
This was the first year when our major benefactor was the Leon Levy Foundation of New York, and all concerned are most grateful. The British Institute of Archaeology at Ankara (BABSI fund) had supported two five-year programmes between 1998 and 2007, and we celebrated our tenth anniversary with a conference in Krakow (Pontika 2008: Recent Research on the Northern and Eastern Black Sea in Ancient Times), funded by the British Academy and the Polish Academy of Arts and Sciences. The Leon Levy Foundation also sponsored an update of the Pichvnari website (Google it), and together with the Friends of Academic Research in Georgia (FaRiG), assisted in the acquisition of a 7-seater...
vehicle for the expedition’s use (invaluable when we had to evacuate students quickly). Other principal benefactors were the Oxford Craven Committee, the Oxford Marjory Wardrop Committee, the Department of Antiquities at the Ashmolean Museum, and the Batumi Archaeological Museum. Thanks to the generosity of the Andrew and Sandra Graham Fund, we were able to employ the services of Maka Bokeria, a palynologist from the Georgian National Museum.

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 2008 campaign fell into three parts: 1) the Hellenistic cemetery, 2) the Colchian cemetery, and 3) the later classical Greek cemetery.

1) Students from Batumi University had cleared part of the Hellenistic cemetery during the two weeks prior to our arrival. This was extremely convenient, for it meant that our team were able to start immediately on the preparation of the graves for drawing and photography. 20 burials were found, each one containing grave goods, including imported and Colchian pottery. For the first time, a typical Colchian iron sickle (tsaldi) was found in a funerary context; other known specimens come from hoards or were chance finds.
2) A trench in the Colchian cemetery investigated last year was extended to the north, and worked on by our group accompanied by post-graduate students from Batumi University. 25 Colchian graves of the fifth century BC were found. Charon’s obols were frequently found, usually a single Colchian silver tri-obol (*kolkhidki*) per burial. In one case, however, the deceased appears to have had his/her mouth stuffed with more than a dozen such coins. Five graves, however, produced minute fractions (one-forty-eighths) of *kolkhidki* (*hemitetartemoria*). Gold beads were also found. Grave 391, contained two *kolkhidki*, silver jewellery, and Attic *lekythos*, and an unusual core-made glass vessel on which the horizontal swirls had been left uncombed. As last year, there were some finds of the 4th century AD, representing a late Roman re-occupation of Pichvnari.

3) The same students began to excavate part of the classical Greek cemetery that dated to the 4th century BC, but work was not quite complete when we had to stop on account of the Russian invasion. The outline of graves began to emerge when the surface was carefully scraped down with a *toki* (a kind of mattock). 14 graves and 9 ‘ritual platforms’ were found. The latter were places where funerary banquets had taken place and consisted of broken pottery (including a fragmentary Attic red-figure crater), animal bones and charcoal. They provided a rich resource for our palynologist. One burial unusually contained two coffins.
The co-directors of the 2008 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 Varshakidze, Dr Manana Odisheli, Nino Dzeladze, Emzar Kakhidze, Miranda Turmanidze, Nargize Surmanidze, (archaeologists), Maka Bokeria (palynologist), Anзор Javelidze, Giorgi Dumbadze (architects and surveyors), Givi Nakhutsrishvili (photographer), Zurab Varshanidze (laboratory assistant); students: Tamasi Darchidze, Vitali Kartisivadze, Sulkhan Okropiridze (all Batumi State University), Maggie Gudadze (Tbilisi State University), Claudio Baldi (University of Zurich), Maria Degtiarenko (University of Virginia), Suji Chandrasekaran (Lincoln College, Oxford), Ellen Hitchcock (St Antony’s College, Oxford), Emma Rix (Corpus Christi College, Oxford), Sebastian Żmuda (University of Wroclaw), Sandro Sekhniashvili (Oxford), Koba Khvedelidze (Tbilisi). Guliko Tsiskaradze and Darejan Gurgenadze cooked as well as ever, and Guram Svanidze ensured that we never went short of supplies. We were frequently visited by local and national television crews. Michael Vickers received an honorary doctorate from the Shota Rustaveli Batumi State University.
In 2009 we plan to finalise the publication of *Pichvnari 5*: M. Vickers and A. Kakhidze, *Pichvnari 5: Results of Excavations Conducted by the Joint British-Georgian Expedition 2003-2007.*