

Mount Chikiani Obsidian Sources (Lesser Caucasus, Georgia)
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The surveys carried out during the last week of July and the first ten days of August 2024 were extended to the slopes of Mt. Shaori, West of Lake Paravani. The first area investigated is located close to the small village of Vladimirovka, along the Western shore of the lake. Some 1300 m West of the lakeshore, an important stone-walled village was discovered (VDL-1), which is subdivided into three main, clearly distinguishable compounds (Fig. 1). Though the surveys have not yielded any evidence of organic material suitable for radiocarbon dating, a few pottery fragments were collected from one feature located in the western part of the village. The typological characteristics of the potsherds, their fabric and temper (which contains very small obsidian fragments), suggest that the site may be attributed to the Iron Age.

The research was later extended to other areas on the slopes of Mt. Shaori, where several stone-built structures, mainly different types of *kurgans*, were identified, photographed and mapped. Twenty-nine features yielded obsidian flakes which are currently being studied at Bordeaux Montaigne University Archaeoscience Laboratory. Their presence, often on the surface of monumental *kurgans*, is very important, because nothing is known of the utilisation and transport of Bronze Age obsidian artefacts in the area investigated. Some *kurgans* have been discovered at altitudes between 2200 and 2300 m. Among these is an impressive circular funerary monument (SHR-41) with small, circular stone-walled features visible from above (Fig. 2) around which several obsidian artefacts were collected. The coordinates of all the sites were recorded using a Garmin-GPS, while all the features have been photographed from above with the help of a non-professional DJI Mini 2 drone.



The Iron Age stone-walled village of Vladimirovka (VDL-1; above) and the impressive SHR-41 *kurgan* from above. Smaller circular structures are clearly visible in the central part of the monument (photograph by M. Ferrandi; right).