Over the Mountains and Far Away

Studies in Near Eastern history and archaeology

presented to Mirjo Salvini on the occasion of his 80th birthday

edited by

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Contents

Editorial .................................................................................................................................................... iv
Foreword ...................................................................................................................................................... v
Bibliography ............................................................................................................................................... vi

Bīsotūn, ‘Urartians’ and ‘Armenians’ of the Achaemenid Texts, and the Origins of the Exonyms Armina and Arminiya .. vii
Gregory E. Areshian

Human Images from the Eastern Urartian Periphery: Anthropomorphic Sculpture of Syunik on the Cusp of the 2nd and 1st Millenia BC ........................................................................................................................................................................ 9
Hayk Avetisyan, Artak Gnuni, Gagik Sargsyan and Arsen Bobokhyan

Cult-Places of Ancient Armenia: A Diachronic View and an Attempt of Classification ........................................ 19
Pavel Avetisyan and Arsen Bobokhyan

The Elamite Tablets from Armarv-Blur (Armenia): A Re-Examination .................................................................. 34
Miqayel Badalyan, Gian Pietro Basello and Roberto Dan

Šiuini: The Urartian Sun god ....................................................................................................................... 46
Miqayel Badalyan

Protective Clay Figurines in the Urartian Fortresses ..................................................................................... 58
Atilla Batmaz

Mesopotamians and Mesopotamian Learning at Hattusa, Thirty Years On ....................................................... 65
Gary Beckman

Too Many Horns in the Temple of the God Hadad of Aleppo at the Time of the Ebla Archives! ..................... 71
Maria Giovanna Biga

The Roots of the Urartian Kingdom: The Growth of Social Complexity on the Armenian Plateau Between Ancient Bronze and Early Iron Ages .................................................................................................................. 74
Raffaele Biscione

Thoughts about the Audience-Hall of Naramsin at Tell Asmar-Ešnunna .................................................................................................................. 90
Felix Blocher

The Urartian God Quera and the Metamorphosis of the ‘Vishap’ Cult .................................................................. 98
Arsen Bobokhyan, Alessandra Gilibert and Pavol Hnila

Laḫmu, ‘The Hairy One’, and the Puzzling Issue of Mythology in Middle Assyrian Glyptic Art .......................... 106
Dominik Bonatz

The First Gilgamesh Conjectures About the Earliest Epic .................................................................................. 114
Giorgio Buccellati

Ayanis Fortress: Only a Military Fortress or More? ...................................................................................... 120
Altan Çilingiroğlu

Granaries in Urartu and Neighboring States and the Monumentalization of Administrative Records ................. 134
Birgit Christiansen

Hasanlu, the Southern Caucasus and Early Urartu .......................................................................................... 144
Megan Cifarelli

The King of the Rock Revisited: The Site of As-Sila (Tafila, Jordan) and the Inscription of Nabonidus of Babylon ........................................................................................................................................... 157
Rocío Da Riva

A New Painting Fragment from Erebuni and an Overview of Urartian Wall Paintings ...................................... 171
Roberto Dan, Yeghis Keheyan, Nelli Hovhannisyan, Artur Petrosyan, Yelena Atoyants, Priscilla Vitolo and Boris Gasparyan

New Observations Regarding the Urartian Inscription of the Tul-e Talesh Bracelet ..................................... 187
Maryam Dara

Nouvelles réflexions relatives à la fin du royaume d’Ourartou – la forteresse d’Erebuni vers la fin du VIIe siècle av. J.-C. ........................................................................................................................................... 191
Stéphane Deschamps, François Fichet de Clairfontaine and Mary Karapetyan

Quand dieu aide les vainqueurs ...................................................................................................................... 203
Jean-Marie Durand
The Relationship between State and Nomads in the Urartian Kingdom .............................................................................. 207
Aylin Ü. Erdem

Alcune considerazioni sulla posizione di Uršum e Haššum/Haššuwa: dal commercio paleo-assiro al regno di Hattušili I .................................................................................................................. 212
Massimo Forlanini

L’espressione (AN)PANI NP nei colofoni ittiti ............................................................................................................ 220
Rita Francia

From Khazane Kapoussi/Hazine Kapsı to Analıkız: Rethinking a Place at Tušpa Citadel ......................................................... 231
Bülent Genç

Some Remarks on Qulḫa ............................................................................................................................................................ 241
Levan Gordeziani

The Problem of the Origin of the Urartian Scribal School .................................................................................................. 244
Yervand Grekyan

The Cross Statue as a Symbol of Christianizing Armenia .................................................................................................. 263
Grigor Grigoryan

Oshakan Tomb No. 25 Revisited ............................................................................................................................................. 266
Michael Herles

Urartian Envoys to Ashurbanipal’s Court – Some Remarks on the Assyro-Urartian Relations in the First Half of the 7th Century BC ........................................................................................................ 283
Krzysztof Hipp

The ‘City of Haldi’ in the Land of Uaza .................................................................................................................................... 292
Simon Hmayakyan

Urartian Inscriptions at the Van Museum. A New Collection .................................................................................................. 296
Kenan İşık

Towards the Reconstruction of the Hurro-Urartian Protolanguage .......................................................................................... 304
Margarit Khachikyan

A New Rock-Cut Tomb in Van Fortress/Tushpa ...................................................................................................................... 307
Erkan Konyar

Upper Euphrates Political Geography Reconsidered ............................................................................................................. 312
Aram Kosyan

The Urartian Rock-Cut Chamber at Yelpin / Armenia ............................................................................................................. 317
Stephan Kroll

Le terre di Urartu nella descrizione di Strabone .................................................................................................................... 324
Gianfranco Maddoli

The Armenian Patronymic Arcruni .......................................................................................................................................... 331
Hrach Martirosyan

Iron Age Luvian tarrawann(i)- ................................................................................................................................................... 337
H. Craig Melchert

An Echo of Assyria in Plutarch’s Life of Alexander .................................................................................................................. 346
Sarah C. Melville

Lo strano caso del Sig. VITA+RA/l, scriba ‘4’ alla corte ittita .................................................................................................. 354
Clelia Mora

From Petroglyphs to Alphabet. A Brief Characterization of the Writing Culture of Pre-Christian Armenia ................. 359
Artak Movsisyan

New Iri-Sağrig Ration Distribution and Related Texts ........................................................................................................... 371
David I. Owen

Le melograne della basilica di Santa Cecilia in Trastevere .................................................................................................... 381
Neda Parmegiani

On the Ethnic Origin of the Ruling Elite of Urartu .................................................................................................................. 386
Armen Petrosyan

Solak 1. Una fortezza urartea nella valle del Hrazdan, Armenia ............................................................................................. 391
Artur Petrosyan, Roberto Dan and Priscilla Vitolo

Un piccolo frammento di una lunga storia: un cammello a Tell Barri/Kahat (Siria) ............................................................. 401
Raffaella Pierobon Benoit
New Ways of Etymologizing Certain Fragments of the Cuneiform Inscription of Tanahat .......................... 418
Ashot Piliposyan

A Note about an Ewer of Probable Anatolian Production, from One of the Tombs of the Assyrian Queens at Nimrud 426
Frances Pinnock

Armenian Toponyms in the 'Patria Quae Dicitur Parthia' according to the Cosmographia of Ravennas Anonymus .... 434
Daniel T. Potts

Updates on Verbal Transitivity and Nominal Ellipsis in Hittite ........................................................................ 438
Jaan Puhvel

The Assyria-Urartu Relationship and the Political Role of Mercenaries .......................................................... 440
Julian Edgeworth Reade

Zur Frage des Weiterlebens urartäischer Namen in achaimenidischer Zeit .................................................... 457
Rüdiger Schmitt

Auf der Suche nach einem Reichsgott für Urartu ....................................................................................... 465
Ursula Seidl

Everyday Life in Trialeti (South Caucasus) in the Middle and the Second Half of the 2nd Millennium BC .......... 476
Nino Shanshashvili and Goderdzi Narimanishvili

A New Fragment of an Inscription of Rusa, Son of Argišti, from the susi Temple of Bastam, Iran .................. 501
Marie-Claude Trémouille, Roberto Dan, Keomars Haji Mohammad and Ebrahim Bodaghi

'Excavating' Looted Tombs at Pessinus (2011-2013) .................................................................................. 511
Gocha R. Tsetskhladze

The Bronze Stamp Seals of Marlik: Evidence of Bronze Age Links with Eastern Iran and Central Asia .......... 525
Ali A. Vahdati and Amir Saed Mucheshi

Beyt’a Mêzînê A Trace of the Qur’anic Influence on the Yezidi Oral Religious Tradition .......................... 532
Vardan Voskanian

The Ethno-Cultural Diversity of Central Anatolian Early Iron Age Inhabitants ........................................... 537
Jak Yakar

The Mighty Weapon of Tarhunt ......................................................................................................................... 544
Ilya Yakubovich

Illiterate Urartians: Writing and the Ayanis Outer Town ................................................................................. 560
Paul Zimansky
Granaries in Urartu and Neighboring States and the Monumentalization of Administrative Records

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Abstract: The present article revisits the Urartian inscriptions concerning granaries and discusses them in a broader ancient Near Eastern context. In comparison with Hieroglyphic Luwian and Assyrian sources from the Middle and Neo-Assyrian period it highlights the characteristics of the Urartian inscriptions and addresses them as monumentalized manifestations of archival records of the storage of grain. On the basis of detailed analyses of the Urartian and other ancient Near Eastern sources it will be argued that the Urartian verb *šu*- which describes the royal activities related to granaries has the meaning ‘to fill’ rather than ‘to build’ or ‘install’. Furthermore, the structure and function of an *ašiḫusı̂* building, which according to some inscriptions was related to granaries, will be discussed in the light of Middle Assyrian administrative records. Special attention will be laid on CTU I A 9–20 from Arin-berd and the phrases *andani* DUB-ti-ni-e and *salmāthi* DUB-ti-ni-e in lines 8 and 10 of this text. This study thus aims to contribute to the understanding of an important institution for the safeguarding of the food supply, which obviously played a prominent role both in the Urartian state administration and the royal ideology of the Urartian kings.

Keywords: Urartian inscriptions, granaries in Urartu, the Neo-Hittite states and Assyria, monumental inscriptions, administrative records, monumentalization of archival records, Urartian *šu*- ‘fill’, Urartian *andani* ‘right (side)’, Urartian *salmāthi* ‘left (side)’, Urartian *ašiḫusı̂* building, *barzidibdani* building, *ašiḫusı̂* building

1. Introduction

[*šu*]‘granary’, *barzidibdani* building, *ašiḫusı̂* building

and laid up the food in the cities’ so that he gathered as much grain ‘as the sand of the sea, until he stopped counting, for it was immeasurable’ (Genesis 41, 48–49).

Besides this famous biblical narrative there are also numerous other textual and archaeological sources from ancient Egypt and the ancient Near East informing us about the storage of grain, the respective storage facilities, and their administration.2

The written sources belong to various genres ranging from administrative records, legal texts, letters and inscriptions to narrative texts.

Among them is the famous account of Sargon’s II’s eighth campaign in the year 714 BC against Urartu in his letter to the god Aššur. In several passages Sargon reports that he looted the granaries of cities under Urartu’s control. By doing so, he depicts the storage facilities and the amount of grain with words that are similar to those of the Joseph story. Sargon states that he opened ‘innumerable large amount of granaries’ and let his troops eat ‘infinite quantities of grain’.3 In col. iii 262–263 Sargon further refers to the function of the granaries as long-term storage facilities for grain. He reports that he let his army load the huge stores of grain, which had been heaped up in the granaries over a long time for the sustenance of the land and its people, on horses, mules, camels and donkeys,

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2 For Egypt see Papazian 2013: 59-70 with further literature; for depictions of granaries in tombs of the Old Kingdom see Siebels 2001: 85-99; for ancient Near Eastern written records see Breckwoldt 2011: 636-637 with further literature; for ancient Near Eastern archaeological findings see Margueron 2011: 637-639 with further literature; for the Hittite kingdom of the 2nd millennium see Seeher 2000: 261-301.


For a new edition of the whole text see Mayer 2013; for an English translation see Fales 2017. A handcopy of the tablet (Louvre AO 5372) has been published by Thureau-Dangin 1912: Plates I-XXII, for photographs see Thureau-Dangin 1912: Plates XXII–XXX. For a list of additional fragments held in Berlin see Mayer 2013: 3.
and piled them up anew inside his encampment (as high as) ruin-mounds.9

Sargon’s description certainly aims to highlight primarily his and his army’s great achievements. At the same time, though, it reflects Sargon’s appreciation of the Urartian facilities for the long-term storage of grain and their considerable number and size. That his account had a real basis is confirmed by several Urartian stone and rock inscriptions.

Compared to the great number of archival texts dealing with grain storage, stone inscriptions addressing this topic are much scarcer in the ancient Near East. The Urartian inscriptions take a prominent role among them due to their contents and great number. It is particularly notable that most of these inscriptions exclusively record the filling of the granaries by the ruler and specify the amount of grain stored in them. Only a small number of inscriptions are more elaborate in that they mention also the construction of an appertaining building.

This characteristic element makes them appear to be monumentalized manifestations of archival records of the storage of grain. Among the ancient Near Eastern sources similar inscriptions are only known to the Neo-Hittite states. However, only two of them show a greater resemblance to the Urartian sources in that they record the amount of grain stored in the granaries.

This distinctive element in the Urartian epigraphic sources, along with Sargon’s account, indicates that the granaries and the related buildings played a prominent role, not only in the state administration, but also in the royal ideology of the Urartian kings. Therefore it is hardly astonishing that they have already been addressed in several studies.5

The present study adds to this by discussing the Urartian sources in a broader ancient Near Eastern context. In particular, I will revisit the meaning of the verb šu- which appears in the standard formula with the word ʾari ‘granary’ as object. Furthermore, I will reconsider the structure and function of an ašišu building, which is mentioned in two inscriptions along with one or two granaries, in the light of Middle Assyrian administrative records. In doing so, I will pay special attention to CTU I A 9–20 from Arin-berd and the phrases andani DUB-ti-ni-e and salmatuši DUB-ti-ni-e in lines 8 and 10 of this text. In addition, the inscribed stone objects and the process of monumentalizing archival records reflected in the Urartian inscriptions will be addressed in light of other sources from the ancient world.

2. References

The Urartian word for granary is ʾari or rather ʾare/ara.6 Apparently, the word can refer to both a whole building, a section of the building, or a single storeroom belonging to it. The latter is shown by two inscriptions of Sarduri II, son of Argišti I, thus, CTU I A 9–19 from Arin-mavir, mentions two granaries as part of a barziddubuni building (ʾbarziddubuni), whereas CTU I A 9–20 from Arin-berd mentions two granaries related to an ašišuš building (ʾašišuši).

Furthermore, the great variety between the specifications of the amounts of grain stored in the granaries, ranging from 1432 to 32,000 kapi, indicates great differences in size. For instance, CTU I A 14–5 of Rusa, son of Erimen on a fragmentary stone block from Arin-mavir reports the storage of 1432 kapı of grain (likely 12,960 l) whereas in CTU I A 8–29 of Argišti I the specified amount of grain is 52,057 kapi (likely 961.710 liter).7

The earliest attestation of the term ʾari ‘granary’ is to be found in CTU I A 5–66 of Minua, son of Ifšuini. Further references are attested in nine inscriptions of Minua’s son Argišti I, 17 inscriptions of Sarduri, son of Argišti I and two inscriptions of Rusa, son of Erimen.8

Altogether, 37 forms of the word ʾari are attested in these inscriptions. Three of them are only partially preserved, but on contextual grounds are clearly to be identified as writings of ʾari. Among the 37 attestations there are 35 attestations in the absolute singular (ʾari) and two are in the absolute plural (ʾarišu). The attestations in CTU I A 9–19 lines 8 and 9 are to be interpreted as dative singular forms (ʾari-e).

The absolute singular forms appear in four different syllabic writings:

2. ʾa-ri-e (2x): CTU I A 5–66.3, A 9–19.11
4. ʾa-ri-e (1x): CTU I A 14–6.2

11. Here, the kapı unit is exclusively used as a measurement of grain, whereas the measurement of wine is aqarqi and the measurement of oil is firišu.

The equivalent 1 kapı = 30 liters is based on the assumption that 1 kapı equals 1 BANEŠ. This equation is based on the fact that in the inscription CTU I A 9–19 of Sarduri II the amount of the grain stored in one room is given in kapı, while the amount of grain stored in the other room is given in BANEŠ, which in the Neo-Assyrian standard presumably equals 30 liters. For a discussion see Salvini 2010: 364–367 with further literature.

8. The chronology of the Urartian kings, particularly with regard to Rusa, son of Erimen, is still a matter of debate. For the discussion see, inter alia, Salvini 2007; Fuchs 2012; Kroll 2012; Roaf 2012; Seidl 2012; Linke 2015: 308–312. I follow here the chronology suggested by Roaf (Sarduri, son of Argišti → Rusa, son of Erimen → Rusa, son of Erimen (opponent of Sarduri II) → Argišti, son of Rusa). This chronology is also supported by the granary inscriptions, which in this case would have been authored by three kings in immediate sequence: Minua, son of Ifšuini (approx. 820–785/780); Argišti I, son of Minua (approx. 785/780–756); Sarduri II, son of Argišti (approx. 756–735 or later); and Rusa, son of Erimen (from 722 or earlier to 714/713).
Among the three partially preserved forms, there are two forms of which only the first sign ‘A is preserved (CTU I A 8–34.4, A 9–21.3) and one form of which the first sign ‘A and the first half of the second sign RI is identifiable (CTU I A 14–5.2). For reasons of space all forms are likely to be restored by non-plene writings (‘a- ri).’

The attestations in the absolute plural are also non-plene writings (‘a-ri-l, CTU I A 9–19.8, A 9–20.7). The dative singular forms are both written ‘a-ri-e (CTU I A 9–19.8).9

Within the overall amount of 37 attestations 10 forms are preceded by the determinative É. Except for the absolute singular form in CTU I A 14–6.2 (‘a-ri-e) all absolute singular forms with plene writing are written without determinatives.


One of the absolute plural forms is attested with the determinative É (CTU I A 9–19.7), the two other attestations are written without it (CTU I A 9–19.8 and A 9–19.9). The latter is also true for the dative singular forms in CTU I A 19.8 and A 9–19.9.

3. Types, proveniences and archaeological contexts of the inscribed objects

Most of the inscriptions referring to granaries are engraved in stone blocks or stone slabs which were part of the building structure of their respective buildings. However, the inscription CTU I A 5–66 of Minua and thus the eldest inscription referring to a granary, is inscribed in a niche in the rocks of the north-western slope of Van Kalesi.10 Besides A 5–66, there is only one granary inscription from Sardurišninili/ Çağustepe which had apparently been found in situ (A 9–31 of Sarduri, son of Argišti, the founder of the city. In contrast to A 5–66, A 9–31 can be assigned to a room which probably was used as a granary, namely room 2 of Uçkağ whose measurements are 11 × 8.8 m = 98.8 m². Also other inscriptions of Çağustepe have been found close to rooms that might be identified with the ‘ari buildings the inscriptions refer to.

Furthermore, one inscription of Minua’s son Argišti I mentioning a granary is engraved in a stele discovered in the mountains near Sarkamši (CTU I A 8–6). This text, however, shows not one of the standard formulae, but refers to a granary in the framework of military achievements. Due to its fragmentary state, the exact wording remains unclear.11

The inscriptions on stone blocks or stone slabs dating from the reigns of Minua, Argišti I, Sarduri II and Rusa, son of Erimena are all very short and formulaic. They can be divided into seven different types:

Type 1. Type 1 consists of a verbal clause regarding the royal activity on the granary and a verbless clause specifying the amount of grain stored in it. The verbal clause is referring to the granary by the word ‘ari in the absolute singular preceded by the demonstrative pronoun ini ‘this’ and in some cases by the determinative É ‘house’. At the beginning of the clause the ruler is mentioned by name and patronym as agent of the action in the ergative case. It is followed by a deictic reference to the granary in the absolute singular and sara ‘to fill’.12 The verbless clause consists of a number, the word kapi denoting the measurement unit of grain and the word ḥittin ‘here’.

One of these inscriptions is authored by Argišti I (A 8–22), the other ones are authored by either Sarduri II or Rusa, son of Erimena. Among the inscriptions of Sarduri II are CTU I A 9–22 (with the duplicates A and B) on a stone block from Arin-berd and the inscriptions CTU I A 9–30, A 9–31, and A 9–32 which are all engraved in stone slabs from Çağustepe. The two inscriptions of Rusa, son of Erimena concerning granaries, namely CTU I A 14–5 (stone fragment found at the slope of Armavir) and A 14–6 (stone from Arin-berd) belong both to this type.

As an example CTU I A 9–22 A will be cited:

1 n-de Sarri-du-ri-išše
2 *ar-šiš-ti-ḫi-ni-išše
3 i-ni ‘ari-šu-ni
4 10 LIM 1 ME ka-pi iš-ti-ni

1–10 Sarduri, son of Argišti, filled this granary. (1) 10,100 kapi (of grain are) here.

Type 2. Type 2 is a variant of Type 1. In addition to the latter's formula the verbal clause shows an adverbial phrase specifying the location of the granary (‘aššu=išni pi 'under the aššu=iš building'). This type is only attested in CTU I A 8–30 of Argišti I from Argištišninili/Armavir.14

Type 3. Similar to Types 1 and 2, Type 3 consists of a verbal clause referring to the filling of the granary and a verbless clause specifying the amount of grain stored in it. In contrast to the formular of Types 1 and 2 the verbal clause refers to the support of the god Ḫaldi through which the deed was achieved. Two versions of this phrase are attested. First, a phrase made up by the word ušamiš ‘protection’ in the ablative-instrumental case as head noun and the name of the god as genitive modifier (with ‘suffixal affixation’):

4 Ḫaldii=iš-N=ni ušamiš=ni ‘through the protection of the god Ḫaldi’ and second, a similar construction with the word alsuši ‘greatness’ in the ablative-instrumental case

4 Ḫaldii=iš=N=ni alsuši=ni ‘through the greatness of the god Ḫaldi’. The first variant (Type 3.1) is attested in inscriptions of Minua (CTU I A 5–66) and Argišti (A 8–27; A 8–29; A 8–31; A 8–32; and likely also A 8–34 where the word following the genitive modifier in line 1 is not preserved). The second variant (Type 3.2) is attested in inscriptions of Sarduri II (CTU I A 9–22A; A 9–24; A 9–25; A 9–26; A 9–27; A 9–28; A 9–29; A 9–33 and A 9–35A).

Type 4. Type 4 is only attested in CTU I A 9–19 of Sarduri II on a stone slab from Armavir. It consists of two verbal clauses referring to a barzidibduni building and appertaining granaries, two verbless clauses specifying the amount of

11 For the meaning of the verb šuš ‘to fill’ see section 4.
12 For a discussion of the word aššu see section 5.
grain stored in them and a verbless clause consisting of the ruler’s name and epithets (‘Sarduri, mighty king, king of the Bia lands, lord of the city Tušpa’).

The first verbal clause (lines 1–6a) states that Sarduri made the barziddibanid building through the support of the god Haldi in a deictic expression: ʾhal-di-ni ni al-su-i-ši-ni ʾmāsar -du-ri-šē ʾar-gis-ti-ū-ni-ši-ni ʾbar-zi-di-ib-du-ni za-du-ni ‘through the greatness of the god Haldi, Sarduri, son of Argišti made this barziddibanid building’.

The second verbal clause (lines 6b–7) is connected to the first by the conjunction e ’a ‘and’. It reports the filling of the granaries by the ruler in a deictic expression made up by the demonstrative pronoun ini ‘house’ and the congruent form of the verb šu- in the 3. person singular preterite: e ’a i-ni-li ʾa-ri-ši šú- ’a-li ‘and he filled these granaries’.

The two verbless clauses (lines 8–10 and lines 11–12) specifying the amount of grain stored in both granaries refer to them using the dative forms 1-stem and 2-stem ‘ari-e ‘in the first granary’ and 2-stem ‘ari-e followed by the respective number of kapi or, respectively BANES measures and the local adverb ishte ‘here’, or, respectively ‘there’: (8) 1-si-ni ‘a-ri-e (9) 10 LIM 1 LIM 8 ME #4 (10) ka-pi is-i-ši-ni (11) 2-ni ‘a-ri-e (12) 8 LIM 2 ME BANES is-i-ši-ni ‘in the first granary there (are) 11,884 kapi (of grain), in the second there (are) 8,200 BANES’.

Type 5. Type 5 is similar to Type 4 in that it refers to two granaries belonging to a building. In case of Type 5 it is not a barziddibanid, but an ʾiḥšišu building. Whereas the formula of the verbal clauses is the same as in Type 4, the verbless clauses specifying the amount of grain are different in that they refer to the granaries by the adverbial clauses andani DUB-ti-me ‘on the right side of the inscription’ and salmeni DUB-ti-me ‘on the left side of the inscription’. Moreover, the name of the ruler in the following verbless clause is followed by a patronym which is missing in the formula of Type 4 (CTU I A 9–19). Type 5 is attested only once, namely in CTU I A 9–20 of Sarduri II, son of Argišti I, on a stone slab from Arin-berd. The inscription will be discussed in more detail further below.

Type 6. This type is only attested once, namely in CTU I A 9–23 of Sarduri II from Arin-berd. It consists of a verbal clause reporting the ruler’s activity on the granary. The structure of this clause is similar to that of Type 1. In contrast to Types 1–5, a verbless clause specifying the amount of grain stored in the granary is missing. The fact that line 4 is left blank suggests that the clause was intended to be added at a later time.

Type 7. Type 7 is similar to Type 6 in that it lacks a verbless clause specifying the amount of grain stored in the granary. Since lines 6 and 7 are left blank the verbless clause was probably intended to be added at a later time, as is presumably the case in Type 6. Similar to Type 3.1 the verbal clause refers to the support of the god Haldi by the phrase Haldi-i-ši-ni ušmaši-ni ‘through the protection of the god Haldi’. Type 7 is attested only once, namely in CTU I A 8–33 from Pirabat.

4. The verb šu- and its meaning

The meaning of the word šu- has been differently defined. Some scholars translate the word with ‘build, construct, install’14 (according to Salvini possibly with the basic meaning ‘dig, excavate’),15 while others assume the meaning ‘to fill’ or ‘heap up’.16

To date, a detailed analysis is still wanting. I will therefore discuss the reasons for or against these interpretations and argue that the meaning ‘to fill’ is more likely.

1. In several inscriptions the statement reporting the activity of the ruler specified by the verb šu- is followed by a specification of the amount of grain stored in the building. If the verb šu- had the meaning ‘to fill’, both phrases would be directly linked; the amount of grain stored in the building would be the immediate consequence of the ruler’s action stated in the preceding sentence. This direct relationship would not exist if the meaning of šu- was ‘to build’ or ‘to install’.

2. The construction of buildings is usually referred to by phrases with the verb šid-, or its derivative šidist- ‘build, construct’ or the verb zad- ‘do, make’.17 The meaning ‘install, create, establish, found’ is otherwise conveyed by the verb ter- (with the basic meaning ‘put’). It is used with a great variety of objects like DUB ‘inscription’, timi ‘name’, ardishe ‘ritual’, meke ‘tribute’ and different sorts of gardens (sari ‘fruit orchard’, wulde ‘vineyard’).18

It is therefore unlikely that the construction of granaries is expressed by a different verb, namely šu-. Since šu-exclusively is used with ‘ari or the plural form arili as its subject it likely refers to a characteristic activity regarding granaries. This would be the case if the meaning of šu- were ‘to fill’.

3. The meaning ‘to fill’ is further supported by written sources from other ancient Near Eastern regions. Thus, most texts referring to granaries provide information about the contents of the store rooms. Typical positive activities involving granaries are the filling with grain or, respectively, the heaping up of the latter. Other texts refer to negative activities like the unauthorized opening of the buildings and the theft of the stored grain. The following are some examples referring to both royal and non-royal granaries.

Hieroglyphic Luwian inscriptions of the first half of the first millennium BC

Similar to the Urartian rulers Minua, Argišti I, Sarduri II, and Rusa, son of Erimenya, some rulers of the Neo-Hittite states refer to granaries in their inscriptions. By doing so, they report that they filled them up.

Thus, the ruler Aziwiwatas declares in the Hieroglyphic-Pheocnic bilingual text from Karatepe that he filled the granaries of the city Pahar:20

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17 For a convincing interpretation for the use of šid- and šidist- on the one hand and zad- ‘do, make’ on the other see Salvini 1998a: 146.
18 For references see CTU II: 212-214.
19 ČILI I Karatepe 1, 8VII (Hawkins 2000: 45-68). The city Pahar is also mentioned in a statue inscription of Shalmaneser III (858–824 BC)
If a slave burglarizes a granary [and finds grain in the granary], he shall [fill the granary with grain and shall pay 6 shekels silver. And he (the damaged party) shall look to his (the perpetrator’s) house for it.

Both in the Hittite laws and most Hieroglyphic Luwian inscriptions the action regarding the granary is referred to by the verb suwa/i. In Hittite the verb as well as the related adjective șu- ‘full’ is written with <$> or rather the cuneiform sign ȘU whereas the Hieroglyphic Luwian verb is written with the sign ŞU. If in Urartian <$> as in Hittite represents [s], the stem of the verb with the meaning ‘to fill’ would in all three languages be șu-. Kossian therefore convincingly suggested that the word might be a loan word originating in the Caucasian region. In any case, the Hieroglyphic Luwian and Hittite texts as well as the internal evidence of the Urartian inscriptions suggest that the basic meaning of the Urartian verb șu- is ‘to fill’ rather than ‘to build, install’.

Similarly, inscriptions of the Neo-Assyrian period mention the filling of granaries. Unlike the Urartian inscriptions they do not refer explicitly to the storage buildings, but only to the grain they piled up within them (ubûkku).

5. Royal granaries belonging to ašiḫuššu buildings and the terminology of CTU I A 9–20 from Arin-berd

As already mentioned, some inscriptions refer to granaries as part of a building complex, namely a construction called (i) barziddānu or a building called (ii)ašiḫuššu.

Thus, CTU I A 8–30 from Arğitûnûnûnûlû/Armavir (listed above as Type 2) refers to a granary under an ašiḫuššu building filled by Arğitû I whereas CTU I A 9–20 (Type 5) reports the construction of an ašiḫuššu building and the filling up of two appertaining granaries by Arğitû I’s son Sarduri II. Similarly, CTU I A 9–19 on a stone slab from Arğitûnûnûlû/Armavir mentions the construction of a barziddānu building and two related granaries.

Moreover, the fact that CTU I A 8–29 reporting the filling of a granary by Arğitû I was found in the area of a tower temple (Urartian <$>susi) suggests that granaries could also be part of such temples. The special significance of the adjoining granary is highlighted by the exceptional nature of the inscribed object, namely a perfectly square-cut stone ashlar of red porphyry and its superbly carved inscription.

The supposed structure of these buildings has been discussed in a number of publications by different scholars. Some information about the function of the barziddānu building is provided by a rectangular stone block bearing CTU I A 5–60 of Minuwa from Kohbants. The text reports that Minuwa built a barziddānu and established a sacrificial ritual there. The middle section of the text (lines 7–12) is only partially

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25 An exception is the above cited inscription from İskenderun (CHLI I/I 1IV.3 İskenderun; Hawkins 2000: 259).
27 Cf. RIMA 2 A.0.87.1 vi ll. 102–103 (Tiglath-pileser I); RIMA 2 A.0.98.2 ll. 64–65 (Aššūr-dān II); RIMA 2 A.0.99.1 li. 44 (Adad-nārārī II); RIMA 2 A.0.100.3 r. 3’ (probably a duplicate; Tukulti-Ninurta II); RIMA 2 A.0.100.17 lii 26–28; A.0.101.19 li. 85 (Aššūr-nāṣir-apil II); RINAP 4.113 iv 1–3 (Essarhaddon).
28 See Salvini 2008a: 363–364 with further references.
intelligible. In conjunction with the other information the mention of the troops (line 7, partially restored) and kings (line 11), however, suggests that the barzidbānu building was a cult building which played an important role for the kingship and the military.

With regard to the ašiḫusi building, the proximal space deixis ini 'ašiḫuse 'this ašiḫusi building’ in CTU I A 12–10 of Rusa, son of Argišti which is engraved in ten beautifully decorated cubic stone blocks of basalt allows us to identify the archaeological remains as part of the respective building. The same is true for CTU IV A 8–42 on a stone fragment.31

In contrast to CTU I A 8–30 and A 9–20 and similar to CTU IV A 8–42, CTU I A 12–10 of Rusa, son of Argišti does not refer to granaries. Yet, the fact that the blocks obviously had fallen down from a higher point into large pithoi storage rooms shows that also in this case the granaries were situated below the respective ašiḫusi building.32

Furthermore, CTU I A 5–65 of Minua, son of Išpuini, shows a similar proximal space deixis to an ašiḫusi building. Since the inscription is attested in three duplicates on cylindrical column bases it can be concluded that such a building had, or could have had, columns.

On the grounds of this archaeological and textual information, Salvini convincingly concluded ‘that the ašiḫusi building was an important representation building of the Urartian fortresses, which was directly and architectonically connected to the storage rooms (silos and cellars)’.33

Whereas Salvini refrained from giving a more specific definition or etymological explanation of the term ašiḫusi, other scholars suggested that it was a temple building, a sanctuary for libation offerings, or a banquet hall.34

The interpretation as a building for libations, which was based on an etymological explanation by König, was for good reasons rejected by Salvini.35 The interpretation as a banquet hall suggested by Wilhelm and Akdoğan is, however, better founded.

Based on Salvini’s hypothesis that the noun is to be analysed as *ašiḫ-ḫi(i)-usi* and thus as a compound of the root *aši*, the derivational suffix -(i)-ši ‘belonging to’ and the suffix -usi which is also attested as a suffix in the word urišhūši,36 Wilhelm and Akdoğan interpret the word as a cognate of Hurrian ašöhe (or, respectively, ažeöhe) with the suffix -usi.

Since ašöhe in the passage KBo 32.13 ii 24–26 of the Hurrian-Hittite bilingual text is translated with Hittite adātar ‘(state of) eating’, a derived noun from the verb ed-/ad- ‘to eat’, they conclude that the Urartian ašiḫusi building functioned as a building for the consumption of food.37

Based on the Urartian evidence and the fact that the passage in the bilingual text as well as other attestations of the Hurrian word refer to banquets of deities, Wilhelm and Akdoğan convincingly argued that the ašiḫusi building was likely a banquet hall.38

As for its structure, CTU I A 8–30 and A 9–20, as well as the archaeological evidence, are illuminating. CTU I A 8–30 indicates that the ašiḫusi building was built above a granary. Similarly, CTU I A 9–20 shows that the ašiḫusi building and the granaries mentioned in this inscription were situated close to each other.

CTU I A 9–20, however, does not indicate that the granaries were located below the ašiḫusi building. Yet, since the text does not provide precise information about the spacial link between the ašiḫusi building and the granaries, it can very well be that the ašiḫusi, similarly to the one mentioned in CTU I A 8–30, was built on top of the storage rooms.

Apart from the number of storage rooms, the structure of the building complexes mentioned in the two inscriptions might therefore be similar in that the respective granaries were located in the basement or cellar. The evidence of CTU I A 9–20 points additionally to a building complex consisting of a corridor or courtyard leading to two storage rooms for grain: one on its right and another one on its left side.

That one of the granaries referred to in CTU I A 9–20 was situated on the left side of the building complex and the other one on its right can be deduced by the wording of lines 8–12 of the inscription. Since these lines have been translated in different ways it appears reasonable to discuss them in detail in their context.39

1 ḫal-di-i-ni-ni
2 al-su-ū-i-i-ni
3 mašar-du-ri-i-še
4 ‘ar-giš-ti-hi-ni-ni-še
5 i-ni ‘a-li-ši-ḫu-si
6 za-du-ni e- ‘a-i-ni-li
7 ‘a-ri-li ši- ‘a-li
8 an-da-ni DUB-ti-ni-e
9 10 LIM 2 LIM 6 ME BANEŠ iš-ti-ni
10 sal-ma-at-hi DUB-ti-ni-e
11 10 LIM 1 LIM 5 ME BANEŠ iš-ti-ni
12 PAP 20 LIM 4 LIM 1 ME BANEŠ iš-ti-ni
13 mašar-du-ri-i-ni
14 ‘ar-gi-iš-ti-e-ḫi
15 MAN DAN-NU MAN kib-bi-a-i-na-ul-e
16 a-ḫu-si ute-su-ša URU

While Salvini, Wilhelm and Akdoğan interpret andani and salmati as adverbs without a dependent noun and DUB-ti-ni-e as an absolute singular form and thus translate: ‘on the right side (there is) an inscription (of the contents): 12,600 BANEŠ are here, on the left side (there is) an inscription

35 Both words have already been related to each other by Melikşvili 1960: 391 who interprets urišhūši as a derivation of uriš ‘weapon’ possibly denoting a weapons room or house. For the meaning of urišhūši see also Salvini 1979a: 584-586 and 1998b: 126 with note 13 who translates the word as ‘treasury’.
38 The transliteration is based on the one given by Salvini 2008a: 444-445 (= CTU I A 9–20).
(of the contents): 11,500 BANEŠ are here, respectively, ‘according to the inscription on the right’, according to the inscription on the left, Melikishvili and Arutjunjan understand DUB-ti-ni-e as a dependent noun of andani or, respectively, salmati.

Melikishvili 1971: 250 translates the clauses as follows:

s одной (стороной) надписи (зернохранилище, которое вмещает) 11,600 капу, с другой (стороной) надписи (зернохранилище, которое вмещает) 11,500 капу.

On the one (side) of the inscription (gen. sg.) (is a granary that contains) 12,600 καπί, on the other (side) of the inscription – (a granary that contains) 11,500 καπί.

Arutjunjan 2011: 269 (= KUKN 265) gives no translation for

(а granary that contains) 11,500 καπί, sometimes also as prepositions.44

On the right side (of the inscription) (is a granary that contains) 12,600 καπί, с другой (стороны) надписи (зернохранилище, которое вмещает) 12,600 καπί, с одной (стороны) надписи (зернохранилище, которое вмещает) 11,500 καпі.

Arutjunjan 2011: 269 (= KUKN 265) gives no translation for

(а granary that contains) 11,500 καπί.

Studies Presented to Mirjo Salvini


46 For the interpretation of andani and salmati as cognates of Hurrian kurunī and kuruni ‘at the side of’, which seem to function as postpositions and sometimes also as prepositions.44

Neither authors, however, identify the case of the correspondent Urartian word DUB-ti-ni-e, which have been convincingly interpreted by Salvini as ‘on the right side’ and ‘on the left side’, are also elsewhere construed with a dependent noun with the ending ni/e.42 The dependent noun can either precede or follow the local adverb.

The grammatical function of the two words can be compared with edini ‘because of, for’, bedini ‘on behalf of’ and probably also kurunī at ‘the side of’ which seem to function as postpositions construed with nouns ending in ni/ne, and thus likely the ablative-instrumental case. As in Hurrian they are likely originally nouns functioning as postpositions and sometimes also as prepositions.44

Cf. the following attestations:

CTU I A 5–21 lines 9–13:

(10)URUú-QU-a-an-ni (11)URUz-gu-ḫi-e (12)URUir-nu-ni-ni (13)URUba-si-i-ni

On the right side of the city Uqʻa (Uqʻa-i-šari adani) I subdued the city Zuguše, the city Irnuni and the city Abasini.

CTU I A 9–3 vi 5b–6:

(11)URUŠa-ma-at-ṭi (12)URUša-ma-at-ṭi a-an-ni a-al-du-bi sal-ma-at-ḥi (13)URUŠa-ma-at-ṭi ʾa-an-ni ʾa-al-du-bi sal-ma-at-ḥi

On the right side I subdued the land Eriah, on the left side of the land Quriani (salmati xustiquriani-ni) I went on a campaign to the land Ígani.

CTU I A 9–4 lines 12–15:

Thus Salvini 2008a: 445: ‘a destra c’è un’iscrizione dal tenore ‘12,600 BANEŠ (sono) qui (contenute)’, a sinistra(?) c’è un’iscrizione dal tenore ‘11,500 BANEŠ (sono) qui (contenute)’.

Thus Wilhelm and Akgōdan 2011: ‘Der Inschrift rechts (zufolge) sind 12,600 kapi-Maßeinheiten (Getreide) darin, der Inschrift links (zufolge sind) 12,600 kapi-Maßeinheiten (Getreide) darin,...’

42 For the interpretation of andani and salmati as cognates of Hurrian kurunī and kuruni ‘at the side of’, which seem to function as postpositions and sometimes also as prepositions.44

Thus, CTU I A 9–20 points presumably not to further inscriptions, but to two granaries situated on its left and right side. Hence, it is likely to be translated in the following way:

(1-2) Through the greatness of the god Haššu (3-4)Sarduri, son of Argišti (5-7) made this aššu-is building and filled these granaries. (8-9) On the right side of the inscription (there) are (12,600 BANEŠ (of grain), (10-11) On the left side (there) are (11,500 BANEŠ (of grain), (12) Altogether (there) are (24,100 BANEŠ (of grain), (13-14) Sarduri, son of Argišti, mighty king, king of the Bia lands, lord of the city Tūspa.

This evidence is of particular interest when compared with Middle Assyrian administrative records from Ashur (Qalat Sherqat), Kār-Tukulti-Ninurta (Tulul al-ʿAqr), and Dūr-Katlimmu (Tell Shē-Ḥamad), and some other cities mentioning karmū buildings that have been identified as granaries. Thus, many of these records specify the location of the storage room in which the grain is stored by the terms ‘on the right side’ (ana emittāni) or ‘on the left side’ (ana šumēlāni).

Cf., for instance, the following attestations:

MARV 2, 23 (Ashur):

(10)barley [a-n-a tar-ba-[ṣi]] (11)ṣa kar-mi i-na e-ra-be a-na e-[m]-li- (12)ṣa kar-mi ša qa-an-ni ša U[DU]N pa-pi-[ri] (barley) piled up (ka[rin], line 17) in the courtyard of the granary, at the entrance to the right, (and??) in the granary which (is) close to the oven of the beer bread.

MARV 2, 23 (Ashur):

(10)barley a-na tar-ba-ṣi ša [kar-mi] (11)ṣa be-ta-nu i-na e-ra-be a-na šu-me-[li] (22)ṣa ša ma-ṣa-tu-su a-na tar-ba-ṣi ša [kar-mi] ša ak-nu-tu-ni [kar-mi] ša ma-ṣa-tu-su a-na tar-ba-ṣi ša ak-nu-tu-ni

46 For the interpretation of andani and salmati as cognates of Hurrian wandani/i ‘right’ and šapalli ‘left’ see Salvini 1970: 409-410.

48 This transliterations and translations given here are based on Faist and Lloï 2012: 20-23.
of Dūr-Katlimmu. A building complex could be identified as the governor's palace. Clay sealings on sacks, vessels and doors have been found in the room which was used for the storage of grain. Moreover, also a thick layer of carbonized grain had been found proving that a long central corridor leading to smaller rooms on its lower floor consisted of a granary of Dūr-Katlimmu very likely belonged to the building complex excavated in this city.

One of the granaries of Dūr-Katlimmu is stored (barley) in one granary at Hubrenu’s. (Barley is stored) in two granaries at Hulālu’s house. (Barley) is stored in the granary of the entrance to the right.

Moreover, some texts mention more than one granary:

No. 75 (DeZ 3848/15) (Dūr-Katlimmu/Tell Šeh-Šemad):

(barley) is stored in the granary on the right, the little granary, ... (barley) is stored in two granaries ... (barley) is stored in the granary, at the entrance to the left, in the granary which (is) next to the staircase, whose point where the grain was extracted is directed to the courtyard.

No. 69 (DeZ 2494) (Dūr-Katlimmu):

(barley) is stored in the granary of the main street at the entrance to the left.

No. 93 (DeZ 2528) (Dūr-Katlimmu/Tell Šeh-Šemad):

(barley) is stored in the granary on the right, the little granary, ... (barley) is stored in two granaries ... (barley) is stored in one granary at Hubrenu’s.

One of the granaries of Dūr-Katlimmu very likely belonged to building P, excavated in this city. Its lower floor consisted of a long central corridor leading to smaller rooms on its left and right side. In one of these rooms, namely room A, a thick layer of carbonized grain had been found proving that the room was used for the storage of grain. Moreover, also clay sealings on sacks, vessels and doors have been found in the room, as have many texts. On the basis of these texts the building complex could be identified as the governor’s palace of Dūr-Katlimmu.

There is, however, no indication that the building consisted of a portico which might have served as a banquet hall. Instead, the second storey, like the first storey, was composed of several rather small rooms. Therefore, this building cannot be considered a parallel for the aşıhus building with its appertaining granaries.

It is more illuminating to compare the Urartian and Assyrian texts with particular consideration for the objects used as writing material, their archaeological contexts, and the contents and function of the texts.

In doing so, it becomes obvious that the Urartian inscriptions reporting the filling of granaries and specifying the amount of grain stored in them show a resemblance to administrative records which were usually written down on clay or perishable material and kept in archives.

These Urartian inscriptions can therefore be regarded as monumental representations of archival records. They are not, however, one-to-one counterparts of the latter. Instead, most of them show elements that are typical for ancient Near Eastern royal inscriptions. These are, in particular, the reference to divine support through which the deed was accomplished (inscriptions of Types 3a and b), and the enumeration of royal epithets as in CTU I 1 A 9–19 of Sarduri II (Type 4). Further, also the proximal space deixis to the buildings is a typical element of monumental inscriptions.

However, except for the proximal space deixis, these elements are not present in the Types 1, 2, 5 and 6 inscriptions of Sarduri II and Rusa, son of Erímena. The primary function of these inscriptions is to record administrative activities rather than to highlight the greatness of the rulers and their magnificent achievements.

As the comparison with the Hieroglyphic Luwian inscription CHLI 1 Karkamiš i 30h from the Neo-Hittite states shows, Urartu is not the only culture where this phenomenon can be observed. On the contrary, from the first millennium onwards a tendency to engrave texts of administrative contents on stone monuments is also noticeable in other regions, in particular, the Greco-Roman world.

While this phenomenon has been studied in view of these sources, the Urartian and Neo-Hittite inscriptions have, to my knowledge, not been the subject of scholarly analysis in this regard. Since these aspects are of great importance for the study of the ancient world, and especially written culture, it seems appropriate to highlight that this phenomenon is already apparent before the Hellenistic period.

As for the relationship between Urartu and Assyria, the Urartian inscriptions make clear that their kings, although having borrowed the cuneiform script (and other achievements) from Assyria, forged new pathways in using this writing.

Bibliography


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*See Jakob 2003: 323–325.*

*See, e.g., Davies 2003; Corbier 2006; Haensch 2009.*


Abbreviations of text editions

CTU I = Salvini 2008a.
CTU II = Salvini 2008b.
CTU III = Salvini 2008c.
CTU IV = Salvini 2012.
MARV 2 = Freydank 1982.
RINAP 4 = Leichty 2011.
TCL = Thureau-Dangin 1912.
UKN = Melikišvili 1960.
UKN II = Melikišvili 1971.