



Erebuni Fortress also known as Arin Berd is a fortified city from the ancient kingdom of Urartu, located in what is present-day Yerevan, Armenia. It was one of several fortresses built along the northern Urartu border and was one of the most important political, economic and cultural centers of the vast kingdom. The name Yerevan itself is derived from Erebuni.

Erebuni was founded by King Argishti I (r. ca. 785–753 B.C.) in 782 B.C. It was built on top of a hill called Arin Berd overlooking the Arax! River Valley to serve as a military stronghold to protect the kingdom's northern borders.



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In the autumn of 1950, an archaeological expedition led by [Konstantine Hovhannisyan](#) discovered an inscription at Arin Berd dedicated to the city's founding which was carved during Argishti's reign. Two other identical inscriptions have been found at the citadel of Erebuni. The

inscription reads:

"By the greatness of the God [Khaldi](#) , Argishti, son of [Menua](#) , built this mighty stronghold and proclaimed it Erebuni for the glory of Biainili (Urartu) and to instill fear among the king's enemies. Argishti says: The land was a desert, before the great works I accomplished upon it. By the greatness of Khaldi, Argishti, son of Menua, is a mighty king, king of Biainili, and ruler of [Tushpa](#) .

Argishti left a similar inscription at the Urartian capital of Tushpa (current-day [Van](#) ) as well, stating that he brought 6,600 prisoners of war from Khate and Tsupani to populate his new city. Similar to other Urartian cities of the time, it was built on a triangular plan on top of a hill and ensconced by 10-12 meter high

[ramparts](#)

. Behind them, the buildings were separated by central and inner walls. The walls were built from a variety of materials, including basalt,

[tuff](#)

, wood and adobe.

Argishti constructed a grand palace here and excavations conducted in the area have revealed that other notable buildings included a colonnaded royal assembly hall, a temple dedicated to

[Khaldi](#)

, a citadel, where the garrison resided, living quarters, dormitories and storerooms.

The inner walls were richly and opulently decorated with murals and other wall paintings, displaying religious and secular scenes.

Successive Urartian kings made Erebuni their place of residence during their military campaigns against northern invaders and continued construction work to build up the fortress defences. Kings [Sarduri II](#) and [Rusa I](#) also utilized Erebuni as a staging site for new campaigns of conquest directed towards the north.

In the early sixth century the Urartian state, under constant foreign invasion, collapsed.

The region soon fell under the control of the [Achaemenian Empire](#) . The strategic position that Erebuni occupied did not diminish, however, becoming an important center of the

[satrapy](#)

of

[Armenia](#)

Despite numerous invasions by successive foreign powers, the city was never truly abandoned

and was continually inhabited over the following centuries, eventually branching out to become the city of Yerevan. Erebuni's close affinity to Yerevan was celebrated in a splendid festival held in September 1968, commemorating Erebuni's 2,750th birthday.