

A NEW URARTIAN INSCRIPTION FROM AĞRI – PIRABAT

by M. R. PAYNE and A. CEYLAN

Pirabat village in the Eleşkirt district of the province of Ağrı in Eastern Turkey is known as the source of a number of Urartian inscriptions, published by Ali Dinçol and Margaret Payne¹. This new inscription, on four building stones, was found in Pirabat *in situ* by the villagers who removed it to a barn for safekeeping. It was brought to the Erzurum Museum in the year 2000 by Alpaslan Ceylan².

The small fortress at Pirabat is somewhat reminiscent of Lower Anzaf in size, shape and location. It stands in the plain at the base of the Uzuntepe hill at the eastern end of the Çakmak Dağı mountain range. About 500 metres to the southwest of the fortress the Öküzuları Deresi stream flows past in a west-east direction. The village is to the west of the fortress lying between the fortress and the stream. The stream is a tributary of the Şeriyen Çayı river which flows in a northwest-southeast direction about 1500 metres to the east of the fortress.

The four adjacent sandstone blocks on which the inscription is engraved stood on a shelf at the top of a structure which appears to be a rounded cistern (Fig. 1) cut into the bedrock approximately 3 metres in diameter on its outer edge and 2.5 metres in diameter on its inner edge. The villagers dug out the structure to a depth of approximately 3 metres without reaching the bottom, they then filled it in to prevent accidents. The inscribed stones formed part of the rounded wall and the inscription faced inwards. The sizes of the blocks are as follows: the first block is 58 cm wide at its base, 33 cm high and 25 cm deep, the second block is 20 cm wide at its base, 34 cm high and 25 cm deep, the third block is 41 cm wide at its base, 38 cm high and 25 cm deep, the fourth block is 46 cm wide at its base, 40 cm high and 32 cm deep. The lines of the inscription are 4 cm deep. The first and last blocks are rounded on their upper outer corners so that the vertical face of the inscription forms a rough semicircle. The blocks are also shaped to fit together in such a way that when viewed from above they lie in an arc whose length takes up about a quarter of the circumference of the mouth of the structure. The inscription itself provides evidence for describing this structure as a cistern as will be seen below.

The structure lies on the streamward side, that is the southwest side, of the fortress at the point where the ground levels off, so that the ground level at this point is about ten meters above the stream at its nearest point. There is no spring in the vicinity. However, since the stream is flowing quickly down from the mountains, only a short distance upstream the stream is at a level higher than the mouth of the

¹ Dinçol A. M., 1989, pp. 137-142; Payne, M., 1996, pp. 415-423.

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Fig. 1 – The cistern.

cistern. Thus, if the cistern were filled from the stream, only a short canal would be necessary to transfer water to the cistern. Although we found no evidence for such a canal it should be noted that the area in question is now under the village. There is, however, a narrow stone lined channel, about 25 centimetres in width, running diagonally down the side of the fortress. It starts high on the side and ends immediately alongside, but outside of, the cistern. Its physical connection to the cistern and its function is not clear.

As we will show, this inscription (Figs. 2-3a-d) is helpful in the solution of several problems in the field of Urartian studies: it gives a clear indication as to the source of the Ağrı-Toprakkale stone, it is helpful in determining the locations of the city of Anaše and the land of Šureli, dating and in clarifying what kind of object a *tarmanili* is.

Transcription:

- 1 ^Dḫal-di-ni uš-ta-[bi m]a-si-ni-e ^{GIŠ}šú-ri-e ka-ru-ni ^mlu-šá-a
- 2 ka-ru-ni ^mka-tar-za-a ^Dḫal-di-ni ku-ru-ni-ni ^Dḫal-di-ni ^{GIŠ}šú-ri ku-ru-ni-ni
- 3 uš-ta-bi ^miš-pu-ú-i-ni-ni ^mḏsar₅-du-ri-e-ḫé ^mmì-nu-a-ni ^miš-pu-ú-i-ni-ḫé
- 4 za-áš-gu-tú-ú-e ^mlu-šá-a ^mka-tar-za-a ḫa-a-i-tú-ú-e
- 5 ^{KUR}šú-ri-li ku-tí-tú pa-ri ^{URU}a-na-ši-i-e
- 6 i-šá-a-ni bi-di-a-li at-ḫi-tú-ú-e i-ni ta-ar-ma-a-n[i]

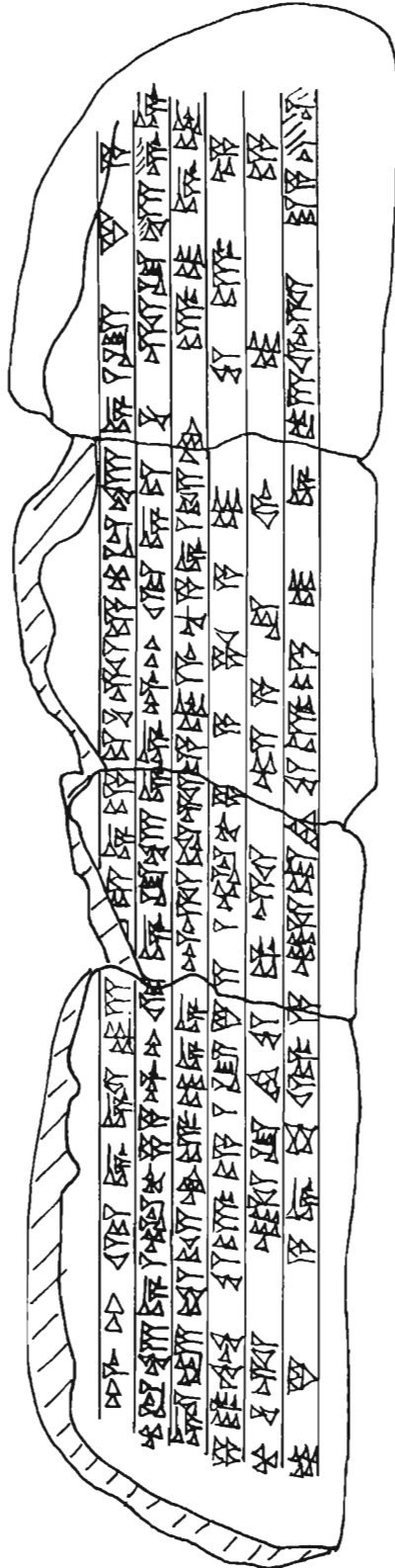


Fig. 2 – The Pirabat Inscription.



Fig. 3a.



Fig. 3b.



Fig. 3c.



Fig. 3d.

Translation:

*Haldi went campaigning with his lance. He defeated the tribe of Luša.
He defeated the tribe of Katarza. Haldi is powerful. Haldi's lance is powerful.
Išpuini son of Sarduri (and) Minua son of Išpuini went campaigning.
They annihilated the tribes of Luša (and) Katarza.
They took the land of Šureli. They advanced as far as the city of Anaše.
From there they turned back. They built this waterworks.*

Line 3: Although the subject of the sentence is plural, the verbal form *uštabi* is third person singular, past tense.

Line 6. The end of the line is badly damaged. It could read *ta-ar-ma-a-n[a]* or *ta-ar-ma-a-n[i-l]i*.

The City of Anaše

There are three other inscriptions that refer to a campaign of Išpuini and Minua to the North. One of these was on a basalt stele that was preserved in the Surb Pogos church in the old city of Van. This stele is inscribed on both sides and its upper portion is now in the garden of Van Museum³. The second text is on the upper part of a stele found in Kasımoğlu where it was reused as a gravestone. Whilst the inscription is broken off it clearly refers to the same campaign as the Surb Pogos inscription of which it appears to be a duplicate⁴.

On this campaign Išpuini and Minua went campaigning against and defeated the tribes of Witeruhi, Luša and Katarza. They then marched in the direction of the city of Anaše and the great city of Kuquru. Although the kings of Etiuhi came to the aid of Witeruhi, Luša and Katarza, the forces of this alliance were scattered. Išpuini and Minua then came to the city of Anaše. A list of plunder taken in the campaign is then given. The present inscription, whilst similar, does not mention the tribe of Witeruhi, the kings of Etiuhi, or the great city of Kuquru. Whilst this is probably because this is a building inscription, it is also possible that it does not refer to the same campaign.

The third reference to a campaign of Išpuini and Minua in the North is on a stone block found at the beginning of the last century in the village of Toprakkale in the province of Ağrı. On this block is the left-hand end of an inscription that reads as follows:

*Haldi went campaigning...
Haldi is powerful, Haldi's...
Minua son of Išpuini...
They advanced as far as the city of Anaše...⁵*

This fragmentary inscription closely resembles the present one. For example in line 5 of the present inscription the word *kuṭitu* is spelt as *ku-ti-tú*, as it is in the Toprakkale inscription, whilst in the inscriptions from Surb Pogos and

³ *UKN*, nos. 20 (lower) +22 (upper part).

⁴ *UKN*, no. 21.

⁵ *UKN*, no. 23.

Kasımoğlu this word is spelt *ku-tè-tú*. It is likely that the completions of the Toprakkale inscription based on the Surb Pogos inscription, as suggested by Melikishvili and König, are wrong and that the Toprakkale inscription is in fact a copy of the Pirabat inscription. In this case UKN 23 should more correctly be completed as follows:

ḫal-di-ni uš-ta-be ma-[si-ni-e ^{GIS}šú-ri-e ka-ru-ni ^mlu-ša-a ka-ru-ni ^mka-tar-za-a]
 ḫal-di-ni ku-ru-ni ḫal-[di-ni ^{GIS}šú-ri ku-ru-ni-ni uš-ta-bi ^miš-pu-ú-i-ni-ni ^{md}sar₃-du-ri-e-ḫé]
^mmì-nu-a-ni ^miš-pu-ú-[i-ni-ḫé za-aš-gu-tú-ú-e ^mlu-ša-a ^mka-tar-za-a ḫa-a-i-tú-ú-e ^{KUR}šú-ri-li]
 ku-tí-tú pa-ri ^{URU}a-na-ši-i-e [i-ša-a-ni bi-di-a-li at-ḫi-tú-ú-e i-ni ta-ar-ma-a-ni-li]

It has been assumed from the Toprakkale block that the city of Anaše must lie somewhere near Toprakkale which is located in the Ağrı plain, east of Eleşkirt. In fact the Toprakkale inscription was not found *in situ*, but in the village primary school, a building that no longer exists. No evidence for an Urartian settlement at Toprakkale has yet been found. The reports in fact state that the stone came from the village of Çinsir (Şinezir), renamed Körpeçayır. As one follows the road southwest from Eleşkirt to Pirabat this is the last village before Pirabat, lying on the left bank of the Şeriyen Çayı. Pirabat has evidence of Urartian occupation. It is our opinion that the so-called Toprakkale stone originated in Pirabat where the new stone, of which it seems to be a copy, was found *in situ*. It now seems very unlikely that Toprakkale was Anaše.

However it is also not at all clear that Pirabat was Anaše. Whilst the new inscription could be interpreted as meaning that the waterworks were constructed at Anaše, it is more likely to mean that they were constructed at some point on the return journey. In fact neither the Surb Pogos inscription nor the present one give any indication that Anaše was taken – Išpuini and Minua merely ‘reached’ it and then turned back. This vague description rather suggests that they failed to take Anaše. Perhaps they lost the battle or perhaps the campaign season was terminated by the approach of winter. Whatever the reason for turning back, Anaše seems to have been somewhere beyond Pirabat, though in which direction is not clear. Anaše may have been further to the north.

The Land of Šureli

The word ^{KUR}Šureli has been the subject of much discussion. It occurs in a number of inscriptions, mainly in the titles of the king of Urartu where he describes himself, along with other honorific titles, as ‘King of the land of Šureli and king of the land of Biainili’, this title is used from the time of Išpuini until the time of Rusa II⁶. In several other inscriptions ^{KUR}Šureli occurs in an unclear context⁷. Other

⁶ Benedict 1965, pp. 35-40, no. 2; Dinçol-Dinçol 1995: 29-30, no. 5b; UKN, nos. 19, 70, 72, 155, 156, 168 and 281; UKN 2, no. 376; Salvini 2001, pp. 271-272 and 276, nos. Ay Br.1 and Ay Br.2 and pp. 253-270.

⁷ Balkan 1960: nos. 1 and 2; UKN, nos. 275 and 276; UKN 2, no. 373.

occurrences are as follows: 'I had cut the canal named Dainala, I brought prosperity to the land of Šureli'⁸, 'When I fortified the land of Šureli'⁹, 'I offered and destroyed 92 chariots, 3,600 mounts and 352,011 soldiers, both cavalry and infantry for the land of Šureli'¹⁰, 'Let the other (offering) that the land of Šureli had required(?) be placed from(!) the *serhani* building in front of the temple and let it be offered ... for Haldi'¹¹, 'May life, joy and greatness, along with authority, power and might be given to Rusa son of Argišti for the land of Šureli and for the land of Biainili'¹², '3,784 eunuchs, 300 lancers, 90 freemen'¹³.

The word *Šureli*, as it occurs without the land determinative KUR, is the plural of the Urartian word *šure*, 'lance' formerly translated as 'chariot' or 'weapon'. ^{KUR}*Šureli* has also been equated with the Assyrian expression, 'Lands of the world'. This is because *šar kiššati* 'King of the world', on the Assyrian side of the Keli-shin bilingual stele, has been equated with the term, ^{KUR}*Šurawe* on the Urartian side of the stele. The term LUGÁL ŠÚ, 'King of the world', also occurs on the six identical Urartian inscriptions in Assyrian language on Mardir Burç – the stone wharf-like structure at the base of the rock fortress at Van. ^{KUR}*Šureli* has thus been variously translated as, for example, 'The Chariot Lands', 'The world', and 'Lands'¹⁴. Thus for example Diakonov and Kashkai state that ^{KUR}*Šurele* is not a toponym but a synonym of the Akkadian words *matâti* and *kiššati*¹⁵.

However, Götze equated the land of Nairi, found on the Assyrian side of the Keli-shin stele, with the combined lands of Šureli and Biainili, as found on the Urartian side of the stele. He considered the following expression, *šar kiššati* 'King of the world', to have no equivalent in the Urartian version, like the previous phrase *šarru rabû*¹⁶. Friedrich accepted Götze's approach¹⁷. Later both Götze and Friedrich equated Šureli with the land of Šubarû, continuing to see it as a geographical region¹⁸. With this new text it becomes clear that Šureli must be the name of a geographical region. This makes the earlier theory of Götze and Friedrich, which equated the land of Nairi, as mentioned in the Assyrian of the Keli-shin stele, with the combined lands of Šureli and Biainili, into a serious possibility.

In texts A6 and A15b from Cargamish¹⁹, the land of Sura (Su+ra/i and Sù+ra/i

⁸ *UKN*, no. 127.

⁹ *UKN*, no. 128A and B.

¹⁰ *UKN*, no. 155.

¹¹ Diakonov 1991, pp. 13-21.

¹² Salvini 2001, pp. 253-270.

These texts that refer to ^{KUR}*Šureli* are to be found at Van (Horhor Chronicles and Surb Sahak stele, Analıkız Chronicles and Surb Pogos stele), Lower Anzap, Karagündüz(?), Razlık, Keli-shin, Ayanis (Temple and two shields), Erciş-Karataş, Çelebi Bağı and Topraklı, Patnos-Aznavurtepe (Two inscriptions), Malazgirt, Pirabat, Djanfida, Zvartnots, and Karmir-blur. Whilst this spread of location gives indication of the importance of Šureli and of the title 'king of Šureli', it does not help to clarify where Šureli lies.

¹³ *UKN* 2, no. 286. Here the word is translated as 'lancers', from the context.

¹⁴ *Hchl*, pp. 202-203, *UKN*, p. 408 and Salvini 1993a, p. 75 respectively.

¹⁵ Diakonov-Kashkai 1981, p. 82.

¹⁶ Götze 1930, p. 103.

¹⁷ Friedrich 1933, p. 36.

¹⁸ Götze 1957, p. 191, Friedrich 1969, p. 33.

¹⁹ Hawkins 2000, p. 126. The quote is from p. 124.

respectively) is mentioned. In A6 prince Yariris writes, 'On account of my justice Tarhunzas and the Sun caused my name to pass to heaven, and the gods caused my name to pass abroad, and men heard it for me on the one hand in Egypt, and on the other hand they heard it in Babylon (?), and on the other hand they heard among the Musa (Lydians), the Muska (Phrygians) ... and the Sura'. Hawkins suggests that, since one of the titles of the kings of Urartu, is 'King of ^{KUR}Šurawe', then the land of Sura, as mentioned in the text A6, probably refers to the land of Urartu. Wilhelm is of the same opinion and asserts that Šureli, must be a political area²⁰. Furthermore, he argues that for this land to be lumped together with Lydia and Phrygia, it must be of major importance. But he finishes by noting that it is not clear where this land lies.

Although we know that Išpuini and Minua crossed Šureli on their journey between the cities of Tušpa and Anaše it is not altogether clear which route they took. Early inscriptions are to be found in the valley plains of the Upper Murat and its tributaries the Karakaya Dere and the Şeriyān Çay, at Malazgirt, Patnos and Pirabat²¹. Since the new inscription was found *in situ*, it would seem that the most likely area for the land of Šureli is the region of the Ağrı plain and the Upper Murat basin. The Urartians seem to have been a people of the plains²² and it is probably that Šureli should be so located. If we compare the new Pirabat inscription with the Surb Pogos inscription, then in Urartian geographical terms, Šureli was the land containing or adjacent to the tribal lands of Witeruhi, Luša and Katarza and to the cities of Anaše and Great Kuquru. Šureli should have been an area of significant size and value since in those texts in which it appears it is listed as a prestigious region alongside and apparently of equal importance to the land of Biainili.

The Tribes of Witeruhi, Luša and Katarza

Whilst the kings of Urartu proclaimed themselves king of the united kingdom of Biainili and Šureli from an early stage, they had some difficulty in keeping hold of the tribal lands – both Argišti I and Sarduri II had to resubdue them. Argišti describes two campaigns against these tribes in the Horhor and one campaign in the Surb Sahak chronicles: In his first campaign year he took the royal city of Witeruhi²³; in his thirteenth campaign year he took the land of Katarza and later the land of Witeruhi which he destroyed²⁴; and in his tenth and eleventh campaign years he took the lands of Luša, Katarza and Witeruhi and castrated the king of Luša²⁵. Sarduri describes one campaign in the Analıkız chronicles: in his twelfth campaign year he took the land of Witeruhi, destroyed it and carried men and women into exile²⁶.

The tribal lands probably lay in the mountainous terrain bounding this plain. Diakonov and Kashkai place them in Transcaucasian, in the modern administrative

²⁰ Wilhelm 1993, pp. 140-141.

²¹ See Zimanski 1985, plates 3, 8 and 9, for aerial views of the plains.

²² Zimansky 1985, p. 94.

²³ *UKN*, no. 127 column I line 12.

²⁴ *UKN*, no. 127 column V lines 47-51.

²⁵ *UKN*, no. 128 column B1 lines 33-39.

²⁶ *UKN*, no. 155 left side of stele line 41.

district of Kars (Since divided into the districts of Kars, Ardahan and Iğdır), west of Eriahe and east of but not necessarily adjacent to Diauhe in the general region of Kağisman²⁷. It seems likely that all three tribes lay in the Arasgüneyi (South Aras) Mountains that bound the Ağrı basin on the north and east.

Dating

There has been some discussion on the dating of the so-called 'Co-regency' of Işpuini and Minua, the question being as to whether joint texts of Işpuini and Minua imply a distinct period of co-regency which should be dated later than texts of Işpuini alone, or whether they suggest little more than joint expeditions during the single reign of Işpuini²⁸. In an inscription on a stone block from Lower Anzaf fortress wall, Işpuini son of Sarduri is given the title, 'Powerful king, great king, king of Şureli, king of Bianili'²⁹. If, as seems likely from the present text, the land of Şureli was initially conquered by a joint expedition of Işpuini and Minua, then it becomes doubtful whether the inscriptions of Işpuini should be dated earlier than the joint inscriptions of Işpuini and Minua.

Tar(a)manili

The word *tarmanili* is known from three other inscriptions all connected to water. The meaning has been discussed elsewhere³⁰. On a stele from Tırmaklı, not found *in situ*, is written, 'Minua son of Işpuini built this canal ... He brought it from the Querainili *taramana* to the river Dainala...'³¹. Three panels in the rock-face above a small spring at the foot of the Van Kalesi rock outcrop carry identical inscriptions reading, 'Minua son of Işpuini built this *tarmanili*...'³². An inscription in a niche carved in the rock-face at Aine-Rum reads, '...Minua built this *tarmanili*...'. Water springs out of the rocky surface at three places between this inscription and the road³³. Whilst all of these examples occur by a spring there is no such immediate water source at the Pirabat site. The structure on which the present inscription was found gives some indication of what type of cistern could have been found at a *tarmanili* waterworks.

Margaret. R. Payne,
PK 216, Teşvikiye,
80200 İstanbul, Türkiye.

Alpaslan Ceylan,
History Department,
Arts and Science Faculty,
Atatürk University,
Erzurum, Türkiye.

²⁷ Diakonov-Kashkai 1981, pp. 48-49, 102-103 and map.

²⁸ For example *Hchl*, p. 1, Loon 1975, pp. 201-202 and Salvini 1993b, p. 546 all prefer co-regency.

²⁹ Dinçol-Dinçol 1995, pp. 29-30 no. 5b.

³⁰ Salvini 1984, pp. 75-76.

³¹ *UKN*, no. 58.

³² *UKN*, no. 92.

³³ Salvini 1984, p. 71.

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