Unforgettable Landscapes:
Attachments to the Past in Hellenistic Armenia

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Historical cartographers are quintessential memory specialists. Given the task of determining the relative importance of one hamlet, village, town, or city from another, those who map the past exercise the right to erase the memory of a place itself, along with the memories of the peoples, histories, and monuments through which that place was constituted. As reviewers of the *Barrington Atlas of the Greek and Roman World* recently wrote, “all maps—in one way or another, aggressively or unconsciously—‘lie’ to us” (Alcock, Dey and Parker 2001, 458). This discriminating duty of the cartographer, when paired with the narrow approach of traditional classical scholarship on the Near East during the Hellenistic era (ca. 323-31 BC), has resulted in rather peculiar maps of the period: undiscovered places that are mentioned in Greek and Roman sources are marked, while archaeological sites whose names do not appear in this particular body of literature are not. The dominant narrative concerning the Hellenistic Near East has radically privileged cities thought to have been havens of Hellenism, due to the celebrated works of Greek art their inhabitants produced. For the student of classical archaeology, the likely impression of the Near East in the enigmatic period between the collapse of the Persian Empire and the rise of the Roman Empire is like that of a photograph with well-focused, fore grounded, Hellenized hubs—such as Pergamon, Antioch, Ephasos—set against a soft-focused, hazy background of
places that were perhaps touched by the ripple effects of Hellenism, or stagnantly persisted as vestigially Persian.

But studies of the Hellenistic Near East are changing, and the welcome transformations that are underway make this epoch more difficult to define than ever before. Nearly every component of traditional scholarship, which characterized the Hellenistic world along clear temporal, cultural, and geographic parameters, is now under scrutiny. While early conventions date the start of the era by the death of Alexander the Great, recent studies stress continuities from the Achaemenid or Pharaonic periods and call into doubt such an absolute temporal rupture (Sherwin-White and Kuhrt 1993; Briant 1982). Culturally, the traditional notion that the Hellenistic period was one of homogenizing hellenization through an exclusionary Greco-Macedonian elite is being supplanted by the recognition that more complex social processes were at work, which included varying degrees of assimilation and the persistence of local, non-Greek traditions. Geographic conceptions are similarly becoming more nuanced. Whereas the Hellenistic world was once thought to encompass the vast swathe of territory conquered by Alexander, it is increasingly recognized that this notion of a monolithic Greek sphere is not sustainable. In this changing scholarly atmosphere, the soft-focus background can begin to come to the fore, and forgotten places can reemerge in the cartographies of the Near East in the final centuries BC.

Hellenistic Armenia

With the death of Alexander the Great in 323 BC, the eastern Mediterranean and Near East became an arena of dynastic politics dominated by Macedonian monarchs. Prominent imperial families such as the Ptolemies and the Seleucids
were surrounded by numerous smaller dynastic polities—such as those of the Armenian plateau—that either answered to these monarchs or vied with them for autonomy. Alexander himself did not pass through the upland plains and daunting mountains of the south Caucasus (Hammond 1996), yet his wider conquests brought Armenia into contact with the eastern reaches of Hellenism, heralded by the Seleucid successors of Alexander who held sway over Anatolia and Mesopotamia in the third and second centuries BC. However, for the communities living on the Armenian highlands, as palpable as the present benefits and challenges of contact and exchange may have been, so too were the opportunities and pressures of the past. These communities inhabited a landscape replete with monuments that spoke to the triumphs and failures of past regimes.

On hills and outcrops of the fertile Ararat plain stood the fortresses that once constituted the northern province of the kingdom of Urartu. This power is thought to have emerged in eastern Anatolia from a conglomeration of smaller polities during the late second and early first millennium BC. Between the mid-ninth and late eighth centuries B.C, Urartu expanded to encompass the south Caucasus and northern Iran, as far as Lake Urmia (Smith 2003). Occupation in Armenia spanned from the second decade of the eighth century until Urartu’s decline some time in the late seventh or early sixth centuries BC (Smith 2003). Some of Urartu’s citadels were reduced to ruins at this time; others continued for centuries to boast formidable defensive structures and sturdy constructions.

Soon after Urartu’s decline Armenia was incorporated into the expansive Achaemenid Persian Empire. Textual sources seem to suggest that a local power, named the Yervandid dynasty after a series of eponymous kings, emerged as vassals to the Persian court. Relatively little is known about the
archaeology of Armenia during the reign of this Yervandid dynasty from the sixth through fourth centuries BC. Although Alexander’s eastern campaign in the fourth century precipitated the collapse of the Persian Empire, the Yervandid dynasty seems to have survived the political upheavals that ensued after Alexander’s death in 323 BC, and appears to have continued to rule into the Hellenistic period for more than a century, albeit under close Seleucid surveillance. This period of semi-autonomous Yervandid rule will be referred to here as the late Yervandid period (323-212BC). The geographer Strabo would have us believe that towards the end of the third century, the late Yervandid dynasty was succeeded by a new dynastic family, the Artaxiads, after the Seleucid king Antiochus III conquered the last Yervandid king and placed Artaxias I on the throne (Str. 11.14.11).

Whether the subjects and elite of Hellenistic Armenia (i.e. Late Yervandid and Artaxiad) would have recognized Urartian and Achaemenid-period remains as the work of two distinct predecessors depends in part on the lifespan of social memories. Richard Bradley, in his numerous and elegant studies on social memory, has emphasized that memories become unstable within spans of time far briefer than most archaeological research can hone in on (Bradley 2003; Bradley 2002). Memories are constantly shifting, and the very act of their construction is by necessity selective. Although the process of social forgetting can be stalled through various strategies—whether writing texts, inscribing artifacts, or constructing monuments—nevertheless, these memories will be unstable and subject to ever changing meanings.

Writing is clearly not the only way to codify memories, yet archaeological studies of social memory have quite reasonably tended to draw a distinction between the way commemorative acts operated in historic and prehistoric contexts, and indeed, the way today’s observer can interpret
commemorative acts on either side of the narrative turn (Van Dyke and Alcock 2003). Oral traditions can be somewhat mimetic in rendering the meaning of the past; however, in the absence of written narrative to codify these meanings the actual content of the past is no longer likely to be recalled. In archaeological studies of social memory that deal with prehistory, “the past” that is being remembered becomes a timeless abstraction whose remembrance cannot easily be moored to specific motivations even if it can be unmistakably identified, whereas historic studies tend to specify exactly what part of the past is being remembered or forgotten and can better probe to what end.³

A study of social memory in Hellenistic Armenia does not fit comfortably on either side of the historic versus prehistoric divide. There are no known contemporary narrative texts from Armenia that could elucidate what parts of the past were being remembered, how intentionally, and for what purposes (although there is an important set of inscriptions that will be discussed below). At the same time, in the late first millennium BC there is sufficient historical information available from Greek, Roman, and Persian sources, to bracket the past into discrete heuristic temporal eras, in this case the Urartian and Achaemenid periods. Whether this same division would have been meaningful to communities living in Armenia in the last three centuries BC is as yet unknowable. In this setting where memories were transmitted orally, we could suggest that remembering the content of the Urartian past in an unmythologized form would be exceedingly unlikely, whereas recollections of the Achaemenid past would still be in transmission. This distinction between actual and mythologized memories has its limitations, however. It glosses over the notion that memories are constantly
mutating, not only over centuries or between generations, but within lifespans and between individuals.

From our perspective, the archaeological and epigraphic records suggest that in the Hellenistic period the political calculations and social relationships of elites and non-elites alike hinged, at least in part, upon a commemoration of both the Achaemenid and Urartian past, just as they did upon an accommodation of the new ideological and social demands of the present. Indeed, expressing such commitment to the past may have been instrumental to meeting the challenges of the present. On the level of the elite, the late Yervandid and Artaxiad kings of Hellenistic Armenia made materially visible choices through which they interacted with the built spaces and perceived associations of the past. These kings constructed a new elite identity precisely by picking and choosing from the smorgasbord of old and new places, languages, iconographies, and indeed pedigrees that lay before them. Although situated at the edges of the imposing Seleucid and then Roman realm, and incorporating some elements of the regal vocabulary of Macedonian kings (e.g. coinage), Hellenistic-era elites in Armenia practiced politics and projected their authority within landscapes that incorporated the enduring remains of the Urartian and Achaemenid eras. Embedded within the physical vestiges of the Urartian and Achaemenid polities were the grounds on which later elites staked a claim to legitimacy and briefly realized the promise of empire.

Archaeological research in Armenia has tended to focus on the monumental fortresses of the Ararat plain, and their palatial or administrative centers, making the commemorative choices of elites particularly open to investigation. Although the decades just before and just after the Soviet collapse witnessed some investigation into regional settlements, these efforts have gone largely unpublished. Elite arenas are
indeed privileged sites of social production to which others respond. At the same time, social forms are substantially determined by subject behavior. There is sufficient (though fragmentary) evidence for non-elite commemorative practices during the Hellenistic period—gleaned from the tantalizing digressions of top-down archaeological efforts—to suggest that past landscapes offered a meaningful sense of place across the social spectrum. Though perhaps differently motivated, elite and non-elite commemorative acts in Hellenistic Armenia display similar trajectories in their memorialization of the past, reflecting the recursive relationships that shape decision-making among elite and subject groups.

The social memories discussed here were constructed and are made visible through text, place, and ritual behavior (Van Dyke and Alcock 2003: 4). The texts, which will be the focus of part one of this study, are a series of stelae made during the reign of Artaxias I (189-160 BC), the eponymous first king of the Artaxiad dynasty. These stelae, which illustrate that pedigree and name are fertile terrain for memory and identity manipulation, offer direct evidence of Artaxias I’s awareness of, and reliance on, the Urartian and Yervandid Achaemenid past. The second part of this study looks at settlements of the last three centuries BC, and in particular the different ways in which two new political centers, Armavir and Artashat, interacted with preexisting Urartian fortresses in the kingdom’s heartland on the Ararat plain. Certain Urartian citadels were reused with different degrees of modification, while others remained vacant. Even these formally neglected Urartian fortresses, however, became sites of commemoration. This phenomenon is examined in the third part of this study, which turns to funerary practices to suggest that the subjects of Hellenistic
Armenia, just as their rulers, engaged in a deliberate discourse with the lived spaces of the Urartian past.

Royal Recollections: The Stelae of Artaxias I (189-160BC)

It is by now commonly held in scholarship on identity politics that little of our social matrix is to be understood as fixed and immutable. Class, ethnicity, religion, status, and even gender are subject to change and choice. The manipulation of these vectors of identity resides ultimately in the hands of individuals, whose choices may or may not represent wider group identities. Elite individuals figure prominently in Classical and Near Eastern discourses. Colorful personalities are often well-known, thanks in part to their own loquacity. In the stelae of Artaxias I we see such a loquacious Near Eastern ruler whose proclamations reveal a number of identity choices, including ones that extended to his very lineage. The stelae discussed below tell the story of an individual king who used the seemingly lasting medium of carved stone, in an attempt to safeguard the memory of his declared identity. The significance of these stelae, which have yet to be systematically studied and published, should not be underestimated. They are the only substantial corpus of written artifacts from Hellenistic Armenia. The stelae are pragmatic monuments that exhibit a concerted effort on the part of a single individual to make an overt claim to territory and the right to demarcate it. The texts inscribed on them conveyed a message deemed important enough to be copied more than ten times and spread across a wide territory, in some cases providing the only material evidence for the presence of Artaxiad rule in regions that are as yet unexplored archaeologically.
The stelae have been found sporadically in Armenia since 1906, dispersed throughout the country, with the northernmost stele found at Spitak, the southernmost at Zangezur, and a cluster around Lake Sevan (fig. 1). Although their sizes vary, all of the stelae are roughly similar in shape—a rectangular stone, sometimes having a lug for a base, that widens towards the top and is crowned with three blunt crenellations (fig. 2), recalling a dentate crown-type form, which Root regards as an “incontrovertible hallmark of Achaemenid Persian iconography and formal resolution” (Root 1999, 164). The stelae are inscribed in Aramaic, the language of the Achaemenid Persian court, and the letter forms follow the tradition of the Achaemenid imperial office, although they point to a roughly second century BC date, consistent with Artaxias I’s regnal years, 189-160 BC (Tiratsian 1977, 255). The inscriptions on these stelae are nearly identical in content. Each contains two elements: the title of the king and a practical statement addressing the occasion of the inscriptions. For example, the inscription from Teghut reads:

In year ten of Artaxerxes, king, Yervandid, son of Zareh the Majestic, bearer of the crown, ally of Xšaθra [power?], Vanquisher of all who encourage/engender Evil, Artaxerxes, king, Yervandid, son of Zareh, divided the land between the villages.

(Perikhanian 1971, 170 [my translation from Perikhanian’s French translation])

Within this formulaic arrangement are notable nuances, for instance in the rendering of the king’s name. In the Sevan and Zangezur inscriptions his name occurs as “Artaxšasi”, which is the Persian word for the Greek
Artaxerxes (Tiratsian 1977, 256). In the Teghut inscription the scribe has used the Greek version, “Artaxerxes”, but still rendered with Aramaic characters. In the Spitak inscriptions, the scribe employed the Persian name, but with no final suffix—“Artaxšas”. This is the version that would come to be closest to the Armenian, Artashes (Tiratsian 1977, 256). In other words, in numerous contemporaneous inscriptions the identity of the king himself—in so far as nomenclature is a marker of identity—is given different emphasis.

Whether or not these stelae are the work of a single scribe, they are clearly the commission of a single individual. The otherwise strict conformity among the various stelae brings the variations in the rendering of the king’s name into even greater relief.

There are two possible interpretations of this variation, both equally significant in their implications for Artaxiad elite identity. The use of Greek and Persian names for the same king may have been a deliberate gesture on the part of Artaxias I to draw upon the multiple languages of the region. In this instance we can understand Artaxiad identity construction not as a consistent, elite-dictated mandate for Hellenization or Persianization but an undertaking marked by a degree of flexibility that might have been essential for anyone hoping to derive legitimacy in the heterogeneous cultural landscape of the Hellenistic Near East. If this interpretation pushes the evidence of a single name too far, an alternative analysis could read the use of Greek and Persian versions of the king’s name as nothing more than scribal error or the work of multiple scribes whose competencies in one or another language varied. In this case, we might suggest that “ethnic” identity, at least as far as language is concerned, was inconsequential. To Artaxias I, who presumably commissioned the stelae, whether his name was rendered in Greek or Persian was not as important as might be expected among observers.
today, who are accustomed to polarize Greek versus Persian identity as absolute and mutually exclusive qualities. The second interpretation appears somewhat more likely, but in either case the ultimate message is very much the same: even when set in stone, the identity of the king was not fixed.

Against this picture of deliberate mutability or linguistic indifference are a number of other factors that reveal the significance of these stelae as commemorative artifacts. The use of the Aramaic alphabet, deployed in the form of the Achaemenid imperial court, reflects, for example, a conscious choice on the part of the king and not the inevitable continuity of Achaemenid administrative practices. By the second century BC, Greek would have been another option for official correspondence. A set of roughly contemporary Greek rock-cut inscriptions from the important site of Armavir demonstrates that this language was already introduced into this region (Robert 1952, 184-185). Among these Greek inscriptions is a list of the months of the year, whose order corresponds to that of the official Seleucid calendar (Sherwin-White and Kuhrt 1993, 195). This and other references in Greek sources make it clear that the kings of Hellenistic Armenia were in diplomatic contact with the Macedonian powers to the west. In light of this, the choice to use Aramaic in the stelae constitutes an overt alignment with the Achaemenid past rather than the Seleucid present.

The feature of the stelae that best illuminates Artaxias I’s use of the past in projecting his own identity is the king’s title. There are numerous, if disparate indications, in addition to the testimony of Strabo mentioned earlier, that Artaxias I ushered a change in Armenian dynastic politics of the second century BC and was not a part of the preceding Yervandid dynastic line. In the Teghut inscription above, however, Artaxias I declares himself, first and foremost, a Yervandid. This claim to Yervandid descent appears on
every one of the Artaxiad stelae, including the many abbreviated inscriptions in which certain elements of Artaxias I’s titulature, such as “vanquisher of those who engender evil,” are eliminated. The indispensable assertion, “Artaxšasi, king, son of Zareh, Yervandid” (Perikhanian 1971, 172), is always retained.

Artaxias I, in marshaling the memory of the Yervandid dynasty, exemplifies the ways in which previous political constellations can offer a repertoire of associations—in this case replete both with notions of empire and sovereignty—that are suitable to the task of choreographing identity. In 1959, long before post-processualism paved the way for memory studies, G.A. Tiratsian interpreted Artaxias I’s deliberate affiliation with the Yervandid dynasts as an act of legitimation by association with Achaemenid grandeur. “To be a relative of the Yervandids,” Tiratsian wrote, “therefore meant to be a relative of the Achaemenids” (Tiratsian 1959, 90 [my translation]). Artaxias I’s declaration of putative Yervandid descent is a clear indication that the past was harnessed for the political capital it offered to the present.

Such declarations, however, only become capital when there is an audience to be persuaded. Yet it is improbable that Aramaic could be read by the greater part of the viewers who looked upon Artaxias I’s stele. The benefit to be gained by parading the apparently uncommon skill of writing across the Armenian plateau may have exceeded that obtained by adherence to the content of the inscriptions themselves. Nevertheless, given the pragmatic and secular content of the stelae, primarily focused on some form of land parceling, we can at least assume a cohort of Artaxiad-period elites for whom these inscriptions, with their references to the Yervandid Achaemenid past, were comprehensible and meaningful acts of commemoration.
Artaxias I was not the first to inscribe his identity across the Armenian plateau in this way, although his inspiration does not seem to have been the Achaemenid Yervandids, whose administrative language and political legacy he otherwise celebrated in these inscriptions. Archaeological research in Armenia has not revealed any inscriptions dating to the Achaemenid period, despite the widespread practice of rock-cut inscriptions outside the Armenian highlands in the Achaemenid heartland of Iran, suggesting that while the content of the texts call upon the Yervandid past, the form of the stelae do not. The concept of inscribing royal declarations on stone was first employed in the Armenian highlands by the Urartians, and nearly fifty stone inscriptions written in Urartian cuneiform have been found in modern Armenia (only a small fraction of the hundreds of Urartian inscriptions found in Turkey and northwestern Iran [Harutunian 2001]). Many of these inscriptions are found on building stones associated with fortresses; a prominent collection of such blocks was found at Armavir, and would have been plainly visible to the Hellenistic inhabitants of the site. Numerous other inscriptions, however, were also scattered across the landscape on cliffs across Armenia, at such sites as Abovian, Marmashen, Lchashen, Atamkhan, and Tsovinar (Harutunian 2001). These inscriptions would have been noticeable to later generations of antiquity just as they are today. More analogous still to the Artaxiad stelae is a set of Urartian stone stelae with cuneiform inscriptions. Most of these have been found in Turkey, although two examples from Armenia—one discovered on the Ararat plain at Zvartnots and the other in the south, near Sisian—offer convincing parallels to the Artaxiad examples. All of the Urartian stelae have worked, rounded crowns and some, like the Artaxiad versions, have lugs at their base (fig. 3). Artaxias I’s decision to deploy rock-cut Aramaic inscriptions on stelae throughout Armenia was, I...
suggest, modeled on the cuneiform rock-cut inscriptions that were found similarly dispersed across the Armenian landscape.

In content and in form, therefore, Artaxias I drew from both the Urartian and Yervandid past, materializing the resonances offered by these polities in the durable medium of stone. Neither he nor his commemorative act, however, was immune to later gestures of social forgetting. Another stele was recently found near the southern shore of Lake Sevan, tucked behind a wax-covered votive stand in an active shrine associated with a small cemetery (fig. 4). The artifact is unmistakably an Artaxiad stele, with its hallmark crenellated top and lugged base. The Aramaic inscription, however, has been entirely effaced, and in its place a cross has been carved in high relief, effectively converting the Artaxiad monument into an irregularly shaped Armenian khatchkar, or Christian cross stone. Artaxias I’s secular monument, which sought to memorialize both his own identity and the Yervandid past, was converted into one of the most common sacred symbols of modern Armenia, in effect subverting or annexing the memory of Armenia’s pre-Christian past. This stele is an instructive reminder of the relentless and shifting nature of the work of social memory.

**On the Summits of Urartu: Capital Cities in Hellenistic Armenia**

With the exception of the Artaxiad stelae, the durable imprint of Hellenistic Armenia’s discourse with the past is visible in physical space rather than in text. Elites of this period built their political centers on a landscape dotted with monumental architecture dating from as early as the Late Bronze Age. Yet they interacted with the first millennium constructions of Urartu, and in establishing new settlements on fertile plains, they continued a
pattern, begun by the Urartians several centuries before, of descending from the towering heights of Bronze Age mountain-top citadels (Smith 2003, 173).

The placement of political centers such as Armavir and Artashat in the last three centuries BC suggests that it was the built landscape of Urartu, rather than Achaemenid-era constructions, which preoccupied the commemorative energies of the political elites who governed the Armenian highlands at this time. Yet the silence of the historical record on the matter of Urartu would have us believe that this polity was all but forgotten after its collapse at the end of the seventh century. The Achaemenid Persians had some recollection of a place named Urartu in the region of Armenia, judging by the Bisitun inscription. This text, however, is the last historical reference to Urartu, and after the Urartian collapse most of the Urartian lands are bound to the Achaemenid Persian Empire, though how closely is not clear.

The built remains of Urartu, however, remained as potent reminders to subsequent elites that they were not the first to rise, nor would they be the last to fall. On the Ararat plain, Urartian citadels stood visible and in different conditions: one, a dilapidated heap of melted mudbrick with stone foundation courses (e.g. Teishebaini); others, respectable palatial complexes with still formidable defensive capabilities (e.g. Argishtihinili, Artashat, Erebuni, Oshakan) (fig. 1). Of these, at least two were reoccupied, to varying degrees, in the Achaemenid period (Erebuni, Oshakan). Urartu may have been forgotten by Armenia’s neighbors, whose scribes and authors are our only narrative sources on Armenia in the late first millennium BC. But for those living among the ruins of Urartu’s distinctive fortresses, it would be difficult not to acknowledge the legacy of a once cohesive and formidable power.
There is a striking and ironic distinction between Urartian and Hellenistic Armenian regard for the built past. The Urartians obliterated the memory of their forerunners by literally scraping and razing all preceding occupation levels at a given site before building directly on bedrock—“a technology of political memory and forgetting” (Smith 2003, 168). In contrast, Armenian elites of the late first millennium interacted with Urartu through a combination of rejection that was purposeful but non-destructive, and adoption that was either wholesale or adaptive. The configuration of Hellenistic capitals suggests a conscious effort on the part of late Yervandid and then Artaxiad elites to establish themselves as independent political entities, while at the same time drawing on the symbolic resources of Urartu and memorializing its built landscapes. Such careful calculations played themselves out most obviously on the Ararat plain, which appears to have been a central focus of settlement activity throughout the first millennium BC. Beyond this concentrated hub of power, however, in the northern periphery, different commemorative choices were at work in the last two centuries of the first millennium—choices that reflect a certain disregard for the Urartian past, in an area that was never imbued with the notions of political power and economic prosperity that long defined the Ararat plain.⁶

There are significant challenges that beset the study of post-Urartian settlement patterns in Armenia. Archaeological investigation has focused largely on the Ararat plain. With the exception of a few sites in the north and in the Sevan basin, relatively little is known about first millennium settlements beyond that west-central area of the modern Armenia. Even on the Ararat plain, despite considerable work conducted at such sites as Argishtihinili, Armavir, Erebuni, Oshakan, and Teishebaini, several sites are
as yet uninvestigated or unpublished. The recent excavations at Horom and Beniamin, and the recent survey and excavations on the Tsakahovit plain are beginning to fill the gap in knowledge of the north (Badalian et al. 1995; Smith et al 2004); however, the southern part of Armenia remains largely unexplored. This study focuses on the Ararat plain, both because it has benefited from decades of archaeological research, and because it was (and still is) a political heartland. Enough data are available on the Ararat plain to suggest that Hellenistic-period elites of Armenia organized their polities through a direct communication with the past and a regard for the political necessities of the present.

Rejecting Erebuni

Among these political necessities was the establishment of a new capital, a practice hardly uncommon among successive powers in the wider Near East, but apparently new to the Armenian highlands. Erebuni had effectively been a capital for over five hundred years, first as an Urartian political center beginning in the eighth century BC and then as a satrapal outpost within the Achaemenid Empire—probably the 18th satrapy. The site seems to have undergone significant changes in the Achaemenid period, with the expansion of columned halls that are thought to have been influenced by the more monumental models at Persepolis (Tiratsian 1960). Its identity as an Urartian fortress was substantially transformed and perhaps forgotten given the more recent associations with Achaemenid hegemony that had defined the site for over two centuries.

Erebuni was abandoned at some point after the collapse of the Achaemenid Empire, and while the precise date is as yet unknown, there does

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not seem to be a Hellenistic presence at the site (Felix Ter-Martirosov, personal communication). Both the late Yervandid and the Artaxiad elite thus dissociated themselves from a settlement that had served as a capital for over six hundred years. In establishing capitals elsewhere, they rejected the memory of a place that had long been an engine of political authority on the Ararat plain and beyond, and, it could be argued, effectively diminished the political legacy of the Achaemenid satrapy as a dependent extension of a foreign power.

From Argishtihinili to Armavir

The new capital at Argishtihinili, however, was not without its own resonances of former supremacy. Argishtihinili was founded in 776 BC by the Urartian king Argishti I. Situated in the western Ararat plain, 5 kilometers north of the modern course of the Araxes river, the settlement’s location catered to Argishti’s apparent ambition to situate his fortresses at all four corners of the plain. Argishtihinili became one of the largest Urartian complexes on the Armenian plateau, and for this reason it is often regarded a primary economic center in the Urartian period (Smith 2003, 175). The settlement’s life as an Urartian fortress came to an end in the late seventh or early sixth century due to incursions, perhaps by Scythians (Piotrovskii 1969, 199).

The site is made up of two complexes that consist of an extended ridge to the west, known as the Hill of David, and an adjacent basalt outcrop to the east, known as the Hill of Armavir. The western complex has undergone more thorough investigation (Martirosian 1974; Smith 2003), but it is on the eastern complex that a Hellenistic settlement was identified amidst the
Urartian constructions. The physical remains of the Hellenistic occupation are poorly preserved due to medieval intrusions, creating a difficult stratigraphic situation that has hampered archaeological interpretation for decades. Despite some lingering disagreement among scholars it appears that the post-Urartian occupation dated from the third through first centuries BC (Tiratsian 1988, 11). This corresponds with the account of the controversial early Armenian historian Moses Khorenats’i, who reports that Armavir became a capital of Armenia after the Achaemenid collapse. The veracity of his description is questionable given that almost a millennium probably separates Moses Khorenats’i from his subject. Nevertheless, it is archaeologically demonstrated that Armavir was a prominent Hellenistic center, with a probable elite residence at the summit of the hill and a lower settlement to the west of the fortress (Tiratsian 1979, 163). Given its appearance in Ptolemy’s Geographia (Ptol., Geog. V.12), Armavir must have been a reasonably sizeable and important settlement in the Hellenistic period. Imported pottery, otherwise rare in Armenia, also attests to the site’s significance as an early Hellenistic hub.

The Urartian structures of the Armavir citadel, including those which archaeologists identified as dwelling quarters, palatial structures, and temple buildings, were reused with little or no modification in the late first millennium (Tiratsian 1988: 82) (fig. 5). The Urartian fortification walls were also adopted, with only some minor restoration to the mud brick superstructures that rested above the semi-ashlar stone foundations, and the addition of a tower that restricted access to the main entrance (Tiratsian 1979, 164). The masonry technique observable in the construction of this tower and in some other modified walls, namely the use of swallow-tail clamps, is found elsewhere in Hellenistic Armenia and the wider Hellenistic
world, and helps to date these restorations to the post-Urartu era. The precise relationship between Hellenistic and Urartian constructions varies across the fortress, with the most substantial modifications in the western area, where domestic spaces predominated (Tiratian 1988; Kanetsyan 1998); however, the architectural plans detailing the configuration of the Hellenistic levels in this area are complicated by the poor state of preservation (fig. 6).

What is important for our purposes is the nearly wholesale adoption of the Urartian buildings and fortifications that effectively organized spatial relationships at this site in the Hellenistic period and that served as constant reminders of Armavir’s connection with the distant past. The choice to reconstruct walls and build towers in a technique that differed from Urartian methods and instead drew on new and imported masonry styles with Mediterranean associations, while operating in a largely undisturbed Urartian settlement, reveals the mix of past and present associations that shaped Hellenistic Armavir. The late Yervandid kings of the fourth century abandoned Erebuni to dissociate themselves from the satrapal connotations of that place. They reached further back into the past to capitalize on the unprecedented potency of a clearly old and dominant presence, just as they asserted their new identity as an independent polity.

Artashat (Greek Artaxata)

Hannibal the Carthaginian, after Antiochus had been conquered by the Romans, left him and went to Artaxas the Armenian... Observing that a section of the country which had the greatest natural advantages and attractions was lying idle and neglected, he drew
up a plan for a city there...whereupon a very great and beautiful city arose there, which was named after the king, and proclaimed the capital of Armenia. (Plut. Luc., 31)

The natural advantages to which Plutarch refers are those discussed several decades earlier by his probable source, Strabo—namely the Araxes River and the broad, fertile Ararat plain that stretches out in all direction from the site of Artashat. While his description of the place as “idle” and “neglected” recalls the sort of hyperbole that precedes many Urartian declarations of fortress building in Armenia (see Smith 2003, 163-165), it is in fact archaeologically demonstrable that Artashat had been idle for some time, not having been occupied in the Achaemenid period. In their descriptions, however, both Plutarch and Strabo omit an important, additional advantage of this place. On the highest of the twelve hills that make up the site was an Urartian fortress with the distinctive buttressed walls that are the hallmark of Urartian fortifications (fig. 7). Like Armavir before it, this second capital city of Hellenistic Armenia, founded at the time of the installation of a new dynastic family in the early second century BC, was grafted atop the Urartian citadel that had been abandoned for over four hundred years. It should be pointed out that Artashat would have offered an attractive settlement location regardless of its past associations, with its conglomeration of adjacent twelve hills rising from the flat fertile plain, and well-watered by the Araxes river. Nevertheless, Hellenistic elites, in their movements and settlement choices, were also responding to the tenor of resilient and enduring authority that Urartian spaces project.

However, in contrast to Armavir and, indeed, to all the Urartian fortresses that came before, the Hellenistic settlement at Artashat was
unprecedented in form and scale. Its identity as the capital of Armenia persisted far longer than had Armavir’s. With the exception of a brief capital-building project at Tigranokerta (in modern southeastern Turkey) during the reign of Tigranes the Great in the first century BC, Artashat remained the capital until the foundation in the fourth century of the settlement that would grow to become the medieval city of Dvin. The city of Artashat was large and imposing, and while the hill that supports the Urartian fortress is the largest of the twelve, it is consumed by the broader design of the site, which is demarcated by an embracing wall of fortification. Although the entire site has been elaborately mapped, only two of the twelve hills have been excavated completely: hill 1, which seems to have been a military barrack and outpost; and hill 8, which consists of domestic quarters. Four hills were destroyed by intensive blasting for marble quarrying in the Soviet period, and the remaining hills have been investigated only partially or not at all. Unfortunately, the second hill (where the Urartian citadel stood) has received little attention to date, which prohibits the kind of close comparison of Urartian and later constructions that is possible, to some degree, at Armavir. It appears that some parts of the Urartian fortress were repaired or modified, particularly its defensive walls, “according to old Urartian methods of fortification, which by that time were obsolete” (Tonikian 1992, 173). These walls were incorporated into the general defensive system of the Hellenistic settlement.

In many respects, Artashat appears to represent a departure from the Urartian past. Some have compared the city of Artashat with notable Hellenistic cities of Asia Minor such as Pergamon and Priene, in terms of how the city plan, stretching over twelve hills, accommodates the natural setting with manmade spaces—a common feature of Hellenistic urban planning. This
sense of departure from the Urartian past is also shaped by the personality of Tigranes II (95-56 BC), the great-grandson of Artaxias I who was renowned in ancient literary sources for his philhellenism, during whose reign Armenia would be brought into close contact with Rome. Under Tigranes II and his successors, Artashat would be a place where coins were minted for the first time (in recognizably Greco-Roman forms), relations with Rome were managed, and plays of Euripides allegedly performed. Nevertheless, the physical and metaphorical constructions of Urartu provided a springboard for the Hellenistic capital, and Urartian traditions can be traced in the layout of the forts of the citadel that persisted for as long as the city was in use (Tiratsian 1979: 174). The manner of appropriation of the Urartian fortress exhibited at Artashat contrasts with the wholesale adoption evidenced at Armavir. The spatial and architectural relationships that may one day be discovered on hill 2 will further clarify our understanding of the correlation between the Urartian occupation and the Hellenistic city.

Houses of the Dead: Remembering Urartu through Funerary Practice

Mortuary landscapes are fertile ground for the glorification of the past, as numerous studies that have probed the ritual veneration of ancestors and have shown (Jonker 1995; Kuijt 1996; Barrett 1988; Morris 1988; Bradley 2002). For the communities living on the Ararat plain in the final three centuries BC, funerary landscapes were indeed primary venues for the veneration of the past. The objects of commemoration, intriguingly, were not the deceased ancestors themselves but the living spaces they once inhabited. At different points on the Ararat plain, burials dating from the third through first centuries BC have been
found embedded within the ruins of three Urartian settlements. In each of these cases, the primary complexes of the Urartian fortresses were left vacant. These monumental constructions served as commanding backdrops as attention instead turned to the ordinary living quarters associated with those citadels, which (with one exception) had not been inhabited since the Urartian collapse in the late seventh century BC. In two of these cases (Teishebaini and Oshakan), the settlements associated with the Hellenistic cemeteries have not yet been located, but it is clear that the Urartian spaces where the burials were placed were not themselves occupied in the Hellenistic period and instead were utilized solely as settings for funerary ritual.

Across the Ararat plain, Hellenistic-era mortuary rituals were played out in the living spaces of the Urartian past, in some cases, as at Teishebaini, with such careful attention to the original configuration of these spaces that individual rooms each accommodated only one burial. Once lived landscapes were converted into cemeteries through a process that preserved the integrity of the past and injected its quotidian landscapes with the connotations of mortuary space. The Urartian settlements became liminal zones, where the transformation from life to death was exercised in funerary ritual just as it was represented in physical space.

As discussed above, the Hill of Armavir was re-inhabited in the late fourth century BC and became an important political center until the founding of a new capital at Artashat in the early second century BC. Excavations at
Argishtihinili proper, however, where the main complex of the Urartian fortress stood, did not reveal reoccupation levels dating to the late first millennium BC. Nevertheless, Hellenistic interactions with Urartian Argishtihinili did extend to the western boundaries of the site.

In the residential blocks and detached houses of the Urartian fortress, A. Martirosian uncovered a series of burials contemporary with the post-Urartian occupation at Armavir (fig. 8) (Martirosian 1974: 55-58). The forms of the burials correspond to those found at other Hellenistic cemeteries in Armenia. In room #4 of the residential complex called House #2, for example, one jar burial and one stone-lined burial—both similar in form and arrangement to securely dated Hellenistic burials at Teishebaini—were nestled within the Urartian stratum. The latter burial was also dated by the distinctive post-Urartian pottery buried with the deceased. Two more burials were found in room #2 of House #3, belonging to the same residential complex. One was another stone-lined grave located in the same stratigraphic level as that in House #2, this one lacking pottery but containing a few items of bronze jewelry. The other was a pit burial with ceramics. Six or seven more stone-lined burials were identified within Urartian levels in the central residential quarter at Argishtihinili. Some of these were covered with hardened clay formed from the destroyed mudbrick walls of the Urartian buildings.

The total number of identified burials at this site is limited (around ten, although the site report is unclear on precise numbers), leading Martirosian to suggest that only a small group of families may be buried in the Urartian town. It bears mentioning, however, that only a fraction of the domestic spaces at Argishtihinili have been fully excavated. The poorly-preserved burials are modest, with few grave goods. For the non-elite
families who buried their deceased within this abandoned Urartian town, the domestic spaces of Argishti’s fortress provided a meaningful and appropriate setting despite several centuries of abandonment and dereliction, suggesting his vacant fortress was imbued with particular associations in the late first millennium. Whether or not those associations related to its Urartian identity, they were sufficiently commanding to attract not only the late Yervandid elites, who saw in Armavir a new political center, but also families who regarded Argishtihinili’s residential surroundings—evocative as they must have been of the living past—a fitting place in which to commemorate their dead.

Oshakan

An identical phenomenon can be observed at the Urartian site of Oshakan, located in the northwest corner of the Ararat plain. The site is made up of an imposing hill on which the main fortress is situated, and a smaller, comparatively lower hill to the northeast, on whose north slope archaeologists S.A. Esaian and A.A. Kalantarian excavated a Hellenistic cemetery with over 40 burials (Esaian and Kalantarian 1988, 32). The burials were located amidst the ruins of a large, agglutinative living complex built in the eighth century BC and destroyed at the same time as Argishtihinili and Teishebaini, in the late seventh century BC. However, as at Erebuni, some form of activity continued at the site until the end of the fifth century BC.

Of these forty excavated burials, six were located outside the complex area. The remaining thirty-four burials were spread across twenty-one rooms of the 39-room complex, with most rooms containing more than one burial, and a particular concentration of burials in room XII (fig. 9). Most of the
burials were of the stone-box type covered with stone slabs, in which the body was lying on its left side—a burial form also seen at Argishtihinili and Teishebaini. In many of the stone boxes there were traces of burning attesting to graveside ceremonies. Some of the burials found within the Urartian rooms were cromlechs—a burial form consisting of a one or more stone circles, often with capstones in the center. This type of burial is very common in the Late Bronze Age/Early Iron Age, but highly unusual for the Hellenistic period. Finally, several jug burials were also discovered within the rooms of the site, and in one such burial (#38) the jug was placed within a stone box, which was itself covered with a cromlech; such combinations of burial forms are not uncommon at the Oshakan cemetery.

The ceramics from the inventory of the burials include several forms that are highly distinctive of post-Urartian pottery, in particular a set of painted flasks that can be securely dated to the third through first centuries BC (fig. 10). (Esaian and Kalantarian 1976, 31). Some of the burials were robbed, while about half of the unrobbed tombs had no inventory whatsoever. The remaining contained an evenly distributed collection of bronze, iron, and gold jewelry or paste beads, with the exception of a few burials (e.g. #11 and #36), which were disproportionately rich in jewelry. The design and method of manufacture of two bracelets from this corpus, when considered along with a blown glass flask, suggest that the cemetery was in use until the third century AD (Esaian and Kalantarian 1976, 39).

For over six hundred years, therefore, beginning in the Hellenistic period, the rooms of this domestic complex, which once served as the residence of an Urartian elite, became modest and fragmented contexts for mortuary activity—constricted and divided by the spatial organization of the Urartian constructions. Commemorating the dead at Oshakan, as at
Argishtihinili, became inextricably linked with the memorializing the lived spaces of past.

Teishebaini

Situated in the northeastern part of the Ararat plain, on the west bank of the Razdan river, Teishebaini was a large fortified complex built by the Urartians in the early seventh century BC. The fortress was destroyed, perhaps by northern Scythians, at the end of that same century. The ruins of Teishebaini are still visible today, as they would have been in the third century BC, when a community established a cemetery inside the abandoned Urartian settlement (fig. 11) (Vayman and Tiratsian 1974). The settlement is located at the foothills of the citadel, whose ruined mudbrick walls and standing stone foundations simultaneously signal the momentous rise and destructive collapse of Urartian authority on the Armenian plateau. No attempt was made to clear the site and rebuild. As at Oshakan and Argishtihinili, the Urartian fortress was left vacant, an untouched museum of a respected past with which it was deemed preferable to associate by proximity than to appropriate by occupation.

The cemetery comprises several unexceptional burials, only six of which are accompanied by funerary equipment. These assemblages suggest a third to second century BC date for the cemetery. Most of the burials consist of pentagonal or hexagonal stone enclosures, and the inventory from the graves, distributed fairly equally among them, includes beads, a silver seal-ring, iron spearheads, and some bronze jewelry similar to that found in the Oshakan cemetery. Unlike Oshakan, no two burials were placed in the same room;
however, as at Oshakan, funerary rituals are choreographed according to the spatial configuration of the Urartian town (fig. 12).

On the whole the Teishebaini cemetery signifies a local commitment to a place and its past. Yet while some characterizations of the Hellenistic world have gone rather far in portraying this period as one of unprecedented globalization in the wake of Alexander, the final three centuries BC do appear to have ushered in new opportunities for travel and contact between and within the eastern and western Mediterranean (Walbank 1992). One of the Teishebani burials speaks to this new atmosphere, and offers an important reminder that the past is not all that mattered to the past. Along with two bronze bracelets, in this burial a silver drachma of Alexander the Great, bearing on the obverse the distinctive bust of Heracles adorned in his lion skin and on the reverse an enthroned Zeus with scepter and eagle, was placed in the mouth of a deceased child as “Charon’s Fee” (fig. 13). This Greek burial practice of offering payment to the ferryman Charon for leading the soul of the deceased over the river Styx is mentioned by a number of Greek sources including Aristophanes, Strabo, and Lucian, and is first noted archaeologically in Athenian graves of the Hellenistic period. Contemporary with the Teishebaini burial is a fourth century burial at Olynthos, where the deceased—here too a child—was found with a bronze coin in its mouth (Kurtz and Boardman 1971). The Teishebaini burial is not the only instance of this practice on the Armenian plateau; other such burials have been found in eastern Turkey, and at the Armenian site of Garni, where yet another coin of Alexander the Great was buried with the deceased (Tiratsian 1976).

For the family of this child at Teishebaini, the memory of the Macedonian conqueror and the social changes introduced by his campaign across the east shaped funerary ritual behavior just as did the commanding Urartian
fortress at whose foot the child was buried. Allegiances to past and present, and commitments to local and global senses of belonging converge in this one burial and evoke the competing pressures and associations that continuously shape social memory in the past.

Conclusion

One expert on Urartu recently wrote that “military defeat in the late seventh century BC led to a political collapse so complete that even the memory of the Urartian empire virtually disappeared” (Smith 2003, 254). This study, which has tried to demonstrate the materially visible and multifaceted reuse of Urartian landscapes in Hellenistic Armenia, would seem at first glance to challenge Smith’s claim of wholesale forgetting.

What is at issue, however, in this seeming incongruity between the remembering and forgetting of Urartu is the distinction between form and content in the production of social memories. This contrast was explicitly presented in the discussion on the Artaxiad stelae, where the content of the inscriptions unambiguously pointed to an attachment to the Yervandid past, while the form of the stelae most probably was derived from the numerous, (though presumably incomprehensible), cuneiform Urartian stelae and stone inscriptions dispersed throughout Armenia. Similarly, the repeated occurrence of Urartian fortresses and settlements across the Ararat plain, distinctive and evocative both in their physical setting and technological achievement, unmistakably captured the attention of elites and non-elites in the Hellenistic period. It is the form of these reused and modified landscapes—the relationship between old and new constructions, settlement plans, and functional uses of space—that open them to interpretation as venues for the
commemoration of the past. It is doubtful, however, that the content or meaning of these spaces as specifically Urartian was retained among the communities who interacted within them in the last three centuries of the first millennium BC. In the commemoration of monuments, “there is a certain tension between the enduring character of these buildings” Bradley notes, “and the changing ways in which they were actually used” (Bradley 2003, 223). The meanings of places change over time, even if their forms remain the same. It is in this light that Smith’s proposition cannot be contested.

Social memories, however, are always selective, in response to the specific needs of the present, and transformative in the way they shape the meaning of the past, even in the most literate of communities and across the shortest of time-spans. The meanings of Urartu’s landscapes in the Hellenistic period of course differed substantially from what they may have been several centuries before. Whether such spaces were generative over time of mythologies or historical fictions, they were clearly nodal points for collective activities among different social groups across the Ararat plain in the Hellenistic period.

For the elite groups who established the capital cities of Armavir and Artashat amidst Urartian ruins, these ruins were eminently meaningful in ways we can only conjecture, perhaps as sites of a stable and long-term authority with the demonstrable ability to harness considerable human resources in support of itself. There would have been good reason to project an image of stability and authority in the final three centuries BC. In this period, Armenia came into contact and conflict with formidable and often militaristic powers such as the Seleucids, the Romans, and the Parthians. These powers interfered regularly in Armenian affairs. According to Strabo, Artaxias I was given the throne by the Seleucid king Antiochus III after the latter had
defeated the last Yervandid king and brought Armenia under direct satrapal control in 212 BC (Strabo 11.14.11). Antiochus III was defeated by Rome in 190 BC at the Battle of Magnesia, and it is at this time, Strabo tells us, that Artaxias I declared himself an independent king and established the new capital at Artashat. After the campaigns of Pompey, Armenia became a Roman protectorate and the country was often in the middle of Rome’s constant struggles with the Parthians. In the political fragile period immediately after Achaemenid collapse, and the aggressive milieu that was fostered by Roman interventions in the east, we can surmise the ideological capital that was gained, at home and abroad, from affiliating with the legacy of such an authority as Urartu.

The stelae of Artaxias I suggest that this king drew upon the remembered meanings of the recent Yervandid dynasty in establishing his own legitimacy; yet in abandoning Erebuni and returning to Urartian fortresses untouched in the Achaemenid period, Hellenistic Armenia’s elites also reached further back, memorializing the physical forms of a polity untainted by the memory of Achaemenid hegemony. With the content of Urartu—its hegemonic power on the Armenian plateau—now forgotten, elites could appropriate these landscapes and inscribe them with new meanings. The forms and contents of the Urartian and Yervandid pasts could be merged to produce a new political identity that drew differently, yet equally powerfully, from both antecedents.

This elite proclivity towards Urartian fortress sites took place in dialogue with subject responses towards the Urartian past. The demands and motivations behind the establishment of cemeteries in the once lived Urartian spaces of Argishtihinili, Oshakan, and Teishebaini are less easily inferred. Many of the burials, especially at Oshakan, were composed from the worked
stones of the Urartian rooms, suggesting a functional explanation for this practice; however, this was not always the case. When we consider the numerous jar burials and the graves whose stone slabs were not taken from the Urartian constructions, an alternative explanation based on a collective attachment to the past becomes more compelling.

Van Dyke and Alcock have pointed out that while “in archaeological contexts it is easiest to see the top-down machinations of elite groups using memory to [create and support a sense of individual and communal identity], memory is also employed in the service of resistance” (Van Dyke and Alcock 2003, 3). The notion of legitimacy inherently assumes an audience before whom a case must be made, which means alternative constructions can never be too far off. It is notable that all of the Hellenistic cemeteries are located near fortresses that were not re-inhabited as Hellenistic power centers. Through these cemeteries subject communities appropriated their own Urartian landscapes, whose commanding citadels were otherwise neglected. Although not necessarily a statement of resistance in any formal sense, the Urartian towns used as Hellenistic cemeteries do mark distinct loci for commemoration, existing apart from the instruments of the polity.

Across the Ararat plain, and across social boundaries, at least two different conversations with the past operated simultaneously, although in different ways and in separate spaces. As elites and non-elites interacted with different parts of the built past, their commemorative acts converged around a common attachment to the unforgettable landscapes of Urartu.

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I am grateful to the organizer of this volume, Norman Yoffee, for the excellent seminar out of which this essay emerged. Various units of the University of Michigan, including the Center for Russian and East European Studies, the Armenian Studies Program, the International Institute, and the Interdisciplinary Program in Classical Art and Archaeology, have provided financial support over the past two years for my research in Armenia. I would also like to thank Adam T. Smith and Ruben Badalian for inviting me to participate in their excavations, and Mkrditch Zardaryan for his continuing guidance. I greatly appreciate the comments offered on earlier drafts of this paper by Susan Alcock, John Cherry, Adam T. Smith, and Norman Yoffee.

Notes

1. The term “Hellenistic” is used here as a shorthand to denote the final three centuries of the first millennium BC. The assumption of wholesale hellenization that attends to the word “Hellenistic” makes this an unsuitable way to describe Armenia. Nevertheless, alternative designations, such as the “Yervandid” or “Artaxiad” periods are equally problematic, for reasons that will not be explained here. Archaeologists of Armenia are currently grappling with these terminological problems.

2. The “Armenian plateau” refers to the uplands of modern eastern Turkey and the Republic of Armenia. This study focuses on the eastern parts of the plateau, in modern-day Armenia, particularly on the Ararat plain, which is only one part of the larger Armenian highlands.

3. To illustrate this point, contrast case studies in Bradley 2002 with those in Alcock 2002.
4. Another indication that Artaxias I marks a new dynastic line is that, prior to him, every reference to the Yervandid kings of Armenia—whether in Greek or Aramaic sources—identifies them by the name (or title) Orontes/Yervand. This makes Artaxias’s name a point of departure. Also, the account of the early Armenian historian Moses Khorenats’i, though deeply controversial and problematic in many regards, records severe animosity between Artaxias and the last Yervandid king. Whether Khorenats’i is accurate or not, his testimony indicates that in the fifth century AD, the memory of this earlier period is one of discord, not continuity, between the Yervandids and Artaxias (Thomson 1978).

5. The Babylonian version of the Bisitun inscriptions mentions a place called Urartu, corresponding with Armenia in the Old Persian and Elamite versions of the same inscription (LeCoq 1997).

6. The enormous northern Urartian fortress of Horom, for instance, seems to have been entirely abandoned in the Hellenistic period.

7. Metzamor and Voskevaz are unpublished. Dovri and Artashat are largely uninvestigated. Aramus is currently undergoing excavation.

8. Two exploratory missions to southern Armenia were conducted in 2004 by Susan Alcock and John Cherry of the University of Michigan, in collaboration with Mkrditch Zardaryan and Armen Tonikian of the Armenian Institute for Archaeology and Ethnography. The developing survey project, tentatively called the Vorotan Project, promises to address this neglect of what appears to be an archaeologically rich region in southern Armenia.

9. There is much controversy concerning the date of Moses Khorenats’i’s History of the Armenians. See Thomson 1978.

10. Strabo says of Artashat: “The cities of Armenia are Artaxata, also called Artaxiasata, which was founded by Hannibal for Artaxias the king, and Arxata,
both of the Araxes River...Artaxata is near the Araxene plain, being a beautiful settlement and the royal residence of the country. It is situated on a peninsula-like elbow of land and its walls have the river as protection all round them, except at the isthmus, which is enclosed by a trench and a palisade.” (Str. 11.14.6)

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