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Mehmet Işıklı and Birol Can

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IRON AGE

CONSIDERATIONS ON THE BELIEF SYSTEMS OF THE EARLY IRON AGE PEOPLES IN LAKE VAN BASIN

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Introduction

In Eastern Anatolia, the appearance of the grooved pottery tradition and utilisation of iron is accepted as the main archaeological evidence for the transition from Bronze to the Iron Age. When one draws a line through the Tendürek Mountains, the region to the south exhibits a series of cultural features relatively coherent within each other[1]. The great majority of the archaeological material of this culture comes from the burial grounds, where the Grooved Ware is believed to stand for the Early Iron Age in Malatya-Elazığ region, South eastern Anatolia and Lake Van Basin[2]. Stratigraphic and C^{14} evidence from Malatya-Elazığ region provides a dating of *ca* 1200-800 BC, and this span is also supported by the data from further south, such as Gricano, where Schachner dated the Grooved Ware to the second half of the 11th century BC[3]. A similar dating has also been suggested for the excavated burials in Lake Van Basin: a C^{14} date for burial no. 6 of Karagündüz falls in with 1250-1120 BC, and was proposed as the dawn of the Early Iron Age in the region by Sevin[4]. After their study on the burials and the fortresses in the region, Belli and Konyar date these between 1300 and 850 BC[5]. Çilingiroğlu proffers a more cautious period for the layer of Dilkaya grooved ware findings, dating the stratum to the later phase of the Early Iron Age, which is to say, 11th and 10th centuries BC in his terms[6].

Aiming to construct the Early Iron Age chronology, Sevin categorises the Early Iron Age burials into two groups. According to this classification, the Early Iron Age between 1200 and 800 BC has two phases: Early Iron I and Early Iron II. Dilkaya burial no. 1, Ernis Early Phase, Karagündüz burials no. 2, 4 and 6/7, Hakkari burial no. 2 were dated to be in Early Iron I, which is between 1250-1000 BC. Early Iron II phase, between 1000 and 800 BC, was represented with Yoncatepe burials no. 1 and 2, Ernis Later Phase, Karagündüz burials no. 1, 3, 5, 8, and 10[7]. The burial customs characterising the two different phases are given as:

Early Iron I: Simple inhumation; chamber tombs without dromos; iron ornaments; pinkish ware.
Early Iron II: Inhumation, and cremation without urns; chamber tombs with dromos; iron and bronze ornaments; red polished pottery; pinkish ware.

However, the lack of any occupation levels on the mounds nearby the investigated burial grounds, and the existence of Middle Iron Age strata instead, recently lead some scholars to question the so-called Early Iron Age chronology. Depending on some Middle Iron Age findings from the graves, Köroğlu and Konyar claimed that the burials should be dated to this period[8]. This may be the case, but the long-term utilisation of the burials can also cause such confusion[9]. The fortresses stand as the second group of data for determining the Early Iron Age in the region. Since the philological evidence mentions a strong tradition of stoutly fortified settlements in Eastern Anatolia beginning with the 13th century BC, no datable archaeological layers or assemblages could have been found[10].

We do not have any philological data on the nature of the belief systems of Lake Van Basin or Eastern Anatolia during the Early Iron Age, but we only have some textual clues on the social structure. Šalmaneser I (reigns between 1274-1244 BC) leaves the first inscriptions about the northern campaigns of Assyria on the Uruaṭri lands, the first

[1] Özfırat, 2007: 147
[2] Çilingiroğlu, 1993: 476; Tarhan–Sevin, 1992: 1090; Sevin–Kavaklı, 1996: 1-20; Belli–Konyar, 2003
[3] For Malatya–Elazığ and South, see Hauptmann, 1971: 75; 1972, 91; Bartl, 1994: 482; 2001, 391; Müller, 1999: 415; 2003: Fig. 2; Schachner, 2003: 158
[4] Sevin, 2004: 185
[5] Belli–Konyar, 2003: 92
[6] Çilingiroğlu, 1991b: 31; 1993: 475-478
[7] For the details of this chronology, see Sevin, 2004; 2005
[8] For details, see Köroğlu, 2003; Konyar, 2005; Köroğlu, 2008
[9] For chronological discussion, see Batmaz, 2008
[10] See Çevik, 2008: 10-11

known form of the term Urartu[11]. There is a lasting debate on Uruaṭri's whereabouts, but general tendency is to locate it on the western part of Lake Van[12]. As a significant theme, the Assyrian monarch does not tell us about humble tribes, but gives details of fortifications on the mountains, powerful armies, a few dozen cities, at least eight different chiefdoms, united by a ruling mechanism that has the ability to mobilise these against the Assyrian *imperium*.

Although Šalmaneser I had caused a real squall on the north, his son Tikulti-Ninurta I had to perform a similar campaign on his first regnal year (1244 BC), which indicates that the region was neither smothered, nor hushed. He is proud to be the king of Babil, Sumer, Akkad and a bunch of other countries, and Nairi, whose 40 (or 43) kings he fought and defeated[13]. The inscription found and named after Yoncalı in Bulanık plain of Muş province gives a possible location for the war field mentioned above[14]. The term Nairi should be used to define the mountainous land beginning from Upper Tigris and reaching the western and south-western part of Lake Van[15].

By the end of the second millennium BC, the lake basin and the mountains surrounding it must be host to a series of ethnic bodies, but we do not possess any tangible evidence about the nature of these peoples. The written data depicts the nations of the region as powerful political entities, ruled by dominant rulers with the help of fierce armies and fortified cities, but this cannot be traced in the archaeological record, which will be discussed below. The chronological complications addressed above and the insufficiency of the applicable data creates a set of problems in the designation of the Early Iron Age community of the region. Since the earliest inscriptions about the region talk about Uruaṭri and Nairi lands, the Early Iron Age burials have been associated with these, and the terminology for the builders of the tombs was established accordingly. Related literature correlates the Early Iron Age directly to Uruaṭri, and the terminology is strictly bounded to Urartu, such as: Protohistory of Urartu, *Beylikler* (chiefdoms) Period of Urartu, and Archaic Phase of Urartu[16]. The most prominent of these is the term 'chiefdom', and the idea of united chiefdoms under confederations during the Early Iron Age still has a considerable number of followers[17]. Instead of tribes or chiefdoms, some recent work in Turkish prefers to use the term '*aşiret*' for the builders of the burials again in relation with Uruaṭri and Nairi groups, depending on the fact that the mentioned political entities of the Assyrian inscriptions possibly shared the same social structure with the modern nomadic and semi nomadic agropastoralists and transhumants[18].

Archaeological Evidence

The only set of data related to the belief systems of Lake Van Basin come from the burials **(Figure 1)**[19], which exhibit too few data indeed, suffering at the hands of the plunderers. That's why, since we have enough information on the architectural details of hundreds of graves, we can only speculate the ritual process before and after the entombment, and the mystical structure related to death. Another problem is generated from the limited available data itself, for we encounter Middle Iron Age - Urartian findings in the so-called Early Iron Age burials, beclouding the dating of the findings. Because of the above mentioned reasons, I will try to examine the belief systems of the Early Iron Age in Lake Van Basin, with the help of the available, though disappointing, data that have the power to reflect the mystical world of the dead and those who buried them. The main assemblage comes from the burials with inhumation, the basic practice mostly common amongst the Early Iron Age burials.

Inhumation

We can trace inhumation practice with the help of the following burial grounds.

Aşıkhüseyin

Skeletal remains indicating multiple burials were attested together with grooved pottery[20].

Dilkaya

Although the excavations did not expose an Early Iron Age stratum, a series of burials were unearthed on the

[11] Piotrovskii, 1969: 43; Van Loon, 1966: 6; Benedict, 1960: 102, footnote 17. For the mentioned inscriptions, see RIMA 1: A.0.77.1/ 22-46; ARI 1: 527; LAR I: 114
[12] Çilingiroğlu, 1994: 5
[13] LAR I: 142, 144; ARI 1: 773 and 795; RIMA 1: A.0.78.5/23-47
[14] Çilingiroğlu, 1994: 8. For the inscription see RIMA 2: A.0.87.16/1-7
[15] For the location of Nairi see Çilingiroğlu, 1994: 7-10. The location of Nairi is a matter of discussion, but one has to keep in mind that the first king of Urartu, Sarduri I also names himself "the king of Nairi". For a discussion on the subject, see Salvini, 2006: 37-42.
[16] See Van Loon, 1966: 6; Çilingiroğlu, 1997: 16; Erzen, 1979: 24 pp
[17] For these confederations, see Tarhan, 1978, 1980. For a discussion of the terminology, see Erdem, 2011
[18] See Erdem, 2011; Batmaz, 2012
[19] Map was produced by computer enhancement, taking *google terrain map* as base.
[20] Belli–Konyar, 2003: 9

mound[21]. The chamber grave unearthed had revealed skeletons of 11 individuals[22], while a chest grave contained eight other skeletons, with the best preserved one in *hocker* position to the north[23]. Another chest exhibited two individuals and an Early Iron Age bowl[24]. One can clearly observe that, in order to make space for the newcomers and their gifts, the previous skeletons were pushed back and piled to the farthest point from the entrance. ***Ernis-Evditepe:*** The burial ground at Evditepe gave approximately 100 burials, varying from the Early to Middle Iron Age[25]. The burials did not have a common direction, some looking east, or opposite and as an important feature, in some samples, only skulls were unearthed[26]. Skeletal heaps directly refer to multiple burials in the same chambers.

Karagündüz

This is a place where we face several usages of the tombs, having 20 to 80 individuals related to the size of the grave. The dead were placed in *hocker* position without a sense of common direction, and the skeletal remains indicate that both genders could have been placed in the same place. Individuals were buried with their clothes on, or wrapped by a cerement[27]. In burial no. 10, while the previous skeletons were being removed for new bodies, 10 skulls were separated and placed in a niche opened to the rear end of the chamber. In the same grave, a skeleton in *hocker* position and lacking a head was unearthed, and a clay lump was shaped and placed instead of the real skull[28], suggesting an existence of a sort of ritual practice. ***KertenkeleKayalığı:*** Multiple burials were detected in association with Early Iron Age pottery, including grave no. 1, where 12 skulls were unearthed[29].

Şorik

Although most of the chambers were destroyed, the remains indicate multiple burials[30].

Uncular

Likewise Şorik, the chambers were destroyed by the plunderers, but numerous human and animal skeletal remains were unearthed[31].

Yoncatepe

The site has three separate parts such as the acropolis, domestic settlement and the burials, where multiple usages of the chambers draw attention[32]. Burial no. 1 is special for its findings: while pushing the previous remains back, the skulls were composed together, some spared in bowls[33]. The most interesting feature of Yoncatepe is canine burials, coming from burials no. 4, 5 and 6[34]. Since no. 4 and 5 had *in situ* remains of a single canine each, no. 6 had 15 skulls and other skeletal parts that can belong to more than 30 canines, associated with other kinds of animals (see below)[35].

Cremation

Since we can trace inhumation practice region wide, cremation cannot be detected in every burial. ***Dilkaya:*** At Dilkaya, the burial III 1 had revealed burnt and unburnt skeletal remains in association with more than 30 skulls, but no containers functioning as urns could be detected[36]. An open place close to the cremation burials had been interpreted as a 'crematorium'. Burnt bone pieces were collected from a wide area, where one can see the traces of piled up wooden remains[37]. But one must keep in mind that the same space has evidence for cremation during the Middle Iron - Urartu period, and it is hard to determine the period of the crematorium thoroughly.

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[21] Çilingiroğlu, 1991a: 271-276; 1991b: 29-38; 1993: 469-491
[22] Çilingiroğlu, 1993: 478
[23] Derin, 1993: 60
[24] Çilingiroğlu, 1993: 478
[25] Erzen, 1964; Sevin, 1987: 36-38; Belli, 2000: 175-180; Belli–Konyar, 2003: 40
[26] Derin, 1993: 53
[27] Sevin–Kavaklı, 1996: 24
[28] Sevin *et al*., 1998: 580-581
[29] Bozkurtlar, 1976: 45-47; Sevin, 1979: 44
[30] Belli–Konyar, 2003: 16
[31] Belli–Konyar, 2003: 28
[32] Belli–Konyar, 2003: 68-71
[33] Konyar, 2004: 323
[34] Belli–Kavaklı, 2001: 374-375; Belli, 2002: 268; Belli–Konyar, 2001: 197; Konyar, 2004: 224
[35] Onar *et al.,* 2002: 318 pp.; Belli–Kavaklı, 2001: 375; Konyar, 2004: 224, 325
[36] Derin, 1993: 64
[37] Çilingiroğlu, 1988: 234

Karagündüz

In chamber no. 5, remains of some cremated children could have been exposed, in association with remains of 42 adult inhumations. No. 8 has 80 inhumations of adults, together with cremated remains of infants. No. 10 has also remains of cremated children with 12 buried adults. Since these graves bear evidence of cremated small children, no urns could have been found[38].

Yoncatepe

Here, the burial no. 1 gives clues of cremation practice besides ordinary inhumations[39]. Another burial, no. 3 is distinguishable with cremation remains. The positioning of the burnt bones and the ashes indicate that the cremation was applied somewhere outside the chambers and the remains were carried in[40]. However, no evidence for child cremation is clear.

Funeral Ceremonies

Although limited, Early Iron Age burials in Lake Van Basin provide some evidence about the nature of the funeral ceremonies. The data is based on the burial gifts and the major group of this is the pottery. A simple observation on the pottery forms makes clear that the pottery types chosen as burial gifts do not have any distinctive features when compared to the ones in daily utilisation. Thus, the pottery inventory found up to the present does not imply any special function, meaning that these relics were just left there because of what they contained.

The above mentioned vessels are proved to contain food, literally meat, of which their bones were unearthed *in situ*, for example, at Karagündüz. While open mouth vessels had meat, the jars contained liquids, known from the analysed sediments on their walls[41]. Yoncatepe evidence about the remains of the products cultivated in the region such as chickpeas, grapes, barley and wheat[42] point out that the most important part of the funeral ceremony was the feast.

The animal bones are not limited to the ones found in the containers. Karagündüz excavations revealed some ovine chin pieces and whole skulls[43]. At Yoncatepe, on the entrance stairs of burial no. 6, a layer of animal bones was uncovered[44]. It is clear that a number of the animals, at least the unconsumed parts, were left in the graves. The secondary sediment visible on the pots and the *tandoors* and hearths discovered at Karagündüz and Dilkaya makes one think that the meal was cooked somewhere around the burials. This practice does not simply infer a gift for the dead to satisfy his/her hunger in the underworld, but is an example of catering in the graveyard, which is still performed in rural areas of Anatolia. So, it would not be unlikely to suggest a 'burial feast' in the graveyards, composed of meat, beverages, fruits, vegetables and cereals, consumed by the attendants of the ceremony, and the dead, who is in the centre of the rite.

We do not know how the followers of the ceremony were getting prepared for the ritual, but there is clear evidence that the deceased was getting prepared for the journey. It is striking to see the dead adorned by a collection of materials, the majority of which is the iron or bronze bracelets. Bronze pieces come from Ernis[45], Dilkaya[46], Kertenkele Kayalığı[47] and Yoncatepe[48], while the iron ones can be found at Karagündüz, [49]Ernis[50] and Yoncatepe.[51] Besides bracelets, another group is the iron and bronze pins, unearthed in Ernis,[52] Karagündüz[53] and Yoncatepe[54]. Apart from these two main groups, rings, buttons and beads can also be listed amongst the other adornments. Textile traces on some metal artefacts and the existence of buttons[55] show that the deceased were most probably buried with their clothes on. No firm difference for the usage of the adornments can be proved; for example, at Karagündüz, nearly every deceased was wearing a necklace, and probably more than one[56]. The needles and the buttons are related to the

[38] Sevin–Kavaklı, 1996: 23
[39] Konyar, 2004: 222
[40] Belli–Kavaklı, 2000: 439; Belli–Kavaklı 2001: 374-375; Konyar, 2004: 223
[41] Sevin–Kavaklı, 1996: 25-26
[42] Konyar, 2004: 324
[43] Sevin–Kavaklı, 1996: 25
[44] Belli, 2002: 268
[45] Sevin, 1987: 38; Belli, 2000: 179; Belli–Konyar, 2003: 46-48
[46] Çilingiroğlu, 1988: 233
[47] Bozkurtlar, 1976: 45-47
[48] Belli–Konyar, 2003: 72; Konyar, 2004: 225
[49] Sevin–Kavaklı, 1996: 27-32
[50] Sevin, 1987: 38; Belli, 2000: 179; Belli–Konyar, 2003: 46-48
[51] Belli–Konyar, 2003: 72, Figure 54; Konyar, 2004: 236
[52] Bozkurtlar, 1976: 45-47
[53] Sevin–Kavaklı, 1996: 31
[54] Belli–Konyar, 2003: Figure 74
[55] Konyar, 2004: 324
[56] Sevin–Kavaklı, 1996: 32-44

dresses, that's why it is hard to associate them with a specific gender. This is the same for the ages of the dead: the foetus uncovered at Karagündüz[57]amongst adults simply shows that no age groups were taken into consideration during the process, and everyone, including the new born, were most probably treated the same.

Since the dresses and the adornments do not refer to a specific gender, we may examine two other groups in this purpose. The first of these is the spindle whorls, discovered at Karagündüz and Yoncatepe[58]. It is likely that these were left in the burials accompanying the female bodies. The second group, which we can interpret in terms of gender, is the weapons, mostly found at Ernis-Evditepe, Karagündüz and Yoncatepe. Ernis-Evditepe is distinguishable with the repertory of mace heads[59], all wrought iron with shaft-holes[60]. There are also some other weapons from Ernis-Evditepe, including a shaft-hole axe and six daggers[61]. Karagündüz also gives a mace head, excavated in burial no. 1[62], and an iron spear head, in no. 2[63]. Blades can be examined under two categories, such as the daggers and the knives. Daggers are represented with three samples, all forged iron, one having an iron hilt while the other two handles had rivets[64].Knives form the most interesting group with 22 findings, including 12 intact examples and 10 other pieces[65]. It is important to note that these knives have relatively small sizes, the longer one 16 cm, and the others much smaller. A similar group can be observed at Yoncatepe, with two daggers, two mace heads and a series of knives in burials no. 2, 3 and 6[66].

It is obvious that the burial gifts were not limited to those listed above. The interest of the plunderers and the 'sympathy' of the 'special collectors' to the metal objects have a real impact on this repertory. As an example, a plundered burial at Şorik gave out pottery samples and bones, together with iron weapon pieces[67], probably left by the tomb raiders as worthless cargo; for they are very well aware of the fact that no 'art lover' would 'collect' such trinkets.

Commentary

Here I will try to make a short list of our knowledge on the Early Iron Age data. The dawn of the 13th century BC introduces us to some local political units on the mountainous area to the south of Lake Van Basin, such as Uruaṭri and Nairi as the strongest ones, who dare to threaten the Assyrian domination. Whether named as *aşiret*, *confederation*, or *chiefdom*, these political entities do exhibit the will and ambition to establish united military forces against the common enemy, and the talent to repeat this more than just once.

The mentioned political entities have the ability to carry their hegemony to a new geography when they are under threat. This suggests a mobilised political power independent from a certain landscape, which may be carried by the ruling casts. This kind of a political existence seems to be possible for the blood-lined tribal organisations that can still be observed in the mountain tribes of the Caucasus, or the *aşirets* of eastern Anatolia. Such kind of a highly mobile political power who can shift easily his territory of sovereignty needs sub-units to move both physically and mentally with the ruler cast, which refers to clans or friaries approving the dominance of the leadership of the tribe, chiefdom or the *aşiret*. While the philological data suggest that the above mentioned political units were effective in the south-western and western part of the Lake Van Basin, a similar situation cannot be observed for the eastern or south-eastern part of the region, either philologically, or in archaeological terms (see Table 1). When the weapon repertory of the Ernis burials are taken into account, the 'warrior' character seems to be on the northern part of the basin, but the evidence decreases on the eastern and southern parts.

The findings from the graves do not imply a certain difference within the statuses of the deceased. None of the burials can be characterised as the resting place of a king, landlord, aristocrat, ruler or even a warrior, since we have only a few weapons. The mentioned small knives cannot be considered as battle blades, and I think they cannot refer to a status, not even a specific gender, for they can be used for any purpose in the daily life, such as their parallels being carried by most people in the region today. They can be associated with a ritual we do not know yet, in relation with the food, especially meat left in the burials. Or, since we know that they are used in weaving, they can be accompanying the spindle whorls, maybe referring to the females.

The archaeological evidence does not provide clear dissimilarities in the burial customs of the Early Iron Age peoples of the region. All of the graves were used for long periods, multiple times, and the previous remains were being pushed back for the new burials. While doing this, the skulls were being treated in a special way, proved by the findings from Karagündüz and Yoncatepe. Collecting the skulls of the previous deceased and protecting them in niches or bowls, when thinking of the individual buried with a clay lump instead of his head, refers to a kind of

[57] Sevim *et al.,* 2002: 39
[58] Konyar, 2004: 239
[59] Belli, 1987: 93, Pl.1; 1991: 31; 2001: 148; Sevin, 1987: 37-38.
[60] Belli–Konyar, 2003: 47; Konyar, 2004: 157.
[61] Sevin, 1987: 38; Belli, 2000: 179; Belli–Konyar, 2003: 46
[62] Doğan, 2002: 22
[63] Doğan, 2002: 21
[64] Doğan, 2002: 13-15
[65] Doğan, 2002: 15-21
[66] Konyar, 2004: 237; Belli–Konyar, 2003: 75, Fig. 55
[67] Belli–Konyar, 2003: 17

honorific gesture to the dead. It is not easy to claim a 'skull cult' at the moment, but a sort of 'cult of ancestors' may be proposed.

While we can see inhumation and cremation together in the burials, we are far away from understanding the mystical world of the period. When we examine the Early Iron Age burials, the 'earlier' ones, such as Ernis, do not provide any evidence for cremation practice. It has to be noted that the 'later' EIA burials with cremations also give Middle Iron – Urartu findings. Although the dating can be a matter of debate, we can assume that the cremation practice appeared towards the end of EIA and continued during Middle Iron – Urartu periods. The main difference between the Early and Middle Iron cremations seems to be the urns: EIA cremation practice does not use urns in contrast to the Middle Iron ones.

Inhumation refers to a journey of the body as a whole to the underworld, while cremation designates a totally different mysticism, a total extermination of the body being sent to the afterlife. We do not know how this transition or transformation occurred, but it seems to take place at the end of the EIA, which is to say, probably during the 10th century BC. Despite Yoncatepe, Karagündüz evidence refers to a cremation practice special to children. Evidence from Dilkaya is not enough to prove the same occasion, but two child cremations from the Middle Iron Age period near the crematorium area leads us to consider a peculiar tradition related to the children towards the end of EIA.

The most distinctive ritual during the burial ceremonies appears to be the animal sacrifice. It is most likely that a part of the killed animal was consumed by the attendants of the rite, and the spared parts, or sometimes the complete animal, were left in the burial with the dead. The sacrificed animals are ovine and cattle, the natural herd stock of the region. The meat is probably cooked in or around the graveyard, and the whole process (building or re-opening the burial, killing and skinning the animal, cooking and distributing the meal) refers to a degree of collective ritual. The main part of the ritual seems to be the banquet, including the consumption of meat, wheat, fruit and beverages. We do not know the reason for the buried canines at Yoncatepe, but dogs found *in situ* challenge the idea that they were eaten. They can be left with the herd animals as a gift to the deceased, maybe a reflecting the social structure of the people: a small flock and sheepdogs for a livestock farmer. This will also lead us to another mystical world, slightly different from the idea of entombing the dead with his/her daily paraphernalia. In this case, the prosperity is carried away from the world of the living, and the otherworld becomes a new realm, similar to the real one. The mentioned change also seems to come into presence towards the end of EIA, and will be quite prominent among the Middle Iron – Urartian period burial customs.

The rites of passage for EIA populations of Lake Van Basin may be constructed with the help of the above mentioned data **(Table 2)**. The separation phase can be followed in the light of the preparation of the dead, proved with the personal adornments such as the needles, bracelets etc. Evidence for a segregation phase would be examined with the help of the existence of food and drink, left for the dead. It is not very easy to precisely determine the integration phase, but weapons, daily tools such as spindle whorls or knives can refer to a preparation for the integration, if not proving segregation. The uneaten animals left in the burials may also refer to a sort of integration. None of the burial gifts (pottery, weapons etc.) were destroyed or damaged intentionally, which is to say, they were not 'killed' with the dead. Appearance of cremation, possible absence of integration phase in the 'earlier' phase of EIA and the continuation of the burial customs of the 'later' phase during the Middle Iron – Urartian period with some variations can be accepted as evidence for the mystical change we encounter towards the end of the 10th century BC.

Conclusion

The philological and archaeological data about Lake Van Basin apparently do not confirm each other, either from the geographical view, or in terms of the evidence they provide **(Figure 1 and Table 1)**. Archaeologically, the EIA population of Lake Van Basin is far away from having powerful political and military unions, but rather portrays a much more humble scene. The population of the region seems to be consisting of stock breeder and agro-pastoralist tribal communities, maybe having the ability to form temporary alliances around loose political powers, if they possibly could. It is today impossible to prove the existence of a ruling cast or a specific social group and the archaeological evidence from the burials reflect a relatively 'equalitarian' social structure. However, the same set of data exposes a strong understanding of afterlife mysticism, approving itself in collective rituals. No temples, shrines or sacred structures could be found from the EIA contexts of the region, neither has a precisely settled archaeological stratum been unearthed. Nevertheless, the coherencies and similarities within the burial practices and the rites of passage such as separation, segregation and integration phases are significant. Collective rituals, long-term used chambers and a sort of 'cult of ancestors' indicate the existence of individuals who control and conduct the mentioned rituals, and helping to keep the collective consciousness together. Absence of a common sense of direction in the burials, dissimilarities in the burial architecture, and local and regional variations suggest that the mysticism provided by the collective conscious was not being systemised by an institutional religion. Thus, it will not be likely to name the supervisors or the leaders of the mentioned rituals as 'priests' or 'religious officers', but these can well be accepted as 'old wise men', 'grandfathers', or maybe just 'elders'. There must have been a strong mythology accompanying this belief system, but not a shred of evidence we do possess at the moment.

It is not easy to define the EIA belief system of Lake Van Basin under categorisations such as animistic, totemistic or shamanistic, nor can these terms provide a root for the future belief systems we will encounter during the Middle Iron – Urartu period. For now, we can only assume a 'tribal religion', perhaps embracing some possible animist or shamanist features.

Table 1: EIA social structure in the light of archaeological and philological evidence

	Philological Data South-western and western part of Lake Van Basin	**Archaeological Data South-eastern and eastern part of Lake Van Basin**
Ethnicity and language	Multiple	Probably not homogenous
Lifestyle	Nomadic/semi nomadic + settled	Nomadic/semi nomadic + settled (?)
Settlement Type	Hamlet/village + temporary settlements + fortresses	No archaeological evidence, hypothetically hamlet/village + temporary settlements + fortresses
Settlement hierarchy	Fortress – village/hamlet – temporal settlements	No archaeological evidence, hypothetically Fortress – village/hamlet – temporal settlements
Economic Base	Stock breeding + agriculture	Stock breeding + agriculture
Ruling Casts and class distinction	Strong, determinate	None or cannot be proved
Social groups	Based on bloodline: Chief/Leader – Tribe/*Aşiret* – Clan /Friary	Possibly based on bloodline: Chief/Leader – Tribe/*Aşiret* – Clan /Friary
Literacy	None or very limited	None or cannot be proved
Legitimation of political power	Hereditary	None or cannot be proved
Strength of the political power	Powerful and persistent	Cannot be known, possibly loose and temporary
Bureaucracy	Limited	None or cannot be proved
Collective labour force	Yes, dense	Yes, limited
Public works	Limited (Defence systems, constructions, accommodation…)	None or cannot be proved
Public services	Limited (Labour force, military service, tax, tribute…)	None or cannot be proved

Table 2: Evidence on EIA burial customs in Lake Van Basin

Burial of a King / Lord / Ruler etc.	None (–)
Distinction of status within the burials	None (–)
Distinction of gender within the burials	None (–)
Distinction of age within the burials	None (–)
Long-term usage of the graves and graveyards	Yes (+)
Multiple burials in the graves	Yes (+)
Data on the warriors cult in the burials	None (–)
Data on the ancestors' cult in the burials	Yes (+)
Collective labour force during the constructions	Yes (+)
Collective labour force during the burial ceremonies	Yes (+)
Collective rituals during the burial ceremonies	Yes (+)
Phase of separation	Yes (+)
Phase of segregation	Yes (+)
Phase of integration	Yes (+)

Özet/Abstract

Van Gölü Havzası'nda Erken Demir Çağı Halklarının İnanç Sistemleri Üzerine Düşünceler

Van Gölü Havzası'nın güneyi ve batısı ile ilgili filolojik kaynaklar bize Assur Krallığı'na karşı ordular toplayabilen bir kabileler veya aşiretler sisteminden bahsetmektedir. Ancak bu durum, Van Gölü Havzası'nın en temel arkeolojik verilerini sunan doğu kesiminde doğrulanamamaktadır. Van Gölü Havzası'ndan gelen arkeolojik verileri incelediğimizde, Erken Demir Çağ inanç sistemlerine ilişkin veriler sadece mezarlardan gelmektedir ve kralları/yöneticileri olan, neredeyse konfederasyonlar olarak nitelendirilebilecek nitelikte siyasal iradeler oluşturabilen bir sosyal yapıdan oldukça uzak bir görüntü ortaya koymaktadır.Van Gölü Havzası Erken Demir Çağ popülasyonu, kolektif ritüeller etrafında birleşebilen topluluklar görünümü vermektedir. Anılan topluluklar belirgin ve güçlü bir 'öteki dünya' mistisizmine sahiptir ve bu amaçla kolektif işgücünün ürünü olabilecek mezarlar inşa etmekte ve ölülerini yine kolektif ritüeller eşliğinde gömmektedir. Bölgede Erken Demir Çağa tarihlenebilecek bir tapınak, kutsal alan veya kült yapısı bulunamamıştır. Ancak güçlü bir öteki dünya inanışının varlığı ve farklı mezarlardan gelen hediyelerin, bir diğer deyişle Ayrılma, Geçiş ve Bütünleşme aşamalarındaki uygulamaların birbirine benzerliği ve tutarlılığı dikkat çekicidir. Kolektif ritüeller, uzun süreler boyunca kullanılan mezarlar ve ata kültü, anılan ritüellerin sağlıklı şekilde yürütülmesini sağlayan ve kolektif bilinci ayakta tutan kişilerin varlığına işaret etmektedir. Ölülerin yatırılışında bir yön birliğinin olmaması, mezar mimarilerindeki farklılıklar ve hem yerel, hem zaman içinde uygulamalarda ortaya çıkan çeşitlenmeler, kolektif bilincin ürettiği mistisizmin kurumsallaşmış bir din tarafından sistematize edilmediğini göstermektedir. Dolayısıyla ritüelleri yürüttüğünü veya onlara önayak olduğunu varsaydığımız kişileri 'din adamı' olarak tanımlamak doğru olmayacaktır, ancak bunlar 'ulu kişiler', 'dedeler' veya 'bilgeler' olarak adlandırılabilir.Şu anki verilerimizle bölgenin Erken Demir Çağ inanç sistemini 'animist', 'totemist', 'şamanist' gibi sınıflandırmalarla tanımlamak için ne yeterli veri vardır, ne de bu terimler bölgede daha sonra gelişecek olan inanç sistemlerine kaynak olabilecek niteliktedir. Bu nedenle Doğu Anadolu'da Erken Demir Çağ inanç sistemi için sadece bazı animist ve şamanist öğeler taşıması muhtemel bir 'kabile dininin' varlığı kabul edilebilir.

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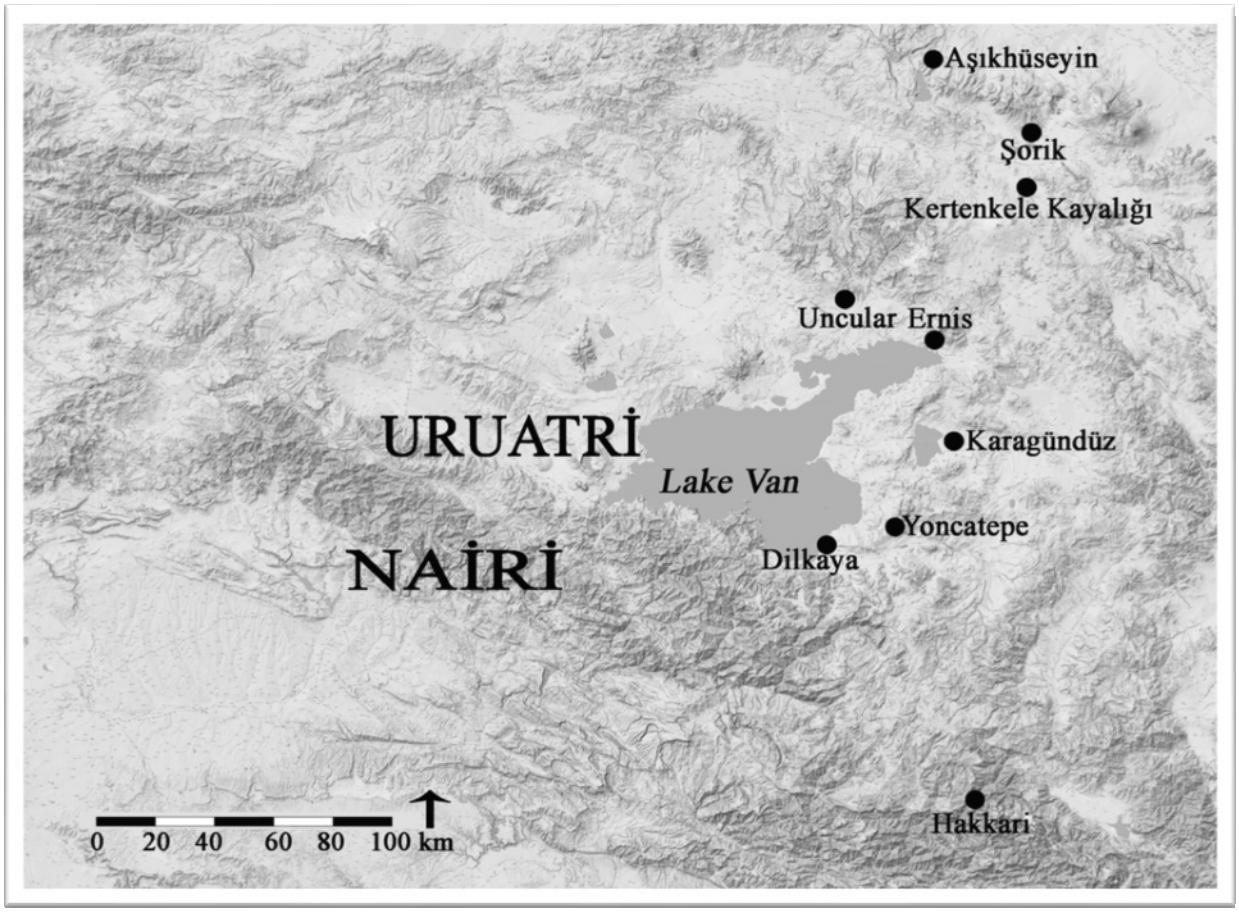

Figure 1. Map of Lake Van Basin

AZATAN: AN IRON AGE FORTIFICATION AND SETTLEMENT IN SHIRAK, (ARMENIA)

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The excavation of the Iron Age site of Azatan (Armenia, Prov. Shirak) has been conducted by the Museum of Gyumri in close collaboration with the State Office for Heritage Management and Archaeology of Saxony-Anhalt, since 2011. The field seasons of 2011 and 2012 were conducted under the direction of Dr H. Khatchatrian, Dr L. Yeganian (Gyumri, Armenia) and Prof Dr A. Furtwaengler (University of Halle/ Wittenberg, Germany).

Since the project was started merely two years ago, it is only possible to present preliminary results in this article.

Introduction

The site of Azatan is an example of a common Late Bronze Age/Early Iron Age phenomenon in Transcaucasia, the so-called cyclopean fortress. At the end of the Middle Bronze Age the settlement pattern in Transcaucasia changed significantly. While this period is primarily known for its luxuriously equipped burial mounds[1], only a few settlements have been identified in Southern Caucasus[2]. This leads to the assumption that the people of the Middle Bronze Age used to live as nomads or semi-nomads based on stock breeding[3]. About the middle of the 2nd millennium BC the warlike communities of the MBA settled down. They built heavily fortified sites, usually on hilltops overlooking fertile agricultural plains, and most of these hilltops were difficult to access. This change in the settlement pattern of Transcaucasia indicates a shift in the socio-political organization of the communities and their subsistence economy. To this day, there are different attempts to explain this phenomenon and to reconstruct the societies of the LBA/ EIA[4]. Some scholars assume that the Urartian Empire of the Middle Iron Age was based on this kind of socio-political organization[5]. There are numerous cyclopean fortresses in Armenia compared to the number of Urartian fortresses; however, the former are scarcely explored[6] and raise a lot of questions.

The Site

Azatan is located at the south-eastern corner of the Shirak plain in northwest Armenia **(Figure 1).** While the plain proceeds to the north and west, it is bordered by Mt. Aragats to the southeast and the Pambak mountain range to the northeast. East of the Shirak plain the terrain immediately ascends to the elevated Tsaghkahovit plain.

The settlement covers an area of almost 36ha including several necropolises and the fortress **(Figure 2)**, but the fortress and the settlement cover an area of only 16ha. The highest point (1580 m approx.) is marked by the fortress towering about 60m above the Shirak plain. It was built of big rough stones of local material. The inner fortification wall – a double wall construction – encircles an area of 50 to 100 m on the eastern hilltop. The wall has the shape of a semicircle due to the features of the landscape. While the northern and north-western part of the enclosure consists of natural steep rocky slopes, the hill was defended by two walls – the inner and outer fortifications – set on the flat slope of the eastern and south-eastern side, respectively. The hill slope to the southwest, however, is covered with many terraces. A deep canyon running south to north separates the fortification area of the eastern hill from the settlement on the western hill. Two constructions made of local stone intersect the canyon. These are interpreted as dams of water reservoirs used for irrigation. The northern flank of the western hill towers about 40 m above the Shirak plain. The western hill is not as steep as the eastern hill with the fortification. Instead, its slope descends shallowly to the east. On the aerial photograph a lot of terraces are visible. The settlement on the western hill covers an area of 5 ha. So far, no traces of defensive walls have been detected in this area. Another part of the settlement is located on a lower plateau north of the two hills, which rises up about 15m above the Shirak plain. The settlement was surrounded by at least four

[1] Torosyan *et al.,* (Shirakavan); Kushareva, 1959 (Uzerlik- Tepe)
[2] Torosyan *et al.,* (Shirakavan); Kushareva, 1959 (Uzerlik- Tepe)
[3] Lordkipanidze, 1991; Schachner, 2001: 284; 287- 291
[4] Lindsay *et al.,* 2008: 1681; Badalyan *et al*., 2003: 159- 165; Narimanishvili–Shanshashvili, 2001: 15
[5] Zimansky, 1985: 95f.; Smith, 1999, 48f.; Badalyan *et al.,* 2003: 163- 165
[6] Smith, 1999: 53, Fig. 3 and 56, Fig. 6: mentioned 26 Early Iron Age fortresses only on the Ararat and Shirak plains

necropolises. The graves were badly damaged by agricultural activities. The first is situated directly on the plain approximately 300 m northeast of the settlement on the plateau. The second necropolis is located on the eastern extension of the plateau half a kilometre from the settlement. A third necropolis is situated approximately 200 m east of the fortification. Additionally, there are a few stone cist graves next to the outer fortification wall. However, these graves probably date to the Achaemenid Period; hence they are younger than those of the necropolis. The fourth burial site is located on the upper part of the canyon mentioned above.

Former Excavation Activities and Scientific Exploration (Figure 3)

Until 2011 only a few rescue excavations had been carried out at the site due to the damage caused by agricultural and military activities – the area had been used for military training. Two trenches were opened by the Museum of Gyumri in the eighties and nineties of the last century – the first on the plateau, the second on one of the terraces of the western hill. These earlier excavations indicated that the settlement roughly dates to the Early Iron Age. The scientific exploration of the cyclopean fortresses and the settlements associated with them began almost one hundred years ago[7]. So far, a lot of surveys have been conducted but only a few excavations were carried out. Furthermore, these excavations usually focussed on the fortresses rather than the respective settlements[8]. Until today, only a few regions have been scientifically explored comprehensively in relation to the questions concerning the cyclopean fortresses[9]. In contrast to the fortresses on the rather isolated Tsaghkahovit plain, the settlement of Azatan is located within a transit area east of a route linking the valley of the river Araxes with the Kura valley of modern day Georgia and Azerbaijan. Only 4km south of Azatan a pass connects the plateau of Maralik with the Shirak plain. Another significant difference between the fortresses of the Tsaghkahovit (Tsaghkahovit and Gegharot) plain and the fortification of Azatan is perceivable: while the former were abandoned at the end of the LBA at the latest, the settlement of Azatan seems to have been established at the end of the Late Bronze Age. Altogether, the Shirak plain was of special importance as it connected the ore resources of the Caucasus with the cultures of Mesopotamia in the south. Apart from that, during the first half of the first millennium BC the site was part of the northern frontier of the Urartian Empire. This leads to some of the main questions related to the excavation in Azatan. To begin with, the Urartian inscription of Marmashen only 15 km northwest of Azatan indicates that the power of the Urartians extended as far as the Shirak plain.

Thanks to the greatness of the god Haldi, Argišti says: I conquered Eriahi's country, I conquered the city of Irdaniu, (reaching) as far as the country of Išqigulu.

Only 5 km south of Azatan the fortification of Horom is located. Until now, controversy has continued about the Urartian nature of the fortress on the northern hill of Horom[10]. The building technique of the fortification walls of Azatan differs remarkably from the stone masonry of Horom. It resembles the ruins of cyclopean fortresses visible all across Southern Caucasus, such as in Keti[11], Aykabat, Tsitsernakaberd[12], Sarnakhpyur[13], etc., which follow the local tradition of the Southern Caucasus. Additionally, they date to the Pre-Urartian Period. So, on the one hand, if there is no Urartian influence visible in the stone masonry, the question of the founding time of the fortress of Azatan is raised. Presumably, it dates somewhat earlier than the northern fortress of Horom. On the other hand, there is the question are there imports from the Urartian Empire such as pottery or metal artefacts? Furthermore, did the Urartian material have any impact on the local artefacts?

Another main question concerns the abandonment of Azatan in relation to the founding of the settlement of Beniamin (Drashkhanakert), which is located close by. Due to the lack of publications of this site, it is hard to determine the founding time of Beniamin. But in terms of visible structures such as column bases and information provided by Armenian colleagues, it is quite clear that the settlement of Beniamin dates to the Achaemenid Period[14]. Therefore, the upper layers of Azatan are of special interest. Is it possible to identify Achaemenid material? Or had the settlement of Azatan already been abandoned at this time, as the results of the rescue excavations of the Armenian colleagues indicate? Based on these considerations the settlement prima facie existed at least from the Late Bronze Age/Early Iron Age to the beginning of the Achaemenid influence. To this day, there is a considerable problem concerning the ceramic chronology of the Post-Urartian Period until the late 7th and 6th century BC, mainly because of the lack of excavations in settlements. Based on the assumption that Azatan was abandoned in favour of Beniamin (Drashkhanakert), the identification of material dating to the time in question was hoped for.

The Plateau

During the field seasons of 2011 and 2012 six trenches were opened in different parts of the settlement. The first was opened on the plateau, on which an old trench of the rescue excavation of the eighties was extended further to the

[7] Adzhan *et al.,* 1932
[8] With exception Lindsay, 2007: non vidi
[9] Avetisyan *et al*., 2000; Badalyan *et al.,* 2003; idem 2008; Smith *et al.,* 2009
[10] Kohl–Kroll, 1999: 251f
[11] Petrosian, 1989
[12] Smith–Kafadarian, 1996: 26
[13] Smith–Kafadarian, 1996: 29
[14] Ter–Martirossov, 1996; Neuser–Furtwaengler, 2011

south **(Figure 4).** In the area of the old trench two walls were excavated (Complex A). They used to be part of a pit house. Another pit house built in rectangular shape was discovered next to it (Complex B). In its centre four plinths were excavated. They had been used as bases for the beams supporting the roof. This type of roofing, the so-called hazarashen type, is also detectable in present-day Armenia. A wall running west to east was probably added later. South of Complex B several walls were found. They used to be part of two other houses (Complex C and D). In Complex A and B two deep pits (silos) were excavated. The walls of the pits were constructed in the same way as the pit houses. Only one layer of stone was set against the earthen walls of the pit. While the silos mainly contained material of the Early Iron Age, such as cooking pots and bowls, the pottery of the utilization phase of Complex A and B dates to the Middle Iron Age **(Figure 5)**. This is indicated by some sherds corresponding to Urartian pottery types and the use of Urartian coating technique on local pottery. One significant piece of pottery **(Figure 5, N° 6)** designates the time when these pit house complexes were abandoned. A cemetery is located 500 m east of the settlement on the plateau, and it was badly damaged by illicit excavations. First of all, during the excavation the damaged graves were cleaned and excavated. Secondly, a grave which was still in sound condition was opened. Its pit was covered with two large stones and surrounded by a cromlech of smaller stones. The ceramic inventory of the graves indicates the cemetery dates to a somewhat earlier time than the houses on the plateau. The pottery finds correspond to the material of the silos on the plateau.

The Western Hill (Figure 6)

In this part of the settlement an excavation was conducted by the Museum of Gyumri in 1995. In 2011, another excavation was conducted by the Armenian-German cooperation. The excavated structures had also been part of a kind of pit house, and they correspond to the structures on the plateau. The pit house was enclosed by a terrace wall. Thanks to the radiocarbon dating of a burned wooden beam, the dating of the settlement was possible. The large settlement on the western slope apparently dates to the 8th century BC; although, in order to verify this, further excavations should be conducted. Guided by aerial photographs, approximately 40 terraces were reconstructed, as well as at least one pit house on each of them. However, when taking into account the wide dimensions of some of the terraces it is highly probable that there were far more than only 40 houses in the settlement on the western hill.

The Fortress (Figure 7)

In 2011, two trenches on the west side of the fortress area were opened. In the so-called Carre II another pit house was excavated. The stratigraphy implied three different settlement layers. The most recent layer is marked by a grave set in a small pit encircled by stones. The body was buried in a crouched position without its head. This phenomenon also appeared in necropolis III, where a skeleton was found without its head as well, as it had been separated from the rest of the body. Afterwards, it was placed in a bowl, which then was buried in the grave as a grave good. This upper layer of Carre II dates to the Achaemenid Period due to the ceramic finds. **(Figure 8 N° 9, 10)**

The second layer consists of the filling from the time after the pit house had been abandoned. It is marked by small, encircled campfire sites. It seems the area was used by herdsmen as a temporary shelter. While most of the pottery fragments are attributed to the grooved ware or the highly polished black ware of the Early Iron Age **(Figure 8 N° 6, 8)**, a few pieces resemble Urartian forms and coating techniques. They mark the *terminus ante or at quem* for the abandonment of the pit house. The lowermost layer used to be part of the floor of the house. Here a stone floor was covered with a thin layer of clay. The house consisted of only one room. On two sides of it, respectively, a structure consisting of vertically set stones was built. These structures were probably used as storage boxes or feeding troughs for livestock. The material designates the time of the construction of the house and it is also similar to finds from the Talin Tomb N° 58[15]. **(Figure 8 N° 3)** Therefore, the house obviously dates to the Early Iron Age.

The Trench outside the Inner Fortification Wall (Figure 9)

When opening the trench right outside the inner fortification wall, it was tempting to verify a structure as a gateway, because it looked like one. But the excavation showed this entrance was part of a later reconstruction phase of the Achaemenid/ Hellenistic Period. At this time, it seems the whole area of the fortress was cleaned. Additionally, the rubble was taken out of the walls. In this trench a massive layer of rubble with a measurement of almost 2m was excavated. The material primarily dates to the 13th - 8th century BC, a time in which the fortress was in use. However, some sherds dating to the Achaemenid/ Hellenistic Period designate the time of this filling. For the so-called gateway some of the huge stones were removed from the masonry. Afterwards, a kind of ramp was built on the inner fortification wall. Since most of the material was part of the filling layer, it is still unclear when the construction of the fortress began. However, two structures resembling silos were excavated at the bottom of Carre III. Among other finds, these structures contained pottery fragments dating to the Late Bronze Age and Early Iron Age. So, on the one hand, the silos indicate that the construction of the fortress must have been carried out during the Late Bronze Age, providing that the silos date to the original time in which the construction of the fortress began. The pottery of the

[15] Avetisyan–Bobokyan, 2008: Fig. 44

surrounding necropolis supports this dating. On the other hand, the silos indicate that the outer fortification wall was obviously part of the original construction of the fortress. It was probably not simply added later, otherwise the silos would have been located outside the fortification wall, which is unlikely. Concerning the questions, the situation at Azatan indicates that the first settlement including the fortification, the houses on the western hill and two of the necropolises date to the 13th - 8th century BC. It seems that the fortress and the settlement on the western hill were abandoned at some point in the 8th century BC. The burned wooden beam and a huge bulk of ash found during the excavation indicate the abandonment involved some kind of violence. The small humble pit houses on the plateau indicate that this part of the settlement was inhabited during the Urartian Period. Concluding from the pottery found in the filling layer, it was abandoned in Post-Urartian time at the latest. A few activities also took place in the late Achaemenid Period and the Hellenistic Period **(Figure 8 N° 9, 10)**. Of the latter, evidence was found for some reconstruction work, but so far it seems it was never finished. Apparently, the settlement was uninhabited between the 6th and the 4th/3th century BC. The abandonment of the first settlement at some point in the 8th century BC was probably caused by the Urartian aggression towards the north. From inscriptions it is known that the Urartians usually raided the areas, taking away with them the young people and the flocks. As a result, only the old people remained, without any livelihood.

In our opinion, the small humble settlement on the plateau designates the time after an Urartian raid of the Shirak plain. As a result, the settlement activities decreased until ceasing completely in the 7th century BC. There are only very few hints to activities in the Achaemenid Period. One explanation is possibly the establishment of the new settlement at Beniamin (Drashkhsnakert) on a plain nearby. It is a phenomenon of the rather peaceful Achaemenid Period that people started to settle on plains.

During the excavation new questions were raised in connection with the founding time of the cyclopean fortresses. The fortifications on the nearby Tsaghkahovit plain were abandoned at some point in the Late Bronze Age, which Avetisyan, Badalyan and Lindsay[16] have already shown. Comparing the altitude of the Shirak plain and the Tsagkhhovit plain, the latter is situated almost 500 m higher than the former. Was there a connection between this fact and the changes occurring in the settlement pattern? A similar phenomenon took place in Transcaucasia at the end of the Middle Bronze Age. People left the mountains to settle in lower regions. Sometimes such phenomena are the result of climatic changes triggering off changes in the subsistence pattern and the settlement pattern of societies. Therefore, it is necessary to wait until the analysis of the radiocarbon assays collected during the last field season will be finalised, in order to verify the dates. Furthermore, it is necessary to collect and analyse data from other fortresses nearby, such as Aykabat, Gusanaghyuk, Keti, Aghvorik or Sepazar. Additionally, the data from the plains of Kars/Erzurum need to be taken into account in order to either verify or refute such theories.

Is there a possibility to date the rise of these cyclopean fortresses more precisely by further analysing radiocarbon dating samples? Did the phenomenon of these fortresses only appear for a short time, or was there a development throughout the centuries as was assumed above? Last but not least, if there were visible changes in the settlement pattern during this time, it might be possible to analyse the function of the fortresses and their associated society. Hence, it might be possible to answer one of the main questions concerning the emergence of the cyclopean fortresses.

Catalogue

1. Carre I Plateau Silo A east (Figure 5, 1)
Small pot, rim fragment Ø 10.2 cm; clay: fine-grid calcite-tempered, black; surface exterior (ex.): very well, black; surface interior (in.): smoothed, black.

2. Carre I Plateau Silo A east (Figure 5, 2)
Small pot, rim fragment Ø 7.6 cm; clay: medium – grid sandy tempered, grey; surface ex.: smoothed, grey; surface in.: coarse, grey. Torosyan *et al.* 2002 Pl. LXV N°5.

3. Carre I Plateau floor level (Figure 5, 3)
Large bowl fragment Ø 32 cm; clay: medium- grid tempered, orange; surface ex. and in.: very well burnished, red-brown. Çilingiroğlu- Salvini 2001 Pl. IX N° 12.

4. Carre I Plateau floor level (Figure 5, 4)
Small bowl Ø 8 cm; clay: medium- grid tempered, orange- beige; surface ex. and in.: very well-burnished, red- brown.

5. Carre I Plateau floor level (Figure 5, 5)
Small bowl Ø 6.5 cm ; clay: medium-grid tempered, grey-beige; surface ex.: matt burnished, grey; surface in.: burnished, black.

6. Carre I Plateau filling level (Figure 5, 6)
Small bowl fragment Ø 14 cm; clay: fine- grid tempered with obsidian, pink; surface ex.: slightly polished, red triangle motive painting; surface in.: slightly polished.

7. Carre I Plateau filling level (Figure 5, 7)
Small plate fragment Ø 14 cm; clay: medium. fine-grid sandy tempered, grey-black; surface ex.: matt burnished, grey; surface in.: very well burnished, grey-black. Ökse 1988 N° 320.

[16] Avetisyan *et al*. 2000; Badalyan *et al.*2008; Lindsay *et al.* 2008.

8. Carre II Fortress pit house floor level (Figure 8, 1)
Pot Ø 22 cm; clay: coarse-grained, black-orange; surface ex. and in.: coarse burnished, beige with traces of fire. Torosyan *et al*. 2002 XLIX N° 14.
9. Carre II Fortress pit house floor level (Figure 8, 2)
Fragment Ø 32 cm; clay: fine- grid tempered, orange; surface ex.: well burnished, red with black painting; surface in.: matt burnished, black painting (?). Belli- Konyar 2003 Figure 22 N° 2.
10. Carre II Fortress pit house floor level (Figure 8, 3)
Bowl fragment Ø 18 cm; clay: medium- grid tempered, red- brown to black; surface ex. and in.: well burnished, black. Avetisyan- Bobokhyan 2008 Fig. 44 N° 3; Torosyan *et al.* 2002 Figure LIV N° 16.
11. Carre II Fortress pit house floor level (Figure 8, 4)
Closed jar fragment; clay: fine- grid obsidian tempered, reddish brown; surface ex.: very well burnished, grey-yellow with hanging triangle incision; surface in.: coarse, reddish-grey. Smith *et al*. 2009 Fig. 15 H; Torosyan *et al.* 2002 Figure LXXVII N° 15.
12. Carre II Fortress pit house floor level (Figure 8, 5)
Closed jar fragment; clay: medium-grid tempered, grey; surface ex.: white coated, with impresso-decoration; surface in.: coarse grey. Sagona- Sagona 2004 Figure 131 N°1.
13. Carre II Fortress pit house filling layer (Figure 8, 6)
Pot fragment Ø 26 cm; medium- grid tempered, red- brown; surface ex.: matt burnished, rim very well burnished, mottled red- brown with incision; surface in.: slightly burnish, red- brown. Torosyan *et al*. 2002 Figure XXV N° 19.
14. Carre II Fortress pit house filling layer (Figure 8, 7)
Plate fragment Ø 26 cm; clay: medium. grid tempered, orange- red; surface ex. and in.: well burnished, light orange with incision.
15. Carre II Fortress pit house filling layer (Figure 8, 8)
Closed jar fragment; clay: medium- grid tempered, grey-black; surface ex.: very well polished, black; surface in.: slightly burnished grey-black. Torosyan *et al.* 2002 Figure LXIV N° 1.
16. Carre II Fortress pit house upper layer (Figure 8, 9)
Small bowl fragment Ø 12 cm; clay: very fine- grid tempered, light orange; surface ex. and in.: well burnished with red painting. Şenyurt *et al.* 2011 Figure 17 N° 192.
17. Carre II Fortress pit house upper layer (Figure 8, 10)
Handle fragment; clay: medium- grid tempered, red; surface: well burnished, dark red.
18. Carre III Fortress wall Silo (Figure 10, 1)
Biconical jar fragment Ø 30 cm; clay: medium-grid tempered, red- brown; surface ex.: slightly burnished, grey-brown with incisions; surface in.: coarse, red-brown. Khanzadian 1995 Pl. 21 N°1.
19. Carre III Fortress wall Silo (Figure 10, 2)
Handle fragment; clay: coarse-grained tempered, red-brown; surface: slightly burnished, dark grey with incisions resembling a mane of a horse. Apakidze 2008 Figure 15 N° 27, 28, 33, 34.
20. Carre III Fortress wall Silo (Figure 10, 3)
Strainer fragment; clay: medium-grid tempered, black; surface ex. and in.: slightly burnished, black.
21. Carre III fortress wall filling – 100- 120 cm (Figure 10, 4)
Bottle fragment Ø 7cm; clay: medium-grid tempered, red- brown; surface ex. burnished, black; surface in.: coarse, black. Ludwig 2010 Tf. 206 N° F8 g.
22. Carre III fortress wall filling – 150- 170 cm (Figure 10, 5)
Small bowl fragment Ø 8.4 cm; clay: fine-grid tempered, grey; surface ex.: burnished, grey with knob decoration; surface in.: coarse, grey.
23. Carre III fortress wall filling -100- 120 cm (Figure 10, 6)
Closed jar fragment; clay: fine-grid obsidian tempered, grey; surface ex.: excellent polished, black with polished decoration; surface in.: slightly burnished, grey. Petrosian 1989 Figure 43.
24. Carre III fortress wall filling – 150- 170 cm (Figure 10, 7)
Closed jar fragment; clay: medium-grid obsidian tempered, red-brown; surface ex.: very well burnished, black; surface in.: coarse, red-brown. Torosyan *et al.* Figure LXXIV N° 14; Khanzadian 1995 Pl. 60.
25. Carre III fortress wall filling – 100- 120cm (Figure 10, 8)
Large bowl multiple fragments Ø 44 cm; clay: coarse-grained tempered, grey-beige; surface ex.: well burnished, beige black mottled with incisions and prick decoration; surface in.: coarse, grey.

Özet/Abstract

Azatan – Ermenistan Shirak'ta Bir Demir Çağı Kalesi ve Yerleşimi

Ermenistan'ın Shirak bölgesinde yeralan Azatan adlı Demir çağı yerleşiminde 2011'den bu yana Gyumri Müzesi ve Saxony-Anhalt Arkeoloji ve Kültürel Miras Yönetimi Dairesi işbirliği ile çalışmalar sürdürülmektedir. Azatan, Ermenistan'ın kuzeybatısında Shirak ovasının güney sınırını oluşturan Maralik Platosunun kuzey yamacında konumlanmaktadır. Yerleşimin büyüklüğü 36 hektardır. Topografik konumu nedeniyle Azatan ayrı bir öneme sahiptir. Bir Urartu kalesi olan Horom'un 10 km kuzeyinde yeralır. 30 km kadar kuzeybatısında yeralan Marmashen yazıtı Urartu hegemonyasının kuzeydeki sınırına işaret eder. Öte yandan Shirak ovası Araxes vadisini Kura vadisine ve Kafkas dağlarına bağlar. Çalışmaya ait ilk sonuçlara göre kale ve yerleşim en geç MÖ 10. yüzyıla aittir. MÖ 7. yüzyılda yerleşim dramatik bir biçimde küçülmüş ancak iskan devam etmiştir. Yerleşimin küçülmesi kuzeydeki Urartu saldırılarına bağlanabilir. MÖ 5. yüzyılın başında Azatan'ın yakınında Akhamenidler tarafından Beniamin (Drashkhanakert) kurulmuştur. Bu dönemde Azatan neredeyse tamamen terkedilmiştir. Azatan Ermenistan'ın kuzeybatısında pek bilinmeyen bir döneme ışık tutması bakımından önemlidir. Yerleşimde yürüttüğümüz kazılar MÖ 1. bin'in ilk yarısına tarihlenen ve oldukça fazla sorunsalı barındıran bir seramik grubuna yoğunlaşmış ve imparatorluğun periferisindeki Urartu etkisine ışık tutmuştur.

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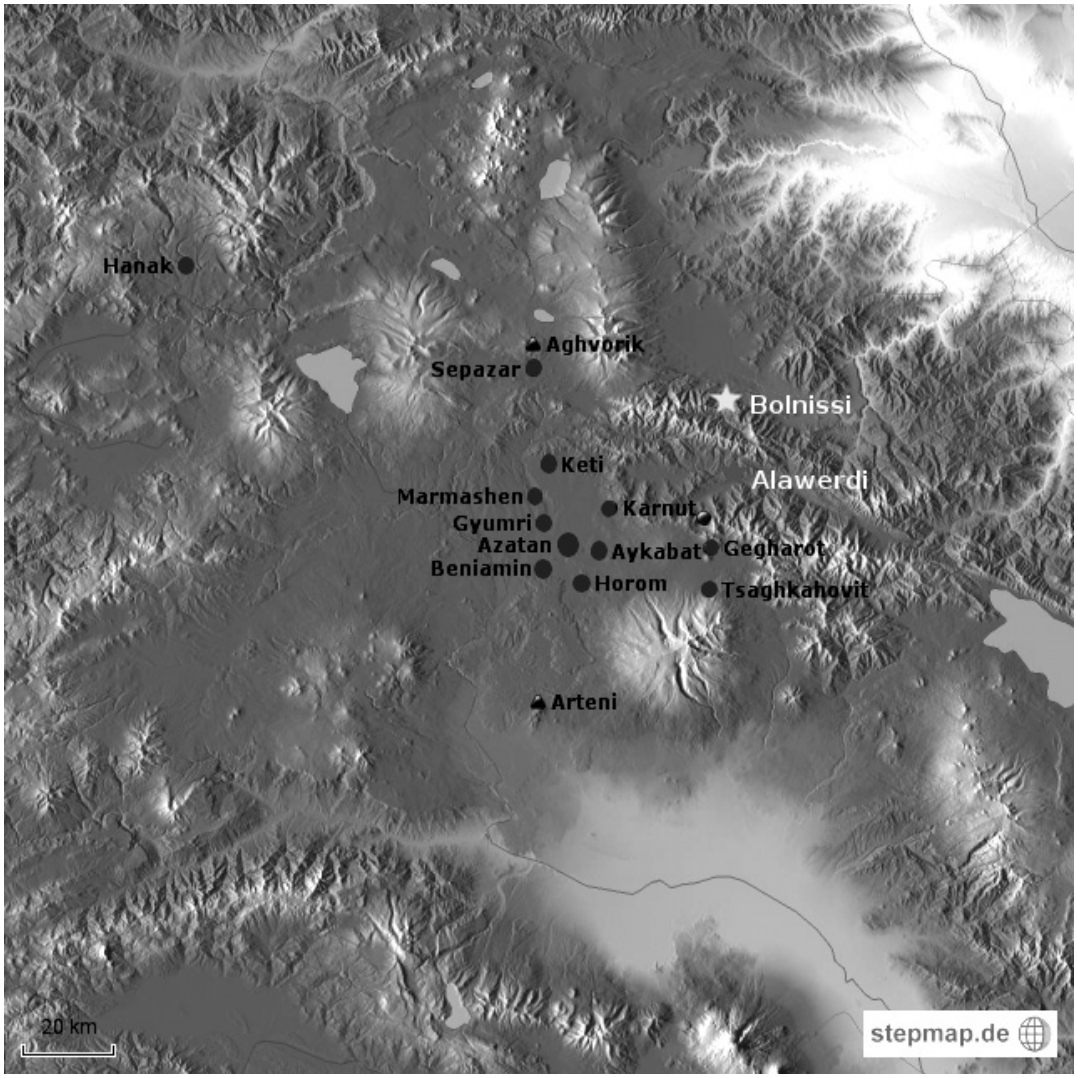

Figure 1. Map with the main find spots (D. Mauermann after step map)

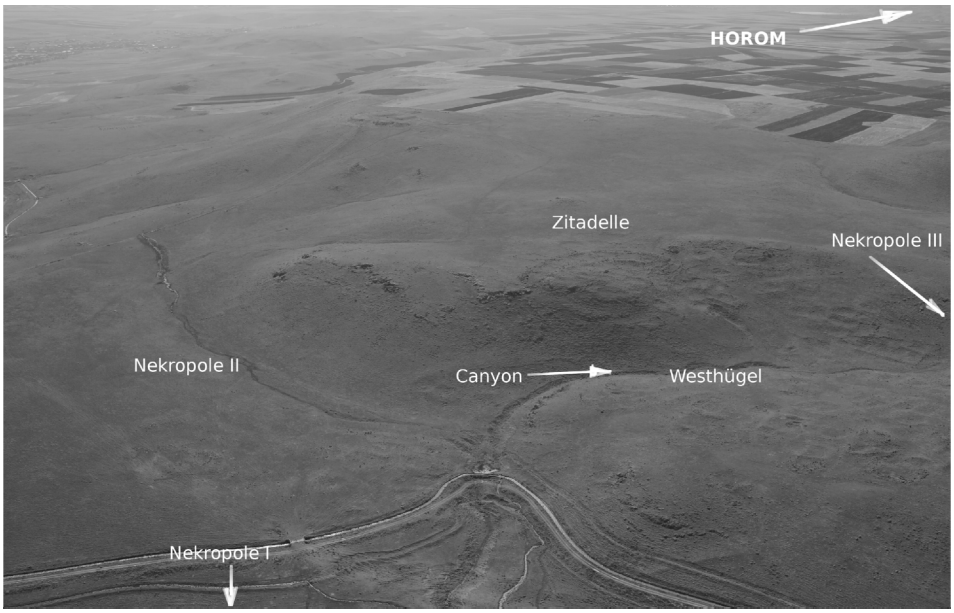

Figure 2. Azatan – aerial photograph (J. Lipták, München)

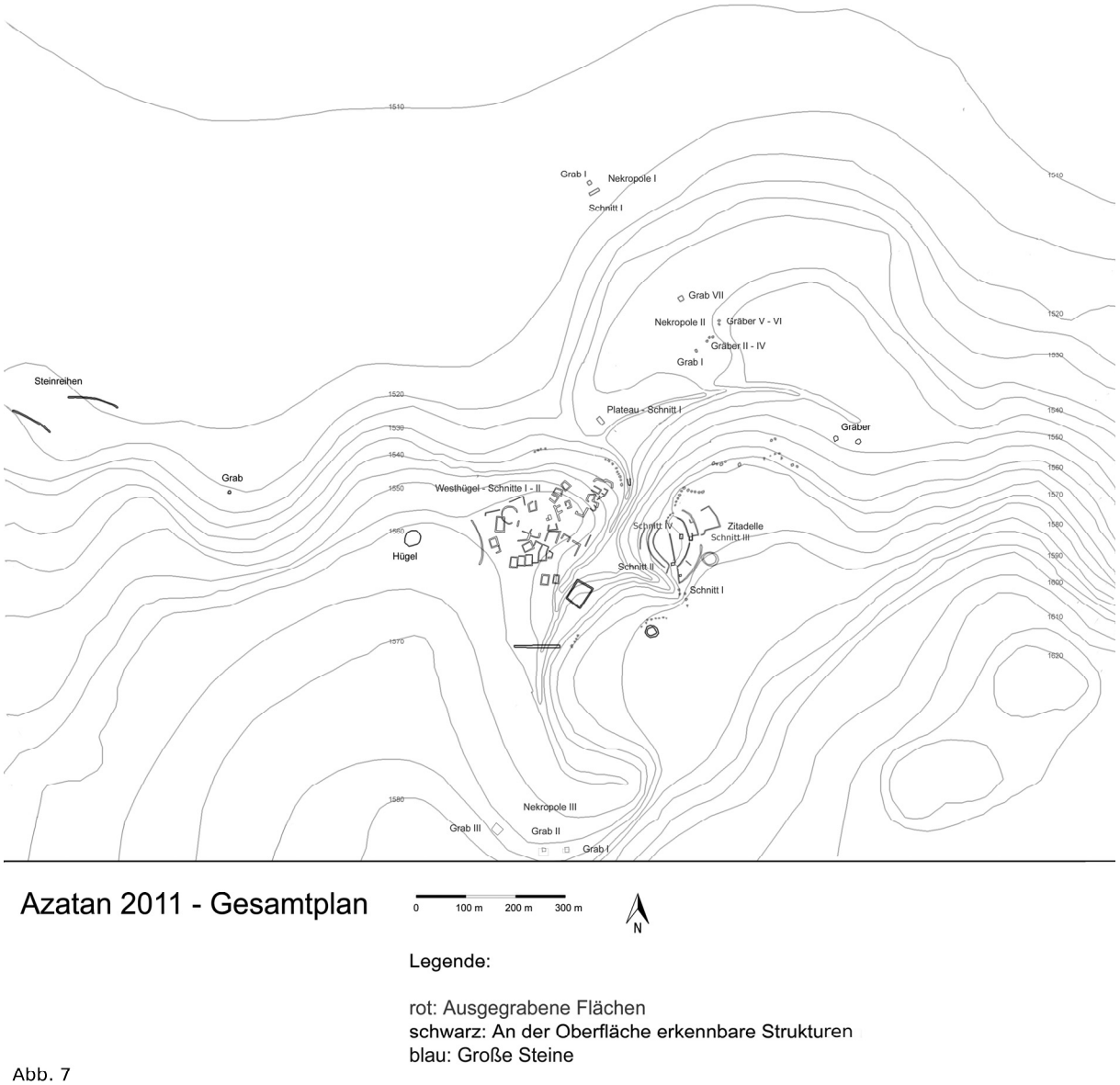

Figure 3. Azatan─plan with excavation areas (T. Neuser, Halle)

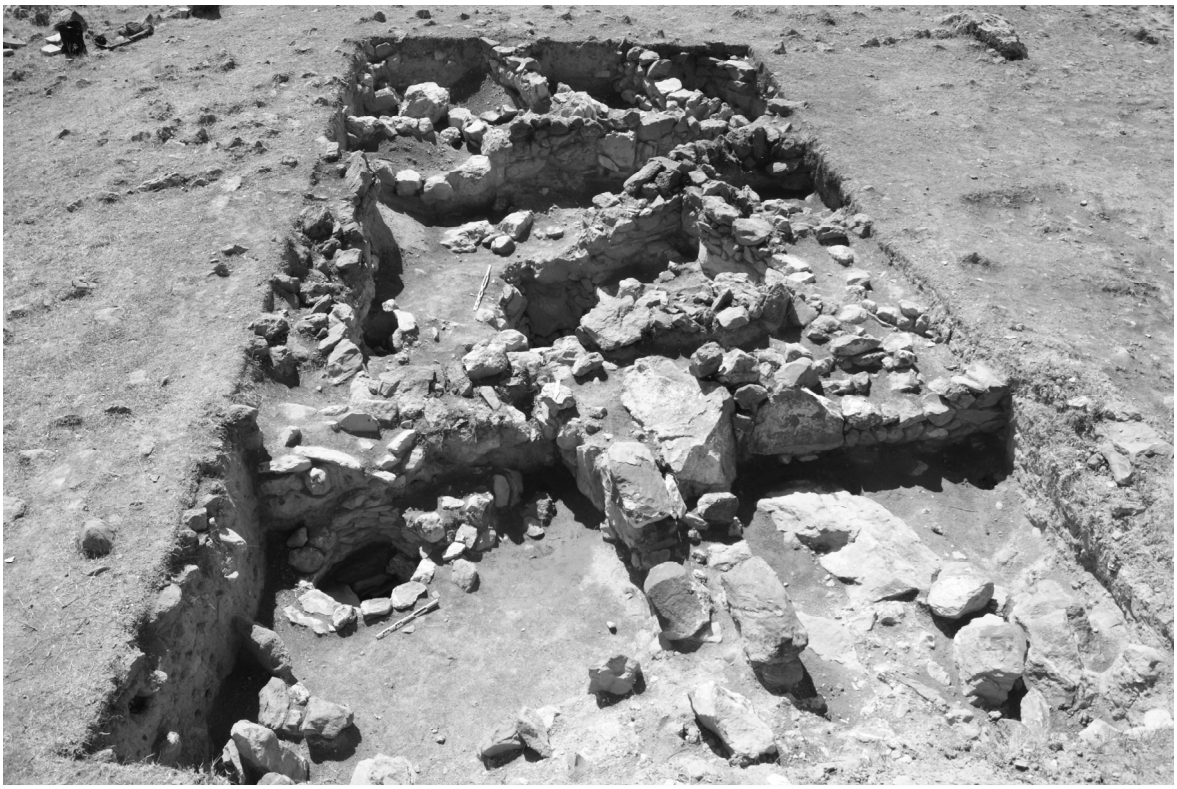

Figure 4. Azatan─Carre I Plateau view from north (T. Neuser, Halle)

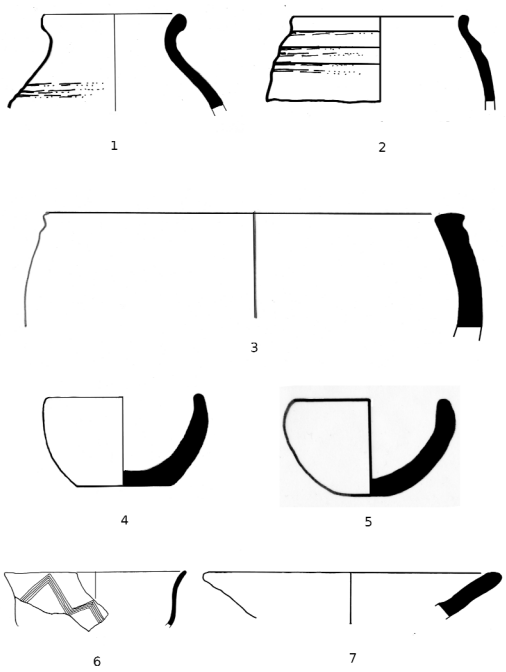

Figure 5. Azatan─Ceramics from the Plateau─Settlement (T. Neuser)