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## Risan, Montenegro : excavations in 2011

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TOMASZ KOWAL

## RISAN, MONTENEGRO. EXCAVATIONS IN 2011

Location: Risan, občina (county) of Kotor, Montenegro

Research team: Piotr Dyczek – supervisor

Montenegrin team: Vilma Kovačević, Predrag Lutovac, Miloš B. Petričević

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Excavation time frame: 10.06–12.07

Since 2001 archaeologists from the Antiquity of Southeastern Europe Research Centre, University of Warsaw, have been excavating the site of Risan (ancient Greek *Rhizon*, Roman *Risinium*) situated in the Republic of Montenegro. The site lies on the shores of the Kotor Bay, at the northernmost point where the River Špila runs into the Risan lagoon. Archaeological work has concentrated in several areas, the most important of which are the sites of Carine VI and Carine VII, the ancient acropolis of the town on Gradine Hill (DYCZEK ET AL. 2005: 112–117; 2009: 129–135); and the so-called Villa of Hypnos, a Roman hospitalium with fine mosaic floors (DYCZEK 2009: 51–63; 2010a: 51–78). The Carine area turned out to be of special interest, the site being located on a coastal plain at the foot of Gradine Hill and on the bank of the Špila. It was occupied from the Illyrian period through Hellenistic times to the Roman Age. The two sectors that were excavated here, VI and VII, are approximately 100 m apart. In 2011 the team explored another quarter of ancient architecture at Site Carine VII. Investigations covered the western part of the sector.

The first step in the 2011 season was to complete the explorations of the chamber containing the hoard of coins discovered in the eastern part of the sector (DYCZEK 2010b: 45–50; KOWAL 2010: 46–48) and published preliminarily in “Novensia” (CIOŁEK 2010: 7–12). Excavations had been interrupted the previous year on the level of floor surfaces from the times of King Ballaios, mainly due to constant ground-water seepage which made digging technically difficult (KOWAL 2011: 199–202). The chamber was entered from the northwest through an entrance 1.1 m wide (the actual door would have been about 1 m wide). The original chamber (before the architectural reconstruction of the entire town in a later phase) was rectangular, 4.8×3 m, the longer side being oriented north-south (DYCZEK 2010b: 45). The later wall dividing the chamber into two (next to which the hoard of coins had been



found) was removed and the underlying fill was explored methodically. A few dozen more coins scattered around the room were discovered, all in sufficiently good state to be identified as issues of King Ballaios. Other artefacts from the corresponding layer included a bone pendant which may have functioned as an amulet. In the course of the excavations the walls of this chamber and the adjoining rooms were cleared, revealing that they formed a single complex making up a bigger architectural whole. If the chamber where the hoard was found served as a mint, then it seems likely that it would have been used at the same time for storing also the raw material and the tools needed to melt the alloy and to form and stamp the blanks. The work in the 2011 season, however, failed to produce conclusive evidence of the chamber functioning as a mint.

The chief objective of the work in the 2011 season were two Hellenistic insulas in the western part of the sector. The architecture was cleared over an area covering about 200 m<sup>2</sup>, attention being paid especially to identifying the function of particular chambers, both those excavated previously and those newly uncovered. The units that were cleared were of both habitational and domestic nature (Fig. 1) (DYCZEK 2011: 40–42). Architectural analysis led to the identification of a closed quarter of buildings within one of the insulas. The complex yielded large quantities of black gloss tableware, the most interesting piece being a fish plate with the letters ΑΓΑ in Greek on the



Fig. 1. Plan of the chambers cleared in Sector Carine VII (Drawing T. Kowal, M. Różycka).

Ryc. 1. Rzut poziomy pomieszczeń odsłoniętych na Carine VII.

underside (Fig. 2). The inscription can be interpreted as an abbreviation of the name “Aglaos” (more likely) or “Aglaophon”. It was made post-firing and can be construed as an owner’s mark. It is conjectured that the complex may have belonged to one Aglaos, the same who marked the plate as his own. Parallels for the plate from *Rhizon* are dated to the turn of the 3<sup>rd</sup> c. BC and the 2<sup>nd</sup> c. BC (ROTROFF 1997: 148, 317, fig. 51:730, pl. 65:730).

The living chambers of the “House of Aglaos” included a bathroom and adjacent kitchen area. The bathroom had two entrances, one from the house and the other from the street. An analysis of the architectural plan reveals certain similarities (taking into account the difference in proportions) to the city plan of ancient Olynthus (CAHILL 2001: 74–82, figs. 12, 14). The bathroom contained a partly preserved ceramic bathtub (Fig. 3), as well as two



Fig. 2. Black gloss fish plate with the letters AGL engraved on the underside (Drawing M. Różycka).

Ryc. 2. Talerz rybny, ceramika czarnopokostowana, z wrytymi na spodniej części literami AGL.

washing basins. One of these basins was additionally decorated on the inside with an impressed ornament. The bathtub is of special interest; to date, excavations at Risan have produced two other bathtubs, one in 1988 and another in 2001 (DYCZEK 2005: 114–115, pl. XXIV:3). These finds attest to the importance that inhabitants of the time of King Ballaios and Queen Teuta attached to hygiene. The present bathtub is of the type in which bathing took place in squatting position with the dirty water collecting in a hollow located in front. Used water was poured out to a nearby stone channel immediately behind the bathroom wall. The reconstructed length of the bathtub is 1 m, the width 0.5 m. Parallel bathtubs, similar in construction and parameters, were found at Smyrna, where they have been dated to between the 6<sup>th</sup> and the 4<sup>th</sup> c. BC (COOK 1959: 36–37, pl. CXCII:a). The bathtub was set on a layer of impermeable clay. A few dozen coins of Ballaios were found in the nearest vicinity of the bathtub.

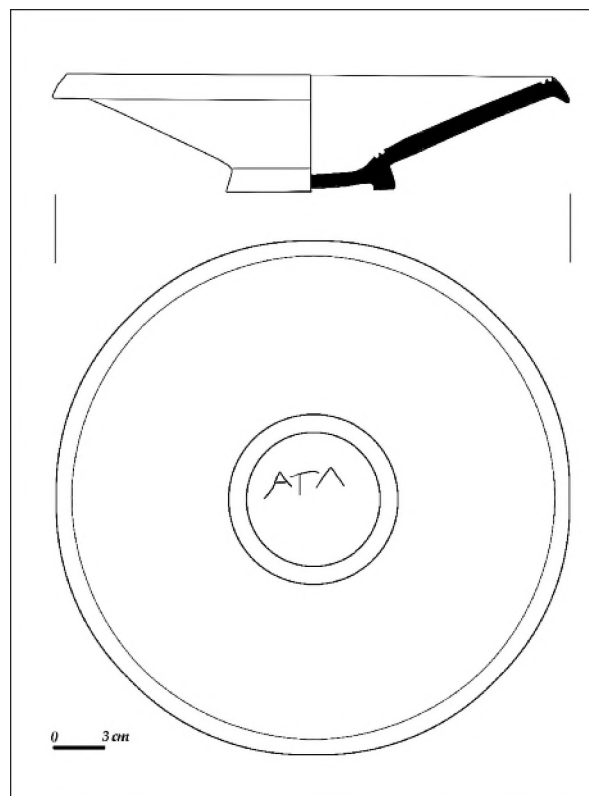


Fig. 3. Terracotta bathtub *in situ* (Photo J. Reclaw).

Ryc. 3. Ceramiczna wanna *in situ*.



Fig. 4. Golden ring with an image of Artemis (Photo P. Kajak).

Ryc. 4. Złoty pierścionek z wizerunkiem Artemidy.

The most spectacular discovery of the current campaign is a gold ring (Fig. 4). It was found in a passage between various units of the insula. The combined weight of the ring is 18 grams. The oval gem set in this ring was 1.6×1.1 cm in size. It was made of a dark red agate, a stone often used for ancient gemstones, carved with an image of Artemis in relief. The figure was rendered with great care, the hands, nose, eyes and robes as well as artefacts (flaming torch) being carved very precisely. This find attests to the

broad trade contacts and cultural ties between *Rhizon* inhabitants and other towns in the Mediterranean. A similarly made ring was discovered during excavations of the Hellenistic necropolis in Budva (MARKOVIĆ 2006: fig. 69). The ring from *Rhizon* was found next to three bronze coins of Ballaios (DYCZEK 2011: 42), conveniently precisising the time when it was lost. Artemis was worshipped at Risan and it is also noteworthy that her image appears on the reverse of King Ballaios' coins (CIOŁEK 2011: 28–31).



Fig. 5. Group of bronze nails (after conservation) (Photo P. Kajak).

Ryc. 5. Skupisko gwoździ brązowych (stan po konserwacji).





Fig. 6. Silver coin (*subaeratus*) with the image of King Ballaios, obverse and reverse (Photo M. Dąbski).

Ryc. 6. Awers i rewers srebrnej monety (*subaeratus*) z wizerunkiem króla Ballaiosa.

The Risan excavations have produced to date many nails which have been studied, resulting in a typology being prepared (LITWINOWICZ 2010: 165–175). A broken pot of local make, found in one of the rooms in the “House of Aglaos” in 2011, contained a set of bronze nails comprising 25 whole nails and 10 shaft fragments (Fig. 5). Bent heads and crooked shafts are proof that the nails were used. A preliminary analysis (the set will be studied by P. Litwinowicz) indicated the presence of three different types: 1. structural; 2. for fittings such as doors (WALSCH 1983: 45–50), window grilles (ULRICH 2007: 69), cart- and boatbuilding (BOCKIUS 2007: 35); and 3. for furniture (bigger pieces, large chests and caskets). The structural nails seem to be of greatest interest; they appear to have been used for beams and rafters (ULRICH 2007: 61–69). The longest of the nails from this group was 17.5 cm, the bent end measuring 3.5 cm, which indicates that it was passed through a construction 14 cm thick.

The numismatic material recovered this year (altogether 300 pieces) was sent for conservation. Some of the coins were in good condition, while others were illegible, the damage having been caused by frequent karst-related flooding. Seven coins were of silver, about 280 of bronze and the rest too deteriorated to be sure regarding the material from which they were made. A few artefacts could not be distinguished from nail heads. Predominant among the coins were issues of King Ballaios of Type Rhizon (268 in all) with only three pieces representing Type Pharos. Of

particular interest is a set of five silver coins of Ballaios (*subaeratus*, diameter 1.8 cm) (Fig. 6). The remaining silver coins included a *Sinus Rhizonicus* coin and another coin of Type Dyrrhachium with a cow/calf.<sup>1</sup>

Underwater investigations were continued as well. Previous work resulted in preliminary conclusions concerning the appearance of the waterfront and the port (KARPIŃSKI 2010: 135–163). The actual course of the city walls has not been established satisfactorily, because a considerable part of the fortifications is underwater in the Špila. A section of the Cyclopean wall had been charted earlier by Montenegro colleagues (FABER 1992: 28–29), but not all parts have been documented as yet. A low water level this season revealed a section of the walls 8 m long, directly opposite Sector Carine VII. This was documented at that time and underwater archaeologists charted a section of the fortifications concealed in the river. A trench was traced in the middle of the river, 50 m from the mouth of the river where it flowed into the sea. A plan of 10 m of the ancient wall of Rhizon was completed and the river bottom was surveyed from the recorded wall to the mouth where stone structures were also observed.

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TOMASZ KOWAL

## RISAN, CZARNOGÓRA. WYKOPALISKA W 2011 R.

W 2011 roku odsłonięto kolejny kwartał zabudowy antycznego miasta na odcinku Carine VII, w jego zachodniej części. Głównym celem tych prac było częściowe odsłonięcie dwóch hellenistycznych insul, a przede wszystkim poznanie funkcji poszczególnych pomieszczeń, tych nowo odkrytych, jak i wcześniej badanych.

W obrębie insul udało się odkryć pomieszczenia o funkcjach mieszkalnych i gospodarczych; przebadano ok. 200 m<sup>2</sup>. Na terenie tzw. Domu Aglaosa odsłonięto m.in. izby o charakterze mieszkalnym, w tym łazienkę i przylegający do niej kompleks kuchenny. W łazience znaleziono częściowo zachowaną ceramiczną wannę, a także dwie miednice do mycia. Jedna z nich była ozdobiona od wewnątrz ornamentem wyciskany. Szczególnie interesująca jest wanna, gdyż jest to stosunkowo rzadkie znalezisko, a świadczy o tym, że mieszkańcy *Rhizon* z okresu panowania Ballaiosy i Teuty dbali o higienę i czystość.

Najbardziej spektakularnym odkryciem tegorocznej kampanii jest złoty pierścień, który wydobyto w korytarzu pomiędzy pomieszczeniami. Pierścień jest zaopatrzony w gemmę, która stanowi jego oczko. Łączna masa pierścienia wynosi 18 gramów. Gemma ma kształt owalny, o wymiarach 1,6×1,1 cm. Kamieniem ozdobnym osadzonym w pierścieniu był agat o odcieniu ciemnoczerwonym. Gemma zawiera doskonale widoczny wizerunek Artemidy – bóstwa czczzonego w *Rhizon*.

W tym roku znaleziono także wiele monet, w tym srebrne subaeraty Ballaiosy, a także – po jednej – typu *Sinus Rhizonicus* i *Dyrrhachium* (z przedstawieniem krowy/cielęcia).

Podczas tegorocznej kampanii prowadzono także badania podwodne – wykonano m.in. dokumentację rysunkową dwóch odcinków murów antycznych zlokalizowanych w korycie rzeki Špila.