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The necropolises of Azerbaijan during the Bronze and Iron Ages in the Lenkoran and the Lerik areas (NABIALLA Project, Azerbaijan): Preliminary report of the 2012–2013 campaigns



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A B S T R A C T

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The NABIALLA Project is a French-Azerbaijani archaeological joint project which tried to reconcile simultaneously two main axes of concern. The Morgan Project, which includes the re-examination of archaeological material formerly discovered and stored in public collections, either in Azerbaijan or abroad, especially in French National Museum of Archaeology (MAN, Saint-Germain-en-Laye) in comparison with archaeological remains found nowadays. The Lenkoran Project intends to study by means of systematic fieldwork the necropolises of the Lenkoran and Lerik provinces (Republic of Azerbaijan) during the Bronze and Iron Ages. This project should result in the better understanding of the funerary practices in the region. This paper presents a summary report of the 2012–2013 campaigns. The Joint Expedition began to conduct fieldwork (surveys and excavation) in the Lenkoran River Valley in 2012. Fieldwork was first conducted at Kraveladi where several megalithic structures have been located within different areas on the banks of the Lakerçay River. In 2013 work was carried out at Cucu Tuk, where a large tumulus was excavated. It contained a double stone circle with a deposit of three pottery vessels which seem to belong to the Late Bronze Age.

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1. Introduction: the origin and framework of the NABIALLA program

Until recently, the protohistorical archaeology of the Caucasus suffered from a lack of scientifically safe data as well as from an increase of illegal excavations. In the last twenty years, new methods in archaeology have been developed in Azerbaijan and many new discoveries have been made by chance or with the opportunity of archaeological surveys raised by huge public arrangements and the Tbilissi–Baku–Ceyhan pipelines constructed through Azerbaijan, Georgia, and Turkey during the period 2003–2005. Many Azerbaijani teams of specialists and foreign

archaeological institutions have been involved for years of collaboration in these important works to recover the stratification of the past of the whole country. Some of the works of large-scale archaeological excavations ended in the implementation of large programs of valuation of the heritage discovered between Caspian Sea and the Mediterranean Sea, sometimes in association with institutions such as the Smithsonian Institution (Taylor and Koller, 2012).

Originally conceived to try to revalue the collection of Caucasian material formerly gathered in the French National Museum of Archaeology (MAN, Saint-Germain-en-Laye), the NABIALLA Project is a French-Azerbaijani archaeological joint project which tried to reconcile simultaneously two main axes of concern (Casanova et al., 2014). The Morgan Project includes the re-examination of archaeological material formerly discovered and stored in public

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Fig. 1. Map of the South-West Caspian Shores. Mission archéologique du Lenkoran.

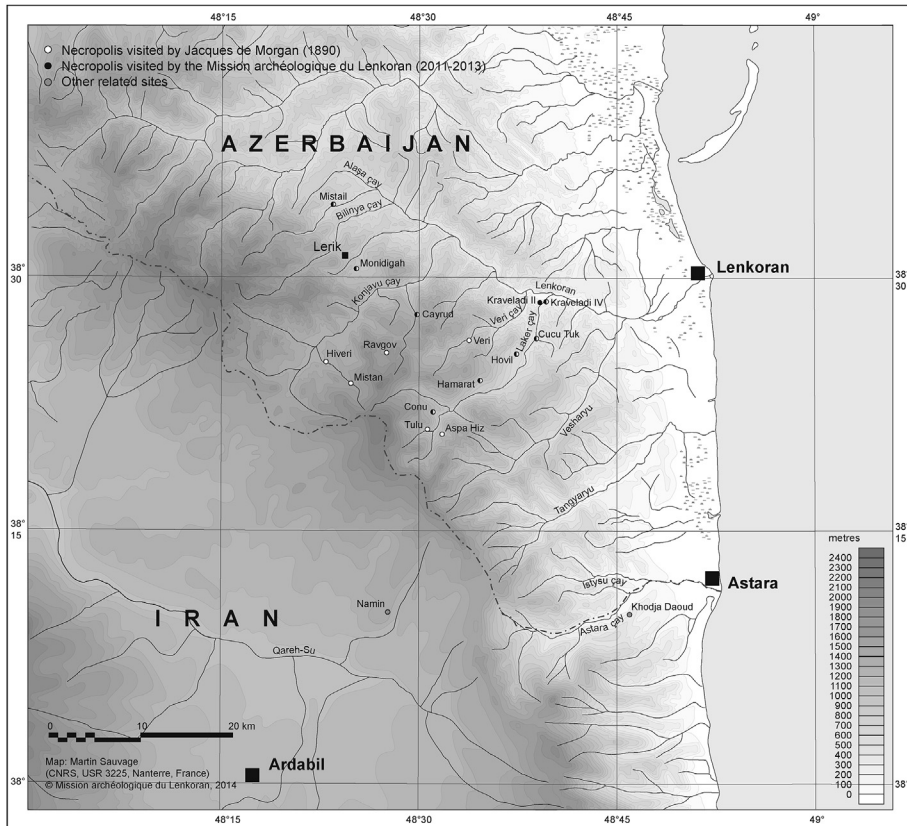


Fig. 2. Map of the Lenkoran Valley. Mission archéologique du Lenkoran.

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