

MORE INSCRIBED URARTIAN STONES FROM ERZURUM MUSEUM

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Although it is known that the Urartians were active in Eastern Anatolia from the thirteenth century BC onwards, it was only in the ninth century BC that they made their presence felt in Anatolian history. Including the early Uruatri-Nairi period they were to be found in Anatolia for about 600 years. The Urartian State must have ceased to exist as a force in the second half of the 7th century BC¹. At its most powerful period the state's frontiers stretched to the region of Mount Sabalan in the East, the Euphrates in the West, to northern Armenia and southern Georgia in the North, Erzincan in the Northeast and to the basin of Lake Urmia in the Southeast.

In this article we are publishing two inscriptions and giving information on the provenance of one stone, to be found in Erzurum Museum². This is one of the main museums of Eastern Anatolia³ having a large number of finds relating to the Urartians.

Inscription 1. Patnos

Our first inscribed stone block (museum inventory N. 38-91) was brought to the Erzurum Museum from the Yüzüncü Yıl Public Park in Ağrı provincial capital, where it had previously been taken from Patnos. The stone is 130 × 45 × 60 cm. in size and contains a three-line inscription repeated to give six lines (Figs. 1a and 1b). The sides of the stone are uncut and left rough.

Transcription:

1. ^dhal-di-i-ni-ni uš-ma-a-ši-ni
 ^mmī-nu-a-še ^miš-pu-u-i-ni-ḫi-ni-še
 i-ni É.GAL ši-di-iš-tú-ni ba-du-si
 ^dhal-di-i-ni-ni uš-ma-a-ši-ni
5. ^mmī-nu-a-še ^miš-pu-u-i-ni-ḫi-ni-še
 i-ni É.GAL ši-di-iš-tú-ni ba-du-si

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¹ For Urartian History see Melikišvili 1960, Piotrovskij 1969, Salvini 1995 and 2005, Tarhan 1978, Zimansky 1985, Erzen 1979 and Çilingiroğlu 1994. For the end of the Urartian Kingdom see Kessler 1986 and Kroll 1984.

² We give our grateful thanks to the museum curator, Mr. Mustafa Erkman, for permission to work in the museum and for giving us all possible assistance.

³ For research work done in Eastern Anatolia see Kozbe-Ceylan-Polat et al. 2008, and Ceylan 2008.



Figs. 1a and 1b

Translation:

(1-3) "By the protection⁴ of Ḫaldi Minua son of Iṣpuini built this fortress to perfection".

(4-6) "By the protection of Ḫaldi Minua son of Iṣpuini built this fortress to perfection".

Inscription 2. Pirabat

The stone recorded in Erzurum Museum inventory as N. 105-90 was brought to the museum from Pirabat village, located 14 km. southwest of the town of Eleşkirt which lies 48 km. west of the provincial capital of Ağrı. Seven inscriptions on stone blocks from Pirabat are to be found in the Erzurum Museum, of which the other six have already been published. They come from the fortress in Pirabat village, which is one of the more important Urartian settlements⁵. Besides these an in-

⁴ The word *uṣmaše*, previously interpreted as "power", must now be translated with "protection" (suggestion by M. Salvini).

⁵ For the publications see Başgelen 1985, Dinçol 1989 (= Payne 2006: 5.3.4+5.3.5) (= CTU A 5-40A, B), Payne 1996 (= Payne 2006: 5.3.5, 8.2.15, 8.2.30, 8.2.31 and 8.2.32) (= CTU A 8-33 - A 8-37) and Payne-Ceylan 2003 (= CTU A 3-6).

scribed stone known as the Ağrı – Toprakkale stone, the current whereabouts of which is not known, has been shown to have come from Pirabat and to be the duplicate of one of the other inscriptions⁶.

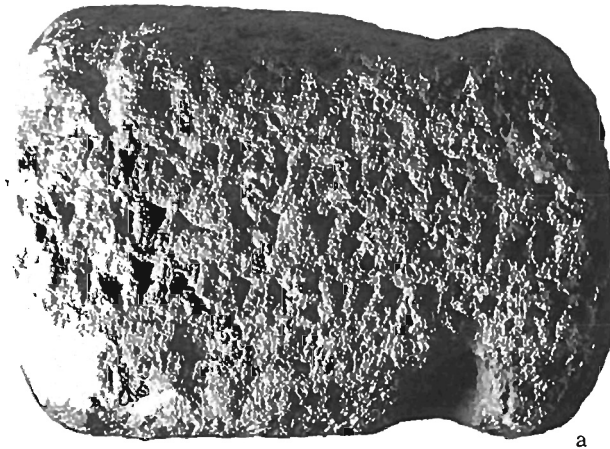
The inscription under present discussion is on a basalt block 40 × 28 × 28 cm in size (Figs. 2a and 2b)

Transcription:

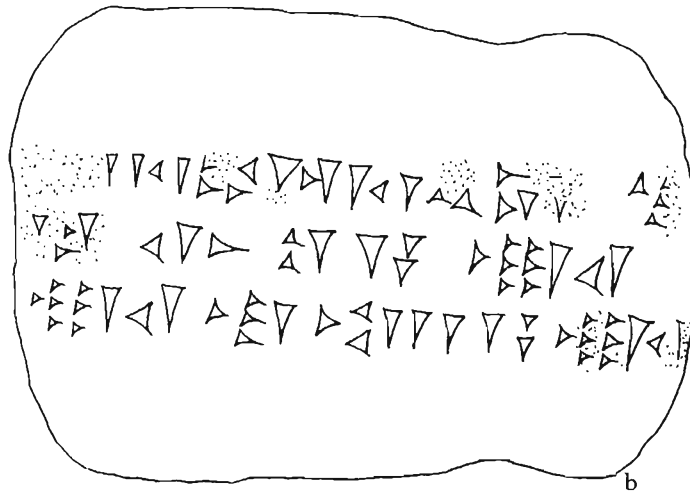
1. ^{md}]sar₅-du-ri-ḫi-ni-še
 ši-d]i-ši-tú-a-li
]-li te-ru-a-li

Translation:

“... son of Sarduri ... built them ... planted them”.



a



b

Figs. 2a and 2b

⁶ See Payne 2006: 3.1.4 and Payne-Ceylan 2003 (= CTU A 3-6).

Notes on the translation:

Part of a three line inscription is to be found on this stone. Since the right hand side of the stone finishes in each case with a complete word, and since the final word of the final line is a verb, it is probable that this is the right hand end of the inscription.

From the first line of the inscription we see that the father of the reigning king was named Sarduri. Since the name of the king himself is not on the stone we cannot know for certain whether he was Išpuini (830-810 BC), son of Sarduri I, or Rusa I (730-714 BC) son of Sarduri II. However of the stones found at Pirabat to date, two are from the period of Išpuini son of Sarduri, and refer to a military expedition and the building of a waterworks⁷, two are from Minua's period and refer to the building of a fortress⁸, and four are from the period of Argišti son of Minua of which one is a granary inscription, the others concern the building of a temple⁹. Thus it would seem that our present inscription should probably be dated to Išpuini, son of Sarduri I.

The second and third lines of the inscription each consist of a verb in the past tense with the third person single subjective + third person plural objective ending *-ali*. Although the reading of the first sign on line 2 as *-di-* is not certain, the verb is very probably *šidištu-* 'to build'. The syllabication of this verb as *šidišitu-* is uncommon but not unknown¹⁰. This verb also commonly takes the third plural objective ending, both in the form *šidištuali* 'he built them' and in the form *šidišituli* 'I / they built them'. This form has been found with only two objects – more usually with the object *Ḫaldinili KÁ(-li) / šeištili* 'Ḫaldi Gate(s)', but also in several cases with *tarmanili* 'waterworks'¹¹. Both are possible but it is noteworthy that from the inscriptions to date the only building known to exist in the reign of Išpuini is a waterworks¹². Note however that the site has not been excavated.

The third line also contains a verb in the past tense with the third person single subjective + third person plural objective ending *-ali* along with a tantalising *-li* ending from what should be the building that would be the object of the verb. The verb *teru-* 'to plant' has not elsewhere been seen with a third person plural objective ending. In general it is frequently used for the planting of standing stones in the ground and the planting of orchards, vineyards and the like¹³.

⁷ Payne 2006: 3.1.4 and Payne-Ceylan 2003 (= CTU A 3-6).

⁸ Payne 2006: 5.3.4 and 5.3.5 (= CTU A 5-40A,B).

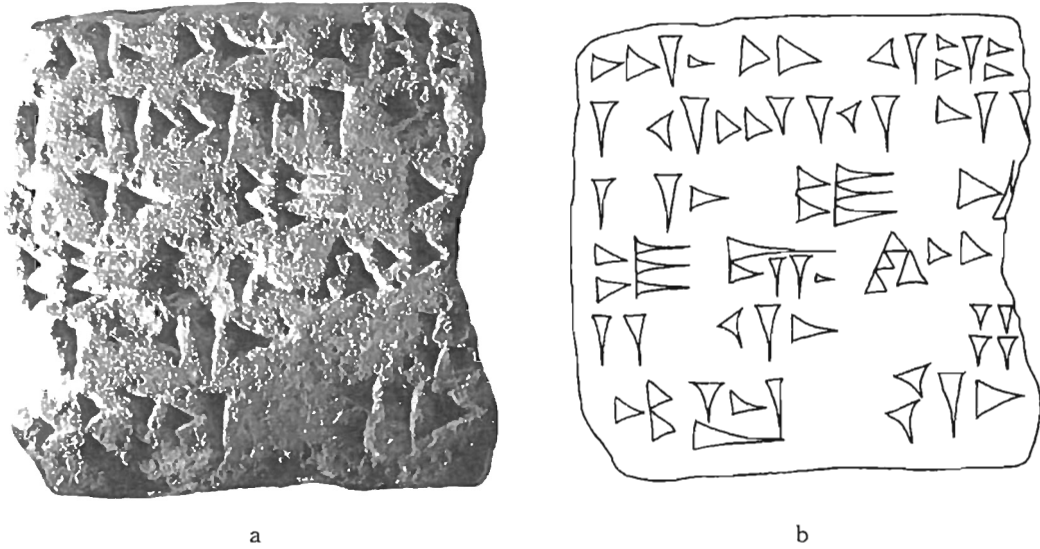
⁹ Payne 2006: 8.2.15 and 8.2.30-32 (= CTU A 8-33, A 8-35 - 37).

¹⁰ See König: 201 *šidišituni*. All five examples are from the reigns of Išpuini and Minua (i.e. early). This particular spelling would thus seem to support the view that the stone should be dated to the reign of Minua son of Išpuini.

¹¹ See König: 201-202. There is one example with *É.GAL^{MES}* 'fortresses' as the object but this is in a long victory inscription of conquered fortresses rebuilt and not relevant to a discussion of our three line inscription.

¹² Payne 2006: 3.1.4 and Payne-Ceylan 2003 (= CTU A 3-6).

¹³ See König: 204. The verb has also been used very occasionally for the building of a fortress but it is unlikely that a plurality of fortresses should be represented here. There are other meanings to the verb but these are not likely here where the verb appears in conjunction with the verb *šidištu-* 'to build'.



Figs. 3a and 3b

Thus the stone could read something like either, 'Sarduri son of Išpuini built this waterworks and planted these orchards and vineyards' or 'Sarduri son of Išpuini built this Haldi Gate and erected these standing stones'.

Note on the provenance of an inscription from Uludal

The stone with Erzurum Museum inventory N. 137-90, being the left half of a granary inscription, on a broken basalt plaque 18×18×7 cm, has been published by M. Salvini, as stone number CTU A 8-34 in his corpus¹⁴. This stone came to the museum from Uludal village which is 11 km. south of Eleşkirt which lies 48 km. west of the city of Ağrı. The stone was sold to the museum by a Mr. Kaya who stated that he found the stone in Uludal. From our research of Uludal village however it would seem that the stone must have originated in Pirabat. The nearness of this village to Pirabat village (Uludal is 7 km. southeast of Pirabat), the evident flatness of the area around Uludal which does not seem to allow for a suitable site for this stone to have come from, and the richness of inscriptions in Pirabat, all support our belief that its original home was in Pirabat. One other granary inscription from Argišti's period has been found at Pirabat¹⁵.

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¹⁴ Salvini M. 2008.

¹⁵ There is indeed a possible join of two incomplete stone inscriptions from Pirabat in the Museum Erzurum; see CTU A 8-35 (+?) 36.

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