



Pichvnari, Georgia 2005

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The eighth season of the joint British-Georgian Pichvnari Expedition, organised on the Georgian side from the Batumi Archaeological Museum and the Batumi Research Institute, and on the British from the Ashmolean Museum, Oxford took place between mid-July and mid-August 2005. The nature of the site was briefly described in an account of the first season's activities in *Anatolian Studies* 51 (2001) 65-90 (and cf. brief reports in successive issues of *Anatolian Archaeology* since 1998). A monograph on the first five seasons' work was published last year: M. Vickers and A. Kakhidze, *Pichvnari 1: Greeks and Colchians on the East Coast of the Black Sea: Results of Excavations Conducted by the Joint British-Georgian Expedition 1998-2002* (Ashmolean Museum, Oxford and the Batumi Archaeological Museum, 2004; 458pp., 333 illustrations; obtainable from Oxbow Books). Lying at the junction of the Choloki and Ochkhamuri rivers to the north of Kobuleti, and a kilometre or so inland, Pichvnari was a major settlement from the late Bronze Age, but became more obviously wealthy during the period of Greek colonization. An area between the Choloki and the sea was used for burials ostensibly by the native Colchian population and immigrant Greeks; at first in separate cemeteries, but by the Hellenistic period together.

Work continued in Colchian and Greek necropolis of the fifth century BC. An old trench in the area of the Napurvala Hill was extended to the west with a view to establishing the point at which one cemetery merged into the other (the results as yet inconclusive). The upper levels in the Colchian cemetery produced some early medieval roof-tiles (recalling the fact that traces of a small basilica-like church had been found in the vicinity before 1989) and an iron spear head. Thirty conventional burials were found in the part of the Colchian cemetery that we excavated, and the first [amphora burial](#)—common enough in the Greek cemetery—to have been found there. The grave goods consisted for the most part of Colchian pottery vessels (notably those of 'Pichvnari' type), but occasionally including Ionian *oinochoai* and *phialai*, Attic black gloss cups and bolsals. There was a good deal of jewellery: gold beads and biconical earrings, silver and bronze bracelets, and iron finger rings. One grave contained more than 2400 glass beads. The burial area

had been re-used in the fourth century AD, when a grave of a woman (Burial 319) was inserted among the rest. It contained a [gold ring](#) decorated with beaded wire and set with a garnet, as well as a pair of [gold earrings](#) set with thin sheets of red glass.

An area towards the north of the Greek cemetery was explored. Beneath the overlying humus and sand were found the outlines of twenty-three graves and two places where there had been funerary feasts ('funerary platforms'). [Burial 261](#), the grave of a girl, was especially well-endowed; it contained a bronze mirror, two glass alabastra, two glass amphoriskoi, some small pyramidal hard-stone and gold pendant, silver hair spirals and a silver ring. The ceramic finds here included an Attic lekythos, a small Samian lekythos and an Ionian pyxis. Finds from the other graves included an Attic white-ground lekythos decorated with a winged goddess, a stemmed black-gloss cup and bolsals, Ionian and local pottery vessels, radial earrings and beads.

The 'funerary platforms' were unusual in that they were large (one is 2.5 metres across), and not associated with any specific grave; rather they appear to have served as common ritual places. A burnt layer contained a Thasian lekythos, and fragments of Attic, Ionian, and local pottery. The other 'platform' was also very large, but remains to be explored in detail. An isolated find was a fragmentary Attic red-figure calyx-crater with a scene of Zeus and Iris that might, if one went in for that sort of thing, be attributed to Beazley's 'Altamura Painter'.

The co-directors of the 2005 season were again Amiran Kakhidze, Director of the Batumi Archaeological Museum and until recently, acting Rector of Batumi State University, and Michael Vickers, Professor of Archaeology in the University of Oxford, and Curator of Greek and Roman antiquities at the Ashmolean Museum; Dr Gia Tavamaishvili was Deputy Director, and other Georgian participants included Dr Manana Odisheli, Nino Dzneladze (archaeologists), Dr Emzar Kakhidze (historian), Mamuka Chelidze (architect and surveyor), Givi Nakhutsrishvili (photographer), Zurab Varshanidze (laboratory assistant); students: Lasha Bazhunaishvili and Rezo Charazi (Batumi State University), Inga Iashvili (Batumi State University), Anano Arabuli, Natia Gurasbashvili, Mariam Lobzhanidze, Eka Tsiklauri, and Miranda Turmanadze (Tbilisi State University). The following visiting students participated: Matthew Ginniver (Keble College, Oxford), Benjamin Harrold (Keble College, Oxford), Alexandra Hodge (Keble College, Oxford), Simon Hunter (St John's College, Oxford), Louis MacLaren (St Andrews University), Linda Nash (King's College, London), Sarah Raine (Keble College, Oxford), Mike Shott (St Cross, Oxford, and Oxford Brookes University) gave instruction in metal detecting techniques. Guliko Tsiskaradze cooked as well as ever, and Guram Svanidze ensured that we never went short of supplies. The 2005 season was supported financially by the British Institute of Archaeology at Ankara, the Oxford Craven Committee, the Oxford Marjory Wardrop Committee, the Department of Antiquities at the Ashmolean Museum, and the Batumi Archaeological Museum. Many thanks are due to all concerned.