Recently Discovered Urartian Cuneiform Inscriptions in the Temple of the Körzüt Fortress

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ABSTRACT
This study examines the findings from the 2023 rescue excavations at the Körzüt Fortress in the Lake Van Basin. Three newly discovered cuneiform inscriptions offer significant evidence linking the fortress's construction to the reign of the Urartian King Minua (810 - 786 BCE). The inscriptions recount the king's victory over the Erkua tribe and the capture of the city of Luḫiuni. They detail the spoils brought to the Urartian capital, including men, women, horses, and livestock from the city and surrounding areas. This narrative underscores Körzüt's strategic significance during Minua's northern campaigns. Moreover, analysis indicates that inscriptions previously found nearby villages likely originated from this fortress. The excavation of the Susi Temple reveals a square-plan design characteristic of Urartian temple architecture, enhancing our understanding of the period's religious and administrative structures. Collectively, these discoveries provide fresh insights into Urartu's political and cultural organization and its broader regional influence. Körzüt Fortress has thus emerged as a critical center for the study of Urartian history and archaeology in the region.
Keywords: Urartu, Körzüt Fortress, Minua, Haldi Temple, Van Region History, Urartian inscriptions, Minua's inscriptions

Introduction

One of the most prominent regions where the character and representation of Urartu can be distinctly observed is the Lake Van Basin. Setting aside the debated phenomena of Arzaškun and Sugunia, the processes of Urartu's emergence, maturation, and eventual decline are clearly traceable in this region. In this context, the Lake Van Basin, as defined in modern geographical terms, largely corresponds to the frequently mentioned concept of a "core region" for Urartu. This interpretation underscores the region's centrality within Urartian archaeology. The basin contains numerous centers associated with Urartu, among which the most notable are Ṭuşpa, Toprakkale, Çavuştepe, Anzaf, Ayanis, Kef, and Körzüt Fortresses.

Among these, the capital Ṭuşpa stands out due to its monumental scale and archaeological significance. Approximately 57 km northeast of Ṭuşpa lies another substantial fortress, albeit less grand than the capital. Known in the scholarly literature as Körzüt Fortress and locally referred to as Pertak, this site is located 9 km south of the Muradiye district, within the boundaries of Uluşar (Korsot) village (Fig. 1). The fortress was constructed on a basaltic rocky ridge extending north–south along Beydağı, a ridge which projects into the Muradiye Plain (Fig. 2).

As one of the largest settlements in the Muradiye Plain, Körzüt Fortress is remarkable for its strategic location, architectural features, and numerous inscribed slabs scattered in its vicinity, all highlighting its significance. Overlooking the fertile lands of the plain and controlling routes extending westward and eastward through Iran, the fortress served as an economically and militarily significant administrative center. Its fortification walls, temples, palace structures, construction techniques, and stone craftsmanship reflect its monumental nature. Numerous inscribed and uninscribed stone slabs have been identified at Körzüt Fortress and in the surrounding villages of Muradiye, Karahan, Topuzarpa, Köşk, and Uluşar. Many of these slabs have been transferred to the Van Museum, underscoring importance of evaluating them collectively alongside the findings from Körzüt Fortress.

Körzüt Fortress has been a subject of study by leading scholars of Urartian research since the late 19th century. In addition to the surface surveys conducted by C. Burney and T. Tarhan-V. Sevin, the site has also been the focus of linguistic studies by Belck and Lehmann-Haupt, A. Dinçol, and M. Payne-N. Başgelen, as well as M. Salvini. The Körzüt region is one of the significant areas where Urartian inscriptions are densely found. Initially, Belck reported discovering four Urartian inscriptions in local churches during his 1891 research (Belck 1892: no.8,17,125, 480). Similarly, Belck and Lehmann-Haupt mentioned inscriptions from the Körzüt region in their studies (Belck, 1901: 302, 621, 623; Lehmann-Haupt, 1900: 621). The name Körzüt was first introduced to the academic world through Burney's surface surveys conducted in 1956. In his work, "Urartian Fortresses and Towns in the Van Region,"

Burney highlighted the Körzüt fortifications as a notable Urartian structure (Burney, 1957: 47, Fig. 6).

Another significant study of the region was conducted by Dinçol. In his article, "Die neuen urartäischen Inschriften aus Körzüt", Dinçol examined various Urartian inscriptions from Körzüt and its surroundings, including construction inscriptions (Dinçol, 1976: 19–24). Later, the fortress was revisited during surface surveys conducted by Tarhan and Sevin, who assessed the site in terms of Urartian military and civil architecture (Tarhan & Sevin, 1976–77). Additional studies analyzing inscriptions from Körzüt and its vicinity include publications by Başgelen and Payne in 2009 (Başgelen & Payne, 2009).

Most recently, rescue excavations conducted by the Van Museum Directorate in 2016 unveiled new evidence about the region. The results of these excavations were presented to the academic community through publications such as "A New Urartian Temple in Körzüt Fortress, Turkey: A Report on the Rescue Excavation of 2016 and New Approaches on the Origin of Urartian Square Temple Architecture" (Kuvanç, Işık, Genç, 2016) and "Körzüt Kalesi Tapınak Alanı 2016 Yılı Kurtarma Kazısı" (Uslu, 2021).

Due to significant site destruction caused by looters, additional rescue excavations were conducted by the Van Museum in 2022 and 2023. The findings not only demonstrate the importance of the site but also address longstanding questions about its original name and founder.

In October 2023, during excavations at Körzüt Fortress in the so-called Southern Temple, three stone slabs containing an inscription of the Urartian king Minua were discovered.

Two basalt slabs (Slabs 1 and 2), lying horizontally close to each other, were found in the northeastern part of the temple, apparently in their original location. The remains of a later period hearth were found atop the first slab. The third slab (Slab 3) was found in the southwestern part of the temple.

A single inscription is carved across the four sides of the slabs. For convenience, the inscriptions are designated as follows: Slab 1A, Slab 1B, Slab 2, and Slab 3, where A and B indicate the sides with inscriptions. The inscription is continuous with the line progressing sequently across the slabs (e.g., Slab 1 line 1 continues to Slab 2 line 1, and so forth). Such sequentially arrangements are characteristic of the monumental inscriptions of the Urartian kings[1]. Notably, the inscription on Slab 1 occupies two sides (A and B), forming an angle that corresponds to the temple's architectural plan.

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[1]   For example, see the inscription of Rusa II from Ayanis, "a long cult inscription attached to the entrance to the temple of Susi» (Salvini, Ayanis I: 251; also mentioned in CTU I: 565, Salvini, Wegner, 2014: 121) or the inscription of Rusa II from Karmir Blur (KUKN 423) and some others.

Methods

This study employs a philological analysis of the primary source material, complemented by comparative philological and historical methods.

The language of the cuneiform inscription is classical Urartian[2]. The signs are clearly carved into basalt and are remarkably well-preserved, except for the final signs on Slab 2. However, this minor damage does not hinder the readability of the text. The inscriptions feature a considerable spacing between the signs, allowing for accurate interpretation of each character.

Each basalt slab contains six lines of cuneiform text. These lines are separated from the stone's edges, creating a conditional frame, and are distinctly spaced from one another. The intervals between the lines measure 3.5 and 4 cm.

The inscriptions share similarities in content, formulation, and toponyms with other Urartian inscriptions, as documented by Salvini (CTU I A 5-2A-F) and by Arutyunyan (KUKN 47, 49, 50, 51) and by Melikishvili (UKN 30, 31, 32, 34). Based on these parallels, the discovered text may represent the initial two slabs of the so-called "Ceremonial/Festive Minua's Inscription", while Slab 3 likely corresponds to its concluding segment.

The inscription follows a standard title format and narrative style, enabling the reconstruction of the missing fragments with a high degree of accuracy (Table 2 for the reconstructed text and its transliteration and translation). The reconstruction is further facilitated by the absence of any fixed pattern in the placement of words or syllables across lines transferred to subsequent slabs. Unfortunately, it is currently impossible to determine the exact number of missing slabs. This limitation arises from the varying dimensions of the discovered stones and the different line lengths within the text.

Results

Rescue excavations conducted in 2016 and 2022 uncovered a temple structure (Kuvanç, Işık, & Genç, 2020; Uslu, 2021) and a single masonry tomb within the necropolis area. In 2023, further excavations led to the identification of a Susi Temple, a distinctive architectural feature of Urartu. These excavations were conducted near the southern edge of the citadel rock, within a destruction pit approximately 12 m in diameter and 2 m deep (Fig. 2). The findings revealed a typical Urartian square-planned Susi Temple.

The temple, which had suffered extensive damage, was partially excavated. Only the northern entrance façade was exposed down to the ground level. The eastern, western, and

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2   «... the bulk of Urartian texts, more or less understandable, are standardized royal inscriptions, replete with stencil formulas..." (Khachikyan, 2010: 149).

northern walls were uncovered to the upper course of the stone levels to outline the structure's plan, while the interior was excavated to the floor level (Fig. 3). The temple is a classical example of an Urartian tower-type temple, featuring a square-planned cella (main chamber) accessed through a narrow rectangular corridor flanked by prominent risalits (projecting corners).

The northern façade includes a stepped entrance, 1.40 m wide, leading into a narrow corridor measuring 3.36 m in length and 0.75 m in width. This corridor opens to the square-planned cella, which measures 5 × 5 m. The corridor and cella sections are constructed with large, neatly cut stone slabs. Bedrock observed between and beneath the stones on the cella floor indicates that the temple was built on a level bedrock foundation.

Significant artifacts from both the Urartian and Medieval periods were discovered during the excavations. Notably, three basalt stone slabs inscribed with Urartian cuneiform were discovered on the preserved northeastern and northwestern facade walls of the temple (Fig. 3). The first two inscribed stones were positioned on the front face of the northeast risalit, while the third was located on the front face of the northwest risalit.

The first two stones, originally positioned side by side, had shifted forward from their original *in situ* alignment (Fig. 4–8). During the Medieval period, a tandır (oven) was constructed directly above these stones. The displaced stones were likely moved forward before the tandır's construction. The inscription on the northwest risalit had fallen sideways in front of the wall (Figs. 9, 10). Based on the positions and conditions of the three inscriptions, it is evident that Medieval settlers disrupted their original placement.

Table 1: Dimensions of the stone slabs

cm	Slab 1: KRZT K. 01.11.2023/1	Slab 2: KRZT K. 22.10.2023/2	Slab 3: KRZT K.22.10.2023/3
length	94	67.5	79
height	33	33	32,5
width	57	69.5	59

Discussion

The Urartian text inscribed on the slabs from Körzüt reveals that Minua, son of Išpuini, led a military campaign against the tribal union of *Erkua,* during which he captured the city of *Luḫiuni*. According to the inscription, Minua took men, women, horses, livestock from *Luḫiuni* and its surrounding regions as spoils of war and transported them to his capital, *Ṭušpa*.

Although the name of the city is not explicitly mentioned on the three slabs found in Körzüt, there is strong evidence to suggest that these inscriptions pertain to Minuaḫinili[3].

Among the 15 texts documenting Minua's campaign against *Erkua* (Kuvanç, Işık, Genç, 2016: 115), the city of *Luḫiuni* is mentioned in at least six of them[4]. These texts originate from various sites, including Tharr (Yalındüz), Güzak (Karatavuk), Berkri (Muradiye), Körzüt (Muradiye), Dzorovank, and Ṭušpa (Van Fortress). In scholarly literature, it has been suggested that the Minuaḫinili referenced in Urartian sources probably refers to the conquered city of *Luḫiuni*, renamed Minuaḫinili by the Urartian king after the construction of modest structures at the site (Arutyunyan, 1985: 130). Considering the standard form of Minua's inscription found in the Southern Temple of Körzüt, we can further explore the possibility of multiple toponyms bearing the name Minuaḫinili[5]. As Slabs 1 and 2 from Körzüt appear to have been found *in situ*[6], it is reasonable to propose the existence of another city with the same name.

Transliteration and philological analysis play critical role in identifying whether previously found fragments belong to this text. Several fragments resembling the inscription found in Körzüt[7] have been identified[8], allowing for the reconstruction of lines both preceding and following the discovered slabs.

Orthographic variations in the spelling of personal names across monuments warrant close examination. For example, in the Körzüt inscription, Minua's name is written in a straightforward syllabic: [m]*mì-nu-a*. By contrast, the Berkri inscription employs a phonetic spelling: [m]*mì-nu-ú-a* (CTU I A 5-2B), while the Qalatgah inscription features a more extended phonetic form: [m]*mì-i-nu-ú-a* (CTU I 5-61, KUKN 46). The reasons for these differences remain unclear; however, it seems likely that a single spelling was consistently used within a given inscription.

The six previously known identical inscriptions, which vary ing their state of preservation, have been compiled (CTU I:188-189), shedding light on the fragments that

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3   The suffix of affiliation *-ḫi(ni)* with the extension of the plural ending *-li (-ḫinili)* is used in the formation of names of various places (fortified cities, mansions, etc.) derived from the name of a person. For example, the names of the cities built by kings Minua, Argišti, Rusa: [m]Minuaḫinili, [m]Argištiḫinili, [m]Rusaḫinili (UKN: 34; see also Ayvazyan, 2011: 111; Salvini, 2014: 20). Thus, the name of the ruler (PN) with the suffix *-ḫinili* as toponyms can be conventionally understood as "those who belong to PN".

4   http://oracc.museum.upenn.edu/ecut/cbd/qpn/onebigfile.html (the date of the last reference 25.11.2024).

5   Until now, in the specialized literature, the toponym Minuaḫinili has been associated with two settlements: 1) Minuaḫinili according to the inscriptions of Minua from Tsolakert and Bashbulakh (both at Tashburun on the northern slope of Mount Ararat), the fortress (É.GAL) of the country of the *Erkua* tribe on the Ararat plain, in the right bank of the Aras River. In this case, Minuaḫinili means the city of *Luḫiuni*, renamed after the conquest of the country of Erkua; 2) "Minuaḫinili – according to the Akhtamar inscription of Minua apparently, is a settlement of the Erinu region on the southern coast of Lake Van. Over there, next to the country of Ay(ya)du (KUKN: 515-516; Arutyunyan, 1985: 142).

6   Slab 3 was found 9.80 meters from the first two ones.

7   The discrepancies in the found texts relate mainly to the peculiarities of phonetic spelling.

8   The reconstruction of these lines is based mainly on the publication of texts (CTU I A 5-2A-F and KUKN 47, 49, 50, 51).

were either erroneously restored or not restored at all. The new inscription from Körzüt makes a significant contribution to the study of site text, as it contains signs unique to this site. These signs are clearly discernible on the slabs, leaving little room for doubts in their interpretation. Consequently, the Körzüt inscription provides an opportunity to confidently restore previously incomprehensible signs, offers new translations of certain words and phrases, and introduces new lexemes into the Urartian language. The development allows us to verify or introduce earlier reconstructions of Urartian texts[9]. Table 2 highlights the signs absent in other inscriptions by underlining them, underscoring the Körzüt inscription's critical role in advancing our understanding of Urartian epigraphy.

Table 2: Signs according to the discovered slabs[10]

	Slab 1 Side A	Slab 1 Side B	Slab 2
1	ᴰḫal-di-i-	-ni-ni uš-ma-a-ši-i-ni ᵐmì-nu[11]-a-še[12]	[m]iš-pu-ú-i-ni-e-ḫi-ni-še
2	ᵐer-e-ku-	-ú-a-ḫi-i-ni-e-di ḫa-a-ú-bi ᵁᴿᵁ	lu[13]-ú-ḫi-i-ú-ni-ni ᵐer-e-
3	a-li[14] ú-i-	-e a-i-še-e-i i-ni-e-i qa[15]-ab-qa-	-ar-šú-la-la-a-ni a-ru-ú-ni
4	[16]a-li-e-ki	za-a-áš-gu-ú-bi a-li-e-ki še-e-ḫi-	-e-ri a-gu-ú-bi 1 LIM 7 ME
5	ᵐmì-nu-a-še	ᵐiš-pu[17]-ú-i-ni-e-ḫi-ni-še a-li	tú[18]-sa-a-i ᵁᴿᵁtu-ú-uš-pa-
6	ma-nu ᴸᵁ́ú-	-e-di-a-ni-e-i gu-ur-da-ri[19] ᵁᴿᵁa-	-e[20]-li-i-a ᴷᵁᴿdi-ru-ni ú-

9   See the notes and comment on Transliteration and Translation.
10   The signs of the slabs from Körzüt are highlighted in bold, while the reconstructed fragments are given in a regular font.
11   In CTU I: 188 Salvini restores the additional sign **-ú** in the name of mì-nu-ú-a-še, although this sign is not present in the Körzüt inscription.
12   The reconstruction of these signs in the other texts is obvious, as it shows part of the name ᵐmì-nu-a + ergative -še.
13   In the texts about conquering city of Luḫiuni (e.g., CTU I A5-1) it can be seen the verb ḫa(u) – "to capture, to conquer" + indicator of 1sg of the transitive verb **bi**, the first letters of the city name ᵁᴿᵁ**lu-** in Luḫiuni.
14   In similar texts, it is always in the form a-li-e.
15   **qa** – a logical and indisputable restoration of the sign, as the similar phrase can be found in Urartian texts **qa-ab-qa-ar-šú-la-la-a-ni** – "(which no one else) had conquered" (e.g., CTU I 5-1).
16   In the texts where this line is reconstructed, Salvini gives sign MU "year" at the beginning – A 5-2A, A 5-2B, A 5-2C, A 5-2D (CTU I: 184-189.). However, in the text A 5-2E, where the signs at the beginning of line 4 are well preserved, as in the text found in Körzüt, the phrase begins directly with the word a-li-e-ki. In this case, Salvini reconstructs the *MU* sign at the end of line 3.
17   **-pu** - this sign is obviously restored in the name ᵐiš-**pu**-ú-i-ni.
18   Here, in the inscription from Körzüt, sign *UD / tú* is clearly read after *URU*, whereas in all other versions of Minua's text, the first sign is missing in this word, which leads to gaps in translation (for example, see CTU I A 5-2C:5; KUKN 51:4). In the article «Urartu Krallığı'nda Harem» Çavuşoğlu R., Gökce B. Işık K. suppose that the partially preserved signs stand for the word "harem" (Çavuşoğlu, 2010: 159). Thus, additional research is required to translate the probable term a-li-tú*?-sa-a-i.
19   The etymology of the word *GURDARIE* remains unclear. Thus, most researchers translate the term "prisoners". In the Minua's inscriptions, we are talking about women from the city of *Aelija*, the country of *Diruni*. It seems strange after the phrase "I killed some, I took others alive (captured)" to mention additionally captured women. Here, it seems important to mention Gordeziani's opinion, which I use in my translation of the text: "Probably, it must denote a state in which the people mentioned must have found themselves. The phrase follows the description of the Urartians' trophies and presumably refers to the fate of some of the captives... A special mention of taking captives to the capital city may imply that they were treated as hostages (Gordeziani, 2010-2011: 40).
20   ᵁᴿᵁ**a-e** – in the name of the city *Aelija* is probably mentioned only in the inscriptions (CTU I A 5-2A-F) dedicated to the campaign against the tribal union of *Erkua*. But only in Körzüt inscription all the signs of this word are clearly seen.

Missing slabs
(possible reconstructions)

1	[a-li i-ú ᴰḫal-di-i-na-a-ú-e KÁ i-e-i-me-e ᾽a-a-ḫu-ú-bi i-ú ᴰḫal-di-i-ni-li KÁ
2	[-ku-a-ḫi-i-ni-e-i ᴷᵁᴿe-ba-a-ni-i-e ᴷᵁᴿe-ti-ú-ni-ni za-a-áš-gu-ú-bi ᵐmì-nu-a-še ᵐiš-pu-ú-i-ni-
3	[ᴰḫal-di-še-e ᵐmì-nu-a ᵐiš-pu-ú-i-ni-e-ḫi-ni-e ḫa-a-ú-ni ᵁᴿᵁlu-ú-ḫi-ú-ni-i-ni
4	[33 ANŠE.KUR.RAᴹᴱˢ 7 LIM 6 ME 16 ᴳᵁ⁴pa-a-ḫi-i-ni a-ti-i-bi-e 5 LIM 3 ME 20 ᵁᴰᵁšú-ú-še
5	[-a URU²¹ ú-te-e a-i-še-e-i ᴸᵁe-ri-li-e-še i-za-a-ni ᴸᵁ́ú-e-di-a-ni tar-a-i-e
6	[-ni²² ka-am-ni a-ši-ni-e-i ᵁᴿᵁa-e-li-i-a ma-nu gu-ur-da-ri ᵁᴿᵁ᾽a-al-ṭu-qu-ia ᴷᵁᴿṣi-ia-ad-ḫi-ni

Missing slab (possible reconstructions)	Slab 3
1 — ši-i-du-ú-bi su-lu-uš-ti-i-a-di ᴰḫal-di-i-e ḫu-ú-ti-i-a-di ᴰ]	**ḫal-di-i-e di-e nu-ú**[-na-a-bi]
2 — e-ḫi-ni-še a-li-e ᵁᴿᵁlu-ú-ḫi-i-]	**... -ú-ni-ni²³ URU pa-a-ta-[-ri-e]**
3 — ᾽a-a-al-du-ú-ni ᴷᵁᴿe-ti-i-ú-ni-i-ni me-e-ši-]	**...-i-ni-i pi-e-i 50 [a-ti-]**
4 — i-na-a-ni ᴸᵁe-ri-e-li-i-e nu-na-a-bi mì-i a-li ᴸᵁ́ḫu-ra-]	**...-a-di-i-na-a-še i-ri-ḷi-bi]²⁴-**
5 — pa-a-ra-la-ni gu-ú-ni ᵐmì-nu-a-še ᵐiš-pu-i-ni-ḫi-ni-še ᵁᴿᵁ]	**lu-ḫi-ú-ni-a-ni pa-ru-ni²⁵ ka-**
6 — ᴰḫal-di-i-ni-ni al-su-i-ši-ni ᵐmì-nu-a-ni ᵐiš-pu-ú-i-	**...-ni-ḫi MAN DAN-NU MAN al-su-i-ni²⁶-še**

Missing slab
(possible reconstructions)

1	[ᵐer-e-ku-ú-a-ḫi ᴷᵁᴿe-ba-a-ni uš-ta-a-di-e]
2	ᴸᵁe-ri-e-li-nu-si-e ᵐer-e-ku-ú-a-ḫi-i-ni-e-i]
3	[-bi-e X LIM X ME ᾽a-še(?) ᴸᵁ́ú-e-di-a-ni(?) ᴸᵁta-ar-šú-ú-᾽a-a-ni-e]
4	[-tú-ú i-ú KUR-ni áš-ú-la-bi ᴰḫal-di-ni-ni uš-ma-ši-ni]
5	[-am-ni] ᴸᵁ́ú-e-di-a-ni ᾽a-a(?)-ši-ni-e-i ᵁᴿᵁtu-uš-pa-ni]
6	[MAN ᴷᵁᴿbi-ia-i-na-ú-e a-lu-si ᵁᴿᵁṭu-uš-pa URU]

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21 When reconstructing, we take into account the estimated number of signs per line. In the texts in the appropriate place, the word "city" occurs in the form of a logogram *URU* (A 5-2A – well preserved; A 5-2B – partially preserved) and in phonetic spelling *pa-a-ta-a-ri-e* (A 5-2C – partially preserved; A 5-2D, A 5-2E – reconstructed (CTU I 184–189).

22 *ú-ni* is usually left untranslated in the publication of texts. Possibly, it may be an example of excessive orthography⁽?⁾.

23 Regarding ᵁᴿᵁ*Lu-ḫi-i-ú-ni-ni* Arutyunyan remarks that the ending with repeated signs *-nini* is completely not typical for Urartian toponyms. is completely unusual for Urartian toponyms. Therefore, in his opinion, the latter -ni – is an indicator of the possessive form (KUKN 471).

24 ᴸᵁ́*ḫu-ra-di-i-na-a-še* **i-ri-ḷi-bi**] preserved only in Körzüt inscription. ᴸᵁ́*ḫuradi(e)* – "a warrior"; ᴸᵁ́*ḫuradini(e) li*ᴹᴱˢ – "warriors", "troops", "army" + ergative-*še*; the verb *irbu* – "to take, to capture" in phonetic spelling *iribi*.

25 In all known texts, the signs *e-di-ni*, are reconstructed in an identical place, while leaving this fragment without translation (see CTU I: 185-189). In the inscription from Körzüt, clearly written and undamaged signs give the reading of *pa-ru-ni*.

26 **al-su-i-ni-še: alsuini** – "great" + ergative-*še* where -*še* preserved only in Körzüt inscription.

Figure 1: Eastern Anatolia and important Urartian Centers, (by E. Ödük)

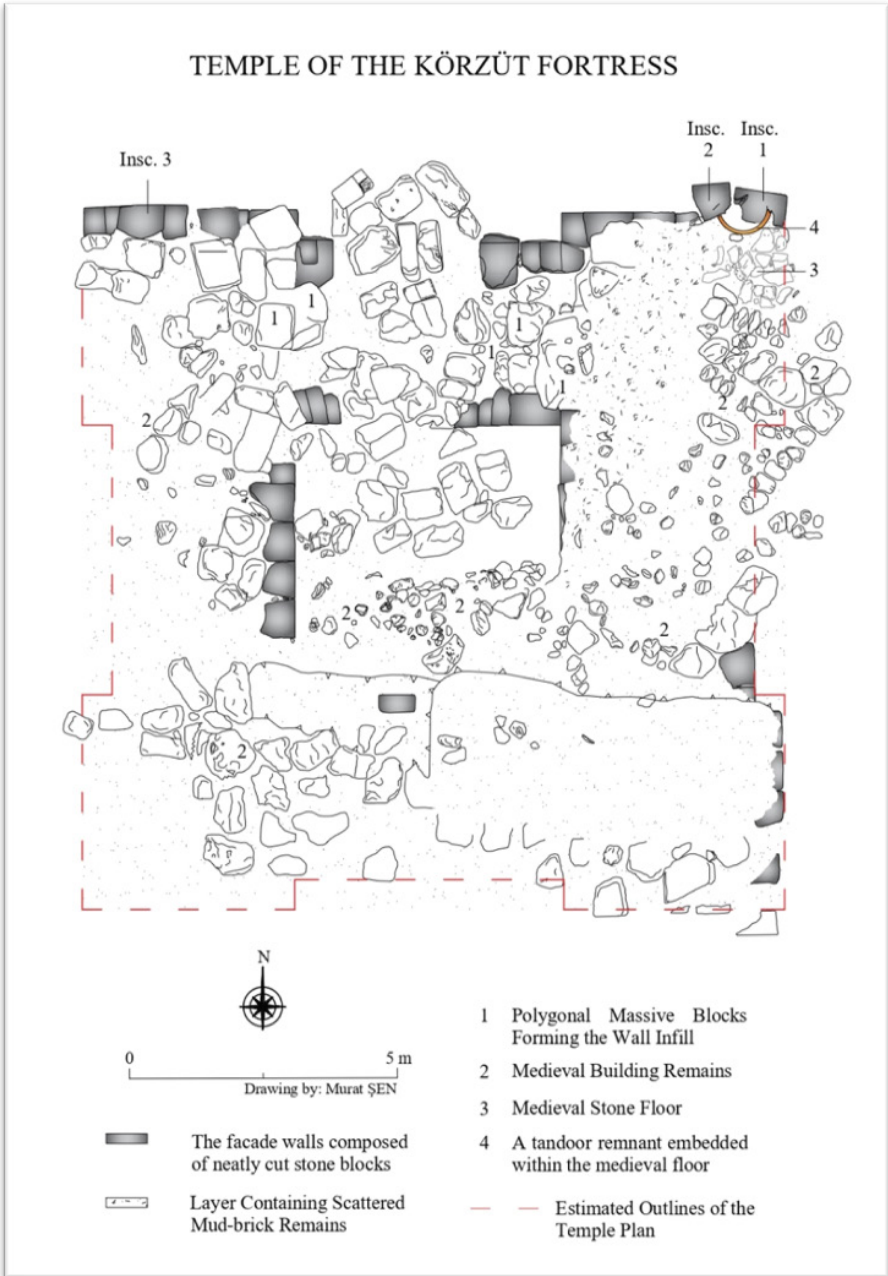**Figure 2:** Körzüt Fortress, Muradiye Plain and Lake Van from the east
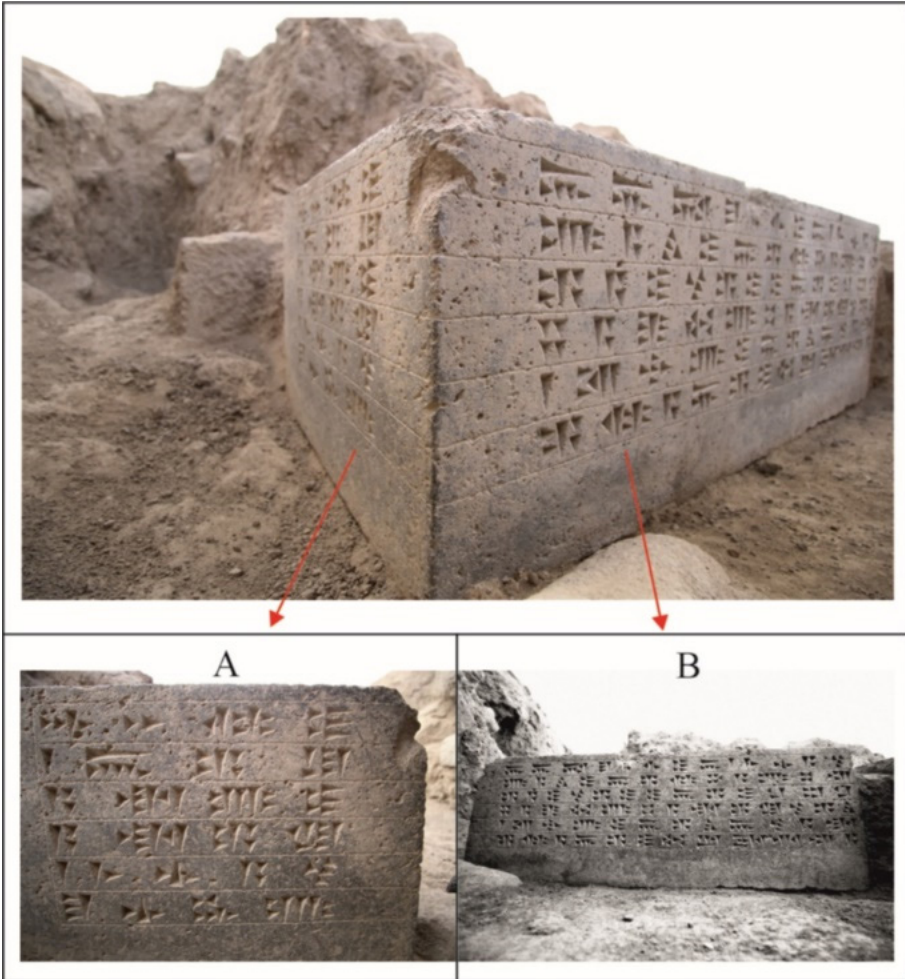
Figure 3: Susi, Haldi temple, (by M. Şen)
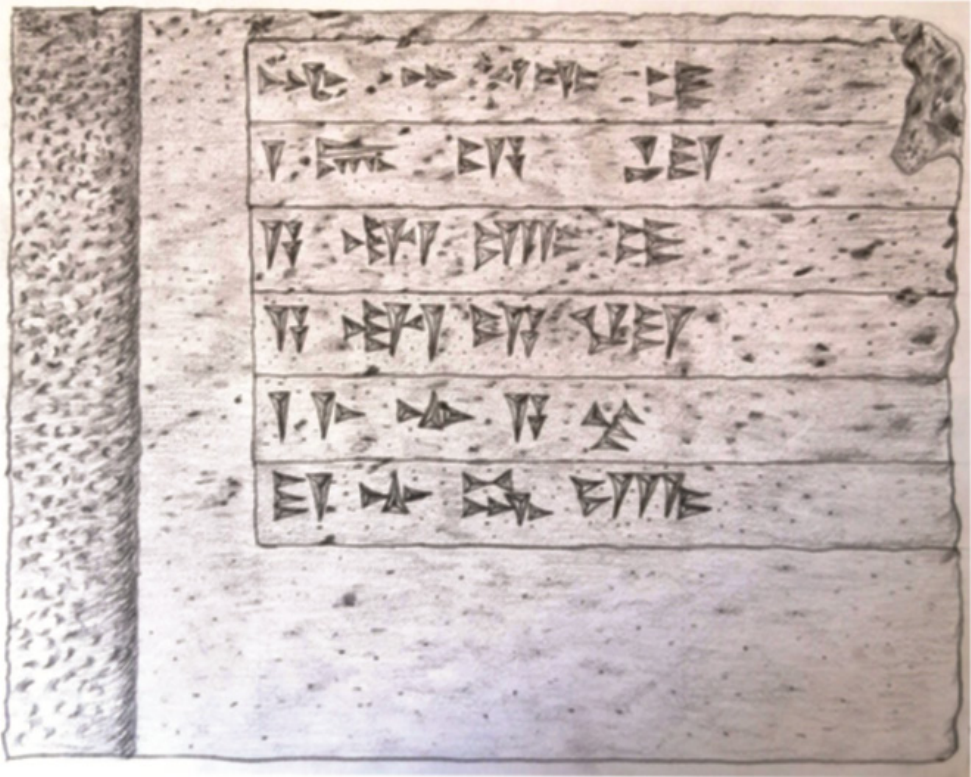
Figure 4: Slab 1, northeast tower

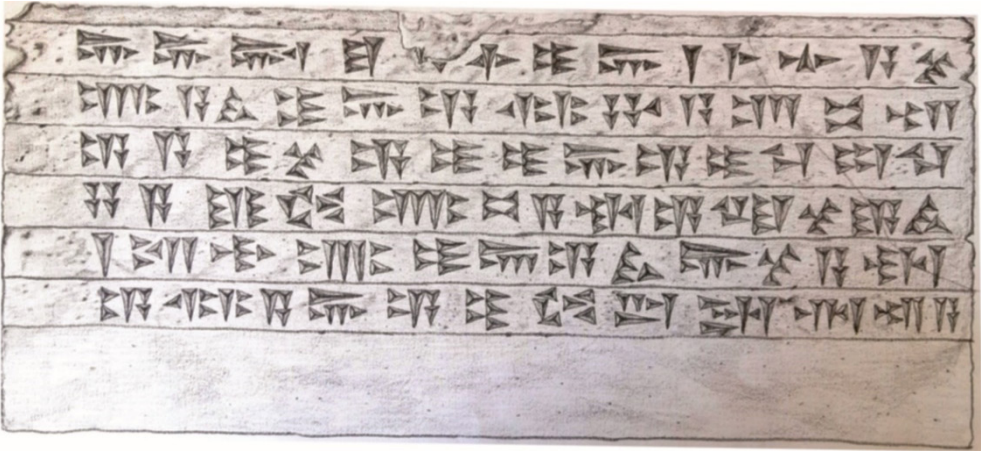**Figure 5:** Slab 1, side A, (by H. Fidan)

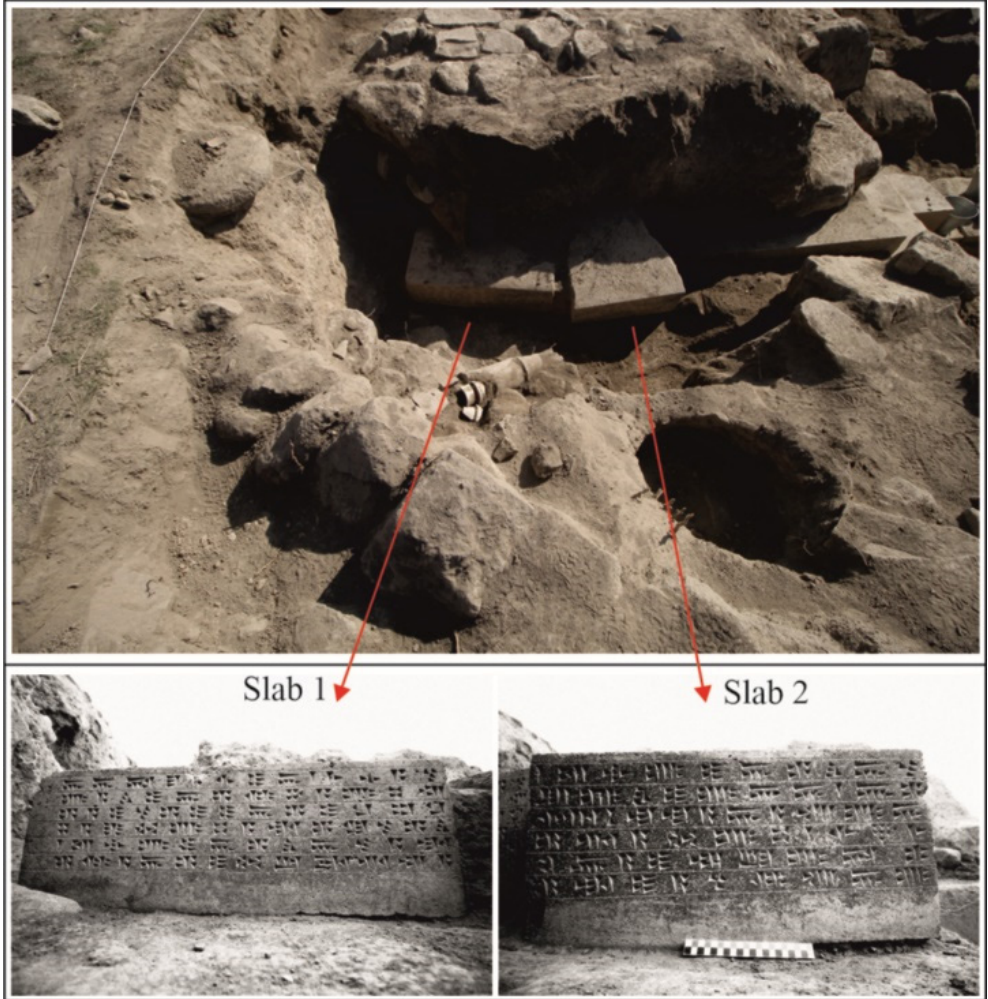**Figure 6:** Slab 1, side B, (by H. Fidan)

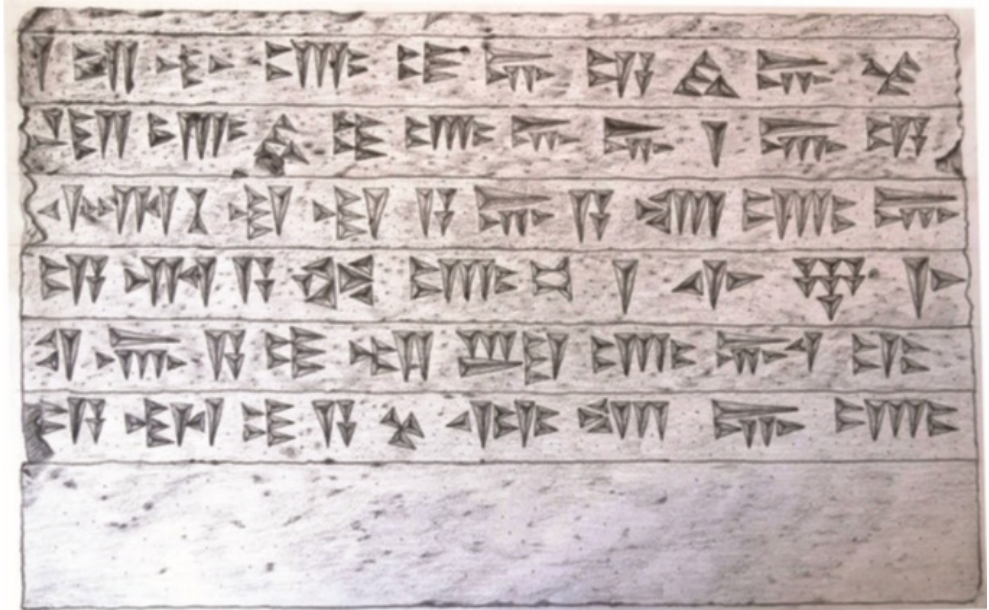**Figure 7:** Slab 2, northeast tower

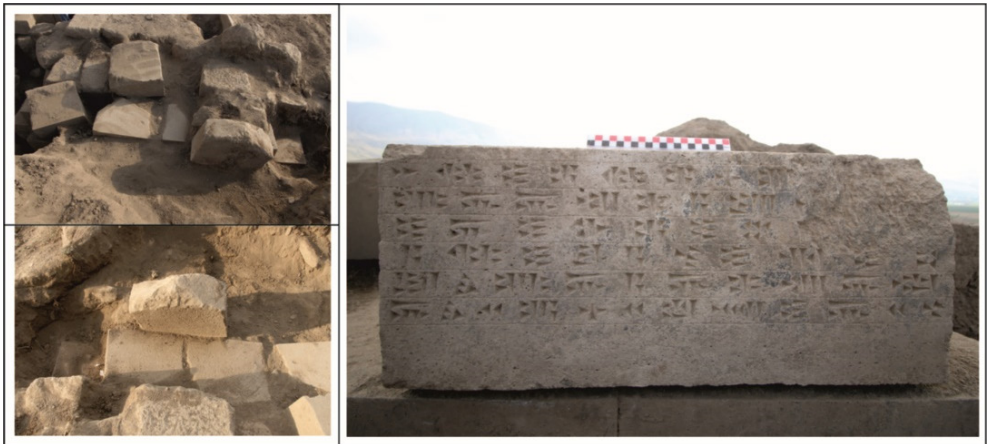**Figure 8:** Slab 2, northeast tower, (by H. Fidan)

Figure 9: Slab 3, nortwest tower
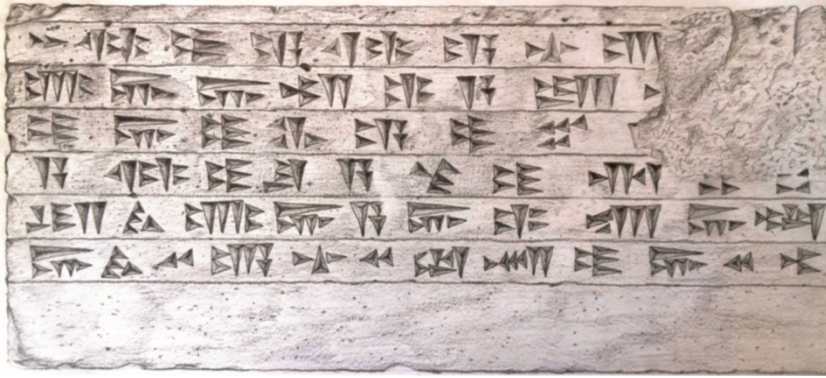
Figure 10: Slab 3, (by H. Fidan)

Transcription and translation

1. ^Dḫal-di-i-ni-ni uš-ma-a-ši-i-ni ^mmì-nu-a-še ^[m]iš-pu-ú-i-ni-e-ḫi-ni-še [a-li i-ú ^Dḫal-di-i-na-a-ú-e KÁ i-e-i-me-e²⁷ ʾa-a-ḫu-ú-bi i-ú ^Dḫal-di-i-ni-li KÁ ši-i-du-ú-bi su-lu-uš-ti-i-a-di ^Dḫal-di-i-e ḫu-ú-ti-i-a-di] ^D**ḫal-di-i-e di-e nu-ú**-[na-a-bi] [^mer-e-ku-ú-a-ḫi ^{KUR}e-ba-a-ni uš-ta-a-di-e]

1: With the power of Ḫaldi Minua, the son of Išpuini, [says: "When I established the foundation for Haldi Gate, when I built Haldi Gate, I prostrated myself before Haldi], I pray[ed] to Haldi". [He(?)²⁸ came to the country of the tribal union? *Erkua*]. I set off ...

2. ^mer-e-ku-ú-a-ḫi-i-ni-e-di ḫa-a-ú-bi ^{URU}lu-ú-ḫi-i-ú-ni-ni ^mer-e-[ku-a-hi-i-ni-e-i ^{KUR}e-ba-a-ni-i-e ^{KUR}e-ti-ú-ni-ni za-a-áš-gu-ú-bi ^mmì-nu-a-še ^miš-pu-ú-i-ni-e-ḫi-ni-še a-li-e ^{URU}lu-ú-ḫi-i]-**ú-ni-ni URU pa-a-ta-[ri-e]** [^{LÚ}e-ri-e-li-nu-si-e ^mer-e-ku-ú-a-ḫi-i-ni-e-i]

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27 This fragment remains unclear. Salvini makes the word division as follows: ^D*ḫal-di-i-na-a-ú-e KÁ i-e-i-me-e* – "(when) I laid the foundation of the gate (temple) of Haldi" (CTU I A 5-2F). Unfortunately, Arutyunyan does not translate this fragment due to the poor preservation of the text, but gives another word division, probably based on case coherence. ^D*ḫal-di-i-na-a-ú-e KÁ-i-e-i me-e...* In the commentary to this line, Arutyunyan writes that the summary texts for this fragment are not entirely convincing. He tends to see in *me-e-...* the beginning of words meripte or meruni (KUKN 55). In the texts cited by Salvini, we see that in texts A 5-2A and A 5-2C the fragment *a-li i-ú* ^D*ḫal-di-i-na-a-ú-e KÁ i-e-i-me-e ʾa-a-ḫu-ú-bi* is partially or completely preserved. Therefore, in this publication it makes sense to follow Salvini's version.

28 This phrase is quite controversial. Similar phrases occur where the pronominal suffix clitic changes in verbs following each other, they are quite common. In this case, we see the intransitive verb *nuna-* with the suffix of the 3rd person singular -*bi*. Salvini translates the phrase *nunabi merkuaḫi* ^{KUR}*ebani* as "It has become the turn of the country of Erkua" (CTU I A 5-2). Melikishvili translates "The country of *Erkua* has come", interpreting it as "I have reached the country of *Erkua*" (UKN 30). Arutyunyan believes that the suffix -*bi* refers to the name of the god Haldi preceding in the line: "He came (the god Haldi) to the country (of the *Erkua* tribe)". He supposes that this is due to the phrase that the god Haldi granted Minua the royal city of *Luḫiuni*. And only after that Minua speaks on his own behalf: "I conquered the city of *Luḫiuni*" (KUKN 47).

2: ... to the country of *Erkua*. I conquered *Luḫiuni*, the city of the tribal union? *Er*[*kua*, – I destroyed the country of *Etiuni*. Minua, the son of Išpuini, says: "*Luḫ*]*iuni*, the royal ci⌈ty] [of the *Erkua* tribe],

3. **a-li²⁹ ú-i-e a-i-še-e-i i-ni-e-i qa-ab-qa-ar-šú-la-la-a-ni a-ru-ú-ni** [ᴰhal-di-še-e ᵐmì-nu-a ᵐiš-pu-ú-i-ni-e-ḫi-ni-e ḫa-a-ú-ni ᵁᴿᵁlu-ú-ḫi-ú-ni-i-ni 'a-a-al-du-ú-ni ᴷᵁᴿe-ti-i-ú-ni-i-ni me-e-ši-]-**i-ni-i pi-e-i 50** [a-ti-] [-bi-e X LIM X ME 'a-še(?) ᴸᵁ́ú-e-di-a-ni(?) ᴸᵁ́ta-ar-šú-ú-'a-a-ni-e]

3: which no one else conquered, [he (Haldi?) granted to Minua, the son of Išpuini". I conquered *Luḫiuni*, I defeated the country of *Etiuni* under the condition of paying trib]ute. 50 thousa[nd of ... men, women ... people]

4. **a-li-e-ki za-a-áš-gu-ú-bi a-li-e-ki še-e-ḫi-e-ri a-gu-ú-bi 1 LIM 7 ME** [33 ANŠE.KUR.RAᴹᴱŠ 7 LIM 6 ME 16 ᴳᵁ⁴pa-a-ḫi-i-ni a-ti-i-bi-e 5 LIM 3 ME 20 ᵁᴰᵁšú-ú-še i-na-a-ni ᴸᵁ́e-ri-e-li-i-e nu-na-a-bi mì-i a-li ᴸᵁ́ḫu-ra-]-**a-di-i-na-a-še i-ri**-[i-bi]-[tú-ú i-ú KUR-ni áš-ú-la-bi³⁰ ᴰhal-di-ni-ni uš-ma-ši-ni]

4: – I have slaughtered some and took others alive. 17[33 horses, 7616 heads of cattle, 15320 heads of small cattle went to the king, not to mention what the a]rmy took when it le[ft the country. With the power of Ḫaldi]

5. **ᵐmì-nu-a-še ᵐiš-pu-ú-i-ni-e-ḫi-ni-še a-li tú-sa-a-i ᵁᴿᵁṭu-ú-uš-pa-**[-a URU ú-te-e a-i-še-e-i ᴸᵁ́e-ri-li-e-še i-za-a-ni ᴸᵁ́ú-e-di-a-ni tar-a-i-e pa-a-ra-la-ni gu-ú-ni ᵐmì-nu-a-še ᵐiš-pu-i-ni-ḫi-ni-še ᵁᴿᵁ] **lu-ḫi-ú-ni-a-ni pa-ru-ni ka-**[-am-ni ᴸᵁ́ú-e-di-a-ni 'a-a(?)-ši-ni-e-i ᵁᴿᵁṭu-uš-pa-ni]

5: Minua, the son of Išpuini, says: "If there is [a king who was the first to bring so many women to the harem to the city of] *Ṭušp*[*a*, then (this king) is Minua, the son of Išpuini, who brought women] from *Luḫiuni* [to the city of *Ṭušpa*"]³¹.

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29   In similar texts, it always goes in the form of *a-li-e*.
30   Salvini translates this phrase: "When I occupied the country" (CTU I A 5-2). Considering that from the verb *ašu* – "to sit, to occupy, to settle", in this sentence there is a form of intransitive *ašula* – "to leave, to retire", Arutyunyan believes that the similar phrase in another text should be translated: "When he left the country" (KUKN 241C, 46). Here, in our opinion, the suffix *-bi* refers to ᴸᵁ́ḫuradinaše – "army, warriors", so it makes sense to translate this phrase: "When it (the army) left the country / When it (the army) was leaving the country".
31   Due to the previously unknown sign (see note 16) and phrases found exclusively in this text, this fragment still requires additional research. In this article, the translation of this line is based on the research in the article "Urartu Krallığı'nda Harem" (Çavuşoğlu, 2010: 159).

6. **ma-nu ᴸᵁú-e-di-a-ni-e-i gu-ur-da-ri³² ᵁᴿᵁa-e-li-i-a ᴷᵁᴿdi-ru-ni ú-**[ni ka-am-ni a-ši-ni-e-i ᵁᴿᵁa-e-li-i-a ma-nu gu-ur-da-ri ᵁᴿᵁ'a-al-ṭu-qu-ia ᴷᵁᴿṣi-ia-ad-ḫi-ni ᴰḫal-di-i-ni-ni al-su-i-ši-ni ᵐmì-nu-a-ni ᵐiš-pu-ú-i-]**ni-ḫi MAN DAN-NU MAN al-su-i-ni-še** [MAN ᴷᵁᴿbi-ia-i-na-ú-e a-lu-si ᵁᴿᵁṭu-uš-pa URU]

6: (There are) women prisoners/hostages? from? the city of *Aelija*, the country of *Diru*[*ni*, [*uni*] (in addition to) the previous / (previously captured) men from? *Aelija* city; there are prisoners/hostages? from? the city of *Alṭuquja*, the country of *Ṣiadḫini*³³. By the greatness of the god Haldi Minua, son of Išpui]ni, the mighty king, the great king, [the king of the country of *Biainili*, the ruler of the city of *Ṭušpa*].

Index of Toponyms

1. city of *Aelija*

ᵁᴿᵁ**a-e-li-i-a** – line 6 (2 times)

2. city of *Alṭuquja*

ᵁᴿᵁ'a-al-ṭu-qu-ia – line 6

3. country of *Biainili*

ᴷᵁᴿbi-ia-i-na-ú-e – line 6

4. the country of *Diruni*

ᴷᵁᴿ**di-ru-ni** – line 6

5. tribal union? Erkua

ᵐer-e-ku-ú-a-ḫi – line 1

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32   Interestingly, Arutyunyan leaves this phrase without translation (KUKN 52). Salvini leaves the term *gurdari* untranslated (CTU I CTU I A 5-2). Following Gordeziani's convincing argument (see note 19) in this publication, we adhere to his point of view that *gu-ur-da-ri* are "prisoners, hostages". However, the main question comes from the fact that in the phrase *manu ᴸᵁúedianiei gurdari ᵁᴿᵁaelia ᴷᵁᴿdiruni ú[-ni kamni ašiniei ᵁᴿᵁaelia manu gurdari ᵁᴿᵁ'alṭuquia ᴷᵁᴿṣiadḫini* – "prisoners" or "hostages" women from one city are mentioned separately, and from another city there is no gender index before the word "prisoners".

33   The passage is actually rather complicated for the translation firstly due to reconstructed fragments, secondly due to the lack of pronominal suffixes to determine its true meaning. In fact, it is also possible to translate not "from" those cities, but "in" those cites, as there can be locative suffixes *-a* in the end of the city-names ᵁᴿᵁa-e-li-i-a ᵁᴿᵁ'a-al-ṭu-qu-ia. And the new version would be like following: "(There are) women prisoners / hostages? (from *Luḫiuni*) in the city of *Aelija*, the country of *Diruni*, (in addition to) the previous / (previously captured) men in the city of *Aelija*; there are prisoners / hostages? (from *Luḫiuni*) in the city of *Alṭuquja*, the country of *Ṣiadḫini*". That literally may possibly mean that hostages from the captured city were settled in other cities and countries.

ᵐer-e-ku-ú-a-ḫi-i-ni-e-di – line 2

ᵐer-e-[ku-a-hi-i-ni-e-i] – line 2 (2 times)

6. country of *Etiuni*

ᴷᵁᴿe-ti-i-ú-ni-i-ni – line 3

ᴷᵁᴿe-ti-ú-ni-ni – line 2

7. Luḫiuni – a royal city of tribal union? *Erkua*

ᵁᴿᵁlu-ú-ḫi-i-ú-ni-ni – line 2 (2 times)

[ᵁᴿᵁ] lu-ḫi-ú-ni-a-ni – line 5

ᵁᴿᵁlu-ú-ḫi-ú-ni-i-ni – line 3

8. the country of *Ṣiadḫini*

ᴷᵁᴿṣi-ia-ad-ḫi-ni – line 6

9. city of *Ṭušpa*

ᵁᴿᵁṭu-ú-uš-pa-[-a] – line 5

ᵁᴿᵁṭu-uš-pa-ni – line 5

ᵁᴿᵁṭu-uš-pa URU – line 6

1. **Aelija** – The city of **Aelija** is mentioned in several inscriptions related to King Minua's campaign against the tribal union of **Erkua** and its royal city, **Luḫiuni**. Arutyunyan locates Aelija in the Muradiye plain, situated to the northwest of Lake Van (Arutyunyan, 1985: 13). The countries of **Diruni** and **Ṣiadḫini**, also mentioned in the inscriptions, are believed to be located within the same region. The name **Diruni** (or **Diru**) is phonetically similar to the name of the village T/Dar. Indeed, one inscription was discovered in this village, supporting the hypothesis that **Aelija** along with **Diruni** could be located along the Bendimahi Creek near in the village of Tar (Yalındüz) and its surrounding area (Işık, 2015: 185).

2. **Alṭuquja** – **Alṭuquja** is associated with the **Ṣiadḫini** region and may have been situated at the northeastern corner of Lake Van, specifically in the area where the Minua inscription was discovered at Körzüt (Arutyunyan, 1985: 23).

Except for the inscriptions found in the Muradiye district, there are no other Urartian inscriptions mentioning **Alṭuquja**. Işık challenged Salvini assertion that **Alṭuquja** could be

located in the Urmian plain, east of Zagros, arguing that there are no Urartian inscriptions in that region. The presence of Minua's reference to **Alṭuquja** during his conquests, however, strengthens the argument for locating it in Muradiye plain (Işık, 2015: 201).

3. **Biainili** – There is a well-established scholarly consensus that **Biainili** is the self-designation of the state referred to as Urartu in Assyrian texts. Faced with the challenge of geographical boundaries and the toponymy of the Urartian region, the term "**Biainili**", which is found only in Urartian texts, is very difficult to compare with a certain territory[34]. In all probability, **Biainili** is the local designation of the Urartian tribes in general, or one of their main branches, located approximately within the borders in which the Urartian kingdom emerged in the 9th century BCE. The term probably reflects the shared origin of the Urartian tribes (UKN: 8).

The name of the country **Biani** appears predominantly as a title in inscriptions. Starting with the reigns of Išpuini and Minua, the title was adopted by all later Urartian kings whose written records survived. This royal title is rendered as "MAN ^KURbi-a-na-ú-e a-lu-si ^URUṭu-uš-pa URU" meaning "King of the country of **Biani**, lord of the city of Ṭušpa" (CTU I A 3-2).

Scholars have also suggested that **Biani** is both a tribal and geographical designation. Diakonoff-Kashkai argues that the term "**Biani** Country" is synonymous with "Urartu Country" representing the geographical core of the Urartu homeland located east of Lake Van (Diakonoff-Kaskai, 1981: 21). Hewsen narrows the localization of **Biani** Country to the area between Lake Van and Lake Erçek, proposing that Biani refers to the tribe that founded and ruled Urartu. (Hewsen, 1992: 185, d. n. 155).

Moreover, expressions in writing sources such as "the gods of **Biani**", "the people of **Biani**", and "the foreigners" suggest that **Biani** can be associated with the name Urartu. The Urartians likely used the term **Biani** Country to define themselves concerning the region east of Lake Van, where the kingdom's political, cultural and geographical center was situated (Işık, 2015: 129-131).

4. Diruni – The name **Diruni** (or **Diru**) appears in inscriptions describing an expedition against the city of **Luḫiuni**, part of the tribal union of **Erkua** (CTU I A 5-2). These inscriptions were likely carved on building slabs for the walls of the temple of Susi, located within the fortress of Körzüt, in the Muradiye district.

The presence of inscriptions on the Muradiye plain strengthens the possibility that the referenced cities, and the Country of **Şiadḫini** as well as the Country of Diruni were situated within the same plain[35].

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34   In Urartian inscriptions, **Biainili** is considered as the designation of the territory of the entire vast Urartian kingdom... Despite the fact that the Urartians themselves called their country **Biainili**, this was not reflected in the toponymy of the central part of Urartu (UKN: 8).

35   For more information, see the description of the toponym Aelija.

5. **Erkua** – Based on the inscriptions mentioned above[36], the country of **Erkua** along with the city of **Luḫiuni** in specialized literature is generally localized on the right bank of the Aras, particularly in the Taşburun area and adjacent localities. On the territory of this country, the well-known administrative and economic center of Minuaḫinili was subsequently established – a key springboard for the Urartians to cross the Aras and conquer the land of the 'Aza tribe (Arutyunyan, 1985: 260).

The name of the **Erkua** tribe was first attributed to the Urartian king Minua. These inscriptions state that Minua captured the tribal union of the **Erkua** tribe and its royal city **Luḫiuni** during his northern campaign (Işık, 2015: 87).

6. **Etiuni** – In the specialized literature, there is a perspective that "the country of **Etiuni-Etiukhi**" represents a collective name for the vast territory of southern Transcaucasia, either a common name or a geographical concept. In any case, it appears that the western borders of the **Etiuni-Etiukhi** tribal union at times extended as far as the Sarıkamış region, while its eastern borders reached the union of the Uduri–**Etiuni** tribes in the Sevan Basin and the Sisian region (e.g., to the regions of Uluani and Tsuluku). The southern borders probably extended to the middle course of the Aras River near its confluence with the Arpaçay-Akhuryan rivers and adjacent areas, while the northern limits possibly reached Lake Çıldır (Arutyunyan, 1985: 263). Additionally, the term **Etiuni** (or Etiu) was likely used in an ethnic context (Işık, 2015: 136).

7. **Luḫiuni** – The name of **Luḫiuni**, the royal city of the tribal union of **Erkua**, is not found elsewhere in the corpus of Urartian texts apart from the inscriptions of Minua. These inscriptions suggest that **Luḫiuni** was located in the Karakoyunlu plain even before the establishment of Urartu. Melikishvili positions **Luḫiuni** between the northern foot of Mount Ararat and the Aras River in alignment with the location given in Taşburun inscription. In contrast, Diakonoff-Kashkai place it between the site where the Taşburun inscription was found and Karakoyunlu, south of the Aras River. Arutyunyan equates the city of **Luḫiuni** with Minuaḫinili, founded by Minua. He further suggests that the location may correspond to the ruins of Tsolakert between the site of the Taşburun inscription and the Karakoyunlu plain (Işık, 2015: 222-224; ibid. 56).

8. **Şiadḫini** – The name of the country of **Şiadḫini** appears in inscriptions from the Muradiye plain, which document King Minua's campaign against the tribal union of **Erkua** and their royal city of **Luḫiuni**. Those inscriptions indicate that some captive women were given as *gurdari* (a term of unknown meaning) to the city of **Aelija**, the country of **Diruni**/ **Diru**, and the city of **Alţuquja** from the country of **Şiadḫini** (CTU I A 5-2).

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36   Here Minua's inscriptions are mentioned.

The countries of **Diruni/Diru** and **Şiadḫini** are only attested in the Muradiye inscriptions, making the precise location of these difficult to identify. However, the presence of these inscriptions in the Muradiye plain highlights the importance of this area (Işık, 2015: 161).

9. **Ṭušpa** – According to Urartian inscriptions, **Ṭušpa** was the capital of the ancient state of Biainili (Urartu). This corresponds to Ṭurušpa mentioned in Neo-Assyrian cuneiform sources (Arutyunyan, 1985: 191; Salvini, 2014: 218-222).

In the same sources, Ṭušpa is first mentioned in the tablet from Sultantepe containing the inscription of the Assyrian king Shalmaneser III (858–824 BC) (RIMA 3: 84-87). In the Urartian inscriptions, the name **Ṭušpa** first appears in inscriptions from the period of the joint reign of Išpuini and his son Minua. Ṭušpa is the most frequently mentioned city in the Urartian inscriptions.

The Urartian capital city of Ṭušpa is traditionally associated with the fortress of Van. However, the capital likely encompassed a significant larger area than the Van Citadel alone. Estimates suggest that during the Urartian period Ṭušpa may have been home to at least 50,000 inhabitants (Işık, 2015: 159-161).

Approximately 150 inscriptions from the reign of the King Minua have been discovered (KUKN 40-172; CTU I A 5-1 – 5-99), excluding those jointly attributed to Išpuini and Minua. These inscriptions found on various monuments including stelae, columns, rocks, building stones, harness materials, bowls, and quivers, as well as accounting type of records, provide significant insights into Minua's rule.

King Minua focused on consolidating the internal political and social system of Urartu, initiating extensive construction projects, and fostering economic development. Simultaneously, he pursued strategically successful policy of conquest, systematically extending influence to the north, northwest, west, southwest and southeast. The strength of the Urartian military during this time is evident in its efforts to control key trade routes. Notably, under Minua's leadership, the Urartians engaged in successful campaigns against the Assyrians, even reaching the borders of Assyria.

Minua's expansionist efforts in the north and northeast, were particularly directed at establishing a foothold in the Lake Van. By subjugating smaller states to the north of Ṭušpa, capturing tribute, and building garrisons and fortresses, Minua sought to secure Urartu's advance into the Aras River basin.

An inscription discovered at Körzüt reveals that Minua conquered the territory of the Erkua tribe, including its royal city of Luḫiuni. This inscription emphasizes the significance of this achievement, stating that Luḫiuni had never been conquered before, suggesting

previous Urartian rulers had not ventured this region. Additional inscriptions from Minua's reign indicate that to consolidate the gains from the Erkua campaign and to ensure the continued advancement of the Urartian influence, the king constructed a military stronghold – Minuaḫinili – within the conquered province of Erkua. In the case of Körzüt Fortress, it appears to have served as another fortress strategically important stronghold in the Van region.

In addition to the philological and historical assessments of the discovered inscriptions, discussions of the Körzüt Fortress's significance focus on its location and the purpose of its construction. Burney highlights the likely positioning of the fortress within the citadel, emphasizing the extensive planning of the lower city, the defensive walls supported by towers, and its strategic location overlooking the Muradiye Plain (Burney, 1957: 47–48).

Tarhan and Sevin emphasize the fortress's role in defense strategy, considering it critical component of the "chain defense strategy" formed by interconnected fortresses (Tarhan & Sevin, 1976–77: 276). The further argue that the fortress represents a substantial investment in enhancing the military protection of the Urartu Kingdom in the Muradiye Plain (Gökçe, Kuvanç, & Genç, 2021: 139, 143).

Additionally, the fortress is described as a key point within Urartu's major northern, eastern, and western transportation routes (Gökçe, Kuvanç, & Genç, 2021: 141). Located along the main route extending northward from Tuşpa, the fortress was a part of a strategic Project of the Urartian Kingdom. This route, running along Lake Van's northern shore, branches westward (Muradiye–Erciş–Patnos–Malazgirt–Bulanık–Murat River Valley) and northward (Muradiye–Çaldıran–Doğubeyazıt–Iğdır Plain–Yerevan), serving military expeditions (Gökçe, Kuvanç, & Genç, 2021: 141).

Another perspective suggests that Körzüt functioned as a royal administrative center to oversee the agriculturally rich Muradiye Plain. A physical map analysis reveals that the fortress lies 8 km east of Lake Van's shore, with the main road extending north from Tuşpa likely passing 1 km east of the site due to the lake's swampy areas. Despite its distance from the main road, the monumental walls enclosing the citadel, the temple, and the construction inscriptions found in nearby villages underscore its status as a royal investment. This suggests that the fortress's establishment at the edge of the Muradiye Plain is closely tied to the plain's agricultural potential (Danışmaz, 2020: 84, 86).

These discussions primarily emphasize military and defense concerns. However, it is important to recognize that economic considerations also played a significant role in the selection of Iron Age fortress location. Given Körzüt Fortress's commanding position over a fertile plain, it is highly probable that this factor significantly influenced its placement. The

scale of the royal investment in Körzüt highlights the extraordinary nature of the project. Therefore, explaining its establishment solely in terms of military, defense, or agricultural potential may be insufficient. A more comprehensive evaluation that intergrates these aspects would provide more accurate understanding.

One of the most debated topics regarding Körzüt Fortress is determining its construction date. Before the discovery of the Susi Temple inscriptions, early assessments suggested that the fortified city was among the earliest examples of Urartian architecture of this type, mainly based on its architectural similarities with Aznavurtepe and Anzaf (Danışmaz, 2020: 86). However, it was argued from another perspective that, based on the dimensions of the stone slabs and the construction techniques employed, the fortress may date to at least the late 9th century BCE. This aligns with the joint reign of Išpuini and Minua, as it shares architectural similarities with the northern walls of the Van Fortress citadel (Tarhan & Sevin, 1976–77: 284–285). Furthermore, inscriptions found in Muradiye and surrounding villages reference both the joint reign of Išpuini and Minua as well as the independent period of Minua's rule (Kuvanç, Işık, & Genç, 2020: 114–115, Tab. 1).

Conclusions

The rescue excavations conducted at Körzüt Fortress and the recently discovered cuneiform inscriptions underscore the site's significant historical and archaeological importance. Körzüt Fortress, with its strategic location, monumental architectural features, and embedded royal inscriptions, functioned as a central hub, reflecting its military, administrative, and religious importance within the Urartian Kingdom during the reign of King Minua. The identification of numerous inscription slabs scattered across nearby villages as originating from this fortress further highlights its central role in regional governance and influence.

The analysis of the inscriptions, complemented by a comparative study of contemporary Urartian epigraphic materials, strongly suggests that Körzüt Fortress was commissioned by King Minua. The fortress appears to have been established as part of Minua's expansionist policies, serving simultaneously as a defensive bastion and an administrative center to consolidate control over newly annexed territories.

These findings not only affirm the historical importance of Körzüt Fortress but also offer valuable insights into the political organization, construction techniques, and cultural practices of the Urartian state. The newly discovered inscriptions and architectural features contribute significantly to our understanding of Urartian dominance in the region, reinforcing Körzüt Fortress's place within the broader framework of Urartian archaeology. Future detailed studies in this area are expected to provide a more comprehensive perspective on the history and archaeology of the Urartian Kingdom.

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