

SOME REMARKS ON THE RESEARCH CONTEXT AND THE PRELIMINARY RESULTS OF THE EXCAVATIONS CONDUCTED IN THE WEST AND CENTRAL FORTS OF ARAMUS BETWEEN 2009 AND 2015

W. KUNTNER (Austria, Innsbruck), S. HEINSCH (Austria, Innsbruck),
H. AVETISYAN (RA, Yerevan)*

The archaeological research of the fortress of Aramus, located southwest of the eponymous village 15 km northeast of Yerevan, presumably started in the 1970¹ when Khanzadyan turned her attention back to the investigation of the fortress of Elar after having resumed excavations in the necropolis in 1960 which have both already been the subject of explorations by Lalayan and Bayburtyan in the 20s of the last century. Khanzadyan's shift in emphasis of research was motivated by the intent to reconstruct the historical landscape of the Kotayk Plateau against the background of the Urartian rock inscription found by Smbatjan along the modern road west of Elar.² The cuneiform rock inscription reports the victory of the Urartian king Argishti I. (785/780-756³) over ^{KUR}*Etiuni* which resulted in the conquest of the land ^{KUR}*Uluani*, the land of the city ^{URU}*Darani*. The toponyms ^{KUR}*Uluani* and ^{URU}*Darani* were respectively identified by Khanzadyan in accordance with Nikolski with the Kotayk Plateau

* University of Innsbruck, Institute of Ancient History and Ancient Near Eastern Studies, PhD, Walter.Kuntner@uibk.ac.at.

University of Innsbruck, Institute of Ancient History and Ancient Near Eastern Studies, Dr., Sandra.Heinsch@uibk.ac.at.

University of Yerevan, Chair of Archaeology and Ethnography, Dr., hykavetisyan@yahoo.com, article received 5.11.2018, reviewed 01.12.2018.

¹ This assumption is confirmed by the Corona satellite imagery DS1115-2154DF095 taken on September 20th, 1971 where only one of the four areas excavated in the Central Fort before 1988 is visible (<http://earthexplorer.usgs.gov>).

² **Salvini M.** *Corpus dei testi urartei*, Volume I: Le iscrizioni su pietra e roccia, i testi. Rome, 2008, p. 348-349.

³ The absolute dates follow **Salvini M.** *Geschichte und Kultur der Urartäer*. Darmstadt, S. 57 and **Salvini M.** 2006, *Il regno di Urartu (Biainili)*, in: S. De Martino (ed.), *Storia d' Europa e del Mediterraneo*, Vol. 2, Roma, 1995, p. 481-483.

and the fortress of Elar. The latter identification was certainly based to some extent on the proximity of the site to the inscription of Argishti I. but most notably also because of its prominent history which contrary to the nearby fortresses of Arinj, Aramus, Kamaris and Akunk, remained consistently in use from the Early Bronze Age up to the present day. Based on the historical narrative of the Elar inscription, Khanzadyan thus considered Elar to be one of the main political centers of the Etiuni confederation and the fortified landscape of Aramus to represent its hinterland⁴ [Fig. 1].

The key factor in Khanzadyan's interpretation that the defence system of Elar must have declined soon after the Urartian conquest of Uluani, and that hence the fortified landscape of Aramus represents exclusively an Early Iron Age – Etiunian establishment only, was based on the low occurrence of red ceramic wares and in particular on the almost complete absence of the so-called Toprakkale ware⁵ both at Elar and on the surveyed fortresses. These findings seemed to be in contrast to the situation encountered in the Urartian fortresses of Erebuni/Arin Berd, Argishtihinili/Armarir and Theishebaini/Karmir Blur, and in particular at Metsamor where red ceramic wares had well been ascertained in the stratigraphic sequence above the destruction layer of the Early Iron Age occupation.⁶

The excavations conducted by Avetisyan at the fortress of Aramus in 1988 fundamentally changed the framework of Khanzadyan's model about the fortified landscape of Aramus inasmuch as the fortress of Aramus turned out to be exclusively an Urartian foundation.⁷ The new date was revised by

⁴ **Khanzadyan E.** Elar-Darani, Yerevan, 1979, p. 162-176.

⁵ The term was introduced by Burney as definition of the “fine red polished pottery” first discovered at Toprakkale and taken to be characteristic of those Urartian sites dating to the “century after 714 B.C.” (**Burney C.A.** Urartian Fortresses and Towns in the Van Region, *Anatolian Studies* 7, 1957, p. 42). For a recent discussion of the Toprakkale ware in the context of the Urartian pottery of Ayanis see **Erdem A.Ü., Konyar E.** Urartian Pottery, in: K. Köroğlu, E. Konyar (eds.), *Urartu, Doğu'da Değişim – Transformation in the East*. Istanbul, 2011, p. 268-285.

⁶ See in regard to the low occurrence or absence of red polished ware the remarks of **Kroll S.** *Urartäische Keramik*, in: H.-J. Kellner (ed.), *Urartu, Ein wiederentdeckter Rivale Assyriens*, München, 1976, S. 62 as well as **Erdem A.Ü., Konyar E.** Urartian Pottery, p. 270.

⁷ **Smith A.T., Kafadarian K.** New Plans of Early Iron Age and Urartian Fortresses in Armenia: A Preliminary Report on the Ancient Landscape Project, *Iran* 34, 1996, p. 36. The

Avetysian first, because of the building technique of the stone substructures and thereunder in particular of the fortification walls of the Central Fort on top of the ridge which are reinforced by counterforces set at regular intervals; one of the most unique characteristic of Urartian masonry. Secondly, the new date was based on the occurrence of a definitely representative amount of Urartian pottery from the oldest layer upwards.⁸ Noteworthy is the evidence of the contemporaneous occurrence of black and grey ceramic wares of Lchashen-Metsamor tradition along with two qualitatively different types of red ceramic wares, referred to by Avetisyan as local Urartu and Biainili ware used, however, to manufacture the same vessel shapes.⁹

Analogous situations were attested more or less at the same time also by expeditions working at the fortresses of Shirakavan (1977-1981)¹⁰, Horom-South (1990-1993)¹¹ or surveying the fortresses along the southwestern coastal region of Lake Sevan (1994-2000).¹² Recent attempts to understand the remarkable interrelation of the different Iron Age ceramic traditions did not fail to appear. These mostly refer to those assemblages recovered at the large Urartian centers in the 40s to 60s¹³, but which unfortunately often lack an adequate stratigraphic recording system, or to grave contexts as the main

investigation of this area was continued in 2004, 2006 and 2008. In the context of the excavations in the Central Fort this area was referred to as area ZB III.

⁸ **Avetisyan H.** Aragats (Excavations of the Urartian fortress), Yerevan, 2001, p. 37-50.

⁹ **Avetisyan H.** Biainili Pottery from Monuments of the Ararat Valley, Yerevan, 1992, p. 43-78.

¹⁰ **Torosyan R.M., Khnkikyan O.S., Petrosyan L.A.** Drevnij Shirakavan, Yerevan, 2002.

¹¹ **Badalyan R.S., Edens Ch., Kohl P.L., Tonikyan A.V.** Archaeological Investigations at Horom in the Shirak Plain of Northwestern Armenia, 1990, Iran 30, 1992, p. 31-48. **Badaljan R.S., Edens C.H., Gorny R., Kohl P.L., Stronach D., Tonikjan A.V., Hamayakjan S., Mandrikjan S., Zardarjan M.** Preliminary Report on the 1992 Excavations at Horom, Armenia, Iran 31, 1993, p. 1-24. **Badaljan R.S., Kohl P.L., Stronach D., Tonikjan A.V.** Preliminary Report on the 1993 Excavations at Horom, Armenia, Iran 32, 1994, p. 1-29.

¹² **Hmayakyan S.** The Urartians on the Southern Coast of Lake Sevan, in: R. Biscione, S. Hmayakyan, N. Parmegiani (eds.), The North-Eastern Frontier, Urartians and Non-Urartians in the Sevan Lake Basin, I. The Southern Shores, Rome, 2002, p. 277-300. **Hakobyan H.** The Surface Pottery of the Southern Coast of Lake Sevan, in: R. Biscione, S. Hmayakyan, N. Parmegiani (eds.), The North-Eastern Frontier, Urartians and Non-Urartians in the Sevan Lake Basin, I. The Southern Shores, Rome, 2002, p. 301-304.

¹³ **Avetisyan H.** Urartian Ceramics from the Ararat Valley as a Cultural Phenomenon (A Tentative Representation), Iran & the Caucasus 3/4, 1999/2000, p. 293-314. **Avetisyan H.** Biainili Pottery from Monuments of the Ararat Valley, Yerevan, 1992.

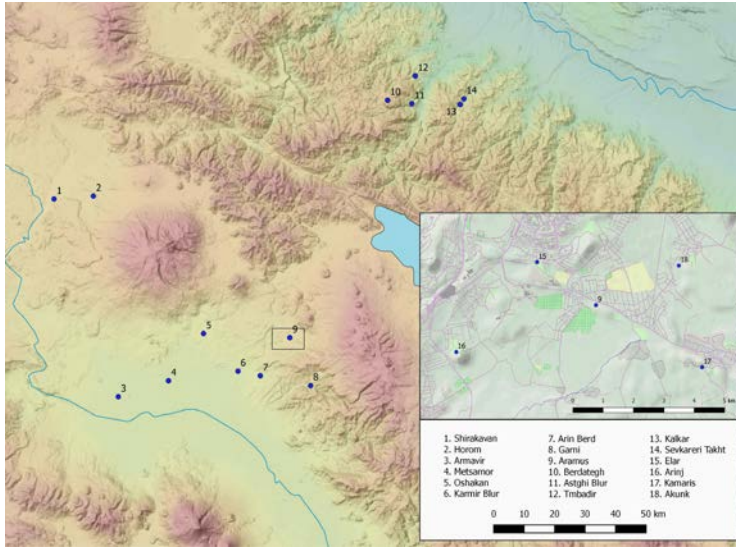


Fig. 1

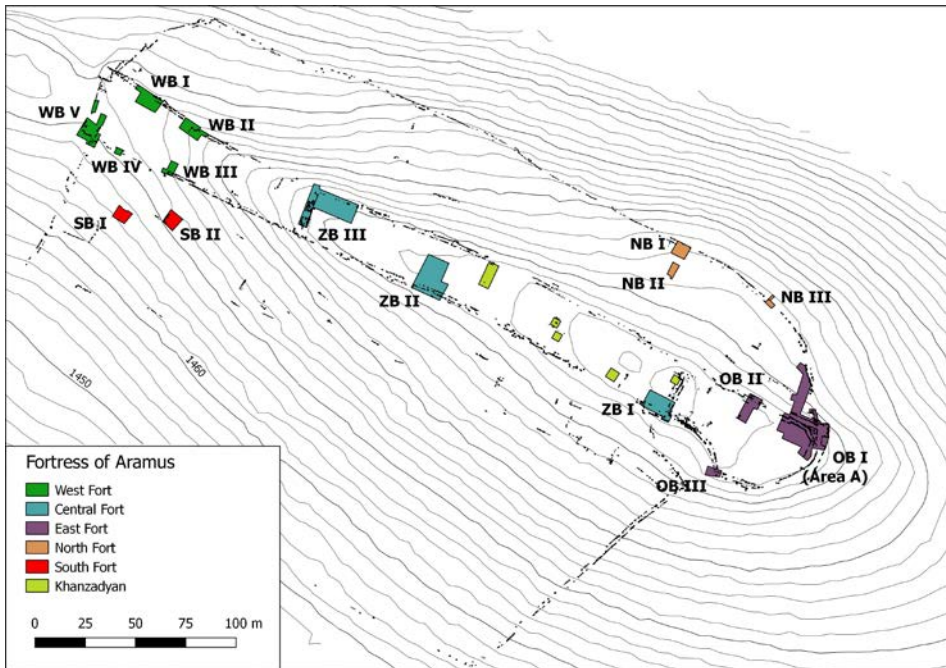


Fig. 2

Fig. 1. Location of sites mentioned in the text.

Fig. 2. Overview of excavated areas in the fortress of Aramus.

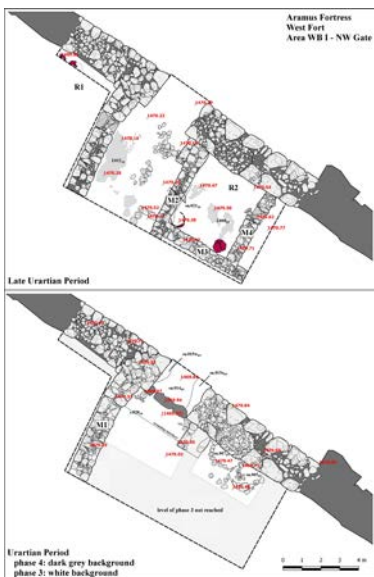


Fig. 3



Fig. 4



Fig. 5



Fig. 6



Fig. 7

Fig. 3. Periodic sequence plan of area WB I; **Fig. 4.** Periodic sequence plan of area ZB II; **Fig. 5.** Overview of area ZB II from northwest showing phase 2 occupation (2014); **Fig. 6.** Detail of storage facility in room R2 (area ZB II) from west showing Urartian period occupation (2014); **Fig. 7.** Overview of room R3 (area ZB II) from northeast showing Urartian period occupation (2014)

point of reference.¹⁴ An in-depth and up-to-date comparative study which takes into consideration also the results of the newly excavated fortresses mentioned above is still ahead.

This was the starting point of the Armenian-Austrian excavation project at Aramus in 2004 which aimed to work out a reliable stratigraphic sequence and related ceramic typology. After twelve campaigns the first focus can now be regarded as largely accomplished. Three exhaustive and consistent occupation sequences spanning the time from the 8th to 3rd/2nd century BCE were established for the East, West and Central Forts. The second focus intended to provide a ceramic corpus for a comparative study of the development and interrelation of Iron Age ceramic traditions is in progress.

The initial choice to concentrate the excavations in the East Fort was twofold: first, this is the only sector which is characterised by a *tappeh* and thus encouraging for meeting a suitable anthropogenic sedimentation. Indeed, the stratification of the East Fort reaches a depth of nearly 3 m whereas in all other areas excavated to date it hardly exceeds the thickness of 1,50 m. Secondly, the stone wall remains visible at the surface revealed a most diverse situation not encountered elsewhere in the fortress. In sum five building periods, termed Aramus I to Aramus V, were discerned and investigated until 2008 near the north-east corner of the fortress at the junction of the North to the East Forts.¹⁵

¹⁴ **Avetisyan P.** On Periodization and Chronology of the Iron Age in Armenia, *Aramazd* IV/2, 2009, p. 55-76. **Khnikyan O.S.** Syunik during the Bronze and Iron Ages, Barrington, 2002, p. 77-96. **Yengibaryan N.** The Graves of the Urartian Period of Karchaghbyur, in: R. Biscione, S. Hmayakyan, N. Parmegiani (eds.), *The North-Eastern Frontier, Urartians and Non-Urartians in the Sevan Lake Basin, I. The Southern Shores*, Rome, 2002, p. 417-454.

¹⁵ **Heinsch S., Kuntner W., Avetisyan H.** The Iron Age fortress of Aramus, Armenia: Archaeological Evidence of the East and North Forts, in: P. Avetisyan, A. Bobokhyan (eds.), *Archaeology of Armenia in Regional Context, Proceedings of the International Conference dedicated to the 50th Anniversary of the Institute of Archaeology and Ethnography, Held on September 15-17, 2009 in Yerevan*, Yerevan, 2012, p. 133-147. **Kuntner W., Heinsch S.** The Ostburg of Aramus, an Urartian and Achaemenid Fortress. The Stratigraphical Evidence, in: P. Matthiae, F. Pinnock, L. Nigro, N. Marchetti (eds.), *Proceedings of the 6th International Congress on the Archaeology of the Ancient Near East, May, 5th-10th 2008, "Sapienza" – Università di Roma, Vol. 2, Excavations, Surveys and Restorations: Reports on Recent Field Archaeology in the Near East*, Wiesbaden, 2010, p. 339-348. **Kuntner W., Heinsch S., Avetisyan H.** The Fortress of Aramus in Achaemenid Times, in: G.P. Basello, A. Rossi (eds.), *Persepolis and its Settlements: Territorial System and Ideology in the Achaemenid State*, Napoli, 2012, p. 403-416.

It is anticipated that the building periodization of the East Fort is confirmed in its principles by all investigations which have been conducted to date. The only deviation concerns the division of the periods Aramus V and Aramus IV as its definition is largely based on an architectural feature whose relation to the settlement development is yet not fully understood. In an overall view it proved therefore preferable to divide the Iron Age occupation of the fortress of Aramus in three main periods respectively dated on the base of a radiocarbon sequence of compressively 30 samples.

The first occupation corresponds to the period of the kingdom of Biainili and is hereinafter referred to as the Urartian period. It lasts from the foundation of the fortress of Aramus by king Argishti I sometime in the first quarter of the 8th century BCE and finishes with the fall of the kingdom in the 40s of 7th century BCE.¹⁶ The term Urartu is preferred over the term Biainili which can, however, be used synonymously, to underscore the concurrence of Lchashen-Metsamor and Biainili potteries at Aramus but also the low amount of Toprakkale ware. This approach follows the proposal of the editors of the proceeding of the symposium Biainili-Urartu held in Munich in 2009 which suggests the term Biainili to be restricted to refer specifically to the kingship of Tushpa and its material culture.¹⁷ The term Urartu on the other hand is understood in its original meaning as a geographic term and used as a hypernym for the manifold Iron Age cultural traditions of this region and therefore including also Biainili.¹⁸ This concept is finally in accordance with Smiths and Thompsons idea of a “Southern Caucasian Political Tradition” which likewise emphasizes the common Late Bronze Age roots of the Iron Age cultural phenomena in

¹⁶ **Kroll S.** Urartus Untergang in anderer Sicht, *Istanbuler Mitteilungen* 34, 1984, S. 151-170. **Fuchs A.** Urartu in der Zeit, in: S. Kroll, C. Gruber, U. Hellwag, M. Roaf, P. Zimansky (eds.) *Biainili-Urartu, The Proceedings of the Symposium held in Munich 12-14 October 2007*, Leuven, 2012, 135-161. **Hellwag U.** Der Niedergang Urartus, in: S. Kroll, C. Gruber, U. Hellwag, M. Roaf, P. Zimansky (eds.) *Biainili-Urartu, The Proceedings of the Symposium held in Munich 12-14 October 2007*, Leuven, 2012, S. 227-241.

¹⁷ **Zimansky P.** Urartian Material Culture as State Assemblage: An Anomaly in the Archaeology of Empire, *Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research* 299/300, 1995, p. 103-115.

¹⁸ **Kroll S., Gruber C., Hellwag U., Roaf M., Zimansky P.** Introduction, in: S. Kroll, C. Gruber, U. Hellwag, M. Roaf, P. Zimansky (eds.) *Biainili-Urartu, The Proceedings of the Symposium held in Munich 12-14 October 2007*, Leuven, 2012, p. 1.

Urartu by stressing on the appearance and spread of the fortification and the artificial irrigation as the most prominent common and unique characteristics of both the Lchashen-Metsamor and Biainili cultural branches.¹⁹

The second occupation period is intentionally referred from a historical perspective to as “after the period of the kingdom of Biainili” or short “post-Biainili” rather than “transitional to Late Achaemenid” in order to eventually avoid the misconception of an antipodal occupation of the fortress of Aramus with two politically driven climaxes and a humble transitional phase. The archaeological evidence, in fact, does not show any sign of interruption nor of decline in the occupation of the fortress of Aramus. Up to now it is practically hardly possible to define a specific interface in the stratigraphy of Aramus to mark the historical caesura between the Biainili and post-Biainili periods not least because of the absence of a destruction horizon. Seen from an archaeological perspective this epochal crossing is rather an incremental process which can be regarded as fulfilled as soon as the characteristic red wares cease to be significantly represented in the ceramic assemblage of a level, although it has to be remembered that the reliability of this marker to define the end of Biainili has still to be proven.²⁰ Concomitant with the aforesaid it is therefore again preferred to call this period Late Urartian. The term Late Urartu intends to emphasize the continuity of fortification – of a distinctly Biainili taste – and of the Lchashen-Metsamor pottery production, however, enriched by hybrid forms implementing Biainili shapes.²¹

The third and final occupation encompasses the reuse of the East Fort in Medieval times. This period will not be discussed in this paper.

¹⁹ **Smith A.T., Thompson T.T.** Urartu and the Southern Caucasian Political Tradition, in: A. Sagona (ed.), *A View from the Highlands*. Herent, 2004, p. 557-580. For a recent review see **Smith A.T.** The Prehistory of an Urartian Landscape, in: S. Kroll, C. Gruber, U. Hellwag, M. Roaf, P. Zimansky (eds.) *Biainili-Urartu, The Proceedings of the Symposium held in Munich 12-14 October 2007*, Leuven, 2012, p. 39-52.

²⁰ **Kroll S.** Notes on the post-Urartian (Median) Horizon in NW-Iran and Armenia, in: A. Özfirat (ed.), *Arkeolojijyle Geçen Bir Yaşam İçin Yazılar Veli Sevin'e Armağan*, SCRIPTA, Essays in Honour of Veli Sevin, A Life Immersed in Archaeology, Istanbul, 2015, p. 205.

²¹ **Yengibaryan N.** The Graves of the Urartian Period of Karchaghbyur, p. 426-427. **Avetisyan P., Bobokhyan A.** The Pottery Traditions in Armenia from the Eight to the Seventh Centuries BC, in: S. Kroll, C. Gruber, U. Hellwag, M. Roaf, P. Zimansky (eds.), *Biainili-Urartu, The Proceedings of the Symposium held in Munich 12-14 October 2007*, Leuven, 2012, p. 373.

The deep insight got in the settlement sequence of the East Fort a solid basis for the development of a stratified ceramic typology as background for the chronological appraisal of the Middle and Late Iron Ages. Particularly noteworthy is in this regard the stratigraphic evidence that the characteristic black burnished pitcher with triangular impressions along the handle neck, interpreted to be one of the most distinctive forms of the latest Lchashen-Metsamor stage²², does not belong to a Biainili but – as suspected by Avetisyan²³ – exclusively to a post-Biainili or more precisely to a 6th century BCE context. Yet an overall assessment of this isolated aspect within the wider Lchashen-Metsamor ceramic chronology of the 7th and 6th century BCE demands for additional analysis in particular as this type of handled pitcher has been found besides Garni²⁴ and some fortresses in the Tavush province²⁵ recently reassigned to the 6th to 4th century BCE²⁶, also at Horom²⁷, Oshakan²⁸ and in the citadel of Karmir Blur²⁹, thus sites which are considered to have been destroyed by the end of the kingdom of Biainili sometime in the 40s of

²² **Badalyan R.S., Avetisyan P., Smith A.T.** Chapter 4. Periodization and Chronology of Southern Caucasia: From the Early Bronze Age through the Iron III Period, in: Adam T. Smith, Ruben S. Badalyan and Pavel Avetisyan (eds.), *The Archaeology and Geography of Ancient Transcaucasian Societies, Volume 1, The Foundation of Research and Regional Survey in the Tsaghkahovit Plain, Armenia*, Chicago, 2009, p. 91-92.

²³ Avetisyan underscored that the handles with “step-like” incisions represent a later form of the single-handled pitcher (**Avetisyan P.** *On Periodization and Chronology of the Iron Age in Armenia*. Aramazd IV/2, 2009, p. 64-65).

²⁴ **Khazadyan E.** Garni IV, rezultati raskopok 1949-1966, Yerevan, 1969, p. 134, Fig. 101.

²⁵ **Esaian S.A.** *Drevnyaya Kul'tura Plemen Severo-Vostochnoi Armenii: III-I tys. do. n.e.* Yerevan, 1976, p. 41, Tab. 27: 14-15 (Astghi Blur); 49, Tab. 35: 6 (Berdategh); 69, Tab. 55: 3 and 13 (Tmbadir); 83, Tab. 69: 1 and 9 (Kalkar); 89, Tab. 75: 2 (Sevkareri Takht). The spelling of the sites is taken from **Kiesling B., Kojian R.** *Rediscovering Armenia, An Archaeological/Touristic Gazetteer and Map Set for the Historical Monuments of Armenia*, Yerevan, 1999.

²⁶ **Karapetyan I.** *Hayastani Nyutakan Mshakujte m.t.a. VI-IV dd.: Est Hayastani Hanrapetut'yan taratsk'um katarvats hnagitakan peghumneri. Hayastani hnagitakan hushardzanere 19*, Yerevan, 2003.

²⁷ **Badalyan et al.** 1993, p. 16, Fig. 12:11.

²⁸ **Esaian S.A., Kalantaryan A.A.** *Oshakan 1: Osnovni Rezultati Raskopok 1971-1983 g.g.* Yerevan, 1988, p. 38; Pl. XX: 1 and 4.

²⁹ **Piotrovsky B.B.** *The History and Culture of Urartu*, Saint-Petersburg, 2011, p. 593, Nr. 696.

the 7th century BCE.³⁰ Based on the evidence from the fortress of Aramus it is becoming apparent that the destruction of Karmir Blur and Argishtihinili has to be considered independently from this historical event.³¹ It rather seems that the mentioned fortresses continued to be used and were reorganized within a political network mainly located around the basin of Yerevan and which moved its focus across the Lesser Caucasus back towards the Kura valley as it has been the case before the advance of the kingdom of Biainili at the end of the 9th century BCE under Išpuini and Menua.

In the special case of Aramus this result urged for the extension of the archaeological research to the other forts to get a more detailed and deeper understanding of the overall context and history of this site. This is especially true for questions regarding the date of the foundation and lifetime of the single forts as well as the question at what time was the fortress completed in its maximum extent? Another central aspect addresses the functional and spatial organization of the fortress of Aramus. And finally, what importance and role had the fortress of Aramus within the fortified landscape of Uluani and what was its relation to the nearby centers of Erebuni and Karmir Blur?

Thus far, the evaluation of the excavation results has focused on the question about the lifetime of the fortress of Aramus. In the following we will concentrate on this aspect and describe the occupation sequences worked out for the West and Central Forts.

The West Fort occupation sequence (Fig. 2 and 3)

The investigation of the West Fort started in 2009 and currently comprises five areas termed WB I to WB V.³² Our initial conjecture that the bucklings located approximately midway of the fortification might have been caused by a later enlargement of the West Fort to the west was wrong. In fact, the contrary is the case, in the sense that they rather represent a younger alteration which concerned those sections of the fortification wall located to the

³⁰ **Kohl P.L., Kroll S.** Notes on the Fall of Horom. *Iranica Antiqua* 34, 1999, p. 244-259. **Kroll S.** Notes on the post-Urartian (Median) Horizon in NW-Iran and Armenia, p. 203-210.

³¹ **Kuntner W., Heinsch S.** Der Untergang Urartus am Befund von Aramus, in: S. Heinsch, W. Kuntner and R. Rollinger (eds.), *Der archäologische Befund und seine Historisierung, Dokumentation und ihre Interpretationsspielräume, Internationale Tagung 16-18. Dezember 2009, Innsbruck.* in press.

³² The abbreviation WB stands for the German term Westburg.

east of these junctions. The West Fort was founded at once and, as suggested by the comparison of the radiocarbon dates taken from the foundation horizon in area ZB I (ERL-19199) and from the lowest concrete pebble floor in the SW-Gate (ERL-17817), to the end of the reign of Argišti Menua or the very beginning of the reign of his son Sarduri. The West Fort has a broadly quadrangular shape. The length is 120 m whereas its width varies between 26 m at the junction to the Central Fort and 32 m at its western end. The fortification walls are consistently 2 m thick and reinforced almost at regular intervals of 10 m by 2,30 m wide counterforces.

The West Fort is accessed by three gates. Two of them, termed NW- and SW-Gates, lies symmetrically opposite and connect the West Fort to the South and North Forts respectively. The third gate, termed WZ-Gate, connects on the other hand the Central and West Forts. Since both the SW-Gate and NW-Gate do not have any reinforcements on their outer sides they are considered to represent just simple internal gateways. It is therefore assumed that the North and South Forts were founded contemporaneously with the West Fort, and thus that the layout of the fortress of Aramus refers to a common construction concept. It remains, however, dubious whether the construction of the planned layout was fully completed by the end of the reign of Argišti Menua.

Sound evidence for a fortress-wide occupation from its very beginning is, in fact, missing and to date restricted to the Central Fort. This is not to say that layers belonging to this initial period were not also found elsewhere. But nowhere were there '*living contexts*' preserved. Occasionally one might even get the impression that the fortress of Aramus might have been built gradually over the 8th century BCE and thus only increasingly used. But on the other hand this situation can easily be explained also as reflection of a constant and intensive use of the forts which led to a continuous adaptation of the structures, as vividly shown for example by the occurrence of several pebble fillings used to level the occupation horizons over time, and therefore to a deliberate removal or even demolishing of prior installations and structures so that one should not ascribe to much importance too the missing of such '*living contexts*'.

An instructive situation in this regard was cleared in area WB I in 2009 and 2010. This area measures approximately 11 m in length and 7 m in width and was opened along the inner façade of the northern fortification wall of the

West Fort at the point where a modern nearly 4 m wide breach has been broken through. Afterwards it turned out that this breach had been oriented towards the location of the NW-Gate. The width of the gate of 2,43 m is conformed with the other gate openings found so far at Aramus but it is distinguished from them by the construction of a 70 cm wide threshold built of three roughly hewn stones laid flush with the inner edge of the entrance. The threshold is imbedded in the 15 cm thick and concrete clay-and-gravel paving su.014₀₉ which was found only in the gate opening. Below the threshold and this paving is a 40 cm thick stone filling su.036₁₀ which runs into the gate room where it first, rests on the sandy loam layer su.037₁₀, and, more southerly at a level of +1469,25 m above sea level, directly on bedrock.

Noteworthy for the understanding of the relative building sequence of the stone walls in area WB I is the stratigraphic evidence from the sounding cut along the threshold and thereafter prolonged along the inner side of the fortification wall into the rooms R1 and R2 respectively located west and east of the gate room. In the sections of the sounding in the gate room it is visible that the stone filling su.036₁₀ was respectively cut by a 40 cm wide and 55 cm deep foundation pit su.015w/0₀₉ continuing under the entrance walls. In the entrance, on the other hand, these pits were sunken from the surface of the concrete paving su.014₀₉. Noteworthy is the finding that the western entrance wall rests on the threshold. It becomes clear from these findings that the entrance walls were completely built anew whereas the threshold and the concrete paving were intentionally preserved representing therefore the remains of an older NW-Gate. The older NW-Gate is referred to as phase 4^{WB} and the younger NW-Gate as phase 3^{WB} of the West Fort sequence.

At the same time as the gate rebuilding two 1,30 m broad stones annexes were added at the insides of the younger entrance walls each projecting approximately 1,50 m from the inner fortification line. The eastern stone annex grounds on the 5cm thick clay levelling su.028₁₀ which runs above the stone filling su.036₁₀ and the filling of the foundation pits su.015w/0₀₉ and finally abuts to the entrance walls. On the surface s.028₁₀ were found in situ two unworked basalt stones hinges reinforced in the south by a backfill made off hand-sized stones. The post holes of the western hinge su.034₁₀ measures 14 cm and that of the eastern hinge su.035₁₀ 10 cm in diameter. The stone hinges

indicate that the threshold and hence also the concrete paving remained in used during phase 3^{WB}.

The stone wall M1 built against the western annex strongly sheers off at an angle 23 degree to the east. The stone wall M1 has a thickness of 1 m but otherwise show the same building technique as the western stone annex. Although this wall is in relative term younger than the western annex it is assigned to phase 3^{WB} not least because of the scanty evidence at our disposal.³³ The same holds true for room R1 which was investigated only within the narrow trench along the fortification but nonetheless revealing the bottom remains of at least three large storage vessels tentatively correlated to phase 2^{WB} based on comparison with room R2.

To the east of the eastern annex on the other hand were found two approximately 70 cm deep storage pits added to the fortification wall. Both pits were sunken from the surface of the stone filling su.036₁₀ and their openings framed by a stone circle. The western storage pit su.007₁₀ measures 140 x 80 cm and the eastern storage pit su.005₁₀ 110 x 80 cm.

Attached to the eastern annex is a markedly thinner only 60 cm broad stone wall, termed wall M2, which together with the equally thin stone walls M3 and M4 delimit room R2. The latter measures from east to west 3,60 m and from north to south 4,10 m and is accessible by a 80 cm broad door in stone wall M4 plastered with one big stone slab placed at a distance of 90cm from the northeast corner of the room.

The stone walls of room R2 display a different building technique, compared to the stone annexes, using decidedly smaller stones. Contrary to them the stone walls of the room R2 were, moreover, not built on the stone filling su.036₁₀ but in a foundation pit (su.021₁₀) cut from its surface. Afterwards both room R2 and the gate room were levelled with an up to 10 cm thick layer su.017₀₉ consisting of small pebble stones. The stone levelling su.017₀₉ was better preserved in room R2 where it forms the concrete subfloor of the 2 cm thick clay plaster i.008₀₉.

Below the eastern wall M4 were identified the remains of an older wall structure which suggests that the alteration mostly affected the gate room

³³ Unfortunately, the foundation horizon of stone wall M1 and in particular its relation to su.028₁₀ could not be investigated in the sounding.

which was henceforth approximately halved by the construction of room R2. This rebuilding is referred to as phase 2^{WB}. On the clay plaster i.008₀₉ were found near the southeast and southwest corners of room R2 the bottom remains of two storage vessels.

The last phase 1^{WB} of the West Fort sequence is defined by reference to some scanty remains of two or maybe three stone structures found 20 cm below topsoil in the gate room next to stone wall M2 probably representing a late renovation and adding of the storage compartments which ground on the clay plaster i.012₁₀ found some 15 cm underneath and correlatable by means of its stratigraphic position to the phase 2^{WB} occupation of room R2. On this level clearly associated to the clay plaster is a gate built in stone wall M1 connecting the gate room and room R1.

The date of the older NW-Gate of phase 4^{WB} in the first half of the 8th century BCE can be deduced by analogy with the SW-Gate itself dated, as mentioned above, on the basis of the radiocarbon date ERL-19198 as well as by historical implication. For the NW-Gate this date is also tentatively confirmed by several black burnished fragments of LM-5 ware found in the layer su.037₁₀ during the clearance of the western storage pit su.007₁₀. The layer su.037₁₀ was characterised here by remains of mud brick rubble, ash and charcoal and run below the fortification wall flush with its foundation horizon. This finding is in clear contrast to the situation encountered in the eastern storage pit su.005₁₀ where again the stone filling su.036₁₀ was found between the fortification wall and layer su.037₁₀. The absence of the stone filling su.036₁₀ and the concurrent presence of mud brick rubble below the fortification in the western pit su.007₁₀ can both be explained through the rebuilding of the older entrance wall in phase 3^{WB} and the fragments thus taken as evidence to date phase 4^{WB} to beginning of the 8th century BCE.

The ceramic fragments found in the cultural layer su.008₀₉ are distinguished by specimen of red-polished Biainili ware among which the fragment of a red-polished pithos with sunken and white painted triangles on the shoul-

der is most remarkable.³⁴ Based on this findings phase 2^{WB} is dated into the first half of the 7th century BCE.³⁵

The date of phase 1^{WB} is problematic because of the soil disturbance. But in consideration of the results from the other areas excavated in the West Fort it is feasible to assume that also the NW-Gate remained in use during the Late Urartian period.

The major evidence supporting this date is the finding of several bright yellowish ceramic fragments found in areas WB III and WB IV. In the former area the fragments were found in the cultural layer su.002₁₀ concentrated around the remains of stone wall built-on the buckling of the southern fortification wall. It is suggested that the eastern wall sections of the fortification walls of the West Fort represent part of a comprehensive Late Urartian rebuilding concept which might have attempted to better integrate the bedrock into the West Fort layout as suggested by the transversal stone terraces found resting on the interface i.002₁₀ both in areas WB II and WB III and which seems to run up each other. In any case, regardless of the difficulty to determine a precise date for the beginning of this rebuilding program, it is clear from the evidence added by the excavations in area WB IV at the SW-Gate that the fortification walls of the West Fort remained completely functional until the 4th century BCE as seen also by the construction of a semirounded bastion, projecting 2 m and with a preserved diameter of 1,40 m, built-on the western outside of this gate and in whose foundation pit su.004₁₂ were again found bright yellowish ceramic fragments commonly considered to be characteristic for a Hellenistic date.³⁶

The Central Fort occupation sequence (Fig. 2 and 4; Pl. I-V)

The investigation of the Central Fort restarted in 2013 and currently comprises two areas termed ZB I to ZB II.³⁷ The Central Fort shows in comparison to the West Fort a more regular quadrangular shape. The length is 200 m and its width 30 m. To the west it slightly tapers to join the West Fort. The for-

³⁴ **Kroll S.** *Keramik urartäischer Festungen in Iran, Ein Beitrag zur Expansion Urartus in Iranisch-Azerbaidjan*, Berlin, 1976, S. 140, Typ71b.

³⁵ **Muscarella O.W.** *Excavations at Agrab Tepe, Iran*, Metropolitan Museum Journal 8, 1973, p. 63 and 73-74.

³⁶ **Parsamyan A.** *The Pottery of Yervandashat according to the 2007 Excavation*, in: "Genesis Forest", Collected articles in memory of Felix Ter-Martirosov, Yerevan, 2015, 91-116.

³⁷ The abbreviation ZB stands for the German term Zentralburg.

tification walls are again consistently 2 m thick and reinforced almost at regular intervals of 12 m by 2,30 m wide counter forces. The main access to the Central Fort is granted by the WZ-Gate reinforced on both outsides with 5,20 m wide towers projecting 1,5 m into the West Fort. Also, the opening measuring 3,20 m signalizes its prominent importance underscored, moreover, by a stairway with 4 steps in the entrance leading upwards into the Central Fort. A lateral gate, however, of a younger date found in area ZB II in 2014 and termed SZ-Gate. Although the fortification walls of the Central Fort are broken again and again these breaches are, with maybe one significant exception in the north-east, too small to reconstruct further gates. But this surface assessment can be considered valid only for the last occupation.

The excavation began in both areas at the same time. But starting from 2014 the investigation was concentrated in area ZB II located in the western half of the Central Fort because of the excellent conservation status of the living structures. The erosion appeared, in fact, minimal and this area provides actually the most detailed and comprehensive settlement sequence which best completes the sequence worked out in the East Fort.

Area ZB II extends nearly 16 m along the southern fortification wall which is preserved at its inner side very likely to its original height 1,70 m. The fortification consists of five stone layers whereby the bottom layer represents the foundation built directly on bedrock. The characteristic pebble and gravel levelling below the mud brick superstructure is not preserved.

The area is divided by a transversal stone wall, termed stone wall M1, built at right angle on the southern as well as very likely also on the northern fortification walls. The stone wall M1 has a thickness of 1,30 m and grounds on a sandy-loamy levelling flush with the top edge of the foundation level of the fortification wall. The stone wall M1 is preserved to the same height which accordingly is assumed to be its original height. The excavation conducted in 2013 took place east of this wall extending almost 5 m to the north. Noteworthy results are first, the well-preserved stratification in the east section which gave us an encouraging overview over the occupation sequence, and secondly, stone wall M2 built with a width of 1,30 m along the inner side of the fortification wall and abutting westwards to stone wall M1. The current findings suggest that stone wall M2 represents the substructure of a stairway which lead into

room R3 through a door once located in the nowadays completely eroded mud brick wall above stone wall M1. On each side of stone wall M1 were found, namely, the remains of a stone structure of which the western, termed su.091₁₄ is better preserved. This stone structure shows a step-like construction leading from north to south up to the top edge of stone wall M1. The existence of similar stairways was deduced for example by Oganesyanyan for Karmir Blur.³⁸

But the same stairway seems to have given access also to a tower room built by adding of another buttress at the corner between the original curtain wall and counterforce. The buttress is 2,50 m wide and projects some 80 cm from the line of the counterforce which on the opposite site is enlarged in the same line at least further 3 m to the east. Thus, a base area of approximately [50m]² is created by this adding whose shape closely resembles the massive towers characteristic for the fortifications of Karmir Blur as well as Hasanlu IIIB.³⁹

According to the east section of area ZB II the foundation pit for construction of the stone wall M2 was sunken from the surface of the cultural layer su.009₁₃ representing a thick unit of clay floors. The layer has a thickness of 15 cm and rests upon the likely thick mud brick debris layer su.013₁₃. Below the mud brick debris was found the burnt debris layer su.011₁₄ being so far the only stratigraphic evidence of a violent destruction. The calibrated age of the radiocarbon sample ERL-19198 taken from this layer is consistent with a date into the Urartian period thus confirming the continuity of Urartian architectural features, described above, into the Late Urartian Period or alternatively into a post-Biainili context. Below the cultural layer su.011₁₄ is again a stony sub-floor, termed su.012₁₄, thereafter encountered also in the rooms west of the transversal stone wall M1 excavated to this level.

The area of area ZB II west of stone wall M1 extends 15 m to the north and is divided on the basis of the stone walls M3 to M5 into the three rooms, termed R1 to R3 in relation to the access from the SZ-Gate identified at the southwest corner of the area, and a court yard to their north. Stone walls M3 and to all probability also M4 represent the main walls as suggested by their

³⁸ **Oganesyanyan K.L.** Karmir-Blur 4: Arkitektura Teishebaini, Arkheologicheskie raskopi v Armenii, Yerevan, 1955, p. 39, Fig. 16.

³⁹ **Kroll S.** Urartu and Hasanlu. Aramazd V/2, 2010, p. 23. For a date of Hasanlu IIIB into the 7th century BCE see now **Kroll S.** Hasanlu Period III – Annotations and Corrections, *Iranica Antiqua* 48, 2013, p. 175-192.

higher masonry quality as well as thickness of 0,80 m, whereas stone wall M5 is just 0,50 cm thick and less carefully constructed. The measures of the rooms are as follows: room R1 is 9,10 m long and at least 3 m, room R2 6,20 long and 4,70 m wide and room R3 6,20 m long and 3,70 m wide.

The extent of the court yard is unclear as only its southern and eastern side walls could be ascertained so far. Our initial conjecture of a corridor running in line with the middle axis of the Central Fort connecting the rooms aligned along the fortification walls was only partially validated. Confirmed is a thoroughfare running exactly in line with the middle axis of the Central Fort as showed by the location of the MZ-Gate found in stone wall M1 exactly halfway between the fortification walls. But the idea of an axial symmetrical layout seems to be confuted because of the northern extent of the court yard.

Court yard

The stratigraphic evidence of the court yard and the MZ-Gate which links the areas on both sides of the transversal stone wall M1 best summarizes the younger occupation sequence in the Central Fort because of the thick and well-preserved floor levels associated to specific architectural alterations.

The upper most occupation level is referred to as phase 1^{ZB} and is correlated to the final Late Urartian period Level II of the East Fort sequence. The phase is defined by the combined surfaces s.005₁₅ and s.020₁₅ both covered by the 30 cm thick mud brick debris layer su.004₁₅. To this level belong the stone pavement abutting the threshold of the MZ-Gate on both sides. In the context of the construction of this stone pavement the northern door jamb of the MZ-gate was restructured by the addition of a stone row su.102₁₅ built along the eastern façade of the stone wall su.100₁₅ up to the stone wall su.101₁₅ which on the other hand bounds with su.100₁₅ at right angles.

Both the stone pavement and the stone wall su.100₁₅ are grounded on the floor screed s005₁₅. It follows that two building phases Level has therefore to be discerned for the use of the MZ-Gate in phase 1^{ZB}. The original gateway of phase 1b^{ZB} consisted of a door sill only marked by a 4 cm high threshold in line with the pivot stone FP073₁₅ located at the southern door jamb as well as with the eastern façade of stone wall su.100₁₅ which marks, moreover, also the initial depth of the gate entrance which in phase 1a^{ZB} was enlarged to fit with the eastern line of the partition wall.

The stone walls su.100₁₅ and su.101₁₅ have the same thickness of 70 cm as stone wall su.103₁₅ only partly uncovered in 2014 next to the southern jamb. Thus it is suggested that these structures represent a gate chamber which in turn prove that the main partition wall and hence also the fortification were still in use at this very late period.

The pottery associated with phase 1^{ZB} originates from the interface of the debris layer i.004₁₅ and from the screed surface s005₁₅. Noteworthy is the occurrence of several red painted fragments made of a red-orange fabric with dark mineral inclusions which can be dated by comparison with Artashat, Garni and Armavir to the 4th and 3rd/2nd century BCE.⁴⁰ So far this type of ceramic was found only very sporadically at Aramus and always in a mixed context in the topsoil, interestingly enough, concentrated along the northern slope below the Northern Fort.

Phase 2^{ZB} is defined by the fine clay layers of the screed floor d.005₁₅ and of the pebble stone floor layers d.020₁₅ both up to 20 cm thick. For layer d.005₁₅ at least four floor finishes could be discerned. They complicatedly merge into each other so that their separate exposure could be achieved only within smaller sections. This was especially the case where a thicker intermediate layer of clay was used to level the subsurface for the next floor finish. Remains of cultural layers characterized by charcoal and loamy clay were also ascertained directly above the single screeds suggesting a continuous use and maintenance of the court yard, as will be seen, from the 8th to possibly the 2nd century BCE.

Noteworthy in phase 2^{ZB} is the shift of the location of the MZ-Gate of 2 m to the northeast in comparison to its position in Level 1^{ZB}. The older gate makes use of the original structure of the main partition wall M1. This find proves that stone wall M1 continued to be used as the main partition wall of the Central Fort and that only its northern part was restructured in level 1^{ZB}. The location of the gates remained, however, comparatively unchanged since both times they almost lie halfway between the northern and southern fortification

⁴⁰ **Tiratsyan G.A.** O raspisnoy keramike drevney Armenii (VI v. do i.e.- III v.n.e.), *Historical and Philological Journal* 3, 1965, p. 265-280. **Ter-Martirossov F.** O proiskhozhdenii raspisnoy keramiki antichnoy Armenii, *Historical and Philological Journal* 1, 1974, p. 53-71.

line underscoring the important strategic function of the passage and the MZ-Gate ultimately emphasized by the addition of a gate chamber in level 1^{ZB}.

In the western half, the court yard was paved on the other hand with a pebble stone floor layer d.020₁₅ showing again some fine layering which indicate the existence of different floor surfaces as for the clay finishes in floor d.005₁₅. A subdivision of these floors was again in no way possible. It is the occurrence of this fine layering which suggests that this part represents an open courtyard used to connect the rooms aligned along the fortification walls of the Central Fort.

Below the interfaces i.020₁₅ and i.005₁₅ the upper edge of the stone structure su.030₁₅ started to emerge. Thus, the layers associated to this structure were assigned to Level 3^{ZB}. Noteworthy is the finding of a handle fragment of a black burnished pitcher with triangular impressions on his neck from the surface relatable to interface i.020.

The stone structure su.030₁₅ is founded on a 25cm thick stone fill layer su.035₁₅. Above this filling and abutting the stone structures respectively in the west and in the east are floors su.036₁₅ and su.029₁₅. The cultural layer su.036₁₅ is 15cm thick and consists mostly of gray silt into which different flat gravel surfaces are enclosed each representing the remains of a floor which could, however, not be discerned in detail as in the case of the pebble floors of layer d.020₁₅ of phase 2^{ZB}. The distinction between the floors of layer d.005₁₅ and su.029₁₅ was also possible from a technical point of view. In fact, the clay screed floors of su.029₁₅ were laid over a gravely subsurface, whereas in d.005₁₅ no gravel was used for the subsurface of the floors.

To note is the congruence of the partition crossing in the court yard area between stony (su.020/su.036) and loamy (su.005/su.029) floors encountered from phases 2^{ZB} to 1^{ZB} with the alignment of the column bases found above room R2 in 2014 dated to the Late Urartian period. The occupation level of the column bases is characterized by a radical architectonic alteration of the room layout marked by a massive mud brick filling of all rooms. The filling was thereby obtained by the intentional demolition of the mud brick walls simply overthrown into the rooms and afterwards leveled up to 5 to 10 cm below the top edges of the stone substructures of the room walls. The stone substructure of the fortification wall and of stone wall M1 remained to be used as substructure.

ture of high standing defensive walls, whereas the stone walls M3 to M5 were thereafter used only as low sockets or thresholds to adumbrate the new layout of the living area. These sockets were, in fact, covered with the same hard mud plaster screed su.028₁₄ as the floor screed d.029₁₅ (Fig. 5).

Another stratigraphic benchmark for the correlation of the stratigraphic sequences of the courtyard and of room R2 is provided by the cultural layer su.034₁₅ found below the stone fill layer su.035₁₅ of phase 3^{ZB}. The cultural layer su.034₁₅ was exposed across the pit bottom of su.032₁₅ where it lies flush with the foundation level of stone wall M4 (+1489,518 m) and is thus tentatively correlated with the cultural layer su.074₁₄ in room R2, referred to as phase 4^{ZB}.

The second major architectural modification of phase 2^{ZB} is the construction of a 2,80 m wide SZ-Gate in the southern fortification wall near the southern corner of area ZB II which connects the South and Central Forts. The entrance was carefully plastered with flat and roughly worked blocks of red and black tufa su.019₁₄ bordered to the east and north by red and black tufa ashlar. Noteworthy is the stela-like red tufa block set directly near the threshold of the gateway which has an almost square section with an average side edge of 30 cm and a length of 142 cm. Albeit the surfaces and in particular the front site of the stela were all smoothed no inscription or decoration was incised.

Once laid down the stela was cut in order to form a small spout to drain off the water from room R3. Next to this drain and lying in one straight line follows at least four shallow 1-3 cm wide depressions whose formation can convincingly be ascribed to rainwater dripping off from the wooden roof construction reconstructed on the basis of the column bases S1-S7 described above. This reconstruction is supported by the spatial concentration of the stone pavements: first, su.017₁₄, between stone wall M1 and the most eastern column base line and secondly, the plastered gate entrance su.019₁₄. The living area covered by this roof construction is characterized by the mud floor finish su.028₁₄ above room R2.

Room R2 (Fig. 6)

The cultural layer su.074₁₄ represents the main floor pavement of room R2 which stratigraphically encompasses the period from the foundation of the Central Fort till the last stage of use of the storage facilities built along the

room walls which falls into the Late Urartian period. It follows from this finding that the aforementioned radical layout alteration at the beginning of phase 2^{ZB} has happened during an advance stage of the Late Urartian period, thus very unlikely in a decline-context of the kingdom of Biainili. The building sequence of the storage facilities proved to be highly informative for the reconstruction of the history of this room emphasizing in particular the continuity despite the political breakdown.

Room R2 was originally accessed by four doorways respectively located at the four room corners. The main entrance was provided by the northern doorway from room R1 since this door only remained in use throughout the whole period of use of room R2. At the initial phase of the room R2 the storage facilities were restricted along the northern and southern wall sections between the doorways. Both facilities consist of two compartments each containing two pithoi.

In the next phase the two storage units were connected by the construction of a third compartment along the south-eastern room wall, whereby the new compartment was functionally integrated only to the northern unit. At their common corner three new vessels su.056₁₄, su.057₁₄ and su.061₁₄ were sunken as these vessels typologically differ from the other two vessels su.075₁₄ and su.076₁₄ in the western part of the northern storage unit. Despite this modification the doorways to the court yard and to room R3 continued to be used. In fact, a passageway paved with flat stones was added between stone wall M1 and the vessels and links the court yard and room R3 via room R2. In order to retain the access to the main doorway to room R1 the eastern and southern storage units were connected by the construction of a stone sill slightly offset backwards in compliance with the enlargement of the paved tread of the passageway.

The third phase of occupation is finally defined by the L-shaped stone structure built behind the vessels su.043₁₄ and su.044₁₄ of the south-western compartment where it abuts the southern room wall M5. The structure then turns northwards running along the western room wall M3 at a distance of 90 cm where it forms the framework of the western storage unit made of one compartment again containing two storage vessels su.077₁₄ and su.078₁₄. From this moment on the western doorway to room R3 was blocked.

At a later stage a third vessel su.089₁₄ was set north of the western storage unit though this time without additional structural conversions. It is suggested that the blocking of the two eastern doorways of room R2 into room R3 and to the court yard falls anytime within this latest phase of occupation since both doorways were blocked with flimsy laid stones at this level which in the courtyard correlates to phase 2^{ZB}.

Surprisingly, the pavement su.074₁₄ continued only beneath the northern and partly also the eastern storage units whereas to the south it almost suddenly runs out over the stone fill layer su.008₁₅ all along the line where it was built over by the southern and western storage units. The stone fill layer su.008₁₅ extends thereof both below the pavement su.074₁₄ as well as the stone walls of room R2 as evidenced in the 2 x 2 m wide stratigraphic sounding deepened near the eastern corner down to bedrock. Thus stone fill layer su.008₁₅ was introduced both to form a massive foundation substructure for the room walls as well as to level the area of occupation. The same foundation measure was ascertained also in rooms R1, R3 and R4 as well as in the rooms in area ZB I everywhere marking the beginning of the occupation of the fortress of Aramus in the Urartian period.

Room R3 (Fig. 7)

Room R3 is entered in the east corner by a 50 cm narrow door between the stone walls M1 and M5 whose opening corresponds to the width of the stairway mentioned above. The first tread in front of the door consists of an up to 15 cm high clay bench whose mud plaster originally covered also the façades of the whole stairway as well as of the fortress wall. The stair consists of four tread each 0,60 m long and approximately 0,25 m high. A recess of about the same width is left open next to the junction of the stairway and the passage which represents the staircase entrance from room R3. Along the stone walls M1 and M5 is another 50 cm wide bench su.094₁₄ finely plastered with clay. The bench is 0,40 m high and made up of pebbles and mud brick rubble. Near the north corner of the room there is rectangular mud structure su.093₁₄, measuring 0,75 m x 1,15 m, which is built on the bench. The thickness of its walls measures about 5 to 8 cm and consists of hardened clay which at the southern corners is splendidly shaped like two turrets slightly protruding out of the bench. The structure is divided into two equally sized compartments

where respectively one grinding stone was found; in the eastern compartment lying directly on the mud plaster and in the western in its filling. It is suggested that the structure might represent a grinding facility for the production of flour. However, no oven was found in the room.

In this regard it may be argued that this feature is represented by the pit su.071₁₄ found directly to the west of the structure su.093₁₄ which was cut at a later time into the bench su.094₁₄ since this pit was filled with ash. Opposite to structure su.093₁₄ was found another mud structure su.095₁₄ built against the fortification wall which is tentatively interpreted as a further grinding facility because of two grinding stones found in the debris su.051₁₄ in its immediate vicinity. The debris rests on the cultural layer su.068₁₄. In the south corner of room R3 was found an up to 0,30 m deep rubbish pit su.070₁₄ which was deepened from the interface i068₁₄.

The cultural layer su.068₁₄ accumulated on the gravel and pebble leveling su.069₁₄ already mentioned to be a hallmark of the foundation level. To this horizon i068₁₄/s069₁₄ belong also the stone structures su.096₁₄ and su.097₁₄ found in the middle of the room. The western structure su.096₁₄ consists of three up to 0,50 m oblong stones put flat one above the other which finally reaches a height of 0,40 m. The eastern structure su.097₁₄ is a solid stump measuring 0,30 m in diameter made up of pebbles coated by hardened clay. The stump was enforced at a later time and enlarged to the east by stones likewise put flat one above the other.

The two structures represent the basis for wooden pillars for the support of the roof. Both bases were raised according to the increasing of the ground soil on the floor over the course of its use. The cultural layer su.068₁₄ which results thereof only partially showed hard, beaten surfaces which could be uncovered over the whole room. This suggests a continuous use of the room R3 and re-plastering of the floor level as required. The cultural layer su.068₁₄ was characterized by ash lenses and the rich presence of charcoal. The surface of s.068₁₄ runs mostly flush with the top edge of the mud bench su.094₁₄ and was covered by the mud brick debris layer su.051₁₄ which stratigraphically marks the beginning of phase 2^{ZB}. This correlation is also confirmed by the evidence of the western door at the north corner of room R3 which, as described above, remained open up to the Late Urartian Period. The

threshold of this door laying at +1489,69 m provides an additional benchmark to link stratigraphically the occupation in room R1.

Room R1

The stratigraphic sequence of room R1 starts with the cultural layer su.102₁₄ ascertained, however, only within a small trench opened along the fortification wall. Its surface lies at +1.488,90 m at the same height as the interface i068₁₄ of the oldest cultural layer in room R3 and about 50 cm below the cultural layer su.011₁₄ of room R4 showing that the rooms were terraced on the bedrock sloping from south-east to north-west as in the case of area ZB I. Above it follows the massive stony-loamy layer su.079₁₄ which raised the floor level of about 50 to 60 cm at the same height as the threshold of the western door between rooms R2 and R3. On its surface s.079₁₄ were founded two stone walls: At +1.498,40 m and abutting the fortification wall is stone wall M6 and at +1.498,50 is stone wall M7 which abuts to the west to the 30 cm thick stone pillar S6, whose lower edge could reached yet.

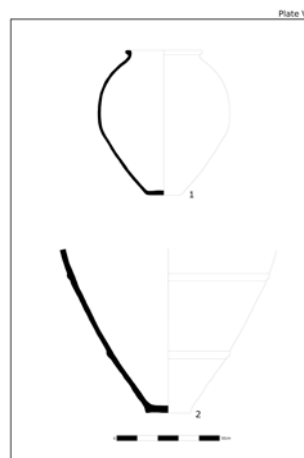
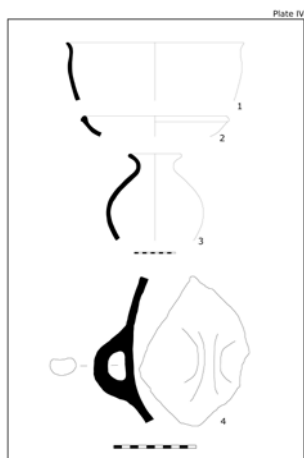
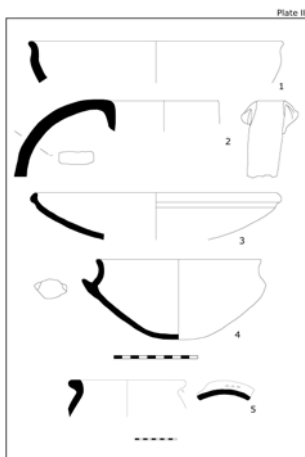
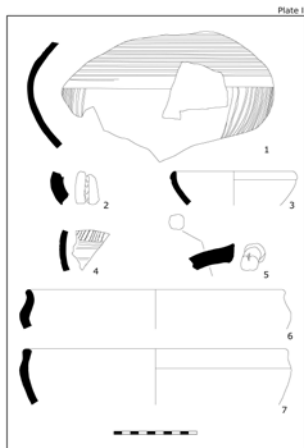
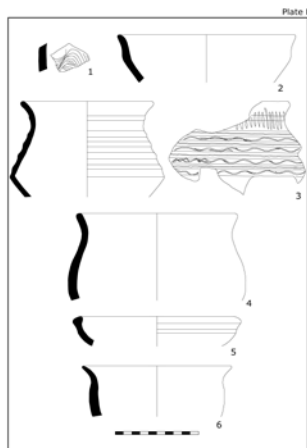
The function of stone wall M6 cannot be surely inferred by the extent evidence. Noteworthy is the finding that the stone wall was enlarged to the north across its whole width by a one mud brick strong wall whose rectangular bricks measures 35 x 17 x 12 cm. The same mud brick size was ascertained also in the debris su.051₁₄ found above the cultural layer su.068₁₄ in rooms R3 where they represent the demolished mud bricks structures at the transition from phases 3^{ZB} to 2^{ZB}. To a distance of 1,50 m to the north-east a further mud brick wall su.031₁₄ was uncovered whose eastern façade lies in line with that of stone wall M6 and its mud brick extension. In the west profile of area ZB II four mud bricks of the same size again could be discerned lying one above the other.

Stone wall M7 divides room R1 into two chambers which were originally connected by a 1,00 m wide door in stone wall M7. In the southern chamber R1a the cultural layer su.064₁₄ was better preserved in its southern part next to stone wall M6 where two mud plasters floors could be distinguished. The northern chamber R1b on the contrary was furnished with a stone plaster su.085₁₄ neatly laid with flat stones which directly rest on the pebble filling su.079₁₄. The width of 80 cm of the stone plaster corresponds largely to the opening of the door connecting chamber R1b and room R2. The space between the stone plaster and the stone walls M4 and M7 is respectively covered

with the gravel layers su.084₁₄ and su.086₁₄. These stone structures forming the floor level were covered by the up to 15 cm thick filling layer su.081₁₄ whose surface runs flush with the top edge of the threshold made up of four flat stones. All these structure has to be dated before phase 2^{ZB} and again underscore the continuity of the occupation of the Central Fort from the Urartian to Late Urartian period. Noteworthy is finally the remark that on the interface of the phase 2^{ZB} occupation a handle with triangular impressions has again been found which corroborates the correlation of phase 2^{ZB} with Level Aramus II of the East Fort sequence.

Description of Plates

Pl.	Nr.	Inv.-nr.	SE	Munsell			Phase
				outside	core	inside	
I	1	AR14-105	R1a – d016 ₁₄	10 YR 3/1	2,5 YR 4/6	2,5 YR 3/2	2
	2	AR14-303	R3 – d052a ₁₄	2,5 YR 4/4	5 YR 4/1	2,5 YR 4/4	4/3
	3	AR14-321	R1b – d065 ₁₄	GLEYS 1 3/10Y	5 Y 3/1	5Y 2,5/2	3
	4	AR14-322	R1b – d065 ₁₄	7,5 YR 4/4	7,5 YR 4/4 and 7,5 YR 2,5/1	7,4 YR 4/4	3
	5	AR14-329	R1b – d065 ₁₄	10 YR 4/4	10 YR 4/1	5 YR 4/3	3
	6	AR14-338	R1a – d062 ₁₄	Black	2,5 YR 3/2	Black	3
II	1	AR14-357	R3 – d051 ₁₄	7,5 YR 5/1	7,5 YR 4/2	7,5 YR 3/1	3
	2	AR14-380	R3 – d058 ₁₄	Gley 1 2,5/N	5 YR 3/3 and 10 R 2/1	Gley 1 2,5/N	2
	3	AR14-397	R3 – d052 ₁₄	10 R 4/6	10 R 4/6	10 R 2,5/1	4/3
	4	AR14-415	R3 – d052b ₁₄	5 YR 4/1	5 YR 4/3	2,5 YR 3/1	4
	5	AR14-422	R1b – d065 ₁₄	10 YR 2/1	10 YR 2/2	10 YR 2/1	3
	6	AR14-383	R2 – i059 ₁₄	5 YR 4/6	5 YR 4/6	5 YR 4/6	2/3
	7	AR14-407	R3 – d052b ₁₄	7,5 YR 3/2	7,5 YR 3/1	7,5 YR 4/4	4
III	1	AR14-411	R3 – d052b ₁₄	7,5 YR 3/4	7,5 YR 2,5/1	7,5 YR 3/4	4
	2	AR14-417	R1b – d065 ₁₄	10 R 4/8	2,5 YR 4/4	10 R 4/8	3
	3	AR14-425	R3 – i071 ₁₄	2,5 YR 3/6	2,5 YR 4/1	2,5 YR 3/6	4/3
	4	AR14-428	R3 – i051/52a ₁₄	5 YR 3/1	5 YR 4/4	10 YR 2/1	4/3
	5	AR14-260	R2 – d044 ₁₄	black	10 YR 4/3	10 YR 2/1	3
IV	1	AR14-462	R3– i070 ₁₄	7,5 YR 4/2	7,5 YR 3/1	7,5 YR 3/3	4
	2	AR14-490	R1a – d080 ₁₄	2,5 YR 4/6 and 7,5 YR 2,5/1	7,5 YR 3/2	2,5 YR 4/4 and 2,5 YR 3/1	3
	3	AR14-528	R1a– i066 ₁₄	2,5 YR 4/8	2,5 YR 4/1	5 YR 4/6	2/3
	4	AR14-480	R3– i052c ₁₄	5 YR 4/6	5 YR 3/4	5 YR 4/6	4
V	1	AR14-SE044	R2 – d044 ₁₄	Black and 7,5 YR 4/3	7,5 YR 2,5/2 and black	Black	3
	2	AR14-SE055	R2 – SE055 ₁₄	10 R 4/8 + 10 R 5/6 and black	10 R 4/8	10 R 4/8	3



**ԱՐԱՄՈՒՄԻ ԱՐԵՎՄՏՅԱՆ ՈՒ ԿԵՆՏՐՈՆԱԿԱՆ
ԱՄՐՈՑՆԵՐՈՒՄ ԻՐԱԿԱՆԱՑՎԱԾ ՊԵՂՈՒՄՆԵՐԻ
ՆԱԽՆԱԿԱՆ ԱՐԴՅՈՒՆՔՆԵՐԻ ԵՎ ՀԵՏԱԶՈՏՄԱՆ
ՀԱՄԱՏԵՔՍԻ ՄԱՍԻՆ (2009-2015 ԹԹ.)**

ԿՈՒՆՏՆԵՐ Վ.Ա. (Ավստրիա, Ինսբրուկ), ՀԱՅՆՇ Ս.Ա. (Ավստրիա,
Ինսբրուկ), ԱՎԵՏԻՍՅԱՆ Հ.Գ. (ՀՀ, Երևան)

Ամփոփում

Երևանից 15 կմ հյուսիս-արևելք ընկած Արամուս գյուղի հարավ-արևմուտքում գտնվող համանուն ամրոցի հնագիտական հետազոտությունը սկսվեց 1970 թ., երբ Է. Խանզադյանը կրկին սկսեց ուսումնասիրել էլառ ամրոցը: Արամուսի ամրոցի տարածքում 1988 թ. իրականացված պեղումները, որոնք ղեկավարում էր Հ. Ավետիսյանը, հիմնովին փոխեցին Արամուսի ամրաշինական լանդշաֆտի մասին նախկին պատկերացումները, քանի որ պարզ դարձավ, որ այն բացառապես ուրարտական հուշարձան է: Սա 2004 թ. սկսված՝ հայ-ավստրիական աշխատանքների մեկնարկային կետն էր, որի նպատակն էր ստույգ շերտագրական հաջորդականություն և առկա խեցեղենի տիպաբանություն մշակելը: Տասներկու տարվա պեղումներից հետո առաջին կարևոր նպատակը կարելի է մեծապես կատարված համարել: Արևելյան, Արևմտյան և Կենտրոնական ամրոցների համար հաստատվել է Ք.ա. VIII դարից մինչև III/II դարերն ընկած ժամանակահատվածն ընդգրկող բնակեցման երեք փուլերի հաջորդականությունը:

Բանալի բառեր. Հայ-ավստրիական համագործակցություն, Կոտայք, Արամուս, Արևելյան, Արևմտյան և Կենտրոնական ամրոցներ, Ուրարտու, խեցեղենի տիպաբանություն, ստատիգրաֆիա:

О КОНТЕКСТЕ ИССЛЕДОВАНИЙ И ПРЕДВАРИТЕЛЬНЫХ РЕЗУЛЬТАТАХ РАСКОПОК, ПРОВЕДЕННЫХ В ЗАПАДНОМ И ЦЕНТРАЛЬНОМ КРЕПОСТЯХ АРАМУСА (2009-2015 ГГ.)

КУНТНЕР В.А. (Австрия, Инсбрук), ГАЙНШ С.А. (Австрия, Инсбрук),
АВETИСЯН Г.Г. (РА, Ереван)

Резюме

Археологические исследования крепости Арамус, расположенной к юго-западу от одноименного села, в 15 км к северо-востоку от Еревана, начались в 1970 году, когда Э. Ханзадян возобновила исследования крепости Элар. Раскопки, проведенные Г. Аветисяном в крепости Арамус в 1988 году, в корне изменили структуру прежней модели укрепленного ландшафта Арамуса, поскольку крепость Арамус оказалась исключительно урартским памятником. Это стало отправной точкой армяно-австрийского археологического проекта в Арамусе в 2004 году, который преследовал цель выработать достоверную стратиграфическую последовательность и типологию связанной с ней керамики. Для восточной, западной и центральной крепостей были установлены три этапа поселения, охватывающие период с VIII по III/II века до н.э.

Ключевые слова – армяно-австрийское сотрудничество, Котайк, Арамус, восточная, западная и центральная крепости, Урарту, типология керамики, стратиграфия.

ON THE RESEARCH CONTEXT AND THE PRELIMINARY RESULTS OF THE EXCAVATIONS CONDUCTED IN THE WEST AND CENTRAL FORTS OF ARAMUS BETWEEN 2009 AND 2015

W. KUNTNER (Austria, Innsbruck), S. HEINSCH (Austria, Innsbruck),
H. AVETISYAN (RA, Yerevan)

Abstract

The archaeological research of the fortress of Aramus, located southwest of the eponymous village 15 km northeast of Yerevan, started in the 1970 when E. Khazdyan turned her attention back to the investigation of the fortress of Elar. The excavations conducted by H. Avetisyan at the fortress of Aramus in 1988 fundamentally changed the framework of the former model about the fortified landscape of Aramus inasmuch as the fortress of Aramus turned out to be exclusively an Urartian foundation. This was the starting point of the Armenian-Austrian excavation project at Aramus in 2004 which aimed to work out a reliable stratigraphic sequence and related ceramic typology. After twelve campaigns the first focus can now be regarded as largely accomplished. Three exhaustive and consistent occupation sequences spanning the time from the 8th to 3rd/2nd century BC were established for the East, West and Central Forts.

Key words – Armenian-Austrian collaboration, Kotayk, Aramus, East, West and Central Forts, Urartu, typology of ceramic, stratigraphy.