

TOMASZ KOWAL

# FIELDWORK AT RISAN, SEASON 2009–2010 (PLS. 204–207)

Localization: Risan, občina (county) Kotor, Montenegro  
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Excavation timeline: 10.06–15.07 (both seasons)

The archaeological site of Risan lies in Montenegro, on the shore of Kotor Bay to the northwest of Kotor, in a natural amphitheater of limestone mountains scarcely grown with Mediterranean flora: cypresses, prickly bushes and seldom found now English oak. Polish researchers from Antiquity of Southeastern Europe Research Centre, University of Warsaw have been excavating the ancient site since 2001 (DYCZEK 2005: 101–102). Risan was one of the most important centers of ancient Illyria (Fig. 1). Ancient sources give different variants of the town's name: ancient Greek *Rhizon*, Roman *Risinium*, or written as *Rhizinium* or *Resinium* (MAYER 1957: 286; KRAHE 1925: 2). *Rhizon* was mentioned primarily in geographic and ethnographic works. The oldest is Pseudo-Skylax from the second half of the 6<sup>th</sup> c. BC who in his *periplus* on sailing around Europe, Asia and Libya writes of an emporium located on this spot (PAJAKOWSKI 1981: 44; MARTINOVIĆ 1967: 107–115). In his *Histories* Polybius refers to *Rhizon* as a *polismation* or well fortified locality (GARAŠANIN 1967: 28). For Pliny the Elder *Rhizon* was an *oppidum civium Romanorum* and he emphasized the fact that the inhabitants held Roman citizenship (ALFÖLDY 1965: 141–143). Ptolemy gave surprisingly accurate geographical coordinates for *Rhizon* (MIJOVIĆ, KOVAČEVIĆ 1975: 78). The locality was also noted on the *Tabula Peutingeriana* as *Resinium*, situated on the intersection of important land routes, one along the Adriatic coast and the other leading into the interior in the direction of modern Belgrade and on to the Danube (PAROVIĆ-PEŠKAN 1974: 63). The town is noteworthy because of its notable history. The beginnings of the town go back most certainly to the 6<sup>th</sup> c. BC. Its position rose in the 4<sup>th</sup> c., peaking in importance in the 3<sup>rd</sup> c. when Queen Teuta moved her capital here. Her conflict with the Roman Republic in 229–228 BC, known to historians as the First Illyrian War, ended with her defeat. With the end of the reign of the last Illyrian king Gentios in 168 BC all of Illyria became subordinated to Rome (DYCZEK 2009b: 6–8).



The two biggest discoveries so far from the territory of Risan were two architectural complexes, the so-called villas of Hypnos and the Meander, named after the mosaic floors found inside them, and a section of ancient Roman street (DYCZEK 2005: 117; 2009c: 51–63). Investigations were also undertaken by the Polish team in Carine, a locality on the plateau near the Špila river, where ancient town ruins were expected. The objective of the work was also to survey the area in an effort to establish the full extent of the ancient city which does not correspond to the borders of the modern town (DYCZEK 2005: 108–118).

In the two most recent seasons of fieldwork, in 2009 and 2010, excavations were concentrated in three areas: the central part of Carine, a site referred to customarily as Carine VII, and the hill of Gradine towering over the ancient town (DYCZEK 2009a: 129–135). Different issues have found answers in recent research, yielding also a spectacular discovery in the form of a hoard of more than a four and half thousand coins (DYCZEK 2011: 7–10).

Investigations in 2009–2010 were focused primarily on the Carine VII site and were a continuation of work initiated in 2004. The name Carine refers to a small plateau at the foot of a fortress on the Gradine hill above the Špila. The first trenches were traced parallel to the riverbed, where a short section of Cyclopean walls of the 4<sup>th</sup> c. BC could be observed. Remains of these fortifications were

found (and shown to be 5 m wide at this point), as well as a fragment of stone-paved street. The inside face of the walls made of large blocks of stone was cleared during the next campaigns. The maximum preserved height of the fortifications was 1.5 m (**Fig. 2**). The chief continuous feature in this sector is the north-south road, 3 m wide, separating the two insulae and originally going down to the river edge. Buildings of different function were located on this street. The last two seasons were concentrated mainly on the eastern side of this street, although limited exploration of the western side was also carried out. A series of rectangular storerooms lined the west side of the street. They were added on to the face of the Cyclopean walls. The stores were found to be full of Greek-Italic amphorae from the 3rd–2nd c. BC, as well as a few hundred amphora stoppers, some of them inscribed. The nature of the architecture on the other side of the street is entirely different. A large complex on a Greek house plan stood there, altogether 16 rooms, both living and domestic in function to judge by the furnishings (DYCZEK 2009a: 129–133). Private rooms yielded luxury tableware of the Gnathia type, whole copper-alloy nails pointing to the presence of furniture and door fittings, bronze locks from boxes and caskets, glass vessels etc. One of the domestic units contained bone and bronze needles for making nets, fishnet weights, hooks, smashed fragments of shells and purple-snail shells. The assemblage of movable finds suggests that one of the rooms was used as a workshop for making or repairing fishnets. Other units distinguished by the number of ceramic weights collected from the fill served as a store or place for safekeeping of fishing equipment. Thick layers containing luxury tableware fragments of the Gnathia type from Southern Italy were found in other complexes, as well as a store of Greek-Italic amphorae of which one contained some flour. The Gnathia-type tableware (fragments of bowls, skyphoi, cups, beakers, oinochoe) came from a late phase dated to the 3rd c. BC. Fragments of pithoi and querns were discovered in other rooms (DYCZEK 2009b: 16–18). Excavations on the eastern side of the street identified altogether three occupation phases. Current archaeological work has demonstrated continuity of the Greek urban layout in this part of the ancient town from the beginning of the Hellenistic age through the 3rd c. AD. The insula underwent architectural modifications along the way, but its general character did not change (**Fig. 3**). The Greek house plan resembles structures known from Olynthus and Miletus. A shared element is a large paved courtyard and small paved courtyards separating the different parts of the house. The foundations and lower parts of walls up to 1 m above the ground were made of stone slabs featuring well-dressed faces. The upper parts of the walls were erected of large dried bricks. Pitched roofs were covered with rooftiles in the Greek style.

A hoard of 4656 ancient coins found during the 2010 turned out to be the most spectacular discovery of the season. We found this on the eastern side of main street in

Carine VII. Coins were contained in a two-handled, locally produced pot, concealed under the floor of a house built on a developed Greek plan from Hellenistic times. The coins had partly melted together; therefore not all of them could be identified before conservation. Even so, most of them apparently bear a representation of King Ballaios. The hoard can be counted among the biggest ever found in the Balkans – it is certainly the biggest found by Polish archaeologists working in the Mediterranean. The jar with the coins was sealed under the floor of one of the rooms of a house on the east side of the road, adjoining the stone pavement of the street. The stratigraphy indicated very clearly that it had been covered by rubble and burning remains following a calamitous fire (DYCZEK 2011). Afterwards a wall belonging to a completely new complex from a subsequent phase of occupation was erected on top of it (**Fig. 4**). The pottery assemblage, including characteristic Gnathia-type sherds (produced in the Greek colony of Egnatia in South Italy) dated the deposition of the hoard to the 3rd c. BC, probably just before or in 229 BC (First Illyrian War). This has helped to place in time a hitherto mysterious king, Ballaios, whose reign so far had been determined only by relative chronology. The localization and archaeological context of the hoard has secured the reign of King Ballaios before that of the famous Teuta, thus contributing significantly to a better understanding of Illyrian history (KOWAL 2010: 46–48).

Two types of coins struck by this ruler have been distinguished so far. The first is a Risan type with a portrait of the king on the obverse and a representation of Artemis walking to the left on the reverse. In one hand the goddess holds a burning torch, in the other, one or possibly two spears. The titles on the reverse read: ΒΑΣΙΛΙΟΥ ΒΑΣΙΛΕΩΣ, “King Ballaios”. On the Faros type, the obverse bears the same kind of royal portrait as on the Risan type. On the reverse, however, Artemis is depicted standing with a burning torch in her hand (**Fig. 5**) (UJES, KOVAČEVIĆ 1992: 9–24; UJES 1993: 5–36). A hoard this big is a treasure trove for coin specialists, as it gives the opportunity to distinguish series of coins. The hoard is being studied by Renata Ciolek from the Institute of Archaeology, University of Warsaw. On 7 July 2010, the coins in the hoard were counted and officially transferred to the Montenegro antiquities service for proper conservation and storage in preparation for research in the future (KOWAL 2010: 46–48).

In the central part of the Carine site archaeological excavations were carried out in 1968 by the Chief Office of Historical Monument Conservation in Cetinje, tracing walls of Roman buildings which probably surrounded a forum and a water well. This must have been the most important part of the ancient town. The results of that work have yet to be published. In 2009 the Polish team dug the first stratigraphic trench in this sector. The top 150 cm consisted of modern rubbish. Archaeological layers started at approximately 1 m a.s.l. They comprised rubble from

a very large building with stylobate, possibly a Roman temple, which could have been located tentatively to the east of the trench. The tumble included a large piece of architrave and a fragment of Ionian capital. The most interesting find, however, was a marble head of a caryatid, unfortunately missing the face. The damages had been incurred already in antiquity (Fig. 6). Not many caryatids have been found outside the Classical Greek centers and Rome, making the Risan find quite rare indeed.

The exploration of the Turkish fortress on the hill of Gradine towering over ancient Risan (207 m a.s.l.) commenced in 2006 (Fig. 7). The known plan of the fortress was verified and a series of walls older than the medieval fortifications was discovered. These older walls ran around the hill. An examination of the architecture of the fort itself showed it to be a multiphase structure. The fort was disposed on two terraces. On the upper one there was a central rotunda surrounded by a series of rooms and a belt of fortifications with towers. The lower terrace was a kind of courtyard surrounded by defense walls. The main gate was situated here. The earliest walls traced on the hill cannot be dated archaeologically, but they have all the characteristics of fortifications described in topic literature as Illyrian of the 5<sup>th</sup>–4<sup>th</sup> c. BC (MIJOVIĆ, KOVAČEVIĆ 1975: 25–26). The faces of these walls were made of large irregular broken stones in polygonal arrangement. The walls, now preserved only in short stretches of only a few metres, once surrounded an ellipsoid area covering about 200 m on the longer axis and about 100 m on the shorter one. Inside this walled area there were two other structures: a cistern surrounded by an additional wall with separate entrance from the outside and an U-shaped structure adjoining the Gradine. The arrangement suggests a typical early Illyrian fort distinguished by its considerable size (DYCZEK 2009a:

133–135). In 2009, the archaeological team carried out all the essential documentation (drawing, photography and descriptive), as well as TS, GPS and GIS measurements of all non-modern walls on the hill. The bondwork and building techniques were examined, leveling measurements taken and a provisional dating of individual sections established. A field survey was also made of all 9 hectares of the difficult mountainous terrain. The pottery assemblage from fieldwalking ranges in date from the 5<sup>th</sup> c. BC through the Turkish period.

In 2009, Polish researchers also took on the task of cataloguing and recording the ancient inscriptions from Risan. Some of them have been drawn by Mrs. M. Korzeniowska. Some inscriptions have already been published (MARTINOVIĆ 1969: 167–179; DYCZEK 2008: 197–209). More than 120 Greek and Latin texts from Risan have been collected and prepared for publication in association with J. Martinović. The task was made difficult by the fact that the texts were scattered around Kotor Bay, often used as *spolia* in various ancient and modern buildings, located in isolated places or held in private hands. In 2010, the drawing and photographic documentation of the located inscriptions was completed. Moreover, a team of epigraphers from the Institute of Archaeology, University of Warsaw, including Assoc. Prof. A. Łajtar, Dr. J. Żelazowski and T. Płóciennik, undertook work to prepare for publication the inscriptions from the excavations at Risan.

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TOMASZ KOWAL

## BADANIA W RISAN, SEZON 2009–2010

Od 10 lat prowadzimy wykopaliska na obszarze dawnego królestwa iliryskiego. Jednym z najważniejszych jego centrów było antyczne *Rhizon*, zwane też *Risinium*. Jakkolwiek początki Risan sięgają najpewniej VI w. p.n.e., to w IV w. p.n.e. jego ranga rośnie. Istotne znaczenie uzyskuje w III w. p.n.e., kiedy królowa Teuta ustanowiła tutaj swoją stolicę. Prowadziła ona z Republiką Rzymską tzw. pierwszą wojnę iliryską w latach 229–228 p.n.e., która zakończyła się klęską królowej. W roku 168 p.n.e. kończą się rządy ostatniego króla iliryskiego Gentiosa, w wyniku czego cała Iliria dostaje się pod władzę Rzymu.

Dotychczas najbardziej doniosłymi odkryciami na terenie Risan były dwa kompleksy budynków – „Willa Hypnosa” oraz „Willa z Meandrami” – z charakterystycznymi ozdobnymi mozaikami. Ponadto prowadziliśmy badania na płaskowyżu niedaleko rzeki Špila, na terenie zwanym Carine. Prace te miały na celu odsłonięcie zabudowy miejskiej z okresu antycznego oraz ustalenie – na podstawie

pomiarów – całościowego zasięgu antycznego miasta, gdyż nie pokrywał się on ze współczesną zabudową miasteczka.

Wykopaliska w 2010 r. rozpoczęliśmy od prac weryfikacyjnych, których celem było ustalenie funkcji pomieszczeń odsłoniętych podczas poprzedniej kampanii. Wtedy to dokonaliśmy sensacyjnego odkrycia skarbu monet na odcinku zwanym Carine VII. Znalezione je pod podłogą badanego domostwa o rozbudowanym planie greckim, w wymarzonej dla archeologa kontekście: wykopano tu jamę, do której włożono duży dwuuszny garnek wypełniony monetami. Jama nie była obszerna, dlatego garnek ułożono poziomo, przykrywając wylew miseczką, a całość przysypano ziemią. Bardzo klarowny układ warstw archeologicznych w pomieszczeniu ze skarbem pozwolił stwierdzić, że naczynie zostało przykryte rumowiskiem powstałym po pożarze, związanym najpewniej z działaniami wojennymi. Skarb zawierał 4655 monet iliryskich oraz jedną o niepewnej identyfikacji, ważył 12 kg.



PLATE 204



Fig. 1. Kotor Bay (satellite photo) with marked sites (L. Pejović).

Ryc. 1. Zatoka Kotorska (fotografia satelitarna) z zaznaczonymi stanowiskami.



Fig. 2. Fragment of the Cyclopean wall on Carine VII (Photo J. Reclaw).

Ryc. 2. Fragment muru „cyklopowego” na Carine VII.

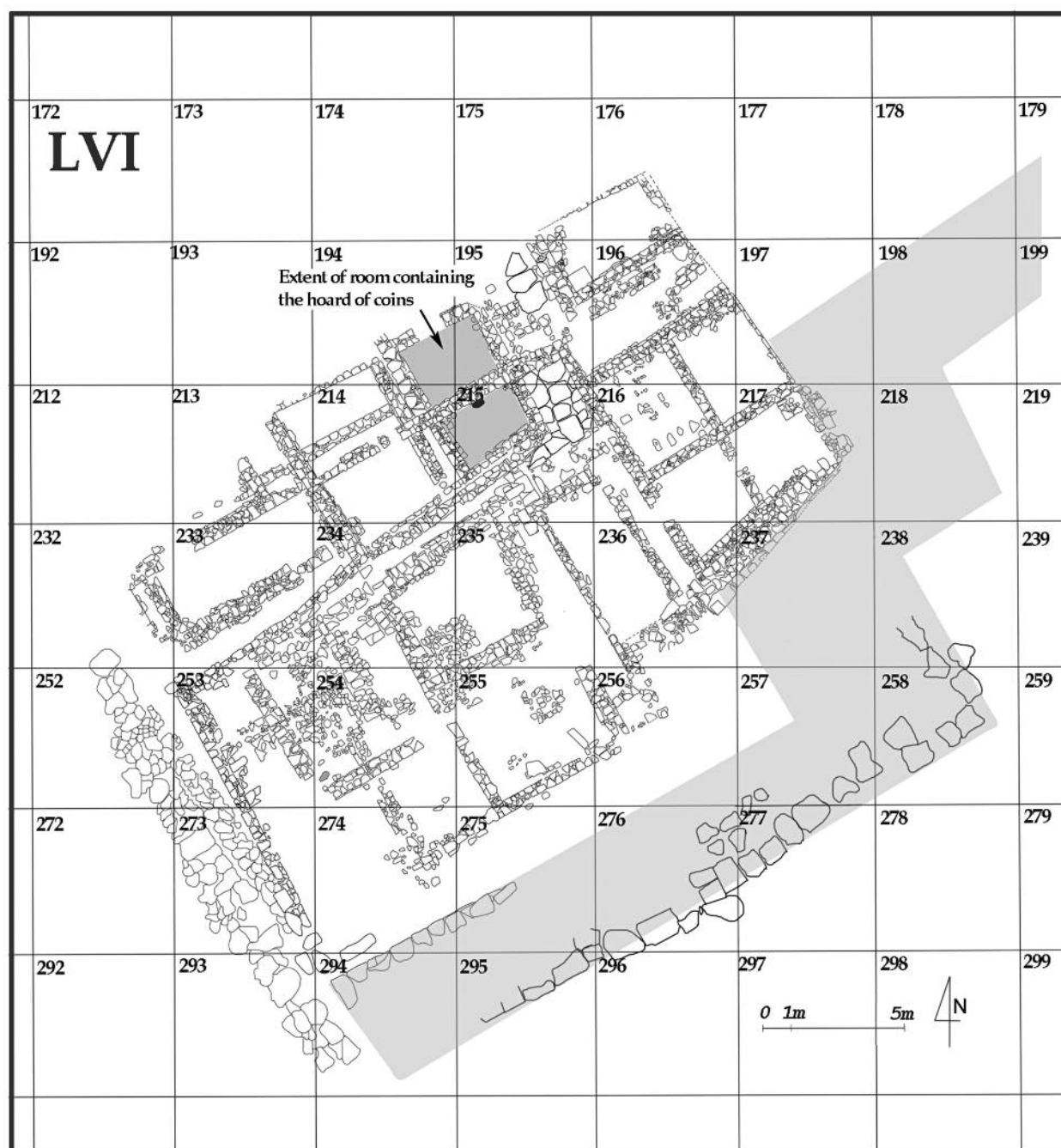


Fig. 3. Plan of the architecture in Carine VII on the east side of the Greek street (Drawn by T. Kowal, R. Karpiński, M. Różycka).

Ryc. 3. Plan zabudowy na Carine VII po wschodniej stronie ulicy greckiej.



PLATE 206

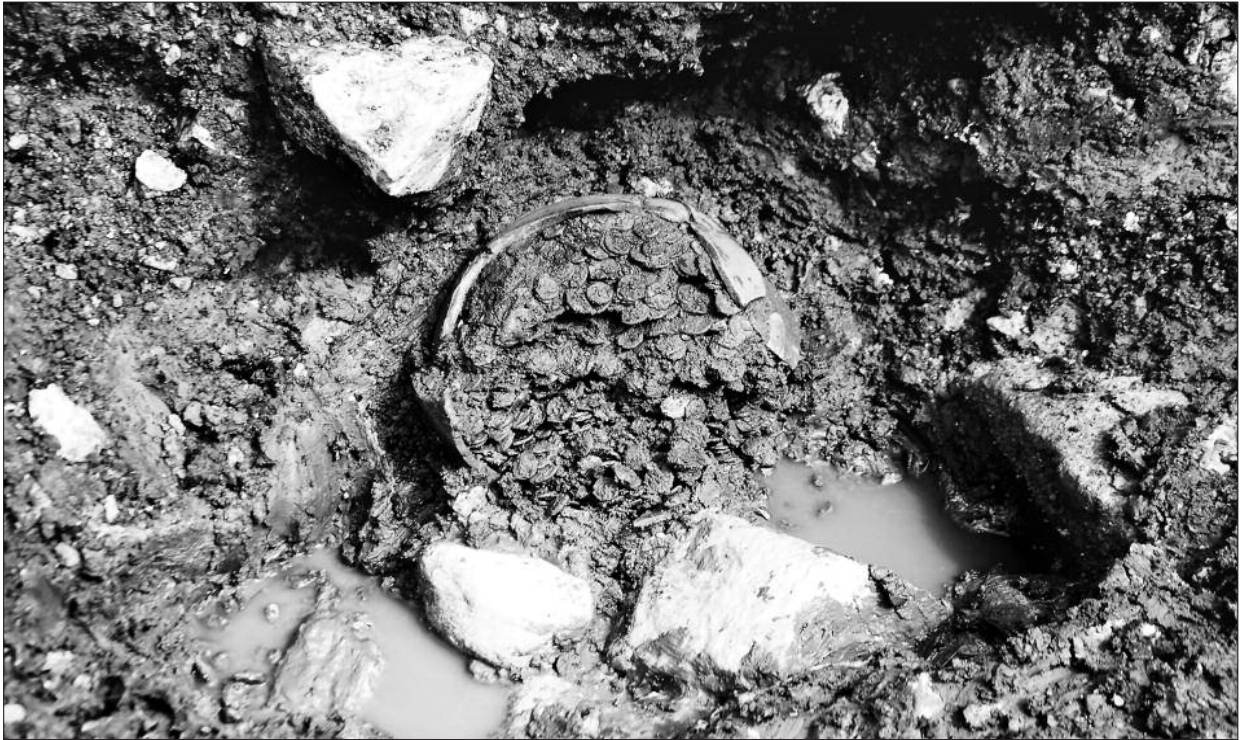


Fig. 4. Pot with the conglomerate of coins *in situ* (Photo by J. Reclaw).

Ryc. 4. Garnek ze zlepionymi monetami *in situ*.



Fig. 5. State of preservation of the coins before conservation. Reverse of a coin of Ballaios with a representation of Artemis walking to left (Photo J. Reclaw).

Ryc. 5. Stan monet przed konserwacją. Tu widoczny rewers monety Ballaiosa z przedstawieniem Artemidy kroczącej w lewo.



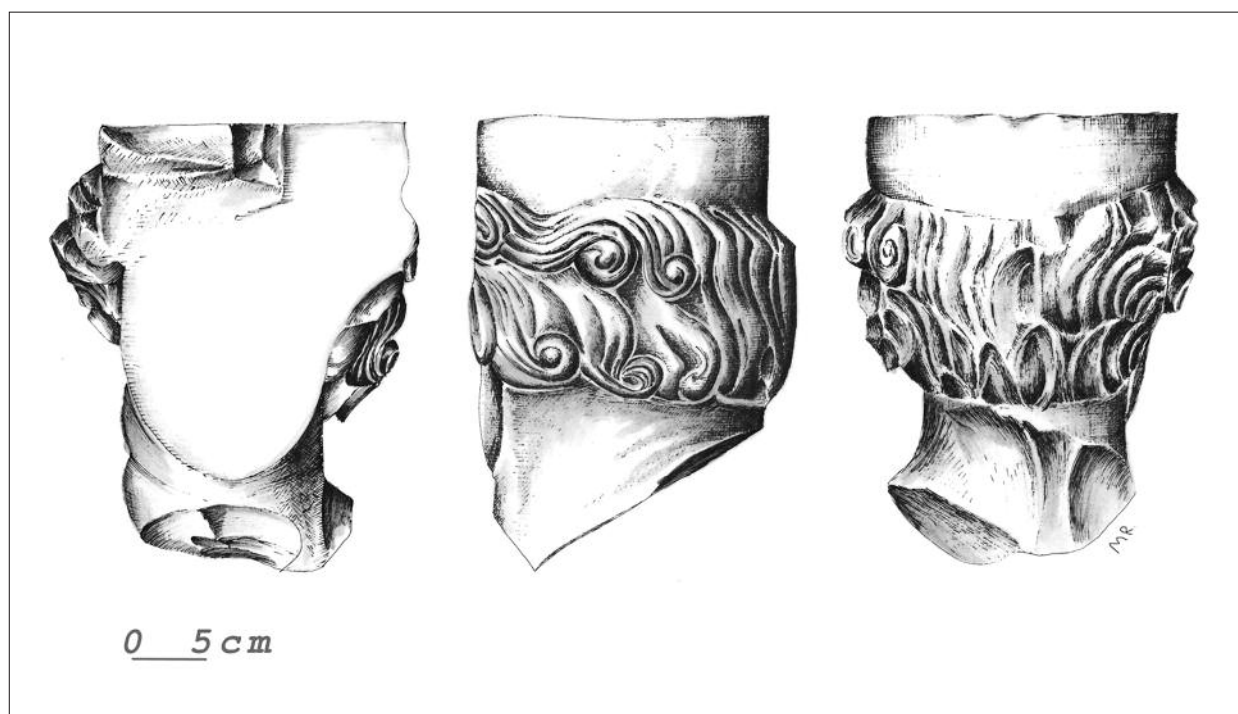


Fig. 6. Marble head of a caryatid (Drawn by M. Różycka)

Ryc. 6. Marmurowa głowa kariatydy.



Fig. 7. Gradine with the medieval fortifications (Photo J. Reclaw).

Ryc. 7. Gradine z doskonale jeszcze widocznymi fortyfikacjami średniowiecznymi.