

## **Butrint Foundation written reports**

**Title:** The Butrint Foundation Excavation Report, 2004

**Author:**

**Date submitted/written:** 2004

**Status and recipient:** The Butrint Foundation

**Copyright details:** BF

**Brief description of content/ keywords:** 2004 excavation report containing information relating to the excavations at Diaporit, Butrint, Kalivo and the Kanalit Rockshelter. The report also provides brief sections on the archive and conservation

**Archive:**



## **The Butrint Foundation**



## **Excavation Report, 2004**



# Contents

<b>Foreword</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Diaporit</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Butrint</b>	
The Vrina Plain	5
The Forum	8
The Fortifications	9
The Painted Tomb	12
Reconstructing Butrint's Inhabitants	13
<b>Kalivo</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>The Kanalit Rockshelter</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>The Archive</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>Conservation</b>	<b>19</b>
<b>Conclusion</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>Illustrations</b>	<b>21</b>

Cover images by Brian Donovan

Top: Butrint seen from Kalivo; middle: the theatre; bottom: 360° image of the Triangular Castle

## FOREWORD

The 2004 season at Butrint saw an ambitious and wide-ranging programme of excavation and survey in the city and its surroundings (**Fig. 1**). Encouraged by the Albanian Institute of Archaeology, we set out to make trial excavations and surveys of a number of sites in advance of future projects, as well as to complete our investigations at Diaporit. So, for example, this year we worked not only in the forum of Butrint but also in the Roman cemetery alongside the Vivari Channel as part of a programme to comprehend the Roman management of the lagoonal landscape. Moreover, we made trial excavations on the nearby hill known as Kalivo, long believed to be a predecessor of Butrint. In addition, working with the Institute of Monuments, we continued the conservation programme at the Triconch Palace (designed and agreed in 2003) and embarked upon the first steps of conserving and presenting the excavations at Diaporit and the Vrina Plain, which with Kalivo, we hope to make into a waymarked trail within the Butrint National Park. The training of Albanian students in excavation methods and data processing was also a key component of the season. Some 60 Albanian students participated in the season, and the success of this programme can be measured by the fact that year on year an ever-increasing proportion of the excavation team is composed of present and former Albanian students, working alongside volunteers from the UK, Ireland, Spain, Italy, Portugal and the USA.

Excavations commenced in May, with the final major season of work at the Roman villa of Diaporit aimed at investigating the earliest phases of the site's long and complex history. At same time an extensive survey was carried out on Butrint's fortifications and the Triangular Castle, the latter accompanied by a programme of geophysical prospection. The second half of June and July saw three simultaneous excavations, with the major excavations on the Vrina Plain acting as the focus of the training programme, while smaller investigations were carried out on the hilltop site of Kalivo and within the probable area of the Roman forum. In addition, continuing the work on the Luigi Cardini archive from the 1930s Italian Archaeological Mission, the team also ventured beyond the immediate region of Butrint with an excavation at the important prehistoric rockshelter at Kanalit near Vlora bay.

Excavation, however, is only one part of an archaeological project – thus attention was also focused on processing the huge quantities of finds and data generated by previous seasons, and on the protection and conservation of the excavated areas. Finds processing took place in the castle at Butrint, while the electronic data was collated in an office established in the village of Ksamili (subsequently transferred to Tirana at the close of the season). The conservation programme at the Triconch Palace also commenced, while large areas of the Diaporit excavations were backfilled to protect the fragile exposed remains.

As well as the continuing archaeological programme, the project also facilitated the training of conservation specialists at a workshop run by the Getty Conservation Institute, aided a field course run by the University of Ljubljana, and provided specialist assistance

to the Albanian Institute of Archaeology's excavations around the 'gymnasium'. Our activities generated significant media interest and the project was featured on BBC World News and Sky, as well as all the major Albanian stations.

The project was directed by Richard Hodges and Ilir Gjepali; Louise Schofield served as Project Manager aided by Gjoni Marko and Muço Laze. The excavations at Diaporit were directed by Will Bowden and Luan Përzhita; Oliver Gilkes and Ryan Ricciardi, assisted by Nevila Molla, directed the excavations on the Vrina Plain; Andy Crowson directed excavations on Kalivo; Karen Francis and Dhimeter Çondi directed the excavations of the forum. Oliver Gilkes and Nevila Molla organised the training excavations. The fortifications project was carried out by Andy Crowson and James Schryver of Cornell University and geophysical survey was carried out by David Bescoby. The finds were managed by Dave Boschi and Ilir Papa. Pippa Pearce of the British Museum returned to conserve the finds and work on the conservation of the wall plaster at Diaporit. The pottery was studied by Paul Reynolds and Joanita Vroom; the coins were catalogued and studied by Shpresa Gjongecaj and Pagona Papadopolous; the glass was studied by Sarah Jennings and the small finds were studied by Etleva Nallbani and John Mitchell. The faunal remains were studied by Adrienne Powell, while the human skeletal remains were studied by Todd Fenton and his team from Michigan State University. Finds illustration was undertaken by Sarah McDowell and finds photography was carried out by Martin Smith. The archive project was directed by Inge Hansen, assisted by Sabina Veseli. Special thanks to our site supervisors Simon Greenslade, Emily Glass, Benen Hayden, Sarah Leppard, Nevila Molla, Jerry O'Dwyer and Riley Thorne who worked with great enthusiasm in blazing temperatures and pouring rain. Thanks too to Jimmy and Leta Jazenxhi who looked after a large team with great dedication.

The Butrint Foundation's continued collaboration with the Packard Humanities Institute has allowed the Butrint team to work on a scale that is almost without parallel in present Mediterranean archaeology. The fortifications project was made possible through a generous grant from Venetian Heritage Inc., while the conservation work at Diaporit was funded through the support of the Howard and Nancy Marks Fund. The archive project continues to benefit from the generosity of the Drue Heinz Trust, while the Kanalit excavations were made possible by a grant from the Institute for Aegean Prehistory.

The success of the 2004 season was, as ever, due to the continuing support and dedication of the Albanian Institute of Archaeology, and in particular to its Director, Professor Muzafer Korkuti.

# DIAPORIT

2004 was the final major season of excavation at the Roman villa of Diaporit, and was aimed primarily at resolving questions relating to the earliest occupation of the site, which previous seasons had indicated dated to the Hellenistic period. The excavation was also partly intended to advance the conservation and presentation of the site, opening up areas that had been highlighted in Richard Andrews' conservation plan as requiring further work to make the site both comprehensible and accessible to visitors.

## Hellenistic Diaporit

Previous seasons had revealed that occupation at Diaporit stretched back to the late 3rd century BC, some 200 years earlier than had previously been thought. Although difficult to reach (owing to the depth and complexity of the later remains that overlay them), Hellenistic levels were identified in three separate areas of the site, demonstrating the extent of this early occupation which covered an area of up to 2,000 m<sup>2</sup> (**Fig. 2**). Like the Roman buildings that succeeded them, the Hellenistic structures were laid out over terraces (of which one was identified) (**Fig. 3**). The result was an extensive open site, quite different from the fortified farmsteads that were characteristic of the 4th and early 3rd centuries BC (such as nearby Malathrea, and the so-called Nekyomanteion of Ephyra), and thereby suggesting something of the changing nature of society in Epirus during the 3rd century.

It is unclear how long occupation continued on the Hellenistic site, although the absence of major deposits of this period or significant quantities of Hellenistic material in later levels suggests that it may have been quite short-lived. Coin finds, certainly, appear to be clustered around the late 3rd century BC, with no examples from the 2nd century.

## The Roman villa

The next major phase of occupation of the site commenced in the early decades of the 1st century AD, during the latter part of the reign of the emperor Augustus or that of his successor, Tiberius. On the western side of the site fragmentary traces of buildings have been found that date to this period including an *impluvium* (a feature for collecting and channelling rainwater), although many of the remains had been destroyed by later building activity or lie beneath the waters of the lake, which have risen since the Roman period.

Around AD 40-80 these buildings were replaced by a larger and more grandiose villa, much of the plan of which has been revealed in previous seasons. In 2004, part of the excavation concentrated on the west wing of this complex, and in particular on the remains of a monumental fountain (**Fig. 4**). This fountain, which was intended to be seen from inside the west wing of the building, took the form of a semi-circular basin, which was subsequently replaced by a much larger apsidal wall. The later fountain had an axial

window that allowed a view onto the garden beyond, and therefore formed a link between the ‘civilised’ interior of the building and the tamed ‘natural’ world beyond - an important aspect of the ideology of villa construction.

Further excavation was also carried out on the bath complex to the south, revealing how earlier elements of the baths were demolished in the 2nd century to create what was probably an open courtyard, the walls of which were decorated with a series of blind arches (of which all the bases survived *in situ*) (**Fig. 5**).

On the eastern wing of the villa, meanwhile, the excavation of the geometric mosaic, partially uncovered in 2003, was completed (**Fig. 6**), with the new sections proving to be in much better condition than those found previously. The mosaic had been used to pave what was probably an opulent dining or reception room that allowed a view across the central garden to the lake beyond.

### **The late antique pilgrimage centre**

Work on the 5th- to 6th-century early Christian phases at Diaporit concentrated on clarifying the dating of structures revealed in previous years, but also revealed the presence of a portico to the southwest of the church. The excavations of the villa described above also showed that the early Christian activity spread across all areas of the site, with 5th- and 6th-century remains noted in both the bath-house area and that of the fountains described above. Perhaps the most important discovery relating to this period was a lamp mould, showing that ceramic lamps with Christian insignia were manufactured at Diaporit in this period.

### **Conclusion**

Five years of large-scale excavation at Diaporit have made it a site of international value, tracing the development of a rural site over more than a millennium. Diaporit remains the only rural Roman site to have been scientifically excavated in either Albania or Greece, and as such has an importance far beyond the Butrint area. The excavations have identified an archaeological sequence that charts the ebb and flow of prosperity and activity at the site, together with the complex ideological changes that marked the ways that aristocratic taste and power were expressed over the course of the site’s long history.

# BUTRINT

## THE VRINA PLAIN

The major Roman suburb to the south of the Vivari Channel, first discovered through geophysical work, continued to be a focus of excavation in 2004 (**Fig. 7**). Analysis of the data from previous years has shown that, rather than being associated with the foundation of the Augustan colony at Butrint, occupation on the Vrina Plain dates to the later decades of the 1st century AD. Furthermore, activity on the Vrina Plain appears to have been significantly curtailed in the 3rd century AD, suggesting a similar history to that uncovered at Diaporit. The 2004 excavations were intended to clarify this important sequence, as well as acting as a focus of the student training programme (see below). Of particular significance were the discoveries of a previously unknown temple and an early Christian church, the existence of which had been hinted at by the findings of previous seasons, while further excavation was also carried out around the so-called ‘Monument’ investigated in previous seasons.

### The temple

The substantial ruin positioned immediately to the west of the aqueduct has long been noted as a significant feature of the Vrina Plain; it was excavated in the 1980s by the Albanian Institute of Archaeology and interpreted as a bath-house or cistern dating to the early imperial period. In 2004 it was decided to investigate further this building because its alignment differed markedly from that of the Roman grid pattern followed by most of the earlier Roman buildings that lie to the west of the aqueduct. This building, like most of the structures to the east of the aqueduct, was aligned more towards the south. This suggests that the alignment of this part of Butrint (and its surrounding area) was changed on at least one occasion, a situation analogous to that at Corinth where successive different street alignments in the city were also reflected in the phases of land division (centuriation) in the territory surrounding the city. At Butrint GIS analysis shows that the alignments of the Roman buildings are also reflected in the topographic features of the pre-1960s landscape (evidenced by wartime aerial photographs), suggesting that the territory of the city was also subject to cadastral land division or centuriation on at least one occasion (**Fig. 8**).

The building was raised above surrounding structures on a large podium constructed of bricks on a clamped stone plinth. The principal feature was a western door, over 3 m wide, with traces of a substantial threshold and door imposts. To the west of this door were the remains of the sloping foundation of a staircase whose blocks would have rested in steps formed in the concrete and rubble core. To the east meanwhile were traces of a rectangular chamber that was originally veneered with marble.



The overall plan, of which the length is twice the width, corresponds to the Vitruvian formula for the laying out of a temple, while an approximate height can be calculated from the dimensions of the doorway. The rectangular chamber would form the *cella* with a wide door giving onto a limestone paved *pronaos*, fronted by a set of steps, with the whole building standing on a podium 1.60 m high (**Fig. 9**).

A number of fragments of marble sculpture were recovered in the earlier excavations, including fragments of heads and torsos, reliefs and architectural fragments, which dated in part to the 3rd century. Some of this sculpture was funerary, and thus the building could be interpreted as either a mausoleum or a temple, or perhaps a temple mausoleum.

### **The early Christian church and its mosaic**

The large apsed room that had been identified in 2003 was fully excavated and proved likely have been a reception room or *triclinium* belonging to one of the large houses on the Plain (perhaps similar to the Triconch Palace) (**Fig. 10**). However, in the later 5th or 6th centuries this apsed room was converted into the narthex of a church whose nave and flanking aisles extended *c.* 20 m to the south. Only the first 4 m of the nave and aisles were exposed, revealing the first two piers of the arcades, while a series of piers in the narthex indicated the presence of an upper storey, probably a gallery, running the width of the church.

The narthex was paved with slabs of stone taken from the pavement of a substantial Roman building; one retained the slots for part of a monumental bronze inscription. The nave, meanwhile, contained an elaborate mosaic composed of octagonal panels filled with an abundant variety of motifs and framed by a sequence of broad borders that use a succession of geometric designs and scrolling garlands of laurel and acanthus leaves (**Fig. 11**). The motifs within the octagons include sea-creatures (fish, crabs, crayfish, squid, shrimps and jellyfish), birds (including a cock and a hen with chicks), terrestrial beasts (boar, deer, a lion and a tiger), as well as fruit and flowers.

The eyes of anyone entering the nave are drawn to a panel bearing a dedicatory inscription, set immediately in front of the western door. Although this is an original feature of the floor, it is neither fully incorporated into the design of the pavement, nor is it positioned centrally on the main west–east axis so that it has the appearance of an independent inscribed tablet, which has been laid provisionally, even casually, on the floor to attract the eye of the visitor. The arrangement stands out in its startling informality and catches the attention far more effectively than would an inscriptional panel worked seamlessly into the overall structure of the floor-design. This is a visual strategy related to the old Hellenistic convention of the *asarotos oikos*, the mosaic showing an unswept floor dramatically strewn with the apparently casually discarded debris of feasting and entertainment.

The inscription, in Greek, is in four lines and reads:

ΥΠΙΕΡΕΥ[ης]  
ΩΝΟΙΔΕ[v]  
ΟΘΕΟCTA  
ΟΝΟΜΑΤΑ+

(ὑπερ ευχης ὧν οιδεν ὁ θεος τα ονοματα)

‘In fulfilment of the vow (prayer) of those whose names God knows’.

This is an anonymous dedicatory inscription of a type which appears in a number of variant forms in other Christian buildings in the Balkan provinces in the late Roman period. The benefactors conceal their names and identities, both as a public demonstration of their humility in accordance with Christ’s own injunctions not to flaunt one’s own good works and virtues, and presumably in acknowledgement of God’s omniscience, which obviates any need of spelling out the names (although not apparently the need to record one’s generosity in epigraphic form)!

While there is no doubt that particular creatures and emblems on the floor would have elicited symbolic readings in the mind of a contemporary observer, there is no obvious soteriological programme underlying the assemblage. The variety of sea creatures and the big cats recall the common Roman love of marine life in all its abundance and variety as an expression and a symbol of affluence and status, and the Roman preoccupation with the ferocious beasts of the amphitheatre and the games as representing mastery and control over the wildest forces of nature in the context of extraordinary public and private munificence. The manifold animals and plants deployed on the floor function both as signs of opulence and success in the secular world and as symbols expressing central Christian sacraments and beliefs. It is tempting to see them as having been designed to assimilate visually secular pleasure and power within the values and doctrines of the Church; to welcome a moderately affluent and aspirant lay congregation into the basilica and to announce that the values and ideals which they espoused and paraded in their water-side villas coincided in essentials with those of the Church.

### **The medieval church**

The church was rebuilt during the 9th or 10th centuries. Post holes for scaffolding were found around the piers and buttresses of the narthex, and access to the aisles from the nave was blocked. A number of coins of Leo VI (886-912) were found in occupation debris in the narthex, a particularly important discovery relating to this little known period in Butrint’s history. This was followed by further reconstruction and the use of areas of the narthex for industrial purposes before the building seems gradually to have fallen into decline in the later 11th or 12th centuries.

## **The student training programme**

The ongoing archaeological training programme for Albanian students was an integral part of the Vrina Plain excavations (**Fig. 12**). Over the course of six weeks a total of 58 Albanian students from Albanian and foreign universities (Tirana, Gjirokastra, Elbasan, Istanbul, Prishtina and London) participated in the training programme, while returning students constituted a major element of the project personnel.

An especially satisfying element of the programme was the supervision carried out by Nevila Molla (principal site supervisor and training school tutor) and Esmeralda Agolli (assistant site supervisor). Both were graduates of previous courses and had attended the Packard Humanities Institute-funded junior year abroad scheme at the University of East Anglia.

A new programme was successfully undertaken during the excavation season. Robert Pitt of the British Museum led four students on a one-week course to teach the various processes involved in recording inscriptions. The students were introduced to the concepts behind ancient Greek and Latin epigraphy, transcribed examples at Butrint, and were taught how to take squeezes as a primary means of documentation.

## **THE FORUM**

The site of the forum of Roman Butrint has never been conclusively identified, but is thought to have been in the unexcavated area that lies between the theatre and the so-called 'gymnasium'. This hypothesis was given weight by the 1990 excavation of a large tripartite building at the base of the acropolis. The excavator erroneously identified the tripartite building as 'shops', but the discovery of a statue base in the central room, together with a monumental inscription recording the erection of a shrine to Minerva, suggests instead that the building may have been the *capitolium* - the shrine to the principal deities of Rome, Jupiter, Juno and Minerva - that would have stood at one end of the forum (**Fig. 13**). Subsequent excavations in 2003 by the Albanian Institute of Archaeology in front of the tripartite building discovered a partially reworked togate statue (possibly of Augustus), together with a huge quantity of marble chippings derived from the reworking.

The date and nature of this reworking are of crucial importance in understanding the history of the forum and thus of Roman Butrint. Consequently, in 2004, the Butrint Foundation team was allowed to re-examine the area where the statue had been discovered in order to try and recover more of the discarded marble-working flakes and to understand the context in which this reworking had occurred (**Fig. 14**).

The 2004 excavations revealed the remains of a flight of monumental marble steps that had led from the pavement of the forum to the threshold of the tripartite building. These steps

were probably covered by a portico, of which a single plastered brick column was discovered. Subsequently a further room was constructed against the western side of the staircase. As befitted its location in the heart of the town's public space, this room was opulently decorated with a painted ceiling and a marble floor, fragments of which were discovered during the course of the excavations.

This room was apparently abandoned by the 3rd century, after which it was used as a marble workshop. The clay floor of the workshop comprised a trampled mass of pottery, glass, shell, bone and charcoal, and included numerous bone and metal pins. Over 80 kg of marble flakes were recovered, together with broken pieces of sculpture - evidence of the re-working of classical statues on a large scale (**Fig. 15**). A fragment of togate shoulder was found to be part of the same monumental statue found in 2003.

Although the forum excavations were limited in scale, the information derived from them is of immense value. The use of such an important area of the forum for marble working suggests that the importance of the public centre of the town had declined and that the public areas of the city were losing their monumentality from the 3rd century onwards. This phenomenon is characteristic of cities of the Western Roman Empire and is consistent with the apparent contraction of the city that has also been noted in the Vrina Plain excavations. Although it cannot be said with certainty that the togate statue was being reworked as early as the 3rd century (the ceramics from the excavation indicating only that this was the earliest possible date for this activity), such an early reworking lessens the possibility that the statue was that of the emperor Augustus, as reworking of the imperial image at such an early date would have been punishable by death.

## **THE FORTIFICATIONS**

A new archaeological and historical assessment of the castles and fortifications at Butrint, funded by a grant from Axion Heritage, was carried out in collaboration with Professor Gjerak Karaiskaj (Director, Albanian Institute of Monuments) during May 2004. The study built upon previous work by the Butrint Foundation on the fortifications and on the archives of the Italian Archaeological Mission, together with Professor Karaiskaj's 1985 book, *Butrinti dhe Fortifikimet e Tij*, which remains the principal work on the fortifications. An English translation of Professor Karaiskaj's book is currently in preparation. A short comparative study was also made of contemporary castles on neighbouring Corfu.

The 2004 survey focused primarily on the medieval and Venetian phases of the city's fortifications (**Figs. 16 and 17**), with particular emphasis on the Acropolis Castle and the Triangular Castle. The survey was seen as a prerequisite for the restoration of these buildings and their potential use as visitor facilities. It was carried out in consultation with the conservation architect, Richard Andrews of Carden and Godfrey Architects, who

advised upon methods of safeguarding the surviving elements of the city's defences which remain one of the most visually impressive aspects of the ancient city.

### **The Acropolis Castle**

The Acropolis Castle visible today, occupying the western end of the acropolis, was rebuilt by the Italian Mission and bears little resemblance to any medieval predecessor. The earliest of the medieval castles at Butrint, however, was built on the eastern summit of the acropolis, reusing the remains of a possible early Christian church (the so-called 'Acropolis Basilica'). It was probably abandoned by the 11th to 12th centuries, to be replaced by a fortified enclosure with towers and an inner keep that was constructed at the western promontory of the acropolis. This enclosure was entered by way of the Hellenistic acropolis gate. The castle was probably built by Michael II, Despot of Epirus, at the beginning of the 13th century (an act noted by Marmora in his *Historia di Corfù* of 1672).

This castle was subsequently strengthened, perhaps during the period when Butrint was under the control of the Angevins during the later 13th to 15th centuries. A lower, subsidiary, enclosure was added to the western side and a second tower was added within the enclosure (the remains of which are apparent in the 1930s photographs), an arrangement reminiscent of the castellan's residence at Angelokastro on Corfu.

### **The Triangular Castle**

Following decades of warfare the acropolis fortifications became ruinous and were abandoned by their Venetian owners in 1572 in favour of the Triangular Castle on the south side of the Vivari Channel. Along with a tower on the opposite bank and a watch-tower on a spur overlooking the Channel to the west these fortifications secured the rich Butrint fisheries and fish houses owned by Venetian families along the north shore of the Channel.

The Triangular Castle was significantly strengthened in the later 17th century. A military survey map dated to *c.* 1718 shows the addition of a western outwork with musket ports, a barrack block on the west side, and a massive earthen *ravelin* controlling the approach to the main gate on the south side similar to those associated with the principal castle at Lefkada. By the early 19th century, Butrint itself had dwindled to a small fishing village clustered around the flanks of the castle. Traces of these buildings, together with the defensive outworks, were located through means of a geophysical survey. In 1821 these defences were augmented by a small castle constructed by Ali Pasha of Tepelene at the mouth of the Vivari Channel, and modelled upon contemporary castles at Preveza and Lefkada.

## **Protecting the Triangular Castle**

The Venetian Triangular Castle is situated on an island created by two make-shift roads and as such is particularly vulnerable to erosion and pollution damage caused by the substantial increase in traffic since the upgrading of the highway south of Butrint. Richard Andrews proposed removing this threat by diverting the roads to a single route to the south-west. In conjunction with this, the area between the castle and the Vivari Channel would be cleared so as to conserve and present the wall remnants of 17th- to 19th-century buildings clustered around the castle. A geophysical survey of the areas alongside the remaining two sides of the fort was therefore commissioned to provide information on the buried remains that are threatened by the existing roads. The initial response from the Albanian Ministry of Transport on this proposal has been favourable and it is hoped to pursue this course in collaboration with the Butrint National Park and the Albanian Institute of Monuments.

## **Geophysical Investigation of the Triangular Castle**

The survey was undertaken on two areas of open ground adjacent to the extant walls of the castle. (Overhead power lines prevented survey in front of the northern wall.) The aim was to map any surviving sub-surface wall structures associated with the castle in order to understand its historical development. As with the previous successful work on the Vrina Plain, the survey was undertaken using a fluxgate magnetometer instrument (Geoscan FM-36), capable of measuring the very small disturbances in the earth's magnetic field caused by the presence of buried objects.

The results from the magnetic survey around are shown in **Fig. 18**. Both areas produced noisy magnetic responses, caused by a high density of small, near surface material such as tile and small iron objects, i.e. nails etc. Despite this level of background disturbance, a number of deeper and weaker magnetic responses could be picked out of the survey results, which can be interpreted as surviving sub-surface walls.

Two principal wall alignments seem to exist. The first (indicated in yellow), perpendicular to the western wall, could suggest buildings constructed against the castle wall itself, although none are shown in the painting of the Triangular Castle by Henry Cook (dated 1820). The remaining northwest-southeast orientated walls (indicated in red) are particularly intriguing, in that they share the same alignment as the Roman buildings excavated upon the Vrina Plain. It is possible, therefore, that these walls relate to a much earlier phase of construction.

The 1718 Venetian plan of the castle shows that the 18th-century topography of the area was significantly different to that of the present day, with the castle situated on an island that was linked to a second smaller island with a defensive outwork (the *ravelin* described above). It was hoped that the survey might reveal some of this former topography, although in the event the geophysical results proved too noisy to detect any weaker magnetic

signatures relating to the former earthworks or the defensive channel. It also seems very probable that most of the walls detected in this area post-date the defensive channel and *ravelin*, as the construction of these features would presumably have come from earlier periods. However, the geophysical survey successfully demonstrated that the Triangular Castle is surrounded by buried sub-surface remains that are under threat from the continued erosion caused by the ever-increasing traffic that uses the unsurfaced roads that surround the castle.

## THE PAINTED TOMB

As was common in a major Roman settlement, the well-to-do inhabitants of Butrint commemorated deceased members of their families in prominent tombs, constructed on the approaches to the town. By far the largest concentration of tombs lay not on the landward sides of the city, but directly on the channel connecting the lagoon with the straits of Corfu. Some 25 mausolea, small and large, have been identified on the lower slopes of the hillside on the north bank of the Vrina Channel, and there were probably many more clustered along this slope, looking out over the water to catch the eyes of any visitor approaching the town by boat along what must have been the principal route of access in the Roman period. During 2004, therefore, members of the Butrint Foundation team took the opportunity to study and record the best-preserved example of these tombs (**Fig. 19**).

The tomb in question was built right at the water's edge, just upstream from the last promontory which juts out into the channel, before it makes its final sweep around to Butrint itself. It must have constituted a prominent landmark, clearly visible from this channel entrance to the old town, as well as from the Roman new town on the Vrina Plain.

In its earliest phase, which dates to around AD 200, it was a shallow barrel-vaulted building, with two internal tomb structures. The vault was covered with a hipped roof, and it seems likely that the façade was topped by a gable with pediment. It was decorated with a painted scheme of a rectangular grid outlined for the most part in red, with red discs ornamented with green at the intersections, and prominent star-formations at the centre of each little square field. A second phase of painting included compositions that incorporated green plants, as well as a possible figural composition in the lunette.

Later the building was extended to over twice its original size, and a small altar was added. It was redecorated with a scheme in which two large panels dominated the west wall. One depicted a frontally posed standing individual, flanked by at least one and probably two attendant figures, while the second showed a young male saint wearing only a loin-cloth and standing waist-deep in water, inclined slightly to the left. The central area of the back wall may have carried a major figural composition and there are also vestiges of drapery, perhaps from a figure, on the eastern wall.

The halo framing the head of the figure emerging from water on the west wall indicates that this later phase was Christian, although whether it was refashioned as a funerary oratory or as a small way-side chapel is unclear. The date of this transformation is unclear as elements of the paintings suggest dates ranging from late antiquity to the later Byzantine period. Maps of the 18th and 19th centuries, like Chevalier's map of Corfu of 1802, make it clear that by that period it carried a dedication to St. Demetrios – Shën Dimitri.

## RECONSTRUCTING BUTRINT'S INHABITANTS

In May the team of anthropologists from Michigan State University continued their examination of skeletons recovered from Diaporit and the Triconch Palace in Butrint (**Fig. 20**). The remains of 185 individuals were examined: 80 skeletons from Diaporit (5 neonates/infants; 15 subadults of 2-16 years of age; 25 adult males; 25 adult females; 10 adults for whom sex was indeterminable); and 105 skeletons from Butrint (24 neonates/infants; 36 subadults of 2-16 years of age; 20 adult males; 13 adult females; 12 adults for whom sex was indeterminable). The skeletal remains from Diaporit date from AD 500-550, whereas those from the Triconch Palace date mainly from AD 550-650.

Significant differences were found between the two sites in both the distribution of ages and the health of the individuals. The most outstanding variation between the two sites was the proportion of subadults (aged less than 16 years old) to adults recovered. At Diaporit, 20 out of the 80 (25%) skeletons recovered were subadults, while at Butrint, 60 out of the 105 (57%) skeletons recovered were subadults. This provides some indication as to the types of population that would have inhabited the areas, and the difference in rates of child mortality.

A similar trend in the prevalence of skeletal pathology between the two sites was discovered. Many, if not most, of the skeletal remains from Butrint have porous lesions on bones throughout their bodies. Individuals with skeletal lesions from Diaporit tend to be more isolated, and suggest circumstances that affected individuals rather than the population as a whole. The lesions found at Butrint, however, are consistent with evidence for sustained periods of anaemia in the population as a whole; which is also supported by a great number of subadult remains that display *cribra orbitalia* (porosity and roughening of the roofs of the eye orbits), a classic trademark of anaemia in children.

There are three possible reasons for the widespread anaemia at Butrint: (1) it was a response to a dietary deficiency in iron; (2) it was genetic – a response to persistent malarial infection; or, (3) it was a response to the presence of numerous infectious agents in the local environment, due to poor living conditions and sanitation, wherein the body produces more blood containing cells that fight the infections. All these reasons would



indicate a significant decline in the quality of life and health of Butrint's population after AD 550.

At Diaporit also, study of the skeletal remains provided some surprising results, although the health of the individuals was clearly better than that of the later inhabitants of Butrint. Evidence of cut marks about 2 cm in diameter around circular defects in two of the skulls and in one upper arm suggests that a surgical procedure may have been attempted. There is no evidence of healing, so it is most likely that the surgical procedures were either performed after death or they were fatal to the individuals. A surprising example of perimortem skeletal trauma was also discovered in the form of a circular defect in the cranium of one female that is consistent with an injury from a high-velocity projectile. The hole in the cranium displays the classic round shape as well as inward beveling that forensic anthropologists typically associate with a gunshot wound. This skeleton, however, should date from the 6th century AD; consequently research is required to establish the type of high velocity projectiles present in the 6th century and their effect on the human skull!

In addition to examining the skeletons for evidence of the quality of life at these two sites, the team was able to reconstruct the skulls of several adults and subadults so that we now have an idea of what the inhabitants may have looked like. The reconstruction of the skulls will be extremely valuable for a future forensic reconstruction of the faces of the individuals from Diaporit and Butrint. More can also be done to establish further identities for the inhabitants of Diaporit and Butrint. Based on the recent successes with the analysis of ancient DNA from Kamenica, analysis of mitochondrial DNA from Diaporit and Butrint would be a valuable aspect of the skeletal analysis in the future. This type of research has the potential to illuminate the relationship that the individuals from past populations may have with each other or with more recent populations.

# KALIVO

The hill of Kalivo, which lies to the east of Butrint, is a major archaeological site in its own right (**Figs. 21 and 22**). Its 2-km circuit of walls encloses an area of 18.5 hectares, significantly larger than that enclosed by the Hellenistic wall of Butrint. Despite investigations by the Italian Mission, and subsequently by the Albanian Institute of Archaeology, the site remains an enigma in terms of both the period and nature of its occupation, with estimates as to the date of the walls ranging from the Bronze Age to the Hellenistic period. During July 2004, therefore, following on from survey work in previous seasons, two small-scale excavations were carried out on Kalivo: first at the small gate within the southern loop of the defensive wall circuit, and second, inside the most substantial of the structures situated inside the acropolis enclosure. These were principally aimed at the recovery of datable material to assist interpretation of the defences and the low structural remains within the walls.

## The Southern Gate

Excavation revealed that prior to the construction of the defensive wall the hillside had been carefully cut back to achieve a gently inclined slope (**Fig. 23**). The surface was then levelled with a deposit of clay upon which the wall was built, terraced into the hillside. The gate itself was constructed from large squared limestone blocks and was reinforced on either side with masonry bastions built around a rubble core. It was approached by a series of stone steps leading to a cobbled surface within the gate.

Ceramics from the clay deposit beneath the wall are still being studied, but probably date from the later Bronze or early Iron Age, providing a *terminus post quem* for the construction of the wall, although comparison with Hellenistic walls in Kephallonia and Ithaca suggests that Kalivo's walls may date from as late as the 4th century BC.

## The Acropolis

The plateau that lies to the south of the summit of Kalivo is circumscribed by the remains of a rough-built stone enclosure. The enclosure contains numerous structures, the largest and best preserved of which is a rectangular building constructed from faced stones and boulders.

Excavation of this building produced Hellenistic pottery, while numerous flat roof-tile fragments may once have been part of a floor surface. The building's walls were cut into a deposit of red clay that contained a small number of prehistoric ceramics similar to those found in the south gate excavation, although the prehistoric finds only confirm that the building, like the walls, dates to this period or later. The size and construction of this building, together with its location which affords commanding views over much of the

surrounding landscape, indicate that it is amongst the most important of the acropolis buildings, perhaps functioning as an observation point, a fortified house, or even a temple.

At present it remains to be demonstrated that the walls and structures relate to anything other than a Hellenistic period settlement. Post-Hellenistic ceramics found elsewhere on the acropolis, including Roman and medieval wares, suggest that occupation of Kalivo endured in one form or another, and the hill remained an important element within the post-Classical countryside around Butrint.

## THE KANALIT ROCKSHELTER

The Kanalit rockshelter was discovered in June 1939 by the Italian prehistorian, Luigi Cardini. It lies on the eastern slopes of the Acroceraunian mountains, overlooking Vlora Bay and the ancient site of Oricum. Cardini's excavations there revealed copper-age flint tools, handmade pottery, hearths and animal bones, although his research was curtailed by the outbreak of the Second World War. A survey carried out by the Butrint Foundation and the Albanian Institute of Archaeology in 2000 managed to relocate the Kanalit rockshelter, and a surface examination of the hill slope below the shallow cave revealed the presence of extremely rare, Mesolithic stone tools, made of flint and black jasper, as well as iron-age and late-antique pottery.

In July 2004 a small excavation was carried out at the rockshelter by the Butrint Foundation and the Albanian Institute of Archaeology. The excavation confirmed Cardini's claims of prehistoric settlement and enabled the recovery of dateable ceramics and stone tools (Cardini's collections from the site having been unfortunately lost during the Florence floods of 1966). The new excavations revealed late medieval hearth deposits and a stone-flag floor, which had been placed on top of the cave's bedrock in order to provide a level ground surface. The relocation and excavation of Cardini's 1939 trench also meant that we were able to ascertain and identify the deposits he described. Unfortunately, a dark soil containing bronze-age material and believed by Cardini to represent a continuous deposit within the cave, proved to be merely an isolated feature, which extended eastwards below the huge boulder blocking the entrance to the cave. The deposits below the bronze-age soil were devoid of finds.

An unexpected feature of the excavation was the discovery of a complete male skeleton for which a grave had been cut through the late medieval stone-flag floor (**Fig. 24**). Excavation of the skeleton suggested foul play - the body had been placed face down and an iron knife blade was discovered lying below the man's jawbone. The grave clearly post-dated Cardini's excavation trench, providing a burial date of between 1939 and the present day. Consequently, the burial is thought to relate to the Second World War, when the mountains and coast around Kanalit are known to have been a centre of partisan and Special Operations Executive (SOE) activity. Further evidence suggesting a war grave may be provided by a cylindrical metal object buried alongside the body, which may be part of a military radio conductor coil.

The most exciting results of the season came from a long trench that was excavated on the terrace outside the rockshelter, in which an *in-situ*, Mesolithic flint-knapping floor was discovered. Over 120 tiny flint flakes and long 'blanks' for tools were recovered along the line of the terrace edge, lying where they had been made by a flint-knapper around 10,000 years ago (**Fig. 25**). Further analysis of the flints from the terrace should reveal crucial information regarding their method of manufacture and date, as well as any typological affinities with other sites in the region. Only a handful of Mesolithic tools are known from Albania, and thus the discovery of an *in situ* production site is of both national and international importance.

## THE ARCHIVE

The archival material on Butrint is of an outstanding quality, comprising a rich collection of historical and archaeological documentation as well as visual material (photographs, motion pictures, drawings and sketches etc.). The archive project, which is aimed at collating this material and making it accessible to scholars and the general public, continues to provide valuable information for archaeological and conservation work at Butrint. The 2004 season focused on developing the electronic archive and database for Butrint and on advancing the project's publication programme.

An operating system for an electronic archive is now in place. This has been designed to accommodate the archaeological data, and to allow archaeologists and specialists to access the data directly via the internet. Between June and August a temporary office was set up in Albania to handle the process of entering the material into the new Butrint database, with the result that *c.* 8,000 individual records pertaining to the excavations and finds from Butrint now exist in electronic form. The data entry has further provided important training in electronic data-handling for a number of Albanian students who are now familiar with the methodological approach of the archaeological database (**Fig. 26**). The Butrint Foundation's success in securing scholarships for Albanian students at the University of Siena (generously funded by the Fondazione Monte dei Paschi di Siena), will enable three students to receive further training in the application of information technology in archaeology, and will allow data entry to continue for the rest of the year.

The electronic archive will also function as a public source of information on Butrint. To this end the photographer Brian Donovan from the University of Auckland, who specialises in 360° interactive images of archaeological and heritage sites, was invited to produce a series of panoramic photographs of Butrint that will provide users of the website with a first view of the city (see cover).

Archival research on the work of the French archaeologist Leon Rey, who worked in Albania in the interwar period, continued during the early part of the year and a complete copy of his personal archive has been prepared. The Butrint Foundation has been instrumental in bringing this archive to public recognition and has facilitated the Rey family's donation of this material to the Albanian State Archives. The Butrint Foundation also participated in the international conference on Rey's excavations at Apollonia held at Tirana and Apollonia in May, co-sponsoring a well-received exhibition on the history of the archaeological investigations at Apollonia. The exhibition will be displayed at Saranda, Durrës and Tirana during the course of the year.

Following the publication in 2003 of the excavations of the theatre by Luigi Maria Ugolini, a second account of his work is now in preparation, detailing Ugolini's investigations at the hilltop sites of Kalivo and Çuka e Aitoit (Eagle Mountain). The volume combines Ugolini's unpublished original manuscripts with modern reassessments and archaeological investigations, and highlights the importance of the hinterland of Butrint for a fuller understanding of the city through history.

# CONSERVATION

## **Diaporit**

During and following the 2004 excavation season at Diaporit, thanks to a generous grant from the Howard and Nancy Marks Trust, a number of interim conservation measures were undertaken to protect the excavations in advance of a more extensive programme of conservation and interpretation. This included the conservation of areas of wall plaster in the bath-house area, carried out by the Institute of Monuments in collaboration with Pippa Pearce of the British Museum (**Fig. 27**), and an extensive programme of back-filling. Additional areas of the bath-house were also excavated in order to make the site more accessible to visitors.

## **The Triconch Palace**

Following the 2003 grant of \$10,000 from the Butrint Foundation, the Institute of Monument's conservation programme at the Triconch Palace is now proceeding well, following the delay caused by the high water levels of the winter of 2003-4. The ongoing conservation project was visited by Richard Andrews of Carden and Godfrey Architects (who drew up the original proposals for the conservation of the Triconch Palace). The Institute of Monuments have also drawn up proposals for a series of raised wooden walkways over the site, which may form an alternative to back-filling some areas.

## **The Vrina Plain**

In accordance with the recommendations of the 2003-4 UNESCO report on Butrint, the excavations were fenced off to protect the monuments from grazing animals (**Fig. 28**). All delicate areas of the excavation (such as mosaics) were covered with netting and sand, while areas of the excavation that had been completed were back-filled entirely. This included, in particular, areas that had been exposed in the drainage ditch, such as that of the so-called 'monument', which were particularly vulnerable to flooding.

## CONCLUSION

This was the most successful season to date at Butrint. We now have a sense not just of knowing Butrint intimately, but also for the first time being able to re-calibrate its long history to shape an entirely new story about the evolution of Butrint from an important Hellenistic sanctuary to a port with readily dated episodes of prosperity. This, in turn, has major implications for the history of the central Mediterranean permitting us to reassess the history of the region in these periods. As this report shows, the excavations each produced good results despite the often difficult spring weather. In addition, we were able to advance all the project's ambitious post-excavation targets. This year, too, we also engaged in some basic conservation activities, taking heed of the 2003-4 UNESCO report on Butrint as a World Heritage Site. Perhaps the most satisfying aspect was the increasing part played by our young Albanian students – many of them alumni of the PHI-sponsored programmes in the UK. They undertook much of the day-to-day organization, and brought to the whole enterprise a spirit of fun and commitment.

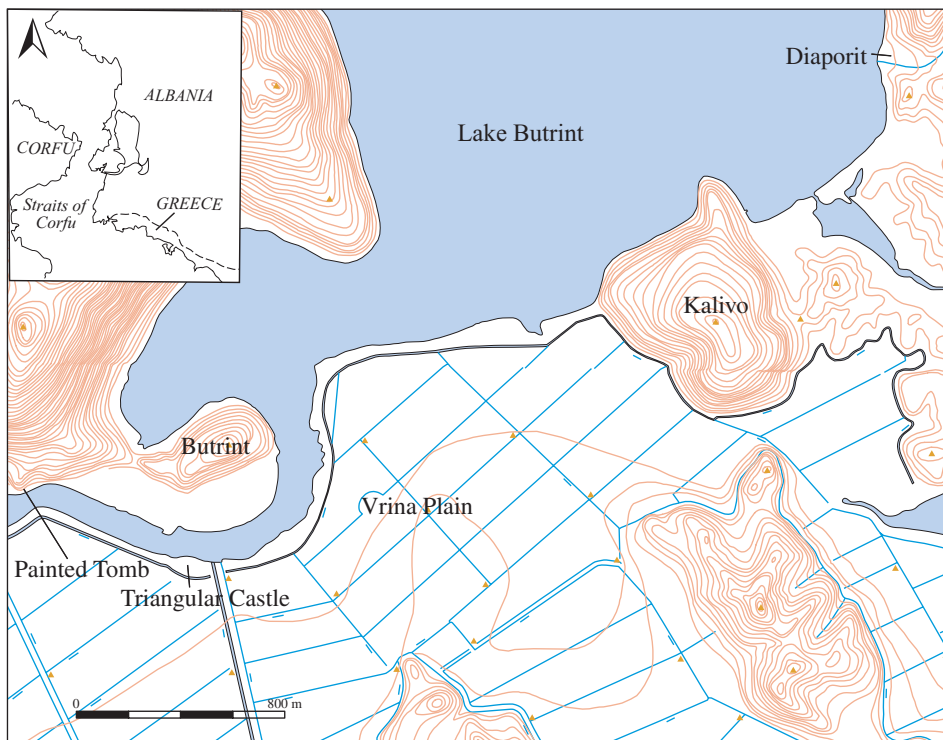


Fig. 1. The location of the 2004 excavations and surveys.



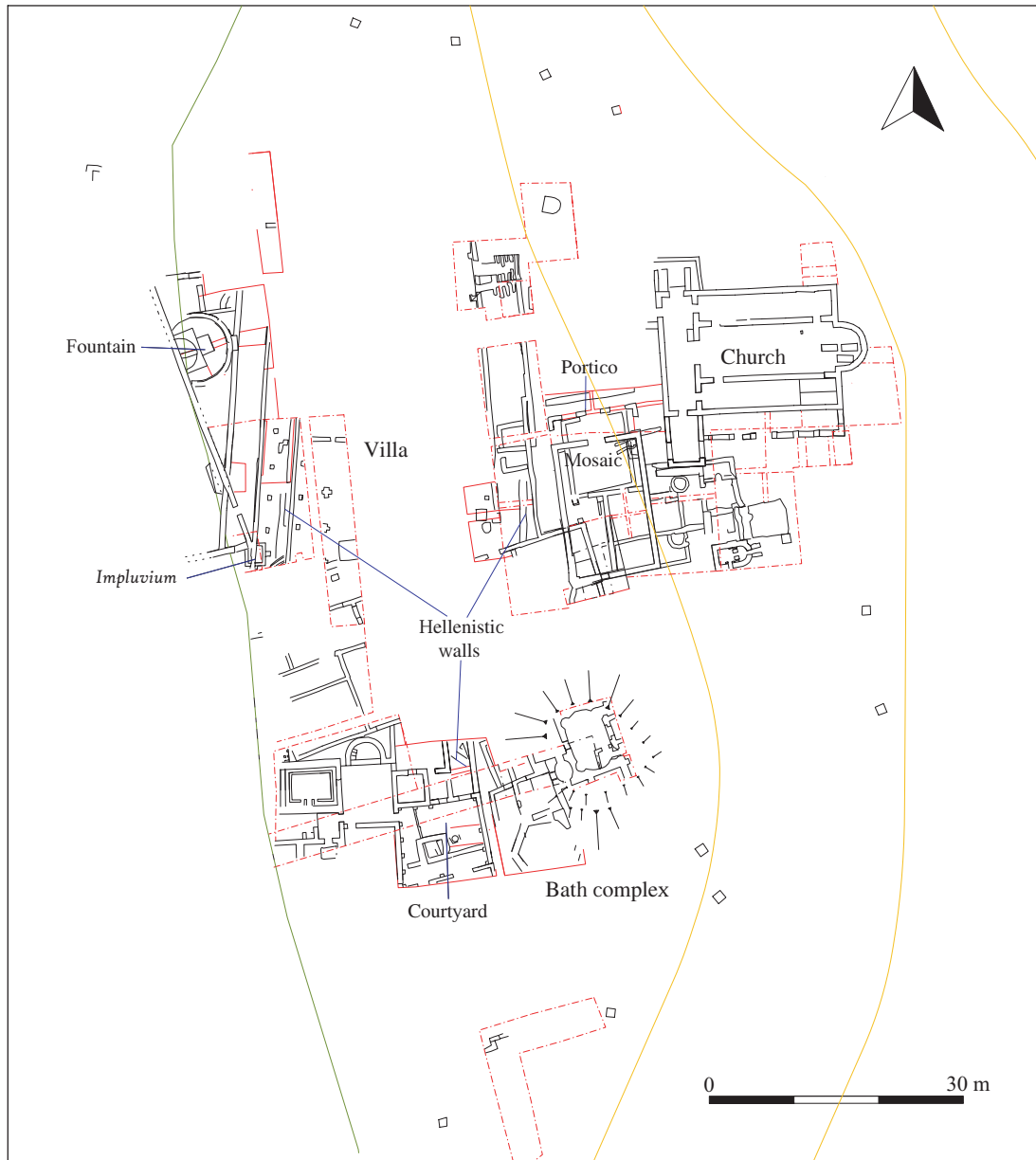


Fig. 2. Plan of the excavated area at Diaporit.



Fig. 3. View of the eastern terrace, with the Hellenistic terrace wall (made of larger blocks) visible behind the two nearest people.



Fig. 4. The monumental fountain (with Butrint visible in the distance).



Fig. 5. Excavations of the bath-house courtyard.



Fig. 6. The upper terrace, with the 1st-century mosaic visible in the foreground.

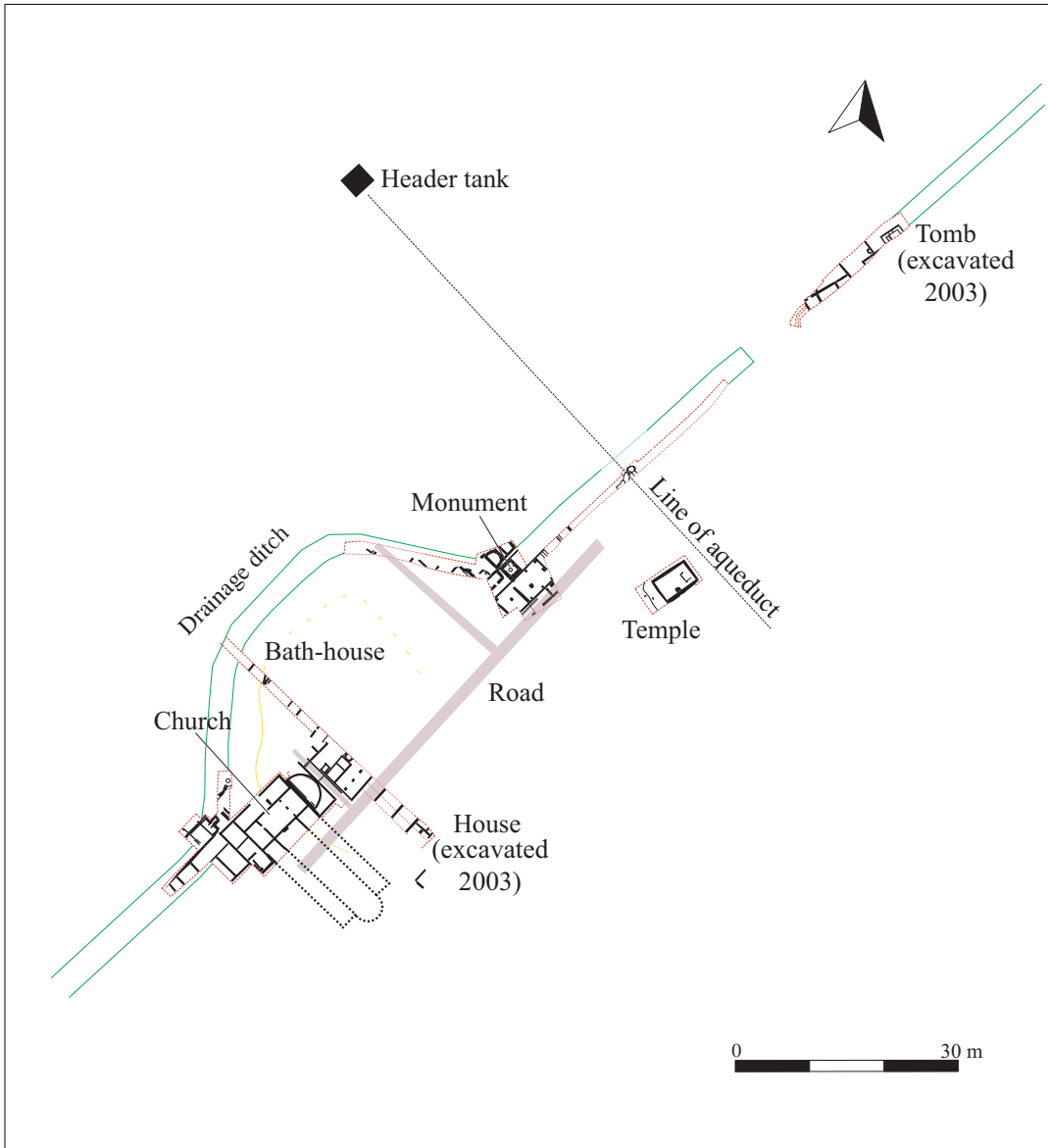


Fig. 7. Plan of excavations on the Vrina Plain.

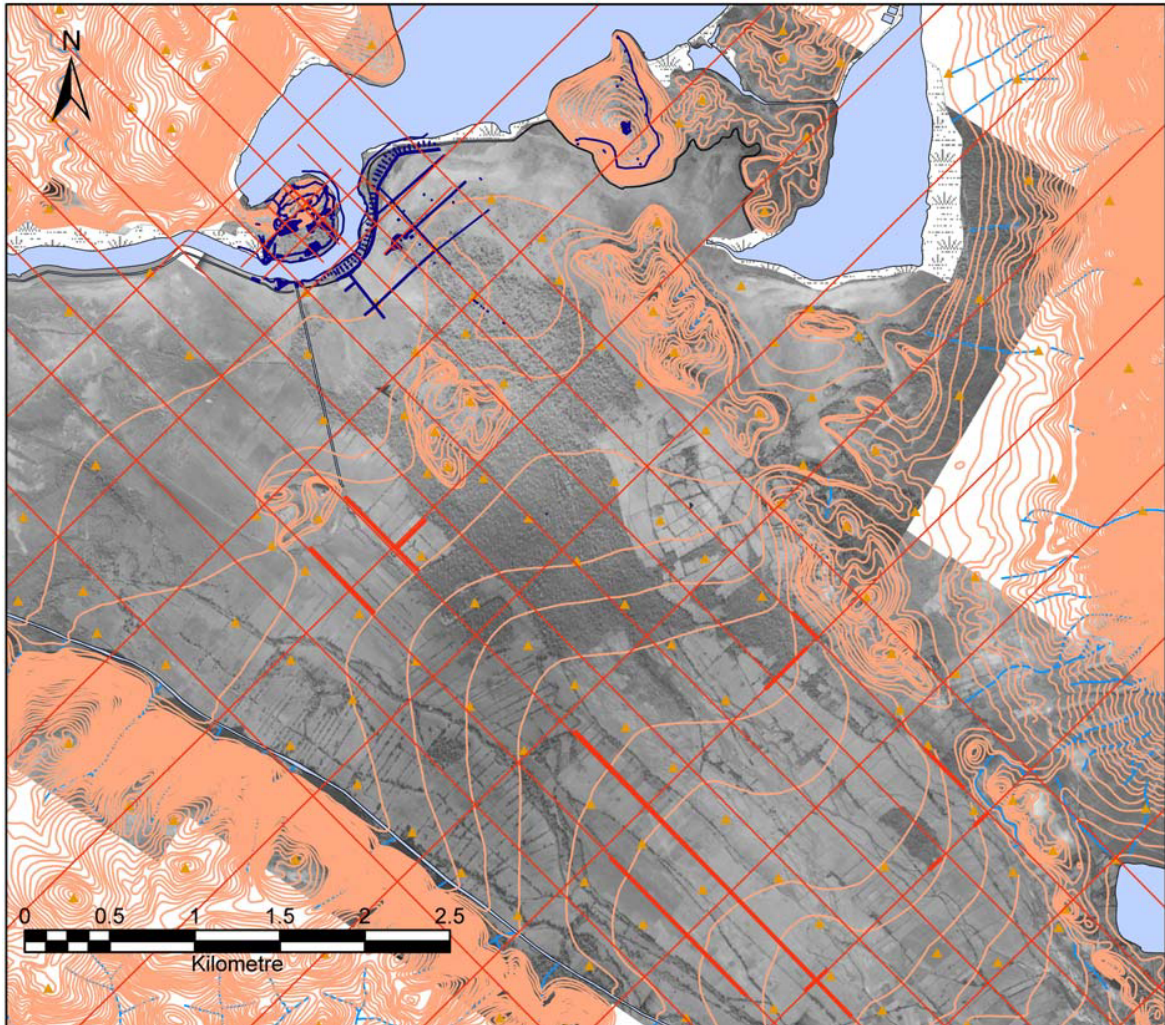


Fig. 8. Centuriation systems to the south-east of Butrint.

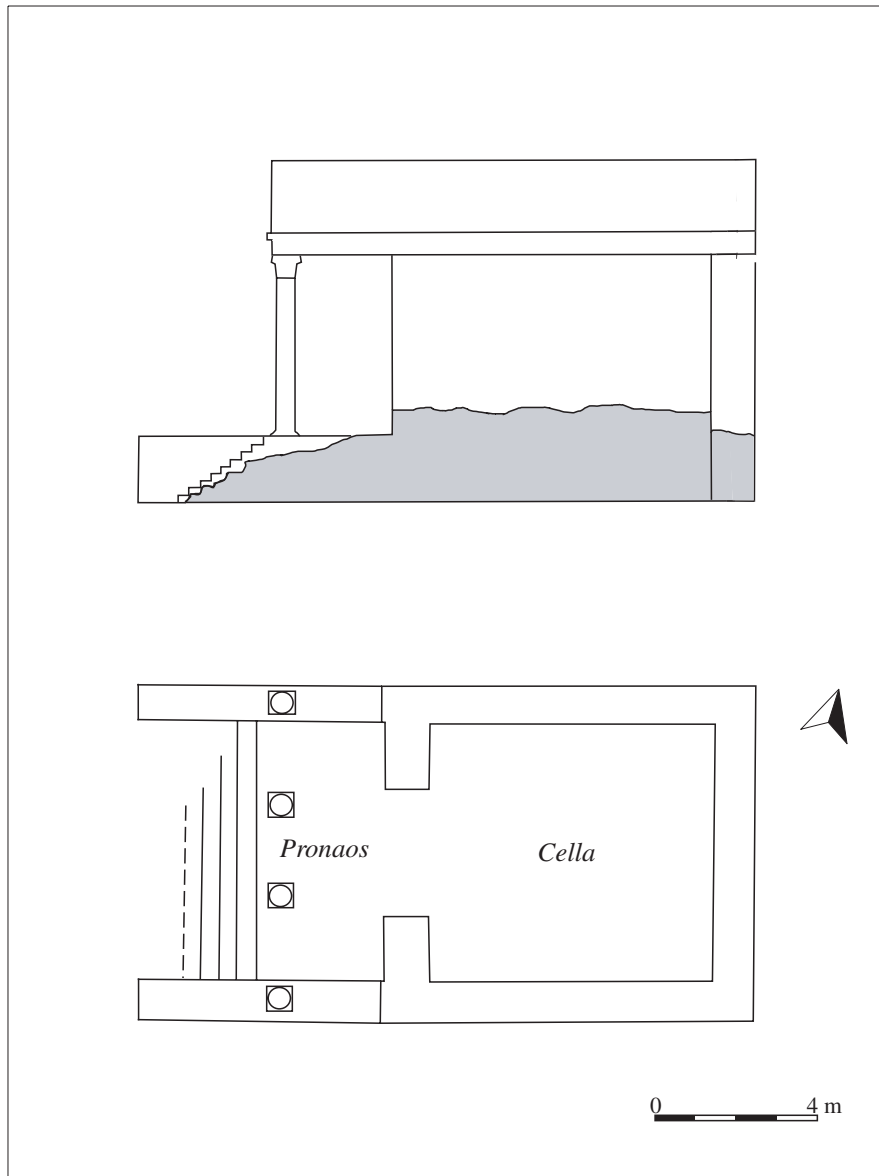


Fig. 9. Reconstruction of the temple found on the Vrına Plain.

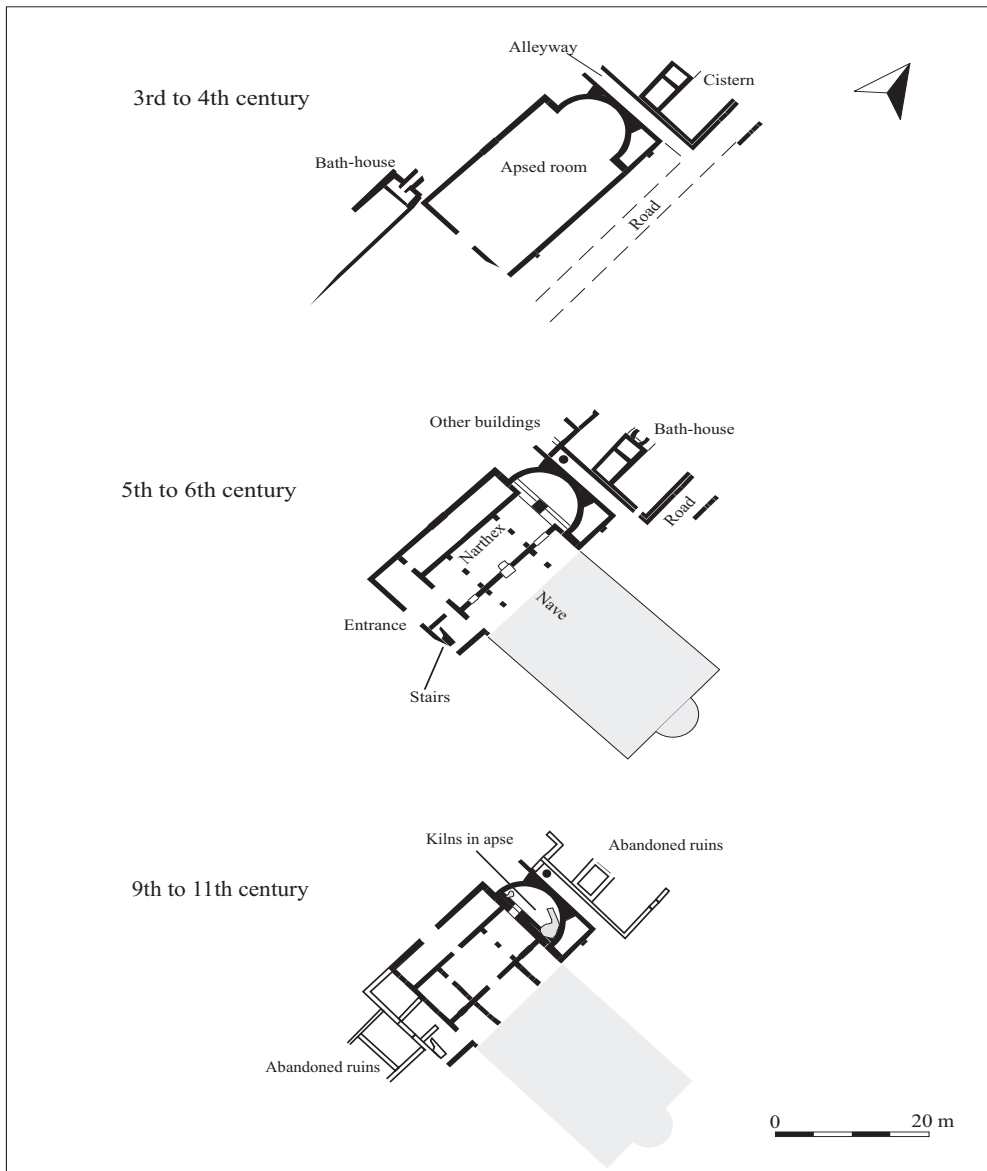


Fig. 10. The construction phases of the apsed room/church.



Fig. 11. The mosaic in the nave of the church.



Fig. 12. The training excavation.



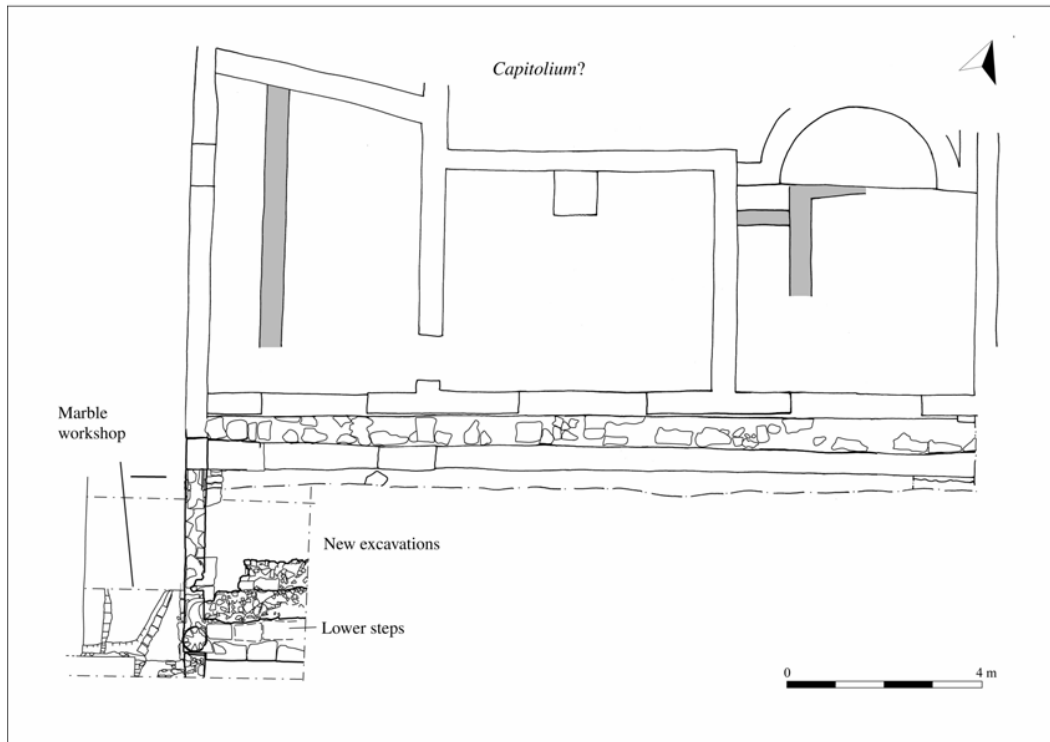


Fig. 13. Plan of the forum excavations.



Fig. 14. Excavations in progress in the forum area.



Fig. 15. Marble flakes from the reworking of the togate statue.

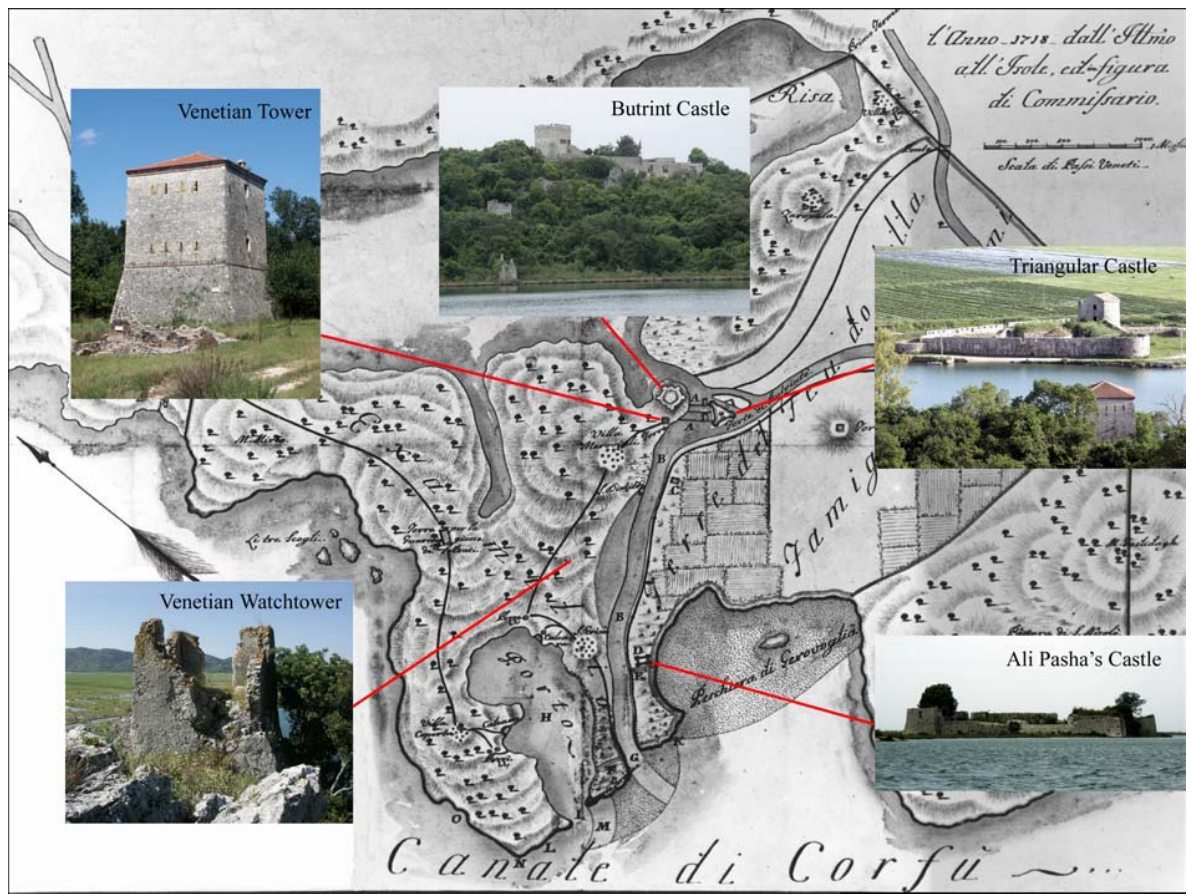


Fig. 16. The medieval and Venetian fortifications of Butrint, with their position indicated on the map of 1718.

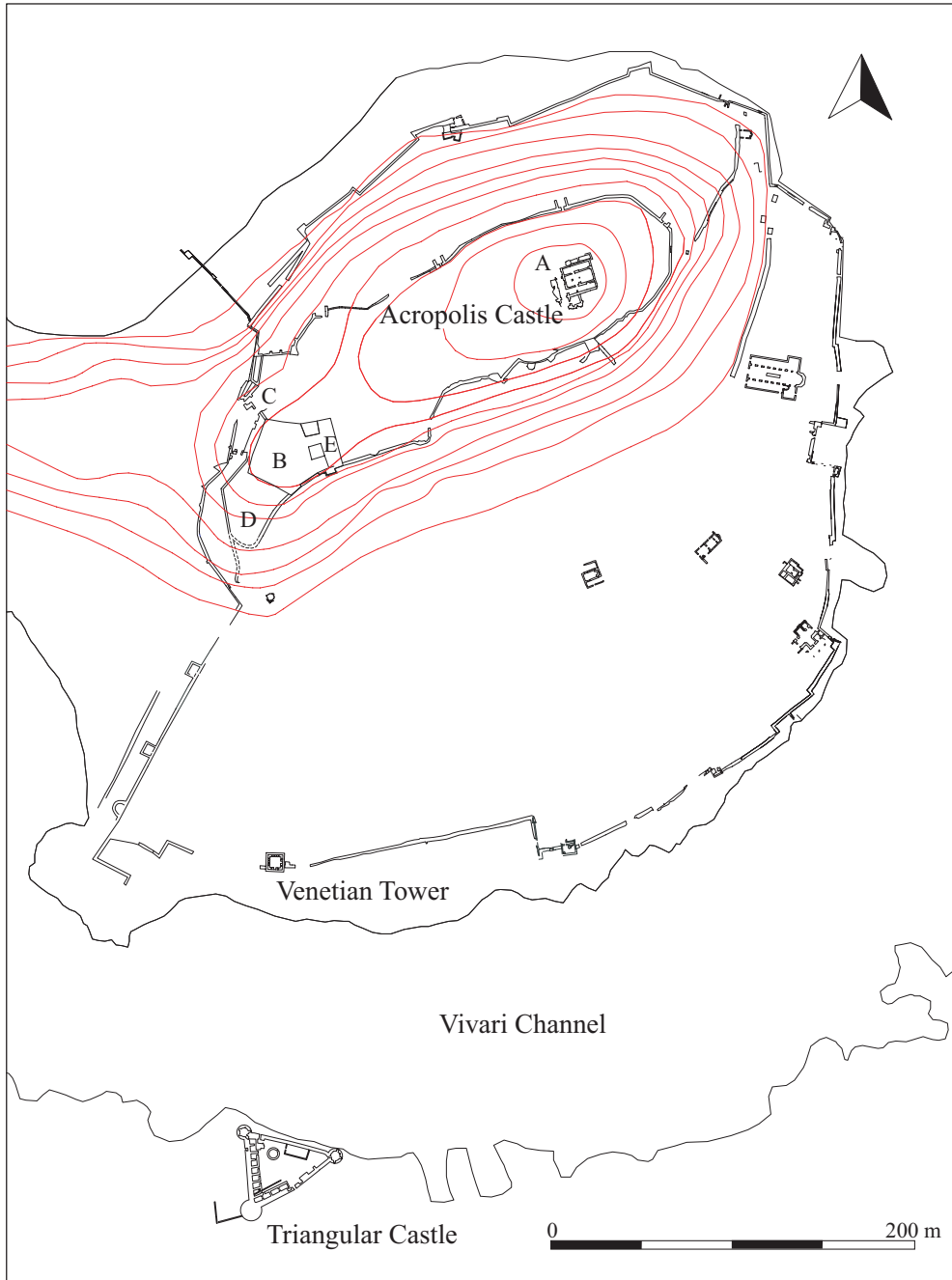


Fig. 17. Plan of the Acropolis Castle (A - earliest castle; B – 13th-century castle; C – Hellenistic gate; D – subsidiary enclosure; E – later tower).

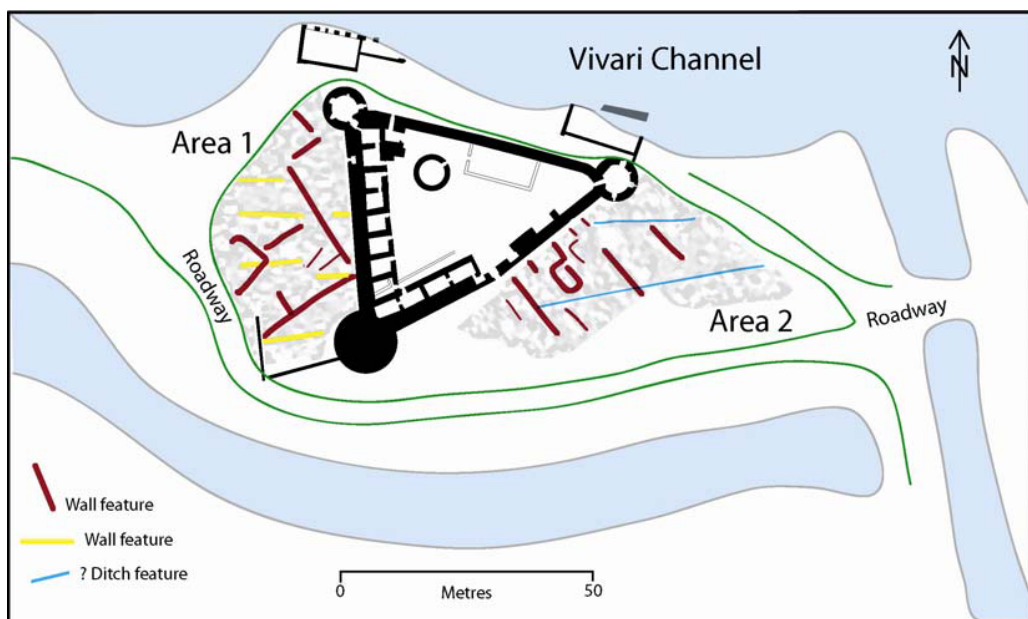


Fig. 18. The results of the geophysical survey around the Triangular Castle.



Fig. 19. Recording the paintings in the Painted Tomb.



Fig. 20. Study of the human skeletal remains.

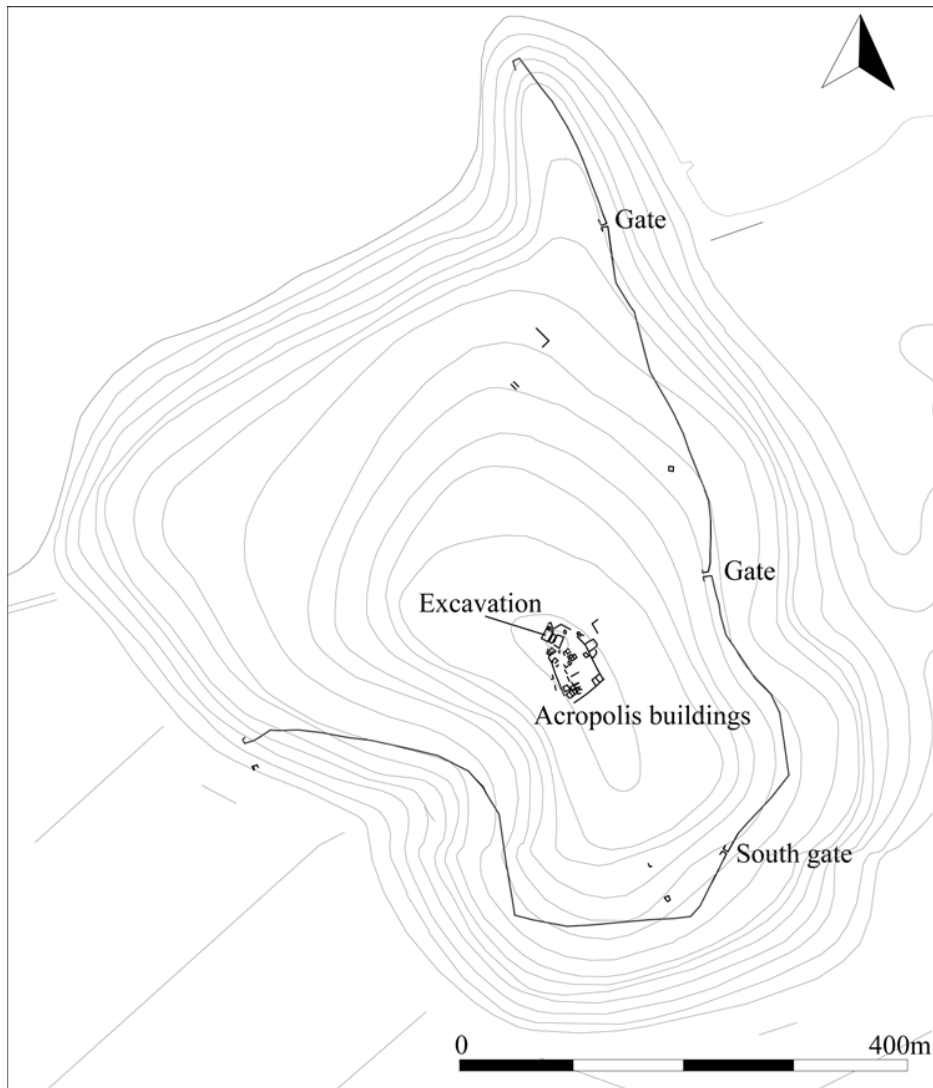


Fig. 21. Plan of Kalivo.





Fig. 22. Kalivo seen from Butrint.



Fig. 23. Excavation in the south gate of Kalivo.



Fig. 24. Second World War partisan found in the excavations of the Kanalit rockshelter.

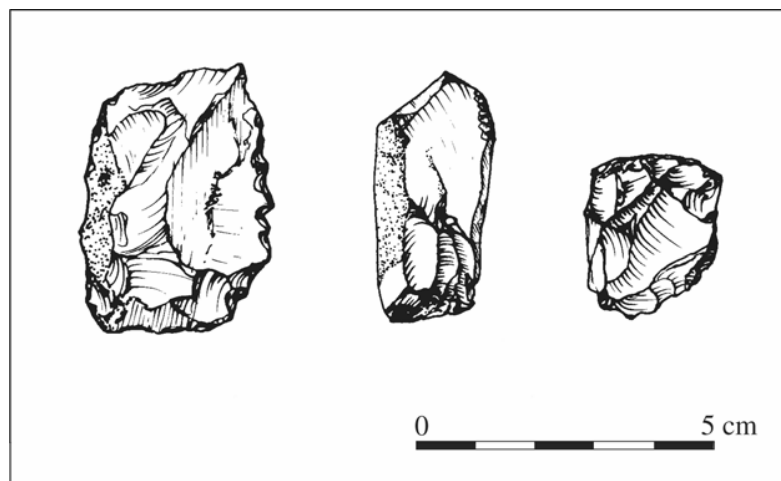


Fig. 25. Mesolithic flints found on the terrace outside the Kanalit rockshelter.



Fig. 26. Data inputting for the electronic archive.



Fig. 27. Conservation of wall plaster at Diaporit.



Fig. 28. The fence erected around the excavations on the Vrına Plain.