

THE ILLYRIAN SETTLEMENT AT DIMAL AND ITS PLACE WITHIN THE MEDITERRANEAN WORLD



Belisa MUKA

Academy of Sciences of Albania
Institute of Archaeology, Tirana
belisa.muka@acad.gov.al

Abstract. – The ancient city of Dimal, an Illyrian hilltop settlement, lies about 450 m above sea level, in the hinterland of Apollonia – a colony of Corinth and Corcyra – just about 30 km from the Adriatic eastern coast. The ruins of the ancient city were first explored by C. Praschniker in 1917 and then, about half a century later, by the Institute of Archaeology, during the period between 1963 and 1976, with some restoration works undertaken in the early 1980s. It is to these investigations that we owe the identification of the antique settlement with the Illyrian city of Dimal, thanks to the presence of the name DIMALLITAN on several stamps of Hellenistic roof tiles. From 2010–2015, the ancient city of Dimal and its surroundings have been subject to study within the joint project between the Institute of Archaeology, at the time part of the Academy for Albanian Studies, now Academy of Sciences, and the Institute of Classical Archaeology of the University of Cologne. Along with the archaeological excavations undertaken in different sectors of the intramuros area, which brought to light important public monuments and the phases of the history of the site, several intensive and extensive surveys of the territory immediately outside the fortification wall lead to the identification of two funerary areas. Ancient and recent research has helped to shed light on the history Dimal prior to and after the Roman annexation of the territory.

Key words. – Illyria, Dimal, Illyrian settlement, hinterland, Dimallitan.

In memory of Burhan Dautaj

The ancient city of Dimal is situated in the southern part of central Albania, on a ridge at the foothills of the Shpirag mountain range, between the villages of Krotina and Bistrovica, in the district of Berat, at an elevation of about 450 m above sea level. It is an Illyrian hilltop settlement in

the hinterland of Apollonia – a colony of Corinth and Corcyra – just about 30 km from the Adriatic eastern coast (Fig. 1).¹

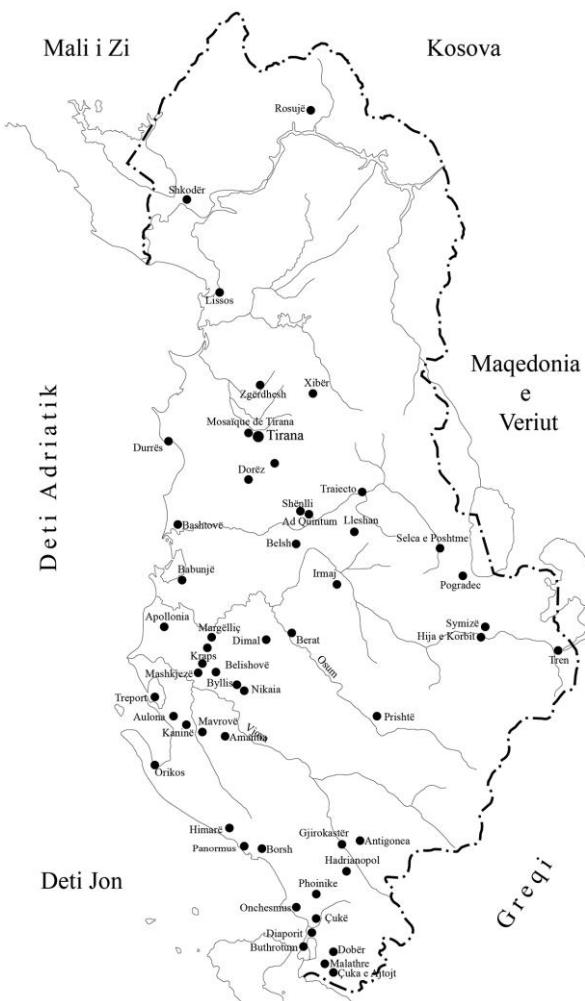


Fig. 1. Map of Albania with the location of the ancient settlements

Historical records highlight Dimal's pivotal role during the events that occurred at the end of the 3rd century BC,² where it served as a crucial stronghold – described by Polybius as “impregnable” – controlling the southern expanse of the Myzeqe Plain (Fig. 2). Recognizing its strategic

¹ I would like to express my sincere gratitude to the colleagues from the Ss Cyril and Methodius University in Skopje, St. Kliment Ohridski in Sofia, and the University of Rijeka for their kind invitation to participate in the initiative “The Unclassical Balkans”.

² Polyb. 3.18.

importance, Demetrios of Pharos captured the city early in the conflict with Rome. This led to a week-long siege in 219 BC, resulting in the fortress falling to Roman armies. However, the Macedonians soon regained control of Dimal and later returned it to Rome, along with Apollonia, as part of the peace treaty signed in Phoinike in 205 BC.³ This victory granted the Romans control over this section of *Via Egnatia*, along with the associated trade and political advantages.⁴ Subsequent written sources make no further mention of Dimal, giving the perception that the city might have persisted during the *Pax Romana*. It seems to have been governed by a *prytanis*, as indicated in an inscription discovered at Dimal that references the period “during the prytany of Caius...”, shedding light on its administrative context.⁵ Of particular importance is the 1973 discovery of a coin hoard consisting of 29 silver and 58 bronze coins.⁶ This find provides valuable insight into the activity of the mint of Apollonia and the monetary reform implemented in the mid-1st century BC, marking the transition from the city’s Hellenistic coinage to that of the late Republic and the Empire standards.⁷



Fig. 2. View of Dimal over the Myzeqe Plain

³ Liv. 29.12.

⁴ The section of *Via Egnatia* that passed through the Myzeqe Plain was a branch that originated in Apollonia and later re-joined the main route near the city of Elbasan, in central Albania. In its time, this served as the most important west-to-east route, linking Macedonia and extending all the way to Byzantium. For further information, see Fasolo 2003.

⁵ Dautaj 1986, 102, No. 3, Pl. I: 2; CIGIME 3, 259, 409.

⁶ Dautaj 1976, 386–387.

⁷ Gjongecaj, Picard 1998; Gjongecaj-Vangjeli 2019, 186–191 (21: Le trésor de Dimal, 1973).

An overview of research

The ruins of the ancient city were first explored by C. Praschniker in 1917. He conducted multiple visits to the site, carrying out the first topographical surveys of the hill where the acropolis of Dimal once stood.⁸ Subsequent research by the Albanian Institute of Archaeology, under the supervision of B. Dautaj,⁹ between 1963 and 1974, led to the discovery of several fragments of Hellenistic-era roof tiles, dated to the 3rd century BC, inscribed with the name *Dimallitan*.¹⁰ These findings enabled the archaeologists to identify the ancient city, located near the modern village of Krotina, as the Illyrian settlement of Dimal (Fig. 3). Preliminary sketches of the city's layout were also created, outlining the course of its walls and key monuments, while some restoration works were undertaken in the early 1980's.

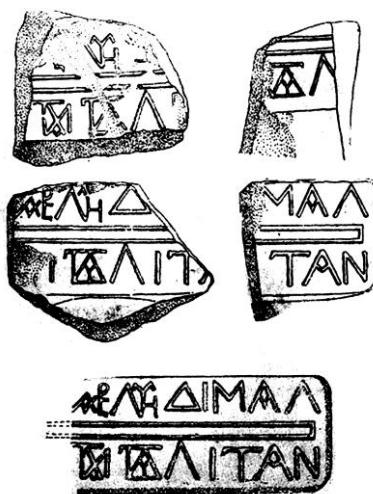


Fig. 3. Inscribed Hellenistic roof tiles from Dimal (after Dautaj 1972, 136)

From 2010–2015, the ancient city of Dimal and its surroundings have been subject to study within the joint project between the Institute of Archaeology, at the time part of the Academy for Albanian Studies, now Academy of Sciences, and the Institute of Classical Archaeology of the University of Cologne, under the joint supervision of B. Muka and M. Heinzelmann.¹¹ The work of the Albanian-German mission in Dimal has greatly expanded our understanding of the city's monuments and history.

⁸ Praschniker 1922, 103–105.

⁹ Dautaj 1965; Dautaj 1972, Dautaj 1976.

¹⁰ Dautaj 1972, 150–152, Pl. 1.

¹¹ On the results of the recent explorations of the settlement, see: Heinzelmann, Muka, Schöndeling 2012; Heinzelmann, Muka 2013; Muka, Heinzelmann 2013; Heinzelmann,

Topography of the site

The settlement spans approx. 600 meters from east to west, encompassing an *intra-muros* area of about 25 hectares. At both ends there are spurs that are integrated into the city's fortifications, providing natural defensive advantages, offering strategic views of the surrounding area. Beyond the city walls, the terrain slopes more steeply to the east than to the west, suggesting its potential use for agricultural purposes in antiquity.

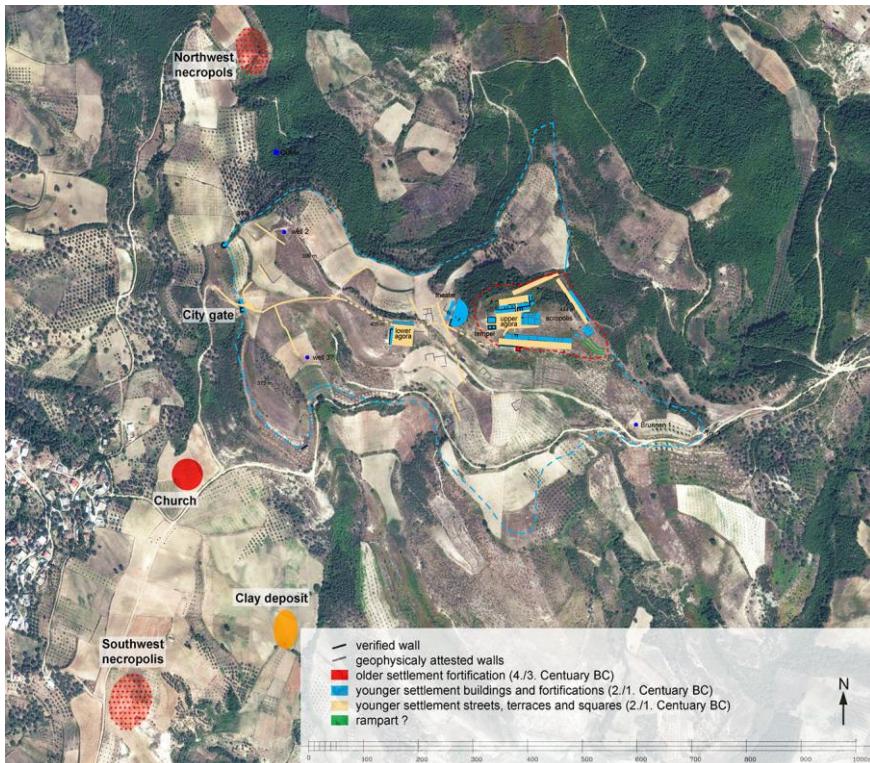


Fig. 4. The settlement of Dimal with the location of the main monuments and the funerary areas of the north-western and south-western necropolis

To the west, the settlement reaches a lower hill standing around 400 meters above sea level, while the eastern side is dominated by a higher hill, rising to 445 meters. This prominent hill, formed through terracing and identified as the *acropolis*, was fortified during the earlier phases of the settlement. At the foot of the acropolis lies a partially man-made plateau, the second public area of Dimal, known as the lower *agora*.

The city is reached through two access points: one is the western city gate (see below), located between the north-western and south-western spurs, facing Apollonia. The second access is to the east, originating from the saddle of the hill and overlooking the mountain ranges to the rear. Geophysical surveys undertaken in the course of the joint project in the *intra-muros* area have indicated the presence of roads, but their layout suggests they were not carefully planned, lacking evidence of intentional design. One notable road stands out: it passes through the western gate, following the southern slope of the hill and eventually leading to the lower agora.

In addition to the archaeological excavations conducted in various sectors of the *intra-muros* area, which uncovered significant public monuments and revealed different phases of the site's history, extensive surveys of the territory immediately outside the fortification walls led to the identification of two funerary areas, to the southwest and northwest (Fig. 4). Both ancient and recent research has provided valuable insights into the history of Dimal, both before and after its annexation by Rome.

The development of Dimal

Based on the type of artefacts discovered in the excavations in the acropolis, there is evidence confirming the existence of some human activity dating back to the Iron Age – an idea that was initially proposed during the first excavations.¹² However, no architectural remains from this period have been identified that can be directly associated with these artefacts.

Significant changes occurred on the acropolis over time. In its earliest phase, likely dating to the 4th/3rd century BC, the settlement was confined on the acropolis, enclosed by a strong city wall reinforced with towers. After the Roman conquest, a major building program was initiated in the 2nd/1st century BC, marking the peak of Dimal's development when the *intra-muros* area covered approximately 22–24 hectares. The settlement expanded onto the lower slopes of the hill, adopting a distinctly urban character. Large terraces were constructed around the acropolis, altering the natural topography of the hill and providing space for multiple *stoae* and a large square building positioned between the two highest points of the acropolis. At the western end of the acropolis, above the theatre (see below), excavations uncovered the foundations of an unknown temple, a small *prostylos* with the façade facing the east of the upper *agora*. To the north, the remains of another rectangular Hellenistic building were discovered. While its poor state of preservation makes it difficult for us to be certain of its function, its architectural style and proximity to the central square suggest it may have been a *prytaneion* (Fig. 5).

¹² Dautaj 1976, 388.

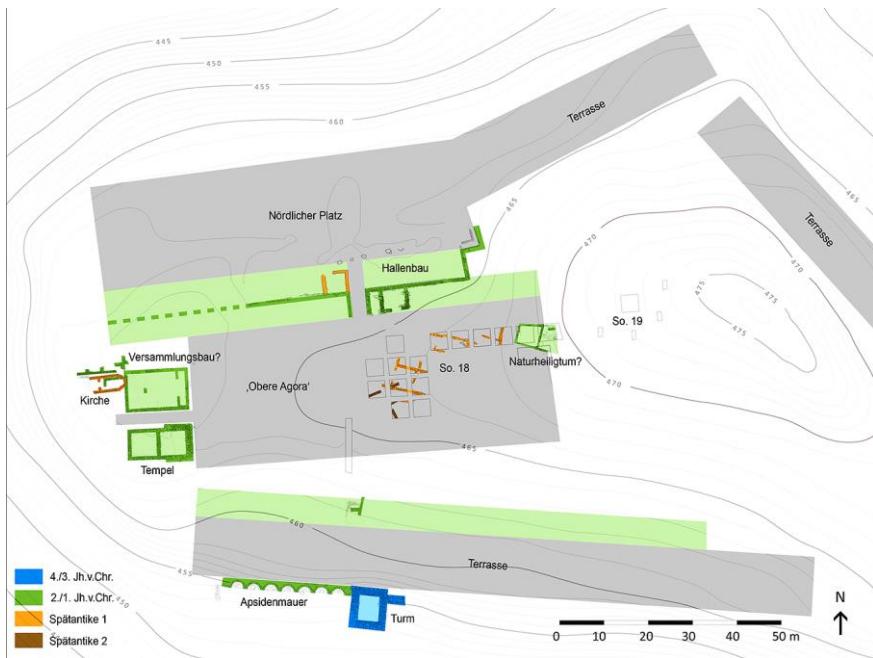


Fig. 5. The structures excavated on the acropolis

One of the areas of interest was the so-called “*stoà*”, excavated in 1963, which features seven niches.¹³ This structure is considered a smaller version of the 17-niche *portico* found in Apollonia.¹⁴ Understanding its function in relation to the surrounding fortification wall was essential for an adequate interpretation. Our study has shown that the apse wall is a later addition, built in connection with the acropolis’ fortification wall. It likely served to fill a thirty-meter-wide gap caused by destruction. The foundations of this wall rise above the level of the fortification, and it is estimated that the original height would have been around 7–8 meters. This construction appears to have been part of a larger substructure, designed to provide both functional support and an aesthetic enhancement for the terrace above, which was built after the abandonment of the acropolis’ original fortification wall (Fig. 6).

¹³ Dautaj 1972, 138; Dautaj 1976, 389–390.

¹⁴ For further information regarding “le portique à dix-sept niches”, see Dimo et al. 2007, 188–200.



Fig. 6. View of the apsidal wall from the east

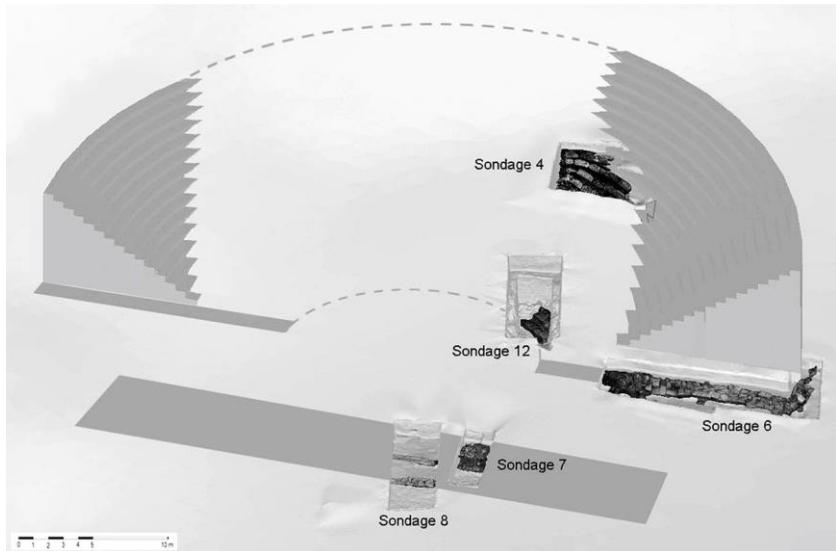


Fig. 7b. Digital reconstruction of the theatre

This period of prosperity also saw the construction of the theatre at Dimal, situated just above the lower *agora* and at the foot of the acropolis. The structure dates back to the 2nd and 1st centuries BC and it was discovered by chance during the 2010 excavation campaign. A substantial por-

tion of the *cavea* remains intact, beneath a five-meter-thick layer of debris and sediment. Excavations at the centre of the theatre uncovered the original level of the *orchestra*, measuring about 17 meters in diameter. The original level of the *orchestra* and the first row of seats have been preserved in good condition. The seats, complete with anchoring supports, display the characteristics of distinctive forms likely reserved for the local elite (Fig. 7). The theatre of Dimal is among the rare Roman-period archaeological monuments discovered in Albania,¹⁵ providing significant evidence of the influence exerted by Greek and later Roman centres along the western Adriatic coast – such as Apollonia – on the Illyrian populations of the hinterland.



Fig. 7a. Details of the honorific seats

Western gate

Another important discovery was the identification of a city gate, located on the western slope of the hill, flanked by two rectangular towers – in overall measuring 23 x 9 meters, with the width of the passageway shifting from 5.2 meters without the projections to only 2.6 meters at its narrowest part of the passage – and linked to the surrounding area by a road that should have functioned as the primary access route to the hill. These are part of the fortification system of the Illyrian city that seems to have been constructed in the early 3rd century BC, during the time of the conflicts that were occurring in the Illyrian region between the Romans and the Macedonians.¹⁶ Positioned to face west, this gate appears to have been the primary entrance, leading toward the important city of Apollonia, one of the region's most important trade hubs that played a crucial role for Dimal (Fig. 8).

¹⁵ For more information on a selection of publications regarding the theatre at Butrint, see CIGIME 2 (inscriptions), Gilkes 2003 (history of excavations); the theatre at Hadrianopolis, see Baçe, Paci, Perna 2007; Perna, Çondi 2012; the theatre at Apollonia, see Hesberg 2014; Hesberg et al. 2018; the theatre at Phoinike, see Villicich 2018; the theatre at Orikos, see Terrier, Shpuza, Consagra 2019.

¹⁶ A thorough study that integrates all the data from the excavations undertaken in Dimal is under preparation. For the purpose of this article, I will limit the information only to some general outlines.

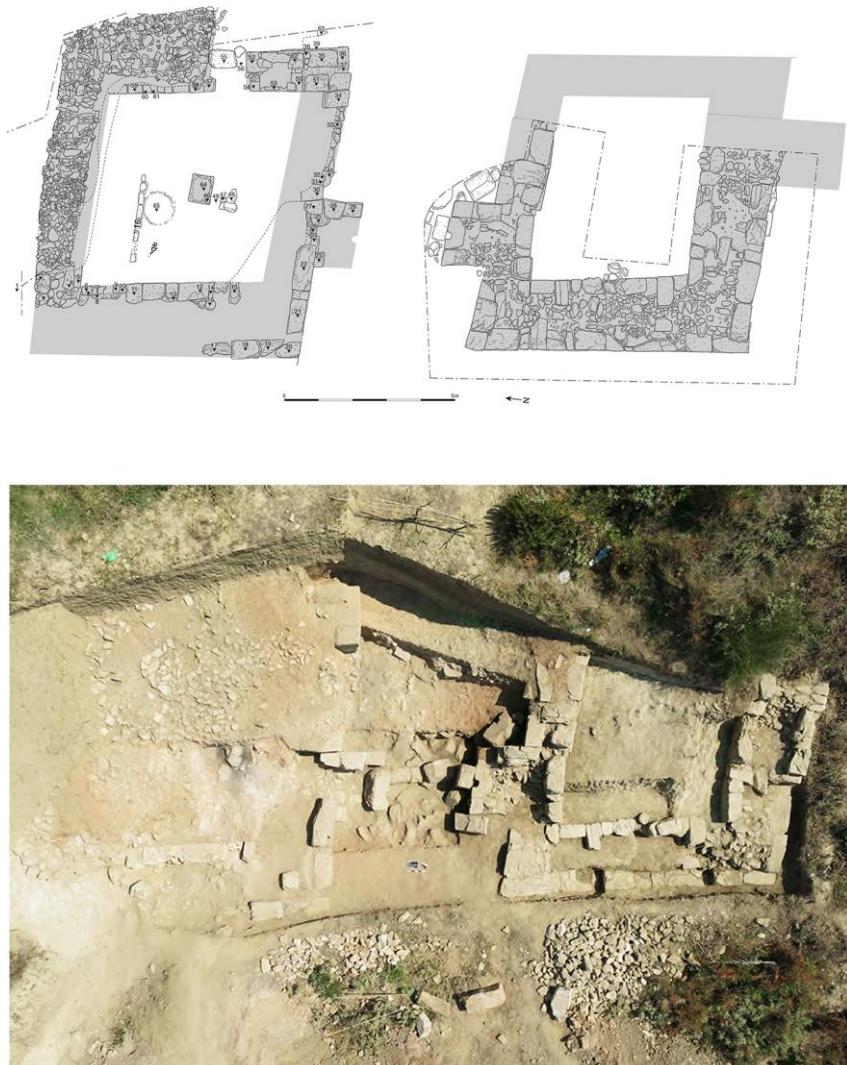


Fig. 8. The gate system (drawing and photo)

The orientation of the gate toward Apollonia is particularly emphasised by its design, which features a subtle parallelogram-shaped deviation toward the south rather than adopting a perfectly straight layout. The construction technique consists of a foundation made of large rectangular limestone blocks, preserved for a maximum of three layers, topped by an upper structure of fired clay bricks. The amount of construction material that has been excavated in the northern tower points to a height of the structure superior to 2 m. The bricks used in the structure are square sha-

ped, measuring 49 x 49 x 7, 5–8 cm, alternated with some half-sized bricks. We are certain now that in the lower part of the fortification, the building method – or the type of masonry – consists of a double external wall made of brickwork, with a core of rubble. Once again, the building technique that combines stone and brickwork¹⁷ closely resembles certain parts of Apollonia's fortification system.¹⁸ Constructing a brick wall requires significantly less time; this method is not only quicker, but also more cost-effective as compared to building a stone block wall, which demands much more labour. It most likely had a double function, both a defensive one, in the fortification system, and a representative one, as it is likely to have been the city's main gate.

The excavations undertaken in the northern tower document no evidence that the tower was destroyed during wartime, as no signs of attack damage has been identified. The northern tower and the gate itself were destroyed by a fire, as indicated by burn marks on the brick walls (Fig. 9), likely linked to the decline of Dimal, starting from the 1st century AD, after which the acropolis and much of the city were gradually abandoned.



Fig. 9. View of the brick elevation's collapse

¹⁷ The use of baked bricks in Epirus and southern Italy is generally associated with the Hellenistic period. Notably, there are cases, such as a building in Lykosura in Arcadia, which was constructed with baked bricks and dated to 180 BC. For further information, see Orlandos 1966, 67.

¹⁸ Balandier 2000, 78–79; Balandier, Koço, Lenhardt 2007, 169–170; 176 and 184.

Necropolis

Outside the city walls, two sectors of the ancient necropolis of Dimal have been identified: one to the northeast and the other to the south-east.¹⁹ While the south-eastern necropolis has suffered considerable damage, the north-eastern sector is better preserved, likely due to its more peripheral location relative to the present-day village.



Fig. 10. General view of the north-western necropolis, with the excavated graves

Chronologically, the northern necropolis appears to be the oldest discovered so far. Based on the analysis of the recovered material, it seems to have been in use from approximately 300 to 225 BC, with the earliest tombs dating back to the early 3rd century BC (Fig. 10). In contrast, the tombs in the southern necropolis predominantly date to the 2nd century BC. The presence of two distinct burial areas thus seems to reflect the key phases in Dimal's development: one before and one after the Roman annexation of the territory. The comparison between the two areas allow us to diachronically explore the changes that seem to have occurred after the Roman conquest.²⁰

¹⁹ Heinzelmann, Muka 2014, 110–115; Heinzelmann, Muka 2015, 91–100; Muka, Heinzelmann 2015, 231–235; Muka, Heinzelmann 2016, 144–147.

²⁰ Muka, Heinzelmann, Schröeder 2020.

Although the limited number of tombs investigated so far in Dimal – approximately 20 – necessitates caution, some hypotheses can be drawn from the available data. The emerging evidence suggests that the Roman conquest introduced significant changes to society, which were reflected in the funerary practices. During the 3rd century BC, tombs appear to have been increasingly utilised as means for self-representation,²¹ showcasing social roles and status (Fig. 11). The funerary areas, as symbolic spaces reflecting the ritual and funerary practices intentionally chosen by the society of the living, reveal the cultural interactions with the neighbouring colonial settlements.

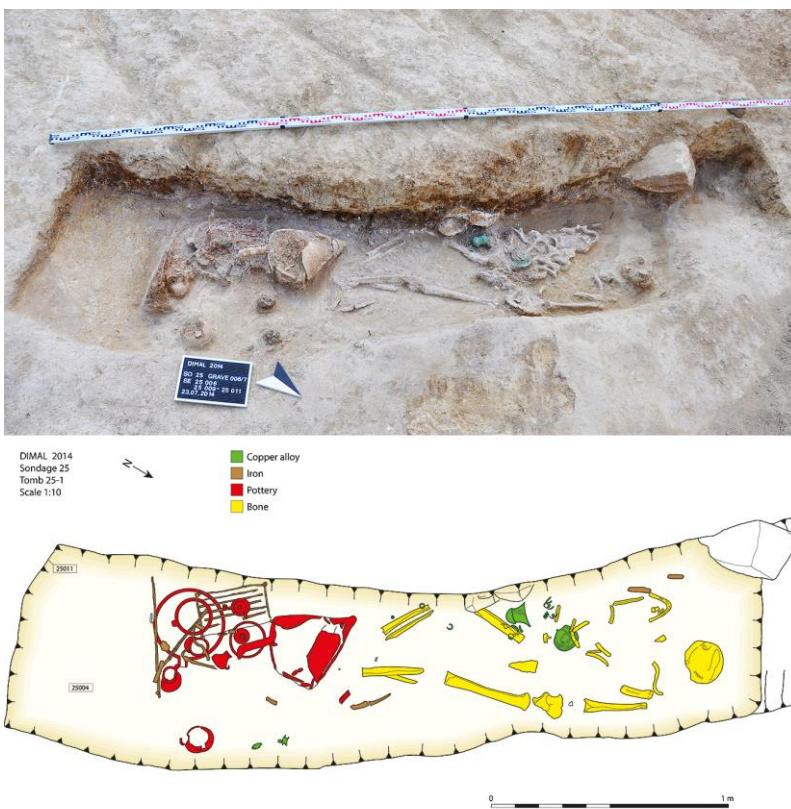


Fig. 11. View and drawing of Tomb 25-1 in the north-western necropolis

²¹ A good example is the case of Tomb 25-1, dating to the early 3rd century BC. The grave goods consisted of a lance, a curved iron knife, two bronze vessels, a bowl and a chalice-shaped cup, a coin, as well as a set of drinking, eating and cooking utensils, including several vessels, such as a chalice-shaped cup, a *cantharos*, a small miniature and a bowl-shaped bowl, a plate with a stamped palmette decoration and a *guttus*, two jugs, a *mortarium*, a *lopas* with a lid, and a presumably Rhodian amphora. Above the vessels was a tripod-shaped iron cooking pot stand and a grill.

A distinctive feature of the northern necropolis of Dimal is the use of stone circles resembling small tumuli, with brick boxes at their centres. This design lends the structures a monumental appearance. These features have been clearly identified in two instances, while their presence is hypothesized in a third. This architectural element, already documented in Apollonia and the southern necropolis of Phoinike, is most strikingly exemplified in the monumental Tomb 107 from the necropolis of Amantia, and more recently from some rescue excavations undertaken in the Himara region, along Albania's southern coast.²²

What is particularly noteworthy is that the pre-Roman tombs in Dimal are distinguished by their remarkably rich burial goods. This phenomenon may be linked to Dimal's Illyrian heritage. Though further research is needed, it is, nevertheless, clear that the society of Dimal placed considerable importance on the quantity of items included in each tomb's burial goods. This emphasis on a variety of grave goods is also evident in the Illyrian cemetery at Belsh.²³

This panorama is also supported by the anthropological analysis of the population of Dimal, revealing characteristics indicative of people not engaged in agriculture or heavy physical labour. The study also provides insights into their diet, showing a balanced intake of proteins and carbohydrates. The population is described as tall, robust and slender, and active in horse-riding activities. The quasi complete absence of dietary and pathological stress markers is indicative of excellent overall health, likely supported by strong economic and sociocultural systems.²⁴

By the 2nd century BC, however, there is a noticeable shift toward a more standardized approach to burials, with a decreasing interest in both the burial process itself and the architecture of the tombs.

The Late Antique phase

After a long *hiatus*, life in the city is reactivated in the Late Antique period with the presence of a small chapel and a residential quarter constructed atop the abandoned structures of the Hellenistic period on the acropolis,²⁵ as well as a basilica with a baptistery in the lower city (Fig. 4).²⁶

²² For more information regarding the examples from Apollonia, see Amore 2010, 77–82; in the case of “i circoli funerari” from Phoinike, see Muka 2005, 114–120; Lepore, Muka 2018, 56–57, 98–99, 120–121; in the case of the monumental tomb from Amantia, see Hobdari, Buzo, 2014, 311–317, Tab. XIV–XVI; in the case of Himara, see Çipa, Meshini, Tota 2022, 33–43.

²³ Ceka 1976.

²⁴ Rubini, Zaio 2015; Muka, Heinzelmann, Schröeder 2020.

²⁵ Heinzelmann, Muka 2013, 160–171.

²⁶ Heinzelmann, Muka 2014, 115–117.

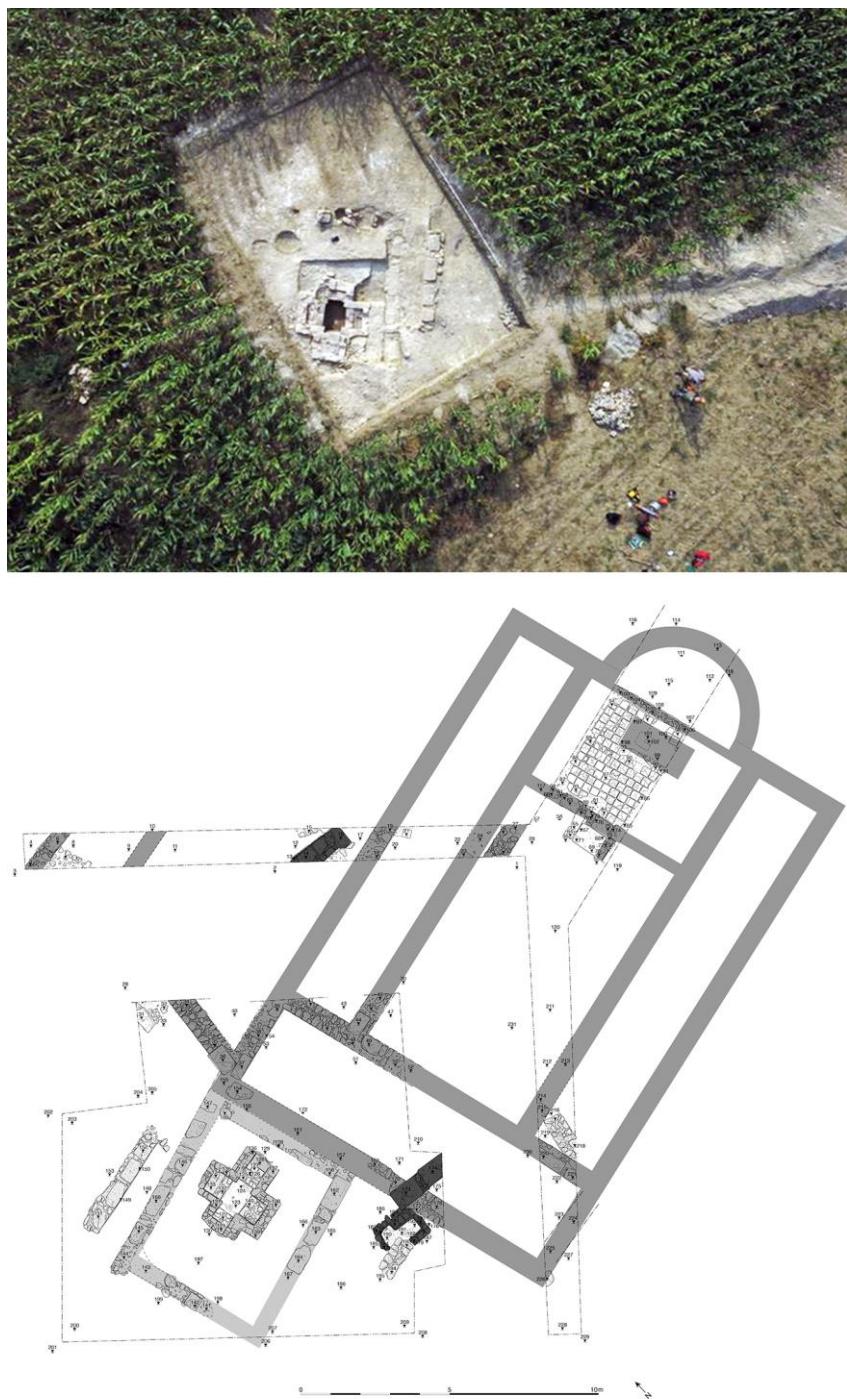


Fig. 12. View and drawing of the basilica

The basilica with an adjoining baptistery, dated to the 5th century AD, has been identified on the south-western slope of the settlement, beyond the perimeter of the ancient walls. The preservation of the church complex is, unfortunately, very poor, largely due to extensive looting in post-Antique periods, as well as the ongoing agricultural use of the land. Most of the uncovered church remains exist only at the level of foundations or foundation trenches. In a few areas, sections of walls or pavements have survived. The situation is further complicated by the presence of earlier wall structures on the south-eastern side of the complex, which are likely remnants of a pre-existing building. However, its function and date remain unknown at present (Fig. 12).

The complex, oriented almost perfectly along an east-west axis, comprises a small church and a later-added baptistery in front of its western narthex. The church has a narthex on its western side, likely a portico with columns or pillars on the façade, and enclosed lateral and entrance walls.²⁷ A single central door connected the narthex to the *naos*. The *naos* was divided into a central nave and two side aisles. Unfortunately, no original elements of the narthex or *naos* are preserved.

The choir, the best-preserved part, was separated from the *naos* by a single step, where remnants of the choir screen and a central door were found *in situ*. It included a rectangular altar room (4.3 meters in depth), though its full width could not be determined, as the lateral walls lay outside the excavation trench. A small step further separated the altar room from a semi-circular apse.²⁸ The original pavement, preserved in the altar room, consists of square tiles. In the central axis, just in front of the apse, there was a rectangular gap in the floor, indicating the original position of the altar.

In a later phase, a small baptistery was added to the western side of the church, partially covering the narthex façade. Initially, it was a rectangular structure with a cruciform baptismal font – *piscina*, on its eastern side, cut into natural soil.²⁹ It was built from reused Hellenistic bricks and coated with impermeable mortar, and it originally featured steps along its east-west axis. In a subsequent modification, the steps and *piscina* arms were sealed, leaving only the central area, re-coated with mortar (Fig. 13), indicating a shift from adult to child baptisms.³⁰ During this phase, a

²⁷ The measurements of the church are 20.5 x 13.2 meters; the depth of the narthex is 3.5 meters; the width of the central door is 3.5 meters; the *naos* is 10.7 meters long; the central nave is 5.7 meters wide and the side aisles measure a width of 2.2 meters each.

²⁸ The original apse depth, approximately 1.6 meters, was reconstructed based on the imprints of robbed walls cut into the natural soil.

²⁹ The measurements of the baptistery: 6.7 x 5.7 meters; the *piscina* was approximately 3 x 2.8 meters, with a depth of 0.90 meters.

³⁰ The shift from adult to child baptisms in Late Antiquity baptisteries is a significant development that became increasingly prevalent by the 4th and 5th centuries AD. Architectural modifications to baptisteries documented during this period reflect these changes. Cruc-

small north aisle with an apse was added to the baptistery, with a similar southern aisle likely present but unpreserved. Two pits in front of the narthex, likely for child burials, contained no skeletal remains. Additionally, a separate structure constructed from large reused stone blocks was attached to the northern side of the church.



Fig. 13. The cruciform baptismal font – *piscina*

Dimal in the regional and Mediterranean trade network

Its strategic location, nestled between Apollonia and the southern branch of *Via Egnatia*, enabled Dimal to play an important role in both the regional and the Mediterranean trade networks. The primary currency in circulation at Dimal is documented during the period between 3rd–1st centuries BC and it consists of the bronze coinage from Apollonia. Predominant types include Apollon/Obelisk, Artemis/Tripod, and Athena/Thunderbolt. These coins were minted in Apollonia and were widely circulated, indicating significant economic and cultural ties.³¹

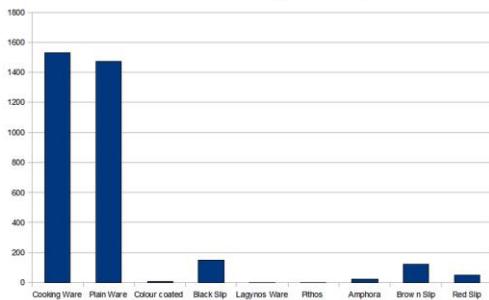
form baptismal fonts were often altered – either by reducing the size or modifying the design – in order to accommodate infant baptisms. For more on the topic, see Ristow 1998; Ehrman, Jacobs 2003.

³¹ I would like to express my sincere gratitude to Shpresa Gjongecaj for her valuable insights into the analysis of the coins discovered at Dimal.

The majority of the ceramic material found at Dimal dates to the 3rd and 2nd centuries BC. Most of this pottery, including coarse wares, cooking pottery, and building materials like roof tiles and/or bricks were locally produced, as evidenced by epigraphic references to the presence of a public workshop dedicated to tile production.³² The fine wares that were imported had a significant influence on the local craftsmanship, leading to the development of very good quality locally made pottery.³³



Local pottery



Imports

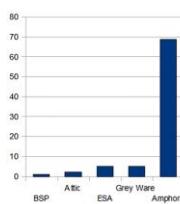


Fig. 14. Pottery finds from Dimal

The imports testify to Dimal's important trade connections with central and northern Greece, as well as with the Italian peninsula.³⁴ Notable finds include fragments of Eastern A *sigillata* from Levant and a lead-glazed *skyphos* from Smyrna, both testimonies of luxury eastern Mediterranean

³² CIGIME 3, 259, 407.

³³ Fenn, Römer-Strehl, Berger 2013, 184–185; Fenn, Römer-Strehl 2016.

³⁴ Muka, Heinzelmann 2014, 230.

nean ceramics (Fig. 14). These imports likely reached Dimal through Adriatic trade routes, with key hubs at Apollonia or Epidamne-Dyrrhachion, highlighting the settlement's integration into broader Mediterranean economic and cultural networks (Fig. 15). Additional evidence of Dimal's integration into the Adriatic maritime trade includes the discovery of imported wine amphorae, primarily from southern Italy.³⁵

These trade patterns reflect the Illyrian coastal region's role as a dynamic exchange hub, facilitating the flow of goods deep into the hinterland. Dimal's involvement in this network highlights its strategic position within the Mediterranean trade systems.³⁶

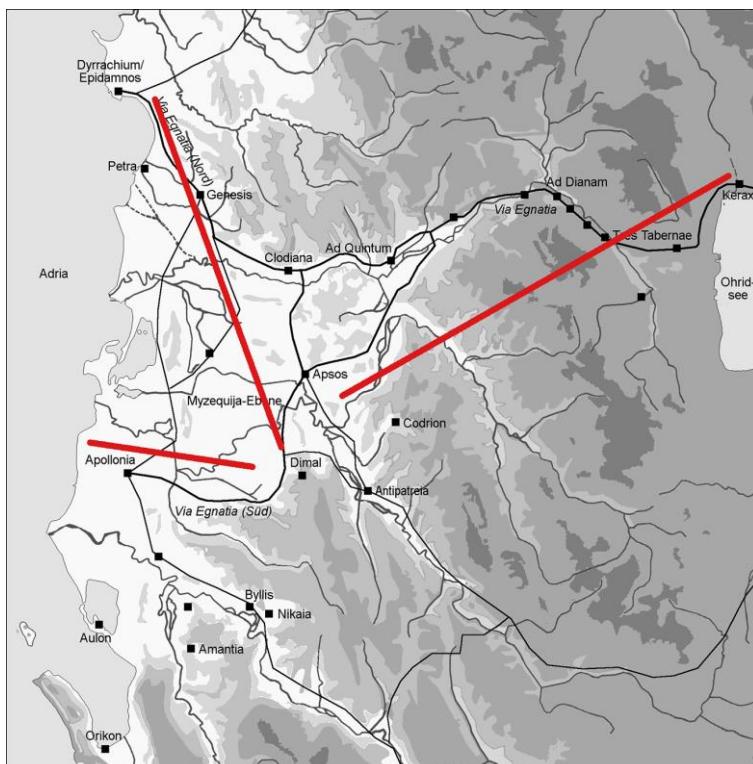


Fig. 15. Dimal, *Via Egnatia* and the trade network

³⁵ Mano, Dautaj 1997: in this contribution both authors present the first attempt to catalogue the amphorae documented in Dimal, where the Italic type holds a prominent place. See also Fenn, Römer-Strehl 2016.

³⁶ For detailed information and a comprehensive catalogue of Latin *sigilla* on amphorae that circulated between the 3rd and 1st centuries BC on the territory of modern-day Albania in general, and Dimal in particular, see Lahi 2019, 19, 25, 31, 34 (Dim. 5099), 38 (Dim. 1973, 9559), 65 (Dim. 1973, 9775), 67 (Dim. 1974, 3716), 113 (Dim. 5396), 125 (Dim. 1973, 8714), 139 (Dim. 1964, 5100), 146, 148 (Dim. 2013, 18-1), 149 (Dim. 4429), 160, 188–189 (Dim. 1971, 9711), 200–201, 203 (Dim. 5399), 215 (Dim. 1974, 11095).

The archaeological evidence from the various contexts discussed in this article highlights the fact that the population of Dimal was well-integrated in both regional and interregional exchanges. Their adoption of Greek customs, evident in food and drink consumption, as well as in votive and funerary practices,³⁷ showing no significant differences, reflects their active participation in the broader Mediterranean economic and cultural *koine*, highlighting the settlement's important and dynamic role within the Mediterranean world.

However, the evidence indicates that from the late 1st century BC, Dimal entered a phase of decline, eventually being abandoned in the early Imperial period. This shift is likely tied to the city losing its strategic importance during the *Pax Romana* that followed the civil war, which shifted regional power dynamics and trade routes, reducing the importance of once prominent settlements like Dimal.

REFERENCES

Amore, M.-G. *The complex of tumuli 9, 10 and 11 in Necropolis of Apollonia*, BAR International Series 2059, Oxford 2010.

Apollonia d'Illyrie 1, Dimo, V., Quantin, F., Lenhardt, Ph. (eds.), *Apollonia d'Illyrie 1: Atlas archéologique et historique*, Athènes, Rome 2007.

Baçe, A., Paci, G., Perna, R. (eds.) *Hadrianopolis I. Il progetto TAU – Università di Macerata*, Jesi 2007.

Balandier, Cl. “Un rempart en briques cuites à Apollonia d'Illyrie (Albanie)? Problèmes de datation et de définition”, in *La brique antique et médiévale production et commercialisation d'un matériau*. Actes du colloque international organisé par le Centre d'histoire urbaine de l'École normale supérieure de Fontenay/Saint Cloud et l'École française de Rome (Saint-Cloud, 16–18 novembre 1995), (eds.) P. Boucheron, H. Broise, Y. Thébert, Rome, 2000, 77–85.

Balandier, Cl., Koço, L., Lenhardt, Ph. “Les fortifications d'Apollonia”, in *Apollonia d'Illyrie 1*, 2007, 159–186.

Ceka, N. “Varri i një luftëtar i ilir nga Belshi”, *Iliria* 6, 1976, 361–363.

CIGIME 2, Cabanes, P., Drini, F., Hatzopoulos, M. *Corpus des inscriptions grecques d'Illyrie méridionale et d'Épire 2: Inscriptions de Bouthrōtos*, Études Épigraphiques 2 (2), Athènes, 2007.

³⁷ Of particular interest is the use of terracotta figurines, a category of material culture employed in both funerary and votive contexts. For further details their production, use and significance, see Muka 2012, 194–198.

CIGIME 3, Cabanes, P., Drini, F. *Corpus des inscriptions grecques d'Illyrie méridionale et d'Épire 3: Inscriptions d'Albanie (en dehors des sites d'Épidamne-Dyrrachion, Apollonia et Bouthròtos)*, Études Épigraphiques 2 (3), Athènes, 2016.

Çipa, K., Meshini, M., Tota, U. "Raporti i gërmimit arkeologjik të shpëtimit në varrezën tumultare të Himarës dhe vëzhgimit sipërfaqësor në territorin përreth, viti 2020", *Candavia* 9, 2022, 33–50.

Dautaj, B. "La découverte de la cité illyrienne de Dimal", *Studia Albanica* 1, 1965, 65–71.

Dautaj, B. "Zbulimi i qytetit ilir të Dimalit", *Iliria* 2, 1972, 135–150.

Dautaj, B. "Aspects de la vie économique à Dimal", *Iliria* 6, 1976, 155–163.

Dautaj, B. "Gjetje epigrafike nga Dimal", *Iliria* 24, 1994, 105–150.

Dimo, V., Fenet, A., Mano, A. "Les nécropoles", in *Apollonia d'Illyrie* 1, 2007, 300–316.

Dimo, V., Lambole, J.-L., Lenhardt, Ph., Quantin, F., "Le centre monuental", in *Apollonia d'Illyrie* 1, 2007, 186–217.

Ehrman, B. D., Jacobs A. S. (eds.) *Christianity in Late Antiquity, 300–450 C.E.: A reader*, Oxford, 2003.

Fasolo, M. *La via Egnatia I, Da Apollonia e Dyrrachium ad Herakleia Lynkestidos*, Roma, 2003.

Fenn, N., Römer-Strehl, Ch., Berger L. "Dimal in Illyrien – eine Siedlung im Bergland Albaniens mit weitreichenden Handelskontakten im Mittelmeerraum. Vorbericht aus der Fundbearbeitung", *KuBA* 3, 2013, 177–187.

Fenn, N., Römer-Strehl, Ch. "The Hellenistic and Roman pottery from 2013 excavations at Dimal/Albania. An Illyrian hilltop-settlements with Mediterranean connections in the hinterland of Apollonia", in *Traditions and Innovations: tracking the development of pottery from the late classical to early imperial periods*. Proceedings of the 1st Conference of International Association for Research on Pottery of the Hellenistic Period Belin (7–10 November 2013), (eds.) S. Japp, P. Kögler, Vienne, 2016, 193–207.

Gilkes O. (ed.), *The theatre at Butrint. Luigi Maria Ugolini's excavations at Butrint 1928–1932*, London, The British School at Athens, 2003.

Gjongecaj, Sh., Picard, O. "Le trésor de Dimalla 1973 et le passage du monnayage hellénistique au monnayage impérial à Apollonia d'Illyrie", *BCH* 122, 1998, 511–527.

Gjongecaj-Vangjeli, Sh. *Trésors de monnaies antiques trouvés en Albanie (V^e–I^{er} siècle av. J.-C.)*, Recherches archéologiques franco-albanaises (RAFAL) 2, Athènes 2019.

Heinzelmann, M., Muka, B. "Vorbericht zur dritten Ausgrabungskampagne", *KuBA* 3, 2013, 167–150.

Heinzelmann, M., Muka, B. "Vorbericht zur vierten Grabungskampagne 2014 in Dimal (Illyrien)", *KuBA* 4, 2014, 109–120.

Heinzelmann, M., Muka, B. "Vorbericht zur fünften Grabungskampagne 2015 in Dimal (Illyrien)", *KuBA* 5, 2015, 91–106.

Heinzelmann, M., Muka, B., Schöndeling, N. "Dimal in Illyrien – Ergebnisse eines deutsch-albanischen Gemeinschaftsprojekts (2010–2012)", *KuBA* 2, 2014, 113–126.

Hesberg, H. von "Nuove indagini intorno al teatro di Apollonia" in *Ricerche archeologiche in Albania Incontro di studi. Cavallino-Lecce, 29–30 aprile 2011*, (ed.) G. Tagliamonte, Rome, 2014, 201–217.

Hesberg, H. von, Lahi, B., Fiedler, M., Shkodra-Rrugia, B., Shehi, E., Döhner, G., "The theatre at Apollonia. Features and finds 2006–2015", in *L'Illyrie méridionale et l'Épire dans l'Antiquité VI: Actes du VI^e colloque international de Tirana, 20–23 Mai 2015*, (eds.) J.-L. Lambole, L. Përzhita, A. Skënderaj, Paris, 2018, 401–416.

Hobdari E., Buzo, J. "Raport i punës arkeologjike në Amantia (2013–2014)", *Iliria* 38, 2014, 293–319.

Lahi, B. *Vula latine amforash në Shqipëri: shekujt III–I pr. Kr.*, Shkodër, 2019.

Lepore, G., Muka, B. *La necropoli meridionale di Phoinike. Le tombe ellenistiche e romane, Scavi di Phoinike – Serie monografica* 3, Bologna 2018.

Mano, A. "Nekropoli i Apolonië – Tuma I", *Iliria* 1, 1971, 103–201.

Mano, A., Dautaj, B. "Përpjekje për një katalogizim të amforave antike nga Dimali", *Iliria* 27, 1997, 127–165.

Muka, B. "Sepolture di età ellenistica: i circoli funerari", in *Phoinike III. Rapporto preliminare sulle campagne di scavi e richerche 2002–2003*, (eds.) S. De Maria, Sh. Gjongecaj, Bologna, 2005, 114–120.

Muka, B. "Figurinat prej balte në Ilirinë e Jugut dhe në Epir", *Iliria* 36, 2012, 187–204.

Muka, B., Heinzelmann, M. "Dimal", in *Recent Archaeological Discoveries in Albania*, (eds.) I. Gjipali, L. Përzhita, B. Muka, Tirana, 2013, 112–117.

Muka, B., Heinzelmann, M. "Dimal: New results of the Albanian-German research project", in Përzhita et al. 2014, 219–227.

Muka, B., Heinzelmann, M., "Kërkimet arkeologjike në Dimal 2013–2014", *Iliria* 38, 2015, 227–238.

Muka, B., Heinzelmann, M. "Fushata e gërmimeve të vitit 2015 në Dimal (Krotinë, Berat)", *Candavia* 6, 2016, 143–151.

Muka, B., Henzelmann, M., Schröeder, A. "Hellenistic necropoleis of the Illyrian settlement at Dimal: topography, chronology and funerary practices", in *L'Archeologia della morte in Illiria e in Epiro. Contesti, Ritualità e Immagini tra età ellenistica e romana. Atti del Convegno Internazionale*, Tirana 16–18 dicembre 2019, Academia delle Scienze, (eds.) G. Lepore, B. Muka, Roma, 2020, 447–458.

Orlandos, A. *Les matériaux de construction et la technique architecturale des anciens Grecs I*, Paris 1966.

Perna, R., Çondi, Dh. (eds.), *Hadrianopolis II. Risultati delle indagini archeologiche 2005–2010*, Bari, 2012.

Përzhita, L., Gjipali, I., Hoxha, G., Muka, B. (eds.), *Proceedings of the International Congress of Albanian Congress of Albanian Archaeological Studies. 65th Anniversary of Albanian Archaeology (21–22 November, Tirana 2013)*, Tirana, 2014.

Praschniker, C. *Muzakhia und Malakastra*, ÖJh 21–22, 1922, 103–105.

Ristow, S. *Frühchristlichen Baptisterien*, Münster 1998.

Rubino, M., Zaio, P. "A Paleoanthropological and Paleopathological Approach to the Dimal Population (3rd–2nd Century BCE, Albania)", *KuBA* 5, 2015, 107–110.

Terrier, J., Shpuza, S., Consagra, G. "La campagne de fouilles réalisée en 2019 par la mission albano-suisse sur le site d'Orikos en Albanie", *Schweizerisch-Liechtensteiche Stiftung für archäologische Forschungen im Ausland (SLSA) Annual Report*, 2019, 61–92.

Villicich, R. *Il teatro di Phoinike*, Scavi di Phoinike – Serie monografica 4, Bologna 2018.