

Azerbaijan National Academy of Sciences
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SHORT SCIENTIFIC REPORT

Excavations at Böyük Kəsik settlement at KP 418.9
SCPX pipeline

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1 SUMMARY

The Boyuk Kasik settlement was initially excavated in connection with the construction of the BTC and SCP pipelines. Therefore, the monument was registered as an area previously known to archaeologists. The archaeological excavations carried out on the site in 2004-2005 indicated that this settlement is one of the rare monuments for the entire Caucasus region. Researchers established that Boyuk Kasik is affiliated with the Leylatepe archaeological culture, which emerged as a result of the migration of Chalcolithic-era tribes from northern Mesopotamia to the South Caucasus. Excavations were also conducted for testing purposes with the use of machinery during the laying of the new SCPX pipeline in order to ascertain the availability of an archaeological monument in the area, but no occupation layer was revealed and no artefacts were obtained there. The archaeological work was done on the site between 16th – 22nd February, 2016.

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2 INTRODUCTION

2.1 SITE DISCOVERY

The area was recorded as a territory previously known to archaeologists. Archaeological excavations were conducted in the area between 2004 and 2005 during the operations on the BTC and SCP pipelines when abundant artefacts, dating back to the Chalcolithic period (the first half of the 4th millennium BC) were discovered [1, p. 1-275]. Excavations to be carried out for testing purposes with the use of machinery were planned and coordinated in order to determine the availability of an archaeological monument in the area located in the SCPX corridor.

2.2 BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE SITE

The Boyuk Kasik residential area was discovered in the territory of the Aghstafa district at KP418.960 on the SCPX route. The monument was figuratively named this way due to its location in the vicinity of the Boyuk Kasik settlement. The ancient settlement is located at N-4583136.879, E-8517341.331 and N-4583194.479, E-8517298.131, 261m above sea level and about 500m east of the present day settlement, in a wide area with plain relief. The monument covers an area of 1.2 hectares. The 30-40cm upper layer was damaged as a result of ploughing due to this area having been used until the latest period for sowing [1, p. 7-8]. The occupation layer is mainly located below the present day soil surface. The surrounding areas have risen as high as the occupation layer of the monument in the aftermath of floods that occurred in the area throughout millennia.

2.3 WHO CARRIED OUT THE EXCAVATION AND WHEN

The archaeological excavations in the area were carried out between 16th to 22nd February, 2016, using a JCB excavator. The excavation work was done by David Maynard, an archaeologist employed by BP, and Ahliman Abdurahmanov, a research fellow and AEI archaeologist. The excavations were observed by PhD in History, AEI Deputy Director for Scientific Affairs, Najaf Museyibli.

3 RESULTS OF ARCHAEOLOGICAL EXCAVATIONS

3.1 DESCRIPTION OF THE SITE

The Boyuk Kasik settlement is located in a large plain area. Insignificant sowing work is done in the area. The territory is mainly used for hayfields and pastures. Crops for household activities are not cultivated there due to low soil fertility. Therefore, the area is still used exclusively for grazing animals. The Greater Caucasus mountain chain is located north of the area. The Aghgol state reserve is located there also. Boyuk Kasik is the last village of the Aghstafa district bordering the Republic of Georgia.

3.2 OVERVIEW OF OCCUPATION LAYERS

No occupation layers were revealed during the excavations. Though a 40m long, 4m wide area was excavated to the depth of 1m, no finds confirmed that an occupation layer was present on the site (Photos 1, 2, 3). No archaeological materials were discovered during the excavation work either. In our opinion, the settlement does not extend to the trench of the SCPX pipe where we conducted the excavations.

3.3 DESCRIPTION OF ARCHAEOLOGICAL FINDS.

No archaeological finds were identified.

4 ANALYSIS OF RESULTS

No artefacts were obtained from the excavation area. The excavated area is situated some distance from the Boyuk Kasik settlement, which dates back to the Chalcolithic period (the first half of the 4th millennium BC).

4.1 ANALYTICAL RESULTS

No occupation layer was revealed and no artefacts were obtained in the area though the excavations were conducted with the use of machinery. Therefore, no substantial facts have been accumulated regarding this particular section (the SCPX corridor ditch) of the Boyuk Kasik settlement.

5 DISCUSSION

5.1 INTERPRETATION OF RESULTS

No tangible cultural remains were discovered from the archaeological area. However, we would like to reiterate that the traces of a habitat were revealed away from the route of the SCPX trench where the excavations were conducted. Overall, the Boyuk Kasik settlement is a monument that is rich in samples of tangible culture. An abundant stratum of the settlement was excavated in the BTC and SCP corridors.

6 APPENDICES

6.1 INVENTORY

No artefacts were discovered in the area.

6.2 REFERENCES

N. A. Museyibli, M. M. Huseynov, 2007. *A comprehensive report on archaeological excavations conducted at the ancient Boyuk Kasik settlement located in KP 438 of the BTC route*. Baku, Azerbaijan, 2007, 275 p.

M. M. Huseynov, 2006. *About the ancient Khojakhon settlement*. The Mingachevir archaeological expedition – 60. Mingachevir, 2006.

N.A. Museyibli, 2005. *The late Eneolithic Age burial mounds of the Aghstafa district*. Archaeology, Ethnology and Local Lore Studies of the Caucasus. Baku, 2005.

6.3 PHOTOS



Photo 1. Trial excavation using machinery.



Photo 2. Trial excavation process using machinery.



Photo 3. Excavation trench backfill.



Photo 4. Signs and fencing near excavation.



Photo 5. Excavation area after backfilling.