

New Archaeological Discoveries in the Village Anaklia

Abstract: Due to its geographical location, Anaklia seems to have been inhabited since ancient times (today it is a part of Zugdidi municipality). According to European travelers and writers, Anaklia was the ancient Heraclea. The most recent archeological excavations have confirmed the existence of a well-established local Colchian settlement in Anaklia in early antiquity. While such facts would point to the influence of Hellenism, it did not exist to the extent that it had a significant impact on the local culture.

As a result of archaeological excavations, significant traces of the Greek urban settlement (Heraclea) have not yet been revealed. On the contrary, the settlement found is surrounded by a defensive moat with an artificial hill, and residential square, typologically matches the model of a sacred Colchian settlement. The products found are predominantly Colchian while imported ceramics are few. This study concludes there was a temporary trading point located here.

Keywords: Heraclea, Neapolis, Dikhagudzuba.

Anaklia is located in Zugdidi Municipality, at the Black Sea coast on the altitude of 3m above sea. It is in 30 km from the administrative center (Zugdidi) and acts as a climatic resort. Convenient economic and geographic location, closeness to the sea, favorable agricultural and boating conditions made it as an attractive environment for the intensive settling of the people during different periods.

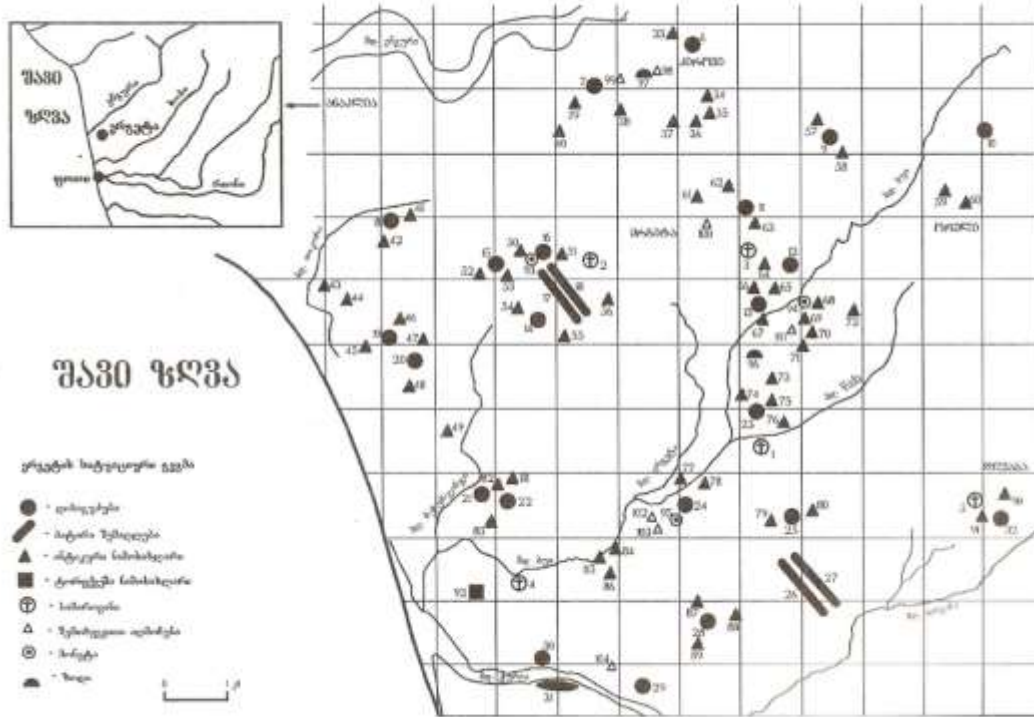


Figure 1 An archeological Map of Anaklia and its Surroundings

The first available written source about Anaklia is dated by 1615, the letter of Louis de Grange, where he refers Anaklia as “Heraclea” (Tamarashvili 1902: 204 -205). Prof. N. Lomouri considers that city **Neapolis**, named by Ptolemais (II century) was located at the Enguri confluence, on the territory of current Anaklia. According to the French and Italian missionaries of the Middle Ages or the European travelers of the later period (Jean Chardin 1975: 255), (Güldenstädt, 1962: 325), (Reineggs 2002: 108), (Gamba 1987: 94) and others. Anaklia named as an ancient Heraclea (**Heraclea** according to Strabo's description was a coastal city in the Kingdom of Pontus) (Tughushi 1991: 5-6). In Georgian written sources, Anaklia is mentioned at the beginning of the XVII century, in the Bichvinta Donation Book, Malachia Catholicos (1616 -1639), where several villages of Odishi are listed, including “Anaclia”.

The archeological interest towards Anaklia appeared at the end of the nineteen century, it was caused by the frequent incidental discoveries made by local population. It is known that in 1848, the Principal of Samegrelo, Davit Dadiani, proudly showed the visitors of his palace in Zugdidi the

numismatic and antiquities' collection exhibited in his palace – museum, found in the villages and Anaklia among them. (Guidebook 2010: 45). Since 30s of the XX century, the professional explorations of the archeological heritage of Anaklia had been initiated.

The first Dikhagudzuba of Anaklia is located in the southwest part of the village Anaklia, to the Tikora part. Akaki Chanturia, the director of Zugdidi Museum, excavated the monument in the 30s of the XX century. A famous archeologist, Boris Kuftin published the material based on the data from the excavation about 4 discovered cultural layers. The first layer included hand-made pottery and the remainders of the metallurgical production. (Bronze casting moulds, slag). This layer dates back to the final stage of the Early Bronze Age (the end of the III-II millennia BC). The second and the third layers date back to the Middle Bronze Age (XVIII -XV centuries BC). In these layers, the remains of wooden structures, richly ornamented clay vessels, Makha (endemic wheat) and millet grains were found. The discovered pottery belongs to the fourth layer (Late Bronze Age), which are machine-made and different from the pottery of the lower layer. (Куфтин 1950 : 161-259).

The Second Dikhagudzuba of Anaklia is located in the district of the village Anaklia, called Chitatskari, on the left side of Zugdidi-Anaklia highway. The excavations of the monument took place in 1971–1978. The academician Davit Muskhelishvili led the expedition. Remains of wooden log (Jargvali) buildings were discovered, date back the end of the III millennium. There were charred grains of Ghomi, hand-made sculpture and woven pottery, bronze hoe moulds. On the second Dikhagudzuba, the ceramic produce remainders were found which has the characteristics of yearly ancient period, VI-V century BC (R. Papuashvili, N. Papuashvili 2005 : 24); (Khoshtaria 1944: 208 -209);

In addition to the complex monuments, there are individual accidental discoveries in the village Anaklia, such as Bronze bars, found in the village Anaklia, 150-200m from the II Dikhagudzubi, on the private corn field in 1952 (R. Papuashvili, N. Papuashvili 2005 : 24); (Khoshtaria 1944: 208 -209). Colchian bronze ax was found in 150-200m from the II Dikhagudzubi, on the private corn field in 1952; (Khoshtaria 1944: 31), Bronze hoe, found in 150-200m from the II Dikhagudzubi, on the private corn field in 1952 (R. Papuashvili, N. Papuashvili 2005 : 24); (Khoshtaria 1944: 31).

The article refers to the new archeological monument, which is known by the name of “the Shekhuzi Makatsarias Na(k)vanu” and there is the artificial hill with former settlements nearby, called Dikhagudzuba (3m above sea), which is called “Orsantiash Nakaru” by the population¹.

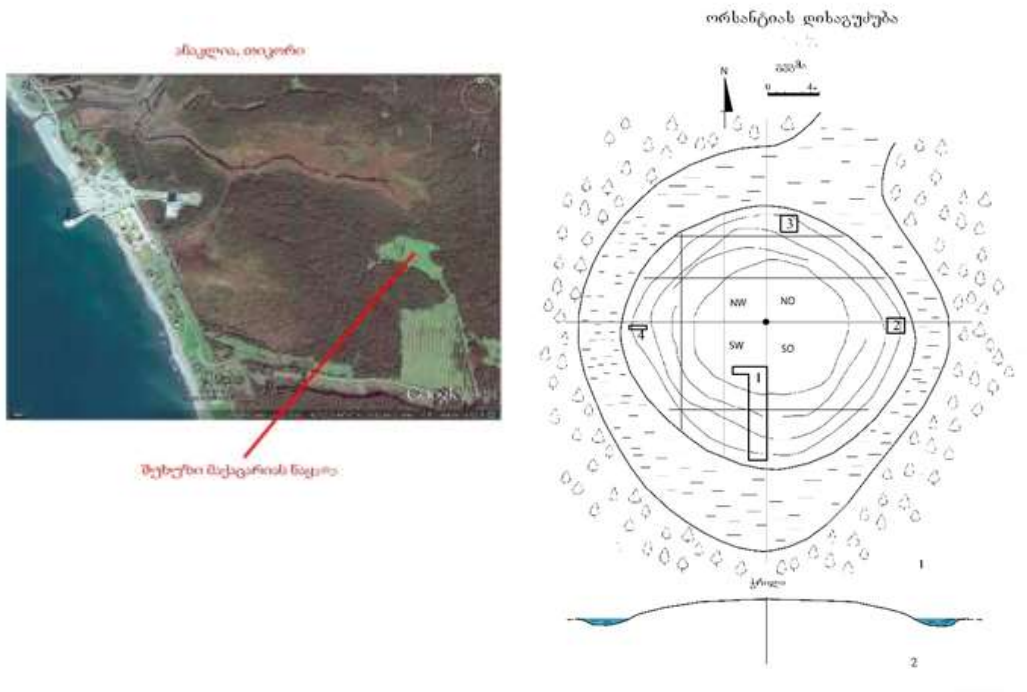


Figure 2. Anaklia, Shukhuzi Makaria

Table I Anaklia, Shikhuzi Mkatsaria Dikhagudzuba.

Dikhagudzuba and Orsantiashi Nakaru

The mentioned archeological monument is located to the east in 1.2 km from the Black Sea. In this place, various fragments of red-burnt plaster and ceramics were periodically found and collected on the surface by the local population.

This area attracted a special attention, it is distinguished by the landscape architecture, as there is quite special in this area, and there was the hill and vast plain around. This complex includes two main components of the Colchis. The artificial hill „Dikhagudzuba“² and surrounding plain with the

¹ The Cattle breeders from the village Orsantia have the “Kare” i.e. temporary shelter and therefore it is called after it.

² Dikhaguzhuba – Artificial hill with the former settlement, which is organized as a result of filling layers together. Its chronological periods includes early Bronze age till IV century AD. Artificial trenches for defence and economic purposes connecting them with the outer world. There is always a bog hill between the Dikhagudzubas called “the Mother Dikhagudzuba”, as other, comparatively small-sized ones were managed from those ones.

vast former settlement. The field archeological research on the monument – the study was conducted in 2016 (the head of expedition R. Papuashvili)

As a result of the archeological excavations the strong cultural layers were identified. The ruins of the wooden building and various artifacts, including imported and local ceramics, were observed. For instance the front and bottom part of the amphora, Colchian vessel, vine-type vessel, which dates back VI-IV centuries BC (Papuashvili 2016 : 5).

Orsantia Dikhagudzuba

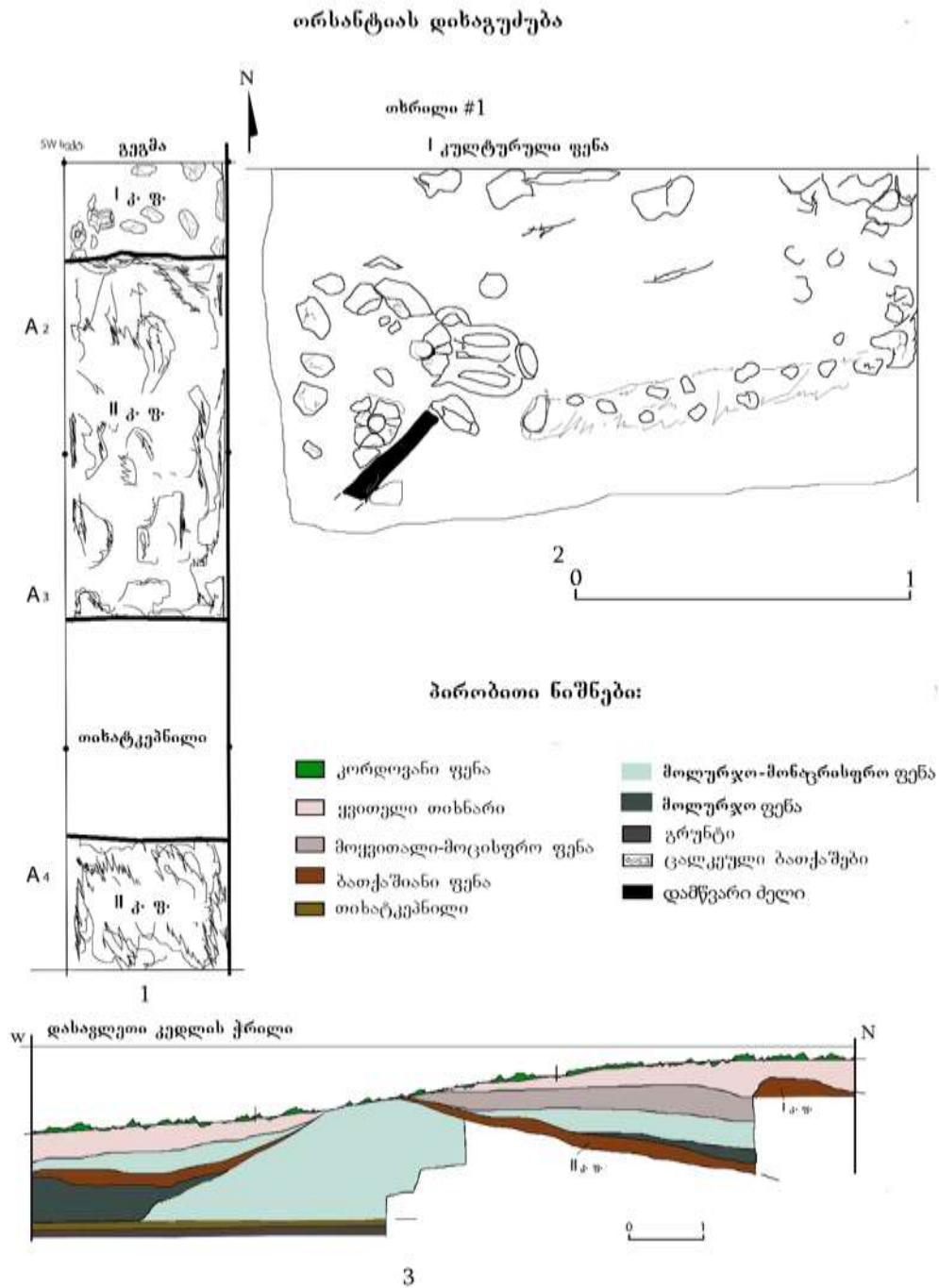


Fig. 3 Stratigraphic Perspective

The stratigraphic image of the artificial hill of former settlement, the date of which was identified, gives the way to thinkoᅆg that there were several small-sized hill former settlement on that place

during the ancient times. They were placed on a specially made, solid yellow clay with a big layer. The buildings were fully destroyed, burnt by unclear reasons and it was left as the pile of plaster. Nobody can say the precise reason for the destroy (attack, natural disaster, accident...) at this moment. As evidenced, very soon (according to the artifacts found here) the inhabitants re-leveled these small hills, filled them with new ground and created a large square on which a new structure was built. Upper and lower cultural layers were created (Khoshtaria 1944; 5).

Thus, one chronologically but stratigraphically two separate cultural layers were recorded on the artificial inhabited hill Dikhagudzuba. There is 0.7m thick sterile layer among them. According to the obtained artefacts. Eared bowls, Colchian cups, Greek amphorae, double-barreled ears, and the unique pottery made in Colchis, by Colchian clay and by imitation of Greek, gives ground for thinking that the mentioned cultural layers in general is dated by VI-IV centuries BC (Papuashvili 2016:5).

It can be proved, that early Ancient, classic age (VI-IV cc BC) is stretched out on 4 ha area. This settlement is one of the best preserved archeological monuments in the Enguri-Rioni basin; There is a well distinguished "Citadel" with a tranche around and the plain with the well-structured residential houses. It is one Colchian rural or urban type settlement dated back to the 2,500s and it seems that it was closely linked to the Greek world.

Noteworthy, that the early ancient period is characterized by the active colonization of the Black Sea coast. The Great Greek Colonization is one of the well-known migration process of the humankind. It supported to starting trading and economic relationship between people, commodity-money exchange and cultural relationship. It was an intensive process of covering of this area and establishment of Greek new settlements. Regular relationship with Greece and Colchis had been started since VI century BC and is linked with so-called "Greek Colonization" Process. That time, Greek city-colonies were appearing on a vast area, from the Gibraltar until the tributary of the river Don, on the Mediterranean and Black Sea Coasts. The process is very specific in the Easter Black Sea coast, as Greek newcomers were met with the people with a strong, well-established and independent culture. This is what determined the character of the settlement that traced by us, where the scale of relations with the Greek world can be clearly read.

No important sign of Greek urban settlement (Heraclea) has not been identified yet. On the contrary, the settlement found here with the safety tranche, which is surrounded by the artificial hill, residential square, typological is repeats the model of the Colchian settlement. The produce is also Colchian and there is small amount of imported pottery. According to our assumption, there was a temporary trading point here in the VI-V centuries BC.

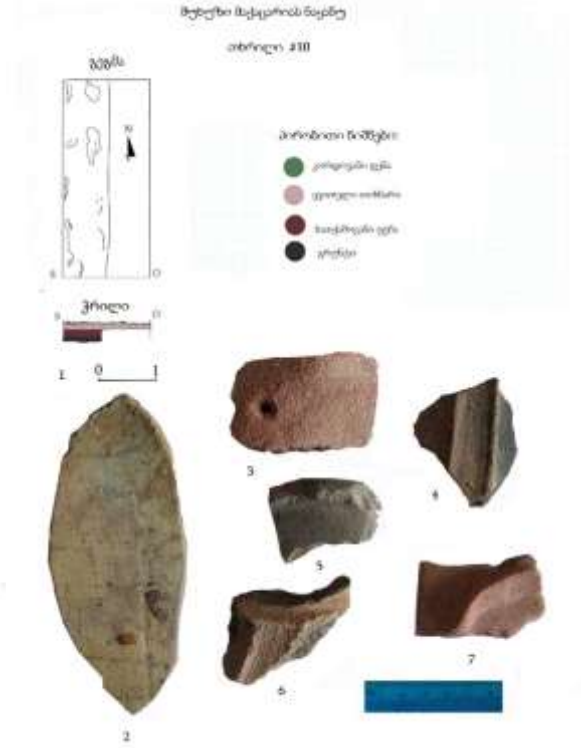


Fig. 4 Orsantia Dikhagudzuba, Pottery

Fig. 5 Shukhuzi Makatsaria Dikhagudzuba, Pottery

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