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The Magnificent Urartian Fortress on The Southern Slope of Munzur Mountains (Tunceli): Kurmizak	Munzur Dağlarının (Tunceli) Güney Yamacında Görkemli Urartu Kalesi: Kurmizak
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ABSTRACT

The Urartians established the first central state structure in the most difficult highlands of the Eastern Anatolia Region. They ruled over nearly all of the region between 858/844-590 BC, and the region experienced a golden age during this period. We understand from the Palu inscription that the Urartian Kingdom had been trying to establish authority over Tunceli and its surroundings since the reign of Minua. This information is evident from the narration of the conquest of the Huzuna identified as Hozat and the conquest of the Şupa state identified as Tunceli. Mazgirt Kaleköy Rock Tomb with its inscription, which is a sophisticated art piece, confirms that Tunceli maintained its prominence until the time of Rusa II, the last great king of the Urartians.

The Urartians were able to reach the Elazığ-Tunceli area through the high and rugged Bingöl Mountains. For the Urartians, the Tunceli region must have been an appealing place especially in terms of mineral resources. The exploitation of animals and animal products other than mining may have also pushed them to go through this challenging route. It is understood that Kurmizak Fortress was an important base for safely transferring the taxes and resources obtained from Tunceli to other provincial centers in the east. When the splendor and distribution of the Urartian city walls are analyzed which have survived partially until today, it is assumed that the castle was a key stronghold. Wall foundation beds displaying Urartian cultural artifacts, open-air worship areas, monumental signs carved into the rocks, cascaded and round-mouthed cisterns, bright red slipped and fluted ceramics, Bianili pottery, embossed stone fragments and arrowheads indicate that it was a strategic fortress in its time.

Keywords: Urartu, Kurmizak Fortress, Tunceli, Province, Bianili.

ÖZ

Anadolu'nun en yüksek ve zorlu coğrafyası olan Doğu Anadolu Bölgesi'nde ilk merkezi devlet yapılanmasını kuran Urartular, MÖ 858/844-590 yılları arasında bölgenin neredeyse tamamında hüküm sürmüş ve bu sürede Doğu Anadolu adeta bir altın çağ yaşamıştır. Urartu Krallığı Minua'nın hükümdarlığından itibaren Tunceli ve çevresinde tutunmaya çalıştığını Palu yazıtında Hozat'a lokalize edilen Huzuna ve yine Tunceli'ye lokalize edilen Şupa ülkesinin fethinin aktarılmasından anlıyoruz. Urartuların son büyük kralı II. Rusa zamanına kadar Tunceli'nin önemini koruduğunu bir sanat şaheseri olan Mazgirt Kaleköy Kaya Mezarı ve yazıtı tescillenmektedir.

Urartular Elazığ-Tunceli coğrafyasına ulaşımı oldukça yüksek ve engebeli olan Bingöl Dağları üzerinden sağlıyorlardı. Urartular için Tunceli yöresi özellikle maden kaynakları açısından cazibedici olmalıydı. Maden dışında hayvan ve hayvan ürünlerinin sömürüsü de bu meşakkatli yolu aşmalarına sebep olmuştur. Tunceli'den elde edilen vergi ve kaynakların güvenli bir şekilde doğudaki diğer eyalet merkezlerine intikal ettirilmesinde Kurmizak Kalesi'nin önemli bir üs olduğu anlaşılmaktadır. Günümüze kadar kısmen ayakta kalabilen Urartu sur birimlerinin görkemi, dağılımlarının kapladığı saha hesaplandığında oldukça güçlü bir merkez olduğu anlaşılmaktadır. Urartu kültür özellikleri sergileyen sur temel yatakları, açık hava tapınım alanları, kayalara oyulmuş anıtsal işaretler, basamaklı ve yuvarlak ağızlı sarnıçlar, parlak kırmızı astarlı ve yivli seramikler, Bianili seramikleri, kabartmalı taş parçaları ve ok uçları zamanında stratejik bir kale olduğuna işaret etmektedir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Urartu, Kurmizak Kalesi, Tunceli, Eyalet, Bianili.

The First Central State of the Mountainous Eastern Anatolia Region, Urartians

The Urartians, who established the first central state structure in the Eastern Anatolia Region, which is the highest and most difficult geography of Anatolia, shared the region among many principalities around 1300 BC (Grayson, 2002, p.

190, 221, 225, 268, 275; Erdem, 2011, p. 60-61; Işıklı, and Caner, 2014, p. 29)¹. The kingdom, which came into prominence after a preparation period of about 400 years in the Van Lake basin, ruled almost all of the region between 858/844-590 BC and during this period, Eastern Anatolia had a golden age. The Assyrians called this kingdom *Urartu* and themselves the *Bianilian*. The Urartians, who ruled, initially, only the core area of Van Lake Basin, later strengthened and followed an imperial policy. We can say that Minua laid the foundations of the policy of expansion. The borders of the kingdom spread over an area of approximately 220 thousand km² in the middle of the 8th century BC, from the Euphrates River in the west to the Urmiye Lake basin in Iran in the east, and from the Ardahan/Hanak (Ortakent) and Sevan Lake basin in the north to the Taurus Mountains in the south (Sevin, 1989, p. 49).

The country was divided into states, which were isolated from each other by high mountains and often governed by the governors appointed from the center. The Urartu Kingdom, which entered a relentless struggle with the southern neighbors Assyrians in the 8th century BC to control the trade routes in the east and west, went out of existence in the late 7th century or mid-6th century BC by leaving many questions behind (Kalkan, 2008, p. 28; Sevin, 2012, p. 352). Information about the last years of the Urartu kingdom is again based on Assyrian written sources and a couple of archaeological sources (Piotrovsky, 1969, p. 203; Erdem, and Batmaz, 2008, p. 75-76). No information can be obtained about in which kind of a political environment these kings ruled and how they ended. One view argues that Urartu's Rusa II and his successor kings agreed with Scythians and other nomadic tribes against Assyria, but these tribes later plundered Urartu cities (Kroll, 2015, p. 110-111). Another view is that the Median Empire might be responsible for the destruction in Urartu, and the finds from the Scythians might well be related to the Scythian families living in the Urartu (Van Loon, 1966, p. 25; Diakonoff, 1985, p. 125).

On Transportation Routes to the Kurmizak Fortress in Urartu Kingdom

Besides Tushpa and Araxes Valleys, Elazığ-Tunceli region is also very important for the economic power of the Urartu kingdom. This region has the potential to meet the economic needs of the Urartu kingdom, both in terms of mineral resources and fertile soils. The Urartians organized expeditions to dominate these distant lands, and then set up road networks to keep in touch. Fortified fortresses built on the road networks provided the safe transition of the war booties obtained from the region to Van, Tushpa. However, Köşkerbaba in Malatya, and İmikuşağı,

¹ It is reported that during the time of the Assyrian king Shalmaneser I (1274-1245 BC), an uprising broke out in the country of Urartian/Uruatri and a campaign was launched to suppress this uprising. According to the Assyrian temple inscription, even at that time, the Urartians had fortified fortresses in the strong mountains. For the time being, this inscription is the first evidence to identify the Urartians and their geography (Grayson, 1987: 183-184; Salvini, 2006, p. 29; Ünsal, 2008, p. 10-11); Part of this article was presented in "Eastern Anatolian Archaeology Workshop II, from Prehistoric Times to the end of The Iron Ages".

Habibuşığı, Değirmentepe, Kaleköy, Maltepe (Sevin, 1986, p. 280), Norşuntepe, Tülin-tepe and other settlements in Elazığ, which have remained in the hegemony of Urartu for a long time in this region, attract attention with the fact that they lack the superb defense system of central Van (Burney, 2012, p. 54). This might be due to the desire of Urartians to hold this area to exploit. This exploitation was directed not only to mining, agriculture and animal resources, but also to the exploitation of manpower. We understand that the Urartians shifted the human population from these lands to make new cities as Argishti, in his time, transferred 6.600 people from Hate and Şupa/Supani (Tunceli) for the construction of the Erebuni/Arin Berd Fortress (Salvini, 2006, p. 70; Burney, 2012, p. 58; Danişmaz, 2020, p. 21-22; Tan, 2020, p. 190). Again, it is stated in the double-sided inscription that 1720 men, 1670 women, 126 horses, 13540 cattle and 20785 sheep and goats were taken from the country of Etiuhe in the expedition to the north during Ishpuini and Minua joint kingdom period (Ünsal, 2008, p. 15-16; Tan, 2020, p. 196). Sarduri II also states that he received 4,000 male warriors from the Etiuni country (Tan, 2020, p. 190)

For these purposes, the Urartians made a road network in the geography that reached from the capital of the kingdom to Patnos, and then from Muş Plain by crossing the Bingöl Mountains to Elazığ Plain and Tunceli. The Urartian spread, which started with Minua and continued until Rusa II, was provided by a 5 m wide paved road bordered on both sides by large stones (Sevin, 1986, p. 283, Figs. 7-10). The Palu/Şebeteria rock inscription² from Minua time and Mazgirt/Kaleköy rock inscription from Rusa II confirm this spread of Urartu (Erdoğan, 2014, p. 21; Danişmaz, 2020, p. 23). Other than the archaeological evidence, the main route of the road network in question must have been as described below, using the most advanced geographic information system of recent years³.

The road starting from the center of Van extends to the Körzüt Fortress in the north in the first place. From here, it advances from Erciş Zernaki Tepe direction to the Murat River in the west and reaches Malazgirt and Bulanık. Then, the road network starting from the Murat River, continuing with Muş Plain and the Bingöl Mountains and ending with the Elazığ-Malatya Plains forms the second stage of the road (Map 1). The third stage, which extends towards Tunceli from the south and

² “God Haldi went on a campaign with his spear. Conquered the lands of Şebeteria City, conquered the lands of Huzana City, took Şupa City... Thanks to the power of God Haldi, Minua, son of İşpuini, went on a campaign, seized the lands of Şebeteria City, seized the lands of Huzana City, took Şupa City, went as far as Hatina Country... Hold the king of Militia City to ransom”, my translation from and for detailed information, see: Işık, 2015, p. 67; Also see:Yapıcı,, 2004, p. 182; Katar, 2018, p. 108.

³ While making the map, ArcMap interface of ArcGIS 10.5 software, which is one of the GIS (Geographic Information Systems) software, was used. Locations were added with coordinates on the digital elevation model data of the ASTER satellite with a resolution of 30 m and confirmed by satellite images. While creating the route, archaeological information in the literature and suitability in the form of land were taken into account. We would like to thank Senior Archaeologist Nilüfer PARLITI from Erzurum Regional Board of Cultural Heritage Preservation for sharing the coordinates of the centers used in mapping with us.

moves towards Erzincan, was examined in more detail as it formed the center of the Urartu Road. When we analyze the royal road in question in depth, we first reach from Muş Varto to Kayalidere on the right bank of the Murat River, the southern area of the Euphrates (Danışmaz, and Konyar, 2021, p. 3)⁴. This stage reaches inside Elazığ-Malatya with a number of plains in the area where Murat meets the Euphrates River. Archaeological remains and findings found in Bingöl, Solhan/Cankurtarantepe, Murat/Norik Höyük about 20 km to the southwest (Özdemir, 2019, p. 734, 739, Fig. 1) and 33 km away from here Zulümtepe, 25 km west of it, Kaleönü, Yeniköy (Sevin, 1987, p. 4-8, Figs. 15-18) between Bingöl and Karakoçan and then Bahçecik (Sevin, 2005, p. 380) village of Karakoçan district, further west, Elazığ/Norşuntepe and Maltepe show that there are important accommodation structures⁵. Accommodation structures extend to Palu Fortress, the most prominent Urartu ruin on the Murat/Arsania River, south of Bağın and Bahçecik⁶.

In the inscription found in the other important center, Bahçecik, the name Sardurihinili (II), the capital of a large state with the governor named Zaiani, is mentioned⁷. In this place, a rectangular structure with a dimension of 63x10 m draws attention. This structure, which is divided into several spaces, is likened to the Urartian accommodation stations/caravanserais /menzilhanes in terms of its plan. This place really has the characteristics of being a caravanserai with its location on an important highway system extending from Bingöl and Palu to the Euphrates banks⁸. The 100 km road that extends uninterruptedly from Solhan to Bahçecik, the engineering structure of Urartu's westward communication highway route, also enabled the Urartu kingdom to reach from Van to Elazığ in the west (Marro, 2004, p. 101, Map. 2), (Map 2). There is another Urartu fortress here, Genefik, which is reached after Palu (Map. 1)⁹.

This highway system, which was built in Elazığ/Alzi, running westwards from Palu is divided into two as the main and secondary road after Norşuntepe, 5 km north of Elazığ. The main road should have been stretching towards Tülintepe, about 1 km west of Norşuntepe. This road then reached Akçakiraz/Perçenç Höyük, 3 km

⁴ Kayalidere Fortress, which is located in Muş Varto, took the royal road coming from Van, from Malazgirt, Bulanık Plain and delivered it to the Euphrates through the Murat Valley, For detailed information, see: Burney, 1966, p. 55, Fig. 1; Çilingiroğlu, 2001a, p. 11.

⁵ Sevin, 1991, p. 97; Köroğlu, 1996, p. 26.

⁶ Palu Fortress was located 1km east of Palu district on a limestone rock, of which north and northeast sides are very steep and east and west sides are bordered by the Euphrates River. Besides its two cisterns and Urartian inscription, it is an important state center with its monumental rock tombs, For detailed information, see: Köroğlu and Dinçol, 1989, p. 123; Danışmaz, 2018a, p. 194.

⁷ Bahçecik Urartu settlement, located about 30 km northeast of Palu, was built on a ridge.

⁸ Between 1985-1987, there should have been Urartu caravanserais, menzilhanes and watchtowers protecting this road every 25-30 kilometers on the highway examined here. For detailed information, see: Sevin, 2005, p. 380-383.

⁹ It is located on Mastar Mountain, which is approximately 30 km east of Elazığ (Sevin, 1987, p. 9, Figs. 23-24).

west. The road extending 5-6 km to the northwest reached the Harput Fortress located on the rocks (Sevin, 1988, p. 461, Figs. 42–43; Yapıcı, 2004, p. 16; Sevin, Sevin and Kalsen, 2008, p. 630). The main and secondary road met again in Harput Fortress. The main road runs directly 3 km northwest from Harput and reaches Gümüşbağlar/Mürüdü Höyük. Along the uninterrupted route, it reached the Salkayatepe settlement 5 km north, then Salkaya Höyük I, 2 km north, and Salkaya II Höyük, 1 km north from there¹⁰. The secondary road, on the other hand, proceeds on a branch that moves towards Hacıseli and Kürdemlik/Sarıbük, 10 km north of Harput (Sevin, 1987, p. 10; Şentürk, 1993, p. 67). The main and secondary road of Urartu should have been uniting in the Tanrıvermiş Fortress (Sevin, 1988, p. 457, Figs. 17–21; Köroğlu, 1996, p. 21), which rises on the edge of Murat Water, near Aydınçık Village, north of Elazığ. This road network continued to the north with Pertek Fortress, which is now in the middle of the Keban lake waters. When we move from Pertek Fortress to the northwest, one can reach to the Kurmizak Fortress and Çemişgezek, which are the subject of our article, to Sağman in the north direction, and Mazgirt Fortress in the east direction. According to Danık, the Harput Plateau with low-level hills coming from the south was surrounded by high altitude mountain ranges in the east and north directions while continuing in a less hilly direction to the Çemişgezek in the west and thus to Kurmizak. This situation has forced Pertek to establish connection with Harput from the south, and Çemişgezek and Kurmizak from the west (Danık, 2005, p. 399)¹¹. This natural passage confirms the strategic position of Kurmizak Fortress on the road network of Urartian period.

Another road network in this geography is drawn by the Peri Suyu, which mixes with the Murat River when moved to the northeast of Elazığ Plain. One can understand that Urartu has expanded the road network in this direction from Deliktaş Fortress located on a small cliff (Köroğlu, 1988, p. 45; Hauptmann, 1972, p. 97, Plate 80). When further north, Tunceli province is reached, there is Bağın (Balın) Fortress and Urartu inscription on a rock on the right edge of the Peri Water within the borders of Dedebağ Village in Mazgirt district. This fortress is important in that it has similar features with Palu Fortress, which is 33 km to the south. Another Urartu settlement, Til Fortress, indicates that the road has been running along the Peri Water (Köroğlu, 1988, p. 46; Köroğlu, 1996, p. 22). Another road extends to Mazgirt/Kaleköy Fortress, a typical Urartu Fortress on the southeast extensions of the Tunceli Mountains, 17 km west of Bağın Fortress (Schäfer, -UKN 279 = HChI 127- 1977, p. 251, 252). When we move west, Burmageçit Urartu Fortress is reached by the Munzur Suyu, which is slightly lower than Bağın and Kaleköy direction and flows from Tunceli region in the north to the Murat River (Yıldırım, 1994, p. 292). This road reaches Rabat Fortress from there to Hozat, Masumupak Fortress and then

¹⁰ The main road route in question is based on the scientific field studies done by the author of the article, Kenan ÖNCEL, in recent years.

¹¹ Kurmizak Fortress was discovered in 2015 by Kenan ÖNCEL, one of the authors of this article, in his field studies.

Ovacık Efkâr Höyük. One can reach Şahverdi Fortress in the northeast from Efkâr Hill, where a similar column base known from Altintepe Fortress is found. This road opens to Erzincan Altintepe through the deep natural passage between the Mercan Mountains, which are just on the edge of Şahverdi (Parliti, Öncel and Parliti, 2017, p. 356, Fig. 11).

Kurmizak, the State Center of Urartu Kingdom: In Terms of its Location, Architecture and Finds

There are findings indicating that this road network extending to Tunceli reaches a state center. A group of bronze works including helmets during the road construction near Burmageçit Fortress and bronze works with Minua inscriptions captured in a chamber tomb, which is currently under water, are important for pointing to a different state center in the northwest (Sevin, 2005, p. 383). At this point, a part of the Şupa/Supani¹² State covering Tunceli should have been called Huzuna/Hozat (Sevin, 2005, p. 382; Çilingiroğlu, 2001a, p. 33.). This is so because this place mentioned in the rock inscription in the Palu fortress belonging to the King Minua period is also mentioned in the Mazgirt Kaleköy inscription in the period of Rusa II. Considering these inscriptions, the country of Şupa can be localized to the north of Elazığ and Tunceli (Işık, 2015, p. 232-233).

In Mazgirt/Kaleköy inscription, together with the name of Şupa Country, the name of Hüşişili City is also mentioned (Salvini, -CTU I: no. A 12-6; s.t: 7- 2005, p. 577-578). In this respect, Kaleköy, located 15 km northeast of Tunceli/Mazgirt District, is very important. An inscription belonging to Rusa II was engraved at the entrance of a two-roomed tomb on the southern slopes of a typical Urartu Fortress, located in the north of the village. Religious rituals constitute the subject of the inscription in general (Schäfer, -UKN 279 = HChl 127- 1977, p. 255). In this respect, the inscription has parallels with the place names and religious passages that we encounter in the temple inscription of Ayanis belonging to Rusa II (Salvini, -CTU I: no. A 12-1 IV, s.t:11; CTU I: A 12- 1 V, s.t: 1-11- 2005, p. 566-570). Similar to the Ayanis inscription, it includes the place names on the expedition route organized by Urartu to the west such as Alaue (Muş Plain ?), Arduru (Aludiri-Aznavurtepe/Patnos) and Titiahina¹³. In this sense, Kaleköy Fortress might have been the last stop of a religious trip organized by Rusa II to the west side of the country. The country of Şupa (Classical Sophene), which was mentioned in the Kaleköy inscription and also mentioned in the previous Urartian inscriptions, should have been involving Mazgirt and Pertek, the districts of Tunceli. In any case, this is

¹² The region, which is referred to as "Şupana" in Kültepe texts, "Şupa(ne)" in Urartian inscriptions and "Şuppa" or "Sophane (Classical Period)" in Assyrian inscriptions, is localized to Tunceli (Danik, 2005, p. 401).

¹³ It should be around Bağın because the part of the inscription of Bağın says "*Minua says: I appointed Titia(ni) there as the governor*", my translation from and detailed information, see: Köroğlu, 1988, p. 25; Danişmaz, 2018b, p. 16.

the first time we encounter the name H̄usiřili City in Kalek̄y inscription. Arutyunyan argued that the location of H̄usiřili City was not known exactly, but it might have been located along the Hardzik Water (Tařlık Stream?), which is one of the branches of the Munzur Suyu near Mazgirt (Arutjunjan, 1985, p. 234). On the other hand, Salvini searched for H̄usiřili City near the Kalek̄y inscription (Salvini - CTU I- 2005, p. 578). Both of the referred centers and the inscriptions raise the question of whether there may be a few local state centers on the Binḡol, Elazıę and Tunceli lines, one of which can be Kurmizak Fortress.

Kurmizak Fortress was established on a high, steep rocky hill, surrounded by a magnificent mountain belt, at the end of the natural valley coming from Altınova, about 10 km north of the Euphrates River, just south of the village of Bulgurtepe, 25 km west of Pertek District in Tunceli province (Photo 1). Kurmizak Fortress is positioned at the highest point relative to its surroundings. It is possible to observe a quite wide hinterland (10.000 km²) over the fortress from Ḡkdaęı, to the south of Palu district, in the south, to Hazar Mountain in Sivrice district, Pirhasan Mountain in Baskil district in the west and Munzur Mountains in the north. The fact that the observation area is so wide shows how special the location chosen for the fortress is (Map 2). The fortress, of which inner citadel has a 3.6 hectare width, has a height of 1.330 m from the sea level¹⁴. In this respect, the natural ridge on which it was built fits well with the ridge on which the Palu fortress was built. In fact, the repertoire of findings, such as the flint stone tool and obsidian tool found on the fortress, shows that the fortress was preferred as an observation point from prehistoric times to the present day (Photo 2).

Volcanic and tectonic movements shaped the land on which the fortress was built. In addition to this, the heavy rains in the region have created deep valleys and increased the steepness of the land. Kurmizak Fortress is built on a volcanic neck belonging to the upper miocene-pliocene period¹⁵ and, in terms of this feature, has a monumental appearance and is almost like an eagle nest. The point where the castle was built and its surroundings is composed of the loose andesite stone cliffs formed possibly by the volcanoes erupted on the bottom of the lake. Indeed, it is mentioned by the researchers that Pertek Andesites have been outcropping in the Kaletepe locality in the northwest of Yukarı Ḡlbahęe K̄ȳy (Herece and Acar, 2016, p. 31). This formation, called Pertek Formation, is the Eocene Limestone formation, which contains a lot of Middle Eocene Nummulites and Microfossils. Although the locality thickness of this formation is more than 200 m, it is stated that the lower parts are gray and argillaceous, and the upper parts are buff colored and pure calcareous. This

¹⁴ Only the area covered by the city walls of Kurmizak Fortress was calculated. Possible outer city and slope area are not taken into account. Altıntepe 4 hectares from other local state centers, 1215 m above sea level; Hasankale 2 hectares, 1725 m above sea level; Palu 2.3 hectares, 1126 m above sea level; Kayalıdere 3 hectares, 1373 m above sea level; Verahram 7.8 hectares, 800 m above sea level. (Danıřmaz, 2018b, p. 134- 136, Table 7); Ayanis Fortress 6 hectare (ęevik, 2009, p. 197).

¹⁵ <http://yerbilimleri.mta.gov.tr/anasayfa.aspx> (09.10.2019).

formation extending in the direction of Pertek-Kurmizak covers an area longer than 100 km. The mineralogical examinations of the sample pieces taken from this rock line are defined as “*andesite*” which is the rock type that Urartians favor (Danık, 2005, p. 399; Kuvanç, 2017, 119). Kurmizak Fortress is also situated in this location and has the same morphological features.

The fortress has been damaged many times on the natural ridge where it is carefully selected and positioned. The first of these is the major destruction caused by the earthquake. Another major destruction is the heavy housing experienced during the Middle Ages. Andesite block ruins on the skirts of the natural hill where the fortress is located indicate that walls surrounded a large part of the fortress. Vertical-slip faults in the region have been effective on easily obtaining and shaping the overlapping andesite blocks. For this reason, it has been observed that the stones used in all architectures are andesite blocks. Although it is steep on all four sides, especially the steepest part of the fortress, the neatly cut, big blocked city wall remains, which shows itself under the Medieval ruins at the north end, indicates early use.

Remains from the Urartians in the fortress are clearly distinguished on the western and eastern slope, where the Medieval remains are least visible. The rock blocks belonging to the partially survived defense architecture, which continued to be used in the Middle Ages in the 300x250 m sized citadel, and the foundation beds corrected for the fortification draw attention (Figure 1). It is possible to talk about the ruins of the building, which gives hints that there is a magnificent entrance door in the northwest corner of the fortress. This building was built with andesite blocks and probably has an arched structure and faces the least inclined direction of the hill where the castle was built. Stone blocks belonging to the fortification walls can be easily observed in the north of the door. Local remnants of the fortification walls all across the fortress, which have survived to the present day, consist of andesite blocks that have been cut and used over and around the fortress. When the fortification walls were examined, it was observed that the remains in different locations had different workmanship.

The first thing that draws attention at first sight on the fortification walls of Kurmizak Fortress is that there is two different construction techniques. The first one is the ones built with small size cutting blocks using mortar and built in the Islamic period. The second is the walls of the Urartian period, which were built with very large size (Cyclopic) stones, without mortar, located to the east and southwest of the fortress (Maas, 2012, p. 138; Caner, Parliti and Tosun, 2020, p. 118-119). This idea is supported not only by the fortification walls with cyclopic blocks, but also by forming the bedrock of city walls by shaving the parent rock (Photo 3-4). In fact, both the bedrocks of the city walls opened on the parent rock and their workmanship are similar to the Ayanis Fortress Eastern fortification walls (Çilingiroğlu 2001b, p.

25-26), Anzaf Fortress (Çilingiroğlu, 1983, p. 32) and Zivistan Fortress (Maas, 2012, p. 138).

The ceramic repertoire found around the Kurmizak Fortress also points to the Urartian or pre-Urartian culture. Some of the ceramics found in the Kurmizak Fortress show similarities to the Evditepe and Alacahan finds in the Van Lake Basin. It is quite important for the chronology of Kurmizak Fortress that the red slipped ware ceramic groups identified in Evditepe and Alacahan in recent studies have pointed to the Early Iron Age (Özfirat, in press: Fig. Evditepe and Alacahan). While most of the typical bright red slipped and grooved ceramics are similar to those found in the excavations in Elazığ and Malatya Plain, a few examples, which are likely to be imported, show “Bianili/royal” ceramic features¹⁶. Grooved ceramics and bright red slipped ware, known for Keban and Karakaya dam excavations, were identified in Van Fortress Höyük, Ayanis, Yoncatepe, Karagündüz, Dilkaya in the core center of the kingdom (Koroğlu and Konyar, 2005, p. 32-33, Fig. 2:2, 4). It is particularly similar to those found in Körzüt Fortress (Figure. 2), (Tarhan ve Veli, 1976, Lev. IX). Analogues of the high quality Middle Iron Age and Bianili/Royal ceramics, which were associated mostly with elites, were reached in close geography at Mazgirt/Kaleköy (Koroğlu, 1988, p. 45; Koroğlu, 1996, p. 22), Norşuntepe (Hauptmann, 1971, p. 78-79), Yıldıztepe Fortress (Sevin, 1988, p. 460-461, Figs. 39-40) on the northern skirts of Mastar Mountain located on the south of Norşuntepe, at Haraba Höyük (Öğün, 1971, p. 40-42) in the southwest of Palu district, at Habibuşağı (Öğün, 1983, p. 237) in Yazılıkaya Mevkii, 14 km south of Baskil district and at Haroğlu, 12 km northeast of Baskil district. As in Habibuşağı, horizontal grooved and thick red brown slipped, burnished ceramics were reached in Maltepe (Sevin, 1986, p.281). Red slipped wares with grooved rim found in Tülintepe also reflect the typical Urartian culture¹⁷. Identifying ceramics belonging to the Middle Iron Age from Murat Höyük (Özdemir, 2020, p. 275-276, Fig. 6), Zulumtepe, Cankurtaran, Kaleönü, Pınartepe, Haroğlu, Genefik, Yıldıztepe, Norşuntepe (Sevin, 1987, p. 6-12; Danışmaz, 2020, p. 23) and Kurmizak Fortress on the road from Bingöl to Elazığ is not surprising considering Urartu identity. This is so because the ceramics belonging to the Urartian period have been reached in the fortresses located at certain intervals along this road from the center of Van to Erzincan Altintepe.

It is quite important that analogues of these ceramics have been reached in the Kurmizak Fortress, since they play a key role between Erzincan and Elazığ. The most common form features of ceramics found in Kurmizak Fortress are plates, bowls, deep bowls, pots and goblets, decanters-jugs. 5 of them consist of outward-rimmed wares and wares with groove/grooves underneath the outside of the rim (Table 2, Figure 4, 17, 19, 21, 23). The rim part of one of these wares has a slightly

¹⁶ It might be attributed to the distance from the center that the ceramics in the Kurmizak Fortress are poorer than those in the Van Basin (Çilingiroğlu, 2001a, p. 134).

¹⁷ Such vessels found in the excavations were put under protection in the Elazığ museum.

curved edge, but the lower parts of the rim are also grooved (Table 1, Figure 3, 7). The number of wares without grooves, either with extroverted or right-angled rim, is 4 (Table 1, Figure 3, 5; Table 2, Figure 4, 18, 20, 22). The pastes of these well-baked ceramics are either not tempered or partially fine sand, mineral-tempered. They seem to come from a single workshop though their wall thicknesses are thin or medium. Unlike the others, one of the ceramics, of which only a body piece was found, is likely to be of Van origin (Photo 5). Since other ceramics are of the type used in almost every period, it was not possible to date them directly to the Middle Iron Age.

Another small group of finds to be evaluated within the tangible cultural assets of the Urartian culture is metal arrowheads. Ayanis Fortress (Özdemir, and Işıklı, 2017, p. 47-49) and Kayalıdere (Figure. 5a), (Burney, 1966, Plate. XIIa) can be given as examples for the arrowheads similar to the arrowheads found in abundance especially on the slopes of the Kurmizak Fortress (Figure. 5b). Another example is an unearthed embossed stone fragment. There is a great similarity in terms of style between the relief decorated stone fragment (Figure. 6a), (Bilgiç and Ögün, 1964, p. 102, Fig.3), the like of which was found in the storage room No.1 of the Adilcevaz/Kef Fortress, and the relief decorated stone fragment found in the Kurmizak Fortress (Figure. 6b).

Other than all these concrete findings, the geopolitical location and the monumentality of the land on which it was built, which are the main reasons for choosing the fortress, coincided with the Urartian fortress identity. Two square planned water cisterns were found at the southeast end of the fortress. It was observed that the water cisterns were made by carving the bedrock. The earliest use of these cisterns can be given to the Urartu period based on their analogues. The stepped cistern remaining in the citadel of the fortress is located in the southwestern part and the rounded cisterns are in the eastern part. The cisterns, which were formed by deepening with a horizontal stepped tunnel, were reached in Tunceli at Bağın, Mazgirt Fortress and Kaleköy, Rabat, Gelin Odaları, Vasgirt, Kaletepe and in Elazığ at Habibuşağı, Harput, Palu, Deliktaş, Kaleköy, Haroğlu, Karakaş (Koroğlu and Danışmaz, 2018, p. 115-116, Table 1) and Genefik (Hauptmann, 1972, p. 97). Open cisterns have been filled with time. It is possible to see analogues of these cisterns expanding to the bottom in many Urartian fortresses.

The Urartians left behind monumental marks carved into the rocks as their signature. These monumental traces applied mostly outside of the fortresses and near the walls were in the places where the mysterious ritual practices of the Urartians were performed (Konyar, 2008, p. 311; Yücel, 2010, p. 28). The stepped rock workmanship pointing to the open-air worship has been found on the southeast and east slope of the fortress. Rock workmanships showing that liquid libation was applied appear in just above the cisterns on the eastern slope. Also, in the southeast of the fortress, the ritual place was identified, with a square planned bed measuring

0.90x0.90 m, carved into the bedrock, and a round-shaped pedestal hole in the middle, which was also carved into the bedrock. Although this structure, of which depth is 0.12 m, is probably a libation area (Sacred Area) where rituals related to the Urartu religion were performed, the pit in the middle should have been a nest where the tree of life or stele was seated (Photo 6). In a way, four unwritten steles erected on four pedestal stones with a length of 1 m, a width of 70 cm, and a depth of 20 cm, which have been found just east of the No. 1 Royal tombs in Erzincan, Altıntepe, should have served the similar purpose with the round altar (Özgüç, 1969, p. 43; Yücel, 2010, p.16, 40) with a diameter of 0.50 m, where a tree of life was placed and libated. The unearthing of stelae at Kayalidere in Varto that are similar to the stelae without inscriptions at Altıntepe has played a key role in understanding the westward spread of Urartu. Seven stelae and tablements were unearthed in the southeast of the multi-roomed rock tomb to the south of Kayalidere Fortress, although it is not known how many there are in total. As in Altıntepe, the stelae here are associated with tombs as well (Erdoğan, Erçek and Şen, 2020, p. 30, Fig. 10-11). In recent studies, findings similar to the stele slot in the Kurmizak Fortress have been reached. The most important of these is the Analıkız East Niche Stele Slot. In the center of this niche, there is a 145x145 cm square bed carved into the bedrock. And, in the center of this bed, there is a stele slot carved into the bedrock at a depth of 25 cm and measuring 70x45 cm (Genç, and Konyar, 2019, p. 4, Fig. 10). Tirmet/Alazlı, which is 25 km east of Muş, can be given as another example of written stele that can fit in the stele slot located in Kurmizak Fortress. It is observed that the stele in question, which narrates the expedition of King Minua in this place on the road route to Keban, is located in a place where the upright hole is opened (Biber, Işık and Erdoğan, 2012, p. 86-87, Fig. 3; Biber, Işık and Erdoğan, 2015, p. 82-84, Fig. 1).

In the immediate vicinity of the stepped cistern, there is also a small area in the high part of the fortress flattened by carving the parent rock. This area should have served, in a way, as a ritual terrace with its height in comparison to the section where it is located. It is possible to see a similar area in Palu fortress (Katar, 2018, p. 110). In the citadel of the fortress, there are small and large signs and niches formed by carving the parent rocks in the highest part. Some of them should have been used for religious purposes and some of them as architectural elements. It is possible to see similar examples in many Urartian centers.

Architectural lines with a rectangular plan that appear in the spring on the opposite slope to the east of the fortress can be distinguished. These structures, which do not allow for investigation due to dense grass and soil, can be considered as “*Outer Town*”. Detailed information about the main and side roads could not be obtained from the foundation traces on the surface. In regard to urban planning, there might be an outer town such as Körzüt, Norgüh, Karmir-Blur, Dutschgag, Zernaki

(?)¹⁸ and Ayanis. In the outer towns, which are parallel to the fortresses in these centers, the structures were built on the sides of the wide streets opening to the main street and having structures around them. The small finds unearthed in the outer cities are very different from those found in the fortress possibly belonging to the ruling elite. It is possible to understand from the example of Ayanis that the finds obtained here are mostly used in daily work and their quality is lower than those found in the fortress (Çilingiroğlu and Derin, 2000, p. 401).

Conclusion

The Urartu kingdom built similar stonemasonry walls, rock carved cisterns, and worship areas in the fortresses away from the center. It is possible to see similar practices in the centers from the Urartians in Elazığ-Malatya and Tunceli. Studies conducted in recent years reveal that the number of these centers is much more than that has been known. The centers in question must have been connected to Elazığ through Tunceli with road networks and accommodation facilities. Urartian engineers often used the transportation passages provided by nature in the selection of roads reaching distant lands. In other parts, we see that construction activities, where labor is spent more, are implemented.

It is possible to make mention of a road route that reaches from the royal center of Urartu, Van-Tushpa to Kurmizak. We understand this primarily from the places where the inscriptions are located and from the writings on them. For example, Minua put down on the inscription of Bağın and Palu that he overcame the Euphrates, reached the Elazığ and Tunceli geography, and his struggle to obtain the Murat Basin and gain a new area to be exploited (Sevim, 2007, p. 24-26). Later, the inscription of Izoli/Tumiški (Habibuşağı) of Sarduri II on the Euphrates (Danışmaz, 2020, p. 22) and the inscription on the front face of the Kaleköy Rock tomb of Rusa II within the borders of Mazgirt follow. Apart from the inscriptions, archaeological ruins also give important clues about the route. The ruins left behind by the Urartians indicate that the road from Van, the capital of the kingdom, followed the shore and reached Körzüt in the north (Tarhan and Sevin, 1976, p. 275, Plate 1). The road, which turns west later, reaches Muş Plain, then Palu and Tunceli, through Erciş (Gökce, Genç and Kaçmaz Levent, 2019, p. 336, Map 1), Patnos and Malazgirt Plain, respectively, through Keçikıran. The Murat River merged with the Peri Water in Tunceli should have provided a natural way for the Urartians. Bağın, Mazgirt, Kaleköy, Izoli/Tumiški (Habibuşağı) and Palu fortresses built on the river should point to the main road of the kingdom opening to the west (Yapıcı, 2004, p. 14). Another source showing the mentioned road route is the archaeological remains such as accommodation stations, bridges, historical roads, watchtowers/outposts¹⁹.

¹⁸ The outer town settlement of Zernaki Tepe bears the traces of the Persian and Hellenistic periods rather than the Urartian period, see: Genç, 2018, p. 184-192.

¹⁹ There should be lakes within the network of transportation routes of the Urartu kingdom. This will be clarified in the archaeological studies to be carried out in the following years.

Among these remains, Koroğlu has defined Palu and Harput as state centers; Haroğlu, Tanrıvermiş, Yıldıztepe, Genefik, Bağın, Kaleköy, Perisu, Mazgirt, Eski Pertek, Til Kale, Deliktaş as fortresses; İzoli/Tumiški (Habibuşağı), Maltepe, Baskil/Kaleköy as border outposts; Cankurtaran, Zülümtepe, Bingöl Fortress, Bahçecik, Norşuntepe as accommodation stations (Koroğlu, 1988, p. 34).

Kurmizak Fortress, which offers a rich Middle Age settlement and rich Urartian period ruins though it was heavily damaged by earthquakes, is located exactly where this road is edged in Tunceli. The natural roads leading to the Altınova Plain, the high mountain area on which it stands, and the cliff on which it is built indicate that it is strategically located at an important point. With this feature, it offers a safe military headquarters and a collection and transition fortress in the reliable transportation of underground and aboveground wealth obtained from the north of Tunceli to the capital. This is so because it is understood that the fortress had a very strong fortification in terms of security during the Urartian period. Apart from the visible walls around the fortress that might belong to the city walls, the stepped support walls on the slope together with the foundation bedrocks made for the walls, open-air worship areas, the stepped cistern and round-rimmed cisterns, the royal and local terracotta pot pieces indicate that it is a strategic fortress. In fact, there is a possibility that it might be the center (Sevin, 2005, p. 383) of the local state (Şupa), which has been sought by Sevin in the northwest, within the borders of Tunceli. The reason is that for the time being, this place has the title of the most fortified and most magnificent fortress that has been identified in all aspects in the region. However, Kurmizak, which has been the scene of a strong settlement belonging to the Middle Ages and the Middle Iron Age, is being damaged by nature and human hands every day.

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PLATES



Map. 1: Road network from Kurmizak Fortress and Tushpa.

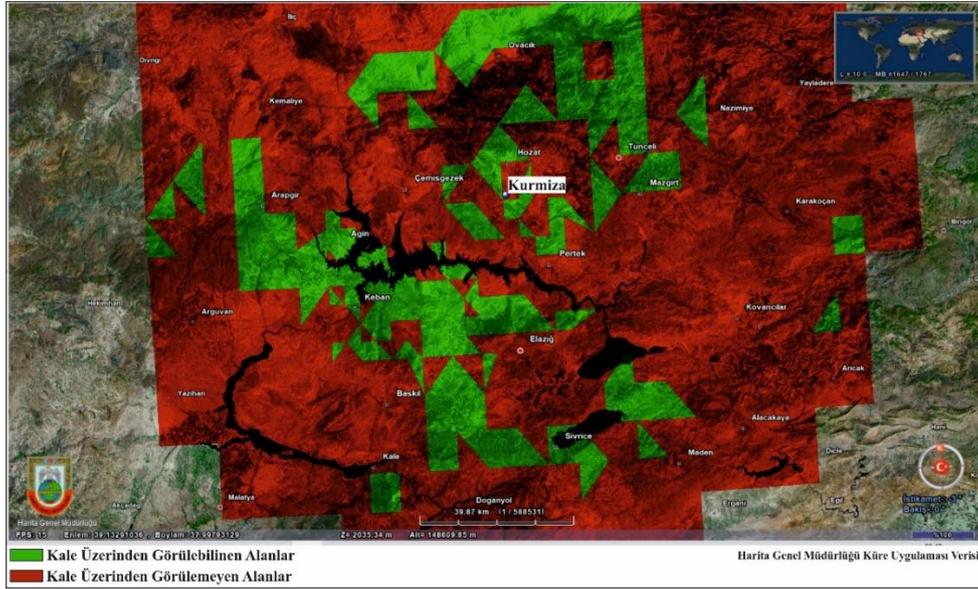


Photo. 1: General View from the Kurmizak Fortress.



Photo. 2: Prehistoric tools found in the Kurmizak Fortress.



Photo. 3: The East Fortification Walls and the city wall bed on the parent rock.



Photo. 4: City wall beds in the southeast of the fortress.

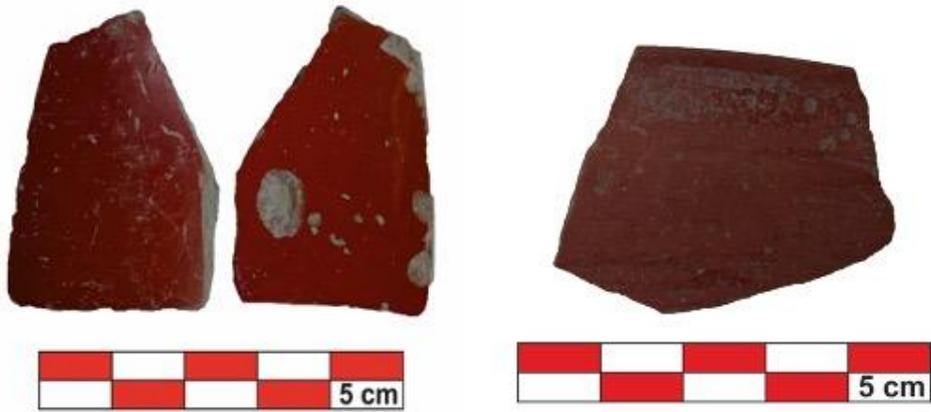


Photo. 5: Sample of “*Bianili*” ceramic found in the Kurmizak Fortress.



Photo. 6: The Sacred Area in the east of the fortress.

No	Code and Drawing No	Paste	Rim Diameter	Decoration	Definition
	Form	Outer Slip	Bottom Diameter	Baking	
	Tempered with	Inner Slip	Height	Made of	

1.	01	Reddish brown 2,5 YR 6/4V	15 cm	None	Sears are seen while descending from the body to the bottom.	
	Bowl	Reddish brown 2,5 YR 6/4	-	Medium		
	Sand, dense lime	Reddish brown 2,5 YR 6/4	6,3 cm	Wheel		
2.	02	Brownish red 2,5 YR 5/6	20 cm	None	-	
	Jug	Brownish red 2,5 YR 5/6	7 cm	Medium		

	Coarse sand, lime	Brownish red 2,5 YR 5/6		Wheel		
3.	03	Brownish red 2,5 YR 5/6	24 cm	None	-	
	Deep bowl	Brownish red 2,5 YR 5/6	-	Medium		
	Sand, coarse lime	Brownish red 2,5 YR 5/6	3,2 cm	Wheel		
4.	04	Light brown 10YR 5/3	10 cm	None	-	
	Jug	Light brown 10YR 5/3	-	Medium		
	Sand, mica, lime	Light brown 10YR 5/3	5,8 cm	Wheel		
5.	05	Light red 2,5 YR 6/6	15 cm	None	-	
	Jug	Red 10 R 5/6	-	Medium		
	Sand, dense lime	Red 10 R 5/6	4,6	Wheel		
6.	06	Dark brown 10YR 5/4	10 cm	None	-	
	Pot	Red 2,5 YR 6/6	-	Medium		
	Coarse sand, mica	Light brown 10 YR 7/3	4cm	Wheel		
7.	07	Red 2,5 YR 5/6	15 cm	None	-	
	Bowl	Red 10 R 5/6	-	Medium		
	Coarse sand, lime	Red 10 R 5/6	4,5 cm	Wheel		
8.	08	Red 2,5 YR 4/6	7 cm	None	-	
	Jug	Reddish Brown 5YR 5/4	-	Medium		
	Coarse sand, lime	Reddish Brown	4,6 cm	Wheel		

		2,5 YR 4/6				
9.	09	Pinkish red 5YR 7/4	7 cm	None	Red 2,5 YR 5/6 paint is seen just below the rim of the ceramic.	
	Jug	Pink 7,5 YR 7/3	-	Well		
	Sand, lime	Pink 7,5 YR 7/3	4 cm	Wheel		
10.	10	Dark brown 2,5YR 4/3	15 cm	None	-	
	Jug	Dark brown 10 R 3/2	-	Medium		
	Sand	Faint/not visible	4 cm	Wheel		
11.	11	Dark brown 5 YR 3/3	-	Availabl e	There is Groove, zigzag notch decoratio n on the body.	
	Body piece	Red10 R 5/4	-	Medium		
	Dense lime, sand	Light brown 7,5 YR 6/3	6,7 cm			
12.	12	Red 2,5 YR 5/6	-	Availabl e	'S' shaped paste insertion is visible on the handle.	
	Handle piece	Light red 2,5 YR 6/4	-	Medium		
	Sand, lime	Light red 2,5 YR 6/4	6,5 cm	Wheel		

Table. 1: 1st study of the Munsell color chart of terracotta pots found in Kurmizak.

No	Code and Drawing No	Paste	Rim Diameter	Decoration	Definition
	Form	Outer Lining	Bottom Diameter	Baking	
	Tempered with	Inner Lining	Height	Made of	

13.	1	Brown 5 YR 5/4	21 cm	None	
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	Plate	Red 10 R 5/6	-	Medium	-
	Sand, lime	Light red 2,5 YR 6/6	2,3 cm	Wheel	
14.	2	Light red 2,5 YR 6/6	15 cm	None	-
	Bowl	Red 10R 5/6	-	Medium	
	Sand, lime	Red 10R 5/6	6,5 cm	Wheel	
15.	3	Reddish Brown 5 YR 4/6	-	None	-
	-	Dark brown 5 YR 4/3	14 cm	Medium	
	Sand, lime	Light gray 10 YR 7/2	5 cm	Wheel	
16.	4	Brown 5 YR 5/6	-	Available	Groove decorations are seen.
	-	Red 2,5 YR 6/6	17 cm	Ill	
	Sand, coarse, dense lime	Pink 5 YR7/4	8,7 cm	Wheel	
17.	5	Red 2,5 YR 4/6	22 cm	Available	As it descends from the rim to the body, groove decorations are seen one under the other.
	Pot	Red 10 R 4/6	-	Medium	
	Sand	Red 10 R 4/6	5,4 cm	Wheel	
18.	6	Reddish Brown 10 R 4/3	18 cm	Available	As it descends from the rim

	Pot	Dark red 10 R 4/6	-	Medium	to the body, one row of groove decoration is seen.
	Lime	Dark red 10 R 4/6	3.9 cm	Wheel	
19.	7	Red 2,5 YR 6/6	17 cm	Available	Grooves and sears marks can be seen on the outer part of the ceramic.
	Bowl	Light red 2,5 YR 5/6	-	Medium	
	Sand	Red 2,5 YR 6/6	4.9 cm	Wheel	
20.	8	Red 2,5 YR 5/8	5 cm	None	-
	Goblet/Decanter- Jug	Light red 2,5 YR 6/6	-	Medium	
	Lime, sand	Light red 2,5 YR 6/6	3.5 cm	Wheel	
21.	9	Red 2,5 YR 5/8	14 cm	Available	Grooved rim.
	Bowl	Pink 2,5 YR 7/6	-	Medium	
	Sand	Pink 2,5 YR 7/6	3.8 cm	Wheel	
22.	10	Dark red 10 R 4/6	12 cm	None	-
	Jug	Red 10 R 4/6	-	Well	
	Fine sand	Red 10 R 4/6	2.6 cm	Wheel	
23.	11	Red 2,5 YR 6/6	10 cm	None	-
	Bowl	Red 10 R 4/8	-	Very well	
	Fine sand	Red 10 R 4/8	3.5 cm	Wheel	

Table. 2: 2nd study of the Munsell color chart of terracotta pots recovered in Kurmizak.

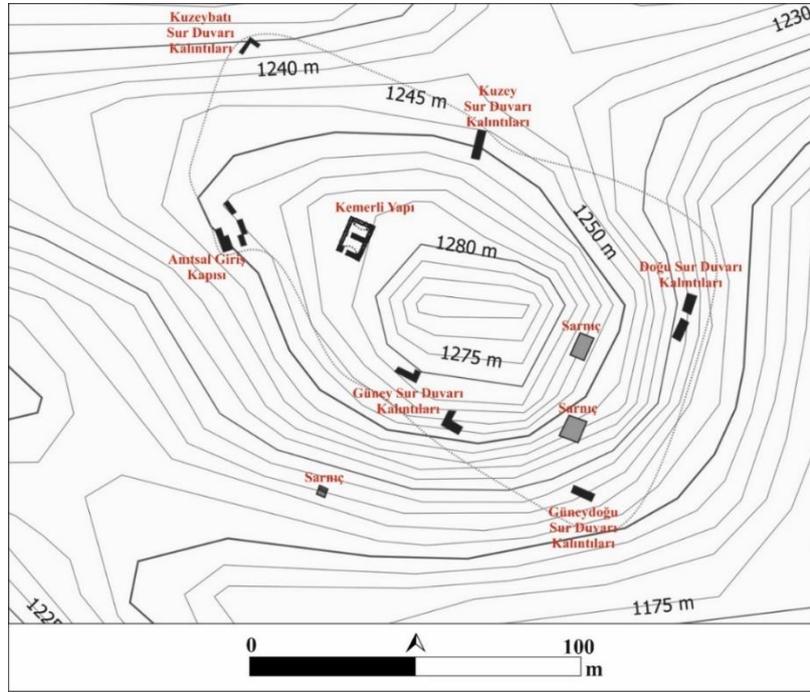


Figure. 1: Kurmizak Fortress layout plan.

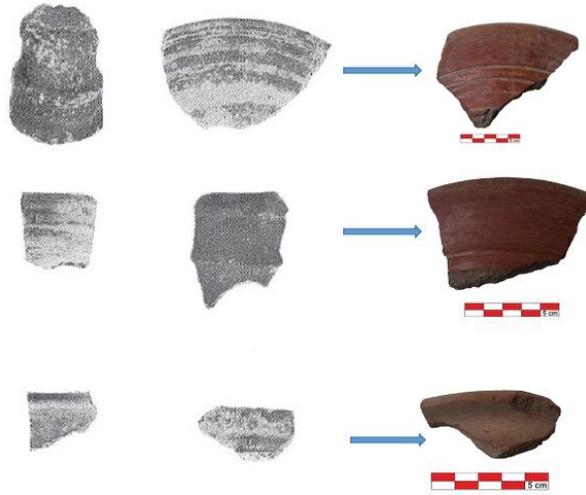


Figure. 2: Urartian ceramics found in the Körzüt Fortress (Tarhan and Sevin, 1976, Lev. IX).

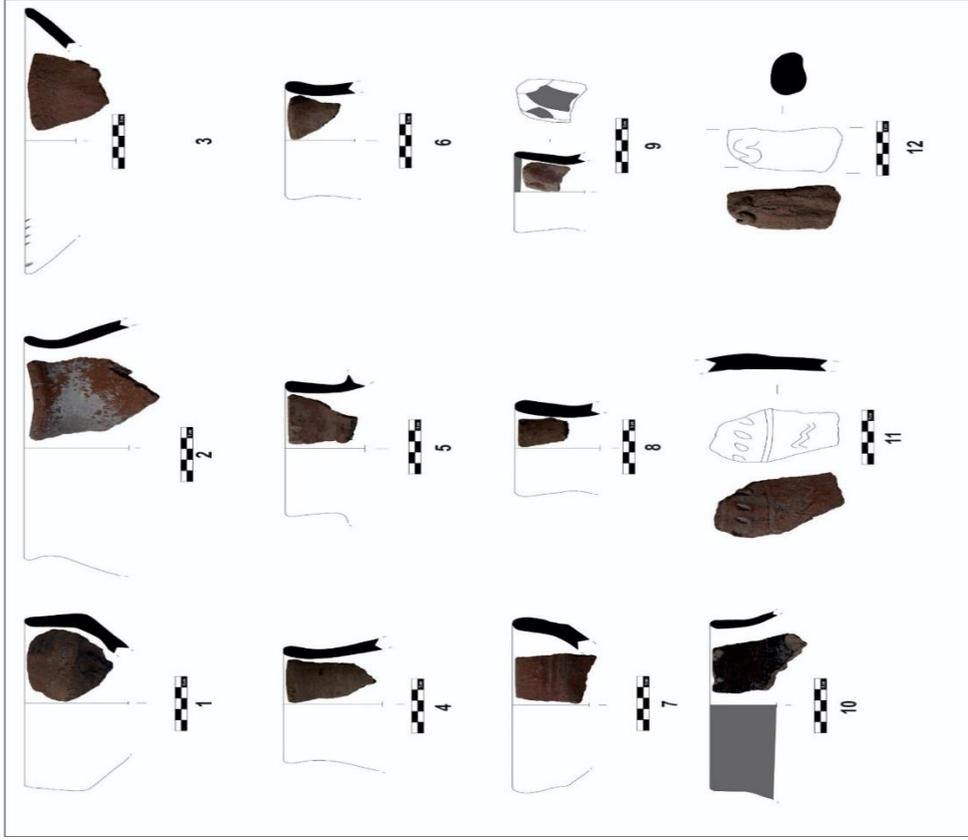


Figure. 3: Terracotta pots and their drawings in Munsell color chart 1.

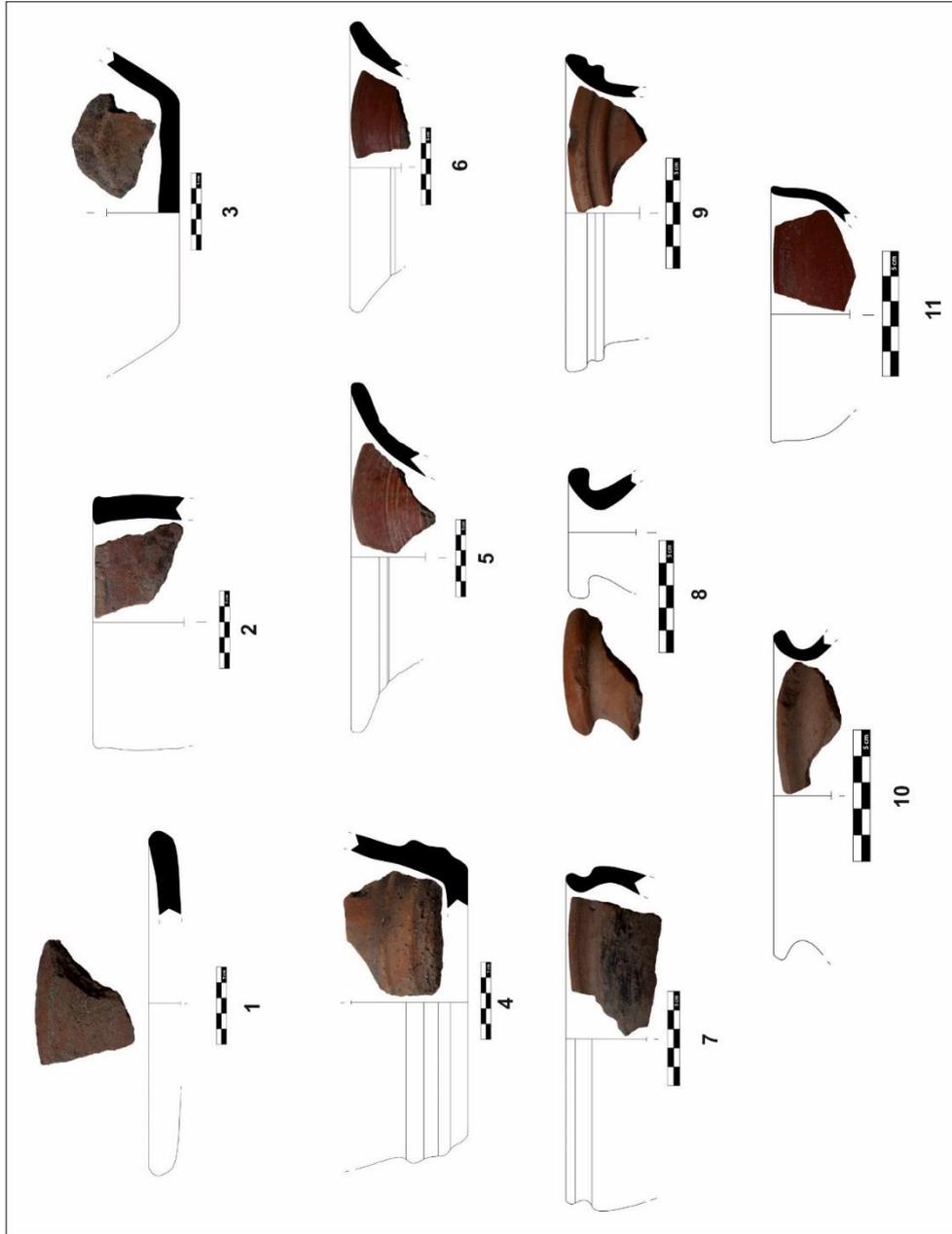


Figure. 4: Terracotta pots and their drawings in Munsell color chart 2.

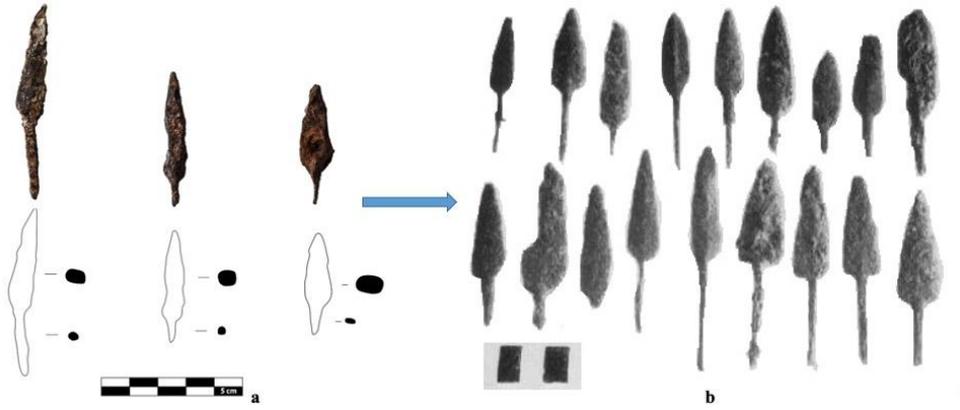


Figure. 5: a. Arrowheads found in the Kurmizak Fortress; b. Arrowheads found in Kayalidere (Burney, 1966, Plate. XIIIa);

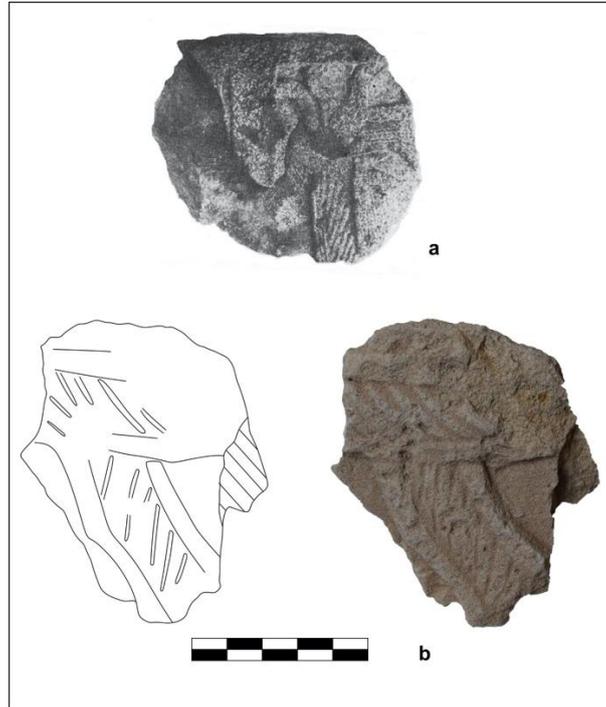


Figure. 6: a. Embossed stone fragment from the Adilcevaz/Kef Fortress (Bilgiç and Ögün, 1964, p. 102, Fig. 3); b. Embossed stone fragment from the Kurmizak Fortress.

Katkı Oranı Beyanı

Makalenin yazarları, makaleye eşit oranda katkı sağlamışlardır.

Çatışma beyanı

Makalenin yazarları bu çalışma ile ilgili taraf olabilecek herhangi bir kişi ya da finansal ilişkileri bulunmadığını dolayısıyla herhangi bir çıkar çatışmasının olmadığını beyan ederler.

Destek ve teşekkür

Çalışmada herhangi bir kurum ya da kuruluştan destek alınmamıştır.