

Report about the results of underwater archaeological surveys in “Kepi i Lagjit”.

Period of the surveys: June – October 2015

Institute of Archaeology of Albania, during the year 2015 has planned Underwater Archaeological Surveys at “Kepi i Lagjit” area, which was part of a bigger project named “Underwater Archeological Map of Albanian Coastline”.

The project was presented at National Council of Archaeology and it was approved by decision no. 60, date 04.06.2015. The council gave the permission to the Institute of Archaeology, in order to start the underwater archaeological surveys.

Period of the surveys was: June up to mid October 2015.

Firstly, we set up a base camp near the 80s military jetty, at the end of the road that leads to the gulf. After that, in cooperation with “FINSEC PORT” sh.a. and “VICTORIA INVEST” sh.p.k., we set a large container, which served as storage; a large plastic deposit for sweet water and a powerful three-phase generator. Also, we transported all the necessary underwater technical equipment, containers with 12, 15 and 18 liters capacity and a powerful BAUER compressor.

The team consisted of one archaeologist, one architect, four technical divers and one operator diver for underwater photo-videos. Also, for short periods of time, other volunteers’ divers joined to assist the team.

In the beginning, we provided a topographic survey and set the key points for this survey, considering as well, the area where the yacht harbor will be build.

Survey methodology was based in the direct survey of the sea basement, made by the survey team, in a systematical period of time. In general, underwater archaeological surveys were conducted parallel with the coastline, in segments oriented by a buzzer, located in advance with a GPS and they duplicated the segments of the adjacent wing with 60 %. After that, for security reasons, these areas were re-controlled, with segments perpendicular with the coastline and with parallel segments, previously controlled.

The Survey started from south of "Plazhi i Gjeneralit" beach and was concluded in the southern limit of the area, at the point where the yacht harbor will be build. The depth of the *survey*, in that area was up to 10 m and it was limited by the coastline. In this area, we identified a sounding lead, south of "Plazhi i Gjeneralit" beach, and a small arm of a leaden anchor, divided in two parts, in northern part of "Plazhi i Gjeneralit" beach. These two objects were documented and are found in the Museum of Archaeology, located in Durres, in order to be further studied, and after the conservation process in lab, to be exposed at the third floor, where it is planned to be an exhibiting pavilion for the underwater archaeology.

Furthermore, the *survey* was conducted in the coastline near "CARINA" up to the north part of the yacht harbor. The depth here was up to 7 m and was limited by the coastline. Despite our expectations, we didn't identify any area with archaeological interest. Generally, this area had only very small and rare fragments of pottery, which haven't given us a chronology.

Finally the survey was focused on the area where the touristic yacht harbor will be constructed.

In this zone, as a survey area here we established a "safety zone", which increased the perimeter of the port area by 50 m towards the sea. So we studied a larger area, to avoid any potential damage of the underwater cultural heritage Fig.1.

- During the survey, we identified a zone with amphora Lamboglia 2, which were located in the outer rocks, in front of the military jetty, west direction (Fig.2, no. 6). They were graphically documented and also we made the underwater map of the site, showing the geomorphology and the detailed bathymetry (Fig. 3 and 4). The amphoras were situated in the surface, and some of them were calcified with the near rocks. There were: almost 3 full amphoras, one of those had a cap; some amphora necks, one of which had a stamp in the rim part, very difficult to read and a lot of amphora bodies, distributed in 4 zones. They were broken as a result of illegal fisheries with dynamite at these last 25 years, as well as from thieveries for scamming purposes of the underwater cultural heritage.

In this area we found a hammer, with some new breaks and from the conversations with a fishermen, we provided photos of two full amphora that were illegally taken. Similarly, as in other parts of the coastline, these last 25 years, in this area the underwater cultural heritage was damaged and stolen. The coast in front of "Carina" has indications of archaeological material thievery, the place where we found the small arm of the lead anchor divided by two. According to people in the area, a lead circle was stolen. It had a diameter of 12-13 cm and served in antiquity to recover nets when they got stuck. Also, a sounding lead, similar to the one we have found in front of the Harbor of Durres, was stolen and was melted for weights.

In 2012, as we could provide the information by the fishermen, in this bay were stolen 2 big iron anchors, Admiralty Pattern type, belonging to the XVII-XVIII century, which were send to city of Kavaja. We could provide photos of one of them.

- Through the military jetty and the group of rocks, where we discovered the amphora Lamboglia 2, we also found a leaden anchor arm, which can possibly be part of the floating vessels which transported amphora's and it matches chronologically with them (Fig.2, nr.14).

We must emphasize that we have lost a lot of information, not only from the clandestine theft, but also from the interventions of military workings, which were made in the '70, in order to adapt the area in a military naval base and which have irreparably damaged almost half of the bay.

Near the rock, which is situated in the south of the gorge, we found a lead weight, semi-spherical shape, in the flat part are clearly visible, in a distance between one and other, 2 wire square sections, possibly in bronze, which are wastes of the clip that served for tying the weight (Fig.2, no. 13). We say fisherman lead weight, because it doesn't have the shape to be classified as an ancient sounding lead, however there is a possibility that this object, was also used as a sounding lead for fishermen and can be considered as an item which belongs to a local maritime culture. This object was recorded and today is found in the Museum of Durres.

In this area, we also have found fine archaeological material, which dated since VI-V century B.C., in general near the coast line, but they're more like earth deposit and as a result of erosion and waves it ended as a deposit near the coastline or close to it, and it shouldn't be interpreted as a archeological material, which may be related to a possible vessel wreck in antiquity (Fig.2, nr. 1, 2, 3, 4, 9).

From the results that were found from the survey, we have reached the following conclusions:

- “Kepi i Lagjit” area, along the entire rocky belt near the coast, starting from the south of “Plazhi i Gjeneralit” beach and up to the north, the coastline near “Carina”, has served as a very good fishing zone, mainly oriented towards quality fish, as “Batllave” fish. This area is situated south of the Durresi bay, together with the area on the north of it, that starts with “Batllat” and ends with “Kepi i Palit”, and have represented the best areas for quality fish hunting and have influenced directly on the ancient economy of Dyrrah.
- Related to the geomorphology of the coast, there isn’t any information that supports the idea of the existence of any port in this area. The naval communication has probably developed (generally with Dyrrah) through small sailing vessels, which have used the contact with the coast, through the natural small caves.
- There aren’t any facts, from the underwater archaeological surveys made so far, that support the thesis of the existence of Epidamnus in this area of Bay of Durresi.
- There aren’t any facts, from the underwater archaeological surveys made so far, that support the thesis of the existence of supposed “Protecting walls” or “Sea Gate”.
- **The area, where the future yacht port will be constructed by the Swiss company FINSEC ltd, is totally clean from any underwater cultural heritage object.**
- **The cooperation with the companies “FINSEC PORT” sh.a. and “VICTORIA INVEST” sh.p.k. was really good. There was never lack of willingness for cooperation from them and I think that this should serve as a working model, for similar cases when requested by the Ministry of Culture and Agency for Archaeological Service.**

Plans and Photos

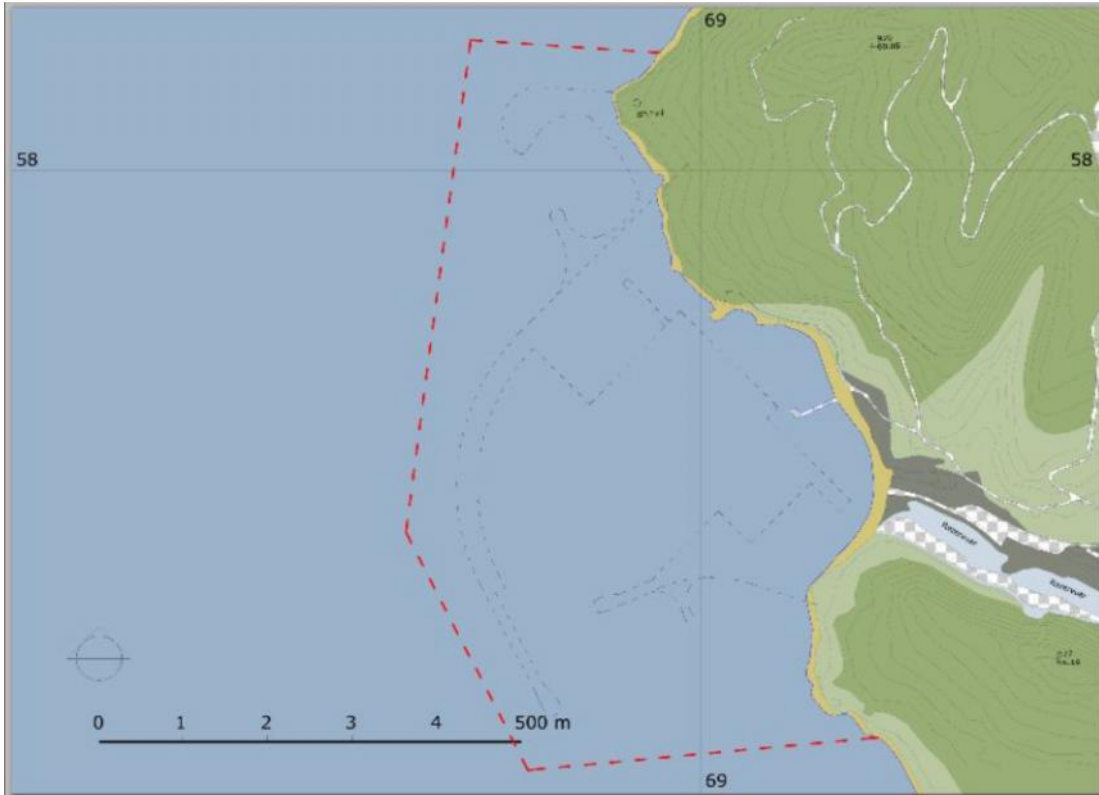


Fig.1 – Map of the extended area of the survey

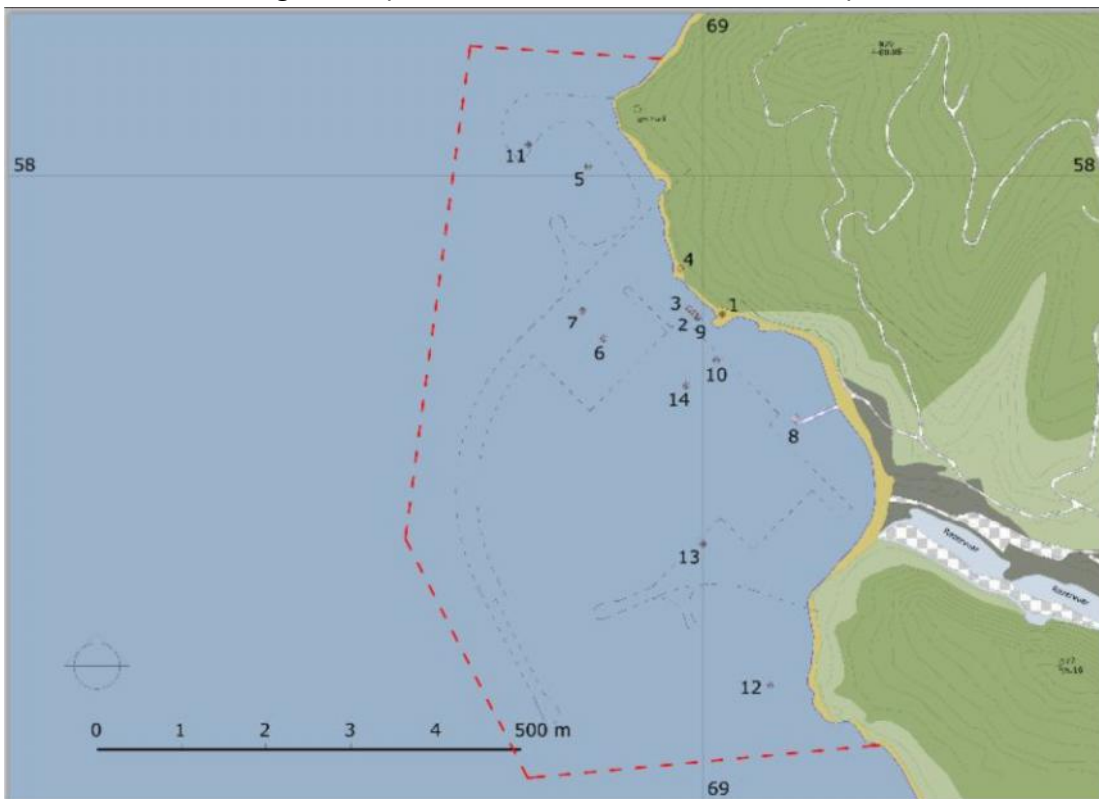


Fig.2 – Map of the area, with important topographic and archaeological points



Fig.3 – Map of the area. Evaluation of geomorphology and bathymetry

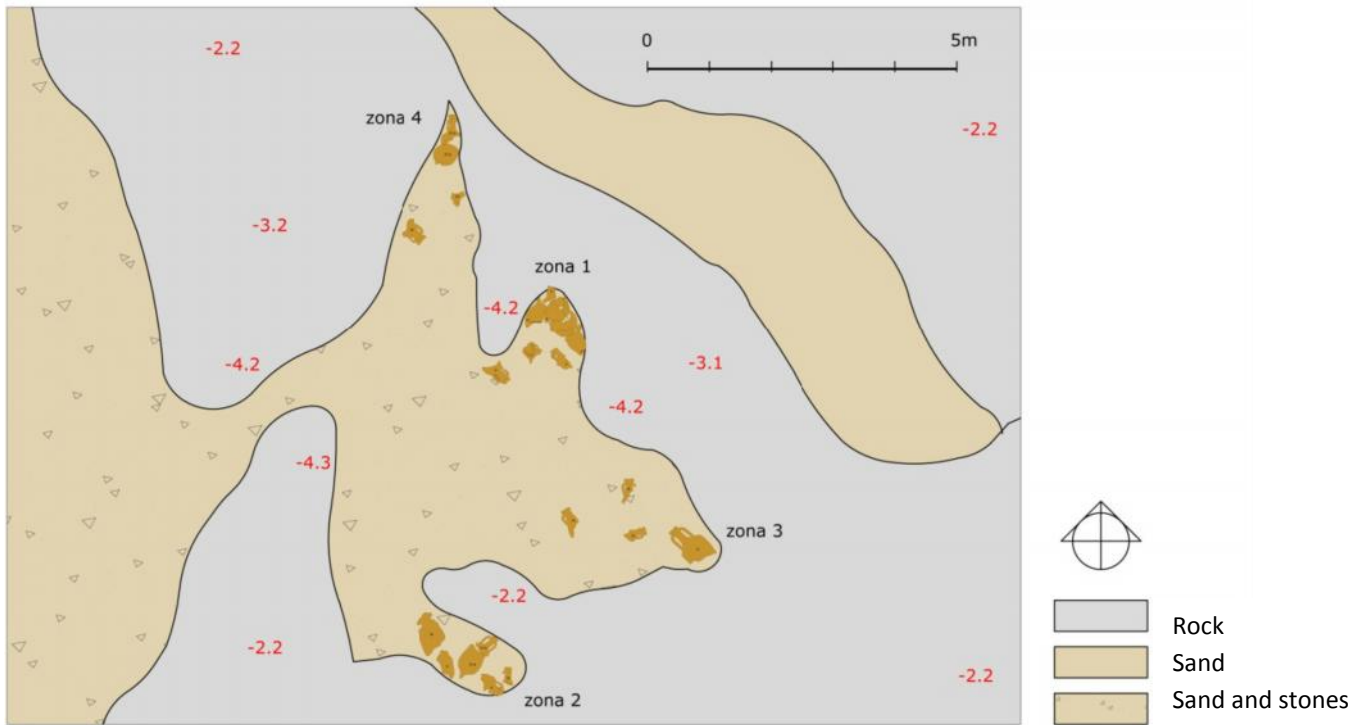


Fig.4 – Map of the area, with amphora

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Fig. 5 – Base camp

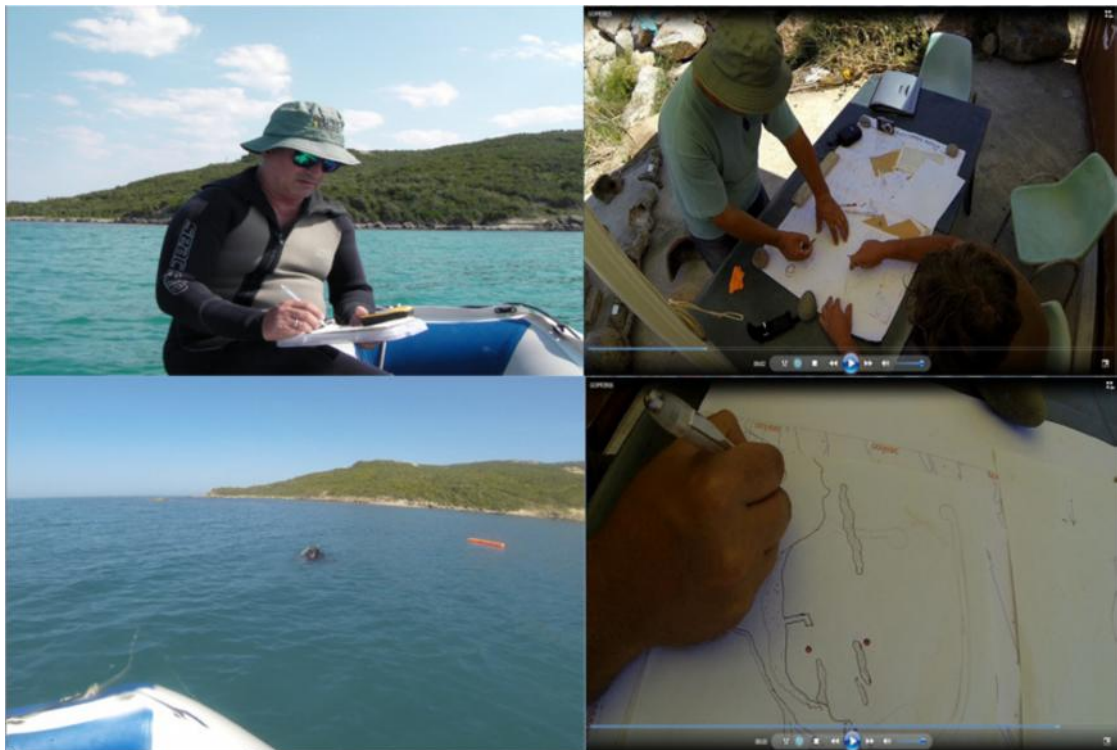


Fig. 6 – Definition of the topographic orientation points

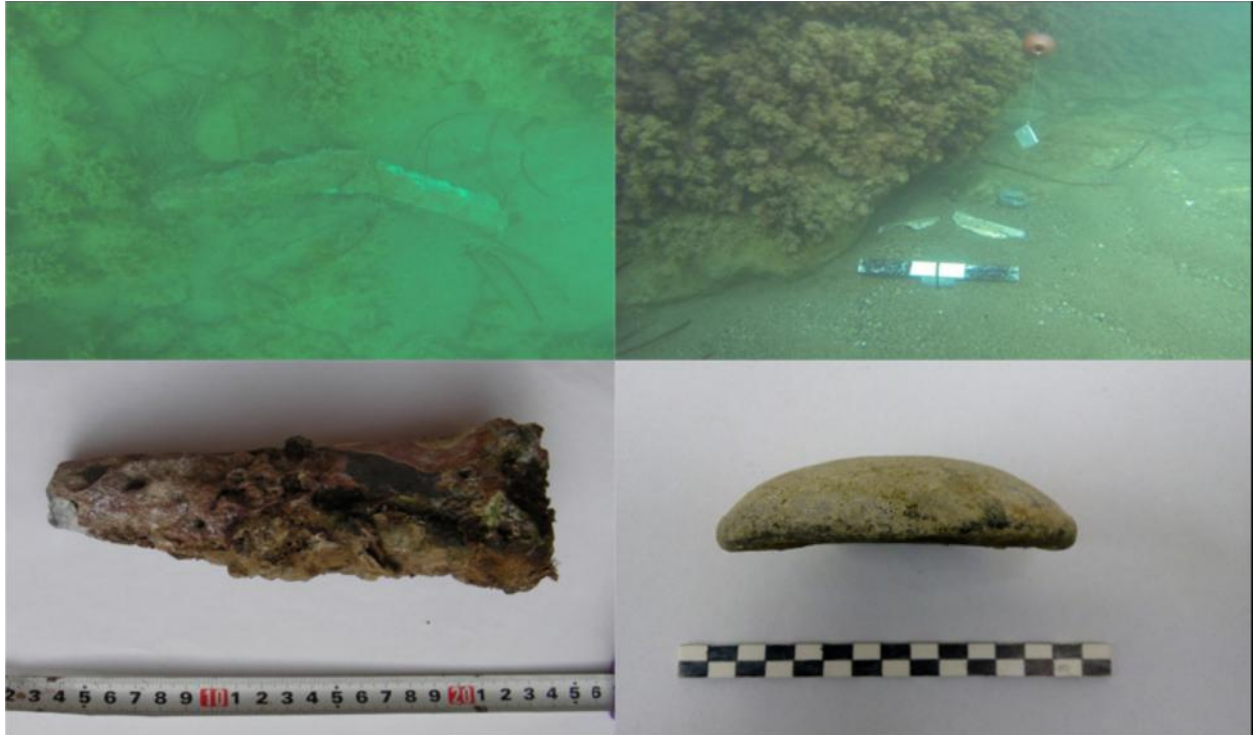


Fig. 7 – Two lead anchor arms at site and two sounding leads in scale.



Fig. 8 – Pre-treatment of the archaeological material with sweet water, land laboratory.



Fig. 9 – Documentation and registration of the archaeological material.



Fig. 10 – Fine archaeological material.

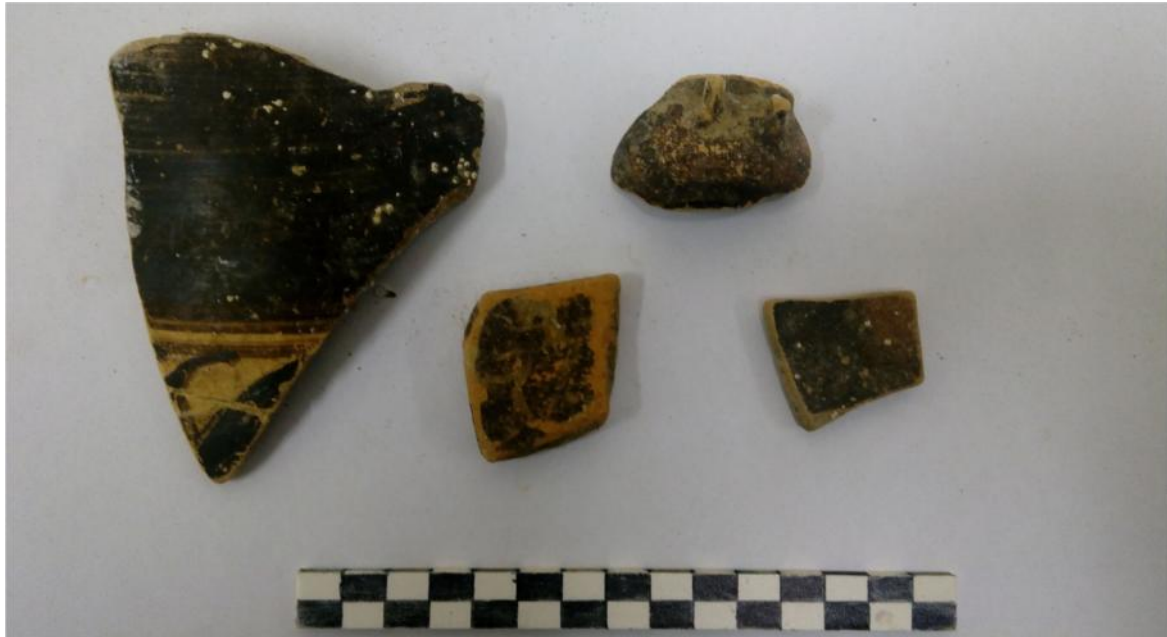


Fig. 11 – Big fragment, container with black figures, has been worked with a trap, c. VI-V B.C.

Three fragments of black glazed container, c. IV-III BC.



Fig. 12 – Dolium- rim fragment.



Fig. 13 – Amphora Lamboglia 2, with rim stamp.



Fig. 14 – Hammer used by clandestine, it was found within the amphora area.



Fig. 15 – Two amphoras which were taken by clandestine in 2013.



Fig. 16 – One of the two Admiralty Pattern anchors, which was taken by clandestine in 2012.