

# HISTORY OF DURRËS

The city of Durrës, nowadays is located exactly on the ancient ruins of Epidamos. Durrës is the one of the most important city in Albania and Adriatic area, enriched with history, architecture and archeological sites such as the Roman Amphitheatre, the Byzantine market, the Venetian Tower, the surrounding Walls, Roman Baths, the Observation Tower, Basilica of St. Michael Arapaj, the fortification of Rodon Cape, etc. One of the most considerable attraction of Durrës is the Roman Amphitheatre that is included on the tentative list of Albania for designation as a UNESCO World Heritage Site. Also, Durrës has a wealth of underwater archaeological sites that has not been investigated to date



## ARCHAIC HARBOUR OF DURRËS

The archaeological material identified in this area dates from the classical period to late antiquity. Ancient naval elements, architectural elements, fragments of amphorae, kitchen utensils, etc. have been identified. Some of them were recovered while the rest were left at the site. This material complements the previous data obtained from research in the harbor of Durrës. In contrast to the Cape of Rodon, the material of Currila - Batlla is directly connected to the port of Durrës as the main destination. These sea routes were connected with important economic areas of the Mediterranean such as Corinth and Corkyra, with the ports of Sicily, those of the Italian Adriatic coast and those of North Africa as well



## AMPHITHEATRE

Durrës Amphitheatre, which is a Roman amphitheatre, is a unique public monument located in the center of the city. It has an ellipse shape with a diameter of 136m and a height of about 20m. It was built in the beginning of 98-117. Once having a capacity of around 20,000 people, it is one the largest Amphitheatre in the Balkan Peninsula, built in the 2nd Century BC. It was discovered in late 1966 and has become a popular tourist attraction.



## THE SURROUNDING WALLS OF DURRËS

The city of Durrës since its establishment was defended by walls built with monolith blocks surrounding it. The Walls seen today were built by the Byzantine Emperor Anastasi I (491-518). Further interventions were made by the emperor Justinian I (527-565) Charles of Anjou in the 13th century (1272) and Karl Thopia, in the 14th century (1350) by performing protective reinforcements. While, under Venetian occupation (1392-1501), have been made interventions with circular towers. The Ottoman occupation, on 13 August 1501, downsized the city to the south-east edge with surrounding walls of 800m, reinforced with towers and battlements.



## THE VENETIAN TOWER

The circular tower (locally called "The Tower"), was built in the XV Century on a Byzantine Tower. This is evidenced by the presence of blocks from previous fences and architectural fragments of ancient reliefs. The tower has a diameter of 16m and a height of 9m. The tower is equipped with 5 turrets and 3 compartments (alcoves). The perimeter above closes is battlements. The interior is built with bricks to form a dome. A staircase in stone is found within, with steep and narrow steps.

## CURRILA BATLLA SITE ARCHAIC HARBOUR OF DURRËS Local underwater investigation

APPRODI project aims to valorise numerous ancient harbours as cultural heritage of the Adriatic-Ionian area, and increase their popularity as destinations for transnational ecotourism. The project aspires to engage local community and ecotourism stakeholders to promote environmentally friendly tourism on the grounds of the ancient ports as seemingly marginal content, but in fact enrich cultural heritage that needs to be well explored.

Pilot actions aim to create interesting and rich content attractive to visitors, which can be presented in an innovative way without endangering heritage sites. For this reason, underwater archaeological research has been carried out in both pilot areas: Currila/Batlla site and Cape of Rodon.

The area of Currila/Batlla in which the underwater research was conducted, is positioned in the south of the hill of Durrës city. More, precisely the research area, starts from the ex polygon to the Venetian Tower.

The data extracted from underwater investigation at this site provided the possibility of identifying the archaic Harbor of Durrës.

