

GJERGJ FRASHERI, *Illyrisches Dyrrah (Dyrrahu ilir) I. Die Grabung Lulishtja 1 Maj*. Stiftung „Qendra Frasheri“, Tirana 2015. € 84.00. ISBN 978-9928-4322-0-9. VII and 726 pages, 1532 illustrations, mostly in colour.

The modern city of Durres in the heart of the Adriatic, c. 30 km to the west of the Albanian capital Tirana, looks back on an eventful history. Founded as a colony of Corinth and Corfu under the name of Epidamnos it maintained its importance under different constitutional forms all through antiquity. Since the Hellenistic period the name *Dyrrhachion / Dyrrachium* got in use and largely replaced the former name. The continuity of the settlement has never been interrupted, even during the period of Turkish rule, in which the population has been reduced to a few hundred inhabitants; only after the independence of Albania – but then very quickly – a revival of the town started. The history of the town is appropriately sketched in the book under review in the section “Historischer Überblick” (pp. 16–35) and again resumed from a different perspective in “Historische Topographie von prähistorischer Zeit bis zum Mittelalter” (pp. 63–114).

Despite the scant tradition, the development of the city in ancient times is clearly evident. It was founded on the southern corner of the island, which was originally separated from the mainland by a lagoon. Due to changes in sea level the lagoon obviously silted up, allowing an expansion of the city area in Hellenistic and Roman times. The extension is testified by the city walls and the position of the necropolis, even if many details still remain unclear. The location of crucial parts of the city, such as the Agora, the main temples, the theatre and the gymnasium, are as yet unknown.

The author also presents the phases of the exploration of Durres’ history in great detail (pp. 35–62). After the fall of the communist regime in 1991, there was an unimaginable construction boom in Durres, destroying the remains of the ancient city or blocking further investigation by archaeologists in a very short time. Before the end of World War II research was primarily done by foreign scholars who only superficially explored some smaller areas. Only the communist administration led to a fundamental change, supporting the systematic study of the archaeological remains of the country, with appropriate institutions starting to work and looking for complex solutions on how to present the remains to visitors. A characteristic example for this process in Durres is the restoration of the amphitheatre.

The institutions continued their work for some time after the collapse of the communist system in the years 1985–1991 and at a time when the subsequent governments implemented reforms and the Parliament in 2008 ratified the Convention of Malta, adopting new standards for rescue excavations requiring the engagement of private contractors.

As a consequence of this an archaeological excavation firm has been commissioned with the task to explore a large area close to the outskirts of the ancient city in preparation for a building project. This first larger excavation under the new rules, conducted under the direction of the author of the volume, is now presented in this publication. The excavations brought parts of the ancient road system and buildings to light, especially from the Hellenistic to Roman period. The time of the Tetrarchs and Constantine led to major changes. The author does not hide the fact that he writes as an Albanian patriot, but at the same time he is well grounded in international experiences. Emotions and rational calculation are thus closely allied, but his engagement quickly captivates the reader. This book gives an idea of the different fields in which archaeology and heritage management have to fight for the monuments and their evaluation, a process always necessary despite of all the political and economic changes. It will still take a long time and especially require vigorous intervention of state institutions in order to establish stable and reliable structures that will grant the private investors sufficient security.

The publication is divided in two parts, the first recapitulating in a focused manner the history of the city and excavation work in general (pp. 1–113), the second presenting the excavations and their results (pp. 114–541). The volume shows clearly how important systematic excavations in the city of *Dyrrachium* are and how they can alter our understanding completely. It also gives a vivid idea of the organisation of an excavation where different stakeholders are involved, such as private clients as well as local and state authorities with their different expectations and demands; and all this was accompanied by great technical difficulties – the ground water level was so high that it had to be pumped out constantly (pp. 114–138).

About half of the publication is dedicated to the presentation of the various phases that are marked by the layers of landfills in combination with the findings (pp. 139–326). The first phase consisted of two horizons. The earliest findings are dated to the 7th to the early 5th centuries BC and consist mainly of wooden piles, perhaps supporting wooden dwellings of the colony. A systematic distribution of the piles cannot be carved out, and the author proposes a peripheral development outside of the ancient town. After all, it calls similar constructions from other Adriatic settlements like Spina or Adria to mind.

Whether or not the ceramic debris uncovered indicates a place of pottery production is not fully clear but it is probable due to the remoteness of the place. From the late 5th century to the 4th century BC the development of the town was disrupted, perhaps resulting from the Peloponnesian War and the internal fights between ‘demos’ and aristocracy. In the late 4th and the 3rd century BC there are clear indications of the systematic creation of a new town quarter prepared by a massive landfill. Traces of roads and buildings in their rectangular disposition are anticipating the subsequent grid of the urban development.

Again, two phases become evident, the first one marked by some smaller walls constructed with pebbles. They do not allow the reconstruction of a clear picture of the inner structure of the *insula*. Furnaces and scoria can be interpreted as remains of an industrial estate. The mid-3rd century BC is followed by a fundamental reorganisation of the quarter with walls erected with larger hewn blocks. The new type of houses with peristyles is equipped with some luxurious amenities like courtyards and small bathrooms. In this period, a new prosperity was ensured by the alliance with Rome.

The next phase covers the period from the turn of the 2nd to the 1st century BC up to the 3rd century AD, i. e. the late Roman Republic and Imperial era. The excavations clearly reveal a road system with a dense paving, lateral canals and sidewalks which were roofed by porticoes or porches. As the results show, older structures were partially integrated and the different components were constantly renewed by the owners of the houses. With the construction of an aqueduct in the time of Hadrian, the supply with fresh water clearly improved, testified by lead pipes at various points of the roads.

The *insulae* occupied an area of 29.80 square metres, which corresponds to approximately 100 Roman feet, and have been divided from north to south by an *ambitus*. Only the *insulae* in the eastern row are much wider, even if their borders to the east are not securely identified. Remarkably richly furnished walls and paving of the houses survived, showing fundamentally different dispositions and no single type of a house. However, no plan of a single house can be completely reconstructed, which in addition to the limited insight can be explained by the constant conversion of units. But the current excavation area does not allow for the unearthing of an entire *insula* (fig. 153; 420). The existing fragments of *dolia*, the different simple floors as well as the remains of various furnaces indicate a crafts quarter with a production of glass and other materials. The few mosaics are very simple in design and no other sign of luxury has been found.

All these findings are very carefully described and evaluated street by street and room by room so that it is possible to write a kind of micro-history of the area. After heavy fires and destruction in the 2nd and 3rd centuries AD the individual buildings had been demolished including their interior, thus clearly signifying the previous uses of the rooms. The results are comprehensibly documented in Figure 395, in which the dominance of taverns, shops and craft enterprises is easy to deduce. From the 2nd and especially during the 3rd century AD the sewers in the streets increasingly clogged and were not sufficiently cleaned. At the same time, obviously the sea water level generally rose. For a while the owners tried to drain the water with new openings in the walls or in the sewers, but without lasting success. At the end of the 3rd century AD the level of the streets was systematically increased by about half a metre with debris from other parts of the city. Subsequently earlier constructions were torn down and partially rebuilt, some of them with remarkable structures and elaborate mosaic floors. The situation is comparable to that of Ostia at the same time. Shortly before the middle of the 4th century AD, a heavy earthquake led to an interruption of settlement activities in this quarter of *Dyrrachium* for several decades.

At the turn of the 4th to the 5th century AD the site was used systematically again, all the former walls were deconstructed and the ground level was raised by a fill which was up to one metre high. Amazingly, the subsequent building activities remained limited to a courtyard in form of a peristyle, without further constructions on the outside. In the second half of the 6th century AD a large apse-like construction was added spanning the whole width of the *insula*. In general, it is surprising that despite of many embankments the former division into *insulae* and thus the orientation of the road system was maintained. This is true even for the newly created sewers.

The turn of the 6th to the 7th century AD led to the definitive end of settlement activities in this area. Up to the 12th century a number of burials were interred around the apse-like building. Apparently, the building was considered as a point of reference, although it can hardly be interpreted as a sacral structure. In later times two small edifices were added, showing no reference to the ancient alignment.

Despite the careful excavation no coherent plan of a complete house is reconstructable. Due to the plan of the streets and the *insulae* with their ambitus and bearing the idea of a regular distribution at the beginning of the construction work in mind, the space for a house could have been set with a size of 50 x 50 feet like those in e. g. Kassope (W. HOEPFNER / E.-L. SCHWANDNER, *Haus und Stadt im klassischen Griechenland*². *Wohnen in der klassischen Polis I* [München 1994] 146), a division which was apparently changed very quickly. While there were houses with a central peristyle in the Hellenistic period, any evidence of appropriate dispositions known from the common types of Mediterranean houses is missing in the Roman phase. Rather, the irregular arrangements and the missing central courtyards as well as the division by corridors call the plans of houses in the northern provinces to mind (G. DITMAR-TRAUTH, *Das Gallorömische Haus*. *Antiquitates* 10 [Hamburg 1995] 16–36; St. GROH, *Die Insula XLI von Flavia Solva – Ergebnisse der Grabungen*. *Sonderschr. ÖAI* 28 [Wien 1996], esp. pp. 86–88 and Plan 13). For the late antique constructions, the original function unfortunately cannot be defined.

The finds are finally presented by brief overviews of the material groups and in a catalogue (pp. 327–541). As is common for an excavation of a settlement, ceramics present the largest group of the finds. Spanning from the second half of the 7th century BC to the 5th century AD the pottery encompasses the usual spectrum of regional genres. Simple vessels are dominant in the Archaic period even in the group of fine ceramics. The excavator tends to interpret vessels decorated in a simple Corinthian style, but also those similar to the Attic black figured style as local productions. He also assumes domestic production for the red figured vessels, with some fragments showing strong simplifications of the figures. The ratio of imports and domestic imitations could however

be verified by scientific methods and other dislocated production centres in Western Greece or Southern Italy should be taken into account as well. But the excavator pleads consistently for a local production, even where – as in the case of the so-called ‘Elische Lekythoi’ – the centres of production are quite reliably known.

The spectrum of non-ceramic finds hardly shows peculiarities. The result of the analysis of finds rather points to a wealth of relationships to other cities in the region. Much of the material culture comes from landfills. The fragments of archaic roof tiles may come from a nearby sanctuary together with ceramics and simply shaped idols of clay, which are not necessarily to be dated early, as proposed by the author (see G. R. DAVIDSON, *The Minor Objects. Corinth XII* [Princeton 1952] 22 Nr. 1 f. in a context of the 5th century BC). Other terracotta from the Archaic period are rare. One figure (pl. 44 fig. 2) might be dated to this period due to the hairstyle, even if a direct parallel is missing. The Doric *geison* with *mutuli* with the holes in the *guttae* as well as the Ionic capital find some parallels in Apollonia and can be dated to the time of early Hellenism. To the same horizon belongs a relief figure of high quality (pl. 81) that corresponds in size and style to the figure of a Greek warrior from Durres (N. CEKA, *Krieger*. In: A. Eggebrecht [ed.], *Albanien – Schätze aus dem Land der Skiptaren*. Ausstellung Hildesheim 1988 [Mainz 1988] 288 Nr. 167; stylistically it is similar to the bust of a girl from the beginning of the 3rd century BC, *ibid.* 344 Nr. 235). In general, finds from loom weights (pl. 49–50) to bone artefacts show the influence of the Greek koine in the region, including a stamp of a rosette made of antler (pl. 53b) that deserves special interest.

The ancient Illyrians gained great importance for the identity of Albania especially under the communist regime. The notion of an Illyrian identity is still evident today and has a certain influence on this publication, too. There is no doubt that a close reciprocity between the local population and the Greeks and later the Romans existed at all times. Whether Epidamnos was the Greek city on the hill and Dyrrhachion was later added as an Illyrian expansion in the plane currently, as the author proposes, remains a hypothesis. The problem remains that traces of Illyrian culture, apart from proper names and perhaps some ceramic elements, are largely lacking. The linguistic evidence, the graffiti and stamps are written in Greek and Latin. The deities also originate from these cultures, as is evident in reliefs with Bes (?) and cornucopia and Mercury (pl. 79), the bronze figure of a Lar (pl. 64, compare: A. KAUFMANN-HEINIMANN, *Götter und Lararien aus Augusta Raurica*. *Forsch.* Augst 26 [Augst 1998] 186–188; the figure from Durres belongs to a small group present in the Roman east), head vessels with representations of Sarapis (pl. 45, compare: E. SCHMIDT, *Katalog der antiken Terrakotten 1*. Martin von Wagner-Museum [Mainz 1994] 170 Nr. 281 Taf. 51 b) and snake vessels referring to Mithraism (pl. 24). The same is valid for houses and other testimonies. Unlike the situation in Paestum (Ch. NOWAK, *Bestattungsrituale in Unteritalien vom 5. bis 4. Jahrhundert v.Chr.: Überlegungen zur sogenannten Samnitisierung*. *Italiká 3* [Wiesbaden 2014] 48–50) or in the Greek cities of the Bosporan kingdom (P.-A. KREUZ, *Die Grabreliefs aus dem Bosporanischen Reich*. *Col. Ant.* 6 [Leuven 2012] 315–316) – to name only a few quite different examples of such processes of exchange – it is extremely difficult to make out traces of Illyrians in the material culture of *Dyrrachium*. But there are other characteristics for describing the identity of a city, such as its importance as a port (compare: D. STEUERNAGEL, *Kult und Alltag in römischen Hafenzentren: Soziale Prozesse in archäologischer Perspektive*. *Potsdamer Altwiss. Beitr.* 11 [Stuttgart 2004]).

The present volume with its richness of information is only conceivable as an effort of a group of contributors, from whom Albana Meta, Antonia Schütz and the photographer Zamir Marika are specifically named. Surprisingly, the book is written in German, probably not least because of

the excavator's research experience as a fellow of the Alexander von Humboldt-Foundation and his long engagement in German rescue excavations.

In spite of the difficult circumstances and the time pressure this publication presents an outstanding achievement. In many cases no detailed publication is produced after such efforts, which should indeed form the basis for urban archaeology in any way. Many more studies on the archaeology and history of this town are desirable in order to be able to create a more complete image of its development throughout the ages. Most of all, it is necessary to produce a complete plan of the town. It is hoped that this goal will be achieved soon.

D – 14050 Berlin
Bolivarallee 9
E-Mail: henner.von.hesberg@icloud.com

Henner von Hesberg

ELSE ROESDAHL / SØREN M. SINDBÆK / ANNE PEDERSEN / DAVID M. WILSON, Aggersborg. The Viking-Age Settlement and Fortress. Jutland Archaeological Society Publications Band 82. Jutland Archaeological Society, Højbjerg 2014. DKK 450,00. ISBN 978-87-88415-87-2. 478 Seiten.

Das 478 Seiten und drei Übersichtspläne umfassende Werk „Aggersborg. The Viking-Age settlement and fortress“, herausgegeben von Else Roesdahl, Søren M. Sindbæk, Anne Pedersen und David M. Wilson, wurde im Jahr 2014 als Band 82 in der vom National Museum of Denmark und der Jutland Archaeological Society editierten Reihe Jutland Archaeological Society Publications veröffentlicht. Mit der Publikation dieser Schrift verfolgt und erfüllt das Dänische Nationalmuseum zwei Ziele: einerseits die – bereits nach Abschluss seiner von 1948 bis 1952 in Aggersborg durchgeführten Ausgrabungen geplante – Veröffentlichung, die aufgrund des frühen Todes des Ausgräbers nicht zeitnah vorgelegt werden konnte, und zweitens die Beantwortung von Fragestellungen, die mit Beginn der Forschungsgeschichte gestellt und im Laufe der Zeit und vor dem Hintergrund neu gewonnener und entwickelter Methoden, Theorien und Erkenntnisse im Zusammenhang mit jüngeren Felduntersuchungen beantwortet und fortgeschrieben wurden. Das Werk zeichnet aus, dass in Verbindung mit modernen Untersuchungs-, Auswertungs- und Publikationsformen die vielen im Laufe der Zeit entstandenen Zeichnungen, Grabungsnotizen, Listen, Berichte und Funde der Altgrabungen, die lange Zeit unbeachtet im Archiv des Nationalmuseums Kopenhagen lagen, erstmals eine umfassende Auswertung erfahren. Durch die Einbeziehung der weiteren vier bekannten kreisrunden Burganlagen vom sog. Typ Trelleborg sowie die digitale Zusammenführung aller in Bezug auf den Fundort gewonnenen Geländeinformationen gelingt es den Herausgeber / innen und Verfasser / innen vor dem Hintergrund der Fundverbreitung, -datierung und -interpretation, eine Neubewertung dieser für das wikingerzeitliche Skandinavien im letzten Drittel des 10. Jahrhunderts besonderen archäologischen Fundorte im Allgemeinen vorzulegen sowie eine die gesamte Forschungsgeschichte umspannende Aufarbeitung des Fundortes Aggersborg im Speziellen.

Die höchst gelungene Publikation geht auf vier namhafte Herausgeber / innen zurück, welche die Forschungen zur Wikingerzeit seit unterschiedlich langer Zeit aktiv mitgestalten. Es handelt sich dabei um ein generationenübergreifendes Team, das theoriegeleitete und praxiserfahrene Forscher / innen aus Universität und Museum sowie internationale Expertise und Sichtbarkeit gleichermaßen vereint und noch dazu einen gleichberechtigten Geschlechteranteil aufweist. Die darüber hinaus vorhandene generationenübergreifende internationale Beteiligung kennzeichnet nicht