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Excavations at the Mound of Van Fortress / Tuspa*

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The Van Fortress/Tuspa, the capital city of the Urartians, rises on a 100 meter high conglomerate rocky outcrop on the eastern shore of the Van Lake, measuring 1400 m in length and a varying width of 230-60 m in north-south axis (Fig. 1). Every corner of the outcrop, which is alone a monument itself, was utilized by the Urartian architects. Royal rock tombs, monumental open air sanctuaries and palaces are the most prominent architectural features of the capital. Many cuneiform inscriptions either on the rock surfaces or on the stelae, further cement its position as a capital. It is possible to trace the cultural remains and chronology of the 200 years of Urartian rule in the levels at the lower settlement.

The 750 m-long mound of Van fortress is located just north of the citadel and lies in an east-west direction parallel to the citadel itself. The area forms the northern section of the lower settlement, while the southern section is named as the Old City of Van. Both of them constituted the lower settlement of Tuspa.

Our prime concern was the extent of the lower settlement, i.e. the mound, since all the previous excavators have suggested the presence of earlier levels beneath the Old City of Van. The 1990 campaign in particular revealed earlier Urartian levels in the Upper Citadel trenches which provided important data on the matter. In this context, it was a must to consider the capital as a whole in order to fully understand the citadel and lower settlement levels, and devise an excavation program accordingly.

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The area, where the Van Fortress and the Lower City were founded, is the most fertile territory in the region, which was the primary reason for its occupation in the Chalcolithic, Early Bronze Age, Early, Middle and Late Iron (Urartian, Median and Persian periods) and Middle Ages. As is well known, mound-type settlements in Van basin are few and far between. Excavated centers include Tilkitepe, Dilkaya, Karagündüz and the mound of Van fortress. Except the latter, all these are rural settlements located far from the royal Urartian centers. The earliest site, Tilkitepe, has a thick Halaf level. Excavations at Dilkaya on the Van Lake and Karagündüz on the Erçek Lake revealed layers reflecting Early Bronze and Iron age cultures. There are only a few settlements that can offer a complete picture of the cultural history of the region and the mound of Van Fortress is one of them. Another important feature of the mound is its location near a royal Urartian settlement.

The second millennium BC culture, Iron Age chronology and the decline of Urartu have not been fully investigated in the Van Basin especially for the mound-type settlements. Excavations at the fortresses and their cemeteries do not help on the matter. The lack of stratigraphical data does not allow us to evaluate the architectural features and small finds from these fortresses. In this respect, one of the main aims of the renewed work at the Van Fortress is to redefine the second millennium culture and the transition to Iron Ages in the region.

Just as it was a witness to the foundation of the Urartian Kingdom, the Lower City of Tuspa inevitably contains important archaeological information for the decline and the new comers arrived in the aftermath. New excavations will allow a chronological reevaluation of settlement character, stratigraphy of and finds from the capital and its surroundings.

Tuspa -Van Lower Settlement

In Urartian archeology, what we know about the "lower settlements" is rather limited. Our information comes from the excavations at Karmir-Blur in Armenia (Martirosjan 1964), at Bastam in northwestern Iran (Kleiss 1979) and at Ayanis in Van Lake basin (Çilingiroğlu - Salvini 2001). In these centers, some buildings with mud brick walls rising on two or three courses of foundation stones have rooms opening to a courtyard. In Bastam and Karmir Blur in particular, it is possible to observe a relatively more developed and extended architecture. Here multi-roomed and independent buildings comprise of stone paved rooms, probably stables, and halls/rooms presumably designed as workshops

as well as living spaces. In the area surrounding the citadel are humbler houses laid according to a pre-conceived plan and independent building groups with larger, more elaborate multi-roomed houses for the elites or merchants.

According to Prof. W. Kleiss the lower city of Bastam was founded for the workers and soldiers working there (Kleiss 1980) and after the completion of the fortress it was transformed into a service area, where about 800 people lived. Altan Çilingiroğlu, the excavator of Ayanis, an important royal city founded by Rusa II on the eastern shore of the Van Lake, where the excavations revealed a lower city, claims that in founding cities Urartians conceived the citadel, the lower city and the infrastructures as a whole (Çilingiroğlu 2004). In some cases, Urartian rulers planned lower cities in order to accommodate the captive peoples, the same approach applied in the lower city of Karmir-Blur. The pre-planned houses forms complex multi-roomed building groups appear sometimes in these settlements or in separate places. (Martirosjan 1964: 264 ff.).

The royal building projects of the Urartians were certainly realized with great manpower after years of work. In this respect, craftsmen, workers and perhaps their families, the bureaucrats in charge, and soldiers would have needed housing, workshops or offices during the construction work. It was claimed that this type of settlement had been built before the actual project began as a part of the Urartian settling policy, which necessarily bore a notion of lower settlement. Thus, the earliest settlements at the fortresses/cities emerged around the citadels. The surroundings of Van Fortress and Tuspa hosted the first settlers of the royal period.

What is called the Old City of Van stretches to areas to the south of the rock of Van. As mentioned above, the scholars worked in the region pointed out the presence of Urartian and much earlier levels in the area. The American team did reach the Urartian levels at a spot now unknown (Lake 1940; Korfmann 1977: 256). Thus it was understood that the Old City of Van, which was occupied until the last century, has a stratigraphy going back to the Urartian period, and that at the mound of Van fortress i.e. the lower city of Van extending due north, existed Urartian layers and settlement.

The first excavations here were initiated by a team led by I. A. Orbelli in 1916, which was followed by the works of Kirsopp and Silva Lake in 1939 (Lake 1940; Korfmann 1977: 256). Excavations of the latter reached the Urartian levels at Tebriz Kapı, but they unexpectedly came to a halt due to the contemporary political problems in the region.

The second term work was undertaken by Prof. Afif Erzen of the Istanbul University in the north of the fortress (Erzen et al. 1963). It was reported that the soundings conducted in a narrow area yielded Early Bronze and Urartian layers.

Prof. M. Taner Tarhan, who led an extensive work at the mound of Van fortress (Tarhan 1984; Tarhan1985; Tarhan 1994), thinks that the lower city was first founded in the south of the citadel. The 100 meter-high Van Rock was protecting this area against the harsh winter winds. After the 9th century BC, when population rose, the settlement area spread out of the walls, forming new districts around the citadel. According to Tarhan the houses there belonged to the elites close to the royal courtiers.

The excavations conducted in an area of 400 m^2 at the westernmost tip of the mound between 1989 and 1991 revealed a building with 15 rooms. This complex, with stone foundations and mudbrick walls, was termed as the "Early Architectural Phase", which was above a conflagration layer and belonged to the 8th century BC. "The Late Architectural Phase" (second phase), much destroyed by the later burials, is dated to the 7th century BC.

The Late Iron Age culture in the mound is represented by a specific kind of pottery named as Festoon or Triangle wares. Architectural features and in situ finds related to this period, on the other hand, have not been identified. This complex was cleaned and taken under preservation in 2010.

Medieval cemetery

It appeared that the excavated areas in 2010 campaign were parts of a cemetery which remained in use up to the 20th century. There are numerous examples of burials that disturb others in the trenches at Section A (M26, M27, M28, N27; Fig. 2).

The 143 bodies found here demonstrate burial practices of different beliefs, the position of the bodies being one of the criteria (Fig. 3). The Christians were placed in the east-west oriented graves as lying on their back with their heads looking west, while the Muslims lay on their right with their heads looking south.

They were buried in rectangular simple pit graves with a depth of 0.50-1.30 m, whose length vary according to the dimensions of the deceased. The 2010 campaign did not reveal chamber tombs or cist graves. Child graves are generally close to the surface.

The covers of the graves and other structural features follow different practices, but they do not offer any insight to the chronology and burial practices. In the graves with capstones, the top of the grave was covered with flat stones lined side by side and then with earth. In case of wide graves, the stones were placed deep in the ground, just above the deceased, which reflects the Islamic *şakk* tradition. Another group of graves does not have capstones, but were covered with sloped flat stones, which prevented the slightly southerly leaned body from sliding. This type of cover stone reflects the Islamic *şami* burial practice.

Graves with wooden covers were also encountered. On two graves from N27 trench and one from N28 were covered with poplar branches. That they are not wholly decayed might indicate their later date.

Some graves have covers formed with half-worked small stones. Their sides were marked with bigger stones. In many cases, beneath these heap of stones, in the grave pit, are flagstones placed just above the body. There are also graves lined with mudbrick and again covered with corbelling of mudbrick blocks.

Only few of the graves included *in situ* small finds as gifts. A child burial from trench N27 carries a bracelet made of 41 blue beads on his right wrist and some others yielded rings and glass bracelets. A child from the M28 grave has *is situ* anklets on both legs.

The grave layers and the filling earth from the burial pits yielded pottery and finds belonging to previously defined layers (Fig. 4). Typical examples include: Karaz pottery of the Early Bronze Age (Fig. 11), Urartian red slip and grooved wares, a small number of painted pottery from the Late Bronze Age and medieval glazed pottery decorated with sgrafitto technique.

The two separate burial practices continued throughout the medieval and Ottoman periods, judging from the finds of glazed and decorated Byzantine pottery, Byzantine coins, Seljukid light-colored pottery with stamping and Late Ottoman pipe pieces.

An 11th century coin (Constantine X, December 25th 1059-May 21th 1067) from burial pits in this area contribute to the stratigraphy of the medieval layers. Islamic pottery of the 12-13th century with stamping decoration has also been found.

Urartian Levels

Below the medieval strata lay the Late Iron Age and Urartian layers much disturbed by the burial pits. The former is mostly represented by the pottery, and although largely destroyed by the burial pits, one can observe mudbrick

walls with stone foundations showing same characteristics with the previously excavated Urartian architecture. Pottery, seals, bullae and bronze decorative pins belong to these layers.

Among the pottery from the cemetery the red slipped wares that are known as "Toprakkale Ware", "Palace Ware" or "Binaili Ware" is dominant (Kroll 1970; 1972; 1976; 1979; 1988), but they all come from the burial contexts. It is widely accepted that this type of pottery appeared with the emergence of the Urartian Kingdom and was used by the Urartian rulers and elites. The fact that it is widely encountered, albeit without any actual architectural context, gives us an idea of the residents in the area.

Most of the red slipped ware from the mound is plates and bowls. Apart from the globular bowls with direct rims, deep bowls with everted rims and carination are also common (Fig. 10). Flat shapes of the same type also exist. Deep bowls with thickened out rims constitute another common group. Generally they have ring bases, though flat types also make and appearance. On some examples there are stampings and marks especially in the base area applied while the paste was still wet. A unique Urartian chalice has the stamping decoration underneath the base.

A bulla found during the 2010 campaign gives important information about the nature of the settlement in this area (Fig. 7). As is well known, finds of clay tablets and bullae are very rare in Urartu. The reconstruction of the cuneiform inscription can be made with the help of the texts from Karmir Blur and Bastam (Salvini 1979: 127). It belongs to an office named Lu. A-sul-li. In the light of other examples, Salvini suggests that the upper line should be read as Sar<duri=i> Sardu<ri>hi>ni=i>, the abbreviated form of the owner. This type of abbreviations are known from Bastam and Ayanis. LU.A-sul-li is apparently an office name, though its nature is yet unknown. Persons with this title appear frequently on the seals and bullae from the sites of Rusa II (685-645 BC), namely Karmir-Blur, Bastam and Ayanis.

An alabaster stamp seal from a burial fill found in 2010 represents a common example in Urartu (Fig. 6). On the stamp area a long-horned and hoofed mythological mixed creature with forked tongue. Similar depictions are observed on the stamp and cylinder seals found in the centers of the Rusa II's reign.

As can be deduced from the finds, Lower City of Van contains the buildings that were used by the elites and merchants of Tuspa. We may also expect that the houses of the servants to the royal family and courtiers, workshops and barns were also occupied the area.

Work on the Previously Excavated Urartian Levels

In the 2010 campaign, the three trenches opened at the western tip of the Mound of Van between 1989-1991 were cleaned (Fig. 8). Here Tarhan had excavated the foundations of a fifteen-roomed Urartian building in 1.60 m deep. To preserve the remains, the walls had been covered with straw-included mud and flagstones. Despite these measures, after 20 years the plan is now unrecognizable. The 1989-1991 campaign had also revealed two graves (nos. 214 and 215) to the west of these walls in the B11 section, which had been dated to the Late Iron Age due to their position partly disturbing the wall foundations (Tarhan – Sevin 1993: 410). In the 2010 campaign, we found another *hocker* burial at the north corner of the same wall, again disturbing a part of it and another one immediately to the south without any actual context.

Near the hocker burial a broken fibula was found (Fig. 9). In the Urartian landscape this type of fibulae are common in the 7th century (Muscarella 1965; Köroğlu - Konyar 2008). The burial at the corner (a pithos?) offers richer finds that include crescent-shaped earrings of bronze and silver, bronze rings and agate, cornelian and glass beads (Fig. 9). Chronologically, they share the same characteristics with the finds from the other 7th century Urartian centers. In stratigraphically speaking, especially the pithos(?) burial disturbed the "Early Urartian Level" in some places and it is apparently related to the "Late Urartian Level", which itself gives an impression of a kitchen or workshop.

During the integration of old trenches to the new trench system, the alleys removed between the K10 and L10 trenches, during which the floor related to the wall no. 149 was also unearthed at the foundation level. We have found two hearths 40 cm in diameter and 20 cm in depth, *in situ* grinding stones and pottery suggesting at least two building levels.

The 2010 campaign obtained supporting evidence for the two-phase construction process of the Urartian buildings, a fact that had been revealed in the 1989-1991 campaign (Fig. 5). Despite the existence of earlier Urartian architecture with stone foundations in the lower level, the following level represents a simpler architectural style. Further research and extensive excavations are needed to gain more information on the matter.

Tuspa – Van Fortress in the richest center in terms of stelae and building inscriptions. Some of them have been preserved *in situ* until modern times and most of them were used as spolia. The churches in the Old City of Van have also been destroyed by the illegal digs. Today, one may observe holes measuring 3.5 m in diameter and 3.5 m in depth. In 2010 we we were

informed about an inscription in a treasure hunter pit reaching the foundations of Surp Pogos Church (Fig. 12). It is dated to the reign of Sarduri II (756-730 BC) and mentions the king's campaigns. It was probably brought from the Analı Kız sanctuary and is now preserved in the Van Museum.

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Van-Tuşpa Aşağı Yerleşmesi / Van Kalesi Höyüğü Kazıları

Van Gölü'nün doğu kıyısında uzanan ovanın ortasında "Van Kayalığı" yükselir. Burası MÖ 9. – 7. yy'lar arasında Doğu Anadolu'da merkezi bir krallık kurmuş olan Urartu'ların krali kentidir. Doğu-batı doğrultusunda yaklaşık 1400 m uzunluğunda, kuzey-güney ekseninde ise 230 m ile 60 m arasında değişen genişliğe sahip bu konglomera kayalık, krallığın yıkılışına kadar kullanılmıştır. Urartulu mimarların "tabii topoğrafya"yı değiştirme, ana kayaya şekil vermekteki başarılarını, mimarideki ustalıklarını başkent Tuşpa'nın bütün alanlarında izlemek mümkündür. Ana kayayı işleyerek oluşturulan yataklarda yükselen duvarlarla meydana getirilen teraslarda kademeler halinde yükselen görkemli binaları, topografyayı değiştirmek ve olanaklarından yararlanma noktasındaki başarının en iyi göstergesidir. Sarp kayalıklar, Urartulu mimarların becerisiyle üzerinde çok katlı binaların yükseldiği düzlük alanlara dönüştürülmüştür. Urartu karakterini yansıtan en bildik anıtlar Van Kalesi'nde yer alır: Krali Mezar Yapıları, Açık Hava Kutsal Alanı, Saraylar, Tapınaklar, Kaya Nişleri yanında ana kayaya işlenmiş çivi yazılı metinler, yapı kitabeleri de Urartu'nun en zengin çivi yazılı arşivini oturur.

Başkent Tuşpa'da gerçekleştirilen arkeolojik kazılar 20. yüzyılın başlarına kadar iner. Rus bilim adamı I.A Orbelli 1916'da, Amerika Birleşik Devletleri'nden Kirsopp ve Silva Lake ise 1938-1939 yılları arasında kalenin değişik noktalarında kazılar yaparlar. Van Kalesi Höyüğü'ndeki çalışmalarında Urartu ve İlk Tunç Çağı çanak çömleklerini rapor ederler. Kalenin güneyinde Eski Van Şehri'nde yaptıkları çalışmalar ise, raporlarında oldukça az bilgi vermelerine karşın bizim için oldukça önemlidir. Kazıcılara göre Eski Van Şehri'nin kültürel dolgusu oldukça kalındır, yaklaşık 5 m derinlikte toprak yapısı değişmeye başlar ve bu dolguda Urartu çanak çömleği bulunur.

Kalede 1960'lı yıllardan itibaren İstanbul Üniversitesi Van Bölgesi Tarih ve Arkeoloji Araştırma Merkezi adına Prof. Dr. Afif Erzen başkanlığında kazı ve araştırmalar başlar. 1983 yılından itibaren ise Prof. Dr. M. Taner Tarhan tarafından kapsamlı çalışmalar yürütülür. Prof. Tarhan, kazı çalışmaları yanında koruma projelerini de hayata geçirir ve bu çerçevede Van Kalesi Eski Van Şehri Tarihi Milli Park Projesi 1983-1987 yılları arasında hazırlanır. Yine aynı amaçla 1987-1991 yılları arasında Van Kalesi ve Eski Van Şehri Kazılarını yürütür. Bu kapsamda 1983-1991 yılları arasında gerek sitadel alanında gerekse

Eski Van Şehri'nde birçok yapının yeniden çizimleri yapılır, koruma onarım projeleri hazırlanarak uygulanır.

1989-1991 dönemi kazılarında Van-Tuşpa sitadelinin kuzeyinde Van Kalesi Höyüğü'nde de kazı çalışmaları yürütülür. Bir "Urartu Konağı" ortaya çıkarılır. Tarhan'a göre Van Sitadeli'nin çevresi tümüyle Aşağı Kent tarafından kuşatılmıştır. Erken dönemlerde, Sitadelin güneyinde uzanan korunaklı alanda kurulan ilk yerleşmeler krallığın ve başkentin büyümesiyle orantılı olarak sitadelin kuzeyindeki alanlara da yayılmıştır. Yeni mahalleler yanında Urartulu elit tabakanın çok odalı konakları da bu alanlarda bağımsız birimler olarak yer almışlardır.

2010 yılında yeniden hayata geçirilen Van-Tuşpa Projesi çerçevesinde, Van Kalesi Höyüğü'nde yeni dönem kazılarına başlanmıştır. Höyüğün batısındaki "A" Alanı olarak adlandırılan kısmı mezarlık olarak kullanılmıştır. Mezarlık alanında iki ayrı gömü tabakası belirlenmiştir. İslami gömülerin geç evre gömüleri olduğu anlaşılmaktadır. Birçok noktada İslami mezarların Hıristiyan mezarlarını kestiği izlenmiştir. Mezar tipolojisine bakıldığında dinsel inanışlarla mezar tipleri arasında doğrudan bir bağlantının olmadığı söylenebilir. Doğrudan toprağa açılmış basit toprak gömüler yanında, yine basit toprak mezarların salt taşı ile kapatıldığı örnekler izlenmiştir. Bazı örneklerde mezar çukurunun tabanına açılmış ikinci bir çukura ceset yatırılmış ve üzeri sal taş levhalar ile kapatılmıştır. Bunun yanında az sayıda taş sandık mezar ve yine toprağın çok yumuşak olduğu alanlarda, yan duvarları kerpiçle oluşturulmuş mezarlar da görülmektedir. Mezar yönleri her iki gömü anlayışında da baş batıya gelecek şekilde doğu-batı yönlüdür. Müslümanlarda gövde hafif sağ yan üstüne yatırılmış ve baş güneye bakar pozisyonda uzatılmıştır. Hıristiyan gömülerde ise baş hafifçe yükseltilmiş ve doğuya bakar pozisyondadır. Eller çoğunlukla kadınlarda göğüs, erkeklerde ise bel hizasında birleştirilmiştir.

Mezarlar iki evreli olduğu anlaşılan taş temelli, kerpiç bedenli mimariyi keser. Mezar çukurları birçok noktada bu duvarları tahrip etmiştir. Duvar kalınlıkları 70-80 cm. arasında değişmektedir. Bu katmanın altındaki dolguda ise henüz mimari vermeyen, ancak Geç Demir Çağı çanak çömleğinin bulunduğu bir tabaka saptanmıştır. Söz konusu dolgunun altında ise üstü çamur harçla sıvalı altı kalın bir mıcır tabakasıyla oluşturulmuş tabanlara sahip Urartu mimarisi saptanmıştır. Söz konusu tabaka ve taş duvarlar açılan alanların büyük bölümünde izlenmekle birlikte henüz bir plan verecek durumda değildir. Ancak bu alanlarda ortaya çıkarılan mimarinin yapısal özellikleri ve

aksları 1989-1991 yıllarındaki kazı döneminde ortaya çıkarılan Urartu mimarisiyle paralellik taşımaktadır.

Eski dönem kazılarında bulunmuş Urartu yapısı tekrar temizlenerek ortaya çıkarılmış ve pasif koruma uygulanmıştır. Çalışmalar sırasında 1989-1991 kazı sezonunda ortaya çıkarılmış B11 mekânın doğu duvarı yer yer tahrip eden bir hoker gömü ve hemen kuzeyinde oldukça bozulmuş ancak buluntuları *in situ* ortaya çıkarılmış bir gömü saptanmıştır. Söz konusu gömü alanının bulunduğu duvarda 1989-1991 kazı sezonunda da aynı yönde 214 nolu gömü saptanmıştır. Söz konusu gömü *in situ* buluntuya rastlanmaması nedeniyle- diğer mezar buluntuları ve gömünün üzerini örten çanak-urne parçalarından yola çıkılarak Geç Demir Çağı'na tarihlenmiştir. Stratigrafik olarak söz konusu gömülerin daha geç olması mümkün görünmekle birlikte, oldukça tahrip olan bu alandaki durumun net olmadığını belirtmek gerekir. Ancak 2010 kazılarında aynı alanda tarafımızdan ortaya çıkarılan her iki gömü çevresinde *in situ* durumdaki buluntu topluluğu (fibula ve gümüş hilal biçimli küpeler) Geç Demir Çağ'ı değil daha çok Urartu karakteri taşımaktalar. Bu çerçevede söz konusu gömüler Prof. Dr. Tarhan'ın işaret ettiği, mimari olarak oldukça belirsiz durumda olan geç evre Urartu katmanı ile ilişkili olabilir. Diğer taraftan Urartu'nun geç evresi mezarlık tabakası ile de temsil ediliyor olabilir. Bu durumun daha net anlaşılması için kazı çalışmalarının daha geniş alanlarda sürdürülmesi gerekmektedir.

Van Kalesi 2010 yılı çalışmaları ve elde ettiğimiz yüzey bulguları "Van Kalesi Höyüğü" olarak tanımlanan alanın oldukça geniş bir alana yayıldığını göstermektedir. Zaten Amerikan kazı heyetinin eski Van Şehri'nde yapmış olduğu kazı çalışmaları, Prof. Dr. Taner Tarhan'ın aynı alanda yaptığı çalışmalar ile bizim ve Van Müzesi'nin başkanlığında yapılan kazılar, Eski Van Şehri olarak adlandırılan, sitadel alanının güneyine yayılan arazinin de Urartulu yerleşmeciler tarafından iskân edildiğini gösteren açık kanıtı sunmaktadır. Bu bölgeden gelen ve Urartu Saray Malları olarak tanınan kırmızı astarlı çanak çömlekler bu durumun açık kanıtlarını oluştururlar. Bu nedenle 2011 yılı kazı programının kuzeyde yer alan Van Kalesi Höyüğü olarak tanımlanan alanın yanında, sitadelin güneyinde yer alan Eski Van Şehri ve yine sitadelde yer alan ve 1989-1991 yıllarında kısmen ortaya çıkarılan alanların tümünü kapsayan bir kazı projesiyle değerlendirilmesi gerekliliği ortaya çıkmıştır. Bu kapsamda Van Kalesi ve Aşağı Kenti'nin yeni bir projeyle değerlendirilmesi ve İlk Tunç Çağı'ndan 20. yüzyılın başına kadar uzanan sürecin maddi kültür katmanlarının tümünü barındıran bu alanın konunun uzmanı arkeolog, sanat tarihçisi, mimarlık tarihçisi ve restoratörlerden oluşan bir arkeolojik

kazı ekibi tarafından yürütülmesi uygun olacaktır. Bölgede restorasyon çalışması çerçevesinde yürütülen kazı ve temizlik çalışmaları özellikle en azından Urartu dönemine kadar inen tabakaların bulunduğu Eski Van Şehri'nde geri dönüşü olmayan tahribatlara neden olmaktadır. Tabakalanmanın açık bir şekilde izlendiği bu alanda sadece temizlik ve restorasyon çalışmaları adı altında yapılan kazılar Urartu tabakalarına zarar vermekte, bölgede en azından 11. yüzyıldan beri bilinebilen Hıristiyan ve Türk-İslam dönemi yapılarının karakteristik özelliklerinin ve daha da ötesinde o dönemin mimari anlayışından demografik yapısına uzanan yelpazedeki özelliklerini algılamamızı ve tanımlamamızı imkânsız kılmaktadır.

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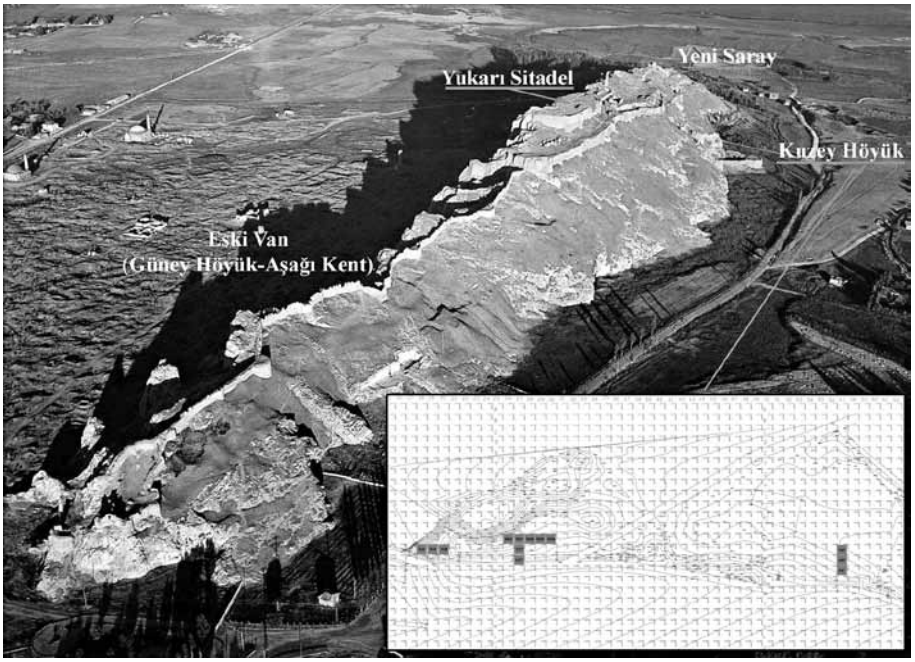


Fig. 1 Van Fortress from the air; the citadel and the lower city surrounding it.

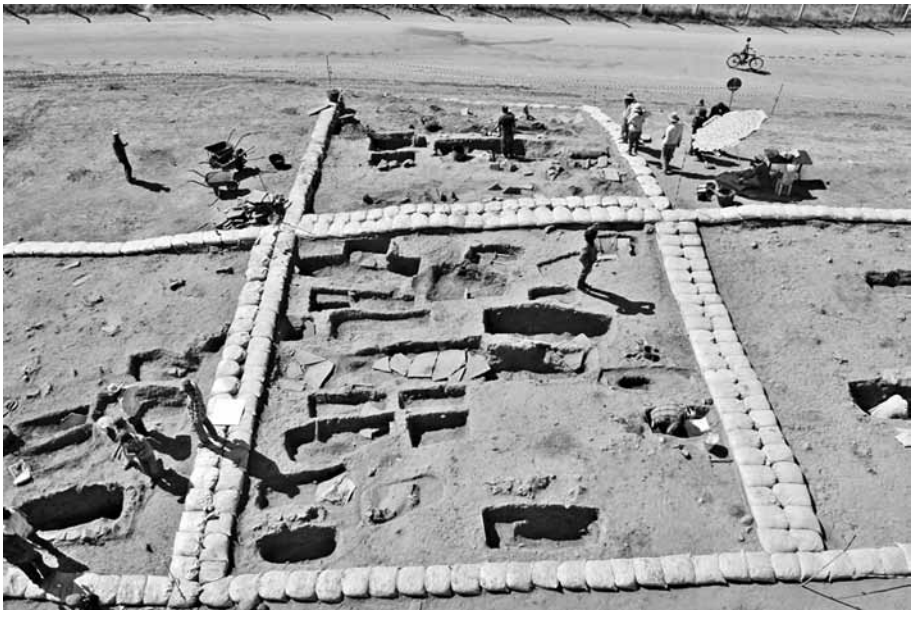


Fig. 2 Trenches in section A, 2010

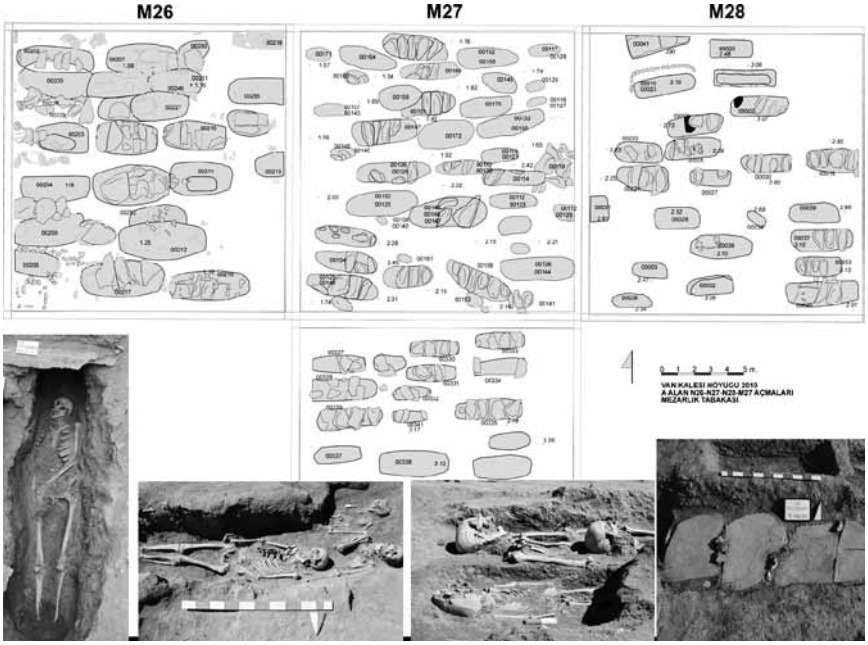


Fig. 3 Trenches in section A; general plan of the cemetery, burial types and forms.



Fig. 4 In situ grave goods and pottery from the fillings.

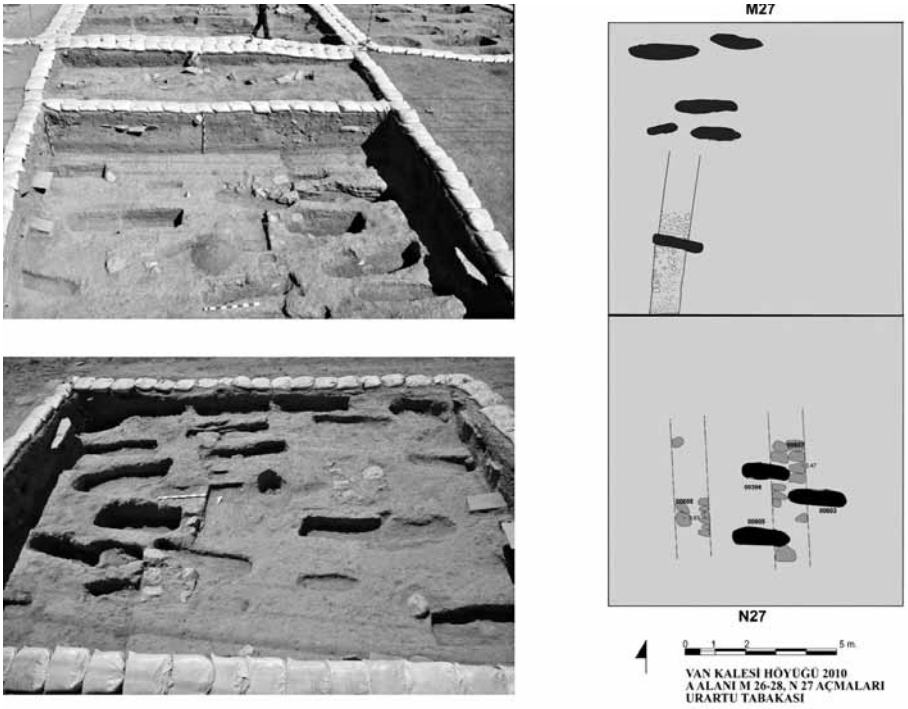


Fig. 5 Urartian architecture in the section A

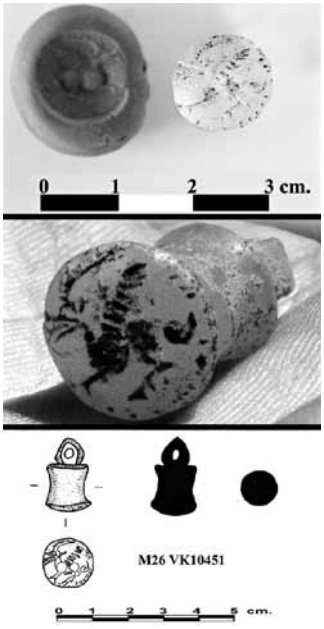


Fig. 6
An alabaster stamp seal with a string hole from the medieval grave filling.



Fig. 7
Urartian bulla from medieval grave filling.



Fig. 8 Urartian architectural remains unearthed during Prof. Tarhan's campaign in 1989-1991 were cleaned and preserved.

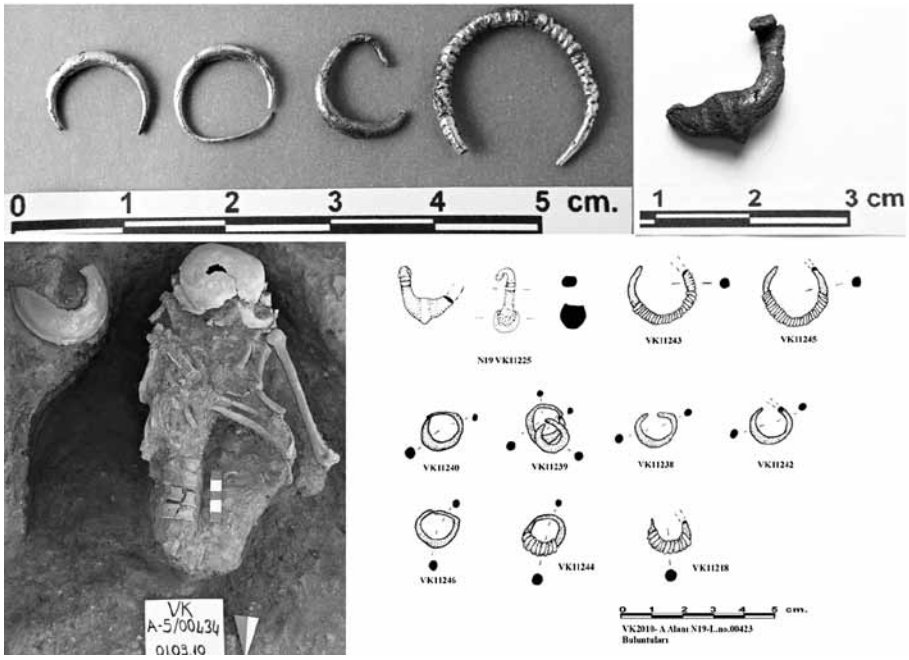


Fig. 9 Urartian silver earrings and a bronze fibula found in situ near the hocker and pithos(?) burials.

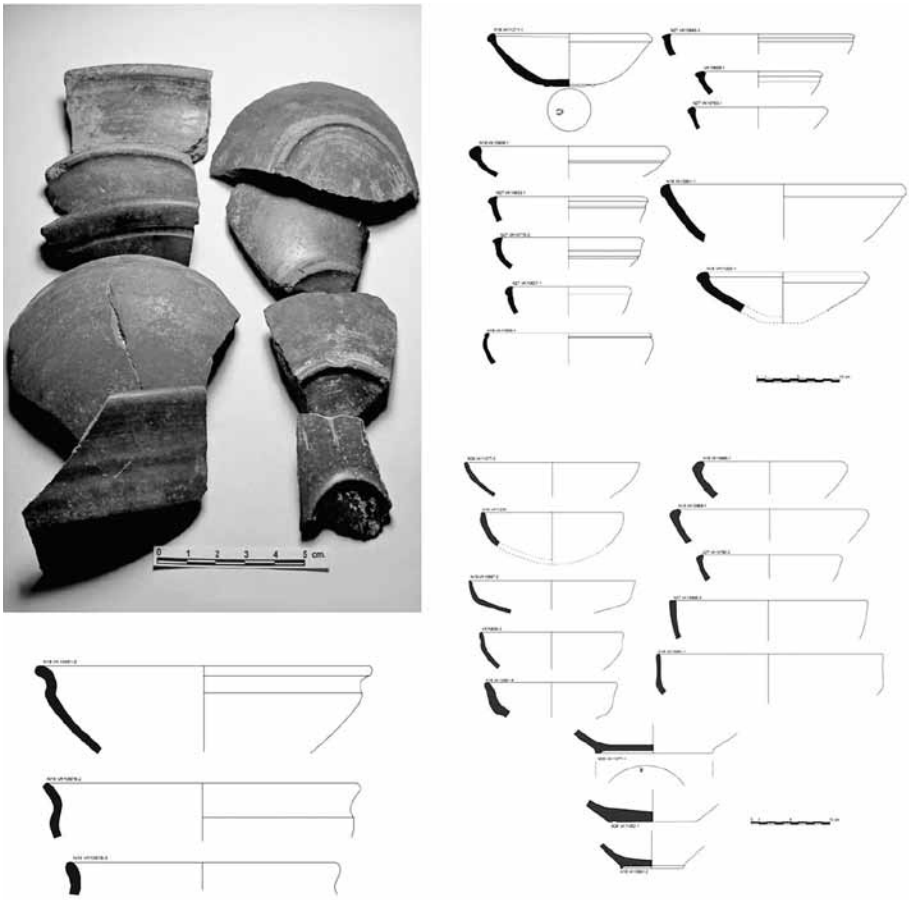


Fig. 10 Urartian red slip palace wares from the grave fillings in section A.

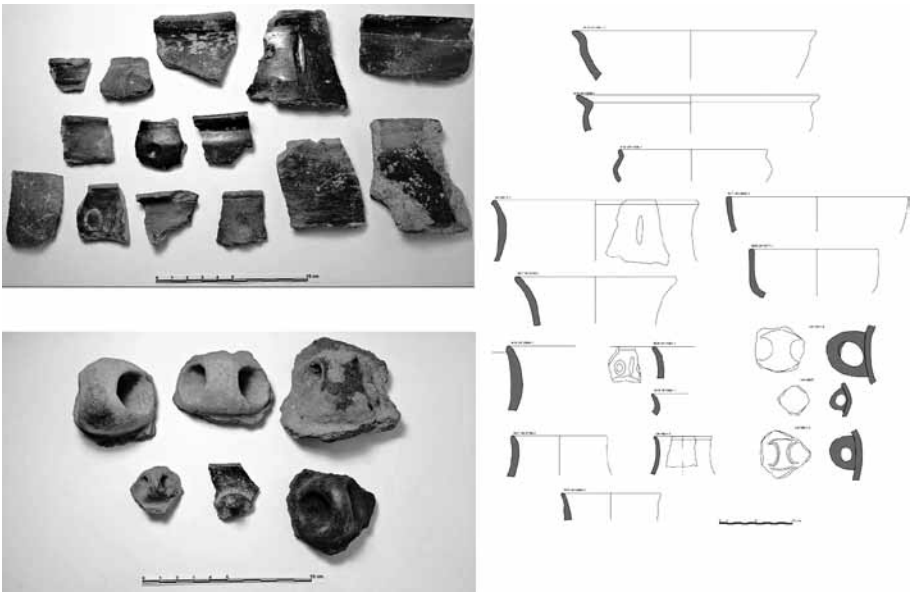


Fig. 11 Early Bronze Age – Karaz ware from the grave fillings in section A.



Fig. 12: A stele from the reign of Sarduri II reused in the Surp Pogos Church.