

THE «DEDELI» BRONZE URARTIAN BELT IN THE ADANA REGIONAL MUSEUM

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It has been established that the belt acquired by the Adana Regional Museum at the beginning of the year 1975 was found in the Dedeli village of Patnos county in the Ağrı District¹.

This bronze belt, which is broken in three places, is 94 cm. in length and 9,5 in width. There is a small section missing on the left side and a portion missing from the right end of the belt where the buckle was attached (Fig. 1. III. 1 - 6)². The «Dedeli» belt deserves special attention among belts belonging to the Urartian period. In the first place there is an unusually large variety of human and combination animal figures represented. Secondly, the large equestrian hunting scene that is depicted, comprises one third of the entire belt surface and shows a warrior on horse back pursuing a running lion. This unique scene sets this bronze belt apart from other known Urartian belts.

¹ The Adana Regional Museum also has one complete belt and a fragment of another belt in its Urartian collection. These belts were recovered from a Urartian cemetery located in the vicinity of «Dedeli». See O.A. Taşyürek, *Urartian Belts in the Adana Regional Museum*, (Ankara, 1975), nos 1 and 19.

² The drawing of the «Dedeli» belt was done by Mr. Nurettin Dođru of the Regional Museum. The accompanying photographs are the work of the author, sincere thanks to Muh-tar Gücüm, who translated this article and to Carolina Williams M.A. Ph. D for the corrections.

The entire belt is surrounded by a guilloche border. Within this border human and animal figures are seen in vertical groups of three each measuring about 2 cm. They are as follows, from left to right: 1 — Sirens, 2 — Lions, 3 — Unrecognizable figures, 4 — Bulls, 5 — Hunters, 6 — Rabbit-headed combination creatures, 7 — Lions, 8 — Rabbit-headed combination creatures, 9 — Goats, 10 — Sphinxes, 11 — Hunters, 12 — Goats, 13 — Lion figures, 14 — Another representation of a Griffon with a horn 15 — Large equestrian warrior and lion figure. Figure 1 - 4, 6 and 7 face to the left, the remaining figures 5, and 8 - 15 face to the right. Decorating the spaces between the groups of figures are rosettes, Maltese crosses, stylized stars, and palmettes. It will be profitable to examine each figure separately.

1 — Siren figures (I LL. 7) On the left end of the belt, following a rosette pattern. There are three siren figures placed vertically above one another. These figures are portrayed as combination creatures with human heads, bird bodies and the paws of a lion. It is interesting to note how the mouth is rendered by the use of four horizontal lines. This artistic representation of an animal mouth will be repeated a number of times in this belt³.

³ See O.A. Taşyürek, *Urartian Belts*, belt number 2. compare III. 12.

2 — Lion figures (III.8): These figures are shown in a «Springing» position with their tails gracefully curved up and in towards their backs. A round bump characteristically depicts their upper jaw.

3 — This section of the belt is missing. Therefore, it is not possible to ascertain what was represented.

4 — Bull figures (III. 9): These figures do not contain any unusual features. Similiar bull representations are seen frequently on many Urartian belts and shields.

5 — Hunters (III. 10): Human figures are shown with drawn bows about to loose their arrows upon the rabbit-headed composite creatures in front of them. They are wearing helmets which suggest they could be either hunters or warriors. Four parallel lines are used to represent the mouth in the same manner as we see in figure 1.

6 — Rabbit headed combination creatures (III.11): This is the first time that this type of composite creature has been found on any Urartian artifact. These figures have the head of a rabbit, the body of either a horse or lion, wings and a tail like a bird. Four horizontal lines represent the mouth. These creatures are shown in a «pouncing» position. It is thought that animal combinations, like the one depicted here, represent mythological creatures.

7 — Lion figures (ILL.12): The lion figures have the same characteristics as the lions in the second row, with the exception of the tail which falls in a curve behind the lion.

8 — Rabbit - headed combination creatures (III.13): These figures are identical to the composite creatures shown in the sixth row, with the exception of the tail. These creatures have bull-like tails.

9 — Goat figures (ILL. 14): The figures are shown in a «springing» position with circular ornamentations.

10 — Sphinx figures (ILL.14). These galloping sphinxes have lion bodies with wings. The ends of the wings are stylized swans heads. The mouth is depicted by three horizontal lines. Each sphinx figure is shown wearing a crown on its head.

11 — Hunter figures: These human figures are decorated with man figures contain the same characteristics as the fifth row figures. The middle figure carries a quiver on his right shoulder. All appear to be aiming their arrows at the goats in front of them.

12 — Goat figures: The difference between these figures and those represented in the ninth row is the manner in which the horns are shown bending backward instead of forward. All other characteristics are similiar.

13 — Lion figures (ILL.16): These pouncing lions have horns, wings, and scorpion tails. The upper jaws are represented by the circular bumps (See figure 2). Lion figures like the ones seen here are commonly found on the Urartian belts from the collection on display found on the Urartian belts from the collection on display at the Adana Regional Museum⁴.

14 — Griffin figure (ILL.17): Near the right end of the belt, in an area surrounded by a palmette motif, there is a single griffin figure. This griffin is the same size as the above figures. Unlike previously discovered examples in Urartian art, this griffin is portrayed with a horn, the body of a lion with wings and finally the tail of a bird.

15 — Equestrian warrior preceded by lion (ILL.6): This large grouping, on the right side near the buckle, is the most unique aspect of the Dedeli belt. An equestrian warrior, wearing a helmet

⁴ See O.A. Taşyürek, Urartian Belts, III.1 and 19.

met, is equipped with a quiver on his back and a shield on his shoulder. He is pursuing a lion, whose head and shoulders are turned to the back and whose front paws are raised and spread. The warrior's hands are portrayed with two fingers in scissors-like fashion and his mouth consists of five horizontal lines (ILL.18)⁵. Proportionately the warrior is far larger than his mount. Note how thick the warrior's legs are. The lion too is executed on a very large scale. Again, the mouth of the lion is shown as a round bump and the left front paw is in the shape of a comb (ILL.19). Attention is given to this added grouping by a stylized decorative motif on the haunches of both the horse and the lion. There is a tulip motif found on the front paws of the lion. Similar compositions can be found on a- Urartian Belts⁶, b-A.

⁵ Ibid fig. 7. p. 29.

⁶ When the author was in Munich in May of 1975, he noted a number of bronze belts with these same characteristics in the excellent photographic archive created by the Museum Director, Dr. H. J. Kellner. The author extends his grateful appreciation to Dr. Kellner for placing the artifacts of the Prehistory Museum at his disposal.

relief found in Malatya, «Aslantash» excavation, New Hittite Kingdom⁷, c- Ziwiye Ivory plaques⁸, d- An alabaster relief of Nineveh origin showing Asur-Banipal hunting lions⁹ etc.

Dating the belt: An examination of the figures enables one to date the belt to what Professor E. Akurgal has termed the Cubic Style of the late Urartian Art Period. The manner in which the mouths of the lions are portrayed, in particular the large lion on the right, is very similar to that on artifacts of the period of Rusa III (605-585 B.C.). It is also evident that this belt falls into the «Cubic Period» from the manner that is used to portray the mouths of warriors, sirens, sphinxes and composite rabbit-headed creatures, i.e. the repeated use of three to five horizontal lines¹⁰.

⁷ See E. Akurgal, *The Hittites*, (London, 1962), pl. 105; T.A. Madhloom, *The Chronology of Neo-Assyrian Art*, (London, 1970), Pl. 5, No. 5.

⁸ See. A Parrot, *Assur*, (Paris, 1969), Pl. 177. B.

⁹ Ibid, pl. 63

¹⁰ See O.A. Taşyürek, *Urartian Belts*, footnote 25.

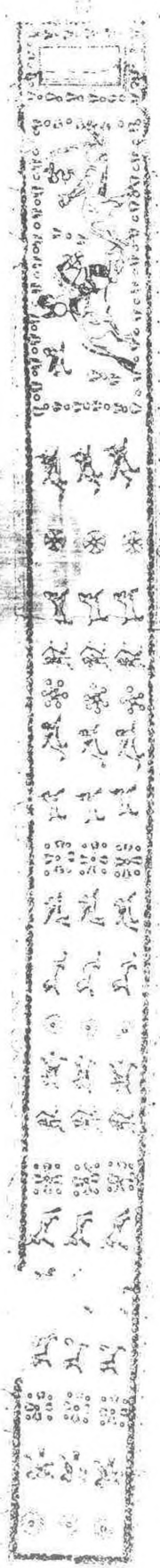
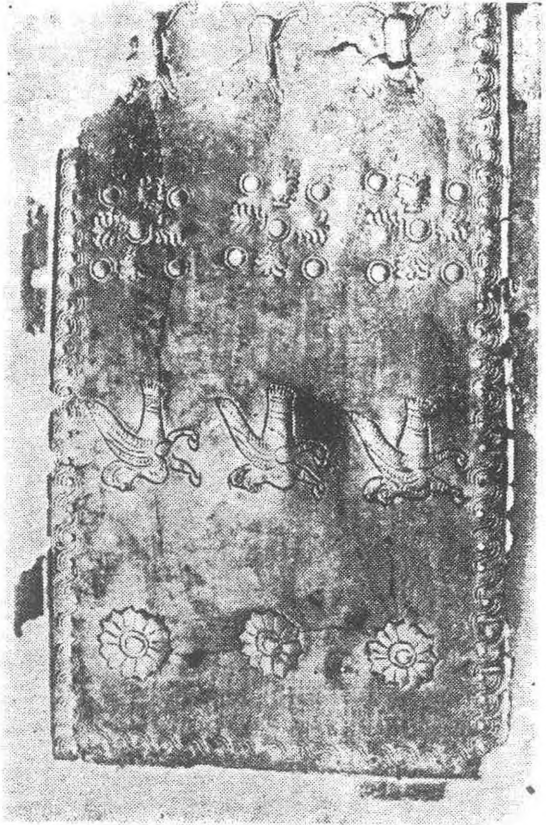
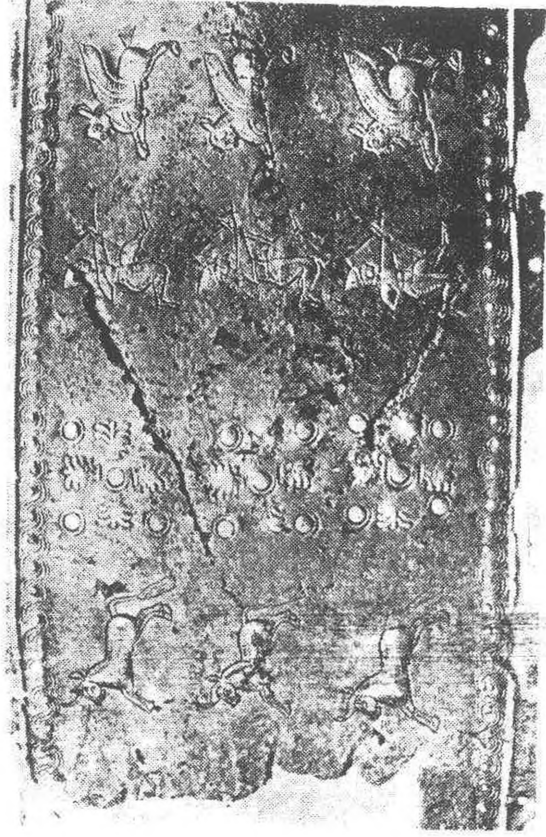


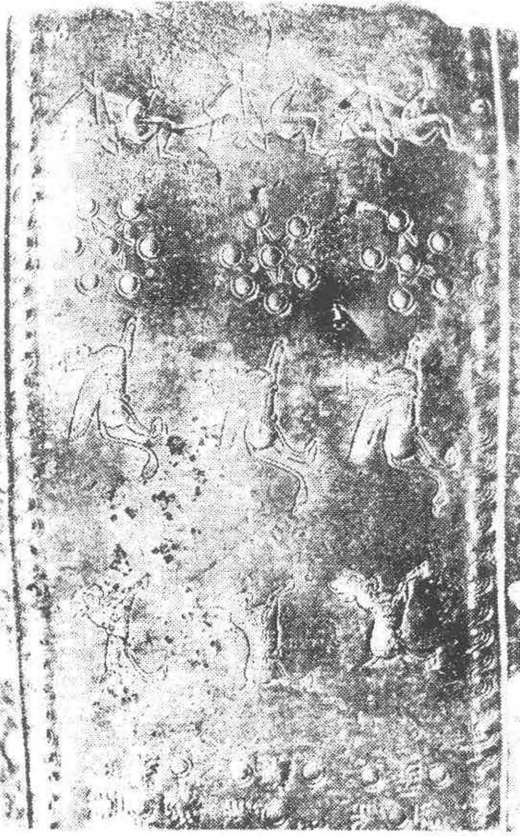
Fig - 1



Resim : 1



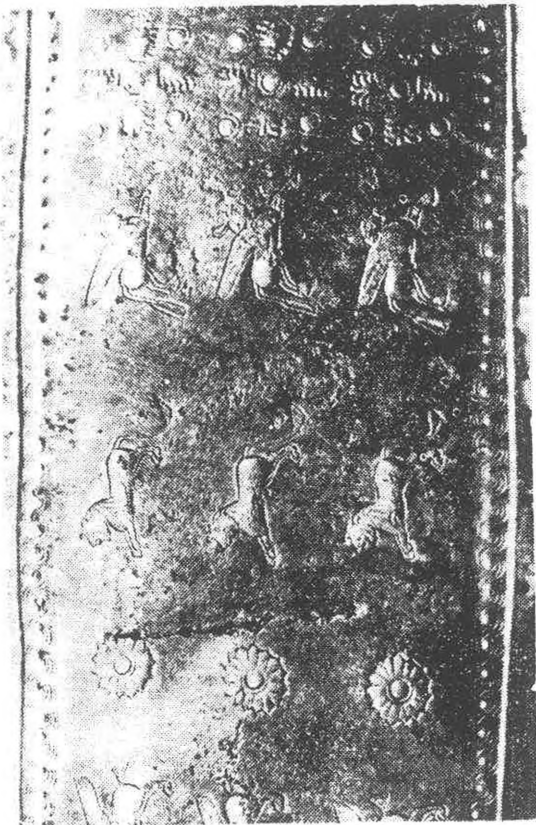
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Resim : 7



Resim : 3



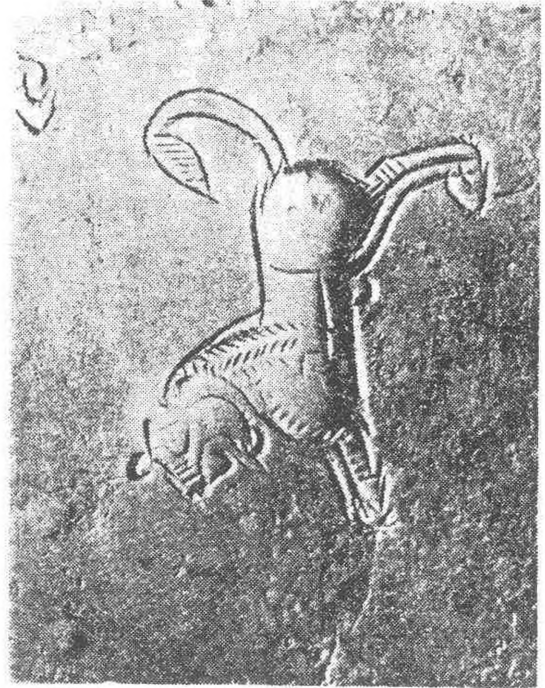
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Resim : 6



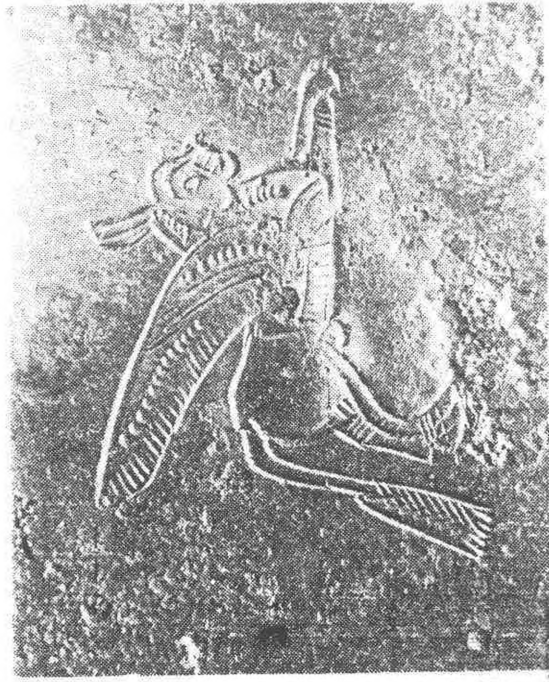
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Resim : 8



Resim : 11



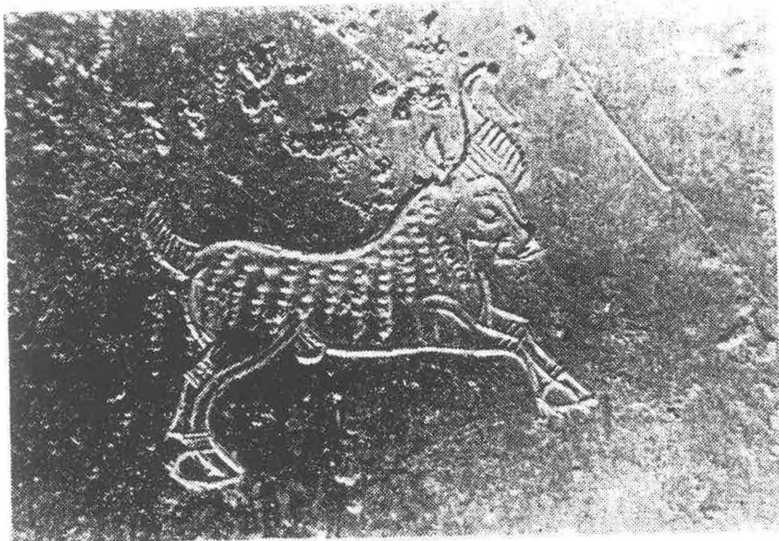
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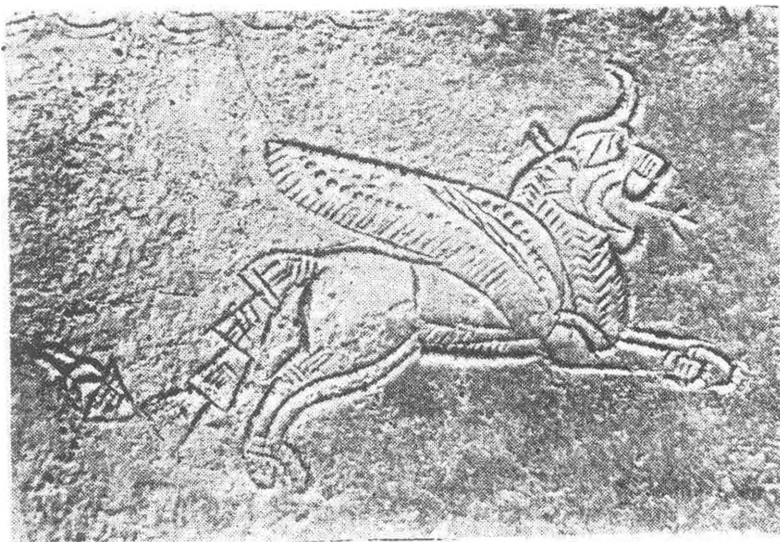
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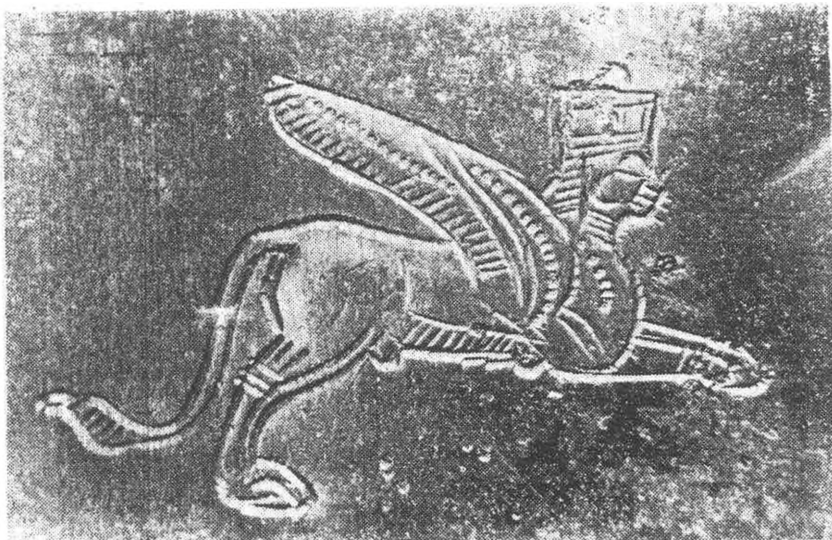
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Resim : 14



Resim : 16



Resim : 15



Resim : 17



Reslm : 19



Reslm : 18