

Pichvnari, Georgia 2009

Michael Vickers and Amiran Kakhidze

The twelfth 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 2009. This year was mostly devoted to the preparation of monographs relating to work done in previous seasons, although some excavation was done in the area of the classical Greek cemetery of the 4th century BC that had been left uncompleted in 2008 on account of the Russian invasion. Our principal benefactors this year were the Oxford Craven Committee, and the Department of Antiquities at the Ashmolean Museum.

Thanks to the presence of a group of skilled editors, much progress was made on the production of three substantial publications:

- 1) N. Vashakidze and A. Kakhidze, *Pichvnari 3: The Hellenistic World and Colchis; Types of Burials and Burial Customs in South-western Georgia in the Hellenistic Period. Results of Excavations conducted by the N. Berdzenishvili Batumi Research Institute and the Joint British-Georgian Pichvnari Expeditions 1965-2004.*
- 2) A. Kakhidze, T. Shalikadze, *Pichvnari 4: Glassware from the Southwestern Littoral of Georgia. Results of Excavations conducted by the N. Berdzenishvili Batumi Research Institute and the Joint British-Georgian Pichvnari Expeditions 1967-2008.*
- 3) M. Vickers and A. Kakhidze, *Pichvnari 5: Greeks and Colchians: Results of Excavations Conducted by the Joint British-Georgian Expedition 2003-2007*

Pichvnari 3 is close to completion, *Pichvnari 4* needs some more editorial work, and *Pichvnari 5* should appear within a few months. These publications belong to a series that has already seen the publication of: 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); A. Kakhidze, *Pichvnari 2: The Classical World in the Eastern Black Sea Area: the Fifth Century BC Greek Necropolis at Pichvnari: Results of Excavations Conducted by the N. Berdzenishvili Batumi Research Institute Pichvnari Expedition 1967-1987* (Ashmolean Museum, Oxford and the Batumi Archaeological Museum, 2007; 408pp., 100 b/w illustrations, 16 colour; obtainable from Oxbow Books).

In the past, we have had visits from the glass specialists Dr Andrew Shortland, now of Cranfield University, and Dr Hannes Schroeder, now of the University of Copenhagen (“Analysis of first millennium BC glass vessels and beads from the Pichvnari necropolis, Georgia”, *Archaeometry* [forthcoming]). A student of Dr Shortland’s, Sara Boyen of the Katholieke Universiteit Leuven, spent some days with us, taking study samples from excavated material from Pichvnari and Gonio.

In 2008, we had excavated part of the 4th century BC classical Greek cemetery. 14 graves and 9 'ritual platforms' were found then, but a few graves and platforms had not been completely excavated. Graduate students from Batumi State University undertook this task.

On the level of housekeeping, we rebuilt the staircase leading up to the Lawrence House (see Reports for 2003-4). A ceremonial ribbon was cut by HM Ambassador to Tbilisi, Denis Keefe, who visited Pichvnari with his family on August 7th.

The co-directors of the 2009 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. Georgian participants included Dr Nineli Varshakidze, Dr Manana Odisheli, Nino Dzeladze, Emzar Kakhidze, Miranda Turmanidze (archaeologists), Anzor Javelidze (architect and surveyor), Givi Nakhutsrishvili (photographer), Maggie Gudadze (interpreter). Students: Tamasi Darchidze, Vitali Kartsivadze, Sul Khan Okropiridze (all Batumi State University), Sara Boyen (KU Leuven), Elizabeth Cohen (Ashmolean Museum, Oxford), Johan Honings (KU Leuven), Benjamin Lazarus (Linacre College, Oxford), Stephanos Tanis (Lincoln College, Oxford), Martina Williman (Lady Margaret Hall, Oxford), Sandro Sekhniashvili (Cherwell School, Oxford). Guliko Tsiskaradze was a superb cook, assisted by Darejan Gurgendze, and Guram Svanidze ensured that we never went short of supplies.