

# **BUTRINT 2000**

*EXCAVATIONS, SURVEY & ARCHIVAL RESEARCH*



**Butrint Foundation**

## *Introduction*

This was a special season at Butrint. Beginning on 1 April and lasting until 30 June, over eighty archaeologists participated in Albania's first dedicated archaeological training excavation. But the campaign marked much more than this. With the news that the Butrint National Park had been formally agreed by the Albanian government on 19 March, the future of the archaeological site looks to be secure. Unlike many similar Graeco-Roman cities, Butrint will be surrounded by a natural buffer zone, in this case a tract running from the Straits of Corfu to the mountains (Fig. 1). The news provided the impetus for the construction of a new ticket office (funded by Unesco), refurbishment of the acropolis castle (funded by the Butrint Foundation) and the first steps towards developing a modern system of site guides for the archaeological ruins.

Turning to the archaeological season, the main excavation was of the triconch palace where small-scale investigations had been made between 1994-98. Here, under the direction of Oliver Gilkes and Kosta Lako, students of Tirana University's second year were introduced to excavation methods. Our second excavation was of a site familiarly known as Atticus's villa. The villa was noted by the Italian mission in the 'thirties, and 're-discovered' by the Butrint Foundation's 1994-96 field survey. The excavations here, under the direction of William Bowden and Luan Përzhita, will establish a key point of interest on the far corner of the new National Park. During June, with funds from Texas A&M university, Elizabeth Greene undertook a preliminary survey of underwater sites at and near Butrint. The results, to say the least, are promising. At the same time, Karen Francis and Ilir Gjipali, completing the research on the Italian mission of the 'thirties, made a new survey of prehistoric sites mentioned in Luigi Cardini's unpublished diaries. Their discoveries exceeded all expectations. Finally, the visit of Dhimosten Budina, formerly the director of the Butrint excavations between 1956, when he returned from his studies in Russia, until 1990, marked a new phase in our research into the history of excavations here.

Overall direction of the project lay with Richard Hodges with Sally Martin acting as project manager. Kosta Lako was responsible for the Albanian operations on behalf of the Institute of Archaeology. Ani Tare, Director of the Butrint National Park, was a constant support in all activities. Louise Schofield and Etleva Nallbani assisted in the supervision of the excavations and the general running of the programme. Miriam Ylli was responsible for co-ordinating the Tirana student programme. Bryan Ayers and Robina McNeil carried out an archaeological assessment of Saranda. The following archaeologists and specialists also participated in the project: Abigail Daley (finds), Peter Guest (coins), John Mitchell (art history), Pëllumb Naipi (mosaic and site recording), Roberto Nardi (mosaic conservation), David Neal (mosaic recording), Pippa Pearce (finds conservation), John Percival (total station survey), Adrienne Powell (animal bone), Paul Reynolds (Roman ceramics), Joanita Vroom (post-Roman ceramics), Dee Williams (finds).

Particular thanks are due to the Packard Humanities Institute which funded the excavations, to the Institute for Aegean Prehistory which funded the survey of prehistoric sites, and to the Drue Heinz Trust which has continued to support the archival research, making it possible to bring Professor Budina back to Butrint. We owe a great debt to Professor Muzafer Korkuti, Director of the Institute of Archaeology, Tirana; to His Excellency Edi Rama, Minister of Culture and to Dr. Iris Pojani, Director of the International Centre for Albanian Archaeology.

Richard Hodges  
Scientific Director  
Butrint Foundation

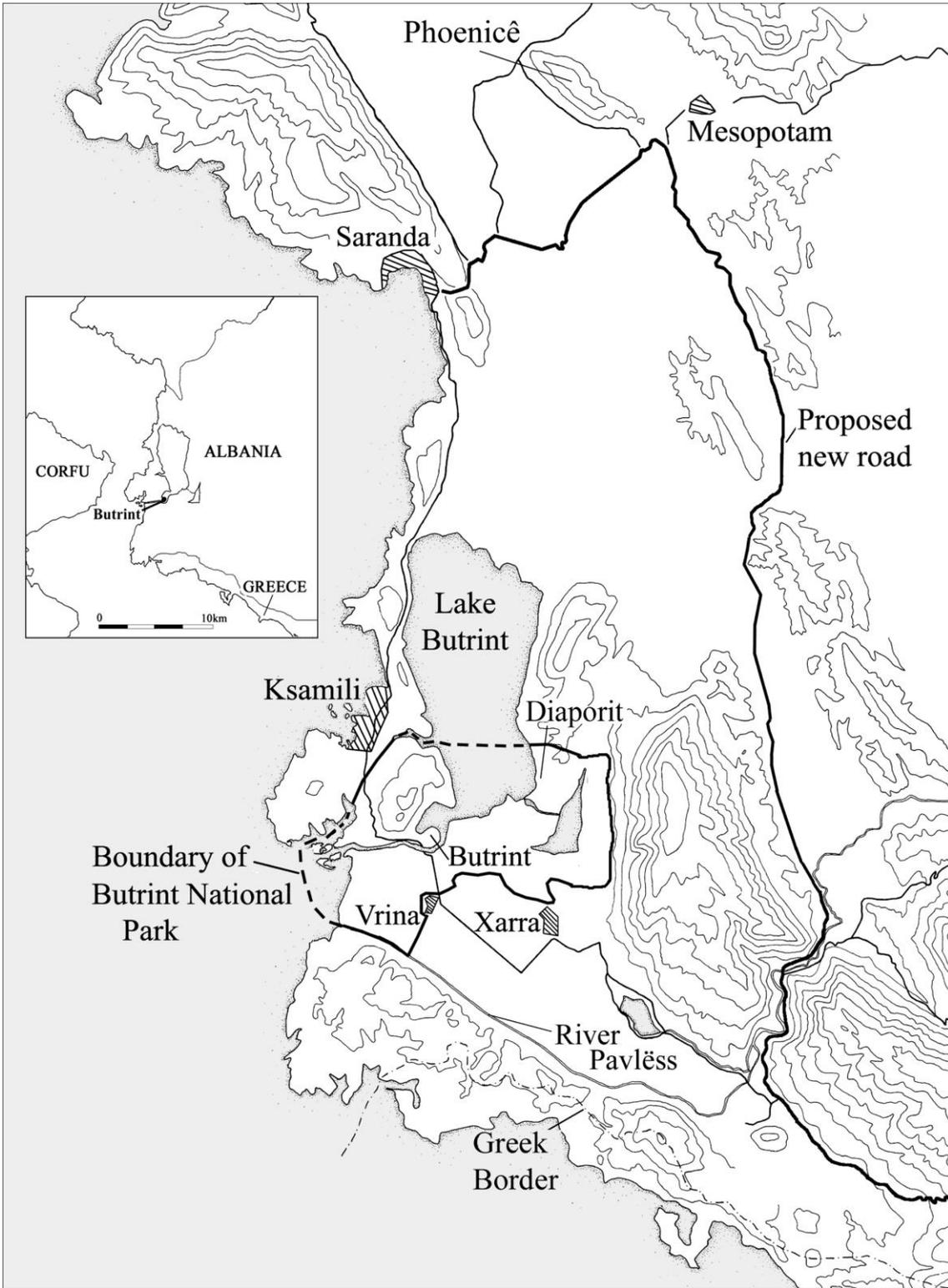


Fig.1. Location map of Butrint showing the boundary of the National Park

## *Excavations at the Triconch Palace*

The triconch palace at Butrint lies on the southern side of the ancient city, adjacent to the Vivari Channel within a slight re-entrant of the city walls. The Italian Archaeological Mission first investigated the triconch in 1928, though excavation work was limited to a study of the triconch *triclinium*. Ugolini interpreted the remains as those of a martyrium church.

During the 1980s, Alexander Meksi and Kosta Lako of the Albanian Institute of Archaeology carried out further excavations. These concentrated on clearing the monument of debris and excavating within the triconch and along its southern wing. This work was brought to a premature end by the economic problems of the early 1990s.

This year's excavation season was the most extensive yet undertaken on the site and continued the Anglo-Albanian research programme of 1994-99. Research was focused in two areas (Fig. 2): i) the southern range of the complex, which earlier excavations had suggested formed the core of the palace; and ii) the western ranges where excavations in 1998 had identified a substantial apsed *aula* and what was interpreted at the time as a colonnaded vestibule. Both were floored with geometric mosaics.

The earliest phase of the palace dates to the late 4th or early 5th centuries. Prior to this, the site adjacent to the channel appears to have been occupied by a number of different structures. These include a substantial arcaded building decorated with marble veneer and at least three other structures most likely to be private dwellings. These buildings were demolished to make way for the palace although elements of the structures were preserved and incorporated into the first palace complex.

The earliest palace was laid out around a stone-flagged courtyard (M), with ranges of rooms to the south, west and possibly north. To the east the palace probably fronted on to a street and the main entrance to the complex is thought to have been in this area.

A portico ran around all four sides of the courtyard, of which the stylobate wall still remains, together with column bases made of fine white limestone and fragments of columns cut from elegant red-pink limestone. Fragments of a mosaic floor have also been revealed here.

The rooms within the south and west ranges of the palace were entered from the courtyard. The southern range consisted of five interconnecting rooms fronted by a long gallery (O). The gallery was floored with a high quality geometric mosaic pavement, while the walls were painted with a perspective colonnade. To the west of the gallery was a reception room containing a small marble-clad octagonal fountain (V), and a mosaic pavement of elaborate design, around a (now badly damaged) central motif. All of these rooms, which looked out over the channel, were probably the private quarters of the owner and his family and formed the heart of the *domus*,

The *triclinium* suite (dining rooms) formed the western wing. From the courtyard a room with a geometric mosaic pavement (W), consisting of a border of a reticulate design surrounding a central mat of interconnected *peltae*, would have greeted guests

before they entered the main reception/dining area. Fragments of a mosaic inscription were found along the eastern colonnade where guests would have passed from the portico. In common with other similar inscriptions, this would have contained an invocation of good cheer.

Beyond the room with the mosaic, the remains of three adjacent rooms positioned to the south (X), west (CC), and north (Y) can be found. Room CC had a raised floor level and walls decorated with niches. These features mark out this space as the principal room of the *triclinium* suite. The whole ensemble was intended for the reception and entertainment of guests of the highest level.

Alterations to the complex were made throughout the 5th century. The two most significant alterations were the addition of an apsed extension to the reception room at the end of the south range (V), including the insertion of a new section of geometric mosaic floor. This was far cruder than the earlier pavement, but the extension transformed the room into an apsed *aula* and mirrors the development of such reception rooms throughout the empire.

The second alteration was the addition of a double-apsed vestibule (N) to the southern side of the small bath suite (HH). This again was a standard feature of later Roman architecture, and parallels for the arrangement can be found at, for example, Piazza Armerina in Sicily and the rural villa at San Giovanni di Ruoti in Basilicata.

In the latter part of the 5th century a major refurbishment and extension of the complex began. New northern and eastern ranges were established, indicating that the owner was able to extend the building across the course of the earlier street.

The new eastern range essentially comprised a three-apsed *triclinium* (A), with surrounding ancillary structures. This room mirrored the earlier *triclinium* on the far side of the peristyle. A double-apsed vestibule (H), connected this new building to the old southern range. This vestibule seems to represent a special marine entrance, which permitted guests to enter directly into the peristyle courtyard. The northern range was essentially just a façade, one room deep, and has not been extensively investigated.

The construction of a new circuit wall around the city in the late 5th century apparently had a great impact on the palace extension. In many areas of the city the wall simply linked together the facades of buildings on the channel side that lay in its path. However, at the palace, the wall was deliberately diverted to avoid the building, perhaps hinting at the power and influence wielded by the palace's owner. Despite the provision of gateways allowing access between the palace and the channel, the imposition of the city wall appears to have halted the building works. No floors were laid down in the new buildings and the walls were left undecorated.

During the early 6th century, levels of silt built up over the mosaic floors indicating that the splendid public and private rooms were no longer maintained. Many of the rooms were subdivided and a number of connecting doors were blocked. Roughly built extensions were constructed that did not respect the alignment of the triconch complex, but rather followed the alignment of the new city walls.

These secondary constructions were accompanied by a change of use for the triconch complex. In the northern range a series of mortar-built tanks were constructed against the unplastered walls of the northern wing, while the southern range was found to be full of crushed mussel shells and thick shell middens. Five small rectangular ovens or furnaces were associated with these shell deposits. The finds included numerous fishhooks, net weights and needles. These findings imply that the ruins of the old *domus* were being utilised by fishermen to process their catch, in the same way that the modern fishermen of Butrint are still to be found processing shellfish on small bonfires or ovens amongst the ruins of the ancient city. By this time the buildings may have presented a peculiar appearance: the mosaic floors were punctured by numerous holes, indicating the use of wooden posts to support the roof or form partitions.

In the northern range this activity was relatively short-lived. During the course of the first decades of the 6<sup>th</sup> century the area was used as a cemetery, possibly while the roofs were intact.

In the later 6<sup>th</sup> century most of the remainder of the *domus* complex was systematically demolished and the building materials were removed for use elsewhere. Layers of demolition debris were interspersed with thick levels of domestic refuse, including large quantities of transport amphorae. Clearly the site of the triconch was being used as a dump by the occupants of dwellings located further into the interior of the city.

The sequence of burials that began in the northern range in the early 6<sup>th</sup> century eventually extended across most of the site. Some of these graves contained metallic grave goods, such as belt fittings and fibulae. One contained a hoard of 12 iron and bronze finger rings that had obviously been held in a small pouch by the side of the body. A small apsed room adjacent to the large triconch *triclinium* was converted into a mausoleum or a small chapel, perhaps associated with the cemetery.

The site of the triconch palace lay undisturbed for some 500 years before the next phase of occupation. This area of Butrint does not appear to have participated to any great extent in the 10<sup>th</sup> - and 11<sup>th</sup> - century occupation of the town, which seems to be concentrated on the acropolis. During the 13<sup>th</sup> century, with the revival of Mediterranean trade and the competition between local polities in Italy and the Balkans, large areas of Butrint were reoccupied and its wall circuit was partly reconstructed.

On the site of the triconch, a number of buildings were constructed within and around the mostly demolished late-antique buildings. Over the *triclinium* of the western wing a series of small irregular structures were erected. A paved yard with a well and a thick deposit of domestic refuse were associated with these structures. This refuse included animal bone and substantial quantities of ceramics, particularly amphorae, imported from Puglia. Elsewhere further traces have been found of similar structures with rough flagstone and mortar floors. The impression gained from these finds is of a townscape comprising collections of rough stone and timber buildings, set around the more substantial churches and defences.

The uppermost archaeological levels excavated in the triconch during the 2000 season provided evidence of Butrint's more recent history. Within the black humic levels were found Byzantine, Angevin and Venetian coins of the 10<sup>th</sup> to 14<sup>th</sup> centuries, pottery of 15<sup>th</sup> to 20<sup>th</sup> century date and 1930s shotgun cartridges, perhaps discarded by Ugolini's

excavators whilst hunting. Clearly these levels represent deposition over an extended period of time. This in itself is interesting as it may show the abandonment of this low-lying area of Butrint and its reversion to woodland. Certainly by 1572 the Venetians had officially abandoned Butrint as the administrative point for the valuable fisheries. After this date the lower city may have begun to assume the wooded form that we see today.

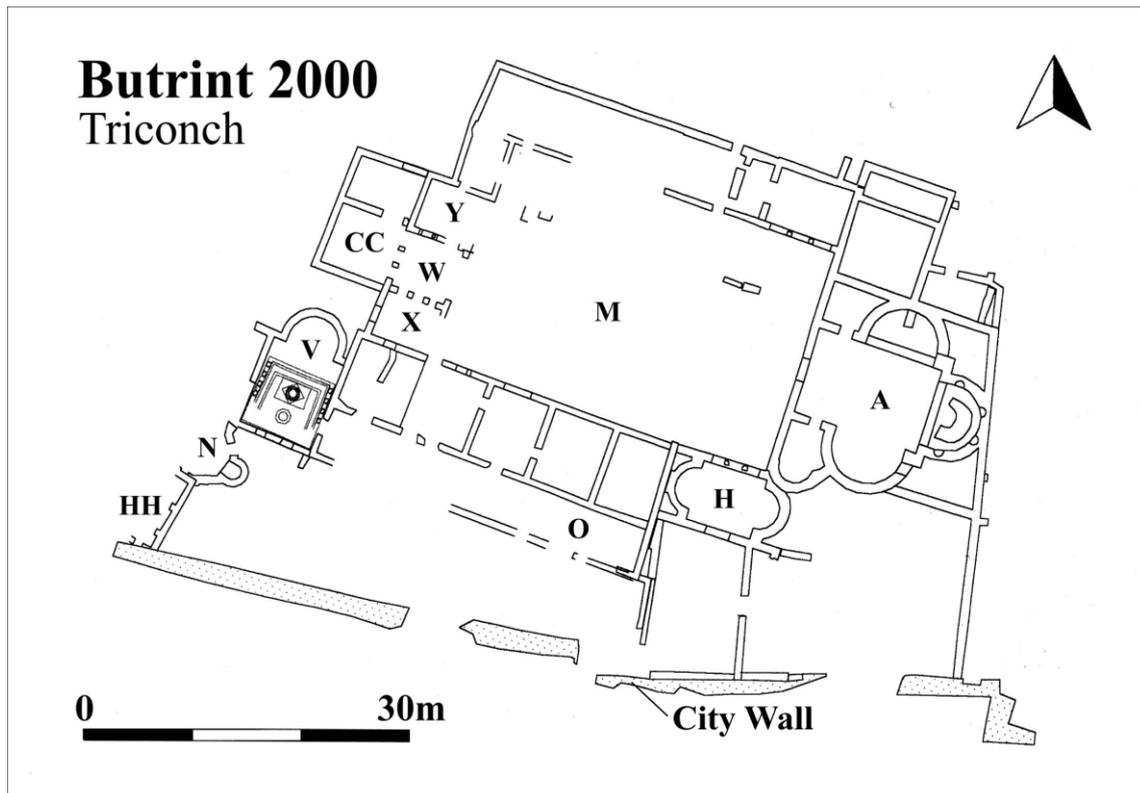


Fig. 2. Plan of the triconch palace, showing the rooms referred to in the text.

## ***Excavations at Diaporit - 'Atticus's Villa'***

### **The site**

The site of Diaporit is situated on the south-west side of Lake Butrint, approximately 500m to the east of Kalivo. It occupies a small valley where the limestone ridge that forms the east side of the lake meets a series of more gentle undulating hills formed of the gravel and red clay typical of the region. The full extent of the site is unknown due to the quantity of colluvial hill-wash that fills the eastern end of the valley. A spring, which was apparently active until at least the 1930s, issued from a limestone outcrop at the eastern end of the valley. The presence of water is still indicated by the lush vegetation that surrounds this outcrop. The name Diaporit is Greek and means the meeting point of two roads. This probably refers to the two drove roads (which may be of some antiquity) which pass the spring.

Archaeological remains at Diaporit were noted by the Italian mission in the 1920s. In a document held by the Museum of Roman Civilisation, Ugolini describes a "Roman building" and a "Byzantine church", which are clearly recognisable as the existing standing remains. He was of the opinion that the Roman structure was of late imperial date and also described how the church was constructed using materials from the earlier building. Albanian archaeologists were also aware of the remains, although no attempt was made to record or excavate the existing structures.

The first systematic archaeological work at Diaporit was carried out in 1994, as part of the field survey of the hinterland of Butrint. The survey team planned the visible standing remains and collected surface ceramics dating from the first century BC to the sixth century AD. This work, together with a further survey in 1999, indicated that the visible structures on the site were the remains of a substantial Roman villa and an Early-Christian basilica (Fig. 3).

### **The villa of T. Pomponius Atticus**

As noted above, the survey evidence indicates that the site itself was occupied from the late Republican period. It was during this period that the Roman aristocracy began to expand into the mainland of Epirus, establishing major landholdings within the area. This activity on the part of the *Synepirotae* or *Epirotici homines* described by Cicero and Varro was the earliest expansion of Roman land ownership beyond the Italian peninsula. Thus far, although they are known from documentary sources, none of these establishments have been located or investigated on the ground. The nature of the early-Roman occupation of Diaporit may therefore be of crucial importance in understanding these processes.

The presence of what appears to be a major villa site on the shores of Lake Butrint is particularly interesting in light of Cicero's correspondence with his friend and archivist, T. Pomponius Atticus. Atticus is known to have had an estate on the river Thyamis, which met the sea opposite Corfu. Adjacent to the water Atticus constructed an *Amaltheum* (probably a temple to the nymph Amalthea) in which he made sacrifices (*De Leg.* II, 7; *Ep. ad Att.* I, 13, 1; I, 16, 15-18). The *Amaltheum*, which was surrounded by plane trees, was clearly a source of pride to Atticus and in 61BC Cicero requested a description of it in order that he could construct a similar building. The letters also suggest that Atticus placed inscriptions dedicated to his friend within the *Amaltheum*.

"I shall be contented with the inscriptions you have put in your Amaltheum, especially as Thyllius has deserted me and Archias has not written anything about me.... Please write me a description of your Amaltheum, its adornment and situation; and send me any poems or tales you have about Amalthea. I should like to make one too in my place at Arpinium" (*Ep. ad Att.* I, 16, 15-18).

It is tempting to equate the site of Diaporit with that of Atticus's establishment although it should be stressed that the visible standing structures are of a much later date. However, the depth of the excavated remains described below, which as yet remain largely undated, indicate that a substantial earlier complex underlies the later Roman villa. The presence of late Republican pottery on the site is also indicative of occupation relating to this period. Diaporit is certainly a more likely site for Atticus's villa than the fortified Hellenistic building of Malathrea, which has also been suggested as a possible location. The Malathrea is situated high on a steep valley side, at a considerable distance from the Pavlëss river, and lacks any sign of construction of the relevant period. Therefore, although the identification of Diaporit with Atticus's villa must remain as a tentative suggestion in the absence of further corroborating evidence, it is certainly the most likely site located thus far in terms of both the type of site and the date of its earliest occupation. Whether or not Diaporit is actually the site of Atticus's own villa, Atticus would have almost certainly known its owner and visited his establishment.

### **The villa at Diaporit**

Topographic survey work in 1999 and trial excavation during May and June 2000, revealed a remarkable palimpsest of buildings on the site. In some areas these structures exist to a depth of more than 2.5m below the present ground level. In both of the two trenches opened on the villa complex, it proved impossible to reach the bottom of the archaeological deposits due to the sheer depth of overlying material and structural remains.

The excavations and topographic survey suggest a complex of buildings laid out over a series of three artificial terraces and covering an area of approximately 85m x 75m. This includes an area of buildings that are now beneath the waters of the lake. A preliminary survey by divers from the University of Texas A & M noted the remains of substantial buildings up to 8m beyond the present shore of the lake.

A trench on the south side of the villa, adjacent to the visible standing structures revealed the remains of a large bath complex. A section of a heated room was discovered with the hypocaust standing to its full height in one corner. This room had been demolished at a later stage to allow the construction of further elements of the bath-complex structures, which included an apsidal room, an oval vestibule and a further heated room. Originally, these later rooms were all opulently decorated with panels of marble that covered both the walls and the floors. Fragments recovered from the site indicate that exotic marble from as far afield as Africa was used for this decoration. A number of the bronze clips that fixed the marble panels to the walls were also recovered during the excavation. All of the marble had been subsequently removed from the buildings, probably for use within the church.

Adjacent to the bath building a large masonry pier can be seen. The pier, which is the most prominent feature of the site, has two angled sides, facing west and south west respectively. The angle between these faces (approximately 36°) indicates that this pier formed one corner of a ten-sided building of a type familiar from other sites in the region. The construction technique utilised in these structures (a mortared rubble core faced with widely spaced brick courses) suggests a construction date of around the third or fourth centuries AD.

A second trench was opened approximately midway between the bath building and the church, adjacent to what appeared to be a large terracing wall revealed by surface clearance. This trench revealed a series of buildings, of which the earliest was richly painted. One wall was adorned with bright panels and bands of colour, while a second was decorated with a simpler dark blue and white design. The painted rooms were subsequently modified with the addition of later walls that were intended to allow the expansion of the upper levels of the building and to enhance the dramatic effect allowed by the use of terraces.

This use of terraces was an important part of the ideology of villa architecture. They were intended to show that the owner of the villa had conquered the landscape, thereby bringing civilisation to the wilderness. The poet Statius, writing in the first century AD, eulogised the owner of a villa in this fashion.

“Here, where you now see level ground  
was a hill; the halls you enter were wild  
country; where now tall groves appear,  
there was once not even soil: its owner  
has tamed the place, and as he shaped and  
conquered the rocks the earth gladly gave  
way before him. See how the dwellings  
force their entry and the mountain is  
bidden withdraw”

It seems therefore that the builder of the villa at Diaporit was familiar with this architectural language of power. This was also continued in the later buildings on the site, which probably date to the third century AD. The use of apsidal and polygonal forms, seen in the bath complex, is a common feature of grandiose buildings of the late empire (as can be seen from the excavations of the triconch palace in Butrint). Of equal importance in this sense was the use of the lakeside location with its command of the vista towards Butrint. As with the use of terracing, dramatic coastal locations were an important part of the aesthetic repertoire of Roman villa owners, and five of the six known villas of the province of Epirus Vetus favoured waterfront sites.

### **The Early-Christian basilica**

By the end of the fifth century, the villa was apparently abandoned. A large church was constructed on the northern part of the site. It was originally thought that this church was an addition to the villa complex, built by the owner for the use of his estate workers. However, the stripping of the marble from the bath building described above was almost certainly associated with the decoration of the church. Close examination of the masonry of the church also indicates that the villa buildings were used as a quarry to provide building materials for its construction. A grave, which is probably contemporary with the church, was inserted into the remains of the bath complex.

Preliminary excavation within the interior of the church indicates that relatively little survives of its interior decoration, although it is likely to have been paved with mosaics or marble reused from the villa buildings.

### **Future work**

The initial excavations carried out during 2000 have provided some indication of the wealth of information available from the site. The remarkable depth of the surviving archaeological remains suggests that future excavation work would allow us the rare opportunity to explore and understand an undisturbed site in the hinterland of Butrint. Systematic excavation of a villa complex of this type has never been carried out in either Greece or Albania, and would therefore be of major international importance.

The depth of the archaeological deposits indicate it would be necessary to open large areas of the site to enable its excavation. Equally, only through large-scale excavation would it be possible to reach and understand the late Republican levels on the site and thereby establish whether or not Diaporit was the site of the villa of Atticus or one of his contemporaries. The presence of large areas of painted wall plaster also means that on-site conservation (carried out in 2000 by Pippa Pearce of the British Museum) is of paramount importance, while the eventual

roofing of areas of the site would have to be considered. However, the excavation of Diaporit would also enable the creation of a new major monument within the Butrint National Park.

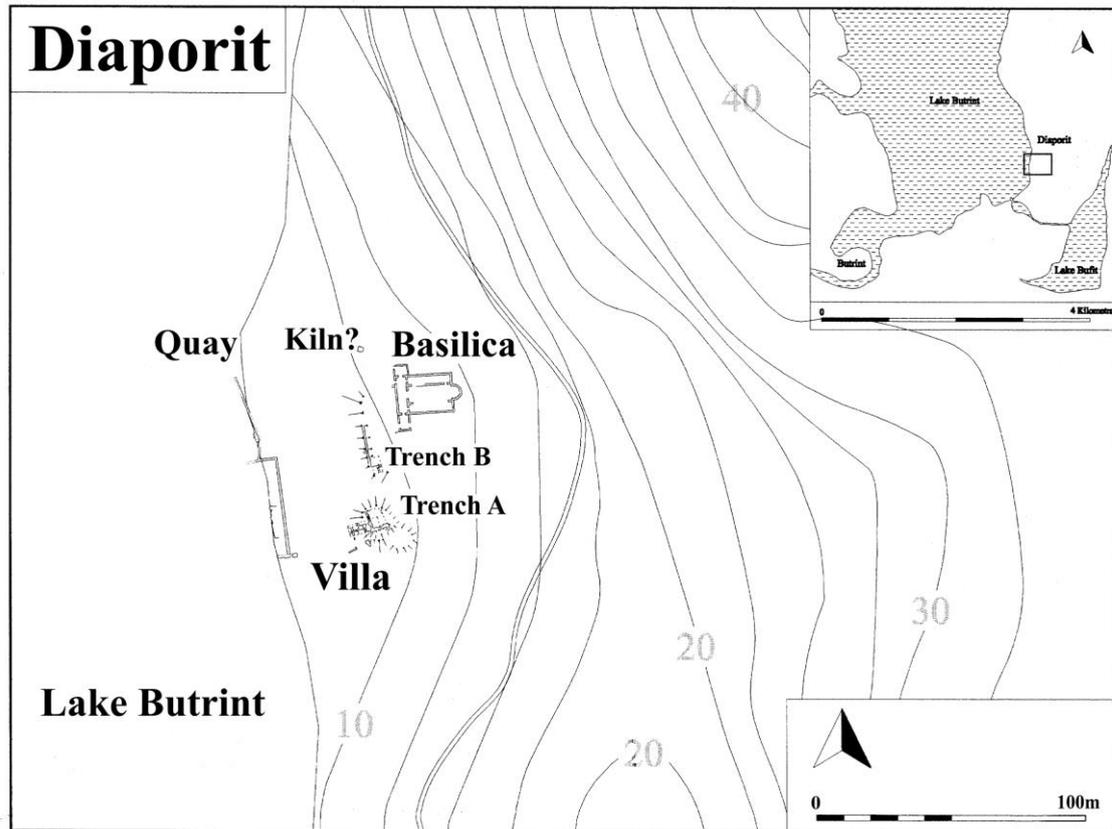


Fig. 3. Plan of the site at Diaporit.

## *The underwater survey*

An underwater survey was made by Elizabeth Greene and a team of four archaeologists between 6-26 June with support from Texas A & M, under the Butrint Foundation's protocol with the Albanian Institute of Archaeology. The team surveyed in the Vivari Channel and identified remains of piers, which probably supported the bridge which entered Butrint close to the great basilica. At Diaporit, 'Atticus's villa', remains of the earliest villa extend some 8 m. into the lake from the present beach, and show that the water level in Lake Butrint has risen more than a metre and a half since Atticus's time. A palimpsest of shipwrecks was found in Butrint bay, thanks to information received from local fishermen. One wreck, possibly dating to World War Two, and with a cargo including TNT, overlies a Roman-period vessel. Finally, Ksamili bay contains several wrecks as well as beachside traces of a Greek-period sanctuary. The wrecks date from Roman, late medieval and modern times. It is clear that the waters around Butrint hold great promise for underwater excavations in the future.

## ***Re-locating the caves and prehistoric sites described in Luigi Cardini's notebooks***

In June 2000, as part of the Cardini Archive project, an attempt was made to re-locate and re-examine some of the caves and Palaeolithic scatters discovered and studied by Luigi Cardini during the 1930s. Cardini's work covered a large area of the southern coastal zone, from the bay of Vlora to the border with Greece. His field notebooks were found in 1999, within the archives of the Institute of Human Palaeontology in Rome. These documents, full of unique information relating to (now lost) prehistoric artefacts, also contain the names of over 60 caves, many of which were personally examined and sampled by him during his search for prehistoric remains.

During the present survey, the area around Butrint was examined in detail. Using Cardini's notebooks and sketches as reference, detailed searches were made in the vicinities of Xarra, Mursia, Diaporit, Mount Milè and Ksamili for sites which had first been noted by Cardini over 60 years previously. Although much of the survey took place in unusually hot conditions and through arduous climbs over rough terrain, the results exceeded all expectations. This was primarily due to the enthusiasm of everyone involved in the survey, including the local Albanian guides and villagers who were often able to re-locate sites by the survival of place-names through oral tradition and folklore.

### **Xarra Palaeolithic Surface Site**

The current survey commenced with a visit to the village of Xarra on June 1<sup>st</sup> 2000, 61 years to the day in which Cardini discovered a large scatter of flint tools - now representing one of a handful of key Palaeolithic sites in Albania. After arriving in the village, some of the local men and a boy directed us to the place still known as "Bregui i Croit" (Spring Hill). With the freshwater spring located, it was possible to orientate Cardini's map to locate the incisions he described in the distinctive red Palaeosol or *terra rossa* (Fig. 4). Immediately and with much excitement we began to recover Palaeolithic tools of flint and chert, collecting 60 tools in a short space of time.

The flints recovered during the survey are considered collectively with Cardini's long-lost Xarra tools, re-discovered with his notebooks in 1999. Technologically, the tools represent a broad time-scale, ranging from the Middle Palaeolithic of *c.*100,000 years ago (and represented by Levallois flakes, scrapers and denticulates); the Upper Palaeolithic of *c.*25,000 years ago (represented by a large knife and a small leaf-shaped biface) - to the Mesolithic, or post-glacial period, represented by a single but crucial microlith: the latter is almost a unique find in Albania. A number of small pebble-tools, probably of the same date, bear a strong resemblance to specialised shellfish toolkits found in Italy and dating to between 10,000 and 7,000 BC. Above all, the most exciting aspect of the Xarra assemblage is the presence of a small number of tools reminiscent of the Aurignacian technology, dated to around 40,000 years ago and indicative of the transition between Neanderthals and Modern Humans. Only a single other example has been reported in Albania.

As a result of information received from local people, a second Palaeolithic site, Xarra II was discovered very close to Cardini's original site. Once again, worked flints dating to the Palaeolithic and Mesolithic periods were found.

### **Mursia**

Following the success in re-locating the Xarra site an attempt was made to try and find Cardini's Palaeolithic surface site at Mursia. Unfortunately, Cardini's maps were not detailed enough to allow this, although a meeting with a 70-year old man from the village meant that we were able to locate and record two large and previously unrecorded caves, in the hills on the eastern side

of Mursia lake. A fine Neanderthal tool and a collection of Bronze Age pottery were also discovered as a result of information received.

#### **Diaporit: the caves of Klima and Kalà**

A large part of the survey was focused on the area around Diaporit, where Cardini discovered the caves of Klima and Kalà. Although, with the help of a young shepherd who knew the area, we were able to locate the areas described, the actual caves were not found. To compensate for this however, an impressive collection of finely made Middle Palaeolithic (Neanderthal) tools was recovered close to the site of the later villa. These tools provide the first secure indication of Middle Palaeolithic activity in the Diaporit area. In addition, a few rare microliths were found, suggesting later post-glacial activity.

#### **Mount Mile and the Sorognà: the caves of La Pica, Pussi and Linaria**

Cardini identified a number of caves on Mount Mile and the adjacent hill known as the Sorognà. The latter name does not exist on maps, although it is still used by the older local people and even survives in a folk song. As a result of our examination of the area a large impressive sink-hole, possibly one discovered by Cardini, was found just to the north of Lake Butrit. A second cave containing a large stalactite formation was also located in the area some days later.

#### **Ksamili: four caves.**

Cardini found and recorded four caves in the vicinity of the village of Ksamili. After making enquiries with local people, two of these caves (and a third recently destroyed by quarrying) were re-located. The first cave, found with the help of a fisherman and Cardini's map, was situated on the steep western side of Lake Butrint. The most impressive cave however, perhaps of the whole survey, was a large cavern situated at the base of a sink-hole, close to the Saranda-Butrint road. The chamber, now closed off by a modern wall but accessible by a recently-excavated tunnel, was approximately 6 metres wide by 12 metres in length. No finds were visible on the ground, although it is likely that these lay deeply buried - the nature of the cave suggests that it would have been a desirable location for the provision of shelter by early humans.

#### **Conclusion**

The present survey was successful in re-locating many of Cardini's Palaeolithic sites and caves. Furthermore, a number of previously unknown flint scatters and caves were discovered within the area of the Butrint National Park. These sites are crucial to our understanding of the early human settlement of the area, and of Albania as a whole. Future research might involve a closer examination of these newly discovered sites, including small-scale excavations.

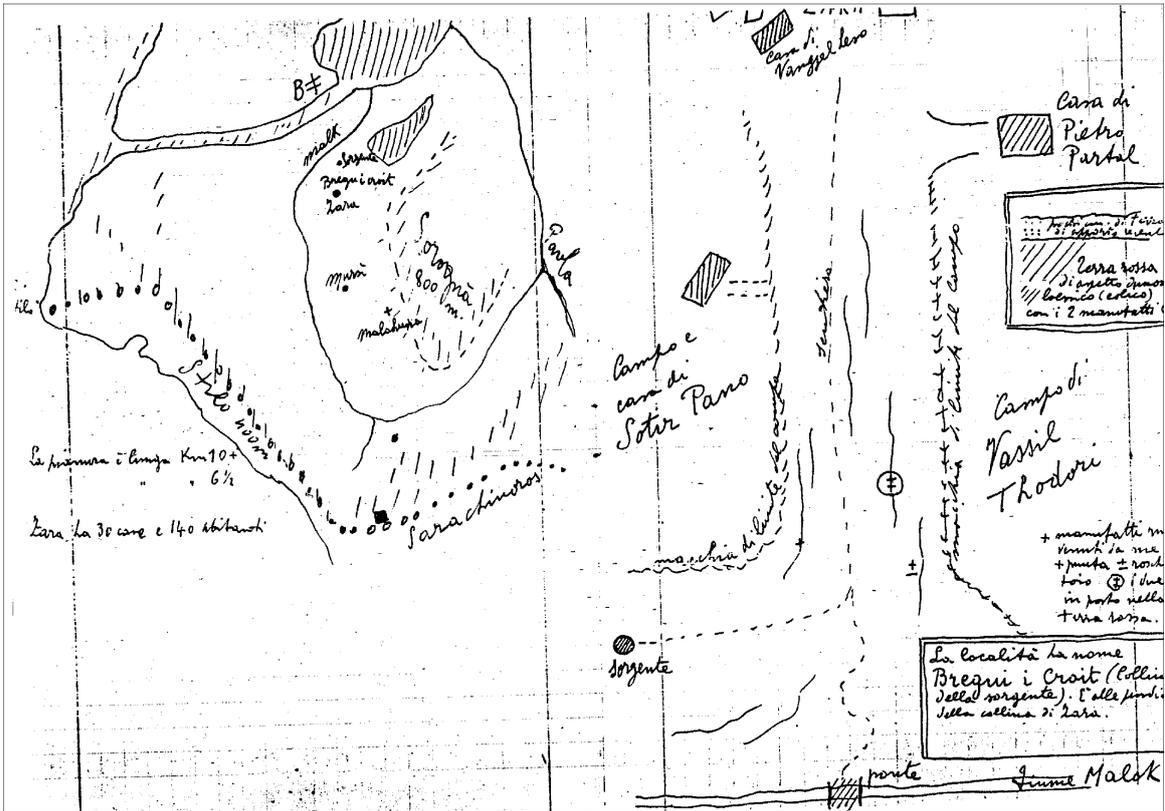


Fig. 4. Cardini's location map of the Palaeolithic surface site at Xarra.

## ***The archive project and Prof. Dhimosten Budina***

Following a major programme of research into the archival sources for the Italian Archaeological Mission in Albania and at Butrint, our understanding of the archaeology of Butrint has been substantially augmented. A whole range of documentation, ranging from hastily scribbled field notes and completed manuscripts, to a large collection of photographic negatives and film footage of the excavation was discovered

The Second World War and the subsequent communist victory ensured the effective end of Italian excavations in Albania. However archaeological work at Butrint continued under the aegis of the few Albanian archaeologists who had worked before the war and a new, rising group of scholars who were trained during the 1950s. Little of this new archaeological work has ever been fully published and consequently it has assumed an air of mystery akin to the forgotten discoveries of the Italians. As a consequence a project to identify and assess the significance of the surviving archive of the post-war period has been launched.

### **Archive research**

Etleva Nallbani, who has examined the archives of the Institutes of Archaeology and Monuments in Tirana, is undertaking the primary research. A substantial amount of good graphic documentation, mainly elevations and plans from numerous excavations in and around Butrint, is maintained in the archive of the Institute of Archaeology, together with around 600 black and white photographs (Fig. 5). The Institute of Monuments, who has responsibility for the restoration and maintenance of standing remains in Albania, maintain further documentation and have a very extensive photographic archive.

An attempt has also been made to assess the significance of the surviving assemblages of finds. Thefts from museum stores since 1992 (Butrint in particular has suffered), have left an uncertain legacy in terms of the material culture found during the excavations since 1945. Much sculpture, for example, is missing, stolen in 1992 or looted in 1997. An examination of a sample of the material store in the museum in Butrint revealed that this was maintained in considerable disorder and that considerable effort would be required to obtain valuable data from the material in its current form.

### **Prof. Dhimosten Budina**

In order to add a human element to the project, a factor largely lacking in the Italian material, Prof. Dhimosten Budina agreed to return from Moscow for a short period. Prof. Budina had been the principal archaeologist at Butrint from about 1956 and later became the senior archaeologist for southwestern Albania. It was hoped that Prof. Budina's memories and knowledge of the sites would greatly assist in understanding what exactly had been achieved during 55 years of archaeological work.

Four days were spent with Professor Budina in Tirana, examining the material stored in the archives and discussing the history and development of Albanian archaeology. A further week was spent at Butrint, examining the site and its locality and discussing the archaeological work that had been undertaken there. A brief visit was also made to Apollonia where Prof. Budina had worked together with his Russian Professor, Vladimir Dimitrovitch Blavatski. All of these journeys were taped and filmed to provide an enduring record of Prof. Budina's memories.



Fig. 5. Archive photograph showing the restoration of the lion gate at Butrint in 1962.

## **Timeline summary of post-war archaeology in Butrint and the work of Dhimosten Budina**

- 1930: Dhimosten Budina born.
- 1952: Guardian appointed to the partly ruinous and abandoned Butrint;  
Budina goes to study in Moscow.
- 1956: Budina returns to Albania and commences the study of Butrint.  
Excavates in the Necropolis. Clearance of thick vegetation is begun.
- c.*1957: Sektor of archaeology at the University of Tirana created.
- 1958: Budina begins work on the archaeological map of southern Albania.
- 1959: Visit of Nikita Kruschev.
- 1962: Beginning of excavations to the west of the theatre.  
Monuments exposed by the Italians re-recorded.  
Study of the inscriptions in the theatre commences.
- c.*1963: Survey work on the Butrint plain concurrently with the draining of the swamps.  
Survey of the Butrint aqueduct.
- 1966: Begins excavations at Antigonea.
- 1968: Second conference of Albanian archaeology in honour of 500<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the death  
of Skanderbeg. Sektor of archaeology of the institute becomes a centre.
- c.*1970: Intended road adjacent to the theatre diverted.  
Cable ferry constructed.
- 1972: Prestigious first conference on Illyrian studies, delegates visit Antigonea.  
Creation of the Institute of Archaeology as a separate entity.
- 1975: Programme to study the Hellenistic walls begins.  
Excavations to the west of the Hellenistic gateway.
- 1978: Visit of Enver Hoxha to Butrint.
- 1979: 35 new archaeology students enrolled.
- 1982: Formal field training programme at Butrint.  
Excavations at the baptistery, in the necropolis, east of the theatre and on the acropolis.
- 1985: Death of Enver Hoxha.  
Visit of Ramiz Alia to Butrint.
- 1990: Enforced retirement of Budina.

## ***Future directions***

This long successful campaign has highlighted many aspects that we need to develop next year and some that call for revision. Clearly, Butrint lives up to its rich archaeological promise. The mosaics from the palace, the long and well-preserved sequence at Diaporit, and the unexpectedly satisfactory discoveries in the underwater and prehistoric surveys all exceeded our expectations. The extensive field-training school was also a great success, thanks particularly to Miriam Ylli, lecturer in archaeology at the University of Tirana. In sum, there has been much to learn and appreciate from this season as the Butrint Foundation, for the first time, was able to mount a full-scale project.