



## **Pichvnari, Ajarian AR, Georgia 2007**

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The tenth 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 2007. 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 in 2004: 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). *Pichvnari 2*, a study by Amiran Kakhidze of the finds from the Greek cemetery made between 1967 and 1989, appeared in the summer of 2006. 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.

The work was carried out on a slightly larger scale this year, major local funding having been received for the first time. The Batumi Archaeological Museum was given a grant of 9000 lari specifically for Pichvnari. Much of it was spent on new cases for the refurbished Museum, due to open in January 2008. Work went very well since the weather was good.

It was possible to explore Hellenistic levels at the settlement. A very rich material culture revealed, which showed ancient life there in a new light, in particular evidence for agriculture, animal husbandry, fishing, and textile production. The area of the Colchian 5<sup>th</sup> century cemetery, most threatened by sand-extraction, was extended, and 30 burials were investigated. Six graves were excavated in the Napurvala Hill area (the apparent centre of the Colchian cemetery), and found to contain *i.a.* locally made Colchian pottery, a Chian amphora, some jewellery and coins ([*kolkhidki*] employed as 'Charon's obols' and found at the mouths of the deceased, an Attic black-gloss cup

and an Ionian oinochoe. Work continued in the Greek necropolis of the fifth century BC. In the Greek cemetery, there were more than 30 (3 or 4 empty) graves of the mid-fifth century BC. One was most remarkable with rich grave goods: an Attic red-figured [lekythos](#), [gold earrings](#), silver bracelets, a gold bead necklace, a glass aryballos and an alabastron. Near the head was a small grave (perhaps of a child). Most interesting, were the ‘sacrificial areas’ around this grave. Two burnt areas and lots of [potsherds](#) distributed between them—the remains of commemorative meals. Also on the same site, a single late-Roman grave; containing an iron axe-head, a spear, a knife, and a silver fibula, was found. In the Hellenistic cemetery, 20 graves were excavated, with clear signs of funerary rituals having been carried out near them. All the graves had some grave-goods in them. Several new shapes of locally made ceramic vessels were found, as well as new varieties of imported black-gloss ware: kantharos, skyphos, cup, perfume vessels. ‘Charon’s obols’ were found in every grave, but in one of them there were 28 coins. There was silver, bronze and iron jewellery, many beads, and a Scythian *akinakes* (the second time that such a weapon has been found at Pichvnari). We learned that the Hellenistic cemetery extends further than hitherto thought.

The co-directors of the 2007 season were again Amiran Kakhidze, Director of the Batumi Archaeological Museum 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 Nineli Vashakidze, Dr Irakli Chavleishvili, Dr Manana Odisheli, Nino Dzneladze, Miranda Turmanidze, Tamar Shalikadze, Nargiza Surmanidze, (archaeologists), Anzor Javelidze, Giorgi Dumbadze (architects and surveyors), Givi Nakhutsrishvili (photographer), Merab Uzunadze (computer specialist), Zurab Varshanidze (laboratory assistant); students: Tamaz Darchidze, Vitali Kartsivadze, Sul Khan Okropiridze, Inga Iashvili (Batumi State University); Mary Frazer (Corpus Christi College, Oxford), Amanda Pavlick (Tufts University, Boston), Claudio Baldi (University of Zurich), Olga Broniewska (University of Gdansk), Gregers Bangert (University of Copenhagen). Guliko Tsiskaradze and Darejan Gurgenzadze cooked as well as ever, and Guram Svanidze ensured that we never went short of supplies. We were honoured to receive a visit from members of the Department of Antiquities at the Ashmolean: the Keeper Dr Susan Walker, accompanied by Professor John Wilkes, and Mrs Suzanne Anderson, thanks to whose administrative skills the finances of the Pichvnari Expedition have been kept on an even keel for the past ten years.

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