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Between Global and Local Adriatic Connections from Protohistory to the Roman Period

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The proceedings entitled *Between Global and Local Adriatic Connections from Protohistory to the Roman Period* bring together 12 scholarly articles, five of which are co-authored. Published in 2024 by the Institute of Archaeology in Zagreb as Book 21 in the series, the volume spans 243 pages.

The collection is organized into two major sections, each comprising six contributions. The first section, *Broader Topics*, presents studies that address wide-ranging archaeological and cultural themes across the Adriatic region. The second section focuses specifically on the Island of Hvar, exploring its material culture, trade, and regional interactions in greater detail. Each paper is followed by an acknowledgment section and a comprehensive list of references.

Carlo de Mitri's article *Adriatic Trade from Protohistory to the Roman Period: An Overview of the Object Landscape* (pp. 7–32) explores the Ionian-Adriatic Basin and its colonization from the 8th century BC onward through traces of both tangible and intangible cultural evidence. The author begins by discussing Mediterranean myths before examining inter-Adriatic and trans-Adriatic connections. He highlights the presence of Mycenaean ceramics in the Syracuse area, which he categorizes into groups according to specific typological markers. This classification also encompasses sites on the Croatian islands of Palagruža, Sušac, Lastovo, Mljet, Vis, Hvar, Brač and Šolta, as well as Lake Ohrid, all dated to the Bronze Age. The article further describes the finds of amphorae and addresses the anthropization of the landscape, establishing connections between Sicily, the Ionian Sea and the Strait of Otranto. A map illustrating the distribution of ceramics, based on excavations at Orikos (southern Albania), and Muro Tenente (Salento, between Taranto and Brindisi) accompanies the text. De Mitri also discusses Attic imports, Roman historical developments and the

Battle of Sentium. The second part of the article focuses on territorial organization and Roman military leadership. Here, the author divides the Adriatic into northern, central and southern sectors, and examines ceramics, cups and amphorae along the Ionian coastline. In its final pages, the article considers the Roman Imperial period and Illyrian pottery, classifying artifact-bearing settlements into five categories. The maritime trade route Brindisi – Durrës, with Aquileia as its destination, is discussed in the context of goods distribution. The concluding section examines Corinthian and Nicopolitan leaf-decorated ceramics, Ancona and the Venetian Lagoon, as well as Asia Minor and Workshop X, which represents a link between the Salento Peninsula and the Greek-Albanian region. As a final chronological reference point, De Mitri touches on the Byzantine period, noting the presence of cooking pots.

Martina Blečić Kavur, in her article *Global Thinking and Local Action: Adriatic Hellenistic Buckets. A Reflection of the Status of the Aristocracy in the Second Half of the 4th and the Beginning of the 3rd Century BC* (pp. 33–46), examines the Hellenistic bronze buckets and their presence in the Adriatic Basin. The study situates these artifacts within a broader geographical and cultural framework extending from the Dnieper Basin to the Iberian Peninsula. The author classifies individual finds according to their typological characteristics and identifies key centers of distribution, noting their origin in the region of Etruria. Through detailed analysis, Blečić Kavur explores the formal and decorative features of these objects, focusing on cast fittings, thin bronze sheets, and various ornamental elements such as ribbons, ropes, dolphins, ivy leaves, female heads (maenads from Budva), palmette motifs, triangular patterns, and bell-shaped bucket forms. The study highlights the role of both Etruscan production workshops and Hellenistic Macedonian court ateliers in the manufacture of these items. Particular attention is given to accessories including heraldic figures, such as a lion's head medallion, and vessel types like the *stamnoid situla*. Associated finds include cups, jugs, and other vessels that, as luxury goods, functioned as part of a symbolic system of social communication within the framework of local aristocratic culture. Blečić Kavur interprets these artifacts as insignia of elite identity, forming an “iconographic language” that materially expressed the culture of wine consumption and ritualized feasting. In this sense, the buckets operated as a medium of social and cultural expression, embodying both profane and ritual dimensions. Depending on the site, the objects are characterized either as imported items or as local reproductions of foreign prototypes. They are understood as tangible evidence of intensified trade networks that facilitated practices such as offering water, mixing and serving wine, and performing both domestic and ceremonial gatherings—activities that underscored social hierarchy and prestige. These vessels thus represent not only indicators of status but also repositories of contemporary artistic expression and vehicles of cultural capital. Their stylistic and functional features provide valuable insight into the diffusion of Hellenistic influence across the Adriatic world. The article also reviews the stratified archaeological contexts of the finds, which include sites such as Apulia, Offida, Norcia, Monteriggioni, Budva, Apollonia, Thrace, Gathia, Nesactium, Novi Vinodolski, and

Karin, among others.

In his contribution *Coastal Cultural Landscapes (in Protohistoric and Ancient Eastern Adriatic Shipbuilding Traditions)*, pp. 47–56), Danijel Džino examines the material cultural heritage of shipbuilding as a key component of the Adriatic maritime world. The article situates ship design within the broader framework of specific maritime communities and their environmental contexts, extending geographically from Istria and Ravni Kotari to the Neretva estuary and the Albanian coast. Ancient literary sources form the primary foundation for Džino's analysis, which also considers the socio-political alliances of the pre-Roman period and the populations inhabiting the region from the southern Alps and northern Italy to the eastern Adriatic littoral. The study provides archaeological and historical data on the Zambrotija shipwreck, as well as descriptions of other vessel types, including the *serilia* and the *lembus*. Among the key pieces of evidence cited for the *liburnia*-type ship is a fragment of a stone relief from Varvaria (Bribirska glavica). The discussion also integrates the historical context of the conflicts at Pharos, generally understood as clashes between local Liburnian groups and Greek settlers in the early fourth century BC. Džino further emphasizes the process by which the indigenous populations of the southern Adriatic—particularly those associated with the political entity known as the Illyrian Kingdom—adopted and adapted Aegean shipbuilding traditions, notably the construction of small, fast vessels. This capacity for technological assimilation and modification, he argues, directly influenced the competitiveness of local maritime trade. By offering a concise overview of these ship types, the article sheds light on broader issues such as piracy, maritime infrastructure, and the continuity of shipbuilding traditions serving military, commercial, and subsistence purposes. For individual communities, the development and adaptation of shipbuilding techniques reflected both practical innovation and the collective transformation of maritime technology into an expression of cultural identity and technical achievement.

In their study *Purkin Kuk: Prehistoric Hillfort, Mound, Greek–Hellenistic Fortress or Public Monument?* (pp. 57–104), Branko Kirigin and Nikša Vujnović examine the archaeological significance of the site of Purkin Kuk, traditionally identified as a prehistoric tumulus. The site's elevated position offers a commanding view of Stari Grad Bay, encompassing Stari Grad (ancient Pharos), the Stari Grad Plain (Stari Gradsko polje), and the islands of Šolta and Brač. Scholarly attention has long focused on the material remains from Purkin Kuk, often interpreted as a prehistoric hillfort or a pre-Greek settlement type that predates the establishment of Pharos. The authors compare the site's tower and surrounding walls—constructed of unworked stone—with similar structures at Maslovik and Tor. Excavations have revealed architectural dimensions, a stone trough, fragments of millstones, and three chert blades. Ongoing debates persist regarding the site's precise classification: whether Purkin Kuk represents a prehistoric mound (tumulus), a hillfort (gradina), or a fortified settlement.

The article also references earlier interpretations, including those of Botteri, who discussed the legend of the Church of St. Nicholas in the center of Stari Grad and its

relation to the city's urban grid. Other nearby localities, such as Laza, are analyzed in correlation with Purkin Kuk. Published archaeological reports provide a chronological overview of research stages and findings. Zaninović, another scholar cited by the authors, argues that Purkin Kuk represents a prehistoric settlement situated on the sun-exposed side of the island, protected from the prevailing northern winds. The study further explores a series of local legends associated with the site, including those linked to Queen Teuta and the mythical burial of a golden hen with seven golden chicks. Folklore also identifies Purkin Kuk as a place of punishment, where convicts were forced to carry heavy stones, and as a dwelling of fairies. Nearby toponyms and features, such as Vilina Stina (Fairy Rock) and Belebići on Mount Velebit, are integrated into this mythic landscape.

A subsection titled Name discusses local toponymy, mentioning the neighboring village of Dol Sveta Ana. The village of Belebići and its environs preserve a square cistern, documented through researchers' sketches. Subsequent sections address the economic and spatial organization of the area, including localities such as Vilina Stina, Laze, Pliš, Piski, the Lombardija slope, and the sacred site of Bond with the Church of St. Rok. The authors also note how the area's geomorphology affects the site's visibility and its role within the surrounding landscape. Purkin Kuk thus emerges as a locus where archaeology, topography, and local tradition intersect – a place imbued with associations of witchcraft, mystery, and sanctity.

The vegetation of the soil itself suggests the possibility of ritual fire lighting on an altar. The article provides a detailed description of the site's physical characteristics, including the shape, depth, length, and diameter of its trench. The excavations are thoroughly documented and contextualized within the broader macrolocation, establishing connections between the site and comparable archaeological contexts at Ošanjići near Stolac and the Martinović tumulus. Architectural remains include walls and blocks with beveled edges, as well as evidence of drystone construction. Finds consist of fragments of ancient ceramics, tiles, and Greco-Italic amphorae. In addition to these structural elements, a concentration of stones was discovered, and at the toponym Laze—a name derived from the clearing of a hillside—drystone walls were also identified. Another site, Belebići, has yielded additional artifacts, including a fragment of an ancient pithos, five fragments of amphora bodies, and one coarse-ware sherd. The ceramic assemblage was classified into two principal categories: indigenous pottery and fine Greek ceramics.

The *pithos* fragments are dated between the 4th and 2nd centuries BC, although some earlier examples, such as those of the "a colletto" type, are also present. Amphora bases were identified as belonging to Type B and Greco-Italic forms, distinguished by firing techniques, wall thickness, neck joints, and surface incisions. Bowls from the site are characterized as typically Hellenistic in material and style. Roof tiles discovered at Laze were catalogued according to shape, material, and provenance, with parallels noted at Vilina Stina, Maslinovka, and Tor. Lithic finds include volcanic stone artifacts, notably a millstone from Brušnik.

The site's connections extend beyond the immediate hinterland to the wider Aegean world. Parallels are drawn with Cretan peak sanctuaries of the Minoan period and with sanctuaries on the Greek mainland, such as the cult of Zeus Lycaeus on Mount St. Elias. The sanctuary's structure is described as consisting of an unfenced *temenos* and a small building serving both as a repository for votive offerings and as shelter for priests, travelers, or fugitives.

Comparable examples are noted on the island of Paros, particularly Mount Kounados, where temples dedicated to Zeus Hypatas, Aphrodite, and Eileithyia attest to the continuity of cultic worship. These parallels support the hypothesis that Purkin Kuk functioned as a sanctuary dedicated to Greek deities. The worship of Zeus in particular is evidenced by numismatic finds – silver and bronze coins depicting the god. Notably, Purkin Kuk's location aligns with the highest topographical points of Brač (Vidova Gora) and Hvar (St. Nikola), reinforcing its potential ritual and symbolic significance.

The migration of Greeks from Paros to the Dalmatian coast introduced a sedentary agrarian lifestyle characterized by animal husbandry – raising sheep, pigs, and cattle – whose remains have been recovered as part of the archaeological record. This raises the question of whether the settlers' choice of sacred landscapes was deliberate, particularly in light of the spatial organization of the Greek polis, whose fertile hinterland often contained sanctuary complexes situated on elevated ground near the urban center.

Upon settling in the region, the Greeks appear to have adapted and integrated local cultic practices. Evidence from the Iron Age levels of Hvar indicates the creation of a platform that facilitated the introduction of Greek deities into the local religious framework. It is therefore plausible that Purkin Kuk functioned as a central point for overseeing Starogradsko polje and that, beyond its sacral function, it also served a strategic or guardian role within the island's broader cultural and spatial system.

In her article *Facing the Gorgon on Pharos: An Insight into the Globality of the Central Adriatic?* (pp. 105–116), Marina Ugarković examines the foundation and material remains of Pharos, established in 385–384 BC by settlers from the Cycladic island of Paros. The study focuses on archaeological evidence from the site of Remete, which has yielded crucial insights into the Greek urban phases of the settlement. Excavations uncovered a southern fortification wall and a stone-built structure identified as a cistern, alongside a rich assemblage of ceramic artifacts. These ceramics are meticulously described, with attention to their morphological and chromatic features.

The ceramic repertoire is divided into two primary classes: red-figure plates decorated with depictions of fish and other marine creatures, and black-glazed (or lustrous) wares similar to those found elsewhere along the Dalmatian coast. The function of these plates, used in everyday dining contexts, is discussed in light of both local and imported examples. Comparative analysis highlights similarities and differences between Greek prototypes and fish plates from the southern Adriatic, such as those found at Budva and dated to the 3rd century BC. The question of importation is addressed, with possible provenances including Attica, South Italy, and the Central Mediterranean.

Regarding local Pharian production, Ugarković identifies additional classes of ceramics, such as common and coarse wares. Distinctive features—including graffiti inscriptions, the use of hard rather than soft clay, and the removal of the central interior ridge to emphasize a central “emblem” – serve to differentiate local products from imported Greek examples.

The article further situates the vessels within the broader mythological and iconographic tradition that extends from the Archaic to the Roman periods. Their decorative programs often feature the figure of Medusa or other humanoid female monsters, reflecting the enduring influence of Gorgon imagery. The scholarly study of such symbolism, which began in the 18th century, has traced connections between these motifs and Corinthian as well as Attic artistic traditions. Ugarković notes that by the mid-5th century BC, the depiction of Medusa had become increasingly anthropomorphic, corresponding to developments in pre-Socratic aesthetics and the craftsman’s pursuit of proportion, harmony, and formal standardization. Further evidence includes other inscribed graffiti and an unpublished ceramic mold used for producing relief appliquéés, which attests to local workshop activity. The corpus of finds from Pharos also comprises sixteen short inscriptions and symbolic markings. Each instance of graffiti, Ugarković argues, may represent a highly individualized expression—whether a record of a specific act, a workshop signature, or a spontaneous manifestation of the artisan’s consciousness.

The concluding section of Marina Ugarković’s article examines the ritual use of masks and explores the idea that the creator of the graffiti and the user of the artifacts may, in certain contexts, have been one and the same individual—an artisan engaged simultaneously in production, personalization, and ritualized use. On the island of Pharos, seven personal names have been discovered inscribed on stone monuments, suggesting a tangible connection between makers and users within the local social fabric.

It is proposed that the application of graffiti was closely linked to the reinterpretation and repurposing of symbolic meanings. The techniques of engraving and vessel decoration thus functioned as a visual medium that mediated multiple layers of cultural expression—artistic, communicative, and ritual.

Antonela Barbir’s contribution *Marine Resources in Greek Coastal Communities: the Case of the Adriatic Pharos* (pp. 117–132) focuses on Greek culinary practices, particularly those related to marine resources, and highlights the significance of molluscs in the economy and daily life of the ancient city of Pharos. The study situates marine exploitation within the broader context of Greek coastal communities and emphasizes the role of the marine environment as a central axis of ancient subsistence and trade.

Archaeomalacological remains – primarily molluscs – were identified at five sites across central Dalmatia and Albania, with additional evidence coming from the necropolis of ancient Issa. At Cape Ploče, the presence of snails and bivalves indicates the existence of a sanctuary, suggesting ritual as well as economic dimensions to marine

resource use. The city of Butrint provides an important comparative link between the Albanian and Croatian archaeological records, contributing to a wider understanding of Adriatic archaeomalacology.

The study acknowledges the challenges posed by the poorly defined coastal zone of Pharos, a settlement primarily oriented toward ceramic production and agriculture. Nonetheless, finds such as hand mills indicate diversified subsistence strategies that integrated both terrestrial and marine resources. The research incorporates data from salvage excavations conducted between 2021 and 2023, during which evidence of bioerosion was recorded on shell remains. Many specimens were found encrusted with other marine organisms, their preservation influenced by fluctuations in climatic conditions, humidity, salinity, and tidal activity.

The analysis identifies several species represented in the assemblage, including the purple murex, striped murex, cerith snail, limpet, mutable nassa, and the spotted snail. Additionally, edible bivalves such as flat and spiny oysters and mussels were studied as integral components of the ancient diet. These findings are contextualized within classical sources, notably Aristotle's *History of Animals*, which documents the consumption and cultural significance of molluscs in antiquity.

The second thematic section of the volume, devoted to other eastern Adriatic areas, opens with the article by Paula Androić Gračanin, Ana Konestra, and Fabian Welc, *Beyond the Horizon: Insight into the Evolution of the Landscape in the Northern Part of the Island of Rab During the Last Two Millennia BC* (pp. 133–152). The study focuses on the northern part of the island of Rab, delineating its geographical boundaries and analyzing its geological strata. The authors reconstruct the landscape of the Late Bronze and Iron Ages through a multidisciplinary approach that integrates archaeology, geomorphology, and geophysical survey data.

The research identifies several fortified settlements (hillforts) forming a strategic and spatial network across the northern portion of the island. Among these are Košljen, Plogar, and Cape Stolac, which collectively define the topographical raster of the Rab area. Additional sites include the hillfort on the summit of Gromačica and the Pečina plateau on the Kamenjak ridge, where remains of a rampart built of carefully hewn stone date to the Bronze Age. Another fortified site, Trbušnjak, also constructed from hewn stone, shows signs of considerable erosion and structural disturbance. The area features a natural ditch accompanied by ten terraces, indicating complex land use and adaptive settlement strategies. The locality known as Kruna, situated between the aforementioned sites, contains several semi-natural karst pools and yielded significant archaeological finds. Although the central burial chamber at Kruna had been looted, discoveries include Baltic blue glass beads, a fibula fragment, and scattered stone slabs, possibly once forming part of a funerary covering.

At Kaštelina Stoc, a coastal promontory covering approximately 7,000 m², geophysical prospection revealed a series of rectangular residential structures, verified through targeted trench excavations. Imported fine ceramics were found in settlement layers, suggesting connections with broader Mediterranean exchange networks.

Funerary artifacts from the Iron Age—grave slabs and elements of personal adornment, including a fibula and a type of pin—were reportedly recovered near the necropolis. For comparative purposes, the Bojnik hillfort in northern Dalmatia was analyzed, providing valuable contextual parallels.

In summary, the study emphasizes the strategic importance of the northern Rab landscape, particularly the system of elevated observation points. At Kaštelina, these were situated along the promontory's edges, while Kruna contained four vantage points positioned along a funerary pathway. Together, the observation posts at Kruna and Kaštelina—reaching up to two meters in elevation—formed a network of nine viewpoints controlling the three principal maritime routes leading toward the Rab Channel. The authors also discuss the Lopar field and its natural entrance via Veliki Der, analyzing the area's intermediate circle of visibility, which may have functioned as an epicenter for grazing control when oriented inland. These sites, including Kaštelina, supervised key marine approaches such as Crnika Bay, and maintained visual communication across the Grgur and Velebit channels, ensuring surveillance over the entire northern Adriatic seascape.

The study by Pio Dominov Petar, *From Coinage to Connection: Some Notes on Greco-Illyrian Coins from Senj (Northern Adriatic)* (pp. 153–166) presents the auxiliary historical discipline of numismatics through the example of coin finds from the Senj area. At the protohistoric hillfort of Kuk, located approximately 2 km from Senj, an Issaeian bronze coin was discovered. Another important site, Štela, lies in the very center of Senj. The coins, dating to the 3rd century BC, are associated with the Illyrian king Ballaios. The paper provides descriptions of the obverse and reverse sides of the coins, their inscriptions, and their legibility. It further connects the territories where the relevant mints operated—namely Hvar and Rhizon in the Bay of Kotor. The site has significantly enriched the local archaeological corpus, contributing around 500 artifacts, including ceramic vessels discovered beneath a building. The distribution of coin finds extends from Montenegro to Istria and northern Italy. Their motifs include grapes, deities, and animals. The monetary iconography is closely related to ceramic vessels through the cult of Dionysus, reflecting the intensive development of viticulture and the wine trade. Since coinage implies commercial exchange, the paper also examines the sources of Issaeian money found in this region. Besides maritime trade, attention is given to inland routes passing through Senjska Draga and the Vratnik Pass. In the concluding section, the author discusses the transport of wine in amphorae, linking it to the broader economic and cultural networks of the period.

The paper by Martina Čelhar and Igor Borzić, *Traditions and New Connections in the Funeral Customs of the Eastern Adriatic Communities in Nadin and Kopila During the 2nd and 1st Centuries BC* (pp. 167–186) examines the cemeteries of Nadin and Kopila, analyzing them in terms of location, chronology, and the richness of grave goods. The graves are classified according to structural features—the outer ring, the central burial pit, and the overall construction and contents—considering two key aspects: (a) the gender and age of the deceased, and (b) the accompanying artifacts.

The study discusses burial positions, jewelry, and clothing, with particular attention to ceramic materials, among which Greek–Hellenistic forms predominate. Excavations in both sites yielded artifacts relevant to the auxiliary historical discipline of military studies, including bronze helmets and spear- or arrowheads. The graves also contribute to the study of uniformology, as the inventories include belt buckles, pin types from Liburnia and Nadin, figure-of-eight fibulae, earrings, and glass objects such as beads, bracelets, and pendants. These finds represent the material legacy of the Iron Age in the Iapodian area. Additionally, evidence of typical Roman cremation practices was recorded, most notably, a funerary urn dated to the 1st century BC.

In their paper, *Silver Fibulae on Hinges from the Zakotorac Cemetery (Pelješac Peninsula): Cultural Connections Between the Southern Part of the Eastern Adriatic Coast and the Central Balkans* (pp. 187–204), Domagoj Perkić, Marko Dizdar, Hrvoje Potrebica examine a burial mound in the Zakotorac area, located on the central island of the Pelješac Peninsula. Excavations at this site uncovered bronze brooches and pins, as well as silver hinge fibulae, which are connected to the material culture of local communities in the territory of Herzegovina. In addition to the richly furnished cemetery, a hillfort was identified on Kotorac Hill, at the Gomile site, where two rectangular buildings were documented. Finds from this area include small stones, fragments of pottery, and various metal objects, including metal plates and weapons discovered at the bottom of the graves. The grave goods reveal numerous costume elements, while osteological analysis identified the remains of nine adults and seven children. The graves span a broad chronological range, from the earliest burial of apparent Greek origin, where two human teeth were recovered, to later phases. The most significant finds are six silver fibulae, each described and analyzed in detail. These fibulae are linked to a type that first appeared in Macedonia under the influence of Asia Minor in the 6th century BC. Comparable examples have been found at the Kopila necropolis near Blato on the island of Korčula, dated to the 3rd and 2nd centuries BC. Additional sites include Cavtat, the sanctuary at Gorica, and the Ružiči site near Gorica. Further distribution extends to Montenegro, including Glogovik near Herceg Novi, Budva, and the Vela Ledine necropolis in Gosti. Collectively, these finds indicate strong cultural connections between the southern part of the eastern Adriatic coast and the central Balkans. Within Herzegovina, the material culture reflects elements of the Delmatian Iron Age, further compared with assemblages from the Romanian Danube region and Novi Pazar in Serbia. Additional related sites include Grudine and the Ukšiči–Grebince necropolis, as well as locations in western Serbia such as the Guč–Grotnica mound, which, together with the Hisar site, suggests the presence of a local workshop. Other notable sites are Radimlje near Stolac—with finds including a bronze bracelet and a double-pointed needle—and Bačina–Grebine near Ploče. The list of relevant sites also includes destroyed graves, such as the Gradešnica site in Pelagonia, dated to the late 7th and early 6th centuries BC. Finally, the analysis highlights recurring decorative motifs—rings, dots, and circles—on the fibulae, all traced to a single burial context. Taken together, the evidence strongly supports the existence of long-distance

cultural contacts between the southern Adriatic and the central Balkans, mediated through the exchange and stylistic transmission of silver fibulae.

The article by Kristina Brkić Drnić, Igor Borzić, Ivan Drnić, *Global and Local: Hellenistic and Roman Ceramics from the Rača Cave on the Island of Lastovo* (pp. 205–224) opens with an overview of the island of Lastovo in antiquity, citing Stephanus of Byzantium, who recorded the ancient name Ladesta in the 6th century. Other historical variants of the island's name include Augusta, Lagusta, Lagosta, and Lastobon. The focal point of the study is the Rača Cave, a site that shows evidence of continuous use into the Roman period. Artifacts also originate from Glavica Hill on the island, and the assemblage consists predominantly of Hellenistic imports. The cave is located above the Radaž Dol valley, overlooking Skrivena Luka Bay, and the paper also explores its utilitarian and ritual functions. The earliest finds belong to the late Neolithic Hvar culture, while later layers yielded Daunian and Corinthian imports as well as excavated ceramic vessels, including terra sigillata wares. These finds form part of a broader network of ceramic circulation across the Adriatic, primarily vessels used for transporting wine and perfumed liquids. Parallel examples are noted at Vlaška Mala on Pag, Risan, and Vis. The assemblage also includes wine amphorae linked to trade connections with Western Europe and the Black Sea region, as well as fragments of black-glazed plates and jugs or pots. A notable find is a skyphos bearing graffiti, which is analyzed in relation to the Kašćel fortress. The paper further discusses decorative motifs and painting styles on the ceramics. In its concluding section, the study examines the trade routes associated with these ceramics, extending to Istria and the western Adriatic coast. This is exemplified by the discovery of a fragment of a Corinthian miniature kotyle, demonstrating mutual cultural and commercial interaction across the region. Within the stratigraphy of the Rača Cave itself, the researchers suggest that the first chamber may have served as a site for ritual ceremonies conducted by the Late Iron Age community. The discussion broadens to the economic aspects of Illyrian sanctuaries, with comparisons drawn to two related sites: Spila near Nakovana on the Pelješac Peninsula, and Vila's Cave, located in an inaccessible position above the source of the Ombla River in Rijeka Dubrovačka, both yielding fine Hellenistic ceramics.

The article *Battle of Aoi Stena (198 BC) and Traces of Fortifications in the Area* (pp. 225–243) by Taulant Rama, Eduard Shehi transports the reader to the era of Roman Republican expansionism, focusing on the Second Macedonian War (200–197 BC) against King Philip V of Macedon. It examines the implementation of Rome's expansionist policy through a detailed analysis of the Battle of Aoi Stena in 198 BC. The battlefield corresponds to the "Narrow Strait of Antigonus," where Philip's forces established fortified positions. The study emphasizes the strategic importance of these defensive structures, particularly a fortress situated on a mountain slope. The core of the analysis concerns the architectural remains of the fortress—its stone block construction, the alignment of the defensive wall, and its overall building technique. Several internal structures have been identified within the fortress complex. The authors document fissures in the masonry, ceramic fragments dated between the 4th and 1st centuries BC,

and scattered roof tiles. In the nearby Albanian village of Peshtan, the interplay between hydrology and archaeology is explored, especially in relation to the meandering course of the river that influenced settlement and fortification patterns. Excavations revealed several walls and six graves containing artifacts such as spearheads and helmets, while remains of pithoi and bricks from the Roman Imperial period were also preserved. The grave inventories are interpreted in connection with the events of the Battle of Aoi Stena. A second fortified site, known as the Ceka Fortress, is described, featuring a natural ascent leading to a defensive tower. The river meander provided an ideal setting for the Macedonian encampment, which was positioned between the villages of Dragot and Mežgoran. According to the analysis, the Macedonian camp was divided into two parts, a strategic weakness that the Romans ultimately exploited—with crucial assistance from local shepherds. The historical narrative of the battle is corroborated by ancient literary sources. Plutarch offers a vivid account of the engagement, discussing the tactical deployment of forces, the formation of defensive lines, and Philip's alliance with Epirus. Livy provides a second, complementary testimony, together offering valuable insight into the military, geographic, and cultural context of this decisive encounter.

