

NOTES ON THE FALL OF HOROM¹

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For years David Stronach has contributed significantly to our understanding of West Asia during the Iron Age. He has excavated several major sites, focussing equally on their beginning, development over time, and inevitable collapse. His most recent work in northern Iraq at Nineveh particularly documented the conquest of that famous city². These excavations not only revealed evidence for its final conflagration and unearthed contorted skeletons strewn near its gates, but also revealed the hasty, inadequate, and ultimately unsuccessful attempts of its defenders to strengthen their fortifications and save their capital from destruction (Stronach 1995). The archaeological record confirmed the basic historical account: Nineveh came to a violent end. The kingdom of Urartu, Assyria's long-term rival,

¹ This article, devoted to David Stronach, has gone through several revisions. Its first incarnation was as a co-authored paper by Drs. Philip L. Kohl and Adam T. Smith which was entitled "Coercion and Consent in the Rise of the Urartian State" and presented at the "Confronting Coercion" symposium of the 93rd Annual Meeting of the American Anthropological Association in Atlanta, GA, November 1994; while subsequently revised, many of the ideas and their formulation should be credited to Dr. Smith. It then was rewritten and became "Coercion and Consent in the Urartian State: Strategies of Governance and Limits to Power" which was presented by Dr. Kohl at the "Anthropology of Power" symposium of the 1st Annual Meeting of the European Association of Archaeology in Santiago de Compostela, Spain, September 1995. Sections of yet another revision were delivered by Dr. Kohl at the Globalization and Indigenous Identity in Early Expansionary States symposium at the Annual Meeting of the American Anthropological Association meeting in Washington DC, November 1997.

² Dr. Stronach's meticulous excavations also demonstrated the inaccuracy of specific features of these historical accounts. Thus, contra Nahum and Ctesias, for example, the walls of the city were not breached by diverting the waters of the Tigris or Khosr rivers, at least when the city was being besieged; indeed the waters of the Khosr may have been ingeniously regulated by Sennacherib, partly for defensive purposes (Stronach 1997: 319-322).

suffered a similar fate, a fact which also has been confirmed by the final destruction levels evident at many major Urartian sites (e.g., at Teišebaini [Karmir Blur], Argištihinili [Armavir], Sardurihinili (Çavuştepe), Rusahinili [Ayanis], and Rusaipatari [Bastam]). This pattern, however, is not universal as recent work on the northern frontier of the Urartian realm is revealing. Ongoing excavations of the Urartian citadel at Horom³ on the Shirak plain of northwestern Armenia have demonstrated that the site was not violently destroyed; rather, structures seem to have been gradually abandoned and emptied of their contents. Settled life continued on the Shirak plain in post-Urartian, Achaemenid times at the neighboring unfortified site of Drashkhanakert (or Beniamin; see Ter-Martirossov 1996). The major disruptive events that brought an end to both the neo-Assyrian and the Urartian kingdoms seem partly to have bypassed settlements situated on the northern limits of Urartian rule. This paper, which is dedicated to David Stronach — a master at teasing historical conclusions from material remains — attempts to explain some of the anomalous characteristics of the Urartian settlement at Horom and tries to relate them to larger structural features of the Urartian kingdom.

Historical Background

In southern Transcaucasia the Late Bronze and Early Iron periods, beginning roughly during the 2nd half of the 2nd millennium B.C., witness the emergence of substantial settlements, including the appearance of numerous fortified sites, such as at Shamiram or, more notably, Metsamor in southern Armenia (Smith 1996: 143 Fig. 4,9)). The Iron Age Kingdom of Urartu did not emerge *ex nihilo*, but, as reconstructed largely from contemporary Assyrian sources, probably coalesced as a confederation of related

³ The current excavations at Horom began in 1990 and have been conducted in association with the Institute of Archaeology, Academy of Sciences, Republic of Armenia (cf. annual reports in Badaljan et al 1992, 1993, 1994, 1998) and co-directed by Dr. Ruben Badaljan. The International Program for Anthropological Research in the Caucasus (IPARC) expanded in 1995 to include participants from the Institut für Vorderasiatische Archäologie, Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität in München, and the 1995 and 1997 excavations at Horom, which were supported by a grant from the German-American Academic Council Foundation, have been co-directed by Dr. Stephan Kroll. It is particularly appropriate to dedicate a paper on Horom to Dr. Stronach for he has been an active participant in the IPARC program since 1992 and excavated at Horom during the 1992 season.

Iron Age groups either in response to Assyrian expansion in the south and/or as a largely internal process of state development (Salvini 1995, Zimansky 1985). The Early Iron Age cultural landscape in Armenia into which Urartu expanded was replete with cyclopean stone fortresses, much cruder in execution than those built by the Urartians and situated in even steeper, less accessible locations. Despite the exercise of raw, coercive military power, which is manifest in Urartian inscriptions and in their material culture, the shift in settlement location from pre-Urartian to Urartian Iron Age times would suggest the advent of a relative pax Urartia at least within their heartland between Lake Urmia and the areas surrounding Lake Van north onto the Ararat plain of southern Armenia. The times certainly were violent and unsettled, but they may have been less so than in the last centuries of the 2nd and the 1st century of the 1st millennium B.C. The Urartian inscriptions largely record the boasts of their kings which recount sacking areas, stripping them of material and human resources, and engaging in monumental construction projects, all of which glorified their power. The archaeological evidence essentially supports these written accounts. Besides their inscriptions, which are sometimes cut into difficult-to-access vertical cliff faces, the most defining Urartian archaeological remains are their impregnable fortresses, constructed on promontories or steep slopes and surrounded by thick, regularly buttressed cyclopean or ashlar stone masonry walls. The rapid expansion of Urartu from its capital on the eastern shores of Lake Van was documented by the Urartians themselves. The Urartians under Menua and Argišti I quickly expanded their territorial control from their new center at Tušpa on the eastern shore of Lake Van to stretch from the headwaters of the Euphrates in the west, to the southern shores of Lake Urmia in the east, to the Kars and Shirak plain and the Sevan basin in the north. The initial expansion of Urartu into Transcaucasia north of the Araxes river is associated with the exploits of the redoubtable Argišti I who began his reign sometime in the second decade of the 8th century B.C. The Urartian expansion to the north into today's southern Transcaucasia was primarily focussed on the fertile Ararat plain where they subsequently constructed new cities, such as Erebuni (Arin Berd) and Argištihinili (Armavir). As recorded by their inscriptions, their forays farther to the north initially consisted of raids, primarily for captives and livestock. Following a period of instability and decline during the late 8th century B.C., in part precipitated by Sargon II's highly destructive military campaign in 714 B.C. throughout the southeastern Urartian realm, a

second period of Urartian expansion and extensive construction was inaugurated under the reigns of Arğišti II and Rusa II in the early 7th century B.C. Under the latter ruler administrative centers like Teišebaini (Karmir Blur) on the Ararat plain, Rusaipatari (Bastam) in northwestern Iran or Rusahinili (Toprakale) near lake Van were built, and Urartian might once again reasserted (Salvini 1995:104).

The Urartians were not only threatened by the Assyrians to their south but also by stratified nomadic groups or states, notably the Cimmerians and Scythians, and powerful expansionary polities on the Iranian plateau to their southeast, such as the Medes. Rusa I, who was defeated by Sargon II, also had to combat the Cimmerians. When the Urartian kingdom collapsed early in the second half of the 7th century B.C. (ca. 640-650 B.C.), it probably fell to forces like the Scythians and Medes. Most of the major excavated Urartian settlements, such as Karmir Blur, Armavir, Çavuştepe, Bastam, and now spectacularly at Ayanis (Çilingiroğlu and Salvini 1995) on the eastern shore of Lake Van, are capped by a massive layer of destruction and bear witness to the violent destruction of Urartu. The collapse of Urartu apparently was so sudden and complete that it dropped out of the historical record; writing scarcely more than a hundred years later, Herodotus failed to mention it.

Conflicting Views of the Urartian State

Current understanding of the nature of the political organization of the Urartian state is informed by two essentially exclusive models. An earlier view, propounded largely by Soviet scholars (e.g. Melikishvili 1951 and Diakonoff 1952), predicates a highly centralized state led by a king of singular authority who actively redistributed resources and labor from the peripheries to the regional centers. While there is disagreement among the proponents of this model as to the exclusive, all-encompassing nature of Urartian kingship and whether or not its state can be characterized as “slave-owning” or “feudal” (for the latter see Adontz 1946), the model nevertheless emphasizes the transcendent power of the Urartian rulers. The archaeological evidence seems to corroborate this picture: the Urartians are known to have founded many citadels renowned for their impressive cyclopean or ashlar stone fortifications; their kings constructed irrigation canals, hewn out of volcanic rock. The most famous, the Samram-Su, which was built by Menua, stretches c. 65 km. connecting the Hoşap valley to Van and is

still used today. The Urartian kingdom was capable of accumulating considerable wealth as the list of booty (e.g., more than 109 tons [3600 talents] of bronze in the form of thousands of shields, swords, and spears) taken from their cultic center at Musasir by Sargon II clearly records. Their longest and most famous inscriptions are cut on the faces of vertical rocks and record the military exploits of their valorous kings. The Urartians' large-scale evidence for metallurgical production (Belli 1991) and well-known metalworking abilities, as attested particularly by their bronze weapons and armaments, reinforce the same image of a powerful Iron Age kingdom. Their texts, their citadels, and their bronze and iron weaponry converge to yield a portrait of a highly centralized and powerful Iron Age Kingdom, qualitatively akin to the Hittite or Neo-Assyrian Empires.

Alternatively, Zimansky (1985) more recently has proposed a model which posits a much weaker central authority, suggesting that the Urartian economy was highly decentralized and state political administration extremely limited. More precisely, Zimansky postulates that Urartu represented a unique combination of decentralized and centralized features (with an emphasis, correcting the earlier literature, on the former) that can be explained largely due to its derivative character and its harsh environment. Urartian trappings of state: their notions of kingship and royal titulary, their script, essential political institutions, policies of deporting peoples [or at least moving them around], and even basic building forms — all mimicked practices and institutions long established in the Assyrian realm. The environment, which isolated most of Urartu during the winter, set limits on Urartian productive potential — its agricultural surplus and demographic base; the Urartians cleverly manipulated their 'cultural ecology' to their advantage in that each region or province of the state maintained a degree of isolation and self-sufficiency that buffeted the entire state from its external enemies, above all the Assyrians. Even the impressive irrigation canals that the Urartian rulers laboriously dug — presumably with conscripted corvee labor — through hard rock required less organizational abilities than comparable projects undertaken on the Mesopotamian plain to the south. Again the environment is key: once constructed, these canals — some of which are still in operation today — required little maintenance. Zimansky concludes: "If control and regulation of the water supply was one of the roots of the state's power, it was not exercised in a way that is detectable by the archaeologist or historian (Zimansky 1985: 69)."

According to Zimansky, the very emergence of Urartu depended upon the Assyrian military threat; in this sense, Urartu was a “state born of military necessity” (p. 32), “a creation of the Assyrians” (p. 48). When examined closely, their seemingly impressive citadels are neither that numerous nor, certainly by Assyrian standards, that immense. According to him: “The Urartian reputation for building and planning cities is an unwarranted creation of the twentieth century (p. 76).” These citadels were places of refuge to which locals fled when enemies like the Assyrians advanced. Due to their environment and constant fear of the Assyrians, the Urartians adopted a decentralized system of defense in which the citadels functioned as isolated units, independently defended, and any one of which could fall, while the state as a whole survived. Urartu, in short, could be ravaged, but not totally conquered since it was not so much a central state administered from a single capital as “a mosaic of provinces or ‘lands’” (pp. 89, 94).

The opposition of these models, both principally derived from an examination of the historical record, is striking and unfortunately reflects the inherent limitations and ambiguities of these sources. While it is necessary to examine some of these limitations, it first must be emphasized that neither model satisfactorily addresses the central question: the creation by the expansionary Urartian state of political subjects, particularly in regards to the relationship between the *in situ* local authorities and the Urartian king. Furthermore, neither model accounts for historical change in strategies of governance that can be detected from the imperial conquests of Menua and Argišti I in the late 9th and early 8th centuries B.C. to the administrative reforms and construction of new centers by Rusa II in the 7th century B.C. Thus, for example, during the first century of Urartian occupation, the spatial organization of centers, such as Erebuni, which was built by Argišti I, suggests that military force was an important aspect of subjectification. Later 7th century centers, such as Teišebaini (Karmir Blur), were characterized more by their magazines and storerooms than their garrisons or military component. Presumably, such shifts in Urartian architecture over time suggest changes in state policy or strategies of governance (Smith 1996).

This paper cannot review in detail the history of research on Urartu (see Barnett 1982: 314-321; Wartke 1993: 11-34; Salvini 1995: 5-14). Suffice it to say that Zimansky is correct in emphasizing the harsh, inaccessible natural setting of the Urartian state, and this very harshness, aided and abetted by modern political geography — the contemporary division of the

area between Turkey, Iran, the former Soviet-Union (now Armenia and Azerbaijan) and, to some extent, Iraq/Kurdistan — has impeded sustained scholarly research from its beginnings in the 19th century to the present. While proper archaeological investigations have primarily been conducted only sporadically, the illegal plundering of Urartian remains, particularly in eastern Turkey and northwestern Iran, has flourished. Occasional exhibits of Urartian art and artifacts (e.g., Merhav 1991) vividly illustrate the problem: most Urartian objets d'art lack altogether proper archaeological provenience. The mountainous Urartian environment is not as conducive to yielding sealed archaeological materials stratified securely within successive mud-brick levels of a tell. Typically, Urartian sites are badly eroded, and their characteristic stone architecture often is reused or removed from its original context. The hundreds of known Urartian stone inscriptions give only limited information. Many Urartian inscriptions are short and difficult to read. Additional information can be gleaned from thousands of Assyrian texts. One knows ultimately almost more about the Urartians from the Assyrian than from their own writings, and this reality, of course, creates its own historiographic problems of interpretation. In the final analysis, any reconstruction of the Urartian state must be aware of and somehow correct for the substantial limitations and ambiguities of the record.

The Urartian State as Seen from Its Northern Frontier: the Evidence from Horom

Recent archaeological investigations in the Shirak plain of northwestern Armenia, have focussed on the site of Horom, the only known Urartian settlement in the area; this work may shed some light on the nature of the Urartian state and on the transformations over time in its exercise of state hegemony. The Urartians' first involvement in the Shirak region occurred in the context of military campaigns led by Argišti I. Two inscriptions testify to the sacking of local polities by the Urartian army (Fig. 1)⁴. One inscription, located on the northwest spur of Mount Aragats at Spandarian, not far from Horom, describes the destruction of “Duruba”, capital city of the kingdom of “Qulia” (Melikishvili 1960: #132). Another inscription farther north in the Shirak plain mentions more countries and places,

⁴ We are grateful to Cornelia Wolff for preparing the illustrations of this article.

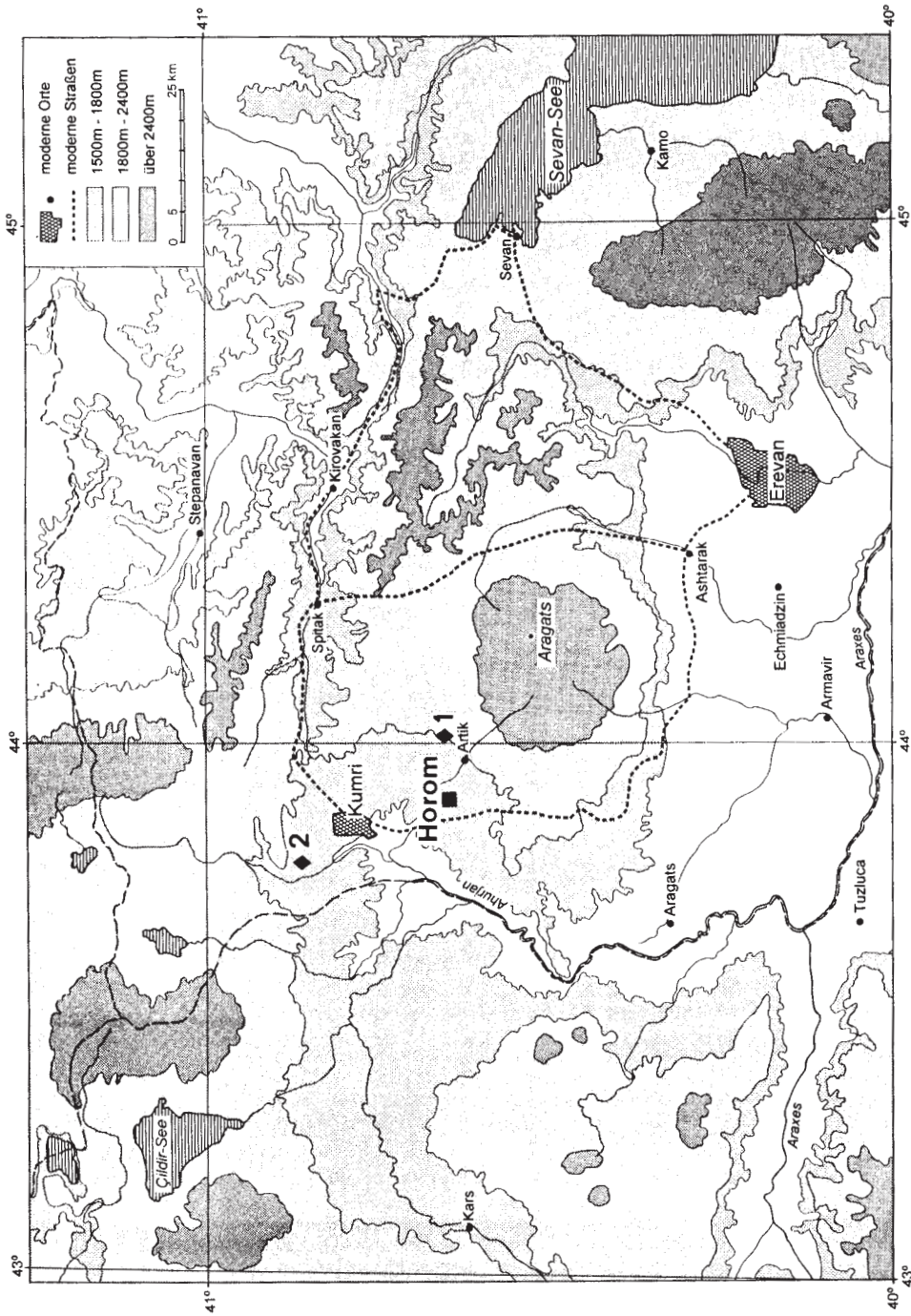


Fig. 1. Map of northwestern Armenia, showing the location of Horom and the inscription of Argišti I at Spandartian (1) and Marmashen (2).

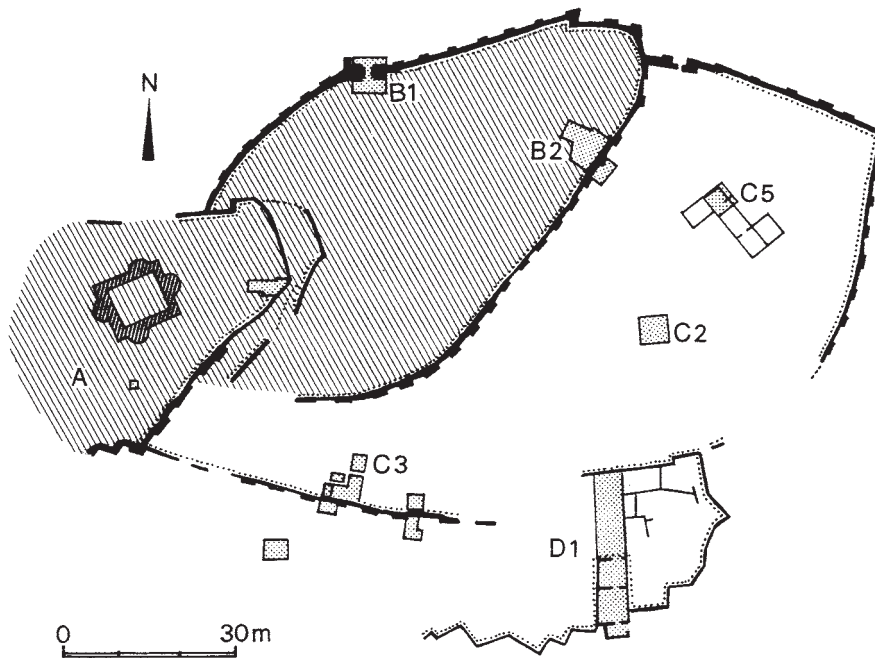


Fig. 2. Map of the Urtian Fortress at Horom, showing the original fortress (A, B), the probably never finished C-Area and possible post-Urtian occupation in C5 and D1.

conquered by the Urtian army. It is unclear whether Urtian rule over the Shirak plain followed immediately upon these forays or whether their attempts to govern the area began somewhat later.

Evidence from the 1995 and 1997 excavations at Horom (Fig. 2) suggests that the earlier Iron Age settlement, probably focussed on the South Hill and the area between the North and South Hills was not used any longer in the 8th and 7th centuries B.C. It may have been destroyed altogether by the invading Urtian army. Evidence for such a destruction is found in area C3 on the North Hill. The section of area C3 shows clearly (Fig. 3), that previously existing mudbrick-buildings were destroyed and levelled before the massive C-fortification wall was constructed. The section is corroborated by the analysis of the pottery from this area. While there is typical Early Iron Age pottery in the destruction level and below, the layer above the destruction level no longer contains Iron Age pottery but only some sherds from Urtian storage vessels. While we cannot yet

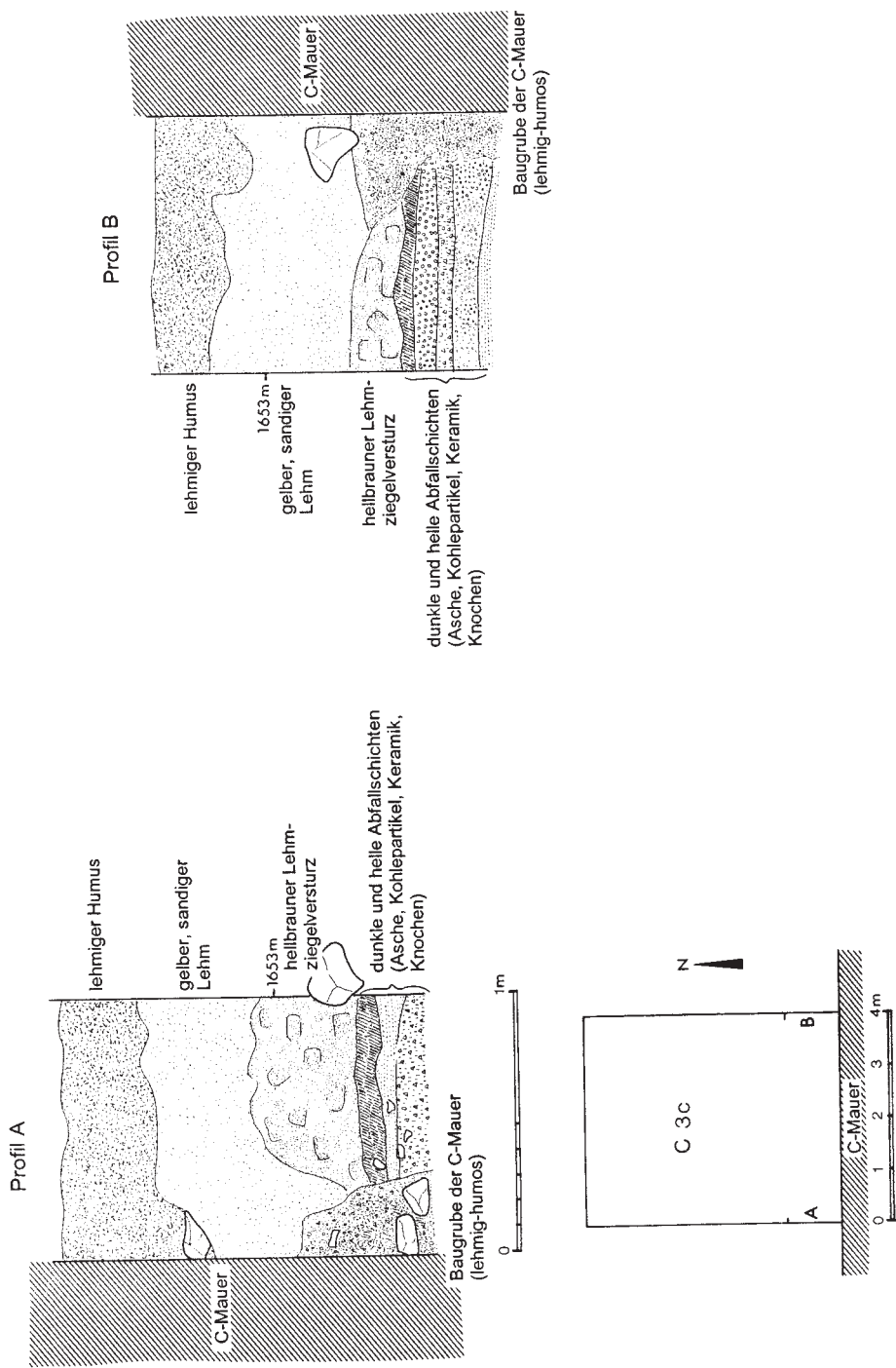


Fig. 3. Horom: section of C3, showing the Urartian wall (C-Mauer) cutting earlier Iron Age strata.

pinpoint precisely the time and stages of the Urartian constructions at Horom, it is likely that they must have followed the initial raids of Argišti I in the early 8th century B.C. and that they eventually constructed a massive fortification system of successive cyclopean stone enclosures, encompassing c. 3.6 ha., on the dominant North Hill which overlooked the earlier Iron Age settlement at Horom to the south. The advent of the Urartians radically transformed the nature of the Iron Age settlement. Evidence from the 1995 and 1997 excavations suggests that the Urartian settlement was not short-lived, lasting for only a few decades. Excavations in the B1 area unearthed three successive flagstone pavements which covered the area between the towers of the gate, the main entrance to the fortress. Related building activity in this area shows that at least five different building levels rest here one upon the other. Pottery evidence points in the same direction: besides Late Urartian bowls with thick rounded rims, Early Urartian bowl types with deep carination were found (Badaljan 1998: Fig. 27-29). The new and heavily fortified northern citadel was constructed by using standard Urartian architectural features, such as rubble fill between the cyclopean stone faces and the regular placement of buttresses. Nevertheless, one can point to other evidence to demonstrate that the Urartian presence on the Shirak plain was not totally coercive, nor did it completely eradicate earlier indigenous practices. The distinctive local Late Bronze/Early Iron grey and black wares with incised or pattern burnished decorations continued to be produced alongside the Urartian wares, but to a lesser degree. In the Early Iron Age, grey and black wares account for about 70% to 80%, while buff or brown wares for only about 20% to 30% of the total ceramic assemblage. Red wares; i.e., wares with a diagnostic red polished slip, are absent. In the period of the Urartian fortress, grey and black wares decrease, while buff and brown wares amount to more than 50% of the total assemblage in the B1 and B2 areas. Red slipped wares now appear but only account for 1% of the general sherdage (Fig. 4).

This may be indicative perhaps of some maintenance of indigenous traditions in the face of Urartian control and/or resistance to it. This pattern of a continued local presence as reflected in the ceramic assemblages is not characteristic of Urartian sites located in the Urartian heartland to the south and may indicate their more tenuous control over their northern frontier. However, all of the forms of the traditional Urartian assemblage are represented including bowls, jugs with handle and trefoil rim, lamps, medium storage jars, cosmetic miniature-jars, and pithoi. In addition to the

HOROM AREA	E3	C3	B1	B2	C5	D1
PERIOD	Iron Age	Iron Age	Urtian	Urtian	Post-Urtian	Post-Urtian
GREY WARE	80	75	42	40	70	60
BUFF WARE	20	25	56	59	29	39
RED WARE	0	0	2	1	1	1

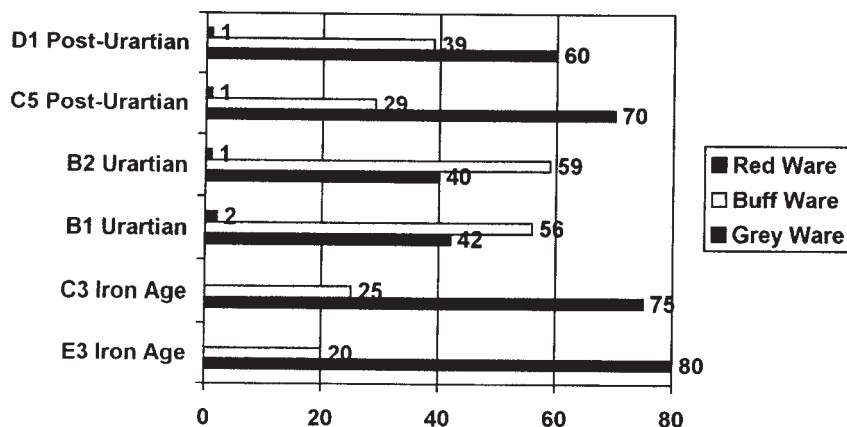


Fig. 4. Horom: relation of grey wares, buff wares and red-slipped wares in the Early Iron Age (E3, C3), in the Urtian Period (B1, B2) and in possible post-Urtian contexts (C5, D1).

ceramic evidence, local metallurgical traditions appear to have continued throughout the period of Urtian occupation of the region, as Caucasian fibulae show, found in the gate of the B1 area. While cuneiform inscriptions have not yet been found at Horom, there is evidence of the Urtian hieroglyphic system in the form of numerical signs on the handle of a jar (Fig. 5 right). This is proof that some kind of redistribution was in use to pay the officials/labour within the realm of the Horom fortress. Another handle shows a seal impression depicting a tower with the lance of the Urtian God Haldi above (Fig. 5 left). Such signs are well-known from Urtian fortresses to the south and west, such as at Bastam and Karmir Blur.

The architectural evidence from Horom is also distinctive and amenable to interpretation by either the centralized or decentralized model of Urtian

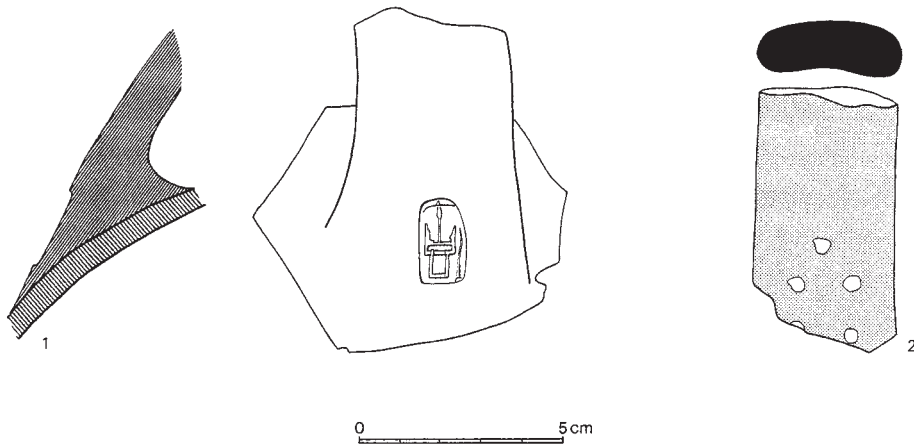


Fig. 5. Horom: jar handles from B1 with hieroglyphic impression (1) and numerals (2).

control. On the one hand, the Urartians built these fortifications which dominate the entire site. Architecture in one area (B2) set against these fortifications, shows evidence of considerable planning in the form of regular, narrow rooms that possibly functioned for military purposes. While part of one area near the gate (B1) shows evidence of some destruction by fire, most of the excavated Urartian structures record no level of destruction, certainly nothing comparable to what is typically found at Urartian sites to the south. The well-built, interconnecting rooms (B2 area), which are preserved to heights of over 2 m. and built within and against the fortification wall (Badaljan 1994: Fig. 3. 7; Badaljan 1998: Fig. 21-23), appear simply to have been abandoned or given way to cruder structures.

The 1997 excavations however revealed some anomalies within the fortress, that suggest the fortress was never completely finished, but show that occupation continued on a rather limited scale. The only gateway to areas A and B is the gate in B1 (Fig. 2). There is a gate in the north into the C-area, but there is no gate connecting C and B. While there are massive structures to be found everywhere in A and B, structures in C seem to be virtually absent, except some outstanding buildings like C2 and C5, which might have been planned as animal stables. These anomalies can be found again in the pottery excavated there. In two operations within the fortified terrace C (C5 and D1), the traditional grey wares continue to out-

number significantly both the diagnostic highly fired red Urartian 'elite' wares and the 'utilitarian' buff wares (Fig. 4). D1, a domestic complex, consisting of what can be interpreted as an animal stable, a possible bakery, and a later added room (Badaljan 1998: Fig. 19) was constructed against the outer face of one of the fortification walls. This architecture may suggest that the local inhabitants continued to occupy the area long after the citadel had ceased to provide military protection. The high percentage of local Iron Age grey wares suggests, that old traditions reemerged again after the Urartian interlude (Fig. 4). New pottery types testify that this occupation can indeed be called post-Urartian (Fig. 6). This picture exactly fits Zimansky's views on the nature of the Urartian material culture as state assemblage (Zimansky 1995a).

While the ceramic evidence has provided some clues as to the continued strength of local traditions under the Urartian occupation, it gives little indication as to the formal relations between Horom and the central government. Despite the persistence of aspects of local material culture, Horom is most plausibly interpreted as an Urartian center that was dramatically transformed by the massive fortifications the Urartians had constructed after they conquered and then incorporated the area into their expansionary kingdom. Incorporation, however, did not involve total absorption. The process of subjectification was more subtle, suggesting real practical limits to Urartian power. At Horom we find intriguing clues as to the creation of subjects of political authority. In the northernmost extension of the Urartian state we can detect, however dimly, both practices of their militarism and state diplomacy. Zimansky's model of a decentralized Urartian state properly tries to understand Urartu as its own creation, not as a pale reflection of differently-based empires to the south and west and may best apply to this evidence from Horom (Zimansky 1995b). Admittedly, however, the interpretation proffered above is only the most plausible reconstruction of the remains from these ongoing excavations. Most Urartian fortresses do not rise over the ruins of earlier settlements, but are built on natural bedrock, transforming — in terms of their own propaganda — the "wilderness" into a striking material manifestation of the Urartian state and its power; most also were violently destroyed, chiefly by mounted nomadic groups who entered the area ultimately from the Eurasian steppes to the north. Neither of these classic Urartian features characterizes the archaeological evidence from Horom; the northern frontier of the Urartian domain was ruled over and ended differently. People

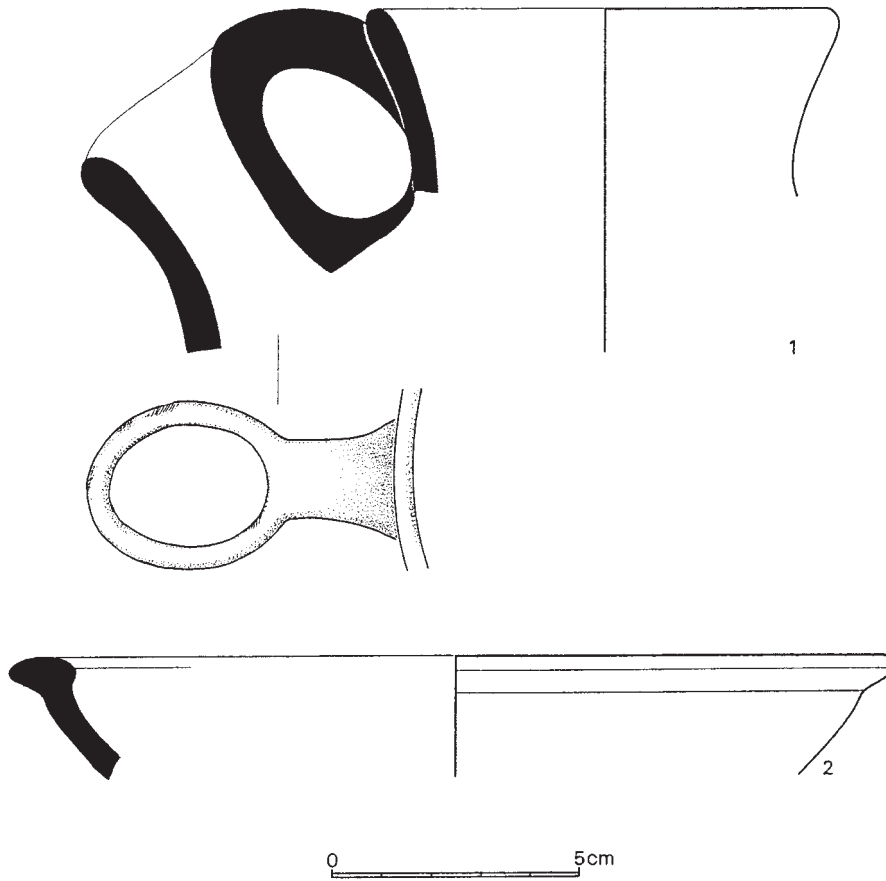


Fig. 6. Post-Urartian Pottery from Horom, 1 from D1, 2 from B1.

continued to occupy some parts of Horom after the Urartian defensive fortifications had been abandoned and fallen into disrepair. They continued to produce ceramics in their local indigenous style and conducted normal domestic activities (keeping livestock, grinding grains, baking bread, etc.) outside the protection of the Urartian walls. Shortly thereafter, a substantial unfortified Achaemenid settlement developed on the Shirak plain at Beniamin, c. 5 km. to the northwest of Horom. Settlements now did not need the protection of the natural hills and the cyclopean masonry, but could be located directly on the plain, a shift in settlement suggestive of the more peaceful times that accompanied Achaemenid rule. A similar

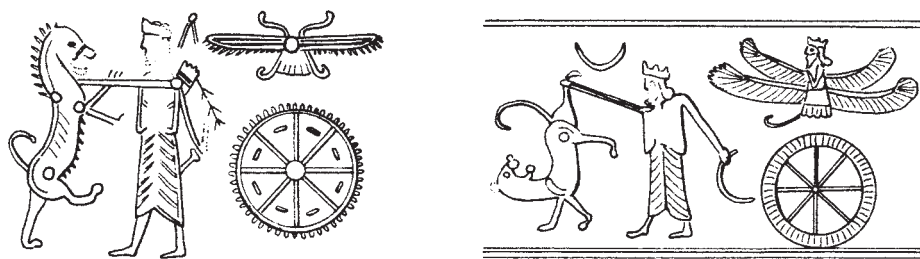


Fig. 7. left: Sketchdrawing of an Achaemenid cylinder seal found in Horom village; right Achaemenid cylinder seal from Pasargadae (after Stronach 1978, Pl. 162a).

picture characterizes the northeastern Urartian frontier in the Sevan basin to the east of Horom. There is continuity between the Late Urartian and Median-Achaemenid periods and no evidence for destruction or any type of large-scale disturbance. The transition is marked by a dynastic, but not material culture change (Biscione personal communication).

The advance of the Urartians under Argišti I onto the Shirak plain did not mean to occupy the plain completely and permanently. They took tribute and incorporated the southern parts of it into their expanding kingdom, constructing their large fortress at Horom. It is even possible that a local ruler took residence at Horom. But this area never became part of the Urartian heartland. As there is no evidence for other occupation during this period in the Shirak plain, some of the local population might have left the area to escape the burdens imposed by the Urartians. As earlier evidence in the Bronze- and Early Iron-Age shows, the Shirak plain was never an area of great wealth compared to plains to the north like Stepavan with its famous Loriberd cemetery. So for any enemy it was not tempting and necessary to conquer the Shirak plain to destroy the Urartian state. The situation in the southern part of the Sevan basin may have been similar. The Urartian presence in these areas formed an interlude, and life continued under the more peaceful conditions effected by the Achaemenids. An Achaemenid cylinder seal, which was found by a local farmer in Horom village during the 1997 campaign, supports this evidence (Fig. 7 left). It has an almost exact parallel at Pasargadae (Fig. 7 right; Stronach 1978, Pl. 162a-b). We wonder, if it dropped out of David's pocket, while he was working at Horom in earlier years.

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