



The Erebuni settlement is located on Arin Berd, which is situated between Nor-Aresh and Vardashen districts in the south-eastern suburbs of Yerevan. It was constructed in 782 BC by one of the greatest kings of Urartu, Argishti the First (786-765 / 764 BC). According to the Khorkhoryan inscription, he resettled in Arin Berd 6,600 warriors from the countries of Khate and Tsupany, situated in the western part of the Armenian highlands. In the late 19th century, archeologist A. Ivanovsky took a basalt cuneiform inscription from P. Ter-Avetikyan in Nork. The inscription was interpreted and copied by M. Nikolsky. After some partial excavations by Ivanovsky, the hill remained unexplored for a long period. Regular excavations in Erebuni fortress began in 1950, led by K. Hovhannisyan. The discovery of cuneiform inscriptions in the first year led to the conclusion that this fortress was constructed by Argishti the First and named Erebuni (Erbuni). There are differing opinions about the origin of the name of Erebuni in professional literature. According to some, Erebuni means “victory” or “capture”, while others think that it means city of “free people”.



The area around the fortress was partially surrounded with high walls. On the monolith, stonemasons raised huge smooth stone blocks. The socle, which is 2 metres high, is topped with an 8 metre high wall made of mud bricks supported by 5 metre high counterforts every 8 metres. The entrance to the fortress was placed on the southern slope of the hill and was protected with high towers, which led to the square via stairs. The square divided the territory of the fortress into three parts: religious, royal (palace) and economic. The religious part is situated on the south-western side of the square. The temple of the supreme god Khaldi of Van is situated within the tower building with pillared halls. The latter was composed of 12 wooden columns on stone anchors. The walls were decorated with rich wall paintings. There is some uncertainty about the shape of the “zigurat” tower building. It is possible that it consisted of several storeys, where sacrifices and other ritual ceremonies were most probably held. It is also possible that the tower building was just a temple, and the pillared hall was a separate building.



The royal part was located north of the square. The central part consisted of a pillared yard, measuring 17x14 metres. The yard consisted of columns arranged in fives along its length, and in fours along its width. The hall of the palace measured 17 x 7.5 metres. The roof of the hall was smooth and had a wooden cover, while the walls were decorated with multi-coloured wall

paintings as well as carpets. It is supposed that carpets were hung using huge round nails, as some holes can now be seen clearly. The pillared hall took a special place. To enter there it was necessary to pass through a narrow and long hall from the pillared yard leading to this royal hall, with the walls and clay benches painted in white. Five consecutive rooms were close to the hall. A Susi temple, dedicated to the god Ivarsha / Iubsha, was on the western part of the palace building. Generally, Susi temples were dedicated to the Urartian supreme god Khaldi, and only in Erebuni and Chavushtepoh were these temples dedicated to the gods Ivarsha and Irmushiny. There are varying opinions about the god Ivarsha. According to one perspective, Ivarsha's worship had its origins in Asia Minor, while according to another; this had been one of the deities of the residents of Uaza, in the territory of Ararat valley.