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The French-Armenian archaeological mission of the LA3M (Aix-en-Provence) at Yereruyk (Armenia): main results

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Résumé de communication

**« The French-Armenian archaeological mission
of the LA3M (Aix-en-Provence)
at Yereruyk (Armenia): main results »**

in

Ancient Armenia at the crossroads

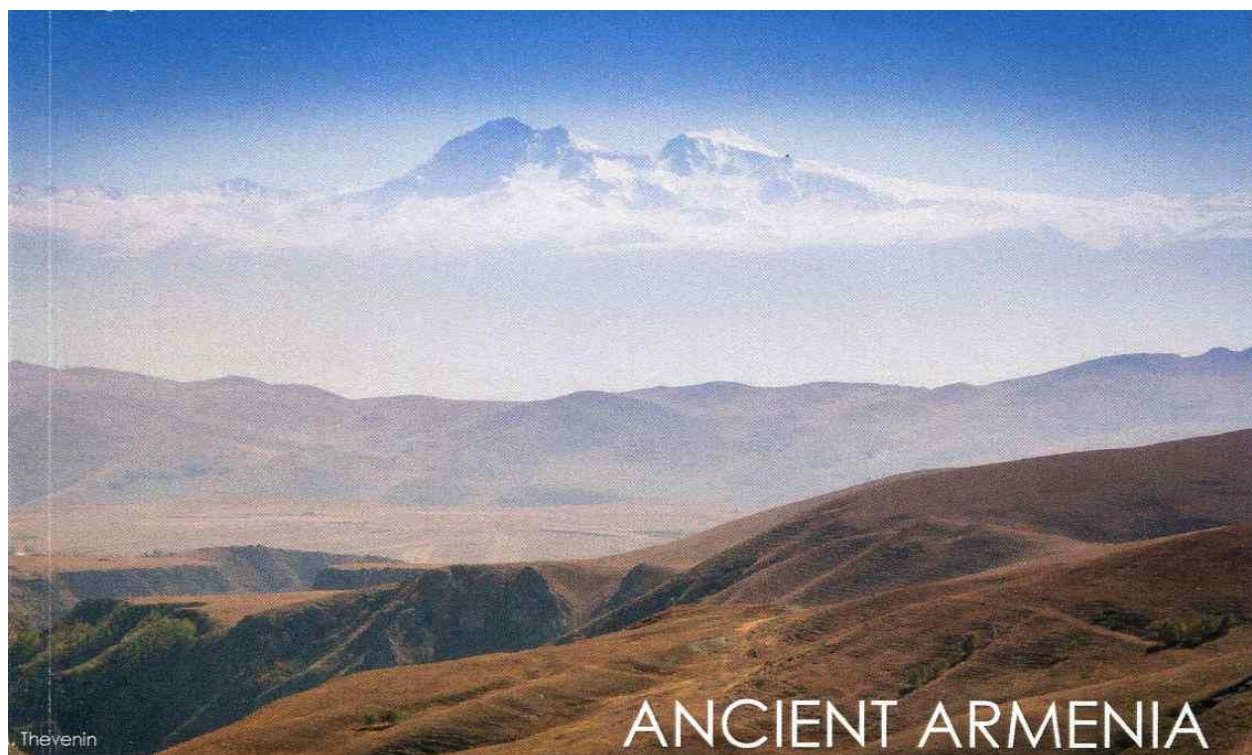
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Organized by B. Perello, R. Badalyan and K. Meliksetian

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Abstracts

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The French-Armenian archaeological mission of the LA3M (Aix-en-Provence) at Yereruyk (Armenia): main results

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Since 2009, the mission has carried out surveys of the early Christian and medieval site of Yereruyk, situated at the northwestern extremity of the Republic of Armenia, on its border with Turkey, a few kilometers from the remains of the medieval capital of Ani.

The site contains, around the ruins of an undated but obviously early Christian basilica with unusual features, the vestiges of several constructions which raise many questions concerning both their function and their dating. The site also poses more general questions concerning the nature of the complex and the reasons for its location in a place which is particularly deprived today, as well as several enigmas that appeared during the investigations. The multidisciplinary team set up by the LA3M of Aix-en-Provence and the Regional Museum of Shirak (the province where the site is located) is striving to provide answers, even if only to a few of these questions.

After the discovery, near the church, of a cemetery and a memorial area, the mission began to explore a field that until then was very marginal, even taboo, in medieval Armenian archeology, that of funerary archeology. The detailed archaeological and anthropological study of more than seventy graves, and 27 dates obtained thanks to radiocarbon analysis of human bones, have provided an initial picture of the long evolution of a Christian cemetery in Armenia, from late Antiquity almost to today. The study of the basilica, meanwhile, led to a revisitation of the field of Armenian-Syriac relations in the early Christian period. A geomorphological analysis of a seasonal stream bordering the site was also carried out in an attempt to better understand the place of this "wadi" in the past life of the complex. This enabled reconsideration of the relations that Yereruyk would have had with the neighboring town of Ani around the year 1000.

