

MINISTRY OF EDUCATION, CULTURE AND SPORT OF AJARA

BATUMI ARCHAEOLOGICAL MUSEUM

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BATUMI ARCHAEOLOGICAL
MUSEUM TREASURE

CATALOGUE

PREFACE

Batumi Archaeological Museum is one of the new museums in the Black Sea region. As a result of intensive field archaeological works the collection of the museum has been enriched with artefacts dated back to the vast time cluster. Objects of jeweller's art represent one of the brightest faces of the collection. The catalogue pursues the objective of a scientific and popular-educational publication. Its readers have the opportunity to become familiar with many original and highly artistic gold objects both of ancient Colchian and Greek goldwork. They reflect highly-developed nature of the state which inherited the best traditions of rich in gold Aya-Colchis.

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Georgia is counted among ancient metallogenic countries. As of the last stage of the Early Bronze Age (second half of the 3rd millennium BC) goldsmithery sprang up. It was the time of the first rise of the goldsmith's art. Numerous unique objects have been discovered. Among them stands out Ananuri torque-pectoral, as well as gold lion statuette from Tsnori. The lion's mane is rendered in relief ornament that creates the impression of twisting. Bedeni fibula depicts meander pattern on one side and circular ornament on the other one. Lately they have increased in number still more.

The next ascent in development of goldwork took place in the Middle Bronze Age (the first half of the 2nd millennium BC). Craftsmen have mastered the art of incrustation, granulation and filigree techniques. The objects of polychrome art appeared as well. One of the finest examples is represented by Trialeti cup. The necklace comprised by agate pendant, gold and cornelian beads belong to the objects of high artistic merit.

The Early Iron Age (the 8th-6th centuries BC) introduced certain revival into the centuries-old field of art. Finds brought to light in Nosiri, Chuburkhinji, Partskhanakhanevi, Urbnisi, Ilmazlo, Tskhinvali and some other places are especially notable. Gold earrings with granulation and necklaces are noteworthy. The latter has distant analogues in Etrurian and Halmstad cultures. Plain and twinned gold beads dated to the 7th century BC were also found in Makhvilauri village, Khelvachauri municipality.

Goldsmithery attained its highest stage of development in the Classical period (the 5-4th centuries BC). Notwithstanding the certain impact of the Achaemenid and Greek schools, it still kept up its individuality. One of its characteristic features was using of granulation technique. Local origin of certain objects found on the rich- in- gold territory of Colchis is thought to be testified with high assurance due to their common stylistic and technical features, for example, decoration of facade of a hoop, extensive usage of granulation. On this basis Vani, Sachkhere and Akhalgori (Sadzeguri) represent rich and diverse monuments of material culture.

Both, as a result of accidental finds and fifty-year field research on the territory of Adjara, the interesting archaeological material has been brought to light. The Pichvnari Colchian and Greek necropoleis of the Early Classical period (the 2nd quarter of the 5th century BC) have yielded the ancient samples. Among them the following are noteworthy: