

შავშეთის საფორტიფიკაციო ნაგებობანი (სათლელის ციხე)

მამულაძე შოთა

შოთა რუსთაველის სახელმწიფო უნივერსიტეტი

VIII საუკუნის დასასრულიდან, როგორც კლარჯეთში, ისე შავშეთში, განსაკუთრებით მძლავრად გაიშალა სამონასტრო მოძრაობა. ამ დროიდან ჩნდება და შენდება დიდი საეკლესიო-კულტურული ცენტრები. „ქვეყნის შეუვალობას“, ბუნებრივია, გამართული თავდაცვის სისტემაც სჭირდებოდა. როგორც მთლიანად ტაო-კლარჯეთში, ისე შავშეთშიც, ციხე-სიმაგრეები შენდება. აქ არსებულ საფორტიფიკაციო ნაგებობების ადგილმდებარეობის მიხედვით, ჩანს რომ, შავშეთის (იმიერხევი, სათლელი, ფიქალთა და სხვა) თითოეულ ხეობას თავისი გამაგრების სისტემა ჰქონდა. ისინი თავის მხრივ, ჩართული არიან მთლიანი ქვეყნის ერთიანი თავდაცვის სისტემის ქსელში. შავშეთის ქვეყნის მთისწინა ზოლი, ზურგი „ქვეყნისა“ მთელ სიგრძეზე საგულდაგულოდაა გამაგრებულ-დაცული. რაც შეეხება, „ქვეყნის“ შესასვლელს, მის გაკონტროლებას (წეფთის) უსტამისის ციხესთან ერთად უზრუნველყოფდა სათლელის ციხე.

1028 წელს, ბერძენთა გამოჩენამდე, როგორც ჩანს, ხეობის ჩამკეტი ციხის მოვალეობას წეფთა ასრულებდა. მოლალატე ციხის მეპატრონე არჯევან ჰოლოლას ძე კონსტანტინეპოლს გაიქცა და ციხე ბიზანტიელებს გადასცა. ტბეთის ეპისკოპოსი, სტეფანე მტბევარი, ხედავს, რომ წეფთის ციხე ბიზანტიელთა გავლენის ქვეშაა. აქედან მოსალოდნელი ომის წინ, ბიზანტიელებს შეეძლოთ „ქვეყნის“ სიღრმისაკენ თავისუფლად გადაადგილება. სტეფანე მტბევარმა დარჩენილი დრო, როგორც ეს ქართლის ცხოვრებიდან ჩანს, მაქსიმალურად გამოიყენა „დაიჭირა ქვეყანა შავშეთისა“ და „მახლობლად ტბეთის ეკლესიასა“ ააგო სვეტის ციხე. იგი სწორედ ხეობის დასაწყისში მაღალ, წოწოლა კლდეზე დაშენებული ნაგებობაა, საიდანაც იტოტება როგორც შიდა, ისე გარე სამყაროსთან დამაკავშირებელი გზები. ეს იყო ყელი გზებისა და ქვეყნის შიგნით შეღწევისა. შეიძლება ითქვას, ვინც ფლობდა სათლელის ციხეს, ის ფლობდა შავშეთის ქვეყნის გასაღებსაც. მსგავსი სიდიდისა და არქიტექტურის მქონე საფორტიფიკაციო ნაგებობა შავშეთში ადრეც და შემდგომშიც არ აშენებულა. ციხე ადრე რომ ყოფილიყო აგებული, თავისი ადგილმდებარეობისა და მნიშვნელობიდან გამომდინარე, გვჯერა, რაღაცნაირი ფორმით ადრეულ წერილობით ძეგლებში მაინც ჰპოვებდა ასახვას. ვფიქრობთ, ციხე, რომელიც

აშენა სტეფანე მტბევარმა „ტბეთის ეკლესიის მახლობლად“ (სულ 10 კილომეტრია მათ შორის დაცილება) ეს სათლელის ციხე უნდა იყოს. იგი, როგორც ჩანს, სწორედ XI საუკუნიდან იწყებს ფუნქციონირებას, რასაც რამდენადმე მხარს უჭერს საკუთრივ ციხის მშენებლობის სტილი და აქ 2009 წლიდან დაწყებული არქეოლოგიური გათხრების შედეგად აღმოჩენილი სხვადასხვა დანიშნულების ნაგებობათა ნაშთები თუ საკმაოდ მდიდარი არქეოლოგიური მასალა.

Fortification Buildings in Shavsheti (Satleli Fortress)

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Monastic movement became especially active in Klarjeti as well as Shavsheti (historical southern Georgia, modern southeastern part of Turkey) from the late 8th century. Many big ecclesiastical and cultural centers emerged at that time. Naturally, “impregnability of the country” needed strong defensive system. A lot of fortresses were built entirely in Tao-Klarjeti as well as Shavsheti. According to the fortification constructions built here it is seen that each gorge in Shavsheti (Imierkhevi, Satleli, Pikalta, etc.) used to have its own fortification system (pl. 1).

The Imierkhevi Gorge can serve as an illustrative example here inasmuch as it is well-locked and protected all along the length from the junction of Imierkhevi-Shavshetistskali up to the mouth of the rivers. The entrance to the gorge, the gate together with the Sinkoti fortress was well-controlled by Tsepti (Ustamisi) fortress standing at the foot of the Karchkhli mount from where the important fortresses of Chakvelta (or Baratsikhe) – in the middle of Imierkhevi - and Ipkhvreli – at the beginning of the gorge – are well visible. On its own the Chakvelta fortress was the place closely connected with the defense system of the right tributary to Imierkhevi – the Bazgiretistskali river gorge. The Khevtshruli fortress at the beginning of the Bazgireti gorge used to control the roads through Bazgireti-Gamisheti towards Sazgireli from where they forked into several directions. At the same time it completely locked the gorge and was included into the common defense system of the whole Imierkhevi and Shavsheti “country” generally, together with Chakvelta fortress. On its part the Chakvelta fortress with its strategic location wonderfully supervised not only the middle part of the gorge but the mouth of the gorge and especially – the beginning of the road passing through the

gorge of the Kvirali river – the left tributary of the Imierkhevi river. At the same time it is was in direct connection with the Garklobi and Ipkhvreli fortresses at the mouth of Kvirala and Imierkhevi itself. The function of these fortresses must have been the same - to control the farming spaces and especially the roads leading from highlands and lowlands or the neighboring regions including different gorges (Skhalta, Kaloti, Mareti and Uchamba) or the roads through the village of Bako at the foot of the Khikhani fortress towards Akhaltsikhe, Artaani, Potskhovi, Samtskhe and the coastline roads. The Garklobi Fortress had another function as well. It is from here that the plain part of Shavsheti begins that leads south-westwards in terraces and reaches up to the villages of Velta and Sateleli. Together with the Tsikhisdziri Castle used to lock the roads from the Kvirala gorge to the Shavsheti lowlands.

There is quite an interesting picture from the viewpoint of the location of the fortresses at the left bank of the Satelelistskhali river. Most part of these fortresses is built in the front part of the mount. The thing is that the passes existing at different places on the Arsiani (Kvakrili) Range gave possibility to get into the Shavsheti and Artanuji gorges. The local fortresses completely and reliably locked some of the roads passing through Shavsheti as well as Artanuji. Such a great number of fortresses on the territory of the left bank of Sateleli were preconditioned by the fact that the region itself is characterized by diverse relief up to the Bahrevani Range that divides Shavsheti and Artanuji. We can see the vertically sloped ranges here as well as deeply cut valleys with the villages spread among them; great part of arable lands, fields and pastures, etc. Even the small gorges (Pikalta, Khantusheti, Verkhvnala) used to have their own fortifications that were connected to each other and simultaneously were involved into the unified defensive system of the whole country.

The majority of the fortresses in Shavsheti (Ipkhvreli, Garklobi, Tsikhisdziri, Dabatsvrili, Kvatetrizi, Chartuleti, Khantusheti, etc.) are located in the front part of the mountains. Their main purpose must have been to control the vast agricultural territories, the roads connecting highlands with lowlands as well as the connecting roads from Adjara, Samtskhe-Javakheti, Erusheti, Potskhovi and especially Kola-Artaani passes and heights towards or through Shavsheti and partially through Klarjeti. In short, the pre-mountain zone of Shavsheti and partially Klarjeti are completely fortified and protected. Moreover, part of the Shavsheti fortresses (Tsepti and Khantusheti) were connected with the fortresses existing on the territory of Klarjeti and created a rather reliable system of defense and inaccessibility of the entire Shavshet-Klarjeti.

And what is the situation at the beginning of the “country”, at the junction of Imierkhevi-Shavshetistskali waters from where the roads diverse through the inland of the country? the entrance to the “country”, its control was provided by Sateleli Fortress together with Ustamisi (Tsepti) Fortress.

Apparently, before the appearance of the Greeks Tsepta Fortress used to serve the function of the gorge-locking fortress. The owner of the fortress, the traitor Arjevan, son of Holola, fled to Constantinople and surrendered the fortress to the Byzantines. The Bishop of Tbeti, Stepane Mtbevari, saw that Tsepta fortress that controlled the inner roads of the country by Imerkhev-Shavsheti and Satelel-Merti water gorges was under the Byzantine influence and owing to the ongoing processes could not fulfill its main defensive function any more. Before the possible war the Byzantines could easily get dislocated from here towards the depths of the "country". Although the Imierkhevi gorge has its own defensive system that used to function at that time, still the roads towards the right and left banks of the river Satelelistskhali and especially towards Tbeti – the center of Shavsheti, were open and unsafe. According to Kartlis Tskhovreba (Chronicles of Kartli) Stepane Mtbevari used the left time as much as possible – he built a fortress "near the Tbeti church". It is mentioned in the early written sources only once and in connection with the Byzantines. In our opinion, only the fortress built at the junction of the Satelel-Merti Rivers could defend the country of Shavsheti before the expected war. The fortress is a construction built on a high rock from where the roads fork connecting the place to the inner and outer worlds (pl. 2.2; 3.1,2). It can be said that the one owing the key to the Sateleli fortress owned the key of the Shavsheti country too. There is no other fortification building of the same size and architecture in Shavsheti. If there had been the one built earlier there should have been some kinds of remains left to this day or might have found the reflection of some kind of other in the early written sources. In our opinion, the fortress built by Stephane Mtbevari "near the Church of Tbeti" (the distance between them is 10 km) should be exactly the Sateleli fortress. Apparently, it begins functioning from 11th century. The idea is supported by the style of the building as well as various kinds of remains and the rich archaeological material found during the archaeological excavations started on the spot in 2009. This time we will draw our attention to the artifacts that were available to us during the expedition in Shavsheti in 2009-2010 (on the architecture of the Sateleli Fortress in details see: Mamuladze 2011:41-75).

The archaeological excavations on the territory of the fortress began in 2009. So far it is the only monument among the Georgian monuments in Tao-Klarjeti which is archaeologically studied (tab. IV, V). The excavation was supervised by Professor Osman Aitekin. The excavation works continued on the site in summer 2010 too. The expedition has to do a rather laborious job. The reason is that there is a lot of garbage of ruined buildings and land on the towers as well as the inner territory of the fortress. According to Mr Osman's story only from the first tower up to 6 m high stone-sand and earth was carried away in summer of 2009. As it became clear after the survey of the territory in October 2010, no less land was on the inner territory of the

fortress as well. For 2 years the excavations were carried out on the south-eastern territories of the fortress and Towers #1, 3 and 4. According to the excavations on the Tower #4 and its adjacent territory in 2010, it became clear that here we have to deal with two construction periods. It is especially well seen in the inner and front parts of the tower #3. As it was partially stated above, the original walls of the inner main part of the tower #3 are destroyed to the foundation level on three sides. Only a small part of the side walls directed to the inner territory has been preserved on the tower. The excavation of this section confirmed that some new walls had been erected here in place of the older ones. However, they had not been built on the ruined parts of the old walls of the tower but slightly turned inside so that the remains of the old walls are left in the original position. Between the foundations of the old, ruined and the newly built walls there lies a rather sterile layer. Moreover, the foundations of the newly built northern wall of the tower are built onto the wine pitchers of the ancient wine cellar excavated exactly on this place (pl. 5.2). The remains of the newly excavated northern building also belong to the second construction level. This construction (5, 7X6, 50 m) is not of a big size. The maximum height of its remaining walls reaches 1, 70 m and thickness is 70-80 cm. There are three rows of small size standard shelves along the entire length within the walls on the floor level in three directions (east, south and west). Part of them is destroyed. It should be noted that in the extreme northern part of the eastern wall as well as the extreme southern part of the western wall, on the level of the shelves, small wine pitchers are inserted. Most part of them is damaged. It is well seen from this picture as well that here again the foundation of the southern wall of this building is erected directly onto the wine pitchers of the ancient wine cellar that originally existed there. It is not excluded that this building might have been of medical purpose initially (pl. 5.1). On 2010 the Turkish archaeologists expanded the excavation works towards the south-east of the fortress. It has not been completed yet. Here again we notice the remains of architectural buildings contemporary to the fortress construction period as well as the later period too. So far, until the end of the excavations it is difficult to say anything about their plan and purpose.

Among the materials found during the excavations for the last period, the wine cellar attracts special attention. It is located in the layer contemporary to the fortress. As it was stated above, the foundations of the later period buildings were built on the part of the wine pitchers. Only a small part of pitchers is seen in the excavated territory. There are only 4 pitchers found so far (pl. 5.2). Supposedly there might be others too. They are placed next to one another in the ground. All of them are damaged. Only the parts of their bottoms, bodies and necks have been preserved. The pitchers are of different size. They are surrounded with horizontal ridges round the body. Fragments of pitchers are found in great numbers in the pit for waste materials that has

been recently found. After the observation of the pitchers it became clear that the ones found on the fortress territory were distinguished with great number and diversity. It has been confirmed that these wine pitchers had wide neck, not so tall body and massive bottom. Among the thrown pitchers we can distinguish the ones with plain surface and decorated with relief ribs. Various types of ornamentations were also used, mostly on necks and sides. Among the ornaments we can single out the following types: succession of circle stamps, relief ribs, shallow ribs, etc. Their color is yellowish or brownish. The firing quality is satisfactory. According to the number of finds it can be stated that quite a big number of pitchers for water or wine might have been buried in the ground in the inner territory of the fortress.

Near the wine cellar, to its south-western direction, a *thone* – Georgian bakery – was discovered. Part of it appeared to be under the medical building foundations. It is closed type of bakery of middle size. The upper part is destroyed; has not so thick wall surrounded with middle sized stones and a thick layer of earth. In 2010 the Turkish archaeologists excavated another bakery in the south-eastern section of the fortress. It is of relatively bigger size but the upper part is destroyed. Here again the walls are surrounded with a thick layer of stones and earth. As it was noted above, two bakeries were discovered in the inner territory of the tower #1. All of them are the closed type of bakeries. It might have been caused by the fact that the vicinities of the fortress comprised the territory rich in forests. Wind bakeries were spread in the regions where there is the lack of forests and *tsiva* is used as a fuel material (Khakhutaishvili 1965:25). As the academician G. Chitatia stated, the utilization of *thones* – bakeries – was connected with preparation of various shapes of bread: *gomiji*, *shoti*, *lavashi*, etc. (Chitaia 1951:380). At the same time, these Georgian bakeries accompanied certain varieties of bread and were characteristic to a certain type of farming zones (Chitaia: 1951:376, 380). It is noteworthy that baking bread in *thone* was considered a sacred job.

Similar *thones* seem to be vastly spread in Georgia as well, especially in eastern Georgia (Japaridze, Artilakva 1971:64; Japaridze 1971:76-77; Muskhelishvili 1954:403-413; Lomtadze 1968:8). In western Georgia they have been found only in the monuments of developed Middle Ages of the Adjara gorge (Mamuladze 1993:62-63). There are numerous earthenware pans found on the territory of the Satali fortress archaeological materials. According to the bottoms of the pans two types can be singled out: the pans of the first type have sprout-like figures on the bottom while the second type pans are plain. They are of different sizes and have short, slightly flared sides, roundish edges and flat bottom. Both types of earthenware pans are still preserved in the ethnographic lifestyle of the local population. There have been no changes so far in the production technology and shape development of these pans so far.

In the waste pits of the inner territory of the Sateleli fortress there has been found a great number of kitchenware fragments. First and foremost we should mention the pots in this context (pl. 6.1-2). They are of blackish-grayish color. The materials are fragmentary but still we can imagine their probable shapes of mouth, shoulder, body and bottoms. Among them the sprout-handled pots can be distinguished. The handles are mostly modeled to the neck of the vessel, sometimes close to the mouth. Majority of this type of pots have flared mouth-edges but some have straight ones. There are quite a number of handled pots. They are mostly characterized with round or oval-crossed handles modeled to the mouth or shoulder or near the mouth. According to the fragments we can judge that they had rather wide mouth, not so tall neck, slightly roundish body and flat massive bottom.

In the waste-pits we also find fragments of handle-less pots. Some of them had flared mouth, others – straight and plain. They had short neck and wide sloped shoulders, roundish body and flat bottom.

The majority of these vessels were made on logs but a small part of them were hand-modeled. Most of them are flat-bottomed though the tendency of heel separation is also noticed.

The waste material pits also contain great number of jugs. According to the fragments it is clear that we have the beaked as well as round-mouth jugs. Some of them are relatively big sized vessels; others are small-sized jugs with thin walls. It is well seen that the jugs excavated here used to have tallish necks, roundish or slightly prolonged body, flat bottom and handles that were mostly modeled to the necks or shoulders. In the materials of this types the handle fragments prevail the majority of which are massive and flat, sometimes oval or rectangular. There are deep ribs at the ends of some handles and some of them have got finger prints too. The waste materials also contain fragments of necks, shoulders, bodies and handles of painted jugs which are so fragmentary that it is difficult to discern the contents of décor. This rule seems to be vastly spread in Transcaucasia from ancient times, especially in the Middle Ages (Japaridze 1956:19-20,42; Archvadze 1974:174-188; Mamuladze 1993:67-68). The above enumerated excavated materials of the Sateleli fortress (pots, pitchers, earthenware, jugs, etc.) have many analogies among the materials found in the ancient sites of Georgia of the developed medieval period (Mamuladze 1993:68).

In the thrown away waste materials of the Sateleli fortress we can also find drinking vessels, especially bowls in great number. The drinking vessels are so fragmentary that it is impossible to make impression on their shapes and forms. As for the bowls they are represented in relatively full shapes so that it becomes possible to distinguish between several variants among them (pls 6.2; 7.1-2).

The undamaged full shape bowls and other materials that are transferred to the Turkish museums or depositories are naturally unavailable for us.

The clay of the bowls is mostly brownish, sometimes – grayish and pinkish too. Most of them seem to undergo fire.

The above described bowls have a number of analogies in almost every contemporary monument in Georgia. They can mostly be dated to 11th-13th centuries though some later period samples can also be found.

During the stay in the Sateleli fortress in 2009 we had a chance to see the specimens of colored vessels as well. The majority of them are bowls (there are one or two fragments of bigger vessels). The bowls are almost similar in shape – deep, straight, mouth sometimes convex, sometimes – concave. They have elegant heel, not very high and the bottom slightly curved inside. The bowls are mostly of middle and small sizes. Besides multi-colored vessels we can also see a great number of uni-colored ceramics – mostly green and yellow). In most cases they are green that means that the local craftsmen used yellow as a supplementary color with green and white, like the eastern craftsmen. Such type of pottery is vastly found in different monuments of eastern Georgia and they can be dated to 11th-12th centuries (Mitsishvili 1969:23-28; Mitsishvili 1979:29-30; Japaridze 1956:24-28; Maisuradze 1953:27-37). The white pottery found in Sateleli fortress territory may be included into the common Caucasian, especially eastern Georgian painted pottery traditions and they should be dated to the same period as well.

Among the materials found on the Sateleli fortress territory a great number of colored pottery is found (pls 8-9). We had an opportunity to take photos of only several fragments. They are mostly represented with the fragments of mouths, bodies or bottoms. Squares or oval can be discerned scratches within the inner surface of the bowls. They are interchangeable and cover the entire surface territory. Sometimes the inner surface is separated from the body by double circular stripes and the space between is covered with scratched ovals. The inner surface or the line separating the ornament motifs is filled with green, yellow or brown paint.

The bottom of some vessels is covered with spiral circles and the separating space is filled with green, yellow and brown paints.

There are also some samples where the leading role is given to the ornament of oval and circle interchange. Here again the green, yellow and brown colors are used.

The bottoms of some bowls attract special attention. Here the bowl bottoms have threefold scratched lines with rectangles which further turn into triangles. Inside the triangles there is an ornament of circular and spiral shape. The space within rectangles is filled with yellow paint, triangles – with green yellow and brown colors.

Among the glazed pottery fragments we meet one or two fragments of Byzantine glazed pottery too. Due to their small number we are not discussing them now.

The multi-colored glazed pottery found on the territory of Sateleli

fortress finds its analogies mostly with the materials found in the contemporary monuments of Georgia. They are of comparatively less amount in western Georgia whereas in eastern Georgia they represent the majority (Mitsishvili 1969:33-52; Maisuradze 1953:27-37; Japaridze 1965:28-35). They are scarce in northern Black Sea littoral as well while not at all represented in Byzantium (Mitsishvili 1976:30-41). Such type of ceramics is almost everywhere dated to 12th-13th centuries. The multi-colored ceramic ware found in Sateleli fortress seems of the same period as well.

Thus, on the territory of the fortress there is no cultural layer of archaeological material confirmed that belongs to the periods earlier than 11th century. This situation once more makes us believe that the Svetis Tsikhe (Pillar Fortress) confirmed in *Kartlis Tskhovreba* (Chronicles of Kartli) and built by Stephane Mtbevari, Bishop of Tbeti, before the coming war with Byzantium in 1028, is the same fortress as the Sateleli Fortress.

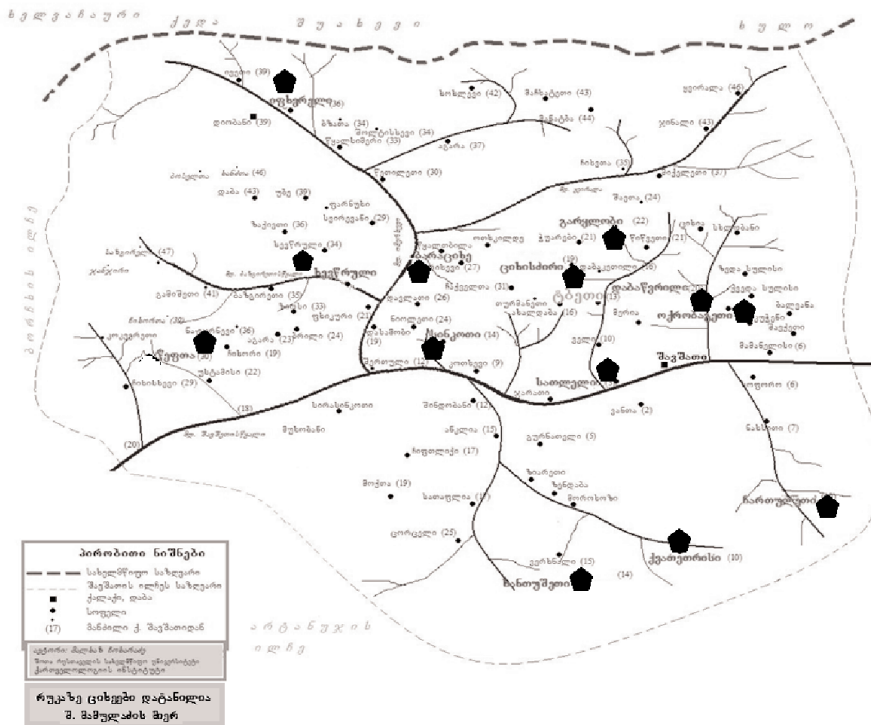
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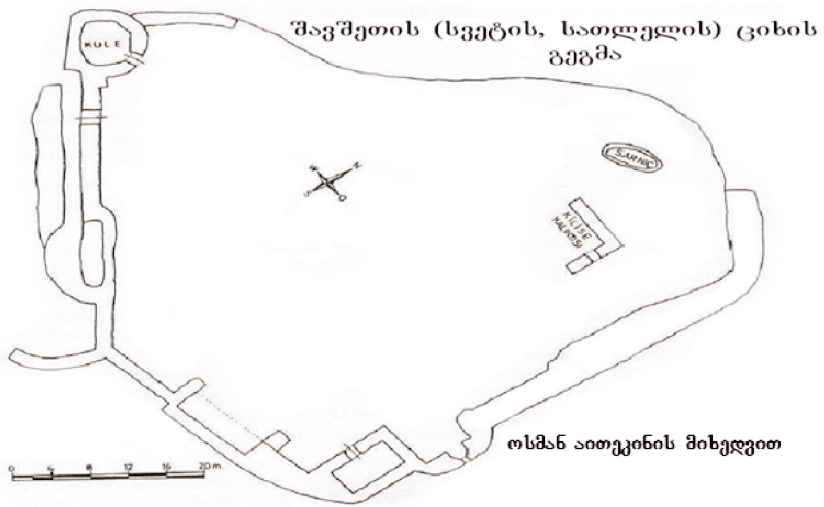
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Pl.1



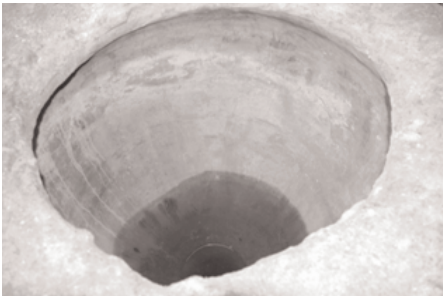
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Pl.3



Pl.4



Pl.5





Pl.6





Pl.7



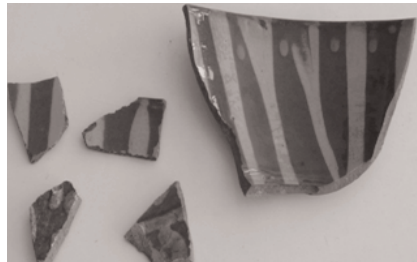
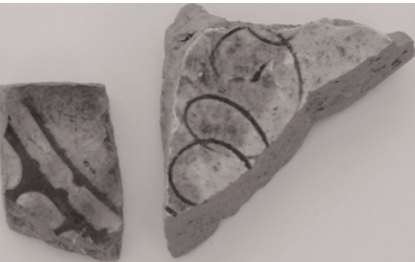


Pl.8





Pl.9





Pl.10

