

# Roman and late-antique Butrint: excavations and survey 2000-2001

W. Bowden, R. Hodges and K. Lako

with contributions by

D. Bescoy, A. Crowson, O. Gilkes, S. Martin, J. Mitchell, L. Përzhita, and P. Reynolds

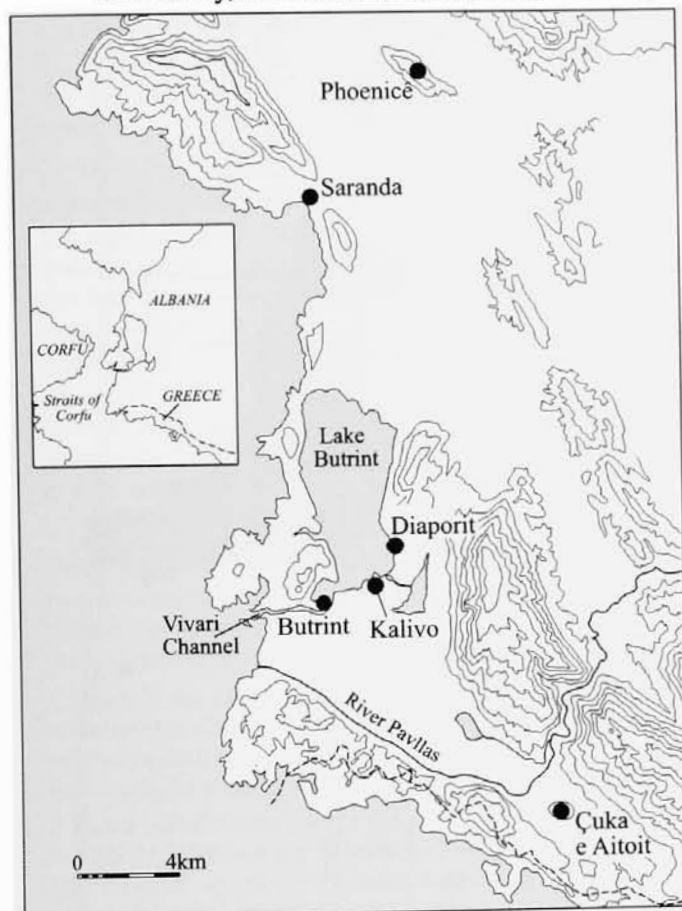


Fig. 1 (above). Butrint in its regional context.

Hellenistic and Roman theatre (Gilkes, forthcoming). Other archival research has focussed on the records of the communist-period archaeological investigations, and has resulted in a much better understanding of the aims and results of these projects, which in some cases are almost wholly unpublished. Our project is also concerned with the controlled development of the site for tourism. This has resulted in the expansion of the UNESCO World Heritage site to 2900 ha and the creation of a National Park with the intent of protecting the archaeological and natural landscape around Butrint (Hodges and Martin 2000; Martin 2001). The present report is a synthesis of the first results of the major excavations of 2000 and 2001. While it is possible (and indeed likely) that interpretations may change as excavations continue, it was felt that the material was of sufficient interest to justify an interim statement.

The new excavations concentrated on two areas: the triconch palace (also the focus of work between 1994 and 1998), and a new site at Diaporit on the E side of Lake Butrint. This work was augmented by further geophysical survey on the SE side of the Vivari channel, aimed at furthering our knowledge of the suburb which is thought to be related to the expansion of the town associated with the foundation of the Roman colony (figs. 1-2).

## INTRODUCTION

The Roman and Byzantine port of Butrint, situated on the SW coast of Albania directly opposite the island of Corfu, has been the focus of a major research project since 1994. The investigation of the site and its hinterland commenced with excavations within the walled town and a survey of sites and monuments in the region (Hodges *et al.* 1997). Despite a brief hiatus caused by civil unrest in Albania in 1997, work continued with excavation and study seasons in 1998 and 1999. The results of the first five years of the project are due to be published shortly (Hodges, Bowden and Lako, forthcoming).

The second phase of the Butrint project, starting in 2000, has encompassed a wide variety of research aims. They have included extensive research on the archives of the Italian mission that conducted large-scale excavations between 1928 and 1942. Among other finds, this resulted in the discovery of the manuscript of L. Ugolini's *Albania antica* vol. 4, the hitherto unpublished results of the Italian excavation of the