

Chapter 1

The history of archaeological investigation at Kalivo and Çuka e Aitoit

Oliver J. Gilkes

Introduction

For the past 200 years travellers and archaeologists have taken an interest in the fortified hilltop sites at Kalivo and Çuka e Aitoit in southern Albania. The surviving accounts, of which the two manuscripts prepared by Luigi Maria Ugolini form the most substantial and detailed part, reveal the underlying differences in approach, as well as the similarities in incentive, that motivated the investigations of these two sites. Broadly speaking, three principal phases of exploration can be identified: (i) 19th-century travellers detailing these two prominent hills in their descriptions of the region; (ii) the Italian archaeological mission of 1924-1943 undertaking major archaeological surveys and excavations; and (iii) the joint Albanian-Soviet archaeological mission of the later 1950s and the surveys continued in the 1980s.

Examining each of these main phases in turn, the striking thing is less their differences in scope or political analyses than the similarities in motivation. The investigations of both Kalivo and Çuka e Aitoit are intimately linked to the status of Butrint as a site described in the ancient sources, and to that of the surrounding region as an area of desirable political influence. How direct the link between these two motivating factors is varies over time. Though, the presence of Butrint throughout provides an important point of reference for the interest in the hilltop sites and for the excavators' perception of the archaeology of the region. In the mid-19th century the classical history of the area provided reference points for the early geographical descriptions by the diplomatic representatives of various western European governments, and – obliquely –

became a method to establish cultural links in a region under the control of the Ottoman Empire. Unsurprisingly, the most explicit articulation of the classical heritage of the region is provided by the Italian archaeological mission in the period before the Second World War. Nevertheless, it was the perceived prehistoric character of Çuka e Aitoit and Kalivo that prompted Ugolini's initial interest in the two sites. In the case of Kalivo, the surviving notes illustrate the intellectual effort made to link the site with the legendary history of Butrint, and the direct associations Ugolini makes between archaeological data and the ancient narratives in order to accomplish this. For the post-war Albanian excavations, the archaeological investigations were used to highlight an Illyrian past of no less antique date than the Greco-Roman history emphasised by Ugolini.¹ Yet, establishing a particular cultural hegemony over the region's past was only one way of expressing political control over the area in general. As a motivating force for instigating, funding and maintaining the archaeological research, this should not be under-estimated.

At the same time, the history of archaeological investigation at Kalivo and Çuka e Aitoit is very much a history of thorough academic research. As is evident from the published plans, as well as from the 2001 survey, the documentation has stood the test of time as accurate descriptions of both of these sites. As a body of work, the investigations undertaken at these sites over the past 200 years have provided a considerable contribution to understanding ancient settlement in the region as a whole.

Early Visitors

The exploration of William M. Leake and François Pouqueville

The earliest exploration of the environs of Butrint coincided with the rediscovery of the ancient city itself. Initially, interest naturally focussed on the highly visible remains at Butrint: the many Hellenistic and later walls and the crumbling Venetian fortifications situated on the southern bank of the Vivari Channel. These monuments were the primary structures recorded by travellers and plotted by mapmakers of the 18th and 19th centuries. However, the surrounding countryside, and the rich scattering of fortifications, villas, settlements and churches, soon became an object of investigation as the political and archaeological interest in the region grew. The foundations for the later systematic surveys by the Italian Mission were laid during the period of the Napoleonic wars; in particular by William Martin Leake, the British diplomat and spy, and his rival the French consul François Pouqueville. Leake, in particular, became an authority on the topography and archaeology of ancient Greece.² Both men were assigned to the court of the Vezir of Ottoman Epirus, Ali Pasha, whose favour the two western European powers sought in the struggle for influence in the eastern Mediterranean. Both Leake and Pouqueville undertook extensive travels throughout the southern Balkans sending back copious reports on their journeys to their respective governments. The memoranda were later turned into published accounts; the extensive nature of which suggests that certainly Leake must have had commercial publication in mind even as he was composing his secret despatches.

Naturally both men visited Butrint: Leake travelling by sea and Pouqueville overland. While both went out of their way to investigate and record the ancient remains that they encountered during their journeying, numerous sites escaped detection. One such was Kalivo, which at that time apparently was heavily wooded and difficult to access. Pouqueville passed to the south of it and observed the ruins of Butrint scattered across the Vrina plain, but failed to notice the circuit of fortification walls on the hill to the north.

Unsurprisingly, both men were aware of Çuka e Aitoit. The hill is the single most evident natural feature in the local landscape and the wall circuits are highly visible on its treeless and rocky slopes. Leake visited the area in January 1805 during an expedition to investigate Konispoli, then a significant Ottoman town. His description is somewhat sparse and the lack of any mention of the isolated mountain suggests that he may not actually have made the ascent to view the ruins.

Konispoli is a scattered town of four or five hundred Albanian families, conspicuous from Corfu by its situation on the summit of the maritime ridge, which stretches from the plain at the mouth of the Kalamá, as far as the bay of Vutzindró. Inland, the plain extends southwards from Vutzindró behind this ridge for a distance of about five miles, and a river flows through it into the lake. The southern part of the plain belonged to a Hellenic city, of which remains are found on the edge of the plain to the north of Konispoli; the other end was obviously a part of the territory of Buthrotum.³

Pouqueville certainly did climb the steep slopes and he identified the site with Phanote, unsuccessfully besieged by Appius Claudius in 168 BC, though this place was subsequently shown to exist some way further to the southeast.

Deux milles au N. O. de Conispolis, autour d'une montagne isolée, on aperçoit l'enceinte pélasgique d'une acropole, et un demi-mille au-dessous une seconde ville abandonnée, que je crois être Phanote. Cette place, dans laquelle Cleve gouverneur de Persée soutint et repoussa les assauts des Romains commandés par Appius Claudius, paraît avoir eu depuis une seconde enceinte, qui fut probablement construite par les Césars de Byzance.⁴

Early 20th-century visitors

The difficulty of access into the interior of Albania in the later 19th century meant that few visitors to the region penetrated further

than Butrint or the coastal strip. In fact, the Butrint area remained remote well into the 20th century. A road to Butrint was only constructed in the 1950s, for example, and English visitors to the area recorded the problems and absurdities associated with travel even in the 1930s.⁵ Nevertheless, scholars did visit and study the ancient remains. The two English students, Stewart Stoddart Clarke and Nicholas Hammond, both undertook walking tours through this region of Epirus. Hammond noted both Çuka e Aitoit and Kalivo, though he focused his later published account on the remains of the former:

The site is built on an isolated conical limestone hill (272 m), which is locally known as Aetòs. It controls the entry into the Pavla gorge as well as into the upper valley towards Konispoli. The sides of the hill are steep, with precipices on the north face, so that the site is very picturesque and has great natural strength. The summit is a narrow spine, some 20 paces wide. The outer circuit is built of well-fitting polygonal masonry with large blocks between which small blocks are commonly used. On the southeast side the wall is built in ashlar style but with oblique vertical joins, the blocks being mainly large. Clarke noted one tower on the northeast side. On the south side the polygonal wall is standing to a height of 4 m in nine courses, and on the southeast side the ashlar wall to a height of 2.40 m in five courses. An inner circuit wall is built of mixed rectangular and polygonal blocks, inferior in workmanship to the outer circuit; the corner stones at the angles are deeply recessed, and rabbeting is used. There are many terrace walls and foundation walls within the outer and inner circuits, the style being mainly good polygonal. The northwest angle of the outer circuit wall was excavated by L.M. Ugolini. Here a gateway 2.60 m wide penetrates the outer circuit. It is flanked on the inner south side by a wall 12 m long. From the inner part of the passageway a drainage channel is cut for a distance of 8 paces and terminates on the outer face of the main

circuit in a projecting block, the channel used in this block being 0.31 m wide. The buildings cleared by L.M. Ugolini are known locally as 'the palace'. The doorway is 0.91 m wide and 2.25 m high. The rock has been cut to form emplacements for blocks.⁶

The presence of the Italian Archaeological Mission working on nearby Kalivo prevented him from making any detailed survey of that place.

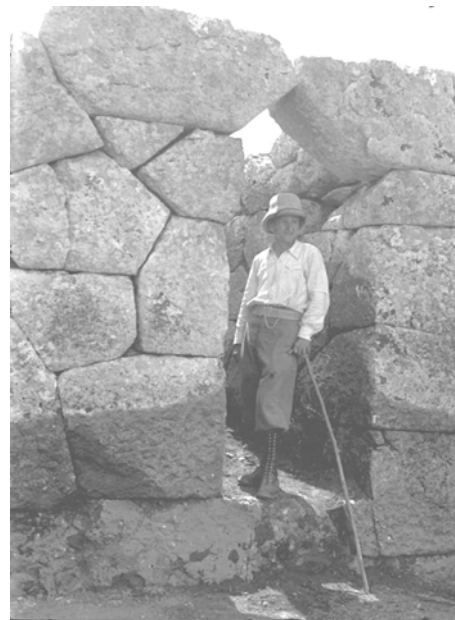


Fig. 1.1 Ugolini at Çuka e Aitoit 1924 (IA)

The Italian Archaeological Mission

The Italian Archaeological Mission was conceived in 1923 as a political tool to further the nationalist ambitions of Mussolini's government to the east of the Adriatic.⁷ The catalyst was provided by the presence of a small French archaeological mission, in the north and centre of Albania, led by the archaeologist Leon Rey.⁸ The Italian response was seen as an easy and inexpensive way of counteracting this and as a means of developing favourable relations with the Albanians. Despite the area traditionally forming part of the Italian sphere of interest, there had been minimal Italian academic interest in the archaeology of Albania prior to this time. Some research had been carried out by Paolo Orsi and

Antonio Baldacci in the 19th century, and Roberto Paribeni, who by 1924 had become director of the Archaeological Mission to the Levante and the National Roman Museum, had explored northern Albania in the first years of the 20th century.⁹ It was to Paribeni that the Italian government turned for advice on how to approach the matter. His suggestions were succinct and left little room for ambiguity. A small, low cost mission, he said, might be despatched to excavate some prehistoric tombs as this would: “satisfy up to a point the fanatical and puerile national pride of the Albanians: their desire to be able to know and illuminate their ancestors the Illyrians”.¹⁰ The young archaeologist selected as head of the mission, Luigi Maria Ugolini (Fig. 1.1), tried to do just this. During 1924 he travelled through the country, criticised the French archaeologists, and studied a series of tombs, which he published in 1927.¹¹ He found it a difficult experience, not least because of the lack of infrastructure and amenities of the country and the reluctance with which the foreign ministry dispensed funds.¹²

The early archaeological projects

The presence of the French Mission in northern and central Albania necessitated that expeditions after 1924 focused on the south of the country, and hence Ugolini explored and excavated at Phoenicê (1925-1927) and Butrint (1928-1936) in the province of Gjirokastra in northern Epirus.¹³ Ugolini was a capable and thorough archaeological practitioner; establishing his own intellectual and academic strategy for the work undertaken, but also a loyal servant of the regime and subject to its orders. Prior to a lecture given in Rome in 1928, the Italian embassy in Tirana instructed him to underscore the relevance of his talk with insertions of a kind considered particularly appropriate: “such additions beyond the strict archaeological field may enter into the field of history and even that of politics”.¹⁴ Ugolini was trained as a prehistorian and a specialist in the Bronze Age archaeology of the Romagna, and his continued interest in prehistory, even while excavating at Butrint, can be seen in the efforts to include pre-classical sites within his programme.

The Italian surveys and excavations at Kalivo and Çuka e Aitoit fell into this scheme; as did the initial work of Luigi Cardini, investigating Palaeolithic and Neolithic settlements in the Butrint area and along the Albanian Riviera. In fact, the Italian project had a holistic approach, combining disciplines in a manner very unusual for its time. The project incorporated prehistoric, classical and medieval archaeology; anthropology; and fine arts. A considerable, inclusive publication programme spanning six major monographs and a host of scientific and popular articles made the results available to the academic and general public.

The excavations at Phoenicê revealed an interesting archaeological sequence fitting relatively well the template provided by the ministry. The ‘Illyrian’ finds were few, but parallels could be made with better-known materials from northern Albania. Moreover, Ugolini recognised that the material culture recovered had affinities with the Iron Age of southern Adriatic Italy.¹⁵ To the Italian government this was an opportunity to be exploited. The political situation had changed, and in 1926 and 1927 two economic and military pacts were signed between Italy and Albania. Ugolini’s lecture in Rome took place in the spring of 1928, when these events were still part of the public debate; however, despite discussing the cultural links between the two countries, he clearly chose to emphasise the archaeology over the politics in his lecture: the “friendship of three thousand years” as the English-language *Italian Mail* put it.¹⁶ Indeed, Ugolini commenced writing of a book on Albanian, Illyrian and Italian cultural contacts, *Albania Preistorica*.

Ugolini at Butrint

The manuscript on the prehistory of Albania was never published, probably due to a chance of emphasis in the archaeological objectives of the Italian Mission.¹⁷ In 1928 the excavations at Phoenicê were brought to an end, and Butrint, instead, became the primary focus of archaeological investigation. The reason for this change must be understood in the light of the ideology of *Romanità*, which was gathering increasing momentum in

Italy. This view looked to a Roman Imperial past as the myth-of-origin of the nation, and was increasingly being used by the fascists as a symbol of identity, as well as a process with which to explain and corroborate political ideology and policy. The myth of Aeneas was one of the philosophical underpinnings of the regime, and, according to Virgil, Aeneas had visited Butrint during his wanderings.¹⁸ Consequently the bimillenary celebrations of Virgil's death in 1929 were to be accompanied by appropriate events; such as, the *crociera vergiliana*, a high-profile cruise to retrace his steps across the Mediterranean, which included a visit to Butrint.¹⁹ An issue of commemorative stamps not only contributed financially to the Mission's archaeological project but also provided widespread publicity for the message of *Romanità* (Fig. 1.2).²⁰



Fig. 1.2 Italian postage stamp quoting Virgil and depicting Aeneas setting off from Butrint to Italy (Archivio Storico Ministero degli Esteri, Rome)

Similarly, the shift in emphasis towards working at Butrint, rather than at Phoenicê, contributed politically to Italian efforts in Albania. The influence in Albanian political and social life could now be promoted as being strengthened, and the ultimate Italian aim of hegemony over the area could be reinforced and justified through selective publication of archaeological material.

The main efforts of Ugolini and his team were directed within the walled area of Butrint: the sanctuary of Asclepius and the associated theatre were excavated between 1928 and 1932; the late antique baptistry was unearthed in the space of a month in 1928; and numerous other sites

were investigated throughout the later 1920s and 30s. Nevertheless, significant attention was directed to the surroundings of Butrint and excavations and survey were conducted at a number of nearby sites. The intention was to publish the work undertaken at these sites in one volume as part of Ugolini's proposed monograph series. The fifth book in this series, *Albania Antica V, Dintorni di Butrinto*, was to have included the work at Monte Aetòs (Çuka e Aitoit); Kalivo; Diaporit; Vagalatti; Malathrae and Shen Marina (the prehistoric cave site investigated by Luigi Cardini in the gorge of the river Pavllas). Ugolini's untimely death in 1936 brought an end to this ambitious project; the last volume in the series, *Albania Antica II, L'Acropoli di Butrinto: Il Sacello di Asclepio*, was published in 1942.²¹ The remainder of his archive was placed in storage at the Museo della Civiltà Romana in Rome and lost for the subsequent 60 years.²²

The surviving skeletal notes for the introduction to the paper on Kalivo highlight Ugolini's intellectual and analytical interest in the site.²³ The terse, descriptive text on the fortifications and Kalivo's geographical position in relation to the surrounding landscape is combined with preparatory notes for a more interpretative discussion on the site. Ugolini highlights the problems of dating the standing structures, sketches in etymological relationships, and clearly viewed the site in relation to Butrint. Particularly interesting are his notes on the ancient sources. The debate he is outlining is based on the difference in expression between Virgil (and with him Ovid), in which Butrint is described as a Troy in miniature founded by Helenus; and Dionysius of Halicarnassus (and with him Stephanus Byzantinus) who suggest that the links between Butrint and Troy are established by a hill near Butrint on which the Trojans encamped and which afterwards took the name Troy.²⁴ Ugolini had already published an account of the links between Butrint and Aeneas following the Virgilian narrative, but his survey of Kalivo suggested to him that that hill could be one intended as linked with Troy, as described in Dionysius of Halicarnassus.²⁵ As he makes clear in his notes, he sees no

problem in revising his earlier assertion in the light of new evidence, but he finds it impossible to decide which of the two ancient versions to favour.²⁶ In particular, Ugolini's notes reveal how immersed in the mythology of Aeneas he has become. Beyond the purely academic and historical interest the ancient sources may throw on the two sites, he attempted to find archaeological relationships to prove the veracity of the Trojan legend. Despite dating the perimeter walls to the Archaic period and despite noting that the existing walls were too substantial to have been those of a temporary encampment, he stressed the description of them as Mycenaean in style. Similarly, Ugolini's reference to Strabo may not be casual. Strabo does not discuss the Trojan past of Butrint but states that it has "alien settlers consisting of Romans".²⁷ If one accepts that Ugolini intended to discuss this passage in connection with that in Dionysius of Halicarnassus it suggests a conflation between 'Roman' and 'Aeneid Trojan' entirely in keeping with the ideology of the Fascist regime. Notwithstanding this, the prehistoric history of Kalivo was advocated also by archaeologists in the post-war period.

Ugolini arrived at Butrint in the spring of 1924, making a brief visit during his tour of the country. He sailed across Lake Butrint to Diaporit where he passed the night in a shepherds hut. The next morning he set out on foot in search of the "regno di Eleno" and described, with a certain amount of poetic licence, how he found the sites of Kalivo (Fig. 1.3) and Monte Aetòs (Fig. 1.4).²⁸

Ma poi sorse l'aurora di un fortunato giorno. Infatti partito di buon mattino per i consueti giri di sopralluogo, ebbi la fortuna di trovare un acropoli arcaica, nella collina denominata Kalivò presso il lago di Vivari. Questa però non poteva essere l'antica Buthrotum di cui parla Virgilio a motivo nella mancanza di corrispondenza con alcuni particolari topografici troppo chiaramente espressi da Virgilio. Tale gioia mi fu riservata nel pomeriggio dello stesso giorno, scoprendo i ruderi sorgenti su una collinetta posta non

lungi da Kalivò e pure presso lo stesso lago di Vivari. Molte ragioni, che non sto qui ad enumerare, provano che le rovine di questa acropoli sono quelle dell'antica Buthrotum. I Veneziani che qui costruirono un castello, corrupeo il nome Buthrotum in Butrinto e i pastori chiamano Vuthrotò quella collina.

La mia fede aveva vinto!

A mezzogiorno poi del giorno seguente ero in contemplazione di una terza antica città del tutto ignorata, situata su di una erta collina denominata Monte Aetòs; circondata da mura di tipo poligonale. In due giorni avevo scoperto ben tre antiche città sconosciute.²⁹



Fig. 1.3 Kalivo (in centre) (L.M. Ugolini)



Fig. 1.4 Çuka e Aitoit/Monte Aetòs (IA)

Surveys of Kalivo and Çuka e Aitoit

The survey and excavation of Kalivo and Çuka e Aitoit/Monte Aetòs took place in 1928 and 1929 respectively; Dario Roversi Monaco undertook both surveys. Roversi Monaco was Ugolini's principal assistant during the early years of the mission and had been responsible for the survey of the ruins of Phoenicê; undoubtedly, the experience of the rocky and near vertical hillsides there served him well at the two new sites. The accuracy of both the major surveys that he produced have stood the test of time. That of Çuka e Aitoit/Monte Aetòs corresponds well with the later survey undertaken by the Soviet-Albanian archaeological mission, and the elements of the Kalivo wall circuit, which Monaco was able to trace, differ little from a modern Total Station survey and satellite survey data (see Chapter 4). While Ugolini in his manuscript report mentions little or nothing concerning the arduous task of producing accurate and levelled plans, Monaco did publish brief accounts, which are valuable in documenting this important and generally unrecorded process.³⁰

Il lavoro di rilievo
(20 feb – 30 luglio 1928)

Altro rilievo, pure disegnato nella scala 1:500, fu quello eseguito a Kalivò, collina boscosissima orientata da nord a sud, ed avente il fianco volto al lago assai ripido. Da un torrione a quota 24,7 ed a picco sul lago parte un muro ad irregolarissimi blocchi poligonali appena sbozzati, che, seguendo il ciglio del lato orientale per m 750, sale fino a quota 65; si volge nel fianco meridionale lungo m 330; di nuovo svolta bruscamente formando il lato occidentale, visibile solamente per altri m 320 fino alla quota 26.

Con somma fatica (il bosco è quasi impenetrabile) e con battute generalmente brevissime (276 punti da 26 stazioni), mi è stato possibile seguire tutto il muro e chiudere esattamente la poligonale attorno ad una superficie di ha 50.

III Campagna a Butrinto e Monte Aetòs
(1 marzo – 30 luglio 1929)

Iniziato con regolarità il lavoro per sbandare l'alto cumulo (m 7 ÷ 8) di detriti e di massi precipitati nella cavea del Teatro, lasciai gli amici ai loro speciali lavori per instalarmi a Ciflik, villaggio formato da poche casupole di rami intrecciati ed intonacati con fango, alle falde di un colle ove una città fu racchiusa da bella mura, costruite a tratti ora in blocchi poligonali ora parallelepipedi.

Dalla bassa pianura della *Kestrine*, ove le acque indugiano a lungo, sorge isolato Monte Aetòs, che di lontano appare nella regolare forma di un cono, mentre da vicino, per i suoi ripidissimi fianchi tormentati e coperti da scoscesi roccioni calcarei, e per la sua cima ridotta ad una strettissima digradante cresta disseminata di rocce e massi, cambia profondamente aspetto; tanto da rivelarsi come un immenso cumulo di sassi, povero di erbe, spoglio di alberi. Tale sua natura rende particolarmente pesante il lavoro al rilevatore.

Da quota 269 e proprio a picco sulle pendici settentrionali, corre il muro greco che in m 320 scende a quota 195; ha un breve lato di m 60, e poi un lungo tratto ben conservato, che corre per m 500 sulle pendici meridionali a più dolce declivio, mantenendosi fra quota 180 e 200. Di qua impostandosi sopra un alto sprone roccioso, volta nuovamente per terminare dopo altri m 180 a quota 205, per l'appunto sotto il suo inizio e contro lo stesso alto ed impervio scoscendimento. A quota 230 del lato settentrionale si stacca un muro che mantenendosi a quella quota circonda tutta la parte alta del colle, alla quale non mi è possibile dare il nome di pianoro per la sua natura eccessivamente tormentata.

Entro le mura innumeri murelli trovano calda sede su rocce opportunamente preparate, al certo muri di case, o di casette formate da fianchi del colle per avere punti-quota. La loro esatta chiusura angolare, planimetrica ed altimetrica mi confermò che anche questo faticosissimo lavoro era stato ben

condotto e ben riportato. Per avere quote sufficienti a ricavare le curve di livello ho battuto lungo le pendici 550 punti da 20 stazioni, interessando ha 90; per il rilievo delle mura e delle interne vestigia che occupano solo ha 9, ho dovuto battere invece ben 418 punti da altre 20 stazioni. Da tanto elevato numero si può avere una idea delle difficoltà che il terreno opponeva al lavoro di rilievo, impedito da continui salti o rocce o roccioni o dislivelli.

Risultato di tale lavoro è la pianta archeologica di questo monte nella scala 1:500. recante la rappresentazione grafica delle zone rocciose e le curve di livello con equidistanza di 5 metri.

At Phoenicê the team had consisted only of Ugolini and Roversi Monaco working with a crew of workmen, but at Butrint they were joined by assistants and specialists, which permitted other projects to be undertaken concurrent with that at Butrint. While we know that Roversi Monaco surveyed both sites, it is uncertain who oversaw the actual excavations at Kalivo; though, most probably Ugolini himself would have done so given his interest in prehistory. At Çuka e Aitoit/Monte Aetòs, the work was supervised by Alfredo Nuccitelli, one of Ugolini's young assistants; he also kept the *Giornale di Scavo* on which the final report was based (see Chapter 11).

The Albanian-Soviet Archaeological Mission

Following the Second World War, Albanian-Soviet cooperation led in 1958 to the establishment of a series of joint archaeological projects in Albania. At Apollonia a major programme was jointly directed by Vladimir Demitriovitch Blavatski and Hasan Ceka; with the participation of around 200 specialists, students and workmen. A second Russian-Albanian team explored the classical site of Oricum; directed by Tatania V. Blavatskaja (Prof. Blavatski's wife) and Dhimosten Budina. The most ambitious element in this programme was the creation of an archaeological map of Albania; for which wide-ranging landscape surveys recording the monuments and sites that existed in

profusion were undertaken. These archaeological projects further functioned as a training school for Albanian archaeologists: almost all the students enrolled to study archaeology at the University of Tirana participated in the projects. The southern Albania Survey was directed by Selim Islami and V.D. Blavatski. They began their surveys at Çuka e Aitoit and Kalivo, where Islami was director; at Ripes, which was directed by Dhimosten Budina and T.V. Blavatskaja; and at the Hellenistic site of Malathrea. Following the rift with the Soviet Union in 1961, Budina continued the survey project as the principal director, and extended it into the Gjirokastra valley and along the coast as far north as Himara (fig. 1.5). As part of the Albanian-Soviet examination of Kalivo a new topographic survey of the hill and its walls was undertaken.



Fig. 1.5 The Albanian archaeological mission at Çuka e Aitoit (IA)
From left to right – rear row: Skender Anamali, Aleksandra Mano, Dhimosten Budina; front row, Neritan Ceka, Selim Islami, Fatmir Arapi.

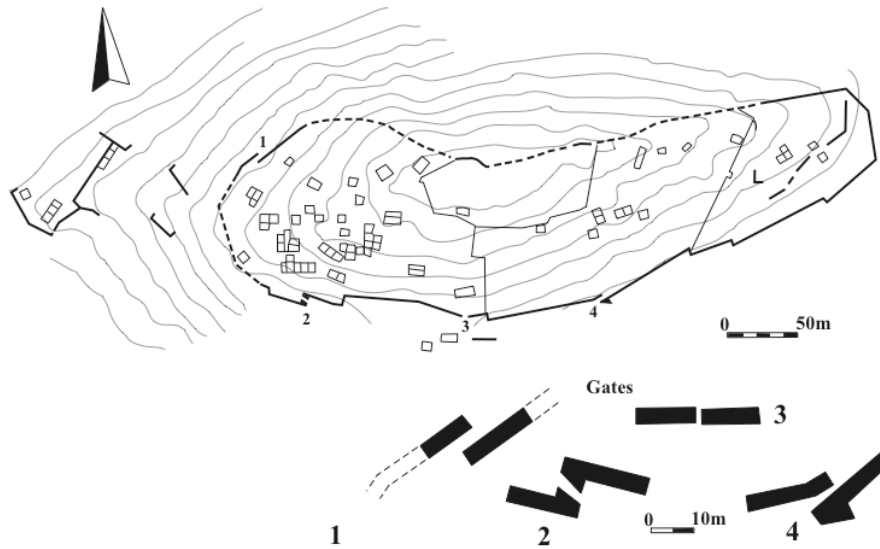
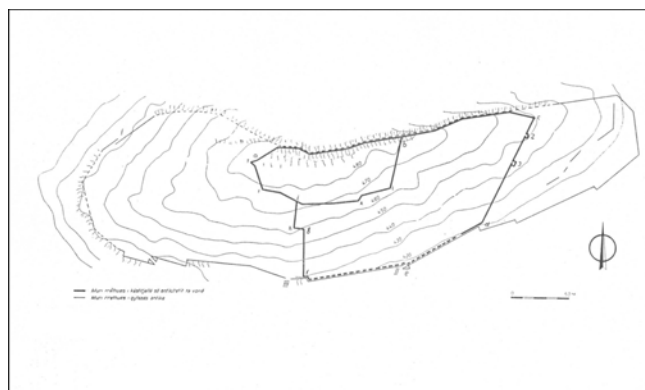


Fig. 1.6 Çuka e Aitoit. Survey by the Albanian-Soviet Archaeological Mission (IWA, IA)



Fig. 1.7 The fortifications at Çuka e Aitoit, with the extension on the western slope proposed in 1976 (after Ceka 1976)

Fig. 1.8 The fortifications at Çuka e Aitoit (grey), and citadel and bailey on the acropolis (black) (after Lako 1982)



The work at Çuka e Aitoit was never published in full and the archive remains in various hands in Tirana and Moscow. In effect, it seems as if the aims of the project were very similar to that undertaken by Ugolini and his colleagues. However, this new project was more intensive and wide-ranging in its scope than that of the 1930s, and involved a new survey of the defences, excavations in the cemetery and, in particular, a focus on the examination of the domestic dwellings. The results represent a significant contribution to the history of this region of Epirus.

Despite the lack of published material it is possible to gain an impression of the work undertaken at both sites from the few published sources and some archival material.³¹ At Çuka e Aitoit, for instance, the walls were little changed from Ugolini's time when the gateways had first been identified and cleared. The four surviving gateways were identified as being spaced along the western and southern sides of the wall (Fig. 1.6).³² Three of these were simple tangential entrances – two on the west (see Figs 7.1, 7.2) and one on the south (see Fig. 7.6) an arrangement probably dictated by the need to climb the hill along a winding path much as the modern visitor must attempt – while the fourth was a simple axial gateway in the southern wall (see Fig. 7.5). None of these appear to have had towers, evidence for which is lacking along the whole wall circuit. The walls were dated to one phase in the middle of the 4th century BC. Neritan Ceka was later to argue that the cluster of buildings on the lower western slopes of the mountain was enclosed in their enceinte in the 3rd century BC as an extension of the main town walls (Fig. 1.7).³³ This is a debatable point; many of the walls are clearly those of substantial building terraces, while these do relate to substantial stone walls on their outer edges, the flanking walls do not in themselves seem substantial enough to have acted as a set of town walls. They may hence simply be evidence of further levelling and terracing. The 'medieval' mortared circuit walls, built using some *spolia* from the earlier Hellenistic walls, that were noted by Ugolini were further examined in the 1980s.³⁴ The survey confirmed the general

course of the walls as well as the tracing done by Ugolini; however, it became clear that the very top of the mountain had been completely enclosed by a wall forming part of this refortification, creating in effect a citadel and bailey (Fig. 1.8). The entrance to the outer area lay on the southern side of the mountain and reused, it was suggested, the old eastern Hellenistic entrance, which was narrowed with mortared masonry for the purpose.

Two small towers/ bastions, originally surveyed by the Italian archaeological mission, were interpreted as having been placed on the eastern wall to reinforce the relatively gentle approach from this side.

A series of more than 34 distinct buildings were identified within and without the circuit walls at Çuka e Aitoit, several of which had been previously examined by Ugolini. Most of the structures were clustered at the western end of the hill with a few along its eastward extent; more structures were documented outside the defences. In an article published in 1989, Apollon Baçe and V. Bushati analysed the house forms.³⁵ The houses were generally of the *oikos* type found elsewhere in the Hellenistic world, but Baçe and Bushati suggested that they represented a form differing from the norm. Three main types were identified. Firstly, elaborate, partly rock-cut houses of two storeys consisting of a central room with a fireplace surrounded by other spaces, which, it was suggested, defined social function. Three of these were identified on the southern slopes of the hill; one in particular produced evidence for storage and domestic milling in the form of *pithoi* and fragments of millstones. Secondly, a series of simpler dwellings with associated byres/storerooms; these were identified at the western end of the walled area. Thirdly, a complex of structures with storage facilities was identified on the western part of the hill outside the main wall circuit. It is described as constructed on a relatively level area and possibly enclosed by the putative second phase of walls (Fig. 1.9). This considerable complex is that which Ugolini called 'the palace' after the local accounts and described as consisting of an extensive series of building terraces and possible perimeter walls.

Baçe and Bushati identified three distinct structures: a room in the north-western corner, which may have been used for storage; adjacent to this, the so-called 'building B' consisting of a series of rooms on two levels that included a byre/storeroom (Fig. 1.10); and, to the east within a separate dividing wall, two other buildings situated on separate terraces (building A) both apparently with porticoes. The intermediate terrace wall was finely built with an elaborate corbelled gateway permitting access to the interconnecting staircase. The eastward facing portico of the upper structure looked out onto a flat area with a stone lined cistern in its centre. Excavations within Building A revealed three horizons, the earliest belonging to the fourth-third centuries BC; a level of the first to second

centuries AD; and finally a horizon of the third to fourth centuries. It was suggested that this whole complex comprised a *prytaneum*, serving visitors to the town, outside the principal enceinte.

Among the many ancient parallels found for these buildings, the article also discussed the similarities between the buildings at Çuka e Aitoit and medieval and post-medieval dwellings in Albania. This highlights the influence of the nationalist paradigm of Illyrian-Albanian continuity in archaeological work. The argument was further developed by stressing the perceived 'egalitarian' nature of the structures on Çuka e Aitoit in keeping with the philosophy of communist 'self-reliance' promoted by the Albanian state at that period.

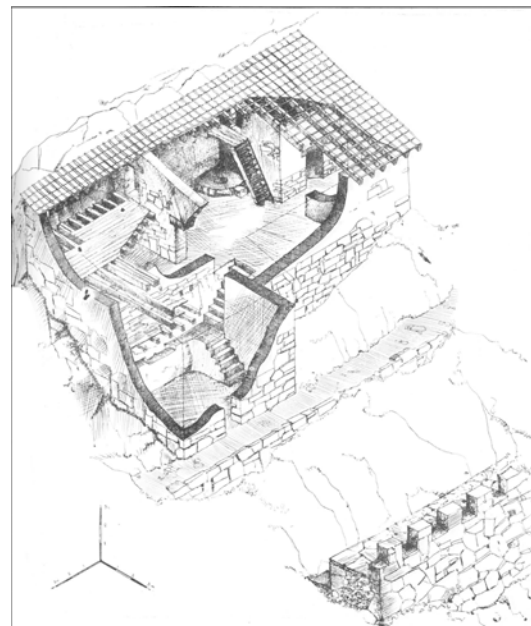
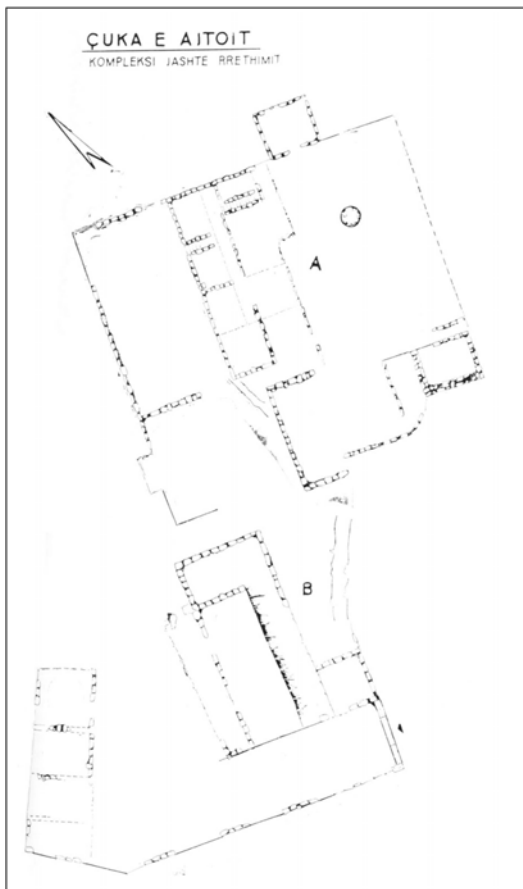


Fig. 1.10 Reconstruction drawing of 'building B' on Çuka e Aitoit (after Baçe and Bushati 1989)

Fig. 1.9 Plan of 'buildings A and B' of the so-called Palace on Çuka e Aitoit (after Baçe and Bushati 1989)

Notes

¹ Though, see also Bejko 1998 for an overview of the methodological context of post-war Albanian archaeology.

² For a biography and bibliography see: <http://esf.niwi.knaw.nl/esf1996/leake/html/bio.htm>

³ Leake 1835: 98.

⁴ Pouqueville 1836: 47-48.

⁵ Newman (undated) and Swire 1937. See also Zuber 1942 for an Italian view of these same problems.

⁶ Hammond 1967: 94-95.

⁷ A full account of the Italian Archaeological mission in Albania and the work of Luigi Maria Ugolini can be found in Gilkes 2003 and Miraj 2003.

⁸ See note 10 as well as Gilkes 2003: 3-4 and Gilkes and Miraj 2000.

⁹ For the results of Antonio Baldacci and Paolo Orsi, see Baldacci 1917 and Orsi 1883.

¹⁰ Archivio Storico Ministero degli Esteri (ASME) Affari Politici (AP) 1924 Pacco 723/1

¹¹ Ugolini 1927.

¹² Arkivi Quendror i Shtetit (AQS) F.263, V.1925, D175.

¹³ The Italian Archaeological Mission at Butrint was continued after Ugolini's death in 1936 under the directorship of Pirro Marconi and, after his death in 1938, by Domenico Mustilli until 1943.

¹⁴ Arkivi Quendror i Shtetit (AQS) F.263, V.1927, D.205.

¹⁵ The cultural interaction across the opposing shores of the southern Adriatic has been more fully acknowledged in modern research; see, for instance, Lomas 1993.

¹⁶ *The Italian Mail* 3 March 1928.

¹⁷ The unpublished manuscript is currently stored at the Museo della Civiltà Romana (MCR); Archivio Storico, UG30.

¹⁸ Virgil *Aeneid* 3.294-505. See also Dionysius of Halicarnassus 1.51.1; Ovid *Metamorphoses* 13.719-721.

¹⁹ See also Thomas 2001, chapter 7.

²⁰ Archivio Storico Ministero degli Esteri (ASME) AP 1932 19/19.

²¹ Ugolini 1942.

²² For a history of the Ugolini manuscripts at the Museo della Civiltà Romana, see Liberati 2003.

²³ Cf. Chapter 2.

²⁴ Virgil *Aeneid* 3.349-351; Ovid *Metamorphoses* 13.721; Dionysius of Halicarnassus 1.51.1; Stephanus Byzantinus *Ethica* s.v. Troia.

²⁵ Cf. Ugolini 1930; his book *Butrinto: il mito d'Enea* was published posthumously in 1937. It was clearly a subject of key interest for him and the archives at the Museo della Civiltà Romana

includes the typescript of an article entitled "I troiani in Epiro" (Ug 73).

²⁶ A fuller discussion can be found in Ugolini 1937: 68-80, highlighting the importance of further archaeological results for deciding the issue.

²⁷ Strabo *Geography* 7.7.5 (Loeb 1924, translation by H.L. Jones).

²⁸ Ugolini 1937: 17.

²⁹ Museo della Civiltà Romana (MCR); Archivio Storico UG26. Ugolini published a slightly different account of the discovery in his 1937 book, *Butrinto: Il Mito di D'Enea*: 'Nella primavera del 1924 compii il primo viaggio di esplorazione archeologica in Albania. Partito dalle regioni settentrionali (provincia di Scutari), attraversando l'Albania centrale, e mantenendomi piuttosto verso la costa, giunsi all'estrema parte meridionale dell'Albania, nella regione di Santi Quaranta. Era questa la zona che prometteva d'essere la più fruttuosa di rinvenimenti, sia a motivo della forte colonizzazione quivi estesa dai Corinzi fin dall'VIII secolo a. Cristo, sia perchè essa era stata grandemente beneficata dal lungo dominio di Roma.

Dopo alcune vane ricerche della precisa sede ove la letteratura antica poneva il regno caonio di Eleno e Andromaca, sorse per me l'aurora di un fortunato giorno. Passata una notte poco ristoratrice, a Diapori (presso il lago di Butrinto) in una piccola capanna di cordiali, ma miseri pastori, di buon mattino mi avviai verso un colle che per la conformazione e per speciali indizi mi faceva bene sperare. Nella prime luci mattutine ("iamque rubescebat stellis aurora fugatis" come Virgilio avrebbe detto) un binaco stormo di cicogne, disposte a ipso, si dirigeva anch'esso verso la collina. Il desiderio mi fece trarre buoni auspici. Sali sulla collina, denominata Kalivò, e vi ritrovai una cinta di mura, in parte poligonali e in parte di tipo "pelasgico".

Non poteva essere questa l'antica Buthrotum, mancando alcuni dei particolari topografici sì chiaramente espressi da Virgilio e ancor più dagli antichi geografi. Sicchè rimasi deluso, per quanto fossi lieto di aver trovato i resti di una antica città fortificata, fino allora totalmente sconosciuta. Dalla cima di Kalivò vidi un piccolo promontorio, situato dall'altra parte del lago. Verso di esso rivolsi i miei passi, e, attraversato il canale emissario del lago con un monoxilo (specie di poco stabile piroga di tipo primitivo, ottenuta scavando un tronco d'albero) raggiunsi il colle e pervenni nello stesso tempo alla mèta dei miei desideri.

Quando giunse il mezzogiorno, ero immerso nella folta e spinosa boscaglia, in

mezzo alla quale apparivano cenerognoli, piccoli e appena affioranti alcuni resti di belle mura greche: notevoli fortificazioni medioevali accrescevano il campo delle ricerche. Non vi potei restare quanto avrei voluto perchè ero solo, e il luogo troppo selvaggio e frequentato da pericolosi animali; il sole poi stava per volgere verso il tramonto ed io dovevo recarmi a pernottare nel villaggio di Zara, distante circa un'ora di cammino. Nella mattinata del giorno seguente ero in contemplazione di un'altra acropoli: Monte Aetòs. Avevo ritrovato quindi tre antiche città in soli due giorni.'

³⁰ Monaco 1934.

³¹ Budina 1970; Baçe and Bushati 1989.

³² See Fig. 6.1 for an updated and annotated plan of the site.

³³ Ceka 1976.

³⁴ Lako 1982.

³⁵ Baçe and Bushati 1989.

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