

## **Butrint Foundation written reports**

**Title:** The Butrint Foundation Field Projects 2006, Interim Report

**Author:**

**Date submitted/written:** 2006

**Status and recipient:** The Butrint Foundation

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**Copyright details:** BF

**Brief description of content/ keywords:** The interim report includes information on Archaeological Projects, Conservation Projects and the Butrint Archive Project for 2006

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**Archive:**

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# BUTRINT FOUNDATION



Field Projects 2006 Interim Report

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Busts from displays in the Butrint Museum.

## Foreword

The 2006 season was highly successful notably for the rich archaeological deposits which were discovered in all the excavations. The scale of the archaeological discoveries means that an ever greater onus is upon us to publish our results. This much was very clear at the British Academy sponsored workshop attended by Professors Paul Arthur, John Camp, Neritan Ceka, Amanda Claridge, Florin Curta and Konstantinos Zachos as well as Drs Elizabeth Bartman and Iris Pojani. All agreed that the scope of the archaeology permits us new insights into the settlement sequence of sites in the central Mediterranean.

No less important are the Butrint Foundation's focused efforts to make the UNESCO World Heritage Site a well-managed place that best serves the community and visiting tourists. Four conservation projects were undertaken

alongside a range of other important initiatives including making new stores and cataloguing existing finds from the excavations and in the Butrint Museum. Now, with annual visitor numbers approaching 70,000, Butrint is well and truly on the Mediterranean tourist trail.

A large team drawn from 18 countries worked with an ever-increasing number of Albanians to make this a cordial experience as well as a successful archaeological project. My thanks to all who took part – often in extremely hot conditions. Finally, my thanks, as ever, to the Butrint Foundation's principal partner, the Packard Humanities Institute, whose support made so much of this innovative and collaborative work possible.

Richard Hodges  
Norwich  
October 2006

## Acknowledgements

The Butrint Foundation summer excavation, conservation and development projects at Butrint took place between mid-May and mid-August 2006. These ambitious projects were made possible by a series of exceptionally generous grants, for which we are enormously grateful, from the following: the Packard Humanities Institute, the Howard and Nancy Marks Fund, the Oak Foundation, the Institute of Aegean Prehistory, the Drue Heinz Trust, the British Academy and anonymous donors.

On behalf of the Butrint Foundation the summer excavations were directed by Richard Hodges in successful and long-term partnership with Ilir Gjipali, Deputy Director of the Albanian Institute of Archaeology. Provision of new finds storage, an exhibition on Luigi Ugolini in the Butrint Castle and Community Development Projects were directed by Daniel Renton. Project Management was carried out by Andrew Crowson working with Elenita Roshi and close support from Jerry O'Dwyer who provided invaluable back-up to the excavation and conservation initiatives throughout the Project.

Dhimiter Çondi was the principal co-director of the excavations at Vrina and in the Tripartite Building and Forum on behalf of the Institute of Archaeology. For the Butrint Foundation Oliver Gilkes oversaw the excavation of the Heroon-Temple and the student training programme. Nevila Molla (University of Siena) directed the student training programme and Valbona Hysa (Albanian Rescue Archaeology Unit), Sinoida Martellozi (Albanian Institute of Monuments) and Gjerg Vanjahu (University of Bologna) supervised the student-led excavations. The excavation of the Great Peristyle *Domus* and basilica on the Vrina Plain was directed by Simon Greenslade with Sarah Leppard (both Butrint Foundation) and supervisor Riley Thorne (Pre-Construct Archaeology). Excavations in the Tripartite Building and Forum were led by David Hernandez (University of Cincinnati), with supervisors Emily Glass (Oxford Archaeology) and Peter Crawley (NAU Archaeology) and the Butrint National Park Archaeologist Erjona Qilla. Sarah Lima (University of Cincinnati) directed the assessments of the Butrint Acropolis and Cape Stylo with Ilir Gjipali and David Bescoby (University of East Anglia). Erjona Qilla took responsibility for much of the excavation work on the Acropolis. Matthew Logue (National University of Ireland, Galway) and Charlotte Hodges (University of Edinburgh) cleaned and recorded sections of the Acropolis defensive walls and excavated in a tower of the Western Defences.

The GPS survey of prehistoric and other sites in the hills and valleys south of Butrint was devised and implemented by David Bescoby with the support of Ilir Gjipali and Sarah Lima. John Percival (NAU Archaeology) surveyed stretches of the Acropolis defensive wall circuit, the excavations at the Acropolis, Forum, Vrina and Western Defences as well as laying out grids over the mosaics for photogrammetric recording. Nevila Molla conducted a new survey of the Great Basilica. David Bescoby took additional soil cores from the Vrina Plain for the on-going volcanic tephra studies at the University of East Anglia and recorded soil profiles at the edge of the Vrina excavations to establish the northern limit of the settlement.



Central Butrint from the air

The Finds Department was managed by David Boschi (Archaeological and Historical Conservancy Inc.) and Sabina Veseli (Institute of Archaeology) supported by Sinoida Martellozi, Mirela Alushi (University of Elbasan) and Elizabeth Mitchell (University of Cambridge). Ceramics were studied by Paul Reynolds (Hellenistic and Roman) and Joanita Vroom (post-Roman). Coin studies were undertaken by Sam Moorhead, (British Museum) together with Shpresa Gjongecaj (Institute of Archaeology). Small finds were studied by John Mitchell (University of East Anglia) and Sarah Jennings (English Heritage) catalogued and studied vessel and window glass. The Butrint Physical Anthropology Project was led by Todd Fenton with Jared Beatrice

and Lindsey Jenny (all Michigan State University). Additional study of human remains from the Vrina Plain was carried out by Dawn Gooney (University of Glasgow). Faunal remains were recorded by Adrienne Powell (University of Cardiff).

A diverse programme of landscape and object photography was supervised by Inge Lyse Hansen. Brian Donovan (University of Auckland) produced a series of panoramic photographic views of Butrint and the surrounding region. Michael Grayley and Martin Smith undertook photography for the Butrint Museum catalogue and of all small finds and other objects from the excavations. Alket Islami (National Aero Club of Albania) took a series of aerial photographs of Butrint, its environs and the excavations. Massimo Zanfini (University of Bologna) carried out photogrammetric recording of the Butrint Baptistery and Trapezoidal Hall mosaics and mosaics in the Vrina excavations. Sculpture and objects were illustrated by Adelheid Heil (University of Suor Orsola Benincasa, Naples). Patricia Capriano (University of Lecce) drew the post-Roman pottery.

Conservation of finds from the excavations was conducted by Pippa Pearce assisted by Alexandra Baldwin (both British Museum). Mosaic conservation on the Vrina Plain was by members of the Israel Antiquities Authority – Jacques Negeur and Ghaleb Abu Diab – with Agron Islami of the Institute of Monuments. Assessment of the condition and conservation needs of the Butrint Baptistery and Trapezoidal Hall mosaics was carried out by Jacques Negeur, Ghaleb Abu Diab and Agron Isalami with the support of Erjona Qilla.

Documentation of the two Butrint mosaics was by John Mitchell and Martin Smith. John Mitchell also documented the mosaics in the Vrina excavations. The practical conservation training programme at Diaporit was led by Rene Rice whilst backfilling around the monuments at Diaporit and Vrina was organised and supervised by Jerry O’Dwyer. Conservation and presentation of the Nymphaeum and Aqueduct piers was designed and implemented by Francesca de Vita (Parma) supported by the Butrint National Park Monuments and Conservation specialist Albana Hakani and Ervin Gjini (Institute of Monuments).

The Archive Project was directed by Inge Lyse Hansen and run on a day-to-day basis by Christian Biggi who is co-ordinating the input of current and archive data and images in to the Butrint Foundation’s on-line Integrated Archaeological Database. Office set up and technical support and advice was provided by Ansar Khoussianiov (Tirana).

Jerry O’Dwyer and Muço Laze implemented all Project logistics. Spartak Frizgj was in charge of security for people and stored objects at the principal hotel and the team was superbly catered for by Anife Laze with the support of Valbona Hoxha and Leila Melam.

Sincere thanks are extended to all the participants who collectively made the 2006 Field Projects an overwhelmingly successful and enjoyable experience, to all those who contributed text and images to this Interim Report and to Anne Vallins for reading the draft text.



The Vrina Plain from Butrint.

## Archaeological Projects

### Introduction

For eight weeks during June and July 2006, the Butrint Foundation conducted two major excavations, smaller scale archaeological work at three other locations in and around Butrint and a global positioning survey of sites situated in the southern environs of the city. Forty-six foreign and Albanian archaeologists took part in the excavations and surveys together with 32 Albanian archaeology students and 37 visiting Albanian and international specialists and consultants. A total of 39 local men were recruited to work in the excavations, 14 local women processed pottery in the Finds Department and a further four local people were employed to work in the main hotel and kitchen.



Excavating a medieval grave overlying the Forum.

The Vrina Plain was the setting for the fifth year of work examining the Augustan colony and the fate of suburban Butrint through late antiquity in to the Middle Ages. Excavation took place in three areas, each one expanding upon previous investigations. A trench was positioned in front of the Temple-Heroon to explore its relationship with the Roman road network. A series of mini investigations took place in and around the 5<sup>th</sup>-century basilica to ascertain the precise nature of the structures and events that both pre- and post-dated its use as a church. Finally, the Student Training Programme was again based in rooms on the eastern flank of the Roman villa building to understand the evolution of the structure and its use through time in an area of relatively straightforward stratigraphy.

Inside the walled city the third season of digging took place, with the largest investigation to date of the Tripartite Building and the Roman Forum. The excavations here aimed to complete the archaeological sequences surviving inside the Tripartite Building and link these important phases with the vast accumulations of deposits overlying the Forum pavement; at the same time it was hoped that the full northern extent of the Forum would be revealed. On the Acropolis hill, overlooking the Forum, a multi-faceted project was begun, re-examining exposed trenches dug in the early 1990s, opening a new trench close to the Acropolis walls and surveying and recording an important stretch of the multi-period defences themselves. This aimed, in no small measure, to determine the presence or otherwise of Bronze Age fortifications and contemporary cultural deposits. A second, small, project also targeted Butrint's fortifications: this time one of the late antique towers at the east end of the Western Defences. A previous half-section of deposits was fully removed to substantiate theories of the domestic re-use of the tower and the conflagration that wrought its ultimate demise.

Allied to the Bronze Age investigation of the Butrint Acropolis, on an exposed hilltop at Cape Stylo, overlooking Corfu and the mouth of the Vivari Channel that feeds in to Lake Butrint, test pits were excavated to assess the date, nature and character of a rough walled enclosure and the deposits within it. Finally, the Cape Stylo headland was surveyed with a GPS unit as the starting point of a broader survey that located sites along the Pavllas River, in the southern reaches of the Vrina Plain, up the Vagalat valley and at Çuka e Aitoit as part of the Butrint Foundation's on-going research into the city's hinterland.

## Bronze Age Butrint

A project supported by a grant from the Institute for Aegean Prehistory targeted an enclosure on the rugged headland of Cape Stylo, a site known as Shën Koll (St Nicholas), together with the Acropolis hill of Butrint to stage an assessment exercise of Bronze Age settlement evidence within the Butrint catchment. The assessment on each site comprised fresh small-scale excavations and surveys and re-appraisal of past work.

## Cape Stylo

The Cape Stylo site at Shën Koll was first discovered during 2003 and was revisited the following year; a total of 158 ceramic sherds, spot-dated predominantly to the Late Bronze Age, with a smaller Early Iron Age component were collected. The site itself comprises an incomplete rectangular stone-built enclosure situated around the rim of a pronounced knoll atop a rough hillside. The surrounding land falls off steeply to the north, and the high point of the site commands spectacular views over the south-eastern valley approach, and has vistas to Butrint and almost the whole of the eastern side of the island of Corfu.



View to Vivari Channel mouth and Corfu Straits from Cape Stylo.



Cape Stylo test trench excavation.

The enclosure covers much of the hilltop, an elongated area measuring some *c.* 160 x 95m. In areas where the wall is absent elements of natural rock formations were incorporated in to the fabric of the enclosure. Elsewhere piles and spreads of tumbled stones from the wall are evident on the down-slopes. Several sections of wall survive to a height of between 0.80-1.50m. In general terms, the construction materials are rough and unshaped limestone blocks of various dimensions positioned without bonding materials on top of elevated bedrock exposures. In places repairs and/or additions were made to certain wall sections: smaller and some faced stones were used to raise or replace collapsed lengths of wall. Among the apparently later sections are curved elements which may potentially have been parts of internal structures.

In order to assess the character and date of the enclosure small spit-dug test trenches were opened in the interior at selected intervals adjacent to its southern wall and a further trench dug on the hill summit. One trench was sited within a potential structure and a second in proximity to a possible gate. Each trench revealed shallow deposits of rendzina soils overlying bedrock. Finds were separated by 100mm spit and trench quadrant divisions to test for chronological sensitivity and distribution within the homogeneous deposits. Although ceramics appeared in concentrations at various depths throughout

the excavations no true stratigraphy could be discerned and all of the sherds were determined to be in secondary, eroded, contexts.

Along with two ceramic beads and a flint hammerstone, the excavations produced a quite remarkable assemblage of several thousand pottery sherds. Some of the sherds proved diagnostic and serve to confirm the Bronze and Iron Age components of the site indicated by the earlier surface collections. A fabric study on the non-diagnostic material revealed five principal types. These include local handmade coarsewares, some resembling examples from the 1990s Hadzis excavations on the Butrint Acropolis, and some thick-walled basins akin to Diaporit Ware. Imported material includes thin-walled wheel-thrown vessels and flagon and amphora type forms that can be compared with examples from Apulia or Corfu which endure until the 1<sup>st</sup> century AD.

Interpretations of function remain speculative. It is possible that the enclosure initially served as no more than that: no early structures were positively identified within its interior. Study of coastal prehistoric fortifications further north along the Albanian coast in the Himara region (Koci 1991: 59) has highlighted a link between the enclosures and fortifications of pastoral communities, a pattern within which the Shën Koll site may fall. However, the site's elevation and geographical domination of the landscape, particularly its visual contact with Corfu, Butrint and the waters in between, means that an interpretation of refuge, watch station or signalling point can not be ruled out. The relationship and interactions of Shën Koll with Bronze Age Butrint, Kalivo and Corfu remain to be explored.

## Butrint Acropolis

### *Acropolis excavations*

Open excavation trenches dug by an Albanian-Greek team in the early 1990s, which had produced a small assemblage of Bronze Age ceramics, were cleaned and re-examined as part of the Acropolis assessment project. This was accompanied by the digging of a new trench close to the fortification walls on the south side of the Acropolis to test for the presence of prehistoric deposits. In the event, no Bronze Age levels were encountered in a deep excavation that reached bedrock, but in conjunction with the existing evidence the trench illuminated a remarkable and previously unrecognised sequence of occupation on the Acropolis from the Archaic period onwards.

Evidence of a polygonal wall (or walls employing different sizes of building blocks), is visible in a discontinuous line throughout the excavations and extant sections of the Acropolis fortifications. Through association with imported Corinthian wares this is generally accepted to date from the 7<sup>th</sup>-6<sup>th</sup> centuries BC. The question remains as to whether the polygonal wall enclosed the full extent of the Acropolis hilltop or acted as a prominent terrace on the southern face. The absence of stratified Bronze Age ceramics in deposits overlying the bedrock in the excavated areas points to the likelihood that evidence of this period was either utterly destroyed by later occupation or that contemporary activity was concentrated over to the east end of the hill.



Butrint Acropolis late Roman tower house with medieval rebuilds.

The new trench produced clear evidence of an early Imperial residential building, with fine frescoes, marbles and fine ware pottery, a structure that may be associated with a bath-house identified in the 1990s excavations. The villa was perched on the side of the Acropolis looking southwards and was systematically demolished perhaps as late as the 5<sup>th</sup> or 6<sup>th</sup> centuries. The debris was incorporated into a terrace at the top of the Acropolis slope, and may be related to the erection of a large, well-appointed tower house of which its ground floor (probably a cellar, with no doors or windows to the

outside) survives in the Albanian-Greek excavations. The tower house may belong to the same period as a major residential building below the Acropolis basilica to the north-east.

The late Roman tower was pulled down and built over by a medieval tower on a slightly different axis. The cellar was filled with rubble to create a new raised ground floor with a rough mortar pavement. Repairs or rebuilds are evident in the medieval fabric, these probably occurring in the 13<sup>th</sup> century, possibly in conjunction with the building of new terrace walls on the edge of the Acropolis identified in the new excavations. Masonry exposed at modern ground level to the north of the excavations indicates that the Acropolis was densely built on in to the Venetian period.

### *Acropolis wall survey*

As part of the Acropolis assessment a section of well-preserved, multi-period, defensive walls on the southern face of the Acropolis (directly below the excavations), was subjected to a new survey by total station theodolite and written and drawn record to better characterise the various phases and features present. After extensive vegetation clearance wall elevations were drawn and lines of extant walls were mapped together with significant masonry showing in previous and current excavations to prepare a diachronic image showing phases of human activity on the Acropolis.

### *Summary of phases*

#### Archaic (7<sup>th</sup>-6<sup>th</sup> centuries BC)

This phase is characterized by large polygonal masonry, employed for both fortification and display, generally cut with neat fits. Numerous stones have tumbled from their original positions down the hill slope, and it seems that some stones of the Archaic period were incorporated in Hellenistic masonry in the area of the Forum below and, on the basis of coin evidence, in remodelling that area during the 10<sup>th</sup> century AD. It is uncertain as to whether the surviving sections of Archaic wall represent a complete circuit wall, or a partial fortification or enclosure.

#### Hellenistic/Early Roman (1<sup>st</sup> century BC-early 2<sup>nd</sup> century AD)

Evidence based on courses of blocks up to 1.50m high laid over *in situ* Archaic stones; in parts replacing the Archaic line of the Acropolis wall, elsewhere possibly refortifying or re-terracing it and probably spoliated for later constructions. A single buttress against the southern face appears to be early Roman in its construction with characteristic scored mortar. Other walls, probably related to residential building, are dated to the early Roman period in excavations on the Acropolis; these are characterized by sub-rectangular stones, square putlog holes, relatively modest width (c. 0.40-0.60m), and the use of a rubble/mortar plinth as their base.



Surveying and recording a section of multi-period Acropolis walls.

### Mid-Roman (late 2<sup>nd</sup>-3<sup>rd</sup> centuries AD)

Mid-Roman walls are layered as skins over/above Archaic and Hellenistic sections of wall, indicating that earlier sections of wall were still extant at this time. There is some variation in techniques during this period, including a form of “gouged” masonry that features small (50-70mm), roughly cut sub-rectangular stones and sparing use of mortar.



Archaic period Acropolis walls with medieval rebuilds.

### Late Roman (4<sup>th</sup>-6<sup>th</sup> centuries AD)

The late Roman period is a time of considerable works on the Acropolis, and is characterised by replacement of early Roman structures, often in conjunction with terracing activities rather than fortification. Demolition layers consisting of earlier Roman material appear to be associated with the construction of a terrace that levelled or extended the top of the Acropolis slope and may be associated with the late Roman tower house. Evidence for late Roman construction is recorded following the line of the Archaic wall, specifically in construction of the tower house and occasional blocks at the base of the Acropolis walls. There is not, however, sufficient evidence to suggest that there was a late Roman circuit surrounding the Acropolis slopes.

### 7<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> centuries AD

There is no new evidence from the present investigations for building during this period, which may indicate contraction in the Acropolis settlement at this time. However, the find of residual pottery of the 8<sup>th</sup>-9<sup>th</sup> centuries in excavated medieval contexts suggests that occupation did persist on the

Acropolis during this period. Although the tower house remained standing to some degree through to the early medieval period the fortifications generally seem to have been allowed to fall into a ruinous state.

### Medieval I (13<sup>th</sup> century AD?)

There is evidence both for entirely new Medieval I fortification walls and the patching of extant sections of wall. A substantial projecting bastion, which housed a prominent gateway into the Acropolis, was constructed in front of earlier wall lines. Additionally, terracing activities occurred at this time; a deep terrace trench containing large stones is dated by a ceramic oil lamp to the late 13<sup>th</sup> or early 14<sup>th</sup> century. Terracing and infilling may have enlarged the surface of the Acropolis summit or reinforced standing fortifications.

### Medieval II (14<sup>th</sup> century AD?)

The only evidence for later medieval fortification is the construction of a large semi-circular buttress against the southern face of the earlier medieval Acropolis wall. Elsewhere there are small patches and indications of repairs to existing defences.

### Venetian period (15<sup>th</sup> century and later)

The sections of wall under examination demonstrated only one likely segment of Venetian period reconstruction over crumbled medieval masonry. Other than that, some of the later patching and maintenance works may post-date the 14<sup>th</sup> century.



Archaic, Mid-Roman, Medieval II and Venetian-phase elements of the Acropolis wall.



The Vrina Plain Temple-Heroon, road and later buildings.

## The Vrina Plain

### The Temple-Heroon

Following the uncovering of the Temple-Heroon in 2005 the objective of excavations in 2006 was to explore the place of this grand monument in its ancient topographic setting. Geophysical survey in 2001-2003 revealed a sequence of probable routeways associated with the buildings in this area and it was hoped to locate one or more of these to provide a fixed point from which to examine the temple within the road network and putative centuriation grid.

The location within Vrina Plain settlement where the temple was erected is significant for two reasons. First, the temple lies on a boundary formed by

the aqueduct between the inhabited area to the west and the necropolis and open villa settlement to the east. Second, just to the north are the two 'monuments' excavated in 2001 and 2002. These two finely built stone platforms may have been the foundations of altars or columns and clearly had some ritual or commemorative purpose, possibly as funerary monuments or cenotaphs. All of these monuments were constructed within the early imperial period, the mid to late 1<sup>st</sup> century AD.

A trench was opened to the west of the temple revealing a road running north-south almost from the foot of the temple steps. The road does not appear to follow the earliest alignment of the centuriation grid, being angled slightly to the east, nor does it actually follow any logical subdivision of the *actus* squares proposed in *Roman Butrint* (Crowson and Gilkes in press). The grid as calculated in previous years still seems to retain its validity and so it is possible that it may follow an earlier-still alignment of land division. Stone and tile built drains ran along both sides of the road, although the

construction of the temple had necessitated the partial removal and re-positioning of the eastern drain on to the (later) alignment of the temple. The primary fill of the new drain was a layer of fine limestone chippings that must have originated from the finishing work on the temple steps and façade. This arrangement appears to confirm the existence of the two *actus* alignments suggested by previous years' excavation and survey.



The Roman road with flanking drain fronting the Temple-Heroon.

The road was strongly built, with a foundation of massive stone lumps and paved with slabs and close-set smaller stones. A repair on the western side of the carriageway had protected slabs from wear and fragmentation. The date of the road is uncertain, but material from beneath the road foundation contained a mix of ceramics including mid 1<sup>st</sup> century *terra sigillata italica* and other types of early 2<sup>nd</sup> century date. It seems possible then that the road was constructed within this period, which provides corroboration for the postulated date of the temple (2<sup>nd</sup> century AD, possibly Hadrianic) as the temple and its steps were clearly intended to relate to the road surface.

The road was laid out 4.50m wide, excluding its flanking drains, but the space to the west was filled with further constructions. A stone slab pavement, some 2.50m wide, formed a sidewalk in front of a colonnade. This ran parallel to the road and was formed of mortared stone piers set at intervals of 2.25m fronting a portico 2.30m deep which had a well-built wall forming its western side. Given its nature, there seems little doubt that this was the principal road leading to Butrint from the south and its course describes a straight line from the village of Mursia along the route adopted by the aqueduct.

In 2005 it was suggested that the temple might have been a heroon, an elaborate temple mausoleum for a significant figure for Butrint, and the identification of the complex to the west as a very large Roman Italianate villa, the largest of its kind in Butrint and one of the largest identified in the region, permits some speculation. The temple's dominant position adjacent to the road, acting almost as a gateway to the necropolis to the east, might allow a tentative connection with the villa complex: the temple-heroon may have been a suitably monumental resting place for the owner and his family.

The later history of the road and its neighbouring buildings mirrors the sequence established for the nearby 'monuments'. A wall was constructed parallel to the road but actually on its surface, reducing its width to about 3.70m. This seems to have formed the eastern limit of a whole new sequence of alterations and additions to the western portico. Blocking walls were inserted between the piers, and internal subdivisions added within the portico itself, while floor levels were raised and timber structures erected. This sequence was closed by the construction of a series of extremely crude buildings, using rough walls of stone and tile bonded with yellow clay.

All of the archaeological deposits were sealed by a thick deposit of yellow clay mixed with tiles and limestone lumps representing a series of collapsed pisé walls from the superstructure of the latest phase of building. The collapsed layer contained ceramics dated to AD 230-250. Normally this might be taken as an indicator of the date of the collapse of these walls, however in this case it is far more likely that the ceramics were actually included within the wall matrix. Thus a case can be made for the final phase being erected c. 230-250, and collapsing sometime later.

This dating is important as the collapse of the wall built onto the road contained a piece of the side moulding from the temple, indicating the temple's partial demolition by the time the wall was erected: it can be suggested that the *pronaos* at least was dismantled at this time. The *cella* of the temple though seems to have remained in use into the 4<sup>th</sup> century. The road was resurfaced with beaten earth and rubble containing 5<sup>th</sup>- and 6<sup>th</sup>-century coin issues, suggesting that it remained in use until this time, possibly still as the major land access to Butrint from the south. Subsequently, encroachment from the collapse and robbing of surrounding structures reduced the road to a sunken track bounded by mounded rubble. This holloway was ultimately filled with demolition debris – marble and limestone lumps, column capital fragments – when the temple was finally pulled down, an act dated in 2005 to the 14<sup>th</sup> century, by which time many of the remaining buildings on the Plain had been systematically dismantled.

## The Villa and Basilica

Excavations at the Vrina basilica in 2006 sought to answer numerous questions posed by the previous four years work in this area, and a large and experienced team was dedicated to the task. Aside from relating all of the temporally-disparate excavations, the season's work aimed to determine the earlier history of the site and the character of the structure that was later transformed in to the basilica, as well as establishing the precise nature of late-antique, Dark Age and early medieval use of the site.

### *Evidence of the Roman Colony*

The earliest phase of activity identified to date was represented by the robbed remains of a rectangular structure 1.50m below modern ground surface. Although the extent of this building was beyond the limits of the excavations, it may represent a small farm building associated with the Roman colonial settlement established in the Augustan period.

### *The Grand Peristyle Domus*

Over time, the farm building was superseded by a number of other structures on a much grander scale culminating sometime in the late 1<sup>st</sup> century AD with the construction of a substantial villa complex – the 'Grand Peristyle Domus'. The western part of the complex formed the private residential area of the villa. The aula excavated during 2003-2004 formed a reception room for honoured guests, who may have arrived by boat from the channel demarking the western edge of the settlement. To the east, a large entrance with a decorative tile façade was found leading off a paved road. The owner may have carried out business in this part of the house, as benches were added flanking the doorway for the comfort of visiting clients.

Central to the *domus* complex was a large open courtyard with a monumental double pool. The outer pool was rectangular with concave sides meeting in points at each corner. Internal sides of the pool were faced with marble. The inner pool was rectangular with double apses at the eastern and western ends and niches in the centre of the north and south walls. Initially, the courtyard was surrounded by rooms of the villa until a corridor was added along the southern and eastern sides. This too was subsequently altered; floor level was raised and the corridor wall reduced to form the foundation for a stylobate wall onto which tile columns were built to create a colonnade



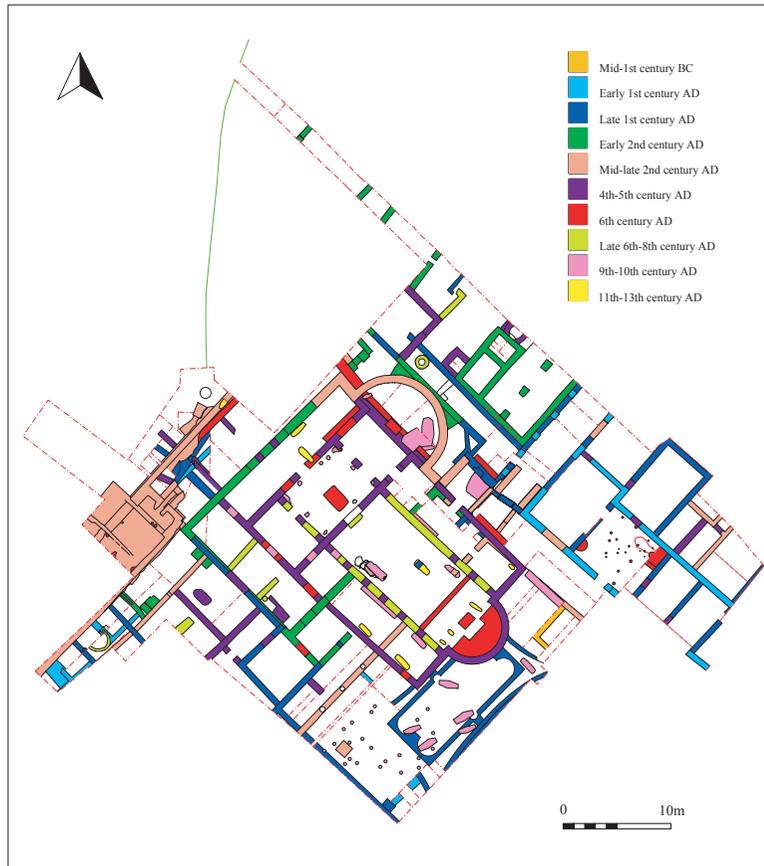
Villa entrance with benches.



Villa courtyard monumental pool.



Vrina Plain Villa and Basilica.



Phase plan of the Vrina Plain Villa and Basilica excavations.

around the courtyard. To the west, the four sides of the portico were completed by building over the original western limit of the courtyard. The remains of a mosaic pavement were found in the eastern portico which, in composition and style, resembles other mosaic fragments found to both the east and west and dated to the 2<sup>nd</sup> century (see *Mosaics*, below).

Remains of a small furnace or hearth were found in association with a number of cakes or ingots of green, blue, yellow and purple coloured glass in one of the rooms north-west of the courtyard. These ingots may well represent the raw material for manufacturing tesserae for wall mosaics which could have been mounted in one of the grander rooms of the *domus*.

At some point, probably in the 4<sup>th</sup> century, the form of the villa was altered by an aisled extension built partially over the northern and eastern porticoes, extending into the courtyard over the eastern end of the pool. Remains of plaster found in the base of the pool suggest that the pool was used to mix mortar for the extension. Excavations in both the eastern and western aisles of the new structure indicate that the stylobate walls of the portico may have remained visible to divide up space in the aisles.

### *The Basilica and its Later Use*

The aisled basilican structure was appropriated for use as a Christian church with the laying of mosaic pavements in the newly-defined nave and bema. Examination of the aisles indicates that both their original floors were robbed and replaced by rough tiled surfaces. At this point the functions of the aisles became more utilitarian with the focus of the church centred on the nave and sanctuary. The eastern aisle was used as a workshop, which contained a hearth associated with a large pottery kiln situated in a small room opening off to the side. A further kiln was examined in the apse of the aula which may have been a bell kiln. The later role fulfilled by the western aisle is unclear, although two well preserved copper chains were found on the floor. Whilst these may be fittings from the church, equally they may be horse furniture which might suggest that the aisle was used for stabling.

Modification of the aisles may be connected to alterations in the narthex where a number of post-holes were cut through the flagstone floor to carry timbers supporting an upper storey. Fires set on the flags were doused with water to crack the 0.12m thick stones and insert uprights. The importance of the building at this period is indicated by 50 late 9<sup>th</sup>-early 10<sup>th</sup>-century Byzantine coins found across the site and by four lead seals. Taken together, the evidence suggests that the site may have become a centre of regional administration with an important local official living and working within the framework of the building, the nave and bema of the church potentially becoming his private chapel. A stone-lined tomb cut through the nave mosaic containing a young adult male interred with an ornate copper belt buckle may belong to the owner's family.

A small cemetery, possibly for the community under the official's jurisdiction, was represented by a number of east-west aligned graves clustered in the area of the in-filled Roman pools. One inhumation, that of a young female, had been interred with copper earrings in her ears and two silver earrings tied by cord around her neck.

The seat of control seems to have been maintained here up to the mid 10<sup>th</sup> century after which time the buildings were abandoned. Upon desertion much of the masonry superstructure was robbed down to the level visible today. The memory of sanctity seems to have endured, however, as a number of later burials were found cut through demolition deposits in the western aisle.

### *Late-Antique and Early Medieval Metalwork*

Excavations on the site of the great 2<sup>nd</sup>-3<sup>rd</sup>-century Peristyle *Domus* and the overlying late 5<sup>th</sup>-century Christian basilica produced a small but important assemblage of metal artefacts. These are not only of intrinsic interest in themselves but also of considerable significance for what they can reveal about the cultural identities of the people who lived in and used the complex of buildings around the church in the early Middle Ages.

#### *Open-work belt-mount*

A large copper alloy open-work belt-mount was found, to the west of the basilica, in the western range of the Grand Peristyle *Domus*. The mount measured 56 x 45 x 1+mm. Four rivets project from the rear face. The plate is pierced by four sub-triangular and two kidney-shaped perforations, and the display face is ornamented with concentric rings at the centre, ring-dots, bands of triangular nicks and dot-trails. This is a mount of Untersiebenbrunnen type, dating from the late 4<sup>th</sup>-early 5<sup>th</sup> century (F. Curta pers. com.).



Open-work belt-mount.

#### *Tapering shafts with knob-terminals*

Two small fittings with tapering shafts pierced by one or two holes for attachment and terminating in well-formed and pronounced knobs with waisted necks and profiled collars were found. These were identified as being parts of Zwiebelknopffiebeln, from the late 4<sup>th</sup>-early 5<sup>th</sup> century (F. Curta pers. com.). However, one fitting was found in a 10<sup>th</sup>-century layer in the eastern aisle of the basilica, from the same context in which a mid-10<sup>th</sup>-century seal was found, see below). A fragment of another similar object was found in the excavation of the Triconch Palace at Butrint.



Tapering shafts with knob-terminals.

#### *Bow fibula*

A simple small copper bow fibula with a small ball-protuberance at the head, of late 6<sup>th</sup>-century date (Justin II/Maurice), from the western aisle of the basilica.



Bow fibula.

### *Open-work buckle and suspension ring*

A male *c.* 20 years of age, in an impressive stone-lined grave cut through the mosaic pavement in the western side of the nave of the basilica, was buried with a belt secured by a perforated rectangular copper alloy Drama Class open-work buckle and fitted with a copper suspension ring. The buckle was found over the pelvis of the skeleton, the ring over the left hip. The buckle was complete, with overall maximum dimensions of 62 x 32mm. The plate is sub-rectangular, perforated with three openings and the display surfaces are incised with an irregular running zig-zag, with a half-ring-dot in each resultant triangular space. The bow of the buckle is plain with three parallel incisions either side of the tongue-channel. On the rear face the imprint of a simple tabby-weave textile was preserved. There were also traces of corroded leather. The object is provisionally dated to the later 8<sup>th</sup> century (F. Curta pers. com.).



Open-work buckle.

A closely related Drama Class open-work buckle is known from Palaiokastritsa on Corfu (Agallopoulou 1973). This has been dated to the late 8<sup>th</sup> century. However, coin and lead seal evidence shows that the church on the Vrina Plain and its environs became the focus of intense occupational and organisational activity in the period between the late 9<sup>th</sup> and mid-10<sup>th</sup> century, when an executive centre of some importance, staffed by an officer in running contact with the Byzantine governors of the themes of Dyrrachium and Nikopolis as well as the imperial palace at Constantinople, was established in the old gallery above the narthex of the church. The ambient evidence suggests that the grave is likely to belong to this period of activity. The dating of the buckle from Palaiokastritsa and that of other related examples needs to be reassessed in light of the new example from a controlled stratigraphic context from Vrina.

### *Open-work buckle*

A second copper open-work buckle was found in the western range of the Grand Peristyle *Domus*, in a later context than the large open-work copper belt fitting described above. The buckle has a rectangular bow, the plate being formed of two tangent stems each with a heart-shaped terminal, contoured rough rope-moulding and charged with a poised square of four pellets. A 3mm lug, pierced for attachment, projects from the rear face of the plate. Schulze-Doerrlamm (2002) Class B15 buckle, later 6<sup>th</sup> century? (F. Curta pers. com.).

### *Silver-plated horse bit*

An exceptional iron horse-bit, with silver-plated crescent-shaped cheek-piece and strap ends and silver strips inlaid into the terminal rein-ring was found to the south of the east aisle of the basilica. Preserved are one half of the bit (which was jointed at its mid-point), one cheek-piece, the two looped strap ends (one complete, one now fragmentary) which appear to have secured two nose-straps to the upper edge of the cheek-piece and the rein-ring from this end of the bit. The crescent-form of the cheek-plate and the use of silver-plating appear to be exceptional for bridle furniture of the period. Dated provisionally to the later 8<sup>th</sup> century (F. Curta pers. com.). For image see *Objects Conservation*.

### *Suspension unit and chain*

Two exceptionally well preserved chain-assemblages, a complex suspension unit and a chain made of links of four different sizes, were found in the eastern aisle of the basilica in an early medieval context and dated by association to the 10<sup>th</sup> century. The suspension unit comprised a pendant loop made up of a large hoop hinged to a corresponding suspension-crescent with swan-necked terminals; two chains attached to the hoop terminated in large omega-form hooks, apparently designed to fit over rectangular sectioned posts. This may have been intended for hanging a large lamp or candelabra in the church or in an elite residential context.



Suspension unit and chain.

### *Decorated bone gaming-piece*

A small domical bone gaming-piece, decorated with incised diagonal lines and ring-dots, from the western aisle of the basilica may date from the 10<sup>th</sup> century.



Decorated Bone gaming-piece.

### *Spherical drop from earring*

A small spherical copper alloy drop from an earring from a dark earth deposit overlying the fountain/pool, may be dated to the 10<sup>th</sup> century. This is fashioned in the normal way from two tiny hemispheres soldered together. The lower half of the sphere is pierced by small ornamental holes, four of which are preserved. The stubs of a loop for suspension are preserved at the top. The outer surfaces bear traces of gilding.

### *Two pairs of earrings, silver and copper*

A female in a grave between the two water features of the Grand Peristyle *Domus*, to the south-west of the basilica, was buried with two pairs of earrings; one pair in her ears, the other under her chin, possibly worn on a string about her neck. The grave was cut through layers associated with collapse of the basilica walls which are dated to the second half of the 10<sup>th</sup> century.

The pair in her ears each consisted of a hoop of thin copper wire, the display half of the hoop bound at intervals with fine silver wire and threaded with tiny roves, to hold in place two or three small hollow copper spheres, which constituted the most prominent ornamental features of these rings. These were found in poor, disintegrating condition.

The pair at her neck is of silver and is more substantially constructed. The hoop is of two parts, the upper part being of simple 1.5mm wire, while the lower half is made of four strands of spirally twisted wire, soldered together to form a thick composite rod of quatrefoil section. Where the two hoops meet there are spherical knobs which seem to have served as fixing points for the upper hoop. A third small spherical knob projecting up inside the circle of the ring is attached at the mid-point of the lower quatrefoil hoop.

Exact parallels for the type of the silver pair have not yet been found, but in general terms the type seems to be one which was current in the Balkans in the later 9<sup>th</sup> and early 10<sup>th</sup> centuries. Examples from many sites in Croatia are illustrated by Milosevic (2000) and Supićić (1999), (Crikvenica, Piramatovci, Trilj and Višići). Related types have been found in Hungary (Zalavar) and Poland (Wieczorek and Hinz 2000; Vana 1983). Earrings of generally related forms found at sites in Albania have been dated by Nallbani (2002) to the late 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> centuries.



Two pairs of earrings; silver (left) and copper (right).

### *Lead seals*

Four lead seals have been recovered from the area of the Vrina Basilica so far, two in 2005 and two in 2006.

1. Seal of Konstantinos Protospatharios and Strategos of Dyrrachium found in the north-west area of the narthex of the basilica.

Obv.: Legend in horizontal lines: +KONS/TANTINI,K(ai),/ASPATHARI/, [ST]RA/TEG(os),N(i)/DYRRAK

Rev.: Flowering Cross with contour legend: +K(uri)E,BOETHE,TO,SO, DO[UL](O)  
Late 9<sup>th</sup>-early 10<sup>th</sup> century.

2. Seal of Konstantine, Eunuch of the Imperial Bedchamber and Table found in association with the initial collapse of the basilica walls, in the east aisle west of the entrance to the small east chapel/kiln room.

Obv.: Legend in horizontal lines: +KON/STANT(inos),B(asilikos),/SPATH(aro),  
K(ou)B(IKoul)ar(ios kai),EPI/T(es),OIKIAKES/TRAPES(ES)

Rev.: peacock profile right with contour legend: N?SPHRAG(IS)?

Constantinople, mid-10<sup>th</sup> century.

3. Seal of a strategos whose name began with Pi, found south of the apse of the basilica.

Obv.: Legend in horizontal lines: +P[...]/RO[...]/OS,STR[...]/[...]/[...]

Rev.: Flowering Cross with contour legend: [K(uri)E,BOETHE]TO,SO, DOUL(O)

Late 9<sup>th</sup>-early 10<sup>th</sup> century.

4. Seal of Iohannes Protospatharios and Strategos of Nikopolis (?) found north of the exonarthex of the basilica.

Obv.: Legend in horizontal lines: +IOANN/H,PATREKE/O,K(ai),ASPATHAREO,  
K(ai),STRA/TEGO,N(i)/KOP(o)L(e)O(s)?

Rev.: Flowering Cross with contour legend: +K(uri)E,BOETHI,TO,SO, DOUL(O)

Found with a class 2 follis (Syracuse mint) of Theophilus plus Michael and Constantine (840-42)?



Lead seals.



Panoramic view of the Vrina Plain Basilica and Villa.

## Student Archaeological Training Programme

### The Field School

In July 2006, a further 32 students participated in the basic archaeological field training school at Butrint. This brings the total number of those who have participated since the inception of the programme in 2000 to over 310. As in recent years the students were hosted as part of the large open area excavations on the Vrina Plain, an area in the past that has provided straightforward stratigraphy, an abundance of finds and yielded significant information for the interpretation of the Roman settlement; in short, ideal and engaging conditions for a training exercise.

The emphasis of the programme this year was placed upon providing an extended period of time for each student to absorb and practice the techniques that they had been taught, rather than multiplying the number of participating groups for shorter periods. The new first year student intake, drawn from the Universities of Elbasan, Gjirokastra and Tirana, with international students also participating from Sofia and Istanbul, spent 20 days in the excavation. Returning programme alumni had up to four full weeks working in the principal excavations with foreign professional archaeologists; the annual over-subscription from alumni demonstrates the positive benefit and unrivalled opportunity that the Butrint Foundation's excavation schools bring to the emerging generation of Albanian archaeologists. The additional length of time provided in 2006 was clearly of great benefit to the entire student group which showed greater general progress and better understanding of technical procedures than previous intakes. Certain individuals demonstrated significant development and potential.

Providing enhanced opportunities for older Albanian students and recent graduates to gain experience of managing and teaching students was also a key aim of the 2006 programme. This has been a long term goal of the student training initiative and, building on the tuition invested in select individuals in 2005, was fully realised for the first time this year. Under the direction of Nevila Molla, three Area Supervisors were engaged: Valbona Hysa, in the eastern range of the Great Peristyle *Domus*; Sinoida Martellozi, also in the *Domus*; and Gjergj Vinjahu at the Temple-Heroon.

All four of the tutors are graduates of previous Butrint training schools and are either now working as professional archaeologists or undertaking post graduate study. Thus far denied such a chance, each demonstrated quickly that they are highly capable of taking on the role of instructors, performing highly creditably with little or no previous experience of holding responsibility on an excavation. What also became apparent, however, was that they themselves required far more advanced training in personnel management, in data administration and analysis and in maximizing opportunities to develop their own confidence and initiative.

All participants were presented with a comprehensive field training manual, written by Oliver Gilkes, to accompany their instruction course, and received certificates of attendance upon completion of the programme. As well as introducing theoretical and practical excavation techniques, the course covered basic surveying, identification of archaeological deposits and finds, making scale drawings and written context records and included formal lectures. Mirela Alushi and Sinoida Martellozi shared responsibility for recording and registering all the bulk finds from the Vrina Plain excavations and most of the student group took the opportunity to spend time in the Finds Department processing material from the site and recording and entering data into the Project's electronic databases.



Three student training areas in the eastern range of the Great Peristyle *Domus*.

In short, this season was an outstanding success both for the students as individuals and for the Project in general. The Butrint course remains the primary means by which Albanian university students are introduced to contemporary field techniques. The 2006 training school served to highlight both the benefits of the considerable investment so far expended in training, but also the limitations inherent in the programme as it stands and the need to expand the opportunities on offer.

### Great Basilica Survey

Either side of her commitments to the Student Training Programme, Nevila Molla conducted a new survey of the Great Basilica in Butrint as her field research for an MA degree course funded by the Packard Humanities Institute at the University of Siena.

The survey aimed to take a fresh look at the building, which had previously been studied by Alexander Meksi (Meksi 1983) and the Butrint Foundation (Bowden and Mitchell, 2004). The objectives of the research were to identify all constructional phases, the technical characteristics of each phase, and to record this information by means of photogrammetric survey of the standing remains.

Work began by ‘reading’ the extant elevations of the basilica both typologically and archaeologically: ascertaining and recording constructional phases through examination of building materials, relationships between sections of masonry and attempting to understand each individual step of construction involved in raising the building. This “Archaeology of Architecture” approach to assessing the building produced significant new phasing data which will be interpreted as part of Nevila’s MA thesis.

In the final stage of the project the building was surveyed with a total station theodolite and hand drawings of each wall elevation were made. This data will be digitised and serve to illustrate the descriptions and new observations on the material evidence.



Panoramic 360° view of the interior of the Great Basilica.



Panoramic 360° view of the Tripartite Building and Forum excavations.

## The Tripartite Building and Forum

In 2006, the archaeological team continued excavations within the civic centre of Butrint, in the Roman Tripartite Building which stood at the north end of the central square of the ancient city. This season's excavations aimed to determine the physical extent of the Forum and its topographical and architectural relationship to the Tripartite Building by examining the only remaining conjoining section of stratified deposits. The excavations revealed a remarkable stratigraphic sequence spanning the 3<sup>rd</sup> century BC to the 16<sup>th</sup> century AD.

Dated to the 1<sup>st</sup> century AD or earlier, the Tripartite Building was originally a larger and more imposing structure than the present ruins suggest. The three limestone-built chambers once contained a large antechamber of brick construction (*opus testaceum*), which was almost entirely robbed out in antiquity. The discovery of the antechamber, which increases the depth of the building by one half, substantiates the hypothesis that the Tripartite Building functioned as Roman temples, where the antechamber served as a *pronaos* and each of the three chambers as a *cella*. Since previous excavations discovered an inscription to Minerva Augusta in the central chamber, it is entirely possible that the Tripartite Building was a *capitolium*, with temples dedicated to Jupiter, Juno, and Minerva. The complex was accessed by five marble steps leading up from the Forum, elevating the

building almost 2m above the Forum pavement. Extant painted wall plaster on the surviving exterior indicates that the façade of the building was painted white, creating the reflective gleam typical of Roman temples.

The dimensions of the Forum are greater than anticipated; the north side is at least 30m wide and encompasses not just the Tripartite Building, but the so-called "Magazine" to its east as well. It is now clear that the latter building is not a Roman store, but rather, a two-storey building where the two extant vaulted chambers functioned as a substructure carrying a building above; the archaeological evidence indicates that *c.* 20 marble steps connected the first floor structure to the Forum pavement itself. The great size of the entire arrangement suggests that an important Roman building, perhaps an Imperial cult temple, stood some 5m above the Forum pavement, making it the most prominent structure in the Forum.

Previous excavations in the Tripartite Building revealed a large Hellenistic building (possibly a temple) as a precursor to the Roman phase. The Hellenistic building stood in proximity to a sacred well, which drew water from a natural fissure running along the base of the Acropolis. Excavations of a Roman shrine, with two ash-covered platforms signalling ritual fires and situated between the sacred well and the Tripartite Building, revealed a Hellenistic cascade beneath, formed from cut bedrock, which funnelled water down from the Acropolis to a channel running south through the complex.

The importance of water in the cult of Asclepius as a curative agent is well attested; the well and water channel may have played a significant role in the Sanctuary of Asclepius.

Excavations in all three chambers of the Tripartite Building revealed well-stratified Hellenistic deposits that shed new light on the development and early history of the complex. Two large votive pits, containing vast quantities of ceramic vessels, were excavated in the bedrock beneath the foundations of the Hellenistic building; one of the deposits yielded a fragment of a terracotta sculpture of what seems to be a Bacchic reveller. The bedrock had been reshaped, apparently for the foundation of a sanctuary upon which the Hellenistic building was constructed. In one of the earliest Hellenistic deposits, possibly dating from the 3<sup>rd</sup> or 2<sup>nd</sup> century BC, a complete silver amulet of a caduceus was recovered; the two entwined snakes are the symbol of the Greek god Hermes.

An exceptional intaglio glass gem with a semi-nude standing female bearing a shawl draped loosely about her shoulders was found in a later deposit. This rare find – none has previously been discovered in the provinces of the Roman Empire – is extraordinarily well crafted. It is likely to have been manufactured in Rome, possibly even commissioned by a Roman imperial family, probably in the 1<sup>st</sup> century AD. The gem attests to the eminence of the aristocracy of Buthrotum within the Roman Empire.



Excavations in the three chambers of the Tripartite Building.



Excavation of the Forum steps and pavement.

Surprisingly then, an unprecedented quantity of artefacts, including a life-size marble sculpture, was dumped in a (defunct) Hellenistic water channel around AD 230-250. Preliminary analysis of the stratigraphic record and ceramic assemblages indicates a substantial rearrangement of space and function in the 3<sup>rd</sup> century AD, including the demise of the Forum as a public centre and the abandonment and despoliation of the Tripartite complex. Within the first half of the 3<sup>rd</sup> century, the Forum pavement was buried, the marble steps of the Tripartite Building were robbed, statuary was systematically destroyed and a 1m high terrace was created in front of the Tripartite Building.

Occupation continued in the area, including limited habitation within the Tripartite Building, until the 6<sup>th</sup> or 7<sup>th</sup> century, as indicated by numerous burials within the building and its environs. After a hiatus of three centuries, the area was reoccupied continuously until the 16<sup>th</sup> century. Masonry structures and wells reflect the changing topographic make-up of the area during the late medieval period, as the Tripartite Building was refashioned into private dwellings. At some point, the eastern part of the complex was transformed into a necropolis, which contained at least one small mausoleum and scattered inhumation burials possibly associated with a medieval church nearby. From these late deposits emerged a 16<sup>th</sup>-century silver akche of Sultan Süleyman I (1520-1566), who campaigned in this region in the 1530s.

## The Western Defences

A new archaeological assessment of Butrint's Western Defences was undertaken in the final two weeks of July 2006. The excavation of the northernmost tower of this complex, continuing work initiated by the Institute of Archaeology in 2004, forms part of the Butrint Foundation's ongoing programme of historical, archival and archaeological research on the fortifications of Butrint.

The Western Defences, a linear complex of fortified walls and towers (a 'proteichisma'), were originally constructed in the late 5<sup>th</sup> or early 6<sup>th</sup> century to guard the principal western approach to the city. During the medieval period, these defences were greatly augmented presenting a highly formalised and protected route into the heart of the city.

The north-western quadrant of the interior of the tower was excavated down to an earthen floor which sloped towards the centre of the tower where a large hearth was located. Limited examination of the hearth recovered late-antique pottery and an iron arrowhead. A number of linear cuts were also found at this level.

Directly above the floor, and carefully arranged on its surface, the complete remains of at least 12 stemmed Venetian drinking glasses and a number of glass platters were found. In addition, a number of iron knives, two unusual glazed 8<sup>th</sup>-9<sup>th</sup>-century chafing dishes (portable ovens), and a unique group of at least eight whole ceramic vessels mostly of local fabrics were found. One of the chafing dishes may be of south Italian origin; the second appears to be locally produced. Pottery sherds displaying incised wavy-line decoration – so-called Slavic wares – were also found. The assemblage is especially important because it is so completely different from the 6<sup>th</sup> – 7<sup>th</sup>-century wares and from the later 9<sup>th</sup> – 10<sup>th</sup>-century wares found in ample quantities in the excavations on the Vrina Plain.

The floor was sealed by a thin charcoal-rich layer and then a deep deposit of broken roof tiles; evidently, the charcoal layer represents a catastrophic fire in which the tower's tiled roof collapsed inwards. Shortly thereafter, part of the tower walls tumbled into the interior, creating a layer of rubble almost 1m deep. Post-abandonment the remains of the tower accumulated layers of in-washed silts up to first floor level. Subsequently, in the 12<sup>th</sup> or 13<sup>th</sup> century, the tower was rebuilt, as indicated by the distinctive use of 'Medieval II'-type putt log holes.



Excavating ceramics from the floor surface in the Western Defences tower.

The discovery of late 8<sup>th</sup> – early 9<sup>th</sup>-century ceramics and imported glass represents an immensely significant advance in our knowledge of Byzantine Butrint and a rare opportunity to explore how the economy of Butrint revived from the later 9<sup>th</sup> century: never before has such an elite assemblage of ceramics and glass been found in the central Mediterranean. The group of locally-made ceramics includes previously unknown types and is entirely unique. The pottery also indicates a highly localised economy for luxury goods at Butrint, suggesting that no wide-scale trade networks were in place at this time prior to the revival of links with southern Italy (Otranto) evident from Vrina Plain ceramic assemblages. Together, the objects appear to represent the contents of a formal dining room of the tower's occupant, replete with glass, plates, knives, cooking pots, storage vessels and flat based amphorae for wine. Plainly, a person of high status occupied this tower, the first ever Byzantine residential tower (house) to be excavated in the region.

## The Butrint Environs Survey Project

As part of the on-going investigation of the hinterland of Butrint, a number of detailed topographical surveys of known extant structures and remains were undertaken during this year's field season. The project aimed at contextualising regional organisation and development from prehistoric times, compiling survey data for display and spatial analysis within a GIS database. Topographical surveys were undertaken using Global Positioning System (GPS) survey equipment, providing cartographically accurate ground plans of surviving ruins and archaeological remains over difficult and unstable terrain in areas normally hard to access. Survey data from each site was subsequently integrated into the Butrint Foundation's existing regional GIS database to allow thematic analysis and the generation of 3-D topographical terrain models and thereby a greater understanding of how each of these sites relates to each other and to the wider landscape.

### Cape Stylo and Vagalat

The topographical survey at Cape Stylo formed part of the larger investigation of the enclosed prehistoric settlement undertaken this year (see above) and focused on the mapping of the surviving wall circuit, which encloses *c.* 0.4 ha. The enclosure encircles the summit of a prominent hill forming the north-western margin of the Korafi chain of hills, overlooking the Straits of Corfu and Butrint. Construction comprises large, un-bonded and un-worked limestone boulders. Small sections of the wall circuit survive to a height of over 1m, particularly along the eastern section. Much of the circuit utilises naturally outcropping limestone, which often forms a sheer scarp face, particularly along the western edge of the enclosed area.

At Vagalat, situated upon the crest of the south-western spur of Mt. Mile, a similar wall circuit of prehistoric date enclosing a smaller area of *c.* 0.1ha was surveyed (Fig. X). Construction is similar to Cape Stylo, although greater sections of the circuit survive, particularly along the north-western edge, where a narrow entranceway remains well defined. The circuit at Vagalat also makes extensive use of outcropping limestone and butts against a steep scarp face along the southern edge. The north-east facing section has been robbed out, most likely re-used as core material within the construction of a Hellenistic tower, *c.* 80m down slope. The structure consists of a square tower surviving to a height of *c.* 4m, with access from the south via a large ramp. The cyclopean blocks were clearly quarried from outcrops within the earlier prehistoric enclosure.

## Çuka e Aitoit, Malathrea, Ciflik and the Pavllas valley

An extensive topographic survey of surviving Hellenistic and late antique remains on Çuka e Aitoit was undertaken, along with the structural remains at Malathrea and Ciflik to the north-west. The extensive multi-period wall circuits and building remains which encircle and flank the low angular hill of Çuka e Aitoit (Mont Aetos) have been subject to previous investigation, firstly by the Italian archaeological mission during 1928-29 and more recently by Albanian-Soviet projects during the 1950s. The current survey of surviving remains allows an interesting comparison with earlier work, especially in assessing the impact of the network of defensive bunkers, entrenchments and gun emplacements constructed during communist times.

GPS surveys of the Hellenistic building at Malathrea, flanking the north-eastern edge of the valley, and the early medieval church at Ciflik were also undertaken. The remains of a small church flanking the south-western margins of the valley above the Pavllas River were also investigated, revealing further building remains pertaining to a small medieval village cut into the scree-derived slopes flanking the Korafi hills.



GPS survey at (clockwise from top left): Cape Stylo; Vagalat; Ciflik; Malathrea.

## Post-Excavation Research

### Introduction

Alongside the archaeological field projects at Butrint each summer, great weight is lent to post-excavation research initiatives. All new objects derived from the excavations are cleaned, conserved, documented and catalogued as appropriate whilst the international team of material specialists and consultants endeavour to keep pace with their analyses. These studies have been targeted over the past two years to match publication schedules whilst also prioritising key new contexts to inform interpretations of the current excavations. The following sections present summaries of progress in 2006 and observations on the principal groups of materials.

### Classical Ceramics

The classification and drawing of the pottery from the Triconch Palace for publication is now completed and work in 2006 concentrated on documenting pottery from the Diaporit villa for publication, and spot-dating all ceramic contexts from the excavations in the Tripartite Building and Forum, the Vrina Plain and the new Acropolis excavations.

#### *Diaporit*

Diaporit work focused on cataloguing the late sequences of the site (5<sup>th</sup> – 6<sup>th</sup> centuries) and the sequences associated with a supposed 2<sup>nd</sup> or 3<sup>rd</sup>-century pottery 'kiln'. The contents of the 'kiln' can now clearly be interpreted as secondary deposition of imported, not local, pottery, mostly small transport amphorae, many lined with pitch, so probably carrying wine; they are not the unused waste products of a pottery workshop. Classification of several large deposits of well-preserved local cooking pots found in adjacent rooms, taken together with the 'kiln' assemblage, suggests that these vessels represent the contents of rooms (small oven; kitchen; storerooms) that were cleared during the 5<sup>th</sup> century after a period of abandonment during the late 3<sup>rd</sup> – 4<sup>th</sup> centuries.

The majority of the late Roman levels at Diaporit date to the late 5<sup>th</sup> – first half of the 6<sup>th</sup> century. Of special significance was the retrieval of unusual



Late-antique ceramic candlestick from Diaporit.

finds, all of the same c. 525-550 phase, that could be associated with the basilica or at least are so far unique: a ceramic candlestick; a lamp attached to a columnar support (i.e. it stood at, say, waist height); a large ceramic goblet stem. A lamp mould and lamps in local fabric dating from the 6<sup>th</sup> century are already known from Diaporit. The positive identification of a local Diaporit fabric transport amphora for the late 5<sup>th</sup>-6<sup>th</sup> centuries is also significant.

### *The Tripartite Building and Forum*

This year the Forum excavations resulted in an unprecedented sequence of assemblages of late Hellenistic and Late Republican – mid-1<sup>st</sup> century AD date. The material from these phases is of exceptional quality, rich in black gloss fine wares and amphorae, the source of which is regionally close, quite possibly Dürres, Corfu and south-eastern Italy/Apulia. The lack of contact with the eastern Mediterranean/Aegean is a strong feature for the earliest contexts (2<sup>nd</sup> – 1<sup>st</sup> centuries BC), quite distinct to what was to follow from the late 1<sup>st</sup> century AD onwards. Very little comparative material has been published from Corfu or south-eastern Italy for the late Hellenistic – early Roman phases from the Tripartite Building and there can be little doubt that the Butrint sequences will provide a ceramic blue-print for future work in Albania, the Adriatic and southern Italy.

All excavated ceramic contexts, *c.* 260, have now been summarised and dated. Major phases identified comprise a small number of 2<sup>nd</sup>-century contexts, key mid-3<sup>rd</sup>-century contexts and the late Roman phases of the site. The latter groups range from the late 5<sup>th</sup> – 7<sup>th</sup> centuries. The few late 6<sup>th</sup> – 7<sup>th</sup>-century deposits excavated in the Tripartite Building and Forum and on the Acropolis are most important, rare testimony to activity and trade of this period in Butrint.

### **Medieval and Post-Medieval Ceramics**

Research on the medieval and post-medieval pottery during the 2006 season concentrated on finds from across all the current sites: the new excavations on the Acropolis, the Tripartite Building and Forum, the Western Defences Tower, as well as material from the Vrina Plain.

The excavations on the Acropolis yielded a few fragments of 8<sup>th</sup>-9<sup>th</sup>-century unglazed, so-called ‘Slavic-looking’ Wares, which were found with late Roman ceramics in a medieval floor make-up layer in the reconstructed late Roman tower house. Whilst not dating the construction of the later tower floor, these sherds indicate the likelihood of Byzantine period occupation on the Acropolis. Also of note were some large pieces of Polychrome Painted Lead-glazed Ware or *ingobbiata invetriata dipinta* (type ‘RMR’) of the mid-13<sup>th</sup>-mid-14<sup>th</sup> centuries. An almost complete glazed painted oil-lamp of the 13<sup>th</sup>-14<sup>th</sup> centuries came from a trench filled with large stones close to the southern Acropolis wall and helps to date renewed terracing of the upper Acropolis slopes. The shape of the lamp is similar to ones found at

excavations in Otranto and Lecce. Furthermore, the excavations in the Tripartite Building and Forum also yielded fragments of 8<sup>th</sup>-9<sup>th</sup>-century unglazed ‘Slavic-looking’ Wares and sherds of 13<sup>th</sup>-14<sup>th</sup>-century Polychrome Painted Lead-glazed Ware.

An important assemblage of 8<sup>th</sup>-9<sup>th</sup>-century wares was found in the excavation of the Western Defences Tower. The assemblage included several complete (or almost complete) pots, among them a chafing dish and an elongated round vessel in a heavily gritted fabric. The latter vessel has a flat base, two handles, a slightly everted rim and three incised wavy lines beneath the rim. The incised decoration is characteristic of 8<sup>th</sup>-century design. In addition, parts of early medieval amphorae were recognized, as well as fragments of unglazed (sometimes painted) jars, a spouted jar, and a flanged red-slipped bowl of a late Roman tradition, but made in an organic-rich fabric typical of medieval manufacture. It is interesting to note that the Tower assemblage contained no cooking pots or amphorae of the Middle Byzantine period (*c.* 10<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> centuries).

The post-Roman pottery from the Vrina Plain mostly comprised ceramics of the 9<sup>th</sup> or 10<sup>th</sup>-11<sup>th</sup> centuries, among them some fragments of so-called ‘Glazed White Ware II’ from Constantinople. The excavation of an early medieval kiln is the most important discovery of the season, because such kilns are extremely rare in the Mediterranean region. One rim fragment of a flanged bowl with incised wavy lines was found in the kiln which can be dated to the 9<sup>th</sup>-10<sup>th</sup> centuries.



Excavation of the Vrina Plain early medieval pottery kiln.

## Sculpture

For the first time full access was granted in 2006 to the Butrint Museum stores containing sculptural pieces. Studies begun in 2005 now concentrated on finds from the Tripartite Building and Forum and the Vrina Plain in order to establish an integral link with current archaeological data. Indeed, the material – mainly from excavations in the 1980s – concurred with several objects found in more recent Butrint Foundation excavations: two identical white marble pilaster capitals add support to the proposed reconstruction of the portico in front of the Tripartite building in the Forum; a large fragment of a sarcophagus lid in Pentelic marble from the Vrina Plain joins a piece excavated in 2005 from the same area.

The objects contained in the museum stores are diverse, although an overall cohesion is apparent. Material from the Tripartite Building is often of higher quality and spans a longer time range, including both Hellenistic and Imperial works, whereas the Vrina Plain has produced exclusively material of the Imperial period. The sculpture from the Tripartite Building is mainly decorative (for architecture or fittings) or religious in nature and includes several marble statuettes fragments and small altars. The Vrina Plain material, on the other hand, is primarily funerary in character with several sarcophagus fragments, though also including a certain number of figurative pieces of free-standing or high relief sculpture.



Small altar fragment from the Tripartite Building.



Sarcophagus lid fragment from the Vrina Plain.

### *Reconstructing the re-cut togate statue from the Forum*

The extensive re-cutting of the over life-size statue excavated in the Forum presents inherent problems for understanding its original aspect. The proposal that it was made with a raised and extended right arm was tested this year in computer generated reconstruction. With the assistance of Adelheid Heil, associated marble fragments were drawn, photographed and assembled into a reconstructed whole.

There is no doubt that the figure, which is supposed to have depicted the emperor Augustus, was portrayed with an extrovert gesture of address. Whereas this gesture is rather common in statues in military garb, it is highly unusual for togate statues – only another two togate statues in the world can securely be identified as such. The choice of gesture may be explained by its oratorical and military connotations. Depicted in this manner the statue representation of the emperor would have associated him with the recent military victory at Actium and with the pronouncement of re-foundation of Butrint as a Roman colony.

The reconstruction also considered a large marble hand said to originate from the Forum and currently in the Butrint Museum. Though the hand does not belong to this particular statue, it is evident that it belonged to a statue of comparable size. The togate statue was thus clearly not the only over life-size figure to adorn the public space of Roman Butrint.

## Coins

The Butrint Foundation was once again extremely fortunate to benefit from the participation of Sam Moorhead, Iron Age and Roman Coins Adviser to the Department of Portable Antiquities and Treasure of the British Museum. Working through the final week of the excavations Sam was able to complete the study of all the coins from the Vrina and Tripartite Building and Forum sites that have so far been cleaned and conserved; without enormous effort from the project conservators countless of the coins would remain unidentifiable.

### *Vrina Plain*

A total of 442 coins from the excavations on the Vrina Plain have been looked at to date. In 2006, 272 of the Vrina coins from the 2005 and 2006 excavations were examined. Coins from all of the Vrina sites are summarised together below.

A small number of Hellenistic coins suggests some activity on the Vrina Plain prior to the Roman period. However, comparison with the coins from the Tripartite Building and Forum, where a large quantity of Hellenistic coins has been found, might indicate that the chief focus in the Hellenistic period was in the city core (depending on the accessibility of deeper strata on the Plain).

Coins from Augustus to the mid-3<sup>rd</sup> century attest to activity on the Vrina Plain in the imperial period, there being a peak of coin loss for coins of the reign of Antoninus Pius (138-61). Amongst these early pieces are three or four coins struck at Butrint, including only the second known example of the snake issue of Graecinus and Pullienus. However, interestingly, there is a lacuna for the early Severan period (AD 193-211), a phenomenon already noted by the author for the Butrint region as a whole (Moorhead in press). Conversely, there is a large number of coins for the period 238-260, the latest being a RESTITVT ORIENTIS piece of Valerian, probably struck soon after the start of his reign in 253. However, to suggest a hiatus at this time might not be correct as a sestertii of Philip I (244-9) was found in the same context as a coin of Gallienus (260-8).

Although there are only two coins for the period 260-75, a period when the output of debased radiates was prodigious, there are seven coins for the period 275-296 which does strongly suggest activity in the later 3<sup>rd</sup> century,

although at least one of these coins come from 4<sup>th</sup>- or 5<sup>th</sup>-century contexts. Careful context analysis is also needed before we can comment with confidence about the 4<sup>th</sup>-century coins. Initial appraisal suggests more activity in the second half of the 4<sup>th</sup> century, but as in the Triconch Palace many of the 4<sup>th</sup>-century coins were found in deposits alongside later, 5<sup>th</sup>-century, coins.

It is possible that many of the 4<sup>th</sup>-century coins were circulating with the significant number of 5<sup>th</sup>-century pieces, suggesting that in the 5<sup>th</sup> century there was activity on the Vrina Plain, as there was at the site of the Triconch Palace. However, as at the Tripartite Building and Forum, the Vrina Plain has no coins after an issue of Justinian I (527-65), in this case a coin of 548/9. Again, for the Vrina Plain, as for the Tripartite Building and Forum and the Triconch Palace, the coin record either suggests an end of occupation or major economic dislocation in the 8<sup>th</sup> century.

However, 15 coins from the period 820-963 suggest a major resurgence of activity in the later Byzantine period. The majority of these coins come from Constantinople, including a silver Milaresion of Leo VI (886-912), although the three earliest coins, of Michael II (820-9) and Michael III (842-67), were struck at Syracuse. Continued activity to the 13<sup>th</sup> century is suggested by two billion Byzantine coins.



Silver Milaresion of Leo VI (886-912) from the aula apse on the Vrina Plain.

### *The Tripartite Building and Forum*

To date 130 ancient and Byzantine coins found in the Tripartite Building and Forum excavations of 2005 and 2006 have been examined. The chronological spread is from around 300 BC to the 16<sup>th</sup> century with Hellenistic pieces, Roman imperial and provincial issues, late Roman, Byzantine, Ostrogothic, late medieval and Ottoman coins.

The chronological spread of the coins is obviously determined by the archaeological deposits investigated, and it is noted that that much of the later material overlying the Tripartite Building was removed, unrecorded, in previous works on the site. However, what is notable in the present excavations is the manner in which the recorded stratigraphy, the ceramic dating and the coins all appear to work closely together. This means that important, clean, contexts are present.

The Hellenistic coins within the assemblage are mostly from Corcyra and the Epeirote Republic. There are also some outliers from Thessaly, Chios and Rhodes that attest to Buthrotum being locked into a wider trading network. There are several key contexts for the Hellenistic coins and it is hoped that it might be possible to date more precisely the issue of Philonidas on Corcyra from stratigraphic analysis.

Notable amongst the Roman coins are seven from the mint of Buthrotum, ranging from issues struck by magistrates in the 30s BC to Nero (AD 54-68). One is an apparently new variety of an issue of Nero, a small coin showing the emperor and Victory and another has a variant countermark (see below). These pieces underline yet again the importance of the excavations for the study of the coinage of Buthrotum.

Other Roman imperial and provincial coins range from the reign of Augustus up to the middle of the 3<sup>rd</sup> century. There are two relatively unworn sestertii of Pupienus (AD 238) and Philip I (AD 244-9). Between 250 and 350, there is only one coin, a radiate of Carus (AD 282-3), and it will be interesting to see if this lacuna is reflected in the ceramics analysis. There are a few coins between the 350s and 498, but a total of nine does seem quite low.

The latest coin prior to the perceived period of Byzantine revival (AD 920) is a coin of the Ostrogothic king Athalaricus (AD 526-34) found in the same context as a nummus of Anastasius (AD 491-8). With such small numbers it is dangerous to draw conclusions about when the Forum fell into disuse, but like the Triconch Palace it was probably deserted by the early 7<sup>th</sup> century.



Silver akche of Süleyman I (1520-1566) from deposits overlying the Forum.

There are three Byzantine folles of the period AD 920-1081 and three late medieval coins. The latest coin is a silver akche struck by Süleyman I (the Magnificent) (1520-1566) in Constantinople (A. Popescu pers. com).

### *A new type for Nero, struck at Buthrotum*

Nero, AD 54-68

Mint of Buthrotum

14/15 mm; 12 DA; 3.26g

Obv. NE[RO CL]AVDI[VS] CAES[AR] (starting at 80C); Radiate r.

Apparently countermark B.AV on neck (smaller variety than on larger pieces).

Rev. EXC (horizontal) to l. of Victory r., hdg wreath and palm; r. side of field unclear.

Notes:

This coin is similar to RPC 1415 which also has the same countermark. RPC 1415 has a larger module (15-17mm) but is lighter (2.78 g). The main difference is that on this coin the legend runs across the field, rather than around the field on RPC 1415. Therefore, it could be argued that this new coin is a new variety within an issue that included RPC 1415.

## Vessel and Window Glass

Glass finds were examined from the three excavations conducted during 2006 in the Tripartite Building and Forum, on the Butrint Acropolis and on the Vrina Plain.

### *Tripartite Building and Forum*

The assemblage of vessel glass recovered from the Tripartite Building and Forum included material not previously well represented in Butrint and mainly comprised material dated to the 1<sup>st</sup> century AD.

The most important fragment found in the Tripartite Building was a piece of cameo glass from a plaque made by the casting method. The blue base glass was cast in a flat tray and then covered with an upper layer of opaque white glass. Decoration was achieved by partly cutting away the upper white layer to reveal the blue base layer creating a low-relief scheme. Unfortunately the fragment was too small to be able to determine the subject of the scheme, but two plaques with Dionysiac themes have been found at Pompei where they were thought to be inlays for furniture (De Caro 1996: 268 inv nos 153651-2). Cameo glass has always been rare; Whitehouse, writing in 1997, stated that only 15 complete or restored vessels and flat panels and an estimated 200 fragments were known (Whitehouse 1997: 41). The Butrint fragment dates from between the late 1<sup>st</sup> century BC to the mid 1<sup>st</sup> century AD and is likely to have been made in Rome.



Cameo glass fragment from the Tripartite Building undergoing conservation.

Several good groups of vessel fragments dating from the 1<sup>st</sup> century AD were recovered from the Tripartite Building and Forum excavations. Vessel forms present included dishes with out-splayed rims (Isings Form 49), Hofheim cups (Isings Form 12) and several fragments of a fine mould-blown small bowl. These vessel forms are used for drinking and serving food and there was a noticeable absence of vessels used for storage. Window glass from the site was cast, made from virtually colourless glass and of good quality.

### *Acropolis*

The small amount of glass recovered from the Acropolis excavations dated to the later 1<sup>st</sup> century to early 2<sup>nd</sup> century AD and included several high quality colourless glass vessels. Fragments of a goblet with facet-cut honeycomb decoration (Isings Form 21; Harden 1987: 195, no. 105) as well as several colourless cast vessels were found.

### *Vrina Plain*

In previous seasons several cakes or ingots of opaque raw green glass have been recovered from the Basilica area of the site and are now on display in Butrint Museum. It was previously postulated that these ingots were the raw material for making the *tesserae* used in wall mosaics, although no examples of that colour of *tesserae* have been found.



Glass *tesserae* and ingots from the Vrina Villa excavation.

One of the most significant glass finds from the Vrina Plain excavations in 2006 was the discovery of a number of small *tesserae* of the same colour and several more ingots and chunks of raw glass. In the last few years similar ingots have been found from at least one 5<sup>th</sup>/6<sup>th</sup> century church, although the Vrina material may pre-date the 5<sup>th</sup> century and belong to a phase of Villa furnishing. Chemical analysis will be required to establish definitively that the ingots were the raw material for manufacturing mosaics on site, and also to investigate the possibility of a common primary source for the ingots.

Sufficient fragments from the same hanging glass lamp were recovered to enable its shape to be determined; it was unusually small. Quantities of window glass were also recovered from the Basilica.

## Objects Conservation

Conservator Pippa Pearce of the British Museum Department of Conservation, Documentation and Science is the longest serving external specialist on the Butrint Foundation projects, and in 2006 spent six weeks working on materials found in the excavations. This year, Pippa was joined by Alexandra Baldwin, also of the British Museum, for two weeks to work on the conservation of small finds. An impressive total of 195 individual objects from the excavations at Vrina and the Tripartite Building and Forum

received conservation treatment during the course of the summer; each object was recorded and photographed and each treatment documented.

Depending on the fragility of the object, treatments typically involve dry cleaning with scalpels and brushes under magnification or wet cleaning through swabbing or immersion with water, alcohol, acid or acetone. Objects are then chemically consolidated and stabilised for storage. As a general rule, all methods and materials employed have been tested and approved by the British Museum, although due to problems acquiring pure laboratory reagents, proprietary products available locally had to occasionally be used.

The active deterioration of many of the metal items on display in the Butrint Museum after such a short time (one year) on exhibition gave considerable alarm to the objects conservation team. It is obvious that damp has caused the deterioration and a serious rethink of the display policy may be required. Suggestions were made that the metal items be removed from their cases in the winter months, when the museum is closed, and stored separately in airtight boxes with silica gel dessicant. The decaying items are in serious need of urgent treatment and it is suggested that Butrint Museum staff receive basic training in conservation 'first aid' from Alma Bahdi who has been working with Lorenc Bejko (international Centre for Albanian Archaeology, Tirana) at Lofkend.



Iron bridle bit from the Vrina Plain: left, pre-treatment; right, after treatment.

### *Conservation Record*

#### *Iron bridle bit fragment from the Vrina Plain*

##### Description:

The bridle bit fragment is inlaid and overlaid with silver. The silver is covered with hard, dense iron corrosion. The silver is well preserved being mostly still metallic though covered with patches of thin black tarnish and a white deposit (probably calcium carbonate). The bridle bit is clad in thick silver sheet, but the ring has the remains of silver inlay, hammered in to cut grooves in the iron. Empty grooves where the inlay is missing can be discerned.

##### Treatment:

Iron corrosion removed with manual and mechanical tools. Silver swabbed with 30% formic acid. Fragment brushed with Paraloid B72 to consolidate and seal surfaces.

### *Conservation Record*

#### *Glass intaglio from the Tripartite Building*

##### Description:

The surface is decayed and friable. Soil is bonded in to glass decay products. The design is cut into the wider plane of a bevel edged oval intaglio. The intaglio is constructed from several different layers of glass. Viewed from the top it appears to have two thin horizontal bands of white dividing a central deep blue portion and two pale blue end pieces. Viewed edge-on, the pale blue is constructed by backing a thin layer of pale blue with first yellow and then deep blue while the deep blue central area has a thin flashing of white glass on the back.

##### Treatment:

Cleaned with small swabs of alcohol. Consolidated with Paraloid B72 (ethyl methyl methacrylate co-polymer, used as a consolidant, sealant and to provide a protective coating) which restored a little of the original vivid colouration.



Glass intaglio from the Tripartite Building: left, in consolidant solution; right, after treatment.

### **Physical Anthropology Research Programme**

Todd Fenton's team of physical anthropologists from Michigan State University (MSU) examined human skeletal remains from Butrint for a fourth consecutive year. This year the team included Lindsey Jenny and Jared Beatrice in the field and Michael Mutolo in the laboratory. This year's fieldwork saw special emphasis placed upon assemblages from the Triconch Palace and Merchant's House in preparation for publication in the Triconch Palace excavations monograph.

Work at MSU during the academic year 2005-2006 focused on:

- a second draft report on all human skeletons recovered from Butrint, Diaporit, and the Vrina Plain.
- creation of an SPSS database for dentition analysis of the human skeletons.
- DNA analysis of selected human skeletons from Butrint, Diaporit, the Vrina Plain, and the Vivari Channel painted tomb that were sampled during the summer 2005 field season.

First results of the DNA research performed in the MSU Forensic Biology Laboratory are very exciting. To begin, mitochondrial DNA analysis of the four male skeletons recovered from the Vivari Channel painted tomb revealed that three of the four were maternally related.

Significant progress has also been made in the investigation of the molecular evidence for diseases. A full year of research has focused on the isolation and identification of ancient tuberculosis DNA in skeletons from Butrint and Diaporit. When that material was found to be unaffected by TB, differential diagnosis of the skeletons shifted to brucellosis, a disease with similar skeletal manifestations. In a major breakthrough, skeletons from the Baptistery and Merchant's House have tested positive for brucella bacteria. To our knowledge, this represents the first time that brucellosis has been identified in an archaeological sample of human bone using molecular methods.

During the summer 2006 field season, the demographic composition of skeletal groups in the Triconch Palace and Merchant's House was investigated. Based on the association of burial context numbers sought from the Butrint Integrated Archaeological Database, matches were found between previously dissociated skeletal material. Additionally, commingled skeletons were separated in order to identify individuals. This analysis resulted in more accurate figures for the minimum number of individuals. As it is now understood, the skeletal sample from the Triconch Palace totals 46 individuals, with 31 sub-adults (67%) and 15 adults (33%).



Michigan State University physical anthropology team.

Another important discovery from this research, which is now helping frame how we view the human skeletal assemblage recovered from the Triconch Palace, was a pattern of clustered burials in the dilapidated palace rooms. Ancient DNA sampling was carried out in order to investigate the possibility of familial relatedness among the individuals buried in each room. Analysis of these samples is currently being performed at the MSU Forensic Biology Laboratory. An updated report reflecting the summer's work is in preparation to include complete skeletal and dental inventories, analysis of the minimum number of individuals, establishment of sex, estimation of age at death, metric evaluations, and observations on palaeopathological conditions.

Looking to the future, the MSU team plans to return to Butrint during 2007 to complete analysis of the skeletons from Diaporit for preparation of a human osteology chapter for the planned monograph publication of the 2000-2004 excavations. Finally, the MSU team remains committed to pursuing the excavation of an Imperial Roman cemetery at Butrint. The skeletons from such a cemetery would represent an invaluable comparative sample to understand how living conditions, health, and stress changed over time at Butrint.

Dawn Gooney carried out preliminary analysis of five new human skeletons, including the contents of an ossuary box, excavated in and around the 5<sup>th</sup>-century church on the Vrina Plain. These are dated provisionally to the Byzantine or early medieval periods. The work included determinations of age, sex and stature and the identification of dental and osteo-pathologies. Of those skeletons that were sufficiently complete to permit identification with complete confidence, all individuals were adult males. The age range of the individuals was between 20-50 years old. Notable pathologies include pitting of cranial bones indicating anaemia, one individual with a healed fracture of the fibula, a cut mark on a second individual and signs of other trauma and infection.

A phenomena common to a number of the group was the occurrence of Wormian bones – small irregular plates of bone interposed in the sutures between the large cranial bones. Though Wormian bones are thought to contain some genetic influence in their occurrence, more detailed examination of the present assemblage, and full examination of the remaining burials from the area of the church, would be necessary before any conclusions could be reached regarding possible genetic/kinship ties between these individuals.

## Faunal Remains

Field cataloguing and study of the faunal remains assemblages from the Butrint Foundation excavations continued over a four week period in 2006 in line with publication priorities.

### *Diaporit*

The final recording was completed on the assemblage from Diaporit. Overall, the bone from this site was in poorer condition than that recorded from the Triconch Palace and Tripartite Building and Forum excavations with considerable superficial damage in the form of root etching and weathering cracks which had obscured or erased surface features such as butchery marks.

The assemblage produced a similar suite of species to that known from excavations in intramural Butrint, although sheep and goat were more common than pig here and wild species twice as frequent. Cat and beaver are absent, but a noteworthy addition is bear: represented by a single metacarpal with a possible cut mark; this is the first occurrence of this species in any of the Butrint Foundation excavation assemblages.

### *The Tripartite Building and Forum*

Recording of the animal bone assemblage from the Tripartite Building and Forum began with material recovered during 2005. Approximately three quarters of the assemblage was identified and recorded.

As was the case for the Triconch Palace assemblage, most of the identifiable bone is from domestic mammals, with only 3% coming from wild species. Pig was the most common of the main domestic food animals, followed by sheep and goat in roughly similar proportions, and finally cattle. Other domestic species present include horse and ass – the latter representing the first definite identifications for this species from Butrint – dog, cat, and domestic fowl. Wild species include red deer, roe deer, wild boar, hare and a single bone which may be beaver. A small number of fish bones, including gilthead bream and common eel, and a larger number of mollusc shells, predominantly cockle but also murex, thorny oyster and mussel, indicate some exploitation of marine and lacustrine resources. A small number of shells of the Roman snail could also represent food remains.

More dog bones occur in the Tripartite Building and Forum groups than in both the Triconch Palace or Diaporit assemblages and the evidence suggests at least two breeds, a medium sized animal and a small, bow-legged animal, are represented. Most of the bone comes from two complete or partially complete skeletons: one showing early stage ankylosing spondylosis and a partially healed fracture on one rib; and another with knife-marks consistent with dismembering a carcass. This evidence for dog butchery is interesting in view of the role which dogs played in healing rituals at shrines of Asclepius which could culminate in an unfortunate animal being dissected as part of a patient's diagnosis (Day 1984).



Worked elephant tusk fragment from the Tripartite Building and Forum excavation.

A single, particularly interesting, piece of worked bone from the 2006 season was examined. Preliminary examination had suggested this was a piece from a very large limb bone, however, the consensus from the International Council for Archaeozoology (François Poplin, pers. comm.) was that it is a piece from the base of a tusk from an especially large elephant.



Butrint from Mt Sotirë.

## The Butrint Archive Project

With generous support from the Drue Heinz Trust the Archive Project continued throughout 2007. The digital archiving of archaeological and research data is moving ahead to ensure that this multi-faceted information may be a resource both for the Butrint Foundation's publication programme and for future generations of Albanian scholars. Concurrently, the Archive Project is finalising the creation of a website aimed at making the history of Butrint accessible to a wider audience.

## The Digital Archive

The digital archive is now an integral resource for the excavation and post-excavation programmes. Managed by Christian Biggi with assistance from Ansar Khoussiainov (Tirana) and Elizabeth Mitchell (University of Cambridge), a temporary archive office was set up at Butrint during June and July to input newly-generated excavation data and make existing data available during the excavation season. One of the summer work's principal objectives was to coordinate finds documentation (drawings, photographs and written records) with archaeological data, in preparation for future

publications. Alongside the database two dedicated hard disks now function as the central digital archive for high-resolution images, reports and other material. For the remainder of the year Christian Biggi will continue as Information Manager to coordinate the archiving of Butrint data.

## The Butrint Website

The outline format for the Butrint website is now in place. The site is broad-based and intended for a general public, from potential visitors and schoolteachers, to interested individuals as well as academics seeking further information. Following the model established in the 2005 site and museum panels at Butrint, the website will serve as a compelling link between a virtual and an actual visit to Butrint.

Menus will offer information on individual monuments, periods, places and people that have made an impact on Butrint. These topics were established at a workshop held in Norwich in April. The website will include directions for how to get to Butrint and other nearby sites in order to encourage and guide visitors to Butrint and Albania in general.



Butrint and the Vrina Plain from the Korafi Hills.

## Landscape and Aerial Photography

In June 2006, photographer Brian Donovan (University of Auckland) visited Butrint to build on his previous landscape work of 2004 and produce new images of the archaeological site and aspects of the surrounding landscape. The photographs comprise stills and interactive Quicktime Virtual Reality panoramas, as well as a time-lapse sequence of sunset over Butrint.

This year the landscape and environmental setting of Butrint formed a particular focus, especially the relationship between Butrint, Corfu and the Pavllas river valley. This element of the project included photographic recreations of views of Butrint painted by Edward Lear. Many of the new photographs by Brian Donovan were commissioned specifically for use on the Butrint website, where interactive explorations of the monuments at Butrint and a virtual visit to the Butrint museum will be presented.

Alket Islami of the National Aero Club of Albania was contracted to take high resolution photographs of the excavations and views of Butrint from the air. The Butrint Foundation's aerial photography programme is seen as an important aspect of documenting the area's archaeology, environment and land use. The results from 2006 included an impressive sequence of images beginning just above ground level and proceeding to higher altitude above

the Vrina Plain excavations to gain vertical views. A flight east of Butrint took in the fortification walls of Kalivo, the conservation works at Diaporit and vistas of Lakes Butrint and Bufi. Overall another fine collection of aerial views of the Butrint area was produced which will be invaluable for use in future presentations, displays and publications.

## Butrint Museum Catalogue

Acclamation of the refurbished museum at Butrint has highlighted the need for an accessible and attractive publication of the objects on display. In collaboration with the Institute of Archaeology and the Butrint National Park the foundations were laid during the 2006 summer season for the design of a museum catalogue that will present the finds in a manner attractive to both academics and museum visitors.

Photographers Michael Grayley and Martin Smith photographed museum exhibits in a series of high quality studio shots. The resultant catalogue will tell the extraordinary story of Butrint through its rich material culture – something which has not comprehensively been done since the publications of Ugolini. It is hoped that the catalogue will stand as a model for future publication for Albanian museums.



Butrint Museum objects photographed for the new museum catalogue (clockwise from top left): Hellenistic ceramics; copper alloy objects; ceramic lamps; Roman glass vessels.

## Butrint Museum Storage

Following the creation of the museum in 2005, the most pressing need is to create ample, modern storage for the finds from Luigi Ugolini's excavations, Institute of Archaeology excavations, and Butrint Foundation excavations since 1994. A tour was made of stores at Athens and Corinth, and thanks to Guy Sanders at Corinth, we were shown the modern aluminium stacking systems devised by a Greek company, Spider.

Spider's representatives visited Butrint in early July and after restoration of the buildings in the Acropolis castle, three rooms will be converted to stores. With additional storage space created by the refurbishment and conversion of a store built by Ugolini, these will be sufficient to accommodate all the present finds with space for future material as well. The next step will be to practically arrange the storage and make a modern inventory, a process that will be begun in October and November this year.

## Conservation Field Projects

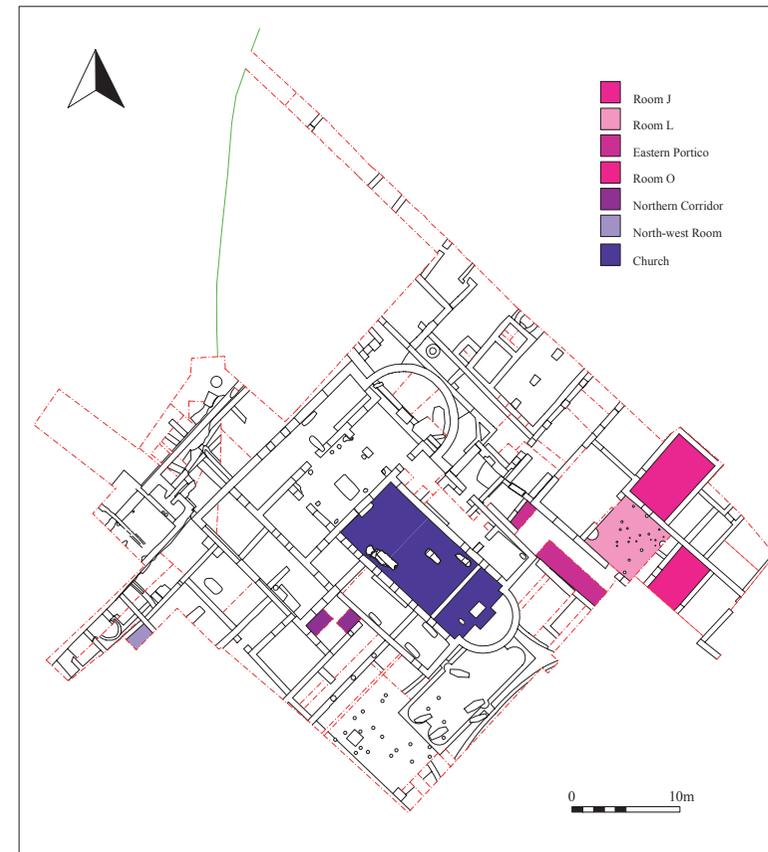
During 2006 the summer excavations were complemented by the most comprehensive and highly-resourced programme of field conservation projects undertaken by the Butrint Foundation to date. Efforts were directed to the cleaning, conservation and presentation of selected standing monuments and structures and mosaics revealed in the excavations. Equally important in this ambitious programme was the further training of Albanian specialists and local people to cement a resident skills base capable of mounting future projects independently. With this aim the Foundation recruited conservation consultants from Israel, the UK and Italy to work alongside Albanian specialists from the Butrint National Park and the Albanian Institute of Monuments to implement the programme on the Vrina Plain (mosaics assessment and preservation), at Diaporit (masonry consolidation and site presentation) and in Butrint (vegetation management and monument conservation).

## Mosaics

### Vrina Plain

Work at Vrina focused on the consolidation of mosaics exposed in the current excavations, principally that within the nave and bema of the 5<sup>th</sup>-century basilica. The Butrint Foundation benefited from the enormous and on-going generosity of the Howard and Nancy Marks Fund to realize the project and from the expertise of Jacques Negeur and Ghaleb Abu Diab of the Israel Antiquities Authority as project leaders along with Agron Islami of the Institute of Monuments.

Local workers were instructed in the assemblage and preparation of raw materials and the composition and mixing of various period-replica lime mortars; tiles were collected from spoil heaps and reduced to fragments and powder as required and charcoal was created to include in the mortar. Albanian students were invited to assist in the application, building up and finishing of mortar layers. At the completion of the conservation work all mosaics were covered with netting and backfilled with deep deposits of sand. The mosaics opened during 2006 are located on the adjacent plan.



Location plan of the Vrina Plain excavation mosaics described in the text.

### *Basilica mosaics*

The basilica pavements (described in the Butrint Foundation Interim Report 2005) provided the set-piece for the mosaic conservation training. Aside from the small-large lacunae resulting from secondary use in the basilica, and which covered 50% of the mosaic surface, preliminary assessment determined that the nave pavement in particular was otherwise in poor condition: unstable foundations coupled with fluctuating groundwater levels had resulted in slumping, concomitant cracking and detachment of tesserae. A flexible intervention to consolidate the various lacunae and provide structural stability elsewhere was thus devised around a varied combination of materials and mortars.



Local workers making ceramic powder for conservation mortar mixes.

Holes (including some later graves) cut through the mosaics were filled with layers of stone, sand and tiles to provide both stability and good water permeability and capped appropriately with layers of lime mortar. The edges of the mosaic were consolidated and loose tesserae replaced. Final recommendation was that the hydrology of the site requires management to combat water table fluctuations and prevent rainwater inundation and that the mosaic should remain covered unless conservation staff are on hand to administer first aid.

#### *Room J*

The mosaic in Room J had been exposed progressively in student training excavations since 2004. It was opened further in 2006 and included in the conservation programme. It was also fully documented by John Mitchell of the University of East Anglia and a photogrammetric plan was made by Massimo Zanfini (University of Bologna).

Although showing signs of considerable wear, the surface of the mosaic was not cut by post-holes or too many other destructive intrusions. The bedding beneath the mosaic was more stable than that in the basilica, had consequently better resisted subsidence and cracking and as such was thought to represent superior technology. Two phases of painted wall plaster survived in places, each consisting of *arriccio* and *intonaco*; reddish-orange

paint was preserved on the surface. This was in poor condition, partly detached, cracked and crumbling. Conservation intervention was relatively swift: the friable edges of the wall plaster were treated with mortar and the shallow lacunae in the mosaic surface were filled.



Vrina Plain Villa Room J mosaic pavement.

### Description

Room J is a sub-rectangular space measuring 4.40-4.70m north-south and 7.25-7.35m east-west. The design of the mosaic pavement appears to be symmetrical about its east-west axis. The overall design of the floor consists of a central square with a framed square emblema at its focus, adjoined to east and west by rectangular panels. This central block is surrounded by bands of framing ornament, with the bands on opposing sides counter-oriented, so that the designs run continuously round all four sides of the room. The pavement is well laid with *c.* 10x10mm *tesserae* set *c.* 5mm apart.

The emblema at the centre of the square central field is a square polychrome guilloche mat with four points on each side, 0.445 x 0.445m (Prudhomme 1985: pl. 135a). Its ribbons are alternately red and grey-blue; consisting of single rows of black, pink, pale pink or white, white and black, in the one case, and black, pale grey-blue, white, white and black in the other. White *tesserae* fill the interstices between the ribbons and the ground is white. This guilloche mat is framed by a double fillet of black and then a double fillet of white stones. This central feature is surrounded by a far larger square filled with a tri-axial pattern of adjacent isosceles triangles, counter-changed black and white, giving the effect of a chessboard pattern of triangles (Prudhomme 1985: pl. 198e). The black triangles radiate out from the centre on all four sides. A stack of seven pink double-sized triangles tangent with black single triangles, each inscribed with a black crosslet, runs out along each of the four diagonal corner axes. This square field is also bordered by two double fillets, in black then white. These, in turn, are framed by a three-strand guilloche. All three strands of the guilloche are white, contoured in black and set against a white ground. The guilloche-band is bordered by single fillets of black. This frame is followed by two fillets in white, then two in pink, followed by a single line of black stones. The pink fillets continue to form an exiguous framework encompassing both the central panel and the adjoining panels to east and west.

These two large rectangular panels flanking the central square have dimensions of *c.* 1.385 x 2.055m. The panel to the east is filled with an overall latchkey pattern of alternately reversed swastikas with single returns, with lozenges inscribed in the alternately vertical and horizontal spaces (giving the effect of a grid of tangent lozenges) (Prudhomme 1985: pls. 166e and 189e). The design is outlined in single or double black fillets on a white ground, and the lozenges are pink and are inscribed with a serrated square in black and white reticulate chequerboard. The interstices between the swastikas and the lozenges are filled with irregular pennant-shaped configurations in black. The western panel contains a close variant on this pattern, with the black pennant-shaped filling devices omitted.

The three panels which form this central unit are set within a three-part frame. First comes a lattice-pattern of adjacent scales, the colours counter-changed, black and white (0.20m wide) Prudhomme 1985: pl. 217d); next a triple fillet of white; then a band of juxtaposed tangent isosceles triangles, black, white and pink (0.295m wide); followed by two triple fillet borders, white, then pink Prudhomme 1985: pl. 198c). The main outer border, which follows, is a broad band carrying a simple grid of serrated simple black fillets on a white ground (36 *tesserae* = 0.36-0.37m wide). Each

resulting poised square cell encloses a parallel serrated square, contoured in black and then with single rows of red and pink framing a field of white with a black stone at its centre Prudhomme 1985: pl. 124). Half squares of this type are set in the triangular spaces between the complete median cells. This band is framed with a single black fillet on either side. Between this band and the wall there is first a strip of thirteen pink *tesserae* wide (0.134m wide), followed by a strip of white five *tesserae* (50mm wide).



Mosaic conservation: filling a lacuna in the Basilica pavement.

## Other mosaics

Aside from those already known from previous excavations in the basilica and Room J, five other mosaics, or fragments of mosaics, were newly discovered in the Vrina excavations during 2006. Because of their late discovery it was not possible to include them in the conservation programme, but each was documented and all are described by John Mitchell below.

### Room L

#### Description

Room L is a sub-rectangular space measuring 6.92-7.03m north-south and 5.98-6.03m east-west. The excavation of the mosaic in this room is not yet complete; a strip along the south wall remains covered. The overall design of the floor consists of a field of running peltas; that is a scheme of tangent black peltas in alternately upright and recumbent confronted pairs, on a white ground, extending over the whole area of the room (Prudhomme 1985, pl. 222 d). The peltas are 0.33m long x 0.15-0.16m wide, and narrow to fine points. This central field is framed first by a single line of black *tesserae* and then by a broad outer white border, set with stepped poised squares. To the west this border is 26 *tesserae* wide (0.35m), to the north 29 *tesserae* (0.37m) and



Vrina Plain Villa Room L mosaic pavement.

to the east 29 *tesserae* (0.38m). The stepped poised squares, in black and white and pink, with sides consisting of 4 *tesserae*, are set at intervals of *c.* 0.43m. Half-squares of the same type are set along the inner and outer edges of this border, staggered with respect to the full squares in the interior. Finally there is an outer band of pink *tesserae* extending to the walls of the portico on the western side (0.34-0.37m), 19-24 *tesserae* on the north side and 23-26 on the eastern side (0.31-0.33m). This outermost border is also charged with poised stepped squares, slightly larger than before, with sides of 5 *tesserae*, set in staggered sequence with respect to the squares in the inner border.

The make-up of the floor is a hard pinkish plaster with inclusions including tile fragments and tile-dust. The *tesserae* are set in a 20mm skim of plaster laid over this foundation. The overall thickness of the two layers of plaster and the overlying *tesserae* is *c.* 90mm. The *tesserae* have sides of *c.* 10-15mm. Traces of plaster, one phase of arriccio and intonaco, were preserved in the north-east corner of the room. The mosaic probably dates to the 2<sup>nd</sup> century AD.

### Room O

#### Description

Room O, which is constructed on a terrace immediately to the south of Room L, was only partially excavated in 2006. Although its full extent is still unknown, it would appear to be a long narrow room, possibly a corridor. Its width on the eastern side is 3.68m and on the western side 3.42m. Its length, so far as it has been excavated, is 5.50m. The floor was laid with a mosaic which is preserved in a very fragmentary state. The central area, of which very little remains, appears to be very similar to that of the adjoining Room L to the north: a field of running peltas, black on a white ground, extending uninterrupted over the width and length of the room (Prudhomme 1985, pl. 222 d). However, the scale is reduced; the *tesserae* are smaller than those used in the lower room, 10mm or less on each side and the peltas are only 0.14m long x 70mm wide. The central field is framed by two rows of black *tesserae*, followed by a white band made up of 29 *tesserae* (0.295m) and finally a 0.14-0.20m band of pink which extends to the wall. The outer pink border is charged with small stepped poised black squares, 3 *tesserae* to each side, set at intervals of *c.* 0.29m. Between these, along the inside contours of the pink border are black poised half-squares, with base-lines of white. These border-schemes are best preserved along the eastern and southern walls.

The make-up of the pavement is a hard mortar with stony inclusions. The *tesserae* are set into a 15-20mm thick skim of plaster laid over this base. The *tesserae* are quite small, their sides typically measuring 10 mm or less. Some wall-plaster, with traces of pink paint, is preserved on the southern wall, running down behind the mosaic pavement.

### Eastern Portico

#### Description

The eastern portico of the Grand Peristyle *Domus* was paved with mosaic, although only some scattered fragments are preserved. Very little survives of the central field,

although the small surviving area shows that the scheme included configurations of small white rectangles and tangent white and black isosceles triangles. An intermittent passage of the border is preserved against the western wall of the walk. Starting from the wall, this consisted of a band of white formed of 10-11 *tesserae* (c. 0.11-0.15m), followed by a band of pale pink, 10 or 12 *tesserae* (0.13-0.135m) wide, and then a border with a generous ivy trail running an undulating course over a white ground. The stem of the trail is delineated with a single line of black *tesserae*; each undulation is occupied by a single large black heart-shaped leaf. The full width of this band of ivy is not preserved.

### *Northern Corridor*

#### Description

Vestigial fragments of a mosaic pavement were found in two trenches in the northern corridor of the Grand Peristyle *Domus*, a space adjacent to and cut by the outer wall of the western aisle of the basilica.

In the north-western trench a small area of mosaic was preserved against the north wall of the room. Against the wall is a white outer border, of now 5 *tesserae* (90mm to the wall), followed by a band of 10 pink *tesserae* (0.12m) and an area of white of which 11 *tesserae* (0.145m) are preserved.

Other small fragments of mosaic are preserved in the south-eastern trench in the room. One of these, a pink border preserved close to but not adjacent to the southern wall to a width of 11 *tesserae* (1.37m), is followed by an area of white of which 8 *tesserae* (85mm) survive. A further small area of the same sequence is preserved a little to the west of this against the same southern wall of the room. Another fragment of mosaic lies adjacent to and is cut by the outer wall of the west aisle of the basilica, which traverses the room at this point. The surface is incomplete and disturbed, but appears to have incorporated black and pink triangles bordering an area of white which contained a complex stepped motif in white, black and pink; possibly a star-formation of the type found in the North-west Room

If this reading is correct and the motif of the central field was a tangent sequence of eight-pointed stars formed on large poised squares, the design of the pavement would have been very similar to that in the North-west Room, with the colours of the white and pink outer framing bands reversed.

The make-up of the pavement in this room is a strong creamy mortar with tile inclusions. The *tesserae* are set into a thin skim of plaster 6-8 mm thick. The *tesserae* have sides of c. 13mm and are 7-9mm deep.

### *North-west Room*

#### Description

At the far north-west corner of the site a small trench opened up a section of an outlying room of the Grand Peristyle *Domus*, with the remains of a mosaic pavement preserved against its northern wall.

The mosaic is carefully founded and laid, with *tesserae* of c. 0.11 x 0.12m and 8-10 mm deep, set into a 5-7mm skim of hard pinkish mortar with brick and other inclusions. Only the outer edge of the design in this part of the floor was revealed. The extreme outer borders of the pavement consist of 7 rows of pink *tesserae* (0.10m) abutting the north wall, followed by 19 rows of white (0.24m), 21 rows of pink (0.25m), 3 rows of white (37mm) and 2 rows of black (26mm), and then the design proper. The preserved scheme consists of the extreme edge of a field of diagonal chess-board pattern, with pink poised squares charged with checkerboard squares of black poised *tesserae*, 3 x 3, alternating with black poised squares inscribed with smaller tangent upright white squares charged with black crosslets, resulting in black isosceles triangles. The design could also be read as a tangent sequence of eight-pointed stars formed on large poised squares, resulting in smaller interstitial squares.

Traces of plaster, apparently cindered from burning, adhere to the north wall. The mosaic probably dates from the 2<sup>nd</sup> century AD.

### **Butrint**

In 2006, the celebrated circular mosaic pavement in the Butrint Baptistery and another in the Trapezoidal Hall adjacent to the north were cleared of their protective coverings of sand for inspection and recording. The floor of the Baptistery had not been uncovered since 1998, that of the Trapezoidal Hall in its entirety not since c. 1980.



Cleaning the Baptistery mosaic for photogrammetric recording and conservation assessment.

Jacques Neguer, Ghaleb Abu Diab and Agron Islami conducted a condition survey and assessment of both pavements. Photogrammetric plans were made of each room by Massimo Zanfini and further documentation was carried out by John Mitchell and Martin Smith (photography). Both pavements have been discussed in *Byzantine Butrint* (Mitchell 2004). However, the account of the Trapezoidal Hall given there was necessarily brief and summary, as it could only be based on a somewhat schematic drawing of the floor published 20 years previously by Aleksandër Meksi (Meksi 1983) and a single available photograph. An updated account is included below.

### *Baptistry mosaic*

The Baptistry mosaic is shown on the cover of this Interim Report. The visibly good condition of the mosaic was seen to belie on-going deterioration – including subsidence, cracking, new lacunae crumbling glass and detachment of other tesserae – along with numerous issues for its long term survival. These problems were determined to be the direct result of fluctuating saline water tables, growth of micro-organisms and salt crystallisation beneath protective plastic sheeting, inappropriate use of hard cement-based mortars during past restorative interventions and the rapid-drying caused by exposing and cleaning the pavement. It was recommended that the damage be precisely recorded, the mosaic remain buried beneath netting and sand and the general condition be monitored seasonally to advise conservation requirements.

Prof. Ippolito Massari (Rome), was invited to Butrint to investigate the effects of seasonal inundation on the city's monuments, in particular the Baptistry and the Roman Forum. As a result of Massari's recommendations, the Butrint Foundation will implement a water monitoring programme during the winter of 2006-7 to record seasonal fluctuation in water levels around the lower city. This will inform any future projects to conserve the Baptistry mosaic and other structures.

### *Trapezoidal Hall mosaic*

The pavement of the Trapezoidal Hall was in a considerably worse state of repair, due in part to inadequate foundations and to the poor technique that had been employed for laying the tesserae, but fundamentally due to the same processes as those affecting the Baptistry. Deterioration brought about by previous interventions, cracking, slumping, growth of micro-organisms and salt efflorescence was heightened by severe intrusion of vegetation roots and the activity of burrowing insects. Recommendations were to map and record

the problem areas, replace cement from earlier restorations with lime mortar, seal beneath sand and monitor seasonally.

### Description

The mosaic is laid on a bed of tiles set at steep vertical angles, in the manner commonly used at Butrint to insure stability on a site prone to infiltration from rising water levels. However, the underlying foundations were not prepared sufficiently well at the outset, so that the floor now undulates and dips steeply in places, resulting in numerous breaks and losses in the tessellated surface. Furthermore the tesserae, which are uneven in size, +/- 10mm, are laid not in the tight locking structures which give stability and coherence to the pavement of the adjacent Baptistry, but rather in loose sequence, with the principal intention of tracing the complex forms and of filling each particular area with colour.

The pavement, like that of the Baptistry, is framed by a running ivy scroll which runs round the walls of the room. Within this are two large areas laid side by side on a north-east to south-west orientation, each subdivided into two. The south-east area consists of a panel of opposed peltae to the north-east, and to the south-east a panel with two rows of squares flanking a central sequence of offset medallions with pairs of peltae separating each of the elements; the squares and medallions are charged with various motifs, including birds, branches bearing fruit and leaves in the squares and varieties of star/rosette in the medallions. The whole south-east area is framed by a sequence of paired peacocks flanking vases. The north-west area consists of a panel to the north-east filled with a grid of medallions joined to each other by short stems, with a motif in each of the resulting fields, and to the south-west a complex pattern of interlocking octagons containing stylized black trees. This area has for its inner frame a narrow ribbon chain with alternate rectangular and round 'medallions' framing little peltae and quatrefoils, and for its outer frame a more expansive ring-chain.

The two blocks on the north-west side of the room are separated by a strip of white, 0.21m wide, carrying the remains of an inscription in black tesserae:

E[.....]ΟΥ ΕΠΙΣΚ

Apparently recording the name of a bishop, whose name began with E, presumably the official who commissioned the laying of the pavement and perhaps the construction of the room.

This pavement differs considerably from that of the Baptistry. First, in the choice and formation of material for the tesserae: no grey-blue limestone is used and there is an absence of bright glass cubes, and in addition to white, black and pink, there is quite extensive use of red tesserae cut from fired clay tiles. Further, the tesserae vary considerably in size and shape, with sides between c. 10-17mm. A second point of difference is in the manner of the laying. As described above, the cubes are set in somewhat casual fashion, to shape and colour the many motifs and elements which constitute the floor; they are not laid in the tightly structured stable sequences found in the Baptistry. Thirdly, there is a marked difference in style, in the manner in which the various motifs deployed in the mosaic are made up and shaped.

Furthermore, the layout and design of the mosaic is exceedingly irregular: borders, bands and motifs all vary dramatically in size. This is nowhere more apparent than on the north-east side of the room, where the outer ivy trail border on either side of the projecting central buttress varies in width by a factor of 1-2.

The emphasis throughout the floor is on diversity and density of design and on colouristic intensity achieved with a very limited palette. This is readily apparent both in the dramatically contrasted undulating pink and white backgrounds of the outer framing ivy trail, and in the make-up of the white ground this border, where a liberal inclusion of blue-grey and pale yellow tesserae among the various of hues of white result in a subtle and very lively colouristic play.

Meksi judged this pavement to be the work of a different team of mosaicists from the one responsible for the mosaic of the adjoining Baptistery, and to be somewhat later in date (Meksi 1983: 75). Although the repertoire of patterns deployed in the northern room is a typical, if richly detailed, variant of that commonly used by mosaicists in Epirus Vetus in the 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> centuries and shares features in common with the formal vocabulary used in the Baptistery, the two pavements are certainly the work of two distinct ateliers. However, it is unclear if the mosaic in the northern room was laid at more or less the same time as that in the Baptistery or a decade or two later.



The Trapezoidal Hall mosaic pavement.

## Sites and Monuments Practical Conservation and Presentation

Two other archaeological conservation projects ran in tandem with the mosaic conservation. Paramount to both of these initiatives was a prerequisite to provide instruction in basic conservation theory and techniques to young conservators and local unskilled people. First, at Diaporit, the final phase of backfilling the 2000-2004 Butrint Foundation excavations was completed alongside consolidation of the basilica and portions of the villa identified for presentation. Second, the Nymphaeum and adjacent aqueduct piers in Butrint were selected as the centre-piece of a vegetation management/monument conservation programme.

### Diaporit

With funding from the Howard and Nancy Marks Fund, Albana Hakani, conservation specialist in the Butrint National Park, completed the re-pointing and consolidation of the Diaporit monastery church in late spring and early summer with a small team of skilled local masons. A freelance conservation consultant, Rene Rice, subsequently carried out the programme of training and masonry consolidation. Aside from including Albana, Rene's protégés were two young Kosovar conservators, Behar Kepuska (Institute for the Protection of Monuments, Gjilan, Kosova) and Besnik



Skilled local craftsmen conserving the Diaporit Basilica walls.



Diaporit Basilica, Villa and bath-house conserved for public display.

Keka, (Regional Centre for Cultural Heritage, Gjilan, Kosova) whose training was mostly practical, in the constituents and mixing of Roman mortars, pointing and the consolidation of walls. The team was fortified by a workforce of up to eight young Albanian labourers. They were taught to mix mortar and simple conservation tasks such as correct removal of vegetation, soil and failed pointing from stonework. Some of these labourers showed considerable promise for further training in future years.

A section of the Roman-period villa and its impressive bath-house complex were the subject of the programme. As a first step, the entire site was cleared of plant growth and all opportunist deep-rooted vegetation was removed from wall tops and joints to ascertain the condition of the masonry. Some original mortar remained intact but many of the joints were soil and gravel filled and had lost their original mortar; other walls were soil-mortared. Vertical surfaces were raked out and wall mortar ground for visual analysis. On this basis replica mortars were mixed from local materials – crushed stone, beach gravel, crushed Roman tiles and lime putty.



Practical masonry conservation instruction on the walls of the Diaporit Villa.

In the bath-house complex the wall tops were crumbling and friable, and were capped with lime mortar. In the residential part of the villa a different approach was taken: grass and plant seed was sown to create a soft wall top consisting of shallow rooted but binding plants which would protect the wall from violent downpour but allow the damp interior of the wall to breathe. This technique demands yearly maintenance to remove deep rooting plants and control the grass growth; elsewhere annual biocide treatment is necessary to keep the interiors and surrounds of the monuments weed-free.

To complete the site for visitor presentation a monumental programme of landscaping was carried out under the direction of Jerry O'Dwyer of the Butrint Foundation. The final open areas of the excavations were backfilled with soil and the interiors of the monuments were filled with gravel. Gravel was sourced from dredging deposits along the shore of Lake Butrint, and many tons were moved by truck and hand barrow to cover low walls and areas considered too fragile to be left exposed.

### The Nymphaeum and Aqueduct Piers

Funded by a generous grant from the Oak Foundation, Rome-based conservator Francesca de Vita had previously identified the Nymphaeum's fragile condition and during June and July worked on the monument and adjacent aqueduct piers as the focus of a conservation training scheme.

Francesca was assisted by Albana Hakani, Ervin Gjini (Institute of Monuments) and up to five workmen and women from the Butrint National Park to embed the skills training in the Park staff and local people.

Located on a paved street leading to the Tower Gate – one of the ancient city's principal entrances – the Nymphaeum (fountain) is dated to the 2<sup>nd</sup> century AD. It was filled from the aqueduct via a cistern to its rear and originally contained statues of Dionysius and Apollo (and a lost third statue) in three niches. Prior to beginning the practical conservation, a thorough structural record of the building's constructional and restoration history was made: both Ugolini and Hoxha's Institute of Monuments had left heavy marks on the fabric of the monument.



Practical monument conservation training on the Nymphaeum in Butrint.

Moss and lichen settlements were grown thick over the entire monument and conservation began with chemical treatment followed by manual removal and washing of the roof, walls and podium. Gaps between the Nymphaeum podium and superstructure were particularly prone to invasive rooting, and were consequently cleaned of soil and filled with a replica cocciopesto and finished with sympathetic grey sandy mortar. The roof was in a particularly friable condition, despite repeated restorative interventions from the 1930s

onwards. Large cracks and soil-filled lacunae were cleaned out and repointed with cocchiopesto mortar. The side of the cistern, the bases of two of the niches and cracks on the internal and external walls of the monument also demanded attention. The cistern's drains were flushed out and the bottom of the pool was cleared of vegetation and filled with layers of ceramics, stones and gravel to alleviate wetness. The pavement in front of the Nymphaeum, which runs to the aqueduct piers, was exposed, levelled and surrounded with gravel.

Four piers of the Roman aqueduct to the north of the Nymphaeum were subjected to assessment and first aid conservation. De-vegetation of macro- and micro-vegetation followed the processes carried out on the Nymphaeum. Plants, mosses and soil were removed to allow limited imperative repointing. The surrounding and overhanging woodland was thinned around the monuments to admit more sunlight and air and thereby reduce the growth of mosses and seed fall on the piers. Waterlogged ground around the bases of the piers was levelled, a layer of ceramics deposited, and a covering of gravel applied to aid drainage and enhance visitor appeal. A list of final recommendations was drawn up covering the structural stability of both the Nymphaeum and the aqueduct piers and the effects the environment has upon them.



Aqueduct piers in Butrint conserved for public display.



Lord Sainsbury of Preston Candover and group viewing conservation work in the Great Basilica.

Other work carried out under the umbrella of the Oak Foundation grant included analyzing the form of cracks in the Great Basilica and selectively cleaning and filling them. Elsewhere glass slides were mounted across active cracks to monitor structural stability and direction of movement. A de-vegetation follow up on the successful conservation and presentation of the Triconch Palace and late-antique city wall in 2005 was carried out by Park work teams, accompanied by identification and treatment training for problem tree growth. Thorough inspection of the Water Gate revealed existing perils and future threats to the integrity of the monument and called for further vegetation control and an engineer's plan to rescue sections of the masonry from further decay and collapse. Finally, lists of best practice were drawn up governing the use of herbicides, tool types and backfilling procedures and the correct treatment of different vegetation species and soils where they adversely affect monuments.

# Butrint Guide Training Programme

## Background

A particular problem at the Butrint National Park has been the standard of tour party guiding by locally-recruited guides. The quality of a visit by individuals and groups has varied enormously in the past, with some being offered in depth and informative tours while others have been treated in a far more perfunctory manner. This variability has extended to the quality of information presented, which is generally based on fact, but in many instances has drifted into the realm of fantasy. Fundamental problems have been that, in many cases, Park Guides simply did not know what they and their groups of guests were looking at, and that they lacked the background information and flexibility to respond adequately to enquiries and questions. Examples of such deficiencies are legion, but two will suffice here: the persistent misidentification of the theatre as an amphitheatre and the complete fabrication that “Julius Caesar came here for his holidays”!

Exploring needs and requirements and encouraging good practice is a major need in a country where the tourist industry is a significant and increasingly vital sector of the economy. Raising the quality of visitor experience is thus a substantial factor in the sustainability of the tourist economy.

## The Programme

In an attempt to address some of the shortcomings at Butrint and elsewhere, a four day course was prepared and held during springtime to create a cadre of tour guides specialised in archaeological site presentation and capable of providing a high-quality visitor experience.

The objectives of the programme were twofold:

- To hold a seminar with relevant participants to discuss the background and theory of guide training and establish the requirements for specialised site guides for particular sites such as Butrint and Gjirokastra.
- To train a group of guides to a level where they could provide a rewarding and accurate interpretation of a site for groups of visitors.

The seminar was held in Tirana and attended by a variety of figures from the Ministry of Culture and Tourism, the Institutes of Monuments and Archaeology, the International Centre for Albanian Archaeology, local government, the travel industry and the Butrint Foundation.



Panoramic view of the Temple of Asclepius and the Theatre at Butrint.



Panoramic view of the Scaean Gate and Lake Butrint.

It was universally recognised that Albania's short- and mid-term tourist potential lies with cultural tourism. Some discussion ranged around the problems and opportunities of this nature of tourism, especially in the light of proposed reforms and restructuring of historic and archaeological sites as National Parks. However, when it came to the responsibility for the provision of guides there was no general agreement of who should take the initiative in ensuring the training and quality of guides. A consensus was achieved on the necessity for a dual approach:

- A series of expert specialised local guides for particular sites and localities to cover both groups of tourists and individuals.
- A group of guides who act more as managers who could cover the movement of groups of tourists around Albania while at the same time being capable of providing tours of particular sites.

### Visits to Apollonia, Butrint and Gjirokastra

The training programme participants proceeded to visit two archaeological sites of national importance: Apollonia, which has recently been designated a National Park and which, due to its proximity to Tirana and the improvement in the road network has an increasing number of visitors; and Butrint, the

model Albanian National Park and a UNESCO World Heritage Site with 55,000 visitors in the preceding year.

At Apollonia seven trainees were present, while at Butrint the addition of local guides raised this number to 12 attendees. Additionally, a further group of 12 existing guides, working for local travel agencies, was provided with a shorter version of the full training course.

The topics covered by the course included: safety, comportment, appearance, presentation skills and the issues of group interaction. Considerable time was invested in examining the standing monuments at each site and discussing appropriate itineraries for varying types of visitors.

Trainees were assessed on their aptitude and ability as guides. Firstly, a theoretical assessment was conducted by a question and answer session on a range of topics studied over the course of the programme. Practical assessment took the form of a tour, but this time with the trainees guiding the assessors. Each participant was asked to present a particular monument to the rest of the group. The provision of accurate information will continue to be a problem in this field as guides working on a part time basis cannot be expected to have the same level of expertise as specialists and may not have access to appropriate literature to improve their knowledge. As far as was possible all trainees were provided with an information pack containing supporting materials and the most recent published guides available for each site along with certification of attendance.

The trainees then visited Gjirokastra where the process of interpreting the Ottoman city is directly related to the continuing efforts to preserve it. Currently there are no official guides to the city, and debate between the various responsible agencies continues as to the correct way forward. Nevertheless, UNESCO World Heritage Site status has recently been awarded and this will provide a footing for future work. The Guide Training Programme was fortunate in having input from Odise Kote of the Gjirokastra city council and the Packard Humanities Institute-funded Gjirokastra Conservation Office.

## Conclusion

Reflecting on the programme, it is suggested that a more permanent guide school be established, based at Butrint and in Gjirokastra and affiliated with the authorities of both sites, to continue the provision of a group of specialised guides for both sites.

The need for over-arching national guidelines for tour guiding is now clear.

The creation of the National Park system will provide an arena for exclusive, licensed guides, as non-registered guides will theoretically be prevented from operating within the Parks. However, this ideal may not work in practice during the busiest times of the year and a compromise may be required. Other sites outside the National Park scheme will remain open to guides of all types. What must be strongly avoided is the type of restrictive practices currently operating in Italy and Greece, where officially-licensed guides continue to provide a low quality service. These types of scheme are in any case under review in new European Union legislation and it would be counterproductive and regressive for Albania to institute such a format on a national platform.

Finally, the important and growing role of private enterprise in this sphere needs to be underlined. Albanian tourism is driven by the market and by the ever increasing number of travel agencies now operating in Albania. These are as much the clients who need to be satisfied as are the tourists themselves. State regulation can help or hinder them, but they must now be more closely involved in the matter of provision of guides for Albanian heritage sites.



Panoramic view of the Triconch Palace excavated by the Butrint Foundation and conserved for public display in 2005.

## Roman Butrint Workshop

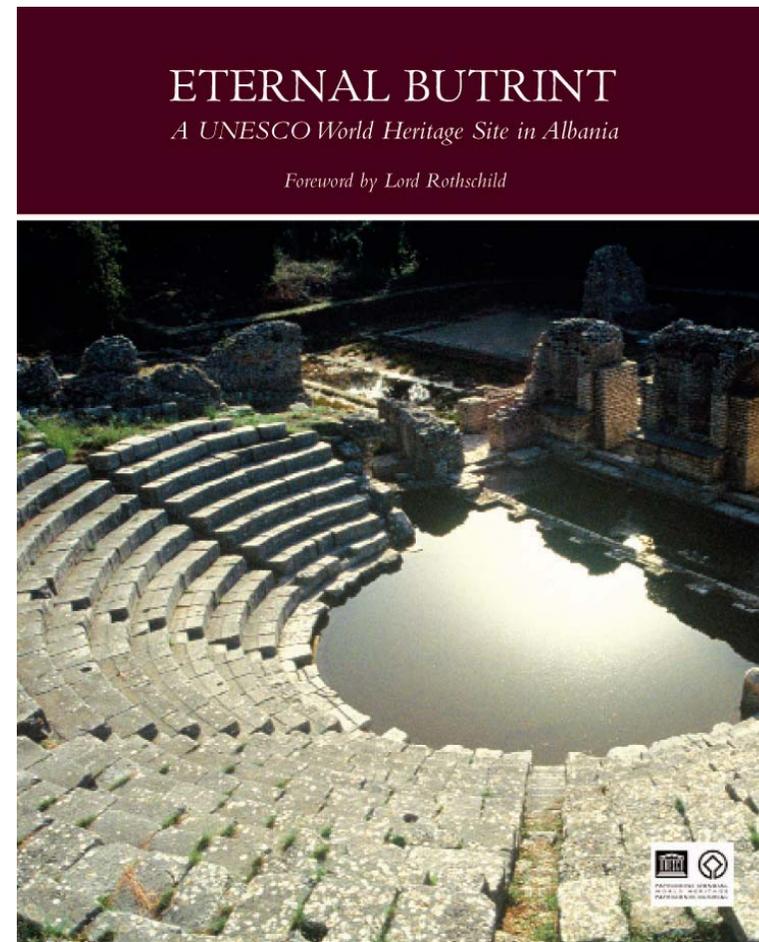
In July 2006, the Butrint Foundation archaeological team hosted an international workshop supported by a grant from the British Academy. The aim of the workshop was to critically examine the proposed chronologies and interpretation of Roman Butrint arising from the major excavations since 2000. The group included Professors Paul Arthur (Lecce), John Camp (American School at Athens), Neritan Ceka (Tirana), Amanda Claridge (Royal Holloway, London), Florin Curta (Florida State), Konstantinos Zachos (Ioannina) and Drs Elizabeth Bartman (New York) and Iris Pojani (Tirana). In two extended site tours of Butrint and Vrina as well as a round table meeting in Saranda, the group met and discussed a range of themes over three days. This has greatly helped to improve and develop the interpretation of Roman Butrint.



Roman Butrint Workshop (clockwise from top): Saranda conference; Vrina Plain; Tripartite Building and Forum; Butrint Acropolis.

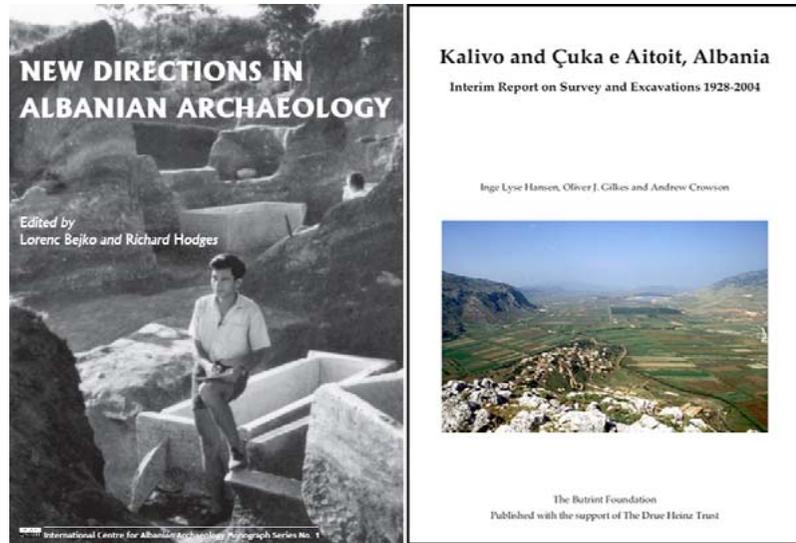
## Publications

2006 has been an extraordinary year for Butrint publications. A large, colourful and lavishly illustrated book *Eternal Butrint* written by Richard Hodges was published by General Penne UK Ltd, London in August. Recounting the complex history of Butrint, it is illustrated with the exceptional paintings by Grand Tourists such as Edward Lear, the magnificent photographs of Luigi Ugolini, images from the archaeological archives of communist Albania and the rich documentation of the Butrint Foundation's mission.



*EternalButrint.*

A book dedicated to the lifetime achievements of distinguished Albanian archaeologist Muzafer Korkuti was published in *New Directions in Albanian Archaeology*. Edited by Lorenc Bejko (International Centre for Albanian Archaeology, Tirana) and Richard Hodges, the volume comprises a series of 35 essays discussing themes of contemporary archaeological research in Albania from both Albanian and foreign scholars currently active in the field.



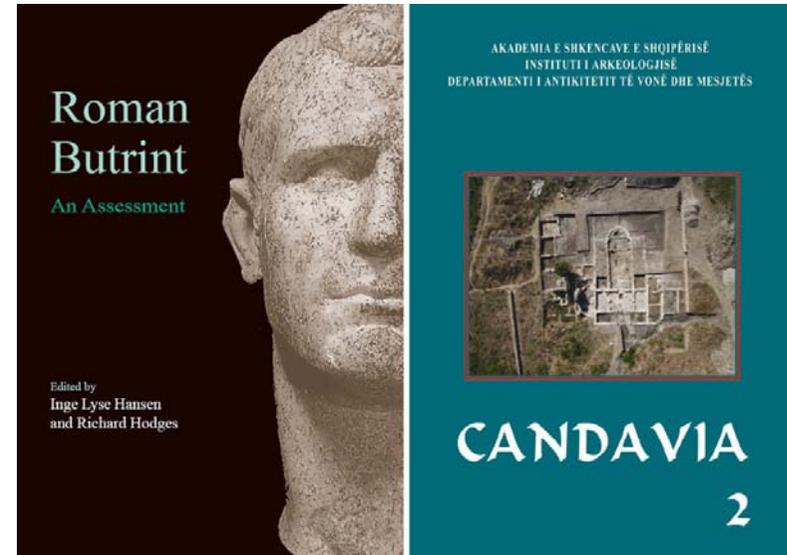
*New Directions in Albanian Archaeology* and *Kalivo and Çuka e Aitoit*.

*Kalivo and Çuka e Aitoit, Albania*, is an important compendium of reports covering excavations and surveys at these sites in the hinterland of Butrint between 1928-2004. Edited by Inge Lyse Hansen, Oliver Gilkes and Andrew Crowson, the volume presents unpublished accounts of Luigi Ugolini's expeditions with modern commentary and has been mounted on the Butrint Foundation website ahead of publication by Oxbow Books in 2007.

Meanwhile, edited by Inge Lyse Hansen and Richard Hodges's, *Roman Butrint, an Assessment* is currently in press through Oxbow Books. Complementing and prefacing *Byzantine Butrint*, the monograph contains 11 chapters on the art and archaeology of Roman Butrint, ranging from the mythical Trojan origins of the city, to the significance of the Asclepian sanctuary and the political and landscape changes wrought by Roman rule.

A series of articles resulting from recent work on the Vrina Plain have been submitted for publication. An early appraisal of the Vrina basilica mosaic

has already been published in *Candavia 2* by John Mitchell and Oliver Gilkes. Further essays on the evolution of the basilica and Temple-Heroon sites by Simon Greenslade, Sarah Leppard, Oliver Gilkes, John Mitchell and Richard Hodges are presently lodged with *Archaeologia Medievale, Monumentet, Illyria* and *Candavia*.



*Roman Butrint* and *Candavia 2*.

A report on 16<sup>th</sup>-18<sup>th</sup> century Butrint by Siriol Davies (University of Stirling), *Late Venetian Butrint*, has been presented to the Butrint Foundation and will be prepared for formal publication in 2007. The report draws on research undertaken in archives in Venice and Corfu and details Venetian economic and military interests at Butrint, providing important new information on the management of the city, its buildings and the environment during this period.

Also in 2007, a handbook to the history and archaeology of Saranda will be published by Richard Hodges in Migjeni's archaeological site guidebook series. Oliver Gilkes is currently researching and writing a series of six regional guides to the archaeological sites of Albania. Other visitor guidebooks, borne out of the Butrint Foundation's fieldwork and research, are planned for preparation in 2007 to follow on the 2005 *A Guide to the Environment and Walking Trails*. The Butrint Baptistery and the archaeology of the Vrina Plain are amongst the subjects for inclusion.

## Conclusion

The seventh season of major excavations at Butrint was undoubtedly the most satisfying. In each of the areas excellent archaeological deposits were found, rich with ceramics, coins and small finds, adding much to our knowledge of Butrint. Best of all, the excavations progressed with young Albanians taking charge. At the same time, the conservation programme proceeded with ease with great input from Albanians.

The excavations revealed Middle to Late Bronze Age settlement on Cape Stylo, but little evidence of this date on the Butrint Acropolis. Nonetheless, comparison of the prehistoric sherds from the 1989-94 Greek excavations on the Acropolis with those from Cape Stylo shows a striking similarity. More importantly, both assemblages reveal a highly localised culture with few imports. Imports, though, distinguish the 7<sup>th</sup>-5<sup>th</sup>-century BC deposits from the Acropolis, and are very evident in the extraordinarily rich levels found in the earliest parts of the Tripartite Building excavations. Here, at the Forum, we seem to have discovered part of the Pyhrric-period sanctuary with deliberately smashed votive offerings. This legacy appears to have been incorporated in the temple or shrines that formed the north side of the Forum. More of the Forum pavement itself was found, in good condition, and overlying it were deep deposits that chart the later history of the public centre of ancient Butrint. On the Vrina Plain the deposits were no less valuable. Discovery of the road linking the Vivari Channel-side to the interior was a special breakthrough, its drain inserted alongside the elevated temple found in 2005. Traces too were found of possible colonial properties, incorporated into a sprawling villa, then made into a monastic centre in the 5<sup>th</sup> century, which in turn served as a Middle Byzantine household in the 9<sup>th</sup> century,

probably for an archon who imprisoned St. Elias in 881-82. The sequence is exceptional. The Middle Byzantine archaeology, usually so elusive, was further illuminated by the excavations in the Tower of the Western Defences where an unique late 8<sup>th</sup>-9<sup>th</sup>-century deposit was found under a roof that had collapsed in a fire.

Examining the finds, including the human remains, is also shedding new light not just on the history of the site, but making us re-interpret the archaeology of the region. This regional theme was highlighted in the British Academy Workshop in Saranda. The PHI excavations are setting a new benchmark in the Balkans.

Satisfying though the archaeology has been, it is evident to all privileged to participate in this project, that step by step we are together witnessing a point of reference in cultural heritage in Albania. The presence of the Butrint National Board at Butrint on July 7, chaired by the Minister of Culture, highlighted the achievement. More of the site is being conserved, more young Albanians are being trained in skills that can be deployed elsewhere and more tourists are coming as the esteem for the site gains momentum in the Balkans and beyond.

There is much still to do. Our archive work is progressing well, but is a colossal task. The new website will be on line by 2007. The museum stores will be completed by this autumn. Yet we need to arrange the stores to contemporary standards, write many field reports that do justice to our discoveries, develop the conservation strategy and, above all, train more staff in line with a park that is bringing new hope to Albania. It is, in sum, an exciting time.



View east from Butrint, to Lake Butrint and Kalivo.

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Mussel beds in Lake Butrint.

The photographs and illustrations in this Interim Report were taken and prepared by Andrew Crowson, Brian Donovan, Oliver Gilkes, Ilir Gjipali, Michael Grayley, Simon Greenslade, David Hernandez, Charlotte Hodges, Alket Islami, Sarah Leppard, Sarah Lima, Jacques Negeur, Pippa Pearce, Piers Pye-Watson, Martin Smith and Massimo Zanfini. All images © The Butrint Foundation 2006.



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