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CREATING A CULTURE

An analysis of the culture of the Kingdom of Bia / Urartu in its geographical and historical context

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I. Introduction

> "There is also something intriguing about the very improbability of Urartu as a political and cultural entity. It flourished at a time and place where everything seemed to militate against cultural coherence."[1]

1. Topic

The present dissertation is an in-depth, diachronic study of the culture of the Urartian Kingdom, a state that emerged on the Armenian Plateau between the 9th and the 7th centuries BCE. The temporal and spatial boundaries of this entity are still unclear, as is the conception of the state itself. In fact, a series of elements bearing characteristics, today interpreted as "Urartian", can be ascribed to it: this study precisely deals with the definition of these characteristics, which define Urartian culture with a certain precision. The elements considered here are relevant to the epigraphic and linguistic sphere, but above all to the sphere of art, understood as "visual communication", and they are generically labelled as "Urartian" but almost never investigated in studies exclusively dedicated. For example, the existence of an Assyrian influence on Urartian culture is widely accepted, to such an extent that Urartian studies have only recently been considered as an independent field, and not a sub-category of Assyriological research: however, this influence has never been fully analysed putting the two different cultures on an equal ground and trying to identify its origins. The connections between the Urartian state and the cultures of the Caucasus, of which it is the heir and continuation, have been far less studied. Other regions to be considered are north-western Iran, which was of particular significance to the Urartian dynasty, and Anatolia as a whole, from the Syro-Hittite Kingdom to Phrygia. With a precise methodological choice, it was decided not to focus this study on Urartian connections with regions such as Greece or Etruria: the analysis of materials considered Urartian within those cultural contexts, in fact, could be the subject of a further doctoral thesis.

[1] Zimansky 1998: 4.

The title of this dissertation, "Creating a Culture", refers to the operation of "invention of tradition"[2] carried out by Urartian rulers to legitimize themselves in the eyes of both their subjects and their enemies, suggesting an idea of state unity that could hardly be realized in a territory like the Armenian Highlands. This operation is analysed here extensively, highlighting its fundamental factors and locating its sources. Numerous issues related to Urartian history itself, from the dynastic sequence to the debated question of the origin of "Urartian" bronze cauldrons, are also discussed in this thesis, in an attempt to provide as complete a picture as possible of the problems that still characterise Urartian civilisation today. A final, necessary note concerns the chronological issues that have always been involved in Urartian studies, often more interested in providing exact temporal frameworks in which to structure the peculiarities of Urartian culture than in contextualizing them more broadly within the history of the ancient Near East. In this dissertation, the aim is not to provide a chronology of Urartian art objects, unless they are clearly accompanied by cuneiform inscriptions that identify the sovereign owner: the objective is rather to identify and explain the connections Urartu had with neighbouring territories during its existence.

2. Aims of the present work

The main aim of this work is an analysis of the contacts and the influences experienced by the Urartian Kingdom during its history. The starting assumption is that important or prolonged contacts between cultures influence at least one of the two: this kind of influence should be regarded as the product of the knowledge and the appreciation of the other culture, which may be considered as superior, or it can be an aspect deeply rooted in the territorial substratum. This purpose is pursued by examining Urartian history in two main ways: after an introduction on historical written sources, both Urartian and foreign, the analysis will be subdivided into philological and artistic issues regarding Urartian culture. The philology will be mainly focused on the analysis of the Urartian language from the point of view of loans and acquisitions of foreign formulae: as the connection of the Urartian language with the Hurrian one is well established in the terms of a common derivation, and it's not to be regarded as an influence or a contact, this topic will not be addressed in the present work. The contact languages which are discussed here are Akkadian and Hieroglyphic Luwian; these two languages also bring with them two different writing systems, cuneiform and hieroglyphic, both of which were in some ways assumed by Urartian scribes: also this topic is going to be discussed in the chapter dedicated to the philological analysis. Artistic issues are faced slightly differently: after an analysis of Urartian artistic materials found in the Near East[3] and a discussion on foreign objects found in Urartu, the purpose of the chapter is the identification of common motifs and objects, which will be analysed in order to understand how they are connected to foreign or local cultures; besides this, also the foreign objects in Urartu, the Urartian objects in foreign territories and the "hybrid" objects will contribute to the recognition of

[2] See Hobsbawm 1983.

[3] A great issue regarding Urartian art is the one concerning the finding of "Urartian" objects in Greece and Etruria: these materials are not extensively considered here, as the only way to prove their "Urartaicity" is a chemical analysis; they are, instead, included in some discussion on the origin of some specimens and they are sometimes mentioned as parallels for Urartian objects.

external contacts. All this work is aimed at leading to a comprehensive result regarding the contacts that the Urartian state had with foreign people, which will be discussed extensively in the conclusive chapter of the present dissertation: in some cases, what was initially regarded as a mere contact producing an influence, will be considered differently at the end of this work.

3. Geographical and chronological boundaries

The Kingdom of Urartu, despite its ambitious expansionist aims, was territorially configured as an "empire of the highlands"[4], developed on a mountainous territory where the average altitude was between 1300 and 1700 metres above sea level[5]. The borders of the state are difficult to define, except for the southern boundary, separating Urartu from Assyria, which is formed by the Eastern Taurus Mountains, a natural barrier between the Assyrian plains and the Anatolian Plateau. To the north, the Caucasus mountain range formed a further obstacle that made communication between Urartu and the peoples north of the mountains extremely difficult. The centre of Urartu can certainly be located on the shores of Lake Van, in present-day eastern Turkey, a body of water surrounded by mountains and volcanoes forming a sort of natural fortress. The valleys between the mountains on the north and east sides of the lake are ideal for intensive agricultural exploitation, implemented with the aid, from the Iron Age onwards, of advanced irrigation systems, which were later extended also to the Ararat plain and the Araxes valley. The territorial annexations carried out by Urartian rulers are characterised by a similarity with the environmental conditions in the centre of the Kingdom, which led to the emergence of a state entity formed by natural fortresses and intensively cultivated valleys: the Urartians gradually annexed to their territory the southern and western areas of Lake Urmia, the basin of Lake Sevan, only freshwater lake in Urartian territory, and the Murat Su valley, almost as far as the territory of Malatya. What is important to emphasise is how the conformation of the territory is ill-suited to an idea of internal unity of the Kingdom: this is demonstrated by the numerous military campaigns led by the sovereigns trying to re-annex territories lost due to the little control that could be directly exercised. The climate of the region is particularly harsh, with short, very hot summers and snowy winters that make the mountain passes impassable for much of the year. Rivers and mountain passes are the only links with surrounding areas: communication and contacts with other regions are therefore severely hampered by nature.

The chronological limits of the Urartian state are also subject to much debate: it is customary to start the narration of Urartian history around the 13th century BCE, with the first mentions of a territory called *Ur(u)aṭri* in the Assyrian texts from Shalmaneser I onwards. This is, however, rather arbitrary: it is not clear, in fact, whether this name referred to a real state formation, nor even whether it had any actual connection with the Urartian state properly said. It is only towards the middle of the 9th century BCE that one finds mention of a specific personage, Arame, explicitly connected with the state of Urartu, where its royal and fortified cities were located. Shortly afterwards, in the last quarter of the 9th century BCE, the first Urartian inscriptions appeared, as well as material culture characterised by traits that can

[4] Zimansky 1998: 4.
[5] Wartke 1993: 11.

be recognised as "Urartian"[6]. As a political entity, the Kingdom of Urartu thus seems to come into being towards the end of the 9th and apparently ceases to exist towards the end of the 7th century BCE, when the cultural phenomena traditionally associated with Urartian rule suddenly come to an end: among them, the cuneiform writing in Urartian language stands out in particular as a common thread that designates the emergence, flourishing, and ceasing of the Kingdom of Urartu. The complications created by the consideration that writing can mark the life of a political entity are numerous, but one is directly related to the temporal limitations of the Kingdom's existence, since it is not possible to establish its chronological limits with certainty through this medium. The Urartian state, in fact, could exist even without the need for written texts, as they have no particular use in the administrative sphere, and are mainly related to the very concept of kingship. It cannot be said whether the use of writing occurred only from a certain point in Urartian history, nor if writing survived as long as the Kingdom itself. All that can be said is that cuneiform writing, linked to the dynasty that ruled a territorial and political entity known today as the Kingdom of Urartu, lasted from the end of the 9th to the end of the 7th century BCE, and clearly marked as Urartian all the objects on which it was inscribed. The geographical concept of Urartu existed at least until the reign of the Persian ruler Darius I, between the 6th and 5th centuries BCE, when the name was used as a synonym for Armenia. However, our ability to interpret the fall of the Urartian state is closely dependent on our understanding of Urartian culture itself, which is still flawed today[7].

4. Problems and questions

4.1. Philological issues

The beginning of the history of Urartian philology can be placed around 1840, with the travels of Schultz, and many of its problems are still debated in the present day. There are five *corpora* of Urartian inscriptions published by now[8], with a total of about 600 epigraphs on stone and rock, and numerous inscriptions on bronze and clay: however, due to the repetitiveness of Urartian inscriptions, many of the terms and grammatical constructions remain of obscure meaning. Numerous attempts of systematisation of the Urartian language have resulted in several of Urartian grammars, such as the first ones, mainly in forms of journal articles, written by Friedrich[9] and Goetze[10], or the last ones[11], which try to collect and organise all the knowledge acquired about the Urartian language.

With this impressive amount of material, it seems that there is not much left to say about Urartian philology and language. On the contrary, as already pointed out, the standardization of the Urartian formulary proved to be both a great help and an enormous limitation to research: on the one hand, it

[6] Zimansky 1998: 7.
[7] Zimansky 1998: 8.
[8] Lehmann-Haupt 1928-1935; König 1955-1957; Melikišvili 1960; Arutjunjan 2001; Salvini 2008-2018.
[9] Friedrich 1931, 1932, 1933.
[10] Goetze 1930, 1935, 1936a, 1936b.
[11] Wilhelm 2004 and 2008; Salvini – Wegner 2014; Salvini 2018.

helped to translate recurring words in specific positions, on the other, it is still not possible to provide an interpretation of more complex passages that use an unknown vocabulary. The most easily translatable texts are war reports, as they tend to use an annalistic form with specific constructions, while very frequent *hapaxes* occur in texts with ritual and religious content, such as the extensive templar epigraph found at Ayanis[12]. Another issue of Urartian philology is the translation of clay tablets with cuneiform texts[13], whose style differs from that of stone inscriptions.

A problem, connected to the ones mentioned before, that, however, has not yet been widely discussed concerns the use of the Urartian language itself: it is not clear to what extent the population of the Urartian state understood and used the language employed by the royal court, or at least by the sovereign, in monumental inscriptions. This reflection arises mainly from the constant connection of the written documents with the Urartian sovereign, which appears to be confirmed at least until the clay tablets and seals are analysed: in those cases, however, the name of the sovereign is sporadically mentioned, and when it is, at least on clay tablets[14], it always appears to be Rusa, son of Argišti[15]. This fact has given rise to the hypothesis that it was this specific ruler who reformed the Urartian administrative system, with the introduction of documents written on clay tablets[16]. The natural consequence of this assumption is that, at that time, it was necessary to have a category of people in charge of the state administration who were able to read and write. In reality, although the innovations apparently brought to Urartu by Rusa, son of Argišti, are indeed conspicuous, it is important to point out that their absence earlier may be due to a gap in the documentation: the excavation of older citadels, or older levels of recent citadels, has not yet been carried out.

The hypothesis that at least until the 7th century BCE the king, or rather his scribal school, was the sole holder of writing knowledge leads to a further, fascinating reflection: the role of writing in Urartu must have been clearly different from that in the rest of the Near East. It alone could indicate the royal presence, so much so that the Urartian rulers did not embrace the Assyrian custom of using writing as a complement to carved bas-reliefs: in Urartu, the writing itself was in close association with the rulers, and as such must have made sense to the viewers, regardless of its connection to an iconographic apparatus. A consideration that might arise from this reasoning also concerns the real extent of the Urartian king's power: it is known that he had a large army, as described by Assyrian sources[17], and that he had to rely on the services of numerous skilled workers, given the numerous constructions and productions connected to him. But how much is known about his subjects? Were there peoples subjected to him who actually recognised him as their ruler? Or was the Urartian king's power limited to the capture and deportation of foreign peoples and their enlistment in the army or among the craftsmen working at court? The extent of the use of writing, apart from considerations of its connection with the Urartian king and the hypothetical aura of respect and veneration that it must have emanated, suggests that the people who could be defined as properly "Urartian" were only those who lived and worked in the royal palace.

[12] CTU A 12-1.
[13] See Salvini 2012: 121-170.
[14] The names often recurring on seals are always referred to the royal sphere, but it is not clear who are the characters mentioned on them.
[15] See the sections on "Royal seals".
[16] Bernbeck 2003-2004: 267.
[17] See RINAP 2: Sargon II 1, ll. 133-134, "I defeated countless (troops) of Ursâ (Rusâ), the Urarṭian. (and) captured two hundred and sixty members of his royal family (and) his cavalrymen."

4.2. Artistic issues

As Van Loon pointed out in 1966, in the preface to his book, *Urartian Art: its Distinctive Traits in the Light of New Excavations*, the western world's knowledge of Urartian art was not very accurate, resulting in a complex of heterogeneous elements that led to the attribution of artefacts without origin to Urartian workshops, forges of different characteristics and styles, which cannot be precisely framed[18]. Urartian production includes metal artefacts, mainly bronze, a few stone, ivory and clay sculptures, wall paintings, seals and ceramics, with a clear prevalence of metal objects over all the other categories which have made it possible to define the Urartian Kingdom as "a metalworking center"[19]: in the prevalence of metal objects lies, in particular, the uniqueness of Urartian art, which may look different from Mesopotamian art and closer to the Caucasian traditions that will continue, even after the fall of Urartu, with the experiences of the Scythian nomadic populations.

What is necessary to specify, in a study of Urartian art, is first of all the very definition of *art*: "The first problem facing archaeologists interested in studying the art of past societies is identifying their proper subject matter. What is art? The modern concept of art is a recent historical phenomenon. Only in the eighteenth century did the term acquire its modern specialized reference to the ''fine arts'' of painting, sculpture, architecture, music, and gardening - all characterized by technical skill, imagination, and aesthetic expression"[20]. The definition of "visual communication", then, appears to be appropriate in circumscribing the field of investigation effectively, since it is relatively simple to apply it in a trans-cultural sense and eliminates both the aesthetic criteria linked to modern cultures, on which the study of art history is grafted, and the questions of understanding the metaphors and symbols embedded in the studied art object. Therefore, art objects will be considered as those with the function of transmitting a message through a figurative decoration, composed of patterns, motifs and styles clearly recognizable and more or less certainly referable to the Urartian sphere.

As it will be seen later, inspirations for Urartian art was certainly the Mesopotamian, particularly Assyrian, and Anatolian artistic manifestations: however, sufficient emphasis should also be placed on local, Southern Caucasian art, which certainly played a leading role in defining the characteristics of Urartian art; the Caucasian substrate is certainly visible in the artefact "symbol" of popular art, the metal belts. Although the Urartian debt to Assyrian art has been widely studied, the emphasis placed on Southern Caucasian art has never been particularly accentuated, so much so that Van Loon, in his paragraph "Origins of Urartian Art", stated that "in Urartu south of the Araxes, no works of art have been found that might indicate the previous existence there of a culture alien to the Near East. Urartian art seems to have grown in an outlying, but not integral part of that larger cultural area of which Mesopotamia was the centre and the leader"[21]. If it is clear that many aspects of Urartian culture were inspired by Assyria, including the representations of animals and people in decorations, the vast use of figurative belts, the most attested material in the history of Urartian art, can only be a Caucasian heritage. The observation of the history of Urartian art, therefore, cannot be separated from a study of

[18] Van Loon 1966: VII.
[19] Merhav 1991.
[20] Corbey - Layton - Tanner 2004: 357.
[21] Van Loon 1966: 171-172.

pre-Urartian Southern Caucasian art, which mainly consists of an analysis of figurative and non-figurative metal belts, keeping the Mesopotamian inspired motifs aside for one moment. It should also be pointed out, for the record, that the exclusive study of Urartian art is a discipline of very recent origin, born in 1966 with Van Loon, and later represented by brief attempts of analysis done by scholars from various fields: from 1968 with Azarpay[22] and her first attempt to study Urartian art chronologically, for the most part, using materials from safe or at least reconstructible archaeological contexts, to the analysis of objects from Karmir-blur invariably provided in the numerous contributions by Piotrovskij[23]. During the Seventies, with the massive appearance on the antique market of objects without provenance, associated with more or less arbitrary criteria to the Urartian sphere[24], the histories of Urartian art started to make use of unprovenanced objects: exhibitions and catalogues were built thanks to them, almost with no references to the few objects with context and provenance, drawing inspiration and information from artefacts of dubious authenticity[25]. It has been rightly pointed out that, at present, it is not possible to write a history of Urartian art by ignoring or excluding materials from the antique market[26], which must, however, be explicitly marked as being unprovenanced, so that the readers or scholars can give them the due weight. Muscarella also highlighted the need to publish also materials of dubious provenance, for a question of completeness of data, only if the study is not explicitly focused on the contexts of discovery of the artefacts: since this study is based on the choice of analysing materials coming from context, the use objects without provenance, preserved in private collections and purchased on the antique market was considered not necessary nor useful. However, it is correct to stress that the use of these materials would not change the results of the present study in any way: the totality of the belts presented by Kellner[27], 449 examples of which only 33 found in safe contexts, for example, only confirms the important Caucasian role in Urartian art, as well as the numerous materials without context published in 2004 by Ursula Seidl[28], which are mostly in line with the features and types well attested by Urartian artefacts found in archaeological excavations. What unprovenanced artefacts cannot provide is a typological distribution of the materials, which helps the scholars in understanding first of all their diffusion, and then their use: most of the belts, for example, were found in tomb contexts, but some were also collected in small treasures buried under the floor of the houses or even in temples and fortresses[29]. The most suitable example, always connected to metal belts, comes from the Ayanis site[30], where, in a burial placed under the floor of a house, the skeleton of a young person in prepubertal age connected with a bronze belt decorated with rows of dots embossed in repoussé technique was found: since this type of burial is not linked in any way to the Urartian costumes, as they used to bury the deceased in cemeteries *extra moenia*, it is clear that it belonged to a member of a family of foreign origin, probably Caucasian, who had maintained their customs even once integrated into the Urartian population. This example clearly shows how a belt provided with a context of discovery can provide a huge amount of information, which an object of unknown origin is unable to explain.

[22] Azarpay 1968.
[23] For example, Piotrovskij 1962; Piotrovskij 1966; Piotrovskij 1967.
[24] See, for example, Muscarella 2000: 146-155.
[25] Muscarella 1984.
[26] Kroll *et alii* 2012: 8.
[27] Kellner 1991.
[28] Seidl 2004.
[29] See, for example, the hoarded goods found under the ground in the citadel of Kayalıdere, Burney 1966: 92 ff.
[30] Zimansky 2012a: 107-109.

Before a discussion on Urartian culture, it is necessary, again, to ask ourselves what is meant by the term "Urartian": if it is true that some of the objects found in excavations of sites within the kingdom of Urartu do not have an Urartian origin, the question "what is an Urartian object?" arises rather spontaneously. First of all, objects with an inscription, cuneiform or hieroglyphic, which can be traced back to the Urartian language, have been considered Urartian: in this, the volume IV of the *Corpus dei Testi Urartei* (CTU)[31], which contains every object (in metal or clay) on which an epigraph in Urartian language is engraved, has been of enormous and irreplaceable help. Starting from these objects, typical features, motifs and patterns have been extrapolated, then identified on objects found in Urartian sites that do not bear any inscriptions. Each pattern will be analysed subsequently and individually, in order to indicate a probable origin: this passage is configured as an analysis of the influences and contacts that Urartu had with the states, chiefdoms and proto-states close to them. The material that eschews this methodology is represented by the belts: as it will be seen, the decoration of the belts underlies a further passage that probably precedes the birth of the Urartian state and that will possibly influence its art in an explicit and evident way. A further distinction, inspired by Van Loon, is surely the one that separates royal art from popular art[32]: if helmets, quivers, shields and all the objects inscribed belong to the category of royal art, the belts are the key artefacts, if not the only ones, on which the definition of popular art is grafted.

An issue that is to be discussed before starting, again, is the one concerning the so-called Giyimli plaques[33]: hundreds of bronze plaques with figures in "Urartian, quasi-Urartian or in a crude, nondescriptive style"[34], appeared on the European antiquity market from 1971 and said to come from a clandestine excavation during the building works for a mosque in the village of Giyimli. The following excavation, led by the Turkish archaeologist Afif Erzen, returned many small oxidized bronze fragments and the remains of an ancient building, probably a temple, in which it is said that the villagers found the plaques: the building, and consequently the plaques, have been dated to the end of the Urartian era or even during the post-Urartian period, in the first half of the 6th century. BCE. The more "Urartian" plaques are decorated with the image of a seated god and a worshipper, which find parallels in some medallions or amulets discovered in Karmir-blur and Toprakkale[35], and they are probably cut out from bigger bronze sheets, probably quivers or belts. The questions arising from these finds are many, first of all: which ones among them are to be considered properly Urartian, and which are the criteria in doing so? Muscarella himself states that "All is reduced to subjectivity, even the acceptance – shared by me – that hundreds of the plaques on the market are probably genuine"[36], and that also the date issue is reduced to pure guessing, as it is not clear whether they are to be considered Urartian or post-Urartian. For these reasons, it has been decided not to include the Giyimli plaques in the analysis of Urartian bronzes, even if they may appear to be one of the most impressive examples of the "popular" art.

[31] Salvini 2012.
[32] Van Loon 1966: 166-169, where *Court Style* and *Popular Style* characters are defined.
[33] A good resumé on the issue is written by Muscarella 1981: 175.
[34] Muscarella 1981: 175.
[35] See the section on "Medallions".
[36] Muscarella 2000: 156.

5. Methodological approach

It is important to understand the principles guiding the study of cultural contact in the archaeological field. Despite the denomination of this study, one should remember that individuals, not cultures, interact with each other[37] in order to pursue their interests: in the case of Urartu, one should remember, as it will be better discussed later, that the material culture traditionally labelled as "Urartian" is a direct emission of the ruling class. Urartian artifactual remains are products of the élite, not of the population, and, for this reason, they are defined as a *State Assemblage*[38]. The coherence of Urartian culture is an illusion[39], if one considers Urartians as the whole society living in what was called the "Urartian State", while it appears to be an appropriate concept regarding the set of materials associated with the ruling class. For this reason, one should think about the Urartian culture as the archaeological culture exclusively linked with the élite, bearing specific characteristics and a great level of standardization; but other evidence, first of all, the bronze belts[40], speak in favour of the presence of a population who did not totally uniform to the high standardization imposed, or suggested, by the ruling class. This may suggest operating a distinction between an Urartian *royal* assemblage and an Urartian *popular* assemblage, where the term "Urartian" is to be intended in an exclusively geographic meaning: their boundaries and their definitions are extremely fluid, and they are not supposed to be considered on "hierarchical" levels, with the royal culture influencing the popular one, but on equal ones, with a constant exchange of information between each other.

These two interconnected assemblages, joining together to form the Urartian culture[41], should be contextualized in a broader discourse involving the other Near Eastern actors, as the basic units of stability and change are not individual cultures, but a whole network of interacting cultures[42]. This gives the chance to reflect on the traces left by the contacts between Urartian culture and other ones, such as the Assyrian, the Neo-Hittite, and the Phrygian ones, but also with other actors not having a specific ethnic definition[43], such as the peoples inhabiting the Southern Caucasian area. This issue raises the problem connected to the ethnicity of the Urartian people itself: as evidenced during the report on the formation of the state, and even more by the current situation in the Southern Caucasian territory, Urartu as a place inhabited by a single ethnic group would be a historical anomaly[44]. One should distinguish, therefore, among a ruling class, belonging to a specific ethnic group whose homeland is still not possible to locate precisely, and the members of the different populations living in the territory and bearing their uses and costumes. For this reason, it is not possible to associate the "Urartian" culture to a precise *éthnos*: one could instead focus on the ruling class, who consciously bore a very precise set of elements (language, material culture, religion) ideally aimed at holding the group of conquered populations

[37] Renfrew 1972: 19; Schortman – Urban 2015.
[38] Zimansky 1995.
[39] In any case, the geographical conformation of the Urartian territory would have made the spread of a single homogeneous culture impossible.
[40] Better analysed in the paragraphs devoted to them.
[41] The definition of "archaeological culture" is taken from Renfrew – Bahn 2020: 539, "A constantly recurring assemblage of artifacts assumed to be representative of a particular set of behavioral activities carried out at a particular time and place".
[42] Schortman – Urban 2015.
[43] On this topic, it is extremely interesting the discussion in Buccellati 2013.
[44] Zimansky 1995: 104.

together, and definable as ethnic markers[45]. The origin of these ethnic markers is a problem tightly linked to the Urartian homeland, but it can also be faced from the perspective of cultural contacts, studying the change within the context of contact situations involving different cultures. The current archaeological approach integrates lines of evidence from archaeology, ethnography, ethnohistory, linguistics, and biological anthropology[46]. From the Urartian point of view, one should however talk more of culture *creation* rather than of a cultural *change*, as one is not aware of the culture of origin belonging to the Urartian ruling class. Furthermore, Urartian rulers needed to create a complex of symbols with a double aim: firstly, to legitimize them to the eyes of the subjected populations; secondly, to appear as a dignified actor in the panorama of the ancient Near East. For these reasons, Urartian rulers created, almost *ex nihilo*, a royal assemblage assembling various elements connecting them to the indigenous background of the Southern Caucasus and the contemporary powers of the Near East. The result talks about a cultural enrichment that emerged from an intensive interaction of civilizations, expressed both in the Urartian language and in visual arts[47].

The biggest impulse to the creation of an Urartian culture was given by the Assyrian empire, the most eminent entity ruling a territory in the 1st millennium BCE in the Near East: Urartian rulers should have interpreted as prestigious many of the elements they derived from Assyria, but it is not sure whether they knew their meanings, or their history and traditions. It is clear, instead, that the use of Assyrian iconographies and literary *topoi* gave the Urartian rulers legitimacy and prestige[48]. But how many Assyrian motifs were imported by the Urartian rulers in creating their own culture and how many were already present in the future Urartian territory is still to be debated.

The methodology adopted in this work firstly establishes the use of different sources according to rigorous criteria: a re-analysis of the previous scientific literature must be done, starting from the different Urartian "Histories" or "Histories of Art" written since the 1960s. The primary sources for the study of Urartu are various and diversified by type and origin; most of the written documents come from the Assyrian archives, with the first mention of a predecessor of Urartu, purely geographical, contained in documents of the 13th century BCE and indicating the destination of some military campaigns northwards supported by the Assyrian sovereigns. From the time of Shalmaneser III, in addition to the detailed Annals, one can read the text carved on the Balawat Gates, three sets of decorated bronze bands that had adorned the main doors of several buildings at Balawat/Imgur-Enlil, which bear small cartouches to record the military events figuratively represented. With the growth of the Kingdom of Urartu, the Urartian written sources can be placed side by side with the Assyrian ones. A particularly prosperous period for Urartian mentions in Assyrian sources is the end of the 8th century BCE, during the military campaigns of Sargon II: in addition to the annals and the famous "Letter to the god Aššur", which recounts the Eighth Campaign of the Assyrian sovereign in Urartu, the research can also make use of the espionage records of the Assyrian governors engaged in controlling the enemy's moves in the north. On the whole, the Assyrian records help to frame the Kingdom of Urartu within the context in which it had a role[49]. The sources on the Urartian side are cuneiform inscriptions

[45] Buccellati – Kelly-Buccellati 2007: 146.
[46] Martinez 2001: 3035.
[47] Interesting essays on cultural contacts in the Ancient Near East are to be found in Aruz et al. 2013.
[48] See also Baltali 2007.
[49] Kroll *et alii* 2012: 6.

on stone, metal, and clay: clay tablets, in particular, are very rare[50], but they can help to shed light on the Urartian bureaucracy, distracting for a moment from the royal self-celebration that pervades the epigraphs on stone and metals. In addition to cuneiform writing, Urartians made use of "hieroglyphic" writing, found on pottery, seals, metal objects. However, this writing has not yet been deciphered, although attempts have been made[51]: scholars generally only agree on the origin of the hieroglyphic writing, related or at least inspired by the Hieroglyphic Luwian. The analysis of the written sources will be concluded with the study of the inscriptions in hieroglyphic Luwian and the quotations of the toponym Ararat in the Old Testament, which, although few, complete the picture of the ancient mentions of the Kingdom. All the epigraphic sources will be studied starting from the literature on the subject, from the *corpora* to the commentaries; they, both Urartian and external, will be used as a starting point to highlight the main historical nodes that occurred in Urartian history and the contacts that the Kingdom has woven during its history with neighbouring countries.

The scientific literature will also be analysed with regard to the excavation reports, inaugurated by those written by Piotrovskij from 1950: from these reports, one can extrapolate the objects considered important for the determination of the characteristics of Urartian art, with common or peculiar features, in order to study each object starting from its excavation context. A clarification is due regarding the choice of the materials analysed in the present work: it has been decided to consider only objects that could be defined as *artistic*, meaning a definition of *art* free from the concept of "fine arts" and focused rather on that of "visual communication"[52], excluding from the research plain weapons or everyday objects. Another excluded material is ceramics, as it is considered that pottery required a suitable amount of skills and time to write another complete doctoral thesis[53]. As Kroll *et alii* made clear, "generally speaking, the larger excavations have been most successful at revealing architectural plans"[54]. The objects have been found in large numbers, but the knowledge we have today of Urartian art is not comparable to that of architecture. One of the reasons for this knowledge gap, among others, is the enormous amount of artefacts without provenance[55] that come from the antique market and it is now exhibited in museums from Japan to the United States; clandestine excavations, which had their peak in the 1970s, although recently very few have not yet completely stopped. The use of objects from the antique market in the study of Urartian art is misleading[56]: not only they do not allow to observe art according to a spatial criterion, attributing the production of certain objects only to certain geographical

[50] In total, just over twenty tablets have been found in several Urartian sites: Toprakkale, Karmir-Blur, Çavuştepe, Yukarı Anzaf, Ayanis, Bastam.
[51] Salvini 1995c: 203-206; Zimansky 1998: 160; Movsisyan 2006: 55-149.
[52] Corbey – Layton - Tanner 2004: 359, "Archaeological art as a field of study is too varied and has too fuzzy boundaries to admit a precise definition, but here, nevertheless, is a tentative delineation and identification of some prominent features. It concerns intentionally produced, repeated objects or patterns, which may be more or less sacred or profane, private or public".
[53] A doctoral thesis on the ceramics of the Southern Caucasus in the Iron Age is being written by a colleague, Priscilla Vitolo, member of the Archaeological Mission to Southern Caucasus, with the title "Dalle terre di Etiu al regno di Bia/Urartu. L'analisi dei complessi vascolari dell'età del Ferro nel Caucaso meridionale"
[54] Kroll *et alii* 2012: 9.
[55] Kroll *et alii* 2012: 8, "To this day the greater portion of known Urartian works of art is without provenience, and yet no study of Urartian art can be written without reference to it".
[56] Muscarella 2013: 621, "Scholars attempting a cultural study of Urartian metal artifacts experience immediately several problems. First is acquiring the large number of publications spread over many venues. Then when investigated, one soon recognizes that the *majority* of the materials published has *no archaeological provenience*, rather they have a large number of museum, dealer and collector *provenances* in many nations. (…) Only a limited corpus of archaeologically documented data are available for meaningful study".

areas, but they also give an erroneous view of all artistic production. Counterfeit objects, of unknown provenance or recovered through clandestine excavations, cannot provide any significant detail for the reconstruction of the Urartian artistic panorama: however, given their nature as art objects, probably for the most part originally Urartian, they cannot be totally excluded from the research[57]. Such objects should in any case be handled with caution, as they do not carry any contextual information added to the material itself. The importance of the context is fundamental within scientific research since it allows the reconstruction of human activities carried out in a site: without the contextual information derived from excavations and the subsequent reports, the objects found could not communicate all the information they carry. The study of Urartian art has always suffered from an approach that aimed more at a framing of the expressive language than at an actual contextualization of the artistic product. When approaching the study of Urartian art, one must also give due consideration to the imbalance caused, on the one hand, to the short life of the kingdom - about two centuries (second half of the 9th - second half of the 7th century BCE) - to which corresponds, on the other hand, a detailed chronological scan, thanks to a more or less precise knowledge of the dynastic sequence of Urartian kings[58]. Nevertheless, the attempt often made of trying to identify a clear succession of productive phases inevitably clashes with the brevity of the Urartian historical path. For these reasons, while keeping in mind the examples of the antique market, it was decided here to use only art objects from safe or at least reconstructed contexts: as a matter of fact, the initial idea of considering only objects with a well-documented context of discovery collided with the evidence of archaeological documentation, rarely complete or well done. For all the Urartian royal objects, an attempt will be made to identify external influences and the origin of decorative motifs. Urartian art was already formed at the time of co-regency between Išpuini and Minua, between the 9th and 8th centuries BCE, less than thirty years after the alleged birth of the Kingdom: this presupposes a moment of formation and diffusion of a certain artistic ideology possibly before the birth of the Kingdom, which guarantees the cohesion of all the ethnic or tribal groups later included within the state[59].

The same cannot be said about the language: the only evidence of the Urartian language is provided by royal inscriptions, both on stone and on metal, while there is almost no private evidence if we exclude the few examples of clay tablets and bullae, in any case coming from environments connected to royalty. The linguistic analysis will focus on the identification of epithets, *formulae*, and terms borrowed or derived from the Assyrian sphere; since the link between the Urartian and Hurrian languages is evident and well-studied, no particular connection between the two will be highlighted, mainly because in this case it would not be a matter of influence or contacts, but rather of a common derivation. Urartian writing is, once again, the protagonist of a long-standing question: if on the one hand the cuneiform writing, clearly derived from the Assyrian environment, is the one used in the official sphere, in the royal inscriptions, on the other hand, many pages have been written in order to define and analyse the "hieroglyphic" writing, probably of Anatolian derivation. While some scholars have taken on an in-depth and interpretative study of hieroglyphic writing[60], others even question its existence[61]: it is not the intention here to try to resolve this *vexata quaestio*, but simply to present its crucial points and

[57] For an overview of the problem of those problematic objects, see Muscarella 1984.
[58] Or so we want to think: this problem will be discussed at the end of the chapter devoted to historical introduction and problems.
[59] See also the discussion in the introductory paragraph of the chapter on art.
[60] Movsisyan 2006: 55-149.
[61] Salvini 2012: 223.

fundamental documents, since this writing system is also an integral part of the culture of the Kingdom of Urartu, certainly derived from an external sphere.

6. History of Research

The history of the Kingdom of Urartu[62] clearly did not wish to be told: from the disappearance of this near-eastern principality, just before the half of the first millennium BCE, to the study of its remains, in the second half of the 20th century, it had managed to hide in the folds of the Assyrian historical narrative. At the beginning of the 19th century, before the archaeological explorations in the Mesopotamian territory, the text of the *History of Greater Armenia*, composed in the 5th century AD[63] by Moses Khorenats'i, suddenly became known: the book deals with the legend of the Armenian king Ara and the Assyrian queen Semiramis, wife of the sovereign Šamši-Adad V. This legend tells of the Assyrian queen's flight to Armenia after the death of her husband: Semiramis arrived in the mountainous area South of Greater Armenia, towards the region of Lake Van, where she commanded numerous hydraulic works to be carried out to build a new city. These descriptions, reported in the works of the geographer Carl Ritter and of the orientalist Antoine Jean Saint-Martin, were connected to the texts carved in stone around the citadel of Van, the first Urartian remains to look interesting to the scholars of the time.

In 1826, the French minister of foreign affairs, on behalf of the "Société Asiatique Française", commissioned the German scholar Friedrich E. Schulz, professor at the University of Giessen, to undertake a "literary journey"[64] through Turkey into the ancient kingdom of Persia, and to copy the royal inscriptions found there. During his journey, in July 1827, Schulz stopped at Van Kalesi, the citadel of the Urartian capital Tušpa, to study the epigraphs and the monuments in the light of the account reported by Moses Khorenats'i; there, he produced copies of numerous cuneiform inscriptions, which, to this day, are known to pertain to the Kingdom of Urartu[65]. In 1828, the scholar also succeeded in copying the text of the bilingual Kelishin diorite stele, named from the Kurdish *kel-i shin* "blue stone"[66]. The epigraphic mission of Schulz came to an untimely end at Julamerk in 1829, when he fell victim to a Kurdish brigand; forty-two of his copies, but not that of the diorite stele of Kelishin, reached Europe and were published posthumously in 1840[67], forming the basis of the studies of the early pioneers of cuneiform decipherment. After the first explorations carried on by Schulz, since 1842 the discoveries of the Assyrian palaces divert the archaeological attention from the remote area around Lake Van, which has only been accidentally studied: in 1850, Sir Austen Henry Layard took a brief holiday in Van after a research trip in Mesopotamia, and there he studied and copied again the ancient monuments and epigraphs, and he recognised as Assyrian an inscription placed at the foot of the rock

[62] The following summary is mainly based on: Barnett 1982a: 314-321; Wartke 1993: 12-34; Zimansky 1998: 286-290; Kroll *et alii* 2012: 2-5.
[63] Even if in Barnett 1982a: 314, it is said that the author lived probably during the 8th century AD.
[64] Barnett 1982a: 315.
[65] The scholar was able to prove that the descriptions of Moses of Koreas referred to the Urartian citadel of Tušpa.
[66] Wartke 1993: 12.
[67] Schulz 1840.

of Van Kalesi. He confirmed Rawlinson's observation that the "Vannic" script differed from the Mesopotamian cuneiform, spelling a different language. Nevertheless, it was the gradual deciphering of Assyrian cuneiform, in the 1850s, that made it possible the partial understanding of the Urartian inscriptions, given the use of a common cuneiform writing system: however, since there still was no copy of a bilingual document[68], the interpretation of the language was far away. The first deciphering took place in the 1870s, but it considered the language of the inscriptions around Van as a sort of proto-Armenian, or even as a Semitic language[69]. Only in 1882[70], Archibald Sayce succeeded in publishing a series of articles entitled "The Cuneiform Inscriptions in Van"[71], accompanied by a small corpus of texts[72], a grammatical sketch, and a list of signs and words: he couldn't manage to propose a classification of that language, which remained *sui generis*. Years after the first attempt accomplished by Schultz, a further try to copy the famous Kelishin stele was carried out by the German engineer Waldemar Belck in the late 1890s; besides the conditions of the text, no longer optimal due to numerous bullet holes, the copy was again made impossible by a Kurdish aggression on Belck, who fortunately managed to escape. The scholar decided to tempt the fates one last time in 1898, sent by the Prussian Academy and accompanied by Carl Friedrich Lehmann-Haupt: the couple of scholars, crossing Armenia to reach the area of Urmia and then returning to Van, managed to produce, between others, some hasty copies of the Kelishin inscription[73], which from that moment could be studied; a more precise and accurate copy, the basis for the future study of Warren C. Benedict[74], was made in 1951 by scholars from the University of Michigan. In 1891, Belck became known into the academic sphere, as he started to copy several Urartian inscriptions, including the Kesis Göl one, which were published in 1892 as part of an account of his travels[75] with Lehmann(-Haupt)[76], who supplied the inscriptions with a philological commentary. Little more was done before World War I, except for the master study of Sargon's Eighth Campaign carried out by François Thureau-Dangin and published in 1912[77], which contributed to the knowledge of Urartian geography. Ten years after World War I, in 1928, Lehmann-Haupt began the publication of the *Corpus Inscriptionum Chaldicarum*, completed in 1935. In 1933, Johannes Friedrich published the first modern Urartian grammar sketch[78], after the notes in 1882 Sayce's texts edition, and he established, together with Ephraim A. Speiser[79], a relation between the Urartian and the Hurrian language. It was necessary, for Urartian philology, to wait almost twenty years for the Russian scholar Georg Melikišvili to publish a series of articles dedicated to the cuneiform inscriptions, *Urartskie klinoobraznye nadpisi* (UKN), in 1953; in the 1960s, this series of articles was

[68] In 1838, Henry Creswicke Rawlinson also tried to copy the text of Kelishin's stele, without success; Wartke 1993: 12.
[69] Barnett 1982a: 315: "Rawlinson, hinting at an Iranian tongue, proposed that the script be called 'Medo-Assyrian'. Lenormant (1871) tried Georgian; Mordtmann (1872) tried Armenian; Robert (1876) proposed a Semitic language". All the works cited by Barnett can be found in the bibliography.
[70] One year before, the Fifth Congress of Archaeology in Tiflis proclaimed the importance of Urartian research; Barnett: 1982a: 316.
[71] Sayce 1882.
[72] Which was composed of the 58 texts known at the time.
[73] Basis for the future analysis done by Goetze 1930.
[74] Benedict 1961.
[75] Belck – Lehmann-Haupt 1892.
[76] Important accounts of his travels were published by Lehmann-Haupt as well; see Lehmann-Haupt 1906, and Lehmann-Haupt 1910. He firstly baptized the Urartian people as "Haldians" or "Chaldians" after the name of their main god, Ḫaldi.
[77] Thureau-Dangin 1912.
[78] Friedrich 1933.
[79] Speiser 1941: 10.

collected in a single volume with the same title, with two additional articles published in 1971, raising the number of known Urartian texts to 370. Between 1955 and 1957, Friedrich König devoted himself to a German translation and commentary of Urartian inscriptions in the *Handbuch der chaldischen Inschriften* (HchI). Several attempts were made in the 1960s and 1970s to sketch an Urartian grammar: worth mentioning is the research of the Russian scholar Igor Diakonoff[80], known to have studied in the 1950s the Assyrian and Babylonian references to Urartu, who precisely identified the relation between Urartian and Hurrian, concluding that Urartian wasn't a Hurrian dialect but a separate language derived from a common parent. A second form of writing typical of the Urartian area was meanwhile identified and defined as hieroglyphic, but it cannot yet be read[81]. A new corpus of Urartian inscriptions, in Russian, was published in 2001 by Nikolai Arutjunjan, organized according to the same approach as that of Melikišvili and entitled *Korpus urartskich klinoobraznych nadpisej*; a few years later, in 2008, began the publication of the most current *Corpus dei Testi Urartei* (CTU) by Mirjo Salvini: the work, divided into five volumes, was published over eleven years, with the last section, dedicated to corrections, dictionary and a grammar sketch, edited in 2019.

Urartian archaeology was born a little later than its philology; Urartian archaeological research remained neglected for its first century of study, as it didn't bring back to light the marvelous evidence discovered in Mesopotamia; as Paul Zimansky pointed out, "Until the Second World War, archaeology played a secondary, if not ignominious, role in the recovery of the Urartian past. Even by the standards of the 19th century, the record is a case study of archaeological malpractice"[82]. The first archaeological finds related to the Kingdom of Urartu appeared in the 1870s in the area around Lake Van: some of the bronze objects offered for sale on the antique market by local discoverers were purchased by the British Museum, which later sent Hormuzd Rassam to conduct archaeological investigations in the area. The excavations were located on a mound in the northeastern outskirts of the city of Van, in the area now known as Toprakkale, as the Van citadel was not yet accessible to Europeans, having been occupied and reused as a fortress in Ottoman times. Rassam, worried about the poor results of his excavations in Mesopotamian, passed the baton in 1880 to Dr. Raynolds, an American missionary, and the British vice-consul in Van, Captain Clayton. Despite the discovery of some inscribed bronze shields, the mission was abandoned within a few months due to Dr. Raynolds' illness[83]: the results of the excavations were not published before seventy years[84], and the site continued to be looted and plundered for over twenty years[85]. A Muscovite expedition, held by the Assyriologist M.V. Nikolsky and by the

[80] One should mention, as examples, Diakonoff 1963; Diakonoff 1971; Diakonoff – Starostin 1986.
[81] See, for example, Klein 1974.
[82] Zimansky 1998: 287.
[83] The interruption of the excavations is also due to the lack of funds of the British Museum: archaeologists did not recognize the mudbrick masonry and dig inside it, not finding any precious objects (Wartke 1993: 23); Rassam, "who possessed a great knowledge of the country but little scholarly feeling" (Barnett 1982a: 317), labeled Toprakkale as a site of little interest, where only a provincial version of Assyrian culture was to be found.
[84] Even in 1950, Barnett could claim that the material from Toprakkale was the only reliable source of Urartian art: "The material from Toprak Kale is our only real source of information reliable illustration of the art of ancient Urartu. There are several other objects from other places in various collections which can be recognised Urartian to-day, but if so it is thanks to comparison with the material from Toprak Kale" (Barnett 1950: 37).
[85] In this way the so-called "Throne of Toprakkale" was dismembered, and to this day it is scattered into various museums around the world, without a clear perception of original and counterfeit pieces. An Armenian citizen of the city of Van describes the discovery of the throne as follows: "Dir mir gehörenden antiken Sachen sind in der Ruinen der Festung Zimzim Magara, die eher ein Palast oder ein großer Tempel ist, entdeckt worden… Ehemals wurde in den genannten Ruinen eine Menge herrlicher Gegenstände entdeckt, zum Beispiel ein Thron von unglaublicher Größe; er war vergoldet und ganz mit Keilschriftzeichen bedeckt (…). Ich kann mich von meiner

archaeologist A.A. Ivanovsky, conducted an excavation at Taşburun, on the northern slope of Mount Ararat, in 1893, looking for more Urartian inscriptions: even if the number of inscriptions didn't raise, they found there the Urartian fortress named *Minuaḫinili*. The couple composed by Belck and Lehmann-Haupt, during their epigraphic adventures in 1898, continued the excavations of Toprakkale, managing to recognize a temple dedicated to the god Ḫaldi in the building previously excavated by the British Museum; even if they made some important finds, they didn't draw a plan of the site. Between 1898 and 1899 a total of eight excavations were carried out, without, however, the discovery of royal palaces or archives: the finds could not be studied stratigraphically, as the excavation methods were still inadequate. Despite their inability to carry out scientific work, Belck and Lehmann-Haupt must be considered the pioneers of archaeological excavation in Urartu, with the merit of letting the materials be accessible through their publications: Lehmann-Haupt was also the first to recognize and formulate the relative independence of Urartian art from Assyrian art, beginning to set the study of Urartu free from being a sub-discipline of Assyriology. Two Russian archaeological expeditions, in 1912 and 1916, followed these first attempts to reconstruct Urartian history: if there is no evidence of the first, from the second[86] is known the discovery of the stele containing the Annals of Sarduri II inside a niche in the northern wall of Van Kalesi; the first translation of this inscription was provided by the Georgian scholar Mikheil von Tseretheli a few years later[87]. Another Russian archaeological mission was led by an engineer named Petrov, who worked in a small Urartian cemetery on the northern slope of Mount Ararat, at Igdyr[88]; on the European side, the first English account on Urartian history and archaeology was published by the aged Archibald Sayce in 1925[89]. After World War I, due to the Russian revolution and to the Turkish resurgence with Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, the access to the province of Van, on the Turkish side[90], was very difficult for anyone, so travels or investigations in the region were suspended for thirty years. The newly allowed excavations in the area were launched, between 1938 and 1939, by what is called "perhaps the most depressing failure to establish an archaeology of Urartu"[91]: the very well sponsored[92] American mission to Van Kalesi led by the biblical scholars Kirsopp and Silva Lake; most of the finds and documentation ended up at the bottom of the Atlantic Ocean when the SS *Athenia* was sunk during World War II, but the surviving material was published in 1952 and 1977 inside other works[93]. 1939 also interrupted another new archaeological mission to Armenia[94], directed by the future

Kindheit her erinnern, welch große Anzahl verschiedener Figuren man in diesen Ruinen entdeckt hat; da man sie aber für das verfluchte Werk des Satans oder der Dshins hielt, zerschlug man sie mit dem Hammer und stellte daraus Bronzegefäße oder Spaten und Pflugschare her." (Wartke 1993: 25).

[86] Directed by the Armenian orientalist and future director of the Hermitage Museum I.A. Orbeli and by the eccentric Georgian linguist N.J. Marr.

[87] Von Tseretheli 1928.

[88] Petrov 1917.

[89] Sayce 1925.

[90] On the Armenian side, several scholars kept investigating Urartian remains: in 1930-1932, the Academy of the History of Material Culture sent the architect T. Toramanyan to record the cyclopean fortresses on the slopes of Mt. Aragats and the shores of Lake Sevan. In 1934 the Hermitage Museum sent B.B. Piotrovskij to Tsovinar, on the southern shore of Lake Sevan, to investigate the slope where several inscriptions of king Rusa I were found. These surveys were aimed to find a suitable place for a long-term excavation, which resulted in the choice of the site of Karmir-Blur. An account of the Armenian research was published for the first time in French by Adontz in 1946 (Barnett 1982a: 318-319).

[91] Zimansky 1998: 288.

[92] It was sponsored by: Brown University, the Semitic Museum of Harvard University, the University Museum Pennsylvania, the Deutsches Archäologisches Institut Istanbul, and the Sackler Library in Oxford University.

[93] Van der Osten 1952; Korfmann 1977.

[94] Sponsored by the Hermitage Museum and the Armenian Committee for the Preservation of Ancient Monuments.

director of the Hermitage Museum, Boris B. Piotrovskij, and aimed at investigating the Karmir-Blur site[95], an area of about 40 hectares on the south-western outskirts of Yerevan. Only after the Second World War, they resumed excavations of this site, "an archaeologist's dream"[96], inaugurating the second phase of research on the Kingdom of Urartu. For the first time in Urartian research, the finds found were systematically published by the director of the mission[97], who also compiled numerous summaries of Urartian archaeology, both for a specialist audience and for a bigger distribution[98]. Another Urartian capital, Erebuni, located in the north-eastern suburbs of Yerevan, was excavated in 1950 thanks to the work of another Russian mission led by Konstantine Hovhannisian[99]; the archaeological discoveries coincided with the publication, by Richard D. Barnett[100] and Gerhard A. Mayer[101], of some of the materials from Toprakkale found in 1880 by Rassam: Barnett also managed to publish in English several materials found from Russian excavations[102], thus making Urartian archaeology accessible to the Western world. Another important Urartian city, *Argištiḫinili* (today known as Armavir and Davti-Blur), was excavated in 1964[103]. Surveys of Urartian sites in eastern Turkey were accomplished by Charles Burney, future archaeologist of the Urartian site of Kayalidere[104], who published a complete summary of his missions in 1957 and 1960[105]; also at the end of the 1950s, the site of Toprakkale was the destination of a Turkish archaeological mission, as were many other Urartian citadels including Altıntepe, Çavuştepe, Adilcevaz, Aznavurtepe/Patnos and, since 1974, Van Kalesi. The 1960s were important years for Urartian art, due to the publication of the first western accounts on it, one in 1966 and one in 1968[106]: they followed the lead of 1962 Piotrovskij's *Iskusstvo Urartu: 8 - 6 vv. do n. ė*, later translated into English[107]. In 1968 began the Urartian archaeological exploration in the northern areas of modern Iran: Wolfram Kleiss and Stephan Kroll began excavating the city of Bastam[108], ancient *Rusa=i*-URU.TUR, while Charles Burney worked on the site of Haftavan Tepe[109], an ancient centre with stratigraphy also bearing witness of Urartian occupation[110]. Kleiss, director of the German Archaeological Institute of Tehran, in his research program focused on Urartu, also devoted himself to extensive surveys throughout the northwestern area of Iran, together with Stephan Kroll, Paolo Emilio Pecorella, and Mirjo Salvini, identifying and reporting more than one

[95] Known by the fragment of an inscription.
[96] Zimansky 1998: 288.
[97] See in the bibliography the three volumes of the Karmir-Blur excavations published by Piotrovskij himself and a fourth volume published by Hovhannisyan in 1955.
[98] Notable works translated in English are mentioned in the bibliography; see, for example, Piotrovskij 1967; Piotrovskij 1969.
[99] Sponsored first by the Armenian SSR and the Hermitage Museum, then by the Pushkin Museum of Moscow. The two missions of Karmir-Blur and Erebuni have shown uninterrupted historical continuity in the area: when the city of Erebuni was abandoned in the 7th century BCE, the inhabitants moved to Karmir-Blur, which fell in the last third of the 6th century BCE; after the fall of Urartu, the citadel of Erebuni managed to survive without any destruction.
[100] Barnett 1950; Barnett 1954; Barnett 1972.
[101] Meyer 1955; Meyer 1967.
[102] Barnett – Watson 1952; Barnett 1959.
[103] Martirosjan 1974.
[104] Whose investigation he worked on in 1966 with Seton Lloyd (Burney 1966).
[105] Burney 1957; Burney– Lawson 1960.
[106] Van Loon 1966; Azarpay 1968.
[107] Piotrovskij 1967.
[108] See, for example, the final volumes published by Kleiss 1979, and Kleiss 1988.
[109] See, for example, the summary articles published by Burney.
[110] Another important centre in the area is Hasanlu, excavated by R. Dyson, which yielded an Urartian level dated to the late 9th century BCE.

hundred Urartian sites. From 1989, instead, international cooperation began in Ayanis, resulting in the publication of, unfortunately, only one volume, in 2001[111]; in 1991, instead, were held the excavations of the fortress of Anzaf, where the famous shield with a representation of the Urartian army led by the gods against the enemy's troops was found[112]. 2004 saw the master publication of Urartian bronze artifacts, edited by Ursula Seidl[113]; a very recently published volume concerning Urartian art, structured as a catalogue, has been produced by a team of Hungarian researchers led by Tamás Dezsö[114]. In recent years, Urartian archaeological research in Armenia has intensified, thanks to the cooperation between European and local missions: it is enough to mention the joint project of the "Institut für Alte Geschichte und Altorientalistik" of the University of Innsbruck and the "Department of History" of the University of Yerevan for the investigation in the site of Aramus, in the Kotayk region, which began in 2003, and again the "Archaeological Mission to South Caucasus", cooperation between ISMEO (Institute for the Study of the Mediterranean and the East) and Yerevan University, which began in 2018 with excavations and surveys in the two Armenian regions of Kotayk and Vayots-Dzor. ISMEO is also working for the first time on the identification of Urartian remains in Georgia, with the "Samtskhe-Javakheti Project", in collaboration with AAG, operative since 2017 with surveys.

An important note on the conditions of Urartian archaeology concerns in particular the presence in the field of studies of several objects without provenance coming from the antiquarian market: the peak of this phenomenon occurred in particular in the Seventies, but it has not yet ceased. In addition to this phenomenon, there is also the great neglect of the majority of Urartian sites, which prevents an excavation or scientific examination of the stratigraphy and material. Both problems will be addressed extensively in the course of the work.

7. Terminology and definitions

7.1. What can be defined as "Urartian"?

Compared to the questions highlighted by Alina Ayvazian at the beginning of her doctoral thesis on Urartian glyptic, the issues that trigger research on the Kingdom of Urartu have not changed much in the last fifteen years: "Who were the Urartians, and whose traditions should we consider 'traditional' for them? Were these traditions Hittite and Hurrian, or Assyrian and Babylonian, or indeed north-west Iranian, where the cult of Ḫaldi may have originated? Whose influences were most prominent in Urartu, and why? How important was the 'local element', and how many 'local elements' were there?"[115]. Some of these questions will not be answered, at least in the short term. The main purpose of this thesis is, however, trying to offer answers at least to the last two questions raised by the scholar, concerning

[111] Çilingiroğlu – Salvini 2001.
[112] Belli 1991.
[113] Seidl 2004.
[114] Dezsö et alii 2021.
[115] Ayvazian 2006: 1.

external and internal influences in the Urartu state, from a historical, philological and artistic point of view.

The first question that needs to be asked in order to concretely analyse the situation is: "who were the Urartians?". Even this question does not have a simple and immediate answer. First of all, *Urarṭu* is a name given by the Assyrian sovereigns, initially to indicate an essentially geographical entity, probably located in the area of Lake Van, which alternated with another geographical entity, *Nairi*, in the control of present-day eastern Turkey, probably as far as the Armenian Plateau[116]. What emerges, around the half of the 9th century BCE, is the name of the first person concretely associated with one of these two entities, ^{m}a-ra-me KUR ú-ra-ar-ta-a-a, "Arame, from the country of Urartu" [117]: he is associated with the city of Arzaškun, called URU MAN-ti-šú sá ^{m}ar-ra-me KUR ú-ra-ar-ta-a-a, "royal city of Arame from the country of Urartu". It does not seem to be unreasonable to call Arame the first known ruler of Urartu, mentioned in the texts of Shalmaneser III; Arame, however, has left no "Urartian" evidence, therefore at the moment he remains no more than a literary character, known exclusively from Assyrian sources and without any connection with the future royal Urartian dynasty. The toponym itself, *Urartu*, is never mentioned in Urartian texts appeared from the times of king Išpuini[118], in which the toponym *Bia* is preferred, often in the expression KUR *bia=i=na=ue*, "the territory of the (inhabitants) of Bia". It is not clear whether this can be defined as an ethnonym or a toponym, nor which were the lands belonging to Bia, nor how the inhabitants of these lands were defined; actually, also in the bilingual inscriptions[119], to the toponym *Bia* doesn't correspond the Assyrian toponym *Urarṭu*. In the text of the Kelišin stelae, in fact, one can find the formula MAN KUR.bi-ʳa-i-naˡ-[ú-e][120] translated in Assyrian as [MAN KUR].ʳ*na*ˡ-*i*-*ri*[121], while the bilingual stelae of Rusa, son of Sarduri, translate the toponym ^{KUR}bi-a-i-ni-li[122] with the Sumerogram ^{KUR}TILLA[123], whose basic meaning is that of "street"[124]. For that, it may not even be sure that the same Urartians, indeed, were aware to be "Urartians" in the Assyrian vocabulary, as the name "Urartu" is never attested in their inscriptions, not even the bilinguals.

The limitation attributed to the meaning of the term "Urartian" is complex: ethnic issues coming into play here are difficult, if not impossible, to resolve, at least with the data currently available. It seems certain that there was a hypothetically continuous dynastic line that, at least from Sarduri, son of Lutipri, defined itself as sovereign of the lands to Nairi or Bia: it is not clear to what extent the populations of the lands of Bia can be compared to the dynasty of the sovereigns, on an ethnic and cultural level. It is not known, for example, whether the language spoken in the lands of Bia was the one that has come down to us through Urartian cuneiform epigraphs, nor is it known how the art associated with the royal dynasty was received, nor whether it was familiar to the people. In terms of ceramics, for example, there is an incredibly high production of local Iron Age ceramics compared to the well-known red glossy

[116] See the chapter on the historical view of Urartu from an Assyrian perspective.
[117] RIMA 2, A.0.102.1.
[118] At the end of the 9th century BCE.
[119] The Kelišin stele (CTU A 3-11) and the bilingual stele of Rusa, son of Sarduri, preserved in three copies found in Movana (CTU A 10-3), Mergeh Karvan (CTU A 10-4) and Topzawa (CTU A 10-5), all in the surroundings of the Urmia Lake.
[120] CTU A 3-11, Vo., l. 3.
[121] CTU A 3-11, Ro., l. 3.
[122] CTU A 10-5, Vo., l. 29'
[123] CTU A 10-5, Ro., l. 26'.
[124] Based on the correspondence with the mention of ^{KUR}bia=i=ni=li in the Urartian version, Salvini translates it with "il paese di Urarṭu" and gives no further explanation for this translation in his Urartian dictionary (Salvini 2018: 452).

ceramics known as Bia[125], showing that Urartian penetration into the local cultural substrata was minimal. This raises the question of whether the Urartian contribution to the local culture, on an artistic and linguistic level, was basically nil, and that the presence of the Urartian dynasty must therefore be considered almost with certainty as being based on local substrata with well-established traditions that were unwilling to accept the "innovations" brought by the "new" Urartian rulers. It is, therefore, necessary to make a distinction at the terminological level: if *Urartu* is to be considered as a purely topographical term, without ethnic connotations, being synonymous with Nairi[126], when we speak of *Urartian* we are instead referring to a specific dynastic line that for a certain period ruled these lands, whose ethnicity is still unknown, who spoke a language related to Hurrian and expressed themselves using an art almost entirely derived from Assyria. On the other hand, the term *Urartian* should not be considered the ethnonym referring to the people who inhabited the lands of Nairi: firstly, because the very term used in the epigraphs, *Bia=i=ni=li*, refers to *different* populations living in the territories of Bia; secondly, because the Urartian inscriptions always refer to battles against small rulers of other lands included in the territories of the Urartian Kingdom, demonstrating that the population of the Kingdom wasn't unified

Urartians, therefore, appear to be a dynasty, hypothetically coming from the territory that the Assyrians called KUR ū-ra-ar-ti, which, at a certain point in the prehistory of the Southern Caucasus, takes over all other tribal groups in the area. The first thing to discuss is if the actual origin of what the Assyrians called "Urartians" is the region of Lake Van, an area identified by the Assyrians as Urartu[127]. A first doubt arises when one tries to analyse the main deity of the Urartian pantheon, Ḫaldi: this god, mentioned in texts dated to the Middle-Assyrian period as a theophoric element in some personal names[128], seems to have been mainly worshipped in the city of Muṣaṣir / Ardini, a site not yet exactly located, but whose reasonable location may be placed between the northern Zagros mountains and the lake of Urmia[129]. In the city of Muṣaṣir, moreover, some rituals connected to the Urartian royalty seem to have taken place: "the crown prince of Urartu was appointed or at least confirmed as the future king under Haldi's auspices in Musasir, and they and their top officials routinely visited the Haldi temple, apparently following a certain schedule"[130], not to mention that the Urartian name for the city, *Ardini*, seems to derive from the Hurrian **arte-ni*, "the City" [131], a toponym that leaves little room for interpretation. It may be conceivable, therefore, that the Urartian royal dynasty came from the area of northern Iran, and moved to the area of Lake Van for reasons that are not yet clear: it is not otherwise

[125] A doctoral thesis on Iron Age ceramics is being written in these years by Priscilla Vitolo, who also discusses the problems of Bia pottery. An emblematic example underlining the scarcity of Bia pottery in the excavations regards the well-known site of Ayanis, where only 18% of the total ceramic finds was constituted by the red glossy Bia pottery.
[126] For a discussion on Nairi, see the section devoted to the first Assyrian mentions of the territory in Middle-Assyrian inscriptions.
[127] A parallel passage in two texts of Ashurnasirpal II (RIMA 2, A.0.101.2, l. 13, and A.0.101.3, l. 38) states that the Assyrians conquered the territory "from the source of the River Subnat to the land Urartu" in the first case, and "from the source of the River Subnat to the source of the Tigris" in the second: it is, therefore, reasonable to locate the territory of Urartu in eastern Turkey.
[128] Zimansky 2012: 714; Radner 2011: 246.
[129] Radner 2012: 245-253.
[130] Radner 2012: 253.
[131] Salvini 1993-1997: 445.

explained by the strong connection with a non-local deity, nor by the interest in feeling legitimized as sovereigns in the temple of Muṣaṣir / Ardini[132].

The Assyrian denomination "Urartu" possibly referred exclusively to the territory around Lake Van, without ethnic or tribal connections with any population: once arrived in that territory, probably after migration, to the original population of the northern Zagros was given the name of "Urartians" from the Assyrian enemies. Whether or not we hypothesize an "external" origin of the royal dynasty and, hypothetically, of a tribe connected to it, it is clear that Urartians are nothing but the élite members of the Kingdom, and that their traditions cannot be indicative of all the populations of the Urartian area, but they indeed identify a small ethnic group: the history of the studies, however, classified as "Urartian" all the materials that come from the area of the Urartian state, from eastern Turkey to the Armenian Plateau, and also many of the materials without provenance bearing some resemblance, true or supposed, with the idea of what must be Urartian. What is not adequately emphasized is that the definition of "Urartian" is purely conventional: it reflects only what was perceived as such by the Assyrians, with a perspective that today may easily be called "colonialist". The rulers themselves defined themselves instead MAN KUR.bi-a-i-na-ú-[e], "king of the territory of those (the inhabitants) of Bia", whereas Bia has no parallels or roots in other languages. The next step is to recognize the diversity within the territory that we will call, for a convention, "Urartian": provided that the definition should apply exclusively to objects attributable to the royal dynasty since the kings are the only ones who left objects inscribed with epigraphs in the Urartian language, it is therefore necessary to resize the number of materials defined as "Urartians" in the course of the history of studies. A substantial difference is formulated in the course of this study between Urartian *royal* art, namely the one witnessed by the inscribed objects emanated from the court itself, and "Urartian" *popular* art[133], or popular art of the Urartian area, which belongs to the local populations, conquered by the kings and the Urartian army during the period of control of the different regions. That these two different fields overlap is almost inevitable: just think of a much broader and more studied parallel topic, Roman art, which with the expansion of the empire has distinguished itself in courtly and provincial art. On the other hand, when one does not want, or cannot, conform populations and conquered territories, the flowering of contamination and syncretism is inevitable. As Ayvazian correctly pointed out[134], there was not one single local element: there were as many elements as the populations incorporated into the Kingdom of Urartu, who continued their artistic production locally, influencing and being influenced by royal art. One should think for a moment about the geographical situation of the Urartian territory, consisting mainly of impassable mountains, passes and rare plains, with very rigid winters in which snow prevented any movement from one area to another, and military campaigns promoted only during the warm seasons: it is not difficult to imagine that, once a region was conquered, its inhabitants did not have many contacts with the conquerors and could continue undisturbed to produce their own objects, without adhering to some sort of centralized standard. These categories of objects are obviously to be

[132] Salvini has a different opinion on the choice of the main Urartian god: in his article on the theocratic foundation of the Urartian Kingdom (Salvini 1989), he affirms that the cult of Ḫaldi was introduced by Išpuini, son of Sarduri, who reigned at the end of the 9th century BCE. It is, of course, true that in no text belonging to Sarduri, son of Lutipri, the god Ḫaldi is mentioned; it is equally true that we only have one complete text dating to this king (CTU A 1-1), and, probably, one very fragmentary inscription (CTU A 1-2), which may not be sufficient proof.
[133] Van Loon 1966: 166-169.
[134] Ayvazian 2006: 1.

found in all those that do not respect fixed characteristics: belts, seals, metal, stone or clay figurines, bronze pottery, and many others.

The pluralistic nature of the Urartian state should be emphasised, since it was born from the union under one central power, or so it would seem, of a large number of different ethno-political entities; the geographical and climatic conditions of the Urartian territory, with rugged highlands and long winters, are also an element that deserves attention in the definition of the Urartian entity. These factors would have given rise to a fundamentally precarious state situation, as the communication between the various areas of the kingdom was impossible or very difficult for most of the year[135]. As Bernbeck pointed out, the idea of a centralised Urartian state, originated in Urartian research, is *ahistorisch*[136] and based on two prerequisites that are still undisputed, namely a "rückprojizierender Historiographie", which assumes structures of the late period as valid also for earlier times, and a "Stabilitäthypothese", which does not consider internal fluctuations and structural variations[137]. This said, the scholar proposed to consider the Urartian model as a *segmentärer Staat*[138], in which the sphere of ideological authority and that of political sovereignty did not coincide: the former would in fact be extended to the periphery, which, due to ethno-political and geographical conditions, is considered flexible and changeable, while the latter coincides with central rule. This would be confirmed, according to the German scholar, by the decentralised structure assumed by the Urartian state, which would entrust local potentates with the exercise of military control over settlements far from the centre, the plain of Van; the governors, belonging to the local élites, would also be largely independent of the Urartian capital. This model would have remained in force at least until the time of Rusa Argištiḫi, in the 7th century BCE, who would have introduced an administrative system definable as centralised and based on the formation of palatial archives, probably on the Assyrian model. What strengthens Bernbeck's position is the Urartian religion, which acts as an ideological authority: in the times of Išpuini and Minua the Urartian pantheon is fixed in the inscription of Meher Kapısı[139], in an operation defined as "invention of tradition"[140], better discussed in the final chapter, that is also accompanied by the introduction of the other typical elements of the Urartian religion, the *susi* temples, the rock gates and the dedicatory stelae. The creation of an ideology would be used strategically to influence a wide geographical area thanks to the additional adoption of local deities, which had already taken place at the time of the epigraphic fixation of the Urartian pantheon; it is also no coincidence that the creation of the Anzaf shield[141] and the iconographic representation of the Urartian deities dates back to that time. While Teišeba and Šiuini, deities from the Hurrian background, are depicted standing on a lion and a bull and bearing their standard attributes – a beam of lightning and the winged solar disk – the depiction of the other deities does not follow criteria that would allow us to recognise real functions attributable to them. In the decoration of the shield, therefore, one can see an attempt to give iconographic identity to a syncretistic pantheon, artificially created, through a deliberate violation of a previous tradition that does not, however, create a cultural *tabula rasa*[142]. However extreme Bernbeck's position may be, it correctly emphasises the importance

[135] See Zimansky 1985: 9-31.
[136] Bernbeck 2003-2004: 268.
[137] Bernbeck 2003-2004: 274.
[138] Bernbeck 2003-2004: 274.
[139] CTU A 3-1.
[140] Bernbeck 2003-2004: 286.
[141] Belli 1999; CTU B 3-1.
[142] Bernbeck 2003-2004: 209-291, "Man muß nicht jeder Einzelheit in Bellis Argumentation folgen, um in den Darstellungen einen Versuch zu sehen, das gerade erstellte synkretistische, in Meher Kapısı schriftlich fizierte

of Urartian religion in state-building: it is no coincidence that Salvini too described the introduction of the Ḫaldi cult as an *instrumentum regni*[143] aimed at legitimising Urartian power over the controlled areas. What is perhaps to be scaled down with respect to the German scholar's hypothesis is the *exclusive* role assigned to religion as the glue of the state: it is true that many Urartian building projects were connected to Ḫaldi, but it is also true that many new constructions were of a civil nature, extremely compliant with an architectural standard connected to a central authority, that of the Urartian dynasty[144]. As much as it is possible, and necessary, to propose hypotheses that help to frame Urartu politically and culturally, it is evident from a first glance that "the system behind this Urartian success is understood at only the most superficial level"[145], and everything we know to date pertains to the royal dynasty, certainly not to the peoples governed by the Urartian state entity.

7.2. Culture and cultural identity

The definition of "culture", the term that gives the title to this dissertation, is based on that provided by Edward Tylor: "knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, custom and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society" [146]. From the point of view of ancient societies, the only possible traces to be analysed are those concerning knowledge and beliefs, testified through writing, and art: in this sense, archaeology is defined as the "past tense of cultural anthropology" [147], focusing its study only on the remains of past societies. The definition of culture applicable in this sense is not that of "material culture" [148] common in archaeology, but that developed in anthropology, analysed at an archaeological level[149]. In the case of Urartu, the definition of culture encompasses every *ex novo* creation produced by the royal dynasty in order to provide a "new tradition" to the subjected peoples, imposing an image of the kingdom as unified as possible: this includes both decorated artefacts, intended to communicate a certain message, and writing, which in the case of Urartu assumes a role equal to that of the image itself, but also language and religion. In short, culture is what is produced in order to sustain a shared symbolic experience[150], with symbols that tend to be manifested aesthetically[151]. Once the meaning of culture has been defined, it is then possible to refer to cultural contacts as situations "identified archaeologically by the observation of the intrusion of elements of one culture into the area of another"[152]. It is therefore clear why, before approaching the study of the contact between Urartu culture and those contemporary with it in the Near East, it is necessary to investigate the characteristics of Urartian culture itself.

Pantheon in seiner Künstlichkeit bildlich zu fixieren. (…) Dies führte nicht nur zur Kreation einer neuen Bildwelt, sondern in diesen Darstellungen wurde auch ein bewußter Traditionsbruch vollzogen, ohne eine völlige kulturelle *tabula rasa* zu erzeugen".

[143] Salvini 1989.
[144] Zimansky 2012a: 105, fn. 8.
[145] Zimansky 2012a: 101.
[146] Tylor 1871.
[147] Renfrew – Bahn 2020: 11
[148] Renfrew – Banh 2020: 543.
[149] See Watson 1995; Hodder 1982.
[150] Jaeger – Selznick 1964: 653.
[151] Rothstein 1972: 672.
[152] Willey et al. 1956: 7.

The previous section, focused on what is today considered as Urartian, lead to a greater question, related to the perception of what was "Urartian" by the same population which is today called Urartian: did Urartians *feel* Urartian? Was there a common culture that unified the different population part of the Urartian Kingdom? "Was Biainili essentially a command structure, which assembled and organized miscellaneous cultural elements, or did there exist a set of beliefs and practices shared by a substantial percentage of the population within the borders of the state that gave its people a cultural identity that we may call Urartian?"[153]. Our understanding of Urartian identity is complicated by the limited knowledge of the Urartian kingdom itself: the first phases of its existence are documented only by the Assyrian sources, which talk about the presence of small-scale political units[154]. These political units were the people that took part in the formation process of the Urartian state, and they must have actually existed during all the history of Urartu[155]. Each unit must have had its own culture, and the totality of them might have influenced the creation of Urartian fundamental cultural elements, belonging to the state culture and, in the end, identifiable with the kingdom itself, writing and belief systems: in this process of formation, some regional cultural traits disappeared, while some others continued to exist in the Urartian kingdom[156]. Between the surviving traits, one should mention the cultural background of the Van region, which was fundamental in forming Urartian culture itself[157], but it is clear that people with different traditions lived among the people forming the Urartian *ethnos*[158]. The analysis conducted by Atilla Batmaz allowed us to reconstruct the main characters of Urartian material culture: "artefactual and architectural remains point to an imperial culture covered by the military and religious state structure. This cultural basis, no matter whether it was grounded in the majority or minority of people, was so dominant that it defined territorial possessions and influenced other areas"[159]. Particular emphasis should be put on the concept of "imperial culture", not in the meaning of culture "belonging to an empire system", but rather of culture "belonging to the royal élite": this may be the key of understanding some of the traits characteristic to the Urartian culture, which will be analysed in the following sections. Is it correct, so, the classic identification between the objects traditionally connected to the Urartian sphere and the Urartian people? Depending on the perspective we choose to adopt, the answer may change. If by "Urartian people" one considers only the Urartian élite, master of the properly said Urartian culture (writing, metalwork, pottery, architecture…)[160], the answer is yes. Or, better, mostly yes, as some of the objects traditionally considered "Urartian" may not be "Urartian" at all, according to the previous meaning: belts, for example, are probably not to be considered royal objects, and so not belonging to the proper Urartian assemblage. If one, instead, considers the "Urartian people" as the totality of the people living on the Urartian land, the answer should definitely be no: not only does the great part of Urartian objects and buildings have a royal background, but it is also not clear the extent to which the common people were able to read, and speak, the Urartian language. This is the reason why, in this work, it has been decided to distinguish between "royal" Urartian and "popular"

[153] Zimansky 2012a: 102-103.
[154] Zimansky 2012a: 109, "an empire that was in fact cobbled together of component parts that did not wholly lose their individuality".
[155] Batmaz 2012: 32-33; Zimansky 2012a: 102, "there are archaeological and philological grounds for recognizing that more than one cultural group existed within the state and that there were variations in the relationships between different groups of people within the state and the government".
[156] Batmaz 2015: 211.
[157] Zimansky 2012a: 103.
[158] Batmaz 2015: 212.
[159] Batmaz 2015: 218.
[160] The "State Assemblage" mentioned by Zimansky 1995 and specifically connected with the ruling élite.

Urartian: one definition has a pronounced connection with the social class of the people involved, the Urartian royal élite, while the other refers to a more geographical perspective, regarding all the people living in the territories belonging to the Urartian kings. One should imagine, so, two different superimposed variables: in the territory of the Urartian state lived many different political units with a different culture, upon which the control of the Urartian state didn't forcibly impose a common unified culture, but rather allowed the spreading of a culture, influenced by and influencing the local ones, which permeated the existence of these local entities. In other words, in their daily lives, local political units were allowed to choose between keeping their own artefacts, beliefs and language, or adapting to a different culture, materially definable as "Urartian state assemblage" and belonging to the people which dominated them[161]. This phenomenon is reflected in the ceramics distribution[162], but unfortunately not much in metalwork, and we have basically no hints informing us on the different languages spread in the Urartian lands[163]; the archaeological excavations in Urartu, moreover, mostly focused on the analysis of the royal sites, which returned, of course, mainly objects belonging to the "royal" Urartian culture. All these elements may lead to a conclusion: instead of talking exclusively about "Urartian identity", one should probably consider the use of two different expressions, a properly said "Urartian identity", referring to the vast majority of the objects we possess and analyse, and many "identities in the Urartian-controlled area", focused on the cultural diversity typical of these territories.

7.2.1. The role of religion for Urartian identity

As Salvini explained[164], the power of the Urartian Kingdom was based on a syncretistic theology created at the emergence of the state: nothing is known of the Urartian deities at the time of the first ruler, while clues about the Urartian pantheon begin to emerge during the reign of Išpuini when one starts to find the figure of the god Ḫaldi. This deity is rarely mentioned in previous times, and appears essentially as theophoric within some Assyrian proper names[165]; the place of worship of this deity was located at the sanctuary of Muṣaṣir. The Urartian sources, starting from the period of the co-regency of Išpuini and Minua[166], refer to Muṣaṣir calling it *Ardini*, a toponym derived from the Hurrian **arte-ni*, "the City"[167], while the first Assyrian mentions of the centre as "Muṣaṣir" date back to the so-called "Banquet Stele" of Ashurnasirpal II, where some emissaries from Muṣaṣir are listed among the foreign dignitaries who attended the inaugural festivities of the new palace of the sovereign[168]. The precise location of the centre of Muṣaṣir is not known, but it is possible to place it in the northern area of the Zagros Mountains[169]. Muṣaṣir / Ardini was not, however, a territory under the direct control of the Urartian state, which on the contrary made several expeditions in order to assume, albeit temporarily, its domain: the area was a

[161] Zimansky 2012a: 109, "The materials we have excavated in the outer town (of Ayanis) show that the population there enjoyed full access to what are generally considered "Urartian" artifacts", and 110, "individuals in an Urartian royal city (Ayanis) exercised choices in some aspects of their daily lives and made these choices in different ways, unfettered by the hand of the state".
[162] See fn. 125.
[163] Zimansky 2012a: 101, "Of the people the Urartian king governed and of the operations of government at the lowest level we have only the most fragmentary information".
[164] Salvini 1989.
[165] Zimansky 2012: 714; Radner 2011: 246.
[166] CTU A 3-11, l. 1.
[167] Salvini 1993-1997: 445.
[168] RIMA 2: A.0.101.30, l. 147.
[169] See Radner 2012.

point of contention between Assyria and Urartu, as is evident from the reports of Rusa I and the letters of the governor of Musaşir, Urzana[170], and the language used in this centre was Assyrian, as demonstrated by the seal of Urzana himself[171]. Despite the independence of Muṣaṣir, its close connection with Urartu, or at least with the ruling dynasty, is evident: the Urartian rulers were crowned there, according to the account offered by the account of the Eighth Campaign of Sargon II[172], and the highest officials of the state made periodic trips to the temple of Ḫaldi. Ḫaldi had the function of "Staatsgott"[173], and all the other gods were subordinate to him, as indicated not only by his absolute preponderance within the Urartian epigraphs but also by the number of sacrifices that Ḫaldi received according to the text of the inscription by Meher Kapısı[174]. Ḫaldi is not mentioned within the few epigraphs of Sarduri, son of Lutipri, and seems to be consciously introduced by Išpuini, who closely associates this god with the legitimacy of the reigning sovereign[175], probably relying on the Assyrian model, the template used by the Urartian kings to build their own idea of monarchy. The choice of the god Ḫaldi as head of the Urartian pantheon is not yet clear, but the hypotheses that can be deduced from this fact allow us to postulate that the reigning dynasty had origins in the Muṣaṣir / Ardini area[176].

The analysis of the names and mentions of the other deities made it possible to postulate a syncretistic conception of the Urartian religion, with local deities incorporated into the pantheon as a result of territorial conquests[177]. However, the pantheon appears decidedly too vast for the historical period in which the inscription of Meher Kapısı was written, during the co-regency of Išpuini and Minua, between the end of the 9th and the beginning of the 8th century BCE: it is, in fact, more likely that the list of divinities reported within the text should be considered as an extremely broad declaration of intent by the sovereigns themselves, rather than a reflection of their achievements[178]. The unifying element of the kingdom, religion, therefore comes from above and is not to be considered a popular belief as it appears to be constructed, so much so that it disappears with the disappearance of the Kingdom of Urartu. This arises perfectly within the sphere of the so-called "invention of tradition"[179]: this, in Urartu, is perfectly applied to the construction of the pantheon, but also to the precise definition of an epigraphic and artistic style outlined in a period slightly after the conception of the religious tradition, from the time of Minua Išpuiniḫi and Argišti Minuaḫi. The paradigm used in the religious field is directly applicable to that used in the artistic field: in both, there is an attempt to create a new tradition, without however completely cancelling the previous one; a radical break with the traditions of the past in favour of new introductions would involve a certain risk of alienation. All these signs point to strategic use of ideology: where repressive military means are initially lacking, the Urartian authority over rather large regions, such as those that must have covered the pantheon of Meher Kapısı, is implemented through the acceptance of local traditions all interior of the Urartian culture itself.

[170] Salvini 1995: 80-84.
[171] Collon 1994: 37-38.
[172] See Foster 2005: 808.
[173] Calmeyer 1976: 48.
[174] CTU A 3-1.
[175] Salvini 1989: 80-81.
[176] Zimansky 2012a: 105.
[177] Salvini 1994: 207; Salvini 1995: 44-45.
[178] Bernbeck 2003-2004: 286.
[179] Bernbeck 2003-2004: 286, quoting Hobsbawm 1983.

7.3. Words matter

The last issue I would like to address here is a terminological one: as the importance of the words in research is utmost, their choice has to be thoughtful. First of all, the use of the toponym "Urartu" and the adjective derived from it is not completely correct, as it reflects an "Assyro-centric" point of view, but the different attempt to call it with its *actual* name, attested in the Urartian inscriptions, from *Bia* to *Biainili*, never actually became popular: I will use here the words "Urartu" and "Urartian" following the previous researches on the topic, but, whether I will need to find neologisms to define aspects or new issues regarding the culture of the Urartian Kingdom, I am going to use the "Urartian" name for their own state, *Bia*. Secondly, the use of the term "Transcaucasian" reflects another "colonialist" point of view, as it is defined from the Russian side[180]: I will refer to this region from a strictly geographical perspective, defining the area as "Southern Caucasus", except when I'll be quoting from other authors[181]. The last issue regards the names used to indicate the Urartian kings, for which I accept the suggestion written by Michael Roaf in the preface to his three articles referring to the rulers called Rusa[182]: as the succession of the kings is both not very clear nor universally accepted, I will refer to every king with the name and patronymic formula, and not with the dynastic succession number.

[180] The term "Transcaucasia" is the Latin rendering of the Russian word *Zakavkazye* (Закавказье), which means "(the area) beyond the Caucasus Mountains", implying a Russian view on the region.
[181] The most recent use of the term in a European contribution, for example, is "Transcaucasian Bronze Belts", published in 2017 by Manuel Castelluccia.
[182] Roaf 2010; Roaf 2012a; Roaf 2012b.

II. Historical overview and problematic issues

1. Introduction

Urartian history is the first example of how important were the contacts with neighbouring peoples; without them, it would not be possible to reconstruct the initial, formative phase of the state structure, as well as certain dynamics internal to the ruling dynasty of which no clues emerge in the royal inscriptions. Assyrian written sources are of fundamental importance because they provide an account of historical events happening in the regions north of the Taurus mountains as they enter the Assyrian sphere of attention: although partial and one-sided, this point of view has allowed scholars to draw an overview of the formation of the Urartian state, thanks also to the precise succession of events that can be dated year by year. Assyrian historiography on the Urartian formative phase has led Mirjo Salvini to divide the early history of the Urartian Kingdom into three chronological phases[1]: a protohistoric phase, dating to the Middle-Assyrian period, in which tribes and *ethnē* of the Armenian Plateau grouped in small confederations, followed by a phase of construction of a network of fortresses and royal residences; the last period saw the foundation of a capital, the introduction of cuneiform writing and the consolidation of a ruling dynasty.

Several reasons have been put forward to explain the formation of the Urartian Kingdom: while some scholars suggest that it was a secondary "mirror" state created as a result of Assyrian military pressure on territories to the north of the Empire[2], others believe that the formation of this new state was linked to the disappearance of the most important Hurrian political formation of the Bronze Age, the state of Mittani / Ḫanigalbat, due to its annexation to the Assyrian Empire during the reign of Adad-nirari I[3].

[1] Salvini 1987: 371.
[2] Barnett 1956; Saggs 1962: 114; Levine 1976: 178; Zimansky 1985: 3.
[3] Salvini 1987: 373, "Col crollo di Hanigalbat e la sua riduzione a provincia assira viene dunque a mancare un punto di riferimento politico ai Hurriti, costretti allora ad una sorta di diaspora (…)".

Other scholars, the first of whom was Masson[4], defined the cultural and political development that happened on the Armenian Highlands as a *Caucasian way to civilization*, started from as early as the end of the 3rd millennium BCE: the Urartian state would not, therefore, have been born under Assyrian military pressure, but it would have resulted from a millenary process that took place in the Caucasian area[5]. A contemporary occurrence between these three factors cannot certainly be excluded, and indeed it could be precisely the final reason for the formation of Urartu; a connection with the Hurrian element would explain both the Urartian language, which is related to the oldest phase of the Hurrian language[6], and its religion, or at least two of the deities that form the main triad of the Urartian pantheon, Teišeba and Šiuini.

For many hypotheses that can be proposed regarding the nature of the state itself, one can rely on just as many historical facts narrated in the Assyrian and Urartian inscriptions: a reconstruction of the history of Urartu based on both kinds of documents is, in fact, the aim of this section.

2. External sources

The first section of this chapter is devoted to the analysis of the external sources narrating events and facts connected to the Urartian Kingdom: as previously explained, it must start with a reexamination of Assyrian sources from the time of Shalmaneser I, in whose texts are to be found the first mentions of an entity called KUR *Uruaṭri*, possibly an antecedent of the Urartian state properly said. As explained in the following sections, another name, KUR *Nairi*, will be used besides KUR *Uruaṭri* in Assyrian texts referring to the northern territories: the occurrences of this toponym, later used also by the Urartian kings themselves, are analysed and studied here, with a tentative reconstruction of the differences between the two. Later, with Ashurnasirpal II, one can find the name KUR *Urarṭu* in its definite phonetical writing, and with his successor, Shalmaneser III, the Assyrian texts can finally be read together with the Urartian ones. The section will focus on all the mentions of Urartu in Assyrian texts until the last ones in the later Babylonian Chronicles. Following the analysis of the Assyrian sources there is the one focused on the few mentions of Urartu in the Bible, where the name appears behind the writing *Ararat*, and finally in Hieroglyphic Luwian inscriptions, where the Urartian state probably appears with the name *Sura/i*.

2.1. Assyrian Sources

The Kingdom of Urartu seems to emerge from the darkness of the prehistory of the Armenian Highlands, although it was separated from centers of the great cultures of the Near East, such as Assyria, by relatively short distances[7]. Since it is not possible to determine the history of its formation relying

[4] Masson 1997.
[5] Biscione 2019: 84; see fn. 97 in particular.
[6] Giorgieri 2000: 175-176.
[7] Wartke 1993: 36.

on Urartian sources, completely absent until the end of the 9th century BCE, to have at least an idea of the events concerning the genesis of Urartu one must rely on the Assyrian inscriptions, which began to mention an enemy in the north when it interferes in the Assyrian territorial expansion projects[8]. The break, in the 12th century BCE, of the balance created between the major forces of the 2nd millennium BCE, Egypt, the Kingdom of Hatti, and Assyria, created a power vacuum in which small local principalities developed, including the future Kingdom of Urartu[9]: although Urartu was not a military power comparable to Assyria, despite a great development in its war technology, it proved to be a great political and cultural authority in the area of the Armenian Highlands[10]. From the first year of King Shalmaneser I's reign, at the beginning of the 13th century BCE, there are mentions of one or more entities controlling, or defending, the mountainous territory north of Assyria, called *Ur(u)aṭri*. With this term it is possible that the Assyrians generically referred to a "mountain village", not to a tribal or state grouping: in the 13th century BCE, it is difficult to imagine more than a temporary alliance between the different populations living in the mountain valleys in this area[11]. In the war reports of Tukulti-Ninurta I and Tiglath-Pileser I another name appears to indicate the territories of the north: *Nairi*, originally intended to designate a tribal confederation in the area that included the mountainous regions between Lake Van and Lake Urmia. This toponym was often used interchangeably with *Ur(u)aṭri* during the 9th century BCE, while from the 8th century meant to indicate a small state between Urartu and Assyria[12]. Towards the middle of the 9th century BCE, the different tribes of the Armenian Highlands gathered under the leadership of a possible king called Arame, apparently as a reaction to the Assyrian pressure: the Assyrian army met the fierce resistance of the small Nairi states, now united in the fight. From this moment on, the term used by the Assyrians to refer to their northern neighbours will be Urarṭu, first used beside the toponym Nairi and then employed as an ethnonym, although the Urartians refer to their country as *Bia.* In addition to the detailed descriptions provided in the Assyrian Annals, there are several pictorial representations of the Urartian population: the Gates of Balawat offer depictions of both the Urartian army and territory, accompanied by explanatory cartouches. The disputes between Assyria and Urartu, in the 8th century considered a state already formed with a central government, took place essentially in two phases: a first phase, between the reign of Shalmaneser I and the period before the ascent to the throne of Tiglath-Pileser III, is characterized by the Urartian expansion to the detriment of Assyria, exploiting the Assyrian weakness that followed the death of Shalmaneser III; the second phase, between the reign of Tiglath-Pileser III and that of Sargon II, is characterized by a *Zweifrontenkrieg*[13] that will take place in northern Syria and north-western Iran. The first proper Urartian king mentioned in Assyrian sources is Sēduri, cited in the year 830 BCE by Shalmaneser III: he is the first Urartian

[8] Wäfler 1986: 87, "Die Auseinandersetzungen zwischen Urartu und Assyrien (…) sind zu einem wesentlichen Teil wirtschaftspolitisch begründet: die Kontrolle der wichtigsten Handelswege und die Kontrolle der Rohstoffgebiete stehen dabei im Vordergrung, wobei die Ausgangpositionen der beiden Großmächte in wirtschaft – und verkehrsgeographischer Hinsicht sehr unterschiedlich sind".
[9] Wäfler1986: 88-89.
[10] Wartke 1993: 37, "In einigen Fällen dürften sich als Phase des Übergangs zur Organisationsform Staat militärdemokratische Verhältnisse herausgebildet haben".
[11] Kessler 1968: 59.
[12] Salvini 1995c: 23, states that *Nairi* was initially the name, used since the 11th century BCE, given to the large mountainous area north of Assyria, while *Ur(u)aṭri* seems to refer to a more limited region: despite their geographical proximity, they must be seen as politically separate regions, distinct in the Assyrian sources. Both names represent the most important political groups of the Hurrian and Urartian tribes who played a fundamental role in the period of formation of the Urartian state, following the dissolution of the entities of Mittani and Ḫanigalbat.
[13] Wäfler 1986: 90.

ruler to leave inscriptions at the capital city, Tušpa or, in Assyrian, Ṭurušpa. The struggle for the succession to the throne of the heir of Shalmaneser III probably favoured the political rise of the Kingdom of Urartu, free to expand and develop without the danger of an Assyrian attack; once the throne was reconsolidated, Assyria had to accept the presence of a new powerful state in Eastern Anatolia, ruled by sovereigns who carefully planned the expansion of their kingdom in all directions[14]. The next kings mentioned by Assyrian sources are Išpuini / Ušpina, Argišti / Argištu, and Sarduri (II) / Ištar-dūrī: under the latter king, in the mid-8th century BCE, Urartu reached the peak of its expansion, covering a large area inhabited by different populations and tribes; therefore, Assyria was almost completely blocked in its expansion to the north. The goal of Urartian military campaigns was to conquer the most economically important regions, such as plains and resource-rich areas, but this expansion came to an end when Assyria resumed its rise under king Tiglath-Pileser III, who began a confrontation with Urartu in order to restore the original Assyrian borders. The Urartian alliance with its Syrian neighbours in an anti-Assyrian function was defeated[15], but Tiglath-Pileser III failed to besiege and defeat the Urartian capital, Tušpa, in 735 BCE: this campaign, however, progressively weakened the Kingdom of Urartu. With the next king, Rusa / Ursā, Urartians managed to regain some of their lost territories, but the victories, if there were, were transitory. Soon, the Assyrian king Sargon II attacked the territories around the lake of Urmia and the sacred city of Muṣaṣir, after a Cimmerian campaign in the Urartian territory. In the 7th century BCE, Urartu played a subordinate political role. The last Urartian kings mentioned in Assyrian sources, Argišti, Ursā and Issar-dūrī, chose a peaceful relationship with Assyria, based on mutual acceptance and coexistence[16]: from 714 BCE, the year of the Eighth Campaign of Sargon II, there were no open wars between Assyrians and Urartians, but the last Assyrian reference to Urartu, between 646 and 642 BCE, referred to it as a small state, subject to Assyria, whose king recognized the sovereignty of Ashurbanipal by sending him numerous embassies accompanied by gifts.

The Assyrian sources dealing with Urartu are essentially of three types, namely annalistic inscriptions, eponymous chronicles and private letters exchanged between the Assyrian sovereign and the provincial governors, the latter preserved mainly for the kingdoms of Sargon II, Esarhaddon and Ashurbanipal, useful to provide basic information about the events narrated in the Annals. In the eponymous chronicles, on the other hand, there are occasional quotations of "*ana* KUR *Urarṭu*" campaigns, recording the years when military operations were led against the northern territories. These textual sources form a precious framework for the reconstruction of relations between Assyria and Urartu, to be added to the Urartian inscriptions and the results of archaeological research[17].

[14] Assyrians were worried especially by their expansion towards the south, where the sacred city of *Muṣaṣir / Ardini* is located, not part of the Kingdom of Urartu but (sometimes) under its control. Wartke 1993: 41: "Mit der Abhängigkeit Musasirs von Urartu war urartäisch kontrolliertes Gebiet damit ohne militärischen Aufwand dicht an das eigentliche Machtzentrum der vorderasiatischen Großmacht herangerückt". Kessler 1968: 60: "Aufgrund seiner geographischen Lage war das assyrische Territorium für Urartu nur ein gelegentlich erreichtes Gelände, die urartäische Expansion zielte in der Regel in andere Richtungen".

[15] Wäfler 1986: 92, "Als 732 die Westfeldzüge Tiglatpilesers ihren Abschluß finden, besitzt Assyrien zum ersten Mal in seiner langen Geschichte eine festgefügte Machtbasis in Westen".

[16] Wartke 1993: 58, states that this policy of acceptance was necessary because the dangers from the North (Cimmerians, Scythians) and East (Persians), threats to the very existence of states, were more important than the struggles for territorial expansion.

[17] Kessler 1986: 62, "Nicht als primäre Belege für Urartäer können die sogenannten Haldi-Namen, vom Typ her assyrische Namen in mittel- und neuassyrischen Urkunden, welche als theophores Element den Namen des Gottes Haldi aufweisen, herangezogen werden. Die Haldi-Verehrung war nicht auf das Gebiet des Staates Urartu

2.1.1. Shalmaneser I

The first mentions of what would later become known as the Urartian Kingdom are conventionally found in the Assyrian inscriptions from the second quarter of the 13th century BCE, during the reign of Shalmaneser I (1273-1244 BCE)[18]: the term used to indicate the mountainous territories north of Assyria is KUR *Uruaṭri*, where the Assyrian sovereign tamed a rebellion in three days during his first year of reign[19]. The king says that he gathered his army to march "up to the mass of their mighty mountains", *ana kisir huršanišunu dannuti*[20], where they destroyed fifty-one cities and conquered eight lands, including KUR *Luḫa* and KUR *Zingun*: together with the name Uruaṭri and the presence of high mountains, these two place names provide a further link with the future Urartian world[21]. The territory to which Shalmaneser I referred using the name Uruaṭri probably extended into the region around Lake Van, reaching at least as far as the eastern slopes of Mount Ararat.

2.1.2. Tukulti-Ninurta I

The following ruler, Tukulti-Ninurta I (1243-1207 BCE), doesn't mention the toponym Uruaṭri: instead, he first mentions *Nairi*, a land which the Assyrians would fight with around the mid-13th century BCE. The first mention of the toponym Nairi[22] appeared in association with the name Eḫli-Tešub, of Hurrian origin, king of the land of Alzu[23], who, frightened by the greatness of the Assyrian ruler, left his territory in order to flee with his courtiers and sons to an unknown country, *ana pāṭ Nairi*[24], "to the (very) border of Nairi". Tukulti-Ninurta I continues the report saying that the town of Alzu, along with five other regions, was annexed to the Assyrian territory. A few lines later, the sovereign also narrates the annexation to his territories of KUR *Kašiiari*, identified with today's area of Tur Abdin, *adi pāṭ Nairi*, "up to the (very) border of Nairi": Tukulti-Ninurta I does not want, or fails, to penetrate the territories of Nairi. Other inscriptions[25] show how, later on, circumstances had changed: the sovereign, after

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beschränkt, sondern florierte besonders im Zagrosbereich um Muṣaṣir, wo ein Hauptkulturzentrum dieses Gottes lag".

[18] Salvini 1967: 41.

[19] RIMA 1: A.0.77.1, ll. 22-46.

[20] RIMA 1: A.0.77.1, l. 31.

[21] Salvini 1967: 41; KUR *Luḫa* can be compared with the Urartian toponym ^{URU}lu-ḫi-i-ú-ni, a city already mentioned by Minua (CTU A 5-1 and 2) as the centre of the territory inhabited by the tribe of Er(e)kuaḫi, and already located by Melikišvili (UKN, p. 425) on the right bank of the Araxes river, in the Ararat plain. KUR *Zingun*, or ^{KUR}zi-ú-qu-ni-e, is identified with the region on the north-west coast of Lake Van where Rusa of Argišti founded a 'City of Ḫaldi' (CTU A 12-4); the toponym should be compared with the god of the same name mentioned in the inscription of Meher Kapısı (CTU A 3-11, ll. 11 and 50). Another toponym quoted by Shalmaneser I that could be found in the Urartian sources is KUR ḫa-li-la, perhaps to be linked to the Urartian ^{URU}a-e-li-a (CTU A 5-2), probably the ancient name of the Körzüt fortress in the valley of the Bendimahi çayı, a northeastern tributary of Lake Van (Dan 2020: 123-124).

[22] RIMA 1: A.0.78.1, ll. iii 30 – iv 23.

[23] KUR *Alzu* as well finds a parallel in Urartian sources, in particular in the inscription CTU A 5-9 f.f., l. 8, written by Minua to celebrate a military expedition in the territories south-east of Tušpa, where ^{KUR}al-zi-i-ni-ni is mentioned as the place where the sovereign kills and deports the impressive number of 2113 people (Dan 2020: 18-20).

[24] RIMA 1: A.0.78.1 iv, l. 10.

[25] RIMA 1: A.0.78.4, A.0.78.5, A.0.78.6, A.0.78.7, A.0.78.13, A.0.78.16 (where the land of Nairi is called 'remote', *nesut padani*), A.0.78.18, A.0.78.20, A.78.24.

defeating forty kings of the lands of Nairi, regularly received a tribute from them and the countries on the coast of the (Upper) Sea, becoming king of their territories[26]; those lands must have posed some problems to the Assyrian king, given the insistence on their conquest mentioned also within the royal title[27]. Particular importance is also given to the harshness of the lands of Nairi[28], in order to exalt the strength of the sovereign who managed to conquer them: the territory is mountainous, extremely difficult, with passes and paths impossible to cover, which the army of Tukulti-Ninurta I manages to make practicable. The subjugation of the kings of Nairi is rendered through the vivid image of the bronze chains tightened around their necks, and their transfer to the Ekur temple, where they swear allegiance to the Assyrian king and receive the duty of a tribute. The information drawn from the texts of Tukulti-Ninurta I indicates that the object of the sovereign's fights was a mountainous territory around Lake Van, inhabited mainly by Hurrian speakers[29], to be located approximately in the same geographical area called Uruaṭri by his predecessor Shalmaneser I. It is possible that the Assyrian tradition indicated with the names Uruaṭri and Nairi two different coalitions, one following the other in the rule the basin of Lake Van after the power vacuum caused by the collapse of the Mittani Kingdom[30]. It is not clear how these two entities were internally structured, how they were composed nor what lead to the rise of one to the detriment of the other: only about Nairi is known the existence of forty kings, while to Uruaṭri were ascribed fifty-one cities; neither of the kings nor the cities bear unfortunately known names.

2.1.3. Tiglath-Pileser I

One must wait until the last quarter of the 12th century BCE to find other mentions of Nairi, namely in the Annals of the sovereign Tiglath-Pileser I (1114-1076 BCE): from a military campaign started around the upper course of the Tigris river, the king first occupied two regions governed by Kili-Tešub, son of Kali-Tešub[31], both bearing Hurrian names like Sadi-Tešup, sovereign of the later conquered region. During the following year, 1112 BCE[32], the ruler faced twenty-three kings of the lands of Nairi[33], who later became sixty[34] as a result of the help provide by their allies: these kings were subjugated and deported, their towns conquered and burnt down, and a quantity of cattle "without number" was brought from Tiglath-Pileser I to Assyria. The kings of Nairi swear before Šamaš eternal loyalty to the Assyrian king, who imposes a tribute on them and captures their children as hostages, before releasing the sixty kings and letting them return to their plundered lands. The king therefore reconfirms himself sovereign of Nairi[35], implicitly indicating that in the previous period that territory had been lost; from Nairi, in addition to livestock, Tiglath-Pileser I brings large quantities of obsidian and hematite to the temple of

[26] RIMA 1: A.0.78.5, l. 45.
[27] For example, RIMA 1: A.0.78.5, l. 5; A.0.78.6, ll. 17-18.
[28] RIMA 1: A.0.78.23, ll. 38-56.
[29] Salvini 1967: 43-45, gives a complete picture of the territories with Hurrian names cited by Tukulti-Ninurta I.
[30] Salvini 1967: 43-47.
[31] Also bearer of a Hurrian title, *I/Errupi*: a discussion of the meaning of the term is to be found in Salvini 1967: 48-49, fn. 3.
[32] Fuchs 2017: 250.
[33] RIMA 2: A.0.87.1 iv, l. 83.
[34] RIMA 2: A.0.87.1, iv l. 94 – v l. 21.
[35] RIMA 2: A.0.87.1 v, ll. 29-32.

Adad[36]. In another text[37], thirty kings of Nairi are conquered and taken like cattle[38] to Aššur, where they are obliged to pay a tribute. In later texts, the king claims to have marched three times on the lands of Nairi[39], where he conquered the lands of Tummu, Daiēnu, Ḫimua, Paiteru and Ḫabḫu[40]. Particular attention should be paid to the inscription engraved in the rock at the source of the Tigris river, on the right of which is carved an image of Tiglath-Pileser I himself; the inscription seems to commemorate the success of the campaign against the lands of Nairi[41] and the king declares himself "the conqueror from the Great Sea of the land Amurru and the sea of the land(s) Nairi", on whose territories he marched three times. Another rock inscription of Tiglath-Pileser I[42] is located near Yoncali, north of Lake Van, and records the campaigns against Nairi and Ḫabḫu. At the time of Tiglath-Pileser I, therefore, it does not seem that the lands of Nairi differ from what is known about them from the inscriptions of Tukulti-Ninurta I: it is possible that these countries allied in times of war by virtue of their belonging to the same Hurrian ethnic group[43], without excluding that in such military alliances were also included non-Hurrian peoples, determining themselves as alliances defined *per differentiam* in comparison to the neighbouring Assyrians.

2.1.4. Aššur-bel-kala

The annals of this sovereign provide a different view, although they were written a short distance from the reign of Tiglath-Pileser I: with Aššur-bel-kala (1073-1056 BCE) both Nairi and Uruaṭri were mentioned, with different meanings. In two different inscriptions[44], a campaign against Uruaṭri is described, almost with the same words used by Tukulti-Ninurta I[45] in his campaign against Nairi, depicting the harshness of the mountainous territory and the brilliance of the Assyrian ruler in creating practicable passes for the army. There is a list of conquered cities, among which URU *Ziqunu*, the already mentioned KUR *Zingun* of Shalmaneser I, is recognized. Another city mentioned by Shalmaneser I among the territories belonging to Uruaṭri is *Mašgun*[46]: both mentions, at the time of Aššur-bel-kala, carry the determinant for city, while Shalmaneser I qualified them as regions. Nairi is only mentioned once in the corpus of this sovereign, in a text of uncertain and complex genesis[47] which narrates a lion hunt: in this case, it is possible that the quotation of the "mountains of Nairi", KUR.KUR *Nairi*, is a crystallized expression, indicating a mountainous territory in the north of Assyria, without relevance to the current political situation at the time of the inscription. In the short period between the kingdoms of Tiglath-Pileser I and Aššur-bel-kala, the situation in the mountainous north of Assyria

[36] RIMA 2: A.0.87.1 viii, ll. 11-16.
[37] RIMA 2: A.0.87.2.
[38] RIMA 2: A.0.87.2, r. 27, *kima* GU_4 *se[rr]eta attadi.*
[39] RIMA 2: A.0.87.4, ll. 15-17; A.0.87.10, ll. 17-20; A.0.87.13, l. 3'.
[40] Among these territories, the only name that matches in the Urartian language is Daiēnu, to be compared with the etnonym ^{m}*diaue=ḫi*.
[41] RIMA 2: A.0.87.15, p. 61
[42] RIMA 2: A.0.87.16.
[43] Salvini 1967: 53. On page 51, Salvini reports a series of toponomastic considerations that link the countries of Nairi both to a Hurrian tradition and to the future Urartian world.
[44] RIMA 2: A.0.89.2, ll. 18'-36', A.0.89.5, ll. 2'-16'.
[45] RIMA 1: A.0.78.23, ll. 38-56. The comparison with the texts of Aššur-bel-kala is especially cogent concerning the description of the opening of the passes in the mountains.
[46] Which, however, has no reference in Urartian toponymy.
[47] RIMA 2: A.0.89.7, p. 99, explains how the author of the text used passages from different sources.

changed, bringing back the dominance of Uruaṭri over Nairi and forcing the sovereign, at the very beginning of his reign, to carry out once again an expedition against the rebel territories.

Between the second half of the 11th century BCE and the end of the 10th century BCE, the texts do not mention Nairi and Uruatri, as a reflection of Assyrian concerns about the Aramean populations[48].

2.1.5. Adad-nirari II

With Adad-nirari II (911-891) the inscriptions mention again the populations living in the lands north of Assyria, providing citations of Nairi and Ur(u)aṭri within the same inscription[49] dated around the end of the Adad-nirari's reign (ca. 893 BCE). First, the sovereign claims to have subdued the country of Qumānu to the lands of Mehru, Salua and *Uratri*: only for the country of Qumānu one can find a correspondent in later Urartian sources, which indicate it as ^{URU}*Qumenu*[50]. A few lines later, Adad-nirari II informs that he had already marched four times against the lands of Nairi, conquering the territory of Ḫabḫu. From this inscription it is clear how the two toponyms, Nairi and Ur(u)aṭri, are independent of each other, even mentioned in two different passages of the text; the existence of these two ethnic or political, or even geographical entities is contemporary and one does not prevail over the other. The king is perhaps more concerned about the territory of Nairi, against which he had to intervene at least four times during his reign: Uraṭri is in fact almost mentioned incidentally, while Nairi deserved to be remembered as a rebel land, which the sovereign had to subdue several times.

2.1.6. Tukulti-Ninurta II

Aligning with the trend observed for Adad-nirari II, in the short reign of Tukulti-Ninurta II (890-884 BCE) there is no mention of Uruaṭri: his texts only report military expeditions against the lands of Nairi[51]. His annals open *in medias res* narrating the campaign against the mountainous territory of Nairi, followed at a short distance by a further expedition against these territories, thanks to information given to him by a governor: he reveals to Tukulti-Ninurta II that, probably, a king of the lands of Nairi is willing to cross the mountains, presumably in Assyrian direction. Tukulti-Ninurta II then decided to leave Nineveh to face this king, but the text does not report the fate of the battle, continuing instead with the description of the campaign against Bīt-Zamani. From a later passage, it is known that silver comes from the mountains of Nairi, probably paid as a tribute together with a large number of horses[52]: the lands of Nairi are once again subjected to Assyria[53].

[48] Salvini 1967: 62.
[49] RIMA 2: A.0.99.2 and its duplicate, A.0.99.4.
[50] In CTU A 3-1, l. 14, where the ^{URU}*Qumenu=*i=na=ue* DINGIR, "gods of the city of Qumenu" are mentioned, and in CTU A 5-9 f.s., l. 13, where is cited "the city of Qumenu, up to the land of Aššur". Please refer to CTU V, under ^{URU}Qumenu, for the bibliography.
[51] RIMA 2: A.0.100.5, ll. 1-29.
[52] RIMA 2: A.0.100.5, ll. 128-131.
[53] RIMA 2: A.0.100.6.

2.1.7. Ashurnasirpal II

Ashurnasirpal II (884-859 BCE) appears to be particularly involved in the events concerning the territories north of Assyria. In his Annals[54], where at least three campaigns against the northern territories are recorded[55], it initially appears that the lands of Nairi were tributaries of the Assyrian king, to whom they are required to pay chariots, horses, mules, silver, gold, bronze casseroles, oxen, sheep, and wine and labour force[56]. A few lines later[57], however, the king appeared to be forced to march "for a second time" against the countries of Nairi, where he "razed, destroyed, (and) turned into ruin hills 250 of their well-fortified cities"[58]. and finally managed to subjugate and regain dominion over the lands of Nairi[59]. Ashurnasirpal II once again faced the enemies of the north, Nairi, Ḫabḫu, Subaru and Nirbu[60], managing to subdue the territories between the source of the Subnat river[61] and the land of Urartu[62], now written in the definitive phonetic form. In a parallel passage[63] there is a change in the definition of the subjugated territories, which, it is said, include the countries between the source of the river Subnat and the source of the river Tigris, allowing to place, almost with certainty, the territory of Urartu in the Eastern Taurus range. Similarly, other inscriptions[64] state that the sovereign's conquests extended from the source of the Subnat River to the vast land of Urumu[65] (and) the entire territory of Nairi. The heroic deeds carried out by the sovereign against the northern rebels of Nairi are engraved on a limestone statue of Ashurnasirpal placed in the city of Tušḫa[66], as mentioned in the text of Nimrud Monolith[67], a composite version of the annals that also recalls how the towns of Nairi were subject to a heavy tribute imposed after their renewed submission to the Assyrian kingdom, during the second campaign of this king against them[68]. Shortly after its conquest, it is narrated an Aramaean invasion in the lands of Nairi and the following Assyrian reconquest, including some military garrisons imposed by Shalmaneser[69]

[54] RIMA 2: A.0.101.1.
[55] The dates of these campaigns are registered in Batmaz 2012: 882 BCE for the first campaign, whose deeds are recorded on a limestone statue (see below); 879 BCE for the second campaign, in which the sovereign destroys 250 towns in the villages of Nairi; 866 BCE for the third campaign, in which the Assyrian king consolidates his dominion from the sources of the Subnat river to the land of Urartu.
[56] RIMA 2: A.0.101.1 ii, ll. 12-15; Nairi pays a tribute to Ashurnaṣirpal II after the first campaign, dated 882 BCE.
[57] RIMA 2: A.0.101.1 ii, ll. 97-100.
[58] RIMA 2: A.0.101.1 ii, ll. 117-118; a passage reporting the destruction suffered by the lands of Nairi can also be found in A.0.101.22, ll. 1'-7'.
[59] RIMA 2: A.0.101.1 ii, l. 131.
[60] RIMA 2: A.0.101.1 iii, ll. 119-120 and A.0.101.2, ll. 10-11.
[61] Today's Cizre; see Yamada 2000: 274.
[62] RIMA 2: A.0.101.2, l. 13; A.0.101.23, l. 9; A.0.101.30, ll. 13-14. In A.0.101.26, ll. 18-24; A.0.101.51, ll. 14-20 and A.0.101.56, ll. 9-10, it is said that the conquests of Ashurnaṣirpal II are extended from the sources of the Subnat River to the centre of the lands of Nirbu.
[63] RIMA 2: A.0.101.3, ll. 32-38; A.0.101.28 iv, ll. 2-3.
[64] RIMA 2: A.0.101.40, ll. 21-22; A.0.101.41, ll. 9-10; A.0.101.42, ll. 4-5.
[65] In the North of Syria. Bryce 2009: 756, "Iron Age country located in northern Mesopotamia, probably in the vicinity of the Kashiyari range (mod. Tur 'Abdin)".
[66] Today's Ziyaret Tepe, in the Diyarbakır province. Bryce 2009: 722, "City in the upper Tigris region, attested in Middle Bronze Age and Iron Age texts, probably to be identified, on the basis of cuneiform tablet finds, with the site of Ziyaret Tepe".
[67] RIMA 2: A.0.101.17 ii, ll. 5-20.
[68] RIMA 2: A.0.101.17 ii, ll. 37-48 e 104-108. The second campaign is recorded in RIMA 2: A.0.101.19 as well.
[69] RIMA 2: A.0.101.19; in the mentioned Shalmaneser the comments in RIMA recognizes the king Shalmaneser II (1030-1019 BCE), who, however, left no documents attesting a relationship with his northern neighbours, Nairi and Uruaṭri; Batmaz 2012: 27, attributes to Shalmaneser I (1273-1244 BCE) the establishment of a border garrison with the countries of Nairi: in this case, there would be evidence of the relationship with northern countries, called 'land of Uruaṭri' by Shalmaneser I, whereas Ashurnaṣirpal II would identify them with the lands of Nairi.

on the border with Nairi and several Assyrian fortresses in its lands: when he expelled the Aramaeans, Ashurnasirpal II also took advantage of this to raid the Nairi lands. The toponyms associated with the territories of Nairi[70] are not attested in Urartian sources: it is known, however, that the Assyrian ruler imposed tributes and *corvées* on these territories, appointing governors of his choice and intimidating the population with the threat of the army. Several passages[71], finally, report the relief of the king who has finally imposed his dominion over the northern territories.

During the reign of Ashurnasirpal II, Nairi and Urartu were defined as two different entities, ethnical, geographical or political, located north of the Assyrian territory, with which the king periodically fought, trying to subdue or control those northern rebel regions. The causes allowing the Assyrian domination of the mountainous territories of the north are primarily identified in the Assyrian technological superiority and in the lack of a unique centralized power controlling the entire territory of the Armenian Highlands, which favoured the creation of small local troops to defend the region from external attacks. The absence of central coordination between the small "kingdoms" of Eastern Anatolia made the defence of the region weak and inadequate in relation to the Assyrian attacks[72]. With this in mind, the Assyrians undertook military campaigns in the north: the expeditions were aimed at restoring order to the local rebellions in a territory now tributary of Assyria. At the end of the reign of Ashurnasirpal II, however, there was a change in the political system in the region surrounding Lake Van, the effects of which would be detected during the reign of the next sovereign, Shalmaneser III[73].

2.1.8. Shalmaneser III

Shalmaneser III (859-824 BCE) fought against his northern neighbours during five distinct campaigns taking place in his first (859 BCE), third (856 BCE), fifteenth (844 BCE), twenty-ninth (832 BCE) and thirty-first (830 BCE) year of reign[74]. The conquests reached at the time of Ashurnasirpal II were once again ephemeral, requiring a new Assyrian intervention already at the beginning of Shalmaneser III's reign. The mentions of Nairi and Urartu are numerous at the time of this king: already in the first version of the Annals[75], dated around 856 BCE[76], the campaigns towards the rebellious north are narrated immediately after the royal title. The expedition started with the departure of the troops towards the north, where the city of Ḫubuškia, ruled by King Kakia / Kāki[77], is set on fire: the toponym appears for the first time in this inscription, and the name of its ruler seems to be placed within a dynasty of Hurrian origin[78]. Salvini[79] initially located the area of Ḫubuškia in the basin of today's Bohtan River, southwest

[70] RIMA 2: A.0.101.19, ll. 98-102.
[71] RIMA 2: A.0.101.31, ll. 10-11; A.0.101.32, ll. 6-7; A.0.101.34, ll. 20-22; A.0.101.35, l. 7; A.0.101.38, ll. 17-18; A.0.101.50, ll. 19-21.
[72] Batmaz 2012: 29.
[73] Fuchs 2012 and 2017, affirms that the Assyrian conflicts against King Arame already began during the reign of Ashurnasirpal II, shortly after 866 BCE, since in the annalistic reports of Shalmaneser III the references to the battle against Arame are devoid of any comments justifying the attacks.
[74] Yamada 2000: 66, table 4, shows the chronology of the military campaigns of Shalmaneser III, specifying however that the campaign of the fifteenth year is not against Urartu but against "Nairi, Euphrate source".
[75] RIMA 3: A.0.102.1.
[76] RIMA 3: 7.
[77] Here called ^{m}*Kāki* MAN.URU *Ḫubuškia* (RIMA 3: A.0.102.1, l. 23).
[78] Both the entry *Ḫubuškia*, in RlA IV 1972-5: 479, compiled by Louis D. Levine, and Salvini 1982: 386, refer the name Kakia to a Hurrian origin.
[79] Salvini1967: 72-73.

of Lake Van, while later[80] he moved it eastwards, in Iraqi Kurdistan, close to the city of Muṣaṣir, in the area of Rewandiz; Reade[81] supported the location of Ḫubuškia in Iraqi Kurdistan, specifying that the region should be south or southeast of the centre of Muṣaṣir. King Kakia and the rest of his troops fled to the mountains, where the Assyrian ruler chased and subdued them. The next stop of the expedition is the city of Sugunia, URU *dannutišu šá* ^{m}*Arame* KUR *Urarṭā*[82], "fortified city of Arame, the Urartian": Arame is the first known name of an Urartian possible ruler[83], and Sugunia is the first known Urartian city. Shalmaneser III besieged Sugunia carrying out a massacre, burned fourteen towns in its surroundings and plundered the treasures; afterwards, he headed towards the "Sea of Nairi", *ana* A.AB.BA *ša* KUR *Nairi*[84], to wash his weapons and sacrifice to the gods: here, he erected a statue of himself, inscribed with prayers for Aššur and an account of his deeds. On his return, he stopped in the region of Gilzanu, in northeastern Iran[85], where he received a tribute, and finally headed towards the city of Aššur. It is therefore to be understood that the city of Sugunia is not located far from the shores of a lake, and given the position of the previous stage of the campaign, Ḫubuškia, it is accepted that this lake is the Urmia one[86]; an interesting thing to note is how the name "sea of Nairi" remains crystallized over time, although this territory now probably belonged to the Urartian entity. In a later version of the annals of Shalmaneser III, dated 853-2 BCE[87], a fundamental detail of the story of the first expedition to the north is slightly modified, and to this story is added the narration of the second campaign against Aramu the Urartian, in the year 856 BCE. The variation encountered concerns the title attributed to King Kakia / Kāki, previously met in the role of king of Ḫubuškia[88] and now called MAN.KUR *Nairi*[89], "king of Nairi": this information has given rise to the hypothesis that the toponym Ḫubuškia should now be intended as used to indicate the region of Nairi, bearing a less extensive meaning compared to previous documents, which identified it as the southernmost of the political concentrations of the populations living on the Armenian Highlands[90]. A few lines later[91] begins the narration of the second expedition towards the north. Moving from the territory of Daiēnu, already mentioned in connection with Nairi in the inscriptions of Tiglath-Pileser I, Shalmaneser III reached the town of Arzaškun, URU

[80] Salvini 1995b: 44.
[81] Reade 1994: 187. Russell 1984: 197, also argues that the most likely location for Ḫubuškia is south of Muṣaṣir. A discussion about the possible location of Ḫubuškia can be found in Lanfranchi 1995, who locates it in the upper valley of Lower Zab.
[82] RIMA 3: A.0.102.1, l. 30.
[83] Arame is never explicitly called "king" of the Urartian lands; however, the city of Arzaškun is called URU *šarrutišu ša* ^{m}*Arame* KUR *Urarṭā*, "royal town of Arame the Urartian" (RIMA 3: A.0.102.2 ii, l. 48), implying a ruling role for this character.
[84] RIMA 3: A.0.102.1, ll. 33-34.
[85] Reade 1994: 185.
[86] Kroll 2012a: 164. Salvini 1967: 73, proposed instead a position of Sugunia on the southern shores of Lake Van, changing his mind later (Salvini 1995b: 44-45) and locating Sugunia in the mountains west of Lake Urmia; the question is briefly resolved in Kroll 2012a: 164, who takes into account the depictions of the Balawat Gates: "Die entsprechenden Darstellungen auf den Reliefs von Balawat, insbesondere die Szene am See, sind lange mit dem Van-See verbunden worden, da Fische und eine Art Wasserhund dargestellt sind. Für den Urmiasee sind solche Darstellungen nicht zu erwarten, aufgrund des hohen Salzgehalts des Sees. Ein kaum lösbarer Widerspruch. Grundsätzlich wäre jedoch auch in Betracht zu ziehen, dass sich die Szene in der Mündungsregion eines der Flüsse mit Süßwasser abgespielt hat, die zahlreich in den Urmiasee fließen. Fische und andere Süßwassertiere sind dort möglich".
[87] RIMA 3: A.0.102.2; for the dating, see the introduction to the text, pages 11-12. The text A.0.102.3 is a duplicate of the first part of this version of the annals.
[88] See fn. 77. (Here called ^{m}*Kāki* MAN.URU *Ḫubuškia* (RIMA 3: A.0.102.1, l. 23).)
[89] RIMA 3: A.0.102.2 i, l. 21.
[90] Salvini 1967: 72-73.
[91] RIMA 3: A.0.102.2 ii, ll. 47-63.

šarrutišu ša ^{m}*Arame* KUR *Urarṭā*[92], "royal town of Arame the Urartian". The location of Daiēnu is useful in determining the geographical position of Arzaškun: scholars agree that this region was located northwest of Lake Van[93], in the area of the upper course of Murat Su; this would help to determine the position of Arzaškun near the northern shore of Lake Van[94]. Arame was frightened by the arrival of the Assyrian king, deciding to flee to Mount Adduri, where Shalmaneser III reached and defeated him in a battle; the Assyrian ruler then razed the town of Arzaškun and other neighbouring towns, massacred the nobles loyal to Arame and finally decided to head for Mount Eritia, where he installed a statue of himself bearing prayers to the god Aššur and an account of his Urartian deeds. Mount Eritia is mentioned in Urartian epigraphs as a city, ^{URU}*Er(i)dia(ni)*[95], and it is considered to be situated in western Azerbaijan[96]. The route then continued with the reaching of the centres of Aramalu and Zanziuna[97] and the ritual of washing weapons in the "Sea of Nairi", with the creation of a second statue dedicated to Aššur. The text engraved on the Gates of Balawat[98] reports the story of the submission of the northern territories "from the land Enzite to the land Daiēnu, from the land Daiēnu to [the city Arzaškun, the royal city of Ar]amu the Urartian"[99], that is from the Altınova plain region[100] to the area north of Lake Van, and "from the city Arzaškun to the land Gilzānu (and) from the land Gilzānu to the land Hubuskia"[101], proceeding southwards. The ending statement declares that these lands belonged to the country of Urartu: "I laid my lordly brilliance over the land Urartu"[102]. The short epigraphs engraved above the sculpted images of the Gates of Balawat recall extracts from the Annals[103]; the text is matched with the images of the warriors of Arame, represented as they descend from the mountains, equipped with crested helmets and small circular shields bearing a relief in the centre[104].

Two throne bases from Fort Shalmaneser[105], as well as narrating the events of the first campaign to Nairi, report of a further expedition to the north during the thirteenth year of the Shalmaneser's reign, in 846 BCE, which is not mentioned elsewhere. Passing from the lands west of Lake Van, Shalmaneser

[92] RIMA 3: A.0.102.2 ii, l. 48. The distinction between *āl šarrūti* and *āl dannūti* to distinguish the capital of a foreign kingdom from a simple fortified city dates back to Ashurnasirpal II and is frequently found in the inscriptions of Shalmaneser III; an analysis of this phenomenon can be found in Ikeda 1979. Zimansky 1985: 41-42, points out that *āl dannūti*, literally "strong city", may have been a generical term to indicate any fortified site without any military implications, not exactly defining a fortress (called instead *birtu*); furthermore, "There is every indication that *āl dannūti* was a term that could be applied to sites of considerable importance" (Zimansky 1985: 42).
[93] See the lemma "Nairi" in *RlA*.
[94] Bibliography and an account of the discussion among scholars are provided in Kroll 2012a: 167. Salvini 1987: 377, places the city of Arzaškun in the Zagros area; see also Salvini 1995b: 48.
[95] See CTU A 3-1, l. 16, where is mentioned ^{D}IM KÁ ^{URU}e-ri-di-a-ni.
[96] See CTU V, at the entry ^{URU}*Er(i)dia(ni)*. Bryce 2009: 234, "Mountain in Urartian territory, near which lay the stronghold of the Urartian king Arame. Though the mountain has not yet been identified, it may have lain to the southwest of Lake Urmia, if the most recently proposed location for Arzashkun in this area is correct". See also Dan 2020: 139.
[97] For an overview of the sites included in the Shalmaneser's expeditions, see Ponchia 2006: 209-210.
[98] RIMA 3: A.0.102.5.
[99] RIMA 3: A.0.102.5 ii, l. 5.
[100] Ponchia 2006: 202.
[101] RIMA 3: A.0.102.5 iii, ll. 2-3.
[102] RIMA 3: A.0.102.5 iii, l.3.
[103] Riferimenti a Urartu si trovano in RIMA 3: A.0.102.63; A.0.102.64; A.0.102.65; A.0.102.71; A.0.102.80.
[104] See Batmaz 2012.
[105] RIMA 3: A.0.102.28.

III penetrates the Armenian Plateau and razes Arzaškun, URU *dannutišu ša* ^{m}*Arame* KUR *Urarṭā*[106], together with the neighbouring towns; it follows the *topos* of the Urartian king's running on the mountains, reached by Shalmaneser III, who killed 13,500 enemy warriors and stole chariots, cavalry, horses, mules, donkeys, military equipment, his royal treasury, and his camp from Arame.

The Annals on clay tablets from Aššur[107], dated 842 BCE, offer a complete description of all the three Assyrian expeditions against the northern neighbours. After the narration of the first two expeditions[108], slightly reduced but essentially unchanged from the previous texts, the narration of the third military campaign against Urartu, during the fifteenth year of Shalmaneser III's reign, begins: marching towards "the land of Nairi", *ana* KUR *Nairi*[109], the king stopped at the source of the Tigris river, where he carved a statue of himself engraved with prayers and stories of his heroic deeds; then, through the pass of Mount Tunibunu, he penetrated the Urartian territories and plundered the cities of Arame the Urartian "to the source of the Euphrates", where he finally went to sacrifice to the gods. The first observation must concern the mention of the "land of Nairi", used as a synonym to indicate the land of Urartu: the toponym Nairi had lost the connotation that it had previously had, ethnic or geographical, to overlap, in the Assyrian imagination, the toponym Urartu in the indication of the mountainous lands north of Assyria, whose centre was the region around Lake Van. The sources of the Tigris river should be located at the exit of the tunnel where the Berkilin river flows, in the north of Diyarbakır province, where four inscriptions of Shalmaneser III and one of Tiglath-Pileser I[110] are to be found. The pass of Mount Tunibunu could be identified at the same place as the source of the Tigris river, a northeastern section of what is today called the Lice-Genç pass, or another mountain pass of the Eastern Taurus[111]: thus, the Assyrian king would have penetrated Urartian territory via the south-west route, finally marching towards the sources of the Euphrates River, north of Lake Van. In this way, Shalmaneser III presented himself as the conqueror of the entire mountainous north: "Conqueror from the upper and lower seas to the land Nairi and the great sea of the west as far as the Amanus range: I gained dominion over the entire land Ḫatti. I (lit. 'he') conquered from the source of the Tigris to the source of the Euphrates. I annihilated like a flood from the land Enzi to the land Suhni, from the land Suhni to the land Melid, from the land Melid to the land Daiënu, from the land Daiēnu to the city Arsaskun, from the city Arsaskun to the land Gilzānu, (and) from the land Gilzānu to the city Ḫubuškia"[112]. At least two of the four texts previously mentioned[113], engraved by Shalmaneser III at the source of the Tigris river, were accompanied by a portrait of the king: two of them[114] briefly recall how the king carried out three different campaigns in the northern territories[115], using both the toponym Urartu, which seems to

[106] RIMA 3: A.0.102.28, rl 38. Here Arzaškun is defined *āl dannūti* and not *āl šarrūti* as usual: it may not be an indication of a change of capital, but a simple error of the scribe, as in the description of the siege that occurred during the fifteenth year of the reign of Shalmaneser III the city is again defined *āl šarrūti*.
[107] RIMA 3: A.0.102.6. Other complete versions of the annals can be found in RIMA 3, A.0.102.8 (on two monumental bulls from Nimrud, written after 841 BCE) and A.0.102.10 (on a marble tablet from Aššur, dated 839 BCE).
[108] RIMA 3: A.0.102.6 i, ll. 28-41 e ll. 57-73.
[109] RIMA 3: A.0.102.6 iii, l. 34.
[110] Russell 1984: 175.
[111] Russell 1984: 179-180; Russell also proposes that the name *Tunibuni* can be identified with the toponym *Tunubu* mentioned by Tiglath-Pileser I as one of the Urartian territories near Lake Van, RIMA 2: A.0.87.1, l. 72.
[112] RIMA 3: A.0.102.6 iv, ll. 26-36.
[113] RIMA 3: A.0.102.21 – 24.
[114] RIMA 3: A.0.102.21 and 22.
[115] RIMA 3: A.0.102.21, ll. 10-11: "I entered the passes of the land Enzite (and) conquered the lands Suhme, Daiēnu, (and) Urartu". The king seems to suggest that the entrance into the northern territories was achieved

indicate only one region of these territories, and the toponym Nairi, bearer of a wider meaning, including the different political entities concentrated around Lake Van. The geopolitical situation narrated in the two remaining inscriptions is slightly different, since Shalmaneser III claims here to have conquered the Urartian territories from the source of the Tigris to the source of the Euphrates: this could prove that, at a certain point, the toponyms Nairi and Urartu lose their ethnical-political-geographical connotation, indicating interchangeably the mountainous territories north of Assyria, around Lake Van. A further mention of the extent of the territories of Arame the Urartian is contained in a fragmentary text engraved on stone found in Aššur[116], which describes the military campaigns carried out between the fifteenth and twenty-first year of the reign of Shalmaneser III: at the beginning, it is stated that the sovereign conquered the cities of Arame the Urartian, "from the sources of the Tigris to the sources of the Euphrates"[117], that is to say, the whole territory extending from south-west to north-west of Lake Van. The Black Obelisk from Nimrud[118], composed between 838 and 827 BCE, continues the narration of the campaigns of Shalmaneser III towards the north: in his twenty-ninth year of reign (832 BCE)[119], the king ordered to his field marshal, Daiiān Aššur, to lead the Assyrian troops towards the Urartian lands. Here, once crossed the Murat Su, he met the army of ^{m}*Sēduri* KUR *Urartā*, Sēduru the Urartian, who was defeated in battle by the Assyrian *turtānu*. In the thirty-first year of Shalmaneser's reign[120], once again Daiiān Ašššur received the order to attack the northern territories, passing first through the land of Ḫubuškia and then through the territory of Muṣaṣir, a future sacred city for the Urartian kings: from here, the *turtānu* headed the army towards the lands of the Urartians, where he attacked and set fifty of their cities on fire.

The inscription engraved on a statue of Shalmaneser III in Nimrud[121] provides further details about the army of Sēduru the Urartian, stating that Daiiān Aššur managed to take possession of a large number of horses and armours[122], which gives the idea of numerous and well-equipped troops: in this passage, Sēduru as well decided to flee to the top of a mountain to save his life. An account of the campaigns against Urartu is also found in a poetic text on a clay tablet found in Sultantepe[123]: the account of the expeditions to the north opens with the verses "I will go see how the Urartians fight, I will go down and wash my weapons(?), be it a land of water or no water. From the yoke of Ashurnasirpal the land of Nairi [...] has arisen"[124]. From the last line, it is understood how the predecessor, Ashurnasirpal II, had subjugated the lands of Nairi, now identified with the lands of the Urartians, and how these lands were rebelling against Shalmaneser III, who quickly conquered all the Urartian lands, reminding the inhabitants of the strength of Ashurnasirpal[125] and killing during the battle the impressive number of

through a western passage, if it is true that Enzite must be identified with the plain of Altınova; from there, probably starting with a journey to the north, he conquered in order the three territories of Suhme, Daiēnu, and Urartu: since the position of Daiēnu as the northernmost of the villages of Nairi is already established, this makes it possible to place the territory of Urartu right on the northern shores of Lake Van.

[116] RIMA 3: A.0.102.13.

[117] RIMA 3: A.0.102.13, ll. 1'-2'. Salvini 2006: 465, "In questa affermazione vi è certamente un significato più simbolico che reale. Conquistare le sorgenti dei grandi fiumi mesopotamici è stato un *topos* letterario fin dall'epoca accadica".

[118] RIMA 3: A.0.102.14.

[119] RIMA 3: A.0.102.14, ll. 141-146.

[120] RIMA 3: A.0.102.14, ll. 174-180.

[121] RIMA 3: A.0.102.16.

[122] RIMA 3: A.0.102.16, ll. 228'-244'.

[123] RIMA 3: A.0.102.17. The translation of the text here used is the one provided by Foster 2005: 779-781.

[124] Foster 2005: 779, ll. 14-16.

[125] Foster 2005: 780, ll. 38-40.

18,000 men. The siege of the king's palace, whose name is not mentioned, lasted nine days, during which the women were enslaved, and the trees, "the attraction of his royal capital", were set on fire; at the end of the massacre, the Assyrian king received a tribute from the city of Turušpâ, mentioned here for the first time. Since the dating of the text is unknown, it is also possible that the description of the campaign refers to one of the first expeditions of Shalmaneser III: the mention of the memory of the strength of his predecessor would point in favour of this hypothesis, since the last campaign of Shalmaneser III in Urartu, in which Sēduru the Urartian is mentioned, would happen about thirty years after the end of the reign of Ashurnasirpal II, a little too far in time for the mention of the memory of his predecessor to be effective. In such a case, it would be obvious that the city of Turušpâ was already founded during the reign of Arame[126]. Other mentions of Nairi and Urartu are found scattered throughout the whole corpus of the inscriptions of Shalmaneser III, both in the royal title, in which he presents himself as "conqueror of the sea of the land of Nairi"[127], and in short accounts of his expeditions to the mountainous north[128], without substantial changes or additions to the versions included in the major inscriptions.

From the inscriptions of Shalmaneser III, it is clear how the situation of the northern territories has changed compared to the periods before his ascent to the throne: now those regions are grouped around a leader, first Arame and then Sēduri, who leads a well-organized army in a war against the Assyrian enemy. The relationship between the toponyms Nairi and Urartu is still unclear: Salvini[129] stated that Nairi's political importance had decreased to a small political entity, also called Ḫubuškia. The basis of this statement is the definition of Kakia / Kāki first as king of Ḫubuškia and then as king of Nairi[130]: however, Nairi does not disappear from Assyrian sources, on the contrary, it is used parallel to the toponym Urartu to indicate the northern mountainous lands. Moreover, it is clear that Ḫubuškia was located far south of Lake Van, in the northern area of the Zagros Mountains: it is therefore not to be excluded that the mention of Nairi in the Assyrian inscriptions indicated a generic mountainous north, while Urartu refers to a specific political entity in the territory around Lake Van, which from a certain point onwards took over the other local tribes, becoming their leader. Assyrian sources offer the name of the first known Urartian sovereign, Arame, a character on whom scholars have expressed conflicting opinions: if Salvini[131] claimed that Arame was the founder and organizer of the Urartian state, Fuchs[132] believed that a kingdom capable of coping with the defeats and setbacks caused by the Assyrian army cannot be of recent foundation. Moreover, the Urartian territorial range speaks against the role of founder attributed to Arame as well, since already with Ashurnasirpal II Urartu was expanding westwards, in the Murat Su valley, and in the time of Shalmaneser III, at least from 859 BCE, the kingdom had a stable base in Sugunia, near the south-west coast of Lake Urmia[133]: the Urartian

[126] Kroll 2012a: 167; Kroll refers this passage to the description of Shalmaneser III's third campaign in the north.
[127] For example, RIMA 3: A.0.102.29, ll. 4-5.
[128] For example, RIMA 3: A.0.102.30, ll. 9-17.
[129] Salvini 1967: 76.
[130] See above. Salvini 1987: 347, also links the political formation Ḫubuškia / Nairi to the Hurrian *ethnos*, because of the presence of Hurrian elements first within the confederation of Nairi (see above), then within the country of Ḫubuškia, such as the name of its sovereign. On the other hand, also the name of the sovereign of Daiēni, Asia, has been interpreted as Hurrian (Salvini 1967: 76), but this does not justify the hypothesis of overlapping the toponym Daiēni on Nairi.
[131] Salvini 1967: 77.
[132] Fuchs 2012: 138.
[133] Kroll 2012a: 165: "Insgesamt bedeutet eine urartäische Stadt Sugunia in diesem Bereich, dass Arames Einfluss über offensichtlich verbündete Staaten es erlaubte, hier eine Sperranlage gegenüber Assyrien zu errichten".

expansion must therefore have started well before the advent of Arame. From a relief of the Balawat gates dating back to the time of Ashurnasirpal II, it is known that the war against Arame broke out in the last years of his reign[134] and was therefore treated as a known and consolidated event in the annals of the next king, Shalmaneser III, who did not succeed in defeating Urartu but managed to counteract its excessive expansion by subjugating the territories of Gilzānu and Daiēni, and by placing under the control of an Assyrian delegate in the territory of Nairi the countries of Suhni and Enzi. Also from the gates of Balawat comes the depiction of the removal of Urartian storage vessels by Assyrian soldiers during the third Shalmaneser's campaign, demonstrating that, already under Arame, Urartian economy was fully developed[135].

Aramu's successor was Sēduri, linked to the first Urartian sources, from which he is known as ^{m}*Sarduri* A ^{m}*Lutibri*[136], "Sarduri, son of Lutibri": it seems clear that the sovereign was not the son of Arame, but a certain Lutibri. A debate has also started around Lutibri: Salvini did not consider him an actual king, reigning hypothetically between 844 and 839 BCE, suggesting that Arame was not a personal name but the Assyrian way of indicating an Aramean ruler, Fuchs proposed instead that Arame and Lutibri[137] were the same person, assuming that Arame is a *Berufsnamen* on the genre "(Lutibri, lord of) Arame", confused by Assyrian scribes as a proper name[138]. Such a proposal, although implying an unusually long duration for the reign of Arame/Lutibri (859-830 BCE ca., if one considers him the father of Sarduri), does not require the hypothesis of a change of the reigning dynasty at the top of Urartu, as is assumed by Salvini[139]. He stated, in fact, that the transfer of power took place through a dynastic change, which would have brought to power a different tribe from the one of Arame; the different royal family would be reflected on the territory through the moving of the capital, from Arzaškun to Tušpa, Turušpa of the Assyrian sources[140]. This shift could be connected, rather than a change of dynasty, to the final destruction of the city of Arzaškun by Shalmaneser III, after which it would have been decided to move the capital on the shores of Lake Van, to a city that probably already existed[141].

In the last quarter of the 9th century BCE, Urartu was a well-organized state entity, with a king, a capital and a strong army: the subsequent paralysis of the Assyrian ruling dynasty, due to the death of Shalmaneser III, further favoured the circumstances of its development.

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[134] Fuchs 2012: 160. Ashurnasirpal II never mentions wars against Urartu, but talks instead about campaigns towards Nairi; the cartouche corresponding to Balawat's relief is "⌜ti-du⌝-ku [...] KUR ú-[r]i?-na", "Battle ... Mount Urina (?)", quoted in RIMA 2: A.0 .101.1 in the description of the campaign against Tumme: the warriors depicted on this band wear crested helmets typical of the future depictions of Urartian soldiers at the time of Shalmaneser III, therefore it is believed possible that the enemy army depicted here corresponds to the Urartian one (Curtis - Tallis 2008: 55, figs. 59-60).

[135] Kroll 2012a: 168.

[136] CTU A 1-1, l. 1.

[137] Already Benedict 1960: 103, refused to explain the name as a Hurrian compound of the type "Luti-ipri", asserting that "in any case if we knew more about Urartian the name could probably be explained perfectly well from that language".

[138] Fuchs 2012: 159; here is a detailed explanation of the scholar's proposal with the previous bibliography. This proposal, however, contrasts with a later hypothesis, which sees the identification of the Assyrian writing of the name *Arame* with the Urartian writing *Erimena*.

[139] Salvini 1967: 78. Salvini 1987: 377, believes that Arame was an Aramean sovereign so that the subsequent change of dynasty would also mark the prevalence of a different ethnic element, the Urartian one.

[140] A dynastic change is also proposed by Batmaz 2012: 33-34 and in several papers by Mirjo Salvini

[141] See above.

2.1.9.Šamši-Adad V

In the inscriptions of Šamši-Adad V (823-811 BCE), there is no mention of wars against Urartu: in fact, this name is not mentioned even once, and it is preferred to use the term Nairi. In this case, the toponym Nairi indicated the whole territory of the Armenian Highlands, since expressions such as LUGAL.MEŠ-*ni* DÛ-*šunu ša Nairi*[142], "all the kings of Nairi", kings from whom he receives horses as tribute, still referred to it. After the first campaign towards Nairi, in which no battles are explicitly described but of which it is said "at that time, I spread over the entire land Nairi like a net"[143], a second expedition to the north follows, entrusted to chief eunuch Mutarriṣ-Aššur. In this campaign, directed towards the region of Urmia[144], the chief eunuch razed eleven fortified towns and another two hundred belonging to a certain Ušpina. The name can easily be linked to the Urartian Išpuini, the second sovereign who left written sources: between the last mention of an Urartian king and this moment, 821 BCE, the Urartians had expanded to the south of Lake Urmia, in what is traditionally considered the territory of Gilzānu[145]. Once again, at the end of the expedition, Šamši-Adad V received a tribute from the kings of Nairi. Several lines later[146], the Assyrian king erected a colossal statue in the fortified city of Sibara, in the territory of Gilzānu: on the statue were engraved stories of his deeds in the territory of Nairi. This data may give rise to the hypothesis that Gilzānu should be considered one of the territories of Nairi, otherwise it would not explain the choice of placing a statue with such a narrative: even the statues placed by previous kings, bearing the stories of the expeditions against Nairi, were placed in the centres of the towns in Nairi. The last mention of Nairi in the reports of the sovereign is a few lines later, where he confirms that he has imposed tribute in horses on all the kings of the lands of Nairi[147].

2.1.10. Adad-nirari III

In the texts of Adad-nirari III (810-783 BCE) only Nairi is mentioned, whose numerous kings, subjected to Assyrian tribute[148], are recorded; the sovereign used the title of conqueror of "all the lands of Nairi", KUR *Nairi ana pat gimriša*[149]. The Assyrian king was present in the area south of Urmia, of primary interest also for the Urartians, but seemed to accept the expansion of Urartu towards the west, although this meant the end of the small kingdoms of Alzi/Enzi and Suhnu, over which Shalmaneser III had claimed his supremacy[150].

[142] RIMA 3: A.0.103.1 ii, ll. 3-4. This annalistic inscription is dated to 813 BCE, thus covering almost all the years of the sovereign's reign.
[143] RIMA 3: A.0.103.1 ii, ll. 4-6. A description of the Assyrian Empire "from the
city Paddira of the land Nairi to the city Kār-Shalmaneser" (ll. 7-9) follows that passage: the city of Paddira is not mentioned in the Urartian sources.
[144] In RIMA 3: A.0.103.1 ii, l. 23, the king Šarṣina of Mannaea is mentioned, around the lake Urmia (Diakonoff 1985: 65-66).
[145] Fuchs 2012: 140.
[146] RIMA 3: A.0.103.1 iii, ll. 20-27.
[147] RIMA 3: A.0.103.1 iii, l. 64.
[148] RIMA 3: A.0.104.7, l. 12.
[149] RIMA 3: A.0.104.8, l. 9.
[150] Fuchs 2012: 139-140.

2.1.11. Shalmaneser IV

An almost simultaneous generational change in Assyria and Urartu, and a renewal of confidence in their respective chances of success, put an end to an era of relative non-belligerence[151]. The text engraved on two colossal stone lions, found in Kār-Shalmaneser[152], has the form of a royal dedicatory inscription but the author is the *turtānu* of the king Shalmaneser IV (782-773 BCE), Šamši-ilu: after the praise to the gods, the inscription narrates a successful campaign against the Urartian king Argištu, ^{m}*Argištu* KUR *Urartū*. To this king is ascribed a massive army, "huge like a thick cloud"[153]. Argištu deployed his army in the land of the Guti, in the Zagros region south of Urmia[154]; here, too, the Urartian king was defeated and fled "like a thief"[155], abandoning his troops. The inscription is damaged and it is not known how the battle against the rebels in the north will end; however, the text is important, thanks to the mention of a new Urartian king, who was fighting to reaffirm his possessions in the region of Urmia. The battle is dated to 774 BCE[156], the penultimate year of the reign of Shalmaneser IV, who consigned to his successor a northern territory still in turmoil, even after all the campaigns against Urartu reported in the eponymous chronicles from 781 BCE[157].

The Assyrian sources are not full of details regarding the deeds of the two successive rulers, Aššur-dan III (772-755 BCE) and Aššur-narari V (754-745 BCE): few fragmentary texts have survived, and there is no mention of Urartu or Nairi in them. This lack of sources is probably due to the internal crisis in Assyria, between 765 and 746 BCE[158], if only from Urartian inscriptions it is known that between the last year of the reign of Aššur-dan III and the first year of Aššur-narari V the *turtānu*, still Šamši-ilu, suffered a mighty defeat inflicted by the Urartian Sarduri (son of Argišti), who reported this event in his Annals[159]. The success of Sarduri II is, however, indicative of the weak offensive of the Kingdom of Urartu, which was unable to fully exploit the period of internal crisis in Assyria to inflict a definitive defeat on them[160]. The northern kingdom thus awakes the interest of the Assyrians again only during the reign of Tiglath-Pileser III.

2.1.12. Tiglath-Pileser III

The military *impasse* between Assyria and Urartu was confirmed under the reign of sovereign Tiglath-Pileser III (744-727 BCE), who was able to defeat the Urartian army in field battles in northern Syria

[151] Fuchs 2012: 140.
[152] RIMA 3: A.0.104.2010. Grayson assigns the text to the king Adad-nirari III, but see Fuchs 2012: 136, fn. 7: "Die beiden Texte gehören in die Zeit Shalmanesers IV. und sind in der Ausgabe Graysons zu Unrecht Adad-narari III. zugeordnet worden, denn weder dessen Inschriften noch die Eponymenchroniken bieten irgendeinen Hinweis, dass dieser König jemals einen Krieg gegen Urartu geführt hat".
[153] RIMA 3: A.0.104.2010, l. 12.
[154] Van de Mieroop 2012, entry "Gutians" in the *Encyclopædia Iranica*: "the term Gutian has no value as indication of a specific people and merely suggests uncivilized people from the Zagros. Any hostile group could be called Gutian. The Assyrian royal annals use the word Gutians when they refer to Iranian populations otherwise known as the Mannaeans or the Medes".
[155] RIMA 3: A.0.104.2010, l. 17.
[156] Fuchs 2012: 136.
[157] Fuchs 2012: 140, fn. 49.
[158] Fuchs 2008: 89-90.
[159] Fuchs 2008: 89.
[160] Fuchs 2012: 140.

but failed to besiege the capital, Tušpa[161]. The conflict against Urartu took place both in the east and west, as the kingdom expanded in a westerly direction towards the sources of the Euphrates, and an easterly direction towards the region south of Lake Urmia.

To the second year of the reign of Tiglath-Pileser III (743 BCE) is dated the rebellion of Matīʾil, son of Attar-šumqi, king of Arpad[162], with whom Sarduri of the land Urarṭu, Sulumal of the land Melid, (and) Tarqularu of the land Gurgum[163] will soon ally. The alliance was defeated by the Assyrian king in a battle that took place in the region of Kummuḫu[164], between the cities of Kištan and Ḫalpi, in Upper Euphrates[165], mainly against the Urartian army; the Urartian king, once again, escaped at night riding a mare to return to his country[166]. A new anti-Assyrian alliance in the north-western territories is dated by the eponymous chronicles to 735 BCE[167] and is described in a version of the Annals[168] found in Nimrud and composed around 730 BCE: in this case, the revolt was started by Sarduri himself[169], allied with Matīʾil against the Assyrian king. Following the defeat inflicted on the rebels by Tiglath-Pileser III, Sarduri was confined to the city of Ṭurušpa, in front of whose gates the Assyrian sovereign erected his statue[170]. The breadth of the Urartian territory is confirmed by the statement "for a distance of seventy leagues, I proudly marched through the extensive land of Urarṭu"[171]. A few lines later, the annexation of a series of territories to Assyria is confirmed, among which are the Urartian fortresses located beyond Mount Nal[172], on the border between Assyria and Urartu, followed by the annexation of other Urartian fortresses[173] located along the course of a river and incorporated into the province of the territories of Nairi, NAM KUR *Nairi*[174]. A last mention of Nairi can be found on two orthostats from Nimrud[175], dated 738 BCE, bearing a very damaged inscription, in which a generic eunuch governor of Nairi, conqueror of the Anatolian city of Supurgillu, is named.

[161] Fuchs 2012: 140.
[162] Bryce 2012: 308.
[163] RINAP 1: Tiglath-Pileser III 35 i, ll. 21'-27'.
[164] Grayson 1992: 74, "Kummukhu had recently become a vassal state of Urartu".
[165] In RINAP 1: Tiglath-Pileser III 47, l. 48, an additional geographical indication on the course of the battle is given since it is said "with the blood of] their [warr]iors [I dyed] the Sinzi River as red as dyed wool": the Sinzi River is identified with the modern Göksu River, which flows through the Besni region near the Adıyaman Province.
[166] RINAP 1: Tiglath-Pileser III 35 i, ll. 32'-37'.
[167] Millard 1994: 54.
[168] RINAP 1: Tiglath-Pileser III 39. Further references to this episode can be found in several versions of the king's annalistic accounts, including the text Tiglath-Pileser III 41, where, at lines 20'-21', it is stated that the Urartian sovereign escaped on a mare on Mount Sizir, "possibly the mountain called Sisira or Susan (mod. Suson Dagh), west of Bitlis" (Wiseman 1956: 126). A brief reference to this battle can be found in a fragmentary text (RINAP 1, Tiglath-Pileser III 36, ll. 10-11) which tells of a new campaign against Urartu during the eleventh year of Tiglath-Pileser's reign, in 735 BCE: the inscription presents "[Sarduri of the land Urar]ṭu, whom [I defeated] on a previou[s campaign of mines...]", but the conditions of the text are extremely fragmentary and the outcome of the new campaign has not been preserved.
[169] RINAP 1: Tiglath-Pileser III 39, ll. 20-22.
[170] Parallel passages can be found in other versions of the annals, including RINAP 1: Tiglath-Pileser III 41, ll. 21'-26'; 49 obv., ll. 3'-5'. Grayson 1992: 76: "The city did not fall".
[171] RINAP 1: Tiglath-Pileser III 39, l. 24.
[172] RINAP 1: Tiglath-Pileser III 39, ll. 25-28, lists the names of these fortresses.
[173] RINAP 1: Tiglath-Pileser III 39, ll. 32-36, lists the fortresses. A parallel passage can be found in RINAP 1: Tiglath-Pileser III 49 obv., ll. 11'-19'.
[174] RINAP 1: Tiglath-Pileser III 39, l. 36.
[175] RINAP 1: Tiglath-Pileser III 13 and 14.

Nairi and Urartu are two very distinct entities: Nairi is now an Assyrian province, probably located in the region of Urmia and including a series of previously autonomous territories; Urartu is instead a political entity located near Lake Van, whose kings are strong enough to cause repeated Assyrian interventions.

The years between 728 and 722 BCE, the reign of Shalmaneser V, are not documented in the sources, which are instead abundant during the reign of Sargon II.

2.1.13. Sargon II

The period of Sargon II's reign (721-705 BCE) is very well documented, especially concerning his relations with the northern countries: in addition to the royal, dedicatory and poetic inscriptions, there is abundant administrative documentation in the form of royal correspondence with the governors located in several provinces of the Empire. In chronological order[176], the first information about Urartu is provided by the text of the Annals of Sargon II: in the third year of his reign (719 BCE), the Assyrian sovereign deported governors of the northern provinces who conspired with the Urartian king Ursâ/Rusa[177], signalling a sort of Mannaean alliance with Urartu. This pro-Urartian predisposition of Mannaea encouraged Ursâ to foment the rebellion of the governors of Uišdiš and Zikirtu[178], Mannaean provinces, against their king, Aza, killed and replaced on the throne by his brother Ullusunu[179]: the new king urged other Mannaean governors to rebel against Assyria, "forcing them to serve the Kingdom of Urartu"[180], to whom Ullusunu gave twenty-two of his fortresses[181]. In the seventh year of his reign (715 BCE), Sargon II attacked the Urartian territories in order to recover the fortresses and return them to the Mannaeans[182]. The same pretext, the safeguard of the Mannaean territories, is invoked as a justification for his Eighth Campaign[183], narrated in a poetic text, an expedition in the Urartian territories during Sargon II's eighth year of reign[184]. The narration of the campaign begins after a long preamble in which it is said that Ullusunu, tired of Urartian domination, addressed the Assyrian king[185]. Sargon II, therefore, decided to leave for this expedition, fighting against Ursâ the Urartian and his only ally, Metatti of Zikirtu, in a battle near Mount Uauš[186]. The description of the battle has an epic tone, involving only the Assyrian king and his charioteer, engaged in a fight with the entire enemy army:

[176] The diagram provided by Roaf 2012a is followed here.
[177] RINAP 2: Sargon II 1, ll. 66-67.
[178] Salvini 1995a: 139: "Il faut imaginer une situation politique analogue à celle des peuples de la Gaule à l'époque de' César, divisés entre eux, mais qui reconnaissaient parfois un chef suprême".
[179] RINAP 2: Sargon II 1, ll. 78-81.
[180] RINAP 2: Sargon II 1, ll. 83-85.
[181] RINAP 2: Sargon II 1, l. 101, the Assyrian version, to be probably considered partisan, states that the Urartian king Ursâ had stolen these fortresses from Ullusunu by deception.
[182] RINAP 2: Sargon II 1, ll. 101-106. Salvini 1995a: 139: "Les Urartéens considéraient Mana/Mannea comme étant potentiellement une province urartéenne - en effet ils y installent un gouverneur -, tandis que les Assyriens, qui ne peuvent pas garder le contrôle de cette région pendant l'hiver, visent à créer un petit royaume autonome, allié de l'Assyrie".
[183] Foster 2005: 790 ff. Interpretations and geographical attempts to identify the places mentioned in the text have been undertaken by several scholars.
[184] A governor's letter is preserved (SAA 19, 076): he is enthusiastic about the Assyrian march on Urartu and urges Sargon to occupy Tušpa and take over Urartian territory.
[185] Foster 2005: 794, ll. 50-65.
[186] Identified, already from Thureau-Dangin in 1912, with Mount Sahand in present-day Iranian Azerbaijan. Bryce 2009: 735, "Mt Uaush (Mt Sahen, south of Tabriz?)".

Ursâ, like his predecessors, left the camp riding a mare to save his life, and the Urartian troops retreated. After a short trip towards Andia and Zikirte, to the east, Sargon II decided to turn back and cross the entire Urartian territory, described a few lines earlier as an "extensive country". In this passage, Sargon II described some Urartian cities, including Ulhu, "Ursâ's pleasure resort", Sarduriḫurda[187], Arbu, "Ursâ's ancestral city" and Riar, "city of Sarduri"; he destroyed these towns, the neighbouring villages, the royal family's residences, and a temple of Ḫaldia. There is also a mention of Yanzu, king of the Nairi lands, whose capital city was Ḫubuškia, who paid tribute to Sargon II on his way to Assyria. An event that disturbed the Assyrian king was the "rebellion" of Urzana, governor of Muṣaṣir, which did not pay tribute to the sovereign's passage; Sargon, enraged and always in the sole company of his trusty charioteer, ventured on the impassable road to Muṣaṣir. At this point, there is a brief digression on the coronation of the Urartian kings, which took place right in the city of Muṣaṣir[188]. After learning of the sack of Muṣaṣir, Ursâ was tormented and suffering: "he collapsed on the ground, tore his garments to shreds, and threw up his hands (in despair). He flung away his headgear, tore out his hair, pounded his chest with both hands, then threw himself flat on his face. His heart stood still, his feelings burned within him, screams of grief rose from his lips"[189]. The Annals report, instead, a different end for the Urartian king[190], who put an end to his life by piercing his heart with a sword, after learning of the devastation of Muṣaṣir (714 BCE). Ursâ's death would here collide with a later mention of him, again in the Annals[191], dated to the ninth year of the reign of Sargon II (713 BCE), according to which the Urartian king Ursâ received a message from Ambaris, king of Tabal[192].

In addition to the official narrative, Ursâ of Urartu is mentioned in a series of texts from Sargon's private correspondence: in one of them[193], it is told how Ursâ defeated a chief cupbearer and his army, and occupied his fortress. Ursâ then marched from Tušpa to the territory of Eti(u)ni[194], but at some point, changing his mind, he turned towards Assyria; the Assyrian governor occupied Sarduriani and the cities beyond Zab, sending a messenger to Ursâ to inform him of a third attack carried out by Assyrian troops. In a speech made by a later Urartian king[195], probably Argišti, Ursâ is mentioned as a comparison, stating that neither the present king nor Ursâ intended to destroy the Assyrian territory; three other extremely fragmentary letters mention Ursâ[196], but their content is unfortunately not clear. A generic king of Urartu, whose name is not specified, is mentioned in other documents of the Sargonid

[187] Zimansky 1985: 42, "The contrast between that description (of the previous city, Ulḫu) and the rather perfunctory notes about Sardurihurda, which are omitted entirely in the annals, leads one to doubt that the latter did indeed fall to the Assyrians. (…) It is not unreasonable to assume that Sardurihurda was in fact the place where Ulhu's population sought refuge".
[188] Kravitz 2003: 93-4, rightly argues that the digression on Urartian customs was placed to justify Sargon II's attack on a centre that did not belong to the Kingdom of Urartu.
[189] Foster 2005: 812, ll. 410-415.
[190] RINAP 2: Sargon II 1, l. 164. Ursâ's death is also narrated in Sargon II's Display Inscription (RINAP 2: Sargon II 7, ll. 76-77) and in the inscription engraved on Sargon's Cylinder (RINAP 2: Sargon II 43, l. 27), which dates the Urartian's suicide to 713 BCE.
[191] RINAP 2: Sargon II 1, l.199.
[192] See the discussion in the following chapter.
[193] SAA 19, 071.
[194] SAA 19, 072.
[195] SAA 05, 095.
[196] SAA 05, 031 – 162 and 187.

correspondence: in one letter[197] it even seems that Sargon II himself wrote to the king of Urartu[198] about an Urartian governor that the Assyrian king would appoint *turtānu*.

Several important letters deal with the Urartian defeat against the Cimmerians[199], which, on this occasion, entered for the first time within the near-eastern history's frame: a preamble to the battle[200] is reported by some letters, which narrate the departure of the Urartian king and his army leading to Elizzada[201], and the installation of the governor Kaqqadanu in the city of Waisi, followed by five other Urartian governors[202]. The name of the Urartian king is mentioned in a single letter[203], which states that "the Cimmerian (king) has departed from Mannea this [...] and entered Urarṭu. He is ... [in] Hu'diadae; Sarduri is [...] in Ṭur[u]špâ"[204]. Concerning Urzana, it is said that the governor of Waisi sent a messenger to Muṣaṣir, in order to ask for help from what he believes to be an ally. It is also said that the entire population of Urartu was very frightened: the king planned to attack the Cimmerians once the snow had fallen[205]. Finally, the Urartian king arrived in Waisi[206] in order to fight the battle against the enemies. The letters concerning the outcome of the Cimmerian campaign are mainly sent by Sennacherib, at the time Crown Prince, who proves that he had again contacts with Urzana[207], governor of Muṣaṣir and informer of the Assyrians. He narrates the Urartian defeat and the killing of the governor of the city of Waisi, where Urartian troops were stationed. Urzana is mentioned in other Assyrian letters[208], in which he is indicated as their ally. Further information about the Urartian defeat comes from the news given to Sennacherib by the king of Ukku[209], who added that the Urartian governors killed were eleven and that the Cimmerians had taken the Urartian commander-in-chief, Kaqqadanu, as a hostage; after the defeat, the kingdom of Urartu "is quiet again"[210], and the king was staying in the province of Wazaun, where he received the visit of the governors of Muṣaṣir and Ḫubuškia. A romanticised description of

[197] SAA 01, 008.
[198] In SAA 05: XIX, this king is identified as Ursâ.
[199] The dating of the conflict against the Cimmerians is not known with certainty; Fuchs 2012: 156, believes that the date of the battle is around 709 BCE, shortly after the alliance of Argišti I with Muttallu of Kummuḫi, recorded in Fuchs 1994: Prunk. 112-113: at the time of that alliance, in fact, the Urartian king was still a strong ally to be protected from; moreover, when Sargon II sent the army against Kummuḫi, in 708 BCE (Millard 1994: 48) the Urartian king fled, probably because of the already enormous defeat suffered in the war against the Cimmerians. Salvini 1995a: 144, suggests instead that the conflict should be dated to 715 BCE, before the Eighth Campaign of Sargon II, since Urzana is still presented as an Urartian ally.
[200] SAA 05, 086.
[201] Probably a town in the province of Wazaun: in the letter SAA 05, 087, it is said that the Urartian king left Tušpa to go to Wazaun.
[202] SAA 05, 087.
[203] SAA 05, 145.
[204] If one refers to a previous passage where the name Sarduri is mentioned, it appears not to be referring to the king but to "the right-hand commander-in-chief, of the family [of Sar]duri" (SAA 05, 93, ll. 6-8); the space preceding the name Sarduri, however, in SAA 05, 145, l. 11, where the cuneiform is illegible, is not large enough for "the right-hand commander-in-chief" to be mentioned. In Baker 2000, entry "Issār-dūri": "11. Urarṭian (reign of Sargon II): In a letter to the palace herald, Urdu-Sin writes that the Cimmerian (king) has departed form Mannaea [...] and entered Urarṭu; he also reports that ^{mD}15-BÀD is [...] in Ṭuruškpa (...) (not dated)"; who this Sarduri is, allocated to Ṭuruškpa, is not possible to know; it could also be a prince or heir to the throne.
[205] SAA 05, 145, recto, ll. 6-14.
[206] The king's movement is recorded in numerous missives, including SAA 05, 147; once in Waisi, the king receives messengers from Andi and Zikirtu, who ask him for help to counter Assyrian overpower (SAA 05, 164).
[207] SAA 01, 030.
[208] SAA 05, 136; SAA 05, 144; SAA 05, 146; SAA 05, 147.
[209] SAA 01, 031.
[210] SAA 01, 031, l. 27.

the defeat comes from another letter[211], also sent by Crown Prince Sennacherib, which contains information provided by the governor of the city of Ištahup, an Assyrian ally: "The Urarṭian [and his magnates were defeated] on their expedition [against] the Cimmerians, and they are very much afraid of the king, my lord. They tremble and keep silent like women, and nobody [...] the forts of the king, my lord. The situation is very good"[212]. The reports about the campaign against the Cimmerians are not limited to the letters sent by Sennacherib: more precise information about what happened inside the Urartian camp comes from several letters mentioning an alleged succession to the throne of the Urartians during the war against the Cimmerians. One of these letters[213] mentions the killing of nine Urartian governors[214], after which the king, whose name is not indicated, decided to flee in secret on horseback. The absence of the king led the Urartian troops to believe that their sovereign had been killed by the enemy: this brought to the appointment of Melarṭua, never mentioned in Urartian sources but already cited in a previous Assyrian letter[215], where he is described as the king's son, LÚ.A-*šu*. After the defeat against the Cimmerians in Guriania[216], the Urartian governors decided to rebel against their king; more precise details on this subject are provided by another letter, in which Sargon II is informed that there were twenty-one rebel governors, all arrested and killed together with their allied conspirators by the king, once he returned to Turušpa. A last letter[217] instead reports that there were no survivors of the Cimmerians' attack.

The documents mentioning Urartu in Sargon II's private correspondence also concern an alleged Mannaean attack on the Urartian cities along the coast of Lake Urmia, while the sovereign was in Tušpa with its governors, performing sacrifices to the gods[218]. The Mannaean assault is also mentioned in another missive, in which it seems that the Mannaeans attacked and occupied the Urartian fortresses along the border between the two states. Other mentions belong to mostly fragmentary letters[219], except one[220], dated 709 BCE, in which the Urartian king, probably Argišti, sent a message to the inhabitants of Kumme, a territory subject to the Assyrian rule, reassuring them about his intentions.

According to information obtained from the documents of Sargon II, Urartu was a powerful Assyrian adversary: although the sovereign wants to suggest that, after his Eighth Campaign, the kingdom and its king Rusa/Ursâ were definitively defeated, this is not evident from the "espionage" documentation preserved in the Assyrian archives. Several letters in fact report a serious defeat of Urartu by the Cimmerians in the province of Guriania, with quite controversial dates. For sure, after 714 BCE, both Assyria and Urartu avoided open wars[221].

[211] SAA 01, 032.
[212] SAA 01, 032, ll. 11-16.
[213] SAA 05, 090.
[214] See SAA 01, 031, where instead eleven governors were killed.
[215] SAA 05, 114. This letter must be dated before the appointment as sovereign of Melartua, since the king of Urartu is located with his troops in Wazana.
[216] SAA 05, 092. Guriania is indicated as a province between Urartu and Cimmeria, paying tribute to the Urartians.
[217] SAA 05, 174.
[218] SAA 05, 084.
[219] SAA 01, 001 - 010 – 029; SAA 05, 100 – 115; SAA 19, 070 - 185
[220] SAA 05, 095. The attribution of the letter to Argišti is based on the citation within it of the previous Urartian king, Ursa.
[221] Fuchs 2017: 252.

2.1.14. Sennacherib

Crown Prince Sennacherib had dealt with the Urartian territories before his ascent to the throne: during his reign (704-681 BCE), following the violent conflicts of the time of Sargon II, there is no mention of fights with the mountainous territories of the north. Urartu is mentioned *en passant* only as a geographical reference in an inscription celebrating the dig of a canal[222].

2.1.15. Esarhaddon

The Assyrian king Esarhaddon (680-669 BCE) reported a small quarrel between the governor of Šubria and the Urartian king, once again called Ursâ, who demanded the return of some Urartian fugitives taking refuge in the territory of Šubria: the governor of Šubria did not satisfy the Urartian request, which was instead accommodated by Esarhaddon himself when he conquered the region of Šubria[223] in 673 BCE. Several oracular enquiries also date back to the time of Esarhaddon: if the northern borders were to appear safe to the Assyrians, because of the double defeat inflicted on Urartu by Sargon II and the Cimmerian attack, the weakness of the Urartian kingdom had paved the way for the incursions of the Cimmerian people in Anatolia[224]. For this reason, several texts report the sovereign's concerns about the northern borders of his empire and the fear of an Urartian-Cimmerian alliance: "[will Ursâ, king of Ur]arṭ[u], whom they call Yaya[225], [...] whom they call king of Pa[...], strive and plan? Will he, [whether ...] or on the advice [of his counsellor]s, together with his army, [or with the] Cimmerians or any of his a[ll]ies, [take] the road from where they are to wage war, kill, plunder, and loot, and [com]e to Šubria, [whether to] the city Pumu, or to the city Kulimmeri, or to the fortified cities of Šubria?"[226]. The king's concerns must have been very serious, if even before sending a messenger to the territory of Ḫubuškia he felt the need to formulate an oracular request[227], asking whether the peoples of the north (Urartians, Cimmerian, Mannaeans, Scythians, *lū Urarṭaya lū Gimirraya lū Mannaya lū Iškuzaya*[228]) would have intended to attack his envoy. Also because of the weakening inflicted by both Sargon II and the Cimmerians, the political correspondence of Esarhaddon does not contain many mentions of the Kingdom of Urartu, which was, however, kept under control because of the fear of the nomadic warriors Cimmerians and Scythians, and not because of the worry of a proper Urartian insurrection[229]. Esarhaddon seems more frightened by the alleged deserters in the territories of Urartu, Mannaea, Media and Ḫubuškia, so much to give orders to the Assyrian garrisons stationed in those regions to capture all the deserters and hand them over to the Assyrian Crown Prince[230]. The other mention of Urartu in the Assyrian political correspondence of this period are too fragmentary to be reconstructed: only a letter

[222] RINAP 3: Sennacherib 223.
[223] RINAP 4: Esarhaddon 33 iii, ll. 23'-34'.
[224] SAA 04: LVIII-LIX.
[225] This is not attested elsewhere.
[226] SAA 04, 018, ll. 4-7; possibly, a similar question was also asked to the oracle in text 019, ll. 9-11.
[227] SAA 04, 024.
[228] SAA 04, 024, ll. 9-10 e ll. 9'-10'.
[229] SAA 16, pp. XXV-XXVI.
[230] SAA 16, 148, ll. obv 9-recto 8.

with a reference to the Urartian king[231] and an incomplete report from the border with the territory of Urartu is mentioned[232].

2.1.16. Ashurbanipal

The last Assyrian mentions of the kingdom of Urartu come from the corpus of king Ashurbanipal (668-631 BCE). An unsuccessful attack of Andaria, Assyrian governor of the Urartian province, against the territories of Uppumu and Kullimmeri, is reported in several inscriptions[233], in two of which is added that the Urartian king, again Ursâ, in 652 BCE ordered the envoy of a delegation of ambassadors to Arbela, bearer of many gifts, to inquire about the health of the sovereign after the war against Elam and to pay him homage for the victory[234]. In the so-called "Prism A" or "Rassam Prism"[235] there is mention of an Urartian sovereign called Sarduri, who recognized the sovereignty of Ashurbanipal over his own by sending him numerous messengers: in one passage[236] it is made explicit that, while Sarduri's ancestors used to treat the Assyrian king as a brother, ŠEŠ-*utu*, Sarduri's relationship with Ashurbanipal is rather based on a son-father model, *kima ša* DUMU *ana* AD-*šu*; the Kingdom of Urartu is eventually recognized as a vassal state of Assyria by the Urartians themselves. Two letters exchanged between the Assyrian and the Urartian kings are preserved: in the letter sent by Ashurbanipal[237], unfortunately extremely incomplete, the Assyrian king addresses to Urartian calling him "his son", DUMU-*šu*[238], taking an interest in the state of his palace and his kingdom; the text of the letter is almost completely lost, but the word "friend" is clearly read, and it probably refers to the Urartian king. The letter sent by the Urartian Sarduri[239], on the other hand, opens with a request for explanations in the face of the unjust treatment given to him by Ashurbanipal: here, the Urartian calls the Assyrian "the king, my lord", LUGAL *belī*[240], and draws attention to his appropriate behaviour in front of Ashurbanipal. The letter continues by answering the request for lapis lazuli made by the Assyrian king, for which Sarduri proposes to send an army in order to take possession of them, given the importance of the material in Urartu and the possible revolts that would be unleashed if Sarduri tried to take them on his own. This revolt is probably referred to by a lacunose enquiry of Ashurbanipal to the Sun God[241], in which he wonders whether the sovereign (probably) of the kingdom, "taken by the sword", will survive, or whether the rebellion will take over: here, the attention is captured by this rebellion, of which Urartian sources make no mention, but which is admissible if we think that Sarduri, Urartian epigone, has lost much of his strength, and perhaps even his acceptance by his people by submitting to Assyria and taking possession of material considered extremely valuable, the lapis lazuli, to give to the Assyrian king.

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[231] SAA 16, 151.
[232] SAA 16, 018.
[233] RINAP 5: Ashurbanipal 3-4-6-7.
[234] RINAP 5: Ashurbanipal 6 vii, ll. 20'-28', Ashurbanipal 7 vii, ll. 11-20, Ashurbanipal 35, ll. 3-8.
[235] RINAP 5: Ashurbanipal 11. An identical but more fragmentary passage can also be found in RINAP 5: Ashurbanipal 23, ll. 121-124.
[236] RINAP 5: Ashurbanipal 11 x, ll. 41-45.
[237] SAA 21, 078.
[238] SAA 21, 078, r. 2.
[239] SAA 21, 124.
[240] SAA 21, 124, r. 6.
[241] SAA 04, 205.

The last Assyrian mentions of Urartu portray it as a weak statelet led by an even weaker sovereign, and are much later than the last Urartian epigraphs; they help to determine the duration of the reign, a pale imitation of what it once was, at least until the middle of the 7th century BCE. Assyrian sources became increasingly rare, until the fall of Assyria in 612 BCE. The last Mesopotamian source that mentions Urartu later is the Babylonian Chronicle: the first mention of Urartu, written ^{URU}Ú-ra-áš-ṭu[242], belongs in the description of the fall of Nineveh, while the second mention is within the chronicle of the last years of the reign of Nabopolassar, dated to the year 608 BCE and rendered in ^{KUR}Ú-ra-áš-ṭu[243]. In both cases, it must be assumed that the toponym was used as a mere geographical reference to indicate a territory roughly corresponding to the sources of the Tigris river[244], without deducing the existence of a royal house or a kingdom still existing.

In the Assyrian sources, one can read the complete history of Urartu, from its beginning to its end, implementing the lacunae of the obscure Urartian sources, providing further details on the politics, economy, and customs of the kingdom. All this information should be read keeping in mind the purpose for which it was written, and it is necessary to skim the less realistic and more propagandistic details. Sargon II's letter to the gods, the account of the Eighth Campaign, for example, describes Ursâ/Rusa as a mountain man, seed of a murderous lineage, senseless, lying and insidious[245]: it is clear that the Assyrian judgment intended to attract the sympathy of the people to their king[246], who emphasized the dark sides of his enemy in order to justify his attack. What emerges without a doubt is that Assyria and Urartu were rivals from the middle of the 9th to the end of the 8th century BCE, while, in the 7th century BCE, they lived in relative peace for about sixty years. The Urartian threat has never been deadly for Assyria, although Assyrian weakness had been a necessary condition for Urartian expansion: usually, the fights between the two kingdoms took place in the area of northern Iran or the Taurus mountain range, thus rarely involving the vital centres of the two powers[247]. Urartian concerns were certainly not focused on Assyria, so much so that when Sargon II penetrated the eastern section of the Kingdom, he came across a complicated defence system consisting of fortresses and evacuation and alert procedures[248]: these precautionary measures should not have been taken for fear of an Assyrian attack, since such an eventuality had never occurred in those areas. Certainly, a danger, coming from the East, with which the Urartians had to interface, was constituted by the Cimmerian people, whose attack is known only from Assyrian sources; nomadic peoples, Cimmerians and Scythians, not the Assyrian armies, may have to be involved in the final destruction of the kingdom, as tentatively demonstrated by the analysis of various archaeological data[249].

[242] Grayson 2000: Chronicle 3, l. 72.
[243] Grayson 2000: Chronicle 4, r. 3.
[244] Kroll 1984: 166-167.
[245] Foster 2005: 796, ll. 90-96.
[246] That the Letter to the Gods of Sargon II should actually have been read in front of an audience is an idea first proposed by Oppenheim 1960, and then taken up by Kravitz 2003.
[247] Although Tiglath-Pileser III, in 735, manages to reach the Urartian capital Tušpa, he is unsuccessful in his attempt to conquer or plunder it.
[248] Foster 2005: 801-807.
[249] Fuchs 2017: 252-253.

2.2. The Bible as a source

The Urartian state is indicated in the Bible using the phonetic form *Ararat*, derived from the vocalisation of the biblical text by the Masoretes, who had forgotten the original pronunciation hidden under the Hebrew רראט, and, nevertheless, retained the geographical location in a mountainous area to the north-east of the horizon of the biblical world. The mentions of the Kingdom of Urartu within the Old Testament are essentially five: the first belongs to the story of Noah's landing on the mountains of Ararat[250], the only citation of this name used as an oronym. The other mentions use the term as a toponym: three of them are parallel versions of the assassination of Sennacherib[251], dated 681 BCE and included in the passage narrating the siege of Jerusalem. The Assyrian king was assassinated by his second son, Arda-Mullissi[252], who fled to the land of Ararat after the death of his father: historically, this has no proof of truthfulness, since no sources outside the Bible have been found to confirm this flee. However, this may be intended to clarify the relationship between Assyria and Urartu, a country that was still an enemy, as it would welcome the Assyrian king's murderer into its territory, according to the principle that "the enemy of my enemy is my friend"[253]. The Kingdom of Ararat is mentioned, finally, in the context of a speech made by God about the fall of Babylon[254], together with the two kingdoms of Minni / Mannea and Ashkenazi / Scythia: this passage is not historically accurate, since it is not the Kingdom of Babylon, but rather Assyria, to entertain warlike relations with Urartu. This last passage was, however, rather important in the field of Urartian studies, since it allowed to determine, at least until it was proven wrong, that the Kingdom of Urartu survived until the middle of the 6th century BCE. Scholars' arguments in favour of a late end of the Kingdom start from the Babylonian Chronicle[255], which cites the toponym Urartu/Uraštu during the account of the last years of the reign of Nabopolassar. The key to supporting this hypothesis was found precisely in the previously mentioned account of Jeremiah, whose "Curse of Babel", dated to the year 594 BCE, lists the Kingdom of Urartu as the bulwark of the war against Babylon. In fact, these biblical chapters were composed in a different era from that of Jeremiah, probably before him, and later included in the prophet's account: this passage cannot be used as proof of the existence of the Kingdom of Urartu in 594 BCE[256].

The mentions of Urartu in the Bible are therefore reduced at the same time to mere geographical indications to define the Armenian Highlands and to reminiscences of a powerful Assyrian enemy, living in the mountains of Armenia, willing to host the assassin of Sennacherib and to side with other

[250] Genesis 8, 4: "In the seventh month, on the seventeenth of the month, the ark set down in the mountains of Araràt."
[251] King II 19, 37: "As he prostrated himself in the temple of Nisroc, his god, his sons Adrammelech and Sareser hit him with the sword, and they flee safe in the land of Ararát. In his place his son Assarhàddon became king". The tradition of the *Vulgata*, for this and the parallel passages, bears the words *fugeruntque in terram Armeniorum*.
Tobias 1,21: "Not even forty days later, the king was killed by two of his sons, who then fled to the mountains of Araràt. He was succeeded then by his son Assarhaddon".
Isaiah 37, 38: "As he prostrated himself in the temple of Nisroc, his god, his sons Adrammelech and Sareser hit him with the sword, and they flee safe in the land of Ararát. In his place his son Assarhàddon became king".
[252] Parpola 1980, identifies the Adrammèlec of the biblical tradition with the Akkadian name Arda-Mullissi mentioned in the letter SAA 18, 100, which contains a warning to the sovereign about his son's intentions.
[253] Marinković 2012: 217-222.
[254] Jeremiah 51, 27: "Raise a banner in the land, blow the horn among the nations, summoning them to war against it (=Babylon); recruit against it the kingdoms of Ararát, Minni, and Aschenáz".
[255] See above.
[256] Kroll 1984: 167- 169.

Caucasian or North-Iranian populations against the Babylonian enemy: of the ancient glories of the Urartian kingdom had lost its memory, retaining only the idea of the location of an Assyrian adversary settled in the northern mountainous territories.

2.3. Hieroglyphic Luwian Sources

From the sources in hieroglyphic Luwian[257] one can only suppose the name used to refer to the Kingdom of Urartu. These sources considered come from Karkemish and are dated to the 8th century BCE; in them, the toponym is mentioned twice[258]. The term used is *Sura/i*, recognized by Gernot Wilhelm[259] as probably referring to the Kingdom of Urartu: as the context suggests that it is a geographical entity, it could be probably linked to the formula KUR *šura=ue* of the Urartian inscriptions. The first inscription analysed reads: "they heard (it for me) among the Musa, the Muska and the Sura"[260], putting the term on the same level as other ethnonyms[261], while in the second inscription, the prince, Yariri, says that he knows twelve languages, including "the Suraean writing, the Assyrian writing and the Taimani writing"[262]: also here, it is a possible reference to the Urartian language[263].

Already in the title of king Išpuini, at the end of the 9th century BCE, one finds the formula "LUGAL ^{KUR}*šura=ue*", inserted in the royal title before "LUGAL ^{KUR}*Bia=i=na=ue*"[264], "king of Urartu"[265]. The formula is translated by Salvini as "king of the country of Šurili" or "king of countries"; the same words correspond, in the text of the bilingual stele of Kelišin[266], to the Assyrian *šar kiššati*, "king of the universe". The term cannot be considered a certain reference to the Kingdom of Urartu, since its meaning is based on a possible misinterpretation of the text of a few Urartian inscriptions; however, one should consider that the possible mention of Urartu may also have been reported in the context of the North Syrian populations of the 8th century BCE when the Urartian kingdom was at its maximum splendour.

[257] References to these sources are to be made in Hawkins 2000.
[258] There is a third inscription, Hawkins 2000: II.1 Karkamiš A4b, which probably mentions "land of Sura(?)", written CORNU + RA/I-ti(REGIO), at § 2, but the dating to the 10th century BCE makes the identification of the toponym with Urartu unlikely: the most plausible hypothesis recognizes instead a graphic rendering for "Assyria", normally written a-CORNU* + RA/I (REGIO).
[259] Wilhelm 1993.
[260] Hawkins 2000: II.22 Karkamiš A6, § 6.
[261] See the comment to § 6 in Hawkins 2000: 126.
[262] Hawkins 2000: II.24 Karkamiš A15b, § 19.
[263] See the comment to § 19 in Hawkins 2000: p. 133.
[264] CTU A 2-6C, ll. 5-6.
[265] Or, better, "king of the land of the inhabitants of Bia".
[266] CTU A 3-11. The quotes are from Ro., l. 3, and Vo., l. 2.

3. Urartian Sources

The geographical area where the Urartian Kingdom developed roughly coincides with the Armenian Highlands: the state initially developed around the capital, Tušpa, on the eastern shore of Lake Van, but Urartian foundations of considerable size and importance are also found around Yerevan and in western Azerbaijan. The limits of Urartian expansion are the upper Euphrates River to the west, the Lesser Caucasus range in Armenia to the north, much of the Iranian province of Eastern Azerbaijan to the east, and the eastern Taurus mountain range to the south[267]. Such territory was controlled, directly or indirectly, by Urartu throughout its history: this was not the maximum expansion of Urartu in a given period, but the maximum limits reached by the Kingdom at different historical moments. As already stated, Assyrian written sources mention *Uraṭri / Uruaṭri*, which can be considered the earliest form of the name Urartu, from the 13th century BCE onwards, several centuries before the "official" formation of Urartu. The initial subordination of Urartological studies to the discipline of Assyriology can still be seen in the modern denomination of the Kingdom, Urartu, according to the name given by the Assyrians themselves to this political entity developed in the north of their empire. That name has come down to the present day in the biblical form Ararat, a phonetic simplification of the Masoretic spelling אֲרָרָט. Even after the discovery of the ethnonym used by the Urartians to designate themselves, *Bia=i=ni=li* "(those) from the territory of Bia", the scientific community continued to use the name "Urartu", now crystallised and rooted in the history of studies.

The progress of historical and archaeological research in the Urartian area has made it possible to establish some fixed points in the definition of the Urartian civilisation, which is original in the Near Eastern panorama. First of all, the cuneiform script: derived from middle-Assyrian writing[268], the shape of cuneiform itself changed at the same time as the language expressed; it was, in fact, adopted in the middle of the 9th century BCE to write texts in Assyrian[269], but it was later used to write epigraphs in the Urartian language[270]. The Urartian language itself is another element of originality: spoken in the 1st millennium BCE, on the borders of the Neo-Assyrian empire, it was only related to the dialect called *ancient Hurrian*, attested mainly at the beginning of the 2nd millennium BCE in the area of Urkeš, on the modern border between Syria and Turkey[271]. Both languages, Hurrian and Urartian, were not related to other languages currently known, as they were not Semitic or Indo-European languages; the Urartian *ethnos*, also, without going into specifics, should therefore be sought in different areas than those that have seen the expansion of the Semites[272] and Indo-Europeans[273], probably in the Caucasian area itself[274]. In fact, the Urartian Kingdom lies exactly halfway between the classical Near East, represented in the 1st millennium BCE by the mighty Neo-Assyrian empire, and the Caucasian region immediately north of the Urartian territory.

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[267] Salvini 2006a: 459.
[268] Wilhelm 1986.
[269] CTU A 1.
[270] From CTU A 2. See the following chapter.
[271] Giorgieri 2000: 176.
[272] See, for different hypotheses, Moscati 1999: 654; Avanzini 2009; Kitchen et al. 2009; Phillipson 2012: 11.
[273] See the lemma "Hurriter, Hurritisch" in *RlA*, Gelb 1973: 52-57; Wilhelm 1989: 5-6;
[274] Salvini 2006a: 460, with an interesting note on this topic, "Quesiti di questo genere vengono posti del resto per tutte le popolazioni, senza che si possa trovare nelle fonti una risposta che non provochi la nuova domanda 'e prima ancora dove erano?', alla quale forse solo ricerche col DNA potranno dare una risposta che vada più in là nel tempo e nello spazio".

It is important to underline that the formation of the Urartian state was an essentially endogenous process, which did not really require an external pressure, in this case Assyrian, to develop; in this regard, it is useful to quote a passage, reported in a footnote, within a contribution by Raffaele Biscione: "The Assyrian military pressure was not continuous and constant (Badalyan et al. 2003: 148, 150). There were five raids between 1273 and late 10th century, one in 70-80 years, i.e. in 3 generations. Things changed with Adad Nirari II at the end of 10th century: there were six raids in the fifty years before Shalmaneser III. Nevertheless in mid-9th century the Urartian kingdom already existed, in 858 Shalmaneser III mentions Aramu the Urartian and his royal city Arzaškun. This means that the Urartian kingdom existed when the Assyrian pressure was at its peak. One wonders if on one side the infrequent raids of II millennium were a menace and an incentive strong enough to give birth to a state in a relatively peaceful period, and on the other if the many raids of late 10th-early 9th centuries could originate in 50 years a 'kingdom' amidst difficulties and devastations. It is logical to think that the continuous Assyrian pressure of late 10th-early 9th centuries was due to the presence of a strong proto-state structure and was the response to the birth of the Urartian kingdom, or of its immediate predecessor, not yet called Urartu"[275]. The process of formation of the Urartian state is conventionally placed at the time when Assyrian incursions into the northern mountainous territory became more frequent, from the late 10th century BCE, during the reign of Adad-Nirari II; certainly, with the first mention of Arame by Shalmaneser III[276], in the middle of the 9th century BCE, the Assyrians were facing a fairly large and well-structured territory, with a series of *al dannūti* and *al šarrūti*, "fortified cities" and "royal cities", including the centres of Arṣaškun, Sugunia and Ṭušpa/Ṭurušpâ. However, Aramu left no epigraphs or written documents in any language, and it is not clear exactly what role he played in the formation of the Urartian Kingdom, nor whether he was the official founder of the state itself. What is known is that his name is never mentioned in Urartian epigraphs, not even in those belonging to the first phase of Urartian history, which officially begins with Sarduri, son of Lutipri. The confederation of peoples who inhabited the mountainous territories north of the eastern Taurus, in this way, entered the range of Assyrian sources in the 13th century BCE, while one must wait until the second half of the 9th century BCE to read directly an actual Urartian epigraphical source.

3.1. Sarduri A Lutipri

The first written document of the Urartian Kingdom[277] is the Assyrian text composed by king Sarduri, son of Lutipri, engraved in six duplicates on the so-called *Sardursburg*, a structure that still stands at the foot of the cliff of Van. The document immediately reveals the Urartian cultural debt to the Neo-Assyrian empire, since it is written in Assyrian, following Assyrian *topoi* and using the *ductus* of Middle Assyrian cuneiform writing[278]. However, it has an original character, being the oldest known text of all the cultures of the Armenian Highlands and northern Iran. The text can be translated as follows:

(1) Inscription of Sarduri, son of Lutibri, great king, strong king, king of the world,

[275] Biscione 2019: 84, fn. 97; see also the last section of this chapter.
[276] RIMA 3: A.0.102.1, l. 30.
[277] CTU A 1-1.
[278] Wilhelm 1986.

(2) king of the land Nairi, king who has no equal, marvellous shepherd,

(3) fearless in battle, king who subdues those insubordinate to him.

(4) (I am) Sarduri, son of Lutibri, king of kings, the one who has received the tribute of all kings.

(5) (Thus) speaks Sarduri, son of Lutibri:

(6) I carried these limestone blocks from the city Alniunu (and)

(7b) I built this wall[279].

The royal titling, in Assyrian "MAN GAL-*e* MAN *dannu* MAN ŠÚ, MAN KUR.*Nairi* MAN *šāninšu* NU TUK-*ú* LÚ.SIPA *tabrâte lâdiru tuqunte* MAN *mušaknis lā kansūtēšu*", in lines 1 and 2, clearly presents elements found in texts by Ashurnasirpal II[280]. The genealogy of Sarduri is otherwise unknown: he does not declare himself to be the son of the only Urartian ruler previously mentioned in Assyrian sources, but he instead affirms to be the son of a certain Lutipri[281], hypothetically indicating a break with the dynasty of Aramu, in circumstances that remain unknown. It is also interesting to note the passage in which Sarduri claims to have obtained tribute from "all kings"[282]: firstly, because such a *formula* is found in an inscription of Shalmaneser III[283], not within the royal titles, and refers to the area around Lake Van, and, secondly, because it can be read as information on the plurality of political entities present on the Armenian Highlands. The kings mentioned in the inscription may be a hint of the presence of multiple local groups, tribes or chiefdoms, that made up the Urartian state from the beginning of history; the mention of "all kings", moreover, fits perfectly into the Assyrian tradition that, from Tukulti-Ninurta I to Ashurnasirpal II, testifies to the existence of numerous "kings of Nairi"[284]. However, it can also be that this royal title was simply used because it belonged to the Assyrian tradition, without any further meaning. The very definition of Sarduri as MAN KUR.*Nairi*[285] is significant and fits within the same earlier Assyrian tradition mentioned, even if the title given to Sarduri himself by his contemporary Assyrian scribes is not "king of Nairi", but "the Urartian"[286]. The text does not mention any military victories, but if one looks at the impressiveness of the structure on which it was engraved, one must imagine a remarkable state organisation already at this point in Urartian history. The mention of ^{m}*Sēduri* KUR *Urartā*[287] in the texts of Shalmaneser III gives another hint about Urartian power in a historical moment that can be considered "initial": the Urartian sovereign and his troops were in fact located in the Murat Su area, about 300 km west of the Van area, showing that Sarduri was already controlling a particularly large territory[288]. The territorial extension is the primary indication that Sarduri should not be considered the founder of the Urartian state; even the idea that he was the member of a new dynasty is difficult to support, considering both the extent of the area he ruled and the frequency of Assyrian attacks, which would have greatly weakened an already unconsolidated power.

[279] The translation used is the one published on the eCUT website, based on the one proposed by Salvini in CTU A 1-1 and translated in English by Birgit Christiansen.
[280] Wilhelm 1986: 103-104.
[281] Lutipri will be extensively discussed in the closing paragraph of this section.
[282] CTU A 1-1, l. 4.
[283] "I received the tribute of all the kings by the sea" (RIMA 3, A.0.102.5, l. 4).
[284] See, for example, RIMA 1: A.0.78.5, l. 45; RIMA 2: A.0.87.1 iv, l. 83; RIMA 2: A.0.101.1 ii, ll. 117-118; A.0.101.22, ll. 1'-7'.
[285] CTU A 1-1, l. 2.
[286] RIMA 3: A.0.102.14, ll. 141-146.
[287] RIMA 3: A.0.102.14, ll. 141-146.
[288] Salvini 2006a: 467.

The end of the epigraph and the mention of the city of Alniunu has been subject to various interpretations, none of which has a definite archaeological basis: it could be the quarry from which the stones used in the construction of the fortress came, or it could be a metaphorical expression indicating the shift of the royal power from one city, Alniunu, to another, Van / Tušpa[289]. Unfortunately, the toponym Alniunu[290] is a *unicum* within Urartian epigraphs, not mentioned elsewhere. Also engraved on a rock face at Van Kalesi is a sacred text in the Assyrian language attributed by scholars to Sarduri I. It is highly incomplete[291] and its exact translation cannot be provided: however, Igor M. Diakonoff defined it as a quasi-bilingual text[292], which can find a parallel in the classic Urartian *formula* of sacrifice institution. If this text was attributable to Sarduri I, it would be the first evidence of sacrifices instituted by an Urartian ruler, although still recorded in Assyrian language. Also worth mentioning is the attribution to Sarduri, son of Lutipri, only by Ursula Seidl[293], of two bronze inscribed *paterae* from Karmir-blur: both the site of discovery and the language of the epigraph, Urartian and not Assyrian, may however be an indication that they are part of the treasure of the other ruler who bears the name of Sarduri[294].

3.2. Išpuini Sarduriḫi

Išpuini, son of Sarduri, was the second Urartian ruler who left written sources; the written tradition in Urartian begins exactly with him. The king is mentioned in the Assyrian sources as "Ušpina", included in the account of a military expedition ordered by Šamšī-Adad V and dated to the year 821[295] or 820[296] BCE: "(...) On my second campaign I issued orders and sent Mutarris-Aššur, the chief eunuch, one clever and experienced in battle, a sensible man, with my troops and camp to the land Nairi. He marched as far as the sea of the west. He overcame (and) defeated 300 cities of Šarṣina, son of Meqdiara, (and) eleven fortified cities together with 200 cities of Ušpina. He carried off from them booty, property, possessions, their gods, their sons, (and) their daughters. He razed, destroyed, (and) burned their cities. On his return he defeated the people of the land Sunbu. He received tribute of teams of horses from all the kings of the land Nairi"[297]. This passage is important for two reasons: the first concerns the mention of Ušpina, a phonetic appearance that leaves no doubt as to the identification of this personage with the Urartian ruler. Secondly, the mention of a certain Šarṣina is of great interest, as he appears to possess a larger number of towns than Ušpina; this indication could be further proof of the persistence of the plurality of small political entities even during the Urartian period.

In Urartian sources, there is no mention of this defeat by the Assyrians: almost all of the sovereign's epigraphs, located in the immediate vicinity of Lake Van, concern building work as part of a programme aimed at strengthening the state power. Numerous studies refer to the sovereigns' desire to defend the

[289] Salvini 2006a: 467.
[290] Following Salvini 2018: 430, "Probabile nome antico (Sarduri I) di Edremit", in the Van province.
[291] CTU A 1-2.
[292] Diakonoff 1989: 93.
[293] Seidl 2004: 18 (A.1, A.2).
[294] Salvini 2012: 19.
[295] Salvini 2006a: 468.
[296] Fuchs 2012: 136.
[297] RIMA 3: A.0.103.1, ii 16b-34a

capital, Tušpa, by building a system of fortresses to protect it[298]: Išpuini initiated this programme by building the outposts of Kalecik, Anzaf and Zivistan during his reign, and their connection to this ruler is given by the presence of inscriptions mentioning him in these sites[299]. However, it is difficult to imagine the size of the kingdom during Išpuini's time, as the only indication of this comes from the distribution of epigraphs over the territory[300], showing that Urartian control certainly extended to the area north of Lake Van. Išpuini's architectural projects were generic buildings (É), sometimes called *burganani*, and fortresses (É.GAL), but the ruler also planted vineyards and orchards. Emblematic are the inscriptions engraved on the so-called Karahan stelae[301], a group of eight stelae signed by Išpuini (two stelae) and Minua (six stelae): the texts commemorate the erection of the first religious buildings mentioned in Urartu, a "Gate of Ḫaldi"[302] and a *ṭeribišuzi* dedicated to the god Ua, the construction of a *burganani*, and the planting of an orchard within the "City of Ḫaldi". What kind of building a *burganani* was, however, is not clear[303], but it is attested exclusively in the inscriptions of Išpuini and his son, Minua: only in one text[304] by Išpuini is it accompanied by the verb for 'to build', *šid=išt-*, while in the other attestations the verb meaning "to place / to plant", *ter=u-*, is used. According to Salvini[305], the noun *ṭeribišuzi* is another way of referring to the stelae, commonly called *pulusi*: a *ṭeribišuzi* could also define a kind of "shrine of stelae"[306], attested in archaeology precisely at Karahan[307] and probably at Altıntepe[308]. The god Ua, to whom the *ṭeribišuzi* is dedicated, is also mentioned mainly in Išpuini and Minua texts[309], with only one other reference in a much later text, the temple epigraph of Ayanis[310], from the time of Rusa Argištiḫi. Given the location of the epigraphs mentioning this deity, one can assume that the god was worshipped mainly in the area around Lake Van.

One of the most important innovations introduced by Išpuini was the use of writing the Urartian language in cuneiform characters, as one can see from the monumental epigraphs on stone and rock. Inscriptions on metals are written both in Urartian and in Assyrian, and almost all the bronze objects inscribed with the name of Išpuini come from the Yukarı Anzaf fortress[311]. The other objects bearing his name are both unprovenanced[312] or coming from the "surroundings of Patnos"[313]. The Urartian inscriptions include a fragment of a sword scabbard[314], which bears a dedication to the supreme god of the Urartian pantheon, Ḫaldi[315], and three bronze fragments belonging to an unidentifiable object[316],

[298] A summary of those studies is given in Dan 2017b: 193-196.
[299] CTU A 2-1 (Kalecik), 2-2, 2-3, 2-4, 2-5 (Zivistan), 2-6, 2-7, 2-8 (Aşağı Anzaf).
[300] See the map in CTU A: 106; Salvini 2006a: 469.
[301] CTU A 2-9.
[302] Salvini 2018: 448, "Metonimia per 'tempio, santuario', in particolare il tempio *susi*, e sineddoche per l'intera area sacra".
[303] Salvini 2018: 384-385.
[304] CTU A 2-1.
[305] Salvini 2018: 420.
[306] Salvini 1993: 547, "The laconism of Urartian royal inscriptions gives no other elements in order to judge the nature and meaning of such shrines, probably open-air sanctuaries".
[307] Salvini 1993.
[308] Özgüç 1969: 28-30.
[309] See CTU A II: 290-291.
[310] CTU A 12-1.
[311] CTU B 2-1, 2-2, 2-7, 3-1, 4-1, 4-2, 4-3.
[312] CTU B 2-3, 2-4.
[313] CTU B 2-5, 2-6.
[314] CTU B 2-1.
[315] See below.
[316] CTU B 2-2.

which are engraved with part of the sovereign's title[317]. The other inscribed bronze objects belonging exclusively to Išpuini bear inscriptions in Assyrian: the five bronze rings with an inscription obtained by punching, also found in the fortress of Yukarı Anzaf[318], in particular, bear the mention of an arsenal of the city of Uṭiruḫi, cited exclusively on this occasion.

Another novelty related to the reign of Išpuini is the introduction of the cult of Ḫaldi, who would later become the Urartian supreme god. The only other deity mentioned within Išpuini's inscriptions is the god Ua, as previously said, whose name recurs one more time, as well as in the text of the Meher Kapısı inscription[319], in an epigraph co-signed by Išpuini and Minua and celebrating the construction of a possible *susi* temple dedicated to Ua and establishing a ritual involving both Ḫaldi and Ua[320]. Urartian religion, unfortunately, did not leave many documents for its study, both because of the lack of actual mythological texts and also because the cultic and ritual texts are often composed of stereotypical formulas that are difficult to translate[321]. What can be inferred, however, is that in the texts of Sarduri, son of Lutipri, there is no mention of deities, and that the first attestation of an Urartian god appears in the inscriptions of Išpuini. Mirjo Salvini has repeatedly affirmed the role of religion as an *instrumentum regni* for the Urartian rulers[322] from the time of Išpuini[323]. Ḫaldi, whose features are similar to those of the god Aššur[324], is a deity with little known characteristics, who appears from the Middle-Assyrian period as a theophoric element in some personal names[325]; his sanctuary was located in the Zagros Mountains, in the city of Ardini / Muṣaṣir, and was probably the place of a cult that could be described as "international"[326]. The reason why Išpuini chose Ḫaldi as the supreme god of his pantheon is still unclear: on the one hand, it can be assumed it was a pragmatic solution to the problem of choosing a single supreme god among the myriad local deities worshipped by the peoples included in the Urartian kingdom, but Salvini has suggested that the choice had precise geographical reasons related to the place of origin of the Urartian *ethnos*[327], which, according to him, was located in the Zagros area. The inscriptions in which Išpuini mentions Ḫaldi[328] are mainly of a civil nature and concern building and agricultural projects, indicating that the introduction of the cult must, in any case, have preceded the general reorganization of the Urartian pantheon, which occurred more probably during the period in which the ruler associated his son's name with the dynastic succession.

[317] Another metal object, a silver situla, with the inscription ^{m}iš-pu-ú-i-ni-ni-e-i ú-ri-iš-ḫu-si-ni-e-i, "(object) from the treasure of Išpuini", has recently been re-evaluated by Salvini and attributed to the Urartian king, even if it is unprovenanced (Salvini 2018: 94).
[318] CTU B 2-7.
[319] CTU A 3-1, l. 6.
[320] CTU A 3-12.
[321] See, for example, the ritualistic section of the Meher Kapısı inscription (CTU A 3-1).
[322] Salvini 1988: 33; Salvini 2006a: 468.
[323] Not all the Urartian inscriptions by Išpuini actually mention the god Ḫaldi; see CTU A 2-1, A 2-2, A 2-5.
[324] Salvini 2006a: 468.
[325] See Saporetti 1970: 224.
[326] Radner 2012: 254, "Yet we must bear in mind that this 'holy city', to use the words of Shalmaneser I, is already attested as a transregional centre of considerable cultural influence centuries before the dynasty founded by Ispuini in the late 9th century BC took control of Urartu".
[327] Pecorella - Salvini 1984: 8; Salvini 1984: 30.
[328] Peculiar is the inscription CTU A 2-5, as it is the only document in which the king refers to a generic "Lord" instead than to Ḫaldi himself; anyway, this Lord is considered to be an implicit mention of Ḫaldi.

3.3. "Co-regency" of Išpuini Sarduriḫi e Minua Išpuiniḫi[329]

When Salvini defined Urartian religion as an *instrumentum regni*, and referred to Išpuini's desire to establish a theocratic constitution for the Urartian state, he certainly had in mind the famous text of the so-called Meher Kapısı[330], the "Gate of Mehr"; the epigraph was composed on the occasion of the construction of a "Gate of Ḫaldi", the planting of a vineyard and an orchard, and the installation of a *burganani*. From this long list of animal sacrifices dedicated to the gods of the Urartian pantheon, ordered hierarchically, several considerations of both a religious and a political nature can be drawn. The first one is that the epigraph was dedicated by Išpuini, son of Sarduri, and by Minua, son of Išpuini[331]; it is not the only inscription signed by both these sovereigns: indeed, most of Išpuini's inscriptions associate his name with his son's, destined to reign after him[332]. It is also logically inferable that the inscriptions bearing the name of both rulers were later than those signed by Išpuini alone, and so they permit to propose a relative chronology within the epigraphs of this period. Salvini noted that "I testi a doppio nome sono dedicati a grandi opere sacrali, come le epigrafi che accompagnano i santuari rupestri di Meher Kapısı e Yesilalıç[333], e la stele di Kelishin[334]; altre iscrizioni celebrano imprese militari in terre lontane"[335], allowing to conclude that religious reform must have taken place later in Išpuini's reign, after the reorganisation of the areas around the capital. It is also important to note, however, that the mentions of Minua in these texts are not accompanied by the royal title, which, when indicated, remains the exclusive prerogative of the current ruler, Išpuini[336]: this is why it may be not appropriate to speak of a "co-regency" since they were not both rulers at the same time, but rather of Išpuini's desire to ensure his son's succession to the Urartian throne. There is only one bronze object inscribed with the names of both rulers, and it is a *unicum* in Urartian art: it is the decorated shield found in numerous fragments in the fortress of Yukarı Anzaf[337], bearing the inscription "For the god Ḫaldi, the (or, resp., his/their) Lord, Išpuini, son of Sarduri, (and) [Minua, son of Išp]u[ini... (large gap, presumably to be restored by five royal titles)... lord] of Ṭušpa-City"[338]. As Salvini correctly noted[339], this is the first attestation of the title "Lord of Ṭušpa" in inscriptions on bronze objects, confirming the

[329] It is not possible to say with certainty if it was real co-regency, as already been stated (Salvini 1995: 48). Only in Meher Kapısı inscription (CTU A 3-1), the name of Išpuini is followed by royal titles. In the joint inscriptions, Minua is always indicated as 'son of Minua'. According to a recent hypothesis of the same Salvini, it is possible that some of the inscriptions of Išpuini carved on a group of column bases from Zivistan (CTU A 2-2A-E) were done by Minua instead of his father. This circumstance it was probably due to the death of Išpuini before the completion of the fortress of Zivistan, l (Salvini 2012: 321-322), which was part of the ring of fortifications of the capital (Dan 2017: 195).

[330] CTU A 3-1. An analysis of the text of this epigraph is to be found in the RlA, at the lemma Meher Kapısı compiled by Mirjo Salvini, and also in Salvini 1994.

[331] CTU A 3-1, ll. 1-2.

[332] Salvini 2006a: 469.

[333] CTU A 3-2. This epigraph is the first one to mention the construction of a *susi* temple to the god Ḫaldi. Other inscriptions mentioning the construction of a sacred building, in those cases a "Door of Ḫaldi" and a *susi* temple, are the one carved on a cubic stone found in Muchrapert, south of Lake Van (CTU A 3-3) and a stone epigraph probably found in Patnos (CTU A 3-12).

[334] CTU A 3-11.

[335] Salvini 2006a: 470.

[336] See CTU A 3-2, ll. 2-3; CTU A 3-10, l. 2; CTU A 3-11, ll. 2-3.

[337] **S-Anz-1**. CTU B 3-1; on this shield, see in particular Belli 1999. In the comment of CTU B 3-1 and in Salvini 2018: 94, the author believes that the epigraph on this shield also contained the name of Inušpua Minuaḫi.

[338] Translation in English from the eCUT website.

[339] Comment to CTU B 3-1.

trend, already observed in rock inscriptions, whereby the first mentions of this title appear in inscriptions co-signed by Išpuini and Minua.

The military expeditions previously mentioned by Salvini[340] were mainly campaigns carried out north of the Araxes river, evidenced by numerous inscriptions[341] that demonstrate the importance of this area from the Urartian point of view. These expeditions' memoirs mention by name the peoples against which Urartians fought in the territory north of the Araxes, namely Uiṭeruḫi, Luša, Katarza[342] and, generically, the kings of Etiuḫi[343], reaching the city of Anašie, which is probably also located in the Kars area[344]. A military campaign in present-day Nakhichevan is recorded in the Ojasar-Ilandagh rock inscription[345], the easternmost of the Išpuini and Minua epigraphs, in which the conquest of the cities of Arṣini and Aniani "in the country of Puluadi", i.e. in Iranian Azerbaijan, is narrated[346]; the epigraph also states that a ritual dedicated to Ḫaldi was performed in this area upon the arrival of the rulers. The expeditions of the two rulers also arrived in the basin of Lake Urmia, as narrated by the text of the stele found in the village of Karagündüz[347] and evidenced by the Qalatgah inscription[348]: The first one tells the military campaign towards the town of Mešta and the village of Paršua, with an abundance of details about the equipment and numbers of the Urartian army, while the second epigraph, extremely damaged and poorly engraved, is important for its place of discovery, just south of Lake Urmia, proving that Urartians did indeed arrive in the area.

One expedition in particular, not military but of a cultic nature, went as far as the modern Iranian-Iraqi border to reach the place of worship of the god Ḫaldi, Ardini/ Muṣaṣir; this campaign is narrated in the text of the bilingual Kelishin stele[349], found *in situ* at the pass bearing the same name, in the Zagros mountains. This voyage was aimed at establishing a protectorate over the sanctuary of the supreme god of the Urartian pantheon, who was been adopted by the rulers before they had placed Ardini/ Muṣaṣir under their political influence: the reason why events had taken this turn, in the opposite order than one would expect, probably lies in the Urartian need to consolidate their dominion over the territories of the Lake Urmia basin, in order to have their backs covered during the expedition and to maintain the protectorate[350]. At Ardini / Muṣaṣir, the two kings built a *iarani* dedicated to Ḫaldi, an inscription in front of the sanctuary (BÁRA), and another *burganani*. The Assyrian version helps to understand some unclear Urartian terms: *iarani*, for example, corresponds to the Akkadian *parakku*, "dais, pedestal,

[340] See footnote 335. Salvini 2006a: 470.
[341] CTU A 3-4, 5, 6, 7.
[342] Salvini 2018: 434, "^{m}Katarza e Luša erano tribù e territori nella zona di Gyumri". All these populations are mentioned only in the inscriptions of Išpuini and Minua. See Dan 2020: 50-51 and 53-54.
[343] Salvini 2018: 432-433, "È una designazione collettiva di vasti territorî dell'Armenia attuale". Same as Etiuni: an explanation of this phenomenon -ḫi / -ni is to be found in Salvini 1979: 109-111. In this article he also explains "Da una parte l'etnico in -*ḫi*, dall'altra il 'nominativo' col /ni/ 'deittico-pronominale' (…) vengono a far parte di un tema, a costituire nuovi nomi 'urarteizzati', in una sorta di assorbimento morfologico nella struttura dell'urarteo, che – se è lecita la deduzione – si constata appunto nei confronti di nomi di stirpi 'barbariche' come queste della Transcaucasia, mentre non si riscontra per nomi di paesi noti quali Mana e Paršua o altri, fissati da ben altra documentazione scritta" (Salvini 1979: 110-111). See also Dan 2020: 40-41.
[344] Dan 2020: 128-129.
[345] CTU A 3-7.
[346] Salvini 2018: 435.
[347] CTU A 3-9.
[348] CTU A 3-10.
[349] CTU A 3-11.
[350] Salvini 2006a: 472.

socle, sanctuary, shrine, divine throne room"[351]. It is, anyway, not clear whether it can be inferred that the *iarani* of Išpuini and Minua is the same sanctuary mentioned two lines later, in front of which an inscription is placed. The gifts brought by the rulers to Ḫaldi in his international sanctuary are manifold: in addition to a large offering of livestock, weapons, banners and bronze lebes are mentioned, the last ones identified with the term *šani*[352], translated thanks to the Assyrian version in which the noun ÚTUL is found. This passage is crucial, as it mentions the main Urartian votive offerings: weapons and, probably, cauldrons.

It is possible to infer, since the protectorate at Ardini / Muṣaṣir required a safe territory between the capital and the Zagros, that the military expeditions eastwards, towards the city of Mešta and the land of Paršua[353], pre-date the cultic journey made by Išpuini and Minua: the town of Mešta, in particular, may be identified with the site of Hasanlu[354], whose level of destruction, Hasanlu IVb, dates to around 800 BCE, to the period of the so-called "co-regency" of Išpuini and Minua. The land of Paršua, on the other hand, was already known from the annals of Shalmaneser III[355] and should be identified with the ethnic group of the Persians[356].

The position of the epigraphs co-signed by Išpuini and Minua[357] thus allows reconstructing a broad map of Urartian expansion at the end of the 9th century BCE. Parallel to, or following[358], the territorial settlement around the capital, Tušpa, Išpuini and his son had begun a reform of the foreign policies of the Urartian Kingdom, expanding their territories to the north, into the territory beyond the Araxes river[359], and to the southeast[360], with an expedition aimed at securing the area separating Van from the sanctuary of Ardini / Muṣaṣir, in the Zagros. In this period, there is the first epigraphic mention of the vast bronze production archaeologically attributable to the Urartian state as well as the first records of Urartian loots, consisting of deportations of people and theft of livestock[361].

3.4. Išpuini Sarduriḫini Minua Išpuiniḫi e Inušpua Minuaḫi

These three rulers are mentioned in a single rock inscription, engraved on the rock within the niche of Tabriz Kapısı, near the Van cliff[362]: the epigraph celebrates the construction of a temple area dedicated to Ḫaldi and the establishment of a religious ritual. This inscription, according to Salvini's analysis,

[351] Chicago Akkadian Dictionary, lemma *parakku*.
[352] This word is also present in the Meher Kapısı inscription, in a passage of difficult translation.
[353] CTU A 3-9.
[354] Pecorella – Salvini 1984: 19-20.
[355] See, for example, RIMA 3: A.0.102.10 iii, l. 35.
[356] Salvini 2006a: 473, "Forse era un gruppo di ritardatari, dato che la fonte urartea impone di localizzarli non lontano da Hasanlu, dunque dalle coste meridionali del lago Urmia, mentre precedenti testi assiri situano Parshua già molto più a sud".
[357] See Salvini 2008a: 124.
[358] It is not possible to say that all the epigraphs bearing the only name of Išpuini were written on his first period "alone" on the throne; there may have been another reason for associating the name of Minua to his one only in a certain kind of texts, possibly connected with the importance or the relevance of the single inscriptions.
[359] Against the countries of Uiteruḫi, Luša and Katarza, CTU A 3-4, 5, 6, 7.
[360] In the region of Urmia, lands of Puluadi and Paršua, CTU A 3-8, 9, 10.
[361] CTU A 3-4, 9.
[362] CTU A 4-1.

appears to have been written in the archaic *ductus*, typical of Išpuini[363], and would therefore date back to a rather early period, later, however, than the reorganization of the Urartian pantheon. The names of the three rulers, father, son and grandson, also appear on at least six bronze votive rings from the fortress of Yukarı Anzaf[364], in which is mentioned the town of Amuša, located by Salvini "perhaps in Nagorno Karabach"[365] and mentioned again in an epigraph by Argišti Minuaḫi[366]. A singular object with an Assyrian inscription only mentions the names of Išpuini and Inušpua, within a formula that is unique in Urartian literature: it is a silver situla of unknown provenance[367], which Salvini believes to be original, dedicated to Inušpua by his grandfather, Išpuini, son of Sarduri. It is not necessary, as Salvini pointed out[368], to assume that Inušpua has ever been king[369]: all the objects bearing his name are inscribed with an archaic *ductus* similar to the one of Išpuini's earliest epigraphs, so they must date to a fairly early period of Urartian history, when Inušpua was probably only a child. The epigraphs associating his name with those of his father and grandfather may have served the purpose of officially appointing Inušpua to the succession, but he must have died before he acceded to the throne. This would be confirmed by the discovery of the silver situla dedicated to him by his grandfather Išpuini, probably coming from the plundering of his tomb[370].

3.5. Minua Išpuiniḫi

Mirjo Salvini's astonishment at the absence of Assyrian mentions of the Urartian king Minua[371] is entirely shareable, not because he could be the most illustrious of the Urartian rulers, but because it is to him that the largest number of Urartian texts from all over the Kingdom date, the only source for the knowledge of his reign period. The absence of mentions in the Assyrian sources is probably due to the different political interests that occupied the two powers: while Urartu was committed to continuing the territorial expansion begun during the "co-regency" of Išpuini and Minua, the Assyria of Adad-Nirari III (810-783 BCE) was focused primarily on the conquest of Babylon[372].

The texts that Minua left mainly concern the arrangement of the land around lake Van, new foundations and agricultural works; particularly famous are the water control works, including the famous canal leading to the Urartian capital, celebrated by numerous Urartian inscriptions[373] but now known today as the Semiramis Canal[374]. The chronology of the works is uncertain, due to the absence of proper annals

[363] Salvini 2018:79.
[364] CTU B 4-1, 4-2, 4-3.
[365] Salvini 2018: 430; Dan 2020: 128.
[366] CTU A 11-03, l. 23.
[367] CTU B 2-4.
[368] Salvini 2018: 94.
[369] The issue on the role of Inušpua in the Urartian royal dynasty is also debated at the end of this section.
[370] Salvini 1978a.
[371] Salvini 2006a: 473.
[372] Liverani 2011: 676-677.
[373] CTU A 5-12 – A 5-23.
[374] Salvini 2006a: 477-478, quotes the passage in the *History of Armenia* written by Movses Khorenatsi in the 5th century BCE in which he attributes the constructions in the area of the lake Van to the legendary Assyrian queen Semiramis.

in this ruler's corpus of inscriptions[375]. Salvini has, however, proposed a chronological analysis of Minua's epigraphs based on their *ductus*[376], distinguishing in particular five phases during Minua's reign: the phases have uncertain chronological limits, but a provenance from the Van area is identifiable for the earliest texts, while the later groups of texts reflect the progressive Urartian expansion. Among the texts that Salvini defines as "archaic", almost all without the royal title, there are also some epigraphs in which his son, Inušpua, is mentioned[377], while such mentions already disappear when analysing the second group of texts identified by Salvini, immediately following in chronological order: for this reason, one can consider Inušpua's death as absolutely premature, at a time when his father had probably not yet become king.

In the more than one hundred preserved texts from Minua's time, in addition to mentions of arrangement works in the area around the Urartian capital, one can also find references to his expansionist policy: by following the chronology within the epigraphs by Minua identified by Salvini, one can get an idea of the route taken by the ruler in his military campaigns. While the "archaic texts"[378] exclusively deal with the celebration of new foundations, canals and dedication of stelae to deities, already among the "ancient texts" one can find a summary of several military expeditions to the territories of Šatiru, Buštu and Alzi[379]: in the year of his coronation, Minua claims to have put down the revolt in the village of Šatiru, which can be placed in the territories southeast of Urartu[380], if in the course of the text it is said that the expedition reached the village of Buštu, in Media[381]. In the same year, however, an uprising in the land of Alzi[382] forced Minua to take on the western territories as well. Among the epigraphs included in the "relatively recent texts", the fourth group identified by Salvini in his analysis of Minua's *ductus*, there is a document which, apart from its intrinsic dating, helps to put in chronological order the various south-eastern campaigns of the Urartian sovereign: it is the so-called "Annals of Minua" [383], a text, incomplete due to the medieval reuse of the stone on which it was engraved, coming from the church of Surb Poġos in Van, which used the same formulae later found in the annals of Urartian rulers; it narrates expeditions that probably took place in the early years of Minua's reign. There is mention of a campaign in the Mana territories[384], possibly preceding the expedition to Šatiru[385], which, as another text suggests[386], started from the town of Mešta[387]. In addition to these accounts, two Urartian epigraphs dating back to Minua's reign were found in the area southwest of Lake Urmia[388], confirming the accounts in the "Annals": they testify to the construction of a fountain and an unspecified building, but

[375] Salvini 2006a: 474, "Una felice eccezione (all'assenza di testi annalistici) è costituita forse da un testo storico inciso in due esemplari all'interno di un tempio nella fortezza di Aznavurtepe presso Patnos, a lord del lago Van (CTU A 5-11A e B). (…) Questa formulazione prelude allo stile degli annali reali della generazione successiva, anche perché il testo riferisce su due spedizioni avvenute lo stesso anno in due diverse direzioni".
[376] Salvini 2018: 96-98.
[377] CTU A 5-71, 5-79, 5-80.
[378] See fn. 375.
[379] CTU A 5-11.
[380] Balkan 1960: 146; Dan 2020: 378.
[381] Salvini 1995d: 50; Dan 2020: 34.
[382] Bryce 2009: 34, "To the north of the Kashiyari mountain range (mod. Tur 'Abdin); Dan 2020: 18-20.
[383] CTU A 5-9.
[384] Urartian name for the Mannaean territory; Bryce 2009: 443, "General name for what was originally a number of small Iron Age kingdoms, (…) located south of Lake Urmia in mod. Iranian Kurdistan"; see Dan 2020: 55-57.
[385] Balkan 1960: 147.
[386] CTU A 5-10.
[387] Salvini 2018: 434, "Da identificare con il Tappeh-e Hasanlu"; Dan 2020: 152.
[388] CTU A 5-59 and 5-61.

they belong, according to Salvini, to a late period of Minua's reign, being included within the group of "canonical texts", or recent ones; this would, therefore, prove an Urartian permanence in the area of the Ushnu-Solduz valley. In addition to the conquest of the Zagros area, Minua launched an offensive towards Assyria, claiming to have reached the city of Qumenu[389] "as far as the country of Aššur". The expedition against Alzi is also mentioned in the same year: it is clear that Minua first conquered the eastern territories (Mana, Šatiru, Buštu) and then, perhaps due to a rebellion, turned westwards, attacking the land of Alzi. It is with the "canonical texts", the fifth and last group of epigraphs in chronological order, that we have more information regarding Minua's expansionist policy, which was mainly directed in two directions, north and west. The campaigns towards the north[390] are aimed at the countries of Erikua[391], Etiuni[392] and Diaueḫi[393], while those towards the west[394] are directed at the country of Ṣupa, conquering the city of Miliṭia and reaching the country of Ḫati, and again at the country of Urme: it is clear that the ruler refers in these cases to the classical Sofene, Malatya and the North-Syrian kingdoms, while Urme corresponds to the current area of Muş[395]. The land of Sofene, in the upper Euphrates valley, on the eastern bank of the river, was conquered by Minua together with the city of Huzana, before the Urartian ruler ventured across the Euphrates[396] into the territories called ^{KUR}*Ḫati* in Urartian texts. On the western bank of the Euphrates, opposite Sophene, there was the city of Malatya, fought over by Urartians and Assyrians during the first half of the 1st millennium BCE. It was attacked for the first time by Minua himself, but he was unable to impose Urartian sovereignty over the territory, as his successors also led military expeditions towards the city[397]. During Minua's enterprise in the northern territories, the Urartians forced the ruler of Diaueḫi, Utupuršini, to cede some cities to the Urartian Kingdom, and they also imposed him a tribute in gold and silver: the situation was only momentarily solved, as Argišti would find himself fighting the same territory several times during his reign. From the Armenian area came numerous spoils in farm animals, but also, for the first time, immense deportations of men and women.

Minua's action placed under the Urartian sovereignty a series of peoples settled over a vast geographical area, from the upper course of the Euphrates River to the basin of Lake Urmia, and again from Armenia to the upper course of the Tigris River. In such a vast territory, it is not surprising to find mention, for the first time in Urartian texts, of provincial officials referred to by the Sumerian term LÚ.EN.NAM[398], which would also be maintained by his successors; curiously enough, these officials already appear in a text considered to be ancient. During his reign, moreover, new building types are encountered: in

[389] Salvini 2018: 436, "Corrisponde a Qumani/Uqumani delle fonti assire"; Bryce 2009: 584, "Kingdom attested in Late Bronze Age and Iron Age Assyrian texts, located in the borderlands between northeastern Mesopotamia and northwestern Iran, to the north and east of the Alqosh plain"; Dan 2020: 161-162.
[390] CTU A 5-1, 5-2, 5-3, 5-4.
[391] Salvini 2018: 432, "Tribù e suo territorio, con la città di Luḫiuni, sulla riva destra dell'Arasse nella pianura sotto l'Ararat". Erikua appears in Urartian inscriptions as being preceded by the determinative of 'person' (^{m}) and not of 'country' (^{KUR}), underlining one of the peculiarities of toponyms in the South Caucasus area, which are considered to be the names of tribes rather than countries, a sign of the permanence of a pre-state situation in the territory when the Urartians arrived (Salvini 2006a: 475).
[392] Salvini 2018: 432-433, "Designazione collettiva di vasti territorî dell'Armenia attuale".
[393] Bryce 2009: 193, "Wealthy Iron Age kingdom in eastern Anatolia, sometime vassal state of the kingdom of Urartu, probably to be located in the vicinity of mod. Erzurum".
[394] CTU A 5-5, 5-6, 5-7.
[395] See, on this toponym and the campaigns against this area, Dan – Neri 2014.
[396] Bryce 2009: 672.
[397] Bryce 2009: 71.
[398] CTU A 5-8, Ro., l. 19.

addition to the aforementioned *burganani* and *ṭeribišuzi*, known from the time of Išpuini, Minua introduced buildings called *barzudibiduni*[399], *ašiḫusi*[400] and *irididuni*[401], whose function has not yet been fully clarified. The first of these, mentioned in several texts by Minua and an epigraph by Sarduri Argištiḫi[402], was a building probably connected with granaries[403], and yet particularly well built[404], which appears to be connected with the sacrifice of a *barzudibidu*, at least in an inscription[405]. It is not clear whether there is a connection between the root of the nouns *barzudibiduni* and *barzani*, which has to do with the slaughter of sacrificial animals[406]; if so, one can think that the building itself was dedicated to the performance of animal sacrifices in favour of the gods. Also the buildings called *ašiḫusi* are mentioned in several inscriptions, both on stone, from the reign of Minua to that of Rusa Argištiḫi[407], on a gold and silver lid inscribed by Argišti Minuaḫi[408] found in Karmir-blur, and on a bulla from Ayanis[409]. Interpretations on the function of this building are particularly discordant[410]: if Salvini believed that it "significa qualcosa come 'villa, residenza estiva'"[411], Seidl recognised it as a columned hall[412], as does Çilingiroğlu, who believed it was a colonnaded hall used as a temple storehouse, giving the name *ašiḫusi* to the eastern storage area of Ayanis[413]; again, Wilhelm translated it as "Bankettsaal" [414], while Bilgiç and Öğün proposed that its function was related to cultic sacrifices[415]. A last hypothesis has been put forward by Çifçi, who accepted Çilingiroğlu's proposal but believed that this room was dedicated to general food storage, not just for temple use[416]. Finally, an *irididuni* was another building, or section of a building, with an unknown function[417], found only in a text by Minua[418]. Minua also built the first fountains, *tarmani=lə*[419]; the dedication of stelae to deities continued, in particular, in addition to Ḫaldi, to Ura, Ua, Elipuri and Šebitu: the first two deities are mentioned in two stelae from the "sanctuary" / *ṭeribišuzi* of Karahan[420], while to the latter are dedicated to two stelae found near Erciş.

[399] CTU A 5-60, 5-61, 5-62, 5-63, 5-64.
[400] CTU A 5-65.
[401] CTU A 5-78.
[402] CTU A 9-19, l. 5.
[403] Salvini 2018: 383, based on the text of Sarduri Argištiḫi; Çifçi 2017: 187-188, "Inscriptions mentioning the construction of *barzidib(i)duni* are dated to the reign of Minua and there is no connection with storage facilities in its construction".
[404] Salvini 1998: 278.
[405] CTU A 5-60, l. 12.
[406] Salvini 2018: 383, with previous literature.
[407] Argišti Minuaḫi: CTU A 8-30, 8-42; Sarduri Argištiḫi: CTU A 9-20; Rusa Argištiḫi: CTU A 12-10.
[408] CTU B 8-28. Another inscription on a bronze object mentions this building, but it is not datable (CTU B 18-3).
[409] CTU B CB Ay-51.
[410] See also Dan – Bonfanti *forthcoming.*
[411] Salvini 2018: 379.
[412] Seidl 1993: 559-560.
[413] Çilingiroğlu 2007: 44.
[414] Wilhelm 2011.
[415] Bilgiç - Öğün 1965: 18.
[416] Çifçi 2017: 188.
[417] Salvini 2018: 395.
[418] CTU A 5-78.
[419] CTU A 5-58, l. 3; CTU A 5-59, l. 7. The meaning of this term is debated, and it is translated both as "fountain" and as "well".
[420] CTU A 5-28, 5-30, 5-75.

Among other things, Minua founded two cities bearing his name, Minuaḫinili: one in the vicinity of Iğdir[421] and the other near Karahan[422].

The bronze objects engraved with Minua's epigraphs come mainly from two areas of the Kingdom: some, found in their probable place of production, were located in the area around Lake Van, in the sites of Yukarı Anzaf[423], Burmageçit[424] and Aznavurtepe[425], while others came from the excavations of the fortress of Karmir-blur[426], where they were transported by his successors. A fundamental difference between the objects found at Karmir-blur and those in the Van area, apart from the type of objects, is the inscription on them: these are some horse harnesses[427], a bronze plaque and six bronze bowls that simply bear an inscription stating that the objects belong to Minua or his treasury. The finds from the area of Van, apart from the accidental excavation of a breastplate inscribed during some construction works[428], are instead mainly characterised as votive offerings to the god Ḫaldi or parts of grave goods; the discovery, in the Gilan area[429], of a horse blinker bearing Minua's name in the Assyrian formula NÍG.GA *šá* ^{m}*mi-nu-ú-a*, not attested elsewhere, is considered indeed peculiar.

At the end of Minua's reign, the territory directly or indirectly controlled by the Urartians was extended from the course of the Euphrates, near the city of Malatya, to the Zagros mountain range, and as far as Media: Urartu came into contact with countless peoples, from those who inhabited the Neo-Hittite kingdoms in northern Syria, to the tribal entities of the southern Caucasus, and finally to the peoples of northern Iran. The relative chronology of the inscriptions, together with the brief report that can be defined as "annalistic", suggests that the first campaigns were directed towards the south-east, followed by the capture of Alzi, paving the way for Minua's future military campaigns towards the west; among the last of the Urartian sovereign's campaigns, there were the northern territories, between Turkey and Armenia, which were then also fought by his successors.

3.6. Argišti Minuaḫi

On the cliff of Van, inside the so-called Horhor chambers, the text of the so-called "Annals"[430] has been preserved, recounting the deeds of Argišti, son of Minua, who continued Urartian annalistic production[431]. It is necessary to point out that these "Annals", the most extensive document in Urartian epigraphy, are not similar to those known from the Neo-Assyrian tradition: they are engraved on eight columns at the entrance to a series of rock chambers, taking care more of the appearance of the writing than the content, and were probably not meant to be read. In fact, they consist of rock inscriptions

[421] Salvini in RlA, lemma Menuaḫinili, talks about probably three cities bearing this name: one in the Bendimahi çay valley, the other between the Ararat mountain and the Araxes river and the last one may have been located west of Lake Urmia.
[422] CTU A 5-24. Salvini 2018: 434.
[423] CTU B 5-6, 5-7.
[424] CTU B 5-8.
[425] CTU B 5-9.
[426] CTU B 5-1, 5-5, 5-4, 5-5.
[427] Two of them (CTU B 5-3A, B) bear an inscription written in Assyrian language.
[428] CTU B 5-2.
[429] Ghirshman 1996.
[430] CTU A 8-1 and 8-3.
[431] Salvini 2006a: 474, as already mentioned, also talks in favour of a tradition started during the reign of Minua.

located in a place of difficult access, and their reading is made even more difficult by the extreme dimensions of the epigraphic space dedicated to them; their primary function was probably not to inform about the facts through reading, but rather to be regarded as symbols, just like Assyrian sculptures and bas-reliefs on stone did. Despite this, it is undeniable that reading the Annals today provides a great deal of information to scholars.

The circumstances regarding Argišti's ascension to the Urartian throne in place of Minua's designated heir, Inušpua, are unclear: although it is likely that Argišti's accession took place entirely peacefully, following Inušpua's untimely death, a violent succession by palace conspiracy, followed by *damnatio memoriae* of the loser[432], would also be possible. While Minua and Inušpua are not mentioned in Assyrian texts, Argišti is mentioned in the inscriptions of Shalmaneser IV in the context of at least two victorious military campaigns led by his *turtānu*, Šamši-ilu, against the Urartian ruler, called Argištu[433]: these campaigns are not recorded in the text of the Annals of Argišti.

The analysis of the Annals shows a particularly schematic structure, characterized by a concise introduction on the exploits accomplished during the year, followed by the formula "Ḫaldi went to war with his weapon (...)", and the prayer of Argišti to the gods so that they will be favourable to his feats; the closure of each chapter, consisting in the narration of what the ruler accomplished in one year of his reign, is represented by the formula "for Ḫaldi these deeds I have done in a year". The absence of year names or references to eponymous officials makes it impossible to define an absolute chronology of the deeds, while a relative chronology is provided by the annalistic structure itself. It is thus possible to schematise the sovereign's deeds by years:

Years 1-2: Conquest of the country of Diauehi, ruled by Utupuršini, already target of Minua's expeditions[434]; conquest of the country of Šeriazi[435], as far as the town of Puti[436]; conquest of the country of Tariu[437] and Zabaḫae[438], as far as the town of Uzinabitarna[439] and the country of Sirimutara[440]; conquest of the town of Maqaltuni[441] and the country of Igani[442]; expedition to the countries of Eriaḫi[443]

[432] But Salvini 1995c: 56, "Weniger wahrscheinlich scheint eine Palastverschwörung, denn sicherlich hätte der neue König, der seinen Bruder, den legitimen Nachfolger, gewalttätig beseitigt hätte, wohl auch dessen Namen aus den offiziellen Inschriften getilgt".
[433] RIMA 3: A.0.104.2010.
[434] Salvini 1995c: 59, "Es ist vielmehr anzunehmen, daß der König der Diauehi, der von Minua unterworfen worden war, die Gelegenheit des Regierungswechsels in TuSpa dafür genutzt hatte, um sich vom urartäischen Joch zu befreien."
[435] Probably north-east of Erzurum (Diakonoff – Kashkai 1981: 81); Dan 2020: 72.
[436] Probably south-west of Lake Çildır (Diakonoff, Kashkai 1981: 64); Dan 2020: 157.
[437] For possible locations, see Dan 2020: 77-78.
[438] Probably located in the area around Lake Çıldır (Dan 2020: 91).
[439] For possible locations, see Dan 2020: 181.
[440] Probably located in the area around Lake Çıldır (Dan 2020: 70).
[441] Probably located north of Çıldır, presumably in the modern borderlands of Georgia (Dan 2020: 150).
[442] Located in an unspecified area in the northern part of the Urartian Kingdom (Dan 2020: 47).
[443] Salvini 2018: 432, "Tribù e regione nella zona di Gyumri (Leninakan) in Armenia"; see also Dan 2020: 39-40.

and Apuni[444], conquest of the town of Urieiu[445] in the country of Uiṭeruḫi[446]. Argišti also placed governors ([LÚ]EN.NAM[447]) in the Diauehi territory, as Minua had already done in the western territories.

Year 2: Conquest of the country of Etiuni[448] in the Southern Caucasus, already partially subjugated by Minua, as far as the country of Išqigulu[449]; conquest of the countries of Uria[450] and Ṭerṣubi[451], as far as the towns of Muruzuqai[452] and Ubarugildu[453]; conquest of the country of Irkiuni[454].

Year 3: Conquest of the city of Miliṭia / Malatya[455], led by Hilaruada[456]; conquest of the Niriba valley[457] and the country of Tuate[458], on which he imposes a tribute.

Year 4: Conquest of the city of Qihuni[459] and the country of Siluni[460], near the lake (Sevan), and founding of the city of Erebuni with the forced labour of people previously deported from [KUR]*Ḫate*[461] and [KUR]*Supani*[462]; expedition to the country of Uburda[463] and capture of the city of Irdua[464] up to the country of Ḫaḫia[465].

Year 5: Conquest of the country of Qilašini[466] up to the towns of Menabšuni[467] and Duduma[468]; expedition to the town of Šurḫarara[469] and the country of Buštu[470]; attack on the country of the town of

[444] This name is similar to today's name of Abuli, a fortress in the Samtskhe-Javakheti region of Georgia, which can be considered the destination of this expedition: see Dan 2020: 21.
[445] Located somewhere in the northern part of Urartu (Dan 2020: 179).
[446] Located in the upper part of the Araxes Valley near Eleşkirt or Kağızman (Diakonoff, Kashkai 1981: 102-103); see Dan 2020: 83-84.
[447] CTU A 8-2, Vo, l. 17.
[448] See fn. 343.
[449] For possible locations, see Dan 2020: 48-49; Van Loon 1966: 15 suggested that this toponym would indicate the Scythian territory.
[450] For possible locations, see Dan 2020: 86-87.
[451] For possible locations, see Dan 2020: 78-79.
[452] For possible locations, see Dan 2020: 108-109.
[453] For possible locations, see Dan 2020: 176.
[454] Salvini 2018: 432, "Paese dell'Azerbaigian iraniano, presso Mana"; see Dan 2020: 48.
[455] See Dan 2020: 152-153.
[456] This name is not mentioned as a dynastic name in Malatya (Salvini 2018:438); Salvini 2006a: 482, suggests that this name may correspond to the one of the neo-Hittite king Q/Kalparunda.
[457] An interesting analysis of this toponym and on its significance for Assyrian and Urartian is in Başturk 2013: 70-71; see also Dan 2020: 60.
[458] Salvini 2018: 437, "Uno dei paesi ittiti"; Dan 2020: 116, suggests an identity of Urartian Tuate, Luwian Tuwati and Neo-Assyrian Tuatti, king of Tabal.
[459] Probably to be identified with today's Lčašen fortress (Dan 2020: 158-159)
[460] Localizable somewhere immediately north of the Sevan plain (Dan 2020: 70).
[461] The toponym refers in general to the areas localized west of the Euphrates (Dan 2020: 45).
[462] Classical Sophene (Dan 2020: 76).
[463] Salvini 1995c: 61, "(…) der Obordene des Ptolemaios (Geogr. V 13, 13) entspricht", in the south-eastern part of modern Armenia (Dan 2020: 81).
[464] For possible locations, see Dan 2020: 146.
[465] For possible locations, see Dan 2020: 44.
[466] Possibly located on the southern border of Urartu, somewhere around the Zagros Mountains (Dan 2020: 66).
[467] For possible locations, see Dan 2020: 151.
[468] For possible locations, see Dan 2020: 137.
[469] For possible locations, see Dan 2020: 166.
[470] See fn. 380.

Babilu[471]; conquest of the country of Paršua[472]. Clash with the Assyrian army and capture of Assyrian soldiers.

Year 6: Conquest of the towns of Mana[473] and Buštu; expedition against the town of Ijani[474].

Year 7: Expedition against the villages of Mana and Irkiuni[475], as far as the border of Aššur.

Year 8: Expedition against the country of Buštu, conquering the valley of Ašqaia[476] and the country of Šatiraraga[477] as far as the country of Alaṭi[478].

Year 9: Expedition to the country of Mana; founding of the town of Argištiḫinili[479] on the river Araxis in the land of ʾAza[480].

Year 10: Expedition towards the country of Mana to the country of Buštu.

Year 11: Conquest of the towns of Mana, with the royal town of Šimeriḫadirini[481], and Etiuni, whose men had captured the *aštuzi* of the town of Ardini / Muṣaṣir[482]; conquest of the territories of Eriaḫi and Katarza[483] as far as the town of Išqigulu; expedition against the town of Uiṭeruḫi.

Year 12: Expedition against the towns of Tariu[484] and Urme[485].

Year 13: Siege of the town of Biḫurani[486] and the country of Bamni[487].

The main routes of Argišti's military expeditions were, therefore, three, namely the northern, western and south-eastern fronts; the foundation of two centres in today's Armenian territory, Erebuni and Argištiḫinili, is particularly noteworthy: the first one is located on the outskirts of the modern city of Yerevan, on the hill of Arin Berd, and has the appearance of a fortress, while the second centre, near

[471] Fuchs in RlA 10: 342, "Die Identifizierung von Mešta mit Hasanlu spräche für ein weiteres, den Assyrern allerdings unbekannt gebliebenes P. südlich des Urmia-Sees (Salvini 1995,42). Entspricht hingegen Mešta dem assyr. belegten Mesi oder Missi *, Baruata ass. Bīt-Barua und Babilu assyr. *Dannutu-sa-mar-Babili* (Diakonoff - Kashkai 1981, 57, 18 f., 17 f.), so wäre dieses P. mit dem Gebiet der nachmaligen assyr. Provinz identisch". See also Dan 2020: 27.
[472] Bryce 2009: 529, "Iron Age land in the central western Zagros mountains of Iran, frequently attested in Neo-Assyrian records"; see also Dan 2020: 62-63.
[473] See fn. 383.
[474] Its location is uncertain, but it should be in the southern part of the Lake Urmia (Dan 2020: 47).
[475] Located to the south-west of Lake Urmia (Dan 2020: 48).
[476] Located in the south or south-east region of the Urmia basin (Dan 2020: 24).
[477] Probably probably located somewhere in the southern part of the Lake Urmia basin (Dan 2020: 71-72).
[478] For possible locations, see Dan 2020: 18.
[479] The identification of Argištiḫinili with the Armavir and Davti hills is confirmed (Dan 2020: 96).
[480] Salvini 2018: 431, "Tribù il cui territorio si trovava nella valle dell'Arasse". The epigraph CTU A 8-14 talks about the organisation of this province, but the huge presence of *hapax* and the incompleteness of the text don't allow a translation. This is the land where the fortress of Karmir-blur will be built: see CTU A 12-2, l. 2. See also Dan 2020: 98.
[481] Royal town of the land of Mana, usually located in the southern part of the Lake Urmia basin (Dan 2020: 166).
[482] Salvini 1992: 219, "Resta però problematico credere ad una incursione di questo popolo transcaucasico fino a Ardini / Muṣaṣir, dato che doveva attraversare il territorio urarteo; a meno che non si tratti invece di una città omonima, situata al nord".
[483] Salvini 2018: 434, "Tribù (…) nella zona di Gyumri, vicino a Eriaḫi".
[484] For possible locations, see Dan 2020: 77-78.
[485] For possible locations, see Dan 2020: 87-88.
[486] For possible locations, see Dan 2020: 135-136.
[487] Salvini 2018: 432, "Sec. Diakonoff, HuU p. 62 nota 67 non è un toponimo, ma si deve intendere 'der Berg'"; see Dan 2020: 27-28.

the city of Armavir, returned residential quarters and production facilities for goods[488]. Undoubtedly, Argišti's actions led to the organisation of the Ararat valley, with the definitive establishment of the Urartian presence in the area, the expansion towards Lake Sevan and the opening of the western front, with occasional expeditions to the newly-established centres.

In the 5th year of reign, the mention of a confrontation with the Assyrian army, led at the time by the *turtānu* of Shalmaneser IV, Šamši-ilu, is important: the Assyrian king, in particular, in his written account of this battle, mentioned a very large enemy army, indicating a state at the top of its power; the Assyrian text is, however, incomplete, and does not provide information on the outcome of this battle, which the annals of Argišti report to have been in favour of the Urartians, with the capture of some enemy soldiers. The two accounts also coincide in terms of the reasons for the battle, namely the struggle for the possession of the territories of the Urmia region.

The ruler's other epigraphs, in addition to the Annals[489] and fragments of annalistic texts[490], concern the construction of canals[491], the erection of buildings[492] and the foundation of the new fortresses at Argištiḫinili[493] and Erebuni[494]: in particular, the foundation epigraphs include for the first time the formula "the land was desert, I have done mighty works here". This formula probably refers to the absence of urban or proto-urban centres in the area, a sign of the tribal organisation of the local populations and the subsequent Urartian arrival. Despite the foundation of these new centres, the sovereign still refers to himself as "lord of the city of Ṭušpa", which remained the capital of the Urartian kingdom: these fortresses were thus exclusively intended to control a geographical area so far from Lake Van. In Erebuni, in addition to the fortress, a *susi* temple dedicated to the local god Iubša was founded[495]: here, too, one can read the Urartian sovereign's awareness of the vastness of the territory he governed, and the difficulty of communication between one fortress and another, especially during the winter months; for this, he did not try to replace the local deity, Iubša, with Ḫaldi, but simply installed an *Urartian* temple to worship a local deity, in an operation of delicate syncretism.

With Argišti, the corpus of metal objects bearing an inscription becomes conspicuous: the objects come exclusively from the site of Karmir-blur, where they were transported when Erebuni was abandoned, as evidenced by epigraphs such as "To the god Ḫaldi, (his) Lord, (...) Argišti, the son of Minua, dedicated in (or: for) the city of Er(e)buni"[496]. The production of decorated shields dedicated to the supreme god continues, along with the dedication of quivers and helmets on which a scene of a military parade and veneration of the sacred tree is embossed. The corpus of this ruler also contains Assyrian epigraphs, such as the one engraved on a bronze button on a piece of armour[497], the one on the bottom of a bronze bowl[498], or the one on a circular plaque[499], but the great number of inscriptions is in Urartian language. Several objects bearing an epigraph without patronymic have also been attributed to Argišti

[488] Salvini 2006a: 483.
[489] CTU A 8-1, 8-2, 8-3.
[490] CTU A 8-4 to 8-13.
[491] CTU A 8-15.
[492] CTU A 8-23 to 8-39.
[493] CTU A 8-16.
[494] CTU A 8-17, 8-18, 8-19, 8-20.
[495] CTU A 8-21.
[496] See, for example, CTU B 8-2.
[497] **A-Kb-2**; CTU B 8-17.
[498] **Bo-Kb-7**; CTU B 8-19.
[499] CTU B 8-24.

Minuaḫi: if for metal objects found at Karmir-blur this choice may be correct, the same cannot be said for objects found elsewhere, such as the bronze bell from a probable tomb on the left bank of the Araxes, opposite the Russian outpost of Alişar[500]. A unique object in the corpus of Argišti Minuaḫi is a precious gold and silver lid with a difficult epigraph which does not make it clear of which object this artefact was part[501]: it is decorated with garlands of blossoms embossed on the gold bands, while the knob appears to have the shape of a pomegranate[502].

With Argišti Minuaḫi, Urartian control has been consolidated in what is now the Armenian territory, with the foundation of two administrative centres of great importance: in this operation, however, the diversity of traditions and cults manifested by the local populations seems to have been respected, and this is evident from the construction of a temple dedicated to a local deity. It is also clear that the control of such a vast territory had to be implemented through the construction of a system of fortresses and a network of military garrisons, so it is likely that the two large centres built by Argišti served rather as secondary royal residences from which the sovereign could control the northern front[503]. The sovereign's battles also took place on the western fronts, with rapid incursions up to Malatya and the land of Urme, and on the south-eastern border, in the country of Mana, to assert Urartian supremacy over the region south of Lake Urmia.

3.7. Sarduri Argištiḫi

The cliff of Van has also preserved the annals of Argišti's son, Sarduri[504], which provide a fairly complete picture of the king's deeds. The text of the Annals can be reconstructed from several epigraphs[505] that must have all originally been placed together with the rock inscription, in the complex called Hazine Kapısı on the north side of the Van cliff. The reconstruction of the annals is a complex task, initiated by G.A. Melikišvili, who tried to deduce the sequence of the texts engraved on the different supports in order to obtain points of reference for an absolute chronology: he suggested, for the reign of Sarduri Argištiḫi, a period between 764 and 735 BCE[506]. It is, however, with Salvini's analysis[507] that a definitive chronological arrangement is reached for the Annals of Sarduri Argištiḫi, to which, thanks also to Assyrian epigraphs, an absolute chronology can be connected.

Year 1 (753 BCE)[508]: expedition to Uelikuḫi[509]; victory over Aššur-nirari (V); campaign against the land of Arme[510].

[500] CTU B 8-22; see also Dan – Bonfanti 2021.
[501] **G-Kb-1**; CTU A 8-28.
[502] But see Dan – Bonfanti *forthcoming*.
[503] Salvini 1995c: 62.
[504] A very extensive analysis of the reconstruction of this text is to be found in Salvini 2010.
[505] CTU A 9-1, 9-2 and 9-3.
[506] Melikišvili 1960: 294.
[507] Salvini 1995c: 66-68; it is also the same order used in the CTU.
[508] The years are reported by Hipp 2014: 89, based on the contributions of Salvini 1995c, Salvini 2008 and Fuchs 2012.
[509] Salvini 2018: 437, "Tribù e il suo territorio della costa ovest del lago Sevan"; see Dan 2020: 81-82.
[510] Salvini 2018: 431, "Nella zona di Diyarbakır e Urfa"; see Dan 2020: 22-23.

Year 2 (752 BCE): Expedition across the Euphrates to the city of Ṭumiški[511] and the tributed country of Qala'ani[512]. Siege of the city of Militia and imposition of tribute on its king, Ḫilaruada.

Year 4 (750 B.C.)[513]: expedition against the country of Mana; conquest of the country of Babilu[514] up to the country of Baruata[515]; campaign against the countries of Etiuni and Liqiu[516] and conquest of several cities in the area.

Year 5 (749 BCE): expedition to the country of Qulḫa[517]; conquest of the country of Ḫuša[518].

Year 6 (748 BCE): expedition to the country of Eriaḫi and Abilianiḫi[519].

Year 7 (747 BCE): Expedition to the country of Ruišia[520] and the country of Etiuni.

Year 8 (746 BCE): expedition to the country of Qulḫa and conquest of the capital, Ildamuša; campaign to the country of Uiṭeruḫi.

Year 9 (745 BCE): campaign towards Etiuni

Year 10 (744 BCE)[521]: expedition towards the country of Puluadi[522]; foundation of the fortress of Libliuni[523]; campaign towards Eriaḫi.

Year 11 (743 BCE): expedition to the country of Qumaḫa[524] and capture of the royal cities of Uita[525], Halpa[526] and Parala[527].

Year 12 (742 BCE): expedition to the countries of Eriaḫi and Mana.

Year 13 (741 BCE): expedition to Etiuni and Eriaḫi to the country of Igani[528]; campaign to the countries of Puzuniai[529] and the towns of Alqania[530] and Ṣudala[531]; march to the countries of Išteluani[532],

[511] Salvini 2018: 437, "Passaggio dell'Eufrate (…) a est di Malatya"; see Dan 2020: 171.
[512] Presumably north of Miliṭia (Dan 2020: 65-66).
[513] To the third year Hipps 2014: 89 attributes the expedition to Riḫišā mentioned in CTU A 9-1, l.s..
[514] See fn. 485.
[515] For possible locations, see Dan 2020: 28.
[516] For possible locations and problems connected to the toponym, see Dan 2020: 52.
[517] Salvini 2018: 435, "La prima testimonianza della Colchide"; see Dan 2020: 67.
[518] Salvini 2018: 433, "Paese a nord-est dell'Urartu"; already mentioned in the texts of Argišti Minuaḫi; see Dan 2020: 45-46.
[519] Salvini 2018: 430, "tribù e territorio dell'area armena, presso Eriaḫi, zona di Gyumri, sopravvive nel toponimo armeno Abełean"; see Dan 2020: 15.
[520] Probably located in southern Georgia, perhaps in the Samtskhe-Javakheti region (Dan 2020: 69).
[521] This campaign is also narrated in the epigraph of Seqendel, in Iranian Azerbaijan (CTU A 9-8).
[522] Salvini 2018: 435, "Città nell'Azerbaigian iraniano"; see Dan 2020: 63-64.
[523] Salvini 2018: 434, "É il sito di Seqendel in Azerbaigian iraniano"; see Dan 2020: 148.
[524] The classical Commagene (Dan 2020: 161).
[525] Bryce 2009: 731, "Iron Age city in southeastern Anatolia, located on the border between the Neo-Hittite kingdoms of Melid (Malatya) and Kummuh"; see Dan 2020: 178.
[526] Bryce 2009: 280, "Iron Age city and district of the Neo-Hittite kingdom Kummuh in southeastern Anatolia"; see Dan 2020: 142.
[527] Bryce 2009: 527, "Iron Age city belonging to the Neo-Hittite kingdom of Kummuh in eastern Anatolia"; see Dan 2020: 157.
[528] Located in an unspecified area in the northern part of the Urartian Kingdom (Dan 2020: 47).
[529] Probably located approximately north-west of modern Gyumri/Leninakan (Dan 2020: 64).
[530] Probably located north-west of modern Gyumri (Dan 2020: 126).
[531] Probably located north-west of modern Gyumri (Dan 2020: 168).
[532] For possible locations, see Dan 2020: 49.

Qadiaini[533], Apuni[534] and Uelikuḫi[535]; expedition to the country of Arquqi[536] and the lands of Adaḫu[537], Lipru[538], Ešumua[539], Kamniu[540], Qu'alba[541], Uḫuni[542] and Teria[543].

According to Salvini's chronological arrangement, the accession to the throne of the ruler would have taken place around 755 BCE at the earliest: Sarduri reports a victory against Aššur-nirari (V), obviously not recorded in the Assyrian sources of the time, which makes it possible to date Sarduri's reign to a period certainly later than 754 BCE[544], the year of the Assyrian king's accession. Sarduri appears to have been very active not only on the northern and south-eastern fronts but also in a westerly direction: among other targets, there is the oldest record of the classical Colchis, in the phonetic form of Qulḫa. Campaigns in the west are also recorded in the text of the Habıbuşağı rock epigraph[545], now disappeared under the waters of Lake Karakaya, where Sarduri narrated his victory over Hilaruada, king of Malatya, and the subsequent conquest of the Qala'a villages as far as Karniši[546], and the Urartian arrival as far as the village of Muša, near the city of Zabša[547]. In addition to showing that the newly conquered town of Malatya had become a tributary of the Urartian state, the text allows reflections on another place-name encountered there, that of Muša: it, apparently to be located west of the town of Malatya[548], is currently considered to be "Iron Age region within the kingdom of Melid/Malatya in eastern Anatolia"[549], but, already in 1981, I.M. Diakonoff and S.M. Kashkai tried to connect this toponym to the Phrygian state. This proposal was based also on the (now considered) old meaning of the hieroglyphic Luwian toponym *Musa*, which indicated Phrygia[550]. The toponym Musa is mentioned in the Luwian inscription found in Karkemish[551], connected with both the geographical names *Muska* and *Sura*[552], which are to be considered the Phrygian and the Urartian states[553]. *Musa* would instead indicate the Lydian region in Luwian texts[554], but it looks unlikely that the same meaning should be applied to the Urartian mention, also because the inscription is focused on the description of the siege of Malatya. One may so refer to the Assyrian inscriptions from the time of Tiglath-Pileser I, whose Annals, in the year of his accession, around 1114 BCE, tell: "In my accession year: 20,000 Mušku with their five kings, who had held for 50 years the lands Alzu and Purulumzu – bearers of tribute and title to the god Aššur, my lord – (the

[533] For possible locations, see Dan 2020: 65.
[534] See fn. 443.
[535] See fn. 508.
[536] Located along the southern coast of Lake Sevan (Dan 2020: 23).
[537] Located in the north-west Lake Sevan area (Dan 2020: 15-16).
[538] For possible locations, see Dan 2020: 106.
[539] Located on the western shore of Lake Sevan (Dan 2020: 103).
[540] For possible locations, see Dan 2020: 105.
[541] Probably located south of Lake Sevan, on the road along the River Arpa to Sevan (Dan 2020: 66).
[542] Probably somewhere in the southern part of Lake Sevan (Dan 2020: 83).
[543] Probably on the south-western shore of Lake Sevan (Dan 2020: 78).
[544] Salvini in RlA, lemma *Sarduri*, dated his Akzessionsjahr in 756 a.C. (+/-1).
[545] CTU A 9-4.
[546] It might have been located left of Miliția (Dan 2020: 50).
[547] Probably located not far away from the town of Miliția (Dan 2020: 182).
[548] See Dan 2020: 57-58.
[549] Bryce 2009: 484.
[550] Diakonoff – Kashkai 1981: 58.
[551] Hawkins 2000: II.22, Karkamiš A6.
[552] Hawkins 2000: II.22, Karkamiš A6, l. 3, § 6.
[553] Hawkins 2000: 120.
[554] Hawkins 2000: 120, "identified as the Lydians (…) as long ago as 1917, which still seems satisfactory"; while Diakonoff – Kashkai 1981: 58, "(…) Hier. -Luwian *Musa*- is apparently Phrygia while *Muska*- denotes the Eastern Muški".

Mušku), whom no king had ever repelled in battle, being confident of their strength they came down (and) captured the land Katmuḫu. With the support of the god Aššur, my lord, I put my chariotry and army in readiness (and), not waiting for my rear guard, I traversed the rough terrain of Mount Kašiiari. I fought with their 20,000 men-at-arms and five kings in the land Katmuḫu"[555]. From this passage, it is clear that, at a certain point at the end of the 1st millennium, a tribe known as ("Eastern") *Muški* occupied the lands of Alzu and Purulumzu, in the Elaziğ plain, which is the region where Malatya / Miliṭia was located. If one considers that, probably during the 8th century, the groups of "Western", traditionally considered the Phrygians, and "Eastern" Muški joined, one can think about the possibility that the area around Malatya had contacts with the Phrygian / Muški people[556]. There are also numerous indications that may lead to believe "that the Phrygian involvement in south-eastern Anatolia was not so short-lived or occasional"[557]: these elements would lead one to consider that Diakonoff and Kashkai's initial proposal was likely, although it was not a direct contact with the actual Phrygian state, but more a sort of Phrygian sort of *colony* in the area of south-eastern Anatolia. Also towards the west is the expedition into the territory of Qumaḫa, the Assyrian Kummuh and the classical Commagene[558]: this campaign, probably because of the conquest of Qumaḫa, led the Urartians to clash with the Assyrians, as mentioned in the annals of Tiglath-Pileser III, around 743 BCE[559]. Of course, the two versions of the story do not coincide, but, apparently, Sarduri was forced to retreat into his own territory east of the Euphrates River[560] after losing a battle that took place in the territory between Kištan and Ḫalpi[561]. From the expedition in the territory of Qumaḫa, Sarduri collected a tribute consisting of metal objects: "800 silver mines, 3000 garments, 2000 bronze shields, 1535 cups"[562]; it is important to note that the words for 'shield', *aše*, and for 'cup'[563], *kiri*, appear exclusively in this passage within the monumental epigraphs on stone and rock. The date of the first expedition to the classical Colchis, Urartian Qulḫa, would be around 749 BCE[564], while the second expedition took place in 746 BCE: as Salvini rightly pointed out[565], these were the same years in which the Greeks founded the colonies of Sinope and Trapezunte, on the Black Sea, in search of silver and iron. It is, therefore, no coincidence that Sarduri narrates, in the epigraph of Habıbuşağı, that he "forged an iron seal"[566], in the only mention of the iron, by the logogram AN.BAR, in Urartian inscriptions. The western front was the main concern of Sarduri Argištiḫi, who managed to reach farther afield than any other Urartian ruler.

Expeditions to the east arrived as far as present-day eastern Azerbaijan, almost without resistance to their invasions, reaching the south-eastern coast of Lake Sevan, where the rock epigraph of Tsovak is

[555] RIMA 2, A.0.87.1, I, ll. 62-75.
[556] See also Burney – Lang 1971: 162.
[557] Vassileva 2008: 168. This topic will be better analysed in the following chapters.
[558] Bryce 2009: 397, "Neo-Hittite kingdom in eastern Anatolia, located between the kingdoms of Melid and Carchemish".
[559] See the section devoted to this king in the following paragraphs.
[560] Salvini 2006a: 488-489.
[561] Urartian "Ḫalpa" (Dan 2020: 142). See Salvini in RlA, lemma *Sarduri*.
[562] CTU A 9-3, IV, ll. 54'-56'.
[563] Or, probably, cauldron; see Salvini 2018: 398, "Si può pensare agli immensi calderoni che emergono dagli scavi urartei".
[564] Salvini 2006a: 485.
[565] Salvini 2006a: 485-486.
[566] CTU A 9-3, III, l.11; also Bryce 2009: 171, "Trade access to this rich metalliferous region *may* have been one of the reasons for campaigns beyond Urartu's northwestern frontier by the Urartian kings (…) though there is no actual evidence for Urartian trade with the Black Sea region".

located[567]. To the west of Lake Sevan, there is another epigraph[568], which records events that took place during the ninth year of the reign. The northernmost epigraph of Sarduri Argištiḫi is located at Taşköprü[569], near Lake Çıldır, and narrates the conquest of the village of Uḫimeali[570] and the town of Maqaltuni[571], probably located in the same area as the inscription: the events narrated, however, cannot be dated to a specific period of Sarduri's reign[572]. Finally, in the last years of his reign, the king was engaged in the Southern Caucasus: the construction of fortresses, such as that of Seqendel, prove that Urartian campaigns cannot be defined as raids, but rather as planned conquests[573].

Sarduri was responsible for the foundation of another important Urartian centre, Sarduriḫinili, the modern site of Çavuştepe, a few kilometres from the capital Ṭušpa, as well as for numerous rearrangement works around Lake Van[574] and at Argištiḫinili / Armavir[575], where Sarduri probably built a fortress[576], a *susi* temple to the god Ḫaldi[577] and a *barzudibiduni* building accompanied by two granaries[578]. The ruler also carried out the construction of siloi and granaries in Armavir[579], at Aznavurtepe / Patnos[580] and at the site of Erebuni, where he also founded an *ašiḫusi* building[581].

The foundation of Sarduriḫinili is not mentioned in the Annals but it's celebrated in a temple inscription found in the site itself[582] and narrating the construction of the *susi* temple dedicated to the god Irmušini accompanied by the foundation of a city to which the ruler imposed his name; at Sarduriḫinili, the king also built numerous granaries. The site, about 20 km southeast of Van, is located on a hill that resembles the one where Ṭušpa was built: the complex gives the impression of being a residence rather than a fortress, so much so that it has been suggested that Sarduriḫinili was the main residence of Sarduri Argištiḫi[583].

Another fortress named Sarduriḫinili[584] was apparently founded by Sarduri in the west, in the territory of the present-day Turkish village of Bahçecik, where he built a *susi* temple dedicated to the god Ḫaldi[585]; accompanying this foundation was the installation of a governor named Zaia, who was to administer "the region as far as Miliṭia, as far as the city(!) of Qu[maḫa], as far as the city of Niḫiria, as far as the country of Ar[me?]"[586]. This event, also dated to 743 BCE, after the conquest of the city of

[567] CTU A 9-7.
[568] CTU A 9-6.
[569] CTU A 9-5.
[570] Dan 2020: 82.
[571] Dan 2020: 150.
[572] Salvini 1995c: 78, "Falls die entsprechende Kriegsepisode nicht durch eine der Lücken im Text abgedeckt war, muß man annehmen, daß sie nach 740/739 stattgef unden hat".
[573] Salvini 1995c: 72.
[574] CTU A 9-9, 9-10, 9-11.
[575] CTU A 9-12.
[576] CTU A 9-13 and 9-14; in CTU A 9-15 he claims to have built also a generic building and a "Gate of Ḫaldi" in Armavir.
[577] CTU A 9-16.
[578] CTU A 9-19.
[579] CTU A 9-21 to 9-24.
[580] CTU A 9-25 and 9-26.
[581] CTU A 9-20.
[582] CTU A 9-17.
[583] Salvini in RlA, lemma *Sarduriḫinili*.
[584] Dan 2020: 114 (Sarduriḫinili 2).
[585] CTU A 9-18.
[586] CTU A 9-18, ll. 9-10.

Qumaḫa[587], must precede the battle of Kištan and Ḫalpi, if it is true that Tiglath-Pileser III succeeded in pushing Sarduri back towards Lake Van.

The deities mentioned in Sarduri Argištiḫi's inscriptions are Ḫaldi, Quera[588] and Irmušini, already mentioned in the Meher Kapısı rock inscription[589] and probably to be considered a deity worshipped in the territory of Lake Van: thus, at new Urartian foundations, the practice of dedicating *susi* temples to local deities rather than to the god Ḫaldi continues.

To Sarduri Argištiḫi belong numerous bronze objects bearing an inscription, almost all of which were found in the fortress of Karmir-blur: in addition to three bronze shields dedicated to Ḫaldi[590] and several shield bosses with an epigraph stating the ownership[591], including one inscribed in Assyrian[592], the production of bronze helmets[593] and quivers[594] with the same decoration used during the reign of his predecessor continued. Unusual is the dedication to Ḫaldi of three bronze arrowheads[595] found within a bundle of thirty-seven arrows contained within a quiver[596]; from Karmir-blur also comes a batch of bronze bowls with an inscription in three variants, which states Sarduri's possession of the objects and do not bear any dedications: the first one is entirely in Assyrian[597], the second one is in Urartian[598] and the last one establishes their belonging to Sarduri's arsenal through the Sumerogram NÍG.GA[599]. Extremely interesting from an artistic point of view is a tubular bronze lion head with an inscription of Sarduri Argištiḫi[600], which is a *unicum* in Urartian art but has unexpected parallels overseas, in Etruria. The objects belonging to Sarduri found in Karmir-blur are completed by several horse harnesses with a simple ownership inscription[601]. In the fortress of Yukarı Anzaf, two bronze rings for door closure were found, with a simple inscription of possession by Sarduri, in Urartian language[602]; finally, from the necropolis of Tul-e Gilan comes a bronze lamina with an inscription[603], probably by Sarduri Argištiḫi, engraved on an object that was later reused as a bracelet.

The history of the reign of Sarduri Argištiḫi's began following the footsteps of his father's successes: initially, at least until 743 BCE, the ruler succeeded in conducting victorious military campaigns in all directions, even defeating the Assyrian army of Aššur-nirari V, probably in the area of the upper course of the Tigris River[604], and paving the way for the Urartian army to conquer the territories west of the Euphrates. The primary objective of Sarduri and his western campaigns was the blockade of the

[587] Salvini 1995c: 72; Hipp 2014: 90.
[588] In CTU A 9-38, inside a dedicatory formula.
[589] CTU A 3-1, l. 9.
[590] **S-Kb-3** and **8**; CTU B 9-1 to 9-3.
[591] CTU B 9-4 to 9-7.
[592] CTU B 9-4.
[593] **H-Kb-3** to **5**; CTU B 9-8 and 9-9.
[594] **Q-Kb-3** to **5**; CTU B 9-10 to 9-12.
[595] CTU B 9-13.
[596] See Dan – Cesaretti – Bonfanti 2021.
[597] Among **Bo-Kb-10-77**; CTU B 9-14 to 9-18.
[598] CTU B 9-19 to 9-21.
[599] CTU B 9-22. Seidl 2004: A.1 - A.2, attributes these two specimens to Sarduri, son of Lutipri.
[600] **Ca-Kb-2**; CTU B 9-24.
[601] CTU B 9-25 to 9-29.
[602] CTU B 9-30 and 9-31.
[603] **Bra-TG-1**; CTU B 9-32.
[604] Where the following campaign against the land of Arme took place; but see also Miller 2012 on the location of the city of Niḫiria, royal city of the land of Arme.

temporarily weakened Assyria[605] towards the Levant[606] and central Anatolian territories; this was also the reason why, as it is known from Assyrian texts, the ruler was part of an anti-Assyrian coalition together with the centres of Malatya and Gurgum[607], and he also marched on the cities of Kummeh and Arpad[608], Assyrian vassals[609]. In control of the western territories, the ruler also placed a specific governor installed in the city of Sarduriḫinili / Bahçecik, with the evident desire to protect the Urartian interests in the region for a long time. However, Sarduri's ambitious plans came to the attention of the Assyrians: Tiglath-Pileser III no longer tolerated the Urartian expansionist aims and tried to stop them, defeating the anti-Assyrian coalition in 743 BCE, during the battle of Kištan and Ḫalpi, mentioned in Assyrian sources[610]. Following this defeat, the Urartian expansionist policy came to an abrupt halt, at least as far as northern Syria was concerned: in his last years, Sarduri devoted himself only to expeditions in the Southern Caucasus and near Lake Urmia. Sarduri's Annals and accounts of deeds stop a few years after his defeat at the hands of the Assyrians.

3.8. Rusa Erimenaḫi

At this point of Urartian history, the chronological succession of the kings and the correspondence with Assyrian sources begins to get complicated: if, following the genealogy given by the patronymics of the Urartian kings, there seems to be no problem in listing Rusa, son of Sarduri, immediately after Sarduri, son of Argišti, the comparison with the documents left by the historical rival does not seem to coincide with what is known instead from Urartian sources[611]. The Assyrian sources mention several times an Urartian ruler named Rusa (in Assyrian, *Ursâ*), without ever mentioning his patronymic: in this work, I accept one of the chronologies proposed by Michael Roaf, which will be discussed later. He was, according to Salvini, the last Urartian ruler, placed at the end of his *Corpus*: Erimena's name never appears in Urartian history before Rusa's reign, and he is therefore considered to be not an actual king, but a separate branch of the Urartian dynasty[612]. In the present state of knowledge, he is included both in the royal list and in a wider debate concerning the chronology of Urartian last years, being considered an "usurper" king[613]. Six stone epigraphs were written by this ruler, and they are located in the area of Van and in that of the major Armenian fortresses, Armavir / Argištiḫinili[614], and Arin-berd / Erebuni[615], both attesting to the construction of a silo. The most important inscription of the ruler is

[605] See Grayson 1992: 71.
[606] Can 2017: 20, "These two powers presumably sought to reach the Mediterranean shore, in order to control the resources and harbors of the Levant".
[607] RINAP 1: Tiglath-Pileser III 35, i 21'-27'a.
[608] The strategic importance of this territory for the Assyrian campaigns in Anatolia is explained in Hipp 2014: 90-91.
[609] Hipp 2014: 89.
[610] RINAP 1, 9 – 35 – 93 – 41 – 47 – 49.
[611] This issue is discussed widely below, in the section devoted to the historical problems in the succession on the Urartian throne.
[612] Salvini 2006a: 498.
[613] See below.
[614] CTU A 14-5.
[615] CTU A 14-6.

the so-called "Keşiş Göl stele"[616], initially attributed to Rusa Sarduriḫi and later to Rusa Argištiḫi[617], which narrates the excavation of an artificial reservoir called ^{m}*Rusa=i ṣue*, "Rusa's lake", the present Keşiş Göl, and of the construction of a city called Rusaḫinili, whose water supply was based on the new Rusa's Lake[618]. At the end of the epigraph a ritual is established, probably to be performed during the lake's floods; the gods mentioned are all already known, but a certain "Goddess of Rusa", ^{m}ru-sa-i-ni-e ^{D}NIN, stands out among them, as she probably attests the introduction of the ruler's personal deities also within Urartian religion.

His name is probably the one mentioned in Sargon II's Eighth Campaign and in several letters sent to the Assyrian king by the intelligence services, in particular by the heir to the throne, Sennacherib[619]. He may be the king rival of Sargon II's campaign in Urartu, and one reads about his fate in several documents of Sargon II, which do not correspond with each other[620]: apparently, however, the Urartian ruler committed suicide because of the pain inflicted on him by his defeat carried out by the Assyrian king.

To Rusa Erimenaḫi belong numerous bronze shields found in Toprakkale[621] and bearing an inscription of the type "To Ḫaldi, (his) Lord, Rusa, son of Erimena, offered this shield for his life. Thanks to the greatness of Ḫaldi (I am) Rusa, the son of Erimena, mighty king, lord of the city of Ṭuspa", more or less preserved. Stone and metal inscriptions are usually marked by several typos and mistakes, which have been explained as "una progressiva perdita di conoscenze scribali verso la fine del regno"[622].

3.9. Rusa Sarduriḫi

The Urartian inscriptions narrating the events occurred during the reign of Rusa Sarduriḫi are incised on three stelae, which contain duplicates of the same text and are unfortunately in a very poor state of preservation: these are the bilingual stelae of Movana[623], Mergeh Karvan[624] and Topzawa[625], all found in the area of Lake Urmia; the best preserved is the stele found at Topzawa, the southernmost of the three. The stelae narrate a campaign towards the Urartian protectorate of Ardini / Muṣaṣir aimed at restoring order: the city's governor, Urzana denied the entry in the temple of Ḫaldi to Rusa, and later fled towards the country of Aššur; Rusa defeated him, in the battle of Mount Andarutu[626], and brought him back to the palace of Ardini / Muṣaṣir, subjecting him again to tribute. From the texts of these three documents, the tension between Urartians and Assyrians in the Zagros area is clear: Urzana was called

[616] CTU A 14-1; 14-2 is a duplicate found in Savacık, 5 km south of the Keşiş Göl. An analysis of the text with further considerations is to be found in Salvini 2006b.
[617] See Salvini 2008: 621.
[618] Salvini 2006a: 498, when the stela was still attributed to Rusa Argištiḫi, used this inscription to prove that Toprakkale / *Rusaḫinili Ḳilbani=kai* had been built during the reign of this sovereign.
[619] See the discussion in the section devoted to Sargon II.
[620] See the discussion in the section devoted to Sargon II.
[621] **S-Top-1** to **6**; CTU B 14-1 to 14-11.
[622] Salvini 2012: 69.
[623] CTU A 10-3.
[624] CTU A 10-4.
[625] CTU A 10-5.
[626] Marf 2015: 130, offers a synthesis of the various attempt of identifying Mount Andarutu / Andarutta, and pages 137-138 proposes a new tentative identification.

to order both by the Urartian ruler and Sargon II, who sacked the palace and temple of Ardini / Muṣaṣir[627]. Urzana's behaviour can be explained in the light of a further document, sent by Urzana himself to the king of Assyria, in which Sargon II's position is clarified: the sovereign, in fact, had ordered the governor of Ardini / Muṣaṣir not to allow anyone to hold services in the temple without his permission[628]. This order may have been issued during the Eighth Campaign of Sargon II.

However, Rusa Sarduriḫi was not only active in the area of Lake Urmia: he left inscriptions in the basins of all three lakes included in the Urartian territory. In Tušpa, Rusa dedicated a stele to the Storm god[629]; within this stele there is an unusual expression, the interpretation of which has not yet been fully clarified: he calls himself ^{m}*Rusa=še* ^{mD}*Sarduri=ḫi=ni=še* ^{m}*u-e-di-ip-ri-i tini*, "Rusa, the son of Sarduri, named Uedipri"[630]. If Lehmann-Haupt considers Uedipri as the second name of Rusa[631], Nicolas Adontz speaks of it as a title and links it to Lutipri, proposing for both the translation of "Herrn der Frau"[632]. Salvini, in his commentary on the inscription, admits that "Dalla costruzione non è assolutamente cogente che il nome si riferisca al soggetto della frase. (…) Per quanto strano, Uedipri potrebbe concordare allora con l'oggetto, ed essere il nome o un epiteto della stele"[633]: as Roaf notes, however, Uedipri is preceded by the determinative of person's name and it should be considered as such[634]. Armen Petrosyan uses the names Lutipri and Uedipri as evidence to suggest the non-Urartian origin of the royal dynasty, which would instead be connected to the ruling elite of Mittani[635]. It is clear that we have not reached a conclusive interpretation of the name Uedipri and its connection to Rusa, son of Sarduri; on the other hand, it occurs exclusively within this dedicatory epigraph to the Storm god, who, by the way, is not mentioned by name. Other deities mentioned by Rusa Sarduriḫi are, in addition to Ḫaldi, Šebitu and Arṭuarasau, both within an inscription engraved on a grey limestone slab found on the *tepe* of Mahmud Abad, south of Lake Urmia[636]: the two deities are already mentioned within the Meher Kapısı inscription[637] but they are probably pertinent to the Urmia area, given the position of Rusa's epigraph. Salvini pointed out that, in the Meher Kapısı inscription, the sacrifices to Arṭuarasau precede those to be made to the deities of the cities of Ardini, Qumenu and Ṭušpa[638], while the particularity of the god Šebitu refers to the formula ^{D}še-bi-tú-i ^{LÚ}ÌR, "servant of the god Šebitu"[639], referred to Rusa himself. Rusa, son of Sarduri, is the first Urartian ruler to call himself a servant of a god, but what is most surprising is that he does not call himself a servant of the supreme god, Ḫaldi. Šebitu's name is reminiscent of the seven Akkadian gods called Sebettu[640], but, as already mentioned, it may only be a local deity.

Two further inscriptions of Rusa Sarduriḫi have been found in the Armenian area of Lake Sevan, both of which commemorate the ruler's victories in the area of the southern shore of the lake. In the Tsovinar

[627] Salvini 2006a: 491.
[628] SAA 5: 147.
[629] CTU A 10-7.
[630] CTU A 10-7, ll. 4-5.
[631] Lehmann-Haupt 1931: 901.
[632] Adontz 1946: 191; see also Riemschneider 1963: 166 and Arutjunjan 2001: 485, 491.
[633] Salvini 2008: 509.
[634] Roaf 2012: 192, fn. 20.
[635] Petrosyan 2019: 387.
[636] CTU A 10-6.
[637] CTU A 3-1, l. 14 and l. 6.
[638] Salvini 2018: 427.
[639] CTU A 10-6, l. 9'.
[640] Salvini 1977: 133.

rock epigraph[641], Rusa mentions a victory over "twenty-three kings" located "on this (...) and the other side of the lake (Sevan)". Both inscriptions[642] mention the foundation of two different cities bearing the names of two deities: in both, the "City of Ḫaldi" [643] and the "City of the Storm God" ([D]IM-*i* URU)[644], the ruler installs governors to control the area. Rusa, son of Sarduri, is the last ruler to leave epigraphs in the area of Lake Sevan, concluding the campaigns started by Argišti, son of Minua; his successor, Argišti, will probably consider as acquired the north-eastern territories and will devote himself to expeditions in the area of modern Artsakh and Iranian Azerbaijan[645].

To Rusa Sarduriḫi belong a very small number of inscribed objects, including an unspecified number of bronze shields[646] and an unknown number of bronze bowls with an inscription of the type "(Object) of the treasure of Rusa"[647]. The bowls, in particular, do not bear the patronymic of the sovereign, and their belonging to the treasure of Rusa Sarduriḫi has been hypothesised thanks to the presence of a stylised lion's head engraved inside the bowls, which "le avvicina agli esemplari di Sarduri II"[648]. All the bronzes believed to belong to Rusa Sarduriḫi come from the excavations at Karmir-blur, where they were transported following the foundation of this fortress.

3.10. Argišti Rusaḫi

Rusa Sarduriḫi's successor, Argišti, left few documents attesting to activities during his reign – eight epigraphs on stone and five inscriptions on bronze objects. The stone inscriptions come mainly from two territories of the kingdom: the Lake Van area, where most of his bronze objects were also found, and present-day Iranian Azerbaijan, plus a stele found in the ruins of the church of Thanahat[649] in today's Armenian province of Syunik. Two stelae[650] found on the northern shores of Lake Van refer to the excavation of an artificial lake; the back of both stelae is difficult to translate: one of them[651] was inserted into the floor in front of the mosque of the village of Çelebibağı and was recovered by the Van Museum only recently, so that the signs are extremely difficult to read[652]. The stele does, however, record the institution of a ritual in which several deities are mentioned, Inua, Aniqu, Nala(i)ni, Quera, Alainini: two of them, Nala(i)ni and Quera, were already mentioned in Meher Kapısı's epigraph, while Inua and Aniqu, female deities, began to be worshipped during the reign of this ruler[653]; Alainini is mentioned only in this text. The translation of the back of the Hagi stele[654], now lost, is problematic due

[641] CTU A 10-2.
[642] CTU A 10-1 and 10-2.
[643] CTU A 10-1, ll. 3-4.
[644] CTU A 10-2, ll. 17-18.
[645] Salvini 2002b: 58-59.
[646] **S-Kb-5**. See Salvini 2012: 56, for a small resumé on this topic. Surely, there is at least one bronze shield: CTU B 10-1.
[647] CTU B 10-2 and 10-3, with all the variants of the inscriptions.
[648] Salvini 2012: 57, mentioning also Piotrovskij 1951: 111.
[649] CTU A 11-3.
[650] CTU A 11-1 and 11-2.
[651] CTU A 11-1.
[652] Salvini 2010b.
[653] Inua is also mentioned in the epigraph CTU A 12-1, ll. ii 1-2; Aniqu is also mentioned instead in CTU A 12-8, l. 21, CTU A 14-1, l. 11, and in CTU A 14-2, ll. 8 and 19.
[654] CTU A 11-2.

to the presence of many *hapax*, but it seems to contain ritual prescriptions. It seems possible, thanks to the text present on two *bullae* from the site of Ayanis[655], therefore of later date, to record the foundation of a new city by Argišti, called "Argištiḫinili in front of Mount Artarapša", which must have been located near the present town of Hagi[656]. Also in the area of Van, there are two further epigraphs, one[657], now lost, commemorating a sporting achievement of the ruler, and the other[658] celebrating the construction of, probably, a bridge over the Murat Su river. Proceeding eastwards, one encounters the Thanahat stele[659], which narrates the Urartian ruler's expedition to Etiuḫi; in the text, one recognises the mention of the city of Amuša, already encountered in the bronze epigraphs of Išpuini, Minua and Inušpua[660], and probably to be located in present-day Artsakh[661]. The last three rock epigraphs[662] of this ruler are found in Iranian Azerbaijan and are the most eastern of all Urartian inscriptions; they mention the villages of Arḫu, Buque, Girdu, Gituḫani and Ṭuišdu, which are unknown from other sources and must necessarily be located in the area where the rock inscriptions were found. At the time of Argišti Rusaḫi, therefore, the Urartians came to control the road to the Caspian Sea[663], continuing the Urartian penetration into the area that had already begun at the time of Išpuini and Minua[664] and continued with Sarduri Argištiḫi[665] and Rusa Sarduriḫi[666].

The inscribed bronze objects of Argišti Rusaḫi, as already mentioned, were mainly found in the western part of the Kingdom: a bronze quiver[667] and shield[668] were found in the fortress of Yukarı Anzaf, while another bronze shield[669] and helmet[670] have been found in Ayanis. Two fragments of a bronze sheet[671] simply inscribed with the name and patronymic of the ruler, came from Tomb III at Altıntepe. None of these epigraphs is philologically or linguistically new compared to those of the previous reigns.

3.11. Rusa Argištiḫi

Rusa, son of Argišti, appears to be the ruler who most reformed Urartian art, which had its greatest expression during this period. He built numerous fortified cities, where he revolutionised the existing administrative system by introducing economic records on clay tablets and *bullae*, which only appear from his reign. The best known of Rusa Argištiḫi's inscriptions decorated the facades of at least five

[655] CTU B CB Ay-17 and Ay-18.
[656] Dan 2020: 23-24.
[657] CTU A 11-7.
[658] CTU A 11-8.
[659] CTU A 11-3.
[660] CTU B 4-1, 4-2, 4-3.
[661] Dan 2020: 128.
[662] CTU A 11-4 to 11-6.
[663] André-Salvini – Salvini 1999: 32.
[664] Rock inscription of Ojasar-Ilandagh (CTU A 3-8).
[665] Rock inscription of Seqendel (CTU A 9-8).
[666] Rock inscription of Tsovinar (CTU A 10-2).
[667] **Q-Anz-2**; CTU B 11-1.
[668] CTU B 11-2.
[669] CTU B 11-4.
[670] CTU B 11-3.
[671] CTU B 11-5.

susi temples connected to him[672]: it contains in perfect writing the narration of his building and sacral deeds, without mentioning military expeditions[673]; unfortunately, due to the presence of the many *hapax*, the epigraph is largely untranslatable. In addition to Ḫaldi, the duplicates that have preserved the initial section of the ritual[674] mention the Storm god, the Sun god, and the Moon god, indicated by Sumerograms, and also 'Arubani, Ḫuṭuni, Eiduru, Baba, Adia, Inuani, Aia, Ṭušpuni[675], Iubša[676], to which are added, as is often the case in Urartian rituals, the weapons and the gate of Ḫaldi. Another key section of this epigraph, preserved in two duplicates, concerns the mention of the deportation of men and women coming "from the land Aššur (Assyria), from the land Targuni, from the land Etiuni, from the land Tabla (Tabal), from the land Qainaru, from the land Hatti (Neo-Hittite states), from the land Muški (Phrygia), from the land Ṣiliquni"[677] or "from the land [...][678], from the land Tabla (Tabal), from the land Qainaru, from the land Muški (Phrygia), from the land Ḫatti (Neo-Hittite states), from the land Ḫaliṭu[679], [from the land Ṣiluquni]" [680], in order to build fortresses. These mentions are particularly important from the point of view of the interactions between Urartu and neighbouring peoples: this inscription contains, for example, the only sure mention of the Phrygian people in an Urartian epigraph, which will be fundamental in establishing a chronology for the contacts between the two peoples; the explicit mention of Tabal is also unusual, since the Neo-Hittite states are usually referred to by the term *Ḫate*.

The ruler is primarily known for the towns built during his reign: in addition to Ayanis, called in Urartian ^{m}*Rusaḫinili* ^{KUR}*Eiduru=kai* ("Rusaḫinili in front of mount Eiduru"), and Karmir-blur (^{D}IM-ni URU, in Urartian ^{D}*Teišeba=i* URU), the centres of Bastam, ^{m}*Rusa=i* URU.TUR, and Kef Kalesi, near Adilcevaz, were founded by Rusa Argištiḫi. In Ayanis and Bastam, the two foundation epigraphs were found[681], which also attest to the construction of a sanctuary and, in Ayanis, the plantation of vineyards and orchards. At Kef Kalesi, in addition to a portion of the temple epigraph, a dozen cubic basalt blocks were found on which a scene is carved in bas-relief[682]: above the image runs a one-line inscription attesting to the construction of an *ašiḫusi* building by Rusa Argištiḫi. Also, at the entrance to a rock-cut room above the Turkish village of Kaleköy, there is an extremely damaged rock inscription[683], on which it is possible to read the name of the ruler; finally, the last inscription attributable to Rusa, son of Argišti, is a stele on display at the Zvartnots Museum[684], which records some land works, including the deduction of a canal, the planting of a vineyard and the foundation of new settlements. The Zvartnots

[672] The temples are to be found in the cities of Ayanis (CTU A 12-1), Karmir-blur (CTU A 12-2), Armavir (CTU A 12-3), Adilcevaz (probably from a temple located in Kef Kalesi; CTU A 12-4), Bastam (CTU A 12-5); Salvini also mentions a fragment of inscription probably from Toprakkale, which would be another duplicate of the inscription (CTU A 12-5a).
[673] Salvini 2006a: 496, "È importante sottolinearlo perché questo rivela un'ideologia rivolta piuttosto alle opere di pace che non alla guerra".
[674] CTU A 12-1 and 12-2.
[675] The gods from Eiduru to Ṭušpuni are mentioned only in the epigraph from Ayanis, CTU A 12-1.
[676] Only in the duplicate from Karmir-blur, CTU A 12-2, l. 8.
[677] CTU A 12-1 VI, ll. 10-11.
[678] Probably, as in CTU A 12-1 VI, l. 10, ^{KUR}aš-šur-ri-ni.
[679] Van Loon 1966: 82, connects this land to the Homeric *Halizones*, whose geographical position is actually still unknown.
[680] CTU A 12-4 II, ll. 7'-9'.
[681] CTU A 12-9 (Ayanis) and 12-7 (Bastam). But, on the foundation epigraph of Bastam, see Trémouille et al. 2021.
[682] See the section on stone sculpture.
[683] CTU A 12-6.
[684] CTU A 12-8.

stele mentions the deities Aniqu and Anita, the former already known from the time of Argišti Rusaḫi[685], while the latter is attested only in this epigraph.

The scarcity of stone and rock inscriptions belonging to Rusa son of Argišti is compensated by the abundance of bronze objects bearing his name, found mainly in the Ayanis excavation. There are eight bronze shields with dedicatory epigraphs[686], the most complete of which reveal the mention of the very name of the city for which they were created, ^{m}*Rusaḫinili* ^{KUR}*Eiduru=kai.* Salvini, in his analysis of the inscription[687], compares the curse formula on the best-preserved shield, which has no Urartian counterpart, with a formula found in a text of Esarhaddon written on a stele from Zincirli, suggesting the idea that Rusa Argištiḫi and Esarhaddon were contemporary rulers. All the shields come from the Ayanis site, except for a single specimen found in two fragments at Toprakkale[688]. Two bronze helmets also come from the Ayanis site[689]: one of them, a decorative *unicum*, in addition to the dedicatory inscription of Rusa bears what Salvini calls a "nuova anacronistica e stupefacente scritta"[690] that states the ownership of the helmet by the ruler Išpuini. It seems unlikely to be considered a reuse by Rusa Argištiḫi of a helmet actually belonging to Išpuini, who lived a century and a half earlier, also considering the absence of helmets inscribed with the name of Išpuini among the results of archaeological excavations[691]. It has therefore been proposed that Rusa himself had the name of his predecessor engraved on the helmet, even if the inscription has an uncertain handwriting, different from that of the first line in which the name of Rusa Argištiḫi is regularly reported. A bronze spear, the handle of which bears a dedicatory inscription to Ḫaldi[692], is an object of great importance in the history of Urartian studies and has helped to understand the meaning of the long-debated term (^{GIŠ})*šuri*[693], associated with the god Ḫaldi in stone inscriptions in various standard formulas, such as "Ḫaldi left with his ^{GIŠ}*šuri*"[694]. In the epigraph engraved on the spearhead, the presence of the demonstrative *ini* preceding the term *šuri* has established that this word means "spear" or, more generally, "weapon". This conclusion is consistent with the only depiction of Ḫaldi that has come down to us, namely the one depicted on Anzaf shield[695], in which the god holds a long spear in his hand and is about to hurl it, as he had already hurled other spears at the enemy army. From Ayanis come also some bronze cylinders and *sikkatu* with a dedication to the god Ḫaldi and, finally, one of the objects bearing the term *tanaṣi*, whose translation was problematic and it finally arrived at "property (?)", as a synonym of *urišḫi*[696]: it is a bronze patera bearing, on the outer rim, the inscription "property(?) of Rusa, son of Argišti"[697]. The term is attested on two other objects, both extremely peculiar: a bronze candelabrum found in Toprakkale[698], attributed to Rusa Argištiḫi exactly because of the presence of the term *tanaṣi*, despite the absence of the patronymic, and a kind of gold wand / sceptre[699], found in the 2008 campaign in

[685] See the previous paragraph.
[686] CTU B 12-1 to 12-8.
[687] Salvini 2008: 59
[688] CTU B 12-8.
[689] CTU B 12-9 and 12-10.
[690] Salvini 2008: 62.
[691] But they exist if we consider the objects coming from the antiquity market (Seidl 2004: 20, B-10 and B-15.
[692] CTU B 12-11.
[693] A resumé of the discussion on this word is to be found in Çilingiroğlu - Salvini 1999: 59.
[694] All these formulae are collected in Çilingiroğlu - Salvini 1999: 58.
[695] CTU B 3-1; Belli 1999.
[696] See Salvini 2018: 416-417.
[697] CTU B 12-17.
[698] CTU B 12-18.
[699] **G-Ay-1**; CTU B 12A-1.

Ayanis, which bears the inscription "property (?) of Qaquli, the queen". Again, thanks to the word *tanaṣi*, Qaquli is considered the queen consort of Rusa Argištiḫi but, as Salvini notes, the designation of this queen as MUNUS.LUGAL poses a problem of relations with other Near Eastern civilizations[700]: these Sumerograms, whose Urartian reading is unknown, would in fact indicate the queen in Hittite cuneiform texts and dynastic seals, and also in Akkadian texts from Ugarit, Mari, Nuzi and Alalah, but not in Assyrian texts contemporary to Urartu. The only other attestation of an Urartian queen dates back to the time of Minua and she is called *sila*, "bride", of the king[701], without specifying the title she was given.

The last bronze objects belonging to Rusa Argištiḫi were found in its new Armenian foundation, Karmir-blur: a door-chain[702], considered extremely important in the history of studies because it allowed Boris B. Piotrovskij to identify the Urartian name of Karmir-blur, ^{D}*Teišeba=i* URU, "City of the god Teišeba". The last bronze inscribed from Karmir-blur is a bronze bowl[703] bearing the epigraph "(Object) of the 'Small City of Rusa'": it was initially thought to refer to the site of Bastam, which in the foundation epigraph itself is called ^{m}*Rusa=i* URU.TUR[704], but the contradiction regarding the size of the Bastam fortress and the URU.TUR apposition attributed to other cities in the Ayanis temple inscription suggested rethinking the translation[705].

With Rusa Argištiḫi, the practice of recording notes of an economic nature on clay tablets began; tablets have been found in six different sites, most of which turn out to be new foundations of the ruler: Yukarı Anzaf, Ayanis, Bastam, Çavuştepe, Karmir-blur and Toprakkale[706]. The tablets are very important for the reconstruction of Urartian onomastics and economy, but they never mention the name of the ruler, who is nevertheless considered responsible for the introduction of writing on clay precisely because the majority of tablets with administrative reports was found in sites founded by him. The presence of *bullae* and *cretulae* is also associated with Rusa Argištiḫi, again due to the prevalent occurrence in newly founded sites[707]: two *bullae*, in particular, are important, as they contain two of the three Urartian "year names", namely "That year when Rusa, son of Argišti, built the *ašiḫusi* building"[708] and "That year (when) Rusa, <the son of> Argišti set the throne at Rusaḫinili in front of Mount Qilbani"[709]. The last *bulla* records the name of another town whose foundation is debated, today's Toprakkale, called ^{m}*Rusaḫinili* ^{KUR}*Qilbani=kai* to distinguish it from Ayanis, ^{m}*Rusaḫinili* ^{KUR}*Eiduru=kai*; the custom of distinguishing towns by the same name was introduced, according to Salvini[710], by Argišti Rusaḫi, who began to identify his new foundation called Argištiḫinili from the earlier fortresses of the same name.

To Rusa Argištiḫi belong several cylinder and stamp seals[711], the imprint of which was found on hundreds of *bullae* from the sites of Bastam, Ayanis, Toprakkale and Ziwiyeh[712], whose importance is

[700] Salvini 2014: 18.
[701] CTU A 5A-1
[702] CTU B 12-15.
[703] CTU B 12-16.
[704] CTU A 12-7, l. 7.
[705] Salvini 2012: 66. See also Trémouille et al. 2021.
[706] Texts and translations of these documents are to be found in Salvini 2012: 121-150.
[707] See Salvini 2012: 173-201.
[708] CTU B CB Ay-51, ll. 1-2.
[709] CTU B CB Ba-6, ll. 1-3.
[710] Salvini 2012: 183.
[711] See Salvini 2012: 209-211.
[712] CTU B Sig. 12-1 to 12-4.

essentially iconographic[713], since the epigraph is always the same: "Seal of Rusa, son of Argišti". The seal impression found in Ziwiyeh[714] shows, in particular, the existence of trade relations between Urartu and Ziwiyeh at the time of Rusa Argištiḫi; the seal is similar to several impressions found in Ayanis, so that Salvini considered possible that trade took place between Ziwiyeh and Ayanis itself[715]. There are numerous seals with other dynastic names for which a more precise attribution is not possible, together with the so-called "Sigilli del funzionario".

The activity of Rusa Argištiḫi was mainly focused on the foundation of new fortresses and cities in the Urartian territory, the renovation of existing cities and the reorganization of the territory; the only mention of a warlike event, in the temple inscription of Ayanis, attests to the deportation of men and women from neighbouring countries, including some powerful opponents such as Aššur and Muški. Rusa, son of Argišti, was responsible for the introduction of a new model of administrative management of the centres, based on the collection in archives of clay tablets recording economic transactions, on which one sometimes can find interesting elements connecting this new administrative system with the reign of Rusa Argištiḫi.

4. Historical, chronological and terminological issues

The knowledge about the Urartian state is, as previously stated, primarily attributable to external sources, in particular Assyrian ones: royal annals, reports of military expeditions and private letters between the sovereign and the provincial governors inform scholars about many aspects of Urartian history and society, even after the emergence of Urartian written sources. This circumstance highlights, in particular, the internal contradiction in the study of Urartian history, which started as a sub-discipline of Assyriology and remained as such even after the translation of the language and the identification of features of art and material culture typical and exclusive to Urartian society. This approach had also, as previously anticipated, led scholars to believe that the emergence of Urartu was a product of the Assyrian expansionism in the Southern Caucasian area, a survival reaction of local populations, who had no interest in being incorporated into the neo-Assyrian Empire.

4.1. The emergence of the Urartian state

As already mentioned, the emergence of the Urartian state may be considered the result of a *longue durée* process, started already in the 3rd millennium BCE and defined as *Caucasian way to civilization*[716]. The emergence of the Urartian Kingdom has evident connections, in fact, with the chiefdoms or the proto-state formations in the Southern Caucasus, whose lifespan is to be dated in a

[713] Urartian seals will be discussed below.
[714] CTU B Sig. 12-4.
[715] Salvini 2012: 211.
[716] Masson 1997.

period preceding Urartu[717], and should not be considered exclusively as the result from an excessive or unusual military pressure of the Assyrians, pressure which, on the other hand, at the time of the formation of the Urartian state, was neither continuous nor constant[718]. In any case, identifying exactly the moment of the emergence of the Kingdom of Urartu is not an easy task: this event was the result of a process that probably sees the supremacy of a chiefdom, or even of just one family, over the other Southern Caucasian proto-states, and cannot be chronologically framed. If the mentions of *Nairi* and *Uruatri* in the Assyrian texts began in the 13th century BCE, they should not be considered as an exact chronological foothold for the history of Urartu: Nairi and Uruaṭri were, in fact, only two among the Southern Caucasian entities preceding the birth of the Urartian state, which alternated in the possession of power on the territory of the Armenian Highlands during, at least, four centuries. An interesting point of view on the reason why the Urartian state appeared for the first time in the period of Assyrian expansionism was given by Salvini[719], who connected the emergence of this state with the disappearance of Mittani / Hanigalbat, which became Assyrian province during the reigns of Adad-nirari I and Shalmaneser I[720]. This circumstance would explain both the chronological frame and also the connection between Urartians and Hurrians, even if this event alone is not enough to justify the formation of a new, strong state, with features previously unknown. This sort of migration of the Hurrian population previously living in Mittani may be considered a fundamental feature added to the so-called "Caucasian way to civilisation": the emergence of the Urartian state should indeed be read as a concurrence of different elements, from the local chiefdoms of the Southern Caucasus to the arrival of some Hurrian tribes from the Northern Mesopotamia. One can also think that the Hurrians, living around Lake Van from the period of the maximum expansion of the Mittani state, were still inhabiting those areas at the beginning of the 1st millennium BCE[721], a reason why the Urartian state developed exactly in that region: unluckily, all those theories have to be confined to the hypothesis status until further archaeological researches will be carried out in that area. In any case, stated that Urartu was not born exclusively under the pressure of the Assyrian troops, the Assyrian role in its formation should not be completely excluded: so many aspects of the Urartian culture are extremely connected to Assyrian features that the negation of an Assyrian role in the Urartian state formation can't be accepted.

The first mention of an Urartian individual, Arame, and of his royal city, Arzaškun, is to be found in an inscription by Shalmaneser III, in 858 BCE[722]. Here, one is witnessing a political change in the mountainous territories north of Assyria between the reign of Ashurnasirpal II, very involved in the events in the areas of Nairi and Uruatri, and the reign of his successor, Shalmaneser III, who mentioned both the name of the Kingdom of Urartu, in its definitive phonetic guise, and the name of its ruler and his royal city; it is, however, not clear what kind of change occurred, nor what led the Urartian entity to prevail over all the other proto-state formations in the Southern Caucasus. Andreas Fuchs[723] offered a further starting point about which one should think, inviting to reflect on the extent of the Urartian territory at the time of Shalmaneser III, and again on the Urartian reaction to the defeats inflicted by the Assyrian army: a state in formation, as the Urartian one would be if the *Gründerrolle* of Arame were

[717] Biscione 2019.
[718] Biscione 2019: 84, fn. 97.
[719] Salvini 1987: 373.
[720] Liverani 2011: 497-498.
[721] Salvini 1987: 374, "Nella confederazione di Nairi abbiamo ragione di riconoscere con ogni probabilità elementi hurriti, e ciò per alcune specifiche coincidenze di nomi di paesi e di persone con radici della lingua hurrica".
[722] RIMA 1: A.0.77.1, ll. 22-46.
[723] Fuchs 2012: 138.

accepted, would be neither able to control such a large territory nor to recover from the setbacks so quickly. It is possible to think, therefore, that the Urartian state began its formation process as early as the 10th century BCE[724]. The Assyrian raids in the area north of the eastern Taurus range became more frequent *precisely* because of the presence of an enemy that could actually frighten the Mesopotamian sovereigns: it is, in fact, difficult to hypothesize a series of Assyrian raids so close in time[725] only to counter some bellicose tribal entities on the Armenian Highlands.

If the study of the emergence of the Urartian state is problematic, also the other historical information about it is decidedly unclear; an aspect on which, at a first glance, few problems seem to arise is that of the succession to the throne, at least in the first years of the Kingdom: a chronological scan, considered more or less detailed, of the Urartian kings is provided by the numerous royal inscriptions that report the name of the sovereign followed by his patronymic, so, for example, at Išpuini Sarduriḫi follows Minua Išpuiniḫi. Once again, the Urartian sources are hermetic: although it is possible that the dynastic succession followed a patrilinear line, so that each sovereign was succeeded by his son, this process is not clear from the inscriptions themselves; in fact, the father indicated in the patronymic might not have actually been the previous sovereign[726]. The passive acceptance of an idyllic uninterrupted father/son succession, moreover, would not be consistent with the dynamics, known in the ancient Near East, of usurpations and changes of royal dynasties; this effective succession did not even take place within the corpus of the inscriptions, although scholars strive to restore a logical and chronological order within the Urartian royal dynasty.

Even before the beginning of a royal dynasty, the chronological succession built on the formula "name of the sovereign + patronymic" reveals some problems: if the first Urartian king mentioned by Assyrian historiography bears the name of Arame, never mentioned in Urartian inscriptions, his hypothetical successor, the first Urartian sovereign author of cuneiform inscriptions, presented himself as Sarduri, son of Lutipri. Many pages have been written over the connection between Arame and Lutipri, from hypotheses that see a change of royal dynasty[727], supported also by an alleged move of the capital, from Arzaškun to Tušpa, to a misunderstanding on the Assyrian side, so that the adjective of origin of the sovereign ("coming from the city of Aramu") would be confused with his own name[728]. What is sure is that in Shalmaneser's report one can also read about royal or fortified cities, referring to Arzaškun and Sugunia, connected to Arame and indicating a territorial organisation unknown in these northern regions before this time. In order to find further data on Arame, it is necessary to take some steps forward and consider the letter to Aššur, which tells about the Eighth Campaign of Sargon II[729]. It mentions the town of Arbu, in the village of Armarijali, as the place of origin of the royal Urartian dynasty[730]: one must therefore ask oneself whether the Assyrian word "Arame" did not actually hide a title, for example

[724] Fuchs 2012: 138.
[725] Biscione 2019: 84, fn. 97.
[726] Fuchs 2012: 157, "Der Vater eines Königs muss aber nicht zwangsläufig auch dessen unmittelbarer Vorgänger gewesen sein".
[727] Salvini 1995c: 35.
[728] Salvini 1995c: 26-27, compares Aramu with Anitta, suggesting that another reigning dynasty replaced his. Salvini 1987: 377-378, also proposed that this king was not Urartian, but Aramean; this suggestion is mentioned also in Salvini 1995c: 27, where he explains that the military pressure on the Aramean states in Northern Syria was so strong that one of their leaders managed to unify the tribes living in Eastern Anatolia in order to protect the territory from the Assyrians: "Obwohl diese Hypothese einzig und allein auf einem Personennamen fußt, so scheint sie doch recht plausibel".
[729] Foster 2005: 790-813.
[730] Foster 2005: 805.

"(lord of) Arame", interpreted instead by the Assyrian scribes as a proper name[731]. In this case, it is also possible for Arame and Lutipri to be the same person: an outdated theory[732] sees Lutipri as a name of Hurrian origin, derived from *lutu+ewri* "Herr der Frauen"[733]. However, the possibility that they are two distinct sovereigns should not be excluded: in particular, it may be possible to identify a mention of Lutipri within an inscription from the time of Ashurnasirpal II[734], under the phonetic guise of Labṭuru[735], in a passage dedicated to the tributes received by the Assyrian sovereign in the outpost of Tušḫa, in the Upper Tigris area. Labṭuru is the son of *ṭu-pu-si* KUR *ni-ir-du-un*, "Ṭupusu, of the town of Nirdun", a vassal state of Assyria characterised as a rebel during various phases of the reign of Ashurnasirpal II[736], located on the route of the Assyrian sovereign during his expeditions to Nairi: indeed, the fortified cities of Labṭuru, called Madara[737] and Udu[738], on the slope of Mount Kašiiari[739], were the seat of the Assyrian siege during one of the raids on the northern territory. Labṭuru is defined, in Assyrian inscriptions, as one of the "kings of Nairi"[740], just as Sarduri will call himself in the Sardursburg's text[741], and, in order to resist Assyrian pressure for nearly twenty years, he must have had significant support from the peoples of the region he ruled[742]. Moreover, the last mention of Labṭuru, in 866 BCE[743], does not explicitly talk about his capture or killing: it must probably be inferred that he was no longer a threat to the Assyrian rulers, who were now targeting more northern populations, such as the one of Arame. Mahmut Başţürk explained the fall of Arame not as a reflection of Assyrian attacks, but as a consequence of the power of Labṭuru, who had expanded from the region north of the eastern Taurus to the area of Lake Van through the actions of his son, Sarduri, who, later, took power and ascended to the throne of Nairi. As Labṭuru was one of the kings of Nairi, north of the Kašiiari Mountains, and he had strong power, manifested in his resistance to Assyrian attacks, it is possible to think that he eventually retreated to the mountainous area north of his kingdom, probably between 865 and 855 BCE[744]. One might think that he was attracted by a region quite far from the Assyrian danger and that he could transfer his powers right into the Lake Van basin, trying to spread his sovereignty from there. Further evidence linking Labṭuru to the future Kingdom of Urartu would be the Urartian culture itself: coming from the mountainous region on the northern border of the Assyrian Empire, and knowing Assyrian writing, art, palace order and ideology, he would have spread these patterns within the new-born Urartian Kingdom[745]. This proposal would move the place of origin of the Urartian dynasty to the

[731] Fuchs 2012: 158-159.
[732] Salvini 2018: 438.
[733] Salvini 1987-90: 180.
[734] Tarhan 1980: 92-98; Başţürk 2013.
[735] RIMA 2: A.0.101.1, l. ii13.
[736] Sano 2015: 327-328.
[737] RIMA 2: A.0.101.1, ll. ii97-ii100.
[738] RIMA 2: A.0.101.1, l. iii110.
[739] Lemma Kašiaru., in RLA 5: "Assyrian name for the hills known in later sources as the Tür 'Abdin, lying south of the Tigris between Diyarbekir, Mardin, and Gazirat ibn' Umar (Cizre)".
[740] RIMA 2: A.0.101.1, ll. ii12b-ii19a. Here, actually, he is not mentioned explicitly as a king of Nairi, as the passage says "While I was in the city Tušha I received tribute from (…) Labturu, son of Tupusu (of) the land Nirdun, and tribute from the interior of the land Urumu, (and) from the kings of the lands Nairi", which makes not clear if Labturu was an important king of Nairi, and for that explicitly mentioned, or if he was a different king, maybe close to the Nairi region.
[741] Başţürk 2013: 70. CTU A 1-1, l. 2.
[742] Başţürk 2013: 71.
[743] RIMA 2: A.0.101.1/iii109b-113a. It refers to the eighteenth year of reign of Assurnasirpal II.
[744] Başţürk 2013: 72.
[745] Başţürk 2013: 72-74, also proposed geographical and philological proofs for the equivalence of Labṭuru and Lutipri.

southwest of the Kingdom, in the area of the Kašiiari mountains, contradicting the most accepted hypothesis that places the origin of the Urartians in the area of Muṣaṣir[746]: indeed, considering the names of the rulers, their dominance over Assyrian culture, their initial definition as "kings of Nairi", and the hypothetical presence of Hurro-Urartian-speaking tribes in the Kašiiari region, it is possible to contextualise the Assyrian presence in Urartian culture, both from an archaeological and philological point of view[747].

A further problem is offered to us exclusively by Urartian sources, without mention in Assyrian texts[748]: not many years after the emergence of the kingdom thanks to Arame, or Lutipri, or both, the sovereign Minua, son of Išpuini, died, leaving the kingdom to his son Argišti. There would seem to be no particular problem if one was not familiar with a series of circumstances that can be considered a *unicum* in Urartian history, as a certain Inušpua was designated as the direct heir of Minua. The most particular circumstance is the presence of Inušpua as co-author of Tabriz Kapısı's inscription, according to which, together with his father Minua and grandfather Išpuini, he dedicated a temple to the god Ḫaldi[749]. Inušpua also owned a series of bronze rings with cuneiform inscriptions, always dedicated together with his father and grandfather, from the fortress of Yukarı Anzaf, bearing the text: "To Ḫaldi, the Lord (them), Išpuini son of Sarduri, Minua son of Išpuini, and Inušpua son of Minua, dedicated when they conquered the town of Amuša"[750]. Three bronze discs, perhaps horse vestments, bearing the inscription mi-nu-uš-pu-a-i-ni-e-i ú-ri-iš-ḫu-si-ni-e-i, "(object) of the treasure of Inušpua" are also known from the antique market[751]. The most surprising object, again coming from the antique market but attributed by Salvini to the booty derived from the "looting of the tomb of Prince Inušpua"[752], is a silver situla with the Assyrian inscription: ^{m}*is-pu-u-i-ni apil*(A) ^{mD}*sar$_5$-dūri*(BÀD) *ana*(DIŠ) ^{m}*i-nu-uš-pu-a ittidini*(SUM-*ni*) *ana*(DIŠ) ^{LÚ}*ki-ba-ri-šú ra-'a-me*, " Išpuini, figlio di Sarduri, ha donato a Inušpua, perché voglia bene al suo vecchio/nonno(?)[753]". Inušpua is configured as a unique character within Urartian history, apparently very close to his father and grandfather, never mentioned together with who would later actually become the Urartian ruler after Minua, Argišti. The sudden disappearance of Inušpua from the Urartian scene has led some scholars to suppose that he rebelled against his father Minua, putting an end to a possible system of father-son "co-regencies" that has been defined as an Urartian "tradition"[754], or even that Argišti was a usurper[755]; an easier hypothesis would also consider the sudden death of Inušpua. What is certain, however, is only the mention of Inušpua in the inscriptions of his father and grandfather; the absence of epigraphs in his name, together with the lack of mention in Assyrian texts, leads us to assume that this character never reigned, or that he was sovereign for a very short time. Inušpua, for certain, is succeeded by Argišti, who proclaims himself as the son of Minua: a brief analysis

[746] See, for example, Burney 1993: 109; Salvini 1994: 207; Taffet - Yakar 1998: 144; Radner 2011: 743-735
[747] Baştürk 2013: 74.
[748] This is probably due to the years of peace between Urartu and Assyria during the kingdoms of Samsi-Adad V and Adadnirari III, who avoided confrontation with Urartu and therefore did not report any news.
[749] CTU A 4-1.
[750] CTU B 4-1.A-D; B 4-2, with slightly different text. Amuša is defined in Salvini 2018: 430, " Città situata forse nel Nagorno Karabach".
[751] CTU B 7; Seidl 2004: 29, D.1 - D.3.
[752] CTU B 2-4; "La particolarità dell'iscrizione fa ritenere con certezza che si tratti di un originale".
[753] The term ^{LÚ}*kibaru* has the meaning of "grandfather" in the Assyrian language used in Urartu; see Salvini 2018: 440; see also Salvini 1980: 175.
[754] Sevin 1979. It is not even guaranteed that there was a co-regency system: "It may be more plausible to propose that Menua's name was mentioned in an effort to guard his rights as crown prince and hence to insure an uninterrupted dynastic succession" (Ayvazian 2005: 200).
[755] Ayvazian 2005.

of Argišti's title in his so-called Annals of Horhor[756], engraved at the entrance of the rock chamber that was supposed to contain Argišti's deceased body, is presented by Ayvazian, who supported the theory of the usurpation of the throne by Argišti also thanks to the absence, in the first attestations of his title, of the formula *king of the country of Bia(inili)*, which instead appears in the royal titles of his two predecessors[757]. However, since the initial section of the Annals of Horhor is missing, this lack may not be intentional: according to Salvini's reconstruction, Argišti's first deeds were recorded on other media and not on the rock, but a partial duplicate of the annalistic text, also the recording of the first feats, has been preserved, engraved on a fragmentary stele found in Van, now disappeared[758]. In this other report, it is noted that the title *king of the country of Biainili* is already present from the first lines[759]. The idea that Argišti regularly succeeded Inušpua, or directly Minua, without assuming the usurpation of the throne, should therefore probably be supported.

Sarduri (II) succeeded Argišti to the throne: Kroll[760] proposed that this sovereign was followed by a king bearing the same name, Sarduri, son of Sarduri, attested only by a cuneiform inscription engraved on some fragments of a shield found in Karmir-blur[761]. Indeed, since the vast majority of the materials of Karmir-blur can be dated to the 8th century BCE, one can hypothesize that his probably short reign dated to the second half of the 8th century BCE, instead of pushing him at the end of Urartian history[762]. Unfortunately, no help comes from Assyrian sources: during the reign of Tiglath-Pileser III (744-727 BCE), two campaigns against Urartu are mentioned in particular, dated from the eponymous chronicles to 743 and 735 BCE, and both times the Urartian king is called Sarduri (Istar/Issar-dūrī - Sarduri - Sardaurri) [763]. It cannot be excluded that the first campaign was directed against Sarduri, son of Argišti, while the capital Ṭušpa was besieged during the brief reign of Sarduri, son of Sarduri.

4.2. The "Rusas" issue

A further problem in the chronological succession of the rulers is represented by the reigns of the three Urartian rulers bearing the name Rusa: Rusa, son of Sarduri, Rusa, son of Rusa, and Rusa, son of Erimena. The analysis of their succession requires the aid of written sources, both Urartian and Assyrian, and an in-depth examination of the iconography of the individual rulers. This iconographic analysis was carried out by Ursula Seidl in 2004[764] and will be discussed below. In the discussion, it is important to stress that all the theories proposed by the scholars have their *pro* and *contra*, and it is possible that, with the documents we own at the current state of research, this issue will not be easily solved without polarising on two main opposite positions.

Logic would place Rusa, son of Sarduri, after one of the two sovereigns named Sarduri who preceded him; it is not clear who of the two Sarduri is his father since he may have been the brother of Sarduri,

[756] CTU A 8-3.
[757] Ayvazian 2005: 202.
[758] CTU A 8-1.
[759] CTU A 8-1, Ro., l. 6.
[760] Kroll 1984: XX
[761] CTU B 16-1.
[762] Fuchs 2012: 146.
[763] See, for example, RINAP 1: Tiglath-Pileser III 9, ll. 8'-10'; 35, ll. i24'-33'; 41, ll. 15'-21'.
[764] Seidl 2004: 122-124.

son of Sarduri, whose reign may have been of infinitesimal duration. However, the iconographic analysis by Ursula Seidl and the independent considerations of Michael Roaf[765] and Andreas Fuchs[766], based also on a study by Stephan Kroll[767], suggested that the line of succession to the throne is not straightforward. In the following pages, the different theories proposed by the scholars will be presented. However, it must be pointed out that, apart from the choice of a chronology for the present work, all proposals have their pros and cons, and that, with the data currently in our possession, it is not possible to get to an unambiguous actual line of succession without problems.

Traditionally, it has been assumed that the sequence on the Urartian throne from the second half of the 8th century BCE was: Sarduri, son of Argišti, Rusa (I), son of Sarduri, Argišti (II), son of Rusa, Rusa (II), son of Argišti, and finally Rusa (III), son of Erimena. In his 2010 article, Michael Roaf summarised the path taken to establish this chronological succession[768]: firstly, the publication of the text and the translation of Sargon II's Eighth Campaign by François Thureau-Dangin[769] led to the conclusion that the chronology of Urartian rulers at the end of the 8th century BCE was undoubtedly linked to the information contained in Sargon II's text. The Urartian ruler reigning at the time of the Eighth Campaign is described as a sort of usurper, particularly in two passages; the first one states that the current ruler's father not only did not hail from the royal city of Tušpa, but did not even belong to the same family as Sarduri: "En passant, j'allai à Arbu, la ville de la maison paternelle d'Ursâ, et à Riar, la ville de Sarduri"[770]. The second excerpt describes a statue in the temple of Ḫaldi at Muṣaṣir as "une statue d'Ursâ avec ses deux coursiers et son cocher, avec leur siège, (le tout) en bronze coulé, (statue) sur laquelle on voyait son orgueil exprimé ainsi: 'avec mes deux chevaux et mon cocher, mes mains ont conquis la royauté d'Urartu'"[771]. The first passage, in particular, made the identification Sargon II's enemy with Rusa son of Sarduri unlikely, but helped in assuming that this king may have been the only one currently known who did not bear a patronymic identifiable with a previous Urartian ruler, namely Rusa, son of Erimena. A few years after the publication of the text of the Eighth Campaign, Lehmann-Haupt reviewed the state of knowledge on Urartian rulers and discussed several possible dynastic sequences, favouring one in particular, already published in an earlier article written together with Waldemar Belck[772]: this chronology placed Rusa, son of Sarduri, as the first of the three rulers with the same name, while Rusa, son of Erimena, was placed at the end of the dynastic succession, in the late 7th – early 6th century BCE. In order to support his chronology, now in contrast with Thureau-Dangin's observations, Lehmann-Haupt made several iconographic and epigraphic observations[773], which can be entirely refuted, as pointed out by Roaf in his own article[774]: "Thus none of Lehmann-Haupt's reasons for identifying the opponent of Sargon with Rusa son of Sarduri have proved to be compelling. (...) Nevertheless, despite the weakness of his arguments and his faulty logic, Lehmann-Haupt's preferred

[765] In three different articles: Roaf 2010; Roaf 2012a; Roaf 2012b.
[766] Fuchs 2012.
[767] Kroll 1984.
[768] Roaf 2010.
[769] Thureau-Dangin 1912.
[770] Thureau-Dangin 1912: 277.
[771] Thureau-Dangin 1912: 403-404.
[772] Belck – Lehmann[-Haupt] 1896.
[773] Extensively explained in Roaf 2010: 70-72.
[774] Roaf 2010: 72-74.

dynastic order was generally accepted for the next eighty years and all the major corpora of Urartian texts"[775].

This line of succession is strongly supported by Mirjo Salvini, who used it also in his *magnum opus*, *Corpus dei Testi Urartei*, organised precisely according to this chronological sequence. With the publication, in 2002, of the text and commentary of a stele found in the village of Gövelek and dated to the time of Rusa, son of Erimena[776], Salvini also attempted to definitively prove this succession, showing that Rusa, son of Erimena, had continued the works of Rusa (II), son of Argišti, both at Keşiş Göl and Rusaḫinili/Toprakkale[777]: this hypothesis was, however, based on the belief, now considered incorrect, that the so-called Keşiş Göl stele[778] dated to the reign of Rusa (II), son of Argišti, while the discovery of a duplicate of this text has made it possible to establish that it actually narrates the deeds performed by Rusa, son of Erimena, including the creation of the artificial lake of Keşiş Göl and the "construction"[779] of the city of *Rusaḫinili Qilbani=kai*, modern Toprakkale. The chronological issue related to the position of Rusa, son of Erimena, in the Urartian line of royal succession is, therefore, also linked to the discussed date of foundation of the city of Toprakkale. In the same contribution, Salvini pointed out the similarities in the literary style of Rusa, son of Erimena, and the style of Argišti, son of Rusa, in his opinion a previous ruler, considering them a precise stylistic choice aimed at legitimizing his presence on the Urartian throne through an archaizing manner[780].

Already in 2004, Ursula Seidl's iconographic analysis allowed to notice the stylistic similarity in the rendering of the figures of animals, bulls and lions, in the representations of the time of Rusa, son of Erimena, traditionally considered a 7th century BCE sovereign, and the representations of 8th century BCE rulers[781]. Based also on Salvini's considerations on the literary style of Rusa, son of Erimena, Seidl came to a totally different conclusion: given the similarities of the style of Rusa, son of Erimena, with the art of the 8th century BCE and the epigraphic formulae used by Argišti, son of Rusa, "Könnte es aber nicht auch sein, daß Rusa, S. d. Erimena, irgendwann in der unruhigen Zeit zwischen Rusa I. (S. d. Sarduri) und Rusa (II.), S. d. Argišti, herrschte, sei es als Usurpator, oder als Vormund eines unmündigen Kronprinzen?"[782]. The pictorial and literary style would suggest that Rusa of Erimena reigned between the end of the 8th and the beginning of the 7th century BCE. Ursula Seidl continued her analysis in a 2007 contribution[783] where she proposed to identify Rusa, son of Erimena, as the founder of Toprakkale. If the death of Rusa (I), son of Sarduri, occurred in 714 BCE, the Rusa allied with Ambaris, king of Tabal, mentioned by Sargon II in 713 BCE[784], must necessarily be Rusa, son of Erimena; his reign, however, would have lasted less than five years, because in 709 BCE Sargon II mentions Argišti/u as an ally of Muttallu of Kummuhe[785]. In this case, Rusa, son of Erimena, would be the father of Argišti (II); Rusa, son of Erimena, would also have founded the fortress of Toprakkale as

[775] Roaf 2010: 73.
[776] Salvini 2002.
[777] Salvini 2002: 141.
[778] CTU A 14-1.
[779] The verb used is "šidu=li", the imperfective form of "šidu-", meaning "to build", "to construct".
[780] The question of the legitimacy of the reign of Rusa, son of Erimena, is precisely due to the absence of an Erimena within the Urartian dynastic line.
[781] See the table published in Seidl 2004: 123.
[782] Seidl 2004: 124.
[783] Seidl 2007.
[784] Fuchs 1994: Ann. 199.
[785] Fuchs 1994: Prunk. 112-113.

a place of worship and administration, but did not consider it necessary to build a defensive wall. In Toprakkale, Rusa, son of Argišti, would later place a monumental gilded bronze throne, intended for a god rather than a king: Rusa, son of Erimena, would thus be the founder of Toprakkale and the local temple of Ḫaldi, and so the king who lived between the 8th and 7th centuries BCE; Rusa, son of Argišti, would instead continue to decorate the temple, donating the throne to it. The foundation of Toprakkale by Rusa, son of Erimena, would also solve two major problems associated with the fortress itself: the first is the absence of the long temple inscriptions associated with the foundations of Rusa, son of Argišti[786], the second is the extreme proximity of Toprakkale to the fortress of Ayanis, in disagreement with the pattern of citadel foundations by Rusa, son of Argišti

A further reply by Salvini is contained in an article[787] published in the same volume as Seidl's previously discussed contribution[788]: in addition to rejecting Seidl's hypothesis on Toprakkale and its founder for several reasons[789], Salvini reiterated the accuracy of Lehmannn Haupt's chronological proposal, basing both on synchronisms with Assyrian rulers and dendrochronological investigations carried out at the Ayanis site. Salvini believes that at least an entire generation passed between Rusa, son of Argišti, and Rusa, son of Erimena, since Argišti, Rusa's father, should be considered the son of Rusa (I), son of Sarduri: both, Rusa and Argišti, are mentioned by Sargon II, the former during his Eighth Campaign[790], while the latter, in the year 709 BCE, as an ally of the king of Kummuhe, Muttallu[791]. A Rusa is then mentioned by Esarhaddon under the phonetic guise *Ursā* in the year 673/672 BCE[792], and this one is the Rusa that Salvini considers the son of Argišti: this date also corresponds to the result of the dendrochronological analysis of Ayanis (677-673 BCE)[793], the well-known foundation of Rusa, son of Argišti, as shown by the extensive temple inscription found at the site[794]. The last Assyrian mention of an Urartian king named Rusa, *Rusā*, dates from the reign of Ashurbanipal, around 652 BCE[795] and this is believed to be Rusa, son of Erimena. A further proof adduced by Salvini regarding the posteriority of Rusa, son of Erimena, concerned a seal bearing the name of Erimena himself[796]: Salvini believes that the name Erimena is followed by the patronymic "son of Argišti", whose reading is however doubtful, so much so that the author himself transliterates it as "^{m}e-ri-me-na[-i? ^{m}a]r?-^{r}giš?"[797]. As far as iconographic considerations are concerned, however, the data provided by Salvini focus on

[786] See CTU A 12. The discussion is still open anyway, as Salvini (Salvini 2007: 149) claimed he found a fragment of the temple inscription of Toprakkale among the findings kept in the Urartian Room of the Hermitage museum (CTU A 12-5). As one may see, the fragment is extremely small and the cuneiform evidence is scarce; moreover, the provenance of the fragment is not sure (Salvini 2007: 149, "Von Toprakkale kommt jedoch höchstwahrscheinlich ein kleines Steinfragment mit Keilschrift"; Salvini 2008: 577, "Proviene probabilmente da Toprakkale").
[787] Salvini 2007.
[788] Seidl 2007.
[789] See Salvini 2007: 149-157.
[790] Foster 2005
[791] Fuchs 1994: Prunk. 112-113.
[792] RINAP 4: Esarhaddon 33 iii, ll. 23'-34'.
[793] Salvini 2007: 157.
[794] CTU A 12-1.
[795] RINAP 5: Ashurbanipal 6 vii, rr. 20'-28'.
[796] Salvini 2007: 152-154. The seal is registered as CTU B Sig. 13-1.
[797] Salvini 2007: 152, "Was klar zu sehen ist, sind ein kurzer waagerechter und ein senkrechter Keil, die Teil eines RI aber auch eines AR sein können. Ich vermute, daß es sich um den 4. und 5. Keil des Zeichens AR handelt (…). Ich glaube ferner, zwei übereinanderliegende waagerechte Keile und einen senkrechten zu erkennen, die ich als GIŠ zu lesen vorschlage".

representations of lions and bulls on a shield from Ayanis[798], theoretically to be dated to the second quarter of the 7th century BCE, but with depictions made in the style that Seidl recognises as typical of the 8th century BCE: unfortunately, however, the shield bears no inscription, and the habit of preserving objects from older periods is an Urartian custom that is also found, above all, in recent fortresses such as Karmir-blur. It has also been argued by Salvini that the lions depicted on the seals of Rusa, son of Argišti, are reminiscent of the style considered by Seidl to be typical of the 8th century BCE: Seidl responded to this observation by proposing that Rusa, son of Argišti, had adopted an iconographic system based on earlier Assyrian or Urartian models, thus with different characteristics from those of contemporary art[799].

The chronology proposed by Ursula Seidl, based on literary and iconographic evidence, can be articulated in two different ways, both of which place the reign of Rusa, son of Erimena, at the end of the 8th century BCE[800]. The first option takes into account the death of Rusa (I) in 714 BCE, as narrated in the Annals of Sargon II[801], stating that the Rusa mentioned in 713 BCE as an ally of Ambaris, king of Tabal[802], would be Rusa, son of Erimena, who would reign until the *terminus ante quem* of 709 BCE, the year of the mention of Argišti/u as an ally of Muttallu of Kummuhe[803]. The second chronology proposed by Seidl, although "There is no decisive evidence supporting the second scheme"[804] does not exclude that there was sufficient time between 709 BCE, with the mention of Argišti in the Assyrian sources, and 646/2 BCE, with the mention instead of Sarduri / Istar/Issar-dūrī, for the reigns of both Rusa.

In 2012, Michael Roaf published two papers[805] concerning the chronological succession of the various rulers named Rusa, with particular emphasis on the proposal made by Thureau-Dangin a hundred years earlier, that the Rusa opposed to Sargon II was indeed Rusa, son of Erimena. This proposal is supported by the text of the Gövelek stele, in which Rusa claimed to have ascended "to the throne" (^{GIŠ}GU.ZA), instead of the more common "to his father's place" (^{LÚ}AD(-si)-ni e-si) [806], suggesting that Rusa's father was not sovereign of Urartu. The name Rusa itself, commonly not considered Urartian[807], would be a further confirmation of the usurping nature of this ruler: it has been suggested that the name Rusa had a Luwian origin[808], found in the form (DEUS)CERVUS$_2$-*za*-*sá*, to be read *Runzas*[809], a regular subsidiary form of the name *Runtiya*. Furthermore, a study of the titles used by Urartian rulers[810] would not confirm the posthumousness of Rusa, son of Erimena, over Rusa, son of Argišti, as postulated by Salvini; still relying on iconographic representations, well exemplified in Seidl's study, Roaf goes a

[798] Reindell 2001: 291, pl. Va.
[799] Seidl 2012: 181, "Rusa Argistihi, in conjunction with his extensive administrative reforms, introduced a coherent system of different iconographic seal types for different officials, that were based on earlier Urartian and Assyrian models".
[800] Seidl 2012: 181.
[801] Fuchs 1994: Ann. 164.
[802] Fuchs 1994: Ann. 199.
[803] Fuchs 1994: Prunk. 112-113.
[804] Seidl 2012: 181.
[805] Roaf 2012a; Roaf 2012b.
[806] Salvini 2002: 126.
[807] Wilhelm 2004: 122; Wilhelm 2008: 108; see Movsisyan 2006: 123, for a summary of the possible origins of the name proposed by different scholars.
[808] Simon 2008.
[809] Hawkins 2000: KARATEPE I, §40, 212, "the Hier. Stag-God *Runzas* is known as the late form of Hitt. Empire ^{D}KAL (= *Kurunta*)".
[810] Roaf 2012a.

step further by considering the depictions of the time of Rusa of Erimena not only stylistically preceding those of Rusa, son of Argišti, but also extremely similar to those of the reign of Sarduri, son of Argišti[811]. Roaf continued the analysis of the figure of Rusa, son of Erimena, relying on Assyrian sources and recalling the considerations expressed by Thureau-Dangin on the origin of Rusa and his non-belonging to the Urartian royal house of Tušpa, focusing in particular on the description of Rusa's death contained in several texts of the time of Sargon II. In the text of the Annals[812], in the eighth year of Sargon II's reign (714 BCE), Ursâ stabbed himself with his own sword; in the text of the Khorsabad cylinder, in the account of the deeds performed during the ninth year of his reign (713 BCE)[813], Sargon II described himself as the one who devastated Urartu, sacked Muṣaṣir and terrorised Ursâ, who killed himself with his own weapon, a belt dagger[814]. It is also possible, however, that Rusa didn't commit suicide[815] and that the description in the Letter from Sargon II was just "Assyrian wishful thinking"[816], or also that Rusa actually died, but did not commit suicide: a passage contained within the text of a fragmentary letter sent to Sargon II by Aššur-reṣuwa[817], an envoy to the province of Kumme, describes a coup d'état that took place in Urartu, in which the death of an individual is described, followed by a commander belonging to the family of Sarduri entering in Tušpa; "If this letter does describe the death of Ursâ, he did not commit suicide. The usurper Rusa son of Erimena was assassinated by his nobles and as a result a second Rusa, Rusa son of Sarduri, a member of the Sarduri-family that had previously ruled Urartu, was able to seize the throne"[818]. In the Annals[819], in fact, at the time of the ninth year of the reign of Sargon II (713 BCE), an Ursâ is mentioned again, and to him an embassy was sent by Ambaris, king of Tabal. The next synchronism is dated instead to 709 BCE, with the mention of Argišti, an ally of Muttallu of Kummuhe[820]. It is possible, therefore, that Assyrian sources referred to two different rulers called Rusa, both preceding the reign of Argišti and both living during the reign of Sargon II[821]. In a private letter sent by Sennacherib to his father Sargon II[822], it is also stated that the governor of the city of Muṣaṣir, together with his brother and the governor of Hubuškia, went to pay his respects to the ruler of Urartu, whose name is not specified: this event is also mentioned in an Urartian document, the Topzawa stele[823], whose author is Rusa, son of Sarduri, which records a battle of the Urartian king against Urzana, governor of Muṣaṣir.

The chronology of the Urartian re-occupation of Muṣaṣir, which, therefore, assumes a previous Assyrian occupation, has recently been debated: while Salvini[824] argued that the attack of Rusa, son of Sarduri, on Muṣaṣir took place before that of Sargon II, in a period before 714 BCE, several

[811] Roaf 2012a: 198, "Thus the most natural sequence is that the lions and bulls of Rusa son of Erimena belong between those of Sarduri son of Argishti and Rusa son of Sarduri and that those of Rusa son of Sarduri belong between those of Rusa son of Erimena and Rusa son of Argishti".
[812] Fuchs 1994: Ann. 164.
[813] Fuchs 1994: Zyl. 27.
[814] Fuchs 1994: Prunk. 76-77.
[815] Roaf 2012b: 775.
[816] Radner 2012: 254.
[817] SAA 5, 93.
[818] Roaf 2012b: 778.
[819] Fucks 1994: Ann. 199
[820] Fuchs 1994: Prunk. 112-113
[821] Roaf 2012a: 205.
[822] SAA 1, 31.
[823] CTU A 10-5
[824] Salvini 1995c: 82.

Assyriologists who have approached the study of this issue[825] considered more logical a reconquest of Muṣaṣir after the occupation of Sargon II, mainly because of the absence of any mention of a previous conquest in the sources[826]. If this event is to be placed after 714 BCE, thus after Sargon II's Eighth Campaign, the Rusa who died between 714 and 713 BCE could not have been Rusa, son of Sarduri, who would instead have occupied Muṣaṣir in the years between the death of the previous Rusa, son of Erimena, and the Assyrian mention of his successor, Argišti, son of Rusa. Concluding his contribution, Roaf proposes several chronological solutions to the dynastic succession in Urartu at the end of the 8th century BCE[827]:

1A. Sarduri (son of Argišti or Sarduri) was besieged at Tušpa by Tiglatpileser III in 735 BCE[828], year in which Rusa, son of Erimena, may have seized power as a usurper. In the first part of his reign, Rusa was occupied with his building projects, including the citadel of Toprakkale, but, when Sargon II ascended the throne, relations between Assyria and Urartu deteriorated and the final clash took place in 714 BCE, after which Rusa, son of Erimena, died. He was succeeded by Rusa, son of Sarduri, who, between 714 and 709 BCE, conspired with Ambaris, king of Tabal and reconquered Muṣaṣir. This solution "matches the clear iconographic development of the lions on the shields and it does not require the death of Ursa and the conspiracy of Ambaris as recorded in Sargon's Annals to be re-dated" [829], and it is, in the present work, considered the most probable chronology.

1A+B. Rusa, son of Sarduri, succeeded Sarduri to the throne, but was later deposed by Rusa, son of Erimena. After Sargon II's Eighth Campaign the throne is regained by Rusa, son of Sarduri, who reconquers Muṣaṣir; this solution allows the actions of Rusa, son of Sarduri, which precede and follow the campaign of Sargon II, to be dated to a wider period.

1B. Rusa, son of Sarduri, occupies Muṣaṣir before 722 BCE, the year of Sargon II's accession to the throne.

1C. Argišti (II) is to be regarded as the son of Rusa, son of Erimena, who died by suicide in 714 BCE; Argišti reigned at least until 709 BCE, after which, at an unspecified time, Rusa, son of Sarduri, ascended the throne and reconquered Muṣaṣir.

2A. Rusa, son of Erimena, never mentioned in Assyrian sources, usurps the throne of Urartu and plans the construction of Toprakkale. However, Rusa, son of Sarduri, regains his family's throne, an event recalled by the epigraph on the statue described by Sargon II during the sacking of Muṣaṣir, before the advent of Sargon II. The occupation of Muṣaṣir and the alliance of Rusa, son of Sarduri, with Ambaris of Tabal occur in a period of time that follows the summer of 714 BCE but precedes the end of 713 BCE, the year of Rusa's death.

2B. Rusa, son of Sarduri, takes the throne of Urartu by force[830], perhaps because the succession had not taken place peacefully. The counter-attack on Muṣaṣir takes place soon after the return of Sargon II to Assyria, following the Eighth Campaign, before the end of 713 BCE. Thereafter, Rusa, son of Erimena, takes the throne and reigns for four years, between 713 and 709 BCE.

[825] Giovanni Lanfranchi, Simo Parpola, Karen Radner, Michael Roaf.
[826] Roaf 2012a: 207.
[827] Roaf 2012a: 213-216.
[828] RINAP 1: Tiglath-Pileser III 39, ll. 20-22.
[829] Roaf 2012a: 214.
[830] Event connected with the statue of Muṣaṣir.

2C. Rusa, son of Sarduri, occupies Muṣaṣir before 714 BCE and is the opponent of Sargon II; Rusa, son of Erimena, reigns successively, between Argišti, son of Rusa, and Rusa, son of Argišti, and is never mentioned in Assyrian sources.

A further chronological sequence, not yet discussed, was instead proposed by Altan Çilingiroğlu[831], according to whom the royal succession to the throne of Urartu at the end of the 8th century BCE would see, after Rusa, son of Sarduri, opponent of Sargon II and probably dead suicidal in 714 BCE, and Argišti, son of Rusa, mentioned in 709 BCE in Assyrian sources, a sequence different from the ones previously discussed. Refuting firstly the proposal that will be indicated by Roaf as 2C[832] and, in general, the idea of the precedence of Rusa, son of Erimena, in relation to Rusa, son of Argišti, Çilingiroğlu observed that many objects found in Ayanis indicate the founder of the fortress in Rusa, son of Argišti; only a helmet belonging to his (presumed) father, Argišti, has been found in the citadel[833]: if indeed a ruler called Rusa, son of Erimena, had reigned between Argišti, son of Rusa, and Rusa, son of Argišti, it would seem rather difficult to explain the presence in Ayanis of this helmet, which is believed to be an *ex voto* of Rusa, son of Argišti, dedicated to Ḫaldi in memory of his father, or directly dedicated by Argišti himself, still alive at the time of the founding of the fortress[834]. Furthermore, the temple inscription of Ayanis does not include Aššur among the mentioned deities: however, Aššur may have already been present in the Urartian pantheon during the reign of Rusa, son of Erimena, since he is included among the worshipped gods in the text of the Gövelek stele[835]: if Rusa, son of Erimena, had reigned before Rusa, son of Argišti, Aššur should instead have been mentioned in the Ayanis inscription[836]. Çilingiroğlu identifies Rusa, son of Argišti, builder of Ayanis[837], in the mention, in the year 653 BCE, of *Ursā / Rusā* in a text of Ashurbanipal[838]; ten years later, again by Ashurbanipal, *Istar / Issar-dūrī* is mentioned[839] affirming the good relations of Assyria and his predecessors to the Urartian throne. In the ten years elapsed between the Assyrian mentions of Rusa and Sarduri, other kings may have followed one another on the Urartian throne: given the tendency towards a father-son succession, the author states that, after Rusa, son of Argisti, Sarduri, son of Rusa , and Sarduri, son of Sarduri, were kings of Urartu, the latter reigning until 643 BCE and therefore mentioned in the Ashurbanipal letter. Rusa, son of Erimena, would therefore have taken the throne after this date, followed by king Rusa, son of Rusa[840]. This solution, however, would not coincide with either the epigraphic or the archaeological data connected with the fall of the Kingdom of Urartu, which had been discussed by Stephan Kroll since 1984[841]. As previously mentioned, Kroll himself, in the light of the archaeological data from the Bastam excavation, proposed to consider a further chronology as a possible sequence of the Rusa to Urartian

[831] Çilingiroğlu 2008.
[832] Roaf 2012a: 216.
[833] CTU B 11-3.
[834] Çilingiroğlu 2008: 25.
[835] CTU A 14-1, Vo., l. 12. Çilingiroğlu 2008: 26, identifies the reason for the presence of Aššur in the Urartian pantheon in the deportations of men and women from Assyria carried out by Rusa, son of Argišti and mentioned in the temple inscription of Ayanis, CTU A 12-1, VI, 10-11. On this topic, see Zimansky 2016.
[836] Çilingiroğlu 2008: 26.
[837] But also the one who deported men and women from the Assyrian territory; one would have to wonder how diplomatic relations between Urartu and Assyria evolved for Rusa himself to send ambassadors to the court of Ashurbanipal to congratulate the Assyrian victory over Elam.
[838] RINAP 5: Ashurbanipal 6 vii, ll. 20'-28'.
[839] RINAP 5: Ashurbanipal 11 x, ll. 41-45.
[840] Çilingiroğlu 2008: 28.
[841] See the following discussion.

rule[842]: considering the mentions from the Bastam tablets and the distinction between "king seals" and "prince seals" made by Seidl[843], Kroll believes that it is also possible to include a further ruler, Sarduri, son of Sarduri, testified only by an epigraph engraved on a shield found at Karmir-blur[844], within the Urartian royal list, immediately after the reign of Sarduri, son of Argišti. This ruler would not have reigned long, leaving the throne to Rusa, son of Sarduri: "In ähnlicher Weise soll in dieser Variante der Königsliste der Möglichkeit Rechnung getragen werden, daß die Prinzen Sarduhi Sar und Rusa Sarduriḫi vielleicht gar nicht dem Zweig des Königshauses von Argisti II und Rusa II. angehörten, sondern einem anderen Familienzweig, der in der Bewahrung des Namens Sarduri auf einen Sarduri II. oder III. zurückging - eine derartige Verästelung des urartäischen Königshauses könnte Sargon II. mit seiner Beschreibung sehr wohl gemeint haben"[845].

In addition to the issue of the "Rusa" succession, there is a uniquely Assyrian mention of a person who was crowned king of Urartu for, probably, a very short time: in two letters addressed to Sargon II, Melarṭua, son of an Urartian ruler[846], is mentioned as being crowned king when his father was believed to have died in a battle[847]. Since he is only known from Assyrian sources, it must be assumed that Melarṭua was the son of one of the Urartian kings mentioned in the Assyrian synchronisms of the time of Sargon II, namely Rusa (son of Sarduri or son of Erimena) and Argišti, son of Rusa. An examination of the context in which Melarṭua is mentioned could point to one king in particular: Fuchs' analysis[848] showed that the Assyrian letters talked about the Urartian battles against the Cimmerians, whose dating must necessarily be later than the Eighth Campaign of Sargon II[849], and so do not refer to the sovereign who probably died following the Campaign, Rusa (I). Fuchs believes that the Cimmerian issue in Urartu should be placed during the reign of Argišti, son of Rusa, certainly after the request for an alliance in 709 BCE by Muttallu of Kummuhe, in whose eyes Argišti must have still appeared as a powerful ruler[850]. At that point, at the end of a battle with the Cimmerians, Argišti was believed to be dead by his army, which elected his son, Melarṭua, as his successor; in reality, the sovereign "escaped secretly on a lone (horse) and took to the mountains"[851], perpetuating the *topos* of the cowardice of Urartian sovereigns[852], and probably reappearing later in order to regain the throne. A slightly different chronology is proposed by Roaf[853], according to whom the ruler who would have faced the Cimmerians would have been Rusa, son of Sarduri; in fact, this king would have had enough time, after the death of Rusa, son of Erimena, to consolidate his authority as ruler by reconquering the centre of Muṣaṣir and, encouraged by this victory, going into battle against the Cimmerians. If so, Melarṭua may have been his son, who was crowned as sovereign following his father's flight and had changed his name to Argišti[854], or also that, as Fuchs has already proposed, Rusa had reappeared and regained the title of Urartian

[842] Kroll 1984: 164-165.
[843] Seidl 1979; see the following discussion.
[844] CTU B 16-1.
[845] Kroll 1984: 165.
[846] SAA 5, 114, Vo., ll. 7-8.
[847] SAA 5, 90, Ro., ll. 1-10.
[848] Fuchs 2012: 155-157.
[849] Fuchs 2012: 155; the author affirms that one of the Assyrian letters related to the Cimmerian problem in Urartu (SAA 5, 31) can be dated, thanks to internal references, to a period after 713 BCE.
[850] Fuchs 2012: 156.
[851] SAA 5, 90, ll. 1-3.
[852] See van de Mieroop 2016.
[853] Roaf 2012a: 212.
[854] Roaf 2012a: 212.

sovereign, probably because Melarṭua was crowned king by a rebellious fringe of the army[855]. In any case, if Melarṭua has been actually crowned king, he must not have been king for a long time, as he didn't leave any royal inscription or inscribed object. However, one may also think of the possibility that the letter sent by Aššur-reṣuwa to Sargon II and containing a description of a coup in Urartu[856] was referred to this very situation, in which a person belonging to Sarduri's family, Rusa himself, tried to regain his power by returning to Tušpa. In such a case, then, it should perhaps be assumed that Melarṭua was not the son of Rusa, son of Sarduri, but of Rusa, son of Erimena: the letter that mentions him as the son of the Urartian king[857] does not mention the name of his father, but only states that the king was in the city of Wazana. In this case, Rusa, son of Erimena, would have died, possibly by suicide, after the Eighth Campaign of Sargon II, and would have been succeeded by Rusa, son of Sarduri, who would have confronted the Cimmerians, fleeing at the end on a mare to save his life. The escape of Rusa, son of Sarduri, would have allowed a rebel fringe of the Urartian armies to crown as their king Melarṭua, son of Rusa, son of Erimena, who would then return to Tušpa, but would reign very briefly, being assassinated in a palace conspiracy to restore Rusa, son of Sarduri, to the throne. Unfortunately, until further clarifying documents are found, these theories must remain in the abstract realm of hypothesis.

The Old Testament records a further connection between Urartu and Assyria through Sennacherib's son: "[36]So Sennacherib king of Assyria departed, and went and returned, and dwelt at Nineveh. [37]And it came to pass, as he was worshipping in the house of Nisroch his god, that Adrammelech and Sharezer his sons smote him with the sword: and they escaped into the land of Armenia. And Esarhaddon his son reigned in his stead"[858]. The identification of Adrammèlec with Arda/Urad-Mullissu of the Assyrian sources is now accepted[859] and, although the murder by the fugitive sons has recently been questioned in favour of a hypothesis that would see Esarhaddon as the culprit[860], the biblical fact of Adrammelech and Sharezer's escape to Araràt / Armenia / Urartu remains fixed. It has been suggested that the flight to Urartu was merely a way to reach the region of Šubria, which was later affected by an Assyrian military campaign led by Esarhaddon himself in 673 BCE[861]. Fuchs believes that it was during Arda Mullissu's stay in Urartu that the great fortresses of Bastam, Ayanis, Karmir-blur and Kef Kalesi were built[862], linking Arda Mullissu's presence to possible Assyrian funding for the construction of Urartian fortresses; his presence would also have acted as a deterrent to an Assyrian attack since the fugitive could have returned to Assyria supported by the Urartian army. If, on the other hand, one considers Knapp's hypothesis that Sennacherib's murderer was Esarhaddon, it would make sense to see the Assyrian reluctance to attack Urartu precisely in the context of maintaining the *status quo*, to prevent his brother Arda Mullissu from returning home and claiming the throne.

[855] Roaf 2012a: 214.
[856] SAA 5, 93.
[857] SAA 5, 114.
[858] II Kings, 19: 36-37. The Italian translation remains loyal to the original, not mentioning Armenia but just saying "terra di Araràt".
[859] Parpola 1980. Salvini 2006: 497, "(…) si può considerare come un fatto storico accertato la circostanza che i parricidi, gli assassini del re assiro Sennacherib fuggirono, e trovarono nel 681 a.C. asilo politico nel territorio del regno di Urartu".
[860] Knapp 2020.
[861] Leichty 1991.
[862] Fuchs 2012: 143.

4.3. The fall of the Urartian state

The fall of the Kingdom is itself still subject to numerous perplexities: if the fall of Urartu was also probably due to the nomadic peoples, Scythian and Cimmerian, during the 7th century BCE, the legacy of the Kingdom seems to have reached intact the peoples who inhabited Urartian territories in later periods, such as the Persians. It is widely possible that the very morphology of the Urartian territory, whereby large administrative centres located in precise and neuralgic locations in the Southern Caucasus were interspersed with territories without centralised control, sometimes in inaccessible positions, was the primary cause of the survival of small centres, which remained unaltered even after the collapse of the main administrative centres of the Kingdom. An example is provided by the citadel of Erebuni, which was abandoned in the Urartian period in favour of the nearby Karmir-blur, but shows an uninterrupted stratigraphy also for the period after the fall of Urartu, testifying that there, on that hill on the outskirts of Yerevan, life had never stopped despite the events affecting the Urartian power centres[863].

The *vexata quaestio* on the end of the Urartian state[864] essentially concerns two aspects: the first one is of a chronological nature, regarding the moment when Urartu ceased to be a state, and the second one focuses on the reasons for its fall[865]. These issues can also be analyzed in the light of previous studies, starting from Lehmann-Haupt and the two different chronologies[866] proposed in order to try to solve this problem, starting from the fixed point of the year 645 BCE, the last mention of a Sarduri in Assyrian documents: the first thesis provided that the fall of the Kingdom occurred in the second half of the 7th century BCE, during the reign of Sarduri, son of Rusa, who he considered to be the last Urartian ruler. The pivot of the second thesis is that the Urartian Kingdom collapsed around 590 BCE, based on the hypothesis that the fall occurred at the same time as the Medo-Lydian conflict at the beginning of the 6th century BCE. Both theses, however, were based on a conventional calculation for the duration of the reign of each Urartian ruler, which should be around 20 years: "Beide Thesen bleiben letztlich aber ein Konstrukt"[867]. The second thesis tended to be the most widely accepted by later scholars, such as Piotrovskij[868] and Diakonoff[869], and would also be supported by the discovery, in 1963, of the Karmir-blur tablets, revealing further probable names of members of the Urartian royal family[870], theoretically to be placed after the reign of Sarduri (III). However, this theory held until the 1980s, when philological and archaeological criticism emerged. In 1986, Karlheinz Kessler[871] published a contribution on the relations between Urartu and Mesopotamia, in which he denied the historical value of the biblical

[863] See, for example, Kessler 1986: 73.
[864] A useful summary of the various speculations about the dates of Urartu's fall can be found in Hellwag 2012: 238-241.
[865] Hellwag 2012: 226.
[866] Lehmann-Haupt 1921. These proposals are also summarised in Hellwag 2012: 228-230.
[867] Hellwag 2012: 229.
[868] Piotrovskij 1944: 38.
[869] Diakonoff 1951: 32-33.
[870] Hellwag 2012: 230. A chronology of the last Urartian rulers is proposed by Diakonoff, based on the mentions of the names in the Karmir-blur tablets; Diakonoff 1963: 28-29, proposes to consider a possible co-rulership between Sarduri III and Rusa I, in the second half of the 8th century BCE, based on a hypothetical joint mention of the names of the two rulers in a tablet from Karmir-blur (CTU B CT Kb-1), and confirms the existence of a ruler called Erimena, who would have reigned before Sarduri IV, the last Urartian king.
[871] Kessler 1986.

passage Jeremiah 51:27, stating that Urartians, Medes and Scythians rose against Babylon in 594 BCE[872]. Kessler, mainly studying the written external sources but also relying on archaeological results, noticed that the fortresses in the northern are of Urartu, such as Karmir-blur and Armavir, and the ones in the Van lake region, Çavuştepe and Toprakkale, were suddenly destroyed probably by nomadic warriors[873]. It is not possible to rely on the Urartian written sources for the last years of the state, so one should look at the Mesopotamian documents, where the last mention of Urartu appears after the fall of Nineveh, in the Babylonian Chronicles, dated to the years 609/608 BCE[874]. The archaeological results, however, prove that at least the central area of the Urartian state, surrounding the Lake Van, was under the control of another population at least at the end of the 7th century BCE. The toponym "Urartu" is also mentioned in the inscription of Bisotun, only in the Babylonian version, dated to the reign of the Persian king Darius I, while the other two versions used the toponym "Armenia": the name "Urartu" appears to be a simple geographical reference for the mountainous region to the north of Mesopotamia [875]. Archaeological problems have been instead discussed in 1984 by Kroll[876], who shifted the fall of the Urartian Kingdom to the middle of the 7th century BCE based on results from the excavation of Bastam. Kroll pointed out that the duration of the Urartian rulers' periods of reign could only be estimated based on sporadic Assyrian mentions of conflicts or reception of Urartian delegates at the Assyrian court[877]: hence, all the possible chronologies proposed by Lehmann-Haupt since 1894 and previously discussed. Instead, Kroll presented arguments based on archaeological data in support of his thesis, proposing that the fall of Urartu should be backdated from what has already been proposed by previous scholars. During the 1978 excavation campaign at Bastam, archaeologists concluded that the destruction of the fortress must have taken place during the time of Rusa, son of Argišti[878], thanks to numerous bullae bearing his name found in the debris of the fire that devastated the citadel. An essential contribution was also provided by Seidl[879], who clearly distinguished two types of seals, according to the title and the iconography represented, namely *Prinzensiegel*[880] and *Königsiegel*, showing that not all the new members of the royal family mentioned in the tablets newly found in Bastam, and also in those of Karmir-blur, were to be defined kings of Urartu. If it is assumed that the personages mentioned in the bullae and in the seals of the tablets, such as Rusa Sarduhi and Sarduhi Sar, were not sovereigns but simply members of the royal family, probably holding public office, there is no need to postulate the existence of kings subsequent to Rusa, son of Argišti, whose bullae are found in the ruins of Bastam: "Die hier vorgeschlagene Lösung beseitigt nun auch den Widerspruch, wie er sich in Bastam ergab, daß man einerseits annehmen mußte, die Festung sei noch unter Rusa II. zerstört worden, andererseits sich im Brandschutt aber auch Korrespondenz späterer Könige fand. Geht man hingegen davon aus, daß es sich bei den in Bastam 1-3[881] genannten Personen Rusa Sarduḫi und Sarduḫi Sar um Prinzen handelt,

[872] "Prepare the nations for battle against her (Babylon); summon against her these kingdoms: Ararat, Minni and Ashkenaz".
[873] Kessler 1986: 73.
[874] Kessler 1986: 74.
[875] Hellwag 2012: 232, fn. 27, "Das mag sich möglicherweise mit der biblischen Bezeichnung ‚Ararat' decken".
[876] Kroll 1984.
[877] Kroll 1984: 152.
[878] Kroll 1984: 157.
[879] Seidl 1979.
[880] Hellwag 2005 corrects the reading of the cuneiform writing on the so-called *Prinzensiegel* from ^{LÚ}A.NIN-*li* ("son of the queen") to ^{LÚ}A.ZUM-*li*, showing that the owners of the seals were not heirs to the Urartian throne but state officials, probably with religious functions, and that they are therefore not to be added to the sequence of Urartian rulers.
[881] CTU B: CT Ba-1, CT Ba-2, CT Ba-3.

um Angehörige der Familie Rusas II., die hohe Ämter im Staate bekleiden, so löst sich dieser Widerspruch auf, und so komplizierte Erklärungs- und Deutungsversuche"[882]. The Urartian embassy to Nineveh, dated around 640 BCE and mentioned in a document by Ashurbanipal[883], speaks, however, of an Urartian ruler called Sarduri, who could be identified with one of the people mentioned in the texts from Bastam or Karmir-blur; this ruler could be the owner of the fragmentary bronze shield found at Karmir-blur bearing an epigraph signed by Sarduri, son of Sarduri[884]; Not only the mention itself but also its context must be considered, for it is clear that Ashurbanipal considered this ruler to be much less powerful than his predecessors, perhaps a further sign of the Urartian decline, as already shown by the findings at Bastam. But if Urartu's decline should be placed during Ashurbanipal's reign, it would not be possible to explain why Urartu is mentioned in the Babylonian Chronicle and the Old Testament, on which Diakonoff's theory of the end of the Urartian state at the beginning of the 6th century BCE is based. Kroll, therefore, proposed to consider the mentions in the Babylonian Chronicle as a mere geographical and not political reference, while the biblical verse contained in the book of the prophet Jeremiah, the key to Diakonoff's argument, appears to have been composed after Jeremiah's lifetime[885], and therefore cannot be dated to the beginning of the 6th century BCE. Both the archaeological findings from the excavations at Bastam and a review of Urartian, Assyrian, Babylonian and biblical sources suggest that it is extremely unlikely to place the fall of the Urartu Kingdom at the beginning of the 6th century BCE, backdating it by about fifty years, to a period around 640 BCE, during the reign of a ruler called Sarduri.

To date, scholars own more data regarding the final years of Urartu's reign, but they are essentially in agreement with the theory proposed in 1984 by Kroll[886]. The reasons for the fall of Urartu are essentially summarised by Zimansky[887] as a combination of several factors, including attacks by nomadic peoples, Medes and Babylonians, possible civil wars within the state itself, and the unclear role played by the Armenian populations as the new dominant ethnic group in the area. When analysing the different factors individually, it can be seen that nomadic populations from the Northern Caucasus had made Urartian power insecure since the 8th century BCE [888], and they were probably responsible for the destruction of fortresses such as Karmir-blur[889] and Çavuştepe[890], in the mid-7th century BCE. The arrival of the Medes, moreover, was probably later than the fall of the Urartian Kingdom, as was the arrival of the Armenians, while the Babylonian role in the affair remains to be clarified[891]. Factors internal to the Urartian state, such as the role of the local populations, had already been pointed out by Diakonoff[892], who had proposed that the end of Urartu was the outcome of joint actions by armed forces

[882] Kroll 1984: 162.
[883] RINAP 5, Ashurbanipal 11.
[884] CTU B 16-1. Salvini also proposes that Sarduri was one of the princes / officials mentioned on the tablets, although in the epigraph on the shield he calls himself "king". Kroll 1984: 164, also proposes to consider the owner of the shield a son of Sarduri (II), son of Argišti, who ruled for a very short time after the death of his father and before Rusa became king.
[885] Kroll 1984: 168.
[886] Hellwag 2012: 233-234, for a summary of these data.
[887] Zimansky 1995b: 1141.
[888] See the various letters related to an attack by the Cimmerians during the reign of Sargon II.
[889] Piotrovskii 1950: 96. In Karmir-blur, however, small bone objects typical of the area between the Caspian Sea and the Black Sea were also found, in a period before the third quarter of the 7th century BCE (Muhle 2005: 95-96; Kossack 1987: 43-48), perhaps signs of peaceful relations with the neighbourhood.
[890] Erzen 1988: 45-50.
[891] Hellwag 2012: 237.
[892] Diakonoff 1951: 39.

outside Urartu and the rebellion of the numerous local populations that were part of the Kingdom. This rebellion is perhaps related to the proposal made by Hellwag[893], who, in addition to the factors mentioned above, also talks about the economic weakening caused by the intense exploitation of resources due to the construction of new centres during the reign of Rusa, son of Argišti, but natural disasters or local famine cannot be ruled out either.

[893] Hellwag 2012: 236-237.

4.4. Possible chronologies of the Urartian succession to the throne

4.4.1. Proposals by Salvini and Seidl

Salvini **(1995 – 2008)**	**Seidl** **(2007)**	
Rusa I, son of Sarduri (antagonist of Sargon II in the Eighth Campaign)	Rusa I, son of Sarduri (antagonist of Sargon II in the Eighth Campaign, dead in 714 BCE)	Rusa I, son of Sarduri (antagonist of Sargon II in the Eighth Campaign)
Argišti II, son of Rusa (mentioned by Sargon II as an ally of Muttallu of Kummuhe)	Rusa II, son of Erimena (mentioned by Sargon II in 713 BCE as an ally of Ambaris, king of Tabal; founder of Toprakkale)	Argišti II, son of Rusa (mentioned by Sargon II in 709 BCE as an ally of Muttallu of Kummuhe)
Rusa II, son of Argišti (founder of Toprakkale, Bastam, Ayanis, Karmir-blur etc.)	Argišti II, son of Rusa (mentioned by Sargon II in 709 BCE as an ally of Muttallu of Kummuhe)	Rusa II, son of Erimena (founder of Toprakkale)
Rusa III, son of Erimena (son of a probable son of Argišti (II), who was a brother of Rusa (II))	Rusa III, figlio di Argišti (founder of Bastam, Ayanis, Karmir-blur etc.)	Rusa III, son of Argišti (founder of Bastam, Ayanis, Karmir-blur etc.)

4.4.2. Proposals of Roaf

Roaf 2012 (from table 14.06)

1A	1A+B	1B	1C	2A	2B	2C
Sarduri, son of Argišti / Sarduri, son fo Sarduri (probably to 735 BCE)	Sarduri, son of Argišti / Sarduri, son fo Sarduri (probably to 735 BCE)	Sarduri, son of Argišti / Sarduri, son fo Sarduri (probably to 735 BCE)	Sarduri, son of Argišti / Sarduri, son fo Sarduri (probably to 735 BCE)	Sarduri, son of Argišti / Sarduri, son fo Sarduri (probably to 735 BCE)	Sarduri, son of Argišti / Sarduri, son fo Sarduri (probably to 735 BCE)	Sarduri, son of Argišti / Sarduri, son fo Sarduri (probably to 735 BCE)
	Rusa, son of Sarduri (regularly succeeded Sarduri to the throne)	Rusa, son of Sarduri (regularly succeeded Sarduri to the throne; occupied Mușașir before 722 BCE)		Rusa, son of Erimena (usurped the Urartian throne)		
Rusa, son of Erimena (probably from 722 BCE; usurped the Urartian throne)	Rusa, son of Erimena (probably from 722 BCE; deposed Rusa, son of Sarduri from the Urartian throne)	Rusa, son of Erimena (probably from 722 BCE; usurped the Urartian throne)	Rusa, son of Erimena (probably from 722 BCE; usurped the Urartian throne)	Rusa, son of Sarduri (probably from 722 BCE; regained the Urartian throne)	Rusa, son of Sarduri (probably from 722 BCE; regularly succeeded Sarduri to the throne)	Rusa, son of Sarduri (probably from 722 BCE; regularly succeeded Sarduri to the throne)
Rusa, son of Sarduri (after the death of Rusa, son of Erimena; conspired with Ambaris, king of Tabal and reconquered Mușașir)	Rusa, son of Sarduri (after the death of Rusa, son of Erimena, he regained the throne; conspired with Ambaris, king of Tabal and	Argišti, son of Rusa (regularly succeeded Rusa, son of Erimena on the Urartian throne; he is mentioned by Sargon II in 709 BCE)	Argišti, son of Rusa (regularly succeeded Rusa, son of Erimena on the Urartian throne; he is mentioned by Sargon II in 709 BCE)	Argišti, son of Rusa (regularly succeeded Rusa, son of Sarduri on the Urartian throne; he is mentioned by Sargon II in 709 BCE)	Rusa, son of Erimena (usurped the Urartian throne and reigned for four years, probably until 709 BCE)	Argišti, son of Rusa (regularly succeeded Rusa, son of Sarduri on the Urartian throne; he is mentioned by Sargon II in 709 BCE)

	reconquered Mușașir)					
Argišti, son of Rusa (regularly succeeded Rusa, son of Sarduri on the Urartian throne; he is mentioned by Sargon II in 709 BCE)	Argišti, son of Rusa (regularly succeeded Rusa, son of Sarduri on the Urartian throne; he is mentioned by Sargon II in 709 BCE)				Argišti, son of Rusa (succeeded Rusa, son of Erimena on the Urartian throne; he is mentioned by Sargon II in 709 BCE)	
			Rusa, son of Sarduri (somewhen after 709 BCE, ascended the throne and reconquered Mușașir)			Rusa, son of Erimena (usurped the Urartian throne; he's never mentioned in Assyrian documents)
Rusa, son of Argišti (from at least 672 BCE; he's mentioned by Ashurbanipal)	Rusa, son of Argišti (from at least 672 BCE; he's mentioned by Ashurbanipal)	Rusa, son of Argišti (from at least 672 BCE; he's mentioned by Ashurbanipal)	Rusa, son of Argišti (from at least 672 BCE; he's mentioned by Ashurbanipal)	Rusa, son of Argišti (from at least 672 BCE; he's mentioned by Ashurbanipal)	Rusa, son of Argišti (from at least 672 BCE; he's mentioned by Ashurbanipal)	Rusa, son of Argišti (from at least 672 BCE; he's mentioned by Ashurbanipal)

4.4.3. Summary of the proposals by different scholars

Salvini (2008)	**Fuchs (2012)**	**Kroll (1984)**		**Seidl (2012)**	**Roaf 1A (2012)**	**Çilingiroğlu (2008)**
Aramu	Ar(r)ame [Erimena I?]					
	(Lutibri)					
Sarduri I, son of Lutibri (840-30 BCE)	Sarduri I, son of Lutibri (~830 BCE)					
Išpuini, son of Sarduri (ca. 830-20 BCE)	Išpuini, son of Sarduri (~820 BCE)					
Co-regency of Išpuini and Minua (ca. 820-10)						
Minua, son of Išpuini (ca. 810-785/0 BCE)	Minua, son of Išpuini (-)					
	(Inušpua)					
Argišti I, son of Minua (785/0-756 BCE)	Argišti I, son of Minua (779~64 BCE)					
Sarduri II, son of Argišti (756-ca. 730 BCE)	Sarduri II, son of Argišti (757~35 BCE)	Sarduri II, son of Argišti	Sarduri II, son of Argišti		Sarduri II, son of Argišti / Sarduri III,	

	Sarduri III, son of Sarduri (-)		Sarduri III, son of Sarduri			son of Sarduri (~735 BCE)	
Rusa I, son of Sarduri (ca. 730-713 BCE)	Rusa I, son of Sarduri (~719-713 BCE)	Rusa I, son of Sarduri	Rusa I, son of Sarduri	Rusa I, son of Sarduri	Rusa I, son of Sarduri	Rusa I, son of Erimena (~722-714/3 BCE)	Rusa I, son of Sarduri
Argišti II, son of Rusa (713-? BCE)	Argišti II, son of Rusa (713~09 BCE)	Argišti II, son of Rusa	Argišti II, son of Rusa	Rusa II, son of Erimena	Argišti II, son of Rusa	Rusa II, son of Sarduri (714/3 BCE)	Argišti II, son of Rusa
	Melartua, son of Argisti (~709 BCE)			Argišti II, son of Rusa	Rusa II, son of Erimena	Argišti II, son of Rusa (~709 BCE)	Rusa II, son of Argišti
	(Erimena II?)						Sarduri III, son of Rusa
Rusa II, son of Argišti (I metà del VII)	Rusa II, son of Erimena (-)	Rusa II, son of Argišti	Rusa II, son of Argišti	Rusa II, son of Argišti	Rusa III, son of Argišti	Rusa III, son of Argišti (~672 BCE)	Sarduri IV, son of Sarduri
[Erimena (^{LÚ}*a-ṣu-li*(?))] Rusa III, son of Erimena	Rusa III, son of Argišti (673~647 BCE)	Rusa III, son of Erimena (possible brother of Argišti)	Rusa III, son of Erimena (possible brother of Argišti)				Rusa III, son of Erimena
[Sarduri (^{LÚ}*a-ṣu-li*(?)), son of Rusa III] Sarduri III, son of Sarduri	Sarduri IV, son of Rusa (646~638 BCE)	Sarduri III, son of Rusa	Sarduri IV, son of Rusa (belonging to the family of Sarduri III)				Rusa IV, son of Rusa

III. External influences on the language and the writing systems

1. Introduction and methodology

As previously mentioned, the history of Urartian philology is much older than the history of its archaeology: it began in 1840 with the travels of Schultz, and has come to the present day with many gaps and few fixed points. As of today, there are essentially five *corpora* of inscriptions[1076], a total of about 600 epigraphs on stone and rock, and numerous inscriptions on bronze and clay. Apart from the number of epigraphs, which appears to be impressive, it must be remembered that, due to the presence of duplicates and the repetitiveness of the Urartian inscriptions, many terms and grammatical constructions remain of obscure meaning. Several grammars, the most recent and complete ones published by Mirjo Salvini and Ilse Wegner in 2014[1077] and again by Salvini in 2018[1078], have tried to systematise the Urartian language, resorting both to the use of bilingual Urartian-Assyrian inscriptions and to the presence of Sumerograms: little progress has been made in comparing the Urartian language with Hurrian, to which it is genetically related[1079]. The common characteristics of the two languages, both of which are agglutinative, concern word structure, ergative sentence structure and the so-called *Suffixaufnahme*; nominal morphology and personal pronouns are similar in both languages, while there are more important differences in relative pronouns and verbal morphology[1080]. The genetic kinship of the two languages led to hypothesize a language family called Hurro-Urartian, whose position in the linguistic tree has been widely discussed in the past.

[1076] Lehmann-Haupt 1928-1935; König 1955-1957; Melikišvili 1960; Arutjunjan 2001; Salvini 2008-2018.
[1077] Salvini – Wegner 2014.
[1078] Salvini 2018: 477-506.
[1079] The first scholar to study the relation between Hurrian and Urartian has been Johannes Friedrich in 1935 (Friedrich 1935).
[1080] Salvini – Wegner 2014: 13.

The founder of the current of thought that sees Hurro-Urartian as a Caucasian language has been undoubtedly Igor M. Diakonoff[1081]. Many authors, assuming a connection between Hurro-Urartian and Northern Caucasian languages, tried to include both language families in the Indo-European linguistic tree, genetically connecting Hurro-Urartian, North Caucasian languages and also Etruscan[1082]. Although loans from Indo-European languages into Hurro-Urartian can be admitted[1083], it is not possible, as far as we know, to postulate a genetic connection between the Indo-European language family and the two languages of the Hurro-Urartian family. The theories that support such a connection are based exclusively on lexical elements, which alone do not prove a relationship between the languages in question, and on very discussed phonetic changes occurred among the various language considered[1084]. Another theory, which excludes the belonging in the Indo-European family, is that Hurro-Urartian is related to Sumerian, postulating the existence of a Sumerian-Hurro-Urartian protolanguage[1085]. It is not possible to verify with certainty the presence of genetic connections between Hurro-Urartian and languages belonging to other linguistic families, nor is this the place to propose other solutions, while the only thing that can be affirmed without a doubt is the effective relationship between the Hurrian and Urartian languages[1086]. Urartian should not be considered a continuation in the 1st millennium BCE of the Hurrian language, but rather a cognate language, part of the same linguistic family[1087] which exclusively includes these two languages: an Urartian branch may have separated from the Hurrian language no later than the 3rd millennium BCE[1088]. This is proved in particular by a certain affinity of Urartian with the dialect called *Old Hurrian*[1089], the language of the founding text of Tiš-atal, the *endan* of Urkeš, dating to the very end of the 3rd millennium BCE[1090]. As M. Salvini has pointed out, a major difference between Hurrian and Urartian also concerns the type of texts preserved: there is no literary genre that is preserved in both languages, since in Urartian one mainly finds royal epigraphs, both on stone and on clay and bronze, quite different from the preserved Hurrian texts, magical rituals, *omina* and diplomatic texts[1091]. A difference intrinsic to the Urartian language itself is also that between the texts engraved on stone and rock and those on bronze and clay[1092].

The Urartian language was written using cuneiform signs, but, as already mentioned, Urartu lacks almost all the text types known in Mesopotamia: the preserved texts are mainly monumental epigraphs on stone and rock, a small number of inscriptions on metal, and an even smaller number of inscriptions on clay, all of them possibly connected to the royal court. Gernot Wilhelm[1093] effectively compared the

[1081] Diakonoff 1967: 165; Diakonoff 1971: 157-171; Diakonoff 1978; Diakonoff 1980: 103. The *summa* of his work is to be found in Diakonoff – Starostin 1986; see also Starostin – Nikolayev 1994: 40.
[1082] See Ivanov 1999: 147-148, for a brief introduction on this topic and literature. The most recent scholar writing on this topic is Forni 2013. The idea that there were Indo-European elements in Hurro-Urartian languages has been firstly proposed by Hrozný 1916: 27, in a pioneering epoch of the research.
[1083] Gamkrelidze – Ivanov 1995: 777-779.
[1084] Klein et al. 2017: 3, "This is the breakthrough of the late 18th and early 19th centuries; the discovery that similarities between related languages are systematic, while those between unrelated (more precisely, not demonstrably related) languages are ad hoc and unsystematic. All languages show resemblances, but only those which descend from a common ancestor have regular resemblances".
[1085] Kassian 2012.
[1086] See Diakonoff 1957; Diakonoff 1971; Salvini 1979; Salvini 1980b; Salvini 1991; Salvini 1992.
[1087] Giorgieri 2000: 176.
[1088] Wilhelm 2008: 105.
[1089] See Salvini 1998d: 106-107.
[1090] Salvini 2018: 479.
[1091] Salvini 2018: 470-480.
[1092] Salvini 2018: 482, "Sembrano lingue distinte".
[1093] Wilhelm 1986: 97.

Urartian situation, with its meagre finds of tablets, with that of southern Syria and Palestine in the Amarna period, when, in the present state of knowledge, there is an absence of large archives or libraries. The possibility of correspondence between Urartian rulers and other Near Eastern powers cannot, therefore, be ruled out, as a single letter found in the archives of Ashurbanipal in Nineveh would testify[1094], but it may be unlikely that there was flourishing Urartian literature preserved on tablets in royal archives. The question of the introduction of cuneiform writing in Urartu is a complex one, with different positions, which will be analysed below; even more controversial is the existence of an Urartian "hieroglyphic" writing itself, which is said to be attested mainly in glyptic and some metal objects.

About the Urartian language and the contacts and influences it sustained during its diffusion, one can only examine individual terms, identifying possible linguistic borrowings from languages spoken in neighbouring territories, and study more extensively the limited *formulae* recurring in Urartian epigraphy and mainly related to royal titling: such operations can be carried out by comparing the Urartian lexicon with both the Assyrian and the Luwian ones, as those are the only known languages that may have had contacts with the Urartian one. This procedure will explain the relations between Urartians and neighbouring populations in terms of linguistic loans; as for the *formulae*, its affinity with the Akkadian world is explicitly clear.

A similar operation is to be carried out concerning the writings used for the Urartian language. The derivation of the Urartian cuneiform from the Neo-Assyrian one is by now a fact[1095], while the existence of a so-called Urartian "hieroglyphic" script is extremely problematic, and, if it ever really existed beyond the three known units of measurement of liquids impressed on *pithoi*, it is still completely unknown. In both cases, regarding cuneiform and hieroglyphic writing, a compilation of the available information derived from previous studies on the issues will be presented. The final aim of the work will be to emphasise the influences on Urartian language and script caused by proximity to Near Eastern populations, while also attempting to clarify the relationships established between the various actors considered.

2. Language

2.1. Influence of the Akkadian language

As for the influence of the Akkadian language on Urartian culture, it is necessary to make clear distinctions between the use of Assyrian language at the royal court of Urartu, the influence of the Akkadian *formulae* in Urartian inscriptions and, eventually, the adoption of Akkadian terms in Urartian. While the first topic is to be seen as a more "cultural" fact, as the Akkadian language was used both because of its superior *status* and for diplomatic reasons, the other two categories are to be considered

[1094] SAA 21: 124. See also the letter sent from the Assyrian king Ashurbanipal to an Urartian king named Sarduri (SAA 21: 78).
[1095] See, for example, Wilhelm 1986.

as actual influences, possibly unconsciously adopted in Urartu due to the prolonged contacts with the Assyrian empire. All these sections will be treated separately, but it must be undoubtedly clear the great debt of the Urartian culture to the Assyrian one.

2.1.1. Use of the Assyrian language

Documents written in Akkadian found in Urartian sites belong essentially to the two "standard" types of Urartian epigraphy: epigraphs on stone and rock, and short inscriptions engraved on bronze objects. Despite the relatively small number of attestations, however, Akkadian is an essential interlocutor for the Urartian language, both because the first attestations of writing in Urartu were in Assyrian, and because this language continued to be used within the royal court even after the standardisation of the Urartian written language. The use of Assyrian is attested during the reign of almost all rulers, especially Sarduri (I), Išpuini, Minua, Argišti Minuaḫi, Sarduri Argištiḫi and Rusa Sarduriḫi; only the first three rulers and the last one in the list use Akkadian in their stone inscriptions, while Argišti and Sarduri, without a clear pattern, use it only for inscriptions on bronze objects[1096].

Concerning stone and rock inscriptions, at least two phases in the use of Akkadian can be distinguished: the first one only comprises the period of the reign of Sarduri, son of Lutipri, who only left documents in Assyrian, while the Akkadian inscriptions of other rulers exist in parallel with the ones in Urartian, and can be attributed to the second phase. With regard to the metal objects inscribed in Assyrian, the tradition began with the reign of Išpuini and apparently ended with Sarduri Argištiḫi; the inscribed objects are of various types: horse harnesses, bowls, votive rings, a bronze plaque and a *situla*, which is unique in Urartian epigraphy. In the following paragraph, all the Assyrian epigraphs written by Urartian rulers will be analysed.

2.1.1.1. Sarduri, son of Lutipri

Sarduri, son of Lutipri, is to be regarded as the king responsible for the introduction of cuneiform writing in Urartu. He was the author of an inscription in Akkadian engraved in six duplicates on the wall of the Sardursburg, near Van Kalesi[1097], celebrating the construction of the wall itself, made with stones brought to Van from the city of Alniunu[1098]. The epigraph begins with the royal title, which includes the epithets "great king, strong king, king of the world, king of the land Nairi, king who has no equal, marvellous shepherd, fearless in battle, king who subdues those insubordinate to him (…) king of kings"[1099]; this profusion of royal titles, typical of Neo-Assyrian epigraphy, will not be taken up again by later Urartian rulers. A peculiarity of this epigraph[1100] is the use of the logogram IM, corresponding to the Akkadian *ṭuppu*, "clay tablet", to indicate the rock inscription: the generic meaning of

[1096] To Sarduri Argištiḫi apparently also belongs a cornelian bead with a dedication in Akkadian to the goddess Arubani (CTU D 9-1).
[1097] CTU A 1-1.
[1098] Probably modern-day Edremit; see Salvini 2001c; see also Dan 2020: 126.
[1099] CTU A 1-1. The English translation of the texts, when not differently indicated, are provided by the eCUT project website (http://oracc.museum.upenn.edu/ecut/pager/).
[1100] But also of another later inscription in Urartian, belonging to the king Argišti Minuaḫi (CTU A 8-13).

"inscription" is only attested for the Old Akkadian period[1101], while it is lost in more recent times. A connection between the use of the term in Old Akkadian and Urartian times is unlikely, but it is plausible to assume that the scribe responsible for the Sardursburg inscription was probably more familiar with another type of text, letters. In particular, as Gernot Wilhelm himself pointed out[1102], the introduction "IM / *ṭuppu*" followed by the sender's name was quite rare in Neo-Assyrian royal letters: the findings show that letters from the royal court, which make up almost the entire corpus of Neo-Assyrian letters, start with the addressee's (the sovereign) rather than the sender's name, resulting in opening *formulae* such as "*ana* LUGAL *bēlīya*". However, the analysis of some private letters from the Neo-Assyrian period has shown that there was also another tradition, which will become common in Neo-Babylonian letters[1103], indicating the sender himself in the opening line: thus, *formulae* such as "IM + personal name" appeared to be the norm in private correspondence[1104]. It is reasonable to assume that the scribe responsible for composing the Sarduri's epigraph was primarily involved in the writing of letters exchanged between private citizens, and that he transferred his knowledge to a different type of inscription[1105]. Another peculiar note is found in the second part of the epigraph, which bears the words "(thus) speaks Sarduri": here, there is no exact correspondence in Assyrian inscriptions, where the actions of the ruler are not introduced by this *formula*. However, this *formula* remains well established in Urartian tradition, since the corresponding Urartian phrase, "KN *ali*", is also often found in later Urartian inscriptions.

There is a second document in Akkadian attributable to Sarduri, son of Lutipri, also engraved on the rock near Van Kalesi[1106]: it is a sacred text, incomplete, of uncertain content. Igor M. Diakonoff defined this rock inscription as a "quasi-bilingual text"[1107], similar in form and content, according to him, to later Urartian votive texts. However, M. Salvini[1108] expressed an entirely different opinion, as he considers both the form and the content of the epigraph to be totally unrelated to future Urartian sacrificial rituals[1109], whereas they are more similar to Assyrian and Babylonian rituals[1110]. As the text is poorly preserved, it is not possible to provide any further relevant information about its content: it is, however, relevant to note that the shape of the niche in which the inscription is engraved is different from that of later Urartian inscribed niches, as it is excavated very deeply and open on the upper side. It also seems to have had the function of an altar[1111], which wouldn't agree with Salvini's proposal. However, both the language and the *ductus* of the inscription would fit along with the previous epigraph of the Sardursburg, for that reason the text may be dated to the time of Sarduri, son of Lutipri[1112].

[1101] Wilhelm 1986: 102; see also the CAD at the lemma *ṭuppu* A 3.
[1102] Wilhelm 1986: 103.
[1103] See Levavi 2018: 39, almost 80% of the letters contains this address formula.
[1104] See, for example, Herbordt 2019: no. 001; SAA 13: no. 039, 040, 041, and many others.
[1105] It should be said, however, that an epigraph belonging to the reign of Ashurnasirpal II (RIMA 2: A.0.101.8), whose text has never been published, is said to bear the phrase "first tablet" inscribed on the edge of the stone slab: despite clearly being the sign that this text was copied from a clay tablet, it is possible that also was a reason why the word for tablet is used to indicate a stone epigraph at the beginning of Urartian epigraphy.
[1106] CTU A 1-2.
[1107] Diakonoff 1989: 93.
[1108] Salvini 1982b: 330-331.
[1109] See, for example, CTU A 3-1.
[1110] See the middle-Assyrian ritual KAR 139, ll. 5-6, in Ebeling, Erich, 1919. *Keilschrifttexte aus Assur religiösen Inhalts* II, Leipzig, 47.
[1111] Dinçol – Dinçol 1986: 352.
[1112] Salvini 2014c: 308.

It is conceivable that Sarduri, son of Lutipri, spoke Urartian, but the Assyrian scribe he introduced to the court of Urartu could only write in his mother tongue, Akkadian. The resulting texts are therefore evidence of the scribe's experience in the service of private citizens rather than his affiliation with the Neo-Assyrian royal court, and this circumstance would have created some syntax problems in the writing of the royal text commissioned from him[1113]. The Akkadian language would remain known and used in Urartu even with his successor, Išpuini, although with him the practice of writing texts in Urartian began.

2.1.1.2. Išpuini Sarduriḫi

As mentioned above, with Išpuini the practice of writing epigraphs in the local language began in Urartu. However, the Akkadian language was not forgotten, and was instead used not only for stone inscriptions, but also for short inscriptions on metal objects. One of these, *unicum* in the Ancient Near East, is engraved on a silver *situla*[1114] of unknown provenance, considered original exactly because of its uniqueness[1115], which appears to be a gift from Išpuini himself to his nephew, Inušpua, associated with the ruler in several inscriptions[1116]. The language in which the dedication itself is inscribed is surprising because in this case Akkadian was used not for an international document but a gift within the Urartian royal family[1117]. This gives the idea that Akkadian was actively used at the Urartian royal court, even for communications within the royal family, whose mother tongue is supposed to be Urartian. There may have been many reasons for this, starting with the need to keep the knowledge of the Akkadian language alive, but it is also possible that the documents written in Akkadian during the reign of this ruler were compiled by a scribe who was not yet totally familiar with the Urartian language[1118]. However, the use of the term ^{LÚ}*kibaru* in the epigraph is problematic: it is translated as "old man/grandfather", but such a meaning is not common in Assyrian[1119]: an interesting formulation is the one chosen by Salvini, who defines it as "assiro di Urartu"[1120], implying that Akkadian was used at the Urartian court in such a way as to have given rise to a local variant of the language. The word is probably Urartian, as shown by the use of the term *kewiri* in Hurrian[1121]. One explanation for the bizarre wording of this inscription and the presence of an unusual term in Akkadian may be that the epigraph was written while the ruler, or someone else on his behalf, was dictating it in Urartian. The scribe would have translated the text but would not have been able to render the term "grandfather" in any other way,

[1113] This issue will be extensively discussed in the Conclusions.
[1114] CTU B 2-4.
[1115] Salvini 2012: 20.
[1116] CTU A 4-1, CTU B 4-1, 4-2, 4-3.
[1117] Salvini 1980a: 174.
[1118] That would not be unusual in the ancient Near East; see van den Hout 2009: 88, "It may have been such situations that prompted Hattušili to consider using the cuneiform script for internal Hittite purposes as well and if so, it is only to be expected that he turned to those same scribes (i.e. the ones employed for correspondence with foreign kings)".
[1119] See the lemmata *kibrû* and *kubarû* in CAD.
[1120] Salvini 2018: 440.
[1121] See the lemma *kewiri* in Richter 2012 with further bibliography.

trying to "Assyrianize" the Urartian word[1122]. This would explain why this epigraph, clearly addressed to a member of his family, is written in a foreign language[1123].

The employment of Assyrian scribes would also explain two bronze helmet earflaps[1124] found, probably, in the vicinity of Patnos, and bearing the epigraph *tillī ša* ^{m}*Išpuini*, "property of Išpuini" [1125]. Such is probably also the case of five bronze votive rings bearing the same inscription found in the fortress of Yukarı Anzaf[1126]. First of all, they are the only objects dedicated to the god Ḫaldi bearing an epigraph in a foreign language[1127], while all other *ex voto* are inscribed in Urartian. As Salvini rightly pointed out[1128], this was probably due both to the difficulty of rendering typical Urartian formulations in Akkadian and also to a sort of taboo resulting from these formulations. However, being at the beginning of Urartian epigraphy, and probably not having yet a fixed form, this hypothesis would be unlikely. Moreover, the introduction of the cult of Ḫaldi would have occurred during the reign of Išpuini[1129], so these were the only objects of his reign to be inscribed with the name of the new deity[1130]. The short period that had elapsed since both the beginning of epigraphy in Urartu and the introduction of the Ḫaldi cult would not suggest a standardization of *formulae* and a deep religious fear of the god. The objects inscribed in Assyrian from Išpuini's time may therefore be placed at the beginning of his reign, when there was not yet a better-established tradition of inscriptions in Urartian. This would also be confirmed by the areas where the objects were found, all around the Lake Van, the centre of the Urartian Kingdom[1131].

It is possible to compare these inscribed rings with other specimens from a slightly later period, inscribed in Urartian, when Išpuini had also associated his son Minua and grandson Inušpua with the throne[1132]. The inscriptions can be compared as follows:

Through the protection of the god Ḫaldi, Išpuini, son of Sarduri, great king, strong king, king of the world, king of the land Nairi, brought this *bibu* from the arsenal(?) of the city Uṭiruḫi (or: carried this *tillu* (and) *bibu* away from the city	For the god Ḫaldi, the (or, resp., his/their) Lord, Išpuini, son of Sarduri, (and) Minua, son of Išpuini, and Inušpua, son of Minua, dedicated it

[1122] A similar situation is described to have happened at the Hittite royal court, see Archi 2010: 40, "The numerous 'Hittiticisms' in the Akkadian of this text (…) are best explained by Kempinski's hypothesis: 'Es scheint, dass der Verfasser das Dokument während des Diktats aus dem Hethitischen ins Akkadische übersetzte, … ein hethitisches Original oder auch nur eine frühe hethitische Übersetzung haben nie bestanden'.
[1123] Another idea (Salvini 1978: 3) is that there was a certain bilingualism among the royal court even after Urartian became the official language.
[1124] CTU B 2-5 and 2-6.
[1125] For the discussion on the use of the word *TIL-LI* in the Urartian sphere, see Salvini 2012: 13-14.
[1126] CTU B 2-7.
[1127] Belli – Dinçol – Dinçol 2009: 100, "the inscription (…) turned out to be in Assyrian with some peculiarities, which are either unique or rarely attested in the Late Assyrian corpus of inscriptions"; in their article, they dealt with each of these peculiarities.
[1128] Salvini 1979c: 591-592.
[1129] See, on this topic, Salvini 1989.
[1130] Also CTU B 2-1 should have born an epigraph mentioning Ḫaldi, even if it is not preserved.
[1131] The mention in the inscription on the votive rings of the town of Uṭiruḫi, near present-day Eleşkirt (Dan 2020: 84), would confirm Išpuini's area of action around Van, at least during his first years of reign. From the time of his co-ruling with his son Minua onwards, the area of military campaigns expands considerably.
[1132] CTU B 4-1 to 3.

Uṭiruḫi), and gave it to the god Ḫaldi, his Lord, for his life[1133].	when they conquered the land of the city Amuša[1134].

In both cases, there is a dedication to the god Ḫaldi following the conquest of a city by the rulers. In the epigraph in Urartian, the royal title and the dubious mention of the two terms of unclear meaning, *bibu* and *tillu*, are completely absent. However, the concept appears to be the same, and it clearly originated in the time of Išpuini and was probably fixed in bronze by a scribe still belonging to an Assyrian school. However, also in this case, as in the case of the *situla* and of a stone epigraph discussed below, it is possible to think that there originally was an Urartian version from which the scribe translated into Akkadian: as Salvini has shown[1135], the text corresponds almost perfectly to some Urartian epigraphic *formulae* on other bronze objects. The hypothesis is therefore that there was a standard form of Urartian expressions probably used as oral prayers by the rulers; an example is the expression "through the protection of the god Ḫaldi", or "(KN) gave it to the god Ḫaldi, his Lord, for his life", which is repeated with the exact same words in many Urartian inscriptions, and is also found in the few Akkadian epigraphs composed at the court of Urartu. These expressions were probably dictated in Urartian and written in Akkadian for the first time during the reign of Išpuini.

The only Akkadian epigraph carved on a stone stele[1136], however, is quite different: it dates from the time of the co-regency of Išpuini and Minua and is has been found at the mountain pass of Kelišin, on the border between Iran and Iraq, from which it takes its name. The stele is engraved with an epigraph in Urartian on the east side and one in Assyrian on the west side, corresponding to the geographical position of the two states: the Urartian version was facing Urartian territory, while the Akkadian version was facing the Assyrian area. The purpose of the inscription is to commemorate a cultic journey performed by the Urartian court to the temple of Muṣaṣir / Ardini, the seat of the cult of Ḫaldi. The importance of the monument, apart from the obvious linguistic issues related to the discovery of a bilingual inscription, lies both in its location, since it requires that the area west and south of Lake Urmia was in Urartian hands, and in its content, which further confirms the strengthening of central power due to the cult of the god Ḫaldi. The text of the epigraph emphasises the wealth of the Urartian rulers in the list of gifts brought to the temple of Ḫaldi, so as to show the Assyrian enemies the power of the Urartian state. The inscription ends with a curse formula, evidently a literal translation from Urartian to Assyrian, and differs from the Akkadian *formulae* in the absence of a blessing formula[1137]. In this case, the use of Assyrian is clearly functional to the Urartian power, which wants to make itself known to its southern enemies, and is therefore justifiable for reasons of international politics.

The reign of Išpuini marked the beginning of the standardisation of Urartian written tradition: it is possible that the first documents inscribed, particularly on bronze, were still in Akkadian. This was due, perhaps, both to the time it took for the scribes of the Urartian court to develop a graphic system suited

[1133] English translation provided by the eCUT website.
[1134] English translation provided by the eCUT website.
[1135] Salvini 2014b: 121-122.
[1136] CTU A 3-11.
[1137] Already noted by Benedict 1961: 383.

to the Urartian language[1138], and to the difference between writing on stone and on metal, which probably required at least two different scribes with different skills. Furthermore, writing on bronze seems to be attested only from the time of Išpuini, and it would confirm the necessity of training scribes to write Urartian language on metal as well, and thus the assumption that even the first metals were inscribed by an Assyrian-speaker scribe in his native language, probably under Urartian dictation. It cannot be ruled out, however, that the Assyrian language had a special significance for king Išpuini, and that this was also the reason why he promoted its use at court: this hypothesis can also be supported by a peculiar inscription from the time of his successor, Minua.

2.1.1.3. Minua Išpuiniḫi

Minua, son of Išpuini, also produced several documents inscribed in Assyrian, including bronze objects and one stone epigraph, certainly among the most interesting ones in Urartian linguistics. Among the bronze objects there are a horse bit[1139] and a plaque[1140], both found at Karmir-blur, bearing the same inscription in Akkadian, *ša* ^{m}*minua*, "property of Minua". They belong to a category of objects engraved with the same inscription meaning "property of KN", in both the Urartian and Assyrian languages. The reason for the ruler to have the epigraphs engraved in Assyrian is not clear, especially as they appear to be objects closely related to Minua's private use, unless one assumes that such objects were to be seen, and read, by Akkadian speakers, or even that the Assyrian language was commonly used in parallel with the Urartian one. From a necropolis in the region of Dailaman comes a horse blinker[1141], found by the local inhabitants, which bears the inscription NIG.GA *ša* ^{m}*minua*, with a double indication of ownership, which corresponds to an inscription of king Argišti, which will be analysed later.

The most bizarre and controversial document of Urartian epigraphy dates to the reign of Minua and is inscribed on an erratic stone from the village of Kevenli that was originally part of a temple building[1142]. It is peculiar in its form: it consists of six lines in total, the first three written in Akkadian, the last three in Urartian. However, the two sections are not translations of each other, so it should not be defined as a bilingual epigraph as such. As Salvini has extensively pointed out[1143], the Assyrian section appears to be a translation of Urartian *formulae* known from other inscriptions and connected to the foundation of temples for the god Ḫaldi: the expressions used in the Akkadian lines do not seem to occur in other Assyrian texts[1144], and the hypothesis is that the epigraph was written entirely by an Urartian scribe, who translated his language literally. However, the reason for the bilingualism of this inscription remains to be investigated. The inscription deals with the construction of a temple and a "Gate", both

[1138] This situation is comparable with many others happened in the ancient Near East; see Archi 2010: 43, "Thus, lengthy schooling was not necessary, and the first generation of Eblaite scribes probably trained at the scribal school of Mari. The next phases involved (a) acquiring a syllabary that rendered the complex phonological system of a Semitic language with greater precision; (b) mastering a sufficiently extensive range of Sumerograms; and (c) formulating fairly complex phrases for rituals and letters. All of this was achieved in the span of roughly ten years".
[1139] CTU B 5-3.
[1140] CTU B 5-4.
[1141] Ghirshman 1964: 50-51; see also another horse blinker from Karmir-blur inscribed with the signs NIG.GA (CTU B 18-11).
[1142] CTU A 5-44.
[1143] Salvini 1979.
[1144] Salvini 1979: 584.

dedicated to the god Ḫaldi, and the second part, in Urartian, is an auspicious expression for the ruler himself. The reason why the second section of the epigraph is in Urartian is quite clear: it can be explained by the difficulty of rendering the Urartian formulaic expressions in Assyrian, a circumstance already encountered in the translation of the first lines, and by the inherent sacredness of these expressions. In this section one can also read the name of Išpuini, asyndetically coordinated with that of Minua, and therefore not connected to it as a patronymic: the father was probably still alive, and this epigraph should perhaps be placed at a rather early time of Urartian epigraphy, if not during the so-called "co-regency" of the kings, immediately afterwards. What remains to be explained is the reason why the first part of the epigraph was written in Akkadian. One may hypothesize a "cultural" justification: even in Urartu, the Akkadian language was evidently recognised as culturally stronger, superior to the local language. A strong influence of an Assyrian scribal school in Urartu cannot be ruled out. It should also be pointed out that the epigraph was not written with the attention to detail usual for Urartian inscriptions: the cuneiform signs in the right margin, for example, are not aligned one below the other, perhaps a hint of scribal inexperience. He may have been the second or third-generation representative of the Assyrian scribal school that introduced writing to Urartu[1145], who did not have a perfect knowledge of the Urartian epigraphic rules and may have been new to stone inscriptions. Some peculiarities of the *ductus*, such as the shape of the corner wedges, link this epigraph to the Sardursburg inscriptions[1146], and may confirm the Assyrian origin of the scribe and his possible inexperience with the typical Urartian *ductus*. A reasonable hypothesis regarding the writing of the first section of this text in Akkadian has been promoted by Salvini[1147], who argues that the use of Assyrian, in this case, was a tribute by Minua to his father, still alive, who was probably the promoter of a tradition expressed in Akkadian. It must be assumed, however, that in an early period of Urartian epigraphy, during the life of Išpuini, the typical *formulae* of Urartian inscriptions were fixed; they were not based on Assyrian models, as their knowledge had probably been diminishing over time. It may be reasonable to assume that the scribes were familiar with the Akkadian language, partly as a matter of international relations, but that they had no understanding of the forms contemporary used in Assyria: this was both because the scribe who initially introduced the writing was, as Wilhelm shows, more accustomed to writing letters between private individuals, and because the Urartian language had already created its own formulaic expressions, suited to its own conception of kingship and deities, which did not need to import any *formulae* from the Assyrian world.

2.1.1.4. Argišti Minuaḫi

At least four cuneiform epigraphs in Assyrian can be ascribed to Argišti, son of Minua, all on bronze objects designed for personal use, found in the site of Karmir-blur. The first one is an armour button decorated with a rosette in the centre[1148]: on the front side, around the central rosette, there is a two-line cuneiform epigraph in Urartian, dedicating the armour to the god Ḫaldi. The rear side of the object bears an inscription in Akkadian with the same formula already observed during Minua's reign, *ša* ^{m}*argišti*: somehow, the front and rear sides contradict each other, since it is unusual for *ex voto* to the deity to be

[1145] Salvini 1980: 176.
[1146] Salvini 2014b: 119.
[1147] Salvini 2014b: 120.
[1148] CTU B 8-17.

used by their original owners. It can be assumed that the Urartian inscription was placed later than the Akkadian one, and that the armour was dedicated after its use, probably after an important victory; moreover, there is another bronze button with the same Akkadian inscription but no trace of the Urartian one[1149]. A further object with an Akkadian inscription belonging to this ruler is a bowl[1150], also bearing the expression *ša* + KN, in which, however, the name of the ruler is written in the genitive Urartian case[1151]. A similar circumstance is found in an inscription engraved on a bronze plaque[1152] bearing the words *ša* ^{m}argišti u[rišḫi], "property of Argišti", in which the concept of property is expressed twice, in Akkadian and Urartian[1153].

Coming from a more or less precise context, not archaeologically investigated, is a shield umbo with the inscription *ša* ^{m}*argišti* currently belonging to the Foroughi collection and probably found in a tomb in the Deilaman region, southwest of the Caspian Sea[1154]. For the publication of this object, R. Ghirshman proposed an interesting solution to the question of Assyrian epigraphs indicating ownership of objects: "Je pense que la valeur en sémitique du signe *ša* avait pris une très large extension et que ce signe fut employé avec ce sens même par les peuples de langue non sémite puisqu'on le connaît sur les inscriptions royales élamites également"[1155]. It seems, therefore, in Argišti's time, that one of the few Akkadian expressions still definitely in use, perhaps as a matter of brevity compared to its Urartian counterpart, is the indication of the possessor of an object. It lasted alongside the Urartian formulae KN + urišḫi, and it was used sporadically, sometimes supplemented with the Urartian word urišḫi, "property".

2.1.1.5. Sarduri Argištiḫi

A large number of bronze bowls found in Karmir-blur bear the Akkadian epigraph indicating the ownership of Sarduri, with three graphic variants: the first, *šá* ^{mD}*sar$_5$-du-ri*[1156], the second *šá* ^{mD}*sar$_5$-du-ri-i*[1157], and the third, *šá* ^{mD}sar$_5$-du-ri-e[1158], the last one with the name of the ruler at the Urartian genitive case. Once again, the circumstance already observed with his predecessors, Minua and Argišti, is repeated, giving rise to the custom of indicating the ownership of the object by inscriptions in Akkadian. Lastly, there is an Assyrian epigraph engraved on a carnelian bead[1159], currently in a private English collection, whose place of discovery is unknown but probably to be located in the Armenian area of

[1149] CTU B 8-17a.
[1150] CTU B 8-19.
[1151] As already noted by Seidl 2004: 45, fn. 202.
[1152] CTU B 8-24.
[1153] See the discussion in Salvini 2012: 40. This circumstance has been already found in an epigraph of Minua where the propriety was indicated twice, once with Sumerograms and the second in Akkadian; a similar concept is to be found in some bowls belonging to a king Sarduri, where the Sumerogram NIG.GA is paired with the king's name in the genitive case (see CTU B 9-22).
[1154] Ghirshman 1966.
[1155] Ghirshman 1966: 220; see also the occurrence of the sign *šá* on a bronze horse harness (CTU B 18-3).
[1156] CTU B 9-14; CTU B 9-17A and B bear the same epigraph but were found in a subsequent excavation campaign.
[1157] CTU B 9-15; CTU B 9-18 bears the same epigraph but was found in a subsequent excavation campaign.
[1158] CTU B 9-16.
[1159] CTU D 9-1.

Armavir[1160]. The inscription on the bead is a dedication by Sarduri to the deity ‘Arubani[1161]. C. Walker pointed out that it was not possible to be sure which Sarduri was actually the owner of the bead[1162]: however, although the text is composed in Akkadian, it appears that the owner was not Sarduri, son of Lutipri, if only for the spelling of the name, different from the one used by Sarduri, son of Argišti, and by the other homonymous ruler, Sarduri, son of Sarduri. Moreover, the bead with the Assyrian epigraph adds to the list of objects that bear witness to the almost continuous use of the Akkadian language in Urartu, even for the personal use of the rulers, at least until the reign of Sarduri, son of Argišti.

2.1.1.6. Rusa Sarduriḫi

Rusa, son of Sarduri, concludes[1163] the list of rulers writing Assyrian documents found in the Urartian territory. The document that belongs to this ruler’s reign is the text of a bilingual epigraph found in at least three duplicates[1164] and placed on the route taken by the Urartians travelling to the sanctuary of Ḫaldi at Muṣaṣir from the capital, Tušpa. These three are actual bilingual inscriptions, as the Assyrian version is a translation of the Urartian one; on all three documents, the Assyrian version appears identical, without any major graphic variant or difference in the arrangement of the signs[1165], with the partial exception of the Movana stele, bearing a few variants[1166]: from this, it can be deduced that at least two of the copies were made at the same time and then placed in two different locations[1167]. The use of the Assyrian language, as in the case of the bilingual stele of Kelišin, may be due to the very location of the inscriptions, on the road to Muṣaṣir, whose official language must have been Assyrian, at least judging by the seal of the city’s governor, Urzana[1168]. Although their original position at the site of the discovery is unclear, it is possible to assume that the Assyrian version faced the protectorate of Muṣaṣir, while the Urartian version faced the territory of Urartu.

2.1.1.7. Sarduri Sarduriḫi (?)

At the end of the list of Urartian rulers to whom written documentation in Akkadian is linked, there is another king named Sarduri: he is probably the same ruler to whom a fragmentary bronze shield with an Urartian epigraph found at Karmir-blur belongs[1169], and, given the late date of his Assyrian document, he may be considered one of the last Urartian rulers. To this king belongs a letter written in Akkadian found in the archives of Nineveh and addressed to the Assyrian sovereign, possibly Ashurbanipal[1170]. In the letter, Sarduri calls himself LUGAL KUR.*ú-ra-ar-ṭi-im*-[*ma*], and addresses the Assyrian ruler with deference, acknowledging his greater power. This is the only evidence of the letters that the Urartian ruler must have sent to the Assyrian court, in the at least two centuries of

[1160] See the discussion in Salvini 2012: 253-254.
[1161] See Salvini 2018: 427.
[1162] Walker 1978: 234.
[1163] The actual positioning in Urartian chronology of the next ruler mentioned is still not clear.
[1164] CTU A 10-3, 10-4, 10-5.
[1165] Salvini 1984: 84.
[1166] André-Salvini – Salvini 2002: 26.
[1167] Salvini 1984: 84. For the Movana stele, see André-Salvini – Salvini 2002: 28.
[1168] See Collon 1994.
[1169] CTU B 16-1.
[1170] SAA 21: 124.

existence of the Urartian state: there probably were many more, as the text of the letter suggests[1171], but they, unfortunately, have not been preserved. If this ruler was indeed the same mentioned on the shield from Karmir-blur, it would show that the Assyrian language had been used throughout the history of the Urartian kingdom, both out of necessity and as a cultural factor. But, more importantly, this would prove that the knowledge of the Urartian language was maintained until at least the middle of the 7th century BCE, as the inscription on the shield demonstrates.

2.1.2. Neo-Assyrian influence on Urartian epigraphs

The following paragraph will be divided in two sections, analysing the influence of the Assyrian formulaic expression in Urartian epigraphs. One specific influence can be examined in Urartian royal titulary, while another one in the so-called Urartian "annals": these two influences can, however, be associated to two different periods of the Assyrian history, as will be shown below.

2.1.2.1. Assyrian influence on Urartian royal titulary

Most of the Urartian royal inscriptions bear the royal title of the king author of the epigraph, which is an essential part of the cuneiform inscription itself. The epithets of the Urartian rulers reflect the traditional Mesopotamian royal title, particularly Neo-Assyrian, with some diachronic differences.

The first Urartian ruler known from Urartian sources, Sarduri, son of Lutipri, used a complex title, no longer used in later Urartian inscriptions[1172]: "(...) Sarduri, son of Lutibri, great king, strong king, king of the world, king of the land Nairi, king who has no equal, marvellous shepherd, fearless in battle, king who subdues those insubordinate to him. Sarduri, son of Lutibri, king of kings, the one who has received the tribute of all kings"[1173]. As already noted by Paul Zimansky[1174], almost identical titling is found in the inscriptions of Ashurnasirpal II[1175]:

MAN GAL-*e*	MAN GAL-*ú*[1176]
MAN *dannu*	MAN *dannu*
MAN ŠÚ	MAN ŠÚ
MAN KUR *Nairi*	
MAN *šāninšu* NU TUK-ú[1177]	MAN *lā šanān*[1178]

[1171] See SAA 21: 124, ll. 6-8, "Why does the king, my lord, *always* write to me in such irritated and angry terms?".
[1172] Wilhelm 1986: 106-107.
[1173] CTU A 1-1, ll. 1-5.
[1174] Zimansky 1985: 50.
[1175] It is, however, worth mentioning Frye 1964: 36-37, where he argues that "(…) almost anything may be found in cuneiform literature of the Ancient Near East if one searches long enough".
[1176] RIMA 2: A.0.101.1, ll ii125b.
[1177] CTU A 1-1, ll. 1-2.
[1178] RIMA 2: A.0.101.1, ll. i 9-10.

The first titles were taken almost *verbatim* from the inscriptions of Ashurnasirpal II, except for "king of Nairi", which appears in another passage of the same Assyrian epigraph, obviously as MAN KUR *Aššur*[1179]. Further on, a series of titles appears again, later taken up from the Assyrian epigraphs:

LÚ.SIPA *tabrâte*	SIPA *tabrâte*
lâdiru tuqunte	*lā ādiru* GIŠ.LAL
	edû gapšu ša māhira lā TUK-*ú*
MAN *mušaknis lā kansūtēšu*[1180]	MAN *mušakniš lā kanšūtešu*[1181]

Again, there do not seem to be any striking differences between the two versions: the only note is the absence of Ashurnasirpal's epithet "mighty flood-tide which has no opponent" in Sarduri's royal title. The epigraph of the Urartian king continues with another royal title, again to be found in the annals of Ashurnasirpal II:

MAN MAN.MEŠ-*ni*[1182]	LUGAL LUGAL.MEŠ-*ni*[1183]

It is almost surprising not to find in the inscriptions of Ashurnasirpal II a specific mention of the sovereign as the collector of the tributes of all kings, as Sarduri calls himself at the end of his royal title. Such an epithet is, however, present in the annals of Ashurnasirpal II as part of the formula "(the king) gained dominion over the highlands in their entirety and received their tribute":

ša DÙ-*šunu* MAN.MEŠ-*ni madattu amhurū*[1184]	*ipēluma bilatšunu imhurū ṣābit*[1185]

The same concept was used in the royal titles of only two other kings of the Neo-Assyrian period, Šamši-Adad V[1186] and Sennacherib[1187], who, however, referred to his ancestors; it was not attested in previous periods, and therefore appears to be somehow functional to the message that the Urartian sovereign wanted to convey at that time, although not totally invented for the occasion[1188]. By almost

[1179] RIMA 2: A.0.101.1, l. i 28.
[1180] CTU A 1-1, ll. 2-3.
[1181] RIMA 2: A.0.101.1, ll. i 13-14.
[1182] CTU A 1-1, l. 4.
[1183] RIMA 2: A.0.101.1, ll. i 21.
[1184] CTU A 1-1, ll. 4-5.
[1185] RIMA 2: A.0.101.1, ll. i 16.
[1186] RIMA 3: A.0.103.1, l. i 34.
[1187] RINAP 3: Sennacherib 1, l. 66; Sennacherib 2, l. 37; Sennacherib 3, l. 37.
[1188] Zimansky 1985: 115, fn. 32, "But in face of so much other Urartian titulary borrowing from Ashurnasirpal II, the independent invention of this particular epithet seems improbable".

entirely adopting the titles of Ashurnasirpal II, although choosing to follow a more "secular"[1189] path and following closely the Assyrian models, Sarduri took the opportunity to represent himself as a sovereign of equal importance to the Assyrian one.

Later Urartian rulers, however, did not follow Sarduri's example and tended, at least for a time, to simplify their titles, as early as the reign of Išpuini: this ruler bore no title in his stone inscriptions, while sporadic epithets appear in his bronze epigraphs. He called himself, in particular, not surprisingly in an Akkadian epigraph engraved on some votive rings, MAN GAL MAN *dannu šar* ŠÚ *šar* ^{KUR}*Nairi*[1190], ordering the epithets in the same way as the Sardursburg rock inscription. In the period of "co-regency" with his successor Minua, several epigraphs with a royal title exclusively addressed to Išpuini appeared: in these, the canon of epithets in Urartian language is fixed, always more or less respecting the Assyrian ones. In general, the epithets taken up from Assyria and translated into Urartian without semantic shifts at the time of Išpuini and Minua are:

MAN *DANNU* / MAN taraie	MAN *dannu*
MAN alsuini	MAN GAL-*ú* / MAN *rabû*
MAN ^{KUR}bia=i=na=ue	MAN KUR *Aššur*
MAN ^{KUR}šura=ue[1191]	MAN ŠÚ

In this same period, however, an epithet apparently unparalleled in Assyria appeared, alusi ^{URU}Ṭušpa URU, which in the text of the bilingual stele of Kelišin corresponds to the Akkadian GAR ^{URU}*Ṭušpan* URU, "lord / governor of Ṭušpa-City": this is the only epithet that will never be missing in later Urartian cuneiform inscriptions[1192]. This specific title does not find a precise correspondence among the epithets of the Neo-Assyrian royal inscriptions, since, generally, the sovereign defined himself as "king of the country" rather than governor or lord of a single city. An exception can be found in the epigraphs of Esarhaddon, who defined himself as "Esarhaddon, great king, mighty king, king of the world, king of Assyria, governor of Babylon"[1193], while the title did not occur in the previous periods within the epithets attributed by the sovereign. It is also interesting to note that the name by which Urartians called their territory, Bia, appeared for the first time with Išpuini and Minua, translated thanks to its Assyrian counterpart in the stele of Kelišin, *šar māt Nairi*.

With Minua, there are no particular innovations in royal titling: apart from the sporadic use of the Urartian spelling pa-a-ta-ri in place of the Sumerogram URU in the epithet "lord / governor of Ṭušpa-City", it is remarkable that the title "king of kings" was taken up only in a single stone inscription from Malazgirt[1194] in Urartian translation, MAN erel(i=n)a=ue, and not through logograms. Similarly, this title was taken up only once by his successor, Argišti, expressed as MAN MAN.MEŠ-ú-e, which

[1189] See the discussion at the end of the paragraph.
[1190] CTU B 2-7.
[1191] On this word, see Salvini 2018: 416.
[1192] Zimansky 1085: 51, "Clearly, control of Van was deemed highly significant by Urartian kings since it was so often specifically mentioned, and a special word was used to express it". On the term *alusi* see Salvini 2018: 373.
[1193] RINAP 4: Esarhaddon 1, i 1.
[1194] CTU A 5-51.

highlights Urartian phonetic complementation and the reading hidden under the Sumerograms, *$^{(LÚ)}$ereli erel(i=n)a=ue. With Argišti Minuaḫi there was a further abbreviation of the titulary[1195] which, in its minimal form, still included the two titles MAN *dannu* alusi ^{URU}Ṭušpa URU. Sarduri Argištiḫi, on the other hand, reverted to more extended titling, which tends to appear in the following order:

MAN *dannu*

MAN GAL-ni / MAN alsuini

MAN KUR.KUR.MEŠ-ú-e[1196] / MAN ^{KUR}šura=ue

MAN ^{KUR}Bia=i=na=ue

MAN MAN.MEŠ-ú-e / MAN erel(i=n)a=ue

alusi ^{URU}Ṭušpa URU.

Interestingly, there is no consistency in the graphic rendering of titles: it is not possible to find a pattern underlying the choice of rendering them in Urartian script or logographically, nor is there any internal consistency in the inscriptions whereby all titles are rendered in Sumerograms or phonetically. The only epithet that is almost systematically rendered using Akkadograms is *dannu*, while the only title that is never rendered in Urartian is MAN.

A circumstance that deserves further investigation is precisely the constant use of the logogram MAN[1197] in Urartian royal titulary and the almost total absence of the logogram LUGAL[1198], commonly used in Assyria. The epigraphs of Ashurnasirpal II consistently bore the title MAN *dannu*, MAN GAL-*ú* / *rabû*, MAN KUR *Aššur*, MAN ŠÚ etc., while more rarely the epithets were composed with the Sumerogram LUGAL; the same trend is noticeable at the time of Shalmaneser III, while it began to be less widespread or completely abandoned already with his successor Šamšī-Adad V, who instead preferred epithets with LUGAL, such as LUGAL *dannu* LUGAL *kiššat* etc., that will find an almost exclusive use starting from Sargon II. This would further confirm the derivation of Urartian royal titling from the Assyrian titling of the Ashurnasirpal II period. Even more interestingly, the logogram LUGAL is used in Urartian contexts to indicate a king other than the Urartian one: examples such as burgala=li LUGAL^{MEŠ}[1199], "the enemy kings", or 4 LUGAL^{MEŠ} inani apti=ni ṣui=ni=ani[1200], "four kings on this side of the lake", or ^{mD}Sarduri=še ali: LUGAL ali isi ikukani edini[1201], "Sarduri says: a king who (will) later on ... the same place", show that the logogram was never referring to the king installed on the Urartian throne. All this is true at least in stone and rock epigraphs, while on tablets one finds formulas such as esi aše LUGAL-ni ^{D}Ḫaldi=ni ašu=me ^{m}Rusaḫi=na ^{KUR}Qilbani=kai[1202], "when the god Ḫaldi

[1195] Wilhelm 1986: 107.
[1196] Wilhelm 1986: 107, affirmed "(…) und der Titel König der Länder, der in dieser Form von den assyrischen Königen nie in ihre offizielle Titulatur, wie sie in den Königsinschriften niedergelegt ist, aufgenommen wurde, wohl aber in Briefen der Sargoniden-Zeit, also eine Generation nach Sardure II. und später, oft begegnet".
[1197] MZL 708.
[1198] MZL 266.
[1199] CTU A 3-4, l. 13.
[1200] CTU A 10-2, l. 5.
[1201] CTU A 9-11, ll. 3-4.
[1202] CTU CT Tk-1, l 4.

installed me as king in Rusaḫinili in front of Mount Qilbani"[1203], or even LUGAL-še ali , "the king says"[1204].

New *formulae* will instead be adopted by Rusa Erimenaḫi; an example of Rusa Erimenaḫi's titling is the following:

"I am Rusa, son of Erimena, the servant of the god Ḫaldi. Through the protection of the god Ḫaldi, my Lord, who faithfully bestowed(?) on me the power(?) over(?)/of(?) all the places, who endows(?) me with *ṭubarduni*, (and) who gave me the mighty regality, I sat down on the royal throne. He put the royal scepter(?) in my hand(?). He faithfully granted me the power(?), by which I ruled the enemy lands. The god Ḫaldi, the Lord, granted me bravery(?), pugnacity and dominion(?)over all the territory"[1205].

The epithet ^{D}Ḫaldi=ei ^{LÚ}IR, "servant of the god Ḫaldi", will also be used by his successors to the throne: its Assyrian counterpart, which can be read on the later stele of Mergeh Karvan[1206], is ^{LÚ}ARAD *ša* ^{D}*Ḫaldia*. This epithet has no parallel in the Assyrian royal epigraphs, but it is possible to identify its model, as suggested by Wilhelm[1207], in the prayers of the Sargonid period: this would suggest a contemporaneity of Rusa Sarduriḫi and Sargon II. Apart from the large number of words with uncertain meanings and *hapax legomena* in his titulary, the distance from the earlier Urartian royal titles is evident: since the translation is unclear, it is not possible at the moment to draw parallels with Assyrian royal epigraphs. However, the "standard" Urartian titularies will never be abandoned during the history of the Urartian kingdom: it is, in fact, interesting to note that Rusa Erimenaḫi, still used the traditional epithets, MAN *dannu* (MAN alsuini) alusi ^{URU}Ṭušpa URU, only in inscriptions on metals, in his case on bronze shields[1208]; the traditional epithets will be instead partially abandoned by Rusa Sarduriḫi.

Rusa Sarduriḫi, on the other hand, continued the innovation of the Urartian royal titulary, inserting epithets related to the political and the religious sphere: among the first ones, there is the unique alu=še ^{KUR}Bia=i=ni=li nuld=u=a=li[1209], "(the one) who made the Bia lands great", attested only in the closing of an abbreviated title and preceded by MAN *dannu*. Somewhat religious is the epithet, also from the reign of Rusa, ^{LÚ}sie muṣi ^{LÚ}UN^{MEŠ}-ú-e[1210], in Assyrian translation ^{LÚ}SIPA *kēnu ša nišē* UNMEŠ[1211], "true shepherd of the people". A partial Assyrian correspondence may be found in the epigraphs of Sargon II, where the epithet RE.É.UM *kēnu* is testified[1212], according to a tradition well attested in the Middle Assyrian period[1213] but not taken up by Ashurnasirpal II, the possible initial model of Urartian royal titulary. Rusa Sarduriḫi, therefore, may have been inspired by a tradition contemporary to him, that of Sargon II[1214]. It is not possible to exclude, precisely for this reason, that the epigraphs were

[1203] The translation is actually not definitive: see the other proposal suggested by Salvini 2012: 145, in particular the comment to line 4.
[1204] See for example CTU CT Ba-01, l. 1.
[1205] CTU A 14-1, ll. 2-15.
[1206] CTU A 10-4, Vo., ll. 6-7.
[1207] Wilhelm 1986: 107.
[1208] This may be related to the taboo connected to the dedication of *ex voto* to Ḫaldi, which should perhaps have borne the traditional titles.
[1209] CTU A 10-1, l. 8.
[1210] CTU A 10-3, l.d., ll. 13-14; CTU A 10-5, Ro., l. 25.
[1211] CTU A 10-3, Vo., l. 53; CTU A 10-5, Vo., l. 23.
[1212] Sargon II 009: l. 3.
[1213] See RIMA 1: A.0.77.1, l. 107 (Shalmaneser I); RIMA 1: A.0.78., l. i 1 (Tukulti-Ninurta I); RIMA 1: A.0.79.1, l. 1 (Ashur-nadin-apli); RIMA 2: A.0.87.1, l. i 28 (Tiglath-Pileser I).
[1214] Wilhelm 1986: 110.

directly written in Akkadian and only later translated into Urartian, which would explain why royal titles related to the religious sphere appear in Urartian for the first time: the concept of "shepherd of the people", moreover, was found in the Sardursburg epigraph, but was already abandoned by Išpuini, perhaps because not relevant to the concept of Urartian kingship. The titulary of the Topzawa stele is concluded by a series of unusual epithets for the Urartian king: "I am he who is not afraid of struggle. Haldi power and strength and joy bestowed on me. In my years I have enlarged the country of Urartu and humiliated the enemy country"[1215]. In this case, although there are no precise comparisons with Assyrian epigraphs[1216], there is no doubt that the titulary is taken from that sphere: the difference with Urartian epithets and the similarity with the long lists of titles in Assyrian epigraphs is obvious. Only in one epigraph does Rusa Sarduriḫi resort to the well-known list of Urartian royal epithets[1217]: however, it is not a stone inscription but a metal one, where one can find MAN *dannu* MAN alsuini MAN ^{KUR}Bia=i=na=ue alusi ^{URU}Ṭušpa URU.

Some of the titles introduced by Rusa, son of Erimena, and Rusa, son of Sarduri, will be taken up by Argišti Sarduriḫi, who did not abandon, however, the traditional Urartian titles. The new epithets whose use continued with Argišti are ^{D}Ḫaldi=ei ^{LÚ}burani[1218], "servant of the god Ḫaldi", corresponding to the previously analysed ^{D}Ḫaldi=ei ^{LÚ}IR, and ^{LÚ}sie muṣi ^{LÚ}UN^{MEŠ,} "true shepherd of the people". As Rusa Sarduriḫi, he too describes himself as "not afraid of battle" by order of Ḫaldi[1219]. Lastly, Rusa, son of Argišti, made great use of the traditional Urartian epithets[1220], abandoning instead the "new" ones.

In general, in addition to the minor presence of epithets in Urartian titularies, it is remarkable the almost total absence of references to deities, at least in the first section of Urartian history: if, for example, Ashurnasirpal II is said to be "chosen of the gods Enlil and Ninurta, beloved of the gods Anu and Dagan, (...) favourite of the god Enlil"[1221], in Urartian epigraphs one will never find similar titles, but rather only short expressions such as ^{D}Ḫaldi=ni=ni alsuiši=ni, "through the greatness of the god Ḫaldi", placed at the beginning of the royal titulary. Almost all of the epithets concerned political aspects of the kingship, while only in one late period there was at least one title that referred instead to a religious function of the ruler[1222], ^{D}Ḫaldi=ei ^{LÚ}IR / burani. Moreover, the consistent and constant use of Sumerograms rather than Urartian graphemes is remarkable, as already pointed out for Sarduri's titling: already F. König[1223] observed that this circumstance would not allow us to consider the logograms as precise indications of the king's roles, since they would roughly correspond to Urartian concepts, but would not be precise translations of them. The "canon" of Urartian royal titles was to some extent already established at the time of the "co-regency" of Išpuini and Minua, who established both the titles that will later be used and the order in which they appear in the inscriptions. They also created the epithet alusi ^{URU}Ṭušpa URU, which underlines the great importance of the city of Tušpa to the Urartian ruler and is one of the first titles without Assyrian precedents[1224]. The first "innovations" in Urartian royal titularies are to be attributed to the time of Rusa, son of Erimena, and they have an Assyrian origin:

[1215] CTU A 10-5, Ro., ll. 26-30; Vo,., ll. 25-27.
[1216] For some comparisons, see RINAP 2: Sargon II 43, l. 25; Sargon II 7, l. 12b, Sargon II 8, l. 79.
[1217] CTU B 10-1, l. 2.
[1218] CTU A 11-2, l. .29.
[1219] See CTU A 11-2, r., ll. 34-35.
[1220] See, for example, CTU A 12-8, ll. 26-30.
[1221] RIMA 2: A.0.101.1, ll. i 10-11.
[1222] Linke 2013: 147.
[1223] See Zimansky 1985: 51.
[1224] Wilhelm 1986: 107.

these innovations will be only partially taken up in the course of Urartian history, next to the well-established "standard" royal titulary.

2.1.2.2. Influence of Assyrian formulae on Urartian annalistic texts

Several Urartian annalistic texts are currently known: they narrate the deeds of a given ruler by years of reign, and the first attempts to compose annalistic texts in Urartian belong to the time of Minua, son of Išpuini, in which the expression ikukani MU[1225], "in the same year", used as an introduction to the description of military campaigns, is found for the first time. Actual annals, on the other hand, were composed by his successors, Argišti Minuaḫi[1226] and Sarduri Argištiḫi[1227], authors of the longest inscriptions in Urartian.

The structure of Urartian annals was fixed: they start with an invocation to the god Ḫaldi for his protection, strength or greatness, followed by the name of the ruler and his royal title, and the description of events in chronological order, narrated year by year; the conclusion of the text is usually represented by curse *formulae*, most of which are still difficult to interpret. The account of each year is introduced by the same *formula*, ^{D}ḫaldini uštabi masine ^{GIŠ}šuri karuni GN[1228], "Ḫaldi campaigned, with his weapon subjugated (the land of) GN", and ended with ^{D}ḫaldia ištine inanili arniušinili 1 MU/šusini šali zadubi[1229], "For the god Ḫaldi, I accomplished these deeds in one year". While Urartian annalistic structure varies greatly from its contemporary Assyrian counterpart, the *formulae* used have direct parallels with some expressions found in annalistic texts from the Middle Assyrian period[1230]: there is, moreover, a set of *formulae* addressed to the greatness of Ḫaldi used in almost every Urartian inscription that closely resembles Middle Assyrian formulaic expressions. It is interesting, therefore, to compare Urartian curse *formulae* with those in use from the Middle-Assyrian period, and with some texts written during the reign of Ashurnasirpal II[1231]: during the Neo-Assyrian period, curse *formulae* in epigraphs fell into disuse, while in Urartian inscriptions they have been used until the abandonment of the writing in the Kingdom, and the same happened to the *formulae* that built the annalistic texts, very rarely found in Shalmaneser III[1232] and Adad-Nirari III[1233].

^{D}Ḫaldi=ni=ni bauši=ni EN-sinini	*ina siqri* ^{D}*aššur bēlīya*
"Through the lordly command of the god Ḫaldi"[1234]	"By the command of the god Aššur, my lord"[1235]
^{D}Ḫaldi=ni=ni ušgi=ni	*ina emūqī ša* ^{D}*aššur bēlīya*

[1225] CTU A 5-11, l. 22.
[1226] CTU A 8-3.
[1227] CTU A 9-1, 2, 3.
[1228] See CTU A 8-3, l. 17.
[1229] See CTU A 8-3, l. 16.
[1230] Grekyan 2019: 245.
[1231] RIMA 2: A.101.29, ll 24'-25'.
[1232] RIMA 3: A.0.102.2, l. 75.
[1233] RIMA 3: A.0.104.3, l. 15.
[1234] CTU A 9-3, II, l. 30.
[1235] RIMA 2: A.0.87.3, l. 6.

"Through the power of the god Ḫaldi"[1236]	"With the power of the god Aššur, my lord"[1237]
ḫuti=a=di ^{D}ḫaldi=edi EN-di ^{D}IM-di ^{D}UTU-di DINGIR^{MEŠ}-ašte ^{KUR}bia=i=n=aš=te (…) ḫaš=ial=me DINGIR^{MEŠ} "I prayed to Ḫaldi, the lord, to Teišeba, to Šiuini, to all the gods of the land of Biainili, (…) the gods heard me"[1238]	*ana aššur u ilāni rabûti bēlīya qātī aššīma anna kīna ešeriš ēpuluninni* "I prayed to Aššur and the great gods, my lords, and they gave me a straight answer, a firm yes"[1239]
^{D}Ḫaldi (…) teq=u=a=li ^{m}argišti=kai "The god Ḫaldi (…) made them to bow down in front of Argišti"[1240]	*šarru ša napḫar malkē u rubê* DN *ana šēpišu ušeknišu* "the King, at whose feet the gods DN made all rulers and princes bow down"[1241]
Alu=še šusi tini=ni t=u=le masi tini tele "Whoever erases my name, and writes his own name"[1242]	*ša šumī šaṭra ipaššiṭuma šumšu išaṭṭaru* "He who erases my (inscribed) name and writes his (own) name"[1243]
Alu=še ini DUB-te t=u=le alu=še pit=u=le alu=še esi=ni suid=u=le alu=še KITIM ḫip=u=le alu=še uliše ti=u=le ieše zad=u=bi (…) ai ^{KUR}bia=i=ni=še ai ^{KUR}lulu=i=ni=še "Whoever erases this inscription, whoever destroys, whoever removes (it) from its place, whoever buries (it) in the ground, whoever says to someone else, 'I did this', (…) be he a *Biainian*, be he a foreigner"[1244]	*u lu narēja ušamsaku ana šaḫluqte imannû ana mīši inaddû ina eperi ukattamu ina išāti iqallû ana mê inaddû* (…) *u lu* (…) *nakara aḫâ ajāba lemna lišāna nakirta lu mamma šanâ uma'aruma ušaḫḫazu* "(He who) … discards my monumental inscriptions, hands (them) over for destruction, consigns (them) to oblivion, covers (them) with earth, burns (them) with fire, throws (them) into the water (…) or (…) he incites a stranger, a foreigner, a malignant enemy, (a man who speaks) another language, or anyone else (to do any of these things)

All these observations point to the adoption of an earlier Assyrian formulary, in use mainly during the Middle-Assyrian period: the reasons for this circumstance are possibly explained in the conclusions of this dissertation.

[1236] CTU A 8-1, l. 4.
[1237] RIMA 2: A.0.87.1, i, l. 70.
[1238] CTU A 8-1, vo., ll. 25-28.
[1239] RIMA 1: A.0.78.1, ll. 92-94.
[1240] CTU A 8-3, II, l. 6.
[1241] RIMA 1: A.0.76.1, ll. 15-17.
[1242] CTU A 12-1, VIII, ll. 7-8.
[1243] RIMA 1: A.0.76.2, ll. 36-37.
[1244] CTU A 12-8, ll- 32-42.

2.1.3. Loanwords

In spite of the intensive contacts between Assyria and Urartu, only one word derived from Akkadian can be identified with certainty: the word for "helmet", kubuše[1245], is said to derive from Akkadian *kubšu*, meaning "turban, headdress", and not specifically "helmet". The term is also found in Hurrian, $^{(LÚ)}$kupšuḫuli, "Turbanmacher" [1246], but it is possibly passed into Urartian directly from Akkadian.

2.2. Influence of the Hieroglyphic Luwian language

The influence on Urartian of the hieroglyphic Luwian language, like that of Akkadian, is ambivalent: both Urartian language and Urartian scripts must be analysed to find traces of linguistic contact between the two peoples. Regarding the Urartian language, there are very few words that show such traces of such contacts; slightly more numerous are the so-called "acclimatised loans"[1247] from Urartian to the hieroglyphic Luwian language of the 1st millennium BCE, which are briefly analysed and discussed below.

2.2.1. From Luwian to Urartian?

The first term recognised as evidence of linguistic contact between the two languages is the Urartian verb *šu-*[1248], with the discussed meaning of "to fill"[1249] or "to dig"[1250]. The verb is always found in a formula such as "KN has filled / dug this silo": ^{m}mì-nu-a-še ^{m}iš-pu-u-i-ni-ḫi-ni-še i-ni ʾa-a-ri-e šú-ú-ni, "Minua, son of Išpuini filled this silo"[1251], [^{m}]ar-giš-ti-i-˹še˺ [^{m}]˹mì˺-nu-a-ḫi-ni-˹še˺ i-ni ʾa-ri šú-[ú-ni], "Argišti, son of Minua, filled this silo"[1252], ^{mD}sar$_5$-du-ri-[še] ^{m}ar-giš-ti-ḫi-ni-[še] i-ni ʾa-ri šú-u-[ni], "Sarduri, son of Argišti, filled this silo"[1253], ^{mD}sar$_5$-du-ri-i-še ^{m}ar-giš-ti-ḫi-ni-še (…) i-ni-li ʾa-ri-li šú-ʾa-li, "Sarduri, son of Argišti (…) filled these siloi"[1254], ^{m}ru-sa-še ^{m}e-ri-me-na-ḫi-ni-[še] i-ni ^{É}ʾa-ri-e šú-ú-[ni], "Rusa, son of Erimena, filled this silo"[1255], and many others[1256]. The same formula, as noted by A. Kossian[1257], is found in the bilingual epigraph of Karatepe: | ("MANUS$^{<">}$)*su-wá* / *í-ha-ha-wá* / *i* | *pa-há + ra / i-wa / i-ní-zi* (URBS) | ($^{<">}$*255")*ka-ru-na-zi*, "and I filled the Paharean granaries" [1258]. As can

[1245] Salvini 2018: 398.
[1246] Richter 2012: 226.
[1247] Giusfredi 2012: 158.
[1248] Salvini 2018: 414.
[1249] König 1955-57: 95; Arutjunjan 2001: 137.
[1250] Salvini 1998c: 146.
[1251] CTU A 5-66, ll. 2-3.
[1252] CTU A 8-28, ll. 1-3.
[1253] CTU A 9-25, ll. 3-5.
[1254] CTU A 9-20, ll. 3-7 *passim*.
[1255] CTU A 14-06, ll. 1-2.
[1256] For all the attestation of this formula, see the second volume of CTU at the lemma ʾa-ri / ^{É}ʾa-ri (Salvini 2008b: 63-64).
[1257] See on this topic Kossian 1997: 29-30.
[1258] Hawkins 2000: KARATEPE 1 Hu, § VII.

be seen, the verb used is *suwa-*, meaning "to fill" [1259]; the same verb is found, however, in addition to the text pointed out by Aram Kossian, also in three other epigraphic attestations[1260]: | (*255)*ka-la / i / u-na-*[*wa / i*?] | (*255)*ka-la / i / u-na* x-*ta* | (X)*su-wa / i-ha*, "I filled granary on(?) granary"[1261], *wa / i-na-' su-wa / i-ha* 3xMlLLE(?), "I filled it with 3000 (measures of) cereal(?)"[1262], | *a-wa / i za-a-zi* | (*256)*ka-la/ i / u-na-zi mi-i-sa-'* | *tá-ti-i-sa* | MANUS.HORDEUM *su-wa / i-ta*, "these granaries my father filled (with) ... barley"[1263]. In all of these mentions there is a clear connection, as in Urartian, between the verb *suwa-* and the granary, which is always the object of the action: the formula is nothing but the same one expressed in two different languages. It is interesting to note the moment when this formula, and therefore this verb, came into use in Urartian: the first attestations are from the time of Minua Išpuiniḫi, and this should not be considered as a coincidence, since he was the first sovereign to mention the Neo-Hittite territories[1264]. Several attestations of the verb in hieroglyphic Luwian are older, such as the previously mentioned epigraph of Maraş, which can be dated to the 10th century BCE[1265]. It is, therefore, conceivable that the adoption of the verb, but probably of the whole *formula*, took place around the reign of Minua, between the 9th and 8th centuries BCE. Even without the confirmation given by the dating of the hieroglyphic Luwian epigraphs[1266], the hieroglyphic Luwian verb *suwa-* is connected with a number of cognate words in Anatolian languages, while Urartian *šu-* has no connection with similar Hurrian terms: it is clear that the term was adopted in Urartian from hieroglyphic Luwian.

The second and last word probably connected with the hieroglyphic Luwian language is a royal name. It is now established that there are no Urartian words beginning with the sound [r][1267], except for one king's name, Rusa. This anomaly, according to Zsolt Simon[1268], can be explained by the idea that the pronunciation of the name was rather Ursa, as in Assyrian texts, or by the hypothesis that the word was a linguistic loan. However, it is also conceivable that the two options are not mutually exclusive: it may be a linguistic loan, but it may also be that it was then perceived by Urartian speakers as a foreign word and therefore adapted to the phonetics of the target language and read Ursa[1269]. What is at least bizarre is that, if this was the case, the scribes did not also adapt the writing of the name to Urartian phonetics. The name Rusa, therefore, is said to derive from the hieroglyphic Luwian (DEUS)CERVUS$_2$-*za-sá*, to be read *Runzas*[1270], a late form of the Hittite ^{D}KAL / *Kurunta*[1271] and subsidiary of the name *Runtiya*. The appearance of the name in a relatively late period of Urartian history, approximately in the last quarter of the 8th century BCE, would suggest that it was borrowed from the Luwian language, either

[1259] Meriggi 1962: 112, *suwa-* "füllen".
[1260] See the webpage of the Ediana dictionary (https://www.ediana.gwi.uni-muenchen.de/dictionary.php).
[1261] Hawkins 2000: MARAŞ 8, § 7.
[1262] Hawkins 2000: KARKAMIŠ A30h, § 3a; the object ("it") is to be found at § 1, "Kubaba's(?) granary".
[1263] Hawkins 2000: TELL AHMAR 5, § 2.
[1264] The land of Ḫate is mentioned twice, once in the formula ku-ṭu-ni pa-a-ri-e ^{KUR}ḫa-a-ti-i-na-a, "He came to the land of Ḫatti" (CTU A 5-5, ll. 10-11), and the other in a very fragmentary passage whose translation is not completely possible but it's probably centered around the verb "they conquered" (CTU A 5-9, Vo., ll. 6-7).
[1265] Hawkins 2000: 251.
[1266] The webpage of the Ediana dictionary, at the lemma *suwa-*, confirms that "While the evidence from Cilicia dates to the final stages of the HLuw. era in the early 7th century BCE, all other attestations are older, ranging from the early 9th century back to the 2nd millennium BCE".
[1267] Wilhelm 2004: 122.
[1268] Simon 2008: 107.
[1269] This is the definition of "Prestito integrato"; see Giusfredi 2012: 154, quoting Cotticelli Kurras 2007: 617.
[1270] Simon 2008: 107, with the explanation of the adaptation of the name to Urartian phonetic.
[1271] Hawkins 2000: 63.

as a matter of cultural prestige or geographical proximity[1272], or as a matter of origin of the ruler himself. If this were the case, it would also explain the maintenance, at least in writing, of the sound [r] at the beginning of the word: in addition to being a divine name, it is possible that there was a kind of taboo due to the fact that it was the name of the sovereign. The foreign origin of the king would affect the narration of Urartian history: in this case, the foreign king would have to be considered Rusa, son of Erimena, who would have preceded Rusa, son of Sarduri, confirming the chronology adopted in this dissertation; this circumstance would also confirm his role as an usurper, as described in Sargon II's Eighth Campaign[1273].

2.2.2. From Urartian to Luwian?

Equally few so-called "acclimatized loans"[1274] of Urartian origin can be found within the hieroglyphic Luwian inscriptions, and these mainly concern the units of measurement transcribed on eight *pithoi* found at the Urartian site of Altıntepe[1275]. Urartian units of measurement were indicated on the vessels in two ways, either in cuneiform or hieroglyphic writing[1276]; the hieroglyphic writing may have been the one used elsewhere for the Luwian language, as for the Altıntepe *pithoi*, or may instead have been composed by some signs of unknown use in other parts of the Near East and therefore called "Urartian hieroglyphs"[1277]. The Altıntepe hieroglyphs have been studied for a long time, starting with their publication by the archaeologist T. Özgüç[1278], and were immediately recognised as Neo-Hittite and dated, due to their ductus "à la fois négligé et tardif" [1279], to the 8th century BCE. The graphic writing in hieroglyphic Luwian was immediately thought to conceal Urartian words[1280], thanks also to comparisons from other Urartian sites where the same words were mentioned in cuneiform writing on *pithoi*[1281]. As has already been recognised by J. Klein, the inscriptions did contain Urartian words, but they were probably perceived by an ear accustomed to the Luwian language: "(...) The employment of two variant transcriptions for the word *terusi*, moreover, suggests that someone at Altıntepe had a fair knowledge of Hittite Hieroglyphic, even if he may not have been an Urartian. Indeed, a native scribe literate in Hittite Hieroglyphic writing might be expected to have left considerably more evidence of his activity than the meagre texts which have come down to us. On the whole it seems most probable that the Altıntepe inscriptions resulted from the presence of a resident or captive from the Hieroglyphic-using Hatti-lands, such as are in fact mentioned in the texts of Argišti I. It may be that this hypothetical foreigner did not even know the Urartian language, but simply transcribed as best he could what his illiterate masters dictated or, in the case of the pithoi, probably instructed some not very gifted apprentices"[1282]. The same hypothesis, the presence of a Luwian scribe, was taken up by Federico

[1272] Simon 2008: 108.
[1273] See Foster 2005.
[1274] Giusfredi 2012: 158.
[1275] Giusfredi 2012: 158-160.
[1276] Payne 2005: 2.
[1277] This will be dealt with later in the text.
[1278] Özgüç 1969: 75-77.
[1279] Laroche 1971: 57.
[1280] Laroche 1971: 59; Klein 1974: 78. Laroche translated the words as Urartian verbs or appositions with the meaning "I measured the contents".
[1281] Laroche 1971: 57-58; Hawkins et al. 1974: 11.
[1282] Klein 1974: 93.

Giusfredi[1283], who placed Urartian units of measurement written in hieroglyphic Luwian on the *pithoi* from Altıntepe among the "prestiti acclimatati" of the Luwian language. It has also been suggested that the inscriptions were the work of at least three different scribes[1284]. However, since these are Urartian words written in a foreign writing system, is it possible to speak of *loanwords*? There is no doubt that these units of measurement were limited to the Altıntepe site and were not used outside it, in the Neo-Hittite world. It is possible, however, that this was the work of perhaps three actual Luwian-speaking scribes, and that they simply transcribed what it was dictated to them. This is no different from the hypothetical Akkadian rendering of the word for "grandfather", *kibarru*, already analysed in the context of the Akkadian epigraphs at the court of Urartu.

There are two other short epigraphs written in hieroglyphic Luwian and found on two metal containers in tombs at the Altıntepe site[1285]: the first one had allowed, before its refutation, to date the tomb in which it was found to the middle of the 8th century BCE[1286] thanks to the recognition of the name Urikki, king of Que. However, Klein's analysis allowed him to recognise that instead of the name of the king of Que, one finds a whole phrase: ś(a)-á-wí PALACE 2 TU, which should be translated as "(belonging to) the Governor of the Citadel, (capacity) 2 *terusi*" [1287]. Again, this is an Urartian-language inscription rendered using the hieroglyphic Luwian writing system: the word *šaue* is indeed found in Urartian epigraphs with the still dubious meaning of "ruler"[1288] or "viceroy"[1289]. The second epigraph in hieroglyphic Luwian[1290], again on a metal vase from a tomb at Altıntepe, is even less clear than the one just analysed, but it still seems to mention the unit of measurement of the *terusi* through the hieroglyphic sign "TU". The conclusion to be drawn from the analysis of the hieroglyphic Luwian evidence at Altıntepe is that this phenomenon was entirely extemporaneous and short-lived, probably during the reign of Sarduri, son of Argišti, the ruler who annexed the Erzincan plain to the Urartian state[1291].

A final, interesting notation regarding the rendering of the Urartian language in Luwian hieroglyphic inscriptions is the possible mention of the Urartian name Sarduri in an epigraph from the village of Cekke, 46 km north-east of Aleppo. The inscription reads: EGO-*mi* DOMINUS.SOL‖-*wa* / *i*+ *ra* / *i-sá sa-sa-tù*+*ra* / *i-sá wá* / *i-sa*‖-*mi-sa* SERVUS-ta_5, "I (am) LORD-tiwaras, beloved servant of Sasturas"[1292]. Sasturas is called, a little later in the epigraph, ^{I}*ka-ma-ní-sa* FRONS-*la* / *i* / *u-sa* SERVUS-ta_4, "first servant / favourite servant of Kamanis"[1293], who is governor of the city of Karkemiš. The epigraph is dated to the middle of the 8th century BCE. The similarity between the names Sasturas and Sarduri was already noted by Pietro Meriggi[1294], and Helmuth Bossert had recognised a mention of the

[1283] Giusfredi 2012: 158.
[1284] Klein 1974: 84.
[1285] Barnett – Gökçe 1953: 124-128.
[1286] Steinherr 1958: 100; the date has been accepted by Van Loon 1966: 106, Özgüç 1969: 71.
[1287] Klein 1974: 90.
[1288] Salvini 2018: 412; the author affirms "Klein (…) identifica con questa parola una scritta geroglifica di Altıntepe ś(a)-á-wí, ma è assai dubbio", but doesn't explain why he disagrees with Klein. Up to date, no scholar is refuting Klein's hypothesis, but also no other scholar published the Luwian epigraphs on metal vessels found in Altıntepe.
[1289] Diakonoff 1963: 67.
[1290] Klein 1974: 90-91.
[1291] Klein 1974: 92.
[1292] Hawkins 2000: CEKKE, § 1.
[1293] Hawkins 2000: CEKKE, § 2.
[1294] Meriggi 1962: 108.

Urartian ruler Sarduri III (?)[1295]; Bossert's proposal was rejected[1296], however, since it was recognised that the Urartian king Sarduri could not be a vassal of the governor of Karkemiš. This Sasturas, who is also mentioned in another epigraph from Karkemiš[1297], would therefore be a vassal of the governor of Karkemiš, who bore a possibly Urartian name: the date of the epigraph would correspond to the mid-8th century BCE, more or less to the reign of Sarduri, son of Argišti, who certainly went as far as the Euphrates[1298] and probably installed Urartian settlers in the territories he reached.

3. Writing Systems

3.1. Cuneiform

As already rapidly noted during the study of the use of Akkadian in Urartu, the cuneiform script was introduced on the Armenian Highlands at least during the reign of Sarduri, son of Lutipri, thanks to an Assyrian scribe[1299]. A brief history of the studies regarding the introduction of the cuneiform in Urartu must start from the work of Warren C. Benedict[1300], who pointed out that the Urartian cuneiform was absolutely not connected to scribal practices of Hurrian origin, as there were no signs of continuity between the two civilizations besides the linguistic affinity. This position, however, was rejected by Igor M. Diakonoff[1301], who rather suggested that the Urartian cuneiform derived from a Mittanian scribal school, as it preserved some of the Mittanian peculiarities in the rendering of vowels. More recently, Mirjo Salvini opposed Diakonoff arguing that the Urartian cuneiform started from a "phase Neo-Assyrienne de l'écriture cuneiforme, qui fut introduite en Urartu au moment de la fondation de l'état"[1302]. Gernot Wilhelm's analysis[1303] confirmed Salvini's statement, underlining how the influence of Hurrian and Hurro-Akkadian on the Neo-Assyrian cuneiform cannot be ignored, and concluded: "Vereinzelte Parallelen zwischen der Schriftverwendung in Mittani und Urartu müssen daher nicht unbedingt auf eine direkte Tradition zurückzuführen, sondern mögen auch frühneuassyrisch vermittelt sein"[1304].

A big difference must undoubtedly be observed in the diffusion of the cuneiform script in Urartu and Assyria. Writing was widespread in Assyria both on a monumental level and tablets, *bullae* and everyday objects; in Urartu, on the other hand, the great majority of inscriptions were written on stone and rock, often located in places of difficult access. The message that the Urartian rulers intended to

[1295] Bossert 1952: 63. The author meant Sarduri, son of Argišti, who is currently considered Sarduri II; also, the reading suggested by Bossert implied that Kamanis was the servant of Sasturas, and not the opposite.
[1296] Hawkins 1979: 161-162.
[1297] Hawkins 2000: KARKAMIŠ A21, § 2.
[1298] See CTU A 9-1, l. 5.
[1299] Wilhelm 1986: 99.
[1300] Benedict 1958: 11.
[1301] Diakonoff 1971: 33.
[1302] Salvini 1978b: 164. The same idea is proposed and further discussed in Salvini 2014c.
[1303] Wilhelm 1986.
[1304] Wilhelm 1986: 100.

send with writing cannot, therefore, be reduced to a simple communication of their deeds or the scheduling of rituals. With their rock inscriptions and their peculiar writing style, the Urartian kings intended to leave traces of their passage, communicating to the inhabitants of the Armenian Highlands, and not only, the power of the Urartian sovereign: the inscription was intended to allow anyone, literate or not, to understand that the Urartian sovereign had passed through that place, had conquered the territory and had written an epigraph there. Another function of the Urartian inscriptions on stone and rock may be considered as purely aesthetic, as, with their precision and rigour, the cuneiform signs actually constituted an architectural decoration, as evidenced by the epigraph of the *susi* temple of Ayanis[1305]. The previous considerations, therefore, lead to questions regarding the degree of "literacy" of the Urartian population: "how deeply was the Urartian population at large involved with literacy? Did writing play a role in Urartian society outside the context of administrative activities in royal citadels and apart from the familiar cuneiform annals, dedications and territorial marking for royal display?"[1306]. The absence of inscribed materials found outside Urartian royal contexts and not bearing the names of the sovereigns would confirm that the cuneiform writing was an exclusive royal monopoly, but it would seem that its use, even within the palatine sphere alone, was much more limited compared to other societies in the Near East: in fact, no letters exchanged with other contemporary sovereigns in Urartu[1307], religious or mythological texts, nor archive documents were attested. This may be due to a documentation *vulnus*, which has not (yet) allowed to find archives of tablets, but it can also be hypothesized that, in addition to cuneiform writing, the Urartian kings imported from Assyria also the literary genre connected to their most-used medium, the stone: this genre would be the annalistic inscription of the deeds of the sovereign himself[1308]. And yet, it is unthinkable that the sovereign would allow the conspicuous waste of time and resources represented by the engraving of long rock epigraphs, such as the annals of Argišti Minuaḫi, if his people could not read his deeds: as proposed by D. Charpin[1309], the texts could be read aloud by a literate person or by the scribe himself, perhaps, speculating, within a scheme that envisaged cyclical readings of the most important texts. This practice, however, would seem to disagree with the idea that Urartian was not a language actually spoken by most of the population of the Urartian state[1310]: even if it were the case, it is unlikely that there was no general understanding of the language of the dominant group of the region. Therefore, one can imagine that the inscriptions were written to be *heard* by the population: but this, unfortunately, is once again the field of speculation.

[1305] Salvini 2014c: 322-323.
[1306] Zimansky 2019: 560.
[1307] Only one letter sent from a king named Sarduri to the Assyrian king Ashurbanipal has been preserved in the Nineveh archives (SAA 21, 124).
[1308] Lamberg-Karlovsky 2003: 67, "Writing cannot be adopted outside of the context in which it exists. Put another way: one must adopt the social context in which writing exists in order to adopt writing. (…) Inscriptive solutions take place in accordance with the problems they address". That would actually give an answer to the question "why the Urartian people didn't adopt the use of writing outside the royal court?" that wouldn't be "because it was a prerogative of the royal court". They were probably used to organizing their life and administrating their resources without that mean, not needing to adopt it once they came into contact with it. See also Shai – Uziel 2010: 77, "The reasons behind the rejection of writing must be viewed within a social context, independently supported in each period by different explanations".
[1309] Charpin 2010: 21–22.
[1310] Movsisyan 2006: 75, "language with its writing system was used in the narrow circle of the royal official correspondence and wasn't the spoken language of the broad masses of society"; Zimansky 2011a: 557, "Alternatively, archaeological and historical evidence for an abrupt emergence of Biainili together with the speed and totality of its disappearance argue for minimizing the number of Urartian speakers".

3.1.1. The adoption of the cuneiform writing

It can be hypothesized that Sarduri, son of Lutipri, spoke the Urartian language, and that writing was introduced in Urartu, thanks to an Assyrian-speaking scribe, writing in his mother tongue, who probably devoted himself to form a school of local scribes, knowing both the Akkadian and the Urartian languages. Traces of cuneiform writing were present in the future Urartian area certainly starting from the reign of Tiglath-Pileser I, who carved a rock relief and an inscription[1311] at the so-called "Tigristunnel", about 100 km from Diyarbakır, in the same place where, a little more than a century later, Shalmaneser III will also leave four epigraphs[1312]. Tiglath-Pileser I went as far as Yoncali in the Malazgirt region, north of Lake Van, where he left a further rock inscription[1313], but it is only starting from Sarduri, son of Lutipri, that the cuneiform writing was systematically used in the area, associated both the language of the local sovereigns, Urartian, and the *lingua franca* of the ancient Near East in the 1st millennium BC, Akkadian.

The Urartian syllabary included about a hundred cuneiform signs, 57 CV signs and 19 VC signs, leaving out many of the most common VC signs in Assyria, in an attempt to simplify the inventory of Assyrian signs; some signs are also used according to phonetic values not adopted by the Assyrian tradition[1314]. CVC signs are rarely attested, while signs for vowels *a*, *e*, *i*, *u* and *ú* are present, the latter two probably indicating the same phoneme. CV signs were probably sometimes read as only consonants[1315], possibly because of the Assyrian model adopted, the inscriptions of Ashurnasirpal II[1316]; this would be another proof that the Urartian model in the adoption of the cuneiform writing resided in the writing of the reign of Ashurnasirpal II, who reigned, however, at least a generation before Sarduri, son of Lutipri[1317]. An Urartian innovation is the phonetic value bu_x / pu_x for the DUMU/TUR sign[1318]. Regarding the morphology of the signs, despite the clear debt with the Neo-Assyrian writing, the Urartian cuneiform shows a peculiarity, namely the lack of intersection of the wedges in stone epigraphs[1319], probably to prevent the breaking of the stone surface of writing[1320].

An interesting note about Urartian scribal tradition is in the rendering of the name itself "Sarduri". It is attested in the following spellings:

$^{mD}sar_5$-dūri(BÀD)[1321]

[1311] RIMA 2, A.0.87.15.
[1312] RIMA 3, A.0.102.21-24.
[1313] RIMA 2, A.0.87.16.
[1314] Wilhelm 2008: 106; Salvini – Wegner 2014: 5.
[1315] See Salvini – Wegner 2014: 5.
[1316] Wilhelm 2008: 107, "The use of CV signs as C signs may thus have been regarded as a means of representing this opposition (voiced and voiceless consonants) at the end of syllables. Especially relevant might be the Assyrian model: the inscriptions of Ashurnasirpal II (887-858 BC) quite often replace a final closed syllable by an open syllable".
[1317] Would it be possible, therefore, to suggest that the cuneiform script was introduced in the Urartian territory at least with the previous Urartian king, Arame?
[1318] MZL 255. See Salvini 2001d: 262.
[1319] Wilhelm 2008: 106.
[1320] Salvini – Wegner 2014: 7. This does not happen in inscriptions on clay.
[1321] CTU A 1-1, A 2-1, A 3-11.

*^{m}sar$_{x}$(XV)-dūri(BÀD)[1322]

^{mD}sar$_{5}$-du-ri(-e)[1323].

The name Sarduri is rather used in the Assyrian context[1324], and its meaning is "Ištar is my [protective] wall"[1325]: the most common spelling for this name is ideographic, ^{mD}sar$_{x}$(XV)-dūri(BÀD)[1326] or ^{mD}INANNA-BÀD[1327], but it is attested also the phonetic spelling ^{m}*sa-ar-du-ri*[1328], the latter used only at the time of Tiglath-Pileser III to indicate his contemporary ruler of Urartu, Sarduri Argištiḫi. However, the first Urartian attestation of the name differs from the Assyrian spellings known, as it was written as ^{mD}sar$_{5}$-dūri, where one can note the use of the sign sar$_{5}$, whose most common phonetic value in the Neo-Assyrian era was [ri]. The passage from the sign for INANNA/MUŠ$_{3}$[1329] to the sign sar$_{5}$/RI[1330], not used in Assyrian epigraphy to indicate the personal name Sarduri, happened since in Neo-Assyrian spelling the shapes of these two signs can coincide[1331]. This is confirmed by the further Assyrian spelling ^{mD}XV-BÀD, in which the sign XV[1332] is a logographic representation of the name of Ištar[1333]. However, in Urartu the sign represented is MZL 142, as confirmed by its phonetic values, ri/re/sar$_{5}$[1334], and not the sign MZL 153, which has no attestation in Urartian epigraphy. The name Sarduri loses, in Urartian, the theophoric element, using instead a secondary reading of the cuneiform sign RI, but does not abandon the determinative DINGIR placed in front of the name itself, perhaps considered an integral part of the sovereign's personal name; on the other hand, the determinative is not indicated in Assyrian phonetic spellings[1335].

The "Assyrian" spelling ^{mD}XV-BÀD is used in only one case in Urartian inscriptions, at the time of the "co-regency" of Išpuini and Minua[1336]. However, again during the reign of Išpuini, the variant already known in Urartu, ^{mD}sar$_{5}$,-dūri (BÀD)[1337] is attested as well, as is the graphic rendering ^{mD}sar$_{5}$-du-ri[1338], which will later become the standard spelling in Urartian documents. The simultaneous presence of the three spellings for the name of Sarduri may be indicative of the presence of at least three different scribal schools in the state of Urartu at the beginning of its writing tradition, probably later merged into

[1322] Attested as a patronymic ^{m}sar$_{x}$(XV)-dūri(BÀD)-ḫi-ni-še in CTU A 3-8, l. 1.
[1323] Attested in different grammar cases and with different postpositions in CTU A 2-5, A 9-3, A 9-12, A 10-1 and many others.
[1324] Tallqvist 1966: 106; Baker 2000: 568-571.
[1325] Baker 2000: 568.
[1326] Tallqvist 1966: 193; Tiglath-Pileser III 35, ll. i 24', 33'; Tiglath-Pileser III 36, l. 11'; Tiglath-Pileser III 47, l. vo. 45; Sargon II 1, l. 144; Sargon II 63, ll. iii' 3', 5'; Sargon II 65, ll. 277, 400, 401; SAA 05, 093, vo., l. 8'; SAA 05 145, vo., l. 11.
[1327] Sargon II 1, l. 144; also attested as $^{m(D)}$INANNA-*du-ri* (Tiglath-pileser III 35, l. i 24'; (Tiglath-pileser III 36, l. 11').
[1328] Sargon II 1, l. 144; also attested as $^{m(D)}$INANNA-*du-ri* (Tiglath-pileser III 35, l. i 24'; (Tiglath-pileser III 36, l. 11').
[1329] MZL 153.
[1330] MZL 142.
[1331] Borger 2004: 284, " MUŠ sieht u.U. wie n° 142 RI aus".
[1332] MZL 747.
[1333] See also Salvini 1998b: 95.
[1334] See Salvini 2012: 289. Also, Salvini 2012: 283, "Frequentissimo in urarteo ma sconosciuto ad altre tradizioni grafiche".
[1335] See fn. 253.
[1336] CTU A 3-8, l. 1.
[1337] CTU A 2-1, ll. 1-2; A 3-11, vo., l. 2.
[1338] CTU A 2-5, l. 1; A 3-2, l. 1, and in many other later inscriptions.

only one[1339]. Or, it can be thought that the three different spellings were attempts to render the name of Sarduri in Urartian cuneiform: the wholly or partially logographic spellings, *^{mD}sar$_x$(XV)-dūri(BÀD) and ^{mD}sar$_5$-dūri(BÀD)[1340], were abandoned without having other attestations in epigraphy perhaps because these logograms were not otherwise used, following a principle that could be defined as of "graphic economy". The persistence of the sign MZL 142 to indicate the syllable [sar] may instead be due to its double phonetic value assumed in Urartian: *sar$_5$*, used only for the name of Sarduri, and *ri*, used instead more widely, which forced the scribes to learn its use to render both syllables. The presence of the same sign with the two different phonetic values in Sarduri's name could have speeded up this process.

3.1.2. The epigraphic medium

A difference between Urartian and Assyrian epigraphs also concerns the surface on which the inscriptions were engraved. While it is true that Assyria also uses stone surfaces, there is also a substantial difference in their function: Assyrian inscriptions, at least from the time of Ashurnasirpal II, the model for Urartian inscriptions, tended to be engraved on decorated orthostats set in the context of Assyrian royal palaces. The inscriptions, therefore, were intended as a complement to the image and not as the primary decoration of the stone itself; the same applied to the epigraphs engraved on the huge statues of lions and winged bulls guarding the palatial halls. The same cannot be said of the Urartian epigraphs: they appear to be the only element engraved on the stone, thus having both a narrative and a properly decorative function. The Urartian epigraphs, as already mentioned, communicated a twofold message: that conveyed by the engraved words and that conveyed by the engraving itself, a symbol of royal power; it did not require any accompanying image, being itself the image of the royal dynasty.

It is interesting to note that, from the very beginning, Urartian scribes organised the writing space of the epigraphs in a very strict and systematic way: once the epigraphic space was delimited through the engraving of four lines forming a rectangle, it was then divided into bands by engraving parallel horizontal lines. The bands thus formed had the same height, which was the same as that of the cuneiform signs carved later on. The signs occupied the whole line in an extremely precise manner: if there were not enough signs to occupy the whole band, they were spaced out and rearranged to reach the end of the line. In this way, the signs placed at the beginning and the end of the line were always vertically aligned with each other. Although some of these rules were not strictly adhered to by the scribe of Sarduri, son of Lutipri[1341], all the peculiarities related to the morphology of Urartian epigraphs were already established with Išpuini[1342], including the practice of not crossing wedges with each other. With Išpuini was also attested to the use of writing on column bases, apparently common only in the Urartian world, and also the inscriptions of steles, which were taken from the Assyrian sphere. The

[1339] Salvini 1998b: 95, "Das zeigt, dass im angeblich kulturell einförmigen Urartu-Reich doch mehrere Schreiber-Traditionen vorhanden waren, wenigstens in den ersten Jahrzehnten der Schriftüberlieferung".
[1340] The value dūri has been firstly proposed by Benedict 1958: 136; the sign was read before as dur$_8$ (Labat 1988: 105, n° 152[8], indicated that this reading is a peculiarity of the Urartian language; again Labat 1988: 79, n° 86, incorrectly indicated the reading šar$_5$ for the sign RI as another peculiarity of Urartian).
[1341] Demarcation lines of writing bands are not engraved in the duplicate CTU A 1-1A (see CTU A III: 48-49); the signs at the end of the lines are not vertically aligned with each other in duplicates CTU A 1-1B, D, E (CTU A III: 50-51).
[1342] See CTU A III: 56-63.

Assyrian custom of decorating palaces with inscribed reliefs was reworked by the Urartians, who introduced inscribed stones in the construction of buildings. The epigraphic innovations developed at the time of Išpuini would essentially be adopted without change during the reigns of subsequent rulers, culminating in the obsessive monumental perfection of the Ayanis temple epigraph[1343] and its duplicates during the reign of Rusa Argištiḫi. This ruler introduced a novelty in the sphere of epigraphy, represented by the inscription of some decorated blocks[1344]: the epigraph runs, unlike most Assyrian inscriptions on decorated orthostats[1345], in a space created just above the image[1346]; as is customary, the wedges occupy the entire available space in height.

3.1.3. A brief note on Urartian palaeography

As already indicated by the comparison of the formulae and the considerations on the adoption of cuneiform writing, it can be said that the Urartian cuneiform has a clear derivation from the Assyrian context: in particular, the shape of Urartian cuneiform signs shows a similarity to that of Neo-Assyrian signs, as already noted by Johannes Friedrich at the beginning of Urartian philological studies[1347]. However, there are some signs whose palaeography differs from the Neo-Assyrian one, reminding Diakonoff[1348] rather of the forms of cuneiform signs in use in Mittanian texts of the 2nd millennium BCE, the so-called "Mittani Letter"[1349]. Although the connection between Urartian and Neo-Assyrian cuneiform is now well established, it is important to note that there are some signs used in Urartian epigraphy that refer to a more archaic palaeography, particularly from the Middle-Assyrian period[1350].

It should be considered a fact that, at least from the second half of the 2nd millennium BCE, the inhabitants of the southern foothills of the Armenian Highlands were at least familiar with the Middle-Assyrian language and cuneiform writing: it is reasonable to derive the development of Urartian epigraphy exactly from this knowledge. However, since the Middle-Assyrian language and script gradually faded away around 930 BCE, it may be useful to quote a short passage from an article by Grekyan, who hypothesises the reasons for this event: "This allows us to think that either the tradition of writing in Middle Assyrian script lasted longer than previously was assumed, or the Urartian scribal culture had deeper roots going back at least to the 10th century BC, if not earlier, when it could meet the Middle Assyrian and inherited to a certain degree the traditions of that writing culture"[1351]. The

[1343] CTU A 12-1. Impressive pictures of this inscription are published in CTU A III: 338-343.
[1344] CTU A 12-10; see the pictures in CTU A III: 364-366.
[1345] See, for example, BM118803, BM 124575, BM 124578, BM124586, BM124530, BM124560 and many others.
[1346] When it does not run on the image, the inscription is usually placed in Assyria under the image itself; see, for example, BM124550, BM124580, BM124924 and many others.
[1347] Friedrich 1933: 1. A good resumé of the studies dedicated to Urartian palaeography, still not so many, is to be found in Salvini 2012: 279-280.
[1348] Diakonoff 1963: 19-20; Diakonoff 1971: 33.
[1349] Salvini 2012: 280. The Mittani Letter is also written in a dialect, Old Hurrian, that is most similar to the Urartian language: however, explaining how both the language and the writing survived for almost half a century without being used, at least as far as we know, it is not easy. Moreover, one should remember that the first Urartian inscriptions were written in Neo-Assyrian, which means that there still was a process of adaptation of the cuneiform writing to the Urartian language, which shouldn't have been the case if the Mittanian writing have survived. The topic is extremely complex and, unfortunately, it is still not possible to provide a definite answer.
[1350] They are summarised in Grekyan 2019: 252-254.
[1351] Grekyan 2019: 257.

hypothesis that seems most reasonable traces a very intense contact between the local populations of the Armenian Highlands and some Middle Assyrian emissaries located in the Assyrian provinces north of the Taurus, such as Nairi, whose conquest and subjugation is mentioned as early as the time of Tukulti-Ninurta I[1352]. In an area so peripheral to the centre of power, the knowledge of the stereotypical Middle Assyrian script and formulary may have been maintained, while the more recent dialect was spoken, attested in fact as the language of the first inscription of the Urartian king Sarduri, son of Lutipri.

3.2. "Hieroglyphic" scripts

In addition to cuneiform writing, two other types of notation are known in Urartu, one so-called "linear" and another one, called "hieroglyphic"[1353], whose interpretation is not yet fully established. The linear notation is known as it tends to be scratched mainly on the necks of *pithoi* for storage or on clay bullae, while the second one, hypothetically, is found in particular on seal bases and royal objects. The difference between those two scripts is not yet clear nor established[1354], as they tend to be treated as the same "hieroglyphic" writing[1355], but it is noticeable and can be recognized at a first glance when observing the different attestations. Potter's marks and other single symbols impressed or incised on ceramics are not considered to be part of a writing system[1356].

3.2.1. "Linear" script

The few known "linear" characters indicated units of measurement of liquids, and their interpretation is an acrophonical rendering of the same units of measurement indicated by cuneiform signs on the neck of many *pithoi*[1357]. The characters of Urartian linear writing are usually engraved on pottery with a thin stylus, proceeding from top to bottom[1358]: three units of measurement are known, *aqarqi* (approximately 275.3 litres), *ṭirusi* (approximately 27.53 litres) and LIŠ (approximately 1.146 litres)[1359], which in Urartian is probably read as *arusi*[1360]. As anticipated, these units tend to be abbreviated when written in cuneiform signs, resulting in *a*(*qarqi*) and *ṭe*(*rusi*). The linear sign for the unit *aqarqi* is a sort of vase, open at both base and mouth, the sign for *ṭirusi* is a stylised vase, closed at both ends, while the LIŠ is indicated by a small bowl. The quantity of the units is indicated by the impression of dots.

[1352] RIMA 1: A.0.78.5, l. 45.
[1353] The meaning of this word should be intended in opposition to the hieroglyphic script: if hieroglyphs are pictograms recognisable as a representation of animals and objects, linear writing is any graphic system using signs with a linear development that cannot be interpreted as pictograms.
[1354] A first differentiation has been theorized by Movsisyan 2006: 98, as he divided the hieroglyphic system in "linear signs" and "picture-ideograms". It is not so clear, however, that the two groups belong to the same writing system.
[1355] See the catalogue in Payne 2005.
[1356] Salvini 2012: 223, "(…) marchi di vasaio e vari simboli incisi o impressi sulla ceramica, che comunemente vengono confusi con la scrittura e ricevono la definizione generica e impropria di 'geroglifici urartei'".
[1357] See Laroche 1971; Salvini 2002c.
[1358] Salvini 2002c: 684.
[1359] Salvini 2012: 223.
[1360] Salvini 2002c: 678, quoting Dinçol 1974: 116.

Such indications of capacity are found on *bullae* and *pithoi* from the sites of Ayanis, Bastam, and Toprakkale, which were certainly centres of power during a late period of Urartian history: Ayanis and Bastam were founded by Rusa Argištiḫi, while there is no consensus on the foundation of Toprakkale, which, however, yielded late materials. There are also "local" variants to linear notation: in the warehouses 25 and 28 in Karmir-blur[1361], for example, there are no linear signs for units of measurement, but only the indication of quantities by the impression of dots[1362]. The use of this different writing system, in parallel with cuneiform notation, sometimes attested on the same materials with linear signs, is possibly due to the different level of experience of the scribes who had to write and read the content[1363]. The system was, however, characteristic of Urartian state organisation, albeit with subtle differences in notation from one site to another, being attested in different centres of administration. These symbols have been "translated" into hieroglyphic Luwian on the *pithoi* found in Altıntepe. The parallel suggested by M. Salvini[1364] analysed similar documentation found in the warehouses of Hattuša/Boğazköy[1365], where some pithoi bore Urartian-like signs that were immediately connected to their contents. This would be another proof of the nature of this script, used by illiterate warehousemen in contrast to the cuneiform notation.

However, alongside these signs clearly interpreted, there is another type of "linear" documentation whose interpretation is far from being definitive: on several *bullae* from Ayanis[1366], a clay tablet from Toprakkale[1367] and on the back of a tablet from Karmir-blur[1368] there are "linear" signs, very similar to each other, for which no interpretation can be given. These documents are usually equated with "hieroglyphs", which will be discussed shortly, but the difference between them is obvious, since not only they do not look like pictograms, but they appear to be conceptually different from hieroglyphic documents. They are, in fact, clay documents, probably for administrative use. The tablet from Toprakkale is, so far, the longest document in Urartian "linear" writing, two and a half lines in which only the dots indicating numbers and a sort of pitchfork are clearly recognisable. The presence of the numbers, as well as the fact that this is a typical archival document, the tablet, suggested that it should be regarded as an administrative document. The *bullae*, on which the symbols for the numbers and sometimes the pitchfork[1369] are recognisable, are no different.

The Urartian "linear" script can be described as a "Vorstufe einer Schrift"[1370], used by Urartian warehousemen who were not familiar with cuneiform writing: the non-standardised characters used are recognisable based on their graphic appearance, but cannot yet be interpreted; it is unclear, for example, whether they express the Urartian language or a local language[1371], which would allow us to postulate

[1361] Piotrovskij 1952: 68-73.
[1362] Salvini 2002c: 692; see also Salvini 2012: 237-238
[1363] Salvini 2002c: 692. However, it is not clear why these two different writing systems are attested on the same objects: if the hieroglyphic one was easy to be understood by everybody, the cuneiform signs do not really have a reason to be impressed as well.
[1364] Salvini 2002c: 692-693.
[1365] See Bittel 1967: 52-54.
[1366] Salvini 2001b: 285-288, 291, 301-302, CB Ay-15, CB Ay-17, CB Ay-19, CB Ay-21, CB Ay-39, CB Ay-49 and Ay-50.
[1367] Firstly published in Lehmann-Haupt 1907: 108.
[1368] Diakonoff 1963: pl. II (text 1).
[1369] Although there are sometimes attempts to interpret other symbols as "horseheads" (see, for example, Payne 2005: 313, no. K.C2), they are not clearly delineated and recognisable.
[1370] Von Schuler 1972-1975: 401.
[1371] Von Schuler 1972-1975: 400.

that Urartian was not actually spoken in the Kingdom. Despite the status of its interpretation, and its low productivity, it can be argued that this script was used in a strictly Urartian context and developed in parallel with the cuneiform script, so much so that, like it, it disappeared with the disappearance of the Urartian state. It cannot be established whether Urartian "linear" writing was based on the *pithoi* of Altıntepe written in Luwian hieroglyphs or whether it was an invention born within the Urartian Kingdom[1372]; inevitably, one have to say that there are similarities between the two, such as the notation of numerals.

Some symbols scratched on bronze figurines belonging to the so-called "Toprakkale Throne"[1373] also appear to be notations in "linear" script, in which the representations that originated the signs cannot be recognised. However, these notations are somehow different from those previously analysed, being more complex and articulated, almost as if they were an intermediate stage between hieroglyphic symbols and linear simplifications: in any case, it is not possible to provide any meaning behind these notations.

3.2.2. "Hieroglyphic script"

In addition to a "linear" writing notation, there are also actual "hieroglyphic" signs that are difficult to interpret, which can be found on the stamp base of some seals, on metal objects related to the royal sphere, as well as on a bronze plate from the antique market[1374].

A brief history of the attempts to decipher Urartian "hieroglyphic script" shows how far scholars still are from its understanding: the first one to postulate the existence of Urartian hieroglyphic writing has been Carl Friedrich Lehmann-Haupt[1375], who also correctly identified the signs for units of measurement[1376], here placed under the definition of "linear" writing. Later, Boris B. Piotrovskij, in addition to resuming the discourse on units of measurement, drew attention to other signs, considering as a "hieroglyph" the pitchfork embossed on some royal helmets, and speculating that it was the symbol of the god Teišeba[1377]. Another symbol whose significance has been hypothesized on several occasions is the tower surmounted by a spear associated with the lion's head[1378]. Few scholars have attempted to decipher complete "hieroglyphic" inscriptions, but only recently has a more extensive attempt been made by Artak Movsisyan to decipher Urartian "hieroglyphic writing" as a whole[1379], providing several tables in which the signs are accompanied by their supposed meaning.

[1372] While Movsisyan (2006: 98) came to the same conclusion regarding the existence of a double "pictorial" script in Urartu, he affirmed that the source of the Urartian linear script is to be recognized in the Armenian linear script.
[1373] See Payne 2005: 336-337.
[1374] Barnett 1974. This bronze lamina gave Barnett the occasion of publishing all the known Urartian hieroglyphs.
[1375] Lehmann-Haupt 1931: 474, 587.
[1376] Those signs were also correctly recognized as measurement units by Burney (1966: 88-90) and von Schuler (1972: 125-134).
[1377] Piotrovskij 1952: 66-67; Piotrovskij 1955: 25.
[1378] See the following discussion.
[1379] Movsisyan 2006: 107-136. His work is apparently thorough, as he analyses all the cases in which hieroglyphs are supposed to appear, but it is based both on the somewhat vague identification of specific Urartian gods associated with "hieroglyphic" symbols attested on bronze plaques from the antique market, and the arbitrary meaning given to certain symbols.

The definite decipherment of the so-called Urartian "hieroglyphic" writing has yet to take place: it is, however, undeniable that there are objects on which abstract symbols reminiscent of the Luwian hieroglyphic have been graffitied or imprinted, but those signs are yet to be interpreted or translated. A list of Urartian "hieroglyphs" is provided by Richard Barnett[1380] and consists of less than a hundred signs, which occur alone or in various combinations on various objects. Beginning with the signs occurring on royal documents, mainly bronze objects such as bowls or horse vestments, it is possible to note the presence of some recurrent signs, such as bulls' and lions' heads, birds, and also an element identifiable as a tower surmounted by a sign defined as a "luminous" tree[1381] or spear[1382]. Such signs begin to appear at least at the time of Argišti Minuaḫi[1383], associated with cuneiform inscriptions attesting to the sovereign's ownership of the object[1384]. Animal heads are attested as signs in Luwian hieroglyphic[1385], but the phonetic value is not clear for all of them, nor is clear whether they should bear the same value in Urartian context. It is indeed quite unlikely that they have a syllabic value in Urartu: it is more possible that they were symbols related to the ruler himself, although there have been numerous attempts to give them a different meaning. Barnett himself[1386] has proposed that these signs indicated the building called in the Urartian $^{(É)}$*urišḫusi-*, which should mean "treasure chamber"[1387], while A. Vayman[1388] gave them the meaning of É.GAL *ištinie*, "(in/for[1389]) this fortress", considering this group of signs as indicative of the Karmir-blur fortress. As can be seen, there is no unambiguous translation, but it is clear that they are connected with royalty and indicate royal property, as that they appear to be the only "hieroglyphic" symbols systematically linked to Urartu rulers: if the hypotheses formulated so far are correct, we would then face "quasi-bilingual" inscriptions.

On the other hand, many different symbols appear on objects not related to the royal world, and a list of them is again presented in Barnett's work, which still appears to be the most complete list of Urartian "hieroglyphs". Many "hieroglyphs" appear on seals[1390], especially on stamp bases: on them, one can find lunar crescents, solar symbols, vases and animal heads, sometimes as single signs and sometimes grouped, whose meaning it is unfortunately not possible to give. The resemblance between Urartian "hieroglyphic" signs and the Luwian ones is undeniable, and the recurrence of certain symbols in specific contexts only confirms the hypothesis that this was a system of notation with a certain regularity. However, it is not clear whether the signs were used as mere symbols, associated with a specific context or person, or whether they actually concealed syllabic readings or pictograms.

The category of objects that makes it most clear that this could actually be a writing includes some bronzes from Karmir-blur[1391] and Toprakkale[1392] that present groups of signs in succession, such as stylised animals and almost abstract symbols. The arrangement of the signs exactly resembles that of a

[1380] Barnett 1974: 48-50. See also Payne 2005: 312-374.
[1381] Piotrovskij 1952: 59; Barnett 1974: 48, n° 6; Salvini 1995c: 204.
[1382] Calmeyer 1979: 183-195; Payne 2005: 330.
[1383] Barnett 1974: 48.
[1384] Payne 2005: 330-334.
[1385] Payne 2014: n° 97, 105, 130, with different variations.
[1386] Barnett 1974: 51
[1387] Salvini 2018: 423.
[1388] Vayman 1978: 100. Diakonoff also proposed that the signs meant something connected to a house, a palace or a temple (Diakonoff 1983: 194)
[1389] On the meaning of the word *ištinie*, see Salvini 2018: 396.
[1390] Payne 2005: 344-363.
[1391] Piotrovskij 1955: 10, 19; Piotrovskij 1969: 62.
[1392] Wartke 1991b: 177, figs. 3-4 and plate 138.

script, as does the repetition of some of them: once again, however, it is not possible to provide a reading of the sequence of symbols.

Although the incredible similarity between the Luwian hieroglyphic script and the so-called Urartian "hieroglyphs" is clear, there is no basis for assuming that the same symbols should have the same syllabic reading, nor, indeed, that they actually are the same logograms. This script would have been inspired, in Urartu, from the mere sight of the hieroglyphic Luwian symbols, but it would not characterise itself as an adoption of the signs and their syllabic or logographic values, as was the case with cuneiform. The presence of such symbols on objects related to kingship, even if limited to the reproduction of animal heads and possible towers surmounted by spears, makes it a matter of state resonance, and not a purely local fact, like all other Urartian writing attestations. Even the hieroglyphs carved on seals lead to consider this possible writing as connected to the court, or a ruling class involved in the administration of the Urartian state. The evidence of "linear" writing in various administrative sites of the Kingdom further demonstrates the widespread use of this "simplified" script, at least in the storerooms of the fortresses: whether this writing concealed a single language or different languages is not known. The considerations that can be made in the light of the previous analysis do not allow us to expand our knowledge of these non-cuneiform scripts in Urartu, nor are they of any help in identifying how Urartian scripts and Luwian hieroglyphic script came into contact and interacted with each other. However, it is worth noting that at least two writing systems were in use in Urartu, one cuneiform and explicitly associated with the royal dynasty, and one "linear", probably created by and for warehousemen who could not read cuneiform. As far as the so-called "hieroglyphic" writing is concerned, it is not yet clear whether it actually existed as a writing system, nor, if so, what were the meanings concealed by the symbols used, but its resemblance to the hieroglyphic Luwian script is clear.

IV. Analysis of Urartian art and its external influences

1. Introduction

The section on Urartian art and the external influences that shaped it has to be necessarily more extensive than the previous one. As already mentioned, the history of Urartian art was essentially written in one decade, between the 1960s and 1970s, without substantial subsequent additions. This has resulted in both a kind of immobility in the definition of Urartian art and the crystallisation of possibly old concepts, based on materials that now appear minimal compared to the total number of objects attributable to Urartian production. Unlike Urartian philology, which is constantly being expanded by international scholars, and history, many aspects of which are being studied and re-studied even today, the study of art appears to have somehow stopped in the last century, with few later notable additions to the field, such as, for example, Ursula Seidl's 2004 volume, *Bronzekunst Urartus*. It appears necessary to review Urartian art in its entirety, in order to identify its main features: what was initially planned as a brief study, preliminary to the actual analysis of influences, actually turned out to be a huge task of reviewing and analysing all Urartian artistic artefacts found in excavations. In fact, another problem in defining the characteristics of Urartian art is the consideration given to a huge number of objects without archaeological context, which assumed a prominent position within Urartian studies, almost becoming the basis of the research. The present study, therefore, starts with the idea of "reclaiming" Urartian art history from objects acquired on the antique market, in order to possibly achieve a different result from the one obtained through the analysis of those materials. Once Urartian art is analysed, and its characteristics isolated, external influences in its formation and development will be studied. But before that, questions of terminology will arise regarding Urartian art itself.

Although it appeared to be a relatively simple objective, isolating and analysing the external influences on a given artistic type turns out to have a certain degree of complexity, due to several factors. First of all, the definition of one *art* characteristic of a certain population should be delimited using stringent

and consistent criteria, which are not easy to identify when it comes to ancient art, especially concerning a state that has left us extremely unclear clues about its culture, such as Urartu. In this case, the guide to identifying Urartian objects is mainly the cuneiform inscription running on artefacts that also have a figurative decoration. From these, an attempt will be made to define the characteristics of Urartian art, which will then be the guide for the analysis of other objects from Urartian sites. In apparent contrast, however, a kind of "popular" art of the Urartian territories can be identified, combining features of "royal" art with elements deriving from a local "Caucasian" tradition.

A further difficulty that arose in the discussion of Urartian art, apart from the problematic definition of "art" itself, was the delimitation to be given to the term "Urartian": if, as previously discussed, the term is essentially attributable to the élite of the Kingdom, then only objects bearing royal inscriptions are to be considered actual Urartian materials. It is clear, however, that there were probably numerous populations living in the Urartu-controlled territories, and that each population had a more or less established artistic tradition, that probably influenced or was, at least, known by the royal dynasty. Artistically speaking, not much remains of these entities incorporated into Urartian territories; the responsibility for this flaw in the documentation is undoubtedly due to what may superficially be called a cognitive bias in Urartian archaeology, which, if one analyses it with an awareness of the very definition of *Urartian*, appears to be at least logical: Urartian archaeology, in fact, mainly focused on the excavation of citadels and fortresses that returned inscribed, royal materials, that allowed those sites to be defined as belonging to the Urartian rulers on a more or less permanent basis. The excavation of local settlements generally does not take place for two main reasons: the first concerns the difficulty in identifying them at ground level, since they are not characterised by easily recognisable masonry structures, and also because of the unknown settlement pattern. There is, in recent years, a tendency to explore marginal areas of the Kingdom, but well defined as *Urartian*, as well as the sporadic investigation of *Outer Towns*, as happened with the settlement of Ayanis, which provided interesting results in terms of Urartian / local contrasts.

1.1. History of research

As already mentioned, the main contributions to the history of Urartian art have been made by eminent scholars between the 60s and 80s of the 20th century: although still valid and excellent supports to the study, they are certainly old, inevitably ignoring the results of the most recent research carried out in the areas of interest.

A brief history of research on Urartian art is offered by Ursula Seidl at the beginning of her volume on Urartian bronzes[1]: the first Urartian bronzes known to the scientific world were fragments of furniture and shields from Toprakkale, characterised by their great resemblance to Assyrian art[2]. The first catalogue of Urartian objects was published by C.F. Lehmann-Haupt[3], who tried to distinguish an "Urartian style", different from the Assyrian one, and concluded by assuming, based on similarities between the Urartian material culture and the one he called "mykenisch-karischer", a migration of

[1] Seidl 2004: 3-6.
[2] Uvarov 1887: 62; Perrot – Chipiez 1884: 755; Lynch 1901: 62.
[3] Lehmann-Haupt 1906.

Urartian populations from the West[4]. Both Lehmann-Haupt and Ernst Herzfeld[5], in their subsequent works, presented the Urartian culture as dominant in the Near East of the 1st millennium BCE, identifying connections and influences exerted by Urartian art on all artistic manifestations of the surrounding populations, extending as far as Etruscan[6] and Greco-Roman art. The first scientific study dedicated to Urartian art was produced in 1962, when, after the publication of the excavation materials from Karmir-blur, Boris B. Piotrovskij started to publish volumes dedicated to the study of Urartian art: his *Iskusstvo Urartu VIII-VI vv do n.e.* dates to that year, and it was made known to western scholars in 1967 thanks to its English translation entitled *Urartu: the Kingdom of Van and its Art*; this work focuses mainly on materials from the site excavated by the author, Karmir-blur, considering *en passant* also some artefacts found in Toprakkale. In his work, Piotrovskij downplayed the influence of Urartian culture on the surrounding ones, focusing rather on the contacts between Urartians and nomadic peoples[7]; moreover, by describing the Urartian style as individually typified forms of high decorative value borrowed from Assyria, he changed the view on the western origin of Urartians. In the work of Ekrem Akurgal, one can find the first attempts to define a chronology of Urartian art: first, he tried to propose an artistic analysis based on different stylistic levels[8], while later he suggested a chronological system divided into three phases only for the period 780-580 BCE[9]. However, the approach was not totally convincing, as he used materials that were out of context and could not be dated. In the second half of the 1960s, important volumes on Urartian art appeared, considering the materials from Toprakkale and Karmir Blur. In 1966, Maurits N. Van Loon published the first volume devoted to an exclusive analysis of Urartian art, divided into categories and entitled *Urartian art: its distinctive traits in the light of new excavations*: the peculiarity of the volume, in addition to the consideration given to Urartian art as an independent manifestation and not as a sub-category of Assyrian art, is the attention given exclusively to objects from archaeological excavations. One of the conclusions reached by Van Loon in his volume was to distinguish Urartian art in *court* and *popular style*[10], considering the former as directly modelled on the Assyrian art of the 9th century BCE, while the latter as consisting of elements proper of court style, together with Syrian influences and local contributions. It is on this specific reflection that the present analysis of Urartian art is based. Shortly afterwards, Guitty Azarpay published her doctoral thesis, entitled *Urartian art and artifacts: a chronological study*, which aimed to order chronologically Urartian objects, in order to create a sort of history of Urartian art according to its development over time. As already mentioned, from the 1970s onwards, several antiques began to appear on the art market, attributed by different scholars to Urartian production: these innovations somewhat "weakened" the scientific study of Urartian art, diverting attention from the archaeological contexts and the objects found there, and exclusively focusing on the artistic details of the artefacts considered Urartian, even though they did not come with certainty from excavated sites. The three best-known catalogues of Urartian objects, exclusively from the antique market, are those published after the exhibitions in Munich[11], Ghent[12] and Jerusalem[13]. Of this group of objects, two categories of

[4] Lehmann-Haupt 1906: 120-123.
[5] Herzfeld 1921: 149.
[6] See also Maxwell-Hyslop 1956.
[7] Piotrovskij 1966: 335-369.
[8] Akurgal 1959: 77-90.
[9] Akurgal 1968: 56.
[10] Van Loon 1966: 166-169.
[11] Kellner 1976.
[12] Vanden Berghe – De Meyer 1982.
[13] Merhav 1991.

artefacts are particularly famous: the Giyimli plates, which had a particular resonance as they were considered examples of Urartian popular and religious art, and the bronze belts, which led to the publication of several catalogues dedicated exclusively to them[14]. The publication of objects from the antique market has opened a debate on the validity of these artefacts in the scientific world of Urartian research, and not only: Oscar W. Muscarella, in particular, has summarised the issue in a short article that urges us to consider antiquarian artefacts only from the point of view of a publication that wants to study all the objects ascribed to Urartian production, for the sake of completeness, but without considering the contexts of discovery of materials from excavations[15]. Jumping forward in time, without mentioning each specific publication of individual objects or classes of materials, one arrives in 2004, with the volume of Ursula Seidl, *Bronzekunst Urartus*, dedicated to the publication of all Urartian metal materials, starting with the inscribed specimens and then expanding to other objects without epigraphs: Seidl's completeness has rarely been achieved in Urartian studies, and although most of the materials she considered are from the antiquities market, her volume is still a landmark in the history of Urartian art.

2. Urartian artifacts in Urartian sites

The first section of this chapter is devoted to an analysis of Urartian objects found at Urartian sites, sites within the borders of the Kingdom that bear other traces of Urartian presence, such as monumental inscriptions, the presence of fortresses and Bia pottery. The analysis is subdivided according to two criteria: firstly, according to the function of the artefact to be analysed; secondly, according to the number of objects found with an actual inscription, so that statistics can be drawn on the type of objects most produced or, at least, most preserved. The analysis is carried out so that the first objects to be analysed are the ones bearing royal cuneiform epigraphs, a powerful indicator of their "Urartaicity"

2.1. War equipment

2.1.1. Quivers

Numerous are the decorated bronze quivers found in Urartu: they were made of a metal sheet, which has been preserved over time and is the only remnant of the quiver itself, and a support in perishable material, probably leather. The metal part, when fully preserved, is usually a bronze sheet about 70 cm long and about 10 cm wide, hammered and bent longitudinally to have an oval-shaped section[16]: it was

[14] See, in the following chapter, the sections devoted to the Giyimli laminae and the bronze belts; for the belts, it is enough to think that the catalogue published by Keller 1991 contained more than 400 specimens, while, at the present day, are known to come from excavations less than 100 bronze belts.
[15] Muscarella 1984; also Muscarella 2000: 146-156, considers and deconstructs the Urartian origin of several artefacts from the antique market, together with other objects said to have an Oriental origin.
[16] Wartke 1990: 58.

calculated that each quiver should contain between 35 and 40 arrows[17]. The base is forged on the same metal sheet or added later by rivets; the metal parts generally have holes down the edges by which the leather support of the quiver was attached: surely enough, the part of the object which came into contact with the shoulder of the warrior was made of leather[18]. The metal surface of the quivers is generally divided into sections by horizontal ribs; the bands formed by these ribs are sometimes occupied by pictorial representations[19]. Regarding their decoration, it is possible to divide the quivers into four groups: quivers decorated with parallel bands, zigzag bands, chariot and horseman series, and animal bands. The best-preserved quivers also have two back rings through which passed the leather shoulder strap supposed to hold them on the warrior's shoulder. The quiver was part of the archer's common equipment, but it was also one of the most common votive offerings dedicated to the god Ḫaldi: this is evidenced not only by some inscriptions found on the objects themselves but also by the quivers found in the cell of the temple of Ayanis at the foot of the pillars to which they were probably hung[20]. From the text of the sacking of the temple of Ḫaldi to Muṣaṣir is known the existence of quivers made of silver[21]: however, archaeological excavations have returned only bronze specimens.

Due to the fragmentary nature of the publications, it is necessary to report the existence of some quivers found in the Urartian context, but published without precise descriptions or images: among these one must remember the quivers found in Çavuştepe, one of which was discovered in the fortress of Uç Kale[22] and one in a building near the temple of the god Irmušini[23], and some figurative quivers found in the temenos of the temple of Ayanis, still unpublished, such as those bearing an inscription[24].

Most of the quivers were found in temple contexts, testifying to the connection between these objects and the sacred sphere, also testified by inscriptions on some specimens; in two cases, Karmir-blur and Kayalıdere, the context of discovery is certainly secondary, while in two other cases, Yerevan and Al Berd, the context is funerary. There may have been a bipartition in the use of the quivers: those found in burial contexts or underground hiding places, decorated with geometrical motifs, could have actually been used by their owners, as shown by the repairs reported by some quivers of the Kayalıdere site; those with figurative decoration, found in sacred or temple contexts, had an exclusive dedicatory purpose, highlighted by the royal inscriptions[25].

2.1.1.1. Quivers with parade scenes

The best-known Urartian quivers bear an embossed decoration depicting a procession of chariots and horsemen: the best preserved, as well as the only ones published so far[26], come from the site of Karmir-

[17] Piotrovskij 1962: 71.
[18] Piotrovskij 1967: 47; Wartke 1990: 58.
[19] A technical description of the types and uses of the quivers is to be found in Seidl 2004: 89.
[20] Derin - Çilingiroğlu 2001: 159.
[21] Foster 2005: 810, l. 380.
[22] Erzen 1988: 10.
[23] Mellink 1970: 166.
[24] Derin - Çilingiroğlu 2001: 159-160.
[25] As the quivers from Ayanis are still not published, one is not able to confirm or deny this hypothesis.
[26] From the site of Ayanis one can see several bronze quivers with figurative depictions; Derin - Çilingiroğlu, 2001: 160: "The quivers with figures were uncovered at the Ayanis Fortress during the excavation season in 2000. On one found in the rooms at the southern part of the temple, a war scene composed of chariots was depicted. On another a scene of flying horses was shown. Bud motives and (+) signs were used on some of the quivers". In fn.

blur (**Q-Kb-1** to **6**)[27]. In some cases, they bear an inscription of the sovereign who dedicated them to the god Ḫaldi, thus qualifying themselves as *ex voto* and not, of course, as everyday objects. The decoration is the same on all the specimens, embossed with details added by engraving: several horizontal bands parallel to each other, arranged at regular distances over the whole length of the quiver, containing scenes of processions or parades of the army. These decorated bands may be interposed with flat bands or groups of embossed ribs[28]; the figured bands are framed by two zig-zag lines placed above and below the scene. The scene similarly takes place on all the specimens, depicting three horsemen and two chariots on each horizontal register; the horsemen are armed with spear, shield and pointed helmet, while on the chariots two warriors with pointed helmets sit, one holding the reins of the horses and the other with his hands raised in front of him. The horses, all represented in the same galloping position, wear harnesses on the mane and neck, while the tail seems to be braided or styled; the harness worn on the mane seems to have the shape of a pinecone, reminiscent of the objects held in their hands by the *apkallū*. The somatic features of the men portrayed are extremely simplified since only their eyes and nose are depicted: the part of the face below the nose has no representation of the mouth, chin or beard. Each scene has a fixed order in the depiction of the different characters, whatever direction they are facing: a horseman opens the parade, followed by a chariot, and again a horseman, a chariot and a last horseman to close the procession. Five of these quivers bear an inscription of an Urartian sovereign, in particular Argišti Minuaḫi and Sarduri Argištiḫi[29]: there are no substantial differences in the representation of the scene over time so that without an inscription or minor changes in the engraved decorative apparatus[30] it would not be possible to propose a different date for each of them.

The discovery of a quiver decorated with friezes of horsemen and chariots is known from the Çavuştepe site (**Q-Çav-1**), but no precise image or context of the discovery has been published[31].

2.1.1.2. Quiver with animals' depiction

In the site of Toprakkale, a fragment of the upper section of a bronze quiver has been found[32], embossed and engraved, depicting a roaring lion walking towards the left and a palmette; the scene is enclosed between two horizontal embossed ribs and two zig-zag bands (**Q-Top-1**). The lion, whose snout is almost completely lost due to a fracture, has its jaws opened in a roar from which its tongue protrudes; its mane is rendered with short lines, its belly is decorated with chevrons and its tail is lowered: the end of the tail has a sort of "claw" that often recurs in lions' representation on the wall bas-reliefs of Ashurbanipal in Nineveh[33]. Overall, the figure recalls the lions represented on the basalt relief of

37, same page: "Figured quivers will be published in Ayanis II", which is still not edited. The quiver presenting the winged horses' scene would in this case constitute a *unicum* in the history of Urartian art.

[27] There are at least eighteen specimens, only thirteen published. Piotrovskij 1950: 51; Piotrovskij 1952: 50; Piotrovskij 1955: 36-39; Piotrovskij 1967: 46; Piotrovskij 1969:178 and figs. 85-86; Seidl 2004: pls. 17-18.

[28] Only in one quiver with an inscription of the king Sarduri II; see Seidl 2004: F.103.

[29]; CTU B 8-14 (Room 36); CTU B 8-16 (Room 11); CTU B 9-10 (found in two parts in the Rooms 5 and 13); CTU B 9-11, B 9-12 (exact provenance unknown).

[30] Azarpay 1968: 42: "(…) with minor variations in the chased decoration, such as the triangular tassels shown above the forelegs of the saddle horses on Sarduri's quiver".

[31] Mellink 1974: 115.

[32] Barnett 1972: 169-170.

[33] See, for example, Brereton 2018: 38, pl. 34; 58, pl. 63

Adilcevaz[34], concerning their position, their squat shape and the characterization of their fur and muscles; also in this case, there are many walking lions represented on Urartian metal objects: both on belts and shields, however, the usual characteristic of the walking lion type is the raised tail, while the rampant lion type usually has a lowered tail[35]. The palmette depicted behind the lion is composed of seven leaves, three on each side and one on top, drop-shaped with a pointed end in the side leaves; it also rests on two small volutes representing the trunk.

From the fortress of Karmir-blur, found inside *karas* 46 in Room 27[36], one can see a fragment of decorated bronze sheet, considered by Piotrovskij a quiver[37]; it shows two lines of roaring lions and bulls, walking and facing left, separated by a bud garland frieze. On the right side, where the extremity of the object is preserved, there are numerous holes arranged on a vertical line. Since one is not dealing with a complete or clearly recognizable object, it is not possible to provide with certainty a hypothesis about the original function of the fragment: however, since in Urartian art quivers depicting separate registers with friezes of bulls and lions or interludes decorated with garlands of buds are not known, it should be considered more likely to be a belt fragment.

Van Loon[38] suggested that the quiver fragment with the lion's depiction found in Toprakkale, as well as a shallow bowl with a lions' series coming from the same site[39], due to the characterization of the animals, should be ascribed to the later Median art: the lion is for sure quite different from the usual Urartian depiction of this animal on metal, and a quiver with this decoration is a *unicum* in Urartian art, but it may seem unlikely to see it as "a trace of Median art on former Urartian territory"[40].

2.1.1.3. Quiver with lines of bud garlands

From the *temenos* of the temple of Ayanis a quiver containing four arrowheads has been found (**Q-Ay-1**)[41]: it was made in iron with applied bronze plates, which are decorated with several rows of bud garlands. The decoration is very common in Urartian art, but it's a *unicum* in the quivers' panorama, as it has never been used as a decoration for those[42].

2.1.1.4. Quivers with zig-zag lines

Five specimens of quivers are decorated exclusively with horizontal lines engraved with a zig-zag pattern and arranged parallel along their length. In Tomb III of Altıntepe a quiver decorated on the outer

[34] Bilgiç – Öğün 1964.
[35] Obviously, this is just a trend: all the lions depicted on royal shields are walking and all have their tails raised; for the belts, see the chapter dedicated to exceptions, for example, the one depicted in the cartouche of the belt called "Yeghegnadzor-1".
[36] Piotrovskij 1952: 37; in Piotrovskij 1955: 39 the indication is instead "*karas* 36, Room 28".
[37] Piotrovskij 1952: 38. Here, it is considered as a belt and catalogued as B-Kb-1.
[38] Van Loon 1966: 179-180.
[39] See the section dedicated to the "Vessels".
[40] Van Loon 1966:180.
[41] Çilingiroğlu 2006: 237-238.
[42] If one doesn't consider the quiver from the antiquity market kept in the Van Museum and represented in Castelluccia – Dan 2011: fig. 17.

wall with narrow horizontal bands filled with a "dog's tooth"[43] motif was found (**Q-Alt-1**). The inscribed plate of Argišti Rusaḫi[44] suggests proposing as an *ante quem* date for the materials found in the tomb at the end of the 8th century BCE. From the fortress of Karmir-blur, Rooms 28 and 36, one can see two more fragments of quivers with a zig-zag decoration in the upper section (**Q-Kb-7, 8**)[45], although it is not clear whether those quivers bore a more complex figurative decoration: these quivers are inscribed with a dedication to Ḫaldi from the king Argišti Minuaḫi[46]. Another quiver bearing this same motif has been found at Karmir-blur in Room 12 (**Q-Kb-9**), while, outside the fortress, one specimen was discovered in a house close to the North-Western gate (**Q-Kb-10**). At the site of Toprakkale[47], on the other hand, there is a quiver which is almost entirely preserved in its lower section (**Q-Top-2**), with three groups of five parallel horizontal bands decorated in a zig-zag pattern; in the centre of this specimen's back, there is a single ring for the attachment of the leather handle. From Toprakkale also comes another small fragment of a quiver with a zig-zag decoration (**Q-Top-3**). The burial on the mound known as Al Berd, close to the Armenian village of Geghovit, was the findspot for a fragment of what may be considered as a quiver with a zig-zag decoration (**Q-Al-1**)[48], even if it is too small to be sure that it is the only decoration depicted.

2.1.1.5. Quiver with lines of repoussé dots

A single quiver, coming from the excavations of the east court of the Upper Anzaf temple (**Q-Anz-1**)[49], is decorated with parallel bands filled with three rows of *repoussé* dots, which would seem to weaken the quiver's durability: that's probably the reason why the motif is not found elsewhere on quivers, while it was more popular on several of the so-called "Urartian" belts.

2.1.1.6. Quivers with parallel ribs

Quivers belonging to this category come from different sites of the Urartian Kingdom and are decorated with groups of parallel engraved horizontal bands. In the site of Ayanis, eleven specimens were found in the Temple area (**Q-Ay-2** to **12**)[50]: those quivers with several embossed horizontal bands, with a number of lines for each group varying from five to eight, and for each quiver there may be three or four groups of repeated lines. Similar to these quivers are the specimens from the "buried booty" of the citadel of Kayalidere, where five quivers with this kind of decoration have been preserved (**Q-Kay-1** to **5**)[51]: from the Kayalidere specimens, one can see that these objects were not purely ornamental, since

[43] Barnett – Gökçe 1953: 126-127.
[44] CTU B 11-5.
[45] Piotrovskij 1955: 16-19, 36-39.
[46] CTU IV B 8-15.
[47] Barnett 1972: 170-171. Wartke 1990: 58-60, published other two fragments of quivers decorated with zig-zag lines.
[48] Biscione et al. 2002: 170.
[49] Belli 2004: 283-284. The author says that this quiver should be dated to the first half of the seventh century BCE, probably to the reign of Rusa II.
[50] Derin – Çilingiroğlu 2001: 160, with the indication of the different plates showing the quivers. The authors date the Ayanis quivers to the reign of king Rusa II (Argištiḫi).
[51] Burney 1966: 93-95.

three of them have repairs made in ancient times. Again in the citadel of Kayalidere[52], from the filling above the floor of a kitchen, two further quivers decorated with embossed horizontal bands were found (**Q-Kay-6, 7**): given the place where they were found, these specimens may have been the remains of the site's looting. Both these two groups of objects seem to have been buried after the plunder of the site and they presumably come from the temple[53]. The columbarium of Yerevan[54] is the place where two other quivers with embossed horizontal ribs were found (**Q-Yer-1, 2**); they were part of the grave goods and placed in a sort of underground hiding place, containing also agate beads, a cup and a stone seal[55]. However, the conical shape of the quivers and the grouping of the lines, arranged in pairs on the body of the object, qualify them as not typical of the Urartian corpus, which is characterized instead by larger and oval section quivers; conical quivers have instead been found in the Iranian area, for example in the site of Marlik[56]. From Toprakkale come three examples[57] of quivers with embossed lines (**Q-Top-4** to **6**)[58], one of which presents an engraved inscription that qualifies it as an *ex voto* to the god Ḫaldi offered by one of the kings called Rusa (**Q-Top-6**), although it is not possible to establish exactly which one[59]. From the east court of the temple of Upper Anzaf comes a quiver decorated with parallel ribs (**Q-Anz-2**)[60] with a dedicatory cuneiform inscription from the time of Argišti Rusaḫi[61]. A quiver with horizontal embossed bands, again bearing a royal dedicatory inscription[62], comes from Room 28 of the Karmir-blur fortress[63]: thanks to the inscription on it, the quiver is dated to the reign of Argišti Minuaḫi, in the second quarter of the 8th century BCE. The site of Haftavan Tepe, in the Urmia basin, was the findspot for a fragment of a bronze lamina interpreted as a quiver and decorated with embossed ribs (**Q-Haf-1**)[64]: it was dated at the level Haftavan III (late 9th century BCE), so still in the first phase of the Urartian Kingdom; if the date is to be considered correct, the quiver should not be interpreted as Urartian, as the control of the state hasn't arrived there yet.

2.1.2 Helmets

Urartian helmets have a conical shape, sometimes bearing separated earflaps, and are usually made in bronze, even if also iron specimens have been discovered by the archaeologists[65]. It is possible to divide the analysis of the conical helmets according to their decoration; there are therefore plain helmets, helmets with an abstract and stylized decoration and helmets with soldiers' lines and a ritual scene in the front; four helmets are considered as *unica*.

[52] Burney 1966: 93.
[53] Castelluccia – Dan 2011: 21.
[54] Biscione 1994: 124-125.
[55] Biscione 1994: 116.
[56] Negahban 1996: pl. 128.869.
[57] Wartke 1990: 58-60, fig. 8 and pl. XIII, published other five quiver's fragments, two of which are decorated with embossed ribs.
[58] Barnett 1972: 170-171.
[59] CTU B 18-4; Salvini says that it may belong to Rusa II or Rusa III.
[60] Belli 2004: 283; see, for colour pictures, the catalogue of the exhibition edited by Belli 2003: 233-235.
[61] CTU B 11-1.
[62] CTU B 8-15.
[63] Piotrovskij 1952: 37-38.
[64] Burney 1972: 139; no image of the quiver has been published.
[65] See Deszö 2001: 79-98.

2.1.2.1. Helmets with military and sacred scenes

In the fortress of Karmir-blur seven complete helmets with a complex embossed figurative decoration developed along the base and divided into three sections, two lateral and one central, were found (**H-Kb-1** to **7**)[66]. The side sections are arranged on two horizontal registers, each one enclosed in a zig-zag frame, depicting armed warriors on horseback and chariot marching in the direction of the frontal area of the helmet: curiously, the helmet that the warriors wear is cone-shaped, while the specimens bearing this decoration are funnel-shaped. The weapons brought by the horsemen are a shield and a spear, while the charioteers, two on each chariot, one bearded and one without a beard, only bring a spear; the horses wear harnesses on their heads and necks, while their tails are styled in a sort of braid. The central section of the decoration is divided into three decorative registers representing winged and non-winged genii wearing a long tunic, decorated with lines, and a horned headdress topped by a disc: the hand facing down holds a *situla*, while the hand raised in front of the face is outstretched. Winged genii are bearded, while those without wings are also without beards. The genii are arranged in pairs, standing at the sides of a sacred tree composed of a thin trunk and sixteen branches concluded by a bud; each tree is enclosed by a sort of "dome"[67]. In the upper register the scene is represented only once, while in the two lower registers, enclosed by two zig-zag lines, the composition is repeated five times. The side sections are separated from the central one by four tubular elements arranged in the shape of a hook, called *Krummwülsten* in German, framing the three central registers and ending in four roaring lion heads with the tongue protruding outwards. As stated by Piotrovskij[68], the *Krummwülsten* complement the central scene, as they are supposed to strengthen the power of the *genii* depicted on the helmets. The five specimens from Karmir-blur bear royal dedicatory inscriptions, four from Sarduri Argištiḫi[69] and one from Argišti Minuaḫi[70], which configure these helmets as *ex voto* for the god Ḫaldi. From the temple area of the site of Ayanis may come another helmet (**H-Ay-1**)[71], possibly discovered in two parts, depicting a procession of horsemen and chariots and four hook-shaped elements ending with lion heads: this helmet bears a dedicatory inscription to Ḫaldi by the king Rusa, son of Argišti[72]. Fortunately, a chronology for these helmets may be provided by the royal inscriptions engraved on their bases, so it is possible to study the evolution of the decoration between different generations of sovereigns; or rather, one can study the lack of alterations in those scenes that characterizes this particular material: the physical shape of the helmet remains unchanged, and also the decoration does not seem to be subject to substantial changes or modifications over time[73].

[66] The fragmentary rests of other five helmets were found as well; Piotrovskij 1967: 46 (**H-Kb-10** to **14**).
[67] Piotrovskij 1967: 46: "The sacred trees are surrounded by a frame whose shape suggests a round-topped stele". A parallel for this representation of the sacred tree is to be found in the Nor Aresh-3 belt.
[68] Piotrovskij 1967: 15.
[69] CTU B 9-8A (found in Room 10) and B (not published by Piotrovskij but only by Salvini), CTU B 9-9 (no drawing or findspot available).
[70] CTU B 8-10. This helmet was found inside Jar 48, in Storeroom 28 (Piotrovskij 1952: 38); a second helmet with an inscription of Argišti Minuaḫi was found in Storeroom 23, but no descriptions or images have been published (Seidl 2004: 30).
[71] Derin - Çilingiroğlu 2001: 163. The description says "Decoration consists of processions of chariots with soldiers and mounted soldiers. There are crooks terminating in snake's heads on front". If so, it wouldn't present the devotion scene on the front side: unfortunately, from the published picture (Derin - Çilingiroğlu 2001: 187, fig. 24) the decoration is not clearly visible.
[72] CTU B 12-10.
[73] Piotrovskij 1967: 47, states instead: "Thus, if we compare the helmets of Argishti I and Sarduri II we can clearly distinguish the work of two different artists, for the artist of the latter reign surpassed his predecessor in skill, although he was repeating in detail his predecessor's design".

2.1.2.2. Helmets with an abstract decoration

Several bronze helmets from different sites bear the same stylized decoration described as a "lightning symbol"[74]: "a vertical ridge, to which a geometrically shaped figure is attached on each side. The total effect is somewhat reminiscent of the lightning fork"[75]. The decorative motif is entirely embossed; its meaning, although associated by Piotrovskij to the emblem of the Storm god[76], has no parallel among other Urartian representations, nor among other geometric symbols known from objects not belonging to the Kingdom, and it seems similar, rather than a lightning bolt, to an animal antler[77]. Three helmets from the "arsenal" of the Burmageçit Fortress (**H-Bur-1, 2, 3**)[78], located halfway between today's Turkish cities of Erzincan and Elaziğ, are decorated with this motif. One of these helmets (**H-Bur-1**) bears an inscription of king Minua[79], which would date it to the late 9th and early 8th centuries BCE. In the site of Çavuştepe, one other helmet has been found (**H- Çav-1**)[80]. At least eleven helmets with this "lightning" decoration[81] have been found in Karmir-blur, but only two were published with a picture (**H-Kb-13, 14**). They were found in Rooms 24 and 37[82]: both helmets show at the base the three parallel embossed lines already known for a plain helmet found in Room 18[83], which was then perhaps an unfinished object, ready to receive a frontal decoration[84]. The helmet in Room 37 is slightly more tapered at the top than the other two specimens from Karmir-blur; it also bears a dedicatory inscription to the god Ḫaldi by Argišti Minuaḫi[85].

The last example of a helmet with geometric decoration has been found in the site of Ayanis[86], but it is still partially unpublished (**H-Ay-2**), with precise findspot unknown[87]. The only sure dating for this category of helmets specimen, with the decorative geometric motif representing a lightning bolt, an antler or a sacred tree, certainly too abstract to be surely interpreted, belongs to the reign of Minua, at the beginning of the 8th century BCE. It is not possible to know if this kind of decoration continued to be used in the following periods, as, even if one finds several of these helmets in later sites, it is impossible to understand if they were newly crafted or instead hoarded.

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[74] Calmeyer 1991: 124. Dezsö 2001: 82, refers to them as the "earliest known type of Urartian conical helmet", reporting the fact that three of them, *provenance unknown*, bear an inscription of Išpuini. Belli 1993: 63, suggested that, as the helmets known at that time covered a time span going from the reign of Išpuini to that of Argišti Minuaḫi, there was a change in Urartian decorative tradition at the time of Argišti Minuaḫi.
[75] Van Loon 1966: 119.
[76] Piotrovskij 1967: 45.
[77] Derin - Çilingiroğlu 2001: 164. Belli 1993: 63, propose the hypothesis that it could be a stylized representation of a deer antler, a bolt of lightning, or a sacred tree. Calmeyer 1991: 125, affirms instead that "(…) the lightning, with or without an inscription, would appear to have been the royal property mark".
[78] Belli 1993.
[79] CTU B 5-8.
[80] Belli 2003, 220.
[81] Piotrovskij 1967: 45.
[82] Piotrovskij 1950: 59, fig. 38, and Piotrovskij 1955: 25, fig. 16.
[83] Piotrovskij 1950: 56, fig. 33.
[84] Castelluccia – Dan 2013: 294, "A third one was found during the 1952 campaign, but the precise findspot was not specified (Esayan 1967: pl. 25). Only the upper part is preserved; the diameter is about 25 cm. It is possible to recognize the presence of part of the vertical front rib; the presence of the "lightning" symbol is only hypothetical".
[85] CTU B 8-11.
[86] Derin - Çilingiroğlu 2001: 164.
[87] Baş 2008: 53.

2.1.2.3. Unica

From the temple area of Ayanis, found inside another headgear, comes a bronze helmet (**H-Ay-3**)[88], decorated and inscribed[89], dated to the time of Rusa son of Argišti. The inscription, reporting the name of Rusa, is written on two lines, and the second one reveals uncertain data, reported in the words of Salvini: "La seconda riga era destinata a ricevere la stessa iscrizione della prima riga, ma è rimasta incompleta. È stata aggiunta posteriormente, con grafia più incerta, la nuova anacronistica e stupefacente scritta: 'proprietà di Išpuini'. Non si può escludere che si tratti della riutilizzazione di un elmo di Išpuini da parte di Rusa II, anche se è difficile spiegarlo tecnicamente. Elmi iscritti col nome di Išpuini sembra che esistano, ma provengono dal mercato antiquario"[90]. If that information were correct, this one would be the most ancient example of Urartian helmet, re-used again by one of the latest Urartian kings. Divided into three decorative sections, separated in the centre by *Krummwülsten* ending with goat heads, its inlaid decoration shows a central scene, probably ritualistic, with a sacred tree flanked by two bearded male figures. Behind each figure there is another beardless character, armed with bow and sword, probably representing two attendants; the tree is surmounted by a winged solar disk. Above the scene stands a further straight tubular element that descends from the top of the helmet and ends just above the solar disk with a ram head. The two side sections of the scene are occupied by one register depicting a row of Iranian chickens, realistically depicted, with their heads pointing downwards; above them there is a decoration with rhomboidal figures bordering the scene. The central scene has an Assyrian origin and has been represented in the depictions since the time of Ashurnasirpal II[91]: however, the realization has distinctly provincial characteristics, for example in the rendering of the central sacred tree or in the choice and rendering of the lateral decorations, which do not find a parallel, neither Urartian nor foreign[92].

The representation of the birds is particularly enigmatic, as Derin and Çilingiroğlu already pointed out[93]: these animals are not known to be related to royalty, nor are they particularly common in the decorations typical of royal Urartian art. Instead, they appear as parts of hybrid beings in different belts of popular art: this circumstance may confirm the local production of the helmet, and a connection both with the Assyrian area, as regards the decoration of the central section, and with the Caucasian area, as shown by the images of the birds, which often recur on "Transcaucasian" belts[94]. This representation of galliform birds is not common in the Assyrian area, but it finds conspicuous diffusion in the decoration

[88] Derin - Çilingiroğlu 2001: 164.
[89] CTU B 12-9.
[90] Salvini 2012: 62.
[91] The scene is represented also in several seals; a very similar one, representing three figures at the sides of a stylized sacred tree, is depicted in Collon 2001: pl. XIII.163, found by Layard excavating "Assyrian ruins"; in addition, the two central figures are bearded while the one on the right is beardless and armed. The type of sacred tree represented here is called "Palmette tree" in Collon 2001: 84.
[92] There are several opinions of scholars regarding this representation. Derin - Çilingiroğlu 2001: 164: "It is quite interesting to note that a helmet which was dedicated to the god Ḫaldi by Rusa II has chicken motifs rather than lions or fantastic animals. It is difficult to understand how the king accepted this new style of representation. This may be the result of new understanding of art, and a result of his renaissance in administration and objection to the traditional representations"; Roaf 2012: 198: "(…) the object inscribed by Rusa A(rgištiḫi) is a helmet whose decoration is clearly Assyrian and which in all probability was booty from a successful attack on the Assyrians".
[93] See previous fn.
[94] See the overview on that topic in Castelluccia 2017: 63.

of the belts of the South Caucasus, with a use that is mainly filling, not involved in the central scene, as it happened in the decoration of the helmet of Rusa Argištihi from Ayanis. The helmet would be a perfect result of the inspiration from the artistic *koiné* characteristic of the Urartian area, a union of local and Assyrian elements.

From Çavuştepe, it is said to come a helmet decorated with genii on both sides of sacred trees and two registers of roaring lions (**H-Çav-2**): unfortunately, there is no clear description of the decoration, which seems to be composed by walking animals[95].

In the site of Burmageçit an extremely fragmentary helmet has been found (**H-Bur-4**)[96], and its figurative decoration can be reconstructed summarily: the central section, separated from the two side sections by the usual *Krummwülsten* ending with snakeheads, seems to be occupied by a representation of the winged solar disc, surrounded by small rosettes with six petals; the side sections, instead, show stylized representations of triangular mountains.

The belonging of these three unique pieces to Urartian royal art is not without doubt: firstly, concerning the helmet **H-Ay-3**, it is important to note that the figurative decoration is made using the technique of engraving and not embossing, with the last one being absolutely typical of royal objects. It can therefore be considered as royal booty, hypothetically from a provincial area of the Neo-Assyrian Empire[97] and belonging to a local chieftain, which the Urartian king had conquered and decided to dedicate to the god Ḫaldi. This circumstance should not be surprising, as the practice of dedicating spoils of war to deities was quite common in antiquity. The other two specimens, on the other hand, are more complex and, as far as we know, have nothing in common with the royal Urartian helmets: they may be local productions inspired by the royal ones, but no further interpretation is possible.

A plain iron helmet found in Ayanis raised the question of the material with which Urartians made their helmets: if it is certain that in Assyria war helmets were made both in bronze and iron[98], before the discovery of Ayanis was logical to assume that Urartian helmets were instead made exclusively in bronze; this hypothesis was also supported by the need for the Urartian army to move quickly on rough terrain, a need that makes it too heavy to wear an iron helmet[99]. Unless we consider this helmet as an import or a sort of war booty, after probably dedicated to the god Ḫaldi[100], or even a helmet created specifically to be an *ex-voto*[101], one should consider the hypothesis that even in Urartian area helmets made of bronze and iron were used, probably for specific military operations.

[95] Seidl 2004: 35, F.92, mentioning Belli 1991: 44 and Belli 2003: 221.
[96] Seidl 2004: 73; Yıldırım 1991: fig. 10.10.3.
[97] It is important to notice that the only Assyrian helmet found during excavations is decorated with an inlaid motif rather than an embossed one (see Dezsö 2001: 23, fig. 2).
[98] Curtis 2013: 44.
[99] Curtis 2013: 44. Calmeyer 1991: 123, argues the opposite: "The commonest and cheapest type must have been the iron helmets", justifying the almost complete absence of material evidence by explaining "apparently this variety perished more easily".
[100] The iron helmet was found in the Temple area. The shape of the helmet, different from that of the other helmets found in the Ayanis site, would also suggest a foreign origin.
[101] But the absence of dedication or figurative decoration should probably suggest that this hypothesis should be rejected.

2.1.3. Shields

"[Six items]: shields of gold which hung to the right and left in his cella and shone brilliantly, with heads of snarling lions thrusting out from their centers, weighing five talents twelve minas of red gold; (…) twelve items: massive silver shields, the outer band of which were decorated with flood monsters, lions, and wild bulls; (…) 25212 items: copper shields, heavy and light"[102]: so reads the description of the pillage of the temple of Ḫaldi at Muṣaṣir in the account of Sargon II's Eighth Campaign. The prominence of the shield within the Urartian cultic dimension is thus evident, as confirmed by the archaeological data in our possession, particularly from four Urartian sites, Yukarı Anzaf, Ayanis, Karmir-blur and Toprakkale. In general, it is possible to describe the morphology of Urartian shields as flat at the edges, where a cuneiform inscription often runs, and convex in the centre, sometimes with a conical boss. Their diameter varies from 70 to 120 centimetres, and some have three handles affixed to the back, one tending to be larger than the other two. Some of them are decorated with depictions, in most cases of animals, while others are completely undecorated. Shields were almost always made of bronze, but some bosses, found at the Kayalıdere site, were made of iron; however, wood and leather are also believed to have been used in the construction of shields[103] and, as Sargon II stated in his account of the booty, gold and silver must have been materials dedicated to the making of shields exclusively used as votive offerings to the god Ḫaldi.

What is certain, at least from the archaeological and figurative data in our possession, is that the Urartian use of bronze shields for cultic purposes was unique in the ancient Near East, given the total absence of votive offerings in this shape in the rest of the area. This would confirm Urartian vocation for warfare, the pivot around which all cultural and cultic events connected to the rulers revolved. An analysis of the Urartian archaeological record also allows us to divide shields into two types, plain and decorated; within the category of shields with figurative decoration, a further subdivision can be made based on the theme depicted: while most bear a decoration of concentric bands containing parades of bulls and lions, a single specimen from the site of Yukarı Anzaf stands out as *unicum* within the Urartian artistic assemblage, as it is decorated with the only known Urartian battle scene (**S-Anz-2**).

2.1.3.1. Shields with animal decoration

The great majority of the shields found in the archaeological excavations of Urartian fortresses have a figurative decoration, usually representing bands of bulls and lions arranged in concentric circles. The arrangement of the animals, moving towards the centre, is made in such a way that none of them appears to be upside down when the shield is hung: this also implies that the object was made to be hung in a permanent position and observed from a single point of view[104]. Within this category, it is possible to subdivide the decorative types into:

1. Shields with figured decoration consisting of three concentric bands; the innermost band contains between six and twelve lions, the middle band contains between twelve and twenty bulls, and the outermost band closes the decoration with between twenty and twenty-eight lions. In most of these shields, the decorated bands are separated from each other by garlands of buds,

[102] Foster 2005: 810-811.
[103] Baş 2016: 109.
[104] Azarpay 1968: 22.

but, in some cases, separating motifs such as zig-zags or *guilloche* can be found. In the centre, there is usually a rosette, but it can also be plain.

2. Shields with figural decoration consisting of two concentric bands: in this case, there are only three examples, one from Ayanis (**S-Ay-2**), containing one band of lions and one of bulls, and two from Toprakkale (**S-Top-2, 3**), with a decoration consisting of two concentric bands of lions only.

A shield decorated with three concentric bands of striding bulls and lions from the Temple Area of Ayanis (**S-Ay-1**) deserves special consideration, as a roaring lion head in the round was found next to it: the lion's head was made of bronze, with eyes in limestone, similar in detail to the bronze lion statuettes found at several Urartian sites. What is remarkable about this specimen is that it confirms the Assyrian accounts and depictions of the sacking of the temple of Ḫaldi at Muṣaṣir, shedding light on a field of Urartian art unknown before its discovery. It is clear that the function of this shield in particular, and of all the shields with figurative decoration in general, must have been exclusively cultic, so much so that almost all of them bear inscriptions of dedications to the god Ḫaldi by various rulers. Thanks to these inscriptions, it is possible to analyse Urartian shields chronologically, trying to obtain information relevant to their possible diachronic development.

2.1.3.2. The Anzaf shield

In 1995, hundreds of pieces of the outer edge of a votive shield have been found in the fortress of Yukarı Anzaf, in a room where many other *ex voto* to the god Ḫaldi were found[105]. The border of the shield was inscribed with a cuneiform epigraph mentioning the names of the kings Išpuini and Minua[106]. The central part of the shield was extremely damaged and fragmented, also considering that the object must have been subjected to a fire that had partially obliterated some of the figures. However, it is now possible, thanks to the help of an X-ray scan, to see the figures embossed on its border in their entirety and with a great abundance of detail: there is a depiction of a war scene involving, in particular, an army of Urartian gods running towards the enemy soldiers. The scene, bordered by a garland of buds, is organised in two opposing alignments, with the running figure of the god Ḫaldi leading the army of Urartian deities in the centre; Ḫaldi is the only deity not standing on a mount, while the other gods are shown standing on animals or hybrid creatures. Each deity holds a different weapon, and they are each represented with different combinations of features. For the first time in the history of the Urartian Kingdom, moreover, the deities are represented in anthropomorphic form, following the specificities attributed to them by their worshippers, with characteristic weapons and symbols: none of the deities is identical to another in this representation. Remarkably, the two deities depicted immediately behind Ḫaldi are easily identifiable precisely because of their attributes, which are following those traditionally indicated in Near Eastern religions: the first deity holds in both hands two beams composed of three thunderbolts each, typical attributes of the storm god throughout Near Eastern history[107], and is therefore identifiable as Teišeba, the second deity mentioned in the sacrifice of Meher Kapısı[108]. The second deity

[105] See Belli 1999 for an extensive description of the Anzaf fortresses and the votive shield.
[106] CTU B 3-1. As both Belli (1999: 35) and Salvini (2012: 23), it is possible that this shield was also dedicated by the grandson of Išpuini, Inušpua.
[107] Schwemer 2008b: 35.
[108] CTU A 3-1, l. 4.

depicted behind Ḫaldi, on the other hand, is inserted into a winged solar disc: here too, it is easily identifiable as the solar god, Šiuini in Urartian, third in Meher Kapısı's list of deities[109]. Particularly interesting is Bernbeck's notation that the two main deities of the pantheon, as well as Ḫaldi, are depicted standing on actual animals rather than fantastic hybrids: from this feature, he could cautiously conclude that at least some animals present in nature were superior to hybrid beings[110].

The identification of the deities that composed the main triad of the Urartian pantheon was quite simple, or at least it should have been: Zimansky proposed that the character represented on the shield of Anzaf running in front of all the other deities should be identified with the ruler, rather than with the main god[111]. The scholar's proposal was based both on the conviction that the cult of the god was essentially *bildlos*[112] and that the character represented running in front of the others on Anzaf shield has completely different characteristics from those of the other deities. In fact, he is not depicted standing on an animal or a hybrid creature; he does not wear a helmet with horns, a typical attribute of divine entities in the ancient Near East, and is surrounded by a sort of luminous aura, identifiable as the *melammu* that surrounded both divine figures and sovereigns; finally, Zimansky also noted how, in Urartian inscriptions, the king usually acted thanks to the will of the god, thus creating an indissoluble bond between the two. However, Bernbeck's assumption that the prominence of the main deity laid precisely in the absence of the multitude of standardized divine attributes characterising the other gods is also convincing[113]: Ḫaldi would be characterized by attributes peculiar to him alone, such as the long spear he holds in his right hand, later identified as the ^{GIŠ}*šuri* mentioned in the epigraphs[114], or the luminous aura surrounding him, which is called *daši* in the inscriptions[115]. The identity of the main character depicted on Anzaf shield is certainly far from being certainly assumed, but his uniqueness should be emphasised. The deities depicted after Teišeba and Šiuini cannot be identified with certainty either, despite Belli's attempt to associate them with the deities listed, in order, in the Meher Kapısı's epigraph: the precise identities and attributes associated with each of the deities listed in the epigraph are unknown, and any attempt to identify them with the characters depicted on the shield is somehow haphazard.

It is interesting to identify the weapons and attributes that recur in this representation, unique in the history of Urartian and Near Eastern art. The main character, in addition to the aforementioned *daši*/*melammu*, is characterised by a long spear, whose height exceeds that of the character holding it, and a bow; he may carry a quiver, probably indicated by the shoulder strap running diagonally across his chest. The conical helmet he wears is decorated with a double line at the lower edge, according also to archaeological finds. A sword hangs from his left side, while at his waist he wears a thick belt, apparently undecorated. The character wears a tunic, knee-length and decorated from the waist down with a banded pattern, different from that worn by other deities. Teišeba does not hold any weapons, apart from the lightning beams, but carries a bow and a sword, the scabbard of which is clearly visible. He wears a knee-length robe and a tunic over it, with a pattern resembling fringes: a parallel is found in

[109] CTU A 3-1, l. 4.
[110] Bernbeck 2003-2004: 287.
[111] Zimansky 2012: 720-721.
[112] For an extensive discussion on this topic, see Zimansky 2011: 105-106, fn. 10, and especially Zimansky 2012.
[113] Bernbeck 2003-2004: 290.
[114] See Çilingiroğlu – Salvini 1999.
[115] Ad essa sono anche dedicati dei sacrifici nella lunga lista di Meher Kapısı.

the reliefs of the palace of Ashurnaṣirpal II at Nimrud[116], which shows that the art of this ruler was already well known in the Urartian sphere; the same robe is worn by the other Urartian deities. Šiuini carries a bow, held in his right hand, and a sword hanging from his left hip; the other deities are characterised by spears, axes, shields with pointed bosses, swords, maces and arrows, represented in different combinations. All of them, except for the main character, wear a conical, slightly convex helmet with horns depicted just above the double line at its lower edge. The hybrid creatures represented are the result of great use of *pastiche*: no two are the same, and the combinations resulting from such work are unique in Urartian royal art, while they were also represented on the belts with far less imagination.

The battle scene, on the right side of the shield's margin, is one of the most vivid scenes in Urartian art, recalling, in general, the appearance of the battle scenes depicted on the wall reliefs of the North-West Palace of Ashurnasirpal II in Nimrud[117]. Immediately in front of who is supposed to be Ḫaldi, two lions are attacking two horsemen, dragging them off their horses. Warriors on chariots are wounded by Ḫaldi's spear, the army is scattered and in disarray, the horses are free to flee. The depiction of the horses, in particular, closely resembles that found on the reliefs of Ashurnasirpal II at Nimrud: a harness on their heads and one on their necks, both in the form of tassels, characterise them. The birds flying over the remains of the enemy army also have an Assyrian counterpart[118] and a well-defined symbolic value[119], although it is not known how much of it was known in the Urartian sphere: if in Assyrian reliefs birds of prey are represented in large numbers while feasting on the remains of defeated enemies and carrying their severed heads in their beaks[120], on the Anzaf shield they appear, three in number, flying over the battle scene, and it is not clear whether they were used as a macabre *memento* or as a decorative element. It is clear, however, that the authors of the shield decoration had an in-depth knowledge of the palace art of Ashurnasirpal II, although it is uncertain whether they actually knew the symbolic value associated with some of the replicated images.

The Anzaf shield is a precious *unicum* in the Urartian artistic panorama: the complexity of its depiction will not be taken up later, neither in royal nor in popular art. It can be defined as the only narrative scene in Urartian royal art, which takes its cue from the Assyrian depictions of the time of Ashurnasirpal II but does not slavishly copy them, leaving room for the local imagery. This is reflected, with less emphasis on detail and less imagination, in the decoration of the bronze belts. One hypothesis that can be proposed here is that the Urartian inspiration for the figures represented as mounts on the gods was not taken from the Assyrian world but from the local one, creating a unique mix of traditions, probably not understood by the spectators and therefore abandoned. In fact, if one looks at the representations that characterise Urartian art in the following centuries, at least until the time of Rusa Argištiḫi, one notices a strict adherence to the Assyrian pictorial model, with scenes taken almost *verbatim* from Assyrian art and not enriched with further details. In this regard, it is useful to recall the rigidity of Urartian royal art, which did not accept external stimuli, perhaps from the beginning: in fact, the Assyrian model was probably already widespread and known in the territories of the Southern Caucasus, so that the introduction of new scenes resulting from the combination of local and popular

[116] See, as an example, BM98064.
[117] See, as an example, BM124540.
[118] See the previous note.
[119] Dolce 2014: 61-80.
[120] Dolce 2014: 75-80.

narrative motifs with Assyrian elements did not give rise to any new tradition identifiable as "Urartian". The iconography chosen by the rulers of Urartu, after Išpuini and Minua, appeared to be closely and rigidly related to Assyrian iconography, following a careful selection of images and themes idealised in the Urartian sphere. Perhaps for these very reasons, the mixture of Assyrian, Hurrian and local elements represented on the Anzaf shield appeared to be alien to the Urartian court and was therefore abandoned as early as the reign of Minua.

2.1.4. Decorated armours and armour's fittings

Several fragments of armours and bronze round armour's decorations have been found in Urartian sites; the armours are of the *scale* type, visible on the Assyrian reliefs of Nineveh from the time of Sargon II[121].

To one of the armours found in Karmir-blur belongs a circular bronze fitting, with the decoration of a rosette with twelve petals in the centre (**A-Kb-2**): along the edge of the object runs, on two lines, a dedicatory inscription of Argišti Minuaḫi[122], which also continues on the back of the button. Curiously, on the back, the inscription is in Assyrian language, *ša* ^{m}*Argišti*, as it is on another bronze fitting[123], without decoration but with a convex central part, found in Karmir-blur. From Karmir-blur comes as well a button with a sixteen petals rosette in the centre, surrounded by three concentric bands decorated with two rows of dots in *repoussé*, alternated with three plain bands (**A-Kb-3**): the similarity of this specimen with the inscribed one may suggest its pertinence to the king's equipment.

Scale armours appear to have been produced primarily in north-western Syria in the Late Bronze Age[124], from where they spread throughout the Near East[125]; as far as the first millennium is concerned, there are numerous findings of Assyrian scale armours[126], both in bronze and in iron, rectangular but rounded at one end, with an embossed rib in the centre and pierced holes through which they were joined to each other: such armours were found at the Altıntepe site, with specimens of both bronze and iron; this type of scales can be compared with three bronze scales and a few iron examples at Nimrud[127]. An Urartian *unicum* is the one from Karmir-blur since none of the scales found has a central rib, but rather clusters of embossed dots (**A-Kb-1**): scales of this type were not found elsewhere[128].

[121] Curtis 2013: pl. XX.
[122] CTU B 8-17. The fitting is kept in the Hermitage Museum, inventory number K-635.
[123] CTU B 8-17a. Preserved at the History Museum of Armenia in Yerevan, inventory number 2010-147. The fitting is similar to another armour plate without the inscription determining its owner, also kept in Yerevan with inventory number 3146-173.
[124] Nuzi, Ras Shamra, Cyprus; Barnett – Gökçe 1953: 127; Curtis, 2013: 48-49.
[125] Several examples of scale armours can be found in Curtis 2013: 46-49.
[126] Curtis 2013: 46: "The vast majority of Assyrian armour scales come from Nimrud, with just a few examples from Kouyunjik and Sharif Khan".
[127] Curtis 2013: 49 and pl. XVIII, type 11b. The author also mentions a bone scale from Boğazköy as a comparison, suggesting that the scales found in Nimrud were imports from the north.
[128] Curtis 2013: 49.

2.1.5. Decorated horse harnesses

From the Urartian area come several decorated bronze discs, the majority of which was found in funerary contexts[129]. In Tomb III, Room 1, of the site of Altıntepe, two bronze discs were found inside a cauldron containing also a folded belt[130], several figurines of horses and horse trappings[131]. One of the discs (**Hh-Alt-1**), preserved for the right half, bears an engraved decoration depicting a winged man standing on a winged horse. The scene is framed by a *guilloche*-shaped border, outside of that several holes, through which the disc was attached to another support, have been made[132]. The depicted character rests his right foot on the head of the horse and his left foot, hidden by the animal's wing, on its back. He wears, above a knee-long tunic, an ankle-long garment with a fringed hem. In his left hand, lowered, he holds a flower, while his right hand is not preserved. The wings, decorated with straight lines ending against an outer edge of *repoussé* dots, are located in the upper part of the body: only one of them is clearly visible, while the other is lost due to a fracture; from the torso of the character depart, facing downwards, the lower part of the wings. Although a headdress with horns is not clearly visible, the character represented may be a deity or a supernatural creature. The wings of the horse are decorated in the same way and are probably represented as if they were seen from above, making them entirely visible to the observer. The horse is depicted galloping to the left, the mane is outlined by small parallel lines, the tail is braided or styled in some way. It is not clear who precisely is the subject of the representation, but a similar representation of a winged horse comes from the same context and it is depicted on the belt found inside the same cauldron: in this case facing to the right, the horse has decorations and characterizations identical to the one depicted on the bronze disc; the horses on the belt do not have any characters on their rump, as the warriors depicted on the belt ride non-winged horses. A winged horse is the mount of the seventh deity represented on the Anzaf shield, with a depiction that is essentially similar to that of Altıntepe's disc. The representation of winged horses is rather unusual in the Urartian context, although a large sample of fantastic animals and hybrids is clearly common: the horse was perhaps seen as a draught animal[133], represented in realistic scenes such as hunts and military parades.

Similar discs have been found in Fort Shalmaneser, together with plaques of different shapes decorated with a series of embossed ribs that follows the perforated edge of the object[134]: these plates should be considered horse harnesses, originally sewn to a leather support. In Assyrian reliefs, horses were rarely depicted wearing ornamental harnesses of this shape: since the time of Ashurnasirpal II, horses were represented towing war chariots, and adorned with harnesses of various workmanship, including some, usually decorated with rosettes, circular in shape[135]. These harnesses include those discs as part of a more complex ornament, composed of small tassels and bands placed around the horse's neck. These ornaments seem to be represented also in Urartian figurative art, in particular in the decoration of the

[129] At the site of Ayanis, Area XI, Hall 12, a decorated bronze disc was found, whose description or picture is not available: Çilingiroğlu – Batmaz 2013: 185-186.
[130] **B-Alt-1**.
[131] Özgüç 1969: 68.
[132] Özgüç, 1969: 68: "Holes along the edges of this disc show that it had been attached to a harness".
[133] Tarontsi 2018: 224: "(…) for Urartians horses were more animals with many useful applicable characteristics, rather than symbols out of practical context".
[134] Curtis 2013: 100 and pl. LXXVIII, in particular the example n. 780.
[135] See, for example, Barnett 1975:pl. 32; Brereton 2018: 103.

helmets[136]: the harnesses worn by the horses represented on the Karmir-blur helmets appear similar to the Assyrian ones, with a small disc supporting some tassels[137]. In both the Urartian and Assyrian areas, these ornaments seem to harness exclusively the horses used to tow war chariots, even if they may not appear elsewhere because they were covered by the leg of the riding knight.

While it can be established with some certainty that other discs found in Karmir-blur (**Hh-Kb-1** to **7**) were horse harnesses, this may not be the case with the decorated discs found inside Altıntepe's burial ground, one of which is different both in terms of decoration and workmanship: whereas the rosette-decorated discs are mainly embossed, as are the vestments of Assyrian horses, the Altıntepe disc has a detailed engraved decoration. It is also unlikely that such an object, finely engraved, was produced specifically for practical use: one hypothesis could then reinterpret it as a personal ornament or, less likely, a votive plaque.

2.2. Personal equipment

2.2.1. Bronze belts

As already mentioned, of the metal objects considered to be the products of Urartian workshops, there is no doubt that bronze belts are among the best known and most studied. Unfortunately, most of the specimens known today resulted from illegal excavation activities: it should be stressed again that, in all the main attempts to sort and classify these belts both typologically and chronologically, these materials have been systematically used, sometimes neglecting the few specimens from safe contexts. Belts are made of thin sheets of bronze with embossed and chased decorations arranged on different friezes. Their average width is 9 or 10 centimetres, and they often have embossed frames which leave a narrow border with perforated holes, used to attach the metallic sheet to a leather backing[138].

Evidence of the use of metal belts in the ancient Near East are offered primarily by the numerous examples found *in situ* inside the burials; further confirmation comes from the pictorial or sculptural representations, mainly from the Hittite sphere[139]. The first-ever examples were found in two tombs of the Protodynastic Period III (2600-2350 B.C.) in the site of Ur, establishing a connection between these objects and the military equipment; the first evidence of a belt with rounded ends, a rather common type in the Near East, was found inside tomb J3 of the site of Jericho, dated to the Middle Bronze Age IIB (1750-1650 B.C.), with a decoration of embossed circular concentric motifs[140]. In Mesopotamia, belts were worn by figures on *kudurru* stones of the 11th-10th centuries BCE and by figures on glazed bricks dated to the reign of Tukulti-Ninurta II found in Ashur, with no actual surviving specimens[141]. In the

[136] Unfortunately, there are not enough detailed photos to analyze the scene directly from the helmet itself; instead, it is necessary to rely on the drawings of the materials. *Par contre*, the discs do not seem to be represented as ornaments of the horses depicted on the quivers: see Seidl 2004: 90.
[137] A reproduction of Piotrovskij's original drawing is published in Seidl 2004: 69.
[138] Curtis 1996: 118.
[139] Moorey 1967: 84, mentions for the Hittite lands some statuettes and the bas-relief at the King's Gate at Ḫattuša, which accompany the discovery of a silver and bronze belt at the Boğazköy site, published by Bittel 1936. He also mentions some ivory figurines from Nuzi published in Mellink 1964.
[140] Moorey 1967: 83-84.
[141] Curtis 2013: 122, with examples from King 1912: pls. LV and LXVII, and from Andrae 1923: pls. 9-10.

Assyrian context, also, two belts were found in Room AB of the North-West Palace in Nimrud, described by Layard as "two long ornamented bands of copper, rounded at both ends, apparently belts", with an embossed rib following the outline of the object and holes pierced all along the edges[142]. In any case, the use of metal belts began much earlier than the Iron Age, and it is claimed that this fashion came to the Caucasian area probably through Syria or Hittite lands[143]. The use of metal belts is attested indeed during the Iron Age in the cultures of the Caucasus, the Armenian Highlands and the Iranian Plateau[144]; the oldest specimens, apparently, are dated back to the Late Bronze Age and were spread in the mountain regions of the Transcaucasian Highlands[145], where they were used between the 13th and 12th centuries BCE. The production of metal belts grew from the 10th century BCE, reaching its peak between the 9th and 8th centuries BCE: after this period, the use of belts in funerary contexts decreased, so much so that, after few specimens dated to the 7th century, they disappeared in the 6th century BCE[146].

The belts are traditionally distinguished based on their decoration in *plain*, *geometric*, *figurative*[147], and they are considered almost exclusively funerary goods, probably previous properties of the deceased: at the moment, it is not possible to establish any kind of religious or cultural significance associated with the use of belts[148]. Although the so-called "Urartian" belts are considered to be derived from, or at least inspired by, Caucasian examples[149], they bear a distinctive decoration, to which one usually refers to as the typical style of the Kingdom of Urartu, following an independent evolution from the artistic tradition of the Bronze Age in the Caucasus[150]. "Urartian" belts are, therefore, considered the local evolution of an element developed by Caucasian populations in the Late Bronze/Early Iron Age, and they clearly constituted the synthesis between an object of local creation and its decoration with themes derived from Mesopotamia. The distinction between "Urartian" and Caucasian belts is exemplified in the site of Golovino, in northern Armenia, where the different decorative and narrative motifs are well known and visible on the belts found there[151]. A further example of the difference between "Urartian" and foreign belts concerns two specimens not decorated with the "typical Urartian" style, coming from the site of Toprakkale[152] and traced back to Phrygian specimens found in different places in Anatolia[153].

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[142] Curtis 2013: 122, pl. XCIV.
[143] Culican – Zimmer 1987: 186; the authors state as well that "on the other hand, *repoussé* belts in plain tradition are found in Early Bronze Age Europe – and indeed together with bronze *torques*, tweezers and other items which later had a long life in the Caucasus".
[144] Where a small corpus of specimens dating back to the Early Iron Age has been preserved.
[145] In the Armenian and Sub-Caucasian Bronze Age burials (Trialeti, Lçasen, Gegarot and Lori Berd), on the other hand, the belts, which began to appear between the end of the 2nd and the beginning of the 1st millennium BCE, are missing (Esayan 1984: 104).
[146] Castelluccia 2018: 20-21.
[147] This classification is provided by Castelluccia, 2018: 21, and it is based on the same grouping proposed by de Morgan 1889: 141, and by Techov 1977.
[148] Castelluccia 2018: 21. Moorey 1967, p. 85, states instead that Urartian belts were found in soldiers' burials. Piotrovskij 1962: 73, also considers the belts as part of the military equipment, in particular used by archers as a substitute for the shield; Esayan 1962 connects most of the decorated belts with the function of protecting warriors, according to the depiction of Urartian soldiers on the Balawat Gates
[149] A history of studies on Caucasian belt and their classification can be found in Esayan 1984 and, more recently, Castelluccia 2017. The belts found in the Southern Caucasus are usually defined with the term "Transcaucasian", which, however, reflects a "Russo-centric" perspective, according to which the territory under analysis is located *beyond* the Caucasus. For this reason, here it is chosen to use an exclusively geographical approach, defining the belts in relation to the mountain range of the Caucasus as "Southern Caucasian".
[150] Castelluccia 2018: 22.
[151] See **B-Gol-1** to **4** and Castelluccia 2017: pl. 57.204-205.
[152] See **B-Top-2** to **4**.
[153] Yet without, however, a specific comparison or a detailed analysis of the materials and contexts of discovery.

The depiction of bull and lion hunting scenes on some belts and the realistic rendering of the figures refer to the Assyrian context, while the respect for symmetry suggests perhaps an influence of the Urartian court on local workshops and craftsmen[154], but "Urartian" belts may have been elements of a popular culture that has become an inspiration for the *State Assemblage*, at least regarding their decorative apparatus, which is associated with the royal art coming from the Kingdom's fortresses[155].

This consideration, however, would change the state of things, at least concerning a question of terminology: belts would no longer be an "Urartian" material properly said, not being part of the *State Assemblage*[156]; instead, they would be an object type of popular culture, developed independently from Urartian royal art, probably in a period slightly preceding the emergence of the Urartian state. Since this scenario ideally explains the diffusion of some typical motifs of Assyrian art found in the decoration of belts in royal Urartian art, we can refer to them later on as *Assyro-Southern Caucasian* belts, effectively untying the production of such belts from the proper *Urartian* environment, which is the one connected to royalty. As it has already been suggested[157], bronze belts can be distinguished from Urartian "court style" by the use of non-Assyrian motifs, but it is not possible to deny that the decoration of these objects belongs to what it's possible to define "Assyrian style", later become "Urartian style", which made it very difficult to trace a line between actual Urartian "royal" and local "popular" productions.

Despite the intrinsic difficulty in determining the dating of Urartian metals – short duration of the Kingdom's lifespan, frequent lack of a reference context, a small number of inscribed materials –, in 1968 the Turkish scholar Guitty Azarpay has tried to identify, concerning bronze belts, specific decorative patterns linked to certain periods of the history of the Kingdom of Urartu[158]. In doing this, she mainly used the decoration of the belt found in 1959 in the ante-room of a tomb in Altıntepe (**B-Alt-1**), near Erzincan, as it has been found in connection with an inscribed plaque bearing the name of the sovereign Argišti Rusaḫi. The decoration of this belt, which she describes as a "valuable pivotal point for a stylistic analysis of other belt designs from less certain contexts"[159], consists of three horizontal series of horsemen with spears, animals and hybrids, interpreted by the scholar as a representation of a hunting scene. The dating suggested by both the context of discovery and the preliminary analysis of the decoration is between the end of the 8th century BCE and the beginning of the 7th century BCE, which, in her opinion, was the starting point for the subsequent chronological arrangement of other belts without secure temporal information. At the beginning of the development of Urartian belts decoration, Azarpay placed the representation on the belts of Nor Aresh[160], near Yerevan, in one of which[161] a scene of bull and lion hunting is clearly depicted on three registers separated by a double straight line. The belt's decoration suggests a great liveliness and dynamism in the fight due to the representations of animals hit by arrows, the different positions taken by the animals and the simultaneous presence of chariots, occupied by two soldiers facing in opposite directions, and

[154] Castelluccia 2018: 22 and Esayan 1984: 142.
[155] Rubinson 2012: 396.
[156] Zimansky 1995.
[157] Seidl 1988: 172.
[158] Azarpay 1968: 47-50.
[159] Azarpay 1968: 47.
[160] **B-Nor-1** to **3**. Even if she considered all the fragments found in the columbarium as belonging to one belt, Barnett 1963, shows that they actually belong to three different belts: this shows once again the importance of the archaeological context.
[161] **B-Nor-1**.

knights, with a clear narrative intent. Considered by Azarpay herself as part of the same object, she contemplates also the fragments of the other two belts from the same columbarium which, however, depict a type of scene that differs in part from the one described above: here animal lines and processions of archers and knights are rather represented, while small portions of a lively hunting scene seem relegated to the margins of the decoration. The focus of the scene in one of these belts[162] is the depiction of two griffins or sphinxes placed at the sides of a sacred tree, represented with a central trunk, five curved branches on each side and four straight branches at the top, all culminating with a drop-shaped bud; the other belt[163], instead, is characterized by the presence of roaring lions embedded in rectangular spaces. The considerations drawn from Azarpay allowed her to link these belts[164] to the art of the kings Argišti Minuaḫi and Sarduri Argištiḫi, dating them to the mid-8th century BCE[165]. A more schematic version of a hunting scene can be found on a belt from Tli[166], South Ossetia, in which the figures – chariots, archers, real and imaginary animals – appear in a static and almost purely decorative composition, separated by large undecorated spaces and, unlike the previous examples from Nor Aresh, interspersed with fillings such as rosettes and sacred trees: the date proposed by Azarpay for this specimen is the end of the 8th century BCE, in an intermediate position between the previous Nor Aresh belt and the subsequent Altıntepe belt[167]. The last step in the development of the decorations on belts may be seen on the Zakim specimen[168], with figures of animals and archers placed inside an extremely elaborate decorative motif consisting of volutes, palmettes and circles.

The concept underlying the creation of Azarpay's chronology was the simplification of the narration, which, at the end of the development, became a pure and abstract decoration, and it should be theoretically welcomed: however, except in the case of Altıntepe, the scholar omitted the analysis of the materials found in context with these belts, and proposed dates per century which are not easy to demonstrate. Accepting the evolution of the narrative element into a decorative one, it would be more advisable to suggest a relative chronology, with the more or less secure temporal information given by the inscribed plaque found in connection with Altıntepe belt. Although it is desirable to come to envision a chronological settlement of the belts, it must be kept in mind that the site and the context in which the objects were found cannot represent binding information on the dating of the materials: in particular concerning metal objects, their use may have been particularly prolonged, given both the quality of the decoration and their durability over time, features that qualify them as valuable objects. It is also difficult to propose a chronology exclusively based on elements of the decorative apparatus, as the only possible way to hazard a summary chronological positioning of the single belts would be the comparison with inscribed, and therefore datable, materials presenting a similar decorative apparatus. This, however, would be difficult to analyse if the hypothesis of a derivation of royal art from popular art was accepted: in this case, the decorative motifs taken over by royal art could have been present at the same time within the popular art repertoire, thus not being chronologically sortable. A different option would be to consider instead the foreign materials, Assyrian or "Caucasian", from which popular art drew the decorative motifs: it is certain, for example, that some motifs used in popular art were derived from the

[162] **B-Nor-3**.
[163] **B-Nor-2**.
[164] Although, for her, all the fragments belong to one specimen.
[165] Azarpay 1968: 47-49.
[166] **B-Tli-1**.
[167] Azarpay 1968: 47.
[168] **B-Zak-1**.

art of the reign of Ashurnasirpal II, due to the presence of numerous iconographies traceable to the artistic innovations of this sovereign, but individual belts are often difficult to date due to the mixture of decorative elements belonging to extremely different periods[169]. Even the analysis of the contexts of discovery may not be useful for a more or less plausible dating of the individual pieces: having ascertained that the belts are very valuable materials and that their transmission for generations is at least probable, it is impossible to provide a reliable dating even when one has found them together with inscribed materials, as happened in Altıntepe Tomb I. What the contexts can confirm, instead, is an explicit link of bronze belts with the funerary sphere and the grave goods of the deceased: in fact, very few examples of metal belts have not been found inside funerary contexts[170]. It is not possible to connect the presence of different types of belts to certain types of context, for example more or less rich burials, or burials with inhumation or incineration: if the belt represented a *status symbol*, and it almost certainly did, this would most likely be connected not to a social distinction between rich and poor, but rather to a sort of military *class*, given the association of belts in grave goods with weapons, cart parts and horse harnesses. Nevertheless, the contexts of Ayanis, Liç and Dedeli also show that the burials with belts were not only reserved to adult male individuals, but also to women and young people of prepubertal age: it should not be excluded, also in these cases, the idea that they were nothing more than a hereditary legacy connected with the military class of the deceased who had handed them down[171]. At the moment, therefore, taking into account the previous considerations, it is not possible to expect a precise chronological arrangement, nor to propose a definite function, of those belts.

The attempt here done is aimed to categorise the different belts, along the lines of what Hans-Jorg Kellner did in his *Gürtelbleche aus Urartu*[172], studying here only belts coming from known archaeological contexts. The number of the specimens is certainly more limited compared to Kellner's one[173] and allows a deepened study of the belts within their finding contexts. Given the extreme heterogeneity that characterises the decorative apparatus of Urartian belts, it is not possible to subdivide them into defined and coherent categories: however, the analysis can take place with a concise division in two macro-typologies, *decorative* and *geometric*, each of which can be traced back to a different area of influence. Thus, if the prevailing influence that can be recognised in decorative belts is certainly from Assyria, belts decorated with geometric motifs have a more marked resemblance to the art of the Southern Caucasus.

2.2.1.1. Figurative belts

A good reference point in identifying a proper *figurative* "Urartian" belt is the comparison with Urartian materials properly said, such as decorated artefacts showing the various motifs typical of the Urartian controlled area[174]. From here, it can be seen that the main decorative motifs consist of animal lines, parade scenes with knights, infantrymen and charioteers, winged genii, fillers, such as rosettes or sacred trees, garlands of rosebuds, zig-zag or dot bands in *repoussé* technique[175]. In the decoration of the belts,

[169] See, for example, the following discussion on the Kayalıdere belt (**B-Kay-1**).
[170] Karmir-blur, Erebuni, Çavuştepe , Kayalidere.
[171] Even if the interpretation of the Ayanis belt is different; see below.
[172] Kellner 1991.
[173] 88 specimens in this analysis, compared to the 449 belts considered by Kellner.
[174] For example, see Zimansky 1995.
[175] All of these motifs will be extensively analysed later.

one can find other "new" motifs, such as hunting scenes on chariots and horses, hybrid creatures, and processions of gods. This vision can be overturned if one accepts that belts may have been an element of inspiration for the creation of the Urartian royal artistic repertoire, so that the comparison can show elements that royal art has drawn from popular imagination and not *vice versa*. The decorative elements not taken up by the figurative repertoire of royal art can easily be connected with a direct Assyrian artistic legacy. A further level of investigation would concern the very morphology of the belts, which differs from that of the Caucasian belts at least as far as the shape of the buckle is concerned: however, it is undeniable that the belt as an object is a typically "Transcaucasian" material arrived in the Urartian territory thanks to contacts with the northern populations, bearers of the culture that used metal belts. Figurative metal belts of the Urartian area can be considered the perfect element of syncretism between the Assyrian culture and that of the Southern Caucasus, one bearing an influence on iconography and the other bearing the object itself.

According to the line of reasoning exposed by Azarpay and previously presented, it may be possible to trace a hypothetical relative chronology of the development of the decorative motif called "hunting scene". From a first moment, in which the motif was expressed as a representation of a dynamic and lively moment of hunting, the decoration moved on to an intermediate moment, a static representation, in which animals are simply depicted in a running position, arranged on parallel bands where the only suggestion of the original hunting theme is given by the presence of archers and horsemen. At the end of the evolution, it is possible to place an almost abstract representation, with animals and hunters placed in separate frames, without any connection with each other, in an image devoid of the initial emotional charge. Although the idea has very good premises, it is not possible to provide an absolute dating of the exemplars. Besides this, even following this evolution of the decoration, to which naturally follows a different dating of the single belts, many of them were found in context with materials to be dated to different epochs: how much this is due to an error in the initial premise and how much to the handing down of the exemplars over time, is not yet clear. In addition to that, Azarpay didn't consider the external influences, mainly the Assyrian ones, on the decoration of single belts.

It is decided here to provide a different organisation of the analysis, not supposed to be *chronological* but rather *stylistic*: so, the figurative belts are divided according to their decoration in *dynamic*, *static* and *abstract*.

2.2.1.1.1. "Dynamic" figurative belts

All the belts belonging to this group bear an embossed decoration showing a lions' and bulls' hunting scene; they all have been found in contexts dated, with more or less certainty, to the 8th century BCE: while the Burmageçit (**B-Bur-1**)[176], Yerevan (**B-Yer-1**) and Nor-Aresh (**B-Nor-1**) specimens come from real or presumed funerary contexts, the belt from Kayalıdere (**B-Kay-1**) comes from a sacred area south-east of the temple. The Burmageçit specimen has been found during construction works for a road passing close to the village of Burmageçit: the finding context was destroyed, but it's thought that it was a tomb, and the belt was part of the grave goods[177]. The columbarium of Yerevan is, instead, a

[176] The bibliography and the references for the mentioned belts can be found in the catalogue.
[177] Yıldırım 1991. From the site of Burmageçit also comes an Urartian inscribed helmet belonging to the king Minua, CTU B 5-8.

well-preserved burial, accidentally found in the centre of the city of Yerevan and subsequently investigated by the Armenian Academy of Sciences, which found there a rich complex of metal and clay grave goods[178]. The cemetery of Nor-Aresh is located in the suburbs of Yerevan and it's composed of three single incineration burials, each one with a belt inside the complex of the grave goods[179]. Finally, the Kayalıdere belt was found close to the *susi* temple, in the fortress, in an area very damaged by illegal excavations. The specimens which can be dated with a good degree of certainty, due to the analysis of the whole complex of the grave goods, are the ones coming from Kayalıdere and Nor-Aresh: after the detailed analysis provided by Salvatori, the Kayalıdere belt can be dated to the mid-7th century BCE[180], while the tomb where the Nor-Aresh belt was found can be dated to the third quarter of the 8th century BCE[181].

The genesis of the hunting motif on these belts can be traced back to the Assyrian lion hunts' reliefs: it can be noticed that there is a great similarity between these four specimens and a relief in Room B of the North-West Palace of Nimrud, dating to the reign of Ashurnasirpal II (883-859 BCE), specifically to the period comprised between 865 and 860 BCE[182], and depicting, on a chariot, the king turned backwards while shooting an arrow to a lion attacking him. This exact scene is vividly represented on those belts, where the king is probably replaced by a simple warrior: this may mean that the lion hunt was not a *royal* pastime anymore, or at least was not intended as royal outside of Assyria. Also, this parallel represents a *terminus post quem* for the representations of the belts, which should be dated from the second half of the 9th century BCE. With this premise, one should not forget that hunting scenes were depicted also on "Transcaucasian" bronze belts, but, in this case, they were characterised by a single hunter on horseback shooting arrows to running animals, mainly deer[183]. Both this information can be useful when trying to understand the reasons why hunting scenes were not incorporated in the Urartian royal repertoire: since they were already widespread on some examples of belt circulating in the Southern Caucasus, that may have not been linked to the Assyrian imaginary which saw hunting as the court diversion *par excellence*. The belts, therefore, would have simply replaced the iconography already typical of the Southern Caucasian area with an Assyrian iconography, more modern and appreciated on the Armenian Highlands; this data would also support the theory that royal iconography was taken from an already widespread popular repertoire, so that the hunting scenes, a favourite theme of the Assyrian sovereigns *desemantised* due to a previous diffusion in the territory, were not received by the Urartian royal court.

While the belt **B-Kay-1** shows a decoration that does not appear to be divided into registers, the images of the belts **B-Bur-1** and **B-Yer-1** are divided into superimposed bands, though without the clear division shown on the **B-Nor-1** specimen. A further distinction between the specimen from Kayalıdere and the others is the repetitiveness of the scenes: in the preserved fragments of **B-Kay-1** there are three different images, one superimposed on the other, suggesting a wider variety of depictions in the decoration of this belt, while the other three show the same scene developed on all the decorative

[178] Esayan 1991 with an English translation offered by Biscione 1994.
[179] Barnett 1963: 194-197.
[180] Salvatori 1976: 91.
[181] Salvatori 1976: 89.
[182] BM 124534.
[183] Castelluccia 2017: 37-38 and belts nn.327-331; in the Astchi-blur belt one can also see depicted some felines, probably lions.

registers. **B-Kay-1** is clearly a *unicum* in the artistic panorama of the Kingdom, owing a great debt directly to the Assyrian models.

2.2.1.1.2. Static / linear figurative belts

What all the belts in this group have in common, in addition to the representation on different bands, is the apparent abandonment of the hunting theme, clearly implied in the image but lacking any realistic trait. The different bands can be separated by straight lines, rows of dots, bud garlands, zig-zag lines or other motifs, or can either not be separated by a physical trait. The specimens include abstract elements in the narration[184]: in addition to the hybrid creatures depicted among the real animals and the hunters, there are filler motifs such as rosettes, palmettes and sacred trees, almost to underline the detachment between the narration and the decoration that the image has come up against. One more detail should be noted[185]: here, for the first time, it is found the representation of soldiers, armed with bow or shield and sword, standing on scorpion-tailed griffins; this detail leads back, for example, to the shield of Yukarı Anzaf, in which the characters standing on animals were clearly connoted as gods. One can find a peculiar decorative motif used to separate the different elements of the representation[186]: inside a sacred tree, two archers are placed, back to back, aiming at the hybrid creatures running in the three bands of the belt. This specific decoration, however, is destined to remain a sort of *unicum* in the history of Urartian art. It is worth noting the presence of a *cartouche* containing representations of lions at the right end[187]: the lions represented in the cartouche are different from the lions depicted in the main scene of the belt, as, in the cartouche, they walk to the right with their tails raised and curled, while in the central scene they are always represented rampant with their tails down, about to attack their prey. It is impossible to recognize a development within this category of belts: although it is clear that the narrative is progressing towards a pure decoration, no elements are allowing to propose a chronology related to these particular specimens. Such belts can be conceptually assimilated to the "Transcaucasian" belts with depictions of "animal and human figures"[188]: the presence of human figures is decidedly negligible compared to the representations of animals in a scene that appears to be a frieze, or a procession, often giving the impression of representing a hunt, as human figures carry bows and arrows. Sometimes, the "Transcaucasian" belts depicting "animal and human figures" are arranged on different bands, usually two, which can be interspersed with geometric motifs as separators. Also in this case, what changes with respect to the "Transcaucasian" belts is the iconography, typically Assyrian: however, the inhabitants of the Armenian Highlands took to the extreme the characterization of the represented hybrid creatures, always creating new ones, not connected to the Mesopotamian mythology[189]. This custom was rooted only in Urartian royal art of the most archaic period, since the only representations of *Mischwesen* in royal art date back to the time of Išpuini and Minua, on the shield from the Upper Anzaf fortress[190]; these hybrid creatures must have been originated from the Mesopotamian imagery

[184] Except for the small fragment **B-Chi-1**, which anyway still preserve very little of its original decoration.
[185] On **B-Ded-2** and **B-Yeg-1** belts.
[186] Only on the two belts **B-Ded-1** and **B-Suç-1**.
[187] For the belts B-Suç-1, B-Yeg-1, B-Yeg-2. There is also a cartouche on the right end of the specimen **B-Tli-1**: though, the decoration of this last cartouche is not preserved.
[188] Castelluccia 2017: 35.
[189] Green 1994: 262-264.
[190] **S-Anz-1**; Belli 1999.

and later adapted to the needs of the local populations, as they were absents instead in the Caucasian area, where depictions of real animals are preferred. The popular artistic tradition of the area north of Assyria must have been formed in a period before the emergence of Urartu: this chronological span would have allowed the formation of an imagery which is distinct from the Assyrian one, adopted by the Urartian sovereigns of the first period and spread on the belts certainly for the whole duration of the Urartian domination, but probably also in the previous period.

The contexts in which these belts have been found are almost exclusively funerary. The Altıntepe site is the westernmost site ever excavated which has returned Urartian materials: inside a monumental burial site found intact, numerous bronze objects were found[191], including, folded inside a cauldron (**Ca-Alt-1)**, the belt (**B-Alt-1**); the date proposed for the burial, thanks to the discovery of a bronze plaque with an inscription of Argišti Rusaḫi, is around the end of the 8th century BCE. The Dedeli belts (**B-Ded-1** to **3**) also came from a necropolis[192], but they were not precisely associated with any burial[193], as it was instead the belt found by chance in Guşçi (**B-Guş-1**), retrieved in what may have been a chamber tomb during the excavation of the foundations of a house[194]: also this belt may have been found in connection with a cauldron. In the Autonomous Republic of Nakhichevan, presumably near a necropolis halfway between the villages of Şahtaxtı and Tazakend[195], the belt catalogued as **B-Şah-1** was found; the metal belt found in Suçatı (**B-Suç-1**) also comes from a burial site in an Urartian necropolis found in eastern Turkey[196]. In the Armenian village of Yeghegnadzor, on the other hand, during excavation work on the foundations of a factory, several objects were found, probably belonging to a hoard including several weapons and ornaments, among which there were the belts **B-Yeg-1** and **B-Yeg-2**[197]. A belt fragment was instead found in the excavations of the Giyimli site (**B-Giy-1**)[198], inside a batch of materials identified as a deposit or treasure: it shows the image of a lion, but it was found together with another fragment, referable to the Caucasian art, decorated with spiral bands (**B-Giy-2**). The Metsamor belt (**B-Met-1**) was found during the excavation of a necropolis, together with a set of ceramic and bronze objects but without weapons[199]. A fragment coming from Karmir-blur (**B-Kb-1**), whose precise location inside the fortress is unknown, presents a decoration of lions and bulls' lines divided by a zig-zag decorated band: the absence of the sections at the edges of the fragment led Piotrovskij[200] to suppose that it was a quiver, but the lack of comparison between those materials and the extreme heterogeneity of the belts lead to consider it a belt. It is clear, therefore, that, except for a few examples, even the belts of this group come mainly from a funerary context. Since the discoveries, on most occasions, were unclear, it is difficult to propose a date: the only hypothesis that can be proposed concerns the dating of the tomb of Altıntepe, whose deposition, thanks to the finding of a plaque inscribed by Argišti Rusaḫi[201], can be reasonably dated *post quem* to the end of the 8th century

[191] Barnett-Gökçe 1953.
[192] Taşyurek 1975
[193] Unlike the dotted belt **B-Ded-4** found in connection with the buried body of a supposed woman.
[194] Hanfmann 1956.
[195] Bahsaliev 1997.
[196] Karaosmanoğlu 1991 : 595-603.
[197] Xnkikyan 2002: 94; Dan *et alii* forthcoming.
[198] Alkım 1973-1976 : 65.
[199] Esayan 1984: 137, pl. 26.84.
[200] Piotrovskij 1952: fig. 20.
[201] CTU B 8-11.

BCE. Another unexpected congruence is provided by the context of discovery of the Altıntepe and Guşçi belts, both connected with a cauldron.

In this same category, one other specimen should be inserted with caution: the Karahasan belt (**B-Kar-1**) depicts five horizontal bands decorated with lines of alternating bulls and lions; what makes this belt peculiar is the fact that the decoration occupies all the available space, with no fillers, frames or interspaces of any kind between the animals. The illusion of the hunting scene has been completely lost here: there are no archers or horsemen, the animals are simply walking and not running; the representation here clearly recalls the royal shields. The belt was found by some villagers during agricultural works, and it's thought to belong to a burial[202].

2.2.1.1.3. Abstract figurative belts

This group brings the representation on the belts to a completely abstract level, with the two specimens of Ani-Pemza-1 (**B-Ani-1**) and Zakim-1 (**B-Zak-1**): although it is not clear whether the decoration of the specimen from Ani Pemza included depictions of hunters, the absence of the original hunting theme is obvious; Zakim's belt, indeed, suggested the hunting theme through the image of a kneeling archer, a peculiar winged soldier, aiming at his prey. The animals represented are rampant lions, bulls and mythological creatures: all the characters are inserted in a grid formed by garland-like decorations, which makes each character the subject of an independent scene. Both belts include flower-shaped fillers rendered through small concentric circles; at the right end, in both cases, there is a cartouche in which a sacred tree is depicted. **B-Ani-1** was found inside a tomb in a necropolis[203], of which no further data are reported; Zakim returned instead a "little treasure", similar to that of Giyimli, whose details are not better specified[204]: even in this case, it is not possible to hypothesize a dating based on the context. However, the comparison with other Urartian materials has returned the same type of decoration, with single characters inserted in the grids formed by a garland, on a seal from Bastam[205] and, more stylized, on a seal from Çavuştepe[206], whose date is estimated to the 7th century BCE.

Theoretically, the evolution per stages supposed by Azarpay in 1968 didn't have wrong premises: if this had to be considered as a real development, one could distinguish three to four different stages[207], starting from the representation of a lion and bull hunt very close to the reality and ending in a hyper-abstract depiction, with characters totally separated and inserted in different frames. Not surprisingly, there are no clear and unmistakable elements in favour of such a chronological arrangement of Urartian belts: so far, the previous subdivision should not be interpreted as a strictly chronological partition of the belts, but more as a "stylistic" arrangement, for at the moment only the analysis of the different types, the characters of each one, and the identification numerous unique features present is an

[202] Taşyurek 1973: 203-204.
[203] Piotrovskij 1959: 249.
[204] Piotrovskij 1966 : 358-359, fig. 85.
[205] **Ps-Ba-2**; Ayvazian 2006: BA.05.
[206] **Ps-Çav-2**; Ayvazian 2006: CT.01.
[207] Depending on the will to distinguish a stage with scenes depicted on non-separated friezes and a stage with separate friezes: surely, one suggests a higher degree of abstraction, even if the concept underlining both representations is not essentially different.

achievable goal. Moreover, it is recognizable that the contexts of the belts are mainly funerary, mainly connected with other metal objects, particularly weapons. In some of the known necropoleis, Kalecik, Burmagecit, Nor-Aresh, Dedeli, Yerevan, characterised by the use of incineration, the remains of the belts are fragmentary and placed next to the cinerary urn. As already proposed[208], this phenomenon could be due to the existence of a specific funerary costume connected with the burial of the deceased. Other examples of belts, from Altıntepe, Suçati, Dedeli, Liç, were found almost intact. Outside the Armenian Highlands, it can be seen that in the necropolis of Tli, in which some "Urartian" belts were found[209], the specimens were perfectly entire and associated with burials, with a costume in line with the burial tradition of the Armenian and Caucasian cultures of the early Iron Age[210]: the repertoire of bronze belts from these areas, independent from the Urartian tradition, was always associated with the burial practice, as well as the deposition of the whole object next to the deceased. On all the specimens, the depictions are static and almost completely decorative in purpose, except on the belts of the dynamic group, in which the effort of creating a narration is visible[211].

2.2.1.1.4. Other figurative belts

Belts B-Çav-1 and B-Çav-2

Surely in the frame of "Urartian" belts, these two have a peculiar decoration depicted in the main field: the specimen **B-Çav-1**, preserved for a small part, only shows a perimeter decoration composed of abstract elements, circles and garlands, which frames single figures probably disconnected from each other. The preserved fragment allows to distinguish a vertical composition of individual animals, perhaps horses, probably facing other animals or characters: if the character glimpsed to the right of the scene was an archer, this would allow this specimen to be inserted between belts with hunting scenes. However, the circular decorations and the garlands around them, together with the rendering of the animal, not running, is as unusual in Urartian royal art as the decorative motif of the following belt, **B-Çav-2**: this, preserved in a larger fragment including the entire right end, shows a scene of lions and bulls facing each other, with their front legs bent; between their heads, circular geometric decorations containing a sort of central "rosette" are to be found, also decorating the **B-Mur-1** and the **B-Kb-3, 4** belts, developing as fillers in the main scene and decorative motif of the frame. On the right of the scene, there is a cartouche containing a garland-like representation of the sacred tree, with branches ending in palmettes and pine cones/buds, surmounted by a winged solar disc.

While the motif of the **B-Çav-1** belt is unclear and therefore represents an intrinsic challenge in the search for parallels in art, the frieze of the **B-Çav-2** belt is well represented elsewhere by the frescoes of the portico of the Erebuni site (**Wd-Er-1)**, depicting lions and bulls kneeling and facing each other, separated, however, not by circular motifs but by squares with concave sides containing circular shapes with a rosette in the centre, a motif originating from Assyria[212].

[208] Öğün 1975: 32.
[209] See Bonfanti – Cesaretti – Dan *in print*.
[210] Castelluccia 2017: 384.
[211] Esayan 1984: 142.
[212] Albenda 2005: 30, fig. 6.

Cartouches' fragments

Of some of the belts, only the figurative cartouches usually present at the right end of the artefacts have been preserved: several cartouches have already been mentioned in the previous discussion on figurative belts, and tend to be decorated with a series of overlapping lions, one for each band in which the main scene is divided. Two fragments[213] present a decoration in the shape of a "garland" sacred tree: the cartouche with sacred trees is depicted on some "anomalous" Urartian style belts, namely **B-Ani-1**, **B-Zak-1**, **B-Kb-4**, **B-Kb-7** and **B-Sot-1**[214]. The first two, coming from the sites of Ani Pemza and Zakim, belong to what Azarpay imagined to be the last stage of evolution of the hunting scenes represented on Urartian belts; **B-Kb-7** and **B-Sot-1** are unusual, as they belong to the category of "hybrid"-geometric belts, with central dotted filling and cartouche with "Urartian" decoration, while **B-Kb-4** is one of the two examples with images of divinities. There are similarities between the sacred trees depicted on the right extremity of **B-Kb-4** and that of **B-Kb-2**: they differ for a small detail of the decoration, the presence of a bud/pine cone termination in the **B-Kb-7** tree. The tree depicted on the exemplar from Dilkaya, **B-Dil-1**, is instead very similar to that of the **B-Ani-1** belt; **B-Dil-1**, moreover, has a perimeter shape rather rounded, as if to indicate that the belt did not have the usual rectangular shape. These two fragments, **B-Dil-1** and **B-Kb-2**, however, are too small to allow convincing statements. A possible connection of this decoration with the Caucasus is represented by what Chantre calls "plaque de ceinture rectangulaire"[215]: buckles of Caucasian belts bearing geometric or figurative decorations arranged along a vertically developed figurative area; some of these buckles bear images of rampant lions in overlapping bands, which bring to mind the decorations of "Urartian" cartouches.

The cartouches of the fragments from Burmageçit (**B-Bur-3**) and Golovino (**B-Gol-4**) have some peculiarities. The first one is divided into five vertical squares, framed by a straight line, in which horsemen with shields, spears, helmets and quivers are depicted; the running horses wear a harness on the head. Representations of warriors on horseback are quite common in Urartian iconography: one can just think about the depictions of military parades on quivers and helmets to have binding comparisons. **B-Gol-4** shows instead a cartouche framed by a single row of dots executed in *repoussé* technique and divided into three squares, each containing a hybrid creature, perhaps a griffin, facing to the right; the animal is composed of bird's head and wings and, probably, bull's legs. Even if this decoration is rather common among the figurative belts, it is uncommon to find it inserted in a lateral cartouche. Both these findings come from unusual contexts, since Golovino is a site of burials with typical Caucasian materials, and Burmageçit is located in a peripheral area of the Kingdom, on its western border.

Belt with soldiers' frieze

Among the belts with dynamic and narrative representations, a *unicum* is represented by the specimen **B-Çav-3**. The belt is decorated by a procession of horsemen, with spears and shields, and charioteers, three for each chariot pulled by a pair of horses: despite what one may think, given the abundance of this kind of depictions on helmets and quivers, this is the only belt depicting a soldiers' parade. All the

[213] **B-Dil-1** and **B-Kb-2**.
[214] This type of sacred tree is also visible on several seals, namely the ones recorded in Ayvazian 2006 as AY 01, AY 03, BA 01, BA 02, BA 14, BA 15, BA 16, TK 20; all of those seals have been found in late Urartian fortresses (Ayanis, Bastam, Toprakkale), founded by Rusa, son of Argišti.
[215] Chantre 1886: pls. X-Xbis.

soldiers wear conical helmets; the characters depicted on the left half of the belt are facing to the left, while those depicted on the right half are walking towards the right end. The preserved fragment is the central one, so it is possible to see the different directions of the warriors. The decorated area, divided into three horizontal bands separated by rows of six-leaf palmettes, is depicted only in the upper and lower band, leaving the central band plain. Last, but not least, the profile of the specimen: one can note, on the upper-left edge, that the belt does not form a right angle, but has a semi-circular profile, concave, decorated with palmettes; on this edge of unusual shape has been drilled a hole, probably to fix the object. This unusually shaped profile is not due to a deformation of the metal: in addition to the accurate shaping of the edge, it can be seen that the last images of the decoration, both in the band decorated with charioteers and knights and in the *intermezzo* with the palmettes, adapt to the change of shape, ending right where they meet the concave end. The belt was found in the building complex of Uç Kale, located east of the lower castle of Çavuştepe, and it belongs to a burial, probably a mass grave inside a postern[216].

A parallel comparison to this depiction should be sought in the decoration of the Urartian helmets found in Ayanis and Karmir-blur[217]: the headdresses are adorned with soldiers' theories, which however do not represent the main focus of the decoration, to be found instead in the central scene of winged genii and sacred trees. The soldiers are placed on either side of the main scene and are represented as galloping knights or groups of warriors on chariots. Four of the helmets bear inscriptions of Sarduri Argištiḫi, while two date back to the time of Argišti Minuaḫi, constituting a comparison dating back to the middle of the 8th century BCE. Another parallel is to be found on bronze quivers[218] on which it is common to find a decoration depicting a procession of chariots and knights; for these quivers, a date to the first half of the 8th century BCE has been proposed, given the presence of inscriptions bearing the name of Argišti Minuaḫi or Sarduri Argištiḫi on such objects. On all these objects, the decoration usually follows the same pattern, namely the alternated depictions of knights and chariots over all the frieze. The parade depiction also appears on seal impressions found in Toprakkale[219] with an inscription saying "of Rusa"[220], approximately dated after the reign of Tiglath-Pileser III (744-727 BCE).

Belts with depictions of gods

The last group of "Urartian" belts with figurative decorations consists of those bearing depictions of gods, constituted by two specimens from Karmir-blur (**B-Kb-3, 4**). **B-Kb-3** is a fragment of a belt decorated with two bands, subdivided by abstract fillers of vaguely circular shape that also act as a frame of the decorative area: in both bands are depicted standing characters on animals (bulls and running lions), and *Knielauf* characters holding the solar disk above their heads; between the characters, one can see two hybrid creatures, probably a sphinx and a griffin, and abstract fillers. Although the gods are not characterized by their most typical near-eastern attribute, the horned headdress, it is quite clear that they are divine figures: first of all, in Urartian royal art, the characters standing on animals tend to

[216] Erzen 1974: 25-26.
[217] See § 2.1.2.1.
[218] See § 2.1.1.1.
[219] **Se-Top-13-14**; Ayvazian 2006: 1037-1038, TK 21.
[220] Ayvazian 2006: 1037; not reported in Salvini 2012.

be representations of gods[221]; moreover, they do not carry weapons and so cannot be identified as soldiers. The specimen **B-Kb-4** represents, inside a frame composed of abstract elements that can be recognised as circles, palmettes and garlands, at least five different figures of gods standing on their mounts: in the left half the figures are facing left, in the right half they are facing right. The animals depicted are not clearly visible, so it is possible to recognize only a bull and probably a lion; all the deities have their arms raised as a sign of blessing, and it is not clear whether the *polos* of the first figure on the left, the only deity almost completely visible, is decorated with horns. The individual figures are inscribed in a frame formed by the abstract elements that decorate the border of the belt; among the figures, within individual frames, there are also abstract fillings similar to sacred trees surmounted by solar disks. At the right end there is a rectangular cartouche containing a peculiar sacred tree.

The context in which these specimens were found is not clear, although they come from Karmir-blur. Parallels of gods standing on animals or hybrid creatures can be found on another important artefact, the Anzaf shield, where the gods are depicted in the act of participating in a battle[222]. Another example of a single deity standing on his mount, in this case a lion, is the god depicted in the wall painting of the portico of Erebuni: in this fresco, the position of the god's hands is identical to that of the gods on the two belts; he is also wearing a *polos*, probably decorated with horns[223]. Not only gods, but also other supernatural beings are depicted standing on animals: this is the case of the bas-relief from Kef Kalesi[224], who depicts winged genii, probably protectors of the fortress, facing each other standing on two lions. The dating of all these findings is completely mismatched: while the shield is dated to the end of the 9th century BCE thanks to the inscription of Išpuini and Minua running along its edge, the fresco must necessarily be dated between the 8th and mid-7th century BCE, the time span during which the town of Erebuni was frequented; finally, the bas-relief shows an inscription of Rusa, son of of Argišti, to be dated to the 7th century BCE. Furthermore, it should be noted that these parallels are purely conceptual: the graphic representation of the gods on the belts is different and, particularly with regard to **B-Kb-3**, there are no comparisons with other materials.

2.2.1.1.5. An "Assyrianizing" belt?

Another belt with a complex decoration is the one found in Mališka (**B-Mal-1**)[225], randomly discovered during agricultural work that resulted in the loss of the materials associated with it: the figurative register is divided into three bands decorated with dots and circles, except in the two rectangular panels, one at the left end of the belt and one at the right end, where rampant lions, bulls and fantastic creatures are depicted. This belt has an unusual decoration not attested in other objects: the presence of a sort of *Anzû*[226] that appears inside the decorative panels is particularly astonishing, although it is not clear if it actually identifies with this deity. It is certain that representations of Anzû were already circulating in the Armenian territory at the end of the 3rd millennium BCE, as shown by its appearance among the

[221] Without getting into specifics, think of the characters represented on Anzaf's shield or the figure standing on a lion painted on the wall of the porticoed hall in Erebuni. But for an exception, see the belt called **B-Ded-2**.
[222] Belli 1999.
[223] Another example is the god standing on a bull depicted on the bas-relief from Adilcevaz (**Rel-Ad-1**).
[224] **Rel-Ad-2-11**.
[225] Esayan 1977.
[226] See Bottéro 1994: 246-256.

characters decorating the silver goblet of Karashamb[227], found inside a Bronze Age necropolis and dated to the 22nd-21st century BCE: the representation on the Mališka belt could indicate this very character, totally unusual in the Urartian context. Oddly enough, this character closely resembles also the one depicted on the belt worn by the king Ashurbanipal on a relief coming from his palace in Nineveh[228]: the character here depicted is actually a solar disc, but, in both specimens, the decoration is depicted only on a small portion of the belt, the rest being filled with geometric designs. This belt, with the depiction of the solar disc, is a distinguishing trait of the Assyrian king during his royal lion hunt, as every other character represented in his reliefs' program wears a similar kind of belt depicted with different motifs. The division of the figurative space of the belt, moreover, is similar to some examples from the Southern Caucasian area, with rectangular panels decorated with images of animals, and a dividing section with horizontal or vertical bands decorated with geometric elements[229]. Also in this case, it is possible to define this belt as *unicum* in the Urartian artistic panorama, with a decoration combining figurative elements typical of the local population of the South Caucasus with iconographic cues from the Mesopotamian area.

As it can be easily seen from this brief review of the "Urartian" belts, it is not possible to propose dates or chronologies at present: the examples are so heterogeneous and peculiar that they do not allow a more precise chronological framing. What emerges, however, is that all the motifs of royal art are depicted within the repertoire replicated on metal belts, which therefore includes animal lines, parade scenes, characters standing on animals, sacred trees and various fillers that will be later analysed; in addition to these motifs, the popular imagery represented on belts offers further scenes and figures that are not taken up in royal art, for example the hunting and prayer scenes, and the extremely composite hybrid creatures.

2.2.1.2. Geometric belts

The previous analysis of the belts with figurative motifs showed that the frames or the interludes that divide the scene into bands are often composed by rows of dots in *repoussé* technique or zig-zag motifs: these same motifs are found, used as decoration of the central figurative field, on some belts found in Urartian sites.

2.2.1.2.1. Dotted belts

These belts are decorated with a *repoussé* pattern consisting of parallel bands composed of three to five rows of small dots. The motif is not common to almost any other certainly Urartian material[230]; belts,

[227] Sagona 2017: 346, fig. 7.20.
[228] See, for example, the catalogue published by Brereton 2018; a close-up of the belt can be found on page 93.
[229] See, for example, Castelluccia 2017: n. 267.
[230] But the same decoration is to be found on a small bronze disc from Kayalidere found in the courtyard in front of the temple (Burney 1966: 78 and pl. XI.a), on a bronze breastplate found in the necropolis of Nor Aresh (Barnett

however, normally use this motif as a filler or a frame for the main scene composed by a decorative apparatus of animals, charioteers and knights, typical of Urartian artefacts. The decoration of dotted belts is usually composed of a dotted frame following the entire perimeter of the belt, inside which several concentric lines decorated with *repoussé* dots are inserted. Within this category of belts, there are interesting starting points: the first one comes from Ayanis[231], along with another belt with a figurative decoration[232], and provides important information thanks to the place of discovery, which allows to further clarify the importance of the context. Paul Zimansky[233] described, in fact, a perfect example of how the context of discovery can affect the perception of the material found: in the village of Ayanis, below a dwelling, the burial of a young man of prepubertal age was found, with a set of materials, including the aforementioned bronze belt, qualifying the tomb as belonging to a member of the Urartian élite. Yet, the place of discovery indicated the non-Urartian origin of the deceased, as intramural burials, in a pit dug into the floor of a house, have no precedent either among the members of the nobility of the Kingdom and among ordinary people, but rather refers to ancient local traditions (Neolithic-Chalcolithic) then abandoned. The logical conclusion is that the young man belonged to a family of foreign origin integrated into the élite of the Urartian city of Ayanis, and, therefore, the burial contained the goods that this élite used to place in their tombs[234]. The contexts of discovery of dotted belts are various; in particular, the discovery of the belts from Arin-berd (**B-Ari-1** to **3**) in the area of the temple of Iubša[235] is surprising, as well as the finding of the two belts from Karmir-blur inside two different rooms of the fortress (**B-Kb-5, 6**), while all the other specimens come, more or less surely, from funerary contexts.

The dotted decoration is not common in Assyria, where more complex fillers, such as *guilloche* or bud garlands, were preferred; a look at the Southern Caucasus, on the other hand, can help to identify the origin of the motif: dotted belts are the largest group within the Southern Caucasian belts with geometric decoration[236], with 94 attestations mainly coming from the well-known necropolis of Tli, in Southern Ossetia. The dotted bands are arranged individually or, more rarely, in pairs of parallel lines. The main difference with respect to "Urartian" belts is precisely the number of dotted lines that form a decorative band: if, on the belts from the Urartian area, the dotted bands vary from three to four, the so-called "Transcaucasian" belts usually have a decoration of one or two dotted bands. Moreover, the dotted bands on the Urartian area belts are always framed by two straight lines, one upper and one lower, unlike the Southern Caucasian specimens, that may or may not have the frame. Some examples of belts defined as "Urartian-style dotted bands"[237] were found outside Urartian borders, in particular in the sites

1963: 196, fig. 44) (here **Br-Nor-1**), and in a bronze quiver from the Anzaf Fortress excavations (Belli 2003) (here **Q-Anz-2**).

[231] **B-Ay-1**.

[232] **B-Ay-2**.

[233] Zimansky 2012: 109.

[234] The process of integration within the population of the Urartian settlements is still witnessed in the Ayanis site, where houses were populated by Assyrians, clearly deported, who continued to use their ceramics and food. Stone – Zimansky 2003: 227.

[235] Esayan 1984: 133, "Kleine Bruchstücke (2-3 cm groß) von drei Gürteln mit Punkt-Rippen-Ornament wurden auch im Susi-Tempel und in Raum Γ-2 der urartäischen Festung Erebuni am südöstlichen Stadtrand von Erevan gefunden (Museum von Erebuni, Inventarnummer 80/34-45)". On the other hand, these are not the only belts coming from a temple area: the exemplar Kayalidere-1 was found near the temple, although not inside it.

[236] Castelluccia 2017: 28.

[237] Castelluccia 2017: 30.

of Golovino and Gyumri: the belts from the tombs of Golovino (**B-Gol-1, 3**)[238] were found in a necropolis that also returned "Transcaucasian-style" belts, while the site of Gyumri revealed 14 cyst tombs, two of which contained bronze dotted belts (**B-Gy-1, 2**). The case of Gyumri is emblematic[239]: while one of the two belts is decorated with horizontal bands of dotted lines framed by two straight lines, the other one shows only two bands composed of two dotted and framed lines, placed at the upper and lower margins of the scene, at the centre of which there is a flat band delimited by parallel straight lines. The belt **B-Gy-2** is similar to several "Transcaucasian" belts[240], while **B-Gy-1** has characteristics typically associated with specimens from the Urartian area. The case of the belt found in Muchannat Tapa[241], near Yerevan and therefore in the Urartian area, is still different: this specimen is decorated with four parallel horizontal bands formed by three straight *repoussé* lines (**B-Much-1**), but its peculiarity is in the absence of the frame delimiting the dotted bands. **B-Much-1** is considered "Transcaucasian" precisely because of the absence of the delimitations of the embossed dotted bands[242], although it was found in the Urartian territory.

2.2.1.2.2. "Hybrid"-dotted belts

On these belts, one can find a main dotted pattern in the central part of the belt to which is connected a typical Urartian figurative element, realised during the creation of the belt or added later. For their particularities, it is worth providing a detailed analysis of each of them. The first peculiar element is to be found in the specimen **B-Top-1**, which was originally decorated with five parallel bands of *repoussé* dots, but, probably added later, a bronze foil with the image of a bird is attached to it. Karen Rubinson raised interesting questions about this belt: "Could this choice of attachment have been a means by which the craftsperson sought to make the belt truly 'Urartian' just as on other examples, in which one end of a belt plate carries lions or floral elements? Could this belt have originally been complete without figural ornament and have appeared at Toprakkale too ordinary, too local, too non-Urartian? Could we see the addition of the bird attachment to this belt as helping the belt become Urartian, joining the South Caucasian substrate to the new political overlay?"[243]. John Curtis, instead, suggests that the plaque was used as a belt clasp, by hooking it to the ring welded on the other extremity[244]. In any case, what is evident is the scarce diffusion of images of birds in Urartian art, both royal and popular: the metal artefacts bearing this decoration are essentially this belt from Toprakkale (**B-Top-1**), the belt from Şahtaxtı (**B-Şah-1**)[245] and a bronze helmet from Ayanis with an inscription by Rusa Argištiḫi (**H-Ay-3**)[246]. While the birds depicted on the Ayanis helmet appear to be galliform, the two birds represented on the belts are birds of prey: if the first are widely represented on the belts of the Southern Caucasian

[238] The publications of the findings does not allow an exact study of the graves to which the dotted belts belonged (Martirosjan 1954:22-23 and pl. IV).
[239] Piotrovskij 1944: 317.
[240] See, for example, the specimens published in Castelluccia 2017: n° 73, 75, 76, 77, 78, 79, 80.
[241] Esayan 1984: 156, pl. 8, n. 28.
[242] Castelluccia 2017: 324-235.
[243] Rubinson 2012: 396.
[244] Curtis 1996: 118.
[245]The context and the geographical position of the site are peculiar, as well as the decoration of the bronze belt itself. Bahsaliev 1997 : 117, fig. 26.
[246] Derin – Çilingiroğlu 2001: 164.

area[247], the second are much more common in Scythian art of later times, between the 6th and 5th centuries BCE, or in the art of the steppe peoples. Birds of prey probably appear on two examples of "Transcaucasian" belts[248], on one of which the bird is depicted in the very act of flying[249] as it appears on the Toprakkale belt attachment. One should, however, not forget that birds of prey were common in Mesopotamia as a sort of macabre indicator for the death depicted in the scenes: it is possible that Urartian craftsmen just assumed the image of the birds, without its intrinsic meaning.

B-Dur-2's main decoration, instead, consists of four horizontal bands of *repoussé* dots ending against a right cartouche depicting three superimposed lions. These lions are walking, facing the right side, with their jaws opened in a roar, their tails raised, the features of the snout and ears well highlighted by engraved lines and a decoration with small dots and lines all over the bodies, to symbolize the fur: this type of lion is commonly known from royal shields, although this image is inevitably less detailed due to the size of the object. The belt found in Room 28 of Karmir-blur (**B-Kb-7**) has been dated, like the other belts coming from the fortress, to the second quarter of the 7th century BCE[250]: its decoration consists of two dotted frames inscribed inside each other and a central band of *repoussé* dots; at the right end, a cartouche framed by dotted lines containing the representation of a sacred tree, similar to a sort of garland, is to be found. The belt from Sotk (**B-Sot-1**), probably from a funerary context which cannot be dated, is almost undamaged: the main decoration consists of five bands composed of four parallel rows of dots, not specular from one side to the other; the right end contains a cartouche, framed by a single row of *repoussé* dots, in which a sacred tree very similar to that of the **B-Kb-2** belt is illustrated. It is possible that other dotted belts also bear this type of decoration at the right end, which possibly symbolizes a sort of "appropriation" of the dotted motif: unfortunately, due to the fragmentary conservation of the specimens, it is not possible to say which of them had such decoration. However, certainly, the specimen **B-Top-1** did not have such a cartouche at the end, since it is preserved almost for its entire length: it is probably because of this absence that craftsmen attached the plate with the image of the bird.

If the information provided by Zimansky and Rubinson is combined, the conclusion that could be drawn is that the origin of the dotted motif is to be found outside the Kingdom: dotted belts may have originated elsewhere, probably before the emergence of the Kingdom of Urartu, in areas adjacent or superimposable to it[251]. Examples of dotted belts found outside the Kingdom are recognizable in the specimens coming from the necropolis connected to the site of Hasanlu IVB[252]: one, for example, was found inside the burial of a young adult male, positioned above his head and, thanks to the presence of two ceramic vessels, the burial[253] was dated to the end of the 9th century BCE[254]. If this type of decoration originated outside the Kingdom, probably before or in parallel with its origins, an import of these belts

[247] Castelluccia 2017: 62.
[248] Castelluccia 2017: 63, fig. 88.
[249] The specimen has been found in Treli; Castelluccia 2017: 63, fig. 88.1.
[250] Esayan 1984: 132.
[251] Or in the same area but, of course, in a previous period of time. Esayan 1984: 108, "Die Zugehörigkeit solcher Gürtel aus dem 7.-6. Jahrhundert v.Chr. zum urartäischen Kulturkreis wurde von B.B. Piotrovskij und B.A. Kuftin begründet; außerhalb Armeniens sind solche Gürtel von F. Baier in Samtavro gefunden worden. Neben anderen bezeugen die Gürtel mit Punkt- und Flechtbandornamenten eine weite Verbreitung urartäischer Kulturzeugnisse auf dem Armenischen Hochland".
[252] See Khanmohammadi *et alii* forthcoming.
[253] It is not to be said that the belt is from the same period as the burial: it could be earlier, given the tendency to preserve metals as precious objects.
[254] Rubinson 2012: 394.

can be hypothesized for the beginning, followed by the diffusion of the dotted motif as main decoration and as frame motif on "Urartian" belts; it is not clear whether these are two parallel or successive transitions, but it seems at least reasonable to identify the origin of this decorative motif outside the Urartian area. Therefore, the hybrid-dotted belts probably represent the evolution of the dotted motif in Urartian spheres: by adding a cartouche containing an image associated with what is more commonly detected as "Urartian", the craftsmen of the Kingdom probably wanted to assimilate a foreign decorative motif in order to use it in their own creations.

2.2.1.2.3. Zig-zag belts

The use of the zig-zag line, only horizontally, is attested in the Urartian area only as a filler or dividing motif; the only "Urartian" belt which has an exclusive zig-zag decoration was found in the Yerevan columbarium (**B-Yer-3**)[255], while the motif has a uniquely dividing function on the **B-Bur-2**[256]. It has been said[257] that the zig-zag motif only appeared on "Transcaucasian bronze belts" found in Urartian sites, taking as an example a bronze belt found in Karmir Berd, whose necropolis has been used since the 15th century BCE and has returned numerous other belts, most of them plain, and one decorated with images of men and animals, perhaps horses, in Caucasian style. The author dated the zig-zag belt to the Middle Iron Age, "given its strong resemblance to similar Urartian items", without mentioning what these items are and what category of objects they belong to, but admitting that the context of discovery of this zig-zag belt is unknown[258]. To conclude his dating proposal, he used a bronze cup found "in the necropolis" to draw a parallel with the bowls found in storeroom 28 of Karmir-blur, dating the belt to the 9th-8th century BCE[259]. The last point that may connect the zig-zag decoration to the Caucasian area is provided once again by the same author: "it is, however, true that this type of decoration is found in the Caucasian world from the Late Bronze Age, on metal objects and clay vessels (Chantre 1888: pl. 50.3)"[260].

2.2.2. Medallions

Urartian medallions found in the excavations come from the sites of Toprakkale and Karmir-blur: from this site also comes an amulet with a four-line cuneiform inscription[261], almost completely illegible, probably a dedication to a deity of the pantheon (**M-Kb-1**). This amulet has the shape of a *lunula*, with the sides pointing downwards and an eyelet for the attachment to a chain placed in the middle of the curved section: the figurative decoration of the amulet consists of a crescent moon on the left end and an eight-pointed star on the right one. Such an object appears to be a *unicum* within Urartian art, while

[255] Esayan *et al.* 1991: pl. XVIII.
[256] The belt **B-Bur-4** (Yıldırım 1991: fig. 10.3-5) is decorated only in a zig-zag pattern but is probably not finished, as it appears to be associated with another specimen using the zig-zag as a divider between different registers (Burmageçit-3). The so-called "belt" published in CTU B 8-29 is not considered here a belt but a horse's vestment: see the contribution of Işik - Kuvanç 2018.
[257] Castelluccia 2017: 44-45.
[258] Castelluccia 2017: 289.
[259] Castelluccia 2017: 289.
[260] Castelluccia 2017: 45.
[261] Piotrovskij 1950: 77, fig. 49; the inscription is published in CTU B 18-9.

it finds several comparisons in Assyrian art, with the typical lunar crescent shape facing downwards: two bronze specimens come from Nimrud while two silver ones were found inside a tomb in Ashur[262]. The shape of the object is representative of the Mesopotamian moon-god Sin, and the diffusion of such amulets is particularly wide especially between the 2nd and the 1st millennia BCE, being represented at the neck of the Assyrian sovereigns in reliefs dating to the 1st millennium BCE[263]. The poor state of conservation of the inscription, unfortunately, does not allow to date the object nor certainly makes it an Urartian production; a connection with a possible moon-god, moreover, can neither be excluded nor confirmed, given the total lack of other similar specimens. Hypothetically, this medallion may have been an import from Assyria which, once obtained, was engraved with an Urartian inscription: that would explain the difference with the other Urartian medallions and the fact that this is the only one inscribed.

A silver medallion in the form of a lunar crescent, with the tips facing upwards, comes from the site of Toprakkale (**M-Top-1**)[264]: it shows a worship scene with a deity, perhaps female, sitting on a throne, holding a bowl and a "sacred fruit" in the shape of a pinecone in her raised hands. In front of her, there is a worshipper wearing a long veil, offering a goat as a sacrificial animal to the deity. On either side of the scene, there are two "teardrop" sacred trees, with the shape that also characterizes, for example, Kefkalesi's relief[265]; under the floor, there is a zig-zag decoration that supports the whole scene. The shape of this medallion is clearly reminiscent of that of the bronze breastplates, but the finesse and precision of the decoration are only shown in a circular medallion, this time in gold, found at the same site[266].

From Room B of the fortress of Karmir-blur comes the first of three circular medallions decorated with a worship scene (**M-Kb-2**)[267]: made of silver, it depicts a "clumsy but unmistakable"[268] representation of a deity, probably female, seated on a throne, in front of which there is a kneeling worshipper and a sacrificial goat. The deity appears to be winged, and perhaps wearing a headdress, while the worshipper wears a veil on her head; the arms of the deity are raised in a gesture of blessing. A possible solar disk is depicted above them. The deity's head is made on a piece of gold soldered onto the silver[269]. The second silver medallion[270], found in Room 36, shows a variation of the worship scene (**M-Kb-3**): the worshipper brings a sacrificial animal to the deity, who is represented standing upright; also in this case, the deity's head is represented on a piece of gold, and a winged solar disk surmounts the scene. Both medallions have a zig-zag decoration at the base, on which the characters rest their feet. As van Loon already pointed out[271], these silver medallions are decorated in an unrefined style, making them "cheaper substitutes for the much more carefully executed gold medallions", an example of which was found in the site of Toprakkale (**M-Top-2**)[272], inside a jar in a wine cellar. The design of the scene is actually very precise and full of details: the goddess sitting on a throne, on the left, resting her feet on a

[262] Curtis 2013: 115-116 and pl. XC, n. 1083-1084 (for the Nimrud specimens).
[263] Curtis 2013: 116.
[264] Piotrovskij 1967: 51, fig. 34; 54.
[265] Bilgiç – Öğün 1964.
[266] See below.
[267] Piotrovskij 1955: 11, fig. 5.
[268] Piotrovskij 1967: 54.
[269] Van Loon 1966: 127.
[270] Piotrovskij 1955: 18, fig. 11.
[271] Van Loon 1966:127.
[272] Lehmann-Haupt 1906: 84-85.

stool with curved feet, wears an ankle-long robe decorated with small engraved geometric motifs, and a long veil over her head; her hands are outstretched in front of her and with the left she holds a "sacred fruit" in the shape of a leaf/pinecone. The worshipper stands in front of the divinity, with the arms outstretched forward, and wears a robe and a veil with the same geometric decorations. Below the floor line, there is a decoration with five buds facing downwards. The eyelet of this medallion is preserved, carefully executed, separated from the body of the object itself. The execution is particularly refined and detailed on this medallion from Toprakkale, probably made for a wealthy member of society. From the Karmir-blur fortress comes a single example of a circular bronze medallion depicting what is known as "a ceremonial scene"[273] actually consisting of a winged solar disc overhanging several plant elements, including flowers and trees (**M-Kb-4**). The worshipping scene, with a possible human figure standing in front of a seated deity, is also represented in the same way on several seals from different sites[274].

Assyria has returned a single engraved gold medallion[275], from Fort Shalmaneser, which, although rectangular, depicts a male individual wearing a long robe and raising his hands in a gesture of prayer: the style with which it is executed is rough and not very detailed, more reminiscent of the examples of Karmir-blur than the gold medallion from Toprakkale. However, a gold stamp seal bearing the same decoration as the Urartian medallions, engraved with the inscription "Belonging to Ḫamâ, queen of Shalmaneser, king of Assyria, daughter-in-law of Adad-nirari", has been found in the Royal Tomb III, Coffin 2, in Nimrud[276]: it proves that this type of image was connected to the Assyrian royal court, from where the Urartian depiction probably was inspired. The presence of medallions with scenes of devotion to a deity seems, conceptually, to belong to a category of *ex voto* dedicated by members of the population, more or less wealthy, but it does not appear to be connected to royal Urartian art, either because of the lack of direct comparisons with royal art objects and because of the absence of objects bearing an inscription; the "Assyrianizing" medallion from Karmir-blur, as previously proposed, seems to be an acquisition coming from the Assyrian area, later characterized as an Urartian *ex voto* thanks to the engraving of an epigraph.

2.2.3. Breastplates

A single decorated crescent-shaped metal breastplate was found in archaeological excavations in the Urartian area (**Br-Nor-1**). Urartian archaeology has also provided three other breastplates, similar in shape to the decorated pectoral from Nor Aresh but without any figurative decoration, engraved with the names of the sovereigns Minua and Argišti (probably, the son of Minua)[277]: on these inscribed pectorals, found during some canalization works near Van, a sort of crescent moon facing upwards is embossed, surmounted by a tiny engraving depicting the head of a roaring lion. It is not clear whether these breastplates were used as horse harnesses or as personal ornaments; in favour of the first hypothesis speaks the crescent-shaped horse frontlet from Pazyryk, but such plates can also be imagined

[273] Piotrovskij 1970: p. 87.
[274] Ayvazian 2006: 160-163; seals ER 24, ER 38, ER 49, KB 58, TK 08.
[275] Curtis 2013: pl. XC, 1087.
[276] Gansell 2018: 82-83.
[277] Seidl 2004: 28, C.47 and 32, E.22 - E.23, *apud* Belli 1983b. Inscriptions are to be found in CTU B 5-2 and CTU B 8-26, 27.

worn on the chest of the warriors, where they would have been tightly fastened to the armour[278]. The width of Urartian breastplates does not exceed 30 cm.

Given the early date of the inscribed breastplates, Seidl[279] stated that it would be possible to consider these elements as part of the Urartian equipment, personal or equine, only in the first part of the history of the Kingdom, around the beginning of the 8th century BCE: their absence within the corpus of the bronzes of Sarduri, son of Argišti, could indicate that already in the middle of the 8th century BCE they were considered obsolete. An Assyrian parallel to this issue is given by the replacement of the breastplates with decorated bands, which occurred at the latest at the time of Tiglath-Pileser III[280]. The crescent-moon shape is typical of the Urartian pectorals, like those bearing the inscriptions of the two sovereigns previously mentioned, and also of the decorated breastplate found inside Tomb 1 in the necropolis of Nor Aresh (**Br-Nor-1**)[281]. This bronze specimen is decorated with several frames inscribed one inside the other: the outermost one has a row of dots in *repoussé*, within which there is a frame with a zig-zag motif and again a last one with *repoussé* dots; in the centre of the pectoral, five "suns" are represented, central moulded circles surrounded by several embossed dots. This decoration appears typically Caucasian: on several belts, one can see these geometrical motifs, also combined[282]. A similar breastplate is worn by a bronze figurine from the site of Toprakkale (**Mf-Top-9**)[283]: the shape is that of a crescent moon, inside which five holes are made at regular distances, probably to contain precious stones; in this case, the breastplate is worn as if it were a sort of necklace, and therefore it is not to be connected to a possible armour.

From Hasanlu several breastplates come, similar in shape to the Urartian specimens but different in size: while Urartian breastplates measure between ten and thirty centimetres, the specimen from Hasanlu kept at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York[284], decorated in the centre with an embossed crescent, has a width of 42 centimetres, which qualifies it as a horse harness. The discovery of this specimen is contextual to the discovery of other horse harnesses, leaving little doubt about the original function. In the Assyrian area, one can find several breastplates depicted as horse harnesses[285]; some archaeological findings in Nimrud confirm the use of harness horses with semi-circular pectorals[286], while there are no known representations of breastplates worn by men[287]. The shape and function of Urartian pectorals are comparable to a golden pectoral said to come "from Ziwiyé"[288]: unfortunately, the absence of a real excavation publication with an indication of the context of discovery does not allow the use of this material to establish artistic parallels.

[278] Seidl 2004: 110.
[279] Seidl 2004: 114.
[280] Seidl 2004: 114.
[281] Barnett 1963: 194-197.
[282] See for example the belt from the Kalakent Paradiesfestung (Nagel – Stommenger 1985: pl. 22) and the solar motif depicted on the Mouçi-yéri belt (Castelluccia 2017: n. 261).
[283] Preserved in the Berlin Vorderasiatisches Museum collection, inventory number VA 00774.
[284] Muscarella 1988: 66-67.
[285] See, for example, Barnett 1975: pl. 38; Mallowan – Davies 1970: pl. XIX, n. 65a.
[286] See, for example, Curtis 2013:pl. LXXVIII, n. 779.
[287] The crescent-shaped pendants found in archaeology are to be worn with the tips pointing downwards, as suggested by the position of the loop of suspension; moreover, they are much smaller, being pendants and not breastplates, and almost circular (Curtis 2013: 196-197). From a Neo-Assyrian tomb at the site of Ashur come instead "zwei silberne Mondsichelstücke", of which, however, no image is published (Haller 1954: 68, Grab 781).
[288] Godard 1950: 19-35.

2.3. Varia

2.3.1. Artefacts in gold and silver

Objects made of precious metals are not common finds in Near Eastern archaeology of the 1st millennium BCE: apart from the treasures hidden in the *kurgans*, not belonging to the Near Eastern archaeology properly said, the use of gold is known from the Assyrian context to be mainly reserved for objects in foundation deposits and the creation of jewellery[289]. Even in Urartu, there is no shortage of jewellery, earrings and bracelets, made of gold; often, thin gold leaf was used to cover artefacts made of bronze or ivory, the remains of which are preserved to this day. Despite the scarcity of gold objects found in the excavation, or, instead, exactly because of this scarcity, two peculiar inscribed artefacts stand out, one made entirely of gold and the other of gold and silver, from the sites of Ayanis and Karmir-blur.

In the building adjacent to the Ayanis Temple Area, numerous objects were found, mostly related to everyday activities such as food preparation, but also women's tools and jewellery: the architecture of the building and the nature of the finds led the archaeologists to designate this section of the fortress as the "Domestic Quarter", serving as a service area for *élite* individuals[290]. In this area, in Room 11, a cylindrical gold artefact was found, approximately 20 cm long, identified as "most probably a fan handle"[291], inside of which there were burnt wooden remains (**G-Ay-1**). The object has an opening on one side, while the other one is closed and decorated with a twelve-petalled rosette; the entire surface of the cylinder is decorated with garlands of buds, which, joined together, form the image of an abstract sacred tree, like the one found also on some belts; the edge of the decorative field is decorated with a guilloche. Below the guilloche, at the upper edge, there is the cuneiform inscription "^{MUNUS}qa-qu-li MUNUS.LUGAL ta-na-a-ṣi"[292], the first translation of which was "Artefact(?) of Qaquli, the queen", based on the connection between the noun *tanaṣi* and the verb *tanu-*, "to make". A new interpretation of the term sees it instead as a synonym of *urišḫi*, "property"[293]: the translation of the inscription would therefore be more like "Property (?) of Qaquli, the queen". The occurrence of the term on a bronze patera from Ayanis, bearing the name and patronymic of the king who owned it[294], has allowed us to assume for this object and all those bearing the term *tanaṣi* a date to the reign of Rusa Argištiḫi; Qaquli would then probably be the wife of this king, although it is not explicitly confirmed anywhere. The term is also present on a candelabrum from Toprakkale, which bears only the name Rusa without patronymic, and which is dated by Salvini, for the same reason, to the time of Rusa Argištiḫi[295]: the word *tanaṣi*, however, is clearly connected to this ruler only on the bronze patera from Ayanis, which may not be sufficient to assume its entry into use in the time of Rusa Argištiḫi[296]. However, for the gold object of Queen Qaquli, the fact that it was found in the fortress of Ayanis may suggest that this queen actually

[289] Curtis 2013: 144.
[290] Çilingiroğlu 2011: 1058-1062.
[291] Çilingiroğlu 2018: 216.
[292] CTU B 12A-1.
[293] Salvini 2018: 416-417.
[294] CTU B 12-17.
[295] CTU B 12-18.
[296] Salvini 2018: 417.

was the spouse of Rusa Argištiḫi, dating the artefact to the beginning of the 7th century BCE. The function of this artefact is strongly debated: Çilingiroğlu[297] connected it to an object held by a figurine of a "eunuch" found in Toprakkale[298], considering it one of the "fans made of gold" mentioned by Sargon II during his description of the sacking of the temple of Muṣaṣir[299]. Salvini, on the other hand, interpreted it as a kind of sceptre[300]. Batmaz connected the object to a ritual performed in the temple area of the Ayanis citadel, considering it probably the handle of a standard[301]. This object is certainly not comparable with other artefacts known from Urartian archaeology: a possible connection has been made, however, with Etruscan metallurgy, which produced some gold objects very similar to that of Queen Qaquli, usually interpreted as clasps[302]. This connection would open scenarios still insufficiently explored, concerning the connection between the east and the west in the 1st millennium BCE; it is worth reporting the expression of Roberto Dan: "it must be noted once again that unfortunately archaeology to this date has only provided a pale reflection of the dense international relations that must have characterized the Orientalizing period in the 8th and 7th centuries B.C."[303].

Recent excavations in Ayanis have yielded numerous other gold objects from the so-called "Hall with Podium"[304], including several golden rosettes, ranging in size from 0.5 cm to 2.6 cm, made by applying thin gold leaf to bronze rosettes; they were probably used as clothing ornaments. The most important gold object, however, is a sphinx (**G-Ay-3**)[305], with a human head, lion's body and bird's wings, depicted in profile, walking to the left. The characterisation of its details, such as the face and wings, closely resembles those of the fragments of carved decoration found inside the *cella* of the temple of Ayanis[306]. The function of this object is unclear: it is too small to be one of the podium ornaments[307], and it is therefore plausible that it was also used as an applique on a garment.

A further precious metal object, made of gold and silver, was found in 1956 in Room 5 of the Karmir-blur site. It is a circular lid with alternating gold and silver bands, each decorated with a garland of buds along the edges, and a spherical knob in the centre of the object itself; on the second silver band from the centre is engraved a cuneiform inscription of one of the rulers named Argišti[308], traditionally considered Argišti Minuaḫi (**G-Kb-1**). The most peculiar feature is the central knob, moulded in the round in a shape that has always been associated with that of a pomegranate: only recently has the identification of the fruit represented in the knob been questioned, with the suggestion that it may be an opium poppy capsule instead of a pomegranate[309]. The object depicted on the lid would in fact hypothetically be indicative of the contents of the vessel with which the lid was undoubtedly associated:

[297] Çilingiroğlu - Salvini 2012: 100.
[298] **Mf-Top-9**.
[299] Foster 2005: 810.
[300] Salvini 2014: 17-18.
[301] Batmaz 2013b: 78-79.
[302] Dan 2016: 18.
[303] Dan 2016: 21.
[304] Işıklı et al. 2019: 91.
[305] Işıklı et al. 2019: 91, fig. 7a.
[306] **Wd-Ay-1**; Çilingiroğlu 2001c: 54, figs. 11-12.
[307] The dimensions of this golden sphynx are 4 cm in length, 3.4 cm in height, and 3 cm in thickness (Işıklı et al. 2019: 91). The dimensions of the outlines of the figures applied on the podium in the *cella* are instead 17 cm in length and 8 cm in height (Çilingiroğlu 2001c: 42).
[308] CTU B 8-28. This object is extensively discussed in Dan – Bonfanti forthcoming; for a discussion on the representation of opium poppy's capsules in ancient art see Samorini 2016.
[309] See again Dan – Bonfanti forthcoming.

the material in which it was made, moreover, would suggest a content considered precious by the rulers, such as opium in an unspecified form, rather than fruit. The cuneiform inscription that runs along the silver band states that such a vessel, called *ḫupiqi*, was dedicated to Ḫaldi for the *aš(i)ḫusi* building[310], and must have had a votive but also a utilitarian function, probably during ceremonies or similar celebrations. It is not clear whether the object had fallen from the upper floor, where the *ašiḫusi* itself may have been located, at the time of the collapse of the fortress, or whether it had been placed there at an indefinite time before the destruction of Karmir-blur. Other objects considered to be *ex voto* were found in Room 5, such as a bronze quiver depicting parade scenes and an inscription of Sarduri, son of Argišti (**Q-Kb-27**), and a bronze statuette of the god Teišeba (**Mf-Kb-2**); further finds fall into the category of glyptics, with the discovery of numerous seals[311], as well as a faïence pendant depicting the Egyptian deity Sekhmet (**Eg-Kb-1**)[312].

2.3.2. Foils and plaques

Probably an original decoration of the famous "Throne of Toprakkale" is the thick bronze foil found in the site of Toprakkale (**Pl-Top-1**)[313], probably preserved for at least a quarter of the original scene: starting from the left, there is a representation of a sacred tree, followed by a man advancing to the left, preserved only for the lower part. The tunic of this character is decorated with squares, inscribed one into the other, and bordered by fringes; at his waist, he wears a belt decorated with spirals. Parallel to the sacred tree here depicted can be found in belts: the tree is composed of branches similar to garlands on which buds and flowers similar to representations of palmettes rest, and it is very close to the sacred trees depicted on the belts, already anomalous, named in the catalogue **B-Çav-1**, **B-Kb-2** and **B-Kb-7**[314]. A further comparison for this representation is to be found outside the Urartian area, in the Kelermes *kurgan*[315]: the gold coating of the *akinakes* found there shows on the hilt the image of two winged characters facing each other on both sides of a sacred tree, represented in an extremely similar way to that of Toprakkale. In general, given the Urartian examples[316], it is possible to think that the scene itself depicted on the Toprakkale plaque, preserved for a small part, is similar to the one decorating the Scythian *akinakes*, depicting two characters, only one of which is preserved (for a half), standing on the sides of a sacred tree.

Essentially decorative foils, not produced to cover pieces of furniture, mainly come from Altıntepe, where, inside a "single chambered tomb"[317], a small quadrangular plate with irregular edges[318] was found, made of gold and embossed (**G-Alt-1**). The image represented is that of a mythological creature, a human-headed winged bull, walking towards the left but with the face, wide nose, thick lips and protruding eyes, pointed towards the observer; he wears a helmet with horns, has a chest-long beard and his hair is curled at the sides of his face. The wings are rendered by a decoration on six registers of

[310] See again Dan – Bonfanti forthcoming.
[311] Piotrovskij 1950: 71-75.
[312] Piotrovskij 1950: 83-84.
[313] Barnett 1972: 176-178.
[314] This last parallel was identified already by Barnett 1972: 178 and fig. 17.
[315] Galanina 1997: pls. 7-9.
[316] Represented, for example, on several of the Karmir-blur helmets.
[317] Özgüç 1984: 36. The author probably refers to Tomb II, the only one consisting of a single chamber.
[318] The plaque measures 2x2 cm.

small lines parallel to each other, while the tail seems to be styled in a braid. This image belonged to the Assyrian figurative repertoire, which, since the time of Ashurnasirpal II, uses these creatures in monumental art, designating them as gateway guardians. This *Mischwesen*, however, is not common in the figurative tradition of the Kingdom of Urartu, where it seems to appear only on this plaque; more common is the representation of hybrids composed of a bull body and a human torso, which is also represented with the arms, usually stretched to hold a bow[319]. It is not a common representation neither to the Urartian area nor to the Assyrian one, where it is present only in the monumental sculpture, and for that one cannot hypothesize that it is an import: it is more probably the Urartian attempt to represent on a small plate the original Assyrian *lamassū*.

In the temple area of the site of Kayalıdere a small bronze foil representing another hybrid creature was found[320]: inside a frame of dots executed in *repoussé*, there is the image of an "inverted" griffin vulture, with the body of bird and the snout of lion[321], walking towards the right (**Pl-Kay-1**). The image is embossed, while the details are engraved. If the figure, unfortunately published in a not very clear photo, had a lion's snout, it would be unique both in the Urartian imaginary and in the neo-Assyrian one[322]. A fragment of a bronze foil with an incised decoration has been found inside the Yeghegnadzor tomb (**Pl-Yeg-1**)[323]: the decoration represents a sort of rosettes with ogival petals, an uncommon iconography for the Urartian area which finds a parallel instead with a stone object from Bastam dated to the Medieval period[324]. From the Reception Hall of Altıntepe two additional gold foils were found, quadrangular with irregular edges, showing two embossed images of standing human figures (**G-Alt-2-3**)[325]. Both characters, one of which is winged, are rendered in an extremely stylised manner, so one can only vaguely guess what they represent. The dating proposed for these plates, based on the context of discovery[326], places them in the last quarter of the 7th century BCE, at the end of the Urartian era, as nothing similar was previously found in the Kingdom[327]. A date to the 7th century BCE has been proposed also for the plates found in the fortress of Karmir-blur (**Pl-Kb-1 to 3**)[328], the best-preserved of which measures 5x8 cm: it shows the image of a male figure facing right, dressed with a long robe and a *polos*-type headgear, behind whom there is an animal, probably an ibex. The edge of the plate is

[319] This hybrid, with hands joined in front of the chest, is clearly identifiable in a figurine from Toprakkale (**Mf-Top-12**); the belt found in Altıntepe's Tomb III (**B-Alt-1**) depicts this hybrid in the form of an archer.
[320] Burney 1966: 98-99; the author states that the plate depicts "a winged horse", but from the photo it is clear that it is actually a hybrid. However, it is not possible to exclude that it is the cartouche of a belt, although it is not common to depict similar animals in such a position.
[321] And maybe bull's tail.
[322] Green 1994: 254: "Lion-headed eagle. This is one of the earliest animal hybrids, first occurring on cylinder seals of the Uruk period, common in Early Dynastic and still found in the Neo-Sumerian period. It disappears from art after the Ur III period".
[323] Dan et al. *forthcoming*.
[324] Kleiss 1979: 174 and pl. 56.2.
[325] Özgüç 1984: 36-37 and pl. XVI a-b.
[326] Özgüç 1984: 37.
[327] The so-called Giyimli plates, which have raised the long-standing question as to where these specimens were actually found, provided that they are indeed ancient, should undoubtedly be mentioned here: in Taşyurek 1977 one of these plaques is published depicting a stylised human figure, roughly embossed, rather similar to those found at Altıntepe. It is clear, however, that here too these are antiquarian market materials, difficult to date and impossible to reconstruct in context: "All is reduced to subjectivity, even the acceptance - shared by me - that hundreds of the plaques on the market are probably genuine. The question of dating the apparently genuine plaques is also subjective, pure guessing - scholars argue whether they are votive objects dating from the Urartian period, or were manufactured in late Urartian, or post-Urartian periods." (Muscarella 2000: 156). See also the paragraph devoted to those plaques in the "Introduction" to this work.
[328] Kellner 1982: 80 and Muscarella 2000: 155.

decorated with a rosette frame. An ibex is also depicted on a further fragment of another plate, again bordered by rosettes, while the lower part of the garment of a figure facing left, together with two rosettes, occupy the preserved decorative space of a last fragment[329]. These objects were probably mainly characteristic of Urartian culture, with an independent development from the rest of Near Eastern art, probably dedicated by private individuals not to a deity, but rather to a prince or a sovereign.

2.4. Decorated bronze vessels

2.4.1. Bowls

A total of seventy-seven decorated and inscribed bronze bowls (**Bo-Kb-1** to **77**) were found in the site of Karmir-blur alone: they bear the names of three Urartian rulers, Minua, Argišti Minuaḫi, and Sarduri Argištiḫi. All these bowls are decorated according to the same pattern: around the centre of the object, on the inner surface of the bowl, there is a cuneiform inscription that follows a circular outline and indicates the name of the ruler who owned the object. In different positions, but always engraved on the inner surface of the bowl, there are two signs, defined as "hieroglyphs"[330], which always occur in pairs. Usually, in the centre of the circle formed by the inscription, there is a particularly stylised roaring lion's head, while outside the circle one can see a sort of tower surmounted by a spear[331]. Scholars have given different readings to this symbol and it is not possible to agree on one single interpretation at the moment: while Piotrovskij read it as a tower surmounted by a tree[332], Merhav suggested that it was instead a sort of "abbreviation" of the motif of the sacred tree placed in front of a fortress[333], as represented on the pillar bases by Adilcevaz (**Rel-Ad-2** to **11).** Vayman's interpretation saw instead the two symbols as hieroglyphs with the meaning "belonging to the fortress", implying, of course, the fortress of Karmir-blur[334]. Moreover, the shape of the bowl appears to be identical over time: the shape is completely shallow, the rim is slightly everted, and there are no ribs of any kind. The same shape, which can therefore be defined as actually Urartian, which can also be found as a ceramic form[335], is found in a deposit, the result of a chance discovery, in the Armenian town of Yeghegnadzor: in that case, however, the decoration of the bowl appears to be unique.

2.4.1.1. The Yeghegnadzor bowl

A particular specimen of a decorated bronze bowl was found, together with other metal materials and a seal[336], during construction work in the town of Yeghegnadzor, Armenia (**Bo-Yeg-1)**. The bowl is

[329] Kellner 1982: 80-82.
[330] Payne 2005: 330-334.
[331] The most convincing interpretation is the one given in Calmeyer 1979: 183-195, who defines it as the "Lanze des Ḫaldi".
[332] Piotrovskij 1952: 59.
[333] Merhav 1991: 315-316.
[334] Vayman 1978: 100.
[335] See Avetisyan 1999-2000: 299 and figs. 36-38.
[336] The whole complex of materials, originally defined as a "tomb", has been published by Esayan – Xnkikyan 1990, and later by Xnkikyan 2002: 94-96. A new analysis of the materials and a new hypothesis of their context is to be found in Dan et al. *forthcoming*.

almost completely preserved; the shape is the same as the previously mentioned bowls, with a slightly everted rim starting from a swelling of the body. At the centre of the base, on the internal side, an incised drawing of a bull pointed towards the right can be seen: the front legs are flexed, while the back legs are straight. The four legs are well represented, with the drawing of the articulation bones and of the hooves: the knees of the flexed front legs are drawn as two small circles. The body and the tail of the bull are decorated with points and lines; the tail passes behind the left back leg and it ends next to that hoof. The head of the bull is very well drafted: the nose, the mouth, the right ear, eye and eyebrow can be clearly seen. The right horn is in the shape of a half-moon, pointing to the backside of the bull. Around the bull, there is a frame composed of two concentric zigzag lines: at the end of every segment of that zigzag, there is a little point. At the centre of the bowl, the point where they placed a sort of rudimentary compasses that served to ensure circularity is visible. In some cases, the bronze worker has mistaken the orientation of the lines of the decorative frame and redone them, essentially leaving two lines instead of one. Close to the hind leg, one can see a further mistake as if he wanted to double the leg, and then he corrected it with a decorative pattern[337].

The kneeling bull iconography is quite common mainly in Urartian wall painting, and it is inspired by the Assyrian world. On the walls of the so-called "throne room" in Erebuni there is a painting depicting two kneeling bulls facing each other with a concave-sided square in the middle (**Wd-Er-1**)[338], and, from the Hypostyle Hall of the Altıntepe temple, one can see a similar depiction (**Wd-Alt-2**)[339]. The kneeling bull image is attested on a frieze decorated with the openwork technique, thought to belong to the so-called Toprakkale throne[340], found in Toprakkale (**Wd-Top-3**)[341] with an inscription probably written by Rusa, son of Argišti[342]. The characterization of the bull's coat is similar to that of the bulls depicted on the two belts found in the same Yeghegnadzor hoard (**B-Yeg-1** and **2**), but it appears more delicate and precise: it looks like as if there was a standard way to characterize the bull's coat, and it was rendered with different levels of precision according to the value of the decorated object. This representation looks different, instead, from the images of walking bulls depicted on the different Urartian shields, but the parallels are not really possible as there are no detailed pictures of Urartian royal shields. As cursorily mentioned, this motif had a clear Assyrian origin. It is found on Assyrian ivories: from Fort Shalmaneser comes a plaque with an incised decoration of a kneeling bull, in the so-called "Assyrian-style"[343]. The same image is represented on many other ivory plaques found in Nimrud: probably part of a couple of facing bulls, winged and kneeling, is the incision found on a plaque fragment from the Nabu temple[344]. The ivory plaques can be dated to the 9th century BCE, thanks to the similarities between those bulls and the ones depicted on the king's garments represented in the reliefs of the North-West Palace of Ashurnasirpal II[345]. In Assyrian wall paintings, one can see a depiction of a kneeling bull on the walls of the Upper Chambers A and C[346], immediately south of the North-West Palace of Nimrud, sketched by Layard: those chambers are dated thanks to an inscription

[337] Dan et al. *forthcoming*.
[338] Oganesyan 1980: fig. 54.
[339] Özğüç 1966: figs. 14, 20-22.
[340] Seidl 2004: 63, abb. 25.
[341] Barnett 1950: pl. VIII.1.
[342] Salvini 2012: 72.
[343] Mallowan-Davies 1970: pl. XXXIII.127.
[344] Mallowan-Davies 1970: pl. XXXII.112.
[345] Bartl 2014: pls. 1b, 36a-b.
[346] Albenda 2005: 16, pl. 3; 17, pl. 5.

of the reign of Adad Nirari III, and curiously the depiction of the kneeling bull in Assyrian painting only dates at his epoch (811 to 783 BCE)[347]. Depictions of a kneeling bull are to be found on a seal/amulet in black limestone or steatite and found inside the South-East Palace in Nimrud[348], while another seal in serpentine, whose provenance is unknown, shows a hunting scene with a kneeling archer and a kneeling bull[349]. Other kneeling animals, such as caprids, are represented on wall reliefs as decorations on some of the garments worn by the king Ashurnasirpal II on the Nimrud's orthostats[350].

The decorative zig-zag motif surrounding the bull's depiction appears on many Urartian royal objects, such as the decorated helmets found in Karmir-blur, with inscriptions of Argišti, son of Minua (**H-Kb-1, 2**)[351], and Sarduri, son of Argišti (**H-Kb-3** to **5**)[352], depicting a soldiers' parade on different bands separated by a zig-zag line[353]. From Karmir-blur also comes a group of metal quivers decorated with the same image shown on the helmets framed by zig-zag bands (**Q-Kb-7, 8**)[354]. Zig-zag bands also frame the scene depicted on the Toprakkale quiver showing a striding lion and a palmette (**Q-Top-1**)[355], and they are the only decoration of another group of quivers found in Toprakkale (**Q-Top-2, 3**)[356] and Altıntepe (**Q-Alt-1**)[357]. Other Urartian royal objects decorated by zig-zag lines are three shields, one from Ayanis (**S-Ay-2**)[358] and two from Toprakkale (**S-Top-3** and **6**)[359]: one of these shields (**S-Top-6**) bear an inscription of Rusa, son of Erimena[360], and must therefore be dated around the 8th-7th century BCE. It appears that this motif, in Urartian royal art, has been mainly used during the first half of the 8th century BCE, when it seems to be used both as a frame and as an independent decoration, and during the reign of Rusa, son of Erimena, when the motif is instead used only as a divider between the main figurative registers[361]. The zig-zag motif itself is not a feature of Assyrian art, and in particular not to the Assyrian bronzes: one should instead look at Caucasian art to find decorations composed by zig-zag bands, a motif spread here from at least the Late Bronze Age[362]. On bronze objects, a sort of zig-zag is present on several "Transcaucasian" belts[363], used as a filler or divider motif. The motif was rooted in the Southern Caucasian/local sphere, and it may have been acquired, mainly by the Urartian royalty directly from the local art of the Southern Caucasus.

The problem raised by this object, however, concerns its degree of *Urartaicity*: it is clear that it drew inspiration for its decoration from palace art, but it cannot be defined as a proper product of the palace, since, apart from the absence of a cuneiform inscription, imperfections in the decoration also make this hypothesis unlikely. One can instead say that this object should be placed within a group of local

[347] Albenda 2005: 126.
[348] See the seal BM 126409.
[349] Collon 2001: pl. II.20.
[350] Bartl 2014: 39, fig. 20.
[351] CTU IV, B 8-10.
[352] CTU IV, B 9-8.
[353] Piotrovskij 1950: 64-67, fig. 40; Piotrovskij 1952: 40.
[354] Piotrovskiy 1955: fig. 26; Piotrovskiy 1970: 32.
[355] Barnett 1954: fig. 9.
[356] Barnett 1972: fig. 8.
[357] Barnett-Gökçe 1953: figs. 4-5.
[358] Salvini 2001: 280.
[359] Barnett 1950: 14, n°3; Erzen 1962: fig. 15.
[360] CTU B 14-7.
[361] See also Seidl 2004: 122.
[362] Chantre 1886: pl. 50.3.
[363] See the specimens found in Kalakent Paradiesfestung (Nagel – Strommenger 1985: pl. 22), Karmir Berd (Arešjan 1970: 243, n° 58), Kirovakan (Esayan 1984: pl. 20.59), Mingečaur (Esayan 1984: pl. 22.66).

productions belonging to a so-called *Assyro-Urartian* cultural production, which can realistically be dated from the 9th century BCE onwards, up to the post-Urartian period, but probably not beyond the beginning of the Achaemenid domination of the Armenian Highlands[364].

2.4.2. Cauldrons and cauldron's attachments

The importance of the use of the so-called cauldrons in the Urartian sphere is mainly evidenced by external written sources, first of all, the Letter to Aššur composed by Sargon II on the occasion of his Eighth Campaign, where he lists the spoiled objects taken from the palace of Urzana and the temple of the god Ḫaldi at Muṣaṣir. Among the materials looted in the temple, there are 607 copper basins, large and small, called *kiuri*, three huge vessels of the same type, each containing up to fifty measures of water, and another vessel, containing up to eighty measures of water, used for libations to the gods; each of these four large vessels rested on a tripod. From the palace of Muṣaṣir come thirteen other metal basins[365]; finally, the lost relief depicting the sacking of the temple of Muṣaṣir, from the palace of Khorsabad, shows two huge vessels on tripods with bull's hoofs standing in front of the temple. The importance of these materials somehow emerges from the Urartian accounts themselves, as Sarduri Argištiḫi received 1535 bronze vessels named *kiri* as a tribute from the king of Commagene[366].

Unfortunately, archaeological excavations have not provided great evidence to support the wide diffusion of these artefacts, improperly called in literature "cauldrons"[367]: large vessels hammered out of a copper or bronze sheet, usually equipped with handles shaped in the form of animals' heads. The origin of the shape of cauldrons is traced back to Elam and Babylon, with subsequent Mesopotamian modifications and re-elaborations[368]. In the Assyrian context, Layard's report on the archaeological excavation of Nimrud stated that twelve bronze cauldrons were found in Room AB of the North-West Palace[369], whose traces were later lost; together with these cauldrons, four semi-circular handles with a ribbed decoration were found. A bronze cauldron also came from the site of Ashur[370], found near a burial site: the specimen is straight-sided, with a flat bottom, and the handles are an integral part of the object[371]. The Assyrian cauldrons are very different from the Urartian ones, both for their shape and for the absence of plastic attachments in animal shapes. Caucasian parallels for cauldrons are difficult to find: a bronze cauldron with pedestal was found inside the Kurgan XV in Trialeti, Georgia, whose context is dated to the Late Bronze Age[372]. It is possible, however, that the origin of the artefact itself can be traced back to the Northern Caucasus: at the end of the 3rd millennium BCE, in connection with the Majkop culture[373], several bronze cauldrons were found in *kurgans* dedicated to members of the

[364] Dan et al. *forthcoming*.
[365] Foster 2005: 809-811, ll. 360-400.
[366] CTU A 9-3 IV, l. 56; the term is translated by Salvini as "coppe".
[367] Van Loon 1966: 103: "Strictly speaking the term is inexact because these vessels were certainly not used for cooking, as the name 'cauldron' would imply".
[368] Barnett 1986: 113.
[369] Layard 1853: 177-180.
[370] Curtis 2013:pl. XXXVI.
[371] Curtis 2013: 67-69.
[372] Schaeffer 1944: 28; the author comments that "(it) recalls so vividly the bronze cauldrons of the Early Iron Age from Southern and Northern Italy that one hesitates to assign it to a period so far back as the Late Bronze Age, as the archaeological data compel one to do". See also Sagona 2017: 349.
[373] See Sagona 2017: 137-182.

local elite. Antonio Sagona confirmed the exclusive connection of the cauldrons with the Majkop culture, and therefore with the Northern Caucasus: "Bronze cauldrons were a local product, not occurring elsewhere in the Near East or the southern Caucasus"[374].

In Urartu, cauldrons were found at the sites of Altıntepe (**Ca-Alt-1**)[375], Ayanis (**Ca-Ay-1**)[376] and Karmir-blur (**Ca-Kb-1**)[377]; attachments, with different shapes, applied to the basins as handles, have been retrieved in numerous sites, even outside Urartu, rising a debate on their genesis, diffusion and chronology, even though Van Loon already observed in 1966 that "no bull's head attachments to cauldrons have been found outside of Urartu which display the typical local characteristics (...). If such objects were exported from Urartu, no original Urartian bull cauldrons have been found outside of Urartu to prove this"[378]. The bull's heads are usually affixed to a T-shaped support, with the head of the bull facing outwards from the cauldron, the horns tending to face upwards and the muzzle features well outlined with an awl. The best-preserved cauldron, found in the chamber tomb of Altıntepe (**Ca-Alt-1**), has four of these *protomai* affixed to the rim of the vessel through small metal nails, positioned according to the cardinal points.

In addition to the bull's heads attachments, there is at least a second type of cauldron attachment found both in the Urartian territory and outside: these handles have the so-called siren shape, which represents a human torso facing inside the cauldron, attached to a T-shaped support fixed to the basin by metal nails. The siren-shaped attachments, so-called *Assurattaschen*[379], are the most widespread outside Urartu, so much so that they have given rise to different theories on their origin and dating that link them to Urartian exports to the West[380]. However, it has been rightly pointed out that there is only one siren attachment coming from a *bona fide* excavation in Urartu and that there is no parallel between the appearance of these sirens and representations on other Urartian materials[381], so the origin of these attachments should be traced outside Urartu, probably in the North Syrian context[382]. The last type of cauldron attachment[383] found Urartu originates from the sites of Toprakkale and Karmir-blur, and both examples have different shapes compared to the previously mentioned *protomai*.

Concerning the chronology, the data coming from the excavated specimens can't really help in defining it: as for all the metal objects, one must consider that cauldrons may have been a legacy, and so more ancient than the finding context. The only inscribed attachment is the lion's one coming from the site of Karmir-blur (**Ca-Kb-2**), bearing an epigraph with the name of the king Sarduri Argištiḫi, dating that

[374] Sagona 2017: 176.
[375] Barnett – Gökçe 1953: 121-122 and pl. XIII.
[376] Çilingiroğlu 2001a: 71; Çilingiroğlu – Batmaz 2013: fig. 12.
[377] Piotrovskij 1966: 247. The bull-shaped handles found in Karmir-blur are treated in a separate section on non-Urartian materials in Urartu.
[378] Van Loon 1966: 106. The characteristics are: "a large attachment plate with the outline of a bird, a square forelock, horns sweeping forward and then upward, bean-shaped eyebrows, single-outlined eyelids and a deeply undercut lower jaw".
[379] These attachments were originally named "Assurattaschen" by Adolf Furtwängler because of their similarity to the symbol of the god Aššur (see Furtwängler et al. 1890: 23).
[380] A summary of the theories formulated before 1966 can be found in Van Loon 1966: 107-111. A chronological arrangement of these attachments is inserted in Akurgal 1968: 39-43, based on the dating of Gordion's MM mound to the last quarter of the 8th century BCE. Many scholars have tried to organize the different cauldron's attachments found in excavations, including Barnett 1986, Muscarella 1962, and Muscarella, 1968.
[381] Muscarella 1962: 322.
[382] Muscarella 1962: 326, also asserts: "Urartian art is being exploited much more than is merited. It has become a scrap basket into which stray objects are thrown" (p. 325).
[383] But it's difficult to create a typology for this object, as there is only one specimen in Urartu.

specimen to the half of the 8th century BCE[384]. Almost all the cauldrons or cauldron's attachments have been found in a funerary context, as in the Altıntepe, the Ališar and, probably, the Guşçi tombs; only the attachments coming from Toprakkale have been found in the ruins of the Ḫaldi temple[385], while all the specimens from Karmir-blur and Ayanis come from the fortresses: there is not a precise pattern of distribution of these objects, but, for sure, cauldrons were depicted in the relief showing the loot of the Muṣaṣir temple, and they are mentioned in Sargon's booty lists from both the temple and the palace. The cauldron, therefore, appears more as a votive or precious object than as an artefact of practical use, except for the specimen found shattered in the Ayanis site (**Ca-Ay-1**) and probably used to measure grain: the presence of cauldrons in funerary or templar contexts testifies to its preciousness, as does the discovery of a lion head with a royal inscription.

2.4.2.1. Fully preserved cauldrons

There are four cauldrons preserved in their entirety in the whole Urartian territory and they come from the sites of Altıntepe (**Ca-Alt-1**)[386], Ayanis (**Ca-Ay-1**)[387], Karmir-blur (**Ca-Kb-1**)[388]; of these, only the specimen from Altıntepe has handles in the form of bull's heads. The two cauldrons from Ayanis and Karmir-blur have a similar shape, with a very large body and two ring-shaped handles at opposite ends of the cauldron; the specimen from Karmir-blur is made of copper with a bronze rim, while the Ayanis vessel is entirely made of bronze. From Ayanis also comes a smashed cauldron, equally devoid of decorations and plastic handles, probably used to measure grain[389].

The cauldron found in the chamber tomb II on the site of Altıntepe is part of the impressive grave goods, that include numerous bronze objects, among which, in particular, two bronze vessels with Anatolian hieroglyphic inscriptions engraved on them[390]. The cauldron rests on a bronze tripod, whose feet are in the form of bull's hooves, to complete the image provided by the four heads affixed to the rim of the vessel: these are moulded and decorated with chisels, affixed to supports in the form of T or "bird's wings" and fixed to the rim of the cauldron by means of four nails. The bull's heads have horns facing upwards, drop-shaped eyes and a mane, in relief on the forehead, decorated with an interlaced motif; the head of the bull is joined to the support at the neck by means of a weld joint, "hidden" by the addition of a collar decorated with a spiral motif. The style of these bull's heads is undoubtedly similar to the attachments found in Guşçi and Toprakkale, analyzed later. The tomb is part of a complex of three

[384] Muscarella 2013: 753: "Only a general late 8th-early 7th century chronology appears to exist for the Urartian bull attachments (…). Evidence for a possible late 8th-early 7th century date is the poorly documented find from Alishar, where a bell inscribed with the name of Argishti was apparently recovered (…). The Altıntepe tomb was for some time thought to date to ca. 740-732 BCE because of the presence of an inscription allegedly of Urikki of Cilicia. But it has been known since Klein 1974 that the name Urikki in fact does not appear, which eliminates Altıntepe as a chronological datum".
[385] Barnett 1950: 13-15.
[386] Barnett – Gökçe 1953.
[387] Çilingiroğlu 2001a, and Çilingiroğlu,– Batmaz 2013.
[388] Piotrovskij 1966: 247: "Nel 1957 in uno dei locali a sud-ovest della cittadella di Teišebaini fu trovato un lebete di rame con un massiccio bordo di bronzo e due manici, della capacità di 70 secchie". There are no pictures available of the cauldron, which was apparently published only in this occasion.
[389] Çilingiroğlu 2001a: 71-72 and 80.
[390] The description of all materials contained in the tomb can be found in Barnett – Gökçe 1953. Contacts with western regions should not surprise, as Altıntepe is the westernmost Urartian site found so far.

burials, entirely excavated in the 1960s, only one of which, tomb III, is dated *post quem* to the end of the 8th century BCE thanks to the discovery of an inscribed plaque bearing the name of Argišti II[391].

As far as the dating of the other cauldrons is concerned, we can only assume a *terminus post quem* provided by the date of the foundation of the sites of Ayanis and Karmir-blur during the first half of the 7th century BCE: it should be borne in mind, however, that metals are materials of long conservation, and therefore they could have been used well before that date. Even in this case, therefore, providing a chronology of the materials and of their decorations is a complicated matter, given the few finds that are still available today.

2.4.2.2. Bull's heads attachments

Most of the cauldron attachments found in Urartian contexts are handles in the shape of bull's heads: it should not be forgotten, however, that the total number of the findings from archaeological excavations is around the three units, to which are added three accidental findings whose context is at least constructible[392]. Urartian bull's heads usually have no ring for the insertion of a handle on the back of the support – the bull's head *is*, in fact, the handle itself. As far as the plastic representation of bulls is concerned, the closest typological comparison is represented by the bull's heads found in the Royal Cemetery of Ur[393]: the Urartian ones cannot be considered a Sumerian revival, but, even if the "intermediary" specimens of the 2nd millennium BCE have been lost, the similarity between the bull's representations leads to thinking that the Urartians were following a Mesopotamian artistic current[394]. From the Assyrian world, plastic representations of metal bull's heads are known from Dur Šarrukin and Nimrud[395] as furniture terminals: however, there is no similarity between these and the Urartian bull's heads used as cauldrons' attachments, which are more similar to the Ur specimens. A Mesopotamian intermediary, not in metal but ivory, comes from the site of Sippar[396], and almost certainly was used to decorate a throne or a seat: what is most surprising is the characterization of the mane on the forehead, identical to the one practised on Urartian bronze bulls' heads.

The two excavated bull's heads found at Toprakkale (**Ca-Top-1, 2**)[397] have horns facing upwards, round eyes and a mane on the forehead decorated with a spiral motif and curved lines; the muzzle is slightly different from that of the heads of the Altıntepe cauldron since in these specimens it is more pointy and less natural: in general, the chiselled decoration of the muzzle and the rendering of the head itself are

[391] CTU B 11-5. A debate on the dating of Tomb II had started as one of the inscriptions in Anatolian hieroglyphic seemed to mention the name of King *Urikki*, who ruled Cilicia during the second half of the 8th century BCE. (Steinherr, F., 1958); a further study (Klein, J. J., 1974) showed that these hieroglyphs should instead be interpreted as units of measurement of capacity, thus not reporting any name useful to date the discovery.
[392] Muscarella 2013: 737-739, offers a brief report of all the bull's head attachments found in the Near East, distinguishing an "Urartian" group from a generical "Near Eastern" group. In the Urartian group, he places thirteen bull's heads: "(…) four each on cauldrons from Altıntepe, Toprakkale, and Guschi, the last two convincingly reconstructed from the incomplete records; and an isolated example from Alishar" (p. 737). These additions will be mentioned in the analysis.
[393] Woolley 1958: 78, pl. 39a.
[394] Hanfmann 1956: 211-212.
[395] Curtis 2013: pls. LIII and LIV.
[396] Barnett 1975: 226, pl. CXXXVI, n. U8.
[397] Barnett 1950: 18-20. Amandry 1956: 239-240, adds to these two *protomai* found in excavations two other bull's heads without provenance preserved in Baltimore and Paris. The two excavated *protomai* are preserved in the British Museum with the inventor numbers BM91240 and BM91242.

more stylised than the Altıntepe bull's heads. The plate fixing the head to the cauldron, preserved for only one of the two specimens, is decorated with bands of oblique lines and *chevrons*, which further differentiate it from the plain support of the Altıntepe specimens.

A peculiar account is that of the discovery of the two bull's heads from Guşçi (**Ca-Guş-1, 2**), in 1905: during the excavation for the foundations of a house, some peasants had run into a small stone "temple" where they found two bronze "statues" of bulls, the skeleton of an ox, a belt in "copper", a bronze snake and some silver vases. Given the weight of the statues, the farmers thought they might contain gold and destroyed them with hammers; the arrival of the village chiefs managed to prevent their total destruction, and the bronze bull heads were saved: now, they are kept separately, one in the Fogg Art Museum at Harvard University and the other in the Musée du Louvre in Paris[398]. These specimens have been associated with two other bull's heads that are believed to come from the same site in Guşçi based on stylistic similarity[399]. All these heads are identical with the handles of the Altıntepe cauldron: same horns facing upwards, same drop-shaped eyes, same chiselled decoration of the muzzle, rendered in a "naturalistic" way. It is quite possible that the other two heads, kept in separate museums without a certified provenance, came from the same site, even if the report of the discovery talks of two "statues" of bulls: since this report cannot actually be denied, and since the possible body of the bull has been lost, one must observe that the presence of bronze bull statuettes is not witnessed in any Urartian site; moreover, their similarity with the Altıntepe bull's heads supports the hypothesis that they were cauldron attachments[400]. The location of the Guşçi site on the map puts it in the area of Mannaean influence, however, all the materials found – or, at least, recorded in the report – seem to be of "Urartian" origin: in addition to the bull's heads, a belt[401] also from Guşçi is perfectly placed within the Urartian artistic sphere[402].

The characteristics that the previous bull's heads have in common are a separate casting of the support and the head, which are joined together later, forming a right angle between the animal's neck and the support. The bulls' ears are perpendicular to the head, and just above the ears one can find the horns facing upwards; between the horns, on the forehead, there is a sort of rectangular mane decorated with stylised curls, which continues along the animal's neck.

The discovery of the following Urartian bull's head has, again, an unusual history: in 1859, a probable rock chamber tomb was found on the Iranian shore of the Araxes, in front of the village of Alişar[403]. The discovery is known only by a letter communication now preserved at the Hermitage Museum[404], where several metal objects were brought, including a bull's head affixed to a T-shaped support that

[398] The report of the discovery was originally published in 1912, in Armenian, in the periodical *Azgagrakan Handess, Revue Ethnographique publiée par la Societé Ethnographique Arménienne* XXIII/2, 114-124; a summary of the event, in English, is available in Hanfmann 1956: 205-207. The two bull's heads preserved at Harvard and Paris were recognized based on the photographs in the original report. The peasants may have discovered a chamber tomb similar to the one of Altıntepe.
[399] Hanfmann 1956.
[400] Hanfmann 1956: 210, letter communication of Sarre and Barnett. It is not clear if in the original report there was a reference to some bulls' statues; Piotrovskij 1967: 37: "They (the two bull's heads) were of different sizes, and *were thought to be* from statues of bulls which had been broken up in search for gold. In fact, they also belonged to cauldrons".
[401] **B-Guş-1**.
[402] Hanfmann 1956: 211: "But the bulls' heads found at Guşçi are so closely allied to the bulls' heads found at the later capital of Urartu (Toprak Kale) that they may be called 'Urartian' legitimately".
[403] See Dan – Bonfanti 2021.
[404] A brief report is available in Piotrovskij 1967: 83-85.

still retains the three original nails (**Ca-Ali-1**). The dating of this complex could be provided by the discovery of a bell-shaped horse harness bearing an inscription of the type "Property of Argišti"[405], which Salvini attributed to Argišti Minuaḫi and, therefore, to the first half of the 8th century BCE: however, it has been noticed that, since there is no patronymic inside the short inscription, it is not sure that it can be dated to that period[406]. This bull's head is slightly different from the others previously analysed: the horns are facing forward, and not upwards, the muzzle has an elongated shape, the mane on the forehead is rendered by slight wavy horizontal lines; but the fact that it is cast in two separate pieces and that it doesn't present an eyelet for the insertion of a circular handle qualifies this bull's head as, possibly, "Urartian".

Despite the differences in the rendering of the details, the "Urartian" bull's heads group is homogeneous in its manufacturing traits, such as the casting of the head and the support in two different pieces, the curled mane on the forehead, the absence of a circular handle added to the bull's head. The only specimen that differs from the others is the pair of handles coming from Room 12 of the Karmir-blur fortress (**Ca-Kb-3**), which may be considered as an import[407].

2.4.2.3. Lion's head attachments

The last type of cauldron attachment found in Urartu is decorated with lion *protomai*: this category of artefacts includes only two completely different specimens, one coming from Room 14 of the Karmir-blur fortress (**Ca-Kb-2**), and the other, a pair of handles, found in Toprakkale (**Ca-Top-3, 4**). **Ca-Kb-2**[408] has an unusual shape, as it appears to be a hollow tubular decoration developing upwards, whose upper end is closed by a lion's head. The snout is rendered with engravings indicating the moustache, the mouth is open in a roar, the eyes are circular; the tubular body is decorated along its entire length with a garland of buds. At the upper end, just below the lion's head, there is an inscription bearing the name of Sarduri Argištiḫi[409], dating this object to the half of the 8th century BCE. A parallel for this type of decoration can be found "overseas", in Etruria, in the Regolini-Galassi tomb of Caere[410], while Anatolia and Mesopotamia are lacking examples to refer to. The characterization of the lion's snout, however, is typically Urartian, as can be seen by comparing this object with the ivory statuettes depicting roaring lions and the cauldron handles from Toprakkale[411]. These handles are also shaped

[405] CTU B 8-22.
[406] Muscarella 2013: 753.
[407] Muscarella 2013: 740. These handles will be analysed later (see § 4.1.1.).
[408] Piotrovskij 1967: 43-44; Seidl 2004: 37. The specimen is preserved in the History Museum of Armenia, inventory number 2783-79.
[409] CTU B 9-24.
[410] Sannibale 2014: 104-105:"La tomba Regolini-Galassi, databile tra il 675 e il 650 a.C., costituisce uno dei contesti più ricchi e significativi per il periodo Orientalizzante in Etruria. (…) Insieme ai vasi in argento figura un lebete di bronzo 'principesco' forse destinato a contenere il vino, il cui sostegno, se tale era veramente, era rimasto nell'anticamera. Il fatto notevole è che le protomi a testa di leone del lebete ceretano, sono identiche a quella ritrovata a Karmir-blur – periferia di Erévan, nella repubblica di Armenia – che reca inciso il nome del re d'Urartu Sarduri II (764-730 a.C.), regnante quasi un secolo prima rispetto alla cronologia della nostra tomba. (…) Questo lebete si differenzia nettamente dagli altri due esemplari rinvenuti nella tomba, più grandi, dal corpo liscio e con le protomi verso l'esterno (…)". The cauldron is preserved in the Museo Gregoriano Etrusco, inv. 20207. It is to be noticed that, even if the shape of this cauldron's attachments is the same as that of the Karmir-blur's one, the representation of the lion's heads is totally different.
[411] Barnett 1950: 15, and Barnett 1954: 6, where they are said to be part of a bronze dish; these handles are part of the British Museum's collection, inventory numbers BM22492 and BM22493.

differently from the others, recalling two horizontal and overlapping vase handles[412]: the body of the handle is semi-circular, it is affixed to the cauldron through two triangular plates welded at the two ends; in the middle of the handle, at the top, there is a plastic decoration of a roaring lion's head, which slightly differs from the usual Urartian representations of lions[413]. The snout is very prominent and it seems to widen at the end; the nose is not incised, the ears and the canines are evident; that may be due to the small size of the lion's head represented on the handle or also to a the manufacture with local taste.

As it can be seen, at the end of this survey, only one kind of *protomai* can be defined as "Urartian" *tout court*, namely the tubular lion's head attachment[414], which is also the only specimen actually having an exclusive connection with a foreign cauldron, found in the Regolini-Galassi tomb in Caere, a *unicum* in Etruscan metalwork[415]. The bull's head attachments, as never found in connection with royal objects, can't be defined as part of the *Urartian State Assemblage*, but they can be possibly defined as an artistic expression of the élite connected to the Kingdom: this is emphasized by the similar making of the bull's heads all around the Urartian territory, perhaps inspired by a royal model.

2.5 Seals

The history of the study of the so-called Urartian seals began with the publication of the seal impressions found by Carl Friedrich Lehmann-Haupt during his excavations at Toprakkale[416]; the images of the impressions published in his volumes have been used by scholars up to the present day for the analysis of the iconography in Urartian glyptic. Lehmann-Haupt's volume, however, was not exclusively devoted to the study of Urartian seals, as was also the case with the publications of Boris B. Piotrovskij, who devoted several pages to Urartian glyptic in the publications of his excavation reports for the site of Karmir-blur[417]. Later on, in his volume exclusively dedicated to Urartian art[418], Piotrovskij outlined a system for cataloguing seals based on their shape (conical, concave-sided, cylindrical, four-faceted and disc-shaped[419]), analysing the iconography and the decorative motifs of each, and connecting them with other manifestations of Urartian art[420]. Maurits N. Van Loon also devoted an extensive section to glyptic in his book on Urartian art[421], dividing the seals by both shape and style, and highlighting the affinity of some of them with Assyrian and Babylonian glyptic. Both the excavation reports of Bastam[422]

[412] They recall the handles of the vessel found in the Lori-Berd "Royal Tomb". It has been calculated (Barnett 1950: 6) that the diameter of the vessel they were attached to is around 45 cm, almost double of the Lori-Berd basin (27 cm; Devedjyan 2010: 81).
[413] These representations can be seen in the bronze furniture fittings and the ivory statuettes.
[414] Due to its uniqueness, it is also possible that this should not be considered as a cauldron attachment, but rather as a chariot pole or a part of another object.
[415] There are actually vascular forms realised in *bucchero* from the Tomba Calabresi, in Caere, with attachments in the shape of lion protomai. See Sciacca – Di Blasi 2003: 85-88.
[416] See Lehmann-Haupt 1931.
[417] See, for example, the chapter devoted to Urartian seals in the excavation reports of Karmir-blur in Piotrovskij 1952: 45-48.
[418] Piotrovskij 1967.
[419] Piotrovskij 1967: 70.
[420] See the parallel perfectly drawn by the two compared images in Ayvazian 2006: 23.
[421] Van Loon 1966: 139-165.
[422] Seidl 1979; Seidl 1988.

and Ayanis[423] contain a chapter dealing exclusively with the analysis of seal impressions found in the sites, dividing the attestations into different groups, also based on the presence or absence of inscriptions, whether cuneiform or "hieroglyphic". Ashot S. Piliposyan[424] again reintroduced the division of the seals by shape, adding a further subdivision based on the level of complexity in the composition of the image, within a broader analysis of Near Eastern glyptic. As it is possible to see from the brief history of the research here outlined, all the major scholars in Urartian studies discussed the issue of Urartian glyptic, each providing a different perspective on the topic.

2.5.1. Royal seals

Recently, an analysis of Urartian glyptic has been carried out by Alina Ayvazian, in the massive volume *Urartian Glyptic: A New Perspective*[425]. In this book, all the seals found in the Urartian area are studied, but without paying much attention to the actual "urartaicity" of the analysed materials: not all the seals found in Urartu, in fact, are necessarily to be considered Urartian *tout court*. For this reason, only the seals with a more or less legible cuneiform inscription are considered Urartian here, and the epigraph will be considered proof of the origin of the seals under examination. Starting then from these properly Urartian seals, it will be possible to include also the specimens without inscriptions in the analysis, based only on their decoration. The analysis carried out defined nine different types of Urartian seals, based both on inscriptions and iconography. The typical shape of the seal is cylindrical, while stamp seals are attested only on very specific occasions. The seal impressions were found almost exclusively in large fortresses, all of which were founded or inhabited during the time of Rusa, son of Argišti, in the final period of Urartian history: Rusa is the only certainly royal name attested in inscriptions on seals, which also mention other personal names associated with officials whose role cannot yet be determined with certainty. A final note must be made about the remaining evidence of such seals: it has been chosen here to consider all seal impressions individually, and not, as is the case for example in the contributions of Seidl[426] and Salvini[427], as impressions of the same specimen. This has been decided both to get an idea of the quantity of the preserved impressions, and also because the seals may have been physically different but similar in their execution, with details that are perhaps not preserved on the impressions.

2.5.1.1 Type 1: Befruchtungsszene and « PN + KIŠIB ^{LÚ}*asuli* »

Only four seals from the sites of Ayanis (**Se-Ay-1**, stamped on a clay *bulla*), Bastam (**Se-Ba-1, 2**), stamped on two clay tablets[428]) and Karmir-blur (**Se-Kb-1**, stamped on a clay tablet[429]) belong to this group. The scene depicted on the cylinder includes the worship of the sacred tree performed by two winged *Mischwesen* with human or eagle heads, holding a situla and a pine cone. The inscription,

[423] Abay 2001.
[424] Piliposyan 1998.
[425] Ayvazian 2006.
[426] Seidl 1978: 137-150.
[427] Salvini 2012: 209-220.
[428] CTU B CT Ba-1 and Ba-2.
[429] CTU CT Kb-4.

running on the upper and lower margin of the image, bears the proper name of the seal's owner and the title ^{LÚ}*aṣuli*. This text is attested on only five seal impressions, four[430] of which belong to Type 1: it is possible to suppose that the epigraph and the decoration are somehow connected, characterizing precisely the social or religious category of the ^{LÚ}*aṣuli*, who appears to be connected to an Assyrian *Befruchtungsszene*. There is no agreement among scholars about the meaning of this representation, especially in the Urartian context[431], but it is possible to assume that the people bearing the title of ^{LÚ}*aṣuli* may be connected to a ritual role inside the royal court, a role celebrated both in the Assyrian palaces and in many other Urartian artefacts[432].

2.5.1.1.1 Type 1b: Not recognizable scene and « PN + KIŠIB ^{LÚ}*aṣuli »*

Only one seal (**Se-Kb-2**, stamped on a clay tablet) currently belongs to this group: the reason for the scarcity of specimens is the fact that the decoration is not recognisable on the cylinder section, which appears abraded or undecorated, while the cuneiform marks impressed above and below the scene are still clear, as is the image that characterises the stamp at the base, a winged chimaera. Bearing the same epigraph as the previous type of seals, it is possible that this specimen also had the same decoration impressed on the cylindrical section.

The text of the tablet bearing the seal is of no help, as it simply mentions a small donation of horses and oxen made by the author of the text. The word "order" is mentioned, but there is no mention of the sovereign.

2.5.1.2. Type 2: Befruchtungsszene and « (KIŠIB) ^{LÚ}*aṣuli* » repeated on two lines

Thirty-three seals are part of this second type, from the sites of Ayanis (**Se-Ay-2** to **4**, stamped on clay *cretulae* and *bullae*), Bastam (**Se-Ba-3** to **28**, stamped on clay *bullae*), Karmir-blur (**Se-Kb-3**, stamped on a clay tablet[433]) and Toprakkale (**Se-Top-1** to **3**, stamped on four clay *bullae*). The decoration is the same as in Type 1 seals, a devotional scene on either side of a sacred tree, while the epigraph repeats "seal of the ^{LÚ}*aṣuli*", without specifying the name, on both lines of text. The connection between these royal officials and the scene itself is even clearer, whether the name is given or not. There seems to be no difference between the scenes carved on the seals with the name of the official and those carved on the seals without his name, and it is therefore impossible to formulate a hypothesis regarding the difference between them. It should be noted, however, that thirty-two of these seals, almost all of them, were stamped on clay *bullae*, and only one on a tablet with a peculiar, almost "annalistic" content, which tells of the submission of two men to the sovereign and a probable booty[434]. The tablet opens with the mention of an "order" reported by a certain Inuššila, while the king is not mentioned here. Although the difference between the rank of the officials whose proper name was written on their seal and those who were only mentioned generically as ^{LÚ}*aṣuli* is unclear, based on the data presented, it

[430] See the following paragraph for a hypothesis on the fifth one.
[431] A short resumé of the various hypothesis is to be found in Hellwag 2005: 96.
[432] For a new hypothesis on the ^{LÚ}*aṣuli*, see Bonfanti – Dan 2021b.
[433] CTU CT Kb-7.
[434] The extreme uncertainty of the translation of clay documents has to be once again underlined.

could be assumed that the former had to do with the validation of the sovereign's orders engraved on the clay by the scribe, while the latter were more likely to seal containers or rooms in buildings.

Finally, the seals from Toprakkale should be mentioned, which do not appear in *CTU* and are therefore little studied: on them, there is an epigraph on two lines, extremely mutilated, the upper of which contains the signs "^{LÚ}*a-*"[435], while the lower contains, in a very fragmentary way, the signs KIŠIB and LÚ, which would demonstrate that these impressions belong to the category of seals analysed here.

*2.5.1.2.1. Type 2b: Not recognizable scene and « (*KIŠIB*)* ^{LÚ}*aṣuli » repeated on two lines*

Only one seal belongs to this sub-category: it comes from the site of Karmir-blur (**Se-Kb-4**, stamped on a clay tablet[436]), and is the so-called "seal of Erimena". Since it is not possible to carry out an analysis of the image, as the impression does not appear to be preserved on the clay, only the text of the seal should be considered, which probably[437] defines Erimena as a ^{LÚ}*aṣuli* official: this would also be confirmed by the presence on clay tablets only of seals belonging to the ^{LÚ}*aṣuli*, who was mostly identified by a name that tends to belong to the royal house[438]. As already stated by Salvini, Erimena may have been a member of the royal house, probably a second-born son, who never became king[439]. Salvini also goes so far as to speculate that the same Erimena of the seal might have been the father of the king Rusa Erimenaḫi, but, as it happens for other kings' names, the owner of the seal would probably not have been the only one who bore this name. What can be certainly said is only that Erimena[440] was the name of one of the ^{LÚ}*aṣuli* officials who operated in the city of Karmir-blur.

2.5.1.3. Type 3: *Befruchtungsszene* and « KIŠIB É x x x »

Another epigraph associated with the *Befruchtungsszene* is connected to the act of sealing rooms or buildings; the epigraph mentions the connection between the seal and a generic building É. There is only one attestation of this combination, from Karmir-blur (**Se-Kb-5**, stamped on a clay *bulla*), in which the scene of worship of the sacred tree consists of two *lamassū*, winged bulls, a slight variation from the man-headed or eagle-headed *apkallū* analysed above. The building mentioned is explicitly linked to the name of Rusa, most likely the son of Argišti, but it is not clear how it was connected to it, as there are no specifications regarding the building itself. Moreover, it is clearly stated that this seal belonged to Rusa himself, who, given the absence of other titles, may be considered the sovereign: this circumstance would speak in favour of the *Befruchtungsszene* as not exclusively linked to the ^{LÚ}*aṣuli*, unless there is a particular connection between the royal figure and the *lamassū* represented there on both sides of the sacred tree.

[435] Already noticed by Seidl 1991: 447, n° 5.
[436] CTU CT-Kb-3. The seal is also discussed in Movsisyan 2006b.
[437] The second line is scarcely preserved, but Salvini (CTU B Sig. 13-1) managed to read it.
[438] Only the tablet catalogued as CTU CT-Kb-7, whose text is anyway peculiar from the point of view of the contents, doesn't attest, on the seal impression, the name of the official who sealed it.
[439] Salvini 2012: 212.
[440] The origin of the name Erimena is not yet clear; Saporetti 1970: 211, considers the Hurrian name *Erimkeni* as the genitive form of the Akkadian *Erim-keni*, from which the Urartian Erimena may have been derived. What appears to be almost sure is that the origin is not to be considered Urartian.

2.5.1.4. Type 4: *Befruchtungsszene* and incomplete epigraph

Ten seals belong to this category, from the sites of Anzaf (**Se-An-1**, stamped on a clay *bulla*[441]), Bastam (**Se-Ba-29**, stamped on a clay tablet[442], and **Se-Ba-30**, stamped on a clay *bulla*[443]), Karmir-blur (**Se-Kb-6**, **7**, stamped on two clay tablets[444]) and Van (**Se-Van-1**, stamped on a clay *bulla*). It is unfortunately not possible, to date, to establish what kind of text was present on these seals, since none of them is complete; however, it is possible, taking into account both what remains of the inscription and the decorative typology present on the cylinder, to hypothesise some data regarding the single seals.

The specimen from Anzaf, for example, is impressed on a *bulla* defined *sui generis*[445], as it presents a text typical of tablets, concerning a royal order: the only legible sign on the seal is a *-li-* in the second line, so it can be assumed that the inscription is connected to a ^{LÚ}*aṣuli*. The scene depicted on the cylinder of the seal would confirm this supposition, although it is almost completely abraded. The Bastam seal impression on a *bulla* does not present any clearly legible sign, while the one on a tablet belongs to the series of seals engraved with the name of a certain Sarduri, in this case son of Sarduri, also present on some seal impressions found in the sites of Karmir-blur and Van: only in one case (**Se-Kb-7**), Sarduri is associated with Rusa as his son, a circumstance that is also reflected in the text of the tablet on which the seal is impressed[446]. As already hypothesized by Salvini, this Sarduri may have been a second-born son of Rusa who held the office of ^{LÚ}*aṣuli*, as also suggested by the decoration on the seal itself. However, in none of the previously mentioned cases, the second line of the epigraph on the seal is preserved: the problem of who these people were cannot be solved, although the hypothesis of ^{LÚ}*aṣuli* is indeed likely.

2.5.1.5. Type 5: King's scene and « *ini* KIŠIB + KN + patronymic? »

The most numerous group of seals is undoubtedly this one, with six hundred and forty-four impressions exclusively found in the sites of Bastam (**Se-Ba-31** to **674**, stamped on clay *bullae*) and Toprakkale (**Se-Top-4** to **11**, stamped on clay *bullae*). This type of seal is unequivocally linked to the sovereign, mentioned by name and, where preserved, patronymic: the scene depicts the king walking, and behind him an attendant holding a parasol above the sovereign's head; in front of the king, there are a walking lion and a trident. Ursula Seidl had assumed that these seals were used within the palatine administrative apparatus, where the trident indicated a particular warehouse in which meat was stored[447]. Ursula Hellwag, on the other hand, noted that the scene bears a striking resemblance to the so-called "astroglyphic" inscriptions belonging to Esarhaddon, and did not exclude a connection between these objects[448], particularly in terms of reading the image as a sequence of signs indicating a "property of

[441] CTU CB An-1.
[442] CTU CT Ba-3.
[443] Not in CTU; see Seidl 1988: 146.
[444] CTU CT Kb-5 and CT Kb-1.
[445] Salvini 2012: 174.
[446] CTU CT Kb-1.
[447] Seidl 2001: 448-449.
[448] Hellwag 2012b.

Rusa"[449]. It is clear that, to date, there is no unanimity on the exact function of these cylindrical seals, beyond the undeniable connection with the ruler himself, Rusa, son of Argišti.

2.5.1.5.1. Type 5b: King's scene and incomplete epigraph

Two hundred and forty-six seal impressions belong to this sub-type, all found in the site of Bastam (**Se-Ba-675** to **921**). The epigraphs are extremely incomplete or mutilated, especially in the lower line: if the first line shows quite clearly, from a collation between the different impressions, the signs forming the word *ini*, "this", and the ending *-ai*, to be completed as Rusa=i, on the second line only parts of some signs forming the patronymic, Argište=ḫi=ni, are read with certainty. Undeniably, this sub-category of seal impressions belongs to the previous type: however, these should be considered as at least two different seals, firstly because of the presence of a genitive ending *-i* attached to the name of Rusa, and, secondly, because the first sign of the first line is in a different position than the one of Type 5. In addition, it should be noted that there is an internal difference in this group as well, due to the position of the lion's tail on the base of the seal: in particular, the **Se-Ba-917** to **920** specimens show a walking lion with a lowered tail, unlike the **Se-Ba-675** to **916** stamps, which show a lion with a raised tail. Again, the significance of the slight difference between the different features on each seal is unclear.

2.5.1.6. Type 6: King's scene and « KN + KIŠIB + patronymic »

Four seals bearing this combination of image and text come from Ayanis (**Se-Ay-5** to **7**, stamped on clay *bullae*) and Ziwiyeh (**Se-Ziw-1**, stamped on a clay *bulla*). Both the image and the epigraph indicate that the ruler himself was the possessor of the seal, which was hung around his neck from its bottom, as can be seen from the impressions on *bullae* from Ayanis. The epigraph is attested with certainty on two of the four *bullae* found in total: another impression from Ayanis presents the same image but the inscription, running around the scene, is not preserved. However, it is reasonable to assume, given the place where this last *bulla* was found[450], that it also belongs to the same type as the others: the place where the *bullae* were found is Area VII, corresponding to the West Storage Rooms[451], which possibly contained objects belonging to the sovereign[452]. The reconstruction of the story of the seal from Ziwiyeh is more complex, although Salvini's hypothesis allowed for an easy solution to the problem[453], postulating trade relations between Urartu and Ziwiyeh at least at the time of Rusa son of Argišti. If the attribution of the seal to Rusa himself is to be considered valid, trade relations with Ziwiyeh must have been particularly important for the Urartian state, given that the king himself had impressed his seal on exported materials. The Ziwiyeh impression, also, does not preserve the epigraph in its entirety, but it is possible to assume that it is identical to the one already analysed.

[449] This is based on the reading of the trident as the Akkadogram *ŠA*, indicating possession, and on the reading of the lion as the sign -ur-, the first syllable of the king's name, Rusa; Hellwag 2012b: 214-215. In any case, one would not see the reason why the name of the king should be repeated both in cuneiform and in this sort of "hieroglyphic" signs.
[450] Area VII, as the other ones.
[451] Çilingiroğlu 2001: 83, fig. 13.
[452] See, as an example, the candlestick with lion legs stored in the West Storage Area Room 2; Çilingiroğlu 2001: 71.
[453] Salvini 2012: 211.

A further step in the analysis could be considering the uniqueness of these seal impressions: firstly, they are impressions of a stamp seal and not of a cylinder one, which would constitute a kind of *unicum* in the still little-known Urartian glyptic sphere. If one considers the cylindrical seal as an evolution of the previous stamp seal, since it could be quickly rolled over clay leaving a long and unbroken impression[454], one wonders why the sovereign still used a stamp seal. One reason might have been the need to immediately identify the king's seal, which was clearly different from the others. Whatever the reason for the use of this type of seal, however, one should undoubtedly note the small number of impressions found, as well as the fact that they were found only at the Urartian site of Ayanis and at the more distant, non-Urartian, site of Ziwiyeh: this would make Ayanis the primary site of Rusa, son of Argišti, at least as far as the storage and exchange of goods belonging directly to the ruler is concerned.

2.5.1.7. Type 7: "Ritual" scene and « KIŠIB É x x x »

Only two seals belong to this group, found in the sites of Ayanis (**Se-Ay-8**, stamped on a clay *bulla*) and Toprakkale (**Se-Top-12**, stamped on a door seal). It is no doubt worth noting that the seal from Ayanis was found in the Temple area, suggesting that the building mentioned in the epigraph is somehow related to the cult: this would be confirmed by the image on the cylinder of the seal itself, which seems to describe a ritual scene of unknown significance. As already mentioned, there are Assyrian parallels for this glyptic type, which are, however, slightly different, as the vessel around which the scene takes place is depicted on a stool, and interpreted as a banquet scene. The ritual connotation, in Urartian context, would also be underlined by the presence of a winged solar disc above the vase, confirming again, among other things, the Assyrian influence on Urartian glyptic. The circumstance related to the support on which the seal from Toprakkale is impressed, the only seal of this combination to have preserved the mention of the name of Rusa, is extremely peculiar since it would be the seal of a door: this would lead once again to think that the seals mentioning buildings were actually placed to close either entire buildings or parts of them, such as the *cella*, not meant to be frequented, permanently or temporarily, by worshippers.

2.5.1.8. Type 8: Parade scene and incomplete epigraph

The impression of this seal is only stamped on two bullae found in the site of Toprakkale (**Se-Top-13, 14**), and, unfortunately, lack a specific context[455]: the image carved on the cylinder is almost perfectly preserved, while the epigraph is only conserved on the lower line. The seal depicts a military parade similar to the one found on royal helmets and quivers, and should be considered directly related to the royal dynasty since it shows an iconography that is very well attested on objects bearing an epigraph characterising them as the property of sovereigns. The second line of the inscription bears, in a fragmentary way, the name of the ruler Rusa in the genitive form Rusa=i. The impressions are currently only known from Toprakkale, in a very fragmentary way, which does not allow us to formulate any hypothesis regarding their use: the presence of the lion on the bottom of the seal, the military parade

[454] Nissen 1977: 15.
[455] Seidl 2001: 450 and fig. 3.4.

and the fragmentary name of the ruler, however, leads to believe that it is closely related to the king himself.

2.5.1.9. Type 9: Abstract chariot scene and incomplete epigraph

The last combination of images and text found on Urartian inscribed seals was found exclusively in the site of Toprakkale (**Se-Top-15** to **17**) and is attested on three *Türversiegelungen*, seals attached to a door. The images depicted on the cylinder and the base are almost completely abstract, consisting of unrelated elements: a chimaera, a standing figure and a covered chariot are depicted together with astral elements and a bull's head, while several elements resembling "hieroglyphs", among which a taurine head stands out, are depicted on the base. The epigraph shows the name of the ruler in the form Rusa=ni and, according to Seidl[456], this inscription must be associated with the one on the other seal from Toprakkale mentioning a generic É building (**Se-Top-12**), also stamped on a *Türversiegelung*. In this case, the inscription would be connected to a building with unclear function, belonging to the king Rusa: if, for the seal **Se-Top-12**, it could be assumed that the building or room to which the seal was affixed had a role in religious worship, due to the "ritualistic" representation carved on the cylinder, for the impressions **Se-Top-15** to **17** such an association is not immediate, unless one considers the chariot represented as a ritual element in religious ceremonies, as suggested by Collon[457]. Seidl[458], on the other hand, interprets the scene as the distribution of grain to the population, which would suggest placing the *cretula* at the door of a warehouse rather than a cultic building.

2.5.2. Popular seals

In addition to seals bearing cuneiform inscriptions, qualifying them as belonging to the court of the Urartian ruler, there is also a group of seals bearing an iconography that can be classified as "Urartian" or "Urartizing"[459]. These seals were found in the sites of Armavir, Ayanis, Bastam, Çavuştepe, Erebuni, Karmir-blur and Toprakkale, and it is worth analysing them individually to outline their characteristics, after a subdivision into morphological and iconographic groups.

2.5.2.1. Multi-faceted seals with depictions of sacred trees and hybrid creatures

There are ten multi-faceted seals depicting images of hybrid creatures and sacred trees. Among them, it is necessary to distinguish several peculiarities: a seal from Çavuştepe (**Ps-Çav-1**)[460] depicts, on each face, hybrid figures standing on the backs of animals crouched on the ground, together with a human

[456] Seidl 2001: 450.
[457] Collon 1987: 158. Also Lehmann-Haupt (Lehmann-Haupt 1931: 580) suggested that this scene represented the veneration of a sacred tree brought around by a wagon.
[458] Seidl 2001: 450.
[459] The present analysis has been possible thanks to the well-designed structure of the volume by Ayvazian devoted to the Urartian glyptic (Ayvazian 2006).
[460] Ayvazian 2006: CT 02.

figure with arms raised in blessing, behind whom one can see several objects. The human figure is reminiscent of the representations of the sovereign depicted on royal seals bearing his image[461], while there are no close parallels between the representations carved on the other faces of the seal. A detail that must be highlighted in the analysis of this seals category is the depiction of a fish on the surface of the **Ps-Er-1** seal[462]: the fish is a motif alien to Urartian royal imagery, which usually tends to be associated with the art of nomadic peoples and does not find many attestations in the iconography characteristic of the Armenian Highlands. It is, however, found on several cylindrical seals from the Neo-Assyrian period, the meaning of which is still unclear[463]. The seal **Ps-Kb-1**[464], on the other hand, attests to the figure of a worshipper kneeling under a winged solar disk, a motif that also recurs, stylised, on the base of this seal[465] together with other representations interpreted as "hieroglyphic" signs. Such iconography is attested on some Neo-Assyrian seals and is often labelled as depicting "Atlantid figures"[466]: a *terminus post quem* for the reintroduction of the motif in the Assyrian sphere appears to be the late 9th or early 8th century BCE, when such iconography returned to Assyria through the mediation of the Syrian sphere. The motif may have arrived in the Urartian lands either with the mediation of Assyria or through Syrian art. On the previously analysed seal, one can see also a winged figure with arms raised in blessing reminiscent of the hybrid creatures standing at the sides of the sacred tree represented on LÚ*aṣuli* seals[467]. Also interesting are the seals **Ps-Kb-2** to **4**[468] and **Ps-Yeg-1**[469]: on the seals found in Karmir-blur, the representation of what seems to be a highly stylised sacred tree is particularly striking, while on the Yeghegnadzor specimen it seems to imitate cuneiform writing. The intention behind this type of representation is not clear, but it is probably a desire to imitate writing, evidently seen as an essential feature of glyptic[470]. Of great interest are multi-faceted seals on whose faces one can see different interpretations of a single motif: the most common are exclusive variations on the sacred tree theme and geometric motifs (**Ps-Ay-1, 2** and **Ps-Top-1**)[471], but there are also images of winged figures standing on the backs of animals (**Ps-Ay-1**)[472], praying figures depicted under winged solar disks, and standing figures with raised hands, probably as a sign of blessing (**Ps-Ay-2**)[473].

2.5.2.2. Possible images of the sovereign

Only two seal impressions, stamped on bullae, recall the representations of the sovereign in royal glyptic: on them, one can see standing figures, wearing a pointed headdress, with their arms raised in blessing. One of them is represented below a winged solar disc (**Ps-Ay-3**)[474], while, on the other seal

[461] See § 2.5.1.5.
[462] Ayvazian 2006: ER 06.
[463] On this, see Seidl 2006.
[464] Ayvazian 2006: KB 02.
[465] But it was also represented on a belt found in Karmir-blur (**B-Kb-3**).
[466] Collon 2001: 85, pl. XVI.202-204.
[467] See § 2.5.1.1.
[468] Ayvazian 2006: KB 76-78.
[469] Ayvazian 2006: NP 07.
[470] On this topic, see Dan et alii *forthcoming*.
[471] Ayvazian 2006: AY 15 and 16; TK 18.
[472] Ayvazian 2006: AY 15.
[473] Ayvazian 2006: AY 16.
[474] Ayvazian 2006: AY 19.

(**Ps-Ay-4**)[475], the human character appears to be the only protagonist of the scene. The absence of the cuneiform inscription does not allow us to categorise these seals as belonging to the royal sphere.

2.5.2.3. Procession scenes

A particular cylindrical seal, found in Ayanis (**Ps-Ay-5**)[476], depicts a scene, unfortunately, lacking its central section: on it, two standing figures are visible, one behind the other, with their arms raised. It is not possible to determine what was represented between the two figures, nor what the scene represents as a whole, but the overall impression is that it depicts a procession. Similar, but with only one character, is the representation on the impression of the seal **Ps-Ay-6**[477], which shows a person with raised arms holding an object that appears to be a flower stem or a branch at the end of which a bud is sprouting. An unidentifiable object is represented behind the character.

2.5.2.4. Adoration scenes

A scene similar to the one depicted on the seals of the ^{LÚ}*aṣuli* is represented on the impression of seal **Ps-Ba-1**[478]: one can see two standing figures, with raised arms, on opposite sides of a central object whose image has not been preserved. They are wearing a sort of ankle-length tunic and do not seem to be wearing any headgear. A highly stylised sacred tree worship scene also appears on the seal impression **Ps-Kb-5**[479]: a bird-headed figure and an anthropomorphic figure, both winged, stand on either side of a sacred tree consisting of five branches with the ends in the form of a triangle. The scene has an evidently geometric connotation, which the royal representations completely lack.

2.5.2.5. Ritual scenes

Some of the scenes on seal impressions refer instead to a sphere that can be defined as "ritual", although their particular meaning is often unclear. One of them (**Ps-Top-2**)[480] depicts a scene that also appears on Urartian medallions from Toprakkale and Karmir-blur[481]: a possible deity is seated on a throne, in front of whom stands the figure of a worshipper. Complementing the scene are small representations of a crescent and a rosette, above what can be interpreted as a pomegranate or a poppy capsule. The cylinder seal **Ps-Kb-6**[482] depicts a scene definable as ritual and sacrificial, with two winged creatures facing each other in front of a sort of altar. The creature on the right holds in its lowered arm a bucket, recalling the ones held by the hybrid creatures represented on the seals of the ^{LÚ}*aṣuli*. There is an altar situated in between the two winged creatures, which seems to be lit with fire, as four parallel lines rise from its base, and it recalls the one seen on the seal impression **S-Ba-921**. It can be connected to some

[475] Ayvazian 2006: AY 20.
[476] Ayvazian 2006: AY 13.
[477] Ayvazian 2006: AY 17.
[478] Ayvazian 2006: BA 04.
[479] Ayvazian 2006: KB 01.
[480] Ayvazian 2006: TK 08.
[481] See § 2.2.2.
[482] Ayvazian 2006: KB 42.

scenes represented on Assyrian seals and identified as "Banquet scenes"[483]. To the far left of the scene, facing right, there is a figure that seems to be wearing a conical helmet, holding a large tree branch, very similar to the image of a tree or tree branch on a stone relief from Toprakkale (**Rel-Top-1**)[484]. The same tree branches are represented on a seal found in Toprakkale itself (**Ps-Top-3**)[485]: they form the vertical borders of the scene, which features a human figure with raised arms standing in front of a vascular form resembling a jug. Behind the figure, probably celebrating a ritual, is a kind of platform on which are possibly represented three stelae. In fact, this representation is reminiscent of the stelae associated with an altar found in Altıntepe site[486], which must have been part of a specifically Urartian ritual, the nature of which unfortunately remains unknown to this day. The meaning of the scene is elusive, but it is possible to affirm that it is a representation of some sort of ritual performed in one of the so-called stele sanctuaries[487]. An unpublished seal impression, defined as "a very lucky find", comes from the site of Erebuni (**Ps-Er-2**)[488] and depicts a ritual libation scene attended by a worshipper holding a cup. Between the celebrant and the worshipper is an altar. This scene is absolutely unique in Urartu, finding no parallel in any other object.

2.5.2.6. Garland decorated depictions

The motif, depicted on two seals (**Ps-Ba-2** and **Ps-Çav-2**)[489], contains a "garland-like" division of the characters which closely resembles that of the belts from Ani Pemza (**B-Ani-1**) and Zakim (**B-Zak-1**). Indeed, in a more or less stylised way, the figures represented are inserted into lozenges formed by the intersection of what appear to be branches of sacred trees: the same concept appears on both altars found in the temple area of the Ayanis site (**Wd-Ay-2, 3**), and may therefore be considered as a popular interpretation of an Urartian royal representation. On the bases of both seals, a winged solar disc is represented, accompanied by other objects, among which we recognize vases, a half-moon and what probably represents the head of an animal.

2.5.2.7. Depictions of city walls

Only one seal (**Ps-Top-4**)[490] depicts what appears to be the city wall of a citadel: they closely resemble the bronze sculpture found at Toprakkale (**Mf-Top-18**), particularly the crenelations that adorn the top of the tower. At the side of the walls, there is a standing figure who wears a crested helmet: he holds a kind of sceptre and is followed by the image of a bull, but it is not clear whether this is an abstract 'hieroglyphic' representation or not.

[483] Collon 2001: 71-72, pl. X.130-131.
[484] Lehmann-Haupt 1931: 546-549.
[485] Ayvazian 2006: TK 01.
[486] Özgüç 1969: 74 and pl. XXVII.
[487] See Salvini 1993.
[488] Ayvazian 2006: ER 38.
[489] Ayvazian 2006: BA 05; CT 01.
[490] Ayvazian 2006: TK 25.

2.5.2.8. Stamp seals' impressions

Of numerous seal impressions, only the iconography of the base can be recovered: they represent abstract symbols, such as moon crescents (**Ps-Ay-7** to **9**)[491] or winged solar disks (**Ps-Ay-10**, **11**; **Ps-Ba-3** to **8**)[492], scenes definable as sets of "hieroglyphs" (**Ps-Ba-9**; **Ps-Top-4**)[493] or scenes whose general meaning is unclear (**Ps-Ay-12**,**13**)[494]. The seal **Ps-Ay-11**, stamped twice on a bulla, is vaguely reminiscent of the impressions on the base of some seals bearing the name of the sovereign: it depicts a lion standing under a winged solar disk. The elongated shape of the impression, vaguely rectangular, together with the absence of an epigraph, cannot allow us to include this impression among those characteristics of royal glyptics. A lion is also one of the subjects depicted on the imprint of the seal **Ps-Ba-9**[495], which is perfectly rectangular: it depicts a lion walking with its tail pointing downwards, two birds, and some abstract symbols, such as a crescent and a trident. The meaning behind these representations is not clear, nor is it clear whether they actually correspond to signs that should be interpreted as "hieroglyphs". An impression found at Bastam shows a more peculiar iconography: on the seal impression **Ps-Ba-10**[496] there is a representation of a hunt between a feline and a goat, which seems to be absent from Urartian royal art, while it is found on Assyrian wall panels. Interestingly, the impression of the seal base **Ps-Top-5** corresponds to that of the inscribed seal **S-Top-15-17**, of which it is probably a part.

2.5.2.9. Varia

Some cylindrical seal impressions appear to bear a scene exclusively composed of purely abstract elements: the image on the specimen **Ps-Ba-11**[497] is introduced by a human figure wearing a knee-long tunic and preceding another figure looking to the right, a character with horizontal wings and four arms, two pointing diagonally up and further two diagonally down. The arms have plant-like finials. The figures are accompanied by abstract representations: crescents, a winged solar disk, stars, perhaps a spear, and what appears to be a representation of a lion lying under the winged solar disk. A lion is also depicted on the base of the cylindrical seal. **Ps-Ba-12**[498] also depicts a scene with different characters: the focal point of the composition is a man holding by the tails two upside-down composite animals, a griffin and a horned winged lion. To the left of this group there is another one, formed by a vertical row of creatures, such as a winged lion with a crescent above it, an elongated fish and a sphinx with a long raised tail and a raised right front leg. The scene is reminiscent of some Assyrian representations identifiable as "three-figure contest scenes"[499] in which, however, the central character tends to grasp the paw or the neck of the animal he is fighting: only in the case of a cylindrical seal datable to the end

[491] Ayvazian 2006: AY 09-11.
[492] Ayvazian 2006: AY 12, 21; BA 06-08, 22, 29-30.
[493] Ayvazian 2006: BA 23; TK 09.
[494] Ayvazian 2006: AY 08 and 18.
[495] Ayvazian 2006: BA 23.
[496] Ayvazian 2006: BA 26.
[497] Ayvazian 2006: BA 09.
[498] Ayvazian 2006: BA 24.
[499] Collon 2001: 165-190.

of the 8th century BCE and classified as coming from a Babylonian workshop[500], the central character grasps the tails of the animals.

2.6. Wall decorations

2.6.1. Wall paintings

Knowledge of Urartian paintings today is based mainly on finds from two key sites, Altıntepe and Erebuni, as well as on a small number of pictorial fragments from other Urartian sites[501]. Such as other specific features typical of Urartian art, the paintings are mainly based on more or less contemporary Assyrian models, except for certain details, such as depictions of pomegranate fruits, lions, and divine headdresses, which differ from those depicted in Assyrian wall paintings[502]. Sometimes, one can find architectural elements painted in colours, such as the columns of the temple of Ayanis[503], which show that painting was widely used in the Urartian area to create contrasts with the building materials used in the construction of the fortresses: the colours used were white, black, brown, blue and red. Almost all of the pictorial evidence in Urartu is related to the templar areas or to royal spaces[504], which underlines the royal character of Urartian wall paintings: in general, the quality of the paintings is extremely high, with a remarkable level of accuracy for details of the small elements that made up the scene. The parallels that can be established between the different fragments of wall paintings in Urartu reveal that their composition and themes were essentially identical, sign that their execution was commanded by a centralised authority[505]. The composition generally consists of overlapping horizontal registers, as has already been shown for other objects typical of Urartian royal art.

Most fragments of Urartian paintings come from the fortress of Erebuni, where they were found in different areas of the citadel[506]. They have made it possible to reconstruct two different pictorial cycles, one characterised by a more static approach, linked to the religious sphere, and the other more realistic, depicting scenes of hunting and rural life[507]. The first group of paintings closely resembles the rigorous layout that characterises royal art, with a division into horizontal registers depicting familiar themes: palmettes, crenelations, rosettes, scenes of devotion to the sacred tree, bulls and lions placed next to squares with concave sides, festoons and garlands. One particular pictorial fragment shows a line of deities holding a *situla* and the branch of a sacred tree (**Wd-Er-1**)[508]. The reconstruction of the second group of paintings is based on Oganesyan's interpretations and therefore does not allow for precise observations regarding its composition: anyway, it represents a hunting scene with an archer on a chariot and pastoral scenes arranged on five registers. Surprisingly, it was painted on top of another wall

[500] Collon 2001: 170, pl. XXXVI.331.
[501] On this topic, see Dan et al. 2019.
[502] Van Loon 1966: 69.
[503] Çilingiroğlu 2001c: 38.
[504] Already in Oganesyan 1973: 60, "The excavations (…) have quite obviously shown that in Urartu architectural wall-paintings constituted an almost integral part of its monumental buildings – ecclesiastical as well as secular".
[505] Oganesyan 1973: 62-63.
[506] See Dan et al. 2019: 171.
[507] Arbitrarily reconstructed by Oganesyan (1961: 60; 1973: fig. 4).
[508] Oganesyan 1973: 68. Lines of people, not gods, are also represented in Assyrian wall paintings, as proved by Mallowan 1966: pl. 308.

painting[509], recently discovered during the restoration of the pastoral and hunting scenes' paintings, in which some elements allow us to recognise it as a part of the first pictorial cycle mentioned. Both painting cycles were considered Urartian by Oganesyan, more precisely to be from the time of Argišti Minuaḫi, the ruler who built the fortress of Erebuni[510], but this chronology has been discussed in many studies, with hypotheses dating the paintings from the end of the 7th century BCE[511] to the Achaemenid period[512]. With the discovery of this first painted layer below the pastoral and hunting scenes, the chronology is now based on two different periods: the first pictorial cycle and the fragments discovered below the other scenes date from the time of the fortress' foundation, in the first half of the 8th century BCE; the second pictorial cycle, on the other hand, could date from the activities of a different ruler, such as Rusa, son of Argišti, who lived in the first half of the 7th century BCE[513]. This date would be confirmed by contemporary neo-Assyrian paintings, constituting the model on which the Urartian one is based[514].

From Altıntepe comes an important group of pictorial fragments[515], found in the temple area (**Wd-Alt-2**) and the hypostyle hall, called "Apadana" (**Wd-Alt-1**): some of the paintings of the so-called "Apadana", as well as its foundation, are, however, to be dated to a late, pre-Achaemenid period, just before the end of the 7th century BCE[516], and are probably not be considered Urartian. Fragments similar to those from Erebuni come from the Level I Temple, dated to the second half of the 8th century BCE[517], and consist of a central frieze depicting bulls and hybrid creatures kneeling or standing next to squares with concave sides, scenes of worship of the sacred tree, garlands, rosettes, and an upper frieze that probably contained a hunting scene that cannot be reconstructed exactly[518].

A few pictorial fragments also come from Room 25 of Karmir-blur, one of the wine storerooms of the fortress, and possibly belong to a room on the upper floor (**Wd-Kb-1**)[519]. Among the fragments, there are remnants of scenes of devotion to the sacred tree and ornamental patterns already seen in earlier paintings, such as garlands, rosettes, palmettes and pomegranates. Also in Armavir-blur remains of paintings were found, badly preserved but showing scenes of devotion to the sacred tree, animals and palmettes on different registers (**Wd-Ab-1**)[520]. From the temple area of Aznavurtepe comes a fragment depicting a kneeling bull (**Wd-Azn-1**)[521], while small fragments of geometrical patterns, human figures, leaves, palmettes, trees and flowers (**Wd-Çav-1**) were found in Çavuştepe, a centre founded by Sarduri Argištiḫi[522]. The Temple Area of Ayanis also yielded numerous pictorial fragments, which do not,

[509] Dan et al. 2019: 172-174.
[510] Oganesyan 1961: 60.
[511] Nunn 2012: 331.
[512] Ter-Martirosov 2012: 171.
[513] Dan et al. 2019: 178.
[514] See Albenda 2005: 25-29; Kühne 1989/1990: 319-320.
[515] Özgüç 1963: 47-50; Özgüç 1966: 47; Karaosmanoğlu et al. 2007: fig. 10.
[516] Nunn 2012: 335-337 and tab. 22.02.
[517] Nunn 2012: tab. 22.02.
[518] Özgüç 1966: 12, fig. 14.
[519] Piotrovskij 1952: 41; Piotrovskij 1955: 7.
[520] Tirac'yan 1998-2000: 162-164; Mahé 1996: 1286.
[521] Özgüç 1966: 47.
[522] Unluckily the description can't be accurate, as the original publication of the paintings lack details (Erzen 1963: 541-542). Other summary descriptions are to be found in Azarpay 1968: 88, note 51, and in Tarhan 2005: 120.

however, allow a precise reconstruction of the scenes depicted: there are, however, traces of geometric designs or figures, painted in blue and brown[523].

2.6.1.1. Analysis of the decorative motifs

The motifs represented in Urartian wall paintings are standardised and fixed, as is always the case with royal art, and can therefore easily be isolated and analysed individually. Apart from the purely decorative elements, such as palmettes, rosettes and crenelations, quite common in Near Eastern art, two scenes in particular are repeated within the wall paintings.

1. Bulls and lions standing next to a square with concave sides. Among the various representations of this motif, only the bulls are kneeling: they have their visible front leg bent at an acute angle with the knee resting on the floor line, in a position of reverence. This choice may have been dictated by the limited space available, which does not allow a standing bull to be depicted, as it is taller than a lion. The bull's tail is pointing downwards, as is usual in Urartian representations, while the lion's tail is curled up and pointing upwards: the lion is walking and roaring. The sides of the squares are decorated with small rosettes arranged in rows, while in the centre there is a larger rosette. The motif of the kneeling bull is present in one Neo-Assyrian painting on the walls of Upper Chamber C in Nimrud[524], while it is more common on ivories[525]. Interestingly, kneeling bulls are depicted in wall paintings preceding the Urartian period and dated to Adad-Nirari III, painted in his palace in Nimrud[526]; conversely, kneeling goats are often depicted in Neo-Assyrian art, in both painting[527] and ivory carving[528]. On the other hand, lions are never depicted in what remains of Assyrian wall painting: it is interesting to note the revival of an Assyrian decorative theme, depicting animals at the sides of a central geometric element[529], reinterpreted in a more "Urartian" key thanks to the presence of animals, the bull and the lion, which are linked to royalty. The square with concave sides is common in Assyria also as a stand-alone decorative element, not necessarily linked to the presence of animals flanking it[530], while in Urartu it is closely linked to this type of scene.
2. Scenes of adoration of the sacred tree. Already isolated as a typical decorative element of Urartian royal art, these scenes consist of two winged or unwinged figures, who tend to carry a situla and an aspersorium pine cone, standing on either side of a sacred tree composed of specular branches departing from a thin central trunk; at the end of the branches are circular elements that may resemble pomegranates. The frieze in which this scene is depicted is visibly smaller than the central frieze where bulls and lions are depicted: it has the same height as the small friezes containing purely decorative elements such as garlands, palmettes and crenelations. This scene is surprisingly not found in Assyrian wall painting, but rather has its

[523] Çilingiroğlu 2001c: 37.
[524] Albenda 2005: pl. 5.
[525] Mallowan – Davies 1970: pls. XXXII.112, XXXIII.126-127
[526] Albenda 2005: 126.
[527] Albenda 2005: pls. 9-10.
[528] Mallowan – Davies 1970: pls. XXXIV.134-140, XXXVIII, XXXIX.
[529] Not only squares with concave sides, but also circles; see, for example, Albenda 2005: pl. 33.
[530] Albenda 2005: 30, fig. 6.

roots in the reliefs depicted on the orthostats of the North-West Palace of Nimrud from the time of Ashurnasirpal II[531] and in some individual figures carved on ivory objects[532].

Urartian artists thus sought their own interpretation of the Assyrian paintings, maintaining the setting of several parallel friezes and choosing to reproduce some of the decorative elements depicted there, but innovating the themes, probably according to the instructions of the ruler. The scenes depicted must have had some religious significance for the Urartian dynasty, given the choice of representing scenes of devotion to the sacred tree within a figurative register of reduced dimensions. As in Assyria, there is a frieze containing the main scene, in this case the alternation of bulls, lions and squares, accompanied by smaller registers containing decorative elements such as palmettes, rosettes, crenelations and, in Urartu, scenes of devotion to the sacred tree.

2.6.2 Various decorations

In addition to the wall paintings, in Urartu there are also decorations made through carvings and inlays on stone and metal.

Undoubtedly, the best-known wall decorations in the Urartian territory come from the temple area of the Ayanis site[533]: the inner walls of the *cella* are decorated with courses of andesite slabs above which there is a mudbrick wall, still preserved and bearing traces of a possible decoration (**Wd-Ay-1**). The andesite slabs show a decoration that has no parallel in Urartian art: each block is carved with an inlaid motif in painted and engraved white stone[534]. The motifs depicted represent gods, winged sphinxes, griffins, rosettes and some plants: themes already known in royal art except for the *Mischwesen*, which do not appear on other objects owned by the sovereign after the Anzaf shield. The technique in which the decorations are executed is known, throughout the ancient Near East, only from the site of Ayanis: the walls of the Ayanis *cella* are to be considered a *unicum* in the artistic panorama of the Near East. The *cella* contained a podium (**Wd-Ay-2**), placed in front of the entrance, made of blocks of raw bricks covered with slabs of alabaster; through holes, some figures of animals, presumably in gold, were probably affixed to the alabaster covering, of which only the holes containing the nails used to affix them and their silhouettes, imprinted on the stone due to a later occurred fire, are preserved today[535]. The alabaster slabs placed on the upper side of the podium still preserve the original engraved decoration depicting figures of divinities and mythological animals inserted inside a structure composed by the union of the branches of a sacred tree, decorated by a chevrons motif, which forms regular metopes, so that each figure is inserted in one of these spaces. At the interlacement of the different branches, small sacred trees with pomegranate fruits are represented. In the seven lines that contain the decoration, only three motifs used in the decoration of the podium can be isolated: winged lions, griffins, winged lions with human heads; all the figures are represented in pairs, one facing the other. An identical podium made in onyx was found in 2014 inside the so-called "Hall with Podium"[536] which is accessed through a passage in the east wall of the temple's *temenos* and is located exactly behind the

[531] See, for example, BM124583.
[532] Mallowan – Davies 1970: pls.XLIII-XLIV.
[533] See, on this, Çilingiroğlu 2001c.
[534] Çilingiroğlu 2001c: 41.
[535] Çilingiroğlu 2001c: 42.
[536] Işıklı et al. 2019.

podium placed in the *cella*. This podium preserves a decoration arranged in ten lines of antithetically-positioned winged creatures, situated on both sides of a sacred tree, with a pattern repeated every three bands (**Wd-Ay-3**). Beyond the question of how this newly discovered room could be used[537], it is relevant to note that there were two identical podiums located a few meters apart, in two different rooms of the temple area of Ayanis.

If it is true that the technique of execution of the decoration is proper to the site of Ayanis, the decorative motifs clearly take inspiration from the previously known Urartian art, deriving from Assyrian art: it is possible to divide the decoration of the walls and the podia in different parts, isolating the single motifs and analysing them to identify their origin. All the figures are characterised in detail: the lions' roar, their musculature is defined by precise lines, the tail is turned downwards, with the tip curved, the wings have well-defined feathers. The bodies of winged lions and griffins do not differ in decoration. An unusual detail is the definition of the lion's ribs. Each metope of sub-rectangular shape has the representation of a pine cone or bud engraved in the middle of the upper side.

- Motif 1: *Mischwesen* confronted on either side of a "sacred tree" (walls of the *cella* and *podia*). In this case, the hybrid creatures are composed with the body of a lion, winged, with its tail pointing downwards, and they may have lion's, human's or bird's heads. If it has a human head, it wears a kind of *polos* also attested in the figures of winged gods of the following motif. These chimaeras do not exist in Urartian royal art before Rusa, son of Argišti, but are instead attested in popular art of the Urartian area: examples of these creatures can be found on several bronze belts, for example, those from Altıntepe[538], Burmageçit[539], Dedeli[540], Metsamor[541] and Tli[542]. In the sphere of the so-called "Transcaucasian" belts, it is not common to find mythological creatures realized with parts of different animals[543]; in Neo-Assyrian art, winged lions with human heads (*lamassū*) were used as guardians of the gateways, especially from the time of Ashurnasirpal II[544]. They are present on seals, often associated with deities: in some cases, they are positioned facing each other at the sides of a sacred tree[545]. However, cases of winged lions are not currently known from other representations in the ancient Near East[546]. Since the lion is an animal intrinsically connected with kingship, the king may have chosen to represent it in the form of a deity right inside the *cella* of the temple of Ayanis. What appears unusual, in the representation of the scene, is the shape chosen to represent the sacred tree placed between the *Mischwesen* in the decoration of the walls of the *cella*: it is in fact composed of a rosette with eight petals inserted into a sort of vase, as if to indicate the trunk.
- Motif 2: kneeling deities facing each other on either side of a floral or geometric element (walls of the *cella*). The kneeling figure is rare within "Urartian" art: it appears only on two belts as the

[537] On this topic, see Işıklı et al. 2019: 94-97.
[538] **B-Alt-1**. Özgüç 1961: 272-273, figs. 23-24.
[539] **B-Bur-2**. Yıldırım 1991: figs. 10.6-10.
[540] **B-Ded-2, 3**. Kellner 1991: 45, n. 103; pl. 30.103.
[541] **B-Met-1**. Esayan 1984: fig. 26.84.
[542] **B-Tli-2**. Techov 1981: pl. 94.
[543] Only on a belt from Tli (**B-Tli-2**) it is possible to recognize a winged horse (Castelluccia 2017: 67, fig. 99).
[544] Green 1994: 255.
[545] Collon 2001: pl. XII.152-153.
[546] Except for a group of seals dated to the Achaemenid period (Collon 1985: nos. 893-895).

position of soldiers[547], and in one belt as the position of a "worshipper" praying a winged solar disc above the head[548]; one figurine of warrior from Toprakkale is depicted in the same position[549]. It is not clear whether the figures depicted are simply kneeling or running: in either case, this position is not common for gods or goddesses, even in the Assyrian context. In Neo-Assyrian glyptic, a deity in *Knielauf* is depicted on one single seal representing the god Ninurta[550], while the otherworldly creature Ḫumbaba is depicted kneeling on two other seals[551]. In monumental art, as well, there is a single representation of winged *genii* kneeling on either side of a sacred tree, on a panel decorating the walls of the North-West Palace of Nimrud, from the time of Ashurnasirpal II[552], two centuries older than the foundation of Ayanis. The position of the hands, the headdress and the wings are reminiscent of those of the two winged *genii* depicted on the bas-relief found on basalt blocks at Adilcevaz[553], also dating to the time of Rusa, son of Argišti. This may be the same divine figure, worshipped in particular at the end of the Urartian period, and important enough to be represented inside the *cella* of the Ayanis temple. Again, the element on either side of which the genii are facing is not a traditional sacred tree: these are in fact Maltese crosses or rosettes.

– Motif 3: sacred tree (*podia*). This type of sacred tree, represented in the decoration of both podia, consists of three sets of branches, one on top of the other, joined in the middle by a diamond-shaped element; the branches may bear buds or pomegranate fruits at the end. Sacred trees represented in this way are not common in Urartian royal art, but they appear on some bronze belts[554] and seem to be an exclusively "Urartian" creation, not pertaining to Assyrian art. They were later adopted by the Scythians, who used them to decorate the hilts of their *akinakai*[555].

In addition to the site of Ayanis, stone inlays and carvings come from the fortress of Toprakkale: a red marble frieze, unfortunately now lost, depicted carvings of opposing bulls, lions, vines, palmettes and rosettes (**Wd-Top-1**)[556]. A fragmentary bronze plaque, on the other hand, shows an openwork decoration that could have been placed either on the wall or a piece of furniture made of perishable material (**Wd-Top-2**)[557]. On it, a winged and bearded figure wearing a *polos* is depicted three times, with his arms raised. He has a belt at his waist and an ankle-length tunic with fringes at the end. The three figures are separated by a *guilloche* decoration: two figures are facing right and the last one left. Above the figures, there is a two-band decoration with three parallel horizontal lines. In this case, the figures were probably represented in the act of holding something, since no symbol above them would qualify them as worshippers. Also from Toprakkale, again made in bronze with an openwork technique, there is a decorative frieze preserved for a fragment and supplemented with a substantial part acquired in the Van area (**Wd-Top-3**)[558], bearing a cuneiform inscription that, in the ductus, recalls the texts of

[547] Dedeli (**B-Ded-3**; Kellner 1991: 45, n. 103; pl. 30-103) and Yeghegnadzor (**B-Yeg-1**; Dan – Bonfanti – Gasparyan *forthcoming*).
[548] Karmir-blur (**B-Kb-3**; Piotrovskij 1967: fig. 31).
[549] **Mf-Top-1**; Barnett 1954: 7 and pl. IIa.
[550] Collon 2001: no. 285.
[551] Collon 2001: nos. 338-339.
[552] BM124580.
[553] **Rel-Ad-2-11**.
[554] Ani Pemza (**B-Ani-1**; Piotrovskij 1966: 359-360, fig. 87); Çavuştepe (**B-Çav-1**; Erzen 1978: 55-59); Zakim (**B-Zak-1**; Spytzin 1907: 131).
[555] See, for example, Galanina 1997: pls. 7-8.
[556] Barnett 1950: 25, mentioning, with a mistake in the indication of the year, an article published by Farmakovski in 1912 (Farmakovski 1914).
[557] Barnett 1972: 174.
[558] Barnett 1950: 16.

Rusa, son of Argišti[559]. The fragments are decorated with an engraved bull, kneeling and facing left, with the head and hooves in openwork, indicating that they must have been made of a different material. The mane and tail are very detailed, and the tail is also pierced and has a lapis lazuli inlay. On the right of the bull there is a star, or a sun, with openwork in the middle, below which is an engraved decoration, probably representing a mountain. Below the bull, there are openwork decorations in rectangles, circles and chevrons. A cuneiform inscription runs along the upper edge of the plaque: "'a?-]al-du-ni šu-i-ni-e-i qi-g[u-"[560]. Its meaning cannot be known with certainty, but it could be related to the subjugation of one or more populations[561].

2.7. Sculpture

2.7.1. Figurines in the round

Urartian archaeology has returned a good number of figurines and statuettes in the round made of bronze, clay, stone or ivory[562]: their function is not always clear, especially concerning clay figurines. Such findings represent a rarity in the art of the ancient Near East, particularly in the 1st millennium BCE: Frankfort's statement, "Assyrian sculpture in the round is, as far as it is known, insignificant"[563] cannot be contradicted even in the light of the archaeological discoveries of the seventy years that separate his assertion from the present. Even in the neo-Hittite area, there aren't, as far as it is known, discoveries of clay or bronze figurines, while larger statues made of stone or bas reliefs dominate the scene.

2.7.1.1. Clay figurines

Clay figurines have not been found in a great number in Urartian archaeology: only three sites, Kef Kalesi, Ayanis and Karmir-blur[564], produced this kind of objects. The clay figurines, despite the scarcity of the discoveries, can be divided into three different groups, namely fish-attired human figurines,

[559] Salvini 2012: 72.
[560] CTU B 18-1.
[561] See the meaning of *'aldu-* in Salvini 2018: 381.
[562] The ivory figurines are treated in a separate section.
[563] Frankfort 1954: 81.
[564] Batmaz 2019: 62 "Clay statuettes, which were representatives of the spiritual world in Urartian religion, have been found only in storerooms of the fortresses of Rusa II, such as Karmir Blur, Kef Kalesi, and Ayanis. Therefore, the main reason why they were made and their meaning must have been the same. (…) Although the regnal years of Rusa II in the 7th century were known as a rebirth or revival of the kingdom, it was also a period when Rusa force the resources for the economic surplus considerably. So, the economic limits of the kingdom were squeezed for the ruling elites. Furthermore, it is suggested that a regional famine, as a result of climate and some other environmental factors, was affecting the economy of the kingdom. (…) Urartu, whose state operation was firmly connected to religion, put in place a theocratic bureaucracy in order to overcome famine, to heal sickness, and to avert evils by placing apotropaic clay statuettes especially to the storerooms of cereals. Yet all these measures taken in spiritual level would not have stopped the fall of the kingdom towards the end of the century."

human figurines with animal organs, and god figurines[565], with a majority of specimens belonging to the first group.

From the site of Kef Kalesi, in the debris that occupied the door between Room 2 and Room 3 in the storerooms, come four clay figurines standing on a pedestal (**Cf-Kef-1** to **4**), said to be divinities[566]. They are barely sketched, wearing a helmet extending downward on the back, as if it was a dorsal fin, and holding in their right hand, raised, an object similar to a "sacred fruit", while it is not clear what they hold in the left hand[567]; one of the figurines perhaps has a long beard. The figurines are not particularly refined or detailed, like the clay figurines found in the warehouses of the fortress of Karmir-blur. In warehouse 26, on a step near the sacrificial table, some figurines were found standing on a pedestal (**Cf-Kb-1** to **4**): two of them are particularly fragmentary, but what remains indicates that they were originally similar to the better-preserved figurines[568]. The best-preserved one is barely sketched, but one can recognize the eyes, nose and mouth, beard and, probably, a conical helmet. The left arm, the only one preserved, is bent on the chest: it originally must have held a spear or twig[569]. The bust is disproportionately long and the legs are very short; on the backside, both the head and the back are decorated with fish skin. Originally, they were coloured, and still today they bear traces of blue paint[570]. They probably replicate the same subject already observed for the Kef Kalesi figurines, connected by the archaeologists of both sites[571] with the "fish-priests" involved in the cult of Ea and the treatment of diseases, leading them to consider these objects as cult figures. Such "fish-garbed figures" are attested for the first time in the Cassite Babylon[572], becoming much more popular, however, in the Neo-Assyrian and Neo-Babylonian area, where they were considered protector genii and were carved in bas-relief on the orthostats of palaces and temples; clay figurines depicting such genii were also found in excavations, usually placed under the floor of buildings[573]. These discoveries are the reflection of a ritual sphere, where the fish-garbed figures represented the *apkallū*, the Seven Wise Men, who lived at the beginning of human civilization and came out of the sea to teach people every skill necessary for society: they were hybrid creatures, half men and half fish. The Mesopotamian priest *āšipū*[574] tried to imitate these supernatural creatures by wearing a fish disguise, while performing the ritual of *Bīt mēseri* at the patient's bed[575]; so as this character is imitated by *āšipū*, he must have originally been a supernatural creature connected to the myth of the Seven Wise Men[576]. Again, in the ritual of *Bīt mēseri*, several prophylactic figurines had to be used, depicting divinities or supernatural beings together with the so-called ^{gi}*urigallū*, represented as stylised "sacred trees"[577]: an object similar to a pinecone, a stylised "sacred tree", is held in the hand by the figurines from Kef Kalesi (**Cf-Kef-1** to **4**) and it may also have

[565] Batmaz 2019: 58.
[566] Bilgiç – Öğün 1965: 13-14 and pls. VII a-b-c. Batmaz 2019: 58, "Boris Piotrovskij, the excavator of Karmir Blur, describes the figurines as 'gods in fish skin', and connected to Mesopotamian Ea, whereas B. Öğün, director of Kef Kalesi excavations, labelled them 'fish-priests'".
[567] Bilgiç – Öğün 1965: 13: " (…) and the left hand (holding) something like a wearing long beards which could be completed by a visual cannibalization"; Batmaz 2019: 58 thinks that they are holding a bucket.
[568] Piotrovskij 1952: 24-25, fig. 9.
[569] Barnett 1959: 3.
[570] Barnett 1959: 3.
[571] Bilgiç – Öğün 1965: 14; Piotrovskij in Barnett 1959: 3, footnote 1.
[572] Green 1994: 252.
[573] See Green 1983.
[574] Incantation expert, whose efficacy derived from the fact that he acted as the emissary of Ea (Hrůša 2015: 127)
[575] Hrůša 2015: 130-131, footnote 341.
[576] A more detailed explanation regarding the "fish-garbed figures" is to be found in Black – Green 1992: 82-83.
[577] Hrůša 2015: 133 and fn. 348.

been supported by the figurines from Karmir-blur. The depictions of fish are not common at all in Urartian art: if the fish is sometimes represented as part of the body of a hybrid creature on belts, and only once depicted as a single character on a hybrid bronze belt[578], other fish-shaped objects are a bronze figurine from the Eastern Storage Room in Ayanis[579] and a stamp seal impression on clay found in Argištiḫinili[580].

Urartian ritual habits are not clear at all: however, the groups of figurines have not even been found buried under a floor, as is common in Assyria[581], but they were associated with storage or warehouse contexts. It is not to be excluded that the figurines were considered simple genii, protectors placed in control of the Urartian reserves: on the other hand, their depiction on Assyrian orthostats[582] suggests that, at some point, they lost, or not only preserved, their religious connotation of healing, being considered also protectors of the royal palaces. From Warehouse 28 in Karmir-blur, another statuette of a divinity has been found, the so-called Scorpion God (**Cf-Kb-5**): once again, the figurine is barely sketched, with circular and oversized eyes, nose, mouth and beard. It bears traces of paint: the face and eyes were white, the hair was brown; the conical headgear was bright blue. The arms were bent forward, but now they are lost from the elbows down; the short legs seem bent, as if about to sit down. The figurine probably had a tail, which is now lost. This figurine is considered that of the Scorpion God, *girtablullû* in Akkadian, whose function was equally of protection of the house[583]. Apparently, the one found in Karmir-blur is the only figurine representing this character physically found in an excavation[584]: However, it seems slightly different from the description of a canonical Scorpion God, "a supernatural being with a horned cap of divinity, human head with beard, human body, the hindquarters and talons of a bird, a snake-headed penis, and a scorpion's tail"[585], unless the legs are not actually bent but shaped like bird's talons, explaining their unusual shape and size. Statuettes depicting such a character are mentioned in protective magic rituals. Also in this case, it is not possible to proceed with further statements regarding Urartian rituality; from these findings, however, it seems that protection rituals, probably influenced by Assyrian ones, were also performed in Urartu. The last clay figurine comes from the site of Ayanis: found in the Temple area, it is composed of a simple, almost cylindrical fragment, probably engraved with scales that resemble those of a fish; there are numerous interpretations of this object, first considered a vague mythological creature, then more precisely a sphinx and finally a deity, similar to those represented in the clay figurines of Kef Kalesi and Karmir-blur: also in this case, the use attributed to this discovery is prophylactic[586].

From the warehouses of Ayanis also come two extremely fragmentary clay statuettes (**CF-Ay-1, 2**)[587]: they represent two human figures whose only visible characteristic is the hair on their neck, made in relief. As their state of preservation is particularly lacking, it is not actually possible to provide

[578] See the belt **B-Tli-3**, whose complete figure is published in Bonfanti – Cesaretti – Dan *forthcoming*: fig. 7.
[579] Sağlamtimur *et. al.* 2001: 224, 245, pl IV.64.
[580] Ayvazian 2006: 151, 398; AR 11.
[581] See, for example, Green 1983: 87.
[582] See, for example, the orthostat depicted in Black – Green 1992: 83.
[583] Hrůša 2015: 134.
[584] Black – Green 1992: 161. Ayvazian 2006: 572 (CT 2), 691 (KB 1), found two scorpion-related figures on seals.
[585] Black – Green 1992: 161.
[586] Sağlamtimur *et al.* 2001: 224. A seal, said to be Urartian, is also mentioned, which Piotrovskij bears as proof that these figurines had the same role in Urartian and Assyrian circles: however, in Piotrovskij 1967: 77, this seal, belonging to a private collection, has a *fundort unbekannt*.
[587] Çilingiroğlu – Erdem 2005: 125 and fig. 11.

comparisons or formulate hypotheses on their meaning. A clay figurine wearing a horned headdress was found in Ayanis Storeroom 10 (**Cf-Ay-3**)[588]. The only preserved fragments are the head, an arm, and the base on which the figurine was placed. The head is preserved down to the neck: eyes and eyebrows were sculpted in relief while the mouth is a simple incised line. Just below the chin, there is a beard detailed with three vertical wavy lines. The headdress has two horns curved downward and a crest on the top. On the neck, curled hair is depicted with horizontal and vertical incised lines. The right arm is preserved from the fingers to the elbow, up to the shoulder, and probably it was originally extended outward. The pedestal has small portions of the figurine's feet preserved. Only the head of another similar figurine was found in the same storeroom

2.7.1.2. Bronze figurines

Undoubtedly, the largest number of figurines found in Urartian area is made of bronze, often with a much higher quality than stone or clay figurines. Bronze figurines have been found in large numbers at several Urartian sites, but they are mainly related to the citadel of Toprakkale: several bronze figurines were found there, probably part of a god's throne, like those seen in Assyrian art, for example on seals. In this section, the figurines are subdivided, according to the subject represented, in anthropomorphic and theriomorphic figurines, in particular depicting lions. A separate paragraph is devoted to the Throne of Toprakkale, which brings together figurines depicting humans and hybrid creatures. Finally, a brief discussion is devoted to an accurate depiction of the city walls and a tower, which are also depicted on stone and ivory.

2.7.1.2.1. Antropomorphic figurines

An unusual style, stylised in the shape but more accurate in details, characterizes the five warrior figurines coming from the same context of the Toprakkale site (**Mf-Top-1** to **5**)[589]: the best-preserved specimen (**Mf-Top-1**) is represented in *Knielauf*[590], wearing a sort of circular medallion on the chest and a helmet on the head. The helmet is common to all these figurines, or at least to the three that have preserved the head: it is not the usual conical helmet represented in Urartian art, but rather a helmet surmounted by a semi-circular crest. Surprisingly, a similar helmet is worn by Urartian warriors from the time of Ashurnasirpal II to the time of Tiglath-Pileser III, which preceded by at least a century and a half the foundation of the site of Toprakkale. According to Piotrovskij, "these small objects have no characteristic of Urartian features, which makes their ascription to Urartu rather doubtful"[591]. There are actually no compelling reasons to consider them, at least as far as warriors are concerned, creations of Urartian origin.

[588] Batmaz 2019: 59, fig. 1.b.
[589] Barnett 1954: 7 and pl. IIa-d.
[590] While the other figurines are represented walking.
[591] Piotrovskij 1967: 53.

From the Darabey fortress, close to Van, comes a statuette of a woman[592] which has long been considered as depicting the goddess Arubani (**Mf-Dar-1**)[593]: the figurine represents a sitting woman, with almond-shaped eyes, wearing a long garment and a veil on her head, both decorated with square motifs. She is probably wearing a long necklace with strings of beads and a sort of belt, probably decorated with geometric motifs, maybe squares, which is for the most part hidden by the long necklace. The right hand is open and outstretched, while the left hand is holding something, probably a branch. It is a sort of *unicum* in Urartian art, and it has been considered a goddess due to the similarity between this figurine and the depiction of a (probable) goddess seated on her throne which can be found on the gold medallion from Toprakkale (**M-Top-2**): she is anyway not wearing any clearly Near Eastern divine attribute, like the horned headgear. The fortress of Toprakkale has returned numerous bronze figurines of the highest quality; starting with human figures, one should undoubtedly mention a statuette[594], about 36 cm tall, representing a standing man holding a twig (**Mf-Top-9**). The face of the figurine, a large part of which is preserved, is finely made in limestone: the eyes, probably, had to accommodate further inlays, now lost; the hair is styled in curls on the neck and sides of the face. The dress is feet-long and decorated with small geometric engravings, the lower hem being decorated with eight-leaf rosettes. The chest is crossed by a sort of shoulder strap laid on the left shoulder and decorated with a breastplate, with five holes originally intended to contain other precious stones. The right arm is stretched along the body and in the hand holds a twig ending with a palm leaf[595], while the left arm is bent over the chest and holds a sort of shawl that descends from the left shoulder; both wrists are adorned with bracelets. On the surface of the figurine, there are traces of gold foil, which suggest that the whole figurine was originally covered with it. A detail that can undoubtedly help to date the figurine is represented by the curly hairstyle that frames the face: it is in fact typical of the reign of Sargon II[596], at the end of the 8th century BCE, which would coincide, given the time gap between the creation of a model and its adoption elsewhere, with the lifespan of Toprakkale. The absence of beard and the resemblance, both in the hairstyle and in the clothing, with a hybrid bull-woman figurine (**Mf-Top-12**), may suggest that the represented character is actually a female one. It is not clear who is the character represented by this figurine, nor what is the use for which it was created: it is unlikely to be a deity, not being in any way characterized as such, while it could instead be a provincial governor or a sovereign.

From Toprakkale comes also the last human figurine[597], about 20 cm high, made of lead, ivory and glass (**Mf-Top-7**): the robe, whose lower hem has fringes, is made entirely of lead and is shaped to accommodate the inlays of other materials, red, blue and white glass, and ivory; the ivory inlays are decorated with a rosette-shaped engraving. The face and hands are made entirely of ivory, closely resembling the ivory masks found at the Altıntepe and Karmir-blur sites, as well as, in the features, to the face of the previously analysed bronze figurine. The hair has the same hairstyle as the previous one, with curls framing the face and reaching the shoulders: again, the figurine would follow the trend

[592] Graff – Rakic 2014: 87.
[593] This goddess is considered the wife of the supreme god, Ḫaldi, and is mentioned in various inscriptions (see the lemma ^{D}*ʾAruba(i)ni* in Salvini 2018).
[594] Barnett 1950: 20-31 and pl. XX, labelled as "Royal attendant"; preserved in the Berlin Vorderasiatische Museum collection, inventory number VA 00774. This figurine is also discussed in the section on Phrygian contacts. It was suggested that this figurine was part of the so-called Throne of Toprakkale (see§ 2.7.1.2.3.).
[595] A similar object is held in the king's hand on Zincirli's neo-Hittite relief called "Barrakib and the scribe", now preserved in the Pergamonmuseum in Berlin.
[596] See below.
[597] Mitchell 1984. Preserved in the British Museum collection, inventory number BM 123870.

inaugurated by the sculptures of Sargon II, dating back to the beginning of the 7th century BCE. Both figurines probably represent dignitaries, being extremely elaborate and refined, in particular the second one, so much so as not to find further parallels in Urartian art.

There is a discussion about the number of bronze figurines in the round of so-called gods: if Piotrovskij[598] says that they are three, in reality there is only one coming from an archaeological excavation, which is the one found in Room 5 of the fortress of Karmir-blur (**Mf-Kb-1**)[599]. The statuette depicts a standing figure, wearing a horned headdress, decorated with a geometric motif on the lower edge; above the headdress, there is another cylindrical element with triangular decorations and a sort of loop at the top. The eyes, nose, and mouth of the figure are well rendered; the hair reaches the shoulders. He wears a long tunic at the ankles decorated with a square pattern, with a lower fringed hem; the chest is crossed by a shoulder strap that rests on the left shoulder. The right hand is resting along the side and holds a hammer, while the left hand, with the arm bent over the belly, holds an axe. The figurine rests its feet on a pedestal decorated with palm leaves. The attributes held in his hand convinced Piotrovskij[600] that the character represented the Urartian Storm god, Teišeba, who gave the name to the town of Karmir-blur itself, *Teišebaini*; much more dynamic representations of the god of the storm holding these objects can be found on the stone stelae from Tell Ahmar[601], where the god holds a bat on one side and a beam of lightning on the other[602]. Both the pedestal and the feature above the headgear show how this statuette was part of a more complex object, "(it was) either set on the top of a standard used for cult purposes, or belonged to the emblem of an Urartian military unit"[603]. Another figurine of a possible deity, even if it's not clear which god should be recognized in this depiction, was found in Toprakkale (**Mf-Top-8**)[604]: the only characteristic that indicates the divine nature of the character is the horned headdress.

2.7.1.2.2. Animal figurines

From Altıntepe, Tomb III, comes a bronze chariot pole in the form of an equine head (**Mf-Alt-1**)[605], with a mane made with parallel lines, pointed ears and features of the muzzle made in great detail; a similar bronze figurine was found inside a wine-cellar in the fortress of Karmir-blur (**Mf-Kb-1**)[606]: the equine head, preserved up to the base of the neck, shows the same details as the specimen of Altıntepe, and it is also configured as a chariot pole. A small bronze ox figurine comes from the North Fort of the

[598] Piotrovskij 1967: 52-53. Actually, he confirmed that two of them were purchased by the British Museum and the History Museum of Armenia without knowing their exact provenance, which, he says, is probably to be placed in the vicinity of Van. Since the site where they were found is not known either, these statuettes will not be discussed here.
[599] Piotrovskij 1950: 68, fig. 41.
[600] Among the other publications, see Piotrovskij 1967: 52.
[601] Musée du Louvre, AO 11505.
[602] An overview of the representation of the Storm Gods in ancient Near Eastern art can be found in Schwemer 2008b: 31-36.
[603] Piotrovskij 1967: 53.
[604] Barnett 1950: 20-31 and pl. XVIII.2.
[605] Özgüç 1961: 287, fig. 16.
[606] Piotrovskij 1967: 53 and pls. 24-25, "A distinctive feature is its flat surface, especially on the front and sides of the face, which suggest that the model from which it was cast was carved out of wood".

site of Aramus (**Mf-Ara-1**)[607] and is dated by the archaeologists, thanks to the stratigraphy, between the mid-8th and the 7th century BCE; the shape of the animal is very geometrical and particularly stylized, composed of a single bronze cylinder, which represents the body, from which four legs depart, always cylindrical, and an elongated snout surmounted by "U" shaped horns. The style of the figurine from Aramus is very similar to that of the standing horse figurine found in Toprakkale (**Mf-Top-6**)[608]: the body is rendered in the same way, starting from a cylindrical torso from which the legs, the tail and the head depart, but the level of rendering of the details is greater; the hooves, preserved only for the hind legs, the mane and the traits of the animal's snout are engraved and modelled in a rather realistic way, even going so far as to represent the bridle and the saddle worn by the horse.

Lion figurines

A separate category must be considered when talking about lion figurines. A *couchant* lion figurine was found in the temple area of Kayalıdere (**Mf-Kay-1**)[609]. It was made with the lost wax technique, so it is hollow inside; the snout is very well characterized, with decorations in the shape of a palmette indicating the whiskers and wrinkles above the nose, the mouth open in a roar, with teeth clearly visible, the eyes appear almost triangular. The head of the animal has a vaguely oval shape, almost slightly pointed at the top, as well as the specimens of ivory lions from the tombs of Altıntepe (**Iv-Alt-4**, **5**). The mane has a flames/*chevrons* characterization, the muscles on the front legs are engraved in the form of a tulip. It is a perfect example of an all-round bronze lion of Urartian area, with parallels reflected both in the bronze lion used as a decoration for an armrest from the Toprakkale site (**Mf-Top-17**)[610], in the ivory lions from Altıntepe (**Iv-Alt-4**, **5**) and the lion's head from Ayanis (**S-Ay-1**)[611]: from the temple area of this site, in fact, comes a bronze lion head plated with gold foil; the mouth open in a roar, the mane made by rubbing a soft material, for example leather, on the bronze. Similar to the Kayalıdere lion figurine are two other figurines representing *couchant* lions, one from Aznavurtepe / Patnos (**Mf-Azn-1**)[612], which has the same characteristics as the Kayalıdere lion, except for the definition of the mane, not outlined in the exemplar from Aznavurtepe, and the other one discovered by chance in the Armenian village of Sznak (**Mf-Szn-1**)[613] in what is probably considered a burial, whose publication consists only of a black and white drawing, therefore objectively not analysable.

2.7.1.2.3. The Throne of Toprakkale

The last bronze figurines analysed here belong to a piece of furniture whose reconstruction is subject to many speculations: the throne of Toprakkale, to which may pertain also the human figurine holding a twig previously analysed (**Mf-Top-9**)[614]. From 1870, round bronze figures said to be from Toprakkale

[607] Avetisyan – Allinger-Csollich 2008: 88-89; p. 88: "With its stylistic characteristics it could be defined as a distinctive example of Urartian sculpture".
[608] Barnett 1954: 7 and pl. IIe.
[609] Burney 1966: pl. X.
[610] Barnett 1950: 15 and pl. XI.
[611] Sağlamtimur *et al.* 2001: 223 and pl. III-48.
[612] Akurgal 1968: 60, *abb.* 26-27, 61, *abb.*28, *taf*. XXXVII.a-b.
[613] Xnkikyan 2002: 10 and ill. 1.
[614] An overview of the attempts of its reconstruction can be found in Seidl 1996: 185-186.

appeared on the antique market, bringing the site to the attention of archaeologists: during English and German excavations, further elements possibly comparable to the ones already known were discovered. Independently of each other, Boris B. Piotrovskij[615] and Richard D. Barnett[616] published the known bronze pieces, trying to provide an interpretation of these findings and arriving at the conclusion that they were dealing with a possible throne, iconographically similar to the ones depicted on the Maltai relief[617]. The last proposal of reconstruction of this hypothetical throne has been provided by Ursula Seidl[618], who, as the previous scholars, also bore in mind the objects from the antique market.

This throne ended up uniting several bronze figurines of dubious or unknown origin now scattered in museums all over the world, but four bronze figurines representing different subjects certainly come from Toprakkale. The first of them has the shape of a griffin vulture (**Mf-Top-10**), with a lion body but beak, wings and legs of a bird[619]: the beak is shaped like a hook, the eyes and thick eyebrows were probably made of stone or glass paste, now lost. The wings, decorated with parallel lines rendering the feathers, start from the front legs and end shortly after the tail. The body is decorated with small engraved details, such as spirals or circles, representing the fur. On the head there is a cylindrical support, probably intended to contain further inlays and used as a support for a flat surface that rested on the head of the statuette. The other two figurines are hybrids of the throne of Toprakkale: a winged ox, *couchant* and *regardant*[620], whose muzzle, or perhaps face, was made of a different material, limestone or ivory, and is now lost (**Mf-Top-14**). The wings of the hybrid are made so that they can accommodate inlays of different materials; fragments of gold leaf have been preserved in some of the engravings decorating the animal's body: the mane is made in a style vaguely reminiscent of a sacred tree, with a central "stem" from which branches go out, ending in buds; the bent legs and hooves are rendered in a very realistic way; the ears are on the sides of the head and the horns, facing forward, are placed just above the ears. The absence of a support above the head but the presence of a sort of pivot below the stomach may indicate that this figurine was placed above a surface but did not support anything above its head. Another statuette represents a winged woman-bull[621], *passante* and *regardante*[622], wearing a crown with horns above which there is another cylindrical element decorated with palm leaves, as the figure held on the head another element of the throne (**Mf-Top-12**). The hair is curled around the neck; the hands are joined in front of the chest, which is covered by a decorated belt; at the neck, a breastplate or a crescent-shaped medallion decorated with three engraved rosettes is worn above a band with square-shaped motifs that crosses the chest from the left shoulder[623]. The stomach is decorated with engravings of geometrical motifs, perhaps representing the bull's fleece. The wings were originally decorated with inlays, like those of the winged bull, of which only the grooves traced to insert the material and the engravings of small parallel lines remain; the hooves are engraved.

[615] Piotrovskij 1939.
[616] Barnett 1950:
[617] Barnett 1950: 28, fig. 13.
[618] Seidl 1994.
[619] Barnett 1950: 20 and pl. XVIII-1; preserved in the Berlin Vorderasiatisches Museum collection, inventory number VA 00775.
[620] Barnett 1950: 6 and pl. V. Another winged ox (**Mf-Top-11**), identical to this one but turned to the other side, is preserved in the Hermitage Museum and it has been published by Seidl (1994: pl. 18.2), and it is not clear if it was found in Toprakkale: given the resemblance with a contextualised piece, it has been chosen here to include it in the catalogue.
[621] Or maybe a man-bull; there are no direct details to identify it as a female figure.
[622] Barnett 1950: 6 and pls. VI-VII; preserved in the British Museum collection, inventory number BM 91247.
[623] This specimen will be discussed also in the section on Phrygian contacts.

An interesting detail of this element is the "hieroglyphic" inscription engraved on the upper side of the cylinder placed on the headgear, whose meaning is actually unknown. The last bronze figurine belonging to the throne[624] depicts a person standing on the rump of a *couchant*[625] bull: the tunic of the character, ankles-long and with a fringed hem, is decorated with detailed geometric engravings, curved lines, squares and rosettes (**Mf-Top-13**). The feet of the character are placed at the sides of the bull's rump; the muzzle of the animal was made of a different material, not preserved. The body of the bull is finely decorated with engraved ornamental lines, especially spirals that adorn the mane, chest and belly; the horns are placed on the sides of the muzzle, above the ears, and turn forward.

Other pieces, also made of bronze, probably belong to the throne, including a corner fragment on the top of which are two slits for ornamental figures (**Mf-Top-15**)[626]; on the underside are "hieroglyphs" and other slits, probably for the insertion of other pieces forming the seat of the throne. The inner side is decorated with a band containing four palmettes with eight leaves, connected by a double line ending in volutes, forming the base of each palmette; the upper and lower frames are decorated with an engraved *chevron* motif. The outer side is engraved with concave square motifs originally decorated with inlay. This was probably the throne piece above the actual foot[627]. Probably not of the throne proper, but a stool or footstool pertaining to it, is instead the furniture foot in the form of a lion's paw (**Mf-Top-16**)[628], the front of which is decorated with an incision of a winged sun disc and two stars above it; there are two lines of impressed triangles, perhaps containing an inlay, on the side of the lion's paw. One of the armrests of the throne could also be the statuette of a roaring lion (**Mf-Top-17**) cast together with a sort of elongated element that could be either the armrest itself or the connection between the armrest and the foot of the throne[629]. The roaring lion, *couchant*, is characterised in a very similar way to other lions found in the Urartian area: the muzzle has the characteristic U-shaped folds, the palmette-shaped whiskers and the vaguely pointed head at the top. The mane and fur are outlined in snails. The piece must have originally been covered in gold leaf, traces of which remain.

It is not common to find round bronze statuettes in Assyrian context; for parallels it is, in fact, necessary to check other artistic areas: an example of a hybrid creature is on the base of a limestone column depicting a female winged bull[630] from the site of Kuyunjik[631], which, despite the more refined details, brings to mind the bronze figurine of the Urartian throne. Since the muzzle, or face, of the Urartian winged bull is not preserved, it is not clear whether this was a hybrid with a human face: in such a case, it would be similar to the figurine of a woman-bull, although there are rare or non-existent cases in which this being is represented couchant. In the Urartian area, in fact, even the representation of winged bulls is rare: the Urartian belts, the main source of the *Mischwesen* of the Kingdom, show only one

[624] According to Seidl 1996, even the figurine of the standing dignitary, with the face in limestone, would belong to the throne.
[625] Barnett 1950: 15 and 31, pl. VI-3; preserved in the British Museum collection, inventory number BM 91243.
[626] Barnett 1950: pl. II.
[627] See the drawing in Barnett 1950: 26, fig. 14; it depicts a furniture foot from the antique market, but the current piece probably had the same function.
[628] Barnett 1950: pl. III.
[629] Barnett 1950: pl. XI.
[630] There is no agreement between scholars about the original Akkadian name; see Green 1994: 255.
[631] Brereton 2018: 37, fig. 33; preserved in the British Museum collection, inventory number BM 90954.

certain example of winged bull[632], embossed on the belt from the site of Sahtaxti[633], in the Autonomous Republic of Nachičevan[634], but no example of woman or man-bull. The griffin-headed demons are also quite peculiar: griffin-headed demons are common both in Assyria and in the neo-Hittite sphere, while representations of real griffins are quite rare; the closest examples to the Urartian representation come from the ivory collection of the South-East Palace in Nimrud[635] and from the Syrian site of Tell Halaf, where a stone statuette representing a bird[636] with features very similar to the griffin vulture from Toprakkale has been found.

As already anticipated, the dating of the figurines, at least the human ones, can be proposed based on their hairstyle: the hair with the indication of thick curls around the neck are characteristic in particular of the time of Sargon II, as shown by the reliefs of his palace in Dur Šarrukin[637], but they are also typical of the neo-Hittite reliefs of the late period[638]. From the Urartian written documentation, there may be a hint on the king who put this throne in Toprakkale: on a clay *bulla* from Bastam[639], there is mention of a "year name" indicated by the act of putting the throne in Rusaḫinili Qilbani=kai carried out by Rusa, son of Argišti. The very fact that a throne, probably dedicated to a god, is mentioned only here, and in connection with Toprakkale, may suggest that it should be dated to the 7th century BCE or, however, towards the end of Urartian history.

2.7.1.2.4. Models of city walls

From the site of Toprakkale[640] comes the only one bronze model, preserved in two fragments, representing the walls of a fortress (**Mf-Top-18**); one fragment represents a turret with two crenelations on the top and a blind window, while the larger fragment represents the walls with crenelations, blind windows and a gate. The model is decorated with two lines of triangles imprinted just below the crenelations, on a protruding stripe of the model. The blind windows, fifteen in total, are drawn with two rectangles inscribed one inside the other, imprinted on the metal. The arch-shaped door is represented by three concentric lines. The frame of that part of the wall containing the windows is in relief; in relief is also a vertical section on the surface of the wall, perhaps representing a protruding buttress. The crenelations are rendered with three steps on the right and three on the left. No precise context of finding is provided: however, since the blind window found in Çavuştepe are dated to the 7th century BCE, it can be assumed that this model may date back to the first half of the same century[641]. A peculiarity of the bronze model is the very shape of the blind windows: archaeological findings show that, due to a question of structural stability, the windows actually had a T shape[642], while in the bronze reproduction they are rectangular.

[632] It is not clear whether the belt catalogued as Burmageçit-3 depicts bulls or winged horses.
[633] Called in the catalogue Sahtaxti-1.
[634] Which, for its geographical position, is to be considered rather provincial.
[635] For example, Barnett 1975b: pl. IX, D9.
[636] Preserved in the Berlin Vorderasiatisches Museum collection, inventory number VA 08979.
[637] Barnett 1975b: pls. 58-64.
[638] See, among others, the relief of "Barrakib and the scribe" from the site of Zincirli, dated 730 BCE, or the stone statue from Arslan Tash.
[639] CTU B CB Ba-6.
[640] Barnett 1950: 5, pl. I.
[641] Dan 2017: 207-208
[642] Dan 2017: 206.

Parallel to this sculpture, in the Urartian context, belong to the ivory and basalt carving, and the ivory models from the sites of Altıntepe (**Iv-Alt-12**) and Karmir-blur (**Iv-Kb-4**), as well as the quadrangular basalt blocks found in Adilcevaz (**Rel-Ad-2-11**), should be mentioned. The windows of these specimens also show an exclusively rectangular shape; a common feature is the decoration that takes the form of a series of triangles or zig-zag bands placed just below the crenelations, thus bringing into question that one is not dealing with a simple decoration, but with an architectural element typical of the Urartian fortresses.

Barnett states that such model-city are often brought as tributes in front of the Assyrian kings, reporting the example carved on a relief from Nineveh: similar models have not been found in the Assyrian area, however, while there are numerous examples of fortresses depicted on reliefs or engraved on ivory plaques[643].

2.7.1.3 Ivories

"Ivory carving then constitutes one of the major categories of remains that we have preserved from (...) the early first millennium BCE"[644]: several ivory and bone objects were also found in three Urartian sites, Altıntepe, Karmir-blur and Toprakkale. It has been stated several times that the ivories found in Altıntepe and Toprakkale were imports[645]: the comparison with North-Syrian and Neo-Assyrian materials, on the other hand, shows the influence of both these traditions on some of the ivories found in Urartu, which may also be considered local productions. It is plausible that, during the Urartian campaigns in northern Syria[646], not only raw materials were exported, but also the artistic techniques of working with ivory in the form of prisoners, captured and forced to work in the Urartian fortresses. After learning the techniques, the Urartians themselves may have set up their own ivory workshops[647], under the guidance of northern Syrian craftsmen; these workshops were probably located mainly in the west of the Kingdom: in Toprakkale and Altıntepe, fragments of unprocessed ivory were found[648], while, as for the ivories in Karmir-blur, the quality is inferior to those found in the western sites, testifying to the "provincialism" of this Urartian centre in the Caucasus, where ivory was probably not a common material[649]. The question of the origin of Urartian ivory is certainly much debated, so that some scholars believe that the ivories found in Altıntepe and Toprakkale are imported, while those, inferior in quality, from the fortress of Karmir-blur are to be considered original Urartian[650]: it is certain, however, that ivory already existed in the lands of Nairi at the time of Aššurnasirpal II[651], even if uncertain is whether this toponym already refers to the future Kingdom of Urartu.

[643] See § 2.7.3.
[644] Winter 2010: 188.
[645] Hermann 1966: 130; Akurgal 1968: 75.
[646] During the first half of the 8th century BCE, with the reigns of Argišti Minuaḫi and Sarduri Argištiḫi.
[647] Piotrovskij 1967: 57: "But in addition to importing objects from outside, every land of the ancient East, from the second millennium BCE, had its own school of artistic ivory-carving, though their quality varied. Urartu also had its own".
[648] A brief overview of the Urartian ivory issue is provided by Özgüç 1969: 85, fn. 71.
[649] Piotrovskij 1967: 58.
[650] Muscarella 1980: 187, fn. 21, for a brief overview on the topic.
[651] RIMA II, A.0.101.1 ii, ll. 110-125; see also Muscarella 1980: 187, fn. 21.

What emerges from the analysis of the materials is the considerable North-Syrian influence on the Urartian school, although it is clear that Assyrian art, both monumental and minor, is also important: the discovery of proper Urartian ivories is minimal, with few complete pieces, so that it is not possible to identify their main characteristics, especially since, as previously observed, it is not clear whether the ivories are locally produced or imported. However, it is recognizable the influence coming from neighbouring territories: if, from Syrian craftsmen, Urartians have learned the techniques of carving the ivory, from the neo-Assyrian world they have drawn the themes and the imagery represented in their artefacts. The static nature of the image and the symmetrical compositions are, however, probably to be recognized as Urartian elements, as they are common to other aspects of their art[652].

The subjects of the ivory products are essentially represented by winged genii, lions, human or divine figures, various animals, abstract or floral decorations, models of fortresses. Once again, it is not possible to provide a precise dating of the ivory and bone objects: a *terminus post quem* for the introduction of ivory carving is possibly the beginning of the Urartian interference in the North-Syrian area during the reign of Argišti Minuaḫi[653], in the first half of the 8th century BCE.

2.7.1.3.1. Bird-apkallū

Five representations of ivory winged genii were found in Urartu, three from Altıntepe and two from Toprakkale; the specimens are very similar to each other, varying only in secondary details. The objects are configured as supports for flat surfaces: the genii are walking to the right or left, with the face and both feet facing the same direction, wearing ankle-length robes that leave the walking leg uncovered; on this leg, one can see a knee-length tunic worn under the long robe. The face of the winged genius is that of an eagle, with a curved open beak, the hooked tongue raised, the eyes wide and fixed in the direction of moving, the pupils made through a small hole; on the back of the head there are two curls ending in spiral locks and behind them a sort of horse mane decorated with oblique lines and dots. The genii hold a flat support over their heads, on which probably rested the furniture they were designated to support. Such genii can be identified as *bird-apkallū*[654] or *griffin-demons*[655].

[652] Beller Dreyfus 2001: 46-7: "Guitty Azarpay suggests that Assyrian influence on Urartu may have been derived from both Assyrian monumental art and portable artifacts, including ivory carvings (Azarpay 1968: 72). Paul Zimansky agrees (Zimansky 1998: 171-2). Winter disagrees: "Considering the closeness of the Urartean works to those from Fort Shalmaneser SW7 and Sakçegozu, and the close political ties between North Syria and Urartu through the first half of the eighth century BCE, I would suggest that the stimulus for the Urartean ivories, or possibly the ivories themselves, came from North Syria' (Winter, I., 1976, "Carved Ivory Furniture Panels from Nimrud", in *Metropolitan Museum Journal* 11, p. 36, fn 18). The divergence can be seen clearly when comparing Assyrian and Urartian ivory carvings. Assyrian examples show a pronounced emphasis on narrative art and the Urartian examples, while employing much of the same imagery, place an emphasis on the use of strong, symmetrical designs in static compositions".

[653] Barnett 1982: 347.

[654] Wiggermann 1992: 75-76: "The griffin-demon does not stem from Babylonia; there he is attested first on the Assyrianizing robe of Nabû-mukîn-apli holding cone and bucket; in Assyria, Syria, and the north he is attested much earlier. Thus we are led to believe that a traditional northern hybrid with apotropaic functions was matched in Assyria with a traditional Babylonian literary figure with similar functions. In Babylonia, from MB onwards, the apotropaic apkallû were viewed as partly man and partly carp; in the early first millennium Babylonia takes over the bird-apkallû, and Assyria the fish-apkallû".

[655] Green 1994: 252-253.

The first plaque from Altıntepe (**Iv-Alt-1**)[656] was originally covered with gold leaf, a small fragment of which remains on the fringes on the left hem of the long robe. The left hand of the genius is raised over the head to carry a flat support, which constitutes the upper edge of the plate, holding at the same time a sort of pinecone or "sacred fruit"[657]; the other end of the support is held by a wing, which starts from the centre of the genius' back and develops upwards, parallel to a wing pointing downwards: the decoration of the two wings is made of small circles for what concerns the section immediately near the back of the figure, while it is outlined in three rows of bird feathers, small rectangles with rounded edges, towards the two extremities. The right arm is bent and covers the waist of the genius, the hand holds the handle of a *situla* decorated with vertical lines on the edge; both wrists are adorned with bracelets. This specimen is about 12 cm tall and, except for small rifts, is complete. From the gallery of the temple, near its entrance, comes a second ivory figurine (**Iv-Alt-2**) originally covered in gold leaf[658], very similar to the one described above, from which it differs in small details; also, the state of conservation of this plate is not as good as the previous one. The *bird-apkallu* is represented walking to the left and wearing a bracelet on the left wrist only, being the *situla* held by the left hand; the feathers of the wings are arranged only on two rows and not on three, like the previous one. The support that is held over the head is slightly thicker than that of the first genius, and the total height of the plate is 14 cm: these differences indicate that the two objects were not intended to be symmetrical, but probably belong to different pieces of furniture or different parts of the same piece. Only the lower limbs of a third figurine (**Iv-Alt-3**)[659], facing to the right, have been preserved: the differences with the other two plates are configured in a different arrangement of the wings, which fall on both sides of the body, and, probably, in a different function of the plate itself, which, unlike the other two, does not rest on a base. The fringes bordering the gown are wide, sub-rectangular in shape; the figurine was found in the first gallery in the eastern corner of the temple, far from the other two.

From the site of Toprakkale come two plates depicting *bird-apkallū*, very similar to those found in the temple of Altıntepe: both facing to the left, holding a support above their heads with both hands, thus abandoning the *situla* motif; the decoration of the garment, with thick flat belt worn on the waist, is the same as that of the wings, taking the form of a series of horizontal bands filled with quadrangular decorations and interspersed with lines of dots made in repoussé. The fringes of both garments are similar to those of Altıntepe's third *bird-apkallu* robe. The first plaque (**Iv-Top-1**)[660], which preserves both the support held and the base, is 11.5 cm high and it's made of white ivory, while the second one (**Iv-Top-2**)[661], in blackened ivory, is about 17 cm high.

The history of this iconographic motif[662] dates back at least to the Middle-Assyrian period: however, the depiction of this griffin-demon has been particularly successful especially during the 9th century BCE, in the Neo-Assyrian period, when it was depicted, for example, beside a sacred tree on numerous

[656] Özgüç 1969: 79-80 and pl. XXXII. A colour image of this specimen is available in the catalogue of the Museum of Anatolian Civilizations in Ankara, p. 199, where all the materials of Altıntepe are preserved.
[657] Özgüç 1969: 80.
[658] Özgüç 1969: 80 and pl. XXXIII.
[659] Özgüç 1969: 81 and pl. XLIX.1.
[660] Barnett 1950: pl. XV, n.2. Barnett 1975: 229 and pl. CXXXI, W14. Preserved in the British Museum collection, inventory number BM 118951.
[661] Barnett 1950: pl. XV, n.1. Barnett 1975: 229 and pl. CXXXI, W13. Preserved in the British Museum collection, inventory number BM 118953.
[662] Green 1994: 252-253.

stone reliefs in Room F of the North-West Palace of Assurnasirpal II in Nimrud[663]; these figures are interpreted as a depiction of the Babylonian Seven Sages. The first scholar who studied the figures from the Urartian site of Altıntepe compared with an Assyrian example was Mallowan[664], who, in 1966, compared an open-work ivory plaque found at Fort Shalmaneser depicting a figure called "Nisroch"[665], which he situated around 730-720 BCE, to "a very similar ivory (...) which may be nearly contemporary" found in Altıntepe. Beyond the ivories[666], one can find stone reliefs: in addition to those previously mentioned that decorated the walls of Room F in the Northwest Palace of Nimrud, rich in engravings and details that are missing from the Urartian representations, there is an orthostatic relief from Karkemish representing two of these *bird-apkallū*, faced to each other, in an "Atlantid" pose, with both arms raised to hold "the sky". They only wear a short fringed tunic, their wings are arranged on both sides of the body, their beaks are tightened: otherwise, they resemble very closely the two ivory plaques from Toprakkale. From Karkemiš comes as well a relief, decorating the base of a statue, which depicts a *bird-apkallu* kneeling between two roaring lions[667]. What is surprisingly similar to Urartian ivories is the definition of the curls and the mane of the griffin-demon, completely different from the Assyrian examples, both in ivory and stone, which tend to define the mane of the hybrid creature by spirals. The closest comparison with Urartian ivories comes from a stone relief from Sakçegözü[668]: the open beak, the curved and raised tongue, the *situla* and the fruit in the right hand connect it immediately to the Altıntepe plates, although it wears only the knee tunic and its wings develop on both sides of the body. The five Urartian specimens are also linked to the Assyrian demi-gods plaques found in Balawat and dated to the 9th century BCE[669], in which ivory was used as a material to render the flesh parts of the body.

Although it is clear that Urartian *bird-apkallū* undoubtedly derive from a Mesopotamian tradition, it is possible that the meaning attributed to them in Assyrian mythology was lost once the representation has been adopted by the Urartian craftsmen[670]. It is noticeable the influence of both Assyrian and North-Syrian traditions on the iconography of Urartian *bird-apkallū*, which, for this reason, may be considered local production rather than import[671]: in Urartu, the tradition of ivory carving survived the longest in

[663] See, for example, Ataç 2010: 161, fig. 6.2. In the British Museum collection, see BM124583-4-5.
[664] Mallowan 1966: 594.
[665] Green 1994: 253: "In modern archaeological writing the griffin-demon is sometimes known as 'Nisroch', because Layard (1849, *Nineveh and Its Remains*) (wrongly) related the type to the Biblical account of the death of Sennacherib in the temple of that god, whom he interpreted as Ninurta, a deity supposedly with certain bird-like characteristics".
[666] It is worth mentioning the similarity of the Urartian griffin-demons with the so-called ones from the tombs of Ziwiyé, which however do not appear to be material found in archaeological excavations with a secure location. The discussion on the legitimacy of the findings from Ziwiyé is to be found in Muscarella 2013: 955-998.
[667] Both specimens are dated by Bossert to the 9th century BCE.
[668] Bossert 1942: 884.
[669] Barnett 1982: 41 and pl. 39 a-b.
[670] Green 1994: 262-264: "(…) we can hardly imagine, for example, that the Urartians should have been concerned about the ante-diluvian sages of Babylonian cities". Mallowan 1966: 594, states instead that, as far as the hybrid identified with 'Nisroch' is concerned: "The distribution of this iconography is an impressive witness to the widespread belief in its potency throughout western Asia".
[671] As far as Winter 2010: 202-203, considered all Urartian *bird-apkallū* in ivory an import from northern Syria. As Özgüç 1969: 81-82, pointed out: "Of many ivories known in Phoenician and Syrian styles, none present close parallels to our Altıntepe examples". Barnett 1982: 41: "The best examples of this style were found at Altın Tepe, near Erzincan in eastern Turkey, but they may be reasonably claimed as Urartian workmanship".

the Near Eastern area, after the high quality of Phoenician and Syrian imports forced the native Assyrian workers out of business[672].

2.7.1.3.2. Lions

Both in Altıntepe and Toprakkale, ivory figurines of lions have been found; those from the gallery of the Altıntepe temple are the best-preserved and documented. The first of these figurines depicts a lion sitting on its hind legs (**Iv-Alt-4**)[673], about 10 cm high, found near the entrance to the gallery of the temple of Altıntepe; the snout is facing left, the mouth is open in a roar, the teeth are clearly visible, while the tongue and the side of the mouth are not depicted. The muzzle is decorated with four wrinkles in the shape of palmettes to describe the moustache and five other wrinkles on the nose, the eyes have an elongated almond shape; the head is pointed on the top: right from the top of the head starts a mane decorated by engravings of lozenges that extend on the whole back and chest of the animal, up to the hind and the front legs; the mane, at least, was originally covered with gold leaf, still preserved for a few fragments. The figurine must have been part of a more complex object, as indicated by the pierced holes at the base.

A *couchant* lion is represented on a second ivory figurine from the temple of Altıntepe (**Iv-Alt-5**)[674], whose original function was to decorate a bronze tripod[675]. Except for the head and legs, the body of the animal was embedded by a bituminous substance; the object, with its 29 cm long and 18 cm high, is one of the largest ivory figurines preserved in the Near East. The lion's mouth is open in a roar, the tongue clearly modelled, showing the pointed teeth rendered with extreme care; the decoration of the snout recalls that of the seated specimen, as well as the pointed shape of the head. The mane begins on the top of the head and is slightly raised, decorated with a sort of zig-zag: particular is the rendering of the mane on the back, as it is composed of small fragments of ivory in the form of a lozenge attached to the layer of bitumen covering the body of the animal. The lower back of the lion was made by a series of juxtaposed rectangular plates. Two similar lions must have decorated the two remaining legs of the tripod: one of their front legs was found (**Iv-Alt-6**)[676], finely shaped and contoured, with two holes drilled at the end, where the paw joined the body of the animal, as well as other small ivory fragments that formed their bodies[677].

From the site of Toprakkale comes a figurine of a roaring lion about 2 cm high (**Iv-Top-3**)[678], probably from a miniature piece of furniture, depicted only for the snout and the mane and affixed to a small back support, probably originally attached to the furniture, as well as small fragments of a snout and lions' legs, of unclear characterization (**Iv-Top-4**)[679].

[672] Barnett 1982: 41.
[673] Özgüç 1969: 82 and pls. XXXIV-XXXV; catalogue of the Ankara Museum of Anatolian Civilizations, page 198, for a colour image.
[674] Özgüç 1969: 83 and pls. XXXVI-XLI; catalogue of the Ankara Museum of Anatolian Civilizations, page 200, for a colour image.
[675] Found in the nearby; see Özgüç 1969: pl. XXXVI.1-2.
[676] Özgüç 1969: 84, pl. XLII.
[677] Özgüç, 1969: 84, pl. XLIII.
[678] Barnett 1975: 229, W9 and pl. CXXXI.
[679] Barnett 1950: pl. XII.

Parallels are immediate inside the Urartian artistic sphere, at least as far as the complete lions from Altıntepe are concerned: the analysis remains on the west of Urartu, at the sites of Toprakkale (**Mf-Top-17**), Kayalidere (**Mf-Kay-1**) and Patnos (**Mf-Azn-1**). From these sites come three bronze lion figurines[680] whose muzzle is very similar to that of the Altıntepe ivories; the Kayalidere lion is also depicted in the exact same couchant position as the second ivory lion described above, with its forelegs stretched out in front of the animal.

Ivory lions come from the Assyrian palace of Fort Shalmaneser: in addition to numerous fragments of legs[681], there are also small complete specimens of ivory lions, whose characterization, however, is very different from that of the Urartian examples. The mane of the Assyrian lions, for instance, is rendered through a decoration with curved lines, and the snout does not have the wrinkles found on the Urartian lions' figurines[682]; only the mane of one lion[683], unfortunately extremely fragmentary, closely resembles that of the specimen couchant from Altıntepe, presenting holes in the form of lozenges where the fragments of ivory or other material must have been placed in order to render its mane. Fragments of roaring lions in ivory also come from Northwest Palace of Nimrud: one of them[684], like the seated lion from Altıntepe, must have been covered with gold leaf[685]; numerous are the fragments found depicting lions' snouts, parts of independent statuettes or pieces of furniture[686], while there is only one fragment of an ivory lion[687] preserved for the head and the front legs part, characterized in a very different way compared to the Urartian lions, and probably to be considered an import coming from a Phoenician workshop. Several fragments of ivory muzzles and legs of lions come from the site of Arslan Tash[688], but also their characterization is very different from that of the Urartian ivories; the lions from Arslan Tash, moreover, are probably represented standing or walking, given the position of the preserved legs. Some ivories of *couchants* lions come from the site of Zincirli[689], probably used to decorate furniture, but they are also configured differently from the Urartian ones. Several ivory lions have been found in the Hasanlu site, among which, in particular, there is a specimen[690] that recalls the Urartian lions for the shape of the wrinkles on the snout: the mouth, open but without characterization of its interior, is comparable to that of the seated lion.

Couchants lions have been found in Nimrud and Dur Šarrukin in the form of metal weights[691]: the characterization of the muzzle is similar to that of the Urartian lions, both in ivory and in metal, and the mane is rendered through small triangles or engraved lozenges; what differentiates them from the Urartian specimens, besides their material and utilization, is essentially the shape of the head, which is very sharp in the Urartian lions. The peculiar shape of the head of the Urartian ivory lions finds, again,

[680] Toprakkale: Barnett 1950: pls. XI, XVIII.3, XIX. Kayalidere: Burney 1966: pl. IXa. Aznavurtepe/Patnos: Akurgal 1968: pl. XXXVII a-b.
[681] Hermann 1986: pls. 367-374.
[682] An overview of the ivory lions from Fort Shalmaneser can be found in Hermann 1986: pls. 354-378.
[683] Hermann 1986: pl. 357, no. 1378 (wrongly called 1370 in the catalogue).
[684] Hermann - Laidlaw 2009: 145 and pl. 13, no. 82. It is reported only for the particularity of the gold leaf, although it is not a statuette but a panel in relief.
[685] Layard 1849: 394: "embellished with blue and gold".
[686] See, for example, Hermann – Laidlaw 2009: 205, n. 283; 217, n. 353.
[687] Hermann – Laidlaw 2009: 218, n. 354 and plate R.
[688] Fontan – Affanni 2018: 136-142.
[689] Andrae 1943: 129 and pls. 64-65.
[690] Muscarella 1980: 91-92.
[691] Curtis 2013: pl. XLII.

a neo-Hittite parallel in the standing lions depicted on the orthostates of the Sakçegözü gateway[692]: their pointed heads, where the mane starts in relief with a zig-zag decoration, closely resembles the Altıntepe lions, from which, however, they differ in the characterization of the snout and the mane. The peculiarities of the seated lion, especially regarding its position, make it difficult to find a parallel, both within the Urartian corpus and in the Ancient Near Eastern art: this specimen is a *unicum* on the art scene of Anatolia and Mesopotamia in the 1st millennium BCE[693].

The comparison between the lion representations in Urartian ivory carving and Near Eastern art has given the same results as the bird-*apkallū* depictions, bringing attention both to Assyria and to Syro-Hittite states; this is not surprising, since Assyria is the main artistic inspiration of Urartian craftsmen and Syria is the centre from which ivory itself was imported[694].

2.7.1.3.3. Other animals

From Karmir-blur comes an object carved in bone (**Iv-Kb-1**), represented by a miniature sculpture[695] depicting a fantastic animal, similar to a winged sphinx, standing on the top of a six-branched palmette: the creature is composed of a bearded human head, the body of a lion and bird wings. The hair, reaching the shoulders, is rendered by short incised lines; the eyes are almond-shaped, the wings have large feathers emphasized by long, deeply incised lines. Such an object, probably ornament of furniture, does not find parallels in the Urartian art, even if the represented creature has had great fortune in the Mesopotamian area from the Early Dynastic period[696]: in the neo-Assyrian area, human-headed lions are found in the relief and the monumental sculpture, employed as gateway guardians[697]; from Nineveh come also some reliefs in which are represented these lion-men, clearly understood as protective spirits[698].

2.7.1.3.4. Anthropomorphic figurines

Several fragments belonging to anthropomorphic figurines have been found in Altıntepe, Karmir-blur and Toprakkale: the only specimen preserved almost in their entirety comes from the excavations of the British Museum in Toprakkale, while the other two sites have only returned fragments of ivory faces and arms. The best preserved of these figures is discussed in the paragraph related to the foreign materials in Urartu[699].

A statuette in the round (**Iv-Top-5**)[700], depicting a male figure, is preserved only for the backside, with well-shaped hair on the back of the head, rendered with curved lines, falling just above the shoulders.

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[692] Orthmann 1971: pls. 49b and 50d. The site has already been mentioned with regard to a parallel to the griffin-demons, and again it is an important meeting point between Urartians and neo-Hittite art.
[693] Özgüç 1969: 83: "In this period in the Near East, a lion seated upright on its haunches in a watchdog position has not been found elsewhere".
[694] Van Loon 1966: 133, and Özgüç 1969: 85, fn. 71.
[695] History Museum of Armenia catalogue, inventory number 2010-131.
[696] Frankfort 1939: 82.
[697] Green 1994: 255.
[698] Brereton 2018: 38, fig. 34.
[699] See § 4.2.1.
[700] Barnett 1950: 16, pl. XIV. Preserved in the British Museum collection, inventory number BM123888.

The man wears an ankle-length robe, decorated at the top with slight incisions recalling the feathers of the wings of the griffin-demons: probably, the front side of the statuette was more finely decorated, since on the left shoulder, almost facing the front, these "feathers" have further engravings on the inside; such a decoration may indicate a different type of fabric, a shawl or even a sort of armour; a flat band, flanked by a band whose dotted decoration is limited to the left shoulder, crosses diagonally the man's back. On his waist, a flat belt is depicted, and on his arms, just above the elbows, three bracelets are outlined. The hems of the dress are decorated with a line of dots in relief: at the ankles, in addition to a horizontal line of points, the dress ends with fringes[701]. It is possible, but difficult to prove given the bad state of conservation of the object, that it is an unfinished figurine: the decoration of the shawl and the band only on the left shoulder lead one to consider the hypothesis of unfinished work or, although it is an improbable hypothesis since it is an all-round figurine, of an object whose observation had to be exclusively frontal. According to the hair, Barnett dates this figurine to the late 8th century BCE, as it finds binding comparisons with Assyrian representations[702].

Several fragments of human faces have been found in the three Urartian excavations previously mentioned, with somatic features that differ from site to site: from the gallery of the temple of Altıntepe come two plaques (**Iv-Alt-7, 8**)[703], preserved from the forehead to the nose, with eyebrows heavily rendered through two deep grooves, almost joined above the nasal bridge[704]; eyes with very marked tear duct and an almond shape, very elongated towards the temples, where they seem to tend upwards; the pupils are rendered through a hole drilled in the centre of the eye. Both plaques must have been part of a composite statuette[705], joining perhaps different materials to render the different parts of the body. The fragment of a face from Toprakkale (**Iv-Top-6**)[706] is more finely carved: the shape of eyes and eyebrows reminds that of the female statuette described above, the nose is not preserved because of a fracture, the protruding mouth is stretched, giving to the face an indefinite expression. Perhaps belonging to the same figurine is a fragment of human head (**Iv-Top-7**)[707], with hair, long at least to the shoulders, made in locks through soft lines: an ear-shaped in an extremely naturalistic way is preserved on the left side of this statuette; Barnett believes that these two fragments probably represent a eunuch of the royal court[708]. The two ivory faces from Karmir-blur (**Iv-Kb-2, 3**)[709] give a reason to the words of Piotrovskij, who defines the ivory carving of the site as "provincial"[710]. The first ivory mask has enormous eyes reminiscent of the shape of a horizontal drop, a sort of almond squashed towards the nasal septum, deeply incised pupils, a large nose and an extremely fleshy mouth, as are the cheeks and chin. The second small fragment of a face, on which traces of paint are visible, has protruding and disproportionately large eyes, almost drooping towards the cheekbones, while the remaining somatic features are barely hinted at, giving the face a melancholic expression.

[701] Barnett 1950: 16: "(…) a fleecy garment usual in Armenia".
[702] Barnett 1950: 16.
[703] Özgüç 1969: 86-87 and pl. XLV.
[704] One of these faces still retains the trace of a blackish substance that filled the groove of the eyebrows.
[705] See, for example, the lead statuette found in Toprakkale.
[706] Barnett 1950: 16 and pl. XII, n. 5. Preserved in the British Museum collection, inventory number BM123884.
[707] Barnett 1950: 16 and pl. XII, n. 4. Preserved in the British Museum collection, inventory number BM123886.
[708] Barnett 1950: 16.
[709] Piotrovskij 1967: 58; History Museum of Armenia catalogue.
[710] Piotrovskij 1967: 58.

From the gallery of the Altıntepe temple come two fragments of arms: one[711] depicts the left arm of a statuette (**Iv-Alt-10**), almost 9 cm long from the shoulder to the wrist, adorned with a bracelet; two holes were drilled in the arm, one of which was in its centre, indicating that the arm was stretched along the bust of the figurine to which it belonged. A more complete fragment[712], carved in a single unit, shows two arms, preserved from the elbow to the intertwined hands (**Iv-Alt-9**); the wrists are decorated with bracelets. The fingers of the right hand, clearly visible, are finely carved. As previously observed, the figurines found in the Assyrian centres have their arms mainly stretched along the hips; a single ivory figurine from Zincirli[713] holds the hands joined in front of the chest, the right hand covered by the left one, in a gesture of reverence that can also be seen, for example, on Esarhaddon's Victory stelae[714].

From Altıntepe Tomb I comes the ivory fragment of a hand (**Iv-Alt-11**)[715], preserved for 4 cm from the wrist adorned with a bracelet to the fingers, stretched out and joined, with knuckles and nails well defined; the lower surface is flat and in the area of the palm two holes are engraved.

2.7.1.3.5. Wall's models

Models of a fortress' wall come from Altıntepe and Karmir-blur: the best-preserved fragment comes from the Armenian site. This (**Iv-Kb-4**)[716] represents a tower with four corner buttresses on which one can see numerous blind windows made through square-shaped holes. The top of the tower is adorned with three-stepped crenellations on each of the four sides, below which there is a horizontal zig-zag decoration inserted in a frame of two flat bands; a small band with vertical lines separates the top of the tower from its body. The work is probably unfinished, as the space at the top of it is undefined and almost convex. A second fragment of a fortress' wall comes from the temple of Altıntepe (**Iv-Alt-12**)[717] and shows an arched gate, represented with two parallel incisions, with stepped crenellations on the top of the wall. The plaque is blackened by burning. Both models are very similar in structure to the bronze wall's model from Toprakkale (**Mf-Top-18**)[718], whose crenelations, zig-zag pattern at the top of the tower and arched gate are particularly reminiscent. All these features are then reflected in archaeology, with the discovery in Karmir-blur of basalt turrets of the same type[719].

From Fort Shalmaneser, some examples of fortresses executed in bas-relief on ivory slabs have been found[720]: the representation more similar to the Urartian ivory models was found on some fragments of a pyxis, where a celebratory scene is developed with three women depicted at the top of the three towers of the fortress. A noteworthy detail is a crenelation on top of the walls, three-stepped like the one made

[711] Özgüç 1969: 91 and pl. LI, n. 1-2.
[712] Özgüç 1969: 91 and pl. XLIX, n. 3-4.
[713] Andrae 1943: 130-131 and pl. 68.
[714] Andrae 1943: 131. A colour picture of the stelae is published, for example, in Brereton 2018: 15, fig. 6.
[715] Özgüç 1969: 92 and pl. XLIX, n. 2.
[716] Piotrovskij 1967: 59. History Museum of Armenia catalogue, inventory number 2010-142.
[717] Özgüç 1969: 89 and pl. XLVII, No 4. The author states that a further ivory and wooden plaque depicting a model of a wall was found at a tomb on the same site, but it has not been published.
[718] Barnett 1950: pl. I. Preserved in the British Museum collection, inventory numbers BM 91250 and BM 91177.
[719] Piotrovskij 1967: 59.
[720] Hermann – Laidlaw 2009: 131-132 and pl. 2, n. 21a-b; 236 and pl. 134, n. TW10.

in Urartian models. Barnett[721] states that these model-cities are often worn as tributes in front of the Assyrian kings, reporting the example carved on a relief from Nineveh[722].

2.7.1.3.6. Various decorations

From the temple of Altıntepe come numerous inlaid ivory plaques depicting floral motifs or winged sun discs. Four specimens bear the image of palmettes (**Iv-Alt-13** to **16**)[723], two with a high stem and two with a low stem, whose trunk is decorated with horizontal rows of small quadrilaterals, and four pairs of symmetrical leaves, above which there is a lozenge-shaped decoration. On either side of the trunk, there are two volutes, ending just below the branches of the tree. The image of a sacred tree decorates three ivory plaques found in the Tomb III of the same site (**Iv-Alt-20-23**)[724], one intact specimen and two fragmentary, rectangular in shape, with rounded upper corners: the inlaid tree has symmetrical branches at the end of which lotus and pomegranate buds are alternated; the carving is very deep, probably to contain different material. The top of the tree is decorated with a single lotus bud.

In the gallery of the temple, three plates depicting winged solar disks were found (**Iv-Alt-17** to **19**)[725], two of which are extremely similar: the most complete one shows the image of the left wing of the disk, of which one can see the centre, standing on a volute-shaped support; the wing is divided into three different sets of feathers. The last plate, in which the centre of the disc and a fragment of the right wing are visible, is different from the other two only as far as the decoration of the disc itself is concerned, as it is rendered through a row of points in relief. Several other ivory plaques found in the temple of Altıntepe are too incomplete to be included in a typology; two of them, however, found in the debris of the temple, are decorated with small engraved circles[726], a motif found on several ivory pyxides from Karmir-blur.

Numerous are the floral representations in the Assyrian ivories: only from Nimrud one can find innumerable plates and high reliefs depicting palmettes[727], characterized by a high trunk decorated with lozenges, lateral branches in the form of volutes and leaves curved downwards; different from the Urartian examples, instead, are the palmette decorations carved in ivory coming from Arslan Tash[728].

2.7.2. Decorated pyxides

2.7.2.1. Ivory pyxides

From the Armenian site of Karmir-blur come several examples of small decorated boxes made of bone (**Dp-Kb-1** to **6**): all have a more or less cylindrical shape and different engraved decorations, according

[721] Barnett 1950: 5, fig. 3.
[722] Albenda, 1986: pl. 24.
[723] Özgüç 1969: 87-88 and pl. XLVI.
[724] Özgüç 1969: 93 and pl. L.
[725] Özgüç 1969: 88-89 and pl. XLVII.
[726] Özgüç 1969: 92 and pl. LII.
[727] See, for example, Hermann 1986: 197-221.
[728] Fontan – Affanni 2018: 205-214.

to which it is possible to divide them during the analysis. The first group consists of cylindrical containers decorated with a circle motif with a hole in the centre[729], which are arranged differently according to the image depicted. The first pyxis[730] has a decoration divided into seven registers, containing circles and drop-shaped engravings alternating with registers of short oblique lines and a thin central register depicting a sort of zig-zag. The second box[731] has as well a decoration divided into registers, alternating between a wider and a thinner one: the wider registers contain a concentric circle motif, while the thinner ones contain a simple circle motif; all the circles have a central hole. On the third box[732] the registers are lost, replaced instead by a mass of circles arranged close to each other. In the centre of the pyxis, there is a sort of band decorated with horizontal lines. The fourth box[733], almost in the shape of a parallelepiped, has a circle decoration in the lower half, being instead the upper part occupied by a lozenge pattern. Lozenges engraved in different registers also decorate a small container made of blackened bone[734]: the last register of the decoration has small semicircles with a central hole. Slightly more complex decorative motifs characterize the second group of pyxis: the first of them[735] has two main registers with engravings of small simple circles, concentric circles and six-petalled flowers, both registers framed by a double parallel line and zig-zag motif. The last container under analysis[736] presents a pattern with large circular holes, zigzags and circles with a central hole.

Several cylindrical ivory containers come from the Assyrian site of Fort Shalmaneser: the decorations are very similar to those of the Urartian containers, alternating mainly bands of circles, lozenges and zig-zags[737]. Ivory pyxides are also found at the Zincirli site[738], with the same decorations of circles and lozenges depicted on the Urartian containers. Without further chemical studies, it is not possible to understand if these objects are part of a cultural *koiné* or if they are to be considered as imports from the Assyrian or North Syrian area.

2.7.2.2. Stone pyxes

In addition to the cylindrical ivory boxes, Urartian archaeology has returned two other small pyxes in stone, from the fortress of Karmir-blur; both pyxes are made in steatite. One pyx has an elaborate decoration (**Dp-Kb-7**)[739]: the handle of the lid is shaped in the form of a lying lion, rather stylised, with its jaws opened in a roar. On the lid, around the lion, a rosette and other animals, probably grazing bovids, are outlined in bas-relief; the sides of the container are decorated with a hunting scene, with lions, birds, ibex, archers and knights. The decoration is executed in a rather geometrical style. A very similar specimen, in ivory, has been reconstructed from the fragments found in Room SW 12 of Fort Shalmaneser, unfortunately without the lid: on the body of the pyx is engraved in bas-relief a line of

[729] The same motif is engraved on an Urartian bone plaque from Bastam, whose use is uncertain: Kroll 1979: pl. 51.5.
[730] History Museum of Armenia catalogue, inventory number 2783-68/2.
[731] History Museum of Armenia catalogue, inventory number 2784-160/1.
[732] History Museum of Armenia catalogue, inventory number 2783-68/1.
[733] History Museum of Armenia catalogue, inventory number 2784-160/2.
[734] History Museum of Armenia catalogue, inventory number 2784-120.
[735] History Museum of Armenia catalogue, inventory number 2784-141/1.
[736] History Museum of Armenia catalogue, inventory number 2783-68.
[737] Hermann – Laidlaw 2009: pls. 117-121.
[738] Andrae 1943: 123-124 and pls. 59-60.
[739] Piotrovskij 1967: 70-71, fig. 50.

buffaloes walking to the right; the motif must have been particularly widespread, given the great number of similar fragments found also in Room SW 37. The pyx, although it actually contains motifs known within the Urartian art, is executed in a stylised, almost primitive way, which is not common to any other artefact of the Kingdom: Piotrovsky, already, was not sure of its Urartian origin[740]. The motif on the second pyx (**Dp-Kb-8**)[741], is different: around a central sacred tree, similar to two palmettes on top of each other and surmounted by a winged solar disk, there are two winged *apkallū*, with bird's face and mane, wearing ankle-length robes decorated with lines and circles. The edge of the box is decorated with a sort of "clumsy pattern which imitates a *guilloche*"[742]. Above the scene, on the lid, there is a sort of through-hole, probably to be used for the suspension of the pyx, whose lower part is similar to a *patera baccellata*. The scene was taken from monumental Assyrian originals and diffused in Urartu on different supports[743].

2.7.3. Stone reliefs

Several stone bas-reliefs have been found in Urartu, in particular in the Western area of Urartu: the best-preserved specimens consist of basalt blocks decorated in relief, both coming from the Urartian citadel above Adilcevaz, known today as Kefkalesi[744].

From the surroundings of Adilcevaz, two reliefs carved on basalt blocks were found, both with depictions of supernatural creatures standing on animals; the first of these (**Rel-Ad-1**)[745] is a bas-relief whose blocks have been found between the stones of the castle walls of the Seljuk period, probably however originating from the nearby fortress of Kefkalesi. The image carved on these blocks depicts two figures[746], one in front of the other, the most complete of which is preserved on the right side: a figure[747], most probably divine, facing left and standing on a bull, wearing a headdress with horns decorated with four horizontal lines of rosettes, on top of which there is a circular element, resting on two volutes, containing an eight-pointed star. The face, of which only the left side can be seen, is characterized by a thick eyebrow, a huge almond-shaped eye and a large flattened nose; the characterization of the hair, which probably reaches the shoulders of the deity, is not clear. He wears are a knee-long tunic and a robe, worn above the tunic, which is ankle long and leaves the right leg uncovered. Both clothes are decorated with a complex rosettes-and-crosses motif, inserted inside quadrangular frames; the hems, probably bordered by fringes, are wide and decorated with a different floral motif. The figure holds a pinecone or bud in his right hand, raised almost in front of his face, while his left arm is bent to cover his waist and with his hand he probably holds a bowl, but the representation is not clear because of the fracture in the relief. The hilt of a sword is visible hanging on the right side of the body, while, on the back, two pendant tassels could indicate the lacing of a quiver. The right foot rests on the head of a bull, while the left foot rests on its back; the body of the animal is

[740] Piotrovskij 1967: 70.
[741] Piotrovskij 1967: 69, fig. 48.
[742] Piotrovskij 1967: 70.
[743] See, for example, the "Ivories" section.
[744] The Urartian name was ^{D}*Ḫaldi=ei* URU ^{KUR}*Ziuquni*, "City of Ḫaldi in the land of Ziuquni", as it is specified in the city's foundation inscription, CTU A 12-4.
[745] Burney – Lawson 1958.
[746] A reconstruction of the original relief is to be found in Calmeyer 1979: 189.
[747] The absence of a beard led one to think that this might even be a female figure; see van Loon 1966: 73: "This god (or goddess?)(...)".

decorated with geometric motifs, probably to symbolize a fabric covering the back of the bull. The horns are very prominent and facing upwards, the eyebrows are thick and the eye is circular; the animal's little mane is decorated with lines and spirals. The bull standing on the left of the relief is better preserved, as only the front legs and one back leg have been lost: facing right, the animal has geometric decorations all over its body, apparently without any anatomical meaning, reinforcing the idea that they indicate a sort of carpet to cover the animal; the tail is long enough to touch the ground. On the background of the scene, there are two "sacred trees", one in front and one behind the deity, with a thin trunk decorated with *chevrons* and two sets of branches, on which leaves or buds in the shape of a drop stand out, each one decorated by a central dividing line and oblique lines on the sides: the leaves of this tree are extremely similar to the object that the deity holds in his right hand. From the reconstruction of the relief, preserved for some plates that form the divine figure on the right and a few fragments of the bull and the figure on the left, it is estimated that it was about 3.5 m tall: any hypothesis on the purpose of this relief needs comparisons that, in this case, they have been found outside the Kingdom. Parallel representations of gods standing on animals depicted on a stone relief are clearly to be found in Anatolia, where the divine figure standing on the bull is usually connected to the Storm god; an example of this iconography can be observed on the basalt plate from Arslan Tash[748]: despite the enormous differences between the north Syrian stele and the Urartian one, it can be noted that the god, standing on a bull, wears a horned headdress similar to a high *polos*, surmounted by a star inscribed inside a disc; the short tunic and the ankle-length robe are also very similar, even if the version of Arslan Tash does not have a geometric and floral decoration as complex as the Urartian one. Gods standing on their mounts are also to be found in the Assyrian area, as the relief of the Faida canal demonstrates. This relief portrays a procession of seven of the main Assyrian deities, standing on striding animals, in the presence of the king, depicted twice, at both ends of each panel. The figures are shown in profile facing left; the deities can be identified as Ashur, on a dragon and a horned lion, his wife Mullissu, sitting on a throne supported by a lion, the moon god Sin on a horned lion, the sun god Shamash on a horse, the weather god Adad on a horned lion and a bull, and Ishtar, the goddess of love and war, on a lion[749].

The deity of Arslan Tash, anyway, is clearly engaged in a dynamic movement, with the arms raised and the bust slightly bent forward, as if he wanted to hit an enemy with the beams of lightning in both hands, emblems of the Storm god; the character of the stele from Adilcevaz, in addition to a position completely devoid of dynamism, characterizing also the Faida deities, does not hold any element that identifies him precisely as the Storm god, so that it is not excluded that he is not a deity but the sovereign, perhaps Rusa Argištiḫi[750]. A parallel to the image comes from the site of Sakçegözü[751], where a relief depicting two characters standing in front of each other at the sides of a sacred tree is to be found: both figures, dressed in a tunic and long robe, wear a sort of polos with horns surmounted by a small disc, this time without decoration inside it, while holding in their raised hand in front of their face a sort of pinecone, exactly like the Urartian character. Regarding the object that the deity holds in his right hand, it is impossible not to notice the similarity with the decoration that surmounts the time of

[748] Preserved in the Musée du Louvre collection, inventory number AO 13092.
[749] See on this topic the online article published on the qui.uniud.it website on January 13, 2020, called "Italian and Kurdish Archaeologists on the trail of the Assyrian Empire".
[750] Burney - Lawson 1958: 214. The horned headgear, however, would suggest the divine nature of the character. A further idea that may be proposed is that the god here represented is Ziuquni, mentioned in the inscription of Meher Kapısı (CTU A 3-1, line 11, where an ox and 2 sheep are offered to him), the same one who gives the name to the city where the relief was found.
[751] Bossert 1942: 885.

Ḫaldi at Muṣaṣir on the relief from the palace of Khorsabad, preserved only in the drawing by Eugène Flandin[752]; it was then proposed that the figure represented there was the supreme god Ḫaldi, although, if that should be considered true, one still does not know the identity of the other character standing on the bull represented in front of him, on the left side of the relief[753]. However, also the Urartian debt to the Assyrian examples from the 9th century BCE is clearly recognizable: the reliefs of the palace of Ashurnasirpal II in Nimrud show several examples of sacred trees rendered through a motif similar to that characterising the Urartian specimen here in analysis, including, for example, a detail of a eunuch's robe at the court of the king, decorated, among other things, with different cone shapes[754]. Figures of winged genie holding a sort of pinecone in their hand, raised in front of their face, are common in Assyrian art, about a century earlier than the Sakçegözü examples, with examples from the 9th century BCE among the reliefs of the Northwest Palace of Ashurnasirpal II in Nimrud[755]: one of the scenes in which the winged genius is involved shows him holding the "pinecone" and a situla, facing a sacred tree, just as on the Urartian relief[756]. In this cycle of Assyrian reliefs, however, the bowl held by the Urartian deity is not an attribute of the genii, but of the sovereign, who holds it on numerous occasions[757]; the genii are instead given a situla, just as in the Urartian iconography of the ivory bird-*apkallu*[758]. About the bull, close parallels are to be found within the Urartian artistic panorama, especially in metal engravings: the shields of Argišti Minuaḫi, Sarduri Argištiḫi and Rusa Sarduriḫi from Karmir-blur[759] represent series of bulls whose body is characterized exactly like that of the specimen carved on the relief of Adilcevaz, as well as the kneeling bull represented on a decorative plate from Toprakkale[760]; similar is the engraving inside a bowl from the tomb of Yeghegnadzor[761], showing a kneeling bull with thick eyebrows, round eyes and mane outlined by lines and dots. The decoration of the body, in particular the back, is instead different from the representations of the bulls on the shields of Rusa Erimenaḫi from Toprakkale[762]. The representation of the bull is different also from that of the stele of the Storm gods from the Syro-Hittite world, the Urartian one resulting absolutely static and very stylized: from Arslan Tash comes, however, the sculpture in the round of a bull[763] that is decorated in a very similar way as the Urartian one, with small spirals juxtaposed to form the hair and a delineation of the muscles of the legs similar to that of the best-preserved Urartian specimen, on the left of the composition. The Urartian characterization is also far from that of the bulls in the Assyrian reliefs[764]: while the Urartian specimen is slender and elegant, the Assyrian bulls are

[752] Botta – Flandin 1849: pls. 140-141.
[753] Burney – Lawson 1958: 215. The object is also present in the scene of the following bas-relief, which cannot however be a representation of the god Ḫaldi.
[754] Cohen - Kangas 2010: 53-57. See also the decoration of the quiver of the eunuch himself, which shows an alternation of palmettes and cone shapes, and the details of the decoration of the king Ashurnasirpal II's garment: Cohen – Kangas 2010: 58-74.
[755] Cohen – Kangas 2010: 76 and 155. An essay on the reason why the Northwest Palace reliefs show so many mythological creatures is written to be found in Parker Mallowan 1983.
[756] Cohen – Kangas 2010: 155.
[757] Cohen – Kangas 2010: figs. 7.2, 7.5 and 7.7.
[758] See § 2.7.1.3.1.
[759] Preserved in the History Museum of Armenia collection, inventory numbers 2010-53, 2010-90 and 2303-10.
[760] Preserved in the British Museum collection, inventory number BM1880,1216.6.
[761] Xnkikyan 2002: pl. XCV.3; Dan *et alii forthcoming*.
[762] Preserved in the British Museum collection, see for example the one with inventory number 1880,1216.1.
[763] Preserved in the Musée du Louvre collection, inventory number AO 13092.
[764] See Barnett 1960: pls. 36 and 45. Urartian bulls seem more like Neo-Babylonian bulls.

robust working animals. Such characterization of the bull is therefore typical of Urartian art, which uses it in every ambit, from the sculpture to the painting.

A second basalt block from Room 1 of the citadel of Kefkalesi (**Rel-Ad-2**)[765], cubic in shape, is decorated on four sides with the same image, surmounted by an Urartian inscription by Rusa, son of Argišti[766]; found in fragments, the relief was reconstructed after the 1965 excavations, providing a well-structured scene depicted on the four sides of the block. In the background, there are the external walls of a fortress, with three towers on each side: each tower has corner buttresses and three-stepped crenelations, also present on the walls connecting one tower to the other. Rows of rectangular windows are present both on the façades of the walls and the towers; between the windows and crenelations there is a band decorated with triangles. In front of the fortress, the actual scene is developed, depicting two winged genii facing each other on roaring lions: one can clearly recognize the high *polos* kind of headgear with horns surmounted by a disc, the bowl in the upper hand and, again, a sort of pinecone/sacred fruit. The characters depicted wear, like the previous one, a knee-long tunic and an ankle-long robe which leaves the leg uncovered; the clothes have a geometric decoration; another characteristic that connects these genii and the character standing on the bull is the shape of the nose, large but flattened, which gives the profile an almost flat course. The position of these two figures is the same as the one of the god of the previous relief: one foot is standing on the lion's head, while the other is resting on his back. The lions roar and bring out their tongues; their mane is outlined by the juxtaposition of small spiral elements, and their body is decorated with geometric elements; their tail is lowered towards the floor. In front of each tower there is then the representation of a sort of sacred tree, composed exclusively of an element in the shape of a pinecone/sacred fruit which forms the foliage and is placed above a thin trunk: the main scene, from right to left, therefore, sees the alternation of sacred trees and winged genii on lions, so that the two characters are faced on either side of a sacred tree, while the other two trees are behind them. Above the walls of the fortress, between the towers, there are two groups of two eagles facing each other on either side of a palmette whose trunk is made up of a volute element; each eagle holds a rabbit in its beak. Such a complex scene, containing numerous decorative and narrative elements, is a *unicum* on in Urartian art: to analyze it in its entirety, it will be necessary again to disassemble the elements that compose it. First of all, the walls of the fortress are a typical Urartian element that can be found on different objects, from the walls carved models on ivory and metal, to the walls engraved on two belts found in the site of Çavuştepe. All of them have the same characteristics, towers with angular buttresses on which a vertical row of rectangular windows is arranged, crenelations at the top of walls and towers, a decoration of small triangles or zig-zags arranged on a band below the battlements; if the entrance of the fortress is visible, it is represented by a door in the form of a wide arch. On the Assyrian reliefs, the Urartian fortresses are characterized in particular by two elements that are also to be found in Urartian representations: the protruding towers placed at regular distances along the wall of the fortress and the gates in the form of an arch[767]. Then, the sacred trees, three in all on each façade, are represented in the shape of a drop with central ribs, standing on a thin trunk: as it has been noted regarding the sacred trees of the first relief from Kefkalesi, the iconography of this element is to be found in Assyria in the 9th century BCE, in particular in the detail of the decoration of the clothes of the characters sculpted on the reliefs of Room G of the Northwest

[765] Bilgiç – Öğün 1964. A good colour image is to be found in the Museum of Anatolian Civilizations of Ankara, page 207.
[766] CTU A 12-10.
[767] Gunter 1982: 108.

Palace in Nimrud[768]; in these cases, in addition to appearing as a conclusive element of the branches of the sacred trees, the "pinecone" also appears as a separate element, representing a whole tree. The same element finally appears in the hands of the *apkallu*: numerous winged genii have been found in Assyria, both in monumental sculpture and in the minor arts, often engaged in performing rituals. Some of them wear a horned headgear, like the Urartian genii depicted here: they hold a pinecone and a *situla* in their hands, and they are probably involved in a ritual performed around a sacred tree[769]. Their representations in sculpture begin during the time of Ashurnasirpal II and continue until the reign of Sennacherib: the wings can be from two to four depending on the period of their representation[770]. The headdress of these Urartian *apkallū*, however, still finds parallels in the North Syrian context: as for the previous relief, one must look to the site of Sakçegözü, where two probably divine characters face each other on the sides of a sacred tree[771]. While the rendering of the composition is generally different from that of the Urartian relief, it should be noted that the headdresses worn by the two characters are similar to those of the Urartian genii, as is the position of the bodies and the object held in the hand, similar to a pinecone. The bowl in the hand of the Urartian winged genii is, instead, still to be considered an attribute related to the king in the Assyrian reliefs of Ashurnasirpal II, being instead the *situla* an element usually held by the genii. The lions depicted here, rather stocky and sturdy but completely static, are probably not of Assyrian inspiration: their build recalls the lions engraved on Sarduri II's shield from Karmir-blur[772], but what distinguishes them is mainly the representation of the tongue, pushed out of the jaws. For that, too, it is necessary to turn to the neo-Hittite Kingdoms: the lions represented on the orthostats of Arslantepe's Lion's Gate are depicted walking with their jaws open in a roar and their tongues protruding out of their mouths, as are the lion-man depicted standing on the sides of a sacred tree found in the same site. Also the lions represented on orthostats in Karkemish are often depicted walking with their tongues protruding out of their jaws opened in a roar. The last group making up the scene is composed of two eagles facing each other on the sides of a palmette: one can find a sort of parallel to this kind of representation in an orthostat relief from Karatepe[773] depicting the scene of a man standing between two lions; above the scene, there is a small relief of two predatory birds standing on the two sides of an upside-down hare. Also, close to this scene, another relief depicts an eagle keeping a hare with its claw[774]; the representations of eagles or hawks hunting small animals occur from the beginning of the 2nd millennium BCE in Anatolia[775], so that is reasonable to infer that this area was the source of the Urartian inspiration. A small fragment of a relief coming from the site of Bastam[776] depicts as well the upper portion of a fortress wall, in which is possible to see the three-stepped crenelations and the decoration of triangles.

A basalt block from Erzincan (**Rel-Er-1**) depicting a walking lion should also be mentioned[777]: its mouth is opened in a roar and its tongue is protruding; the mane is rendered by small pointed incisions,

[768] Cohen – Kangas 2010: 54-58, 74.
[769] Green 1994: 262.
[770] Kolbe 1982: 14. Urartian genii fall within the *Variante A* described by Kolbe.
[771] Bossert 1942: 885.
[772] Preserved in the History Museum of Armenia collection, inventory number 2010-90.
[773] Orthmann 1971: pl. 15a "Karatepe A/4".
[774] Orthmann 1971: pl. 15f "Karatepe A/5".
[775] Vorys Canby 2002: 161-162: the author also explains that the art of falconry, from which this type of scene possibly comes from, was known in Ancient Anatolia but probably not in Assyria.
[776] Seidl 1993: 560.
[777] Akurgal 1961a: 29-31, fig. 13.

the back is decorated with parallel straight lines. The tail is thin and lowered, the right front leg has two drop-shaped decorations on the shoulder joint, unusual for the Urartian lion specimens; the snout has the palmette-like characterization indicating the whiskers that can also be seen in the ivory representations. This lion is less imposing than those depicted on the cubic blocks by Adilcevaz, although it is represented in the same position; its posture is also more static. The comparisons of this lion are to be found in the lions represented on the shield of Rusa Sarduriḫi from Karmir-blur[778], especially concerning the rendering of the mane and coat, the decoration on the right front paw and the representation of the snout. A similar stone relief is to be found in the site of Tell Halaf, depicting a walking lion with its jaws opened; its body is slim and the position is very similar to the Erzincan relief, even if the details of the decoration are clearly different.

Similar to the latter in terms of workmanship and material is a relief that is said to come from the "surroundings of Erzurum" (**Rel-Erz-1**) which represents a man standing, facing left[779]: being particularly ruined, from the bas-relief it is only possible to glimpse that the man was wearing a *polos* headdress with a disc on the top and a long robe tightened at the waist by a belt with a zig-zag pattern. In both hands, he is holding objects whose use cannot be established. Seidl[780] stated that both the lion's bas-relief and this last one can be dated to the middle of the 8th century BCE, although the Erzurum area has not returned many materials that can be dated to that time.

Finally, a fragment of relief from the citadel of Toprakkale (**Rel-Top-1**), which in addition to the bas-relief technique also had an inlaid decoration, has been preserved[781]: on it is represented the left profile of a bearded man, who grabs a branch with his left hand while lifting his right hand as a sign of greeting. On his head he wears a cylindrical headgear with a small disc at the top; the details of the composition, among which there is the face of the figure, must have been made of other materials, of which only a fragment of an iron branch remains. Unfortunately, the state of preservation of the material does not allow us to compare it with other artistic elements of the Near East.

One should report the hypothesis that the rock relief found close to the fortress of Doğubayazit, at the entrance of a chamber tomb (**Rel-Doğ-1**), is to be considered Urartian[782]: the relief is not clearly visible in photography, but is well described as "un bas-relief de style hittite 'à droite, un homme tient dans la main droite un batôn et porte quelque objet dans sa main gauche. À gauche, un autre homme, les deux mains levées, semble chasser un animal, un bouc. Au milieu est située une ouverture oblongue, haute de 75 cm, murée à sa partie inférieure de petites pierres, polies du côté extérieur, mais grossièrement taillées sur les autres côtés. (…) De telles chambres creusées dans le roc ont été découvertes par des archéologues en Turquie, notamment aux environs du lac de Van, et aussi en Perse"[783]. The scene, as it is described, does not seem to belong to the Urartian inventory: the characteristic that could lead back to this area is the morphology of the face of the two characters, who show the large, flat nose already

[778] Preserved in the History Museum of Armenia collection, inventory number 2303-10. Van Loon, instead, compares it to the lions on Rusa Erimenaḫi's shields from Toprakkale; van Loon 1966: 77.
[779] Seidl 1993: 560-561.
[780] Seidl 1993: 561.
[781] Lehmann-Haupt 1906: 546-549.
[782] Van Loon 1966: 70-71. The author talks about the publication of the relief in Zalcharov 1931: 165-166, pls. 13-14, where, however, it is not mentioned the possibility that this relief is from the Urartian period except in a note in the margin where it is said: "Cf. Lehmann-Haupt, *Armenien einst und jetzt* II, Hälfte 2, Berlin '31, p. 753-757, qui prend ce relief comme appartenant aux Khaldes" (14, fn. 120).
[783] Zalcharov 1931: 13-14, from Ivanovsky, A.A., "Po Zakavkaziu", in *Materialy po Arkeologii Kavkaza* IV, 43-65.

encountered in Kefkalesi's reliefs; again, the helmet worn by the man on the right presents the same *Krummwulsten* seen on the bronze helmets found in different fortresses in the Urartian land. Comparing the relief and the features of the rock-cut tomb itself, Konyar came to the conclusion that it has to be an Urartian production: "The iconographic features of the relief, the stone masonry of the burial chamber, and the features such as niches suggest dating the tomb to the Urartian period. However, its place in the Urartian chronology is a matter of debate. It has been suggested that, judging from similar helmets used by kings, it could be dated to the reigns of Argishti I or Sarduri II. On the other hand, Salvini claims that it might belong to the reigns of Aramu or Lutipri, predecessors of Sarduri I, from the beginning of the 9th century BC"[784].

An Urartian-style relief it is also said to be found in Evoğlu, north of Iran, apparently coming from an architectural context (**Rel-Ev-1**): it depicts a bearded god, so defined by the horned headdress in the shape of the *polos* with a disc on the top, facing right, with a pinecone in his right hand and, surprisingly, a small goat in his left hand; his robe is decorated with geometrical shapes and rosettes. What is different from the other depictions of deities holding a pinecone is the position of the last one: on this relief, the pinecone points upwards, and it's held by its sort of "trunk"[785]. A parallel to this relief is to be found only in an Assyrian bas-relief coming from Room T of the North-West Palace in Nimrud[786] showing a winged genius holding in his hands a goat and a pinecone shaped leaf pointing upwards.

Urartian reliefs are clearly influenced by Assyrian and North-Syrian monumental art: from Assyrian art, the Urartian craftsman recovered subjects and themes such as the *apkallu* and their ritual position around the sacred tree, transposed into the Urartian context with the inclusion of typical elements, such as the fortress that stands on the background of the composition. The craftsmen of the Kingdom also changed the objects placed in the hands of their genie, replacing the more common Assyrian *situla* with a bowl, usually depicted in the hands of King Ashurnasirpal II in the reliefs of his Northwest Palace in Nimrud. The bowl is also held in the hands of the deity standing on the bull from Kefkalesi: the position of the divine figures standing on animals is also inspired by the reliefs coming from the neo-Hittite west; from here also comes the iconography of the lions on which the Urartian *apkallu* are standing, adopting that particular roar with the tongue pushed out of the jaw that has no comparison within Urartian royal art. The representation of the lions, however, is as far from Assyrian realism, with their dynamic positions and the precise rendering of the animals' muscles, as it is from the very stylized depiction of the neo-Hittite monuments: it seems almost as if the Urartians were inspired by their own metal artefacts to represent the animals on the bas-reliefs, whose resemblance with the metal engraved animals is remarkable particularly concerning the stele from Erzincan and the relief of the character standing on the bull from Kefkalesi. The lions on the other basalt block from Kefkalesi are almost as naturalistic and massive in their rendering as the Assyrian lions, however, taking up the static position from the reliefs and the statuary in the round of neo-Hittite area. Nevertheless, the adoption of foreign iconographies, in particular Assyrian, is not aware of the meanings they imply: the representation of winged genii, for example, in the Assyrian context is probably representative of the Seven Antediluvian Wise Men[787], which can hardly be known to the Urartian population. Likewise, the choice of the attributes that the divine creatures hold in their hands does not reflect the Assyrian one, implying, more

[784] Konyar 2017: 25.
[785] Calmeyer 1979: 187-188.
[786] Barnett 1975: pl. 4.
[787] Green 1994: 262.

than the indication of a different ritual perpetrated by the *apkallu*, a stylistic preference or simply a physical difficulty in representation: if the *situla*, in fact, is held by the lowered hand, it would overlap the raised knee and it would be placed on the head of the ridden animal. Moreover, it is not clear if the representation of the animals follows a criterion of belonging to the deity, if it is actually a deity, standing on them, nor if this criterion reflects the one already known in the Near-Eastern religion[788]: particular is the position of the deity on the Urartian relief, not represented as a warlike power of thunder[789] but more as a peaceful protector genius, who takes his position from the numerous specimens coming from the Assyrian neighbour from Ashurnasirpal II onwards[790]. A purely Urartian characteristic is also the gesture with which the genii show the straight pinecone in the raised hand: if in the Assyrian and neo-Hittite areas it is almost hidden in the closed hand, the Urartians represent the pinecone completely visible to the spectator, held only for the petiole. A final observation concerns the sites where the Urartian reliefs were found, mostly located in the western part of the Kingdom: this circumstance, although probably due to a still partial study of the Urartian sites, may give rise to the hypothesis that the very idea of the god or god-like representations on relief comes from the Syro-Hittite sphere, where there are numerous examples of stelae and orthostats decorated according to this technique. The Urartian relief, at least in the few examples that have been preserved, appears to be the crasis of Assyrian themes and iconographies, and Syro-Hittite ideas, reinterpreted, revisited and modified in a personal way by the craftsmen of the Kingdom.

[788] In this case, for example, the bull ridden by the deity represented in the first relief would unequivocally qualify him as the Storm god. See Schwemer 2008.
[789] See the neo-Hittite stelae representing the Storm god standing on the bull; a non-exhaustive list includes reliefs from Adıyaman, Arslan Tash, Asmacık, Cekke, Gölpınar, Hacibebekli, Karasu, Kahramanmaraş, Tell Ahmar.
[790] Kolbe 1982: 14 ff.

3. Urartian objects in the Near East and the Caucasus

Urartian objects, or objects which present the same features as the ones widespread in the Urartian territory, have also been found outside the Urartian area, mainly in Caucasian and northern Iranian sites. These artefacts are probably the results of plunder actions or exchange, or even of a cultural influence of Urartian art on local artisans.

3.1. Bronze objects

A surely Urartian conical helmet has been recovered outside Urartu: it comes from the site of Rutschi-Tig / Verkhnyaya Rutkha, Northern Ossetia, and it was discovered during illicit diggings in a necropolis (**H-Ru-1**)[791]. Its decoration is typical of a certain type of Urartian helmets, as it bears the embossed depiction of an abstract "lightning" symbol represented on many specimens found in Urartian sites[792]; as many of the other helmets, it bears the cuneiform inscription ^{m}ar-˹gi-iš-tiˀ-i u-ri-iš-ḫi, "property of Argišti"[793], which Salvini identified as Argišti, son of Minua, probably because no helmet of this kind with an inscription of Argišti, son of Rusa, has been found yet. This helmet has been defined as the indication of warfare between Transcaucasian tribes and the Urartians[794]: however, it would be very unusual if an inscribed and decorated bronze helmet was actually worn by the king battling against local tribes. It may be possible to suggest that such helmet testifies general inter-"statal" contacts more than war dynamics, even if another hypothesis would be that the helmet was part of a booty raised by the Transcaucasian invaders in Urartu.

Further east, in the Gilan region, a conspicuous lot of Urartian inscribed objects has been found: from an illicit digging whose provenance is generally attested as the "area of Gilan"[795], comes a horse harness with the *unicum* epigraph NÍG.GA *šá mì-nu-ú-a*, "treasure of Minua"[796]; another horse harness incised with the inscription ^{m}ar-gi-iš-ti-i ú -ri-iš-[ḫi][797], which Salvini attributes to the arsenal of the king Argišti, son of Minua. This time, anyway, it is also possible that this object belonged to Argišti Rusaḫi, whose campaigns in the northern regions of Iran are recorded also by several stone inscriptions[798].

Lastly, from a tomb in Tul-e Gilan (**Bra-TG-1**)[799], comes a small copper strip re-adapted as a bracelet and bearing the following cuneiform epigraph on one line: $^{[D}$Ḫal-di-e e-ú-ri-e i-ni x ^{mD}sar$_5$-du-ri-še ^{m}a]r-giš-ti-[ḫi]-ni-še uš-tú-n[i ul-gu-ši-ia-ni e-di-ni], "[To Ḫaldi, his lord, Sarduri s]on of Argišti, dedicate[ed (this) for his life]"[800]. This object is attributed by Salvini to the king Sarduri, son of Argišti, even if, as it's correctly pointed out[801], it may also belong to the king Rusa, son of Argišti: the only visible element

[791] Castelluccia 2014: 88.
[792] See the section "Helmets"; the specimens come from Ayanis, Burmageçit, Çavuştepe and Karmir-blur.
[793] CTU B 8-13.
[794] Sulimirski 1970: 398.
[795] Urartian objects found in the region are published by Ghirshman 1964.
[796] Salvini 2012: 32; "la sua probabile autenticità si basa sulla scritta B 9-22 in due tazze di bronzo da Karmir-blur".
[797] Salvini 2012: 41, under the description of B-26.
[798] See Dan – Bonfanti 2021a.
[799] A resumé of the studies on this bracelet is offered in Dara 2019.
[800] CTU B 9-32.
[801] Dalalyan – Grekyan 2004: 4.

is, in fact, the patronymic, and the kings who define themselves as "son of Argišti" are Sarduri (II) and Rusa (III). The bracelet is probably cut out from a bigger object, which was the one originally inscribed: the signs, though, aren't carved with attention, as the space between them differs every time; furthermore, the style and decoration of this object are the same as the other eleven bracelets found during the excavations in Tul-e Gilan, indicating that it was clearly manufactured here. This bracelet cannot be proof of the Urartian invasion of the Gilan region: commerce or battles are probably the reason why this object was found here.

From the Grave 24 of the Tul-e Talesh necropolis, in Iranian Azerbaijan, comes instead a bronze quiver (**Q-Tul-1**) decorated with four groups of four bands filled with a zigzag pattern[802], similar to the specimens found in the sites of Toprakkale, Karmir-blur and Geghovit[803]: the publication of the grave is not complete but its presence here may be connected with the campaigns of Argišti, son of Rusa, in the area[804]. The most conspicuously found "Urartian" artefact corresponds, anyway, to the bronze belts.

3.1.1. Bronze belts

The site of Golovino[805], located north of Lake Sevan, has returned a series of burials, both megalithic and cyst, with typical "Transcaucasian" grave goods: during the excavations of 1929, Urartian bronze belts and one bronze buckle were found, but the information on their precise contexts is unfortunately not available. The belts are decorated with bands of superimposed rows filled with *repoussé* dots, framed by an embossed straight line (**B-Gol-1** to **3**). The belt buckle, instead, which is the right end of the bronze belt where usually a ring for closure is affixed, represents three superimposed *Mischwesen*, with bird's bodies and wings, and horse's legs, inserted in a frame lined by a row of *repoussé* dots (**B-Gol-4**): the description of this objects is actually based on a poorly reproduced drawing made in 1952[806], so it cannot be totally precise. The *Mischwesen* represented on the Golovino buckle is a *unicum* in Urartian art, mainly because the usual decorations of the belt's buckles are superimposed rampant lions: this is possibly a hint that locates the production of this belt in a non-Urartian land. Other belts found in the Golovino necropolis are either undecorated[807] or decorated with spiral motifs[808] and miscellaneous geometric motifs[809]: these are qualified as Southern Caucasian specimens, with possibly no Urartian connections.

A belt of probable Urartian manufacture was casually found near Chirsa, in Kakheti, eastern Georgia (**B-Chi-1**)[810]. Unfortunately, no other significant information is available. It is a fragment of the upper part of a bronze belt of the dimensions of 7 x 6.5 cm, clearly reworked and rounded. It presents the images of three superimposed rampant lions facing right; the figures were executed in relief while the

[802] Castelluccia 2014: 90-91.
[803] See the section "Quivers".
[804] Piller, 2010: 67-68.
[805] Martirosjan 1954: pl. IV.1-5.
[806] Martirosjan, 1952: pl. 4, n. 4.
[807] Castelluccia 2017: pl. 2.8; two other belts were found, but their pictures are not published (Castelluccia 2017: 278).
[808] Castelluccia 2017: pl. 57.204-205.
[809] Castelluccia 2017: pl. 63.223.
[810] Miron - Orthmann 1995: 27, 277.

details were incised, and it seems that the metalsmith drew all the lions freehand, as they all have different characterization.

Other Urartian belts were found in the graves 40b and 215b of the great necropolis of Tli (**B-Tli-1, 2**)[811], a village in the northern part of Shida Kartli (Eastern Georgia). The fieldwork, from 1960 to 1988, unearthed a total of about 500 graves dating from the 15th to the 7th century BCE. A summary of the grave goods found within the two aforementioned tombs includes bronze bowls, bronze fibulae, bronze "Colchian-Koban" axes, bronze daggers, bronze pins, iron daggers, iron knives, bronze buckle and a piece of a "Transcaucasian" associated with the buckle, and a fragmentary pottery vessel[812]: the tombs are clearly characterized as non-Urartian. The belts, depicting three rows of animal, hybrid and human figures, find close parallels with some belts found in the Urartian area, like, for example, the ones coming from Altıntepe, Dedeli, Yeghegnadzor and Suçati.

The excavations in the area of Gyumri, formerly known as Leninakan, returned two bronze belts: the first one (**B-Gy-1**)[813], found in Grave 8, presents a decoration of four horizontal bands filled with four lines of *repoussé* dots and framed by a straight embossed line; the second belt, whose exact finding context is unknown, has a geometrical decoration with two strips filled with two lines of *repoussé* dots disposed along the upper and lower edges, while in the centre there is a double line running parallel to the two strips. This second belt[814] is not a common type in Urartian sites, although it presents a dotted decoration (**B-Gy-2**)[815]: it resembles more the specimens found in the Tli graves, with lines of *repoussé* dots framed with straight lines spaced out with plain bands[816]. From the district of Gyumri, in the town of Shirak, a belt has been accidentally recovered (**B-Shi-1**)[817]; information regarding this specimen are very few, and none regards its exact provenance. It represents a sort of griffin, jumping towards a stylized solar disk located upon a single-branched sacred tree; the upper edge is framed by a *guilloche*, the lower one presents a garland with buds and palmettes. The style of the griffin is far from the Urartian representations, while the solar disk and the sacred tree find binding comparisons in the decoration of other belts found in Urartian sites[818].

Fragments of bronze belts defined as "Urartian" [819] were found in the necropolis of Akhm'ilovo, in the Gorno-Mariisky district, on the left bank of the Volga river (**B-Ak-1, 2**). They had been reused to form a female headdress: the decorations on the fragments consisted of a rampant hybrid creature, enclosed between two sacred trees, and a lion, placed at the upper right end of the belt, which was framed by bands of dots[820]. The presence of Urartian materials in a place so far from the Southern Caucasus is certainly due to the preciousness of the decorated belts, which were evidently the result of the plundering of burials in the Urartian area; this is also confirmed by the presence of a "Transcaucasian" belt forming part of one of the female headdresses found[821].

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[811] Techov 1981.
[812] A detailed analysis of the grave goods and of the "Urartian" belts found in the Tli necropolis is available in Bonfanti – Cesaretti – Dan *forthcoming*.
[813] Martirosjan 1964: 284.
[814] Esayan 1984: 108 and fig. 27.a-b.
[815] Castelluccia 2017: no. 218.
[816] See, for example, Castelluccia 2017: nn. 75-80.
[817] Piotrovskij 1975: fig. 84.
[818] See, for example, **B-Kb-3** and, even if the two symbols are represented separately, **B-Çav-2**.
[819] Seidl 2004: 14, referring to Seidl 1988b: pl. 109.
[820] Patrushev 1982: 192, fig. 4.1-2 and 4.6.
[821] Patrushev 1982: 192, fig. 4.3-5.

4. Foreign artefacts in Urartian land

Foreign artefacts found in the Urartian territory mirror the relationships that Urartu itself had with its neighbouring states, adding more knowledge to the panorama already known from Urartian inscriptions and the Assyrian reports. These artefacts belong essentially to all the states which entered in contact with Urartu: starting from the West, we can find Phrygian bronze artefacts, Syro-Hittite and Assyrian ivories, and Caucasian belts.

4.1. Bronze objects

4.1.1. Phrygian cauldron attachments

Two bronze cauldron handles coming from Room 12 of Karmir-blur (**Ca-Kb-1**) have a particular feature[822]: they, as many others, represent two bull's heads affixed to a T-shaped support, but their characteristics are totally different from the other Urartian bull's heads. The horns of the animal are turned outwards first and then upwards, there are no ears, on the forehead, there is no mane but rather a small depression, the muzzle is elongated and the eyes are circular. A circular eyelet is applied on the heads of the bulls, probably used for inserting a ring handle; the heads and the supports, furthermore, are created in a single unit. Muscarella[823], raised the doubt that the cauldron and the bull's head attachments are not to be considered Urartian: this would for sure explain the stylistic and manufacturing difference between the Karmir-blur heads and all the previous ones.

Only Herrmann[824] associated these bull's heads with the cauldron attachments found at the site of Gordion[825]: they are in fact identical to the bull's heads still attached to the cauldrons MM12 and MM13, found inside the Tumulus MM, the so-called "Mida's Mound", probably dating back to the end of the 8th century BCE[826]. If Young states that "at least one Phrygian bull cauldron traveled beyond its home area"[827], it would perhaps be more correct to assume that at least two of these cauldrons were found outside the Phrygian territory, given the absolute similarity between the Karmir-blur cauldron bull's heads and the attachments found in the Tumulus MM.

Another type of cauldron usually attachment associated with Urartu is the siren-shaped one: to date, there is only one specimen[828], found in 1859 inside the chamber tomb of Alişar / Verahram (**Ca-Al-1**)[829]. It has long been thought that there was at least one other specimen, coming from the Toprakkale

[822] Piotrovskij 1950: 70-71. One of those handles is still fixed to the rim of the cauldron; they belong to the collection of the History Museum of Armenia, inventory number 2010-12.
[823] Muscarella 1992: 27, "The pair from Karmir Blur, recovered on a vessel that disintegrated, is manifestly not Urartian, in style or construction, and it surely should be interpreted as an import".
[824] Herrmann 1975: 400.
[825] A good image and description are available in Young 1981: 219-223 and pl. 59.A, B, C.
[826] Young 1981: 270. A brief discussion on the issue of Gordion's chronology is to be found in the section dedicated to the Phrygian contacts.
[827] Young 1981: 222.
[828] It has long been thought that there was at least one other specimen, coming from the Toprakkale excavation and published in Lehmann-Haupt 1906: 86-87; Muscarella 2013: 733: "The Berlin 'Toprakkale' siren, long assumed to have been excavated, is now known to have been purchased in Europe".
[829] Piotrovskij 1967: 82-85; Dan – Bonfanti 2021a.

excavation[830], but it resulted to be a purchase from the antiquity market[831]. The Alişar / Verahram siren attachment has elongated eyes, a flat nose, and the shape of the mouth recalls a sort of "archaic smile"; the hair is rendered with horizontal wavy lines. The tunic is decorated with a sort of zig-zag line filled with punched dots. It is believed that this one siren-shaped attachment is an import[832], not at all typical of the Urartian territory[833], probably coming from the north of Syria[834]. The question of the origins of the siren attachments is longstanding, starting from the western sites where siren-shaped cauldron attachments were found, both in Greece and in Italy, and seeing their models as coming from the East during the so-called 'Orientalizing' period in the 8th century BCE[835]; three main options are hypothesized by the scholars regarding their origin: "one postulates a North Syrian, another an Urartian main center, both accepting one or two examples to be of Assyrian manufacture; the third, a minority opinion, argues for both a North Syrian and an Urartian center, also accepting one or two examples to be Assyrian"[836]. The fact that only one specimen has been found, and not even in the heart of the Urartian territory, makes it clear that an Urartian main centre of production is not a realistic option for the siren-shaped cauldron's attachments[837]. This siren-shaped handle should be considered an import, solving, in some ways, to the *vexata quaestio* on the Urartian origin of the sirens cauldron's attachments. A similar character has been found depicted on an ivory element in Nimrud, which is said to have a Syrian origin, dated to the half of the 9th century BCE[838]: this would confirm the hypothesis that these kind of artefacts, depicting sirens, primarily departed from a Syrian centre.

What has not been sufficiently highlighted in the history of the studies[839] is that all the only other siren-shaped attachments from the Near East have the same place of discovery, Gordion's Tumulus MM, "Midas Mound"[840]: from here, still attached to two cauldrons, come eight siren-shaped attachments

[830] Lehmann-Haupt 1906: 86-87.
[831] Muscarella 2013: 733: "The Berlin 'Toprakkale' siren, long assumed to have been excavated, is now known to have been purchased in Europe".
[832] Muscarella 2013: 733: "(…) only the example from Alishar in north-western Iran derives from Urartu-controlled land, and its presence there represents a rare import from the west".
[833] Muscarella 1962: 325: "May the very fact that siren attachments characteristically have handles be an indication that they were not manufactured at Urartu?". The thesis of an Urartian origin of this type of attachment was instead strongly supported by Barnett 1982: 367-368 (who then moderated his view in Barnett 1986: 112) and Kyrieleis 1966.
[834] Muscarella 1962: 326-327 and Muscarella 1970: 110-111. The role of North Syria in the development of the siren-shaped attachments was firstly outlined by Kunze 1931: 270-280. Muscarella 2013: 732-733: "(…) there is no evidence to indicate that even one siren cauldron was manufactured in Urartu. Greater North Syria still remains the best candidate for the region where the primary workshops flourished. That a number of workshops functioned there is evidenced by the variety in details of the sirens, although we are incapable of matching individual sirens to specific North Syrian centers". See also Winter 2010: 343. Van Loon 1966: 108: "this group has no specific feature in common with any other work of art found in Urartu. The closest parallels are with works of art of so-called neo-Hittite sites". A Syro-Hittite origin of these attachments was proposed also by Akurgal 1961: 35-51.
[835] See, for example, Bardelli 2015.
[836] Muscarella 2013: 732.
[837] Wartke 1985: 92-93, after analyzing the various siren protomai without provenance collected in different western museums: "So sind Zweifel berechtigt und angebracht, wenn allein auf Grund ihrer ‚Herkunft' einige Kesselattaschen mit Menschenprotomen der urartäischen Kunst zugerechnet werden"; also, confirming the late purchase of the Toprakkale siren-attachment: "Da nachweishch auch die Berliner Attasche VA 2988 kein Grabungsfund aus Toprakkale ist, fehlt damit die wesentliche Stütze für eine urartäische Provenienz der gesamten Gruppe von menschengestaltigen Attaschen".
[838] Bahrani 2017: 257, fig. 11.4.
[839] See only Muscarella 2013: 726-727.
[840] The question of the Tumulus MM's name has recently become problematic; with the new study on the dating of the Gordion site, it has been concluded that the findings should be backdated by at least a century; specifically, the Tumulus MM would date to the beginning of the 8th century BCE, about fifty years before the reign of the

extremely similar in workmanship and morphology to the handle found in Alişar / Verahram[841]. In particular, the engraved decoration of the tunic and the jewellery, which is almost identical to that of the sirens at Gordion's, is surprising, so much so that its origin can be hypothesized in a single workshop. If a clear influence of Neo-Hittite art in the creation of the attachment in the shape of siren has been recognised[842], it is also possible that their diffusion is actually linked to the Phrygian sphere, which has returned the largest number of these objects in a context that can actually be dated to the 8th century BCE.

4.1.2. Phrygian belts in Toprakkale

Other objects that suggest moving our gaze westwards are the three belts found in Toprakkale[843], which can find parallels again in the Phrygian area: found inside two of Gordion's three large tumuli[844], their dating corresponds to a period probably included in the 8th century BCE[845]. Two of these belts (**B-Top-2, 3**)[846], clearly of the same type, have a geometric decoration in quadrangular shapes and a hooked buckle that are to be considered characteristic of Phrygian specimens, as shown by the belts found inside the Tumulus P in the site of Gordion[847]. As Wartke[848] suggested in the first place for the belt he published, but it can also apply to the one published by Barnett, this specimen finds a precise comparison in the representation of the partially hidden belt and the chest-crossing band on a statuette found in the same site of Toprakkale. This figurine (**Mf-Top-9**)[849], depicting a male attendant, a servant or a courtier, has hybrid characters: the representation of the half-moon medallion finds precise archaeological correspondences in the Urartian context[850] and the decorations of the dress undoubtedly refer to Urartian and Assyrian arts, the rendering of the hair recalls the reliefs from the time of Sargon II[851], and the belt undoubtedly refers to the two Phrygian examples from Toprakkale. Another comparison for the belts, decorated exactly like the one depicted on the previous statuette, is represented on a figurine of a hybrid creature, with a human's torso and head, bull's body and bird's wings, found again in Toprakkale (**Mf-Top-12**)[852]: the human torso is adorned with a half-moon shaped pendant and a band crossing the chest, decorated with squares motifs, exactly like the belts found in Toprakkale. The appearance of the figurine's torso is very similar to that of the attendant's statuette, except for the

famous King Midas. Rose – Darbyshire 2011: 155-164; see also, for example, Muscarella 2012 for a different opinion.
[841] See, for example, Young 1981: pls. 51-57.
[842] Muscarella 1962: 362.
[843] Wartke 1990: pl. XXI; Barnett 1972: figs. 13, 18. Bonfanti – Dan 2021a. To the three belt fragments, one should also add the frame of a wide belt (**B-Top-5**).
[844] Tumulus P, or "Child's burial", and Tumulus MM.
[845] See the section on the issues on Gordion's chronology.
[846] Wartke 1990: *taf.* XXI and Barnett 1972: fig. 18.
[847] Young 1981: 35-36, figg. 10-11.
[848] Wartke 1990: 77.
[849] Wartke 2014: 92, catalogue n° 36, "(…) from a piece of furniture, most probably a large-scale throne of a deity".
[850] For the Toprakkale specimen (**M-Top-1**), see for example Piotrovskij 1967: 51, fig. 34; 54. For the Nor Aresh specimen (**Br-Nor-1**), see Barnett 1963: 194-197.
[851] See, for example, Barnett 1975: pls. 58-64.
[852] Barnett 1963: pl. VI; BM91247.

headgear worn by the hybrid creature, horned, which qualifies it as a divine being[853]. A curious circumstance is that both of these two figurines are part of the same object, which is the so-called "Toprakkale throne"[854]: the representation of a foreign belt on an Urartian royal throne is somehow unexpected and it would indicate that this kind of belt was somehow popular among the Urartian élite.

The other belt found in Toprakkale (**B-Top-4**)[855] was possibly rounded on one of the short sides; the decoration is made in open-work technique and depicts geometric motifs, mostly circular-shaped. Similar belts were found in the building called "South Cellar" in Gordion, a structure dated, thanks to the Greek pottery sherds found there, from the late 8th - early 7th century BCE[856]. Also outside Gordion, in a mound grave near Ankara[857], and from the site of Boğazköy, as well, were found belt buckles with a decoration of circular openwork elements[858], extremely similar to those from Toprakkale. Further west, two silver belts with both the geometrical decoration with squared shapes and the openwork plaque used as a clasp was found in the site of Bayındır, in Lycia, inside the Tumulus D[859]: the owner of the tomb was a young female who was wearing one of those belts at the time of the burial. Her ethnicity is still debated, but the features of the belts point towards the Phrygian area[860]: this discovery suggests that this kind of belt was much spread in Anatolia even after the destruction of the Phrygian tumuli in Gordion, as this burial is dated around the end of the 7th century BCE.

4.1.3. Southern Caucasian belts

It is very uncommon to find, in Urartian sites, belts with a decoration that completely differs from the imagery that one would expect to find as an ornament of an Urartian object[861]. Such artefacts are to be considered as typical examples of the so-called "Transcaucasian" art, which persisted also during the Urartian period, sometimes as an expression of local art coexisting with the *Assyro-Urartian* style. A complete study of all the belts found in Armenia during the Iron Age was published in 1984 by Stepan Esayan, and it's still the best compendium on this topic: apart from systematizing the belts in different categories, it also reports the information connected to their finding contexts, when available; often, these pieces of information are the only ones usable on those objects.

In the village of Mucan, on the western coast of Lake Sevan, in 1970, a cist-grave was discovered while building the foundations of a house: the materials found here, included a belt with spiral decoration (**B-Muc-1**), are dated approximately to the 7th-6th century BCE[862]. This fragment is very similar to the ones found in the Chrtanoch / Golovino necropolis[863]: the date proposed by Esayan differs from the one offered by Castelluccia, as the Armenian scholar suggested a period between the 9th and the 8th century

[853] A figurine of another hybrid creature wearing the same belt is to be found in the Hermitage State Museum, inventory n° DB-16002: it is labelled as found in Toprakkale but it is also said that it was purchased from the antiquity market. The detail of the belt may be a hint suggesting its actual provenance from the site of Toprakkale.
[854] See § 2.7.1.2.3.
[855] Barnett 1972: fig. 13.
[856] DeVries 2005: 40.
[857] Özgük - Akok 1947: figg. 23, 25–26. On the tumuli of Ankara see also Aral 2017.
[858] Neve 1970: Abb. 11.c-d.
[859] A good picture of this belt is available in Şare 2011: 242, Fig 3.3b.5.
[860] Şare 2011: 98-99.
[861] Mucan, Muchannat Tapa, Lčašen.
[862] Castelluccia 2017: 324.
[863] See the section on Urartian materials outside the Urartian land.

BCE[864]. Close to Mucan, in Gavar, an Urartian fortress has been found, to which belonged a stone inscription[865], originally used inside the walls of the fortress, mentioning the name of Rusa, son of Sarduri, dating to the end of the 8th century BCE.

Not only Mucan: also the site of Muchannat Tapa, located near the Yerevan railway station, returned many Urartian items and a belt decorated with rows of *repoussé* dots not framed by straight lines (**B-Much-1**), as one would expect from the "typical Urartian" belts. This belt is today considered "Transcaucasian"[866], but, as no other information on its finding is available, there should actually be no reasons for it: it may simply be a variation from the usual "Urartian" belt dotted decoration.

Last, the belts found at Lčašen, a site located on the southern shore of Lake Sevan: the belts, decorated with animals figures and hunting scenes with a chariot (**B-Lč-1**), have no information regarding their discovery, but an Early Iron Age fortress has been found close to the Lčašen village. This is possibly the city conquered by Argišti, son of Minua, who left an inscription on a rock near the village[867]; the belts could come from the fortress or the necropolis, whose date is still discussed but it probably pertains to the Late Bronze Age[868]

Numerous are the "Transcaucasian" belts found in the Armenian and Northern Iranian territories and dating before the Urartian times[869], demonstrating that the region was effectively permeated by that specific artistic taste. What is not clear, since one tends to date all the belts with an Assyrian type of decoration to the Urartian period, is if, apart from the examples mentioned in the previous paragraph, "Assyro-Urartian" and "Transcaucasian" belts lived together for a certain time, starting from the Assyrian incursions north of the Anti-Taurus mountain range. At the present day, numerous are the "Urartian" belts with an uncertain context of discovery, or whose context is not clearly datable: it may be possible that many of them are to be considered pre-Urartian, witnesses of a new artistic style in contrast with the Transcaucasian one.

A peculiar specimen comes from the Altıntepe Tomb III (**B-Alt-2**)[870]: discovered in a series of fragments, this silver belt has a central decoration with at least one zig-zag engraved band framed by two parallel rows of close embossed dots[871]. This specimen stands out in the Urartian art scene as a *unicum* in terms of both material and decoration The use of the zig-zag as a decoration of the central band is attested only and exclusively in this exemplar, found in a chamber tomb context that can be dated *post quem*, thanks to the bronze plaque with the inscription of Argišti, son of Rusa[872], placing the lifespan of the tomb's owner at the beginning of the 7th century BCE. This decoration is never attested in other Urartian metalworks but two similar items come from two sites in the Southern Caucasian region, Kalakent, in present-day Azerbaijan, and Mouçi-yéri[873], in the Armenian district of Lori: as the

[864] Esayan 1984: 105.
[865] CTU A 10-1.
[866] Castelluccia 2017: 325.
[867] CTU A 8-11.
[868] Castelluccia 2017: 308-309.
[869] See Dan – Bonfanti 2021b.
[870] Özgüç 1983: 37, plate XVI, c-d.
[871] It is not clear whether the larger fragment will form a second parallel band or is the continuation of the first. If it were the continuation of the first band, the height of the belt would be lower than usual.
[872] CTU B 11-5.
[873] De Morgan 1889: 115, fig. 89; Castelluccia 2017: n. 202.

belt found in the *Grab* 48 of Kalakent's Paradiesfestung is dated to the Early Iron Age[874], it is once again confirmed that the zig-zag motif is clearly common in the pre-Urartian era.

Lastly, a small fragment of a Southern Caucasian styled belt has been found in the excavations carried out in the site of Giyimli (**B-Giy-1**)[875]: it doesn't show any sign of reuse, which on the contrary characterized most of the other bronze plaques found here. The spiral decoration is clearly to be connected to the Southern Caucasian sphere, and its presence in a site located in present-day Turkey is explained as an exchange, or the result of a plunder action, from a site located further north[876].

4.2. Ivory and bone objects

4.2.1. An ivory figurine from the site of Toprakkale

A very well preserved ivory figurine (**Iv-Top-8**)[877] found in Toprakkale, about 18 cm high, represents a woman, "either goddess or worshipper"[878], nude, only wearing a necklace and a decorated headgear, with her hands raised to cover her chest; her nose and mouth have been lost due to a fracture on her face, her legs are preserved only up to her ankle. The headgear, a sort of *polos* or a crown, is decorated with rosettes with eight petals, separated by a horizontal row of raised dots; raised dots also decorate the upper and lower extremities of the *polos*. Below the headgear, the hair is rendered in locks falling on the shoulders, decorated with parallel lines marking the curls; on the forehead, the hair is arranged in curls rendered using small spirals. The remaining of the face is finely shaped: the eyebrows are deeply incised, the eyes, in the shape of an almond, are slightly protruding, with a deep tear duct. The irises, now blind holes in the centre of the eyes, must have been represented by blue stones, of which a small trace remains in the left eye. On the neck, a double-lined necklace is decorated with dots in relief arranged on two vertical lines. The hands are on the chest, covering the breasts, the stomach is rounded, with a navel described in a very natural way; the last very naturalistic detail is the rendering of the right knee, which is the only one preserved. The figurine stood on an ivory pedestal decorated with palm leaves[879]. Several female figurines, whose faces, mainly, have been preserved, come from Nimrud: from Fort Shalmaneser, in particular, comes the face of an ivory figurine[880] wearing on her forehead a sort of coronet decorated with rosettes in relief, under which one can see straight hair; the shape of the eyes is slightly different, but as in the figurine from Toprakkale they are finely engraved, with a more realistic

[874] Nagel – Strommenger 1985: pl. 22.
[875] Erzen 1974b: 207-209, figs. 29-30.
[876] Erzen 1974b: 209, defines it as an Urartian innovation, but it seems very unlikely, as it doesn't recur elsewhere on "Urartian" belts.
[877] Barnett 1950: 16, pl. XIV. Preserved in the British Museum collection, inventory number BM119447.
[878] Barnett 1950: 16.
[879] Hermann – Laidlaw 2009: 203: "Furniture elements decorated with palm-shaped capitals were popular, and there are many variations". An example comes from Fort Shalmaneser and is published in Hermann – Laidlaw 2009: and pl. 88, n. 272; several examples of furniture elements in the palm leaves shape are published in Barnett 1975: pls. LXXVIII and LXXIX.
[880] Hermann 1986: 238 n. 1283 and pl. 332. The figurine is part of the "Burnt Palace Group"; always Hermann 1986: 23: "A statuette from Toprak Kale is related to this group", clearly referring to the specimen here discussed.

rendering of the tear duct. Again from Fort Shalmaneser comes an ivory female figurine[881] whose face, arms and legs have been lost: she wears a *polos* decorated with arches, and a necklace, the arms must have originally been stretched along the bust as shown by the hands, preserved and resting on the sides of the hips, decorated with bracelets on both wrists. The standing position of the figurine, the *polos* and the necklace recall the female statuette found in Toprakkale. The ivory figurine from Toprakkale finds hence numerous parallels in the ivories from Nimrud[882]: peculiar is the choice to combine the use of the *polos* or high crown with the rosette decoration, in the Assyrian context exclusively dedicated to the coronets; a similar headdress, with a line of rosettes bordered by lines of dots, is to be found on a stone relief from Karkemish depicting the head of a woman[883]. The position of the hands of the Toprakkale ivory, covering or holding the woman's chest, moreover, recalls only two small ivory fragments of female figurines from Nimrud[884], given the most common position of the figurines with the arms stretched along the sides; an ivory *alabastron* in the form of a woman[885] holding her breast comes instead from Kuyunjik, wearing an Egyptian-style wig. The dating of the group of ivories, from Fort Shalmaneser and Southeast Palace of Nimrud, depicting nude female figurines wearing a headgear, is between the late 9th and the late 8th century BCE[886]. It has also been shown that these ivories[887] were not made in the Assyrian area, but are rather imported from the Syrian area[888]: given the fine quality of the object and the absence of similar representation in the Urartian art, it is likely that also the female figurine from Toprakkale was imported from the north of Syria.

4.2.2. An ivory open-work plaque in Altıntepe

From the gallery of the temple in Altıntepe comes a peculiar small plaque, 5 cm high, decorated in openwork and originally inlaid with coloured stones (**Iv-Alt-24**)[889]: it shows a deer, standing in front of a (sacred?) tree, with its head turned back; the left eye, the only one visible, is almond-shaped; the stag's horns join the branches of the tree in the background, blending in with them. The body of the animal has fourteen small holes originally intended to contain precious stones. The tree in the background is made by carving five symmetrical branches on each side: each branch curves downwards at the outer end to join the lower branch, thus forming a rectangular "frame" to the plaque. The tree trunk is decorated with three sets of chevrons arranged at regular distances. Urartian art is not famous for depictions of deer: there are no comparisons in the depiction of this animal among the objects composing the artistic panorama of the Kingdom, so one must look at nearby Assyria. A plate extremely similar to the Urartian one, but a little more than twice as high, comes from Room NW15 of Fort Shalmaneser[890]: it depicts a deer with its head turned back while it is about to eat a leaf from the tree in

[881] Hermann 1986: 240 no. 1296 and pl. 343. This figurine is considered as well part of the "Burnt Palace Group". Also the figurine n. 1297, similar to the previous one but in a worse state of preservation, recalls the Toprakkale specimen.
[882] Barnett 1975: pls. LXX-LXXVI.
[883] Orthmann 1971: pl. 23b "Karkemis C/3".
[884] Barnett 1975: pl. LXXVI, n. S231 and S234.
[885] Barnett 1975: pl. CXXIII, n. T6.
[886] Barnett 1975: 52.
[887] Called by Hermann 1986 "Burnt Palace Group" and by Barnett 1975, "Loftus Group".
[888] Barnett 1975: 44-52.
[889] Özgüç 1969: 86 and pl. XLIV, n. 1.
[890] Mallowan 1966: 518, n. 422, and Hermann – Laidlaw 2013: Colour Plate, n. LXI. In Hermann 2018: 146, fig. 231, one can see that the plaque is engraved on the back as well.

the background; the body of the deer has a decoration symbolizing its fur. From Fort Shalmaneser, one can study numerous other plates decorated in open-work[891], among which one, again found in Room NW15, representing an oryx[892], with the head turned backwards to eat the leaves of the background tree. Both of these plaques differ from the Urartian one both for the dynamism which characterise the subjects and the abundance of engraved decorations, minimal instead in the Altıntepe plate. These ivories[893] are also to be considered North Syrian imports, probably originating from the site of Guzana/Tell Halaf, a city absorbed by the Neo-Assyrian Empire in the 9th century BCE: the dating of this group of ivories would therefore be earlier, contemporary with the *floruit* of the centre in the 11th-10th centuries BCE[894]. Cervids carved in ivory were also found in the site of Arslan Tash[895], where, however, they are depicted while walking, with the head lowered to graze the grass; these specimens cannot be accurately dated, but it has been suggested that they also date back to the 8th century BCE[896].

A detail of the Urartian plaque is the rendering of its frame by the arrangement of the tree branches occupying the background of the scene: the plaques from Fort Shalmaneser and Arslan Tash are framed instead by a squared border, imposed above the scene. An Assyrian plaque that uses the tree in the background to mark the edge of the scene was found in Nimrud's Well AJ, again depicting a "nervous stag", standing in the mountains and browsing in a forest[897].

4.2.3. Nomadic decorated objects

The most distinctive object related to the nomad's military presence corresponds to the bilobate and trilobate arrowheads, whose existence in the Near East has been attributed both to the Cimmerians and the Scythians: those arrowheads have been found in several Urartian centres, such as Ayanis, Çavuştepe, Toprakkale, Kayalıdere, Bastam and Karmir-blur[898]. Their presence in so many Urartian citadels clearly implies both military and cultural interactions between the Urartian Kingdom and the nomads. The issue of the presence of nomadic objects in Urartu is, however, doubly linked to that of the fall of the Kingdom, although both archaeological and textual data indicate a constant contact between these entities throughout Urartian history[899]. Objects with clear connections to the Scythian

[891] The position of the deer of Altıntepe, besides resembling that of the Assyrian stags, closely resembles that of the bovids carved on some ivory plates, also from the site of Fort Shalmaneser; see Mallowan 1966: 521-523. Further examples of deer depicted on the Assyrian plates can be found in Hermann 1986: 138, no. 586 and pl. 140, no. 592; Hermann - Laidlaw 2013: pl. 124, no. 589. Some Neo-Hittite examples have been found in Arslan Tash as well, see for example Fontan – Affanni 2018: 151-177.
[892] Mallowan 1966: 518, n. 423.
[893] Called "Flame and Frond Group" in Hermann 1986: 16.
[894] Hermann 2017: 119-126.
[895] Fontan – Affanni 2018: 143-149.
[896] Hermann 1986: 31. Fontan – Affanni 2018: 33: "La date de construction du Bâtiment aux ivoires ne peut être proposée qu'à titre d'hypothèse: il aurait été édifié à une date précédant la construction du palais assyrien, lui-même probablement construit dans la seconde moitié du VIII siècle avant J.-C., postérieurement aux phases II et III, datées après le sceau cylindre assyrien AT.09.1. de la seconde moitié du IX siècle. Une date pour le Bâtiment aux ivoires dans la première moitié du VIII siècle avant J.-C. correspondrait bien à l'importante phase de construction qui est attestée par les inscriptions de Ninurta-bel-usur, eunuque de Shamsi-ilu".
[897] Hermann 2017: 33-34, fig. 27.
[898] Erdem 2019: 209.
[899] Erdem 2019.

world are found particularly at the site of Karmir-blur, where, within the Urartian levels, horse harnesses, arrowheads and decorated objects have been found[900].

Of particular interest among the nomadic decorated objects found in Karmir Blur is the horned head of a griffin with ram's horns found in the so-called "gatekeeper's room" (**No-Kb-1**)[901], near the main gate of the citadel. In addition to numerous domestic objects and millet stocks, this fragment of horn object was found with clear signs of use, with a longitudinal hole and a decoration representing a small griffin head with ram's horns[902]. The belonging of this object to the sphere of Scythian art can be demonstrated with parallels from the Kelermes burial mounds[903]. In Room 15, next to the horn remains, another griffin head was found (**No-Kb-2**), differing from the one previously described for the absence of horns[904]. Both griffin *protomai* were used as belt clasps and, as already noted, do not differ from those found in the Kelermes tumulus. Similar objects have been found in Anatolia at the burial site of Norşuntepe[905]: however, they differ from the specimens from Karmir-blur in both morphology and decoration, indicating a different chronology for this type of artefact. The clasps from Norşuntepe appear to be from a more archaic period, around the middle of the 7th century BCE, while those from Karmir-blur seem to date to the end of the 7th or beginning of the 6th century BCE[906]. Despite the formal distinctions that indicate the different chronologies of these objects, it is evident that they clearly belong to the nomadic sphere, and it is relevant to note that such artefacts have also been found in territories to the west of Urartu, indicating the extent to which nomadic populations had moved into the interior of Anatolia. The in-depth morphological study of these clasps, conducted by S. Makhortyk, has also made it possible to territorially characterise the different productions: this has allowed him to note that some characteristics of the clasps found in Karmir-blur connect them to productions of the 6th century BCE located in the Podneprovie region of Ukraine, suggesting that detachments of people from the Ukrainian steppes may have made incursions as far as the Southern Caucasus and the Near East[907], using the site of Karmir-blur as a stable base over a long period.

From Ayanis comes a scabbard tip in bone depicting a running horse (**No-Ay-1**), found next to an iron sword to which it was probably connected[908]: it is decorated in the so-called "animal style" typically associated with nomadic peoples[909]. This scabbard tip has a rounded shape with a tapered upper edge and distinct rim[910]. It is decorated with an image of a curled-up animal, with a large head and an elongated snout. The eye, the nostril, the ends of the legs and the tail are in the shape of concentric circles. The Ayanis find is similar in its rounded shape, as well as in the presence of a coiled animal, to

[900] Piotrovskij 1950: 92-96.
[901] Piotrovskij 1966: 348, calls the room "stanza del guardia-porta".
[902] Piotrovskij 1950: 96, fig. 64.
[903] Galanina 1997: pl. 16.169-289.
[904] Piotrovskij 1950: 96.
[905] Schmidt 2002: 1082-1083, pl. 68.
[906] Makhortyk 2018.
[907] Makhortyk 2018: 46; Makhortyk 2020: 87.
[908] Çilingiroğlu – Erdem 2005: 134, fig. 9.
[909] The definition of the so-called "animal style" belongs to the Russian scholar Rostovtzeff (1922), and refers to the group of metal and non-metal objects representing animals which is one of the distinctive elements of the cultural world of the Euro-Asian steppes. An overview of this topic can be found in Schilz 1994.
[910] Çilingiroğlu 2018: fig. 12.

the tip of the gold scabbards of the *akinakai* from Kelermes[911] and Melgunov[912], as well as to a bone scabbard preserved in a private collection, presumably found in Iran[913]; the animal depicted, however, has no direct analogy with any other decoration. It finds a rather close parallel in what is called an "openwork bridle plaque", found in Kurgan 5 from Ak-Burun, Crimea[914], which, however, depicts a lion, in the same position as the horse on the hilt from Ayanis. The plaque from Ak-Burun is dated to the 5th century AD, probably indicating a later date for the Ayanis find as well, and thus contacts continued after the fall of the Urartian Kingdom. The archaeological context allows us to consider the find identified in Ayanis as the first Scythian image of a coiled animal now known in the Near East. A bone tip of a scabbard decorated with the image of a coiled animal was also found at Karmir-blur (**No-Kb-4**l[915]: it depicts an animal with a hypertrophied head, which occupies almost the entire lateral part of the plate. The head shows an eye composed of concentric circles with a dot in the middle. Compared to the zoomorphic knob of Ayanis, the image on the tip of Karmir-blur is more schematic: the stylisation has been effected through the excessively enlarged rendering of some significant elements, such as the head, and the loss or levelling out of others, such as the tail[916].

Finally, in the site of Çavuştepe, two horse harnesses in bone were found, again decorated in animal style (**No-Çav-1**)[917]; another decorated harness, in bronze, was found at Altıntepe[918], and depicts the head of a griffin, in a manner very similar to that seen for bone objects. There are numerous Scythian specimens for comparison from various parts of Eurasia[919].

4.3. Scarabs and sealing

A small group of Egyptian objects was also found in Urartu, mainly in the fortresses of Karmir-blur and Erebuni. These include two amulets, a clay alabastron and several more or less oval seals. All these objects, however, would not testify to direct contact between Egypt and Urartu, but rather to the fact that the circulation of such goods was so wide that they reached the Armenian Highlands through Syrian mediation. There are also several foreign seals in Urartu, mostly Assyrian, which could be considered as prodromes of Urartian glyptic.

[911] Galanina 1997: pl. 9.
[912] Hermitage Museum, inventory number Дн.1763-1/19. Other comparisons for this object can be found in Makhortyk 2020: 83-84.
[913] Barbier 1996: 12, 37, fig. 7.
[914] The Metropolitan Museum of Art 1975: 106, n° 58.
[915] Piotrovskij 1970.
[916] Makhortyk 2020: 84.
[917] Erzen 1988: fig. 41 and pl. XLVII.
[918] Özgüç 1989: pl. III.
[919] Korolkova 2006: pl. 27.

4.3.1. Egyptian artefacts in Urartu

A group of Egyptian and Egyptian-style objects has been found in the fortress of Karmir-blur[920]: it is composed of a faïence pendant in the form of a figurine of the goddess Sekhmet (**Eg-Kb-1**), a scarab (**Eg-Kb-2**), four oval-shaped seals (**Eg-Kb-3** to **6**)[921] and a clay *alabastron* (**Eg-Kb-7**). Unfortunately, only the pictures of the seals and the scarab are available for study, but the description of the Sekhmet figurine written by Piotrovskij provide for this lack[922]: the pendant was found in 1946 inside Room 5, the same room where an Assyrian cylinder seal was discovered[923]; it is about 3 cm big and it's poorly preserved, with missing legs and the upper part badly damaged. It can be recognized the goddess, depicted standing on her left profile, with a hand outstretched and the other bent; her lion head is poorly preserved, but the posture of the figure leaves no doubt about the identity. Another Urartian capital in Armenia returned an Egyptian object: during the 1966 excavations of the Erebuni settlement, an amulet with the image of the god Bes was found (**Eg-Er-1**)[924]. His head is adorned by six feathers, and the facial features of the god are well outlined; the amulet is made of a blue-green paste. According to Hodjash[925], the closest parallel for the Erebuni amulet is kept in the Pushkin Museum of Fine Arts and it dates back to the Saite Period, during the Twenty-sixth Dynasty of Egypt[926], which means that it probably was a post-Urartian acquisition.

In any case, all the Egyptian materials arrived in Urartu through Assyria or Syria, where they were not rare[927]: it is unlikely to propose a direct contact between Urartu and Egypt[928].

4.3.2. Foreign seals

Several of the seals found in Urartu belong to foreign officials, bearing iconographies that can be traced back to specific traditions: glyptic consists in fact of extremely mobile artefacts, which easily fit into other cultural systems. During the 1955 excavations at Erebuni, a cylindrical seal made of steatite (**Fs-Er-1**)[929] was found in the columned hall of the temple of Ḫaldi[930]. On its surface, there is the figure of a hunter in the act of shooting an arrow at a goat, which is surmounted by a bird in flight. Similar figures have been found on Assyrian seals from Karmir-blur (**Fs-Kb-1, 2**)[931], and there are numerous parallels from Assyrian sites[932] dating from the late 9th to the early 8th century BCE[933]. Among the Assyrian seals found at Karmir-blur, a specimen in frit (**Fs-Kb-3**) depicting an archer aiming at a figure in the form of

[920] A brief discussion on these objects is to be found in Piotrovskij 1958: 20-21.
[921] Discussed in the following paragraph.
[922] Piotrovskij 1950: 83-84.
[923] See the following paragraph.
[924] Hodjash 1975: 154.
[925] Hodjash 1975: 156.
[926] Dated around the 664–525 BCE.
[927] Piotrovskij 1958: 21.
[928] Another opinion is instead expressed by Devedjan – Hmayakyan 2002, who talk about an "Egyptian-Assyrian-Urartian alliance" (p. 191).
[929] Ayvazian 2006: ER07.
[930] Hodjash 1979: 107.
[931] Ayvazian 2006: KB17-18.
[932] Collon 2001: pls. II-III.
[933] Hodjash 2000: 151.

a snake stands out[934], for which there are rather stringent Assyrian parallels from Nimrud[935]; equally stringent parallels[936] exist for the specimen **Fs-Kb-4**[937], which depicts a scene with an archer and prey. Also interesting is a chalcedony seal depicting an image of the adoration of a deity seated on a throne between two standards[938]: it finds Assyrian parallels on several examples of seals[939]; the scene, however, has assimilated in the Urartian area, where it was depicted in particular on medallions made of precious metals[940]. The scene is also depicted on a seal in the form of a ring found in the tomb of an Assyrian queen in Nimrud[941]: it also seems to be the origin of the production of statuettes of seated gods, of which evidence remains in the specimen **Mf-Dar-1** from Darabey. It appears to be the only scene depicted on Assyrian seals found in Urartu that will later give rise to the evolution of an independent Urartian tradition.

In addition to Assyrian seals, specimens of Egyptian seals were also found in Urartu: in Armavir, a scarab-shaped seal in faience (**Eg-Ar-1**)[942] bears the hieroglyphic phrase "Men-kheper-ra", "The King of Upper and Lower Egypt"; it may have belonged to a priest who lived during the 26th dynasty[943]. Three more seals in scaraboid shape were found in Urartu, at Karmir-blur[944]. Interestingly, Urartians were not the first receivers of foreign seals: a few centuries earlier, an Egyptian seal with the name of the Babylonian king Kurigalzu, a contemporary of the 18th dynasty pharaoh Amenhotep, was buried in the cemetery of Metsamor[945].

A single cylindrical seal is probably Luwian in origin[946], though some of its imagery, particularly the manner of the depiction of a "hunter's head", seems to also find parallels in the "local style" of Hasanlu[947]; it shows a masked man clawed by a lion from behind. Thanks to this specimen, Hodjash also raised the possibility that Luwians were among the peoples deported to Erebuni by king Argišti Minuaḫi[948].

[934] Ayvazian 2006: KB45.
[935] Collon 2001: 46-47, pl. IV.41-43.
[936] Collon 2001: pl. IV.46.
[937] Ayvazian 2006: KB19.
[938] Ayvazian 2006: KB58.
[939] Collon 2001: pls. XX-XXI.
[940] See **M-Kb-2, 3** and **M-Top-1, 2**.
[941] Gansell 2018: 82.
[942] Ayvazian 2006: AR40.
[943] Hodjash 2000: 153.
[944] Ayvazian 2006: KB21, 32, 33.
[945] Khanzadyan – Piotrovskij 1984.
[946] Hodjash 1988; Ayvazian 2006: ER08.
[947] Marcus 1996: 86-87.
[948] Hodjash 1988: 104.

5. Hybrid materials

5.1. "Hybrid" burials in the Lori Berd necropolis

The necropolis of Lori Berd, located near Stepanavan in northern Armenia, presents numerous burials dating from the 12th to the 5th century BCE; among the goods buried here, one can also find some so-called Urartian materials. From the tomb 56 comes a bronze helmet with one preserved earflap that is particular from several points of view (**H-Lor-1**): the shape, first of all, is conical, with a sort of crest that extends from the front to the back, gradually flattening towards the top. The earflap, then, similar to a specimen found in Ayanis separated from the helmet to which it belonged[949], has holes along the edges and a sort of decoration that follows the edges consisting of a frame of two embossed lines and a further internal border, probably made by engraving small circles; the peculiarity concerns its repair in ancient times, made with a fragment of belt decorated with spirals of Caucasian type[950]. The frontal decoration of the object, again, represents a *unicum*: enclosed between three *Krummwülsten* on each side is the image of two fish facing each other, symmetrically represented and decorated with dots and small lines. Below the fish, there is an engraved decoration of curved, wavy and spiral lines, which continues, slightly varied, on the sides of the helmet. The *Krummwülsten*, with snake-headed endings, also decorate the base of the helmet, taking the form of the parallel embossed lines also known from other headgear specimens. Generally speaking, the helmet is different from the Urartian specimens known, both for the shape and the decoration[951]. On the whole, however, both the central scene and the snake-shaped endings of the *Krummwülsten* are not common in the figurative decorations of Urartian helmets[952]: perhaps the helmet should be considered a local reinterpretation of properly Urartian specimens. What is interesting about this helmet is the repair carried out in ancient times, with a part of a "Transcaucasian" spiral belt which was found inside the tomb, near the burial of a horse: this detail allows us to observe that the helmet, although bearing a complex decoration and therefore in apparent contrast with what was observed for the customs of the Kingdom of Urartu, must have been used by the deceased while he was still alive, a circumstance which would have caused the earflaps to break, and

[949] Çilingiroğlu, – Batmaz, 2013: 197, *res*. 11.
[950] Devedjyan 2010: 78; for an overview on Transcaucasian spiral belts, see Castelluccia 2017: 39-40. The earflap, joined to the helmet through staples, is a near-eastern feature, not a Caucasian one (Dezsö 2001: 97).
[951] Devedjan 2010: 77: "The Lori Berd helmet does not belong to the usual Assyrian-Urartian point-headed type of bronze helmet. It is uncommon".
[952] Devedjan 2010: 78: "Though the Lori Berd helmet doesn't have cuneiform inscription on it, but in its form, ear-laps and iconography it corresponds to Urartian helmets of this type. The iconographic style and execution also have all features of the Urartian period toreutics. The realistic and shaded images of snakes and fishes are engraved on Urartian belts and snakeheaded bracelets. Various ornaments of marine waves are seen on the images of animals on Urartian shields and votive plates. The helmet by its production skill and fineness is perfect and doesn't yield to royal luxurious helmets. It probably originated in one of the famous Urartian centers not earlier than the end of VIII c. – beginning of VII c. BCE". Unfortunately, the comparisons provided by the author in order to consider this helmet an Urartian specimen are limited to materials coming from the antiquity market, except for the snake-headed bracelets found in several archaeological excavations. Neither the shape of the helmet nor its decoration is common in the art of the Kingdom, where the fish are represented only as parts of hybrid beings on the belts' decoration; as for the snakes ending the *Krummwülsten*, the author himself admits (p. 77): "(...) the snakes are pictured full face, which is practically not found on the Urartian-Assyrian helmets". The author then provides a sort of exegesis of the scene, which would link the image to a later Armenian myth. Castelluccia 2014: 86, confirms: "Such geometric pattern is unusual on Urartian metalwork; it is not typical".

therefore to be repaired. What is also very interesting about this helmet is its discovery context: no decorated helmet in the Urartian land was found in a tomb, as they were probably made to be dedicated to the god Ḫaldi. This additional detail allows us hypothesising once more that we are not dealing with a proper Urartian context.

The publication of the "Urartian" material from Lori Berd's "Royal tomb" 56[953] informs that around the stone box containing the helmet "pottery, bronze shields, arrowheads in wooden quiver (which is not preserved), club heads, bracelets etc." [954] were found. The so-called "discal shields" are circular bronze plates with a diameter of about 19 cm, perforated in the centre and bearing a decoration in relief representing a rosette with eight angular petals, surrounded by concentric lines: this material would have been found in the Urartian area only in the Karmir-blur fortress, where plates with decorations of rosettes in relief were found. These plates, found in Room 36 and defined by Piotrovskij[955] as horse harnesses, would have a diameter equal to half the Lori Berd's "discal shields", which anyway are different in decoration from the Karmir-blur's specimens. These horse harnesses are, however, visible on various Assyrian reliefs[956]; another issue is the width of Lori Berd's plates, which, with their almost 20 cm diameter, appear twice as large as the Urartian horse harnesses and cast doubt on their actual use as horse vestments[957].

Inside the same burial, a silver goblet decorated with a figurative scene inscribed within a frame of *repoussé* dots was also found (**Gob-Lor-1**), in a niche; the scene depicts a probable hunt on horseback and chariot, but the prey is missing. The scene is extremely stylised and greatly differs from canonical, royal or popular, Urartian art, mainly in terms of the style of execution. Moreover, there are no Urartian examples of silver goblets: the parallels that may come to mind are instead dating back to the Middle Bronze II, in some necropoleis located in the Southern Caucasus: one should look, in particular, at the situla found in Trialeti[958], Georgia, and the goblet of Karashamb[959], in northern Armenia, both made of silver. The goblet from Lori Berd's tomb 56 is dated to the 7th-6th century BCE and it is defined as a clumsy attempt to copy or interpret an Urartian or Assyrian hunting scene[960]: this hypothesis is to be accepted, as it qualifies the object as a local reproduction of a Near-Eastern scene.

Another tomb containing what are defined as "Urartian" materials is n. 59: in it, there is a large bronze shallow bowl with quadrangular handles, joined to the body of the bowl by two bronze bird sculptures[961]. The author sustains that this type of vessel is very common in the Urartian sphere, associating it with the bronze cauldrons, which however have both a greater diameter and depth; the type of metal shallow bowl is certainly widespread in the Urartian sphere but does not have shaped handles. A parallel for these handles comes from the Iranian area, from Hasanlu[962], and it is dated to the 9th century BCE: the conclusion is that this object may be the result of an import and might be dated to the time of formation of the Urartian state, between the 9th and the 8th century BCE, demonstrating once

[953] Devedjyan 2010.
[954] Devedjyan 2010: 76.
[955] Piotrovskij 1955: 43.
[956] For example, Barnett 1975b: fig. 127.
[957] Also Devedjyan admits that this is an unusual discovery (Devedjyan 2010: 79).
[958] Sagona 2017: 345, fig. 7.19.1.
[959] Sagona 2017: 346, fig. 7.20.
[960] Devedjyan 2010: 81.
[961] Devedjyan 2010: 81, "Though the sculpture is bird-shaped, it leaves an impression of a female-bird".
[962] Porada 1962: 46-47, reports two bronze bird-shaped basin's attachments, one from a tomb in Susa and one from a 9th-century context in Hasanlu: the Hasanlu attachment is very similar to the Lori-Berd one.

again the several contacts that took place in this area at the beginning of the first millennium BCE. What really appears to be "Urartian" inside the necropolis is only the bronze belt buckle found inside tomb 107: it depicts a typical cartouche with the representation of three superimposed rampant lions, made in an extremely linear style, placed inside squares outlined by repoussé points.

The analysis of the tomb's materials leads to a conclusion that is opposite to the one premised: the materials labelled as "Urartian" do not really appear as *fully* Urartian, either in terms of morphology or iconography; the only object that could be connected to the Urartian area is the bronze belt buckle found in tomb 107, which, however, in light of the distinction between popular art in the Southern Caucasus in the Urartian era and the royal Urartian art, cannot be properly considered Urartian. The Iron Age materials found in Lori Berd's burials can be considered part of an artistic *koiné* of Assyrian style widespread in the territories bordering the Neo-Assyrian Empire, probably, but not necessarily, conveyed through the mediation of "Urartian" materials. The influence of art typical of the Southern Caucasian area is clearly greater here, given the location of Lori Berd's site. What can be said, in the end, is that the so-called "Urartian" materials are actually local productions that fall within the Iron Age popular artistic *koiné*.

5.2. The so-called "Urartian" belt from tomb 425 in the Tli necropolis

The necropolis of Tli is one of the most important and peculiar contexts of the entire Southern Caucasian region[963]. Inside this necropolis, about 480 burials relating to different chronological periods relevant to the Bronze and the Iron Age have been excavated. Particularly, inside three different burials, three belts connected to the Urartian sphere were found: if two are typical "Urartian" (**B-Tli-1**, **2**), as they find perfect and binding comparisons with specimens found inside the Urartian land, one belt appears to be the result of a sort of *hybridization* between the Assyro-Urartian iconography and some local motifs. This belt was found inside the tomb 425 (**B-Tli-3**), a single burial of a male individual; the grave goods grave included a typical Koban axe with a zoomorphic decoration, a fibula with herringbone engraving, a double-handled jar, a metal bracelet, a fragmentary dagger blade, a bracelet or necklace with carnelian beads and, of course, the bronze belt with a slightly expanded right edge[964]. The scene on the belt is divided into three registers depicting the same succession of characters[965]; besides the "standard" depiction of hybrid creatures, horsemen and animals, separated by rosettes, a very atypical image is the one of the fish: this decoration is totally unknown in Urartu, but it can be seen on the helmet from the so-called "Royal tomb" n. 56 of the Lori Berd necropolis, which is traditionally considered as Urartian[966]. The fish motif is popular on Scythian objects[967] and it can also be found on some Southern Caucasian belts[968]. Apart from this feature, both the proportion between characters and fillers, a filler following each figure, and the representation of solar symbols are unusual: Southern Caucasian belts

[963] A discussion on the so-called "Urartian" belts found in the Tli necropolis, as well as their contexts of discovery, can be read in Bonfanti – Cesaretti – Dan *forthcoming*.
[964] Techov 2002: 47, fig. 114.
[965] A more precise analysis of the scene can be found in Bonfanti – Cesaretti – Dan *forthcoming*, to which this paragraph is inspired.
[966] See the discussion in the previous paragraph.
[967] See, for example, a golden fish from the context of Aržan 2 (Čugunov et al. 2008: 81) and from the so-called Vettersfelde treasure (Nawroth 2007: 322, figs. 1-2).
[968] Castelluccia 2017: 64.

often reproduce solar motifs, in different shapes and sizes, used both as fillers or as part of the scene[969]. The right end is a *unicum*: inside a vertically developed figurative area delimited by a frame of single lines of *repoussé* dots and separated by a vertical zig-zag line of single-lined *repoussé* dots, there are three cartouches representing two superimposed images. The first cartouche shows the image of two rampant bulls facing to the right; inside the same area, there are other representations of what can be interpreted as a solar motif. The second cartouche shows two horsemen with pointed helmets armed with spears, but without shields; their horses wear a harness with a sort of crest. The last cartouche on the right depicts a sacred tree among whose branches there are images of four ibexes or bulls. The decoration of the belt is completed by a triple parallel line made with *repoussé* dots. Peculiar is the zig-zag vertical decoration: the use of the zig-zag line, only horizontal, is attested in the properly said Urartian area only as a filler or dividing motif, and there is only one example of a belt which associates *repoussé* dots and zig-zag, even if not in the same way as it's done on the Tli specimen. This silver belt comes from the tomb found in Altıntepe[970] and has a binding parallel in the belt of the Grab 48 of Kalakent's Paradiesfestung, dated to the Early Iron Age[971]. The motif formed by a single dotted row framed by straight lines recurs on numerous other belts, mainly from Tli[972]; the zig-zag created by embossed dot lines appears on a belt from Stepantsminda[973] and a similar motif, probably composed by short lines rather than by dots, on another belt from Tli[974], both associated with a clearly Caucasian decoration, not to mention the belts with "snake" decorations that may recall the zig-zag/dotted line motif[975].

There is clearly a great difference between the belt found in tomb 425 and the pattern usually connected to Urartian art; for this belt, so, it is not possible to propose a direct derivation from the Urartian area. It may be considered, more likely, a local reworking of an "Urartian" product, probably directly inspired by a proper "Urartian" belt, creating a specimen that can be defined as an *Urartian-Caucasian* hybrid.

[969] Castelluccia 2017: 43.
[970] Özgüç 1983: 37, plate XVI, c-d.
[971] Nagel – Strommenger 1985: pl. 22.
[972] Castelluccia 2017: nos. 77-81. Culican-Zimmer 1987: 187 "in a number of graves in the surrounding area are portions of belts decorated with horizontal repoussé lines or rectangular panel work in a style well known in Urartian metal belts (v. Techov 1981: figs. 88-91-98-101-106-119-124)", but this framed single-dotted line decoration is not common in the art of Urartu.
[973] Castelluccia 2017: n. 291.
[974] Castelluccia 2017: n. 322.
[975] Castelluccia 2017: nn. 332-349.

6. Widespread features of Urartian art and their derivation

The following section will be devoted to a detailed analysis of the most common motifs and objects in Urartian art: the aim is to identify the precise origin of these features, in order to establish whether they have been adopted thanks to a foreign influence or were original Urartian creations. Following a recapitulation of the use of motifs or objects in Urartian art, a brief history of the use of the analysed feature in the art of the Near East and the Caucasus in general will be traced, in order to identify a possible external origin.

The idea that emerges from the analysis is complex and varied: while a large part of the geometric motifs used as fillers was foreign to Assyrian art, what happened with the naturalistic motifs and the more figurative scenes has the opposite tendency. In any case, there is an inclination in Urartian royal art not to mix elements belonging to different traditions: for this reason, there are extremely stereotypical images that are repeated unchanged throughout Urartian history, almost always connecting the same filling and decorative motifs. A certain amount of innovation occurred, however, in the time of Rusa Erimenaḫi and Rusa Argištiḫi, who introduced new combinations into Urartian art. As far as typical objects are concerned, Urartu shows a perfect adherence to the Assyrian model, at least within the royal art: only the cauldrons and belts, which probably both belong to the popular artistic strand, are outside this trend, showing in Urartu different influences or inspirations than those coming from Assyria.

At the end of this chapter, it will be possible to draw conclusions about the influences and contacts that are evident in Urartu on an exclusively artistic level and to highlight the role that bronze belts played in the formation of Urartian art.

6.1. Common motifs

Several motifs can be identified within Urartian art. The term "motif" is used to refer to an element or image repeated several times both on a single object and on a series of Urartian materials: a distinction is made between geometric motifs, such as zig-zag, dotted decorations and *guilloches*, and figurative motifs, such as parade scenes or lines of animals. The function of the motif is to decorate the object on which it is placed without, however, claiming to develop a narrative: there are only two cases in which the scenes depicted have a narrative purpose, and these will therefore be dealt with in a separate section under the definition of "narrative motifs".

6.1.1. Geometric motifs

The first section of this chapter is devoted to an analysis of the geometric filler motifs used in Urartian art, both royal and popular. These are, in particular, the zig-zag, the dotted motif and the guilloche: while the origins of the guilloche motif are Assyrian, or more generally Mesopotamian, the other two motifs have different origins and it will be necessary to look to the Caucasian and Iranian areas to find adequate parallels.

6.1.1.1. The zig-zag pattern

- Belts
- Helmets
- Quivers
- Shields
- Breastplates
- Horse harness
- Bone container
- *Deichselkappe*

The decorative zig-zag motif is present on numerous Urartian artefacts, usually used as a filler or divider between different figurative registers and it appears on many Urartian objects. The zig-zag only appears as the main decoration on two belts (**B-Yer-3**, **B-Bur-4**), one of which is probably unfinished[976]: the only specimen surely decorated exclusively with a zig-zag motif belongs to the grave goods of the Yerevan columbarium. It finds an exact parallel in a finding from the Karmir Berd fortress[977], located about ten kilometres from the Yerevan columbarium. A discussion about this similarity and the dating of both findings is to be found in the paragraph dedicated to the belts with geometrical decorations: one should remember here that not many other belts present a zig-zag decoration used as a divider between different registers. Only another belt from Burmageçit, which can be compared to the unfinished one previously mentioned, bears a divider zig-zag decoration (**B-Bur-2**): the other specimens, the silver belt from Altıntepe (**B-Alt-2**) and the belt from the tomb 425 in the Tli necropolis (**B-Tli-3**), are to be considered Southern Caucasian or "hybrid" examples.

Apart from the belts, other examples to be considered are provided by the several decorated helmets found in Karmir-blur (**H-Kb-3** to, at least, **9**). They depict in the central images of winged genii and sacred trees, and theories of soldiers on horseback and chariots at the sides; the individual registers on which the scenes develop are framed by a zig-zag motif. The inscriptions engraved on these helmets date one to the reign of Argišti I and three to that of his successor Sarduri II. Hereafter, the quivers: the largest group is again from the site of Karmir-blur and consists of five quivers dating back to the kingdoms of Argišti I and Sarduri II (**Q-Kb-23** to, at least, **27**). Their decoration is similar to that on the sides of the helmets, namely parades of soldiers arranged on distinct horizontal friezes and framed by zig-zag lines. From Toprakkale, on the other hand, comes a quiver with a zig-zag motif framing the only preserved figurative register, occupied by the image of a six-leaf palmette and of a roaring lion walking towards the left (**Q-Top-6**). The zig-zag motif is also used to fill the main decorative bands in several other bronze quivers from the Karmir-blur complex (**Q-Kb-19** to **22**), of which no detailed images are published[978], and in an almost complete quiver found in Toprakkale, showing a three-group decoration of five horizontal bands incised with a zig-zag pattern (**Q-Top-4**). From the tomb of Altıntepe comes a last quiver decorated with narrow horizontal bands with a filler that Barnett calls 'dog's tooth'[979], which turns out to be nothing more than a zig-zag pattern (**Q-Alt-1**).

[976] **B-Bur-4**.
[977] Castelluccia 2017: no. 225.
[978] Piotrovskij 1955: 16-18.
[979] Barnett – Gökce, 1953: 126.

From Nor Aresh comes a bronze breastplate decorated in the centre with five small images of "suns", which are surrounded by a composite motif of *repoussé* dots framing a zig-zag decoration along the entire edge of the object (**Br-Nor-1**); the breastplate is a peculiar artefact, one of the two "Urartian" objects decorated with the motif of embossed dots. This object is not to be considered as a royal item, so it cannot be defined as an Urartian object properly said. Three shields (**S-Ay-6, S-Top-6, S-Top-9**), probably to be dated at the end of the Kingdom, divide the decoration into bands framed by a zig-zag pattern: one of them comes from Ayanis and has only two concentric registers occupied by bulls and lions and framed with the zig-zag motif[980], while the other two were found in the site of Toprakkale. The two specimens found in Toprakkale bear an inscription by Rusa, son of Erimena, allowing to propose a dating between the 8th and 7th century BCE; the figurative decoration consists of bands of lions and bulls, framed by the zig-zag[981]. Another bronze specimen to be considered here is a possible part of horse trapping found in the Karmir-blur fortress and engraved with an epigraph bearing the name of Argišti: the only published picture is a detail of the inscription[982], ascribed by Salvini to Argišti, son of Minua[983], but a personal communication of the author, with the entire picture of this so-called "belt", showed that the specimen is totally decorated with a zig-zag motif. Moreover, if one compares its "buckle" with the other belts, it is evident that there is a difference: one may instead make a comparison with a horse trapping kept in the Adana Museum[984], which has the exact same type of fastener. Lastly, there is a *Deichselkappe* incised with an epigraph of Sarduri Argištiḫi found in Karmir-blur and entirely decorated with the zig-zag motif.

Engraved on two bone containers, the motif appears also outside the toreutic area: from Karmir-blur come three small decorated boxes (**Iv-Kb-5, 6**)[985], two of which bear the zig-zag pattern associated with small circles and flowers. Unfortunately, these cases are not dated and their exact position inside the citadel is not known.

The analysis of the decorative motif in Urartian royal art seems therefore to suggest that this motif was mainly used during the 8th century BCE, starting from the reign of Argišti, son of Minua, and Sarduri, son of Argišti, in which the motif seems to be used both as a frame of the figurative bands and as an independent decoration, and then during the reign of Rusa, son of Erimena, in which the motif is again used only as a divider between the main figurative registers[986].

The zig-zag motif itself is not a feature of Assyrian art, and in particular not to the Assyrian bronzes: one should instead look at Caucasian art to find zig-zag motifs decorating, where this motif can be found on ceramics from the late Middle Bronze Age period[987] and it started to spread more from the Late Bronze Age[988]. On bronze objects, a sort of zig-zag is present on several "Transcaucasian" belts[989], never represented as the main decoration of the scene but rather as a filler or divider motif. Moreover,

[980] Derin – Çilingiroğlu 2001: 179, fig. 11.
[981] For a discussion on the Ayanis shield with the zig-zag motif as a divider, see the section devoted to the analysis of the shields.
[982] CTU B 8-29; the object is considered a belt by Salvini.
[983] The lack of the patronymic wouldn't allow ascribing this object to the arsenal of a specific sovereign named Argišti.
[984] Işik – Kuvanç 2017: 224-225.
[985] Catalogue of the Armenian History Museum in Yerevan.
[986] This conclusion is also reached by Seidl 2004: 122.
[987] Sagona 2017: 352.
[988] Chantre 1888: pl. 50.3.
[989] See, for example, Castelluccia 2017: n° 268-271.

an Early Iron Age "Transcaucasian" belt with a zig-zag decoration is the one found in the Kalakent Paradiesfestung Grab 48, combining a zig-zag motif with a dotted decoration: this belt finds a perfect comparison in the Altıntepe silver belt, which may therefore be considered an (early?) import from the Southern Caucasian area. The origins of this motif are therefore not Urartian: if it is clear that the zig-zag pattern has been widely used on Urartian royal objects more than on popular materials like belts, this very motif had deep roots in the Southern Caucasian / local sphere. It may be said, so, that this motif was acquired by the Urartian royalty from the local art of the Southern Caucasus, probably during the reign of Argišti, son of Minua, the first king who managed to reach the Armenian territories which later became part of the Urartian state.

6.1.1.2. The dotted pattern

- Belts
- Quiver

A geometric motif typically associated with the Urartian sphere is that of the bands composed of several lines of dots executed in repoussé technique, so much so that, in his monograph on "Transcaucasian" belts, Manuel Castelluccia defines specimens decorated with bands of embossed dots as "Urartian-style dotted belts" [990]. In reality, if one analyses the actual Urartian decorations, those belonging to the sphere of kingship, this type of decoration is seldom attested: the only royal object that bears dotted bands is a horse blinker dating to the reign of Minua, which, however, bears a marginal decoration consisting of two single dotted bands divided by an embossed straight line. The concept of the decoration is thus different from the parallel bands consisting of a series of dotted lines, which form the main ornament of the object on which they are embossed. Having established that this type of motif cannot be defined as Urartian, it is possible to analyse the materials bearing this decoration case by case basis in order to observe their connection with Urartu itself.

The only batch of dotted belts from a context related to Urartian kingship is the one found inside the *susi* temple of the Erebuni citadel (**B-Ari 1** to **3**)[991]: there are actually no pictures of them, nor excavation reports that place them exactly in their context of discovery. Moreover, the belt fragments found are extremely small, about 2 to 3 cm long, so it is not possible to actually use them in a study: it will be sufficient to recognise the presence of three small fragments of bronze foil with dotted decoration from the citadel of Erebuni. The same applies to the belt fragments from the tombs of Kalecik, the measurements of which do not allow for any consideration (**B-Kal-1** to **3**)[992]. A single dotted belt is said to come from Kammergrab I of the Dedeli site (**B-Ded-4**), "in einer Doppelbestattung an weiblichem Skelett" [993]: no pictures or measurements are available for it either, and it has also not been found between the objects inside the museum where it should be kept[994]. The only actually documented examples of belts with dotted decorative bands from the Urartian territory were found in Karmir-blur

[990] Castelluccia 2017: 30-31.
[991] Esayan 1984: 133.
[992] Çavuşoğlu et al. 2009 : 275, 284 tav. 4.
[993] Kellner 1991: 77.
[994] Kellner 1991: 77, "Mus. Ankara (z.Z. nicht auffindbar)".

(**B-Kb-5, 6**)[995], Liç (**B-Liç-1**)[996], Melekli (**B-Mel-1**)[997] and Ayanis (**B-Ay-1**)[998]: the place of discovery of the Ayanis dotted belt has raised some interesting observations regarding the origin of its owners. As already mentioned, the dotted specimen from Ayanis has been found in the burial of a prepubescent individual, but the burial immediately below the floor of a house is identified as being alien to the Urartian tradition. This, together with other factors[999], has led archaeologists to propose that the family of this individual was of foreign origin but integrated into the Urartian city. This would also allow the decorative typology of the belt inside the burial to be located outside Urartu.

Belts with dotted decorative motifs are in fact widespread in both the north and south of Urartian territory: in the north, the cases of belts from Chrtanoc/Golovino (**B-Gol-1** to **3**), Gyumri (**B-Gy-1, 2**) and Muchannat Tapa (**B-Much-1**)[1000] are worthy of mention, as they have been found in "royal" [1001] burials and look so similar to the specimens considered Urartian that they are considered to be imports or imitations of Urartian materials[1002]. Further north, in South Ossetia, the necropolis of Tli, among other sites, has yielded a large number of specimens of dotted belts, with a slightly different decoration[1003]: the dates of the different graves containing dotted belts vary from the Late Bronze Age to the Middle Iron Age, with specimens that are definitely pre-Urartian. But it is to the south that one finds the most immediate parallel for this type of decoration, at the site of Tappeh Hasanlu: level IV of the site has yielded at least eighteen specimens of bronze belts with embossed dotted decoration[1004], many associated with skeletons on the floor of the so-called Burned Building II. The occasion of the death of these people, and thus of the destruction of Level IV of Hasanlu, has been widely debated, but the reason is usually identified as the Urartian army attacking the city around 800 BCE[1005]. The dotted motif is quite common in the Gilan region, on the Caspian Sea coast, as demonstrated by the findings at the sites of Marlik[1006] and Ghalekuti[1007]. It is therefore likely that the dotted pattern was adopted, from northern Iran, once the Urartians arrived in these regions. From there, the pattern would have spread to the Urartian Kingdom and the areas immediately to the north, such as Chrtanoc/Golovino, Gyumri and Muchannat Tapa. In Urartu, the dotted motif is also sometimes used as a separator between one figurative register and another: indicative in this respect is a small number of belts with figurative decoration, arranged on registers or in panels, which use bands of dotted lines as a separating element. This is probably the last step in the reception of the motif in Urartian territory, since it is considered so common that it can be used as a divider between registers.

[995] Esayan 1984 : 132-133, fig. 24.75, 77-78.
[996] Keller 1991: 70, no. 291.
[997] Barnett 1963: 154-161.
[998] Zimanski 2012a: 109.
[999] Zimansky 2012a: 109.
[1000] For this belt in particular, see Khanmohammadi *et alii forthcoming*.
[1001] "Fürstengräbern"; Esayan 1984: 132.
[1002] Esayan 1984: 132.
[1003] For a list of all the dotted belts found in the Southern Caucasus, see Castelluccia 2017: 99-105.
[1004] See, for a brief overview on this topic, Khanmohammadi et al. 2021.
[1005] The idea that Hasanlu IVb was destroyed by the Urartians is generally accepted (see, for example, Muscarella 2012b: 279). Potts 2018: 238 summarized the different theories regarding the Urartian sovereign that destroyed Hasanlu – Išpuini and Minua, Minua or Argišti Minuaḫi. A different hypothesis on the destruction of Hasanlu IV has been offered in Magee 2008, but he was later criticised by Muscarella (Muscarella 2012b: 278-279).
[1006] Negahban 1996: fig. 34, n° 870, 871, 881, 887; Piller 2008: 79-80; see fig. 6.K, M.
[1007] Egami et al 1965: pl. LXXV: 36.

Further evidence of the unfamiliarity of the dotted motif in the Urartian territory is provided by a small number of belts that associate the dotted band decoration with the image of a sacred tree or figurative element: these specimens come in particular from the sites of Karmir-blur (**B-Kb-7**)[1008], Sotk (**B-Sot-1**)[1009] and Toprakkale (**B-Top-1**)[1010], and probably testify to the Urartian need to make belts with this decoration less alien to their eyes. The dotted belt found at Toprakkale is extremely peculiar: it was probably completed with its five bands of dotted lines, but it also bears a metal element in the form of a bird, attached as a pendant. It is worth quoting Rubinson's words on the analysis of this very belt: "Could this choice of attachment have been a means by which the craftsperson sought to make the belt truly 'Urartian' just as on other examples, in which one end of a belt plate carries lions or floral elements? Could this belt have originally been complete without figural ornament and have appeared at Toprakkale too ordinary, too local, too non-Urartian?" [1011].

There is only one object other than belts decorated with only bands of repoussé dots: a bronze quiver found in the fortress of Yukarı Anzaf (**Q-Anz-2**), unique in Urartian art. The embossed dots decoration is indeed very rare in the context of quivers in the ancient Near East, and once again one is mainly dealing with comparisons from the Iranian area, particularly from the sites of Marlik[1012] and War Kabūd[1013]. Moreover, there is only one single quiver with this decoration coming from tomb 334 in Uruk, and it is dated between the 9th and 8th centuries BCE[1014].

6.1.1.3. The guilloche pattern

- Shields
- Sceptre (?)
- Belts
- Horse harness

Contrary to what one might expect, *guilloche* decoration is not one of the most commonly used in Urartian art: it is found on three royal objects, a few belts and a single disc, probably used as a horse harness. In the decoration of royal shields, the *guilloche* is used during the time of Rusa, son of Erimena, and decorates only two specimens, both from Toprakkale (**S-Top-4, 5**). The *guilloche* is also engraved on the upper and lower edges of the so-called "golden sceptre" of Qaquli, queen of Urartu, found in Ayanis (**G-Ay-1**); on a bronze disc from the tomb of Altıntepe (**D-Alt-1**)[1015], the *guilloche* is used as a frame at the edge of the object, which bears in its centre the figure of a horseman standing on a winged horse. Three bronze belts show this decoration as a frame to the central decorative space: one of these specimens was found again in the Altıntepe site (**B-Alt-1**)[1016], where this type of motif was evidently

[1008] Esayan 1984: 133, fig. 24.78.
[1009] Yengibaryan 2013: pl. 3.4.
[1010] Wartke 1990: 75-78, pl. XX.
[1011] Rubinson 2012: 396.
[1012] Negahban 1996: fig. 34.870-873.
[1013] Haerinck – Overlaet 2004: pl. 129.
[1014] Castelluccia – Dan 2011: 14.
[1015] Özgüç 1969: pl. XXV.
[1016] Özgüç 1974: 847.

widespread, while the others were found at Dedeli (**B-Ded-2**)[1017] and Suçatı (**B-Suç-1**)[1018]. All the materials with this decoration come from sites in eastern Turkey, which would suggest a connection with the areas west of the Urartian Kingdom. The use of this decorative motif is attested since the 3rd millennium in both Mesopotamia and Iran[1019], and in the Southern Caucasian area it was found on several belts, including, for example, one specimen from Bjni[1020] and one from Aparan[1021]; an entire belt, from the site of Sanahin[1022], is decorated exclusively with this motif. Neo-Assyrian art has yielded numerous examples of guilloche motifs, both on local[1023] and Levantine[1024] ivories found in Nimrud, and on many wall paintings[1025]. The guilloche decoration also appears on several Neo-Hittite stone bas-reliefs[1026], mainly from the site of Karkemish.

6.1.2. Floral motifs

The floral motifs adopted in Urartian art all originated from the Assyrian area: in particular, one can find garlands and festoons with buds, and representations of sacred trees. Other minor motifs, probably used as a sort of remedy to the *horror vacui* that appears to seize Urartian craftsmen, such as rosettes and palmettes, are also easily traceable within Assyrian art, while they are completely absent from Caucasian depictions. As for the depiction of sacred trees, which can occur either within more complex scenes or as a purely decorative filler motif, it is possible to notice an evolution in its representation, analysed later in the paragraph dedicated to it.

6.1.2.1. Garlands of pine cones / buds

- Belts
- Quivers
- Shields
- Chariot pole (?)
- Gold and silver lid

One of the most common dividing motifs is the one consisting of several garlands with buds or pine cones. This motif has a clear derivation from Assyrian art, where it can be found in very different ways: the garland can combine buds/pine cones, flowers, palmettes and pomegranates, or a mix of these elements[1027]. Urartian decorations with this type of motif are instead composed of garlands, in the form of small half-moons, joining pine cone-shaped elements, usually interpreted as buds. They are attested

[1017] Kellner 1991: 37, n. 63; Taf. 12.63.
[1018] Karaosmanoğlu 1991: 595-603.
1019 Bunnens 2006: 73.
1020 Esayan 1984: abb. 6.17.
1021 Esayan 1984: *abb.* 6.18.
1022 Esayan 1984: abb. 9.29.
1023 See, for example, Mallowan – Davies 1970: pls. VI.10, VIII.22, XVII.61a.
1024 See, for example, Herrmann 1986: pls. 19.84, 80, 81.353.
1025 See, for example, Albenda 2005: 10, 101, 102, 103, 104.
1026 Orthmann 1971: pls. 2.a, 24, 25.b/d.
[1027] Albenda 2005: 107-118.

in Assyrian painting only as decoration on the walls of one of the Upper Chambers of Nimrud[1028], dated between the 9th and 8th centuries BCE. As noted by Albenda, the depiction of pine cones in Assyrian iconography "may relate to a religious event, or as a symbol with special meaning" [1029]: however, it is not certain that the same meaning pertains to Urartian art, where objects similar to pine cones are also depicted on the branches of sacred trees, sometimes alternating with what can be interpreted as pomegranate buds[1030]. This motif is also attested on the Nimrud reliefs from the time of Ashurnasirpal II[1031]. In addition to wall paintings and reliefs, this type of garland is also found in Assyria on portable elements such as ivories, thanks to which it was able to 'travel' northwards: some examples come from Fort Shalmaneser[1032], where an ivory plaque was found with the depiction of two overlapping registers separated by a guilloche motif and a garland of pine cones and pomegranates; the fragment has been dated to the 9th century BC, thus being in line with the dating of the Nimrud Chambers.

Only one representation of pine cone-shaped elements unrelated to the tree or garland iconography is depicted on the cubic basalt block with a sacred scene from Adilcevaz and dated to the time of Rusa, son of Argišti (**Rel-Ad-2**): in this scene, the pine cone is represented both in the hands of the two winged *genii* standing on lions and as a separate element, possibly representing the sacred tree itself. In the case of the tree representation, one can find a parallel in a wall panel from the time of Sennacherib[1033], where pine trees are depicted as drop-shaped, just like the Urartian ones. By analogy between the Urartian and Assyrian representations of winged *genii*, anyway, the object held by the figures carved on the Adilcevaz block is supposed to be a pine cone; this deduction may also be based on the shape of the pine tree itself, as it was shown on Sennacherib's relief. Again, by analogy with the shape, it is likely that the object depicted in the garland decoration is itself a pine cone: in fact, on a practical level, it makes no difference to recognise pine cones or buds in the decoration since the Urartians probably used it only for its decorative value rather than for an alleged symbolic value embodied by this representation.

The garland of pine cones or buds thus appears in the art of the Urartian territories only on two belts (**B-Bur-6** and **B-Kb-1**): the specimen with this decoration is extremely fragmentary so that it is not possible to confirm that it actually is a belt. An exemplary case is the one of a single fragment from Karmir-blur (**B-Kb-1**), where this motif is found as a divider between several figurative registers depicting theories of animals: the excavator, Boris B. Piotrovskij, thought that it was a quiver more than a belt[1034]. On the other hand, this motif decorates many Urartian objects belonging to the royal sphere: the majority of the bronze shields, the rear of a chariot pole and the gold and silver lid. Shields are undoubtedly the objects on which this decoration appears most frequently (**S-Anz-2**, **S-Ay-5**, **S-Kb-6** to **8**, **S-Kb-10** to **14**, **S-Top-8**), with evidence ranging from the reign of Minua to the last shields produced in Urartian times: garlands are used as motifs framing the single figurative registers, with all the cones facing the external border of the shield. All the shields belonging to Urartian rulers have this only motif as a frame for the figurative registers, except for Rusa, son of Erimena, who also introduced the zigzag and *guilloche* decoration: the reasons behind this stylistic choice are unclear, as the motifs

[1028] Albenda 2005: 17, pl. 6.
[1029] Albenda 2005: 108.
[1030] See Albenda 2005: 107 on this topic; "A cone does occur with other plants as a textile border pattern, and on an ivory in the Assyrian style of carving the pinecone appears together with the pomegranate in an alternating pattern".
[1031] Bartl 2014: 31-32.
[1032] Mallowan – Davies 1970: pl. VI.10.
[1033] Russell 1991: 110, fig. 58 (BM 124822).
[1034] Piotrovskij 1952: 38, fig. 20.

were already known to Urartian palace art, and yet never used in the decoration of bronze shields. However, the decoration is extremely present on other Urartian royal materials, particularly on two precious objects belonging to Argišti, son of Minua, and Sarduri, son of Argišti, both unique in the Urartian artistic field. To the first sovereign is ascribed a gold and silver lid with a knob carved in the form of a bud / poppy capsule (**G-Kb-1**): each gold band is framed by the garland decoration, with the tips of the cones pointing outwards. This decoration is embellished by a further detail: between the garland joining the pine cones and the pine cones themselves, there is a small connecting element, which does not seem to be present on other Urartian objects. To Sarduri belongs what has been considered for a long time a cauldron attachment with a lion's head (**Ca-Kb-2**), but which is not strictly comparable in the Near East: it may be a chariot pole[1035] decorated with the muzzle of a roaring lion and, on the back, a pair of parallel pine cone garlands. There is only one example of a quiver decorated with this motif (**Q-Ay-12**), unfortunately without a cuneiform inscription.

It is clear that the motif was widely known in the royal art of the Urartu Kingdom, with evidence known as early as the first phase of Urartian history, during the reign of Minua: this ruler makes use of a peculiar garland decoration, as the pine-shaped elements are alternately decorated with a pattern composed of parallel and incidental lines. This could perhaps mean a stronger adherence to the Assyrian model, where garlands with combined elements are more common, and could therefore represent at least two different elements belonging to the garland itself: the decorated ones, more similar to actual pine cones, and the undecorated ones, possible buds. Likely, this is a bud and pine cone arcade, later abandoned in favour of the adoption of a simpler decoration, with a single identical element repeated several times. The motif is not widespread in popular art, where it is found only on a few examples of belts and a single bronze quiver: it is likely that this decoration was not part of the South Caucasian imagination, where in fact it has not been found on any object.

6.1.2.2. The sacred tree decoration[1036]

- Belts
- Helmets
- Sceptre (?)
- Wall paintings
- Alabaster podium
- Ivory plaque

When referring to the sacred tree, it is necessary, at least as far as Urartian or Urartian-period art is concerned, to distinguish at least two types. The first corresponds to an "Assyrianizing" model of the sacred tree, with a central trunk from which the different branches come out[1037]: it is usually set inside a sort of dome, which might be suggestive of a stele[1038], and flanked by winged mythological creatures. This type of sacred tree is found on the decorated helmets of Argišti, son of Minua, and Sarduri, son of Argišti, and on a single bronze belt found in one of the three tombs excavated in the Nor Aresh

[1035] See Seidl 2004: F.110.
[1036] For the possible meaning of this motif in the Urartian sphere, see Batmaz 2013b.
[1037] Bartl 2014: 35, fig. 13, types I to IV.
[1038] Piotrovskij 1967: 46.

necropolis[1039]. As for the so-called Urartian glyptic, this type of representation of the sacred tree, but without the "dome" surrounding it, appears on some seals found in the sites of Ayanis[1040] and Toprakkale[1041]. Finally, the scene also appears on the Urartian wall paintings of Altıntepe (**Wd-Alt-1**)[1042] and Erebuni (**Wd-Er-1**)[1043]. This type of scene, consisting of a sacred tree surrounded by winged creatures, is usually one of the main subjects of the decoration, whether on helmets or belts; the scene also has exact parallels within Assyrian art, particularly in stone reliefs from the time of Ashurnasirpal II[1044]. Several seals from the Neo-Assyrian period show the same scene of worship of the sacred tree flanked by hybrid mythological creatures[1045], and it is also depicted in the garment decoration of king Ashurnasirpal II on a relief from Nimrud[1046]: it is possible to assume that this type of sacred tree was therefore particularly widespread in Assyrian art exactly during Ashurnasirpal II's reign, in the first half of the 9th century BCE, from where Urartian artists themselves probably took the motif. The difference between Assyrian and Urartian scenes, as pointed out by G. Azarpay, lies in the depiction of the figures standing at the sides of the sacred tree, which in Assyria tend to be hybrid creatures, while in Urartu they are mostly human figures, sometimes winged[1047].

The second type of depiction of the sacred tree is slightly different, more abstract, and consists of several superimposed garlands indicating the branches, ending in buds or stylized pomegranates; there is no central trunk, but the branches are joined at their centre. This type of tree is most commonly used on bronze belts (**B-Ani-1**, **B-Kb-7**)[1048], mainly as a separating motif, but is also found on a single gold object belonging to Queen Qaquli (**G-Ay-1**)[1049], unique in Urartu, and on several seals found at Ayanis (**S-Ay-1** to **4**), Bastam (**S-Ba-1** to **30**), Karmir-blur (**S-Kb-1** to **5**) and Toprakkale (**S-Top-1** to **3**). At Ayanis, this type of sacred tree is inlaid on the alabaster podium found inside the cella of the *susi* temple (**Wd-Ay-1**)[1050], while at Altıntepe it is found on a fragment of an ivory plaque found inside Tomb III (**Iv-Alt-20** to **23**)[1051]. The difference between this depiction and the previous one stands in the types of materials where it is found: on the belts, for example, this motif is used as a divider or a filler, while on seals it is inserted in the devotion scenes described before. It is particularly important the fact that this depiction is to be found also on seals mainly bearing inscriptions of the ^{LÚ}*aṣuli*, an official, probably member of the royal family, whose function is still not clear: it has been suggested that the sacred tree was connected to a ritual possibly directly connected with the royal dynasty itself[1052].

[1039] Cita in catalogo. Barnett 1963: 198, fig. 47.
[1040] Ayvazian 2006: 203, AY 15.
[1041] Ayvazian 2006: 203, TK 18.
[1042] Özgüç 1966: figs. 18-19, 22, 29, 37, pls. III.3, XXIII.1-2., XXX.1-2.
[1043] For the most recent publication, see Dan *et alii* 2019: fig. 8.
[1044] Collins 2008: 119; see BM 124531.
[1045] Giovino 2007: figs. 15, 62, 71.
[1046] Giovino 2007: fig. 22.
[1047] Azarpay 1968: 21, "Whereas in Assyrian representations the tree is usually tended by griffin-demons and animals and less often by human figures, the sacred tree in the Urartian wall paintings is generally flanked by winged or wingless human figures with pail and cone".
[1048] See, for example, the belts called Ani-Pemza-1 and Karmir-blur-5.
[1049] Dan 2016.
[1050] Çilingiroğlu 2001c: 57-59, figs. 19-23.
[1051] Özgüç 1969: pl. L.
[1052] Batmaz 2013b: 80-81.

As noted by Azarpay[1053], this type of depiction of the sacred tree brings Urartian examples closer to the Caucasian world than to the Mesopotamian one: Piotrovskij[1054], in 1950, already associated the decorations of sacred trees on the bronze belts found at Ani Pemza, Karmir-blur and Zakim with the images embossed on the *akinakai* of the Kelermes and Melgunov barrows. Some examples of this variation are somehow recognizable in the presence and reworking of Levantine elements within Assyrian art, especially in ivory objects dated to the 8th century BCE[1055]; in the north Syrian area, these decorations are present on some reliefs[1056]. The fact that this type of representation is more recent in the Mesopotamian area, and is probably influenced by north Syrian art, can be observed in some seals from the Neo-Babylonian period depicting this type of sacred tree instead of the earlier, more linear and less complex one[1057]. It is possible that this type of depiction of the sacred tree originated in the north-Syrian area, with a subsequent reworking in Urartu and later adoption by the Scythian world, as shown by the *kurgan* of Kelermes and Melgunov. Azarpay believed that the introduction of the second type of depiction of the sacred tree was in fact a novelty of the reign of Rusa, son of Argišti[1058], and the present data would confirm the hypothesis that this was a later acquisition in Urartian art. It is conceivable that, at first, the influence on Urartian depictions of sacred trees came from the Assyrian iconography of the time of Ashurnasirpal II, while, towards the end of the 8th or beginning of the 7th century BCE, the arrival of Levantine products in Urartian contexts changed the iconography of the sacred tree, introducing a more abstract version, which would then also be adopted by the Scythian populations.

6.1.3. Figurative motifs

The most common figurative motifs in Urartian art can essentially be divided into two macro-categories: static and dynamic figurative motifs, the former characteristic of royal art, and the latter often used as decorations pertaining to popular art. Royal art makes use, in particular, of motifs depicting lines of lions and bulls, sometimes in combination with each other and sometimes used independently, and of military parade scenes, which appear essentially on precise categories of objects, such as helmets and quivers, clearly connected to the religious sphere and, at the same time, to the concept of war. The proper narrative motifs, exclusively found in popular art, have as their subjects scenes of hunting and devotion to the winged solar disk. While the second motif has probably already been adopted devoid of its semantic value, the first motif has perhaps undergone a sort of evolution in its use: from dynamic hunting scenes, clearly inspired and perhaps copied from Assyrian art, it has moved on to completely stylised scenes, where the concept of the hunt has been completely lost, passing from being a narrative motif to pure and simple filler.

[1053] Azarpay 1968: 45-46.
[1054] Piotrovskij 1950: 90-91.
1055 See Mallowan - Herrmann 1974: pls. VI, XXXIV; Herrmann 1986: pls. 38, 39, 40, 41, 198-213, 318.1223, 319.1224-1227.
1056 See, for example, Orthmann 1971: pl. 16g, from Karatepe.
[1057] Giovino 2007: figs. 99-100.
[1058] Azarpay 1968: 46.

6.1.3.1. Animal lines

The two main animals depicted in Urartian art are lions and bulls: they are found either combined on the same artefact, or in independent objects and inserted into scenes in which they are not the protagonists. The first objects that come to mind about the lines of lions and bulls are the bronze shields, that tended to be hung on the walls of Urartian temples: on them are depicted theories of walking bulls and lions, all facing two median lines to have their heads up when hung, arranged in concentric bands starting from the centre of the shield. There are usually three figurative bands, two of which are occupied by lions. This type of decoration is strictly pertaining to the art of the Urartian Kingdom, since it is not attested in any of the cultures that preceded it or were contemporary with it: it is, however, found among the sculpted wall decorations in the site of Persepolis[1059], which clearly take up the bands of walking bulls and lions that are widely attested in Urartian iconography.

In addition to the representations in profile on shields, lions are also depicted individually, either in metal belts and statuettes or in ivory figurines, then again in wall paintings and stone reliefs; bulls are instead less common, usually depicted on belts and statuettes, mainly used to create a hybrid creature, and on cauldron attachments. It will therefore be necessary to devote separate sections to each of the two most represented animals in Urartu.

6.1.3.1.1. Lions

- Belts
- Wall paintings
- Shields
- Stone reliefs
- Chariot pole (?)
- Bronze figurines
- Ivory figurines

There is no doubt that the lion is the animal most often depicted in Urartian art: the earliest depictions of lions date back to the Anzaf shield (**S-Anz-2**)[1060], dated between the end of the 9th and the 8th century BCE, where they are represented both in the act of attacking the enemy army and as the mount of the first deity after Ḫaldi, Teišeba. All the lions depicted there are rampant and have an extremely pronounced outline of the ribcage, which seems to disappear with the later images. The later decorations depicted on the shields are of a completely different order: abandoning the dynamic nature of the scene embossed on Anzaf's shield, the following examples have concentric bands decorated with theories of lions and bulls, separated by garlands of buds / pine cones. The lions, in this case, all have the same, extremely static, walking and roaring pose, and each image differs from others in the detail of the rendering of the animals' muscles and features. It is proposed here that it is necessary to distinguish the hand of the bronzeworker rather than different styles pertaining to each Urartian ruler who had decorated shields dedicated to the god Ḫaldi, although a progressive process of stylisation and

[1059] Roberto Dan, personal communication, May 2021.
[1060] Belli 1991.

geometrization is evident from the time of Sarduri, son of Argišti[1061], and it may be useful in providing a chronological picture of the different depictions. Moreover, the division into "styles" is not directly applicable to materials other than royal bronzes, and since the only two-dimensional representations of "royal" lions on bronze are on shields, the stylisation seems to be somewhat an end in itself. Two-dimensional representations of roaring lions are seen on wall paintings from Erebuni (**Wd-Er-1**)[1062]: on them, the lions face each other on two sides of a square with concave sides, whose concept is Assyrian in origin[1063], and are represented with their tails curled upwards and their manes outlined with flame-like shapes. The depiction of these animals is different from the one seen embossed on bronzes, so it is not possible to provide a stylistic dating despite the almost perfect succession of lion depictions for individual rulers. A single lion is also only sketched as a mount of the deity depicted on the wall of the portico of Erebuni[1064]: of it, one can only understand that it is roaring and has its tail raised, but further details are impossible to point out.

Belonging to Sarduri Argištiḫi is a chariot or standard pole, also thought to be a cauldron attachment (**Ca-Kb-2**), which ends with the three-dimensional snout of a roaring lion: the features of the snout are well listed by Işıklı and Aras when they speak of the peculiarities of the Urartian lion, mentioning "palm-shaped whiskers, triangular orbits and button-shaped ears" [1065], features that are also found in the analysis of a lion head affixed to the centre of a bronze shield found in the Ayanis temple area. The same characteristics are to be found in several other bronze lion figurines from the sites of Toprakkale (**Mf-Top-17**)[1066], Aznavurtepe / Patnos (**Mf-Azn-1**)[1067], Kayalıdere (**Mf-Kay-1**)[1068] and Sznak (**Mf-Szn-1**)[1069], all depicted in a *couchant* position. Similar to the latter is an ivory lion figurine found in Altıntepe (**Iv-Alt-5**), which is accompanied by another ivory lion figurine, seated but still roaring (**Iv-Alt-4**); a small roaring lion in ivory also comes from Toprakkale (**Iv-Top-3**).

Images of lions can also be found on stone reliefs and carvings: for example, lions are represented as the mount of the winged *genii* depicted on the relief carved on the cubic basalt block found at Kefkalesi (**Rel-Ad-2** to **11**), which shows them facing each other, roaring and charging, in front of the city

[1061] Although it may not be entirely correct to speak of different "styles" formulated by individual rulers for lion representations during their reigns (it started with Akurgal 1968: 56-61; see, more recently, Işıklı – Aras 2016: 437-438), it is nevertheless possible to identify a consistent development of Urartian lion representations (as well as, as will be seen, of bulls) towards a more pronounced stylisation. The analysis of the art of Rusa, son of Erimena, studied in the broader field of Urartian royal art, perfectly fits into the chronology of the development of the lion figure in Urartu at the end of the 8th century BCE, but it's not clear how much of this adherence to the past has been wanted by the king and how much was simply adopted by the bronzeworker. The term "styles" can be used when examining its meaning, specifying that it is, probably, not a choice related to the will of the sovereign but rather an independent artistic evolution towards a lesser adherence to reality. The tables published by Ursula Seidl (2004: 124, fig. 94) and Roaf (2010: 78, fig. 7) clearly explains this process.
[1062] The most recent analysis of Urartian wall paintings is to be found in Dan *et alii* 2019.
[1063] It is interesting to note that we don't have this exact kind of depictions, with lions standing on the sides of the concave squares, in Assyria itself; one can anyway find many parallel examples for this scene, with different animals represented, in Albenda 2006: 35-44.
[1064] Oganesyan 1973: fig. 46.
[1065] Işıklı – Aras 2016: 434, "Kükrer biçimde verilen bu eserlerin palmet şeklindeki bıyıkları, üçgen göz çukurlukları ve düğme şeklindeki kulakları Urartu'nun geleneksel işleniş tarzını yansıtmaktadır":
[1066] Barnett 1950: 15 and pl. XI; Piotrovskii 1967: 18.
[1067] Burney 1966: fig. 10; Akurgal 1968: 60, fig. 26-27, 61, fig.28, pl. XXXVII.a-b
[1068] Burney 1966: fig. 9a.
[1069] Xnkikyan 2002: 10 and ill. 1.

walls[1070]. The blocks bear an epigraph by Rusa, son of Argišti[1071], which dates it to the last period of Urartian history. Akurgal also assigns to 7th century BCE art the basalt block relief of a lion, found near Erzincan (**Rel-Erz-1**)[1072], placing it in the so-called "Ringelstil": however, it is very different in detail from the lion depicted on the block from Kefkalesi, as it appears much more stylised. Several factors influenced Urartian art in general, both royal and popular, including the distance from the centre of the state power, the trends of the moment, foreign stylistic influences and, of course, the hand of the craftsman who produced the individual objects. The lion from Erzincan, although somewhat different from, for example, the lions carved on the basalt block from Kefkalesi, can be considered an Urartian production, both because of a certain similarity to another type of lion, the one embossed on the shield from Ayanis of Rusa, son of Argišti (**S-Ay-5**), and because of the absolute distance from the Neo-Hittite art of a site such as, for example, Malatya / Arslantepe, on whose reliefs the lions are rendered in a completely different way. Lions are inlaid on both the alabaster *podia* located in the temple area of Ayanis (**Wd-Ay-2, 3**) and also on the walls of the *cella* (**Wd-Ay-1**)[1073]: in this case, the animals are represented as *Mischwesen*, as they are winged, but, at least on the *podia*, the depiction is very stylized and, for this, it is perfectly fitting into the process of geometrization seen on the representation on shields. From Ayanis is also a lion's head carved all-round in a block of limestone[1074], which has the exact same features of the lion's head in bronze affixed to the decorated shield.

The objects that have the most variations in the rendering of the lion images are undoubtedly the bronze belts: on them, the lions are depicted both walking and rampant, with a sort of pattern where the charging lions tend to be relegated to the small side cartouches, while the rampant ones usually appear within the central scene. The image of the lions on bronze belts appears to be clearly taken from Assyrian models, especially from the time of Ashurnasirpal II[1075], together with some images from hunting scenes. What is not taken from Assyrian models, however, is the dynamism of the animals' positions, which, in Urartian popular art as in royal art, are represented in an extremely static manner, also emphasised by the repetitiveness of the scene. The few exceptions are four belts found in the sites of Kayalıdere (**B-Kay-1**)[1076], Burmageçit (**B-Bur-1**)[1077], Nor Aresh (**B-Nor-1**)[1078] and Yerevan (**B-Yer-1**)[1079], which depict dynamic hunting scenes clearly inspired by Ashurnasirpal II's lion hunts[1080]. Morphologically, the differences between the various lions depicted, apart from the position, rampant or walking, vary in minor details, such as the position of the tail: here too, there is a tendency for rampant lions to have a straight, downwards facing tail, while walking lions usually have a curled, upward tail, although there are exceptions to this pattern too[1081].

[1070] Bilgiç – Öğün 1964.
[1071] CTU A 12-10.
[1072] Akurgal 1961a: 29-31, 36 fig. 13.
[1073] For the decoration of the walls and the podium of the temple *cella*, see Çilingiroğlu 2001c; for the podium located in the so-called "Hall with Podium", see Işıklı *et alii* 2019.
[1074] Işıklı – Aras 2016.
[1075] On this topic, see Dan – Bonfanti 2021b.
[1076] Burney 1966: 78 fig. 10, pls. IX.b and XI.b.
[1077] Yıldırım 1991: 10.8-9.
[1078] Barnett 1963: 197-198, figs. 46-47.
[1079] Esayan et al. 1991: pl. XVI.
[1080] See the section devoted to the analysis of the bronze belts in the text.
[1081] One of the two belts found in the Yeghegnadzor tomb (see Dan – Bonfanti 2021b) is a perfect example of this variation: while two of the three remaining lions represented in the side cartouche are rampant and have their tails pointed upwards, the last lion on the bottom is rampant with its tail pointed downwards. This probably happened

Although the standard position of Urartian royal lions, walking and roaring, is well attested in the North Syrian kingdoms, at sites such as Arslantepe[1082], Karkemish[1083], Karahmanmaraş[1084], Zincirli[1085] and Sakçegözü[1086], the details and the general rendering of the animals are more reminiscent of Assyrian specimens, particularly from the time of Ashurnasirpal II. It can be assumed that the main influence on Urartian lions is undoubtedly Assyrian, which also exerted it, of course, in the Neo-Hittite sphere: in both cases, the artists were unable, or unwilling, to replicate the dynamism of the models, thus crystallising the forms into standardised positions and features, which spread without substantial modification in both popular and royal art. The only exception is, for royal art, the Anzaf shield, containing the only battle scene represented in Urartian art, and the few examples of Urartian bronze belts with hunting scene decorations, which almost literally reproduce the original Assyrian models, trying to replicate even the movements of the animals, creating what can be defined as the only "dynamic" or "narrative" decorations that characterize the whole Urartian art[1087].

Depictions of lions are particularly important as they actually help in defining the "dynamic" or "static" nature of the Urartian royal and popular art, and may help in creating a chronology for the introduction of the more static scenes. As can be seen in the table, "static" scenes became popular in royal art only during the reign of Argišti Minuaḫi, in the beginning of the 8th century BCE, while the only decorated artefact known before, the Anzaf shield, certainly contained a very dynamic image of a battle. Hypothesizing that royal art initially took inspiration from the popular art spread in the Southern Caucasus during the 9th century BCE, which was heavily influenced by the Assyrian one but still contained elements of the local Caucasian substrate, it can be established that a sure change in this trend happened during the second quarter of the 8th century BCE, with Argišti, son of Minua, who, for some reasons, decided to give to royal art a very static tendency, almost as if it was supposed to convey a "hieratic" message. One should suppose that this was the turning point also for popular art, which, in this case, took inspiration exactly from royal art, changing the depictions on the objects to more, but not completely, static images. What can be supposed, for example in the case of bronze belts, is that the dynamic specimens should be dated to the very beginning of the Urartian kingdom.

Royal Art		Popular Art
Išpuini and Minua: "dynamic" royal art.	From Argišti Minuaḫi on: "static" royal art.	On belts: both "dynamic" and "static" images are represented.

because there was no space anymore to depict its tail pointed upwards, and mainly tells us that minimum variations of secondary details should not be taken as indicators of chronology or style.

[1082] See, for example, Orthmann 1971: pl. 40, Malatya A/5b, pl. 41, Malatya A/9a.

[1083] See, for example, Orthmann 1971: pl. 31, Karkemis H/11.

[1084] See, for example, Orthmann 1971: pl. 44, Maraş B/1 and B/2.

[1085] See, for example, Orthmann 1971: pl. 61, Zincirli C/2 and C/5, pl. 62, Zincirli D/1, pl. 66, Zincirli J/1.

[1086] See, for example, Orthmann 1971: pl. 50, Sakçagözü A/11.

[1087] The hunting scene motif will be better developed in a further section exclusively devoted to it.

6.1.3.1.2. Bulls

- Belts
- Shields
- Stone reliefs
- Cauldron attachments
- Bronze figurines
- Wall paintings

Like the depictions of lions, bulls are also extremely present in Urartian art, both royal and popular. They are almost always depicted walking and in profile in royal art, while on some bronze belts they also appear running. In general, it can be said that the biggest iconographic influence on bulls is, again, to be found in Assyrian art, although there is a marked difference in concept and depiction. While in Assyrian art bulls are mainly identified as pack animals, rarely, only in the depictions of the period of Ashurnasirpal II, the subjects of a royal hunt[1088], in Urartu they appear as elegant animals, worthy of being depicted together with the animal king *par excellence*, the lion, on the shields dedicated to the supreme god of the pantheon. This difference is also visible in the iconography: while in Assyria the bulls are strong and muscular, in Urartu they are slender and very fine, probably decorated with drapes. Only in the art of Sargon II, Assyrian bulls appear to be more similar to Urartian bulls[1089], but there is no evidence to suggest an Urartian influence on the art of this ruler.

A very rare example of a bull hunt is present in Urartian popular art, embossed on a bronze belt found in Nor Aresh (**B-Nor-1**)[1090]: it is clear, however, that one cannot base many considerations on a single example of a bronze belt containing a bull hunt somewhat similar to those depicted on Assyrian reliefs, and what is important to note is, instead, that even in Urartu the theme was present, although the hunted bull embodies all the characteristics of elegance and royalty peculiar, as will be seen later, of the royal conception. On other belts[1091], bulls are depicted essentially running or as parts of *Mischwesen*, while it is uncommon to find simple walking bulls in popular art. In royal art, bulls are present in numerous cases: the first and best known is undoubtedly that of the bronze shields, where they are depicted together with lions. In these artefacts, bulls are depicted walking and in profile, arranged in concentric bands around the centre; there is only one band containing bulls, usually the central one; the depiction of the bulls on shields also undergoes the stylisation process already seen for the royal lions over time. Again together with lions, bulls are depicted in some Urartian paintings, found both in Altıntepe (**Wd-Alt-1**)[1092] and Erebuni (**Wd-Er-1**)[1093]: in this case, almost identical parallels for these representations can be found in Assyria, mainly in the Upper Chambers of Nimrud, where the bulls, sometimes winged, are kneeling in front of a geometric element[1094].

One can also find bulls depicted as the mounts of divine characters, as is the case, for example, in the relief of Kef Kalesi (**Rel-Ad-1**), in which the storm god, Teišeba, standing on his sacred animal, the

[1088] Curtis – Reade 1995: 6 (BM 124532).
[1089] See, for example, Bahrani XX: 238, fig. 10.12.
[1090] Barnett 1963: 197, fig. 46.
[1091] See, for example, the specimens **B-Mal-1** and **B-Yeg-1**.
[1092] Özğüç 1966: figs. 14, 20-27, pls. XXIV.1-2, XXVII.1-2, XXVIII.1,3.
[1093] Oganesyan 1961: pls. 33, 38; Oganesyan 1973: 8-12, 14.
[1094] Albenda 2006: 16-17.

bull, with an iconography predominant from the second half of the Ur-III period[1095], has been recognised. The bull is extremely stylised, with many engraved details reminiscent of the characterisation of bulls on bronze shields, and the deity standing on it rests one foot on his head and the other on his back: it is interesting to note that, apart from the horned headdress that characterises him as a supernatural being, this figure does not bear any of the attributes traditionally associated with storm deities at least since the Ur III period[1096], and he is therefore interpreted as Teišeba only thanks to the presence of the bull as his mount. Actually, it should be noted that, in Urartian iconography, the mounts of the deities appear to be somewhat interchangeable: on the shield of Anzaf, the only depiction, according to current data, of the Urartian pantheon, the bull is represented as the mount of the solar god Šiuini[1097]. It should also be noted that this relief was part of a more complex composition, of which only a few fragments have been found, showing two deities standing on bulls facing each other[1098], and therefore unlikely to represent the same character; furthermore, apart from the wings and the mount, the representation of this deity does not differ in detail from the representations of *genii* on the cubic basalt block found in Adilcevaz (**Rel-Ad-2**). It is therefore not possible to state with certainty that the bull was the mount of the Storm god in Urartu, and it is perhaps for this reason that the animal is often used to form hybrid creatures, mainly winged, represented in bronze figurines in the round[1099], probably parts of the so-called "Toprakkale throne".

A characteristic feature of Urartian art[1100] is the use of bull's heads as cauldrons' handles and attachments, which, as already noted, find parallels only in Phrygian art of the 9th-8th centuries BCE. It is not clear, at the present stage of studies, whether these vessels were decorated in this way for cultic or aesthetic reasons; what is clear, however, is that Urartian examples were represented with specific characteristics that are well summarised by O.W. Muscarella: "A separate casting of the head and the wing-tail unit, a prominent forelock with hair curls, distinct muzzle incisions, and the placement of four outward-facing bulls to a cauldron" [1101].

In Urartu, bulls had certain iconographic importance, especially in royal art, where they are depicted both as mounts of divine beings and as protagonists in the decoration of the shields dedicated to the god Ḫaldi by the sovereigns. Their iconography, like that of the lions, undergoes a process of stylisation that ends with the acquisition of specific characteristics to decorate their coats and snouts, which appear to have the same features (almond-shaped eyes, thick eyebrows, horns pointing upwards, snail-shaped decorations along the jaw) even when the *protomai* alone are used as cauldron handles. The details are inspired by Assyrian art, as can be seen, for example, from the lion hunting relief from the time of Ashurnasirpal II[1102], which shows a characterisation of the mane and muscles very similar to the one used in Urartian art, but then these features develop independently, with decorative elements exclusively from Urartian art. It is interesting to note that the same characteristics of royal art, concerning the decoration and characterisation of the bulls, are taken up, at least as far as we can see today, by popular art; it is therefore not possible to establish, with regard to these animals, a clear

[1095] Schwemer 2008b: 33.
[1096] Schwemer 2008b: 31-36.
[1097] Belli 1999: 46, fig. 20.
[1098] Burney – Lawson 1958: 211-212.
[1099] See, for example, the specimens **Mf-Top-11** and **Mf-Top-12**.
[1100] And of the Phrygian one; see the discussion on cauldrons.
[1101] Muscarella 2013: 737.
[1102] VA00962.

distinction for the iconography in the two arts of the Urartian period, beyond the presence or absence of inscriptions on the materials analysed.

6.1.3.2. Parade scenes

Parade scenes are to be found in the Urartian royal toreutic sphere, particularly on decorated quivers[1103] and helmets[1104] dedicated by the sovereigns to the god Ḫaldi as *ex voto*; another object with the same representation is one belt which has been discovered in the site of Çavuştepe, Uç Kale (**B-Çav-3**), depicting a parade of chariots and knights on two registers. An Urartian seal from the site of Toprakkale (**S-Top-13, 14**) also bears the depiction of a chariot parade and some soldiers walking in front of it[1105], but this seal appears to be a *unicum*: it is inscribed with the name of Rusa, without further specifications, and the proposed date for it is the second half of the 8th century BCE[1106]. In the same position as the horsemen in the parade scenes are the warriors on horseback depicted in the cartouche of a belt from Burmageçit (**B-Bur-3**) and in the main scene of a belt from the necropolis of Nor Aresh (**B-Nor-3**); chariots pulled by horses galloping, with soldiers facing forward, are depicted on the two examples of belts from the columbarium of Yerevan (**B-Yer-1, 2**), while more dynamic is the position of the hunters on chariot depicted on belts from the same two sites of Burmageçit (**B-Bur-1**) and Nor Aresh (**B-Nor-1**). Single depictions of horsemen and chariots, not connected in the same scene, appear on numerous belts coming from different sites scattered throughout Urartian territory, although the depiction of the horsemen often varies with regard to their position, more dynamic, as they raise their arm to hold the spear[1107]. Of course, the concept depicted on the belts is different from the one on the quivers: they probably represent, in fact, hunting scenes, and not soldiers' parades, but the style of the depiction is so similar that they can be analysed in the same category of decorations.

The representation of the military parade is comparable, in the Assyrian context, with the ones depicted on the reliefs of the Balawat Gates of Shalmaneser III[1108], differing from these reliefs mainly for the number of spokes in the wheels of the wagons and for the extremely simplified representation of the characters' faces. Later in time, parades scenes of military chariots are also shown on the reliefs of the Central and South-West Palace of Tiglath Pileser III in Nimrud: here, however, the representations are inside a contexts of war scenes[1109] or parades with the king standing in a blessing position on a military chariot[1110]. "Assyrian style" ivories also represent parade scenes, as shown on a plaque carved in relief found inside the temple of Nabu in Nimrud[1111].

[1103] See § 2.1.1.1.
[1104] See § 2.1.2.1.
[1105] Ayvazian 2006: 1037-1038, TK 21. Even if it's inscribed, this seal is not reported in Salvini 2012. See Dan – Bonfanti *in preparation*.
[1106] Ayvazian 2006: 1037, "Estimated date: after TP III (744-727 BCE)".
[1107] See, for example, the specimen **B-Alt-1**.
[1108] Barnett 1960: pls. 157, 161, 162.
[1109] Barnett 1962: pl. IX.
[1110] Barnett 1962: pl. LXIX.
[1111] Mallowan – Davies 1970: pl. XVII.61a; at page 28, the plaque is described: "Design in two registers, separated by a guilloche border, shows processional scenes. Above, a file of Assyrian soldiers and officials, walking in pairs and followed by chariots, advance to the left. Below, two processions of Assyrians confront one another. (…) This plaque is of particular interest as it would seem to present a combination of 9th and 8th century features".

6.1.4. "Narrative" motifs: a popular peculiarity

As noted above in the analysis of the individual decorative motifs, the royal art of the Urartian state can predominantly be described as *static*: the units that form the decorations are often disconnected from each other, forming lines of individual elements rather than actual scenes. Even the depictions of military parades are devoid of dynamism and appear absolutely immobile and stylistically unchanging[1112], as if they were used as fillers rather than as scenes to narrate an event. This appears to be in contrast with Assyrian royal art, which tends to visually narrate the exploits of the king, either metaphorically, with the lion-hunting scenes, or realistically, but in a fictional way, with the pictorial descriptions of the sovereign's military campaigns. On the other hand, the popular art of the people who inhabited the Armenian Highlands during the centuries of expansion of the Urartian state, represented primarily by bronze belts, is different, at least concerning several specimens depicting narrative scenes of unequivocal Assyrian inspiration. The bronze belt is by nature an object that allows the development of complex narratives, both because of the size of the object and because it has a horizontal development that can be divided into registers. The so-called "Transcaucasian" specimens, immediate neighbours of the belts that can be defined as "Assyro-Urartian", were not able to exploit all the narrative potential of the object itself, opting instead for individual unrelated motifs that formed a coherent whole[1113]. This is also the case for the so-called "Urartian" belts, in line with the "static" tendency of royal art and the belts widespread in the Southern Caucasus, with the difference that the figurative space is often divided into registers, in order to accommodate a greater number of figures, following a trend already inaugurated by Assyrian reliefs. Some belts, however, not only take up Assyrian modes and forms, but also the *narrative* theme of the lion hunt, either in a dynamic sense, very similar to the reliefs on the orthostats of the palaces of Nimrud and Nineveh, or in a static style, more typical of Urartian royal art.

Another motif that tends to be "popular" is the figure of the worshipper: this too is found on belts and sometimes on seals[1114], and is taken from an Assyrian figure widespread mainly in glyptic[1115]. It appears to be a rather rare motif, present on very few examples of belts, but it is important because it is not taken from the official art of the royal palace.

6.1.4.1. Lion and bull hunting scenes

- Belts

Hunting scenes are completely absent from Urartian royal art, in total contrast to Assyrian art, where they appear to be a symbol of the sovereign's kingship. In Assyria, lion hunting scenes have been depicted in royal art since the time of Ashurnasirpal II, taking up a Mesopotamian figurative tradition that dates back to at least the 4th millennium BCE[1116]. The absence of figurative representations of fights between rulers and lions in the 3rd and 2nd millennia BCE is also compensated for by the abundance of

[1112] Even if Piotrovskij 1952: 49-50, recognized some differences between the scenes represented during the reigns of Argišti Minuaḫi and Sarduri Argištiḫi, the overall setting of the scene is exactly the same.
[1113] For an overview of the motifs represented on "Transcaucasian" belts, see Castelluccia 2017: 15-38.
[1114] But, regarding the seals, there is no proof that they are actually Urartian.
[1115] See, for example, Collon 2001: pl. XVI.202, 203, 204.
[1116] McMahon 2009: 121.

leonine metaphors and hunting scenes described in the texts[1117]: this clearly demonstrates that the idea of the ruler hunting the lion was a well-rooted concept in Mesopotamian imagery that was not lost over the millennia. In Assyria, in the 1st millennium BCE, there are numerous formulae in the texts comparing the strength of the ruler to that of a lion[1118], creating an apparent paradox in which the ruler is both the lion itself and the hunter of the animal. Religious implications have also been suggested with regard to the hunting representations on the orthostats of Assyrian royal palaces, thanks also to the libation scenes that follow the killing of the lions[1119]. As for bull hunts, the situation does not change: although figuratively they are less represented in the royal sphere[1120], on an epigraphic level there are numerous metaphors where members of the royal family are associated with cattle[1121]; the first mention of bull hunting is to be found in the inscriptions of the royal dynasty of the Ur III period[1122]. Again, it seems that the whole bull-hunting scene may have mythological significance, with references to the myth of Gilgamesh[1123].

In Urartian royal art, on the other hand, there are no traces of these hunting scenes, but bulls and lions are elsewhere intrinsically linked to the representation of kingship: rather, the ruler is probably identified with the lion itself, which appears on numerous artefacts from the time of Argišti, son of Minua, for example the bronze shields, where also the bulls are depicted. In the earlier period, however, at the end of the 9th century BCE, with Išpuini and Minua, it seems that the figure of the lion is instead associated with the gods Ḫaldi and Teišeba, as it appears on the shield found in the fortress of Anzaf (**S-Anz-2**)[1124]: this could lead one to think that the figure of the lion is connected not so much to the sovereign as to the gods of the pantheon, to whom the royal artefacts bearing figures of lions are dedicated[1125]. At the epigraphic level, however, the association of the king's strength with that of the lion begins to appear at the time of Minua in a single text[1126], and then becomes more common and widespread from Sarduri Argištiḫi onwards[1127]. Thus, it seems clear that in Urartu too there is some kind of correlation between the ruler and the lions and bulls, but this does not include hunting.

This is true if one considers the sphere of royal art: on some bronze belts, particularly from the sites of Nor Aresh (**B-Nor-1**), Yerevan columbarium (**B-Yer-1**), Burmageçit (**B-Bur-1**) and Kayalıdere (**B-Kay-1**)[1128], there are scenes of lion hunting and, in only one case, bull hunting, which almost perfectly reflect the Assyrian models from which they were inspired. The scenes can be divided into several

[1117] McMahon 2009: 121, "The near total gap in preserved visual representations of king and lion combats between the fourth and first millennia BC is partly filled by extensive metaphors in third and early second millennia BC texts and by descriptions of royal lion hunts from the later second millennium BC. For instance, Shulgi is frequently equated with a lion in most versions of the 'Praise Poems' to Shulgi, and Hammurapi is similarly described, although less often; the extended Neo-Assyrian lion hunts are anticipated by records of the hunts undertaken by Middle Assyrian kings".
[1118] Cassin 1981: 369-374.
[1119] Watanabe 2002: 76-78.
[1120] On royal orthostats, only one bull hunt is preserved (VA00962, from the palace of Ashurnasirpal II in Nimrud), while on seals the bull hunt is a bit more common (see, for example, Collon 2001: pl. II).
[1121] Watanabe 2002: 59.
[1122] Watanabe 2002: 72.
[1123] Watanabe 2002: 75.
[1124] See Belli 1999.
[1125] Except for the lion's heads depicted on the base of the royal bowls found in great number in the site of Karmir-blur (see, for example, Salvini 2012: 51)
[1126] CTU A 5-44, l. 6.
[1127] See CTU volume II, lemma "e-ia-ar-di-še" and following.
[1128] These belts, among others, are specifically analysed in Dan – Bonfanti 2021b.

sections, each depicting a particular position of the hunter or the animal, which are found in Assyrian royal depictions from the palaces of Ashurnasirpal II and Ashurbanipal.

- Archer on chariot turned towards the back of the vehicle: it already appears at the time of Ashurnasirpal II, as evidenced in particular by the famous relief depicted on an orthostat from the North-West Palace of Nimrud[1129]; with Ashurbanipal, the image undergoes a slight variation, as the warrior on a chariot depicted on an orthostat from the North Palace of Nineveh does not hold a bow but a spear[1130]. The animal that is hit can be, especially on the belt **B-Nor-1**, a rampant lion or a bull: in both cases, it is very close to the rear wheels of the chariot[1131].
- Rampant lions and bulls shot with arrows: the Assyrian parallels come in particular from the art of Ashurbanipal and are mostly represented by lions with arrows in their necks and heads[1132]. As for the bulls, there is only one preserved example dating from the reign of Ashurnasirpal II and coming from Nimrud, in which a bull is shot in the neck and head by three arrows shot by a warrior on a chariot following him[1133].
- Lion standing on its hind legs: this particular depiction is present in two cases on bronze belts and is attested in Ashurbanipal art in an extremely vivid manner[1134].

It is interesting to note that such representations do not belong to the world of Assyrian glyptic or ivory carving, probably because they are specifically related to the sphere of the royal palace and the language used by the ruler to speak about himself. What can therefore be observed is only that, at a certain point in history, bronze belts were produced depicting purely Assyrian scenes, with references in particular to the monumental art of Ashurnasirpal II and Ashurbanipal: as already noted, however, the monumental art in question was not taken up by the Urartian rulers, who preferred to depict static elements and scenes without action. This is possible thanks to an intermediate step probably made by the depiction on the bronze belts: on them, in fact, the sovereign is not depicted, but rather a series of simple warriors who replicate the king's positions on the Assyrian orthostats; this would cancel the royal connotation of the scene itself, that would go from narrating an action of the sovereign to being a simply decorative element. This hypothesis also allows us to postulate that the adoption of these hunting scenes as depictions of belts is chronologically earlier than the formation of the Urartian state, and therefore part of the probably unconscious process of cohesion of the populations living on the Armenian Highlands. The circumstance may also have been influenced by the presence of belts with hunting scenes from the Southern Caucasus, where the object of the hunt is often a deer[1135]: since the hunting scene was already popular in Southern Caucasian art, and therefore not connected to royalty, it may have retained the same value, but with Assyrian features, in line with the new "fashion" that spread across the Armenian Highlands. As for the preserved belts, in particular, the author of the depictions should have been familiar with the representations on the Assyrian royal orthostats, since the lion-hunting scenes were not preserved on other materials. It can be assumed, however, that there were examples of such depictions made of perishable materials, such as wood, which also circulated in the Assyrian detachments in eastern Anatolia. From there, then, local craftsmen would have taken up the

[1129] BM124534; see Albenda 1972 for a detailed analysis.
[1130] BM124851.
[1131] In particular, the lions grab the wheels themselves, as in the Assyrian orthostats.
[1132] BM124865.
[1133] VA00962.
[1134] BM124852.
[1135] Castelluccia 2017: 37-38.

lion-hunting scenes, replacing them with the deer-hunting scenes already found on Caucasian belt specimens.

6.1.4.2. Worshipper scenes

A decorative element that appears only once on Urartian belts, on the specimen **B-Kb-4**, can be interpreted as a winged sun disc; it was probably devoid of its original meaning, reworked and *resemantised* by the local populations. This element has a clear Assyrian origin, associated with representations of solar divinities. By a curious coincidence, it is depicted on the belt of King Aššurbanipal in a bas-relief from Nineveh[1136]; in the Urartian area, it is found on several seals[1137], a steatite container (**Sp-Kb-2**), and a decorated medallion (**M-Kb-4**), the latter two found in Karmir-blur. On the belt **B-Kb-4**, this symbol is depicted in connection with a person positioned below the solar disc: this figure, who can be interpreted as a "worshipper", is kneeling or in *Knielauf*, with his arms raised as if holding the solar disc. A similar scene may be seen on numerous Mesopotamian seals from the Middle-Assyrian era[1138] and Urartian seals[1139] as well. As this image is not represented on any of the Urartian royal objects, one should imagine that it was not part of the official artistic inventory chosen by the Urartian kings themselves; moreover, having been found mainly in the site of Karmir-blur, one may imagine that it was a symbol remained in the collective imagination of this region, probably still linked to a religious meaning.

6.2. Common artefacts

An analysis of the most widespread artefacts associated with the Urartian Kingdom has to start with the metal objects that form the most common category, that of votive offerings to the god Ḫaldi: for this reason, quivers, helmets, and shields will receive a particularly in-depth study, as they are the core of Urartian royal art. A chronology within these categories of objects will be provided, clearly based on the presence of royal inscriptions, followed by an analysis of decorated and uninscribed specimens, in an attempt to provide a chronology applicable to them as well. Other objects belonging to royal art and analysed here are seals, whose study will be divided between the iconographic and the epigraphic level; less characterised within the "royal" and "popular" artistic currents are instead the bronze figurines, which certainly belong to both areas, as well as the cauldrons, whose affiliation to palace art is only proved by an inscription found on what is traditionally considered a cauldron attachment, but which has no other comparisons in Urartian art. Finally, there is the analysis of the belts, a fundamental object in the creation of royal Urartian art, which will be studied in depth in the concluding pages of this chapter, trying to provide new interpretations regarding the emergence of Urartu itself.

1136 Collins 2008: 132.
1137 See, for example, **S-Ay-5**; Ayvazian 2006: BA 04-09, BA-22, BA-29.
1138 Frankfort 1939: pl. XXXIII b/e; for the Neo-Assyrian era, Frankfort 1939: pl. XXXIV.b.
1139 Ayvazian 2006: 639, KB 02; Erzen 1988: pl. XXXVIII.b.

6.2.1. Quivers

The tradition of using quivers partly or wholly of metal goes back much further than the Late Assyrian period, as shown by a bronze quiver from Mari of the 16th century BCE[1140]. For the Neo-Assyrian period, only one bronze quiver was found, dated to the 7th century BCE and preserved in Room NE 5 at Fort Shalmaneser, rectangular and about 44 cm long, with a convex surface apparently devoid of decorations; the lower base and the back part must have been made of perishable material[1141]. Despite the absence of finds, many quivers depicted on the chariots on the reliefs of Assyrian palaces from the time of Ashurnasirpal II[1142] appear sometimes rich in decorations and ornaments, often divided into registers occupied by religious and mythological scenes[1143]: these specimens can be combined with the Urartian decorated quivers, which may have been inspired by the Assyrian models of the 9th century BCE[1144]. In the reliefs, quivers are depicted mainly hanging from the sides of war chariots, usually in pairs; when carried by soldiers, they are hidden by the body of the soldiers themselves, and only the two ends are visible. To be more precise about their design, Urartian quivers are very similar to two examples depicted on a relief of the North-West Palace of Ashurnasirpal II of Nimrud[1145], related to a military expedition during the Lebanon campaign (874 BCE)[1146]: attached to the war chariot, they have a complex geometric decoration within a rectangular frame. The edges of the quiver are decorated with engraved circles, while inside the frame there is a division into panels made by zigzag lines; inside the single panels, there is a single representation of an eight-pointed star. It is immediately clear that the design of Urartian quivers is broadly the same: a surface divided into horizontal panels containing a decoration and separated by zigzag lines. There are no known representations of figured quivers made at the time of other Assyrian rulers, except for a single panel from the South-West Palace of Nineveh and dating to Ashurbanipal, which depicts the defeat of Elamite warriors, who carried quivers decorated with two incidental lines and a circular panel in the centre[1147]. Despite the extensive iconographic documentation available, very few metal specimens have been found in archaeological excavations: the only known Neo-Assyrian quiver comes from Fort Shalmaneser and was discovered in 1960[1148]. The fragment has no decoration and was found in a poor state of preservation.

Apart from the Assyrian examples, the Luristan bronzes, most of which are of illicit origin, have returned several quivers[1149]; only one specimen, clearly recognizable as a quiver, was found in an excavation in Luristan, in War Kabud, in a funeral complex dating back to the Iron Age III[1150]: it is decorated with a series of dots made in *repoussé* technique and with embossed palmettes. On the Caspian Sea, in Marlik, there is a further group of quivers with a conical shape and engraved geometric

[1140] Yadin 1963: 164; this quiver is decorated with a series of big dots in the *repoussé* technique.
[1141] Curtis 2013: 43.
[1142] Barnett 1975: pls. 32 and 37; a "shoulder" quiver with a decoration of rosettes, palmettes and sacred trees is represented instead on a relief showing a eunuch attendant to the king: Cohen – Kangas 2010: 58.
[1143] Curtis 2013: 43.
[1144] Curtis 2013: 43. Curtis also compares these materials with examples from Wester Iran, *fundort unbekannt*, for which he states: "Probably these quivers belong to the steadily increasing category of unprovenanced bronze objects from Iran that appear to have been produced by provincial workshops either operating under strong Assyrian influence or copying Assyrian prototypes".
[1145] BM 124557.
[1146] Reade 1985: 205.
[1147] BM 131126.
[1148] Oates 1961: 13.
[1149] See, for example, Muscarella 1988: 192-202, n. 308.
[1150] Vedi Castelluccia – Dan 2011: 15.

decoration[1151]. Again, from level IVB of the Hasanlu site, comes an iron quiver decorated with hunts and images of animals[1152]; from the South Caucasus area there are no metal quivers found, but they are represented in several examples of belts from funerary contexts[1153].

Urartian bronze quivers can be analysed according to the type of their decoration and the presence of inscriptions; a possible subdivision is as follows.

1. With embossed parallel ribs
   - Inscribed: 2 specimens (**Q-Anz-2** and **Q-Top-6**)
   - Uninscribed: at least 25 specimens (all the other specimens)
2. With zig-zag lines
   - Inscribed: 2 specimens (**Q-Kb-7-8**)
   - Uninscribed: at least 7 specimens (all the other specimens)
3. With lines of embossed dots
   - Uninscribed: 1 specimen (**Q-Anz-1**)
4. With lines of bud garlands
   - Uninscribed: 1 specimen (**Q-Ay-1**)
5. With parade scenes
   - Inscribed: 4 specimens (**Q-Kb-2-5**)
   - Uninscribed: 5 specimens (all the other specimens)
6. With animals' depiction
   - Uninscribed: at least 1 specimen[1154] (**Q-Top-1**).

Most of the quivers found in the Urartian area do not bear real inscriptions: there are only eight inscribed specimens, and they belong mainly to the group of quivers with parade scenes; unfortunately, the fragmentary condition of the finds does not allow us to determine whether other specimens also bear cuneiform inscriptions. For example, given the large number of epigraphs on quivers with parade scenes, all the specimens of that group may have been of royal origin, without inscriptions due to their state of preservation.

6.2.1.1 Chronological analysis: inscriptions on quivers and typologies

As already said, there are only eight quivers inscribed by Urartian rulers: three of them belong to Argišti Minuaḫi, three to Sarduri Argištiḫi, one to Argišti Rusaḫi and one to an unspecified ruler named Rusa. The Urartian word for quiver is *gurbi(ni)*, as attested by two dedicatory inscriptions bearing the name of Sarduri Argištiḫi on two quivers with parade scenes found in Karmir-blur[1155]. Salvini proposes an etymological comparison with the Akkadian *gurpisu*, which means "armour" and not quiver, and mentions Diakonoff's hypothesis that rejects the identification of the Urartian term with the Hurrian

[1151] See Castelluccia – Dan 2011: 16.
[1152] Pigott 1989: 75, fig. 14.
[1153] Panasauri (Castelluccia 2017: n. 312), Sagaredžo (Castelluccia 2017: n. 313), Maralyn Deresi (Castelluccia 2017: n. 303) e Tli (Castelluccia 2017: nn. 319-320-321).
[1154] Derin - Çilingiroğlu 2001: 159-160 report the existence of a quiver with decoration of winged horses.
[1155] CTU B 9-11 and 9-12.

gurpisi[1156]: however, since the hypothesis of Diakonoff, who proposes instead a Caucasian etymology for the term *gurbi(ni)*[1157], is based precisely on the identity between the Hurrian and the Akkadian words[1158], the comparison with *gurpisu* should also be rejected. It is also possible, given the presence of an Akkadian loan in Hittite, **gurzip(p)i-*, with metathesis, hence the adjective *gurzip(p)ant-*, "gorgeted, wearing a hauberk" [1159], that this term was a "Kultur- oder Wanderwort"[1160] of Hurrian origin, which came into the Urartian language to identify the quiver before a hypothetical semantic shift, first in Akkadian and then in all the languages that have borrowed the word, into "armour" [1161].

There are essentially three types of explicitly royal quivers out of the seven groups previously identified: with embossed parallel lines, with zigzag lines, with military parade scenes. The inscriptions are distributed as follows:

Cat. N°	**Inscription and CTU code**	**Description**	**Site**
Q-Kb-7	1 [^{D}ḫal]-di-e e-ú-[ri-e ^{m}ar-gis-ti-še] 2 [^{m}mì-nu]-a-ḫi-ni-e-[še uš-tú-ni] (CTU B 8-14)	Zig-zag bands	Karmir-blur
Q-Kb-8	1 ^{D}ḫal-di-e EN-*ŠÚ* ^{m}ar-gi-i[š-ti]-še uš-tú-ni (CTU B 8-15)	Embossed parallel bands	Karmir-blur
Q-Kb-2	1 ^{m}ar-giš-ti-[i ú-ri-iš-ḫi(?)] (CTU B 8-16)	Parade scene	Karmir-blur
Q-Kb-3	^{D} ḫal-di-e EN- *ŠÚ* ^{mD}sar$_5$-du-ri-še NÍG.BA (CTU B 9-10)	Parade scene	Karmir-blur
Q-Kb-4	^{D}ḫal-di-e EN-*ŠÚ* i-ni gur-bi-ni(?) ^{mD}sar$_5$-du-ri-še NÍG.BA (CTU B 9-11)	Parade scene	Karmir-blur
Q-Kb-5	$^{\lceil D\rceil}$ḫal-d[i]-e EN-*ŠÚ* i-ni [gur-bi-ni(?)]^{mD}sar$_5$-du-[ri-še NÍG.BA] (CTU B 9-12)	Parade scene	Karmir-blur

[1156] Salvini 2018: 389.
[1157] Diakonoff – Starotsin 1986: 18.
[1158] Diakonoff 1989: 98.
[1159] Puhvel 1997: 287.
[1160] Schwemer 2005-2006: 225.
[1161] Salvini 1979b: 309, "In verità nel hurrico di Boğazköy il termine per 'faretra' è *išpa(n)ti*, derivato dall'accadico *išpatu(m)*. Ciò potrebbe aver determinato lo slittamento semantico di *gurbiši*, venuto a significare una sorta di corazza, se l'interpretazione corrente ha colto nel segno".

Q-Anz-2	[^{D}]ẖal-di-e EN-*ŠÚ* ar-giš-ti-še ru-sa-ẖi-ni-še uš-tú-[ni] (CTU B 11-1)	Embossed parallel bands	Yukarı Anzaf
Q-Top-6	l ^{D}ẖal-di-e EN ^{m}ru-sa[-a-še … (CTU B 18-4)	Embossed parallel bands	Toprakkale

The cuneiform epigraphs on quivers, engraved immediately below the upper margin in a flat band between the edge and the first decoration, are stereotypical and replicated over time, with an initial dedication to the god Ḫaldi, followed by the name of the sovereign and the verb "to dedicate" (*uštu=ni*). The only graphic variation occurs during the reign of Sarduri, the son of Argišti, who uses the Sumerogram NÍG.BA, corresponding to the Urartian verb *uštu-*, instead of the usual Urartian writing. Furthermore, on a quiver from Karmir-blur, there is an incomplete epigraph that is integrated by Salvini as "^{m}ar-giš-ti-[i ú-ri-iš-ẖi(?)]"[1162]. This makes it unique as far as quiver inscriptions are concerned: only the name of the sovereign is actually preserved, which could suggest an integration along the lines of all other quiver inscriptions.

The custom of decorating and dedicating to the god Ḫaldi specimens of bronze quivers originated during the reign of Argišti Minuaḫi: he also depicted the military parade scene on his quivers, attested by a few fragments of a quiver bearing an inscription with his name (**Q-Kb-2**), and enriched the figurative repertoire with geometric decorations of zig-zag bands and straight lines embossed on bronze. The tradition of parade scenes continues with his successor, Sarduri Argištiḫi, for whom only quivers bearing this decoration are attested, while Argišti Rusaḫi and one of the rulers called Rusa use only the parallel band decoration. Again, it is not possible to trace an evolution in the decoration of these objects, but it can be stated with the available data that the images of military parades are confined to the reigns of Argišti Minuaḫi and Sarduri Argištiḫi, since they were not repeated later[1163]. Also unusual is the fact that the only quiver from Argišti Minuaḫi decorated with a military parade scene is the only one without a dedication to the god Ḫaldi. The dating of quivers is, as always, a complex matter, as are all dates concerning Urartian metals: the inscribed ones bear dedicatory epigraphs from the reign of Argišti Minuaḫi to the reign of one of the kings called Rusa, while no certain chronological handholds are helping to date uninscribed quivers, especially because they are sometimes found in secondary contexts, or because their publication is incomplete. The idea of dating quivers according to the decorative motif depicted on the metal is not considered correct if we accept the hypothesis that they did not all serve the same purpose but were partly used and partly dedicated to the gods: it is not necessary, in fact, to chronologically order different motifs that identify quivers with different purposes, as these motifs can undoubtedly coexist in the same time.

[1162] CTU B 8-16.

[1163] But Batmaz 2015: 136, stated that, from the site of Ayanis, another bronze quiver with military parade has been found. Since this specimen is not published yet, one cannot know if it was inscribed and if the depiction is different from the usual one.

6.2.1.2. Analysis of the decorated uninscribed specimens

While it is relatively easy to identify a royal quiver, it is not so easy to understand whether the specimens without an epigraph are also royal property or whether they have a different function. It is possible, however, to try to understand their use by placing them in their contexts of discovery; it is important to note, once again, that quivers are one of the most common metals in Urartu and that their decoration is extremely varied.

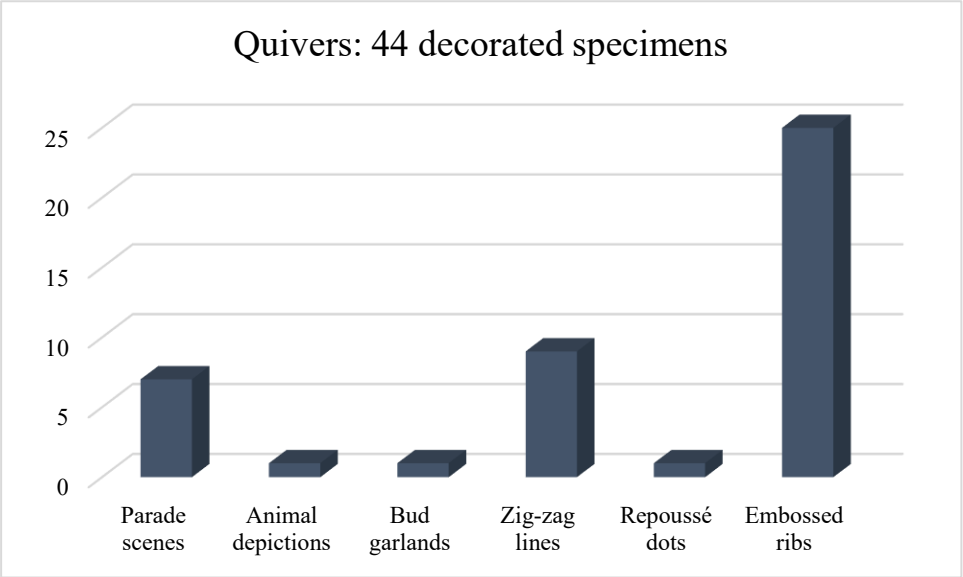
Cat. N°	**Site and context**	**Decoration**
Q-Anz-1	Yukarı Anzaf East court of the temple	Lines of *repoussé* dots
Q-Ay-2 to 12	Ayanis Temple area	11 quivers with embossed parallel bands
Q-Haf-1	Haftavan Tepe	Embossed parallel bands
Q-Kay-1 to 7	Kayalıdere Possibly from the temple	7 quivers with embossed parallel bands
Q-Top-4-5	Toprakkale	2 quivers with embossed parallel bands
Q-Yer-1, 2	Yerevan Columbarium	2 quivers with embossed parallel bands
A-Al-1	Geghovit Al Berd	Zig-zag lines
Q-Alt-1	Altıntepe Tomb III	Zig-zag lines
Q-Kb-9	Karmir-blur Room 12	Zig-zag lines
Q-Kb-10	Karmir-blur Private house, close to NW Gate	Zig-zag lines
Q-Top-2	Toprakkale	Zig-zag lines
Q-Top-3	Toprakkale	Zig-zag lines
Q-Tul-1	Tul-e Talesh Necropolis	Zig-zag lines

Q-Ay-12	Ayanis Temple area	Bud garlands
Q-Çav-1	Çavuştepe	Parade scene
Q-Kb-1	Karmir-blur Room 25	Parade scene
Q-Kb-5	Karmir-blur Room 5	Parade scene
Q-Kb-6	Karmir-blur Room 3	Parade scene
Q-Top-1	Toprakkale	Lion's depiction

It is evident from the above table that most of the quivers without epigraphs are also without decoration, or have essentially geometric decoration, with parallel and zigzag bands or with garlands of buds. There are very few quivers with figured decoration, and no information on their original context is available: it is known that the materials from Karmir-blur are all located in secondary deposits, while no information is available for the quiver with figures from Çavuştepe. However, it is significant that a large part of them was found at the Karmir-blur site, as were all the other quivers decorated with parade scenes[1164]: a dedication of this type may be a custom attested only in the royal fortresses between the kingdoms of Argišti Minuaḫi and Sarduri Argištiḫi, in the middle quarters of the 8th century BCE. The only quiver whose figurative decoration does not consist of a parade scene was found in Toprakkale and appears to be unique, at least for the time being[1165]: its dating could be provided by morphological and iconographic analysis of the lion[1166] and palmette figures behind it; no information on the context of its discovery is available for the Toprakkale site either.

As for the group of quivers too, a distinction must be made between those dedicated to the god Ḫaldi, which are relatively few compared to all Urartian examples, and belong to different typologies, and quivers not explicitly connected to the cult of the god: most of them, however, were found in temple contexts, which implicitly connect them to a cultic function. Some of them, on the other hand, come from tombs or necropoleis: they may have been used during the lifetime of the individuals they accompany in burial. Traces of use and restoration are also present on the quivers found at Kayalıdere[1167]: the bronze quivers were thus used for warfare, in addition to quivers made of perishable material[1168]; they probably belonged to the group of specimens decorated with simple geometric motifs. There is, apparently, no clear distinction in decoration between cultic and purely functional quivers.

[1164] There is a mention regarding the find of one single quiver with parade scene in Ayanis (Derin - Çilingiroğlu 2001: 159; Batmaz 2015b: 136), but since it is still unpublished one cannot analyse the images depicted on it; it is also not known if it bears a royal inscription.
[1165] See the still unpublished quiver found in Ayanis with a depiction of winged horses (Derin - Çilingiroğlu 2001: 159-160).
[1166] See this section.
[1167] Burney 1966: 95.
[1168] Piotrovskij 1950: 35.



6.2.2. Helmets

Relying on Assyrian figurative sources, it is possible to trace a stylistic development of war helmets in the Urartian area[1169], and then compare the results with the materials actually resulting from archaeological excavations. What can be interpreted as a sort of early Urartian helmet is visible on the reliefs of the Balawat Gates of Shalmaneser III (859-824 BCE), where warriors wearing a sort of round headgear with an arc-shaped crest on top, probably made of feathers or manes, are depicted in a scene bearing a scroll mentioning Urartu[1170]. The attribution of this type of helmet to the Urartian army is what has allowed the recognition of the Urartian army in the enemies depicted on the Balawat Gates of Ashurnasirpal II (884-859 BCE), in the episode of the battle on Mount Urina[1171]: the first representation of the Urartian army and the soldiers wearing a crested helmet has chronologically been traced back to the kingdom of Ashurnasirpal II, during the first half of the 9th century BCE, when the Urartian Kingdom properly said didn't actually exist yet. The same type of helmet is depicted, about a century after the reliefs of Shalmaneser III, on a bas-relief from the South-West Palace of Nimrud from the time of Tiglath-Pileser III[1172] showing a warrior on horseback, interpreted as Sarduri I trying to escape from the Assyrian army[1173].

[1169] Calmeyer 1991; van Loon 1966: 118-119.
[1170] RIMA 3, A.102.65. Barnett 1960: pls. 145-146-147. Calmeyer 1991: 123, calls this type of helmet "Kamm-Helm"; another type of helmet included in his analysis is the one he calls "Raupen-Helm", with a crest protruding and ending in an animal head: also this kind of helmet is not known to be derived from archaeological excavations, as the only example of it (Calmeyer 1991: 128, fig. 10) is of unknown provenience.
[1171] Barnett – Curtis - Davies 2008: 53 and pls. 59-60.
[1172] Barnett 1962: pl. LXV.
[1173] Barnett 1962: xxiv. However, the association of this horseman with the Urartian army is not certain.

No helmet of this kind was found during archaeological excavations in the Urartian sites; curiously, no similar helmet is even represented in any way within the Urartian art scene[1174], in which, however, the depictions of soldiers are numerous[1175]. Also the most ancient Urartian artefact known up to now, the Anzaf shield (**S-Anz-1**), datable to the end of the 9th century BCE, therefore closer in time to the Assyrian war scenes, does not report any example of crested helmets. All the Urartian helmets found in archaeological contexts, in fact, have a conical shape, with a more or less accentuated tip: the less complex version has, in the words of Maurits N. van Loon[1176], "an intermediate shape between a cone and a round helmet with spike"; the more elaborate type of helmet, which also shows a complex decoration engraved on the front, has a conical shape, slightly more rounded at the base and tending to a very marked point. On the inside of the helmets found in Ayanis there still are remains of leather, which clearly indicate that the inner part of the metal helmets must have been covered with leather[1177]. From the time of Ashurnasirpal II, warriors are represented wearing conical helmets with small figures engraved on the front[1178], with two embossed ribs at the base of the helmet; a helmet has also been found in the archaeological context of Palace K in Zincirli[1179], decorated with three embossed ribs at the base. The only complete Assyrian helmet was found in Nimrud: made of iron, conical, decorated with a bronze inlay with parallel lines around the base and a scene representing a sort of ritual at the front[1180], closely resembling the helmets depicted on the Assyrian reliefs of Ashurnasirpal II. The inscribed Urartian helmets, all conical, are datable to the 8th century BCE so it is possible to assume with certainty that their origin is inspired by the Assyrian cone-shaped helmets[1181]. It is possible, then, that the Urartian war equipment was different in respect to the equipment spread in the Southern-Caucasian region before the emergence of the Urartian state, which united different chiefdoms under a single royal dynasty: this decision may have arisen from the need to differentiate themselves from the previous pseudo-state assemblies of the Armenian Highlands or, even more probably, from the desire for homologation and recognition within the Mesopotamian area, where pointed conical helmets were widespread. Caucasian helmets should briefly be mentioned as well: as it has been demonstrated, their use began in the 12th century BCE[1182], preceding the diffusion of conical helmets in the Urartian area, although an attempt has been made to prove a sort of Urartian or Near Eastern influence on the production of helmets in the Caucasian area during the Iron Age[1183]. It should also be noted that Caucasian helmets are composed of a single metal foil, in which the earflaps are also carved, folded on itself and fixed by rivets, unlike Urartian helmets, which are always cast.

Urartian helmets can be divided into several categories: their analysis in this section is based on the presence of a decoration or a royal epigraph.

[1174] An exception may be considered the bronze figurines of warriors from Toprakkale (**Mf-Top-1** and **Mf-Top-4**), which are not, however, clearly characterized as Urartian objects.
[1175] Crested helmets are worn by the warrior statues found in Toprakkale (Barnett 1954: pl. 2, n. 2.a-c), which are said not to be Urartian by Piotrovskij (Piotrovskij 1967: 53).
[1176] Van Loon 1966: 119.
[1177] Derin - Çilingiroğlu 2001: 163.
[1178] Barnett 1960: pl. 12; Barnett 1975: 27-28.
[1179] Andrae 1943: 75.
[1180] Curtis 2013: 43-44. See also Barnett 1953: 101-102, for a better image of the depicted scene.
[1181] Azarpay 1968: 27, says: "She (S.M. Bastieva) regards the Urartian adaptation of the Assyrian funnel-shaped type as a reflection of the change in the cultural and economic interests of Urartu in the eighth century BCE".
[1182] Ivantchik – Moshinskiĭ 2001: 302.
[1183] Dezsö 2001: 97; "As Urartu was (in case of the iron helmets) the periphery of Assyria, Transcaucasia and the Caucasus region for the 8th century B.C. became the periphery of Urartu and thus Assyria as well".

Bronze helmets				
Plain helmets		Helmets with "lightning" symbol		Helmets with parade and devotion scene
Inscribed	Uninscribed	Inscribed	Uninscribed	Inscribed

6.2.2.1. Chronological analysis: inscriptions on decorated helmets and typologies

There are thirteen helmets bearing Urartian inscriptions and they usually follow a typical and stereotyped formula, the tradition of which began during the reign of Argišti Minuaḫi. The word for "helmet" in Urartian is *kubuše*, possibly derived from the Akkadian *kubšu*, meaning "Kopfbinde, Turban" [1184] or, more generally, "cap, headdress" [1185]; the term is also attested in Hurrian, in the word [LÚ]*kupšuḫuli*, "Turbanmacher" [1186], in a text dated to the Alalaḫ IV period, in the mid-Babylonian epoch.

Flat helmets come from the sites of Ayanis and Karmir-blur, and are conical in shape; only one specimen is inscribed[1187], with an epigraph that makes it peculiar because of its context of discovery. It bears an inscription of Argišti, son of Rusa, but the site where it was found is Ayanis, where it is the only material belonging to that ruler: it may perhaps be considered a kind of bequest from his father to Rusa himself, the founder of the city, but it stands out in its uniqueness among all the material at the site. However, it is unusual that the only bequest from Argišti to his son is an undecorated helmet.

Helmets bearing a "lightning symbol"[1188] decoration were found in four Urartian archaeological sites: the arsenal of the Burmageçit fortress (**H-Bur-1** to **3**), Çavuştepe (**H-Çav-1**), Rooms 24 and 37 of Karmir-blur (**H-Kb-13-14**) and the temple area of Ayanis (**H-Ay-2**). They make their first appearance during the reign of Minua, thanks to the discovery of a specimen from Burmageçit bearing the epigraph "[m]mì-nu-a-i ˹ú˺-[ri-iš-ḫi]", "from the treasure of Minua" (**H-Bur-1**)[1189]. This specimen is devoid of the dedication to the god Ḫaldi, which will be observed on almost all the other inscribed helmets, and therefore cannot be considered templar heritage but only the property of the sovereign. Next, in chronological order, is the helmet found in Room 37 of the Karmir-blur fortress (**H-Kb-14**), inscribed by Argišti Minuaḫi "[D]ḫal-di-e e-ú-ri-e i-ni ku-bu-še-[e(?)] [m]ar-[gi-iš-ti]-še [m]mì-nu-a-ḫi-ni-[še uš]-tú-ni", "To Ḫaldi, (his) lord, this helmet Argišti, son of Minua, has dedicated" [1190]. It is reasonable to assume that the dedication of bronze helmets to the god Ḫaldi began during the reign of Argišti, son of Minua: since this specific piece was dedicated to Ḫaldi, it is unlikely that this type of helmet bore the emblem of the god Teišeba as a decoration, as suggested by Piotrovskij[1191]. It is also unlikely that the decoration represented a symbol indicating the owner of the object, the sovereign, as it has not been found

[1184] Von Soden 1965: 497.
[1185] CAD VIII: 485-486.
[1186] Richter 2012: 226.
[1187] CTU B 11-3.
[1188] See the discussion on this decoration in the text.
[1189] CTU B 5-8.
[1190] CTU B 8-11.
[1191] Piotrovskij 1967: 45.

elsewhere than on this type of bronze helmet[1192]; the most likely hypothesis so far is that it represents a highly stylised sacred tree[1193]. What is clear from the above brief analysis is the substantial immutability of the lightning symbol decoration from Minua to, at least, his son Argišti. To another sovereign, currently not known, belong the helmets with lightning symbol and inscription, unpublished, from the temple area of Ayanis[1194]; this would also confirm the constant standardization of the royal art, which had to be clearly recognizable at a first glance by anyone who observed it. This is particularly true when applied to the discovery of an Urartian helmet with a "lightning symbol" and royal inscription at the site of Rutschi Tig, in Northern Ossetia (**H-Ru-1**). The helmet, in fact, even if it wouldn't have borne an Urartian inscription, would be recognisable at first glance as a production belonging to the Urartian kings. The epigraph, anyway, confirms this, although it too bears no patronymic but only a laconic "^{m}ar-˹gi-iš-ti˺-i ú-ri-iš-ḫi", "property of Argišti" [1195]. Its presence at Rutschi Tig is probably due to war booty, and this may perhaps help in chronologically positioning this object: in fact, looking at the distribution map of the epigraphs of the two rulers named Argišti, it is immediately evident that this helmet is extremely likely to have belonged, as Mirjo Salvini correctly pointed out, to Argišti Minuaḫi, the only one of the two to have gone as far as the northern border between Turkey and Armenia, site of a possible clash with populations from the northern Caucasus. There were at least two uses for this type of decorated bronze helmet, dedication to the god Ḫaldi and storage in the royal arsenal. Helmets bearing only the name of the ruler are unlikely to be part of the *ex voto* to the main god, but rather belong to the king's possessions.

At least eight[1196] helmets are decorated with scenes of worship of the sacred tree and military parade, all of which bear a cuneiform epigraph characterising them as votive offerings to the god Ḫaldi by Urartian rulers. The tradition of dedicating decorated helmets to the supreme god began in the time of Argišti, son of Minua, of whom two helmets, inscribed and decorated with scenes of parade and adoration, have survived (**H-Kb-1-2**): the epigraph reads "^{D}ḫal-di-e e-ú-ri-e i-ni ku-bu-še-e ^{m}ar-gi-iš-ti-še ^{m}mì-nu-a-<ḫi->ni-še [uš-tú]-u-ni", "To the god Ḫaldi, (his) Lord, this helmet Argišti, the son of Minua, dedicated"[1197], according to a formula that would later be repeated by other rulers. To Sarduri, son of Argišti, belong four helmets inscribed and decorated with scenes of parades and sacred tree adoration (**H-Kb-3** to **6**); the dedicatory epigraph used resumes and enriches the one already proposed by his predecessor, adding in two cases the formula "ul-gu-ši-ia-ni e-di-ni", "for his life" [1198] and varying the writing of the words through the use of the Sumerograms EN-*ŠÚ*, "his lord", and NÍG.BA,

[1192] See the suggestion in Calmeyer 1991: 125.
[1193] Belli 1993: 63.
[1194] Derin-Çilingiroğlu 2001: 164, "Two lines of inscription run near the edge".
[1195] CTU B 8-13.
[1196] There is confusion about the epigraph incised on a helmet with parade scenes found at Ayanis. The original publication, Salvini 2001b: 275, reports for the helmet in question (AyBr 11) the catalogue number 60, which, in the same volume (Derin-Çilingiroğlu 2001: 163-164), is been reported as a helmet found inside another helmet (Cat. No. 59), decorated of processions of chariots with soldiers and mounted soldiers. However, catalogue number 60 is also used on another occasion, to report two helmets, still found inside the other, decorated with a "lightning motif" (Derin-Çilingiroğlu 2001: 164). Seidl 2004: 41, I.11, in fact, states that the helmet in question has a military parade decoration, and that its catalogue number is 59, which, however, corresponds to the *unicum* specimen inscribed by Rusa Argištiḫi. The matter is not clear: here we consider the helmet bearing the inscription CTU B 12-10 decorated with a parade scene: it corresponds to the catalogue number 60 of Derin-Çilingiroğlu 2001 mentioned on page 163 and depicted on page 187 in fig. 24.
[1197] CTU B 8-10.
[1198] CTU B 9-8A, 9-8B.

"has dedicated" [1199]. It is worth considering that these helmets come from the site of Karmir-blur, where they were transported at the time of the founding of the fortress by Rusa, son of Argišti, so they do not represent the actual number of helmets dedicated by his predecessors, but rather the choice made by Rusa himself when he founded Karmir-blur. The original provenance of these helmets is not really known: it is known that Argišti Minuaḫi dedicated his shields of for/in the city of Erebuni, as proved by the epigraph engraved on some of them, so one may tend to extend this provenance to all other objects, both of this ruler and his son Sarduri, although this is not necessarily true[1200]. The last inscribed helmet with parade scenes[1201] belongs to the time of one of the rulers called Rusa and was found in Ayanis, in the Temple area (**H-Ay-1**); the inscription, on two lines, the second of which is totally illegible, reads "] ^{m}ru-sa-a-še ˹uš˺-tú-ni ["[1202]. It is clear that this is a dedication to the god Ḫaldi, also due to the location of the find in the temple area, but, unfortunately, the absence of the patronymic does not allow us to place this helmet chronologically in the dynastic sequence of the Rusa: in fact, it would not be advisable to imply that all the materials found at Ayanis are the property of Rusa, son of Argišti, although he is certainly its founder. Caution should be exercised here, especially concerning the metals dedicated to the god Ḫaldi: if, in fact, much older objects were found in Karmir-blur, a fortress founded by Rusa Argištiḫi, this may also be true of the finds from Ayanis.

A word should be spent also about the last, unique helmet inscribed by Rusa Argištiḫi (**H-Ay-3**), which has an incised decoration, unlike that on the helmets of its predecessors, which is embossed: exclusively incised decorations, indeed, do not tend to be directly related to Urartian kingship. It is therefore probable that the specimen was really part of the spoils of a battle against the Assyrian army, as both the shape and the decoration would establish[1203], and was later engraved by the king with his own name and in accordance with Urartian tradition, inaugurated by Argišti Minuaḫi: the epigraph reads in fact "^{D}ḫal-di-e EN-*ŠÚ* ^{m}ru-sa-a-še ^{m}ar-gis-te-ḫi-ni-še uš-tú-ni", "To Ḫaldi, his lord, Rusa, son of Argišti, he dedicated"[1204]. As already anticipated, there is a second anachronistic inscription engraved on this helmet, "^{D}ḫal-(lacuna) ú-ri-iš-ḫi ^{m}iš-pu-ú-i-ni-e-i", "(A) Ḫal[di] (lacuna). Property of Išpuini", which Salvini believes was added at a later date[1205]. In particular, he affirmed that the second line should have contained the same inscription as the first, according to a procedure known for other types of bronze objects, such as shields, but not usual for helmets; anyway, it has been left incomplete. Whatever the history of Išpuini's inscription, one cannot avoid the question of why this line was not completed: it is unlikely that the scribe noticed only afterwards the presence of Išpuini's inscription on the same line as his epigraph, just as it is unlikely that he had to abandon his work suddenly. The hypothesis may be that the scribe forgot to do it, which is unlikely since it was a real inscription, or that he made a mistake: as already mentioned, there are no attested inscriptions on helmets on two lines[1206].

The inscriptions on helmets are thus chronologically, typologically and territorially distributed:

[1199] CTU B 9-9 and the bronze helmet catalogued in Piotrovskij 1960 as 58-228.
[1200] This solution is indeed very simple and elegant, as Erebuni is extremely close to Karmir-blur. In any case, this is certainly not the only other "royal" fortress built in the region, as both Argišti Minuaḫi and Sarduri Argištiḫi have been very active in this area.
[1201]
[1202] CTU B 12-10.
[1203] As it has been suggested by Roaf 2012: 198.
[1204] CTU B 12-9.
[1205] Salvini 2012: 62.
[1206] Or, at least, they are not published.

Cat. N°	Inscription and CTU code	Decoration	Site
H-Bur-1	^{m}mì-nu-a-i ˹ú˺-[ri-iš-ḫi] (CTU B 5-8)	"Lightning symbol"	Burmageçit
H-Kb-14	^{D}ḫal-di-e e-ú-ri-e i-ni ku-bu-še-[e(?)] ^{m}ar-[gi-iš-ti]-še ^{m}mì-nu-a-ḫi-ni-[še uš]-tú-ni (CTU B 8-11)	"Lightning symbol"	Karmir-blur
H-Kb-1	^{D}ḫal-di-e e-ú-ri-e i-ni ku-bu-še-e ^{m}ar-gi-iš-ti-še ^{m}mì-nu-a-<ḫi->ni-[še uš-tú]-ú-ni (CTU B 8-10)	Parade and worship scenes	Karmir-blur
H-Kb-2	[(^{D}ḫal-di-e e-ú)]-ri-e i-ni k[u]-bu-še-e ^{m}ar-gi-iš-ti-[(še ^{m}mì-nu-a-ḫi-ni-še uš-tú-ni)] (CTU B 8-12)	Parade and worship scenes	Karmir-blur
H-Ru-1	^{m}ar-˹gi-iš-ti˺-i ú-ri-iš-ḫi (CTU B 8-13)	"Lightning symbol"	Rutschi Tig
H-Kb-3	^{D}ḫal-di-e e-ú-ri-e i-[(ni ku-bu-še-e ^{m})]^{D}sar$_5$-du-ri-i-še ^{m}ar-gi-iš-ti-ni-ḫi-še uš-tú-ni ul-gu-ši-ia-ni e-di-ni (CTU B 9-8A)	Parade and worship scenes	Karmir-blur
H-Kb-4	[^{D}ḫal-di-e] e-ú-ri-e i-ni ku-bu-še-e ^{mD}sar$_5$-du-[ri-še ^{m}ar-gi-iš-ti-ni-ḫi-še uš-tú-ni ul-gu-ši-ia-ni e-di-ni] (CTU B 9-8B)	Parade and worship scenes	Karmir-blur
H-Kb-5	^{D}ḫal-di-e EN-*ŠÚ* i-ni ku-bu-še ^{mD}sar$_5$-du-ri-še ^{m}ar-giš-ti-ḫi-ni-še NÍG.BA (CTU B 9-9)	Parade and worship scenes	Karmir-blur
H-Kb-6	^{D}ḫal-di-e EN-*ŠÚ* i-ni ku-bu-še ^{mD}sar$_5$-du-ri-še ^{m}ar-giš-ti-ḫi-ni-še NÍG.BA (not catalogued in CTU;	Parade and worship scenes	Karmir-blur

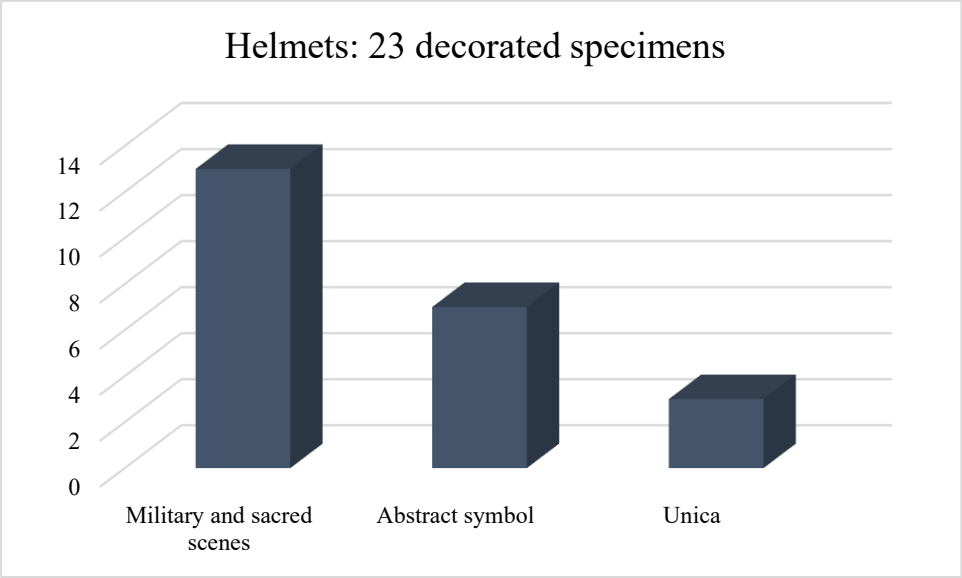
	Piotrovskij 1960: 58-228)		
H-Çav-1	Unknown	*Unicum*	Çavuştepe
H-Ay-3	(1) ^{D}Ḫal-di-e EN-*ŠÚ* ^{m}ru-sa-a-še ^{m}ar-gis-te-ḫi-ni-še uš-tú-ni (2) ^{D}Ḫal-(lacuna) ú-ri-iš-ḫi ^{m}iš-pu-ú-i-ni-e-i (CTU B 12-9)	*Unicum*	Ayanis
H-Ay-1	] ^{m}ru-sa-a-še ˹uš˺-tú-ni [(CTU B 12-10)	Parade scenes	Ayanis

Only two helmets bear an inscription of the type "property of", and they belong to Minua Išpuiniḫi and Argišti Minuaḫi; both helmets are decorated with the "lightning symbol" of unknown significance: helmets with this decoration have also been dedicated to the god Ḫaldi during the time of Argišti Minuaḫi, with a formula used also on the other type of decorated helmets. The helmets bearing this type of decoration found in Ayanis have instead a two lines inscription of unknown content. The inscriptions on the type of helmets with scenes of military parades and worship of the sacred tree belong to the type "To the god Ḫaldi, (his) Lord, [this helmet], KN, son of KN, has dedicated", with the addition, on only two helmets from the time of Sarduri Argištiḫi, of the phrase "for his life". Also attributed to the reign of Sarduri Argištiḫi is a helmet, found in Çavuştepe, with a peculiar decoration[1207] and an unknown inscription, reported by Seidl as "Helm des Sarduri" according to what is written on its plaque in the Van Museum[1208]: since the helmet is a *unicum*, it is not possible to speculate what type of inscription it bore.

As can be seen, the custom of decorating bronze helmets originated during the time of Minua, who introduced the abstract decoration of the "lightning symbol" type on a helmet belonging to his arsenal; the same figurative motif was taken up by his successor, Argišti Minuaḫi. From the time of Argišti Minuaḫi, moreover, the custom of decorating votive helmets, explicitly dedicated to Ḫaldi, with scenes of military parades and sacred tree worship became established: in total, twelve such helmets have been found in archaeological excavations, at least seven of which have a votive epigraph. Only, apparently, with Sarduri Argištiḫi is there a variation in the decoration of the helmets, with the introduction of a theory of lions on two registers framing the scene of worship of the sacred tree (H-Çav-3); another variation is possibly introduced by Rusa Argištiḫi, a ritualistic scene in Assyrianizing style flanked by a line of Iranian chickens (H-Ay-3), but it is more likely to consider this type of headgear as an Assyrian property. If the helmet with parade scenes belonging to Rusa, son of Argišti, did not contain worship

[1207] **H-Çav-3**.
[1208] Seidl 2004: F.92.

scenes on the sides of the sacred tree, one could think of a further variation introduced in the decoration of helmets at the time of this ruler: unfortunately, the state of publication of this helmet does not allow us to ascertain the actual absence of this scene.



6.2.3. Shields

The importance of bronze shields in the Urartian cultural panorama is evident from the previous analysis: apart from the already mentioned section in the account of the sack of the temple of Muṣaṣir by Sargon II, listing numerous shields taken by the Assyrians[1209], the archaeological finds are in any case conspicuous in this respect. Out of a total of eighteen shields found in the archaeological excavations, many of which are inscribed, fifteen shields bear a figurative decoration, which is almost always more or less the same: concentric bands decorated with lines of walking bulls and lions, represented on the front surface of the shield. An exception to this is the Anzaf shield, a unique Urartian shield, whose surface depicts the only recognizable battle scene in the art of the Kingdom: for this reason, it must be treated separately, and not together with the "canonical" Urartian shields[1210]. Before proceeding with a detailed analysis of the Urartian shields, the relief from Khorsabad depicting the sack of Muṣaṣir should be considered: it clearly shows shields decorated with concentric circles, perhaps representing the bands of bulls and lions found on the Urartian shields actually found in the excavation, hanging on the outer walls of the temple of Ḫaldi; on at least two pillars, however, on the right, two conical shields with a central protruding lion head are hung. One of these shields is also depicted in the hand of an Assyrian soldier on the roof of the temple, shown running away with the booty. This type of shield has emerged in its entirety in only one case, but it is perhaps also evidenced by a few other fragments, found in the temple area of the Ayanis site within two storerooms, and has no comparisons elsewhere in Urartu. Unfortunately, in the hands of Assyrian soldiers, other shields are also represented,

[1209] Foster 2005: 810.
[1210] See § 2.1.3.2.

conical in shape and without decoration: in this case, it is not possible to distinguish between the shields belonging to the Assyrians and those taken from the temple of Ḫaldi; moreover, it must be considered that the information obtained cannot be accurate, since the original relief has been lost and the only evidence left is its drawing by Émile Flandin[1211].

Urartian iconography, on the other hand, which depicts shields in the hands of soldiers, can only be analysed on royal quivers and helmets: it is worth noting, in the extremely standardised depiction that characterises both objects mentioned, that the shields are only carried by the knights, while the soldiers on the chariot are not holding them. The shields seem to be smaller than the specimens found in the excavations of the fortresses[1212], have a circular shape and probably a hemispherical boss in the centre, marked as clearly in relief in respect to the flat edge: shield bosses of this type have been found in only one site occupied by the Urartians, Yoncatepe[1213], and were probably attached to shields made of perishable material. As it can be seen, therefore, there are no Urartian representations of decorated shields like those found in fortresses. There is, however, another Urartian source that provides several representations of shields, namely the Anzaf shield itself (**S-Anz-2**), which bears an epigraph from the time of Išpuini, Minua and, perhaps, Inušpua, and is therefore the oldest example. The shields depicted there are of a different type than the previous ones: born by seven of the deities, they have the shape of semicircular supports to which five conical elements are attached; bronze conical elements of this type have indeed been found in archaeological excavations[1214], and some of them bear a cuneiform inscription identifying them as "property of KN". These conical elements belonged to Argišti, son of Minua, and Sarduri, son of Argišti, with an imbalance in the number of specimens towards Sarduri: in fact, six of these conical elements were found together in a *karas* from storeroom 28 in Karmir-blur[1215], probably indicating that they belonged to the same object. This type of shield must also have been realised in perishable material, to which these metal elements were attached; however, its only depiction in the Urartian sphere is in a "war" context: it is therefore possible to consider that the "umbos" or "conical" type of shield was used exclusively in battle, as it was made mostly of perishable material, such as wood or wicker, therefore much lighter than shields made entirely of metal. This hypothesis is however not confirmed by the reliefs of the Balawat gates, from the time of Shalmaneser III, where the "Urartians" or their predecessors are depicted attacking the Assyrian army from high mountains, holding small round shields with convex centres, probably with a metal umbo attached[1216]: these shields closely resemble those depicted on Urartian quivers and royal helmets, so that it is possible to propose that this was the only type of shield that the Urartians used in warfare, round, medium-sized and with a convex centre. A further idea can be proposed: there may have been a distinction in war contexts between the shields carried by the kings, or by their marshals, and the ones used by simple soldiers. In this case, the king may have used the shields reinforced by the conical elements, while the soldiers were supposed to use the simple umbo's shields.

Once the question of the difference in use between the different shields in the Urartian context has been addressed, one can move on to an overall analysis of the decorated and inscribed shields: it should be

[1211] Botta 1849: pl. 141.
[1212] But it can maybe be compared to two shields, found at Altıntepe and Kayalıdere, whose diameter is 55 and 62 cm (Barnett – Gökçe 1953: 123; Burney 1966: 101).
[1213] Belli – Tozkoparan 2005: 171-172.
[1214] See, for example, Piotrovskij 1952: 39.
[1215] Piotrovskij 1952: 39.
[1216] King 1915: pls. XXXVII-XXXVIII.

noted that only one decorated and undamaged specimen does not bear a cuneiform epigraph, a situation that is therefore the opposite of that analysed for the cauldrons. For the sake of convenience, the decorated shields have been divided into two macro-types, excluding for the time being the Anzaf shield: shields with a flat centre and shields with a sculpted centre.

Shields with a flat centre, which may be completely plain or decorated with a rosette, are thick bronze plaques, convex or conical in shape, decorated with concentric bands of bulls and lions. Most specimens have three concentric bands: the innermost and outermost bands contain embossed representations of lions, while the middle band contains representations of bulls. The bands are framed at the upper and lower margins by garlands of buds. This pattern remains unchanged until the reign of Rusa, son of Erimena, who also "signed" several shields with different details: in two cases, the decorative bands are only two, once containing bulls and lions (**S-Top-3**) and another time only lions (**S-Top-2**), and, in three cases, these bands, whether three or two, are framed by zig-zag lines (**S-Ay-2**, **S-Top-3**, **S-Top-6**) and guilloche lines (**S-Top-1** and **S-Top-4**). Even at the time of Rusa Erimenaḫi, however, one shield adhering to the earlier tradition is found, with three decorative bands framed by garlands of buds (**S-Top-5**). The animals depicted, in any case, are always walking, and have "fixed" characteristics: for the lions, the rendering of the mane with a flame-like decoration, the tail ending in a tuft of fur, the jaws open in a roar; for the bulls, the decoration of the back, the tail pointing downwards ending in a tuft of fur tassel-shaped, the curved horns pointing forward and upwards. In the representations of both animals, a perspective criterion is respected, with the legs of the visible side in the foreground and those of the hidden side in the background. It is important to emphasise these criteria when considering the only intact specimen of an uninscribed decorated shield, with two concentric bands of bulls and lions framed by zigzag lines (**S-Ay-2**). The general characters for the recognition of Urartian shields are respected, and at a glance makes it possible to establish the *Urartaicity* of the object. However, on closer inspection, one notices some extremely different details: the manes of the lions are represented by parallel dashes, the tails of the bulls are turned upwards, but above all the perspective in the representation of the paws is not respected, as both are depicted in the foreground. It is interesting to also note an error in the representation: only one bull is shown with its tail pointing downwards, among all the others with upward pointed tails. Another important difference is the technique used to represent the animals, which are made entirely by engraving and not by embossing, thus losing the three-dimensionality typical of Urartian shields. Moreover, engraving does not allow for the standardisation that can be observed on single shields, where each animal is depicted in its outline exactly the same as the other: this means, for example, that the orientation of the tails is different from time to time, or that the size of the animals' heads does not correspond. Entire decorations realised through engraving can also be found on some fragments of another uninscribed shield, or one presumed to be so, which depicts walking lions with a very elongated shape and non-traditional details (**S-Ay-3**). The question that arises spontaneously therefore concerns the owner of these shields, both found in the temple area of the Ayanis site, in two different storerooms: if they do not bear cuneiform inscriptions and do not respect the Urartian tradition of depicting animals, can they be considered the property of the sovereign? It is indeed possible that they were commissioned by members of the Urartian nobility from a bronzeworker who was not part of the royal court, and therefore did not know the rules for depicting lions and bulls on shields. But the general layout of the work clearly refers to the Urartian royal shields, which should have been displayed in full view, hung on walls, in order to be replicated. This is also evident from the arrangement of the figures in the representation, whose heads are upside only when seen from one

perspective, the direction in which they were to be hung. Since there is no difference in the height of the represented animals, it is not clear whether they were hung at human height or higher: the relief of the temple of Muṣaṣir, in this case, makes it clear that they were, in fact, hung one above the other, on the outer wall of the temple itself, and such a model can perhaps be applied also in the individual temples of Urartian fortresses, extending the hanging also to the *temenos* of the temples.

The category of shields with a sculpted centre consists, so far, of only one specimen found intact in the excavation of the temple area of Ayanis (**S-Ay-1**)[1217]. The decoration of the outer surface of the shield is similar to that of the other specimens: three concentric bands of incumbent bulls and lions, framed by garlands of buds. The only substantial difference in the depiction, which is however only visible thanks to a drawing and not to photographs, lies in the position of the lions' tails, pointing downwards instead of upwards. There are no other details that distinguish this shield from the others, previously analysed, apart from the lion head in the round affixed to the centre of the specimen. The lion's head is moulded in accordance with other Urartian lion specimens[1218], and its position in the centre of the shield would confirm the Assyrian depiction of the Muṣaṣir sack: Urartian votive shields did indeed have lion heads affixed to their centres.

It is extremely interesting to analyse the Neo-Assyrian reliefs in order to reconstruct the "lion's head shield" type: interesting information can be found from the reigns of Ashurnasirpal II and Shalmaneser III. In the reign of Ashurnasirpal II, in particular, convex shields containing both a lion's head and conical elements are represented in the reliefs, usually attached to the back of chariots in war scenes[1219]; in only one case is this type of shield found hanging on the shoulder of a soldier, who follows the war chariot on foot[1220]. Furthermore, in only one case this shield is held by a soldier, represented on the king's chariot, on the back of which is the same type of shield[1221]. In addition to these shields, there are specimens to which only the conical elements are affixed, either attached to the back of chariots[1222] or carried by soldiers[1223]. It is interesting to note that the chariot to which the shield with the lion's head and conical elements is affixed is always the one where the sovereign is riding: the type immediately shows itself to be unequivocally connected to royalty. Regarding the representations of the time of Shalmaneser III, an analysis of the scenes depicted on the Balawat Gates is essential: in this case, there are no examples with a lion's head and conical elements, since only shields with only a lion's head are hanging on the back of the chariots. The first attestation of this type of shield is found in Band II[1224], which depicts a scene from Shalmaneser III's first campaign in Armenia (dated 860 BCE): it shows a war chariot, the only one in this military campaign, with a lion's head shield affixed to the back, which has made it possible to define that the person depicted on this chariot was indeed the sovereign, Shalmaneser III[1225]. Another important notation regarding shields concerns the specimens carried by Assyrian soldiers, which are rather rectangular and differ markedly from those in the hands of the

[1217] Batmaz 2015c: 185, says that another shield of this type was found in fragments in Storeroom 2 of the Ayanis temple area.
[1218] Derin – Çilingiroğlu 2001: fig. 22.
[1219] BM 124540, BM 124551, BM 124557.
[1220] BM 124556.
[1221] BM 124540.
[1222] BM 124537.
[1223] BM 124540; BM 124537: in this case, the king, dismounted from his chariot, carries it.
[1224] King 1915: pl. IX.
[1225] The description of this scene given by King is, in fact, "Slaughter of Urartians by Assyrian chariots under Shalmaneser's leadership".

"Urartians", or their predecessors, which were round and convex in the centre[1226]. According to Assyrian representations, therefore, this type of shield came into contact with the populations that inhabited the Armenian Highlands on this occasion, around 860 BCE, and was immediately connected to the royal environment: as we have not had the opportunity to fully discover an archaic Urartian shield, it is not possible to confirm whether the Urartians themselves immediately replicated this type of model. Shields with lion's heads are found affixed, in Band VI, on every war chariot depicted during the campaign of Shalmaneser III in Northern Syria[1227], although it is not clear why, at some point, the chariots are depicted without the shield affixed to the back, again during the same military campaign. Shields with lion's heads then appear in the narration of the events of the campaign towards Hamath, in 849 BCE[1228], still affixed to the back of all the chariots depicted. Assyrian representations of this type of shield with a central lion's head end in the time of Shalmaneser III; to find new representations on monumental reliefs, one must head westwards, to the North-Syrian kingdoms. From Zincirli comes a basalt orthostat, located in the Outer Citadel Gate, depicting a war scene on a chariot, obviously replicating one of the Assyrian war scenes: on the back of this chariot there is a shield with a lion's head, clearly visible[1229]. The orthostat is dated to the 9th century BCE, while the war scenes found at the Long Wall of Sculpture in Karkemiş are dated to the late 10th century BCE[1230]. They show war chariots, set in scenes reminiscent of Assyrian scenes, to which a shield with a protruding centre is attached at the back. Although it is not evident that it represents a lion's head , it is to be assumed that this is the decoration in the centre of the shield, since shields with other types of protruding central decoration are not iconographically attested. The last evidence of a war chariot decorated with a shield with a central protrusion comes from Sakçegözü, this time within a lion hunting scene[1231], probably dating from the first half of the 8th century BCE[1232]. It is clear from the analysis that this type of shield certainly did not originate in Urartu: what can be ascribed to Urartian inventiveness is instead its use and, of course, the decoration on its outer surface.

It is clear from the above brief excursus that there are no Assyrian representations of Urartian shields decorated with bands of walking animals, except for the specimens hanging on the outer walls of the temple of Muṣaṣir, which bear a decoration of concentric circles that may perhaps indicate the presence of decorative bands. This type of shield is obviously absent from other Assyrian reliefs, which are more interested in recounting the deeds of the ruler than in showing the aspect of foreign temples. The only decorated shields that appear in Assyrian reliefs date to the Ashurbanipal period and belong to two different types: some, more similar to Urartian shields, appear to be decorated with concentric bands, but these are visible on the back of the shield[1233], while others[1234], which appear to be larger and more elongated, are decorated with small circular relief elements, located around the centre and outer edge of the shield. However, they certainly do not come close to the abundance of decoration that characterises Urartian royal shields: these can be considered to be an indigenous creation, born of the nature of the supreme god, Ḫaldi, lord of war. To this type of shield, with its decoration of concentric

[1226] See, for example, King 1915: pl. XII.
[1227] King 1915: pls. XIX-XXIV.
[1228] King 1915: pls. LXXIII-LXXVI.
[1229] Gilibert 2011: Zincirli 12.
[1230] Gilibert 2011: Carchemish 18-22.
[1231] Ussishkin 1966: 19, fig. 3.
[1232] Ussishkin 1966: 23.
[1233] BM 124804.
[1234] BM 124806, BM 124931.

bands and lines of animals, a further detail is added, clearly taken from Assyria or the North-Syrian area, namely the protruding lion's head, which takes up the motif of the lions already represented in the embossed decoration on the surface of the shield itself.

A final thought must necessarily be given to the contexts in which the shields were found: bearing in mind that the first shields, in chronological order, with a decoration of concentric bands come from the storehouses of the fortress of Karmir-blur, and therefore are not found in their primary location, and that, furthermore, the exact contexts of the finds from Toprakkale are not known[1235], the only data on which to base a discussion is that from Ayanis. All but one of the shield specimens[1236] found there come from the temple area: this, in addition to the cuneiform inscription running along the edge, confirms both the votive nature of the decorated shields and the veracity of the lost relief from Khorsabad, depicting the temple of Muṣaṣir with several shields hanging on the outer walls.

In addition to the direct archaeological data, Urartian depictions on helmets, quivers and one shield also provide some information relevant to the morphology of the shields themselves, as do the images on Assyrian reliefs from Balawat and Khorsabad. Starting from the Assyrian data, the shields used by the Urartians in battle appear at first glance as small specimens with a convex centre, somewhat similar to the shields actually found in the archaeological excavations. On the other hand, the depiction of the sack of Muṣaṣir on the relief from Khorsabad confirms the version of the event described by Sargon II: several shields with a protruding centre are attached to the outer wall of the temple of Ḫaldi, and from some lateral representations they appear to be decorated with roaring lion heads executed in the round and welded to the centre of the shield itself. This is also confirmed by a peculiar archaeological find from the temple of Ayanis[1237], which proves the veracity of the Assyrian descriptions.

For a broader look at the shields of the ancient Near East, the six specimens found by Layard in Room AB of the North-West Palace in Nimrud[1238] should certainly be mentioned, two of them almost complete and with a diameter of 77-79 cm; they are circular and slightly convex, with a thin trough running along the edge[1239], not found in Urartian shields[1240]. Despite the absence of the thin incision along the edge, Urartian shields have the same morphology as Assyrian shields, despite their slightly larger size; a substantial difference between Urartian and Assyrian shields lies instead in their use: while it is unclear, as already noted, what use the Assyrians made of the type of shields found by Layard at Nimrud, almost all of the Urartian shields found at the excavation clearly had a cultic nature, sometimes explicitly marked as votive offerings to the god Ḫaldi. The chronological order in which Urartian shields were found saw first by specimens from Toprakkale, then those from Karmir-blur and Kayalıdere, and finally

[1235] Except for two shields, whose context is reported in Batmaz 2015c: 167-168, and they are said to come from the Temple area.
[1236] Ay-3, which was found in Area V, the monumental gate to the fortress.
[1237] Derin – Çilingiroğlu 2001: fig. 21.
[1238] Barron 2010: 115, "Layard found these large bronze shields in a room which appears to have been used as storage. The shields were set neatly one against another standing upright. As the room contained many other metal artifacts: cauldrons, other weapons, etc., these items could have been stored simply for their value as metal. They could represent booty or tribute brought into the empire and not in fact represent Assyrian items at all. If they were brought in as booty it is also possible that, like the items taken from the temple of Musasir in Urartu, they were not practical items of warfare but ceremonial weapons".
[1239] Curtis 2013: 45.
[1240] Curtis 2013: 46 mentions only one shield supposedly from the site of Giyimli which has this feature, suggesting that it may have belonged to an Assyrian prisoner in Urartu.

those from Anzaf and Ayanis: this chronology of discoveries has allowed us to hypothesise the existence of a second type of shield, not analysed here, found for the first time at the Karmir-blur site[1241] and characterised by the presence of a central conical umbo, probably attached to a shield made of perishable material, as confirmed by the discovery of wicker remains near some of the shield bosses[1242]. In the Assyrian context, shields with a central umbo already appear on the Balawat Gates as weapons carried by both Assyrians and Urartians[1243]. It is possible, however, and this is demonstrated by a single attestation in Urartian context, that there were several bosses on the same shield: a specimen from the Yukarı Anzaf fortress[1244], decorated with a parade of gods ready for war, shows, carried by seven out of twelve deities, a shield of convex circular shape, probably made of perishable material, to which several conical elements were attached. This type of shield is also present in the Assyrian world[1245] where, despite the absence of archaeological findings confirming it, it was depicted as an army weapon from the time of Ashurnasirpal II and Shalmaneser III[1246]. As for the depiction on reliefs, circular shields appear to be the most common in Assyria from the Middle Assyrian period, when they are represented on the White Obelisk of Ashurnasirpal I among the weapons of Assyrian infantrymen[1247]; already in the time of Tiglat-pileser III, circular shields are widespread in depictions, even to Assyria's enemies, with a slightly larger size than in the past[1248]. During the reign of Sargon II, Assyrian shields are depicted decorated with geometric or floral elements, alongside the flat variant.

6.2.3.1. Chronological analysis: inscriptions on shields and typologies

There are numerous examples of bronze shields with an inscription running along their edge, as well as bronze shield umbrellas from Karmir-blur with an inscription attesting to their ownership by the ruler. The Urartian word for shield is *aše*, as we learn from several texts engraved on shield specimens from the time of Argišti Minuaḫi onwards; the term occurs only once in stone and rock texts, in the plural, indicating a tribute from the west[1249]. The term is probably connected with the Hurrian word *ešši*[1250]. The shields are part of the most numerous group of objects dedicated to the god Ḫaldi by the Urartian rulers, so one can suppose that they had a special function in the cult of this deity, probably connected to the idea of protection offered by Ḫaldi himself. The only typology of shield dedicated to Ḫaldi is the round one, both decorated and undecorated: the shield bosses, probably part of a different shield typology, are inscribed only with the name of the ruler and the indication of the property.

Even the earliest known Urartian shield, the specimen from the fortress of Yukarı Anzaf, bears an Urartian cuneiform inscription that qualifies it as a votive offering to the god Ḫaldi by at least two kings, Išpuini, son of Sarduri, and Minua, son of Išpuini, to whom the name of Inušpua, son of Minua, designated as heir to the throne, may perhaps also be added in the large gap that follows the mention of

[1241] Then also in Kayalıdere and Ayanis; the shield bosses from Karmir-blur are the only ones bearing inscriptions dating them to the reigns of Argišti Minuaḫi and Sarduri Argištiḫi.
[1242] Barnett – Watson 1952: 135.
[1243] Azarpay 1968: 23.
[1244] Belli 1999.
[1245] De Backer 2016: 22, calls it "Herisson (Type B)".
[1246] De Backer 2016: 48.
[1247] Barron 2010: 121.
[1248] Barron 2010: 122.
[1249] CTU A 9-3, IV, ll. 54'-55'.
[1250] See the lemma *ešši* II in Richter 2012; Haas – Thiel 1978: 111.

Minua[1251]. The shield is, as already mentioned, unique in the artistic sphere of the Urartian Kingdom, and appears to mark the beginning of the tradition which sees the dedication of votive shields to the god Ḫaldi; it is not, however, taken up in terms of its iconography, but rather in terms of the very concept of dedication of such an object, and also of the votive inscription attached to it. On the shield of Anzaf there is the first mention of the title "lord of the city of Ṭušpa" engraved on metal objects, confirming the epigraphic information also present on stone[1252]. Another peculiarity from the early Urartian period is a kind of quadrangular identification plate with a sort of ring attached to one of its short sides, which bears the inscription "To the god Ḫaldi, (his) Lord, this shield Minua has dedicated/voted" [1253], which was also found in the excavations at the site of Yukarı Anzaf, inside Storeroom 11[1254]; the shield associated with this plaque was not found, however, and it could suggest that it was affixed to perishable material, probably wood.

Several plain shields belonging to the Argišti king Minuaḫi have been found in various rooms in the fortress of Karmir-blur: the peculiarity connected with many of them is the dedication itself, engraved in one or two lines on the edge, which configures them as votive offerings originating from the fortress of Erebuni. One of the best-preserved inscriptions says: "(l) To the god Ḫaldi, (his) Lord, this shield Argišti, the son of Minua, has dedicated in (or: for) the city of Erbuni. (I am) Argišti, son of Minua, a mighty king, king of Biainili, lord of the city of Ṭušpa. (2) To the god Ḫaldi, (his) Lord, this shield Argišti, the son of Minua, has dedicated in (or: for) the city of Erbuni. (I am) Argišti, son of Minua, mighty king, king of Biainili, lord of the city of Ṭušpa" [1255]. Similar inscriptions also occur on another type of shield attributable to Argišti Minuaḫi and bearing figurative decorations of striding bulls and lions[1256]: it must therefore be inferred that these shields were probably originally placed in the temple of Ḫaldi in the fortress of Erebuni, but, once Erebuni was abandoned, these votive offerings were taken by the inhabitants of the fortress to the new city, Karmir-blur, built by Rusa Argištiḫi about a century later in the immediate vicinity of Erebuni. This speaks strongly in favour of the exaltation and preservation of traditions in Urartian circles, confirming Reinhard Bernbeck's hypothesis[1257] that the Urartian religion was, rather than an effective "social glue" for the different populations subject to the state, one of the elements on which Urartian identity itself was based. Also from the fortress of Karmir-blur, there transported after their original dedication, are several shields bearing a cuneiform inscription qualifying them as belonging to the ruler Sarduri, son of Argišti; however, they do not mention the city where they were originally dedicated, although it is indeed possible that these specimens also came from Erebuni and were brought to Karmir-blur together with the shields of Argišti. One bronze shield boss also bears the inscription "(Object) of Sarduri" in Assyrian language, showing that the use of Akkadian was still alive in Urartu even in the mid-8th century BCE, so that it was used in royal inscriptions alongside the well-known Urartian expression expressing the same concept of possession.

Only one shield certainly belongs to the sovereign traditionally considered to be the successor of Sarduri Argištiḫi, namely Rusa Sarduriḫi[1258]: it also comes from the fortress of Karmir-blur, brought there from

[1251] CTU B 3-1, with Salvini's comment to the inscription.
[1252] Salvini 2012: 23.
[1253] CTU B 5-7.
[1254] Belli – Dinçol – Dinçol, 2004: 4-5.
[1255] CTU B 8-3.
[1256] CTU B 8-4.
[1257] Bernbeck 2003-2004a.
[1258] CTU B 10-1.

another place of origin, and bears an engraved dedication to Ḫaldi, followed by the royal title of the sovereign. Ursula Seidl also reports two other shields dedicated to Ḫaldi by Rusa Sarduriḫi[1259], both decorated with bands of striding bulls and lions, whose actual existence is uncertain: Salvini himself does not report them in his *Corpus*, but he does record their mention by Seidl and concludes that they may be one shield rather than two different ones[1260]. There is, in fact, only one inscription reported by Seidl, in a French translation taken up by Santrot, which reads "Au dieu Khaldi, son seigneur, Roussa, fils de Sarduri, offre ce bouclier. Le fils de Sarduri, Roussa, est un roi grand et puissant, roi du pays Biainili, maître de la ville de Touchpa"[1261]. The inscription is the same as the one already mentioned, adding no new elements to the analysis. There are only two shields from Argišti Rusaḫi, one without figurative decoration and one fragmentary: the first comes from the fortress of Yukarı Anzaf and is the only one found at the temple of this site, while the second comes from Ayanis. While the shield from Anzaf clearly bears the name of the ruler followed by the patronymic, in the second case only the proper name, Argišti, is given: Salvini assigns it "giocoforza" to Argišti Rusaḫi[1262], as does Seidl[1263], probably because of the royal titles reported on this shield which repeats the one inscribed on the specimen from Yukarı Anzaf ("Argišti, strong king, lord of Ṭušpa-City").

Eight bronze shields from Ayanis bear an inscription of Rusa Argištiḫi, only one with figurative and all-round decoration[1264]: this one bears the name of the city where it was dedicated, Rusaḫinili Eidurukai, together with a curse formula not found in other Urartian texts, "(as for the one) who takes this shield away, (as for the one) who throws it into the waters, (as for) anyone else in the territory who does ..... (as for the one) who casts (or casts (into) the earth) fires (e) bracers; (as for the one) who destroys my name, and places his (own) name, may the god Ḫaldi annihilate him, his name, his offspring (and the offspring) of his offspring under the sun"[1265]. Salvini himself states that this formula has a parallel in a curse found on a stele of Esarhaddon from Zincirli[1266]: "Whoever takes away this stele from its place and erases my inscribed name and writes his name, covers (it) with dirt, throws (it) into water, burns (it) with fire, or puts (it) in a place where (it) cannot be seen, may the goddess Ištar, lady of war and battle, change him from a man into a woman, and may she seat him, bound, at the feet of his enemy. May a future ruler look upon a stele written in my name, read (it) aloud (while standing) in front of it, anoint (it) with oil, make an offering, (and) praise the name of the god Aššur, my lord" [1267]. Five of the eight bronze shields assigned by Salvini to Rusa Argištiḫi and coming from Ayanis are either too fragmentary to be translated, or without the name of the sovereign, or even not published nor reported in the corpora[1268]: only three shields are then certainly referable to that sovereign in the fortress of Ayanis, two of which also bear the name of the city where they are dedicated[1269]. Only one bronze shield

[1259] Seidl 2004: G.13 and G.14.
[1260] Salvini 2012: 56.
[1261] Seidl 2004: 40, from Santrot 1996: 134.
[1262] CTU B 11-4.
[1263] Seidl 2004: H.6.
[1264] CTU B 12-1.
[1265] CTU B 12-1, l. 2.
[1266] Salvini 2012: 59.
[1267] RINAP 4: Esarhaddon 98, rev. 53b-57.
[1268] See Seidl 2004: I.15.
[1269] CTU B 12-1 and 12-4.

of unknown appearance found in Toprakkale is assigned to Rusa Argištiḫi[1270], and it simply bears a dedication to the god Ḫaldi and the royal title of the ruler.

Rusa Erimenaḫi dedicated at least eleven shields, all from the Toprakkale fortress, whose inscription to Ḫaldi is now standardised: "For the god Ḫaldi, his Lord, Rusa, son of [E]rimena de[di]cated it for his life. [Through] the greatness of the god Ḫaldi (I am) Rusa, strong king of Ṭušpa-City" [1271]. Salvini notes[1272], in the inscriptions of Rusa Erimenaḫi both on metal and stone, some repeated errors, which he assigns to a possible progressive loss of scribal knowledge that occurred towards the end of the Kingdom: the increase of spelling errors could also be due to the origin of the ruler Rusa Erimenaḫi, who, even if he might have been a usurper, might have also brought his own scribes to the Urartian court. The ruler that Salvini places at the end of the Corpus, Sarduri Sarduriḫi, left only an inscribed bronze shield from the site of Karmir-blur[1273], which echoes the epigraphs on the other shields analysed.

Cat. N°	Date	Type of inscription	CTU code	Decoration
NC[1274]	Argišti Minuaḫi	(1) "Of the treasury of Argišti, son of Minua, (is) this shield" (2) Name and royal title ("strong king, great king, king of the Bia lands, lord of Ṭušpa-City") (3) Dedication to Ḫaldi (4) "Through the greatness of the god Ḫaldi (…)" (5) Name and royal title ("strong king, great king, king of the Bia lands, lord of Ṭušpa-City")	CTU B 8-1	Plain
NC	Argišti Minuaḫi	(1) "Of the treasury of Argišti, son of Minua, (is) this shield" (2) Name and royal title ("strong king, great king, king of the Bia lands, lord of Ṭušpa-City") (3) Dedication to Ḫaldi in / for the city of Er(e)buni (4) Name and royal title ("strong king, great king, king of the Bia lands, lord of Ṭušpa-City")	CTU B 8-2 CTU B 8-3 CTU B 8-5	Plain

[1270] CTU B 12-8.
[1271] See, for example, CTU B 14-3.
[1272] Salvini 2012: 69.
[1273] CTU B 16-1.
[1274] The shields with this mark are not included in the present catalogue as they do not bear any decorations.

S-Kb-1	Argišti Minuaḫi	(1) "Of the treasury of Argišti, son of Minua, (is) this shield" (2) Name and royal title ("strong king, great king, king of the Bia lands, lord of Ṭušpa-City") (3) Dedication to Ḫaldi in / for the city of Er(e)buni (4) Name and royal title ("strong king, great king, king of the Bia lands, lord of Ṭušpa-City")	CTU B 8-4	Bulls and lions
NC	Argišti Minuaḫi	(1) Dedication to Ḫaldi in / for the city of Er(e)buni (2) Name and royal title ("strong king, great king, king of the Bia lands, lord of Ṭušpa-City")	CTU B 8-6	Plain
NC	Argišti Minuaḫi	(1) Dedication to Ḫaldi in / for the city of Er(e)buni (2) Name of the king without royal title	CTU B 8-7	Plain
NC	Argišti Minuaḫi	"Property of Argišti"	CTU B 8-9	Umbo
S-Kb-4	Sarduri Argištiḫi	(1) Dedication to Ḫaldi (2) Name and royal title ("strong king, king of the Bia lands, lord of Ṭušpa-City")	CTU B 9-1 CTU B 9-2	Not known
NC	Sarduri Argištiḫi	(1) Dedication to Ḫaldi (2) Name and royal title ("strong king, king of the Bia lands, lord of Ṭušpa-City")	CTU B 9-2	Plain
S-Kb-3	Sarduri Argištiḫi	(1) Dedication to Ḫaldi (2) "Through the greatness of the god Ḫaldi (…)" (3) Name and royal title ("strong king, great king, king of the Bia lands, lord of Ṭušpa-City")	CTU B 9-3	Bulls and lions

NC	Sarduri Argištiḫi	"(Object) of Sarduri" (in Assyrian)	CTU B 9-4	Umbo
NC	Sarduri Argištiḫi	"(Object) of Sarduri, son of Argišti"	CTU B 9-5	Umbo
NC	Sarduri Argištiḫi	"Property of Sarduri"	CTU B 9-6	Umbo
NC	Sarduri Argištiḫi	"(Object) [of] Sarduri"	CTU B 9-7 (A-F)	Umbo
S-Kb-5	Rusa Sarduriḫi	(1) Dedication to Ḫaldi "for his life" (2) "Through the greatness of the god Ḫaldi (…)" (3) Name and royal title ("strong king, great king, king of the Bia lands, lord of Ṭušpa-City")	CTU B 10-1	Bulls and lions
NC	Argišti Rusaḫi	(1) Dedication to Ḫaldi "for his life" (2) "Through the greatness of the god Ḫaldi (…)" (3) Name and royal title ("strong king, lord of Ṭušpa-City")	CTU B 11-2	Plain
NC	Rusa Argištiḫi	(1) Dedication to Ḫaldi "for his life" (2) Position of the shield ("in Rusaḫinili Eidurukai") (3) "Through the greatness of the god Ḫaldi (…)" (4) Name and royal title ("strong king, great king, king of the regions, king of the Bia lands, lord of Ṭušpa-City")	CTU B 12-4	Plain
NC	Rusa Argištiḫi	(1) Dedication to Ḫaldi "for his life"	CTU B 12-5 CTU B 12-8	Plain

		(2) “Through the greatness of the god Ḫaldi (…)” (3) Name and royal title (“strong king, lord of Ṭušpa-City”)		
S-Ay-1	Rusa Argištiḫi	(1) Dedication to Ḫaldi “for his life” (2) Position of the shield (“in Rusaḫinili Eidurukai”) (3) “Through the greatness of the god Ḫaldi (…)” (4) Name and royal title (“strong king, great king, king of the regions, king of the Bia lands, lord of Ṭušpa-City”) (5) Curse formula	CTU B 12-1	Bulls and lions
NC	Rusa Erimenaḫi	(1) Dedication to Ḫaldi “for his life” (2) “Through the greatness of the god Ḫaldi (…)” (3) Name and royal title (“strong king, lord of Ṭušpa-City”)	CTU B 14-1 CTU B 14-2 CTU B 14-5 CTU B 14-6 CTU B 14-8 CTU B 14-11	Plain
S-Top-2 **S-Top-5** **S-Top-6**	Rusa Erimenaḫi	(1) Dedication to Ḫaldi “for his life” (2) “Through the greatness of the god Ḫaldi (…)” (3) Name and royal title (“strong king, lord of Ṭušpa-City”)	CTU B 14-3 CTU B 14-4 CTU B 14-7	Bulls and lions
NC	Sarduri Sarduriḫi	(1) Dedication to Ḫaldi “for his life” (2) “Through the greatness of the god Ḫaldi (…)” (3) Name and royal title (“strong king, great king, lord of Ṭušpa-City”)	CTU B 16-1	Not known

The table shows the chronological evolution of Urartian dedication formulae on bronze shields, which retained certain fixed points throughout the duration of the royal dynasty, primarily the dedication to the god Ḫaldi. Moreover, since the reign of Argišti Minuaḫi, the position of the ruler has been achieved exclusively "through the greatness of the god Ḫaldi (...)", excluding other formulations found on other epigraphic media. Only with Argišti Minuaḫi and Rusa Argištiḫi, one can find the names of the cities where the shields were dedicated. From the reign of Rusa Sarduriḫi, shields are dedicated to the god Ḫaldi for the life of the ruler, in a formula that will be present in all epigraphs engraved on shields after his time. The only ruler who always uses the same formula on all dedicated shields, whether flat or decorated, is Rusa Erimenaḫi: the dedication of bronze shields, all from the citadel of Toprakkale, is also attributable to that ruler.

6.2.3.2. Further chronological considerations

Although shields are one of the characteristic elements of Urartian civilisation, the chronological evidence for them is extremely poor: the number of decorated shields that can be attributed with certainty to the different sovereigns is only thirteen, summarised in the following table:

Cat. N°	**Date**	**Description**
S-Anz-1	Išpuini Sarduriḫi Minua Išpuiniḫi (probably Inušpua Minuaḫi)	"Mythical" battle between the Urartian gods and the enemies
S-Kb-1	Argišti Minuaḫi	A central rosette with 38 petals surrounded by three concentric stripes separated by bud garlands: Inner band: eight lions Middle band: twenty bulls Outer band: twenty-eight lions
S-Kb-2	Argišti Minuaḫi	A plain centre surrounded by three concentric stripes separated by bud garlands: Inner band: twelve lions Middle band: twenty bulls Outer band: twenty-eight lions

S-Kb-3	Sarduri Argištiḫi	A plain centre surrounded by three concentric stripes separated by bud garlands Inner band: six lions Middle band: sixteen bulls Outer band: twenty-four lions
S-Kb-4-5	Sarduri Argištiḫi	Concentric rings with lions, bulls and bud garlands. Nothing more is known.
S-Kb-6	Rusa Sarduriḫi	A central rosette surrounded by concentric bands of lions, bulls and bud garlands
S-Kb-7	Rusa Sarduriḫi	Plain centre surrounded by concentric bands of lions and bulls separated by bud garlands
S-Ay-1	Rusa Argištiḫi	The centre is decorated with an all-round lion head; it is surrounded by three concentric bands separated by bud garlands: Inner band: twelve lions Middle band: sixteen bulls Outer band: twenty lions
S-Top-1	Rusa Erimenaḫi	Three central rosettes, one inside the others, surrounded by three concentric bands separated by a guilloche: Inner band: twelve lions Middle band: sixteen bulls Outer band: twenty lions
S-Top-3	Rusa Erimenaḫi	Two bands of walking lions and bulls separated by a zig-zag line.

S-Top-2	Rusa Erimenaḫi	A central rosette surrounded by two concentric bands separated by a guilloche: Inner band: eight lions Outer band: sixteen lions
S-Top-5	Rusa Erimenaḫi	The center is lost; it is surrounded by three concentric bands separated by bud garlands: Inner band: six lions Middle band: twelve bulls Outer band: twenty lions
S-Top-6	Rusa Erimenaḫi	A central rosette surrounded by three concentric bands separated by zig-zag lines: Inner band: lions Middle band: bulls Outer band: lions

No two shields belonging to the same ruler are identical, although the period of the reign of Rusa Erimenaḫi is the most fruitful in terms of innovation in decoration. The creation of a "standard" decorative motif for Urartian bronze shields, a "gleichbleibend Dekorationsprogramm" [1275], apparently dates from the reign of Argišti Minuaḫi and, although the iconography of individual animals is probably Assyrian in origin, there are no exact counterparts to the figurative scheme as a whole[1276]. Moreover, as van Loon has already shown[1277], it is not possible to identify an unequivocal evolution in the design of the individual animals: if it is true that a standardised model for the design of bulls and lions can be indicated for each ruler, it is also true that such minor differences may be due simply to the hand of the single bronzeworkers rather than to a precise decorative programme from the palace[1278]. As for the secondary decorative elements, such as the dividing bands between one theory of animals and another, a consistent change is only noticeable again during the reign of Rusa Erimenaḫi: whereas his predecessors consistently used only garlands of buds as dividing motifs, Rusa Erimenaḫi used guilloche and zigzag lines in addition to the bands of buds. This change is consistent with the other changes made

[1275] Seidl 2004: 88.
[1276] Azarpay 1968: 24, mentions as a parallel the bronze shields found in the cave of the Idaean Zeus in Crete.
[1277] Van Loon 1966: 117-118.
[1278] The table that Ursula Seidl published (Seidl 2004: 123) probably implies that each king only had one bronzeworker working with him: if so, it would be consequent to identify for each period of reign a specific typology of animals' depiction. It is an unlikely circumstance, anyway; however, she opened the road for a very fruitful field of research in Urartian studies, as she raised the issue that the traditional succession of rulers should be revised.

by Rusa Erimenaḫi in the decoration of the shields themselves; whereas his predecessors used only a decoration divided into three concentric bands surrounding a centre that could be flat, decorated with a rosette or bearing a three-dimensional lion's head, Rusa Erimenaḫi used, in addition to the tripartite decoration, depictions on only two concentric bands containing only incumbent lions. To date, only one uninscribed decorated shield from Ayanis, with two bands of bulls and lions divided by a zigzag line, is known to scientific publications: logically, following the hypothetical chronology provided by the actual variations in the decoration of the shields, it should be ascribed to the reign of Rusa Erimenaḫi, although it is in fact the only inscribed object belonging to this ruler found outside the citadel of Toprakkale. On the other hand, the number of inscribed shields of Rusa Argištiḫi is so small that no real chronological development of the history of representations on Urartian bronze shields can be traced, at least not during the last years of his reign.

6.2.4. Seals

As noted above, there are several types of figured seals in Urartu. The typology theorised by Piotrovskij[1279] is still generally valid as far as the shape of the seals is concerned, while for the iconography different macro-categories have been identified with variables within them. A separate issue is clearly that of the inscribed seals, exclusively pertinent to the royal court environment, whose typologies have been precisely distinguished on the basis of the figurative decoration and the text present in the epigraph. As already discussed, Urartian royal glyptic is immensely indebted to Assyrian iconography, which results from images such as the *Befruchtungsszene* and the representation of the sovereign under the parasol, while other motifs popular in Assyria, such as hunting scenes, banquets and images of gods, are not taken up in royal glyptic. Another peculiarity of the Urartian inscribed seals lies in the inscription itself: inscribed seals are uncommon in the Near East[1280], and the position of the epigraph in relation to the image is unique in the field of glyptic art, since it acts as a sort of frame, at the upper and lower edges, of the figurative scene itself. Only forty-seven inscribed seals have been preserved in the Assyrian world since the Palaeo-Assyrian period[1281], twenty of which date back to the Neo-Assyrian period; the inscriptions on them tend to be arranged from top to bottom or vice versa. The types of epigraphs attested on Neo-Assyrian seals are roughly the following:

1. PN of the sovereign with genealogy.

2. PN of the eunuch owner of the seal, PN of the master, possible toponym

3. Dedication to the deity, PN of the owner, PN of the sovereign

4. Seal of the palace.

In Urartu, of the four categories identified for the Assyrian seal epigraphs, three are undoubtedly found, with the necessary modifications, while references to the deities are completely absent and are never attested in relation to the glyptic corpus.

[1279] Conical, concave-sided, cylindrical, four-faceted and disc-shaped (Piotrovskij 1967: 70).
[1280] Paley 1986: 209-210.
[1281] See the RIAo corpus: http://oracc.museum.upenn.edu/riao/corpus/.

In the following section, Urartian royal seals will be analysed both on an iconographical and epigraphical level, in order to understand the categories used in their previous study[1282].

6.2.4.1.Iconographical analysis

The analysis will be conducted focusing firstly on the iconographical study of Urartian royal seals, in order to classify precise categories of images that will be connected to specific epigraphs, analysed in the following section. It is worth noting here that all the images retrieved on Urartian royal seals were inspired from the Assyrian world, from where the seals themselves were introduced in Urartu: that should not be surprising, as seal impressions are to be considered one of the most commonly viewed images in ancient Near Eastern commerce.

6.2.4.1.1. Image 1

The cuneiform inscription runs along the upper and lower margins of the image depicted on the cylinder, which presents a scene of worship of the sacred tree performed by two winged *Mischwesen*, who may have alternating human and eagle heads, holding a situla and a pine cone. These two hybrid figures are usually depicted on either side of a sacred tree. The type of sacred tree depicted is peculiar to Urartian art, and is formed by several curved branches that graft onto each other, without a central trunk. At the end of the branches, one can find oval elements, probably pine cones, or floral elements. This type of tree is most commonly used on bronze belts[1283], mainly as a separating motif, but is also found on a single gold object belonging to Queen Qaquli[1284], unique in Urartu. At Ayanis, this type of sacred tree is inlaid on the alabaster podium found inside the *cella* of the *susi* temple[1285], while at Altıntepe it is found on a fragment of an ivory plaque found inside Tomb III[1286]. The whole scene is clearly Assyrian in origin and appears to be a stylised rendering of the reliefs on the orthostats of Nimrud from the time of Ashurnasirpal II[1287], whose meaning is still debated among scholars[1288]. In the Urartian royal sphere, it appears in particular on the front section of the helmets of Argišti, son of Minua, and Sarduri, son of Argišti, while it does not appear with the subsequent rulers: in any case, the scene on the helmets is less stylised than the one on seals, and the depicted sacred tree belongs to a different type. In the Assyrian context, this type of decoration is found, although slightly different, not only on the orthostats in Nimrud, but also on several cylinder seals, whose origin is still debated[1289]. The base of the seal is occupied by the image of a winged horse, or at least of a chimaera, holding a situla; it is sometimes surrounded by abstract symbols, which are difficult to understand. There is no evidence of this hybrid creature on other Urartian artefacts, either royal or popular.

[1282] See § 2.5.1.
[1283] See, for example, the specimens called **B-Ani-1** and **B-Kb-7**.
[1284] Dan 2016; **G-Ay-1**.
[1285] Çilingiroğlu 2001c; **Wd-Ay-2**.
[1286] Özgüç 1969: pl L.
[1287] See, for example, BM 124583.
[1288] See, on this topic, Giovino 2007.
[1289] Collon 2001: 99-101, n° 179-181.

6.2.4.1.2. Image 2

This kind of seal depicts two scenes: the first one shows the king and one of his attendants walking to the right; the attendant is depicted behind the king and holds a parasol with small tassels covering the king's head, who wears a pointed headdress, similar to one of the many helmets found in Urartian fortresses, and carries a sort of sceptre or short staff in his left hand. In front of them, probably in a different scene, a lion is walking to the right, very similar to the lions depicted on Urartian shields, and a trident with the tips pointing upwards. The inscription runs along the upper and lower margins of the cylinder. The scene of the king and his attendant is clearly taken from the Assyrian world, particularly from wall reliefs: it is found, for example, on an orthostat, dated to the period of Ashurnasirpal II, from Nimrud, where the king is shown standing under a parasol held by an attendant behind him[1290]. The scene is also found on some ivory plaques, also found in Nimrud[1291], dated to the 9th century BCE and found in the Throneroom of the Nabu temple. This type of depiction is not attested elsewhere in Urartian art. On the base, however, there is a single figure of a lion advancing towards the right, extremely similar to the one already seen on the cylinder of the seal.

6.2.4.1.3. Image 3

The depiction shows a man in profile, with raised arms and open hands, whose shoes have a tip pointing upwards, an element that refers to the iconographic tradition originating on the Anatolian *plateau*, but present on the Armenian Highlands at least since the Middle Bronze Age[1292]. The man has a beard and a lock of hair emerging from a conical headdress, a possible Urartian bronze helmet. In front of this figure, in which a representation of king Rusa should be recognised, there is a triangular element under the outstretched arms, probably a bow: the depiction of a bow in connection with the ruler is not surprising, on the one hand, because Assyrian rulers are also often depicted in hunting activities using a bow, and on the other, because in Urartu we have evidence of the actual use of the bow, in particular an Urartian inscription on stone which celebrates the king Argišti, son of Rusa, having shot an arrow to a length of 950 cubits[1293]. The king is also covered by a parasol with tassels, hypothetically held by an attendant, who is anyway not depicted but can be found both on Assyrian reliefs from the time of Ashurnasirpal II[1294] and on other Urartian seals, where the attendant is depicted behind the sovereign[1295]. This representation has extremely pertinent parallels in the images of the Assyrian king, placed under a parasol while holding a bow resting on the ground, both carved on the bas-reliefs of the orthostats of Nimrud[1296] and engraved on ivory plaques, also from Nimrud[1297]. The inscription runs on three sides of the representation, excluding the lower side, and it can be assumed that this was, given its morphological uniqueness, a personal property of the sovereign himself, who wore it directly around his neck.

[1290] Curtis – Reade 1995: 7.
[1291] Mallowan – Davies 1970: pl. XX.
[1292] See the images depicted on the silver goblets of Trialeti and Karashamb (Sagona 2017: 345-346, figs. 7.19 and 7.20).
[1293] CTU A 11-7.
[1294] See, for example, BM124533.
[1295] See the seals categorised as "Type 2".
[1296] Curtis – Reade 1995: 7.
[1297] Mallowan – Davies 1970: pl. XX.69.

6.2.4.1.4. Image 4

There are only two attestations of this type of decoration, on two seal impressions from Ayanis and Toprakkale. The best-preserved scene belongs to the Ayanis impression, and it shows at least two different scenes, both probably ritualistic. One consists of two figures, holding a staff and a possible pine cone, standing on the sides of a large vase with an everted rim placed under a winged solar disk. The other scene shows two figures, also holding a staff and a pine cone, standing on the sides of a sacred tree in the form of a palmette[1298]. The inscription runs, at least, along the upper edge of the cylinder, while it was not present, or has not been preserved, along the lower edge. The ritual scene with the vase finds more or less precise comparisons in Assyrian glyptic[1299], as does the scene of adoration of the sacred tree, which can be compared to the scenes already analysed in the context of the *Mischwesen* seals. The depiction of the winged solar disk falls into the category that Collon defines as "(with) Multipartite horizontal bundles", and it has been dated to the 8th century BCE[1300]. The depiction on the base of the cylinder seal is only preserved on the Toprakkale specimen, and it shows the image of a winged chimaera surrounded by possible hieroglyphic signs, such as a moon and several stars. It is interesting to note that the discovery of the seal with "ritual" scenes in Ayanis took place within area VI, the temple area[1301]: this circumstance would fit well with the idea that this seal was used to seal rooms belonging to the temple, given the depiction of ritual scenes on it. Extremely interesting is also the inscription that runs along the upper margin, which is actually connected to a building and will be analysed later.

6.2.4.1.5. Image 5

Impressions of seals bearing this image have only been found on two *bullae* from Toprakkale. The scene is extremely similar to the decoration of Urartian royal quivers and helmets, a military parade consisting of a chariot, with an eight-spoked wheel, drawn by an advancing horse with its right foreleg raised, in front of which stand two advancing figures wearing a pointed helmet and holding a kind of staff or sceptre. The parade scene is clearly derived from Assyrian art: in particular, close parallels can be found on the reliefs of the Balawat Gates of Shalmaneser III[1302], which differ only in the depiction of the chariot wheel and in the rendering of the faces of the two walking figures. Parade scenes are also depicted on the reliefs of the Central and South-West Palace of Tiglath Pileser III in Nimrud, where, however, they are part of war scenes, with the king standing on the military chariot[1303]: since the figure of the king is not preserved, it is not clear whether he is also present in the scene. Military parades are represented on some fragments of Assyrian-style ivories, found in particular in the temple of Nabu in

[1298] See, for comparisons, Collon 2001: 84.
[1299] See, for example, Collon 2001: 64-65 and pl. IX, n° 106-113, where they are called "Banquet scenes" and belong to the so-called "Pot-stand group".
[1300] Collon 2001: 81-82.
[1301] Çilingiroğlu 2001c: 37.
[1302] Barnett 1960: pls. 157, 161, 162.
[1303] Barnett 1962: pls. IX and LXIX.

Nimrud[1304]. In the Urartian sphere, as already mentioned, scenes of this type are found in the decoration of quivers, royal helmets and bronze belts: in particular, there is a specimen from Çavuştepe, Uç Kale[1305], which depicts a military parade with chariots, infantrymen and horsemen, arranged in two figurative registers. On the base of the seal, however, a lion with raised tail is depicted, as already noted for the type 2 seals.

6.2.4.1.6. Image 6

The last type of decoration identified was found on two door-seals, again from Toprakkale: the composition of the scene is extremely peculiar, and it may have been an abstract representation that brings together several unrelated elements. The impression opens, on the left, with the image of a walking chimaera, with the body of a lion, wings and snout of an eagle, horns of a bull, which has no other comparison in Urartu art. The next figure is a walking man, with his right hand raised as if holding a bowl and his left hand resting on a stick; the man's hair is reminiscent of the hair of the period of Sargon II, with a portion of hair styled at the base of the neck. The most unusual element is undoubtedly the chariot, which occupies a large part of the scene: the base consists of two wheels, the spokes of which are not outlined, and a caisson, which appears to be covered by a curtain, forming a sort of triangle above the caisson itself. At the apex of the triangle is a sort of corn spike, possibly representing the end of the wooden stick on which the cloth covering the chariot is held. No animal is pulling this vehicle, although the rods for yoking oxen or horses are depicted. In the composition of the scene, there are several abstract "hieroglyphic" signs, which are not connected to the objects depicted: there are in fact two suns or two stars, a sort of sickle and a bull's head, whose position is peculiar because it is placed at the end of the two stalks of the chariot as if to indicate that it is the bull himself who is driving it. The chariot depicted here is extremely different from other chariot representations found in Urartian circles, so much so that Collon has suggested that this type of chariot was used during religious ceremonies[1306].

6.2.4.2. Epigraphical analysis

The analysis of the seal impressions belonging to the Urartian royal sphere is to be concluded considering the epigraphies associated with the various images previously isolated. All these epigraphs clearly connotate the seals as royal objects, for the intrinsic nature of the inscriptions themselves, but only seldomly mention the king, within a particular category of epigraphs connected directly to the image of the king himself. The majority of the inscriptions mention instead a person bearing the title of

[1304] Mallowan – Davies 1970: pl. XVII.61a; on page 28, the plaque is described: "Design in two registers, separated by a guilloche border, shows processional scenes. Above, a file of Assyrian soldiers and officials, walking in pairs and followed by chariots, advance to the left. Below, two processions of Assyrians confront one another. (…) This plaque is of particular interest as it would seem to present a combination of 9th and 8th-century features".
[1305] **B-Çav-3**.
[1306] Collon 1987: 158.

LÚ*aṣuli*, on whose function there is no consensus among the scholars[1307], who appears to have been a fundamental figure in the Urartian administrative system.

6.2.4.2.1. Epigraph 1

Only five seal impressions from the sites of Ayanis, Bastam and Karmir-blur belong to this category. They are composed by a first line, on the upper margin of the image engraved on the cylindrical section, which contains the proper name of the owner of the seal, and a second line, below the image, which bears the words "KIŠIB LÚa-ṣu-li", meaning "seal of the LÚ*aṣuli*". The interpretation of this title has been the subject of numerous contributions[1308], which anyway always accepted the idea that it indicated a person belonging in some way to the royal house: an initial reading of the term as LÚA.NIN-*li* identified him as a hereditary prince, "son of the queen", while the reading LÚA.ZUM-*li*, phonetically LÚa-ṣu-li, meant a person, at the court of Rusa, son of Argišti, who occupied a priestly position, perhaps connected to a ritual related to the waters[1309]. A proposal that has not had much success[1310] concerns the identity of LÚ*aṣuli* with the Assyrian LÚA.ZU[1311], to be read as *ašu*, "doctor" or as *barû*, "divination priest", also attested in Hurrian texts to indicate a priest in charge of divination[1312]. The phonetic reading that would be hidden under the Sumerograms would then be uncertain, while the Urartian complementation *-li*, as elsewhere, would indicate a *Berufsname*[1313]: in this case, this person would have the role of a sort of doctor / divination expert, whose care would be related to water. It is undoubtedly worth noting that the proper names of these people are the same as the royal names, which would suggest that they at least belonged to the royal court. This group of seals includes an undoubtedly peculiar specimen (**S-Kb-4**), somehow confirming the royal class of the LÚ*aṣuli*, which mentions the name of Erimena, son of Argišti (?) and possible father of the most discussed Urartian ruler, Rusa. In the epigraph associated with the seal, the second line is extremely poorly preserved but allows us to assume that the title "LÚa-[ṣu?-li?"[1314] was engraved on it. In this case, Erimena would not be a sovereign, but rather an official, probably belonging to the royal house, father of a future Urartian king.

6.2.4.2.2. Epigraph 2

To this category, inscribed on two lines, one above and one below the image carved on the cylinder, belong the majority of seals found in excavations, particularly at Bastam. All seals presenting on the first line the words "i-ni KIŠIB mru-sa-a(-i)", "this (is) the seal of Rusa", more or less completely, have been included in this category. The second line, on the other hand, is often poorly preserved, but in the

[1307] See the following sections. A reference should be made to a contribution on the name LÚ*aṣuli* in a recent article, which suggests that this title was referring to the scribe (Bonfanti – Dan 2021).
[1308] Hellwag 2000; Salvini 2001a; Salvini 2001b; Hellwag 2005; Bonfanti – Dan 2021.
[1309] Hellwag 2005: 96. Salvini (2019: 378) doesn't accept this idea, as he defines this title as "Titolo intraducibile di un funzionario di alto rango appartenente alla famiglia reale urartea. (…) Vedi anche la discutibile interpretazione di U. Hellwag 2000 e 2005 come LÚA.ZUM-li 'Wasserwirtschaftsminister'".
[1310] See the previous footnote.
[1311] Hellwag 2005: 95.
[1312] See, for example, the *corpus* by Haas 1984.
[1313] See Salvini – Wegner 2014: 21.
[1314] See Salvini 2012: 212.

cases where it is fully preserved[1315], it bears the patronymic of the ruler, "^{m}ar-giš-te-ḫi-ni-i", "son of Argišti". This category of seals is therefore entirely datable to the time of Rusa, son of Argišti, and in some way directly related to the ruler himself.

6.2.4.2.3. Epigraph 3

As already noted for the Epigraph 1 seals, this type also bears the title of ^{LÚ}a-ṣu-li, this time both on the first line and, when preserved, on the second. In this case, the proper name of the official is not written, but only the belonging of the seal to the ^{LÚ}a-ṣu-li. Epigraphically, the inscription is a repetition on both lines, when preserved, of the words "KIŠIB ^{LÚ}a-ṣu-li".

6.2.4.2.4. Epigraph 4

This epigraph is present on only three seals, found in Ayanis, Karmir-blur and Toprakkale. The category in question is distinguished from the others mainly by the mention of a generic building (É), connected in two cases to the name of king Rusa, but always inserted within different syntactic formulations. In the case of the seal from Ayanis (**S-Ay-8**), only preserved for a single incomplete line, the Sumerogram É appears after the expression "i-ni KIŠIB", probably meaning that the seal must have somehow "belonged" to the building to which it referred. However, in the case of the seal on a *bulla* from Karmir-blur (**S-Kb-5**), where both lines of text are preserved, above and below the image, one can also read the name of the ruler, or official, to whom it belonged; the text is "(1) i-ni KIŠIB ^{m}r[u-s] a<-i> (2) ^{m}ru-sa-ḫi É.x", "(1) This (is) the seal of Rusa. (2) Building [...] of Rusa"[1316]. The type of building to which it referred is unfortunately not known, since the signs following the Sumerogram É are not well preserved, but it must have belonged to a certain Rusa, whose patronymic is not known, probably the owner of the building in question. The last seal bearing this epigraph, preserved only for a single incomplete line, comes from the site of Toprakkale (**S-Top-12**): the inscription is "] É.KIŠIB ^{m}ru-[sa-", "House of the seal of? Ru[sa(?)]"[1317], and it is interesting to note that this seal was engraved on a *cretula* attached to a door, which would fit perfectly with the epigraph on it. It should not be excluded that the translation may be different from the one indicated in CTU[1318], which objectively does not seem to make much sense: one could assume instead that, in accordance with the word order of the Urartian genitive construction, the noun rectus is É, and not KIŠIB, resulting in a translation more similar to "Seal of the building / house of? Ru[sa(?)]", which would then correspond to the so-called "edificio Rusaico" mentioned by Salvini in his analysis of the epigraph on **S-Kb-5**[1319].

[1315] Sig-Ba-55-674.
[1316] Si vedano la traduzione e il commento di Salvini: CTU B Sig. 19-1.
[1317] Si veda la traduzione di Salvini: CTU B Sig. 19-2.
[1318] See the previous footnote.
[1319] CTU B Sig. 19-1.

6.2.4.2.5. Epigraph 5

Only three seals feature this type of epigraph, two from Ayanis (**S-Ay-5-7**) and one, discussed[1320], from Ziwiyé (**S-Ziw-1**). The peculiar syntactic construction of the inscription deserves attention, since between the name and the patronymic of the ruler, Rusa, son of Argišti, the Sumerogram KIŠIB, "seal", is inserted, with a construction also attested on the tablet from Toprakkale[1321], also from the period of Rusa, son of Argišti. The translation of the epigraph would be, literally, "(By) Rusa seal, of the son of Argišti", although, as on the tablet from Toprakkale, the genitive ending *-i* of the ruler's name is missing[1322]. The absence of the genitive ending is quite common, however, in the time of Rusa, son of Argišti, at least as far as inscriptions on seals are concerned, probably for a matter of space.

6.2.5. Cauldrons

As can be seen from the previous chapters[1323], the Urartian cauldrons can be divided into at least two subgroups according to the presence or absence of plastic attachments: one group, represented by cauldrons found at Karmir-blur and Ayanis, probably had a purely practical function, as evidenced by the two annular handles attached to the rim of the vessels, which made lifting and moving the objects easier. It is precisely the sculpted attachment that makes the everyday use of the cauldrons to which it is affixed highly unlikely, as it would be extremely impractical for moving these objects; moreover, such attachments require additional bronze modelling, which would be unsuitable for functional, everyday use.

<table>
<tr><td colspan="3">Cauldrons</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">With sculpted attachment</td><td>Without sculpted attachment
(uninscribed)</td></tr>
<tr><td>With bull's head attachment
(uninscribed)</td><td>With lion's head attachment
(inscribed)</td><td></td></tr>
</table>

The assumed function of the group of cauldrons without attachments was to measure grain or liquids[1324], while it is reasonable to assume a votive use for the second group of cauldrons. Despite this, the now lost relief of Sargon II's Eighth Campaign depicting the sack of Muṣaṣir, at least as far as can be seen today, shows two cauldrons standing in front of the temple of Ḫaldi, apparently without figurative attachments: it is therefore difficult to state with certainty the precise differences in the use of the two types of cauldrons. The report of Sardon II's Eighth Campaign confirms anyway the importance of cauldrons in Urartian cult, as it specifies that 607 copper kettles, copper washbasins, water pails, pots,

[1320] Salvini 2012: 211.
[1321] CTU B CT Tk-1.
[1322] See Salvini 2005: 264-265.
[1323] See § 2.4.2.
[1324] Çilingiroğlu 2001a: 71.

and vases and four heavy copper cauldrons together with their copper stands were taken from the temple[1325]. The largest type of cauldron mentioned, containing eighty measures of liquid, is said to have been filled with wine by the king of Urartu in order to offer libations to the god Ḫaldi. This fits well with the large number of vines planted in honour of the god and mentioned in Urartian epigraphs; the information also fits the description of the prescribed ritual in the Meher Kapısı inscription, which, if the translation is correct, states "sia dalla parte di Ḫaldi il vaso/lebete(?) si circuisca(?) [vale a dire: si vada intorno al lebete(?)], sia (dalla parte) di tutti gli dèi." [1326]. It is therefore possible to say that the use of cauldrons for votive purposes was a well-established practice in Urartu: it remains only to be understood what type of cauldron was used for this purpose.

Relying on Assyrian visual representations, cauldrons are visible on some bands of the Balawat Gates of Shalmaneser III, particularly those depicting the campaign towards Karkemiş[1327] and the North Syrian expedition[1328]. They are the result of plundering, and are represented as large globular containers, hung on a stick to aid transport or carried on the shoulders of Assyrian soldiers. Unfortunately, there is no archaeological confirmation of the use of cauldrons in the North Syrian area, just as there are no Assyrian cauldrons that could resemble Urartian cauldrons.

In this sense, it is important to note that only one animal's head pertaining to a cauldron was inscribed by a sovereign, Sarduri Argištiḫi, and that it is indeed unique in the artistic panorama of Urartu. The head (catalogued as **Ca-Kb-2**), as already noted, is tubular and curved in shape, and ends with the depiction of a roaring lion's snout: similar specimens have been found in Etruria and are usually traced back to the production or imitation of Near Eastern originals[1329]. The epigraph engraved on the object does not mention any particular terms, but only describes the attachment as "(object) of Sarduri, son of Argišti" (1 ^{mD}sar$_5$-du-ri-i 2 ^{m}ar-gis-ti-ḫi-ni-i) [1330], without any graphic or grammatical peculiarities. It is not possible to draw any firm conclusions from this lion head, except that it was dated to approximately the middle of the 8th century BCE and that its discovery site, to which it had certainly been moved from its primary place of storage, was Room 14 of the Karmir-blur fortress, an extremely poorly preserved deposit, due to the collapse of the walls, in which an iron tripod approximately one and a half metres high was also found[1331]. This attachment is considered to be surely Urartian and not, for example, a war booty on which the king had his name engraved: it is similar to representations of lions in the round in various materials found at other Urartian sites, and is reminiscent of the tubular representations that decorate the front of Urartian helmets (*Krummwülsten*)[1332]. The presence of an engraved garland of buds on the back of the attachment only confirms this assumption. It is therefore the only cauldron's attachment that certainly belongs to the Urartian royal assemblage, unlike the other ones.

[1325] Foster 2005: 811, ll. 395-399.
[1326] CTU A 3-1, l. 25. The translation actually differs on the online version of the CTU, the eCUT, where it is said "may the jugs go around on behalf of the god Ḫaldi and on behalf of the Assembly of the Gods" (eCUT A 3-1, l. 25), implying the fact that there were many vessels involved during that ritual, and that those vessels were small and light enough to be passed from a person to another. The same translation is to be found in the new version of the text CTU A 3-1 in Salvini 2018.
[1327] King 1915: pls. XXXI-XXXII.
[1328] BM 1879,1213.2.
[1329] Amandry 1956: 248-249, fn. 28; Maxwell-Hyslop 1956: 156.
[1330] CTU B 9-24.
[1331] Piotrovskij 1950: 55.
[1332] See the section devoted to the analysis of Urartian helmets.

In fact, the bull's head attachments, found both individually and attached to their own cauldron, are not closely related to the Urartian royal sphere. Analysing the individual contexts in which they were found, if available, one notes that they were found rather in tombs[1333], located far from the centre of the kingdom. When the finds were discovered inside fortresses, as at Karmir-blur (**Ca-Kb-2** and **Ca-Kb-3**), they appear to be characterised by elements that are not common to the other specimens. Depending on their characteristics, they can be classified into different types:

- Type 1: Altıntepe (**Ca-Alt-1**), Guşçi (**Ca-Guş-1, 2**), Toprakkale (**Ca-Top-1, 2**). The horns are affixed to the sides of the head, just above the ears that protrude laterally, and point forward and upwards. On the forehead of the animal there is a sort of mane stretched over the muzzle, decorated with curved vertical lines ending in a spiral, closely resembling the decorations on the coats of the bulls depicted on the shields[1334]. The eyebrows are in relief, at the sides of the mane, and cover the oval eyes, well defined in their details, for example the lacrimal duct. The animal's nose is slightly protruding and defined at the upper edge by three parallel lines. At the base of the head there is a sort of collar, connecting the head with the neck, decorated with small spirals. The neck of the animal is plain and joined at a right angle to the T-shaped plate that connected the attachment to the cauldron. The support, probably symbolizing wings, can be flat or decorated with parallel bands, horizontal in the upper section and vertical in the lower one, decorated in a herringbone pattern. The support is T-shaped, with the ends of the arms larger than the centre.
- Type 2: Alişar (**Ca-Ali-1**). The horns are affixed to the sides of the head and protrude laterally and then forward, straight, and not upwards; the horns of Alişar's head are broken, but appear to be thinning too much to continue upwards. Behind the horns, represented below them, there are the protruding ears. The mane, also in the centre of the forehead, between the horns, is decorated with curved horizontal lines; at the lower edge are four small incised circles. The eyebrows protrude slightly, at the sides of the mane, and are located above the almond-shaped eyes. The muzzle is decidedly elongated, the nose is protruding and bordered by parallel curved lines. This specimen also forms a right angle with its mount, left unadorned. The shape is more slender than that of the supports of the previous type.

The contexts in which type 1 of the bull's heads were found are not always known: only as far as **Ca-Alt-1** is concerned, the whole cauldron and its tripod were found in a chamber tomb, part of a larger complex of tombs that contained, among other things, two fragments of a bronze plate engraved with the name of Argišti, son of Rusa[1335], so that the whole complex is dated to the time of that ruler. Indeed, even if the bronze plates were to be taken into account as a *terminus post quem*, they would refer to the tomb complex rather than to the objects contained therein, which may indeed be much older. Again, **Ca-Guş-1, 2** were the result of a chance discovery of what is thought to be another chamber tomb, unfortunately without any criteria to help with dating. For the finds **Ca-Top-1, 2**, on the other hand, the exact location of the find at the site is not known, as the exact date, which is generally considered to be between the end of the 8th and the beginning of the 7th century BCE. As Toprakkale is a capital city, it is possible that the spread of cauldrons with a bull's head attachments started from this very centre and then took hold elsewhere, probably within noble circles, probably directly connected to royalty, as

[1333] See the specimens **Ca-Alt-1**, **Ca-Ali-1** and **Ca-Guş-1, 2**.
[1334] See the section devoted to the analysis of Urartian shields.
[1335] CTU B 11-5.

shown by the plaque bearing the name of the sovereign found in the Altıntepe tomb complex. Toprakkale is also a focal point for another aspect of Urartian history: in addition to the intrinsic problems that the site poses, relating to its foundation, dating and connection with a particular Urartian ruler, it is the site where materials typical of the Phrygians, a population that probably had several contacts with the Urartians, were found. Several fragments of bronze belts of typical Phrygian morphology, very different from the so-called Urartian belts scattered throughout the kingdom, were found at the site[1336]. It is possible to assume that not only bronze belts came from Phrygia, however: a broader look at the Phrygian civilisation reveals the presence of bronze cauldrons decorated with sculpted attachments, found in the Gordion burial mounds, the dating of which is still uncertain. These attachments are slightly different from Urartian examples. Two of these bull's heads, still affixed to the rim of a bronze cauldron, were found at Karmir-blur (**Ca-Kb-3**), in a disturbed layer that cannot be dated with certainty: the parallel with the cauldrons from the Gordion tumuli is irrefutable, but a comparison can also be made with two *dinoi* with taurine *protomai* found at a site closer to Urartu, at Kaynarca, in southern Cappadocia[1337]. Although smaller in size than the cauldrons found in the mounds of the capital, they closely resemble the specimens from Gordion, both in the shape and in the decoration. It is not possible to exclude that materials of this type were probably already circulating among the Anatolian rulers during the 8th century: if one considers the new chronology of the Gordion site[1338], which dates the construction of the mounds to the end of the 9th century BCE, one obtains a date that is significantly older than all Urartian sites in which cauldrons with bull's heads have been found, or at least than all the datable sites. It is therefore likely that the object itself, the cauldron decorated with sculpted attachments, came to Urartu from the west, from the Phrygian area, perhaps as a gift from one ruler to another, or as spoils of war: as the site at Kaynarca shows, the Phrygian presence in southern Anatolia was well established[1339], and Urartian incursions into the territories west of the kingdom are well documented, especially in the time of Sarduri, son of Argišti.

It cannot be ruled out so, on the basis of the previous discussion, that the cauldron with bull's heads was not an exclusively Urartian invention, but originated instead in Phrygia: without any doubt, the Urartians manipulated and reinterpreted the design of the bull's heads, producing ones that were closer to their own aesthetic taste and that took up elements already known from Urartian art. This is the case with the characterisation of the bulls' manes, placed between the horns and made with curved parallel lines ending in small spirals: this same depiction can be seen, as a decoration of the bulls' coats, on bronze shields from the time of the ruler Argišti, son of Minua, but appears more refined on the shields of his successor Sarduri. However, not only cauldrons with bull's heads are known from Phrygia: another type of cauldron attachment has the shape of a siren torso, facing the inside of the vessel, with its arms outstretched, exactly like the one that was found, at the beginning of archaeological research in the Southern Caucasus, in the post of Alişar (**Ca-Ali-1**), together with the bull's head attachment. Two considerations can be drawn from the above information: the first concerns the adoption of a decorative motif that was familiar to the Urartians rulers, namely the bull, as opposed to one that they did not know, or did not use, such as the siren. The second concerns the diffusion of this type of cauldron with sculpted attachments within the Urartian territory: the bull's head from Alişar is an obvious attempt to copy Urartian attachments of the royal sphere, and, at first glance, it may seem very similar to those

[1336] On these belts, see Dan – Bonfanti 2021b.
[1337] Akkaya 1991.
[1338] Rose – Darbyshire 2011.
[1339] Vassileva 2008.

but, on closer inspection, it appears incredibly different. Even looking at the siren-shaped attachment found in the Alişar post, one notices some differences from those found in Gordion, both in the rendering of the face and in the decoration of the dress: it is possible to assume, then, that the craftsman had seen the royal cauldrons and had well in mind what he wanted to reproduce; the details, however, escaped his memory, and were reported differently from the originals. Moreover, the discovery of a single bull's head and a single attachment in the form of a siren, together with a bronze bull's foot, like those on the tripod from Altıntepe, suggests the existence of a single cauldron, to which the two different attachments were attached, in a symbol of the purest provincialism. Although also an octagonal bronze bell, a horse harness, was found inside the Alişar cave, engraved with the name of Argišti, without a patronymic, two other bronze bells, definitely not Urartian[1340], were found together with it, qualifying the group of objects as belonging to an individual, probably a soldier, connected to the Urartian royal sphere probably only for part of his life.

A final note should be made regarding the image of sirens: they are represented as winged women or men, according to the image transmitted by Greek mythology. Their absence in Urartian representations can only be indicative of a lack of recognition of their role on a cultural and mythological level. The siren was so not part of the vast imaginative repertoire of Urartian or local hybrids and mythological beings, and for this reason it was probably not taken up on an iconographic level, not even on a material that was already marked by its image, such as the cauldron. This situation, and the large number of siren attachments found in Greek sanctuaries, suggests a western derivation of this iconographic motif, which then spread to the east, first to Phrygia and then, with little success, to Urartu.

To sum up: considering all the information gathered above, it can be assumed that the origin of the cauldron with sculpted attachments is to be found in the west, possibly in Phrygia, and that it reached Urartu at least during the 8th century BCE. There, the Urartian rulers appreciated the model and decided to reinterpret it according to their aesthetic taste, in the version that best suited their imagination, namely the bull's head attachment. Royal and noble art then moved on to popular art, which reinterpreted also the attachments in the form of sirens: an example of this art comes from what can be described as the probable tomb of a horseman, perhaps a mercenary *ante litteram*, located along the banks of the river Araxes.

6.2.6. Belts[1341]

Of all the metalwork considered to come from Urartian workshops, there is no doubt that bronze belts are among the best known and most studied. Most of the specimens known today are, however, the result of illegal excavation activities, and it should be noted that all the main attempts to classify these belts typologically and chronologically have made systematic use of material lacking an archaeological context, in most cases neglecting instead the specimens found in more-or-less reconstructible contexts. In the case of bronze objects, however, it must be borne in mind that an object's site and discovery context do not represent binding information regarding its dating, as they were goods subject to hoarding processes with a particularly prolonged use over time[1342]. For this reason, the only possible

[1340] See, about this, Dan – Bonfanti 2021a.
[1341] The following paragraph is based on Dan – Bonfanti 2021b.
1342 See, for example, the case of the Karmir-blur fortress, where objects were found that date to a long time before the site was founded. Material from the nearby abandoned site of Arin-berd/Erebuni had been taken there,

way to organise a summary chronological positioning for individual belts may be the comparison with inscribed and datable items presenting similar decorations. Even these attempts are, however, frustrated by the coexistence within the same belt of datable elements from different periods. Moreover, as already explained, not all the pieces found in Urartian sites can be qualified as Urartian objects *tout court*: for this, it is important to note that "Urartian" belts embrace the evolution of items developed autonomously in the Southern Caucasus after the Middle Bronze Age. In the studies, some belts[1343] have been considered "Urartian" even if they do not present any of the characteristic features of Urartian royal art which can be reconstructed exclusively through the study of inscribed items. Given the nature of Urartian political power and the great uncertainty related to both the emergence and the fall of Urartian centres, the idea that these finds all belong to a so-called *Urartian state assemblage*[1344] appears unsustainable: one must imagine that the penetration of purely locally-produced artefacts into Urartian palaces occurred both during the reign of Urartian kings and in preceding or subsequent periods.

Regarding the origin of the belts themselves, it is generally said that they are a typical cultural element of the Southern Caucasus (Armenia, Georgia, Azerbaijan); recent studies have proposed that the use of such belts started in the 13th century BCE and their production continued at least until the 7th century BCE[1345]. Unfortunately, problems related to the chronological attribution of most of the objects found in the discovery contexts in association with belts[1346], and the fact that these contexts were investigated in the early stages of research in the Caucasus, preclude the possibility of proposing an exact chronological frame for the spread of these belts, defined as "Transcaucasian". The only certain conclusion is that the diffusion of belts occurred at an unspecified time after the Middle Bronze Age in the Southern Caucasian region[1347], but, at the current state of research, it is not possible to establish the chronological limits of this phenomenon or to determine whether it was long or short-lived. What may be affirmed, though, is that the belts typical of the Southern Caucasian region and the belts produced in the period of *Assyrianization* of the Armenian Highlands were probably contemporary productions that crossed the territory in certain chronological phases, as evidenced for example by certain belts found in the sites of Golovino and Tli.

presumably during the time of Rusa, son of Argišti. Among these objects, for example, there were some inscribed specimens dating back to the time of Minua (CTU B 5-1).

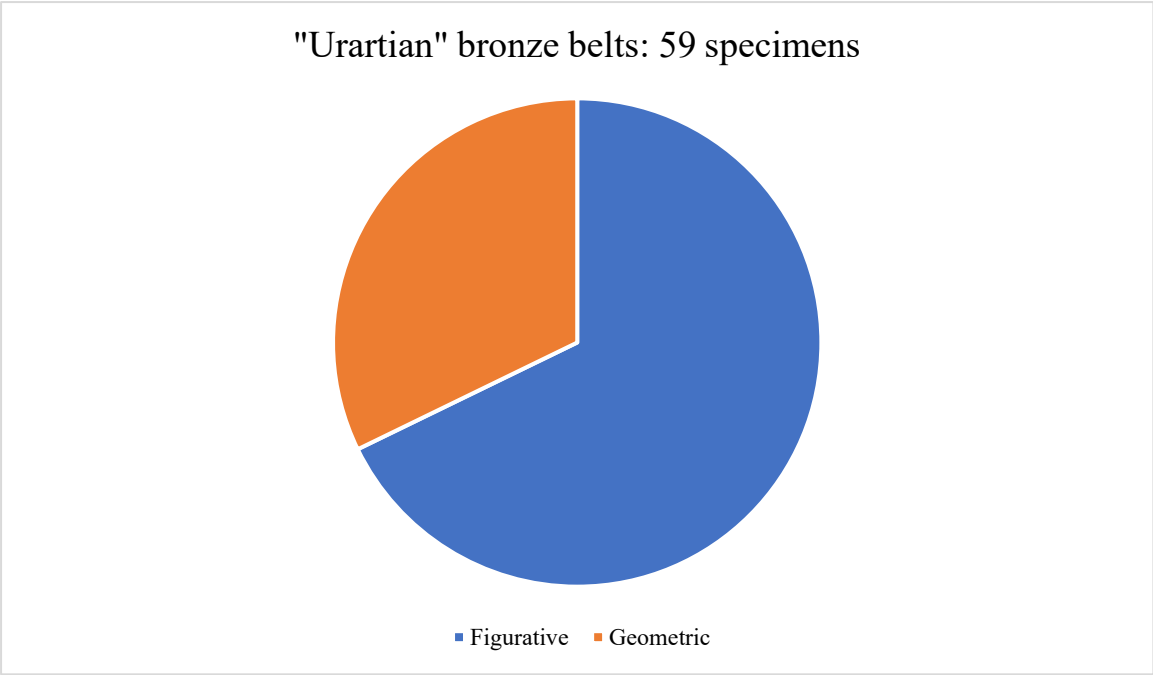
1343 See, for example, **B-Kay-1**, where hunting scenes modelled on examples of Assyrian palace art – and totally absent from Urartian royal art – are represented.

1344 Zimansky 1995.

1345 Castelluccia 2017.

1346 See, for example, the date proposed for Beštašeni Tomb 13 by Castelluccia 2017: 259.

1347 It is unlikely that the spread of Caucasian belts was exclusively limited to Late Bronze/Early Iron Age, but it is more likely that it had a broader diachronic development. In general, in the periods following the end of the Middle Bronze Age, there was a clear change in material culture production, which then remained largely unchanged until the so-called Late Iron Age. The indigenous peoples occupying the Southern Caucasian region largely followed trajectories of internal cultural development with which exogenous elements of various natures overlapped, with diverse artistic results.



6.2.6.1. An attempt to categorise "Urartian" belts

The impracticality of typologizing and assigning a chronology to decorations and variety of iconographies on belts led to the impossibility of finding in them a chronological handhold useful for their classification; although some belts present iconographic elements that link them to the sphere of royal art, these datable features may be dated from the beginning to the end of the Urartian dynasty, demonstrating how unlike it is to provide a precise date for individual belts. Some of the belts, on the other hand, are markedly hybridized, and local and exogenous elements coexist in their decoration[1348]. The fragmentary specimen **B-Kb-1**, in particular, is emblematic of the difficulty of obtaining an unambiguous and precise date: it is decorated with a garland that has precise parallels with the famous Anzaf shield[1349], dated to the time of Išpuini and Minua, as well as with a lid bearing an inscription by Argišti, son of Minua[1350] from Karmir-blur. The preserved zoomorphic depictions, lions and bulls moving to the left, closely resemble decorations on the shields of Argišti, son of Minua[1351], Sarduri, son of Argišti[1352], Rusa of Argišti[1353], Rusa of Erimena[1354], and on a seal belonging to Rusa of Argišti[1355]. It is evident, therefore, that it is impossible to provide an exact chronology for the belt on this basis.

Established the *local* character of bronze belts, another comparison with Urartian royal objects helps to understand their level of hybridization. The previous detailed analysis of finds bearing royal epigraphs, such as shields and metal quivers, showed a morphological and iconographic homogeneity that

1348 See the belts **B-Sot-1**, **B-Kb-7**, **B-Mal-1**, **B-Tli-3**, **B-Top-1**.
1349 Belli 1999; CTU B 3-1; **S-Anz-1**.
1350 CTU B 8-28; see also Dan – Bonfanti *forthcoming*/a; **G-Kb-1**.
1351 CTU B 8-4; **S-Kb-1**.
1352 CTU B 9-3; **S-Kb-3**.
1353 CTU B 12-1; **S-Ay-1**.
1354 CTU B 14-7, 14-9; **S-Top-1**, **S-Top-6**.
1355 CTU B Sig. 12-1; **S-Ba-55-674**.

demonstrated both the standardization of the art as the vehicle of a specific message and the substantial impossibility of establishing the long-term diachronic development of Urartian art. The deviation from the standard models used as markers of Urartian royalty demonstrates once again that these belts did not constitute a production connected to royal art, but an adaptation to the new "fashion" of objects circulating in the area already in the period before the emergence of the Urartian state. One case that might seem anomalous or inexplicable is the so-called "belt" bearing an inscription of the sovereign Argišti, son of Minua[1356]: decorated with a zig-zag motif, it is marked as the "Property of Argišti"[1357], in apparent conflict with the hypothesis that belts are a production excluded from the royal sphere. It seems, however, more likely that it is a particular type of horse collar, as recently shown by the examination of another specimen[1358], of unknown origin, bearing an inscription of Minua. This explanation would thus confirm the absence of inscribed belts.

Iconographically, the belts constitute an extensive collection of heterogeneous material, among which may be highlighted the unequivocal and systematic coexistence of local iconographic features with elements of Anatolian-Mesopotamian derivation. The discovery contexts also show the coexistence of items traditionally considered expressions of Urartian royal art and others that might be defined as "Caucasian" productions, implying the contemporary presence in the territory of royal and local artistic productions. It is necessary to imagine that the process of penetration or imitation of Anatolian, Levantine and Mesopotamian cultural elements in local artistic traditions may have taken place with differing degrees of intensity, depending on the presence of different variables[1359]. In general, the belts show unequivocal traces of cultural hybridization, distancing themselves from the Urartian royal productions. There is, however, the need for a general reconsideration of the problem of the belts' typological classification and their exact chronologies: it is clear that by separating individual iconographic elements it is possible to find elements with parallels within Urartian royal art, but the *local* character of these objects, which were produced in non-centralized workshops, suggests the impossibility an exact chronological attribution, with the possibility that they could have also been made after the fall of Urartu. At the time of the formation of the Urartian state, during the 9th century BCE, a rich iconographic heritage of Assyrian-Levantine origin was already present throughout the area that later constituted the state and also in the neighbouring territories: the creation of Urartian art, a process lasted several centuries, is the result of the assimilation and reinterpretation of elements from Anatolian and the Assyrian-Levantine world. For the development of Urartian art, the sovereigns selected specific iconographic features already present in the regional repertories, making a further choice from the vast heritage already reflected in the metal belts.

The local character of the belts is furthermore indicated by an exemplar published and discussed by Paul Zimansky[1360]: in the village of Ayanis, below the floor of a house, the burial of a young man of

1356 CTU B 8-29. Salvini 2012: 44 defines this object as a "belt".
1357 The inscription does not mention the patronymic of the sovereign: it is likely that the object belonged to Argišti, son of Minua, given the large quantity of inscribed metalwork attributable to him, in contrast with the very few attestations of his namesake, Argišti, son of Rusa, all found in the westernmost part of the kingdom (Yukarı Anzaf, Ayanis, and Altıntepe).
1358 See Işik – Kuvanç 2018.
1359 One of these variables was certainly geographical and concerned whether or not the region was close to the centre of power.
1360 Zimansky 2012: 109.

prepubertal age was found, with grave goods, including a bronze belt[1361], which identify the tomb as belonging to a member of the "Urartian nobility". Yet, the type of funerary context seems to clearly indicate the non-Urartian origin of the deceased: an intramural burial, in a pit dug in the floor of a dwelling, has no precedent either among the members of Urartian nobility, for whom chamber tombs dug into the rock that often contain both inhumation burials and incinerations were preferred, or among ordinary people, who were buried in *extra moenia* cemeteries according to local traditions (Neolithic-Chalcolithic), later abandoned. The conclusion is that the deceased belonged to a family of foreign origin among the population of the town of Ayanis, and therefore the funerary objects reflect those that this group of people used to place in their burials. In this case, the belt would qualify perfectly as a typical item of grave goods of a local population, later integrated into the Urartian group.

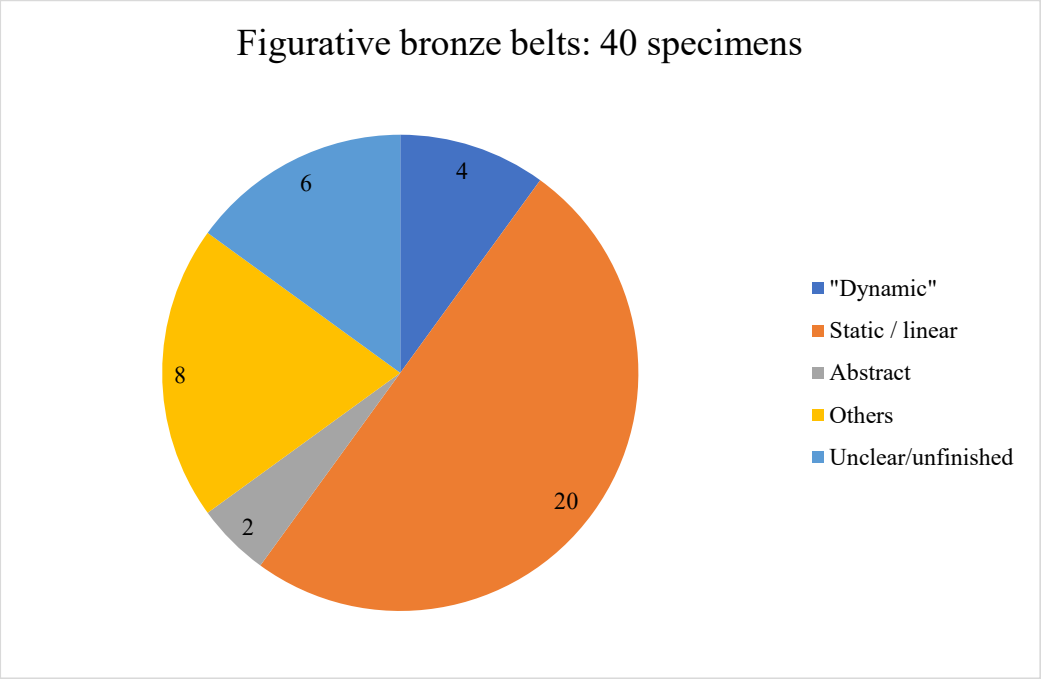
6.2.6.2. Analysis of the decorations on "Urartian" belts

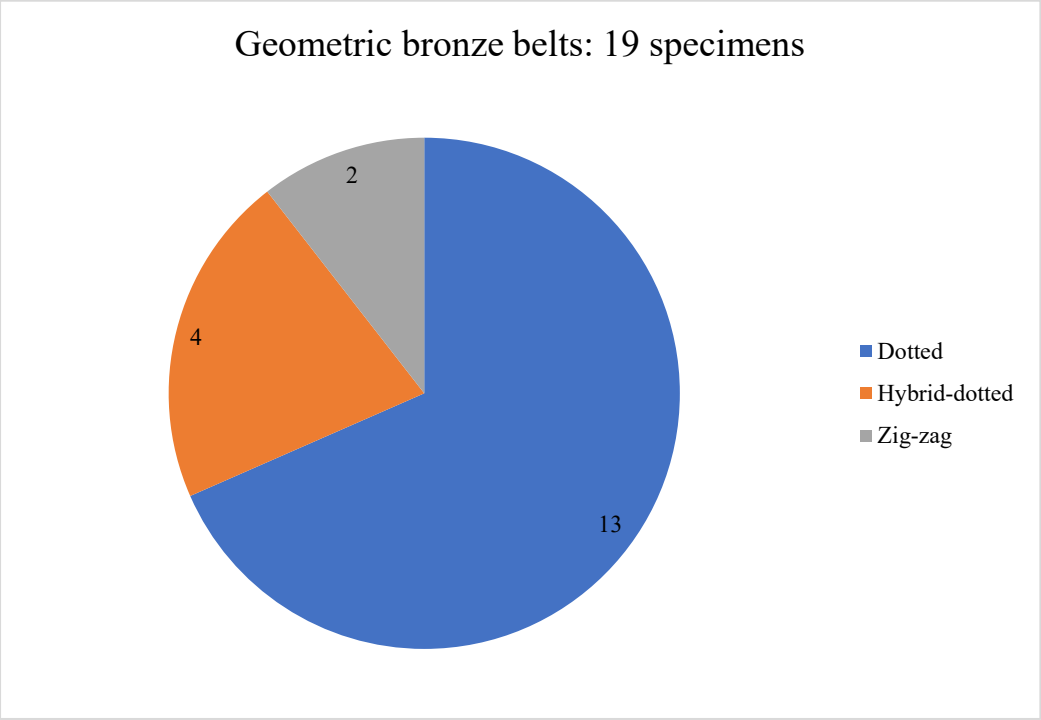
In an attempt to formalize the different iconographies, the belts were subdivided into a series of groups:

1. *Figurative belts*, where the presence of iconographic features of exogenous derivation is predominant or exclusive. Most of the belts are decorated with anthropomorphic, zoomorphic or *Mischwesen* figures, and filler elements, characterized by the absence of narrative purposes and often marked by a static nature; few specimens show an apparent dynamism, resulting from the imitation of Assyrian depictions, which were deprived of their original narrative function, in particular the reproduction of hunting scenes decorating the Assyrian palace art from the time of Ashurnasirpal II to the reign of Ashurbanipal. As far as chronology is concerned, it may be hypothesized that these belts were largely made in the period when the use or replication of exogenous iconographies became systematic, which means both before the emergence of Urartu and in the two centuries of Urartian history.
2. *Geometric belts*, whose decoration is entirely locally derived. The chronology of these belts is by far the most uncertain: since they bear local decorative patterns, their creation could be attributed to the Urartian period, or indeed to a previous or subsequent period. This type of geometric belt could have been produced by local communities within Urartu's boundaries, or at its margins[1362]. Among these belts, one can also find some "hybrid" examples, which combine a dotted pattern and a figurative element, such as a sacred tree motif: it may be suggested that these belts date back mainly to the pre-Urartian era, in which examples of local belts featuring foreign iconographic elements appear for the first time; an alternative hypothesis might be that these belts were products of a post-Urartian era, testifying instead to the persistence of exogenous elements assimilated in a context of re-emergence of local traditions.

The analysis of the belts has led to the identification of different iconographic motifs present in the decoration of these objects, which will be subsequently analysed.

1361 **B-Ay-1**.
1362 See, for example, the cases of Golovino and Hasanlu, discussed below.


Figurative bronze belts: 40 specimens
4
20
2
8
6
"Dynamic"
Static / linear
Abstract
Others
Unclear/unfinished


Geometric bronze belts: 19 specimens
2
4
13
Dotted
Hybrid-dotted
Zig-zag

6.2.6.2.1. Geometric motifs

Zig-zag[1363]: this motif is also present in royal art for the entire duration of the Kingdom of Urartu; it is a local element characteristic of a period after the Middle Bronze Age, which was also assimilated by Urartian royal art. Some local examples are present in the decoration of the Caucasian belts from Kirovakan[1364] and Mingečaur[1365].

Lines of dots[1366]: this decoration developed in the area in question at an unspecified time, probably after the Middle Bronze Age, later being absorbed into Urartian popular and royal art. In general, the case of Hasanlu, from which come almost twenty belts worn by the inhabitants of the site at the very end of what is called Level IV, shows that this type of belt must have been the most commonly used in this region. Numerically, the specimens from Hasanlu almost double the total of all those found outside of north-western Iran, which suggests the possibility that this type of decorative motif originated in this territory[1367], and only later spread to neighbouring areas[1368].

Cruciform elements[1369]: these elements appearing on "Urartian" belts are extremely varied, sometimes as the result of the union of different geometric patterns such as, for example, palmettes. Caucasian belts exhibit only one type of cruciform element, similar to a Maltese cross, which occurs for example on the belts from Širakavan[1370] and Treli[1371].

Dividing elements of various shapes[1372]: the most common dividing motif is the one composed of several variations on the theme of the sacred tree, consisting of several superimposed garlands indicating the trunk and branches, ending in buds or stylized pomegranates. Some examples of these variations are recognizable in the presence and reworking of Levantine elements within Assyrian art, especially in ivory objects[1373]; in the Neo-Hittite area, these decorations are present on several reliefs[1374].

Guilloche[1375]: the use of this decorative motif is attested since the 3rd millennium in both Mesopotamia and Iran[1376]. In the Caucasian area, it is found on several belts, including, for example, one from Bjni[1377]

1363 See the belts **B-Alt-2**, **B-Bur-2**, **B-Bur-4**, **B-Tli-3**, **B-Yer-3**.
1364 Esayan 1984: abb. 10.59.
1365 Esayan 1984: abb. 22.66.
1366 See the belts **B-Ay-1**, **B-Liç-1**, **B-Gol-1-3**, **B-Gy-1-2**, **B-Kal-1-3**, **B-Kb-5-7**, **B-Mel-1-2**, **B-Much-1**, **B-Top-1**, **B-Sot-1**.
1367 See also Rubinson 2012: 395-396.
1368 See also Khanmohammadi *et al. forthcoming*.
1369 See for example the belts Dedeli-2 and Yeghegnadzor-1.
1370 Esayan 1984: abb. 22.63.
1371 Esayan 1984: abb. 23.71.
1372 See the belts **B-Ani-1**, **B-Çav-2**, **B-Dil-1**, **B-Ded-1**, **B-Kb-2-4**, **B-Met-1**, **B-Nor-3**, **B-Shi-1**, **B-Yeg-1**, **B-Zak-1**, **B-Sot-1**.
1373 See Mallowan - Herrmann 1978: pls. VI, XXXIV; Herrmann 1986: pls. 38, 39, 40, 41, 198-213, 318.1223, 319.1224-1227.
1374 See, for example, Orthmann 1971: pl. 16g, from Karatepe.
1375 See the belts **B-Alt-1**, **B-Ded-4**, **B-Shi-1**, **B-Suç-1**.
1376 Bunnens 2006: 73.
1377 Esayan 1984: fig. 6.17.

and one from Aparan[1378]; an entire Caucasian belt, from the site of Sanain[1379], is decorated exclusively with this motif. Neo-Assyrian art has yielded numerous examples of *guilloche* motifs, both on local[1380] and Levantine[1381] ivories and on wall paintings[1382]. The *guilloche* decoration appears on several Neo-Hittite stone bas-reliefs[1383].

Sun disc: this decorative element appears only once on Urartian belts, on the exemplar Karmir-blur-5, and can be interpreted as a winged sun disc; it was probably devoid of its original meaning, reworked and resemantized by the local populations. This element has a clear Assyrian origin, associated with representations of sun gods. It is depicted on the belt worn by Aššurbanipal in a bas-relief from Nineveh[1384]; in the Urartian area, it is found on several seals[1385], a steatite container[1386], and a decorated medallion[1387], the latter two from Karmir-blur. On the Karmir-blur-5 belt, this symbol is depicted in connection with a person positioned below the solar disc: this figure, who can be interpreted as a "worshipper", is kneeling or in *Knielauf*, with his arms raised as if holding the solar disc. A similar scene may be seen on numerous Mesopotamian seals from the Middle-Assyrian era[1388] and Urartian seals[1389] as well.

Garland: this decoration is present on only two "Urartian" belts, Ani Pemza-1 and Zakim-1; it may also be found on the impression of a cylindrical seal on a *bulla* from Bastam[1390], as well as on a seal from Çavuştepe[1391], while it has no attestations in the Caucasian and Assyrian sphere.

1378 Esayan 1984: fig. 6.18.
1379 Esayan 1984: fig. 9.29.
1380 See, for example, Mallowan – Davies 1970: pls. VI.10, VIII.22, XVII.61a.
1381 See, for example, Herrmann 1986: pls. 19.84, 80, 81.353.
1382 See, for example, Albenda 2005: 10, 101, 102, 103, 104.
1383 Orthmann 1971: pls. 2.a, 24, 25.b/d.
1384 Collins 2008: 132.
1385 See for example CTU IV Sig. 21-1; Ayvazian 2006: BA 04-09, BA-22, BA-29.
1386 Kept in the History Museum of Armenia, inventory number 2010-148.
1387 Kept in the History Museum of Armenia, inventory number 2010-159.
1388 Frankfort 1939: pl. XXXIII b/e; for the Neo-Assyrian era, Frankfort 1939: pl. XXXIV.b.
1389 Ayvazian 2006: 639, KB 02; Erzen 1988: pl. XXXVIII.b.
1390 See CTU IV BA 05.
1391 Erzen 1988: pl. XXXVIII.a.

6.2.6.2.2. Floral motifs

Rosettes[1392]*, palmettes*[1393]*, bud garlands*[1394]: these motifs[1395] clearly appear on numerous Assyrian art objects, for example in wall paintings[1396] and stone reliefs[1397], and on various ivory pieces of Levantine origin[1398]; rosettes are also depicted on a Neo-Hittite relief portraying a hunting scene[1399].

Sacred trees: these representations, considered as part of the scene and not exclusively filler motifs, only appear in the decoration of the Nor Aresh-1 belt: they are represented as carved on the surface of a sort of "stele", flanked by two figures; exact Assyrian parallels are known[1400]. In the Urartian sphere, they are also found on some seals from Ayanis and Bastam[1401].

Medallions: the circular decorative medallions that characterize the Karmir-blur-5, Karmir-blur-6 and Çavuştepe-2 belts are present, with some iconographic variations, on Assyrian ivory objects[1402]; it is evident that on the belts they have been reproduced in a more schematic and stylized style than in the original models.

6.2.6.2.3. Figurative motifs

Zoomorphic figures

Bulls, both walking and rampant, are taken from Assyrian art[1403] and reshaped according to local taste, making them finer and more ornamental. The figures of bovids on the Caucasian belts are clearly different from those of the Urartian period; an example is a belt from Akhtala[1404], with stylized walking bulls, perhaps characterized more like pack animals than decorative animals.
Lions, both walking and rampant, inspired by the Assyrian figures of the reliefs produced from the time of Aššurnasirpal II; unlike the majority of Assyrian lions, the Urartian specimens appear fixed and motionless, suggesting that they are static, which is underlined by the repetitiveness of the scenes, later standardized by royal art. There are a few exceptions to this trend, to be found in the four belts Kayalıdere-1, Nor Aresh-2, Yerevan-2 and Burmageçit-4: they refer to the Assyrian model of the lion

1392 See the belts **B-Ded-2**, **B-Ded-4**, **B-Guş-1**, **B-Met-1**, **B-Sah-1**, **B-Tli-1-2**, **B-Yeg-2**. They are composed of a circular element in the centre, surrounded by several petals that are almost oval.
1393 See the belts **B-Çav-2**, **B-Ded-4**, **B-Giy-1**, **B-Met-1**, **B-Tli-2**, **B-Yeg-1**, **B-Zak-1**. They are composed of a small central trunk to which twigs of semi-circular shape are attached.
1394 See the belts **B-Ani-1**, **B-Çav-2**, **B-Giy-2**, **B-Kb-1**.
1395 All these motifs also appear in Albenda 2005: 115.
1396 See, for example, Albenda 2005: 10.
1397 See, for example, Collins 2008: 57, 61, 77, 106.
1398 See, for example, Herrmann 1986: pls. 222, 226, 227; Herrmann 1992: pls. 7.55, 9.56, 52, 53.
1399 Orthmann 1971: pl. 51.c.
1400 Herrmann 1986: pls. 143.602, 146.617-9, 147.615. For the stone reliefs, see for example Collins 2008: 119.
1401 Ayvazian 2006: 202-203.
1402 Herrmann, 1986: pl. 323.1242; Herrmann – Laidlaw - Coffey 2009: pls. 2.15, 11.
1403 Herrmann 1986: pl. I.1; Mallowan - Davies 1970: pls. XXXII, XXXIII.124-125. An emblematic bas-relief is that from Nimrud from the period of Aššurnasirpal II, kept in the collection of the Vorderasiatische Museum in Berlin: not only does it represent a bull very similar to the Urartian images, but it also shows that the bull hunting theme was present in Assyria.
1404 Esayan 1984: fig. 14.46.

hunt of Ashurnasirpal II, from which they also take the position of the archers on the chariot. Generally speaking, there are a few completely secondary details that modify the individual lion figures, for example, the position of the tail; there is a tendency to depict mostly rampant lions, while walking lions are almost always confined within a lateral "cartouche". As for the bulls, the Caucasian representation of lions differs a lot from that of the Urartians: examples may be seen on the belts from Aschti Blur[1405] and Bjni[1406]. Both bulls and lions, always walking, are represented in Urartian royal art.
Birds often occur in Mesopotamian art in connection with death[1407]; in the Southern Caucasus, such iconography is attested from the Middle Bronze Age[1408]. In the "Urartian" sphere, this iconography appears only once, on the Şahtaxtı-1 belt, where a raptor is depicted holding the head of a decapitated figure in its beak. As far as Urartian royal art is concerned, there is only one representation of birds: it appears on the basalt block from Kef Kalesi with an inscription by Rusa, son of Argišti, and depicts two birds of prey, probably eagles, holding hares in their beaks[1409].
Horses, depicted in an extremely realistic way like all the animals present in Urartian art, royal or local; the model is Assyrian[1410].

Anthropomorphic figures

Knights, archers, infantrymen and soldiers on chariots are known from numerous Assyrian bas-reliefs[1411]: on the belts, they are represented both in hunting scenes[1412] and military parade scenes[1413], without variations in weapons or positions; often, knights and archers especially are represented individually, not inserted in any specific type of scene[1414]. There is a close parallel on a Neo-Hittite relief from Zincirli[1415], where the same scene of soldiers on a chariot, common also in Urartian royal art, is represented: the Neo-Hittite and Urartian scenes share the same characterization of the soldiers, wearing the characteristic pointed helmet.
Figures standing on animals, known above all from Anatolian art, also appear on Mesopotamian seals from the Akkad period[1416]; in the Assyrian context, this representation is found on seals from the Middle and Neo-Assyrian periods[1417]. The characters shown standing on animals are divine; in the Urartian sphere, while in royal art the depiction of standing figures is exclusive to divinities, on the belts this format is not only reserved for the gods: the Dedeli-1 and Yeghegnadzor-1 belts show simple soldiers, characterized by a pointed helmet and a bow, represented hunting while standing on the back of animals,

1405 Esayan 1984: fig. 15.49.
1406 Esayan 1984: fig. 15.52.
1407 See Dolce 2014: 61-80.
1408 See, for example, the silver cup of Karashamb (preserved in the History Museum of Armenia, inventory number 2867-1) and the belt from Astchi Blur (Esayan 1984: fig. 15.49).
1409 A similar scene, associating birds of prey with hares, is represented on a Neo-Hittite relief from Karatepe; Orthmann 1971: pl. 15.a.
1410 See, for example, Collins 2008: 35, 39-40, 112-113.
1411 See, for example, the following reliefs of the time of Šalmaneser III preserved in the British Museum: BM 124534, BM 124558, BM 124579, BM 124657, BM 124858, BM 124930.
1412 See the belts **B-Nor-1**, **B-Bur-1**, **B-Kay-1**, **B-Yer-1**.
1413 Only on **B-Çav-3**.
1414 See for example the Metsamor-1 belt: here the knights and soldiers on the chariot are represented in a line of rampant animals and hybrids, perhaps in an attempt to reproduce an original hunting scene emptied of its narrative meaning.
1415 Orthmann 1971: pl. 60.c.
1416 Frankfort 1939: pl. XXII.e.
1417 Frankfort 1939: pls. XXXII, XXXIII.

both real and imaginary. It is quite likely that this depiction is a slavish imitation of desemantised exogenous models, which would therefore represent simple soldiers rather than gods. These narrative variants, different from royal art, are obvious manifestations of popular art.

Mischwesen

Those figures appear to be more anchored to a local taste, fanciful in their characterization, but clearly show an Assyrian-Levantine derivation[1418]. Compared to the possible original models, the representations on these belts appear more imaginative.
The metal belt during the Urartian era may be interpreted not only as objects synthesising Assyrian and local elements but also as a sort of vehicle of *Urartization*[1419] in the northern territories of Urartu, given the great variety of its decorations and the conspicuous quantity of specimens, superior to all the other finds constituting royal art. A hypothetical trajectory for the spread of belts might have initially started in the South Caucasus and moved to the territories that later became the centre of Urartu[1420]: once the use of the object had been assimilated and reinterpreted according to new Assyrian tastes, it is possible that, with the advent of Urartu in the northern territories in the 8th century BCE, the diffusion of the decorative elements present on belts, followed an inverse trajectory (*Urartization*), spreading Assyrian decorative motifs, now reinterpreted and reused by the Urartians, in the northern areas.

Therefore, there are many reasons why understanding belts' use is of fundamental importance in the attempt to reconstruct more complex dynamics. There is no doubt that the bronze belt is one of the most representative object types in the entire region during the pre-Urartian, Urartian and probably post-Urartian periods. It is evident that the use and diffusion of metal belts followed different trajectories of development; in general, the belt is characterized by a function more connected to its symbolic aspect, a function probably maintained until the emergence of the state of Urartu, when, from being a status symbol, it became an object of more widespread diffusion, probably for aesthetic reasons. For the same reason, belts were characterized as the main vehicles for the diffusion of iconographic elements. The fact that already during the years of Urartu's formation belts were part of a popular or local tradition is demonstrated by two circumstances: the first is the absolute heterogeneity of their iconographic apparatus, while the second is the total absence of belts directly associated with the *Urartian state assemblage*, most clearly due to the absence of inscribed specimens. For these reasons, it would be reductive to consider that the belt, widespread during the Urartian era, was a direct manifestation of Urartian royalty, as they are decisive for our understanding of the historical and social events that took place in the South Caucasus and the Armenian Highlands in the first half of the 1st millennium BCE.

6.2.6.3. The possible origins of the Urartian style: popular and royal arts

The analysis of Urartian art necessarily took place after having answered the question "what is definable as 'Urartian'?" The answer, like many questions concerning the Urartian state, is by no means

1418 See, for example, the ivories from Nimrud in Mallowan – Davies 1970: pl. XXXIII.122-123.
1419 Urartu acted as an intermediary between Assyria and the local communities north of the Eastern Taurus and the Zagros. With the emergence of the Urartian state, the direct influence of Assyria on the region was interrupted, to such an extent that there was a transition from a process of *Assyrization* to one of *Urartization*.
1420 The hybrid specimens might be dated to this period; see the **B-Mal-1** and **B-Tli-3** belts.

straightforward[1421]. What can be said with fair certainty, at this point in the research, is that the analysis of supposedly Urartian materials must be carried out on two different levels: one, which has always been the main level, if not the only one considered within *Urartological* research, concerns artefacts of royal production, bearing cuneiform inscriptions indicating a precise sovereign; the second level, whose distinction from the first is still not totally clear, is that of locally produced objects, "popular" objects, if one wants to use this term, which can, in style and iconography, be influenced by, or even influence, royal art. Since, at the moment, there is no formal criterion to distinguish one from the other, other than the extreme heterogeneity that characterises popular art as opposed to the rigorous and rigid style of royal art, the unequivocal parameter that has been chosen to divide the artefacts into the two categories is the presence or absence of a royal inscription. The main, characteristic artefact of popular art, already identified in Van Loon's work as an example of the so-called *Popular Style*[1422], is the bronze belt: it may also be the key to a better understanding of the relationship between royal and popular art[1423].

6.2.6.3.1. The role of bronze belts

If one checks the reference parameter for the identification of a low chronological limit of the diffusion of "Transcaucasian" metal belts, Castelluccia reports the statement "the lower chronological limit is characterized by the presence of Urartian metalwork"[1424]. The chronological limit is a period of about two and a half centuries, more or less half the time interval in which the diffusion of Southern Caucasian belts is placed, not specifying the relationship between Urartian objects and "Transcaucasian" belts found in the same context. It is not possible to provide exact dates in the absence of certain chronological handholds, and in the case of metal artefacts it is virtually impossible to make credible proposals: precisely because of the material of which they are composed, they must be considered valuable objects, probable hereditary bequests, artefacts preserved for generations and handed down from father to son, which cannot rely on any proposed dating for the context of discovery, as it would only mark the ultimate limit of their use. What, with relative certainty, can instead be said about metal belts, is that they have spread in the South Caucasus area since the late Bronze Age and that they remained in use at least until the end of the Urartian domination. There is, in short, no clear chronological difference in the production of Transcaucasian belts compared to the so-called Urartian belts: there is not even, in addition, a clear geographical difference in their diffusion, which for the most part overlaps on the territory of the Armenian Highlands.

What differentiates the so-called "Urartian" belts from the "Transcaucasian" ones is defined by two key elements, one morphological and one stylistic: the clasp of Urartian belts differs from that of Southern Caucasian belts because, unlike the latter which have more complex buckles, it is composed of a ring buckle. Stylistically, on the other hand, Urartian belts are characterised by a sort of realism in the decoration of the artefacts, even when the depictions represent fantastic creatures, which totally distances them from Southern Caucasian belts. This "fantastic realism" is inspired by Assyrian art: the

[1421] See § I.7.1.
[1422] Van Loon 1966: 168-169.
[1423] The term *Urartian popular art* is, unfortunately, imperfect: for reasons of brevity it is chosen to be used, alternating with the shorter formula *popular art*, but a more correct definition of the phenomenon would be that of *popular art of Urartian area and period*, since it is not at all assumed that the Kingdom of Urartu was ethnically homogeneous; see the discussion in § I.7.1.
[1424] Castelluccia 2017: 390.

orthostats of the Neo-Assyrian palaces, from the ones of Ashurnasirpal II in Nimrud to the residence of Ashurbanipal in Nineveh, represent scenes of hunting, parade and banquet with extreme adherence to reality, an element that remains even when depicting fantastic creatures, *apkallū*, chimaeras. The adherence to reality, taken from the Assyrian tradition, is precisely reproduced in the decoration of the so-called "Urartian" belts, abandoning the style characteristic of Caucasian belts and adopting both the themes and modes of representation typical of Assyrian art.

The first issue that might arise concerns the origin of this inspiration: considering it unlikely that the Urartian metalworkers had visited the Assyrian royal palaces in person, the answer can only rely on the circulation of seals and ivories that would show the same depictions of hunts, military parades and fantastic creatures; ivories, in particular, offer a lot of useful material for this research. Among the numerous specimens published by Mallowan and Davies in 1970, some plates with a carved decoration representing battle or hunting scenes[1425] and military parades[1426] stand out; the seals, on the other hand, show numerous hunting scenes, with representations similar to those of the palace orthostats[1427]. What is different in the belts, compared to the Urartian royal art, is the wide variety of themes and, sometimes, the dynamism with which the scenes are rendered: one should think, for example, of the Kayalıdere-1 belt[1428], preserved only for a few fragments and bearing a lion hunt scene. The scene itself, clearly modelled on an original Assyrian one that finds unequivocal parallels in the orthostats of the palaces of Nimrud and Nineveh, is extremely vivid and dynamic, with hunters and lions in different positions: the image returned is different from the static scenes tending to be associated with Urartian royal art, and finds innumerable parallels in the Assyrian glyptic[1429] and ivory carving of North Syrian area[1430], although the most fitting comparison derives from the lion hunting scenes depicted on the orthostats of the Assyrian palaces[1431]. A further scene represented in the Assyrian glyptic and present on the belts of the Urartian area, in particular on a specimen found in Karmir-blur[1432], is the image of an Atlas, or a kneeled worshipper, placed under a winged solar disc[1433]. The scene, even if it has a much older origin[1434], appears in several Neo-Assyrian seals[1435], while it does not seem to have any correspondence

[1425] Mallowan – Davies 1970: pl. XVI.55.
[1426] Mallowan – Davies 1970: pl. XVII.61a.
[1427] See, for example, Collon 1987: 154, s. 693.
[1428] Burney 1966: 78 fig. 10, pl. IX.b, pl. XI.b.
[1429] Collon 1987: 154-157, specifically referring to the aforementioned seal number 693, "the scene is closely paralleled by Assyrian reliefs of the 9th century BC depicting king Assurnasirpal II" (155); Collon 2001: pls. VIII, XXIV, XXV.
[1430] Mallowan – Herrmann 1974: pl. III. Winter 1976: 26, notes that the decoration of the ivory plate under examination has a fitting parallel in Neo-Hittite art, in particular on a relief depicting a lion hunt from the Enclosure gate in Sakçe Gözü (Winter 1976: 37, fig. 21). Both the ivory plate and the relief were dated to the time of Tiglath-Pileser III, around the middle of the 8th century BCE.
[1431] See, for the time of Ashurnasirpal II, the relief BM 124534 from the North-West Palace in Nimrud; for the time of Assurbanipal, for example, the relief BM 124859 from the North Palace in Nineveh.
[1432] Piotrovskij 1967: fig. 31.
[1433] Collon 2001: 85, defines these representations as "Atlantid figures", an evolution of a theme that originated in the 2nd millennium BCE and had a sort of revival in the Neo-Assyrian era starting from the 9th century BCE. Also Ayvazian 2006: 131-132, associates this image, also present on three Urartian seals (one of unknown origin), to the figure of the Atlas; however, "The sacred nature of the image is further supported by its traditional association with the Urartian sun god Shiwini, whose symbols include a winged sundisc, a colt and a swastika. The image of an Atlas figure supporting a winged sundisc may have served as one of Shiwini's many apostasies" (131-132). If it is specified that the winged solar disc was a hypostasis of the god Šiuini, it can also be considered likely that the kneeling figure depicted below it is a kneeling worshipper.
[1434] Collon 2001:85; Matthews 1990: 108-109.
[1435] Collon 2001: pl. XVI.

in the Assyrian palace art. Thanks to the proposed examples, starting from the time of Assurnasirpal II (884-859 BCE), one can trace the outlines of what may be defined as a sort of *cultural popular koiné* circulating in the Near East: this *koiné* took as a starting point the royal art of the Neo-Assyrian area and, following that model of royal derivation, was proposed elsewhere on different supports. Specifically, the lion hunting scenes, originally conveying a message of royalty, being the sport of the kings *par excellence*, were used in the popular *koiné* of the 9th-8th centuries BCE as a simple dynamic decoration, losing the symbolic value of the sovereignty that characterized them from the beginning. The depiction of Atlases/worshippers is also present on Neo-Hittite seals, even if the winged solar disc is not represented over them: the position, however, a sort of *Knielauf*, is very similar to that of the characters on **B-Kb-3** and on some "Urartian" seals[1436], so much so that the decoration of the Neo-Hittite specimens is called "kneeling/running (winged) man"[1437].

The two identified scenes, the lion hunt and the Atlas/worshipper, in addition to the common presence within that sort of Assyrianizing cultural *koiné*, present another significant common detail: neither of the two representations is attested, in the Urartian context, outside of the belt and seal decoration, which means that these scenes remain excluded from the repertoire of royal art. There are numerous images depicted only in the decoration of metal belts, part of the *popular* artistic repertoire[1438], which have no counterpart in the art of the sovereigns, static and repetitive: in addition to scenes of hunting and kneeling worshippers, one can mention the many examples of *Mischwesen*[1439], the rampant lions and bulls, the ibexes. Attention must once again be paid above all to the hunting scenes, which in the Assyrian context convey a message closely linked to the sovereign's kingship and power, but which, on the other hand, are totally absent from royal production in Urartu: it is possible, therefore, that the scene was desemantized within the popular *koiné*, and that the Urartian sovereigns had chosen not to represent it on their objects precisely because it is no longer connected to the court environment. For this hypothesis, the total loss of meaning of one of the most relevant scenes of Assyrian royalty, it is necessary to suppose that this representation had been circulating for some time in the Southern Caucasian area, and that it was perceived by the inhabitants only as a simple hunting scene, with no allusions to the royal sphere. This would make it possible to postulate an effective circulation of objects decorated with such scenes in a period before the emergence of the Kingdom of Urartu, at least from the 9th century B.C., during the reign of Ashurnasirpal II.

The diffusion of metal belts, a material typical of Caucasian cultures, would be an element of continuity with the region's past: although the iconography introduced in the 9th century is characteristic of Assyrian culture, the support on which it was reproduced is totally original and peculiar to the Caucasian area. The belt itself, in fact, is a handy object that allows the development of a complex decoration without requiring any further skill from the craftsmen of the area, who were already experts metalworkers thanks to the presence of raw materials on the territory; what still needs to be analysed is the wide distribution of the object in the Urartian area during the period of the Kingdom's life. What can be assumed is that the circulation of materials within the Urartian state contributed to the diffusion

[1436] Even if the Urartian worshippers aren't represented as winged on the seals; Ayvazian 2006: 130-132.
[1437] Kubala 2015: 115. The seals in question are catalogued as n° 18, 21 and 51, and are all dated between the 10th and 8th centuries BCE.
[1438] See in this regard Van Loon's reflection 1966: 168, which considers belts as an expression of popular art.
[1439] Which have disappeared from Urartian royal art since the time of Išpuini and Minua, when they are represented as mounts of the gods on Anzaf's shield (Belli 1999); two androcephalous bulls on the sides of a sacred tree also appear on a seal, probably royal, bearing the name of a Rusa (CTU IV, Sig. 19-1; **S-Kb-5**).

of metal belts from east to west, in present-day eastern Turkey: once the Assyrian themes and depictions in the area of the Armenian Highlands have been assimilated, probably after the time of Ashurnasirpal II, one hypothesis could be that the Urartian advent in the area of Lake Sevan during the reign of Argišti I (785/780-756/755 BCE) introduced the metal belts among the Urartian customs, and that later those were assimilated within popular art and spread further west, in the area of Lake Van. This process would explain the presence of Southern Caucasian belts in the area of eastern Turkey, for example at the site of Altıntepe, where a silver belt[1440] was found with the same decoration observed on a specimen from Grab 48 of the Paradiesfestung in Kalakent, in present-day Azerbaijan[1441]. A further element of continuity with the tradition of the South Caucasus is the *cartouche* that some "Urartian" belts present at the right end: it is a sort of rectangular space usually decorated with an emblem, for example a sacred tree, or with almost "heraldic" symbols, often three or four superimposed lions. This cartouche, especially the lions-type, finds precise comparisons with what is called "plaque de ceinture rectangulaire"[1442] found in the necropolis of Koban-Le-Haut, in the Republic of North Ossetia-Alania, in particular with two plaques showing a decoration made up of animals facing right, arranged vertically.

The diffusion of decorated belts in the Urartian area can however be hypothesised along two lines: the first is that the belts spread in the area of the Kingdom while they still carried a "Transcaucasian"-type decoration, and that therefore the advent of the Assyrian-type decoration, already accepted by the local populations of the Upper Tigris basin, is to be found in the area of Lake Van from the 8th century BCE onwards; the second hypothesis is that the belts of the Armenian Highlands had already assimilated the Assyrian decoration before the advent of the Urartians, and therefore they were already acquired in their final form, which then spread in the territory of Urartu. The first hypothesis would explain the formal modifications of the belts, whose morphology changes with respect to the Caucasian one, and would trace a line of diffusion of the Assyrian decoration from the Upper Tigris basin to the area of present-day northern Armenia; the second hypothesis, on the other hand, envisages that the area of Assyrian influence in the period before the emergence of the Urartian state was wider than that currently considered, extending far north and east of the area of Lake Van, and that the object in question had been assumed without undergoing modifications. Assyrianizing belts, however, can hardly be considered Urartian *tout court*: the decoration was in fact derived from a popular *koiné* of older date, and, fundamentally, the motifs and terms of the decorations were not derived from Urartian royal art, the only proper Urartian art. This assumption is not problematic for the definition of belts as "Urartian" except in the light of Zimansky's reflections on Urartian *State Assemblage*[1443], whose meaning is summarised by Rubinson[1444]: "As Zimansky posited, the objects generally called 'Urartian' are part of a state assemblage, associated with the central government". Given the *popular* nature of metal belts, and with the help of Van Loon[1445], who states that "(...) the bronze belts found mostly in the graves of Urartian commoners or provincials, varied from place to place", it is possible to conclude that they were not part of this centralised state assemblage controlled by the kings, and therefore they cannot be properly defined as *Urartian*. However, it can be said that these belts are of Urartian era, or of Urartian

[1440] Özgüç 1983: 37, plate XVI, c-d.
[1441] Nagel – Strommenger 1985: taf. 22.
[1442] Chantre 1886: pls. X-Xbis.
[1443] Zimansky 1995: 111.
[1444] Rubinson 2012: 396.
[1445] Van Loon 1966: 168.

area, or even of Urartian sphere, but not that they derived from Urartian royal art, which, being the only one presenting inscriptions qualifying it as Urartian, can be considered *the* Urartian art.

Finally, further consideration must be given to Urartian royal art, which does not include many of the elements present on belts: what can be proposed is that, thanks to the diffusion of belts and Assyrianizing motifs on a large scale, royal art has taken its cue from these objects to create a repertoire suitable for the taste of the kings. For this reason, as already mentioned, many of the scenes emptied of their original meaning are not recovered, while individual motifs are selected, such as bulls and lions, military parades, sacred trees, which are re-proposed by the sovereign on objects dedicated by them. A scene present in both royal and popular art is the frieze of what were originally depicted as gods standing on their mounts: it makes its appearance on the Anzaf shield, from the time of Išpuini and Minua, in a very vivid and dynamic representation depicting a battle between the Urartian gods, armed in different ways, against the enemy army. The belts[1446] show this type of depiction, warriors standing on animals, to recreate hunting scenes, losing the intention of transmitting the original message; the gods, on the other hand, depicted only on two belts, both coming from the Karmir-blur site, are static characters placed on the backs of different animals, either walking or running, and holding a pomegranate branch in their hands. The scene of the army of gods is no longer depicted in Urartian royal art after the reign of Išpuini and Minua, although the representations of gods continued in royal art following the same model as the character standing on his mount[1447]: the explanation may lie in two factors linked to the inspiration of royal art. The first hypothesis is that the scene was not recognised by the population as a battle between the gods and the enemy army, which has a further confirmation in the same approach to hunting scenes in the popular repertoire; the second hypothesis is that this iconography was not entirely part of the Assyrianizing popular *koiné* but was an *ex novo* introduction made by the sovereigns, which, however, failed to find the desired consensus.

The first hypothesis can also be accompanied by an explanation of a religious nature: in numerous Urartian inscriptions, one can read " Ḫaldi marched ahead of the troops"[1448], without ever mentioning the other gods, who were probably not associated with the war. On the Anzaf shield, the leader of the army of divinities is probably the god Ḫaldi: Zimansky[1449] pointed out that the image depicted was clearly different from all the other figures of divinities, probably because it did not represent a god, but instead the sovereign leading the divinities in battle. This conception had probably not found approval at a popular level, and had therefore been dropped, reusing instead the iconography of the warriors standing on animals within the hunting scenes. This iconography was also extremely present on many Assyrian seals: although in these cases the figures represented were clearly divine, they wore weapons, usually bows and arrows, which qualified them as warriors, and fought against hybrid creatures[1450]; from the warrior deity to the simple warrior the step is, iconographically speaking, short. Also in this case, therefore, the iconography may have come from the area of the Assyrian *koiné*: this data, moreover, could lead to excluding the hypothesis that the diffusion of the figurative belts, bearers of the iconography derived from the Assyrian popular *koiné*, occurred after the Urartian conquest of the Armenian Plateau region, in the first half of the 8th century BCE, since the date of Anzaf's shield is

[1446] **B-Yeg-1**, **B-Ded-2**.
[1447] See, for example, the so-called Ḫaldi of the Erebuni paintings, and the column base from Adılcevaz, or the relief from Kef Kalesi.
[1448] See, as an example, CTU A 8-2, l. 30b, and many others.
[1449] Zimansky 2012.
[1450] See, for example, Collon 2001: pl. XXIV.232-292.

certainly earlier. An observation that can instead be raised is that this iconography also circulated in the form of perishable materials, no longer preserved, and it is not connected to the spread of the belts: unfortunately, this hypothesis must be confined to the speculation sphere, since there is no material data to support it. What can instead be hypothesized, with the support of the belts, is that the *royal* Urartian art took inspiration from the *popular koiné*, spread throughout the territory that will be part of the Kingdom of Urartu, drawing on its heritage according to the new meanings that the local population had attributed to each of the images derived from Assyrian art. Therefore, for example, it will no longer be the lion hunt that iconographically represents royalty, but only the lion, which is in fact often depicted, in a walking position, in royal art. This hypothesis could be the answer to the question raised by Azarpay[1451]: "the distinction drawn by M.N. van Loon between an Urartian 'court' and a 'popular' artistic style may explain some features peculiar to the provincial art of peripheral regions, such as that of the Urartian level at Altın-tepe. Yet even there the innovations of the 'court' style are clearly echoed in local works as shown by the occurrence on the Altın-tepe bronze strip, dated to the seventh century B.C., of the cable pattern which constitutes the border ornament on inscribed Urartian shields of the same century"; in fact, the innovations would not be typical of static royal art, but rather of the more dynamic popular art, which could change and update its repertoire based on the *koiné* spread from the area of the Upper Tigris basin[1452] to the area of Lake Sevan.

The close interconnection between Urartian royal and popular art derived from the Assyrian cultural *koiné* is extremely evident, thanks to the numerous motifs that popular art inspires to royal art. It would seem almost logical that the inspiration of royal art could only be an already solid base formed in the area of the Kingdom of Urartu since before its emergence, both because the repertoire of scenes, themes and iconographic motifs is already formed at least from the second Urartian king, Išpuini, and because of a question of legitimacy of Urartian sovereignty: the *ex novo* creation of an art inspired by the Assyrian one, without any previous ties with the Urartian territory, would not have helped the process of cohesion and loyalty of the local population to the sovereigns.

6.2.6.3.2. An analysis of the most emblematic bronze belts

In order to better understand the differences between popular art in the Urartian area and Urartian royal art, several belts considered as fundamental examples will be analysed to show the connection between Urartian area belts and neighbouring artistic heritage.

The first belts, whose peculiarity has already been discussed above, are those from the sites of Kayalıdere[1453], Burmageçit[1454], Nor Aresh[1455] and Yerevan[1456]: the depicted scenes show lion hunts, a typical subject of Neo-Assyrian art, reinterpreted according to the Assyrian popular *koiné*. In this key, the hunter is no longer exclusively the king, as already in some Assyrian seals[1457]: the scene loses its

[1451] Azarpay 1968: 73.
[1452] An article that explains in detail the spread of Assyrian culture in the Upper Tigris basin is Koroğlu 2015, in which the transmission of artistic models is not mentioned: however, it seems clear that this aspect of the culture could have easily spread in the area of the future Kingdom of Urartu in the pre-Urartian era.
[1453] Burney 1966: 78 fig. 10, pl. IX.b, pl. XI.b; **B-Kay-1**.
[1454] Yıldırım 1991: 10.8-9; **B-Bur-1**.
[1455] Barnett 1963, 198, fig. 47; **B-Nor-1**.
[1456] Esayan *et al*. 1991: pls. XVI-XVII; **B-Yer-1**.
[1457] See, for example, Collon 2001: pl. II.19.

royal connotation and it is not adopted by the Urartian sovereigns in their artworks. The preserved fragments of the Kayalıdere belt, in particular, are extremely relevant to the analysis of Urartian hunting scenes: they bear an iconography which, in Assyrian hunting scenes, covers a period of time from the reign of Ashurnasirpal II to that of Ashurbanipal. Starting the analysis from above, one can see an archer pointing his arrow at a rampant lion, with his front legs open and his snout roaring: the position of the lion is precisely reflected in a relief of Ashurbanipal found in the North Palace of Nineveh[1458], where the lion has already been hit on its head by an arrow. In the lower register of the scene, the hunters are on a chariot: while the lion bites the wheel of the vehicle, one of the three hunters turns towards the animal, ready to shoot an arrow. This scene, on the other hand, is an exact copy of an Assyrian relief from the North-West Palace of Nimrud dating back to the time of Ashurnasirpal II[1459], who is the protagonist of the scene, firing his arrows at the lion; a further detail that can be seen on the right of the scene concerns the presence of a lion under the belly of the horse driving the cart, another parallel with the same Assyrian relief from which the main scene is taken. The Urartian metalworkers, however, did not reproduce the crouching lion, as visible in the Assyrian relief, perhaps due to a lack of experience in rendering animals in this position. The last scene, visible in the lowest register, shows instead a lion killed with a spear by three warriors on a chariot: also this image is clearly derived from a relief from the time of Assurbanipal II, coming from the North Palace of Nineveh[1460]. Hunting is a very present theme on the seals during the reign of Ashurnasirpal II, and it is always carried out by an archer, kneeling, standing or on a chariot, who generally hunts a bull[1461]: this detail is compared with the Urartian area belt called **B-Nor-1**, where a mixed lion and bull's hunt is represented[1462]; the bull hunt is not very well represented in the reliefs of the Assyrian palaces, where it appears in particular on a relief dated to the time of Ashurnasirpal II and kept in the Vorderasiatische Museum in Berlin[1463]; this scene also appears on an ivory panel of "North Syrian" style coming from Nimrud and dated to the first half of the 8th century BCE[1464]. Dynamic hunting scenes such as those found on the Kayalıdere belt, however, do not appear to be widespread in glyptic or ivory carving, leading one to believe either that the metalworker had seen the Neo-Assyrian reliefs in person, or that copies of these reliefs were circulating in a reduced format in the area where the Assyrian popular *koine* developed. The scene of the archer making a twist on the chariot is shown on all the belts with hunting scenes, a sign of the brilliant innovation introduced by the sculptor of Ashurnasirpal II[1465] and the fortune that this iconography has had in the Near Eastern area[1466]. A further detail that recalls Mesopotamian contexts is the presence of a bird on a fragment of the Kayalıdere belt, placed close to what appears to be a decapitated head, according to an iconography that has been widespread since the 3rd millennium BCE and taken up again in the Neo-Assyrian context, especially in epigraphy, where the presence of birds of prey is explicitly connected with the decapitation of the enemy, making them "co-protagonisti della

[1458] BM 124853.
[1459] BM 124534.
[1460] BM 124854.
[1461] Collon 1987: 75. It is also specified that the figures on the chariot are probably royal. See, for example, Collon 1987: 154, seal n° 693. This is in contrast with Amelirad 2019: 20, where it is believed that the bull hunt is a typical Urartian scene.
[1462] A bull hunt can be seen also on a seal found in Karmir-blur; Ayvazian 2006: KB 17.
[1463] VA 00962.
[1464] Winter 1976: 38, fig. 22.
[1465] Albenda 1972.
[1466] See, for example, Amelirad 2019: 13, fig.1, for the repetition of this scene on an ivory item from Ziwiyé.

esibizione della vittoria in specifiche formulazioni iconologiche"[1467]. Given the presence of a bird of prey within a hunting scene and the absence of the meaning of death connected to the birds within the representations on the glyptic, this symbolism may have also been emptied of its meaning. It appears on another atypical belt from Şahtaxtı, in Nakhichevan, depicting what can be defined as a hunting scene[1468] with horsemen armed with bow and shield chasing winged bulls. The bird of prey is in the middle of the preserved fragment and seems to approach the severed head of a soldier, whose body is just behind. On closer inspection, it can be seen that the helmet placed on the head is different from those worn by warriors on horseback, an indication that, hypothetically, on that belt was the only battle scene, to our knowledge, depicted within the popular art of the Urartian area[1469]. The type of belt that represents friezes of animals and horsemen, perhaps interpreted as an evolution of the original hunting scenes[1470], is extremely widespread in the Urartian area: an example comes from the site of Altıntepe, near Erzincan, where, folded inside a cauldron in a chamber tomb, a bronze belt was found[1471]; it depicts three superimposed identical friezes with representations of rampant animals and knights; the figures are turned towards the centre of the belt, so that those on the left are turned towards the right and vice versa. Among the figures represented there are rampant lions, winged horses, horsemen armed with spears, ibex, hybrid archers, griffins and numerous other *Mischwesen*: the realism of Kayalıdere's belt has certainly been abandoned, as has its adherence to Assyrianizing models. The development of numerous different *Mischwesen* certainly had an Assyrian impulse, although conceptually it is probably far from its model: if the Assyrian *Mischwesen* were bearers of a symbology, it is possible that in the Urartian area took place the same desemantization that occurred in the development of the hunting scenes[1472], which therefore allowed a greater development and a wider differentiation of the hybrid creatures depicted in the arts. At Altıntepe, inside the Tomb III, an Urartian *unicum* belt has been found[1473]: the specimen is made of silver and has a geometric decoration composed of zig-zags and dot made in the *repoussé* technique. This belt finds an almost punctual parallel in the bronze specimen found in Grab 48 of the Paradiesfestung in Kalakent[1474], present-day Azerbaijan, showing that the geometric decorations belonged to a *koiné* of Late Bronze - First Iron Age spread in the South Caucasus certainly before the emergence of the Kingdom of Urartu and by it, afterwards, resumed and modified. In this regard, it is necessary to widen the view of the belts found in the Urartian area to include those with a dotted or zig-zag geometric decoration, which is a good part of those known today. This decoration has clear Southern Caucasian origins, and it is worth mentioning the considerations drawn by Castelluccia[1475]: "the use of repoussé dots seems to have had a certain popularity in Caucasian iconography. (...) An item similar to Urartian belts is represented by a fragment from Leninakan, in north-west Armenia. It possesses a double row of dots and a grooved line, clearly resembling Urartian items although with some differences. The site location, far beyond the limits of Urartian domination in Transcaucasia, argues for a local production. We cannot distinguish between the possibilities of an

[1467] Dolce 2014:80.
[1468] Azarpay 1968: 49, who defines animals and soldiers friezes as "a more schematized version of the hunting scene".
[1469] The only known battle scene in Urartian royal art is the one represented on Anzaf shield.
[1470] Azarpay 1968: 49.
[1471] Özgüç 1961: 272-273, figs. 23-24.
[1472] Green: 1994: 262-264, referring to the *apkallū* depictions in Urartian art, "we can hardly imagine, for example, that the Urartians should have been concerned about the antediluvian sages of Babylonian cities".
[1473] Özgüç 1983: 37, pl. XVI, c-d.
[1474] Nagel – Strommenger 1985: pl. 22.
[1475] Castelluccia 2017: 26.

imported object, or a local production strongly influenced by Urartian style", presuming that there is a style definable as "Urartian" in the decoration of dotted belts. This hypothesis does not seem likely, since there is no univocal and unequivocal definition of this style other than that of "(...) series of horizontal bands, often marked by a double embossed line; they filled with a series of embossed dots, arranged mostly in vertical rows of four dots above the other"[1476], which, however, is not confirmed by some specimens of dotted belts found in the Urartian area[1477]. Regarding some of the *Urartian-style dotted bands*, the author considers it likely that those found outside Urartian territory are the result of "trade, gift exchange or plundering - or perhaps be local productions inspired by Urartian models"[1478], not considering the fact that such belts may not have been a real Urartian production. This circumstance is, among other things, at the basis of the theories formulated by Rubinson[1479] and Zimansky[1480], according to which belts with a geometric dotted decoration do not belong to the Urartian artistic repertoire, so much so that it seems clear that there is an actual overlap in shape and decoration between the so-called "Urartian" dotted belts and those from the Hasanlu site, level IVB (pre- Urartian) or those found in the South Caucasus in periods before the advent of Urartian. In particular, an emblematic example concerns the specimen **B-Top-1**[1481], decorated with five bands of *repoussé* dots to which a sort of pendant or buckle in the shape of a bird is affixed: this addition to a belt which, probably, originally had only a dotted decoration, may have been adopted precisely to make a belt that seemed, perhaps, too far from the local style more pertinent to the "Urartian" taste. Still following the same reasoning, the belts with a central section decorated with bands of stitches made in repoussé to which is added a final cartouche, usually placed on the right end of the artefact, containing a decoration often used on the Urartian area figurative belts, a sort of abstract development of a sacred tree, may belong to the category of "hybrid" belts, which combine the geometric decoration with an image that to the eyes of the local population must have seemed familiar: these examples are, unfortunately, only two[1482], and do not allow to advance further hypotheses. The two examples **B-Tli-3**[1483] and **B-Mal-1**[1484] are clearly hybrid, *Urartian - Southern Caucasian*: **B-Tli-3**, coming from tomb 425 of the large Tli necropolis, even though it has figurative decorations similar to those of Urartian belts, is clearly an example of an extremely different style from the one represented on the more proper "Urartian" belts. The same consideration applies to the belt found in the burial site of Mališka[1485], which bears several figurative decorations of rampant lions, bulls, hybrid beings and even a side cartouche, but for most of the central section it is decorated with a series of sun symbols typical of belts in the "Transcaucasian" area[1486]: if the Tli necropolis is clearly outside the Urartian-controlled area[1487], Mališka is located in the Armenian region

[1476] Castelluccia 2017: 30-31.
[1477] See, for example, the specimens **B-Mel-1-2** (Barnett 1963: 177, figs. 30-31) and **B-Kb-5-6** (Esayan 1984: 132, Abb. 24.75 and 24.77)
[1478] Castelluccia 2017: 31.
[1479] Rubinson 2012.
[1480] Zimansky 1995; see in particular the discussion on the dotted belt found in a burial place below the floor of a house.
[1481] Wartke 1990: 75-78, tab. XX.
[1482] **B-Kb-7** and **B-Sot-1**; it is clearly not possible to determine whether the cartouches found individually in Urartu pertain to belts of this type or not. It is interesting to note that both specimens come from the northern Armenian area, the overlapping area between the "Transcaucasian" and "Urartian" belts.
[1483] Seidl 2004: 14, fig. 3; Bonfanti – Cesaretti – Dan 2021.
[1484] Esayan 1977: 97.
[1485] Esayan 1977: 97.
[1486] See, for example, the specimen from Mouçi-yéri (Castelluccia 2017: pl. 76.261).
[1487] But, inside two tombs, two "Urartian" belts have been found.

of Vayots-Dzor, a place that bears the traces of an Urartian occupation[1488]. Known by the Caucasian belts but also widespread in royal Urartian art only as a filler or dividing motif, is the zig-zag decoration, which appears as an exclusive decoration only on two belts, one of which is probably unfinished[1489]: the specimen which was certainly decorated only with bands filled with a zig-zag comes from the Yerevan columbarium[1490]. Interestingly, a "twin" belt was found about ten kilometres from the Yerevan one, in the fortress of Karmir Berd, north of the city of Yerevan: once again, thanks to the similarity with "similar Urartian items"[1491], Karmir Berd's belt is dated to the Urartian period, even if the only comparison material is also a *unicum* in the Urartian repertoire. Given the conceptual distance between "Urartian" popular and royal art, it seems unlikely that a motif used in royal art only as a filler would be taken up by local people to decorate an entire metal belt, also considering the admission that follows the hypothesis of Urartian production or influence with regard to Karmir Berd's belt: "it is, however, true that this type of decoration is found in the Caucasian world from the Late Bronze Age, on metal objects and clay vessels"[1492]. The zig-zag decoration, then, was certainly part of that "popular" artistic heritage shared by the people of the Southern Caucasus and enriched, in the Iron Age, by the Assyrian influence.

As it can be seen, there are no elements that allow a geometrically decorated belt to be dated with precision: it does not have any diriment characteristics, no cogency in its decoration, which would allow it to be defined as "Urartian" - nor to clarify what is meant by *Urartian dotted style*. As far as belts with figurative decoration are concerned, the question is more complex: if one accepts the hypothesis that the Assyrian style was brought to the Southern Caucasus by the Urartian army with the conquest of Argišti I, one must consequently accept that all the figurative belts were produced after the first quarter of the 8th century BCE, thanks to the union of the Caucasian element (the belt and some of its decorations) with the Mesopotamian element, i.e. the Assyrian images. If, on the other hand, communication and exchange between the Southern Caucasus and the area of Lake Van, the original area of Assyrian influence in the pre-Urartian age, is believed to have taken place even before the conquest of Argišti I, no precise dating is possible. However, it should be pointed out that the style of the figurative belts usually called "Urartian" was then reflected in the royal art of the Kingdom, which makes the diffusion of these artefacts somehow connected to the very life of the Urartian state and therefore, probably, contemporary to it. The inspiration that royal art draws from popular art, exemplified here in particular by the belts, is explained by the sudden emergence of a reigning Urartian dynasty, which was at the end of a *Caucasian way of civilization*[1493] but which, before the advent of Urartu, had never needed to give itself symbols or legitimate itself with its population, or even its divinities: there was clearly no better way to be recognised as sovereigns than to adopt, and to modify, the symbols and motifs already known to the population over which they were reigning. This process is also confirmed, on a religious level, by the inclusion of local deities in the state pantheon, rather than by the imposition of a single deity connected to the royal dynasty; while it is true that for the god Ḫaldi, at a certain point, one can almost speak of *enoteism*, it is also true that in all the religious monuments

[1488] Xnkikyan 2002; Dan et al. *forthcoming*.
[1489] Burmageçit-2.
[1490] Esayan et al. 1991: pl. XVIII.
[1491] Castelluccia 2017: 289; it is not specified to which items he is referring to.
[1492] Castelluccia 2017: 45.
[1493] Masson 1997.

of the kingdom, from the epigraph of Meher Kapısı[1494] to the temple inscription of Ayanis[1495], the deities mentioned are many and connected to the territory of the Urartian Kingdom: this is also reflected in art, which includes and reworks local motifs without imposing a different or contrasting style. Going beyond, such a reworking of popular art by the Urartian élite would only confirm the presence of a *Bia-Southern Caucasian koiné* where to place all the motifs and themes represented on the belts of the Urartian area, which are nothing other than the ending point of a secular process that sees the interaction of different populations, for reasons that can be the most varied, not necessarily war or conquest, and creates a common repertoire of motifs, themes and scenes, reworked or resemantized according to the systems of thought or values of the local populations. In this way, as already explained, hunting scenes of a clear Assyrian inspiration arrived before the eyes of the Urartian kings without their original significance connected to the royal environment, and in this way they are not assimilated into Urartian royal art. A separate discourse must be addressed instead to the divine figures, clearly depicted standing on their mounts: this iconography has a double value within the scenes represented on belts, since it is used both in hunting scenes and in scenes of divine processions[1496]. The Urartian royal court chose at the beginning to unite the two valences, as shown by Anzaf shield, in which the gods are depicted as warriors; later, a static divine representation is preferred, still figures standing on their animals with their arms positioned in a gesture of blessing. There is no clear explanation for this fact, but it is certainly worth noting the predilection of royal art for static scenes, without particular emphasis on the movements of the characters, which is also reflected in the depiction of the gods. What royal art takes up marginally, mainly in the use of geometrical motifs as fillers or separators, is the Caucasian tradition: an explanation of the phenomenon was given, with particular regard to the Hasanlu site, by Marcus[1497], who stated: "for body decoration in mortuary context and daily and perhaps temple life, traditional local customs were most appropriate; whereas for promoting the political and administrative power of the ruling elite, Assyrian and other western objects and images were ideologically more useful". This reasoning is directly applicable to Urartu: if they shared with the enemy a series of iconographies that qualified them as equals, rivals or in any case as a member of the same context, it would not be particularly difficult to affirm their position as members of the same ruling élite. The creation of the Urartian artistic repertoire appears a delicate and careful choice of elements which, if on the one hand are aimed at building a connection with the local population and a legitimation of the royal authority, on the other hand, they appear as members of an iconographical system shared with the ruling élite of the Mesopotamian area, the main rival, which must also legitimize the Urartian sovereign as a member of the same group. This task was in some way facilitated by the popular artistic *koiné* spread in the Southern Caucasus at the advent of Urartu, which had assimilated and taken up motifs and themes from Assyria, mixing them with local tradition.

Following the subdivision of the artistic objects found in Urartu into "popular" and "royal", the previous discussion was based on the classification of the objects into one or the other category. The epigraphs

[1494] CTU A 3-1.
[1495] CTU A 12-1.
[1496] For the image used in hunting scenes, see for example **B-Yeg-1**, **B-Ded-2**; for the same image used in a religious context, see **B-Kb-3** and **B-Kb-4**.
[1497] Marcus 1995: 2495-2497.

engraved on the object were the guide to decide whether an object belongs to the royal art: in any case, the objects bearing an inscription must necessarily be traced back to a very specific and standardised production from the palatine area. The analysis helped to establish the characteristics of the art of the Urartian kings, fixed and very precise, repeated, more or less similar, for the whole history of the reign. The category of popular art, on the other hand, was at the same time dependent on and separate from royal art, and its derivation must necessarily have been local. Popular art tended to include all objects that do not bear cuneiform epigraphs; in some cases it was necessary to depart from this principle, for example in the case of wall or temple decorations, such as those found at Ayanis, which are clearly connected to royalty, also due to the high degree of standardisation that characterises them, even if they don't bear any inscription. What needs to be underlined again is the interconnection between royal and popular art, which in some cases led to a blatant copying of objects from one or the other.

The pluralistic nature of the Urartian state should also be emphasised again, as it was born from the union under one central power, or so it would seem, of a large number of different ethno-political entities: this plurality is reflected in popular art. As Bernbeck pointed out, the idea of a centralised Urartian state originates in the Urartian research, which he calls "ahistorisch" [1498] and which is based on two prerequisites that are still undisputed, namely a "rückprojizierender Historiographie", which assumes structures from the late period as being valid also for earlier times, and a "Stabilitäthypothese", which does not consider internal fluctuations and structural variations[1499]. Bernbeck proposed to consider the Urartian model as a *segmentärer Staat*[1500], where the sphere of ideological authority and that of political sovereignty do not coincide: the former would in fact also extend to the periphery, which, due to ethno-political and geographical conditions, is considered flexible and changeable, while the latter coincides with the central dominion. What strengthens Bernbeck's position is Urartian religion, which acts as an ideological authority: in the times of Išpuini and Minua, the Urartian pantheon is fixed in the Meher Kapısı inscription[1501], in an operation defined as "invention of tradition"[1502], which is also accompanied by the introduction of the other typical elements of the Urartian religion, the *susi* temples, the rock "gates" and the dedicatory stelae. The creation of an ideology would be used strategically to influence a wide geographic area thanks to the adoption of local deities, which had already taken place at the time of the epigraphic creation of the Urartian pantheon; it is also no coincidence that the creation of the Anzaf shield[1503] and the iconographic representation of the Urartian deities dates back to that time: While Teišeba and Šiuini, deities from the ḫurrian background, are depicted standing on a lion and a bull and bearing their standard attributes – a beam of lightnings and the winged solar disk – the depiction of the other deities does not follow criteria that would allow us to recognise actual functions attributable to them. In the decoration of the shield, therefore, one can see an attempt to give iconographic identity to a syncretistic pantheon, artificially created recently and fixed in writing in the Meher Kapısı rock niche, through a deliberate violation of tradition that does not, however, create a cultural *tabula rasa*[1504]. However extreme Bernbeck's position may be, it correctly

[1498] Bernbeck 2003-2004: 268.
[1499] Bernbeck 2003-2004: 274.
[1500] Bernbeck 2003-2004: 274 ff.
[1501] CTU A 3-1.
[1502] Bernbeck 2003-2004: 286.
[1503] Belli 1999; CTU B 3-1; **S-Anz-1**.
[1504] Bernbeck 2003-2004: 209-291, "Man muß nicht jeder Einzelheit in Bellis Argumentation folgen, um in den Darstellungen einen Versuch zu sehen, das gerade erstellte synkretistische, in Meher Kapısı schriftlich fizierte Pantheon in seiner Künstlichkeit bildlich zu fixieren. (…) Dies führte nicht nur zur Kreation einer neuen Bildwelt,

emphasises the importance of Urartian religion in state-building: it is no coincidence that Salvini too described the introduction of the Ḫaldi cult as an *instrumentum regni*, aimed at legitimising Urartian power over the controlled areas. What is perhaps to be scaled down with respect to Bernbeck's hypothesis is the *exclusive* role assigned to religion as the state's glue: it is true that many of Urartian building projects were connected to Ḫaldi, but it is also true that many new constructions were of a civil nature, extremely adherent to an architectural standard connected to a central authority, that of the Urartian dynasty. Taking Bernbeck's theories as a starting point, it could be argued that art is connected to Urartian religion as a social glue: if it can be assumed that royal Urartian art takes its cue from various sources, not least the local art of the Southern Caucasus, already influenced by Assyrian iconography, it is also true that there is an influence, probably to be placed in a late period of Urartian history, that acts from the royal sphere on popular art. Art is connected to religion, as is always the case, thanks to the large number of artefacts, especially bronze ones, dedicated to the god Ḫaldi and found in the temple areas of the fortresses: it is precisely from there that most of the objects classified as "royal art" come, and it is precisely there that it is possible to trace the original location of some artefacts, such as those found at Karmir-blur, which were not found in their original context. The question is extremely complex in its nuances, but in general it is possible to say that through artistic expression, the rulers sought to legitimise themselves in the eyes of the people, trying to create a cultural cohesion that would prevent the Urartian state from crumbling. As in the case of religion, the population of the Armenian Highlands also welcomed the art created in the Urartian palace, adapting it to their own taste and reworking the ideas provided by the rulers.

sondern in diesen Darstellungen wurde auch ein bewußter Traditionsbruch vollzogen, ohne eine völlige kulturelle *tabula rasa* zu erzeugen".

V. Concluding remarks

The analysis of the contacts between the Urartian Kingdom and the surrounding areas could not be separated, as already mentioned, from an in-depth study of the Urartian culture itself, in order to recognise its fundamental characteristics and distinguish them from those of other peoples. There is no doubt that during the 1st millennium BCE there was a transmission and circulation of artefacts and ideologies according to a diffusionist model[2897] that affected most of the Near East and had Assyria as its pivot: it is possible to assume the existence of a sort of cultural *koiné* that spread from the area of northern Mesopotamia to, at least, the Syro-Hittite and Urartian areas. Beyond the spread of this sort of *koiné*, however, one can still recognise elements pertinent to the individual cultures in which it found its place. Their use in the individual target areas was, however, influenced by the ideologies and traditions prevalent in the area, making it possible to recognise both the starting model and the modifications to it in the target area. In all historical epochs existed a circulation of artefacts and ideas that took place through the transmission of easily transportable objects, such as ivory and seals, which spread independently of the culture of origin. On the whole, Urartian culture appears to be characterised by a brief phase of openness to external influences at the end of the 9th century BCE: it was probably during this phase that an art was formed that was to become characteristic of the Urartian area, and that was established, at least, from the reign of Argišti Minuaḫi. From the 8th century BCE onwards, Urartian culture was characterised by a kind of far-reaching cultural isolation[2898], which allowed for the establishment in a standardised and static form of the artistic and epigraphic models formed in the previous epoch.

[2897] Nieling 2004: 308.
[2898] Novák 2004: 302.

1. Western Borders: North-Syrian Kingdoms and Phrygia

1.1. North-Syrian Kingdoms

Urartian contacts with the Syrian-Anatolian area seems to have intensified only in the 8th century BCE, during the period when Urartu was more closed to foreign influences. Apart from the aforementioned embassy sent by Ambaris, king of Tabal, on should also mention the fourteen ambassadors sent to Urartu by Urik, king of Que[2899]; but the contacts between Urartu and the North-Syrian states mentioned in Assyrian sources go back to at least the mid-8th century BCE, when a coalition of forces led by Urartu and Arpad was defeated by the Assyrian king Tiglath-Pileser III in 743[2900], during the reign of Sarduri, son of Argišti, who, anyway, didn't mention the defeat in his inscriptions. According to Urartian sources, contacts with the North-Syrian states are surely attested already during the reign of Argišti, son of Minua, who campaigned in "the Hittite lands"[2901], arriving up to the city of Malatya / Miliția, and earlier in time also during the reign of Minua, son of Išpuini, who imposed a tribute on the king of Malatya during his expedition in the Hittite lands[2902]. One can understand, thanks to both Assyrian and Urartian sources, that relations between Urartu and the North-Syrian states existed from the reign of Minua, and that they got stronger during the 8th century, with the reigns of Argišti Minuaḫi and Sarduri Argištiḫi. It has been suggested that the Urartian ambitions were beyond Malatya, towards the south-central Anatolian region where the kingdom of Tabal was located[2903]: however, the only mention of Tabal in an Urartian inscription is probably to be found in the epigraph found in the Ayanis temple, among the country from where Rusa, son of Argišti, deported men and women to build his fortresses[2904], in the same passage as the only mention of *Muški.* But again, one must rely on Assyrian sources to know more: in Sargon's II letter to Aššur, the account of his Eighth Campaign, it is said that he plundered in the Muṣaṣir temple "11 (…) coupes du pays de Tabal, aux anses d'or"[2905] and "5 (…) brûle-parfums du pays de Tabal"[2906], suggesting that the Urartian Kingdom had contacts with Tabal at least at the end of the 8th century, before 714 BCE. These contacts are also confirmed by archaeometrical analysis carried out on some materials from the site of Ayanis, demonstrating that, at least in the 7th century BCE, Urartu used an increasingly extensive base for copper, including sources in Cyprus, Tauride and Pontide Anatolia, and the Caucasus: these sources probably became available since the Urartian dominance over the Malatya region, which allowed Urartu to access materials coming from the Mediterranean region[2907].

Extremely interesting is the analysis of the hieroglyphic writing in order to understand the connection with the western regions: the issue is very controversial, as it has been previously analysed, but a very

[2899] SAA 19 152: ll. 4-6.
[2900] RINAP 1: Tiglath-Pileser III 100, l. 1, and 132, l. 3.
[2901] CTU A 8-3, II, l. 15.
[2902] CTU A 5-5, ll. 11-17.
[2903] Bryce 2009: 260.
[2904] CTU A 12-1, VI, l. 11: ^{KUR}tab-la-ni, probably to be considered the kingdom of Tabal (Salvini 2018: 436).
[2905] Thureau-Dangin 1912: l. 358; see also Foster 2005: 809, "bowls from the land of Tabal with golden handles".
[2906] Thureau-Dangin 1912: l. 361; see also Foster 2005: 809, "incense stands from the land of Tabal with silver holders (?)".
[2907] Batmaz et al. 2018: 14.

interesting set of documents comes from the site of Altıntepe. There, at least eleven hieroglyphic texts have been discovered, mostly carved on clay pithoi or bronze vessels, with signs scratched in vertical columns on the surface of the vessel: the signs are recognizable as Luwian, but the language that they represent is Urartian[2908]. Unluckily, as the total number of hieroglyphic signs represented here is no more than 14, one cannot assume the presence of a general hieroglyphic Luwian knowledge at Altıntepe, while it may be safer to hypothesise the presence of a resident or captive with a sort of hieroglyphic Luwian literacy, probably coming from the Hatti lands[2909]. Deportees from Hatti are mentioned already in the texts of Argišti, son of Minua[2910], and, even if he refers specifically to soldiers sent to inhabit the fortress of Erebuni, it can be assumed that they were also deported to other sites of the Kingdom; due to the geographical position of the site of Altıntepe, it is also possible to infer that contacts with hieroglyphic Luwian writing were not unusual, and that they possibly lead to a new temporary writing system at Altıntepe, "an isolated and short-lived phenomenon, possibly not outlasting the career of single (foreign?) scribe"[2911]. It is also worth mentioning the hypothesis that some of the Urartian sovereigns, at least the first king called Rusa, may have had a Luwian origin[2912].

It is safe to say that relationships with the North-Syrian kingdoms lasted through the whole Urartian history, as long as we know from Urartian and Assyrian sources: imported materials, however, are not as common as one may believe considering the contacts mentioned in epigraphs. An ivory figurine of a woman found in Toprakkale[2913] testifies the commerce of precious goods, at least from North-Syria to Urartu; many comparisons for this statuette were found in Nimrud and they are proved to have been produced in the Syrian area[2914], with a date comprised between the end of the 9th and the end of the 8th century BCE. The figurine found in Toprakkale would be a witness of these contacts, together with another ivory object, a plaque found in the site of Altıntepe and depicting a stag[2915]: also this object has parallels in ivories from Fort Shalmaneser considered to be imported from the Syrian region, probably from the site of Guzana / Tell Halaf, with an even earlier proposed date, 11th-10th centuries BCE[2916]. Ivory plaques depicting striding deer were found also in Arslan Tash and dated indicatively at the 8th century BCE[2917]. Other objects coming from the North-Syrian region are the scaraboid seals with the emblem of the moon god of Harran[2918] found in the fortress of Karmir-blur[2919]: the great part of them is considered to be an import.

As for the much-discussed *Assur-Attaschen*, there is no uniformity among scholars in indicating their precise area of origin: they are included here among the artefacts that testify to a probable Phrygian

[2908] Klein 1974.
[2909] Klein 1974: 93.
[2910] CTU A 8-3, II, l. 37.
[2911] Klein 1974: 93.
[2912] Simon 2008.
[2913] **Iv-Top-8**.
[2914] Barnett 1975: 44-52.
[2915] **Iv-Alt-24**.
[2916] Hermann 2017: 119-126.
[2917] Hermann 1986: 31. Fontan – Affanni 2018: 33: "La date de construction du Bâtiment aux ivoires ne peut être proposée qu'à titre d'hypothèse: il aurait été édifié à une date précédant la construction du palais assyrien, lui-même probablement construit dans la seconde moitié du VIII siècle avant J.-C., postérieurement aux phases II et III, datées après le sceau cylindre assyrien AT.09.1. de la seconde moitié du IX siècle. Une date pour le Bâtiment aux ivoires dans la première moitié du VIII siècle avant J.-C. correspondrait bien à l'importante phase de construction qui est attestée par les inscriptions de Ninurta-bel-usur, eunuque de Shamsi-ilu".
[2918] Van Loon 1977: 229.
[2919] Ayvazian 2006: 91-96; **Eg-Kb-2**.

influence on Urartu because, numerically, they appear to be widespread mainly in the Gordion tumuli. However, they are known to originate from the Syro-Levantine area[2920] because of their characteristic features of sirens' faces: there is only one object found in excavation, from Nimrud but probably of Syrian origin, that recalls these elements, namely a decorative element in ivory depicting a bird of prey with a female head[2921]. It is closely comparable, in shape and concept, to the cauldron attachments decorated with a siren: however, only one of them is found in the Urartu area, in the tomb of Alişar, and this is not sufficient to prove their wide diffusion, or even production, relevant to the Urartian culture. On the whole, these attachments do not provide evidence of Neo-Hittite influence on Urartu culture[2922].

1.2. Phrygia

The first mention of the toponym *Muški*, traditionally associated with the Phrygian state[2923], appears in two stone inscriptions dated at the time of Rusa, son of Argišti, one from the temple of Ayanis[2924] and the other from Adilcevaz[2925]: both times, the toponym is connected with deportations of men and women from the foreign countries of *Aššur*, *Targu*, *Etiu*, *Tabla*, *Qainaru*, *Ḫate* and *Ṣiluqu*, in order to build the two aforementioned fortresses on the shore of Lake Van. According to Assyrian sources, two different populations bear the name of *Muškū*: one ("Eastern Muški") is attested in inscriptions dating from the 12th to the 9th centuries BCE, and the population was located close to the confluence of the Murat Su and the Kara Su[2926], while the other one ("Western Muški") is mentioned in the text of 8th-7th centuries epigraphs and they may have been located in the territories of present-day Cappadocia and Cilicia[2927]. While Salvini suggested that the Urartian mention of *Muški* should not be considered a reference to Phrygia but to the territory of the so-called "Eastern Muški"[2928], the artefacts found in archaeological excavations of Urartian sites speak in favour of connections with Urartu and Phrygia; also, the dates of the Assyrian attestations of the toponym connected to the different areas don't really match with Salvini's proposal, as the "Eastern Muški" is only mentioned in more ancient sources. In any case, according to Bryce, "at some point in their history, the Phrygians became associated with a people called the Mushki in Assyrian texts. Kossian (1997) regards 'Mushki' as a collective term designating numerous related tribes who during the second half of the 2nd millennium BCE were gradually infiltrating into different areas of the Armenian highlands. (…) The nature, date, and origins of the Phrygian–Mushki association are still matters for debate. However, a widely held view is that towards the end of the 8th century BCE an amalgamation took place between Phrygian and Mushki groups, and that a Mushki king called Mita, better known by his Greek name Midas, was responsible for the union

[2920] Muscarella 1962.
[2921] Bahrani 2017: 257, fig. 11.4.
[2922] Orthmann 2004: 461, "Da wir jedoch nicht wissen, wo der Ursprung insbesondere der sog. *Assur-Attaschen* zu suchen ist, können sie kaum als ein Zeugnis für eine Außenwirkung des späthethitischen Kulturraumes gelten".
[2923] For a discussion on the toponym, see the lemma "Muški" in Reallexikon der Assyriologie, vol. 8.
[2924] CTU A 12-1, VI, l. 11.
[2925] CTU A 12-4, recto, l. 8'.
[2926] In Southeastern Turkey, approximately in the modern-day district of Elaziğ.
[2927] Dan 2020: 58.
[2928] Salvini 2018: 435, lemma "Muški", "si riferisce ad un paese dell'area dell'Eufrate (associato con Ḫate), che non ha nulla a che fare con la Frigia".

of the two groups"[2929]. For this reason, there may have been no difference between "Eastern" and "Western" Muški at the time of Rusa, son of Argišti. Moreover, if the union between the two groups of Muški happened sometime during the 8th century BCE, the materials from the "Western" Muški may have spread also in the territory of the "Eastern" Muški. Only one hieroglyphic Luwian inscription incised on an orthostat found in Karkemish[2930], dated between the end of the 9th and the beginning of the 8th century BCE, names, connected to a mention of Urartu, the toponym *Muska*[2931], which is conventionally accepted to be the Luwian name for the Phrygian people[2932].

If one looks again at the whole corpus of Urartian inscriptions, one can see campaigns towards the west as early as the beginning of the 8th century BCE, during the reign of Minua, who left an epigraph in Palu, near Elazığ, during his expedition towards Malatya[2933]. In this inscription, it is said that the sovereign arrived "pa-a-ri-e ^{KUR}ḫa-a-ti-i-na-a"[2934], which can reasonably be considered, as also proposed by Salvini in the translation, the Neo-Hittite area, clearly referring to the North Syrian kingdoms. These kingdoms had several contacts with Phrygia, a state that, already at the beginning of the 8th century BCE, had developed a flourishing culture reflected in the discoveries inside Gordion's tumuli: the objects in these tumuli, particularly belts and cauldron's attachments, find some comparisons in Urartian area. Already in 1981, I.M. Diakonoff and S.M. Kashkai tried to connect another toponym, similar to *Muški*, to the Phrygian state: in the text of the Habıbuşağı inscription[2935], now submerged due to the Karakaya dam, one can read "ʾa-al-du-bi ku-ṭu-bi pa-ri ^{KUR}kar-ni-ši-e ^{KUR}ba-ba-ni sal-ma-at-ḫi ^{URU}mì-li-ṭi$_5$-a-ni ku-ṭu-bi pa-ri ^{KUR}mu-šá-ni-e", "I arrived in the land of Karniši, mountainous land on the left(?) of the city of Miliṭia / Malatya, and I came up to the land of Muša"[2936]. The two scholars proposed that the toponym Muša was connected to the Phrygian region, based also on the now considered old meaning of the hieroglyphic Luwian toponym *Musa*, which indicated Phrygia[2937]. The toponym *Musa* is mentioned in a Hieroglyphic Luwian inscription found in Karkemish[2938], and it is connected with both the geographical names *Muska* and *Sura*[2939], which are to be considered, as already said, the Phrygian and the Urartian states[2940]. *Musa* would be indicating the Lydian region in the Luwian texts[2941], but it looks unlikely that the same meaning should be applied to the aforementioned Urartian epigraph, also because the inscription is focused on the description of the siege of Miliṭia. One may go back to the location of the "Eastern" Muški tribes to try and understand the connection between the region of Malatya and the Muški. A hint on where to locate the territory of

[2929] Bryce 2009: 558.
[2930] Hawkins 2000: 123-128, II.22. KARKAMIŠ A6.
[2931] Hawkins 2000: 124, II.22. KARKAMIŠ A6, l. 3, § 6. Lately, it has also been discovered another Luwian epigraph mentioning the toponym *Muska*, which is the inscription called TÜRKMEN-KARAHÖYÜK 1, in the Konya region (see, for a first edition, Goedegebuure et al. 2020).
[2932] Hawkins 2000: 126. A further discussion on the identification of this toponym is to be found in Goedegebuure et al. 2020: 40-43.
[2933] CTU A 5-5.
[2934] CTU A 5-5, l. 11.
[2935] From the reign of Sarduri, son of Argišti.
[2936] CTU A 9-4, ll. 13-15.
[2937] Diakonoff – Kashkai 1981: 58.
[2938] Hawkins 2000: II.22, Karkamiš A6.
[2939] Hawkins 2000: II.22, Karkamiš A6, l. 3, § 6.
[2940] Hawkins 2000: 120.
[2941] Hawkins 2000: 120, "identified as the Lydians (…) as long ago as 1917, which still seems satisfactory"; while Diakonoff – Kashkai 1981: 58, "(…) Hier. -Luwian *Musa*- is apparently Phrygia while *Muska*- denotes the Eastern Muški".

the "Eastern" *Muškū* comes from the Assyrian inscriptions from the time of Tiglath-Pileser I, whose Annals, for the year 1114 BCE, tell: "In my accession year: 20,000 Mušku with their five kings, who had held for 50 years the lands Alzu and Purulumzu — bearers of tribute and tithe to the god Aššur, my lord — (the Mušku), whom no king had ever repelled in battle, being confident of their strength they came down (and) captured the land Katmuḫu. With the support of the god Aššur, my lord, I put my chariotry and army in readiness (and), not waiting for my rear guard, I traversed the rough terrain of Mount Kašiiari. I fought with their 20,000 men-at-arms and five kings in the land Katmuḫu"[2942]. From this passage, we learn that, at a certain point at the end of the 1st millennium, a tribe known as Muški occupied the lands of Alzu and Purulumzu, both located north of the Kašiiari mountain range, in the Elaziğ plain, which is the region where Malatya / Miliția was found. If we consider that, probably in the 8th century, the groups of "Western" and "Eastern" Muški joined, one can think about the possibility that the area around Malatya was influenced by Phrygian / Muški contacts[2943].

The objects probably related to contact with Phrygia are essentially of two types: on the one hand, possibly, a single cauldron attachment from the site of Alişar / Verahram[2944], on the Iranian banks of the river Araxes, and two others from the citadel of Karmir-blur[2945], and, on the other hand, three belts found in the fortress of Toprakkale[2946]. Both these objects find cogent parallels within the three great early tumuli of Gordion[2947], as already extensively described in the section concerning their analysis[2948]. Several pages have already been written in the attempt to solve the problem of the widespread diffusion in the Mediterranean of cauldron attachments in the form of sirens, recognising in them an influence from the North Syrian area[2949], but very few studies have concentrated on the bull's heads from Karmir-blur[2950], and almost no contribution analysed the presence of three Phrygian belts at the Toprakkale site[2951]. The Urartian state must have had contacts with the Phrygian area, possibly, as proposed in the previous paragraphs, at a time preceding the "official" mention of *Muški* in the Urartian royal epigraphs: unfortunately, the long discussion on the dating of Gordion, apart from being a *vexata quaestio* with few answers, can only offer a *terminus post quem* for the diffusion of Phrygian materials in the Near East. A brief overview of the different chronologies proposed to identify the time of the destruction of the three Gordion *tumuli* can show the difficulties intrinsic in the matter: if the Gordion's archaeologist, Rodney S. Young, proposed in his work that the destruction of the site happened around 700 BCE[2952], the *New Chronology* offered by the B. Rose and G. Darbyshire backdates the destruction by about a century, to around 800 BCE[2953]. Unfortunately, even the New Chronology is not universally accepted: O.W. Muscarella, in particular, is an opponent of this "high" chronology, stating that "After much scrutiny of the articles I have not changed my mind on the conclusions I previously published, nothing brought forth impels me to revise or alter what I presented concerning the NC (New Chronology). The authors believe what they already know from the NC, C-14 decree. I too believe what I know, because

[2942] RIMA 2, A.0.87.1, I, ll. 62-75.
[2943] See also Burney – Lang 1971: 162.
[2944] **Ca-Al-1**.
[2945] **Ca-Kb-3**.
[2946] **B-Top-2** to **B-Top-5**.
[2947] Young 1981.
[2948] See § 4.1.1 and 4.1.2.
[2949] Muscarella 1962; Van Loon, 1977: 230.
[2950] Herrmann 1975.
[2951] Bonfanti – Dan 2021b.
[2952] Young 1981: 269-270.
[2953] Rose – Darbyshire 2011.

the artifacts tell me so, that based on them the Old Chronology (OC) is accurate. As for the current proffered C-14 and dendrochronological dating, I disallow them (along with other scholars, knowing that such determined chronologies from a good number of sites have been demonstrated to be inaccurate)"[2954]. On closer inspection, actually, the exact chronology of the destruction of Gordion does not turn out to be of vital importance in the discussion on Urartian materials, or Urartian contacts with Phrygians: in both cases, the materials must have been circulating for certain already during the 8th century BCE, for the Old Chronology because the deceased in the three large tumuli had used their grave goods also during their lifetime, while for the New Chronology because, precisely, the same materials were already in circulation from the 9th century BCE. It is not necessary, however, to imply *direct* contact between Urartians and Phrygians as early as the 8th century BCE: considering different sources, well exemplified and summarised in an article written by Maya Vassileva[2955], "the combined data of the monuments demonstrate that the Phrygian involvement in south-eastern Anatolia was not so short-lived or occasional"[2956], with material data proving this involvement to be found in the sites of Tyana, Porsuk and Kaynarca[2957]. Particularly interesting from an *Urartological* perspective is the tumulus found in Kaynarca[2958], in the modern district of Niğde, considered the tomb of "un personnage de haut rang"[2959], which contained different bronze objects somehow related to both the Phrygian and the Urartian sphere: a bronze belt and two cauldrons / *dinoi* with bull's head attachments. All these artefacts find parallels between the objects discovered inside the three great tumuli of Gordion and are probably dated, following the comparisons, to the end of the 8th century BCE[2960]; it is also possible to compare both the belt and the cauldrons with the materials found in Toprakkale and Karmir-blur, which are witnesses of the relations with Urartu and Phrygia. Again, quoting Vassileva, "we would not be able to estimate securely what kind of Phrygian population there was in south-eastern Anatolia, but the evidence of the cultural interactions cannot be assigned only to isolated contacts, garrisons or diplomats"[2961]. It is probably not unthinkable that Sarduri, son of Argišti, referred to a Phrygian region in south-eastern Anatolia when he mentioned the land of Muša in the context of his campaign around Malatya. The site of Kaynarca, in Southern Cappadocia, is very interesting in this perspective, as it is located halfway between the Urartian and the Phrygian states; also, it is not very far from the region of Malatya: it may be possible that Urartians came into contacts with Phrygians precisely in this region, maybe during the campaigns of Sarduri, son of Argišti, the first king who campaigned so far in the west[2962].

Further help is provided by Assyrian written sources, which mention a sequence of events involving both Phrygia and the Urartian Kingdom. The sequence of the events may be considered as follows: first, in his eighth year of reign (714 BCE), Sargon II defies the Urartian king[2963], who was however still

[2954] Muscarella 2012: 378.
[2955] Vassileva 2008.
[2956] Vassileva 2008: 168.
[2957] Vassileva 2008: 167.
[2958] The artefacts from the Kaynarca tumulus are published in Akkaya 1991.
[2959] Akkaya 1991: 27.
[2960] Akkaya 1991: 26.
[2961] Vassileva 2008: 168.
[2962] Actually, also the king Minua, between the 9th and the 8th century BCE, campaigned in the western lands: proof is the stone inscription he left in Palu, on the Murat Su (CTU A 5-5), which equally mentions the city of Malatya (CTU A 5-5, l. 16); he didn't say, anyway, that he moved further the city of Malatya, like Sarduri, son of Argišti, instead affirmed.
[2963] Foster 2005; RINAP 2: Sargon II 1, ll. 133-147.

powerful if, Ambaris, king of Tabal, tried to convince the sovereigns of Muški and Urartu to be his allied against the Assyrian empire (713 BCE)[2964]. As an ambassador from Muški is only mentioned once inside Sargon's inscriptions (709 BCE)[2965], it is possible to infer that the embassy cited in a letter from the king to his attendant, Aššur-šarru-uṣur[2966], and in the Annals is the same: in that case, the alliance between Assyria and Muški is necessarily to be following the Eighth Campaign, and so it may not be considered aimed at the Urartian defeat during Sargon's Eighth Campaign. Apparently, based on Assyrian sources, there were not many contacts between Urartu and the Phrygians, while, as we already mentioned, several were the contacts between Urartu and the North-Syrian states.

2. North-eastern borders: local substratum and nomadic populations

The Caucasus region, from the middle of the 2nd millennium BCE, is characterised by the development of metallurgical innovations, which greatly increased the production of metal objects at a regional level, being defined by modern scholars as "Caucasian Metallurgical Province"[2967]. With the increase in demand for metal objects, there was also a considerable technological advancement, which allowed for the creation of laboriously decorated artefacts, with a prevalence in the production of weapons[2968]. Despite this common denominator, between the Late Bronze and the Early Iron Age, the region was also characterised by a great deal of cultural and social fragmentation, with expressions of socio-political complexity and architectural novelty that gave rise to the emergence of fortresses, huge stone structures located in strategic positions[2969]. Urartu retained many of the characteristic features of earlier cultures, particularly concerning architecture and toreutics, traits of which are also found in the Late Bronze/Early Iron Age of the Southern Caucasian region and probably of North-Western Iran and Eastern Anatolia[2970]. However, on an artistic, administrative and, necessarily, literary level, the Urartian rulers relied on the conspicuous and successful Assyrian production, which must have looked both prestigious to foreign eyes and also familiar, even in the territories north of Assyria.

Very few traits from the preceding artistic cultures of the Armenian Highlands survived in Urartian art: among them, for example, at a purely decorative level, zig-zag motifs stand out, while, as far as the typical objects are concerned, an important role was played by bronze belts. It is not straightforward to explain how belts went from being a purely local element to a characteristic of the Urartian state, bearing decorations that can be defined as *Assyrianizing*, nor is it easy to try to give a reason for the total lack of inscribed belts found in archaeological contexts if such objects should indeed be considered as characteristic of the Urartian civilisation. The idea proposed here is that belts were considered an extremely successful item, thanks also to the large decorative section they offer to the bronzeworker, and that they, therefore, spread throughout the future Urartian territories long before the emergence of

[2964] RINAP 2: Sargon II 1, ll. 198-204.
[2965] RINAP 2: Sargon II 1, ll. 449-452.
[2966] SAA 19 152: ll. 3-9.
[2967] Chernykh 1992: 275-295.
[2968] Gevorkyan 2009.
[2969] Sagona 2017: 378-380.
[2970] Biscione 2019: 84.

the Urartian Kingdom[2971]. One should remember that belts were widespread in all the territories of the ancient Near East, but they were particularly popular in the Southern Caucasian region from the Middle Bronze Age, from where they spread on the whole territory of the Armenian Highlands[2972]. In this way, from being a purely local element, they became a sort of vehicle for Mesopotamian culture in the territories of the Armenian Highlands, being in fact the material that testifies to a sort of crossover between the two cultural substrata that formed the terrain on which the Urartian dynasty imposed itself. Thus, at the artistic level, although there are no traces of continuity between the art of the Caucasian and Urartian cultures, the bronze belts played an extremely important role, being the object that helped the spread of Assyrian artistic imagery in the Armenian Highlands' area. In general, it is possible to say that the Urartian Kingdom adopted some of the characteristic features of the previous and contemporary Caucasian cultures, specifically metallurgical production and architecture, but without encroaching on the artistic dimension, which was almost exclusively linked to Assyria. The expertise of stone-working, however, probably also resulted in the enormous Urartian epigraphic production, the vast majority of which was engraved on stone and rock. It is therefore possible to consciously define the Urartian Kingdom as a precise mixture of local technological knowledge and Mesopotamian ideologies.

Another important remark that should be made according to the archaeological finds regards the contacts between Urartu and the nomadic populations[2973]. The presence of nomadic populations in the Ancient Near East is among the most important events in the 7th-6th centuries BCE[2974], when the nomads came into active contact with various state formations in western Asia, which had an impact at an archaeological level on the shape of their material culture. One of the most striking examples of this interaction is the relationship between the nomads and the state of Urartu, reflected in the numerous archaeological finds of nomadic artefacts found in the fortresses. Despite the destructions, most of the fortresses have preserved many valuable and unexpected artefacts. The Urartian fortresses of Ayanis and Karmir Blur contain quite a lot of nomadic materials, represented by weapons, such as arrowheads, horse harnesses and objects decorated in the so-called animal style. A typological and chronological analysis of the nomadic antiquities in the Urartian context reveals different temporal phases, and makes it possible to distinguish between earlier and later materials: however, this study has to be addressed in a different contribution, due to the nature of the analysed materials themselves[2975]. However, it can be affirmed that they show the contacts between the Urartian state and the nomadic populations started from the second half of the 7th century BCE and continued at the beginning of the 6th century BCE.

[2971] See § 2.2.1.
[2972] It should be noted that, even if "Urartian" and "Transcaucasian" belts are to be considered two phenomena intrinsically different for the meaning they bring with them, they probably were mostly chronologically contemporary. "What may be affirmed, though, is that the belts typical of the Caucasian region and the belts produced in the period of Assyrianization of the Armenian Highlands were contemporary local productions that crossed the territory in certain chronological phases, as evidenced for example by certain belts found in the sites of Golovino and Tli" (Dan – Bonfanti 2021b: 81).
[2973] Here, another terminological problem has to be addressed: we prefer to use the expression "nomadic populations" instead of "Scythians" because of the extremely well-defined borders of the last one, which implies also an ethnic issue. Since some of the finds cannot be attributed exactly to the Scythians, they are going to be defined generically as "nomadic". One should remember that, according to the textual information, also the Cimmerians managed to browse the Urartian territory, and they couldn't have not left any traces of their passage.
[2974] See Makhortykh 2020.
[2975] A brief overview on this topic is being prepared by the author together with Roberto Dan and Andrea Cesaretti.

2.2. Nomadic populations

To trace a brief history of Urartian contacts with nomadic populations, it will be necessary to firstly look at the Assyrian written sources, which inform us that, between the end of the 8th and the beginning of the 7th century BCE, some ethnic rearrangements took place that also involved nomadic populations.

The earliest mention of the Cimmerian population, *Gamir* in Assyrian, are to be found in several letters sent to the Assyrian king Sargon II by his Crown Prince Sennacherib, between 720 and 724 BCE. The origin of the Urartian-Cimmerian conflict, started by to Urartian king, is to be found in a letter sent by Crown Prince Sennacherib[2976], which mentions the Urartian king, Urzana governor of Muṣaṣir and Assyrian spy, and the Cimmerian army: in this letter is told how the Urartian ruler was defeated by the enemy army. This defeat had had an enormous echo in the neighbouring territories, if in another missive sent by Sennacherib[2977] the news on the outcome of the Cimmerian expedition to Urartu was reported to the prince by three different governors: the army had suffered considerable losses and the king had not yet returned to Tušpa, but the country was described as "quiet again"[2978]. One can estimate the importance of this conflict by the fact that it was led by the king himself, followed by his commander-in-chief and at least thirteen governors. A letter written by the Assyrian governor Aššur-reṣuwa[2979] allows to locate the origin of the Cimmerians north of Lake Sevan, in the central area of the Southern Caucasus[2980]: ^{KUR}Gamir(ra) was already localized by Diakonoff on the territory of modern Georgia, most probably in its central part[2981], with an opposing view compared to the one proposed by Salvini[2982], who located the toponym south or southeast of Lake Urmia. Two more letters[2983] report on an invasion of Cimmerian troops into the Urartian territory; in particular, the one signed by Urda-Sin mentions an Urartian ruler Sarduri, in connection with the governor of Muṣaṣir, Urzana[2984]: in the letter, one can read that "The Cimmerian (king) has departed from Mannea this [...] and entered Urarṭu. (...) Sarduri is [...] in Ṭur[u]špâ"[2985]. The outcome of this expedition is not known: this expedition is to be located in the territories south-east of Urartu, to the south of Lake Urmia, as the Cimmerian camp was pitched in Uṣunali, in the Zagros mountain range.

All the communications sent by Sennacherib date from before the Eighth Campaign of Sargon II; during the reign of Sennacherib, however, one can't find mentions of the Cimmerians in Assyrian texts: after having been mentioned in the Assyrian letters dated to 714 BCE, the Cimmerian population disappeared from cuneiform texts for more than thirty years. In fact, Cimmerians turned out to be a conspicuous concern for his successor, Esarhaddon, who mentioned them many times, both in the annals and in his queries to the Sun god: in particular, within one text they are mentioned in connection with Rusa, king of Urartu, probably the son of Argišti. The tablet reads: "Will Ursâ, king of Ur]arṭ[u], (...) strive and plan? Will he, [whether ...] or on the advice [of his counsellor]s, together with his army, [or with the]

[2976] SAA 1: 30.
[2977] SAA 1: 31.
[2978] SAA 1: 31, l. b.e. 27.
[2979] SAA 5: 92.
[2980] Ivantchik 2005: 105.
[2981] Diakonoff – Kashkai 1981: 71; Diakonoff 1984: 90 and 175.
[2982] Pecorella – Salvini 1984: 45-46.
[2983] SAA 5 144-145.
[2984] SAA 5: 145.
[2985] SAA 5: 145, ll. 4-13.

Cimmerians or any of his a[ll]ies, [take] the road from where they are to wage war, kill, plunder, and loot (...)?"[2986]. The ambiguous wording might suggest that, at that time, the Cimmerians were allied with the king of Urartu against Assyria: in fact, Esarhaddon faced a Cimmerian attack led by a certain "Teušpâ, a Cimmerian, a barbarian whose home is remote"[2987]. One can't help but notice that the proper name of the Cimmerian leader is suspiciously similar to the one born by the Urartian capital on lake Van, Tušpa: many illations can be made on this topic, but no sure connection can be proven. Esarhaddon was also extremely worried about a possible attack on one of his messengers to Hubuškia, in the Assyrian province of Nairi, which could be carried out by Urartians, Cimmerians, Manneans, Scythians or other enemy peoples, and he turned to the god Shamash to find out the outcome of that possible embassy[2988]. The Cimmerians have been defeated during the reign of Ashurbanipal: "(As for) the Cimmerians, a dangerous enemy who had never feared my ancestors, and, with regard to me, had not grasped the feet of my royal majesty, with the support of the gods Aššur and Marduk, my lords, he (Gyges) clamped (them) in manacles, handcuffs, (and) neck-stocks and sent (them) before me, together with his substantial audience gift(s)"[2989]. Assyrian documents thus inform us that the Cimmerians were a threat to the peoples of the ancient Near East for at least a century.

Next to the name of the Cimmerians, however, is that of the Scythians, at least from the time of Esarhaddon, who mentions them in connection with the Cimmerians themselves in his queries to the god Šamaš[2990]; he also claims to have defeated their army, led by Išpakāia[2991]. The Scythians, despite their future fame, were at that time less prominent than the Cimmerians, and one can find in fact very sporadic mentions of them, all connected to the regions of Manna and Media, at the north-eastern frontiers of Assyria. The name of a Scythian ruler is mentioned in a tablet containing the queries of Esarhaddon, namely Bartatua, who wanted to stipulate an alliance with Assyria through an inter-dynastic marriage[2992]. The name of the Scythians is mentioned in Assyrian texts in connection with Urartu only within Esarhaddon's queries, while it is more interesting to consult the Bible for further information. In the list of biblical genealogies, where ethnonyms have taken the form of proper names, one finds a certain Gomer, son of Japheth and father of three sons, including Aškenaz[2993]. Aškenaz is mentioned in another passage in connection with Ararat, namely: "Raise a banner in the land, sound the horn among the nations, summoning them to war against her; recruit against her the kingdoms of Araràt, Minnì and Aškenaz"[2994]. Behind the name of Gomer is obviously Gamir, the Assyrian name for the Cimmerians; Aškenaz is a transliteration of the Assyrian Iškuza, indicating the Scythians; for Ararat there is no need to provide an interpretation.

In Urartian texts, however, it is mentioned only one toponym that is probably related to the Scythian population[2995], namely ^{KUR}Išqigulu, both in the annals of Argišti, son of Minua[2996], and in the famous

[2986] SAA 4: 18, ll. 4-8.
[2987] RINAP 4: Esarhaddon 1, ll. iii 43-44.
[2988] SAA 4: 24. In general, the king is very worried about a Cimmerian or a Scythian attack (SAA 4: 35, 36, 37, 39, 40).
[2989] RINAP 5: Ashurbanipal 3, ll. ii 92-iii 4.
[2990] See fn. 90.
[2991] RINAP 4: Esarhaddon 1, l. iii 59; 2, l. ii 20; 3, l. iii 31; 7, l. i' 1; 97, l. 19b.
[2992] SAA 4: 20.
[2993] Genesi 10, 3.
[2994] Geremia 51, 27.
[2995] Van Loon 1966: 15.
[2996] CTU A 8-3, ll. i 21 and v 47; CTU A 8-10, l. 3.

tablet containing the "name of the year" found in Toprakkale[2997]. The mention of the ethnonym as early as the time of Argišti Minuaḫi would predate the Scythian presence in the Near East, and the location of this territory would be in northern Armenia, north of Gyumri[2998]. However, it must be remembered that the identification of ^{KUR}Išqigulu with the Scythians is still hypothetical.

The connections between Urartu, Cimmerians and Scythians are strong and present, well established in the Near East, probably after an initial period of conflicts: archaeological excavations have allowed us to find, in various locations in the Near East, bi- or trilobate bronze arrowheads in the same shape as Scythian arrowheads[2999]. These arrowheads were apparently used not only by the Scythians, but by all the armies at the time[3000]. It is not clear whether there was an actual distinction between Cimmerians and Scythians on an ethnic level, or whether the sources reflect the lack of knowledge of nomadic populations on the part of Assyrian intelligence. What is clear, however, is the interaction between these peoples and the Urartians, underlined by both Assyrian textual data and archaeological evidence, including numerous arrowheads, but also various art objects, found at Karmir-blur and Ayanis[3001]. At Karmir-blur, in particular, a huge quantity of "Scythian" arrowheads, together with bridle sets of nomadic type and *akinakai*, swords used in the nomadic world, were found in the same rooms: this may talk in favour of considering that Urartians adopted some of the nomadic weapons and horse harnesses, more than viewing these weapons as ethnic markers[3002]. Art objects belonging to the so-called "animal style" have also been borrowed by Urartians, as demonstrated by the finds of Karmir-blur and Ayanis, but this event was rarer and may be considered the reflection of specific close intercultural contacts with the nomadic populations[3003].

2.2.1. The impact of Assyro-Urartian culture on nomadic populations

Urartian influence on foreign cultures is rarely attested: apart from the highly debated cases of Urartian influence in Greece and Etruria[3004], or the still unclear question of the spread of bronze cauldrons, no elements of Urartian civilisation are found in any Near Eastern culture contemporary[3005] with the Urartian Kingdom. An exception to this trend, however, is represented by some specific objects found

[2997] CTU B Ct Tk-1, l. 2.
[2998] Dan 2020: 48-49.
[2999] Sulimirski 1954: 295-296; Derin – Muscarella 2001: 197-198; Dönmez 2002: 35. The problem of the archaeological distinction between Cimmerian and Scythian is still big and debated: while we have specific information, coming also from the classic authors, such as Herodotus, on the use and costumes of the Scythians, we lack precise information of the Cimmerians, which, at present, may only be discussed as "a historical problem" (Roberto Dan, personal communication). That's the reason why, apart from archaeologically and historically established cases, in this text the term "nomadic" has been used.
[3000] Ivantchik 2005: 108.
[3001] Erdem 2019.
[3002] See the stress on this topic in Derin – Muscarella 2001.
[3003] Ivantchik 2005: 110.
[3004] Pallottino 1958.
[3005] Different is the case of the future Persian Empire.

in Scythian burial mounds, such as, for example, the *akinakai* buried in the Kelermes[3006] and Melgunov[3007] kurgans[3008].

Both *akinakai*, a specific type of dagger or short sword connected to the Scythian world[3009], have a decoration on the surface of the entire scabbard and hilt, made of gold. The scabbards of both *akinakai* are completely covered, along its length, with images of hybrid creatures, with lion or bull bodies, stretching a bow with human arms; their images are framed by a *guilloche* line. Their representation is quite reminiscent of the hybrid creatures depicted on the bronze belts widespread in the Urartian area, although they are elaborated with the insertion of motifs related to the nomadic world: all the wings of the hybrid creatures, for example, consist of images of fish, a motif absolutely typical of the nomadic world[3010] rather than of Urartian or Mesopotamian imageries. What is most surprising is the image depicted at the upper end of the scabbards: a scene of devotion to the sacred tree by two winged anthropomorphic figures. Each of them is standing in front of a tree in a lanceolate form that clearly resembles those represented on the pillar bases from Adilcevaz (**Rel-Ad-2-11**) while in the centre there is a sacred tree in the shape of a garland, similar to those represented on some bronze belt specimens[3011]. The inspiration for this scene is most likely drawn from the art of Rusa, son of Argišti, who inscribed the pillar bases from Adilcevaz[3012]; moreover, the motif of the "garland" sacred tree, engraved on the hilt of the *akinakai*, is a clear reference to the so-called golden sceptre of Queen Qaquli (**G-Ay-1**), traditionally considered to be the consort of Rusa Argištiḫi. In this case, the decoration of the two *akinakai* slightly differs: the hilt of the Melgunov's *akinakes* has a cylindrical shape, that recalls that specific sceptre. Around the pommel of the hilt of the Melgunov's *akinakes* there is a garland decoration of buds and tassels, as is also found on certain bronze belts. The shape and the decoration of the Kelermes' *akinakes* hilt differ from the Megunov one: it is composed of rhomboidal and circular elements flanked by the same type of "garland" sacred tree seen on the Melgunov *akinakes*; the circular knob on the top of the hilt is also decorated with a different geometric motif. The dating of this object is therefore necessarily later than the first half of the 7th century BC, the period of the reign of Rusa, son of Argišti. The Urartian inspiration is very evident, and it is skillfully combined with nomadic iconography, as evidenced by the decoration on the lower end of the scabbard, which also recalls that of the sword hilt found in Ayanis (**Nom-Ay-1**), or by the image of the deer represented in the side panel of the scabbard itself[3013]. The result is constituted by objects with absolutely hybrid decorations, showing clear signs of the encounter between two cultures. Both specimens testify to a series of long-lasting contacts with Urartian culture, both in the royal and popular spheres, which certainly must not have been limited to warlike incursions by nomadic peoples into the Urartian state.

[3006] Galanina 1997: pls. 7-9.
[3007] See the Hermitage Museum, catalogue Дн.1763-1/19.
[3008] An extensive work on Assyro-Urartian influences in nomadic iconography would require an amount of research comparable to another PhD thesis; moreover, this does not represent the main aim of this one. For this reason, it had been chosen to focus only on the particular case of the aforementioned *akinakai*, which present a very characteristic Urartian motif on their hilt. An in-depth study regarding these topics is being prepared by the author with dr. Roberto Dan and Andrea Cesaretti.
[3009] On the *akinakai*, see Topal 2015.
[3010] Korolkova 2006: 37.
[3011] See, for example, **B-Kb-7**.
[3012] CTU A 12-10.
[3013] See Galanina 1997: pl. 5.

3. Southern borders: the Neo-Assyrian Empire and the Iranian territory

3.1 Assyria

A cogent and coherent discourse on the relations between Assyria and Urartu is, at the end of the previous analysis, extremely complex: the definition of Urartian culture in some ways cannot disregard the strong influence exercised by Assyria, yet it is characterized as intrinsically different, for mainly political reasons, from Assyrian culture. The opposition between Assyria and Urartu, which paradoxically arose long before the emergence of the Urartian state, in fact characterised Urartian culture not so much *per differentiam*, as one would expect from two enemy states, but rather by the presence of an Assyrian permeance within almost all areas relevant to Urartian culture: all manifestations of art, epigraphy, and probably the state administration itself[3014]. One does not wish to deny the technological innovations introduced by the Urartian state, mainly identifiable at the architectural level and in the treatment of the landscape, but, as far as art and epigraphy are concerned, they are limited to sort of notes in the margin: one can identify, for example, peculiarities in the arrangement of the inscription compared to the image on the cylindrical seals, or epigraphic features identifiable in the rendering of cuneiform signs, but there are no major innovations compared to the already established Assyrian tradition. In the following section, after a brief historical introduction analysing the contacts between the two powers, the Urartian cultural spheres in which Assyria had a predominant influence will be analysed, namely, as already mentioned, epigraphy and art. A brief excursus will then be devoted to Urartian religion, which appears to bear peculiar characteristics and, at first glance, seems to be marginally affected by Assyrian influence.

3.1.1. The written sources

As examined above[3015], contacts between Assyria and the Armenian Highlands originated several centuries before the "official" emergence of the Urartian state: this circumstance has given rise to numerous studies, based primarily on the philological analysis of onomastics and toponymy found in Assyrian texts that mention Urartu's possible antecedents, aimed at proving or disproving the actual connection between the entities mentioned in the Assyrian texts, *Nairi* and *Uruatri*, and the future Kingdom of Urartu[3016]. What has not been given particular weight, however, is the very fact testified to by these Assyrian texts, namely that a perfectly formed state entity of considerable prestige and with a distinctive artistic and literary culture, Assyria, had begun to expand its direct influence into the territories of the Southern Caucasus.

The Kingdom of Urartu as such seems to suddenly emerge as a state with a monarch and an army in the second half of the 9th century BCE: in this period one can find not only the first Urartian written sources,

[3014] A PhD thesis is being written on this topic by Armağan Tan.
[3015] See § II.2.1.
[3016] The most famous of these studies is undoubtedly Salvini 1967.

that are however not very informative about the political events happening in the background, but also different Assyrian texts talking about an Urartian king residing in his royal city. In order to understand the complex events that lead to the genesis of the Urartian state, one must rely on previous Assyrian inscriptions, which began to mention an enemy in the north when it interfered in the Assyrian territorial expansion projects. It is, however, not possible to verify whether the entities mentioned in Assyrian inscriptions with the names *Ur(u)aṭri* and *Nairi*, starting from the beginning of the 13th century BCE, and generically located in the territories north of the Assyrian area, should be regarded as the direct antecedent of the future Urartian Kingdom. What the Assyrian inscriptions are actually telling us is that, despite the brevity of the first expeditions in the north, we should consider that the interference of the Assyrian Empire in the Southern Caucasus started already during the Middle Assyrian period, at the end of the Late Bronze Age. These contacts continued almost uninterrupted until the fall of the Assyrian Empire[3017], providing the modern scholars with a counterpart to the univocal Urartian inscriptions.

3.1.2. Adoption of cuneiform script in Urartu

The adoption of cuneiform writing in Urartu has often been seen as the actual start of Urartian history, much more so than the Assyrian indications that there was at least one ruler before Sarduri, son of Lutipri. And if indeed the introduction of writing on the Armenian Highlands must be seen as an event of exceptional significance, it cannot be said that it could not have been, up to a point, rather predictable. If, in fact, as suggested above, Assyrian influence in future Urartian territories must be attested at least from the 13th century BCE, the fundamental elements of Assyrian culture inevitably arrived, probably filtered and with a certain delay in relation to the innovations recorded in the centres of power, also in the mountainous areas of the north. Moreover, the Assyrian king Tiglath-Pileser I succeeded in engraving his name and royal title in stone at the town of Malazgirt[3018], north of Lake Van, the epicentre of the future Kingdom of Urartu; Tiglath-Pileser I[3019], followed by Shalmaneser III[3020], also engraved cuneiform inscriptions in Assyrian language at the source of the Tigris river, at the so-called *Tigristunnel*, on the Urartian border. Cuneiform epigraphy, therefore, had penetrated in the Urartian territories well before the emergence of a writing culture associated with the Urartian Kingdom itself. If one assumes, as we are trying to prove, that there was a sort of Assyrian substratum in the future areas of Urartian interest, presumably well established between the eastern Taurus range and Lake Van, the adoption of Assyrian cuneiform appears to be the natural evolution of the so-called *Caucasian way to civilisation*[3021] represented by the Urartian state. If, in fact, one looks at the introduction of cuneiform writing in Urartu as part of a process that rests precisely on an Assyrian substratum in the Urartian territories, then there is no longer any need to assume external intervention, in this case theorised with the idea that the Urartian army kidnapped an Assyrian scribe[3022]. Furthermore, this would explain why the formulae adopted by the Urartians, for example the royal titulary, were not the ones used by the contemporary Assyrian king, but rather by previous rulers: the delay in communication between the

[3017] See the table in § 3.1.5.
[3018] RIMA 2: A.0.87.16.
[3019] RIMA 2: A.0.87.15.
[3020] RIMA 3: A.0.102.21–24.
[3021] Masson 1997.
[3022] Radner 2011: 742.

Assyrian centre and the northern "periphery" would, in fact, favour the adoption of a slightly more antiquated form.

3.1.3. Art

There are few doubts about the very close connection between Urartian and Assyrian art: this is manifested to this day mainly at the level of artistic and iconographic motifs taken from Urartians, but it cannot be excluded that Urartu may also have imported the media on which to reproduce these motifs. For this reason, it is useful to consider that some inscriptions of Assyrian kings found on tablets clearly indicate that some epigraphs were intended to be affixed to metal objects[3023]. As indicated repeatedly in this contribution, the analysis of Urartian written and material culture allows us to place it preliminarily, in an almost paradoxical way for two enemy states, in the wake of the more prestigious Assyrian culture, confirmed as a reference culture in the Near East of the 1st millennium BCE. On an artistic level, therefore, it is not possible to identify individual influences, for example individual decorative motifs, from Assyria: Assyrian figurative art consistently permeates all Urartian artistic production, forming the basis on which it is set from the very beginning. The original Urartian creations are sporadic, and mostly located chronologically towards the end of the Kingdom, under King Rusa, son of Argišti: these are, for example, the decorations on the walls of the *cella* and the podium of the temple of Ayanis, or the decorated and inscribed square blocks found at Adilcevaz.

Without claiming to be complete, it is possible to draw up a list of Assyrian decorative motifs found in Urartu art: starting with fillers, one finds *guilloche* and floral motifs, such as garlands of blossoms, rosettes and palmettes. As for the figurative motifs, Assyrian traces in Urartu art can be found in the scenes of worship of the sacred tree and military parades (perhaps borrowed from the chariot hunting theme in Assyria), as well as in the choice of the two main animals represented in Urartian art, the lion and the bull. It is remarkable that some anthropomorphic statuettes, such as those pertaining to the throne of Toprakkale, can be dated according to changes in Assyrian art, as they bring characteristics to be regarded as innovations of the art of Sargon II. However, it is not just an issue only regarding decorative motifs: a chance purchase by the Hixenbaugh Ancient Art Gallery made it possible, through chemical analysis, to verify the originality of a quiver decorated and inscribed with the name of Shalmaneser III[3024], demonstrating once again how, also in Assyria, epigraphs were inscribed on metal objects of particular value. The quiver that belonged to Shalmaneser III is also proof of the existence of decorated quivers in Assyria, although specimens from actual excavations are lacking. In the field of glyptics, Urartu seems to apply to the medium itself, the seal, some Assyrian figurative scenes typical of other media: for this, there are several scenes of worship of the sacred tree by hybrid creatures and presentations of the sovereign standing under a parasol, accompanied by the presence of roaring lions of all shapes and sizes. On the whole, it seems that the Urartian rulers, in the process of creating the kingdom's characteristic art, carefully selected some Assyrian artistic specificities, abandoning others for no apparent reason. However, as is abundantly clear in the section of analysis of the Urartian belts, this selection must have taken place at a time when such motifs were already successfully circulating

[3023] See Novotny 2018: 255, fn. 7. However, as indicated in Novotny 2018: 254-255, few epigraphs incised on metal objects have been found in Assyria, such as RINAP 3: Sennacherib 193 and 194; RINAP 4: Esarhaddon 2010.
[3024] See the Hixenbaugh Ancient Art Ltd website.

in Urartian territories, further evidence of the setting of Urartian kingship on an earlier Assyrian substratum.

A further step in the analysis of Urartian art and how it was set on an Assyrian substratum concerns chronology: it is interesting, therefore, to examine carefully not so much the period when Urartian artists adopted specific traits of Assyrian art, but the absolute dating of such traits, which, as with inscriptions, could lead to the identification of a precise Assyrian artistic period. The analysis could start from the identification of the model of some of the typical Urartian objects: concerning quivers, for example, J. Curtis noted that "Urartian quivers (...) are reminiscent of those of Ashurnasirpal II discussed above and may (...) have drawn their inspiration from them" [3025]. This date is not at all surprising, as it corresponds to that of the model of Urartian royal epigraphs. As for the helmets, it is also important to note that the shape of Urartian examples resembles that of the helmets depicted on Assyrian reliefs from the time of Tukulti-Ninurta II, and in particular the reliefs of Ashurnasirpal II[3026], which are often decorated with incised lines that can be interpreted as embossed ribs[3027]. Several decorated helmets defined as Assyrian circulate on the antiquities market[3028], bearing the same motifs as decorations on Urartian helmets, but since they cannot be dated precisely, they are not suited to be included in a chronological analysis. Regarding Urartian shields, depictions on Assyrian reliefs show circular shields from the Middle Assyrian period, when they are represented on the White Obelisk of Ashurnasirpal I among the weapons of Assyrian infantrymen[3029]; the rare archaeological finds[3030] confirm the Assyrian use of circular shields, slightly smaller than Urartian ones and lacking the figurative decoration. It is clear, however, that the purpose of the decorated Urartian shield was dedicatory, as evidenced by the epigraphs engraved on many examples, while Assyrian representations mostly show shields used in warfare. The only representation of Urartian dedicatory shields in the Assyrian context is precisely related to the pillage of the temple of Ḫaldi at Muṣaṣir, on whose columns several specimens of votive shields are affixed, decorated with *protomai* of roaring lions protruding from the centre of the shields. Only one specimen of this kind has been archaeologically found, in the temple of Ayanis (**S-Ay-2**). In the case of this type of object, therefore, it is not possible to identify a precise model found in the Assyrian context.

As for the figurative motifs, it is useful to focus on the more "narrative" decorations rather than on the filler motifs, which are repeated almost unchanged throughout Assyrian art. It is evident, for example, that the scenes of adoration of the sacred tree are taken from the art of Ashurnasirpal II, as attested both in the bas-reliefs found in his capital, Nimrud[3031], and, at a provincial level, in numerous cylindrical seals found in various localities of his empire[3032]. It is not possible, instead, to specify anything about the depictions of lions and bulls in Urartian art, since representations of such animals are typical of the entire history of Near Eastern art[3033]. On the other hand, concerning themes taken on by "popular" art,

[3025] Curtis 2013: 43.
[3026] See, as an example, the wall relief BM124534.
[3027] Curtis 2013: 44.
[3028] See, for example, Born – Seidl 1995.
[3029] Barron 2010: 121.
[3030] Barron 2010: 115.
[3031] See, as an example, the wall relief BM98063.
[3032] See, as an example Collon 1987: 76, n° 340-341.
[3033] Collon 1987: 187.

references to hunts, more or less realistic, are represented on the belts, always inspired by the art of Ashurnasirpal II[3034].

On a side note, it is interesting to note that the decorations on Urartian royal objects always[3035] appear to be embossed, unlike what can be observed in Assyrian art, unfortunately particularly on objects from the antiquity market[3036], on which the depictions tend to be engraved.

3.1.4. Religion

The only area of Urartian culture in which Assyria does not seem to have had a particular influence is religion, which is characterised as related to the Hurrian one at least for two of the deities of the main triad, Teišeba and Šiuini, and instead takes up deities of probable local origin for the rest of the pantheon. The third deity of the supreme triad, Ḫaldi, appears to have been somehow venerated before in Assyria, at least from what is shown by the theophoric elements of some personal names from the Middle[3037] and Neo-Assyrian[3038] periods, while the oldest written record of his name appears, again as a theophoric element, in a text from the Palaeo-Babylonian period from Mari[3039]. Ḫaldi's name is always characterised as divine by the determinative ^{D}, suggesting that there was a tendency to venerate this deity in an unidentifiable part of Assyrian territory, probably located near the Zagros mountains. The temple of the god Ḫaldi is located in the centre of Muṣaṣir / Ardini, an international sanctuary of the deity frequented by different ethnic groups during the 1st millennium BC, and possibly also in earlier periods. It is clear, anyway, that the veneration of this deity was not particularly widespread, given the scarcity of names in which the theophoric element appears: the attestations are nevertheless sufficient to suggest a cult, albeit not widespread, active in Assyria from at least the Middle Assyrian period, probably in the northern regions of the state.

On the other hand, the dedication of bronze objects, mainly weapons, to the supreme divinity of the pantheon, Ḫaldi, appears to be a uniquely Urartian specificity. This phenomenon, nevertheless, undoubtedly took its cue from the Assyrian practice of engraving cuneiform epigraphs on bronze objects[3040], but evolved into dedicatory inscriptions due to the deity's warlike vocation: it is no coincidence, in fact, that dedicatory epigraphs are mainly found engraved on weapons as early as the reign of Išpuini. In any case, it is not possible to exclude the possibility that dedicatory epigraphs addressed to deities were also present in the Assyrian world but have not been preserved due to a lack of documentation.

[3034] Collon 1987: 155, "the huntsman in a chariot (…) is closely paralleled by Assyrian reliefs of the 9th century BC depicting king Assurnasirpal II".
[3035] Incised decorations are present on discussed objects.
[3036] See, again, Born – Seidl 1995.
[3037] Saporetti 1970: 224 and 283.
[3038] Baker 2000: 441-442.
[3039] Durand – Talon 1984: 277-278.
[3040] As demonstrated both by the texts on clay tablets saying that they were supposed to be incised on metal objects, and also by the bronze quiver, from the antique market, inscribed by Shalmaneser III.

3.1.5. Assyrian campaigns in the northern territories

	Nairi	*Ur(u)atri*	*Urartu*
Shalmaneser I		**RIMA 1: A.0.77.1, ll. 22-46** A rebellion occurred in the land of *Uruatri*; the king tamed it in three days, destroying 51 cities and conquering 8 lands.	
Tukulti-Ninurta I	**RIMA 1: A.0.78.1, ll. iii 30 – iv 23** Expedition in the territory of the mount *Kašiiari* to the very border of Nairi. **RIMA 1: A.0.78.4, A.0.78.5, A.0.78.6, A.0.78.7, A.0.78.13, A.0.78.16, A.0.78.18, A.0.78.20, A.78.24** The sovereign defeated 40 kings of Nairi and received tributes from them.		
Tiglath-Pileser I	**RIMA 2: A.0.87.1 iv, l. 83** The ruler faced 23 kings of Nairi. **RIMA 2: A.0.87.1, iv l. 94 – v l. 21** The ruler faced 60 kings of Nairi. **RIMA 2: A.0.87.2** The ruler defeated 30 kings of Nairi. **RIMA 2: A.0.87.4, ll. 15-17; A.0.87.10, ll. 17-20; A.0.87.13, l. 3'**		

	The ruler marched three times on the land of Nairi. **RIMA 2: A.0.87.15, p. 61** Inscription carved at the *Tigristunnel*, where he commemorates his campaign against Nairi. **RIMA 2: A.0.87.16** Inscription located north of the Lake Van, around the modern Malazgirt, recording his campaigns against Nairi.		
Ashur-bel-kala	**RIMA 2: A.0.89.7, l. 18** Mention of the mountains of Nairi, probably just to indicated the territories in the north.	**RIMA 2: A.0.89.2, ll. 18'-36', A.0.89.5, ll. 2'-16'** The ruler campaigns against Uruatri	
Adad-Nirari II	**RIMA 2: A.0.99.2, ll. 30-31** The ruler marched four times against the lands of Nairi	**RIMA 2: A.0.99.2, l. 25** He subdued the land of Uratri (mentioned incidentally)	
Tukulti-Ninurta II	**RIMA 2: A.0.100.5, ll. 1-29** Narration of several campaigns against the lands of Nairi. **RIMA 2: A.0.100.6**. The lands of Nairi are subjected to Assyria		
Ashurnasirpal II	**RIMA 2: A.0.101.1, ii, ll. 12-15**		**RIMA 2: A.0.101.2, l. 13; A.0.101.23, l. 9; A.0.101.30, ll. 13-14.**

	First campaign against the lands of Nairi ended with their subjugation and the imposition of heavy tributes (882 BCE). **RIMA 2: A.0.101.1, ii, ll. 97-100** Second campaign against Nairi (879 BCE). **RIMA 2: A.0.101.1, ii, l. 130** "Finally, I have gained dominion over the entire extensive lands Nairi" (866 BCE). **RIMA 2: A.0.101.19, ll. 93-97** Aramaean invasion in the lands of Nairi and the following Assyrian reconquest		**In A.0.101.26, ll. 18-24; A.0.101.51, ll. 14-20 and A.0.101.56, ll. 9-10** The ruler subdued the territories between the source of the Subnat river and the land of Urartu / the source of the Tigris river.
Shalmaneser III	**RIMA 3: A.0.102.1, ll. 21-34** Campaign against Nairi. King Kakia / Kāki is called MAN.KUR *Nairi*. Shalmaneser III headed towards the "Sea of Nairi", *ana* A.AB.BA *ša* KUR *Nairi* (859 BCE) **RIMA 3: A.0.102.28, ll. 10-18**. Campaign against Nairi (846 BCE). **RIMA 3: A.0.102.6 iii, ll. 34-45**		**RIMA 3: A.0.102.1, l. 30** First mention of Arame the Urartian, and of his fortified city Sugunia (859 BCE). **RIMA 3: A.0.102.2 ii, l. 48** Shalmaneser III reaches the town of Arzaškun, called "royal town of Arame the Urartian" (846 BCE). **RIMA 3: A.0.102.5 ii, l. 3** Shalmaneser III declares: "I laid my

	Campaign against Nairi (844 BCE). **Foster 2005: 791, ll. 14-16** "I will go see how the Urartians fight, I will go down and wash my weapons(?), be it a land of water or no water. From the yoke of Ashurnasirpal the land of Nairi [...] has arisen"		lordly brilliance over the land Urartu". **RIMA 3: A.0.102.28, l 38** During the campaign in 846 BCE, Shalmaneser III razed Arzaškun, URU *dannutišu ša* ^{m}Arame KUR *Urarṭā*. **RIMA 3: A.0.102.14, ll. 141-146** Campaign of the field marshal Daiiān Aššur towards Urartu where he meets ^{m}*Sēduri* KUR *Urartā* (830 BCE)
Šamši-Adad V	**RIMA 3: A.0.103.1 ii, ll. 3-4** The ruler receives tributes from all the kings of Nairi. **RIMA 3: A.0.103.1 ii, ll. 16-34** The ruler campaigned against Nairi, where he defeated 200 cities of Ušpina		
Adad-nirari III	**RIMA 3: A.0.104.7, l. 12** The kings of Nairi are subjected to a tribute		
Shalmaneser IV			**RIMA 3: A.0.104.2010, ll. 8-18** The ruler's *turtanu*, Šamši-ilu, narrates the campaign against ^{m}*Argištu* KUR *Urartū*, to whom is ascribed a massive army (774 BCE).

Aššur-dan III - Aššur-narari V			**CTU A 9-2, l.d., ll. 1-10** Sarduri (II) defeated Aššur-nērārī, son of Adad-nērārī, king of the land Aššur.
Tiglath-Pileser III	**RINAP 1: Tiglath-Pileser III 39, l. 36** The ruler annexed several Urartian fortresses into the Assyrian province of the territories of Nairi: Nairi is used, from now on, to indicate an Assyrian territory in the north.		**RINAP 1: Tiglath-Pileser III 35 i, ll. 21'-27'** Sarduri of the land Urarṭu, Sulumal of the land Melid, and Tarḫularu of the land Gurgum are allied with Matīʾil, king of Arpad, who rebelled against Assyria (743 BCE). **RINAP 1: Tiglath-Pileser III 39, ll. 20-22** Sarduri of Urartu forms a new alliance against Assyria (735 BCE). **RINAP 1: Tiglath-Pileser III 39, ll. 25-36** Tiglath-Pileser III annexed several Urartian fortresses.
Sargon II			**RINAP 2: Sargon II 1, ll. 66-68** The ruler deported governors of the northern provinces who conspired with Urartian Ursa/Rusa (719 BCE). **RINAP 2: Sargon II 1, ll. 101-104** The ruler attacked the Urartian territories in order to recover the

			fortresses and return them to the Mannaeans (715 BCE). **Foster 2005: 790 ff** Sargon's Eighth Campaign against Urartu (714 BCE). **SAA 05, 86-87 and 145** Urartian defeat against the Cimmerians.
Esarhaddon			**RINAP 4: Esarhaddon 33 iii, ll. 23'-34'** The ruler reports a small quarrel between the governor of Šubria and the Urartian king, once again called Ursa.
Ashurbanipal			**RINAP 5: Ashurbanipal 6 vii, ll. 20'-28', Ashurbanipal 7 vii, ll. 11-20, Ashurbanipal 35, ll. 3-8** The Urartian king, again Ursa, ordered the envoy of a delegation of ambassadors to Arbela, bearer of many gifts, to inquire about the health of the sovereign after the war against Elam and to pay him homage for the victory (652 BCE). **RINAP 5: Ashurbanipal 11** The ruler mentions an Urartian sovereign called Sarduri, who clearly recognizes the

			sovereignty of Ashurbanipal over his own by sending him numerous messengers: the Kingdom of Urartu is eventually recognized as a vassal state of Assyria.

3.2 Iran

A brief historical note is to be included also regarding the contacts with the Northern Iranian territory before its inclusion in the Urartian state. Between the 9th and the 7th century BCE, large regions of north-western Iran became part of the kingdom of Urartu. The Urartian writing tradition started very early in the Iranian territory, thanks to the inscriptions of Išpuini and Minua, dating back to the last quarter of the 9th century BCE, showing that this area was of great importance for the Urartian ruling dynasty, probably because of the location of the sanctuary of Muṣaṣir. One problem concerning the Urartian presence in northwestern Iran is the destruction of the site of Tappeh Hasanlu, which has been addressed in many ways, even in fairly recent studies, unfortunately without being able to identify the author precisely. It is possible, however, to say that the Urartian Kingdom had contact with Hasanlu, mainly due to the discovery of several bronze belts decorated with a dotted motif made in *repoussé* technique[3041], which is widely compared within the art of the Urartian period. The most relevant context is the so-called Burned Building II of Tappeh Hasanlu, which corresponds to level IV of the site (Iron Age II). Eighteen bronze belts decorated with rows of embossed dotted lines come from this complex of buildings, with a decoration usually arranged in horizontal bands composed of parallel rows of embossed dots. The belts from Burned Building II at Hasanlu were often found in association with skeletons, mainly of male individuals and often disarticulated, and with iron swords: the death of these individuals must have occurred while they were defending the fortress from the Urartian attack[3042]. A few examples of belts with dotted decoration also come from the sites of Marlik[3043] and Ghalekuti[3044], both in the Gilan area: all these specimens were found in burial contexts. Of particular interest is the fact that the dotted decoration of these belts is not enclosed in a double straight line, as it usually is on the Southern Caucasian specimens.

[3041] See Khanmohammadi et al. *forthcoming*.
[3042] The idea that Hasanlu IVb was destroyed by the Urartians is generally accepted (see, for example, Muscarella 2012b: 279). On the various theories regarding which Urartian sovereign destroyed Hasanlu – Išpuini and Minua, Minua or Argišti I, see Potts 2018: 238. A different perspective on the destruction of Hasanlu IVb has been proposed by Magee 2008, later criticised by Muscarella (2012b: 278).
[3043] Negahban 1996: Figure 34, nos 870-871, 881, 887; Piller 2008: 79f.; see Figure 6/K, M.
[3044] Egami et al. 1965: Plate 75/36.

4. Final remarks

What has been observed above allowed me to establish with certainty several features of Urartian culture, first of all its composite character. It derived, in fact, from the combination of different characteristics belonging to different cultural spheres neighbouring the Urartian area. The situation of Urartian culture in the Near East appears to be absolutely hybrid: it is the result of a mixture of Hurrian, Assyrian, Iranian and Caucasian elements, merged to create *ex novo* a culture that could unite the different tribal entities that became part of the Urartian state. The analysis conducted allowed me to consider Urartian culture properly as belonging exclusively to the court of the sovereign, who had the power and the faculty to create cultural elements in an attempt to unify the populations subjected to him; the key materials for the identification of proper Urartian features are those bearing cuneiform inscriptions, from which it is possible to draw "guidelines" for labelling as *Urartian* or *Urartianising* other uninscribed objects found in sites inside or outside the Kingdom of Urartu. It is clear that Urartian culture fit perfectly in the wake of Assyrian culture, without being a slavish copy of it: the selection of motifs and materials that the Urartian rulers wanted to connect to their kingship created specific and stereotyped situations, generated by the repetition of precise motifs related to precise objects found in precise contexts. However, it is equally evident that, at least throughout the first phase of Urartian history, it is not possible to identify original Urartian creations, except for the production of sporadic objects, derived, in any case, from an external influence, such as the bronze helmets depicting the abstract symbol of "lightning", or even *unica*, such as the famous Anzaf shield. This is, in fact, the only actual Urartian artefact almost completely detached from the traditions of neighbouring territories: it is, however, equally true that the concepts and mythology outlined in that representation were probably too complex, and too elaborate, and so abandoned in later periods. The common denominator that united the various features of Urartian culture, both linguistically and artistically, is a certain adherence to the Assyrian model, more or less accentuated depending on the type of evidence considered, but always present: this is the reason why Urartian studies were not born as an autonomous science, but as an ancillary discipline to Assyriology, postulating that Urartian culture was nothing more than a branch of Assyrian culture.

The situation, however, is decidedly more complex; the adaptation of the Assyrian culture is implemented at every level, which can lead to consider the Assyrian role not so much as an *influence* but as a sort of *base* from which the Urartian culture started. The use of the Assyrian language throughout the whole history of Urartu, the adaptation of the Assyrian cuneiform to the Urartian language, and the use of forms, motifs and objects taken from Assyria but slightly modified, according to the Urartian taste, suggest that the Assyrian culture was in some way widespread and well recognized also on the Armenian Highlands, as a sort of substratum imposed starting from the first incursions of the Assyrian army north of the eastern Taurus range. It is from there that the Urartian culture started: it was configured both as an innovation of a previous tradition known in the territories that saw its emergence, and as a confirmation of the Urartian foreign policy, which clearly intends to be considered equal to the Assyrian one. From Assyria, the features associated with the Urartian kings start to develop; and, nevertheless, complex innovations too distant from the Assyrian original, such as the one realized in the decoration of the Anzaf shield, were looked like a too marked detachment from the well-known Assyrian culture, leading to the abandonment of that new tradition created by Urartian sovereigns. That of "invention of tradition" is a concept well-suited to the Urartian situation: in order to create a culture

that unifies the conquered populations, sovereigns must create new languages and new practices that can instil certain values through their repetition, implying, to ensure the recognition of these languages, a continuity with the past. This situation fits perfectly into the definition provided by E. Hobsbawm of "invention of tradition"[3045], which, although originally referring to an analysis of a much more recent historical period, is well-suited also to the Urartian situation. As already pointed out by R. Bernbeck[3046], this paradigm applies to the religion of Urartu, but not only: the whole cultural system created by the sovereigns appears to fit within this definition. This mechanism probably started, in the Urartian case, to establish and legitimize the Urartian institution created in a territory new to these situations, the Southern Caucasus and the Armenian Highlands, and it is therefore configured as a response to an unprecedented situation. The new Urartian tradition could only be based on the Assyrian one for two main reasons, both of which concern the recognisability of the language used: it had to be understandable to the subjects of the Urartian ruler, who certainly were familiar with the Assyrian imaginary, and it had to be recognized as an equal by neighbouring peoples, especially Assyria. There is, therefore, the use of a previous tradition, not formalized in the Urartian territory, adapted and reworked to serve the purpose of the new sovereigns. The use of the cuneiform script has the same purpose, but, at the local level, it had a different outcome: it should not have been particularly known on the Armenian Highlands before Urartu, given the scarcity of Assyrian inscriptions present, and so, for the local populations, it must have been inextricably connected to the Urartian royalty, being considered as a symbol. The long inscriptions of the sovereigns were probably not understood in the content by the populations; it is also true that very few people could read them, due to their position, and, therefore, they had to be looked upon as emblems of the king. To the Assyrian eyes, they must have appeared as a sign both of the perspicacity of the Urartian kings, who had intuited the potential of cuneiform writing, and their greatness, precisely because of the inaccessible positions in which they were located. In any case, the adoption of writing in Urartu remains one of the most inexplicable characteristics of this culture: it did not happen, in fact, for utilitarian reasons, as it was probably not initially used in the administrative field, but to emphasize the power of the sovereign, who could afford both to create a scribal school to adapt cuneiform writing to the Urartian language and pass it on to future generations, and to use stonecutters able to engrave the inscriptions in even less reachable positions. In addition to them, several metalworkers with extraordinary preparation were located at the Urartian court, capable of giving life to impeccably crafted metal objects: the power of the Urartian ruler also had to pass through the quality of the works he commissioned.

The uniqueness of Urartu and its culture also lies in a further substratum present and well-rooted in the territory of the Armenian Highlands, namely the traditions of the Southern Caucasus, which, in Urartu, are reflected above all in the architectural field. Urartians had made their own also local traditions, especially for a utilitarian purpose, along with the Assyrian ones: the element that most embodies this syncretism is the bronze belt, bearer of extremely complex history and, probably, symbols and meanings, but not directly related to the ruling class of Urartu. In an unspecified period, during the Middle Bronze Age, belts started to spread in the Southern Caucasian area, also thanks to their extreme versatility in the representation of decoration, given by their ample decorative space. It is also known how, in the Urartian area, they were particularly widespread and used: found mainly in funerary contexts, they were completely disconnected from the sphere of royalty, rarely coming from royal

[3045] Hobsbawm – Ranger 1983: 1-15.
[3046] Bernbeck 2003-2004.

citadels and not reporting cuneiform epigraphs, the only sure trace to attribute a material to the Urartian royal court. Therefore, they were not part of that set of objects representing Urartian royal culture, but they were probably only connected to local populations. The dating of the belts, their introduction in eastern Anatolia and the limit of their use are impossible to establish nowadays, since there are no reliable dating criteria based on decorations and craftsmanship: it is not at all easy to provide a chronology of use of the bronze belts, which may have been used even long before and long after Urartian history. The only clue leading to the attribution of these objects to the Urartian sphere is the type of decoration that they show, of Assyrian derivation and, therefore, rather similar to the decorative motifs that the rulers of Urartu decided to use in creating their own symbols. However, the unequivocal attribution of these belts to the Urartian Kingdom is problematic: first of all, because already starting from the time of Shalmaneser I there was an intrusion of Assyrian elements on the Armenian Highlands, caused by the Assyrian military campaigns which, certainly, were accompanied by exchanges of cultural and diplomatic nature. The belt, therefore, from the moment of adoption and reinterpretation of Assyrian motifs, became the hybrid object *par excellence*, making use of a typically local material to reproduce images introduced from Assyria, which slowly insinuated themselves into the local imagery. It is precisely here that the imposition of the Assyrian substratum in the Southern Caucasus took place: the introduction of these initially "exotic" images, slowly assimilated by the populations of the Armenian Highlands, is probably motivated by the perception of Assyrian culture as superior, more prestigious than the local ones. Nevertheless, the adoption of Assyrian images gave rise to forms of syncretism, with the creation of images that did not exist in the original model: the few Assyrian hybrid creatures, well codified and bearers of precise meanings, may have provided a pretext for the imagination of creatures well more composite, non-existent in the Assyrian imagery, possibly conceived with the help of local unknown mythologies. These creatures are not to be found in Urartian royal art, if not in the *unicum* represented by the Anzaf shield, which, however, shows a mythology and iconography so complicated that it was immediately abandoned. It is from the Assyrian imaginary assimilated by local populations, probably specifically by those inhabiting around Lake Van, that the Urartian royal dynasty took its cue in the operation of *cultural creation*: this circumstance is also evident in the adoption of the writing. It is necessary here to briefly recall the characteristics of Urartian cuneiform writing: it is mostly derived from the Neo-Assyrian syllabary, which is also the language reported in the Akkadian inscriptions of Urartu, but retains a large number of signs belonging to the syllabary of Middle Assyrian period, to which also almost all the formulas adopted by the sovereigns date back, at least up to the time of Rusa Sarduriḫi. The most popular hypothesis, to date, regarding the introduction of cuneiform writing in Urartu involves the kidnapping of an Assyrian scribe during an Urartian campaign carried out in the 9th century BCE[3047]. However, this circumstance is unlikely and unnecessary if one simply postulates the presence of an Assyrian substratum in the future Urartian area: on the other hand, there were already Assyrian cuneiform inscriptions in the area of Lake Van, albeit few, and it should not be forgotten the presence of Assyrian outposts established, at a certain point in history, north of the Taurus mountain range. Precisely in such an outpost the origin of the scribe in the service of Sarduri, son of Lutipri[3048], may be recovered: the distance from the Assyrian centre had probably favoured the development of a scribal school specialized in letters[3049] that knew the *topoi* of Middle-Assyrian epigraphs, because the education of the first scribes dated back to that period. The use

[3047] Radner 2011: 742.
[3048] See also Grekyan 2019: 258.
[3049] See Wilhelm 1987.

of the Neo-Assyrian dialect is clearly a different matter, since that is the language of use, spoken daily, and the use of a "mixed" syllabary, formed by Neo- and Middle-Assyrian signs, can be justifiable precisely in light of the distance from the centre and the difficulty of learning the new varieties or new meanings of the signs, abandoning the previous use: for a peripheral scribal school that wrote in the Neo-Assyrian language, the learning a new syllabary was not essential.

This dissertation had two primary objectives: the first was to carry out a comprehensive analysis of Urartian culture, with the ambition of producing a sort of *Kulturgeschichte*[3050]; the second, once the characteristics of Urartian culture had been established, was to highlight contacts and influences exerted on it by neighbouring cultures. Both objectives encountered various obstacles in the production of this thesis, whose primary questions, highlighted in the introduction, have been rethought: the decision of respecting the original structure, while encountering and underlining new unexpected problems, was taken in order to show the reasoning process behind the conclusions. Regarding the first objective, the very definition of "Urartian culture" is incredibly complex and has an unexpected ideological bearing: I defined the "Urartian culture" as the set of traditions produced by the royal court, primarily characterized by the presence of an Urartian inscription, and, from those, I tried to analyse how and in what forms it had an impact on the governed territory. The operation proved to be rather complicated, due to the almost exclusive excavation of the citadels, by nature connected to royalty, and the incredible quantity of artefacts from the antique markets. Once the limits of the "Urartian culture" had been sort of established, a class of artefacts traditionally associated with it turned out to be extraneous, namely bronze belts: this made it possible, thanks also to the path already opened up by Van Loon but never continued in Urartian studies, to distinguish between artefacts belonging to a "royal" Urartian culture, the proper one, and objects that instead fit into a territorial and chronological definition rather than a social one, identified as the culture "of Urartian period and territory". Given the basis provided by these definitions, which undoubtedly still need a further detailed study, it was possible to focus on the influences experienced by Urartian culture: here too, it was necessary to rethink the concept of influence in favour of a sort of rereading of Urartian history, based on a different way of interpreting the evidence. Given the almost total adherence of Urartian culture to Assyrian models dated to an era preceding the emergence of the Urartian Kingdom, the existence of an Assyrian substratum in the territory of future Urartian development, established on top of an earlier Caucasian substratum, was assumed. In the case of Assyrian and Caucasian "influences", therefore, it is necessary to remodel the term "influence" itself, defining it more as a derivation of Urartian culture from the combination of elements belonging to the two local substrata on which it was imposed. For this reason, it is not possible to trace, at least for the beginning of Urartian history, precise contemporary stylistic parallels that shaped its culture. Starting, instead, from the time of Rusa Erimenaḫi, *topoi* originating in the epigraphs of Sargon II, as well as artistic features typical of this ruler's art, entered into Urartian inscriptions: unfortunately, the short life of the reign would not allow a true development of these elements. If, from the Assyrian substratum, Urartu took the decorative motifs, the objects on which they are represented and the *topoi* of the epigraphs, from the Caucasian substratum Urartu took the architecture, necessarily designed to adapt to the impervious territory; even the bronze belts, and a few motifs represented on them, are of Caucasian tradition, probably rooted in the populations' use. The only elements that can be considered alien to Urartian territory are ivory, probably introduced from the Syrian area, and cauldrons, which were much

[3050] I would like to thank my supervisor, professor Giorgieri, for this very definition.

more common in the Phrygian area. For the rest, it is clear that Urartian culture was "self-sufficient" from the moment of its creation.

The creation of a culture is the result of the effort of an individual or a group to give meaning and norm to a new experience[3051], and starts from the necessary premise that such a culture is needed to provide symbols peculiar to the formation of a new group. When several groups of people come into contact, there tends to be a situation in which at least one of them is in a position of dominance – economic, political, or military – whereby it has the possibility of forcing the others into a subordinate position[3052]: this was the case with the ethnic group that later took power on the Armenian Highlands and is conventionally indicated with the name "Urartian". In the case of the groups of peoples living on the Armenian Highlands, they had more than the "Caucasian" substratum in common, since a system of customs derived from Assyria had recently been established in their territory: this made the backgrounds of the different populations quite similar, so that there was no need for anyone to learn from the beginning the meanings and the ideas behind a new culture, imposed by the superior population. The new situation of superiority reserved for a single group, the "Urartians", allowed them to draw on the cultural heritage shared by the peoples of the Southern Caucasus to form a new system of symbols and customs used to identify their new political entity. These symbols were already familiar to the subjects of the Urartian ruler on the Armenian Highlands, and they also allowed Urartu to reach its aim to become a full-fledged member of the Near Eastern society, through the use of a system of symbols with a well-established "Mesopotamian" tradition. The emergence of Urartu, moreover, was situated temporally within a period that contemplated a power vacuum brought about by the disappearance of the Hurrian state of Mittani: the aggregation of the Hurrian populations, therefore, may have taken place around another pole, the centre of which was Lake Van, effectively creating a new state that could be fully integrated into the "classical" Near Eastern landscape. Moreover, albeit the ethnic and social complexity occurring in the Southern Caucasus between the 2nd and 1st millennia BCE, it should be emphasised that, as early as the first Assyrian attacks, the Nairi region was already well organised, given the number of cities and kings mentioned in Assyrian sources: the seizure of power by just one of these kings was only a matter of time. The Hurrian cultural heritage is preserved within Urartian culture in terms of the language and, at least in part, the religion; the art and techniques of epigraphy, as well as the composition of inscriptions, have Assyrian roots, with the knowledge of the Assyrian language persisting throughout the whole Urartian history; architectural techniques and the use of bronze belts, on the other hand, lead back to the sphere of the Southern Caucasus. Whichever way one looks at it, Urartian culture appears to be extremely composite, a blend of traits from the different cultures from which it sprang, but extremely closed to outside cultural influences. The emergence of Urartu has been seen either as the result of Assyrian military pressure or as the culmination of the so-called *Caucasian way to civilisation*, but it is instead a much more complex matter, the result of new situations of domination on the Armenian Highlands that filled a previous power vacuum and worried the Assyrian state from the very beginning. Thanks to the Assyrian military and diplomatic campaigns, Urartian culture had the opportunity to come into being, as they introduced in the Armenian Highlands motifs, customs, and concepts that were previously foreign; the new social arrangements, the result of internal development in the Southern Caucasus, also benefited from the Assyrian intrusion, as it helped to form a new political entity whose power was recognised by the other Near Eastern states and, from

[3051] Jaeger – Selznick 1964: 659.
[3052] Rothstein 1972: 673.

a certain point, also by the nomadic peoples of the steppes. Urartian culture, which owed so much to the cultures already present in its territory at the time of its formation, proved closed to further external influences, crystallising in symbols and ways that were used throughout its history.

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CAD = *Chicago Akkadian Dictionary.*

CTU A = Salvini 2008a.

CTU A II = Salvini 2008b.

CTU A III = Salvini 2008c.

CTU B = Salvini 2012.

MZL = Borger 2004.

RIMA 1 = Grayson 1987.

RIMA 2 = Grayson 1991.

RIMA 3 = Grayson 1996.

RINAP 1 = Tadmor – Yamada 2011.

RINAP 2 = Frame 2020.

RINAP 3 = Grayson – Novotny 2014.

RINAP 4 = Leichty 2011.

RINAP 5 = Novotny – Jeffers 2018.

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CREATING A CULTURE

An analysis of the culture of the Kingdom of Bia / Urartu in its geographical and historical context

II

CATALOGUE

Preliminary notes

This catalogue was created to complement the consultation of the text of the doctoral thesis entitled *Creating a culture. An analysis of the culture of the Kingdom of Bia / Urartu in its geographical and historical context* and, as such, it contains the titles of chapters and paragraphs, arranged in the same order and numbering. The need for a catalogue arose when the number of objects mentioned in the work began to become impressive, so it was appropriate to rethink the system of citations originally used.

This catalogue lists all the materials studied in the thesis, and each is given a unique number that identifies both its type and origin. A brief morphological description of the object, followed by an essential bibliography and the current location of the artefact, indicated where possible, complete each sheet. Where it has been possible to recover it, an image of the object is also included; for the more complex decorations, such as those depicted on bronze helmets, a drawing has also been included.

It is important to emphasise that the catalogue is, by its very nature, an element that must be considered perpetually in progress: archaeological research makes the information already acquired obsolete every year, adding new material or bringing to light objects that disprove previous research. For this reason, although this work hopes to be a useful support for future *Urartological* research, it can in no way be considered finished: on the contrary, it is hoped that it will be constantly updated in the light of new research.

2. Urartian artifacts

2.1. War equipment

2.1.1. Quivers

2.1.1.1. Quivers with parade scenes

Q-Çav-1: Çavuştepe.

One bronze quiver with eight superimposed parade scenes (no picture is available).

Erzen 1962: 624; Mellink 1974: 115; Batmaz 2015b: 141.

Location: unknown.

Q-Kb-1: Karmir-blur, Room 25.

Small fragments of a quiver decorated with parade scenes.

Piotrovskij 1950: 67; Piotrovskij 1952: 50.

History Museum of Armenia, inventory number: 2010-3.



Q-Kb-2: Karmir-blur, Room 11.

One fragment of a bronze quiver with superimposed parade scenes bearing an inscription of Argišti Minuaḫi (CTU B 8-16).

Piotrovskij 1952: 50; Seidl 2004: E.18, pl. 17a.

History Museum of Armenia, inventory number: 1740-41.



Q-Kb-3: Karmir-blur, Room 13.



One bronze quiver with eight superimposed parade scenes bearing an inscription of Sarduri Argištiḫi (CTU B 9-10).

Piotrovskij 1950: 54, pls. 13-15; Piotrovskij 1952: 50; Piotrovskij 1955: 37, fig. 26; Seidl 2004: F.101 and pl. 17c-d; Batmaz 2015: 166, KB.23.

Hermitage Museum, inventory number: 11662.

Q-Kb-4: Karmir-blur.



One fragmentary bronze quiver with at least three superimposed parade scenes bearing an inscription of Sarduri Argištiḫi (CTU B 9-11).

Piotrovskij 1970: pl. 49; Seidl 2004: F.103 and pl. 18a; Batmaz 2015: 166, KB.24.

History Museum of Armenia, inventory number: 2303-7.

Q-Kb-5: Karmir-blur, Room 5.

One bronze quiver with eight superimposed parade scenes bearing an inscription of Sarduri Argištiḫi (CTU B 9-12) (no picture is available).

Piotrovskij 1950: 51; Piotrovskij 1960: no. 40-5; Seid1 2004: F.102; Batmaz 2015: 166, KB.15.

Hermitage Museum, inventory number: 17762.

Q-Kb-6: Karmir-blur, Room 3.

One bronze quiver with eight superimposed parade scenes (no picture is available).

Piotrovskij 1950: 67.

Location: unknown.

2.1.1.2. Quiver with animals' depiction

Q-Top-1: Toprakkale.

Upper section of a bronze quiver depicting a lion, roaring and walking towards the left, and a palmette.

Barnett 1954: 9; Barnett 1972: 169-170.

British Museum, inventory number: BM 135456.



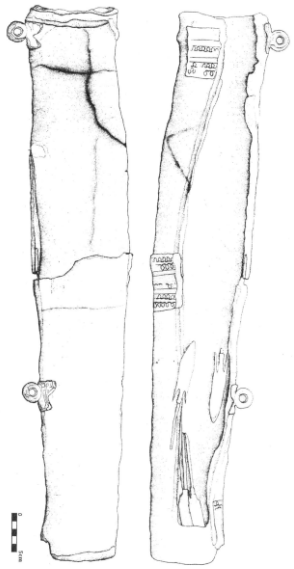
2.1.1.3. Quivers with lines of bud garlands

Q-Ay-1: Ayanis, Temple area VI.

One iron quiver with applied bronze plates decorated with rows of bud garlands.

Çilingiroğlu 2006: 237-238.

Location: unknown.



2.1.1.4. Quivers with zig-zag lines

Q-Al-1: Al Berd.

One fragment of what may be considered as a quiver with a zig-zag decoration.

Biscione et al. 2002: 170.

Location: unknown.

Q-Alt-1: Altıntepe, Tomb III.



One quiver decorated on the outer wall with narrow horizontal bands filled with a "dog's tooth" motif.

Barnett – Gökçe 1953: 126-127.

Location: unknown.

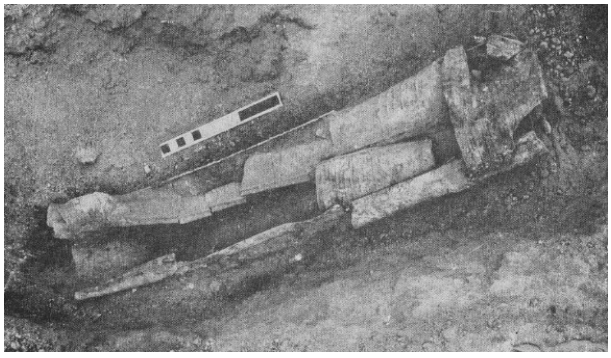
Q-Kb-7: Karmir-blur, Room 36.

Two fragments of a quiver with a zig-zag decoration in the upper section, bearing an inscription of Argišti Minuaḫi (CTU B 8-14) (no picture is available).

Piotrovskij 1955: 39; Piotrovskij 1960: no. 52-158; Seidl 2004: E.17; Batmaz 2015: 164, KB.12.

Location: unknown.

Q-Kb-8: Karmir-blur, Room 28.



One bronze quiver decorated with groups of six zig-zag bands and bearing an inscription of Argišti Minuaḫi (CTU B 8-15).

Piotrovskij 1952: 35 and pl. 16; Piotrovskij 1955: 38; Piotrovskij 1960: 50-134; Batmaz 2015: 164, KB.13.

Location: unknown.

Q-Kb-9: Karmir-blur, Room 12.

One bronze quiver decorated with zig-zag bands (no picture is available).

Piotrovskij 1955: 38.

Location: unknown.

Q-Kb-10: Karmir-blur, House close to the NW Gate.

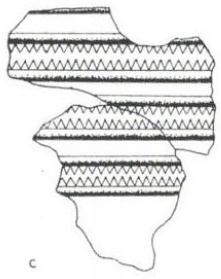
One bronze quiver decorated with zig-zag bands (no picture is available).

Piotrovskij 1955: 38.

Location: unknown.

Q-Top-2: Toprakkale.

One almost entirely preserved quiver with a zig-zag decoration, plus two other fragments.

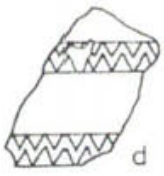


Wartke 1990: 58-60, fig. 8c (Cat. N° 27); Barnett 1972: 170-171.

Vorderasiatisches Museum, inventory number: VA 15246.

Q-Top-3: Toprakkale.

Fragments of a quiver with zig-zag decoration.



Wartke 1990: 58-60, fig. 8d (Cat. N° 29).

Vorderasiatisches Museum, inventory number: VA 15246.

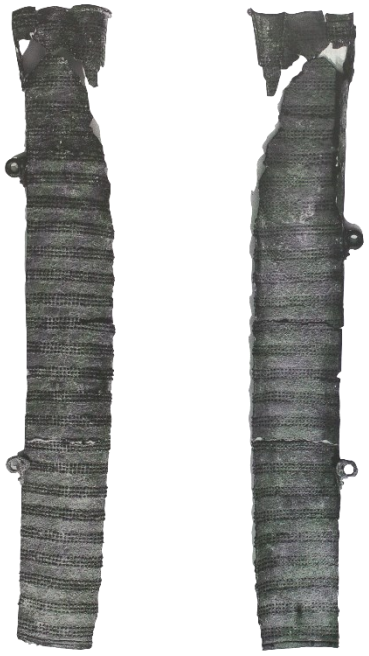
2.1.1.5. Quiver with lines of repoussé dots

Q-Anz-1: Yukarı Anzaf, East court of the temple.

One bronze quiver decorated with parallel bands filled with three rows of repoussé dots.

Belli 2004: 283-284.

Location: unknown.



2.1.1.6. Quivers with parallel ribs

Q-Anz-2: Yukarı Anzaf, East court of the temple.

One bronze quiver decorated with embossed horizontal bands and bearing an inscription of Argišti Rusaḫi (CTU B 11-1) (no picture of the whole object is available).

Dinçol – Dinçol 1995: 37 and fig. 16c (drawing of the inscription); Belli 2004: 283; Seidl 2004: H.3; Batmaz 2015: 162, YAK.9.

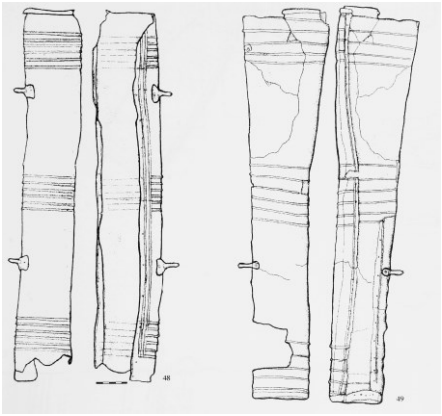
Location: unknown, probably Van Museum.

Q-Ay-2, 3: Ayanis, Temple area VI.

Two bronze quivers decorated with three groups of six embossed horizontal bands.

Derin – Çilingiroğlu 2001: 160 (Cat. 48-49), fig. 7.48-49.

Van Museum: inventory number unknown.

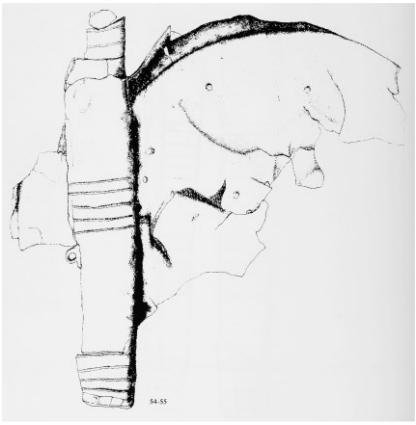


Q-Ay-4: Ayanis, Temple area VI.

One bronze quiver decorated with three groups of five embossed horizontal bands; found in connection with a fragmentary undecorated shield.

Derin – Çilingiroğlu 2001: 160 (Cat. 54), fig. 10.54.

Van Museum: inventory number unknown.

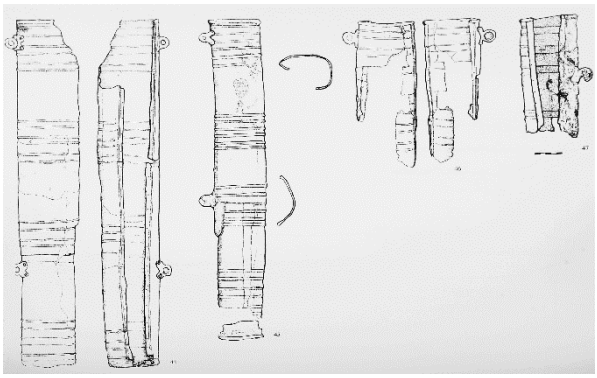


Q-Ay-5, 9: Ayanis, Temple area VI.

Five bronze quivers decorated with four groups of six embossed horizontal bands.

Derin – Çilingiroğlu 2001: 160 (Cat. 44-47, 53), figs. 6, 9.

Van Museum: inventory number unknown.

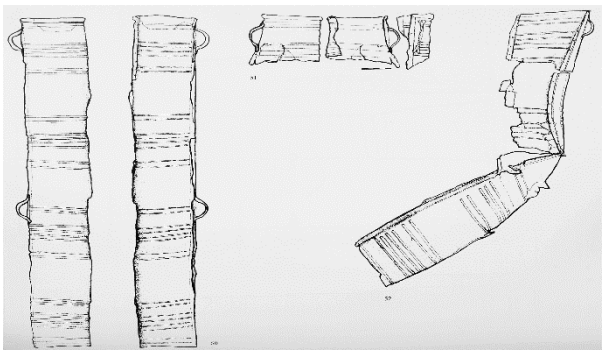


Q-Ay-10, 12: Ayanis, Temple area VI.

Three bronze quivers decorated with four groups of eight embossed horizontal bands.

Derin – Çilingiroğlu 2001: 160 (Cat. 50-52), fig. 8.

Van Museum: inventory number unknown.



Q-Haf-1: Haftavan Tepe.

One fragment of a bronze lamina interpreted as a quiver decorated with embossed ribs (no picture is available).

Burney 1972: 139.

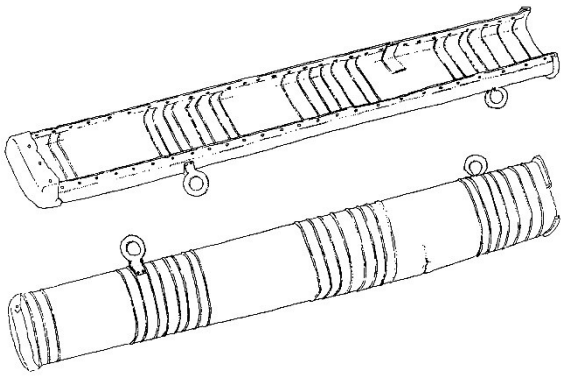
Location: unknown.

Q-Kay-1, 5: Kayalıdere, "Buried booty", presumably coming from the temple.

Five bronze quivers decorated with three groups of eight and one group of three embossed horizontal bands.

Burney 1966: 93-95, fig. 18.6.

Location: unknown.



Q-Kay-6, 7: Kayalıdere, secondary findspot, presumably coming from the temple.

Two bronze quivers decorated with three groups of eight embossed horizontal bands (no picture is available).

Burney 1966: 81.

Location: unknown.

Q-Top-4: Toprakkale.

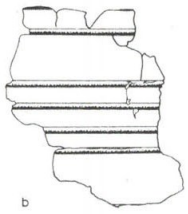


Upper part of a bronze quiver decorated with groups of six embossed horizontal bands.

Barnett 1972: 170-171; Wartke 1990: 58, fig. 8.a, tav. XIII (Cat. N° 25).

Vorderasiatisches Museum, inventory number: VA 9854.

Q-Top-5: Toprakkale.



Two fragments of a bronze quiver decorated with groups of four embossed horizontal bands.

Barnett 1972: 170-171; Wartke 1990: 58, fig. 8b (Cat. N° 26).

Vorderasiatisches Museum, inventory number: VA 9856.

Q-Top-6: Toprakkale.

One bronze quiver decorated with couples of embossed horizontal bands and bearing an inscription of a king named Rusa (CTU B 18-4).

Barnett 1972: 170-172, fig. 10.

British Museum, inventory number: BM 135726 (according to the curator, it is to be joined with BM 135727 and BM 135728).

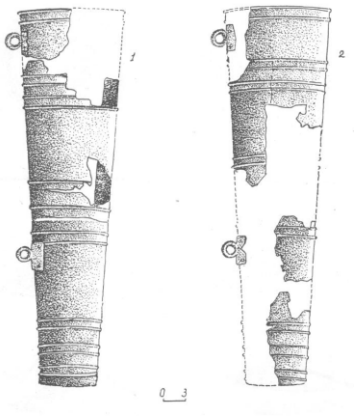


Q-Yer-1, 2: Yerevan columbarium, underground hoard.

Two bronze quivers with conical shape, decorated with embossed horizontal bands; the shape is not typically Urartian.

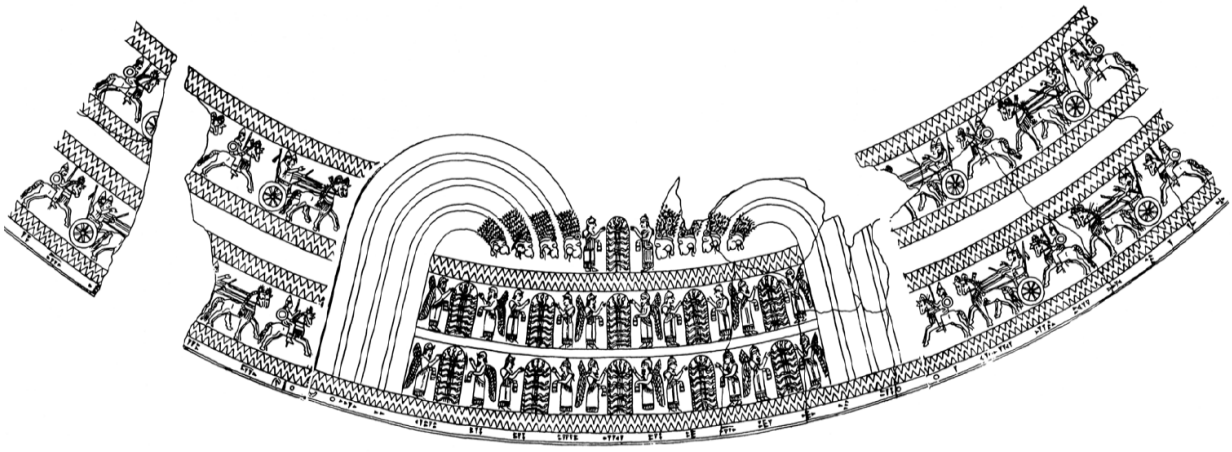
Biscione 1994: 124-125, fig. 8.1-2.

Location: Yerevan mall?



2.1.2. Helmets

2.1.2.1. Helmets with military and sacred scenes



H-Ay-1: Ayanis, Temple area VI, next to pillar 4.

One bronze helmet with military (and sacred?) scene bearing an inscription of Rusa Argištiḫi (CTU B 12-10); another helmet (H-Ay-6) was found inside this one (no picture is available).

Derin – Çilingiroğlu 2001: 164 (Cat. 59); Seidl 2004: 41, I.11; Batmaz 2015: 158, AY.7.

Van Museum: inventory number unknown.

H-Kb-1: Karmir-blur, Jar 48, Storeroom 28.

One bronze helmet with military and sacred scene bearing an inscription of Argišti Minuaḫi (CTU B 8-10).

Piotrovskij 1952: 38; Piotrovskij 1955: 26; Piotrovskij 1960: no. 50-135; Seidl 2004: E.5, fig. 29.

History Museum of Armenia, inventory number: 2010-42.



H-Kb-2: Karmir-blur, Room 23.

Fragments of a bronze helmet with military and sacred scene bearing an inscription of Argišti Minuaḫi (CTU B 8-12) (no picture is available).

Piotrovskij 1960: no. 58-230; Seidl 2004: E.6.

Location: unknown.

H-Kb-3: Karmir-blur, Room 10.



One bronze helmet with military and sacred scene bearing an inscription of Sarduri Argištiḫi (CTU B 9-8A).

Piotrovskij 1950: 64, fig. 40; Piotrovskij 1960: no. 47-12; Seidl 2004: F.86; Batmaz 2015: 165, KB.20.

Hermitage Museum, inventory number: 17761.

H-Kb-4: Karmir-blur, Room 23.

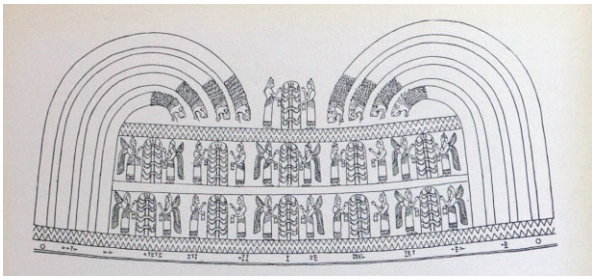


One bronze helmet with military and sacred scene bearing an inscription of Sarduri Argištiḫi (CTU B 9-8B).

Batmaz 2015: 166, KB.21.

History Museum of Armenia, inventory number: 2783-194.

H-Kb-5: Karmir-blur, Room 23.



One bronze helmet with military and sacred scene bearing an inscription of Sarduri Argištiḫi (CTU B 9-9).

Piotrovskij 1960: no. 58-227; Piotrovskij 1962: 70, fig. 41; Seidl 2004: F.87; Batmaz 2015: 166, KB.22.

History Museum of Armenia.

H-Kb-6: Karmir-blur, Room 23.

One bronze helmet with military and sacred scene bearing an inscription of Sarduri Argištiḫi (not reported in CTU; see Salvini 2012: 49) (no picture is available?).

Piotrovskij 1960: no. 58-228; Seidl 2004: F.88.

History Museum of Armenia, inventory number: said to be 2783/194 (as Salvini 2012: 49, correctly noted that the inventory number corresponds anyway to another helmet, here H-Kb-4).

H-Kb-7: Karmir-blur, Room 36.

One bronze helmet with a barely visible military and sacred decoration (no picture is available).

Piotrovskij 1955: 26.

Location: unknown.

H-Kb-8-12: Karmir-blur.

Fragments of other five helmets with military and sacred scene (no picture is available).

Piotrovskij 1967: 46.

Location: unknown.

2.1.2.2. Helmets with an abstract decoration ("lightning symbol")

H-Ay-2:Ayanis, Entrance Room.

One bronze helmet with "lightning" decoration.

Baş 2008: 53.

Location: unknown, probably Van Museum.



H-Bur-1:Burmageçit.

One bronze helmet bearing an inscription of Minua (CTU B 5-8).

Belli 1993: 64, fig. 3a.

Location: unknown.



H-Bur-2: Burmageçit.

One bronze helmet with "lightning" decoration and the entire right earflap preserved.

Belli 1993: 64, fig. 4a.

Location: unknown.



H-Bur-3: Burmageçit.

One bronze helmet with "lightning" decoration; the ring where the right earflap was attached is preserved.

Belli 1993: 64, fig. 4b.

Location: unknown.



H-Çav-1: Çavuştepe.

One bronze helmet with “lightning” decoration.

Belli 2003: 220.

Van Museum, inventory number: 1.1.96.



H-Kb-13: Karmir-blur, Room 24.

One bronze helmet with “lightning” decoration (no picture is available).

Piotrovskij 1950: 59, fig. 38.

History Museum of Armenia, inventory number: 2010-88.

H-Kb-14: Karmir-blur, Room 37.

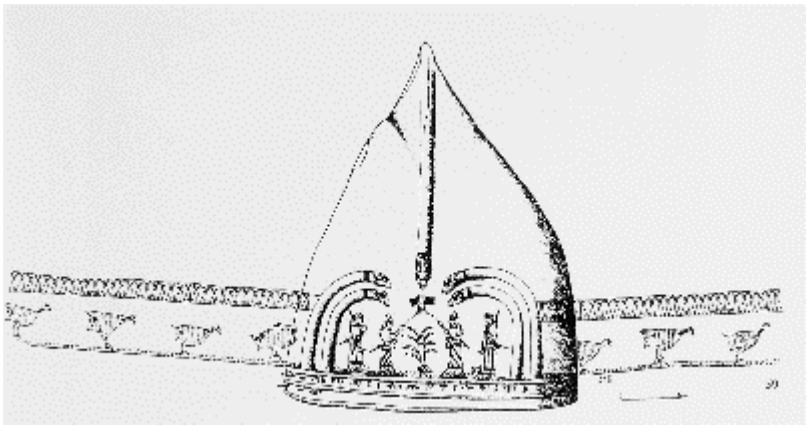
One bronze helmet with “lightning” decoration bearing an inscription of Argišti Minuaḫi (CTU B 8-11).

Piotrovskij 1955: 25, fig. 16; Piotrovskij 1960: no. 53-164; Seidl 2004: E.3.

History Museum of Armenia: 2010-88.



2.1.2.3. Unica

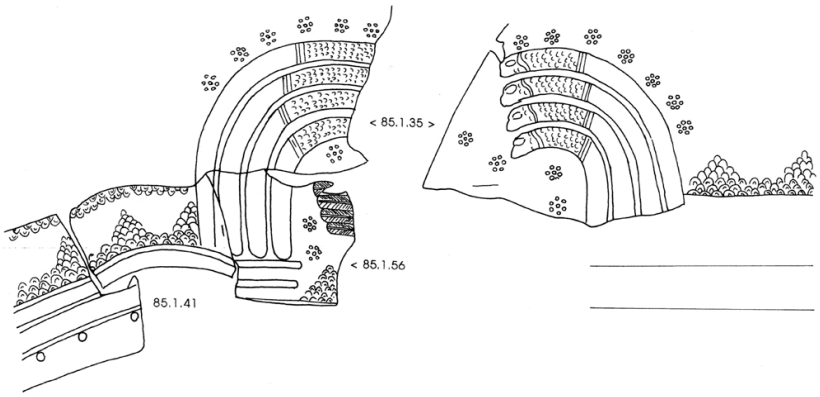


H-Ay-3: Ayanis, Temple area VI, next to pillar 4.

One bronze helmet, found inside another one (H-Ay-5), decorated and bearing an inscription of Rusa Argištiḫi (CTU B 12-9); its decoration shows a central scene, probably ritualistic, with a sacred tree flanked by two bearded male figures, while the two side sections of the scene are occupied by one register depicting a row of "Iranian chickens".

Derin – Çilingiroğlu 2001: 164 (Cat. 60), fig. 13.59; Seidl 2004: I.12; Batmaz 2015: 158, AY.6.

Van Museum.



H-Bur-4: Burmageçit.

Fragmentary helmet with a depiction of winged solar disc, surrounded by small rosettes with six petals; the side sections show stylized representations of triangular mountains.

Yıldırım 1991: fig. 10.10.3; Seidl 2004: 73, fig. 33.

Location: unknown.

H-Çav-2: Çavuştepe.



One bronze helmet decorated with genii on both sides of sacred trees and two registers of roaring lions separated by a zig-zag line. It apparently bears an inscription of Sarduri Argištiḫi, not included in any corpora.

Belli 1991: 44; Belli 2003: 221; Seidl 2004: F.92; Salvini 2012: 49.

Van Museum.

2.1.3. Shields

2.1.3.1. Shields with animal decoration

S-Ay-1: Ayanis, Temple area VI.



Bronze shield with an embossed decoration representing three lines of lions and bulls; at the centre, there was a plastic decoration of a lion's head. The decorated bands are separated by a garland of buds. It bears an inscription of Rusa Argištiḫi (CTU B 12-1).

Derin – Çilingiroğlu 2001: 162 (Cat. 58); Reindell 2001: 282 f. Taf. VIII a. b; Seidl 2004: I.13.

Van Museum: inventory number unknown.

S-Ay-2: Ayanis, Temple area VI.



Bronze shield covered in tin, with an embossed decoration representing two lines of lions and bulls and a rosette in the centre; the decorated bands are separated by a zig-zag line.

Reindell 2001.

Van Museum: inventory number unknown.

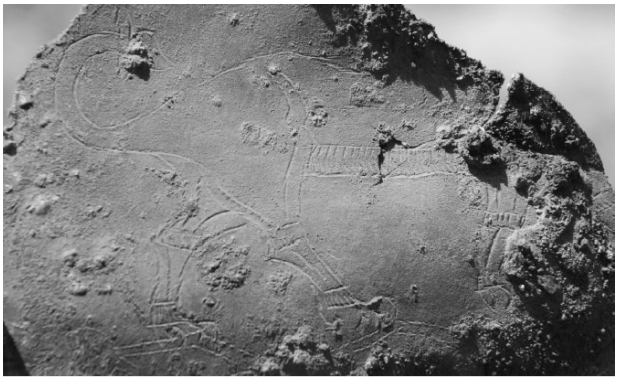
S-Ay-3: Ayanis, Temple area VI.

Possible fragments of a bronze shield with engraved decoration of walking lions. The dividing lines between the figured bands consist of rhomboidal elements.

Batmaz 2015c: fig. 7.

Van Museum: inventory number unknown.





S-Kb-1: Karmir-blur, Room 34.



Bronze shield with an embossed decoration representing three lines of lions and bulls and a rosette in the centre. The decorated bands are separated by a garland of buds. It bears an inscription of Argišti Minuaḫi (CTU B 8-4).

Piotrovskii 1952: 51; Piotrovskij 1960: no. 51-141; Piotrovskij 1969: pl. 88; Seidl 2004: E.14, fig. 51.

History Museum of Armenia, inventory number: 2010-53.

S-Kb-2: Karmir-blur.

Fragmentary bronze shield with an embossed decoration representing three lines of lions and bulls. The decorated bands are separated by a garland of buds. It bears an inscription of Argišti Minuaḫi (CTU B 8-8).

Piotrovskij 1969: pls. 91-92; Seidl 2004: E.15, pl. 15.

Hermitage Museum: 1092.

S-Kb-3: Karmir-blur, Room 38.



Bronze shield with an embossed decoration representing three lines of lions and bulls. The decorated bands are separated by a garland of buds. It bears an inscription of Sarduri Argištiḫi (CTU B 9-3).

Piotrovskii 1955: 29, fig. 18; Piotrovskij 1960: no. 53-165; Piotrovskij 1962: fig. 39; Seidl 2004: F.97, pl. 16a.

History Museum of Armenia, inventory number: 2010-90.

S-Kb-4: Karmir-blur, Room 53.

Fragments of a bronze shield with an embossed decoration representing concentric bands with lions and bulls. The decorated bands are separated by a garland of buds. It is supposed to bear and inscription of Sarduri Argištiḫi (not published in CTU) (no picture is available).

Piotrovskii 1960: no. 57-218; Seidl 2004: F.100 (reports the epigraph: “Inschrift des Sarduri, S. d. Argisti”).

Location: unknown.

S-Kb-5: Karmir-blur, Room 28, close to karas 48.

Fragments of a shield with a possible embossed decoration representing three lines of lions and bulls and a rosette in the centre. The decorated bands are separated by a garland of buds. It bears an inscription of Rusa Sarduriḫi (CTU B 10-1) (no picture is available).

Piotrovskii 1952: 53; Piotrovskij 1960: no. 50-133; Seidl 2004: G.12 (“Mit G.13 identisch?”).

History Museum of Armenia?

S-Kb-6: Karmir-blur.



Bronze shield with an embossed decoration representing lines of lions and bulls. The decorated bands are separated by a garland of buds. It bears an inscription of Rusa Sarduriḫi (not published in CTU).

Piotrovskii 1970: pl. 38; Seidl 2004: G.13; Salvini 2012: 56.

History Museum of Armenia, inventory number: 2303-10.

S-Kb-7: Karmir-blur.

Bronze shield with an embossed decoration representing lines of lions and bulls. The decorated bands are separated by a garland of buds. It bears an inscription of Rusa Sarduriḫi (not published in CTU).

Piotrovskii 1987: 48; Seidl 2004: G.14, fig. 52 (details); Salvini 2012: 56.

Location: unknown.

S-Top-1: Toprakkale.



Bronze shield with an embossed and chased decoration representing three friezes of lions and bulls separated by a guilloche and a central rosette. It bears an inscription of Rusa Erimenaḫi (CTU B 14-9).

Barnett 1950: 13, n° 1, fig. 9, pl. X.1; Seidl 2004: K.2.

British Museum, inventory number: BM22481.

S-Top-2: Toprakkale.

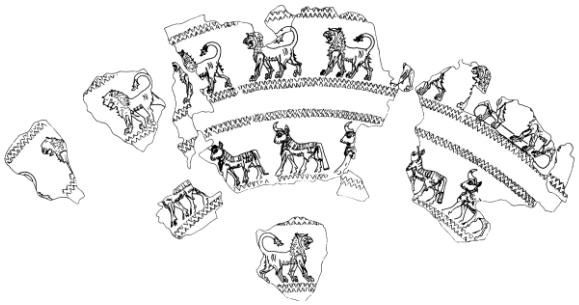


Bronze shield with an embossed and chased decoration representing two friezes of striding lions separated by a guilloche and a central rosette. It bears an inscription of Rusa Erimenaḫi (CTU B 14-3).

Barnett 1950: 13-14, n° 2; Azarpay 1968: pl. 58; Seidl 2004: K.5, pl. 14a.

British Museum, inventory number: BM22482.

S-Top-3: Toprakkale.



Fragments of a corroded bronze shield with an embossed and chased decoration representing two rows of striding lions and bulls separated by a zig-zag line.

Barnett 1950: 14 n° 3; Barnett 1972: 163-164 n° 1 (+ 168 n° 6).

British Museum, inventory number: BM135734.

S-Top-4: Toprakkale.

Five small fragments of a bronze shield with a row of striding lion and a guilloche line (no picture is available).

Barnett 1972: 164-166 n° 2.

British Museum, inventory number: BM135733.

S-Top-5: Toprakkale.



Fragments of a bronze shield with depiction of three rows of walking lions and bulls separated by bud garlands. It bears an inscription of Rusa Erimenaḫi (CTU B 14-4).

Lehmann-Haupt 1907: 99, n° 27, fig. 70; Lehmann-Haupt 1931: 499; Wartke 1990: 46, n° 17, pls. VI-VII; Seidl 2004: K.3, pl. 13b-c.

Vorderasiatisches Museum, inventory number: VA 805+785+811.

S-Top-6: Toprakkale, South-eastern corner of the Temple Area.



Bronze shield with an embossed and chased decoration representing three rows of lions and bulls separated by a zig-zag line and a central rosette. It bears an inscription of Rusa Erimenaḫi (CTU B 14-7).

Erzen 1962: 405, figs. 13-19; Akurgal 1968: 58; Azarpay 1968: 66 (wrongly said to be from Altıntepe); Seidl 2004: K.4, pl. 16d-e.

Ankara Museum of Anatolian Civilisations, inventory number: 152.1.64.

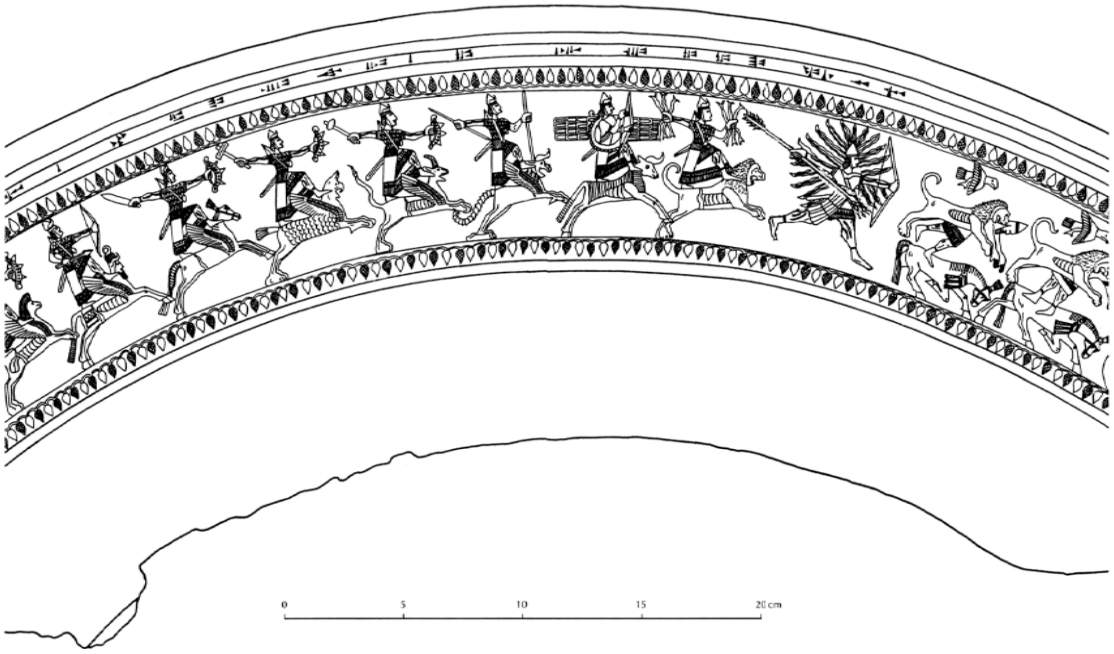
2.1.3.2. The Anzaf shield

S-Anz-1: Yukarı Anzaf, Temple area.

Bronze shield with an embossed decoration representing a battle scene between gods and an enemy army (an extensive description can be found in the text). It bears an inscription of Išpuini Sarduriḫi and Minua Išpuiniḫi, to whom is probably to be added Inušpua Minuaḫi (CTU B 3-1).

Belli 1998: 71 fig. 30, 75 fig. 31; Belli 1999; Seidl 2004: B/C.1, fig. 48.

Van Museum, inventory number: 1.4.2003.



2.1.3.3. Inscribed shields with unknown decoration

S-Kb-8: Karmir-blur, Room A.

Fragments of a bronze shield bearing an inscription of Sarduri Argištiḫi (CTU B 9-1). The decoration is not known (no picture is available).

Piotrovskii 1955: 10; Piotrovskij 1960: no. 51-143; Seidl 2004: F.98.

Probably kept in the Hermitage Museum, inventory number: K-590 (Salvini 2012: 45).

S-Kb-9: Karmir-blur, Room 33.

Fragments of a decorated bronze shield bearing an inscription of Sarduri Argištiḫi (not reported in CTU). The decoration is not known (no picture is available).

Piotrovskii 1955: 15; Piotrovskij 1960: no. 51-144; Seidl 2004: F.99.

Location: unknown.

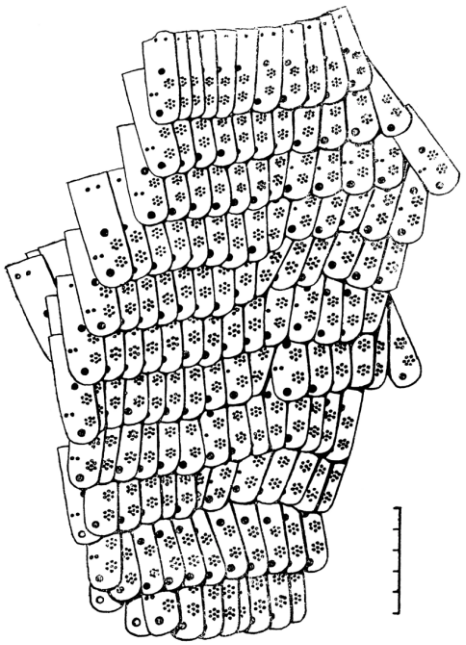
2.1.4. Decorated armours and armour's fittings

A-Kb-1: Karmir-blur, Room 26.

Fragments of a bronze lamellar armour with rectangular scales rounded on one short side, each scale is decorated with two floral elements made by the impression of seven dots in *repoussé* technique, and has three holes in the upper part, which were used to attach it to the others.

Piotrovskij 1955: 31, fig. 21.

History Museum of Armenia, inventory number: 2010-89/1,2.

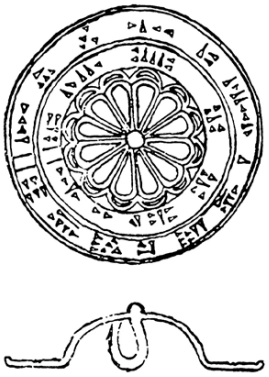


A-Kb-2: Karmir-blur, Room 36.

One circular bronze fitting, with the decoration of a rosette with twelve petals in the centre and a dedicatory inscription of Argišti Minuaḫi (CTU B 8-17) running on two lines.

Piotrovskij 1954: 75; Piotrovskij 1955: 35, fig. 25; Seidl 2004: E.27; Batmaz 2015: 165, KB.14.

Hermitage Museum, inventory number: K-635.



A-Kb-3: Karmir-blur

One button with a sixteen petals rosette in the centre, surrounded by three concentric bands decorated with two rows of dots in repoussé, alternated with three plain bands.

Catalogue of the History Museum of Armenia 2018: 141.

History Museum of Armenia, inventory number: 2784-136.



2.1.5. Decorated horse harnesses

Hh-Alt-1: Altıntepe, Tomb III; Room 1.

One bronze disc with an engraved decoration depicting a winged man standing on a winged horse.

Özgüç 1969: 68, pl. XXV.1.

Location: unknown, probably Ankara Museum for Anatolian Civilisations.



Hh-Kb-1-7: Karmir-blur.

Several bronze discs decorated with a central rosette of fourteen petals surrounded by concentric circles, alternately flat and decorated with a double row of repoussé dots.

Piotrovskij 1955: 47.

Location: unknown



2.2. Personal equipment

2.2.1. Bronze belts

2.2.1.1. Figurative belts

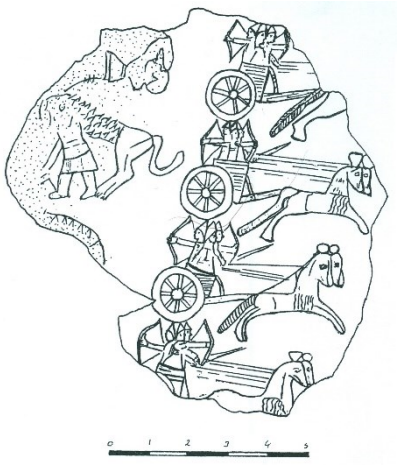
2.1.1.1. "Dynamic" figurative bronze belts

B-Bur-1: Burmageçit, possible tomb.

Fragments of a dynamic figurative bronze belt. The decoration consists of a hunting scene with chariots, helmeted archers and spearmen attacking running lions. The decoration is not disposed on divided registers, although there is a regularity in the positions of the characters.

Yıldırım 1991: fig. 10.8-9.

Location: unknown.



B-Kay-1: Kayalıdere, area south-east of the *susi* temple.

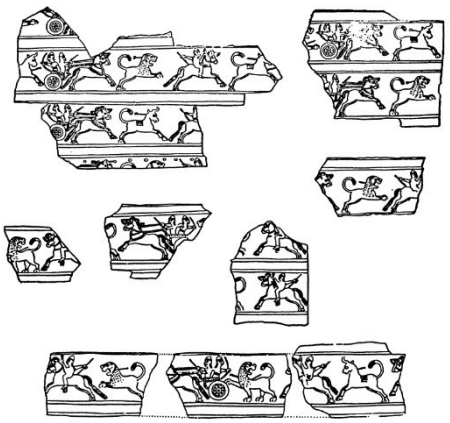
Fragment of a dynamic figurative bronze belt. The decoration consists of a hunting scene: it is characterised by the presence of chariots, horsemen and lions all tightly arranged on the belt. These depictions have close parallels on Assyrian palace orthostats, while they are not common in Urartu.

Burney 1966: 78 fig. 10, pl. IX.b, pl. XI.b.

Location: unknown.



B-Nor-1: Nor-Aresh, Tomb 2.

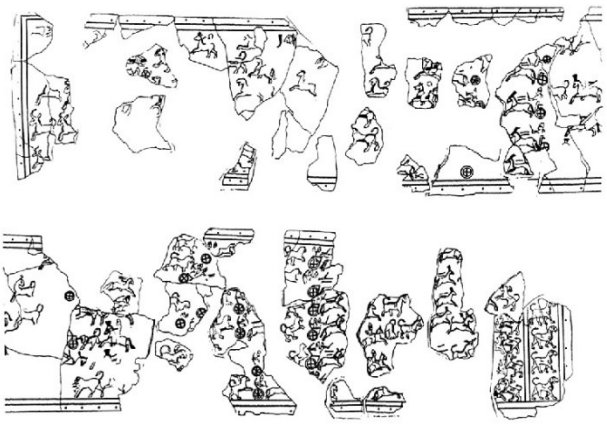


Fragments of a dynamic figurative bronze belt. The decoration is divided in horizontal registers, separated by an embossed double line. It represents a lions' and bulls' hunting scenes, where the hunters are both on horseback and on chariots. Despite being divided in registers, the decoration should be considered as dynamic, as it contains a lively scene with characters interacting with each other, and not only single depictions detached from the others.

Barnett 1963: 197, fig. 46.

Location: unknown.

B-Yer-1: Yerevan, Hoard in the columbarium.



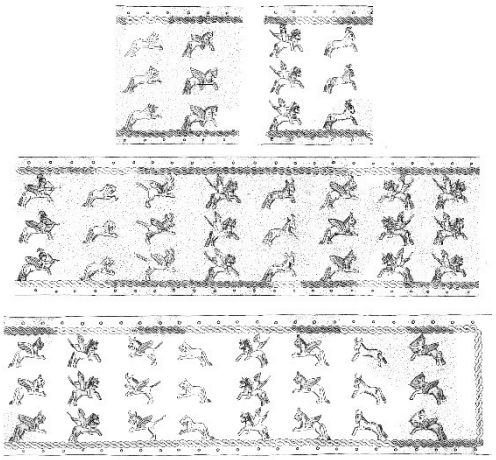
Fragments of a dynamic figurative bronze belt. There are holes along the preserved edges; the central scene is framed by an embossed double line. The decoration is not clearly divided in registers, resulting chaotic. The main decoration includes bulls' and lions' hunting scenes on chariots; on the right termination, there is a vertical panel depicting superimposed lions with their tails raised.

Esayan et al. 1991: pl. XVII; Biscione 1994: 132, fig. 14.

Location: unknown.

2.2.1.1.2. Static / linear figurative belts

B-Alt-1: Altıntepe, Tomb III.

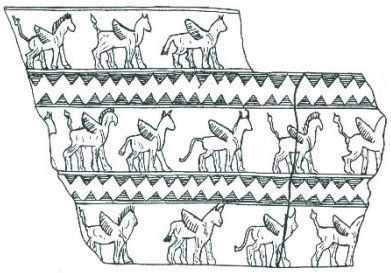


Figurative bronze belt found folded inside the cauldron in the first chamber of tomb III; it measures no less than 90 cm and it's 10 cm wide. The belt had been folded up into the cauldron in such a way as to render it unusable. On both edges there is a guilloche pattern and a row of holes. It is decorated with 45 characters disposed on three registers. They are horsemen wearing pointed helmets, winged centaurs shooting arrows, running lions with open jaws, winged horses, goats, bulls and other hybrid creatures, all moving from left to right or from right to left.

Özgüç 1961: 272-273, figs. 23-24; Özgüç 1974: 847.

Location: unknown.

B-Bur-2: Burmageçit, possible tomb.

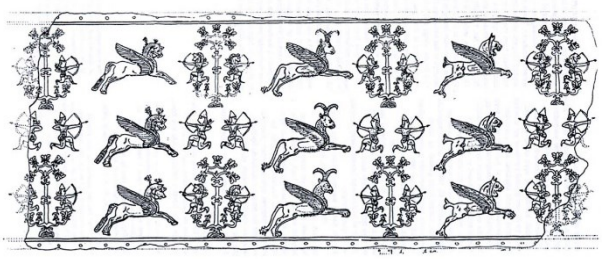


Fragments of a figurative bronze belt decorated with friezes of animal motifs placed between zig-zag bands. Most of the animals depicted are hybrid creatures such as winged horses or griffins arranged back to back and walking towards the left or the right. There are holes along the edges.

Yıldırım 1991: fig. 10.6-7.

Location: unknown.

B-Ded-1: Dedeli, possibly from a tomb.



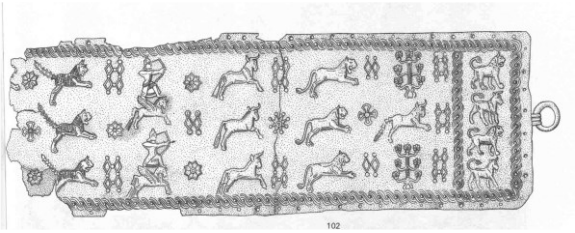
Fragment of a figurative bronze belt. The decoration is disposed on three registers in which hybrid creatures are represented running towards the right. On the first and the last lines, these creatures are alternated with depictions of trees and other hybrid beings

holding an arch; on the middle register, the hybrid creatures are alternated with depictions of archers wearing a pointed helmet. The iconography of the hybrid archers is unique to this belt specimen.

Taşyürek 1975: no. 19, fig. 18, pls. 47-54; Kellner 1991: 37, no. 63; pl. 12.63.

Adana Museum, inventory number: 26.1.73.

B-Ded-2: Dedeli, possibly from a tomb.



Two big fragments of a figurative bronze belt. There are holes running along the edges; the central section is framed by a *guilloche* line. The decoration is disposed on three registers in which animals, archers on mounts and hybrid creatures are represented running towards the right. They are alternated with filler motifs, such as geometrical shapes, rosettes and sacred trees. Peculiar is the representation of warriors standing on hybrid creatures: this position, common only to the belt B-Yeg-1, is usually associated to divine beings. The right edge presents a vertical panel in which four superimposed lions and bulls are represented.

Taşyürek 1975: no.1, fig. 1, pls. 1-8; Kellner 1991: 45, no. 102; pl. 28.102.

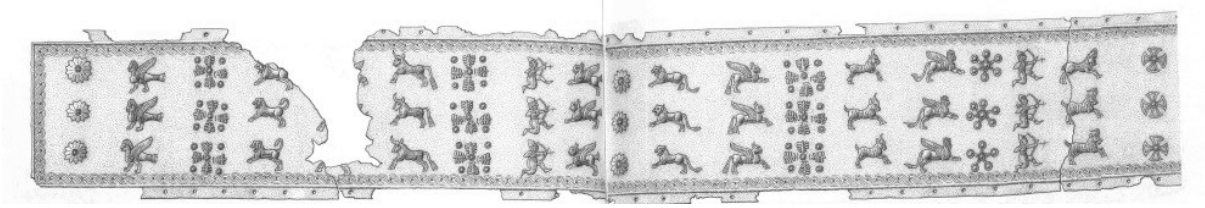
Adana Museum, inventory number: 1362.

B-Ded-3: Dedeli, possibly from a tomb.

Figurative bronze belt almost completely preserved. There are holes along the edges and the central decorative space is framed by a *guilloche* line. The decoration is divided on three registers, where running archers, animals and hybrid creatures alternate with geometrical and floral motifs.

Taşyürek 1977b; Kellner 1991: 45, no. 103; pl. 30.103.

Adana Museum, inventory number unknown.



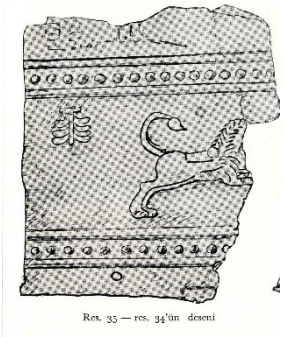
B-Dur-1: Durakbur, Tomb 4.

Fragment of a figurative bronze belt with depictions of animals and hybrid creatures on different registers. Due to the preservation state of the object, it is not possible to reconstruct the whole decorative plan (no picture is available).

Kellner 1991: 82, n. 449.

Location: unknown.

B-Giy-1: Giyimli, "Structure".


Res. 35 — res. 34'ün deseni

Fragment of a figurative bronze belt; the decoration is incised and is divided in registers framed by dotted lines. On this fragment one can see the depiction of a running lion with its rail raised and a small palmette preceding it.

Erzen 1974b: 207-209, figs. 34-35.

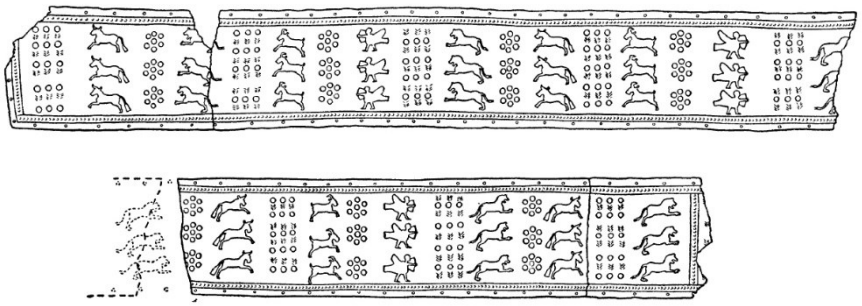
Location: unknown.

B-Guş-1: Guşçi, possibly from a tomb.

Almost complete figurative bronze belt, found by villagers who described the original context as funerary. There are holes along the edges; the central decorative spaced is framed by a line of dots. The decoration is disposed on three registers, not divided, where running bulls, goats, lions and hybrid creatures are alternated with geometrical and floral motifs. The right edge should have contained a vertical panel, separated by the rest of the decoration by a vertical row of dots.

Hanfmann 1956: 206.

Location: unknown.

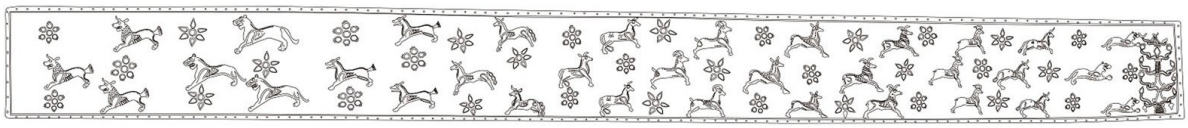


B-Kan-1: Kani Koter, Tomb.

Entire figurative bronze belt. There are holes along the edges. The decorative scene is not framed; the decoration is composed of three undivided registers containing animals and hybrid creatures alternated with rosettes. At the right end there is the depiction of a sacred tree. It was associated with other grave goods such as seven ceramic, three bronze and three silver vessels, metal weapons, objects in silver, bronze and ivory, ornaments in gold, silver and bronze, glass, stone and composite beads, and a scaraboid stamp seal.

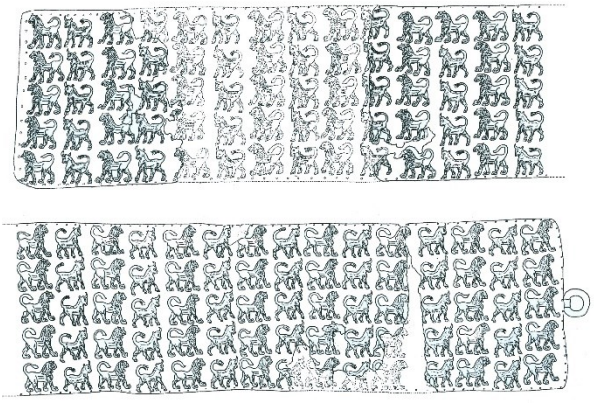
Amelirad 2019: 7-9, 11, fig. 13.

Location: unknown.



B-Kar-1: Karahasan, fortress.

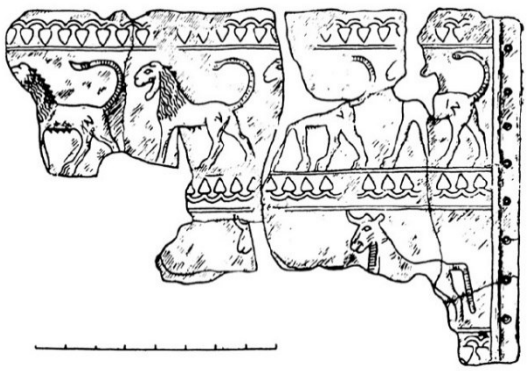
Almost complete figurative bronze belt. There are holes along the edges; the decorative space is entirely filled with representation of lions and bulls, with their tails raised, on five registers. This kind of depiction is unusual, as there are no filler motifs or empty spaces. A ring is preserved on the right termination.



Taşyürek 1973: 203-204.

Location: unknown.

B-Kb-1: Karmir-blur, Room 27.



Fragment of a figurative bronze belt. There are holes along the right preserved edge. The decoration is composed by at least two horizontal registers divided by garlands of buds; the upper one contains depictions of roaring lions with their tails raised walking towards the left, while the lower register is occupied by walking bulls. This specimen was considered a quiver by the excavator.

Piotrovskij 1952: fig. 20.

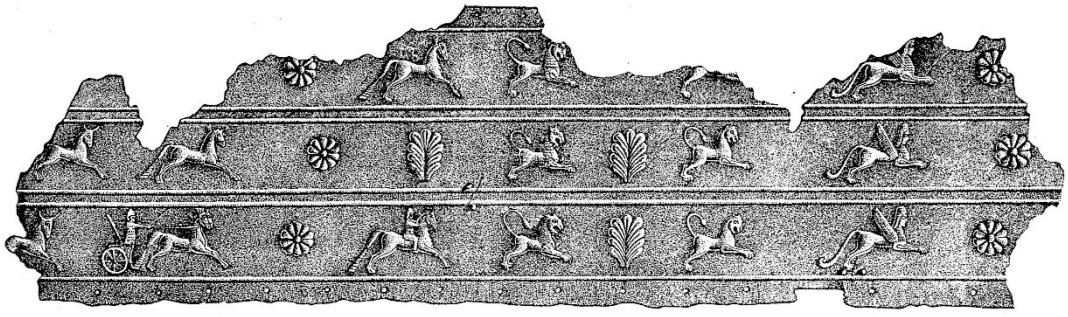
Location: unknown.

B-Met-1: Metsamor, Tomb 4.

Fragment of a figurative bronze belt. The decoration is disposed on at least three horizontal registers divided by a double embossed line; each register contains depictions of animals, hybrid creatures, horsemen and chariots, alternated with floral elements. The belt was found together with other grave goods, among which there were ceramics and bronze objects, such as bronze pins, bronze bracelets with an unusual spiral shape and a further metal object of unknown function. Due to the absence of weapons, it was assumed that the burial belonged to a female.

Esayan 1984: fig. 26.84.

Location: unknown.



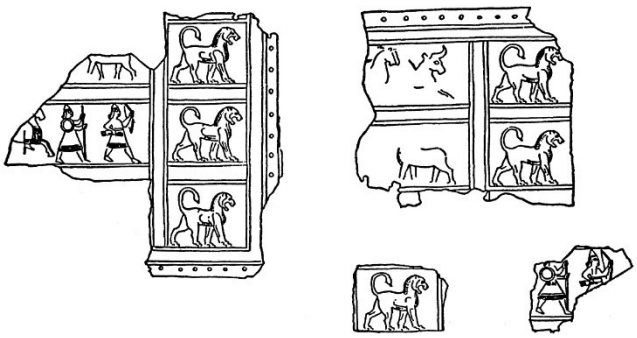
B-Mts-1: Mtskhetijvari.

Fragments of a figurative bronze belt (no picture is available).

Davitashvili 1996: fig. 1.

Location: unknown.

B-Nor-2: Nor-Aresh, Tomb 1.

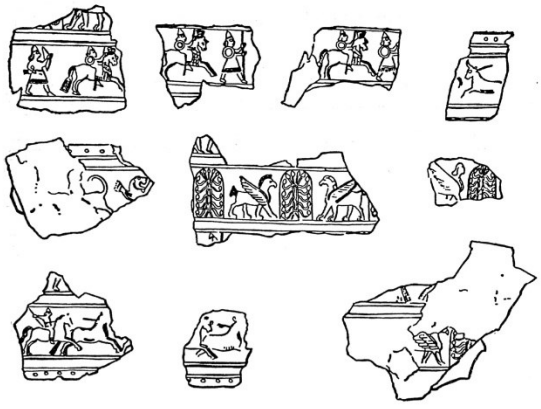


Fragments of a figurative bronze belt. There are holes along the preserved edges. The decorative space is divided by straight embossed double lines in registers showing soldiers and a bull's hunt from horseback. On the right edge there is a vertical panel with superimposed images of lions. Tomb I consisted of two pots surrounded by small stones and bronze objects, such as the belt, a fibula, two stamp seals, a lunate neck ornament, a horse-bit and a disc.

Barnett 1963: 195, fig. 41.

Location: unknown.

B-Nor-3: Nor-Aresh, Tomb 3.



Fragments of a figurative bronze belt. The decoration is disposed on registers divided by horizontal embossed lines; it is composed of friezes of lion's and bull's hunting scenes, designs of griffins and sphinxes, and sacred trees in the form of a stele. The other grave goods were composed by ware, sherds and a flat stone, probably the stopper of the urn.

Barnett 1963, 197-198, fig. 47.

Location: unknown.

B-Şah-1: Şahtaxtı, Necropolis.



Fragment of a figurative bronze belt. There are holes along the preserved edges; the central space is framed by an embossed double line. The decoration appears not to be divided in registers, as there would be some depictions outside them: it consists in hybrid creatures, horsemen, a bird and a beheaded body. There are some rosettes used as fillers.

Bahşaliev 1997: 117, fig. 26.

Location: unknown.

B-Suç-1: Suçati, tomb.



Fragments of a figurative bronze belt. There are holes preserved along the edges. The decoration is disposed on four horizontal registers, not divided by lines, with hunting scenes, featuring four archers arranged symmetrically in a heraldic position around a palm tree; they are separated from the animals they are hunting by the presence of rosettes. The animals are lions and other hybrid creatures running, with their tails pointing downwards, arranged symmetrically.. At the only preserved end, the right one, there is a panel with four superimposed walking lions, with their tails raised, facing in the opposite direction to all the other animals depicted on the belt.

Karaosmanoğlu 1991: 595-603.

Erzurum Museum.

B-Yeg-1: Yeghegnadzor, hoard.

Fragments of a figurative bronze belt. There are holes along the preserved edges. The decoration is disposed on registers, not divided by any motif, and it includes animals, hybrid creatures, archers and warriors standing on their mounts (see the same iconography on the belt B-Ded-1). At the right end, there is a vertical panel depicting five superimposed running lions: the peculiarity is that all the lions have raised tails, except for the last one, which, due to lack of space, has its tail lowered.

Xnkikyan 2002: 96, Fig. XCVI/1; Dan et al. *forthcoming*.

Yeghegnadzor Regional Museum, inventory number: 4112.

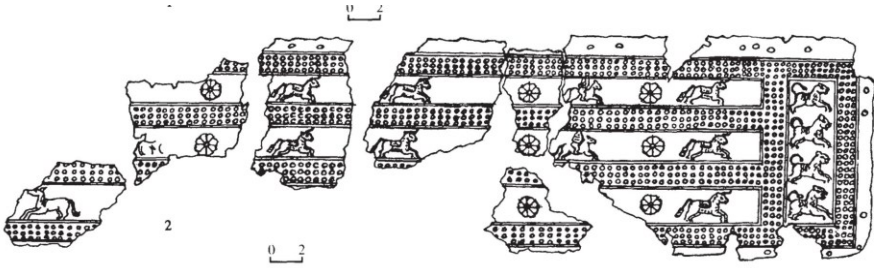


B-Yeg-2: Yeghegnadzor, hoard.

Fragments of a figurative bronze belt. There are holes along the preserved edges. The decoration is disposed on registers divided by dotted bands, and it includes animals, hybrid creatures and floral elements.

Xnkikyan 2002: 96, Fig. XCVI/2; Dan et al. *forthcoming*.

Yeghegnadzor Regional Museum, inventory number: 4111.

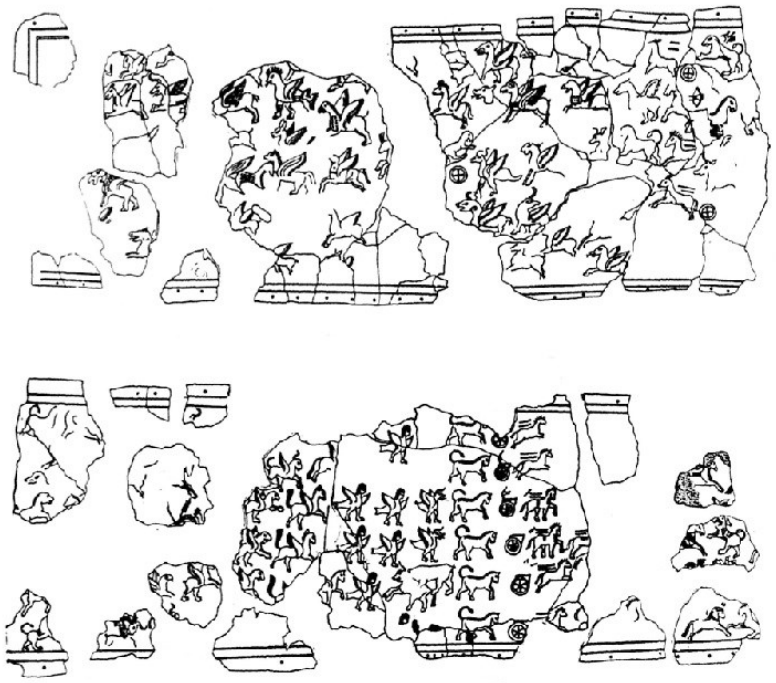


B-Yer-2: Yerevan, Hoard in the columbarium.

Fragments of a figurative bronze belt. There are holes along the preserved edges; the central decoration is framed by an embossed double line. The decoration is not clearly disposed on registers, but it overlaps in certain points, with a chaotic result. it depicts animals, hybrid creatures, warriors and soldiers on chariots.

Esayan et al. 1991: pl. XVI; Biscione 1994: 133, fig. 15.

Yerevan Mall?



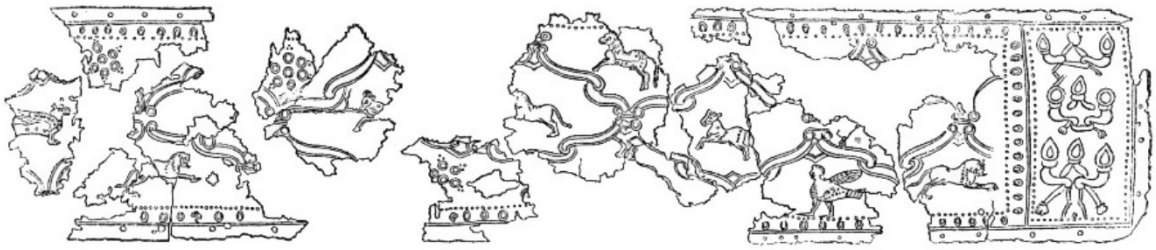
2.2.1.1.3. Abstract figurative bronze belts

B-Ani-1: Ani-Pemza, cremation tomb 6.

"Abstract" figurative bronze belt; no other information about the archaeological context and the associated goods were reported. As a frame, there is a stylized garland pattern and a row of holes. The decoration is composed by a central garland creating sort of diamond-shaped metopes inside of which lions, goats, horses and hybrid creatures are depicted. On the right edge, there is a stylized depiction of a sacred tree.

Piotrovskij 1959: 249; Piotrovskij 1966: 359-360, fig. 87.

Location: unknown.

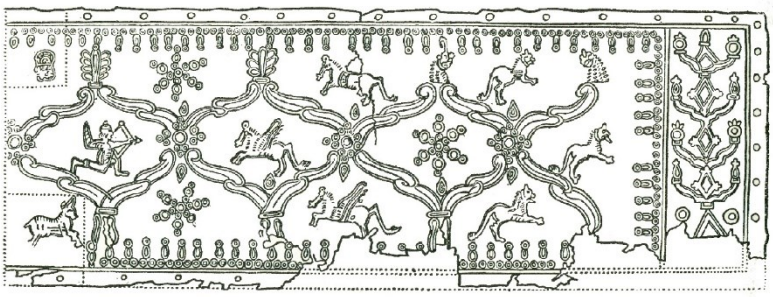


B-Zak-1: Zakim, Hoard.

"Abstract" figurative bronze belt; no other information about the archaeological context and the associated goods were reported. The central space is framed by a stylized garland pattern and a row of holes. The decoration is composed by a central garland creating sort of diamond-shaped metopes inside of which floral elements, running archers, lions, horses and hybrid creatures are depicted. On the right edge, there is a stylized depiction of a sacred tree.

Spytzin 1907: 131.

Location: unknown.



2.2.1.1.4. Other figurative belts

Belts B- Çav-1 and B-Çav-2

B-Çav-1: Çavuştepe, fortress.

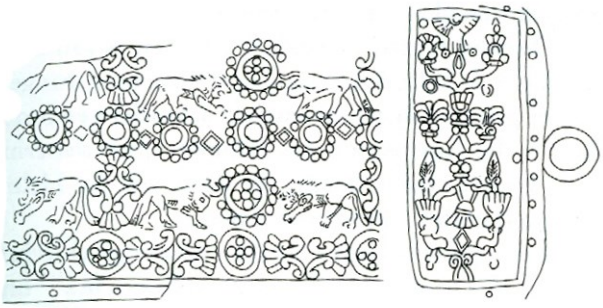


Fragment of a figurative belt of unclear style, found during the excavation of the fortress. The quality of the published image does not allow any detailed consideration, but one can see depictions of medallions and floral elements among possible images of animals.

Erzen 1978: 55-59.

Location: unknown.

B-Çav-2: Çavuştepe, fortress.



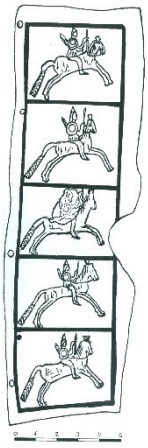
Fragment of a figurative belt of unclear style, found during the excavation of the fortress. The fragment includes the entire right end and shows a scene of lions and bulls facing each other, with their front legs bent; between their heads those circular geometric decorations containing a sort of central "rosette" are to be found. On the right of the scene there is a cartouche containing a garland-like representation of the sacred tree, with branches ending in palmettes and pine cones/buds, surmounted by a winged solar disc.

Erzen 1978: 55-59.

Location: unknown.

Cartouches' fragments

B-Bur-3: Burmageçit, possible tomb.

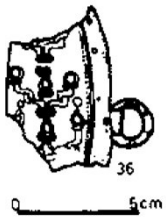


Fragment of a figurative bronze belt's cartouche. This is the left end of a belt and the decoration is arranged on five superimposed panels; in each panel a horseman, wearing a pointed helmet and holding a shield, is depicted galloping towards the right. Along the left edge, four rivets are preserved, used to hold the metal lamina to a strip of leather.

Yıldırım 1991: fig. 10.10.1.

Location: unknown.

B-Dil-1: Dilkaya, tumulus area.



Small fragment of a bronze belt of unclear style. It is the right end termination and it is preserved the ring used to close the belt. The edge appears to be curved, with holes running along it; the decoration consists of a stylized sacred tree.

Çilingiroğlu 1991: 422.36.

Location: unknown.

B-Lori-1: Lori Berd.

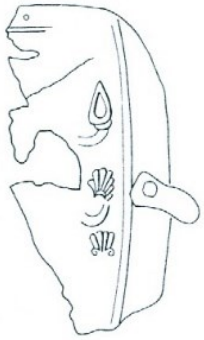


One fragment of the cartouche of a bronze belt with superimposed lions.

Devedjyan 2010: 83, fig. 5, pl. XVII/1.

Location: unknown.

B-Kb-2: Karmir-blur.



Small fragment of a bronze belt of unclear style. It is the right end termination and it is preserved the attachment of the rung used to close the belt. The edge appears to be curved, maybe due to a re-use; the decoration consists of a stylized sacred tree, with only the terminations of the branches visible: they are decorated with palmette-like flowers and a bud or a pine cone.

Esayan 1984: fig. 24.78.

Location: unknown.

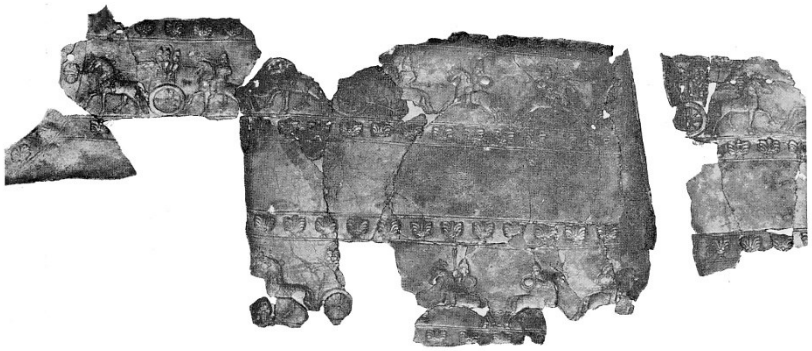
Belt with soldiers' frieze

B-Çav-3: Çavuştepe, Uç Kale.

Fragments of a figurative belt decorated with a double frieze depicting a soldiers' and chariots' parade; the middle register is not decorated. The registers are divided by horizontal rows of palmettes The decoration of the belts is reminiscent of the parade friezes depicted on royal helmets and quivers.

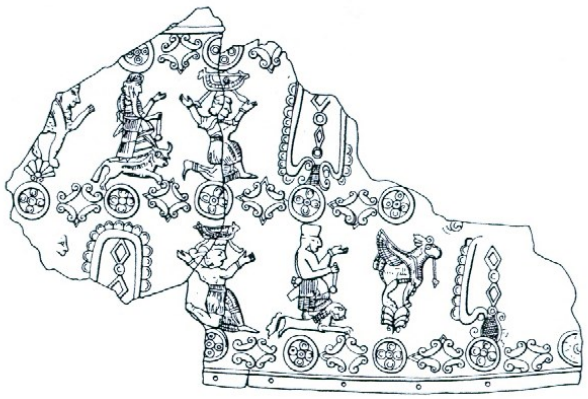
Bilgiç, Öğün 1964: pl. 20; Sevin 2007: 721-726.

Location: unknown.



Belts with depictions of gods

B-Kb-3: Karmir-blur.



Fragment of a figurative bronze belt. There are holes along the preserved part of the lower edge. The decoration is composed of two registers framed by three lines of geometric elements such as medallions and spirals; in the two registers, one can see the representation of what are probably to be considered divinities standing on their mounts, worshippers underneath a solar disc, hybrid creatures and geometric fillers. This belt and the following one are to be considered the only specimens depicting gods.

Piotrovskij 1967: fig. 31; Esayan 1984: fig. 28.89.

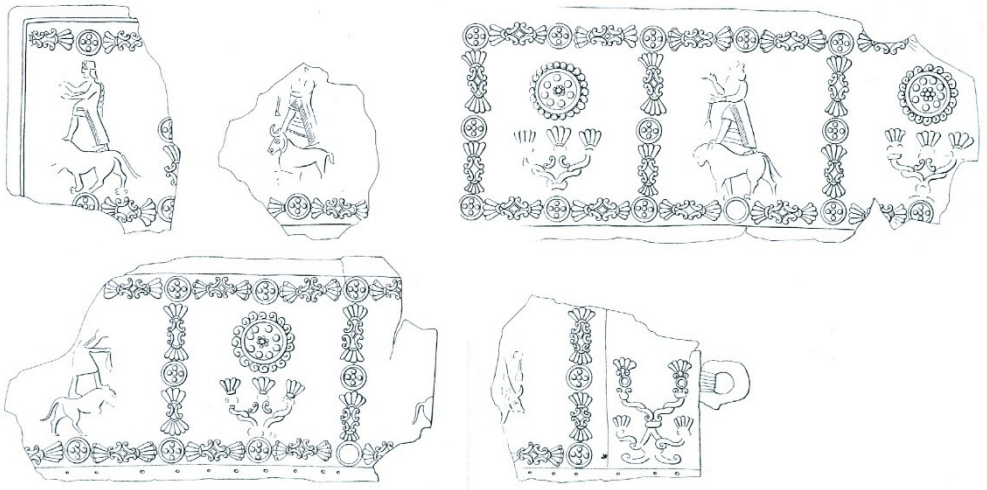
History Museum of Armenia, inventory number: 2010-158.

B-Kb-4: Karmir-blur.

Fragments of a figurative bronze belt. There are holes in some parts of the preserved lower edge. The decoration is divided in panels, each one containing a god on a mount or a floral decoration resembling to a sacred tree and a medallion containing a rosette. The right edge is decorated with a sacred tree; it is preserved the ring used to hold the belt. This decoration is a *unicum* among the belts, as it is not divided in horizontal registers but in squared panels.

Esayan 1984: fig. 28.90.

Location: unknown.



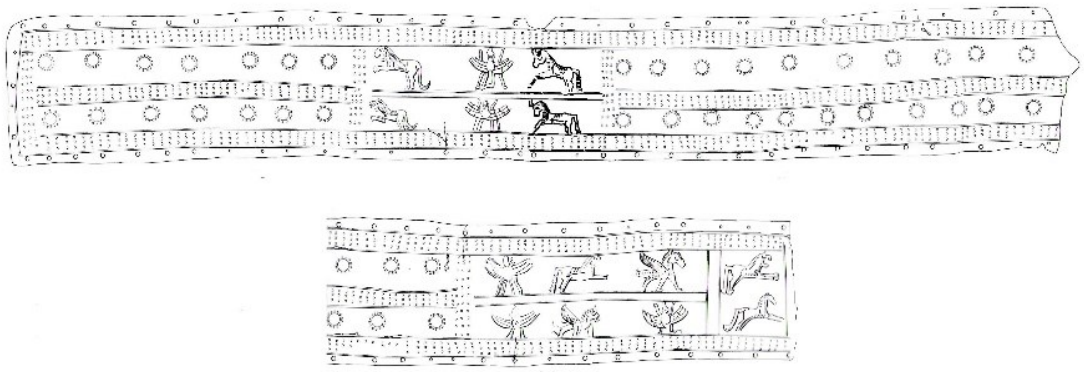
2.2.1.1.5. An Assyrianizing belt?

B-Mal-1: Mališka, probable tomb.

Entire bronze belt of unclear style. There are holes along the edges. The figurative register is divided into three bands, decorated with dots and a decoration in the two intermediate bands with a continuous succession of circles. There are two rectangular panels, one towards the left end of the belt and one at the right end, where lions and fantastic creatures are depicted. This kind of belt is represented on Assyrian orthostat, depicted on the waist of the king Ashurbanipal. The belt was discovered by chance during agricultural work, which led to the almost total loss of the other grave goods. However, it was possible to recover some ceramic fragments and some bronze bracelets with snake-head endings.

Esayan 1977: 97.

History Museum of Armenia, inventory number: 2409-1.



2.2.1.2. Geometric belts

2.2.1.2.1. Dotted belts

B-Ari-1: Arin-berd, Room Γ, temple area.

Small fragments of a geometric bronze belt with dotted motif (no picture is available).

Esayan 1984: 133; 2162/29.

Location: unknown.

B-Ari-2: Arin-berd, Room Γ, temple area.

Small fragments of a geometric bronze belt with dotted motif (no picture is available).

Esayan 1984: 133; 2162/29.

Location: unknown.

B-Ari-3: Arin-berd, Room Γ, temple area.

Small fragments of a geometric bronze belt with dotted motif (no picture is available).

Esayan 1984: 133; 2162/29.

Location: unknown.

B-Ay-1: Ayanis, underground tomb of a possible foreign child.

Fragmentary geometric bronze belt with dotted motif; the decoration consists of three lines of dots disposed on rows, surrounded by a whole frame consisting in rows of dots. There are no dots along the edges; the right clasp is preserved and it consists of a single ring. This belt gave the occasion to associate dotted belts with a foreign population.

Zimansky 2012a: 521, pl. 1b.

Location: unknown.



B-Ded-4: Dedeli, Tomb 1.

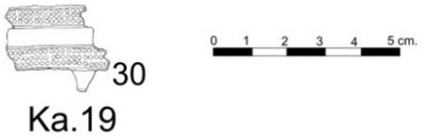
Geometric bronze belt with dotted motif, found in a double burial on a female skeleton; the other grave goods are not known (no picture is available).

Öğün 1978: 663-667; Kellner 1991: 77, no. 373.

Location: unknown.

B-Kal-1: Kalecik, Tomb 19.

Fragments of a geometric bronze belt with dotted motif. The decoration is composed by at least two bands of dots, disposed in horizontal rows.

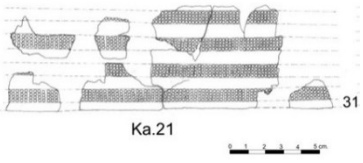


Çavuşoğlu et al. 2009: 275 and pl. 4.

Location: unknown.

B-Kal-2: Kalecik, Tomb 21.

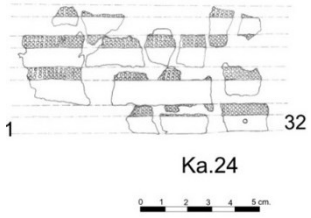
Geometric bronze belt with dotted motif. The decoration is composed by at least four bands of dots, disposed in horizontal rows.



Çavuşoğlu et al. 2009: 284.

Location: unknown.

B-Kal-3: Kalecik-3, Tomb 24.

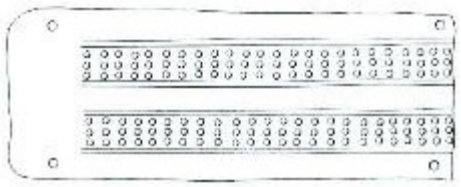


Geometric bronze belt with dotted motif. The decoration is composed by bands of dots, disposed in horizontal rows.

Çavuşoğlu et al. 2009: 284.

Location: unknown.

B-Kb-5: Karmir-blur, Room 4.

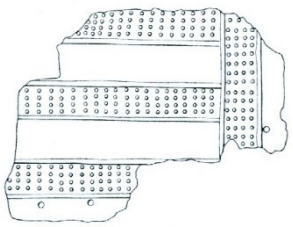


Fragment of a geometric bronze belt with dotted motif. The decoration is composed of two horizontal bands of dots disposed on three parallel rows and enclosed in a frame of two horizontal embossed lines.

Piotrovskij 1950: 50-51, fig. 24; Barnett – Watson 1952: 139; Esayan 1984: 132, fig. 24.77.

Location: unknown.

B-Kb-6: Karmir-blur, Room 13.



Fragment of a geometric bronze belt with dotted motif, found inside a *karas*. The decoration is composed of at least three bands of four rows of dots and a vertical band at one termination. There are holes along the preserved borders.

Piotrovskij 1950: 53, fig. 24; Barnett – Watson 1952: 142; Esayan 1984: 132, fig. 24.76.

History Museum of Armenia, inventory number: 2783-120.

B-Liç-1: Liç, Tomb 3.

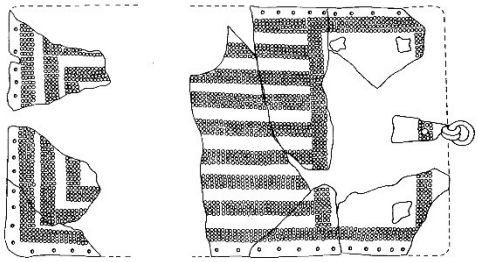


Entirely preserved geometric bronze belt with dotted motif. Found in a grave, associated with a female skeleton; other grave goods were several bowls and decorative pins.

Öğün 1978: 675-676.

Location: unknown.

B-Mel-1: Melekli, tomb.

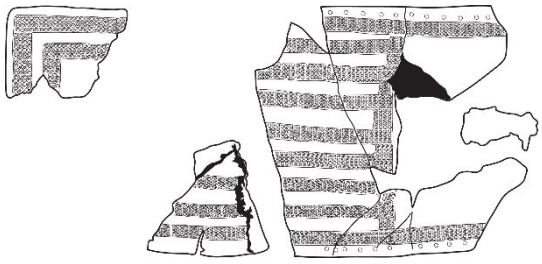


Geometric bronze belt with dotted motif. There are holes around the edges; the ring used to hold the belt is preserved. The decorative space is framed by a continuous dotted band. The decoration is disposed on seven horizontal bands composed by rows of dots and joined on one side by a vertical line. There is, at one termination, a vertical panel, whose decoration is not preserved.

Barnett 1963: 177 fig. 30.

Location: unknown.

B-Mel-2: Melekli, tomb.



Fragments of a geometric bronze belt with dotted motif. The decorative space is framed by a continuous dotted band. The decoration is disposed on seven horizontal bands composed by rows of dots and joined on one side by a vertical line. There is, at one termination, a vertical panel, whose decoration is not preserved.

Barnett 1963: 177 fig. 31.

Location: unknown.

2.2.1.2.2. "Hybrid"-dotted belts

B-Dur-2: Durakbur, Tomb 6.

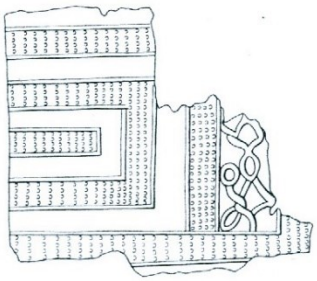
Complete bronze belt, broken in three overlapping fragments. It is said to have a dotted decoration, disposed on nine lines with four rows of dots each; on the right end there is a vertical panel with four superimposed lions (no picture is available).

Oğün 1978: pl. 258; Kellner 1991: 73, no. 323.

Location: unknown.

B-Kb-7: Karmir-blur, Room 28, *karas* 46.





Fragment of a geometric bronze belt with dotted motif, found inside a *karas*. At the right end of the belt there is a vertical panel containing a decoration resembling to a stylized sacred tree.

Piotrovskij 1952: 37, fig. 19; Esayan 1984: fig. 24.75.

History Museum of Armenia, inventory number: 2783-120.

B-Sot-1: Sotk, probably from a tomb.

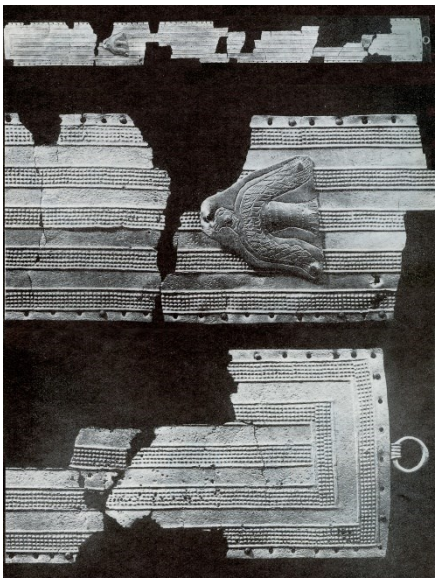


Complete bronze belt with dotted motif. The decoration is disposed on three parallel bands composed by rows of dots, framed by a whole continuous dotted band; at the right end of the belt there is a vertical panel containing the depiction of a stylized sacred tree. The ring used to hold the belt is preserved.

Yengibaryan, 2013: pl. 3.4.

History Museum of Armenia, inventory number: 2615-1.

B-Top-1: Toprakkale.



Fragments of a geometric bronze belt with dotted motif. There are holes along the preserved edges; the decoration is composed by three bands of rows of dots, framed by a continuous dotted bands running along the border. There is an attached lamina depicting the image of a flying bird, whose function is not clear. On the right, it is preserved the ring used to fasten the belt.

Wartke 1990: 75-78, pl. XX.

Location: unknown.

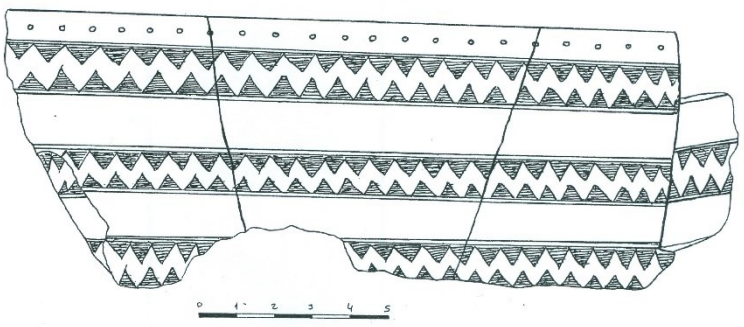
2.2.1.2.3. Zig-zag belts

B-Bur-4: Burmageçit, possible tomb.

Fragments of a geometric bronze belt with zig-zag horizontal bands. There are holes along the preserved edge. The fact that this kind of motif is usually employed as a separator between different registers may suggest that the belt, like other specimens from the same site, was left unfinished.

Yıldırım 1991: fig. 10.3-5.

Location: unknown.

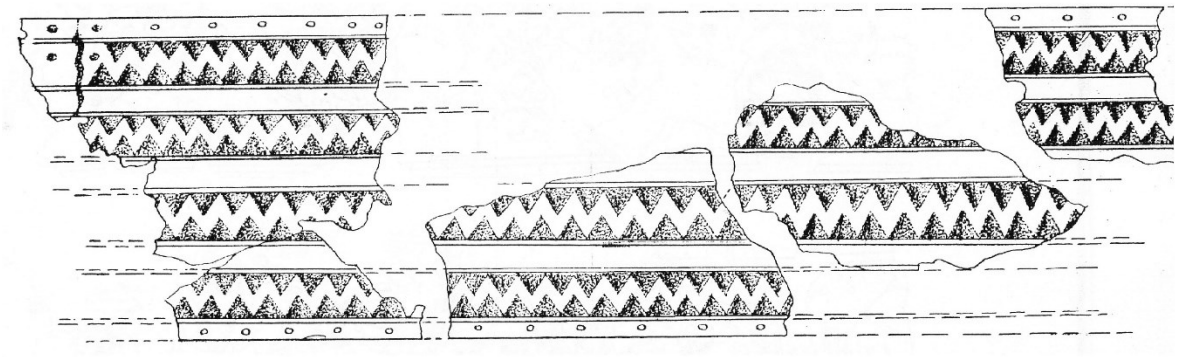


B-Yer-1: Yerevan, Hoard in the columbarium.

Fragments of a geometric bronze belt with four zig-zag horizontal bands. There are holes along the preserved edges. Since there is not enough space between the zig-zag bands, it is to be supposed that this belt only feature this very decoration.

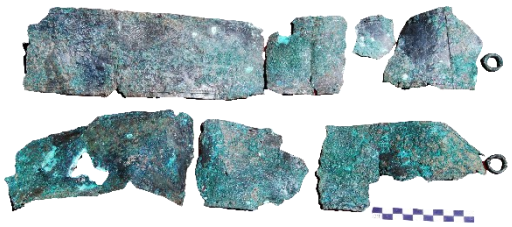
Esayan et al. 1991: pl. XVIII; Biscione 1994: 134, fig. 16.

Yerevan Mall?



2.2.1.4. Bronze belts with an unclear decoration

B-Ay-2: Ayanis, Eastern slope Area XIII.

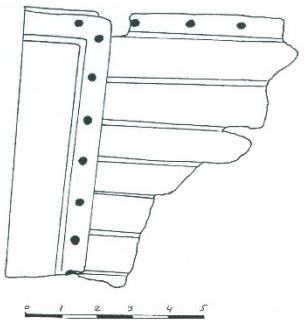


Seven fragments of a damaged bronze belt of unclear style; found underneath an iron candelabrum, fragments of *pithoi*, iron arrowheads and an iron spade. The fragments were stratified as if they were deposed on top of each other. The belt shows some incised and embossed decorations, but it is not clear what exactly is depicted on it.

Batmaz 2014: 133-134, fig. 20.

Location: unknown.

B-Bur-5: Burmageçit, possible tomb.

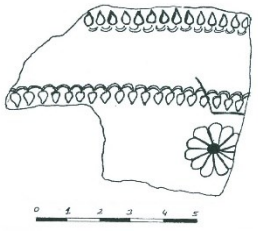


Fragments of a probably unfinished bronze belt. The decorative space has been divided in horizontal registers with embossed bands. There are holes along the edges.

Yıldırım 1991: fig. 10.1-2.

Location: unknown.

B-Bur-6: Burmageçit, possible tomb.



Fragment of a belt of unclear style, decorated with two rows of garlands and a single rosette.

Yıldırım 1991: fig. 10.10.2

Location: unknown.

B-Çav-3: Çavuştepe, probable mass grave.

Fragments of a belt of unknown style, found during the excavation of a postern and connected to the skeleton of a soldier (no picture is available).

Erzen 1974a: 25-26.

Location: unknown.

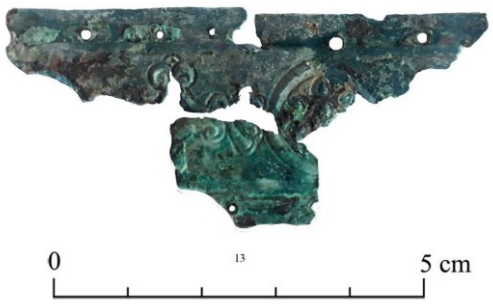
B-Kb-8: Karmir-blur, Room 12.

Small fragment of a badly preserved belt of unclear style. The visible decoration apparently contains a bull, a sacred tree and an ornamental motif (no picture is available).

Piotrovskij 1950: 53; Barnett – Watson 1952: 142.

Location: unknown.

B-Mur-1: Murat Tepe, Grave G4.



Small fragment of a bronze belt of unclear style. There are holes along the preserved edges; the decoration, apparently one register occupying all the decorative space, is composed by geometrical elements and medallions. The total height of the belt is apparently less than 5 cm, which is to be considered a *unicum.*

Özdemir 2019: no. 13, 742, 749, fig. 5.

Location: unknown.

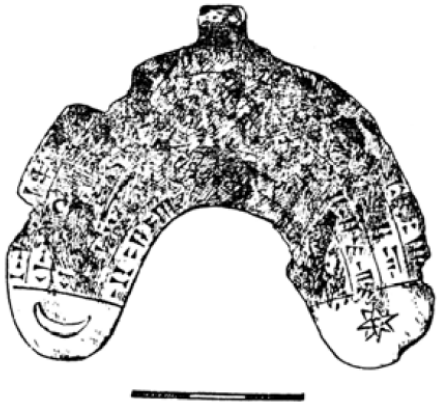
2.2.2. Medallions

M-Kb-1: Karmir-blur, close to Room 21.

One amulet in the shape of a lunula with the tips pointing downwards, decorated with a crescent moon and an eight-pointed star, bearing an inscription almost completely illegible (CTU B 18-9).

Piotrovskij 1950: 77, fig. 49.

Hermitage Museum, inventory number: 17791.



M-Kb-2: Karmir-blur, Room B.

One golden and silver circular medallion decorated with a worship scene.

Piotrovskij 1955: 11, fig. 5.

History Museum of Armenia, inventory number: 2010-63.



M-Kb-3: Karmir-blur, Room 36.

One golden and silver circular medallion decorated with a worship scene.

Piotrovskij 1955: 18, fig. 11.

History Museum of Armenia, inventory number: 2010-64.



M-Kb-4: Karmir-blur.

One bronze circular medallion depicting what is called “a ceremonial scene”.

Piotrovskij 1970: p. 87.

History Museum of Armenia, inventory number: 2010-159.



M-Top-1: Toprakkale.

One silver medallion in the shape of a lunar crescent, with the tips pointing upwards, decorated with a worship scene.

Piotrovskij 1967: 51, fig. 34; 54.

Vorderasiatisches Museum, inventory number: VA 04635b.



M-Top-2: Toprakkale, Wine cellar.

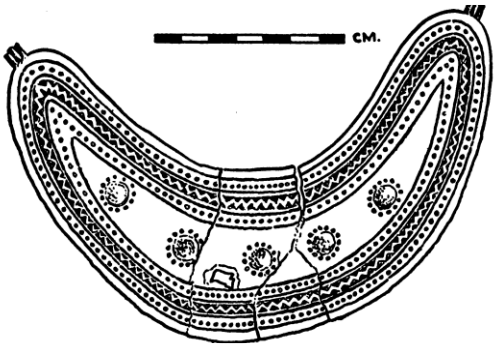
One golden medallion decorated with a worship scene.

Lehmann-Haupt 1906: 84-85.

British Museum, inventory number: BM 2015,6009.1.



2.2.3. Breastplates



Br-Nor-1: Nor Aresh, Tomb 1.

One bronze crescent-shaped breastplate with geometrical decorations.

Barnett 1963: 194-197, fig. 44.

Location: unknown.

2.3. Varia

2.3.1. Artefacts in gold and silver

G-Alt-1: Altıntepe, Tomb II.



One small quadrangular golden plate with irregular edges, depicting a human-headed winged bull walking towards the left.

Özgüç 1983: 36.

Ankara Museum for Anatolian Civilisations.

G-Alt-2-3: Altıntepe, Reception Hall.



Two golden foils, quadrangular, with irregular edges, showing two embossed images of standing human figures.

Özgüç 1983: 36-37 and pl. XVI a-b.

Location: unknown.

G-Ay-1: Ayanis, Area XI, Room 11.



Golden cave stick, possible sceptre, decorated with an abstract sacred tree motif. One end is closed and it bears the impression of a twelve petalled rosette; it also presents a *guilloche* immediately upon the inscription of Qaquli, considered to be the queen of Rusa Argištiḫi (CTU B 12-1A).

Salvini 2014a; Dan 2016; Çilingiroğlu 2018: 215-217; Çilingiroğlu – Batmaz 2013.

Location: unknown, probably Van Museum.

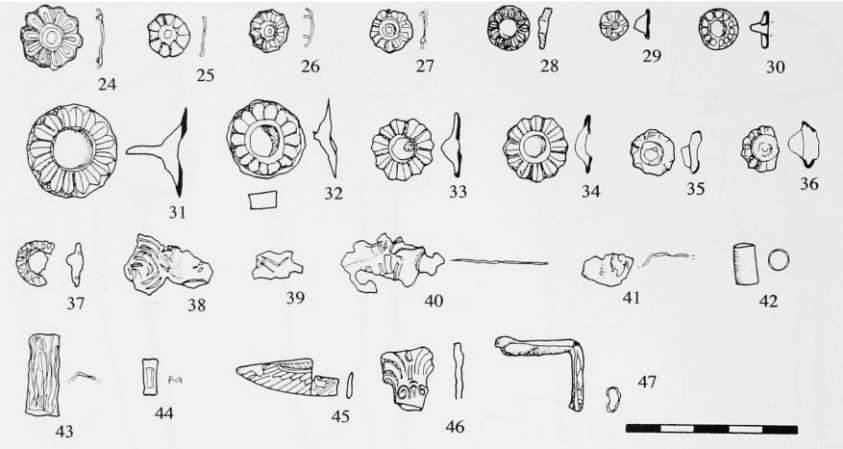


G-Ay-2: Ayanis, Temple area VI, “Hall with Podium”.

Several fragments of gold foil on which remain traces of the original engravings of floral motifs, palmettes and winged sun disc.

Sağlamtimur – Kozbe – Çevik 2001: 244; Işıklı et al. 2019: 91.

Location: unknown.



G-Ay-3: Ayanis, “Hall with Podium”.



Golden plaque representing a sphinx, with human head wearing a *polos*, lion’s body and bird’s wings, depicted in profile, walking to the left. The characterisation of its details resembles those of the fragments of carved decoration found inside the *cella* of the temple of Ayanis . The function of this object is unclear.

Işıklı et al. 2019: 91, fig. 7a.

Location: unknown.

G-Kb-1: Karmir-blur, Room 5.

Golden and silver lid with all-round handle in the shape of a possible poppy capsule. Every golden band is decorated with a bud garland motif on the edges. It bears and inscription of one of the kings called Argišti (the patronymic is not indicated, but Salvini considers it as a property of Argišti Minuaḫi) (CTU B 8-28).

Piotrovskij 1960: 56-215; Seidl 2004: E.S.1; Dan – Bonfanti *forthcoming*.

History Museum of Armenia, inventory number: 2010-184.



2.3.2. Foils and plaques

Pl-Ay-1: Ayanis, Rooms 1 and 2.

Bronze plates with a sun motif made in *repoussé* technique.

Batmaz 2015b: 136.

Van Museum.



Pl-Ay-2: Ayanis, Room 3.

Bronze plate with the embossed image of an individual standing on the back of a bull, usually recognised as the god Teišeba.

Batmaz 2015b: 136.

Van Museum.

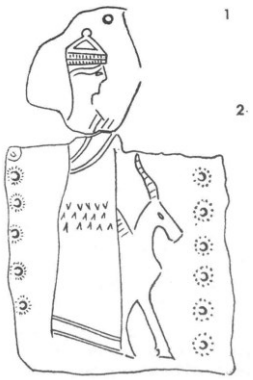


Pl-Kb-1: Karmir-blur.

Fragmentary bronze plaques representing the image of a male figure facing right, dressed with a long robe and a polos-type headgear, behind whom there is an animal, probably an ibex.

Kellner 1982: 80; Muscarella 2000: 155.

Location: unknown.

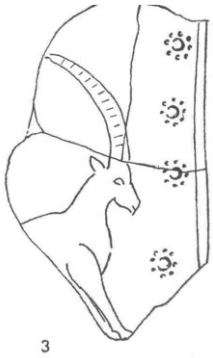


Pl-Kb-2: Karmir-blur.

Fragmentary bronze plaque representing a possible figure of ibex. The edge is bordered by rosettes.

Kellner 1982: 80.

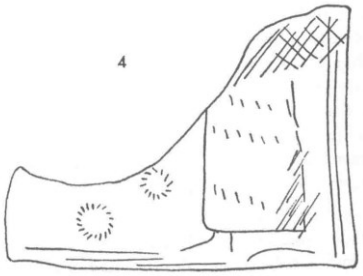
Location: unknown.



Pl- Kb-3: Karmir-blur.

Fragmentary bronze plaque representing the lower half of a person dressed with a long robe. Images of suns are on the background.

Kellner 1982: 80.



Pl-Kay-1: Kayalıdere, Temple area.

One small bronze foil representing a bird with (possibly) a lion's snout walking towards the right.

Burney 1966: 98-99.

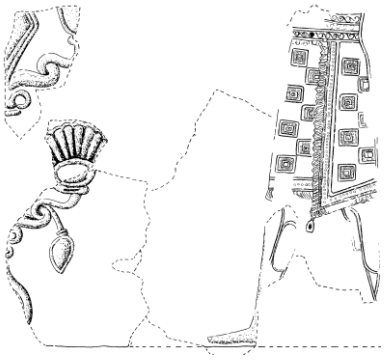
Location: unknown.



Pl-Top-1: Toprakkale.

One thick bronze foil probably covering a portion of the famous throne, depicting a sacred tree, followed by a man advancing to the left, preserved only for the lower part.

Barnett 1972: 176-178, fig. 16.

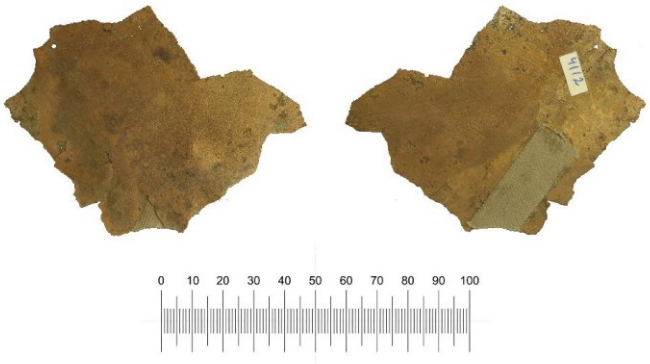


Pl-Yeg-1: Yeghegnadzor, deposit.

One fragment of a bronze foil with an incised decoration of an unusual shaped rosette.

Dan et al. *forthcoming*.

Yeghegnadzor Regional Museum, inventory number 4112.



2.4. Decorated bronze vessels

2.4.1. Bowls



Bo-Kb-1-6: Karmir-blur, Storeroom 25.

Six bronze bowls decorated with two possible hieroglyphic signs and inscriptions of Minua running around the centre (CTU B 5-5).

Piotrovskij 1951: 111; Piotrovskij 1952: 55; Piotrovskij 1960: n° 49-34-39; Diakonoff 1963: 112-117; Seidl 2004: 24 (C.l – C.4).

Hermitage Museum, inventory numbers: 17746, 17747.

History Museum of Armenia, inventory numbers: 2010/32/54, 2010/32/52.

Bo-Kb-7-9: Karmir-blur, Storeroom 25.

Two bronze bowls decorated with two possible hieroglyphic signs and inscriptions of Argišti, son of Minua, running around the centre (CTU B 8-19 and 8-20).

Piotrovskij 1951: 111, fig. 4; Piotrovskij 1952: 56, fig. 27; Seidl 2004: 30, fig. 15b (E.2).

Hermitage Museum.

Bo-Kb-10-77: Karmir-blur, various rooms of the fortress.

Sixty-seven bronze bowls decorated with two possible hieroglyphic signs and inscriptions of Sarduri, son of Argišti, running around the centre (CTU B 9-14, 9-15 and 9-16).

Piotrovskij 1951: 111, fig. 6; Piotrovskij 1952: 56; Piotrovskij 1960, 106; Piotrovskij 1970, pls. 73-74; Wartke 1993: 113, fig. 55; Santrot 1996: 272; Seidl 2004: 33 (F.1-14), 34 (F.82-83).

History Museum of Armenia, inventory numbers: 2010/32/ 1.4.8 and many others.

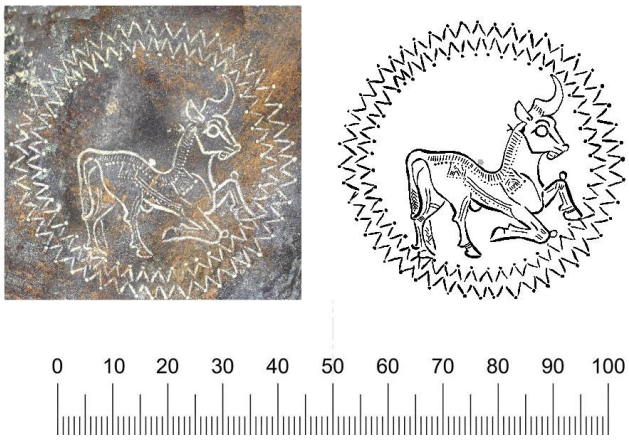
Hermitage Museum, inventory numbers: 17749-17759.

Bo-Yeg-1: Yeghegnadzor, hoard.

Bronze bowl with depiction of a kneeling bull surrounded by a zig-zag motif.

Esayan – Xnkikyan 1990: 41, pl. 2.7; Xnkikyan 2002: 256, pl. XCV.3; Dan et al. *forthcoming*.

Yeghegnadzor Regional Museum, inventory number: 1304/4110.



2.4.2. Cauldrons and cauldron's attachments

2.4.2.1. Fully preserved cauldrons

Ca-Alt-1: Altıntepe, Tomb II.

One complete bronze cauldron resting on a bronze tripod and completed with four bull's head attachments.

Barnett – Gökçe 1953: 121-123, pl. XIII.

Ankara Museum for Anatolian Civilisations.

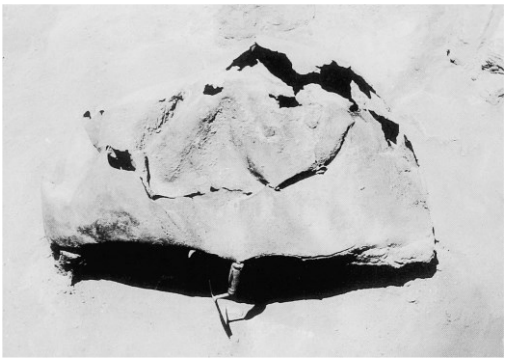


Ca-Ay-1: Ayanis, West Storage Area, Room 7.

One smashed bronze cauldron found upside down on the mud-brick floor; It had a capacity of 200 liters and it was probably used for measuring grain.

Çilingiroğlu 2001a: 71, fig. 7.

Van Museum.



Ca-Ay-2: Ayanis, second floor of the Entrance Room.



Double-handed bronze cauldron full of carbonised millet. The handles are circular and positioned vertically on its rim.

Batmaz 2015b: 137.

Van Museum.

Ca-Kb-1: Karmir-blur, room in the south-west of the citadel.

One copper cauldron with bronze rim completed with two handles (no picture is available).

Piotrovskij 1966: 247.

Location: unknown.

2.4.2.2. Bull's heads attachments

Ca-Ali-1: Alişar / Verahram, possible chamber tomb.

One bull's head cauldron attachment.

Piotrovskij 1967: 83-85; Dan – Bonfanti 2021: 99, fig. 5.

Hermitage Museum, inventory number: 16004.



Ca-Alt-1: Altıntepe, Tomb II.

Four bull's head cauldron attachments still applied on the cauldron itself.

Barnett – Gökçe 1953: 121-123, pl. XIX.1.

Ankara Museum for Anatolian Civilisations.



Ca-Guş-1, 2: Guşçi, possible underground tomb.

Two bull's head cauldron attachments.

Hanfmann 1956.

Location: unknown.



Ca-Top-1, 2 : Toprakkale.

Two bull's head cauldron attachments.

Barnett 1950: 18-20.

British Museum, inventory numbers: BM91240, BM91242.



2.4.2.3. Lion's head attachments

Ca-Kb-2: Karmir-blur, Room 14.



One hollow tubular decoration developing upwards, whose upper end is closed by a lion's head; it bears an inscription of Sarduri Argištiḫi (CTU B 9-24).

Piotrovskij 1967: 43-44; Seidl 2004: F.110.

History Museum of Armenia, inventory number: 2783-79.

Ca-Top-3, 4: Toprakkale.



Two cauldron handles recalling two horizontal and overlapping vase handles at the top of which there is a plastic decoration of a roaring lion's head. Their shape and decoration is a *unicum* in Urartian art.

Barnett 1950: 15; Barnett 1954: 6.

British Museum, inventory number: BM22492, BM22493.

2.5 Seals

2.5.1. Royal seals

2.5.1.1 Type 1

Se-Ay-1: Ayanis.



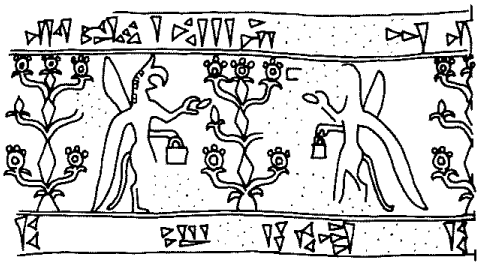
Sealed clay *bulla* (CTU IV CB Ay-52). The seal decoration consists of two winged chimeras standing on the sides of a sacred tree; there is an inscription running on the upper and lower margins of the scene (CTU IV Sig. 20-3). The stamp is not preserved.

Abay 2001: 324.

Van Museum.

Se-Ba-1, 2: Bastam, Unterburg, Building 8, Room 5.



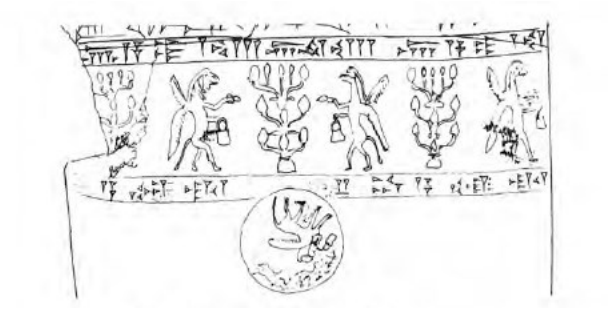


Two inscribed seals (CTU IV Sig. 20-2) stamped on two clay tablets (CTU IV CT Ba-1, CT Ba-2). The seal decoration consists of two winged chimeras with eagle head (at least the one preserved) holding a situla and a pine cone, standing on the sides of a sacred tree. On the stamp, one can see a winged griffin / horse / chimera with a T sign above its head.

Seidl 1979: 137, A.1.

Teheran Museum.

Se-Kb-1: Karmir-blur.



Inscribed seal (CTU IV Sig. 20-1) stamped on one clay tablet (CTU IV CT Kb-4). The seal decoration consists of three winged chimeras with eagle heads holding a situla and a pine cone standing on the sides of a sacred tree. On the stamp, one can see a winged griffin / horse / chimera holding a situla.

Diakonoff 1963: n° 4.

Location: unknown.

2.5.1.1.1. Type 1b

Se-Kb-2: Karmir-blur.



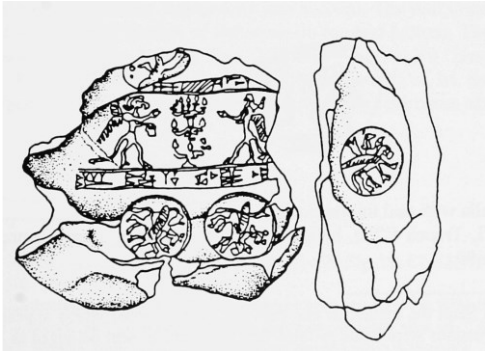
Inscribed seal (CTU IV Sig. 20-4) stamped on one clay tablet (CTU IV CT Kb-2). The scene on the cylinder is not recognizable; on the stamp, one can see a winged horse /chimera holding a situla.

Diakonoff 1963: n° 2.

Erebuni Museum?

2.5.1.2. Type 2

Se-Ay-2: Ayanis, Area VII.



Inscribed seal (CTU IV Sig. 20-7) stamped on a clay *cretula*. The seal decoration consists of two winged chimeras holding a situla and a pine cone, standing on the sides of a sacred tree. The chimera on the left has an eagle head, while the one on the right seems to have a man's head. On the stamp, one can see a winged griffin / horse / chimera holding a situla.

Abay 2001: 323, fig. 1.

Van Museum.

Se-Ay-3-4: Ayanis, Area VI.

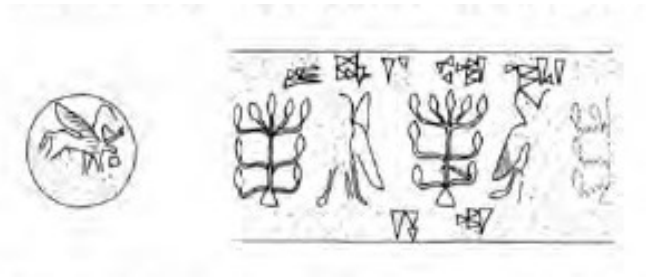


Two inscribed seals (CTU IV Sig. 20-7) stamped on clay *bullae* (CB Ay-4). The seal decoration consists of at least two winged chimeras holding a situla and a pine cone standing on the sides of a sacred tree. On one of these seals, between the tree and the chimera one can see a spouted vessel. The image on the stamp is not preserved.

Abay 2001: 324, fig.3.

Van Museum.

Se-Ba-3-24: Bastam, Unterburg UB 19, outside the fortress' wall.

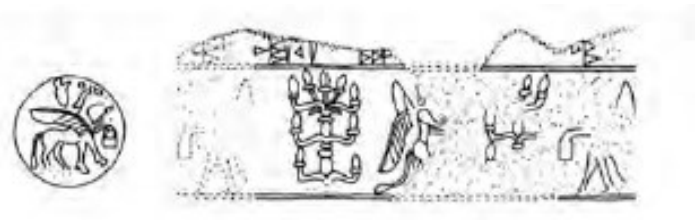


Inscribed seals (CTU IV Sig. 20-8) stamped on twenty-one *bullae*. The cylinder stamp alone is impressed also on six other *bullae*, the stamp alone on two other *bullae*. The seal decoration consists of two winged chimeras, poorly preserved, standing on the sides of a sacred tree; on the stamp, one can see a winged griffin / horse / chimera holding a situla.

Seidl 1988: 145, A.3.

Teheran Museum.

Se-Ba-25-27: Bastam, Oberburg 5,7 and Mittelburg 2,1.



Inscribed seal (CTU IV Sig. 20-9) stamped on two *bullae*. The cylinder stamp alone is impressed also on one other bulla, the stamp alone on another one. The seal decoration consists of two winged chimeras, poorly preserved, standing on the sides of a sacred tree; on the stamp, one can see a winged griffin / horse / chimera holding a situla with a spouted vessel and other linear signs above its back.

Seidl 1988: 145, A.4.

Teheran Museum.

Se-Ba-28: Bastam, Oberburg 5, 7.



Inscribed seal (CTU IV Sig. 20-10) stamped on one bulla. The stamp alone is impressed on twelve other bullae. The seal decoration consists of two winged chimeras, poorly preserved, standing on the sides of a sacred tree; on the stamp, one can see a winged griffin / horse / chimera holding a situla, with a spouted vessel above its back.

Seidl 1988: 145-146, A.5.

Teheran Museum.

Se-Kb-3: Karmir-blur.



Inscribed seal (CTU IV Sig. 20-11) stamped on one clay tablet (CTU IV CT Kb-7). The seal decoration consists of at least two winged chimeras holding a situla and a pine cone, standing on the sides of a sacred tree. The stamp is not entirely well preserved, but it depicted probably a winged horse / chimera with a lunar crescent above its back.

Salvini 2012: 220.

Location: unknown.

Se-Top-1-3: Toprakkale.



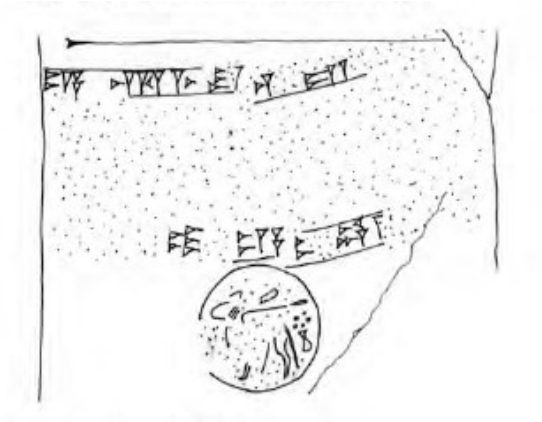
Inscribed seal (not in CTU) stamped on three clay *bullae*. The seal decoration consists of at least two winged chimeras holding a situla, standing on the sides of a sacred tree. The stamp, not well preserved, depicts a possible winged horse / chimera, probably holding a pine cone.

Lehmann-Haupt 1910: 306, 323; Seidl 2001: 447, fig. 4.1.

Vorderasiatisches Museum, inventory number: 4311 + 4321.

2.5.1.2.1. Type 2b

Se-Kb-4: Karmir-blur.



Inscribed seal (CTU IV Sig. 13-1) stamped on one clay tablet (CTU IV CT Kb-3). The scene on the cylinder is not recognizable; on the stamp, one can see a possible chimaera, and probably a vase.

Diakonoff 1963: n°3; Movsisian 2006; Salvini 2006b; Salvini 2007.

Location: unknown.

2.5.1.3. Type 3

Se-Kb-5: Karmir-blur.



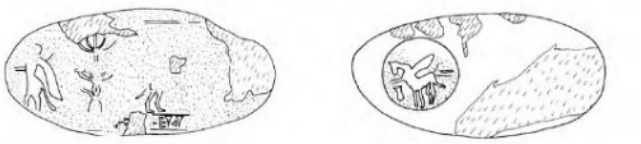
Inscribed seal (CTU IV Sig. 19-1) stamped on one clay *bulla*. The seal decoration consists of at least two winged bulls with human heads holding a situla and possibly a pine cone standing on the sides of a sacred tree. A sort of tree / geometric element is present at the left or right margin of the seal. The stamp has a quadrangular shape and it doesn't present any image.

Arutjunjan, 1960; Salvini 1979: 129.

Erebuni Museum?

2.5.1.4. Type 4

Se-An-1: Yukarı Anzaf.



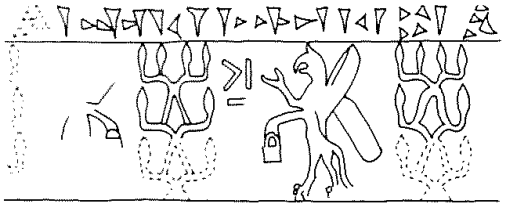
Inscribed seal stamped on a clay bulla (CB An-1). The seal decoration consists of bad preserved winged chimeras standing on the sides of a sacred tree. On the stamp, one can see a winged griffin / horse / chimera holding a situla.

Belli - Salvini 2003.

Location: unknown.

Se-Ba-29: Bastam, Unterburg, Building 8, Room 9.





Inscribed seal (CTU IV Sig. 20-5b) stamped on a clay tablet (CTU IV CT Ba-3). The seal decoration consists of winged chimeras with eagle head (at least the one preserved) holding a situla, standing on the sides of a sacred tree. There are three geometric signs carved between the chimera and the sacred tree. On the stamp, one can see a winged griffin / horse / chimera holding a situla with three linear signs carved above its back.

Seidl 1979: 137-138, A.2

Teheran Museum.

Se-Ba-30: Bastam, Mittelburg 2,1.

Inscribed seal stamped on one or maybe two *bullae*. The seal decoration consists of winged chimeras holding *situlae*, poorly preserved, standing on the sides of a sacred tree. On the stamp, one can see a Winged griffin / horse / chimera holding a situla, with its head not preserved (no picture is available).

Seidl 1988: 146, A.6.

Teheran Museum.

Se-Kb-6: Karmir-blur.

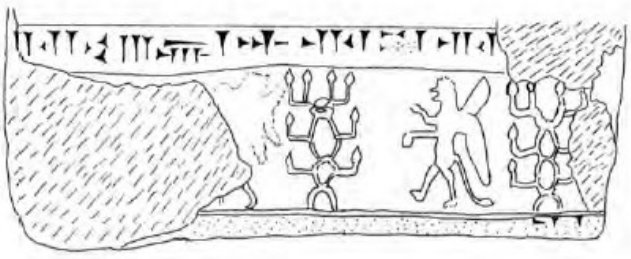


Inscribed seal (CTU IV Sig. 20-5) stamped on one clay tablet (CTU IV CT Kb-5). The seal decoration consists of at least one winged chimera holding a situla and a pine cone standing on the sides of a sacred tree. The stamp is not entirely preserved.

Salvini 2012: 216-217.

Location: unknown.

Se-Kb-7: Karmir-blur.



Inscribed seal (CTU IV Sig. 20-6) stamped on one clay tablet (CTU IV CT Kb-1). The seal decoration consists of winged chimeras probably holding a situla and a pine cone standing on the sides of a sacred tree. On the stamp, one can see a winged horse / chimera probably holding a situla.

Diakonoff 1963: n° 32; Salvini 1979: 130.

Location: unknown.

Se-Van-1: Van Kalesi Höyüğü.



Inscribed seal (CTU IV Sig. 20-5) stamped on one clay *bulla*. The only preserved element of the seal's decoration is the top of a sacred tree; on the stamp, not entirely preserved, one can see a probable winged horse / chimera.

Salvini 2012: 217.

Location: unknown.

2.5.1.5. Type 5

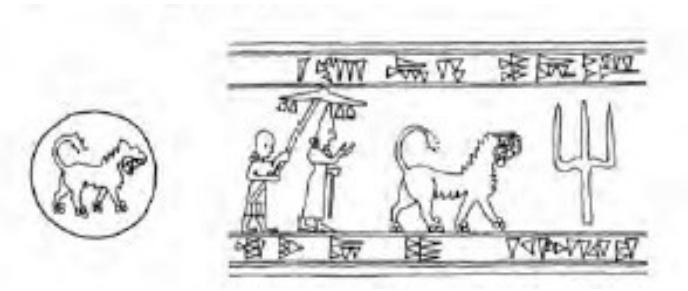


Se-Ba-31-54: Bastam, Rooms at the dividing wall between Mittel- and Oberburg.

Inscribed seal (CTU IV Sig. 12-2) stamped on twenty-four *bullae*. The cylinder stamp alone is impressed also on four other *bullae*, the stamp alone on eight *bullae*. The seal decoration consists of three different elements: on the left, two men, one wearing a flat headgear and holding a parasol with tassels in his hands. The second man, possibly the king, wears a pointed helmet, lifts his right hand and hold a sort of stick or scepter in his left one. On the right, there is a walking lion with lifted tail, and a trident. On the stamp, one can see a walking lion with its tail raised.

Seidl 1979: 138-139, B.1; Seidl 1988: 146, zu B.1.

Teheran Museum.



Se-Ba-55-674: Bastam, Oberburg 5, 7 and Mittelburg 2,1.

Inscribed seal (CTU IV Sig. 12-1) stamped on six hundred twenty *bullae*. The seal decoration consists of three different elements: on the left, two men, one wearing a flat headgear and holding a parasol with tassels in his hands. The second man, possibly the king, wears a pointed helmet, lifts his right hand and hold a sort of stick or scepter in his left one. On the right, there is a walking lion with lifted tail, and a trident. On the stamp, one can see a walking lion with its tail raised.

Seidl 1988: 146, B.2.

Teheran Museum.

Se-Top-4-11: Toprakkale.



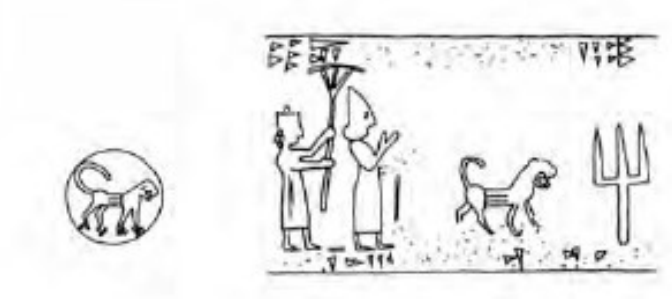
Inscribed seal (Sig. 12-2) stamped on one clay *bulla*; it is stamped also on seven, probably eight, other *bullae*. The seal decoration consists of two different elements: on the left, a trident, two men, one of them bearing a parasol and the other one, wearing a pointed helmet, lifting his hands. On the stamp, one can see a walking lion with its tail raised.

Lehmann-Haupt 1910: 199, 222; Seidl 2001: 446, fig. 1.1.

Vorderasiatisches Museum, inventory number: 4308.

2.5.1.5.1. Type 5b

Se-Ba-675-916: Bastam, Unterburg UB 19, outside the fortress' walls, and Mittelburg 2,1.

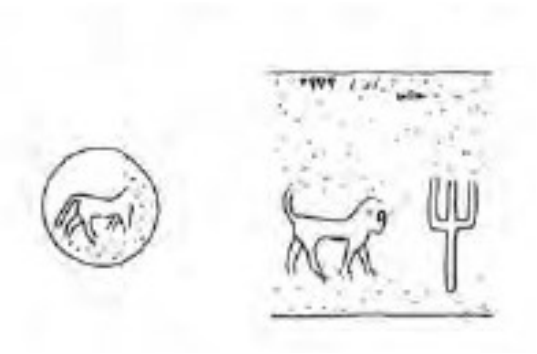


Inscribed seal (CTU IV Sig. 12-2) stamped on two hundred forty-two *bullae*. The seal decoration consists of three different elements: on the left, two men; the first one wears a flat headgear and holds a parasol with tassels in his hands. The second man, possibly the king, wears a pointed helmet, lifts his right hand and hold a sort of stick or scepter in his left one. On the right, there is a walking lion with lifted tail, and a trident. On the stamp, one can see a walking lion with its tail raised.

Seidl 1988: 146, B.3.

Teheran Museum.

Se-Ba-917-920: Bastam, Oberburg 5, 7.

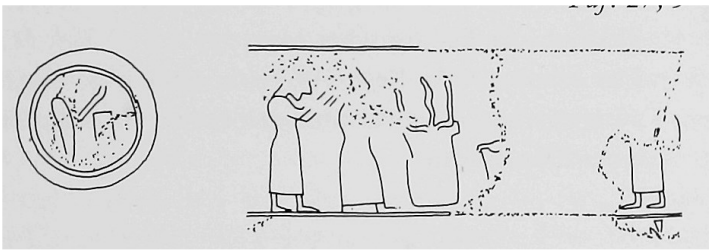


Inscribed seal (CTU IV Sig. 12-2; Salvini joined this seal with the previous representation, even if the image on the stamp is different) stamped on three *bullae*. The seal decoration consists of at least two different elements, a walking lion with its tail raised and a trident. On the stamp, one can see a walking lion with its tail lowered.

Seidl 1988: 147, B.4.

Teheran Museum.

Se-Ba-921: Bastam, Mittelburg 2,1.



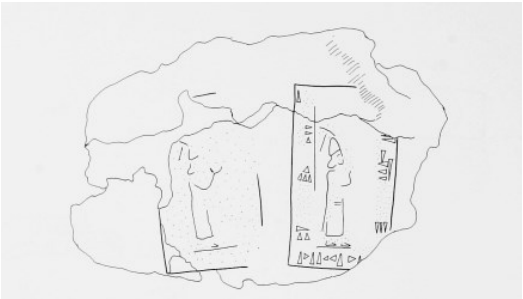
Inscribed seal stamped on one *bulla*. The seal decoration consists of at least two different elements, on the left two men with their hands lifted, probably standing in front of a trident. On the right, a single man looking towards left. On the stamp, the only recognizable element is the double line that encloses the scene; the objects represented are not clear.

Seidl 1988: 147, B.5.

Teheran Museum.

2.5.1.6. Type 6

Se-Ay-5-7: Ayanis, Area VII.



Inscribed stamp seal (CTU IV Sig. 12-3) stamped three times on a clay bulla, twice on another one and once on a last one. The scene is composed by a man, most likely the king, standing under a parasol with tassels. He wears a long dress and a conical helmet, holds in his left hand a stick and lifts his right hand.

Abay 2001: 327-328 (A2), figs. 5-6; Salvini 2005: 265-266, 272, fig. 11.

Van Museum.

Se-Ziw-1: Ziwiyeh.

Inscribed stamp seal (CTU IV Sig. 12-4) stamped on a clay *bulla*, The scene is probably the same as the previous seal, and it should be composed by a man, most likely the king, standing under a parasol with tassels. He wears a long dress and a conical helmet, holds in his left hand a stick and lifts his right hand (no picture is available).

Seidl 1988: 15,0 fn. 8.

Location: unknown.

2.5.1.7. Type 7

Se-Ay-8: Ayanis, Area VI.

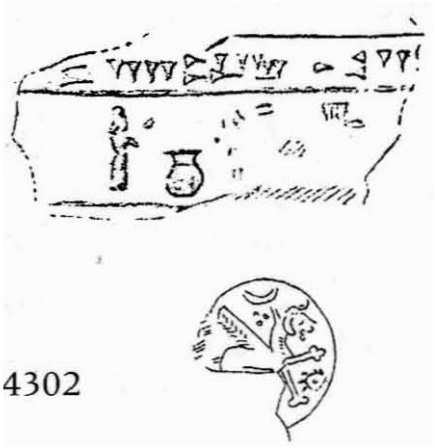


Inscribed seal (CTU IV Sig. 21-1) stamped on a clay *bulla*. The seal decoration consists of a "cultic" scene, probably a ritual performed. On the left, one can see two men holding a stick and a pine cone standing on the sides of a big vessel (drawn with *repoussé* dots), placed underneath a winged solar disc. On the right, two men holding a stick and a pine cone standing on the sides of a possible palm tree. The stamp is not decorated.

Abay 2001: 329 (A3), fig. 7.

Van Museum.

Se-Top-12: Toprakkale.



Inscribed seal (CTU IV Sig. 19-2) stamped on one door seal. The seal decoration consists of a "cultic" scene, probably a ritual performed: on the left, a person with his hands raised standing on the side of a vessel; other signs are not recognizable. The stamp is not entirely preserved, but it represents a possible winged horse / chimera with linear signs in the shape of a lunar crescent and a star.

Seidl 2001: 447, fig. 5; Lehmann-Haupt 1931: 245, 345, 686.

Vorderasiatisches Museum, inventory number: VA 4302.

2.5.1.8. Type 8

Se-Top-13-14: Toprakkale.



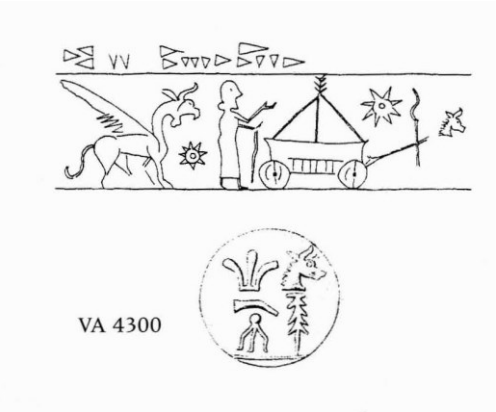
Inscribed seal stamped on two clay *bullae*. The decoration of the seal is composed of a military parade involving a chariot trained by a horse, and two men wearing pointed helmets, walking in front of it and holding a stick. On the stamp, one can see a walking lion with its tail raised.

Seidl 2001: 447, fig. 3.4; Lehmann-Haupt 1910: 261; Lehmann-Haupt 1931: 222, 583.

Vorderasiatisches Museum, inventory numbers: 4492(+4526), 4310.

2.5.1.9. Type 9

Se-Top-15-17: Toprakkale.



Inscribed seal stamped on two door seals. The decoration of the seal is composed of different elements: on the left, a winged chimera following a man holding a stick. On the right, a chariot with a sort of cover and a tree shaped element on the top. The chariot is not trained by any animal. There are four possible hieroglyphic signs, not connected to the scene: two stars, a bull's head and a line. On the stamp, one can see five possible hieroglyphs: three geometric shapes, one bovid head and one tree.

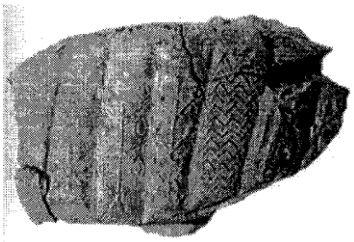
Lehmann-Haupt 1907: 43, n° 39, fig. 80; Lehmann-Haupt 1931: 580, 833; Seidl 2001: 447, fig. 5.

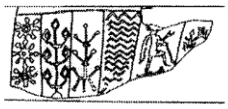
Vorderasiatisches Museum, inventory numbers: 4299, 4301.

2.5.2. Popular seals

2.5.2.1. Multi-faceted seals with depictions of sacred trees and hybrid creatures

Ps-Ay-1: Ayanis.





Impression of a multi-faceted seal. It mainly represents variations on the sacred tree theme; for each face, a description can be provided: three eight-petaled flowers one above the other; a sacred tree with diamond-shaped buds; sacred tree, simple in design, with branches curving out and up from the trunk and small rounded fruits on the tips; a series of horizontal, parallel zigzag lines; an animal supporting a winged deity who holds a vertical stick in his left hand and raises his right hand; fragment of a tree.

Abay 2001: 335, fig. 15; Ayvazian 2006: 480-481.

Location: unknown.

Ps-Ay-2: Ayanis.



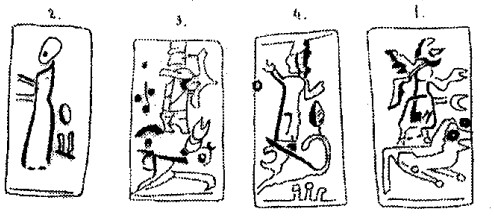


Impression of a multi-faceted seal, square in section, with only three panels preserved. On the left panel there is an altar with a sacred tree on each side and a stele in between. The middle panel shows a kneeling man with a plant below him. The last panel shows a god standing on a winged and horned holy lion.

Abay 2001: 336-337, fig. 16; Ayvazian 2006: 482-483.

Location: unknown.

Ps-Çav-1: Çavuştepe.



Four-faceted seal in black stone, perforated lengthwise. The design of the seal consists in: a composite figure whose face is shaped like a lunar crescent, wings protruding from its neck, and slim torso. The legs of the figure may be those of a bull, and the arms are scorpion-like. The figure is riding an animal with vertically bent down tail; the next facet shows possibly a priestly

figure wearing a tall headgear and a long dress; a deity standing on a composite monster; a male figure in tunic and helmet.

Erzen 1978: 41-42, pl. XXXVIIIb; Ayvazian 2006: 572-573.

Ps-Er-1: Erebuni.





Four-faceted seal made of black amber, with another decorated face on the bottom. Its hanging loop is decorated on top by two grooves which divide the surface of the loop into three parts. The seal design consists of mythical motifs: a large fish with its tail pointing downwards; a possible deity walking to the right, wearing a long dress decorated in the lower part with parallel lines. To the right of the deity are two cuneiform-like wedges and a small circle; a blooming tree, with two dots placed underneath its lower branches, probably indicating fruits, and one more dot placed at the beginning of the trunk. On the bottom, a mythical creature is represented.

Ayvazian 2006: 584-585.

Erebuni Museum, inventory number: 13/100.

Ps-Kb-1: Karmir-blur, Room 36.



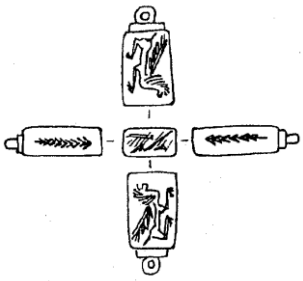


Four-faceted seal in stone, with another depiction on the bottom. The seal design consists of: a kneeling winged figure under a winged sun disc; a winged deity facing right, wearing a square headdress, with his right hand raised, and the left stretched forward; mixed "hieroglyphic" signs, among which another winged sun disc, are depicted on the base.

Piotrovskij 1955: 55-56, fig. 42.24; Ayvazian 2006: 693-694.

Location: unknown.

Ps-Kb-2: Karmir-blur.

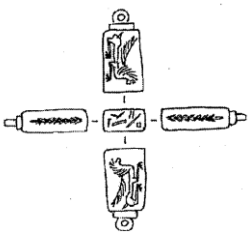


Four-faceted seal with bottom stamping surface and a loop for hanging separated from the seal by a stepped cushion. Wide opposing sides of the seal depict pairs of winged lion-griffins. The creatures are depicted vertically. Narrow sides of the seal depict a possible narrow tree or a branch. The design of the base is not distinguishable.

Piliposian 1998: pl. 63/4; Ayvazian 2006: 839-840.

History Museum of Armenia.

Ps-Kb-3: Karmir-blur.

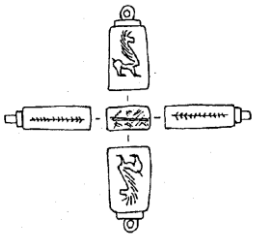


Four-faceted seal with bottom stamping surface and a loop for hanging separated from the seal by a stepped cushion. Wide opposing sides of the seal depict pairs of winged lion-griffins. The creatures are depicted vertically. Narrow sides of the seal depict a possible narrow tree or a branch. The design of the base includes variously positioned lines and a small square.

Piliposian 1998: pl. 64/5; Ayvazian 2006: 841-842.

History Museum of Armenia.

Ps-Kb-4: Karmir-blur.

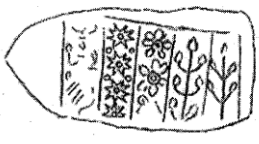


Four-faceted seal with bottom stamping surfaces and a loop for hanging separated from the seal. Wide opposing sides of the seal show an animal with a horse's head and a lion's lower body. The narrow sides each depict a possible narrow branch or a tree. The design of the bottom stamp is not distinguishable.

Piliposian 1998: pl. 64/2

History Museum of Armenia.

Ps-Top-1: Toprakkale.



Multi-faceted seal impression. Its design consists of many variations of the sacred tree motif.

Lehmann-Haupt 1910: 380; Ayvazian 2006: 1031-1032.

Location: unknown.

Ps-Yeg-1: Yeghegnadzor, hoard.



Four-faceted seal in jasper. The design of this seal is not clear: on its narrow sides, it depicts what can be considered as an imitation of cuneiform writing. The based is carved with two horizontal lines placed along the middle of its long side, with short vertical lines placed on both sides of them.

Piliposian 1998: pl. 64/4; Ayvazian 2006: 881-882; Dan et al. *forthcoming*.

Yeghegnadzor Regional Museum.

2.5.2.2. Possible images of the sovereign

Ps-Ay-3: Ayanis, Area VI.



Oblong seal impression showing a man facing left, raising his hands and standing under a winged sun disk. He wears a conical headdress and a ankle-long robe.

Abay 2001: 338, fig. 19; Ayvazian 2006: 488-489.

Location: unknown.

Ps-Ay-4: Ayanis, Area VI.



Round seal impression showing a standing male figure in an ankle-length robe and probably a conical helmet, with his hands in front holding an unidentifiable object.

Abay 2001: 339, fig. 20; Ayvazian 2006: 490-491.

Location: unknown.

2.5.2.3. Procession scenes

Ps-Ay-5: Ayanis, Area VI.



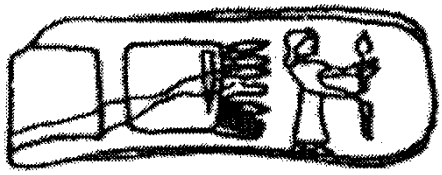


Impression of a cylinder seal. Its design consists of two human figures walking to the right with one arm raised; the image is not preserved in the space between them. The impression of the base shows a lion facing left, with his tail curled up.

Ayvazian 2006: 476-477.

Location: unknown.

Ps-Ay-6: Ayanis, Area VI.



Impression of a cylinder seal showing a long haired figure facing right, holding a spear in both hands. Behind the man there is an object, rectangular in shape, whose right border presents a long fringe.

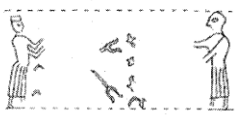
Abay 2001: 337, fig. 17; Ayvazian 2006: 484-485.

Location: unknown.

2.5.2.4. Adoration scenes

Ps-Ba-1: Bastam, Building 8, Room 4.





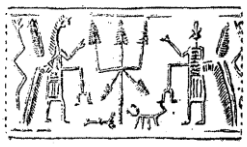
Cylinder seal impression showing two figures standing one on each side of an unidentifiable group of objects. They are both wearing a striped skirt. The visible objects in the center of the scene consist of two streamers with finials facing right. On the base, there is a representation of a winged sun-disk-standing above three "hieroglyphic" signs.

Seidl 1979: 139; Ayvazian 2006: 516-517.

Teheran Archaeological Museum, inventory number: Ba 74/77.

Ps-Kb-5: Karmir-blur, Room 24.





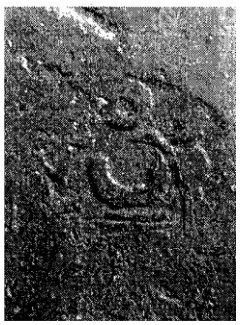
Cylinder seal in black stone representing an adoration of the sacred tree scene. The loop is attached to the cylindrical body. A schematical sacred tree with three lanceolate buds pointing up and two pointing down is flanked on either side by a winged genius. The one on the left is eagle-headed, and the one on the right is probably human-headed with a tall headdress possibly with horns. A sig-zag line is shown vertically behind the left-hand genius. The base impression shows a sun disk standing above some "hieroglyphic" signs.

Piotrovskii 1950: fig. 45.1; Ayvazian 2006: 691-692.

History Museum of Armenia, inventory number: KB 2010 167 11352.

2.5.2.5. Ritual scenes

Ps-Er-2: Erebuni, Northern slope.



Stamp seal impression depicting a ritual scene, with the action evolving on both sides of an altar with an offering. A bearded man wearing a conical headdress is standing on the right of the offering table and proffering a libation with his outstretched right arm. The person on the left of the offering table seems to be sitting and holding a cup. The altar is represented by a squared platform.

Ayvazian 2006: 468-469.

Erebuni Museum, inventory number: ER400/140.142.1999.

Ps-Kb-6: Karmir-blur, Storeroom 28, inside *karas* 15.



Cylinder seal in stone with a loop on top. On the cylinder surface, two winged creatures are facing each other in front of an altar. The one on the left is wearing a horned headgear; its right arm is pointing upwards, and its left arm rests on the horns of a goat. The winged creature on the right is holding a bucket in its right hand. The altar between the two winged creatures seems to be lit with fire, as four parallel lines rise from its base. Above the altar is the image of a halfmoon; to the far left of the scene there is a male figure that seems to be wearing a conical helmet: he holds a large tree branch.

Piotrovskij 1952: 45, fig. 22.19; Ayvazian 2006: 771-772.

Location: unknown.

Ps-Top-2: Toprakkale.

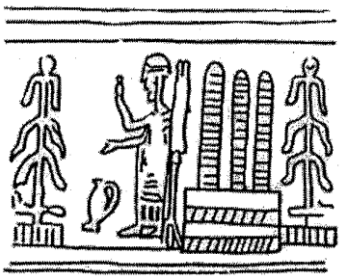


Circular stamp seal impression showing a deity with a horned headdress sitting on a stool and raising one arm up while the other arm is stretched vertically forward. The deity is facing right, and in front of it there is a worshipper raising his arms up towards the deity; it is not clear whether or not he is holding a stick. A pomegranate-like flower rises behind the deity to the left.

Lehmann-Haupt 1910: 180; Ayvazian 2006: 1011-1012.

Location: unknown.

Ps-Top-3: Toprakkale.



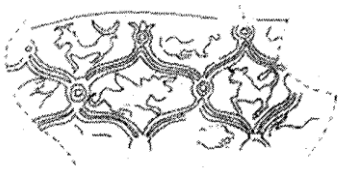
Cylinder seal impression featuring a human figure with raised arms standing in front of a vascular form, resembling a jug. Behind the figure, probably celebrating a ritual, is a kind of platform on which are possibly represented three stelae.

Lehmann-Haupt 1931: 549; Ayvazian 2006: 997-998.

2.5.2.6. Garland decorated depictions

Ps-Ba-2: Bastam, House 1 of the settlement.





Impression of a cylinder seal. The depiction consists of a net design with soft interlocking motifs ending on top in pomegranate fruits and joined with double-circle designs. Inside the individual metope there are figures of animals. On the base, one can see a winged sun disc above a single-handled vessel and a horizontally-placed crescent moon.

Seidl 1979: 139; Ayvazian 2006: 518-519.

Teheran Archaeological Museum, inventory numbers: Ba 70/40; 75/56, 57; 781.

Ps-Çav-2: Çavuştepe.





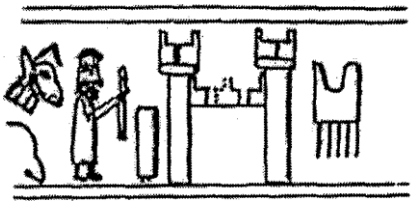
Porphyry cylinder seal depicting an image divided by double lines into a series of metope. Inside and outside them there are animal heads and other objects. The impression of the base shows a winged sun disc and other "hieroglyphic" signs.

Erzen 1978: 41, pl. XXXVII.a; Ayvazian 2006: 570-571.

Location: unknown.

2.5.2.7. Depictions of city walls

Ps-Top-4: Toprakkale.



Cylinder seal with a suspension loop on top. It depicts a man dressed in a long robe, and possibly a crested helmet holding a long thin object, possibly a staff. The man is approaching rectangular object, which may have served as an entrance to a fortress. A part of a fortress wall immediately follows the rectangular object. The fortress wall consists of two towers and a crenellated wall between them. Behind the man there are two objects, possibly hieroglyphic signs, which depict the head of a bull and another linear object. The impression of the base consists of the repetition of possibly hieroglyphic symbols.

Wartke 1998: 170, fig. 89; Ayvazian 2006: 1045-1046.

Vorderasiatisches Museum, Berlin.

2.5.2.8. Stamp seals' impressions

Ps-Ay-7: Ayanis, Area VIII.



Stamp impression showing a group of possible hieroglyphic signs like crescent moon, perhaps a snake, human hand and an altar or a bucket.

Abay 2001: 331-332, fig. 9; Ayvazian 2006: 468-469.

Location: unknown.

Ps-Ay-8: Ayanis, Area VII.



Stamp impression showing of a group of hieroglyphic signs like a snake, crescent moon, human hand and an altar or a bucket.

Abay 2001: 332, fig.10; Ayvazian 2006: 470-471.

Location: unknown.

Ps-Ay-9: Ayanis, Area VII.



Stamp impression, repeated twice, showing of a group of hieroglyphic signs like a snake, crescent moon, human hand and an altar or a bucket.

Abay 2001: 332, fig.11; Ayvazian 2006: 472-473.

Location: unknown.

Ps-Ay-10: Ayanis, Area VI.

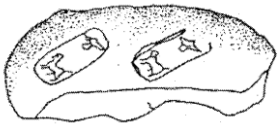


Stamp impression, repeated twice, showing a human head and a vase placed underneath a winged sun disc.

Abay 2001: 332, fig.12; Ayvazian 2006: 474-475.

Location: unknown.

Ps-Ay-11: Ayanis, Area VII.



Seal impression of rectangular shape, stamped twice on a bulla, depicting a lion standing under a winged sun disc.

Abay 2001: 339-340, fig. 21; Ayvazian 2006: 492-493.

Location: unknown.

Ps-Ay-12: Ayanis, Area VI.



Stamp seal impression showing a worshipper standing and raising his hand in prayer. On the left, there is a rectangular object on a triangular base, and there are some signs between them.

Abay 2001: 331, fig. 8; Ayvazian 2006: 466-467.

Location: unknown.

Ps-Ay-13: Ayanis, Area VII.



Stamp seal impression showing a human figure who kneels facing right and raises her hands as if dancing.

Abay 2001: 337-338, fig. 18; Ayvazian 2006: 486-487.

Location: unknown.

Ps-Ba-3: Bastam, Building 8, Room 1.



Stamp impression depicting a winged sun disc above four “hieroglyphic” signs, such as a bull’s head, a staff, and a human ear.

Seidl 1979: 139; Ayvazian 2006: 520-521.

Teheran Archaeological Museum, inventory number: Ba 73/31.

Ps-Ba-4: Bastam, Building 8, Room 6.



Stamp seal impression depicting a winged sun disc design above three objects which are difficult to identify.

Seidl 1979: 139; Ayvazian 2006: 522-523.

Teheran Archaeological Museum, inventory number: Ba 74/1.

Ps-Ba-5: Bastam, Building 8, Room 9.



Oblong stamp seal impression with a design arranged down the longer surface of the stamp. On the top there is a winged sun disc, in the middle two unclear objects, and on the bottom a crescent moon with its ends pointing up.

Seidl 1979: 139; Ayvazian 2006: 524-525.

Teheran Archaeological Museum, inventory number: Ba 74/86.

Ps-Ba-6: Bastam, Middle fortress.



Stamp seal impression representing three objects placed under a winged sun disc. These objects are the head of a caprid facing left, and two human heads facing each other.

Seidl 1988: 147; Ayvazian 2006: 552-553.

Tehran Archaeological Museum, inventory number: Ba 78/1057.

Ps-Ba-7: Bastam, Settlement.



Pentagonal stamp seal impression depicting two animals placed under a large winged sundisc, facing each other: on the left, possibly, there is a crouching lion with its tail lowered, while on the right there is a bull with a long upturned tail and one horn curving backwards.

Seidl 1988: 148; Ayvazian 2006: 566-567.

Tehran Archaeological Museum, inventory number: Ba 78/1285.

Ps-Ba-8: Bastam, Settlement.



Probably rectangular seal impression whose only remaining decoration is a winged sun disc.

Seidl 1988: 148; Ayvazian 2006: 568-569.

Tehran Archaeological Museum, inventory number: Ba 78/1283.

Ps-Ba-9: Bastam.



Rectangular seal impression showing a lion walking to the right, a bird in flight and a standing bird, possibly with a fish's tail and a lion's head, standing on one long leg, facing right. Under the second bird's tail, touching the lion, is an object reminiscent of a horseshoe on a hook. Two more objects, among which there is a lunar crescent, appear one below the other to the right of the birds.

Seidl 1988: 147-148; Ayvazian 2006: 554-555.

Tehran Archaeological Museum, inventory number: Ba 78/139.

Ps-Ba-10: Bastam, Upper fortress.



Stamp seal impression showing a scene composed of a lion attacking a horned animal placed below a winged sun disc.

Seidl 1988: 148; Ayvazian 2006: 560-561.

Tehran Archaeological Museum, inventory number: Ba 77 /147

Ps-Top-5: Toprakkale.



Circular stamp seal impression showing five “hieroglyphic” signs. They consist, on the left, of perhaps a plant motif, an axe-like object, and a three-legged object; the group on the right consists of an animal’s head placed above a five-tiered tree with a flat top.

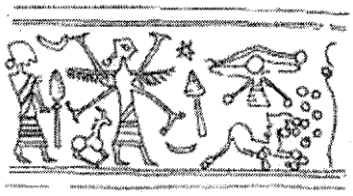
Lehmann-Haupt 1931: 833; Ayvazian 2006: 1013-1014.

Location: unknown.

2.5.2.9. Varia

Ps-Ba-11: Bastam, Building 8, Room 4.





Impression of a cylinder seal with a stamp decorated base. The scene on the cylinder is introduced by a human figure wearing a tunic-like knee-length dress. The next figure to the right is an anthropomorphic deity possible with horizonal wings and four arm-like protrusions. A sun disc, placed above a possible crouched lion, closes the right border of the cylinder impression. On the stamp base, one can see a roaring lion with its tail curving up and over the back; it is surrounded by three objects: a lunar crescent, a star, and a branch.

Seidl 1979: 139-140; Ayvazian 2006: 526-527.

Tehran Archaeological Museum, inventory number: Ba 72/11, 1701.

Ps-Ba-12: Bastam, Settlement.





Cylinder seal impression showing a man in a long dress, holding by the tails two upside down composite animals, a griffin to his left, and a horned winged lion on his right. A star appears above the lion. To the left of this group is another one, formed by a vertical row of creatures: a winged lion, an elongated fish, and a sphinx. On the stamp impression there is a winged composite animal with an eagle's head and a lion's body.

Seidl 1988: 148; Ayvazian 2006: 556-557.

Tehran Archaeological Museum, inventory number: Ba 78/1281, 1284.

2.6. Wall decorations

2.6.1. Wall paintings

Wd-Ab-1: Armavir-blur, fortress.

Badly preserved fragments of a wall painting showing scenes of devotion to the sacred tree, animals and palmettes on different registers.

Tirac'yan 1998-2000: 162-164; Mahé 1996: 1286; Dan et al. 2019: 182.

Wd-Alt-1: Altıntepe, "Apadana".

Wall painting, reconstructed thanks to the numerous fragments found fallen on the floor. It is composed by a large central frieze with bulls or sphinxes on the sides of a concave square and other smaller bands containing metopes with winged genies at the sides of sacred trees or filled by decorative elements such as palmettes, rosettes, garlands and crenellations. The colours were red, blue, light brown, white, black and green.

Özgüç 1966: 46-56; Dan et al. 2019: 182.

Wd-Alt-2: Altıntepe, Temple Area.

Wall painting consisting of a central frieze depicting bulls and hybrid creatures kneeling or standing next to squares with concave sides, scenes of worship of the sacred tree, garlands, rosettes, and an upper frieze that may have contained a hunting scene that cannot be reconstructed exactly.

Özgüç 1966: 12, fig. 14; Dan et al. 2019: 182.

Wd-Azn-1: Aznavurtepe, temple area.

Fragment of a wall painting showing a kneeling bull.

Özgüç 1966: 47; Azarpay 1968: 88; Dan et al. 2019: 182.

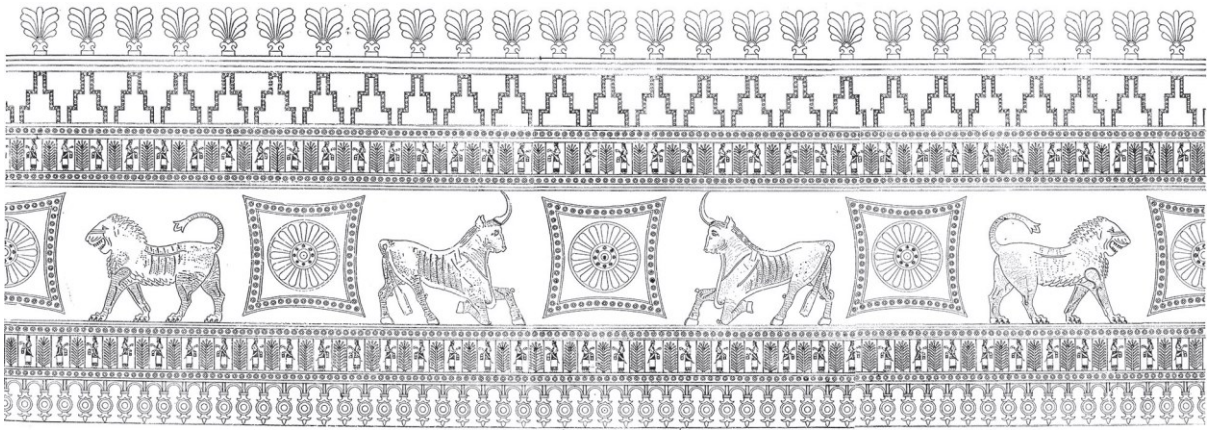
Wd-Çav-1: Çavuştepe, Hall III.

Small fragments of wall paintings depicting geometrical patterns, human figures, leaves, palmettes, trees and flower. The description can't unluckily be accurate, as the publication of these fragments lacks of details.

Erzen 1963: 541-542; Azarpay 1968: 88, fn. 51; Tarhan 2005: 120.

Wd-Er-1: Erebuni, different areas of the citadel.

A series of wall paintings organized in the same way, with a division into horizontal registers depicting palmettes, crenellations, rosettes, scenes of devotion to the sacred tree, bulls and lions placed next to squares with concave sides, festoons and garlands. One particular pictorial fragment shows a theory of deities holding a situla and the branch of a sacred tree.



Oganesyan 1973: 68; Dan et al. 2019: 171-178.

Wd-Kb-1: Karmir-blur, Room 25.

Fragments of wall paintings probably fallen from a room on the upper floor of the wine storeroom where they were found. The remaining fragments show scenes of devotion to the sacred tree and ornamental patterns such as garlands, rosettes, palmettes and pomegranates.

Piotrovskij 1952: 41; Piotrovskij 1955: 7; Dan et al. 2019: 179-181.

2.6.2 Various decorations

Wd-Ay-1: Ayanis, inner walls of the temple *cella*.

Carved andesite slabs decorating the walls of the *cella*. Each block is carved with an inlaid motif in painted and engraved white stone . The motifs depicted represent gods, winged sphinxes, griffins, rosettes and some plants.

Çilingiroğlu 2001c.



Wd-Ay-2: Ayanis, temple *cella*.

Alabaster slabs covering the podium located in the temple *cella*. Through holes, some figures of animals, presumably in gold, were probably affixed to the alabaster covering, of which only the holes containing the nails used to affix them and the silhouettes of some of them, imprinted on the stone due to a later occurred fire, are preserved today. The alabaster slabs placed on the upper side of the podium still preserve the original decoration, made by engraving, that presents figures of divinities and mythological animals inserted inside a structure composed by the union of the branches of a sacred tree, decorated by a chevrons motif, which form regular metopes, so that each figure is inserted in one of these spaces; at the interlacement of the different branches, small sacred trees with pomegranate fruits are represented. In the seven lines that contain the decoration, only three motifs repeated in the decoration of the podium can be isolated: winged lions, griffins, winged lions with human heads; all the figures are represented in pairs, one facing the other.

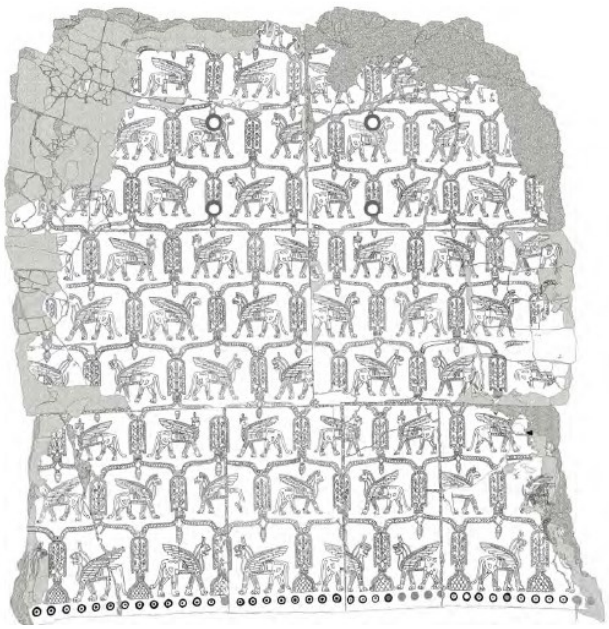
Çilingiroğlu 2001c.



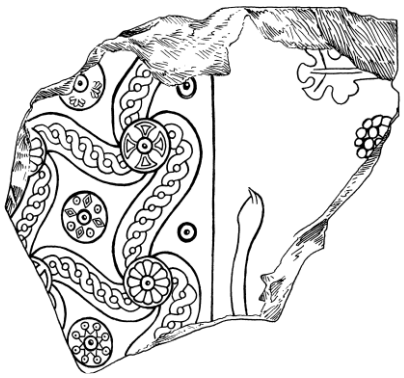
Wd-Ay-3: Ayanis, “Hall with Podium”.

Onyx podium located inside the so-called “Hall with Podium”. It preserves a decoration arranged in ten lines of antithetically-positioned winged creatures, situated on both sides of a sacred tree, with a pattern repeated every three bands.

Işıklı et al. 2019.



Wd-Top-1: Toprakkale.



Red marble frieze depicting carvings of opposing bulls, lions, vines, palmettes and rosettes. This frieze is today unfortunately lost.

Farmakovski 1914; Barnett 1950: 25.

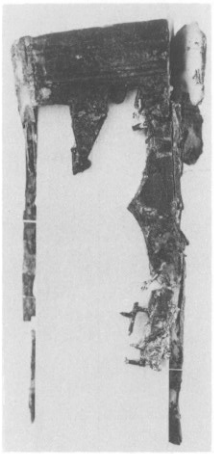
Lost.

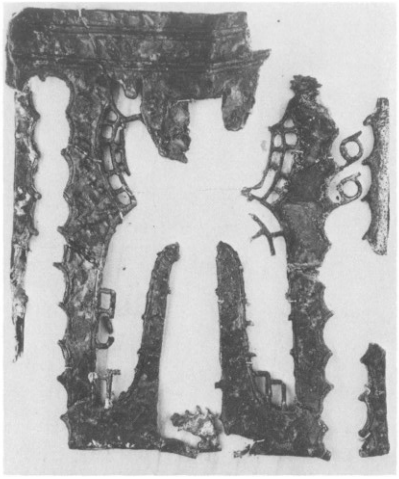
Wd-Top-2: Toprakkale.

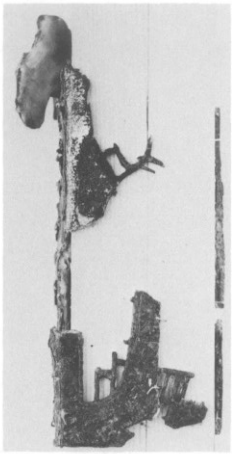
Fragmentary bronze plaque with openwork decoration that could have been placed either on the wall or on a piece of furniture made of perishable material. It depicts for three times a winged and bearded figure wearing a polos with his arms are raised. He has a belt at his waist and an ankle-length tunic with fringes at the end. The three figures are separated by a guilloche decoration: two figures are facing right and the last one left. Above the figures is a two-band decoration with three parallel horizontal lines.

Barnett 1972: 174.

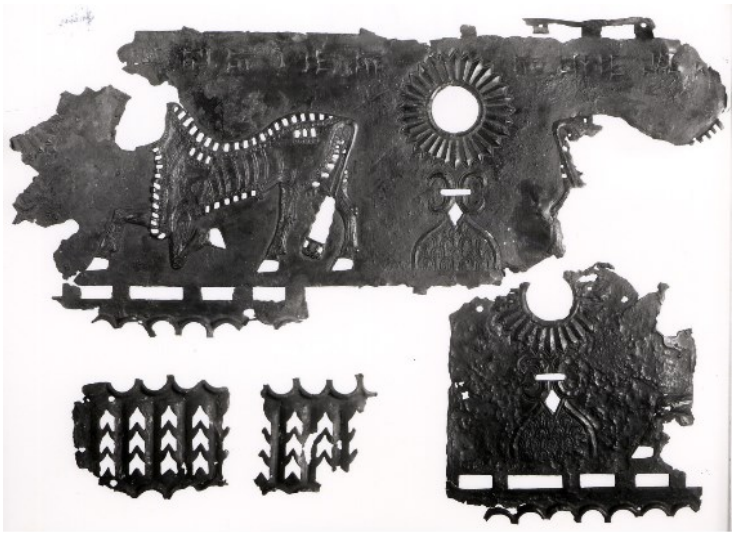
British Museum, inventory number: BM135732.







Wd-Top-3: Toprakkale.



Fragmentary bronze plaque with openwork decoration bearing a cuneiform inscription (CTU B 18-1). The decorations shows an engraved bull, kneeling and facing left, with the head and hooves in openwork, indicating that they must have been made of a different material. The mane and tail are very detailed, and the tail is also pierced and has a lapis lazuli inlay. To the right of the bull there is a star, or a sun, with an openwork in the middle, below which is an engraved decoration, probably representing a mountain. Below the bull there are openwork decorations in rectangles, circles and chevrons.

Barnett 1950: 16.

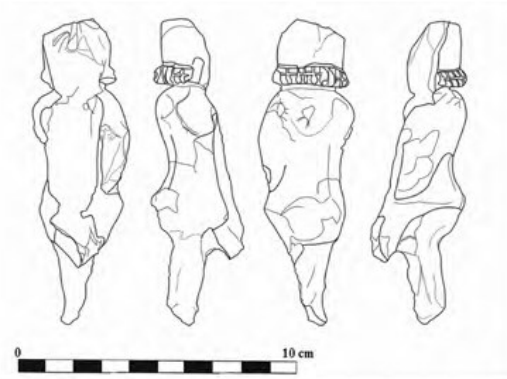
British Museum, inventory numbers: BM1877,1218.5; BM1877,1218.6; BM1877,1218.16.

2.7. Sculpture

2.7.1. Figurines in the round

2.7.1.1. Clay figurines

Cf-Ay-1,2: Ayanis, Storeroom 7.

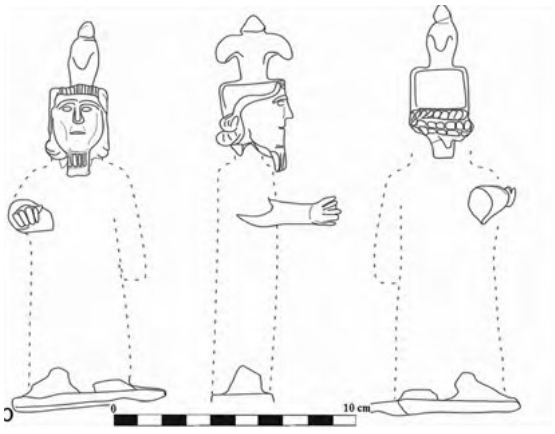


Two fragmentary clay figurines said to be depictions of gods. Of the first one, only the back of the head is well preserved and it shows a hairstyle comparable to that of the period of Sargon II, with locks of hair on the back of the neck. The position of both figurines resembles a walk, with one leg stretched in front of the other, looking like the position adopted for the depictions of gods standing on their mounts.

Batmaz 2019: 59, fig. 1.a, c.

Location: unknown.

Cf-Ay-3: Ayanis, Storeroom 10.

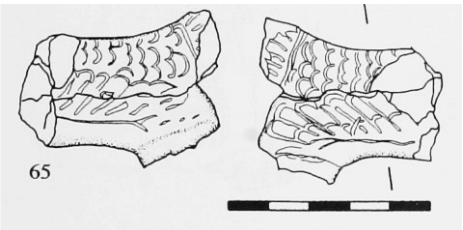


Clay figurine wearing a horned headdress. It consists of three preserved fragments: the head, an arm, and the base on which the figurine was placed. The head is preserved down to the neck: eyes and eyebrows were sculpted in relief while the mouth is a simple incised line. Just below the chin, there is a beard detailed with three vertical wavy lines. The headdress has two horns curved downward and a crest on the top. On the neck, curled hair is depicted with horizontal and vertical incised lines. The right arm is preserved from the fingers to the elbow, up to the shoulder, and probably it was originally extended outward. The pedestal has small portions of the figurine's feet preserved. Only the head of another similar figurine was found in the same storeroom.

Batmaz 2019: 59, fig. 1.b.

Location: unknown.

Cf-Ay-4: Ayanis, Temple *cella*.

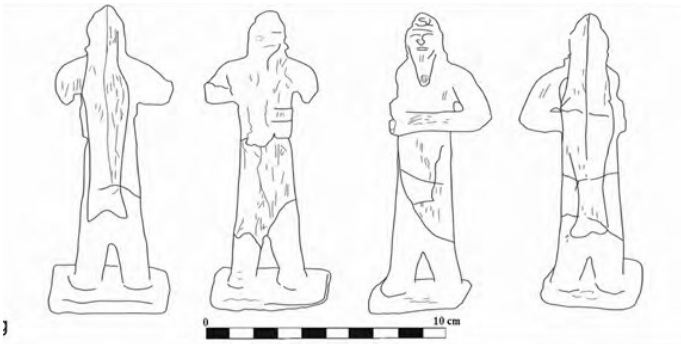


Small fragment of a clay figurine, at first interpreted as a mythological creature, then a closer inspection indicated that it had scales. It may represent a divinity wearing fish-attire.

Sağlamtimur et al. 2001: 224, pl. IV.65.

Location: unknown.

Cf-Kb-1, 4: Karmir-blur, Room 26.

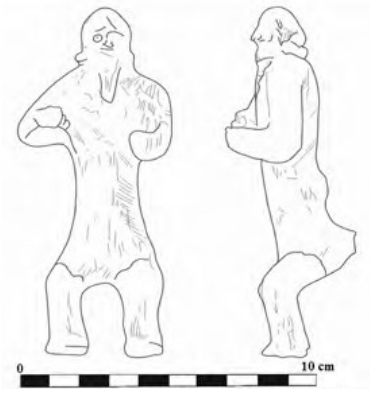


Four fragmentary clay figurines, barely sketched; the best preserved has a beard and probably a conical helmet, the left arm, the only one preserved, is bent on the chest: originally it must have held a spear or twig. Originally they were coloured, and still today they bear traces of blue paint.

Piotrovskij 1952: 24-25, fig. 9; Batmaz 2019: 59, fig. 1.g.

History Museum of Armenia, inventory number: 2010-33 (best preserved figurine).

Cf-Kb-5: Karmir-blur, Storeroom 28.

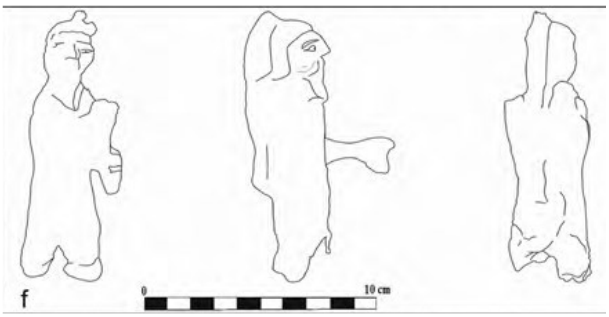


Fragmentary clay figurine represented what is called a scorpion-tailed figure whose face is painted in white, hair and beard in brown, and eyes in red.

Piotrovskij 1952: 26, fig. 10; Barnett 1959: 6, fig. 4; Batmaz 2019: 59, fig. 1.e.

History Museum of Armenia, inventory number: 2010-45.

Cf-Kef-1, 4: Kef Kalesi, Debris between Room 2 and Room 3.



Four clay figurines standing on a pedestal, said to be divinities, barely sketched, wearing a helmet extending downward on the back, as if it was a dorsal fin, and holding in their right hand, raised, an object similar to a "sacred fruit".

Bilgiç – Öğün 1965: 13-14 and pls. VII a-b-c; Batmaz 2019: 59, fig. 1.f.

Location: unknown.

2.7.1.2. Bronze figurines

2.7.1.2.1. Antropomorphic figurines

Mf-Dar-1: Darabey.

One statuette of a sitting woman, probably a goddess.

Graff – Rakic 2014: 87.

History Museum of Armenia, inventory number: 1242.



Mf-Kb-1: Karmir-blur, Room 5.

One statuette depicting a standing figure, wearing a headdress with horns; probably to be considered a standard point. On the headdress there is a cylindrical element decorated with impressed triangles. The eyes and the mouth are impressed as well; on the back of the neck, the hair is well defined. It holds what appears to be an axe and a hammer in its hands, recalling the Storm Gods of the Anatolian tradition. The vest is decorated with incised lines and ornaments.

Piotrovskij 1950: 68, fig. 41.

History Museum of Armenia, inventory number: 1740-1.



Mf-Top-1: Toprakkale.



One stylized bronze figurine depicting a warrior in *Knielauf* wearing a crested helmet.

Barnett 1954: 7 and pl. II.

British Museum, inventory number: BM 1880,1216.20.

Mf-Top-2: Toprakkale.



One stylized bronze figurine depicting a standing warrior wearing an originally crested helmet.

Barnett 1954: 7 and pl. II.

British Museum, inventory number: BM 1880,1216.21.

Mf-Top-3: Toprakkale.



One stylized bronze figurine depicting a standing warrior. It is very badly preserved only for the upper part of the body.

Barnett 1954: 7 and pl. II.

British Museum, inventory number: BM 1880,1216.22.

Mf-Top-4: Toprakkale.



One stylized bronze figurine depicting a walking warrior wearing a crested helmet.

Barnett 1954: 7 and pl. II.

British Museum, inventory number: BM 1880,1216.23.

Mf-Top-5: Toprakkale.



One stylized bronze figurine depicting a possible standing warrior. It is very badly preserved and its head is lost.

Barnett 1954: 7 and pl. II.

British Museum, inventory number: BM 1880,1216.24.

Mf-Top-7: Toprakkale.



Fragmentary lead statuette of a standing male figure, possibly a dignitary, wearing a long robe decorated with small squares inlaid with mosaic-glass plaques and larger squares inlaid with ivory plaques decorated with rosettes; the design consists of two horizontal rows of small squares alternating with two rows of larger squares into which ivory plaques were set. Above the fringe are two rows of rectangles; on the shoulders and along the sleeves are set two parallel rows of small bronze bands; a large fragment from the back of the head has almost vertical strands of hair divided by bronze bands and three horizontal rows of locks formed by small bronze rings; the small squares of the garment are inlaid with opaque red mosaic-glass plaques of varying size, with a red dot in the centre. The fringe is inlaid with opaque red pieces of glass, and the locks with small balls of opaque blue glass; the strands of hair were probably also inlaid with blue glass. The figurine contains traces of a wooden core.

Mitchell 1984.

British Museum, inventory number: BM 123870.

Mf-Top-8: Toprakkale.



Bronze figure of a bearded standing god wearing a pointed, horned head-dress, with hand and fist extended.

Barnett 1950: 20-31 and pl. XVIII.2.

British Museum, inventory number: BM 91147.

2.7.1.2.2. Animal figurines

Mf-Ara-1: Aramus, North Fort.

One small bronze bull figurine. It has emphasized horns, rounded-spherical eyes, a short tail, a stretched body and comparatively short legs (no picture is available).

Avetisyan – Allinger-Csollich 2008: 88-89.

Location: unknown.

Mf-Alt-1: Altıntepe, Tomb III.



One bronze chariot pole in the shape of a horse head, with a mane made with parallel lines, pointed ears and features of the muzzle made in great detail.

Özgüç 1961: 287, fig. 16.

Location: unknown.

Mf-Kb-2: Karmir-blur, Wine cellar.



One bronze chariot pole in the shape of a horse head, preserved up to the base of the neck.

Piotrovskij 1967: 53 and pls. 24-25.

History Museum of Armenia, inventory number: 2783-80.

Mf-Top-6: Toprakkale.



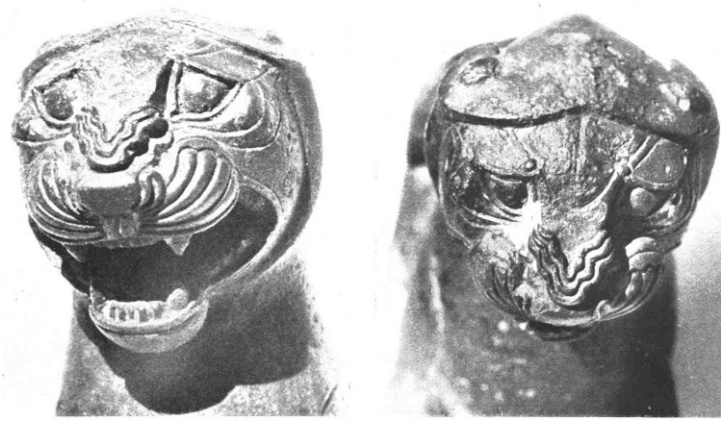
One stylized bronze figurine of a standing horse. The snout and the mane are very well rendered through incised details. The two frontal legs are lost.

Barnett 1954: 7 and pl. II.

British Museum, inventory number: BM 1880,1216.25.

Lion figurines

Mf-Azn-1: Aznavurtepe / Patnos.



One bronze figurine of a *couchant* lion with a roaring snout. The snout is well detailed through incised lines, forming palmette-shaped whiskers and a sort of crenellation decoration on the nose itself. The teeth are carefully depicted, the ears are not represented.

Akurgal 1968: 60-61, figs. 26-28, pl. XXXVII.a-b.

Location: unknown.

Mf-Kay-1: Kayalıdere, Temple area.

One bronze figurine of a couchant lion with a roaring snout. The snout is well detailed through incised lines, forming palmette-shaped whiskers and a sort of crenellation decoration on the nose itself. The teeth are carefully depicted, the ears are not represented. The mane has a sort of chevrons decoration.

Burney 1966: pl. X.

Location: unknown.



Mf-Szn-1: Sznak.

One bronze figurine of a couchant lion with a roaring snout. It looks more geometrical than the others, and it's not possible to understand the features of its snout.

Xnkikyan 2002: 10 and pl. 1.

Location: unknown.



2.7.1.2.3. The Throne of Toprakkale

Mf-Top-9: Toprakkale.



One bronze statuette representing a standing man holding a twig, probably to be considered a royal attendant. Probably part of the Toprakkale throne. This statuette, which is largely preserved and made in a round sculptural hollow form, shows an elaborately dressed man. There are still traces of gold foil on the surface, which suggests that it was applied over a large area. The facial inlay of white limestone has been preserved in fragments. The right arm is straight beside the body and holds a palm-shaped frond in its hand. The left arm is bent and holds a long, narrow cloth which is passed over the left shoulder. Around the neck the figure wears a crescent-shaped pectoral, with five round holes offering space for inserts. Furthermore, a robe can be seen that is laid over the left shoulder and runs under the right arm. In the area of the lower legs there is a horizontal border with eight-leaf rosettes. On the left and right of the head on the shoulders there are remnants of the extensively designed curly hairstyle.

Barnett 1950: 20-31 and pl. XX; Meyer 1967.

Vorderasiatisches Museum, inventory number: VA 774.

Mf-Top-10: Toprakkale.



One bronze figurine depicting a griffon vulture, probably part of the Toprakkale throne. The griffin, worked as a hollow casting, was originally covered with sheet gold, of which only tiny particles remain on the surface of the statuette. The tail and the right leg are missing. The eye sockets, the brow arches and parts of the bead rings of the headpiece were coloured.

Barnett 1950: 20 and pl. XVIII-1.

Vorderasiatisches Museum, inventory number: VA 775.

Mf-Top-11: Toprakkale.

One bronze figurine depicting a winged bull, couchant and regardant, probably part of the Toprakkale throne.

Seidl 1994: pl. 18.2-3.

Hermitage Museum, inventory number: DB 16001



Mf-Top-12: Toprakkale.

One bronze figurine depicting winged woman-bull, *passante* and *regardante*, probably part of the Toprakkale throne-

Barnett 1950: 6 and pls. VI-VII.

British Museum, inventory number: BM 91247.



Mf-Top-13: Toprakkale.

Cast and incised copper alloy furniture fitting, originally inlaid and gilded. It represents a person in a patterned and fringed robe, standing on a recumbent bull. The upper part of the person's body is lost.

Barnett 1950: 15 and 31, pl. VI-3.

British Museum, inventory number: 91243.



Mf-Top-14: Toprakkale.

Copper alloy figure representing a recumbent winged bull, probably from a stool; cast, with a dowel for attachment below.

Barnett 1950: 6 and pl. V.

British Museum, inventory number: 91248.



Mf-Top-15: Toprakkale.

Bronze corner fragment of a throne seat on the top of which are two slits for ornamental figures; on the underside are “hieroglyphs” and other slits. The inner side is decorated with palmettes connected to each other by a double line; the upper and lower frames are decorated with an engraved chevron motif. The outer side is engraved with concave square motifs originally decorated with inlay.



Barnett 1950: pl. II.

British Museum, inventory number: BM91252.

Mf-Top-16: Toprakkale.

Furniture foot in the form of a lion’s paw , the front of which is decorated with an incision of a winged sun disc and two stars above it; there are two lines of impressed triangles, perhaps containing an inlay, on the side of the lion’s paw.



Barnett 1950: pl. III.

British Museum, inventory number: BM91164.

Mf-Top-17: Toprakkale.

Statuette of a *couchant* roaring lion with characteristic U-shaped folds, palmette-shaped whiskers and a vaguely pointed head. The mane and fur are outlined with a *guilloche* motifs. The shoulders are outlined by an upside-down U motif. On the hind section, a further piece was casted together with the lion. The piece must have originally been covered in gold leaf. It is casted together with the armrest of the throne.



Barnett 1950: pl. XI.

British Museum, inventory number: BM91253.

2.7.1.2.4. Models of city walls

Mf-Top-18: Toprakkale.

One bronze model, preserved in two fragments, representing the walls of a fortress – Barnett 1950: 5, pl. I – British Museum, inventory number: 91177+91250.



2.7.1.3 Ivories

2.7.1.3.1. Bird-apkallū

Iv-Alt-1: Altıntepe, Temple Area.



One bird-headed winged genie, originally covered with golden leaf. The eagle-headed genie is facing to the right, with both feet pointing in that direction; it is wearing a fringed long robe. It is holding a pine cone in its left hand, which also supports the uppermost boundary of the plaque. Its right hand holds a situla.

Özgüç 1969: 80 and pl. XXXII.

Van Museum.

Iv-Alt-2: Altıntepe, Temple Area.



One bird-headed winged genie, originally covered with golden leaf. The eagle-headed genie is facing to the left, with both feet pointing in that direction; it is wearing a fringed long robe. It is holding a pine cone in its left hand, which also supports the uppermost boundary of the plaque. Its right hand holds a situla.

Özgüç 1969: 80 and pl. XXXIII.

Van Museum.

Iv-Alt-3: Altıntepe, Temple Area.



Fragmentary winged genie preserved only for its lower half. It is facing to the left, with both feet pointing at that direction. It wears a long fringed garment; it carries a situla with its right hand.

Özgüç 1969: 81 and pl. XLIX.

Van Museum.

Iv-Top-1: Toprakkale.



One figurine of a bird-headed winged genie. It is facing to the left, with both arms raised (only the left one is preserved) to support the uppermost boundary of the plaque. It wears a tunic and a long fringed robe. Only the lower part of the wings is preserved.

Barnett 1950: pl. XV.

British Museum, inventory number: BM 118951.

Iv-Top-2: Toprakkale.



One figurine of a bird-headed winged genie realized in blackened ivory. It is facing to the left, with both arms raised (only the left one is preserved). It wears a tunic and a long fringed robe. The wings and the feet are not preserved.

Barnett 1950: pl. XV.

British Museum, inventory number: BM 118953.

2.7.1.3.2. Lions

Iv-Alt-4: Altıntepe, Temple area, gallery of the temple.

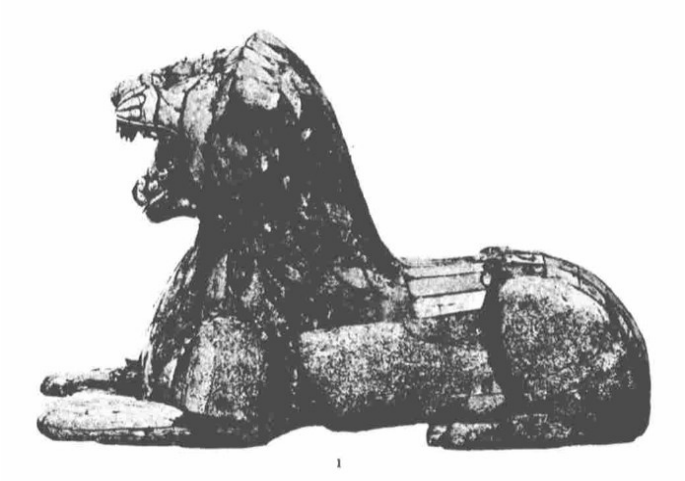


One figurine of a lion sitting on its hind legs. Its face is turned on the left side with its mouth wide open and precisely outlined, except for the tongue which is not rendered. The muzzle is decorated with two symmetrical palmettes forming the whiskers; the nose is broken but it stills bears the traces of the crenellation-like decoration seen also for the bronze lion statuettes. The eyes have an oval shape; the forehead has a sharply triangular in shape. The mane is decorated with incised lozenges and was originally covered with gold leaf. This lion must have been originally attached to another object, as indicated by the dowel hole in the base.

Özgüç 1969: 82, pls. XXXIV-XXXV.

Ankara Museum of Anatolian Civilisations.

Iv-Alt-5: Altıntepe, Temple area, gallery of the temple.



One figurine of a *couchant* lion. It probably originally rested on the foot of a tripod base in bronze. Its mouth is opened in a roar; the teeth are individually rendered, the tongue is carefully modelled. The muzzle is decorated with a palmette design for the whiskers, the nose has the crenellation-type ornament. Its eyes are oval with a central hole for an inlaid pupil; the forehead is markedly triangular. Its mane is decorated with sort of lozenge/flame-shaped designs. Head, forelegs and paws are solid, the rest of the body was originally embedded in another substance, whose disintegration made the other components fall apart. Despite the difficulties of the restoration, this is one of the largest examples of ivory statues ever found in the Near East.

Özgüç 1969: 83, pls. XXXVI-XLI.

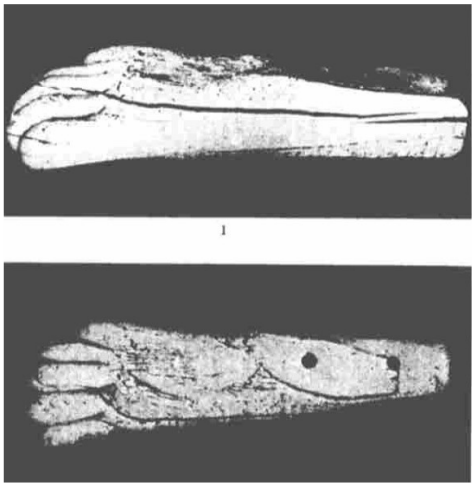
Ankara Museum of Anatolian Civilisations.

Iv-Alt-6: Altıntepe, Temple area, gallery of the temple.

Fragments of ivory figurines of a lion, in particular the paws and forelegs. It probably belonged to the same tripod stand as the previous figurine.

Özgüç 1969: 84, pls. XLII-XLIII.

Location: unknown, probably Ankara Museum of Anatolian Civilisations.



Iv-Top-3: Toprakkale.

One figurine of a roaring lion.

Barnett 1975a: 229, W9 and pl. CXXXI.

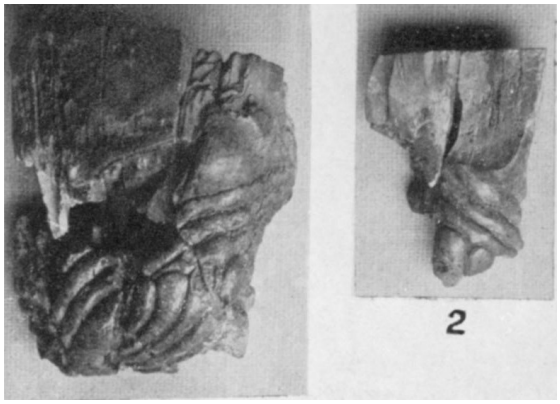
Ankara Museum of Anatolian Civilisations.

Iv-Top-4: Toprakkale.

Fragments of ivory figurines of lions. One head and several fragments of legs and forepaws are preserved.

Barnett 1950: pl. XII.

Location: unknown.



2.7.1.3.3. Other animals



Iv-Kb-1: Karmir-blur.

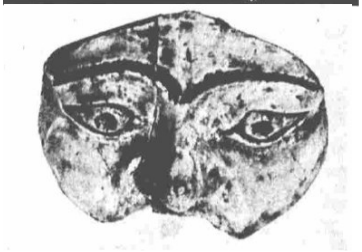
One miniature sculpture of a winged hybrid creature standing on the top of a palmette.

History Museum of Armenia catalogue 2018: 209.

History Museum of Armenia, inventory number: 2010-131.

2.7.1.3.4. Anthropomorphic figurines





Iv-Alt-7, 8: Altıntepe, Temple area, gallery of the temple.

Two ivory inlay human faces. The eyes are elongated and oval in shape with an inlaid pupil; the eyebrows are prominent and join in the centre, over the nose, and they were probably supposed to be inlaid. The rest of their bodies was probably made of another material.

Özgüç 1969: 86-87 and pl. XLV.

Ankara Museum of Anatolian Civilisations.



Iv-Alt-9: Altıntepe, Temple area, gallery of the temple.

Ivory fragments of arms with clasped hands. The inner surface is flat, while the outer is carved in rounded relief. The arms are represented up to the elbow; the fingers of the visible hand are carved in detail, while the hidden hand is summarily represented.

Özgüç 1969: 91, pl. XLIX.3-4.

Ankara Museum of Anatolian Civilisations.

Iv-Alt-10: Altıntepe, Temple area, third gallery of the east corner of the temple.

Left arm of a statuette represented in the round. The fragment is blackened by burning (no clear picture is published).

Özgüç 1969: 91, pl. LI.1-2.

Ankara Museum of Anatolian Civilisations?

Iv-Alt-11: Altıntepe, Tomb 1.



Fragment of an ivory outstretched hand with fingers extended and closely held together. The nails and the knuckles are clearly indicated; the hand is broken at the wrist end.

Özgüç 1969: 92, pl. XLIX.2.

Ankara Museum of Anatolian Civilisations?

Iv-Kb-2, 3: Karmir-blur.



Two ivory fragments of human faces.

Piotrovskij 1967: 58.

History Museum of Armenia, inventory numbers: 2010-133, 2010-132.

Iv-Top-5: Toprakkale.



One ivory figurine in the round depicting a man wearing a fringed ankle-length robe, preserved only for the back side (unfinished). The hair is disposed in locks on the back of the neck; the robe has precisely incised details. The figure is wearing bracelets on both arms.

Barnett 1950: 16, pl. XIV.

British Museum, inventory number: 123888.

Iv-Top-6: Toprakkale.



Fragment of carved ivory human face.

Barnett 1950: 16 and pl. XII, n. 5.

British Museum, inventory number: BM123884.

Iv-Top-7: Toprakkale.



Ivory fragment depicting the back of human head with fine hair.

Barnett 1950: 16 and pl. XII, n. 4.

British Museum, inventory number: BM123886.

2.7.1.3.5. Wall's models

Iv-Alt-12: Altıntepe, Temple area, second gallery of the east corner of the temple.



Inlay plaque depicting a fragment of a fortress' wall with an arched gate, represented with two parallel incisions, with stepped crenellations on the top of the wall.

Özgüç 1969: 89 and pl. XLVII.4.

Ankara Museum of Anatolian Civilisations?

Iv-Kb-4: Karmir-blur.



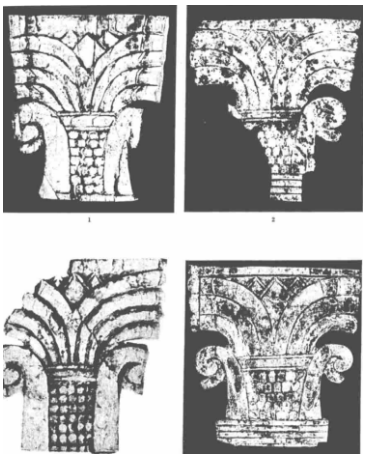
One fragment of a fortress' wall depicting a tower with numerous blind windows and adorned with three-stepped crenellations.

Piotrovskij 1967: 59.

History Museum of Armenia, inventory number: 2010-142.

2.7.1.3.6. Various decorations

Iv-Alt-13-16: Altıntepe, Temple area, first gallery of the east corner of the temple.

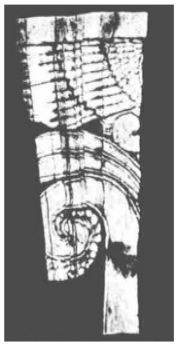


Four inlaid ivory plaques depicting palmettes. Two of them have a high base and four sets of leaves, while the other two have a lower base and three sets of leaves.

Özgüç 1969: 87, pls. XLVI.

Ankara Museum of Anatolian Civilisations?

Iv-Alt-17-19: Altıntepe, Temple area, second gallery of the east corner of the temple.



Three fragments of winged sun-discs with volute decorations.

Özgüç 1969: 88-89, pl. XLVII.

Ankara Museum of Anatolian Civilisations?

Iv-Alt-20-23: Altıntepe, Tomb III, Room 2.



Four inlay plaques with the representation of a sacred tree; the plaques are rectangular with a rounded top. The tree is incised: it has symmetrical branches of alternating lotus and pomegranate buds, carved to receive an inlay made in another material.

Özgüç 1969: 93, pl. L.

Ankara Museum of Anatolian Civilisations?

2.7.2. Decorated pyxes

2.7.2.1. Ivory pyxes

Dp-Kb-1-6: Karmir-blur.

Six small decorated boxes made in bone. The decorations are geometrical, made of small dots and circles or lines.

History Museum of Armenia catalogue: 205.

History Museum of Armenia, inventory numbers: 2783-68/2, 2784-160/1, 2783-68/1, 2784-120, 2783-68, 2784-141/1, 2784-160/2.



2.7.2.2. Stone pyxes

Dp-Kb-7: Karmir-blur.

Pyx in steatite with the handle of the lid shaped in the form of a lying stylized roaring lion. On the lid, around the lion, a rosette and other animals, probably grazing bovids, are outlined in bas-relief; the sides of the container are decorated with a hunting scene, with lions, birds, ibex, archers and horsemen-

Piotrovskij 1967: 70-71, fig. 50.

History Museum of Armenia, inventory number: 2010-149.



Dp-Kb-8: Karmir-blur.



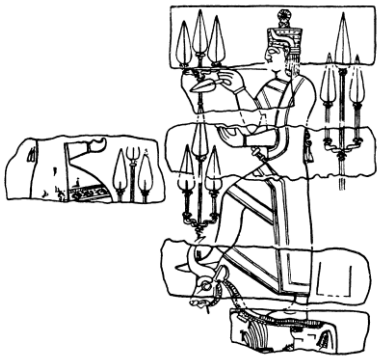
Pyx in steatite decorated with the engravings of a sacred tree, surrounded by two winged bird-apkallū. The sacred tree is surmounted by a winged solar disc and it is composed by symmetrical branches in the shape of palmettes and a single stylised central branch. The bird- apkallū wear a long robe, and their hands are raised.

Piotrovskij 1967: 69, fig. 48.

History Museum of Armenia, inventory number: 2010-148.

2.7.3. Stone reliefs

Rel-Ad-1: Adilcevaz, probably from Kef Kalesi.



One bas-relief in basalt with the depiction of a figure standing on a bull. The characters are facing left towards two triple spearheads placed one above the other; a triple spearhead is present also behind the figures. The person standing on the bull is wearing an elaborately decorated fringed garment; he wears a horned *polos* on his head, characterizing the figure as a god. The bull seems to wear a rug on its back. The fragments show that the relief was composed by another figure, probably standing on a bull, facing the first one.

Burney – Lawson 1958.

Location: unknown.

Rel-Ad-2-11: Adilcevaz, Kef Kalesi.



Ten cubical basalt blocks decorated on four sides with the same image and surmounted by an Urartian inscription by Rusa Argištiḫi (CTU A 12-10). The scene is composed by two facing winged characters standing on the back of two roaring lions; between them and behind each of them, there is a spearhead, probably representing a sacred tree. The winged figures wear a long robe over a tunic and hold in their raised hands a bowl and a pine cone. They are standing in front of city walls, characterized by the presence of windows and crenellations; on the top of these walls there are two pairs of eagles facing each other and holding hares in their beaks.

Bilgiç – Öğün 1964.

Ankara Museum of Anatolian Civilisations.

Rel-Doğ-1: Doğubayazit.

One bas-relief representing two men. The relief shows from left to right: first, a figure in an ankle-long garment, with hands raised in prayer. Around its wrists are bracelets. In front of this figure and above the entrance to the tomb is an animal described by some as a wild goat, by others as a bull. Next comes what seems to be a beardless :figure with long hair, again in a long garment reaching to the ankles, with bracelets around the wrists. In the right hand he or she holds a staff which seems to rest on his foot. The left hand is raised in a gesture of greeting. This figure seems to wear a rounded headgear with striations, perhaps representing the horns of divinity (no picture is available).

Van Loon 1966: 70-71.

Rel-Er-1: Erzincan.



One bas-relief in basalt depicting a walking lion. The lion is characterized with the usual details pertaining to Urartian art: the muzzle is decorated by palmette-shaped whiskers, the mane with flame-shaped motifs. The ears are not depicted, there is the indication of only the canine teeth. The shoulder has the shape of a double drop. The back of the lion has a three lines motif. Its tail is lowered.

Akurgal 1961a: 29-31, fig. 13.

Rel-Erz-1: Erzurum.

One bas-relief in basalt depicting a man wearing a polos and a long robe.

Seidl 1993: 560-561.

Rel-Ev-1: Evoğlu.



One bas-relief depicting a bearded figure holding a kid in his left hand. This character is wearing a horned *polos* surmounted by a circle; his hair is adjusted on the back of his neck and rendered with wavy lines. He wears a decorated garment and in his right hand, raised, holds a pine cone. The kid is extremely small in respect to that figure.

Calmeyer 1979: 187-188.

Rel-Top-1: Toprakkale.



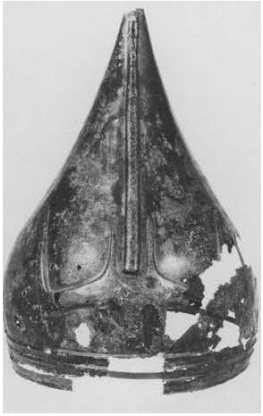
One fragment of a relief decorated with inlays depicting the left profile of a bearded man, who grabs a branch with his left hand and lifts his right hand as a sign of greeting. His *polos*, hair and beard are represented in bas-relief, while his face, arms and details of the garment are carved and supposed to contain inlays in other materials.

Lehmann-Haupt 1931: 546-549.

3. Urartian objects in the Near East and the Caucasus

3.1. Bronze objects

H-Ru-1: Rutschi-Tig.



One Urartian conical helmet with a "lightning" decoration, bearing an inscription of one of the kings named Argišti (CTU B 8-13).

Nagel 1959-1960: PP; Seidl 2004: E.4.

Museum für Vor- und Frühgeschichte, inventory number: III d 4882.

Bra-TG-1: Tul-e Gilan, necropolis.

One small copper strip re-adapted as a bracelet and bearing an inscription of Sarduri, son of Argišti (CTU B 9-32), or Rusa, son of Argišti.

Dalalyan-Grekyan 2004; Dara 2019.

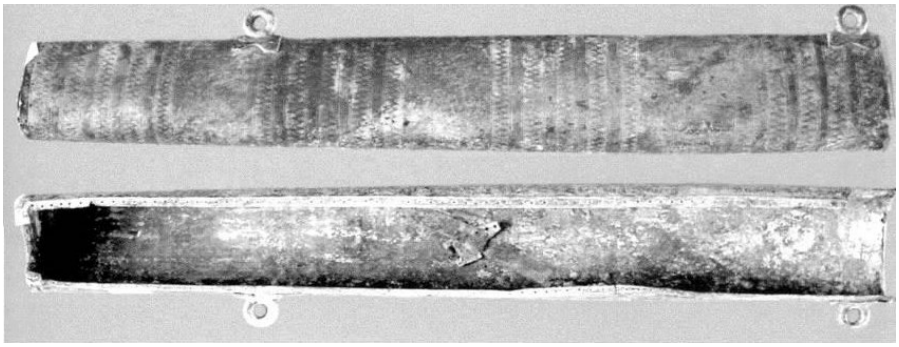
Location: unknown.

Q-Tul-1: Tul-e Talesh, Grave 24.

One bronze quiver decorated with four groups of four bands filled with a zigzag pattern.

Castelluccia 2014: 90-91.

Location: unknown.



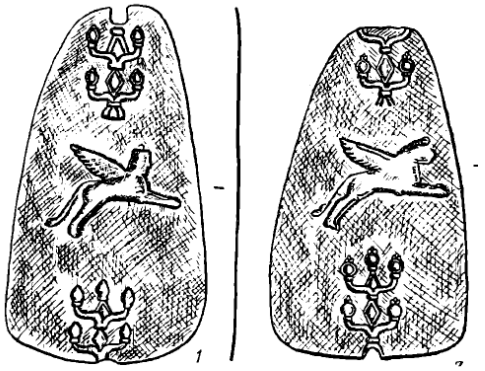
3.1.1. Bronze belts

B-Ak-1: Akhm'ilovo, necropolis.

Reworked fragments of bronze belts decorated with rampant hybrid creature, enclosed between two sacred trees.

Patrushev 1982: 192, fig. 4.1-2; Seidl 1988b: pl. 109; Seidl 2004: 14.

Location: unknown.

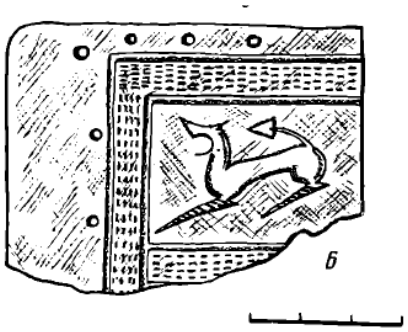


B-Ak-2: Akhm'ilovo, necropolis

Reworked fragments of bronze belts decorated with a lion, placed at the upper right end of the belt, which was framed by bands of dots.

Patrushev 1982: 192, fig. 4.6; Seidl 1988b: pl. 109; Seidl 2004: 14.

Location: unknown.

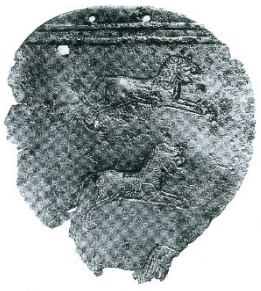


B-Chi-1:Chirsa.

Reworked fragment of the upper part of a bronze belt depicting two superimposed rampant lions and a fragment of a third.

Miron - Orthmann 1995: 27, 277.

Location: unknown.

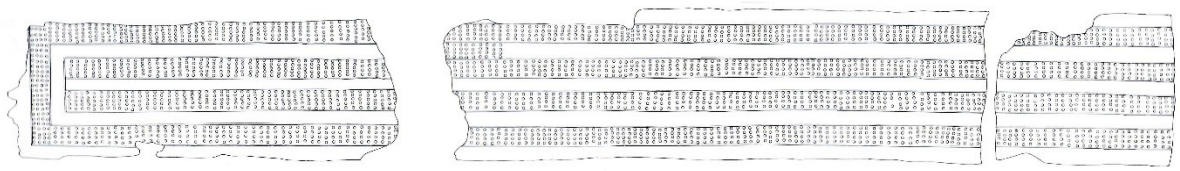


B-Gol-1, 3: Golovino, unspecified burial.

Three bronze belts decorated with bands of repoussé dots.

Martirosjan 1954 : taf. IV.1-5; Kellner 1991: 71, n. 304.

Location: unknown.

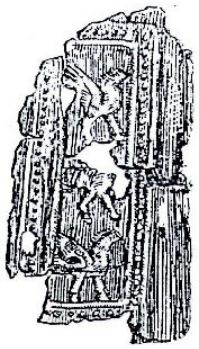


B-Gol-4: Golovino, unspecified burial.

One belt buckle representing three superimposed *Mischwesen*.

Martirosjan, 1952: Pl. 4, n. 4; Esayan 1984: 104-105, fig. 15.

Location: unknown.

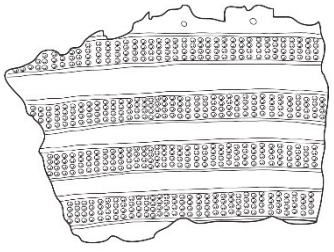


B-Gy-1: Gyumri, Grave 8.

One bronze belt decorated with bands of repoussé dots.

Martirosjan 1964: 284.

Location: unknown.

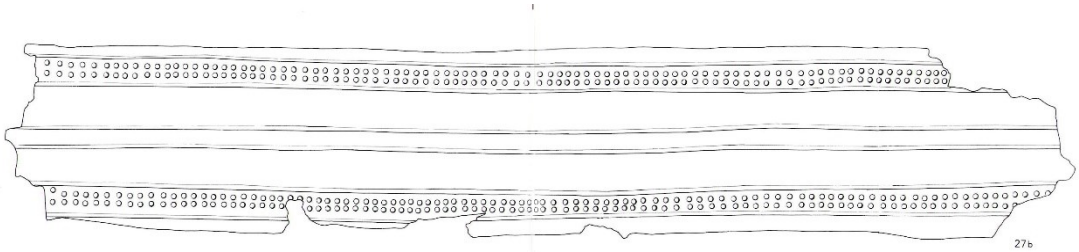


B-Gy-2: Gyumri.

One bronze belt decorated with lines of repoussé dots framed with straight lines spaced out with plain bands.

Esayan 1984: 108 and fig. 27.a-b; Piotrovskij 1944: 317.

Location: unknown.



B-Shi-1: Shirak.

One fragment of a bronze belt decorated with different fillers and a griffin.

Piotrovskij 1975: fig. 84.

History Museum of Armenia, inventory number: 22-11.

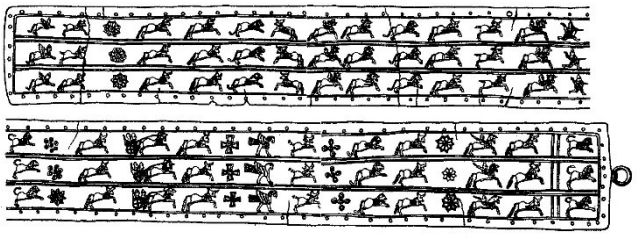


B-Tli-1: Tli, Tomb 40b.

Bronze belt depicting three rows of animals, hybrids and human figures.

Techov 1981: pl. 94; Bonfanti et al. *forthcoming*.

Location: unknown.

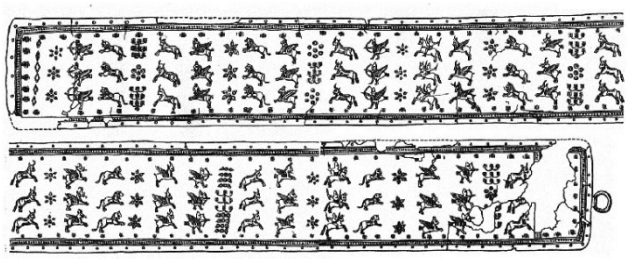


B-Tli-2: Tli, Tomb 215b.

Bronze belt depicting three rows of animals, hybrids and human figures.

Techov 1981: pl. 127; Bonfanti – Cesaretti – Dan, *forthcoming*.

Location: unknown.



4. Foreign artefacts in Urartian land

4.1. Bronze objects

4.1.1. Phrygian cauldron attachments

Ca-Al-1: Alişar / Verahram, tomb.



One bronze siren shaped cauldron handle. As it is the only specimen of this kind found in Urartu and extremely resembling the cauldron attachments found in Gordion's *tumuli*, it is considered here as a foreign object.

Piotrovskij 1967: 82-85; Dan-Bonfanti 2021: 98.

Hermitage Museum, inventory number: DV16003.

Ca-Kb-3: Karmir-blur, Room 12.



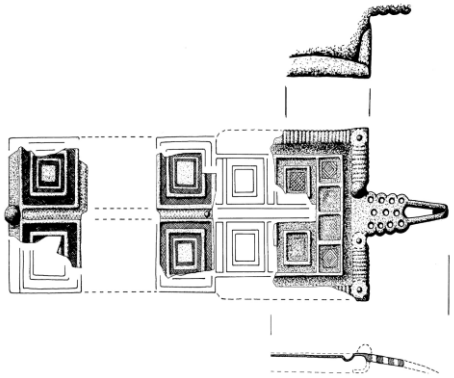
Two bronze cauldron handles in the shape of bull's heads. Their shape is very different from the "typical" Urartian one described in Muscarella (XXX), and they resemble more to the specimens found in Gordion's *tumulus* MM.

Piotrovskij 1950: 70-71.

History Museum of Armenia, inventory number: 2010-12.

4.1.2. Phrygian belts in Toprakkale

B-Top-2: Toprakkale.

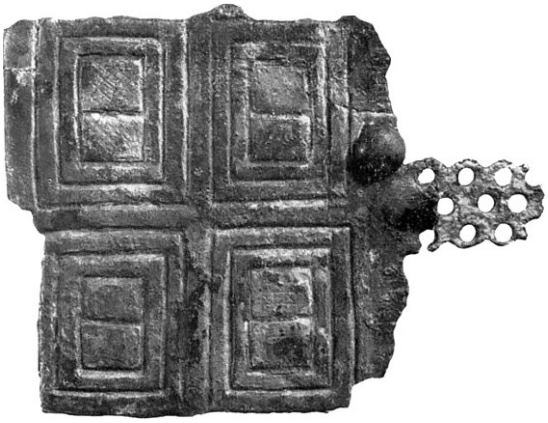


Copper alloy belt buckle. The decoration is composed of inscribed squares and other square-shaped motifs, possibly made in relief. The locking tongue is perforated and ends in a sort of hooked clasp. The margin is thickened and decorated with parallel lines. Two rivets are preserved, one on the side of the locking tongue and the other on the opposite edge of the specimen.

Barnett 1972: fig. 18; Wartke 1990: taf. XXI; Bonfanti-Dan 2021: 6-7, fig. 3.

British Museum, inventory numbers: BM 1880,1216.24

B-Top-3: Toprakkale.

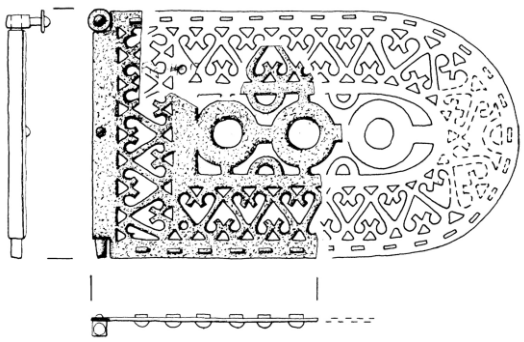


End-piece of a wide belt plate with attachment of the belt buckle. The outer side opposite the perforated locking tongue has partially preserved its original margin, while all other sides have broken edges. On both faces of the belt buckle there is a rivet with a large decorative head, of which only the stump is still on the rivet. Another rivet hole can just be seen in the middle of the other lateral outer edge. The roughly square piece of metal sheet is divided into four rectangles with double borders, and the innermost fields are bisected by straight lines. The areas thus delimited, the narrow edge strips and the cross-shaped area between the four rectangular "windows" are decorated with fine incisions, which are only poorly and incompletely recognizable due to the pitted surface of the metal sheet.

Wartke 1990: no. 50, pl. XXI.a; Bonfanti-Dan 2021: 6, fig. 2.

Vorderasiatisches Museum, inventory number: VA 9819 + VA 9834.

B-Top-4: Toprakkale.



Copper alloy belt clasp with open-work decoration. The clasp was possibly rounded on one of the short sides; the decoration on the edges consists of short lines in relief. Between the edge and the centre, which is decorated with open-work circles, there is an open-work ornament of geometric motifs. One rivet can be seen in one corner.

Barnett 1954: 5, fig. 3; Barnett 1972: 173, fig. 13; Bonfanti-Dan 2021: 7, fig. 4.

British Museum, inventory number: BM 1880,1216.7.

B-Top-5: Toprakkale.

Frame of a wide belt, cast. The semicircular object, which is round in cross-section, is undecorated, only the ends are somewhat widened and finish with flat, rounded tips. There is a rivet in each end of the frame, and in the middle an octagonal rivet-like pin with a narrower, round, blunt end and an attached washer.

Wartke 1990: no. 51, pl. XXI.b; Bonfanti-Dan 2021: 7, fig. 5.

Vorderasiatisches Museum, inventory number: VA 9815.



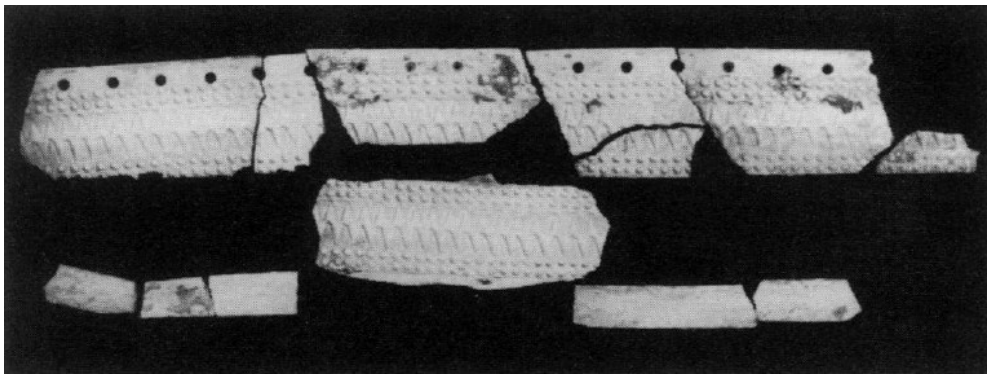
4.1.3. Southern Caucasian belts

B-Alt-2: Altıntepe, Tomb III.

Fragments of a silver belt decorated with repoussé dots and a zig-zag motif.

Özgüç 1983: 37, plate XVI, c-d.

Location: unknown.

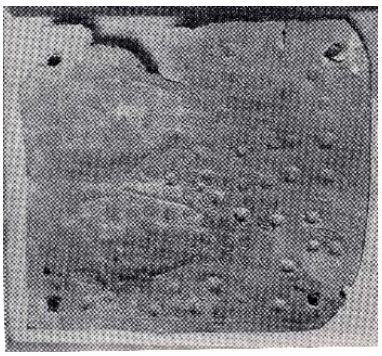


B-Gyi-1: Giyimli.

One fragment of a bronze belt with spiral decoration.

Erzen 1974b: 207-209, figs. 29-30.

Location: unknown.



B-Lč-1: Lčašen.

Several fragments of belts decorated with animals figures and hunting scenes with a chariot.

Castelluccia 2017: 308-309.

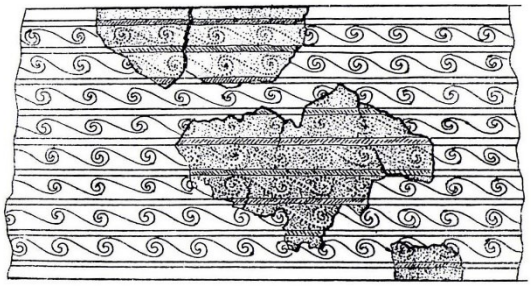
Location: unknown.

B-Muc-1: Mucan, Cist grave.

Fragments of a bronze belt with spiral decoration.

Castelluccia 2017: 324.

Location: unknown.

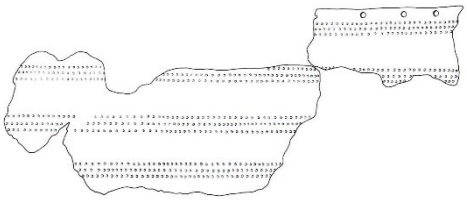


B-Much-1: Muchannat Tapa.

One belt decorated with row of repoussé dots not framed by straight lines.

Esayan 1984: 156, pl. 8, n. 28.

Location: unknown.



4.2. Ivory and bone objects

4.2.1. A Syrian ivory figure in Toprakkale

Iv-Top-8: Toprakkale.



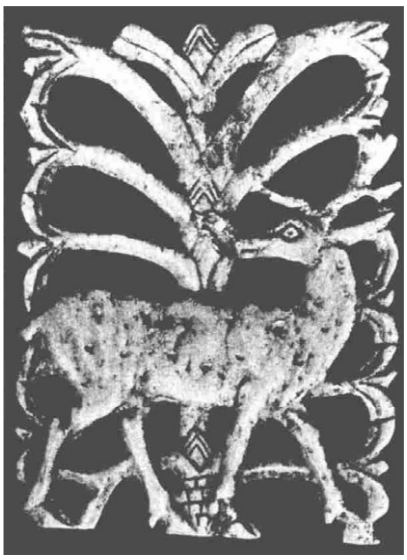
One well preserved ivory figurine of a naked woman wearing an elaborate crown and necklace, with remains of blue inlay in the eyes.

Barnett 1950: 16, pl. XIV.

British Museum, inventory number: 119447.

4.2.2. An ivory open-work plaque in Altıntepe

Iv-Alt-24: Altıntepe, Temple gallery.



One small plaque decorated in open-work technique and depicting a stag, originally inlaid with coloured stones. The stag is resting against a tree on the back of the plaque; its head is turned backwards, its eyes are elongated and oval in shape with a central hole for the pupil. The tree is symmetrical in design and decorated with three superimposed chevrons at the base, centre and top of the trunk.

Özgüç 1969: 86 and pl. XLIV. 1.

Ankara Museum of Anatolian Civilisations.

4.2.3. Nomadic decorated objects

No-Ay-1: Scabbard tip, Storeroom.


1

Scabbard tip in bone depicting a running horse, found next to an iron sword to which it was probably connected. It is decorated with an image of an animal curled up in a ring with a massive head and an elongated snout of sub-rectangular shape, and has an open. mouth. The eye, the nostril, the extremities of the legs and the tail are in the shape of concentric circles. The foreleg, raised upwards, is pressed tightly against the neck, with its tip touching the base of the lower jaw, while the tail and the hind leg are parallel to each other in the horizontal plane and border, in the first case at the chin and in the second at the knee joint of the foreleg.

Çilingiroğlu – Erdem 2005: 134, fig. 9; Makhortyk 2020: 83, fig. 5.1.

Location: unknown.

No-Çav-1: Çavuştepe.

Two horse harnesses in bone decorated in “animal style”. No clear picture is available.

Erzen 1988: fig. 41 and pl. XLVII.

Location: unknown.

Sc-Kb-1: Karmir-blur, “gatekeeper’s room”.

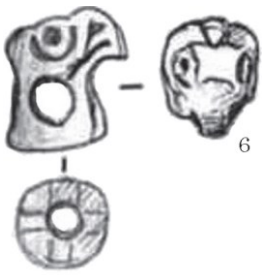


Fragment of belt clasp in horn with clear signs of use, with a longitudinal hole and a decoration representing a small griffin head with ram’s horns.

Piotrovskij 1950: 96, fig. 64; Makhortyk 2020: 86, fig. 8.1.

Location: unknown.

Sc-Kb-2: Karmir-blur, Room 15.

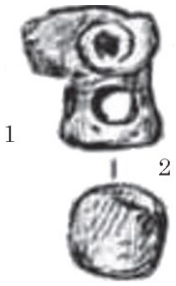


Fragment of belt clasp in horn with clear signs of use, with a longitudinal hole and a decoration representing a small griffin head.

Piotrovskij 1950: 96; Makhortyk 2020: 86, fig. 8.5.

Location: unknown.

Sc-Kb-3: Karmir-blur.

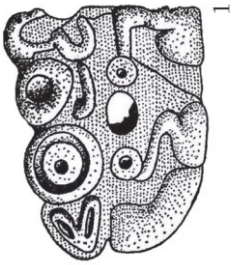


Fragment of belt clasp in horn with clear signs of use, with a longitudinal hole and a decoration representing a small griffin head with ram's horns.

Makhortyk 2020: 86, fig. 8.2.

Location: unknown.

Sc-Kb-4: Karmir-blur.



Scabbard tip in bone representing an animal with a large head, occupying almost the entire lateral part of the plate. The head shows an eye composed of concentric circles with a dot in the middle, and an ear in the shape of a horse's hoof sole. The front part of the animal's snout is represented as two semi-ovals, whose vertexes are turned in different directions.

Piotrovskij 1970; Makhortyk 2020: 84.

Location: unknown.

4.3. Scarabs and sealing

4.3.1. Egyptian artefacts in Urartu

Eg-Ar-1: Armavir.



Scaraboid seal in faience: its base contains an Egyptian hieroglyphic inscription "Men-kheper-ra", meaning "The King of Upper and Lower Egypt". Next to the inscription is a seated god holding a scepter.

Piotrovskij 1955: 84; Hodjash 2000: 153; Ayvazian 2006: 448-449.

History Museum of Armenia, catalogue number: 1164a.

Eg-Er-1: Erebuni.

One amulet made of a blue-green paste with the image of the god Bes. His head is adorned by six feathers, and the facial features of the god are well outlined (no picture is available).

Hodjash 1975.

Location: unknown.

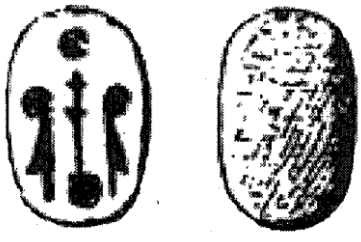
Eg-Kb-1: Karmir-blur, Room 5.

One poorly preserved faïence pendant in the form of a figurine of the goddess Sekhmet. The goddess, depicted standing on her left profile, with a hand outstretched and the other bent; her lion head is poorly preserved, but the posture of the figure leaves no doubt about the identity (no picture is available).

Piotrovskij 1950: 83-84.

Location: unknown.

Eg-Kb-2: Karmir-blur, Room 18.

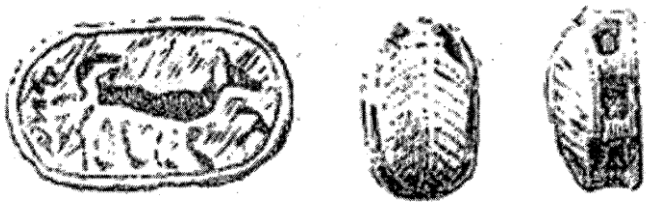


Oval paste bead of scaraboid shape, drilled through, with one convex side, and one flat side with carved symbols showing four Egyptian hieroglyphic signs: on top, "Sun", in the middle, "Beauty", and the two on the sides, meaning "truth".

Piotrovskij 1950: 84, fig. 54; Ayvazian 2006: 695-696.

History Museum of Armenia, catalogue number: 2010/151a.

Eg-Kb-3: Karmir-blur.



Scaraboid seal with branching ridges on the back: its head is indicated by indentations in the upper part of the scarab. A dog, or a wolf, stands between a four-tiered branch and two wedges, facing right. Its tail is raised and curved over its back.

Piotrovskij 1955: 58, fig. 43.34; Ayvazian 2006: 731-732.

Eg-Kb-4: Karmir-blur, Room 36.



Scaraboid-type seal, drilled along the oblong side, with a fish carved on its flat side.

Piotrovskii 1955: fig. 41 and pl. IV.19; Ayvazian 2006: 751-752.

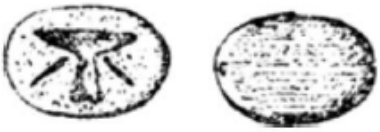
Eg-Kb-5: Karmir-blur, Room 36.



Scaraboid-type seal, drilled along the oblong side, with carved Egyptian hieroglyphs on the flat side. The meaning of the hieroglyphs have so far not been recognized.

Piotrovskii 1955: fig. 41 and pl. IV.19; Ayvazian 2006: 753-754.

Eg-Kb-6: Karmir-blur, Room 18.



Scaraboid seal, drilled along the oblong side, with the figure of a winged sun carved on the flat side.

Piotrovskij 1950: 84, fig. 54.

Location: unknown.

Eg-Kb-7: Karmir-blur.

One clay alabastron.

History Museum of Armenia Catalogue.

History Museum of Armenia.

4.3.2. Mesopotamian seals

Fs-Er-1: Erebuni, columned hall of the temple of Ḫaldi.





Cylindrical seal in steatite representing figure of a hunter in the act of shooting an arrow at a goat, which is surmounted by a bird in flight.

Hodjash 1979: 107, fig. 120; Ayvazian 2006: 586-587.

Location: unknown.

Fs-Er-2: Erebuni.





Cylinder seal representing the figure of a hunter. In front of him stands a goat with large horns, which is being attacked by two dogs. A rampant roaring lion is standing behind the hunter. A bird is hovering above the lion.

Hodjash 1979: 108, pls. 121, 122; Ayvazian 2006: 588-589.

Location: unknown.

Fs-Kb-1: Karmir-blur.



Impression of a cylinder seal depicting a hunt on wild bulls; the main character is a human figure, pointing its bow at a bull below it. A lunar crescent and a star appears above the scene.

Piotrovskij 1970: n° 108; Ayvazian 2006: 723-724.

Location: History Museum of Armenia.

Fs-Kb-2: Karmir-blur.





Cylinder seal in frit depicting a standing archer shooting over a low tree at an animal, which may be a bull or a deer. The archer's dress is long, with a diagonal fold in the skirt and a square hat. At the archer's feet, in front of him, stands a low plant, perhaps a bush. The animal faces left, towards the archer. Two crossed wedges appear above the animal's back, with an appearance of cuneiform signs written in reverse, probably an illiterate master's mistake.

Van Loon 1966: 140-141; Piotrovskij 1970: n° 107; Ayvazian 2006: 725-726.

Location: History Museum of Armenia.

Fs-Kb-3: Karmir-blur.





Cylinder seal in frit depicting a bearded archer in a long dress aiming his bow at a large horned snake with curled tail. The archer is facing right, and the snake is facing left, towards the archer. A crescent mounted by a dot appears above the snake. A sacred tree stands between the archer and the snake: it is made up of a central trunk and a series of short incisions, disconnected from the trunk.

Piotrovskij 1952: 45; Ayvazian 2006: 777-778.

Location: unknown.

Fs-Kb-4: Karmir-blur.





Cylinder seal in faience with depiction of an apparently religious symbol standing by a slim tree which separates the symbol from an approaching snake. The symbol looks like a crescent moon. This may represent a symbol of the moon god Sin as worshipped at Harran in North Syria.

Piotrovskii 1970: n° 105, 106; Ayvazian 2006: 727-728.

5. “Hybrid” materials

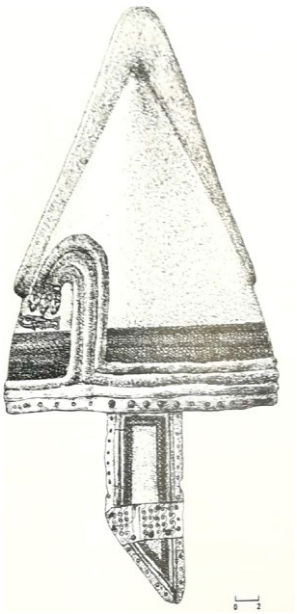
5.1. “Hybrid” burials in the Lori Berd necropolis

H-Lor-1: Lori Berd, Tomb 56.

One conical bronze helmet with one preserved earflap with a decoration of fish and curvy lines; the earflap presents an ancient repair with a fragment of a belt decorated with spirals.

Devedjyan 2010: 77-78.

Location: unknown.



Gob-Lor-1: Lori Berd, Tomb 56.

One silver goblet decorated with a figurative stylised scene.

Devedjyan 2010: 81.

History Museum of Armenia, inventory number: 3166-114.



5.2. The "Urartian" belt from tomb 425 in the Tli necropolis

B-Tli-3: Tli, Tomb 425.

One bronze belt decorated with rampant hybrid creatures, horsemen and a sacred tree with figures of caprides inserted among the branches. The belt presents also a geometrical lines and zig-zag decoration made with *repoussé* dots.

Techov 2002: 47, fig. 114; Bonfanti – Cesaretti – Dan *forthcoming*.

