

**L'ILLYRIE MÉRIDIONALE ET
L'ÉPIRE DANS L'ANTIQUITÉ**
V



**Actes du V^e colloque international de Grenoble
(10-12 octobre 2008)
réunis par Jean-Luc Lamboley et Maria Paola Castiglioni**

Volume I

DE BOCCARD

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THE ROMAN FORUM AT BUTRINT AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE ANCIENT URBAN CENTER

The Roman Forum Excavations at Butrint (2004-07) furnish new conclusions concerning the chronology, topography and historical development of the urban center. Excavations of the north and south stoas, together with other Hellenistic monuments, have generated a new topographical definition of the sanctuary of Asclepius and the Hellenistic agora. An intense building program, leading to the construction of the agora, theater, and other buildings, occurred in the 2nd c. B.C. After discovering the forum and its NW corner in 2005, a trench in 2007 exposed the SW corner, thereby revealing the topographical layout of the forum, which dates to the Augustan period. The visual focus of the forum was a two-storey building, adjacent to which was a tripartite building that may have served as the capitolium. Inscriptions and statuary were discovered in an extensive spoliation phase dating to the mid 3rd c. The end of the forum came in the mid/late 4th c., when the urban center was inundated, possibly due to an earthquake.

Introduction

Butrint (*Bouthrotos*, *Buthrotum*) is located in southern Albania, on the mainland opposite Corfu¹. In antiquity, the

¹ We would like to express our gratitude to the Butrint Foundation and the Packard Humanities Institute for supporting our project, the Roman Forum Excavations at Butrint. We especially thank R. Hodges, who is the project director of excavations at Butrint, together with I. Gjipali (Institute of Archaeology, Tiranë), for providing invaluable direction and advice. We thank all the team members whose work has contributed to this report: ceramics by P. Reynolds (University of Barcelona); coins by S. Moorhead, R. Abdy (both British Museum of London) and Sh. Gjongecaj (Institute of Archaeology, Tiranë); glass by S. Jennings (English Heritage); sculpture by I. Hansen (Butrint Foundation); fauna by A. Powell (University of Cardiff); human osteology by T. Fenton and J. Beatrice (both Michigan

city was situated on the rocky coast of ancient Epirus and prospered as a port-city on the Ionian Sea. Its geographical position on a well-fortified headland allowed the city to flourish as a seaport along the ancient east-west maritime trade routes (**fig. 1**). Unlike most ancient cities in Epirus, Butrint possessed a wide alluvial plain (Vrina plain) running south of the city across the Vivari channel. When properly managed, the rich soil of the plain offered a potential for agricultural production. An important factor to Butrint's prosperity was its advantageous position near a land route that traversed the coastal mountain range and led to the Drinos valley. Maritime commerce at Butrint provided a market for products originating from the interior of Epirus. The synergy of these favorable conditions at Butrint was no doubt apparent to Julius Caesar, first when he employed the city as a supply base during his campaigns against Pompey the Great, and later when he decided to found a Roman colony in the city².

Recent excavations from 2004-07 in the ancient urban center of Butrint have contributed a range of discoveries that cast new light on the Hellenistic city, the Roman colony, and more broadly on the diachronic development of the city up to the late medieval period³. The stratigraphic sequences,

State University); geoarchaeology by D. Bescoby (University of East Anglia). We are grateful to D. Boschi, P. Crawley, A. Crowson, O. Gilkes, E. Glass, and B. Hayden for their assistance in the management of the excavations. Finally, we must thank the Albanian workmen and students, as well as our international volunteer archaeologists, for their valuable contributions to the project.

² CAES. *BC* 3.16. For the Roman colony, see *infra* n. 26.

³ For additional information on the recent excavations, see HERNANDEZ 2007; HERNANDEZ and ÇONDI 2008; REYNOLDS, HERNANDEZ and ÇONDI

together with the material evidence recovered from the present excavations, contribute new chronological phases and topographical knowledge that provide the first comprehensive reassessment of Butrint's urban center since the excavations of the Italian Archaeological Mission, directed by L. M. Ugolini nearly 70 years ago⁴. Ugolini's excavations unearthed a substantial portion of the west end of the ancient city, revealing the theater and several other significant monuments related to the sanctuary of Asclepius. A particularly important discovery was the inscriptions on the west *parodos* and *diazoma* of the theater that revealed the names of hundreds of slaves manumitted under the aegis of Asclepius.



Fig. 1 : Butrint.

Current research has focused on a Hellenistic and Roman complex located east of the theater. The central monument of the complex is a three-roomed Roman building, known as the tripartite building, which underwent several major phases of reconstruction in antiquity (fig. 2). An important achievement of the project was the discovery of the Roman forum – the administrative, commercial, and civic heart of the Roman city. The fine limestone pavement slabs of the forum were found *in situ*, and judging from several trenches the entire pavement appears to remain buried under two to three meters of earth (fig. 3). The excavations have produced a rich stratigraphic record that traces the development of

the urban center from the early Hellenistic to the late mediaeval period. In this paper, we outline the major phases of urbanization of Hellenistic and Roman Butrint. We examine the foundation of the forum in relation to the Roman colony and discuss the end of the ancient public center.



Fig. 2 : tripartite building

The sanctuary of Asclepius and the agora

A central monument of Hellenistic Butrint is the theater, which visually eclipses many of the surrounding buildings in the urban center (fig. 4). The theater has an integral architectural relationship with several adjacent buildings. The upper *cavea* of the theater was not regular; the semi-elliptical rows of seats only existed on the upper eastern half of the theater. The upper western side of the *cavea* was constrained by a pre-existing bedrock platform that served as the *temenos* of a temple located above the theater. The temple consists of a *pronaos* and *cella*. Both the theater and the temple situated above it were excavated by the Italian Archaeological Mission. Ugolini dated both monuments to a “periodo classico,” which is generally thought to refer to the 4th c. B.C.⁵. There is no archaeological evidence associating the temple to a specific deity, though some

2008. For a general overview of Butrint, see HODGES 2006. For Epirus, see HAMMOND 1967.

⁴ UGOLINI 1935; 1937; 1942; 2003.

⁵ UGOLINI 1937, 122-3, figs. 71-2. 135. D. BUDINA(1988, 71) and J. WILKES (2003, 166) propose a 3rd-c. B.C. date for the theater. Five unpublished sketch plans of the temple are in the Ugolini archive of the Butrint Foundation.

have suggested Aphrodite, Zeus Soter, or Asclepius⁶.



Fig. 3 : Forum pavement (Area VI)

A dedicatory inscription along the second row of seats commemorates the construction of the theater: “from the public revenues of the god [Asclepius]”⁷. Fifty-six inscriptions engraved on the theater, on the north wall of the western *parodos* and on the *diazoma*, are annual acts of manumissions⁸. The manumission inscriptions follow a formula that lists the names of freed slaves and of magistrates, and the name of the presiding priest of Asclepius, who serves as the eponym⁹. The temple and its *temenos* protruded through the uppermost west side of the theater and thus held a primary position in the complex. In essence, the theater and its temple above formed an architectural unit, one which suggests a close thematic union between the two monuments. For this reason, the temple may have been dedicated to Asclepius himself¹⁰. The design of the theater was also calculated in part by another preexisting building. The shape of the western *koilon* (lower *cavea*) was cons-

⁶ Ugolini is said to have associated the temple with Aphrodite, see WILKES 2003, 166. For associations with Zeus Soter, see BUDINA 1988, 64; with Asclepius, see MELFI 2007, 24-6.

⁷ UGOLINI 2003, 89; CABANES and DRINI 2007, 71-2, n. 7.

⁸ CABANES and DRINI 2007, 71-125, 289-316. A few inscriptions are decrees granting the right of *proxenos* to foreigners.

⁹ Some inscriptions refer to Zeus Soter.

¹⁰ MELFI 2007, 26.

trained by the presence of an earlier building, identified by Ugolini as the shrine of Asclepius¹¹. The earliest phase of the building, which has been thought to date either to the late 4th or 3rd c. B.C., has the form of a temple *in antis* with *cella* and *pronaos*¹². Ugolini’s excavation revealed a *favissa* at the rear of the shrine. The *favissa*, a chamber built around a small natural grotto in the bedrock, was found replete in votive offerings to Asclepius¹³. The large irregular stone construction of the chamber might date to the prehistoric period, as Ugolini noted¹⁴. Indeed, this natural grotto, which appears to have dictated the form and location of the shrine of Asclepius, probably served as the primary source of medicament, the healing water, in the sanctuary.

The construction of the eastern wall of the *analemma*, which retains the theater’s *cavea*, entailed the partial destruction of the long stoa, which was truncated and remodeled on its west side¹⁵. The long stoa, made of well-faced ashlar, had buttressed piers bearing triangular-shaped corbel arches.

¹¹ UGOLINI 1942, 108; WILKES 2003, 166; SEAR 2003, 182. MELFI (2007, 22-3) argues that the building functioned as a treasury. This interpretation is unlikely because the location and form of the building were determined by a preexisting spring, integrated into the building as a *favissa*. The *favissa*, together with the architectural plan of the building, suggests a shrine or temple, as Ugolini originally thought.

¹² UGOLINI 1942, 104-6; PANI 1988, 32; BUDINA 1988, 61. The earliest phase of the temple is over 7 m long x 6 m wide (often misstated in scholarship as 6.5 x 4.6 m, which are the internal dimensions of the structure). The temple is often dated to the 4th c. B.C. in scholarship, e.g. see PANI 2001, 16; WILKES 2003, 166; MARTIN 2004, 82. However, a 3rd-c. B.C. date is also possible because the date of the temple derives from its structural relationship to the theater alone. Thus, BUDINA (1988, 63) and BAÇE (1984, 21) both view a 3rd-c. B.C. date as possible.

¹³ UGOLINI 1937, 152-7; 1942, 91-146. The *stipe votiva* contained almost 340 dedications *ex voto*, some of which bore the name of Asclepius.

¹⁴ UGOLINI 1942, 100.

¹⁵ WILKES 2003, 166-7, figs. 6.35-40. The building was first excavated by UGOLINI (1937, 123-5, fig. 73).

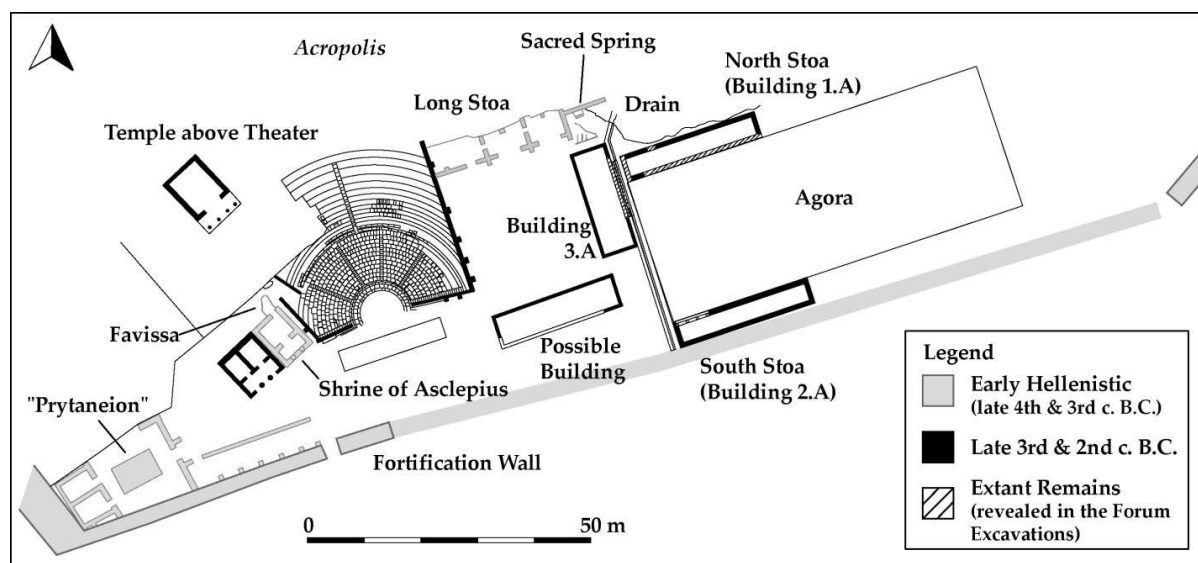


Fig. 4 : Reconstruction of Hellenistic Butrint in the 2nd c. B.C.

The building was originally longer, measuring *c.*49 x 4.5 m¹⁶. The long stoa, which is situated on a bedrock terrace, is thought to date to the 4th or early 3rd c. B.C.¹⁷. G. Pani suggests that the building functioned as an *abaton*, a building for ritualistic incubation where worshipers received dreams or visions from Asclepius prior to treatment¹⁸.

The location of the Hellenistic agora has never been conclusively identified at Butrint. N. Ceka proposes that the agora occupied the area in front of the shrine of Asclepius, extending up to the so-called prytaneion¹⁹. This area encompasses a rather narrow space between the theater and the fortification wall and lacked space for public

buildings typically associated with an agora. Owing to the large-scale excavations undertaken by the Italian Archaeological Mission, the theater and its surrounding area represented the bulk of known Hellenistic urban structures until the recent excavations. Consequently, there may have been a tendency to view the Hellenistic city as focused exclusively around the theater. The urban fortification walls, long segments of which survive and extend to the tower gate at the east end of the city, suggest that Ugolini exposed only a small fraction of the Hellenistic city. The new excavations east of the theater have brought to light Hellenistic monuments and a stratigraphic record that offers new evidence for the topography and chronology of both the sanctuary of Asclepius and the agora.

Recent discoveries in the urban center of Hellenistic Butrint

The archaeological project partitioned the Hellenistic and Roman complex into fourteen different study areas (Areas I-XIV), which are illustrated on the Hellenistic phase plan (fig. 5). Excavations revealed the remains of Building 1.A, the earliest identifiable construction beneath the tripartite building. The foundations of the north wall of Building 1.A appeared in Area

¹⁶ Polygonal masonry seen in the upper *cavea* is thought to indicate the original extent of the edifice, see BUDINA 1988, 58; PANI 2001, 18; WILKES 2003, 167.

¹⁷ BUDINA (1988, 58) re-excavated the building in 1982 and proposed a 4th c. B.C. date. PANI (2001, 18, n.16) mentions that K. Lako, analyzing the same material from the excavations, dates the building to the early 3rd c. B.C.

¹⁸ PANI 2001, 19; MELFI 2007, 23-4.

¹⁹ CEKA 1988, 116-8, Tab. XVIII, 1; 2006, 177-85. The "prytaneion" was excavated by Budina and remains unpublished. PANI (2001, 21) assigns a 3rd c. B.C. date to its earliest phase, citing personal communication with Budina.

I. Previous excavations exposed the south and west sides of the building, made of large grey rabbeted ashlar blocks²⁰. The three extant walls show that the building was 26 m long and 4.5 m wide. Building 1.A, having a long, thin rectangular form, has the shape of a stoa. The construction deposits yielded a drachma minted in *Kerkyra* that provides a terminus post quem date of 229 B.C. Building 1.A, which we call the north stoa, probably dates to the 2nd c. B.C.

Trenches on the west side of the complex in Area IX revealed a wall of ashlar masonry *in situ*, four courses high with a preserved length of 10.4 m. This wall formed part of Building 3.A, which was later partially demolished when the Roman peristyle building was constructed. Excavation also exposed an open drain, which consists of a 12 m stretch of down-ward-pitched flagstones abutting the east side of Building 3.A. A cascade of cut bedrock behind the north stoa (Building 1.A) originally linked to the drain. Consequently, the drain redirected water running down from the acropolis away from the north stoa. For this reason and because of the similar masonry and building technique of both buildings, Buildings 1.A and 3.A, together with the drain, appear to be an integral construction dating to the 2nd c. B.C.

In Area VII, a grotto, 4 m deep, created a natural spring at the foot of the acropolis (fig. 6). The spring was discovered in previous excavations in 1982²¹. The spring occupies an important position in the Hellenistic complex, undoubtedly related to the sanctuary of Asclepius. Ashlar masonry, which formed a back wall to the spring, is keyed into the long stoa, which predates the

construction of the theater. This shows that the spring was in use at least by the 3rd c. B.C. if not earlier. The architecture seen today surrounding the spring is mostly a Roman reconstruction. In the Roman period, the spring was adorned with a marble parapet wall. Deep grooves, seen along the top of the parapet wall, were formed by rope that slowly rubbed away the marble, as water was drawn from the spring. The Roman reconstruction contains in its interior base an ashlar block of spolia with similar rope marks. This demonstrates that the stone served as the original parapet of the spring in the Hellenistic period.

South of the complex in Area XV, a trench revealed a two-step stylobate of Building 2.A (figs. 4, 7). The steps are joined by lead clamps, and their faces are decorated with delta-shaped lifting bosses. The lifting bosses are spaced at regular intervals that coincide with the spacing of the columns that originally sat on the stylobate.

Four circular cut marks are the impressions of columns, each containing a central dowel-hole and a lead spillover channel. The columns are 58 cm in diameter, spaced regularly at 1.8 m intervals. The excavations exposed a 6 m stretch of this stylobate, which did not reveal either end of the building. The form of Building 2.A with its two-step stylobate suggests a stoa, although the buildings function remains uncertain. Ceramic imports from Campania and Megara help date Building 2.A (the south stoa) to the 2nd c. B.C.

The sanctuary of Asclepius and the agora: revisited

The architecture of the stylobate of the south stoa is similar, if not the same, as the stylobate of the temple above the theater (fig. 8). As discussed above, the temple is made of dressed ashlar blocks attached by lead clamps and has delta shaped lifting bosses along its lowest course. This same masonry style is also present on parts of the theater, such as the lowest course of the *cavea* beneath the seats (fig. 9). The founda-

²⁰ This area of Butrint was first excavated by S. Islami in 1982 and continued under Dh. Çondi in 1990-91. Most of the material evidence from these prior excavations is now lost owing to the looting and destruction of the archaeological stores during Albania's civil turmoil in 1997. These prior excavations are unpublished. For a brief description of the excavations, see ÇONDI 1990, 264-5.

²¹ BUDINA 1988, 58-60, pl. 9.

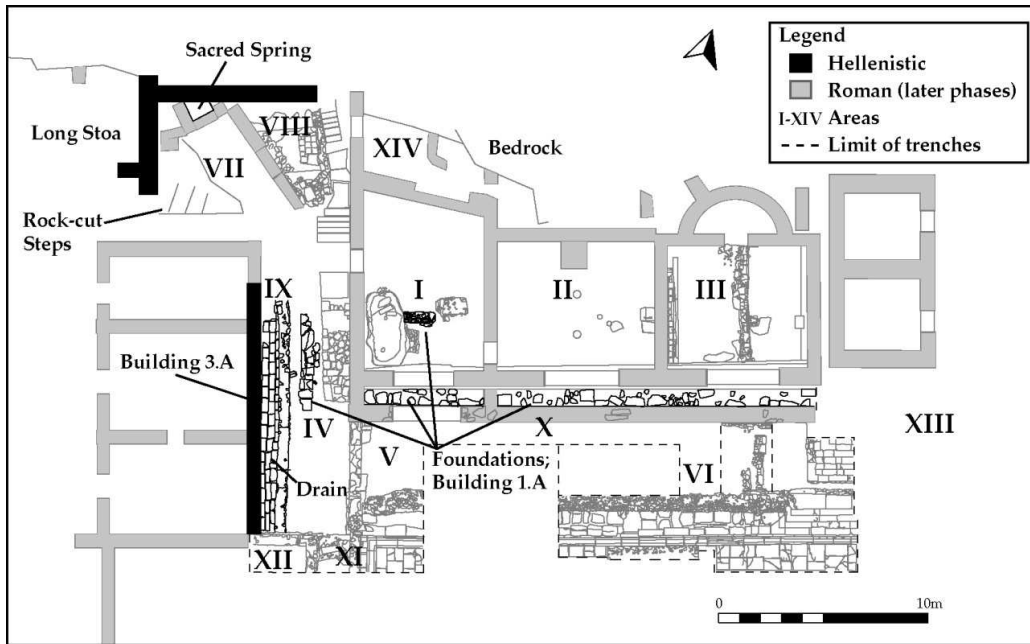


Fig. 5 : Hellenistic phase of plan of the tripartite building complex

tions of the Roman *scaena frons* contain spolia of this same masonry. This distinct masonry type suggests that the spolia derive from the original architecture of the theater.

The theater was constructed after or at the time of the *temenos* platform of the temple above it. On the basis of the date of the south stoa, it is likely that the theater and its temple date to the early 2nd c. B.C.



Fig. 6. The sacred spring adjacent to the long stoa (Area VII)



Fig. 8 : Temple above the theater (with lifting bosses)



Fig. 7. Stylobate of the south stoa with lifting bosses (Area XV)

This date is substantiated by the recent work of P. Cabanes and F. Drini who recently published the Hellenistic inscriptions of Butrint. They show that the dedicatory inscription engraved on the theater dates to the Epirote Republican Period (232-168 B.C.) and specifically argue for a date in the early 2nd c. B.C. on the basis of their absolute and relative

chronologies²². This date for the theater is also supported by the results of recent excavations at the nearby site of Phoenice, the capital city of Chaonia²³. Stratified deposits related to the original construction of the theater at Phoenice date the theater to the late 3rd or 2nd c. B.C., with one of the construction deposits dated to the 2nd c. B.C.²⁴.



Fig. 9. Theater, lowest course with lifting bosses.

In the area where Buildings 1.A and 3.A meet, the two buildings are separated from one another by a very small space that is almost entirely occupied by the open drain. This arrangement reveals that the sacred spring occupied a restricted space, one which was defined by the ashlar retaining wall to the north, bedrock to the west, and Buildings 1.A and 3.A to the south. Access to the sacred spring appears to have been from the west, in the gap between the long stoa and Building 3.A. In fact, rock-cut steps at the sacred spring lead directly up to the long stoa. This suggests that the spring was intimately tied to the rituals of the sanctuary. The area contained by the theater, the long stoa, and Building 3.A is a demarcated space with access to the sacred spring. The *temenos* of the sanctuary of

Asclepius appears to have extended from the shrine of Asclepius to Building 3.A and was defined to the north by the long stoa, which possibly functioned as an *abaton*. The earliest identifiable phase in the urban center dates to the late 4th or 3rd c. B.C. This phase includes the shrine of Asclepius, the long stoa, and the sacred spring (and perhaps the prytaneion). With the exception of a few residual sherds possibly dating as early as the 5th c. B.C., no traces of this phase were recovered in the areas of our excavations²⁵.

A rapid and large scale growth of the urban center appears to have occurred in the 2nd c. B.C., with the construction of the theater, the temple above it, Buildings 1.A, 2.A, and 3.A. During this period, the sanctuary was enhanced and aggrandized. The theater, inscribed with a dedication to Asclepius, was the centerpiece of the sanctuary. Its architectural design incorporated both the shrine of Asclepius and a temple above the *cavea*. The prominence of this temple, protruding into the space of the upper *cavea* on a solid bedrock terrace, indicates its singular importance in the sanctuary. The urban center appears to have significantly expanded eastward during this time. The expansion is demonstrated by the construction of two stoas opposite one another, Buildings 1.A and 2.A. The two stoas define an open space that in all likelihood was the agora, not least because the area later became the forum of the Roman town. The agora measures 26.5 m (N-S) and would have an estimated length between 40-60 m (E-W). This development of the Hellenistic city in the 2nd c. B.C. reflects, in the case of Butrint, an urbanization program that emanated from the heart of a sanctuary.

The Roman colony of *Buthrotum*

Julius Caesar conceived the plan to implant a Roman colony at *Buthrotum* as

²² CABANES and DRINI 2007, 71-2, n. 7 and 289.

²³ For a synthesis of the current results of field work at Butrint and Phoenice, see GIORGI *et al.* 2007.

²⁴ VILLICICH 2005, 67-8; 2007, 71; GIANNOTTI 2005, 82-4. Although the Hellenistic architecture of the theater at Phoenice dates to the late 3rd or 2nd c. B.C., the excavators believe that there may have been an earlier theater built by Pyrrhus in the early 3rd c. B.C.

²⁵ Although we excavated more than 1 m below the water-table using pumps, we did not reach natural deposits in most of the trenches (except in Areas I-III).

part of a larger enterprise that sought to colonize key coastal sites in the western Balkans, including Corinth²⁶. Caesar's plan faced fierce opposition by T. Pomponius Atticus, who owned a villa and considerable property at *Buthrotum*²⁷. Cicero attempted to intervene on behalf of Atticus, especially after Caesar's assassination, when plans for the colonization came under the purview of M. Antony²⁸. Roman colonists, consisting of non-veteran Italians, who were probably freedmen, were dispatched to *Butrhrotum* and colonized the city in 44 B.C.²⁹. The newly found colony issued a series of coins bearing the legend COL(onia) I(ulia) BVT(hrotum) on the obverse and a club and staff, the iconographic symbols of the cult of Asclepius, on the reverse³⁰. The new colonial authorities apparently embraced the cult of Asclepius at *Buthrotum*³¹.

After the battle of Actium, Augustus refounded the colony of *Buthrotum*. Whether Augustus' refoundation was a nominal grant of colonial status alone or included the infusion of additional colonists remains unknown. The city minted several series of coins commemorating the refoundation³². Two series contain on the obverse the portrait of Augustus and the legend C(olonia) A(ugusta) BVT(hrotum), and on the reverse an image of the aqueduct of

Buthrotum with the names of *duoviri*³³. Among the *duoviri* named on these coin issues are T. Pomponius and P. Pomponius Graecinus, who share the same *nomen* and *gens* as T. Pomponius Atticus³⁴. To be sure, the *gens* of the *Pomponii* remained preeminent in *Buthrotum* after the colonization and throughout the early empire, as evinced by a marble inscription, coins, and a stamped amphora handle bearing their names, unearthed in the present excavations of the forum.

In the Aeneid, *Buthrotum* is described as *parva Troia* and is linked to Rome by a Trojan foundation legend³⁵. Aeneas, the progenitor of the Roman race, arrived at Butrint and there learned that the city was founded by his kinsman, Helenus, son of Priam³⁶. Sculptural finds, including head pieces of Augustus, Livia, and Agrippa, suggest that the *princeps* and his family were prominently displayed in the urban center and specifically in the theater³⁷.

The Roman forum

The forum was first discovered in 2005 when excavations exposed its northwest corner (fig. 10). The forum pavement and the lowest course of steps were found *in situ*. A limestone gutter set around its perimeter served as part of the drainage system for the buildings framing the forum.

²⁶ CIC. *Att.* 16.16A. For a discussion of the colonization programs of Caesar and Augustus in western Greece and Epirus, see RIZAKIS 1997, 15-36.

²⁷ For Atticus and *Buthrotum*, see DENIAUX 1975, 283-96; 1987, 247-54. For the association of the villa of Atticus with Diaporit, near Butrint, see BOWDEN and PËRZHITA 2004, 413-33.

²⁸ CIC. *Att.* 14.10-12, 14, 17, 19, 20; 15.2, 4, 12, 14, 15, 18-20, 29; 16.1, 2, 3, 4, 16A-F.

²⁹ CIC. *Att.* 15.29; 16.1, 3, 4. See also DENIAUX 1987, 252.

³⁰ BURNETT *et al.* 1992, 276, n. 1379.

³¹ For the evidence related to the political institutions of the Roman colony of *Buthrotum*, see DENIAUX 2007, 33-9.

³² For the Julio-Claudian coinage minted at Butrint, see BURNETT *et al.* 1992, 276-9.

³³ BURNETT *et al.* (1992, 277, n. 1381, 1388) identify the four-arched piers on the coin as a "bridge." Recent excavations at Butrint have identified the bridge crossing the Vivari Channel, running close to the aqueduct. However, the monument on the coin is two-tiered and more likely depicts the aqueduct, as Ugolini originally thought: UGOLINI 1942, 46, 233. For the aqueduct of Butrint, see BUDINA 1967, 145-52; ÇONDI 2000, 211-22. The construction of the aqueduct was likely an Augustan benefaction to the city. For the relationship between imperial benefactions and aqueducts, see Coulton 1987, 72-84.

³⁴ BURNETT *et al.* 1992, 277, n. 1381-2, 1387-93.

³⁵ HANSEN 2007, 44-61.

³⁶ VERG., *Aen.* 3.292-505. Aeneas' visit to Butrint is also mentioned by OVID (*Met.* 13.719-23) and DIONYSIUS OF HALICARNASSUS (*Ant. Rom.* 1.51).

³⁷ For Ugolini's finds related to the Roman colony, see BERGMANN 1998.

In the late 1st c. B.C. or the Augustan period, the north stoa was demolished and replaced by the tripartite building, which occupied the northwest end of the forum. Originally, two steps led up from the forum pavement to a portico fronting the tripartite building.



Fig. 10. Forum pavement, NW corner (Area XI).

A trench at the east end of the complex (in Area VI) revealed the forum pavement and five limestone steps, which would have originally ran across the entire north side of the forum, including across the front of the tripartite building (figs. 11, 12). The steps are the product of two phases. The first phase consisted of two steps. Three additional steps were added above these in a later phase of reconstruction. In fact, the two phase are visually apparent: the lower two steps are much more worn than the top three above them. The excavations also revealed a flight of seven additional steps leading up to a two-storey building on the east side of the tripartite building.

Adjacent to the tripartite building, two-barrel vaulted rooms are the substructure of a two-storey building. The upper level of the building was raised almost seven meters above the forum and was reached by a flight of some 22 steps leading up from the forum pavement. Construction of the flight of steps leading to the two-storey building, as well as the three additional steps added to the first phase, can be correlated to a reconstruction phase of the tripartite building dating to the Hadrianic period. The two-storey building would have been the most visible structure in the urban center

and would have constituted the forum's architectural and visual focus (fig. 13). For this reason, the building may have functioned as an imperial cult temple.



Fig. 11. Forum pavement and steps (westward view, Area VI).



Fig. 12. Forum pavement and steps leading to the two-storey building (Area VI).

A drain running from room 3 in the tripartite building to the forum pavement provides vital evidence for these phases and chronologies (fig. 14). Three different segments of the drain were excavated and this has allowed us to correlate the excavated stratigraphic deposits with the construction of the forum and its steps. Ceramics recovered from the deposits associated with the construction of the drain suggests that the pavement, two steps, and drain date to the Augustan period. At a later time, in the Hadrianic period, three additional steps were added to the north side of the forum and the flight of steps leading to the two-storey building.

The tripartite building itself contains at least four phases of Roman construction, dating from the Late Republican or Augustan period up to the mid 3rd c. A.D. Although the function of the building remains unknown, some evidence suggests that the three rooms were Roman temples. Previous excavations revealed an inscription within room 2 re-used as spolia in late antiquity. The inscription commemorates the construction of an *aedes* (or temple) to Minerva Augusta. The stated approval by the *decuriones* (or city council) indicates that the building was public, not private.³⁸ Later phases of the tripartite building included statue bases centrally in rooms 2 and 3. The surviving architecture of the rooms, the size of the inscription, the reference to a public temple, and the presence of statue bases suggest that the building functioned as the colony's *capitolium*, dedicated to Jupiter, Juno, and Minerva. The internal decoration of the tripartite building consisted of wall paintings and high-quality marbles. Among the various fragments of wall paintings recovered in the excavations, one features a male figure, in motion with out-stretched arms.

An important objective in 2007 was to determine the extent of the forum and its topographical layout. Based on a hypothetical reconstruction of the course of the aqueduct in the urban center of the city, one in which the aqueduct extended to the Roman bath in front of the theater, a trench was excavated in Area XV. The trench revealed the southern extent of the pavement and traces of the southern structures of the forum (fig. 15). As discussed above, the two steps in Area XV originally belonged to the south stoa dating to the 2nd c. B.C. In the Augustan period, the south stoa was substantially remodeled and integrated into the south/southwest side of the forum. In other words, the south stoa was transformed into a two-step portico at the southwest corner of the forum. The trench revealed the entire southwest corner

of the forum. The discovery of the southern limit of the forum proves that the forum ran east-west and supports our initial hypothesis that the aqueduct ran along the south side of the forum. Resting on top of the west steps, a marble molding was unearthed *in situ*. It served as a base for a statue or an inscription. Pottery pointing to an Augustan date was recovered from the backfill deposits beneath the two steps of the west side of the forum. The two steps along the south side of the forum led to the portico of a building, which we did not encounter in the trench. The building is probably located south of the excavated trench.

The north-south width of the forum was 20.1 meters. The east-west length can be estimated from the remains of the east building, which was excavated in 2004-5 under the direction of N. Ceka and D. Çondi. A face of the building in *opus mixtum*, seen in the section of the trench, marks the rear of a building fronting the east side of the forum. This means that the pavement's east-west length falls in the range of 52-61 meters. The topographical layout of the urban center suggests that the aqueduct crossed the main southern entrance of the forum where the *cardo maximus* probably arrived. This road would have led to the two-storey building, which would have been the architectural focus of the forum. The original design of the forum, consisting of a paved rectangular space with an integral gutter outlined by two steps and a portico, is very similar design to the Roman market at Corinth and the Roman agora of Caesar and Augustus at Athens.³⁹

³⁸ PATTERSON 2007, 41.

³⁹ SCRANTON (1951, 180-94) dates the Roman Market at Corinth to the first half of the 1st c. A.D. Construction of the Roman Agora at Athens was begun by Caesar and completed by Augustus: HOFF 1988, 95-124. Corinth, just as Butrint, received a colony of non-veteran Italian settlers: HODGES and HANSEN 2007, 6.

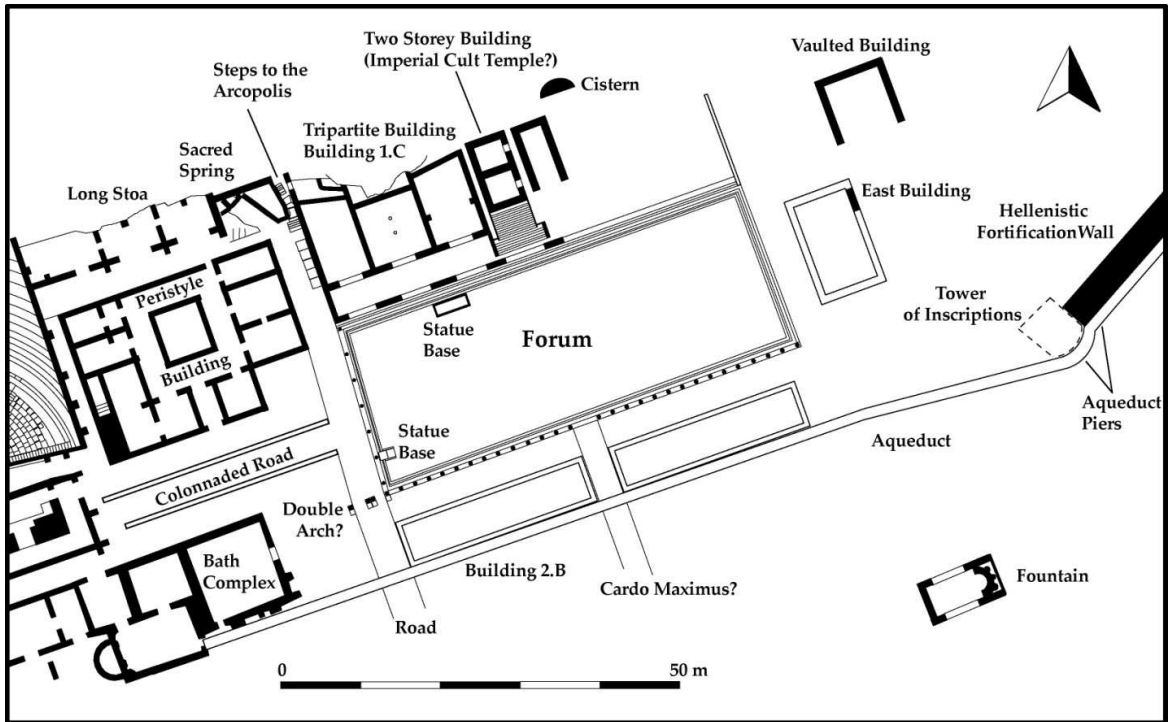


Fig. 13. Reconstruction of the urban center of Roman Butrint in the 2nd c. A.D.

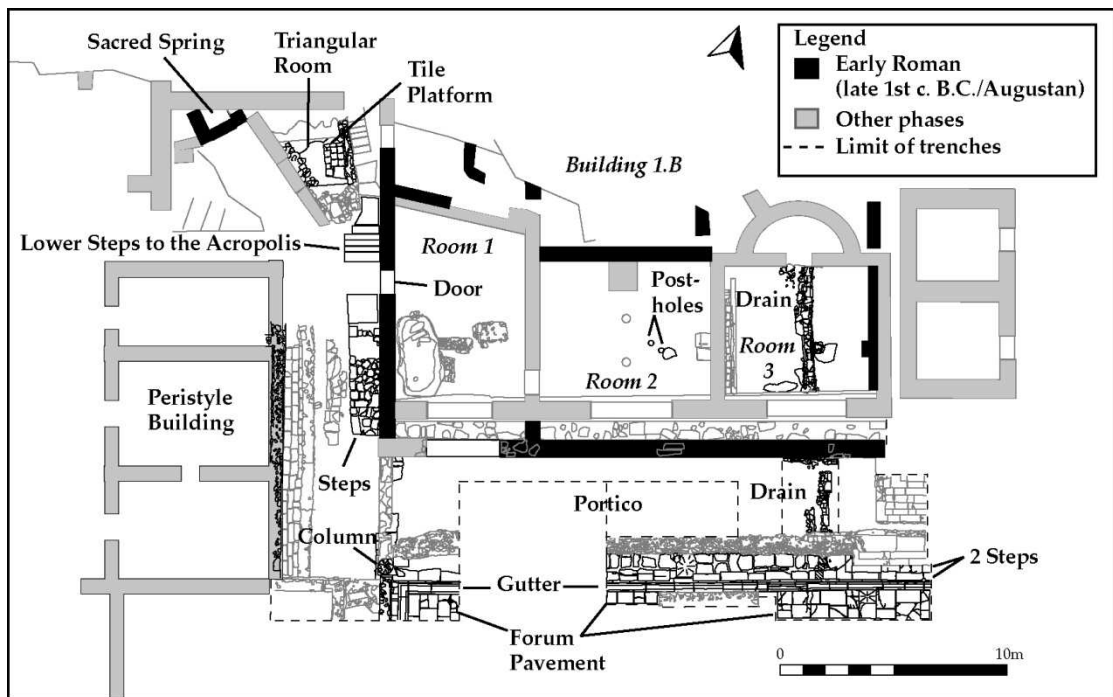


Fig. 14. Phase plan of the tripartite building complex in the Augustan period (Areas I-XIV).



Fig. 15. SW corner of the forum with pavement and steps (Area XV).



Fig. 16. Togate statue in situ, mid 2nd c. A.D. (Area IX).

Urban transformations in late antiquity

The excavations revealed a large-scale spoliation phase in which the tripartite building (Building 1.D) was robbed out in the mid 3rd c. A.D.⁴⁰ Across the site, we recovered evidence of destroyed and discarded statuary and inscriptions. In Area IX, a large quantity of material was dumped into the defunct Hellenistic drain in A.D. 230-250.⁴¹ The dumped material includes a life-size marble sculpture, which was unearthed in 2005 (fig. 16). Dating to the mid 2nd c. A.D., the marble statue represents a high-ranking Roman official wearing an imperial-style toga and patrician boots.⁴² The statue depicts either a local official or possibly an emperor. In addition to this statue, other sculptural fragments were also recovered from the dump, including a hand clasping a rock and a separate piece of a leg. Eight fragmentary inscriptions and over a metric ton of pottery were recovered from the dump. Physical and stratigraphic relationships indicate that this material was dumped prior to the construction of Building 4 (of the peristyle building) and probably formed part of the same construction program. Because a drain in Building 4 was connected to the forum gutter, the forum was still in use when the statue was discarded.

⁴⁰ For late antique Butrint and Epirus, see BOWDEN, HODGES and LAKO 2002 and BOWDEN 2003.

⁴¹ For the ceramic assemblage of this deposit, see REYNOLDS, HERNANDEZ and ÇONDI 2008.

⁴² POJANI 2007, 64.

The destruction deposits of the tripartite building (Building 1.D) also yielded in room 1 an honorific inscription with the letters “TPOM,” which refers to T. Pomponius, a member of the *gens* of Atticus and an intaglio glass gem, measuring less than 1 cm x 2 cm in area. The intaglio features an incised semi-nude standing female, bearing a shawl draped about her shoulders. This rare find is of the highest craftsmanship and probably dates to the first century A.D. It is unclear whether the spoliation phase or the destruction of statuary were caused by a natural calamity, such as an earthquake, or were the result of sociopolitical factors.

The forum pavement now possesses a slope of 1.7 degrees, where the pavement on the southern side is over half a meter lower than on the north side. This displacement of the forum may have been the result of an earthquake that struck the city in the mid to late 4th c. A.D. Several sources, including Libanius and Ammianus Marcellinus, refer to an earthquake and/or tsunami that struck Epirus in the second half of the 4th c.⁴³ The earthquake appears to have resulted in the inundation of the forum and surrounding urban center. This might explain why the forum pavement was never robbed and more importantly why the

⁴³ HODGES *et al.* 1997, 217; GUIDOBONI 1994, 261-7; KELLY 2004, 141-67; PAVLIDES and CAPUTO 2004, 159-88; PIRAZZOLI *et al.* 1996, 6083-98.

civic center shifted to the east side of Butrint in late antiquity.

Two rubble deposits dating to the mid to late 4th c. A.D. seal the forum pavement; one contains abundant marble veneer and architectural fragments; the other compact demolition rubble. The first deposit represents a spoliation and demolition of buildings framing the forum, the second deposit a backfilling of the forum with demolition rubble. The spoliation and destruction phases of the forum were followed by backfilling the forum space, presumably to create a surface above the water-table. Several attempts were made to reoccupy the forum in the 5th c., but the water level continued to rise, leading to the abandonment of the urban center by the 7th c.⁴⁴ A thick and relatively sterile alluvial deposit shows that the urban center lay partially submerged in a shallow pond until the major terracing program undertaken in the 10th or 11th c.

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⁴⁴ Six inhumation burials were excavated across the site, marking the abandonment of the area in the mid 6th to early 7th c. The burials correlate to those at the triconch palace: BOWDEN, HODGES and LAKO 2002, 209; GILKES and LAKO 2004, 170-2.

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Ce colloque est le cinquième organisé depuis le premier en 1984 à Clermont-Ferrand à l'initiative de Pierre Cabanes, le dernier ayant eu lieu à Grenoble en octobre 2002. Tous les six ans il permet de réunir l'ensemble de la communauté scientifique travaillant sur ces régions Balkaniques, depuis la Roumanie à l'est et la Croatie à l'ouest jusqu'à la péninsule grecque au sud, avec des pays de vieille tradition comme la Grèce, et des pays plus récents comme la République de Macédoine ou le Kosovo. Le but de ce colloque est double comme l'indique le programme. Il s'agit d'abord de faire connaître et de partager les découvertes récentes dans le domaine de l'archéologie, de l'épigraphie et de la numismatique, depuis la préhistoire jusqu'à la Basse Antiquité. En effet, depuis l'ouverture de chantiers internationaux et tout récemment également du développement des recherches grâce à la méthode liché, le rythme des découvertes dans ces régions s'accélère. Il est important que celles-ci soient confrontées et discutées le plus rapidement possible afin de constituer de véritables connaissances à la fois pluridisciplinaires et comparatistes, et de proposer des mises au point historiques dans un domaine précis ; cette année le thème retenu par le comité scientifique, est celui des échanges, aussi bien économiques que culturels. Ce choix dépend d'une part des thèmes de recherche développés par le groupe «Balkans» au sein de l'équipe d'accueil du CRHIPA qui reçoit ces travaux, avec l'appui du GDR Euro-péen Balkans du CNRS, mais aussi de l'orientation actuelle des recherches menées par les différents partenaires appartenant à une douzaine de pays. La confrontation entre l'expérience accumulée par les anciens et le renouvellement des problématiques proposées par les jeunes chercheurs, et tout particulièrement les doctorants, s'est avérée, depuis les derniers colloques, le gage d'une recherche dynamique et fructueuse.



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