

THE URARTIAN FORTRESS OF KEVENLİ AND THE CUNEIFORM INSCRIPTIONS BY KING MINUA FOUND THERE

by OKTAY BELLİ and MIRJO SALVINI

The fortress of Kevenli is located 10 km northeast of the Urartian capital Tushpa* (Fig. 1). The nearest settlement is Kevenli (formerly Şuşanis) village¹, 950 m south-east of the fortress. It stands 1960 m above sea level and is surrounded by the peaks Varak (2800 m) and Ereğ (3200 m) like a half moon. These mountains thus serve as a barrier against the severe easterly winds and ensure the region a decent climate. Although these mountains were formed by volcanic andesite and conglomerate rocks, there are small islands of yellowish and grey calcareous formations in the near vicinity². Interestingly enough, andesite and limestone deposits can coexist in Eastern Anatolia. Today, the surroundings of Varak and Ereğ are bare, but it is known that until the 19th century, the region was covered with wild fruit trees and thick groves.

After the establishment of the Urartian capital Tushpa, on the rocky Van Fortress, new administrative and economical fortresses were built. Zivistan, Kalecik and Lower Anzaf fortresses were built under Ishpuini, while Çayırbaşı (Kerevanis), Kıratlı (Lamizgert), Upper Anzaf and Kevenli (Şuşanis) fortresses were constructed under Minua. Kavuncu (Çoravanis) and Keklik Bulağı fortresses were erected in 7th century B.C. (Fig. 2).

Built on a low calcareous rock, the fortress measures 90 m x 105m and covers an area of 9000 m² (Fig. 3). The eastern section meets with a chain of low hills, while the western and southern sections end with a slight slope (Fig. 4). The walls are only visible in the west and east and preserved up to two courses, having a height of 1.5 m (Fig. 5). The large foundation stones are worked roughly on the surface and joints (Fig. 6). The mud-brick superstructure was completely destroyed. The west wall, running to the north, slopes due to the unsuitable rock surface³ (Fig. 3). This contradicts however with the 8th and 7th century B.C. Urartian fortresses, where the walls are straight. In these centuries, Urartian architects shaped the land to their needs, instead of complying with the inconvenient topographical

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¹ See the 1:200.000 map of the Harita Genel Müdürlüğü, sheet Başkale (İç/151); and the 1:500.000 map of the Kartographischer Verlag R. Ryborsch, Obersthausen, Türkiye/Turkey 6 (J/36).

² İ. E. Altınlı, *Explanatory Text of the Geological Map of Turkey (Van)*, Ankara 1964, 42 ff.; O. Belli, Urartian Stone Quarries and Workshops in the Van Region, in: O. Belli (Ed.), *Istanbul University's Contributions to Archaeology in Turkey (1932- 2000)*, İstanbul 2001, p. 378 ff.

³ O. Belli, Van Ovası'nda Yeni Urartu Merkezleri, *II. Araştırma Sonuçları Toplantısı*, Eski Eserler ve Müzeler Genel Müdürlüğü, İzmir 1984, p. 165, fig. 4.

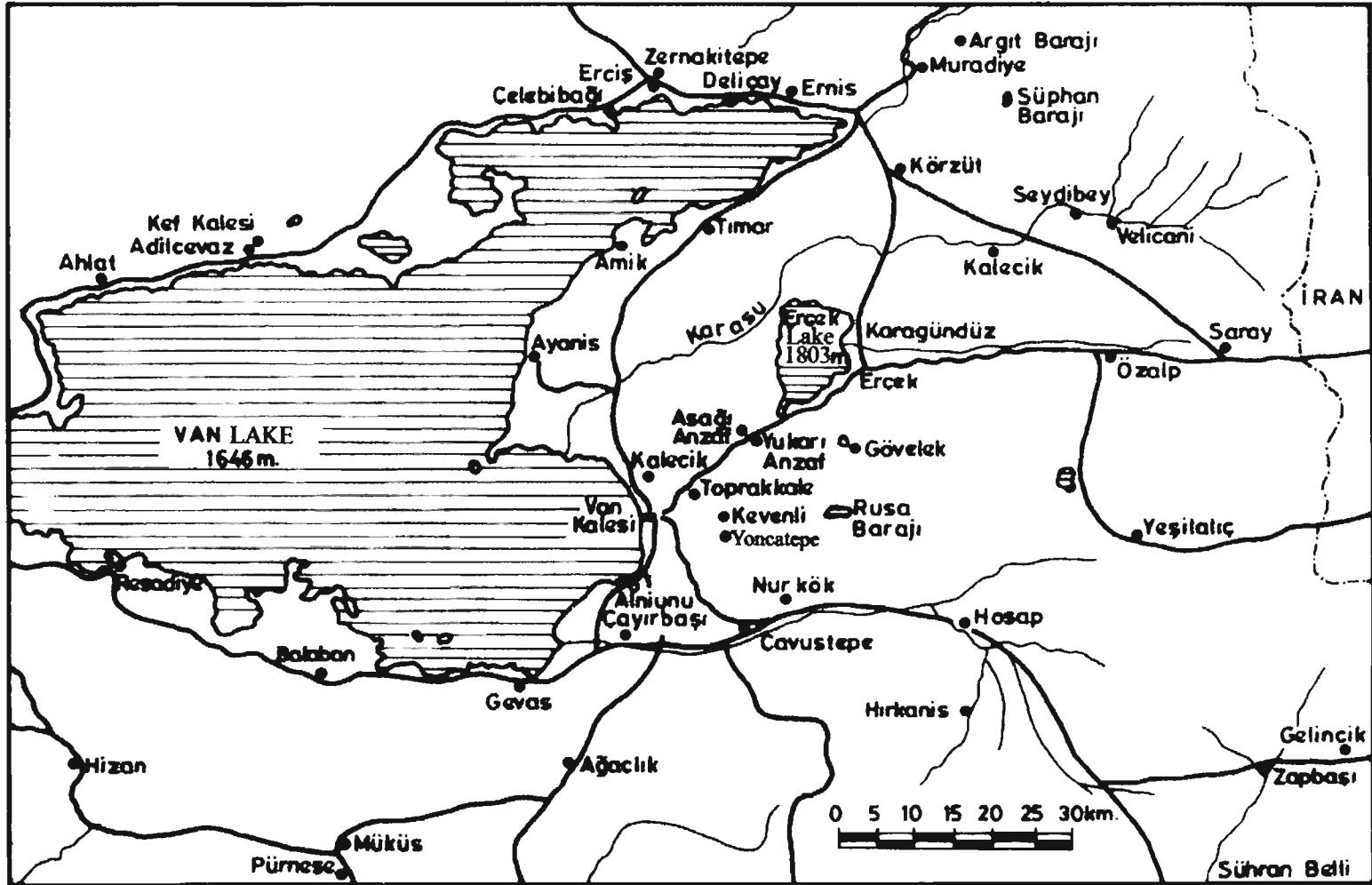


Fig. 1 – The location of Kevenli Fortress.

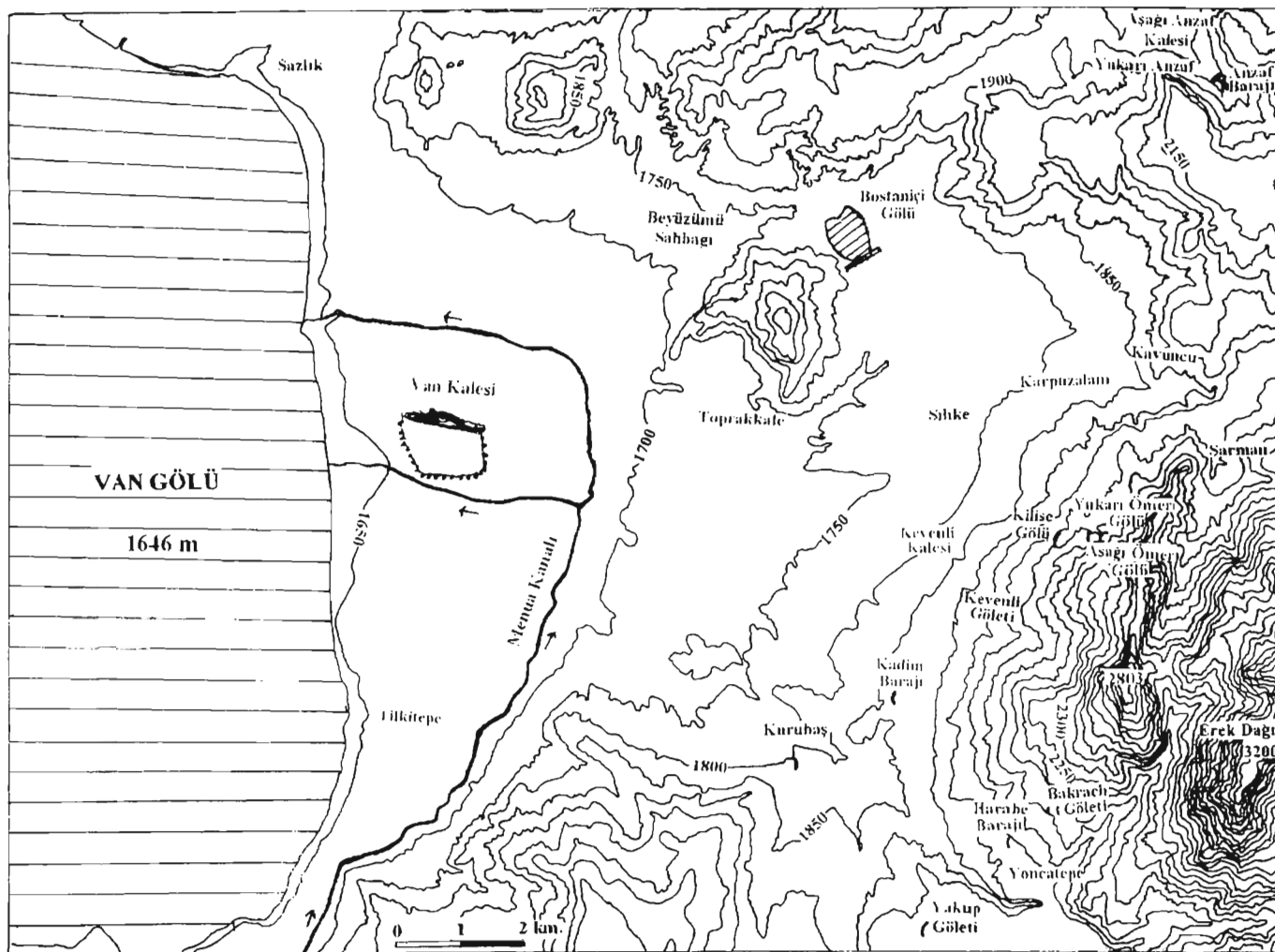


Fig. 2 – Topographical plan of Van Fortress and other fortresses.

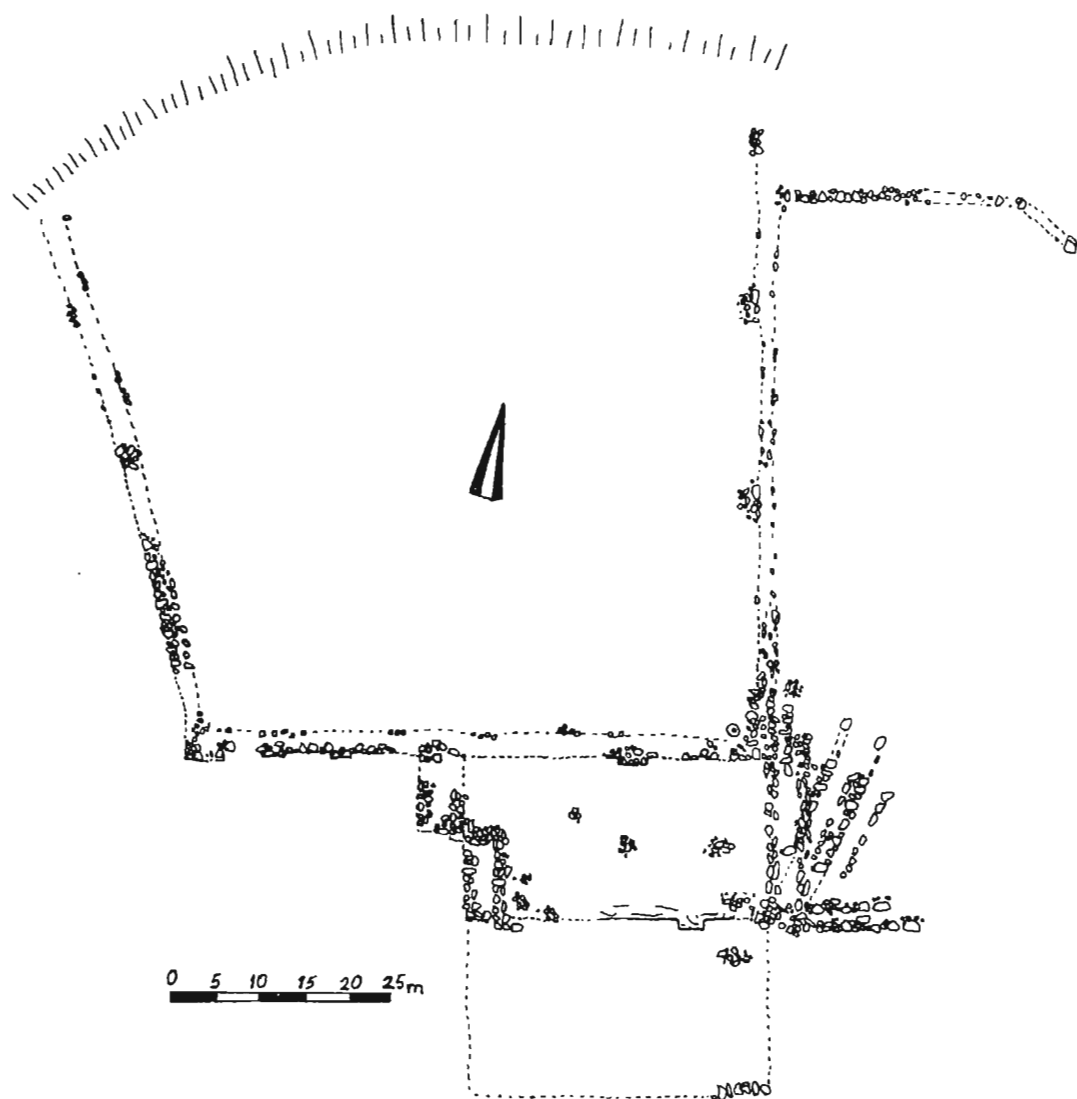


Fig. 3 – Topographical plan of Kevenli Fortress.

features. The entrance seems to be from the east, where the low, flat hills permit an easy access route.

Bastions are rarely used and they resemble those of the Upper Anzaf Fortress built by Minua in the 9th century B.C.⁴. The limestone for the foundations was brought from the rich deposits in the vicinity. As the southern section of the fortress with its decent climate is suitable for a settlement, the land was terraced. There is a difference of 6 – 7 m in altitude between the upper part of the fortress and the southern terraces.

⁴ O. Belli, *The Anzaf Fortresses and the Gods of Urartu*, (Arkeoloji ve Sanat Yayınları), İstanbul 1999, p. 16.



Fig. 4 – Kevenli Fortress, from the south.



Fig. 5 – City wall of the Kevenli Fortress 1.5 m in height.



Fig. 6 – The south Fortress wall built with large stones.



Fig. 7 – Kevenli Fortress which had been used for agricultural purposes.

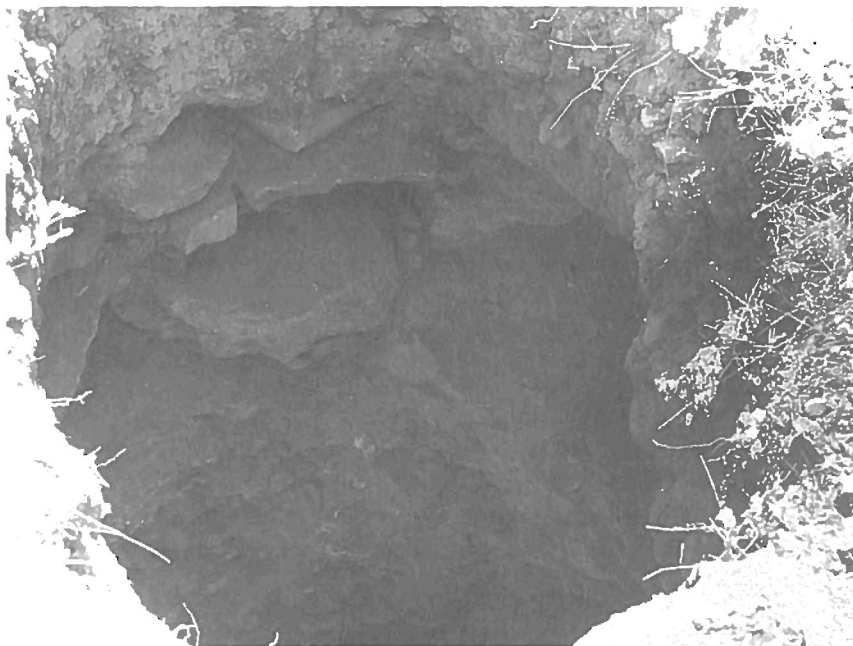


Fig. 8 – The illegal digs at Kevenli Fortress.



Fig. 9 – Kevenli Dam, from the south.

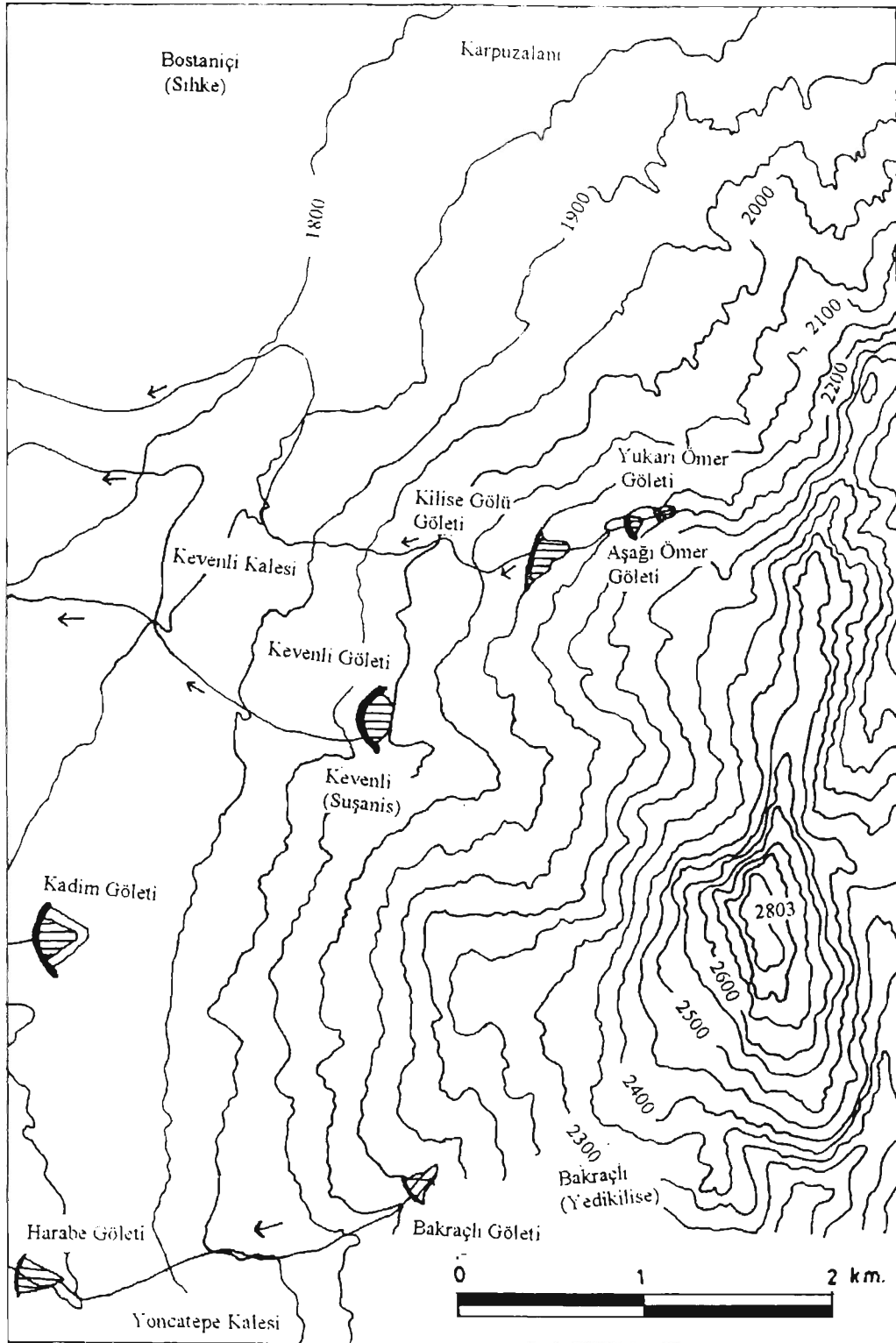


Fig. 10 – Topographical plan of Kevenli Dam and its vicinity.

Unfortunately, the site of the Kevenli fortress has long been used for agricultural purposes (Fig. 7). The fragments of pithoi found there indicate the presence of large storerooms at the southeast corner of the fortress⁵. These pithoi and cuneiform inscriptions found during illegal digs suggest that the fortress was an economic centre (Fig. 8). Dams near the Kevenli fortress indeed show how modern farming practices were in the Urartian age.

Mount Ereğ (3200 m), which embraces Van from the east like a half moon, descends gradually towards the Van plain (1750 m) in the west. The plain, which measures 9 km x 17 km., covers an area of 150 km². It has fertile soil, but modern farming is impossible without irrigation channels. The richest water sources of Eastern Anatolia, indeed, of Anatolia as a whole, however, are found near Mount Ereğ. During the Urartian Kingdom, 14 dams and lakes were built in order to exploit these sources. Most of these are on the small streams flowing from the eastern slopes of the Ereğ range towards Van plain. These sources were also one of the key factors in establishing the Urartian capital in the Van plain⁶.

Under Minua, five small dams were constructed near the Kevenli Fortress: Upper and Lower Ömer Lake dams and Kilise lake dam are located 2.5 km. northeast of the fortress and are supplied by the rich sources of Mount Ereğ. Water is directed to the west in order to water the fields east of the fortress. The Kevenli dam lies 850 m to the south, in Kevenli village (Fig. 9), and supplies water for the fields in the west, together with Kadim Lake 2.5 km. southeast of the fortress⁷ (Fig. 10).

It is clear that Kevenli fortress was an important economic centre, organizing farming in the region and storing the products of such activity.

EPIGRAPHIC DOCUMENTS FROM KEVENLİ / ŞUŞANIS

Many cuneiform inscriptions, mostly fragmentary, have been found at different times on this site. All of them belong to King Minua, son of Išpuini, no other king being attested there. The inscriptions are here collected and discussed.

CTU A 5-34. Inscription on circular stone (column base?) from Šušants (= Şuşanis = Kevenli) (Fig. 11). Editions: Schulz⁸ XXIII = Cich 69 = UKN 78 = HchI 57 = KUKN 98 = CTU A 5-34

⁵ O. Belli, Van Ovası'nda Yeni Urartu Merkezleri, II. Araştırma Sonuçları Toplantısı, Eski Eserler ve Müzeler Genel Müdürlüğü, İzmir 1984, p. 165, fig. 8.

⁶ O. Belli, Dams, Reservoirs and Irrigation Channels of the Van Plain in the Period of the Urartian Kingdom, in: A. Çilingiroğlu and R. J. Matthews (Eds.), *Anatolian Iron Ages 4, Proceedings of the Fourth Anatolian Iron Age Colloquium held at Mersin, 19-23 May 1997*, "Anatolian Studies" 49, 1999, p. 11.

⁷ O. Belli, *ibid.*, p. 17 ff.

⁸ The original drawings by Schulz in Figs 11 and 14, are here presented for the first time. The publication is: Friedrich Eduard Schulz, *Mémoire sur le lac de Van et ses environs* (envoyé à Paris le 8 juin 1828), "Journal Asiatique", série III, 9, 1840, p. 257-323, + VII planches.

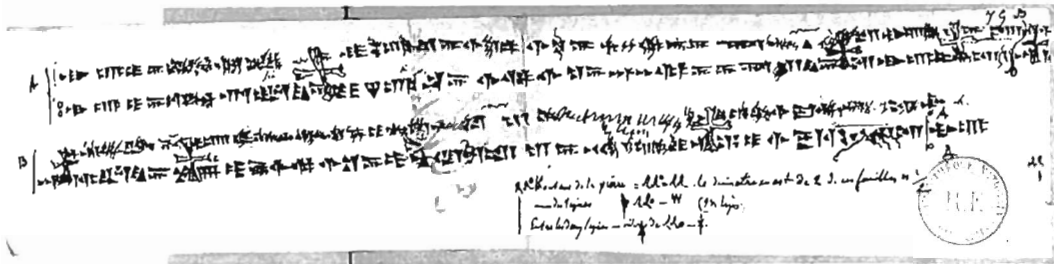


Fig. 11 – The original copy by F.E. Schulz of his inscription N° XXIII.

- 1 [ḫal-di-ni-ni] uš-ma-a-[ši-ni ṁmì-nu-a-še ṁiš]-pu-ú-i-ni-ḫi-ni-še É ṭu-lu-[ú]-ri-[ni]
- 2 É.GAL ba-du-si-e ši-di-ši-tú-ni URU ši-di-ši-tú-ni ú-i gi-e-i iš-ti-ni ši-da-ú-r[i]
- 3 ṁmì-nu-a-še ṁiš-pu-ú-i-ni-ḫi-ni-še ši-di-ši-tú-ni e-ʾa É.GAL e-ʾa URU

“Through the power of Haldi, Minua, son of Išpuini has erected a ṭulurini house and a fortress and a town. Nothing was here built (before). Minua, son of Išpuini, built both a fortress and a town”.

A building named *ṭulurini* is attested only here and it is impossible to guess what kind of construction it may have been. We can only note that a round shaped inscribed stone was part of such a building, like the unknown buildings of Išpuini in Zivistan, where many such round stones were found. It is, however, clear that É.GAL means the fortress (a fortified palace) and URU surely does not mean “city” or “town” in the accepted Mesopotamian sense, but “settlement”, and we may presume that it designates the surrounding village, where the farmers dwelled.

CTU A 5-44.

Inscribed basalt stone from a temple building in Kevenli/Şuşanis, in the Van Museum (Fig. 12). Measurements : height 26 cm, width 92 cm, thickness 44 cm; first published by A.M. Dinçol - E. Kavaklı, *Van Bölgesinde Bulunmuş Yeni Urartu Yazıtları/ Die neuen Urartäischen Inschriften aus der Umgebung von Van*, “Jahrbuch für kleinasiatische Forschungen” (= JKF Bh 1), Istanbul 1978, p. 27; see also the interpretation of M. Salvini, Una “bilingue” assiro-urartea, in: (O. Carruba ed.), *Studia Mediterranea Piero Meriggi dicata*, vol. 1, Pavia 1979, pp. 575-593.

Editions: CTU A 5-44 = KUKN 141

- 1 a-na ḫal-di-e EN-šú ṁmì-nu-u-a DUMU ṁiš-pu-ú-i-ni
- 2 i-si-tú šá ḫal-di-e ir-ti-ši-ip KÁ šá ḫal-di-e
- 3 a-di li-mid/be-di-šú ir-ti-ši-ip lib-bi URU ar-šu-ni-ú-nu ina pān(IGI) KUR-ú-ra¹
- 4 ma-ni-ni ḫal-di be-di-ni ḫal-di-na-ni KÁ be-di-ni
- 5 ṁiš-pu-ú-i-ni-e ṁmì-nu-ú-a ul-gu-še ma-ni-ni ṁiš-pu-ú-i-ni-i
- 6 ṁmì-nu-a-i al-su-ú-i-ši e-i-a-ar-di-i-ši

(lines 1-3 in Assyrian) “To Haldi, his lord, Minua, the son of Išpuini, erected a tower (temple) of Haldi and a Door of Haldi to the perfection in the city of Arşuniunu, (which lies) in front of Mount Ura”.



Fig. 12 – The Assyrian and Urartian temple inscription from Kevenli (CTU A 5-44).

(lines 4-6 in Urartian) “May exist, from Haldi and from the Haldi Door, for Išpuini and for Minua life, greatness (and) . . .”.

The last word must signify another positive concept, such as power or the like but is not precisely translatable.

This is the earliest inscription relating the construction of a *susi* (= *isītu*) , i.e. a Tower Temple, in Urartu. The reason why both languages, Assyrian and Urartian, were used in this manner, is not clear, but this and other problems have been discussed in the quoted articles.

^{KUR}Ura is the name of a mountain, not of a country. If we suppose that the ancient Urartian name of Kevenli was Aršuniunu, ^{KUR}Ura could correspond to the Keven Dağı, which dominates Kevenli and belongs to the massif of the Erek Dağ. There is a difficulty with this, however, since the same city name occurs in stelae from Karahan, on the northern edge of Lake Van (see below).

SACRAL INSCRIPTIONS BY MINUA FROM THE VILLAGES OF KEVENLI AND SIHKE⁹

A new small fragment of inscription has been found recently in Kevenli, and it is kept in a private house¹⁰ (Fig. 13a and b). Some fragmentary inscriptions with sacral content have been already found in different periods in the close villages of Kevenli and Sihke, but these one must come from Kevenli.

⁹ The following publication of Urartian texts is also a preparation of the forthcoming Corpus of Urartian Inscriptions by M. Salvini (CTU = *Corpus dei testi urartei*, “Documenta Asiana” VIII). For the rare philological abbreviations used here see SMEA 44, 2002, p. 30.

¹⁰ My thanks go to Prof. Veli Sevin, of the University of Van, for his indications and to the trusted driver Ömer Yavaş for his persuasive skills which enabled me to see and photograph the fragment.



Fig. 13a and b – The new fragment from Kevenli (= part of CTU A 5-88), kept in the Kevenli village.

Despite appearances, this small fragment (22.5 cm wide, 10 cm high and approximately 52 cm thick) is not without significance. Although poorly preserved, the upper surface is well squared and shows that it was originally inserted into the walls of a building.

We can make out the following signs in what remains of the first three lines of a text:

- 1]a-di KÚ[
- 2]-e áš-ḫa-áš-te-^re[
- 3]^ra-lu-še^r x-^rlu^r[

The rarity of the terms found in lines 1 and 2 immediately enabled us to compare this text with an incomplete and problematic inscription by Minua which consists of three pieces: CICH 86+101¹¹ = UKN 96 = HchI 76 B,C,D = KUKN 122 and with its duplicate, CICH 104 = UKN 98 = HchI 76E = KUKN 124¹². This, in turn, leads us to reconsider the reconstructions proposed to date. Firstly, HchI 76 A = CICH 102 = UKN 97 = KUKN 123, as opposed to König's reconstruction, HchI p. 14 and Taf. 51, is not part of this text and does not represent the opening lines. The indirect join was not, in fact, included in Melikišvili's corpus¹³. One need only examine the photograph published by Lehmann-Haupt in CICH Taf. LVII, of the three stones (the two of CICH 101 and CICH 102) placed one above the other to see how in CICH 102 = HchI 76A the inscription starts immediately below the upper edge, unlike the other two stones, where a gap of a few centimetres has been left. The same can be seen in the photographs published by da G. Tseretheli (UPMG 15, 16, 17), the first to publish in one place all three stones from different sources re-used in the monasteries of Karmirvor-Vank in the village of Šušants and in the church of Sihke¹⁴.

The new fragment, therefore, is a duplicate of the first three lines of CICH 86+101 and forms a join (in the sense that the new stone is the upper half) with the previously known duplicate, in turn consisting of two pieces, Schulz XXV+XXVI (Fig. 14) = CICH 104 = UKN 98 = HchI 76E = KUKN 124, which corresponds with lines 4-7 of the main text. We are thus able to make the following numerous, reciprocal integrations:

CTU A 5-87

- 1-(a)]-di KÚ-ni pa-ri ^Dḫal-di-i-e ur-pu-a-ši za-du-še

¹¹ CICH 101 consists of two fragments which join with CICH 86.

¹² The text reconstructed by Harutjunjan, integrated with KUKN 122, in transcription and not divided into lines does not provide any new information but, rather, serves to confuse.

¹³ It should be remembered that the first edition of UKN dates back to 1953 and was published in VDI, fasc. I-IV. The 1960 edition in book form is the same and does not take into consideration König's corpus, HchI, except in the appendix, pp. 448-460. B.B. Piotrovskij's judgement is, instead, unfair, *Vanskoe Carstvo (Urartu)*, Moskva 1959, p. 16 defining König's work as inferior to that of Melikišvili. The book *Vanskoe Carstvo* was translated by M. Salvini with the title *Il regno di Van (Urartu)*, "Incunabula Graeca" XII, Roma 1966.

¹⁴ The story of the stones and their provenance is outlined well in HchI p. 14, sub Nr. 76.

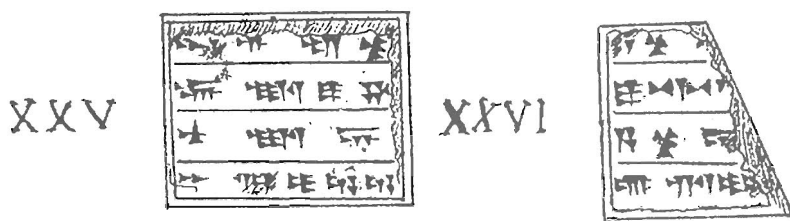


Fig. 14 – The original drawings by F.E. Schulz (Nos XXV and XXVI) of two fragments from Schuschantz/Kevenli.

- 2] x x 'DUB' x x [. . . -(e aš-h)] a-aš-te-e-še a-še ʰhal-di-i-e aš-ḥa-aš-tú-li ḥa-lu-li
- 3 ʰʰhal-di-na KÁ i-ne-ri-ḥi-ni-t[i]-ni a-lu-še ḥa-lu-li-e gu-di GÜB-di a-tu-li-i-e
- 4 . . .] di-du-li-ni ur-pu-li-ni ʰhal-[di]-na KÁ KÚ-ni URU-še a-še sa-li me-šú-li ka-am-ni-ni
- 5 . . .] za-na-ni-ni ḥa-i-ti-ni ʰhal-di-na KÁ s[(a-l)]i aš-ḥa-aš-ti-ti-ni a-še GU₄ ši-i-du-li a-i-ni
- 6 . . .] ur-pu-a-ši ʰhal-di-na KÁ t[a-(n)]u-li-ni a-še ni-qa-li ši-i-du-li ta-nu-li-ni
- 7 . . ur]-pu-a-ši ʰhal-di-na KÁ ʰhal-di-i-ʿe [(e)]-ʿú-ri-i-e ʰmì-nu-a-še ʰiš-pu-ú-i-ni ḥi-ni-še
- 8 ʰhal-di-ni-l]i KÁ ba-du-si-i-e [ši-di-iš-tú-a-li]

It is not possible to offer a translation of this fragmentary sacral text dealing with sacrifices for god Haldi (ʰhal-di-i-e ur-pu-a-ši za-du-še). A philological commentary follows.

Line 1 - KÚ-ni Diakonoff, AMI 22, 1989, 87, suggests the Urartian reading at=u=l=i=ne which translates as “may he eat!”. The verb atu=le in line 3, in the present and durative aspect, seems in truth to have as its object ḥaluli “wine”, which would appear to contradict Diakonoff’s reading. However, the temple inscription of Ayanis appears to confirm the correspondence between the Sumerogram KÚ and the Urartian verb atu-; cf. gu-di na-di a-tú-li-e and gu-di na-di KÚ-li in the inscription from the susi temple of Ayanis (CTU A 12-1, respectively V 11 and IV 10).

line 2 - ur. ašh- is linked with the Hurrian ašh- “opfern” by Diakonoff, HuU p. 76, which lies at the root of the term ašḥušikkunni “Opferherr”.

ašh=ašt=u-, see M. Salvini, Or 59, 1990, 245.

Line 3 - gu-di GÜB-di “to the right and to the left”, Diakonoff RGTC 9, 1981, p. 22.

Line 5 - ašḥaštitiṇ Harutjunjan, NUNKb p. 26 “пожертвование(?), пожертвоприношение(?)”.

CTU A 5-88 = unpublished fragment from Kevenli (10.8.04) + Schulz XXV + XXVI = CICH 104 = UKN 98 = HchI 76 E = KUKN 124.

- 1 [.] a-di KÚ[-(ni pa-ri ʰhal-di-i-e ur-pu-a-ši za-du-še)]
- 2 [. . x x (ʳDUBʳ) x x . . .]-e áš-ḫa-áš-te-ʳeʳ[(-še a-še ʰhal-di-i-e áš-ḫa-áš-tú-li ḫa-lu-li)]
- 3 [. (ʰhal-di-na KÁ i-ne-ri-ḫi-ni-t)i(-ni)] a-lu-še ʳḫa-luʳ[-(li-e gu-di GÜB-di a-tu-li-i-e)]
- 4 [. (di-du-li-ni ur-pu-li-ni ʰhal-[di]-na KÁ)] KÚ-ni URU-še a-še [(sa-li me-šú-li ka-am-ni-ni)]
- 5 [. . . (za-na-ni-ni ḫa-i-ti-ni ʰhal-di-na KÁ)] sa-li áš-ḫa-áš-ti-t[(i-ni a-še GU₄ ši-i-du-li a-i-ni)]
- 6 [. . . (ur-pu-a-ši ʰhal-di-na KÁ t)a]-nu-li-ni a-še n[(i-qa-li ši-i-du-li ta-nu-li-ni)]
- 7 [. . . ur(-pu-a-ši ʰhal-di-na KÁ ʰ)]ḫal-di-i-e e-ú-ri-i-e [(ᵐmì-nu-a-še ᵐiš-pu-ú-i-ni-ḫi-ni-še)]

FOUR INSCRIPTIONS OF MINUA ON CORNER STONES FROM A TEMPLE BUILDING IN
KEVENLI / ŞUŞANIS

The Van Museum has recently acquired a new inscription from Kevenli (Fig. 16-17), which was immediately identified as a duplicate of an inscription that has been known to us since the times of Schulz. It is presented here with the corpus sign A 5-45B. This enables us to identify two series of two epigraphs dedicated by Minua to the construction of the “Gates of Haldi”, all of which are from Kevenli.

The first was found at Tutan, near Van, but originally came from Kevenli / Şuşanis and is conserved in the Georgian Museum of Tbilisi (Fig. 15). G.V. Cereteli (UPMG p. 63 and Pl. XXIX-XXX) believed it to be a fake, but the discovery of the duplicates proves once and for all that it is authentic.

Schulz XXIV = UPMG 23 = UKN 74 = HchI 49b = KUKN 92 = CTU A 5-45A.

Tbilisi Museum – the inscription is engraved in a continuous manner on two sides at a right angle to each other, the position of the corner being indicated with a vertical line (|).

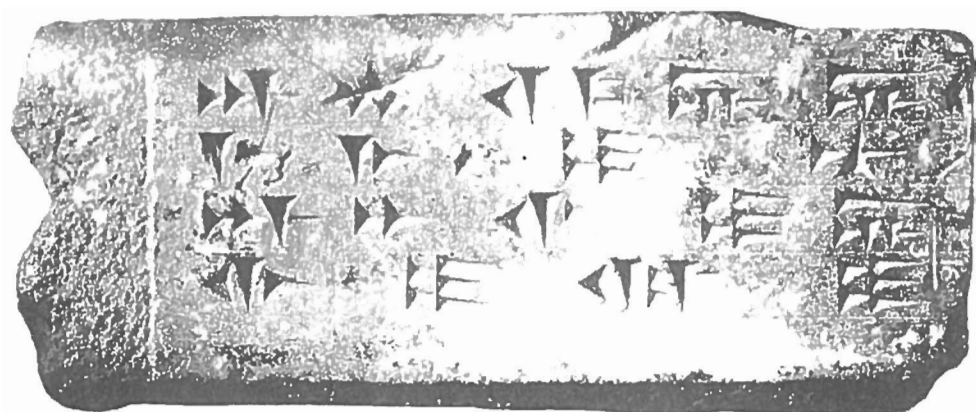
CTU A 5-45A

- 1 ʰhal-di-ni-ni | uš-ma-a-ši-ni
- 2 ᵐmì-i-nul-ú-a-še
- 3 ʰhal-di-i-ni-li še-iš-ti-li
- 4 ši-i-di-il-iš-tu-a-li

“Through the power of God Haldi Minua, the son of Išpuini, has built doors of Haldi”.

Line 4 has the only attested case of tu (Labat 58); the sign tú (Labat 381) being commonly used in Urartian.

CTU A 5-45B, unpublished, from Kevenli, Van Museum, 1 august 2004 (Fig. 16-17); this is inscribed on two sides, at a right angle to each other, of a well-squared calcareous stone. It is a duplicate of UPMG 23 and therefore came from the same building.



a

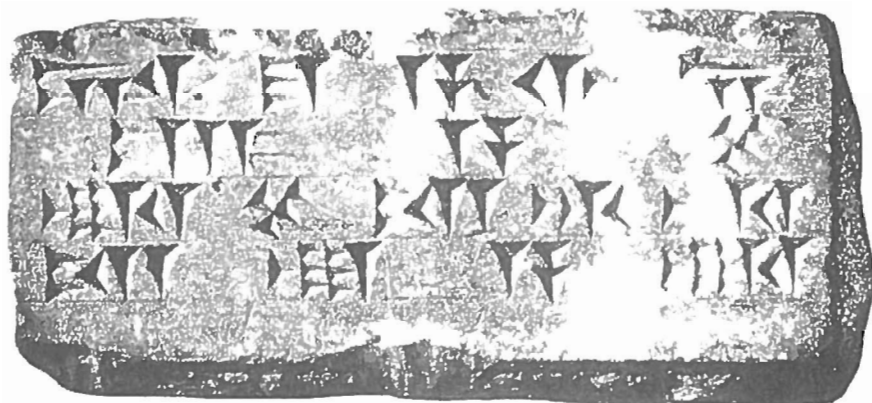


Fig. 15 – Stone inscription said to come from Tutan Kevenli. Georgian Museum, Tbilisi (CTU A 5-45A). From Cereteli, UPMG pl. XXIX, text 23.

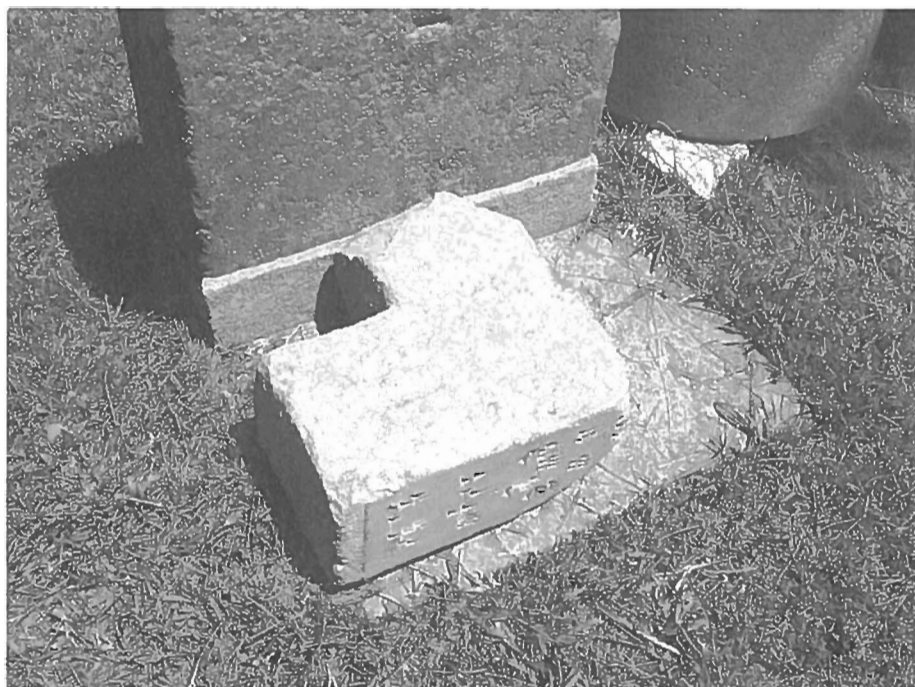


Fig. 16 – New inscription from Kevenli (CTU A 5-45B) in the Van Museum (2004), general view.

CTU A 5-45B

- 1 𐎶𐎠𐎠𐎠𐎠𐎠𐎠[𐎠 | 𐎠𐎠𐎠𐎠𐎠𐎠]-𐎠
- 2 𐎠𐎠𐎠𐎠𐎠𐎠[𐎠𐎠𐎠𐎠𐎠𐎠]
- 3 𐎶𐎠𐎠𐎠𐎠𐎠[𐎠𐎠𐎠𐎠𐎠𐎠𐎠𐎠𐎠]
- 4 𐎠𐎠𐎠𐎠𐎠𐎠[𐎠𐎠𐎠𐎠𐎠𐎠]

CTU A 5-46A, white calcareous stone inscribed on two sides at a right angle to each other. 21 cm high, 50 cm wide and 28 cm thick (Fig. 18). In previous editions it was believed that this consisted of two separate fragments: a = CICH 106 = UKN 122 = HchI 49d from Šušants, b = CICH 107 = UKN 123 = HchI 49c from Šušants; = KUKN 94.

CTU A 5-46A width 50 cm, height 21 cm, thickness 28 cm

- 1 𐎶𐎠𐎠𐎠𐎠𐎠𐎠 𐎠𐎠𐎠𐎠𐎠𐎠[𐎠𐎠𐎠]
- 2 𐎠𐎠𐎠𐎠𐎠𐎠𐎠𐎠𐎠𐎠𐎠 𐎶𐎠𐎠𐎠𐎠𐎠𐎠[𐎠 KÁ]
- 3 𐎠𐎠𐎠𐎠𐎠𐎠𐎠𐎠𐎠𐎠𐎠𐎠𐎠[𐎠]

CTU A 5-46B = UKN 121 = HchI 49b = KUKN 95; fragment from Šuşanis, cf. H.G. Güterbock, JNES 22, 1963, 269.

CTU A 5-46B

- 1 [𐎶𐎠𐎠𐎠𐎠𐎠𐎠] 𐎠𐎠𐎠𐎠𐎠𐎠[𐎠𐎠𐎠]
- 2 [𐎠𐎠𐎠𐎠𐎠𐎠𐎠𐎠𐎠𐎠𐎠] 𐎶𐎠𐎠𐎠𐎠𐎠𐎠[𐎠 KÁ]
- 3 [𐎠𐎠𐎠𐎠𐎠𐎠𐎠𐎠𐎠𐎠𐎠]𐎠𐎠𐎠𐎠[𐎠𐎠]



Fig. 17a – New inscription from Kevenli (CTU A 5-45B). Van Museum, left side.

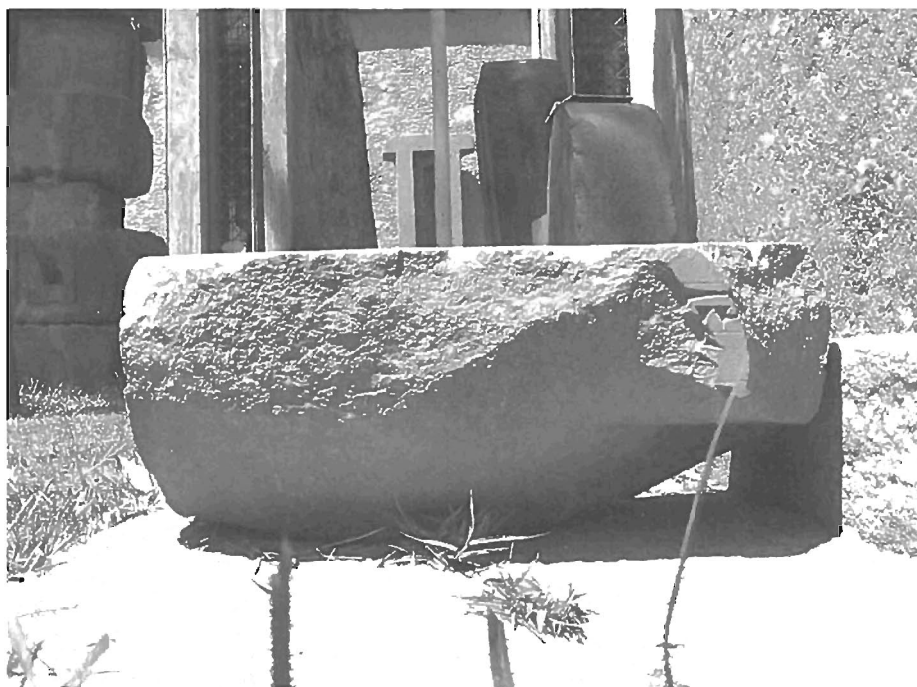


Fig. 17b – New inscription from Kevenli (CTU A 5-45B). Van Museum, right side.



Fig. 18 – A formerly published inscription from Šušants / Kevenli (CTU A 5-46A).

These four inscriptions bearing identical contents, from which we may deduce the correspondence between the Sumerogram KÁ and the Urartian word še-iš-ti-li, were probably inserted symmetrically at various points in the structure of a susi temple (the “Gate of Haldi” standing for *susi* temple or “tower temple”) of Kevenli / Şuşanis, an Urartian centre of which we do not know the name. If we consider Minua’s “bilingual” inscription from Kevenli, this could be the city of Arşuniunu, before Mt. Ura where the king built an (Assyrian) *išītu*, that is to say, a tower temple (= Urartian *susi*)¹⁵.

However, the city of Arşuniunu and Mt. Ura, as a god (deified mountain?), recur in an entirely different location on the stela of Karahan, a village some 70 km to the north at the mouth of the Bendimahi çay. This makes it difficult to identify Kevenli with Arşuniunu.

Having gathered all of the complete and fragmentary inscriptions from Kevenli together here, we may draw the following conclusions. The site appears to have been founded by Minua and, it would seem, was only occupied during his reign. The characteristics of the texts suggest that Kevenli must have been the earliest or one of the earliest settlements established by Minua. The inscription CTU A 5-34 recalls similar inscriptions by Işpuini at Zivistan, and the “bilingual” text CTU A 5-44, with its partial use of the Assyrian language, as well as its archaic ductus, may be linked with the scribal uses of Işpuini. If this is the case, then we have here epigraphic proof, as yet unsubstantiated by archaeological evidence, of the building of one of the earliest tower temples (*susi* / *išītu*) of the Urartian kingdom. None are

¹⁵ M. Salvini, Fs. Meriggi, 1979, Una “bilingue” assiro-urartea, *Studia Mediterranea Piero Meriggi dicata*, vol. 1, Pavia 1979, 575-593.

known to us, in fact, from the period in which Išpuini governed alone, whilst there are two mentions of such buildings in the sacred inscriptions dating from the period of co-regency between Išpuini e Minua¹⁶. The fact that the epigraphic documentation which has survived is religious in content can only make us think of an extremely old sacred tradition which explains the presence of Armenian monasteries¹⁷ here on the slopes of the greatest mountain range in the area.

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¹⁶ See the rock niche inscriptions of Meher Kapısı and Yeşilalıç. The first (A 3-1 = CICH 18 = UKN 27 = HchI 10 = KUKN 38), l. 17 provides for an animal sacrifice at the *susi* of Haldi, the second (A 3-2 = CICH 16, Taf. 6 = UKN 25 = HchI 8 = KUKN 36), l. 2 e l. 7, celebrates the building of the *susi* temple of Haldi.

¹⁷ See Paolo Cuneo, *Architettura armena*, Roma 1988, Tomo I, p. 536sg. N° 321 (convent of Kopanis, S. Grigor), pp. 538-542, N° 322 convent of Varagvank' (= Yedikilise), p. 543, N° 323 convent of Varag Verin, Tomo II, Geographical map not included in the text, H/7, N° 321, 322, 323.