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**“Adjaristskali Gorge (historical and archaeological survey by
Keda Municipality)”**

Specialty: Archeology

Annotation

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Introduction

Relevancy of the research topic. Adjaristkali Gorge is the “heir” of rich material and spiritual values. The sequential archeological field surveys confirm that the settlement of ancient humans began as early as the Chalcolithic era. During the following period, this part of Georgia became one of the leading centers of Western Georgian (Colchian) culture. Moreover, it has played an important role in the development of the country through the roads connecting the southwestern Georgian coastline and inland regions.

The materials collected over the years give us the basis for the need to study the region in depth. The very regular archeological surveys will promote the thorough study of certain issues of the history of Adjaristskali (Keda Municipality) and confirm the facts presented in written sources.

The goal of the topic. The goal of the qualification work is to include the written sources, historiographical data, material heritage-related monuments of physical or material culture of different epochs in scientific circulation. Naturally, the new discoveries will help popularization of the rich historical past of our country not only by displaying the monuments of the material culture from the museum space but of the open-air as well. It will also raise the issue of resolving the unresolved problems and the planned field expeditions will bring more innovations to the archaeological study of the region

The novelty and importance. The thesis, essentially, is the first monographic survey, focusing on a new concept of monuments of material and spiritual culture of different eras. The special attention was paid to the search for the ancient hearths of the metallurgy associated with the Merisi deposit. A new type of fortification structure was discovered in the Georgian archeology on the example of Keda. The winepresses related to the viticulture and winemaking are the subject of special research, the number of which are significant.

The structure and volume of the thesis. The structure of the thesis is conditioned by the goals and objectives of the research. The thesis consists of an introduction, 7 chapters, 12 paragraphs and conclusions. The thesis is attached with a list of used literature, graphic and

photo illustrations. The printed version of the thesis consists of 255 pages together with graphic and photo illustrations.

Chapter I. Natural geographical environment

The municipality of Keda is situated along the river Adjaristskali in the middle part of it. Keda region borders Kobuleti to the north (with 38 kilometers in length), Shuakhevi - to the east (with 24 kilometers in length), Khelvachauri - to the west (with 24 kilometers in length) and it is surrounded by Turkey to the west with 17 kilometers in length.

Shavsheti Range lies to the south of Keda, Meskheti Range borders our municipality to the north-eastern part and Kobuleti Range lies to the north and north- western part of Keda. The total area of the municipality is 452 sq. km. Number of population is 20,5 thousand

By its geographical location, it is a narrow gorge, divided by Adjaristskali River in the middle part. The total length of the river Adjaristskali is 92 kilometers, most of its part (42 km) flows on the territory of the municipality.

The Keda municipality comprises 9 councils and 64 settlements. The borough Keda is its administrative center, which are 200 meters above sea level. The highest peak is the Kanli (2987 meters).

Chapter II. Sources and historiography

§ 1. Written references, archaeological researches

It is worth mentioning that by the 60s of the 16th century, the villages of the lower part of Adjaristskali or the villages included in the Nahiyah of the Lower Adjara as well as the whole Adjara were completely ravaged by the Turks. The number of people domiciled in villages is either very reduced or completely destroyed. The local population was paying taxes in favor of the Turks. By the 1870s, according to the Ottoman administrative division, the territory of

contemporary Keda was included in the Ottoman Kaymakam of the Kaza of Lower Adjara (with its center in Keda).

By the Russian administrative division of 1878 (Decree of December 20), the territory of contemporary Keda was included in the district of Batumi and as unified into the okrug of Adjara with the status of Lower Adjara district (with its center in Keda). Further, despite major administrative changes related to the district of Adjara, the territory of Keda has always been described as the district of Lower Batumi, often called as the County of Keda.

“Keda is the administrative center of Lower Adjara. Meanwhile, it is a center, the market for the production of this part. The Lower Adjaraians are mostly carrying out trading business here, no matter what simple things Lower Adjarian needs to buy, he will definitely come to Keda” – was mentioned by T. Sakhokia in 1897.

In 1915-16 6 primary Georgian schools were opened in Adjara by the initiative of the Society for the Spreading of Literacy. One was in the village of Agara.

§ 2. Novelty and importance

Along with written sources, the material sources are important for study of the history of Adjaristskali Gorge as well. The very archaeological materials made it possible to study the overground or underground cultural monuments on the territory of Adjara.

Yet in 1885, Dimitri Bakradze stated: “There is no doubt that many ancient artifacts must be found in Kartli-Kakheti, Imereti, Meskheta and the Black Sea coast, which will shed light on our past centuries.”

Many explorers and travellers have been interested in the above ground examples of material culture of the Adjaristskali Gorge.

Dimitri Bakradze, Giorgi Kazbegi, Praskovya Uvarova, Tedo Sakhokia, Zakaria Chichinadze, Yuri Sikharulidze, Khariton Akhvlediani and others are noteworthy.

The famous Georgian historian, D. Bakradze was the first specialist, who dealt with above ground material culture monuments of Adjaristskali Gorge. We can say that the most valuable

part of his scientific heritage is the part concerning Guria-Adjara and Southern Georgia as a whole.

The book focuses on the monuments of material culture of the Lower and Upper Adjaristskali Gorge, their condition, roads and road structures.

An interesting information about the monuments of material culture is preserved in the heritage of the famous Georgian ethnographer-traveler T. Sakhokia in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. The traveler extensively discusses the above ground monuments, folk legends related to them, he also speaks about Dandallo Bridge.

The materials from accidental discoveries or archaeological excavations gives us important information about Medieval Adjaristskali Gorge.

The first researcher, whose shovel touched the monuments of Adjaristskali Gorge was Praskovya Uvarova. She travelled to Adjara-Shavsheti in 1888 under the instruction of the Imperial Russian Archaeological Society. The researcher left us remarkable information about the life and material culture of the inhabitants of the Adjaristskali Gorge. The small-scale archeological works were also carried out by her.

The years of random discoveries and archaeological research have accumulated rich and varied materials; created a valuable base for source criticism for the study of the ancient history and culture of the region. Many monographs or other papers have been published, but there are still many monuments that are subject to research

§ 3. The brief historiographical overview

A famous Georgian geographer Vakhushti Batonishvili of the first half of the 18th century, describes Keda as a small town and briefly describes it in his work: „Description of the Kingdom of Georgia: “Chorokhi joins Adjaristskali from the east and crosses Zarzma - between the mountains of Adjara, it comes from east to west. At the edge of this water, in the middle of this gorge, there is a small town-like Keda ... and the gorges of Adjara are full of vineyards,

fruit productive, rice-woolly, grainy, narrow, rocky, full of deep gullies, mountainous-forested, men mainly carpenters”.

The researcher Davit Bakradze has relatively more precise and detailed information about the gorge. The descriptions clearly show that Keda did not change its expression and purpose in Adjaristskali Gorge.

Giorgi Kazbegi also provides interesting information. He travelled in Adjara in 1874. This was the period when the Russian-Turkish relations were very aggravated and the Turkish government treated the travelers in the border areas of Russia with suspicion. In this regard, George Kazbegi used to write: “Travelling to Turkey of Asia is not very safe, especially in the border areas of Russia and especially for Russians. Our neighbors see threat in everything. That is why every step of the traveler, every question, especially his attempt – to record or draw something, faces the thousands of obstacles.

Chapter III. The Bronze Age

§ 1. The newly discovered non-ferrous metallurgy deposits in Keda Municipality

Every important event that is further a step towards the civilization of mankind is preceded by the existence of rich natural resources. Discovery of such a large quantity of metal products in our region is related to the rich non-ferrous metal deposits that are abundant in Keda. Merisi ore knots and ore-containing rocks consist of gold, silver, selenium, tellurium, potassium, gallium, strontium. It is recognized that Adjara is one of the promising regions of Georgia in terms of non-ferrous and noble deposits.

§ 2. Archeological materials from the Early Bronze Age from Keda Municipality

The acquisition of the village Kolotauri is especially noteworthy among the Early Bronze Age materials of Keda region, which contains clay crockery. Two pieces of crockery has been

fully preserved. It is noteworthy that none of them have the exact analogue between the modern materials.

According to certain signs, Kolotauri jar is much alike the materials of modern monuments of Samshvilde, Abelia, Didube, Kiketi and others. The similar forms continue to exist in the following era, which are related to the cultures of the Western Asia.

The most noteworthy among the latest acquisitions is a combined bronze weapon, found in the village Kokotauri. Massive. One end of it is a bayonet-like weapon, while the other is a n elongated leaf-shaped spearhead. We come across such weapon in our reality for the first time. Its distribution area is too wide (Aegean World, Mesopotamia, Anatolia, Kura-Arax and Maykop cultures (Dolmen tombs) and is dated the last centuries of the third millennium B.C. According to archaeological materials obtained in Keda Municipality, both - the mountainous and seaside areas of Adjara have been exploited for Chalcolithic -Early Bronze Age.

South-West Georgia of the Middle Bronze Age, in particular, the territory of Adjara has not yet become the subject of emergency research. Although significant exploration works has been carried out on the territory of the ancient settlement of Kobuleti-Pichvnari, still, the Late Bronze and Early Iron Age monuments and the monuments of Classical Antiquity have been studied mostly. The same situation is in our research site Keda, except for one accidental discovery from the village of Koromkheti.

The materials collected by accidental discoveries are the main source for research of Adjara history and material culture of the Middle Ages, including the two-winged ancient bronze Khuakveriani axe, which was considered in the village Khelvachauri. It is considered the most archaic of these types of weapons. The second such bronze axe and the piece of shovel was discovered in Makhuntseti, which will be discussed below.

§ 3. Keda Municipality,

One of the oldest centers of tribal Colchian culture of the Chorokhi Basin (Later Bronze and Early Iron Ages)

As it is evident from the materials that during the whole Late Bronze Age and its following periods, the Western-Georgian culture has reached the highest stage of its development. Alongside the bronze metallurgy and livestock, the agriculture should have been more developed here where the shoveling was supposed to take the leading place. In no other part of the country are found as much land-related weaponry as on the territory of historic Colchis. Most of them are kept at Khariton Akhvlediani Adjara State Museum.

Makhuntseti acquisition. The land cultivation tool was found in the village Makhuntseti in 1954 that is damaged but it appears to have a triangular round-edged blade and a tubular hole for handle, which is directly inserted within the circumference of the trunk. The great part of the tool is missing (to the top). The “straight forehead” and round holed axe was also discovered together with it.

Sikhalidzeebi treasure. An interesting materials from the Late Bronze Age have been discovered in the village of Sikhalidzeebi (the left bank of the river Akavreta, the tributary of Adjaristskali), it represents the Colchian axe of the first type. The second type of axes, so-called the Khuakveriani axes from the village Sikhalidzeebi are much more in quantity and more attention are paid to them (there are 6 pieces founded – whole or broken, the separate fragments are found as well).

For the first time such quantity of Khuakveriani axes appeared in the territory of Colchis. According to the area of spread, it seems that the origin of these types should also be associated with Southwest Georgia. They are mainly discovered in Adjara; twice in the areas adjacent to it.

Saghoreti acquisition. Two bronze axes found in the village of Pirveli Maisi (Saghoreti) are kept at the State Museum: the first one – the Colchian of the first type and the second one – so-called the Khuakveriani axe. They date back from the Late Bronze Age, namely, XII-XI centuries A.D.

Nowhere, in any part of Colchis, such a great number of the “ancestors” of the first type axes have never been discovered; therefore, it may be assumed that one of the centers of the gradual development and formation of the first types of the Colchic axes was this region.

Saghoreti treasure. The accidental discoveries of the recent years have highlighted another treasure from Saghoreti. It includes I type of Colchic axes. Its shape has a complete form and is distinguished by exquisite proportions. These types of axes have undergone the significant changes over a long period of time (XIV-VI centuries). All axes are completely preserved, patinized, with traces of use. The treasure should belong to XII-XI centuries B.C.

Zundagi treasure. Zundagi treasure is another important discovery on the territory of Keda, which includes eight items, such as Central-South Caucasian bronze axe, flat axe, bracelet, to massive rings, as well as two lace buckles and one still unknown thing.

First of all, it is worth noting the so-called Central-South Caucasian axe. An interest towards it is special as such a thing was previously unknown in Adjara. It has massive, low, straight, sharp back, wide oval shaped hole for handle the edges of which are decorated with high, steep seams; the most slightly noticeable seam among them is stretched along the hole for handle and „waist” surface, extended to a certain part of the blade. The blade is segmental in shape, with above directed high wings, the arch between the ridge and collum is expressed with sharp ribbed pair of facets.

The bronze flat ax included in the Zundagi treasure is also of no less interesting. It is fully preserved too. It has high, sword-like, symmetric blade, thickened, “waist” consisting of six facets, shoulder-like, more or less sloped lateral ridges, rectangular tab, thinned out at the end. It is distinguished by graceful form and proportions, moulded in double casting box, height 13.8 cm.

Zundagi treasure also includes two pieces of hooked buckles of the bronze sheet belt. One of them used to have a quite wide belt. According to the shape, the slope is slightly narrowed, narrow elongated, rectangular shaped. There are 10 round holes for pintles for

fitting the belt to the deepened bottom. As it seems, the craftsman has intentionally made the deepening during moulding in order to hide heads of the pintles.

The second buckles is also narrow, elongated, rectangular shaped; the bottom sides are slightly narrowed, it is smaller in size. The length-7.7 cm, width-2.5 cm. There are 9 round holes for pintles for fitting the belt to the bottom. The hook is also attached to the “waist” in this case. The buckles is surrounded by horizontal engraved line of the double spirals, with double lines around.

The same ornament is repeated on the buckles discovered in 23rd and 50th graves of Tlia burial ground Shida Kartli. This complex is reviewed among the materials of XII-X centuries B.C. It would be better to date them with X-XI centuries.

Vaio discoveries. The temple hangers discovered in Vaio are one of the oldest and widespread types of head jewelry. 1.5, double, triple and sometimes fourfold temple rings have been discovered used to tie hair curls. They have been primarily used as a burial equipment during millennia. The splendid specimens of silver, bronze, iron, and gold are known as well.

Tsonoarisi discovery. The main part of the discovered materials is the clothing accessories and especially bronze fibulas. Both are of the same shape, one part of which is round. The middle part of the arc is thick. One of its ends is flattened and bent. The second gradually becomes thinner, creating springy spirals the continuation of which is a small acerate tongue, which is firmly set in the flattened, bent end. Both fibulas have the so-called herringbone, vegetable and coniferous patterns. They are covered with graphic décor, the outer surface of the flattened nest is adorned with vertical stripes of tightly located inclined notches surrounded by lines. The fibulas are same in size (length 9.5 cm; width – 6 cm).

Accidental discovery of Kolotauri. It is the special monument because the human traces of every era have been continuously visible here since the Early Bronze Age. The simple bronze rings have been discovered of different sizes (ornamented in other cases) but all of them the same style of production, all of them have flat transverse cuts, the ends are open and the joints are flattened.

An interesting discovery is bronze ornamented tweezer as well. It is made of a thin sheet of metal. Its outer part is decorated with fantastic double-headed animal, fully adorned with dots. Two animal on each side of the tweezer are depicted. The animal is prick-eared and has the hooked tail. There is the “S” shaped dotted image at the end of one side and one similar figure is engravated at the other side. The ornamented part is inserted in the pair of lines on both sides of the head and bottom, the distance between lines is filled with inclined pale line. It should be noted that it is a complete analogue of modern tweezer. The discovered materials according to their form, production technology and characteristics belong to VIII-VII centuries B.C.

Chapter IV

The archeological monuments of Keda municipality of the classical antiquity

(VI-I centuries B.C.)

§1. The archeological monuments of the classical antiquity

The territory of Ajara was part of the Kingdom of Colchis in VI-IV centuries B.C. Land cultivation is intensively developed during this period (especially from VII century B.C.), as well as the viticulture and winemaking, traditional livestock breeding, fishing and many other fields of agriculture, most part of production was already commodities.

The first cities appear. Emission of Colkhian Tetri is one of the signs of existence of state organization and cities in Pre-Classical Antiquity, which mainly served the domestic market. Promotion of the various fields of professional craftsmanship is indicative of high aesthetic level of the economy, culture, technology. Production of iron and weaving (the Colkhic flax was recognized internationally) has been especially widespread, pottery, where standardization of products take place, jewellery arts of this period is also unique. Formation of the states and cities, development of coinage, naturally led to the involvement in international trade, economic, and cultural relations.

§ 2. Spread of one types of the Cult Ceramics in Adjaristskali Gorge (Kvashta)

The small clay crockery we are talking about now is a very interesting thing for us as its analogues are preserved in the Hermitage and the information about which was found in the work of K. I. Zaitseva, brought from Saint Petersburg.

We come across the analogues of the piece of our crockery in Olbia, Kherson and Kuban, at the Bosphorus strait. 105 similar pieces of crockery have been studied, their production dates back a long time, it starts in V century B.C. and lasts until III-IV centuries A.D. The samples of V-IV centuries B.C. are few. Most of them belong to the Hellenistic period. The researcher starts with Olbia and appertains them to the cult items. All items of Olbia belong to the Hellenistic period.

As we mentioned, the similar item – the cult bowl was still unknown in our region.

As it seems from the cult item of Kvashta, Georgian seaside had the close contacts with the republics of Pontus by the Classical period, namely with North Black Sea coast. As we can see, this relationship has reached the Adjaristskali Gorge and we think that intermediate in this relationship should have been the seaside town-like settlements, such as Batumi Castle, Tsikhisdziri, Pichvnari, etc...

The former settlement of Kvashta. As it was mentioned above, the monuments from Adjaristskali Gorge were previously unknown. In addition, a new type of monument was added to Colchian culture. Furthermore, a new type of monument was added to Colchian culture. It was a fortification, surveillance point, which set control on larger section of Adjaristskali Gorge. We should think that such fortification surveillance points should have been in other parts of Adjaristskali Gorge as well. The settlement of Kvashta was one of the important links of this whole system. This is the kind of monument that was discovered in the village Kolotaruri on the territory of Keda, which we will discuss later. The very

convenient places are selected for these types of monuments from a strategic point of view. As it was said, one of these surveillance points should have been located on territory between the villages of Beradzebi and Kapnistavi in Khelvachauri municipality; it is located on the right bank of Adjaristskali, on a high valley. The confluence of Adjaristskali-Chorokhi and a significant part of the Adjaristskali Gorge itself could have been controlled from here. The surface materials discovered here seem to be contemporaneous with those found in Kvashta. The settlement of Makhvilauri of the Classical antiquity was also supposed to have a similar purpose. The fortified vacant lots of Kvashta also had a different function. During the excavations, large quantities of household ceramics were discovered, manual grinders, etc. As it seems, the foodstuffs of the nearby settlements, namely of the grain were being stored in a fortified vacant lots.

The inhabitants of Adjaristskali Gorge had reached the quite high level of socio-economic development in ancient times. The labor productivity increased, the process of property differentiation of the society deepened. There is commodity production; the imported goods from the Greek world appear as well. The pottery production related to agriculture, viticulture and horticulture take the leading place among the materials. There are numerous materials related to spinning, knitting, fishing and other fields of craftsmanship. The special attention is paid to clay stamps, which should represent the insignia of the authorities. As it seems, by V century B.C. (according to the model of Kvashta) the process of formation of classes and class societies is over here, like at the coastline of South-Western Georgia. In this respect, as mentioned above, the fortified vacant lot of Kvashta represents the peculiar monument of V century B.C. We should think that like other monuments of Adjaristskali Gorge, it also had the function of closing the southern borders of Colchis and the Adjaristskali Gorge in general. A monument of the same kind, the vacant lot of the antique period should have located at the right bank of the lower part of river Chorokhi. The similar function of Adjaristskali Gorge and its tributaries becomes even more prominent for subsequent epochs.

The whole gorge covered with complex system of fortification constructions created for the Feudal period, which was one of the most important links of a strong Georgia.

The former settlement of Kolotauri of Classical Antiquity. The former settlement is located on the highest section of the end of Jvarkedi, which is peninsular in shape and deeply penetrated in the Adjaristskali bank. The river flows around the hill and accordingly, the former settlement (to the East, West and South) is almost impregnable and the south section is divided from Jvarkedi by narrow strait. Consequently, in case of closure, the former settlement would become impregnable. The vacant lot was located right next to the rocky hillside plateau. From here, the villages on the slopes of the Adjara-Guria and Adjara-Shavsheti Mountains, as well as the larger part of Adjaristskali itself, are perfectly seen. The area of the vacant lot consists of 1.5 ha. Its territory flows down to Adjaristskali with rocky cliffs. The terrain of the upper part, where the watchtower was standing, is rocky. Only remains of masonry of the Middle Age has been survived. The old layers of culture have been washed away over time. The traces of human activity of that time are mainly preserved in the plains around the monument, after study of which interesting materials have been obtained.

The clay drinking vessel of the Hellenistic period from Vaio. As it is known for us, the village of Vaio is rich in geological (gold, copper, lead, etc.), as well as historical discoveries, e have already discussed. This time, let us focus on the clay drinking vessel, accidentally discovered by Badri Shavishvili, the geography teacher at the school of Vaio, during ploughing a vineyard in spring 2007. It was buried about one meter deep. According to the finder, there were other vessels with it but they broke up and the pieces were scattered, it is possible that we come across the tombs of III-I centuries B.C.

Chapter V

Keda municipality in the Feudal period

§1. Cult and material and cultural monuments

Churches and graves

The church appears early in the history, and it is possible that it was built in the IX-X centuries. As for the duration of its functioning, according to the Kvevris discovered in the churchyard, as well as in the church itself and burial inventory adjacent to its south-east, it functioned for a long time, especially in the late Medieval period, and ceased to exist only as a result of Ottoman expansion.

The bronze censer. It is noteworthy that, from Early Christianity during the centuries, these liturgical items largely maintained their form and decorative nature. In more or less sustainable iconography, the contemporary signs were read out by separate details, mainly, the dating of bronze censers is based on iconographic features.

According to the form, the censer preserved in the museum of Keda, which was discovered in the village of Kharaula, is a bronze hemispherical bowl, with low, slightly trapezoid-shaped legs and flat hilt at the upper part. The diameter of the mouth is equal to 8.5 cm, height – 6.5 cm, diameter of the leg – 4 cm. The mouth of censer is damaged, it is impossible to determine the shape of the loops. There are random, deep holes at the pouring lip that should be the result of later impacts. The bottom of the censer must be drilled later. According to its shape and size, the Kharaula censer is much similar to the samples of the VI-VII centuries preserved in the Georgian National Museum:

§ 2. Fortifications

It is well known that fortifications were built in pre-class societies as well but they were smaller and their purpose did not go beyond the specific narrow objectives. However, the role of prison was growing in class societies. It had already serving the state purposes and its scope was widening. Even, during the Feudalism, when “everybody fought against everybody”, each

feudal lord had to remain in the fort. The necessity of fort conditioned existence of the castle. Thus, the fortress was also a stronghold of the feudal lords and reign.

Kaviani Castle. Kaviani Fortress is located on the other side of borough Kichauri, on the left side of the river Adjaristskali. In the middle of Kaviani Range, at the top of the rocky hill stretched towards the gorge. It is bordered by dry ravines from both sides. It included Adjaristskali, Chvanistskali, Khertvisi and relevant road communications. One can perfectly see the spaces to Arsiani and Adjara-Guria mountains from here, as well as the village on the slopes. It is facing directly Chvana (Otol) and Chanchalo castles. It was reliably merged into the unified defense system chain of the entire gorge.

Tsivasula Fortress. Tsivsula is called the place where Saghoreti and Agaristskali are connected with each other. After just 1 km of flow, Agaristskali joins Adjaristskali. The monument is 0.5 km away from the central highway. The fortress Sasire lies rocky hill in the middle of the steep mountain range and below, on the terrace rock layers. The fortress has a quite strategic location. The fortress controlled the roads of Adjaristskali and Agaristskali leading to the seaside. The fortress is small. Its area is about 350-400 square meters, it is almost impregnable. The walls of the fortification follow the outer edges of the rock. The northeast and southwest walls of the prison are damaged.

§ 3. Road and road constructions.

The roads connecting to the internal roads as well with outer countries are one of the oldest in the Caucasus. Many tribes in distant past have been using the latter for travelling from south countries to north and vice versa, from north to south. This road was playing an important role in development of interconnectedness between the nations, as well as trading.

Road constructions. The mountainous terrain of Georgia defined the method of building bridges. The narrow and easily accessible places were chosen for building. Initially, the small logs were use to cross small streams, and then they began to build more complex wooden girder

bridges instead. The temporary bridges are being replaced by stone bridges with the development of bridge construction. The main parts of the stone bridges are the spans, coastal and middle piers; the span, in turn, consist of the main arch and span above the arch. The main part of the old stone arch bridges – the arch, is mainly built with raw stone slabs, without any architectural decors. The lime mortar was used as an adhesive. The bridge constructors faced great difficulties in building pier in the middle of the river because of the fast flow. Therefore, they tried to build the single span bridges. The shape of the vaults is very interesting, sometimes they are semi-circular, sometimes capsular (parabolic), sometimes arrow-shaped, sometimes flat.

Makhuntseti Bridge. The Makhuntseti Bridge is rather large, of a slightly ogee form, resting on the natural rock slopes, the height of which are different. The rock (so-called piers) is partially built with stones. The bridge is built on the rock of volcanic origin. The most narrow part of the bridge is its middle part. The outer arches at both sides are inserted into the hollowness between the fragmentary stones and is filled with irregular shaped stones and lime mortar. The outer stones are vertically arranged along the entire length of the river bank. The bridge has no eaves;

Saghoreti (Earth) Bridge. Saghoreti Earth Bridge is located at the right tributary of Adjaristskali, on the river Chanchakhati, 3 km from central highway. The semicircular arch-shaped bridge is supported by the piers built on the rocky layes at both banks. It is built with rubbles and fragmentary stones on the mortar. The surface of the bridge is covered with stone slabs. The outer stones of both sides of the river are arranged vertically along the entire length.

Tsoniarisi Bridge. Tsoniarisi Bridge is in Keda, village Tsoniarisi, on road to Zeraboseli-Tsoniarisi road. The bridge is located in the narrowest section of the river. It collapsed in April 2007. There are only bridge piers left, which were soon restored. The piers are built with cut stone on lime mortar. The recesses of the nests of camber slip and scaffolds are maintained on

the piers; each row of recesses has two rectangular nests. The areas above the piers are filled with large stones, the hollowness between them is filled with small stones and lime mortar.

Dandalo Bridge. The Dandalo Bridge is distinguished by its thin arch, of exquisite proportions. A wide bridge has been built with cut stone of volcanic origin on the mortar. The carriageway of the bridge is covered with irregular shaped stones and lime mortar, as if the left side of the bridge is turned to left, the opposite direction of the river. The piers are erected on the rock. The recesses of the nests of camber slip and scaffolds are maintained on them; there are two row of recesses on each pier, three in each row. The upper three recesses are built on the left pier. The two rows of the recesses show that the scaffolds were arranged in two rows. The upper part of the piers are wider. The right pier is laid on a rock, while the left is penetrated in the water to reduce the span. The outer arch fragmentary stones are used at the both sides of the river, with irregular shaped stones and lime mortar in it.

Chapter VI

Viticulture and winemaking in Keda

§ 1. The archeological monuments related to viticulture and winemaking

(Winepress)

Viticulture and winemaking was taking one of the honorable and perhaps, one of the leading places in the medieval agriculture of Adjara. This can be proved by the archaeological artefacts discovered in the villages of the region by accident or by archaeological excavations. There is no village in the gorge or at the seaside, here large numbers of medium and large Kvevris are not discovered. Special attention is paid to the abundance of cellars and winepresses, old tools related to viticulture and winemaking, ceramic ware, etc., which have more or less preserved themselves in current ethnographic existence.

Winepress of the village Oktomberi. The monument is located in the gorge of the river Akavreta, in the village Oktomberi, Ajashpiri district. It is 3 km from the center of the district.

The winepress is carved in stone. The massive natural stone have been selected for this; there are the circular recesses at the north-eastern and south-western corners of the winepress for the wooden logs.

Koromkheti winepress. The monument is located in the village of Koromkheti of Keda municipality, on the left bank of the river Adjaristskali, in 300 meter, in front of the house of K. Saladze. This territory represents the small valley with unified monolith of a huge rock. The winepress is located in the extreme southern part of this rocky stratum and is leaned to the east-west line.

Zungadi winepress. Zundagi winepress is located in the village Zundaga, 28 km away from Batumi. The distance to the monument is 700 m. It is 150 meters down the extreme northeast section of the Babuchoghli village on the right side of the Zundaga river. The village Babuchoglebi, itself is located on the valley at the bottom of the ranges of Dzaglauri and Tsivitskaro. The winepress is carved in the rocky stratum of the last section of the range of Dzaglauri. It is quite well preserved. In order to avoid the flow of the waste water in the winepress to the north, along the entire length, at the east side the gutter was cut into the rock. A 95 cm-long step was cut into the rock at the bottom of the winepress. It was used to facilitate the process of placing the grapes in the winepress. There are also circular-shaped recesses on the rock in the western and extreme southern parts of the winepress. They seem to have been used for storing abradants.

Chapter VII

Late medieval fortifications

Archaeological excavations in Zendidi

In the works of traveler-historians of the second half of the nineteenth century and the early part of the twentieth century, references to the ancestral fortress of Zendidi Bezhanidze are scarce and often contradictory, which, naturally, cannot create a clear image for restoration of the fortress and the district as well. Historical sources say almost nothing about the date of

construction and significance of Bezhanidze fortress. The only solution of this problem was an archaeological study of the prison and its environs. Due to the urgency of the problem, Zendidi Archaeological Expedition was founded in 2001 on the basis of the Niko Berdzenishvili Scientific-Research Institute of the Batumi National Academy of Sciences the goal of which was to determine the date of construction of the fortress as well as period of its functionality, also, its importance in the medieval history of our country, in particular Adjara.

Conclusions

Except some random discoveries, Keda municipality has long been considered a "white spot" from an archaeological standpoint. As we have seen, the picture has changed significantly since the end of the last century, and even more importantly for today, the situation significantly changed by participation of Batumi Niko Berdzenishvili Scientific Research Institute and Batumi Archaeological Museum, as well as with our effort. A number of cultural monuments have been researched and studied in the Keda municipality and some conclusions are possible to be made according to them. The territory of our research is very interesting from geomorphological point of view. Here are all the conditions for the search for ancient human settlements.

1. Adjaristskali Gorge (Keda municipality) is playing important role in the economic, political and cultural life of the Georgian kingdoms and principalities, as well as in various countries. Convenient strategic location, important trade-transit routes and the natural environment still play an essential role in this period of history.
2. V-II millennia B.C. of the Eneolithic-Early Bronze Age are also very interesting, especially Kolotauri discovery according to which we have to deal with the local variety of the well-known Shulaveri-Shomu culture. Even more noteworthy discoveries include the Kokotauri combined bronze weapon, which dates back to the last centuries of III millennium B.C. The signs of similarity is being finding out between the burial complexes of Dolmen culture; the Kura-Araxes culture, with Anatolian and Mesopotamian civilizations, Crete-

Mycenaean culture, etc. It seems that Adjaristskali Gorge was connected to the outside world from the earliest times, as reaffirmed by the archeological works carried out by the Batumi Archaeological Museum in 2014-2019 for the purpose of researching metallurgical sites. It is considered that the professional metallurgists living here have introduced completely new methods to increase the productivity of labor in relation with to the increased demand for metal on world market. The simple mechanic device was invented. It is our pleasure to announce that our museum has also been involved in this field work. It is our pleasure to announce that our museum has also been involved in this field work. Accordingly, these recent discoveries have taken an important place in the qualification work. One may boldly conclude that the local metallurgists here also made some contribution to the creation of Western Asian civilizations during the period of transition from the Stone Age to the Bronze Age. The metal was one of the major export products in the southern countries. The Keda municipality is quite rich in mining areas; among them are Merisi and Vaio deposits. These data contributed to the fact that in general, Adjaristskali Gorge and mountain range itself play a major role in the processes of formation of the magnificent tribal culture of the Late Bronze and Early Iron Ages. It is worth mentioning that the origin of the Khuakveriani axes is related to Akavreta, Merisi gorge (treasure of Sikhalidzebi). The number of key components related to Colchian culture has also increased. Some of them are adorned with decor so typical to Colchian culture. There were also close contacts with both - the coastal population and the Colchian populations of the foothills and highlands of Adjara. This relationship seems to have reached up to northeast Anatolia via the headwaters of the river. The artefacts characteristic to Colchian culture are also found here. It is enough to mention that the origin of the Khuakveriani axes is related to Akavreta, Merisi gorge. Their number is increasing gradually. It means that the Colchian culture seems to be covering a very large area.

3. According to the recent discoveries, the role of Adjaristskali Gorge and in particular, the role of the field of our study is special in the history of international relations of Colchis both – in economic as well as in political life of ancient times. It is not surprising. The most

important highway passing through the Adjaristskali Gorge, according to the epochs, appears to be headwaters to the ancient Anatolian world and its relatively late formations, , and to the Greco-Roman world by sea and river routes. As we can see, foreign imports is gradually finding its way into the gorge. It should also be emphasized that this region also served as the defense of the country during the Antique period. An interesting archaeological sites of classical and Hellenistic times have been studied such as Kvashta and Kolotauri, the main function of which was to protect the country on the outlined slopes and hills. It is not excluded that its function was connected with much more earlier period (VII-VI centuries). Along with the cult items found in Tsonisari, the special attention is paid to its structural location as the monuments studied through the above archaeological excavations. In general, Keda municipality is an important link in the fortification system of the gorge.

4. Examination of the monuments and materials collected on them reveals that Keda municipality has become more active in the Feudal period and Adjaristskali Gorge was fully involved in the defense system of the country. A surveillance-signal tower is built on almost every high, strategic place. Some of them are already discussed above. The residents of Keda municipality were Orthodox during the Feudal period; they even built a small Orthodox church in the village of Zendidi. The most interesting discovery in this regard is the censer accidentally found in the village of Kharaula in the family of Kharadze belonging to the VI-VII centuries.

5. The leading field of agriculture at that time was viticulture, which was conditioned by the current climatic conditions. The abundance of the harvest of grapes has led to such a great number of wine jars (Churi) and winepresses. Eight units of winepresses carved in the stone have been traced in the territory of Keda municipality, which should belong to the developed Middle Ages, and the wine jars (Churi) and clay jars are found almost in every village.