

MUSEUM

Georgian National Museum

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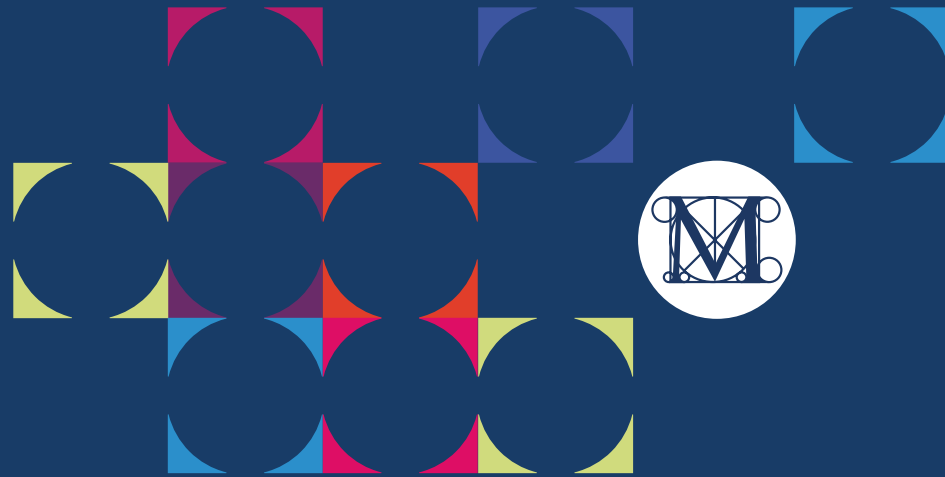


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APRIL 7-18, 2014

Global Museum Leaders COLLOQUIUM

GMLC@METMUSEUM.OCR



THE GLOBAL MUSEUM LEADERS COLLOQUIUM (GMLC), a two-week forum created and hosted by The Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York, is designed to stimulate and broaden international dialogue on museum management and collections care among directors from art institutions across the globe. The inaugural Colloquium brought together 14 directors from museums in Asia, Africa, Europe, and Latin America.

THE GLOBAL MUSEUM LEADERS COLLOQUIUM provides a 360-degree view of current museum practices worldwide. It is a laboratory for developing new, practical approaches to common challenges in museum leadership. By providing a forum for open exchange, it fosters collaboration among the participating institutions and countries, giving rise to an influential network of directors who are connected to the Metropolitan Museum of Art and to each other as alumni of the GMLC.

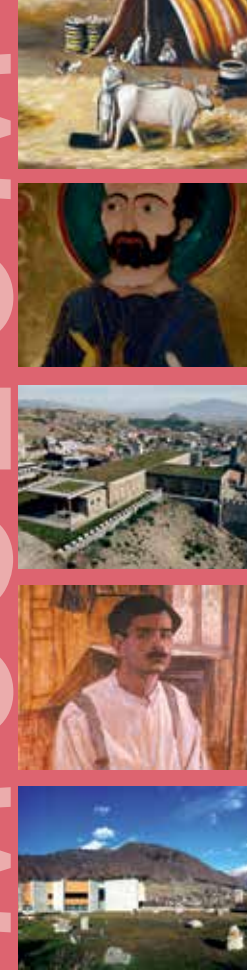
PARTICIPATING COUNTRIES



"Since its inception, the Met has been a museum that has embraced an international perspective and sought to open its visitors' eyes to the world. And like any great museum, the Met is a place where people come together to understand different points of view. It is with this in mind that we welcome this distinguished group of museum leaders from 14 countries on five continents for the launch of our global museum leadership program. Ideally, this exchange of ideas and expertise will generate collaborative thinking that will prove beneficial not only to the participating institutions but to museums on a much broader scale." – Thomas P. Campbell, Director and CEO of The Metropolitan Museum of Art.

THE GEORGIAN NATIONAL MUSEUM (GNM) was represented at the Colloquium by its General Director, Prof. Dr. David Lordkipanidze. The GNM was invited as the successor of a long museographic tradition in Georgia, and as a leader of innovative cultural institutions in the Caucasus region.

MUSEUM



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REGION

In 2013, the renovated Museum of History and Ethnology of Svaneti has opened its doors to the public. Since 2008, with support from international foundations and organizations, several large-scale projects have been carried out.

62 / ART

Pirosmani's art is the bridge that connects medieval Georgian painting with the art of the 20th century.

54 / RESEARCH

In 2013, with UNESCO's support, the Georgian National Museum carried out a project entitled "Retracing Lost Technologies – Cloisonné Enamel", with the goal of restoring the lost medieval technology of cloisonné enamel.

38 / REGION

The architectural project of the renovated building of the Ivane Javakishvili Samtskhe-Jvakheti Museum of History was winner of the International competition "Architectural Award 2012" in the Nomination of Restoration / Reconstruction.

64 / ART

As an artist of the era of Cubism and Abstract art, David Kakabadze had a sharpened sense of time and space and translated his holistic perception of visible reality into corresponding imagery.

34 /

The history of the Svaneti Museum of History and Ethnography goes back almost a century. Its establishment is linked to the founders of humanities in Georgia, as well as to local figures who had the vision to create a museum to protect the region's cultural heritage.

INTERNATIONAL EXHIBITIONS

ARCHAEOLOGY



Colchian Gold

Antikensammlung, Altes Museum, Staatliche Museen zu Berlin (The State Museums of Berlin), Berlin, Germany
15 March – 3 June 2007

Musée des Arts Asiatiques (Museum of Asian Art), Nice, France
16 June – 2 September 2007

Musée de la Monnaie (Currency Museum), Paris, France
11 September – 7 November 2007

Arthur M. Sackler Gallery, Smithsonian Institution, Washington D.C., USA
1 December 2007 – 24 February 2008

Institute for the Study of the Ancient World, New York University, New York, USA
12 March – 1 June 2008

The Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, USA
21 June – 1 September 2008

Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge, UK
2 October 2008 – 4 January 2009

Benaki Museum, Athens, Greece
20 January – 6 April 2009

Getty Villa, Los Angeles, USA
16 July – 5 October 2009

Museum of Mediterranean and Near Eastern Antiquities, Stockholm, Sweden
20 November 2009 – 14 February 2010

Drents Museum Assen, Assen, Netherlands
6 March – 15 August 2010

Archaeological Museum of Seville, Seville, Spain
5 May – 20 June 2010

Il Museo dei Fori Imperiali (Museum of Imperial Forums), Rome, Italy
17 November 2011 – 5 February 2012



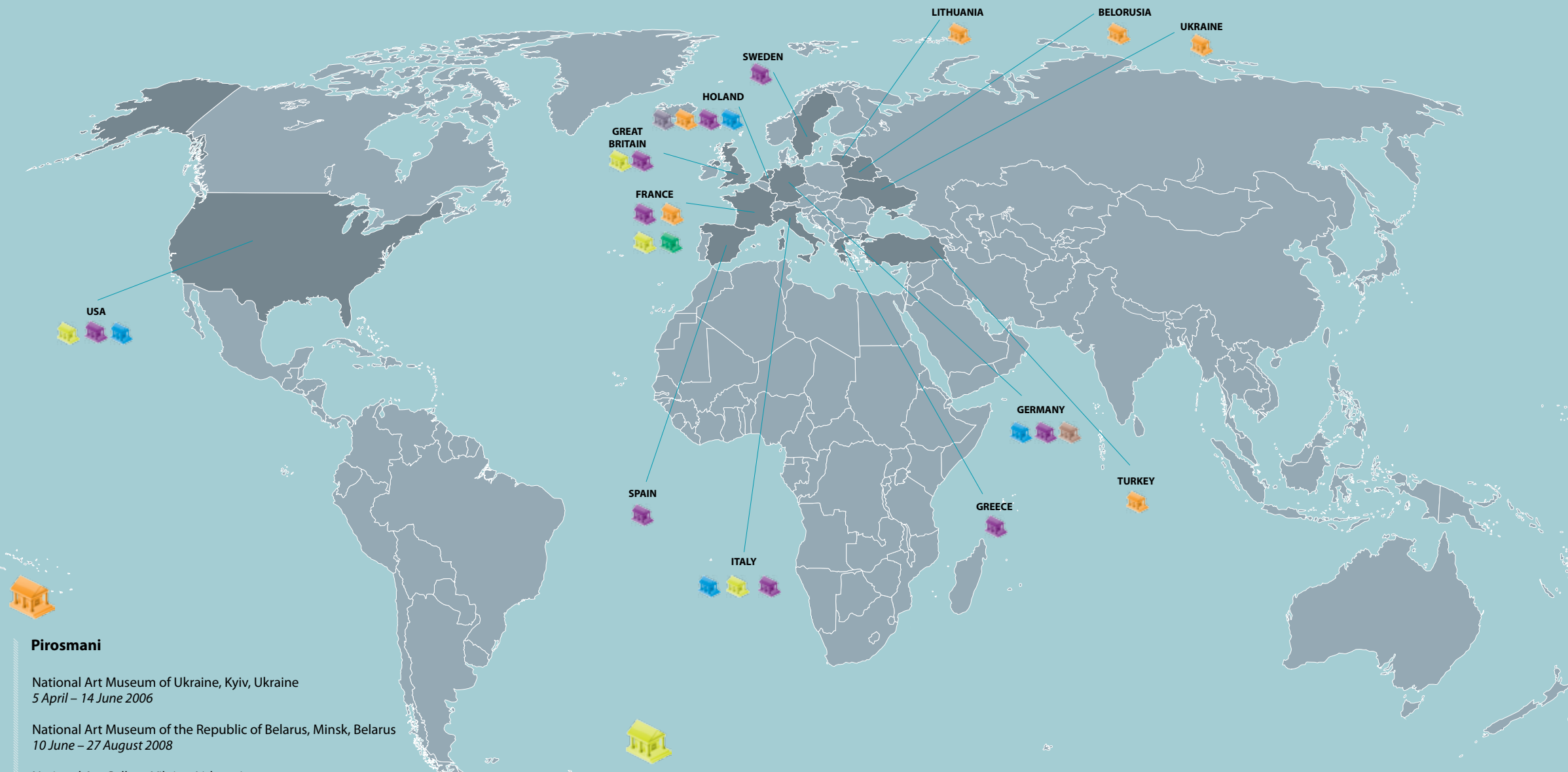
Dmanisi Discoveries

„Roots of Humankind“, Rheinisches Landesmuseum Bonn, Bonn, Germany
8 July – 11 November 2006

„The Face of Human Evolution“, Naturalis (National Museum of Natural History), Leiden, Netherlands
8 December 2009 – 28 February 2010

Permanent exhibition on human evolution (Replicas from the Georgian National Museum are on display), National Museum of Natural History, Smithsonian Institution, Washington D.C., USA
Since 17 March 2010

„Homo Sapiens, Long History of Human Evolution“, Palazzo delle Esposizioni, Rome, Italy
11 November 2011 – 12 February 2012



Pirosmani

National Art Museum of Ukraine, Kyiv, Ukraine
5 April – 14 June 2006

National Art Museum of the Republic of Belarus, Minsk, Belarus
10 June – 27 August 2008

National Art Gallery, Vilnius, Lithuania
31 December 2008 – 2 May 2009

Pera Museum, Istanbul, Turkey
1 August – 7 October 2007

Zervos Museum, Vézelay, France
22 September – 7 November 2008

Dordrechts Museum, Dordrecht, Netherlands
6 May – 30 September 2012



Famous Georgian Artists of the 20th Century

„Paris-Montparnasse/Tbilissi“, Musée du Montparnasse, Paris, France
26 June – 30 August 2008



Photo-Exhibitions

„Photostudio Ermakov – Photographer, Collector and Entrepreneur“, Netherlands Fotomuseum, Rotterdam, Netherlands
14 June – 31 August 2014



Georgian National Museum participated in the following international exhibitions:

„Byzantium and Islam: Age of Transition“, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, USA
14 March – 8 July 2012 (An item from the Georgian National Museum Shalva Amiranashvili Museum of Fine Arts was exhibited)

„Vinum Nostrum – Art, Science and Myths of Wine in Ancient Mediterranean Cultures“, Palazzo Pitti Museum of Art, Florence, Italy
19 July 2010 – 15 May 2011

„Breaking the Rules“, exhibition of European Avant Garde, British Library, London, UK
8 November 2007 – 30 March 2008
(Works by Pirosmani and Irakli Gamrekele were exhibited)

„Beyond Babylon – Art, Trade, and Diplomacy in the Second Millennium B.C.“, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, USA
18 November 2008 – 15 March 2009 (Archaeological artifacts from the Georgian National Museum were exhibited)

„Vassily Kandinsky“, Centre Pompidou, Paris, France
8 April – 10 August 2009

„Kandinsky“, retrospective of Vassily Kandinsky's works, Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York, USA
18 September 2009 – 13 January 2010

„Expressionismus & Expressionismi: Berlin-Munich 1905-1920. Der Blaue Reiter vs Brücke“, Pinacothèque de Paris, Paris, France
11 October 2011 – 11 March 2012

„Court and Craft in Medieval Mosul. A Masterpiece of Arab Metalwork“, Courtauld Gallery, London, UK
20 February – 18 May 2014



Upcoming

Museum Europäischer Kulturen, Staatliche Museen zu Berlin (Museum of the European Cultures, State Museums of Berlin), Berlin, Germany
1 August – 5 October 2014



The year 2014 has special meaning for Georgia and for the Georgian National Museum. For our country it is unique because of the signing of the EU-Georgia Association Agreement that will mark the beginning of a new phase in Georgian history and in our relations with the European Union.

For our institution this year is special because we celebrate the tenth anniversary of the Georgian National Museum, created when all major museums of Georgia were brought together, with the National Gallery and two research centers.

It is symbolic that the Twinning Project implemented by the Georgian National Museum and the Prussian Cultural Heritage Foundation / State Museums of Berlin for the institutional development of our museum – supported by the European Union – was the first European twinning project in the cultural field. Through close collaboration between these institutions the Georgian National Museum has been transformed into a modern, innovative, creative and user-friendly institution that is well integrated into the urban and social fabric.

We are pleased to present the first English-language issue of Museum, the Georgian National Museum's magazine. We dedicate this issue to the signing of the EU-Georgia Association Agreement and the tenth anniversary of the Georgian National Museum. We introduce our readers to many activities and projects which – along with scientific research and exhibitions – are being carried out in the educational field. We would like our readers to become familiar with the centuries-old history and culture of Georgia, as well as the history of our museum. Thus we are honored to present interviews with the leaders of our partner institutions and of joint international projects.

The Georgian National Museum continues to develop its institutional traditions, beginning with the foundation of the first museum in Georgia in the 19th century. At the same time we are actively involved in new processes in the cultural field as we become part of a world-wide museum network.

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Visit the Svaneti Museum of History and Ethnography from where you can discover the amazing landscapes of Mestia and its Svanetian towers. You will find newly installed exhibitions and unique exhibits, enjoy a coffee in the Museum's café, and learn about the museum's collections using modern computer technologies – or you can just rest and enjoy the experience as you connect to the rest of the world through the Museum's free wifi from the highest settlement of Europe!

The Museum's shop offers a wide choice of books and souvenirs, including catalogues and other publications, modern jewelry, as well as unique reproductions of selected museum objects.

Admission: The café and shop are open every day except Monday from 10:00 am to 6:00 pm.

Address: Svaneti Museum of History and Ethnography, N7 Avtandil Ioseliani Street, Mestia, 3200 Georgia

facebook.com/GNMuseum
museum.ge

In response to the signing of the EU-Georgia Association Agreement we decided to present the speech of the General Director of the Georgian National Museum, Prof. David Lordkipanidze made in the Council of Europe on the fifth Debate on European Identity on October 10th, 2013.



GEORGIA AND THE REGION'S EUROPEAN ASPIRATIONS: BUILDING THE FUTURE ON A VIBRANT PAST

David Lordkipanidze

Searching for identity is a normal evolutionary process for human societies. The formation of a European identity is influenced by many factors including geographic, political, cultural, religious, anthropological, technological and many others. The identification of Europe is also largely conditional – for example, from the point of view of physical geography, Europe and Asia are parts of a single continent, Eurasia. However, I do not intend to discuss how identity is formed or to propose my own definition of national or European identity.

In my opinion, Europe is a family of states unified around common values and interests. Despite negative or critical comments about the efficiency of the European Union, I strongly believe in such value-based networks. Our goal should be to create transdisciplinary, pan-European networks at different levels. These alliances well adapted to today's realities

could create a foundation for diffusing new and progressive European values wherever they intersect with principles throughout the world.

The long history of Georgia and the entire Caucasus region could contribute to this process. The study of history is a powerful tool, and has been used for both positive and negative ends. Perhaps a somewhat

“heavy” scientific legacy in Georgia’s case was the classification of human races by Johann Fredric Blumenbach in the late 18th century. This German scientist coined the term for a “Caucasian race” based on the physical characteristics of a diplomat he knew, the first Ottoman Ambassador to England, originally from the Caucasus region. The “science of human races” was per-

petuated by subsequent anatomists such as Professor William Lawrence who again referred to the “Caucasian race” (1823, Lectures to the Royal College of Surgeons in London): “The name of this variety is derived from Mount Caucasus because in its neighborhood, and particularly towards the south, we meet with a very beautiful race of men, the Georgians.” Gradually, for the English-speaking scientific world, the European and the “Caucasian races” became synonymous. Yet for Georgians and other peoples of the region, the identity of being Caucasian carried very different meanings.

This is why we believe the stories of our past must be explored and examined, so they can become tools for unification instead of division. Our main goal is to ensure that our rich heritage doesn’t only remain in our archives, but helps move us towards new visions for a common future. Georgia’s European aspirations are not new. We have been a part of Europe, in the broadest sense, from prehistory to the present. Georgia is a multi-ethnic, multi-religious society whose history has been turbulent, but whose thoughts and culture have benefited from a diverse population and the traditions of many of its neighbors.

The country is distinguished by magnificent landscapes, varied and unique endemic fauna and flora, and five climate zones that range from the humid sub-tropical on the Black Sea to the rural wetlands, high plateau and alpine regions, and even to the semi-desert areas of the southeast. Its rich natural resources have supported uninterrupted human habitation for thousands of years.

On the territory of the Caucasus several archeological sites have been discovered that are of universal importance for the history of mankind. Archaeological research and the communication of many exceptional findings have brought our region into the spotlight of the world’s scientific community. This has given local scholars the possibility to work with international institutions and to become respected members of that community. I believe that both art and

science are unique instruments for spreading values and are strong tools for diplomacy.

Using archaeological discoveries for nationalistic purposes, however, is nothing new and many countries claim to be “First”, “the Cradle” or “a unique culture”. This sometimes manifests itself as a form of competition, a rivalry to underline a country’s importance. A good example is the story of the “earliest Europeans”. Various countries have claimed this title after finding what they say are the “earliest” discoveries of hominids, our biological ancestors. In the early 20th century a lower jaw from Mauer, Germany, near Heidelberg, was considered the earliest known human in Europe until in the 1970s a discovery from the French village of Tautevel became the earliest European at 450,000 years old. Even today, signs for tourists indicate that Tautevel is “the birthplace of the first European”. In the early 1990s discoveries from Ceprano, Italy and Atapuerca, Spain were dated back 800,000 years, which in turn made them the new “First Europeans”.

However, our task should be instead of creating competitions – to create a win-win situation for all concerned. Even though in recent years Georgia has become known as the country of the “First Europeans” it would be very naïve to consider 1.8 million-year-old creatures as “Europeans”! The Dmanisi discovery is indeed of immense importance for science, yet our approach has been to universalize the knowledge of human migration, rather than claim a distinction for being “first”. However, the imagination of journalists was fired with new vigor for rivalry – the Dmanisi story has been featured worldwide through international media including cover stories in Science magazine, National Geographic, The New York Times and many others; a quote from Liberation in 2000 following a congress in Tautevel read: “With these two fossils discovered in Georgia, in Dmanisi, south of the Caucasus the first inhabitants of Europe became a million years older. This has been confirmed, which is not frequent in the kingdom of paleontology – no one contests the dates. Until now Spain and Italy

vied for the honor of having sheltered the oldest humans of the continent, which dates back only 800,000 years.”

Dmanisi is a village about 85 kilometers southwest of Georgia’s capital, Tbilisi, and lies on the ancient Silk Road linking Europe and Asia. The site is rich in medieval and Bronze Age artifacts, but it is the wealth of prehistoric finds that has put it on the scientific map. Before the Dmanisi discoveries, the prevailing view was that when humans left Africa a million years ago, they had larger brains and sophisticated stone tools. But Dmanisi has changed these ideas. The discovery of Dmanisi’s 1.8 million year-old human fossils has brought the Caucasus region into sharp focus as an entirely new region for studying the evolution of early Homo. Few paleoanthropological research projects have had such a powerful impact on our thinking about human evolution. These discoveries document the first expansions of humans out of Africa, and demonstrate that their migration was due neither to increased brain size, nor to improved technology.

In Georgia, the Dmanisi project is playing a crucial role in the development of paleoanthropology and of science in general through establishing close links with international scientific centers and introducing new methods and technologies to Georgian sciences. Project structures bridge scientific interests across international borders and have formed a large, active multinational team. We have founded a field school in Dmanisi where, every year, dozens of students from the United States and Europe are enrolled in training and receive university credits. Hosting students from around the world can significantly break down cultural-linguistic barriers, increase scientific exchange and provide many opportunities to generate new cohorts of colleagues and friends. Progressively this creates extensive networks of future scientists. Today the Dmanisi field museum is a rare example of how scientists can simultaneously facilitate active research underway at a site and at the same time make the site and its research accessible to the wider public.

Another field of competition between countries has been “Which country is the “Cradle of Wine?” Georgia is again in line for this distinction, as it claims to have the earliest traces of viticulture. The Caucasus occupies a territory within the Near East zone, one of the seven global “Centers of Origin” of food plants, where scientists believe the origins of agriculture and the domestication of important grains occurred. The varieties and forms of cultivated plants that originated in the wider Caucasus region have shown that the area was indeed an ancient center for the domestication and diversification of food plant species.

I would suggest moving from the competition of who is “first winemaker” towards a multidisciplinary research of the history of wine and other cultivated foods. The beginning of agriculture is a key period in human history and offers another opportunity for researchers to develop high-level international interdisciplinary collaboration. This could be the occasion to create another model like that created in Dmanisi, bringing together different academic institutions and working on public outreach.

Most have heard the myth of the Greek Argonauts, but not everyone knows about the historic connection with Georgia through the myth of Jason and the Golden Fleece. According to the story told by ancient Greek authors, Jason and the Argonauts sailed to Colchis in search of the Golden Fleece that hung in a sacred grove of trees, and guarded by a dragon that never slept. Unearthed gold artifacts from Vani in western Georgia connect the history of this land to the myth of Jason and the Golden Fleece. Archaeological discoveries provide evidence of an advanced culture in what is today western Georgia, showing that the mythical land of Colchis was indeed this region. Many of these treasures confirm that Colchis was a real country, and was rich in gold.

They also attest that Georgia’s culture is an indispensable part of Western civilization, as the kingdom of Colchis is one of the main pillars of Georgia’s cultural identity. Most scholars consider classical Greek culture as the basis of European culture

and civilization. Greek or “Hellenic” culture has its roots in ancient Near Eastern civilizations, and it emerged after the campaign of Alexander the Great in the East. The archaeological discoveries show that pre-Christian cultural traditions in western Georgia contributed to the process of civilization.

After the Greco-Roman period Georgia was subjected to Arab invasions, however with the progress of the Byzantine Empire, the country built strong links with European culture. Since Georgia became a Christian country in the 4th century, and also developed its own alphabet, the country could maintain own identity. Byzantine cultural tradition began taking shape through a merger of this symbiotic culture with Eastern Christianity, embracing countries, including Georgia. Based on Hellenistic cultural trends, new cultural centers came into being in the bosom of Eastern Christianity, with their own national scripts and cultural traditions influenced by East-West civilizations. Here lies the uniqueness of Georgian material and spiritual culture, its attractiveness both to the East and to the West.

Due to its geographic location, Georgia has long been a natural crossroads for many powerful cultures. Nevertheless, the country has preserved its cultural identity, with an unwavering interest in the Western world. Now that the country is putting itself on the world map again, it is our genuine belief that European nations will be our partners on the way to the West. Our goal is to develop common values while maintaining our unique cultural identity, to encourage diversity and tolerance while building bridges with other cultures.

Building academic institutions is crucial for these processes. We should use scientific disciplines to study the past and to bring new knowledge, but at the same time we must work on communication and institution building. One of the key issues today is to find opportunities to establish new institutions, especially cultural institutions not only in the Caucasus. Since the collapse of the Soviet Union many

changes have occurred, but few have taken place in our cultural institutions. In Georgia’s case, creating the Georgian National Museum has been a step towards establishing a strong institution based on our own national and cultural heritage.

The Georgian National Museum presents internationally significant collections of art and dynamic, changing exhibitions that provide visitors with inspiration and knowledge of the wonderful world of culture, arts, sciences and education. Discoveries of the oldest human existence in Eurasia are displayed along with magnificent Medieval Christian art, stunning gold and silver jewelry from the ancient land of Colchis, spectacular modern and contemporary paintings by Georgian artists and masterpieces that exemplify Oriental, Russian and Western European decorative arts.

The Georgian National Museum now envisages the introduction of modern management policies and the establishment of a uniform administrative system. This initiative will put a coherent museum mission in place and improve conservation standards for preserved collections. It will strengthen the educational programs centered on the museum’s resources and contribute to coordinating academic and museum activities. The Georgian National Museum is an important regional example of how to transform post-Soviet museums into modern, innovative, creative and user-friendly institutions that are well integrated into the urban and social fabric.

If there were a public opinion survey carried out on priority issues for Georgia, the main response would be “Education”, and if you ask Georgians what the country’s main factors of national identity are, the answer will be rich cultural history and Christian Orthodoxy. Indeed I am sure that museums have a high potential for participating in educational and cultural processes and developing a balance between faith and knowledge. To develop wider European values in our young people, including those of diversity and tolerance, new exhibits and public education activities are the best tools. Two concrete examples include:



Mestia, Georgia - View from the Svaneti Museum of History and Ethnography

– The Ivane Javakhishvili History Museum, located in Samtskhe-Javakheti, a region of multicultural challenges for ethnic Armenians and Georgians. The new museum tells the story of the region, using the exhibition and educational programs to develop common values and, in particular, strong feelings of tolerance in the younger generations.

– The recently opened branch of the National Museum in the Upper Caucasus region of Svaneti, in the capital city of Mestia. The museum houses very precious collections of medieval icons and manuscripts. Svaneti is an island with remains of Byzantine culture, with local peculiarities. The new museum is linking the local community through its collection of treasures, while building trust and dialog. Renovated exhibits and storage show respect for religious objects and are both research and educational tools. Creating a balance between science and religious beliefs is an important role for this Museum.

The Georgian National Museum is a horizontal network of different bodies unified under joint values. We are working with different international institutions, and are pleased with our cooperation

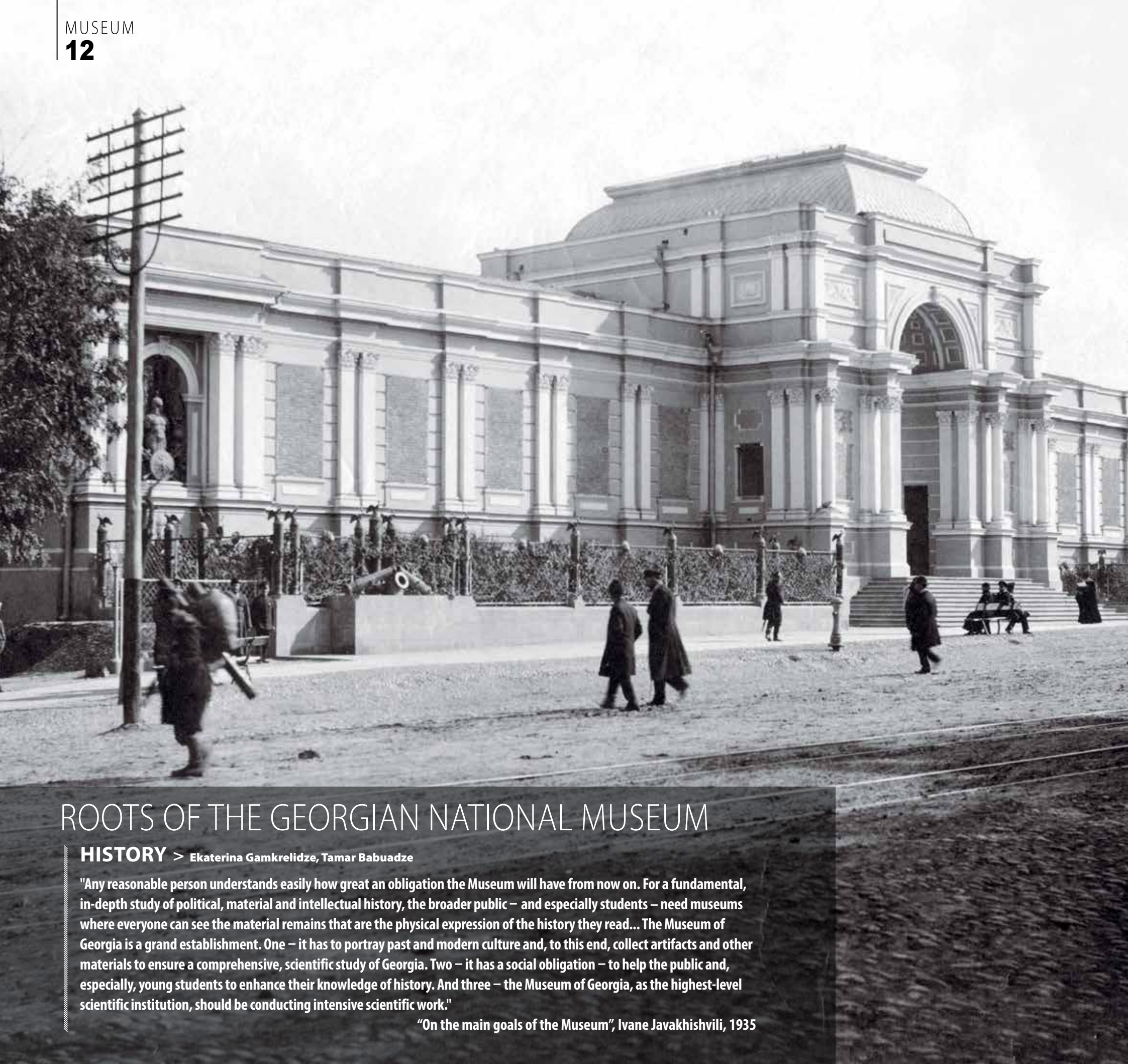
with the Prussian Cultural Heritage Foundation / The State Museums of Berlin, within the framework of the first EU twinning program in the cultural field. We continue to work bilaterally, and our cooperation has been developed at the regional level with help of Goethe Institute. We have created a network of museums in former Soviet countries, including Ukraine, Russia, Azerbaijan, Armenia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Kirgizstan and Tajikistan. This will create even more horizontal cooperation. I believe that the tendency of museums in the world will change from brand promotion towards new alliances such as those created by the NY Metropolitan Museum of Art that bring together institutions from Europe, Latin America, Asia and Africa. The Georgian National Museum should be part of this global trend.

Personally, I am participating in the work of the European Cultural Parliament’s pan-European network for artists, a forum for regular debate on crucial issues for independent artists, writers, musicians, historians, philosophers, designers, architects and other cultural personalities from all European countries. I believe that the

synergy of Art and Science is also a strong tool for developing democratic societies. Academic and artist freedom are key ingredients of this process.

The Caucasus must take its place in a world where there is no room for conflict. It can become a place of unification, and where different generations build common values. Today archeology has changed its position from the colonial science it had been over the last centuries, to one that advocates for countries to claim and study their own heritage – where peoples can discuss and independently create the vision of their nation’s legacies and identity and find ways to link these with the rest of the world.

Why do we need the European Union, or indeed any other alliance? Without question, this contributes to a better world! These alliances promote a respect for human rights and for the environment, along with the preservation of cultural heritage... This can only take place, however, if we develop these values early in life – thus I believe that my country, my profession and my institution must participate in this process. ■



ROOTS OF THE GEORGIAN NATIONAL MUSEUM

HISTORY > Ekaterina Gamkrelidze, Tamar Babuadze

"Any reasonable person understands easily how great an obligation the Museum will have from now on. For a fundamental, in-depth study of political, material and intellectual history, the broader public – and especially students – need museums where everyone can see the material remains that are the physical expression of the history they read... The Museum of Georgia is a grand establishment. One – it has to portray past and modern culture and, to this end, collect artifacts and other materials to ensure a comprehensive, scientific study of Georgia. Two – it has a social obligation – to help the public and, especially, young students to enhance their knowledge of history. And three – the Museum of Georgia, as the highest-level scientific institution, should be conducting intensive scientific work."

"On the main goals of the Museum", Ivane Javakhishvili, 1935

The educational component is inherent to a museum. Creating collections and protecting and scientifically studying artifacts would have partially lost their meaning if the collective memory accumulated over the centuries and carried by the items kept in a museum remained out of reach for the public. Even in pre-Christian times, the role of rudimentary museums was played by religious temples.

INITIAL OUTLINES

The pagan temples and chapels of the Bronze and Iron Ages discovered in Eastern Georgia, to which the population donated ritual items for centuries, also played the role of treasury. In the Medieval era, however, treasuries were set up at the courts of the Georgian kings and items of historical significance such as royal jewelry and rare natural artifacts were collected. The royal storehouse in Tbilisi, at the court of David the Builder where Vakhtang Gorgasali's armor and weapons were kept, was an example. Churches and monasteries had their own treasuries and libraries. However, unlike royal treasuries the items and manuscripts kept in spiritual centers were studied closely.

Beginning with the 16th century, the term "museum" derived from the Ancient Greek, began to be used in Europe when referring to a storage place for antiquities. For Georgia, it was an era of declining statehood, which hampered the development of museums. Only the old-style royal salaros remained, safekeeping important items of natural history and cultural heritage.

In the second half of the 19th century, however, several museums opened in Tbilisi. The first was a museum established as the Caucasus branch of the Russian Geographic Society in 1852. Following this, similar institutions were

established, such as the Caucasian Museum, the Museum of the Society for the Spreading of Literacy, the Church Museum and the "Temple of Glory", which was a Museum of Military History. Each of these was created for different reasons – the Museum of the Russian Geographic Society, the Caucasian Museum and the Museum of Military History were established to promote Russian policies and values. However, others like the Museums of the Society for the Spreading of Literacy and the Museum of the Georgian Orthodox Church, were created by the Georgian intellectuals to counterbalance Russian values and culture, and to save Georgian national treasures.

The Geographic Society Museum, however, became the first complex scientific and educational institution in the Caucasus, and enriched its collections with the contribution of private donations. Significant among the items received by this museum were ancient bronze figures of a bellwether and goat heads brought from Tusheti in 1863 – and even a meteorite that fell near Stavropol.

In the mid-19th century, naturalist and archaeologist Friedrich Bayern made an important contribution to the development of museum work in Georgia, creating large natural science collections in the Caucasus, which then became the foundation for geological, zoological and botanical collections of Tbilisi museums. To exhibit his rich collections, in 1856 Bayern opened a museum of natural sciences in Tbilisi's district of Didube, which was called "Naturalist Bayern's Office" then in 1859, Bayern began to establish connections with the Caucasus branch of the Russian Geographic Society. He had become interested in the Urartian cuneiform inscriptions discovered near Ararat and in Georgia's archaeological monuments. It was due to his ex-

cavations that Georgia's archaeological antiquities became known to scientists all over the world.

Three years after the exhibition opened, the Russian Geographic Society Museum administration decided to organize its first exhibition of these antiquities, which caused great public interest. However, it was costly for the Geographic Society to keep the Museum open and, in 1864 the first Georgian museum closed, after only 12 years of existence.

THE CAUCASIAN MUSEUM

Yet soon after this another project was submitted to the Viceroy's Chancellery by an ethnographer of German origin, Gustav Radde, to establish a Caucasian museum where he could place his own materials from the Caucasus as well as part of the heritage left unattended after the closure of the Geographic Society's Museum. In 1865, Radde's project was approved and Radde himself was appointed Director. He stated that from that point on, "the Caucasus has become his precious and beautiful second motherland."

There was a lack of Georgian items in the Caucasian Museum, however occasionally the collections were enriched by significant local ethnographic materials

from Khevsureti and Abkhazia. In 1868, the Caucasian Museum was merged with the Public Library, and two years later, it was moved to a new building with eight exhibition halls, constructed by the architect A. Salzman.

THE GEORGIAN MUSEUM FOR EVERYONE!

In 1885, an "Archaeological" Museum was established in connection with the Library of the Society for the Spreading of Literacy. Its collections were gradually enlarged by significant archaeological, numismatic and historical contributions. In 1907, according to Iliia Chavchavadze's will, all of his property, personal belongings and an exceptionally rich library were bequeathed to the Society for the Spreading of Literacy. However, the Museum experienced great hardships as constant problems of space meant that artifacts were kept in different places. The philanthropist David Sarajishvili had offered to sponsor the construction of a large Museum, however he died in 1911. As World War I and global turmoil thwarted any plans to build the museum, it also meant the disappearance of the Society for the Spreading of Literacy.

THE CHURCH MUSEUM

Meantime, in 1888, a "Treasure House for Ancient Church Artifacts" had been established in a building constructed especially for this purpose. The main merit of the Church Museum, apart from saving threatened Georgian Orthodox treasures, was the organization of special expeditions. In 1889, expeditions were organized to Mtskheta and David Gareja which meant that important antiquities were moved to the Tbilisi-based Church Museum from these two centers of Orthodox Christianity. Other treasures were collected from the Gelati, Samtavro and Sokhumi churches.

Ten years later the Church Museum had become a very strong institution, with collections rivaling those of the Caucasian Museum, and a total of 1,359 artifacts. However the Church Museum was closed after Soviet rule was established in Georgia in the first part of the 20th century.

THE "TEMPLE OF GLORY"

The idea of establishing a Museum of Military History, or "Temple of Glory", in Tbilisi was developed by the Director of the Caucasian Museum, Gustav Radde in 1888. Originally to become the "Temple of Glory" for the Russian Empire, it was built in Alexander's Garden in the center of Tbilisi. Renowned painters from all over the Empire, including Franz Roubaud, Max Tilke, Ivan Aivazovsky and others, were invited to illustrate the exhibition and paint the battle scenes. While items were being collected for the "Temple of Glory" exhibition halls, it was possible to organize other exhibitions with the participation of Georgian artists. Thus, works by Gigo Gabashvili, Aleksandre Mrevlishvili, Mose Toidze, Iakob Nikoladze and others were exhibited for the first time in Tbilisi. As a result, the "Temple of Glory" became central to Tbilisi's cultural life in the 1890s, a place where the Tbilisi public could see the works of Georgian artists for the first time. The "Temple of Glory" was perceived more of a place dedicated to visual arts than an illustration of the Russian Empire's military triumphs.



Ethnographic exhibition hall of the Caucasian Museum



Ethnographic exhibition hall of the Caucasian Museum

Eventually, the Russian Empire relinquished the implementation of their goal, and in 1916, the doors of the "Temple of Glory" closed – never to open again.

THE "GEORGIAN MUSEUM"

By the late 19th century the Museum of the Society for the Spreading of Literacy was in its death throes and the Georgian intellectuals realized that the Church Museum alone would never be able to collect, study and promote their national treasures. Led by Ekvtime Takaishvili, in 1907 the Georgian Historical and Ethnographic Society was established with the goal to create a "Georgian Museum and Library". For this purpose he managed to unite illustrious Georgian personalities such as Akaki Tsereteli, Vazha Pshavela, Iakob Gogebashvili, Vasil Barnov (Barnaveli), David Kldiashvili, Ekaterine

Gabashvili as well as Zakaria Paliashvili, Ivane Javakhishvili and Niko Marr.

The Society received permission to build a new museum in 1912, although the Georgian Museum had been established earlier. Of special significance for the museum were the two manuscripts donated to its first collection by Ekvtime Takaishvili in 1908 – the Book of Laws and the Code of Vakhtang VI. In the following years, in order to enrich their collections, the museum's staff organized expeditions, which meant they could organize two exhibitions in the building of the Gymnasium for Noblemen.

David Sarajishvili had bequeathed 100,000 rubles for the construction of a museum building and his widow added 600,000 to this amount – but in vain with the beginning of World War I, plans for an appropriate building for a museum

were delayed again, and in 1927, hope disappeared completely, and all collections and the library were taken over by the Museum of Georgia, established in connection with the Caucasian Museum.

THE MUSEUM OF GEORGIA

By establishing the Museum of Georgia, one of the most important landmarks in the scientific study of Georgian history began. In 1919-1920 the Government of the Georgian Republic issued several important decrees which, for the first time, defined the system of Georgian museums as a national institution. The Museum of Georgia became a center of supervision and protection of material cultural monuments. In April 1920, a Foundation for Purchasing Items of Historical Significance was established under the Museum of Georgia. During the

same period, the periodicals "Sakartvelos Muzeumis Moambe" (Bulletin of the Museum of Georgia) and "Sakartvelos Muzeumis Shromebi" (Proceedings of the Museum of Georgia) were created.

A decree issued on 30 March, 1920 by the Constituent Assembly and the Government on the establishment of the Georgian National Art Gallery was significant, as it founded Georgia's Museum of Art. Funds were also allocated for the construction of a building for the Museum of Georgia, although this was never implemented. Because of the chaotic political situation that took over the country, the Museum ceased its work in accordance with an order issued on 20 February, 1921. However, several months later the process of reviving the Museum of Georgia began again, albeit with difficulty. During this troubled period, an Academic Council supervised the work of the Museum, yet in 1921 all the Museum's relations and ties with foreign scientific institutions were terminated, and museum staff was frequently targeted by Soviet Government repressions.

In early 1922, the Government raised the issue of repatriating Georgian antiquities kept in the Russian museums and storage facilities. The process of repatriation began a year later, with the involve-

ment of most of Georgia's distinguished academics and representatives of the public. Although it proved impossible to repatriate all items, as some of them could not be traced, the search and attempts to repatriate them continued for a long time.

In 1923, the Soviet Government issued an official decree, according to which the reorganization of the museums had to be conducted, yet the process was never completed. As a result, Georgia's museums decayed into terrible condition, some even without buildings. The Republic's Government closed them all, and between 1928 and 1931, all of the museum collections of the Republic were placed in the Museum of Georgia.

In 1929, the construction of a museum building in Tbilisi was completed, so that after a 30-year involuntary hiatus the Museum finally regained its main function – organizing exhibitions. In 1931, Ivane Javakhishvili began working in the Museum and in 1937 he was appointed Head of the History Department that he had been earnestly trying to establish since 1934. With the Museum staff he devised projects and took on the training of young scholars, intensifying work on exhibitions, recording collections and other tasks.

A physical-chemical restoration laboratory was founded in 1932, where the refurbishment of metal items and the restoration and conservation of ancient palimpsests were carried out. The Museum's taxidermy laboratory was outstanding, not only at the Georgian level but compared to others in the Soviet Union. In May 1933, scientific divisions were established in almost every department, with the participation of all the Georgian scholarly elite. Thanks to the scientists working at the Museum, the institution received international recognition – yet because of limited funding, exhibitions could not be organized simultaneously for all departments. In 1928, a zoological exhibition was organized and remained open until 1972. Between 1931 and 1937, the halls offered ethnographic exhibits of 18th-19th century Georgian garments and crafts from Khevsureti and Svaneti; the so-called "vault" of the Department of Manuscripts; Georgian mineral resources; and an exhibition displaying material culture from the era of Shota Rustaveli. The storage facilities of the Museum's Library were becoming richer every year and by 1932 there were 300,000 books in the Museum Library.

Political events and repressions that unfolded at the end of the 1930s left an appalling mark on the life of the Museum of Georgia and its scientists. In October 1933, Giorgi Mirotadze became the Director of the Museum, and then lost his life during the repressions. Even so, the Museum's institutional development continued, and during this time large-scale archaeological excavations began in Mtskheta, Samtavro and Armaziskhevi, Bolnisi and ancient Dmanisi settlements, Gudarekhi and other sites. The Museum of Georgia was given the responsibility to process all of the discoveries.

In 1926-1930, relations were re-established with foreign scientific centers. In 1929, the Museum broadened the scope of its exhibitions abroad, and in June-October 1930, Germany's cities of Berlin, Cologne, Nuremberg and Munich hosted an exhibi-



Caucasian Museum

tion of ancient Georgian works of art, and a catalogue was published in German. From Germany, the exhibition traveled to Vienna. However, upon an order of the Soviet Government on 25 May, 1938, the Museum of Georgia consultant and world-renowned scholar Grigol Tsereteli was arrested. He died in prison. One year earlier, another great scholar, folklorist Vakhtang Kotetishvili had been executed. Then, a Government Order No 2, declared that photos of "enemies of the people" and "Trotskyite saboteurs" were to be removed from the Museum's photo laboratory and handed over to the NKVD. As a result of these measures many documents and remarkable materials disappeared from Georgia's archives.

When World War II began in 1941 the Museum found itself threatened. In 1942, Germans were succeeding on battlefields and their troops approached the Caucasus. This led to the implementation of special measures at the Museum. The collections were placed in evacuation crates and evacuation item lists made, and removed to unknown sites. These

collections were returned to the Museum only in 1943. On 11 April 1945, some Georgian treasures that had been moved to Paris returned to Tbilisi. The crates were brought from the airport to the Museum of Georgia, and under the supervision of academician Simon Janashia, a government commission was established, which spent almost two years recording and checking the items.

After Janashia's death in 1947, the Museum was named after him.

In the 1950s, the Archaeology Department was created as a separate division. The number of archaeological expeditions increased and collections became richer. In 1957, a vault was built for the most precious items illustrating the history of the development of Georgian goldsmithery, and then in 1960 a landmark archaeological exhibition broke the mold in Georgian exhibition work. Through a vast array of archaeological discoveries, visitors could discover a complete picture of the history of Georgian material culture from the Stone Age

until the 4th century. In 1963-1981, there was an exhibition of Georgian material culture from the 4th to the 13th centuries. In 1967 an exhibition entitled "The Era of the Bourgeoisie" completed the series on Georgian material history. So, the visitors could follow the uninterrupted history of Georgia from ancient times until the Medieval Period and see the thematic ethnographic exhibitions and treasure exhibitions.

During the period of Soviet rule and since that time, the Museum has remained Georgia's main institution for science and exhibitions and a guarantor for the protection of Georgian national identity. Since 2004, after the establishment of the Georgian National Museum, the Simon Janashia Museum of Georgia became its key component. ■

The article is based on G. Chkhaidze's monograph "The State Museum of Georgia", Tbilisi, 2003; further reference: L. Chilashvili's article "Looking Back 150 Years", Museum Anniversary Bulletin, 2002, No 44.



Zoological exhibition hall of the Caucasian Museum

REMEMBERING EKVTIME TAKAISHVILI

MAIN THEME > Merab Mikeladze

He was blessed with talent, an outstanding love for his homeland and high morals. Throughout his lifetime his unique love for his country and his brilliant mind were put to use to study and safeguard Georgia's national treasures. Ekvtime Tkaisvili carried out his work tirelessly, dedicated to preserving his country's valuable cultural heritage. The value of his many initiatives resulted in a greater understanding of the origin and history of the nation of Georgia and its multi-ethnic society.

Ekvtime Takaishvili was born on January 3, 1863 in Likhauri, a small village in the region of Guria. His father was Simon Takaishvili, a military guard officer, and his mother was Nino Nakashidze. Ekvtime was orphaned at an early age and went to live with his aunt and grandmother. His grandmother admired books and was a skilled storyteller. In evenings she told him many fairy tales that inspired the little boy, ultimately motivating him to discover and le-

arn more about the world around him. When he was seven, Ekvtime attended the Ozurgeti Regional School.

After graduating from the Kutaisi Classical Gymnasium, Takaishvili continued his studies at the Faculty of History and Philology at St. Petersburg University. At his initiative, a group of Georgian students asked a professor of the Faculty of Oriental Studies, Alexandre Tsagareli, to arrange for the presentation of lectures on Georgian history and literature.

When Takaishvili returned to Georgia in 1887, equipped with his understanding of history and philology and with great knowledge of Georgian studies, he began to teach. He had a multifaceted interest in the fields of humanities, history, epigraphy, geography, archaeology, and art. This allowed him to connect and synthesize diverse disciplines and to deeply understand the vast dimensions of Georgian history and culture.

Takaishvili began teaching at the Tbilisi School and Gymnasium for Noblemen he collected and studied Georgian antiquities as an extension of the work of his teachers, Marie Felicite Brosset and Dimitri Bakradze. In 1889, at Bakradze's advice, he became a member of the Church Museum. In 1894, then joined the Imperial Archaeological Commission and the Caucasian Branch of the Moscow Archaeological Society. Beginning in 1901, he served as a member of the divisions for Caucasian Branches of the Societies of Geography and Oriental Studies. In 1907, Takaishvili founded the Historic and Ethnographic Society and also began working as Deputy Director of the Caucasian Institute of History and Archaeology. After his emigration to France, in 1922, he was elected member of the Numismatic Society of France and the Asian Society of Paris.

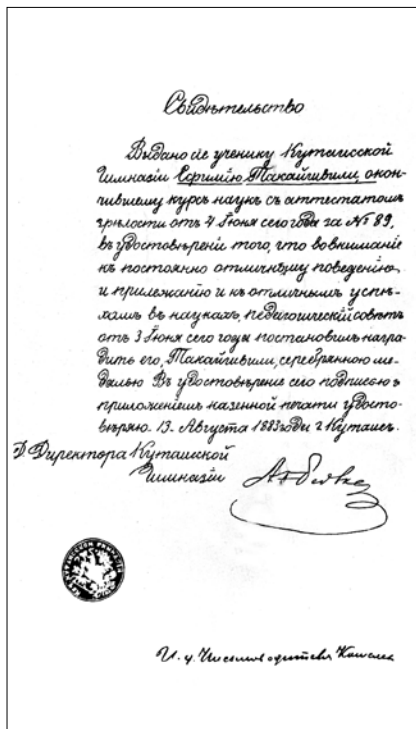
Ekvtime Takaishvili is one of the founders of Tbilisi State University. During his work as a professor and Head of the Department of Archaeology he compiled a special course, with an accent on the archaeology of fossils. This was the first course of archaeology and the use of archaeological terminology in a Georgian university.

Until 1917, Ekvtime Takaishvili was the only active Georgian archaeologist involved in excavations. He discovered and studied fossils, produced high profile studies on ancient structures, and published historical materials. He was responsible for the development and introduction of several principal archaeological regulations and provided preliminary instructions to future archaeologists on topics to be studied.

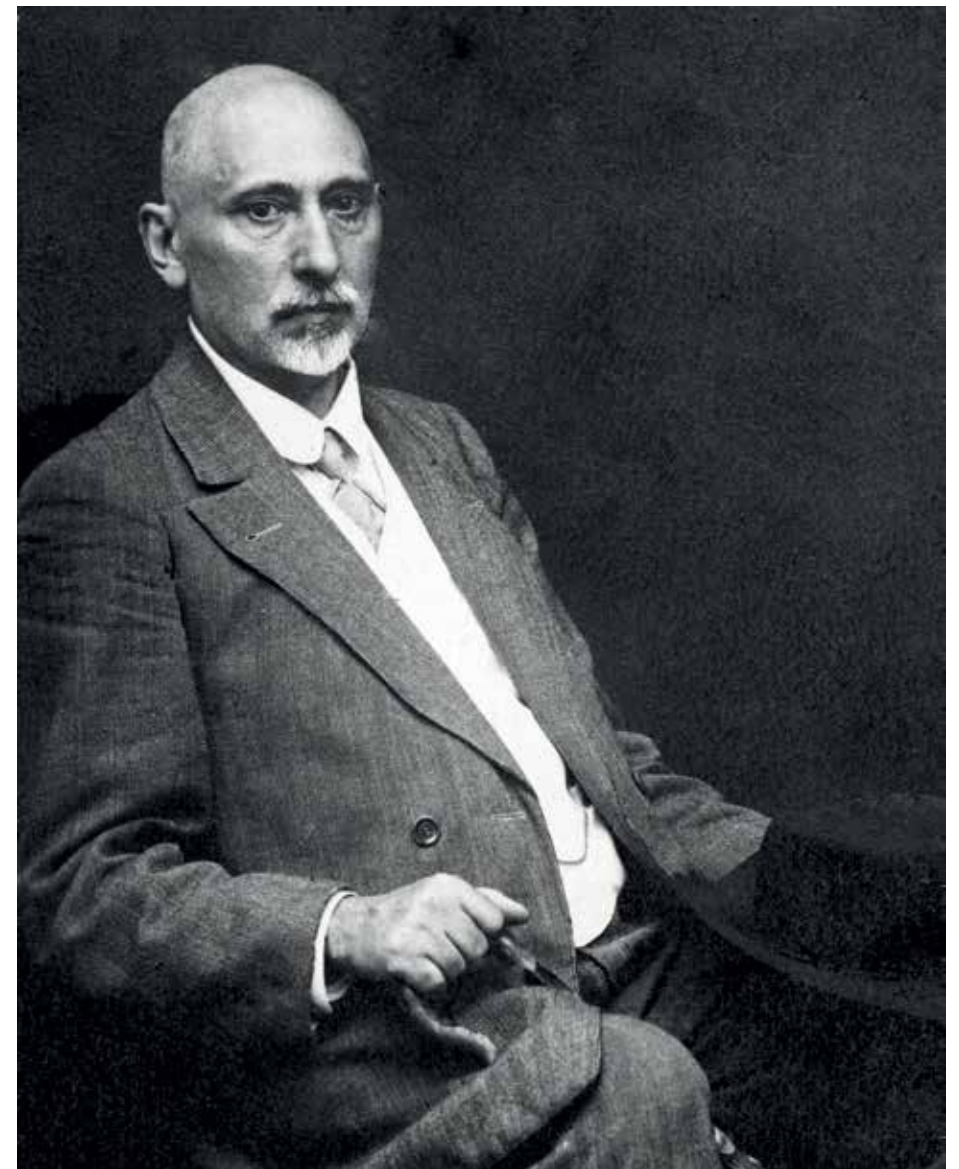
These included sites such as the former settlements of Vani, burial grounds in Sachkhere, as well as ancient sites in Tsalka and Trialeti. He also purchased numerous archaeological objects, including the material remains of the Sachkhere excavations.

It is clear that Takaishvili's tireless work led to the establishment of national and regional museums of Georgian history, science, and culture. According to his own words, he "looked for objects like a retriever!", collecting invaluable samples of national treasures one by one – first as a Board member of the Society for the Diffusion of Literacy Among Georgians and later as its Director. His importance and value in establishing the museum is truly priceless.

At the beginning of the 20th century, the Museum of the Georgian Historic and Ethnographic Society replaced the Museum of the Society for the Diffusion of Literacy Among Georgians and began to study, collect and preserve Georgia's cultural heritage. Takaishvili became the Director of the Historic and Ethnographic Society and started to carry out extensive expeditions. One of these took place in southwestern Georgia at the end of the World War I (1917) in Tao-Thortum-Ispir. Takaishvili's keen intuition had prompted him to direct his interest towards this oldest, and most probably, most "vulnerable" region of Georgia, where historic monuments were threatened by destruction. He used the advancement of the Russian troops on the Turkish front to his advantage and immediately decided to organize an expedition to liberated areas at the sources of the Chorokhi and Mtkvari Rivers, some of the most important sites for Georgian culture. Despite positive political developments, the journey to this region did not mean the travel would be easy or safe. Takaishvili left his last will and testament with his wife, saying "In case I don't make it back alive, organize a modest funeral and transfer my belongings to the Historic and Ethnographic Society".



Takaishvili not only discovered and collected Georgian museum objects and displayed them in exhibits, but was also in charge of the preservation and conservation of national treasures transported to France after the Bolshevik Revolution. Although he lived in extreme poverty in exile, he managed to purchase some objects of Georgian origin from antique dealers in France. In 1945, after 24 years of long separation, due to Takaishvili's devotion the valuable holdings returned to Georgia.



Certificate about the election of Ekvtime Takaishvili as the member of the Numismatic Society of Paris



Takaishvili's successful expeditions included the churches of Khakhuli, Ekeki, Oshki, Ishkhani, Bana and Parkhali; the Castle of Thortum and other architectural sites. Members of expeditions produced scientific measurements and drawings and generated architectural plans. They identified and registered monuments, recorded architectural details and copied frescoes. According to Takaishvili "most objects, manuscripts, deeds, pictures, frescoes and plans, which are kept at our museums and libraries, were collected during these excursions."

Results of the research by the Historic and Ethnographic Society were frequently presented in publications of the organization. The Society launched two series of editions for this purpose – "Old Georgia" and "Antiquities of

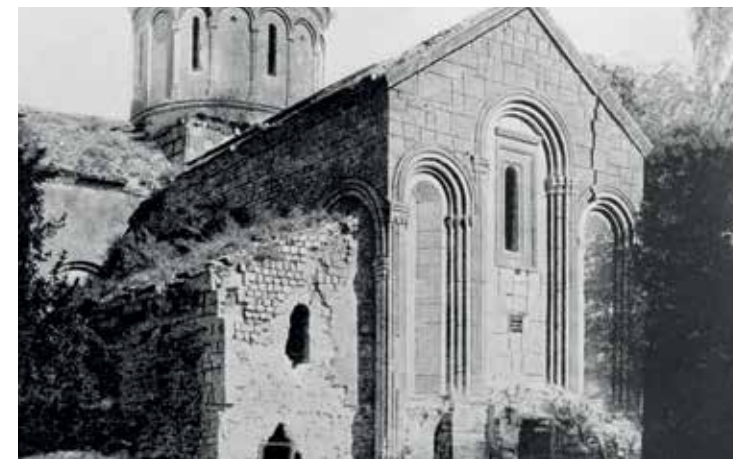
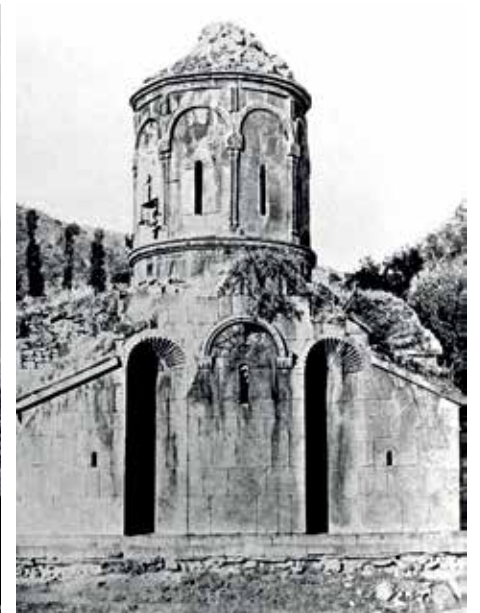
Georgia". The first focused on scientific articles and studies in different fields of humanities and the second presented the sources themselves – deeds, manuscripts, historical letters and other documents.

Takaishvili not only discovered and collected Georgian museum objects and displayed them in exhibits, but was also in charge of the preservation and conservation of national treasures transported to France after the Bolshevik Revolution. Although he lived in extreme poverty in exile, he managed to purchase some objects of Georgian origin from antique dealers in France. Strangely enough, in 1937, Takaishvili published a Georgian language edition of the "Archaeological Expedition of 1910 in Lechkumi and Svaneti". At the same time British and American

museums tried to buy the Georgian national treasures.

After Takaishvili's departure from Georgia to France taking treasures from several museums, to ensure their preservation, Ivane Javakhishvili became Head of the Historical Society. Javakhishvili stated that as a result of Takaishvili's efforts, the Georgian Museum had become the largest and most important educational and scientific institution in the country.

In 1945, after 24 years of long separation, due to Takaishvili's devotion the valuable holdings returned to Georgia. When he set foot on his native soil, he smiled and recalled words of the famous Georgian poet, Akaki Tsereteli: "I returned a sick man, my homeland welcomed me as a physician." However, he missed visiting his wife's grave.



Nino Poltoratskaya had been the beautiful daughter of a Polish attorney and a Georgian mother, and they had been introduced by the famous Georgian writer, Ilia Chavchavadze. She had accompanied him when he left for France in 1921 and in spite of her fragile health, she supported his quest to gain knowledge and understanding of Georgia's history and culture. Nino had died and was buried in Paris in 1931.

Shortly after his return in 1945, the 82-year-old scholar resumed his scientific work with renewed vigor, dedication, and generosity of spirit, which was always reflected in his face. He worked diligently putting in place a number of research projects, and lectured publicly at Tbilisi State University about the Georgian objects found in Europe, providing information about Georgia's

heritage. As a result of his work, a book about the Bagrationi dynasty, by Sumbat Davitis Dze, an 11th century historian, was published in 1949.

Nevertheless, in 1951, the Soviet government arrested his adopted daughter, Lydia Poltoratskaya, his only caretaker, and he was put under house arrest. When he died, in 1953, approximately 40 courageous admirers attended his funeral. He had no children. His entire life had been dedicated to creating a lasting example of the love of one's country, to serious scholarship, and to integrity. The Georgian Orthodox Church officially declared him a Saint Worthy of Veneration, and Georgians continue to respect his tremendous contributions, to honor his lifelong adherence to truth, and to take example from his service to the nation. ■



Cross of Queen Tamar, end of the 12th century



Goblet, 2nd millennium B.C., Trialeti



KEEPING THE PAST – FACING THE FUTURE

PROJECT > Tamar Babuadze

The Twinning Project is an EU-funded program of cooperation that helps public institutions in East European countries harmonize their standards with those of the EU through trainings, seminars, consultations, reorganization and legislative changes. It entails the partnership between public institutions of a EU member state and a country aspiring to become an EU member, to promote reforms and further development.

In this new century, a museum is no longer a place for simply collecting, conserving and exhibiting artifacts. It is becoming an inseparable part of urban life.

How should the museum fulfill this new role in the era of supertechnologies? How should a traditional establishment turn this challenge to their advantage? These issues were discussed in the autumn of 2012 at an international conference in Tbilisi entitled "Why Museums Now? Keeping the Past – Facing the Future" by specialists, managers and architects from the British

Museum (London), the Smithsonian Institution (Washington D.C.), Prussian Cultural Heritage Foundation / The State Museums of Berlin, the Metropolitan Museum (New York), UNESCO and the Georgian National Museum. Importantly, the last day of the conference was devoted to the South Caucasus and post-Soviet countries. Armenian, Azeri, Belorussian, Kazakh, Russian, Ukrainian, Uzbek and Georgian experts participated in a regional workshop entitled "Museums of Eastern Europe, Central Asia and the Caucasus in the 21st Century".

After the international conference, its participants said that the Georgian National Museum could become an example of development and progress in the region, thanks to its innovative projects.

A MUSEUM DISTRICT

A thematic exhibition was held within the framework of the conference. The exhibition, which opened at the Simon Janashia Museum of Georgia in cooperation with the Goethe Institute of Georgia and The State Museums of Berlin, presented a

museum-centered concept for both Tbilisi and Berlin. In the case of Berlin there is an existing concept of a "Museum Island", while in Tbilisi a project will turn the museum section of Rustaveli Avenue into a completely new urban space. French architect Jean François Milou is the author of the project. His plan was presented at the exhibition along with sketches of Gudiashvili Street made by Georgian architect Vladimer Kurtishvili in the 1970s.

What is the idea behind Berlin's Museum Island? What role does it play in the city's overall urban scene, what does it add to it, how does it make it more vibrant? How does such a system of museums deal with the issue of protecting and exhibiting collections? These were questions raised by the exhibition that opened at the Museum, and answered by graphic presentations and photos, items and accompanying texts, as well as a film for exhibition visitors. These two projects exhibited side by side – one implemented and one planned – allowed

visitors to clearly grasp the scale of changes that a project such as "Museum District" would entail.

Based on Berlin's Museum Island example we can assume that Museum District Tbilisi will soon become a model for placing and protecting collections in optimal spaces, and for the effective allocation of exposition space. This will be a process that will extend beyond museum walls and, through the joint efforts of politicians and representatives of business and academia will transform the capital's center into a district of art and knowledge.

The project covers an area that includes the National Gallery, Alexander's Garden, Gudiashvili Street, Simon Janashia and Shalva Amiranashvili Museums and adjacent territories. The transformation has already begun at the Simon Janashia Museum, where a "ticket-free zone" has been opened with a cafe and a gift shop, with a courtyard that hosts interesting events. Once the museum street is fully operatio-

nal it will be one of the central components unifying Rustaveli Avenue and Gudiashvili Street.

NEW STANDARDS AT THE NATIONAL MUSEUM

The Twinning Project is an EU-funded program of cooperation that helps public institutions in East European countries harmonize their standards with those of the EU through trainings, seminars, consultations, reorganization and legislative changes. It entails the partnership between public institutions of a EU member state and a country aspiring to become an EU member, to promote reforms and further development.

Twining projects have been successfully implemented in various countries for more than 10 years, and the agreement on cooperation with the Georgian National Museum was signed five years ago. The goal was to provide the Museum with institutional support, and was the first Twin-



ning project in the cultural sphere, with The State Museums of Berlin as the National Museum's partner. Leading experts of The State Museums of Berlin from 40 different sectors shared their experience in reorganizing a museum in a transition period with the Georgian colleagues in the course of the 27-month project. Priority spheres included the building planning, storage and workshop space, moving the collections, restoration and conservation of artifacts, museum management and the introduction of general museum standards.

The Twinning project consisted of four components. The first envisaged the creation of storage space for works of art, the second created recommendations to improve preventive conservation, the third was a test project for moving the collections – implemented with the Oriental Art Collection – and the fourth component entailed the preparation of a set of museum standards. Eventually, this document defined the Museum's internal standards with regard to public relations, partnerships and legal issues concerning exhibitions and loaning exhibit items.

STORAGE SPACE FOR WORKS OF ART

One of the priority issues in the Georgian National Museum's reorganization plan

was to add one more component to the Twinning project – the creation of storage space for works of art. This will be a system of restoration and conservation, diagnostic laboratories and collection storage spaces equipped with modern technologies where all types of items kept in the museum can be brought for restoration, conservation and research. The idea is that the center will also help the museums of neighboring countries in scientific research and restoration, as its purpose and capacity will be of an unprecedented scale in the South Caucasus.

The author of the concept of the storage facility for the works of art, Jean François Milou, elaborated the initial draft and main aspects of the concept after consultations with the head of the Georgian National Museum and its leading specialists. The project itself was prepared within the framework of the Twinning Project by the National Museum's Architecture and Construction Office group with the help of leading specialists from The State Museums of Berlin. The German colleagues consulted the Georgian specialists on each issue including the structural analysis, construction planning and architecture, equipment of storage facilities, restoration workshops and research labs.

The second function of the center is the storage of collections from the Shalva Amiranashvili Museum of Fine Arts, the Simon Janashia Museum of Georgia and the Dimitri Shevardnadze National Gallery. According to the preliminary plan, a large space will be allocated in the new building for the collections and equipped with modern technology for the protection of museum items.

On Gudiashvili Street, a new building will be constructed next to the Museum of Fine Arts and will contain storage and restoration facilities for art including paintings and graphic arts, paper, glass, textile, ceramic, metal and wood.

The issue of storing the collections in the new center is addressed in the Twinning Project as well. All items at the National Museum have been digitized, and according to each item's size, weight, condition and photo have been entered into a database. The floor space of storage facilities for the works of art and laboratories were planned after these data were analyzed. The two components of modern standards and equipment became the basis of the entire concept of the center. Thanks to new technologies not only restoration and conservation can be conducted but it will also be possible to carry out a comprehensive scientific study on any item.



THE ORIENTAL ART COLLECTION

"New Life for the Oriental Art Collection" is one of the most diverse and rich exhibitions of the Simon Janashia Museum of Georgia. An Egyptian mummy and a sarcophagus; an 8th-century page from the Quran written on parchment; an easel, a miniature and lacquer paintings from China and Japan; Chinese silk paintings and compositions on rice paper; metal and ceramic tableware; Chinese vases from the 14th to 19th centuries; and combat weapons made of precious metals are only a part of 180 masterpie-

ces from the cultures of Egypt, the Islamic world and the Far East now on display, making a lasting impression on the visitors.

The exhibition is particularly important because many items displayed have been restored. Due to unsuitable conditions at the Shalva Amiranashvili Museum of Fine Arts, many items had sustained damage, making them unfit to be exhibited. Unique items had to be rescued. Restoring and recording-digitizing the Oriental Art Collection and moving it to new quarters was a main component

of the Twinning Project. It was also an experiment since it entailed the creation of instructions for moving works of art into new storage facilities and for conserving them in the National Museum. This important component of the Twinning Project had twofold results: extremely rare items from the Oriental Art Collection were treated and restored, while a new set of rules and instructions were elaborated. This will mean that precious items in the Museum will be protected by more qualified and systematic processes. ■

EMINENT DIRECTOR OF THE METROPOLITAN MUSEUM OF ART

INTERVIEW > Natia Khuluzauri

Philippe de Montebello was born in Paris into French aristocracy; the family moved to the USA in the 1950s. He graduated from Harvard University with a degree in art history then received his MA from New York University. In 1977, Montebello became Director of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, and his name is still associated with the museum's Golden Age. In 2009 he retired – yet he still remains one of the most influential figures of American cultural life. Today he teaches museum history and culture at NYC's Institute of Fine Arts. In the autumn of 2012, Professor Montebello came to Tbilisi and participated in the conference "Why Museums Now? Keeping the Past – Facing the Future" organized by the Georgian National Museum, Goethe-Institut Georgia and Staatliche Museen zu Berlin / Stiftung Preußischer Kulturbesitz. During his visit we had the honor of speaking with him.



Professor PHILIPPE DE MONTEBELLO, Director of the Metropolitan Museum of Art in 1977-2008, Professor of the Institute of Fine Arts, New-York University.

How did you choose your profession?

Even as a child I was interested in art, and when I went to the university I decided to major in art history. There is nothing complicated about it – some people like mathematics, some people become scientists. I always knew I wanted my life to be connected to art.

What about your first steps at the New York Metropolitan Museum of Art – the exhibitions and events? Which was most successful?

In my career at the Met I created more than 600 exhibitions – it's hard to name only one!

Of course most were very successful – but what was the first time you tasted the sensation of great satisfaction for an innovative exhibition?

I suppose my first success was a series of exhibitions I organized with the Soviet Union – "Scythian's Gold", followed by "Treasures of the Kremlin", followed by three or four shows on the Peter the Great and Katherine the Great – then there was a show of 19th and 20th century paintings... So this was a series of exhibitions from the Soviet Union – and nobody had done it before!

You were the Director of the Metropolitan Museum of Art during an interesting epoch, when cultural life in New-York was at its peak and Andy Warhol, Jasper Johns,

Jean-Michel Basquiat and others were revolutionizing Art...

I was never involved or particularly interested in contemporary cultural life. I wasn't involved with Warhol, and I'm not involved with today's artists. I am an old fossil and – although I follow what is happening today, I don't have any emotional involvement or interest in it, and never did...

Which period of art history is most notable for you then? Which epoch or direction attracts you?

It so happens that I specialized in early Dutch and French painting – 15th century painting such as Fouquet, Van Eyck and Rogier van der Weyden... But that's not necessarily what I prefer in the world – it's what I studied for my degrees at the University. However, as the Director of the museum with all of the art of the world, I developed an interest in Islamic art... This is what I love most and collect today.

It seems that this was the reason for your special interest in the oriental exhibition at the Georgian National Museum, and the Qajar collection?

Yes, you have a great collection of Qajar portraits. I would say that even the Metropolitan does not have the quantity or quality of the Qajar Dynasty portraits found in here. I also liked the oriental ceramics and metal vessels from your collection.

Let's return to New-York – we all know that Rome was considered the first capital of art, then Paris, then from the middle of the 20th century...

New-York!

Again, you were the part of this development, and directly or indirectly you were involved in the process that made New-York the international cultural center that it became. What can you say about this?

I don't know – maybe I was in a right place at the right time – but I don't think I created events; I think I exploited the circumstances successfully. I'm not sure if I'm an inventor or a creator... But, you know, I think that everything I did, I did well. I always stressed excellence and never lowered the bar of the expectations of the public – that's most important. If you always continue to raise the bar for the public, they will begin to expect better and better – and I think that's what I did.

I am sure you often had to make very hard and complicated decisions...

Daily...

Did you take risks often, or did you plan a lot in advance? How did that work?

I have an unorthodox management style. I don't have meetings – I don't believe in them. And I don't believe in consensus building, which is very popular today. I listen to people and talk individually to my curators and va-

rious members of the staff whose opinions I respect – but not everyone. There are people whose opinions I don't care about and I don't invite them to tell me anything. But there are people who I think count in any institution, and I have lunch with them, often discuss issues with them, then aggregate all I learn from everyone, which allows me to make quick decisions based on this cumulative intelligence. So, I don't have to bring them all in a room and say – "Now what shall we do about this or that", because I have a general sense of the right thing to do. This was how I was made decisions – I just did things, things happened quickly and they happened decisively... It's a form of "benevolent dictatorship"...

I suppose it's quite difficult to make the decision to resign...perhaps it's about choosing the right moment in this case... But, still it must not be easy to let go of something that you devoted most of your life to, and that you made so successful. You decided to resign just as the Museum was at the height of its success – why?

Just as the progression of my career was linear and logical – studying art history at the University, studying as Assistant Curator in the European Paintings Department at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, then moving up to become Associate Curator, then becoming Director of a small museum in Houston... next I come back to the Met to become Chief Curator and then Director. This was smooth, logical and even lucky in a way, and for 31 years I ran the institution. I have come to the point where I have basically reinstalled just about all the collections – the last big one was the Greek and Roman Galleries. I had made all the plans for the American wing and for the new Islamic wing. More and more people were saying that museums must change, that they must show more contemporary art, and that museums must have more electronics and technology. I am ignorant and even indifferent to technology, but I am intelligent enough to know and realize that this was indeed a shift the Museum needed to take. I was also sufficiently self-aware to know that I was not the person who would make the right decisions in that field, because I knew nothing. So, I decided – I am 72, I've spent 30 years as Director, the Museum is great; I leave my successor a marvelous staff, a well managed institution with a good budget and he can make the changes. There is a time for everything. So I left perfectly content.

Would you change something if you could?

There are things I regret, there are things I would still like to be able to influence, but I had wisdom to change jobs. I did not retire – instead I became a fulltime Professor and have so much work to create courses for the graduate school in art history that I don't have time to look back and be nostalgic.

That must be a great feeling...

Yes! It's a different life and a very busy life too!

I am sure the students are eager and very happy to attend your lectures.

I cannot speak for them – I hope so...

Tell me, with your experience, what would you advise the Director of the Georgian National Museum?

Nothing! I do not give advice and I do not believe in giving advice. If someone wants to extrapolate from what I have done, from what others do – they can... But I am not a consultant – I refused all jobs as consultant and I don't believe in giving advice to other people or other institutions, just as I do not give recommendations to my successor at the Metropolitan Museum of Art... I leave him alone, just as I was left alone by my predecessor.

I thought you were sometimes asked for advice about new exhibitions or other special events...

If I do give opinions, I give them privately.

Then I'll seize my chance and ask you – what advice would you give to the Georgian National Museum as an institution, how should it situate itself globally?

– You must understand people's thoughts are influenced by their positions, their locations and a lot of external factors. For example, Americans do not understand geography in general and many of them – when you say "Georgia" – don't think of the Republic of Georgia in the Caucasus; they think about the state of Georgia in US. So, in the US you need to propose something that is characteristic of who you are. For the rest of the world, you also need to show your uniqueness, so the way you introduce yourself is something that has already been done, like sending the Vani gold treasure to New York's Institute for the Study of the

Ancient World, then to Getty and other exhibitions. So, be conscious of presenting yourself; do less requesting and more proposing – like sending exhibitions abroad. You should send some of the works of art you have, and organize exhibitions in Paris, London, Berlin, New York and other centers of culture. So, yes, you need to present yourself more so people understand what you have and who you are...

Several objects from our collections were exhibited in the Metropolitan Museum of Art...

Yes, you have a great collection of early cloisonné enamels. When we did a Byzantine exhibition at the Met we borrowed objects from your collections, but as part of another exhibition. You should organize exhibitions that don't come exclusively from only one Georgian museum. Look at yourself as a country – if you pull resources from different places you can create exhibitions and programs to send abroad. In this way other people become aware of the great culture of Georgia.

So considering this, and since you first visited Georgia 30 years ago, what do you find has changed since then – and what is the same in Georgia today?

Well, it is a bit the same situation here as in all of the countries that were once part of the Soviet Union – I walked here from my hotel and there was no KGB person following me. I looked around and saw an athlete on a poster with a big name: Samsung. You have become a country that has become international and open in the commercial, financial and cultural worlds. I arrived here this time without a visa, for example. In the old days, going to the Soviet Union was a big problem and took weeks of preparation. You are now like rest of Europe and the rest of the world. You are now a free country and one senses it.

So, do you think we will have our own place on the map of the world's museums?

Well, you are getting there.

Finally, let me ask "Why museums now?" What is the role of the museum in this rapidly changing epoch of the digital technologies?

Why museums now? – Because people still thirst for authenticity! ■

HERMANN PARZINGER LEADER OF THE MUSEUM FIELD IN GERMANY

INTERVIEW > Natia Khuluzauri

An EU-supported twinning project was jointly implemented in 2009-2012 by the Prussian Cultural Heritage Foundation and the Georgian National Museum to support the institutional development of the latter in collaboration with the State Museums of Berlin. Twinning programs with Europe have existed successfully for a decade, designed for collaboration between Western Europe and Eastern European countries that subsequently became members of the EU. The first twinning project in the field of culture was implemented by the Prussian Cultural Heritage Foundation, Germany and the Georgian National Museum.



Professor HERMANN PARZINGER, renowned scientist and a leading specialist of prehistory, President of the Prussian Cultural Heritage Foundation, the largest cultural institution in Europe.

Professor Parzinger, as Head of the Prussian Cultural Heritage Foundation – one of the largest cultural heritage institutions in Europe, overseeing 17 museums, libraries and archives – could you tell us about this complex institution?

The Prussian Cultural Heritage Foundation includes the National Museums of Berlin, the National Library of Berlin, the Prussian State Archive and other institutions. Of course, to lead such a large institution is challenging, but our collections cover all types of cultural heritage, art and material culture, literature, documents and music – so it is a unique chance for the institutions that are part of our Foundation. This is especially true in today's digital world when you can connect all these museums, libraries and archives. However it is very important to create the understanding between them that they must cooperate and work together to face common challenges in order to stay at the cutting edge of their fields.

In your opinion, what is a museum's place in the larger political picture of a country?

Museums play an important role because first of all they preserve and analyze the cultural heritage of a country. Secondly they use this heritage to educate the public – to help them become interested in art, history and culture, which is very important for modern society. In Germany museums and other cultural institutions receive strong support from the government, especially the Prussian Cultural Heritage Foundation in Berlin, since large projects like the renovation of Museum Island or reconstruction of the Berlin Palace with the Humboldt-Forum, shape the picture of a country as a cultural nation in the eyes of the world.

As a world famous scientist, do you believe scientific study is the foundation of Museum life?

Research is the basic foundation of a museum. If a museum is not engaged in research, then it only becomes a storehouse of material culture. Research produces new perspectives about our past and new stories about history, which we want to show the public through exhibitions. There are so many collections in museums all over

the world waiting to be fully studied so they can open their secrets and help us understand the past. Basically, conservation research is necessary so we don't lose our cultural heritage. Some material culture is in critical condition and has to be constantly cared for in the best conditions.

Not long ago the Prussian Cultural Heritage Foundation finished rebranding. Could you give us some key points from that process which are pertinent to modern cultural institutions? Could you tell us about the general mission of museums in the 21st century?

Today clear branding and a good understanding of the mission of an institution are extremely important. They influence how an institution sees itself and shapes its self-perception, and at the same time they send out a message that conveys a certain image. For us it was very important that our new branding showed, above all, that all museums, libraries, archives and research institutes of the Prussian Cultural Heritage Foundation belong to one and the same institution and

that they all share the basic points of one and the same mission statement. We wanted to combine some aspects, such as the traditions and long histories of these institutions, with modernity, innovation and an orientation towards the public. These are also the most important points for any museum in the 21st century, and are not so different from the 20th or 19th centuries – museums, like other cultural institutions, have to stay in close touch and continuously reach out to new publics in order to fascinate people by art, history and culture. To do this they have to use the most modern and innovative methods and techniques. When museums are in close touch with their visitors, they are never old-fashioned – this has been the secret of successful museums since the 18th century.

How can one engage the public in the life of a museum?

Public engagement has many different facets. First of all, museums have to aim their programs at people within different parts of society, for example different ages, different interests and education, as well as cultural or religious backgrounds – museums must engage them all. Therefore it is important that museums offer activities that combine temporary exhibitions with permanent ones and integrate exhibitions into other cultural programs. Public engagement also implies financial engagement – those who are wealthy should feel a certain obligation to support cultural institutions, which always lack sufficient funding, even in Germany.

For more than three years, the first EU-supported twinning project in the cultural field was implemented by the Prussian Cultural Heritage Foundation's State Museums of Berlin and the Georgian National Museum. Why did you decide to participate in this project?

I think it has been a very important experience for all members of my ins-

titution who participated in it. Seeing the difficulties others have to overcome, it can sometimes help you to better understand your own situation and be more appreciative. On the other hand, I have enormous respect for what Georgia achieved in the last years building up this fascinating "museum street" in the city center of Tbilisi. There is much that remains to be done, but we are very glad we could travel a short piece of the way with you.

Could you give us an overall evaluation of the project and its importance for our museums?

Everyone knows Georgia is not a affluent country, but it's for this reason everyone admires what they are creating in the center of the capital. Culturally, Ge-

In autumn 2012 an international conference "Why Museums Now? Keeping the past – Facing the Future" was held at the Georgian National Museum. This was one of the most important events in our museum's life since museum specialists from all over the world came to Georgia to discuss today's issues. What would you say about such conferences and forums?

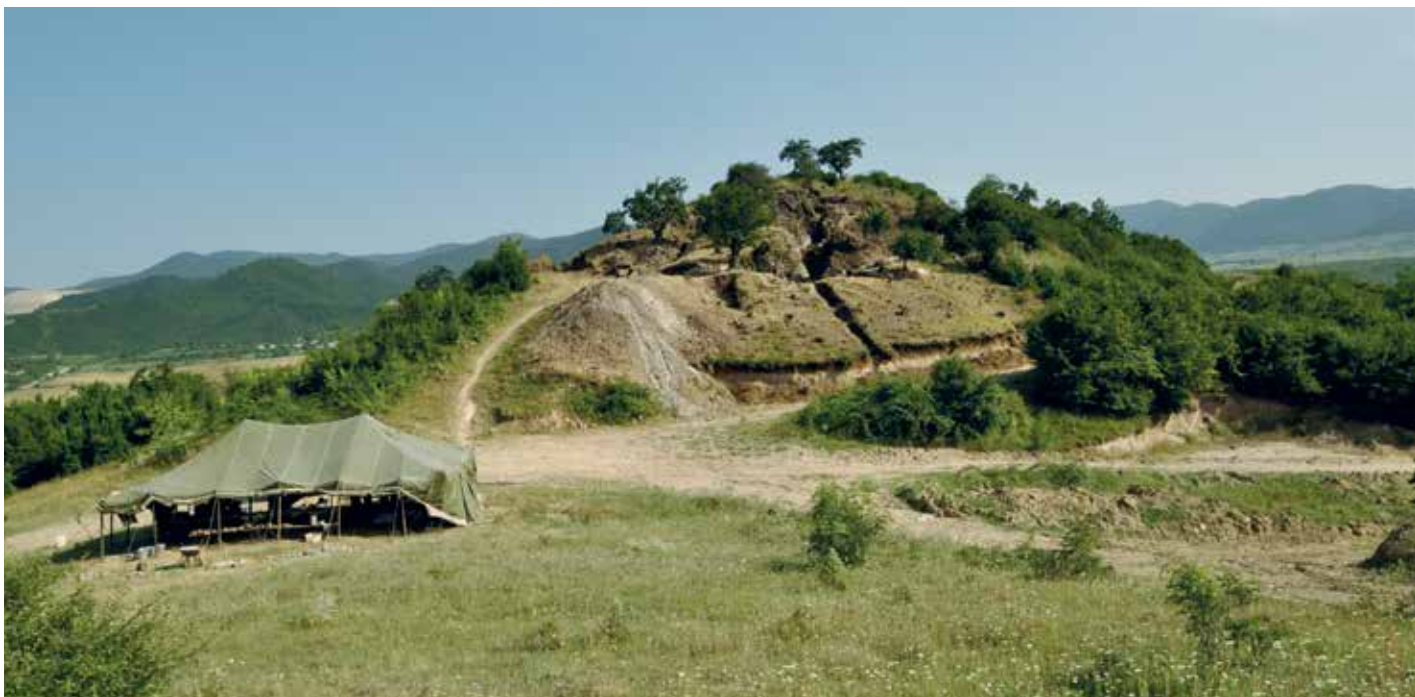
Museums and all other cultural and scientific institutions are, and should be, active international players. Therefore it was excellent to hold this conference, which brought museum leaders together from different countries to discuss key issues, challenges and difficulties. Indeed, only those of us who continuously learn from others will be successful.

Public engagement has many different facets. First of all, museums have to aim their programs at people within different parts of society, for example different ages, different interests and education, as well as cultural or religious backgrounds – museums must engage them all. Therefore it is important that museums offer activities that combine temporary exhibitions with permanent ones and integrate exhibitions into other cultural programs. Public engagement also implies financial engagement – those who are wealthy should feel a certain obligation to support cultural institutions, which always lack sufficient funding, even in Germany.

orgia is an extremely rich country, and it was a brilliant investment in its future to care for this cultural heritage. The investments you are making now will reflect the cultural achievements of the Georgian people for a very long time. It can help Georgians today to be stimulated to work for a better future when they realize the achievements of the past. In addition to this, the project and its contacts which the museums in Georgia have with institutions all over the world, everybody learns about Georgia and about what is happening there.

How do you see the future relationship of recently twinned State Museums of Berlin and the Georgian National Museum?

I strongly hope that we will continue to collaborate on both exhibitions and research projects in the coming years. We should deepen our relations since Georgia is a wonderful and extremely interesting country. All those from the Prussian Cultural Heritage Foundation who have been to Georgia within this Twinning Project would love to come back! ■



THE MYSTERY OF THE SAKDRISI MINES

RESEARCH > Irina Ghambashidze

The world's oldest gold production site has been discovered in Sakdrisi, Kvemo Kartli in southern Georgia, where archaeological research has produced sensational results. This is the world's oldest known gold production site, dating from the 4th millennium B.C. Over 15 tunnels and mining platforms were discovered in this site where extracted gold ore underwent preliminary treatment.

Scientific cooperation with the German Mining Museum in Bochum (DBM) began in 1996, and since that time several important archaeological projects have been implemented. Between 2001 and 2003 an exhibition entitled "Georgia – Treasure from the Land of the Golden Fleece" was organized in the German cities of Bochum and Wiesbaden where 756 copper, bronze, antimony, lead, iron, gold and silver artifacts demonstrated the uninterrupted history of Georgia's ancient metalwork.

A Georgian exhibition in Germany in 2003 resulted in two educational and scientific projects implemented in cooperation with DBM, the Ruhr University Bochum (RUB) and the University of Frankfurt (IMUF) with funding from the Volkswagen Foundation (Germany). The first was entitled "Stepping up interdisciplinary research and introducing new methods of mining archaeology and archaeometallurgy in Georgia" and the second, initiated in 2007, is entitled "Gold in Georgia". The goal of the projects are to study ancient metallurgy in Georgia using both social and natural science research to learn how raw materials were extracted and processed in the Caucasus in ancient times.

The archaeometallurgical study of ore mines on Georgia's territory includes that of ancient metal artifacts. It has involved

Master's, Doctoral and Post-doctoral students from Georgia and internationally and has contributed to the preparation of a course of lectures in Georgian, and courses in Caucasian archaeology. There have been workshops held in archaeology and archaeometallurgy.

Within the framework of the project archaeological excavations started in the mining tunnels of the Sakdrisi mine, which had been discovered in 1987 in the southern region of Kvemo Kartli near the town of Kazreti. Geological works meant excavations could be carried out as deep as 25 meters below the surface.

The densest cultural layers in the mining tunnels were found at 1.5-2.4 meters where fragments of earthenware were discovered in situ along with charcoal, stone, bone and obsidian tools. Marks indicating the use of stone hammers could be seen clearly on the smooth walls, indicating their archaic origins. The ancient mining tunnels followed the gold veins, leaving no doubt that the mines were used to extract gold. Over 10 000 stone mining tools were discovered over the territory of Sakdrisi, proving that the primary treatment of gold likely took place on location.

The discovery of clay items typical of the Kura-Araxes cultu-

re which were found in the cultural layers of the mines played an important role in the preliminary dating of the monument. Radio-carbon dating later confirmed this upon examination of charcoal discovered in the same layers. The period of works in these mines was determined at 3 330-2 580 B.C. Thus gold mining in these tunnels continued for 750 years. Due to the sensational archaeological research results in Sakdrisi the site was identified as the oldest monument of gold mining in the world. In 2006, Sakdrisi entered the list of Georgia's Cultural Heritage Monuments.

It became clear during the course of the research, that at the same time other ancient civilizations like Egypt were extracting gold by sifting through sand along river beds, societies in the Lesser Caucasus Mountains were already acquainted with complex underground mining technologies – detecting almost invisible gold in ore mines with the naked eye, using stone tools to separate it from rock, then crushing, washing and smelting it.

To carry out more complex research it became necessary to find an ancient mining settlement. After archaeological reconnaissance work the remains of a settlement and burial grounds were found, that covered over 62 hectares on territory adjacent to today's village of Balichi. This is currently considered the largest archaeological remains of any settlement of the Kura-Araxes period in the South Caucasus.

Inside the buildings stone tools for processing ore occupied a key place, along with Kura-Araxes ceramics. One of the buildings was a workshop where a smelting furnace was found; around it were small stone hammers, pounders, crushers, grinding boards, and crushed ore. Inside the furnace, a slag-covered clay cubicle to melt ore was found. Based on these discoveries, the site was identified as a settlement of miners, where gold ore from Sakdrisi underwent secondary treatment and smelting, at the turn of the 4th and the 3rd millennia B.C. The burial grounds were mostly collective, with clay items as the main burial accessories.

Through interdisciplinary projects, analytical research began in parallel to archaeological research. Samples of gold from Georgia's mines and from ore-bearing sands along riverbeds were collected for comparison using chemical and isotope analyses. Samples were sent to laboratories at the DBM Institute of Archaeometallurgy and the Institute of Mineralogy the Gothe University of Frankfurt, where they were analyzed with participation of Georgian and German Doctoral and Master's degree students.

This research will provide information about where the gold from Sakdrisi went, as results of the analysis of gold artifacts and ores discovered in Georgia are summarized. The archaeological study of Caucasian, Mesopotamian and Anatolian gold artifacts will be completed. Importantly, it has already been shown that at the turn of the 4th and 3rd millennia B.C., underground mining and processing gold in the South Caucasus was taking place locally.

In 2009, a long-term memorandum of mutual cooperation was signed between the Georgian National Museum, DBM, RUB and the DMT. In 2013, a new stage began in the relations be-



tween the the Georgian National Museum, the German Mining Museum Bochum and the Ruhr University Bochum. The German Research Foundation (DFG), the French National Center for Scientific Research (CNRS) and the French National Research Agency (ANR) have funded a new project, "Salt, Copper and Gold – the Oldest Mining Production in the Caucasus" with participation of the Archéorient – Environnements et Sociétés de l'Orient Ancien (Maison de l'Orient et de la Méditerranée, Université de Lyon, France), the Georgian National Museum and the Nakhchivan branch of the National Academy of Sciences of Azerbaijan. The project is interdisciplinary, with over 50 research scientists participating from several institutions. ■

A REGION OF TREASURES

REGION > Salome Guruli

The renovation of Svaneti Museum of History and Ethnography is an exceptionally important event in our country's cultural life. Today Georgian treasures are presented in excellent conditions and are accessible for the broader audience.





Jewellery "Aslar",
19th century / Vermeil, niello



Jewellery "Chaprastal"
19th century / Silver, niello



40 Sebastian Martyrs
12th century / Wood,
canvas, levkas, sheet
gold, tempera



Adishi Four Gospels
Pages of the manuscript
with Canon Tables / 897/
Parchment

Donated treasure

Pouch, stone, bead, coin imitations, Turkish Aqches, Russian tokens



The history of the Svaneti Museum of History and Ethnography goes back almost a century. Its establishment is linked to the founders of humanities in Georgia, as well as to local figures who had the vision to create a museum to protect the region's cultural heritage.

One of the first studies about Svaneti was conducted by Douglas William Freshfield, President of the Royal Geographical Society, UK. His work, illustrated by the Italian mountaineer and one of the first photographers of the Caucasus, Vittorio Sella, was published in London in 1896. Vittorio Sella visited Svaneti three times between 1886 and 1890 leaving us unique photographs of the region in the 19th century. Photographer and ethnographer Dmitri Ermakov brought 1,500 negatives back to Tbilisi from his Svanetian trips, and during his 1910 expedition he was the first to photograph the Adishi Gospels. These are the oldest known Gospels (897 A.D.), kept in Svaneti for centuries, which were discovered in the village of Adishi by the scholar of Svanetian history and ethnography, Besarion Nizharadze.

In the early 1930s, it was decided to unify, catalogue and protect the treasures kept in Svanetian churches – unique manuscripts, ancient coins, ethnographic artifacts, ritual items or unique icons and crosses. As a result, the first museum opened in Mestia in 1936. Initially, the artifacts that were kept in Mestia's main church – St. George Church of Seti – became part of the museum's collection. Egnate Gabliani, who graduated from St Petersburg University and had been publishing essays on Svaneti since 1920 became the Museum's Director under the pseudonym of Egnate Svani. Under his leadership the Museum enriched its collections greatly, and it continues to do so. A decisive role in this process was played by a multifaceted scientific expedition to Svaneti that started in 1972, after which the Government of Soviet Georgia adopted a special resolution on the protection of the material and spiritual cultural heritage of Svaneti. The museum became the Museum of History and Ethnography of Svaneti, which was part of the Simon Janashia Georgian State Museum. The construction of the new building began, and continued for 27 years. In 2003 the museum took up its quarters in the new, drastically incomplete building. A hodgepodge of structures unsatisfactory both in external aspects and interior management with unfinished internal work and unstable climate conditions complicated the protection of the unique treasures.

In 2004, the museum joined the National Museum consortium as part of the Simon Janashia Georgian State Museum. Since then, with support from international foundations and organizations, several large-scale projects have been carried out. In 2010, Ellis Williams Architects from the UK in collaboration with the GNM studied the building

and recommended urgent renewal as both the building and its collections would otherwise be irreparably damaged. Finally a decision was made to demolish the old museum and build a new one.

In 2013, a comprehensive rehabilitation of the Svaneti Museum of History and Ethnography, carried out with governmental support, was completed. The Georgian National Museum consortium, along with Georgian and foreign specialists contributed to the project, including architecture (Gaga Kiknadze); Exhibitionspace design (Lina Maria Lopez); and lightening design ("En phase" company).

Any museum concept is developed around the collections that are kept in it. The collection of the Svaneti Museum is composed mostly of treasures donated to churches. The storyline of the exhibition has been arranged according to this principle. The voyage back into history starts with archaeological material discovered in the region, which reflects the uninterrupted history of this important centre of mountainous Colchis from the 3rd-2nd millennia B.C., i.e. the Early Bronze Age to the Middle Ages, the next hall is occupied entirely by numismatic treasures. Icons, crosses and vessels donated to the churches over time are exhibited in the following two halls. Svaneti is a significant seat of medieval Georgian culture. The monuments of Christian Art, preserved here, attest to the fact that medieval Georgian culture developed in close relations with the advanced spiritual centres of Byzantium and the Christian East. The last two galleries display unique manuscripts and rich ethnographic material. New display with functional, conceptual and aesthetic design of the showcases, meets high international standards. It welcomes and attracts the visitors by the different rhythm of presentation and opens ways to learn more about the items through the increase the level of visual access. Temporary exhibition space at the center of the building is flexible enough to allow in-depth explorations of art works. The new public spaces (museum shop, café, multimedia center, auditorium) diversify the ways in which the museum interacts with its audience. New building has increased storage space and expanded space for laboratory and research. The renovated Svaneti Museum of History and Ethnography emphasizes the museum's mission to be a resource, a place for education and inspiration. ■

The Georgian National Museum thanks the following institutions and organizations for their support:

Georgian National Commission for UNESCO; European Union; Prussian Cultural Heritage Foundation / The State Museums of Berlin; Smithsonian Institution; US Ambassadors Fund for Cultural Preservation; Embassy of Italy in Georgia; Embassy of Switzerland in Georgia



Renovated exposition halls of the Svaneti Museum of History and Ethnography



THE MULTICULTURAL HISTORY OF THE AKHALTSIKHE MUSEUM

REGION > Nino Megrelidze

The very first museum in the city of Akhaltsikhe opened in 1880s, created by Ivane Gvaramadze. Historian, ethnographer and archaeologist, Gvaramadze published essays in the newspapers *Iveria* and *Droeba*, familiarizing the Georgian public with the problems and history of Samtskhe-Javakheti (also known as Meskheti). He carried out educational work among the Turkophone Meskhetians who lived there, and created a library and an elementary school in Akhalsikhe. For many years he collected historical items, and eventually opened a family museum in his home.

In 1921, items from his home, along with those from abandoned churches and monasteries, were included in exhibits in a regional museum created in Akhaltsikhe. The establishment had no time to become known, as it was soon closed down – the exhibits were moved to the Simon Janashia State Museum in Tbilisi. The Akhalsikhe Museum reopened only in 1937, thanks to the son of Ivane Gvaramadze, Konstantine. The newly-founded museum was given the status of “local history museum” and its former exhibit items were returned.

In 1972, the Museum moved to buildings inside the historical Rabati Fortress, and efforts to enrich the museum's collections began. The Javakhishvili Samtskhe-Javakheti Museum of History, as it was called then, already had significant manuscripts, rare editions, photos, ethnographic samples and other historical materials. However, archaeological excavations carried out in Samtskhe-Javakheti beginning in the 1950s enriched not only the Museum's collections but considerably enhanced the historical significance of Akhaltsikhe in general.

Amiran's Hill, near Akhaltsikhe, is a mountain on the left bank of the Potskhovi River, and on its southern slope the remains of a village were discovered during archaeological digs that started in 1953. Dating from the 3rd millennium B.C., the settlement was built using rock and co-

bblestone, sometimes with mud bricks and wood. It had a smelter, squares with sacrificial altars, and tombs. Studies confirmed that people who lived on the territory of Akhaltsikhe thousands of years ago farmed the land. Their metallurgy was highly developed, and metal items show unparalleled skill. The inhabitants of the area were also skilled at making clay and ceramic items – often for ritual purposes – today known as Meskhetian ceramics.

The excavations confirmed that humans have inhabited the territory of Javakheti since ancient times. The remains of numerous settlements, fortresses built with enormous boulders, and crypts dating back to early antiquity have since been discovered. Javakheti is first mentioned in an inscription by the King of Urartu in 785 B.C. The city of Akhaltsikhe was in the fiefdom of Atabegs and, until the 1830s, it was the main city of the “Childiri” Kingdom. It was a settlement situated on extremely important trade routes between South Caucasus and Western Asia. It is because of such a diverse cultural history that Akhaltsikhe has an eclectic appearance, with both Eastern and Western influences. This lends greater interest to the artifacts found in the Samtskhe-Javakheti History Museum, which include jewelry, ritual goblets, glass vessels, clothes and rugs.

After the Ivane Javakhishvili Samtskhe-Javakheti History Museum had become part of the Georgian National Museum, reconstruction began, and many projects



Renovated exposition of the Samtkhe-Javakheti Museum of History



preserve the historical appearance of the building and its surroundings. This is why architectural elements of the building – window niches as well as arches of central walls – are used as show-cases. The mostly-glass, transparent and almost invisible showcases seem to disappear in the space of the halls, drawing all attention to the building and artifacts. Special lighting creates an impression that the exhibited items are suspended in air. The exhibition centers chronologically around the Meskhetian house. Some objects are exhibited in a showcase and others are not, which allows visitors to see them up close, providing an experience of greater intimacy.

The exhibition offers a continuous, sequential line of historical developments that occurred on the Meskhetian territory from ancient times until the 20th century. The modern, comfortable environment of the renovated Samtskhe-Javakheti History Museum provides a unique opportunity to see archaeological, ethnographic, paleontological, paleographic, numismatic, architectural and other aspects of Meskhetian history. The exhibits show how each era was characterized by the coexistence of different cultures reflected in ancient landscapes and the environment, traditions and rituals, elements of social structure and hierarchy, religions, advanced medieval architecture and the literature of the Meskhetian territory. ■



have been implemented in Akhaltsikhe with the help from international organizations and companies. One special initiative was implemented with the support from BP and its partners. Collections were replenished by artifacts discovered during archaeological excavations carried out during the construction of the Baku-Ceyhan and South Caucasus Pipelines. The Museum was also equipped with a storage facility for archaeological collections and a new exhibition was organized within the framework of the same project.

However, the most important changes for the museum began in 2011, when restoration and construction work started in historical Rabat and the Museum's

exhibition halls were moved to a new building, called "Jakelis' Palace". The museum re-opened in 2012 with a new name, new exhibits and international museographic standards.

The architectural project of the renovated building of the Ivane Javakishvili Samtskhe-Jvakheti Museum of History was winner of the International competition "Architectural Award 2012" in the Nomination of Restoration / Reconstruction (Author of the Project Gaga Kiknadze (Company: Architects.ge Ltd.)), organized by the Association of Architects of Georgia, Architects' Club and STYLE Magazine.

Today called the Samtskhe-Javakheti History Museum, the creators tried to



Cooking House from Guria region

A MINI-MODEL OF GEORGIA

PROJECT > Natia Likokeli, Mariam Samadashvili

Immersed in greenery on the hillsides along the road leading up to the Turtle Lake, the Ethnographic Museum in Tbilisi – a miniature model of Georgia – was founded in 1966 by ethnographer Giorgi Chitaia.

This "Open-air Georgia" covers approximately 50 hectares and is divided into 11 zones. Eastern Georgia is represented by five zones and another five are dedicated to Western regions. The eleventh zone is home to such historical and archaeological monuments as the Sioni Basilica and the crypt of the 5th-6th centuries, an Abkhazian dolmen – or megalithic tomb – dating from the 2nd millennium B.C.

Different regions of Georgia are represented by homesteads that are usually composed of a house, a yard and outbuildings necessary for life in rural areas. A total of seventy constructions, including outbuildings, were brought to Tbilisi from the regions of Samtskhe-Javakheti, Guria, Samegrelo, Imereti, Racha-Lechkhumi, Abkhazia, Ajaria, Svaneti, Kartli and Kakheti, all of which contain approximately 8,000 exhibit items (furniture, tools, etc.) from all over the country.

With international support, several projects have been carried out at the Ethnographic Museum in recent years: a new storage facility, digitized exhibit items, and restored dwellings, such as the Megrelian house brought from the village of Ontopo in 1976. It was recently restored with support from the Norwegian Open-Air Museum, and a 'reviving history' exhibition was held there.

Visitors who come to see this old Megrelian dwelling are greeted by the head of the household, the mistress and the children dressed in traditional garments. The hosts, in addition to telling the guests the story of the house and describing local beliefs, offer them ghomi (Italian millet (*Setaria italica*)) cooked in the hearth. Ancient species of Italian millet, corn and beans are planted on the farmstead, on a small plot outside the dwelling house.

Visitors learn about Georgian traditional everyday life by participating in in-

teresting, entertaining activities. While ghomi is cooking in the hearth, the head of the household engages them in traditional craftsmanship, teaching them to weave cylindrical baskets.

Based on this experience, another exhibition, "Kakhetian abundance at a Giorgitsminda House" opened on November 9, 2013. As in the Megrelian dwelling, visitors to the Kakhetian house are greeted by a "family" dressed in traditional clothes. However, instead of ghomi, they are offered shoti (Georgian bread) baked in a tone, an earthenware oven in the yard. The family will tell the guests about the typical management of a traditional Kakhetian household, and about the sacred meaning of bread and the vine. Visitors take part in the process of baking and tasting the bread.

The Kakhetian "hall house" was moved to the Ethnographic Museum from the village of Giorgitsminda in 1974. This joint project between the Georgian Na-



Living history exhibition at the Giorgitsminda house

composed of thematic weeks, when Georgian craftsmen – potters, smiths and loom weavers – taught crafts to school and university students from spring till late Autumn.

Currently, a project implemented in partnership with the Skansen Open-Air Museum (Sweden) aims to "animate" a second house brought from the village of Ontopo, Samegrelo – this time benefiting from the experience of the Skansen Museum in Stockholm – the world's oldest open-air museum.

The "animated everyday life" and traditional crafts programs are some of the best ways to promote our country's culture and disseminate knowledge about Georgian traditional ways of life, customs, rituals and household management. Engaging visitors in diverse activities not only helps Georgian youth and adults learn about their own history through interactive and entertaining activities, but also sparks interest and a greater understanding by foreign visitors of the country's traditions and diverse cultures. ■

tional Museum, the Norwegian Directorate for Cultural Heritage and ICOMOS (Georgian National Committee of International Council on Monuments and Sites) was carried out between 2008 and 2010, using traditional tools and techniques. This included the restoration of the house after its displacement. When work

was completed, the doors of "Giorgitsminda" opened to the public again. An exhibition was organized with support from the National Intellectual Property Center Sakpatenti.

A project implemented in partnership with UNESCO and Norway's Maihaugen Museum included a summer school



Living history exhibition at the Sajalabo House



The Barn. Samegrelo region

IMPRESSED BY GEORGIA

MUSEUM FRIEND > Mikheil Tsereteli

Dr. Carole Neves had been working as the Director of the Office for Policy and Analysis of the Smithsonian Institution for many years. She initiated and supported close cooperation between the Georgian National Museum and the Smithsonian.



CAROLE NEVES

BIO

Dr. Carole Neves first studied International Relations, followed by Urban Economics, and lastly Policy Analysis. She obtained her PhD in this discipline. In between Masters and Doctors degrees, she studied in Egypt, where she researched the Arab Socialist Union, a one party political system. She returned to the United States for few years and then after her marriage moved to Brazil. The majority of time in Brazil, Dr. Neves taught at universities. In 1970s her family moved to the United States. Her first job was for MIT Research Enterprises; as a result of an OPEC oil crises she worked forecasting alternative energy scenarios in Central America. After that experience, she worked briefly for the company from Cambridge, Massachusetts, called Urban Systems. In 1985, National Academy of Public Administration asked her to work on a serious problem that NASA was facing. Carole Neves recalls: "At that time the administration was interested in looking for the privatization of the Space Shuttle. I thought it was an intriguing problem, because

some experts wanted to form government sponsored corporation to manage the space shuttle program. So, I joined the National Academy and we conducted a rigorous study. We concluded that the Shuttle Program and NASA itself could not be privatized at that point, because the complex technologies were so coupled on ongoing research and development. And even if the shuttle program was privatized, the government would be the main customer at a higher cost. Because space exploration is extremely expensive, and the private sector would need to build new infrastructure and try to make a profit, the costs to taxpayers would grow. Three days after report was delivered to the Congress, the Challenger accident occurred; NASA came back to the Academy and asked the Academy to work with the General Samuel Phillips, who put a man on the moon and ran the Apollo Program. For almost two years, a committee, headed by Phillips, studied NASA, a complex organization with numerous employees and contractors located all over the US, inside out and

upside down. It was the best learning experience in my life. The group traveled all over the United States and scrutinized every aspect of NASA. I became very involved in the issues related to the finance, organizational structure, micro and macro management, leadership and decision making." Carole Neves stayed at the National Academy for 15 years in total and conducted numerous studies of major government organizations, often at the request of the Congress.

In a year 2000, Dr. Neves received a request from the new Director of the Smithsonian Institution. The U.S. Congress advised him to build an analytical capability. C. Neves went to the Smithsonian to strengthen their decision making.

THE SMITHSONIAN INSTITUTION

The Smithsonian is the world's largest museum and research complex, consisting of 19 museums and galleries, the National Zoological Park, and nine research facilities. Physical visitors that come at the Smithsonian's museums number approximately 30 million each year. The web visitors are well over 200

million. The research centers are backbone of the entire Smithsonian. The largest one is Astrophysics Observatory at Harvard, which belongs to the Smithsonian; another important one is a Tropical Research Institute in Panama, which does work on bio diversity and climate change. Any day of the year, one can find Smithsonian researchers working in about 100 countries of the world.

Establishment of the Institution is connected with the name of James Smithsonian (1765-1829), a British aristocrat and scientist who was very much engaged in research in the field of Geology. He left his entire fortune to the United States. He had never once set foot on American soil but was very inspired with the new democracy and the governmental system of the US. The Congress was aware that this money supposed to be used to build a capacity to generate and disseminate knowledge. The Smithsonian views itself as a knowledge producing institution, sharing this knowledge not only with the general public in the US but also with the world at large. The Smithsonian is a public entity that receives both governmental and private support.

THE SMITHSONIAN'S OFFICE FOR POLICY AND ANALYSIS

Carole Neves continues about the Smithsonian's unit that she had been leading during 12 years: "The Office for Policy and Analysis provides an objective, independent analytical capabilities. It was established to improve a decision making throughout the whole Smithsonian. The Office conducted strategic planning not only for the Institution as a whole but also, for the several units working within the system. The Office regularly performed visitors' studies. It did a great deal of the work on program evaluation and management studies. Occasionally, it conducted special studies at request of the Board of the Smithsonian or the Secretary of the Smithsonian. Sometimes the Office had close to 80 projects that staff and interns were working on

at the same time. Scheduling the work was important because often the data collections process, reduction of material, and analysis are labor intensive, especially in conjunction with qualitative research.

The staff working in the office have very interesting backgrounds. I hired several PhDs including a statistician, organizational anthropologist, sociologists, and economist; I had specialists in organizational development, management, and strategic planning, editing, and a person with a degree in public administration. We also had people with the museum backgrounds and numerous interns from all over the world. One had been a longtime director of a major museum.

Nature is breathtaking, geography is diverse, history is rich, and the cultural objects are intriguing. Georgia has such talented people in the cultural arena. Unfortunately, I can't read Georgian, so I can't appreciate literature and poetry unless it is translated. I read some of poems that have been translated, and they are very moving.

The Office's job was to improve the decision making, and also improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the entire Smithsonian. In the 12 years that I was there, I established a base capability which took probably four years and to get a full shop took probably eight years."

The analytical unit like this is kind of an unusual practice in our country. Should a successful museum be interdisciplinary today?

I really believe in interdisciplinarity. I think that it is required in almost every field. The most successful artists like Leonardo Da Vinci or Michelangelo were very well schooled in many other domains including science. They used both their right brains and left brains; and policy analysis does that too. Moreover, successful people like Steve Jobs set an example for the world. He had such a keen sense of design, and he was very knowledgeable

in the humanities area; he also read profusely and understood technology.

The Smithsonian is a wonderful place for bringing together science, technology, engineering, and mathematics as well as the arts and humanities. And our office was a great example. When you examine decisions, you have to look through multiple perspectives and you need many sets of eyes to produce a really great in depth study. I have learned over the years that the best ways to approach problem solving are collaboration and teamwork, in short, assigning a team to perform tasks and holding them accountable. If you look at some of the most successful enterprises of the world whether NASA, or whether or ARPA, one

of the most innovative agencies that was responsible for the development of the internet and other amazing projects, planning and implementation are done in teams with multiple skill sets.

The Office for Policy and Analysis also worked on International level. When and why did you first come to Georgia and how did your contacts with the Georgian National Museum start?

I first came to Georgia not because of the Georgian National Museum (in fact, I even did not know of its existence). I first came to help establish Georgian Institute for Public Administration (GIPA). I worked for GIPA for about 6 years. I made many friends in Georgia, returned to Georgia periodically and still enjoy teaching Policy and Analysis and Political Economy in Georgia.

A Georgian friend introduced me to the museums, and I fell in love. I fell in love

because there are so many opportunities to work with the museums and to improve the museum scene here. I conclude that Georgia's culture is one of its greatest exports and it can be even greater. I also view culture as one of its greatest potential imports, because tourism can really manifest itself in this area. Nature is breathtaking, geography is diverse, history is rich, and the cultural objects are intriguing. Soon I will visit Cuba on a cultural tourism trip. Many Americans travel there to visit artists, attend concerts, and learn about traditions including food.

I believe that Georgian culture is a critical asset that has not been fully explored nor properly exploited in Georgia and externally. It should be. And that goes for the ballet, orchestra, arts and crafts, theater, film making as well as for the museums. Georgia has such talented people in the cultural arena. Unfortunately, I can't read Georgian, so I can't appreciate literature and poetry unless it is translated. I read some of poems that have been translated, and they are very moving."

In 2007-2011, the Georgian National Museum had large scale reconstruction-renovation projects in its main museum building. During this period, a carefully selected part of Georgia's archaeological heritage was presented in the leading museums of Europe and USA. Carole Neves was one of the initiators of organizing this collection at the Smithsonian Institution's Sackler Gallery. Her office also conducted special visitor study to evaluate this exhibition. C. Neves recalls: "Our Office conducted visitor studies of this exhibition. We used many different measures of satisfaction. Scores were excellent. Visitors really appreciated the show. The most Americans were surprised when they saw the exhibit, not only by the age, beauty, and workmanship of the objects themselves but also by the history. Visitors were very moved by the exhibit.

For the Georgians it was a very good experience also. Fortunately, prior to the exhibition, I had worked with three Georgian conservators who have served an internship in Washington DC.

They learned a great deal about the conservation of objects. They spent several months in the US and worked very hard together with the American conservators who were highly experienced; some are very famous. They carefully treated the rare objects and left them in wonderful condition.

The Georgian specialists benefited in many ways: from seeing the installation and design of the exhibit, learning to handle the processing of international loans, packing and crating, ensuring security and protection from internal climatic conditions, checking every single aspect of the exhibit to make sure that the objects were displayed in a full glory. For the both sides it was a wonderful experience.

You know Georgia well starting from the difficult 1990s. Do you think that the museums and the cultural heritage of Georgia can play a significant role in the country's development?

I believe they already play a critical role. However, I think there has to be much more interaction with the Ministry of Education and schools themselves. I see school groups coming to the museums, but I am sure much more can be done. Some of the museum educational staff need to go to schools too. It will be better to generate more engaging materials and activities. It is not one way street for most successful museums. We have large, well trained education staffs in all of our museums and research centers. They work very closely not only with the schools in the Washington DC area but also with the schools all over the US. Right now major museums are very engaged in education via the Internet. The Smithsonian has generous support from one of the largest publishing companies, Pearson Publications, and Microsoft. Both in kind support and funds are provided by the private sector. The Smithsonian aspires to be a key player enhancing the science education throughout the US. It is concerned with producing scientists in the future as many other countries

are; many great scientists visited museums in their childhood and note that the experience defined their careers.

What will be your advice to the leaders who define cultural policy in Georgia?

Cultural tourism can be tied to economic development. Beyond a doubt, Georgia has remarkable heritage. Great partnerships should be established with the private sector. A strategic plan needs to be prepared for the development culture as a whole; and, of course, the plan should be linked to tourism and economic development. We utilize the museums in many interesting ways and have close relationships with many private sector businesses. For example, the Air and Space Museum has very strong and stable relationships with Boeing Aircraft, Lockheed Martin and many other producers of air and space related hardware and software. As a result of these partnerships, it has acquired not only a wonderful collections, but it has developed strong educational programs and very supportive partnerships with both universities and air and space museums throughout the world. Many of the art museums have lasting relationships with numerous companies, media and philanthropists that sponsor exhibitions. The US government is very instrumental in fostering philanthropy of individuals and businesses, primarily through tax breaks. I know that BP has helped the National Museum in a great deal, but I hope that more private organizations and individuals, both local and international, step-up to the plate and form some enduring partnerships with the museums, ballets, orchestras, theatres, because Georgia does have competitive advantage in this area. For small country, I am constantly impressed by the artistic capabilities and quality.

Would you like to add something?

I really do not have much to add. I recently retired and plan to spend more time in Georgia. I will be happy to support local cultural institutions in pursuit of their visions of development. ■

The Georgian National Museum Friends Society

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DROWN TO GEORGIA

VOLUNTEER > Natia Khuluzauri

Ms. Mahnaz Harrison has over 24 years experience as a leader manager. She has led the process and guided the clients to strategic action, performed management orientation and skills workshop for top tier management. Her health management and familiarity with the political economy of the Caucasus led her to being awarded with the Fulbright Scholarship to Georgia where she worked with governmental and nongovernmental Georgian stakeholders to draft the country's Comprehensive Cancer Control Policy. She co-edited the Country's Non Communicable Disease Policy. With the Georgian National Museum (GNM) she became involved as a volunteer.



MAHNAZ HARRISON

Could you talk about your first connection to Georgia? Did you come here to help the Country to develop the health-care policy...

Not initially. Actually, I came first to Georgia in 2002 as a philanthropist and found a Country that was at the verge of being a failed state. We had a family foundation and through the family foundation every year we gave thousands of dollars to the philanthropic organization to be spent on culture and health and welfare of communities around Georgia. As for my own professional work and passion has been on healthcare – palliative care and hospice. I eventually became involved in palliative and hospice care in Georgia and tried my best to connect Georgians in palliative and hospice with their American counterparts including invitations for them to come to the US...

More than 10 years passed since then, how do you see Georgia today?

Today, 12 years later the Country is in much better shape, it has its spot on the globe. It is on the London stock market and it is known to many communities around the world and one of the vehicles in which it had managed to be everywhere around the world is the Museum exhibitions. Museum is the heart of the knowledge, culture and people and various exhibits that have traveled outside of Georgia had brought people to understanding that Georgia is a country, has a language and rich culture that goes back thousands of years – this is the image that the Georgian

National Museum provided to the outside world by a great vision of a great director and a great team. So, I am most proud to be considered a volunteer at the Museum and this is what it matters most to me when it comes to my relationship to the Georgian National Museum.

You are not just a volunteer; you have become inseparable part of the GNM team during those years. How your relationship with the GNM started?

In 2004 I came to Georgia for the American-Georgian Business council meeting, where I met the General Director of the Georgian National Museum. He invited us to take a tour of the building of the S. Janashia Museum of Georgia. I remember very well what this building was looking like then, with broken steps and broken walls; it was not the way it looks today. David asked me if I would help the organization with its mission and going forward and I took pride in the spirit of volunteerism and got involved with the Museum from writing grants to fundraise for infrastructure, development of the staff, to training, to bringing people into the Museum and etc.

Being a volunteer means not being interested in monetary return. Could you please, talk little more about volunteerism and the benefit you get from being a volunteer?

Generally speaking, the miracle of volunteerism is something that is at the mastery level in the United States. I traveled around the world and I don't think that there is a

Country that has the wealth and breadth of volunteers that Americans have. But it has come through many years of work and dedication of men and women, who were willing to give off their time, give off themselves, give off their money and at the same time to make a cause to go forward. This is most driven out of Good Samaritan attitude of first Americans but it's more than that. I am an emigrant to the America and I was in awe about the notion of volunteerism and what a volunteer does. So, the very first thing I did when I arrived in United States, was actually look for a volunteer opportunity. I was a full time student, professional and mother, but I decided to spend a half a day every week volunteering to learn what it is about volunteerism. And I learnt that basically people come to volunteer, because they feel that they have a desire to help others. They have a desire to be a part of a community, to give off themselves without expecting a monetary return. Retired people instead of sitting and staring in the air come and help others in many ways.

Do you think that to allow yourself to be a volunteer you need to have a financial stability?

Partially yes, this comes from comfort to have financial security, that you have monthly payment, you do not have to worry about working – that is true, but when I did all of that I did not have financial security, I was just a student and I was working full time as a teacher. But, I wanted to be a part of this American magic and I loved

every minute of it. I have been a volunteer since then in different forms and different shapes. The volunteer is somebody who can bring its set of skills to an organization. My set of skills are management, ability to strategize and do strategic planning for people. So, when I join variety of boards, I organize committees, do fundraisings, system structures of a board and etc... that is a kind of volunteerism I do. I've volunteered in old age houses, also, because that's where I felt that I could support most. I've volunteered to feed the homeless every week, I helped cooking meals with others and was going out with my children to serve the homeless, sit with them and talk to them because they are people like you and I. So, with every step of this way I walked away with a gift of having being with people. Volunteerism is a two-way street – you give but you take. Take is not monetary – it is emotional, it's satisfactory to your soul because you are touching somebody else's sole. I think with a museum in here I have grown not only being very proud of the institution, I have learned to like and respect the way in which people see their roles and their involvement with the Museum. And this gives me a sense of pride that makes me to come back to the Museum.

Have you received the emotional satisfaction you were talking about from the Museum?

Absolutely. When I see step by step, little by little changes that have come as a result of continues talks and meetings that gives me a great deal of satisfaction. I think as a volunteer you need to go in without serious expectations. You go to give and wish and hope for the best and at a point if you don't think that you are getting emotional and internal satisfaction from it, then that volunteer role is no longer for you and you got to move on to the something else.

What would you say about the level of volunteerism in Georgia?

The spirit of volunteerism is something that needs to be created in the Georgian society and particularly within the Museum. Museum is a nice place to actually recruit and cultivate volunteers. Because, there is culture, there is communality, people of different ethnic backgrounds, men and women, young and old, they all

can find a common ground and that is the heritage they share. I think the burden is on the museum in some ways to create a structure and infrastructure for volunteers. But, I think one critical point is that with economic hardship, when people have to work so hard... it is very difficult to think that people could give off their time as frequently as in a financially more stable society like America... But, having said that, the spirit of wanting to do something for others, giving off yourself, educating your children into how to give back to the society, I think that is something that yes, Georgians need to learn about and take ownership of it.

You mentioned that you are not originally from America; would you talk about your home country and compare life here and there?

I was born and raised in Iran and after Iranian revolution I left for United States. I always say that I am drown to Georgia because of life in past. I see many similarities in my native homeland and Georgian way of living, Georgian warmth and also, cultural heritage. But I also, actually, just recently have learnt about a massive army of women volunteers in Iran. Hundred thousand of women volunteers in 350 cities and hundred villages were recruited by the Ministry of Health from each neighborhood to go around to 50-80 households and their communities and talk about women and children health. In the end they have become the strongest force of volunteerism I have ever heard. These women took on themselves to talk about the health prevention issues, about not-smoking, about eating healthier. They were not working, they were housewives and thanks to this their marriage and life has improved, because they are doing now things that they themselves are proud off, because they feel useful. This is something that can be done in Georgia, army of mothers and fathers to get involve on healthy lifestyle and keep the population healthy. To be a volunteer gives you actually the satisfaction of being very useful to the others. Iranian women have taken upon themselves to really lead this into that direction, and this is fascinating even for me. I think, Georgian women need to take a little chapter out of that book and definitely start doing that on their own today.

Public-private partnership is another important model of collaboration that is well-developed in the USA.

Museum is a public institution and budget comes from government, but no public institution in a bigger picture can always survive on its own. It is always helpful to create a legal framework, so the public institution can partner with private institutions and private individuals that are not looking for individual gains, but are looking at individual investments. If someone comes and says that has 600 items and wants to give it to the Museum in conditions that the Museum will put a hall in his name would be an individual private donor – this is also the way of the public and privet partnership. You could also look at foundations that can support the Museum through the Museum Friends Association.

What would you say to the organization that can support to the Museum, why should they invest in the Museum?

Georgia is now known in many parts of the globe because of its national heritage through the exhibits of the museum that has gone around the world. I do not think a country less than four million people could actually start talking about cultural heritage if they don't take it out and don't show it around. Georgians would want to make sure that how Georgia is perceived in a world through its national heritage is secured. So, for the Georgian corporations it should be their pride to want to support and partner with the museum, to provide continuous and sustaining support, so that museum and its collection would continue telling the Georgian story around the world and to the next generation of Georgians.

Would you like to add something?

I think it would be nice if every Georgian would give – you don't have money to give, you give off your time, give off your collection, give off yourself to make something that speaks to your heritage, your identity and your being as a Georgian and there is not a better vehicle than the Georgian National Museum for this. In return you get back pride and satisfaction for the opportunity to introduce your cultural identity and your heritage to the rest of the world. ■

HISTORY TOLD THROUGH TREASURE

EXHIBITION > Natia Likokeli

"Many streams issue from Caucasus bearing gold-dust so fine as to be invisible. The inhabitants put sheepskins with shaggy fleece into the stream and thus collect the floating particles. Perhaps the golden fleece of Aetes was of this kind."

Appian, *The Mithridatic Wars*



After a break that lasted several years, the Simon Janashia Museum of Georgia presented an exhibition telling Georgia's ancient history through the sparkling of gold, silver and gemstones. The name of the exhibition is just as simple and magnificent as the artifacts displayed. It carries the sense of mystery that we experienced as children, when we read adventure books where charac-

ters found hidden treasures in unreachable places. This is the sensation we feel when stepping into the Museum's Archaeological Treasure; however here we participate in the adventure ourselves. In the carefully mounted lighting, the spectacular culture of the great mounds of the Trialeti comes to life in the form of ritual gold and silver goblets, an incusted necklace or the details of a banner made with asto-

nishing skills. We perceive the grand kingdom of Colchis through unbelievably refined riches so exquisite it seems they couldn't have been made by mortals – gold and silver jewelry, a silver belt, colored beads, seals and miniature sculptures. A treasure from Akhalgori is composed of disc-shaped plates and temple pendants of pure gold. The kingdom of Iberia is represented by a multitude of colorful

jewelry, cameos, tableware decorated with precious and semi-precious stones, and writing tools from the 3rd and 4th centuries.

Standing before each display, we can visualize the leaders and priests from ancient times and the Argonauts who sailed to Colchis, a land rich in gold, to secure the famous Golden Fleece. We see their gods – the great King Aetes and Medea of Colchis – King

Parnavaz and the beautiful Seraphita, noblemen, great warriors, goldsmiths – and the country itself, boisterous and lively. We see foreign diplomats bring offerings to Georgian kings, and noblemen order luxurious items from local or foreign craftsmen, and Egyptian, Syrian, Greek and Roman trade side-by-side with local vendors.

The style of the exhibition is discreet – the lighting, displays, props or item

holders are made to ensure the artifacts are as visible as possible. Epochs flow seamlessly as you gradually move through time, from one display to another, realizing only at the end of the exhibition that its creators took you on a trip through history – that they showed you the essence of Georgia's ancient past, to create a foundation for understanding how Georgian culture has become so unique. ■



THE DISCOVERY OF THE "COLCHIAN HOOD", A TOOL THAT SHAPED THE ART OF MEDIEVAL CLOISSONNÉ ENAMEL TECHNOLOGY

RESEARCH > Ermile Maghradze

A remarkably beautiful way of decorating metalwork, cloisonné enamel originated as an exceptional technique in the 2nd-3rd century and was practiced until the 1450s in the Byzantine Empire as well as in Georgia. By the 10th-11th century, it had penetrated Kievan Rus' to the north. After the 15th century, however, cloisonné enamel technology had disappeared.

In 2013, with UNESCO's support, the Georgian National Museum carried out a project entitled "Retracing Lost Technologies – Cloisonné Enamel", with the goal of restoring the lost medieval technology of cloisonné enamel.

The study of surviving cloisonné enamel artifacts has made it possible to identify a large array of technical tools from ancient shops where medieval craftsmen worked colored glass or prepared precious metals to decorate ena-

mel. Enamel artifacts discovered by archaeologists in Georgia have confirmed that colored glass had been produced in this area since the 6th-5th centuries B.C. An advanced level of glass production was a precondition for the development of cloisonné enamel in the region.

The early cloisonné enamel artifacts from approximately 2nd-4th century A.D., were exemplified by a medallion decorating the sheath of Pitiakhsh Asparukh's dagger, the image of an enamel rosette

in the center of the Aragvispiri pectoral.

Newer cloisonné enamel artifacts started to appear again in the 8th century. From a technical viewpoint, the cornerstone of cloisonné technology is the very thin gold base-plate with metal partitions soldered to it vertically to form cells. The key purpose of the partitions, apart from forming a structure, is to separate the enamel inlays of different colors and create a graphic image, which could formerly be carried out only by incrustation techni-

ques. Incrusted artifacts of natural precious and semi-precious minerals were widely used in the jewelers' workshops of the ancient world. Such minerals are mentioned in the Bible as the "12 Biblical gemstones". Gradually, man-made plates of artificial glass resembling these precious minerals in color started appearing as well. It has been confirmed that the palette that developed matched all 12 Biblical gemstones, and was used in medieval Byzantine-Georgian enamel artifacts.

Within the framework of the project scientific research and laboratory tests were conducted, based on two very important historical manuscripts: The first was the medieval treatise "On Various Arts" by a Benedictine monk, Theophilus Presbyter, who lived and worked around the 11th-12th centuries in Germany, and the second was the treatise "On Mixing Oils and Chemical Reactions" by the 18th century Georgian King Vakhtang VI.

The description of the processes of working precious metals – gold and silver – and of the necessary filler substance lead by Theophilus Presbyter is a priceless treasure for researchers in this field.

However, typical of this kind of historical document, the general technological processes described in the manuscript are far from being detailed enough to ensure satisfactory results when the instructions are followed. Researchers on these techniques have to study other available historical documents simultaneously and carry out numerous empirical tests to discover technologies forgotten and lost over the centuries.

In the original manuscript, a whole chapter is devoted to making cloisonné enamel. When describing this process, Theophilus focuses on making the gold base for inlays, which provides us with important information. However, his description of fused jewelry glass is very superficial, so apparently he is less familiar with this technique. Thus he takes the role of observer of the operation rather than a practicing craftsman. This shows that there were no craftsmen or workshops skilled in making and coloring glass at that time in the geopolitical area where Theophilus lived, and that he himself did not have thorough knowledge of fusing colored jewelry glass.



Sheath of dagger, Armaziskhevi, 2nd-3rd centuries A.D.



A medallion of Simon the Apostle from the Khakhuli triptych, 12th century A.D., Original



A medallion of Simon the Apostle from the Khakhuli triptych, 12th century A.D., Copy



Unlike Theophilus, Vakhtang VI of Georgia provides us with significant details on fusing jewelry glass, and his description of the process of making colored glass fills many gaps in the study of the lost medieval technology of cloisonné enamel. In the passages of his treatise that are specifically devoted to fusing colored glass, he clearly and convincingly describes the process of working the raw materials and fusing "colorful cups" from them. He also describes and draws a wind-powered furnace used for making colored glass, as it ensures the high temperatures necessary. It is also important that Vakhtang VI also termed colored glass with the names of noble gems. For example, "if you wish to make a cup the color of ruby", "making chrysolite", "turquoise blue", "making sapphire blue", "making a color similar to emerald" and so on.

Thus the knowledge was ancient and the technology described in Theophilus' treatise was a sacred tradition that continued to the era of Vakhtang VI. The King described many different mixtures used to make glass and for fusing glass of va-

rious colors. However, the colorful glazes are not used for cloisonné enamel but for imitating Biblical gems.

A project was carried out in the cloisonné enamel laboratory in the city of Gori (East Georgia), where a workshop was set up based on the notes and descriptions from these two historical texts, and all the tools for working metal and glass were re-created by using details described by Theophilus Presbyter and Vakhtang VI. Numerous tests were carried out and the results confirmed that it is indeed possible to make enamel by following the technical processes described by both Vakhtang VI and Theophilus.

Parallel to these experiments, research carried out on scientific literature and archaeological materials contributed to the study. One very important archaeological discovery in Western Georgia was a perforated, cone-shaped iron "hood" and a tray discovered in 1966 in the remains of a city near Vani in the historical region of Colchis.

We made a link between this artifact and a type of "hood" used to mount enamel, which had been described by Theo-

philus. In the chapter of the treatise that explains firing gold plate with mounted enamel, Theophilus describes a "hood" with a tray that a smith has to use to complete the firing. It is apparently very important that Theophilus is describing one of the types of muffles (a clay or iron box inserted into a furnace in order to fire an article) that was widespread in the medieval goldsmith workshops.

As a result of reconstructing the hood that was described, and then testing it, we could determine the purpose of the Colchian iron hood discovered in Vani, which is similar in function, appearance and material to the one described by Theophilus. A copy of the Colchian cloisonné hood was made and tested, which showed that the Colchian "hood" is a goldsmith's tool – an iron muffle. If placed underneath a pile of burning coals as described by Theophilus, high temperatures are achieved inside the muffle and a highly skilled jeweler can perform work on glass, gold or silver.

It is highly significant that this tool used by ancient Colchians to solder precious metals in the period of early anti-

quity – 16 centuries before Theophilus – has survived to this day. We can suppose that such muffles in a variety of sizes and shapes were used by Colchian goldsmiths for creating various kinds of jewelry and other objects.

When the project, "Retracing Lost Technologies – Cloisonné Enamel" was being implemented, and to confirm that all details of the forgotten medieval cloisonné enamel technology had been recovered fully, a demonstration object was made. A medallion of Simon the Apostle from the Most Holy Mother of God triptych in Khakhuli was selected for this purpose. The soldering operations performed to make a copy of this medallion were carried out using a reconstructed Colchian hood and the soldering was done in accordance with the description provided by Theophilus Presbyter. The quality of soldering turned out to be very high: All partitions were firmly and properly soldered to the base in a multi-stage firing process. The solder described by Theophilus is undoubtedly the one used in early antiquity and the Hellenistic period to solder filigree (granulation) or incrustated inlaid particles. This is a so-called reactive solder and Theophilus describes a method for making it artificially. Such solder can also be found in natural form from chrysocolla ("chrysocolla" is a Greek word that combines the words "gold" and "glue", or "adhesive").

Thus, the Colchian hood and the establishment of its purpose is of great significance, allowing us to evoke material evidence when re-creating ancient goldsmith workshops that existed on the territory of ancient Colchis. Unique artifacts were made that are today on display in the Georgian National Museum. A more complete picture is taking shape before our eyes – one that evokes many centuries of uninterrupted tradition of goldsmith workshops in territories now part of Georgia. This tradition produced numerous and remarkable examples of cloisonné enamel that were later re-created in the Early and High Middle Ages in Georgia, contributing a significant treasure to world culture. ■



Bracelet, Mtskheta, 4th century A.D.



Iron hood, Vani, second half of the 2nd century B.C.

Quadifolium with Crucifixion, the Khakhuli triptych, 8th century



St. Peter, Icon of the Martvili Virgin, 9th century A.D.

St. Virgin, the Khakhuli Triptych, 9th century A.D.

St. Theodor, the Khakhuli Triptych, 9th century A.D.



Pendant triptych with Deisis, Martvili, 8th-9th centuries A.D.



Pectoral, Vani, beginning of the 4th century B.C.



Lamp with the images of Ganymede and Zeus transfigured into an eagle, bronze, Vani, 3rd-1st centuries B.C.



Three-nozzle lamp, decorated with four figures of dancing Erotes, bronze, Vani, 3rd-1st centuries B.C.



Six-nozzle Lamp, representing Dionysus' triumph in India, decorated with images of elephants and figures of Dionysus, Heracles and Ariadne holding torches, bronze, Vani, 3rd-1st centuries B.C.



Incense Burner with images of elephants, bronze, Vani, 3rd-1st centuries B.C.

FROM EXCAVATION

to Exhibition Halls



RESEARCH > Nino Chimakadze

Before finding a home in the collections of the Georgian National Museum, most of the items discovered as a result of archaeological excavations in Georgia are taken to the museum's Archaeological Restoration Laboratory. Sometimes, after cleaning and treatment, valuable artifacts that were covered in rust, salts or soil for centuries change their appearance so much that they can hardly be recognized as the same object.

Before finding a home in the collections of the Georgian National Museum (GNM), most of the items discovered in Georgia as a result of archaeological excavations are treated at the Museum's Archaeological Restoration Laboratory. It takes several months or more to restore and conserve an object. Artifacts are often deformed or damaged, so restoring their original shape means careful and difficult work over a long period of time with specialized tools.

Bronze and iron artifacts from a hoard, containing true masterpieces of Hellenistic art, discovered in Vani in 2007 are being studied at the Laboratory of the GNM. Archaeological excavations have confirmed that Vani still has many secrets waiting to be uncovered. It is notable for its treasures of luxurious gold items as well as for its bronze and iron artifacts. In 2007, the unique materials unearthed in the area prompted historians and archaeologists, as well as researchers of ancient religions to reconsider many notions. The artifacts

were most likely produced in the 3rd to 1st centuries B.C. However, those that survived in the hoard had been buried in a special pit dug into parent material in the 1st century B.C. The archaeologist who conducted the excavations of the hoard, Dimitri Akhvlediani, linked the hoard containing the artifacts to the destruction of the temple city in the 1st century B.C., when they must have been hidden away in the time of danger. This is indicated by the pit having been dug in a hurry.

A large part of the hoard was treated at the Georgian National Museum. Items of various forms, large ritual vessels, bronze legs of kline, lamps and other bronze artifacts were restored in 2007-2014.

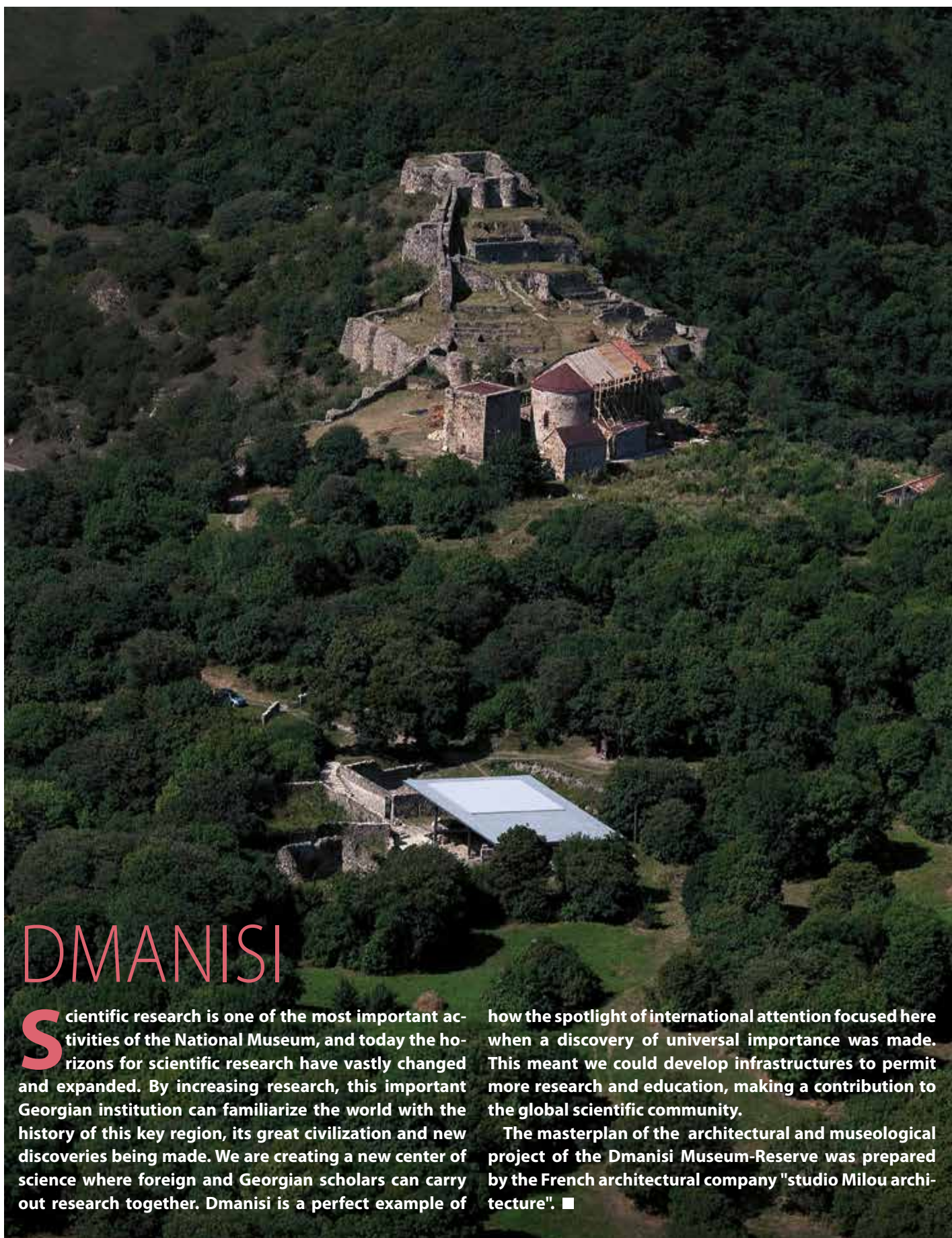
From 2009, the Georgian National Museum has been cooperating on technical study and restoration of artifacts with the Getty Villa, the Getty Conservation Institute and the Metropolitan Museum of Art known for their research and conservation. In the frame of this cooperation archaeological discoveries

from Vani were presented in many leading museums of the world.

Among the objects treated at the Getty Villa's Conservation Institute was a three-nozzle lamp decorated with an image of an eagle and a mythological personage Ganymede, as well as a three-nozzle lamp, decorated with four figures of dancing Erotes. The Metropolitan Museum of Art restoration laboratory examined an incense burner decorated with images of elephants, and a six-nozzle lamp adorned with images of human busts and elephant heads. With the help of advanced technology, it was possible to thoroughly study and restore these artifacts. In addition to being unique objects of art, these items provide specialists with an exceptional opportunity to understand historical processes and cultural development.

Specialists continue studying these treasures both in Georgia and in the United States. If these suppositions hold true soon new facts about Georgia during the Hellenistic era will be uncovered, which will then lead to new research. ■





DMANISI

Scientific research is one of the most important activities of the National Museum, and today the horizons for scientific research have vastly changed and expanded. By increasing research, this important Georgian institution can familiarize the world with the history of this key region, its great civilization and new discoveries being made. We are creating a new center of science where foreign and Georgian scholars can carry out research together. Dmanisi is a perfect example of

how the spotlight of international attention focused here when a discovery of universal importance was made. This meant we could develop infrastructures to permit more research and education, making a contribution to the global scientific community.

The masterplan of the architectural and museological project of the Dmanisi Museum-Reserve was prepared by the French architectural company "studio Milou architecture". ■



THE NATIONAL GALLERY

The National Gallery re-opened its doors to the public on June 5, 2010. This recent addition to our museum system encountered several important challenges, but with the help of the Georgian National Museum staff and leadership obstacles were overcome – renovation of the building and the poor condition of the collections headed the list of problems to solve. It appeared that not only the Museum had been victim of the financial crisis, but it had no resources to carry out significant projects at the Gallery.

It is with pride that the Georgian National Museum staff remembers the hard work and dedication that contributed to

completely renew the National Gallery. After a preparatory stage, they planned concepts for the new Gallery, and by the time the Ministry of Culture allocated material resources for restoration, the concept and the plan for the Gallery were ready, which meant the project could be carried out smoothly, and the Gallery re-opened in 2010.

The architectural project of the renovation and extension of the Dimitri Shevardnadze National Gallery was prepared by the Portuguese architectural company Aında Arquitectura Studio (Porto) and the Georgian architectural company Arsi (Tbilisi). ■



Still Life

FEEL PIROSMANI

PIROSMANI, ARTIST OF THE GEORGIAN PEOPLE

ART > Ekaterine Kiknadze

At the turn of the 20th century, Tbilisi was located at the crossroads of Asia and Europe and characterized equally by Eastern exuberance and European sophistication. Houses with elaborately carved wooden balconies alternated with Art Nouveau architecture, while chokhosani, or men from the mountains wearing traditional Caucasian coats, the chokha, mingled with silver-belted kintos, a social group found in urban areas, made up of local tradesmen, or other locals who spent their time in taverns and wore their own distinctive attire. These populations mingled in the streets with ladies and gentlemen adorned with the latest Parisian fashion.

Niko Pirosmani, clad in sober clothes, carried all of Georgian culture in his eyes and mind, and spent most of his life in this city of vibrant contrasts. His art is the bridge that connects medieval Georgian painting with the art of the 20th century. The two poles coexist – the monumental silence and spirituality of frescos on one hand and brilliant artistic technique on the other. His style showed that although Pi-

rosmani lived among tavern-keepers and tradesmen in the Asian part of Tbilisi, he perceived the world like a European modernist.

For great people, the spiritual world, reflection and everyday life are rarely separated. This is the way it was with Pirosmani – often homeless and alone, he was also a man of incredible innate dignity. His pride and reserved manner prompted his acquaintances to call

him "Count". Some say his reserve was typical of the Eastern region of Kakheti, and especially in Kiziki, where Pirosmani was born, an area that that never knew serfdom. It is perhaps not coincidental that another monument of 20th century Georgian culture, the writer Vazha Pshavela, also came from a region free of serfdom – Pshavi. Both men expressed exceptional individuality in their artistic expression and carried a strong combi-



Threshing

nation of tradition coupled with a sense of inner freedom.

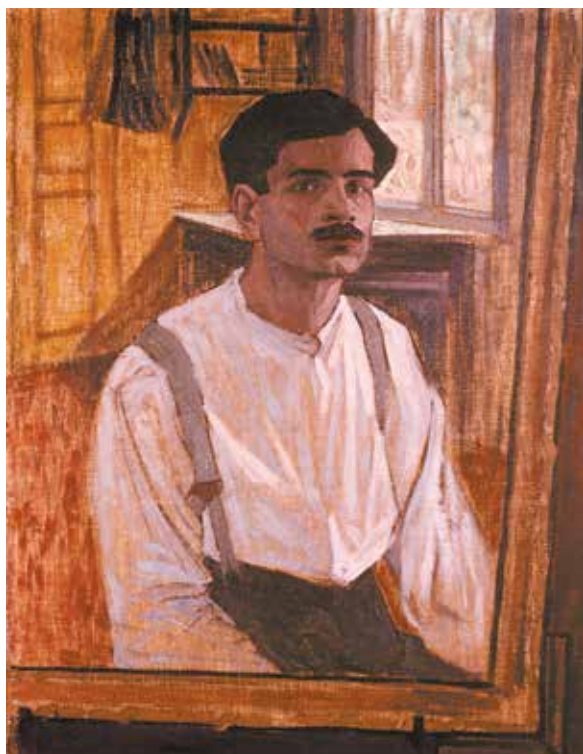
The circle of those appreciating Pirosmani's art was just as full of contrasts as his painting – intellectuals on one hand and local inn-keepers on the other. The artist Kirill Zdanevich and his brother Ilia Zdanevich, along with the Russian futuristic artist of French origin Mikhail Le Dantu discovered Pirosmani, painting in a traditional Tbilisi inn called "Varyag". Le Dantu's first words about him were "This is today's Giotto!" For these artists, Pirosmani's paintings "Queen Tamar", "Deer", "Hunter with a Rifle", "Erekle II" and "Shepherd" evoked a close association with modern European art in that they equally and forcefully evoked both national

and universal themes. This is a trait of many great painters.

The interest towards him in Georgia and beyond was always great. In 1969 an exhibition of Pirosmani's work was hosted at the Louvre. Since 2007, a collection of 150 of his works from the Georgian National Museum has been exhibited abroad in France, Turkey, Lithuania, Ukraine, the Netherlands. In 2012, the year that marked the 150th anniversary of his birth, UNESCO promoted many commemorative events for Pirosmani, including the largest exhibition of the artist's works ever held at the Georgian National Museum's Dimitri Shevardnadze National Gallery. Niko Pirosmani's works are presently on display in this gallery and in the Sighnaghi Museum. ■



Roe Deer in the Landscape



Self-portrait



Imereti Landscape



Imereti - My Mother



Constructive-decorative Composition

TWENTIETH CENTURY CLASSIC

ART > Ketevan Kintsurashvili

On 18 May, 2013, International Museum Day, a retrospective exhibition of David Kakabadze (1889-1952) opened at the Georgian National Museum's Dimitri Shevardnadze National Gallery.

David Kakabadze depicted the world as if he were flying over the hills of his native Imereti. As an artist of the era of Cubism and Abstract art he had a sharpened sense of time and space and translated his holistic perception of visible reality into corresponding imagery. Divided into colorful segments, the surface of the land in his paintings covers the slopes like a carpet.

After graduating from the Kutaisi Gymnasium in 1915, David Kakabadze studied simultaneously at the Faculty of Sciences at Petersburg University and at the private art studio of Dmitriyev-Kavkazskiy. He returned to Georgia in 1918, when Geor-

gia had become an independent republic. His work was shown at the Temple of Glory, today's National Gallery, as part of an exhibition of Georgian artists. The Georgian Government then sent Kakabadze and several other young artists to Paris, where he stayed from 1919 to 1927.

When he learned he was going to Paris, Kakabadze set himself a goal: to study new trends in art and have his own say in them. He fulfilled his aim not only by learning what the newest trends were, but by being one of the first to create organic or biomorphic abstraction. He is also one of the first artists to integrate elements of Art Deco in his work. Living in the art cen-

ter of the world, Kakabadze could express his vision in a multitude of forms. He started with Cubism, then moved on to abstract art, organically integrating elements of Dadaism and surrealist abstraction.

He was fascinated by the technological novelties and while still studying at the Gymnasium, he saved to buy a camera, which he constantly carried with him. Cinema also captivated him. While in Paris, in 1922-1923, he invented a stereo movie projector that could create a three-dimensional effect without using special glasses. He had his invention patented in many countries of Western Europe, Great Britain and

the United States. This epoch, that he termed "an era of machinism and cinematography" inspired him to create new techniques. He used glass and metal pieces that had accumulated in his studio while working on the projector, to create collages. On the back of some of these, he attached light bulbs and used pieces of mirrors, glass, lenses and flashing elements to give depth to his compositions, creating a new sense of dynamism.

In 1921-1927, Kakabadze created a series of biomorphic abstractions. In his work during this period the contour of an embryo or vegetation is often discerned. His sculpture "Z" (part of the Yale University Art Gallery collection, USA) is an example of this organic abstraction. Apart from student exercises, Kakabadze never painted female models, yet the female subject is present in the artist's work in non-traditional forms. His model was "terra", the Earth, he rarely painted sky or water in his Imeretian landscapes. Kakabadze generalized the idea of motherland through images of

the mother ("Imereti - my Mother") and his organic abstractions may be considered a subconscious representation of the female subject.

In the abstract paintings he created before he left Paris, the artist depicted what appears to be a cell under a microscope, or images of space seen through a telescope. These works convey the notion that the natural micro and macro-worlds obey the same rules of organizational order. This order is a corner stone of Kakabadze's entire work - nature and the origin of life are constant sources of inspiration.

In 1927, David Kakabadze returned to his homeland. He had left an independent Georgia where Modernist art and literature were on the rise, and came back to a Soviet country where avant-garde proclivities were punished. He worked as a stage and film artist, taught at the Academy of Arts, published theoretical essays and made a film about Georgian architectural monuments. He later returned to landscape painting, however he was criticized for disregarding the prin-

ciples of Socialist Realism. He was finally dismissed from the Academy of Arts in 1948. The artist died of a heart attack in 1952.

In today's era of 3-D it is striking to note how progressive David Kakabadze's ideas were for his time. He worked at creating new methods to solve the problems of depicting space at two-dimensional surface. This exceptional representative of Modernism left inventions that were so innovative that they have continued to exist as a process even in the Post-modernist era. In 2011, his project for a holographic portrait of Stalin was implemented realized posthumously in Sweden, with support from the Municipality of Lund. In spite of the avant-garde, experimental nature of his creation, however, all of Kakabadze's work was based on classical, fundamental canons.

At the beginning of the 20th century, as David Kakabadze stood on a hill in his native Imereti, his eyes saw a new era to come, yet he perceived the world as a true classic, creating avant-garde art based on eternal values. ■



DIMITRI ERMAKOV PHOTOGRAPHER AND COLLECTOR

PROJECT >

**Lika Mamatsashvili, Nino Tabutsadze,
Lika Gudushauri**

The geographical scope of Dimitri Ermakov's photographic series is a constant source of wonder – covering Turkey, Persia, Bulgaria, Georgia, Armenia, Azerbaijan and many provinces of the North Caucasus, not to mention Central Asia. Ermakov travelled widely in the Caucasus, taking detailed pictures of the populations, how they lived and dressed, the scenery, historical edifices such as fortresses, towers, churches, as well as the religious and everyday objects of the Caucasian peoples. His pictures form a unique photographic record of Caucasian history, ethnography, archaeology and culture.

Dimitri Ermakov (1846-1916) was a great artistic photographer who created rich, original and all-embracing photographic chronicles. The major part of his photographic legacy is found in the photo collections of the Georgian National Museum. Ermakov's works may be considered a photographic guide to Georgian life and to the reality of the second half of the 19th and the first quarter of the 20th century. Apart from books, photographic catalogues, cameras and other objects, his collection includes 119 albums, 25,819 photos, 15,536 glass negatives and 27,655 stereoscopic images. As a collector, he acquired nearly all the most historically significant photographic works of the 19th century. For example in his collection we find works by such famous

When the photographer was born in 1846 his father, Lodovico Cambiaggio, worked in Crimea, and later in the She-makha area in the Province of Baku. His mother was from the Russian Molokan Christian minority in Tbilisi, and it is by her surname that Ermakov is generally known. Although Dimitri Ermakov was an "illegitimate" child, his father took special care of him, and it is said that in the 1860s, under the direction of his father, Dimitri studied and passed his qualifications at the topographic school in Ananuri, Georgia. His father also introduced him into Georgian elite society.

Ermakov probably started his photographic activity in 1866 or 1867, although he most likely worked as a photographer even earlier. In 1870 he was chosen as an associate member of the Society for the

lents met with widespread recognition – orders for his work began to pour in. Subsequently, the Shah of Persia invited him to become his personal photographer, a distinction highlighted in Ermakov's biography. He participated in many international exhibitions and earned 36 top photographic awards at international exhibitions held in Russia and abroad.

During the Russo-Turkish War of 1877-78 Ermakov served as photographic war journalist working on the front lines on the secret instructions of the Russian Tsar. These photos continue to be of great interest to experts, especially military historians and analysts. He often took photos of staged battle scenes, as photographic technology was not sufficiently advanced to photograph rapid movements in battles.

In 1880 Ermakov returned to Tbilisi and opened a photo studio in the city centre, on Golovin Avenue, where he worked successfully in different genres. He was extremely versatile and maintained close relations with well-known historians and archaeologists in Georgia and Russia. He participated in numerous archaeological and ethnographic expeditions, where he documented Georgian and Caucasus-wide historical sites, including frescos, church plates, books and manuscripts.

In 1910 he went on an expedition to Svaneti organized by Ekvtime Takaishvili where he took approximately a thousand photos depicting many architectural and archaeological locations. A large number of these sites are lost today and survive only in Ermakov's photos. His skill was such that he could embark on a photographic project without directions from the specialists and produce photos of high scientific standards that could be used for research purposes. He gained valuable experience working with scientists and scholars, and became a first-class photographer in scientific circles. His photos of historical sites, frescos, cultural artefacts and objects of unique architectural significance clearly show he knew how to use the best vantage point to record detail and convey a sense of space.

Ermakov published two catalogues in Russian, in 1896 and in 1901, in which he

In 2000, the Georgian National Museum, in collaboration with the Nederlands Fotomuseum in Rotterdam, began a major conservation project for the photo collections of the Georgian National Museum, supported by the European Foundation Horizon in Naarden. Digitalization, restoration and conservation were carried out, and as a result a modern photo archive emerged, created in accordance with international standards. The project lasted ten years and was finalized in 2010, thus injecting new life into the National Museum's photo collections.

photographers as Alexander Roinashvili, Vladimir Barkanov, Dimitri Nikitin, Eduard Klar, Edward Westley, Alexander Engel, Antoin Sevruquin, Boris Mishchenko, as well as the Italian mountaineer and photographer, Vittorio Sella.

In Ermakov's collections we also find stereoscopic photos from Europe, America and even Japan. There are European photos of a light-hearted nature, along with those demonstrating what photography was already capable of doing. However, Ermakov's greatest contribution is to have preserved a kind of comprehensive catalogue of the work of photographers active in Georgia during his lifetime.

Promotion of Caucasian Fine Arts, and beginning with that year he made several expeditions to Persia, although it is not known how frequently or for how long. For some time he owned a photography studio in Teheran.

In 1907 he became a member of the Caucasian Section of the Moscow Archaeological Society and in 1912 he founded the Tiflis Society of Fine Arts.

Earlier, in 1874, to great and unexpected acclaim, Ermakov presented his pictures in France at the Tenth Photographic Exhibition organized by the Paris Photographic Society. There was great stir about the artistic qualities of his photos in the Parisian press, and very soon his ta-



arranged his photos alphabetically and thematically. The themes he chose for his albums reflected personal preferences, but he later offered the photos for sale to individuals interested in his photographic work, and to a variety of different organizations. From the standpoint of the 21st century, some photos bear geographically misleading captions since borders have changed over time, due to major events.

It was above all Tbilisi that was at the centre of Ermakov's interest. He produced a detailed chronicle of the city, situated at the cross-roads of two civilizations – European and Asian. It is shown as a centre of commerce and trade, and his photographs show details of life in the city and serve as historical documentation – to this day they are source of wonder. He took great interest in types of public transport in both the Asian and European parts of Tbilisi – we see transport suited to narrow streets like horse- and ox-carts and mules, and we see coaches serving the European part of the city. In 1883 the “horse railway”, or Konka was introduced – consisting of an open carriage with moveable chairs, and drawn by four horses.

Ermakov created a series of cityscapes featuring the Narikala Fortress built fifteen centuries earlier, and which throughout history had served as a bastion in the defence of the city. The sulphur baths of old Tbilisi held a special attraction for all visitors to the city and played an important role in its history. The Tbilisi Baths were the subject of many writers – their masseurs occupied a special place in the photographic series as well. At different times Alexander Griboedov, Alexander Pushkin and Alexandre Dumas were duly impressed by the oriental massage. Ermakov's photo series devoted to bath-masseurs and the sulphur baths occupy an important place in his work.

Ermakov's studio production reflected his talents in another genre – his portraits were composed with great care and precision. He used chiaroscuro and soft contours, and paid great attention to lighting. In his workshop he conducted experiments in photographic tech-

nology. In one, he painted the reverse of a negative in black, which resulted in the photo becoming more distinct and with heightened contrast. He almost never edited a film he shot, choosing rather to fill the frame with a composition. In-depth perception and the creation of a sense of space are typical features of his creative style. He carefully followed the development of new techniques and made active use of them in his work – he tried to construct a new camera lens and to create a mobile laboratory.

Key events took place in the last decade of the 19th and early years of the 20th century and influenced the life of society in Georgia. Many are reflected in Ermakov's work, for example the opening of the first industrial exhibition in 1896 in Tbilisi, which contributed to the importation and distribution of the latest technologies for the working population of Tbilisi and Georgia. Similarly, on 25 May, 1892, Ermakov documented the unveiling of one of the first monuments in Tbilisi – a statue of Pushkin. His photos of that period also show the celebration of the Epiphany with the consecration of the water, and others record the 1893 flood of Tbilisi. He recorded the inauguration of the Red Cross Hospital, named after Grand Duke Mikhail Romanov and later known as the “Mikhailov Hospital”, which still exists. On 20 April 1913, almost all active photographers in Tbilisi and Kutaisi gathered to depict the Festival of White Chamomile, when money was collected to help people suffering from tuberculosis.

Another remarkable series of pictures is distinguished by its size and rarity, and depicts the construction of the Georgian Military Highway, that passed through vast mountain panoramas all the way from Tbilisi to its final point over the Caucasus Mountains. The series includes all the important historical and natural landmarks such as the Svetitskhoveli Cathedral and the River Kura, and is a pictorial record of the entire process of the railway's construction up to the arrival of the first passenger train on 10 October, 1872.

Bringing Ermakov's life-time works together was not easy. During the photographer's life the Georgian scholar Ekvtime Takaishvili tried to collect his photos, but it was far from simple. Following Ermakov's death in 1916, his heir decided to sell the photographer's collection, which led Takaishvili to start proceedings to purchase the complete archives so this national treasure could be preserved in Georgia. During Ermakov's lifetime the Georgian patron of the arts, Pavle Tumanishvili, had ordered thirty albums for which Ermakov photographed Georgian churches and antiquities. Tumanishvili later passed these to the Historical and Ethnographic Society of Georgia.

Ermakov's collection was finally purchased with the combined support of the Historical and Ethnographic Society of Georgia, Tbilisi State University, Georgians living in Baku, and the Patron of the Arts, Akaki Khoshtaria. Today the collection belongs to the nation and is preserved in the Georgian National Museum, the National Archives and other institutions.

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To conclude this substantial restoration project, on June 14th, 2014 an exhibition entitled: “Ermakov Photostudio – Photographer, Collector and Entrepreneur” will be inaugurated at the Nederlands Fotomuseum in Rotterdam. ■



Field School in Dmanisi

The Dmanisi Paleoanthropology Field School



The Dmanisi Paleoanthropology Field School is a four week program offered annually by the Georgian National Museum, University of Zurich and the Dmanisi Field Network. The Field School 2014 will run from mid-July through mid-August and offer an opportunity to acquire practical archaeological skills, in combination with theoretical knowledge. The Field School is open to young scientists, as well as archaeology and anthropology students and interested persons internationally.

The school is held at the Dmanisi Paleolithic site (village of Patara Dmanisi, 80 km from Tbilisi, Dmanisi Region, East Georgia) and participants will stay either in the camp or a village near the archaeological site.

Dmanisi is one of the most important archaeological sites in the world, where well-preserved fossil hominins (see <http://archaeology.about.com/od/hterms/g/hominin.htm>) were discovered, as well as a rich assemblage of lithic artifacts and faunal remains. Discoveries in Dmanisi changed the understanding of major events in human evolution, such as the time of dispersal out of Africa, which has now been shifted back by one million years. It has also launched the debates on intra-population variation in fossil hominids, revealing that it does not exceed the variation observed in modern humans.

DMANISI FIELD SCHOOL PROGRAM

- The first three weeks is a combination of theoretical course and practical training. The theoretical course features lectures in archaeology, geology, anthropology, paleontology and taphonomy (the study of the processes such as burial, decay, and preservation that affect animal and plant remains as they become fossilized); the practical training involves instruction in archaeological techniques and excavation. By the end of the third week students will choose a topic for a potential research project focusing on Dmanisi. Students will work with each other and the Field School faculty to finalize their proposals during the final week at the site.

- Sundays are free and participants will have an opportunity to take part in excursions to other historical and prehistoric sites of interest in the Dmanisi region. The last Sunday of the field school is the day of departure.

For more information visit: museum.ge and dmanisi.ge





UNIVERSE, HUMAN BEING, BRAIN

EVENTS > Natia Khuluzauri

It is 20 November 2013, almost 7 o'clock. Friends of the Museum, businessmen, politicians and students gather in the Auditorium and the public areas of the Georgian National Museum... The staff settles final technical details: it's the first attempt to air an event live from the Museum Auditorium to the public area of the S. Janashia Museum of Georgia. Everything is ready and three Georgian scientists – Gia Dvali, David Lordkipanidze and Zaza Kokaia – are getting ready to meet their audience.

"Universe, Human Being, Brain" is the title of the lecture to be delivered by the Georgian scholars. The goal is to tell about fundamental discoveries made in recent years in cosmology, paleoanthropology and neuroscience. The audience will hear about the most recent findings related to the origins of the universe, human evolution and development of the brain, told by the scientists whose research is directly linked to those discoveries. They will find out how modern science manages the process of learning about the universe, the descent of man and the essence of being human.

The Georgian National Museum's General Director, Professor Lordkipanidze, makes opening remarks then soon appears before the public in a different role – that of scientist. Gia Dvali had already explained the theory of the origins of the universe, the "music" that – apparently – can be heard to this day – explosions that set in motion the creation of the universe through sound vibrations. He talked about black holes, energy exchange and tests conducted by scientists today. And when we reach the topic of humans we learn that we consist of particles of stars that once existed. Professor Lordkipanidze takes Gia Dvali's place, and he begins to talk about human evolution, the path that our ancestors took from hominin to homo sapiens and the place that Dmanisi's ancient inhabitants occupy in the history of human evolution. We feel that discoveries made in Dmanisi have altered the global evolution map. Science magazine published an article about the latest discoveries of Dmanisi yet again, and we learn that the main factor conducive to human evolution was an increase in the size

of the brain and in the number of its folds and that a modern human's brain is approximately 2.5 times larger than that of human ancestors discovered so far. Then Zaza Kokaia further develops the topic of the brain and tells us about the incredible "autonomy" represented by the brain. He explains in detail what makes us human, and what conditions our skill called "thinking". Several myths are debunked, for example that brain cells do not regenerate. It turns out that they do, in fact it even turns out that forgetting is a process as natural as remembering! We learn that today it is possible to extract stem cells from an already developed cell and turn them into the most complicated cells – neurons – in our brain.

The lecture continues for about two hours, followed by an animated discussion. The scientists return to the public area to allow the audience gathered there to ask their questions too. Time spins away, the way it does when one is watching a good show or reading a good book. The audience is reluctant to leave – the evening is a great success. ■

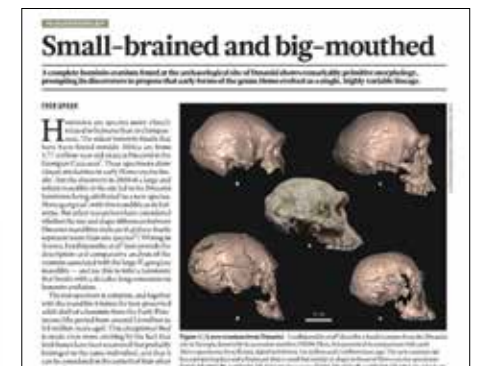
DMANISI DISCOVERIES ON THE COVER OF SCIENCE

PUBLICATION > Natia Khuluzauri

"A Complete Skull from Dmanisi, Georgia, and the Evolutionary Biology of Early Homo" was the title of an article published in Science magazine on 18 October 2013, drawing the attention of the world's scientific community and the press. The article was about the discovery of the fifth cranium from Dmanisi, found in 2005 in an archaeological layer dating back 1.8 million years. The lower jaw discovered in 2000 belongs to the same individual. This sample is the only perfectly preserved skull of an adult in-

dividual, which allowed the scientists to conduct comprehensive research.

The research on which the magazine article was based had continued for years, conducted in collaboration with foreign colleagues. The Georgian scientists, David Lordkipanidze, Abesalom Vekua and Ann Margvelashvili, worked with representatives of the world's various leading research institutions such as G. Philip Rightmire (Harvard University), Christoph P.E. Zollikofer and Marcia S. Ponce de León (University of Zurich) and Yoel Rak (Tel Aviv University), who co-authored the article.



Nature magazine

Publishing an article in Science is a great honor for any scholar, and being on its cover is a special recognition. Proving this point further was the response to the publication in another exceptionally important scientific journal, Nature, as well as in The New York Times, The Guardian, National Geographic, Figaro and other top news publications of the world. This was the third extensive article published by Science on Dmanisi's extraordinary discoveries. The paleoanthropological find in Dmanisi was assigned a third place in the world's top 10 archaeological discoveries of 2000.

Comments by renowned scientists were published in the same issue of Science, including those by American scholar Tim White, who said: "This is a special burial site which will remain in the spotlight of scientists' attention for a long time". ■





NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC IN GEORGIA

EVENTS > Natia Khuluzauri

On 22 September 2012, in the courtyard of the Georgian National Museum, the Silk Road Group and the new editorial team for National Geographic Georgia hosted a reception to mark the "childhood dream" of many Georgians. The Georgian public and media were greeted by the General Director of the Georgian National Museum, David Lordkipanidze and his guests, Executive Vice President of the National Geographic Society of the United States, Terrence B. Adamson, and National Geographic photographer, Mark Thiessen. The occasion also marked the opening of a photo exhibition by the American explorer, George Kennan, who traveled and documented Georgian sites in the late 19th century. A 55-page account of this trip was published in the October 1913 issue of National Geographic US.

The representative of National Geographic USA, Terrence Adamson, said that Georgia, with its history and remarkable archaeological discoveries, its diverse natural environment and its unique people, has long been part of National Geographic's life. He said the magazine has published articles on this country for more than a century, and George Kennan's work exemplifies this interest. According to him, the Georgian edition would

now provide National Geographic with more opportunities to learn and publish materials on this region.

According to the new Editor of the Georgian edition, Levan Butkhuzi, the magazine will play an important role in the education of the Georgian public about their own country. The materials are thoroughly analyzed and factual, yet their presentation is clear, attractive and accessible both to the public and professionals. Butkhuzi pointed out that collaboration with the Georgian National Museum and its General Director have been subjects of National Geographic Georgia's work on several occasions, given the importance of projects implemented by the Museum. When creating the Georgian edition, Butkhuzi said, the editorial team had the Museum's unyielding support. "So where else – if not at the Museum, where National Geographic has been so welcome, would we hold this presentation!"

The Silk Road Group and the Chairman of its Board of Directors, Giorgi Ramishvili, are the initiators and sponsors of National Geographic in Georgia. Ramishvili said that his and his team's wish is to offer Georgians high-quality, publically accessible scientific literature. Today, National Geographic is published in 40 languages in over 100 countries including Georgia. ■



WORLD ENVIRONMENT DAY AT THE GEORGIAN NATIONAL MUSEUM

EVENTS > Ana Verulashvili

The Georgian National Museum and National Geographic Georgia presented a series of events dedicated to World Environment Day on May 5, 2014 at the Simon Janashia Museum of Georgia. Youth made up the majority of attendees, and were invited to participate in educational programs and public lectures – a master class took place in the courtyard of the museum.

The Minister of Environmental Protection and Natural Resources of Georgia, Ms. Khatuna Gogaladze, and the General Director of the Georgian National Museum, Prof. David Lordkipanidze, officially opened the day with addresses dedicated to World Environment Day. Minister Gogaladze said, "The Georgian National Museum and National Geographic Magazine have organized a very interesting exhibition, and I see many young people involved in the activities. I strongly support these type of events and would like to emphasize that the main aim for such programs is to help our young generations grasp the meaning of environmental protection – about biodiversity, poaching, and other issues. We want them to know the risks to our environment, and how they can protect it." Professor Lordkipanidze emphasized the need for youth to be pro-active: "We have the possibility to pass along the knowledge and understanding of our environment, and I am sure many of our guests here today will now want to become active defenders of nature!"

In the public area of the S. Janashia Museum of Georgia, a photo exhibition offered images from fascinating moments of wildli-

fe and nature, taken by the world's top photographers from the National Geographic. Mr. Levan Butkhuzi, Editor-in-Chief of National Geographic Georgia, said, "National Geographic could not ignore this important day! We have a strategic partnership with the Georgian National Museum, which includes an educational center. This has permitted us to organize this exhibition." Mr. Butkhuzi and Mr. Gia Todua, member of the Georgian National Museum Educational Center, offered lectures on environmental protection.

Visitors could see exhibits from the Natural History Collections displaying unique flora and fauna of the Caucasus region collected since 1852 by leading scientists and explorers.

The crowning moment of the day was the master class that took place in the courtyard of the Museum under the guidance of Dr. Nicholas Toth, Professor from the University of Indiana and co-founder of the Stone Age Institute. He and archaeologists from the Georgian National Museum, David Jvania and Giorgi Bidzinashvili, explained the evolution of Stone Age tools, and showed techniques and how they had been created.

This celebration of World Environment Day at the Georgian National Museum was a successful initiative that linked knowledge of our origins with urgent modern risks to the natural environment. This permitted visitors to understand the need to respect and conserve biodiversity and the natural world. ■



THE GEORGIAN MISSIONS TO KUWAIT

ARCHAEOLOGY > Natia Likokeli

On December 24th, 2010, the Secretary-General of the Kuwaiti National Council for Culture, Arts & Letters Mr. Bader Al-Rifai and the General Director of the Georgian National Museum, Professor David Lordkipandize signed an Agreement of Mutual Cooperation. Through this agreement the Georgian National Museum will conduct archaeological excavations for two months annually on the Failaka Island near Kuwait.

In 2011, the first archaeological group worked on the site from March 7th until the end of April. Thirteen Georgian scholars and students took part in the excavations, and during the excavations Early Bronze Age tombs were unearthed for the first time at Failaka. These were barrows and stone boxes (the remains of which are dated to the end of the 3rd and beginning of the 2nd millennia BC). The Georgian mission also carried out a survey of the area and established the existence

of other sites to be excavated during future missions. The main aim of the 2012 mission was to carry out scientific research on unearthed constructions and to continue excavations. Architectural construction, glass and ceramic fragments and other objects unearthed on the island were studied. Most were dated to the Early and Middle Bronze Ages. At the same time the team investigated the surrounding territory and carried out partial conservation of several buildings.

In the spring of 2013 the Georgian mission continued excavations on Kuwait's Failaka Island, where Early Iron Age hearths and a settlement from the Middle Ages were unearthed. A new Agreement was signed the same year between the Kuwaiti National Council of Culture Arts and Letters, and the Georgian National Museum. This Agreement would permit Georgian architects to carry out an architectural survey and prepare the technical description of sites at Sheikh Khazaal during following years. ■



VISIT THE EXHIBITION

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