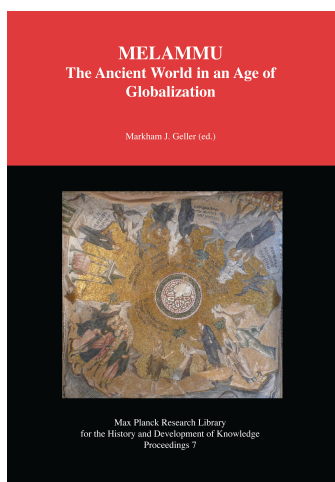


Max Planck Research Library for the History and Development of Knowledge

Proceedings 7

Mirjo Salvini:

The Spread of the Cuneiform Culture to the Urartian North (IX–VII Century
BCE)



In: Markham J. Geller (ed.): *Melammu : The Ancient World in an Age of Globalization*
Online version at <http://edition-open-access.de/proceedings/7/>

ISBN 978-3-945561-00-3

First published 2014 by Edition Open Access, Max Planck Institute for the History of Science under
Creative Commons by-nc-sa 3.0 Germany Licence.

<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/3.0/de/>

Printed and distributed by:

Neopubli GmbH, Berlin

<http://www.epubli.de/shop/buch/39410>

The Deutsche Nationalbibliothek lists this publication in the Deutsche Nationalbibliografie; detailed
bibliographic data are available in the Internet at <http://dnb.d-nb.de>

Chapter 14

The Spread of the Cuneiform Culture to the Urartian North (IX–VII Century BCE)

Mirjo Salvini

Among the first Assyrian texts interpreted at the time of the deciphering of the cuneiform script, during the second half of the nineteenth century, we have those from the palace of Sargon at Khorsabad (Fuchs 1994, 407–409). The kingdom of Urartu stands out among the enemy countries of the Assyrian empire. Its syllabic writing *Ur-ar-tu* or *Ú-ra-ar-tu*, has enabled philologists to restore the phonetic value and original pronunciation of the name which the Bible has passed down to us as Ararat (André-Salvini and Salvini 2003), a term which today indicates the highest mountain of eastern Turkey, near the border with Armenia and Iran (Fig 14.1).



Figure 14.1: Mount Ararat, from the south (all photos by Mirjo Salvini)

The “Babylonian Mappa Mundi” on a cuneiform tablet of the eighth-seventh century BCE in the British Museum, puts Urartu among the most important places of the Ancient World (Horowitz 1988). In the trilingual inscription by the Achaemenid King Darius at Bisutun, the twentieth satrapy is named Uraštu in the Babylonian text and Armina (Schmitt 1980) in the Persian one. This is the earliest mention of the country and the ethnos of Armenia and goes back to the year 521 BCE (Malbran-Labat 1994, §6, 23, 24). This correspondence enables us to consider the history of Urartu as the beginning of the history of Armenia (Fig 14.2).



Figure 14.2: Darius' relief and inscription at Bisutun

In Eastern Turkey, along the coast of Lake Van, we find the ruins of Tušpa (Fig 14.3), the ancient capital of the Urartian kingdom. This old Urartian name survives in the appellation of Thospitis lacus by the classical authors (Ptolemaios, Plinius) and the mediaeval Tosp. The site of Van Kalesi with its monumental ruins was known in the Armenian tradition as Shamiramakert, the city of Semiramis.

14.1 The Discovery of the Urartian Capital

The memory of the magnificent Urartian capital city has stayed alive since the end of the Urartian state, in the second half of the seventh century BCE. The Armenian tradition was established at a very early date by the historian Moses



Figure 14.3: South side of Van Kalesi, site of the Urartian capital Tušpa

Khorenatsi, who lived during the fifth century CE. He tells of the building of Shamiramakert, the “City of Semiramis,” by the legendary Assyrian queen whom classical tradition attributes with all kinds of grandiose architectural projects.

This tradition opened the way to the historical research and archaeological discoveries which have continued for almost two centuries now. When, in 1827, the young philosophy professor, F.E. Schulz, arrived in Van to study the ruins of Shamiramakert, he took with him the history of Armenia by Khorenatsi.

I quote now some passages from chapter 16, demonstrating through the example of certain figures the precise topographical and archaeological references found in this text: How after the death of Ara, Semiramis built the city and the aqueduct and her own palace (Khorenatsi 2006, fn. chap. 16).

[...] passing through many places, she arrived from the east at the edge of the salt lake [= Lake Van]. On the shore of the lake she saw a long hill [= Van Kalesi] whose length ran toward the setting sun [...] To the north it sloped a little, but to the south it looked up sheer

to heaven, with a cave in the vertical rock. [...] first she ordered the aqueduct for the river to be built in hard and massive stone [Fig. 14.4] [...] on the side of the rock that faces the sun [...] she had carved out various temples and chambers and treasure houses and wide caverns [Fig. 14.5] [...] and over the entire surface of the rock, smoothing it like wax with a stylus, she inscribed many texts, the mere sight of which makes anyone marvel [Fig. 14.6]. And not only this, but also in many places in the land of Armenia she set up stelae and ordered memorials to herself to be written with the same script.

Such a precise description must be based on reports of ancient travelers or dwellers rather than the works of the classical authors, as some scholar states.



Figure 14.4: Sustaining wall of the “Semiramis Canal,” built by King Minua, south of Van



Figure 14.5: The mausoleum of Argišti I on the south side of Van Kalesi with the “Khorkhor”-Annals



Figure 14.6: Detail of Argišti I's Annals

I would like to provide a short sketch of Urartian history,¹ describing the cuneiform epigraphical sources beginning with the monumental complex of Shamiramakert (today's Van Kalesi, the Rock of Van).² From this center begun the diffusion of cuneiform writing over the Armenian Plateau. The various chronological phases of the Urartian settlement and the remains of some official buildings show the construction of Urartian power and the enlargement of the kingdom.

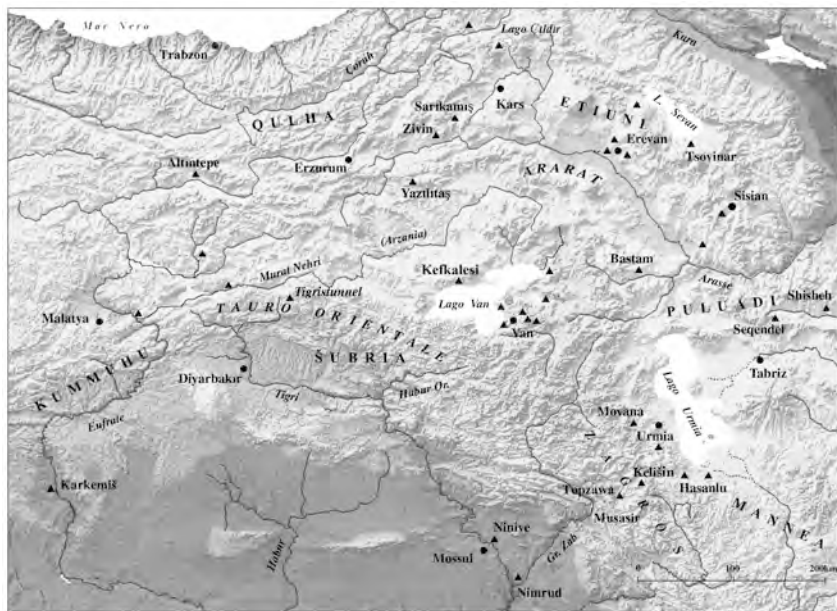


Figure 14.7: Distribution of the Urartian inscriptions

It is from this place, from Van Kalesi, that, from the end of the ninth century onwards, military expeditions of the Urartian kings set off to conquer an immense territory, stretching as far as the Euphrates in the west, Mount Sabalan in the east (in Iranian Azerbaijan), the basin of Lake Sevan in today's Armenia, and—

¹ See (Salvini 1995). In the Appendix, see the Urartian Chronology with the Assyrian synchronisms.

² See (Salvini 1986; Salvini 2001a).

beyond the mountain ranges of Taurus and Zagros—the modern region of Iraqi Kurdistan³ (Fig 14.7).



Figure 14.8: The “Sardursburg” and one of the inscriptions of Sarduri First

The oldest building in Van Kalesi which we can date is the so-called “Sardursburg,” defined thus by Lehmann-Haupt who worked there at the end of the nineteenth century (Lehmann-Haupt 1926, 19ff.). This structure is so solid that, still today, it is in an excellent state of conservation. It is attached to the western slopes of Van Rock, not far from the shores of the lake. It consists of a few rows of great, well-squared limestone blocks, so large as to merit the definition of Cyclopaean wall⁴ (Fig 14.8). Six cuneiform inscriptions are carved into these blocks in Assyrian language and Neo-Assyrian ductus. They are all duplicates of the text of Sarduri I, the founder of the Urartian capital Tušpa.

³ Map 1:2.000.000, by TAVO B IV 12, *Östliches Kleinasien. Das Urartäerreich* (9. bis 7. Jahrhundert v. Chr.), 1992; (Porter 2001).

⁴ Cf. the measurements of the blocks by M. Salvini (2001d, 302–304).

Inscription of Sarduri, son of Lutipri, great king, powerful king, king of the universe, king of Nairi,⁵ king without equal, great shepherd, who does not fear the fight, king who represses rebels. Sarduri says: I have brought here these foundation stones from the city of Alniunu, I have built this wall.⁶

With this written document, which was discovered in 1827 by Schulz, the pioneer of Urartian research, we have the beginning not only of the history of the Urartian kingdom, but also of written documentation for the entire, immense mountainous region stretching across what are now Eastern Turkey, Armenia and Iranian Azerbaijan. Sarduri, who was defeated by the Assyrian king Shalmaneser III in the year 832 BCE (Seduri, the Urartian) (Grayson 1996, especially the “Black Obelisk,” 69), may be considered as the founder of the Urartian state and its capital Tušpa, even though the name of the city itself does not appear in the document.

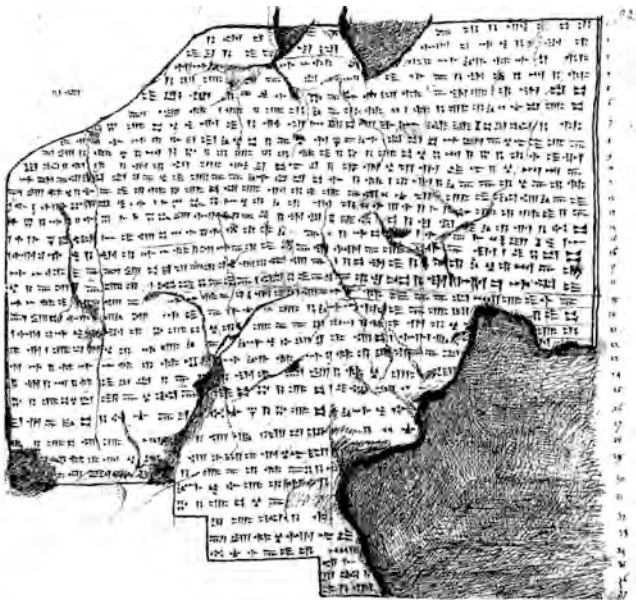


Figure 14.9: Original copy by F.E. Schulz of the first column of Argišti's Annals (Courtesy of the Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris)

⁵About the tradition of the toponym Nairi, see (Salvini 1998, 87–91).

⁶Analysis and translation: (Wilhelm 1986, 95–113; Salvini 2008, A 1-1a-f).



Figure 14.10: The rock inscription (top) of Xerxes in Van Kalesi and the original copy (bottom) made by Schulz in 1827

The most important achievement of Schulz has been the discovery and autography of 42 cuneiform inscriptions on the Rock of Van and in its vicinity (Fig 14.9), which were published posthumously in 1840.⁷ He identified the trilingual inscription of Xerxes in Van Kalesi (Fig. 14.10), and distinguished his ductus from that of the other, older (at that time incomprehensible) inscriptions of an unknown mighty people. I would like to underline the fact that these inscriptions reached Europe many years before the discovery of the Assyrian capitals of Nineveh and Khorsabad, and 30 years before the deciphering of cuneiform.

The architecture of “Madir Burçu” differs from all the other Urartian fortifications known to us. Its position does not even enable us to identify it as a fortress. I have already put forward the hypothesis⁸—supported moreover also by other scholars—that it was, instead, a port structure such as a quay or wharf, presuming that the lake water level at the time of its construction was a few meters higher than today (fairly rapid increases and decreases in the water level have been noted in various eras). The Rock of Van could be partially surrounded by waters like a peninsula. The shore of the lake is so near that we can also imagine the existence of an ancient canal connecting the structure of the “Sardursburg” with the great water. The “Sardursburg” also served as a propyleum giving access to the higher levels of the Rock, that is to say, the citadel.

We have no other written records signed by Sarduri Ist documenting his deeds, but the very fact that he fought against the powerful Assyrian King Shalmaneser III demonstrates a certain political importance and military power. Thus he was the first founder of the Urartian kingdom. On the top of Van Rock there exists however a ruined rock niche with some traces of cuneiform writing (Fig 14.11). The text is incomplete and full of gaps, so that no name is preserved, neither of a king nor of a god. It is a sacral text listing animal sacrifices. In the mid of this niche there is a square hole for a stela, which is not preserved. Both language and ductus of this inscription are neo-assyrian, like the text on the “Sardursburg,” and the ductus is very similar. It must be therefore contemporary to Sarduri Ist. Here arises the problem of the provenance of cuneiform script in Urartu. Diakonoff’s theory of its derivation from the cuneiform ductus of the old Mittannian chancellery (D’jakonov 1963) based mostly on the linguistic connection between the Hurrian and Urartian languages.

However it cannot be accepted, because there is a huge chronological hiatus between the fourteenth and the ninth century. There are indeed no written records on the Urartian highlands during those five centuries. While the Hittite and the Mittannian empires of the second millennium used a Babylonian cuneiform *koine*, the northern states contemporary with the Assyrian empire were influenced by the

⁷See (Schulz 1840, 257–323).

⁸See above fn. 2.



Figure 14.11: Assyrian rock inscription on the south side of Van Kalesi

Assyrian script. See, e.g., the short approximative inscriptions of King Kapara of Guzana/Tell Halaf.

Before the foundation of the Urartian state with capital Tušpa many Assyrian campaigns were directed to the north of the Taurus Range, and already Tiglath-pileser I in the eleventh century and Shalmaneser III in the ninth century let written records on the border of the Urartian territory, like the famous reliefs and inscriptions on the “Tigristunnel”⁹ (Fig 14.12). Tiglath-pileser Ist inscribed his name even in the hearth of the Nairi lands, on a rock near modern Malazgirt, north of Lake Van.¹⁰

The use of Assyrian at the Urartian court continued also by Sarduri’s successors besides the indigenous Urartian language. Sarduri’s son Išpuini introduced the use of the indigenous Urartian language, the language of the dynasty. He left us some building inscriptions which commemorate the construction of a system

⁹RIMA 2, N° 15 (Tiglath-pileser I); RIMA 3, N° 21–24 (Shalmaneser III). See also the discussion about the topographical position of the different inscriptions and reliefs by (Salvini 1988, 270–281).

¹⁰RIMA 2, N° 16.



Figure 14.12: Relief and inscription of Tiglath-Pileser Ist in the “Tigristunnel,” near Lice (East Turkey, October 1984)

of fortresses around Van (Anzaf, Zivistan) and dedications to his “Lord,” god Haldi. Very soon he involved his son and heir apparent Minua in his military expeditions, directed to distant countries such as the region north of the Araxes and south of Lake Urmia. King Išpuini (end of the ninth century BCE) achieved the final unification into one state of all the peoples settled over a wide territory of the Armenian highland, and also the annexation of the territory east of the Zagros mountains, the modern territory of Iranian Azerbaijan.¹¹ Unfortunately we have no idea of the ethnic composition of the new state or of the nature of the peoples settled there. The only information is given by the cuneiform documents which, from Išpuini on, are mostly redacted in the Urartian language. All we can say for the Urartian ethnic element, which was the driving force and center of the state, is that, according to their language, they were neither Semites nor Indoeuropeans. They are related only to the Hurrians who are attested from the end of the third to the beginning of the first millennium BCE in many regions of the Near East. However, the element binding the peoples unified in the Urartian kingdom was not only the use of the Urartian language in substitution of the Assyrian one.

¹¹ The sources are the texts of Išpuini (Salvini 2008, A 2) and those, more important, of Išpuini and Minua (Salvini 2008, A 3).

Išpuini was the first Urartian king who knew how to exploit the religious element, which would become the basis of the state.



Figure 14.13: Bilingual stela of Kelišin by Išpuini and Minua *in situ* (August 1976)

There are two major written documents testifying to this policy. The first is the Kelishin stela (Fig. 14.13), (Götze 1930; Salvini 1980a), erected on the 3000m. high pass of the Zagros range, which deals with a pilgrimage by Išpuini and his son Minua around 810 BCE to the temple of god Haldi in Muşasir. The Kelišin stela shows that the city-state and international sanctuary of Muşasir, situated in today's Iraqi Kurdistan, was controlled by the Urartians around 820–810 BCE, the period to which we must date the numerous joint inscriptions of Išpuini and Minua. The central role played by the cult of the national god Haldi emerges from all the elements of historical-epigraphic evidence today at our disposal.



Figure 14.14: Rock niche of Meher Kapısı, near Van, with the sacral inscription of Iṣpuini and Minua

As further proof of this situation we must remember that, in the Assyrian text of the “Sardursburg” by his father Sarduri Iṣt, there is no mention of God Haldi, nor in the other Assyrian sacral inscription in Van Kalesi quoted above which belongs to the same period. I am therefore convinced that the cult of Haldi, who was not an old Hurrian-Urartian god (unlike the weather god and the sun god), was introduced by Iṣpuini as the official cult of the state. The most meaningful and famous evidence of this is the open-air sanctuary of Meher Kapısı near Van, with its rock inscription (Fig. 14.14), (Salvini 1993–1997; Salvini 1994). This rock niche is covered by a long sacral inscription fixing the whole Urartian pantheon headed by the supreme triad, the national god Haldi, the weather God Teisheba and the Sun God Shiuini. It is a list of animal sacrifices offered to a long list of male gods, followed by the goddesses, which is connected with the seasonal works of the agriculture. It is clear that the presupposition for such a monument and its ideology was the conquest and the establishment of a protectorate over the city state and the sanctuary of Haldi in Muṣaṣir. Iṣpuini, introducing the cult of the national god Haldi, must be considered as the second founder of the Urartian state on a theocratic basis.

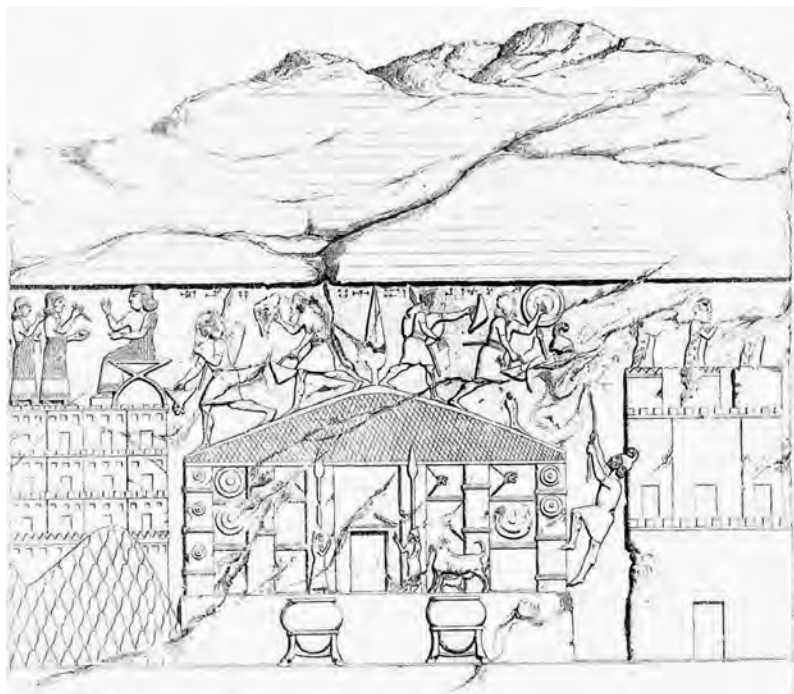


Figure 14.15: Looting of the Muşasir temple by the Assyrians in 714 BCE.

Drawing by E. Flandin (Botta and Flandin 1846–1850, Pl. 142)

The Urartians, in fact, gave enormous importance to Haldi's temple at Muşasir, the major cult centre of the national god, from Išpuini up to the time of Rusa I at least, when the final clash with the Assyrians took place: I refer to the famous Eighth Campaign of Sargon and the sack of Muşasir in the year 714 BCE (Fig 14.15), (Thureau-Dangin 1912).

14.2 The Traces of King Minua in the Ancient Capital City of Tušpa

The north wall of the citadel of Van Kalesi reveals four different phases (Fig 14.16). Whilst the upper two are of the Seljuk and Ottoman periods (excluding modern restorations), the two lower parts date to the Urartian era. The great size and quality of the squared-off limestone blocks at the base of the wall show similarities with the “Sardursburg” and must date back to the time of Sarduri I (ca. 840–830 BCE). The second phase consists of smaller blocks

of friable sandstone, but also dates back to the Urartian period. This is shown by the inscribed stones which are inserted here, even though they are not in their original position (Fig 14.17), (Salvini 1973). A study of these stones has shown that they are fragments of a lengthy inscription by Minua, son of Išpuini, which must have covered the façade of a dismantled building. The text I could reconstruct is a duplicate of an inscription (Salvini 1980b; Salvini 2008, A 5–2A-F.) celebrating Minua’s conquests over the lands north of the Araxes, in modern Armenia. The best-preserved example decorated the façade of a tower temple in Körzüt. The most important civil achievement of Minua is the 60 km long canal, which is still in function and the millenary tradition calls “Canal of Semiramis” (Fig 14.18).



Figure 14.16: North wall of the Urartian citadel on Van Kalesi (September 1969)

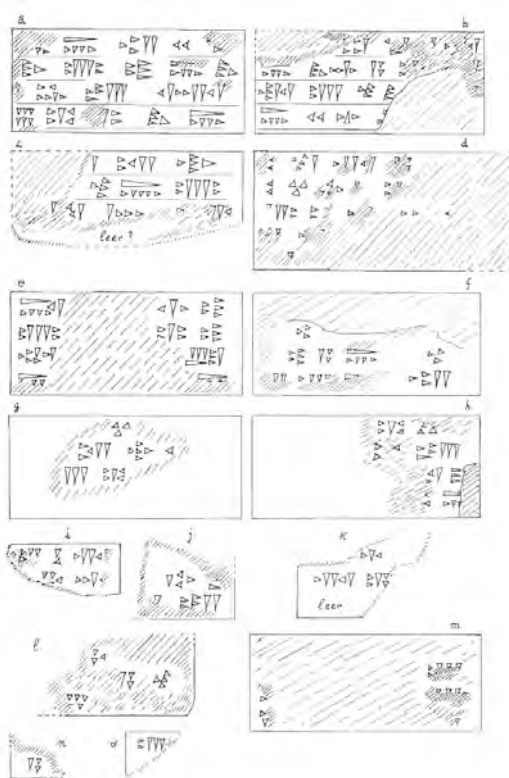


Figure 14.17: Fragments of an inscription by Minua reemployed in the citadel wall (from Salvini 1973, Abb. 5)

Various examples show the numerous different applications of the Urartian cuneiform script on Van Kalesi. On the northern slope of Van Kalesi there is a rectangular rock chamber with the following measurement: it is more than 20 meters long and nine meters wide, but only 2.5 meters high. The entrance is more than 8 meters wide. It is self-evident that this could not have been either as a tomb or a dwelling. The solution is provided by the inscription at the entrance: “Minua, son of Išpuini, has made this place a *siršini*” (Salvini 2008, A 5–68). In the cursing formula there is an explanation of this term and, thus, of the purpose of this space. “Minua speaks: he who takes the oxen from here ... he who takes the herd from here may the Gods destroy him.” Clearly we are dealing with Minua’s royal stables, cut into the living rock.



Figure 14.18: Inscription of Minua's wife Tariria and the sustaining wall of Minua's canal

And I would also add what I call the “Fountain of Minua,” declared to be such by the three epigraphs that mark this site along the north foot of Van Rock (Salvini 2008, A 5–58A-C). Its name is *taramanili* (*plurale tantum*), connected the Hurrian word *tarmana* (Salvini 1970) whose meaning of “fountain” can thus be precised.

The Urartian capital must have had other installations of this practical kind. The presence of a small rock inscription by Minua only a few meters away from the Sardursburg indicates a secondary use of this structure as a grain silo. The text, in fact, celebrates the foundation of a building called *'ari*, that is to say a silo

with a capacity of 23,100 kapi, which corresponds to 583 cubic meters (Salvini 1973).

14.3 Argišti I's Records

On the south-western slope of Van Kalesi it is possible today for anyone to visit the rock chambers of Horhor, the main monument left to us by Argišti I (see Fig. 14.5). The long inscription of his annals, decorating the entrance of this rock Mausoleum, is the most extensive document in Urartian cuneiform epigraphy¹² (Fig 14.19). The inscription was badly damaged by the wars and sieges suffered by the Fortress in Ottoman times. I quote a passage (Salvini 2008, A 8–1 Vo 1–13):

({ald)i went out (to a military campaign) with (hi)s weapon, he (de-
feated) the country of Etiuni, he (defeated) the land of the city of
Qihuni, he threw (them) to Argišti's feet. Haldi is powerful, Haldi's
weapon is powerful. Through Haldi's greatness Argišti, son of Minua
went out (to a military campaign). Haldi went ahead. Argišti says:
I conquered the country of the city of Qihuni, which lies(?) by the
lake (= Lake Sevan). I reached the city of Alištu. I deported men and
women.

During the same years Argišti began the construction of the city of Er(e)buni, (Salvini 2008, A 8–1 Vo 13–22) which corresponds to the hill of Arin-berd, on the outskirts of Erevan. For this, troops were transferred from the western borders (6600 soldiers from the regions of Կաթմաշ and Տաշ, the classical Melitene and Sofene),¹³ with the clear aim of reinforcing control over the territory that today constitutes Armenia. Or are we instead dealing here with deportees employed in building the new residence? These two interpretations are still both possible. This shows how large the dominions of the Urartian kingdom were during the eighth century BCE and how well organized the state was.

¹²First copied by F.E. Schulz in 1827 (see above fn. 7) [Schulz II-VIII]. Translated by Arutjunjan (1953); collated by (André-Salvini and Salvini 1992).

¹³See (Salvini 1972, 142–144, 279–287). After collation of the badly damaged rock inscription of Rusa II in Kaleköy near Mazgirt (Salvini 2008, A 12–6), I could read ^{KUR}š]u-pa-a, which confirms the position of the Urartian Տաշ(ni), being the oldest quotation of the classical Sofene.



Figure 14.19: Argišti I's Annals on the rock of Khorkhor

14.4 The Rock Terrace of Hazine Kapısı by Sarduri II



Figure 14.20: Hazine Kapısı (Gate of the Treasury). Rock monument on the north slope of Van Kalesi

On the north-eastern sector of Van Kalesi, there is an about 40 meters wide terrace cut in the rock (Fig 14.20). This is known as the “Gate of the Treasure” (Hazine Kapısı; Salvini 1995, 143–145) due to the two great niches cut in the rock there. Originally they both held inscriptions, but only in the niche to the right are these partially preserved. This is the famous text of the Annals of Sarduri II, son of Argišti, which was unearthed during the excavations by Marr and Orbeli in 1916¹⁴ (Fig 14.21). Schulz could see and copy the upper, visible part of the inscription, cut in the rock (Schulz XII = Salvini 2008, A 9–3 I).

This king reigned between 755 and 730 BCE, exactly at the time of the foundation of Rome. Among his military expeditions I quote the conquest of the southern shore of Lake Sevan in today’s Armenia and the military confrontation with the Assyrian empire in the west, on the Euphrates. In both cases we have a correspondence with local rock inscriptions.

¹⁴See (Marr and Orbeli 1922). Unfortunately the stela and the basalt basis with the main text of the annals were broken in pieces by the vandalistic action of the local people.



Figure 14.21: The Annals of Sarduri II in Hazine Kapısı, at the time of the Russian excavations in 1916 (from Marr and Orbeli 1922)



Figure 14.22: The rock inscription of Sarduri II on the left bank of the Euphrates (1973)

I mention here only the expedition against Malatya, recalled in the annals, which was recorded on the rock overlooking the Euphrates at Habibuşağı (Fig. 14.22), (Salvini 2008, A 9–4). Beyond the Euphrates, in the region of Commagene (Assyrian Qummuhi, Urartian Qumaha), one of the greatest struggles between the Assyrians and the Urartians took place in the year 743 BCE.¹⁵ The Annals of Tiglath-pileser III relate the Assyrian victory in the battle of Commagene, pushing the Urartians back to the east of the river which marked the western frontier of the Urartian kingdom (Salvini 2008, A 9–1, 2, 3).

A considerable quantity of cuneiform records enable us to reconstruct the historical geography and local history of many regions of Armenia in Urartian times. The conquest of the Sevan region, for instance, which continued to progress throughout the whole eighth century; was the work of three sovereigns: Argišti I, Sarduri II and Rusa I. After Rusa I (see the rock inscription of Tsovinar (Salvini 2008, A 10–2) on the south shore of Lake Sevan) (Fig 14.7) there are no more records coming from—or relating to—the region of Lake Sevan.

But Rusa I is known in the cuneiform literature mostly as the adversary of Sargon. The long Assyrian-Urartian war took place in the territory of North-West Iran between 719 and 714, and ended with the famous sack of Muşaşir. In recent times two new cuneiform stelae have been discovered in Iranian Azerbaijan, which add some elements to the Urartian version of the facts, namely the conflict with the rebel Urzana, king of Muşaşir.¹⁶

His successor Argišti II, from the firm base provided by the consolidated possession of that north-eastern frontier, turned his expansionist aims eastwards, against countries lying both north and south of the Araxes. The new conquests are recorded the stele from Sisian (now in the Museum of Erebuni),¹⁷ which shows the Urartian advance towards the Nagorno Karabakh, and on the three rock inscriptions of Razliq, Nashteban and Shisheh in Iranian Azerbaijan (Salvini 2008, A 11–4, 5, 6, with previous literature).

The following period is marked by the reign of Rusa II, the last great Urartian sovereign. During this period, military enterprises were less important than an intense artistic and architectural activity, the greatest testimony to which on Armenian territory is the extraordinary site of Karmir-blur (Piotrovskij 1970; Arutjunjan 1966), and the contemporary cities of Bastam (Kleiss 1979; Kleiss 1988) in Iranian Azerbaijan and of Ayanis (Çilingiroğlu and Salvini 2001) near Van. The perfectly preserved temple inscription of Ayanis demonstrates the es-

¹⁵ See (Astour 1979; Salvini 2011).

¹⁶ See (André-Salvini and Salvini 2002), with previous literature; (Salvini 2008, A 10–3, 4, 5).

¹⁷ KUKN 411 = (Salvini 2008, A 11–3); (Haroutiounian 1982). See also the new edition of the Reverse (Gajserjan 1985, 67–79) and (Salvini 2009).

thetic function of cuneiform writing, besides an original inlay decoration of the cellar (Fig 14.23).



Figure 14.23: Façade of the *susi* temple of Ayanis during excavations (1997)

The Urartians wrote also on different kinds of bronze objects (Salvini 2001c), and even on golden objects mostly with dedications to god Haldi. Difficult to explain is the fact that writing on clay (tablets and bullae) was used only during the seventh century, the last period of Urartian history. Furthermore, both on bronze and on clay, a different kind of script appeared, besides cuneiform (Salvini 2001b; Seidl 2004).

Two distinct local hieroglyphic or linear systems were used, one of them incomprehensible, the other very elementary (Fig 14.24), which can be interpreted thanks to parallel cuneiform notations.¹⁸

¹⁸See my deciphering in (Çilingiroğlu and Salvini 2001, 293–303).



Figure 14.24: Cuneiform (left) and hieroglyphic (right) bullae from Ayanis, seventh century BCE

The kingdom of Urartu was destroyed in the second half of the seventh century, probably before the fall of Nineveh and Assyrian power.¹⁹

With the fall of the centralized Urartian state the cuneiform writing disappeared completely and forever from the Armenian highlands, with one exception: one and half centuries later the Achaemenid King Xerxes, son of Darius let incise his trilingual inscription on the south side of the Van rock, about 40 meters high in an inaccessible position. Although the message of this text is generic, it confirms on the very place of the old capital Tušpa that the former Urartian territory, inhabited henceforth by Armenians, formed part of the Persian Empire as the satrapy of Armina, as the Bisutun trilingual of Darius stated. The spread of the Cuneiform writing in Urartu and specially the presence of rock inscriptions all over a great territory as a sign of a big centralized state did perhaps inspire the Achaemenid monarchy (Seidl 1994).

¹⁹Robert Rollinger (2008, 51–75), maintains that the Urartian state survived long after the fall of Assyria, and continued to exist as an independent political entity until the conquest by Cyrus the Great.

Assyrian kings	Synchronisms ¹	Urartian kings
Shalmaneser III (859–824 BCE)	quotes Ar(r)amu the Urartian (years 859, 856, 844)	[no written records]
Shalmaneser III (ca. 840–830)	quotes Seduri, the Urartian (year 832)	= [written records of:] Sarduri I, son of Lutibri* [* no written records of him]
Shamshi-Adad V (823–811)	quotes Ušpina (year 820) [no synchronism]	= Išpuini, son of Sarduri (ca. 830–820) coregency of Išpuini and Minua (ca. 820–810) Minua, son of Išpuini (ca. 810–785/780)
Shalmaneser IV (781–772)	quotes Argištu/i (year 774)	= Argišti I, son of Minua (785/780–756)
Ashur-nirari V (754–745)	is quoted by (year 754)	Sarduri II, son of Argišti (756–ca. 730)
Tiglath-pileser III (744–727)	quotes Sarduri, Sardaurri (years 743, 735?)	= Sarduri II
Sargon (721–705)	quotes Ursā / Rusā (years 719–713 ²) quotes Argišta (year 709)	= Rusā I, son of Sarduri (ca. 730–713) = Argišti II, son of Rusā (713–?)
Sennacherib (704–681)	[no synchronism]	
Esarhaddon (681–669)	quotes Ursā (year 673/672)	= Rusā II, son of Argišti (first half of the VII cent.)
Ashurbanipal (669–627)	quotes Rusā (year 652) ⁴	Erimena (^{LÚ} ašuli ?) ³ = Rusā III, son of Erimena Sarduri (^{LÚ} ašuli ?), son of Rusā III
Ashurbanipal	quotes Ištar/Issar-dūrī (year 646/642)	= Sarduri III, son of Sarduri

Table 14.1: Urartian Chronology

Notes in Table 13.1

¹ For the Assyrian synchronisms, see (Fuchs 2012).

² The date 713 for Rusa I's death, instead of the traditional one, 714, is proven by the Annals of Sargon, year 9: see (Fuchs 2012, 419; Lanfranchi and Parpola 1990, SSA V, p. XXVII).

³ We have also to take into consideration the new dendrochronology following which Rusahinili Eidurukai (Ayanis) was built in the second half of the 670s: (Manning et al. 2001, 2534; Çilingiroğlu 2006, 135).

⁴ Cf. my attempt to interpret the seal of Erimena and the chronological problems concerning the seventh century (Salvini 2007).

Bibliography

- André-Salvini, B. and M. Salvini (1992). Gli annali di Argišti I, note e collazioni. *SMEA* 30:9–23.
- (2002). The Bilingual Stele of Rusa I from Movana (West-Azerbaijan, Iran). *SMEA* 44:5–66.
- (2003). Ararat and Urartu. Holy Bible and History. In: *Shlomo. Studies in Epigraphy, Iconography, History and Archaeology in Honor of Shlomo Moussaieff*. Ed. by R. Deutsch. Tel-Aviv: Jaffa, 225–242.
- Arutjunjan, N.V. (1953). Chorchorskaja letopis' Argišti I. *EV* 8.
- (1966). *Novye urartskie nadpisi Karmir-blura*. Erevan.
- Astour, M.C. (1979). The Arena of Tiglath-pileser III's Campaign Against Sarduri II (743 BCE). *Assur* 2:1–23.
- Botta, P.E. and E. Flandin (1846–1850). *Monument de Ninive*. Osnabrück: Biblio-Verlag.
- Çilingiroğlu, A. (2006). Erevan. *Armenian Journal of Near Eastern Studies* 1:135.
- Çilingiroğlu, A. and M. Salvini, eds. (2001). *Ayanis I. Ten years' Excavations in Rusahinili Eidurukai*. Documenta Asiana VI. Rome: Istituto per gli Studi Micenei ed Egeo-Anatolici.
- D'jakonov, I.M. (1963). *Urartskie pis'ma i dokumenty*. Moskva, Leningrad.
- Fuchs, A. (1994). *Die Inschriften Sargons II. aus Khorsabad*. Göttingen: Cuvillier.
- (2012). Urartu in der Zeit. In: *The Proceedings of the Symposium Held in Munich 12.14 October 2007. Tagungsbericht des Münchener Symposiums 12.-14. Oktober 2007*. Ed. by S.Kroll, C. Gruber, U. Hellwig, M. Roaf, and P. Zimansky. *Acta Iranica* 51. Leuven: Peeters, 135–161.
- Gajserjan, V. (1985). Sisianskaja nadpis' Argišti II. *VONA* (6):67–79.
- Götze, A. (1930). Zur Kelischin-Stele. *ZA* 5:99–128.
- Grayson, A.K. (1996). *Assyrian Rulers of the Early First Millennium BC (858–745 BC)*. (*The Royal Inscriptions of Mesopotamia. Assyrian Periods* vol. 3). Toronto: University of Toronto Press.
- Haroutiounian, N.V. (1982). La nouvelle inscription ourartéenne découverte en Arménie soviétique. In: *Gesellschaft und Kultur im alten Vorderasien*. Ed. by H. Klengel. (Schriften zur Geschichte und Kultur des alten Orients 15). Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 89–93.
- Horowitz, W. (1988). The Babylonian Map of the World. *Iraq* 50:147–165.
- Khorenatsi, M. (2006). *History of the Armenians, Translation and Commentary on the Literary Sources by R.W. Thomson, Revised Edition*, first edition: Cambridge Mass., London 1978. Ann Arbor: Harvard University Press.
- Kleiss, W., ed. (1979). *Bastam I. Ausgrabungen in den urartäischen Anlagen 1972–1975*. (Teheraner Forschungen 4). Berlin: Gebr. Mann Verlag.
- ed. (1988). *Bastam II. Ausgrabungen in den urartäischen Anlagen 1977–1978*. (Teheraner Forschungen 5). Berlin: Gebr. Mann Verlag.

- Lanfranchi, G.B. and S. Parpola (1990). *The Correspondence of Sargon II. Part II. Letters from the Northern and Northeastern Provinces*. Helsinki: Helsinki University Press.
- Lehmann-Haupt, C.F. (1926). *Armenien einst und jetzt, II/1*. Berlin, Leipzig: Behr.
- Malbran-Labat, F. (1994). *La version akkadienne de l'inscription trilingue de Darius à Behistun*. Documenta Asiana I. Rome: CNR. Istituto per gli Studi Micenei ed Egeo-Anatolici.
- Manning, S.W., B. Kromer, P.I. Kuniholm, and M.W. Newton (2001). Anatolian Tree Rings and a New Chronology for the East Mediterranean Bronze-Iron Ages. *Science* 294(5551):2532–2535.
- Marr, N. and I. Orbeli (1922). *Archeologičeskaja ekspedicija 1916 goda v Van. Raskopki dvuch niš na Vanskoj Skale i nadpisi Sardura vtorogo iz raskopok zapadnoj niši*. Petersburg.
- Piotrovskij, B.B. (1970). *Karmir-blur (al'bom)*. Leningrad.
- Porter, M. (2001). *The Helsinki Atlas of the Near East in the Neo-Assyrian Period*. Helsinki: Casco Bay Assyriological Institute.
- Rollinger, R. (2008). The Median “Empire,” the End of Urartu and Cyrus the Great’s Campaign in 547 BC (Nabonidus Chronicle II 16). *Ancient West and East* 7:51–75.
- Salvini, M. (1970). Einige urartäisch-hurritische Wortgleichungen. *Orientalia* 39:409–411.
- (1972). Le testimonianze storiche urartee sulle regioni del Medio Eufrate. Melitene, Kommagene, Safene, Tomisa. *La Parola del Passato*:142–144.
- (1973). Urartäisches epigraphisches Material aus Van und Umgebung. *Belleten* 37:279–287.
- (1980a). Kelišin. *Reallexikon der Assyriologie und Vorderasiatischen Archäologie* 5:568–569.
- (1980b). Un testo celebrativo di Menua. *SMEA* 22:137–168.
- (1986). Tuschpa, die Hauptstadt von Urartu. In: *Das Reich Urartu. Ein altorientalischer Staat im 1. Jahrtausend v. Chr.* Ed. by V. Haas. (Konstanzer althistorische Vorträge und Forschungen 17). Konstanz: Universitätsverlag, 31–44.
- (1988). Sulla formazione dello stato urarteo. In: *Stato Economia e Lavoro nel Vicino Oriente Antico*. (Atti del convegno dell’Istituto Gramsci Toscano *Stato Economia Lavoro nel Vicino Oriente Antico*, Firenze, 29–31 October 1984). Milano, 270–281.
- (1993–1997). Meher Kapısı. *Reallexikon der Assyriologie und Vorderasiatischen Archäologie* 8:21–22.
- (1994). The Historical Background of the Urartian Monument of Meher Kapısı. In: *The Proceedings of the Third Iron Ages Colloquium held at Van, 6-12 August 1990*. Ed. by A. Çilingiroğlu and D.H. French. (Anatolian Iron Ages 3). Ankara: British Institute of Archaeology, 205–210.
- (1995). *Geschichte und Kultur der Urartäer*. Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft.
- (1998). Nairi, Na’iri. *Reallexikon der Assyriologie und Vorderasiatischen Archäologie* 9:87–91.
- (2001a). Alte und neue Forschungen in Van Kalesi. Topographie und Chronologie der urartäischen Hauptstadt Tušpa. In: *Lux Orientis. Archäologie zwischen Asien und Europa. Festschrift für Harald Hauptmann zum 65. Geburtstag*. Ed. by R.M. Boehmer und J. Maran. Rahden, Westfalen: Verlag Marie Leidorf GmbH, 357–367.
- (2001b). Inscriptions on Clay. In: *Ayanis I. Ten Years’ Excavations in Rusahinili Eiduru-kai 1989–1998*. Ed. by A. Çilingiroğlu and M. Salvini. Documenta Asiana VI. Rome: Istituto per gli Studi Micenei ed Egeo-Anatolici, 279–319.
- (2001c). Royal Inscriptions on Bronze Artifacts. In: *Ayanis I*. Ed. by A. Çilingiroğlu and M. Salvini. Documenta Asiana VI. Rome: Istituto per gli Studi Micenei ed Egeo-Anatolici, 271–278.
- (2001d). Van Kalesi – Sardursburg. *SMEA* 43:302–304.
- (2007). Argišti, Rusa, Erimena, Rusa und die Löwenschwänze. Eine urartäische Palastgeschichte des VII. Jh. v. Chr. *Armenian Journal of Near Eastern Studies* II:146–162 and Tables III, VI.
- (2008). *Corpus dei testi urartei. Le iscrizioni su pietra e roccia (CTU)*. Documenta Asiana VIII. Rome: CNR, Istituto di studi sulle civiltà dell’eggeo e del vicino oriente.

- Salvini, M. (2009). Die Ausdehnung des Reiches Urartu unter Argišti II. (713-ca. 685 v. Chr.) In: *Giorgi Melikishvili Memorial Volume*. Ed. by I. Tatišvili, M. Hvedelidze, and L. Gordeziani. Caucasian and Near Eastern Studies 8. Tbilisi: Ivane Javakhishvili Institute of History and Ethnology, 203–227.
- (2011). Sarduri. *Reallexikon der Assyriologie und Vorderasiatischen Archäologie* 12:39–42.
- Schmitt, R. (1980). “Armenische” Namen in altpersischen Quellen. *Annual of Armenian Linguistics* 1:7–17.
- Schulz, F.E. (1840). Mémoire sur le lac de Van et ses environs. *JA* 9:257–323.
- Seidl, U. (1994). Achaimenidische Entlehnungen aus der urartäischen Kultur. In: *Achaemenid History VIII. Continuity and Change. Proceedings of the Last Achaemenid History Workshop, April 6–8 1990, Ann Arbor-Michigan*. Ed. by H. Sancisi-Weerdenburg, A. Kuhrt, and M. Cool Root. Leiden: Brill, 107–129.
- (2004). Bronzekunst Urartus. *Beschriftete Bronzen*:18–124.
- Thureau-Dangin, F. (1912). *Une relation de la huitième campagne de Sargon (714 av. J.-C.)*, TCL III. Paris: P. Geuthner.
- Wilhelm, G. (1986). Urartu als Region der Keilschrift-Kultur. In: *Das Reich Urartu. Ein altorientalischer Staat im 1. Jahrtausend v. Chr.* Ed. by V. Haas. (Xenia 17). Konstanz: Universitätsverlag.