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## Risan, Montenegro : Excavations in 2014

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## RISAN, MONTENEGRO. EXCAVATIONS IN 2014

**Keywords:** Bay of Kotor, Carine, Dalmatia, Illyricum, *Rhizon/Risinium*

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

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Excavation timeline: 23.06 – 09.07. 2014

In the 2014 season, fieldwork was resumed at Sector Carine VI after a decade. Carine is a former village and currently a quarter of Risan, located on the northern bank of the River Spila.<sup>1</sup> The area was first methodically excavated in 1988<sup>2</sup> and later in 2001–2004.<sup>3</sup>

During that time, three main construction phases have been identified. The first one, dating back to the 4<sup>th</sup>–3<sup>rd</sup> c. BC, consisted of a large courtyard building with two large amphora storerooms. The second phase, from the 3<sup>rd</sup>–2<sup>nd</sup> c. BC (the “era of King Ballaios”) included architecture interpreted as warehouses and small shops. After a couple of centuries, which were less discernible in the archaeological record, in the next distinct phase of construction, during the times of Emperor Constantine, i.e., the first half of the 4<sup>th</sup> c. AD, a large, rectangular building oriented north-south was erected at Carine VI. It measured 20 m by more than 20 m and was interpreted as a late Roman *horreum*.<sup>4</sup>



In 2014, in the southern part of Carine VI, a large, trapezoidal trench measuring 20 by 7 by 25 by 8 m was excavated (Figs. 1, 2:a,b). The unusual shape of the trench was caused by the fact that one of its edges was based on a concrete path, running along the River Spila. The whole trench was divided into 9 smaller units. The main objective was to hopefully uncover one of the main streets of the settlement and to identify the nature of buildings in this part of the town. Such data might make it possible to clear up the aforementioned, somewhat murky situation in Early Roman Risan. Additionally, it was intended to find a fragment of the town wall, surrounding the Ancient

<sup>1</sup> On Carine in general: T. KOWAL, *Changes in a Landscape: A Case Study of Three Postcards from Risan*, “Novensia” 24, 2013, 41–60; M. LEMKE, *New Facts from Old Texts. Dusting off Written Sources on Antique and Medieval Risan*, “Novensia” 25, 2014, 53–83.

<sup>2</sup> V. KOVAČEVIĆ, *Istraživanja arheološkog lokaliteta “Carine” u Risnu*, “Glasnik Odjeljenja Umjetnosti Crnogorska Akademija Nauka i Umjetnosti (CANU)” 16, 1997, 17–51; D. UJES, V. KOVAČEVIĆ, *Novac “kralja” Balajosa sa iskopavanja u Risnu (1988)*, “Numizmatičar” 15, 1992, 9–24.

<sup>3</sup> P. DYCZEK, V. KOVAČEVIĆ, P. LUTOVAC, J. MARTINOVIĆ,

J. RECLAW, A. STAKOVIĆ, *Rhizon 2001–2003. Preliminary Report on the Excavations of the Center for Archaeological Research – Nowae, Warsaw University*, “Archeologia” (Warsaw) LV, 2004, 101–118, pls. XXIV–XXVII; P. DYCZEK, V. KOVAČEVIĆ, M. LEMKE, P. LUTOVAC, J. RECLAW, *Rhizon 2004–2007. Preliminary Report on the Excavations of the Center for Research on the Antiquity of Southeastern Europe, University of Warsaw*, “Archeologia” (Warsaw) LVIII (2007), 2009, 121–139, pls. XIX, XX.

<sup>4</sup> P. DYCZEK ET AL., *Rhizon 2001–2003...*, 112–117; P. DYCZEK ET AL., *Rhizon 2004–2007...*, 129.



Fig. 1. The 2014 trench at Carine VI (Photo M. Lemke).

Ryc. 1. Wykop na stanowisku Carine VI w 2014 r.

settlement. This wall was expected to be found in direct proximity to the River Spila, close to the concrete path.

One of the basic problems resulting from the location was the unearthing of structures belonging to a large sawmill which was in operation between the World Wars. This sawmill occupied the entire area of Carine (Fig. 3). Its main structures were concealed in a large hall, which was located merely some metres to the north-west from the excavation ground. The construction of the sawmill was preceded by preparatory work, such as land levelling and ground stabilisation, probably using heavy equipment.<sup>5</sup> These works considerably disturbed archaeological layers. During excavation, remains of a concrete sewage channel were discovered. It is possible that water, used for cooling in the sawmill was disposed of into the River Spila this way. The channel was embedded deep in the ground, therefore many stone and brick structures were destroyed and Ancient layers became mixed up with contemporary ones. The low level of the relevant layers (around 0.2 m a.s.l.) proved to be another problem, as the

trench would be continuously flooded with ground water, making documentation hard and proceeding fieldwork below this level impossible.

### Warehouse (*horreum*)

After removing the top layers contaminated with contemporary material, a small sequence of intact strata was investigated before reaching a level where inevitably ground water would make a further descent impossible. An interesting discovery was a structure that proved to be a warehouse from the Roman Period, which underwent transformations over several centuries. It appears that the large structure was built in the 2<sup>nd</sup> c. BC. It was a very solid edifice, its walls between 0.8 and 1 m thick. Within the warehouse were rectangular storage rooms measuring 2.5 by 4 m or 4 by 5 m, and interior corridors 1 m wide. Due to the ground water, only two rows of stones that were part of the wall were cleared, but it could still be determined that it had two distinct faces, built with well-matched limestones

<sup>5</sup> T. KOWAL, *Changes in a Landscape...*, 43.

Fig. 2. a – structures unearthed at Carine VI in 2001–2004 and 2014; b – plan of the stone constructions unearthed in 2014 (Drawing M. Lemke).

Ryc. 2. a – plan zabudowy antycznej na Carine VI odsłoniętej w latach 2001–2004 i 2014; b – plan konstrukcji kamiennych odsłoniętych w roku 2014.





Fig. 3. The sawmill at Carine. The arrow marks the location of the 2014 trench. Postcard from the 1920s/1930s (Private collection T. Kowal).

Ryc. 3. Tartak na Carine. Strzałka pokazuje położenie wykopu z 2014 r. Poczтівka z lat dwudziestych lub trzydziestych XX w.

measuring ca. 30×20×20 cm. Inside, amphorae were stored, as evidenced by the large amount of their remains. Interestingly, the material falls into the hitherto less known period between the 2<sup>nd</sup> c. BC and the 1<sup>st</sup> c. AD and includes Types: Lamboglia 2,<sup>6</sup> Dressel 1A, Dressel 2–4, Dressel 6A, or Dressel 9–10.<sup>7</sup> A road that led to the warehouse from the River Spila was 1.2 m wide and made of thin slabs of limestone, measuring 40×30 cm.

Around the middle of the 2<sup>nd</sup> c. AD, an architectural transformation of the building took place, as proven by coins and Roman glassware. Various repairs were undertaken and new walls were added, often relying on the foundations of earlier structures. New partition walls were 0.4 m wide. It is characteristic that in addition to the familiar white limestone, new building material, i.e., pink limestone and slate stone was also used. The gaps between the stones were filled with fragments of tiles and bricks. There was also a functional shift towards a proper *horreum*

– the second one now at Carine VI, with two levels, where grain was stored. The floor was slightly raised on brick pillars to keep water out. In the eastern part of the trench, nine such brick pillars were unearthed. The bricks forming the posts were circular with a diameter of 18.5 cm and a thickness of 5 cm. No more than two rows of bricks remained because of the modern intrusions described above (Fig. 4). The distance between the pillars measured between 0.5 to 1 m. Scattered around them, a large amount of iron nails was discovered, which kept wooden elements of the building in place. It seems that on the brick pillars a wooden floor was built, where grain was cleaned and dried, to be stored in other rooms or in *dolia*. One such *dolium* was found a few metres from the drying-chamber (Fig. 5). Also, a stone *mortarium* for grinding was found nearby. Other rooms in the building still served as a warehouse for food products stored in amphorae. Further finds confirm this, such as a set of 6 lead weights. From this architectural

<sup>6</sup> N. LAMBOGLIA, *Sulla cronologia delle anfore romane di età repubblicana (II-I secolo a. C.)*, “Rivista di Studi Liguri” XXI/3–4, 1955, 262.

<sup>7</sup> H. DRESSSEL (ed.), *Inscriptiones urbis Romae latinae. Instrumentum domesticum*, Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum XV/2:1, Berlin 1899.





Fig. 4. *Horreum*, remaining ceramic pillars (Photo M. Lemke).

Ryc. 4. *Horreum*, zachowane słupy ceramiczne.



Fig. 5. *Dolium* for storing grain, flooded by ground water (Photo M. Lemke).

Ryc. 5. *Dolium* służące do przechowania zboża, zalane wodą gruntową.

phase we also abundantly retrieved amphorae, typically 2<sup>nd</sup> c. AD and later types, such as, e.g., LR 2<sup>9</sup> or Africana II Grande.<sup>9</sup> In those amphorae, mainly wine and oil were kept.

## Finds

During excavation, a sizeable collection of ceramic amphora stoppers was discovered – 46 pieces in total. Some were plain, others decorated with concentric circles, solar motifs on its surface, and also linear or geometric ornaments. Some stoppers were inscribed, usually with single Greek or Latin letters. Among the more interesting ones is a stopper with a Greek inscription (inv. No. 236/14 W, Fig. 6). The measurements are standard: diameter 9.2 cm,

thickness 1.8 cm. However, the stopper has a diversified colour and a smeary surface, which may be the results of misfiring. The clay also contained characteristic “Adriatic fabric” red inclusions (ceramic rubble). The inscription consisted of the letters Θ [theta] Γ [gamma] and [iota?] \_? \_ H [eta]. Apparently, this is the stamp of the manufacturer, or possibly the winemaker. There is a distinct tendency not to state the entire name but merely an abbreviated form in such inscriptions.<sup>10</sup> A stopper with a probably similar inscription was discovered in 2008 (inv. No. 48/08). Regarding this analogy, one can wonder whether the letter Γ [gamma] is not rather a badly preserved letter T [tau]. The artefact was found in a layer associated with the first phase of Roman building activity in Risan, i.e., the turn of the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 1<sup>st</sup> c. BC.



Fig. 6. Amphora stopper with inscription; inv. No. 236/14 W (Drawing M. Daniel).

Ryc. 6. Inskrybowany korek amforowy; nr inw. 236/14 W.

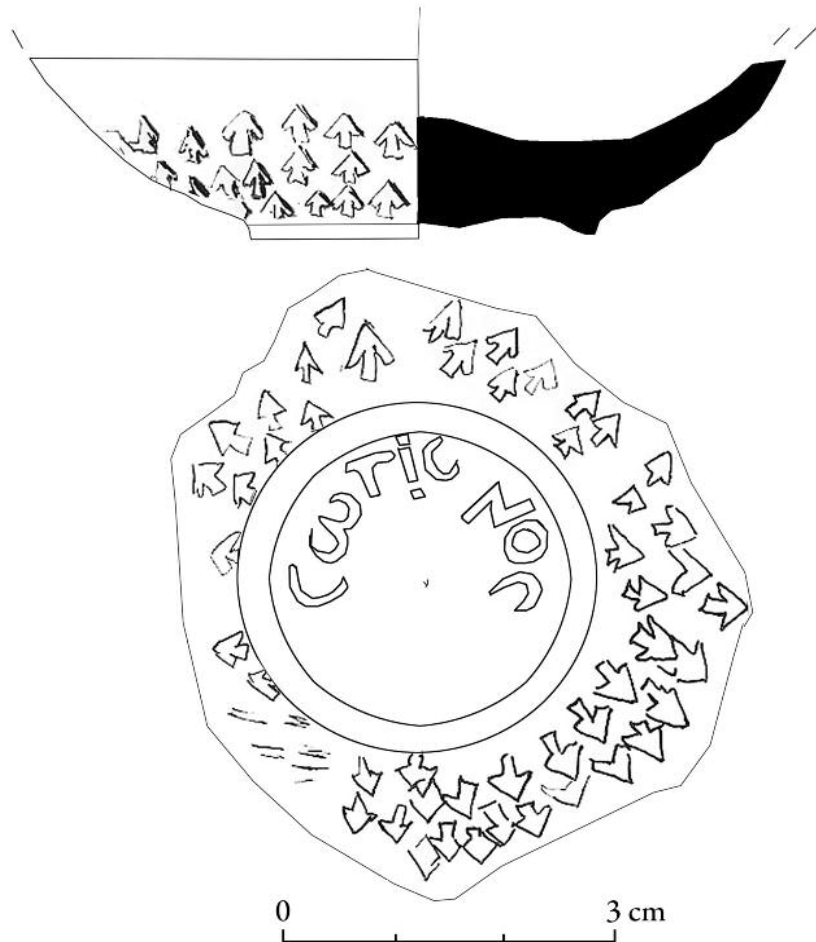
<sup>8</sup> D.P.S. PEACOCK, D.F. WILLIAMS, *Amphorae and the Roman Economy: An Introductory Guide*, London – New York 1986, 182–184.

<sup>9</sup> D.P.S. PEACOCK, D.F. WILLIAMS, *Amphorae...*, 155–157.

<sup>10</sup> M. BAJTLER, *Ceramic Amphora Stoppers from the East Coast of the Adriatic*, “Novensia” 26, 2015, 74. The authors express their gratitude to Marta Bajtler for her input.

Fig. 7. Fragment of a Megarian bowl with a producer's stamp  $\Sigma\Omega\tau\iota\omicron\nu\omicron\varsigma$  (Sotionos); inv. No. 10/14 W (Drawing K. Wójcik).

Ryc. 7. Fragment czarki megaryjskiej ze stemplem producenckim  $\Sigma\Omega\tau\iota\omicron\nu\omicron\varsigma$  (Sotionos); nr inw. 10/14 W.



A few other interesting finds were unearthed as well. Among these is the fragment of a Megarian bowl (inv. No. 10/14 W, **Fig. 7**) with a decorative motif in the shape of upward arrows and a herringbone ornament. On the bottom of the vessel is a convex producer's stamp with the name  $\Sigma\Omega\tau\iota\omicron\nu\omicron\varsigma$  (Sotionos). A producer of this name came from Delphi: in the Metropolitan Museum collection is a hydria with a dipinto by the same manufacturer. The latter artefact is dated to before 212 BC.<sup>11</sup> Another interesting artefact is a small bronze figurine which was part of a lock hasp from a wooden chest<sup>12</sup> (inv. No. 229/14 W). Aphrodite/Venus is depicted in a type of Anadyomene, washing sea foam from her hair (**Fig. 8**).

Two similar figurines can be seen on an almost intact lock hasp found in Miletropolis.<sup>13</sup> Based on this and other analogies, the hasp figure can be dated to the 2<sup>nd</sup> c. AD.

As usual, the excavations in Risan provided many coins. However there were surprisingly few coins of the Ballaios type. This ruler does not appear in written sources: he is exclusively known on the ground of the coins he minted. Thus the enigmatic king is of great interest to numismatists and historians. Some new facts regarding the period of his reign could be established in 2014. As stated above, mainly Roman layers were excavated (Late Republic and Early Imperial) and the retrieved artefacts provide interesting comparative material. The discovered Roman amphorae

<sup>11</sup> B.F. COOK, *Inscribed Hadra Vases in The Metropolitan Museum of Art*, The Metropolitan Museum of Art Papers 12, New York 1966, 25, cat. no. 10, pls. III:10, XI:10.

<sup>12</sup> The authors are indebted to Dr Norbert Franken (Berlin) for his advice.

<sup>13</sup> K.A. NEUGEBAUER, *Bronzegerät des Altertums*, Bilderhefte zur Kunst- und Kulturgeschichte des Altertums 2, Bielefeld 1927, 6–7 and table XIV:1; N. FRANKEN, *Bilddatenbank: Antike Bronzen in Berlin* (2011), <http://www.smb.museum/antikebronzenberlin>, Misc. 11868 (access on 10 February 2016).



belong to types whose occurrence in these regions is dated to between 2<sup>nd</sup> c. BC and 2<sup>nd</sup> c. AD, such as Lamboglia 2,<sup>14</sup> Dressel 2–4, Dressel 6–6A, Dressel 8, and Dressel 9–10.<sup>15</sup> There was only a small amount of Gnathia pottery and its local imitations. These finds date back to 4<sup>th</sup>–2<sup>nd</sup> c. BC and often occur with Ballaios coins. There are also merely two ceramic weights, a category usually found abundantly in archaeological layers connected with the period of Ballaios' reign. Lastly, in 2014 numerous artefacts connected with the Roman domination in the region were found in a well dated context: Roman Imperial coins, glass bowls and bottles, lead weights and other metal objects (like the

aforementioned lock hasp), bronze nails, Roman amphorae and stoppers. These considerations suggest that Ballaios minted his coins before the Roman occupation of the area, i.e., before 167 BC. Consequently, the research of 2014 distinctly confirmed that the theory once promoted by Arthur Evans, suggesting Ballaios' reign between 168–135 BC,<sup>16</sup> is false.

Despite the scarcity of Ballaios coins, a large number of other coins was found during the campaign – more than 60. Two silver coins from Ancient Dyrrhachium (Durrës in Albania, 150 km from Risan) were found (inv. No. 23/14 W, Fig. 9, and inv. No. 216/14 W), but only the former was clear and legible. In every campaign coins from

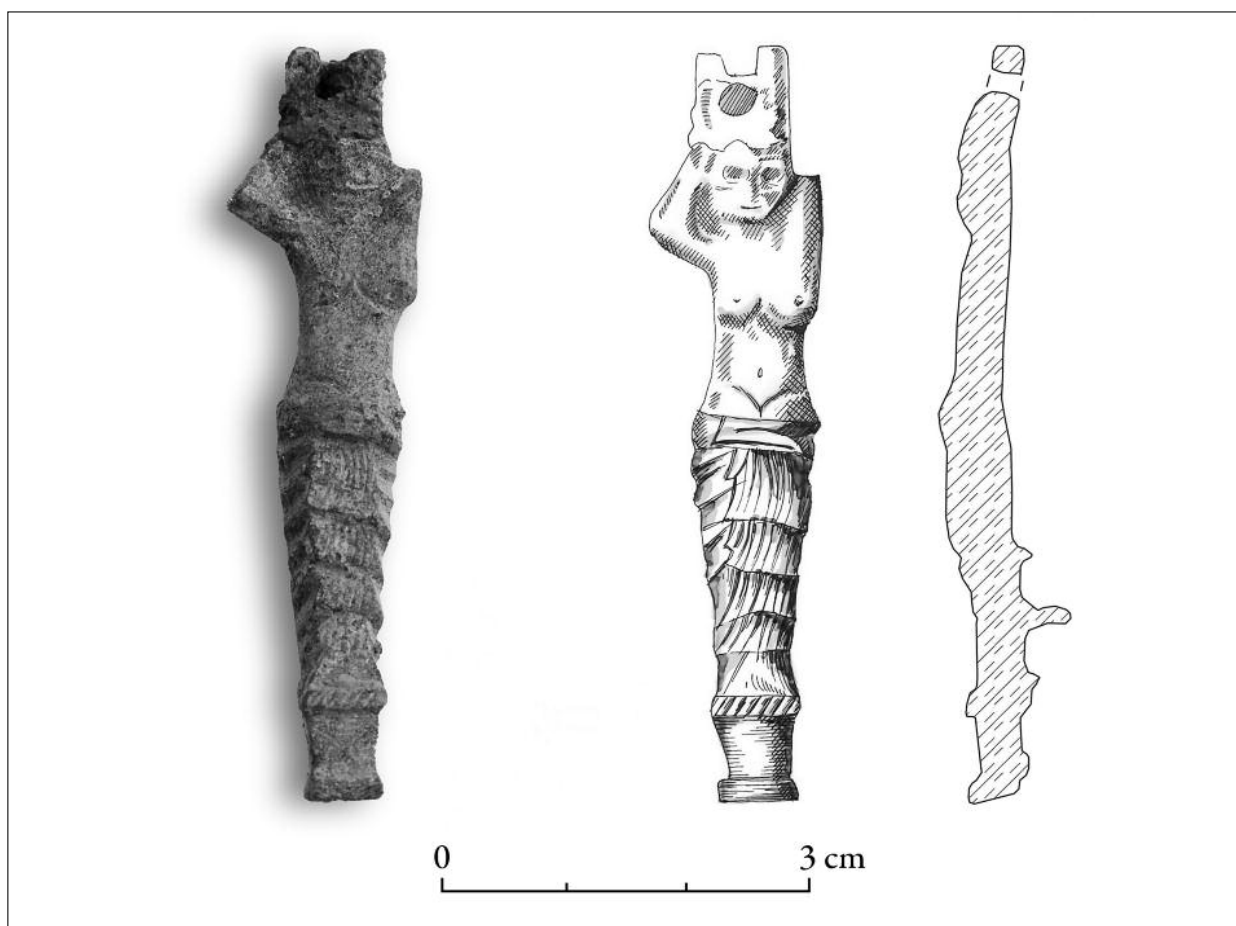


Fig. 8. Figurine from a bronze lock hasp depicting Venus (Aphrodite); inv. No. 229/14 W (Photo J. Reclaw, drawing K. Wójcik).  
Ryc. 8. Figurka zdobiąca okucie zamka z przedstawieniem Wenus (Afrodyty); nr inw. 229/14 W.

<sup>14</sup> N. LAMBOGLIA, *Sulla cronologia...*, 262.

<sup>15</sup> H. DRESSEL (ed.), *Inscriptiones...*

<sup>16</sup> A. EVANS, *On Some Recent Discoveries of Illyrian Coins*, "Numismatic Chronicle" 20, 1880, 269–302. For an overview of the various theories and arguments regarding the reign of Ballaios

cf. P. DYCZEK, *Rhizon in der Zeit des Königs Ballaios*, (in:) G. von Bülow (ed.), *Kontaktzone Balkan. Beiträge des internationalen Kolloquiums „Die Donau-Balkan-Region als Kontaktzone zwischen Ost-West und Nord-Süd“ vom 16.–18. Mai 2012 in Frankfurt a. M.*, Kolloquien zur Vor- und Frühgeschichte 20, Bonn 2015, 111–114.

Fig. 9. Silver coin from Dyrrhachium; inv. No. 23/14 W (Photo J. Reclaw).

Ryc. 9. Srebrna moneta miasta Dyrrachium; nr inw. 23/14 W.



this Adriatic town are found. Notably, within the “great treasure hoard from Risan,” with 4656 Ballaios coins, the single alien coin came from Dyrrhachium.<sup>17</sup> It can be concluded that this town was engaged in intensive trade with other Illyrian towns on the eastern Adriatic coast including Risan. A number of interesting Roman coins include a bronze sestertius with Lucillia (inv. No. 53/14 W) and also 2<sup>nd</sup> c. coins of Hadrian (inv. No. 105/14 W) and Commodus (inv. No. 117/14 W), minted in Philippopolis. From the 4<sup>th</sup> c. AD there are coins of Constantius II (inv. Nos. 154/14 W, 157/14 W, 159/14 W), from the series FEL TEMP REPARATIO<sup>18</sup> where the emperor is depicted on the obverse, and on the reverse there is a soldier killing his opponent with a spear.

Concluding it can be said that during the campaign it was possible to establish several new facts from the history of Ancient Risan. Traces from the Illyrian Period (3<sup>rd</sup> c. BC) were unearthed, i.e., constructions that were part of the external town walls. In the Spila riverbed, further parts of the town wall are visible. Secondly, it was possible to acquire some information on the plan of the town in Roman times, after the middle of the 2<sup>nd</sup> c. BC.

Thus far, information about *Risinium* between the 2<sup>nd</sup> c. BC and the 2<sup>nd</sup> c. AD has been scarce and chiefly known from written sources. According to Pliny the Elder, in the early 1<sup>st</sup> c. AD, *Rhizinium* was an *oppidum civium*

*Romanorum*, that is a fortified and defensive place, where Roman citizens lived (*Naturalis Historia* III, 22, 144). Owing to the recent campaign it is clear that Risan developed fast under the new rule, by developing trade. The intensity of the trade is proved by the storage amphorae discovered as a part of the *horreum*. After the 2<sup>nd</sup> c. AD, Risan also became a warehouse centre for the countryside. As we can see, the city underwent a successive urban transformation in Roman times. From earlier structures smaller stores were built, which were part of the town storerooms for all types of products, and several granaries making up a considerable part of Carine. Coins found in layers from that period date the moment of construction of the building to the time between Hadrian and Commodus. The granary and warehouse functioned at least until the end of the 4<sup>th</sup> c. AD.

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<sup>17</sup> R. CIOLEK, “Great Hoard” of 4656 Coins of King Ballaios from Risan, “Novensia” 21, 2010, 7–12.

<sup>18</sup> J.P.C. KENT, *The Roman Imperial Coinage*, vol. VIII: *The Family of Constantine I. AD. 337–364*, London 1981, 112.

## RISAN, CZARNOGÓRA. WYKOPALISKA W 2014 R.

W 2014 roku prace wykopaliskowe w Risan odbywały się na odcinku Carine VI (Ryc. 1–3). Odcinek ten znajduje się w pasie przybrzeżnym na północnych obrzeżach miasta. Główne prace badawcze na tym terenie miały miejsce w roku 1988 oraz w latach 2001–2004. W 2014 roku założono trapezoidalny wykop (20×7×25×8 m), którego celem było uchwycenie jednej z głównych ulic osady oraz rozpoznanie charakteru zabudowy w tej części miasta. Podczas tegorocznej kampanii udało się ustalić kilka nowych faktów z historii antycznego Risan. Po pierwsze, odsłonięto fragmenty murów z okresu iliryjskiego, czyli z III w. p.n.e. Konstrukcje te wchodziły w skład zewnętrznego pasa murów miejskich. Po drugie, udało się uchwycić zabudowę miasta z okresu początku rzymskiej dominacji na tym terenie, tj. od połowy II w. p.n.e. Wiadomo już, że Risan pod władzą Rzymian w II w. p.n.e. znacznie się rozwinęło w oparciu o rozwój wymiany handlowej. O jej intensywności świadczą odkryte magazyny amfor będące częścią *horreum*. Miasto przeszło też kolejne przekształcenie urbanistyczne. Na bazie wcześniejszych konstrukcji powstały kolejne mniejsze pomieszczenia składowe, które były częścią miejskiego magazynu na wszelkiego rodzaju produkty, oraz spichlerzem na zboże (Ryc. 4, 5).

Podczas tegorocznej kampanii wykopaliskowej pozyskano pokaźny zbiór ceramicznych korków do amfor

– 46 sztuk. Na jednym z ciekawszych zabytków tej grupy znajduje się inskrypcja w alfabecie greckim (nr inw. 236/14 W, Ryc. 6). W trakcie wykopalisk wydobyto wiele innych ciekawych reliktyw. Bardzo interesujący wydaje się fragment tzw. czarki megaryjskiej (Ryc. 7). Na spodniej części naczynia, wokół jej podstawy, znajdował się wypukły stempeł producencki z imieniem: CΩTIONOC (Sotionos). Innym ciekawym zabytkiem, znalezionym w trakcie tegorocznej kampanii, jest fragment okucia zamka drewnianej skrzynki wykonany z brązu, przedstawiający obnażoną boginię Afrodytę/Wenus w typie Anadyomene (nr inw. 229/14 W, Ryc. 8).

Jak zwykle stanowisko Risan dostarczyło wielu numizmatów, lecz w tym roku zaskakująco mało monet z wizerunkiem króla Ballaios – zaledwie kilka. Dane archeologiczne nie pozostawiają wątpliwości, że Ballaios wybijał monety przed rzymską okupacją tych terenów, czyli przed 167 r. p.n.e. Badania archeologiczne z roku 2014 dobitnie potwierdzają, że teoria sir Arthura Evansa o panowaniu Ballaios w przedziale lat 168–135 p.n.e. jest nie-trafna. Znaleziono też m. in. dwie srebrne monety z Dyrachium, lecz tylko jedna z nich była wyraźna i czytelna (Ryc. 9).