

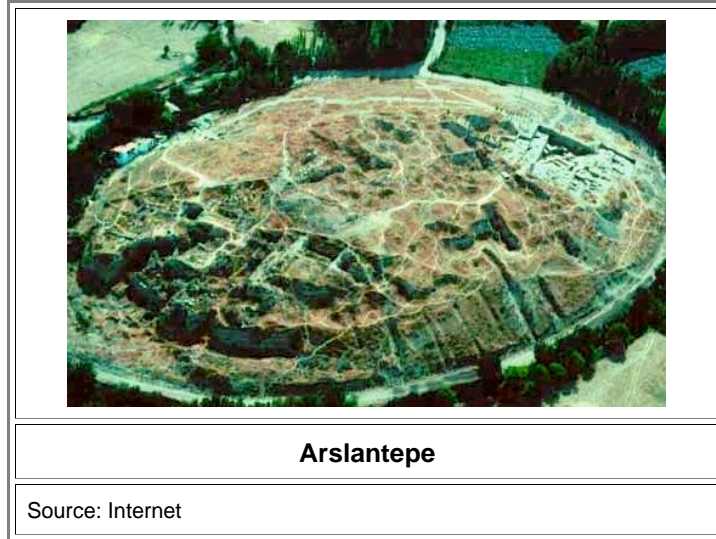
Arslan Tepe

Advanced

Arslantepe (near [Malatya](#)) is the modern name for the Hittite "Malidiya" or "Melid". Arslan or Aslan means lion, and Arslan Tepe thus means lion hill. The name probably relates to the monumental stone sculptures of lions produced while the city - after 1200 BC - became the center of the independent Luwian Neo-Hittite state of Melid. The Assyrian King [Sargon II](#) conquered and destroyed the city in 712 BC. Sargon was the guy who had control over plenty of iron and thus might have had the edge in warfare as far as weaponry was concerned.

The roots of Arslantepe go way back at least to the bronze age; it was fortified already in the third millennium BC.

- Arslantepe was a big place, the present-day tell is quite large:



- There is a lot of [Luwian](#) stuff around. When the Hittite empire was destroyed in the [Bronze age collapse](#) around 1200 BC, some of the displaced Hittites started new smaller kingdoms; one center was Arslantepe.

The Luwians are of no interest to us, however. Their remains, including their art, are even less impressive [than those of the Hittites proper](#); an example from **Karatepe**, another Luwian capital, can be [seen here](#). It is very similar to what turned up in Arslantepe.

What is of interest to us is that Arslantepe, like [Yumuktepe](#), had an early copper production and an especially interesting metallurgical "program" in 3400 BC - 3000 BC. That's the time span where the ["Le prime spade al mondo"](#) come from.

- It appears that the metal workers were experimenting with several kinds of alloys not often found elsewhere. They mixed, for example, copper not only with arsenic and tins (and I leave open how) but also with antimony, nickel and iron. They also had unusual copper - silver alloys and other stuff that still exercises the archaeometallurgists quite a bit.

The bronze weapons from the "palace hoard", including the famous swords, are remarkably uniform in their chemical composition. They consist of arsenical copper with a obviously well controlled arsenic (As) content around 4 % and pretty much nothing else. This brings us right back to the ["arsenical copper" puzzle](#): how was it made? Co-smelting or alloying? If alloying, where did the arsenic come from?

All things considered, it seems to be no accident that the very first swords were found in Arslantepe. We will, however, have to wait for some more digging and analyzing before we will really understand what was going on in Anatolia and its surroundings around 3500 BC and later, when metallurgy [finally took off](#).

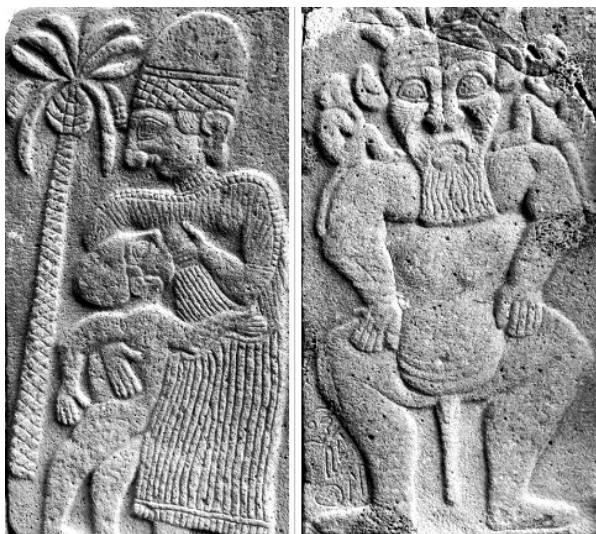
- Just to show that Hittite or Luwian art [wasn't so hot](#): here is the lion and some artwork showing King Pugnus-mili pouring a libation to the Storm God (or possibly Rumpelstiltskin). It just is not quite up with, for example, [this](#).



Arslantepe art and lion

Source: Internet

Just to prove that I kid you not: here are to more "art" pieces from Karatepe, another Luwian stronghold around 800 BC and not to far from present day Osmaniye. [Same technology](#) (stone, hammer, chisel) as [here](#) or [here](#) but somehow not quite the same.



Karatepe art

Source: Photographed in 2013