ABSTRACT SUBMISSION

The GaRKAP project in Western Azerbaijan: a preliminary report on the fourth year of excavation (2024) at Tava Tepe (Agstafa district).

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Abstract

The GaRKAP (Ganja Region Kurgan Archaeological Project) international project in Western Azerbaijan - launched in 2018 - began investigating the Late Bronze and Iron Age site of Tava Tepe in 2021. This site, located in the middle Kura River Valley (Agstafa district), has been studied for four seasons by CAMNES (Center for Ancient Mediterranean and Near Eastern Studies), the University of Catania, and the Azerbaijan National Academy of Sciences, revealing two main occupational phases (LBA: Phase I; IA: Phase II).
This paper focuses on Tava Tepe's Phase I, and especially on one structure brought to light during the last two seasons. Recent findings from the southern area of the site revealed a pseudo-circular structure with two distinct phases of use. The first phase is characterized by a central fireplace encircled by a pottery hoard, with fired animal bones and clay tokens suggesting that the structure was likely used for food preparation. The sealing of the hoard at the end of this phase and the construction of a second central fireplace surrounded by a similar hoard likely indicates the ceremonial significance of the structure, aligning with ritual practices in the Southern Caucasus from the late second to early first millennium BCE.

Keywords

Tava tepe, ceremonial, Late Bronze and Iron Age, GaRKAP, pottery hoard

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