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MILITARY AND MILITIA IN THE URARTIAN STATE¹

ERİM KONAKÇI AND MAHMUT BİLGE BAŞTÜRK

Abstract

Just like other states in the 9th century BC, the most crucial institution for the Urartians was the existence of a vigorous army. Despite a lack of data directly relating to the Urartian army, one may easily see the overriding role of arms and armed men in Urartian culture. It is not only the repertory of weapons in the Urartian assemblage; an unarmed figure is hard to find in Urartian art. This paper aims to shed a modest light on the worldly and unworldly role of these armed men, with the help of the written and material evidence.

State of War and God of the State

The majority of Urartian inscriptions tell us about military operations and their successful outcomes. They do not give detailed information on the different classes forming the army or on its battle order, unlike their Assyrian counterparts; but they provide some data on numbers of soldiers and booty, the reliability of which will be discussed below, and they are generally concise: in response to rebellion, estrangement, discontent or the will of a god, the army marches upon the enemy, defeats it and returns to the homeland.

What is beyond doubt is the predominant role of one god, Haldi, who is not only the celebrated warrior leading the army with his weapon but also the main character, overshadowing the king and the entire army, in the success of any campaign. The success of the fighting depends mainly on the action of Haldi, rarely on that of something or someone else. The god attacking the enemy with his own weapon, the *šuri*, is mentioned not just in written sources, it can be traced in both iconographical and archaeological data. There is little doubt that the sparkling god with the glinting weapon on the shield from Upper Anzap (Fig. 1) is Haldi,² and a brief look at the ruined enemy obviously proves the power of the thrown *šuri* to both Urartian and modern observers (Fig. 2). Haldi's weapon can now be identified with a tangible example from Ayanis (Fig. 3), bearing a plain inscription:

¹ We would like to thank Altan Çilingiroğlu, Director of the Ayanis excavations, for his advice and guidance with this paper, and for his generous access to the Ayanis excavation archive; and the anonymous referees for their detailed comments and helpful suggestions. The Editor-in-Chief would like to thank Charles Burney for reading this paper and improving the English.

² Belli 1998, 40, fig. 18.

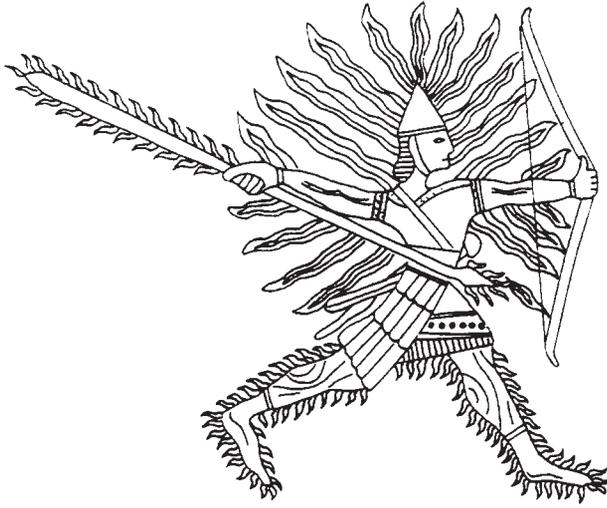


Fig. 1: The god Haldi with *šuri* on the bronze shield from Upper Anzaf (after Belli 1998, 40; detail from drawing 18).

‘To Haldi his lord, Rusa, son of Argišti, made and dedicated this lance/sword (*šuri*) for his life.’³

The relation between the chief god and weaponry is not limited to his *šuri*; plentiful evidence from different excavations illuminates this connection. On the rock inscription of Meher Kapısı,⁴ the renowned manifestation of the Urartian god-list, Haldi was not only honoured by the sacrifices dedicated to his personage, his weapons, belligerence and power were severally revered through a series of animal offerings. When one considers hundreds of arrows and spearheads, shields, quivers and helmets dedicated to the god in his temples (the major group of finds in the Urartian repertory), the combatant persona of Haldi indisputably comes into prominence.

It may not be surprising to see the main deity of an Iron Age theocratic monarchy as a great warrior. However, this vital role of Haldi is in some degree shared by the other divinities. Teišeba, the second god in the Urartian pantheon, also appears to be a warrior god. Like his Hurrian image Tešup, the god’s name is written by the same ideogram used for Enlil and Adad,⁵ the ancient storm and war gods of Mesopotamia,⁶ not only because Teišeba is the only Urartian god whose divine warlike

³ For *šuri* = lance, see Çilingiroğlu 1997, 142. For details, see Çilingiroğlu and Salvini 1999.

⁴ Melikishvili 1960, 27.

⁵ Piotrovskii 1966, 43.

⁶ Kendall 1977, 43.

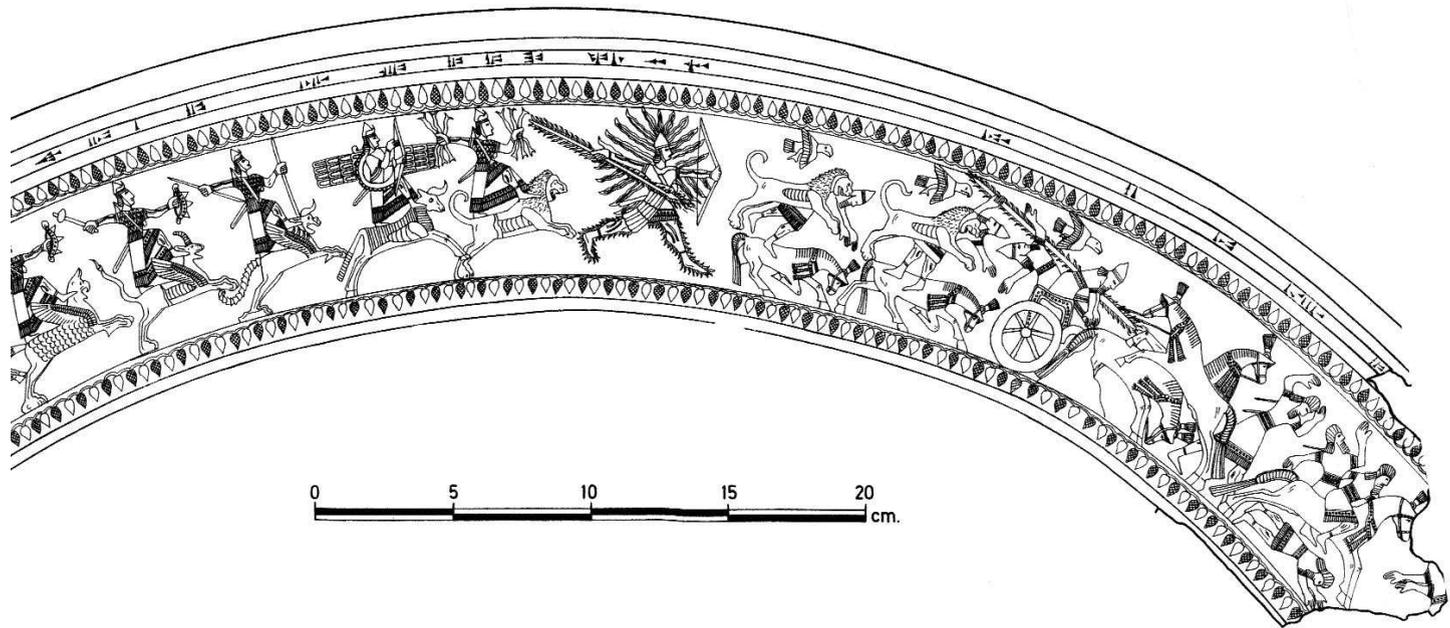


Fig. 2: Gods on the march and the ruined enemy. Bronze shield from Upper Anzaf (after Belli 1998, 105; detail from drawing 17).

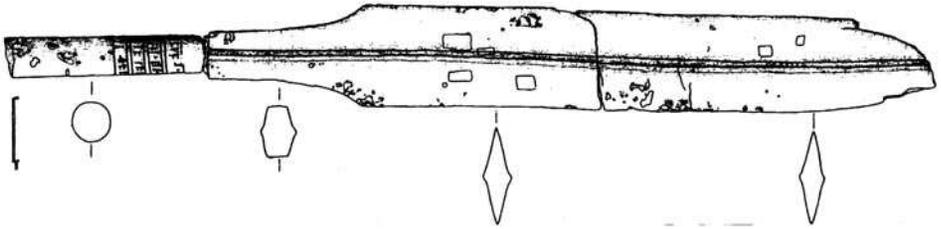


Fig. 3: *Šuri* from Ayanis. Van Museum, Ayanis section (after Derin and Çilingiroğlu 2001, 173; drawing 25).

character was canonised after Haldi,⁷ but because he had the power to destroy by fire enemies fleeing before the blade of the Urartian king.⁸ We are not told of such an idiosyncrasy for the Urartian sun god, Šiuini (Hurrian Šimigi); it is clear, however, that he was one of the three major divinities, along with Haldi and Teišeba, whom the Urartian king had to invoke for strength in battle.⁹

This situation is reasonable for the Urartian heavenly triad, but it is more interesting to hear of divinities from lower ranks, even local ones, directly in relation to regal campaigns. Hutuni, the name for the local god of the Karahan region,¹⁰ literally means ‘the power of victory’ or something similar,¹¹ which evokes the consideration that he is – or once had been – a god of battle. Although Hutuni’s name is not given in campaign records, his place in the ritual lists can point to his character: He was enrolled as the fourth divinity in Meherkapısı¹² and, in the Ayanis inscription, he was cited alongside superior divinities.¹³ Apparently, a god from the same region, Ura, seems to have shared the same features, since a temple was dedicated to his lance.¹⁴ Evidence for two other gods is much more palpable. Although he was a local divinity in the Urmia region,¹⁵ Šebuti had the honour of his own *susi* temple, and a king planning battle had to perform a ritual before him: ‘Rusa, son of Sarduri says: I have erected this inscription: When kings plan campaigns, a bull and a sheep to Šebuti, a sheep to Artuarasau and a sheep to the gates of Šebuti have to be slaughtered...’¹⁶

⁷ Melikishvili 1960, 27.

⁸ Melikishvili 1960, 155 F.

⁹ For sample inscriptions, see Melikishvili 1960, 127, 130, 155.

¹⁰ Salvini 1993, 547.

¹¹ Salvini 1994, 206.

¹² Melikishvili 1960, 27.

¹³ Salvini 2001, 259.

¹⁴ Dinçol and Kavaklı 1978, 8–14, no. 1.

¹⁵ Salvini 1994, 206.

¹⁶ For details of the whole inscription and comments, see Salvini 1977.

Furthermore, considering the relation between the main god and weapons, an unarmed god is hard to imagine in Urartian descriptive culture. Although there are sufficient clues to regard Haldi as a god of both crops and fertility, not just purely a god of war,¹⁷ the entire repertory of Urartian art makes us envisage the Urartian divinities as a troop of warriors commanded by Haldi, instead of a solemn pantheon. The imaginary portrait of a band of divinities armed from head to toe to strengthen the power and resolve of the army in battle leads us to attempt an understanding of the ‘profane’ mirror of this picture, the actual military texture of the Urartian state.

Military Structure and Organisation

The shortcomings of inscriptions about military structure were mentioned above, and particulars of the Urartian chain of command are no exception. The Urartian monarch is described as commander-in-chief in nearly all Urartian inscriptions. Like his coequals, a reigning monarch had to conduct at least one campaign annually in order to solidify his sovereignty, and had to lead his army. Assyrian sources yield similar information, and a series of Assyrian documents demonstrate this difficult mission of the Urartian king. In one example, Arame, the first king of Urartu, could barely save his life on the battlefield after climbing a mountain peak.¹⁸ In Ulluba, during the retreat before the Assyrian monarch, the whole camp of Sarduri, including the king’s own tent – even his bed, his royal seal and his rings – was sacked.¹⁹ Rusa I also had to face the sword, not only against his sworn enemy, the Assyrians,²⁰ but against the Cimmerians as well.²¹

Moreover, in some unclear circumstances (see below), generals participated in supreme command. For now, we can accept that the highest rank, that of commander-in-chief, was occupied by the king and his deputy/deputies, who are attested in such texts as: ‘Argišti, son of Menua speaks: Haldi is mighty; the weapons of Haldi are mighty. Through the greatness of Haldi, I have sent out military commanders on campaign...’²²

The vicegerents and generals of the armies were generally and naturally the rulers of provinces: ‘Sarduri speaks: ...Three provincial governors were called out. In three places I carried out a campaign...’²³ The sub-commanders could have been appointed from among the chiefs or the heads of tribes faithful to the kingdom:

¹⁷ For the relationship of Haldi with fertility, see Çilingiroğlu 2005; 2004; Taffet and Yakar 1998; Taffet 1999.

¹⁸ Luckenbill 1926, 605.

¹⁹ Luckenbill 1926, 769.

²⁰ Luckenbill 1927, 154.

²¹ Parpola 1987, no. 31.

²² Melikishvili 1960, 127, column III.

²³ Melikishvili 1960, 55 E.

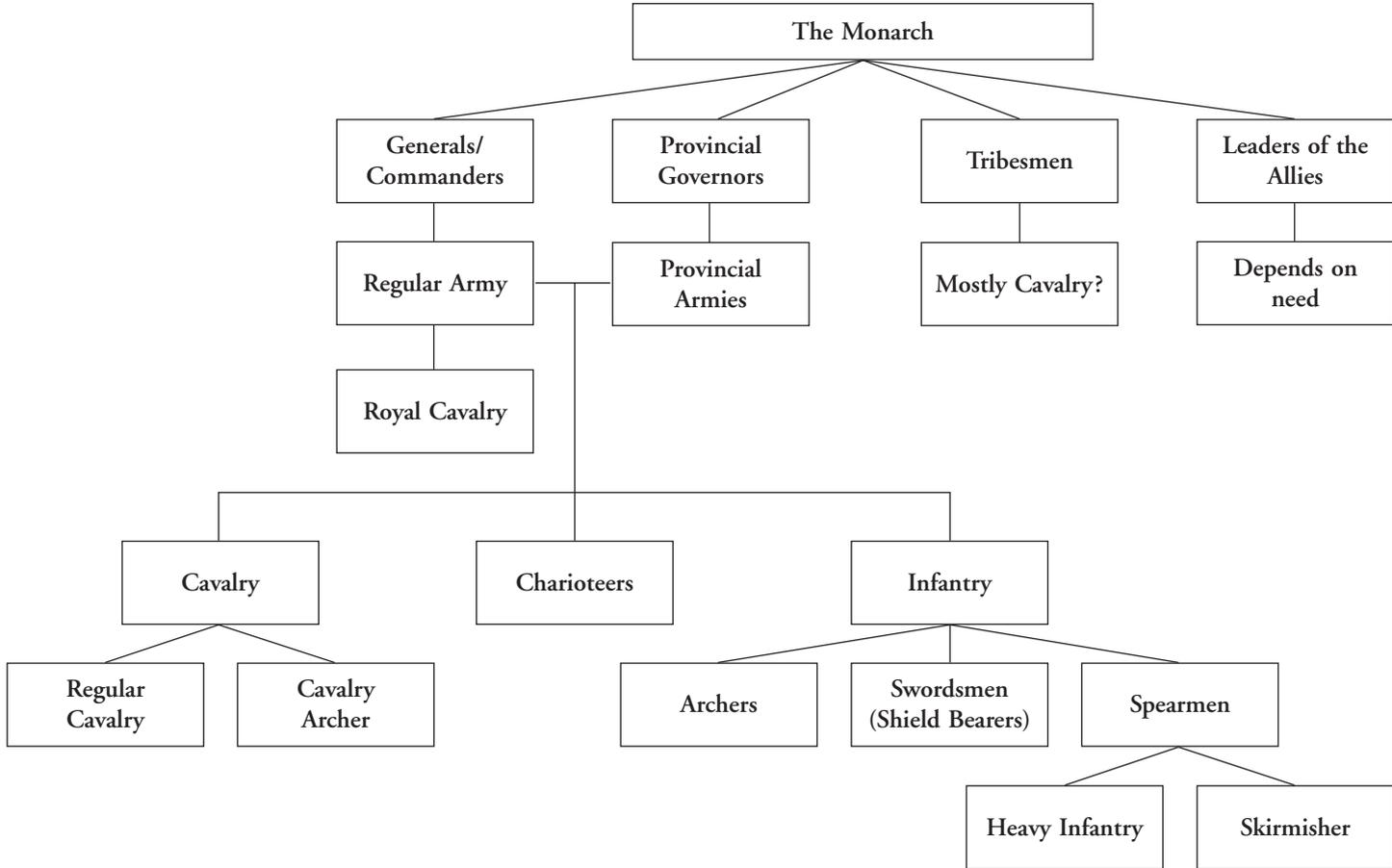


Fig. 4: Military organisation in the Urartian Army.

‘a commander, from the Dada tribe of mine’.²⁴ Certainly, the military support of allies was also gladly accepted: ‘Urzana rendered (to me) auxiliary armies... I took the auxiliary armies, by command of Haldi, I, Rusa, came against the cities of Assyria. I enacted carnage there...’.²⁵

Thus, the primary constituents of the Urartian forces appear to have been: 1) the regular army loyal to the monarch; 2) auxiliary armies of the states/provinces called up in time of war, commanded by feudatories;²⁶ 3) warriors from different tribes within the kingdom, commanded by their chief or lord; and 4) auxiliary troops sent by allies, probably commanded by their officers (see Fig. 4). It was noted that the whole army was led by the king. The army was arranged hierarchically from the lowest to the uppermost. We know of the existence of corporals, literally ‘decurions’ (LU.10-li), in military service;²⁷ the other ranks in the Urartian army cannot be determined, but there are sufficient clues in Assyrian sources to indicate some senior and junior officers. These officers had real power in the army, even for dealing with a treason promoted by a cavalry captain.²⁸

Military Classes

Despite the uncertainty about ranks, we have some definite archaeological and philological evidence about the classes forming the army, although it is scarce and does not enable us to evaluate developments or changes according to reign. Images provide certain details²⁹ about the different military classes and, thanks to Urartian inscriptions, we know that the army was composed of three main bodies: chariotry, cavalry and the infantry: ‘Išpuini was mighty, Menua was mighty; in the army (there numbered): 106 chariots, 9174 horsemen, 2704 foot soldiers...’;³⁰ ‘Išpuini was mighty, Menua was mighty; in the army (there numbered): 66 chariots, ×460 horsemen, 15,760 foot soldiers’.³¹

Chariotry. As in other military forces of the era, charioteers were an important unit. Although wheeled vehicles had been used for military purposes conceivably since the

²⁴ Melikishvili 1960, 27, column III.

²⁵ Melikishvili 1960, 264.

²⁶ This term does not equate directly to its mediaeval European equivalent. It is reminiscent rather of the *timar* and *zeamet* systems of Ottoman Anatolia.

²⁷ Belli and Salvini 2003, 150–51. See also ‘infantry’ here.

²⁸ Waterman 1936, no. 144.

²⁹ The authors are aware of the unsoundness of material such as belts and helmets on which the depictions occur. The pieces chosen for this study were selected amongst artefacts which can be accepted as ‘Urartian’ from both the iconographical and stylistic point of view. For a recent discussion of the reliability of Urartian metal artefacts, see Muscarella 2006; see also Muscarella 2000, 146–55.

³⁰ Melikishvili 1960, 24.

³¹ Melikishvili 1960, 21.

4th millennium BC, the emergence of the true chariot seems to have occurred at the beginning of the 2nd millennium BC.³² Chariotry in Urartu displayed no differences from other 1st-millennium cultures in the Near East, especially those of Assyria and northern Syria.

Evidence about Urartian chariots rests on two main groups: depictions and actual finds of bronze chariot fittings. The early Urartian chariot was typified by relatively small wheels structured with thickened projections that formed part of the hub into which the spokes were inserted.³³ The earlier rims seem to have been composed of three to six portions, and although the transition from six to eight spokes reflects what was taking place in Assyria,³⁴ it is hard to prove this from depictions, where wheels with six spokes were sometimes still found on bronze artefacts.³⁵ However, there are sufficient clues to assume a distinction between the earlier (9th-century BC) and the later (8th-century BC) chariots,³⁶ especially in terms of the wheel and the yoke. The later wheels are larger, structured with eight instead of six spokes that were inserted directly into the hub. At the centre of the wheel, there is a relatively large roundel. The rim is composed of two concentric rings (the outer being wider). In the later phase, pole terminals curving upwards but otherwise plain replace the earlier type shaped like animal heads.³⁷ The axle-caps of earlier Urartian chariots were cylinders fitted with two opposed openings for the linchpin; later ones were formed of three parts: a large hemispherical boss protecting the axle end, a narrow intermediary section through which the linchpin passed, and a wider cylindrical part which sheathed the outer end of the hub.³⁸ The horses were reined by bits composed of two pieces: cheekpieces usually made of bronze, and mouthpieces of bronze or iron.³⁹ The differences between Urartian and Assyrian chariotry were in minor details: the Assyrian wheel had four clamps, the Urartians just two.⁴⁰

According to Urartian texts, charioteers never formed more than 1% of the whole army,⁴¹ with either two or three persons per chariot. Chariot warfare was based on the use of projectiles, generally arrows (Fig. 5), but we can also see javelins placed

³² See Littauer and Crowell 1979: for the emergence of the wheeled vehicles and their development, 13–36; for chariots, 50–56, 74–81, 101–10.

³³ Merhav 1991b, 54.

³⁴ For chariotry in Assyria, see Littauer and Crowell 1979, 101–10.

³⁵ Gündüz 2002, 801.

³⁶ For the development of Urartian chariots and technical information, see Merhav and Seidl 1991, 50–96. For the relation between Urartian and Assyrian chariotry, and interactions between Urartu and northern Syria, see Çilingiroğlu 1984, 50–60.

³⁷ Merhav 1991b, 58–59.

³⁸ Merhav 1991b, 60–61.

³⁹ Seidl 1991, 79.

⁴⁰ Seidl 1991, 59.

⁴¹ For discussion, see Zimansky 1985, 53–60, especially table 7.

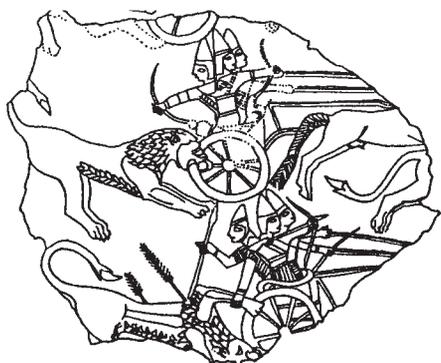


Fig. 5: Charioteers on bronze belt, From Kayalidere (after Burney 1966, 78; detail from fig. 10).

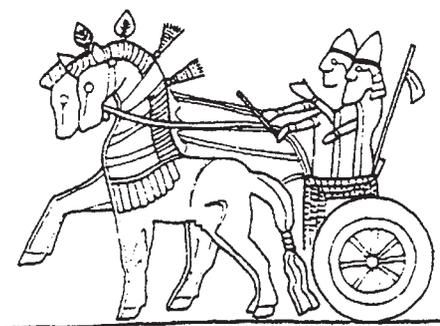


Fig. 6: Charioteers on bronze quiver. From Karmir-Blur. Yerevan Historical Museum, inv. no. 2303/7 (after Seidl 2004, 90; detail from fig. 56).

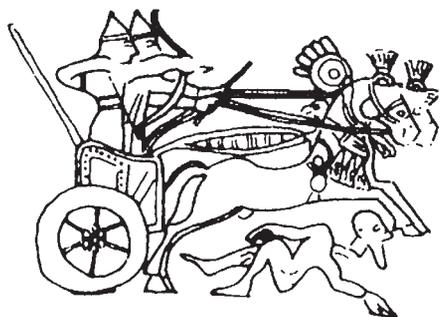


Fig. 7: Charioteers on bronze disc. Karlsruhe Badisches Landesmuseum (after Calmayer and Seidl 1983, 105; detail from fig. 1).

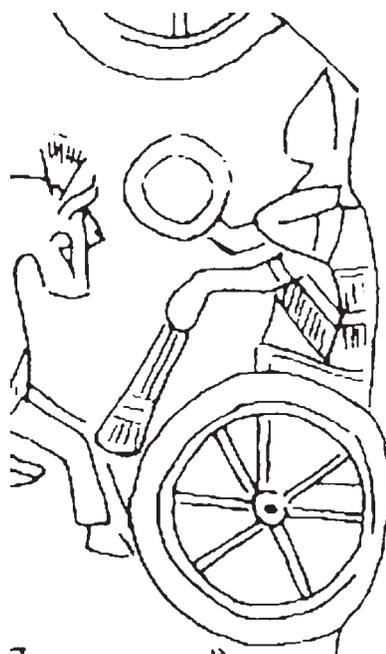


Fig. 8: Charioteer on bronze belt. Private collection, Akron, Ohio (after Seidl 2004, 153; detail from fig. 107).

at the back of the vehicles (Figs. 6–7). These depictions look quite similar to their Assyrian counterparts, and the Urartian charioteers carrying these weapons mostly looking upwards or downwards. In some examples, an obscure object is held by the warrior (Fig. 8); we interpret this as a sling. Unfortunately, no examples of baked or shaped sling-stones have been found in the excavations. The warriors were protected by a shield, generally carried by one of the soldiers in the chariot,⁴² and sometimes hung on the rear end.

Chariotry was not an ordinary branch in the army; it had always been the preserve of the aristocracy.⁴³ The tablet from Toprakkale,⁴⁴ on which different categories of person in the Urartian palace were enrolled, lists first the 1113 *mare*-men, then 104 *tardaše*-men and 1009 *kiri*-men. The second written source is the Karmir-Blur inscription, where the *mare*-men are mentioned as the owners of the *serhane*-house, and a class powerful enough to take part in sacrifices.⁴⁵ I.M. Diakonoff correlated them with the *marianna*-men in the Mitannian kingdom, and inferred that the *mare*-men were charioteers, members of one of the aristocratic warrior-classes in the Urartian palace.⁴⁶ This seems quite plausible, and the percentages related to this class support the idea: just 1% of the force in battle but nearly 20% of palace staff – a fair proportion for the nobility.

Cavalry. Horsemen form the principal military group depicted, not just because of the splendid appearance of the mounted image but on account of numerical preponderance, sometimes nearly triple the entire infantry, thanks to the attendance of auxiliary cavalry troops called up for battle from different tribes of the highlands. Such an organisation would provide a prompt military force at the least cost.

Bronze or iron bits were used to rein the horses as mentioned above. Horses, mounted or yoked to a chariot, were furnished with discs, blinkers, frontlets, breast-plates and collars, not only for protection but also for their charm (Fig. 9). Bells and some shoulder ornaments were sometimes added.⁴⁷ No depictions or finds indicate a saddle, pack or anything to perform this function, not even a blanket. Most

⁴² The circular object seen on some depictions above one of the three charioteers is clearly a shield carried by the royal guard in the chariot, probably not a 'halo' (for the second interpretation, see Sevin 2007).

⁴³ See Moorey 1986, especially 205–08.

⁴⁴ Melikishvili 1960, 286.

⁴⁵ Melikishvili 1971, 448. The inscription very likely belongs to the frontage of the undetermined temple in Karmir-Blur. This part of the inscription is lacking in Melikishvili 1971, and Payne translates *šurale* as 'Šurale Land' (see Payne 2006: 12.2.6). We follow Diakonoff 1991 for the translation and interpretation of the inscription.

⁴⁶ For the entire inscription and comments, see Diakonoff 1991.

⁴⁷ For details, see Seidl 1991.

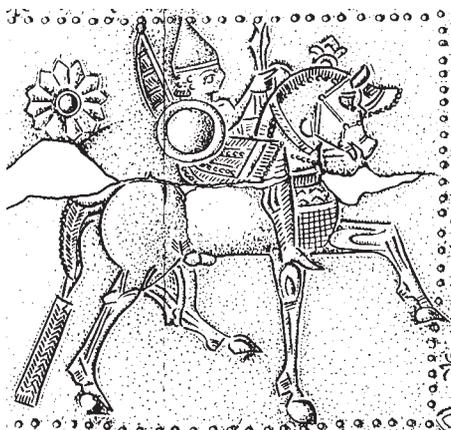


Fig. 9: Royal cavalry on bronze belt. Munich, Prähistorische Staatssammlung Museum für Vor- und Frühgeschichte, inv. no. 1984.3579 (after Seidl 2004; detail from pl. C1).



Fig. 10: Regular cavalry on bronze belt. From Nor Areš (after Seidl 2004, 152; detail from fig. 106).

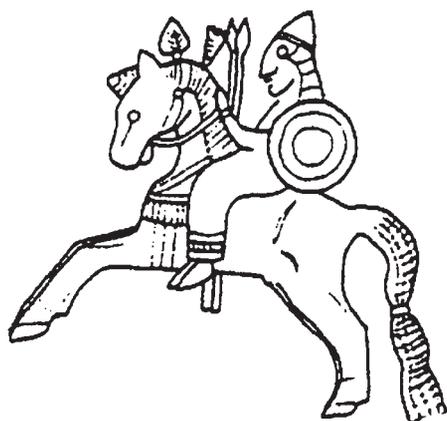


Fig. 11: Regular cavalry on bronze quiver from Karmir Blur. Yerevan Historical Museum, inv. no. 2303/7 (after Seidl 2004, 90; detail from fig. 56).



Fig. 12: Regular cavalry on bronze belt. Private collection, Akron, Ohio (after Seidl 2004, 153; detail from fig. 107).



Fig. 13: Cavalry archer on bronze belt. Munich, Prähistorische Staatsammlung Museum für Vor -und Frühgeschichte, inv. no. 1985.522 (after Kellner 1991a, pl. 46; detail from fig. 182).



Fig. 14: Cavalry archers on bronze belt. Private collection, Akron, Ohio (after Seidl 2004, 153; detail from fig. 107).



Fig. 15: Royal cavalry on bronze belt. Diyarbakır Museum (after Çavuşoğlu 2003, 23; detail from fig. 3).

probably on this account, the soldiers seem to be gripping the horses with their thighs on the shoulder of their mounts (compare Figs. 9–15).

Based on depictions, mounted troops can be divided into two sub-groups: regular cavalry and the cavalry-archers. In the main, the former carry long spears, usually more than one. Cavalcades portray these men with one or two lances in one hand and a shield on their shoulder (Figs. 10–11). In representations of combat, the warriors use their arms as javelins, sometimes throwing their weapons on horseback, with javelins in each hand (Fig. 12). It is surprising that there are no depictions of cavalymen jousting with lances.

The cavalry archers are rarely depicted. Attack scenes display the mounted bowmen in action, both in frontal and Parthian shots (Fig. 13). Very occasionally, there are two men on a horse, the one carrying the quiver and probably riding it, the other shooting (Fig. 14). Urartian cavalry of both types seems to have been used to fire projectiles rather than engage in close combat. Indeed, all evidence shows that the mounted units of the Urartian army, cavalry and chariotry, were deployed as mobile launching platforms.

A battle scene involving these units would probably look like a javelin competition (*cirit*) of a sort still encountered in eastern Anatolia, rather than the hand-to-hand scrimmage of the Middle Ages. The lines in the battle order must have varied, of course, according to the range of the units: while the shifting cavalry archer was harassing the enemy from a longer range, chariots could hunt the enemy from a safe distance; finally, mounted javelin-throwers would break the enemy lines with brisk hit-and-run raids. Certainly, conditions could change during the heat of battle, and the warriors, like their modern counterparts, would discard pre-arranged strategies and use any tactics or weapons in a bid to survive.

Records of the eighth campaign of Sargon II give us information about warriors, especially cavalry, from the Urartian nobility. The structure of these men is clarified in The Letter to Assur: ‘His noblemen, counsellors who stand before him, I shattered their arms in the battle; them and their horses I captured. 260 of his royal kin, who were his officers, governors and cavalry, I captured and broke their resistance...’.⁴⁸ In another text, there is a shorter definition for this caste: ‘260 of his royal seed, who constituted his cavalry, I captured...’.⁴⁹ The reference to soldiers from the ‘royal seed’ is to a class of elite warriors chosen from among the tribesmen or clansmen of the monarch himself, and written evidence supports the existence of such a class, at least as landowners: ‘On my march I came to Arbu, the city of the father’s house of Ursa, and Riar, the city of Ishtar-duri, seven cities of their neighbourhood

⁴⁸ Luckenbill 1927, 154.

⁴⁹ Luckenbill 1927, 20.

in which dwell his brothers, his royal seed, with strong defences, – those cities I destroyed, I levelled to the ground...'.⁵⁰ We do not know the structure of the Urartian noble cavalymen, though Sargon's description of his 'own' elite cavalry gives us an idea: '1000 fierce horsemen, bearers of bow, shield and lance, my brave warriors, trained for battle'.⁵¹ Despite the lack of written sources, several Urartian depictions of these soldiers point to the character of this branch of cavalry: in Fig. 9, the mounted soldier has two lances (javelins) in one hand, a shield on his other arm, and a quiver on his back. Fig. 15 depicts a royal hunting scene with an armoured cavalryman, a quiver with its bow on his back, thrusting a lance into a lion: that is to say, all the arms that Sargon listed for his own elite forces.⁵² It is reasonable to think of these Urartian noble cavalymen, who stem from the king's tribe or clan, as the heavy cavalry or the royal cavalry of the Urartian army.

Urartian written sources on the identity of noble warriors are no more satisfactory than those about other subjects, but the existence of a social class related to the weapons is clear. Like *mare*-men, the term *šurale* appears in the Toprakkale tablet and the Karmir-Blur inscriptions as the epithet of a group in the palace who had the privilege of making sacrifices in the *susi* temples.⁵³ The name of the group, *šurale*, comes from *šuri* (literally lance/sword-men), and most likely designates a noble class of the royal guards or elite warriors in royal service. If the evidence in Assyrian and Urartian sources is taken into consideration, it might be possible to regard the *šurale* as the royal heavy cavalry, whom we hardly ever hear of or see. Who better could attend the Urartian royal family than fully armed 'fierce' but noble cavaliers from the same line?

Infantry. The main force of the Urartian army was naturally the infantry, even though outnumbered by the cavalry. They were not categorised in Urartian inscriptions, but the depictions give information about three classes of footmen: spearmen, swordsmen/shield-bearers and archers.

Urartian spearmen consisted of two groups: the first group carried spears as long as a man (Figs. 16–17). They held their weapons with both hands and bore a shield on their backs. The second group seems to be more flexible: their spears were approximately two-thirds the height of a man, convenient for thrusting at short range and for throwing (Fig. 18), held in one hand; their shields were either raised

⁵⁰ Luckenbill 1927, 165.

⁵¹ Luckenbill 1927, 166.

⁵² For a similar depiction, see Kellner 1991b, 151, fig. 9.

⁵³ For discussion, see Diakonoff 1991. For a recent discussion on the meaning of *šurale*, see Payne and Ceylan 2003, especially 197–99.



Fig. 16: Heavy infantry on bronze belt from Nor Areš (after Seidl 2004, 152; detail from fig. 106).

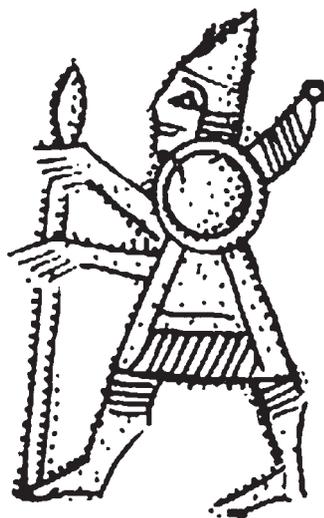


Fig. 17: Heavy infantry on bronze belt. Munich, Prähistorische Staatsammlung Museum für Vor -und Frühgeschichte (after Seidl 2004; detail from pl. C1).

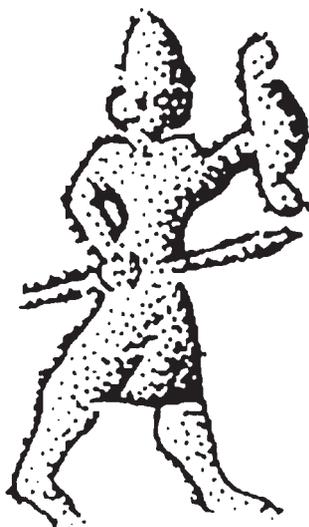


Fig. 18: Skirmisher on bronze belt. Munich, Prähistorische Staatsammlung Museum für Vor -und Frühgeschichte, inv. no. 1971.1781 (after Kellner 1991b, 144; detail from fig. 1).



Fig. 19: Shield-bearer on bronze belt. Munich, Prähistorische Staatsammlung Museum für Vor -und Frühgeschichte, inv. no. 1971.1781 (after Kellner 1991b, 144; detail from fig. 1).

in the other hand or shouldered with a leather or rope strap. The main difference between the groups must have been functional, with the first group probably deployed as heavy infantry, and the second swiftly in rapid skirmishes.

It is surprising to have so few swordsmen depicted (Fig. 19). All examples of this unit bear shields; they can even be labelled as shield-bearers since we can see no drawn swords, even in close battle. The swordsmen were presumably not assault units but soldiers for defence, and were equipped to survive rather than to charge and attack. Swords must have been used in close combat, especially at the height of battle, although the depictions indicate that, as for many traditional peoples of the region, these dagger-like weapons were mostly ornamental or prestige accessories: they were seldom discovered in fortresses, but rather in burials.⁵⁴

Archers formed an essential unit in the military structure of the 1st millennium BC, and Urartu was no exception. The bow-and-arrow was the most effective conventional weapon, and was probably carried by both regulars and auxiliaries/irregulars. The different types of this weapon, of wood or reed, were easily and cheaply produced.

Most images of soldiers show archers in various postures: drawing their bows bending on one knee (Fig. 20), standing (Fig. 21), on parade, carrying their bows and arrows (Fig. 22), etc. Like the javelin-throwing cavalry, some archers carry two arrows in one hand. Quivers were generally carried on the back and sometimes hung on belts. Bowmen, including the cavalry archers, used mainly triangular, recurved or convex bows, three of the types used in the 1st-millennium BC Near East.⁵⁵

A clay tablet unearthed in the Upper Anzaf fortress lists a group of soldiers and the weapons sent to them:

To Unkanu: 30 arrows, 1 bow. To Nurubi: 30 arrows, 1 bow. To Uruadi: 22 arrows, 1 bow. To Arilutuqu: 30 arrows. To Huštu: 20 arrows, 1 bow. To Urueda: 20 arrows. To Urđi: 20 arrows, 1 bow. To Nudu: 20 arrows, 1 bow. To Eriuqu: 30 arrows, 2 bows. To Aza, the decurion: 20 arrows, 1 bow. To Urtu, the man of the god, 30 arrows, 1 bow. To Işpiqulu: 30 arrows. To KikaMAH: 30 arrows, 1 bow, 1 lance. To Şuişha: 30 arrows, 1 bow. To Urdini: 30 arrows, 1 bow.⁵⁶

The number of weapons delivered to the warriors is not consistent. Some, like Arilutuqu, Işpiqulu and Uruada, were given arrows but no bow, and it is hard to explain why the decurion Aza was given only 20 arrows, fewer than some of the nine soldiers listed before him for whom he was responsible. The soldiers listed can easily be accepted as archers, and one can assume the weapons were delivered in case of

⁵⁴ For a recent work on Urartian swords, see Biber 2005.

⁵⁵ 79% of the depicted bows are convex, and the rest are recurved (see Zutterman 2003, 135).

⁵⁶ Belli and Salvini 2003, 150.



Fig. 20: Archer on bronze belt.
From Dedeli, Patnos
(after Seidl 2004;
detail from pl. B2).



Fig. 21: Archer on bronze belt
(after Seidl 2004, 154;
detail from fig. 109).



Fig. 22: Archer in parade, on
bronze belt. Munich, Prähis-
torische Staatsammlung
Museum für Vor -und Früh-
geschichte, inv. no. 1971.1781
(after Kellner 1991b, 144;
detail from fig. 1).

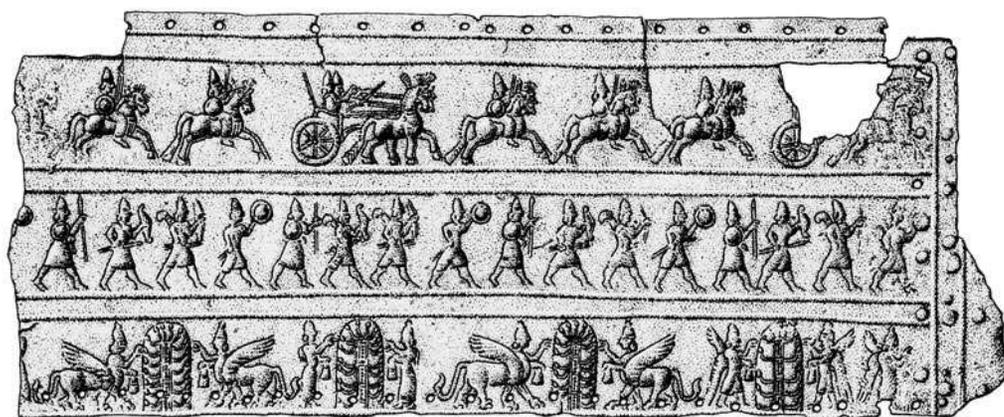


Fig. 23: Parade scene on bronze belt, Munich, Prähistorische Staatsammlung Museum für Vor -und Frühgeschichte, inv. no. 1971.1781
(after Kellner 1991b, 144, fig. 1).

sudden attack or danger,⁵⁷ but the number of arrows and bows mentioned above is too small for the defence of a fortress, and this unique tablet does not explain why the distribution was made to the fortress personnel. An army should not be armed on sudden occasions, rather it needs a stock of arms to respond to any sudden outbreak or commotion. The soldier KikaMAH was given a *šuri* besides 30 arrows and a bow, which makes us think that the uncommonness was not in the situation of the fortress but in the soldier himself. It is much more likely that these weapons were given to warriors as a decoration for gallantry or promotion, or that they were only the 'service weapons' of the soldiers, given by the higher ranks to be carried on duty. There is also the possibility that these were never used and were kept as relics of the state.⁵⁸

Parade scenes on a unique fragmentary bronze belt present the possible battle order – and hierarchy – subsisting in the Urartian army, from right to left (Fig. 23). The upper row displays a charioteer and cavalymen respectively, and repeats the scene subsequently. In the middle row, again from right to left, a shield bearer (swordsmen), an archer, a skirmisher and a spearman are depicted in order, correspondingly repeated. Although this order need not have been constant, it demonstrates the different classes of infantry in the same procession, and confirms the distinctions we have tried to make above. It appears quite realistic for an army in battle order, deployed for a regular pitched battle: shields in the very first row against projectiles, then ranged units and, last of all, close fighters.

The general accoutrements of the soldiers do not reveal any strict distinctions. Soldiers from all branches wear pointed helmets,⁵⁹ both elaborate⁶⁰ and plain (Fig. 24), made of iron or mostly bronze.⁶¹ Bronze helmets were produced by casting, or shaping one or two plates by swaging.⁶² The chap was protected by ear flaps,⁶³ and nearly all depictions indicate a thin chain mail or (probably) cloth band for the protection of the neck and the nape: no examples of chain mail have been discovered, but textile remains have been found *in situ* in the helmets.⁶⁴ A metal attachment on the helmets could not have been found today, and the helmets lack the requisite holes for such an attachment. The head must have been preserved from blows with the

⁵⁷ Belli and Salvini 2003, 152.

⁵⁸ For a discussion of the tablet, see Çilingiroğlu 2006, 238–39.

⁵⁹ Despite Assyrian depictions, no Urartian figures show a crested helmet, and hardly any examples have been unearthed. For crested helmets, see Seidl 2004, pls. 8a–c.

⁶⁰ The general decorative style seen on Urartian helmets is the 'thunder' motif (see Dezsö 2001, 80–81), and the other Urartian decoration patterns, incised or embossed (Çilingiroğlu 1997, 116–17; Calmeyer 1991, 123–24).

⁶¹ For Urartian helmets, see Seidl 2004, 64–84.

⁶² Biber 2005, 107; Calmeyer 1991, 123.

⁶³ See Seidl 2004, 67 and plate 7d–e.

⁶⁴ Ayanis excavation records, information provided by Altan Çilingiroğlu.



Fig. 24: Pointed bronze helmets from Ayanis. Van Museum (Ayanis excavation archive, by permission of A. Çilingiroğlu).



Fig. 25: Two types of iron spearheads from Ayanis. Van Museum (Ayanis excavation archive, by permission of A. Çilingiroğlu).



Fig. 26: Iron spearheads from Ayanis. Van Museum (Ayanis excavation archive, by permission of A. Çilingiroğlu).



Fig. 27: Various iron arrowheads from Ayanis. Van Museum (Ayanis excavation archive, by permission of A. Çilingiroğlu).



Fig. 28: Bronze arrowheads from Ayanis. Van Museum (Ayanis excavation archive, by permission of A. Çilingiroğlu).

help of a leather or felt skullcap. The body was protected by a mail blouse, made of small plates bound together through slots.

A tunic, a uniform of all Urartian soldiers, was worn on or under the mail, or on its own. The tunic was girt with a belt, obvious on all kinds of depictions.⁶⁵ Offensive arms, arrows and lances generate the major group of finds among the Urartian assemblage, and this provides a direct analogy with the figurative scenes. Nearly 95% of spearheads found by excavation exhibit a blade length of between 15 and 20 cm.⁶⁶ The rest have a blade length of 20–30 cm.⁶⁷ From what we know from depictions of spears, the first group must have come from the regular spears of the infantry, cavalry and chariotry; the second might have belonged to the longer lances, carried in two hands by the heavy infantry or cavalry (for comparison, see Figs. 25–26).

Arrowheads were multifarious: solid, leaf-shaped, one-barbed, two-barbed, socketed, bilobate and trilobate (Figs. 27–28).⁶⁸ There is a considerable quantity of bone arrowheads – for instance, at least 1047 examples unearthed in Yoncatepe.⁶⁹ It is not clear if different kinds of arrowhead were used for different purposes, and one has to keep in mind the existence of sharpened wooden or reed arrows without a projectile point. The arrows seem to have been classified according to type and put into the quivers accordingly. From Ayanis, we now know that all of them could have been carried in the same leather or wicker quivers,⁷⁰ in contrast with the bronze (Fig. 29) or unique iron quivers (Fig. 30) found in the excavations.⁷¹ The quivers were produced from bronze plates, bent into the shape of an open tube 70 cm in length and 10 cm in diameter. The base was soldered with a bronze disc, and the open part closed by leather. Two rings were added to the quivers for leather or string cords.⁷²

Our evidence about Urartian shields is based largely on examples discovered that are made of bronze (Figs. 31–32).⁷³ These reasonably heavy pieces were probably

⁶⁵ Urartian belts create a special group of finds. For a study of these, see Kellner 1991a; but see also Muscarella 2000, 53; 2006, especially 151–75.

⁶⁶ For spearheads, see Wartke 1990, 123–26; Barnett 1959, 7–8; Derin and Çilingiroğlu 2001, 155–57.

⁶⁷ For comparative charts of Ayanis examples, see Derin and Çilingiroğlu 2001, 155–57.

⁶⁸ Urartian arrowheads. For Kayalidere: Burney 1966, pl. XI d, XIII a, fig. 21, nos. 8–12; for Toprakkale: Wartke 1990, 226–33; for Karmir-Blur: Barnett 1959, 11; van Loon 1966, 114; Piotrovskii 1952, 28; for Bastam: Kroll 1988, 80; for Ayanis: Derin and Muscarella 2001.

⁶⁹ Belli *et al.* 2006.

⁷⁰ Ayanis excavation records, by permission of Altan Çilingiroğlu.

⁷¹ For the iron quiver, see Çilingiroğlu 2006. For Urartian quivers from Toprakkale, see Barnett 1972, 171; for Karmir-Blur, see Piotrovskii 1969, figs. 85–86; van Loon 1966, 121; Barnett and Watson 1957, 135, 139, pl. 31.1; for Kayalidere, see Burney 1966, pl. XVIII b–c, fig. 18, 6a–b.

⁷² Derin and Çilingiroğlu 2001, 158; Çilingiroğlu 1997, 119–21.

⁷³ For the shields from Karmir-Blur and Toprakkale, see Piotrovskii 1967, 45, pls. 21–23; for Kayalidere, see Burney 1966, pl. XXI b–c, figs. 20–24.



Fig. 29: Bronze quiver from Ayanis. Van Museum
(Ayanis excavation archive, by permission of A. Çilingiroğlu).



Fig. 30: Iron quiver from Ayanis. Van Museum
(Ayanis excavation archive, by permission of A. Çilingiroğlu).

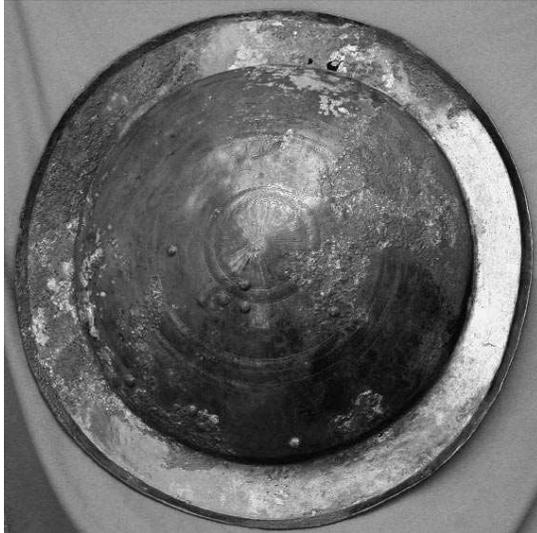


Fig. 31: Tin-plated shield from Ayanis. Van Museum
(Ayanis excavation archive, by permission of A. Çilingiroğlu).

produced, like the lion-headed one unearthed in Ayanis (Fig. 33), for ceremonial and dedicative purposes,⁷⁴ akin to the 25,212 small and large specimens mentioned in the spoil list of Musasir.⁷⁵ The smaller ones, with no decoration and a dimension of 60–80 cm, could also have been used effectively in battle, but the depictions showing shields carried in one hand suggest that most were made of cane or wood.⁷⁶ Bronze umbos in the centre of these shields were probably their mainstay. Empty pointed umbos (Fig. 34) could easily have been attached to bronze or organic shields,⁷⁷ and create minacious shields with teeth, like the ones hung on the backs of chariots or carried by the gods (Fig. 2).

Size of the Army and Recruiting

The regular Urartian army falls into two main categories: a professional standing army, and provincial forces called up for campaigns.⁷⁸ The professional forces were composed of ‘soldiers’, most probably commanded by an aristocratic warrior-class (as discussed above), and employed permanently with such ordinary military tasks as guarding the city, intelligence gathering, public security and patrolling borders. The severe winter months, in which the king could not campaign, must have formed a respite for the soldiery, with combat training and, perhaps, war games.⁷⁹ They were stationed mostly in the capital, Tušpa, and in fortresses or posts throughout the country. The soldiers dwelt in the outer town, in accommodation built by the state, although the upper classes lived in the fortress. The building with buttresses in the Pınarbaşı sector of the outer town of Ayanis, differing clearly from domestic buildings in other areas,⁸⁰ may be thought of as a small barracks for both the soldiers and their animals.⁸¹ The coarse quality of the ceramics from this part of the outer town⁸² supports the idea. The same was proposed for some of the buildings in the Karmir-Blur outer town,⁸³ and for the entire town of Aznavurtepe.⁸⁴

The second unit, provincial armies, was probably the most important component of the military forces: it was not only a company of armed men in time of

⁷⁴ Derin and Çilingiroğlu 2001, 161–62.

⁷⁵ Luckenbill 1927, 173.

⁷⁶ Belli 1998, 53–54.

⁷⁷ Merhav 1991a, 138. For a similar discussion and the unearthed umbos, see Belli 2007.

⁷⁸ ‘Sarduri speaks: ... Three provincial governors were called out. In three places I carried out a campaign...’ (Melikishvili 1960, 55 E).

⁷⁹ Taffet 1999, 379.

⁸⁰ Stone and Zimansky 2001, 363.

⁸¹ Information supplied by Altan Çilingiroğlu.

⁸² Stone and Zimansky 2001, 362.

⁸³ Martirosyan 1964, 265–66.

⁸⁴ Burney and Lawson 1960, 189–95.



Fig. 32: Interior of a bronze shield from Ayanis. Van Museum (Ayanis excavation archive, by permission of A. Çilingiroğlu).



Fig. 33: Lion-headed shield from Ayanis. Van Museum (Ayanis excavation archive, by permission of A. Çilingiroğlu).



Fig. 34: Bronze shield umbo. Les Arcs, Marcel Ebnöther Collection (after Merhav 1991a, 139, fig. 21).

war, it was one of the main labour forces in agriculture and stockbreeding. Provincial governors had real power in their regions and ruled large areas, that is to say, larger than many of the Neo-Hittite states: 'Sarduri says: I appointed Zaiia(ni) as governor of the land up to the city of Melitea, up to the city of Qu[maha (?)], up to the city of Nihiria in the land of Ar[me], and up to the land of Hašime[], in order to keep order.'⁸⁵ There is enough evidence to assume a firm system of landholding in the Urartian kingdom, and the governors of provinces were at the same time feudatories, appointed as recruiters or army commanders. This tradition has a long history in Anatolia, going back to the Hittite period at least, as we know of the Hittite caste of 'Man of Weapon' (lu^{GIŠ}tukul), a military class taming the land assigned to them and nurturing their own foodstuff unless they were called to arms.⁸⁶ The often seen phrase 'I assembled warriors' refers to the provincial armies called up for war, and the contribution of these forces to the professional army must have been crucial for campaigns.⁸⁷ Indeed, without the armies of the provincial governors, the king had to take action with only his regular troops: 'Sarduri speaks: I sent out armies, not a single one of the governors of the provinces were called upon and with only one detachment, I took the field against the land of Uelikuni...'.⁸⁸

These provincial armies were naturally supported by the settlers of those provinces, that is to say the people living in or around the provincial centres (probably native inhabitants of conquered regions, or people sent from the homeland, but mostly incomers captured during or after battle who had been deported to the new province from a distance).⁸⁹ It is obvious that an uncertain number of deported men were thought to serve in military forces: 'Menua says:... of the land of Alzini, 2113 persons during (this) year, some of whom I killed, others I carried off alive; the men from that number I sent back to the army...'.⁹⁰ This quotation gives no numbers for the men consigned to the army; later sources give more detailed figures and categorise the captives more thoroughly. The important point is that enemy soldiers were captured alive and brought into state service. Argišti I had taken 10,140 warriors from the lands of Eriahi, Apuni and

⁸⁵ Payne and Sevin 2001, 115.

⁸⁶ Bryce 2002, 75. The infantry in the early Ottoman period, during the rule of Orhan Bey, also cultivated land in peacetime (Taneri 2003, 184).

⁸⁷ For an example, during the reign of Suleyman the Magnificent, the core army of 50,000 men was expanded by four times through the presence of provincial levies to reach 200,000 (Lybyer 2000, 102).

⁸⁸ Melikishvili 1960, 155 E.

⁸⁹ For mass deportations in the Urartian state, see Çilingiroğlu 1983.

⁹⁰ Melikishvili 1960, 28.

Uiteruhi.⁹¹ The same sovereign talks about enemy warriors, whom he forced to settle in a new fortress:

The city of Irepuini I built for the power of the land of Biainili (and) for the suppression of an enemy land. The earth was a wilderness; nothing had been built there. I accomplished mighty deeds there. 6600 warriors of the lands of Hate and Šupani I settled there...⁹²

This practice was not peculiar to Arğišti I, since we know that Sarduri II deported 6000 warriors from Mana land,⁹³ 4000 warriors from the lands of Irkua, Ueirda and Puinialhi,⁹⁴ and 2000 warriors from the Urme land.⁹⁵ The idea of this exercise was pragmatic: deportees or settlers from far lands were the most faithful subjects of the state during its history, for they owed their existence directly to the endurance of its authority. Warriors from enemy lands would help the establishment of power in 'hot spots' by serving their new lords, so they would remain as citizens of the state, instead of being enslaved, castrated or slaughtered. Their faith was appreciated by the king and the gods, but also by worldly means; they were definitely part of the loot:

Sarduri speaks: ...7150 persons during that year, some of whom I smote, others I carried off alive; 500 horses I led away, as well as 8560 head of large-horned and 25,170 head of small-horned cattle. All this was sufficient unto the king, but what the warriors seized, they led away on their behalf, when I abandoned the country...⁹⁶

They would transmit their loyalty and behaviour to their kin in the second generation, who would be unlikely to prove rebellious. Not only veteran warriors but other male captives, especially young men, must have been channelled into the provincial armies.⁹⁷ In particular, young men/boys trained for royal service from infancy would create a perfect group of stout soldiers free of parental, ethnic and religious roots or affiliations. These, different from the mature warriors, could easily form a firm part of the regular army, especially in the border provinces.

⁹¹ '... I came upon the land of Eriahi, I took (the field) against the land of Apuni, I conquered the city of Urieiuni, the royal city of Uiteruhi. 19,255 boys, 10,140 warriors living, 23,280 women, in all 52,675 persons during that year, some of them I killed, others I carried off alive...' (Melikishvili 1960, 127 I).

⁹² Melikishvili 1960, 127 II.

⁹³ Melikishvili 1960, 155 A.

⁹⁴ Melikishvili 1960, 155 A.

⁹⁵ Melikishvili 1960, 155 A.

⁹⁶ Melikishvili 1960, 155 C. For similar inscriptions, see Melikishvili 1960, 155; Salvini 1980; Dinçol 1976.

⁹⁷ Çilingirođlu 1983, 313.

The system was not unique. Something similar persisted in Anatolia until the last phases of the Ottoman empire, under the name of *devşirme*, known mostly for the legendary warriors, the Janissaries (*yeniçeri*).⁹⁸ Furthermore, it was not only the ‘professional’ soldiers selected among the deportees but also immigrants such as Albanians and Circassians who proved to be the most loyal groups in the service of the Ottoman state – much more loyal, indeed, than native ethnic groups, for they had lost all connections with their homeland and mostly with each other, and could barely survive without the state as protector. What is more, they made no demands for land or administrative rights, and they would even fight on the side of the state against native insubordination. The same system had already been shown to be practical, and was fully realised during the 1st millennium BC by states contemporary with Urartu; as Sargon II remarks: ‘... and the rebellious people of Carchemish... I carried off and brought to Assyria. 50 chariots, 200 steeds (or cavalrymen), 300 foot soldiers, I selected from among them and added them to my royal host...’.⁹⁹

Unfortunately, the written and figurative evidence given above does not elucidate the knotty issue of the size of the army, essential for assessing the Urartian state. During the joint reign of Išpuini–Menua, the campaign on Meišta was undertaken with 11,984 warriors (charioteers, cavalry and infantry).¹⁰⁰ The total number of soldiers in the northern campaign of Menua was approximately 17,286.¹⁰¹ These numbers give the size of the campaigning forces, but not of the entire army: an important part of the military forces must have been left in reserve against potential rebellions and sudden external aggression. It is possible that most of the provinces were mobilised only in exceptional conditions, and that just two or three of them may have been called up, for logistical reasons most probably those closest to the possible battlefield: the total Urartian military force was at least triple that of the mobilised forces.

The proportion of captured and deported ‘warriors’ in the entire Urartian army also remains obscure. With the help of the mass deportations, 16,740 ‘warriors’ were recruited during the reign of Arğišti I¹⁰² and 12,000 under Sarduri II.¹⁰³ If the deported ‘young men’ and ‘boys’ were also the future staff of the Urartian army, at least one-third of the Urartian army may be considered as of deportee origin.¹⁰⁴

⁹⁸ The Ottoman empire took Christian children from the countryside of the conquered regions. These were trained as soldiers (Janissaries), and could even be promoted as army commanders (Lybyer 2000, 48–51).

⁹⁹ Luckenbill 1927, 8. For a similar inscription, see Luckenbill 1927, 7.

¹⁰⁰ Melikishvili 1960, 24.

¹⁰¹ Melikishvili 1960, 21. The missing number $x460$ is estimated with the minimal value of $x = 1000$.

¹⁰² Melikishvili 1960, 127.

¹⁰³ Melikishvili 1960, 155.

¹⁰⁴ The same practice can easily be traced for the Hittite (MacQueen 2001, 83), Assyrian (Oded 1979, 48) and Ottoman empires (Taneri 2003, 186; Lybyer 2000, 56).

At a rough estimate, the total strength of the Urartian army in the reign of Menua was 52,000 soldiers. Through augmentation in the number of the deported people, this figure would have increased under Arğišti I and Sarduri II, parallel to the large-scale campaigns, to a total of some 70,000–80,000. An inscription from the reign of Sarduri II about the total number of the Urartian army gives the number of 352,011 soldiers.¹⁰⁵ This sounds much exaggerated: the regular army of Sargon the Akkadian is known to have been 5400 men;¹⁰⁶ Muwatalli II, the Hittite king, had mobilised an army of 47,500 for the battle in Kadesh against Ramses II;¹⁰⁷ Byzantium had an army of 150,000 soldiers at its zenith;¹⁰⁸ and the entire Ottoman army in 16th century numbered approximately 220,000.¹⁰⁹ When one considers these numbers, that of 352,011 loses all credibility. There is of course the possibility that the Urartian king was propagandising, but the exactness of the number may refer to something else: it may measure the pool available for military service at any one time, namely all men between 15 and 45 years, rather than the regular military forces.¹¹⁰ In all events, the entire army could have numbered 100,000 soldiers at the very most, an approximate figure for the Urartian military forces in their heyday.

Commentary

Monarchy in Mesopotamia was based mainly upon large-scale agricultural production and a network of long-distance trade, which provided legitimacy for the actual and applicant governing classes, creating its own tradition going back to the 4th millennium BC at least. The same can be suggested for the precursors of the Hittite kings of central Anatolia, the rulers of the cities being nourished by both agrarian fecundity and, particularly, the taxes provided by the Mesopotamian trade network. The formation of a real aristocracy and ruling castes in the Urartian heartland cannot be traced back beyond the very earliest phases of the Urartian state, and it is obvious that suzerainty in these lands did not lie in a background similar to its coevals or antecedents.¹¹¹

¹⁰⁵ Melikishvili 1960, 155 G.

¹⁰⁶ Nissen 2004, 195.

¹⁰⁷ Bryce 2003, 118; Beal 1992, 292.

¹⁰⁸ Yıldız 1982, 554.

¹⁰⁹ Halaçođlu 1982, 77. For the number of 200,000, see Lybyer 2000, 102.

¹¹⁰ For a detailed study of these numbers, see Diakonoff 1991.

¹¹¹ Archaeological research has revealed that the emergence of complex societies in Transcaucasia came about through the diversification of an elite caste from mobile pastoralist communities (Smith *et al.* 2004, 4). The typical Early Iron Age, or Pre-Urartian fortresses built at high altitudes in Transcaucasia clearly display a hierarchical political pattern, which would be changed with the Urartian invasion. (For the Early Iron Age fortresses, see Avetisyan *et al.* 2000, 19; Smith and Kafadarian 1996, 23; Smith 1999, 53; 2003; Sanamyan 2002, 331–35; Biscione 2002; 2003. For a recent consideration of the Urartian invasion to the north, see Ozan 2006). The craggy landscape surrounding the

The Urartian monarchy had to create a tradition of its own, including aristocratic classes and even a religion, in order to establish a peculiar basis to its legitimacy. There is little doubt that the promoters of the Urartian state were in fact ‘warriors’, and the primary social institution, a ‘caste of warriors’, may have arisen spontaneously. The monarch was the unchallengeable leader of these elites, and had his divine parallel, Haldi, the holy warrior leading the armies with his gleaming weapon. The subordinates of the god, like those of the king, were also warriors. Even the divinities of distant lands were not spurned: they were armed and enrolled under the god Haldi, like their worshippers who were deported to the kingdom and given to the service of royalty. The organisation scheme of the elite warrior-class seems to have been consubstantial with the ideological, especially the religious structure.

The army was divided into units such as chariotry, cavalry and, of course, regular infantry, the main indicator of a state organisation (see Fig. 4). The dynastic warrior elite definitely took their place in this as chariot warriors and royal cavalry guards. For the first time in history, the highlands of eastern Anatolia, north-western Iran and Transcaucasia may have been united with the glue of an ‘indigenous’ and strong military caste. The Urartian army was, of course, a combination of rage, brutality and the blade, but not only this; it was a system as a whole, showing itself in architecture, agriculture and huge ethnic and demographic movements – in short, the transformation of a semi-nomadic way of life into a civilised one. The realisation of this system gave the highlanders of this region the chance to resist the Assyrian imperialism, then to create their own *imperium* and make it last for about 250 years. Urartians disappeared with the collapse of the system, and were mentioned but occasionally, again in warlike contexts: the Persians knew them as ‘Chaldaeans’, struggling against the Armenians in the highlands (Xenophon *Cyropaedia* 3). Xenophon portrays these mountain tribes, attacking both Armenians and Greeks: ‘Chaldaeans were said to be an independent and valiant people; they had as weapons long wicker shields and lances’ (*Anabasis* 4. 3. 4; 5. 5. 17). The quotation below is like a summary of this work:

Now the Chaldaeans were said to be the most warlike of all the tribes in that country, and each of them was armed with a shield and a brace of javelins. They fight for pay

fortresses preserved these political centres from invaders and opponents (Smith 2003, 170), and the early fortress-states had the chance to establish cultic complexes such as in Metsamor (Khazandian *et al.* 1973, 196), and make the economic developments experienced in Metsamor and Horom (see Khazandian *et al.* 1973, 196; Smith 1999, 63; Badaljan *et al.* 1994, 21). Despite this evidence from the northern borders of Urartu, our knowledge about the heartland is scarce, and it is hard to talk of central politic patterns and fortress-states on mountain peaks, or a ruling class establishing hegemony on the agricultural plains. We have some Assyrian annals from the reigns of Salmanasar I and Tiglat-Pileser I mentioning fortresses on mountain peaks, and some Early Iron Age cemeteries, but we are still far away from forming an understanding of Pre-Urartian political structures in the Urartian heartland.

wherever they are needed, partly because they are warriors born, but partly through poverty; for their country is mountainous, and the fertile part of it small (Xenophon *Cyropaedia* 3. 2. 7).

This is possibly the last time the three relics of the Urartian culture – god, army and the state – were brought together in one place. But this was long after the time ‘when the hurly-burly’s done, when the battle’s lost and won’.

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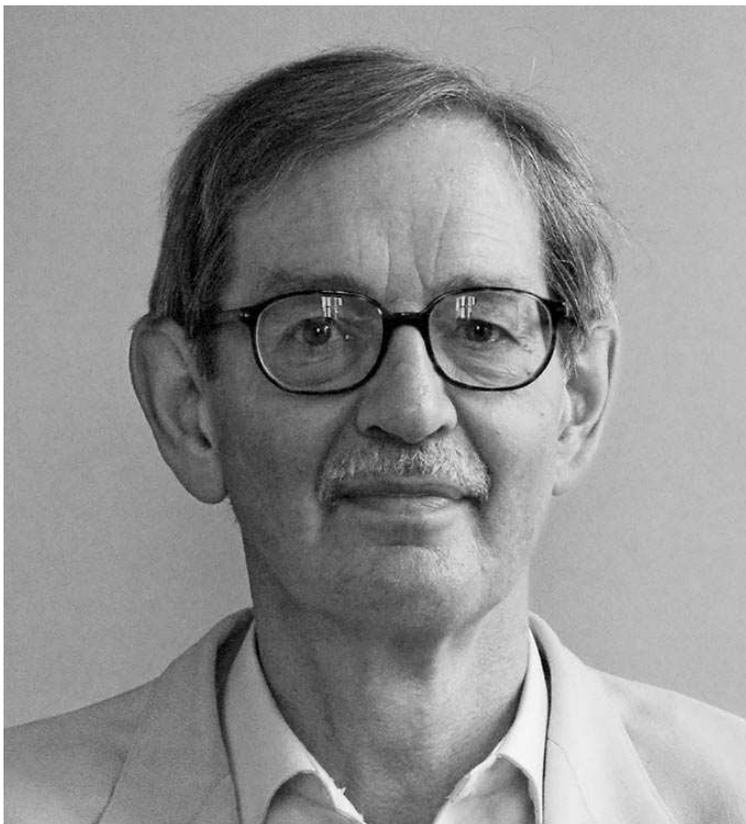
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This volume is dedicated to Prof. A.M. Snodgrass
to celebrate his 75th birthday



Prof. A.M. Snodgrass

EDITORIAL

Anthony Snodgrass, one of the most respected and influential classical archaeologists of our time, has had a huge impact on scholarship, especially in transforming our understanding of the Early Iron Age and the Archaic Mediterranean, and not least in the study of contacts between the ancient West and East.

He has been a firm supporter of this journal since its establishment was first mooted. Dedicating this issue to him is a small acknowledgment of his unfailing help over many years, timed to coincide with his seventy-fifth birthday.

Gocha R. Tsetskhladze
Editor-in-Chief