



EXCAVATIONS IN KARMIR BLUR HISTORICAL HERITAGE SITE IMPLEMETED BY SUSTAINABLE URBAN DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM TRANCHE 1



HISTORICAL OVERVIEW

The archaeological complex of the site is located near the lower stream of the Hrazdan River, occupying an area of more than 50 hectares, and consisting of the XII-VII centuries BC Pre Urartian settlement, Urartian¹ city with the citadel and urban quarter, functioning during VII-VI centuries BC, VI century BC through I century AD tomb field (cemetery), Umeshin channel and cave sites on the opposite side of the Hrazdan River. The site was discovered in 1936 with a find of a basalt structure, preserving five lines of cuneiform inscription, commemorating the name of Urartian king Rusa the II. The systematic excavations of the citadel and the living quarter started from 1939 with a joint expedition of the Leningrad state Hermitage and the Armenian Commission

of Antiquities and Armenian filial of the Academy of Sciences of USSR, and were finished at 1968. The citadel, opened by the excavations is a monumental construction and one of the outstanding monuments of the Late Urartian architecture. It was a two stored building, occupying an area of more than 4 hectares outstanding monuments of the Late Urartian architecture. The first year of excavations brought to the light the name of the site; it was mentioned in the inscriptions as the Citadel of the city Teyshebaini (Teysheba is the name of the Urartian God of War and Storm). During the excavations of the Teyshebaini Karmir Blur many art objects and high quality cultural remains were discovered, including metal objects.

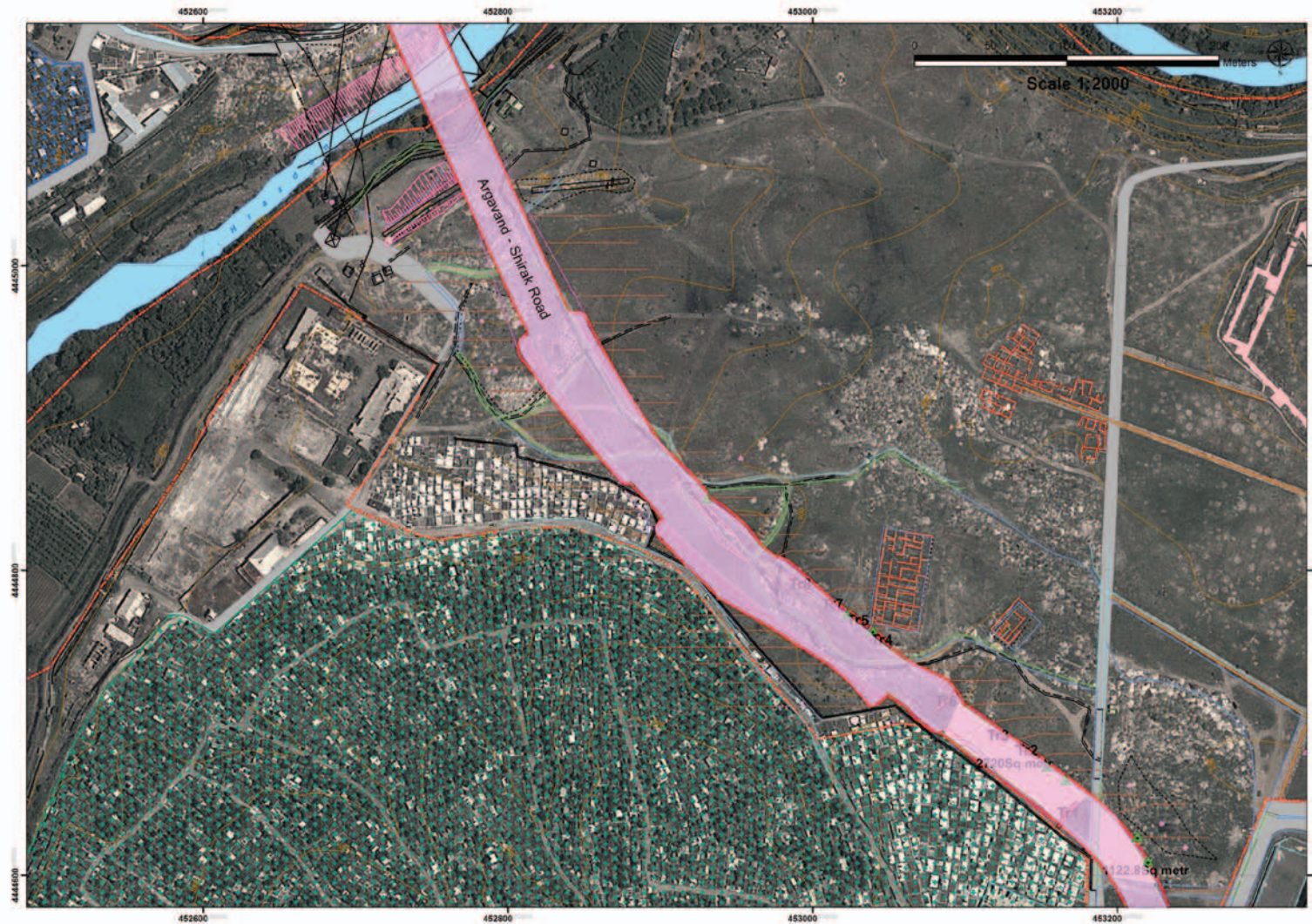


¹Urartu is a name of the state, existing on the territory of the Armenian Highlands during IX-VI centuries BC, mentioned in the Assyrian cuneiform inscriptions with this variation. The center of the kingdom was city Van (Tushpa in Urartian), that's why often it's named Van kingdom. The self identification of the kingdom in the Urartian inscriptions was the Country of Biaynili.



SUSTAINABLE URBAN DEVELOPMENT INVESTMENT PROGRAM PROJECT 1

ARGAVAND HIGHWAY-SHIRAK STREET



Legend

- | | | | | | |
|------------------------|--|-------------------------------|------------|------------------------------------|------------------|
| Road construction area | New cemetery | Survey area | Church | Umeshin canal | Modern buildings |
| Old cemetery | Outlines of the archaeological sites protections zones | Points of surface collections | Cave sites | Citadel of Teyshebaini-Karmir Blur | Streets |
| | | | | Hrazdan river | Elevation |



CONSTRUCTION OF ARGAVAND-SHIRAK NEW ROAD SECTION

Construction of Argavand-Shirak new road section is planned by the Sustainable Urban Development Investment Program Tranche 1 funded by the Asian Development Bank. The new road will pass through the historical heritage "Karmir Blur" (Red Hill, the reason of such coloration of the local sediments is related to the reddish mud brick structures, used for the constructions from the Urartian period), therefore excavation works are carried out to check the existence of the archaeological layers.

The first excavations of the "Karmir Blur" historical site have been implemented starting from 1939. Unfortunately, after the collapse of the Soviet Union the site slowly turned into a garbage area and the survival of the site has been threatened by the rapid widening of the actual cemetery area, the construction activities around the site and in the Hrazdan River gorge, the garbage deposited on the site and into the gorge, and the growing agricultural activi-

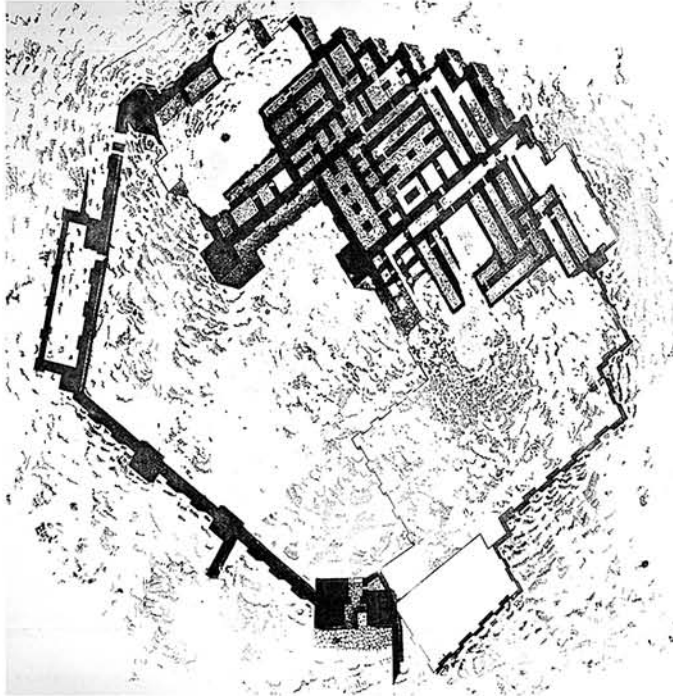
ties. A fully cultivated and flourishing area, regulated by the Urartians some 3000 years ago was transformed into an unattractive, abandoned area without any significance. By looking at the site in nowadays, it is hard to believe and imagine that the old fixed scenes, showing the situations opened by the excavations, belong to the same site.

Worth mentioning that the Asian Development Bank has allocated 44 700 USD for the preliminary excavation works as the archaeological findings are not only national valuable heritage materials, but are also significant archaeological heritage materials of Asia, Middle East and Asia Minor. The planned section of the road will start from Shirak street, through the southern side of the Karmir Blur archaeological site, across the Hrazdan River Gorge, and to the intersection of the Admiral Isakov Avenue (Argavand Highway) and Arno Babajanyan street.



Urtians were masters of organizing economic activity and the flourishing of life. They had fully cultivated the landscape around Karmir Blur and adjunct territories through building of water channels, roads and fixing the agriculture and trade activities. The Umeshin channel, built by the order of king Rusa II in VII century BC, started from the Hrazdan River east of the site and continued west, reaching Zvartnots area. The inscription about the building of the channel is discovered during the excavations of Zvartnots . In this way they were regulating the amounts of water supplies and controlling the portions of paid taxes. The wine cellars opened in the first floor of the citadel indicate the volume of the agricultural activity of that time and showing the development of such a branch of agriculture as wine making. The total amount of the earthenware pots or karases for keeping wine, opened in the cellars by the excavations, is around 400, with total volume of 400 000 liters. Volume of each karas was calcu-

lated and written on its surface by hieroglyphic, cuneiform inscription or both together). Together with the karases excavated in the houses of the city (this wine was for everyday use of the citizens) the total amount of the wine kept in Teyshebaini-Karmir Blur was up to one million liters. An approximate calculation for preparation of such amount of wine indicates that around 1, 5 million kilograms of grapes would have been produced, on around 300 hectares of vineyards, with a help of 2500 workers. In addition to karases, oil lamps for working in the area of dark cellars, and clay funnels for transporting the wine, pitchers, askoses, and glasses, and different kinds of bowls for wine serving and drinking were found. The censers (fumigation vessels) found near empty karases are indicate the process of fumigation of the clay volumes for wine preservation with sulfur. Large amount of grape seeds found in and around the wine making units are showing that local varieties of grapes were cultivated by the Urartians.



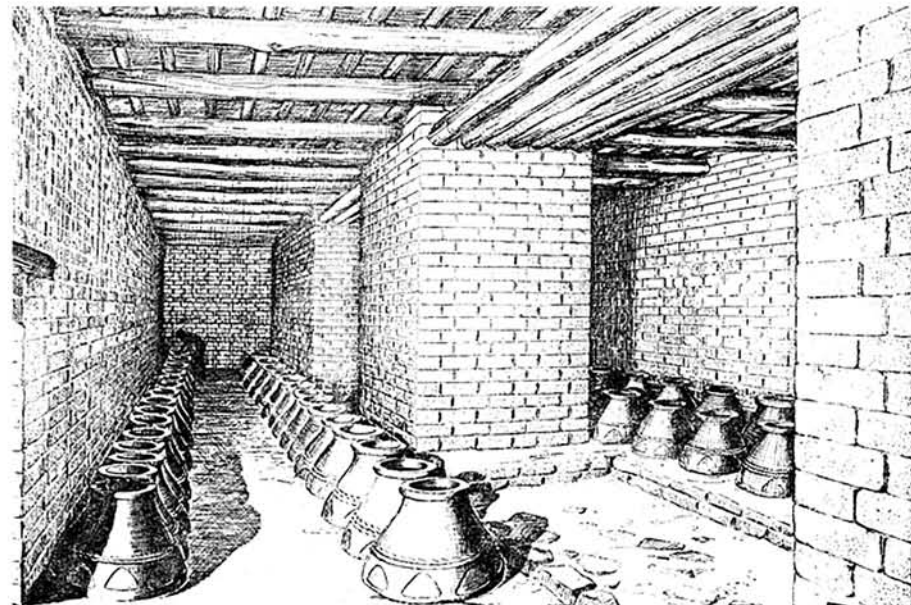
Citadel of Teyshebaini - Karmir Blur. Plan



Wine cellar n28 with karases. Tesishebaini - Karmir Blur (VII Century BC)



Citadel of Teyshebaini - Karmir Blur. Plan



Reconstruction of wine cellar N28 with karases



One of the other important branches of agriculture was wheat growing. The excavated agricultural tools made from iron were in everyday use, making the Urartian argoeconomy very productive. The cellars adopted under wheat storage are showing 1500 tones of volume of crops, preserved in Karmir Blur, and grown on around 2000-3000 hectares of fields. In total the land cultivated by Urartians was 4000-5000 hectares, without calculating the area of pastures and meadows for cattle breeding. The production of a large amount of beer here is proved by the existence of cigar-shaped vessels for beer production.



- 1. Funnel
- 2. Censer(fumigation) vessel
- 3-6. Oil lamps

Teyshabaini - Karmir Blur (VII Century BC)

The life in Urartian Teyshabaini-Karmir blur was flourishing till the beginning of the VI century BC, when the Van Kingdom or the Urartu failed under the attacks of Median-Scythian and local Armenian joint military forces. In 590 BC the citadel of Teyshe-

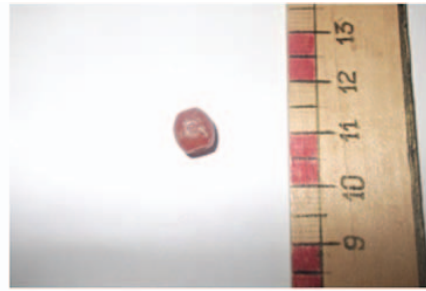
baini was fully destroyed and abandoned, as the last enclave of the Urartian Kingdom. The life hasn't continued here even in later periods. The area of the city became a cemetery in V century BC through I century AD time period.



Cemetery of a woman



Photo of discovered mausoleum cromlech



Necklaces and earrings

Compressed plot



Carafe



Cemetery of a woman



Stones with small holes



ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITES DURING EXCAVATIONS WITHIN FRAMES OF SUSTAINABLE URBAN DEVELOPMENT INVESTMENT PROGRAM



