ERIQUA AND MINUAHINILI: AN EARLY IRON AGE-NAIRI KINGDOM AND URARTIAN PROVINCE ON THE NORTHERN SLOPE OF MT AĞRI

(SETTLEMENT COMPLEXES AT MELEKLI AND KARAKOYUNLU)

ERİQUA VE MİNUAHİNİLİ: AĞRI DAĞI'NIN KUZEY ETEĞİNDE BİR ERKEN DEMİR ÇAĞ-NAİRİ KRALLIĞI VE URARTU EYALETİ (MELEKLİ VE KARAKOYUNLU YERLEŞİM KOMPLEKSLERİ)

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ABSTRACT

Highland of eastern Anatolia, southern Transcaucasia and northwestern Iran were divided among a great number of local polities in the Late Bronze-Early Iron Age (c. 1600-900 BC). By the change of political power, regional landscape previously consisted of small local polities largely transformed into a province of the kingdom of Urartu (Middle Iron Age, c. 900-600 BC). The Urartian conquest of the Araxes valley-Mt Ağrı region began the earlier stage of the kingdom. Some of the sites that we investigated in the region show a developed and complex system. These settlement complexes were located in central area of geographical units. Each of the them covers interrelated units in a vast

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area within a long time period. The most remarkable settlement complexes of Mt Ağrı are Melekli, Karakoyunlu and Bozkurt can be consider as urban and administrative centres of Early Iron Age (pre-Urartian) and Urartian. South of the Araxes river was land of Erikua-Ireku-Irkuahi, inscriptions of king Minua refer to conquest of Luhiuni which was the capital of Eriqua. Luhiuni, the royal city of Early Iron Age kingdom Erikua; and Minuahinili, new fortress of Urartu and Haldi Temple which was built afterwards by king Minua, must be in the settlement complexes at Melekli and Karakoyunlu (Iğdır) on the northern slope of Mt Ağrı (Iğdır plain-south of the Araxes valley). Bozkurt settlement complex located in the southern part of mountain (Doğubayazıt plain) must also be considered in this frame.

ÖZET

Son Tunç-Erken Demir Çağı'nda (ykl. MÖ 1600-900) Doğu Anadolu yüksek yaylası, Güney Kafkasya ve Kuzeybatı İran çok sayıda yerel politik güç arasında bölünmüştü. Siyasi gücün değişmesiyle, öncesinin küçük yerel yönetim birimleri çoğunlukla Urartu Krallığı'nın (Orta Demir Çağ, ykl. MÖ 900-600) eyaletlerine dönüştü. Aras Vadisi-Ağrı Dağı bölgesine ilk fetihler Urartu Krallığı'nın erken döneminde başlamıştır. Bölgede yaptığımız araştırmalarda belirlediğimiz bazı yerleşimler gelişmiş ve kompleks bir yerleşim sistemi gösterirler. Bu yerleşim kompleksleri coğrafi birimlerin merkezi noktalarında yer alır. Her biri, geniş alanlar içinde, birbirleriyle ilişkili ve uzun bir zaman dilimi içine yayılmış ayrı birimlerden oluşur. Ağrı Dağı'nın en dikkat çekici yerleşim kompleksleri olan Melekli, Karakoyunlu ve Bozkurt Erken Demir Çağ (pre-Urartu) ve Urartu Krallığı'nın büyük kentleri ve idari merkezleri olarak düşünülebilir. Erken Demir Çağı'nda Aras Nehri'nin güneyi Erikua-Ireku-Irkuahi ülkesiydi, Kral Minua'nın yazıtlarında Eriqua başkenti Luhiuni'nin fethi anlatılır. Erken Demir Çağ krallığı Eriqua'nın krali kenti Luhiuni ile sonrasında Kral Minua tarafından yeni kurulan ve bir Haldi Tağınağı'nın da inşa edildiği Urartu kalesi Minuahinili sırasıyla Ağrı Dağı'nın kuzey eteğindeki (Iğdır Ovası-Aras Nehri'nin güneyi) Melekli ve Karakoyunlu (Iğdır) yerleşim komplekslerindedir, dağın güney eteğindeki (Doğubayazıt Ovası) Bozkurt yerleşim kompleksi de bu çerçevede değerlendirilmelidir.

Late Bronze-Early Iron Age (LBA-EIA, c. 1600-900 BC) of the highlands of eastern Anatolia, southern Transcaucasia and northwestern Iran are characterized by small independent polities named Nairi and Uruatri by Assyrian and Urartian texts. According to these epigraphic sources, pre-Urartian landscape appears to have been divided amongst numerous small local kingdoms or polities. By the change of political power, regional landscape previously consisted of small local polities largely transformed into a province of Urartian empire (Middle Iron Age, MIA, c. 900-600 BC). The Urartian conquest of the Araxes valley-Mt Ağrı region began the earlier stage of the kingdom. In the early ninth century BC, Ishpuni and Minua, kings of Urartu, extended the borders of the kingdom from the upper Euphrates to the western shore of Lake Urmia, their campaign reached to the shore of Lake Sevan in the north. In spite of existence in the north of the Araxes valley since the reign of King Ishpuini (830-810 BC), the Urartians did not occupy southern Transcaucasia until the reign of King Argishti I (785/80-756 BC). Military conquests of King Argishti I, encouraged by Argishtihinili fortress, construction in the north of the Araxes river (Ararat plain) and the region integration as a province of the kingdom. However, the Urartians occupied definitively the region of Mt Ağrı (Iğdır plain-south of the Araxes valley) just after the earliest campaigns to southern Transcaucasia which carried out by Ishpuini and Minua. The new fortress-city at Minuahinili on the northern slope of Mt Ağrı was established as a primary administrative center when the land of Eriqua captured by King Minua. With the foundation of Minuaihinili, the kingdom of Urartu became the sole political authority on the south of the Araxes river and Mt Ağrı region, and was dominated the gateways to the southern Transcaucasia-northwestern Iran and rather fertile Igdır plain.

In general, it appears that area of pre-Urartian landscape had a common culture and there were numerous polities which could be named fortress-state, city-state, small kingdom, chiefdom and regional confederacies in tribal structure. Written sources also give information about countries, cities, fortresses and people of these territorial highland polities of pre-Urartian landscape. Political intensification of these LBA-EIA highland state formation was marked by the appearance of local states based in fortresses and fortress-settlements following a long period of pastoral life, a few settlement and numerous big and wealthy kurgans of mobile communities of Middle Bronze Age (MBA). Our knowledge on the territories of these local states or small kingdoms in eastern Anatolia is extremely limited; it is only possible to localize some of them under general terms. It looks that the areas they controlled were mostly limited with geographical units like a valley or a plain which was isolated with mountains. Settlement complexes and a large number of LBA-EIA well preserved fortresses and their cemeteries located in the highlands and foothills surrounding of Mt Ağrı, including the Lake Van basin have been recorded in our investigation which is also the case in southern Transcaucasia and northwestern Iran. Rocky hills on foothills or highlands have clearly played a special role in the construction of landscape at that time producing of territory planning and control. One of the most remarkable characteristics of this period is the fortresses-cemeteries in great numbers which situated on the defensible hilltops. The most striking features of these fortresses are inaccessibility, irregular architectural plan based on topographic contours, cyclopean walls[1] and large cemeteries, located on skirts of the hills and directly connected with contemporary fortresses. The cemeteries which are located in the major fortresses or settlement complexes contain over one hundred graves. Kurgans and kromlechs are the most common grave type, taking the place of large kurgans of the MBA.

One of the EIA kingdoms in the highland of eastern Anatolia which was mentioned in the inscriptions of King Minua was the land of Erikua-Ireku-Irkuahi located in the north of Mt. Ağrı (Iğdır plain-south of the Araxes valley)[2] (Figs. 1-2). Igdır plain is the most fertile area of eastern Anatolia, and it is the entry point of southern Transcaucasia and northwestern Iran through the Araxes river southwards. In actual fact, Igdır plain is a flat area in the Araxes valley that is between two highest volcanoes in the Near East. This low plain is surrounded by Mt Aragats (Mt Alagöz, 4094 m) in the north, and Mt Ağrı (5123 m) in the south. The section of this plain located in Turkey where the Araxes river flows in the middle is called Igdır plain or Sürmeli-Aras Çukuru, and the section located in Armenia is called Ararat or Erivan-Revan plain. The Igdır plain seems like an oasis in the eastern Anatolia with its 800 m average elevation on the northern slope of Mt Ağrı which is the lowest terrain in the region, its mild climate, and depending on this, with its agricultural production. It is ecologically diverse ranging from the Mediterranean climate to the

[1] Term of 'Cyclopic fortress' generally means fortifications built with irregular and huge stone blocks, but the term is not quite right for the most of the LBA-EIA fortresses although it is used in this article because of the general use. Mostly, the stones of fortress walls are not very large, it seems that may be earlier fortresses (LBA) built with very large blocks, but it is difficult to define because of the lack of excavations in the eastern Anatolia. The term of 'Cyclopic fortress' is here used to indicate forts, fortresses and fortified settlements built on hilltops, irregular plans which is terrain dependent, dry masonry and uncut or roughly shaped stones. This type of masonry contrast with the ashlar or semi-ashlar masonry used in the construction of later fortresses in the Middle Iron Age-Urartu. Second, EIA fortresses have not projections on the walls, such as buttresses or towers except for some late examples which is irregular design.

[2] Özfırat 2005; Sevin 2005; Salvini 2002; Salvini 2006.

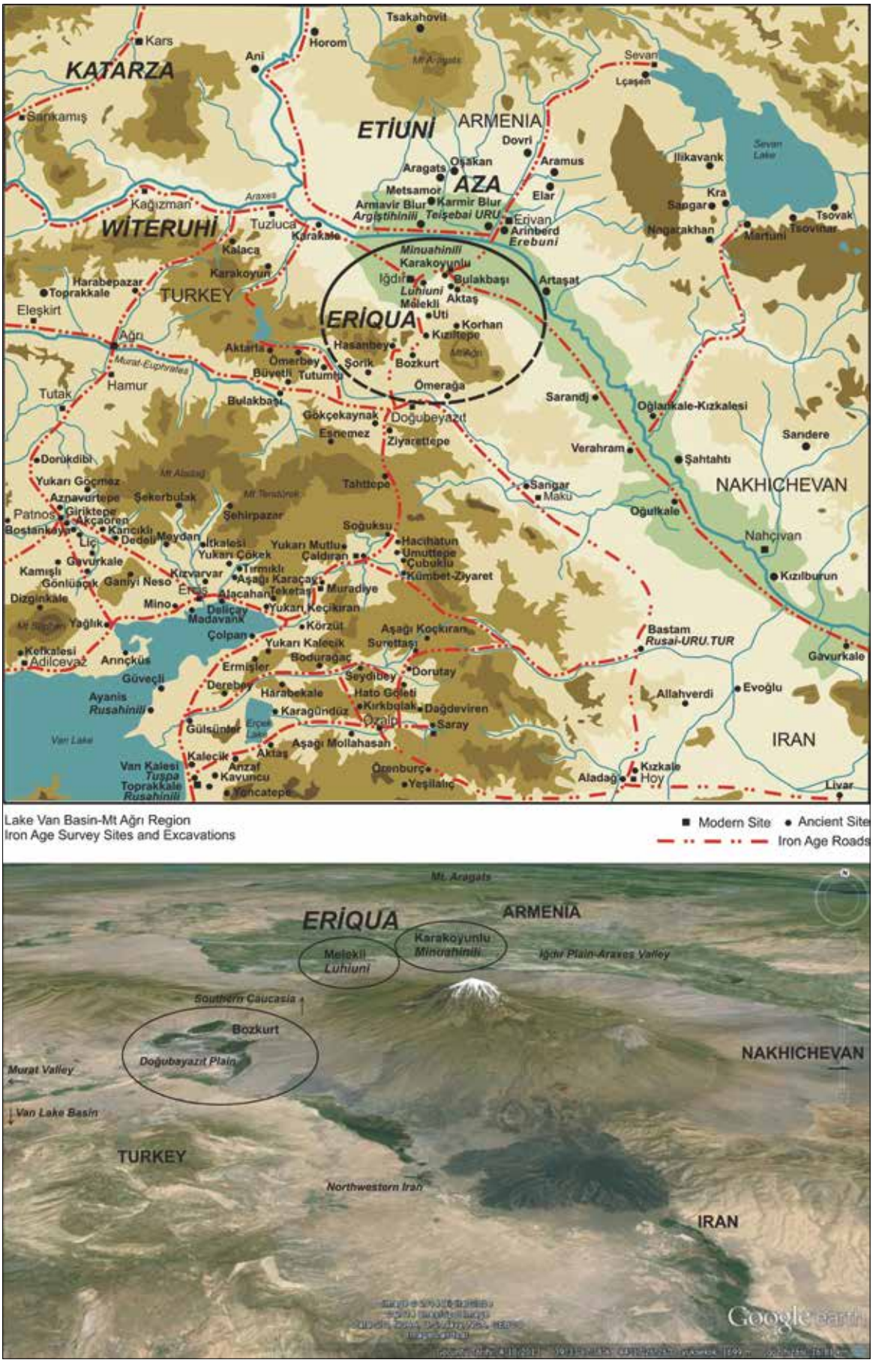


Figure 1: Mt Ağrı Settlement Complexes / *Ağrı Dağı Yerleşim Kompleksleri*

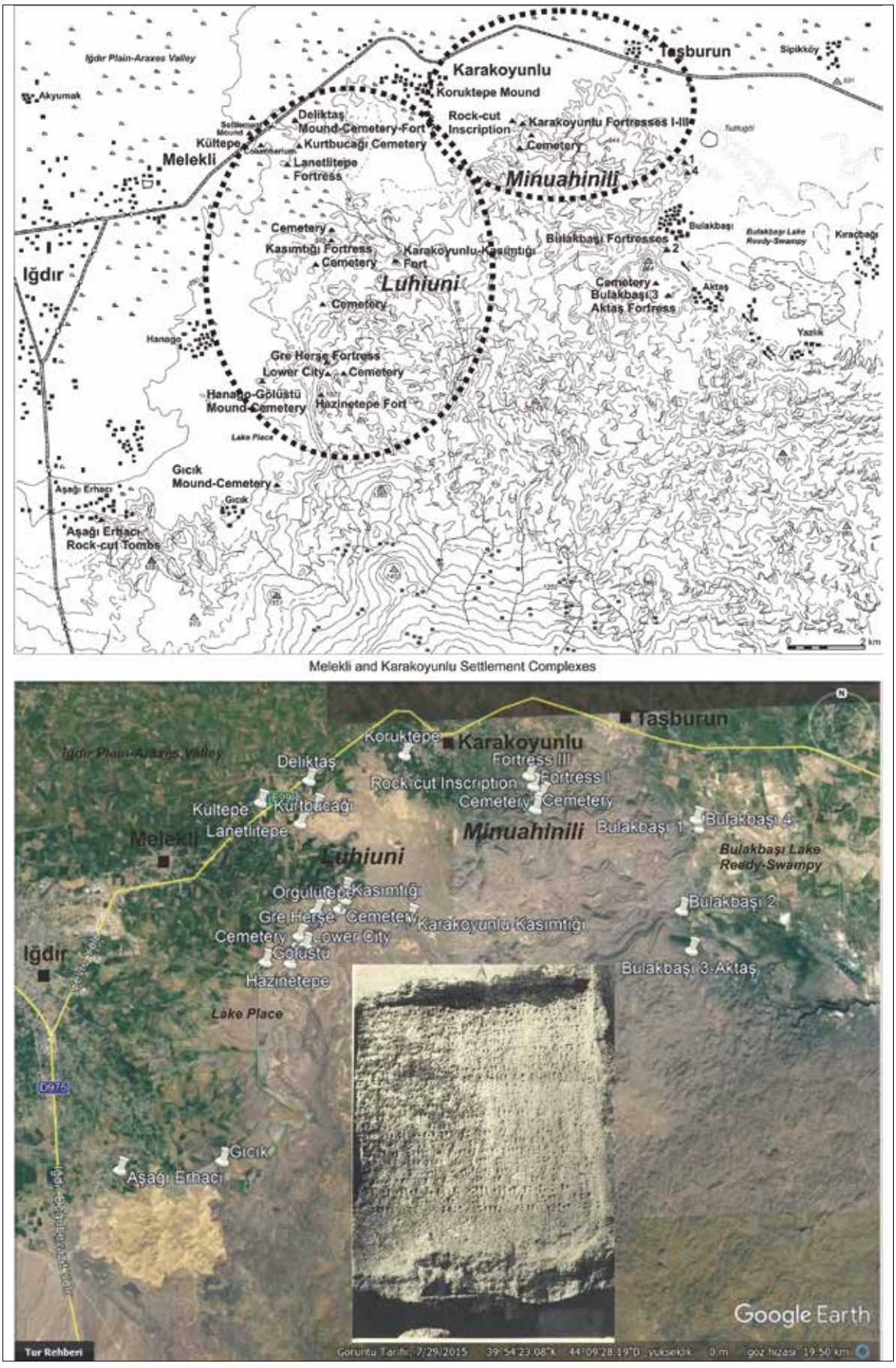


Figure 2: Melekli and Karakoyunlu Settlement Complexes / *Melekli ve Karakoyunlu Yerleşim Kompleksleri*

highlands of mountains. Mt Ağrı is also virtually the most important point in eastern Anatolia in a strategic sense. It is on the gateways of Caucasia and Iran is surrounded by the Iğdır plain and primary road of southern Transcaucasia in the north; Doğubayazıt plain and one of the main roads to northwestern Iran and to the Upper Euphrates valley by the Murat river valley in the south.

Some of the sites that we investigated show a developed and complex system[3]. Central fortresses or settlement complexes that cover long periods, along with citadels, lower cities, cemeteries and mounds, suggest that the region was divided into numerous small units ruled by a central city. These fortified-cities or central fortresses of the small independent polities of pre-Urartian (LBA-EIA) and Urartian (MIA) were mostly located to be part of in the large settlement complexes in continuity. The most remarkable settlement complexes of Mt Ağrı, Melekli (Iğdır), Karakoyunlu (Iğdır) and Bozkurt (Doğubayazıt) can be considered as urban centers of pre-Urartian and Urartian in the region (Figs. 1-4). They were also formed with some permanent and seasonal settlements and smaller fortresses in various size and function around them.

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Urartian inscriptions mentioning the Araxes valley describe a number of local polities informing the names of countries and their cities, such as, northwest of the valley was Aza; west of Lake Sevan was Etiuni; northeast of valley was Ulua land and its city Dara (Elar); south of valley was the land of Erikua-Ireku-Irkuahi (Fig 1).

The Urartian kings tried to take control of the Araxes valley and southern Transcaucasia from the beginning. It appears that King Ishpuini (830-810 BC) gave a start to its imperial expansion and reorganization of the country. Military expansions during co-regency of Ishpuini and Minua reached to the shores of Lake Sevan and Urmia. In a short time after these earliest campaigns, King Minua (810-785/780 BC) focused his attention to the Araxes valley. Minua started to expand into southern Transcaucasia on the northern slope of Mt. Ağrı. He campaigned against the land of Erikua, and conquered Luhiuni which was the royal city of Eriqua, and afterwards, this conquest was consolidated by the construction of fortress of Minuahinili which was on the southern bank of the Araxes river. Thus, northern part of Mt Ağrı or south of the Araxes valley were included to Urartian territory[4].

Inscriptions of the Eriqua campaign of King Minua which also contains the capture of the royal city of Luhiuni and foundation of the new Urartian fortress of Minuahinili was found in the fortresses at Karakoyunlu and vicinity of Bulakbaşı. The study on the find spots of these three inscriptions which was found in the area was done by A. A. Ivanovskij and M. V. Nikol'skij, first researchers to make a systematic investigation here in 1893-1894[5]. Because of the research area including Karakoyunlu and Bulakbaşı villages was within the boundaries of town of Taşburun (Iğdır province) in the mentioned date, fortresses and inscriptions were named as Taşburun (Figs. 2, 15)[6]. Confusion about these inscription apart from the name issue, is related with the find spots. Actually, except from the rock-cut inscription found on the slope of the fortresses at Karakoyunlu, the location of other two which is known as Bulakbaşı is uncertain. Because of this uncertainty (see fn 7-8), we preferred to use name of Taşburun which is the numbers and locations given by Nikol'skij.

The conquest of Eriqua is mentioned in the rock-cut inscription, found on the northern skirt of the fortresses at Karakoyunlu (Figs. 4, 10), Taşburun No. I[7]:

[3] Settlement complexes were major sites in the region. Our survey and excavation in the Lake Van basin and Mt Ağrı region has revealed that settlement complexes were located in central geographical areas, which where favourably located for agriculture, pastures, highland routes, trade routes etc. Each of them covers separate units related to each other such as mounds, cemeteries, lower cities and fortresses, spreading over a wide area with a horizontal stratigraphy covering a long chronological sequence, from the Late Chalcolithic Period to the Middle Iron Age (Urartu) or the Late Iron Age (Achaemenid), except for an interruption in the Middle Bronze Age (MBA). Actually, this settlement pattern which was characteristic for the highland of eastern Anatolia, southern Transcaucasia and northwestern Iran demonstrate a quite different model in contradistinction to those of the central area of Near East. It seems that, settlement system of Caucasia needs to be discussed and redefined as shown by recent work in the region.

[4] Özfırat (in press).

[5] The inscriptions were studied by Nikol'skij, during investigations of A. A. Ivanovskij and M. V. Nikol'skij in eastern Anatolia on behalf of the Moskva Archaeological Society, Nikol'skij 1896: 14-30; Lehmann-Haupt 1910: 169-171; Ivanovskij 1911: 36-59. Ivanovskj and Nikol'skij did not publish any findings from the Karakoyunlu and Bulakbaşı excavations and survey, and since the photographs and plans are extremely limited, we do not have enough information about the dating, architectural features, functions etc. of the structures that were investigated by Ivanovskj.

[6] All the settlements examined on the northern slope of Mt. Ağrı were described and named taking Taşburun town as the central point. Karakoyunlu name is used once, Bulakbaşı or Başbulak name is used because of the lake there. Two fortresses are mentioned in Karakoyunlu, and three on the shore of Lake Bulakbaşı (Fig. 15). Thereof, fortresses at Karakoyunlu and Bulakbaşı was frequently recorded as Taşburun, and as Tsolakert, Solagert, Zolakert and Çölegert in other versions. Taşburun is connected to Karakoyunlu district today, but before it was the opposite, Karakoyunlu was connected toTaşburun. Karakoyunlu fortress II is also named as Mağaralar Mevkii due to Urartian rock-cut tomb there, so we used this name in our first reports.

[7] Nikol'skij 1896: No I, 16, 22-27, Tafel III-IV; Vorderasiatisches Museum, Berlin, the rock-cut inscription at the point where the Karakoyunlu fortresses connect with the plain. According to the



Melekli Settlement Complex



Hanago-Gölüstü Mound and Cemetery (I73/4)
Pottery: Late Chalcolithic
Architecture: Kurgans

Deliktaş Mound, Fort ? and Cemetery-Kurtbucağı Cemetery (I73/13)
Pottery: Late Chalcolithic, Middle Bronze Age (a few), Middle Iron Age (Urartu), Late Iron Age (Pers-Akhaimenid)
Architecture: Kurgans, Urartian Fort ?

Küllepe Mound and Cemetery-Columbarium (I73/1)
Pottery: Early Bronze Age, Middle Bronze Age (a few), Late Bronze-Early Iron Age, Middle Iron Age (Urartu), Late Iron Age (Pers-Akhaimenid)
Architecture: Urartian Cemetery-Columbarium

Kasımtığı-Gre Herşe Fortresses, Lower City, Forts and Cemeteries (I73/3)
Pottery: Early Bronze Age (a few), Middle Bronze Age (a few), Late Bronze-Early Iron Age, Middle Iron Age (Urartu, a few)
Architecture: Late Bronze-Early Iron Age Fortresses, Defensive walls, Fort
Cemeteries: Kurgans-Cromlechs

Melekli-Lanetlitepe Fortress (I73/14)
Pottery: Late Chalcolithic (a few), Middle Iron Age (Urartu)
Architecture: Urartu



Figure 3: Melekli Settlement Complex / *Melekli Yerleşim Kompleksi*

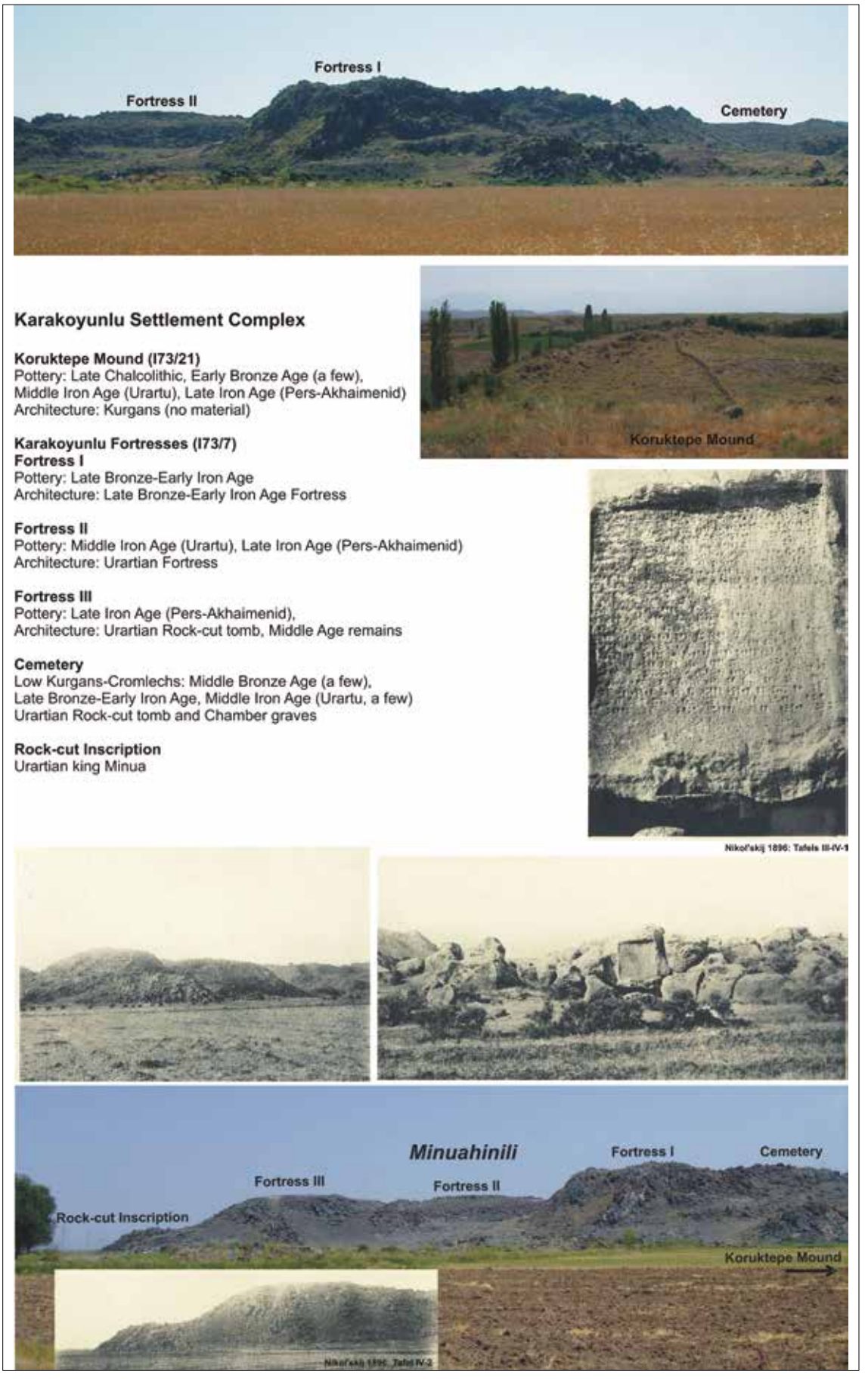


Figure 4: Karakoyunlu Settlement Complex / *Karakoyunlu Yerleşim Kompleksi*

"The god Haldi started excursion with his own spear. He conquered Erikuahi land, and took the city of Luhiuni. They made (them) obey in front of Minua. The god Haldi is strong, and the spear of the god Haldi is strong. With the strength of the god Haldi; Minua, son of Ishpuini, started his excursion. The god Haldi went in the front line.

Minua said: (The god Haldi) came to Erikuahi land. The god Haldi gave royal city of Luhiuni, which was never conquered before, to Minua, son of Ishpuini. I conquered the city of Luhiuni. I granted the city of Luhiuni (in return for) payment of tribute.

Minua said: Whoever destroys this inscription, whoever commits a crime, whoever makes any other person commit these crimes (or) whoever says something different, that is, "I conquered Luhiuni", the god Haldi, the god Teisheba, the god Shivini (and all gods) deprive him from sunlight."

In Körzüt, which is a repetition of the previous inscription, the list of war spoils are given, and it is mentioned that the women from the royal city of Luhiuni were moved to the harem in Tushpa[8].

The foundation of Minuahinili is mentioned in the inscriptions of Taşburun No II-III.

Taşburun No II[9]:

"With the might of the god Haldi, Minua established this place, the land of Irkua of Minua ( ). He built a Haldi gate and a fortress in a perfect style.

Minua said: I established … I built …"

Taşburun No III[10]:

"Minua, son of Ishpuini, established this building in a perfect style, and built a fortress to the god Haldi in a perfect style. He named (this place) as 'Minuahinili'. Minua, son of Ishpuini, the mighty king, is the hero of the City of Tushpa, and the king of the Biainili land, with the greatness of the god Haldi."

Luhiuni, the royal city of Kingdom of Erikua; and Minuahinili, the new fortress of Urartu which was built afterwards, must be situated in the settlement complexes at Melekli (Luhiuni) and Karakoyunlu (Minuahinili), (Figs 1-4). Actually, both were local LBA-EIA cities, one of them was at Melekli-Kasımtığı (Luhiuni) and the other was at Karakoyunlu fortress I, probably a smaller city of Eriqua. Melekli and Karakoyunlu settlement complexes are located on the northern slope of Mt Ağrı where lava flow join the Iğdır plain-Araxes valley, covering a long time span from the Late Chalcolithic (LC) to the Late Iron Age (LIA-Achaemenid) except for an interruption in the MBA which is represented by very few sherds. Right in front of them, lie the fertile lands of the plain, and the main routes of southern Transcaucasia and northwestern Iran via the Araxes river valley.

Luhiuni must be the large fortress-settlement at Kasımtığı-Gre Herşe fortresses which is located in Melekli settlement complex (Figs. 1-3, 5-6). Showing the characteristics of a large fortress-city, it spreads to an extremely wide area dimension of nearly 4 km; and was the largest settlement in the region with its central area surrounded by fortification walls, fortresses on the very high hills overlooking the plain, lower city and a vast cemetery. There is an ancient lake at the western end of the city (Figs. 2, 5). The walls of the citadels which have irregular plans based on topography were made of uncut or roughly shaped stones; and the square-rectangular buildings were built on the slopes in the contour of terraces. Long ramps extending from citadels stretch to the southern sides of the fortresses (Figs 7-9). Two forts are situated in the southern and northwestern borders of the city, the forts at Hazine Tepe and Karakoyunlu-Kasımtığı are located on extremely high and sharp hills overlooking all the valley and plain (Figs 2-3, 5-6, 9). The central area and the citadel of the city is located on Gre Herşe fortress (Figs 2-3, 5-7, 9). It is situated on the highest hill of the city with its buildings on terraces (Fig 7). Lower city fortification walls which lies on the southern slope of the fortress is at the length of nearly 3 km (Fig 5, 7). This wall is 2.5 m in thickness, and 2 m

Nikol'skij photographs, this inscription is on the northern slope of fortress what we call Karakoyunlu III and on the rocks overlooking the valley. The find spot of this inscription is recorded as Solagert fortress in Payne 2006: 5.1.3; Tsolakert-Taşburun (Iğdır) in Salvini 2008 (CTU): A5-1.

[8] In the inscription of Susi Temple of the fortress at Körzüt (in Muradiye plain at the northeastern shore of Lake Van) in which the northern campaigns of King Minua were mentioned, Payne 2006: 5.1.4-5.1.6; Salvini 2008 (CTU): A52A-F.

[9] Nikol'skij 1896: No II, 17-18, 28-29, Tafel V; History Museum of Armenia, Yerevan, this inscription is on a stone block, found at the home of a hard ware store owner in Taşburun town. The exact find spot is unknown, the villagers described that they found this inscription from the medieval city on the plain east of the lake near the Urartian fortresses (Bulakbaşı 1-4) on the slope of Mt Ağrı and shores of Lake Bulakbaşı. Although Ivanovskj made extensive excavations in the medieval city of Bulakbaşı in 1893-1894, he did not find any evidence of earlier periods (Fig. 15 map, probably settlement of Taşburun), (Ivanovskij 1911: 38-52). The find spot of this inscription is recorded as Solagert fortress (Eçmiazin) in Payne 2006: 5.3.12; Tsolakert-Taşburun and Mağaralar Mevkii (Iğdır) in Salvini 2008 (CTU): A5-27.

[10] Nikol'skij 1896: 16-17, 29-30, No III, this inscription couldn't be found. Nikol'skij studied this inscription from a photograph found in Archbishop Mesrop in Taşburun town. The find spot of this inscription is recorded as Başbulak in Payne 2006: 5.3.13; Başbulak-Bulakbaşı (Taşburun, Iğdır) in Salvini 2008 (CTU): A5-26.

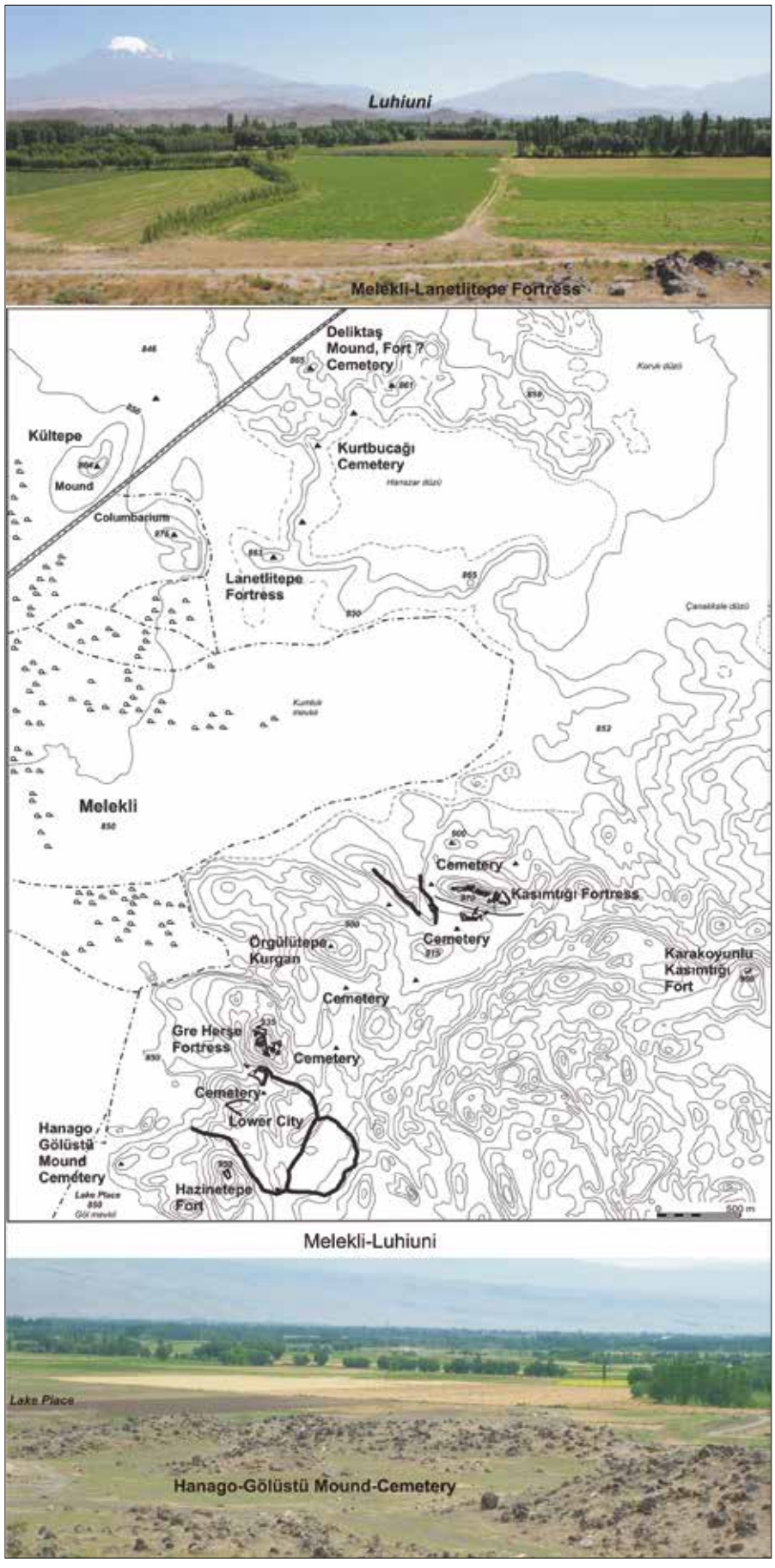


Figure 5: Melekli-Luhiuni / *Melekli-Luhiuni*



Figure 6: Melekli-Luhiuni / *Melekli-Luhiuni*

height of it has been preserved. It surrounds the lower hills and flat areas in the southern and eastern part of the fortress. Kasımtığı fortress situated on the high hill which is northern part of central area, it might be a separate point in the northern border of the city (Fig 2-3, 5-6, 8-9). There are some parts of a long and thick wall that might belong to the city wall on a lower hill in the western slope of Kasımtığı fortress.

Cemetery of site contains hundreds of kurgans and kromlekhs spread over all the flat places and lower lava hills around Melekli settlement complex (Figs 2-3, 5-6) which has pottery from the MBA to the LBA-EIA. It spreads extending to Hanago-Gölüstü mound to the south, and Deliktaş mound-Kurtbucağı to the north, these are large kurgans, differing from the ones in between fortresses (Figs. 2-3, 5), no pottery have been found in these large kurgans. Among the kurgans in the city, the largest one located between the Kasımtığı and Gre Herşe fortresss on a high hill (Örgülü Tepe) overlooking the whole Araxes valley differs from the rest because of its size and location (Figs. 2-3, 5-6, 8). There is a large kurgan in the middle of a platform (60 x 60 m) with terraces on the hill.

Luhiuni, the capital of Erikua was the political center of the region of Mt Ağrı-southern bank of the Araxes river in pre-Urartu. The localization of LBA-EIA settlement at Melekli-Kasımtığı with Luihuni evidenced by the remains of largest fortified-city in the region, and by its architecture which has irregular plan based on topography were made of uncut or roughly shaped stones and by the remains of extensive cemetery and its pottery both fortresses and cemetery belongs to LBA-EIA aside from a few MBA from graves and its geographical location and its closeness to Minuahinili.

Minuahinili is located in Karakoyunlu settlement complex nearly 4 km away from Melekli to the east, closer to the Araxes river (Figs. 1-2, 4). The fortress-city at Minuahinili which was named after King Minua, was established on a lower hill stretching on the plain[11]. The city, although its plan is not clear, spans c. 3 km with a citadel, lower city and a large cemetery (Figs. 2, 4, 10). Citadel consists of new Urartian Fortress (Fortress II) and a LBA-EIA fortress (Fortress I). Both fortresses situated over three separate hills overlooking the plain were surrounded by about 1 km long wall with its fragments can be seen. The lower city must have been existed in the plain, starting from right on the slope of the citadel where the inscription of King Minua to the Koruktepe mound. Since this area is within the borders of the modern city and the farmland we couldn't determine the remains and boundaries of the city, but Koruktepe mound in within modern Karakoyunlu evidences that the city expands to this point. The LBA-EIA fortress at Karakoyunlu (fortress I), which is situated on the high hill overlooking the plain, shows an irregular plan that was created by the topography (Figs 10-11), its pottery is also typical for the period. The Urartian fortress (Karakoyunlu fortress II) located on the opposite lower hill stretching the plain[12]. On a third hill adjacent to these, Karakoyunlu fortress III has thick Middle Age layer and an Urartian rock-cut tomb on the eastern side (Fig. 10)[13]. Except for some sherds, it is difficult to obtain information about the levels because of the intense layer of Middle Age on it, but, some of the wall pieces related to the Urartian architecture are apparent.

Karakoyunlu fortress II (Minuahinili) shows the characteristics of Urartu by its architecture and pottery. Semi-ashlar masonry was used in the construction of the walls with buttresses (Figs 10, 12). Fortress is 450 meters long and consists of two separate sections with differing elevations[14]. The Upper part has 250 m

[11] Contrary to the settlement system of pre-Urartian on the highlands and inaccessible hills, Urartian sites were built at much lower elevations, on the lower hills stretching the plains and valleys. In fact, settlement pattern of Urartu were based on controlling primarily roads, valleys-plains and other fertile lands for agriculture. It seems that, pre-Urartian settlement pattern and socio-economic structure one way or another survived, except for eastern and northern sides of the Lake Van basin which is central area of the kingdom and in the Urmia plain, along with the fortresses-cemeteries of the highlands. A great number of pre-Urartian fortresses continued into the Urartian period, in some cases minor changes are visible. The Urartian administrative centers which were founded on the borders of the kingdom combined local and Urartian architectural features.These fortress-cities or capitals of LBA-EIA were transformed into provincial or major cities of Urartu, such as, Gavar-Khaldi, Tsovinar-Teishebaini, Tsovak, Lchashen, Arghuyti Dash, Horom, Aramus, Shisheh and Seqindel-Libliuni. Badalyan/Avetisyan 2007; Badalyan, R. S./Kohl, L. P./Kroll, S.1997; Badalyan/Kzlyan/Iskra/Mikalyelyan/Kyureghan 2016; Badalyan/Mikalyelyan/Kyureghan/Iskra/Hovsepyan/Nahapetyan/Yeghiazaryan 2017; Baxşeliyev 2002; Bakhshaliyev/Marro 2009; Biscione 2002; Biscione 2003; Biscione 2009; Biscione 2012; Biscione/Dan 2011; Biscione/Dan 2012; Biscione 2012; Hammer 2014; Heinsch, S./Kuntner, W./Avetisyan, H. 2012; Hmayakyan 2010; Kerimov 2003; Khanzaq, B. R./Biscione, R./Hejebri-Nobari, A. R./Salvini, M. 2001; Kleiss/Kroll 1980; Kohl/Kroll 1999; Kroll 2005; Kroll 2011; Kroll 2012; Narimanishvili 2012; Narimanishvili 2016; Özfırat 2009; Özfırat 2013; Özfırat 2014b; Özfırat 2015; Özfırat 2016; Özfırat 2017a; Özfırat 2017b; Rasuloglu 1993; Reinhold 2016; Ristvet, L./Bakhshaliyev, V./Gopnik, H./Ashurov, S. H. 2013; Sanamyan 2002; Sevin 2005; Sevin 2006; Sevin 2014; Shanshashvili/Narimanishvili 2013; Smith 1999; Smith 2003; Smith 2012; Smith/Badalyan/Avetisyan 2009.

[12] Ivanovskj and Nikol'skij mention two fortresses in Karakoyunlu, according to their descriptions, they must have made a small excavation in 1893 at the place we call Karakoyunlu II (Ivanovskj 1911: 37-38).

[13] Çevik 2000: No 18.

[14] This must be the hill where A. A. İvanovkiy and M. V. Nikol'skij excavated, yet there weren't enough information from this short-term excavation, since it includes only one structure, Ivanovskij 1911: 37-38; Nikol'skij 1896: 16, 22-27.



Figure 7: Melekli-Luhiuni: Gre Herşe Fortress, Lower City Walls / *Melekli-Luhiuni: Gre Herşe Kalesi, Aşağı Kent Surları*

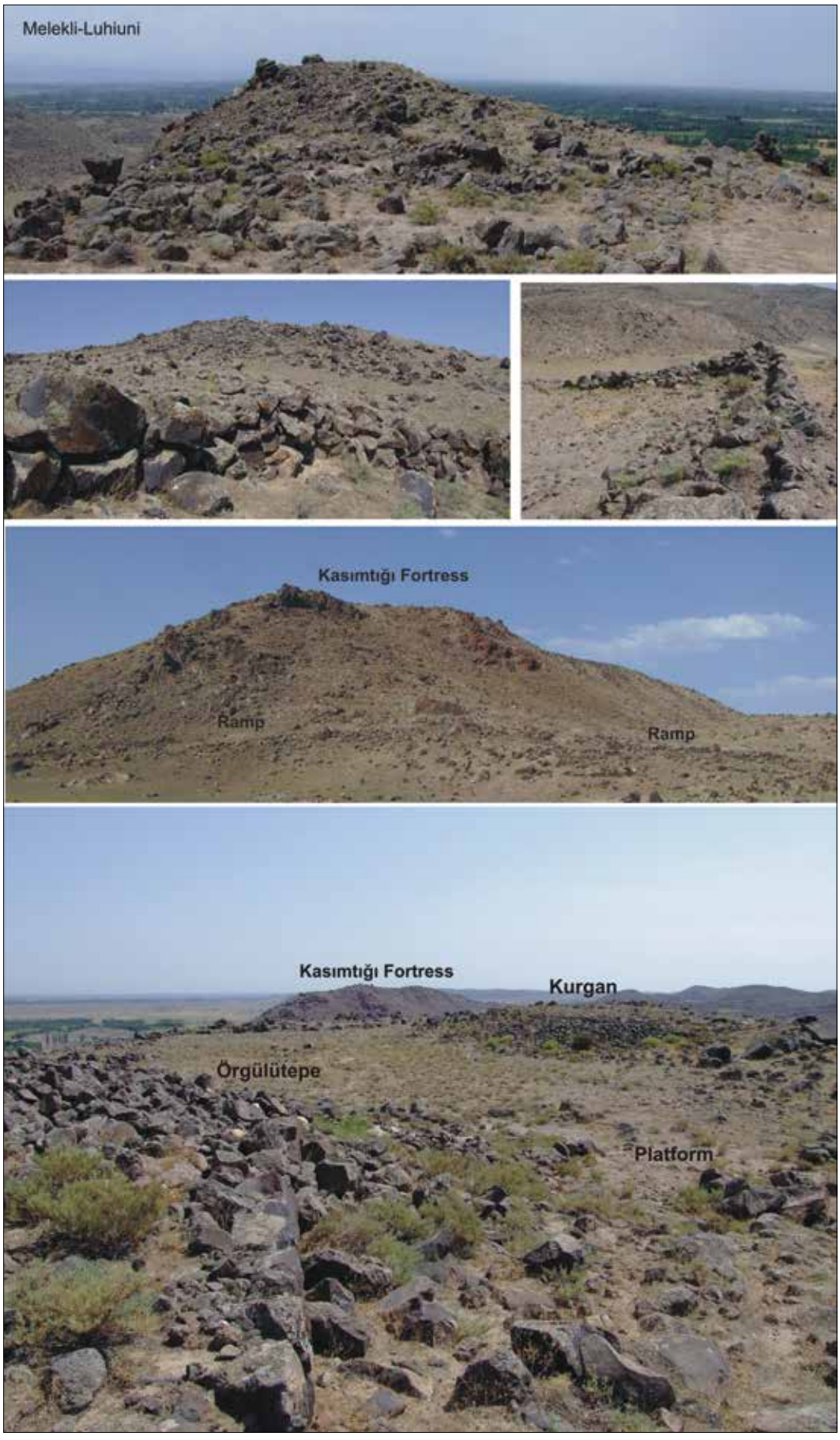


Figure 8: Melekli-Luhiuni: Kasımtığı Fortress, Örgülütepe Kurgan / *Melekli-Luhiuni: Kasımtığı Kalesi, Örgülütepe Kurganı*

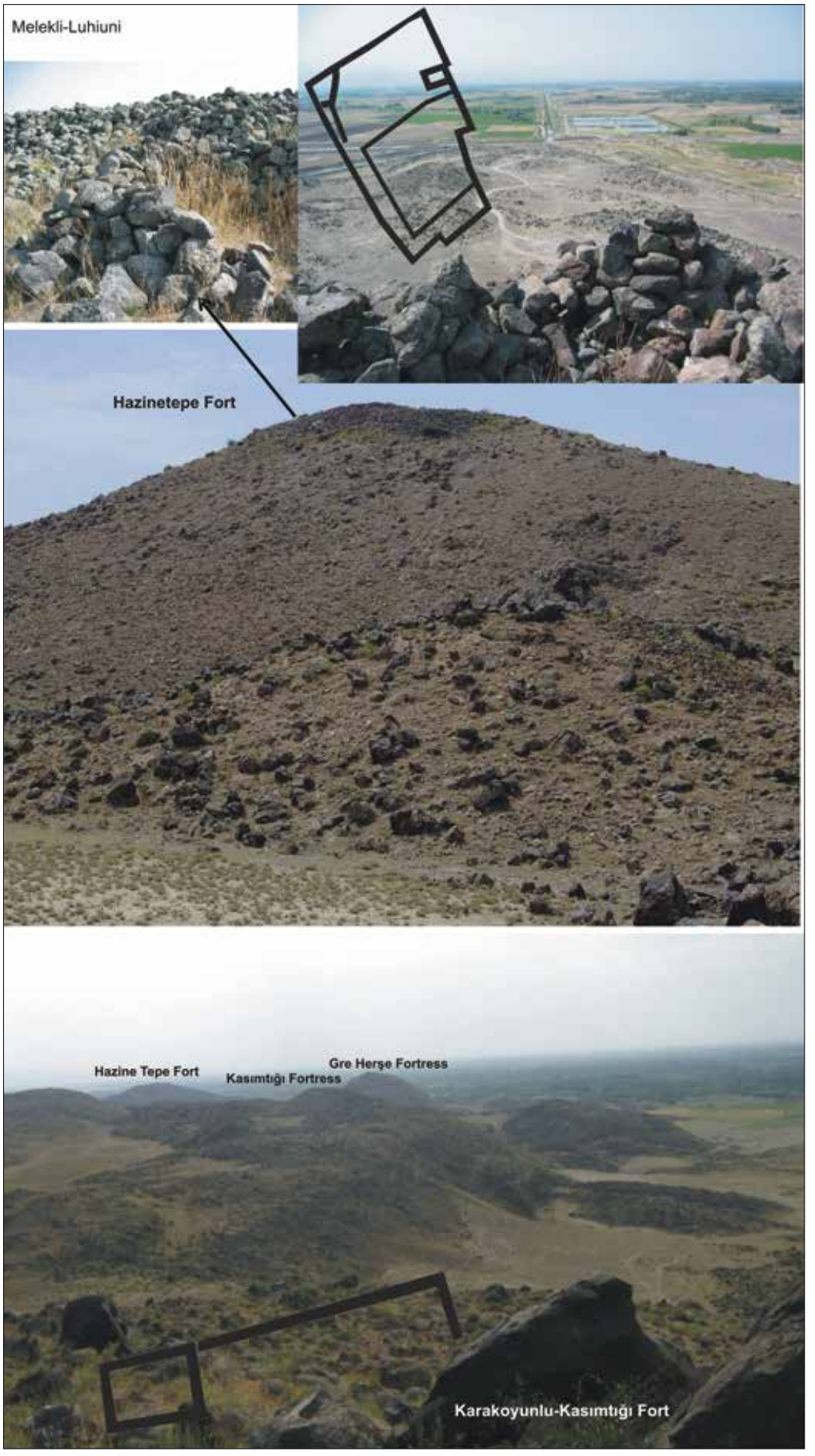


Figure 9: Melekli-Luhiuni Forts / *Melekli-Luhiuni Kuleler*

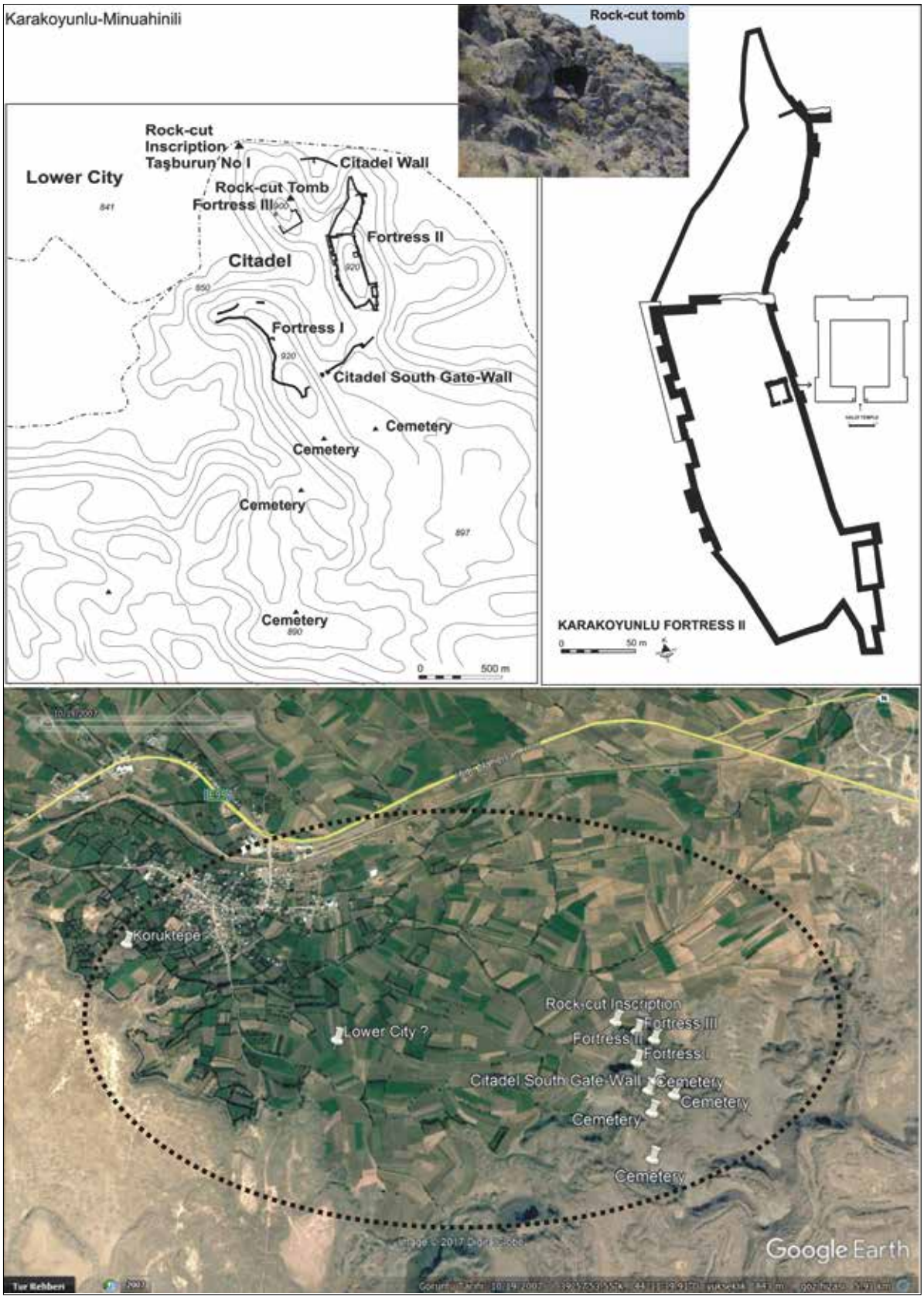


Figure 10: Karakoyunlu-Minuahinili / *Karakoyunlu-Minuahinili*



Figure 11: Karakoyunlu-Minuahinili: Fortress I, Citadel South Gate and Wall / *Karakoyunlu-Minuahinili: Kale I, Sitadel Güney Kapısı ve Duvarı*



Figure 12: Karakoyunlu-Minuahinili: Fortress II / *Karakoyunlu-Minuahinili: Kale II*

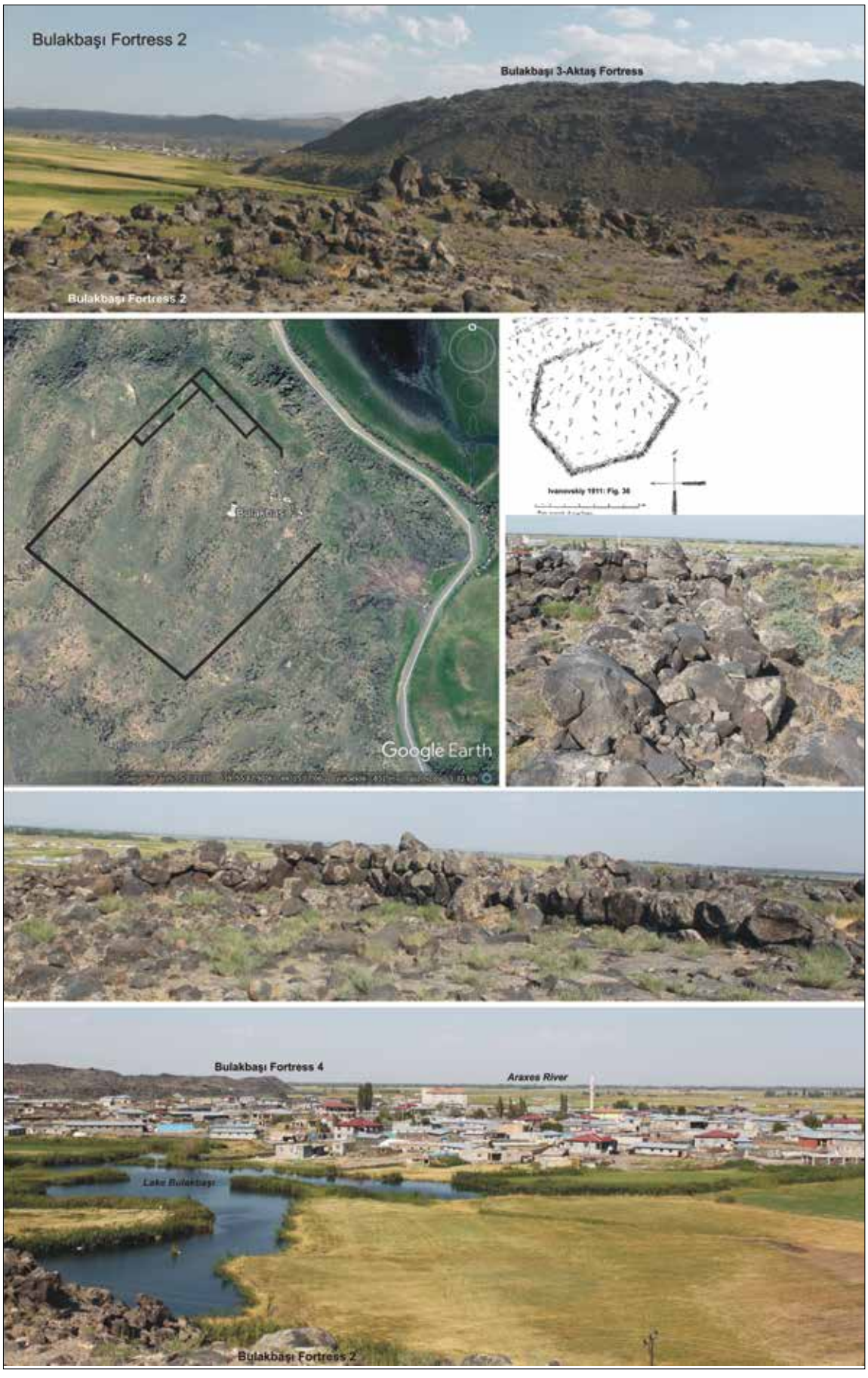


Figure 13: Bulakbaşı Fortress 2 and General View of Fortress 4 / *Bulakbaşı Kale 2 ve Kale 4 Genel Görünüm*

length and 70 m width with rectangular plan, the second part adjacent to the plain below has an irregular plan matching the topography with 200 meters of length. At the highest point, there is the Haldi temple with a square plan (4.00 x 3.5 m) as mentioned in the inscriptions of Minua: '… and built a fortress to the god Haldi in a perfect style ...', '… He built a Haldi gate and a fortress in a perfect style …'.

The fragments of wall surrounding the citadel can be traced to south and east. The gate to the cemetery in the south of the fortresses and the wall going to the east and wall pieces between the two fortresses in the north, level of the plain should belong to the wall of the citadel. The early fortress (I) in the west appears to have been reconstructed by the Urartians, and should have required this arrangement, since it is already at the western end of Minuahinili (fortress II). In this case, the citadel of the city appears to have been surrounded by a wall in much lower other directions, except for the western side which is a steep hill where the fortress I is located. In the south, the gate towards the cemetery indicates that it is a strong wall. We could not find any information on whether the walls surrounding the citadel continued north to the lower city, since dense farming took place today at Iğdır plain. Karakoyunlu settlement complex has a large cemetery consisting of great numbers of graves, some Urartian chamber graves, mostly low kurgans and kromlekhs on the lower lava hills and the flat areas south of the fortresss in which the pottery of a few MBA, a great number of LBA-EIA and a number of MIA-Urartu have been found.

Localization of the Karakoyunlu Fortress II with the fortress-city of Minuahinili, besides the discovery of rock-cut inscription of King Minua there and its geographical location, was by far the largest fortified site and principal Urartian fortress on the northern side of Mt Ağrı. Karakoyunlu Fortress II is distinguished from the others in the region by its attentive architecture and Haldi temple, its graves and its classical Urartian pottery[15]. The Urartian settlement at the Karakoyunlu complex demonstrate city characteristic; a citadel surrounded by a wall which seems to enclose all three fortress, a large cemetery spread over a wide area between the lava hills in the south, together with a lower city located on the plain in the north constitute the units of the city.

Minuahinili, the Urartian political center of the region was strengthened with new constructions in time (Figs 1-2). They appear as various units supporting the administrative center: The fortresses at Bulakbaşı 2 and 4 near the southern bank of the Araxes river that appears to have been constructed at the same time with Minuahinili and a fortress-garrison town (Bulakbaşı 3-Aktaş fortress) next to them which established later were in southeast; an outpost-route station (Melekli-Lanetlitepe fortress), settlement and columbarium were in the west; an outpost-route station (Bozkurt fortress II) and a central fortress (Ömerağa-Gölyüzü fortress) in the Doğubayazıt plain were on the southern slope of Mt. Ağrı.

Bulakbaşı fortresses located c. 4 km southeast of Minuahinili (Karakoyunlu) at a closer point further east to the Araxes river, on the shore of Lake Bulakbaşı (Figs 1-2, 13-16)[16]. This area, which is recessed southward along the skirts of Mt. Ağrı, is the richest wetlands of the region. Lake Bulakbaşı is also the exit point of Karasu River which is a branch of the Araxes river. Urartian fortresses at Bulakbaşı (2-4) and a big kurgan (Bulakbaşı 1) located on the surrounding hills on the western shore of lake. They are all on adjacent hills: Kurgan (Bulakbaşı 1), Fortress 4, Fortress 2 and Fortress 3-Aktaş lies from north to south.

Bulakbaşı fortress 2 situated on a low hill adjacent to the fortress of Bulakbaşı 3-Aktaş and next to the lake (Fig. 13, 15-16)[17]. The plan of the fortress is partly clear due to a Middle Age level on top. A rough plan of the fortress is rectangular, with 200 m length with. The walls were built with semi-ashler stones, had a thickness of 3.00 m. Remains of two adjacent interior rooms in the plan of rectangular are visible on the northern corner.

Bulakbaşı fortress 4 is on a high hill adjacent to the kurgan (Bulakbaşı fortress 1), (Fig. 14)[18]. The lay out of the fortress is rectangular, with 130 m length (the existing part) and 50 m width. Although the plan of the southern part of the fortress remains undefined, the main gate (3.60 m wide) into the citadel appears to have been on the northern side, overlooking the kurgan (Bulakbaşı fortress 1).

[15] We found a large number of Late Iron Age pottery both Karakoyunlu Fortress II and Koruktepe mound and also from Melekli-Kültepe mound showing of the presence of an large Achaemenid settlement.

[16] Ivanovskj and Nikol'skij recorded three fortress, on the western shore of Lake Bulakbaşı (Fig. 15). Enumerating the fortresses of Bulakbaşı No. 1 and 2 (we used the same), from here to the south, they finally did research on Bulakbaşı 3-Aktaş, which they called the Great Fortress. Ivanovskij 1911: 38-56; Nikol'skij 1896: 17-18, 28-29. We have found a new Urartian fortress (Bulakbaşı 4) on a high hill between Bulakbaşı 1 and 2. I would like to offer my sincere thanks to Dr. Ayhan Yardımcıel for his help in Bulakbaşı studies.

[17] Ivanovskij 1911: 55-56.

[18] The site has not been investigated by İvanovsky.

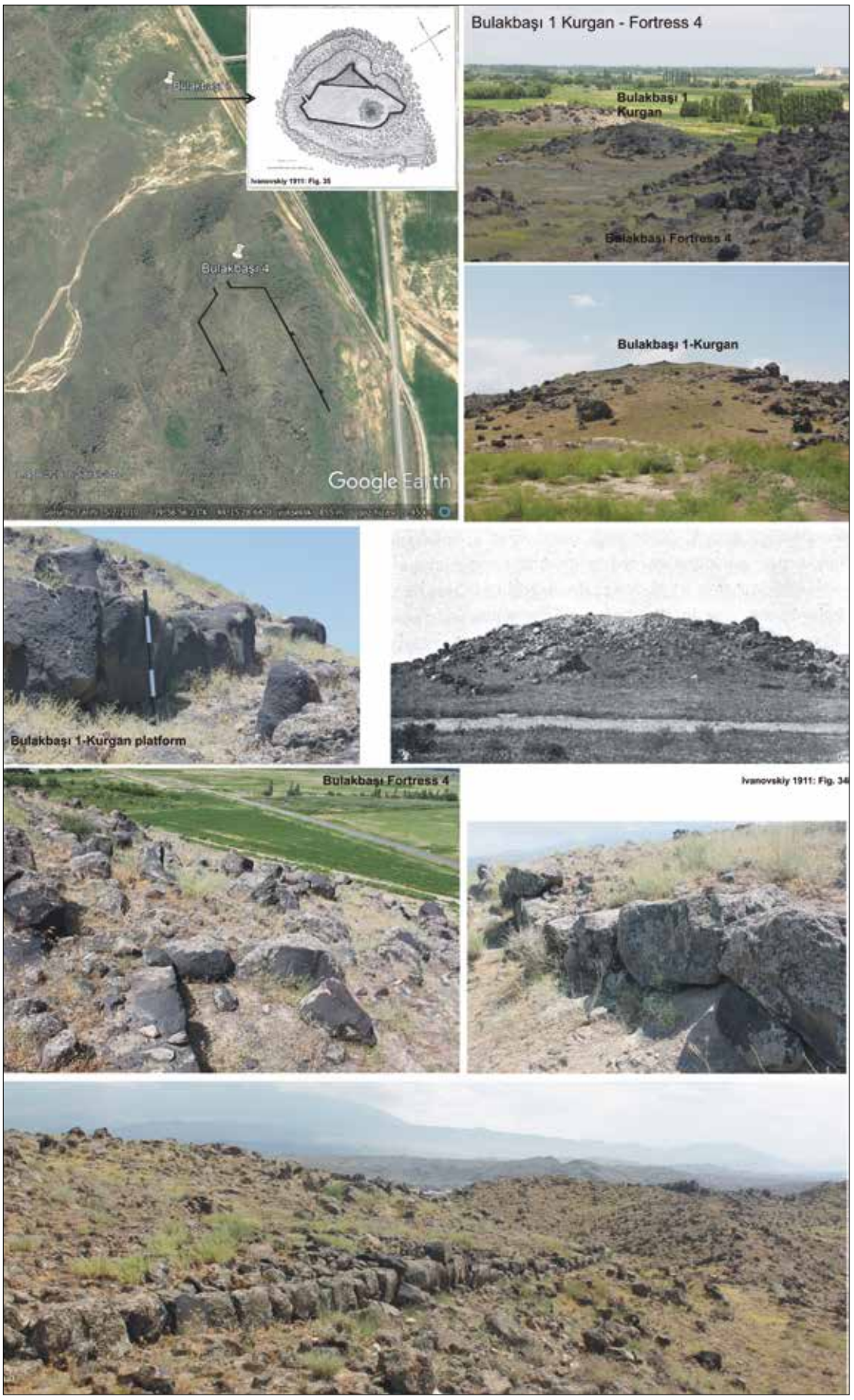


Figure 14: Bulakbaşı Kurgan (Fortress 1) and Fortress 4 / *Bulakbaşı Kurgan (Kale 1) ve Kale 4*

Bulakbaşı 3-Aktaş fortress-garrison town is located dominating entire plain-valley on a very high hill adjacent to Bulakbaşı fortress 2 (see fn 14), (Figs. 13, 15-16)[19]. The plan of the fortress is roughly triangle-shaped, it has strong walls which has dimensions of 500 x 280 m and 3 m thickness built semi ashlar masonry. Three gates reached by ramps are on the walls which were regularly buttressed, main gate is situated on the east with towers and a long-wide ramp. The traces of architecture inside are very weak and a few pottery was found in the fortress[20], for this reason, it is possible to claim that this was not established as a settlement. Given its situation on an extremely high hill and its plan which is not typical of Urartu and the closeness to Minuahinili; it must have been used as a garrison-town. Its localization on the shore of Lake Bulakbaşı and the Karasu river which flows to the Araxes river must have been an important reason to build such a big fortress. Bulakbaşı 3-Aktaş fortress shows the architectural features of the 7th century BC. It is possible to admit that it was established on the northern bank of the Araxes river by Rusa, son of Argishti II, during the foundation of the new political center Teishebaini (Karmir Blur), and the reorganization in Aza.

Bulakbaşı fortress 1 is a kurgan although Ivanovskj recorded as a fortress and numerated Bulakbaşı 1 (Fig. 14-15)[21]. Unfortunately, no sufficient information reported from his excavation. It is situated on a small and low hill northwestern end of lake. The kurgan is 8 m in diameter in the middle of a square platform (10 x 10 m) with terraces which built semi-ashlar masonry. It is difficult to date it, no pottery has been found. The plan of İvanovsky is not very different, the kurgan lies on the eastern corner, platform is much more visible and a small passage on the west wall which we couldn't have seen.

The fortresses at Bulakbaşı usually known as Minuahinili from inscription reported from Başbulak-Bulakbaşı in the literature. No distinction was made for the three fortresses of Bulakbaşı investigated by İvanovsky, the site recorded as a single fortress. As we mentioned above, the find spot of the Bulakbaşı inscription are unclear and fortress II at Karakoyunlu much more convenient for the localization of Minuahinili, in fact, it can be considered as a single settlement because of both sites are very close to each other. The architecture of fortresses at Bulakbaşı 2 and 4 were semi-ashlar masonry which is typical for Urartu. Unfortunately, it is very difficult to distinguish which one was built by Minua, no pottery has been found in the fortresses and the plans of Bulakbaşı fortresses are not typical. The fortress at Bulakbaşı 3-Aktaş is separated from others by its architecture, which shows late Urartian characteristics. The fact that the find spot of the Bulakbaşı inscriptions are not fully known create a problem, nevertheless, the presence of inscriptions related to the foundation of Minuahinili near the fortresses thoughts that one of the fortresses of Bulakbaşı 2 and 4 was built by Minua. It seems that, the Lake Bulakbaşı densely fortified by the Urartians due to its geographical location, most likely for military activities. King Minua, probably Argishti I and afterwards Rusa, son of Argishti II should have preferred this fertile area of Lake Bulakbaşı which is also very close to the Araxes river. Its location on the crossroads of southern Transcaucasia and northwestern Iran in the valley, and its closeness to the primary administrative centers like Erebuni (Arin Berd), Argishtihinili (Armavir) and Teishebaini (Karmir Blur) are situated in across the Araxes river, and absence of pottery in the fortresses strengthening the assumption of their military base.

Melekli Urartian settlement is situated c. 4 km west of Minuahinili, at the northwestern end of Mt Ağrı[22]. It is located in Melekli settlement complex and just below the LBA-EIA city of Luhiuni-Kasımtığı, on the interconnected low lava hills that extend into plains. (Figs. 1-3, 6). Melekli Urartian settlement consist of interrelated units: Outpost-route station (Lanetlitepe fortress), fort ? (Deliktaş mound), columbarium (Kültepe) and settlement (Kültepe mound)[23]. It seems that the Urartian settlement at Melekli was established in 8th century BC. The Melekli-Lanetlitepe fortress has an image belonging the early 8th century BC, an outpost-route station with its location, planning and size. Columbarium is dated to the second half of the 7th century BC and is considered a cemetery belonging to the military garrison of Urartu. It must have been established by King Minua during the first time the region was incorporated into the Urartian borders or during the conquest of the northern part of the Araxes river by King Argishti I (785/80-756 BC). Melekli, with its location at the west end of the plain and

[19] Ivanovskij 1911: 56-59; Nikol'skij 1896: 19-20, Great Fortress; Özfırat 2014a.

[20] These sherds shows EIA features, probably they belong to an earlier building.

[21] Ivanovskij 1911: 54-55.

[22] Özfırat 2017b

[23] In general, Kültepe mound and Columbarium named as a single site as Kültepe, Melekli or Iğdır. The reason of this confusion is because they are next to each other over a single hill and the Urartian level in the mound is not defined yet (Fig. 3, 6). First excavation at Melekli-Kültepe (Iğdır) mound and Urartian Columbarium were carried out by P.F. Petrov in 1913. Second excavation at Urartian Columbarium was carried out by K. Balkan in 1966. The material of excavation of P. F. Petrov in Tbilisi was published later by B. A. Kuftin, see Kuftin 1944. The summary and additional information related to the Columbarium part of this publication was published in English by R. D. Barnett, see Barnett 1963. The material of excavation of K. Balkan was not published, for a short informations see Mellink 1967 and Alkım 1968. The material of Balkan excavation in Kars Museum was studied by us, see Özfırat 2017b.

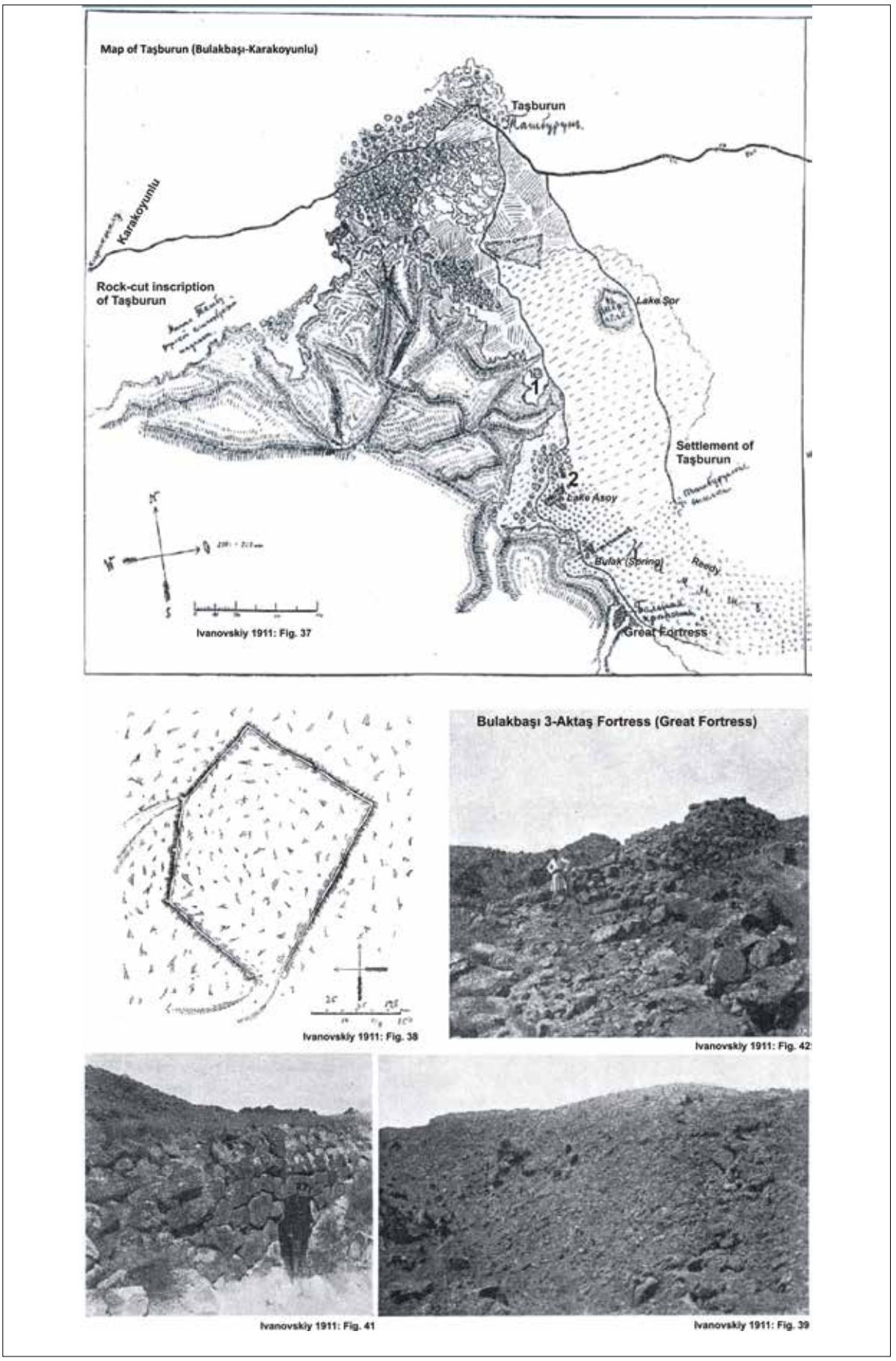


Figure 15: Map of Taşburun (Bulakbaşı-Karakoyunlu) and Bulakbaşı 3-Aktaş Fortress, Investigations of A. A. Ivanovskij and M. V. Nikol'skij / *Taşburun (Bulakbaşı-Karakoyunlu) Haritası ve Bulakbaşı 3-Aktaş Kalesi, A. A. Ivanovskij ve M. V. Nikol'skij Araştırması*

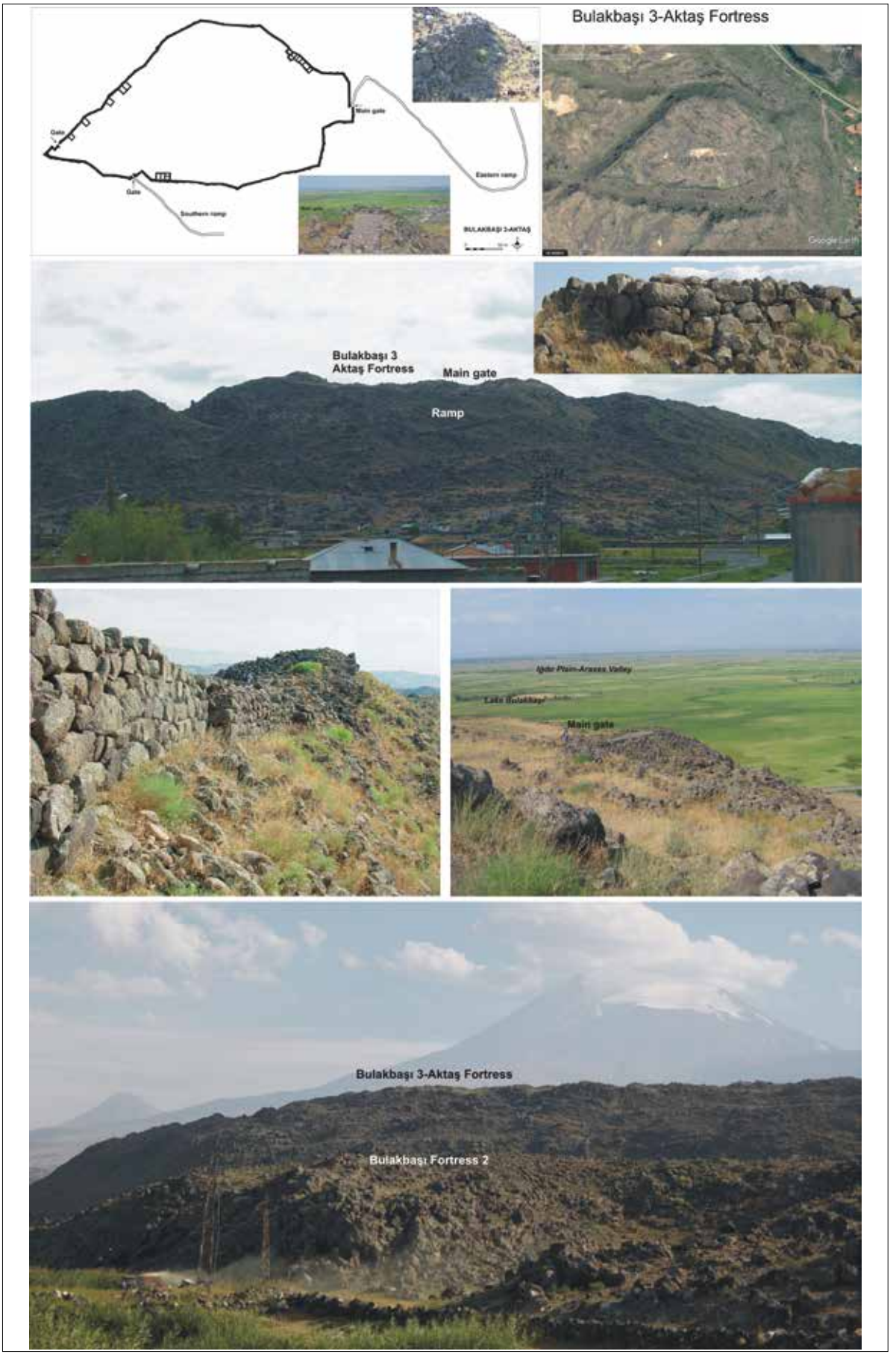


Figure 16: Bulakbaşı 3-Aktaş Fortress and General View of Bulakbaşı Fortress 2 / *Bulakbaşı 3-Aktaş Kalesi ve Bulakbaşı 2 Kalesi Genel Görünüm*

on the Mt Ağrı gateway, was the most important point between the city of Minuahinili and eastern Anatolia.

The Urartian fortress at Ömerağa-Gölyüzü and outpost-route station at Bozkurt Fortress 2 are located in Bozkurt settlement complex on the southern slope of Mt Ağrı (Doğubayazıt plain) and on the shore of Lake Saz-Şeyhli (Figs. 1)[24]. The Urartian pottery of Ömerağa-Gölyüzü, and its architecture and location relative to the other sites in the plain suggests that it was the primary center in the southern slope of Mt Ağrı connected with Minuahinili. The area was also controlled an outpost-route station at Bozkurt (Fortress 2) which is located on a very high hill dominating the plain and on the western pass of Mt Ağrı (Figs. 1)[25]. The fortress at Ömerağa-Gölyüzü was also important with its location on the main road of northwestern Iran where the early provinces of the kingdom are located. Both fortresses must have been built during the foundation of Minuahinili because of the earlier pottery of the fortress at Ömerağa-Gölyüzü.

CONCLUSION

Northern part of Mt Ağrı was densily populated covering a long chronological sequence, from the Late Chalcolithic to the Late Iron Age (Achaemenid) in contrast to the rest of the highland of eastern Anatolia by its land use which is the most agricultural area in the region and its location on the crossroads of southern Transcaucasia and northwestern Iran via the Araxes river valley. Thereof, the most remarkable sites of pre-Urartian and Urartian in the region are in the Iğdır plain and on the surrounding hills.

Basically, to define the exact location of pre-Urartian local polities are difficult in the highland of eastern Anatolia, as a result of insufficient epigraphic data and lack of stratigraphic excavations. The most remarkable information comes from the area of Mt Ağrı when considered the epigraphic sources and archaeological data. The central fortresses or fortress-cities of LBA-EIA which are mainly parts of settlement complexes are suggested to be political centers or capital of small kingdoms of Nairi, with the foundation of the kingdom of Biainili, these sites were transformed into provincial cities, primary administrative centers or major fortresses of Urartu. Inscriptions of King Minua inform to conquest of Erikua which is a local pre-Urartian polity, situated on the southern bank of the Araxes river and foundation of the city of Minuahinili. Luhiuni, the royal city of Erikua; and Minuahinili, the new fortress-city of Urartu located in settlement complexes at Melekli and Karakoyunlu (Iğdır) on the northern slope of Mt Ağrı (Iğdır plain-south of the Araxes valley) according to the result of our survey.

Kasımtığı-Gre Herşe at Melekli settlement complex is the largest of the LBA-EIA fortresses in the region showing city characteristic. Luhiuni, the capital of Erikua and the political center of the region in pre-Urartu must be the large fortress-city at Kasımtığı-Gre Herşe which surrounded by fortification walls (Figs. 1-3, 5-6). The new fortress-city at Karakoyunlu II-Minuahinili was established as a political center of the region when the Luhiuni captured by King Minua. In this manner, territorial control and the military organization of the north-eastern frontier of the kingdom were substantially completed.

The construction of Minuahinili supported in time by fortresses, garrison-towns, outposts, road stations and settlements surrounding the city. It seems that, King Minua established the Bulakbaşı fortresses 2 and 4 for military activities on the northern slope which was located at a closer point further east to Araxes valley for defense of the city of Minuahinili and campaigns of southern Transcaucasia. The area densely fortified by the Urartians due to its geographical location. King Minua, probably Argishti I afterwards Rusa, son of Argishti II must have preferred the area of Lake Bulakbaşı because of its fertile land and its setting up a forward point on the crossroad of southern Transcaucasia and northwestern Iran as shown by the fortress at Bulakbaşı 3-Aktaş.

Mt Ağrı western pass was controlled from both sides by the Melekli and Bozkurt outposts-route stations and the central fortress at Ömerağa-Gölyüzü on the southern slope which was located at a closer point further east to northwestern Iran such as Bulakbaşı on the north (Figs. 1-2, 11). The plain of Doğubayazıt on the southern slope of mountain also was important for the kingdom of Urartu because of its location on the main routes leading to Tushpa in the south, to Caucasia in the north, to Euphrates valley in the west via the Murat river valley and to northwesten Iran in the east. Thus, the infrastructure for southern Transcaucasia campaigns and consolidation with new cities and provinces was established in northwestern Iran-Lake Urmia. Probably, the strengthening of Minuahinili continued during the foundation of Argishtihinili (Armavir) and construction of the northern bank of the Araxes river as a province of Urartu by Argishti I seems to have been completed by Rusa, the son of Argishti II (c. 675's BC). Rusa has increased its power in the eastern and northern regions of the kingdom with its large-scale construction activities such as the new cities Teishebaini (Karmir Blur) and Rusaihinili (Bastam). Bulakbaşı 3-Aktaş Fortress, located in the east of Minuahinili and very close to the river, must have been built as a garrison-town during the reorganization of King Rusa.

[24] Özfırat 2016.

[25] It is difficult to date since we didn't make any excavation, and a few pottery have the characteristics of 8th-7th century BC. Yet, its situation on the western gateway on Mt. Ağrı between the plains of Doğubayazıt and Iğdır strengthen the possibility of its foundation dating back the first campaigns of Minua.

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