

## THE BRONZE URARTIAN HELMET IN THE GAZIANTEP MUSEUM

Dr. O. AYTUĞ TAŞYÜREK

This helmet was purchased for the Gaziantep Museum in 1973 (Inventory No. 64.3.1973). It does not differ significantly from other Urartian helmets which have been published (Fig. 1) (pl. 1)<sup>1</sup>.

The four most famous examples of Urartian helmets, known as king's helmets, were found in Karmir Blur<sup>2</sup>. In addition to the Karmir Blur helmets, a fifth helmet, which is now in the British Museum, was found in Van<sup>3</sup>. A sixth one was found in Çavuştepe by Professor Dr. Afif Erzen during the 1971 excavation season<sup>4</sup>. These six helmets are the only examples of this type known.

The helmet which is now in the Gaziantep Museum is quite worn and does not bear any inscription. In the center of the front of the helmet a life-tree is inscribed in a cartouche. There are two fe-

male figures on each side of the life-tree facing it<sup>5</sup>. On both the right and left sides of the helmet beside the female figures are four mythological creatures which have the heads of lions and the bodies of snakes<sup>6</sup>. The snake bodies are curved so that the lion heads are facing downward. Also on both sides of the helmet and next to the mythological creatures Urartian warriors and cavalymen are depicted. They are wearing helmets and are pictured as going to battle with their chariots or on horseback. Each chariot is pulled by a pair of ornamented horses. The cavalymen are side by side in pairs. All figures are shown moving toward the center.

The figures, which were worked in a relief technique, are similar to those on the helmets from Karmir Blur<sup>7</sup>. This is particularly true of the helmet of Sarduri II<sup>8</sup>. Therefore, the helmet in the Gaziantep Museum can be dated to the middle of the VIII century BC.

<sup>1</sup> It is with great pleasure that I thank Mr. Hikmet Gürçay, General Director of Antiquities and Museums, who gave me permission to work on this helmet and to publish it, and Mr. H. Candemir, Assistant Director of the Gaziantep Museum, who was largely responsible for bringing the helmet to the museum.

<sup>2</sup> S. Lloyd, *Early Highland Peoples of Anatolia*, (1967), Fig. 122.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid*, Fig. 123.

<sup>4</sup> The helmet found in Çavuştepe has not been published and is still in the laboratory of the Istanbul Archaeological Museums for cleaning.

<sup>5</sup> Barnett-Watson, *Iraq*, XIV (1952) Pl. XXXIII/2.

<sup>6</sup> The Karmir Blur helmets and also the Van and Çavuştepe helmets have these mythological figures on the front.

<sup>7</sup> B. Piotrovsky, *Urartu* (1969) Pl. 93-96.

<sup>8</sup> G. Azarpay, *Urartian Art and Artifacts*, (1968), Pl. 16.