



DONOR IMPACT REPORT

Shepard Urgent Action Grants 2020-2024



asor

UNEARTHING THE PAST SINCE 1900

2024 Donor Impact Summary



\$15,000

awarded to
emergency
conservation
efforts

2

emergency/
stabilization
projects
funded

2024 Grant Recipient Names:

- *Gia Chilingarashvili*
- *Rajwan Al-Maiyali*

Organizations & Universities of Recipients:

- *Ivane Javakhishvili Tbilisi State University and Georgian National Museum*
- *University of Al-Qadisiyah*

Names of Projects & Initiatives:

- *Rescue Excavation of a Chalcolithic Settlement in Southwest Georgia*
- *Restoration of Umm al-Qurun's Minaret on the Hajj Pilgrimage Routes: The Darb Zubaydah*



PROJECT HIGHLIGHT



Rescue Excavation of a Chalcolithic Settlement in Southwest Georgia

Gia Chilingarashvili

Ivane Javakhishvili Tbilisi State University, Georgian National Museum

A **Shepard Urgent Action Grant** allowed the team to conduct a 20-day small-scale excavation at a recently discovered Chalcolithic site in the village of Pkhero in southwest Georgia. Archaeological sites from the Chalcolithic period are extremely sparse in Georgia. This site holds significant scientific potential for understanding various aspects of late prehistory in the South Caucasus.

This site has suffered damage from both natural and human activities. Urgent excavations became necessary after a portion of the settlement was destroyed during road construction, resulting in a 1-2-meter-high section that continued to collapse periodically. Ongoing erosion, exacerbated by heavy rainfall, threatened to destroy the remaining archaeological layers.



View of the excavation site showing the road cutting through the deposits as well as the pathway connecting the still-active alpine pastures.

PROJECT HIGHLIGHT



Rescue Excavation of a Chalcolithic Settlement in South-West Georgia

Gia Chilingarashvili

Ivane Javakhishvili Tbilisi State University, Georgian National Museum

In the small trenches located approximately two meters from the main excavation, we confirmed the presence of a Chalcolithic layer. This layer contained a substantial amount of archaeological material, including a small vessel and a grinding stone (see image below). Moving forward, the analysis of the collected materials during the project funded by our Shepard Grant will enhance our understanding of late prehistory in the South Caucasus.



The aim of the rescue operation was to collect primary data to determine the nature of the site by examining its stratigraphy and collecting samples. This data will enable us to develop a long-term strategy for research and conservation of the site. Additionally, the results will help us implement plans to protect the site from further damage.

PROJECT HIGHLIGHT

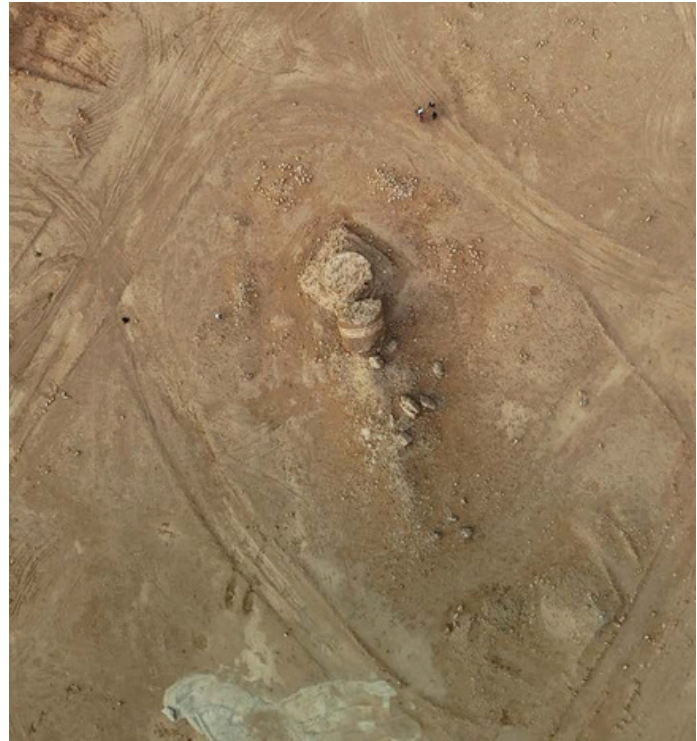
Restoration of Umm Al-Qurun's Minaret on the Hajj Pilgrimage Routes: The Darb Zubayduh, Iraq

Rajwan Al-Maiyali
University of Al-Qadishyah

Umm Al-Qurun is a surviving rest station on the Darb Zubaydah hajj pilgrimage route, located close to the modern city of Najaf. This means that the surviving architecture, especially the lighthouse (*manara*) and rest house (*qsar*), has been vulnerable to intentional and unintentional damage. Both structures are now in an extremely vulnerable state and in need of greater protection and stabilisation.

One particularly concerning development is the construction of a modern tarmacked road from Najaf along the route of the Darb Zubaydah. In addition to potentially disrupting important archaeology relating to the hajj route, the road passes extremely close to the site of Umm Al-Qurun, even passing between the station complex and manara.

Groundworks associated with the road building have resulted in the digging of numerous ditches close to the lighthouse, and tracks left by bulldozers demonstrate how easily damage could be inflicted, even unintentionally, to this unique historical structure. The road will also improve access to the site from Najaf, increasing the risk to these unprotected sites.



Aerial view of collapsed lighthouse at Umm Al-Qurun showing tracks and ditches, September 2024



Cistern walls, September 2024



Fencing installed around manara site, September 2024

Before & After: Completed project photos.



Funding from ASOR has allowed the project team led by Rajwan Al-Maiyali from the University of Al-Qadishiyah and heritage consultant and photographer Richard Wilding to complete the following measures:

1. Emergency protection measures around the manara including the erection of a protective fence and covering of the manara structure.
2. Documentation through photography and drone filming of all structures at Umm Al-Qurun in their current state of preservation.
3. Community engagement with local stakeholders to increase awareness of the site's importance and need for greater protection.

Lifetime Donor Summary Impact



\$74,725

awarded to
emergency
conservation
efforts

10 emergency/
stabilization
projects
funded

Year	Recipient	Country	Project	Organizations & Universities of Recipients
2020	Tobin Hartnell	Iraq	The Tabira Gate Stabilization Project at Ashur	American University of Iraq, Sulaimani
2020	Lindy Crewe	Cyprus	Stabilisation and refurbishment of a Chalcolithic roundhouse visitor centre at the archaeological site of Kissonerga-Mosphilia, Paphos District, Cyprus	Cyprus American Archaeological Research Institute
2021	Wahid Omran	Egypt	Safeguarding and Documentation the Akhmim Tomb C4	Fayoum University
2022	Maria Elena Ronza	Jordan	Emergency Conservation of the Roman Bathhouse in Petra	SELA for Training and Protection of Heritage
2023	Anke Weber	Egypt	Stabilizing History. Emergency documentation and consolidation of the pillars in the burial chamber of the tomb of pharaoh Ramesses III in the Valley of the Kings	Humboldt University of Berlin
2023	Mariam Eloshvili	Georgia	Emergency Excavation for Data Collection from the Late Neolithic Settlement at Khramis Didi Gora	Ilia State University
2023	Murat Akar	Turkey	Post-earthquake Action at Tell Atchana/Alalakh	Hatay Mustafa Kemal University
2023	Paula Sconzo	Iraq	Rescue Operations at the Site of Cham Pashaya, II	University of Palermo
2024	Gia Chilingarashvili	Geogia	Rescue Excavations of a Chalcolithic Settlement in Southwest Georgia	Ivane Javakhishvili Tbilisi State University and Georgian National Museum
2024	Rajwan Al-Maiyali	Iraq	Restoration of Umm Al-Qurun's Minaret on the Hajj Pilgrimage Routes: The Darb Zubayduh	Univeristy of Al-Qadishiyah



*Thank you for all you do to support
ASOR's mission to protect and conserve
cultural heritage.*

