The Ararat plain in the Early and Middle Iron Age

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The main aim of submitted thesis is to analyse and contextualise, into a broad socio-political and socio-economic scale, variabilities and changes observed in the material culture of the region between Early Iron Age and Middle Iron Age (second half of 12th- beginning of 6th century BC). In a historical framework the analysis encompass the time period between formation of local polities in the Ararat plain and incorporation of the region into the Urartian Empire.

The thesis is organised in two parts. The first, and most essential part consists of thirteen chapters, whereas the second part compose of two appendixes (namely A and B), having a form of a catalogue of archaeological sites from the region, and catalogue of the pottery from Early Iron Age and Middle Iron Age.

Following the introduction, next chapter overviews current state of research in reference to the studies on the Iron Age period in eastern Turkey and Armenia, as well as to the history of archaeological research in the Ararat plain. Chapter 3 specifies and explains the methodology used in the analysis, with special reference to two theoretical models adopted in the thesis, namely peer polity interaction and core-periphery. First model was intended to explain socio-political and socio-cultural changes during the period of formation of local polities in the region, during the Early Iron Age, while the second one was intended to specific relations between local and imperial society during the Middle Iron Age.

Chapter 4 features the geographical landscape of the area examined within the study. Chapter 5 describes the history of the region between the end of 9th and the end of 7th century BC, from a perspective of the Urartian epigraphic evidences. Chapter 6 focuses on the stratigraphy and chronology of eight Iron Age sites in the region: Metsamor, Dvin, Artashat, Karmir Blur, Armavir, Arin Berd, Oshakan and Aragats. The analysis leads to the correction of chronological sequence of the Early and Middle Iron Age in the Ararat plain and adjacent regions of Transcaucasia. Chapter 7 is dedicated to regional settlement pattern analysis. The first two sub-chapters (7.1 and 7.2) presents settlement types and discuss the issue of irrigation. Sub-chapter 7.3 identifies hypothetical political units from the Early Iron Age using XTENT procedure. Sub-chapter 7.4 in turn, examines changes in settlement pattern between Early Iron Age and Middle Iron Age.

Chapter 8 describes the household architecture and defines distinctive features between local and imperial style constructions. Chapter 9 is fully devoted to analysis of regional potting tradition from the Early and Middle Iron Age. It examines the evolution and changes in local pottery production (i.e. Lchashen-Metsamor pottery), as well as the impact of Urartian pottery in regional ceramic assemblage in the Middle Iron Age. Chapter 10 discuss bronze and iron production in the region, with special reference to organisation of metal production in Metsamor. Chapter 11 deals with the Iron Age burial practices in the region. It focuses on description of burial assemblages from both periods as well as analysis of changes between local and Urartian burial rites.

Two last chapters (12 and 13) are interpretative section of the thesis. The first one is devoted to reconstruction of regional society of the Early Iron Age, with reference to socio-political and socio-economic relation. The reconstruction based on data from settlement and burial contexts presented in chapters 7-11. Chapter 13 concentrates on reconstruction of regional society of the Middle Iron Age, with special emphasis on the role of imperial policy in changes of socio-cultural and socio-economic relations in the region during the domination of Urartian Empire. The work ends with final conclusion.