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Conflict and Interaction in the Iron Age: The Origins of Urartian–Assyrian Relations

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The Neo-Assyrian Kingdom and the Urartian Kingdom were two important Near Eastern states in the Middle Iron Age (ninth to sixth centuries BC) that steered political developments and considerably transformed the lives of populations within their territories. This article aims to explore the origins of Urartian–Assyrian relations: the processes and ways through which Mesopotamian and Assyrian influences reached the eastern Anatolian highlands. The populations who founded the Urartian Kingdom lived mostly as semi-nomadic tribes in eastern Anatolia and surrounding areas during the Early Iron Age (thirteenth to ninth centuries BC). It is impossible to explain the emergence of the Urartian Kingdom in the Van region towards the mid-ninth century BC—which quickly became a powerful rival of its contemporaries—as a natural development of local culture. The main question at this stage is how and from where Assyrian influences were transmitted to the tribes who founded the Urartian Kingdom. Our opinion is that the answer to this question should be sought in the Upper Tigris region, which was inhabited by both cultures (Pre-Urartian and Assyrian) before the foundation of the Urartian Kingdom.

Keywords: Early Iron Age, Middle Iron Age, eastern Anatolia, Upper Tigris region, Uruatri, Nairi, Urartian Kingdom, Neo-Assyrian Kingdom

INTRODUCTION

The Neo-Assyrian Kingdom and the Urartian Kingdom were two important Near Eastern states in the Middle Iron Age (ninth to sixth centuries BC) that steered political developments and considerably transformed the lives of populations within their territories. The Neo-Assyrian Kingdom, which ruled all of Mesopotamia from the Persian Gulf to the Taurus Mountains, and from Iran to the shores of the eastern Mediterranean, had an established state tradition going back to the early second millennium BC. Throughout its rule in this vast area, the Assyrians introduced their own standards of governing, urbanization, art, and daily life in addition to existing traditions. The Urartian Kingdom, on the other hand, which controlled eastern Anatolia, the southern Caucasus, and northeastern Iran (Urmia Basin), was established without predecessors towards the middle of the ninth century BC. Importing many practices from Mesopotamia into eastern Anatolia, including a new form of government, urbanization, art, and writing, this kingdom created an identifiable culture in

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this region recognized as Urartu. The southeastern Taurus Mountains between the Euphrates on the west and the Urmia basin on the east, and the northern part of the Zagros Mountains, formed the border between these two states. There were autonomous local communities in this mountainous area, which were difficult for either state to control (Figures 1 and 2).

The main written sources of information on the origins of Urartian–Assyrian relations and the foundation process of the Urartian state are the eastern Anatolian campaign records of the Middle Assyrian kings. The common interpretation, based on these inscriptions, is that semi-nomadic populations united in their resistance against Assyrian oppression between the thirteenth century BC and the mid-ninth century BC founded the Urartian state (Salvini, 1995: 25; Kroll et al., 2012: 9–20). Soon after the state's foundation, cities were built around the capital at Van (Tushpa), agricultural activities increased, and architecture, arts, technology, and pottery developed. It is accepted that Urartu imitated the Neo-Assyrian Kingdom in many areas. However, the means by which these novelties suddenly reached the highlands of eastern Anatolia during the foundation of the Urartian state has not been adequately discussed. Explanations for where and how the Urartian administrative class acquired the experience in creating a sedentary population are also inadequate.

This article aims to explore the origins of Urartian–Assyrian relations: the processes and ways through which Mesopotamian and Assyrian influences reached the eastern Anatolian highlands. To do this, we will try to define the areas of intersection between the two cultural regions through written and archaeological data, and then present our assessments about the processes whereby the Assyrian influences could have been acquired during the foundation period of the Urartian Kingdom.

Early Iron Age: Uruatri-Nairi Tribes Meet the Middle Assyrian Kingdom

As mentioned above, the earliest information on the history of populations who founded the Urartian Kingdom is found in the annals of the Middle Assyrian kings who carried out campaigns to eastern Anatolia starting in the thirteenth century BC. It is the Middle Assyrian king Shalmaneser I (1275–1245 BC) who, for the first time, named the nine tribes he fought against in the northern Taurus Mountains as 'Uruatri' (Urartu) (Grayson et al., 1987: A.0.77/1). Later on, Tukulti-Ninurta I (1244–1208 BC) recorded that he fought against forty kings in eastern and southeastern Anatolia, a land he calls 'Nairi' (Grayson et al., 1987: A.0.78). Tiglath-Pileser I (1114–1076 BC), on the other hand, raised the number of kings in Nairi land to sixty (Grayson, 1991: A.0.87.1). Assyrian interest in the lands of Nairi continued during the reign of Ashur-bel-kala (1073–1056 BC) (Grayson, 1991: A.0.89; Salvini, 1995: 18–24).

Migrations in the Near East that took place during the Early Iron Age, mainly in the eastern Mediterranean shores, northern Syria, Mesopotamia, and eastern Anatolia, also impacted the Middle Assyrian Kingdom. Assyria tried to survive over a period of 150 years, and did not embark on new and large-scale projects (Roaf, 2001). During this process, part of the semi-nomadic forbearers of the Urartians relocated to the Upper Tigris region. It appears that, while the Upper Tigris was under the control of the Middle Assyrian Kingdom during the beginning of the Early Iron Age, it also became the habitat of northern semi-nomadic groups.

Figure 1. *Main Urartian settlements in eastern Anatolia and its vicinity.*

Evidence concerning this process can be obtained from the location of the Nairi lands as reconstructed from the texts, as well as from archaeological remains.

Middle Assyrian inscriptions do not provide very specific definitions for the borders of Uruatri/Urartu and the Nairi lands. Assyrian scribes used these terms to define in general terms the populations they confronted to the north of the Taurus mountains, in eastern Anatolia and its vicinity, and also to denote the regions these peoples inhabited. Although it is accepted that the Uruatri region was closer to Lake Van and its vicinity, this term does not denote the whole region in which the Urartian Kingdom ruled in the Middle Iron Age. Nairi, on the other hand, comprises a much wider area than Uruatri. The records of the early Neo-Assyrian period, of Ashurnasirpal II's campaign to the north in 882 BC and 879 BC, specifically state that the southern border of Nairi is defined by the Kashiyari (Tur Abdin) mountains. The king, on his first campaign, passed through the Kashiyari mountains and entered Nairi lands, built a palace in Tushan, and erected a stela. Archaeological excavations carried out in Üçtepe in 1988–1992 provided evidence regarding the existence of the Neo-Assyrian citadel (Köroğlu, 1998). The aforementioned stele is one of two Kurkh stelae discovered in Üçtepe (old Kurkh) by Taylor in 1861 (Taylor, 1865: 22–23). The records of the second campaign give more detailed information on the location of Nairi and Tushan, on the shores of the Tigris:

> After crossing Mount Kašiiari I went down for a second time to the land(s)

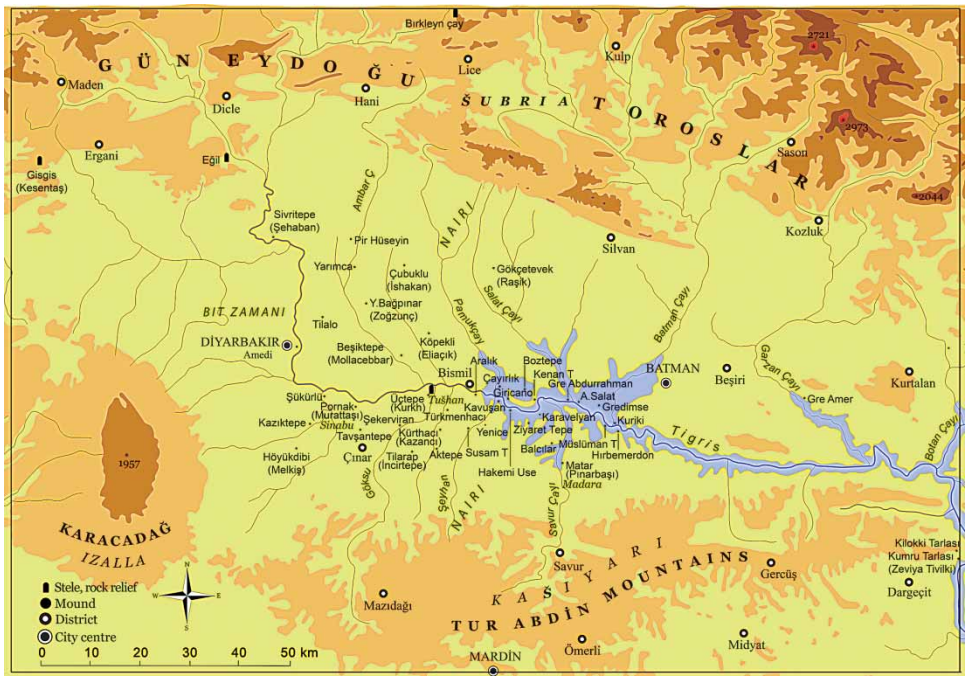

Figure 2. *Iron Age settlements in the Upper Tigris region.*

Nairi. I pitched camp (and) spent the night in the city Šigišu. Moving on from Šig[išu] I approached the city Madara, the fortified city of Labṭuru, son of Ṭupusu. The city was well fortified; it was surrounded by four walls. I besieged the city. They took fright in face of my mighty weapons and [I received] from them property, possessions, (and) sons as hostages. I spared their lives (but) imposed upon them tribute, taxes, (and) labourers. I razed (and) destroyed the city (and) turned (it) [into] ruin hills.

Moving on from the city Madara I entered the city Tušḫa. I consecrated a palace at Tušḫa. I received in Tušḫa tax (and) tribute [from the land N]irdun, horses, mules, casseroles, armour, oxen, sheep, (and) wine. I razed, destroyed, (and) turned into ruin hills [60] well-fortified cities at the foot of Mount Kašiiari, which (were ruled by) Labṭuru, son of Ṭupusu.

[With] the support of Aššur, my lord, I moved from the city Tušḫa. I took with me strong chariots, cavalry, (and) crack troops. 1 crossed the Tigris by means of a bridge of rafts. (Grayson, 1991: A.0.101.19/63b-77a)

In this inscription of Ashurnasirpal II, the Upper Tigris region is clearly defined within the borders of a wide terrain named Nairi. The Upper Tigris joined the provincial system in the Neo-Assyrian period by the construction of new garrisons. The northern border of Nairi stretched as far as the Diauehi land located in Erzurum region, in eastern Anatolia. This region, situated to the north of the Taurus mountains, became part of the Urartian lands after the kingdom was founded in the mid-ninth century BC (Salvini, 1995: 18–24).

Archaeological finds from the Early Iron Age levels confirm the existence of a common culture between the Upper Tigris region and eastern Anatolia. The Early Iron Age is represented in eastern

Anatolia and surroundings with a type of pottery called grooved ware. This pottery was discovered for the first time above Late Bronze Age layers in Korucutepe and Norşuntepe, during the Keban excavations, and was associated with the beginning of the Early Iron Age (Winn, 1980; Bartl, 2001; Müller, 2005). The Early Iron Age grooved ware appears to be mostly handmade, poorly baked, and with undeveloped forms. This ware is known as grooved ware because of the horizontal grooves applied mainly between the rim and the shoulder (Figure 3). Products of the same culture can be found in many mounds (höyük/tell): in the Middle Euphrates basin to the west, the Urmia basin to the east, and the Upper Tigris region to the south. They reach as far as the southern Caucusus to the north (Köroğlu, 2003; Roaf & Schachner, 2005).

There is no clear correlation between material culture and specific Early Iron Age kingdoms in eastern Anatolia. The architecture, small finds, and pottery found in settlements of this period, several hectares in extent, are of local character. At Elazığ, while pottery was made using sophisticated wheel technology in the Hittite Empire layers, hand-thrown and badly fired samples are more common in the later Early Iron Age layers. The situation is similar in the Upper Tigris region. The technology used in both stone workmanship and pottery is very different from that of Middle Assyrian examples.

Data concerning the arrival of grooved ware to the Upper Tigris region can be obtained from numerous mounds, most primarily from Ziyaret Tepe and Giricano. Middle Assyrian, Early Iron Age, and Neo-Assyrian layers were revealed on top of one another in areas L and E at Ziyaret Tepe (Matney et al., 2005: 23–26; Matney et al., 2009: 51–56). A cuneiform archive was discovered at Giricano that pinpointed the demise of the Middle Assyrian rule in the region to around 1050 BC. This date also marks the beginning of the arrival process of the local population who used grooved ware at the vacated Assyrian settlements in the Upper Tigris basin (Roaf & Schachner, 2005). Although only several examples were found, grooved ware was discovered in Üçtepe mound in the Early Neo-Assyrian level 8, stratigraphically above the Middle Assyrian level 9 (Köroğlu, 1998: 51, fig. 9.21–23).

In addition to these two centres, the existence of grooved ware and related material culture was documented at numerous mounds, including Salat, Hakemi Use, Gre Amer, Gre Dimse, Hırbe Merdon, and Müslüman Tepe (Tekin, 2006; Matney et al., 2009: 51–56; Ökse & Görmüş, 2009; Guarducci, 2011). Surface surveys revealed that this material culture did not only exist in the Tigris Valley, where excavations were conducted, but in the whole basin between the Taurus and Tur Abdin mountains (Köroğlu, 1998: 54–74).

Aside from the grooved pottery, circular, simple pit houses with stone foundations, pits, and wares with painted decorations can be considered as archaeological evidence of this culture (Figure 4). Permanent houses made of mudbrick, like those made by sedentary farming villagers, have not been discovered among the representative sites of this culture. Therefore, these populations are considered semi-nomadic (Ökse & Görmüş, 2009; Erdem, 2011). Most probably, they moved between summer and winter quarters, much like the tribes that survive to this day. Today, the tribes spend the summer months in the highlands of eastern Anatolia, abundant in pastures, and descend to the south of the Taurus Mountains to the Upper Tigris Valley due to harsh winter conditions.

The dissemination area of the Early Iron Age grooved ware culture includes both the Nairi and Uruatri lands, as

Figure 3. *Cremation urn burial covered by a bowl with grooved decoration from Ziyaret Tepe.* After *Matney et al. (2009: 78, fig. 16).*

Figure 4. *Ziyaret Tepe, Operation L, Early Iron Age pit.*

defined in contemporary Assyrian inscriptions (Roaf & Schachner, 2005: 120). It appears then that the grooved ware culture, which spread to the Upper Tigris region at the beginning of the Early Iron Age, also started to be used on the mounds of the Tigris Valley, after the Middle Assyrians deserted the area.

In the Early Iron Age, the resettlement of semi-nomadic populations in the Uruatri and Nairi lands to the Upper Tigris region under the control of the Middle Assyrian Kingdom suggests that they had the opportunity to acquaint themselves with an established state tradition. This region became the sole common area in the Iron Age for the Assyrians, representatives of the sedentary cultures, and northern semi-nomadic populations.

The Beginning of the Middle Iron Age: Acquaintance Process of the Urartian Founding Populations with the Assyrian State Tradition

The existence of semi-nomadic populations in the Upper Tigris region must have paved the way for their acquaintance with the state tradition once the region was added to the provincial system at the beginning of the Neo-Assyrian period. Therefore, the source of many Assyrian-influenced practices that suddenly appeared in the Lake Van basin during the foundation process of the Urartian Kingdom can be explored in this region.

In the early ninth century BC, during the reigns of Ashurnasirpal II (883–859 BC) and Shalmaneser III (858–824 BC), the Neo-Assyrian Kingdom made great investments in order to rule the Upper Tigris region, which was part of the wide region named Nairi. Provincial centres and garrisons such as Tushan, Amedi, Sinabu, and Tidu were constructed on fertile lands in the Tigris Valley (Figure 2). Social transformation programmes were put into action to channel Assyrian culture to the region, and Assyrian and Babylonian peoples were placed alongside an elite class that was assigned as administrators. Also, stelae were erected and reliefs carved as power symbols of Assyrian kings and gods (Kessler, 1980; Köroğlu, 1998; Parker, 2001).

Neo-Assyrian provincial centres excavated in this region, such as Üçtepe and Ziyaret Tepe, were constructed with a planning approach much like Assyrian capitals. Based on Ziyaret Tepe, excavated in 1997–2013, the common characteristics of Neo-Assyrian provincial centres can be defined as consisting of a citadel and a lower city. The citadel housed important buildings, such as palaces and mansions. The courtyard floors and bathing spaces of the palace and other important buildings were paved with baked brick or pebble mosaics. In the lower city, there were storage buildings and dwellings alongside other important buildings. The whole settlement had a drainage system (Matney et al., 2013; Wicke & Greenfield, 2013).

Provincial centres larger than thirty hectares were surrounded by mudbrick walls with towers and monumental gateways. It appears that all the finds in provincial centres and garrisons, ranging from building plans to the size of mud-bricks, and from luxury items to daily pottery, were shaped according to state standards. These types of centres also maintained a cuneiform archive storing official documents (Parpola, 2008; MacGinnis, 2012a).

The carving of stelae and reliefs are practices that Neo-Assyrian kings brought to the region to serve propagandistic and ritual purposes. The stelae that Ashurnasirpal II and Shalmeneser III erected in Tushan (Üçtepe/Kurkh stelae) are similar to those seen in places annexed to the

Assyrian provincial system and where new construction programs were implemented (Taylor, 1865: 22–23; Grayson, 1991: A.0.101.19, 1996: A.0.102.2). At the foot of the Taurus Mountains, which encircle the north of the Upper Tigris region, from east to west, there are the reliefs of Shalmaneser III at Bırkleynçay (Schachner, 2009), the Eğil relief dating to the period of Sargon II (Bartl, 1999–2001), and the Ergani/Gisgis (Kesentaş) relief, which is dated to the period of Tiglath-pileser III (Köroğlu & Yumruk, 2014). Bırkleynçay, where Tiglath-pileser I also had reliefs and inscriptions during the Middle Assyrian period, is as much a holy source for the Assyrians as it was a border delimiting the area the Assyrians could control (Figure 2).

During this restructuring period, which started in the first half of the ninth century BC, the Aramaeans, Phoenicians, and Babylonians were amongst the most important groups deported to the Upper Tigris region from other regions (Matney, 2010). Philological data demonstrate that among the local populations in the region, there are groups of Anatolian as well as Hurrian-Urartian origin (MacGinnis, 2012a, 2012b). The deported populations worked for the state either in the Neo-Assyrian provincial centres themselves or in nearby villages. Architectural and small finds from the villages, each several hectares in size, such as Kavuşan and Hakemi Use, where these types of groups might have been settled, parallel those in the Neo-Assyrian provincial centres.

The arrival of the Neo-Assyrian Kingdom in the Upper Tigris region turned the Tigris valley between Diyarbakır and the Batmançay into a cultural part of Assyria through the settlement of groups in the provincial centres and surrounding countryside. However, pottery and other finds which would demonstrate Neo-Assyrian influences decrease in number further north from the valley towards the Taurus Mountains and further south towards the Tur Abdin Mountains. Although several small Iron Age settlements in the region between Batmançay and Ilısu, where the valley narrows, reveal various small finds and pottery similar to those usually encountered in Neo-Assyrian centres, the Iron Age culture is of local character (Ökse et al., 2014: 285–88).

With the exception of the region where great garrisons such as Üçtepe and Ziyaret Tepe are located, the Neo-Assyrian period is generally represented by pottery of local character, which is a continuation of the Early Iron Age tradition. In fact, this is true for numerous provinces and their environs within the vast borders of the kingdom. Although the Neo-Assyrian Kingdom transferred its own culture to its purpose-built provincial centres, royal cities, fortified cities, and agricultural village settlements of local kingdoms preserved their original structure for a long time (Liverani, 1992: 125–31). After the eighth century BC, these settlements were mostly included in the provincial system; local culture prevailed only in rural areas further away from provincial centres.

Due to the dominant character of the Neo-Assyrian Kingdom, it is difficult to discern groups of different origin, or semi-nomadic populations of Nairi origin, at provincial centres and other smaller contemporary Assyrian settlements in the Upper Tigris region. However, some indirect data can be associated with these groups under Assyrian control. For example, cremation burials discovered in the palace courtyard at Ziyaret Tepe can be evaluated in this context.

At Ziyaret Tepe, five cremation burials were discovered side by side under a brick floor covering in the eastern courtyard (Room 5) of the Bronze Palace, located in

Operation A/N. Inside the burials, finds of palatial quality, such as Neo-Assyrian pottery, stone vessels, metal vessels, engraved ivory, and stone beads were found along with human bones and ashes (Wicke, 2013; Wicke & Greenfield, 2013: 69). It is obvious that the finds are luxury items used in the Neo-Assyrian palace. However, the burial tradition itself appears to be associated with local cultures.

Cremation in Assyria appears to be a practice represented by limited examples in various centres such as Assur (Haller, 1954: 51–53), Nimrud (Oates & Oates, 2001: 82), and Dūr-Katlimmu (Moorey, 1980: 6–7; Kreppner, 2008). However, it is accepted that this type of burial was contrary to Assyrian traditions and therefore was not used for people of Assyrian origin. It has been suggested that cremated individuals could be of northern Syrian, Phoenician, or Urartian origin, where such practices were widespread in the Iron Age (Tenu, 2009; Hauser, 2012: 248–55). It is known that cremations were performed in the Early and Middle Iron Age (Urartian period) in eastern Anatolia and surrounding regions, not only for the burials of the administrative class but also for commoners who were mostly using grooved pottery (Öğün, 1978; Sevin, 1980; Derin, 1994; Herles, 2011).

In the Upper Tigris region, a cremation burial in an urn covered by a bowl with grooved decoration (L-839) was discovered in the citadel of Ziyaret Tepe in an Early Iron Age level (L5) in Operation L (Matney et al., 2009: 55–57, figs. 15–17). Cremation burials inside twenty-two urns were discovered next to inhumation burials, as part of the Neo-Assyrian settlement at Kavuşan Höyük, about 3 km northwest of Ziyaret Tepe (Kozbe, 2010). Twenty-one urns and cremation burials identified in Kumru Tarlası (Zeviya Tivilki) appear to be related to populations whose existence continued during the Neo-Assyrian period and who used local grooved ware (Ökse et al., 2014: 103–15). The Ziyaret Tepe and Kavuşan cremations dated to the Neo-Assyrian period might point to local, semi-nomadic populations deported to provincial centres and villages close to them. In that case, the Ziyaret Tepe cremation burials found in the Bronze Palace courtyard (Room 5) can be associated with the existence of officials of different ethnic origin working at the Neo-Assyrian palace (Wicke, 2013).

Although small in number, grooved ware pottery is found in the Neo-Assyrian deposits at Ziyaret Tepe. Probably, groups using grooved ware resettled at Assyrian provincial centres during the interruption period following Shalmaneser III's rule, and brought with them their distinctive material culture. Therefore, with the arrival of the Neo-Assyrian Kingdom, groups using grooved ware did not leave the region, and while some were forced to abide by Assyrian traditions in daily life, others continued to live in areas where Assyrian control was weaker.

In the Upper Tigris region, the co-existence of semi-nomadic populations using grooved ware with the Neo-Assyrian state tradition appears to have started with the establishment of provincial centres in the region, during the reign of Ashurnasirpal II (883–858 BC). The Urartian State was founded fifty years later in the Lake Van basin.

Neo-Assyrian Influences in the Eastern Anatolian Highlands

As mentioned above, pre-Urartian/Early Iron Age settlements in the region where the Urartu was founded consist of simple villages not larger than a few hectares. It is obvious that the state was not a product of local development. Many practices observed in the capital and its surrounding

countryside during the foundation process of the Urartian Kingdom point directly to Assyrian sources. It seems that the ruling family who founded the Urartian Kingdom knew well the state structure, city building model, architecture, and the art of the Neo-Assyrian Kingdom.

The first documents indicating the foundation of the Urartian capital Tushpa in the Lake Van basin are the records of Shalmaneser III's campaign in eastern Anatolia in 830 BC. It is undisputed that the Seduri mentioned in these inscriptions is Sarduri who founded the kingdom's capital. Urartian king Arame and his capital, referred to in Assyrian written sources before Sarduri, are outside the scope of this discussion as no material culture remains have been identified. Sarduri declared the foundation of the kingdom with inscriptions carved on a monument called Sardurburg at Van Citadel (Tushpa). After this date, for more than 200 years, numerous state practices that developed in eastern Anatolia and its environs appear to have been inspired by the Neo-Assyrian Kingdom.

The first inscriptions of King Sarduri were written in Assyrian using cuneiform borrowed from Neo-Assyria. In these inscriptions, King Sarduri presents himself like a Neo-Assyrian king. The first inscription, repeated six times, on Sardurburg in the northwestern corner of Van Citadel reads:

> Inscription of Sarduri, son of Lutipri, great king, mighty king, king of the world, king of Nairi, king who has no equal, wonderful shepherd who does not fear battle, king who makes the insubordinate submit, (I am) Sarduri, son of Lutibri, king of kings, who have received tribute from all kings … (Melikishvili, 1960: no.1)

It is interesting to note that the titles Sarduri uses are very similar to those used by the Neo-Assyrian king Ashurnasirpal II, who established the provincial system in the Upper Tigris (Zimansky, 1985: 51). The cuneiform style taken from the Neo-Assyrian Kingdom was later adopted into Urartian; however, bilingual inscriptions in Urartian and Assyrian continued to be written, although fewer in number. Studies that link Lapturu, son of Tupusu, mentioned in the two campaigns of Ashurnasirpal II in the Upper Tigris region (Nairi land), with Lutipri, named as the father of Sarduri, should be acknowledged in this context (Tarhan, 1980).

It appears that the Urartian tradition of inscribing on bedrocks, bronze plates, and especially stelae was adopted from Assyria. The stelae that the Urartian army erected on main roads, cities, and far-flung regions of the kingdom (Salvini, 2008) imitate Assyrian examples in terms of form and content, much like the Kurkh monoliths. Inscriptions that they carved on bedrock in the furthermost reaches recall the Bırkleynçay example. The Hanak/Ortakent inscription at the northernmost point of the Urartian land (Dinçol & Dinçol, 1992) and the Habibuşağı inscription at the westernmost point of the land (van Loon, 1974) can be cited as examples. The annal-writing tradition, one of the most important sources of the post-Sarduri I period of the Urartian Kingdom, also developed under Neo-Assyrian influence.

Urartian cities appear to have taken some fundamental features from the provincial system of Neo-Assyria. The citadel of the Urartian city, the buildings inside it, and the lower city were shaped using a similar approach. During the Urartian period, cities as large as eighty hectares were established (Figure 1), including Van Citadel (Tušpa), Upper Anzaf, Körzüt, Aznavurtepe, Armavir Blur (Argištihinili), Çavuştepe (Sardurihinili), Toprakkale

(Rusahinili Qilbanikai), Ayanis (Rusahinili Eidurukai), Kef Citadel (Haldiei URU), Arin Berd (Erebuni), Karmir Blur (Teišebai URU), Bastam (Rusai-URU.TUR.), Kayalıdere, and Altıntepe (Zimansky, 1985: 61–66; Köroğlu, 2011: 25–35; Kroll et al., 2012: 2–5). What we are trying to focus on here is the way the knowledge, experience, and inspiration required for the development of many luxurious goods, which materialized in the elite class lifestyle during the city-building and urbanization process, reached the Urartu from Mesopotamia. Comparisons between the cities founded by Assyria and Urartu take into consideration their individual features based on their different geographies, sources of raw materials, and climatic conditions. It is accepted that numerous practices of Urartu, such as construction of citadels on high cliffs, stone-mine workmanship, rock-carved cisterns, storage rooms with series of large pithoi, and city wall construction techniques, reflect this civilization. However, it must be noted that there is persuasive evidence to suggest that the necessary knowledge for a kingdom—which mostly consisted of semi-nomadic tribes—to reach an expanse of eighty hectares and start constructing developed cities came from Neo-Assyria.

The citadels were positioned atop high cliffs, while the lower cities were built at their foot. In all these cities, as with Neo-Assyrian cities, a sophisticated stone workmanship existed; the walls, monumental palaces, temples, and storage buildings were made of standard-sized mud-bricks, and the cities had drainage systems. In most of the cities, luxury items and cuneiform documents are notable finds. Pottery for daily use was mass produced in workshops. Urartian red slipped ware is, likewise, a product of this process. The Urartian Kingdom, despite boasting about its vast borders in written sources, could not introduce to all its provinces the novelties that appeared with the existence of the state. As in Assyria, it appears that traditional life continued in mountainous areas and rural regions away from the cities (Zimansky, 1995; Köroğlu, 2011).

The approach of the Urartian kings to build new cities in conquered land is dissimilar to the Late Hittite and Phrygian Kingdoms, which developed only their capitals. This demonstrates that the Urartians followed not only the developments in provincial capitals but also the Neo-Assyrian capital itself. Another similarity strengthening this argument is the deportation policies of the states. Deportation, a Neo-Assyrian Kingdom policy used frequently to add to the population in cities, increase agricultural potential, and security (Oded, 1979), was also implemented by the Urartian Kingdom (Zimansky, 1985: 53–60).

Another similarity with Neo-Assyria is the practice of burying kings in the capital city. There are four multi-roomed rock-cut tombs built for the Urartian kings in the citadel of the capital Tushpa. They are monumental tombs comprising a main hall and side rooms. The most important evidence suggesting that they were made for kings is the cuneiform annals of Argishti I, situated at the entrance of the grave in the southwest side of the citadel (Köroğlu, 2007). Multi-roomed tombs are, in many respects, original products of the Urartian Kingdom. However, the fact that they are within the citadel, and contain details such as pseudo-arches and vaults, reminds one of Neo-Assyrian examples (Sevin, 1987, 2012).

This discussion of the similarities between the Assyrian and Urartian cultures could be extended further. However, our aim is, as mentioned above, not to discuss similarities but the beginning of this process. As a matter of fact, after the

foundation of the Urartian Kingdom, its relations with Assyria continued based on rivalry and conflict, not only through the Upper Tigris region but also through Late Hittite Kingdoms in the Middle Euphrates basin, and through Parsua and Media lands in the Urmia basin (Radner, 2011; Zimansky, 2011). As a result of these relations, new cultural influences continued to reach the eastern Anatolian highlands through Neo-Assyria, as well as the Late Hittite Kingdoms, Phrygia, and Persia. The efficiency and power of the Urartian Kingdom fluctuated in relation to its contemporary, the Neo-Assyrian Kingdom, within a period of more than two centuries between the mid-ninth century BC and the second half of the seventh century BC. When the Neo-Assyrian Kingdom weakened, Urartu crossed the borders and tried to control Assyrian periphery regions and local kingdoms; when the Assyrians strengthened, the Urartian power in the border regions waned.

Conclusions

The populations who founded the Urartian Kingdom lived mostly as semi-nomadic tribes in eastern Anatolia and surroundings during the Early Iron Age (thirteenth to ninth centuries BC). The village-like settlements dating to this period are not larger than a few hectares. Finds related to daily life, such as simple architectural remains, pits, pit houses, and grooved ware, are completely of local character. It is impossible to explain the emergence of a civilization in the Van region towards the mid-ninth century BC, which quickly became a powerful rival of its contemporaries, as a natural development of local culture. Therefore, it is uncontroversial to say that the Urartian culture progressed with Neo-Assyrian influence. The main question at this stage is how and from where these influences were transmitted in such a short time and so powerfully to the tribes who founded the Urartian Kingdom. Our opinion is that the answer to this question should be sought in the Upper Tigris region, which was inhabited by both cultures (Figures 1 and 2).

Starting from the Early Iron Age, the Upper Tigris region, within the borders of the Nairi land, is where the Middle and Neo-Assyrian kingdoms and semi-nomadic groups using grooved ware co-existed. In addition to the information gathered from Neo-Assyrian inscriptions regarding the relocation of locals to provinces, finds that point to local factors in Assyrian provincial centres and villages, such as cremation burials and grooved ware, should be re-examined (Figure 3). Before the foundation of the Urartian Kingdom, during a period exceeding half a century, the Nairi and Urartu policies of Ashurnasirpal II and Shalmaneser III resulted not only in conflict but also created the environment through which northern semi-nomadic groups learned the established state tradition of Mesopotamia.

The foundation of a provincial centre named Tushan on the southern shore of the Tigris in the Upper Tigris region (882 BC) dates roughly to fifty years prior to Tushpa's declaration as the capital of the Urartian Kingdom. During this period, the Neo-Assyrian Kingdom founded many cities besides Tushan, such as Tidu, Sinabu, Amedi, and Damdammusa, either as garrisons, royal cities, or provincial centres. The populations deported to these places mainly used items that had been produced in state-run workshops. Clearly, there were specific standards in the plans and units of settlement areas, and the materials used. It is understood that similar practices existed for populations

relocated to surrounding villages, who farmed for the state. It can be said that groups of Hurri-Urartu origin among the populations in the Upper Tigris region, who were made to work for Assyria during the building process of provincial centres and who later became part of the system, could have learned the Neo-Assyrian system during the more or less half-century period. In the establishment phase of the Urartian State, many innovations were transferred to eastern Anatolia through the Upper Tigris, such as writing in Assyrian with Neo-Assyrian cuneiform, royal titles, inscriptions on stelae and bedrock, efforts to form a sedentary population, use of sophisticated technology for production, and building of cities.

It appears that populations in the Upper Tigris region, who experienced the Neo-Assyrian state tradition, created a new state in eastern Anatolia in light of this model and adapted it to the conditions of the region. The Taurus Mountains, which formed the border between the two cultures, complicated Neo-Assyrian access to the north of these mountains and control of this region, but did not hinder the mobility of semi-nomadic populations.

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Conflit et interaction pendant l'Âge du Fer : les origines des relations entre l'Urartu et l'Assyrie

Le royaume néo-assyrien et le royaume d'Urartu étaient deux importants Etats du Proche-Orient durant l'âge du fer moyen (9e au 6e siécle av. J.-C.), dirigeant les développements politiques et transformant de façon substantielle la vie des populations sur leurs territoires. Cet article a pour but d'analyser les origines de la relation Urartu – Assyrie et donc les processus et chemins par lesquels les influences mésopotamiennes et assyriennes arrivaient dans les régions montagneuses de l'Anatolie

orientale. Les peuples fondateurs du royaume d' Urartu vivaient pour la plupart en tant que tribus semi-nomades en Anatolie orientale et dans les régions environnantes pendant l'âge du fer ancien (13e au 9e siècle av. J.-C.). On ne peut pas expliquer l'émergence du royaume d'Urartu—qui très vite devenait un puissant rival des ses contemporains—dans la région de Van vers le milieu du 9e siècle av. J.-C. comme un développement naturel de la culture locale. La principale question à ce point est de savoir comment et d'où les influences assyriennes furent transmises aux tribus fondateurs du royaume d'Urartu. Nous pensons qu'il faut chercher la réponse à cette question dans la région du Haut Tigre, qui fut habitée par les deux cultures avant la fondation du royaume d'Urartu. Translation by Isabelle Gerges.

Mots-clés: âge du fer ancien, âge du fer moyen, Anatolie orientale, région du Haut Tigre, Uruatri, Nairi, royaume d'Urartu, royaume néo-assyrien

Konflikt und Interaktion in der Eisenzeit: Die Wurzeln der urartäisch-assyrischen Beziehungen

Das Neuassyrische Reich und das Königreich von Urartu waren zwei bedeutende vorderasiatische Staaten der mittleren Eisenzeit (9.-6. Jh. v. Chr.), die die politischen Entwicklungen lenkten und das Leben der Bevölkerung in ihren Territorien in wesentlichem Maße veränderten. Dieser Beitrag hat zum Ziel, die Wurzeln der urartäisch-assyrischen Beziehungen und somit auch die Prozesse und Wege, über die mesopotamische und assyrische Einflüsse das Hochland Ostanatoliens erreichten, zu beleuchten. Die Bevölkerungsgruppen, die das urartäische Reich gründeten, lebten während der frühen Eisenzeit (13.-9. Jh. v. Chr.) weitgehend als halbnomadische Stämme in Ostanatolien und umliegenden Regionen. Es ist nicht möglich, die Entstehung des urartäischen Königreiches, das schnell ein mächtiger Rivale seiner Zeitgenossen wurde, allein als einen natürlichen Entwicklungsprozess der lokalen Kulturen um die Mitte des 9. Jh. v. Chr. in der Van-Region zu verstehen. Die wichtigste Frage ist dabei zu diesem Zeitpunkt, wie und woher assyrische Einflüsse auf die Stämme trafen, die das Königreich von Urartu gründeten. Wir meinen, dass die Antwort auf diese Frage in der Region des oberen Tigris gesucht werden sollte, die vor der Gründung des urartäischen Reiches von beiden Kulturen besiedelt wurde. Translation by Heiner Schwarzberg.

Stichworte: frühe Eisenzeit, mittlere Eisenzeit, Ostanatolien, obere Tigris-Region, Uruatri, Nairi, Urartäisches Reich, Neuassyrisches Reich