

Butrint Foundation written reports

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The Butrint Foundation



Field Projects 2005

Interim Report

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Foreword (Fig. 1)

Each year at Butrint seems to be on a larger, more ambitious scale than the year before! This year was no exception. The archaeological excavations prosecuted thanks to our collaboration with the Packard Humanities Institute involved more Albanian students (45) and more nationalities (18) than ever before amongst a total number of 147 project participants. A team of specialists concentrated upon the post-excavation study of finds from the Triconch Palace – the subject of the next report, to follow *Byzantine Butrint* (2004) – while excavations proceeded in the forum (in the centre of Butrint) and on the Vrina Plain. Meanwhile, thanks largely to the generosity of the Howard and Nancy Marks Fund, renewed emphasis was placed upon conservation projects, including backfilling and presenting the Triconch Palace, and protecting and conserving Diaporit Roman villa and the Vrina Plain monuments. Work on the digital archive project continued throughout the summer with the support of the Drue Heinz Trust. Finally, but by no means least, the team was engaged in the making of a new museum in the acropolis castle as well as establishing way-marked trails with elegant information panels not only inside Butrint, but also around outlying environmental habitats and archaeological sites. In all, over ten weeks, Butrint steadily assumed a new identity with a great contribution to its history as well as to the facilities for sharply increasing numbers of visitors.

In collaboration with Ilir Gjipali (Albanian Institute of Archaeology) the excavation project was directed by Richard Hodges and the museum renovation, site interpretation panels and environmental trail projects were directed by Daniel Renton. Project Management was carried out by Andrew Crowson working with Gjoni Marko and Elenita Roshi. Reshad Gega was the principal designer for the museum restoration project. Louise Schofield provided management back-up and general support to the excavations and museum throughout the Project.

Dhimiter Çondi was the principal co-director of all excavations on behalf of the Institute of Archaeology. For the Butrint Foundation Oliver Gilkes directed the excavation of the heroon with the assistance of Emily Glass and oversaw the student training programme with Nevila Molla. The excavation of the Vrina Plain church was directed by Sarah Leppard and Simon Greenslade. Excavations in the forum were led jointly by David Hernandez (University of Cincinnati), Benen Hayden and the Butrint National Park Archaeologist Erjona Qilla.

The Finds Department was managed by David Boschi and Ilir Papa (Institute of Archaeology). Sabina Veseli (Albanian Institute of Monuments) coordinated the conservation and display of objects for the museum. Ceramics were studied by Paul Reynolds and Joanita Vroom. Coin studies were undertaken by Shpresa Gjonecraj (Institute of Archaeology) along with Sam Moorhead, Richard Abdy (both British Museum, Hellenistic and Roman coinage), and Pagona Papadopoulou (University of Paris – 1, post-Roman coinage). Small finds were studied by John Mitchell (University of East Anglia) and Sarah Jennings (English Heritage) catalogued and studied the glass. Human skeletal remains were assessed by Todd Fenton with Jane Wankmiller, Jessica

Brown and Jared Beatrice (all Michigan State University). Lindsey Murray (Michigan State University) took bone samples for DNA analysis. Faunal remains were recorded by Adrienne Powell (University of Cardiff). Sculpture, marble fragments and inscriptions were examined by Inge Lyse Hansen and David Hernandez. John Patterson (University of Cambridge) re-assessed the Minerva inscription in light of new finds and excavations. All of the finds specialists employed on the excavation project also gave time and support to the museum project through selection and placement of objects and preparation of descriptive texts for display cases.

Alket Islami (National Aero Club of Albania) and Massimo Zanfini (University of Bologna) took aerial photographs of the excavations and Michael Grayley (Norwich School of Art and Design) undertook the object photography. Finds illustration was carried out by Adelheid Heil (University of Suor Orsola Benincasa, Naples).

A programme of soil sampling to recover environmental remains was devised and executed by Anne-Marie Heath (University of Sheffield) and soil cores to seek for volcanic glass were taken and prepared by David Bescoby and Julian Andrews (both University of East Anglia).

Conservation of the Vrina Plain mosaic and excavation finds was conducted by Pippa Pearce assisted by Laura Church (both British Museum), and conservation of objects for museum display was carried out by Renaud Bernadet along with Avni Alcani (Institute of Monuments). Conservation and presentation work in the Triconch Palace was designed and implemented by Francesca de Vita supported by the Butrint National Park Monuments specialist Albana Hakani. The backfilling programme at Diaporit was organised and supervised by Jerry O'Dwyer.

The Archive Project was directed by Inge Lyse Hansen and run on a day-to-day basis by Cerys Reid-Smith (University of Sheffield) supported by Pippa Lacey (University of East Anglia). Office set up and technical support and advice was provided by Michael Rains (York Archaeological Trust) and Ansar Khoussianiov. The author of the new Butrint website, Daniel Wrightson, visited the Project to gain contemporary ideas for its presentation.

Jerry O'Dwyer and Muço Laze implemented all Project logistics. Kujtim Jazenxhi was in charge of security for people and stored objects at the principal hotel and the team was admirably catered for by Anife Laze with the support of Violeta Jazenxhi.

Sincere thanks are extended to all participants in the 2005 Field Projects and to all who contributed text and images to this Interim Report. The season's success was, as ever, made possible by the continuing support of Professor Muzafer Korkuti and the dedication of the Albanian Institute of Archaeology.

The Vrina Plain

The Heroon (Figs 2, 3, 4, 5)

During 2005, further excavations were undertaken on the monument identified in 2004 as a temple. Most of the structure was exposed and excavations were carried out along its southern and western sides.

The building proved to be a small Italic-style temple in an Ionic order. A lower stone plinth with mouldings continued around the temple, though on the southern side, where the presence of an earlier building had partly protected it from later robbing, the *opus caementicium* core was faced with stone slabs held in position by iron and lead pins and clamps. Along this side the sequence of mouldings was preserved, with a lower moulding accompanying the plinth, an intermediate moulding only on the sides and rear of the building and then a badly damaged upper moulding at the level of the pronaos on which the brick walls of the cella stood.

A flight of steps on the extensively-robbled western side led up to a narrow pronaos between two *antae* walls. The colonnade probably consisted of six columns *c.* 4m high, though these were entirely lost, presumably removed by stone robbers. Enough of the western face survived, however, to reconstruct the arrangement of the steps and pronaos pavement. Other fragments of the façade were found in demolition debris: elements of the cornice and architrave, which were simple and undecorated, in a grey-veined white marble. The whole of the facade probably reached nearly 8m in height from the surface of the pronaos.

A wide doorway led into the cella: placements for a massive threshold and stone imposts were found. The cella interior was rectangular, and it was clear that the walls had been covered, at least on the lower levels, with a grey-white veneer. Fragments of *verde antico* veneer were found, and these too may have come from the interior. The floor by contrast was a fine, if simple, *cocciopesto* surface.

A series of rectangular mortared tile boxes of varying size, the largest almost 2m long, were evident on the *cocciopesto* surface. Combined with the presence of substantial fragments of marble sarcophagi of 2nd- and 3rd-century AD date and human bones found in 2004, it can be suggested that these structures were either tombs or bases for sarcophagi. A single tile-covered infant grave was found outside the temple against its southern wall, in a narrow space between the temple and the earlier building to the south.

There had clearly been some later reuse of the cella: the remains of a rough tile and earth floor were associated with 4th-century AD coins.

The temple was extensively robbed during late antiquity when the stone pavement in front of the temple was removed, possibly to floor the narthex of the palaeochristian church to the west, and then robbed again in the Middle Ages, dated by 14th-century AD

pottery in demolition deposits. The secondary robbing was especially thorough. Except on the southern side, the walls were undermined and pulled over, scattering masonry. Large sections of the cella walls remained intact on the ground and thus the operation was evidently intended to remove the marble blocks of the cornice which were then still *in situ* on top of the walls. These were then smashed up for easy removal, and abundant remnant fragments were found amongst the other debris.

The precise construction date of the building remains uncertain. It is aligned on the later of two centuriation grids identified on the Vrina Plain, which appears from other excavated buildings to date to the 2nd century AD. However, the style of brickwork suggests the later part of the 1st century AD, and the marble veneer might indicate a later date yet, in the mid-2nd century AD. Due to groundwater, the excavations did not penetrate below the level of the pavement in front of the building, and ceramics found in build-up and rubble deposits around the structure date to no later than the mid-to-late 3rd century AD. These may originate either from the use of the temple or perhaps from clearance prior to its demolition.

Considering the date of the sarcophagi, the building may have served as a burial place at a later date. It was, however, clearly not intended as a mausoleum, and forms part of a series of buildings, along with the ‘monuments’ excavated in 2001-3 and the earlier structure to their south, apparently arranged around two sides of an open space. The structure and its environs are perhaps best interpreted as a heroon: a Hellenistic concept partly adopted by the Roman world, the focus of a funerary cult to a particular figure, and a grand ritual space before the necropolis on the Vrina Plain which stretches away to the east.

The identification of any particular figure associated with this monument is fraught with problems, though heroa are typically dedicated to founders of cities or heroes. At Butrint one might suggest the mythical city founder Helenus, the son of King Priam, or even Aeneas. Such memorials though are normally erected within a city, like the Heroon of King Battus at Cyrene, or the so-called Heroon of Aeneas at Lavinium, whereas the Vrina Plain temple is outside the principal part of the town, albeit close to the approach road that would have led across the causeway and bridge to the city centre.

Virgil’s account of the visit of Aeneas to Butrint presents another possibility to be considered. Here is described a cenotaph heroon situated near the city gates, which was dedicated to the memory of the great Trojan hero Hector. It is possible that the city authorities could have recreated this to promote the city, highlighting its mention in an epic known to all educated Romans.

A reconstruction of the front elevation of the heroon has been drafted to elucidate the arrangement of the steps, pronaos and the six columns and to convey the imposing frontage and scale of the building. This reconstruction has been based on the surviving remains, fragments of architectural decoration (particularly the capitals) and follows Vitruvian principles for a eustyle Ionic temple.

Marble Finds from the Heroon (Fig. 6)

A large quantity of architectural and figurative marble fragments was found during the excavation of the heroon. The heroon was evidently adorned lavishly as confirmed by a fine volute fragment of an Ionic capital – indicating the nature of the columns fronting the temple – and a number of revetment fragments of *verde antico* marble. Furthermore, a marble base with a circular attachment hole for a statue was found in front of the steps, suggesting that the entrance to the temple was flanked by at least two standing statues. Indeed, a rather fine portrait head in the style of Marcus Aurelius, found in 1987 near the north-east corner of the structure, may belong to one such statue.

The figurative fragments originate principally from reliefs, in particular the relief decoration of sarcophagi. The discovery of two heads of dogs and a lion filial suggest at least one sarcophagus being adorned with a hunting theme, though an earlier discovery of a female figure with bared breast may indicate that it depicted a battle between Greeks and Amazons. The funerary context of the pieces is supported by the assessment of a large number of marble finds revealed during topsoil clearance in 1987. Many of the pieces originate from Attic sarcophagi, though at least two may be related to workshops in Asia Minor. Common to both were their monumental size and elaborate decorative schemes. In addition, there is evidence amongst the pieces for at least one kline-type sarcophagus – where the sarcophagus is shaped like a couch for the deceased to recline upon.

The pieces can be dated to between the later 2nd to the later 4th century AD, with the vast majority belonging to the second half of the 3rd century AD. Importation of material of this nature places Butrint – in common with the rest of Epirus during this period – within a commercial network centred on Greece and Asia Minor rather than metropolitan Rome. Collectively the finds provide evidence for considerable investment in high quality and monumental-sized funerary sculpture.

The Roman Town House (Figs 2, 7, 8, 9)

The eastern rooms of a Roman town house were partially exposed during 2003, situated to the south of a major *actus*-aligned colonnaded road and immediately south-east of the later church. Excavation of this property resumed in 2005 as the site of the Student Training Programme.

Although the complete plan of the house has not yet been revealed, this season's work discovered original floor levels in two rooms and dated the earliest phase of the building to the late 1st or early 2nd century AD. At this time we now know that the property contained two luxurious halls decorated with painted wall plaster and paved with mosaic floors with geometric motifs.

As has been discovered elsewhere on the Vrina Plain, it seems that the affluent lifestyle of the early Roman period was also somewhat short-lived here. By the early 3rd century AD the aspect and use of the rooms had changed entirely: both internal doorways and those fronting onto the road were blocked up and beaten earth floors were laid over the mosaics. A clay-lined kiln piercing the later surface indicates that small-scale industrial works were now operating in the formerly grand residence.

The secondary occupation was sealed by the dramatic collapse of entire sections of the building's walls. A rectangular space – a window – in the masonry of one of the western walls indicates that this looked out on to a courtyard that would have also had a frontage on to the colonnaded road. The wholesale collapse of this structure points to a dramatic event here in the 3rd century AD, namely an earthquake. This horizon has appeared repeatedly in the excavations on the Vrina Plain, and it is evident that the earthquake wrought widespread destruction upon extra-mural Butrint. Suffice it to say that the area of the town house was never inhabited again, although it was intermittently used as part of the late-antique and medieval burial ground focused on the 5th-century AD church.

One more season of excavation should conclude our understanding of the town house. A more complete plan needs to be recovered along with the full dimensions of the mosaic-paved halls and, perhaps most importantly, how the building relates in all of its phases to the adjacent church and the Roman period structures from which the church evolved.

The Early Roman Apsidal Building (Figs 2, 7, 10)

In 2004, excavations revealed part of a substantial palaeochristian church, containing a striking mosaic pavement in the nave, built across an earlier large apsidal structure. Utilising the earlier east-west orientated building as an entrance vestibule, it appeared that the church was constructed on a north-south alignment with the southern wall of the earlier building removed to facilitate the new build. During 2005 the excavations concentrated on the apsidal building to better appreciate the sequences and possible functions of its evolution and to determine its precise relationship with the church.

Measuring 18x10m with an eastern apse, the apsidal building was initially identified as an *aula*, possibly a *triclinium*, belonging to a Roman *domus* associated with a bath-house to the east. Reappraisal in 2005 discovered that in fact it encompassed a number of phases of earlier structures, some of which had been levelled and built over whilst others were made use of in raising the *aula*. These earlier buildings fronted onto an *actus*-aligned road (on the opposite side of the road to the Roman town house), part of the infrastructural grid of the postulated Roman colonial settlement. The *aula* itself dates to a period when the road grid was being encroached upon, as the apse was built over a north-south road that formerly ran between the *aula* and the bath-house.

Prior to the 3rd century AD, the internal layout of the *aula* was altered with the addition of a number of walls and piers to support vaults carrying a second storey, probably a gallery, accessed via a staircase on the western wall. Some of these walls stretched southwards across the road line and were later incorporated into the fabric of the church. As part of on-going changes to the arrangements (and, conceivably, activities) within the *aula*, the apse was separated off and converted into some kind of lined tank. Floor levels were raised and the space in front of the tank was paved with flagstones that apparently included *spolia* from a substantial Roman building, incorporating a slab with impressions of letters from a monumental bronze inscription. A new triple doorway in the northern wall of the building was inserted, in part utilising the existing space of a double window. The opening of the door may be related to use of a wharf on the nearby contemporary waterfront.

Taken together, the structural alterations indicate that the building at this time performed a public role. The division of space, the paved areas and the insertion of the tank suggest that the building had become a place for storage, plausibly for central collection and distribution of agricultural goods. It may also have had a processing function as well: an olive press was found immediately to the north in 2002 and it is not inconceivable that oil was contained in the apsidal tank. If these interpretations are correct, the structural modifications will date most likely to the 2nd century AD when centralised agrarian depots were instituted across the Empire. Interestingly, the suggested role of the building may account for one or more of the numerous bath-houses that are found close by: they may be the washrooms of the centre's workforce.

As already recorded at the site of the town house on the south side of the road, a cataclysmic destruction befell structures on the Vrina Plain, including the converted *aula*, probably in the late 3rd century AD. For almost two centuries the site lay abandoned, until the ruins were cleared during the 5th century AD and remodelled once more to serve a religious purpose.

The Palaeochristian Church (Figs 2, 7 11)

The excavations on the Vrina Plain in 2004 had concentrated on exposing the apsidal building, and only incidentally were *c.* 4m of the church nave and aisles exposed. During 2005 the focus of the excavations shifted to examine the church, and a further 432m² was excavated, exposing its full extent encompassing the colourful nave mosaic in its entirety.

In structural terms the actual form of the building was already in existence when the function of "church" was adapted to it in the 5th century AD. The *aula* became the entrance vestibule of the church, divided into an exo-narthex entered via the triple doorway to the north, with the central paved area becoming a narthex leading onto the nave. The apsidal tank appears to have been floored over at this time.

The most significant addition to the existing buildings was the instatement of a bright and colourful mosaic in the nave (see below). A second section of mosaic was uncovered in the sanctuary in front of a southern apse, with the two mosaics separated by a chancel screen. Remains of an altar were found in the sanctuary, situated centrally before the apse. The apse, which itself may have been screened, was raised above the level of the mosaic on a flagstone floor and was entered via a step. A large trench cut through the centre of the apse indicated that something of significance or value – perhaps relics – had been robbed from the church at a later date.

A number of structural modifications were applied to the building over time: doorways were narrowed then blocked and a new staircase was built over the tank. These changes may have become necessary as there are indications that the building became unstable. Evidence of this can be seen around the chancel screen and especially in the narthex where a number of post-holes for timber props were cut through the flagstone floor. Ultimately, however, the arcades dividing the nave and aisles did collapse and the former arcade openings were blocked in.

It is not certain precisely how long the church remained usable, but it seems that rising groundwater tables played a part in its desertion. It was without doubt abandoned as a church by the 9th century AD when much of the superstructure and furniture such as the screens and flag floors were smashed and removed. The area of the narthex may have remained open and in use, as evidence of small hearths was found in conjunction with a number of coins of Leo VI (AD 886-912). Two kilns were found in the former *aula* apse, one of which may have been a pottery kiln.

This period of industrial activity within the shell of the building appears as the last occupation of the complex. A number of graves were subsequently cut through or placed directly on top of the mosaic. It is likely that these individuals, who were largely children, were interred here because the memory of the church remained and the ground was still therefore deemed consecrated.

The Church Mosaic Pavement (Figs 12, 13)

The nave and sanctuary of the church were paved with mosaic, a uniform design and programme encompassing both areas. The mosaic *tesserae* were laid in a bed of pinkish mortar supported by a raft of tightly-packed roof-tiles. The *tesserae* are c.10mm square and are mostly cut from limestone of various colours: white, shades of pink, ochre, lavender, pale blue, mid grey-blue and black. Bright red-orange *tesserae* are made from tiles, and yellow ones are of glass.

In the nave a single composition extends the whole length of the floor. The principal field is a long rectangular grid of irregular octagons, forming medallions; the octagons are filled with an abundant variety of motifs: sea-creatures, birds, terrestrial beasts, fruit, flowers and trees. Superimposed on this are two large tablets, *tabulae ansatae*, carrying

inscriptions in Byzantine Greek. At the northern end of the nave a variety of fish and sea-creatures, mushrooms, flowers, a stag and two cruciform designs surround the smaller of the two inscriptions, which translates as: "In fulfilment of the vow (prayer) of those whose names God knows". Beyond this the selection of creatures shifts to large feline quadrupeds, a cock and a hen with her chicks and other birds, some fish, a basket of flowers and further cruciform devices. Further on a second large *tabula ansata* with a now largely destroyed inscription, including four preserved words: "... and rest ... your bodily substance ..." is surrounded by a more symmetrically ordered group of animals, sheep on the left and birds above, facing in towards the inscription. To judge from its size and the ordered disposition of animals in attendance, this was the more extensive and important of the two inscriptions.

Although a third of the panels are lost, the half of the nave nearest to the sanctuary is filled with birds, trees bearing fruit, a few quadrupeds and some rectangular and circular ornamental configurations. The row abutting the threshold to the sanctuary contains birds and trees and a chalice next to the central axis. The disposition of motifs over the floor is a somewhat informal, but nevertheless marked, progression from an immediately attractive assemblage of sea-creatures at the entrance, past feral quadrupeds and domestic birds, and a more ordered group of animals and birds clustered about the principal votive inscription, to a large assembly of fruit-bearing trees, flowers and birds, culminating in a large chalice, a kantharos, with large curling S-shaped handles, on the sanctuary threshold, announcing the eucharistic space around the altar. This central field is framed by a sequence of three broad borders: the outer one consisting of panels containing alternately a doubled inter-looped square and a marine acanthus cartouche; the middle one a six-stranded guilloche; and the inner one a barbed garland of adjacent laurel leaves superimposed in threes, with spaced fruits and flowers and an obliquely entwined ribbon.

The pavement in the chancel is uniform with the nave in idiom and colour, but richer and more varied in design. The central feature, directly in front of the altar, is an arch surmounted by two small birds and flanked by two brightly-coloured trees resembling cypresses. From what remains of the lower part of this composition it appears that within the arch a single plant grew, terminating in a prominent red flower. Above this flower is a burning lamp, suspended from the apex of the arch. This central panel is embedded in a grid, similar to that of the nave. Much of this has been destroyed, but the remaining octagons show that it was filled with trees, plants, birds, fish and ornamental devices, arranged in more or less symmetrical order, fronting and framing the altar. This grid is in turn framed by a magnificent curling plant *rinceau*; each scroll issuing from a fluted trumpet and terminating in a prominent brightly-coloured fruit, with a profusion of long sinuous leaves growing out from the stems. A marine acanthus cartouche is laid against each of the three walls of the sanctuary; those on the two lateral walls are flanked by inter-looped squares.

The scheme of the central field in the pavement was particularly favoured for churches in the Balkans in the 5th and 6th centuries AD. In broad terms the floor can be interpreted as a terrestrial paradise, its inhabitants as the creatures and plants of God's creation, and then typologically as the faithful of the new creation, reborn in grace after the incarnation

and the birth of Christ. The tempo of the design and imagery is raised in the sanctuary, where the single bright flower rising beneath a lamp in the focal arched aedicule, at the centre of a grid of animals and trees and framed by a luxuriant fruit-bearing *rinceau*, may be designed to draw attention to the presence of relics in a *confessio* beneath the floor of the apse and to the martyrial status of the church.

The Student Training Programme (Figs 14, 15)

The Albanian university student archaeological training programme grew in strength and popularity once more, and this year moved considerably closer to attaining its goal of being managed by Albanians for Albanians. Under the dedicated tutelage of Oliver Gilkes the teaching and supervision was carried out by three young Albanian women: Nevila Molla, who is presently employed under another Butrint Foundation internship before commencing an MA programme at the University of Siena, Esmeralda Agolli, a part-time tutor at the University of Elbasan and presently a candidate for Fulbright funding to take an MA in the USA, and Elda Omari, a graduate student from the University of Padua.

An area of the town house adjacent to the church on the Vrina Plain was again dedicated to the training school during July. Forty-five students from the Albanian universities of Elbasan, Gjirokastra and Tirana and from Pristina in Kosovo undertook instruction in the principal elements of a modern archaeological excavation. This comprised surveying, stratigraphic excavation and recording, scaled drawing, photography and finds processing and registration. This year's programme was complemented further by the presence of Anne-Marie Heath, an environmental archaeologist from Sheffield University. Several of the young Albanians were trained in targeted soil sampling and sieving, and in sorting sample residues to recover informative plant and animal macrofossils.

A further 16 students, some slightly more experienced, from Croatia, Germany, Holland, Italy, the United Kingdom and the United States, were included in the principal excavations at the Vrina church and in the forum. These individuals worked alongside a handful of professional archaeologists and were joined by returning graduates of previous seasons' training schools.

The Roman Forum

The Tripartite Building (Figs 16, 17, 18, 19)

During 2004, excavations in front of the Tripartite Building east of the theatre elicited the conviction that the forum of Roman Butrint had at last been positively located. This theory was put to the test during 2005 with substantial further work here. The project essentially comprised two elements: a phased architectural re-assessment of the Tripartite Building and adjacent structures and archaeological excavation within and in front of the Tripartite to determine how the two areas functioned through time.

Results from the excavations will contribute a new dimension to the historical record of Butrint. A remarkable sequence of occupation was revealed, possibly the finest single stratigraphic record of Butrint obtained thus far, ranging from the 2nd century BC through to the 15th century AD. The wealth of artefacts recovered include a life-size Roman marble sculpture, silver and bronze coins, frescoes, inscriptions, jewellery, sculptural fragments, imported marbles, a host of bronze, iron, lead and ivory objects as well as enormous quantities of ceramics.

Discovery of a well-preserved *in situ* Roman monumental pavement with a gutter running along its perimeter conclusively resolved the long-standing debate concerning both the location and design of the Roman forum at Butrint. The limestone pavement of the forum was bounded on all sides by two marble steps leading up to a colonnaded portico, all of which was crowned at the north end of the forum by the Tripartite Building. The full extent of the paved area is presently unknown, though it seems there is a good chance that the surface may survive across the entire forum area lying to the south.

The south-facing Tripartite Building is built against bedrock at the base of the acropolis hill and has been subjected a number of past intrusive investigations. In spite of this, and scant survival of documentation, significant deposits survived inside the structure beneath layers of archaeological spoil. The discovery of an enormous Hellenistic building (possibly a temple) with an eastward orientation beneath the foundations of the Tripartite Building may point to the location of the Greek Agora, which currently remains unknown.

Construction of the Tripartite Building, together with three cult rooms built in proximity to a sacred Hellenistic well, formed part of a larger Roman building programme intended to establish a monumental sacred space at the north end of the forum. Epigraphic evidence indicates that the Tripartite Building housed temples to Minerva and Mercury. These temples were richly adorned with fine imported marble wall revetment and with wall paintings, one of which includes a conspicuous male figure in the context of a mythological or historical scene. The finest pieces of fresco have been conserved and are now on display in Butrint's newly refurbished museum.

The excavations also revealed a large rectangular brick structure built on the forum pavement that probably served as a base for a monumental statuary group. Surprisingly, a catastrophic destruction of the Tripartite Building in the late 2nd century AD is indicated by the recovery of an unprecedented quantity of artefacts, such as marble sculptures and ceramics, dumped into a Hellenistic drain. With the demise of public space during late antiquity, the Tripartite Building was probably converted into a private dwelling. Subsequently, the nature of occupation changed again, and in the 6th century AD a timber structure accompanied by a well occupied the space in front of the Tripartite Building.

In conclusion, as the administrative, judicial, civic, and commercial centre of the ancient city, the Roman forum should be considered a microcosm of the Roman colony as a whole, thereby providing our best evidence to date for the origin, economic structure, and transformation of Butrint during the Roman period.

A number of hypothetical reconstructions of buildings that may have surrounded the Butrint forum have been attempted, and two are presented in Figure 19. These are primarily intended to provoke discussion. At present unknown, the area of the forum pavement in both examples is based on a length 2.5 x width. The width itself is taken to correspond to that of the Tripartite Building. A road, termed the 'Via Sacra' is shown to link the Hellenistic 'Sacred Way' with the Tower Gate to the east. The first example also includes a monumental southern approach to the forum in the shape of an arched entrance. Both examples show a portico running along the remaining three sides of the forum and different arrangements for the display of statues. A typical selection of public buildings such as a basilica and a temple are included to complete the range of structures that may have fronted the open space.

Marble Finds from the Forum (Figs 20, 21)

One of the most significant finds from this season, recovered from a disused Hellenistic period drain, is a remarkably well-preserved marble statue representing a high-ranking Roman man wearing a toga, short-sleeved tunic and patrician boots. The missing inset head would almost certainly have had portrait features. The richly draped toga and double-strapped patrician boots are evidence of the prominent position and political status of the figure and the statue would have depicted a local dignitary at Butrint or possibly an emperor.

The sculpting is of high quality, executed by craftsmen well aware of the iconography of status in Rome. The extravagant use of fabric and texture in the toga design create a play of light and shadow across the statue, accentuating the use of this official costume of a Roman citizen. The particular arrangement of the toga chosen for the statue was, by the beginning of the 2nd century AD, the preferred attire to indicate the political role of the emperors; for the Butrint figure to use this type denotes the political rank and the adherence to Roman values of the person depicted.

The shape of the base (a truncated rectangle with the rear corners cut away) together with the frontal aspect of the figure, suggests that it was intended to be displayed within a niche. It would most probably have adorned a public building close to the forum. The shape of the inset for the head suggests that the figure would have turned towards his left, in the direction of perceived movement. Indeed, the subtle emphasis on direction may indicate that the statue was complemented by a pendant figure with an opposing direction of movement.

The quality of carving and interest in light and shadow suggest a date in the mid-2nd century AD, probably during the reign of Marcus Aurelius. The archaeological evidence suggests that the statue was displayed for only a short period, and it is tempting to speculate that the statue originally depicted Lucius Verus, co-emperor with Marcus Aurelius (AD 161-169).

Another important discovery was provided by the re-evaluation of the marble shoulder fragment found in the forum in 2004. Two large pieces found among the wealth of marble chippings join to form the right shoulder and upper arm of a draped figure. Find-spot, size and marble type all point toward the shoulder belonging to the monumental togate statue discovered in 2002, and convey an entirely new reading of this figure. The initial reconstruction of the statue had proposed a traditional Republican pose for the figure, with the right arm held close to the chest and enveloped in the drapery folds. Now, however, the surviving part of the arm reveals that it was raised up in a much more vigorous pose. The gesture appears to be one of *salutatio*, the gesture of public address or greeting. This is a common feature in cuirassed statues, but found rarely in togate statues. The unusual aspect of the statue with its extrovert address of the viewer, together with the sheer size of the figure, supports an interpretation of it as an imperial portrait, most probably a representation of Augustus fashioned soon after his victory at Actium.

The statue was undoubtedly originally displayed close to where it was discovered and where it had been reworked. Further analysis of the pottery associated with the marble finds now indicate that the statue was reconfigured during late antiquity, and provides additional evidence for the adaptation of civic spaces and their adornment in this period.

Two finds currently in the Butrint Museum store substantiate the nature of the buildings investigated this year. A statuette of a female figure wearing a *peplos* dress is said to have been found inside the well cut into the acropolis rock. Only the torso from upper chest to just below the waist survives, but the figure appears to date from the Hellenistic period and would probably have represented a votive representation of a deity. Its deposition in the well may have been ritual and related to the sacral nature proposed for the well itself.

Excavations the area of the Tripartite Building in the 1980s also discovered a handsome marble bust of a young man. The head is missing, but the bust type indicates that it be dated to the 2nd century AD. The figure wears a *paludamentum*, or military cloak, fastened with a clasp on his right shoulder, but otherwise appears in heroic nudity. The bust is clearly honorific in character and would have depicted either a member of the

local elite or an Antonine prince, and its presence highlights the importance and formal quality of the Tripartite Building within which it may originally have been displayed.

A Dedication to Minerva Augusta (Fig. 22)

[.]INERVAE
AVGVST SACR
M·OTACILIUS·MYSTES·
ET·AEDEM·D·S·P·F·C·
L·D·D·D·

The dedicatory stone, housed in the Butrint Museum, was found in the 1980s during excavations in the Tripartite Building. The inscription is carved on a limestone slab, broken into five fragments, measuring 0.87 x 1.25 x 0.08m. It was discovered upside down in the central chamber, imbedded as *spolia*, in what is now recognized from this year's excavations as a late-antique floor surface. The "IN" of [M]INERVAE was recovered this year from spoil from the earlier excavations. The date of the inscription cannot be clearly determined, but the letter-forms of the inscription would tend to suggest the first half of the 1st century AD.

Reconstruction of text

[M]INERVAE
AUGUST(AE) SACR(UM)
M(ANIUS) OTACILIUS MYSTES
ET AEDEM D(E) S(UA) P(ECUNIA) F(ACIENDAM) C(URAVIT)
L(OCUS) D(ATUS) D(ECRETO) D(ECURIONUM)

Translation

Sacred to Minerva Augusta: this statue (?) and shrine were set up by Manius Otacilius Mystes at his own expense on land voted to him by the city council.

Discussion

The stone appears to have been attached to a monument, which formed the base for a statue of the goddess Minerva, though no word explicitly alluding to such a statue appears in the text. It was set up by Manius Otacilius Mystes, who built a shrine at the same time, presumably to house the statue of the goddess. Otacilius Mystes used his own funds, but the project received the approval of the council of the city, which provided a suitable site. Such approval was necessary for the construction of a public, as opposed to a private, shrine.

The worship of Minerva as 'Minerva Augusta' was widespread across the Western provinces of the Roman Empire and might be thought to reflect the wisdom of emperors and to seek the protection of the divinity for the *princeps* himself. Another inscription from Butrint records a votive dedication to Mercurius Augustus, set up by C. Papirius

Hermes on behalf of his sons in the 2nd century AD and suggests parallel ‘Augustan’ cults of Mercury and Minerva in the town.

M’ Otacilius Mystes was probably a freedman, though it is not impossible that he may have been a Greek of local origin. A text recorded at Butrint by Ciriacus of Ancona in 1434, reads IMP. M’. OTACINIUS. It has been suggested that the reference was to M. Iulius Philippus (emperor AD 244-9) and his wife Marcia Otacilia Severa, but in the light of the new discovery it is possible that OTACINIUS is a misreading of OTACILIUS, and that the inscription preserves a dedication to an emperor by a member of the Otacilius family.

The name Otacilius is of Italian origin, and there were several noteworthy Otacilii in the late Republic; an Otacilius Crassus was one of Pompey’s naval commanders in the Civil War against Caesar, and an M’ Ota[...] is recorded on an inscription from Paestum. It is not clear if any of these Otacilii was connected to the Otacilius Mystes now attested at Butrint. Another possibility is that Otacilius Mystes was one of the colonists sent to Buthrotum by Caesar – who may have included freedmen – or the freedman or descendent of one of them. A link with the Roman elite is not to be excluded, however, as freedmen of other notable Roman families are to be found in the epigraphic record of the colony.

Patronage and Production

Graecinus at Butrint (Fig 23)

This year's excavations at the forum recovered a fragmentary stamped tile similar to one found in the excavations of the lakeside villa at Diaporit in 2001. Both tiles are roughly 20mm thick, made from local material identified as 'Diaporit clay', and within a rectangular field both are stamped with the same name. Though only the first part of that name (GRAE...) survives, there can be little doubt that it refers to Pomponius Graecinus, an important member of the local elite at Butrint during the later Augustan period.

Although this is the first time his name has been found on tile stamps, it appears in inscriptions and on local coins. Graecinus had a long and outstanding political career at Butrint holding both the high office of *duovir* and that of *quinquennal* (the magistrate in charge of the citizen registry), which he held three times consecutively. His magistracies put him in charge of minting coins at Butrint and by far the longest series of known coin-types bears his name; it also gave him opportunity to build and dedicate public buildings in the city, as demonstrated by a marble inscription in the Butrint Museum in which he is named together with his colleague Milesius.

His name Pomponius makes it very likely that he was related to Titus Pomponius Atticus – either directly as a member of the same family, or as a client taking the name of his patron. The same may be the case for another person known from the Butrint coinage, Titus Pomponius, who held office during the early-middle period of the reign of Augustus. Indeed, Titus Pomponius and Pomponius Graecinus share almost identical coin types (depicting Augustus and the aqueduct), and it is possible that this was deliberately chosen to highlight the family relationship between them, and their family's ties to the imperial family and connection to acts of imperial benefaction at Butrint.

Graecinus' name appearing on tiles offers a fresh understanding of his status at Butrint. Since the stamp is applied at the time of manufacture, it is possible that Graecinus was the owner of the *figlina*, or workshop, producing the tiles, adding his name as a mark of quality. This is a tempting interpretation, given the use of local clay, which adds an economic dimension to the standing of the family at Butrint. On the other hand, the imprint could denote the person who commissioned the tile. If this was the case, the presence of the stamp at Diaporit and in the forum could indicate both the ownership of the Diaporit villa and the sponsor of the public building works in the forum. This concurs with the position and acts of benefaction of the family and adds further light to the patronage links between Butrint and Atticus, as well as with his son-in-law Agrippa, and helps explain the strong ties to the imperial family itself.

Physical Anthropology Research Programme

Family, disease and death in post-Roman Butrint

In 2005, the physical anthropology research programme at Butrint continued for its third consecutive year. During the 2004-2005 academic year the major accomplishments of the team included the first draft report on all of the human skeletons recovered by the Butrint Foundation from Butrint, Diaporit and the Vrina Plain and the generation of a database for the skeletons. The Preliminary Report on the human skeletons has several foci, including complete skeletal and dental inventories, analysis of the minimum number of individuals, establishment of sex, estimation of age at death, metric evaluations of skeletal elements, and cursory observations on palaeopathological conditions. To date, the Michigan State University team has analyzed a total of 191 skeletons.

The foremost undertakings of the 2005 season included the systematic analysis and documentation of the palaeopathological conditions of all the human skeletons. This analysis was undertaken to establish a better understanding of the individual life histories of the people who lived in the Butrint region beginning in the 5th-6th centuries AD and ending during the medieval period. Establishing baseline data on these skeletons from the later periods of habitation at Butrint provides us with a picture of life during these times.

Furthermore, ancient DNA sampling was performed on a total of 19 human skeletons as follows: 7 from Butrint, 6 from Diaporit, 2 from the Vrina Plain and 4 from the channel-side cemetery west of the city. The skeletons from Butrint and Diaporit were sampled in order to investigate the molecular evidence for diseases including tuberculosis, malaria, and treponematosi. These skeletons were chosen because they exhibited macroscopic evidence of palaeopathology consistent with these disease processes.

The ability to isolate ancient tuberculosis DNA is a new development, and one that is somewhat controversial. From the literature it appears that success in isolating the TB DNA has mostly come from the examination of cervical or thoracic vertebrae that display evidence of palaeopathological lesions. Fortunately, at Butrint several skeletons display these same vertebral lesions.

The Vrina Plain skeletons were sampled in order to investigate the possibility of familial relatedness. This analysis focuses on an unusual double burial excavated to the west of the Vrina church during 2003. In addition, 4 skeletons that were recovered from a tomb on the north bank of the Vivari Channel in 2004 were also sampled to investigate their relatedness.

During 2005-2006 the Michigan State team will focus on two main goals: 1. the differential diagnosis of the palaeopathologies observed and documented in the field; and 2. the integration of all new data collected during the 2005 field season into the Preliminary Report.

The top priority for future work should be the excavation of an Imperial Roman skeletal assemblage from Butrint. The excavation of such a group of human skeletons is essential for understanding how health and disease changed over time at Butrint, as they would represent a sample with which to compare the later skeletons already studied from the Triconch Palace and Diaporit. An equally important priority is the commitment to the completion of DNA analyses investigating the molecular presence of specific diseases in the human skeletons, as well as the relatedness of individuals. Based on the recent successes in the analysis of ancient DNA from the Albanian Rescue Archaeology Unit excavations led by Lorenc Bejko at a tumulus at Kamenica in south-east Albania, the current research has the potential to make significant contributions to our understanding of the make up of populations at Butrint.

Photography

Aerial photography (Figs 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 30, 31, 32)

During the 2005 season the Butrint Foundation undertook a two-pronged aerial survey of monuments and excavations in and around the National Park. The results have allowed us to view the city and some of the sites in its hinterland from a new perspective.

In order to obtain detailed aerial views of the excavations and outlying sites Massimo Zanfini, a kite-flying archaeologist from the University of Bologna in Ravenna, was recruited. With a camera suspended in a cradle stitched in to the kite fabric, Massimo skilfully piloted the kite above his targets whilst an assistant took the photographs via a radio-control unit. Aside from providing spectacular overhead shots of the heroon and church on the Vrina Plain, the low technology and portability of the kite enabled us to over-fly numerous sites – including the Diaporit villa and church, the villa at Malathrea and Çiflik church – and secure valuable images that would otherwise be unobtainable.

For more general views of Butrint and the Vrina Plain the services of paramotor pilot Alket Islami, President of the National Aero Club of Albania, were secured. A paramotor is, as the name suggests, essentially a motorised parachute, with a small cradle to seat the pilot. Using the flat Plain for a runway Alket ascended above the open excavations and then soared over Butrint to take a series of stunning vertical and oblique views of the city, its monuments and the vistas across Lake Butrint and along the Vivari Channel towards Corfu.

Whilst aerial photography is in itself a long-established element of the modern archaeological discipline, the inseparable issues of material and financial means to carry out such targeted and detailed surveys in Albania have hitherto been unattainable. The Butrint Foundation's innovative solutions to these problems and the photographic skill and airmanship of Massimo and Alket have proved that high quality aerial images can be obtained through somewhat unorthodox approaches. Now we can appreciate the topography and detail of the city like never before, and have acquired a bank of exceptional photographs for publication, display and publicity.

Photogrammetry (Figs 12, 29)

Photogrammetry is the technique of measuring objects from one or more photo-grammes (images containing target points with known coordinates). During 2005, Massimo Zanfini was employed to conduct both aerial and terrestrial surveys to digitally reconstruct the location of the sites on the Vrina Plain, the mosaic in the palaeochristian church nave and walls of the Tripartite Building in the forum area.

Firstly, a sequence of photographs taken from the kite were transformed, pixel by pixel, in to the real world 3D coordinate system used by the Butrint Foundation surveys to produce a single, rectified, plan image of the excavations on the Plain. Secondly, grid points were surveyed across the church nave mosaic and a series of elevated digital photographs were taken. From these a single photogrammetric plan was created based on the coordinate points recorded in each separate image. The photo-plan is now being used as a scaled base map to produce a super-accurate digitally-drawn plan of the mosaic. Thirdly, coordinate target points were set up on selected walls in the Tripartite Building at the north end of the forum. Similar techniques were then used to prepare single, scaled images of each wall which can again be used as a base from which to digitally draw elevations.

The Tephrochronology Project

Charting landscape change at Butrint (Figs 33, 34)

Landscape change, particularly in the form of destructive episodes of soil erosion and alluviation, is often associated with Roman and late antique settlement and land use. Such landscape changes are evident at Butrint throughout antiquity, and while changes in social organisation and urban topography are becoming well understood, broadly synchronous changes in landscape morphology are not yet integrated tightly within the emerging archaeological chronology. Establishing of a tephra-based chronology for landscape change at Butrint, which geochemically identifies isochronous marker horizons of volcanic ash, or tephra, from well documented volcanic eruptions, offers a way of accurately dating landscape change.

A number of auger samples from the Vrina Plain, recording a complex sequence of landscape evolution through more than 4 metres of sediment, have revealed 3 distinct horizons of tephra fallout. The tephra particles, which are predominantly glass shards, are detected through microscopic analysis of recovered sediments. Concentrations of tephra within the sediments are generally low, so samples have to be first processed to remove organic material and other superfluous elements. The tephra shards themselves are extremely small, measuring approximately 40µm. Once identified, the shards are analysed to determine their individual geochemistry. This effectively provides a fingerprint, allowing the volcano from which the tephra originated to be identified.

The central Mediterranean has a dynamic volcanological history, with an excellent historical record of eruptive episodes. In many cases the deposition of tephra layers can be dated to within days or weeks. An analysis of individual shards is currently being carried out using an advanced mass spectrometry technique in which shards are 'ablated' by a high power laser and the resulting aerosol analysed for major and trace element signatures. So far, tephra derived from Vesuvius in southern Italy has been identified along with possible tephra fallout from the Minoan eruption of Santorini (Thera). Further analytical work on tephra particles from Butrint is currently underway.

As well as establishing a tephra-based chronology for landscape change at Butrint, a similar investigation will be carried out at a number of comparable sites along the Adriatic and Ionian coastlines. This will allow a regional chronology to be established within which absolute dates for possible landscape change can be compared and correlated over wide areas. This will provide a far clearer picture of the extent to which landscapes were altered during antiquity as a result of human activity.

The Butrint Archive Project

The Digital Archive (Fig. 35)

With the impressive results achieved over the last year, the electronic database is now the primary archive for the modern excavations at Butrint and an important tool for the correlation of information between excavation and specialist results.

A networked office was established at Ksamili to maintain the digital record and input both current and archive excavation data. In June the office was the location for a two-day workshop led by Michael Rains to introduce the electronic archive to site supervisors, specialists and Albanian collaborators, in particular the graduate students presently pursuing other programmes on behalf of the Butrint Foundation in Albania. Fundamentally, the workshop set an important agenda for the future, specifically the integration of the archive material with the modern archaeological data.

Inclusion of archive material was the principal goal for this season and the abundant collection of historical images of Butrint has now been added to the database. The result of a seamless cohesion between archive and archaeological material is two-fold: it will enrich future investigations, and it will allow this multi-faceted material to be investigated without losing sight of the wealth of research results already attained. This will be the lasting and unique strength of the electronic archive.

The Website

The structure of the Butrint website is now in place. The project consultant, Daniel Wrightson, visited Butrint in July and work is now proceeding rapidly. There are two primary objectives of the website: to convey the evocative history and the beauty of Butrint to a wider public, and to encourage a first-hand experience of Butrint through an engaging virtual visit to the site.

Publication Programme

The monograph *Explorations in Albania 1930-1939*, edited by Karen Francis, was published in June. It concerns the work by Luigi Cardini – the principal prehistoric period specialist working with the 1930s Italian Archaeological Mission in Albania – and highlights the wide-ranging archaeological interests of the Italian team. Of particular significance are the pre-Roman occupation-history of the area near Saranda and the Mesolithic component of the artefact assemblages, the rarity of which in Albania bestows a measure of international importance to the work.

A manuscript by Selim Islami detailing investigations at nearby Çuka e Aitoit (Eagle Mountain) during the Socialist period has been translated into English, and a series of hitherto unpublished notes by Luigi Maria Ugolini on related sites have been edited for publication. The British School at Athens has expressed an interest in publishing this material as the third of its series of archive monographs concerning Butrint. The volume was initially intended as an investigation of the remarkable Hellenistic sites in the area. However, this summer Ilir Gjipali offered to make available not only the archive of Astrid Nanaj – who excavated at Kalivo – but also his own unpublished data on Bronze Age sites in and around Butrint. A study of this nature is a rare and welcome opportunity.

Re-assessment of Butrint's medieval and Venetian fortifications, allied to work on the relevant archival, documentary and photographic material, will culminate in the draft production of 3 separate pieces of work by early 2006. Firstly, translation in to English of Gjerak Karaiskaj's standard work *Butrinti dhe Fortifikimet e tij* requires only final revision and editing with a new Introduction before it is ready for publication. Secondly, the re-assessment fieldwork will be presented within a revised historical framework to provide a modern appreciation of the post-Roman fortifications in *Archaeologia Medievale*. Thirdly, a popular guide, following the format of the *Environmental Guidebook* published by the Butrint Foundation this summer, will be prepared to increase visitor awareness and appreciation of the castles and defences within the National Park.

Butrint Museum

Creating a showcase for Butrint (Fig. 36)

In January 2005, with funds from the Leventis Foundation, the Butrint Foundation, and an invaluable contribution (in the form of project staff) from the Packard Humanities Institute, work commenced on the renovation of the Butrint Museum. The museum was constructed on the acropolis by the Italian Archaeological Mission in the 1930s and it was closed in 1990 due to civil unrest in Albania.

Re-opening the museum has been a priority for the Butrint Foundation which sees it as an ideal showcase for the interpretation of Butrint as well as a much needed visitor attraction. The design team was led by Ilir Gjipali, Vice-Director of the Albanian Institute of Archaeology, and Reshad Gega, an architect affiliated to the Albanian Institute of Monuments. The project was managed on a day-to-day basis by the Butrint Foundation. The underground museum, which has an internal floor space of 140m² and an elegant 30m² neo-classical courtyard, was in need of total renovation: it was re-roofed, re-wired and the interior was redesigned to create exhibition areas with large display cases gracefully lit with natural and artificial light.

The re-opening of the museum also entailed an enormous conservation effort on objects that had been stored long term in poor conditions in Tirana and Butrint. Renaud Bernadet, a Sorbonne-trained conservator joined the team for six weeks and worked alongside Albanian specialists to conserve metalwork, glass, ceramics and marble to exhibition quality. The conservator provided much-needed training to his Albanian colleagues which will serve well for the upkeep of the objects on display. The museum was furnished during July with objects selected by the international team of material specialists working on the summer excavation project.

The visitor now follows a chronological circuit around the museum, taking in the rich history of the city from its pre-urban origins, through its early period as a healing sanctuary, its evolution as a Roman colony, and on through the Dark Ages to its re-birth as an early medieval boom town. A wide range of illustrative finds, discovered over the last 80 years, is now displayed in 12 glass cases. Objects include Neolithic and Bronze Age tools, Hellenistic and Roman tableware and amphorae, metalwork, coins and glassware. Twenty two elegant text panels recount the history of Butrint, accompanied by key photographs, site plans and Studio Inklinc (Florence) site reconstruction drawings.

The courtyard annex houses the statues found by the Italian Mission, and includes the 2nd-century AD togate figure excavated by the Butrint Foundation from the forum in 2005. Manumissions and other inscriptions are also on display in the courtyard and museum. Around 20 Hellenistic and Julio-Claudian busts are also displayed inside the museum in sections dedicated to the classical patrons of Butrint.

The museum opened officially on October 22, with both Lord Rothschild and Sali Berisha, the Albanian Prime Minister, in attendance. There is no doubt that the museum will be of major importance to Butrint and the imperative to promote Albania's cultural heritage to a wider audience. The museum will be maintained by the Institute of Archaeology, who already assert that it is the finest museum in the country and a model for future archaeological park museum development. Importantly, its role in helping the visitor better understand Butrint means that many of UNESCO's concerns about the lack of interpretation at the site have been satisfactorily answered.

Conservation Projects

Work to conserve and to present three key archaeological sites took place throughout the excavation season.

Triconch Palace (Fig. 37)

An on site training programme was established, under the tutelage of Rome-based conservator Francesca de Vita, to instruct three Albanian trainees from the Institute of Monuments (including Albana Hakani, the Butrint National Park's monuments specialist) in practical conservation techniques. The training took place for six weeks at the excavated site of the sprawling late Roman residence known as the Triconch Palace, an area which suffers badly from seasonal flooding, algae growth and uncontrolled vegetation incursion. The trainees learned essential conservation skills including how to identify different types of algae/vegetation and appropriate methods for treating them; practical wall consolidation using traditional mortars and techniques, and final site presentation methods. The lowest areas were in-filled with broken tiles and the whole area (c. 500m²) was covered with fine gravel to provide a weed-resistant and self-draining surface. With the erection of an accompanying interpretation panel this was an enormously valuable project that has made the Triconch Palace site fully accessible to visitors.

Diaporit

Backfilling of the excavations at the Hellenistic/Roman villa and late-antique pilgrimage centre of Diaporit, that had commenced during 2004, continued selectively this year under agreement with the Institutes of Monuments and Archaeology and under the direction of Jerry O'Dwyer of the Butrint Foundation. The work was generously sponsored by the Howard and Nancy Marks Trust. Now approximately 75% of the site has been backfilled or covered to the required depth and only the most significant monuments – the 5th-century basilica, Roman bath house and some Roman villa buildings – have been left exposed for future display. Later in 2005, a project, funded by the Butrint Foundation, and implemented by the newly-trained Park monuments specialist, will see further consolidation of the bath-house walls and hypocaust. The final phase of site infilling and extensive wall and floor consolidation of the basilica is scheduled for completion in 2006.

Vrina Plain (Fig. 38)

Pippa Pearce and Laura Church from the British Museum consolidated and conserved parts of the mosaic pavement in the nave of the 5th-century church during July. The scale of the task coupled with the instability of the original mortar bedding meant that conservation work had to be carried out selectively. Future plans for the complete conservation of the mosaic are yet to be formulated and the materials used in 2005 were chosen for their suitability to withstand long term burial. The rescue work carried out focused on the two inscriptions and some of the more vulnerable sections in the north of the nave: crumbling edges were consolidated with sound mortar and some of the larger holes were filled with crushed tile and lime mortar. Loose tesserae were re-laid in their original positions.

The mosaics in the church and the Roman town house were covered with netting, 0.30m of sand, and stone-free topsoil. Backfilling over the mosaics and other areas, including the heroon, began at the end of the excavation season and continued throughout August. Protection of the site was further ensured by the construction of impressive circuits of dry stone walls by local craftsmen to exclude livestock from the monuments.

Site Interpretation and the Environment

In 2005, the Butrint Foundation embarked on a series of projects to enhance Butrint's visitor experience. To this end, 21 interpretative site panels were designed and installed and a network of walking trails was established. In addition, 4,000 guidebooks to the natural environment of Butrint were published along with 8,000 leaflets containing maps and details of trail routes for walkers. These initiatives go a long way to addressing UNESCO and Butrint Foundation concerns about the lack of interpretation at the site, and the projects will add significantly to the breadth of Butrint's appeal.

Interpretative site panels (Fig.39)

In June, design work was completed on a series of 21 interpretative panels for Butrint's intra-mural and extra-mural monuments. The panels were designed in Italy by Studio Inklinc (Florence). Each contains text in Albanian and English and makes use of Inklinc's exquisite hand-painted reconstruction drawings of the city.

The panels lead the visitor on a chronological tour of Butrint from its early days as a Hellenistic sanctuary, to its heyday as a Roman colony and then a flourishing early Christian centre, to its ultimate incarnation as a fortified medieval market town. The panels chart the evolution of the landscape, the growth and development of the city and the key moments in Butrint's 3,000 year history.

The site panels have been printed on weather-proof and vandal-proof boards and were erected on steel frames at intervals around the main visitor site at the end of July. They appear to be universally appreciated. The extra-mural panels have been designed and printed and will be erected, following the winter months, in the spring of 2006.

Environmental Trails (Fig. 40)

In late June 2005, the Butrint Foundation completed a project to create 20kms of walking trails around the National Park. The purpose of the project was to develop a well-defined and maintained network of trails around all areas of the Park in order to encourage visitors to spend longer at the Park, exploring areas outside the walled city, and to lead to greater environmental awareness.

Initially the project involved potential trail mapping and a condition survey of each route that included an environmental assessment of certain paths to prevent unwarranted disturbance in sensitive areas. Ultimately, the trails selected were chosen to guide the walker around different habitats within the Park and to give access to remote lying monuments. Four trails were developed as a result:

Kalivo trail (wetlands, Mediterranean maquis, olive and orange groves, 6th-century BC fortified site of Kalivo).

Butrint Bay trail (coastal wetlands).

Lake Bufi trail (wetlands, lake, a trail linking with the Kalivo trail).

Mount Sotira trail (wetlands, Mediterranean maquis, forest, olive groves).

In June, while work continued on the practical task of clearing the trails, 8 bridges of treated timber were constructed over dykes, and 100 way-marker posts (each bearing the symbol of a specific trail) were placed along key points of the trails. The trails are furnished with interpretive signs at key historic monuments. In October, 8,000 trail leaflets to accompany the walks were printed.

Environmental Guidebook (Fig. 40)

During the 2005 season the Butrint Foundation produced a comprehensive illustrated colour guidebook to the local environment including detailed maps showing the various walking trails established around the Butrint National Park. The 34 page guidebook focuses on the different natural habitats at Butrint as well as the enormous diversity of fauna and flora to be seen in the Park – much of which is of high conservation concern or globally endangered.

During the summer 4,000 copies of English and Albanian versions of the book were printed in Tirana. The guidebook went on sale at the Butrint National Park and in a variety of bookshops (including Rinas airport) around the country. Profits from the guidebook will be used to pay for re-printing.

Conclusion

This season was made memorable by the striking cultural mix on the project, as well as the discoveries of the Forum, the togate statue and the Vrina Plain basilica. Closer inspection, though, of our season reveals many other significant advances. The analyses of the ceramics from the 2000-3 Triconch Palace excavations enable us to chart not only the later Roman phases with greater accuracy, but also those phases, starting in the 10th century, belonging to the early and high Middle Ages. The Triconch Palace report promises to be an important benchmark in defining the changing rhythm of settlement inside Butrint. Much the same can be concluded about the preliminary post-excavation work on the 2000-4 excavations of the Roman villa at Diaporit. The relationship of the site to Titus Pomponius Atticus may now seem less secure, but the presence of major Hellenistic and later Republican phases, besides those published in *The Journal of Roman Archaeology* belonging to the later Roman period, make this an exceptional site in the western Balkans.

The discovery of the forum reveals the investment within Butrint in the early Imperial age. As such it permits us to re-evaluate the significance of the celebrated statues of the Imperial court found in the Theatre by Luigi Ugolini. It also compels us to examine the processes which led to the short-lived but conspicuous Roman history of the Vrina Plain suburb. In sum, it provides a new cornerstone in Roman archaeology in the region, raising intriguing questions about the roles of the neighbouring towns of Corfu and Phoenicê as well as the history of Augustus's revolution in the central Mediterranean.

Yet for all these new discoveries, our project is at its most exciting when it deals with training and public presentation. Working with the Albanian authorities, it has been a singular pleasure to explore together how to present the archaeology to an audience now in excess of 50,000 tourists per annum. Equally, training a new generation of students and deploying alumni of earlier seasons in management roles is overtly rewarding.

With each season it is easier to identify what we do not know and what needs doing to implement the 2001 Management Plan effectively. The earlier history – the later Bronze Age and Hellenistic periods – merits more detailed study. As far as presenting Butrint is concerned, there is much still to be done in terms of meeting basic requirements for the archaeological Park. There is also a need to ensure the Park engages more successfully with the communities around it. This said, with its rich history and increasing number of monuments, complemented now by a fine museum, Butrint never ceases to be a special experience for an archaeological student, lay visitor or a scholar.

Foreword

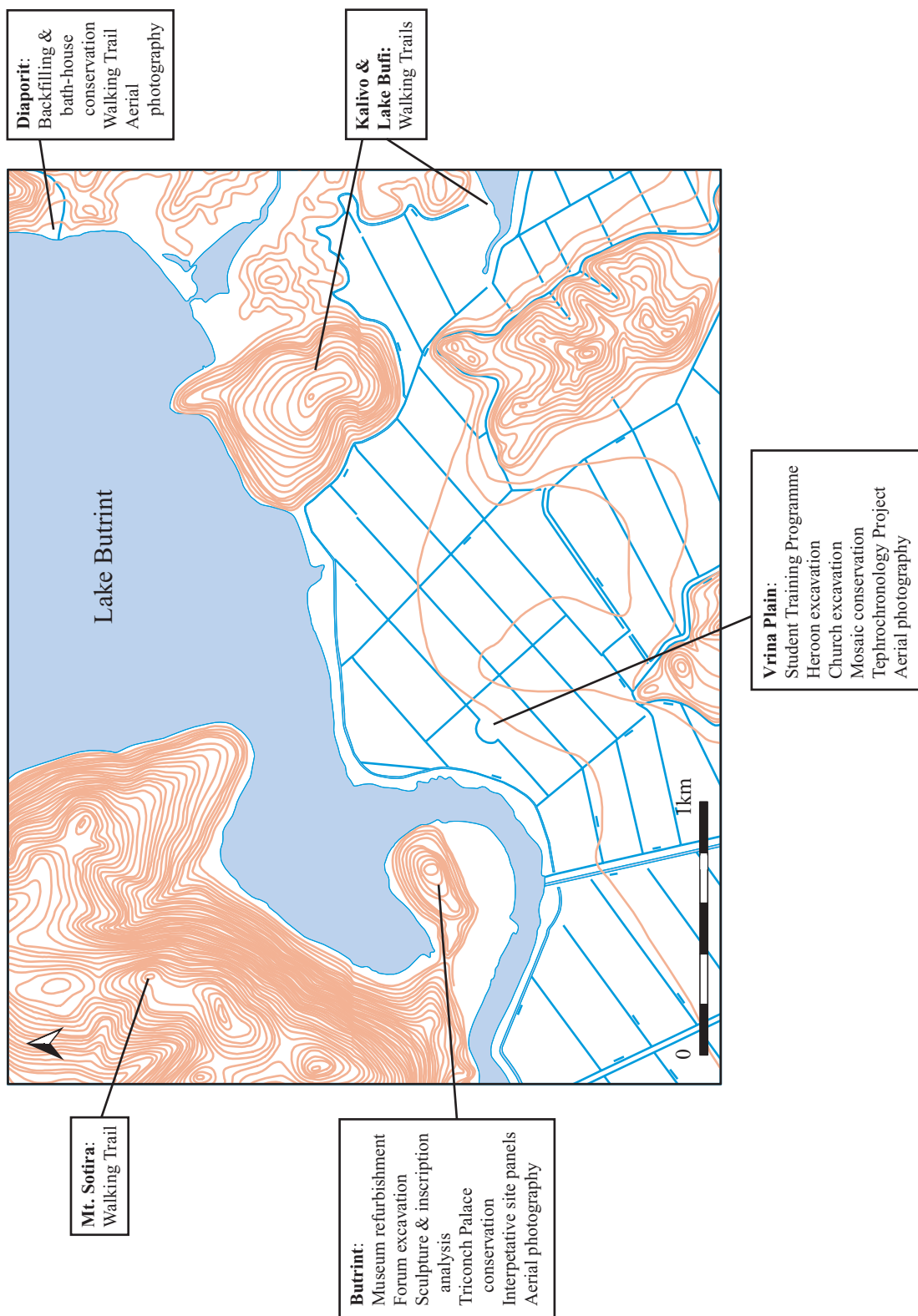


Fig. 1. Location of 2005 projects and excavations.

The Vrina Plain

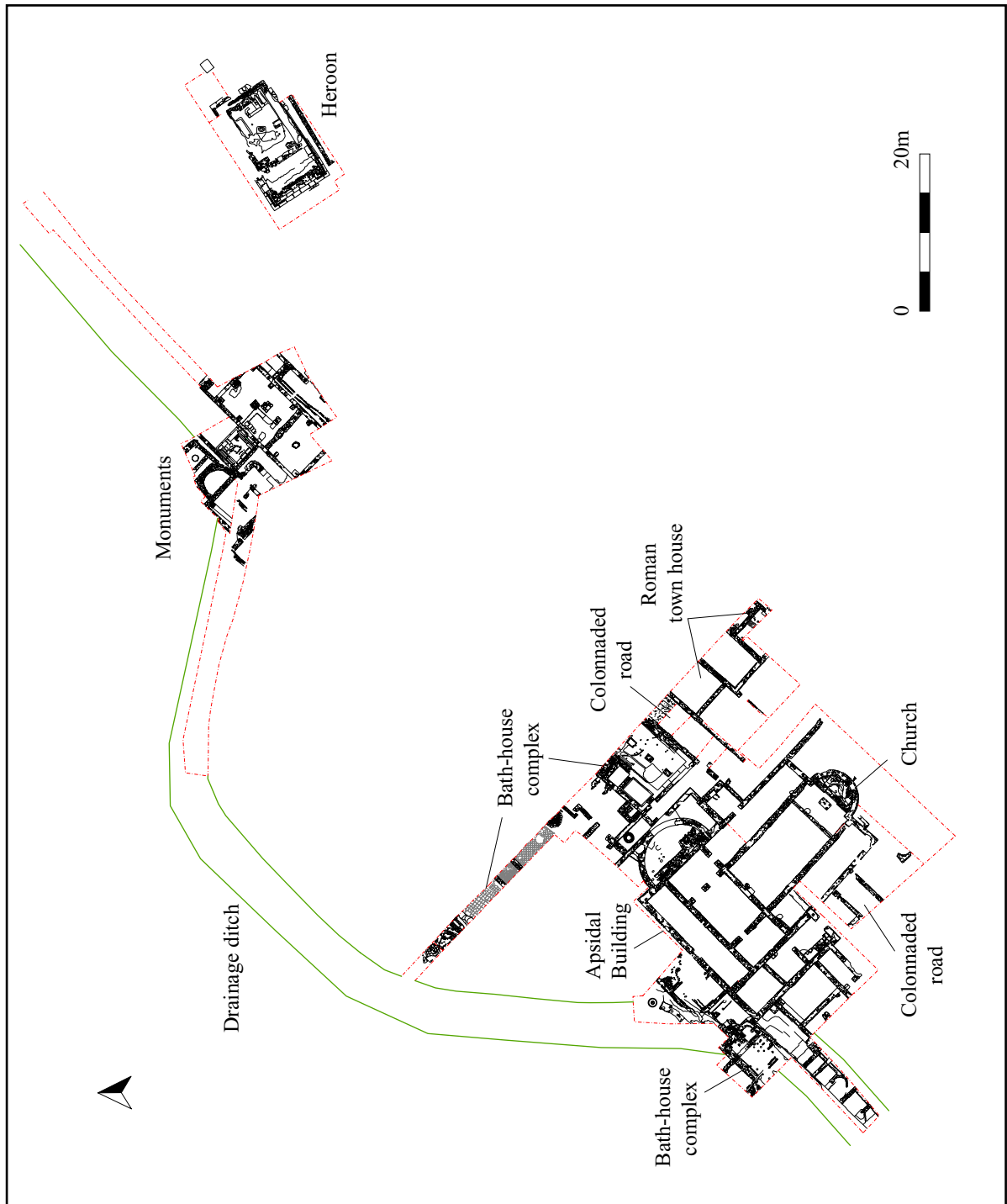


Fig. 2. Plan of excavations on the Vrina Plain.

The Heroon



Fig. 3. The heroon during excavation, with the stepped entrance in the foreground.



Fig. 4. The heroon post-excitation, showing the stone plinth and mouldings and earlier structure to the south.

The Heroon

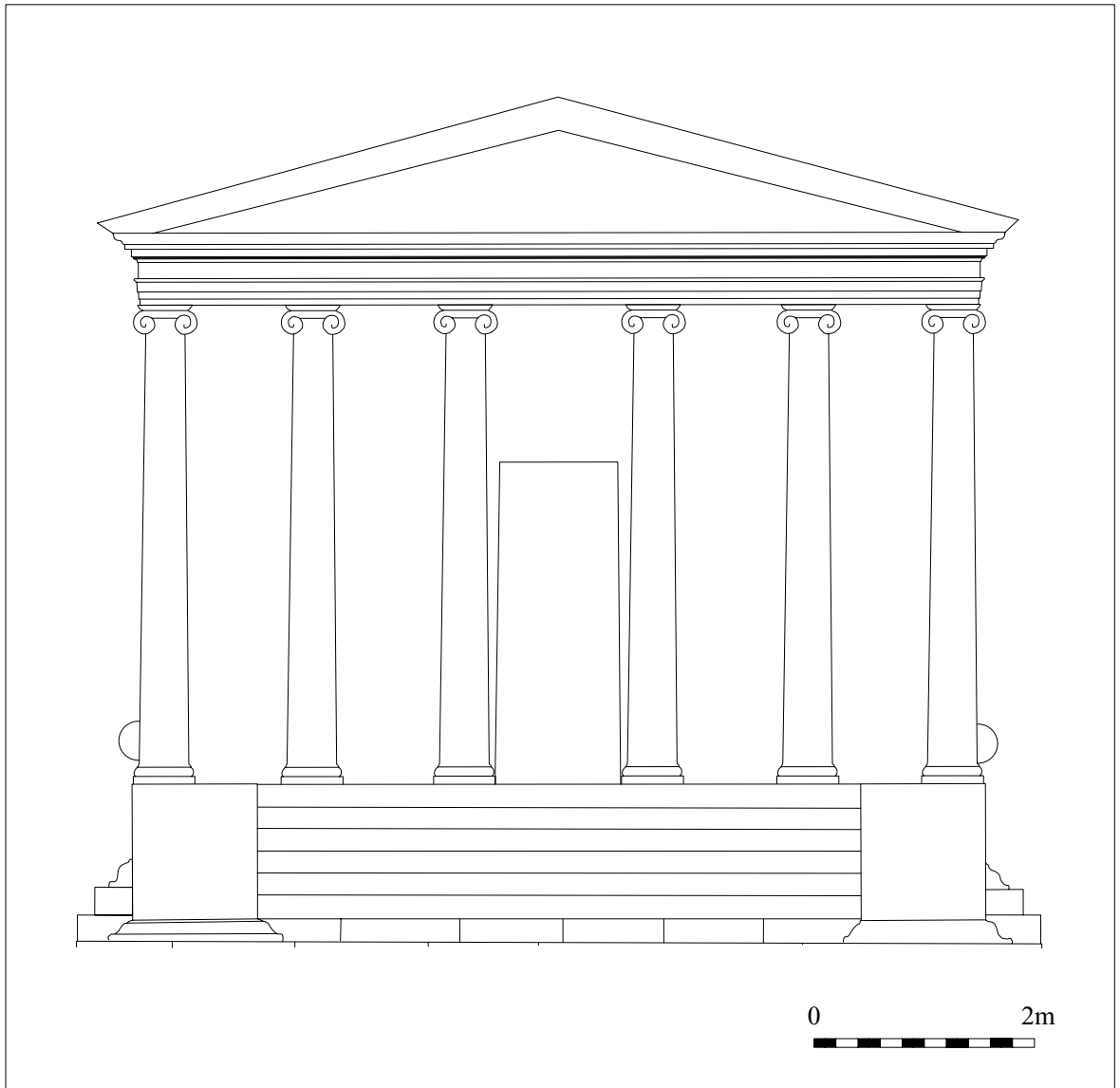


Fig. 5. Reconstruction of the heroon façade.

Marble Finds from the Heroon



Fig. 6. Marble finds from the Heroon; (top) volute fragment of an ionic capital; (bottom left) dog head sarcophagus adornment; (bottom right) lion head sarcophagus filial.

The Roman Town House, Apsidal Building and Palaeochristian Church



Fig. 7. Roman town house and bath-house (left side), Roman apsidal building (lower centre) and palaeochristian church (centre). North is to the bottom of the photograph.

The Roman Town House



Fig. 8. Human colonnade along the *actus* grid-aligned road fronting the Roman town house.



Fig. 9. Geometric mosaic pavement in the Roman town house, with a late-antique human skeleton interred against the far wall.

The Apsidal Building and Palaeochristian Church



Fig. 10. The Apsidal Building looking east towards the apse.



Fig. 11. The palaeochristian church looking north towards Butrint.

The Palaeochristian Church Mosaic Pavement



Fig. 12. Photogrammetric image of the palaeochristian church nave mosaic.

The Palaeochristian Church Mosaic Pavement



Central panel in front of the altar.



Border design in the sanctuary.



Swan in south-west corner of the nave.



Pear tree in south part of the nave.



Sheep in north part of the nave.



Birds and fig in north part of the nave.

Fig. 13. Images and designs in the palaeochristian church nave mosaic.

The Student Training Programme



Fig. 14. The Student Training Programme: students from Gjirokastra and Pristina Universities receiving instruction in the recording of human skeletal remains.



Fig. 15. Elda Omari (top), Albanian Supervisor of the Student Training Programme, cleaning the Roman town house mosaic with a University of Tirana student.

The Tripartite Building

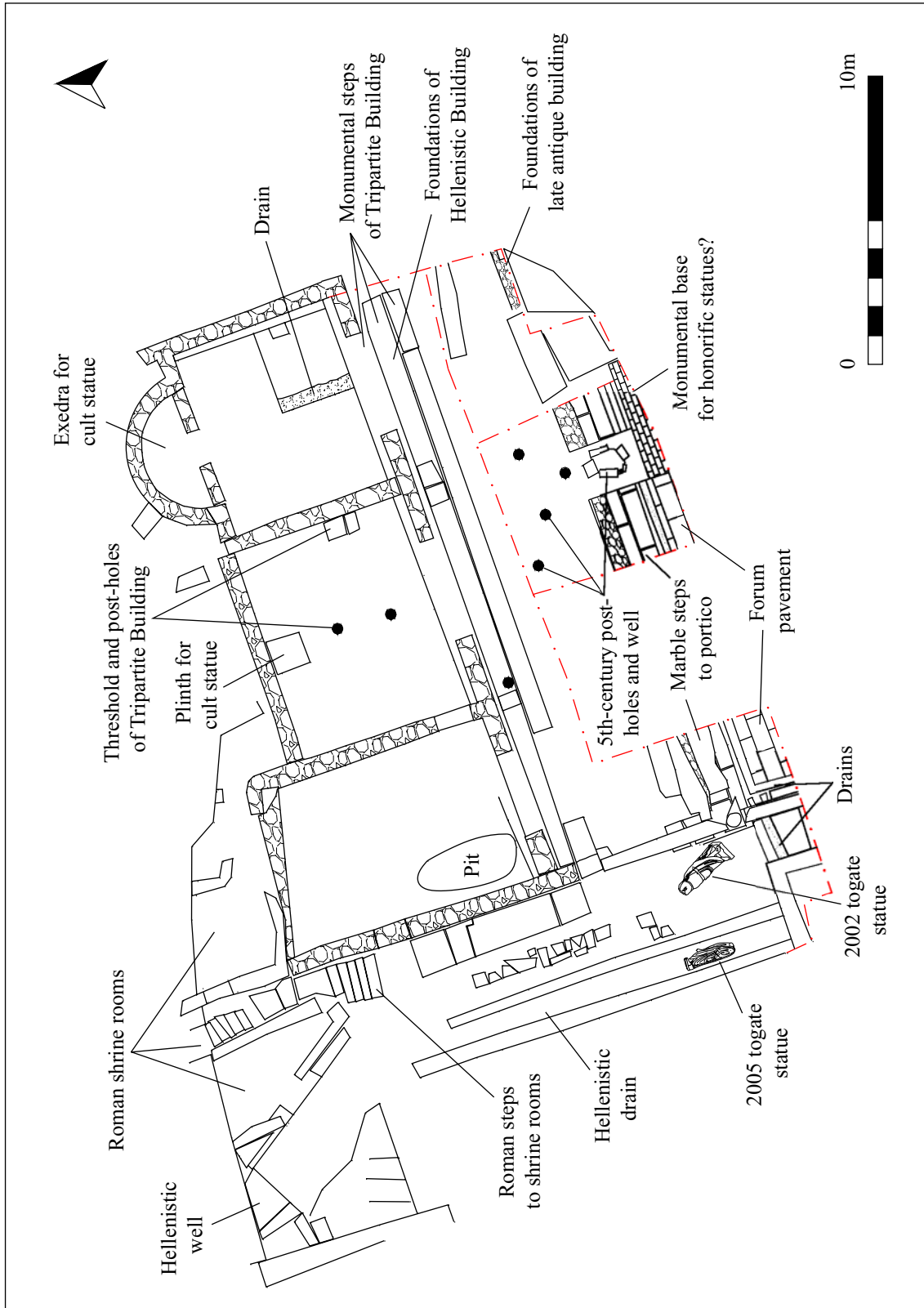


Fig. 16. Plan of excavations in the Tripartite Building and Roman Forum.

The Tripartite Building



Fig. 17. Excavations inside and in front of the Tripartite Building.



Fig. 18. Excavations showing the forum pavement (bottom left) and the drain (centre, top) that contained the togate statue.

The Tripartite Building

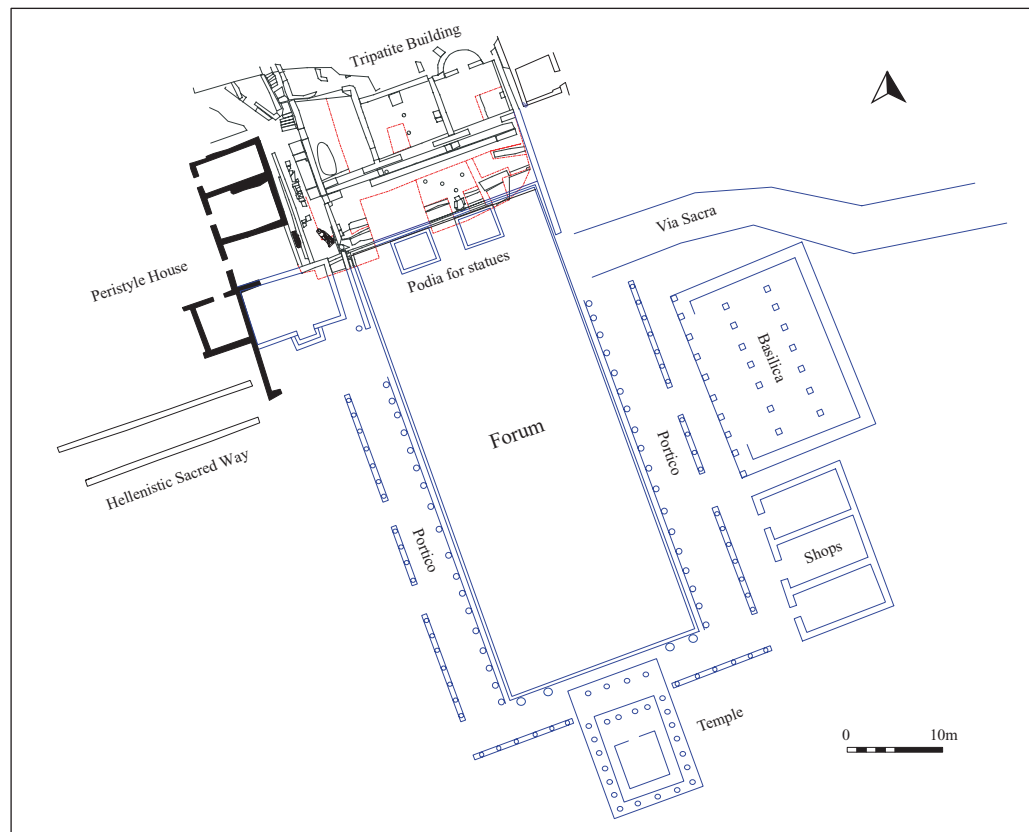
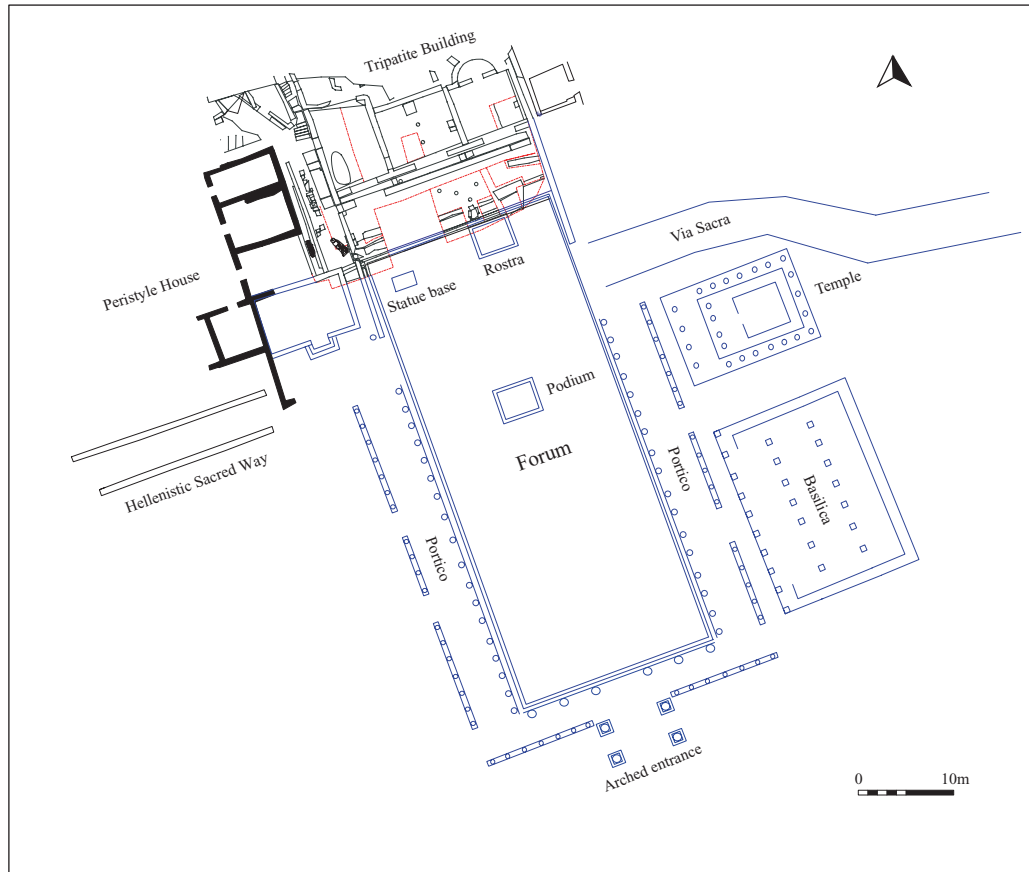


Fig. 19. Hypothetical plans of buildings (in blue) surrounding the forum at Butrint.

Marble Finds from the Forum



Fig. 20. Life-size togate statue found abandoned in a disused drain in the forum excavations.

Marble Finds from the Forum and a Dedication to Minerva Augusta



Fig. 21. Excavation of the togate statue from the disused drain.



Fig. 22. The Minerva inscription from the central chamber of the Tripartite Building. The discoloured fragment in the upper left, bearing part of "IN", was found during 2005.

Patronage and Production



Fig. 23. Graecinus at Butrint: (top) coin from the forum minted at Butrint [legend on obverse: GRAECINUS QUIN TERT; reverse: BUTHR{OTUM}]; (centre) stamped tile from Diaporit; (bottom) inscription in Butrint Museum.

Aerial Photography and Photogrammetry



Fig. 24. Paramotor taking off from the Vrina Plain.



Fig. 27. Kite photography over the Heroon.



Fig. 25. Paramotor over the Triangular Castle.



Fig. 28. Kite photography team at Antigonea.



Fig. 26. Paramotor circling over the Vrina Plain.



Fig. 29. Photogrammetric imaging of church mosaic under conservation.

Aerial Photography



Fig. 30. Aerial view of the Butrint peninsula.

Fig. 31. Central Butrint showing the Theatre, Sanctuary and the Forum excavations at the far right.

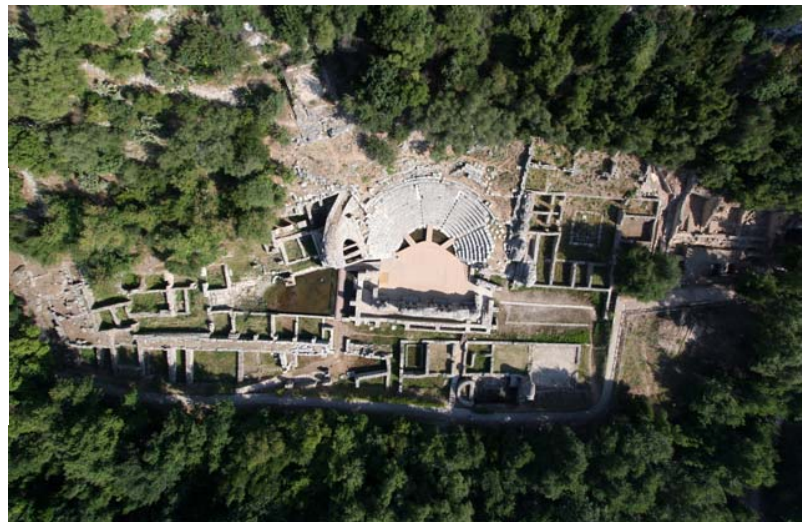


Fig. 32. Aerial view of the Triangular Fortress.

The Tephrochronology Project



Fig. 33. Extracting samples for tephra analysis from the Vrina Plain using a hand auger.

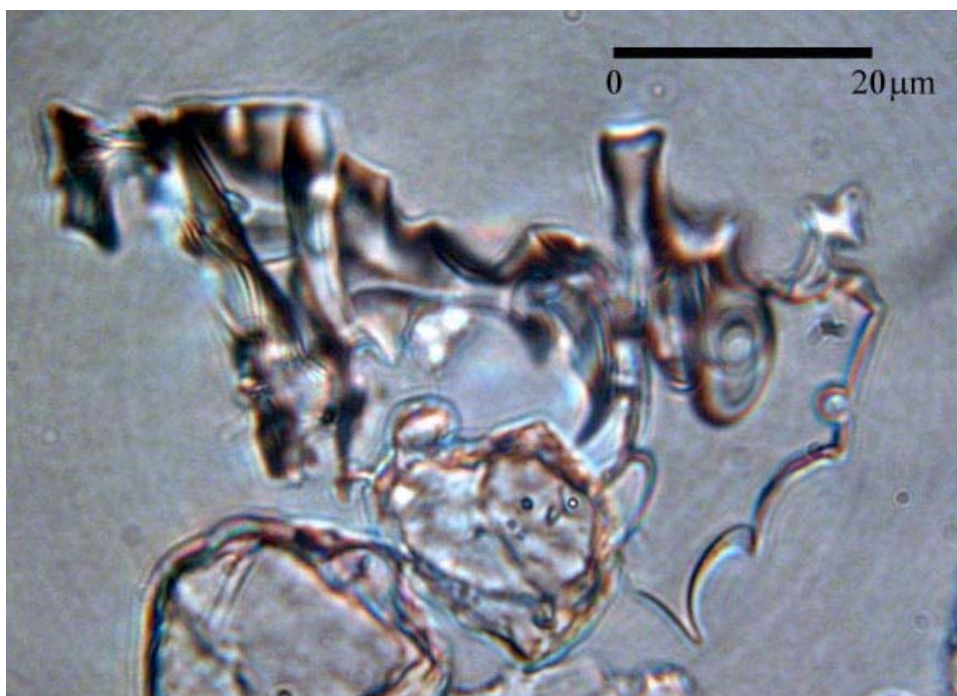
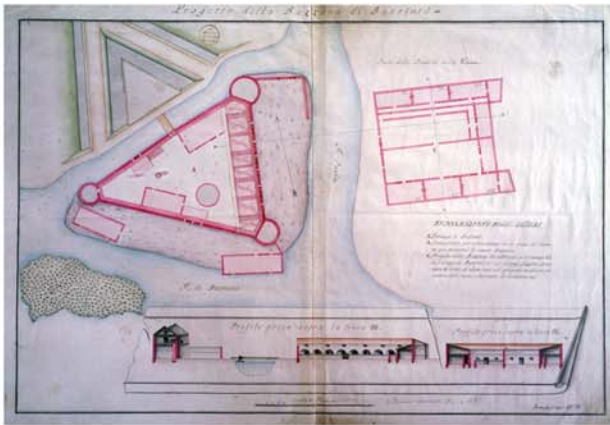


Fig. 34. Large shard of tephra recovered from an augered sample taken from the Vrina Plain.

The Butrint Archive Project

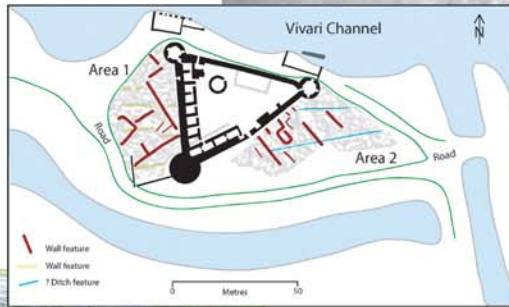
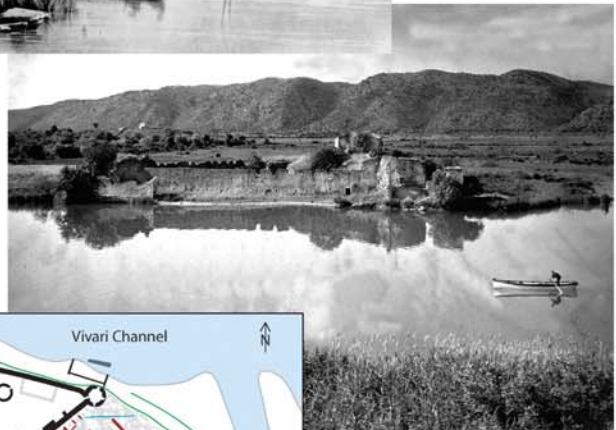


◀ Venetian military survey map, c. 1718.

▼ *The Triangular Fortress* by Henry Cook, 1850s.



Photograph by Luigi Maria Ugolini, 1930s. ▶



▲ Geophysical survey by the Butrint Foundation, 1994.

◀ Photograph by the Butrint Foundation, 1994.

Fig. 35. The Digital Archive. The integration of archive and modern archaeological data: images of the Triangular Castle representing layers of research within the database.

Butrint Museum



Display cabinet of objects from Phoenicê and accompanying interpretative panel.

Portrait of Augustus's General Agrippa (left) and bust of a "large Herculaneum-type" woman.



Objects, display cases and interpretative panels lit on the day of the official Museum opening ceremony.

Fig. 36. Display cases, interpretative panels and objects in the refurbished Butrint Museum.

Conservation Projects



Fig. 37. Aerial view of the conservation and presentation of the Triconch Palace as a new monument for visitors.



Fig. 38. Conservation of the Vrina Plain church mosaic during the excavation.

Site Interpretation and the Environment



Fig. 39. Interpretative Panel near the entrance to the Site: a guide to the principal monuments in Butrint with the Triangular Castle in the background.



Fig. 40. The Butrint National Park Environmental Guidebook and the Walking Trail leaflets.