On the Shoulders of Prometheus
On the Shoulders of Prometheus

International collaboration and the archaeology of Georgia

Edited by

Emanuele E. Intagliata and Paul Everill

ARCHAEOPRESS ARCHAEOLOGY
Georgian Archaeological Monographs

The Georgian Archaeological Monograph series is intended to provide a focal point for the publication of excavation reports, single and multi-authored research volumes, conference proceedings, and doctoral theses relating to all aspects of Georgian archaeology and cultural heritage. Submissions are also welcomed on topics relating to the archaeology of the wider Southern Caucasus, particularly fieldwork reports and research currently unavailable in English. The monograph series embraces the full spectrum of interdisciplinary contributions to our understanding of the archaeology of the Southern Caucasus including, but not limited to, historical research; excavation/fieldwork; environmental/biological/artefactual analysis; and new scientific methods.

Lead Editor:
Dr Paul Everill, University of Winchester

Editorial Board
Ian Colvin, University of Cambridge
Prof. David Braund, University of Exeter
Prof. Davit Lomitashvili, National Agency for Cultural Heritage Preservation of Georgia
Dr Besik Lortkipanidze, Georgian National Museum
Dr Nikoloz Murgulia, Georgian National Museum
Prof. Michael Vickers, University of Oxford
Contents

List of Figures and Tables........................................................................................................................................ vi

Introduction .......................................................................................................................................................... x
  Emanuele E. Intagliata and Paul Everill

Chapter 1: The Javakheti Plateau: Megaliths, Villages, and Obsidian Mines in the Prehistory of the Lesser Caucasus of Georgia ............................................................................................................1
  Paolo Biagi, Renato Nisbet

Chapter 2: Household Archaeology and the Agricultural Economy of an Iron Age Village:
The 10th–3rd Centuries BC at Grakliani Gora, Shida Kartli, Georgia.........................................................15
  Katie Campbell, Davit Naskidashvili, Katya Turchin, Vakhtang Licheli

Chapter 3: The East Georgian Sanctuaries of the Late Bronze and Early Iron Ages .................. 42
  Simone Arnhold, Paata Bukhrashvili, Felix Blocher Shorena Davitashvili

Chapter 4: Work- and Lifescapes in 1st Millennium BC Udabno ......................................................... 59
  Sabina Brodbeck-Jucker, René Kunze

Chapter 5: Nokalakevi–Archaeopolis: Twenty Years of Anglo-Georgian Collaboration .......... 85
  Paul Everill, Nikoloz Murgulia, Davit Lomitashvili, Ian Colvin, Besik Lortkipanidze

Chapter 6: Lighting up Arrian’s Room. Preliminary Remarks on the Lamps Found in the Roman Fort in Apsaros (Gonio, Georgia) ........................................................................................................ 99
  Maria Jaworska

Chapter 7: Early Christian (4th-6th Centuries AD) Monuments of the Kingdom of Lazika, West Georgia .............................................................................................................................................. 111
  Nikoloz Murgulia, Besik Lortkipanidze, Davit Lomitashvili

Chapter 8: A New Late Antique Church Complex at the Foot of the Greater Caucasus – Machkhomeri Hill (Khobi Municipality) ........................................................................................................ 124
  Emanuele E. Intagliata, Revaz Pupashvili, Andrey Vinogradov, Davit Naskidashvili, Gogita Chitaia

Chapter 9: The Results of Landscape Survey from Samshvilde Environs (Chivchava River and Khrami River Valleys) ............................................................................................................. 134
  David Berikashvili
List of Figures and Tables

Chapter 1: The Javakheti Plateau: Megaliths, Villages, and Obsidian Mines in the Prehistory of the Lesser Caucasus of Georgia

Figure 1. Approximate location of three main areas surveyed in 2012–2019 (green dots); Mt. Chikiani and its surroundings (1), southern terraces of the Tsalka Reservoir (2), and western slope of Mt. Paravani (3) (top); the territory east of Mt. Chikiani surveyed in 2012–2019, with the location of obsidian mining-fields, most important obsidian workshop (ER), basalt quarries, menhir (red dot), a few monumental kurgans (green and blue dots), and megalithic alignments (blue dots) (P. Biagi and R. Nisbet). .................................................................3

Figure 2. Mt. Chikiani: Obsidian mining-fields marked by the presence of groups of rounded mining-pits (top). Inyak Dağ: The fortress seen from the south-eastern upper slope of Mt. Chikiani (bottom) (P. Biagi and R. Nisbet, July 2018). .................................................................4

Figure 3. NECK: Circular platform made of basalt blocks and related obsidian workshop (ER) discovered along the south-western slope of the small dome (black dot). Distribution of obsidian artefacts along the slope (white dots), chert artefacts (red dots), andesite/basalt pestles (yellow dots), and potsherds (violet dots) (R. Nisbet, July 2019). ..................................................................................................5

Figure 4. NECK: Knapped stone artefacts from the ER strip: exogenous chert artefact (nn. 1 and 2), obsidian, ovate rough-out (n. 3), obsidian, Bedeni type foliate arrowhead (n. 4), obsidian, spearhead rough-outs (nn. 5 and 6). The small bars are 1 cm (E. Starmini and P. Biagi). ..................................................................................................................6

Figure 5. NECK: Basalt/andesite hammerstones from the hill slope with evident traces of hammering at one edge (P. Biagi). .................................................................................................................................6

Figure 6. Mt. Chikiani: Kurgans K-105 (top) and K-128 (bottom) (R. Nisbet, July 2018). ...........................................................................................................................................8

Figure 7. Mt. Chikiani: Different types of small kurgans made of basalt and obsidian blocks (A, B, D), and shallow rounded habitation structure (?) whose probable entrance is marked by vertical slabs (C). The black bar is 1 m (E. Starmini and P. Biagi). ..................................................................................................................................................8

Figure 8. Mt. Chikiani: Village VII-6 made of apsidal stone structures, facing south-west (top) and unmapped village located north-east of Seyttapa (bottom) (VII-6: M. Ferrandi, July 2017). .................................................................9

Chapter 2: Household Archaeology and the Agricultural Economy of an Iron Age Village: The 10th–3rd Centuries BC at Grakliani Gora, Shida Kartli, Georgia

Figure 1. Location of Grakliani Gora. ...........................................................................................................................................16

Figure 2. Aerial view of Grakliani Gora looking west, showing terraces cut into the hillside. .................................................................................................................................17

Figure 3. Overview of major features at the site showing the locations of buildings mentioned in the text. ........................................................................................................................................18

Figure 4. Plan of Buildings 4.3–4.6 on Terrace IV at Grakliani Gora. .................................................................................................................................19

Figure 5. Orthographic photo of metal hoard in the SE of Building 4.6 and a close up showing the iron objects, mineralised wood and polished bone handle and spearhead. .................................................................................................................................20

Figure 6. Excavation of the oven in Building 4.3, looking southeast. ..................................................................................................................20

Figure 7. Layers of ceramic sherds built into oven in Building 4.3. .................................................................................................................................21

Figure 8. Building 4.4 looking west showing eroded oven in the south-west corner of the building and nearby storage pot. ........................................................................................................................................................................22

Figure 9. Burnt roofing material on the floor of Building 4.6, with individual roof beams visible. .................................................................................................................................................................23

Figure 10. Plan of Building 4.6. .................................................................................................................................................................24

Figure 11. Base of vessel sf. 12 within stone installation, surrounded by charred organic remains and mudbrick. .............................................................................................................................................25

Figure 12. Whetstone found in Building 4.6. .................................................................................................................................................................25

Figure 13. Quern stones in Building 4.6. .................................................................................................................................................................27

Figure 14. Oven in northeast corner of Building 4.6, looking east. .................................................................................................................................28

Figure 15. Oven in northeast corner of Building 4.6, looking east. .................................................................................................................................28

Figure 16. Overview of kitchen area looking north. In the front left of the image is part of the ‘altar’ and burnt roofing material and pottery sherds can be seen scattered across the floor of the building. .................................................................................................................................................................29

Figure 17. Central part of Building 4.6 showing large rectangular plaster feature in the centre, smaller horseshoe shaped structure on southeast corner, plaster channel, and charred remains, probably a divide within the room. ...........................................................................................................................................30

Figure 18. Working shot within Building 4.6, looking northwest from southeast corner, the iron hoard was under the white covering. ..................................................................................................................................................30

Figure 19. Adult skeleton sk. 72 with poorly preserved neonate skeleton sk. 73 visible below its right arm. ..............................................................................................................................................................................31

Figure 20. Infant skeleton sk. 15 within stone lined grave .................................................................................................................................................................................................32

Figure 21. Plan of adult and infant burial 72 & 73 and infant burial 15. .................................................................................................................................32

Figure 22. Human skull sk. 26 .................................................................................................................................................................................................33

Table 1. Sample Contexts .................................................................................................................................................................................................35

Table 2. Crop Presence in Samples (x = present, Xx = particularly abundant, * = negligible) .................................................................................................36
Chapter 3: The East Georgian Sanctuaries of the Late Bronze and Early Iron Ages

Figure 1. Map of East Georgia with the sanctuaries (1. Vaistskali; 2. Melaani; 3-4. Meligele I + II; 5. Shilda; 6. Mount Gochebi; 7. Arashenda; 8. Kachreti) listed as well as other places mentioned in the text. 43

Table 1. Chronological and cultural system (MBA/LBA: Middle/Late Bronze Age, EIA: Early Iron Age) of East Georgia developed by Pizchelauri 2010 (Pizchelauri 2010: 446), and in brackets the former chronology published in 1995/1997 (Pizchelauri 1995: 100-103; Pizchelauri 1997: 10). 45

Chapter 4: Work- and Lifescapes in 1st Millennium BC Udabno

Figure 1. Location of the settlements of Udabno I-V in the Dawit Gareja steppe, province of Kakheti, eastern Georgia (base maps: Esri, Maxar, GeoEye, Earthstar Geographics, CNES/Arbus DS, USDA, USGS, NOAA, AeroGRID, IGN). 60

Figure 2. Russian aerial photograph in a 3D-view (Modified after Korfmann et al. 2003/2004: 177, Figure 2 and modelled in ESRI ArcScene by using SRTM-data; compiled by A. Swieder, Halle/S.). 61

Figure 3. Udabno I with houses under study. Magnetogram with deposited aerial photograph (modified after Hübner et al. 2002: 431, Figure 3 and Korfmann et al. 2003/2004: 177, Figure 2). 62

Figure 4. Udabno II with houses under study. Magnetogram with deposited aerial photograph (modified after Hübner et al. 2002: 431, Figure 7 and Korfmann et al. 2003/2004: 183, Figure 7). 63

Figure 5. Udabno III with houses under study. Magnetogram with deposited aerial photograph (modified after Bertram and P’ic’xelauri 2005: 337, Figure 24). 64

Figure 6. Sequence of calibrated 14C-data from the houses of Udabno II for samples of animal bones (dark) and charcoal (grey), Calibration by OxCal 4.4 (compiled by R. Kunze). 65

Figure 7. Sequence of calibrated 14C-data from the houses of Udabno I for samples of animal bones (dark) and charcoal (grey), Calibration by OxCal 4.4 (compiled by R. Kunze). 66

Figure 8. Sequence of calibrated 14C-data from the houses of Udabno III for samples of animal bones (dark) and charcoal (grey), Calibration by OxCal 4.4 (compiled by R. Kunze). 66

Figure 9. LBA black polished sherd with impressed concentric circles with incised tangents from a ditch in Udabno I (Udabno-Archive). 67

Figure 10. Udabno I. Redrawing of the Houses J (left) and K (right) (Udabno-Archive). 67

Figure 11. Udabno I. House K with orthostats (Udabno-Archive). 68

Figure 12. Udabno I. Group of cooking pots in a pit (Udabno-Archive). 69

Figure 13. Udabno II. House A. Stones of a threshing sledge in situ (Udabno-Archive). 70

Figure 14. a) Pithos from Building F in the citadel of Udabno I; b and c) jars with a wide profile, a short neck and two handles on the broadest part of the body from Udabno I-F and Udabno I-D respectively (Udabno-Archive). 73

Figure 15. Pithos from House Udabno III-D in situ, found in the southern part of the building (Udabno-Archive). 74

Figure 16. Udabno III, House D. Detailed view of the northern area of work (Udabno-Archive). 74

Figure 17. Obsidian tempered pot with circular stamp impressions from Udabno I, Building I (Udabno-Archive). 75

Figure 18. Fragment of a butter churn from Udabno I, House F (Udabno-Archive). 75

Figure 19. Udabno III, House E. Mortar and pestle (Udabno-Archive). 77

Figure 20. Selection of some jewelry objects found in depot-like manner. a) carnelian beads from house U I-K; b) slate pendants from U III-B; c) copper plates in the outer wall of the eastern citadel fortification of Udabno I (Udabno-Archive). 79

Figure 21. Goblets from Udabno II, Building A. Height of the largest goblet: 37 cm (Udabno-Archive). 81
Chapter 5: Nokalakevi–Archaeopolis: Twenty Years of Anglo-Georgian Collaboration

Figure 1. Topographic map of Georgia (generated from the ASTER GDEM produced by NASA and METI, showing the location of Nokalakevi. Coordinates in WGS84 UTM 38N) ..................................................86
Figure 2. Vertical drone photo of the ‘lower town’ of Nokalakevi, enclosed within a loop of the River Tekhuri (© National Agency for Cultural Heritage Preservation of Georgia 2016). .................................................................87
Figure 3. Oblique drone photo, looking east, showing the location of Nokalakevi at the junction of the foothills to the north (left) and the Colchian Plain to the south (© National Agency for Cultural Heritage Preservation of Georgia 2016) ........................................................................................................87
Figure 4. GPS survey of extant structures at Nokalakevi (2009) showing modern infrastructure and surviving fortifications, the extent of the walls, and the relationship between the ‘upper’ and ‘lower’ town (coordinates in WGS84 UTM 38N) ......................................................................................................................................88
Figure 5. Ruins of Nokalakevi around the Forty Martyrs’ Church, drawn in the 1830s (Dubois de Montpéreux 1839). .................................................................................................................................................89
Figure 6. The 23 solidi, minted during the reign of the Emperor Maurice (AD 582–602), discovered during excavation in 1930. .........................................................................................................................................................90
Figure 7. Georgian and British students working together next to the standing fortifications of Nokalakevi-Archaeopolis ..............................................................................................................................................92
Figure 8. An example of the double-headed zoomorphic figurines found at Nokalakevi .........................................................................................................................................................................................93

Chapter 6: Lighting up Arrian’s room. Preliminary Remarks on the Lamps Found in the Roman Fort in Apsaros (Gonio, Georgia)

Figure 1. Site plan: Roman fort within the Byzantine-Ottoman walls (after Geyer 2003; Karasiewicz-Szczy匹配orski and Mamuladze 2019, drawing by O. Kubrak) ........................................................................................................100
Figure 2. ‘Almond-shape’ lamp found in Apsaros (M. Jaworska). ..................................................................................................................................................................................102
Figure 3. Lamp with pelta-shapes on the base found in Apsaros (M. Jaworska). ...............................................................................................................................................102
Figure 4. ‘Sunburst’ lamp found in Apsaros (M. Jaworska). ..................................................................................................................................................................................104
Figure 5. ‘Firmalampae’ found in Apsaros (M. Jaworska). ..................................................................................................................................................................................105

Table 1. Building phases of the fort in Apsaros within the historical context (data from Jaworski 2022, tab. 1).106

Chapter 7: Early Christian (4th-6th Centuries AD) Monuments of the Kingdom of Lazika, West Georgia

Figure 1. Saint Andrew the first-called Missionary journey to west Georgia (based on creative commons map of Colchis and Iberia created by user DEU). ........................................................................................................112
Figure 2. Iron cross, hidden in Stone stele, dated 3rd–4th centuries AD. Bichvinta–Pitsunda (Lortkipanidze 1991: Figure LXXVII). ........................................................................................................................................112
Figure 3. Georgia in the 5th–6th centuries AD (N. Murgulia and B. Lortkipanidze). .............................................................................................................................................113
Figure 4. Aerial view of the lower town of Nokalakevi-Arcueapolis. 4th-, 5th-, and 6th- centuries AD churches in the royal quarter of the city (V. Kenia) ........................................................................................................114
Figure 5. Possible restoration of the stone cross found in Nokalakevi (Everill 2014). .....................................................................................................................................................115
Figure 6. The inscription and cross cut in the cornerstone of the apse of Forty Martyrs’ church (N. Murgulia). .............................................................................................................................................116
Figure 7. Plans of the 4th- and 5th-century AD churches in Nokalakevi-Archaeopolis (Zakaraia and Kapanadze 1991: 168, Figure 59). .............................................................................................................................................117
Figure 8. Forty Martyrs’ church. 6th century. View from south (V. Kenia). ..........................................................................................................................................................118
Figure 9. The Jege-Misaroni church. 6th century. View from northwest (G. Tsurtsumia). ................................................................................................................................................119
Figure 10. Plan of Khuntsi fortress (I. Murgulia and N. Murgulia). ..........................................................................................................................................................120
Figure 11. Orthophoto of Khuntsi fortress temple (5th–6th centuries AD) (N. Murgulia) ..........................................................120
Figure 12. Five step Entrance (Dromos) and interior of the temple crypt. View from the west (N. Murgulia). ......121

Chapter 8: A New Late Antique Church Complex at the Foot of the Greater Caucasus. Machkhomeri Hill (Khobi Municipality)

Figure 1. Schematic plan of the visible remains on Machkhomeri hill as of 2020 (D. Naskidashvili) .........................................................................................................................125
Figure 2. Drone photo of Machkhomeri hill seen from the northeast. In the background is the Colchian plain (summer 2019. D. Naskidashvili) .................................................................125
Figure 3. Plan of the visible remains of the church in August 2020 (D. Naskidashvili). ..............................................................................................................................................126
Figure 4. Room D (summer 2019. E.E. Intagliata). ..........................................................................................................................................................127
Figure 5. The nave seen from the northwest (Room B). Note the blocking of the space between the pillars. Phase 3 (D. Naskidashvili). .............................................................................127
Figure 6. The western stretch of the perimeter wall covered in vegetation (August 2021. E.E. Intagliata). ......131
Chapter 9: The Results of Landscape Survey from Samshvilde Environs (Chivchava River and Khrami River valleys)

Figure 1. Location of Samshvilde Archaeological Complex in Georgia. .................................................................135
Figure 2. Samshvilde promontory at the confluence of the Chivchava and Khrami rivers. .................................135
Figure 3. Landscape survey Route I. Samshvilde village. Chivchava Cave I Complex. ........................................137
Figure 4. Landscape formation on the left side of River Chivchava. .................................................................138
Figure 5. Menhir on the left side of River Chivchava. ......................................................................................138
Figure 6. River Chivchava Cave I Complex. ....................................................................................................139
Figure 7. Fragments of the pottery collected on the survey Route I. .............................................................139
Figure 8. Dry masonry at the entrance of Chivchava Caves. ........................................................................140
Figure 9. Cave shelters in the Khrami Valley. .................................................................................................141
Figure 10. Landscape survey Route II. Pirghebuli monastery - unknown monastic complex in the Khrami river canyon. ........................................................................................................141
Figure 11. The fragment of the historical way alongside of River Khrami. ....................................................142
Figure 12. The survived part of the Historical Bridge on the left side of the River Khrami. ...........................143
Figure 13. The unstudied cave on the right embankment of River Khrami. .....................................................143
Figure 14. The location of the unknown monastic complex in the valley of the River Khrami. .......................144
Figure 15. Church from the unknown monastic complex. The valley of the River Khrami. .........................145
Figure 16. Small church from the unknown monastic complex. The valley of the River Khrami. ..........145
Figure 17. Ornamented stones and architectural details from the unknown monastic complex. .................146
Figure 18. Pottery fragments of the late medieval centuries from the valley of the River Khrami. .................147
Figure 19. Fragments of the glazed pottery (12th—13th centuries AD), medieval period glass (13th century AD), copper plate and an iron nail from the survey route 2. The valley of the River Khrami. 147
Figure 20. Obsidian tools from the Caves of the River Khrami. ....................................................................148
Introduction

Emanuele E. Intagliata¹ and Paul Everill²

Despite some high-profile exceptions, the archaeology of the South Caucasus (present-day Georgia, Armenia, and Azerbaijan) remains marginalised and often overlooked – not receiving the wider exposure it deserves. Its higher profile at the moment probably owes as much to conflict in Syria and Ukraine in recent years, which has forced a number of international projects to relocate to more favourable locations, as it does to greater awareness. This situation is partly a consequence of decades of occupation and academic isolation, and partly because of an unfortunate (and incorrect) perception that the South Caucasus is simply peripheral to the archaeologies of Europe and Asia.

This volume originated in a conference session, organised by the editors for the 21st annual meeting of the European Association of Archaeologists (Kiel, 6-11 September 2021), dedicated to the archaeology and history of the South Caucasus. Its goal was to raise awareness of the growing number and variety of studies dedicated to this region. The session showcased examples of collaborative working in the South Caucasus, projects which have enabled the cross-fertilisation of ideas and scholarly traditions, helping to develop new methodologies, and bringing new technology and scientific advances to bear on regional archaeological debates. It was a celebration of both the archaeology of the South Caucasus and of the power of international scholarly cooperation to bridge divides and widen horizons.

The scope of this volume has changed slightly from the conference session that inspired it. The original aim was to publish a collection of all the papers presented at the EAA; however not all were submitted for publication to the editors, and none with a focus beyond Georgia. Additional contributions were, however, added to the collection, though these studies were also situated in Georgia. The resulting volume, therefore, presents a diverse miscellanea, with clear yet narrow geographical and chronological boundaries. Despite this evident limitation, the following contributions demonstrate the high level of connectedness of this region with the rest of the Southern Caucasus and, indeed, Asia and Europe. They all highlight the research potential of Georgia, as well as the benefits that international collaboration can bring to our understanding of the history and archaeology of the Caucasus more generally.

The publication of this volume also marks the beginning of a new book series through Archaeopress, dedicated to the archaeology of Georgia. The Georgian Archaeological Monographs (GAM) series was established to provide a focal point for the publication of excavation reports, single and multi-authored research volumes, conference proceedings, and doctoral theses relating to all aspects of Georgian archaeology and cultural heritage. The series will also publish on topics relating to the archaeology of the wider Southern Caucasus, particularly fieldwork reports and research currently unavailable in English. The monograph series will embrace the full spectrum of interdisciplinary contributions to our understanding of the archaeology of the Southern Caucasus including, but not limited to, historical research; excavation and fieldwork; environmental, biological and artefactual analysis; and new scientific methods. Many of these approaches to the study of the past are represented within the pages of this, the first volume of the monograph series.

The contributions in this volume follow a broad chronological order. Chapter 1, by P. Biagi and R. Nisbet, presents the results of a series of surveys conducted in the Javakheti Plateau, which uncovered the remains of a wide variety of Bronze Age sites. The contribution deals with the nature

¹ University of Milan.
² University of Winchester.
and complex relations that may have occurred between these sites, some of which are obsidian mining fields.

Chapter 2 (K. Campbell, D. Naskidashvili, K. Turchin, and V. Licheli) presents the results of the excavations of four earthen buildings dated to between the late 2nd millennium BC and the 3rd century BC at Grakliani Gora (Shida Kartli) and associated archaeobotanical analyses. The result draws a picture of a rural community whose way of life changed little over the course of a millennium despite the upheavals and geopolitical reshufflings that characterised this period.

The chapter by S. Arnhold, P. Bukhrashvili, F. Blocher, and S. Davitashvili (Chapter 3) provides an overview of what is known about the Late Bronze Age/Early Iron Age east Georgian sanctuaries. These monumental compounds, of which only nine have been excavated, appear to be characterised by a standardised plan and rich assemblages. New excavations conducted by a Georgian-German team at Nazarlebi (Kakheti), whose preliminary results are presented in this contribution, are currently helping to fill in the gap left by past scholarship on the chronology and architecture of these monuments.

Chapter 4 by S. Brodbeck-Jucker and R. Kunze presents the results of investigations at Udabno (Kakheti - east Georgia), a complex of five Late Bronze/Early Iron Age rural settlements of which three (Udabno I-III) have been partially excavated since 2000. The contribution provides insight into the everyday lives of these sites’ inhabitants, who were mostly self-sufficient and lived off the products of their land while maintaining trade connections with the southwest Caucasus.

Chapter 5 (P. Everill, N. Murgulia, D. Lomitashvili, I. Colvin, and B. Lortkipanidze) offers an overview of the research conducted at Nokalakevi-Archaeopolis, with a specific focus on the work carried out by the Anglo-Georgian Expedition to Nokalakevi (AGEN) since 2001. Over the past 20 years, AGEN has pioneered a multidisciplinary approach to the archaeology of Nokalakevi, allowing a greater understanding of the long history of occupation of this site, and the lives of its inhabitants.

The chapter by M. Jaworska (Chapter 6) presents preliminary remarks on the results of a study of selected lamp finds discovered during excavation at the Roman fort of Gonio-Apsaros. After contextualising the material, the contribution discusses the problem of the low representativeness of clay lamps in the archaeological record and puts forward an explanation for this. It also explores the trade link evidenced by studying lamps and the role of the army in importing goods from the west to the South Caucasus.

Chapter 7 by N. Murgulia, B. Lortkipanidze, and D. Lomitashvili, discusses the evidence for the Christianisation of modern-day western Georgia, focusing in particular on the remains from sites in the surroundings of the Laz capital, Nokalakevi-Archaeopolis. In so doing, the contribution also presents the results of the excavations conducted by the authors in what has been identified as the ancient Onoguris mentioned by Agathias. To date, the excavations have revealed portions of a substantial fortification wall and a church, the latter believed to have been constructed on top of an earlier place of religious convergence.

The chapter by R. Papuashvili, E.E. Intagliata, A. Vinogradov, D. Naskidashvili, and G. Chitaia (Chapter 8), presents the results of a research project conducted at Machkhomeri hill – Khobi Municipality. The excavations have revealed the existence of a late antique church most likely dedicated to the Forty Martyrs of Sebaste. The church appears to have been an important religious centre in Lazika, attracting funding from religious associations and prominent figures such as the bishop of Satala. The apparent absence of strong defensive facilities so far excludes the hypothesis that the site was part of the frontier defensive system of Lazika in Late Antiquity.
Finally, Chapter 9 (D. Berikashvili) provides insights into the results of a landscape survey conducted in the hinterland of Samshvilde (Kvemo Kartli). Most of the material and sites discovered during this fieldwork, which was conducted over the course of three years, are dated to the Middle Ages, although earlier and later archaeological evidence are also attested. The contribution provides a much-needed contextualisation of the settlement pattern surrounding the complex site of Samshvilde and demonstrates the potential of landscape archaeology to shed light on the history of large nucleated settlements.

The chapters collected in this volume represent the diversity and vibrancy of international research collaboration in the archaeology of Georgia, while all underline the enormous potential of the country’s archaeological resource. The importance of seeing the South Caucasus in its unique context, rather than as peripheral to Europe or Asia, is evident throughout. The increasing application of scientific techniques to archaeological research and landscape archaeology, features prominently in many of these chapters. However, the key element is the multidisciplinarity of much of the work, which allows specialists drawn from a wide range of backgrounds and scholarly traditions to contribute to the better understanding and appreciation of the Georgian historic environment.

In various versions of the story of Prometheus, the Greek Titan gave fire and civilisation, and the arts and sciences, to mortal humans. As punishment, Zeus had him bound to the Caucasus Mountains where he was tortured for his defiance. Archaeology itself – the application of science and scholarly endeavour to the understanding of our own early societies – might, therefore, be directly connected to Prometheus and his gifts, but the proximity of the Caucasus Mountains means that there is perhaps nowhere in the world where this is more true.