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## Fieldwork at Risan and Novae, season 2003

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PIOTR DYCZEK (IA UW)

FIELDWORK AT RISAN AND NOVAE, SEASON 2003  
(PL. 37-42)

1. Risan, ancient names: *Rhizon*, *Risinium* – Montenegro, Boka Kotorska.
2. **Team:** Piotr Dyczek  
 Vilma Kovačević, Jovica Martinović – Montenegro side  
 Janusz Reclaw, Martin Lemke, Piotr Kazanowski  
 Group of 6 student-trainees from the Institute of Archaeology of Warsaw University and 10 students from the Slavic Studies Institute of Warsaw University.
3. **Explorations** lasted from June 12 to July 17, 2003.
4. **Financed** from the resources of the Center of Archaeological Research – Novae, Warsaw University.
5. Greek *emporion*, perhaps Greek colony, Roman colony, Roman municipium, small medieval episcopal center.
6. **Chronology:** 4th century BC - 11th century AD.

The site lies in the territory of the modern town of Risan, situated on the northern arm of the Boka Kotorska bay, otherwise known as Risan Bay, 11 km northwest of Kotor. Risan occupies a natural cavea formed by limestone hills sparsely overgrown by typical Mediterranean flora. Two mountain ridges encase the location, the highest peaks being Stole (945 m a.s.l.) and Ušanik (844 m a.s.l.). Overlooking the town is the Gradine mount (132 m a.s.l.) with remnants of an Illyrian fortress crowning the top. The river Špila – all of 300 m long – springs from the hills. Mentions of *Rhizon* appear mostly in geographical and ethnographical studies of the eastern Adriatic coastline. The oldest record is in Pseudo-Scylax. In fragments 24 and 25, this author of the second half of the 4th century BC refers to an *emporion* that lay by the “Rhizon lake” and of the river Arion (Fig. 1).

Polibius (*Histories*) gives the localization and describes the political situation of this territory in the 3rd century BC, focusing on the war that the Illyrian queen Teuta fought with the Romans in 229 and 228 BC. Upon being defeated, Teuta agreed to withdraw from almost all of Illyria, pay a tribute and not to venture beyond *Issa* in more than two unarmed ships. She was also forced to surrender her rule in favor of Pinnes, Argon's son from a first marriage. Strabo noted the existence of *conventus civium Romanorum*, which could indicate that the locality enjoyed autonomy. Livy in turn speaks of the town being located in the third province, into which Illyria had been divided: “*inde in tres partes Illyricum divisit...*” He also mentions the Romans having defeated in 168 BC the Illyrian king Gentios. On this occasion he refers to the Rhison tribe and this people's chief city which was endowed with numerous privileges.

The situation of the 1st century AD was described by Pliny the Elder in his *Historia Naturalis*. Here *Rhizon* is referred to as an *oppidum civium Romanorum*.

*Rhizon* is also mentioned in other ancient authors: the Geographer from Ravenna, Stephen of Byzantium and Constantine Porphyrogenes. It was also depicted on the *Tabula Peutingeriana*.

The archaeological remains were first investigated in the 1880s by Arthur Evans, who uncovered the tombs and ruins of the settlement. Work continued on and off in the 1930s, 1950s, 1960s and 1970s, and systematic excavations were undertaken in 1988 and 1989.

The Polish archaeological project, which opened in 2001, has concentrated during the most recent campaign on the Roman villa district on one hand and on the bank of the Špila in the so-called Carine region on the other. In a Roman villa with mosaic floors discovered in 1930 by D. Vuksan and called the Villa of Hypnos in the literature, in reference to the medallion representation of the god on one of the mosaics, the team concentrated on a full recording of the mosaic floors (Fig. 2). Trenches verifying the archaeological situation led to the localization of *cubicula* and *triclinia*. Another Roman villa, which was functional from about the middle of the 2nd to the middle of the 4th century AD, was located nearby the Villa of Hypnos. Nine rooms in all were traced, two of these with *opus tessellatum* floors. The best preserved floor revealed a double meander on white ground, framed with red-cube borders (Fig. 3). In the 4th century this mosaic was covered with another floor made this time in the *opus sectile* technique. Fragments of wall decoration have also been preserved: geometrical motifs on a white background.

The archaeological work in Carine took up the work initiated here in 1988 by V. Kovačević. More than 500 sq. m were investigated, uncovering a domestic complex from the 4th century BC, which flourished in the 2nd century BC, under king Ballaios (Fig. 4). The complex included a depot of amphorae, chiefly Greek-Italic vessels, a *taberna*, bathroom and shops selling pottery.

The rooms are situated around a small courtyard appropriately furnished with sewage installations.

A small ceramic bathtub was discovered in the bathroom which is dated to the 2nd century BC. The tub measures 0.96 m by 0.58 m (**Fig. 5**) and was fixed in place with hydraulic mortar. Adjoining the tub is a mosaic floor, ca 1.0 by 1.0 m, made of white limestone pebbles and red pieces of pottery. The ornament is a red grid on a white background. A leaden pipe runs from the level of the mosaic toward the sewage channel in the street.

The more public than private nature of the complex is indicated by a long building closing off the courtyard on the north. It was divided into several small and narrow rooms. Huge quantities of Gnathia ware, copper nails and coins, representing mainly issues of Ballaios, were discovered here. The pottery greatly exceeds the needs of a single household and is surprisingly unvaried

typologically, the repertoire of shapes being restricted to *skyphoi*, *pelike*, small cups and two examples of gutti. The ware is of the Late Gnathia type, dated to the period 325-270 BC. The assemblage also includes some later imitations produced in the pottery centers of Stari Grad on the Hvara and Vis and Lumbarda on the Korčula.

A series of triangular structures made of big stone blocks were explored on the river bank. They seem to have formed the jetty of an ancient port (**Fig. 6**).

A prospection of the area around Ledenice village led to the identification and tracing of three sections of a Roman road, 3.0 m wide, that had linked the ancient "highway" running along the Adriatic coast with the interior (**Fig. 7**).

Underwater prospection was carried out in preparation for underwater archaeological work planned for 2004. Concentrations of ancient pottery and amphorae especially were located for future reference.

### Fieldwork at Novae

1. Svištov, ancient name: *Novae* – Northern Bulgaria.
2. **Team:** Piotr Dyczek  
Evgenia Genčeva – Bulgarian side  
Leszek Mrozewicz, Janusz Reclaw, Eryk Bunsch, Martin Lemke, Piotr Kazanowski  
Group of 25 student-trainees from the Institute of Archaeology of Warsaw University.
3. **Excavations** from July 20 to September 17, 2003.
4. **Financed** under a grant from the Committee for Scientific Research (KBN) of the Republic of Poland.
5. Roman fortress of the First Italic legion, Early Byzantine town, medieval cemetery.
6. **Chronology:** 1st century AD - 12th century AD.

Archaeological research covered the area of the Roman army hospital (*valetudinarium*), the medieval burial ground and the ancient pottery manufacturing center.

Another series of hospital rooms was uncovered. The walls were plastered red. The original furnishings included broken pottery and ancient lamps (**Fig. 8**).

Pits with 33 skeletons were uncovered in the medieval burial ground situated around a small church (**Fig. 9**). Both adults and children were represented among the dead. The bottoms of the pits and in some cases the sides had been laid with stones and fragments of roofing tiles. Nails found here and there suggest that at least some of the burials had been made in coffins. Furnishings included bronze earrings and multivaried beads made of a variety of colored glass (**Fig. 10**). Buckles were also found and an iron knife which had once been attached to a waist belt. Some pits were also recorded, obviously used as rubbish dumps for the refuse from funeral banquets: animal bones and pottery vessels. The dating of the necropolis to the period from the 9th to the

12th centuries, based on radiocarbon dates and characteristic finds, make this the earliest known medieval burial ground in modern Bulgaria.

Ancient remains found on the very edge of the Danube in this vicinity turned out to include kilns used for the manufacture of roofing tiles and a local type of oil lamp (**Fig. 11**). To date, single kilns had been known from Novae and they had been used for the production of cooking vessels. This year's results have provided the first evidence of building ceramics also having been manufactured at Novae. The discovery that a local lamp type was also produced on the spot came as a total surprise.

The most important find of the season, however, was a large fragment of a funerary stela with a representation of a banquet scene carved in relief. No other example of this kind of tombstone has been unearthed in Northern Bulgaria so far. It throws new light not only on the chronology, but also on the religious beliefs and aesthetics of the ancient inhabitants of Novae and the entire province of Lower Moesia as well.

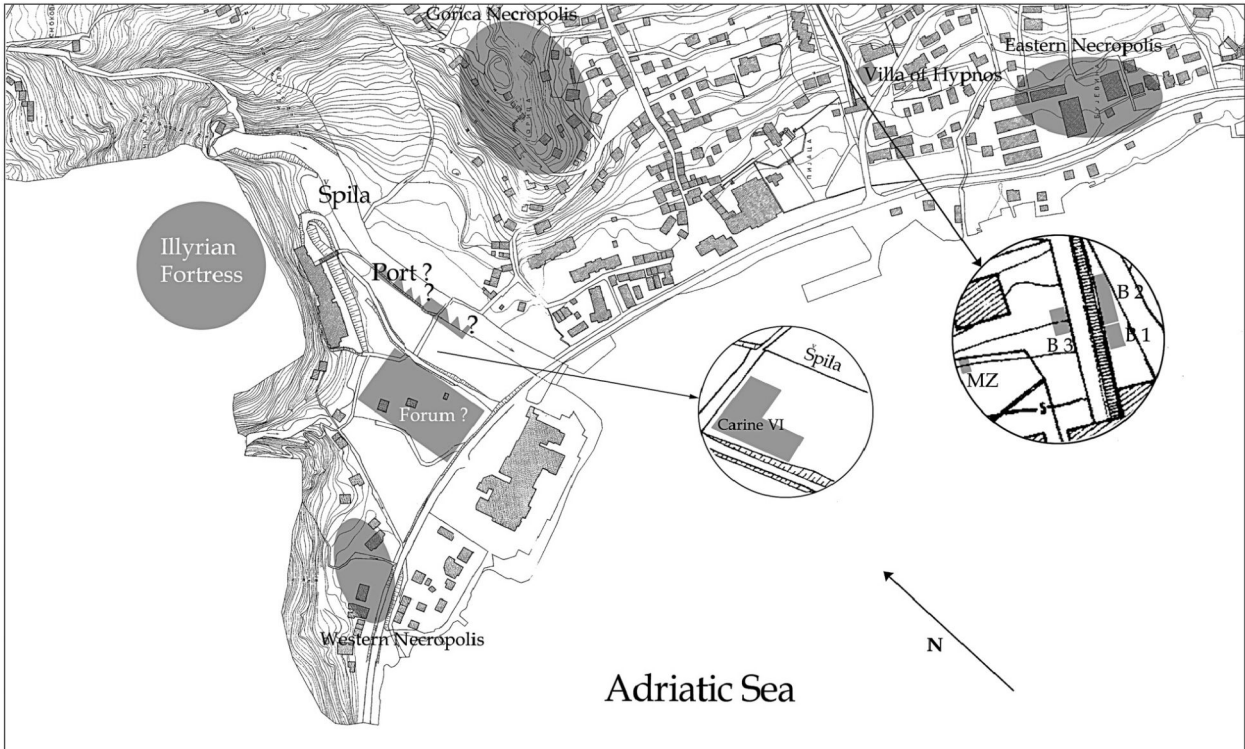


Fig. 1. Plan of Risan with ancient remains marked (drawing P. Dyczek, J. Janowski, M. Różycka)



Fig. 2. Mosaic floor with image of Hypnos (phot. J. Reclaw)



Fig. 3. Mosaic with double meander (phot. J. Reclaw)

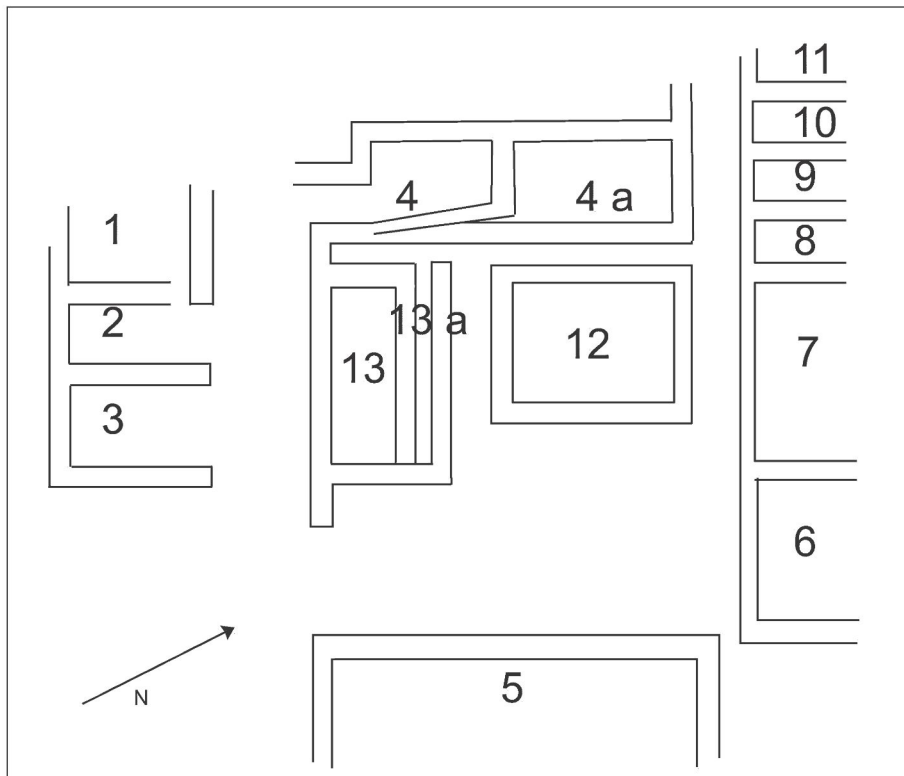


Fig. 4. Plan of the domestic complex in Carine – 2nd century BC (drawing P. Dyczek, J. Janowski)



Fig. 5. Bathroom facility of the 2nd century BC (phot. J. Reclaw)

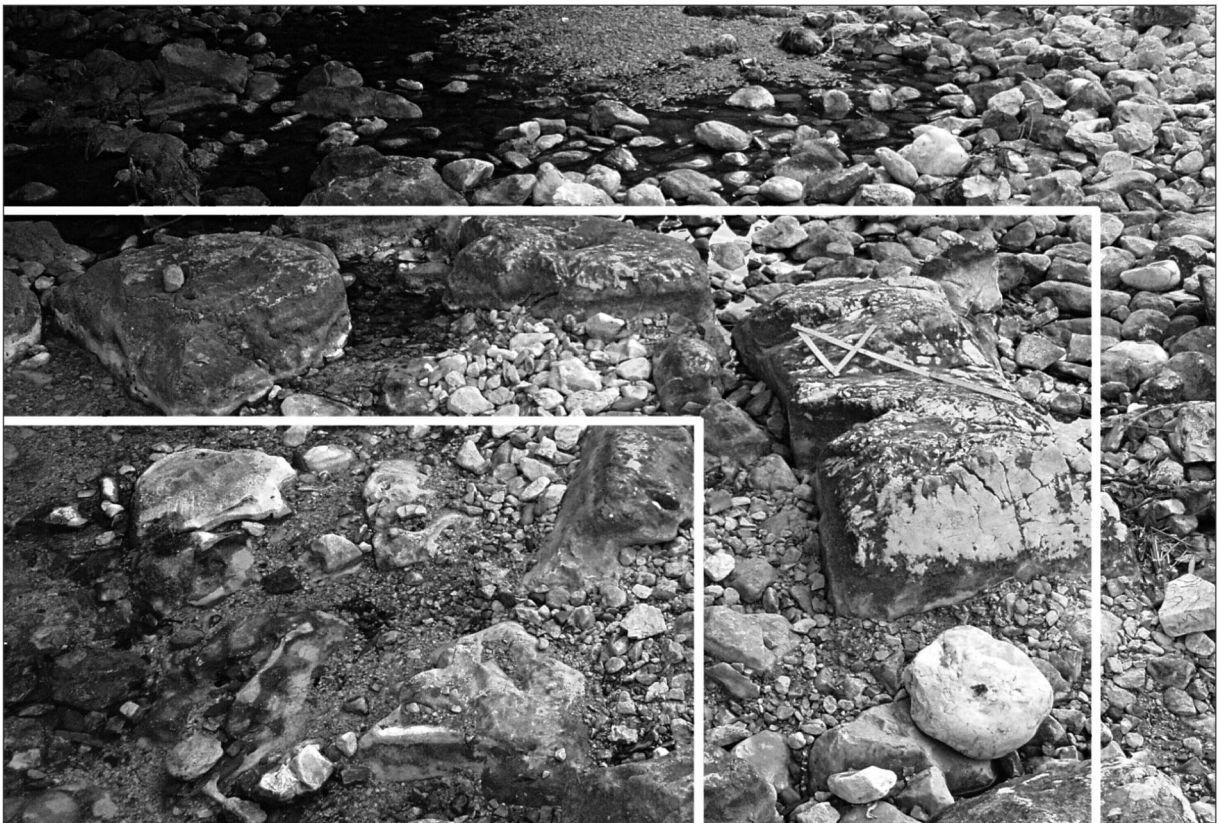


Fig. 6. So-called “Cyclopean walls” in the waters of the Špila River – presumed remains of ancient jetties (phot. J. Reclaw)

PLATE 40



Fig. 7. Section of a Roman road in the vicinity of Risan (phot. J. Reclaw)

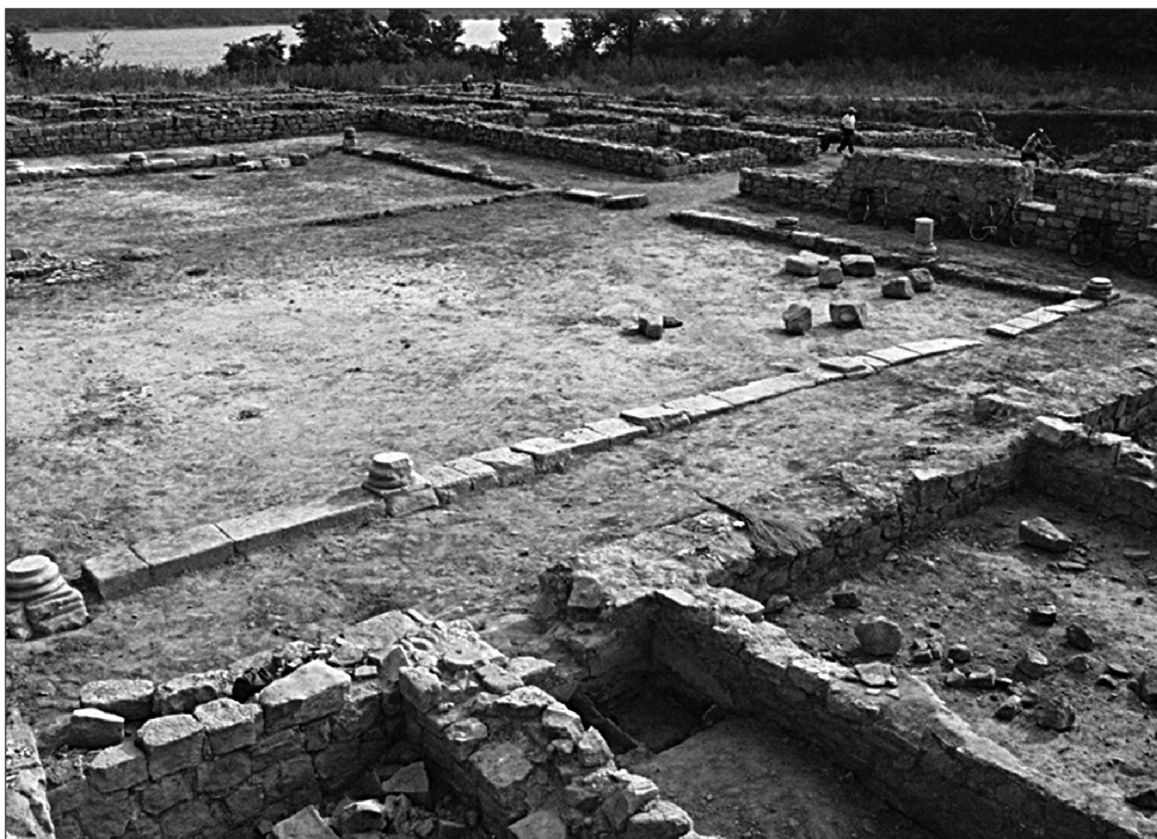


Fig. 8. Southern wing of the *valetudinarium* in Novae (phot. J. Reclaw)



Fig. 9. Medieval cemetery in Novae (phot. M. Lemke)



PLATE 42



Fig. 10. Glass-beads from medieval graves, Novae (phot. J. Reclaw)



Fig. 11. Lamp from a local pottery manufacturing center discovered *extra muros* in Novae (phot. J. Reclaw)