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.

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.

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 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.

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

The architectural project of the renovated building of the Ivane Javakhishvili Samtskhe-Javakheti Museum of History was winner of the International competition “Architectural Award 2012” in the Nomination of Restoration / Reconstruction.

The global 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.

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.
Colchian Gold
Antikensammlung, Altes Museum, Staatliche Museen zu Berlin (The State Museums of Berlin), Berlin, Germany
13 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

Benaki Museum, Athens, Greece
6 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

Courtauld Gallery, London, UK
20 February – 15 August 2010

Archeological Museum of Seville, Seville, Spain
6 May – 30 September 2010

Drents Museum Assen, Assen, Netherlands
1 August – 5 October 2010

Il Museo dei Fori Imperiali (Museum of Imperial Forums), Rome, Italy
15 March 2009 – 18 November 2008

Palazzo Pitti Museum of Art, Florence, Italy
8 November 2007 – 13 January 2008

The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, USA
1 August 2007 – 20 January 2008

Rheinisches Landesmuseum Bonn, Bonn, Germany
1 March 2008 – 20 January 2009

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 – 4 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

„Beyond the Rules“, exhibition of European Avant Garde, British Library, London, UK
6 November 2007 – 10 March 2008
(Works by Pirosmani and Irakli Gamrekeli 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 – 1 January 2010

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

Dmanisi Discoveries
„Roots of Human Kindness“, Rheinisches Landesmuseum Born, Born, Germany
8 July – 17 November 2006

„The Face of Human Evolution“, Naturkai (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
3 April – 14 June 2010

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

National Art Gallery, Vilnius, Lithuania
8 July 2007 – 30 March 2008

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

National Art Museum of Ukraine, Kyiv, Ukraine
4 January 2009

National Art Museum of the Republic of Belarus, Minsk, Belarus
2 September 2007

National Art Museum of Ukraine, Kyiv, Ukraine
24 February 2008

National Art Museum of Ukraine, Kyiv, Ukraine
28 February 2010

National Art Museum of the Republic of Belarus, Minsk, Belarus
31 December 2008 – 2 May 2009

National Art Museum of the Republic of Belarus, Minsk, Belarus
18 November 2008 – 15 March 2009

National Art Museum of the Republic of Belarus, Minsk, Belarus
15 March 2009 – 18 November 2008

National Art Museum of the Republic of Belarus, Minsk, Belarus
11 September – 7 November 2007

National Art Museum of the Republic of Belarus, Minsk, Belarus
11 March 2011 – 3 February 2012

National Art Museum of the Republic of Belarus, Minsk, Belarus
11 May – 7 November 2008

National Art Museum of the Republic of Belarus, Minsk, Belarus
14 February 2010

National Art Museum of the Republic of Belarus, Minsk, Belarus
31 December 2008

National Art Museum of Ukraine, Kyiv, Ukraine
30 September 2012

Georgian National Museum participated in the following international exhibitions:

„Beyond Babylon – Art, Trade, and Diplomacy in the Second Millennium B.C.“, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, USA
18 November 2008 – 13 March 2009 (Archaeological artifacts from the Georgian National Museum were exhibited)

„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 – 1 January 2010

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 (The State Museums of Berlin), Berlin, Germany
1 August – 3 October 2014

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

Famous Georgian Artists of the 20th Century
„Paris–Montparnasse/Thyliss“, Musée du Montparnasse, Paris, France
26 June – 30 August 2008

Museum Europäischer Kulturen, Staatliche Museen zu Berlin (The State Museums of Berlin), Berlin, Germany
15 March 2009 – 18 November 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:

„Beyond Babylon – Art, Trade, and Diplomacy in the Second Millennium B.C.“, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, USA
18 November 2008 – 13 March 2009 (Archaeological artifacts from the Georgian National Museum were exhibited)
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.

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 Artandil Iseliani Street, Mestia, 3200 Georgia

facebook.com/GNMuseum
museum.ge

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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 and important topic whenever our people face both positive and negative ends. Perhaps a somewhat “heavy” scientific legacy in Georgia’s case was the classification of human races by Johann Friedrich 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 peripheralized 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 neighbourhood, 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 a 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 magnificently varied landscapes, 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-arid deserts 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”, “most” or “true” and sometimes manifest 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 Tautavel became the earliest European at 450,000 years old. Even today, signs for tourists indicate that Tautavel 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 been 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 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 Tautavel 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 were only tools 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 project was founded a field school in Dmanisi where, 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”. 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 scientists. Project structures bridge of 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 undereway 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 inter-disciplinary collaboration. This could be the occasion to create another model like the one that we are forming together different academic institutions and working on public outreach.

Most have heard the myth of the Greek Alexander the Great campaign of Alexander the Great in the East. 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 its 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 national 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 eastern 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 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 in our cultural institutions. It will strengthen the educational programs centered on the museum’s resources and contribute to coordinating activities among museums. The Georgian National Museum is an important regional example of how to transform post-Soviet museums into modern, innovative, creative and dynamic, changing exhibitions 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. Georgians believe that museums have a high potential for participating in educational and cultural processes and developing a balance between science and religious beliefs. Ge culture is an important role for this Museum.

The Georgian National Museum is a horizontal network of different bodies united under joint values. We are working with different international institutions, and are pleased with our cooperation with the Russian 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.
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 in the district of Didube, which was called “Naturalist Bayern’s Office” then in 1859, Bayern began to establish connections with the Caucasian branch of the Russian Geographic Society, which had become interested in the Urartian cuneiform inscriptions discovered near Ararat and in Georgia’s archaeological monuments. It was due to his ex-

**ROOTS OF THE GEORGIAN NATIONAL MUSEUM**

**HISTORY > Ekaterina Gamkrelidze, Tamar Raboadze**

“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
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 the collections were enriched by objects 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 Caucasian Museum had 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. Salman.

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 exceptional 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 Caucasian Museum

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 Ayvazovsky 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 Merishvili, Mose Toidze, Niko 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.

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 Georgian Museum alone would never be able to collect, study and exhibit all the national treasures. Led by Ekvtime Takashvili, 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, Jakob Gogebashvili, Vasil Barnov (Barnaveli), David Kladiaishvili, Ekaterine Gabashvili as well as Zakaria Palkashvili, Ivan 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 Takashvili in 1908 – the Book of Laws and the Code of Vakhtang VI. In the following years, in order to enrich their collection, the museum 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, the museum 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 Moemba” (Bulletin of the Museum of Georgia) and “Sakartvelos Muzeumin 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 involvement 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 evacuation facilities of the Museum’s Library.

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, Ivan 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 1938, 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 Miotadze 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 Armazi, Bhainsi and ancient Oumiani settlements, Gudarz, 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, Nurnberg and Munich hosted an exhibition 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, folklore Vakhtang Koteishvili 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 battlefield 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 by the Constituent Assembly and the 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, folklore Vakhtang Koteishvili 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.

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 Tkaisieli 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 Likhaia, 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 learn 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 Tsigareli, 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 Saclikon 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 sources 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’s successful expeditions included the churches of Khakhuli, Ekeki, Oshki, Ishkhani, Bana and Parchali; 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 Historical 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 Lechkhumi 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, Ilija 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 Davitdz Dze, an 11th century historian, was published in 1949.

Nevertheless, in 1951, the Soviet government arrested his adopted daughter, Lydia Poltoratskaya, his only carer, 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.
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 were questions raised 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 Gudashvlili Street made by Georgian architect Vladimir 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, Gudashvili 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 visitors to clearly grasp the scale of changes that a project such as "Museum District" would entail.

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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.

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Twinning 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-
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, restoration and conservation of artifacts, museum management and the introduction of general museum standards. The Twinning project had twofold results: extremely rare items from the Oriental Art Collection had 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.

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.
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 satisfaction of great innovation for an exhibition?

I suppose my first success was a series of exhibitions I organized with the Soviet Union — “Scythian Gold” followed by “Treasures of great satisfaction for an innovative exhibition?”

You were the director of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, and your name is still associated with the museum’s Golden Age. In 2009 you retired — yet you still remain one of the most influential figures of American cultural life. Today he teaches museum history and culture at NYU’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.

Where did you first see “Scythian’s Gold?”

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

Professor PHILIPPE DE MONTEBELLO

Professor of the Institute of Fine Arts, New York University.

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 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 circumstancessuccessfully. 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.

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

It happens that I specialized in early Dutch and French painting — 15th century painting such as Fouquet, Van Eyck and Roger 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?

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.

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 do! I have to work for 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 have left 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 location, their interests — and it’s indifferent to technology, but I am intelligent enough to know and realize that this was indeed the Millennium Exhibition” — don’t think it was 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?

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What is the role of the museum in this rapidly changing epoch of digital technologies?

What museums now? — Because people still have to see for authenticity!
HERMANN PARZINGER
LEADER OF THE MUSEUM
FIELD IN GERMANY

INTERVIEW > Nata 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 cooperation 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 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 Archives 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 and achieve success in the cultural arena.

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, share 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 to 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 be long 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 art, history and culture, 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 use 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 exhibits into other cultural programs. Public engagement also includes 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 institution 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 Georgians achieved in the last years building up this fascinating “museum street” in the center city 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 very affluent country, but it’s for this reason everyone admires what they are creating in the center of the capital. Culturally, Georgia 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 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.

In autumn 2012 an international conference “Why Museums Now? Keeping the Museum in the 21st Century” 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 essential 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.

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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, Kvevro 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 the second, initiated in 2007, is entitled “Gold in Georgia”.

The project is interdisciplinary, with over 50 research scientists participating from several institutions.

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The archaeometallurgical study of ore mines on Georgia’s territory included that of ancient metal artifacts. It has involved the discovery of clay items typical of the Kura-Araxes culture 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, melted 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 comparative using chemical and isotope analyses. Samples were sent to laboratories at the DBM Institute of Archaeometallurgy and the Institute of Mineralogy of the 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 DTF. In 2013, a new stage began in the relations between the the Georgian National Museum, the German Mining Museum Bochum, 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.
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.

A REGION OF TREASURES
T
he 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 Gablani, who graduated from St Petersburg University and had been publishing essays on Svaneti since 1910, 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 lighting 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 millennium 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) diversely 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
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 Akhaltsikhe. 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 Akhaltsikhe 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 Jabati 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 Potkho-vi 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 cobblestone, 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...
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 “Jakeli’s 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 Javakhishvili Samtskhe-Javakheti Museum of History was winner of the International competition “Architectural Award 2012” in the Nomination of Restoration / Reconstruction (Author of the Project Goga Keknadze (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 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 showcases. 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, palaeontological, 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.
A MINI-MODEL OF GEORGIA

Immersed in greenery on the hillside 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.

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 interesting, 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 Georgitsminda 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 Georgitsminda in 1974. This joint project between the Georgian Na-
Living history exhibition at the Giorgitsminda house

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 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.
IMPRESSED BY GEORGIA

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.

Introducing the Smithsonian Institution

Carole Neves continues about the Smithsonian Institution: "I was responsible for the development 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 also worked on international level. We had many friends in Georgia.

As a Georgian friend, I introduced her to the Georgian National Museum and the Smithsonian. She was very interested in looking for the private collection 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 the Apollo 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."

Establishing the Office for Policy and Analysis

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 Director of the Smithsonian Institution. The U.S. Congress advised him to build an analytical capacity. C. Neves went to the Smithsonian to strengthen their decision making.

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 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 an office which took probably four years to and 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 successful people like Steve Jobs set an example. 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 (GPIA), I worked for GPIA 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 with the humanities area; he also read profoundly 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 result. I believe you have to approach problem solving as 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 ARPA, one

The staff working in the office have very interesting backgrounds. I hired several PhDs including a statistician, organizational anthropologist, sociologists, and economists; 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.

The Office for Policy and Analysis was also worked on international level. What is the most interesting thing that you have worked on? The first thing that came to mind was the Smithsonian's views itself as a knowledge producing institution, sharing this knowledge not only with the general public but also 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

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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 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 reconstructions in the 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 studies to evaluate this exhibition. C. Neves recalls: “Our office conducted a visitor study to evaluate 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 both the 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.
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 philantrophic organization to bring infrastructure for volunteer and welfare of communities around Georgia. As for my own professional work and passion I have been on healthcare – palliative care and hospice. I eventually became involved in palliative and hospice care in Georgia and was going out with my children. I met Georgians in palliative and hospice with their American counterparts including the Museum (GNM) she became involved as a volunteer. 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 Georgian National Museum. I remember going up to the sixth floor and was looking then, with broken steps and broken walls, it was not the way it looks today. Only 10 years ago if someone would like to bring the museum to this system and go forward. I became involved as a volunteer you need to go in without self-precious expectations. You go to give and wish for the hope and best 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 get to move on to the something else.

Would you say about the level of volunteerism in Georgia?

Partly yes, this comes from having 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 infrastructure for volunteer and it has come through many years of work and dedication of men and women, who were willing to give off their time, give off the missives, give off their money and at the same time to make a cause to go forward. This is driven out of Good Samaritan attitude of first Americans but it’s more than that. I am an emigrant to the American 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 learned 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 their money and at the same time to make a cause to go forward. I walked away with a gift of having being a volunteer in a two-way street – you give but you take. Take is not monetary – it is emotional, it’s satisfactory to you because your soul is touching somebody else’s sole. I think with a museum like me 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 and takes 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, about seeing it in without self-precious expectations. You go to give and wish 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 get 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 with the Museum. In the USA;Vous veulent à la fois avoir une financement public et privé… il ne faut jamais être dans de telles situations. Vous avez besoin de faire preuve de responsabilité et de respect pour votre héritage et votre identité et votre being as a Georgians and there is not a better vehicle than the Museum for that direction. In return you get back pride and satisfaction for the opportunity to introduce others to that heritage.

MUSEUM

DROWNED TO GEORGIA

GEORGIAN NATIONAL MUSEUM

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.

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 that a country less than that. Hundred 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 that how Georgia is perceived in a world through its exhibitions. Every city and town and through the Georgian corporation funds of the Museum.

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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 characters 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 incrusted necklace or the details of a banner made with astonishing 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 Soraphite, 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.
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 enamel. 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-3rd 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 Aragvispri pectoral. Newer cloisonné enamel artifacts started to appear again in the 8th century. From a technical viewpoint, the cornerstones 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 techniques. 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.

THE DISCOVERY OF THE “COLCHIAN HOOD”, A TOOL THAT SHAPED THE ART OF MEDIEVAL CLOISONNÉ 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 enamel. 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.

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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.
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 the technology described in Theophilus’ treatise was a sacred tradition that continued to the era of Vakhtang VI. The King main that Theophilus is describing the importance that Vakhtang VI also termed the technology described in Theophilus’ treatise was a sacred tradition that continued to the era of Vakhtang VI. The King main that Theophilus is describing the technology described in Theophilus’ treatise was a sacred tradition that continued to the era of Vakhtang VI. The King

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. A medallion of Simon the Apostle from the Khakhuli Triptych, 8th century A.D.

We made a link between this artifact and a type of “hood” used to mount enamel, which had been described by Theophilus. 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 muffie. If placed underneath a pile of burning coals as described by Theophilus, high temperatures are achieved inside the muffie 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 antiquity – 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 incrustation. 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.

GEORGIAN NATIONAL MUSEUM
Before finding a home in the collections of the Georgian National Museum (GNM), most of the items discovered as a result of archaeological excavations in Georgia are taken to 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 figures of Dionysus, Heracles and Ariadne holding torches, bronze, Vani, 3rd-1st centuries B.C.

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.
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 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 Ainda Arquitectura Studio (Porto) and the Georgian architectural company Ars (Tbilisi).
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 Pirosmani 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 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 combination 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 Zdanevic, 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. Pirosmani’s works are presently on display in this gallery and in the Sighnaghi Museum.
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 and the art studio of Dmitriyev-Kavkazskiy. He returned to Georgia in 1918, when Georgia 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 work featured in non-traditional 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 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 principles 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.
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 and signally significant photographic works of the 19th century. For example in his collection we find works by such famous photographers as Alexander Rojaschvili, Vladimir Barkanov, Dimitri Nikitin, Eduard Klar, Edward Westley, Alexander En- gel, Antoan Serepiqi, 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.

When the photographer was born in 1846 his father, Lodovico Cambaaggio, worked in Crimea, and later in the Shevakha 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 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 Tehran.

In 1907 he became a member of the Caucasian Section of the Moscow Archaeological Society and in 1912 he founded the Tiflis Photographic Society. There was great stir 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.

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When the photographer was born in 1846 his father, Lodovico Cambaaggio, worked in Crimea, and later in the Shevakha 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 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 Tehran.

In 1907 he became a member of the Caucasian Section of the Moscow Archaeological Society and in 1912 he founded the Tiflis Photographic Society. There was great stir 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.

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In the 21st century, some photos bear geographic 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 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 technology. 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 "Michkhalov 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.

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.
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 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 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 forgetting is a process as natural as remembering! We learn that 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.

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 evolutionary model. Science magazine published an article about the latest discoveries in 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 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.

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 individual, 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 Leon (University of Zurich) and Yoel Rak (Tel Aviv University), who co-authored the article.

DMANISI DISCOVERIES ON THE COVER OF SCIENCE

PUBLICATION > Natia Khuluzauri

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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 Magazine.

In the public area of the S. Janashia Museum of Georgia, a photo exhibition offered images from fascinating moments of wildlife and nature, taken by the world’s top photographers from 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 National Museum and National Geographic Georgia presented a series of events dedicated to World Environment Day on May 5, 2014 at the S. 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. Khutsuna 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!”

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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.

THE GEORGIAN MISSIONS TO KUWAIT

ARCHAEOLOGY > Natia Likokeli

On December 24th, 2010, the Secretary-General of the Kuwait 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.