

**Otar LORDKIPANIDZE CENTRE OF ARCHAEOLOGY
OF GEORGIAN NATIONAL MUSEUM**



**RESEARCHES IN
IBERIA-COLCHOLOGY**

(History and archaeology of ancient Georgia)

by Gela Gamkrelidze

Edited by
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გელა გამკრელიძე: იბერია-კოლხოლოგიური კვლევები.

წინამდებარე წიგნში ავტორის მიერ უცხოეთში გამოქვეყნებული სტატიების ნაწილია თავმოყრილი. ზოგიერთ სტატიაში დამატებულია შეტანილი. წიგნში განხილულია იბერია-კოლხოლოგიის – საქართველოს კლასიკური და აღრეშედივეური პერიოდის ისტორია-არქეოლოგიის საკითხები. წიგნი განკუთვნილია სპეციალისტებისათვის და ჩვენი ქვეყნის ისტორიით დაინტერესებული უცხოელი მკითხველისათვის.

In the present book the author considers some issues related to Iberia-Colchology, studying history and archaeology of Georgia. The book accumulates scientific essays published in the past and also those written lately. The book is designated for the specialists and also for the readers concerned with history and archaeology of Georgia (in Caucasus).

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THE ARCHAEOLOGY IN GEORGIA

Georgia is a land rich in matters antiquarian, and the collecting of antiquities has a long history. Attempts to study these antiquities in a serious manner, and to relate them scientifically to specific periods of Georgian history were only made comparatively late. There was a depository of antiquities at the royal Georgian court in the Middle Ages, overseen by the *mechurchletukhutsesi* (royal treasurer). Whilst on a visit to a museum in Rome, the enlightened Georgian Sulhkan-Saba Orbeliani (1658-1725) recalled seeing similar objects in the depository of the Georgian king Vakhtang VI (1675-1737).

The Georgian historian Teimuraz Bagrationi (1782-1846) also mentions the storage of excavated objects such as coins and weapons, in the royal treasury of the Georgian capital, Tbilisi: “In various times there were found dead people, buried at differing localities in Iberia [i.e. Georgia], not only in earlier periods, but even in modern times during the rule of Erekle II there were found dead people buried in the period of Idolatry [paganism] with coins put in their mouths and with iron weapons. These artefacts are housed in the depository of king Erekle II...”. He adds that unfortunately the Royal Court, together with the depository, was pillaged during the Persian sack of Tbilisi (1795).

Until the nineteenth century, the study of antiquities in Georgia was of a haphazard nature. Some information was been preserved concerning certain relics. This testimony is most interesting because of its descriptive character, inasmuch as these remains have either been completely destroyed or damaged almost beyond recognition. Despite the untimely destruction of these quintessential Georgian antiquities, copious descriptions of the articles in question are to be found in the works of such Georgian scholars as Sulhkan-Saba Orbeliani, Teimuraz Bagrationi and Vakhushti Bagrationi. They are mentioned by foreign travellers such as Arcangelo Lamberti, Cristoforo de Castelli, Frédéric

Dubois de Montpéreux, Johann Anton Güldenstaedt, and others.

In the nineteenth century, the study of Georgian antiquities belatedly acquired a more systematic character. Beginning in 1837, the Georgian Statistical Committee gave attention to the recording and protection of historical monuments; special instructions were drawn up and circulated to administrative offices (see: The Central State Historical Archives of Georgia, depository 16, file 5433). One of the compilers of these pioneering instructions was M. F. Chilashvili, who, as a staff member of the Committee of Statistics was familiar with the state of affairs in this field. While addressing a meeting of the Caucasian Geographical Society on the 8th of December, 1856, he underscored the necessity of conducting an intensive campaign of archaeological excavations throughout the whole of Georgia. The instructions composed by the Committee of Statistics played a special role in the location and preservation of Georgian antiquities and proved to be of importance since many archaeological and historical monuments were saved as a result. But this was only a small step to advance the study of antiquity. The need for a study of Georgian antiquities on a larger scale that was at the same time more flexible led to the start of scientific archaeological excavations.

The first excavations undertaken with a truly scientific purpose were conducted in the summer of 1852 at the ancient city site of Uplistsikhe, about 15 km from Gori. The excavations were conducted by Dimitri K. Meghvinetukhutsesishvili (1815-1878), a pioneer of Georgian archaeology. Regrettably, very little is known about him, hence the sketchy nature of his biography. His contemporaries thought him to be one of their most gifted colleagues. “He knew Georgian history very well and was, in point of fact, a reconstructor of Georgian history” (*Sakartvelos Kalendari*, Tiflis, 1895). The eminent French Kartvelologist Marie Brosset thought highly of his scholarly activity and refers in one of his works to the assistance he had received from

him.

Meghvinetukhutsesishvili described and studied many important historical monuments, relics and remains of Georgia. He gathered and left for posterity many important manuscripts and items of archaeological interest. He surveyed several regions of Georgia: Kartli, Imereti, Guria, Meskheta, Adjara, and other regions. In one of the letters sent to Marie Brosset, Meghvinetukhutsesishvili notes as follows: “I should like to describe all the churches and monasteries, crosses and icons bearing ancient inscriptions, and make copies of these inscriptions as well”.

First serving in Gori he worked as an official in the local Gori court, but this hindered him in his wide-scale scientific researches, and, in 1851 he moved to Tbilisi to work in the Governor’s office, where he had more free time for scientific research. He received financial assistance from the government and was charged with the responsibility of arranging expeditions to different parts of Georgia, with the object of describing and studying significant historical remains. Regrettably, financial support for these expeditions came to an abrupt halt, and Meghvinetukhutsesishvili returned to Gori to work in the court there. But he then received a sum of money from the government in 1852, and began to excavate at Uplistsikhe, an ancient city site not far from Gori. He invited an artist from Tbilisi, and purchased the necessary equipment for excavation and the recording of relics. During the excavations he kept a field journal, and apparently intended to publish a full report of his work. Sadly, only short reports published in the *Kavkaz* newspaper (1852, Nos. 43, 66, 70) have been preserved.

Meghvinetukhutsesishvili began the archaeological study of Uplistsikhe by surveying the area and made drawings of the ancient structures; he discovered and copied several Georgian inscriptions. In order to make these copies, he had to climb high cliffs to see half-destroyed rock-cut edifices. He braved many dangers in order to harvest

the fruits of his archaeological studies. He began by excavating the great hall of Uplistsikhe; cutting a trench about 4 m long, he unearthed fragments of a column and potsherds. In the room adjacent to the great hall were found huge wine jars, or *pithoi*. He concluded that the great hall and the adjoining structures seemed to be the palace of a nobleman. He studied all materials related to Uplistsikhe, namely the written sources containing evidence for Uplistsikhe as well as folk traditions preserved among the local inhabitants. At the same time, he excavated burials in the area.

Meghvinetukhutsesishvili died in 1878 and was buried in the village of Khidistavi near Gori. His surviving works include several historical studies, namely: *The Reign and Life of the Georgian King Erekle II, A Full Description of Important Inscriptions on the Churches and Monasteries of the Gori District, A Journey to the Khidistavi Region of the Gori District in 1849, and A Journey and Survey of Imereti in 1850*, amongst others.

By the middle of the nineteenth century, the cultural life of Georgia was newly active. European-type scientific societies were established, a museum was founded and a library was opened. Periodicals for scientific articles began to be published. An over-arching meaning was ascribed to the word “Archaeology”, which was often used in these articles. It became a very fashionable word. In articles published at the time, the study and recording of archaeological material were often of a casual nature. Descriptions are often placed side by side with reports on natural history, ethnography, or folklore. At the time the term “archaeology” was applied to the description and study of all kinds of antiquities (books, churches, monasteries, icons, epigraphic monuments, etc.), while the search for remains buried in the ground was given less attention. This was quite natural because in those days archaeology had not yet developed into a science in its present-day meaning.

The Geographic Society, which held its first meeting in Tbilisi in

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1850, was one of the first to devote attention to Georgian antiquities. At this meeting, among other matters, the decision was taken to create a museum and an archive. Among the active members of the society were many notable public figures active in Georgia, who included R. Eristavi, D. Qipiani, P. Ioseliani, G. Orbeliani, G. Eristavi, M. Chilashvili, A. Berger, P. Uslar and others. The newly founded society decided to charge its members with the responsibility of gathering relics, compiling catalogues, and taking an active part in expeditions, in order to create the museum which opened in the spring of 1852. It was housed at the time in a building at what is today 5 Alexander Chavchavadze St. It became the very first museum in the Caucasus. The Museum contained departments of ethnography, natural history and history. By 1854, the Caucasian Museum already collected some 3300 exhibits. The historical and archaeological collections of the Museum were replenished by many artefacts found by excavation. Numismatic materials, weapons, armour, jewellery, etc. were amassed. The Museum established contacts with several scientific institutions.

In 1863 the Museum ceased to exist, its collection being transferred to the newly opened Caucasus Museum in Tbilisi, which, like its predecessor, had a bias towards ethnography and natural history, though neither history nor archaeology were ignored. The modern State Museum of Georgia succeeded the Caucasus Museum.

One of the most active founders of the Caucasus Museum, the historian Platon Ioseliani (1809-1875), was also a member of the Geographic Society and the author of noteworthy Kartvelological studies; especially interesting are his works in history and archaeology, namely those dealing with the origin of towns in Georgia. According to Ioseliani, towns were founded on the banks of major rivers and their main tributaries, near the sites of strategic importance, and sometimes near religious centres. Occasionally, they established on these sites independent centres of production which focused on the development of

trade. In support of his views, Ioseliani conducted small-scale excavations on an ancient city-site near the modern village of Zhinvali. He discovered and excavated the remains of cobblestone structures, which contained fragments of pottery and metal wares. Already, in 1844 (i.e. much earlier than the period when Mtskheta became the overwhelming object of scientific attention), Ioseliani noted in one of his works that there existed many ruins in Mtskheta which had never been explored.

In 1867, in Mtskheta, the ancient capital of Georgia, during road reconstruction works on the right bank of the Mtkvari river at Bagineti (Armazistsikhe), there was a casual find made of a slab with an inscription dated to AD 75. In later years in the same region of Mtskheta, in Samtavro and Bebristsikhe chance finds of ancient burials (cist-graves) were also made. These finds attracted governmental interest, and in 1871 F. Bayern (1817-1886), an Austrian natural historian who lived in Tbilisi was charged to carry out excavations in the Samtavro valley. There were found cist-graves, which yielded pottery, metal weapons, and jewellery (*Kavkaz* 1872, Nos. 7, 8), and the finds were later added to the depository of the Caucasus Museum. Although the fieldwork was hardly conducted on a scholarly level, nor the historical significance of finds correctly interpreted, the resulting archaeological material did foment great public interest. In 1885 Bayern's work was published in Berlin, in which the Samtavro valley graves were discussed.

Following these archaeological finds in Mtskheta, interest in the Caucasus, and especially in Georgia, grew among historians and archaeologists. As a result, a Caucasus Archaeological Committee was set up in Tbilisi in 1872 with the aim of co-ordinating historical and archaeological studies in the Transcaucasus. Soon the Committee merged with the Society of the Amateurs of Caucasian Archaeology that was established in Tbilisi in 1873. The founding of the latter

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society was preceded by much preparatory work. Thus, an article by Dimitri Bakradze (1826-1890) was published in the Georgian language magazine *Tsiskari* in 1873, and familiarised Georgian readers with the prospects for archaeological studies in their native land. The article was entitled: "Concerning the Society of Amateurs of Caucasus Archaeology, the foundation of which is contemplated in Tiflis". The beginning of the article underscored the necessity for the historical and archaeological study of the Caucasus region, as well as the importance, geographically speaking, of the region's location in determining the historical development of the country. Moreover, an assessment was given of the significance of inscriptions found on historical monuments related to the study of the country's past. Afterwards, Bakradze noted that attention had also been paid to the study of archaeology in Georgia, and that it was decided to create an Archaeological Society in order more fully to explicate a listing of antiquities. Other plans included "to excavate tombs which contain items dedicated to the dead of ancient times, to gather inscriptions and after collecting these finds, and considering their nature, to spread this knowledge throughout the Society". Thanks to archaeology, it became possible to reconstruct the early history of peoples of the Caucasus region. This had never been studied, although the Caucasus is arguably one of the most important regions in the world from an archaeological point of view. He added: "For the most part, remains are not visible, but, rather, are buried in the ground, as Mtskheta proved, where many ancient tombs were revealed." Bakradze was also concerned with the re-use of stones from ancient ruins that consequently damaged the sites in question. He determined that the formation of the Archaeological Society was necessitated by these facts: "The society needed to comprehend fully the significance of these ancient remains, to preserve them and not to allow anyone to damage them further; to take photographs of buildings, and their wall-paintings; to copy the inscriptions; to purchase old coins, manuscripts,

and all those items which comprised such a gift from antiquity; to organize the archaeological excavation of tombs where it was necessary, etc.”. As is evident from this the present article, Bakradze outlined a significant programme imbued with progressive ideas for the proposed archaeological society; the question was raised of the necessity of protecting monuments, and the need for their mapping, recording, description, purchase, and excavation. In this way, Bakradze, the author of this programmatic article, was one of the founders and an active member of the society of the Amateurs of Caucasian Archaeology.

In Bakradze’s view, the search for sources and materials of Georgian history was one of the principal approaches in this field of research. He believed quite correctly that materials of Georgian history should be gathered chiefly through historical and archaeological research. Thus, he carried on scientific research in various regions of Georgia, such as Svaneti, Ajara, Guria, Meskhet-Javakheti, and Mingrelia. These historical and archaeological surveys represented but a part of the larger plan that Bakradze had worked out. His ultimate objective was the study of Georgian antiquities as a whole. This goal was naturally beyond the powers of a single scholar, hence the need for pooling scholarly effort. By this time, scholars working in Georgia, though not organised into a corporate body, carefully gathered and studied materials important for Georgian history (Bakradze 1880). This is why the progressive public received the idea of founding a society of amateurs of archaeology with delight and enthusiasm. The work of Ioseliani, Baratashvili, Eristavi, Qipiani, Orbeliani, Bakradze, and others was known in scholarly circles, as it is apparent from the Georgian periodicals of the time. The Charter of the Society of the Amateurs of Caucasian Archaeology was endorsed on 23 March 1873. It was decided that the Society would be set up in Tbilisi, and that its aim would be to protect old buildings, and antiquities in general, from

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destruction. As far as possible, the Society was to purchase antiquities from the population, to search for material on its own account, and to conduct research. Every member was to report on the results of his study to a meeting of the Society, and then publish it on the recommendation of the Committee of the Society. The Society was to establish close scholarly contacts with various similar societies of the Caucasus and of Europe with a view to obtaining new information. The charter envisaged the organization of special expeditions and excavations. The Society was so keen on an intensive archaeological study of antiquity that it offered interested persons awards and certificates. The Charter provided for the transfer of all scholarly papers to the Public Library (now the National Library of the Georgian Parliament), while the material from archaeological excavations would be placed in the custody of the Society's Museum, an institution that subsequently merged with the Caucasian Museum.

The Society's first publication appeared in Tbilisi in 1875. The volume contained reports on the Society's meetings as well as scholarly articles (*Transactions* 1, 1875; 2, 1877). The Archaeological Society had its honorary, full, and founding members, as well as corresponding members. Both local residents and subjects of foreign countries were eligible to work for the Society. The Society counted up to sixty members. Relying on membership fees and charitable donations, the Society suffered from a shortage of funds, preventing it from expanding its activities. Special mention should be made, however, of the contribution of the Society of the Amateurs of Caucasian Archaeology to the organisation of an Archaeological Congress in Tbilisi. The Society was one of the main initiators and organisers of this Congress. At the first meeting of the Society of the Amateurs of Caucasian Archaeology in 1873, a brief review paper was presented. Dealing with the prospects of archaeological studies in the Caucasus, it noted the need for an archaeological study of the Black Sea littoral in view of the

discovery there of such interesting monuments as dolmens. The need for an archaeological study of the environs of Sukhumi, Poti, and Bichvinta was also pointed out. The historical sites whose study was desirable were listed, viz. in West Georgia: Bedia, Nokalakevi, Phasis, Ozurgeti, Kutaisi, Vartsikhe, Oni, Khoni, and Shorapani; in East Georgia: Surami, Atsquri, Odzrkhe, Tmogvi, Akhaltsikhe, Akhagori, Kaspi, Bolnisi, Dmanisi, Mtskheta, Zhinvali, Gremi, Nekresi, Ujarma, and Cheremi. The question was raised at the Congress of the need of compiling an archaeological map of Georgia.

One of the meetings of the Society was addressed by Bakradze. Speaking about the future development of archaeological exploration in Georgia, he focused attention on sites for future excavation that promised best results. He gave priority to the study of the early periods of the Transcaucasus inasmuch as information on those periods was very meagre. Using ancient written sources, he presented an historical overview of ancient Greek colonisation on the eastern Black Sea coast. He referred specifically to Mtskheta and Vashnari as points whose archaeological study would, in his opinion, be very fruitful. To support his view, in 1874 Bakradze excavated near the village of Vashnari (modern Ozurgeti district). The finds included fragments of pottery, glass, iron and bronze wares, as well as the remains of a building, namely parts of a marble pillar, bricks, and tiles.

Bakradze's historico-archaeological studies were summed up in his monograph: *Old Christian Monuments of the Caucasus*, published in a volume of the Society of Amateurs of Caucasian Archaeology. Some 320 sites and monuments are described alphabetically with a scholarly analysis and references to sources. The description of each site is preceded by a review of the relevant local traditions of the region where the site is located. In dating a monument, Bakradze gives priority to its architectural style. Bakradze was one of those researchers who tried to use newly discovered archaeological material in the study of Georgian

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history, for he was well aware of the importance of archaeology when dealing with the ancient history of Georgia. In his monograph *A History of Georgia*, Bakradze notes: "...had we studied the archaeology of the early periods of history, we could have touched upon their way of life and interrelationship and relations with foreign tribes and peoples. But of this we have scant knowledge"; he continues: "There can be no doubt that many objects must come to light in Kartli and Kakheti, Imereti, Meskheta (i.e. various regions of Georgia) and on the Black Sea littoral, shedding light on our past centuries".

With Bakradze's active participation, the Society preserved records in a ledger which included almost all the details of casual archaeological finds in the Caucasus. Here, for example, were recorded three whitish jugs found while digging the foundations of a house at the confluence of the Kurtskhana and Otskhi rivers, near Akhaltsikhe; a casual find of an inscription and a clay pot near the Artanuji fortress; sarcophagi without grave goods, discovered by chance in 1876 in the village of Saguramo and near Urbnisi; a hoard of Bactrian coins brought to light while digging the foundation for a girls' school in Tbilisi.

After Mtskheta, the greatest archaeological interest lay in the antiquities of Qazbegi (modern Qazbegi district). This locality and its adjoining area had claimed the attention of students of antiquities as far back as the 1860s through casual finds of ancient objects. The archaeological depository of the State Museum of Georgia possesses a copper dagger excavated in the village of Ninotsminda; a bronze bell with an ancient Georgian inscription, and a large quantity of material from Qazbegi (formerly the village of Stepantsminda) found through excavation.

In Qazbegi in 1877, in digging the foundation of a house close to the today's museum of the writer Alexander Qazbegi, bronze objects (pins, bracelets) were found, as well as a so-called radial earring, a gold plaque, rings of a bronze chain, and a silver cup, and a copper situla; in

total around 200 items. An adjoining area of the same site was dug in 1878, yielding gold and silver items, bronze bracelets, finger-rings and iron spearheads. Besides Qazbegi, archaeological explorations were carried out in the Sno river valley, namely in Juta, where three burials were excavated, yielding iron arrowheads, bronze temple hoops, bronze and iron bracelets, etc. Nearby, a burial was excavated at Artkhmo, which though robbed, still contained some surviving objects, such as bronze temple hoops and bracelets.

Vani, situated near the confluence of the Sulori and Rioni rivers, is one of the noteworthy archaeological sites that early claimed the attention of those interested in ancient history. In 1876, the Georgian language newspaper *Droeba* (No. 52) reported on the discovery of burials and various gold objects in the village of Sachino (modern Vani). The paper added: "There seems to be considerable wealth in this hill. Who knows how many historical materials found here have been lost owing to the ignorance of the owners, and how much is still hidden in this hill". The discovery of individual items in Vani had been previously reported in 1848, e.g. a male sculptured head, 15 cm in height. In 1880, the Georgian writer and public figure Giorgi Tsereteli (1842-1900) informed the public about objects found in Vani. This helped to start the small-scale excavations conducted in 1889 on the Akhvledianebis Gora hill in Vani, on the instruction of the Archaeological Society. Several burials were excavated and pottery and metal items found.

Between 1878 and 1880 G. Tsereteli carried out archaeological explorations of the Mghvimevi cave (in the Qvirila valley, between Sachkhere and Chiatura). Near the town of Sachkhere, on the slope of the hill of Modinakhe fortress, remains of burials were discovered, featuring pottery and metal wares. In the Qvirila valley, near Shorapani fortress (Sarapanis, mentioned by Strabo), he found remains of an ancient clay water-pipe; near Shorapani burials were found. In Kutaisi,

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near the bank of the Rioni, close to the modern Red Bridge, an ancient bath was unearthed; to the north of the Bagrati church a chance discovery of a damaged burial was made. Elsewhere in Kutaisi, remains of pottery were found in the area of the present-day market, where there had formerly been a garden. Judging by the description, this must have been Colchian pottery.

In 1880 two ancient settlement mounds were discovered during soil extraction at Nasajvarevi between Chognari and Ajameti stations on the Poti-Tbilisi railway line. Successive levels contained pottery, metal tools and weapons such as axes, knives, and arrowheads, and bronze bracelets. Also in the 1880s there was a small museum of archaeology and local history in a school at Sukhumi, but it was later transferred inland. In 1886 small-scale excavations were conducted in Sukhumi, in the western part of today's Rustaveli garden. A coin of Amisos and fragments of pottery were found, including those of an amphora and black- and red-glazed wares. In 1880, eleven burials were excavated in the village of Dighomi, at the confluence of the Dighmis-tsqali and Mtkvari (Kura) rivers. They mostly contained silver jewellery and earthenware vessels. There were no weapons in any of the burials.

As already noted, the Society of Amateurs of Caucasian Archaeology raised the question of holding an archaeological congress in Tbilisi. In 1878 a preparatory Committee headed by Dimitri Bakradze was set up in Tbilisi, a committee that continued to carry out extensive work towards gathering material on the history, archaeology, ethnography, folklore and languages of the Caucasus. Participants included D. Bakradze, D. Jorbenadze, A. Tsagareli, R. Eristavi, G. Tsereteli, A. Berger, E. Weidenbaum, F. Bayern, and G. Radde. The Tbilisi intelligentsia threw themselves into the preparatory work for the congress, which proved a strong stimulus for the development of the humanities, namely the history, archaeology, ethnology and linguistics of Georgia. The Organising Committee of the Archaeological Congress

invited up to forty eminent foreign scholars to the Congress, including O. Montelius (Stockholm), R. Virchow (Berlin), H. Schliemann (Athens), A. Rambaud (Paris), E. Chantre (Lyons), G. Mortillet (Paris), E. Rossi (Rome) and others. The Archaeological Congress was opened on 8 September 1881 in a palace at Rustaveli Avenue (for details see: *Kavkaz* 1881, Nos. 198, 199, 200).

The Congress caused quite a stir in the city. It was attended by up to 850 persons bearing special passes and badges. The Congress was divided into eight sections: the remains of primitive society; the remains of the pagan and Classical periods; the remains of the Christian period; oriental monuments; the remains of art and painting; monuments of languages and writing; linguistics; historical geography and ethnography. In all 81 papers were read at the sessions of the Congress. So far as Georgia was concerned, there was only a short paper on Qazbegi and archaeological sites along the Rioni (mainly in Kutaisi). An exhibition of archaeological items was specially arranged for participants, and the displays in the Caucasian Museum were renewed. Excursions were organised to Mtskheta, Uplistsikhe, and Gelati. The term “archaeological” is highly relative with respect to the Fifth Archaeological Congress, for during its work other sciences were represented on a wider scale than archaeology. The Congress in the Caucasus was of major importance, however, for the development of the humanities in general, even though next to nothing was done for the study of Georgian archaeology as such, or for the improvement of archaeological study and method in general. The eminent historian-cum-archaeologist Ekvtime Taqaishvili recalled that “excavational archaeology was scantily represented at the Tbilisi Congress”.

After the Congress in 1881, the Society of Amateurs of Caucasian Archaeology broke up for lack of funds. But on 28 November 1881 the former members of the Society united in a new Society of Caucasian History and Archaeology. According to its Charter, the scope of the

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activity of this society broadened. It was to study the history of the Caucasus, and primarily the written and material sources of its history; to protect as far as possible these historical monuments and sources from destruction; ancient objects unearthed in archaeological excavations or purchased from the population were to be handed over to the Caucasian Museum (now the State Museum of Georgia), and old manuscripts to the Public Library (now the Library of the Georgian Parliament).

Again the historian Dimitri Bakradze was the initiator, and he directed it until 1886. Two volumes of papers came out in between 1881 and 1885, and discussed surface finds from sites that are still archaeologically interesting today, namely, Akhaltsikhe, Akhalkalaki, Sukhumi, Akhali Atoni, Khutsubani, and Anakopia. After the publication of the second collection of papers of the Proceedings of the Society, it too dissolved for lack of funds, without having done much at all in the way of excavation. Even so, interest in Georgia's antiquities did not wane, as is demonstrated by the interest in the Georgian Black Sea coast (ancient Colchis) shown in 1883 by Heinrich Schliemann, of Troy and Mycenae fame. His interest came about through the story of the arrival of the Argonauts in Colchis in quest of the Golden Fleece.

In 1889, the antiquities of Mtskheta again claimed attention, and this time Bagineti, or Armaztsikhe, produced antiquities. Bakradze was again the driving force, but due to his old age, he was unable to supervise the excavations in person, and charged Ekvtime Taqaishvili (1863-1953) with the task. Work at Bagineti lasted for only three weeks, being discontinued for want of funds. Although the excavations did not last long, they proved to be of interest. A structure was excavated, and three different levels were identified. The remains contained hewn stone, adobe bricks, fragments of marble, remains of glass and clay vessels, and a copper axe. A female head was depicted on a surviving wall. These were the first of many excavations conducted by Taqaishvili. He was later to resume the archaeological study of

Mtskheta, excavating to the west of the Mtskheta station, near Armaziskhevi, where he dug burials built of slabs, that yielded necklaces, finger-rings, ear-rings, bracelets, and glass unguentaria. The remains of a structure built of lime mortar and fragments of vessels were found here too, and Taqaishvili dated the burials to between the first and eighth centuries AD.

In 1896 Taqaishvili excavated on the Akhvlediani Hill at Vani, in the Sulori river valley. He expressed several noteworthy views concerning the hill. Here he found remains of structures of hewn stones, fragments of clay vessels, divers ornaments, coins, metal weapons, etc. The finds here included imported (Egyptian, Greek, Roman) coins and other items. Taqaishvili considered the archaeological finds from Vani against the historical background, taking into account the above-mentioned material found in earlier years. He concluded that the Akhvledianis' Hill held the remains of a classical period city; on the basis of the imported items and coins, he believed the site to be on an ancient trade and transit highway.

Also in 1896, Taqaishvili carried out archaeological explorations near the villages of Sajavakho (on the left bank of the Rioni, in modern Samtredia district) and Khutsubani (on the right bank of the Kintrishi, now Kobuleti district). Finds at Khutsubali had attracted claimed attention as far back as 1879, and this had given rise to Taqaishvili's interest in the locality. He traced cultural levels with remains of pottery and a few metal items. At the archaeological exploration of "Dranda-ghele" at Sajavakho a large quantity of potsherds came to light, and Taqaishvili concluded that he was dealing with a ceramic workshop. In 1902 Bori, on the left bank of the river Borimela, attracted attention. In the course of ploughing, local residents found rich burials containing gold and silver jewellery, and vessels (especially interesting is a silver cup with a representation of a horse at an altar and an inscription), and coins (both Roman and Parthian). Near Tsikhisdziri (modern Kobuleti

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district) first to third century AD gold and silver jewellery, vessels, coins, and stones with carved images came to light while digging the foundations for a house.

Rich items, known as the Akhalgori Treasure, were found accidentally during earth removal near Sadzeguri (in Akhalgori district). The items include: gold earrings, torques, temple hoops, bracelets, a necklace with images of toads, finger-rings, silver phialai, and horse harness (now in the State Museum of Georgia). In the same year bronze axes and several metal bars were found while digging near Akhalkalaki (now in Kaspi district). The items were purchased by Taqaishvili for the Caucasian Museum. The discovery of these items prompted Taqaishvili to assume the existence of a smelting workshop for metal.

Taqaishvili carried out small-scale excavations at the confluence of the Baniskhevi and Mtkvari (Kura) rivers. A burial was found containing bronze bracelets, fibulae, sard beads, etc. In this period Taqaishvili explored Sachkhere, discovering several copper axes, bracelets, fibulae and fragments of a clay vessel. He was at this time the head of the newly established Historical-Ethnographic Society, and kept a watchful eye on casual finds made on Georgian soil in order to purchase them for the Caucasian Museum.

Taqaishvili was something of a pioneer in that he made some proposals concerning archaeology in Georgia that were to prove highly influential. He expressed the need to employ local ethnographic and folklore in interpreting archaeological finds; we have already mentioned his views on the character and significance of the location of the Vani city-site; he also stated which sites, such as Vani, Sachkhere, Trialeti-Tsalka, and Bagineti should be studied as a first priority. At the same period Taqaishvili drew up the curriculum of an archaeological course for Tbilisi University students.

In 1924 the Georgian government issued a decree “On the Protection of Antiquities and Monuments of Art”, and since then all

unwarranted archaeological digging, without the permission of relevant scholarly institutions has been forbidden in Georgia. In addition, the state took over the care and protection of all archaeological discoveries. Initially, Tbilisi State University, the State Museum of Georgia and the Georgian Historical-Ethnographic Society were charged with conducting archaeological excavations and safe-keeping of the items brought to light. Subsequently, these were joined by a newly-established Institute of Archaeology, attached to the Ministry of Education. The character of the latter Institute was, however, oriented more to the study of trends in art. In the early period archaeological discoveries were largely of a casual nature, with no planned archaeological studies being carried out.

In this respect, the excavations carried out by Giorgi Nioradze in 1925-1931 at *i.a.* Karsniskhevi, Zemo Avchala, Sasireti, Devis Khvreli, and Sakazhia were an exception. He had received a professional archaeological education in Europe and was well acquainted with the advanced methods of field archaeological work of the time. Returning to Georgia in 1925, he was appointed head of the archaeological department of the State Museum of Georgia. With a view to revitalizing field archaeological explorations, he rallied round himself the scholarly forces of the old and new generations, such as S. Makalatia, G. Gozalishvili, S. Iordanishvili, G. Muskhelishvili, G. Chitaia and others; individuals who were at the time active in various regions of Georgia, such as at Plavismani, Tagiloni, Iqalto, Nokalakevi, Kiketi, or Tsitsamuri.

In 1925 Nioradze restored the archaeology course at Tbilisi University that had been initiated by E. Taqaishvili in 1918. At first Nioradze was Chair of Ancient History, and from 1934 Chair of the History of Material Culture, created in the Faculty of History, uniting the specialities of the history of archaeology, ethnography and art. Nioradze was Chair until 1953, after which Otar Japaridze was to hold

the post for many years. The chair of archaeology at Tbilisi State University became the principal seat for training professional archaeologists in Georgia, and most Georgian archaeologists have learned the basics of archaeology in this department.

While the State University was the main forge for new specialists of archaeology, the State Museum of Georgia was the principal repository of the archaeological material discovered in Georgia. The institutions maintained close contacts. In 1919, the Caucasian Museum, founded in 1852, was renamed the Museum of Georgia. In 1929-1930 the collections of the Historical and Ethnographic Society and of the Museum of Antiquities of the University were transferred to the Museum of Georgia. Georgian archaeology was mainly served by one department of the Museum, that of prehistoric archaeology.

As noted above, in 1925 Giorgi Nioradze headed the archaeological studies conducted by the State Museum of Georgia. Special mention should be made of his contribution to the study of Georgian Palaeolithic sites. This research proved finally that man inhabited Georgian territory prior to the Bronze Age, successfully challenging an earlier view that Palaeolithic man had lived neither in Georgia nor the Caucasus.

In 1926-1931 the Palaeolithic dwelling at Deviskhvreli (Kharagauli district) was excavated. On the basis of the finds, Nioradze published a monograph, the first significant work on the Palaeolithic in Georgia. Subsequently, a model of the cave was constructed at the State Museum of Georgia, illustrating the life of Stone Age man for the general public. The excavations at Deviskhvreli were followed by the study of other archaeological sites. In particular, the Sakazhia cave (Terjola district) was excavated in 1936. In 1934-1936 the Mghvimevi cave (Chiatura district), and the Palaeolithic habitation at Yashtkhva near Sukhumi in Abkhazia were excavated.

1936 proved an important year for the development of Georgian

archaeology. In that year the Academician N. Marr Institute of Language, History and Material Culture (the Georgian abbreviation of which was ENIMKI) was set up on the basis of the former Institute of Caucasian Studies (the former Historico-Ethnographical Institute, founded by N. Marr). The newly-founded Institute became a leading Kartvelological centre, and along with other branches of Kartvelology, a Department of Georgian Archaeology, Anthropology and Ethnography was opened at the Institute. In 1938 the Archaeology Department was detached from the latter, and it was united with the Archaeological Institute of the Ministry of Education. G. Nioradze was appointed head of the Archaeology Department of ENIMKI, and this Department became the main centre of archaeological studies in Georgia. An appropriate scientific and material base necessary for the conduct of extensive, planned field archaeological work was created at the Department.

Apart from the Archaeological Department at ENIMKI, significant archaeological work was carried out at the Museum of Rustaveli and his Age. This museum was created essentially to organize an exhibition of the Middle Ages, in particular of the period of Rustaveli. In 1936-1939 this museum conducted excavations at Dmanisi, Gudarekhi, Bolnisi, Geguti and other places. An inscription in the *asomtavaruli* script recorded in Bolnisi and dated to of 492-493 proved especially valuable in that it is one of the oldest dated inscriptions in Georgian.

Academician Ivane Javakhishvili made as substantial contribution to archaeology as he did in other Kartvelological fields. From the start he correctly observed that “Archaeology must be counted the principal subject for the ancient period of history”, and that “Archaeology, as a branch of science having its own method, is an arena of research of relevant specialists and an ordinary historian usually makes use of its gains for his own purposes”.

Javakhishvili considered it necessary to use archaeological

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evidence in the study of the earliest period of Georgian history. In the very first edition of his *History of the Georgian Nation* use is made of archaeological material, which the 1928 edition of the same book is prefaced by a special part: "The material culture of the Caucasus and the Georgians", in which the Bronze and Iron Age material culture is discussed according to the archaeological evidence then available. Photos and drawings of archaeological material were also added to the second edition.

Javakhishvili took part in field work from 1930, when he was appointed as one of directors of the Nokalakevi (Archaeopolis) excavations, but digging at Nokalakevi unfortunately only lasted for two months, and was discontinued. From 1936 Javakhishvili became more actively involved in fieldwork, giving general guidance to the archaeological excavations at Dmanisi, Gudarekhi, Geguti, and Bolnisi. Javakhishvili was the first to draw up a scientific plan for an archaeological study of medieval sites. It included the study of old city sites (planning, building material, etc.), and he stressed the need for the study of water conduits and irrigation canals, this being a novelty in research at the time.

In 1937 Javakhishvili published an article in the *Moambe* of ENIMKI entitled "Our tasks in the sphere of linguistics and history of culture", which was programmatic for Georgian archaeology as well. The author noted which studies ought to be carried out according to the plan: historical trade routes, with accounts of crossroads, and using all relevant knowledge of the ancient historical evidence and focusing appropriate attention on material that might help in solving the principal problems in the history of culture.

In 1937, archaeological excavations commenced at Mtskheta along Javakhishvili's guidelines, and conducted by a team from the ENIMKI Institute. The expedition discovered traces of an ancient bath on the right bank of the Mtkvari, at the confluence of the Armaziskhevi.

Formal excavations at Mtskheta began as the result of a rescue excavation at Samtavro. The cemetery there had had been encroached on by new buildings and the local authority planned to build there, thus threatening an archaeological site of paramount importance for Georgian history. The question of the damaged necropolis in the Samtavro Field was discussed at a meeting of the ENIMKI scientific council, and it was determined to undertake archaeological research there. On this basis the Mtskheta-Samtavro Archaeological Expedition was formed. It started work on 27 October 1938 with Javakhishvili at its head. He took charge of both the academic and practical sides with characteristic energy.

The tireless labours of the members of the Mtskheta Archaeological Expedition were rewarded by discoveries of great scholarly significance, of burials and other finds, which indicate a high level of urban existence in Georgia of that period. The Mtskheta Archaeological Expedition turned into the principal school for training professional archaeologists. Here nearly every representative of the senior generation of Georgian archaeologists was introduced to the scientific processing of archaeological material through fieldwork. The first stage of the scientific work of the Mtskheta Archaeological Expedition was published in a fundamental work, *Mtskheta I: Archaeological Remains of Armaziskhevi*.

In 1936-1940 rich barrow burials were excavated in Trialeti in connection with the construction of the Khrami Water Power Station reservoir. A series of extraordinary Bronze Age remains were discovered here, known by the name of "Trialeti Culture". Academician B. Kuftin was able, on the basis of a study of Trialeti, and of archaeological material in general, to show how Georgian culture had deep local roots. In 1941 an exhibition, "Trialeti and Mtskheta: Seats of Ancient Georgian Culture", opened in the State Museum of Georgia. This was the first popular exhibition of the

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brilliant archaeological material from Mtskheta and Trialeti, and the exhibition came about thanks to the energetic scientific and organizational efforts of Academician Simon Janashia. After the death of I. Javakhishvili, the entire burden of the general direction of archaeological work in Georgia devolved on Janashia. Subsequently N. Berdzenishvili took over this task. When ENIMKI was set up, its Department of Archaeology was assigned the role of planning archaeological work on a national basis.

Planned archaeological studies in Georgia were carried out on an especially wide scale in the 1980s. In this period excavations were carried out in, Rustavi, Bakurtsikhe, Gremi Dmanisi, Khovle, Ujarma, Nadarbazevi, Tbilisi, Sagarejo, Tetrisqaro, Bolnisi, Gudarekhi, Samshvilde, Urbnisi, Nabi, Vashnari, Eshera, Tvqviavi, Gelati, Skanda, Shorapani, Kldeeti, Yashtkhva, Sakazhia, Sagvarjile, Odishi, Tetrniste, Sakao, Sachkhere, Brili, Anaklia, Dablagomi, Kobuleti-Pichvnari, Ureki, Quleri, Bichvinta, Geguti, Sukhumi, and elsewhere. The first university textbook, *The Archaeology of Georgia* was published based largely on the material from these sites.

In 1941 the Institute of History was separated from the Institute of Language, History and Material Culture, and from 1943 it bore the name of I. Javakhishvili. As a result, the archaeologists working at ENIMKI were transferred to the Institute of History, Archaeology and Ethnography of the Georgian Academy of Sciences. At the time its detachment from ENIMKI, the Institute of History had only one department of archaeology. Subsequently a whole archaeological sector was created on the basis of this department, uniting several archaeological departments.

An urgent need for archaeological work grew as a consequence of house building on a widespread scale. At the insistence of Professor Otar Lordkipanidze, a Centre for Archaeological Studies (CAS) was set up at the Institute of History, Archaeology and Ethnography in 1977.

The principal departments of the CAS are: the Palaeolithic period, Stone and Bronze Age, Classical period Iberia and Colchis, the Middle Ages and interdisciplinary studies. Cardinal problems of Georgian archaeology are studied at the CAS through the description and classification of Georgia's archaeological sites, and via consideration of such topics as: the original settlement of man on Georgian territory; the inception and development of a manufacturing economy; the ethnogeny of the Georgians; bronze and iron metallurgy; the genesis of polities on Georgian territory (the kingdoms of Colchis and Iberia), palaeo-urbanistics; archaeological culture and socio-economic structures, contacts of ancient cultures with other worlds; medical centres, etc.

The complex study of individual archaeological artefacts is carried out in the various departments of the Centre for Archaeological Studies. There are research programmes in: spectral, metallographic, archaeomagnetic, palaeozoological, dendrological analysis, as well as sections for the conservation of archaeological artefacts and the interpretation of aerial photographs. Since 1985 underwater archaeological studies have been carried on under the direction of G. Gamkrelidze on the Black Sea coast and at Lake Paliastomi. The off-shore shelves of Bichvinta, Sukhumi, Anaklia, Poti and Tsikhisdziri have been studied hydroarchaeologically (Gamkrelidze 1992; 1993: 30-48). The Centre for Archaeological Studies (now the Otar Lordkipanidze Centre of Archaeology of the Georgian National Museum) is at present the main institution for archaeological research in Georgia. Its scientific collaborators conduct excavations in all regions of Georgia. Brief reports on these excavations are published annually in the collection *Archaeological Field Studies* (see the Bibliography).

The discovery of hominid skulls in the lower layers of the Dmanisi site in the south-eastern part of Georgia should be considered as the major success of modern Georgian archaeology. The age of the skulls has been established at 1.8 million years. Primitive stone tools and

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diverse palaeofaunal and palaeobotanical material were attested in the context of the skulls. The remains of ancient man found in Dmanisi belong to the *homo erectus* type, representing the earliest evidence for the spread of hominids in Western Eurasia.

More than 350 Paleolithic habitations have been traced on Georgian territory to date. Important stratified sites include: Kudaro I, Kudaro II, Tsona, Tsopi, Jruchula, Ortvala, Apiancha, Sakazhia, Edzani, Kvachara, Darkveti, Sagvarjile, Tetri Mghvime, which are situated on the Black Sea littoral, in the Rioni-Qvirila valley, on Javakheti Plateau and Kvemo Kartli. The stone and osteological material brought to light on these sites provides interesting evidence for the life of Palaeolithic man. On the basis of this material it may be said that beginning with the earliest stage of the Paleolithic period to the start of early farming, an uninterrupted picture of human life on Georgian territory is attested. Georgia's Upper Palaeolithic displays a certain similarity with contemporary remains in Mesopotamia and Syria-Palestine (*Archaeology of Georgia*, 1991).

As a result of new explorations, numerous Neolithic archaeological sites have been discovered in Georgia (Kighuradze 1986), in particular: Anaseuli, Palauri, Darkveti, Khroshi, and Chkhortoli. The latest stage of these sites is dated to the sixth millennium BC. On settlement sites of this stage we already come across farming tools such as sickle blades or querns. These artefacts point to the transition effected by the early inhabitants to farming and livestock-breeding, and which are indicative of important changes under way in society. The last phase of this process is clearly visible in Early Farming Culture sites of the 6th-4th millennia BC in Georgia (Kiguradze 1986).

The archaeological study of the Kvemo Kartli settlements of the 5th-4th millennia BC has revealed an ancient local farming society, whose economic basis of life was farming based on simple irrigation, as well as livestock breeding. These archaeological sites are: Arukhló I-II,

Shulaveris gora, Imiris gora, Khramis gora, etc. Excavations brought to light adobe structures, household facilities, diverse pottery, stone and bone tools (largely for farming use). Diverse palaeobotanical material was also found here, such as evidence for millet, barley, durum and common wheat.

A new stage begins in the development of local society from the second half of the 4th millennium BC. In Georgian scholarly literature this stage is referred to as the Kura-Araxes culture. This archaeological culture spread in Transcaucasia, north-eastern Caucasia, eastern Anatolia, and northern Iran, covering a fairly large area. In Georgia the following are considered to be classic sites of this culture: Sachkhere barrows, Kvatshlebi, Khizanaant gora, Amiranis gora, Ilto, Samshvilde, Koda, Jhinvali settlement site, Ghrmakhevistavi, and Dighomi (*Archaeology of Georgia* 1992; Japaridze 2006).

According to modern scholarly research, the Kura-Araxes culture is considered to have been that of an agricultural, livestock breeding society. In it, metallurgy becomes detached as a separate branch from the first half of the 3rd millennium BC. Archaeological study of the end of the 3rd millennium and first half of the 2nd millennium BC (the Middle Bronze Age period in Georgia) is being carried on successfully, the way having been brilliantly paved by the discovery of the barrow culture of Trialeti (Kuftin 1941). Similar archaeological evidence was found on Gomarteli plateau, Dmanisi district. In the 1970s and 1980s, new centres of this culture were attested in Mtsketa, Kakheti, and elsewhere. Excavations revealed burial structures built with wooden beams, rich in artefacts (burial wagons, gold and silver jewellery, bronze weapons, black-burnished pottery, etc.) (Japaridze 2003).

According to the latest studies, Georgia in the second half of the 2nd millennium witnessed the accelerated development of productive forces, primarily of metallurgy, the further advance of farming and the emergence of the antecedents of early city-dwelling. Study of sites of

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this type stems from the Samtavro necropolis in Mtskheta.

Numerous Late Bronze-Early Iron Age archaeological sites have been discovered in Georgia: settlements, burial grounds, temples, traces of metallurgical and ceramic manufacture. Sites of this period have been recorded and partly excavated and studied: in Shida Kartli; on the southern slope of the Central Caucasus Range, in the Iori and Aragvi valleys, Kvemo Kartli, Meskhet-Javakheti, Kakheti, Kolkheti, Svaneti, Racha, etc. A major Late Bronze-Early Iron Age settlement, resembling a proto-urban type settlement, called Treli gorebi, has been discovered at Dighomi, near Tbilisi. Its excavation is under way.

Georgian archaeologists have made some headway in the study of iron metallurgy. Judging by the archaeological data iron production appears to begin in the 14th cent. BC, while its wide adoption is presumed from the 12th cent. BC. Hundreds of artefacts relating to iron manufacture have been found in the shape of iron smelting furnaces, slags and ore. These finds have been made at Paluri, Nigvziani, Ureki, Merkheti, Brili, and elsewhere. An astonishingly large number of iron agricultural tools and weapons have been discovered on west Georgian sites of the 8th-7th cent. BC (Khakhutaishvili 1987, 2009).

In the Classical period, the kingdoms of Colchis and Iberia (Kartli) emerged, both well known from Greek, Roman and Georgian written sources. This led to the eventual creations of a united state of Georgia. (Gamkrelidze 1993, 5-101). Georgian archaeologists have achieved considerable success in the study of these kingdoms in the Classical period. To date city sites, repeatedly mentioned in Georgian and Greek sources, have been studied archaeologically, namely: Mtskheta-Armaztsikhe (Apakidze, Gobejishvili, Kalandadze, and Lomtadidze 1955), Nastakisi, Uplistsikhe, Dzalisi, Sarkine, Shorapani, Bichvinta, Apsarus, and others. Sites of the same period are: Samadlo, Tsikhiagora, Vani, Eshera, Kobuleti-Pichvnari, Saikhe, Sakorkio, Sukhumi-Dioskurias, Ochamchire, etc. Most of these sites bear

characteristics of urbanization, *viz.*, defensive works, an acropolis, public and cult buildings built of hewn stone and roofed with tiles, baths (Lordkipanidze 1991; 2002; Gamkrelidze 2002; Gamkrelidze and Pirtskhalava 2005; Braund 1994).

Through the long-standing endeavours of Georgian archaeologists the Colchis of the Greek and Roman written sources has emerged as a real country with statehood, a developed agriculture, cities, diversified craftsmanship, weapons, distinctive pottery, toreutics, goldsmithing, architecture, coinage, etc.

The artefacts from the above-mentioned sites have proved to be principal source for the study of such outstanding scholarly problems as the social stratification of Classical period Georgia, the typological and functional classification of settlements and towns, trade, economic and cultural contacts with the outer world, craftsmanship, agriculture, monetary circulation, ideology, the study of the fine arts, architecture, etc.

Georgian medieval archaeological sites are more numerous in comparison with those of other periods. Georgian archaeologists have studied medieval city and village sites, fortresses and strongholds, evidence for manufacture, cult architecture, sanitary systems, etc. The study of specific artefacts is under way: pottery, metal, glass, ornaments, arms, numismatic material, etc. (Lomtadze 1977).

Since the 1960s and 1970s wide-scale field work has been conducted on medieval sites: in Tbilisi, Rustavi, Ujarma, Vardtsikhe, Jhinvali, Kazreti, Mtsdziri (Vani district), Balichi, Dmanisi, Akhalkalaki (Javakheti district), Gavazi, Telavi, Poti (near Lake Paliastomi), etc.

The main aim and subject of research of the collaborators of the Centre of Archaeology working in the Classical period and the Early Middle Ages is:

A statistical and typological classification of Classical and Early

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Medieval archaeological sites brought to light in Georgia.

The bio-geo-environment (flora, fauna, climate, sea transgression, etc.) in the Classical period and the Early Middle Ages according to archaeological data.

The genesis of polity; questions of the formation and development of statehood in Georgia according to archaeological data.

Research into social stratification in Georgia in the Classical and Early Medieval periods according to archaeological data.

Mapping Georgia's Classical and Early Medieval archaeological sites.

Analyses of the structure and type of burials, as well as burial complexes; research into the burial customs and rites according to archaeological data from Classical and Early Medieval sites.

The study of problems of the genesis of urbanism.

Research into Classical and Early Medieval Georgia's political and economic structures from an archaeological standpoint.

Research into craftsmanship; metal, ceramic, glass, textile and leather workshops.

Research into the character of trade: roads, bridges, passes, sea- and river routes, main transit roads; means of transport (by land, sea, river, etc.).

The study of the circulation of coins and of trade.

The demographic situation and the study of the migration according to archaeological data.

The character and type of settlements. The morphology of structures and planning peculiarities.

The study of building materials (stone, wood, adobe, brick, tile) in settlements and the technology of construction.

The study of the planning and architecture of Classical and Early Medieval farming establishment.

The study of small-scale sculpture.

The typological study of Classical and Early Medieval local and foreign

containers (amphorae).

Research into Classical toreutics.

The study of Classical terracottas.

The study of black-gloss and red-gloss pottery.

The study of glyptics.

The study of jewellery.

Research into Iberian-Colchian relations with the Classical and Iranian worlds (Greek, Achaemenid, Pontic, Bosphoran, Albanian, Parthian, Roman, Sasanian, etc.). Study of Classical and Medieval foreign wares discovered in Georgia.

Iberia and Colchis in the system of Near Eastern and Caucasian archaeological cultures.

The study of irrigation systems.

Research on Early Medieval Georgia's relations with the outside world (Byzantium, Iran, the Near East, the Northern Black Sea area, Europe).

The archaeological study of armaments and fortification works.

The genesis of Christian culture in Georgia according to archaeological data.

The juxtaposition of written sources and archaeological data as exemplified by Georgian archaeological material.

Research into sacred structures and artefacts in Classical Georgia.

Cardinal problems of Georgian archaeology of the relevant periods are being studied at the Centre of Archaeology mainly according to the topics listed above, but in other ways as well. By means of a specially created questionnaire, all the archaeological data are prepared for statistical-typological and systemic-structural analysis. This facilitates the subsequent solution of the principal aim, i.e. the reconstruction of historical-cultural regularities reflected in the material data.

The Centre's Archaeological Expeditions conduct fieldwork throughout Georgia in order to discover and study new archaeological sites: settlements, fortification and religious structures, burial grounds,

centres of metallurgical and ceramic manufacture, and unique specimens of art. Special attention is given to field and rescue excavation on new construction sites.

Papers by archaeologists belonging to institutions that were the predecessors of the Otar Lordkipanidze Centre of Archaeology were first published in the *Enimkis moambe* (“Proceedings of ENIMKI”), then in the “Proceedings of the Institute of History” and in the collected papers *Mimomkhilveli* (“Reviewer”). Since 1955 Georgian archaeologists have issued a separate systematic publication *Material for the Archaeology of Georgia and the Caucasus*. In later years other archaeological collections were also founded and published serially, namely, *Archaeological Sites of Feudal Georgia*, *Questions of Georgian Archaeology*, *Vani*, *The Great Pitiunt*, *Mtskheta*, *Tbilisi*, *The Archaeological Sites of Kavtiskhevi*, *Archaeological Studies on New Construction Sites*, *Proceedings of the Kakheti Archaeological Expedition*, *Proceedings of the Zhinvali Archaeological Expedition*, *Dziebani* (“Researches”) of the CAS, *Iberia-Colchis: Researches on the Archaeology and History of Georgia in the Classical and Early Medieval Periods*, *Journal of Georgian Archaeology*, etc. (Kacharava 1997; *Iberia-Colchis* 1 [2003], 2 [2005], 3 [2007], 4 [2008], 5 [2009], 6 [2010]; *Journal of Georgian Archaeology*, 2004; Kacharava 1987).

The principal repository of the archaeological material brought to light on Georgian territory is the National Museum of Georgia, the oldest scientific educational institution of the country. Today it is engaged in a fruitful field of archaeological studies. The Museum has a special restoration and conservation department, and it facilitates the protection and popularization of newly discovered archaeological monuments.

Other regional institutes also carry out archaeological research, namely the D. Gulia Abkhazian Institute of History, and the Tskhinvali Scientific Research Institute and the Batumi Scientific Research

Institute. Special archaeological departments exist at these institutions.

Archaeological work carried out on Georgian territory is supervised by the Archaeological Commission which grants permission to conduct excavations. Without such permission archaeological excavations on Georgian territory are forbidden and are punishable by law.

The universally acknowledged successes of Georgian archaeology, one of the branches of modern Kartvelology, have come about thanks to the work of generations of Georgian archaeologists. Archaeological research in Georgia has confirmed the existence of sites of all stages of human life and development, ranging from the Palaeolithic to the Medieval period. Proof of this success is to be found in the several thousands of papers and monographs published by Georgian archaeologists over the years.

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THE LAND OF COLCHIS AND THE CITY OF PHASIS

(Towards a historical-archaeological study of western Georgia in the Classical period)

The land of Colchis, famous throughout the Classical world, from where – according to the celebrated ancient Greek myth – the Argonauts stole the Golden Fleece, was on the eastern coast of the Black Sea, i. e. on the western territory of modern Georgia. The valley of the Rioni, frequently referred to in ancient Greco-Roman sources as the Phasis, lies in central Colchis. According to the archaeological and written sources: Herodotus, Scylax of Caryanda, Hippocrates, Apollonius Rhodius, Strabo, Appian, Flavius Arrian, Marcus Manilius, Procopius, Agathias and others, as well as by its physico-geographic environment, the Rioni (Phasis) valley must have occupied an economically developed position.

The Rioni rises from the mountain glacier Phasis on the south slope of the Caucasus Range. Up to Kutaisi the Rioni is a turbulent mountain stream. Leaving Kutaisi, the Rioni flows slowly in the Kolkhian plain. By its geographic position the Rioni constituted a convenient trade-and-transit waterway. Evidence on the use of this river as a commercial waterway is mainly extant in the works of Strabo and Pliny. Strabo describes the waterways of the Rioni and the Qvirila (Phasis): *“It is (Phasis) navigated as far as Sarapana, a fortress capable of admitting the population even of a city. From here people go by land to the river Cyrus in four days by a wagon-road.”*(Strabo, XI, II, 17). The continuation of the waterway is described by Strabo thus: *“And he further says that it is navigable and that large quantities of Indian wares are brought down on it to the Hyrcanian sea, and thence on that sea are transported to Albania and brought down on the Cyrus river and through the region that comes next after it to the Euxine.”* (Strabo, XI, II, 3) (The Loeb

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Classical Library, London, 1957). It is thus quite clear that Strabo describes the trade route running from India to the Black Sea through the rivers Cyrus and Phasis. Pliny also describes the same route [Latyshev, V. 1904: 178].

The fact is worthy of attention that it is along this route that settlements of the Classical and early medieval periods were situated, the archaeological study of which yielded items of foreign manufacture (pottery, adornments, metal and glass ware). Such settlements at the Rioni river are attested: in Kutaisi; Patriketi-Vartsikhe [Japaridze, V. 1977: 43-50]; Vani [Lordkipanidze, O. 1977: 159-175]; Tsikhesulori [Mitsishvili, M. 1977: 32-47]; Shuamta [Gamkrelidze, G. 1982: 49-117], Dablagomi [Tolordava, V. 1977: 67-78]; Dapnari [Kighuradze, N. 1976]; Natekhebi (Lake Paliastomi) [Gamkrelidze, G. 1992: 30-48; Gamkrelidze, G. 1987: 98-117], and others, with adjoining territory (Pl. I).

Hippocrates supplies interesting information about the natural data of the Phasis-Rioni basin in his treatise "On Air, Waters and Places", in which he speaks of the influence exerted by the climatic and physical-geographic conditions of the place and its population. It is believed that Hippocrates had visited Colchis and that his reports are the result of immediate observations [Qaukhchishvili, T. 1965: 20]. His evidence appears to deal with the lower and partly middle course of the Rioni. But some data extend to the entire basin. For example, when it concerns marshes and numerous canals the territory in the lower course must be implied: warm weather and frequent rainfalls could not have been characteristic of a small area, for they were the same almost all over Colchis. Hence it may be assumed that the region under study and especially its adjoining elevations were convenient places for farming, and accordingly for settlement. As to forests and structures built of planed wooden beams and apparently roofed with reeds, their traces have been found today too on elevations along the

Rioni, where they could by no means have been erected on water. This circumstance points to the fact that the author was familiar only with the lower, marshy course of the Rioni (Phasis), which has remained the same to the present day. The question arises as to what induces people to live in houses built on marshland. The local residents were probably harassed by their neighbours; hence they moved to the lower course of the Rioni-Phasis and began to build their dwellings on the marsh, for such structures were almost inaccessible. At many places along the Rioni remains of plaster and beams are attested, which – with the aid of archaeological material – are dated to the 4th cent. BC. The evidence of Hippocrates also relates to the same period.

A piece of information of our present interest is contained in Xenophon's *Anabasis* (see *Anabasis* V, 6, 36). Here the land of the Phasianoi implies the Valley of the Rioni (Phasis). The region they intended to conquer could not have been poor at that time, Apollonius Rhodius, a 3rd-century BC author, writes about the land of Aea (Aia)-Colchis-Phasis in his poem the *Argonautica* (III, 215). The poem is the last verse version of the myth. Apollonius Rhodius describes the city of Kutaisi in the middle course of the Rioni. According to Strabo's *Geography* (XI, 11; II, 17), Colchis is notable for its fruits and all that is needed for shipbuilding. The country produces much timber, floating it down the rivers. The inhabitants manufacture much linen and resin.

Interesting evidence on the Phasis valley is supplied by Pomponius Mela (1st century) in: “inde is locus est ubi finem ductus a Bosphoro tractus accipit, atque inde se in sinu adverse litoris flexus adtollens angustissimum Ponti facit angulum. hic sunt **Colchi**, huc **Phasis** erumpit, hic eodem nomine quo amnis est a Themistagora Milesio deductum oppidum, . . .” (Pomponii Melae, *Chorographia*. . ., I, 108). More diverse evidence on the Phasis valley is preserved in the work of Pliny the Elder's “*Natural History*”. It has been

ascertained that in describing Colchis he had recourse to various sources. He reports on towns lying along the course of the Rioni; the concrete evidence on them, adduced by him, is of entirely real historical-geographic character. Pliny's evidence on the navigability of the Rioni-Phasis attracts special attention. He (Pliny, VI, II) points out that the Phasis is navigable to the mouth of the Surium river (the name resembles the Sulori river).

Special interest attaches to Arrian's work: *Periplus Euxini* (2nd century). He was the Governor of Cappadocia in 131; he undertook a voyage along the Black Sea coast to ensure the security of the borders. Arrian personally inspected the strongholds existing there, informing the Emperor Hadrian in an official report on the voyage. Particularly interesting in Arrian's *Periplus* is his detailed description of the city at the mouth of the Phasis (Arrian, 9, 10).

A list of the towns of the Rioni valley is given by the Alexandrian scholar Ptolemy (2nd cent.) in his treatise "Geographical Guide" (Book V, Ch. 9). In this work he enumerates towns and villages; the towns: Mechles, Media, Saraca, Surium, Zadrida, Aea (Aia); the rivers: Phasis, Hyppus, Cyaneus, Harius. Valuable evidence is supplied by Dion Cassius in his work "Roman History" (XXXVII, 3).

The fortification works along the Phasis are mentioned by the Byzantine historian Zosymus in his "History" [Qaukhchishvili, S. 1961: 269] but, unfortunately, he does not list them, nor point to their location. Much trustworthy written evidence is found in the work of 6th century Byzantine writer Procopius of Caesarea (BG VIII, 14, 17; BP, II, 29; Agathias, II, 19, 22; III, 6, 7, 19, 28; IV, 9, 13). According to Agathias Scholasticus, during the war in the 6th century the Byzantine navy, using the Rioni, supported her troops against Iran. To this end, at the confluence of the Tekhuri with the Phasis a strategic beachhead was built, where light ships were usually anchored (Agathias, II, 23).

Of the Georgian sources special interest with respect to the region under study is evoked by “The Lives of the Georgian Kings and Their Forefathers and Descendants”, ascribed to Leonti Mroveli. The source describes the history of Georgia from ancient times. The chronicle mentions King Parnavaz of Kartli (Iberia), who confirmed Prince Kuji as ruler of lands in Colchis (for details see: [Gamkrelidze, G. 1985: 86-97]).

According to historical sources, the Rioni (Phasis) was the main navigable river of Colchis (Western Georgia). Owing to the mass felling of forests in the 19th-20th centuries, the water level of the Rioni lowered drastically, having a negative effect on the navigation in the region. The Rioni (Phasis) flows in the Kolkhian Lowland, between the foothills of the Greater and Lesser Caucasus. The Kolkhian Lowland has the form of a triangle adjoining the sea with its base. In the east it reaches the vicinity of the confluence of the Qvirila. In terms of its geographical environment the Kolkhian Lowland and the foothills surrounding it constitute a unique natural region, allowing setting up intensive agricultural production. The local climate enables cultivation of a wide range of high-yielding crops. The Kolkhian lowland is characterized by a humid subtropical climate. The length of the vegetation period allows to growing several harvests annually. In the western, depressed part of the lowland, there are swampy soils, and in the eastern part podzol soils. In terms of agro productive indices these soils are more favourable. Such soils are successfully used to plant vineyards [Maruashvili, L. 1970: 201].

At settlements of the Early Bronze Age of the Kolkhian Lowland (pl. II) fruits of cultivated plants have been found – many-rowed barley, unbearded wheat (type of common), millet, foxtail millet, spelt, etc. Written sources referred to the cultivation in Colchis of barley, wheat, chestnut, hazelnut, grapes, apples, vegetables, etc; exported from Colchis were: timber, honey, flax, etc. A comparison of

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the evidence of Greek authors with the specificities of the modern Kolkhian Lowland shows that the nature of this region has not suffered substantial changes over the past 2500 years, barring the reduction of the areas of forest tracts [Janelidze, Ch. 1980: 150]. The upper reaches of the Rioni are rich in various minerals, where from early times copper was mined, having played a leading role in the development of copper and bronze metallurgy. Tin, gold, cornelian, antimonite and rock crystal were mined here.

Such is the geographic environment of the Rioni valley that exerted cardinal influence on the course of the history of ancient Colchis. The archaeological material, discovered in Rioni valley, attests also to the important place held by the cited region in the period under study in the economic life of Colchis. Exploratory archaeological work was carried out on the Dateshidze-Gabashvili hill in Kutaisi; a cultural layer of the Early Iron Age and traces of iron-smelting manufacture were brought to light. A cultural layer was also found here; Colchian pottery of the 4th-5th cent. BC. is represented by fragments of economic and household utensils. Fragments of black-gloss Attic pottery came to light in the same layer. There also is much plaster - scorched clay plastering with imprints of wood. On the south slope of the same hill a dense layer of scorched plastering was uncovered. Fragments of scorched beams also came to light here. The area of the excavations totals 550 sq. m.; basins, bowls, mugs, etc were found; the pottery is largely dated to the 6th-5th cent. BC [Kvirkvelia, G. 1978: 62].

According to the data on archaeological excavations on the Gabashvili, Dateshidze and Ukimerioni hills in Kutaisi, an urban-type settlement of the 6th-5th cent. BC was found to be concentrated. An area of approximately 25 ha was enclosed with defensive walls; towers and other defensive works had been constructed. The high level of the sanitary condition of the city-stronghold is attested by the

ruins of two bathhouses with heating units whitewashed with hydraulic solution. Cultural layers of the 7th-1st cent. BC were discovered on the Parnali hill in v. Chognari, in the environs of Kutaisi. Among items of the 6th cent. BC note should be made of a miniature sculptured representation of a ram, fragments of black-gloss Attic pottery of the 5th cent. BC; there is much plaster with imprints of wood, handles of a Thasian amphora of the 3rd cent. BC, bronze bracelets with concave back and fragments of cups with turned in lips. In v. Chognari (on the Barona hillock, cultural layers of the 7th-1st cent. BC were brought to light (the material is preserved in the archaeological funds (reserves) of the Kutaisi Historical Museum).

In the middle course of the Rioni, settlement-hills are found also in v. Partskhanaqanevi – on Sabrialo, Kirinebi and Shroshanebi hillocks. Similar settlements are attested at Kopitnari, Kveda-Metekhi and Kvitiri. These sites have yielded objects of the 7th-2nd cent. BC and plaster with imprints of wood. In Kutaisi and its adjoining territory jar burials have come to light at Tsatskhvebisubani (Kutaisi), as well as in the villages: Partskhanaqanevi, Kveda-Meskheti, Maghlaki, Kvitiri, Mukhiani, Ukaneti, Odilauri and Banoji. The grave goods brought to light are uniform: pyriform jugs, bowls with inturned lips, bronze bracelets adorned at the ends with a representation of a snake's head, bronze fingerings, cornelian beads. These jar burials are dated largely to the 3rd cent. BC. Up to eleven archaeological hoards of the Bronze and Early Iron periods have been revealed.

As is evident, on the basis of the above-named settlements, an urban-type settlement appears in Kutaisi in the 6th-4th centuries. The geographical designation of Kutaisi is first mentioned in the work *Alexandra* by Lycophron of Chalcis, a Greek poet of the 3rd cent. BC. Kutaisi is mentioned also by Vallimachus of Cyrene (3rd cent. BC). Evidence on “Kutaisi” is found in the *Argonautica* of Apollonius of Rhodes (3rd cent. BC). Here mention is made of “Kutaisi”, i. e. Aea

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(Aia). Procopius (BG, VIII, 14) identified the Ky(u)taya of Greek written sources with his contemporary fortress “Kotatisi” on the bank of the Rioni. On the basis of archaeological material and written sources the view has become established in the specialist literature on the identity of Ky(u)taya-Kotatisi-Kutaisi.

The village of Vartsikhe lies in the course of the Rioni. Materials of the Classical and medieval periods are attested. Special interest in Vartsikhe undoubtedly attaches to the remains of an early-medieval city-fortress, known in Byzantine written sources under the name of Rhodopolis (Procopius, BG, VII (IV); Agathias, IV, 15). The remains of an ancient fortress are attested on the promontory at the confluence of the Rioni and the Khanistsqali. The above-ground wall proved to date to the period of the late Middle Ages, while the walls dating from the early Middle Ages are buried underground. Split-stone, cobblestones, lime mortar, bricks and tiles were used as construction material. The archaeological material, brought to light at Vartsikhe, is largely represented by pottery and glass and iron wares. The pottery includes fragments of household, table-ware and kitchen ware. Remains of imported pottery have also been discovered.

Study of adjacent territories is attached major attention in ascertaining the genesis of the settlements of the city-fortress of Vartsikhe. Here remains of Classical period settlements have been brought to light – evidenced particularly intensively two hundred metres to the south of the city, on Giorgobiani hill. Attested here are fragments of stone walls built in dry masonry and fragments of plaster; a beam structure was apparently erected on this. The remains of the structure are dated – with the aid of the pottery – to the pre-Hellenistic period. Remains of such settlements are noted on the territory around the Giorgobiani hill. Thus, the environs of Vartsikhe were settled already in the Classical period, while by the early medieval period the settlement is concentrated within the city-fortress.

Of the archaeological sites, uncovered in the Rioni valley, the ancient city site of Vani boasts the longest history of study. It lies on the left bank of the Rioni, in the river Sulori valley, on the hill Akhvledianis-gora. Excavations on this hill have been under way for a long time. Vast material has accumulated and proceedings have been published (for the bibliography, see the collected papers “Vani”). In the past, the rise of an urban-type settlement on the Akhvledianis-gora hill was apparently facilitated by the ancient settlements whose remains have been discovered in large numbers at Vani and its environs. The Akhvledianis-gora hill in the 5th-4th cent. BC was evidently a place of residence of the local Colchian nobility. Various crafts also concentrated here. Concentration of handicrafts at definite centres and, accordingly, the emergence of a market, constitutes one of the principal features of the urbanization of society [Lordkipanidze, O. 1977: 19].

The last stage of the existence of Vani involved the entire Akhvledianis-gora hill, fortified with thick walls and steep slopes. The thickness of the defensive wall reaches almost three metres, and it is built of rectangular cut stones of large sizes. The ruins of the city gate have survived on the northern side of the former city site. Remains of a cultic structure are found here. At the distance of one hundred metres a fairly large complex of structures of cultic purpose has come to light. The archaeological material of the 3rd-1st cent. BC, found on Akhvlediani-gora, attests to the fact that at that time use was made at Vani of the achievements of Hellenistic engineering.

Westward of the city site of Vani, approximately at the distance of one kilometre, in the village of Zedatsikhe Sulori, ruins of a fortress have survived on the top of the mountain. The mountain is protected by natural steep slopes, and the road linking it with Vani leads to it from the south-east. Excavations inside the fortress revealed cultural layers of Early Medieval and Hellenistic periods. Interesting material

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came to light –remains of architectural details: fragments of a cornice, a fragment of a column with cannelures, etc. The remains of a wall of the Hellenistic period in the fortress of v. Zedatsikhe Sulori, as well as the architectural details and pottery point to the existence here of a settlement in Hellenistic times as well. It undoubtedly had some connection with the city of Vani, and was possibly destroyed together with it [Mitsishvili, M. 1977].

Within 8 km of Vani, in v. Mtsidziri, remains of ancient settlements are traceable on the hills “Adeishvilisgora”, “Naktsevigora”, “Nabambevisgora”, and on the territory contained between these. In this locality archaeological material of the Classical period and early medieval periods was attested. At Mtsidziri, the defensive structure merits special attention: clay, wood and stones were the basic construction material in erecting the structure. The building is rectangular in shape, with two facilities: 26.88m² and 13.44m². The socle is 2.60 m wide. We may be dealing here with a variety of wooden structures mentioned in the works of Xenophon and Vitruvius. At Mtsidziri, along with local pottery, a small quantity of imported ceramic ware was discovered (Chian, Attic, Mendeian, Sinopean). The archaeological remains of Mtsidziri are closely related to synchronous remains of entire Colchis. By its geographical location Mtsidziri held a strategically advantageous place. In the Early Classical and Hellenistic periods Mtsidziri represented a fortified point within the defensive system of the city of Vani and its environs [Gamkrelidze, G. 1982].

Along the course of the Rioni, within 2 km of Mtsidziri, lies the village of Dablagomi, situated on hillocks at the bank of the Rioni. To date the inner territory as well as the adjoining hills: Natsikhvari, Nasakirevi and Nasaqdevi have been studied. Almost over the entire area of Dablagomi fragments of plaster have been found, some bearing imprints of wood. The remains of the structure are preserved

comparatively better on the Nasaqdrevi hill. The upper layer dates from the 7th-5th cent. BC. At Dablagomi the large number of jar burials evokes special interest. They are arranged on the slopes of the hillocks of Nasakirevi and Natsikhvari. At Dablagomi, on the west slope of the Natsikhvari hill, a rich burial, covered with a tile, came to light. Its study revealed that it dates from the 3rd cent. BC [Tolordava, V. 1977: 48-54, 78-79].

Remains of a settlement – typologically and structurally similar to those of Dablagomi – were discovered within the distance of one kilometre, at v. Dapnari; the chronological limits: 4th-3rd cent. BC. Apart from this hill, archaeological remains are in evidence on the Chais-gora and Tsqvetili hills. Cultural layers of a settlement were investigated on this territory. The dwellings appear to have been built on the terraces of the hills. Large quantities of plaster with imprints of wood and charred beams were brought to light on these terraces. On the Chais-gora hill the remains of a furnace for smelting iron were found [Kighuradze, N. 1976].

Remains of a settlement resembling Mtisdziri, Dablagomi and Dapnari have been discovered at Sajavakho, near Dapnari. Colchian pottery of the 6th-2nd cent. BC has come to light here. Excavations at Sajavakho have so far not been carried out.

It is in the 6th-4th c.c. B.C. that a fairly stable and consolidated archaeological culture is evidenced on the territory of modern West Georgia, i.e. ancient Colchis. The following are the most typical features of Colchian culture in the 6th-4th c.c. B.C. - A system of settlements situated on natural hillocks or artificial mounds, surrounded by one or two ditches; the citadels fortified with a wooden paling built on the edges of an artificial defensive ditch are also evidenced. Also, there is a specific custom of burying of the common people. There is found peculiar artifacts - pottery: Pithoi with hatched surface; jugs, with the shape of to conuses attached by bottom; basins

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with flat bottom and slanting walls. Also unique goldsmithery - diadems with a torque and rhombic plaques, earrings and specific rings, openwork or bi-conic pendants, etc. During the excavations there is witness wide range of silver coins of various face-values, known in the scientific literature under the name of Colchian coins or *Kolkhuri-tetri*. In West Georgia archaeological studies have shown the predominance of wooden architecture throughout Colchis from the end of the 2rd millennium B.C. to the 4th c. B.C. inclusive. Such are the houses at the *Namarnu*, *Anaklia*, *Simagre*, *Nosiri*, *Pichori* settlements and etc.

Ancient Greek literature has preserved evidence on the individual branches of Colchian manufacture. The manufacture was the basis of the economic and political power of Colchis. The broad scale of iron manufacture is directly attested by the exceptionally numerous finds of most diverse objects used in everyday economic life and in war – axes, hoes, knives, ploughshares, daggers, sickles, spears, blades and many others. In West Georgia 6th-4th c.c. B.C. during the existence of a major Colchian political entity, there is a peculiar structure of Colchian settlements, also there are type of burial sites and religious cults and manufactures (iron metallurgy and goldsmithery) characteristic for only Colchian culture. All the elements of material culture just listed above, clearly fits in a well-defined territorial limits corresponding to the boundaries within which ancient Colchis was placed in the geographical conception of the ancient Greeks [Lordkipanidze, O. 1979].

On the basis of the above-cited archaeological and written sources, as well as geographical data, it may be presumed that the Rioni valley was densely populated in the period under study. Judging by the archaeological material discovered in the Rioni valley, the level of economic development of the local population was high. In the period under study this was one of the developed regions in Colchis,

forming a definite integral whole from the economic and geographic viewpoints. However, its political status differed at various times.

The archaeological remains, uncovered in the Rioni valley, are closely linked with synchronous remains of entire Colchis, forming an organic part of this common archaeological culture. In the period under discussion life in the Rioni valley obviously continued uninterruptedly, though characterized by varying intensity. By its natural conditions and geographic position the Rioni valley held an advantageous place in terms of communications and strategy. The natural relief was used successfully for building living and defensive structures. In building fortified dwelling structures use was primarily made of beams, clay and occasionally stones. Archaeological investigation has shown that log structures with clay plastering were characteristically practised in the Rioni valley, as well as in entire Colchis.

In them – in terms of design and material – a definite genetic link is observable with the preceding periods of the Bronze and Early Iron Ages (see: [Apakidze, D. 1991: 7-75]). The geographical environment, the geopolitical situation and economic activity created the preconditions for the rise on the territory of Western Georgia (with its centre in the Rioni valley) of the Colchian state, towards the end of the 6th cent. BC.

According to the archaeological data of the middle course of the Rioni River, from the end of the 4th cent. BC qualitatively new elements coexist with ancient ones. The changes concern the burial custom (jar burials). In the subsequent centuries a new construction material – tile – appears here, pottery suffers considerable typological changes.

From the 3rd cent. BC buffer “city-states” – Dioskurias- Sukhumi, Gyenos- Ochamchire, Phasis-Poti and Kobuleti-Pichvnari – develop between Classical countries and inner Colchis in the Colchian Black

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Sea littoral, while the hinterland Colchis is subjected to the political and economic influence of the Iberian Kingdom. The *skeptuchies*: Sairkhe, Kutaisi and Vani were under this influence (according to Strabo, XI, II, 18). Mithridates VI Eupator, King of Pontus, appeared on the political horizon from the end of the 2nd cent. BC, laying his hand on the coastal cities. The policy of the Iberian kingdom, under whose influence inner Colchis was, was probably changeable with respect to the Pontic kingdom, as evidenced by Georgian written sources and the recent archaeological materials (for details, see: [Gamkrelidze, G. 1985: 86-97; Gamkrelidze, G. 1989: 59-69].

Following the defeat of Mithridates VI, Colchis was invaded by Pompey, appointing Aristarchus as ruler of the country. Colchis was divided into *skeptuchies* (see Strabo); it was not turned into a Roman province. Historical sources say nothing about Pompey leaving part of his troops in Colchis. In the strategic respect western Colchis was of special significance for Rome. Successful struggle for dominance in the Northern Black Sea region and in the East was impossible without complete influence on the Black Sea littoral of Colchis.

One of most interesting and important towns of Colchis was Phasis and is generally localized somewhere near the present day Poti town and adjacent to it territories (pl. III).

Study of history of Phasis town has been continuing for about a century and a half but scantiness of written records and archaeological evidences makes it almost impossible to throw a light on certain problems connected with it.

Phasisi town is mentioned by the following authors: Pseudo Skylax (4th century BC), Asia, 81. Aristotle, *Fragment* 46, Plato "*Phedon*" 109(b), Heraklides Lembos, "*Phasians' Politia*" 18, Hippocrates, "*About Airs, Waters and Men*" 15, Theocritus, "*Idyle*" 13.24, Strabo, "*Geography*" 11. 2t.16.17. 3t.4. Pseudo Plutarch "*About the Names of Rivers and Mountains...*"

Phasisi5.1. Gaius Plinius Secundus “*Natural History*” 6. 1. 13. 52, Pomponius Mela “*Description of the world*” 1. 108, Arrian F. “*The Black Sea Periplus*” 9. 10. ch 1, Claudius Ptolemaeus “*Geographic Guidebook*” 5. 9T. 2, Pseudo-Orpheus “*Argonautica*” p. 3, Themistios “*Words*” 27, Castorius so called *Tabula Peutingeriana*_10 – 11, Ammianus Marcellinus “*History*” 22. 8t. 24, an anonymous author “*Euxinus Pontus Periplus ...*” 44(3). Zosimos “*A new History*” 1. 32. Stephanos from Bizantium “*Ethnica*” Phasis(22). Agathias “*About the Reign of Justinian*” 3. 19. 20. 21.; 4.23. Menander “*History*” fragment 3 ch, Epiphanius from Constantinople “*Life of Andrew*” chapter – “*Svaneti, Fusta, Djiketi*”(58-81). Theophanes Chorography “*Chorography ...*” about Phasian episcopo Kviros (103). Georgius Cedrenus “*A Historical Review ...*” about Phasian episcopo Kviros (28). Basil from Sophene “*The List of Holy Patriarches*”, 27, Niketas Choniates “*Chronicle*” Port Phasis (132). Archangelo Lamberti “*Description of Samegrelo Region*” [Lamberti, A. 1938: 172]. J. Chardin “*Journey in Persia and Other Oriental Countries*” (258) etc.

An important and the oldest information about Phasis belongs to Pseudo-Scylax (4th century BC)(periplus “*Asia*” 81). The most important information about the localization of Phasis town belongs to Strabo (between the turn of 1st BC – 1st AD): “*There is a town of the same name at the Phasis river. It is Colchians’ trading post surrounded with the river (Rioni), a lake (Paliastomi) and the Sea*” (Strabo “*Geography*” 11. 2.17). It is fairly apparent that the description completely coincides with the present day locality of Poti town.

Noteworthy information belongs to a high-ranking Roman official Flavius Arrian (2nd century) to whom belongs an inspective report “*The Black Sea Periplus*”. F. Arrian wrote:

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“The fortress (Phasis) itself which accommodates four hundreds of best warriors seemed to me almost inaccessible. As to the security of the area it is very convenient for visitors. The town walls are encircled with wide double moats. There were clay walls with timber towers on them some time before but now both of them the walls and the towers are built of baked bricks. Their foundations are quite firm and there are battering machines on the walls. In whole everything is arranged so that nobody is able to come nearer and siege the garrison stationed there. The harbor is safe for ships and so are the adjacent territories settled with retired military men and merchants.” (Arrian “*Periplus ...*” 9).

A 4th-century BC silver bowl inscribed in Greek (about the inscription see below) was found at Phasis which is quite frequently mentioned in Greco – Roman and Byzantine written records but the information is rather controversial because in most cases the data are taken from one and the same source.

According to the traditional simplified scheme of the written records Phasis was founded at the area, anciently settled by *Kartvelian (Georgian)* population, by Ionian Milesians in order to contact with the locals through a trading post-emporium [Inadze, M. 1982: 119-124].

According to archaeological evidences Phasis has supposedly left far behind all the other Late Bronze – Early Iron period settlements such as: *Namarnu, Dziguri, Siriachkoni, Okhodje, Nandevu, Sagvichio (Zurgani, Konsha), Nagmipidji, Chaladidi (Zurga, Sabazho, Chkhari), Guripuli, Naokhvamu (Reka village), Ergeta* etc. [see Djibladze, L. 2001, 34- 38 and the map], adjacent to Poti and Paliastomi because it occupied a more convenient area from communication point of view (the Rioni – Phasisi river delta) and it appeared easier to become an urban centre.

Some scholars suppose that a celebrated scientist Hippocrates had himself visited the neighboring areas of the Phasisi river [Kaukhchishvili, T. 1965: 8] and included some very important pieces of information about the journey in the adjacent territories of Poti – Paliastomi in his work *“About Airs, Waters and Places:”* “... I tell you about people who live in Phasis;...”. “... People have dwellings built in swamps. They are built of timber and rush. People walk little. They sail up and down to town (probably to Phasis) or to **emporium** in their boats because there are many channels there” (Hippocrates, *“About Airs ...* 15). The passage shows that people living in down stream of the Rioni – Phasisi river went to a special trading post – Phasis **emporium**. Hippocrates as if stresses the fact that in the area within the Phasisi river delta (if it is Phasis town) there is the locals’ trading post and not a Greek type town – polis. Normally concentration of trading at special areas points to the presence of a protourban centre. It seems quite possible that the goods were even distributed from the area after Greeks come there (e.g. the Antique period imported pieces found at the fortress and the settlements lying along the Rioni river) which implies the birth of more or less permanently functioning market and this in its turn is one of the principal characteristic feature of an urban settlement.

It is quite possible that a protourban centre had already existed at the estuary of the river Phasisi when Greeks first came to the area (let’s recall to our mind the Late Bronze – Early Iron period settlements), and perceived it as a town and a trading post (**emporium**). Greeks had come into contact with the trading settlement and in the course of time there emerged an area inhabited with them. The main reason for the contacts with the natives was either export, or local raw materials instead of imported luxury goods (fine pottery, adornments, metal ware,

aromatic ointments etc) which is perfectly borne out by written records and illustrated by the archaeological evidences dating from the period after the 5th century BC. Thus coastal emporii were mutually convenient for both the locals and the foreigners. In the course of time Greek colonies established at Phasis underwent symbiosis and transformation in the result of the contacts with the natives which in its turn were determined with the local biological, geographic and social habitats [Gamkrelidze, G. 1993: 3 – 45].

Phasis gradually transformed into a buffer, ethnically mixed polis-type town with probable rural areas around it after disintegration of the Colchis kingdom in the 3rd century BC. In this connection there is Heraklides' (2nd century BC) very important information about *Phasis Politia* which implies the presence of certain statehood there [Gamkrelidze, 1993: 46 – 87].

Another information belongs to a considerably later period (5th century) anonymous author who mentions the Caucasian Iberians in the context with Phasis in his “Periplus” and goes on: “*There is a Hellenic town, so called Phasis, founded by Milesians at the mouth of the river, on the left bank of the Phasis (river) and as it is said there come together people speaking 60 different languages among which there are even Indians and Bactrians*” (Arrian, Anonymous author, 3).

But these somehow summary written records probably concern to the period after the 3rd century BC. A so called Great Greek colonization of the 8th – 7th centuries BC did not touch Phasis town. The archaeologically traced settlements (see the list above) at the lower stream of the Rioni – Phasisi river clearly testify to this fact. There are not found any imported pieces belonging to the period of “*colonization*”. As to the 6th – 5th centuries BC, the import is very little – about hundred pieces of

pot shards. This is why it is early and absolutely groundless to speak about some kind of intensive Greek “*colonization*”. As to the written records, they enable me to suppose the presence of only a small Greek trading settlement (something like an **emporium**) at or within Phasis town, or in the Rioni river delta in the 5th century BC, for instance, something like a Genoese factory existing at Poti – Phasis in the 14th – 15th centuries. It is a very important fact that there are not observed any traces of great changes anywhere in Colchis in archaeological culture (pottery, metallurgy, architecture, ideology, burial rites etc.) during the 8th – 6th and even the 4th centuries BC. The natives kept living traditionally at the same territory and there is not seen any sign of Greek influence in their everyday terms.

In spite of the fact that the locality of ancient Phasis is in this or that way fixed by the Antique period written records (see Strabo, Arrian), the problem remains still unsolved because the town of the Classical and Hellenistic periods is not archaeologically traced yet though there are found the remains of the Early Byzantine period Phasis (see below) [Gamkrelidze, G. 1987: 97 – 117; Gamkrelidze, G. 2002: 101].

Now I want to offer twelve different points of view about the localization of Phasis town.

1. Dubois de Montpereux considered that the Roman period Phasis lay between Chaladidi village and Poti town, namely, in the south of the latter (present day airport) he had found remains of a fortress and thought that it was Arrian’s Phasis [Montpereux, F. D. 1839: 63 – 80].

2. F. Brun thought that Phasis town was in the south – east section of lake Paliastomi [Brun, F. 1880: 250].

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- 3. N. Shafranov** thought that Phasis was situated at the south side of lake Paliastomi, at the estuary of the Supsa river [Shafranov, N. 1880: 3].
 - 4. According** to L. Elnitskii Phasis was at the left bank of the Rioni river estuary, approximately at the area of the present day sea port [Elnitskii, L. 1938: 319].
 - 5. M. Berdznishvili** thought that Phasis lay at the left bank of the Rioni river, near Patara (small) Poti. As to the Phasisi of Arrian's times he agrees with Dubois de Montpereux [Berdznishvili, M. 1942: 19 – 20].
 - 6. B. Kuftin** considered that Arrian's Phasis lay at the estuary of lake Paliastomi, at the Pichori river banks [Kuftin, K. 1950, 116].
 - 7. According** to N. Khoshtaria the ancient and the Roman – Byzantine period Phasisi was situated at the area of the modern Poti town.
 - 8. N. Lomouri** agrees with Dubois de Montpereux but thinks that it not the Phasis mentioned by Arrian, but it is the Phasis of Agathias times (6th century AD).
 - 9. G. Grigolia** thinks that Phasis should be searched for at the east side of lake Paliastomi where the Pichori river flows into the lake [Grigolia, G. 1973: 54].
 - 10. A palaeogeographer** Dj. Djanelidze considers that Phasis town should be searched for along the Rioni river, in 6 km distance from the sea, at the territory around Patara (small) Poti and Chaladidi village [Djanelidze, Dj. 1973: 5 – 16].
 - 11. Ot. Lordkipanidze** and T. Mikeladze had coordinated all the existing information gleaned from the written sources and archaeological evidences and came to a conclusion that different period towns known under name of Phasis should be explored through the researches of those archaeological sites which are lying at the estuary of the Rioni river, at the territory among

Kvemo (lower) Chaladidi and coastal Grigoleti and Kulevi villages [Lordkipanidze, O. Mikeladze, T. 1973: 33].

12. The next opinion belongs to me. I think that the 3rd – 7th century Phasis is the same as “Natekhebi” settlement found in the south part of Poti town, in the west section of lake Paliastomi. I suppose that a certain part of Phasis town among Kulevi, the Rioni, Pichori and Supsa rivers was often covered with water (or appeared in a swamp of peats) in the result of local geomorphologic changes and this is why the town was dislocated from one place to another at different times but so that it remained within the confines of the area just mentioned [Gamkrelidze, G. 1987: 97 – 117; Gamkrelidze, G. 2002: 101].

Phasis town always was one of the most important transit points of sea and river ways or land routs. Gold, iron, timber, flax, flax oil, honey, wine and later oil etc was taken abroad through the town port. The name of a bird “pheasant” so common in European languages is derived from “Phasis” and quantities of “Phasian birds” were taken to foreign countries from these areas. Importance of Phasis as a transit and trading town increased greatly in the Hellenistic and Roman periods.

A Roman commander Pompey while leaving Iberia (Caucasian) met the navy commander Servilius at Phasis. Servilius’s fleet controlled the town from the sea. Gradual increase of Roman influence over the eastern Black Sea lands resulted in stationing of their garrison at Phasis. Emperor Hadrian sent Flavius Arrian to Phasis in 134. He had inspected the readiness of the garrison, all the fortification systems and wrote an appropriate description. A Latin stamp deserves a special interest from this point of view. It probably belonged to the garrison stationed at Phasis [Shpaidel, M. 1985: 134 – 140]. There is a mention of Phasis castellum during the reign of

Emperor Constantine I. A high school of rhetoric's functioned at Phasis in the 4th century. Phasis belonged to Lazika (a new Colchis kingdom) in the 4th century. One of the crucial battles between Byzantine and Iran took place at Phasis in 542 – 562 when Byzantine – Lazika united troops defeated Iranians. There was an episcopate subject to Constantinople in the 6th – 8th centuries at Phasis. Phasian bishop Theodore's signature is on the resolution of the Ecumenical Council that took place in 553. One more Phasian bishop Kviros became Alexandrian Patriarch. A bit later there Phasis was the residence of Lazikan Metropolitan. A Genoese trading station functioned at Phasis in the 14th – 15th centuries (see the previously cited written records).

Archaeological researches at Poti – Phasis and adjacent territories began long ago. E. Dubois de Montpereux had found remains of a fortress in the east of Poti (present day airdrome) at the site “Nadjikhuri” in 1834 and considered that it was the Phasis mentioned by Arrian. He even made a drawing of the fortress. N. Khoshtaria made surface surveys of Poti adjacencies in 1953. A team of Poti archaeological expedition of Iv. Djavakhishvili Institute of History, Archaeology and Ethnography investigated the neighborhoods of the town. There were made geologic boring in 1961 – 5. Later the same expedition explored Nadjikhuri site in 1969. One more expedition (director T. Mikeladze) studied archaeological problems of Phasis in 1971 – 80. Beginning from 1985 the Centre for Archaeological Sciences (Academy of Sciences of Georgia) continued expeditions at Poti. This time the Black Sea hydro archaeological expedition (director G. Gamkrelidze) found the remains of a settlement dating from the 3rd – 7th centuries in lake Paliastomi.

The oldest artifacts have been found at Natekhebi site, in the west part of Lake Paliastomi, within clay and peats deposits. This

is a profiled ring-base of a black-slip Attic container dating from the 4th century BC and an underside of Rhodos amphora dating from the 3rd century BC. A pair of Colchian Tetri – a 2nd type didrachm and several smaller nominals (displayed at the State Museum) dating from the 5th century BC were found at a neighboring area of Poti town (more precise topography is absent). Pot – shards identical of Sinopean pottery and dating from the 2nd – 1st centuries BC were found at the depth of 6 m while boring the soil at the crossroads of Pirveli Maisi and Kavkasia streets. A 4th century BC Sinopean and Heraclea Pontica amphorae were found in the sea at Maltakva and the Supsa River.

Traces of a settlement were uncovered near Poti at Kvemo (lower) Chaladidi village (right bank of the Rioni river, 1.5 km northwards) roadside in N. Kipiani's farm-yard. The hill occupied 1800 m². It consisted of following layers: clay and sand mixture, yellowish clayey soil, remains of burnt structure – plastering and pieces of timber. Middle and lower layers are dating from the Late Bronze – Early Iron periods. The settlement yielded pots, basins, and bowls decorated with characteristic handles and bosses on them, mainly blackish in color. Their bodies are decorated with slanting incisions of wavy, rhomb – like ornaments. There was also found a mould, a quern, a spindle-whorl, flint sickle bushes etc. Archaeological excavations were carried out at Kvemo (lower) Chaladidi village, near “Sabazho” (customs) site, in A. Beridze's farm – yard. Unearthed settlements yielded burnt pieces of timber and plastering, pottery, a mould and bellows of a melting furnace [Mikeladze, T. 1978: 33 – 40].

Another settlement “Simagre”, supposedly a rural area of Phasis town, was found in the east part of Sakorkio village. The plot belongs to P. Patsia. It is on the left bank of the Rioni river.

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The hill occupies an area of 3 300 m² and only 200 m² has been excavated. A lower layer (depth 60 cm) yielded timber structures. The settlement consists of several building levels. The artifacts found there are dating from the 6th – 5th centuries BC. The structures are rectangular, built like log cabins. There are also found remains of hurdle fences. The excavators have managed to fix floors of the log cabins. One of them measured 112 m² and contained partitions. The logs were inserted in one another. There have survived six rows of log walls. The pottery of “Simagre” settlement is dating from the 6th – 5th centuries BC. Most of the wares are manufactured locally and typologically are similar in all the uncovered levels. At the same time they are characteristic to the 6th – 5th century BC Colchian artifacts: jars, clay cisterns, pots and their lids, drinking vessels, pitchers with tubular handles, tumblers, dishes, basins, cone-shaped spindle-whorls, bronze knives, iron lance heads, hoes, knives, hooks, bit wears, oblonged querns, wooden deepers, cornelian and agate beads, and a gold triangular pendant decorated with a granulated meander. A group of imported pottery consists of Chios, Lesbos and Samian amphorae, Ionian table wares basins, oil-lamps and kylixes, Attic black-slip and black-figured kylixes. 5th – 4th century BC plastered log structures were uncovered in 9 km distance from the sea, along the left terrace of the Rioni river. There were found Colchian wares – pots, tumblers, lids, jugs with tubular handles. The Hellenistic period pieces were found in the south of “Simagre” settlement. These were pot-shards of rimmed clay cisterns and Colchian amphorae, also the undersides of Sinopean amphorae [Mikeladze, M. 1978: 50 – 78].

A pair of concave sided, Early Medieval, locally manufactured amphorae and rectangular bricks with two crossing grooves were found at Poti arboretum, in the north-east of the

airport. Pieces of bricks and tiles, pot-shards of an amphora with corrugated exterior, Emperor Hadrian's (117 – 138) silver didrachm minted in Caesarea town were found next to Poti airport inside a trench made in the north of Nadjikhuri site.

Remains of a cemetery and a structure built of stone, brick and lime mortar were uncovered in the north-east of Simagre settlement (distance 300 m), on the left bank of the Rioni river. Bricks with crossing grooves, single-handled pitchers, mugs, two-handled pots, and basins also were found there. The pottery is made of well worked clay and baked in pale brown color. The finds are dating from the Early Medieval period.

The Early Medieval period pot-sherds (pointed saucers of clay cisterns, basins and concave sided amphorae) came to light while building a bridge across the Kaparchina river in the south-east part of Poti town, at lake Paliastomi. A corrugated amphora was found at the left estuary of lake Paliastomi (the Thkorina river). Pot-shards of the Early Medieval period came to light at the mouth of the Pichori river which also flows into lake Paliastomi. Another group of pot-shards of the same period were uncovered at "Nadjikuri" (discovered by Dubois de Montpereux), present Poti airdrome. The group consisted of bricks with crossing grooves and pot-shards of corrugated pottery. One more collection of the Early Medieval period pot-shards (of clay cisterns, corrugated amphorae etc) were unearthed in the south-west of "Nadjikhuri", where the river Shavi flows into lake Paliastomi.

There are several artifacts bearing Greek and Latin inscriptions connected with Phasis: A silver chalice (diameter - 21 cm) with swelling inwards underside. It comes from Kuban so called Zubov kurgan. The chalice is decorated with a snake's and deer's heads. A Greek inscription runs round the rim -

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ΑΠΟΛΛΩΝΟΣ· ΗΓΕΜΟΝΟΣ· ΕΙΜΙ· ΤΟΜ· ΦΑΣΙ –. It belongs to Apollo the leader who is in Phasis”. The inscription is made in Ionian dialect of the Greek language and is palaeographically dated to the 4th century [Lordkipanidze, O. 2000: 7 – 11; Tsetskhladze, G. 1994: 199 – 216].

A stamped tile with Latin inscription emerged among the ruins of Tsikhisdziri castellum (now in the State Museum, Tbilisi): - VEX [illatio] FA[siana]. The tile is considered to be made for the garrison stationed at Phasis in the 2nd century [Shpaidel, M. 1985: 140].

A 6th century concave sided amphora with a graffito of Greek letters “Φω“ and a Sinopean amphora with a graffito – BIK- was found in the sea, near the Supsa river canyon.

A chalice bearing a Georgian secular inscription was found at Poti, near lake Paliastomi (now at the Kutaisi Museum of History, # 3788).

A special hydro archaeological exploratory expedition was organized at the Centre for Archaeological Studies (Academy of Sciences of Georgia) in 1985 (Director G. Gamkrelidze). The team had to investigate the Black Sea coastal areas of Georgia and first of all create a special hydro archaeological map of quite a large territory. Besides making the map the team had to reconsider all the existing written records, geographical and geomorphologic data and collate all of them from hydro archaeological point of view. Poti town and neighboring areas seem the most interesting and such circumstances had determined the first steps of the team. Remains of a dew stone wall was uncovered in the south part of lake Paliastomi, at the end of the Kaparchina river, at “Naeklesiari” area, but the pot shards picked there did not allow the scholars to date the site and the pieces properly.

Remains of a 3rd – 8th century settlement were uncovered in a distance of 0.5 km from lake Paliastomi estuary (Maltakva) at “Natekhebi” area where the lake forms a bay. As soon as we began the explorations there emerged a question – was the pottery brought by the river Rioni or were they the remains of a settlement. Further researches showed that it was a settlement according to a number of sound features: First – large quantities of pottery gathered at a certain area. Second – several amphorae vertically dug into the soil. Third – remains of a burial. Fourth – several test-pits yielded the same pottery as picked on the bottom of the lake.

The remains of “Natekhebi” settlement occupy an area of about 900 m². The bottom of the lake is covered with sand (about 300 m towards the centre), layers of clay and peats. At some of the areas the peats are covered with sand. It is not at all excluded that there may be artifacts of earlier periods beneath the clay and peats. Lake Paliastomi occupies an area of 18 km². The levels of the Black Sea and the lake are equal. The rivers flowing into the lake come from swampy areas and the deepest among them is the Pichori.

Geomorphologists believe that a lake – Laguna Paliastomi as a sea-born relic. In ancient times there was an estuary of the Rioni river [Dzvelaia, M. 1973: 25 – 33]. It seems quite natural that seafarers used the estuary as a very convenient harbor and then continued their way via Paliastomi sailing upstream the Rioni River – a very popular transit trading seaway.

Dubois de Montpereux offered an interesting interpretation of “Paliastomi”. He explained the toponym through the old Greek language – “an old estuary” – ΠΑΛΑΙΟΣ ΣΤΟΜΑ. Karl Koch agreed with him [Koch, K.; Spenser, O. 1981: 173]. There are cases when some of Greek written records mentioned two words

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together - λιμνο // στόμα (liman, estuary,). It is clear that the terms mentioned above have several, somehow synonymic, meanings. It is also a very interesting fact that one of the meanings of the word - στόμωμα – is a castellum. If so it could be Palaieostom // Palaiestomoma.

Pottery predominates among the artefacts uncovered at “Natekhebi” settlement excavated in lake Paliastomi which together with other archaeological evidences (archaeo topographic, glass wares and metal pieces etc) help to create an impression about the life of ancient settlers of “Natekhebi” and their trade contacts. Pot-shards found in Paliastomi (“Natekhebi” settlement) may be grouped this way: – building material, container and household wares.

Building material consists of bricks and tiles. The bricks are 3 – 5 cm thick. They are of the same size as those picked at the Early Medieval period towns of west Georgia – Bichvinta, Sokhumi, Ochamchire, Gudava, Nokalakevi, Mtisdziri, Vashnari, Kobuleti – Pichvnari, Tsikhisdziri, Gonio ets. The tiles are flat with their sides turned up (solen – like). The height of the turned up side is 3.5 – 5 cm, thickness of the tile – 1.5 – 2.5 cm. They are made of reddish-brown clay with some (limestone, quartz) inclusions. Among the shards some belong to flat imported tiles, and their clay is like Sinopean clay. Together with the bricks and tiles there were found the remains of logs and burnt plastering. It seems quite possible that log cabins, plastered with clay and roofed with tiles, were built onto a ground floor built of bricks. Flavius Arrian noted: “Earlier the walls were made of clay with timber towers standing on them at Phasis town but now the walls and the towers both are built of bricks” [Arrian, F. 1961: 40].

Amphorae container make the majority, or even the main part of the containers uncovered at “Natekhebi” settlement. These locally produced concave sided amphorae are very close to those found at Nokalakevi. Normally such amphorae are common at the Late Antique – Early Medieval sites of west Georgia such as Gantiadi village, Bichvinta, Sokhumi, Ochamchire, Gudava, Mtisdziri, Tsikhisdziri, Varditsikhe, Kobuleti – Pichvnari.

Household pottery consists of basins, jugs, pots and mortaris. The pots are plain, broad-bodied and short-necked. Their rims are everted, clay is 6 – 8 mm thick, undersides are with concentric lines, diameter – 7 – 10 cm. Basins make the majority of “Natekhebi” settlement kitchen pottery. They are mostly with rounded, low sides and flat undersides. There were also found rim and side pieces of mortaris (clay is 8 – 10 mm thick). The clay of the mortaris is brownish with limestone, mica and quartz inclusions and it means that they were produced locally. Such mortaris are common at Varditsikhe, Vani, Bichvinta, Ochamchire, Gudava, Nokalakevi, Mtisdziri etc. In addition to above mentioned household containers there were found clay cisterns with concentric, relief lines around their bodies and flat undersides. Their clay is dark brown, 16 – 19 mm thick.

A quantity of imported pottery (25 %) found at “Natekhebi” settlement enables me to create a general impression about the contacts between the natives and the foreigners. These are imported amphorae, red slip basins and glass wares. The clay of the amphorae is like Sinopean – it is pale grayish with a violet shade. There are also underside, side, and handle pieces of the amphorae with corrugated bodies. There are several groups of amphorae made of clay like Sinopean. Such amphorae come from Bichvinta, Sokhumi, Ochamchire, Gudava, Tsikhisdziri, Tsebelda

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etc. Reddish-brown amphorae make another group among “Natekhebi” household pottery. They are made of well-worked clay and have medium size. Similar amphorae have been found at Bichvinta, Tsikhisdziri, at the agora of Athenae. It is also possible that they are of the Mediterranean origin. The settlement yielded also semispherical undersides of corrugated amphorae with small warts on their tips. They are made of reddish-brown clay. Such undersides come from Bichvinta, Tsebelda, Sokhumi and Tsikhisdziri. There are also undersides of Samian amphorae which are common at Bichvinta, Sokhumi, Ochamchire, Tsikhisdziri, Tsebelda, Nokalakevi and Varditsikhe. The latter is quite far from the Black Sea coastal area.

There is a group of brown-burnished amphorae container among the ones found at “Natekhebi” settlement. The clay of such vessels contains fine inclusions of mica. These amphorae have tubular necks and rollers around their rims. Their handles are horizontally attached at their rims. In form they are similar of those found in the 2nd – 3rd century layers of the northern Black Sea towns, but are rather infrequent at Georgian Black Sea coastal sites. There were also uncovered several pot-shards of red-slip ware at the settlement. They are plain with the rims curved inwards. Their well-worked brownish clay, with fine inclusions of mica, is baked evenly. A red slip has survived perfectly. Such wares are common in the 4th – 5th century layers of west Georgian sites such as: Gonio, Tsikhisdziri, Ochamchire, Sokhumi, Bichvinta, Vashnari, Nokalakevi, Kutaisi, Tsebelda, Mtisdziri etc. It is important to note that large quantities of such pottery have been found at coastal towns of the country (e.g. Sokhumi, Bichvinta etc).

Glassware’s make one more group of containers found at the settlement. These mostly are pedestal led goblets. In addition to

them there were scraps of some unidentified glass vessels and also pieces of a window pane. The glass is transparent, pale greenish though there are sky-blue pieces too. Such glass is unearthed at Tsebelda, Gudava, Mtisdziri, Sokhumi, Nokalakevi etc. Similar pedestalled goblets are dating from the 4th – 8th centuries and plenty of them are found at coastal settlements of the Mediterranean and Black seas. They are also found in regions far from the seas – in the Asia Minor, Caucasia and Near East. Stemmed glass goblets come from Mtskheta, Urbnisi, Rustavi, Zhinvali, Tbilisi, Bichvinta, Sokhumi, Tsebelda, Ochamchire, Gudava, Tsikhisdziri, Vashnari, Mtisdziri, Vardistsikhe and the other Early Medieval period settlements. They differ in form and color. The ones found at coastal settlements seem comparatively similar.

There were remains of a pit tomb in the north-east underwater part of “Natekhebi” settlement. The tomb yielded a concave sided amphora with a broken rim. The amphora was lidded with an underside of another one. The amphora contained burnt bones of poultry and a pig. An individual was next to the amphora. The pit tomb also contained a bronze pin (length 7.7 cm), three bow-shaped bronze pins with long, sharp tips (length 4.3 cm, 4.3 cm and 5.2 cm) dating from the 6th century, a rectangular, flat piece of lead, a pedestalled glass goblet (pedestal diameter 4.3 cm), a Byzantine 20 nummi copper coin with a letter “K” on the reverse, while the obverse is illegible. The coin is minted during the reign of Justinian II (565 – 578). Another copper coin of emperor Constantius II (337 – 361) was uncovered in the west part of “Natekhebi” settlement. Archaeological material of “Natekhebi” settlement is in the Poti town Site Museum storage [For more detailed information see Gamkrelidze, G. 1987, 98 – 117;

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Gamkrelidze, G. 1992: 30 – 48; Gamkrelidze, G. 1990: 215-219; Gamkrelidze, G. 1992: 101-119; Gamkrelidze, G. 1990: 223-236].

At the present stage of study “Natekhebi” settlement discovered under the waters of lake Paliastomi may be dated to the 3rd – 8th centuries. As to the pit tomb found there, it may belong to the 6th century. The artifacts found at the settlement point to a close parallelism to other contemporaneous sites of west Georgia (Kutaisi, Mtisdziri, Vashnari, Tsebelda etc) and especially to Bichvinta, Sokhumi, Ochamchire, Gudava and Nokalakevi. It seems fairly possible that “Natekhebi” settlement structures are the remains of the Byzantine period Phasis described by Agathias and Procopius of Caesarea as lying at the estuaries of the rivers Pichori, Shavi and Kaparchina. The town was probably dislocating because of certain geomorphologic changes [For more detailed information see Gamkrelidze 1987: 97 – 117; Gamkrelidze, G. 1992: 211-216; Gamkrelidze, G. 1992: 30 – 48; Gamkrelidze, G. 1992: 101 – 119].

The localization of Phasis town is as if strictly fixed by the authors of Greek and Latin written records – the town lay at the left bank of the Phasisi river delta and after this they mention a lake (probably Paliastomi). Such description completely coincides with the present day locality of Poti town. This is why all the scholars note that Phasis town is to be searched for at Poti and adjacent territories [see: Berdznishvili, M. 1942, 3 – 21; Grigolia, G. 1973, 36 – 55, Lordkipanidze, O. Mikeladze, T. 1973, 17 – 36; Gamkrelidze, G. 1993]. In spite of the circumstances like this Phasis of the Classical – Hellenistic periods is not yet discovered and the reason for it is a very complicated palaeogeomorphological situation existing in the area [Djanelidze, Ch. 1973: 5 – 16, 21 – 33; Dzvelaia, M. 1973; Djanelidze, Ch. 1980: 21 – 64]. From geomorphologic point of

view Kulevi – Poti – Ureki seaside is as if a missing link in a Georgian coastal context (330 km in length). The fact of global regression and transgression of the Black Sea with regard to Phasis seems more than obscure. The problem of local dynamics of the coastal shelf remains still uncertain. Very often geomorphologists rely upon archaeologists' information and make their own inferences according the locations of the settlements. As to me, I am sure that this problem needs an all – embracing investigation but first of all the geomorphologists should tell us what the coastal dynamics was like and where exactly the Rioni flew into the sea. They should also take into consideration global (regression and transgression of the sea) and local (hill – wash or ballast brought by the rivers, also old beds of the Rioni, Pichori, Khobi and Supsa rivers swampy and peaty territories) data.

It seems preferable to use properly deciphered space photos in palaeogeomorphological investigations in order to clarify once and for ever where exactly the Phasisi – Rioni flew into the sea and how the Late Bronze – Early Iron and Antique period settlements were related with the river. Unfortunately air photos appeared absolutely useless in the case like this. It is also important to note that the Rioni river has been carrying an enormous amount of ballast since the periods mentioned above and it seems quite natural to suppose that the river delta is dislocated and vast areas are under water today.

There are series of settlements along Kulevi – Poti – Ureki coastal areas: the Late Bronze – Early Iron period ones at the estuary of Khobi river, at Kulevi village, in the north of Poti town. A 6th – 4th century BC one at the Tsiva river, at the estuary of the Supsa river, in the south of Poti town. Here belong “Natekhebi” settlement too which is in lake Paliastomi, at the

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same Poti where a 4th century BC pot-shard of a black-slip container and a base-ring of a Rhodosian amphora (see above) was found.

It is important to note that an area of about 200 m width was covered with the sea during 1872 – 1965 [Kekelia, J. 1981: 505 – 508]. It seems so that Phasis town sank in the sea. This fact is amply illustrated. The information offered by geographers – says that a so called Phanagorian regression in the Black sea finished at approximately between the turn of BC and AD and began its transgression [Djanelidze, Ch. 1973: 5 – 16; 1980: 148 – 159]. In the result the level of the sea became about 3 m higher and covered all the then settlements [Djanelidze, Ch. 1973: 16]. Similar process developed in the northern [Blagovolin, N. Shcheglov, A. 1968: 15 – 27] and southern (e.g. Sinope) Black Sea lands where a certain number of the Antique period towns were covered with water.

A geomorphological situation of Poti – Grigoleti shelf is too complicated. The sea is muddy and it is extremely difficult to see anything in it at the estuary of the Rioni river south ramification. The river carries silt which forms under water dunes during the storms. Accordingly if imagine that the process has been going on for centuries it will be easier to suppose that the remains of Phasis town are covered with the thickest layer of sand.

Good sized pot-shards of concave sided amphorae were found during hydro archaeological researches in a distance of 25 m from the beach in the sea. An early period Sinopean amphora (rim diameter - 12 cm) with tubular neck (15 cm high), solid handles (ovoid in section) on the shoulder was uncovered near the Supsa river canyon in the sea. Another Heraclea Pontica amphora dating from the 4th century BC was found again in the sea at Maltakva.

So, collation of the present day geomorphological and topoarchaeological information enables me to conclude that the Classical and Hellenistic period Phasis is to be searched for on the land and in the sea within the radius of approximately 12 km or more precisely in the triangle of Poti – Kulevi – Supsa and Chaladidi – Sakorkio. Because of local geomorphological changes ie accumulation of ballast (carried by the rivers), dislocation of peats, extremely moistened soil, change of the sea level etc a part of Phasis town was probably covered with water from time to time. This is why the town was often dislocated within the confines of the just mentioned territorial triangle (see Fig. I, II, III).

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Figures:

- Fig. I** – The Map of Classical and Early Medieval Archaeological sites of West Georgia (Colchis);
- Fig. II** - The Map of Late Bronze- Early Iron Age Archaeological sites of Colchis;
- Fig. III** - The Map of Classical and Early Medieval Archaeological sites In the vicinity of town Poti.

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ON THE EVOLUTION THE COLCHIAN AMPHORAE

(the 4th cent. BC to the 3rd cent. AD)

A study of these ties between the Greek world and Colchis (Western Georgia) are of interest not only as regards the history and Archaeology of Old Georgia, but also as regards the Greek world and its relations with the *Pontus Euxinus* (Black sea) seaboard.

In the Hellenistic epoch, one of the commercial routes connecting East and West lay through Old Georgia. This route ran from India as far as the Caspian Sea, then through the Caucasus along the riv. *Kur*, across the *Lixiis cedi* pass, down the Black sea at the city *Phasis* and the stretched across the sea to the cities in Asia Minor and on the Black sea seaboard.

Imported amphorae in Colchis, the eastern Black Sea area in western Georgia, emerge as commercial containers from the second half of the 6th cent. BC. Amphorae made at urban centers of the Black and Mediterranean Seas are attested here [Puturidze, R. 1976:79-90].

The manufacture of local "*Colchian amphorae*" (resp. *brown-clay*) began from the second half of the 4th cent. BC. By this period, Colchian amphorae resemble their *Sinopean* counterparts. In the numerous archaeological finds of Colchian amphorae of western Georgia, different typological variants are noticeable in terms of form, capacity and clay. [Puturidze, R. 2003:98-109; Puturidze, R. 1977:68-71; Lordkipanidze, O. 1966:137-140; Kakhidze, A. 1971:55-63; Lordkipanidze, G. 1970:81-82; Gamkrelidze, G. 1982: 69-98; Brashinski, I. 1980:pl. XXIII; Vnukov, S. Tsetskhladze, G. 1991:170-185; Khalvashi, M. 2002:10-20, and others]. There is a difference chronologically as well. Colchian amphorae appear to have been manufactured at many sites on the territory of western Georgia. Amphorae of local production from the second half of the 4th cent. BC

to the 8th cent. AD were made subsequently too with various modifications (Fig.IV).

In 1950 archaeologist B. Kuftin was the first who put forward an idea about the possibility of producing amphorae in West Georgia (Colchis). Archaeologist R. Puturidze was the first who began studying of amphorae. R. Puturidze had treated the Late Classical and Hellenistic period concave sided amphorae and regarded them as manufactured in Colchis. In 1959 R. Puturidze had gained herself at the archaeological sites and Georgia's museums and paid a special attention to the concave sided amphorae from the Kutaisi, Poti and Vani museums.

I. Zeest, speaking about Bosphorus' ceramic container had singled out one group among the Hellenistic period amphorae and called them "brown clay amphorae" produced somewhere in the southern Black Sea lands. O. Lordkipanidze orally stated opinion and wrote that the Hellenistic period brown clay amphorae were pottered in Colchis. A. Kakhidze too had agreed with the opinion and divided Pichvnari amphorae of this type into two groups: Colchian comparatively high amphorae of brown clay with cylindrical ring-bases and Colchian shorter ones with button-like ring-bases. O. Lordkipanidze believed that the Colchian origin of brown clay amphorae has been borne out by not only their wide distribution in Colchis or with close similarity of the local clay used for manufacturing of native pottery but also by the signs made on them before baking which are like those made on Colchian pithoi. I. Zeest agreed with Georgian archaeologists about the possibility of producing brown clay amphorae in Colchis and stressed how important it was to localize the manufacturing centre. G.Tsetskhladze had made numbers of petrographic analyses and contributed to the study of the problem. He has published a number of his own papers and some more in

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co-authorship with other scholars. He has rendered great services to the problem of dating of Colchian amphorae found in the northern Black Sea lands. He had singled them out and then dated them properly.

Find of burning kilns together with pot shreds of brown clay amphorae, other pottery and tiles around them once again proved that amphorae were made in Colchis not only in the Hellenistic period but even later and they had various forms and shapes, even more, they were produced at many Colchian sites.

Excavations of Vani town were exclusively productive and important from the point of view of Colchian amphorae, which made it easier to date them better according to their find spots and accompanying artifacts. Most of them had completely been restored. In the result we have got a full picture of alterations in their forms and shapes beginning from the later half of the 4th century BC and until the 1st century BC when the town was perished. Many dozens of shreds of Colchian amphorae were found in the suburb of Vani town.

Native amphorae dating from the 2nd – 1st centuries BC are found in abundance at Vani town that enables me to suppose that they had almost completely displaced other kinds of such vessels. They had been found in the ruins of the town and many of them were even restored. It appeared that they slightly differ from one another that make it possible to suppose that either they were made at different local workshops, or they were made by different potters. Signs engraved on unbaked surfaces of necks, handles and seldom on bodies of these amphorae (but not on all of them) first appeared in the Late Hellenistic period. About 40 different signs made on the amphorae have been found at Vani town.

In general, typological-chronologically, Colchian Amphorae present the following picture: Colchian Amphorae of the second half

of the 4th cent. BC to the first half of the 3rd cent. BC resemble Sinopean ones; however, the surface of the clay is coarser, and the color brownish. Light-brownish specimens also occur. The body of local, Colchian Amphorae is egg-shaped, close to cylindrical; the handles are equally curved and oval in section (Fig.I, fig. 1-4).

Colchian Amphorae of the 2nd cent.-1st cent. BC develop a concavity in the belly; the neck is cylindrical and comparatively short; clay on the surface is coarse and of brownish hue; light-brown specimens also occur (pl.II, fig.2-4). In general, one of the principal characteristics of Colchian Amphorae is a spiral at the bottom (Fig.III), the so-called rosette-like in some researchers' terminology. Such spirals are not characteristic of foreign Amphorae. The clay structure of Colchian Amphorae is nappy-porous. The clay contains whitish and blackish small-fragment specks. Admixtures occur of diabase and basalt; pyroxenites, quartz, mica, iron (III) hydroxide, etc. Mineralogical-petrographic analysis of the clay has been carried out, demonstrating its identity with local, Colchian clays of different regions [see Morchadze, T. 1979:81; Poporadze, U. Paradashvili, I. Akhvlediani, D. Gasitashvili, A. 2006: 220-224].

Some specimens of Colchian Amphorae of the 2nd-1st cent. BC bear signs (e. g. see Fig.V, fig. 2). Perhaps they were made by the potter to indicate the capacity of the vessel or the number of specimens made. The signs on Colchian Amphorae resemble those made on locally made wine pithoi and tiles. It should be noted also that in one local amphora, brought to light at *Vani*, the surface is treated in the same way as local wine pithoi – horizontal bands or vertical lines [Puturidze, R. 1977:68-69].

Kilns for firing pottery have been discovered in Colchis, where fragments of amphorae have been attested along with those of other types of ceramic wares. A kiln of this type has been found near the village of *Gvandra (Abkhazia)*, dating from the 3rd cent. BC. A similar

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kiln came to light on the “*Red Beacon*” settlement site near Sukhumi. Remains of a kiln have been studied on a settlement site south-west of v. *Gulripshi*.

Colchian amphorae of the 2nd cent. BC and 1st cent. BC have a special spiral at the bottom. The cylindrical foot assumes mushroom-like rounded shape and the end is thickened. The walls of Colchian amphorae of this period are relatively thin. Some scholars even call it button-like. The body of the amphora has more concavity; scholars believe that this concavity is connected with transportation on land. The concavity would easier hold the rope and it would be easier to load it on a horse or ass. The capacity of Colchian amphorae ranges from 13 to 22 liters.

Amphorae with ribbed neck and concave body of the 2nd-3rd cent. AD must be a continuation of the subsequent period of Colchian amphorae of the 2nd-1st cent. BC; they have an elongated body, almost equally curved handles and a spiral at the bottom. Their walls are relatively thinner, and they have a rib on the neck, at the place of attachment of the handles. Amphorae of this type have been found at *Bichvinta, Sukhumi, Eshera, Tsebelda, Poti (Paliastomi), Ureki, Kobuleti Pichvnari, Tsikhisdziri, Gonio*, etc (Fig.IV, 3); [Khalvashi, M. 2002:10-20].

From the 3rd-4th cent. AD a new type of Colchian amphora with concave body and spiral at the bottom develop. The handles of these amphorae are sharply curved in the upper part, and the body is narrower and elongated. Some specimens have low corrugation on the body. The handles lose its oval shape in section, becoming flatter (Fig.IV, 4).

Colchian amphorae have been discovered in large numbers on settlement sites of the 2nd-1st cent. BC all over the territory of historical Colchis. There is almost no former settlement site here with such amphorae not coming to light. It is almost unanimously

acknowledged in the specialist literature that these amphorae are of local, Colchian, manufacture. Colchian Amphorae are attested at the following points: *Eshera, Sukhumi, Ochamchire, the River Inguri valley, the area adjoining Poti, v. Ureki, the interfluve of the Supsa-Natanebi, v. Tsikhisdziri, Pichvnari near Kobuleti, v. Makhvilauri, Batumi, v. Gonio, v. Bukistsikhe, v. Gurianta, v. Dapnari, v. Dablagomi, v. Mtisdziri, the environs of Kutaisi, v. Sagvichio, Vani and its environs, and others*. Colchian Amphorae of the 2nd-1st cent. BC have come to light at various settlement sites of the northern Black Sea area, namely *Gorgippia, Cyteus, Cepoi, Naples (Scythian), Chersonesus, Donuzlav, Belyaus, Karatobe, Cercinitides*, etc [Vnukov, S. Tsetskhladze, G. 1991:170-185].

A high relief stamp is fixed on the upper part of the handle of the Colchian amphora discovered in the lower layer of “*Natekhebi*”(in *Poti*). The handle is of oval section; the clay brownish, with whitish and blackish noticeable in it; the surface is coarse-nappy-porous. The stamp is circular (diam.: 1.9 cm), with an equal-beam cross in it; the stamp is an epigraphic; the cross is slanted in relation to the handle (Fig.V, fig. 1).

Until quite recently, circular stamped Colchian amphorae were unknown to scholarship. At present cross stamps placed within a circle have been brought to light, resembling one another: from *Poti, Pichvnari-Choloki*, former city site of *Vani*. To date nine specimens are known in all. One piece is attested by oral communication. The stamps of this type are attested on a wine jar of local production.

A cross placed within a circle may have been a sign of a prominent person of authority of some urban settlement or region of Colchis. The product of the ceramic workshops under him was branded with such an emblem. “*Vani*”, “*Kobuleti-Pichvnari*” or *Phasis* may have been such an urban centre. The raw material and manufacture of Colchis were exported onto the international market

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 via the city of *Phasis*. It is not ruled out that these brands belonged to a king's official who was charged with control of the manufacture of amphora-containers and was responsible for the quality of the commodities to be transported in them. Bearing in mind the well-known brands of 3rd cent. BC Colchian amphorae from *Dioscurias-Eshera*, with the name of the city inscribed [see Puturidze, R., 2003; pl. I, 2], then a brand with a cross may be taken for an emblem of some other city, e. g. the trading city of *Phasis*. This city was an important trade centre [Lordkipanidze, O. 2000; Gamkrelidze, G. 2003:170-185; Braund, D. 1994:102-103; Gamkrelidze, G. 1992:6-29, and others], (Fig.I). It is mentioned by the following authors: *pseudo-Scylax* (4th cent. BC), *Aristotle*, *Plato*, *Heraclides Zembos*, *Hipocrates*, *Theocritus*, *Strabo*, *pseudo-Plutarch*, *Pliny*, *Gaius Secundus (Elder)*, *Pomponius Mela*, *Flavius Arrian*, *Plutarch*, *Claudius Ptolemaios*, *pseudo-Orpheus*, *Themistios*, *Castorius*, *Ammianus Marcellius*, *Zosimus*, *Stephanus Byzantinus*, *Agathias*, *Theophanes the Chronograph*, *George Cedrenus*, and others [see Gamkrelidze G. 2003:170-173].

The city of *Phasis* was one of the principal points of the sea and river transit commercial route of Asia-Europe. Through the city of *Phasis* iron, timber, flax, linseed oil, honey, wax, wine, etc. were exported abroad [Lordkipanidze, O. 1966:117-120; Gamkrelidze, G. 1992:6-18].

Thus, on the basis of the recent archaeological evidence discovered in Western Georgia or Colchis, as well as by recourse to and consideration of other artifacts we may conclude that from the second half of the 4th-to the 2nd cent. BC inclusive amphorae were made in Colchis, on which proprietary, trade brands were stamped, as was the practice in Mediterranean and Black Sea urban centre. I believe these stamps constitute the proprietary (legal) emblem of an urban centre (e.g. *Phasis*) of Colchis or of some person of advanced

position who was in control of the manufacture of amphorae and assumed responsibility for the quality of the products, exported in these commercial vessels (containers). This, in its turn points to the higher level of development of the Colchian society of the period and to the quality of its integration in advanced urban centre of the Mediterranean and Black Seas.

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Figures:

Fig. I - 1-4 Colchian Amphorae from Kobuleti – Pitchvnari settlement;

Fig. II - 1,2, 4 - Colchian Amphorae from Vani; 3 - Colchian Amphora from Grigoleti settlement; 5 - Colchian Amphora from Poti Natekhebi settlement;

Fig. III - Bases of Colchian Amphorae from the Hellenistic period settlements of West Georgia;

Fig. IV – 1. Colchian Amphorae of the 3rd c. BC.; 2. Colchian Amphorae of the 2nd -1st cc. BC.; 3. Colchian Amphorae of the 1st – 3rd cc. AD.; 4. Colchian Amphorae of the 4th -8th cc. AD.;

Fig. V – 1. Stamped handles of Colchian Amphorae of the Hellenistic period; 2. The inscriptions on the Colchian Amphorae of the Hellenistic period.

COLCHIAN AMPHORA WITH STAMP FROM POTI-PHISIS

An archaeological expedition has discovered a highly noteworthy stamp at the “*Natekhebi*” locality, on the west shore of Lake *Paliastomi*, Poti, Georgian Black Sea littoral. Here the soil is highly clayey-sandy, with a clay-peat layer under it, where archaeological material of the 4th-2nd cc BC was found, namely, a profiled foot of an Attic black-gloss vessel and the base of a *Rhodian* amphora [see Gamkrelidze, G. 1992, pls. 5, 6]. Here was also found a fragment of a Colchian amphora with a cross stamp. Below, I shall try, as far as possible, to determine the significance of this discovery for the history of Colchis. This implies discussion of such questions as: **1.** The archaeological context of the discovery of the stamp; **2.** The topography of other cross-stamps, attested in Colchis; **3.** The meaning of cross as a symbol; **4.** The question of the manufacture of amphorae or trading containers in Colchis; **5.** Stamps as a proprietary trade mark; **6.** *Phasis*, the place of discovery of the stamp, as a trade centre.

At the “*Natekhebi*” former settlement site, in *Poti*, construction ceramics is represented by tiles and bricks. Traces of wooden beams and clay plaster also came to light. Here, on the ground floor built of bricks there must have been beam structures plastered with clay. *Arrian* notes that “*earlier the walls were built of clay, with wooden towers standing on them; now the walls are built of bricks*” (*Periplus*. . . , 9). The bulk of the vessels found on the site are ceramic containers: amphorae, concave-bodied specimens prevailing among them. Household pottery is represented by pots, bowls, louteriai and jugs. Up to 25 % of the archaeological material is foreign pottery, helping to form a general idea of foreign contacts. The wares are largely comprised of amphorae. Most of the amphora fragments resemble *Sinopean* and are corrugated. The bases of *Samian* amphorae claim attention. A pit burial, discovered in the north-eastern part of the

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settlement site, yielded: a concave-bodied amphora, bronze pin, three bronze fibulae, a quadrangular lead plate-weight, a glass drinking-vessel, a copper 20 numa coin of Justinian II (565-578). In the western section of the settlement, a copper coin of Emperor Constantius II (337-361) was also found. The archaeological material of the site evinces especial closeness with its counterparts from *Bichvinta*, *Sukhumi*, *Ochamchire*, *Tsikhisdziri*, *Gudava* and *Nokalakevi*. In the shape of this site we may be dealing with the remains of the city of *Phasis*, described in the works of Arrian, Procopius and Agathias (for a detailed discussion of the archaeological material, see [Gamkrelidze, G. 1987; 97-117; Gamkrelidze, G. 2003: 170-185; Gamkrelidze, G. 2002: 70-101; Gamkrelidze, G. 1992: 101-119; Gamkrelidze, G. 1992: 30-48]). In the lower layers, a stamped handle of a Colchian amphora was found together with other archaeological artifacts.

A high relief stamp is fixed on the upper part of the handle of the Colchian amphora discovered in the lower layer of “*Natekhebi*”. The handle is of oval section; the clay brownish, with whitish and blackish noticeable in it; the surface is coarse-nappy-porous. The stamp is circular (diam.: 1.9 cm), with an equal-beam cross in it; the stamp is anepigraphic; the cross is slanted in relation to the handle (pl.II,fig.1).

Until quite recently, circular stamped Colchian amphorae were unknown to scholarship. At present cross stamps placed within a circle have been brought to light, resembling one another: from *Poti*, *Pichvnari-Choloki*, former city site of *Vani* (see pl. I, map of distribution). To date nine specimens are known in all. One piece is attested by oral communication. The stamps of this type are attested on a wine jar of local production. A single cross, differing from others, was found on a bowl too.

List of Colchian amphorae and wine jars with a cross stamp:

1) An oval-section handle of an amphora with a cross stamp placed in a circle was found on the right bank of the *Choloki* River, at a former

settlement site. Its clay is brownish, with whitish and blackish small fragments noticeable. The surface is rough and porous; it is dated to the 3rd cent. BC, and is preserved in the Finds of the *Pichvnari Archaeological Expedition* base (see [Tsetskhladze, G., Iashvili, I., 1991: 58-61]); (pl. IV, fig. 1).

2) An oval-section handle of Colchian amphora with a circular stamp in which an equal-beam cross is placed. The clay is brownish and white and blackish small specks of fragments are visible; the surface is rough and porous; it was found on the upper terrace of the former city site of *Vani*; plot 213-212; field #07:1-04:470. The layer contains artifacts of the 4th-2nd cent. BC. (pl. III, fig. 1).

3) An oval-section handle of a Colchian amphora, with a circular stamps framing an equal-beam cross. The clay is reddish-brownish, with whitish and blackish small-fragment specks noticeable. The surface is rough-porous. It was found on the upper terrace of the city site of *Vani*; plot 222; field #07:1-74:360. The layer contains artifacts of the 4th-2nd cent. BC. (pl. III, fig. 2). [Gigolashvili, E., Kacharava, D., et al. 1979: pl. 5, fig. 30].

4) Oval-section handle of a Cholchian amphora, with a circular stamp with an equal-beam cross in it. The clay is brownish, with whitish and blackish small-fragment specks visible; surface is rough-porous; it was discovered on the lower terrace of the former city site of *Vani*; plot 67, close to the cistern; field #07:1-79:2067; the layer conyains 2nd-1st cent. BC. artifacts (pl. III, fig. 3).

5) Oval-section handle of a Colchian amphora with a circular stamp with an equal-beam cross placed in it. The circle is not completely filled with the cross. The clay is brownish, with whitish and blackish small-fragment specks visible; the surface is rough-porous. It came to light on the upper terrace of the former city site of *Vani*; plot 213; field #07:1-03:65. The layer contains artifacts of the end of the 4th and 2nd cent. BC. (pl. III, fig. 4).

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6) Oval-section handle of a Colchian amphora with a rounded beam swastika stamp. The clay is brownish, with whitish and blackish small-fragment specks visible. The surface is rough-porous. It was found on the central terrace of the former city site of Vani; plot 127. 142; field #07:1-04:2287. The layer contains artifacts of the 3rd-1st cent. BC. (pl. II, fig. 2).

7) Oval-section handle of a Cholchian amphora with a cross stamp. The lower side is slightly elongated. No circle is noticeable round the cross. The clay is brownish, with whitish and blackish small-fragment specks visible. The surface is rough-porous. It was formed at the place *Mshvidobis Gora* near the river *Sulori*, eastward of the city site of *Vani*, while conducting surfacial archaeological explorations; field #07:9-05:34. Artifacts of the 3rd-1st cent. BC were found on the spot (pl. III, fig. 5). Another handle of a Colchian amphora with a cross stamp came to light on the central terrace of the city site of *Vani*.

8) A circular stamp on the mouth of the wine jar of local manufacture, with an equal beam cross in the circle. The clay is brownish, with whitish and blackish small-fragment specks visible. The surface is rough and porous. It was found on the upper terrace of the *Vani* city site. plot 222; filed #07:1-47:277. The layer contains artifacts of the 3rd cent. B C-4th cent. AD (pl. IV, fig. 4).

9) A circular stamp with an equal-beam cross in it on the triangular-section mouth of a wine jar of local make. The clay is brownish, with whitish and blackish small-fragment specks visible. The surface is rough and porous. It came to light on the upper terrace of the *Vani* city site; plot 221; filed #07:1-70:329. The layer contains artifacts of the 3rd cent. BC -4th cent. A D. This fragment of a wine jar was found near a badly-damaged early medieval kiln. Today it is justly believed that this pottery must date from the 4th-3rd cent. BC [Tsetskhladze, G., Iashvili, I., 1991:59].

10) A fragment of the shoulder of a wine jar of local manufacture; it has an encircled equal beam cross stamp. It came to light at the *Gurianta* former settlement site, on the left bank of the Supsa, Ozurgeti district. The layer is dated to the 4th-3rd cent. B C (pl. IV, fig. 2); (see [Vashakidze, N. 1971:17]).

A fragment of the base of a bowl was discovered on the upper terrace of the former city site of *Vani*; it is adorned with an encircled equal beam cross stamp. This cross differs from the rest in having quadrupled beams. The clay is brownish, with whitish and blackish small-fragment specks visible. Plot 191-194; field #07:1-75:203. The layer contains artifacts of the 3rd-1st cent. BC. (pl. IV, fig. 3). [Gigolashvili, E., Kacharava, D. et al. 1979:44].

It is also noteworthy that a locally made three-lipped jug with a cross stamp on the top of its handle was found in a burial complex in v. Patardzeuli, Sagarejo district. The complex is dated to the 1st cent. BC-1st cent. AD. (see [Narimanishvili, G., 1999: 68, fig. 1]).

To date cross-stamped Colchian amphorae have not been traced anywhere beyond Colchis. Basing on the stratigraphic data and context of artifacts, they must be chiefly dated to the end of the 4th cent.-2nd cent. BC. The cross shapes on the stamps differ somewhat. Various signs are often scratched on the handle and neck of 2nd-1st cent. BC Colchian amphorae, brought to light in abundance in Western Georgia, dating from a later period. To date up to thirty varieties of such signs have been recorded. It should be noted that approximately similar signs are evidenced in Colchis on wine jars from the 4th century BC, and on tiles and weights from the 3rd cent. BC. They are considered by scholars to be largely marks of the workshops that manufactured wine jars, amphorae and tiles [see Puturidze, R., 2003:102-103]. Among these signs there are sign-graffiti also (see pl. IV, fig. 6).

Small-body crossed stamps in a circle are known on *Thasian* amphorae. But here Greek letters are placed in the four spaces between the beams [Brashinski, I., 1980:233, fig. 132; Bon, A., 1957: 167; Monakhov, S. 1999:233]. Stamped *Thasian* amphorae have so far not been attested on the territory of Western Georgia.

Two, fired clay stamp seals have been found in a 7th-6th cent. BC layer at the *Parnalis Gora* former settlement site in v. *Chognari*, near *Kutaisi* (field #227, 229; Kutaisi Archaeological Expedition, Director: O. Lordkipanidze 1964).

The stencils for making stamps were made of stone, clay or metal, e.g. clay stamps from the *Parnali Gora* site (v. *Chognari*) or metal stencils for proprietary stamps of the 5th-3rd cent. BC. from *Guadikhu*, *Vani*, *Kobuleti-Pichvnari*, *Eshera*, *Dablagomi*, *Dapnari*, etc. [Lordkipanidze, M., 1975:14-73].

About the cross: The cross is a mysterious coordination, universal symbol. It was first fashioned in the Paleolithic period, and since then it has held a leading place in the symbolism of mankind. Since time immemorial, the cross has reflected man's view on the outer world. We often come across it in various ornamental and mythological subjects – depicted on different archaeological artifacts in various drawings and combinations. It is often one of the principal elements of the ornamental pattern and the basis of distribution of most compositions. Together with a circle, the cross is the principal feature of the perception of the world.

Scholars believe that the cross derives from the image of a human standing with his arms extended horizontally, being his symbol; also from sticks placed crosswise for kindling fire by friction, being perceived as a symbol of fire and the hot sun. It may also be a symbol of a symmetrically planned settlement, divided into four equal parts. Roads leading from east to west and from south to north crossed in main square of such a settlement. The cross is a symbol of

cosmogonic-sacred internal essence and must be indicative of the four cardinal points. Its horizontal-vertical section denotes the four directions issuing from the centre. The cross is organized symmetrically around this centre.

The cross, placed in a circle, is a revolving circle divided into four sections, being the most ancient archetype of the sun and one of the principal symbols of mankind. The swastika is a subsequent development of the cross, obtained by bending the beams of the cross, also being an ancient symbol [see Khidasheli, M., 2001:63-65]. It expresses the revolving sun or rotating swastika.

From the beginning, the cross seems to have been a sign-symbol of cultic-sacred purpose. Subsequently, from the 4th century the cross became the principal, canonical, holy symbol of Christianity. In Georgian written sources it is first mentioned in *Iakob Tsurtaveli*'s work of the 5th century (part 16) [Monuments of Old Georgian Hagiographic Literature, 1964:26]. Notably enough, the Old Georgian capital letter-sign - j - is characterized by the outline of the cross, with a horizontal line at the top. The letter-sign - q - also has the form of an upright cross (pl. IV, fig 5); [see Gamkrelidze, Th., 1989:165, 179].

The cross spread in the Mediterranean space from the Near Eastern area. Neither is its diffusion from the Caucasus ruled out. This is supported to some extent by the frequent depiction of the cross on archaeological artifacts of the early farming period, *Trialeti* culture and, generally, the Bronze and Iron Ages, and pre-Christian period, discovered in the Caucasus. Different versions of the cross occur on vessels, weapons and tools, ornaments, etc. Images of the cross are attested in large numbers on pottery, gold, silver, bronze, iron, fabrics, and stone. The cross appears to have held a distinguished place in the cultic and everyday life in the pre-Christian period Caucasus. From the 5th century encircled crosses, known under the name of "*Bolnisi*"

crosses, spread in Christian Georgia. They generally resemble the encircled crosses attested in the pre-Christian period.

The sun was one of the principal gods of the Colchian world. This is, for example, attested by an official inscription brought to light on the *Vani* city site; line 18 of the inscription mentions Helios, god of the sun. In the ancient world it was identified with *Zeus*, *Apollo*, *Osiris*, *Jupiter* and *Mithra*. Apollonius Rhodius considers *Helios* (the sun), father of the Colchian king *Aeetes*. The sun was related to the fertility cult as well [Qaukhchishvili, T., 1987:139-142]. The cross, swastika, revolving swastika, and circle are considered to be symbols of the sun. Hence, a distinguished Colchian may well have chosen the sun as his emblem, symbolically implying the god sun.

About the Colchian amphorae: Imported amphorae in Colchis, the eastern Black Sea area in western Georgia, emerge as commercial containers from the second half of the 6th cent. BC. Amphorae made at urban centers of the Black and Mediterranean Seas are attested here. The manufacture of local “*Colchian amphorae*” (resp. *brown-clay*) began from the second half of the 4th cent. BC. By this period, Colchian amphorae resemble their *Sinopean* counterparts. In the numerous archaeological finds of Colchian amphorae of western Georgia, different typological variants are noticeable in terms of form, capacity and clay. There is a difference chronologically as well. Colchian amphorae appear to have been manufactured at many sites on the territory of western Georgia. Amphorae of local production from the second half of the 4th cent. BC to the 8rd cent. AD were made subsequently too with various modifications [see Gamkrelidze G.2009:195-203]. In general, typological-chronologically, Colchian amphorae present the following picture:

1) Colchian amphorae of the second half of the 4th cent. BC to the first half of the 3rd cent. BC resemble *Sinopean* ones; however, the surface of the clay is coarser, and the colour brownish. Light-

brownish specimens also occur. The body of local, Colchian amphora is egg-shaped, close to cylindrical; the handles are equally curved and oval in section (pl. V, fig. 1).

2) Colchian amphorae of the 2nd cent.-1st cent. BC. develop a concavity in the belly; the neck is cylindrical and comparatively short; clay on the surface is coarse and of brownish hue; light-brown specimens also occur. In general, one of the principal characteristics of Colchian amphora is a spiral at the bottom (pl. V, fig. 5), the so-called rosette-like in some researchers' terminology. Such spirals are not characteristic of foreign amphorae. The clay structure of Colchian amphorae is nappy-porous. The clay contains whitish and blackish small-fragment specks. Admixtures occur of diabase and basalt; pyroxenites, quartz, mica, iron (III) hydroxide, etc. Mineralogical-petrographic analysis of the clay has been carried out, demonstrating its identity with local, Colchian clays of different regions [see Morchadze, T., 1979:81; Poporadze, U., Paradashvili, I., Akhvlediani, D., Gasitashvili, A. 2006: 220-224].

Some specimens of Colchian amphorae of the 2nd-1st cent. BC bear signs (e. g. see pl. IV, fig. 6). Perhaps they were made by the potter to indicate the capacity of the vessel or the number of specimens made produced. The signs on Colchian amphorae resemble those made on locally made wine pithoi and tiles. It should be noted also that in one local amphora, brought to light at *Vani*, the surface is treated in the same way as local wine pithoi – horizontal bands or vertical lines [Puturidze, R., 1977:68-69].

Kilns for firing pottery have been discovered in Colchis, where fragments of amphorae have been attested along with those of other types of ceramic wares. A kiln of this type has been found near the village of *Gvandra (Abkhazia)*, dating from the 3rd cent. BC. A similar kiln came to light on the “*Red Beacon*” settlement site near Sukhumi.

Remains of a kiln have been studied on a settlement site south-west of v. *Gulripshi*.

Colchian amphorae of the 2nd cent. BC. and 1st cent. BC. have a special spiral at the bottom. The cylindrical foot assumes mushroom-like rounded shape and the end is thickened. The walls of Colchian amphorae of this period are relatively thin. Some scholars even call it button-like. The body of the amphorae has more concavity; scholars believe that this concavity is connected with transportation on land. The concavity would easier hold the rope and it would be easier to load it on a horse or ass. The capacity of Colchian amphorae ranges from 13 to 22 liters.

Colchian amphorae have been discovered in large numbers on settlement sites of the 2nd-1st cent. BC all over the territory of historical Colchis. There is almost no former settlement site here with such amphorae not coming to light. It is almost unanimously acknowledged in the specialist literature that these amphorae are of local, Colchian, manufacture. Colchian amphorae are attested at the following points: *Eshera, Sukhumi, Ochamchire, the River Inguri valley, the area adjoining Poti, v. Ureki, the interfluve of the Supsa-Natanebi, v. Tsikhisdziri, Pichvnari near Kobuleti, v. Makhvilauri, Batumi, v. Gonio, v. Bukistsikhe, v. Gurianta, v. Dapnari, v. Dablagomi, v. Mtisdziri, the environs of Kutaisi, v. Sagvichio, Vani and its environs, and others*. Colchian amphorae of the 2nd-1st cent. BC. have come to light at various settlement sites of the northern Black Sea area, namely *Gorgippia, Cyteus, Cepoi, Naples (Scythian), Chersonesus, Donuzlav, Belyaus, Karatobe, Cercinitides*, etc [Vnukov, S., Tsetskhladze, G., 1991:170-185].

3) Amphorae with ribbed neck and concave body of the 2nd-3rd cent. AD must be a continuation of the subsequent period of Colchian amphorae of the 2nd-1st cent. BC; they have an elongated body, almost equally curved handles and a spiral at the bottom. Their walls are

relatively thinner, and they have a rib on the neck, at the place of attachment of the handles. Amphorae of this type have been found at *Bichvinta*, *Sukhumi*, *Eshera*, *Tsebelda*, *Poti (Paliastomi)*, *Ureki*, *Kobuleti Pichvnari*, *Tsikhisdziri*, *Gonio*, etc (pl. V, fig. 3); [Khalvashi, M., 2002:10-20].

4) From the 3rd-4th cent. AD a new type of Colchian amphora with concave body and spiral at the bottom develop. The handles of these amphorae are sharply curved in the upper part, and the body is narrower and elongated. Some specimens have low corrugation on the body. The handles lose ovalness in section, becoming flatter (pl. V, fig. 4).

About the stamps: Applying a brand meant inviolability and ownership of the object or content of a vessel. The brand protected this property legally from appropriation by dishonest persons. A brand was approximately the same legal sign as emblems depicted on a coin. Its depiction was the prerogative only of definite noble persons (in Colchis: a *sceptuch* – “*scepter*\\ *bearers*”, king, *chief priest*). It was largely possessed by advanced persons of a state association and high ranking officials. Hence a brand may be considered to be a document of legal character.

A cross placed within a circle may have been a sign of a prominent person of authority of some urban settlement or region of Colchis. The product of the ceramic workshops under him was branded with such an emblem. “*Vani*”, “*Kobuleti-Pichvnari*” or *Phasis* may have been such urban centers. The raw material and manufacture of Colchis were exported onto the international market via the city of *Phasis*. It is not ruled out that these brands belonged to a king’s official who was charged with control of the manufacture of amphora-containers and was responsible for the quality of the commodities to be transported in them. Bearing in mind the well-known brands of 3rd cent. BC. Colchian amphorae from *Dioscurias-*

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Eshera, with the name of the city inscribed [see Puturidze, R., 2003; pl. I, fig. 2], then a brand with a cross may be taken for an emblem of some other city, e. g. the trading city of *Phasis*.

About the city of Phasis: This city was an important trade centre [Lordkipanidze, O., 2000; Gamkrelidze, G., 2003:170-185; Braund, D., 1994:102-103; Gamkrelidze, G., 1992:6-29, and others], (pl. I). It is mentioned by the following authors: *pseudo-Scylax* (4th cent. BC), *Aristotle*, *Plato*, *Heraclides Zembos*, *Hipocrates*, *Theocritus*, *Strabo*, *pseudo-Plutarch*, *Pliny*, *Gaius Secundus (Elder)*, *Pomponius Mela*, *Flavius Arrian*, *Plutarch*, *Claudius Ptolemaios*, *pseudo-Orpheus*, *Themistios*, *Castorius*, *Ammianus Marcellinus*, *Zosimus*, *Stephanus Byzantinus*, *Agathias*, *Theophanes the Chronograph*, *George Cedrenus*, and others [see Gamkrelidze G., 2003:170-173]. Several epigraphic monuments have survived in connection with *Phasis*: a silver phiale (diam. 21 cm), with a Greek inscription: “*I am of Apollo the hegemon, who is in Phasis*”, datable to the 4th cent. BC. [for details see Gamkrelidze, G., 2000:170-185; Gamkrelidze, G., 1992: 101-119].

In the environs of *Poti* a trace of a settlement is attested in v. *Kvemo Chaladidi*, on the right bank of the river *Rioni* (1.5 km northward). The area of the mound is 1800 sq. m. Another settlement, which may be taken for a rural environment of *Phasis*, was discovered in the eastern part of v. *Sakorkio* – in the area known as “*Simagre*”. The mound covers the area of 3300 sq. m. [Mikeladze, 1978:43-77].

A most important report on the location of *Phasis* is preserved in *Strabo's "Geography" (XI,2,17): "On the Phasis (Poti) is situated a city bearing the same name, an emporium of the Colchi, which is protected on one side by the river (Rioni-Phasis), on another by a lake (Paliastomi), and on another by the sea (Black Sea)." (The Loeb Classical Library, London, 1957). The population of the lower reaches of the Rioni-Phasis apparently frequented a special trading*

point or the *Phasis* emporium. From this writing of Hipocrates it seems to appear that the place lying in the delta of the Phasis was a commercial point of the local population. Generally speaking, concentration of trade at special places points to a protourbanistic centre.

It may be conjectured that when the Greeks appeared at the mouth of the *Phasis* river, here there already existed the protourbanistic centre *Phasis* (let us recall the Late Bronze-Early Iron period settlement sites that already existed on this territory). The Greeks perceived this point as a town and trading centre (emporium). They established contacts with this trading settlement and in the course of time a Greek settlement also emerged here. The Greek colony set up near Phasis suffered symbiosis as a result of contacts with the local population. According to archaeological evidence, of the Late Bronze-Early Iron Age period settlement sites – *Namarnu*, *Dziguri*, *Sariachkoni Okhoje*, *Nandevu*, *Sagvichio* (*Zurgani*, *Konsha*), *Naghmipiji*, *Chaladidi* (*Zurga*, *Sabazho*, *Chkhari*), *Guripuli*, *Naokhvamu* (v. *Reka*), *Ergeta* and others [see Jibladze, L., 2001:31-38 and map] – later *Phasis* must have become advanced. In terms of communications it occupied a convenient place, namely, the *Rioni-Phasis* delta, and it developed into an urbanistic centre. The archaeologically discovered settlement sites in the lower course of the *Rioni-Phasis* also point to this. Here foreign products of the 6th century BC are scarce. Although the location of the *Phasis* of the Classical period is known generally by the written sources, its exact situation is hitherto unknown. Only remains of the *Phasis* of the 3rd-8th centuries BC are known to date [see Gamkrelidze, G., 2003:179].

The city of *Phasis* was one of the principal points of the sea and river transit commercial route of Asia-Europe. Through the city of *Phasis* iron, timber, flax, linseed oil, honey, wax, wine, etc. were

exported abroad [Lordkipanidze, O., 1966:117-120; Gamkrelidze, G., 1992:6-18].

Thus, on the basis of the recent archaeological evidence discovered in Western Georgia or Colchis, as well as by recourse to and consideration of other artifacts we may conclude that from the second half of the 4th-to the 2nd cent. BC inclusive amphorae were made in Colchis, on which proprietary, trade brands were stamped, as was the practice in Mediterranean and Black Sea urban centers. I believe these stamps constitute the proprietary (legal) emblem of an urban centre (e.g. *Phasis*) of Colchis or of some person of advanced position who was in control of the manufacture of amphorae and assumed responsibility for the quality of the products, exported in these commercial vessels (containers). This, in its turn points to the higher level of development of the Colchian society of the period and to the quality of its integration in advanced urban centers of the Mediterranean and Black Seas.

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Illustrations:

Pl. I _ The map of findings of stamps with crosses.

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Pl. II -1 -The handle of Colchian amphora with stamped cross found near Poti, W bank of the lake Paliastomi, place "Natekhebi". **2** - The handle of Colchian amphora with stamped swastika found on the central terrace of Vani City site (field # 07:1-04:2287). (for the description see the text).

Pl. III - 1 -The handle of Colchian amphora with stamped cross found near Poti, W bank of the lake Paliastomi, place "Natekhebi". **2** - The handle of Colchian amphora with stamped cross found on the central terrace of Vani City site, field. # 07:1-04:470. (for the description see the text). **2** - The handle of Colchian amphora with stamped cross found on the upper terrace of Vani City site, field. # 07:1-74:360. (for the description see the text). **3** - The handle of Colchian amphora with stamped cross found on the lower terrace of Vani City site, field # 07:1-79:2067. (for the description see the text). **4** - The handle of Colchian amphora with stamped cross found on the upper terrace of Vani City site, field. # 07:1-03:65. (for the description see the text). **5** - The handle of Colchian amphora with stamped cross found near r. Sulori, place "Mshvidobis Gora" (for the description see the text).

Pl. IV - 1 The handle of Colchian amphora with stamped cross, found on the left banc settlement-site of r. Choloki (for the description see the text). **2** - The fragment of the handle of Colchian amphora with stamped cross, found on the Gurianta settlement-site, near the r. Supsa. (for the description see the text). **3** - The fragment of the bowl with the stamped cross, found on the upper terrace of Vani City site, field # 07:1-75:203. (for the description see the text). **4** -The stamped cross on the mouth of the pythos, found on the upper terrace of Vani City site, field # 07:1-74:277. (for the description see the text). **5** – Georgian Asomtavruli letters **j(ჟ)** and **q(კ)**. **6** - Some examples of the letters on the Colchian amphorae of 2nd -3rd cc BC.

TWO SILVER RHYTONS FROM WEST GEORGIA – *COLCHIS (Mtsdziri and Gomi)*

Rhytons were the vessels used for drinking. Mainly two types of them existed: some had short necks and animals' heads, others - horn-like body decorated with small figures of various creatures. The horn-shaped vessel in Georgia used for wine drinking is called "qantsi". The ancient roots of wine-making in Georgia warrant's the assumption that "qantwi-rhyton" is one of the oldest forms of drinking vessel.

There are different opinions about the origin of rhytons [Svoboda, Cončev 1956: 6 – 15]. Some scholars consider that they were first made in the Asia Minor [Amiranashvili 1961: 51]; others think that Iran is the mother land of a rhytons [Rostovtsev 1929: 8 – 14]. Some authors suppose that the drinking vessel like a rhyton could not be made only at one certain place [Trever 1940: 107 – 108; Maksimova 1956: 215 – 235], and really, rhytons could easily be made in any region of the world where the cattle-breeding was carried out [Gamkrelidze 1982: 73 – 81], because a scraped horn is a natural drinking vessel which is very easy to make.

Originally rhytons were made of animals' horns but in the course of time various materials (clay, metal, ivory, glass) and forms appeared. More developed ones were those made of metal. It seems that a rhyton obtained a significance of a ritual vessel at that time and was widely spread in the Black Sea littoral, Caucasus, eastern Anatolia and Iran [Arakelian 1976: 36 – 47]. Twenty-one rhytons were found in the lands along the river Dnestr and Northern Caucasus (burial mounds of Semibratni, Kelermess, Uliap, Kuloba, Tolstaya Mogila, Solokha, Mordvinov, Talaev, Karagodenashkh etc) [Vlasova 1999: 65].

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The depictions of persons with horn – rhytons in their hands were found in Georgia too: e.g. near Gudauta town (a site Bombora). It is a figure of a sitting man with a horn-rhyton in his hand. The statuette of two men holding rhyton in their hands was found at Kazbegi town. A depiction of a goddess with “Amalthea’s Horn” in her hand was found in the 6th burial of Armaziskhevi, at Mtskheta town. Another goddess with a horn in her hand was depicted on a silver dish found at Tsikhisdziri village and one more find comes from Vani town – a sculpture of a goddess with a horn in her hand [Voronov 1969: PL. XLVIII; Tsitlanadze 1976: Pl. 7, 9; Inaishvili 1993: 33, Pl. 81; Gamkrelidze 2001: 135 – 138; Simon 1999: 30].

Quite often a “Horn of Plenty” – horn-rhyton was one of the attributes of gods and goddesses. The frequent occurrence of rhytons in burials and in some cases their unfitness for use as drinking vessels would lead one to the assumption that one of the sacred functions of the rhyton was its use in rituals connected with the dead, (placing it in the grave or drinking from it for the repose of the dead man’s soul on his remembrance day, etc.).

The same theme is attested outside Georgia as well. The conceptualization of the rhythons as a “Horn of Plenty” or *cornucopia* points also its sacred and religious function. The “Horn of Plenty” is a wide-spread symbol of wealth and abundance. Such a “qantsi – rhython” or *cornucopia* was one of the attributes of Gaea, Kirene, Pluto, Fortuna, Tyche, sometimes of Cybele Dionysus or some other gods or goddesses.

Rhytons have been found at many sites of Georgia, namely, at Gudauta site of Bombora – the rhyton with a protome of a wild goat [Krivitskii 1977: 33], two silver rhytons from Kazbegi town : one with a ram’s protome [Tsitlanadze 1976: 52, Pl. 153] and another with a calf’s head on it (the latter is at the Hermitage department of East, St. Petersburg), the bronze rhyton from Borjomi Bornigele

cemetery , the silver rhyton from Mtisdziri village site Nashuebi [Gamkrelidze 1998: 211 – 216], Vani town clay rhyton with a boar's head on it, Uplistsikhe ancient town clay one . Glass rhytons were found at the Tsebelda river gorge (three examples) [Voronov 1975: 76 – 77, fig. 20 7, 8, 11], one at the ancient city-site of Urbnisi [Saginashvili 1970: 72, Pl. 124], and another one from Samtavro cemetery of Mtskheta town [Ugrelidze 1967: 26, fig. 3].

Below we are going to describe and discuss some problems around two all metal made rhytons from Georgia, which were found in Mtisdziri and Gomi.

A badly damaged burial was discovered at the place Tsabla-ghele in the village of Mtisdziri within 8 km of the ancient city-site of Vani. Only few artifacts from this grave - golden, so-called radial earring, golden torque, fragments of the bronze vessel and a silver rhyton have survived. Based on the archaeological material the burial must be dated to the 4th cent. B.C. [for details see Gamkrelidze G. 1982: 73-81; Gamkrelidze G. 1998: 211-216]. The Most interesting artifact found at Mtisdziri is a silver rhyton (fig. I) which is unfortunately so much damaged that only two fragments have survived: the figure of a man-he-goat (fig I 1) attached to the lower end of the rhyton and a badly damaged fragment of the rim of the rhyton with an ivy ornament (fig I 2). First it was thought that these two fragments belonged to two separate vessels [Khoshtaria 1959:154-161].

The figure on the protome has a human head while its ears, horns and lower extremities are those of a goat. Its ears are alert characteristic of a wild goat, the neck being thick and massive. The beard reaches the chest, the oval eyes are set close, the eyebrows are joined, and cheek-bones are prominent, the nose is straight and massive. The circularly channeled horns were manufactured separately and afterwards attached to the head of the figure. On the chest of the figure an image of a creature is noticeable with long ears, hairy head and lowered legs.

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The figure of the man-he-goat has hoofs typical of a goat. Both the man-he-goat and the rhyton itself are richly decorated with a relief ornament. The master tried to render the muscles and separate features by an ornament of scaly, fan-shaped and slanting notches, using the technique of scratching and incision. Specially pointed tools were also used.

The artistic style of the Mtsdziri rhyton is somewhat related to the so-called Achaemenid style, and has less in common with the so-called Eastern Greek style. Circular channeling of the horns is characteristic of the Achaemenid art. Rhytons with relief, horizontal stripes and flute occur frequently being of Oriental provenance. The representation of animal ears on the chest of the man-he-goat is also characteristic of Oriental style. It should be noted that the so-called herringbone ornament, which is typical of Colchian pottery of a definite period was used in rendering the figure of the man-he-goat. The same can be said about the geometric ornament that has much in common with the style of the 5th-6th cent. B.C. gold adornments of Colchian origin (gold diadem, "radial" and openwork earrings, temporal rings) [Lordkipanidze 1971: 51-63]. Some of their ornaments recur on silver articles of the same period.

The Mtsdziri rhyton must be the work of a local master, influenced by Oriental Achaemenid style but its subject (the face of the figure) seems to be the result of local religious beliefs. As noted above, the end of the qantsi-rhyton features a half-man and half-goat, i.e. a man-he-goat. I have identified it with the animal-protector god Ochopimtre-Ochopinte-Ochokochi, some parts of whose body is human and others of a goat, as represented on the Mtsdziri rhyton.

Ochopimtre, an animal-protector god must have been a common mythological image in ancient Georgia. Interest attaches to Ekvtime Mtatsmindeli's evidence on the name of a Georgian pagan god (Bochi) which was identified with Ochopimtre: see *"The name of the*

pagan idols regarded by them as gods – some of men and some of women - were completely destroyed: Dios, or Apollo, or Artemis, or Bochi (Ochopintre), and Gatsi, and Badagon, and Armaz at treating wine they would pronounce the name of the depraved Dionysus with a guffaw, and all this is diabolical..." [The Small Nomocanon 1972: 58].

It is significant that the name of the god Bochi (Ochopintre) is mentioned together with the name of Dionysus. It is conceivable that there was a link between the man-he-goat and Dionysian mysteries. This is suggested by the representation of ivy ornament on the rhyton which is characteristic of gods of the Dionysus circle and of vessels for drinking wine.

By its function and appearance Ochopintre resembles the Greek god Pan which is often represented as a he-goat. The Greeks imagined Pan as a merry god of the woods. The representation of Pan is found in some places of Georgia. After the formation of general Greek religion Pan became one of the attendant gods of Dionysus.

It cannot be ruled out that the Georgians had a local Dionysus-type god and its companions (Ochopintre) that later became assimilated to the Dionysus cult earning from Greece.

Some ritual traditions preserved in Georgian folklore and Ethnography (wrapping into a goat-skin, mask making e.g. *Berikaoba*, etc) seem to suggest that the man disguised as a goat on the Mtisdziri rhyton personified Ochopintre taking part in the mysteries connected with these gods.

A silver rhyton representing a scene of a battle (Fig. III) is an absolutely unique specimen of toreutics. It has been found in a high land region of Georgia Upper Racha in the village of Gomi and was brought to Kutaisi museum with other artifacts: a copper bowl, a bronze belt – plate, two bronze bracelets, a pair of bronze pins and a bronze finger-ring, remains of a glass adornment, another finger-ring made of horn, a strand of beads and 16 scraps of other beads. All these

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pieces are quite common for the pre – Christian cemeteries. The nearest archaeological site to Gomi village is Brili multilayer cemetery excavated at Gebi village. It seems quite natural to suppose that all the artifacts just cited are stray pieces found at Gebi and taken to Gomi.

The depictions on the rhyton capture a special interest of scholars. The vessel has a form of an oblong cone. Dimensions of its preserved part are: height – 13 cm, rim diameter – 6.5 cm, weight – 86 gr. The rim of the vessel is damaged and its lower part is missing. Now it is kept safe at the Kutaisi State Museum’s reserve of precious metals (no 111) (Fig. III, 1, 2). The rhyton is made in one single piece of a silver plate. As it seems, first the scene was depicted on the flat surface. Afterwards the needed, horn-like shape was given to the plate. Probably, that is why the figures are somehow deformed and distorted [Bochoridze 1994: 254]. The shape of the vessel with its cylindrical neck and narrowing to the bottom body (its protome is missing) suggests that the vessel is a rhyton.

Decoration of the vessel consists of three different bands. The first one is made around the rim. It is a frieze of dense flutes. The second represents four fighting men, and the third one – a pair of different animals and a tree. All figures are disposed symmetrically.

Two pairs of fighting men are depicted below the flutes. Each pair is facing each other.

The first warrior on the left is a bearded man. He wears a helmet, short clothes and shoes on his feet – depicted with bands around his ankles. He is holding a spear in his right hand and a rectangular shield in his left one. The spear is lifted up, ready to thrust the enemy.

The second warrior wears a helmet, a sleeveless jacket and similar shoes. He is aiming his arrow towards his foe.

The third warrior is standing with his back towards the second one and facing the fourth. He is wearing a helmet, holding a dagger in

his right hand and a rectangular shield (similar the first one) in his left one. The fourth warrior is holding a spear. Some details of the men's figures are deformed and damaged. A tree with eight branches, a wolf and a doe are depicted below the warriors.

Some figures depicted on the rhyton are impressed, others are scratched out and the rest are hammered from the inner side. All of them are schematic and naturalistic, made in low relief with impressed lines. The craftsman who made the reliefs does not seem to be skilled enough. All four men are depicted in the three – fourth with their heads in profile. A spatial solution of upper and lower devices is simple. The doe and the tree make an illusion of differing planes. Horizontal dashes on the men's shields create an illusion of an artistic perspective. Dynamic postures of the warriors show a rather aggressive attitude. The tree depicted on the background connects the upper and lower scenes and functions as a key motif.

The rhyton found at Gomi village belongs to the type of horn-like ones. Two of the four warriors portrayed on it are holding similar shields which cover them from their pelvis to the shoulders. The shields are rectangular and their right upper corners are cut out. They are rendered so that it is easy to see how they are tied to the arms and in addition to it they should have attachments for grasping them. It was very convenient to hold a shield this way because a warrior then was able to use both of his hands if needed (such attachments were first used by Hoplites) [Kvirkvelia 2001: 35]. The cut out right corners of the shields allowed the warriors to watch the enemy's actions. Such detail of a shield is depicted only on the rhyton from Gomi village and it seems quite possible to consider it as a local novelty. Shields with visors are quite common but they are not asymmetrical, e. g. so called semi lunar ones, or the one depicted on the 1st century relief of Chersoneses town. The shields of Gomi rhyton are rendered with the help of vertical lines that creates an

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impression of a wood – as if long pieces of it are bound together with two pieces of metal bands (upper and lower ones) and between them there is a horizontal sign or emblem like Latin “v” (<).

Rectangular shields with rounded corners are depicted on Karashamba silver bowl found in the 2nd millennium burial near the Razdan River [Oganesian 1988: 145]. Trapezoid shields are depicted on the belt-plate found in the Late Bronze period burial in Stepanavan [Martirosian 1964, fig.65]. The assault of town Sugun is depicted on a bronze sheathing of a door – Assyrian warriors are holding oblong rectangular shields [Piotrovskii 1959: Pl. 4]. On the scene of Kadesh battle (1312 BC.) from Abu – Simbel temple the warriors fighting against Ramzes II are standing in the race-chariots and holding hurdle rectangular shields. [Istoria ... 1914: 132, fig. 1]. A so called Scythian warrior holding a rectangular shield with rounded corners is depicted on a gold comb found in Solokha burial [Mantsevich 1987: 34]. Here I have to note that shields are less characteristic to the Scythian – Sarmatian world and they are almost absent among their numerous archaeological material. From the burials only five shield remains are known [Meliukova 1964: 78; Khazanov 1971: 63].

According to Herodotus (7. 61), Xerxes’ Iranian warriors had round shields of hurdle. Rectangular shield was not characteristic to the Aegean – Greek world. Earlier Roman shields are round or rectangle and slightly bent ones appeared about the 3rd century BC. Polybius (History 6. 23. 2 – 4) wrote that shields were made of planks covered with leather (120 by 80 cm). Both ends of such shields were bound with metal pieces. Later rectangular, ovoid hexahedral and rhomb-shaped shields coexisted but the ends of the latter were cut away. The shields had round metal umbons in their central parts. All three types of shields (rectangular, hexahedral, and ovoid) are depicted on the reliefs of Lucius Septimius Severus’ triumphal arch in Rome. Rectangular shields are depicted on the scenes of gladiators’

battle found in Pompeii. Roman infantrymen used rectangular shield – scutum at the time of Marcus Furius Camillus’ dictatorship. From this time until 3rd c. AD on type of shields remained common among Roman infantrymen (cavalry soldiers used ovoid shields). It is quite probable that Pompeii’s legionaries were equipped with such rectangular shields when they first came to the Transcaucasia in 65 BC and fought against the Kartlian (Caucasian Iberia) King Artoke [Gamkrelidze G. 2001: 57 – 69]. At the times of the Roman Empire the shields became smaller and they covered the soldiers’ torsos only.

A rectangular wooden shield with angle – irons at the corners and covered with a sheathing of nails was found in west Georgia, at Tsebelda. It was included in the context uncovered on a hill of Stekliannaya and dated to the 4th century (48 by 68 cm) [Voronov 1975: 95, fig. 33].

A collection of the Late Classical period artifacts preserved in the State Museum of Georgia was found in Tbilisi, at Delisi suburb. The collection contained a figure of a warrior (no 5 – 996: 7) with a rectangular shield in his hand.

Shields with round bronze or iron umbons are quite frequently found in Georgia. Wooden or leather pieces of the shields perish easily in the soil. Roundness of an umbon does not mean that a shield should be round too (e.g. rectangular Roman scutum with round umbons). An assumption about roundness of a shield is strengthened with ethnographic examples characteristic to Georgian highlands where the locals used the shields with a diameter of 30 – 40 cm [Cholokashvili 1954: 227 – 232]. I think that at Varsimaantkari cemetery there are unearthed only umbonis and not the shields themselves [Mukhigulashvili 1986: 67 – 72].

Round metal umbons and sheathings are very common in Georgian Late Bronze – Early Iron periods, namely, they were found at Badiauri, Lilo, Melaani, Vanta, Ureki, Kazbegi, Samtavro,

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Kamarakhevi, Varsimaantkari, Vani, (the 9th burial), Khutsubani, Eshera, Brili etc.

It is notable that round Hoplite shields were found in the 7th burial at Tsiteli Shukura and in Akhul – Abaa burial [Kvirkvelia 2001: 32 – 40]. It is quite possible that foreign shields with metal sheathings and umbons were used by high-ranking persons. It is absolutely clear at Varsimaantkari where among 166 burials only in two grave assemblages umbons were found (d. 30 cm) [Mukhigulashvili 1986: 71]. As to ordinary soldiers, they probable used either hurdle, or wooden shields sheathed with leather and it is natural that they have perished.

Shields of Kartvelian tribes (Colchis, Mosinikes, Moskhes, and Khalibes) are mentioned in Greek written sources. Herodotus (7.78.79) noted that “Colchians wore wooden helmets, small shields of rawhide, short spears and knives”. Xenophon (Anabasis 4.7.22) mentions Khalibes with ox-hide shields and Mosinikes who “held ivy-leaf-like shields covered with white ox-hide” (5.12). Strabo (Geography 11.4.5) wrote that the Albanians are “soldiers on foot and bow-men. They have raw-hide suites of armor and shields like those of the Iberians”. Here is also mentioned a shield similar to Roman scutum – θυρέος [Dvoretzki 1958: 802]. It is very important to note that this passage of Strabo’ “Geography” chronologically concerns to the fight of a Roman commander Pompeii against Albanians and Iberians.

According to the written sources just cited Colchians, Khalibs, Mosinikes and Iberians used small ox-hide, ivy-leaf and scutum-like shields made of hurdle or wood and sheathed in hide. Archaeologically attested umbons point to the fact that metal was frequently used in making the shields.

On the Gomi rhyton scutum-like shields are depicted but they have visors at the right upper corner which distinguishes them from

other specimens. The Warriors depicted on Gomi rhyton wear short clothes covering their pelvis. The garments are rendered in vertical lines. The first and the second warriors wear as if sleeveless jackets over their shirts. The clothes of the first and the third ones are belted. As I have already noted the figures are diagrammatic and it is difficult to say anything surely. It cannot even be excluded that the warriors are dressed in suites of armor, or the diagrammatic lines depict something like a Roman lorica.

The third warrior has even trousers on so characteristic to the Scythian – Sarmatian world. Let me return to Solokha comb in this connection – a warrior depicted on it is dressed in a short jacket (shirt) and trousers. He is holding a shield in his hand.

Xenophon (5.4.13) says that Mosinikes “... wore short sackcloth chitons which did not reach their knees” and adds that “Khalibes wore flax suites of armor reaching the lower area of their stomach belted with tightly twisted ropes” (4. 7. 15) i.e. belts.

Three warriors are bare-legged but they have shoes on their feet which are fastened at their ankles like Roman legionaries. It is a well-known fact that Greek warriors covered their legs with cnemides. So did Khalibes (Xenophon, Anabasis 4.7.16).

Bronze and iron mail links and scales of armor are found in Georgia, namely, at Vani, Eshera, Tagiloni, Kldeeti, Tsebelda (Shapka). About hundred holed iron scales were found in a warrior's burial (no 2) at Vani town. This kind of ammunition is called a scaly armor. Pierced scales were attached to a leather or sackcloth garment which covered a warrior's torso [Lordkipanidze 1976: 183 – 184]. As I have already noted it is possible that the warriors depicted on Gomi rhyton are dressed in such suites of armor rendered diagrammatically.

All four warriors, depicted on the rhyton, are wearing hemispherical helmets. Some of them have nose and jaw covers which are not at all common for the pre classical period [Yesaian 1966: 101,

Pl. 16]. They were not characteristic to the Iranian world. As to the Greek and then Roman periods, jaw covers were considerably frequent [Bottini et al. 1988: 65 – 136, 327 – 365].

So called Chalkidian and Hopletian helmets are found at different sites of Georgia: Sokhumi, Kutaisi, Kokhi (Adjara) and Shukhuti (Lanchkhuti district). Recently a Roman hemispherical helmet has been found in Kakheti region, Dedoplistskaro district, Zemo Kedi village.

Helmets were furnished with additional belts at the forehead in the period of Roman republic, just like the ones depicted on the helmets of the first and second warriors of Gomi rhyton. Nose covers are less characteristic to Roman helmets of the Republican and Imperial periods [Bottini et al. 1988: 327 – 365; Connolly 1988: 228]. It is quite possible that Gomi rhyton represents mixed types (Greek – Roman) of helmets. Herodotus speaks about Colchian (7. 79) and Moskhan (7. 78) wooden helmets. While describing the fight of Pompeii legionaries and Iberians Strabo (11.4.5.) notes that the latter wore leather helmets.

The first warrior of Gomi rhyton is holding a spear lifted up in his hand. The tip of the spear is directed downwards, as if ready to stab. It is short with a rhomb-like spear-head. A tie-line of its hafting is stressed with a pair of horizontal lines. Similar warrior with a spear is depicted on the Emperor Constantine's triumphal arch in Rome. The down directed spear-head points to the fact that the warrior is ready to stab not to throw.

Quantity of spear-heads far exceeds other weapons of the Classical period Georgia. It means that it was a basic weapon during the period. The same is witnessed in the written sources. Herodotus (7. 78. 79), Xenophon (5. 2. 4. 12. 22. 25), Strabo (11. 4. 5) wrote that a spear-head was a leading weapon among Colchians, Khalibes,

Moskhes, and Iberians (Caucasian). About a special group of Iberian soldiers with spears speaks even Plutarch (Luculus 31).

The second warrior on Gomi rhyton grasps a bow and an arrow in his left hand aiming to the one with a spear in his hand. The bow is small with a string tied horizontally. The arrowhead is triangular, with ogee shoulders. Such arrowheads are mostly characteristic to the Late Hellenistic – Roman world [Lordkipanidze 1976: 180]. Percentage of arrowheads in Georgia of this period is not large. Supposedly a bow and an arrow were not so important which is witnessed by Herodotus (7. 78. 79) and Xenophon (4. 3. 7. 8. 15 – 16; 5. 2. 4. 12. 22). They cite and describe the weapons of Colchians, Moskhians, Mosiniks and Khalibes but do not mention either a bow, or an arrow. But later, at the time of Roman (Pompeii) campaign Strabo enlists the weapons of Iberians (Caucasian) and Albanians and mentions a bow and an arrow too (Strabo 11. 4. 5). Iberian archers are mentioned by Appian (Misthradat's wars 101) and Dio Cassius (37. 2). Strabo points to poisoned arrows of Svans (11. 2. 19).

The third and the fourth warriors depicted on the rhyton are fighting to each other with a short, double-bladed dagger and a spear. Iron daggers are fewer than spears among the Classical period weapons of Georgia but comparatively more appear in the Late Classical period e.g. at Armaziskhevi, Kldeeti, Chkhorotsku, Brili, Tsebelda, etc [Puturidze 1959: 74 – 75]. Herodotus (7. 79) mentions short daggers (knives?) together with spears. Xenophon (4. 7. 16) says that Khalibs wore short daggers hanging on their belts.

A doe and a wolf are depicted on the lower part of the rhyton. These animals live in the Caucasian mountains even today. There is a tree behind the doe. I suppose that this is an allegorical depiction of a dualistic struggle between a virtue and an evil (characteristic to Zoroastrism and later to Manichaeism). The tree in this case is on the side of virtue (behind the doe). The lower scene is an allegorical

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rendering of the upper one i.e. fighting warriors. The doe is a symbol of virtue and the wolf of an evil. As to the tree – it is a symbol of fertility, victory of life and defeat of an enemy. I could also offer here an idea of an antithetical triad – confrontation of a doe and a wolf against the background of a tree.

It seems quite possible that Gomi rhyton was made as an offering to a high-ranking warrior who died in a battle and later used in performing his burial rites. Now, let us return to the previous scene depicted on the rhyton. I think it is much more realistic to explain this scene as a fight of southerners against the north Caucasians – Sarmats or Alans [Khazanov 1971: 3 – 4]. A local craftsman mirrored the event that he had already seen and demonstrated his own philosophy in a sacral scene which was quite characteristic to that epoch.

Gomi rhyton is artistically independent and unique. It differs from analogous pieces of art of neighboring countries. The rim of the rhyton is decorated with a band of flutes and so called domed vaults at its end. Local bronze wares with flutes were common even in the Late Bronze – Early Iron period Georgia e.g. fluted situlae found in Lechkhumi [Sakharova 1976: 11, Pl. 9] and at Tlia [Tekhov 1977: 75, Fig. 63]. Flutes were very common on the Pre Classical period Colchian pottery which carried on the tradition in the early Classical period [Lordkipanidze et al 1981: 57] but they were not ended with domed vaults.

Vertical flutes were not characteristic to the Classical period Greek pottery (in contrast to Architecture). They are not seen on Achaemenid or Sassanian decorative vessels. A relief ornament, namely flutes, appeared in the Hellenistic – Roman world on pottery and toreutics [Froning 1982: 179, 280, 288 – 303; Blavatskii 1953: 238 – 254] e.g. a Roman rhyton dated to the 1st century BC [Kobilina 1939: Fig. 9]. Flutes, friezes and so called fan-like decoration became

widespread in the Hellenistic and Late Classical periods [Kropotkin 1970: 24 – 25, Fig. 45].

Presumably frieze less flutes appeared in the Caucasus (first on metal wares and then on pottery) even in the Late Bronze – Early Iron Age so the ornament may even be considered as traditional. As to the frieze-like flutes with domed vaults at one end, they are characteristic to the Late Classical period. Just this kind of frieze embosses Gomi rhyton.

The Late Classical period of Georgia is distinctive with the abundance of toreutics [Machabeli 1976: 9 – 23; Lordkipanidze 1968: 77 – 101, 111] found at Tagiloni, Ureki, Tsikhisdziri, Bandza, Kldeeti, Bori, Sargveshi, Khaishi, Kvashkheti, Zguderi, Tskhinvali, Zhinvali, Ertso, Armaziskhevi, Bagineti, Samtavro etc. It had been influenced by the Roman world [Machabeli 1976: 138 – 147]. As to Gomi rhyton the influence is seen in a manner of rendering the flutes. The Late Classical period fluted wares are found at Tagiloni, Khaishi, Bandza, Tsikhisdziri [Machabeli 1976: 28 – 29; Puturidze 1959: 72 – 74; Djavakhishvili 1958: 149 – 150]. Some of the Late Classical period pieces of toreutics found in Georgia were common even for the 4th century. Silver pieces of later periods belong to the Christian times and bear the features corresponding to the philosophy of this religion.

Chemical analysis of silver attests the fact that a container, made of this metal, makes any liquid less harmful because silver destroys bacilli. This quality of silver was perfectly known in the ancient times and people tried to use the containers made of this metal in performing sacral rituals. It is noteworthy that the Classical period Georgian silver was of high standard. As to the Christian period, there was used an alloy of silver and copper in order to make the metal firmer. Objects made of such alloy patinate in the course of time and become greenish [Goginashvili 1997: 79 – 81].

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Gomi rhyton is made of whitish silver containing stibium which is a silver-like whitish metal itself and its ore deposits are in Racha, near Brili (Zopkhito). As to silver, it is mined at Kvaisa (Djava district). It should not be forgotten that there is a well-known Brili site near Gomi village and the metal pieces found at Brili contain stibium (chemist Dr. G. Inanishvili). According to Strabo (12. 3. 19) Khalibes mined not only iron but silver too.

I think that the horn-rhyton found at Gomi village in Upper Racha, on the south slope of the Caucasian mountain ridge was produced locally and comes from Brili cemetery. It is dated to the Late Hellenistic – Late Classical periods. The rhyton was made for performing a burial ritual. As to the subject matter – it is a depiction of the craftsman’s perception of the reality which shows certain closeness with the north Caucasian (Sarmatian) on one hand and the Roman worlds on the other.

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Figures:

- Fig. I** – 1-3 A silver rhyton from Mtisdziri.
- Fig. II** – A silver rhyton from Mtisdziri, new graphical reconstruction
- Fig. III** -1. A silver rhyton from Gomi village, Upper Racha region.
2. The depiction on the Rhyton.

ABOUT THE MILITARY- POLITICAL SITUATION IN IBERIA-COLCHIS (GEORGIA) IN THE 4th c. BC–2nd c. AD.

(Written Sources and archaeological evidence)

In the classical period political hegemony on Georgian territory was attained by the kingdoms of Colchis and Iberia [13; 34; 37], on whose place and basis Georgia was formed in the future. It should be noted that, unfortunately, factual data for the reconstruction of the military and political history of the Classical period is scarce. Nevertheless, reconstruction of the military and political history of the 4th cent. B.C.-2nd cent. A.D. is feasible to a greater or lesser extent on the basis of a mutual collation and critical analysis of the evidence of the written sources and archaeological and epigraphic remains [see 19; 20; 24; 25; 2;13; 6;7;].

Modern Georgia lies in the central and western part of Transcaucasia. The political-economic situation of ancient Georgia differed in various periods. At the original stage of development, the Georgians or the *Kartvelian* ethnos were settled in the basins of three rivers – *Mtkvari (Curos)*, *Rioni* and *Chorokhi*. People of an ancient *Kartvelian* stock inhabited approximately this territory, whose various unions are referred to by different ancient written sources (Herodotus, Xenophon, Strabo, Arrian, Leonti Mroveli, and others), namely *Colchians*, *Iberians*, *Mossinoeci*, *Chalybes*, *Sasperes*, *Heniochi*, *Taochoi*, *Saniges*; subsequently the *Chan*, the *Laz*, the *Svans*, the *Egrians*, the *Karts* [16;36].

The hills and hillocks, gorges, knolls, hollows, uplands and lowlands, with their natural environment, create convenient places for settlement. Building material here is in abundance: wood, clay, stone, etc.; there is granite, limestone, gypsum, potter's clay, various shales, and quartz sand. The principal sites of metallurgical ore mining (copper, iron, and tin) in Georgia are: *Racha-Lechkhumi*, *Svaneti*,

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Abkhazia, Achara, Kvemo (Lower) Kartli, the upper reaches of the *Greater Liakhvi*, the river *Dzami* valley. The sand of the *Enguri, Tskhenistsqali, Tekhuri, Rioni and Mashavera* rivers contains a definite amount of gold. This is attested by ancient authors: Strabo (XI, II, 19), Appian (*HR*, XII, 103). Gold mining is reported by Pliny too (*NH*, XXXIII).

Owing to its specific tectonic development, Georgia's relief is divided into two main differing parts: mountains and foothill, and valley and lowland. Footpath-roads crossed the mountain ranges of the Greater and Lesser Caucasus, by which the ancient local population communicated with the rest of the world; these are: *Rikoti, Zekari, Mepistsqaro, Mamisoni, Nakra, Klukhori, Daryali*, etc.[37;

The terrain of Colchis, and partly Iberia, bounded by mountains, created an advantageous defensive and military-strategic environment. Notable from this viewpoint is the assessment of the theatre of military operations in the Caucasus Mountains and adjacent territory, given by Lucullus, Roman general of the 1st cent. B.C. (see Plutarch, Lucullus, 14). Significant information in this respect is also found in (Flavius) Arrian's written report to the Emperor Hadrian. Arrian visited the Black Sea littoral of Georgia as the emperor's military and administrative official (see his *Periplus Ponti*).

Consideration of the local terrain and landscape is of major importance in conducting military operations. Skilful use of narrow gorges easy to block, high mountains difficult to cross, hillocks easy to fortify, dense, impenetrable forests, rivers hard to cross was a guarantee of a successful ending of a military campaign. The climate is attached no less importance in warfare. Thus, in fighting Pompey, Mithradates Eupator "fled to Colchis beyond the mountains "(see Strabo, XII, III, 28). He had to rally forces and replenish armament; he wintered in Dioscurias, using the terrain and climate towards the

realization of his military and strategic plan (see Appian, *HR*, XII, 101).

The *Rioni-Qvirila* (the *Phasis* of the Greco-Latin written sources) and the *Mtkvari* (the *Curos* of the Graeco-Latin sources) constituted an advantageous transit and strategic route owing to their physico-geographic location. Evidence on this is largely preserved in the writings of Strabo and Pliny (see Strabo, XI, II, 17; VII, 3; Pliny, *NH*, VI, 52). Notably enough, classical and early medieval settlement sites are situated precisely along this route, their archaeological study yielding imported foreign items (pottery, ornaments, coins, and metal and glass vessels). Such settlement sites along the *Rioni-Qvirila* have been discovered at *Shorapani*, *Kldeeti*, *Vani*, *Shuamta*, *Partsqanaqanevi*, *Mtisdziri*, *Dablagomi*, *Dapnari*, *Sajavakho*, *Chaladidi* (near *Poti*), and so on; along the course of the *Mtkvari*: at *Zghuderi*, *Urbnisi*, *Uplistsikhe*, *Qanchaeti*, *Dzalisa*, *Tsikhiagora*, *Nastakisi*, *Samadlo*, *Sarkine*, *Mtskheta*, and so on.[see 1; 6; 7; 8; 10; 11; 12; 30; 35; 3].

During military operations in Iberia and Colchis, the local fighters made good use of the terrain, mountains, narrow defiles of gorges, defensive works advantageously positioned on mountains and hills, dense impenetrable forests, fords. The same factors had a negative effect on the actions of the invading forces. They were naturally not familiar with the local geographical setting, failing to make a tactically correct use of it. Accordingly, they lacked comprehensive information about local conditions; in particular, they had a vague idea of the opponent's economic base and resources, the quantitative demographic situation, morale, communication and military and technical means, social system, military and strategic actions. Owing to the geographic setting, in Iberia and Colchis it was almost unfeasible to conduct wide-scale, frontal operations with numerous troops. Success here could be achieved with well-trained, mobile, so-called

commando-type detachments, well-informed about the local environment. The strategy and tactics of the war operations of the local population were largely built on the advantageous use of the terrain.

Colchis - and partly Iberia – were historical-geographical regions, bounded by mountains, creating a definite natural defensive area from the military and strategic points of view. Fertile soil, varied relief, moderate climate, ample hydropower resources, ores, diversity of flora and fauna provided a good basis for social progress. Hence, a highly-peculiar historical-cultural area took shape in Colchis, with its centre on the *Rioni*, and in Iberia, on the *Mtkvari*. Colchis and Iberia in the classical period held a pivotal area geopolitically. The eastern and western civilizations met here – and occasionally clashed[37].

Written sources and archaeological evidence . “The Life of the Georgian Kings and of their Fathers and Ancestors from the Earliest Times” (see *Kartlis Tskhovreba*, hereinafter *K.Ts.*)[18] is the basic Georgian language source for Georgia’s history and particularly her military and political history. It was compiled by the Georgian scholar Leonti Mroveli. Most of the reports found in this (written) source have been documentarily confirmed by new archaeological excavations. For example, the fortified cities: Nastakisi, Sarkine[23], Tsikhe-Goji, Armazi, Shorapani, Dimna; historical personages: Artag (Artoces), Parsman I, Parsman Kveli, Mihrdat, Amazasp, and others. The names of historical persons are confirmed in epigraphic monuments discovered archaeologically. King Parsman is mentioned in the so-called Vespasian’s inscription unearthed on the right bank of the Mtkvari, in Mtskheta. The same inscription refers to King Mihrdat. The latter is also mentioned in the so-called inscription №1, brought to light in Armazi, Mtskheta. King Mihrdat is mentioned also in an inscription found in Rome. King Parsman features in an inscription found at Ostia, the port of Rome. The same king is mentioned in the

so-called “Armazi bilingual inscription” excavated archaeologically at Armazi, Mtskheta. The same bilingual mentions “the great King Xepharnug of the Iberians”. “The great King Amazasp of the Iberians” is mentioned in an inscription brought to light in 1996 as a result of archaeological studies at Armaztsikhe-Bagineti[19].

The actions of the historical persons, mentioned in “*The Life of the Georgian Kings*”, are repeatedly referred to and described in Greco-Latin sources as well. The Iberian King Artag (Artoces) is mentioned by Appian in describing Pompey’s campaign in Iberia (*HR*, XII, 103,117), and Dio Cassius (*History of Rome*, XXXVII, 1). King Parnavaz is referred to by Dio Cassius (*History of Rome*, XLIX, 24; LVIII, 26). King Parsman is cited by Tacitus (*Annals*, VI, 33, 34); Dio Cassius (*History of Rome*, LVIII, 26). King Parsman II is mentioned by Arrian (*Periplus*, 11)[see 2; 5; 18; 19; 20; 23;24; 25;34].

The Iberian kings mentioned in written and archaeologically obtained epigraphic sources were directors and organizers of military affairs in Kartli. The military and administrative reforms carried out by king Parnavaz laid the foundation for the kingdom of Iberia (Kartli according to the Georgian language sources): “Then Parnavaz was safe from all his enemies and became king of Kartli and Eguri (i.e. Egrisi) and he increased the number of the Kartlosid i.e. Goegorianid armies and appointed eight eristavis and a *spaspeti*” (*K.Ts.*). These reforms were further extended by other kings of the Parnavazid dynasty. Importantly enough, Parnavaz, king of Iberia and founder of the Parnavazid dynasty (end of the 4th cent. B.C.– first half of the 3rd cent. B.C.) is referred to in the Armazic-Aramaic text of the so-called Armazi bilingual inscription, viz. in line 8.[5].

Along with Georgian, special significance attaches to Greco-Latin sources in studying Georgia’s military and political history of the Classical and Hellenistic period, viz. Herodotus’ *History* VII,79; Xenophon’s *Anabasis*, IV-VIII,17-19,22; Memnon’s *History of*

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Heracleia, Strabo's *Geography*, XI,3; Tacitus's *Annals*, VI,34; Appian's *HR*, XII, 94,103; Arrian's *Periplus*, 8-11; Dio's *History of Rome*, XXXVII, LXX,[see 38] as well as epigraphic monuments: Eshera 1st cent. BC, Mtskheta 75 A.D., the so-called Vespasian's, the so-called Monumentum Ancyranum near Ankara. The Ostian Parsman II's; Mtskheta's so-called Armazi bilingual; the so-called *Shapur's* inscription near *Istakhar*, etc.

Armament constitutes one of the principal sources for the study of military art of Classical-period Georgia, and generally of the ancient World. Its development is directly proportional to the development of society. Both offensive and defensive types of armament occur in the archaeological material of Georgia of Classical times. Of the types of offensive weapons spears, battle-axes, daggers, swords, bows and arrows and slings are represented in Classical-period archaeological material[see 1; 3; 4; 10; 12; 14; 15; 17; 30; 35 etc.].

As shown by research, the spear was the chief weapon of war in Georgia throughout the Classical period. Numerically, iron spears come first in comparison with other weapons, according to archaeological evidence. The same is confirmed by written sources (see Herodotus, Xenophon, Strabo). At different stages of the Classical period, wherever mention is made of the armament of Kartvelian population, the spear features invariably. The spear has been discovered at many archeological sites (Sukhumi, Tsiteli Shukura, Guadikhu, Sukhumi Mountain, Eshera, Vani, Pereta, Gora, Dablagomi, Chkhorotsqu, Dzevri, Itkhvisi, Modinakhe, Beshtasheni, Shavsqaqara, Santa, Tashbashi, Qanchaeti, Kamarakhevi, Tsikhedidi, Natsargora, Varsimaantkari, Zhinvali, Tsipranisdziri, Nedzikhi, Kldeeti, Uplistsikhe)[13; 30;] According to the features characteristic of the spearhead, five principal types are known in Classical-period Georgia, the so-called narrow-bladed spears being most numerous and characteristic of the 6th-3rd cent. B.C. The so-called elongate

rhomboid-bladed spears coexisted with the form just named, in evidence with rounded shouldered spearheads throughout the Classical period. Notably enough, these three types are known from the pre-Classical period.

The next variety is an iron battle-axe – an iron weapon for hacking, with a short four-faceted butt and oval hole for the handle. Iron battle-axes have been attested at many sites of Georgia's Classical period (see Tsiteli Shukura, Gudauta, Guadikhu, the Sukhumi Mountain, Eshera, Vani, Dablagomi, Dzevri, Kutaisi, Kerzu, Brili, Qanchaeti, Beshtasheni, Gomareti, Etso, Manglisi, Asureti, Santa, Rveli). Two principal types are distinguishable among them in terms of characteristics.

Daggers and swords occur – with different ratios – in Georgian material culture throughout the Classical period and it may be said that each chronological stage is characterized by a definite type. We come across two-blade flat-handled (5th-3rd cent. B.C.), single-bladed (4th- 3rd cent. B.C.), ring-handled (1st- 2nd, 2nd- 4th cent. A.D.), and with a wooden case handle specimens. The points of their discovery are: Sukhumi, Tsiteli Shukura, Guadikhu, Eshera, Vani, Inashauri, Gora, Qanchaeti, Itkhvisi, Chkhari, Lia, Dzevri, Modinakhe, Chkhorotsqu, Bori, Kamarakhevi, Zhinvali, Armaztsikhe, Kldeeti[6; 7; 8; 10; 12].

The sling was a simple variety of a projectile weapon. Small-sized round boulder-stones are found in abundance at the ruins of Classical period fortification systems and graves of warriors, along with armour plates (see Vani, Anakopia).

As to the bow and arrow, unfortunately it is not attested archaeologically. Bronze, bone and iron arrowheads have come to light at different points of Georgia (*Vani, Itkhvisi, Kutaisi, Ivrispirebi, Enageti, Tsikhedidi, Gomareti, Sioni, Kumisa, Tsikhiana, Samadlo, Nastakisi, Algeti, Varsimaantkari, Chala, Kldeeti*). These arrowheads are of different types: four-faceted, pyramidal (5th-4th cent. B.C.);

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bronze, three-faceted, socket-less (4th-3rd cc B.C.); socketed (5th-3rd cc B.C.); bronze, three-winged, socketed-spurred and spurless (5th-4th cc. B.C.); bronze, pyramidal headed, socketed (4th-3rd cc B.C.); iron, tanged three-winged (2nd-3rd cc. A.D.). Small sized arrowheads, appearing in the 5th-3rd cc. BC have corresponding small-sized bows, while relatively large iron arrowheads point to large bows.

Of the categories of defensive armament coat-of-arms, helmet, shield and cnemides are attested in Classical period Georgia. These varieties have come down to us in specimens made of metal. The *Kartvelian* population, as evidenced by written sources, was armed with wooden and leather, at times flax, defensive means, hence these failed to be preserved in the earth. The chain-mail is represented as fragments of metal-reinforced armour, i.e. small plates of iron and bronze with which clothes of leather or fabric were covered. These have been found in 4th century B.C. archaeological complexes (*Vani, Sairkhe, Zhinvali*).

The helmets are of bronze – of the so-called Chalcidice type. Found in 4th century archaeological complexes (*Akhul Abaa, Kutaisi, Kokhi, Lanchkhuti, Dedoplistsqaro*). As to shields, we may form an idea of them from specimens with a metal cover; according to the latter several types are distinguishable in Classical-time Georgia: covered entirely with a metal plate, the so-called hoplite shields (6th-5th cc. B.C.); covered with metal bands or narrow plates (4th-3rd cc. B.C.); with metal umbones (2nd-1st cc. B.C. - 3rd-4th cc. A.D.); these are discovered on Classical period Georgian archaeological sites (*Tsiteli Shukura, Akhul Abaa, Eshera, Vani, Modinakhe, Kamarakhevi, Varsimaantkari, Zhinvali*). Thus, the shield is found at all stages of the Classical and Hellenistic period. In all, three bronze cnemides have been brought to light (*Vani, Akhul Abaa*), dateable to the 4th century B.C.

According to archaeological evidence, the war chariot held a definite place in the military art of Georgia's ruling circles of the Classical and Hellenistic period of is. Its remains have been discovered in a 4th century archaeological complex at *Uplistsikhe*. This must have been traces of a two-wheeled war chariot. A bronze model of a two-wheeled war chariot, drawn by two horses, has been found at *Gokhebi*, near *Tetristsqaro*.

Greco-Latin and archaeological data are interesting for the study of the wooden defence works of Classical and Hellenistic period Georgia. This data is largely preserved in the works of Hecataeus of Miletus, Hippocrates, Xenophon, Strabo, Appolonius Rhodius, Diodorus of Sicily, Pomponius Mela, Vitruvius, and Pliny. The works of the cited authors deal with fortified settlements of south and south-western Transcaucasia, in particular Colchian-Mossinoeci beam and plaster, tower-type fortifications. The same sources contain noteworthy evidence on the use of the relief in the construction of settlements and their interrelationship. According to Xenophon, the fortifications consisted of a moat, the main road connecting the inner fortress-tower and other relatively smaller towers. All these were enclosed within a paling of beams. This wall of beams had the principal gate. The fortification towers served as living quarters as well. Interesting in this respect is the 4th century beam tower of v. *Mtisdziri*, Vani district[3; 30].

Archaeological studies point to the existence in 5th-4th cc. Colchis of a definite, well established system of fortified settlements. Colchian settlements of the 6th- 4th cent.B.C. were situated on hills, forming a definite system and surrounded with moats. Wooden beams constituted the chief building material, due to the abundance of forests in Colchis.

The fortification works of ancient cities, brought to light in Georgia, were built on the basis of Hellenistic advanced and highly

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developed theoretical and practical achievements of the period. The city fortification systems of *Armaztsikhe*, *Uplistsikhe*, *Vani* and *Eshera*: *Armaztsikhe* - triangular rocky mountain forms the end of the “mountain of Kartli”. Dominating over the environment, it controls the crossing of the two rivers – the *Mtkvari* and the *Aragvi*. The mountain is divided into a relatively plain area where the city proper was built, and a rocky elevation – a fortification dominant. Its front part is bounded by the river *Mtkvari*, and the other two parts by double, parallel ravines. A fortification line follows along the edge of each ravine: a chain of curtains and towers. The chief function of the outer fortification strip and its tower was to protect the town. Both lines are built with account of the achievements of the advanced engineering of the period[1; 6; 7; 8; 33; 35].

Uplistsikhe - ancient rock-town city in the middle of Kartli is situated on a rocky triangular projection of a ridge on the left bank of the *Mtkvari*. Its fortification line was combined in a special way, the rock gates were linked to an aggregate of curtains and towers. The fortification works here are almost entirely destroyed and they can be judged, largely their direction, by the sockets hewn in the rock for the walls[26].

Vani - Of ancient Georgia’s cities, fortifications of *Vani* have been brought to light best of all. Not only towers and curtains have been unearthed but gates, posterns, moats, etc. as well. On the whole the system is the result of well-planned construction. It attracts attention in many respects, e.g. by portcullises, octagonal towers, counterfort curtains, etc. It must have been built in the 2nd cent. BC. This ancient city was situated on a hill of 6 ha, in the river *Sulori* valley, west Georgian lowland[6; 7; 8; 13; 33].

Eshera - is a noteworthy ancient city site of the eastern Black Sea area and north-western Colchis. It is situated 10 km westward of *Sukhumi*, on the right bank of the *Gumista*. Here two fragments of the

fortification line have been brought to light: curtains and towers. A secret door has also been revealed. Here too, as in all other cases, the walls are strictly subordinated to the natural boundaries of the hill. The fortification of *Eshera* should be dated to the 1st cent. B.C. [35].

Ancient Georgia (Iberia-Colchis), lying at the juncture of Asia and Europe, was the arena of hostilities between military and political-economic forces of countries of Iranian, on the one hand, and Graeco-Roman orientation, on the other.

In 401 Cyrus, ruler of *Cappadocia* and *Lydia* (in Asia Minor) started a war against the Iranian king Artaxerxes II to deprive him of his throne. In this war, Xenophon was the military leader of one detachment of Greek mercenaries. He described the battles and the territories where people of Georgian stock lived. In a battle near Babylon, Prince Cyrus was killed, and his army dispersed; 10000 Greek fighters, steeled in battles, took the road back home. On their homeward path they passed through south-western Transcaucasia – at times negotiating their passage with the local *Kartvelian* population but mostly fighting their way with difficulty. The 10,000 strong army needed considerable provisions, leading to clashes with the local population. Some fortified towns had to be stormed, while others were too strong to take and were bypassed. According to Xenophon, the numerous fortified cities they passed differed in their defenses. Thus, failing to take one stronghold the Greeks lost many men and they had to retreat (see *Anabasis*, V, 2, 7).

It is clear from Xenophon's records that the *Kartvelian* population of south-western Transcaucasia had a good mastery of the basic elements of warfare of the times. In particular, they had special fortifications – moats, wooden walls, towers, inner fortresses, embankments; they possessed advanced weapons of the period: spears, daggers, axes, arrows; means of individual defense: shields, helmets, armour; and knowledge of military-tactical stratagems: quick

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 attack, regrouping, advantageous use of the terrain; were courageous in battle, adroit and indomitable (*Anabasis*, III-V).

Xenophon has left a description of a clash between the Colchians and the Greek troops in 401 BC. The battle took place on a hill at the borders of Colchian dominions. Owing to the rugged terrain, it must have been difficult for the Greek phalange to take this elevation, as there would be confusion among the foot-soldiers resulting in a rout. Hence, by the decision of the Greek command, the “*phalanx*” was divided into companies – *lochi* – and deployed frontally along the entire perimeter of the enemy’s defense. This was done in such a way as to exceed the line of Colchian defense, allowing subsequent attack from the flanks. These superior forces attacked the Colchian position on the hill and took the strategically important elevation after a stiff battle. As a result, the Greeks invaded the land of the Colchians, cleaning their way to the Black Sea. Then they entered the coastal, densely populated city of Trapezus in the land of the Colchians (see *Anabasis*, IV-VIII, 17-19, 22).

The Colchian military leadership appears to have had intelligence reports on the military movements of the Greeks. Hence the Colchian army was ready for battle, occupying strategic eminences at the Colchian border; this must have been in eastern Pontus and in the Laz mountain region (at present in Turkey). The Colchians were right to deploy their troops on a strategic eminence. One of the commanders on the Greek side, and a connoisseur of the art of war, called this special arrangement of the principal detachment of the Colchians “*phalanx*” (see *Anabasis*, IV, VIII, 17) or “*Colchian phalanx*”. The Greek command had considered important the advantageous strategic position of the troops and their tactical disposition. Therefore, the Greeks altered the traditional tactic of engagement. This must have been indicative of the “*Colchian phalanx*” being a rather formidable force.

In the battle of 401 BC, as reported by Xenophon, following the Greek attack, the *phalanx* of the Colchians split in two in an orderly fashion, one part regrouping to the right and the other to the left. By this the Colchian command carried out a definite maneuver. By opening the central part of the *phalanx* they created a situation for the Greeks to be decoyed in and then to attack them from the flanks. The Colchians thereby warded off the danger of being outflanked by the Greek *lokhi*. The Colchians carried out practically correct maneuver, but in this case the superior number of the Greek fighters was decisive – they numbered 10,000.

As is known, the complex process of the formation of the Iberian Kingdom took place at the turn of the 4th-3rd centuries B.C. At this time Inner Colchis united within the bounds of the Kingdom of *Kartli*.

Apart from fight on land, the residents of the coastal regions of ancient Georgia had experience in naval warfare as well. Evidence on this is preserved in Greco-Latin written sources. According to Strabo, the inhabitants of Colchis at the sea along the Caucasus Range controlled the sea in *kamaras* or naval boats (see Strabo, XI, II, 12; Tacitus, *Annals*, III, 47; Xenophon, *Anabasis*, V, IV, 9-14). Colchis had shipbuilding timber, it produced quantities of flax, hemp, wax and tar (see Strabo XI, II, 17). The naval forces of the Kingdom of Pontus were basically manned by Colchian residents and rigging for ships came from Colchis (see Strabo, XI, II, 18).

Notwithstanding Rome's might, it failed to bring Colchis under control. Nor was this achieved by the hand of Aristarchus, Mithridates of Pergamum or Polemo. Lucullus's prediction to the effect that it was very difficult to subdue this region partly came true (see Plutarch, *Lucullus*, 14). Indeed, Inner Colchis, with its' gorges, hard-to-cross rivers must have not been easy to subjugate. This was compounded by aggressively inclined principalities and warlike mountain population. The Romans succeeded in establishing a definite control over the

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Black Sea littoral. In this the coastal cities must have served as their main strongholds in which – unlike Inner Colchis – the Greco-Roman economic and cultural influence was stronger. The Colchian littoral was the strategic and communication base indispensable for Rome to establish her influence in Asia Minor and the Bosphorus.

The factor of the war played a significant – at times decisive – role in the process of the historical development of Colchis and Iberia. The incorporation of part of Colchis in the Kingdom of Iberia led to the ultimate breakdown of the Kingdom of Colchis and change of its political status. The expansion of the Kingdom of Pontus – followed by the annexation of the Black Sea littoral – also proved negative for Colchis. In Inner Colchis the rich city of Vani (see archaeological material) was destroyed and plundered. Colchis turned into an arena of hostilities between the Kingdom of Pontus and Rome, the latter exerting a definite influence on the development of Colchis, and later of Iberia. On the one hand, this influence proved negative, for the littoral fell under the political influence of Rome, while in some regions – owing to Rome’s flexible policy – the situation grew unstable, ending subsequently in the development of “principalities” – semi-dependent on Rome (*e.g. the Saniges, Macrones, Heniochi, Lazica, Apsiles, Abazgoi; see Arrian’s Periplus, 11*). On the other hand, Rome – a highly developed, advanced state of the period – played a somewhat positive role: in particular, the local population became closely acquainted with the then progressive Roman culture; Roman commercial capital appeared in the coastal cities; acquaintance was made with new war tactics and technology.

The period of ascendancy of the Kingdom of Iberia began from the end of the 1st century B.C. this was facilitated to some extent by the new advantageous geopolitical situation, in particular, the incessant wars between Rome[39] and Parthia. The rulers of Iberia made adroit use of the confrontation of Rome and Parthia. In the first

half of the 1st century, the Kingdom of Iberia grew so powerful as to expand its borders and capture, after a stiff battle, the important city-fortress of Artaxata on the Araxes. By this time, Iberia had regained its south-western territories in the upper reaches of the Chorokhi, the Mtkvari and the Araxes, even reaching the seashore.

In the 30s A.D. the Iberian king Parsman – acting in collusion with the Romans – set out on a campaign against the Parthians in the Araxes area. The enemy troops were commanded by Orodes, son of the Parthian king. The numerous Parthian forces were largely composed of horsemen, while the Iberian king's troops comprised a strong infantry and mobile detachments of cavalry. Parsman I made brilliant use of the local conditions and tested stratagems. The Parthian cavalry was not accustomed to warfare on mountainous terrain. The Iberian cavalymen first showered the Parthians with arrows, and then the infantry launched an orderly attack, resulting in an utter rout of the Parthians (see Tacitus, *Annals*, IV, 33-35). At the first stage of the battle Parsman besieged the enemy sentry posts, capturing the strategic supplies of food, forage, etc. (see Tacitus, *Annals*, VI, 34). By a correctly calculated manouvre, Parsman succeeded in defeating the Parthians in the battle.

In the 50s A.D. Parsman I rendered military aid to the Roman commander Gneus Domitius Corbullan who was conducting a war against the Parthians in south Transcaucasia. In return, Iberia incorporated lands up to the river Araxes (see Tacitus, *Annals*, XIV, 23). In the first half of the 2nd century Parsman II Kveli ascended the Iberian royal throne (see *Moktsevai Kartlisai* “The Conversion of Georgia”, 36; *K.Ts.*, I, [18, p. 51]). Parsman II already fought the Roman Empire openly, seeking to oust it from coastal Colchis and southern Transcaucasia. To uphold her own interest, Iberia boldly takes on Rome and Parthia the mightiest states of the period. The cited states appear to have considered the Kingdom of Iberia a powerful

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country to be reckoned with. Hence, under the Emperor Antoninus Pius (138-161 A.D.) relations between Iberia and Rome improved. The Roman historian Elius Spartian narrates that the Roman emperor respected the Iberian king Parsman II, for he was in need of Parsman's military support in south Transcaucasia and the Near East. Therefore he granted the Iberian king countless valuable gifts (these may be the valuable items discovered to date archaeologically at Mtskheta; see [1]), a war elephant and a 50-strong detachment of warriors (see [38, p. 293]). In 140 A.D. Parsman II arrived in the Imperial capital Rome, with a retinue, on a diplomatic mission. Parsman was accorded a solemn welcome and even his statue was erected in token of respect (see Dio Cassius, *History of Rome*, LXX, 2).

As a result of a flexible policy of the kingdom of Iberia (maneuvering between Rome and Parthia) and successful wars the country's border expanded. Much wealth entered the country, bringing about economic advance and an accelerated tempo of development of manufacture. Notably enough, the frequent military operations in Colchis and Iberia and optimum stress situations, calling for quick resolutions of organizational questions, contributed to the social consolidation of the local population.

The Iberian kingdom of the Parnavazid period, including part of Colchis as well, had a fairly good system of military organization. The Iberians appeared to have been well-informed about the advanced military art of the Greeks, Iranians and Romans, skillfully adapting this knowledge to their own capacities. At the time of war, the country could mobilize up to 50.000 infantry and 20.000 cavalry (see Strabo, XI, III, 3; IV, 5). Part of this army was well-trained, presenting a formidable force. According to Appian, in the fight against Pompey "... Artag, the king of the Iberians gave battle (to Pompey) with 70.000 fighters... at the river Cyrus (the Mtkvari) (see Appian, *HR*, XII, 103).

The king was supreme commander of the kingdom of Iberia, the reins of state government being in his hands. The entire military and administrative system obeyed the king. According to Strabo, the commander-in-chief was next to the king, being appointed from the royal family (see Strabo, XI, III, 6; *K. Ts.* I,[18, p. 24]). Strabo notes in the same passage that the *eristavis* or governors of the country's military and administrative regions came under the commander-in-chief. The *atasistavis* ("head of one thousand soldiers") and the *asistavis* ("head of one hundred soldiers") were subordinate to *eristavis* (see *K. Ts.*, I,[18, pp. 24-25]). Hence, it should be assumed that the army was conventionally divided into companies (hundreds) and legions (thousands). The next in seniority to the king was the commander-in-chief who ruled the military department and he was charged with directing the armed forces. He was also responsible for the mobilization of the army, gaining the intelligence information about the enemy and military training and readiness. Similar duties devolved on the *eristavis* of certain territories who governed territories placed under them and commanded the warriors coming from there.

The Iberian kingdom was divided into territorial-administrative units (see *K. Ts.*, I,[18, p. 24]). They were governed by representatives of the local military aristocracy - *eristavis*, referred to as *sceptukhs* or *pitiakhshes* in Greek and Aramaic written sources (see Strabo, XI, II, 18; [24, pp. 37-43]). The insignia of the *eristavi*, received by him from the king, constituted a sceptre, a special signet ring, a gorgeous belt, armament, etc. (these items are documentarily attested in Georgian archaeological material; see e.g. the graves of the aristocrats, unearthed at Mtskheta[1]).

One of the major cares of the state machine of the Iberian kingdom was to remain the military contingent. The king had standing, principal military detachments and a body-guard. These detachments were manned by sons of military-aristocratic families and by

mercenary professional warriors. For royal services they received high remuneration and plots of land. They collected the taxes and established order in the country. Warriors of this category were promoted faster, the principal condition being distinction in the military sphere, prowess in war and loyal service at the royal court. In the time of war they basically manned heavily armed cavalry detachments that were capable of quick maneuvering. These formed the middle and junior officers, namely the *atasistavis* and *asistavis*. In peaceful times part of them performed civil functions, governing certain minor territorial units. In war they commanded military detachments mobilized from these administrative districts and manned by commoners. Strabo calls these commoners “warriors and tillers of land” (see Strabo, XI, III, 6). People were enlisted from these family commons, going to war with their own arms and forming the largest mass of the state army. The lightly armed infantry was formed chiefly from these men. Commoners of this category returned to their homesteads upon the end of the war and continued tilling the land.

Generally, the hierarchic structure of the armed forces of the Iberian Kingdom must have been as follows: king, the commander-in-chief and directly in charge of the royal military office; in today’s terminology, high-ranking officers or supreme command, commanders of warriors coming from territorial units, *eristavis*; middle and junior officers – *atasistavis*, *tsikhistavis* (commanders of the garrisons stationed in royal strongholds), *asistavis* (younger sons of aristocratic families), mercenary professional fighters (from neighboring countries); soldiers – mobilized commoners in the case of war, local and foreign mercenaries.

The army of the Iberian Kingdom (see Strabo, XI, III, 3; XI, IV, 5; Appian, *HR*, XII, 103; *K.Ts.*, I,[18 pp. 24-25]; Plutarch, *Lucullus*, 31) largely consisted of two fighting arms – infantry and cavalry units; these were: the king’s bodyguard of a heavily armed and well-trained

detachment. They were armed with spears, daggers, battle-axes, arrows, chain and armour, helmets, shields; armed companies of cavalry and infantry. The armament of the troops of these two arms was largely similar to that of the king's detachment. Their armament contained also war chariots and machines for throwing stone missiles; lightly armed infantry (not wearing chain and armour) fought mainly with spears, slings, bows and arrows and wooden shields; these troops were most numerous.

Fortification works held a significant place in the defense system of the Iberian Kingdom; they were built at strategically convenient and necessary places, e.g. Mtskheta, Uplistsikhe, Urbnisi, Sarkine, Nastakisi, Shorapani, Dimna, etc. The capital Mtskheta was defended specially. Along with the principal stronghold (Armaztsikhe), another fortification system was built. The roads for entering the country were also reinforced and barred by fortification works.

It is evident from the written sources that the military forces of the Iberian Kingdom had good knowledge of the principal elements of the then warfare. They were aware of and made successful use of tactical stratagems of war: rapid attack, regrouping, advantageous use of the terrain, elements of the so-called guerilla warfare (see Dio Cassius, XXXVII, 1, 2; Appian, *HR*, XII, 103; Plutarch, *Pompey*, 34: *K.Ts.*, I,[18, p. 28]). In battle they were courageous, expedient and steady. They had iron weapons – advanced for those times – used for attack and defence.

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Description of Plates:

- I. The disposition of archaeological monuments on the territory of Georgia.
- II. 1. Decoration of helmet on rhyton from Gomi (Oni distr.).
2. Helmet Representation of warrior from Datvani (Tsageri distr.). 3. Helmet - the so-called Chalcidice type one from T. Lanchkhuti. 4. Bronze plate cover of shield from Kamarakhevi (Mtsketa distr.). 5. Bronze plate cover of shield from Eshera. 6. Semisphere umbones of shield (according to archaeological evidence). 7. Bronze cnemide from Akhul-Aaba (Abkhazeti).
- III. 1. Iron and bronze plates of chain-mail from Vani (according to archaeological evidence). 2. Coat-of-arms; reconstruction. 3. Bronze model of war chariot from Gokhebi (Dedoflistsqaro distr.); 6th-4th cc. BC.
- IV. 1. Two-blade daggers (according to archaeological evidence). 2. Iron battle-axe (according to archaeological evidence).
- V. 1. Arrowheads (according to archaeological evidence). 2. The sling. 3. Spear types (according to archaeological evidence). 4. Ram from ancient city Vani. 5. Stone cannon-balls from Catapult of different calibres from ancient city Vani.
- VI. The portraits of the representatives of the military aristocracy of ancient Georgia, from the 1st-2nd cc AD archaeological evidence.
- VII. 1. The battle scenes in rhyton from Gomi (Oni distr.); the 1st c. BC. 2. The representation of warrior with armour, sword and helmet from Datvani (Tsageri distr.); the 5th-4th c. BC., (according to archaeological evidence)

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**SINOPEAN AND COLCHIAN AMPHORAS WITH GREEK
GRAFFITI IN THE CONTEXT OF THE TOWN OF PHASIS
(POTI)**

An archaeological expedition, studying the Georgian Black Sea coast, discovered amphoras with highly significant inscriptions - graffiti on the right side of the Maltaqva Strait and western shore of Lake Paliastomi, near the town of Poti, at the mouth of the Rioni river. Archaeological artefacts of the 4th-3rd c BC were also brought to light at the same lake: foot of an Attic black-glossed cantharus, base of a Rhodian amphora and local, Colchian pottery. The handle of a stamped Colchian amphora was also found nearby [for details see Gamkrelidze, G.1987: 97-117; Gamkrelidze, G. 1992: 30-48, pls. 5-8; Gamkrelidze, G. 2009: 175-194]. Versions of the deciphering of the Greek graffiti scratched on the amphoras are proposed below, with a discussion of the significance of the discovery of this material in the context of conceptualization of Phasis as a trading centre, allowing a novel view of some issues.

Phasis was an important point of the Europe-Asia sea-river-land transit road. Timber, flax, linseed oil, honey, wine, copper, iron, hemp, the phasian bird (pheasant), and later kerosene were transported through Phasis. In the Hellenistic and Roman periods the significance of Phasis as a transit city grew [see Lordkipanidze, O. 1966: 117-146; Inadze, M. 2009: 246-251; Gamkrelidze, G. 2009: 175-194]. Ships entered the conveniently located lake estuary of Paliastomi with a city-haven, continuing to sail along the Rioni and Pichori. A definite quantity of transit containers was attested along this route. At present I shall focus attention on the discovery of amphoras with graffiti (see pls. **I, II, III**).

I. - The upper part of an amphora with graffiti was found on the marine shelf lying between the Supsa canyon and Maltaqva. The clay

of the amphora is light ashy-violet, containing blackish small particles. The wall of the amphora is thick; the surface is coarse with marine deposits noticeable on it. The shoulders of the amphora are slanting. The diameter of the mouth is 11 cm; the height of the cylindrical neck is 15 cm; the diameter of the shoulder is 35 cm; the width of the handles – 4.5 cm; the width of fold is 1.04 cm; the handles are of oval section, with a linear low ridge noticeable on them.

Graffiti: 1) **BIK** (see pl. II) – between the handles, at the beginning of the shoulder. According to version **A**, it may be **BIK** [OΣ] – clay vessel. But if we take it for an abbreviation, then according to version **B** it may mean **B** – “clay vessel”, **I** – “offered”, **K** – “high quality” or “Colchian” (according to version **C**). In this case the inscription may be decoded thus: “[with this] clay vessel high quality [Colchian ?] wine is offered” (see pls. II).

2) ΠΕ - is placed on the other side of the amphora, slightly aside, near the neck. According to version **A** this may mean the numeral 5 (five). If we take it for an abbreviation, then according to version **B**, it will be: “old (Π) olive oil (E)”. Here the right hand side of (Π) is represented by a double line and on top, in the corner, a small line is noticeable (see pls. II, IV).

3) XO – scratched on the same side of the amphora. According to version **A** this graffiti means capacity – chous. 1 chous equals 3.285 liters. If we multiply the five of version **A** of the inscription by 1 chous, we shall obtain 16.415 liters or five chous, the capacity of this amphora. Earlier, fairly large 16 liter amphoras constituted a definite standard of Sinopean amphoras. The complete Sinopean amphora, found in the grave of the so-called “distinguished Colchian warrior” is of 16 liter capacity. According to version **B**, XO may mean “fine wine” (see pls. II).

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The above-described amphora with graffiti was discovered by hydroarchaeologists, hence it may have been part of the cargo of a sunken merchant vessel. It is preserved in the funds of the Archaeological Centre (room 5). According to its morphologic-typological data the amphora is Sinopean and almost analogous to the fully preserved stamped amphora discovered in the so-called grave of a “distinguished Colchian warrior”, at the Vani city site [see Puturidze, R. 1976: 82-84]; according to the archeologist B. Grakov’s classification of Sinopean amphoras, it belongs to the early, first chronological group, and is dated to the end of the 4th-early 3rd c BC [see Grakov, B. 1929: 96-108; Brashinski, I. 1980: 42; Monakhov, S. 1999: 487-496].

II. - The upper part of an amphora with graffiti was caught in a fishermen’s net cast at the shelf at the mouth of the river Rioni. The clay of the amphora is grayish-violet, containing small blackish particles. The wall of the amphora is thin; the surface is coarse, marine sediments noticeable on it. One handle of the amphora, in the upper part is broken; the shoulders are slanting; diameter of the mouth 10 cm; length of the cylindrical neck is 14 cm; width of the fold of the mouth – 1.01 cm. Between the handles, at the beginning of the shoulder, the graffito ΦΙΛΟ is scratched, the continuation of which is broken off (see pls. III, 1). According to version **A**, this may imply ΦΙΛΟ[ΒΑΚΧΟΣ] – a word linked to Dionysus (Bacchus), and generally the love of wine. The inscription may belong to a wine merchant who worshipped the god Dionysus. According to version **B** simply ΦΙΛΟ[ΙΝΙΑ] or “lover of wine” is not ruled out. In the graffito ΦΛ is a ligature. A triangular Φ of this outline was attested on the foot of a cantharus found in grave #6 of Takhtidziri cemetery of the end of the 4th c BC, Kareli district (excavations of the archaeologist I. Gagoshidze). A Φ of a similar outline was attested on a 4th c BC vessel fragment in the North Black Sea area city site of Nymphaeum

[see Tolstoy, I. 1953: 86]. The word “lover” is attested also on a pot found at excavating the “Mithradates Mountain” in the North Black Sea area [Tolstoy, I. 1953: 97-98]. According to the version C the Poti amphora may imply ΦΙΛΟ[ΘΕΟΣ] “lover of god” [see Pape, W. 1884: 1624]. A similar graffito on a 4th c BC cylix, found on the Athenian Agora, was reconstructed by M. Lang as “lover of the cup” [see Lang, M. 1976: 12, fig. C6]. A fragment of a 4th c BC grave stele was found in the North Black Sea area city of Panticapaeum, the inscription containing part of the word “lover”, followed by the ethnonym “Colchian”, which may mean “a feast-loving Colchian” - ΦΙΛΟΚΩΜΟΣ ΚΟΛΧΟ, or the person to whom this inscribed grave stele is dedicated was a lover of carousal and pastime [КБН, 1965: 183; see also DR, 1958: 1730].

Another amphora with graffiti, discovered at Poti, similarly to the former amphora, is Sinopean by morphological-typological data and, according to the archaeologist B. Grakov, must belong to the first chronological group, dating from the end of the 4th-early 3rd c BC [Grakov, B. 1929: 97].

Greek inscriptions-graffiti are found most frequently in the regions of the Mediterranean and the Black Sea. In Georgia Greek graffiti largely occur in the archaeological material of western Georgia or Colchis, namely, on artefacts of archaeological sites of Kobuleti-Pichvnari, Sairkhe, Eshera city site, Ochamchire, Vani city site, Bichvinta city site, Sokhumi city site, Tsebelda and Poti. The number of Greek Graffiti is small in Georgia, mainly occurring on imported pottery. So far up to 140 items have been recorded. From the archaeological sites of Western Georgia we have basically one-, two-, or three-letter graffiti [Nasidze, M. 2002: 10]. The small number of letters increase the possibility of their various interpretation, often becoming the object of debate among scholars. Basically, the graffiti

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are inscriptions made on fired ceramics by scratching with a pointed object. By means of such inscriptions-graffiti persons marked their own possession, a vessel filled with relevant substance offered to a god, commercial measure and weight, etc. Inscription-signs of magic, incantation character are also evidenced. Graffiti were often in the form of initials, ligature, abbreviation. Of special importance are the commercial markings on vessels and containers. The product in the vessel is mentioned (e.g. oil, wine, honey, beer, etc.) and its quantity (e.g. how many choa or cotilla), its price (e.g. 2 drachms or 3 obols), its property (e.g. clear or sour), etc. [see Yailenko, V. 1980: 72-99; Solomonik, E. 1985: 77-91; Lang, M. 1976: 1-5; Nasidze, M. 2002: 5-24]. Graffiti of this type point to highly-developed commercial activity. Frequently, a graffito is of a single letter, and may be the first letter of the name of a god, e.g. Θ - god in general; A - Apollo or Artemis; Δ - Demeter; H – Hera, B – Bacchus; or it may denote the name of the owner of the item, e.g. Φ -Φintidos, Δ - Demes, etc. [see Nasidze, M. 1999: 19-20]. A considerable part of the graffiti represent abbreviations, each letter of which denoted something, its meaning being well known to the majority of the society of the period.

According to Greek-Latin written sources, Phasis was situated on the side of the delta of the river Phasis (Rioni-Qvirila). A lake is also mentioned here (Paliastomi ?). This definition fits the modern location of the town of Poti. Hence, scholars are unanimous in placing ancient Phasis in Poti and adjacent territory [see Lordkipanidze, O. 2000: 3-9; Elnitski, L. 1938: 315-320; Gamkrelidze, G. 2003: 172]. Owing to the complex geomorphological situation on the territory just cited, the Phasis of the Classical period has not been traced to date. The global factor of the regression and transgression of the Black Sea is obscure in relation to Phasis; the question of the local dynamics of the sea coast is also unclear. Over the centuries the river Rioni has

been transporting a large quantity of sand, earth silt, causing the extension of the delta into the sea. Thus, e.g. from 1872 to 1970 the sea invaded up to 200 m wide zone of land. This meant the submergence of the town. By comparison of modern geomorphological and topoarchaeological data, the city of the Classical period should be sought in the triangle of the territory adjoining Poti, between Qulevi-Poti-Supsa and Chaladidi-Sakorkio. Owing to local geomorphological changes, part of the city of Phasis was frequently inundated, owing to which, the location of the city had to be changed within the mentioned triangle, moving to an adjoining area to rid it from the encroachment of the sea [for a detailed discussion see Gamkrelidze, G. 2003: 170-185].

Phasis is mentioned by the following authors: pseudo-Scylax (4th c BC), Aristotle, Plato, Heraclides Lembos, Hippocrates, Theocritus, Strabo, Plutarch, Pliny the Elder, Pomponius Mela, Flavius Arrian, Claudius Ptolemaios, pseudo-Orpheus, Themistios, Ammianus Marcellinus, Zosymus, Agathias, and others. Most important evidence on Phasis is preserved in “The Geography” of Strabo: “On the Phasis is situated a city bearing the same name, an emporium of the Colchi, which is protected on one side by the river, on another by a lake, and on another by the sea” (Strabo, XI, II, 2, 17) (The Loeb Classical Library, London, 1957, p. 211). It is clear from the work of Hippocrates too [see Hippoc. 15] that the population of the lower reaches of the Rioni-Phasis river walked to the trading place, “emporium” (Phasis?). It would seem also that the place lying in the delta of the Phasis was a trading point or protourbanistic centre of the local population. The evidence of Arrian, a high-ranking official of the Roman Empire who visited Phasis, about the stronghold of Phasis and port is also significant (see “Periplus ...9)

In present day Poti and its adjacent territory the oldest archaeological datum was attested at the locality “Natekhebi”, in the

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clay-peat strata, in the north-western part of Lake Paliastomi. Fragments of Sinopean pottery came to light at the depth of 5 m, at geological drilling on Caucasus street in Poti. Fragments of amphoras of the 4th-3rd c BC from Heraclea Pontica and Sinope were found in the sea, between the Maltaqva strait and the river Supsa. A whole amphora of the 4th c BC from Heraclea Pontica was also found in the sea near Maltaqva. Ancient settlements were excavated in the environs of Poti, in v. Kvemo Chaladidi and at the locality “Simagre” in v. Sakorkio, where the bottoms of Colchian and Sinopean amphoras were attested [see Mikeladze, T. 1978: 33-40, 50-78]. In the lower reaches of the river Rioni-Phasis, on a former settlement site of the 6th c BC studied archaeologically, foreign manufacture is relatively smaller in percentage than local. The 4th c BC silver phiale with a Greek inscription is probably from Phasis [see Lordkipanidze, O. 2000: 62-65; Tsetskladze, G. 1994: 199-216].

It appears that when the Greeks arrived at the mouth of the Phasis there already were settlements here, as attested by the archaeological study of the Late Bronze-Early Iron Age former settlement sites here: at Namarnu, Dziguri, Nandevu, Sagvichio, Naghmipiji, Chaladidi, Guripuli, Naokhvamu, Ergeta, etc. [Jibladze, L. 2001: 34-38 and map]. Of these Late Bronze- Early Iron Age settlement sites on the territory adjoining Poti-Paliastomi, “Phasis” seems to have advanced, for it held a convenient place – the delta of the river Phasis. The Greeks perceived this settlement as a trading place, establishing contacts with its residents. In the course of time a colony arose here.

On the basis of decoding the Greek-language graffiti discovered near Poti-Phasis, and by recourse to and consideration of other artefacts it can be concluded that Sinopean amphoras arrived intensively in Colchis from the second half of the fourth c BC [Puturidze, R. 1976: 79-90; Gamkrelidze, G. 1982: 99-100]. Occasionally the owners of these amphoras scratched inscriptions on

them, as was the case in Mediterranean and Black Sea city centers. Frequently these graffiti were made by merchants who transported and recorded commodities in commercial containers, this being another indication of the extent of integration of the Colchian society of the period with advanced city centers of the Mediterranean and the Black Seas, in particular with Sinope which, back in the 6th-5th c BC, carried on active economic policy, setting up colonies close to Colchis – in the south-eastern Black Sea littoral – at Cerasus, Cotyora and Trapezus. In the eastern Black Sea littoral, i.e. in Western Georgia or Colchis, foreign amphoras as commercial containers appear from the second half of the 6th c BC. Amphoras made in the Mediterranean and Black Sea city centers are attested here. In the numerous archaeological gains of West-Georgian Sinopean amphoras various typological versions occur in terms of shape, capacity and clay [see Kakhidze, A. 1971: 28-66; Puturidze, R. 1976: 79-90]. On some specimens of Sinopean amphoras of the 4th-2nd c BC we find graffiti that often indicated the capacity, content, quantity or price of the amphora. Workshops were set up in Sinope for the manufacture of ceramic containers for transporting goods (e.g. the 2nd-6th c workshops at Demirsi [see Kassab Tezgor, D. 2000: 155-168]. Amphoras manufactured here have been traced in large numbers on ancient settlement sites throughout the Black Sea area. The Sinopeans may have traded in empty containers as well, transporting them by sea vessels. Their amphoras appear to have been considered as best vessels for transporting liquids and grain.

Foreign pottery occurring on the territory adjoining Poti-Phasis, namely Sinopean amphoras, is an indicator of trade and economic activity of Mediterranean and Black Sea area cities. I share the view of a Sinopean colony having existed at Kobuleti-Pichvnari [see Inadze, M. 2009: 278-280; Dundua, G. 1987: 38; Kvirkevelia, G. 1999: 30-33; Akhvlediani, D.: 91-97]. A similar quarter of Sinopeans was

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probably set up in Phasis. The discovery of Sinopean amphoras with graffiti may serve as one of the facts demonstrating this. In the second half of the 4th and early 3rd c BC the commercial activity of the Sinopeans in Colchis and, especially in the Black Sea littoral, assumes special character. A large quantity of fragments of amphoras, mortaria and tiles is evidenced here. And local manufacture of imitation amphoras and tiles began here. At this time a significant number of Sinopean coins were in circulation here [Dundua, G. 1987: 33-36], attested at archaeological sites of Western Georgia. Commodities of the Eastern Medoterranean found their way to Phasis via Sinope; then they were distributed in inner Colchis upstream the Rioni river. Almost throughout the classical period Sinope was a major trading partner of Colchis, engaging in economic activity through the merchant and artisan colonies in Kobuleti-Pichvnari and Phasis, as evidenced by archaeological data discovered in Western Georgia [see Lordkipanidze, O. 1966: 117-146; Puturidze, R. 1976: 79-90].

In the early Byzantine period too, Phasis performed the function of a major point of the Europe-Asia sea-river-land route. One proof of this is a former settlement site on the western side of Lake Paliastomi, at Poti, where the third concave-bodied amphora with a graffito came to light.

III - The amphora with a graffito has an elongated concave body: the upper part of the shoulders is broken off; the surviving height is 67 cm; the body tapers conically towards the base; low, smooth horizontal grooves are noticeable on the body; the body has several holes; the clay is dark brownish, and is unevenly fired; the surface is rough; at the beginning of the shoulder the graffito – **Φω** is scratched (see pls III. 2; I). In Greek graffiti abbreviations were mainly given in capital letters. Here the first letter is capital - **Φ**, which, in my view, must stand for the proper name – “Phasis”, while the second letter is

not in capital (ω), presumably implying a verb – “to buy”. Accordingly, by version **A** we get “I bought it in Phasis”. By version **B** it may mean ΦΩ[Σ] – “clear” “good” (wine?). By its morphological-typological data this amphora is local, Colchian. It is preserved in the Poti Museum of Colchian Culture. As noted above, the amphora in question was found in a clayey-sandy layer near the former settlement site “Natekhebi”, on the western side of Lake Paliastomi, close to the shore. Traces of a destroyed burial were attested at the same place.

Apart from the above amphora, highly diverse archaeological material was brought to light on this site. Construction ceramics is represented here by tiles and bricks. Remains of wooden beams and clay plaster were also found. Probably the structures of wooden beams stood on brickwork. According to Arrian, the walls in Phasis were of brick, with wooden towers above them [see *Periplus* . . . , 9]. Most of the vessels found on the site constituted trading containers or amphoras, concave body specimens prevailing. Kitchenware pottery is represented by pots, bowls, mortaria and jugs. Up to 25% of the archaeological material is foreign pottery, among which fragments of late Sinopean amphoras occur in large quantity. Attention is also attracted by the bottoms of Samian amphoras. In the north-eastern part of the settlement site the above-mentioned concave-body amphora was attested at a destroyed burial. Here a bronze pin, three fibulae, a square plate-loomweight, a glass drinking vessel, a copper 20 numa coin of Justinian II (565-578) were found. The archaeological material of the settlement site stands distinctly close to contemporary archaeological gains of Bichvinta, Sokhumi, Ochamchire, and Gudava. This site must be of the 3rd-8th c, and it may represent remains of the city of Phasis described by Arrian, Procopius and Agathias [For a detailed discussion of the archaeological material see

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Gamkrelidze, G. 1987: 97-117; Gamkrelidze, G. 1992: 101-119, 30-48; Gamkrelidze, G. 1990: 223-236].

Greek Graffiti on Amphoras Discovered at the Poti (Phasis):

I - Sinopean amphoras of the second half of the 4th c BC.

1) -BIK -

B//IK [OΣ] - clay vessel (versions A and B).

I [EPOΣ] - offered (version B).

K [AΘAPOΣ] - of high quality, clean (version B).

K [OΛXIAOΣ] (?) - Colchian, ? (version C).

[in this] clay vessel offered is high quality [Colchian?] [wine].

2) - ΠΕ - ε`

ΠΕ [NTE] - 5 five (version A).

Π [ΑΛΑΙΟΣ] E[ΛΑΙΟΝ] - old olive oil (version B).

3) - XO -

XO[YΣ] - 1 chous ≈ 3.283 L x 5 ≈ 16, 415 L (version A).

XO[H] - fine wine; O[INOΣ] - wine (version B).

II - Sinopean amphora of the second half of the 4th c BC.

1) - ΦΙΑΟ -

ΦΙΑΟ [BAKKOΣ] - love of Dionysus (Bacchus) and in general of wine and feasting (version A).

ΦΙΑΟ [INIA] - lover of wine (version B).

ΦΙΑΟ [ΘΕΟΣ] - lover of god (version C).

III - Local Colchian amphora of the 6th c AD.

1) - Φω -

Φ[ΑΣΙΣ] ὠ[νητός] - I bought it at Phasis (version A).

φῶ[ς] - light, dazzling, radiance (version B).

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Description of Plates:

- I.** The disposition of Sinopean and Local Colchian amphoras on the territory of Colchis.
- II.** Sinopean amphora of the second half of the 4th c BC.
- III. 1-** Sinopean amphora of the second half of the 4th c BC. **2-** Local Colchian amphora of the 6th c AD.

STAMPS OF ROMAN MILITARY UNITS AND POLITICAL SITUATION IN THE COLCHIS & IBERIA

The present paper discusses the military and political history of the Roman period (the 1st cent. BC – 4th cent. AD). The history of military-Political is researched on the basis of a study of the available written sources and archaeological evidence on the cultural and historical development of Colchis and Roman. Beginning with sixties of the 1st cent. BC when the Georgian states first came in contact with Roman legions, and till the Roman Empire had ceased to exist, these states kept up close contacts. The study of the history of Roman-Georgian relations is of paramount significance to the political history of Georgia. Modern Georgia lies in the central and western part of Transcaucasia. The political-economic situation of ancient Georgia differed in various periods.

The terrain of Colchis, and partly Iberia, bounded by mountains, created an advantageous defensive and military-strategic environment. Notable from this viewpoint is the assessment of the theatre of military operations in the Caucasus Mountains and adjacent territory, given by Lucullus, Roman general of the 1st cent. BC (see Plutarch, Lucullus, 14). Significant information in this respect is also found in (Flavius) Arrian's written report to the Emperor Hadrian. Arrian visited the Black Sea littoral of Georgia as the emperor's military and administrative official (see his *Periplus Ponti*). In Suchumi (Sebastopolis) discovered a fragment of a stele for inscription of Arrian: HADR[ian]...[castra in Sebastopoli curavit] PER. FL[avius]. A[rrian]. LEG[atun]. [see Rostovtzeff, 1907].

Along with Georgian, special significance attaches to Greco-Latin sources in studying Georgia's military and political history of

the Rome period, viz. Strabo's *Geography*, XI,3; Tacitus's *Annals*, VI,34; Appian's *HR*, XII, 94,103; Arrian's *Periplus*, 8-11; Dio's *History of Rome*, XXXVII, LXX, as well as epigraphic monuments: Eshera 1st cent. BC, Mtskheta 75 AD, the so-called Vespasian's, the so-called Monumentum Ancyranum near Ankara. The Ostian Parsman II's; Mtskheta's so-called Armazi bilingual; the so-called Shapur's inscription near Istakhar, etc.

During the inspection tour of the Colchian littoral, by Flavius Arrian, legate of the Emperor Hadrian, Pityus was an insignificant harbor (Arr., PPE, 18). As shown by archaeological excavations of recent years, at the end of the 1st cent. A.D. or in the second half of the 2nd century, the Romans built a temporary fortification in Pityus, the remains of which are presented well (wooden beams) in the central part of the castellum.

Thus, the stamped bricks and slabs of Roman units discovered in the eastern Black Sea area provide documentary proof of the constitutional activities of Roman military units and to their presence at strategic points of the Colchian littoral, as well as to their participation in controlling the Caucasus region and ensuring the security of trade in the Black Sea littoral. Ancient Georgia (Iberia-Colchis), lying at the juncture of Asia and Europe, was the arena of hostilities between military and political-economic forces of countries of Iranian-Parthia, on the one hand, and Roman orientation, on the other. Notwithstanding Rome's might, it failed to bring Colchis under control. Nor was this achieved by the hand of Aristarchus, Mithridates of Pergamum or Polemo. Lucullus's prediction to the effect that it was very difficult to subdue this region partly came true (see Plutarch, *Lucullus*, 14). Indeed, Inner Colchis, with its' gorges, hard-to-cross rivers must have not been easy to subjugate. This was compounded by aggressively inclined principalities and warlike mountain population. The Romans

succeeded in establishing a definite control over the Black Sea littoral. In this the coastal cities must have served as their main strongholds in which – unlike Inner Colchis – the Greco-Roman economic and cultural influence was stronger. The Colchian littoral was the strategic and communication base indispensable for Rome to establish her influence in Asia Minor and the Bosphorus. The stamped bricks and slabs of Roman military units discovered in the eastern Black Sea area provide proof of their activities and of their presence at strategic points along the Colchian littoral.

Stamps of Roman military units constitute a significant historical source. Archaeologically attested stamps of Roman legions and subdivisions provide documentary evidence for the place, time and function of the deployment of Roman units in one region or another of the Roman empire. Several stamps have been discovered on the eastern Black Sea littoral: Bichvinta (Pityus/Pityunt in ancient written sources - Strabo 11. 2. 14; Pliny *NH* 6. 16; Arrian *PPE* 27; etc.), the village of Moedani (Lanchkhuti district), the right bank of the River Supsa, and the village of Tsikhisdziri (Petra in Byzantine sources - Justinus *Nov.* 28) and Gonio (Apsarus/Apsarun in Graeco-Roman written sources - Pliny *NH* 6. 12; Arrian *PPE*, 6, 9, 16; Anon. *PPE*, 41 - Stephanus of Byzantium *s.v.*; etc.).

Archaeological study of the Bichvinta area revealed three fragments of stamped ceramic slabs of a Roman legion. One was found in a tower near Lake Inkiti, in a 2nd- 3rd-century level [Lordkipanidze O.1963, 105-06]. The slab is of local, reddish-brown clay, cast in a mould. The stamp is square-shaped. The letters are clearly legible: **LEG**. Another fragment was found in the area of the *castellum* of Pityus, in a level of the end of the 2nd century AD. It is of local reddish-brown clay, mould-manufactured, with a square stamp. Part of the stamp has survived: **G** and **XV**. The third

fragment was brought to light during the excavations of the western gate of the *castellum* - in a level of the 2nd-3rd centuries [Kiguradze *et al.* 1987, 88]. The slab is of local, reddish-brown clay, mould-made. Only the letter **G** survives on the square slab. Following analogies, these three stamps have been deciphered: **LEG[IO] XV [Apollinaris]**. Ceramic stamps and tiles, analogues of those of Bichvinta legion **XV**, have been discovered at Satala which was the permanent station of this legion. They are precise analogues of the Bichvinta stamps. As is known, in connection with the imminent conflict and the Alans becoming more restless, legion XV was transferred in AD 74 from Pannonia. From that time until the 5th century, the legion was situated in Satala, on the border of Eastern Cappadocia. Later, troops of legions XII and XV were deployed in Anatolian cities too [Elinitcki, 1950, 194.] Also in the reign of the emperor Vespasian, legion XII was transferred from Syria to Cappadocia, and later, in the time of the emperor Titus, to Melitene [Maksimova, 1965, 316]. Under Domitian troops of legion XII Fulminata appeared in Albania too - as a separate detachment together with Iberians. Some scholars consider Iberia - along with Colchis - to have been one of the bases of legion XII in Vespasian's time. In their view, Roman military units were stationed in Mtskheta as well [Kudryavtsev 1949, 60]. There also is an opposite view according to which a Roman garrison was not stationed in the Iberian capital Mtskheta. Indeed, to date stamps of Roman military units have so far not been discovered in Mtskheta. However, Roman participation in the fortification work in Mtskheta cannot be doubted, as is clearly demonstrated by an inscription of Vespasian, dated to AD 75 and brought to light in Mtskheta: “*Let this wall stand firmly for the king of Iberia, Mithridates, the friend of Caesar and for the Iberian people, ally of the Romans*” [Tsereteli 1958, 5-20]. The inscribed stele appears to have been set up in Mtskheta in

the name of the Roman emperor. Notably enough, Roman-type building materials - fired bricks, ceramic slabs, lime mortars - and their building techniques gained ground in Colchis and Iberia.

During the inspection tour of the Colchian littoral, by Flavius Arrian, legate of the emperor Hadrian, Pityus was an insignificant harbor (*PPE* 18). As excavation has shown, at the end of the 1st century AD, or in the second half of the 2nd century, the Romans built a temporary fortification in Pityus, the remains of which are well preserved (wooden beams) in the central part of the *castellum*. Pityus claimed the special attention of the Romans in the AD 130s, confirmed by the discovery of a Latin inscription in the area of the stronghold saying that a permanent garrison was stationed in Pityus between the years 135 and 152. The building of a stone fortification structure must have been commenced in the same period, with the participation of the unit of construction engineers of legion XV. Judging by the dimensions of the *castellum* (150 x 170 m), the garrison of the Pityus legion XV would not have exceeded one cohort. As evidenced by the part of a *ballista* axle, discovered in the 3rd-4th century level, the garrison was equipped with stone-throwing machines. According to Tacitus, legion XV was armed with large machines for hurling (*Ann.* 3. 23). *Ballistae*, onagers and catapults constituted the technical equipment of legions alone; hence, it should be conjectured that a legionary cohort was stationed at Pityus.

A fragment of a stamped slab of a Roman military unit, discovered in the area of a fortification building in Moedani is identical with the Pityus stamped slabs. The slab is square, cast in a mould and of reddish-brown clay. Three letters survive: **LEG**. The slab may have belonged to legion XV. This Roman stamped brick discovered in Moedani may have belonged to the military unit that guarded the approaches to the Phasis stronghold. Arrian wrote that

Phasis was fortified so well that no one could approach it (*PPE* 9). For archaeological evidence on Phasis, see [Gamkrelidze 2001]. In Arrian's words, "400 choice" fighters were stationed in the brick-built Phasis fortress. In the view of some scholars, the Phasis garrison may not have been legionary, for numerically it was almost part of a military unit. The garrison of Phasis, which corresponded to one cohort rather than two maniples, both quantitatively and qualitatively must have been of the type akin to modern "commandos". However, in Arrian's words, the Phasis garrison was equipped with *ballistae*, which means that this garrison was legionary as well.

The fragment of stamped brick of a Roman legion discovered in Tsikhisdziri (Petra) is of a relatively different content. It was found in the area of the former fort in Tsikhisdziri, Kobuleti district. It may be generally dated to the 3rd-4th centuries - according to the latest archaeological evidence, Petra-Tsikhisdziri appears to have been restored in the same period. The Tsikhisdziri brick is of square form, cast in a mould, and of reddish-brown clay. The letters are clearly legible: *VEX.FA*. Most scholars have deciphered the stamp as: *Vex [illationes Legionis XII] et XV A[Pollinaris]* [Kiguradze et al. 1987, 88]. More recently it has been deciphered: *VEX [illation] FA [siana]* which is accepted. Accordingly, the Petra stamped brick must have been made in the workshop of the Phasis garrison, while the latter garrison may have been *Pedites singulares* or a special construction unit, which manufactured building material for the other Black Sea forts [Speidel 1985b, 139]. Notably enough, the stamped bricks or ceramic slabs, discovered in the northern Black Sea area, point to the traditional construction activity of the legion's vexillation; besides, a 2nd-century Latin inscription tells us about the construction activity of vexillations of legions XII and XV. Thus, participation of separate vexillations of the legions in the

construction of the Petra fortress should not be ruled out. At the time under discussion, a small Roman military unit must have been situated at Petra.

As to Apsarus (Gonio), researchers continue to make use of Arrian's report on the number and character of its garrison: "*five speirai are stationed at Apsarus*" (PPE 6), traditionally translated as five cohorts or half a legion [Latyshev 1904, 207]. Accordingly, the majority of scholars have considered the Roman military units of Apsarus to have a legionary garrison. But the fragment of a papyrus discovered in the Fayum and, which is most important, the stamped brick of a Roman military unit found in Gonio, have shed light on this vague issue. The papyrus fragment, dated to the 2nd century, refers to Martialis, a veteran of cohort II, named after Claudius and stationed at Apsarus [Speidel 1985, 178]. The validity of this evidence is confirmed by the stamped brick fragment found in the central part of the *castellum* of Apsarus in a level of the 1st-2nd centuries. The brick is local, fired, of reddish-brown clay, cast in a mould; while the stamp is square, the letters being legible - **CO II**. The stamp is deciphered as: **CO[HORS] II [Claudiana]**. It is known that this was an auxiliary cohort deployed in Cappadocia in the mid-2nd century. The other four cohorts named by Arrian in Apsarus are also considered to have been auxiliaries. It is notable that Arrian's *speira*, too, is a direct translation of the Latin *maniple*, being equal to one-third of a cohort or a unit of 150-200 men. As five *speirai* in theory form one and a half *cohorts*, the troops must have numbered 1000, which fully accords with the capacity of the *castellum* of Apsarus. Based on its dimensions (195 x 245 m), the Apsarus fort would have accommodated 1000 soldiers, which was a fairly large force to garrison Apsarus. It should be noted that this garrison far exceeded in number those of Phasis, Sebastopolis and Pityus. This

points to the special importance of Apsarus in the system of frontier fortification of the Black Sea and the Caucasus.

Thus, the stamped bricks and slabs of Roman military units discovered in the eastern Black Sea area provide documentary proof of the activities of such units and of their presence at strategic points along the Colchian littoral, as well as their participation in controlling the Caucasus region the Black Sea coast (On the Romans on the Colchian Black Sea coast, see [Lekvinadze 1969; Braund 1994, 171-204]).

The expansion of the Roman – followed by the annexation of the Black Sea littoral – also proved negative for Colchis. Colchis turned into an arena of hostilities between the Kingdom of Pontus and Rome, the latter exerting a definite influence on the development of Colchis, and later of Iberia. On the one hand, this influence proved negative, for the littoral fell under the political influence of Rome, while in some regions – owing to Rome’s flexible policy – the situation grew unstable, ending subsequently in the development of “principalities” – semi-dependent on Rome (e.g. the Lazica, Saniges, Heniochi, Apsiles, Abazgoi; see Arrian’s *Periplus*, 11). On the other hand, Rome – a highly developed, advanced state of the period – played a somewhat positive role: in particular, the local population became closely acquainted with the then progressive Roman culture; Roman commercial capital appeared in the coastal cities; acquaintance was made with new war tactics and technology. Much wealth entered the country, bringing about economic advance and an accelerated tempo of development of manufacture. Notably enough, the frequent military operations in Colchis optimum stress situations, calling for quick resolutions of organizational questions, contributed to the social consolidation of the local population.

Eastern Black Sea used to play an important role in geopolitical space of Roman Empire. In the middle 1st cent. A.D. a special Pontus-Caucasian frontier system was formed in order to serve the purpose of reinforcement of Roman positions in the Caucasus and to take the region Northern Caucasus under good control as well. However, these tasks were not always handled by means of mentioned above system, therefore, the role of Pontus-Caucasian frontier system used to vary time to time. In the 1st-2nd cc. A.D. Pontus-Caucasian defense system is under formation process. This process was finalized after modernization of the Eastern frontier of the Empire was completed in the 2nd-3rd cc. A.D. and Roman military forces had entered Pityus, 135-152 A.D. Pontus-Caucasian frontier system indeed provided security at the remote Northern Caucasian frontiers of the Roman Empire and facilitated establishment of Roman positions in the Caucasian Region overall. In the middle of the 3rd cent. A.D. the system ceased its existence and its recovery and renovation became possible only in the 3rd-4th cc. A.D.

At the end of the 4th cent. A.D. the positions of Pontus-Caucasian frontier-defense was weakened and they were limited to castles in Apsarus-Sebastopolis only. Phasis, Apsarus, Sebastopolis and Pityus remained coastal military type of towns within the Pontus-Caucasian frontier-defense system during the 1st cent. A.D. From the second half of the 3rd cent. A.D. these towns developed into important trading points and in some cases cultural-educational (Phasis) and religion (Pityus) centers.

Along with the organizational formation of Pontus-Caucasian frontier-defense system and consequent enlargement of military forces the flow of Roman important increased significantly in Colchis (ceramics, glassware, metal, etc., mainly dominated by Asia Minor products). Transportation of import production was carried

out through the Sea passage. Products were mostly oriented for use of Roman military units. The provision of logistic support for them used to arrive by means of the central system, from Trapezus in the 2nd- 3rd cc. A.D. from Antioch in the 4th cent. A.D. The level of Roman influence varied through the regions of Colchis. It was more visible along the coastal line near the settlements around castellums. As per Romanisation of local population of Eastern Black Sea coast in the period of the 1st- 4th cc. A.D. is not observed, usually so characteristic of provinces of Roman Empire.

Joining of the Eastern Black Sea coast to the Roman common frontier-defense system contributed to the introduction of elements of advanced Roman culture into local culture, promoted the military, political, economic stability of Black Sea coastal towns and its surrounding area, invasions of Northern Caucasian tribes ceased. Roman traditions significantly defined historical-cultural direction of ancient Georgia which finally was oriented towards Christian world.

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Description of Plate:

- I – Stamps of Roman military units: **1-3.** Pityus, **4.** Moedani, **5.** Tsikhisdziri, **6.** Apsarus. **7.** Suchuni stele.

HYDROARCHAEOLOGY IN THE COLCHIAN LITTORAL

According to written sources, such as Pseudo-Scylax of Caryanda, Pomponius Mela, Strabo, Procopius, Agathias and Vakhusti Bagrationi and archaeological data there were many settlements on the Georgian (Colchian) seashore: Gonio (Apsarus), Tsikhisdziri (Petra), Kobuleti, Ureki, Poti-Maltakva (Phasis), Anaklia, Ochamchire (Gyenos), Sukhumi (Dioscurias-Sebastopolis), Bichvinta (Pytius). The ancient authors mention several settlements, ports and defensive structures of these settlements which now lie under water and so their exploration is important for the investigation of Georgian history.

Twenty-four centuries ago Pseudo-Scylax of Caryanda (Periplus, Asia, 81) mentioned Colchian coastal cities (Dioscurias, Gyenos, Phasis). According to geomorphologists in the second half of the 1st millennium BC, the level of the Black Sea was much lower than it is today. In about the 1st century BC the change in the Black Sea level began resulting in the submergence of the ancient coast.

The encroachment of the sea continues. Over the past 50 years it has claimed about 300 ha of the coast in Achara alone [Kiknadze, 1988:4]. In the Georgian Republic, where the coast extends for up to 330 km, the sea occasionally washes interesting archaeological material ashore, e.g. pottery, adornments, metal wares and coins. Several years ago a fishing haul between Kobuleti' and Tsikhisdziri contained intact Sinopean, Samian, Chersonesian and Rhodian amphoras—probably the cargo of a sunken ship. In the Sukhumi Bay, at the mouth of the River Besleti, a marble slab was found, decorated with an image in relief. The sculptured bust of a female and amphoras were also recovered from the bottom of the bay.

In researching Georgian history, submarine archaeology can be of help in resolving such important historical lacunae as the migration by sea of ancient peoples, the way ancient civilization spread in Colchis, the trade and economic relations of ancient Georgia with the peoples of the Black Sea and Mediterranean Sea [Gamkrelidze, 1983: 11; 1986:657-670].

The situation described above prompted the setting up in 1985, for the first time in Georgia, of the Black Sea Coast Hydroarchaeological Expedition at the Centre for Archaeological Studies. The first task of the expedition was to draw a hydroarchaeological map of the Black Sea coast. This necessitated a rereading and collection of the written sources, oral traditions and geomorphological data.

From the hydroarchaeological points of view, interest is attached to the town of Poti and its environs—where the ancient city of Phasis is known to have been situated. According to written sources Phasis was one of the major urban centres of Colchis, hence the commencement of submarine archaeological studies at Poti. For five years running the Black Sea Coast Hydroarchaeological Expedition has worked at Poti each autumn and spring. The main underwater archaeological exploration has been carried out on the sea shelf from Poti harbour to the village of Maltakva and in Lake Paliastomi. Aqualungs and suction dredges have been used. Unfortunately, a sonar hydrolocator, which gives good results in hydroarchaeological exploration, was unavailable.

The geomorphological situation of the shelf, in the section explored by the expedition, is rather complex. At the mouth of the southern branch of Rioni River the sea is muddy and visibility is bad. The river carries large quantities of sand, creating sand-banks in stormy weather. So far no trace of ancient culture has been found here; perhaps it is covered with a thick layer of sand. The expedition

achieved much more significant results in Lake Paliastomi. In Paliastomi, within approximately 1 km of the mouth of the Maltakva, a 3rd-8th century AD settlement was detected in the north-western portion of the lake, at Natechebi [Gamkrelidze, 1987: 97-117]. The attention of the expedition was drawn to the site by fishermen from Poti who had often found potsherds in their nets.

The ancient settlement in the lake extends over about 1000 m² and over 900 m² along the coast. Extending from the coast to the middle of the lake, the bed is sandy for about 200 m, then peaty-clay layers begin. While diving with aqualungs on the bottom of the lake, the slightest movement disturbs the silt and the water becomes greenish-brown in colour. A large quantity of pottery was recovered from the settlement in the lake, including constructional ceramics (bricks, tiles). Fragments of burnt wall plaster also occur, pointing to the existence here of buildings.

Bricks found in the settlement are mainly fragmentary. The bricks are rectangular about 30 cm x 25 cm and 3 cm x 5 cm thick. They were cast in wooden moulds, as is indicated by wooden imprints visible on them. The clay is coarse, and of a reddish-brown colour - small admixtures of limestone, quartz and pyroxene are visible; the clay is not fired uniformly.

The bricks found in the settlement are similar in size to those discovered at city sites of the early Middle Ages: Bichvinta, Sukhumi, Ochamchire, Gudava, Nokalakevi, Mtisdziri, Vashnari, Kobuleti-Pichvnari, Tsikhisdziri and Gonio. The settlement of Natechebi, located in Lake Paliastomi, features fragments of flat upward-curving roof tiles. The eversion resembles a truncated triangle. Its height is 35-50 mm, and thickness is 15-25 mm; the clay is largely reddish-brown, with fine admixtures. The clay is often well-fired and traces of the wooden mould are visible. Such tiles are larger but in form resemble tiles of an earlier period. Judging by the texture of the clay, the tiles

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and bricks from the settlement, are of local manufacture. Besides local tiles, 14 fragments of foreign flat upward-curving tiles were discovered. Their curvature in cross-section is like a truncated triangle. The tile clay is light grey with a violet hue; the clay contains a large quantity of pyroxene.

Amongst the pottery recovered from the bottom of the lake were Colchian amphoras, used to carry oil, wine and grain. Besides Samian, Sinopean and Chersonesian amphoras, fragments of jars, bowls, mortaria and red-glazed plates were also found. One amphora bears the graffito on the side. Alongside pottery of local production, wares from Asia Minor and the northern Black Sea littoral also occur, pointing to trade relations.

A burial ground was found under the water: an amphora of local manufacture stood vertically covered with the bottom of another amphora. Human bones, three bronze bowls, a fibula, glass goblets and a 20-nummus Byzantine coin of Justinian (AD 565-578) were found by the amphora; animal and bird bones were inside it. Another copper coin of emperor Constantius II (337 – 361) was uncovered in the west part of “Natekhebi” settlement.

Over the centuries the lake appears to have covered part of the settlement. The archaeological material discovered at the Paliastomi settlement is similar to that of contemporary western Georgian sites, namely, Pitiunt-Bichvinta, Archaeopolis-Nokalakevi, Sukhumi-Sebastopolis and Gudava.

Perhaps we are dealing here with the remains of Phasis, described in the works of Procopius and Agathias. This would not exclude the possibility of discovering ancient Phasis in the lower clay layers of Paliastomi, above which the settlement under discussion was discovered. Archaeological material of the 4th -2nd centuries BC has been attested here by fragments of a black-glazed Attic vessel, and the base of a Rhodian amphora. Strabo has this to say about Phasis:

“There is a town on the river Phasis, which carries the same name; this town is in the centre of trade relations for Colchians, surrounded by river [Rioni] lake [Paliastomi] and sea” (Strabo, XI, II, section 17). Agathias writes: “There is a lake there, which is called little sea and it joins Euxine Pontos. . . Big cargo ships at the sea coast and near Phasis stopped at the town” (Agathias, III, 21).

The 18th century Georgian historian Vakhushti Bagrationi remarks: “There is a big lake Paliastomi at the edge of the sea, from this lake issues a river that empties into the sea, from where ships come into the lake to lie at anchor. Different species of fish are found in the lake in abundance. It is said, that this was formerly a city later covered with water” [Bagrationi, 1973: 790].

According to geomorphologists, Lake Paliastomi is a relict sea. In ancient times there was an estuary of the Rioni River. Ships would naturally enter this convenient haven with its harbour-city and then continue up the Rioni - which was then a well-known trade and transit route (Strabo, XI, VII, section 3).

In 1983-84 in the northern part of Paliastomi, where the road leading to Poti crosses the River Kaparchina at the site of the construction of a new bridge, the so-called Batumi New Bridge, the builders found a large quantity of fragments of pottery. They also reported frequent clogging of the trunk of the suction dredge by broken pottery.

An inspection of the site revealed sherds of earthenware, including pointed bases of jars, parts of pots and basins, chronologically belonging to the early medieval period. In the southern part of Lake Paliastomi, at the end of the Kaparchina River, on the site of a former church a fisherman reported the existence of remains of a stone wall at a depth of 3 m. The wall runs from south to north, for about 20 m, and its surviving width exceeds 1 m. The place, which is called Naeklesiari, is boggy and full of water-plants with

marsh gas rising in bubbles. The water in the lake is opaque. Several fragments of undecorated pottery were found by the wall. These sherds do not enable the wall to be dated; it may conjecturally belong to the early Middle Ages.

According to local inhabitants, in olden times a large church existed with an icon of the Virgin Mary. The parishioners behaved badly, it is said, refusing to take off their hats before the icon; therefore God punished them by covering the church with water and removing the icon to another place. An old fisherman recalled hearing from other fishermen that silver candlesticks had been caught in their nets.

It is interesting to note that according to the Russian ambassador, Alexey Jevlev (1650-52): “Earlier the icon of the Virgin Mary was in Guria (historical region of Georgia) being in the cathedral church of the city of Paliastomi. The priest had entered the church and, taking the holy icon, removed it from the town of Paliastomi, the city-fortress would sink in the water. . . . God's will was fulfilled and the city-fortress with its inhabitants was submerged in the water. . . . The holy icon of the Virgin Mary was brought to the city-fortress of Kutaisi in the time of Giorgi III (1156-84). He was grandson of King David” [Jevlev, 1969: 139-140].

At the mouth of Tkhnorina, the southeastern tributary of Paliastomi—a medium-sized crimped amphora (the clay seems to be local) was found. It is preserved in the Poti museum. Fragments of early medieval amphoras have also been found at the mouth of the Pichora, emptying into Lake Paliastomi.

The hull of a wooden ship was discovered on the sea shelf, off the shore near the Poti lemon farm within 700 m. Its length is 23 m, maximum beam 6 m. The ship's stern and sides are clearly seen in the water but the ship's hull is filled with sand and silt. Its keel is made of chestnut; the planking made of pine is in a bad state. The ship has two

masts. Flat-headed wrought iron nails were used in building the ship. The ship, discovered during hydroarchaeological explorations, in form resembles an 18th-century trader. Its thorough study will be feasible only after it has been cleared.

From 1988 the Black Sea Coast Hydroarchaeological Expedition has continued underwater exploration of the sea shelf with the research ship *Hydrobiologist* and during this time new hydroarchaeological methods have been developed. The expedition conducted surveys off the coasts of Bichvinta, Sukhumi and Tsikhisdziti-Boboqvati [Gamkrelidze, 1988: 44-50].

In Bichvinta, Lake Inkiti and Bichvinta backwaters are earmarked for study. Lake Inkiti was formerly a lagoon and hence must have been a convenient mooring place for ships. In 1957 remains of a defensive structure, dating from the same period as the ancient city site of Bichvinta, were discovered to the north of Lake Inkiti. Bichvinta Bay slopes evenly towards the sea to the depth of 15 m and then dips abruptly. Any archaeological material finding its way into the sea from the shore must inevitably have slipped down the steep incline, and hence should be sought away from the coast. Beyond this steep incline, at approximately 60-70 m, there is a terrace covered with silt. The terrace was studied by an exploration bathysphere. In good weather, visibility at the bottom is 10 m.

The expedition hopes to continue investigation of the terrace at a future date. Beside Sukhumi castle, in the water 120 m off the coast, walls covered with sea-shells and weeds were detected and after removing these an early medieval wall of flat rectangular bricks came into sight. The wall is up to 2 m thick and both brick and stone have been used. Lower parts of the wall are deeply buried in sand and gravel. Of special interest was the central part of the Sukhumi Bay, where some researchers hypothesize the existence of the remains of the early Classical Dioscurias. The author dived with an exploration

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camera to the depth of 98 m. Unfortunately the bottom is covered with a thick layer of sand.

The expedition has also explored the Tsikhisdziri-Boboqvati section of the coast. According to local inhabitants coins and fragments of pottery are found on the beach. Northward of the ancient city site, about 300 m from the shore, fragments of an amphora with a concave body were discovered at a depth of 30 m. A sherd of greenish glazed ceramic was also found.

The Black Sea Coast Hydroarchaeological Expedition will continue the exploration of Georgia's sea shelf in future seasons.

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Figures:

- I** - Hydroarchaeological Expedition in the Black Sea Coast.
- II** - 1. Dubois de Mortperex map (1838). 2. bricks and tiles of "Natekhebi" settlement.

III - Archaeological material of the 4th -2nd centuries BC has been attested here by fragments of a black-glazed Attic vessel, and the base of a Rhodian amphora.

IV - Heraclea Pontica amphora dating from the 4th c. BC was found again in the sea at Maltakva. Local Colchian amphoras, mortaris and Sinopean amphora of the 3th -7nd c.c AD. of “Natekhebi” settlement.

V- Amphoras of the 3th -7nd c.c AD. of “Natekhebi” settlement.

VI- A fibulas, and a 20-nummus Byzantine coin of Justinian (565-578); coin of emperor Constantius II (337 – 361) was uncovered of “Natekhebi” settlement.

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**ABOUT PETROLEUM TRANSPORTATION IN PHASIS AND
THE “MEDEA’S OIL” ACCORDING TO THE
ARCHAEOLOGICAL DATA**

In the town Poti, the Black Sea littoral Archaeological expedition [see Gamkrelidze, 1987: 97-117] revealed the Natekhebi settlement, where three fragments of lower parts of amphorae (fig I) and other fragments of amphorae of the same type are of special interest. On the bottom of the vessels the black sediments of bitumen-like mass was found. The laboratory analysis showed that the sediment contains a semi-solid petroleum waste of asphalt-pitch. Over time, the light fractions of petroleum was evaporated and heavy fractions, after rusting and mixing of inert compounds was transformed into asphalt-pitch mass (the analysis were made in the Interdisciplinary laboratory of the Archaeological Center by Dr. G. Inanishvili).

The Natekhebi settlement, where these amphorae were found, is located to the South of Poti, one kilometer from the sea, near the small bay of the lake Paliastomi. The settlement is dated to the 3rd-8th cc. The archaeological material has parallels in Ureki, Tsikhisdziri, Bichvinta, Sokhumi, Gudava, Nokalakevi, Mtisdziri and other archaeological sites of west Georgia of the same period. The archaeological material is preserved in Poti Municipal museum. It is possible that this site can be the part of the Phasis, which is described by Early Byzantine written sources – in the works of Agathias Sholasticus and Procopius of Caesarea [see Gamkrelidze 1987: 97-117].

As it was mentioned above, of special interest are the amphorae with petroleum sediments. Three amphorae of this type were found in the lake and are preserved in Poti Museum. These amphorae are of 0,50- 0,65 meters long and have prolonged shape with a conic heel, the body is ornamented with horizontal lines, and the clay is brownish.

They look like the so called Colchian amphorae, with concaved walls made of brownish clay with small insertions of lime. This type of amphorae are found at the Early Medieval archaeological sites of west Georgia - Gantiadi, Bichvinta, Sokhumi, Tsebelda, Ochamchire, Gudava, Batumi, Nokalakevi, Mtisdziri, Ureki, Tsikhisdziri, Gonio etc. Their Colchian origin is obvious after the Petrographical analysis of clay [see Puturidze 1959: 70].

The amphorae with concaved walls which were found in North Black sea littoral are smaller and the clay is different. Such amphorae were unearthed in Crimea at the city site of Tyritake. In one amphora the remains of petroleum was found. The vessel had prolonged body, concaved walls and conic bottom (height 0.58 m) and was made of light-brown clay. According to the archaeological strata and typology the amphora is dated to the 4th century [Gaidukevich, 1952: 62]. After the chemical laboratory analysis the liquid petroleum and bitumen-like sediments were revealed [Uspenski, 1952: 415]. This oil, according to the chemical composition was extracted from the old petroleum fields of Kerch peninsula –Chongelek. The North Black sea Littoral city sites – Tyritake, Tanais, Chersonesos, and others were receiving the petroleum from this field [Kostrin ,1971: 264-265; Kostrin, 1965: 291-293]. Numerous amphorae of this type are found in Chersoneses, Tyritake, Myrmekion, Istria, Varna [Iakobson, 1979: 12; Koshelenko 1984: 260, fig. 5], also in the south Black sea littoral, near the city Synop (Demyrs) [Kasab Tesgor 1999: 22].

The characteristic features of petroleum were well known in the ancient civilization. One of the varieties of petroleum, asphalt-pitch, and black pitch is mentioned in the Holy Bible – it was used for covering the surface of the Noah's Ark (Genesis, VI, 14, Exodus, II, 3). Herodotus informs about the using the petroleum, pitch and asphalt-pitch as a constructing and connecting material (I, 179; IV, 195; VI, 119). Strabo (XVI, I,5,9,15), Plutarch (Alexander, 35),

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Xenophon (Anabasis, II, 4, 12), Plinius the elder (II, 109; XXXV, 15), Vitruvius (De architectura I,5, §8) inform us about the production and utilization of oil and petroleum products, location of petroleum and *maltha* fields in Mesopotamia, Sicily, Palestine, Iran ,etc.

Petroleum, *maltha*, and *asphalt* were used as a waterproof and a constructing material [Dupont, Kacharava, 1999: 9]; the protecting material of metal from corrosion; in the religious rituals (it was mixed with other oil on the fire altars); to protect the plants from insects; for preparing medicines; for mummification; for military purposes; for lighting the lamps.

Petroleum is a blackish-brownish-greenish, insoluble substance. Near the earth surface, during the process of evaporation of light fractions and corrosion of heavy fractions it is transformed into heavy, sticky *maltha*, then it becomes more solid and is transformed into natural asphalt. In the Georgian written sources - the dictionary of Sul Khan-Saba Orbeliani the asphalt is explained as a substance which is coming out from the rocks and water and looks like the black pith [Orbeliani 1928: 21]. The natural products of petroleum – *oil*, *maltha*, *bitumen*, *asphalt* are mentioned in old Greek and Latin sources as *ΑΣΦΑΛΤΟΣ*, *ΝΑΦΤΑ*, *naphtha*, *bitumen*, *maltha* (Forbes, 1936: 4-13).

In Georgian petroleum is translated as “*navti*” or “*napti*”. The origin of this word is not yet identified. In old Georgian sources it is mentioned in the “ Martyrdom of saint Habo” (9th century) [Monuments of Old Georgian Hagiographic Literature, 1963: 73, 5] and early translations of Holy Bible [Abuladze, 1973: 322]. Some linguists suppose that this word comes to the Georgian language from Iranian [Andronikashvili, 1966: 345].

According to the 2nd century writer Nicandros of Colophon says “there is Medea’s one-day poison called kerosene (*ΝΑΦΤΑΝ*),

which is called Colchian or Barbarian. If somebody rubs with it his body or clothes . . . and stands on the sun they will be burnt in the fire . . . the way of making it was discovered by Medea and that's why it is called Colchian" [Scholion 249. Urushadze, 1964: 335]. According to Plutarch "Medea impregnated the cloak with kerosene and thus killed King Creon and his daughter Glauce as it is told in the Euripides tragedy "Medea" (Plutarch, Alexander, 35).

The famous Greek historian Procopius of Caesaria (6th century) gives the information about the petroleum and Colchian Medea. He describes the battle between Romans and Persians, which took place in Colchis, to the south of Phasis, near the town of Petra (now Tsikhisdziri) in 550. The native population took part in the battle and as Procopius of Caesaria tells that "they filled the pots with brimstone, asphalt and one poison which is called (ΝΑΦΤΑΝ) by Medians and Medea's Oil by Greeks (ΜΗΔΕΙΑΣ ΕΛΑΙΟΝ), they flamed it and were throwing it to the wall braking machines and burnt most of them, the tower and Persians who were there." (Procopius of Caesaria BG, VIII, 11; Kaukhchishvili, 1965: 171). So, we can see that during the combat on the territory of Colchis the "Medea's Oil" was used which was acting like modern napalm. The written sources of the Classical period confirm the content of kerosene in "Medea's Oil"; accordingly Colchis was the country, where the characteristic features of petroleum were well known.

It is noteworthy that in the town of Phasis – Poti the amphorae with remains of petroleum were found. The remains of petroleum and natural asphalt fields, which are still working are located to the south from Poti, near the rivers Supsa and Natanebi [Dzvelaia, 1973: 51; Kiknadze, 1990: 192]. There are some other petroleum fields in Georgia - Samgori-Patardzeuli-Navtlugi (the name of one part of Tbilisi is called Navtlugi and is linked to the Georgian name of

Petroleum – *Navti*); in Kakheti – Mirzaani and Shiraki; and also near Poti – In Chaladidi.

The town Phasis –Poti, (where the amphorae with the remains of petroleum were found) was one of main sites on the trading road connecting Europe and Asia (see Lordkipanidze, 1957: 377-384; Gamkrelidze, 1992: 26-27). It seems possible that the timber, flax, pith, honey, vine, metal, leather and other goods were transported through Phasis.

In the Late Classical period and Early Middle Ages Phasis as a trading town became more important (Strabo XI, II, 17; Plinius the Elder NH, VI, 52; Anonymous author XLII, 3). Nowadays we can add the petroleum to the goods listed above. It was stored in amphorae and transported by the ships, supposedly from Crimean peninsula. It seems possible that petroleum was also transported to Poti from Caspian Littoral or the petroleum fields of Georgia listed above.

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A VERSION OF PROTOJEWS IN GEORGIA

The exploration of the history of the Jews who have been living in Georgia since ancient times arises a keen scientific interest and is basically based on written sources and archaeologically proved data. According to Georgian narrative sources the period of the Jewish arrival in Georgia is said to be the time when Babylonian king Nebuchadrezzar II conquered Jerusalem and Jews left the city (597-586 BC). Namely, *“Then the king Nebuchadrezzar II destroyed Jerusalem and Urians (Jews) left the city and came to Kartli (Georgia)...”* [K.T. 1955: p. 15]. It’s possible that the source depicts the arrival of one of the flows of Jews to Georgia. However, we suppose that the protojews [resp. Eberi] appeared in the Caucasus far before this period, even as early as in the beginning of the 2nd millennium BC. Exactly this issue must be supported by the fact that in Georgian narrative sources “Uria” stands for the Jew [see Mamistvalishvili, M. 1940: p. 145-156]. As it is known, in foreign written sources “Uria” doesn’t mean the Jew’s ethnic name. We share the opinion of an Israeli scientist Dr. Z. Jinjikhashvili, who argues that “the origins of the term Uria must have come from an earlier period and evolved from the name of a Sumerian city Ur, than the written sources that have reached the present day. The city of Ur was the dwelling place of the tribe called Eberi and this very tribe, namely the patriarch Abraham’s branch, left the city for the Promised Land and the other part of the tribe undertook the journey to the Caucasus, to the place where today’s Georgia is situated” [Jinjikhashvili, Z. 1998: p. 53-54].

This version of the arrival of the protojews in Georgia seemed convincing to us. Nearly the same idea was voiced by us in the scientific circles in 1987. Since the ancient times in the Georgian language protojews have been called Ur-ians – the comers from Ur.

It's noteworthy that in 1941 Pr. B. Kuftin underlined the fact that there had been observed material-cultural impulses coming from Mesopotamia to the so called Trialetian culture. His conclusion was based on archaeologist Leonard Woolly's excavations in the city of Ur [see Woolley L. 1954.; Ллойд С. 1984:], on comparing the excavation results and archaeological artifacts from Ur and Trialeti [Куфтин Б. 1941: p. 78-100]. The movement of Jewish patriarch Abraham (approximately 1800-1750 BC) and the Jewish people to the Promised Land of Canaan took place in the period contemporary to the so called Trialetian culture in Georgia. *Genesis, XII Chapter, 8* says that Abraham and his people "*removed from thence unto the mountain...*" The Caucasian mountains can be inferred in this passage. Therefore, we can relate the arrival of protojews in Georgia (see Fig. 1,) to the movement of Abraham's people from Ur to the "mountain", who afterwards were called Urians, as a consequence of having come from Ur. In *Kartlis Tskhovreba* (History of Georgia – an ancient Georgian written source) Urians are mentioned many times [К.Т. 1955: p. 35, 36, 44, 77, 78, 79, 83, 95, 100, 101, 115 and etc.]; "*Ur-ia Mtskheteli*" (i.e. the Jewish area) is also mentioned here.

The fact that ethnic Jews existed in Georgia is proved by the Jewish scripts that are found and undoubtedly identified in Mtskheta and Urbnisi. We assume that the bronze oinochoai, on which presumably the sacred menorah motif is depicted, is the sign of the Jewish presence here. The oinochoai was casually discovered in the foundation of one of the building houses in *Kazreti*, among some Roman-period archaeological artifacts [Gamkrelidze, G. 1995: 124-127]. Now it is kept in the Georgian national museum. The picture on the oinochoai is painted in the style which was created in the Roman-period world. The sacred menorah symbolizes strength, wisdom and beauty. It also represents the hope of future and the advent of the Messiah; it's associated with the tree of life and fertility.

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Many images of menorah are found in Syria and in the country of Canaan. We encounter images of menorahs dating back from the 2nd c. AD dispersed around the world – on the graves of Jewish Diaspora, décors in synagogues, glass dishes, etc. The menorah depicted on the oinochoai discovered in *Kazreti*, which is the symbol of the Jewish religion, indicates the possibility that the Jewish Diaspora existed on the territory of Georgia. Furthermore, in *Kvemo Kartli* (south-east Georgia), apart from the cities of Mtskheta and Urbnisi, the valley of Kazreti presumably had another Jewish Diaspora.

The existence of a Jewish Diaspora in the Kingdom of Iberia (*Kartli*) is attested both by written sources and archaeological evidence. In the Iberia of the Roman-early medieval period Hebrew inscriptions have largely been discovered on the town Mtskheta and Urbnisi. Jewish presence in these places is confirmed by written sources and by materials found through archaeological excavations [K. T., I, 1955:16, 35-36, 44, 95, 97, 118; Babalikhshvili, 1971:3 Nikolaishvili V.].

The first Hebrew inscription was discovered in the *Samtavro* in Mtskheta. The slab has a deep niche (length: 30 cm), in which the inscription is carved. It reads: „*This coffin of the dear and respected Ieguda, nicknamed Gurki. Let his resting-place alongside with pious. Let his resurrection be linked to immaculate life (with saints)*”. The language is Rabbinic or Aramaic. The inscription is dated to the 4th c. AD. [Khvolson , 1884:130].

The second Hebrew inscription was discovered in the *Samtavro* cemetery. Two stone slabs with inscriptions were used to build the walls one of the burials. The inscription is of fine lines, and its area is 28x21cm. It reads: “*This grave (is) of Ioseb Bar Hazan (?) (be he) mentioned As blessed; and Shallum also, His brother, (be) mentioned In peace*”. On the basis of paleographic analysis, dated Ioseb Bar Hazan’s inscription to the 4th-5th cc.[Tsereteli G. 1940:419-25]. This

date is supported by the situation of discovery and the archaeological context.

The third Hebrew inscription in Mtskheta, on a former Roman-Early Medieval period settlement site. It is made of a thin gold plaque; its length: 5.8 cm, width: 2.9cm. An inscription of 29 lines. The inscription is a Hebrew incantation written in Aramaic, being an amulet of Abraham of Sarah's son. It was designed to be worn round the neck and, as a rule, the text was magic. Such plaques were made of different materials: gold, silver, copper and lead. The amulet protected its owner. It was also placed in private houses and synagogues [Tsereteli K. 1996:95-96]. The inscription on the amulet reads thus: "*(This is) a kind amulet for Abraham son of Sarah. for his household. This is a seal with which Solomon the king sealed (evil spirits) so that no harm is done to Abraham son of Sarah and no member of his family before us and as earlier, powerful God fulfilled (his word) with respect to Abraham that (he) would be God his protector always you are troubled. Exorcise (evil spirits), do good and secretly put your hand on him. and again [further] streng then this just [cause] in the name of these angels I seal and bind [the evil spirit], so that he should not dominate over him over Abraham son of Sarah [be it] magic and evil spell nor jinxed [bewitched] and neither the cherubim nor the devil, nor sleepwalker nor any evil demon, and [they] will have no power over Abraham son of Sarah from this day to eternity amen, amen, Sela, rise and execute a deed of grace. There is no the substance in them, aleph, beth, gimel, dalet he, waw, sayin, heth, teth, yod kaph, lamed, mem, nun, samek [ayin] pe, sadhe, qoph, resh, sin taw and said Jacob when he saw these: ,This is God's camp and he called the place Makhanayim". [Tsereteli K. 1996:95-96]. The house of Abraham son of Sarah, where the amulet was discovered, consists of two rooms, with a door –passage between. A wine cellar is arranged in the second room, where a large quantity of*

clayware was found, which is generally characteristic of the 4th-5th centuries AD. In the second room two clay seal-bulls were found, with Sasanian monograms depicted on them.

Therefore, the possible arrival of protojews in Georgia in the beginning of the 2nd millennium BC is connected to the archaeological artifacts – discovered in the Trialetian culture and the city of Ur – showing resemblance. In addition to this argument, the things and epitaphs on the graves written in the Hebrew language, the image of menorah on the oinochoai, dated by the 3rd – 6th c. AD, make the track of ethnic Jews in Urbnisi, Mtskheta and Kazreti evident. All this proves the ancient relationship between Georgians and Jews on the Georgian territory.

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Figures:

Fig. I - The map of Mesopotamia and Caucasus.

ZUR IDENTIFIKATION DER KOLCHERIN MEDEA AUF EINEM STELENRELIEF VON SUCHUMI (VERSION)

Die Stele von Suchumi zählt zu den in Georgien entdeckten hochinteressanten Werken der Steinmetzkunst [Lordkipanidze, 1966: 93-106; Picard, 1956:81-82; Gamkrelidze, 2001: 122-134]. Die Steinsäule mit dem Basrelief wurde bei unterseeischen Küstenbefestigungsarbeiten im Meer auf dem Grund der Bucht von Suchumi an der Mündung des Besleti gefunden. Die Bucht von Suchumi ist jener Ort, an dem die Lage eines Teils der schon im Werk des Pseudo-Skylax von Kariand im 4. Jh. v. Chr. erwähnten Stadt Dioskurias (Periplus..., 81) vermutet wird. Hier findet man nach stürmischem Wellengang häufig Amphoren, Scherben schwarzlackierter Keramik und Münzen. Funde aus prähistorischer Zeit und der Antike wurden auch in den archäologisch erschlossenen Abschnitten der Stadt Suchumi, des Suchumi-Berges von *Guadichu* und *Ziteli Schukura* gemacht.

Die aus dem Meer geborgene Stele von Suchumi besteht aus weißem Marmor und hat einen gelblichgrauen Schimmer. Sie hat eine viereckige Form, und ihre linke untere Ecke ist zertrümmert. Die Maße der viereckigen Platte sind 157 cm x 92 cm x 12 cm. Die Tafel hat auf ihrer Oberfläche sechs Vertiefungen. Gegenwärtig ist die Stele im Heimatkundemuseum von Sochumi ausgestellt (Abb. I). Auf der Stele ist in Flachrelief (0,5 cm bis 2 cm) eine dreifigurige Komposition herausgearbeitet, die überwiegend realistisch wiedergegeben und im wesentlichen im Stil der griechischen Klassik ausgeführt ist.

Die linke Figur der Komposition ist ein stehendes junges Mädchen, das einzeln vor dem Hintergrund dargestellt ist und von oben auf eine sitzende Figur hinabschaut. Ihr leicht geneigter Kopf mit kurz

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geschnittenem Haar ist im Profil, der Körper, der in einen ärmellosen, in der Taille gegürteten Peplos gekleidet ist, in Frontstellung wiedergegeben. An den Schultern ist der Peplos mit Klammern zu Falten gerafft und auf der Brust durch vertikale und schräge Kerblinien wiedergegeben. Die Jungfrau hat eine gerade Nase, volle Lippen, eine von der Wange abgetrennte Ohrmuschel mit Ohrläppchen und einen mandelförmigen Augenschlitz. Der etwas kantige Kiefer endet in einem leicht vorspringenden, energischen, Willensstärke ausdrückenden Kinn. Die Jungfrau hält in ihrer linken, bis zur Schulter erhobenen Hand ein Kästchen, das schematisch dargestellt ist. Die rechte Figur des Basreliefs ist eine vornehme Dame, die, in einen Chiton gekleidet, auf einem tierfellbedeckten Sessel mit gebogenen Beinen sitzt. Sie hat die rechte Hand über ein an ihre Knie gelehntes, nacktes Kind gelegt, das ihr ins Gesicht blickt. Das im Profil dargestellte, kurz geschorene Kind hat seine rechte Hand auf der linken der Frau liegen. Die Dame hat ein Himation über den Chiton gehüllt, das teilweise auch über die Sessellehne hängt und mit reliefierten Falten wiedergegeben ist. Der Kopf der Frau ist im Profil dargestellt, ihn charakterisieren ein weiches Oval, eine mandelförmige Augenöffnung, eine gerade sogenannte griechische Nase, volle Lippen und eine ovale Ohrmuschel; die Frisur ist elegant zurückgelegt und vorn in wellenförmigem Ornament ausgeführt. Bei der Untersuchung dieses Basreliefs beschränken wir uns an dieser Stelle im wesentlichen auf dessen ikonographische Attribution.

Leider wurde die Stele von Suchumi nicht *in situ* gefunden, und daher läßt sich darüber nur anhand des Reliefs urteilen. Es ist anzunehmen, daß sie beim Transport mit dem Schiff bei stürmischer See ins Meer fiel oder mit dem Schiff versank und so auf den Meeresgrund gelangte und ihren Bestimmungsort nicht erreichte.

Die Stele von Suchumi ist ein Grabstein. Mit solchen Stelen wurden Orte markiert, wo die Kulthandlungen für den Verstorbenen

vollzogen wurden. Hier war das Memorial zum Gedenken an den Toten errichtet. Es ist nicht auszuschließen, daß das Relief dazu bestimmt war, die Wand einer Gruft zu schmücken. Zugunsten dieser Überlegung spricht, daß die Tafel an der Oberseite sechs Vertiefungen zum Befestigen besitzt. Gleichzeitig ist bekannt, daß die griechischen Stelen in klassischer Zeit mit Fronton geschaffen wurden, die Stele von Suchumi weist aber kein Fronton auf, sondern stellt lediglich eine viereckige Tafel dar.

Die Sitte, auf Gräbern Steinsäulen aufzustellen, läßt sich in Griechenland schon in der archaischen Zeit belegen. Der Stele von Suchumi ähnliche Grabsteine mit Figuren aber verbreiten sich seit der klassischen Zeit in der gesamten antiken Welt. Auf den Grabstelen des klassischen Griechenlands wird meist die Szene der Verabschiedung von den Verstorbenen in einer zwei- oder dreifigurigen Komposition dargestellt [Boardman, 1985: 165-166; Kolpinski, 1988: 58-82, 99; Grifcov B., 1923: 94-118; The Oxford History of Classical Art 1993: 83-147, 143, 136]. Darin wird der Tote häufig so wie auf der Stele von Suchumi in einem Sessel sitzend und gemeinsam mit einem Kind oder einer jungen Frau gezeigt. Auf den griechischen Grabstelen ist die sitzende Verstorbene eine verallgemeinerte und keine konkrete Gestalt. Ihre idealisierte Erscheinung mit dem sogenannten griechischen Profil, dem Chiton, der Frisur und dem fellbedeckten Klismos ist auch auf dem Relief von Suchumi in gewisser Weise trapharetisch und traditionell. Im Hinblick auf die Darstellung der Figur der sitzenden Frau ist beispielsweise die im Athener Archäologischen Nationalmuseum ausgestellte Grabstele von Hegesos zu beachten, die in das Jahr 400 v. Chr. datiert wird und auf der ebenso wie auf der Stele von Suchumi das Gesicht der Frau im Profil, der Torso aber en face wiedergegeben wird. Zudem sitzen beide Frauen in einem gleichartigen Klismos. Genauso sind Kopf und Körper der Sitzenden auf einer in Piräus gefundenen Grabstele aus

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dem 4. vorchristlichen Jahrhundert bezeugt (Archäologisches Nationalmuseum zu Athen). Gleichfalls in einem Klismos sitzend ist die Frauenfigur auf der Grabstele des Philostratos aus der zweiten Hälfte des 5. Jhs. v. Chr. dargestellt (Eremitage von St. Petersburg). Zwar ist auf den genannten Stelen die Modellierung der Sitzenden im allgemeinen ein und dieselbe, doch weist sie unterschiedliches künstlerisches Niveau auf.

In der Art der Darstellung zeigt die im Flachrelief wiedergegebene Figur der stehenden Jungfrau auf der Stele von Suchumi eine gewisse Ähnlichkeit mit der Gestalt der speerbewaffneten Göttin Athene aus dem Athener Akropolis-Museum, die in das Jahr 450 v. Chr. datiert wird [Kolpinski J., 1988: Tafel 220]. Eine stilistisch- bildnerische Ähnlichkeit ist auch mit der auf einem Marmorgrabstein von Pantikapaion Dargestellten aus dem letzten Viertel des 5. Jhs. v. Chr. [Grač N., 1972: 56-61] festzustellen, und zwar in der Neigung des Kopfes, der Wiedergabe im Profil, dem kurzgeschnittenen Haar und der Zeichnung des Auges. Beachtenswert ist auch das bekannte dreifigurige Basrelief von Eleusis aus dem Ende des 5. Jhs. v. Chr. mit der Darstellung der Göttin Demeter (Athener Archäologisches Nationalmuseum). Hier zeigen die Kleidung der rechten und der linken Figur und die Zeichnung des Kopfes der rechten Figur in etwa die Art wie auf der Stele von Suchumi in Flachrelief.

Die Kleidung der auf der Stele von Suchumi dargestellten Figuren (Peplos, Chiton, Himation) und der Charakter ihrer Modellierung, der fellbedeckte Klismos, die Frisur der Verstorbenen, die zurückgekammt ist (vielleicht mit einem Netz gehalten) und vorn ein Wellenornament trägt, sind überaus charakteristisch für die griechische Welt [AC - 1973: 107]. In dieser Weise wurden in der griechischen Kunst der klassischen Zeit vornehme Damen und Göttinnen dargestellt. So hat der Meister das Gesicht und die Kleidung der Frauenfiguren auf dem Relief von Suchumi und den

Klismos offenbar nach eigenem Wissen und Vermögen in klassischer Weise wiedergegeben. Bei allen drei Figuren werden die Proportionen nicht ganz eingehalten. Und zwar sind die Köpfe im Verhältnis zum Körper etwas zu groß geraten. An der Figur des Kindes ist auch der Arm im Vergleich zum Kopf unverhältnismäßig groß. Schlecht wiedergegeben sind die Hände der Figuren; offenbar stellte das Ausmeißeln der Handfläche für den Gestalter des Reliefs eine unüberwindliche Schwierigkeit dar. Das setzt in Erstaunen, denn ein solch kompliziert herauszuarbeitendes Element wie das Ohr (mit Ausnahme des Kinderohres) wurde deutlich, realistisch und auf hohem Niveau ausgeführt. Das Kästchen, das die junge Frau in der Hand hält, hat eine völlig schematische Darstellung gefunden und ist nur als Viereck zu erkennen.

Daher entsteht der Eindruck, daß das Relief von keinem sehr hochrangigen Künstler stammt oder einfach unvollendet geblieben ist (besonders das Kästchen) oder auch von mehreren Handwerkern unterschiedlichen Könnens angefertigt wurde. Unbestreitbar ist jedoch, daß die Stele von Suchumi unter dem lebendigen Einfluß der Kunst der griechischen Klassik entstanden ist. Sie wurde zu Recht in das letzte Viertel des 5. Jahrhunderts v. Chr. datiert [Lordkipanidze, 1966: 104].

Die Stirn des auf dem Basrelief von Suchumi abgebildeten Kindes ist fliehend, die Nase springt leicht vor, und der Kopf wirkt ein wenig flächig. Zum Unterschied von den Frauenfiguren ist die Augenöffnung im Profil gegeben, während das Ohrläppchen mit der Wange verwachsen ist. Überhaupt erinnert die Figur des Kindes in gewisser Hinsicht an die eines Mannes (Gesicht, Arm, Hand) und besitzt, von den anderen Gestalten abweichend, ein auffällig nichtgriechisches Aussehen (Stirn, Nase, Ohr, Kopfform). Es ist bezeichnend, daß die Figur des Kindes auf der berühmten Stele von

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Skopas, dem "Grabstein des Jünglings", von Fachleuten als Allegorie des Todes, des Sterbens, aufgefaßt wird [Vii -1956: Abb.201, S. 237].

Für den Stil der Stele von Suchumi läßt sich bislang keine unmittelbare Analogie finden. In künstlerischer Hinsicht steht er dem klassischen griechischen Stil nahe, aber das niedrigstehende Relief (Kind, Kästchen, Handflächen, Augenhöhlen) ist nicht mit der sogenannten griechischen Hochklassik zu verbinden. Deshalb vermittelt das Werk den Eindruck, daß es ein Erzeugnis von der Peripherie der antiken Welt oder eines dorthier stammenden Handwerkers ist. In der Fachliteratur wurde darauf hingewiesen, daß eine gewisse stilistische Nähe zwischen dem Relief von Suchumi und der Stele von "Kritos und Timarista" zu verzeichnen ist, die an der Peripherie, in Ionien, auf der Insel Rhodos entdeckt wurde [Lordkipanidze, 1968: 171]. Bemerkenswert ist, daß die griechische Handelskolonie Dioskurias als Siedlung gilt, die von der ionischen Stadt Milet gegründet wurde (Flavius Arrianus, Periplus, 10). Daher ist es möglich, daß die Stele von Suchumi von hierher in die Kolchis gebracht wurde. Was von der Peripherie stammende Ware betrifft, so wurden in Athen schwarzfigurige Gefäße aus dem 6. und 5. Jh. v. Chr. gefunden, die griechische Inschriften kolchischer Handwerker trugen: "Ein Kolcher hat mich gefertigt"; "Euxitheos hat das gefertigt, ein Kolcher hat es bemalt" [Kauchtschischwili, 1976: 226]. Entsprechend ist auch nicht auszuschließen, daß ein kolchischer Meister (Steinmetz) in Ionien wirkte und die Stele von Suchumi angefertigt hat.

Besonderes Interesse beansprucht auf der Stele von Suchumi die Figur der stehenden Jungfrau mit dem Kästchen in der Hand, die möglicherweise die Kolcherin Medea verkörpert. Sie ähnelt sich nach Ihrem Aussehen der in Herkulaneum entdeckten Freske von Medea (Schultern, Ärmel, Kinn).

In der klassischen griechischen Zeit wurden mythologische Gestalten (mit ihren entsprechenden Attributen) realistisch, als

Menschen, wiedergegeben [Carpenter , 1991: 35-48; Tachogodi, 1989: 66-69]. Es wurden Grabstelen gefunden, auf denen neben dem Verstorbenen mythologische Gestalten dargestellt waren, z. B. datiert man in das Jahr 450 v. Chr. ein Relief, auf dem bei dem Verstorbenen Orpheus und Hermes vertreten sind (Museum von Neapel); in Sparta fand man eine steinerne Grabsäule mit Schlangen aus der zweiten Hälfte des 6. Jahrhunderts v. Chr. (Pergamon-Museum Berlin); von der Halbinsel Chalkedon stammt ein fünffiguriges Relief aus dem 6. Jh. v. Chr [Boardman, 1985: pic. 248]. In der Nekropole Nympheon wurde eine Grabstele ausgegraben, auf der die Göttin Kybele dargestellt ist (Historisches Museum Kertsch). Das Archäologische Museum von Odessa besitzt eine Grabstele (Inv.-Nr. 50122), auf der Kybele und Hermes vertreten sind. Die beiden letzteren Denkmäler werden allerdings in römische Zeit datiert [Kobilina, 1978: 66, 68]. Mit sakralen Symbolen hat man es wohl auch bei der Skopas-Stele, dem "Grabstein des Jünglings", zu tun, wo neben dem Verstorbenen ein Hund (die Treue), ein Greis (das Alter) und ein weinendes Kind (das Sterben) dargestellt sind [Kolpinski, 1956: 237]. Bei der Betrachtung der griechischen Grabstelen ist ersichtlich, daß die Hauptfigur, der Tote, überall mit geneigtem Kopf wiedergegeben ist, in sich selbst verschlossen, abstrahiert und von sakralem Glanz geprägt.

Die stehende Jungfrau, die auf der Stele von Suchumi erscheint, hält in ihrer bis zur Schulter erhobenen Hand ein Kästchen. In der griechischen Mythologie und Kunst, und zwar auf Reliefs und bemalter Keramik, begegnen Darstellungen von Kästchen, für die es mehrere Erklärungen gibt [Zu den graphischen ... 1976: 59, 70]. Die erste besagt, es sei die Büchse der Pandora; die zweite erklärt es als Behältnis zur Aufbewahrung für Schmuck und Kostbarkeiten; die dritte deutet es als Kästchen der Medea, das neben Kräutern und Schlangen eines der Symbole und Attribute der kolchischen Zauberin

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verkörperte [Simon, 1954: 204-226]. In der Ikonographie von Medea ist das Kästchen unterschiedlicher Form (viereckig, zylindrisch u.a.).

Die "Büchse der Pandora" ist in der griechischen Mythologie ein weit verbreiteter Begriff. Es handelt sich um ein Geschenk des blitzeschleudernden Zeus für den Ehemann der Pandora, in dem jegliches Unglück, das die Menschheit heimsuchen kann, eingeschlossen ist. Öffnet man die Büchse, kommen Unheil, Leid und Pest daraus hervor und verbreiten sich über die ganze Welt. Auf bemalter Keramik ist dieses Kästchen fast gar nicht zu finden.

Das Schatzkästchen, wo im Gymnaikeion Schmuck und Kostbarkeiten aufbewahrt werden, ist häufig auf Keramikmalerei und, was besonders bedeutsam ist, auf Grabstelen anzutreffen. Dieses Kästchen ist meist offen, und bei der Wiedergabe auf Stelen reicht es eine Dienerin oder Vertraute (Verwandte) der verstorbenen Dame, beispielsweise auf der Hegesos-Stele, auf der ein offenes Kästchen zu sehen ist, das der Toten unterhalb des Torso gereicht wird. Die Frau, die der Verstorbenen das Kästchen reicht, trägt ein Gewand mit langen Ärmeln, wie es für niedere Schichten kennzeichnend ist. Eine ebensolche Frau mit einem geöffneten Kästchen in der Hand erscheint auf einem rotfigurigen Gefäß des 4. Jhs. v. Chr. aus Sizilien. [Sidorova, Tuguseva, Zabelina, 1985: 74]. Ein offenes Kästchen findet sich auch auf einer rotfigurigen Pellika vom 4. Jh. v. Chr. aus Apulien [Sidorova, Tuguseva, 1985: 60]. Weder hier noch auf anderen Darstellungen wird das offene Kästchen in der erhobenen Hand gehalten [Siehe die Kataloge Lezzi-Hafter Adrienne, 1976: Abb. 82, 87, 94, 100, 105, 107, 117, 123, 126, 129, 133, 135, 148, 160, 163, 171, 175; Conze A., 1893-1922: B. I-IV; Boardman, 1989: Abb. 28, 63, 166, 207, 234, 299, 403; Peredolskaia, 1967: Tafel XCVI, CXLVI, CLI 4, CLVII 1,4]. Auf der Stele von Suchumi dagegen steht eine Jungfrau, gekleidet in ein Gewand, wie es für hochrangige Frauen und Göttinnen charakteristisch ist, einen

ärmellosen Peplos, und hält stolz ein verschlossenes Kästchen in der einen Hand, die sie bis zur Schulter erhoben hat.

Das dritte Kästchen, das das Attribut der Medea ist, ist stets verschlossen, und Medea hält es meist in ihrer erhobenen Hand (Abb. II, 2). In dieser Pose erscheint Medea auf einem rotfigurigen Krater mit Voluten aus der zweiten Hälfte des 5. Jahrhunderts (Museum von München, Nr. 3268; Abb. 5; 7) und auf einem rotfigurigen Krater aus dem 5. Jh. v. Chr., der in der St. Petersburger Eremitage aufbewahrt wird (Inv.-Nr. 1718), wobei über dem Kopf der Figur mit dem Kästchen in der erhobenen Hand die griechische Inschrift ΜΗΔΕΙΑ zu lesen ist. Eine Darstellung der Medea findet sich auch auf einem Krater aus dem 6. Jh. v. Chr., der im Museum von Turin (Inv.-Nr. 249) aufbewahrt wird.

Medea ist eine der Hauptpersonen der griechischen Argonautensage und steht in enger Beziehung zur kolchischen Welt [Canava, 1982: 85-91]. Griechische Quellen vermerken, daß sie die Tochter des Aietes, des Sohnes des Helios, ist. Einigen Versionen zufolge ist die Göttin Hekate Medeas Mutter. Medea als Priesterin des Tempels der Hekate und Enkelin des Gottes Helios besitzt die Fähigkeit, wahrzusagen, Arzneien zuzubereiten, zu verjüngen und Tote wieder zum Leben zu erwecken [Lexicon Iconographicum Mythologiae classical, 1992: B. VI(1), S. 386-398; B. II(1) 1984, S. 591-599; Mitologičeski slovar, 1990: 349-350]. Von ihrer vielseitigen Begabung machen wir in diesem Fall auf ihr Vermögen aufmerksam, Verstorbene wiederzubeleben, das mit dem Totenkult verknüpft ist. Daher dürfte es nicht verwunderlich sein, die Zauberin Medea allegorisch mit dem Arzneikästchen in der Hand auf einer Grabstele dargestellt zu finden.

Medea ist eine populäre Heldin des griechischen und römischen Schrifttums. Häufig wird sie mit dem Kästchen voll wundertätiger Heilmittel in der Hand erwähnt. Beispielsweise: Medea "erwählte es,

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von hier aus zum Tempel der Hekate zu gehen". "Wie Zauberinnen es gewohnt sind, strich sie häufig um Tote und aus der Erde emporsprossende Wurzeln herum" (Apollonios von Rhodos, Argonautika, IV, 50-54); "Im Palast des Aietes gibt es eine Jungfrau (Medea), die die Göttin Hekate besonders in der Bereitung von Heilmitteln unterwies" (III, 529); "Medea begab sich zu dem Kästchen, in dem sich viele Arzneien befanden, die einen heilbringend, die anderen todbringend" (III, 803); "Medea öffnete das Kästchen und wollte das Gift herausnehmen" (III, 835); "Auf Eingebung Heras nahm sie veränderten Sinnes das Kästchen herab..." (III, 818); "Medea aber nahm inzwischen die Arznei hervor, die wie man sagt, Heilmittel des Prometheus genannt wird" (III, 845) [Apolonios Rodoseli, argonavtika, 1970: 205, 219, 221, 253].

Aufgrund obiger Argumente halten wir es für möglich, auf dem Basrelief von Suchumi, das bei einem Steinmetzen für einen Standort in der Kolchis in Auftrag gegeben worden war, in der stehenden Jungfrau mit dem Kästchen in der Hand die allegorische Gestalt der Kolcherin Medea zu erkennen. Aus dieser Sicht können wir das Medizinkästchen zusammen mit Kräutern, Schlangen und einem sog. frigidarischen Hut für ein Attribut der Medea – Ikonographie halten.

Anmerkungen:

Apolonios Rodoseli, argonavtika, 1970: Tbilisi, S. 205, 219, 221, 253 (in georg. und griechisch Sprache).

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- Zu den graphischen** Typen des kästchens s. Lezzi-Hafter Adrienne, Der Schuwalow-Maler, 1976, B. I, Mainz, S. 59, 70.

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THE PROCESS OF GLOBALISTIC ROMANIZATION AND IBERIA-COLCHIS

(An overview)

In its essence Romanization was a globalistic process, implying the spread and establishment of Roman political-economic norms and culture in the provinces of the Empire and neighboring countries. The gist of Romanization lay in involving the peoples subject to Rome and under its influence in a single system and establishment of a way of life governed from a single centre and based on common standards [see Hopkins, A. (ed.), 2003:4-9; Shelton, J. 1998:21-30; Matthew, D.; Garland. L. 2005:134]. Processes of globalization did occur in various forms and scale before the period of the Roman Empire as well. For example, the state of Achaemenid Iran or the Empire of Alexander the Great performed the function of globalization. Later, the Roman Empire was distinguished for an unheard of scale of the process of globalism. In a number of provinces of the Roman Empire Romanization was attended by the development of technological, communication and East-West contacts, a process of assimilation and cultural syncretization of peoples, occurring in the annexed countries under the aegis of *Pax Romana*. The process of Romanization differed in tempo and scale in the boundless space of the Roman Empire. It took place at a relatively accelerated rate in the western provinces of the Empire than in the Eastern countries, which was due to the non-uniform socio-economic and political structure here [see Gamkrelidze, G. Todua, T. 2006:97].

A peculiar process of historical development took place for millennia on the territory of ancient Georgia. Here, in the Classical period – the 6thc. BC - 4thc. AD – political hegemony was gained by the kingdoms of Colchis and Iberia, on whose place and basis a single state – Georgia – was formed. Iberia-Colchis, lying at the

junction of Asia and Europe, was the arena of the exercise of military and political-economic power – the scene of hostilities of countries of Iranian orientation, on the one hand, and that of Classical orientation, on the other.

Study of the history of the relations of Iberia-Colchis and Rome is largely feasible on the basis of archaeological material, for written sources on this period are few. The archaeological excavations, carried on for years, have resulted in the accumulation of fairly diverse evidence from the following sites: Kldeeti, Bichvinta, Inkiti, Poti, Tsikhisdziri, Vashnari, Gonio, Tbilisi, Dighomi, Ureki, Dedoplistgora, Urbnisi, Uplistsikhe, Zhinvali, Mukhatgverdi, Mtskheta (Armaztsikhe, Armaziskhevi, Kamarakhevi, Ghartiskari), Sokhumi, Tsebelda, Ghebi, Itkhvisi, Shorapani, Vani, Shukhuti, Tagiloni, Zghuderi, Tsitsamuri, Sarkine, Dzalisa, etc. Individual artefacts attested at the sites just listed are important, as they allow us to trace the Romanization process throughout Iberia-Colchis [Gamkrelidze, G., *Todua*, T. 5-24, 97-116].

In 65 BC the legionaries of the Roman Republic appeared in Transcaucasia, led by Gnaeus Pompeius Magnus. It was basically the economic and strategic advantage that attracted the Romans in the Caucasus; bringing new countries within the sphere of her influence; gaining possession of new trade routes and markets for selling their goods. Especially noteworthy for them was the road that came from Central Asia, from the Caspian Sea, on the river Mtkvari (*resp.* Kura), crossing the Likhi range, through the Phasis (*resp.* Rioni) river to the Black Sea. This road acquired particular significance after the strengthened Parthian state placed under its control the southern transit highways running from China and India. At the same time the Caucasus Range was a good obstacle for regulating the inroads of North Caucasian aggression nomadic tribes into Transcaucasia and Roman Asia Minor. In this respect especially noteworthy are the

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passes of Mamisoni, Darial and Derbent. Whoever held these roads he could control the movements of the North-Caucasian warlike tribes [see Gamkrelidze,G., Todua,T. 2006:25-57].

Geopolitically, the Caucasus held one of the key territories. This was a definite meeting-place of Eastern and Western civilizations, with its gorges, rapid, hard-to-cross rivers and dense forests. Iberia-Colchis must have been a hard nut to crack. The Romans managed to establish a definite control in which, unlike hinterland Colchis, the Classical economic and cultural influence was stronger. The Colchian littoral was a strategic region that was indispensable for Rome to establish her influence in the Caucasus, Asia Minor and the Bosphorus [see Braund,D., 1991:35-52].

Rome had a definite impact on the process of development – first, of Colchis and then of Iberia, which proved negative. The littoral came under Rome’s political influence, while in some regions the flexible policy of the Romans resulted in an unstable situation, subsequently in the formation of principalities semi-dependent on Rome [see Arrian, PPE, 11]. Rome – a state highly developed by that time – played a somewhat positive role. In particular, the local population became acquainted with the advanced Roman culture, new economic and culture, military tactical and technical innovations, Roman capital appeared in coastal cities.

The so-called Pontus-Caucasian border system took shape in the eastern Black Sea region towards the end of the 1st c. AD. Its principal task lay in strengthening Rome’s geopolitical positions and control in the Caucasus. Apsarus (Gonio)[see Mamuladze,Sh., Kakhidze,E., Khalvashi,M., 2009:107-130; Khalvashi,M., 2002; Lordkipanidze,O., Mikeladze,T., Khakhutaishvili,D., 1980], Phasis (Poti) [see Gamkrelidze,G., 1992:30-48; Gamkrelidze,G., 1992:30-48; Gamkrelidze,G., 2009:175-194], Sebastopolis (Sokhumi) [see Puturidze,R., 1956:54-94] and Pitiunt (Bichvinta) [see

Lordkipanidze,G., 1991; Berdzenishvili,K., Puturidze,R., 1975], involved in this system, turned into city-fortresses of militaristic character. The Romans expanded the boundaries of the empire not only by military force but by flexible diplomatic stratagems as well. Some peoples settled along the entire perimeter of the empire were governed by kings, retaining a measure of independence. Rome spared no diplomatic effort to establish friendly relations with these rulers, for the successes of the empire occasionally depended on them.

In the Eastern policy of Rome the Black Sea area communications were indispensable in her rivalry with such powerful a state as Parthia [see Bokshanin,A., 1966]. Notwithstanding her power, at the initial stage, Rome failed to subordinate inner Colchis. This failed to be done either by the hand of Aristarchus, Mithradates of Pergamum or Polemon. Lucullus's prediction that subjugation of this region would prove very difficult turned out to have been correct to a certain extent (see Plutarch, Lucullus, 14). The process of setting up and development of Roman settlements in the eastern Black Sea area took a peculiarly different path. Roman classical type *canabees* did not rise here. At the *castellums* of Dioscurias – Sebastopolis, Apsarus, Pitiunt and Phasis there existed *vicus* type small trade and artisan settlements, whose area of activity was limited to a concrete coastal zone. Along with the setting up of the Pontus – Caucasus border system and the numerical growth of garrisons, Roman manufacture – pottery, glassware and metal items – spread in the eastern Black Sea area. Among the items, traditionally, wares of Asia Minor centers prevailed. Transportation of this manufacture was largely carried on by sea. It was mainly directed at supplying Roman military units. The Roman garrisons were supplied in the 2nd – 3rdc. on a centralized basis from Trapezus [see Maksimova, M., 1956], and in the 4thc. from Antioch. The involvement of the coastal zone of the eastern Black

Sea area in the border system of the Roman Empire ensured to a certain extent the security of the approaches to Rome's eastern provinces and the strengthening of the Romans, geopolitical interests in the Caucasus and eastern Asia Minor.

Roman political influence on the kingdom of Iberia (*resp.* Kartli) did not last long. The rulers of Iberia were quick to take advantage of the intestine political strife in Rome in the second half of the 1st c. BC, that ended in the overthrow of the Republic, declaration of an Empire, and extreme aggravation of relations with the powerful state of Parthia. By this time Iberia was completely free from political dependence on Rome. Iberian kings successfully used Rome for the consolidation of the political power in their struggle against Parthia.

In the 1st -2nd c. AD the relations between Rome and the Iberian kingdom were largely of good-neighborly character. This relationship was expressed in a peculiar alliance, determined by bilateral economic and political interests. The trade route that linked Eastern countries with the Western world via Georgia was in Rome's economic and political interests. Pompey was known to have taken special interest in the potentialities of carrying on trade relations along this road. According to Varro: "Adicit idem Pompei ductum exploratum in Bactros septem diebus ex India perveniri ad Bactrum flumen quod in Oxum influat, et ex eo per Caspium[Caspian sea] in Cyrum[Kura river] subvectos, et V non amplius dierum terreno itinere ad Phasim in Pontum Indicas posse devehi merces..." (see Pliny, NH, VI, 52).

In the 1st - 2nd c. AD, the kingdom of Iberia played an active part in Rome's foreign policy, emerging as her ally in the Near East. The Roman historians Tacitus and Dion Cassius have supplied detailed evidence on this. At this time some North-Caucasian tribes found themselves under the influence of Iberia. The Iberian authorities controlled the major trade and strategic routes and passes. Iberia

attained especial power in the 140s AD, in the reign of King Parsman II. During his reign the territory of Iberia expanded appreciably, reaching the Black Sea. The Roman Empire was interested in having the strengthened Iberia as her ally. According to Dion Cassius, the Emperor Antoninus Pius invited Parsman, the king of Kartli, to Rome, lavishing honors on him (see Roman History, XX, 2). This event is reported as well in an inscription discovered at Ostia, near Rome. The might of the Iberian Kingdom in the opening centuries of the new era found graphic reflection in material culture too. Let us recall the rich burials of the Iberian royal family and nobles, discovered as a result of archaeological excavations, as well as cities with advanced, diversified artisan manufacture and intensive trade and economic relations.

The residence of Iberian Kings was at Armaztsikhe in Mtskheta. A whole set of structures of the 1st - 3rd c. AD came to light here, in the construction of which lime mortar was widely used. These are: the palace, bathhouse, economic facilities, water conduits, cultic structures, wine cellar. The structures are adorned with relief representations. A gable roof stone sarcophagus, standing out for its rich grave goods was found in Armaziskhevi, Mtskheta. Among the items found here there is toreutics of Roman provenance, a silver cup, phiale, ladle, spoon, coins [see Apakidze, A., et al, 1955, v. I; Apakidze, A. (ed), Mtskheta vols II-XI].

A mausoleum-type stone crypt was discovered near Armaziskhevi, at the foot of the Kartli mountain with a tile gable roof. Its architecture is basically of Roman type. The residence of the high officials of the Iberian Kingdom was situated on the right bank of the Mtkvari, in Armaziskhevi. Excavations here have revealed a palace complex and necropolis of the 2nd - 4th c. AD. Here too the stone

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walls of the structures were bound with lime mortar, and tiles were used for roofing. The architectural adornment of the palace is attested to by the palmetto capitals, relief cornices, etc. Here is a Roman type bath of the palace. The necropolis of the nobles was in an area adjoining the palace. The grave goods of the necropolis are exceedingly rich and diverse, comprised of gold and silver items adorned with precious stones. Among these are gold insignia, daggers, bells, diadems, silver vessels adorned with representations, bracelets, necklaces, buckles, fingerings, iron weapons, etc. The bulk of these artefacts are Roman or Roman imitations. It should be noted also that synchronous rich burials of Iberian nobles have also been discovered in Bori(Kharagauli district), Zhghuderi(Kareli district) [see Braund,D., Javakhishvili,K., Nemsadze,G., 2009] and in the Aragvi valley.

As evidenced by archaeological excavations, in cities of the Roman period and the Early Middle Ages – Mtskheta, Dzalisa, Urbnisi, Bichvinta, Tsikhisdziri, Nokalakevi, Kutaisi, Gonio – appropriate attention was paid to the observation of sanitary and hygienic standards, as evidenced by the discovery in these cities of baths, water supply, water pipes and sewage systems. As a result of intensive political and economic relations between Rome and Iberia-Colchis, baths of the Roman *thermae* type were built here. One of the first complexes of a 2nd c. bath was brought to light at Armaziskhevi; it was comprised of five sections: changing-room, cold bath (*frigidarium*), warm bath (*tepidarium*), hot bath (*calderium*) and furnace room. The lower storey of the bath was occupied by the hypocaust systems, *calorifier* (air heater) columns made of circular and square clay slabs. At the bottom of the bath basin clay pipes were laid by which dirty water was drained into the collector. This bath belonged to the elite of Iberia. Thus, the nobles of Mtskheta in the period imitated the Romans not only with rich appliances -- items of

luxury but in the way of life as well. Another graphic example of this is a bath complex of the palace, resembling that of Armaziskhevi in the village of Dzalisa, Mtskheta district. This bath too has cold, warm and hot sections, a swimming pool, heating system, sewage, collector and water supply. Water entered the bath by lead pipes. The floor evokes special interest with its Roman style mosaic.

Apart from the baths of Armaziskhevi and Dzalisa, three baths were discovered in Armaziskhevi – also of Roman type. They too are built of stone and plastered with hydraulic solution. The Armaziskhevi baths belonged to the Iberian royal family, as evidenced by an inscription found here.

A bath complex adorned with a 3rd c. mosaic was uncovered at the Bichvinta city site as well, with a rather complex system of water regulation, built of ceramic pipes and lime mortar. The baths built in the early middle Ages continue Roman traditions. Significant in this respect is the bath complex traced in the area adjoining the Bagrat church, in Kutaisi. It was comprised of ten parts. Unlike the baths of Mtskheta and Dzalisa, it was designed rather to cater the public. The Bichvinta and v.Tsikhisdziri baths were also of the same purpose. Similar baths have been discovered in the villages of Urnisi and Shukhuti. The floor of the Shukhuti bath is adorned with mosaic, similarly to those of Dzalisa and Bichvinta. Archaeological excavations indicate that Roman-type baths were widespread in Georgia in the 2nd - 6thc., being fairly complex structures from the engineering-architectural standpoint.

The “Dedoplistgora” settlement site was discovered near the Mtkvari(Kura) river, at v. Aradeti, Kareli district. Here a 1st c. BC palace was excavated. Part of the artefacts found here evince closeness to Roman culture [see Furtwängler, A., Gagoshidze, I., 2008].

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A 2nd- 4th c. AD settlement, brought to light in the modern village of Dzalisa, Mtskheta district, is proof of the influence of Roman culture, being identified with the city of “*Dzalisa*”, mentioned in Ptolmy’s work (2nd century). The city held 50 ha, with a citadel in the north-western part. Excavations here have attested to traces of monumental buildings with tiled roofs, streets paved with brick slabs and squares, public, cultic and dwelling houses, mosaics, baths and sewage systems.

The archaeological materials brought to light on Georgian territory attest to the existence here of a local architectural school that was well-acquainted with the main principles of Greco-Roman architecture, developing them on local soil. This is seen clearly from a 4thc epitaph found at Mtskheta. It mentions the Mtskhetan “*principal artist-architect Aurelius Acholis*”. Even Strabo noted: “*Furthermore, the greater part of Iberia is so well built up in respect to cities and farmsteads that their roofs are tiled, and their houses as well as their market-places and other public buildings are constructed with architectural skill.*” (Strabo, XI, III, 1) (see The Loeb Classical Library, London, 1957).

From the 1st c. BC gems embedded in ornaments began to spread in Iberia and Colchis. Most of them were imported from Greco-Roman, Italic and Asia Minor artisan centers. At the same time, local workshops for the production of gems are likely to have existed, in whose manufacture there occur quite a few items done on the Roman pattern [Lortkipanidze, M., 1954-56]. Ornaments of various types hold a significant place among the items imported in the opening centuries of the new era. This clearly points to the participation of the population of Iberia and Colchis in international trade and in particular to the activity of the trade and artisan centers of the Roman world. Among the numerous foreign items bronze and silver vessels

of different purpose stand out – pitchers, pateras, ladles, inkstands [see Lordkipanidze, O., 1964; Machabeli, K., 1983].

In the 1st-2nd c. AD, south Italian cities were centers of the manufacture of such items, e.g. Capua. Such vessels are discovered fairly often on the territory of Iberia and Colchis, pointing to the import here of Italic production. These items were taken to Mtskheta, the capital of the kingdom and from there they found their way to various regions of the country. It is worth noting that, along with cities, villages too were involved in this, as attested to by the archaeological finds from Nichbisi, Zemokhandaki, Atotsi, Dighomi, Zemoavchala, Lilo, Zghuderi, etc. The participation of Iberia and Colchis in international trade is graphically illustrated by numismatic material as well. From the 1st c AD Roman *aurei* entered the country, which – along with Augustus *denarii* soon became the principal tender. Regular trade and economic relations with the outer world is evidenced by the fact that in Iberia and Colchis the coins of nearly all Roman emperors have been discovered, beginning with Nero down to Valerian [Dundua, G., Dundua, T., 2006; 110-122]. The active trade and economic contacts of the population with the Roman world appear to have been followed by cultural relations too. This is reflected well on the monuments of material culture of Roman period Iberia and Colchis.

Separate elements of Roman architecture began to spread on a wider scale from the 2nd c. AD. The spread of the Classical Roman architectural system is indicated by the capitals, cornices and the character of their decor. Some elements of the adornment of the rock-cut halls of Uplistsikhe, namely, the caisson treatment of the ceiling, which finds analogies in Roman architecture (see, e.g. Maxentius, Constantine's basilicas, Caracalla's *therme*). A new variety of buildings – baths – appear in the cities. Interest attaches also to some

changes in wall bricklaying that occurred in Roman architecture back in the 1st c. BC.

Representations made on glyptic and toreutic items, semantically reflective of Roman mythological themes, point to definite changes in the 1st - 3rd c. AD population of Iberia-Colchis. Particularly widespread are representations of Tyche and Fortuna, Fortuna-Isis, Minerva, Victoria, Apollo, Mars, Pluto, Mercury, Jupiter, Helios, Asclepius and Mithra, coexisting with local gods (e.g. Armazi, Gatsi, Gaim, Zaden). From the opening centuries of the new era Christianity spread in Iberia-Colchis. There was a bishopric at Pitiunt and a Christian commune in Sebastopolis, as attested to by a church and stele on the grave of a Christian Roman legionary, unearthed here. The stele bears the inscription: "*Christ powerful. Here lies Orestes, a brave legionary, please come.*" Christianity appears to have spread to Gonio. Apsarus, as attested to by the discovery here of fingerrings with Christian symbols. Christianity appears to have spread intensively from the Roman Asia Minor provinces to Iberia as well, as evidenced by numerous artefacts. Apart from Colchis early Christian symbolism is attested to in the necropolis discovered in the Mtkvari and Aragvi valleys. After the aggrandizement of Sassanian Iran, Rome became the only ally of the Iberian kingdom in its struggle with the Sassanid state, which was probably instrumental in the proclamation of Christianity as the state religion in Iberia. This meant the ultimate siding of the Iberian kingdom with the Romans.

As a result of the stationing of Roman military units in littoral Colchis, this region became actively involved in the system of the Roman world. This process was primarily reflected in the diffusion of Roman manufacture. In particular, new products began to arrive in coastal Colchis from various centers of the Roman world: Italic fibulae, amphoras, red-gloss pottery, metal and glass wares characteristic of the entire Roman world. Similar products found their

way into Central Europe [see Kropotkin, V., 1970]. In the 2nd - 3rd c AD more import from the Roman world is attested to at the Black Sea strongholds: Pitiunt (Bichvinta), Sebastopolis (Sokhumi), Apsarus (Gonio), Phasis (Poti).

In the 2nd - 3rd c. AD the manufacture of the coastal centers of the Roman provinces of Asia Minor entered the Georgian littoral centers intensively. For example, amphoras of Sinopean provenance are attested to in large numbers at the city sites of Pitiunt, Phasis and Sebastopolis. The intensity of Sinopean import is suggested also by monetarii. In the cited period the littoral centers had loose contacts with Trapezus as well, as confirmed by numismatic material. Among the imported items found at the city sites glassware of Roman provinces is prominent. The bulk of metalware and adornments also came from the eastern provinces of Rome. For example, most items of the Tsikhisdziri and Gonio hoards, by their art-and-style features, fall within the circle of culture of Roman provinces [Inaishvili, N., 1993; Apakidze, A., 1947, 128; Lordkipanidze, O., Mikeladze, T., Khakhutaishvili, D., 1980]. The 3rd - 4th c. BC is characterized by a fresh flood of Roman manufacture. Interest attaches to the greenish incense burners brought to light at the cemetery of the Bichvinta city site, made in the glassworks of Cologne. West-Georgian archaeological material features such interesting specimens of Roman manufacture as gold and silver *falerae* – awards. e.g. an iron dagger with a gem on the hilt, found in burial 3 of Kldeeti; a silver armband with an image of Tyche-Fortuna, discovered in burial 345 of Bichvinta; a gold casing from Gonio. *Falerae* basically involved: fingerrings with gems, buckles, bracelets, daggers, cups, drinking-vessels, etc. In the imperial period *falerae* were awarded not only to individual legionaries and military units but mercenary fighters and local governors of pro-Roman orientation as well. Coins of Augustus, Antoninus Pius and Marcus Aurelius were unearthed in Kldeeti

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burials [Lomtadze, G., 1957]. Among the diverse archaeological material found on the territory of the Gonio-Apsarus city site the statuette of Serapis is of interest. From the 1st c. AD the cult of Serapis was popular in the entire Roman Empire, especially in Gaul, Spain, Dacia.

The peoples settled along the entire frontier perimeter of the Roman Empire were traditionally governed by local kings, preserving independence. Rome spared no diplomatic effort to establish friendly relations with these rulers, for the successes of the Empire were occasionally dependent on them. For their part, Roman military units played a certain stabilizing role in their surrounding world. In addition, separate elements of Roman culture spread in hinterland Colchis through the Romans.

The contingent of the Roman military units on the Colchian Black Sea littoral largely consisted of warriors from Greek and Asia Minor provinces and locals. This is evidenced by the inscriptions found at the city sites of Sebastopolis and Pitiunt. It is significant that a whole number of components of the material culture of the city-fortresses of the eastern Black Sea coast are identical with the culture of Roman Asia Minor. The bulk of Roman import was designed for supplying Roman garrisons. Logistic provision of these garrisons was effected from Trapezus, the latter being the chief base of the Roman Black Sea navy. Its role was especially enhanced after the Samosata-Satala-Trapezus highway was built in Domitian's time.

Romanization or the spread of elements of Roman culture in the eastern Black Sea region occurred in a specific way. Here the Romans found demographically fairly dense settlements. Furthermore, here at the time of Roman presence, as reported by Greco-Roman authors (Ptolemy, Arrian, Procopius) local indigenous population lived at coastal centers as well. From the mid - 1st c. AD, following the deployment of Roman garrisons, business contacts were

gradually established with the locals. The local indigenous population and their rulers must have been on loyal terms with the administration of Roman city-fortresses. This union was based on principles of mutual cooperation and mutual benefit. The native population constituted a guarantee of the economic and political stability of the city-fortresses, being the source of supplementing the labor force to the latter, as well as the source of supply with farming produce. The latter gave an impetus to the manufacture of local pottery, represented abundantly on the territory of Pitiunt, Sebastopolis and Apsarus. The native population had to perform certain military duties as well, as is evident from Arrian's treatise "Against the Alans"; "*Let the allied troops be deployed next to the hoplites, which are... the Trapezuntines, Colchians and Rize spearmen...*" (Arrian, *Tactics*, 7).

Roman type hydraulic solution used in the construction of fortifications, lay and cultic structures, spread in the Colchian littoral from the 3rd c. AD and from the 4th c in the hinterland areas. From the same period, Roman type flattish square, fired bricks and circular ceramic slabs came into use – absolutely unknown in construction in the previous period. Square bricks were used in building the corners of structures. Thus, e.g. braces of double and triple brick masonry are evidenced in the 4th c fortifications of Tsebelda, Nokalakevi, Kutaisi, Tsikhisdziri. The city-fortresses of the eastern Roman provinces were built of mixed masonry of bricks and stones. We find analogous masonry at city Sites of the northern Black Sea area: Olbia, Tir, Khersonesus. As to the square ceramic slabs, they were used for laying floors.

Roman influence is clearly visible in ceramic manufacture, primarily reflected in the 2nd - 4th c. One group of *montarii* also belongs to the category of clayware made under the influence of Roman pottery. The latter vessels differ from their Roman counterparts in clay composition. Ceramic handled lamps with a tube

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for the wick also belong to local imitations, made of local clay. Here imitations of jugs widespread throughout the Roman world were also made. Traditional varieties of local pottery coexisted along with imitations of Roman ceramics, quantitatively exceeding their imported counterparts.

Besides ceramic manufacture, the influence of Roman culture is seen in another sphere of artisanship. In connection with the wide spread of Roman type bow-shaped pins in the eastern Black Sea area from the 1stc. AD and the great demand for them, from the 3rdc. the so-called two-piece, and cruciform of roman culture were made locally from the 3rd c. The influence of Roman culture is noticeable in some varieties of arms as well. In particular, Roman type, square *scutum* shields, *gladium* type daggers, etc have been attested [see Gamkrelidze, G., 2002:39]. Along with the continuation and preservation of traditions of goldsmithery, a new, so-called cloisonné polychrome style spread in the jeweler's art of Georgia. Brilliant specimens of Georgian goldsmithery of the Roman period are created in this style: fingerrings adorned with colored stones, buckles, pendants, fibulae, etc from Gonio, Kldeeti, Ureki, Tagiloni, Zghuderi and Mtskheta. The urbanistic character of the cities of this period Iberia and Colchis, the architecture and principles of planning obeyed the general laws of city building that were accepted generally in the Classical world and Romanized East.

Thus, separate elements of Roman civilization appear to have occurred more or less intensively in the lowland and mountain regions of Georgia. These impulses are especially noticeable in the art of construction, ceramic production and in a whole number of components of material culture. In the mountain regions local traditions were very firm; hence radiation of Roman culture reached these regions with difficulty. Instead, the influence of Roman - Early Byzantine culture is felt clearly in the coastal zone – in the city

fortresses. This is graphically illustrated by the fortresses built by the technique of *opus mixtum*.

In terms of cultural as well as socio-economic development the society of the plain of Iberia and Colchis was at a higher level than that of the mountain zone. Generally speaking, in the eastern Black Sea area we do not find such features that are characteristic of countries of the West European provinces of the Roman Empire (e.g. Germany, Britain, Gaul) [Golubtcsova,E. (ed.), 1985:167-302]. Drastic Romanization of the native population and the rise of the so-called *complex culture* – mass spread of artisan products made in the Roman world – the impact here of Roman culture, as well as in the Eastern provinces of the empire appears to have been rather superficial here. The process of Romanization in early Georgia took a peculiar, different course. Roman-European type culture did not emerge here, as the roots and influence of the so-called Eastern-Hellenistic culture were strong here.

By its historical destiny, Eastern Anatolia was for centuries closely linked to the Transcaucasian countries. A study of the archeological sites, written and epigraphic evidence – facts confirming the Romanization influence on Iberia and Colchis – shows that the achievements of Roman culture were manifested most graphically in the economy. Within a short period of the advent of the Romans here definite changes are primarily manifested in Iberia and Colchis in the sphere of trade. Following the cessation of hostilities in Iberia and Colchis by the Romans, the establishment of trade and economic contacts was facilitated by the favorable geopolitical situation of Transcaucasia in regard to the Classical world. This is clearly illustrated by the trade routes from the Classical world to countries of the Iranian world running through the territory of Iberia and Colchis. The use of these roads is attested to by archeological – numismatic discoveries. In the period of Romanization of Iberia and

Colchis the ratio of foreign trade shows an increase, commodity production expands, foreign coins circulate in large numbers, and trade and artisan centers develop – primarily in the Roman fortified cities in the Black Sea region. Subsequently the influence of Roman culture on Iberia and Colchis is manifested clearer in various fields of local life, in particular in architecture, manufacture of pottery, various lines of artisanship. These processes acquire a more intensive character from 2nd c. AD.

The impact of Roman culture became especially strong in Iberia and Colchis in the 2nd - 4th c. AD. As to the path of spread of Roman culture, it must have occurred from the sea-littoral and Anatolia. Later, the influence of Roman-Early-Byzantine culture found more reflection in architecture. In particular the so-called Roman concrete, the *opus mixtum* masonry of the walls, rounded arches, peculiar capitals, contacts, the impact of the process of Romanization was felt more in the coastal cities and in Mtskheta, the political centre of the Iberian kingdom. Earlier, the diffusion of Hellenistic culture and its technical achievements in Colchis paved the way for the advent of the Romans in the Caucasus and the start of Romanization.

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Illustration:

PL 1- The map of the Archaeological points in the Iberia-Colchis in 1st c. BC. – 4nd c. AD.

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**SCHEME OF A MODEL OF THE HISTORICAL
DEVELOPMENT OF SOCIETY**

(Bio-geo-environment and Socio-environment)

In the process of historical development of society the development of the socio-environment – the state of a particular society – depends on the bio-geo-environment (generally, the geographical environment). The bio-geo-environment was of primary importance in the development of one or another civilization (e.g. of Mesopotamia, the Nile, the Hwang Ho, the Ganges, the Mediterranean, the American). According to the biblical model of the origin of the world, God first created the bio-geo-environment, and the Man, the creator of the socio-environment (see Genesis 1-26). It was Hippocrates and Aristotle who first focused attention on the determining role of the bio-geo-environment in the development of society. Hippocrates was the first to consider the climate – one of the components of the bio-geo-environment – to be the determinant factor of the physiognomic and psychic system of humans and peoples. The views of Hippocrates were shared by Plato, Aristotle, Xenophon, Polybius, Strabo, Ptolemy, Pomponius Mela, and other authors of the Classical period. In his work *Politeia*, Aristotle expanded Hippocrates' views on the impact of climate on the development of society. He linked it to the forms of the management of society. He noted that monarchy was characteristic of lowland, even-relief countries, and democracy for mountainous ones.

According to Ibn-Kaldun, a medieval author, the world falls into seven zones in terms of climatic conditions. In his view, the fourth and fifth zones are characterized by temperate climate. The Mediterranean countries are situated in these zones. He considers the peoples of the zones with such climate to be the creators of highly civilized countries. He believes that the people of countries of drastically cold and hot climate zones stand out for low social development. Similarly to Kaldun, Jean Boden too divided the world into climatic zones: cold climate polar parts, hot climate equatorial zone and the temperate climate area lying between them. Peoples

inhabiting the latter area are distinguished for their even character and physical data. Peoples situated here, in his view, created law-governed states. Charles Louis Montesquier developed further the views of his predecessors on the leading role of the bio-geo-environment, presenting it in a harmonious system. According to him, the interaction of man and the bio-geo-environment determines the form of political government. A notable promoter of the ideas of geographism was the historian Henry Thomas Buckle in whose view, what seems to us fortuitous in history is in reality subject to the regularity of nature. Human activity is always motivated and has appropriate causes. If we ascertain these causes, we shall be able to predict historical processes. Buckle believed that the process of historical development was the arena of interaction of the environment and man. He points out that climate, soil, food act jointly, determining the development of society. He held that the development of civilization is related to the state of the bio-geo-environment, as well as on the people and its intelligence and experience, enabling it to creatively internalize the opportunities offered by the environment. The sociologist Lev Mechnikov was an original representative of geographism. In his view, rivers, seas and oceans played a primary role in the development of civilization. He believes that world history underwent three stages of development: I- The period of rivers, when civilizations originated on river banks (e. g. the Tigris and Euphrates, Nile, Ganges, Indus, Huang Ho, Yangtze valleys). Stage II – sea period, when they moved from the river banks to seashores, e. g. the Mediterranean and Black Seas (e. g. Genoa, Venice, Constantinople, Alexandria, and so on). Stage III began in 1492 with the discovery of the American continent. He calls this the ocean period, followed by the movement of the civilizations from the inner seas to the shores of oceans: London, Lisbon, Amsterdam, New York, etc.

Friedrich Ratzell, the founder of geopolitics, was a prominent representative of geographism. Ratzell considers the principal task of anthropogeography the determination of the impact of the environment on the people, their physiology and mentality. According to him, peoples, countries should be considered as bioorganisms in the

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process of development. Similar culture develops in countries of similar relief and climate. Ratzell maintains that in historical research the climate, soil and relief should be taken into account for they occupy a leading place among the driving factors of the development of history. The geopoliticians presented the scheme of the development of a state as a biological organism. The process of the development of society was conceptualized in a different way by Paul Vidal de la Blache. According to him, the geographical environment offers opportunities, and it depends on the society and its intelligence to what extent it will use these opportunities. The development of anthropogeographical viewers resulted in the emergence of a new trend – that of environmentalism. The followers of the latter line further developed the ideas of geographical determinism and, using the statistical-typological method, gave it the shape of a more harmonious system.

Thus, bio-geo-environment is the basic determiner of social development. It occupied a leading place in the birth and development of ancient civilizations, in different historical periods. Today too it plays a major role in the development of society. It should be noted also that the impact of the bio-geo-environment on the socium varies according to the chronological alternation of epochs. The specificity of bio-geo-environment determines the economic and production, trade and economic, military and strategic, spiritual and cultural, territorial and state life of a concrete society. Notably enough, the ethnogeny of different nations occurs in a particular bio-geo-environment, which subsequently shapes their characteristic general national traits and features. Generally, I share these views and try to add several more to the above factors, representing them diagrammatically (schematically) in a system of definite hierarchic relations.

In interpreting (explaining) the process of historical development the truth should be sought in the explanation of the correlational interaction of two basic factors – those of the bio-geo-environment and socio-environment. Of these factors the latter cannot develop without the former, while the former exists without the latter. The

following are the components of the bio-geo-environment: barisphere, limnosphere, hydrosphere, biosphere, atmosphere, cosmo-astro space, motion of the planet and the climate resulting from these, relief, soil, minerals, river, lake, sea, flora, fauna, meteorites. Change of one of the component parts of the bio-geo-environment causes the change of other parts, which is subsequently reflected in the socio-environment. The model of historical relations is discussed in a joint system of relations (see my scheme of the historical development of society, fig. I). The scheme is graphically circular, formed of zones developed from the inner circle, in the core of the circle: №1, while №2 is the socio-environment – arranged round the circle in the form of zones. In the socio-environment is the zone A, with factors of the development of man or the individual, and zone B, with factors of the development of the society formed of individuals. The given scheme is subject to development: component-factors may be added to the zones, increasing the number or classification of zones. The factors presented in the sectors follow, within the limits of possibility, from one another. The circular zones of the scheme are intersected (crossed) by four “processes” that permanently accompany and govern the historical development. These processes are: biochemical, genetic, chronological and *sacranooous*.

The biochemical process has been permanently at work in the bio-geo-environment through chemical means – from the beginning to the present day. This is a process in which organisms move from one state to another, being involved in biochemical exchange (circulation). The process occurs through fermentation. The bio-geo-chemical process acts on humans as well. The intake of food (the gastricaloric factor), life as a result taking food, growth, aging, death and interment.

The genetic process is the natural property of all organisms, ensuring the passing of the parents’ properties to the offspring. Each present-day human is the result of an unbroken genetic process from the beginning to the present. It has gone through the entire sequence of historical development. In this respect the role of royal dynasties or

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representatives of aristocratic families along the developmental path of one or another country is noteworthy.

The chronological process is a continuous sequence of events, facts in the overall development of history. The events are counted down from the present to an earlier happening. The basic, primary measure of this process is astronomic twenty-four hours (second, minute, hour, day, week, month, year, century, etc.). Unless we know the continuous arrangements of events according to the chronologic process, we shall find it hard to understand the inner nature of the bio-geochemical and genetic processes. For example, a human was born, grew up, and died (he/she is involved in biochemical metabolism); or a state was formed, it developed and was destroyed as a result of an invasion of alien tribes. All this occurs, respectively in a concrete span of the chronological process and in a definite sequence.

In my view, *sacranooous* is a unity of supernatural, divine power and human mind, permanently accompanying the process of historical development. The supernatural powers that, along with the mind of a chosen person, exert a definite influence on the development of society. *Sacranooous* acts in the bio-geo-environment and socio-environment, linking them. I believe that the human mind alone is incapable of gaining an insight into internal laws of nature. Hence superpower force also acts in him / her, through the mind of definitely chosen people exerts an intuitional-intellectual influence on the development of society. In this respect, I share, to a certain extent, V. Vernadski's conception of the transition of the biosphere to *noous sphere*.

The building of the socio-environment begins with the origin of *Homo sapiens* and the evolution of its interaction with the bio-geo-environment. At the first stage it is characterized rather by factors of the development of an individual. In particular, the human physiological, psychoneurological, gastrocaloric, instinctive-intuitional, propagation-demographical and magic-mythical system. The life of a human individual is basic implementation of biological and social needs and potentialities.

The following zones represented in the scheme are characterized by common features of social development: economic and productive, trade and communications, military-strategic, religious, spiritual-cultural, territorial and state, foreign factor, and so on; a higher hierarchy involves: power, economic, information, scientific and technical, geopolitical, ideological, etc. These are those leading factors of the socio-environment that are transformed by the team efforts of humans from the bio-geo-environment and are used for the progress of society. For example, dwelling, defensive and cultic structures, roads, hydrostructures (irrigation systems, water storages); villages, cities, various works, etc. In a word, everything created by human groups or society with their intelligence is the product of the socio-environment.

In the lower side of my diagram the scheme of the inception and development of civilizations is presented. The scheme is a single large circle in which *sacranous* (Sn), biogeochemical (B), genetic (G) and chronological processes occur. Represented in this circle are four partially overlapping small circles: bio-geo-environment (B), socio-environment(S), humans (Hs), as a concept of reasoning intelligence, and human being (Hb) as a biological concept. In my view, the meeting of all the overlapping above-listed components creates regions of primary inception and ascending development of civilizations (CIV). According to the given scheme a general formula can be also derived according to which, if we have statistical data, we can calculate the geographical areas of the predominant inception of civilization. A method has to be worked out for determining the intensity and size by factors. The proposed model is by no means flawless, and calls for further refinement (for details, see Gamkrelidze, G. Historical and Topo-archaeological Researches, *Published by Georgian Academy of Sciences - "Metsniereba"*, Tbilisi, 1993, ISBN5520014833, (in Georgian), pp. 3-45).

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**ON THE INFLUENCE OF BIO-GEO-ENVIRONMENT AND
EXTERNAL FACTOR ON THE PROCESS OF THE COLCHIS
HISTORY DEVELOPMENT**

Ancestors of the Georgians have lived on the territory of contemporary Georgia from the earliest times. Complex process of historical development of Georgia has been proceeding here, on this territory, in this bio-geo-environment for millennia. One of the most important regions of ancient Georgia was Colchis (West Georgia). It is generally admitted, that the ancient world-wide famous country of Colchis, to which the Argonauts had sailed, as the wellknown Greek myth says, was located right on the East coast of the Black Sea, i.e. on the territory of contemporary West Georgia. The valley of the Rioni river, which is often mentioned in ancient Greek and Roman literary sources as Phasis, is situated in Central Colchis. The main process of development of Colchis was going on in the valley of Phasis.

The role of bio-geo-environment (*resp.* of geographical habitat) in the historical development of the society is exceptionally important because the rise and the development of the social environment and the socium, the condition of any region, nation or state depends on bio-geo-environment. While explaining the process of historical development, we have to search for the truth within the corelated interactions of two main factors – bio-geo and social habitats. The latter is unable either to appear, or to develop further by itself, while the former exists independently. Component members of bio-geo-environment are: barysphere, limnesphere, hydrosphere, biosphere, atmosphere, astro spheres, movement of planets and derived from them: a – climat, relief, soil, minerals, rivers, lakes, seas and human; b – flora, fauna, meteorites. Change of any of these members provoke the same process within the rest of them that, in its turn, has an effect on the social environment. While dealing with the process of historical

development, we have placed the bio-geo-environment at the head of the hierarchy just mentioned. In the interaction with them a human creates his social environment and further historical development of this, or that region, society, nation and state depends on them [see Gamkrelidze, G. Historical and Topoarchaeological Researches, *Published for Georgian Academy of Sciences*, 1993, Tbilisi, ISBN, 5520014833., (in Georgian)].

Bio-geo-environment is a basis for the historical development of any community, region or country. Based on the study of written and archaeological sources and on the physical and geographical data one can say, that Colchis might have held highly developed position in terms of administrative and economic development. As archaeological discoveries prove, hills, rises, canyons and flatlands provided good conditions for habitation.

Colchis is bounded on the north by the Larger Caucasus range, on the south – by Lesser Caucasus, on the east – by the Likhi range and on the west – by the sea. Nature has poured upon Colchis fertile valleys and green pastures. Lots of rivers and subtropical climate facilitated early development of agriculture. In terms of geographical environment the Kolkheti lowland of Colchis and foothills surrounding it represent unique natural region. It is possible to develop highly intensive agricultural production there. The local climate allows to cultivate various food crops and gather good harvests. The Kolkheti Lowland climate is humid subtropical. This region is most of all affected by the Black Sea. That's why winter is not very cold there and summer is relatively cool. The length of vegetative period provides possibility for gathering several harvests per year. Coastal part of the Kolkheti Lowland is covered with grassy swamps, boggy and liana forests with evergreen forest covers. Interesting information about natural and geographic characteristics of the river of Phasis (Rioni) basin gives Hippocrates in his work "*On*

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Air, Waters and Places". He describes the influence of climatic, physical and geographic conditions of the place on its inhabitants.

Colchis is rich in various ores. Copper has been excavated since early times there playing leading part in the development of copper and bronze metallurgy. Iron, tin, gold, cornelian, antimony, etc. have been excavated there as well. Such is the geographical environment of Colchis, which has cardinally affected the passage of the ancient Colchis history. The geographical environment, geo-political situation and economic-administrative activity created preconditions for the emergence of the State of Colchis on the territory of West Georgia at the end of the 6th century B.C. (with its center in Rioni Valley)

External political factor has profoundly influenced historical development of Colchis. Its part is evident in the relationships with Greece, Iberia, Pontus and Rome. Greek colonization is one of the external factors for Colchis. In our opinion initially the Greek settlements were trade colonies founded in a country rich in natural resources. Greek colonization mainly had constructive influence on the development of the country. The Black Sea coastal part of Colchis was involved in the trade relationship of Colchis with the external world, which was caused by the existence of trade transit main (Phasis) and sea communications. Several buffer cities such as Dioskurias, Gyenos, Phasis, etc. appeared between the Classical countries and Colchis starting from the end of 4th century B .C. while internal part of Colchis was politically and economically affected by the Iberian Kingdom. Sceptuchyas of Sairkhe, Kutaisi, Nokalakevi, Vani were under the influence of Iberian Kingdom (see Strabo, XI, II,18).

Starting from the 2nd century B.C. Pontus' king Mithridates VI Eupator (a new external political factor) appeared on the political horizon of Colchis. He took in hand the coastal cities. The politics of the Iberian Kingdom towards the Pontic Kingdom was inconstant (see

the Georgian written sources and the newest archaeological materials). Between the kings of Pontus and Iberia there was a kind of agreement, in accordance with which they divided Colchis into the spheres of influence (Memnon, 30). At the end of the third war between Rome and Pontic Kingdom Mithradates chased by Pompeius escaped through the mountains to Colchis (Strabo, XII, III, 28). On his way he destroyed the city of Vani and settlements in the Rioni Valley. Starting from about the 3rd century B.C. the middle stream of Rioni was brought under the influence of Iberian Kingdom.

After the defeat of Mithradates VI Eupator Colchis became subject to the invasion of Pompeius (city of Vani was destroyed). Pompeius appointed Aristarchus as a ruler of Colchis. Internal Colchis seems to maintain a kind of independence. Initially Rome relied upon the local government. Colchis was divided into Sceptuchyas (Strabo, XI, II, 18). It was not turned into a Roman province, because the Romans were forced to take into consideration local geopolitical conditions. Historical sources say nothing whether Pompeius had left any part of his troops in Colchis. After Aristarchus West Colchis was invaded by Pharnaces. He needed that part of Colchis as a strategic communication for the forthcoming battles in the South.

West Colchis had special strategic and economic importance for Pharnaces and Rome. Successful fight for the dominance in Black Sea North Coast and in the east would have been impossible without complete influence on the Colchian Black Sea coast. Some considerations make us suppose, that only West Colchis was subject to the political influence of Rome.

As a result of our work we can make the following conclusions: Bio-geo-environment of Colchis has cardinally affected the passage of the ancient history of Colchis. Bio-geo-environment has mainly created preconditions for the emergence of a developed socio-environment on the territory of West Georgia. The State of Colchis

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with the center in the Rioni valley was founded there at the end of the 6th century B.C. Political centre has initially been there as well.

In accordance with the written and archaeological sources and the physical and geographical data Colchis held economically developed position in the period in question. Natural relief of Colchis was successfully used for the erection of dwellings and fortifications. In the Hellenistic period the Rioni valley (Phasis) seems to be main transit and trade route.

Greek colonization mainly had constructive influence on the development of the country. Later on Colchian coast joined the external relationship of ancient Colchis. Starting from the end of the 4th century B.C. between the Classical countries and Colchis appeared several buffer cities – Dioskurias, Gyenos, Phasis. Internal part of Colchis was influenced politically and economically by Iberian Kingdom. Classical economic and cultural innovations were mainly spread from the coastal cities.

The appearance of Mithradates VI Eupator, who took in hand coastal cities, turned out to be destructive for Colchis. At the end of the third war between Rome and Pontus Mithradates chased by Pompeius escaped through the mountains to Colchis. On his way he destroyed the city of Vani.

Rome did not manage to gain foothold in the Internal Colchis, the coastal cities became subject to the influence of Rome and then of Byzantine. The coastal Colchis was of special importance in terms of strategic and economic importance for Pharnaces and Rome. Successful fight for the dominance in Black Sea North Coast and in the East would have been impossible without complete influence on the Colchian Black Sea coast.

PROBLEMS AND PROSPECTS OF GEORGIA'S CLASSICAL AND EARLY MEDIEVAL ARCHAEOLOGY

The first scientific archaeological excavation in Georgia was carried out in 1852 on the Classical and Early Medieval city site of Uplistsikhe, within some fifteen kilometers of Gori. Former city sites, frequently referred to in Georgian and Greek written sources, have to date been studied archaeologically, namely: Mtskheta-Armaztsikhe, Nastakisi, Uplistsikhe, Dzalisi, Sarkine and others. To the same period belong the sites: Samadlo, Tsikhiagora, Vani, Esheri, Kobuleti-Pichvnari, Sairkhe, Sakorkio, Sukhumi-Dioscurias, Ochamchire, etc. Most of these archaeological sites bear features characteristic of urbanism, in particular, defensive walls, acropolis, public and cultic buildings with tile roofs and built of cut stone, and baths. The artefacts coming from the above-mentioned archaeological sites proved to be the principal source for the study of scholarly problems of paramount importance. Early medieval archaeological sites have also been studied: in Tbilisi, Rustavi, Ujarna, Vardtsikhe, Zhinvali, v. Kazreti, v. Mtisdziri (Vani district), Balich, Dmanisi, Akhalkalaki (Javakheti district), Gavazi, Telavi, Poti (near Lake Paliastomi), etc.

Credit for the well-known successes of one of the branches of modern Kartvelology, i.e. Georgian archaeology "in particular" of Classical and Early Middle Ages, goes to all generations of Georgian archaeologists. Graphic evidence of these successes is the several thousand scholarly papers, books and monographs in Georgian, English and Russian, published by Georgian archaeologists.

Taking into consideration the demands set by the present development of science, in conditions of cooperation with scholarly institutions of this branch in other advanced countries, novel scholarly approaches should be worked out. Complex study of individual archaeological artifacts should continue, in particular, of pottery, gold

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und silver ornaments, specimens of toreutics, glassware, arms, building materials and structures, glyptic, numismatic and other specimens. Research into the archaeology of Classical and Early Medieval archaeology is closely linked with historical written source study.

The main aim and subject of research of the collaborators of the Institute of Archaeology working in Classical and Early Middle Ages is:

- 1) Statistical-typological classification of Classical and Early Medieval archaeological sites brought to light on Georgian territory.
- 2) The biogeoenvironment (flora, fauna, climate, sea transgression, etc.) in Classical and Early Middle Ages according to archaeological data.
- 3) Genesis of polity - questions of the formation and development of statehood on Georgian territory according to archaeological data.
- 4) Research into the social stratification on Georgian territory in the Classical and Early Medieval periods according to archaeological data.
- 5) Mapping of Georgia's Classical and Early Medieval archaeological sites.
- 6) Analyses of the structure and type of burials, as well as burial complexes; research into the burial customs and rites according to Classical and Early Medieval archaeological data.
- 7) Study of problems of genesis of urbanism.
- 8) Research into Classical and Early Medieval Georgia's political and economic structures from the archaeological standpoint.
- 9) Researches into artisan manufacture; metal, ceramic, glass, fabrics and leather workshops.
- 10) Research into the character of trade: roads, bridges, passes, sea way and river routes, transit main roads; transport means (land, sea, river, etc.).

- 11)** Study of circulation of coins and trade.
- 12)** Demographic situation and study of the migration of the population according to archaeological data.
- 13)** Character and type of settlements. Morphology of structures and planning peculiarities.
- 14)** Study of the building materials (stone, wood, adobe, brick, tile) of settlements and the technology of construction.
- 15)** Study of the planning and architecture of Classical and Early Medieval farming implements.
- 16)** Study of minor plastics.
- 17)** Typological study of Classical and Early Medieval local and foreign containers (amphorae).
- 18)** Research into Classical toreutics.
- 19)** Study of specimens of Classical terracottas.
- 20)** Study of black-glazed and red-glazed pottery.
- 21)** Study of glyptic data.
- 22)** Study of ornaments.
- 23)** Research into Iberian-Colchian relations with the Classical and Iranian worlds (Greek, Achaemenid, Pontic, Bosphoran, Albanian, Parthian, Roman, Sasanian, etc.). Study of Classical and medieval foreign wares, discovered in Georgia.
- 24)** Iberia and Colchis in the system of Near Eastern and Caucasian archaeological cultures.
- 25)** Study of irrigation systems.
- 26)** Research of Early Medieval Georgia's relations with the outer world (Byzantium, Iran, the Near East, the Northern Black Sea area, Europe).
- 27)** Archaeological study of armament and fortification works.
- 28)** Genesis of Christian culture in Georgia according to archaeological data.
- 29)** Juxtaposition of written sources and archaeological data as exemplified

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by Georgian archaeological material.

30) Research into sacred structures and artifacts in Classical Georgia.

Cardinal problems of Georgian archaeology of the cited period are under study at the Classical and Middle Ages Department mainly according to the topics listed above, as well as of other questions. Using a definite questionnaire, the entire archaeological data are prepared for statistical-typological and systemic-structural analysis. This facilitates subsequent solution of the principal aim, i.e. reconstruction of the historical-cultural regularities reflected in the material data.

The Institute's archaeological expeditions conduct field-archaeological studies throughout the territory of Georgia, in order to discover and study new archaeological sites - settlements, fortification and cultic structures, burial grounds, seats of metallurgical and ceramic manufacture, unique specimens of art. Special attention is given to field and salvage work on new construction sites.

The scientific council of the O. Lordkipanidze Centre of Archaeology defines the scientific objectives of the institution. The scientific workers of the Classical and Middle Ages Department discuss scientific-research programmes; programmes of field-archaeological studies, questions of recommending the publication of scientific papers; it issues a serial journal "Iberia-Colchis" (archaeological historical studies of Classical and Medieval Georgia); programmes and projects to be submitted to state, foreign and other foundations; plans for joint scientific-research work with scientific institutions, and soon.

Funds for the expeditionary work of the Department should be attracted from state, non-governmental and foreign foundations. A source for financing scientific studies may come from the state budget, funds for financing concrete projects and programmes; revenues from work done on contractual basis; grants obtained from

various foundations for concrete projects; funds accruing from publishing (including popular-scientific education), and so on.

Thus, as a result of a scientific and structural reform at the O. Lordkipanidze Centre conditions must be created at the Classical and Middle Ages Department for effective activation of the existing scientific potential. Generation of new scientific ideas, regular contacts with progressive scientific centers of the world, timely implementation of the modern innovations will maximally contribute to the realization of the tasks set.

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**INFORMATION ABOUT THE TOPOARCHAEOLOGICAL
DICTIONARY OF “*Kartlis Tskhovreba*”**

The long and peculiar process of the historical-cultural development of the Georgians on Georgian territory and their relationship with other peoples continued for millennia. Modern Georgia has taken the road of strengthening her statehood and joining the Euro-Atlantic unity. Knowledge and experience is one of the guarantees of the stability and progress. Hence the study and conceptualization of historical experience acquires priority significance. Without scientific conceptualization of the history of Georgia cognition of the present and better foresight of the future are inconceivable. Our ancestors were well aware of this and back in the Middle Ages they compiled the “*Kartlis Tskhovreba*” or the “History of Georgia” which, along with the Bible, translated into Georgian at an early date, and Rustaveli’s “The Man in the Panther Skin” constituted the cornerstone of Georgian culture. It is a most important written source for the study of the ancient and medieval Georgian history.

This gave rise to the idea of creating a topoarchaeological dictionary – an encyclopedic reference book – of the *Kartlis Tskhovreba*. This dictionary will shed more light on the real-tangible appearance of the geographical points referred to in the *Kartlis Tskhovreba* and will determine their place in Georgian history and material culture.

Topoarchaeology is a direction of scientific research at the crossing of various branches of historical science, involving a synthetic-systemic study of archaeology, historical geography, place names and written sources. The dictionary has been compiled precisely from this angle. Simon Qaukhchishvili’s academic edition of *Kartlis Tskhovreba* was taken as the basis, for it takes into account all the old copies. Vakhushti Bagrationi’s “Description of the Kingdom of

Georgia” has also been used. This monumental work mentions up to 650 points: cities, towns, villages, hamlets, monasteries, fortresses, etc (e. g. Mtskheta, Sarkine, Uplistsikhe, Gremi, Akhaltsikhe, Rustavi, Dzalisa, and so on). Part of them continues to exist to the present day, while part were destroyed through the vicissitudes of time. Our purpose was to create a reference containing comprehensive archaeological and historical-source study done at modern standards on the points mentioned in the *Kartlis Tskhovreba*. Part of these points have been studied archaeologically. However, in many cases this information is not readily accessible to the broad readership interested in the past of Georgia.

In the proposed dictionary already familiar and newly discovered archaeological, historical, historico-geographical and other type of material is brought together on each locality referred to in “*Kartlis Tskhovreba*” and as a result of a complex study, a scholarly paper containing exhaustive information on each city, village or fortress has been written, using a unified template.

In working on the Dictionary use was made of the historico-comparative and statistic-typological method of study of archaeological artefacts. In studying each site (city, village, fortress, etc.) the following data were given: 1) both old and new designations; 2) list of the written sources in which these points are mentioned; 3) the location of the sites; 4) their description and comments on the archaeological artefacts; 5) brief history of study and its findings; the present status of the study of the site; 6) comprehensive bibliography. The topoarchaeological study of “*Kartlis Tskhovreba*” has resulted in the compilation of a unique reference type work of encyclopedic character, arranged alphabetically. It will be of help to archaeologists, historians and all interested readers. The information on each place name, mentioned in “*Kartslis Tskhovreba*”, brought together in the Dictionary, will become available to the public.

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In the Classical period political hegemony on Georgian territory was gained by the kingdoms of Colchis and Iberia, on the site and basis of these kingdoms a single Georgian state – Georgia – was formed. In the present Dictionary the principal context of the cultural-historical development of early Georgia is given on the basis of the available written sources and new archaeological material.

Should funding become available, all historical points: GPS coordinates, topographical maps and photos of archaeological material could be entered in the Dictionary. Also in case of financing, the translation of the Dictionary into English and its issuing is envisaged in the future. The electronic version of the Dictionary could be placed on the Internet supplied with an electronic search system.

This vast work can naturally not be exempt from certain flaws due to subjective or objective causes. Unfortunately owing to lack of data, information is not evenly presented in all the articles. We hope that the favourably disposed reader will pardon us and will provide business-like notes which will be taken into account in future revised publications.

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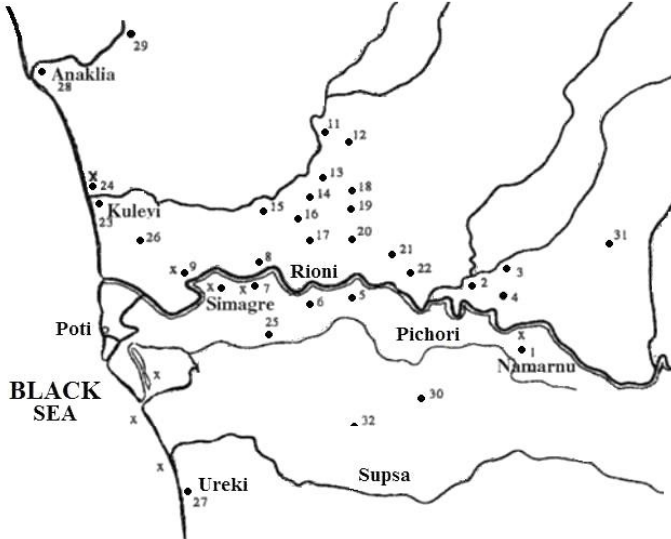
Abbreviations:

- აკც** – არქეოლოგიური კვლევის ცენტრი.
ამ – არქეოლოგიური ძიებანი.
ენიმკი – ენის, მატერიალური კულტურისა და ისტორიის ინსტიტუტე.
თსტუგ – თბილისის სახ. ტექნიკური უნივერსიტეტის გამომცემლობა.
იბერია-კოლხეთი – საქართველოს კლასიკური და ადრემედიევური პერიოდის არქეოლოგიურ-ისტორიული კვლევების ჟურნალი.
მსკა – მასალები საქართველოსა და კავკასიის არქეოლოგიაში.
მსკი – მასალები საქართველოსა და კავკასიის ისტორიისათვის.
სდსძ – სამხრეთ-დასავლეთ საქართველოს ძეგლები.
სსმაე – საქართველოს სახ. მუზეუმის არქეოლოგიური ექსპედიციები.
სმამ – საქართველოს მეცნიერებათა აკადემიის მოამბე.
სსმმ – საქართველოს სახელმწიფო მუზეუმის მოამბე.
ქც – ქართლის ცხოვრება.
ძმ – ძეგლის მეგობარი.
АО – Археологические Открытия.
ВГМГ – Вестник государственного музея грузии.
ВДИ (VDI) – Вестник древней истории.
ВВр. – Византийский Временник.
ИРАИМК – Известия Рос. Академии Ист. Материальной Культуры.
КСИИМК – Краткие сообщения Института Истории материальной Культуры.
МАК- Материалы по археологии Кавказа.
МАР - Материалы по археологии России.
МИА – Материалы и исследования по археологии СССР.
ПАИ – Полевые археологические исследования.
СА (SA) – Советская археология.
ТОИПКЭ – Труды отдела истории первобытной культуры Эрмитажа.
AA – Archäologischer Anzeiger.
AJA – American Journal of Archaeology.
AS – Anatolian studies.

PLATES

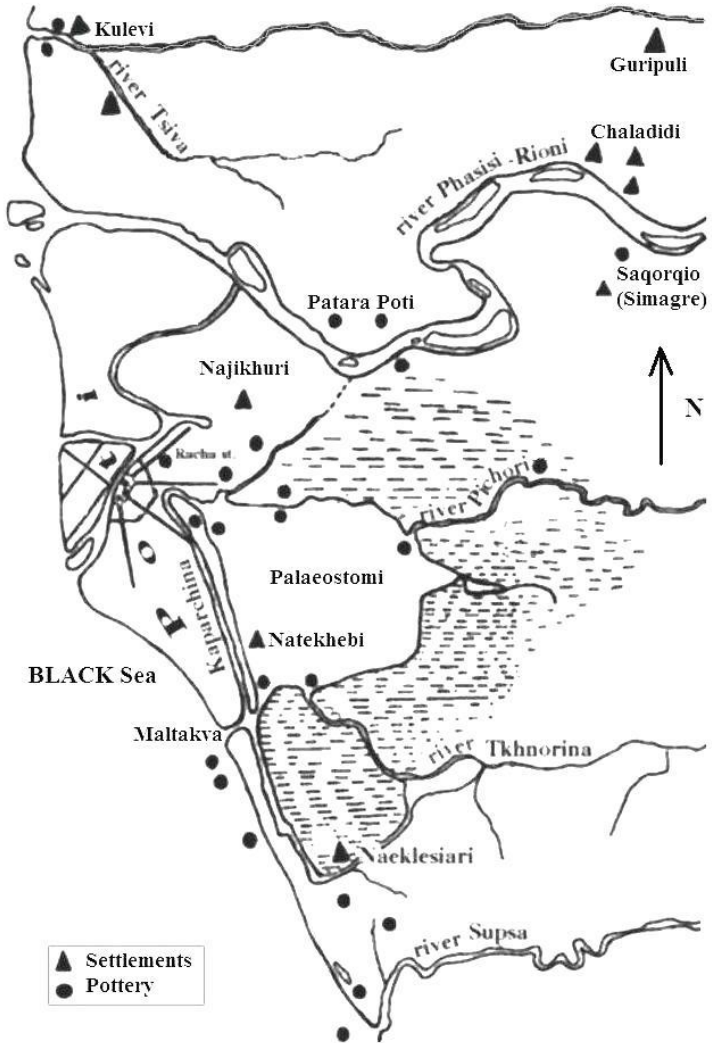
II

LATE BRONZE-EARLY IRON PERIOD SITES



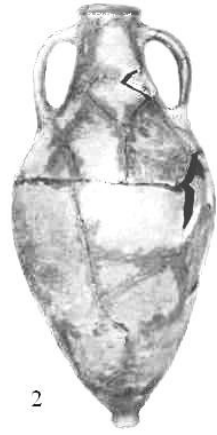
1. Namarnu, 2. Dziguri, 3. Nosiri, 4. Tskemi, 5. Siriachkoni Okhidje, 6. Nandevu,
 7. Sagvichio (Zurgani Konsha), 8. Nagmipidji, 9. Chaladidi (Zurga, Sabazho, Chkhari),
 10. Choga 1, 2, 11. Ochkomuri, 12. Betlebi, 13. Eki, 14. Khorshi – Lomura,
 15. Guripuli, 16. Naokhvamu (Reka village), 17. Kvaloni Dikha – Gudzuba, 18. Gedjeti,
 19. Noko, 20. Sakire, 21. Senaki (at cement fabric), 22. Batnaokhure, 23. Kulevi 1,
 24. Kulevi 2, 25. Hill at the Pichori river bank, 26. Tsiva, 27. Ureki, 28. Anaklia,
 29. Ergeta, 30. Chopola, 31. Mukhurcha, 32. Nigvziani.
- X – The 6th century BC pot-sherds of imported containers; Simagre (Sakorkio village), Zurga (Chaladidi village), Sagvichio, Namarnu, Kulevi, at Supsa (in the sea), Palaeostomi (at “Natekhebi”), at Maltakva (in the sea).

III



I

ON THE EVOLUTION...



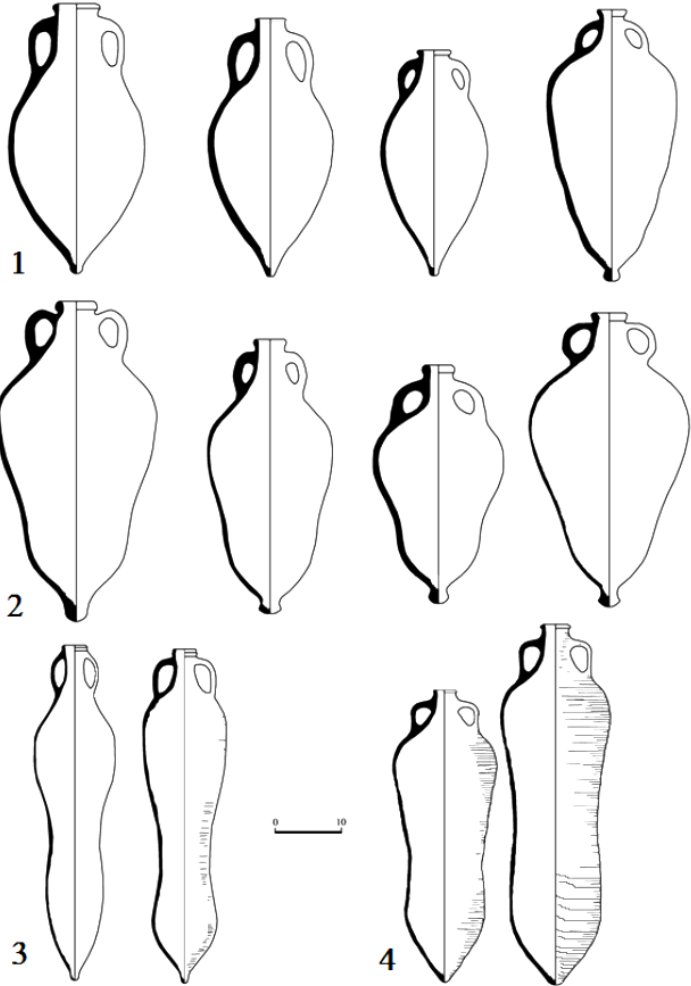
II



III



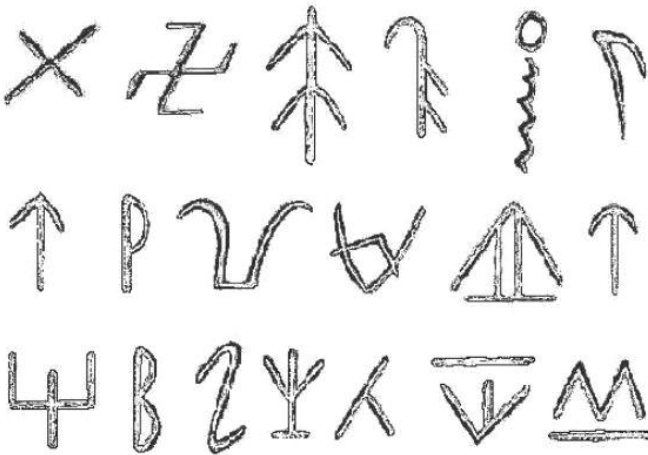
IV



V



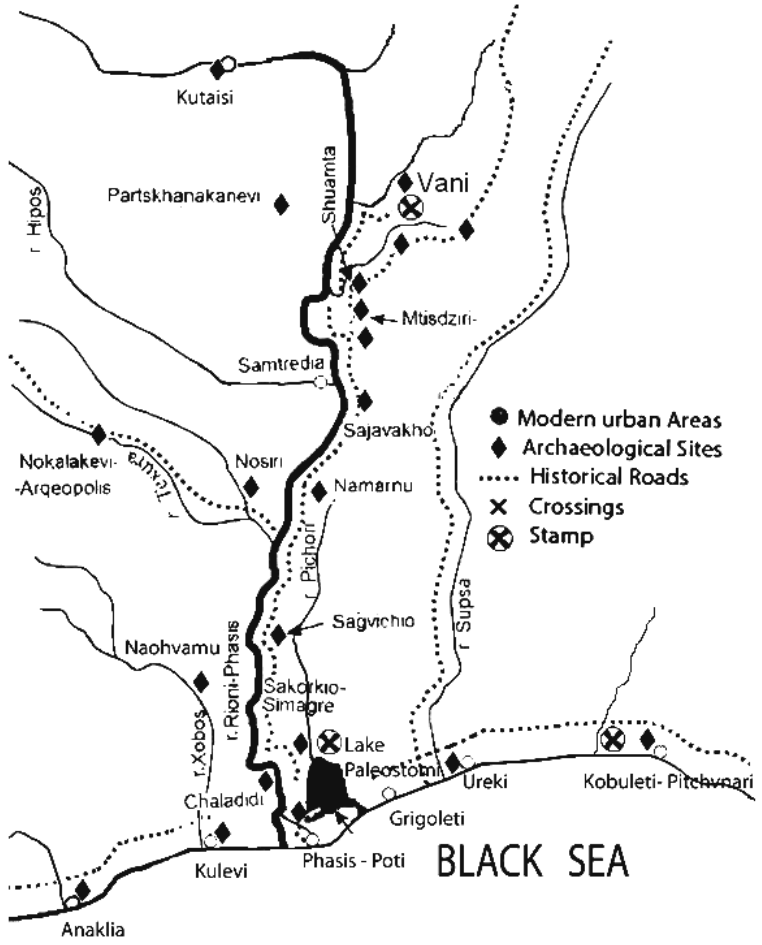
1

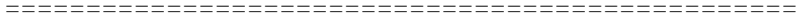


2

I

COLCHIAN AMPHORA WITH STAMP ...

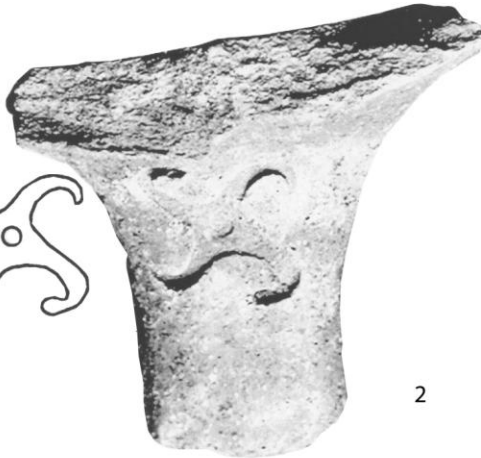




II



1



2



III



07:1-04:470



07:1-74:360



07:1-79:2087



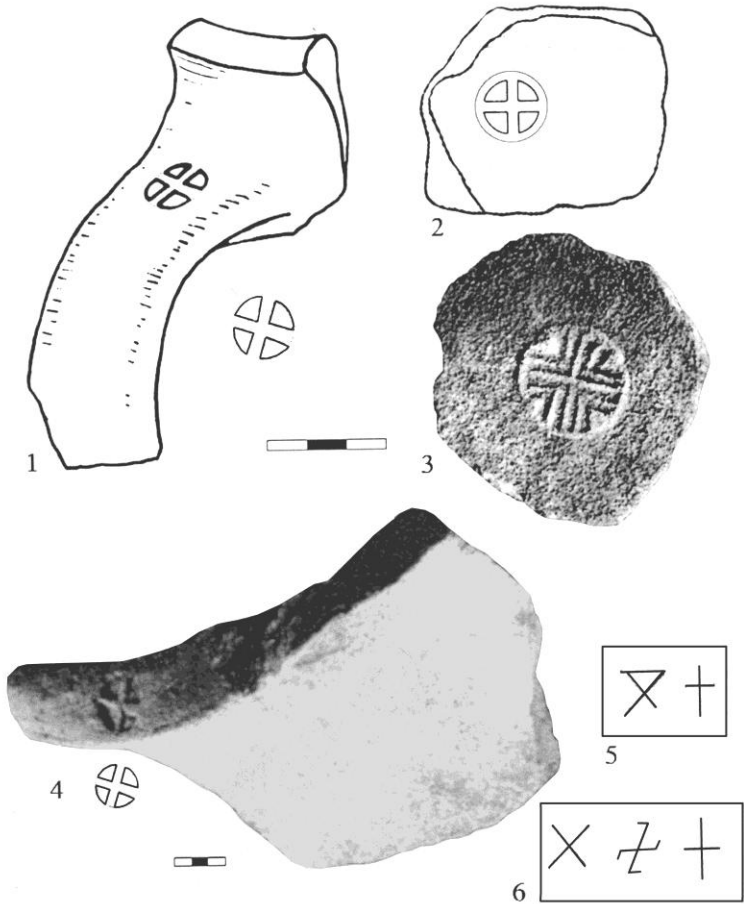
07:1-03:65



07:9-05:34



IV

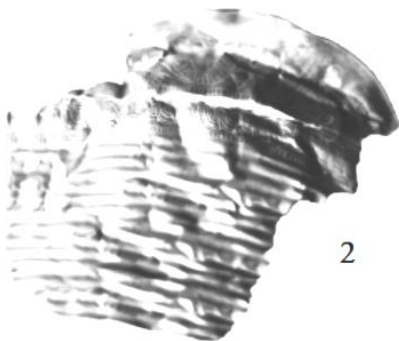


I

TWO SILVER RHYTONS ...



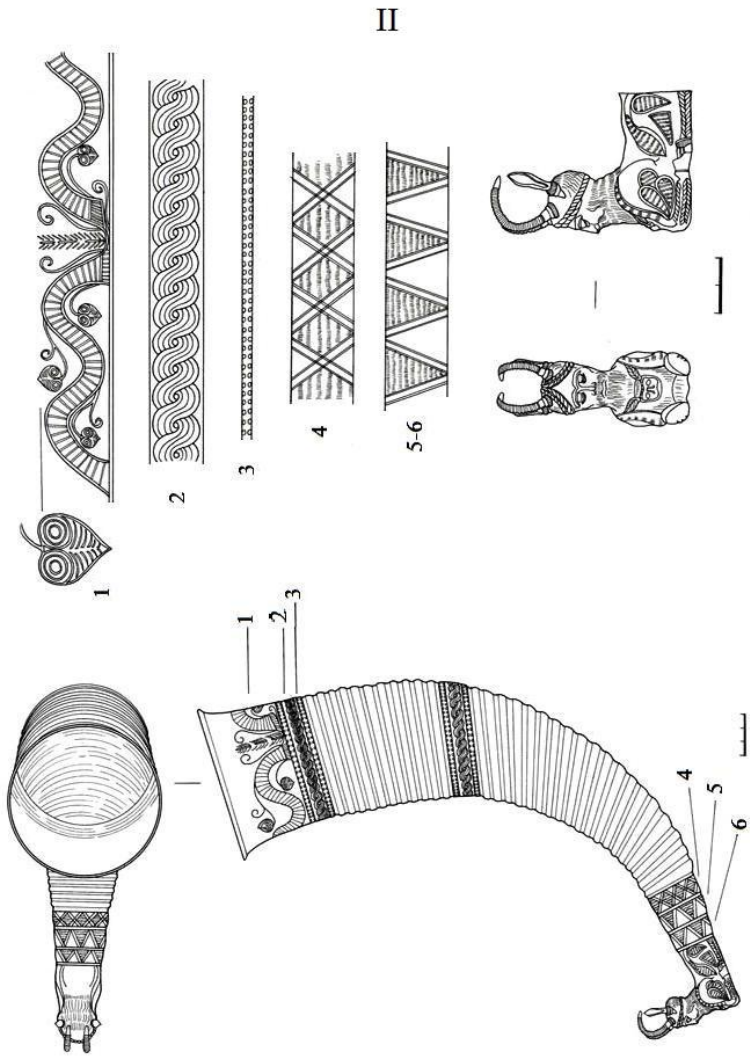
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2



3

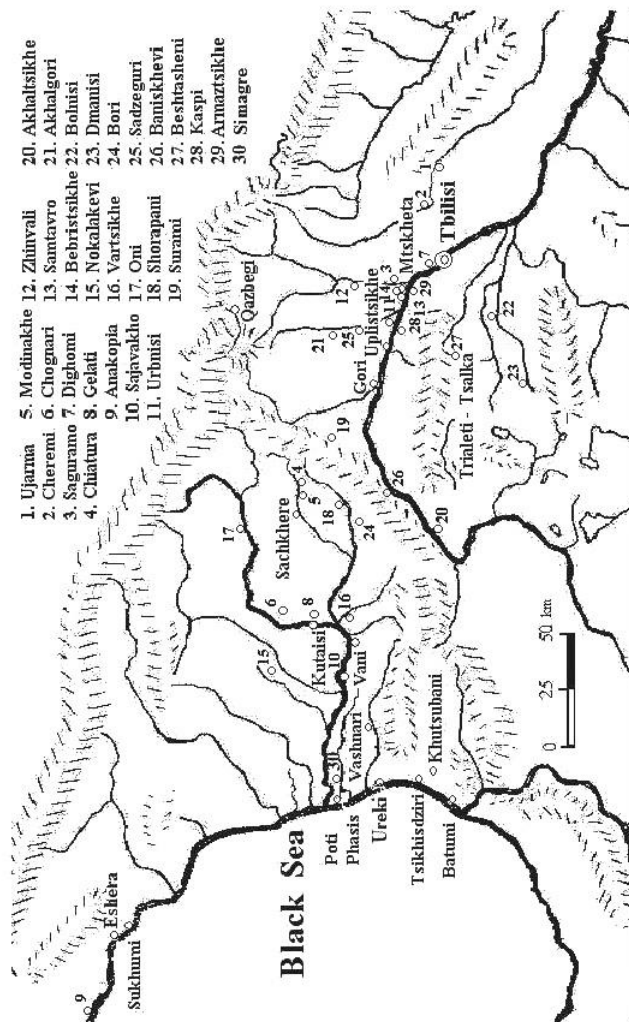


III

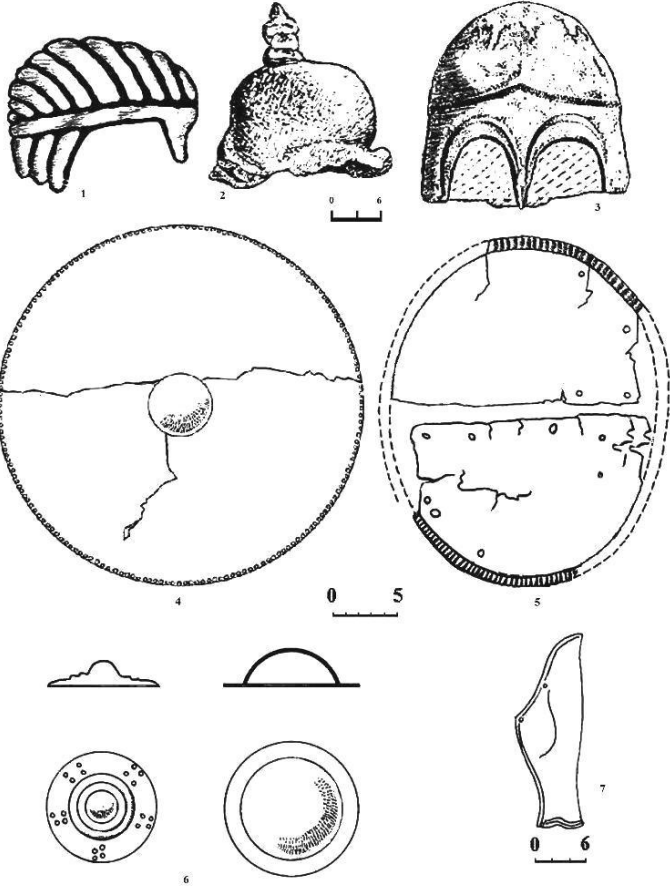


I

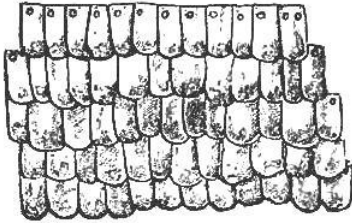
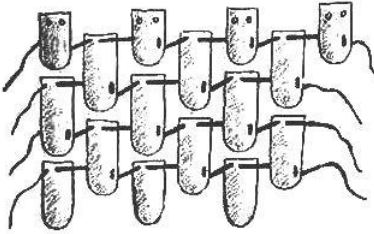
ABOUT THE MILITARY-POLITICAL ...



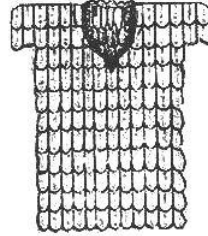
II



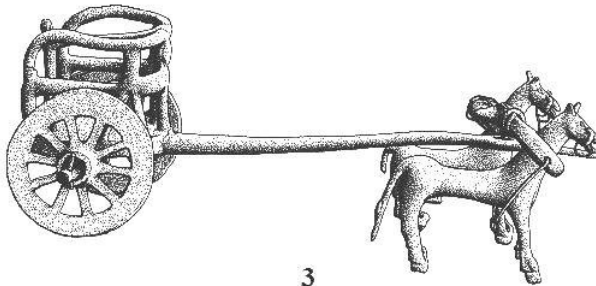
III



1

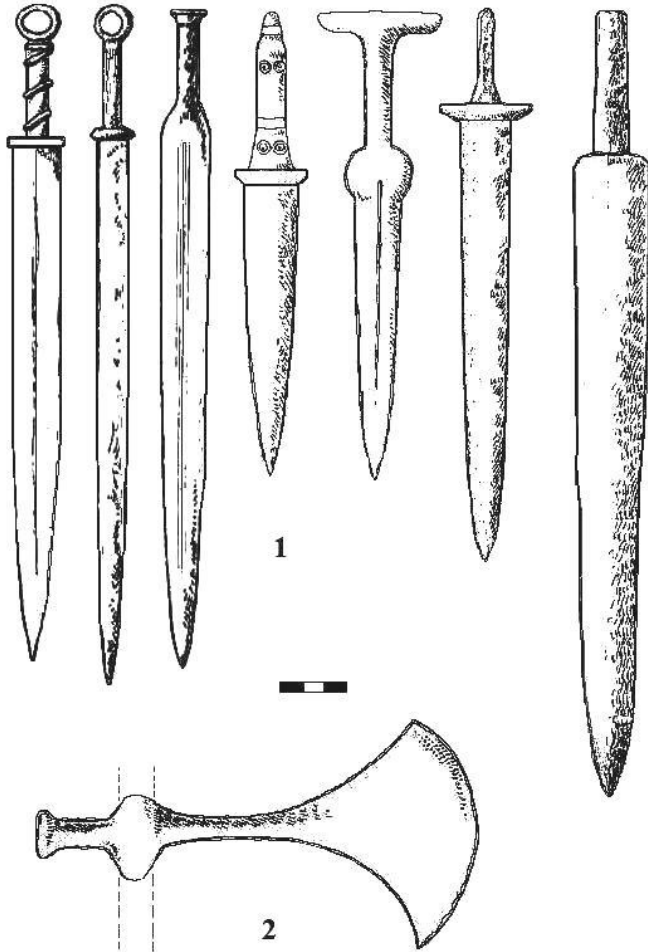


2

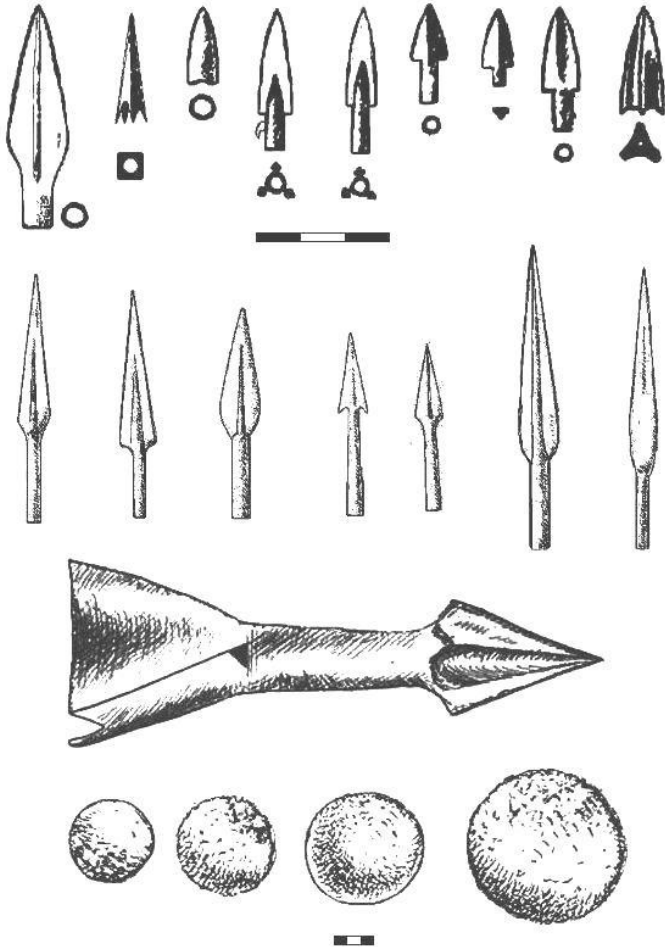


3

IV



V



VI



Aspavruqi



Ucha



?



Gela



Zevaqi



Zevaqi

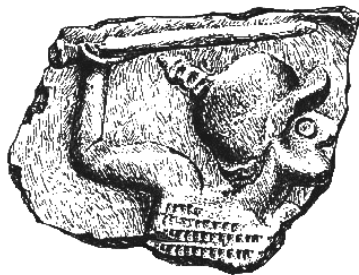


Ucha ?



?

VII

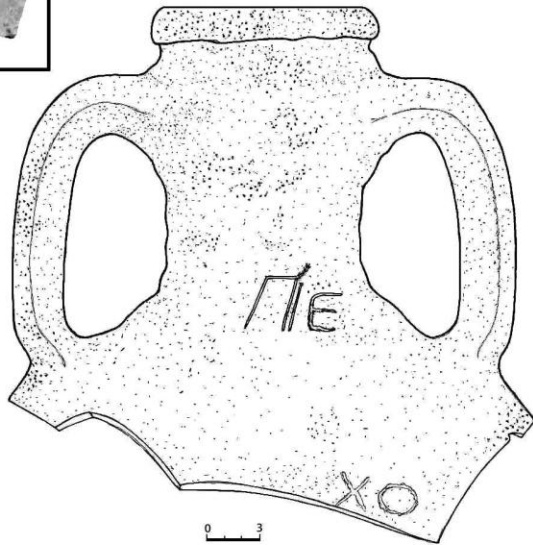
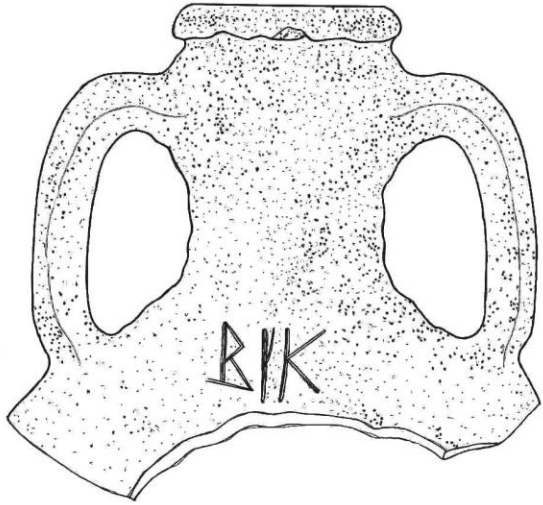


I

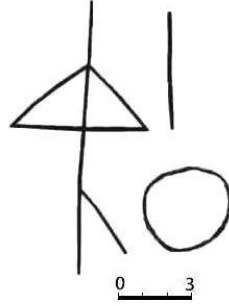
SINOPEAN AND COLCHIAN ...



II



III



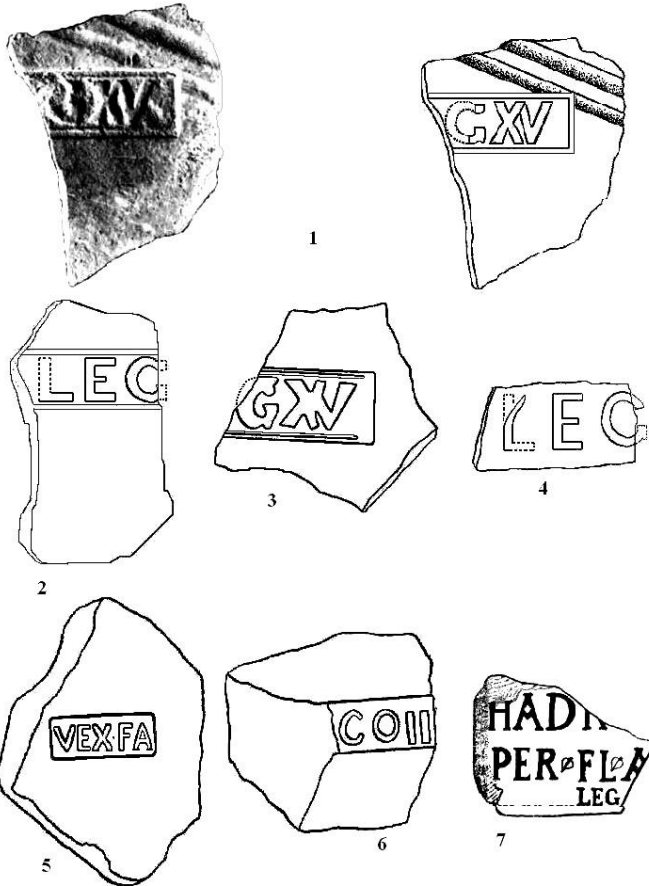
1



2

I

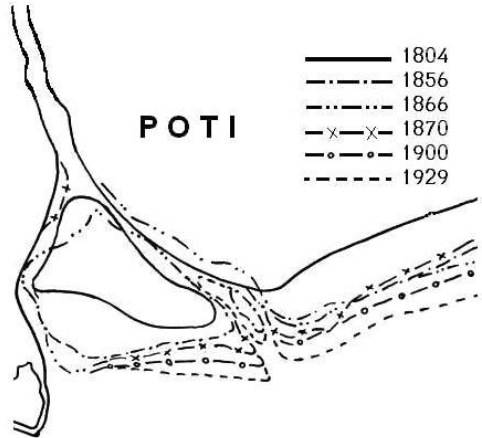
STAMPS OF ROMAN MILITARY ...



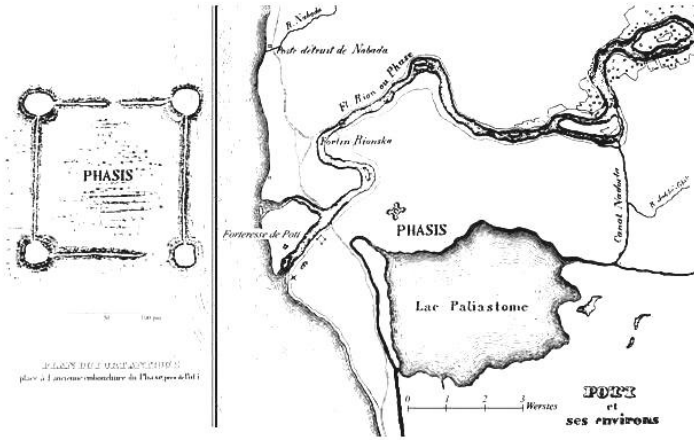
1-3 FROM PITYUS (BICHVINTA). 4- FROM MOEDANI.
5- FROM TSIKHSZIRI. 6- FROM APSARUS (GONIO).
7- SUCHUMI STELE.

I

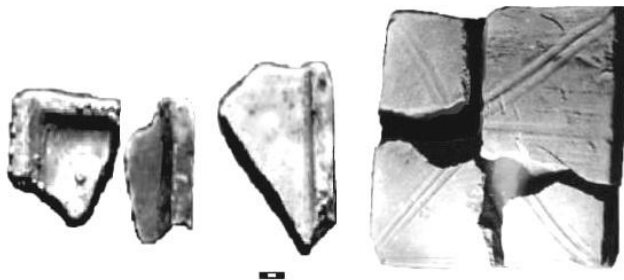
HYDROARCHAEOLOGY IN ...



II



Map 1838, Dubois de Montpereux



III



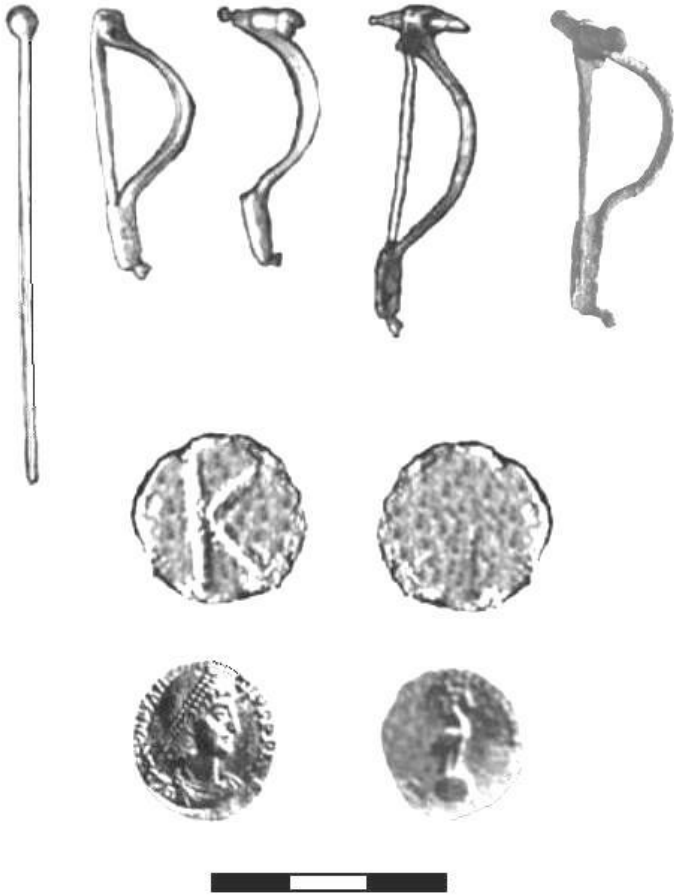
IV



v



VI



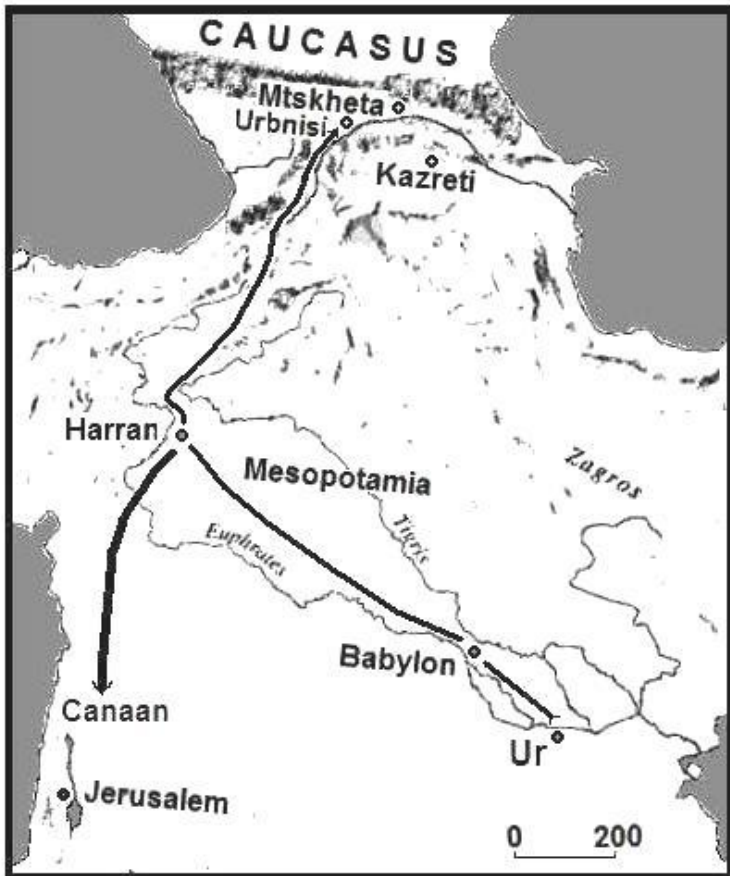
I

ABOUT PETROLEUM...



I

A VERSION OF PROTOJEWS ...



I

ZUR IDENTIFIKATION DER KOLCHERIN ...



1



II

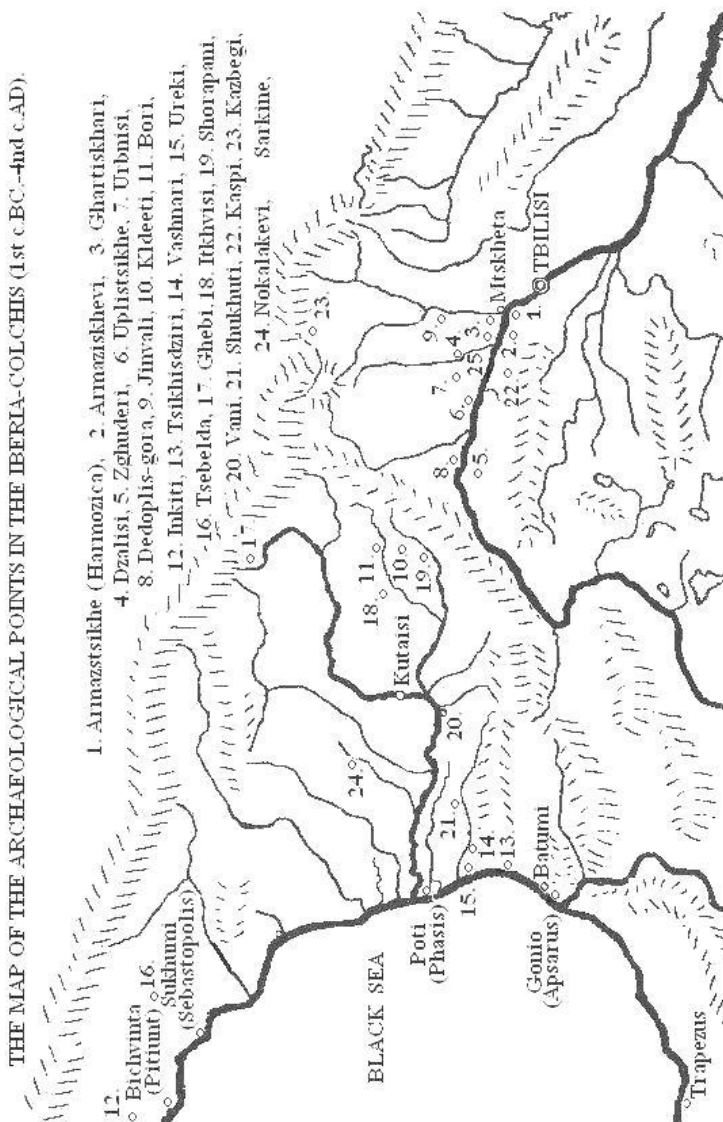


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THE PROCESS OF GLOBALISTIC ...

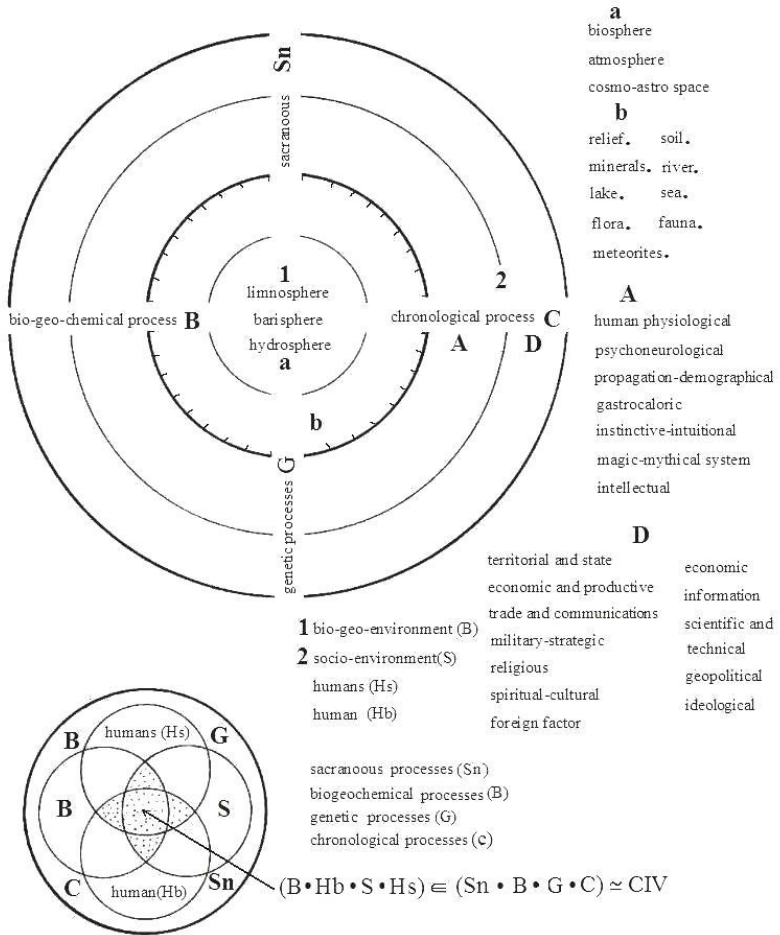
THE MAP OF THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL POINTS IN THE IBERIA-COLCHIS (1st c.BC.-4nd c.AD).



1. Armaztsikhe (Harmoziça), 2. Ammaziskhevi, 3. Ghartiskhari,
4. Dzalisi, 5. Zghuderi, 6. Uplistsikhe, 7. Urbnisi,
8. Dedoplist-gora, 9. Jinv'ali, 10. Kldeeti, 11. Bori,
12. Inkiti, 13. Tsikhisdziri, 14. Vashmari, 15. Ureki,
16. Tsebelda, 17. Ghebi, 18. Ikkhvisi, 19. Shoropani,
20. Vani, 21. Shukhuri, 22. Kaspi, 23. Kazbegi,
24. Nokalakevi, Sarkine,

I

SCHEME OF A MODEL OF THE HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT OF SOCIETY



On the Article of - THE ARCHAEOLOGY IN GEORGIA - Description of the Plates:

- 1-** Archaeological excavations in the village of *Mtisdziri*, *Vani* district, *Imereti*; *Adeishvili* hill; Date– 4thc.B.C.; Archaeologist G. Gamkrellidze.
- 2.a-** Northern wall of the structure on the *Shaori* mountain plateau , discovered near *Paravani* lake, *Javakheti*; Date– Bronze Age. **b.** Archaeological excavations in the village of *Jinisi*, *Tsalka* district, *Trialeti*; Date- 17thc.B.C.
- 3-** Grave # 5; discovered in the village of *Safar-Kharaba*, *Tsalka* district; Date - 15th c. B.C.; Archaeologist G. Narimanishvili.
- 4-** The gate of *Abuli* mountain structure complex; discovered near *Paravani* lake; Date – Bronze Age.
- 5-** Grave # 10; discovered in the village of *Safar-Kharaba*, *Tsalka* district; Date - 15th-14th c.c. B. C.; Archaeologist G. Narimanishvili.
- 6. a-** Kurgan; discovered near *Paravani* lake; Date – The first half of 3rd millennium B.C., Archaeologist K. Kakhiani. **b.** The building on *Adeishvili* hill plateau, discovered in the village of *Mtisdziri*, *Vani* district; Date – 6th - 7th cc.; Archaeologist G. Gamkrellidze.
- 7-** Settlement-hill *Dikha-Gudzuba* II, discovered in the village of *Anaklia*, *Zugdidi* district; Date - 7th- 4th cc. B.C.
- 8-** Structural complex on the lower terrace of *Vani* city-site, discovered in the *t. Vani*, Date – 2nd- 1st cc. B.C.; Archaeologists Ot. Lortkipanidze.
- 9. a-** Underwater Archaeological works in *Sokhumi* bay; especial ship “*Hydrobyologist*.” **b.** Lowering of especial camera during the hydro archaeological works, depth 100m, *Supsa* canyon of Black sea.
- 10. a-** Hydro archaeological works near *t. Poti*, lake *Paliastomi*, “*Natekhebi*” settlement. **b.** Hydroarchaeological works at *Poti- Grigoleti* shelf.
- 11-** Structural complex on the lower terrace of *Vani* city-site, discovered in *Van*; Date – 2nd- 1st cc. B.C.; Archaeologist Ot. Lortkipanidze.
- 12-** Grave #7; *Armazikhevi*, (view from above), the cemetery of *Eristavs*, discovered in. *Mtskheta*; Date– 2nd-3rdcc.A.D.

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- 13-** *Adeishvili* hill plateau structural remains (general view), discovered in the village *Mtisdziri*, *Vani* district; Date – 6th- 8th cc. A.D.; Archaeologist G. Gamkrellidze.
- 14-** Tomb; discovered in *Mtskheta*, near the railway station; Date – 1st c. A.D.; Archaeologist Al. Kalandadze.
- 15-** The statuette of lion; discovered in *Tsnori* kurgan # 12, *Kakheti*, *Alazani* valley; Golden; Date – 2300c. B.C.; Archaeologist K. Pitskhelauri; Preserved in the National Museum of Georgia.
- 16-** Forged bowl; discovered in *Trialeti* kurgan # 5, *Tsalka* region (*Tsalka* reservoir); Silver; Date- 18th c. B.C.; Archaeologist B. Kuftin; Preserved in the National Museum of Georgia.
- 17-** The fragment of Standard; discovered in the village *Brili*, cemetery, grave # 12, *Oni* district, *Racha.*; Bronze; Date- 18th c. B.C.; Preserved in the National Museum of Georgia.
- 18-** Pectoral; discovered in the v. *Melaani* cemetery, grave # 85, *Gurjaani* district, *Kakheti*; Bronze; Date 14th c. B.C.; Archaeologist K. Pitskhelauri; Preserved in the National Museum of Georgia.
- 19-** Pins; discovered in the village *Chitakhevi*, *Borjomi* district; Bronze; Date – 13th c. B.C.; Archaeologist Ot. Gambashidze; Preserved in the National Museum of Georgia.
- 20-** Rhython, discovered in the village *Bornigele*; *Borjomi* district; Bronze; Date – 14thc.B.C.; Archaeologist Ot. Gambashidze; Preserved in the National Museum of Georgia.
- 21-** The fragment of Standard; discovered in *Berikldeebi* kurgan # 4, *Shida Kartli*, on the right side of the *river Mtkvari*; Bronze; Date – 15th c. B.C.; Archaeologist A. Javakhishvili; Preserved in the National Museum.
- 22-** The fragment of sheep headed Standard, discovered in the village *Brili*, cemetery, grave # 31a, *Oni* district, *Racha*; Bronze; Date – 2nd millennium B.C.; Archaeologist G. Gobejishvili; Preserved in the National Museum.
- 23-** The statuette of bull, discovered in the village *Mtskhetisjvari* cemetery, grave # 82; *Khashuri* district, *Shida Kartli*; Bronze; Date -6thc. B.C.; Preserved in the National Museum of Georgia.

- 24-** Model of the horse chariot; discovered in the village *Gokhebi*, *Dedoplistkaro* district, *Kakheti*; Bronze; Date – 7th-6th cc. B.C.; Preserved in the National Museum of Georgia.
- 25-** The figurine of a horseman; discovered in the village *Tsagera*, place *Chikhashi*, *Tsageri* district, *Lechkhumi*; Bronze; Date - 7th-6th cc. B.C.; Archaeologist B. Kuftin; Preserved in *Tsageri* Regional Museum.
- 26-** The figurine of a man; discovered in the village *Melaani*, *Gurjaani* district, *Kakheti*; Bronze; Date – 7th c. B.C.; Archaeologist K. Pitskhelauri; Preserved in the National Museum of Georgia.
- 27-** The fragment of standard; discovered in the village *Stepantsminda*, *Kazbegi* district; Bronze; Date - 5th c. B.C.; Archaeologist E. Takaishvili; Preserved in the National Museum of Georgia.
- 28-** Axe insignia; discovered in the village *Rene*, *Kaspi* district, *Shida Kartli*; Bronze; Date - 7thc. B.C.; Archaeologist Sh. Iremashvili.
- 29-** Rython; discovered in the rich burial of *Tsabla-gele*, village *Mtisdziri*, *Vani* district; Silver; Date – 4thc. B.C.; Reconstruction of archaeologist G. Gamkrelidze; Preserved in *Ot. Lortkipanidze Vani* Archaeological museum (National Museum of Georgia).
- 30-** Ear-ring; discovered in the rich burial of *Tsabla-gele*, village *Mtisdziri*, *Vani* district; Gold, Electrum; Date – 4thc. B.C.; casual find; Preserved in *Ot. Lortkipanidze Vani* Archaeological museum.
- 31-** Stella of *Medea*, discovered in *Sokhumi* bay, Mouth of *r. Besleti*; White marble; Date - 4th-5th cc. B.C.; casual underwater find; Preserved in *Sokhumi* Regional museum.
- 32-** The statuette of *Dionysus*; discovered in the structural complex of the lower terrace of *Vani* city-site; Reddish-brown clay; Date– 1st c. B.C. Archaeologists *Ot. Lortkipanidze*; Preserved in *Ot. Lortkipanidze Vani* Archaeological museum (National Museum of Georgia).
- 33-** Tubular adornments; discovered in *Vani* city-site, burial # 24; Gold; Date – 4thc. B.C.; Archaeologist D.Kacharava; Preserved in the National Museum of Georgia.
- 34-** Ring; discovered in *Vani* city-site, burial # 22; Gold; Date – 4thc. B.C.; Preserved in National Museum of Georgia.

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- 35.a-** “*Colkxian Tetr*”- didrachm; Silver; Date – 5thc. B.C.; Preserved in National Museum of Georgia. **b.** “*Colkxian Tetri*” - didrachm; Silver; Date – 4thc. B.C.; Preserved in National Museum of Georgia. **c.** “*Colkxian Tetri*”- hemidrachm; Silver; Date – 5th-3rd cc. B.C.; Preserved in the National Museum of Georgia.
- 36-** So called *Colkxian* beaker; discovered in the building on the Eastern terrace of *Adeishvili* hill in the village *Mtisdziri*; Black burnished clay; Date – 4thc. B.C.; Archaeologist G.Gamkrelidze; Preserved in *Ot. Lortkipanidze Vani* Archaeological museum (National Museum of Georgia).
- 37-** The figurine of sheep; discovered on the upper terrace of *Vani* city-site; Brownish clay; Date – 8th-6thcc. B.C.; Archaeologist Ot. Lortkipanidze; Preserved in *Ot. Lortkipanidze Vani* Archaeological museum (National Museum of Georgia).
- 38-** Adornment-pendant “solar symbol”; discovered in the village *Sadzeguri, Akhalgori* district; Gold; Date- 4thc. B.C.; Archaeologist E. Takaishvili; Preserved in the National Museum of Georgia.
- 39-** Pendant with a portrait of a man; discovered in the village *Kldeeti* rich burial #6; *Zestaponi* district, *Imereti*; Gold, Cornelian; Date - 2nd- 3rdcc. A.D.; Archaeologist G. Lomtadidze; Preserved in the National Museum of Georgia.
- 40-** Bowl; discovered in rich burial of the village *Khovle, Kaspi* district, *Shida Kartli*; Silver, Partially gilt; Date - 3rdc.A.D.; Archaeologist V.Shatberashvili; Preserved in the National Museum of Georgia.
- 41-** Figurine of Gryphon; discovered in the rich burial of village *Zguderi, Kareli* district, *Shida Kartli*; Bronze; Date - 3rdc.A.D.; Preserved in the National Museum of Georgia.
- 42-** The statuette of “Mzechabuki” (young man); discovered in the village *Gonio*, near the r. *Mtsire-Chorokhi, Ajara*; Cast gold; Date – 2nd - 3rdc. A.D.; Archaeologist As. Inaishvili; Preserved in Batumi State Museum.
- 43-** Bracelet; discovered in *Mtskheta, Armaziskhevi* burial; Gold, Jet; Date- 3rdc. A.D; Archaeologist A.Apakidze; Preserved in the National Museum of Georgia.
- 44-** Pendant with a statuette of sheep’s head; discovered in *Mtskheta, Armaziskhevi* burial #7; Gold, Amethyst; Date – 2ndc.A.D.; Preserved in the National Museum of Georgia.
- 45-** The Statue of *Ariadne*; discovered in the village *Sarkine*, in the assemblage of structural remains of “*Grdzeli mindvrebi*”; Reddish - brownish terracotta; Date –

1st c. A.D.; Archaeologist Al. Bokhochadze; Preserved in the National Museum of Georgia.

46- The figurine of leopard; discovered in *Mtskheta, Samtavro* field; Bronze; Date – 1st c. A.D.; Archaeologist Al. Kalandadze; Preserved in the National Museum of Georgia.

47- The figurine of mountain goat; discovered in the village *Tsipnadziri*, burial # 5, *Dusheti* district; Bronze; Date- 1st c. A.D.; Archaeologist R.Ramishvili; Preserved in the National Museum of Georgia.

48- Pendant with the figurine of the deer; discovered in the village *Jinvali*, burial # 357; *Dusheti* district; Bronze; Date- 3rdc. A.D.; Archaeologists R.Ramishvili; Preserved in the National Museum of Georgia.

49- Woman's head; discovered in the structural complex on the upper terrace of *Vani* city-site; Reddish- brownish terracotta; Date – 2nd - 1st cc. B.C.; Preserved in the *Otar Lortkipanidze Vani* Archaeological museum (National Museum of Georgia).

50- Belt-buckle; discovered in *Tbilisi, Digomi, Treligoreebi* cemetery; Bronze; Date – 3rdc.A.D.; Preserved in the National Museum of Georgia.

51- Round pendant; discovered in the village *Gonio*, near the *r. Mtsire-Chorokhi, Ajara*; Gold; Date – 2nd – 3rd cc. A.D.; Archaeologist As.Inaishvili; Preserved in Batumi State Museum.

52- The statuette of *Dionysus*; discovered near the village *Kodistskaro, Kaspi* district, *Shida Kartli*; Bronze; Date – 2ndc. B.C.; Casual find; Preserved in *Kaspi* Regional Museum.

53- Phiala; discovered in the village *Mukuzani, Gurjaani* district, *Kakheti*; Silver; Date – 4th c. A.D.; Archaeologist K.Pitskhelauri; Preserved in the National Museum of Georgia.

54- Rhython with the figures of warriors; discovered in the village *Gomi, Oni* district, *Racha*; Silver; Date –1stc. B.C. -1stc. A.D.; Preserved in *Kutaisi* State Historical Museum.

55- Jug; discovered in rich burial of the village *Khovle, Kaspi* district; opaque white; Partially gilt glass; Date - 3rd c.A.D.; Archaeologist V.Shatberashvili; Preserved in the National Museum of Georgia.

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- 56-** The statuette of a man; discovered in *Mtskheta*; Lead; Date – 2ndc. A.D.; Archaeologist A.Apakidze; Preserved in *Mtskheta* Archaeological Museum-Reserve.
- 57-** The statuette of the man fighting against the lion; discovered in *Tbilisi, Delisi*, on the territory of the *Institute of Kybernetics*; Bronze; Date – 1st- 2ndcc. A.D.; Preserved in the National Museum of Georgia.
- 58-** Pendant; discovered in the village *Gonio*, near the *r. Mtsire-Chorokhi, Ajara*; Gold, red and green pasta-glass; Date – 2nd – 3rd cc. A.D.; Archaeologist As.Inaishvili; Preserved in *Batumi* State Museum.
- 59-** *Colchisian* amphorae; discovered near *Poti*, lake *Paliastomi*, settlement *Natekhebi*; brownish clay; Date – 3rd – 6thcc. A.D.; Archaeologist G. Gamkrelidze; Preserved in *Poti*, *Colchisian* Culture Museum.
- 60.a.** Pin and Phibulae; discovered near *Poti*, lake *Paliastomi*, settlement *Natekhebi*; Bronze; Date – 3rdc. A.D.; Archaeologist G. Gamkrelidze; Preserved in *Poti*, *Colchisian* Culture Museum. **b.** Twenty nume coin; discovered near *Poti*, lake *Paliastomi*, settlement *Natekhebi*; Copper; Date – 6thc. A.D; Archaeologist G. Gamkrelidze; Preserved in *Poti*, *Colchisian* Culture Museum. **c.** The coin of the Emperor Konstancius 2nd (337-361); discovered near *Poti*, lake *Paliastomi*, settlement *Natekhebi*; Copper; Date – 4thc. A.D; Archaeologist G. Gamkrelidze; Preserved in *Poti*, *Colchisian* Culture Museum.
- 61-** Stella; discovered near the village *Gantiadi*, place *Nagzauri*, in the church complex, *Dmanisi* district, *Kvemo Kartli*; Rose tuff; Date – 5th - 6thcc. A.D.; Archaeologist K.Kakhiani; Preserved in *Dmanisi* Historical- Archaeological Museum-Reserve.
- 62. a.** The stone with Georgian inscription; discovered near *Bolnisi Sioni Cathedral* front, *Bolnisi* district, *Kvemo Kartli*; Date – 493 A.D.; Archaeologist L.Muskhelishvili; Preserved in the National Museum of Georgia. **b.** The stone with Georgian inscription; discovered in the Georgian Monastery of Bir El-Coot (preserved in place), near Jerusalem, Israel; Date – 1st half of the 5thc.A.D.; Archaeologist V.Korbo.

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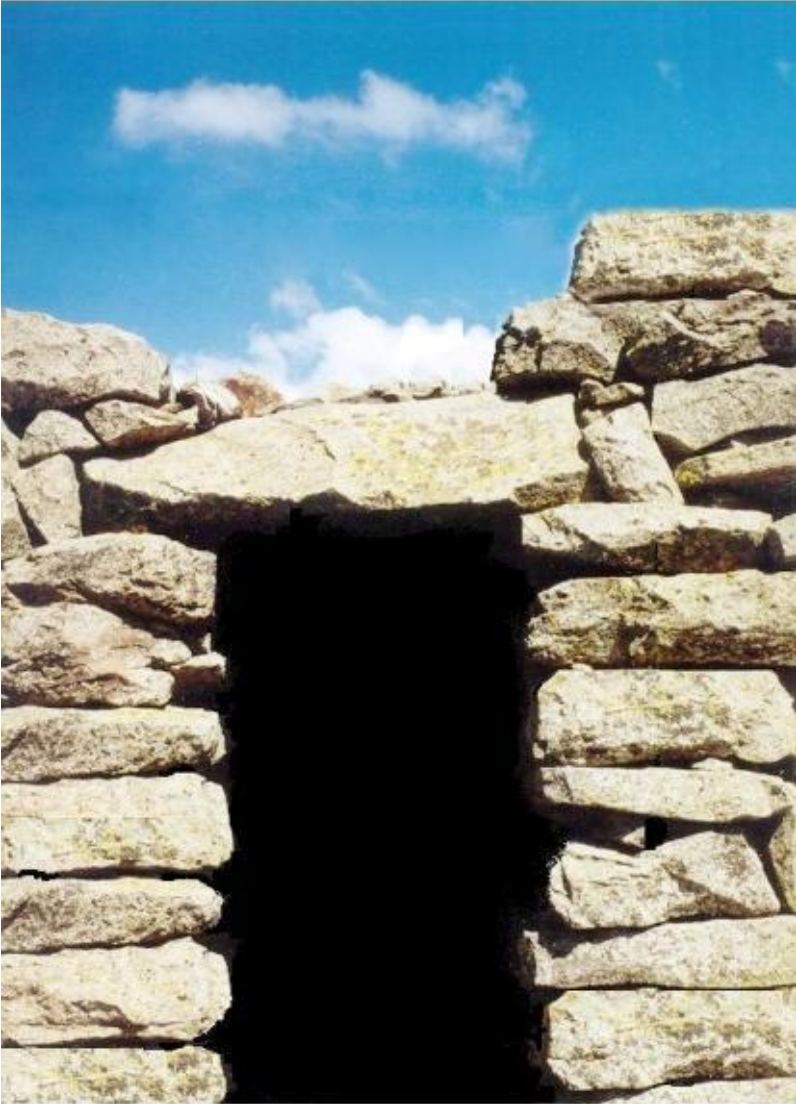


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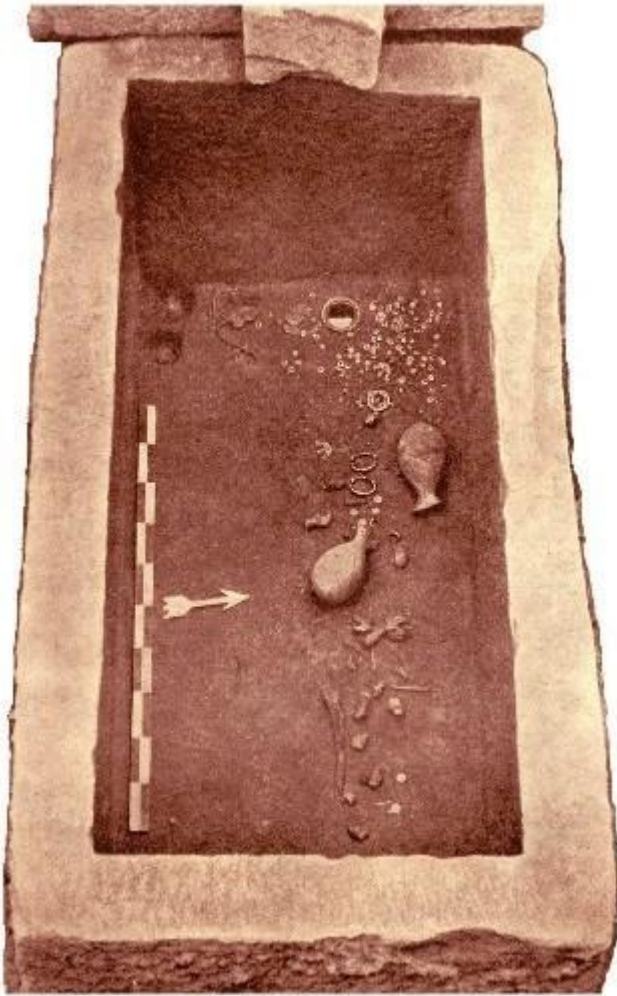
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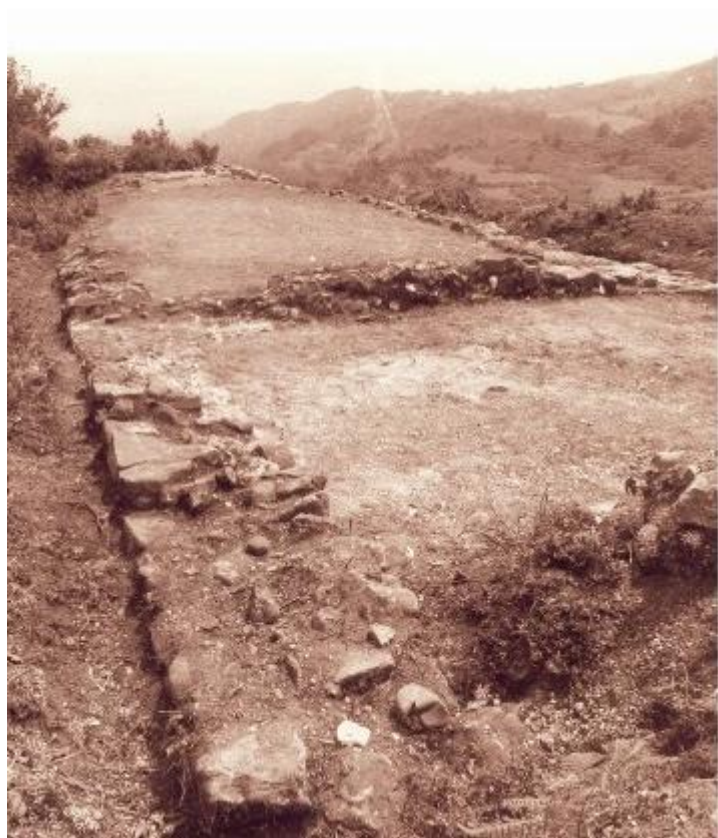
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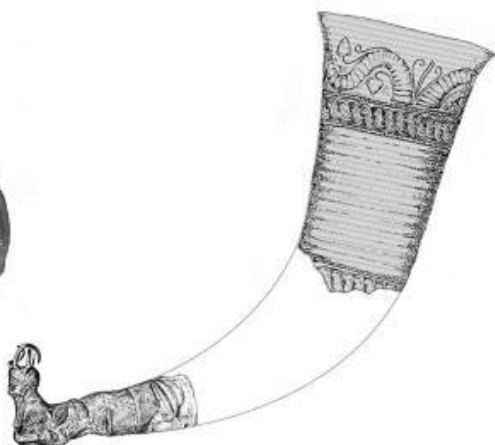
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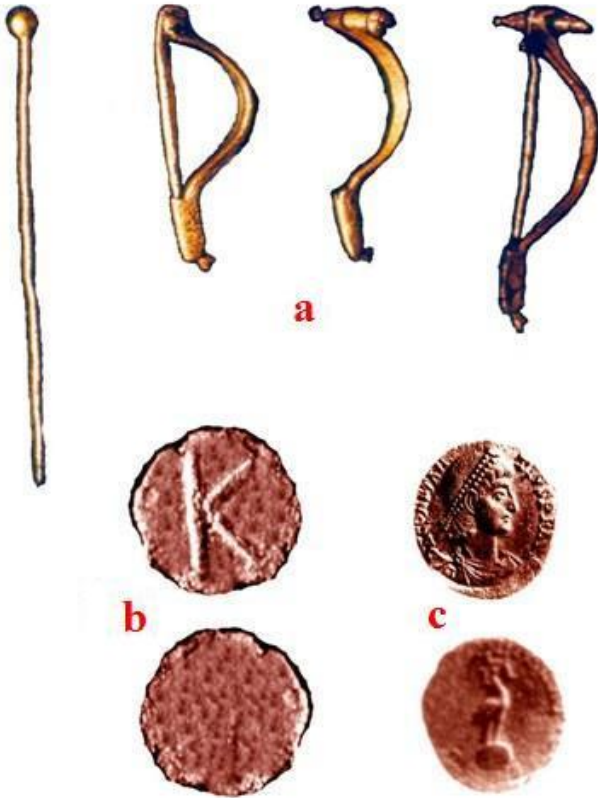


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