



**THE PORTRAYALS OF HORSES, HORSE-RELATED SCENES AND
MYTHOLOGICAL CREATURES WITH ELEMENTS OF HORSE'S APPEARANCE
IN THE ARTISTIC ICONOGRAPHY OF URARTIAN BELTS**

**ATLARIN PORTRELERİ, URARTU KEMERLERİNİN SANATSAL
İKONOĞRAFİDE ATLARIN GÖRÜNÜŞ UNSURLARIYLA ATLA
İLGİLİ SAHNELER VE MİTOLOJİK YARATIKLAR**

Saak TARONTSI*

Abstract

This particular article titled “The portrayals of horses, horse-related scenes and mythological creatures with elements of horse’s appearance in the artistic iconography of Urartian belts” is next one in series of monographic writings wholesomely devoted to animal personages appearing in the iconography of Urartian belts. Being entirely dedicated to horse as to **the third most important animal in urartian society**, the article continues series of studies aimed to uncover the roots behind the traditional, cultural and worshipping bonds of ancient urartians to their Sacred Animals, somewhat similar to what we recently went through on the most comprehensive investigation of iconographical images of lions and bulls in Urartian belts. Although this article dedicated to horse’s appearances in Urartian belts shares a lot in principle with previous ones,

* Corresponding Author’s Institution – Yerevan State University, Faculty of History, Department of Archaeology and Ethnography, and, Academy of Sciences of the Republic of Armenia, Institute of Archaeology and Ethnography. E-mail – saaktaro@gmail.com, phone – (374) 99-71-91-22 – cell., (374)51-91-22 – home.

nevertheless, there are some principal and profound differences. From the archaeological point of view, we are entirely missing any evidence of material culture connected to lions and bulls, but, on the contrary, as it goes to the subject of horses, we have huge archeological material heritage from urartian past that makes the entire process of this investigative analyses peculiarly distinctive. That is a reason why we decided to deviate from traditional format of two previous animal personages' study and included in the whole article the introductory mini-article part, wholly covering the archaeo-material implications of horse culture in Urartu. We called it – **Part I – Archaeological material evidence of horse culture in Urartu (Pre-Article)** and included in Part I the extraordinary and tangible evidence cases of horse's utilization in urartian society during peaceful construction activities, throughout many wars and numerous military campaigns, providing some unique and most interesting samples of urartians' distinctive horse culture. Urartian sources about horses other than Urartian belts include many factors: actual horse's remains, writing sources about the role of horses, cavalry and war chariots in urartian wars and politics, archaeo-material and artifacts' classification by material type and performing functions, list of horse-handling gear types, iconographical varieties of horse's depiction in urartian artistic representations according to types of artifacts, weaponry types used from horses and chariots, typological implications of war chariots from engineering prospective, and, finally, included some brief summary of functional particularities of horses in ancient Urartian state. **Part II – The Portrayals of horses, horse-related scenes and motives with mythological creatures with elements of horse's appearance in the iconography of Urartian bronze belts (Core Article)** got dedicated to Iconography of Urartian bronze belts - symbolical implications of horse culture, crafty artistic representations of allegorical topics and emblematic presentations of horses in imagery, motives and scenes in iconography of Urartian bronze belts. Depictions of **horse in Urartian belts as a common (non-mythological) animal** are shown, including in that **horses as common animals portrayed separately, horses as draft animals for horse-riders, horse as draft animals for war chariots**, with plentiful varieties of iconographical scenes: **Hunt Scenes with horses—including hunt scenes with horses as draft animals and horse-riders, hunt scenes with horses as draft**

animals for war chariots, as well as **mixed hunt scenes with the avail of both horsemen and war chariots** shown in mixed panoramic view; **Battle Scenes with horses** – including **battle scenes with horses as draft animals and horse-riders**, **battle scenes with horses as draft animals for war chariots**, **mixed battle scenes with the avail of both horsemen and war chariots**. Then the description of **horsemen portrayed with special artistic emphasis, out of ordinary standards and common clichés** that portrays the horse-riders in parading outfit and festive mood concludes the overview of horse as common (non-mythological) animal in Urartian belts. After that follows the defining characterization of **mythological (non-ordinary, composite) horse creatures, comprising from four main types: Winged Horses, Mythological horse creatures with human's body and the head of the horse, Mythological horse creatures with horse's body (partially or whole) and the head of the human, and, Horses as standing platforms for urartian gods and deities**. The article is concluded with **Conclusions** part, where those studies are considered to be *in continuum*, i.e. not overwhelmed with finalization formulations and not finite in derivative conclusion points, yet, the rational core of the studies and analytical covering of above-presented data create some newer types of opportunities to continue those urartological studies with ostensible success and enrich the Urartology with essential elements of more deeper understanding of ancient urartian society's core values and cherished principles of religious, sacral, mental and ideological nature.

Key words: Urartian, bronze, belts, horse, scenes, mythological, creatures, elements, appearance, iconography, artistic, tradition.

Part I (Pre-Article) – Archaeological material evidence of horse culture in Urartu.

The rich cultural heritage of Urartian empire plays a significant part in the overall process of assessing the historical importance of many prominent Anatolian civilizations. The cluster of those remarkable civilizations that ever thrived in Anatolia and each and every one of them left its unique trace throughout times is comparable to a constellation of bright stars, thus making the Anatolian cultural identity unique throughout many thousands of years. The best part of Urartian artifacts preserved till our days consists mainly from various pieces of metalwork, and the most distinguished from them by all means are masterpieces of

Urartian production - Urartian bronze belts. Easily distinguishable from other types of Urartian metalwork, those ancient artifacts are quite unique as a combination of remarkable characteristics: it is the most quantity of preserved pieces known up to date, the astonishing richness of artistic creativeness, the eloquent style of visual representations, the superb metalworking manufacturing techniques that let all numerous images, figures, ornaments, animals, human characters and mythological creatures harmoniously appear in the iconography of Urartian bronze belts. Each and every character craftily depicted on Urartian belts has its own specific place, significance and hierarchical function. All images there can be divided by certain categories, ranging from simple to complicated, from non-animated to living things, from simple lines, geometrical figure to vegetation motives and sacred symbols such as Winged Sun Disk and Sacred Tree or Tree of Life, from wild and domesticated animals to various human characters and mythological beings with human and animal parts.

Since all essential iconographical elements found on the imagery content of all Urartian bronze belts and their fragments can be divided on certain categories, then the category of simple, non-composite animals comprises from itself the special type that hierarchically stands between lower level of various symbolic vegetation motives such as Sacred Tree or Sacred Flower, and higher level of human and mythological beings' (including composite animals and creatures with both animal and human parts) personages. The typological category of **simple, non-composite animals** has the following species found in the iconography of Urartian bronze belts and their partial fragments. **a) lions; b) bulls; c) horses; d) sheep; e) goats; d) deer; e) camel; f) rabbit; g) snake; h) birds; j) fish.** From this very list that is representing the non-composite, ordinary animal species two groups must be separated for outlining the following categories of. **a) main animal characters**, and, **secondary animal characters**. This type of hierarchical division is quite typical for ancient urartians. For example, they worshipped the religious pantheon of gods divided to two groups. **main gods** and **secondary deities**. Those groups, in their turn, can be divided to certain sub-groups.

The animals depicted on Urartian bronze belts have two main groups – **main animals** and **secondary animals**. All other animals belonging to second group are much less frequently appearing on the imagery of belts. The **main** or **primary animal characters** of Urartian bronze belts are – **lions, bulls** and **horses**. The first two animals, **lions** and **bulls** were considered sacred among ancient urartians and their numerous images, motives and scenes were largely present on the iconography of Urartian belts. Although all these three above-mentioned animal characters are belonging to a same division, nevertheless, between them there is one sufficient and profound difference. If lions and bulls could be considered either wild, living as wild beasts in the onset of nature, or domesticated, presumably tamed by humans and kept as domesticated animals, then horses, beyond any doubt, were all domesticated by humans at the time of Urartu civilization. Could there be any domesticated lions in urartian societal environment? The probability of such wild cat specie's domestication was very high, since numerous images of lion were frequently in arrogant and proudful display virtually in all forms of Urartian art. But, since we don't have any direct evidence suggesting so, the presumption of wild lions' domestication in urartian society should be considered as pure speculation, although the domestication of lions possibly could

take place in urartian royal courts or at homes of wealthy and influential members of urartian social elite. Moreover, the likelihood of the remarkable fact that bulls and related to them cows were already domesticated at the times of Urartu is much greater than lions', since there are numerous evidential suggestions that agriculture, and especially cattle-breeding and animal stock raising were comprising a great part of urartian economy. Yet, when paying proper attention to detailed analyses of iconographical traditions and set rules of artistic depictions of the animal images of Urartian bronze belts, lions and bulls are presented exclusively as wild species, predominately in scenes portraying wild symbolism of running, hunt and sheer display of natural force. Indeed, ancient urartians had both cows and bulls in disposal for their agricultural needs, yet no features of cows as separate animals are displayed on belts. R. Çavuşoğlu expressed an opinion that the features of cows as animals are not clearly distinguishable on the images of Urartian bronze belts, therefore, they are conditionally all accepted as bulls¹. Lions and bulls are portrayed not only as real animals from life settings, but, rather, animalistic symbols of special significance, and that is first of all serving as symbols of sacred animals. Therefore, judging from the tendency of urartian metalsmith masters to depict lions and bulls not only as mere animals in randomly selected settings, but, rather, as pure, impeccable and irreplaceable symbols of great power, perhaps serving as figures of spiritual might and heroic force of urartian warriors.

As we can judge from the iconography of Urartian bronze belts, images of horses depicted as separate animals are quite rare. On the contrary, most of the scenery of belts that has images of horses, got depictions of those animals with conjunction of human characters, showing humans dominating horses and using them for their transportation needs. Therefore, wild versions of horses as animals of nature are either rare or virtually non-existent. Most of the images of horses depict those animals with horse riders and cavalry warriors, while other depict them carrying the battle carts with warriors. Even domesticated, horses as animal characters serve the pure purpose to underline and stress the factor of military might or power of urartian hunters, that is exactly the reason why horse characters of Urartian belts are depicted in scenes or hunt or war.

What can we possibly learn from horse depictions of Urartian bronze belts. Well, there are two possible ways to examine the precious evidence of horse cultivation in Urartu: **first, to carefully examine, list and classify all archeological evidence and written historical accounts for the purpose of establishing the general characteristics of horse culture in Urartu;** and, **second, to provide the detailed analyses of horse characters and horse-related imagery, motives and scenes in iconography of Urartian bronze belts.** R. Çavuşoğlu indicated the significance of a well-known fact that Urartians gave a special importance to horses in daily life and at the time of wars. He stated that written accounts and visual sources of urartian origin confirm the vitality of horses for Urartians². Horses were highly valued as precious livestock serving for daily needs of civil society and army. They were often taken in great numbers as a booty during many military campaigns. Before we start to examine the typological classification particularities of horse images on Urartian

¹ Çavuşoğlu, R.

2014 *Urartu Kemerler – Urartian Belts*; Rezan Has Museum, Istanbul, page 34

² Çavuşoğlu, R.

2014 *Urartu Kemerler – Urartian Belts*; Rezan Has Museum, Istanbul, page 36

bronze belts, we must establish, distinguish and delineate the actual facts about horse culture in Urartu. There are many vital factors connected with that particular culture that as an archaeological evidence came to light during urartian studies and supply us a very important information about horse-breeding and horse riding traditions that existed in Urartu. Those very informative factors of scientific data we can conditionally divide into two integral consequential parts that are:

1. Derived from sources other than Urartian bronze belts, and, practical implications of horse culture, evidential facts of horse-breeding, indicative hints of utilization, peculiar suggestions of usage and distinctive characteristics of horse cultivation in Urartu, as well as various representations of horse imagery in Urartian architecture, design and art.

2. Derived directly from iconography of Urartian bronze belts; and, symbolical implications of horse culture in Urartu, craftily made artistic representations of allegorical topics and emblematic presentations of horses in imagery, motives and scenes in iconography of Urartian bronze belts.

1. Urartian sources about horses other than Urartian bronze belts.

Many historical written accounts and actual archaeological evidence of urartian material culture clearly indicate that horse as a domesticated animal was an unalienable part of ancient Urartu. Urartians had special linguistic terms for horse. As it was noted by B. Gökce and K. Işık, the specific word and special symbol of horses were deeply rooted in urartian culture and language. Urartians used the special terminology for horse - **ANSHE.KU.RA**- derived from ancient Sumerian ideogram, as well as used the very special word **-hushai-** inscribed on bullae uncovered in the Ayanis fortress (Rusahinili Eudurukai) as the definitive phonetic spelling of horse in the Urartian language³. **Urartian sources about horses other than Urartian Bronze belts, or general sources about horse breeding and culture** include the following: a) **Written sources** – Urartian and Assyrian; and, b) **Archaeological artifacts** immediately connected with horse breeding and utilization culture; c) **Visual or iconographical sources with images of horses** on Urartian artifacts and various art items (**other than belts**). Let's count the estimated number of factors that provide the archeological evidence for the scientific fact of horse-breeding culture in Urartu and its overall significance for ancient urartians. Then, after summarizing the most essential functional factors of horse breeding and usage culture in Urartu, we will cover the topic of the iconography of Urartian bronze belts as basis for our investigational analyses. First, we have to consider as an evidential basis for our investigation the corpus of written texts, both urartian and non-urartian. As numerous cuneiform documents testify, Assyrian kings recorded in their royal annals the significant number of horses in the territory of Urartu, as well as noted about the availability of developed and well-trained cavalry forces in urartian army. Within that very context particularly interesting is the cuneiform inscription of

³ Gökce, B., Işık, K.

2014 "Horses and Horse-Breeding in Urartian Civilization", *Ancient West and East*, 13:1, 12-14

Assyrian king Tiglath-Pileser I (1114-1076 BC) that states: “Many of the kings of the countries of Nairi fell alive into my hands; to these kings I granted pardon; their lives I spared; their abundance and wealth I poured out before my Lord, the sun-god. In reverence to my great gods, to after-times, to the last day, I condemned them to do homage. The young men, the pride of their royalty, I gave over to the service of the gods; 1,200 horses and 2,000 cattle I imposed on them as tribute, and I allowed them to remain in their own countries”. As we can see from this text, the number of 1200 horses is quite significant for horse-breeding scales of ancient past, as well as the number of 2000 cattle also suggest that both cattle-breeding were developed in Nairi (ancient name of Urartu). From available urartian cuneiform sources we derive the convincing evidence of horse-breeding culture in Urartu. Urartian king Menua proudly noted in his cuneiform inscription near Toprak Kale that in this very place his horse **Arsibi** ((**Artziv** -արծիվ (eagle in Armenian), **Arts’ivi** - არწივი (eagle in Georgian) – both linguistical roots were inherited from Urartian language) on which he sat down, jumped 22 cubits (11.44 meters) lengthwise⁴. Likewise, king Menua tells about big booty of horses while conquered the country of Etiuni. First urartian kings Menua and Argishti started the powerful initiative series of unstoppable campaigns, aiming for conquest of large territories, gaining control over earthly and watery resources, controlling populations of subdued countries and thus, building a vast empire stretching from Caspian Sea towards Asia Minor, as well as reaching the faraway frontiers of Black and Mediterranean Seas basins. The majority of urartian cuneiform inscriptions are dedicated to conquests of countries and building an empire, i.e. building cities, digging water canals, making vineries, orchards, etc. Beyond any doubt, such policies of rapid territorial expansionism and vast empire building met with bitter enmity and tough resistance from the side of another growing empire and major player force of Near East. With powerful armies and significant manpower resources, urartians conquered many countries and entered into direct confrontation with Assyria. That very uncompromised confrontation since the time of Urartu’s rise as empire gradually transformed into non-ceasing, continuous war of permanent nature, where urartians not only have been able to defend effectively their homeland frontiers, but also greatly enlarge the area of their direct dominance, control vital international land and maritime trade routes, thus claiming the title of superpower state of ancient world. As notable examples of empire building initiatives were expeditions of Menua’s conquest of the countries of Alzi situated on upper Tigris river, Hulmeri/Qulimeri, Huzana, Tsupa, and many others. Menua also received a rich tribute from the powerful king of Melitene (Melid-Malatia, urartian – uru Me-li-te-i-a-al-he) country.⁵ Attentively analyzing the important information from Assyrian and Urartian written cuneiform sources, stating the global magnitude and tendencies of international wars and politics of those ancient times, as well as considering the paramount archaeological evidence of horse breeding and cultivating in Urartu, we must conclude that horses were not only constituting the main mean of transportation, but also were much

⁴ Lloyd, S.

1989 *Ancient Turkey – a Traveler’s History*, University of California Press, Berkeley and Los Angeles, California, USA 1989, page 104

⁵Astour, M.

1979 “The Arena of Tiglath-pileser III’s Campaign against Sarduri II (743 B.C.)”, *Assur*, 2:3-2

valued by their functions and were worshipped as the **third important sacred animal**, after lions and bulls. Horses played a major role not only in a life of urartians, but also in that of their direct ancestors. Indeed, the archaeological evidence suggest that Anatolian landscape was one of the primary centers of horse-breeding and utilization. In that connection, especially interesting is the archaeological material related to horse culture that was unearthed in Ararat valley. Ancient Urartians regarded that fertile land with many natural and manpower resources as territory of great strategical importance. The impressive plentitude of pre-Urartian, early-Urartian, mid-Urartian and late-Urartian artifacts is quite essential for our understanding of the special role that horse played in Urartu. For the great benefit of our archeo-historical investigation we are able to underline the types of materials that various types of horse-related artifacts were made of, including items of horses' functional handling and those with the iconography of images, motives and scenes thematically connected with horse and war chariots.

Iron - Photo 1 shows one of the most remarkable artifacts of pre-Urartian or early-Urartian time consisting from a fragment of actual horse's skull, rein and iron bit keepers dating back to XI-IX century BC. Those items were unearthed during archeological excavations of ancient Metsamor fortress and settlement and now are constituting the part of permanent exhibition of Metsamor Historical-Archaeological Museum-Reserve in Taronik, Armenia. Usage of iron is also one of the indicators of the significant degree of metalsmith's development in the regions of people of Hurrian stock, later Urartians. The remarkable historical fact that many old kingdoms, states, countries, cities, confederations and unions had significant number of horses for various civil and military needs easily explains that Urartians troops had excellent chances to replenish their supply of horses each time they conquer new geographical regions and expand frontiers of their vast empire. From many written accounts of Urartian kings glorifying their conquests we have an importation of large horse stocks appropriation as a booty. The very first time that Urartian kings started to take a booty of horses happened during the co-regency of Ishpuini and Menua (820-810 BC), when from the country of Etiu were taken 126 horses, and from the country of Parshua – 1120 horse units. Menua (810-785 BC) slightly increased the number of horses that were taken as a booty –1733 units from Etiu and unknown number from Diauehi. and Argishti I (785-756 BC) appropriated 4426 horses in countries of Uldi, Diauehi, Ashkalashi, Qadai, while totaling 9437 horses from all subdued areas; Sarduri II (756-730 BC) got 3500 horses from countries of Qu'alba, Uhini, Teria, and surpassed the record of his predecessor while totaling 10442 horse units during his conquests⁶. Even Urartians seized some 22858 horses from conquered lands, it is presumable that the core of Urartian army, the cavalry got much more horse units of pure Urartian origin in their disposal, although it is hard to guess about their exact number due to lack of written evidence. Nevertheless, urartians proved themselves being capable of successfully managing vast frontiers of an empire and continuing its

⁶ Salvini, M.

2008 *Corpus dei testi urartei - 1, Le iscrizioni su pietra e roccia (Documenta Asiana 8)*, Istituto di studi sulle civiltà dell'Egeo e del Vicino Oriente, Rome, 2008, A3-A5

enlargement process, as well as the effectively maintaining trade roots for insuring unceasing material and labor supply for civil construction needs and military build-up activities. B. Gökce and K. Işık in their article titled “Horse and Horse-Breeding in Urartian Civilization” clearly indicated many relevant archaeological factors, allowing us to find practical implications of horse culture in Urartu. As one of such important implications, they mention actual **finds of horse remains** in urartian archeological dig sites such as Arin Berd (Erebuni), Karmir Blur (Teishebaini), Armavir Blur (Argishtihinili), Upper Anzaf, Ayanis, Bastam and other sites. Other essentially important **practical implications are archeological artifacts** of Urartian origin that relate to horse breeding and riding. Here are types of horse-related artifacts that were found in numerous urartian archeological sites or were depicted in visual representations of urartian traditional artistic culture: **a) horse trappings – bells, breastplates, collars, harness disks, blinkers, frontlets, shoulder ornaments, poll-crest holders, head- bands; b) horseshoes; c) saddles; d) clothed horse-covers; e) horse carts, war chariots and other types of horse-related transportation vehicles. Symbolical implications of horse culture include iconographical images of horses, horse-alike creatures, horse-related motives and scenes on the objects of Urartian art (other than belts)** on a variety of objects of Urartian production. There is a good possibility of an eventual tendency that there were different horses of various breeds in Urartian society, and the better stocks of horses belonged to more privileged owners such as military commanders, wealthy merchants, temple priests, nobility in court, and, lastly, to Urartian king himself. Some types of horse-related artifacts were skillfully covered by cuneiform inscription of an owner, usually Urartian king, attenuating the exclusive ownership of the particular horse wearing this or that metal accessory. Others horse-related artifacts were richly decorated by various symbols, figures and scenes of Urartian life, religion and mythology. Nevertheless, horse-related artifacts other than bronze belts could be divided on two main kinds – **a) Horse-handling equipment, sometimes artistically decorated and immediately applicable to horses; b) iconographical images of horses, horse-alike creatures, horse-related motives and scenes on the objects of Urartian art (other than belts)**, showing the huge importance that ancient urartians gave to that third most-important animal in their system of symbolical beliefs and daily life.

Mural Painting- Photo 2 shows the mural fragment of a running horse that once adorned the large palace hall at [Erebuni](#) (Arin Berd) Fortress as the great artistic iconographical testament of horse's cultural perception in Urartu. This mural painting dates back to VIII century BC and currently is located in Erebuni Historical and Archaeological Culture Preserve in Yerevan, Armenia. Remarkably, this picture depicts a horse by itself, as an animal in a separate context, without any association with human activities. Many more stunning archeological objects of Urartian civilization display the tradition of utilizations of horse's image as the very popular thematical choice of artistic expression.

Silver - From those we should attenuate the astonishing productions of rare Urartian silversmith in a form of vine-drinking rhytons. **Photo 3** displays urartian silver rhyton with horse's head covered with visible strings of horse-handling tools, while animal is in the state of bowing, reclining on its knees – the pose that is very typical for symbolistic expressions of urartian art. Another notable production of urartian silversmith is the urartian silver rhyton on

Photo 4, that presents rider on the horse, where horse is portrayed with full handling gear, and the rider has a long beard of Mesopotamian type, carries short sword and wears a helmet with depiction of eagle (possibly, reminiscent to above-mentioned **-Arsibi-** (eagle) – name of Menua’s horse, on **Photo 4a**).

Wood, Leather, Bronze, Iron – Horse-Cart or War Chariot - Erebuni museum collection also has an amazing reconstructed life-size urartian chariot with crafty depictions of horsemen and warriors on it – see **Photos 5** and **5a**. This chariot belongs to a type of military vehicle of light type, presumably with two soldiers in a compartment, driven either by two or four horses. It was manufactured by compiling various parts with the usage of **wood, iron, bronze, copper** and **leather**. Since that war horse-cart didn’t carry much weight load with the exception of horse-riders and military equipment (bows and arrows, lances and other weaponry), we can assume that these types of horse-vehicles were very maneuverable and capable of driving fast and reaching high speeds, thus, representing from itself fast, speedy and formidable transporting weapon against any foe, particularly against mighty Assyrian armies. Since we don’t have many preserved examples of urartian chariots, we can guess about their design types from depictions on the pieces of urartian art, mostly metalwork. Yet, one piece of marvelous bronze-work once comprising part of urartian horse-cart or military chariot is a lucky exception from the multitude of urartian artifacts irrevocably lost in turmoil of historical times. Also, quite rare bas-relief made of stone with the depiction of war chariot and a horse (without horsemen) was illustrated the book of A. Çilingiroğlu “Urartu krallığı tarihi ve sanatı – History and Art of Urartian Kingdom”, shown with long ropes as part of horse-handling and chariot-controlling equipment, as well as with strangely looking object of half-triangular shape with rounded angle in the middle, perhaps a shield used as a spare military equipment of the chariot⁷. From the prospective of ancient historical realities, the availability of war chariot formations as spearhead of cavalry forces in the battlefield that could decide the fate of battle, and, perhaps a war campaign is comparable to the same estimation of modern battle tanks. G. Azarpay in his book “Urartian Art and Artifacts” brought forward a citation from one of the longest inscription of urartian king Rusa I found in the place called Topzaua⁸, where urartian king proclaims some interesting facts about the crucial role of war chariots in the course of historical events : “Rusa, son of Sarduri (says) the following: Urzana, king of Ardini (Musasir) came before me, **I took upon myself the trouble of (providing) subsistence for all his army**...As a result of this blessing, **to the gods of the high road**, a dwelling I built for the (god) Haldi, for the prosperity of Rusa. I installed Urzana as a ruler of the region. I made him reside in the city if Ardini (Musasir). In the same year, I, Rusa son of Sarduri, returned to the city of Ardini (Musasir). Urzana, on the high throne of his ancestors, the kings, mounted me...Urzana before the gods of the house of the gods in my presence made the libations. At this time, for the god Haldi, the lord, I erected within the gates, a temple, an abode of his divinity. Urzana

⁷ Çilingiroğlu, A.

1997 *Urartu Krallığı Tarihi ve Sanatı – History and Art of Urartian Kingdom*, Yaşar Eğitim ve Kültür Vakfı, İzmir, page 125

⁸ Azarpay, G.

1968 *Urartian Art and Artifacts – a Chronological Study*, University of California Press, Berkeley and Los Angeles, page 35

provided me with **auxiliary troops, war chariots, whatever was available to him. I took with me the auxiliary troops, and with the command of the god Haldi, I, Rusa, went off to the mountains of Assyria. I made there a slaughter...**I, Rusa, servant of the god Haldi, **faithful pastor of the nation, (who) with the help of Haldi and the force of the troops, do not fear opposition.** God Haldi has given me power, authority and joy in the course of all my life. **I ruled the country of Biaini (Urartu) (and) have subjugated hostile countries.** The gods have given me long days of joy, (and) besides the days of joy...after that ...**piece was established**". This very cuneiform inscription of Rusa I should be considered as one of the most important documents of ancient times, at least no less significant than the famous inscription of his direct adversary – Sargon II of Assyria, since **the motto war and peace** defines its estimated significance. Rusa says about quite dramatic chain of events which he defines as a victory in war and peace, and the following important points closely interconnected with the developmental direction of historical affairs, and, within that same context, the overall role and significance of war chariots as a strategically prominent weaponry type should be clearly identified and underlined: a) gods of high road had everything to do with troops - people and horses, infantryman, cavalryman, and, especially – war chariots; b) Urzana was set on the throne by Rusa I and joined forces with him against Assyrian dominance; c) Rusa provided subsistence for Urzana's army. The forms of that subsistence could have been varying – perhaps, payment with gold or silver, provision of military equipment, training of troops, logistical and informational support, etc.; d) Urzana and Rusa built the temple of Haldi and strengthen their union on the base of religion and ideology; e) Urzana formed auxiliary troops, the core of which consisted with war chariots. It is possible to reflect upon the matter of military strategy and tactics of joint urartian-mannean forces in the usage of auxiliary forces, possibly war chariots were accompanied by cavalry and infantryman, but, with what proportion, we don't know; f) with the help of auxiliary troops and war chariots Rusa launched an expedition against main foe – Assyria. Rusa I claims that invaded Assyria, made a slaughter and, therefore, achieved military success and victory with the main god Haldi and the force of the troops (equalization goes in a form of well-connected axis - Haldi → auxiliary troops → war chariots); g) Rusa I affirms his strong control over Biaini-Urartu; h) Rusa I asserts the he subjugated hostile countries and, therefore, strongly established the dominance of his growing empire in the region; i) Rusa I confirms that his might based on military power (Haldi → auxiliary troops → war chariots) allows him to maintain peace, and, therefore, he, as a pastor of the nation, with the aid of Haldi and the help of the troops (including war chariots), do not fear opposition; j) Established peace means prosperity, wealth and happiness for his people and allied nations under his control and dominance. After all, the merits of the war chariot in the battlefield, as well as their strategical importance as a core of cavalry and whole army were tremendous.

Stone – Bas-Relief with carved war chariot – **Photo 6** shows the remarkable example of stone bas-relief depicting urartian war chariot driven by charging horse, without the presence of human character. This illustration was provided by A. Çilingiroğlu in his book titled "Urartu krallığı tarihi ve sanatı (History and Art of Urartu Kingdom)" The sophisticated horse-handling gear is on display along with two astounding pieces of ceremonial cockade and strange half-rectangular, half triangular object reminiscent of chariot

shield, or, perhaps, some other type of military equipment. Although the horse's figure indicates the presence of animal, its head seem to be split in two, making an impression about the presence of two horses attached to the chariot. From the engineering prospective and manufacturing point of view this war chariot got outstanding construction that was significantly differing from its Assyrian counterparts and was made due to great ingenuity of ancient urartian masters⁹.

Stone – steatite – in **Photo 7** Rare and outstanding example of urartian **decoration box** made of steatite stone. The figure of bowman and horse-rider are clearly seen, with image of the bull and carving of the lion on the lid. One of few urartian stone-made objects with image of horse on it.

Urartian War Chariots from engineering perspective and manufacturing point of view – on **Photo 8** we can observe an illustration page consisting from drawings of 6 different types of urartian war chariots from the depictions found in various objects made from different materials, mostly metalwork. This incredible illustration was compiled by P. Calmeyer and described in his article “Zu Einem Ziselierten Bronzehelm Des 8. Jahrhunderts (To a Chased Bronze Helmet of the 8th Century BC)”. War chariots are shown with horses in full parading outfit, with different types of horse-handling gear, without soldiers. War chariots construction shows light, fast and maneuverable vehicles with outstanding military capabilities. Notable features include flag poles for identification of urartian troops, and, possibly, markings of military units in formation¹⁰. We can get admonished that ancient urartians were capable of manufacturing various types of war chariots, and their own production of military vehicles provided various modifications, designs, protection, armament and capacities for speed, maneuverability and performance of military tasks. S. Esayan mentioned that urartians had in their disposal two main types of horse-driven carts – two-wheel carts and four-wheel carts. Two-wheel carts were used as war chariots and four-wheel carts were wagons were utilized for moving weights, equipment, natural materials, goods and products. Urartian war chariot had an original design with light cabin and somewhat shortened drawbar, which added to maneuverability and passing ability in harsh terrains and hard territories, as well as significantly contributed to better movement in the mountains. The outfit with four-wheeled wagons had a design with a round axis, sitting in the nest and the end of the frame. These vehicles were mainly used to transport heavy and bulky goods¹¹. Yet, according to archaeological sources preserved till our days we have images of only four-wheeled chariots that were exclusively were used in continuous wars. The motives of skipping of depiction of four-wheeled vehicles that were used in peaceful

⁹ Çilingiroğlu, A.

1997 *Urartu Krallığı Tarihi ve Sanatı – History and Art of Urartian Kingdom*, Yaşar Eğitim ve Kültür Vakfı, İzmir, page 125

¹⁰ Calmeyer, P.

1986 “Zu Einem Ziselierten Bronzehelm Des 8. Jahrhunderts - To a Chased Bronze Helmet of the 8th Century BC”, *Archaeologische Mitteilungen aus Iran*, 19:83-picture 3

¹¹ Yesayan, S. - Есаян, С.

1960 “From the History of Wheel Transport of Ancient Armenia – Из истории колесного транспорта древней Армении”, *Historico-Philological Journal – Պատմա-բնական և արվեստագիտական հանդես*, Yerevan – Երևան, 3:150

social life are quite unknown. Maybe, keeping the war-like mood that used to create the heroic spirit of urartian identity in the state of unceasing permanence was one of the primary goals of urartian state, and that phenomenon had to do just everything with official urartian imperial ideology.

Ivory – **Photo 9** demonstrates very interesting ivory plaque fragment with example of urartian horse-rider throwing a projectile weapon, maybe, a javelin towards enemy soldiers, while horse is shown in galloping jump. A part of collection of Metropolitan museum of Art in New York, USA, this artifact is a perfect illustration of a horseman in war with his remarkable cavalry tactics, possibly supporting a war chariot by throwing weapons to troops formations of foes.

Bone – **Photo 10** displays a bone plaque from Ziwiye depicting two horsemen with bows shooting arrows along with their symbolistic talisman bird – eagle, urartian **-Arsibi- (eagle)**. The subject of associating horses with name or image of eagle (royal bird) is a matter of separate study and it has a great importance for thorough understanding of symbolical values of urartian believes. V. Kovalevskaya in her book titled “Horse and the Rider – Ways and Destinies”, in Chapter VI – “Horsemen of Assyria and Urartu” describes the details of this particular bone plaque. She brought to reader’s attention the fact that in front of a horse-rider we see also an infantryman who holds the horses by the bridle, allowing a horseman to aim and shoot the arrows in precise way. The right bearded rider (right-wing driver) with his right hand holds the reins of the archer's horse high, and his left hand with a lash - at his croup, making sure that the archer's horse does not bring the croup to the left¹². Indeed, this scene from Ziwiye bone plaque is a very rare example of close cooperation of various types of urartian army units – infantry and cavalry, coordinating battle efforts and providing mutual support. Autor also mentioned the specific fragment from famous inscription of Assyrian king Sargon II about the urartian treasures looted from the temple of supreme urartian god **Haldi** and his wife **Bagbartu (Bagmashtu)** that was situated in the city of **Musasir (Ardini)**:”33 silver chariots ... 7 reins and dykes, covered with golden stars, together with a silver scourge with golden **kiblu** and rim. One image of Ursa (Rusa) with his two riding horses and a charioteer, with their seats - cast copper, - on which one can read his own boast: “With my two horses and one chariot, my hand possessed the royal power of Urartu¹³.” Therefore, while bringing to detailed analyses this impressive list of horse-related artifacts, we add new materials of horse-related manufactured items to the list already presented above – **gold** and cast **copper**. And, finally, summarizing the list of materials from which the ancient urartians made objects of horse-handling and riding equipment or artistic pieces with images of horses, horse-related scenes and motives, we must present one more type of craft material where images of horse and horseman are present – **stone**. In **Photo** we see very rare stone box made of steatite where the figure of bowman and horse-rider are clearly seen, with image of the bull and carving of the lion on

¹² Kovalevskaya, V. - Ковалевская, В.

1977 *Horse and the Rider – Ways and Destinies – Конь и Всадник – Пути и Судьбы*, "Наука" Publishing House, Home edition of Eastern literature, Moscow, page 86 – Издательство “Наука”, Главная Редакция Восточной Литературы, Москва, стр. 86

¹³ Same as above, page 87

the lid. It is one of few urartian stone-made objects with image of horse on it. We should add to the list of manufacturing substances types of **clothing**, perhaps **silk**, **cotton** or **linen** that were used for making flags for the war chariot poles and for sheathing, covering and casing of war chariot seats and other parts requiring decoration for great display or parading activities.

While we listed the large variety of natural substances used as materials for producing the large varieties of horse-handling and riding equipment, horse-carts or war chariots, as well as different types of items with iconographical traits of horse, horse-related scenes and motives, such as – **mural paint, iron, silver, gold, copper, wood, leather, ivory, bone, stone and bronze**, we must admit that the vast majority of urartian made objects directly connected to vital horse riding functions or iconographical representations are made exclusively from one particular material – **bronze**. Yet, after all, although numerous artifacts of urartian production with depictions of horses or on them were done from the substances listed above, and possibly from other materials, still, we must emphasize the important archaeo-statistical fact that the vast majority of horse and horse-related representations in urartian art were expressed through metalwork items, mostly **made of bronze**.

Bronze – Sculpture - **Photo 11** illustrates remarkable bronze sculpture of horse's head found in Erebuni (Arin Berd) fortress, that served as an ornamental shaft of real Urartian military chariot. This once was a part of a wholesome bronze horse sculpture that nicely adorned urartian military chariot. War chariots played the decisive role in defenses, victories, advances and successes of urartian army due to easy control, light weight, maneuverability, ability to pass through difficult landscapes, high speed and relatively small size, which made those horse-driven vehicles quite hard to hit. From numerous images of urartian chariots we can see that they had very good armor protection and wide range of weaponry types - bows and arrows, lances, spears, darts, javelins, and possibly some throwing stones and other projectiles. Without horses, horse-riders and war chariots, all together comprising the mighty cavalry – the most mobile and maneuverable part of urartian army, urartian conquests of vast territories would deem impossible. B. Piotrovsky in his informative article titled “Urartian chariot” brings to readers’ attention the historical texts of urartian kings Menua and Argishti, stating that “they sent troops north for the conquest of new territories 66 war chariots, many thousands of horse-riders and 15760 soldiers”. There is also another cuneiform inscription describes the campaign of urartian troops to lands located south of lake Urmia, where 106 war chariots, 9174 horse-riders and 2704 troopers¹⁴. B. Piotrovski in his words marks out a detailed draw of an urartian chariot according to which it has a heavy body, the wheel axle is placed at the very back, the wheel is massive, in most cases with eight spokes (in some figures like six spokes). The curved drawbar is closed by the figures of horses, a belt is often marked, connecting the curved part of the drawbar with the body.

¹⁴ Piotrovsky, B.

1962 “Urartian Chariot”, *Drevniy Mir, compilation of Articles in honor of academician W.W. Struve, Moscow*, page 1 – “Урартская Колесница”, *Древний Мир, Сборник Статей в честь академика В.В. Струве, Москва*, стр. 1

Bronze – Quivers - **Photos 12 and 13** display craftily made image details of quivers belonging to urartian kings Argishti I (786-764 BC) and his son Sarduri II (764-735 BC), exquisitely displaying elegantly moving horse carts proceeding after horsemen in parading march.

Bronze – Projectile Weapons for cavalry, used from charging horses or moving war chariots – in **Photo 14 (a, b, c, d)** we can see remarkably rare examples of **sharpened tips and striking points of urartian projectile weapons** that use to strike by throw from the distance, **spearheads of darts, pikes and lances**, possibly used from horses or war chariots.

Photo 15 provides a view of outstanding example of rare urartian **spearhead** type, that used to strike enemy troops from the distance. This sample displays notable aerodynamic characteristics with capability to fly long distance and strike enemies far away. It was used by either single horseman or by a crew of war chariot.

Photo 16 (a, b) shows craftily made sharpened **arrow tips** that urartians used to shoot from **bows** during the defensive or offensive military operations, those could be used either by single horseman or by a crew of war chariot as well.

Bronze and bronze alloys – Horse or War Chariot Decoration Items – in **Photo 17** we can perceive very unusual type of horse-handling equipment made from a fine bronze or bronze alloy, possibly part of either single horseman's equipment or **an adornment or war chariot**.

Other bronze items as parts of horse-handling gear – are items functionally made for controlling a horse, protecting it with armor, decorating it during parades and festive marches, such as **horseshoes, saddles, bells, breastplates, collars, bits, harnesses, harness frontlets, harness disks, blinkers, frontlets, trappings, poll-crest holders, headbands, horse armor, war chariot shields and armament parts**¹⁵.

Other bronze items with the display of horse thematic on its iconographical imagery – are quite numerous by types, including metalsmith works with artistic display of iconographical imagery of horses, horsemen and war chariots in large variety of items, such as **metal plaques, parts of horse armory, helmets**, etc.

Summarizing the first part of this article dedicated to practical implications of horse culture in Urartu, we can conclude the following paramount points of great archaeo-historical importance: **a. Horse breeding and cultivating were playing a key role for the formation, survival and expansion of Urartian state; b. There were plenty of horses on the territory of Urartu proper; c. Horse-breeding and cultivation were quite developed before the rise of Urartu in geographical regions of various kingdoms, states, countries, cities, confederations and unions, according to written testaments of Urartian kings; d.**

¹⁵ Gökce, B., Işık, K.

2014 "Horses and Horse-Breeding in Urartian Civilization", *Ancient West and East*, 13:1, 12-14

Horses were the main source of transportation in Urartu, reliably providing the essential movement of manpower of various cargo and military equipment across the frontiers of vast empire; e. Horse breeding development eventually led to skillful manufacturing of various types of horse handling equipment types, made from various types of material – bronze, iron, copper, silver, gold, wood, leather, wool, silk and others, including bridles and parts (reins, bits, crownpieces, cheekpieces, etc.), harnesses, saddles, etc.; f. Horses were valued as domesticated animals, symbolized power of urartian cavalry consisting from horseman, supporting horse carts, war chariots and auxiliary troops; g. Horses were considered as one of the main subject of urartian artistic iconography and their images, scenes and motives were often appeared in urartian artifacts; h. Horses, along with lions and bulls were regarded as the third most important animal in the urartian system of iconographical values and the hierarchical gradations of worship and believes.

Part II (Core Article) – The Portrayals of horses, horse-related scenes and motives with mythological creatures with elements of horse’s appearance in the iconography of Urartian bronze belts.

Iconography of Urartian bronze belts - symbolical implications of horse culture, crafty artistic representations of allegorical topics and emblematic presentations of horses in imagery, motives and scenes in iconography of Urartian bronze belts.

Before we start to provide detailed breakdown of typological types and grades of horse images on Urartian bronze belts, we should continue to reflect upon the really high multitude of useful applications that horse as a domesticated animal of great significance could perform in urartian social life. R. Çavuşoğlu describes the overall role of horses on urartian bronze belts in being draft animals and helping people in all necessary occasions. From the useful applications of horse for ancient urartians he mentions three important functions that horse served – hunting, battle and parade. Here he provides his classifying view of horse positions on belts – rarely standing, mostly walking and galloping, while providing drafted illustration of horse on Urartian bronze belts – **standing horse, galloping horse, horse with horse-rider** and **horses with war chariots**¹⁶. Indeed, the role of horse as draft domesticated animal in urartian society was impossible to underestimate. Upon reflecting about the above-mentioned list of applicable functions of horses in Urartu, we want to add to that couple of more functionalities – horses were serving as primary transporting carriers of mail delivery, messaging, interstate communication, military logistical control and sending and receiving royal governmental orders across Urartian

¹⁶ Yiğitpaşa, D.

2002 *Van/Altuntepe Nekropolü Sunu Kapları*, Yüzüncü Yıl Üniversitesi, Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü, Yayınlanmamış Yüksek Lisans Tezi, page 10;

Çavuşoğlu, R.

2014 *Urartu Kemerler – Urartian Belts*; Rezan Has Museum, İstanbul, page 173;

Yiğitpaşa, D.-Can, S.

2017 “Kahramanmaraş Arkeoloji Müzesi’nden Bir Grup Urartu Eseri”, *Mustafa Kemal Üniversitesi, Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü Dergisi*, 14:37, page 250

empire. These types of communicative activities could have been done in two possible modes: **1. by sending the mail, message, orders or decrees from point A to point B by making the horse or horse-driven cart to covert that distance in certain amount of time, and, 2. by sending signals from one military outpost to other by ways of signaling, either by flashing lights seen from far away or by sounds of bells heard from few kilometers away.** H. Avetisyan and A. Bobokhyan in their book titled “Archaeology of Urartu – Fortresses-Settlements and Burial Complexes” defined the rising Urartian state in IX century BC as civilization, the population of which undertook the huge and quite complicated task of building new cities, settlements, fortresses, orchards, gardens, crop fields, water-canals, wells, roads, military outposts, royal and other burials, rock-cut niches and many other objects of strategical importance. Sometimes Urartians had to build everything from scratch and anew, but, in most cases, they rearrange the structures of conquered people and converted them into urartian urban objects¹⁷. The immenseness of such huge task of empire building should be comprehended according to contemporary terms of ancient world, as well as many models of horse’s functional role in building the Urartian empire should be examined.

Nevertheless, when almost all practical implications of horse’s functional role in urartian society were meticulously examined, it is the time for coming back to the immediate task and thematic goal of this article – it is to investigated the images of horse in the overall context of Urartian bronze belts. It must be noted that the very nature of Urartian bronze belts made those unique artifacts quite favorable and advantageous for the thorough studies of Urartian systems of mythological personages, hierarchy of signs, symbols, plants, animals, humans, gods, fantastic creatures of with composite elements of both human and animalistic origin. With other words –

Urartian bronze belt or its surviving fragment represents from itself a well-arranged system of units, each precisely reflecting upon traditional philosophical views, religious concepts, ritual habits and sacral values closely connected with temple lives and theocratical nature of Urartian state. As a system, Urartian bronze belts are easy to break down into essential componential elements, as well as to elucidate about the exact contextual nature of the iconographical images, motives and scenes presented on those artifacts. Unlike other artifacts of Urartian produce, whether made from metal or any other substance, Urartian bronze belts are less casual and incidental in their thematic expressiveness and much more systematically arranged in their compositional kinds, with other words they are easy to arrange, relate and classify within the artifacts of own type. **Photo 1 (a, b, c, d)** shows different kinds of horse’s images from the iconography of Urartian belts that are really possible to identify and classify by type, including: **a. Walking horse; b. Galloping horse; c. Horse with horse-rider; d. Horses driving war chariot with soldiers with bows shooting arrows.** R. Çavuşoğlu made these wonderful drawing samples in his book “Urartu Kemerler – Urartian Belts” that comprehensively show all necessary details from the images of Urartian belts¹⁸.

¹⁷ Avetisyan, H., Bobokhyan, A.

2010 *Archaeology of Urartu – Fortresses-Settlements and Burial Complexes*, Bavigh, Yerevan, page 205

¹⁸ Çavuşoğlu, R.

2014 *Urartu Kemerler – Urartian Belts*, Rezan Has Museum, İstanbul, page 173, plate XXI, pictures 4, 5, 6,

The typological implications of a **horse as a common (non-mythological) animal** are not quite the same as with other main animal characters frequently appearing in the iconographical scenes of belts – lions and bulls, whose animal characters are always depicted on separately presentable contextual cases, independent manner, on they own, without any visible attachment to humans. On the contrary, horses as common domesticated animals are mostly presented serving people. This type of close conjunction with human activities makes the task of classifying horses as common animals little bit different than that of lions and bulls. On most occasions, horses as common animals are constituting an unalienable part of human activities and are contextually interconnected with human characters, motives and scenes with human's appearance. Yet, there are some pieces of Urartian bronze belts where sometimes, on rare occasions, horses are depicted separately, independently and on their own.

Horses as common animals portrayed separately – are quite rare, exceptional and difficult to sort out from the scenes with horses. On **Photo** we see the fragment of Urartian belt with war chariot driven by a horse and a bull figure on lower register, with the rarest depiction of single horse (rare for Urartian bronze belts) and galloping horseman along with image on upper register. Another Photo shows a remarkable belt fragment divided into three registers: on the first upper register we see horse riders with military equipment, on the third lower register we can notice the horse figure with fragment of horse chariot, and, on the second middle register we observe the remarkably rare scene of two independently walking horses. The third belt fragment is a partially preserved register with three images going from left to right independently walking horse, riding horseman and Sacred Tree. Although in those above-mentioned belt examples with horse scenes we hardly managed to locate some samples of independently walking horse, they never appear without accompanying personages of either riding horseman or military chariot. Another words, separate horse figures never were actually “independent, but, always followed the iconographical rule of ancient urartian masters – they always were complemented by images of horses with horse-riders or war chariots. Thus, this very rule alienated the horse image from images of lions and bulls in the senses that they always were pictures as draft animals which is impossible to imagine without human presence. The iconographical formula of separate horse characters on the iconography of belts is the following – **Separate Horse + Human Serving Horse Character = Horse Scene**, where **Human Serving Horse Characters can be depicted without Separate Horse figures**, but, **Separate Horse characters can't be depicted without Human Serving Horse Characters**. **Photo 2** depicts a fragment of Urartian bronze belt with war chariot driven by a horse and a bull figure on lower register, with the rarest depiction of single horse (rare for Urartian bronze belts) and galloping horseman along with image on upper register. On **Photo 3** we can see a remarkable belt fragment divided into three registers: on the first upper register we see horse riders with military equipment, on the third lower register we can notice the horse figure with fragment of horse chariot, and, on the second middle register we observe the remarkably rare scene of two independently walking horses. This fragment is one of extraordinary pieces once belonging to The John J. Slocum

Collection. And, **Photo 4** displays the most unique fragment of Urartian bronze belt with exceptional images of horses portrayed independently, without being harnessed to horsemen or war chariot. This belt fragment is a part of exhibition of Metsamor Historical-Archaeological Museum-Reserve in Taronik, Armenia, and it is considered to be one of its kind. In **Photo 4a** we see the detailed draft image of the same belt fragment that S. Esayan provided the detailed drawing of the above-presented belt with images of independent horse figures, standing separately on their own¹⁹.

Horses as draft animals of horse-riders – it is an imperative to make a special note about the fact that **ancient urartians never portrayed horses in peaceful terms, i.e. in context of civil life or peaceful daily activities**. While before we were talking about the profound differences existed between the personages of horses, from one side, and lions and bulls, from the other, concerning their status of separate or independent representation, this time we should emphasize some very important common affinities that exists between them. Horses share with lions and bulls the symbolically expressed the supreme idea of power, i.e. power to be a part of weapons use. Power here is not just an idea to be generally promoted or merely provided cliché, it is the inmost character of urartian artistic expressionism. The entire life of ancient urartians depended on the process of successfully defending of their homeland, as well as the primarily regarded ability to wage series of unceasing war campaigns with getting more territories, defending their borders and defeating their foes. Therefore, the image of horse in the iconography of Urartian belts is equalized with the concept of horse being integral parts of war machine. Possibly, the conceptual predominance of war doctrine in urartian social life explains that scenes of hunt are quite rare in the iconographical thematic of bronze belts

Hunt scenes with horses –

Hunt scenes with horses as draft animals and horse-riders – Belts with hunt scenes are not too many. Few remaining fragments still have remarkable parallels with war scenes, expressing motion and severity of battle scenes. The only exception is that wounded animals, mostly lions and bulls are also shown, sometimes stricken with arrows that are visible from their spine parts.

In **Photo 6** there is an outstanding fragment of Urartian bronze belt with rare scenic depiction of hunt on lions. Participants are infantry warriors or hunters on foot, and cavalrymen or horsemen hunters, while no image of war chariot is seen. This piece got uncommon feature of horsemen hunters depiction in formation of parallel pares that artistically create an impression of close cavalry formation. There are two lions on the scene: one is with missing head due to damage to the belt, shown in reclining position under hoofs of cavalryman, while the other lion is in despair, roaring and turning head towards galloping horsemen hunters.

¹⁹ Esayan, S.

1984 “Gürtelbleche der älteren Eisenzeit in Armenien”, *Beiträge zur Allgemeinen und Vergleichenden Archäologie* 6:192-pict. 84a, b

This remarkable fragment was described and illustrated by H. Born and U. Seidl in their book “Shutzwaffen aus Assyria and Urartu”²⁰.

Hunt scenes with horses as draft animals for war chariots –Hunting horsemen are depicted very often in Urartian belts. The overall sense of dynamism reflected in the iconography of Urartian belts perfectly suits for all image types – running prey, usually lions and bulls, and, horsemen in fast galloping horses that pursue them. Sometimes prey is shown falling under the hoofs of pursuing horse, or wounded with arrows in the back, with irregularly changing body positions and head turned towards the hunting side.

Mixed hunt scenes with the avail of both horsemen and war chariots – War chariots are inalienable parts of hunt scenes of Urartian belts, providing more scale, dramatism and grandeur to viewing of hunt in development. Swiftly moving vehicles are shown in full motion, pursuing the pray, usually lions, or, sometimes lions and bulls together. Warriors in chariot usually are two, sometimes facing in one direction, and, sometimes their figures outlined being in opposite directions. On **Photo 5** we can nicely observe an exceptional fragment of Urartian bronze belt with profound depiction of hunt scenes with images of infantry warriors or hunters on foot, cavalrymen or horsemen hunters, and war chariot. Hunting parties shown holding bows and shooting arrows towards charging lions – one of them is wounded and running away, while the other is fallen under hoofs of chariot horse and roars in despair with its head turned back. This entire scene is full of dramatic images artistically mixed in space perspective was described by W. Röllig in his article titled “Ein urartäisches Gürtelblech mit Darstellung einer Löwenjagd – An Urartian Belt Plate Depicting a Lion Hunt”²¹.

Battle scenes with horses –

Battle scenes with horses as draft animals and horse-riders – Horsemen or cavalryman are depicted very often in images of Urartian belts, sometimes with the company of war chariots, and, sometimes without them. Usually, battle scenes are hard to distinguish as such since the dominating idea of **dynamism or development in motion** is prevalent in the iconography of belts, and horsemen are depicted as standardized clichés, without excessive individualization nor attenuation over horsemen’ details. Horse riders are portrayed with great variety of types, and their images could be more incidental than other images elements of bronze belts, although their depictions usually don’t follow strict rules – both horseman and horse portraits are more casual in style and free in expression than other elements of picturing that must follow strict rules of style. Battle scenes with horses as draft animals and horse-riders differ depending on the place of origin, iconographical concept and

²⁰ Born, H.; Seidl, U.;

1995 *Shutzwaffen aus Assyria and Urartu*, Band IV Sammlung Axel Guttman, Verlag Sammlung Guttman bei Verlag Philipp von Zabern, Mainz, Erscheinungsdatum, page 82, picture 71

²¹ Röllig, W.

1997 “Ein urartäisches Gürtelblech mit Darstellung einer Löwenjagd - An Urartian Belt Plate Depicting a Lion Hunt”, *Orientalia* 66:221-ph. II

contextual role, sometimes offering unique solutions not found elsewhere. The perfect example of that is **Photo 7** showing a unique piece of Urartian bronze belt with the exceptionally rare depiction of a battle scene. The battle retrospective is displayed with fine artistical taste with elements of **brutality, symbolism and mythologism blended together in organic dynamism**. Brutality is reflected in the figure of decapitated body with the head thrown nearby, symbolism is in image of Sacred Eagle (-Arsibi-) with its mighty spirit supporting the battle process, and, mythologism is in Sun Disks and figures of Winged Bulls (one of them is with lion paw, while two have lion's tail) as objects of sacred mythological realm. This belt fragment is exceptional also by geographical point of origin. R. Dan said it was found in Nakhichevan region²², an area historically close and adjacent to Ararat valley, where many strongholds of urartians were situated as prime defensive fortifications, settlements, economical and agricultural centers supplying all requirements of constantly growing empire.

Battle scenes with horses as draft animals for war chariots – Scenes with hunt, battle or just chase depicted as full of energy drive mood of ancient urartians, reaching **the maximum limits of dynamism and the greatest extent of symbolism**. Yet, the iconographical compositions of some belts scenes containing the multitude of running Sacred Animals, compilations of Sacred Symbols and other decoration motives sometimes is hard to determine whether it implies to as a hunt scene or war scene, since only the availability of horsemen or/and war chariot decides in favor of calling the particular scene which could be either the scene of hunt or war. If the figure of a horseman is a determinative for positively identifiable action, the avail of war chariot makes the whole process of dynamism more conceptualized in terms of definitely perceivable formula. Speaking other words, scenes with war chariots are in a deeper state of dynamism and they are always act as the main focus of a battle scene. War chariot always come up as a phenomenon having inner strength of military vehicle, horses driving it and cavalymen riding it, thus taking on itself of a leading mechanism to assume greater concentration of military force, giving a huge impetus to dynamic developments and by itself symbolizing an utmost attribute of urartian army.

War chariots are synonymous for leading force of battle formation, symbols of extreme military might and superbly dynamic force of urartian army. Besides, urartian war chariots were great part of military parades, adorned with various ornamental decorations and symbolic signs and being used for triumphant display, making an impressive show for the sake of great power of urartian king and glory of urartian gods, along with cavalry horse-riders and infantry troops during parading marches.

Mixed battle scenes with the avail of both horsemen and war chariots – War chariots were not always in action by themselves. In most cases, they were shown in conjunction with cavalry as parts of the whole scene of Urartian belts. The iconographical

²² Dan, R.

2014 "Inside the Empire – Some Remarks on the Urartian and Achaemenid Presence in the Autonomous Republic of Nakhchivan", *ISMEO - Associazione Internazionale di Studi sul Mediterraneo e l'Oriente; Iran and the Caucasus* 18:332-Ph. 4

solutions with elements of war chariots and horse-riders are numerous, with the usage of plenty of combinations and portraying clichés. Sometimes, along with those two core elements – war chariots and cavalymen, the third elements is added – the infantry. The division between those elements with dominating emphasis on war chariots could be **graphical** or **symbolical**, either divided by registers or just by space of Urartian bronze belt's covering. The entire battle retrospective with images of war chariots and horsemen is displayed with considerable artistic blending, combined with elements of **brutality, symbolism and mythologism mixed together in dominating motion**. In **Photo 8 (a, b, c, d)** – we see the remarkable drawings from the actual imagery of fragments from one unique Urartian belt, described by R. Çavuşoğlu in article “A Unique Urartian Belt in the Van Museum”²³.

Partially remaining fragments reveal dramatic depictions of battle scenes with participation of war chariots and horsemen of cavalry. From the enemy side there is a loose horse along with bodies of adversary either wounded by arrow or falling down from the horse, while the other body shown with merciless brutality – decapitated and thrown under hoofs of urartian horse. Yet, despite some excessive views of unprecedented savagery, the renderings of war chariots are splendid and promote the spirit of dynamic force, combat readiness and ability to contribute to the winning factor in battle. Mixed battle scenes with cavalry and war chariots are serving a purpose to emphasize the brutality of urartian army might, symbolism of winning spirit of urartians and mythologism standing behind the foundation of urartians' ability to defend their homeland domain and dominate in territories being under their immediate control or great influence.

Horsemen portrayed with artistic emphasis, out of ordinary standards and common clichés – Unlike the above-described scenes where the scenery thematic dominated over the composition presented, with the usage of standard clichés and mostly non-describable and non-conspicuous personage units, some Urartian belts pursue the quite different type of artistic objective – it is to put a greater emphasis on the individuality of the horseman with detailed characterization of its image. Such a contrasting interpretation creates unusually vivid, bright and fresh artistic stream in the iconographical description of Urartian belt as an object of artistic rendering, making the viewer understand that in this case scenarios the quality of image means also artistic focus on the cavalryman as the carrier of distinguished qualities. Both horseman and his horse are becoming the prime objects of descriptive focus, with physical attenuation of parading outfit and spiritual emphasis of festive mood and high spirit. Such series of non-standard portraying, much freer from ideological bonds and strict rules of depiction had its impressive success in the overall iconographic creativity of Urartian belts, producing many fine and remarkable examples of this kind. In **Photo 9** – **we can observe** well-preserved partial fragment of Urartian bronze

²³ Çavuşoğlu, R.

2005 “A Unique Urartian Belt in the Van Museum”, *Archaologische Mittellungen aus Iran und Turan*, 37:366- Fig. 1a

belt with unique picture of horseman in full parading outfit²⁴. His well-groomed and nicely adorned horse is charging forward, while horseman holding a bow. The arrow is not seen in space, perhaps it is supposed to be assumed that the arrow is already flying towards the enemies or already struck a foe. The whole fragment is divide into two horizontally divided registers with horseman in one and three mythological creatures on the other. Sharing some similarities and disparities with this example, another image seen in **Photo 10** – is a fragmentary image from a piece of Urartian bronze belt partially showing a horseman in parading outfit²⁵, wearing a special helmet and having a quiver-like device leaving an impression of a holy weapon, with one hand holding the horse gear in control, and with the other performing some kind of a ritualistic gesture with religious or mythological significance. Somewhat the same, yet quite disparate is a remarkable example provided on **Photo 11** – an outstanding fragment of Urartian bronze belt with great scene of hunt, where the central figure is the horseman in full parading outfit holding a spear or lance²⁶, his prey is wild raging lion with two paws extended in the air and its head turned back towards the direction of the hunter, while all hunting progression has an impression of a festive procession blessed by Holy Signs of Holy six-pointed Star and Winged Sun-Disk. The main focus of horseman and his horse on those type of belts doesn't necessarily mean that other elements of artistic depiction somehow contrast, contradict or overlap from the prime subject of a portrait. On the contrary, parading horseman and other elements of a scene are craftily and skillfully integrated on each other, adding a charisma to the main character and complementing the thematical, symbolical and mythological richness of artistic developments. As an impressive and very interesting result, we can see the intertwining of main thematical content found in one image of parading horseman – hunt, parade, military victory, sacral ritual, symbolical triumph and, finally, the mythological apotheosis of a character, making it unique as one physical appearance with multitudes of thematical, symbolical and mythological meanings.

Mythological (non-ordinary, composite) horse creatures –

Winged Horses – It must be noted that Mythological (non-ordinary) creatures with elements of horse's appearance are not that many in the existing database of Urartian bronze belts. That means that that in hearts and minds of ancient urartians the overall image of the horse was directly associated with its draft functions. Other words, urartians were considering horses not as wild animals, nor were comparing just with other domesticated species for satisfying their daily needs. Horses were given much symbolism in life of urartians and they were truly worshipped as majestic symbols of power, might, speed, dynamical potency, beauty and, of course, the inmost core of cavalry and mighty driving

²⁴ Wartke, R-B.

1994 *Urartu Das Reich Am Ararat*, Verlag Philipp Von Zabern, Mainz Am Rhein, page 95, table 70

²⁵ Taşyürek, O. A.

1975 *Adana Bölge Müzesi'ndeki Urartu Kemerleri – The Urartian Belts in the Adana Regional Museum*, Adana Eski Eserleri Sevenler Derneği Yay; Donmez, Ankara, page 26, picture 29

²⁶ Seidl, U.

2004 *Bronzekunst Urartus*, Verlag Philipp Von Zabern, Mainz am Rhein, page 195, table 57a

force of war chariots. Therefore, for urartians horses were more animals with many useful applicable characteristics, rather than symbols out of practical context. Nevertheless, having created a formidable pantheon of **Mythological Beings** with strict **Hierarchy of Divine Elements**, urartian priests and religious figures couldn't exclude the horse from the list of **Sacred Animals** and **Fantastic Creatures**. Therefore, although rarer than other **Sacred Animals** and **Fantastic Creatures**, horses appear as the **Third Sacred Animal** and the **First Draft Animal** with many combinative variables and reconstructive appearances in the iconography of Urartian belts. One of the prime mythological characters with the mainframe of horse's body and added wings is the **Winged Horse**, the progenitor and prototype of lately famous Pegasus, the Flying Horse in antique Greek and Hellenistic mythology. Appeared long before Pegasus, the Winged Horse was portrayed in urartian belts painstakingly, with emphasis on details and well-forethought representativeness. Such an outstandingly unique example of Winged Horse can be seen on **Photo 12**, an image from Urartian bronze belt with astounding portrayal of mythological Winged Horse with outstanding figural features²⁷, well-groomed appearance and in parading outfit, charging forward with heroic mood and the overwhelmingly winning spirit. Some interesting developments of ancient urartian mythological concepts we can note on **Photo 13** – showing a fragment of Urartian bronze belt with remarkable scene of two deities standing on backs of running bulls, shooting arrows from bows; ahead of them we see mythological Winged Horses running, galloping and leaping forward in a dramatically dynamic position²⁸. Here Winged Horses are not the subjects of main emphasis or thematical focus, but, rather, just other parts of mythologized hunt scenes or even target objects of the hunt. Yet, considering the worshipped nature of a horse not just as a precious livestock commodity, but the guarantor of many vital function of human kind, we can assume that the whole hunt scene got just a symbolical character, with the adaptation of Winged Horses as elements of mythological setting and symbolization of dynamic running and flying powers. We can presume, that Winged Horse was a heroic personage of many stories, legends and fairy tales of ancient urartians, as well as important figures of religious rituals and sacral deeds.

Mythological Horse creatures with human's body and the head of the horse –

Following the affluent tradition of urartian religion of worshipping the **Fantastic Creatures** of formidable pantheon of **Mythological Beings**, another type of composite creatures was demonstrated on the scenery of Urartian belts – **Mythological Horse creatures with human's body and the head of the horse**. This type of Fantastic Being was considered half-human, half-animal character with divine attribution of emotional traits and behavioral displays, which could have been taken partially from the horse, and partially from human characters. On **Photo 14** there is a fragment of Urartian bronze belt with the scene of a mythological creature with human body and head of the horse, in kneeling (worshipping)

²⁷ Taşyürek, O. A.

1975 *Adana Bölge Müzesi'ndeki Urartu Kemerleri – The Urartian Belts in the Adana Regional Museum*, Adana Eski Eserleri Sevenler Derneği Yay; Donmez, Ankara, page 56, picture 49

²⁸ Taşyürek, O. A.

1975 *Adana Bölge Müzesi'ndeki Urartu Kemerleri – The Urartian Belts in the Adana Regional Museum*, Adana Eski Eserleri Sevenler Derneği Yay; Donmez, Ankara, page 59, picture 55

position, with quiver visible on its back, shooting an arrow from a bow²⁹. This wonderful portrait of a fantastic Creature is heroic in nature, flawlessly performing two distinct functions at the same time – worshipping in kneeling position and being a warrior while holding a bow and shouting an arrow.

Mythological Horse creatures with horse's body and the head of the human –

The topmost fantastic creature hierarchically appearing as composite carrier of horse's body and human head is the Mythological Horse that has only partial body of the horse having two legs with horse's hoofs, combined with paws of the lion, wings of the eagle and head of human or human-like being such as legendary figure, mythological deity or one of the godly creatures of urartian religious pantheon. **Photo 15 (a, b, c, d)** – present very fine fragment of Urartian bronze belt nicely portraying four finest and rarest examples of complex **Composite Fantastic Sphinxical Creatures** with Winged Horse's Body with two back Horse Legs, two front Lion's Legs and Human Face, wearing Crowned Tiara and holding a special weapon resembling a bow with one hand and the Holy Scepter on the other³⁰, swiftly galloping forward in a dramatical warlike motion. The mysterious weapon resembles half-disk of the Sun with seven rays that supposed to strike an enemy and bring victory to urartian deities. The fact that in the composition of those creatures is horsy only in some parts, with some reservations and restrictions testify in favor of the factual evidence, that ancient urartians put an overwhelming emphasis on the horse as draft animal largely supporting their most essential life functions and constituting the core of armed forces, reflect on the attitude towards introducing horse as mythological creature only nominally, just to keep animalistic hierarchy in place. Therefore, in the iconography of Urartian belts horse is more often depicted as draft animal for cavalry and war chariots rather than the popular mythological creature. Yet, this seemingly unpassable disbalance doesn't necessarily mean that horses were forbidden to be considered either as physical animals with specific domesticated functions or parts of fantastic creatures of mythological significance. It just a specific concept of urartians about horses and their inmost imaginative understanding lead to specific emphasis on how to portray horses while depicting stories, legends and mythological histories about those remarkable animals. They prefer horse to be mainly as drafty part of their lives and all significant event and decisive actions constituting their history, and they did this according to their passion and logic. Nevertheless, although mythological creatures with elements of horses' appearance were not as numerous as other being of this type (as, for example, winged lions or bulls), their hierarchical place was firmly reserved in the urartian religious pantheon.

Horses as standing platforms for urartian gods and deities – Urartians used **Mythological Beings as Compound Composite Fantastic Creatures** for symbolization of certain **Divine Powers**. Those powers were artistically achieved by combining various

animalistic parts together for attaining certain **Thematical Values, Symbolical Qualities and Mythological Properties –the Philosophical Triad of the Mind**, while combining those in the figure of the being. Yet, as sometimes some Urartian belts portray, Winged Horses were used as standing platforms for urartian gods and deities. The good example of such functional actions is **Photo 15** – depicting a fragment of Urartian bronze belt with the superb image of a deity of god wearing a Holy Crown, standing on a mythological Winged Horse and shooting an arrow from a bow³¹. The fact that the deity on a Winged Horse is on a warrying mood instead of performing worshipping action (like standing on a winged lion or bull) shows the apparent features of urartian **Concept of a Horse as Military Attribute**. Therefore, making parallels between conventional horse and mythological one we find out about the similarity of their functionalities – they both fight for their masters in physical world, as well as in mythological realm. Since we really don't know much about ancient urartian narrative contents with the participation of mythological personages, the expressions of iconography of urartian artwork, especially that of Urartian bronze belts constitute to be the only one and primary source for conducting the painstaking research of urartian stories, legends and mythological histories with participation of many personages, creatures and elements of various hierarchical degree and mythological value. Yet, judging from the peculiar aspects of horse's performance on the above-presented photo, we can conclude that the inmost virtue of Winged Horses is to serve its Prime Deity in furious battle in the **Realm of Divinities and World of Gods and Deities**, being a driving vehicle of its success and insurer of its decisive victory.

Conclusion – This very article titled “The portrayals of horses, horse-related scenes and mythological creatures with elements of horse's appearance in the artistic iconography of Urartian belts” is truly devoted for procuring better facts, evidential suggestions, ancient artifacts and artistic depictions for finding out the precise role and exact value of horse in the iconography of Urartian bronze belts. Since horse played a big and vital role in the life of ancient urartians, it was worshipped as the third most important animal in the line of main sacred animals. However, when comparing our current investigation process with the previous efforts concerning lions and bulls as first two most important Sacred Animals, we receive some apparent disparities and profound differences. And the matter is not in the lack of iconographical description of horses nor their deviations from the firmly established and strongly attested rules of urartian iconography, but, on the contrary, on the huge surplus of artifacts directly related to horse culture in Urartu. The main controversy is that we don't have any traces of material culture related to lions and bulls, and, quite oppositely, archaeologists unearthed huge number of artifacts that is possible to define as archaeo-material culture of horse in Urartu. Therefore, our article writing process went a bit different way than previous writings on similar subjects – by the method of comparing, contrasting and concluding the evidence of horse culture implications in Urartu. As a result of our

³¹ Taşyürek, O. A.

1975 *Adana Bölge Müzesi'ndeki Urartu Kemerleri – The Urartian Belts in the Adana Regional Museum*, Adana Eski Eserleri Sevenler Derneği Yay; Donmez, Ankara, page 38, picture 8

scientific inquiry we found out that many seemingly unrelated thematical fields intersected and intertwined, but never overlapped due to a historical reality that the horse wasn't just any animal in the life of urartians. For inhabitants of Urartu horse was a part of the most important human activities, and, therefore, it was a well-cherished and worshipped symbol. That very symbol helped them to defend their borders, conquer new lands, build an empire and win in battle against powerful adversaries. Both common and mythological versions of horse's figure were set for greater inspiration, invigorating mood and heroic spirit for performing valiant acts and noble deeds. In the iconography of Urartian bronze belts, we find a great variety of horses' interpretation, depicted alongside with hunting or fighting horsemen and driving the most powerful vehicles of ancient past – mighty war chariots. The multitude of horses' interpretations reflects the multi-functional nature of that fine animal, making its common image much more popular and frequently appearing in hunt or battle scenes compared to mythologized episodes or religious performances. Nevertheless, it must be mentioned that mythological versions of horses were portrayed with great mastery and artistical respect, paving the way for Mythological Beings and Fantastic Creatures such as Winged Horses and creatures with horse's body and human face, which appeared to be prototypes for much later legendary horse-related creatures of later antiquity such as Pegasus and Centaurus. It must be admitted that the work in progress is really far from being over. On the contrary, the real study work just began. We tried to study, compare and contrast only few examples of horse's iconography from few selected belts. publications and drawings for them, as well as to compare and contrast to few selected artifacts directly related to archaeo-material culture of horse in Urartu. But, the reality is that the quantity and quality indicators of actual archaeological and historical data is much more than we can cover at the current timeframe, and, therefore, the study work continues and considered to be *in continuum*. With enrichment of our knowledge of horse culture in Urartu many new fields of study see the light and ready to be explored – mythological themes with fantastic animals and creatures depicted on horse trappings and other objects of horse's attire, actual size reconstruction of urartian war chariots, and much, much more. At the end we just want to express our sincere hope that this very article is an important step for elucidating some important aspects of horse's appearance in the iconography of Urartian bronze belts and outlining some key point concerning the horse culture in Urartu.

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List of photo pictures sources used in article “The portrayals of horses, horse-related scenes and mythological creatures with elements of horse’s appearance in the artistic iconography of Urartian belts”

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Wiener) **Photo2.** <https://www.ancient.eu/image/7188/>(image permission license by James Blake Wiener) **Photo 3.** courtesy of author (Saak Tarontsi).

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Photo 14c. <http://treasury.am/hy/ւ ի գ ալ ի -մ աւ -3>

Photo 14d. <http://treasury.am/hy/տն գ ի -ծ ալ ը -16>

Photo 15. <http://treasury.am/hy/ւ ի գ ալ -46>

Photo 16a. <http://treasury.am/hy/ւ Ե տաւ լ աք -459>

Photo 16b. <http://treasury.am/hy/ւ Ե տաւ լ աք -465>

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Photo 1a. Çavuşoğlu, Rafet; Urartu Kemerler – Urartian Belts; Rezan Has Museum, Istanbul, 2014, page 173, plate XXI, picture 4.

Photo 1b. Çavuşoğlu, Rafet; Urartu Kemerler – Urartian Belts; Rezan Has Museum, Istanbul, 2014, page 173, plate XXI, picture 5.

Photo 1c. Çavuşoğlu, Rafet; Urartu Kemerler – Urartian Belts; Rezan Has Museum, Istanbul, 2014, page 173, plate XXI, picture 6.

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Photo 5. Röllig, Wolfgang; Ein urartäisches Gürtelblech mit Darstellung einer Löwenjagd; Orientalia, 66, 1997, pp. 221, photo II.

Photo 6. Born, H.; Seidl, U.; Shutzwaffen aus Assyria and Urartu, Band IV Sammlung Axel Guttman; Verlag Sammlung Guttman bei Verlag Philipp von Zabern; Mainz, Erscheinungsdatum, 1995, page 82, picture 71.

Photo 7. Dan, Roberto; Inside the Empire – Some Remarks on the Urartian and Achaemenid Presence in the Autonomous Republic of Nakhchivan; ISMEO - Associazione Internazionale di Studi sul Mediterraneo e l'Oriente; Iran and the Caucasus 18, 2014, page 332, Photo 4.

Photo 8a. Çavuşoğlu, Rafet; A Unique Urartian Belt in the Van Museum; Archaologische Mitteilungen aus Iran und Turan, Band 37, Dietrich Reimer Verlag GmbH, Berlin, 2005, page 366, Figure 1a.

Photo 8b. Çavuşoğlu, Rafet; A Unique Urartian Belt in the Van Museum; Archaologische Mitteilungen aus Iran und Turan, Band 37, Dietrich Reimer Verlag GmbH, Berlin, 2005, page 366, Figure 1b.

Photo 8c. Çavuşoğlu, Rafet; A Unique Urartian Belt in the Van Museum; *Archaologische Mittellungen aus Iran und Turan*, Band 37, Dietrich Reimer Verlag GmbH, Berlin, 2005, page 366, Figure 1c.

Photo 8d. Photo 25a. Çavuşoğlu, Rafet; A Unique Urartian Belt in the Van Museum; *Archaologische Mittellungen aus Iran und Turan*, Band 37, Dietrich Reimer Verlag GmbH, Berlin, 2005, page 367, Figure 2.

Photo 9. Wartke, Ralf-Bernhard; *Urartu Das Reich Am Ararat*, Verlag Philipp Von Zabern, Mainz Am Rhein, 1993, page 95, table 70.

Photo 10. Taşyürek, Orhan Aytuğ; Adana Bölge Müzesindeki Urartu Kemerleri – The Urartian Belts in the Adana Regional Museum; Adana Eski Eserleri Sevenler Derneği Yay; Donmez, Ankara, 1975, page 26, picture 29.

Photo 11. Seidl, Ursula; *Bronzekunst Urartus*; Verlag Philipp Von Zabern, Mainz am Rhein, 2004, page 195, table 57a.

Photo 12. Taşyürek, Orhan Aytuğ; Adana Bölge Müzesindeki Urartu Kemerleri – The Urartian Belts in the Adana Regional Museum; Adana Eski Eserleri Sevenler Derneği Yay; Donmez, Ankara, 1975, page 56, picture 49.

Photo 13. Taşyürek, Orhan Aytuğ; Adana Bölge Müzesindeki Urartu Kemerleri – The Urartian Belts in the Adana Regional Museum; Adana Eski Eserleri Sevenler Derneği Yay; Donmez, Ankara, 1975, page 59, picture 55.

Photo 14. Taşyürek, Orhan Aytuğ; Adana Bölge Müzesindeki Urartu Kemerleri – The Urartian Belts in the Adana Regional Museum; Adana Eski Eserleri Sevenler Derneği Yay; Donmez, Ankara, 1975, page 56, picture 50.

Photo 15. Taşyürek, Orhan Aytuğ; Adana Bölge Müzesindeki Urartu Kemerleri – The Urartian Belts in the Adana Regional Museum; Adana Eski Eserleri Sevenler Derneği Yay; Donmez, Ankara, 1975, page 38, picture 8.

Photo 16 (a, b, c, d). Wartke, Ralf-Bernhard; *Urartu Das Reich Am Ararat*, Verlag Philipp Von Zabern, Mainz Am Rhein, 1993, page 96, table 71

PHOTOS OF PART I



Photo 1. This pre-Urartian or early-Urartian fragment of actual horse's skull fragment, rein and iron bit keepers testify that horse breeding and various horse-related metal items manufacturing was quite developed at the time of Urartian empire's rise. Those important artifacts date to XI-IX century B.C. They were unearthed in ancient Metsamor fortress and settlement and now are part of exhibition of Metsamor Historical-Archaeological Museum-Reserve in Taronik, Armenia.



Photo 2. This mural fragment of a running horse that once adorned the large palace hall at [Erebuni](#) Fortress as the artistic iconographical testament of horse's cultural perception in Urartu. The painting dates to VIII century B.C.. It is located in Erebuni (Arin Berd) Archaeological Museum in Yerevan, Armenia.



Photo 3. The horse-shaped rhyton for drinking wine and other beverages, made from silver. Found in Erebuni (Karmir Blur) city, dates back to VII-VI century BC, late Urartian period. It is a part of exhibition in Erebuni (Arin Berd) Archaeological Museum in Yerevan, Armenia.



Photo 4. The horse-shaped rhyton with rider for drinking wine and other beverages, made from silver. Found in Erebuni (Karmir Blur) city, dates back to VII-VI century BC, late Urartian period. It is a part of exhibition in Erebuni (Arin Berd) Archaeological Museum in Yerevan, Armenia.



Photo 4a. The detail of above-presented horse-shaped rhyton with rider showing the emblem of eagle (urartian -Arsibi-) on the helmet of horse-rider.



Photo 5. Urartian horse chariot from Erebuni fortress, dates back to VIII century BC. It is a part of exhibition in Erebuni (Arin Berd) Archaeological Museum in Yerevan, Armenia.



Photo 5a. Different angle view of Urartian horse chariot from Erebuni (Arin Berd) fortress, dates back to VIII century BC. It is a part of permanent exhibition in Erebuni Archaeological Museum in Yerevan, Armenia.



Photo 6. Remarkable example of stone bas-relief depicting urartian war chariot driven by charging horse, without human character. The sophisticated horse-handling gear is on display along with strange half-rectangular, half triangular object reminiscent of chariot shield, or, perhaps, some other type of military equipment.



Photo 7. Rare and outstanding example of urartian decoration box made of steatite stone. The figure of bowman and horse-rider are clearly seen, with image of the bull and carving of the lion on the lid. One of few urartian stone-made objects with image of horse on it.

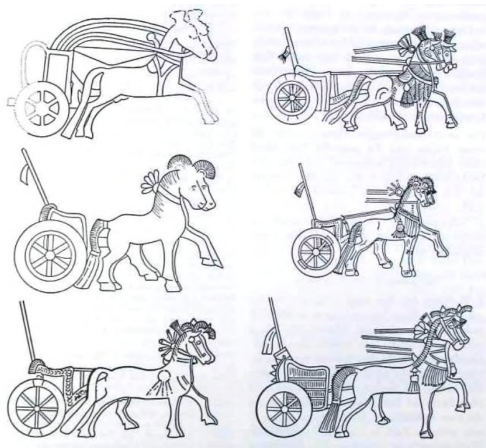


Photo 8. Types of urartian war chariots from the depictions in various objects, mostly metalwork. War chariots are shown with horses in full parading outfit, with different types of horse-handling gear, without soldiers. War chariots construction shows light, fast and maneuverable vehicles with outstanding military capabilities. Notable features include flag

poles for identification of urartian troops, and, possibly, markings of military units in formation.



Photo 9. Urartian bone plaques from Ziwiye with images of two horsemen with bows and arrows during the battle with symbolic eagle (-Arsibi-).



Photo 10. Very interesting ivory plaque fragment with example of urartian horse-rider throwing a projectile weapon, maybe, a javelin towards enemy soldiers, while horse is shown in galloping jump. A part of collection of Metropolitan museum of Art in New York, USA.



Photo 11. Remarkable bronze sculpture of horse's head from Erebuni (Arin Berd) fortress, dates back to VIII century BC. It served as an ornamental shaft of Urartian military chariot. It is a part of archaeological collection of Armenian Historical Museum in Yerevan, Armenia.



Photo 12. Detail of a quiver of urartian king Argishti I (786-764 BC) found in the fortress of Teishebaini (Karmir Blur). Elaborately decorated quiver displays horse carts proceeding after horsemen in parading march.



Photo 13. Detail of a quiver of urartian king Sarduri II (764-735 BC), found in the fortress of Teishebaini (Karmir Blur). Elaborately decorated quiver displays horse carts proceeding after horsemen in parading march.



Photo 14 (a, b, c, d) – Remarkably rare examples of sharpened tips and striking points of urartian projectile weapons that use to strike by throw from the distance, spearheads of darts, pikes and lances, possibly used from war chariots.



Photo 15. Outstanding example of rare urartian spearhead type, that used to strike enemy troops from the distance. This sample displays notable aerodynamic characteristics with capability to fly long distance and strike enemies far away. It was used by either single horseman or by a crew of war chariot.



Photo 16 (a, b). Craftily made arrow tips that urartians used to shoot from bows during the defensive or offensive military operations, those could be used either by single horseman or by a crew of war chariot as well.



Photo 17. Unusual type of horse-handling equipment made from a fine bronze, possibly part of either single horseman's equipment or an adornment or war chariot.

PHOTOS OF PART 2

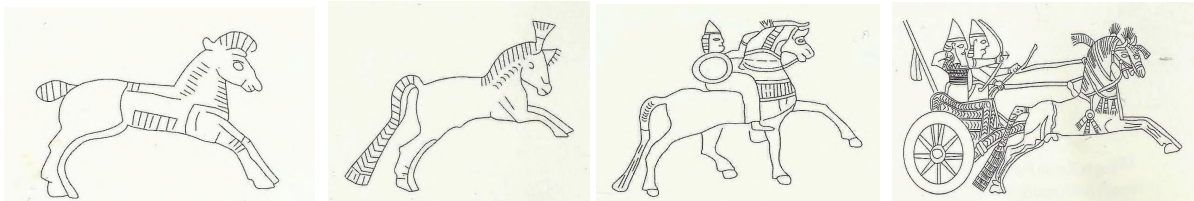


Photo 1 (a, b, c, d). Various types of horse's images from the iconography of Urartian belts, including: a. Walking horse; b. Galloping horse; c. Horse with horse-rider; d. Horses driving war chariot with soldiers with bows shooting arrows.



Photo 2. A fragment of Urartian bronze belt with war chariot driven by a horse and a bull figure on lower register, with the rarest depiction of single horse (rare for Urartian bronze belts) and galloping horseman along with image on upper register.



Photo 3. A remarkable belt fragment divided into three registers: on the first upper register we see horse riders with military equipment, on the third lower register we can notice the horse figure with fragment of horse chariot, and, on the second middle register we observe the remarkably rare scene of two independently walking horses



Photo 4. Unique fragment of Urartian bronze belt with exceptional images of horses portrayed independently, without being harnessed to horsemen or war chariot. This belt fragment is a part of exhibition of Metsamor Historical-Archaeological Museum-Reserve in Taronik, Armenia.

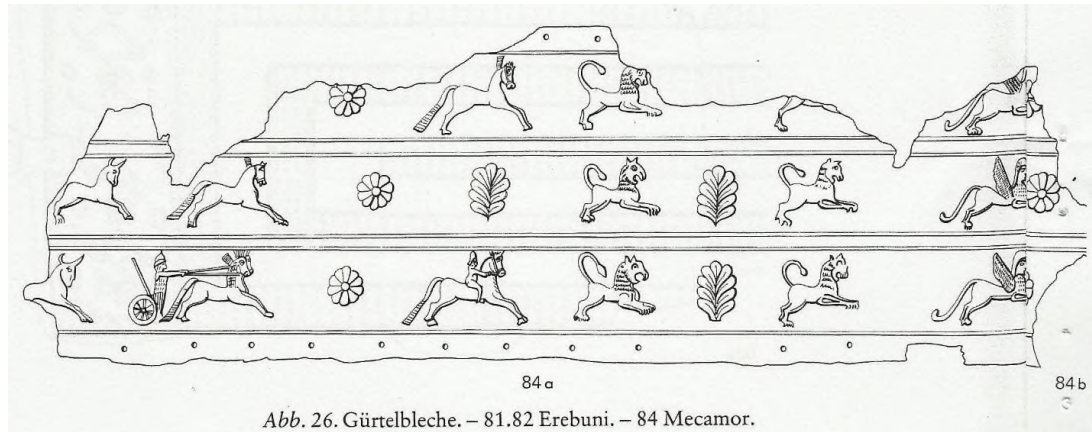


Photo 4a. The detailed drawing of the above-presented belt located in Metsamor Historical-Archaeological Museum with images of independent horse figures, standing separately on their own.



Photo 5. An Exceptional fragment of Urartian bronze belt with profound depiction of hunt scenes with images of infantry warriors or hunters on foot, cavalymen or horsemen hunters, and war chariot. Hunting parties shown holding bows and shooting arrows towards charging lions – one of them is wounded and running away, while the other is fallen under hoofs of chariot horse and roars in despair with its head turned back. The entire scene is full of dramatic images artistically mixed in space perspective.



Photo 6. An Outstanding fragment of Urartian bronze belt with rare scenic depiction of hunt on lions. Participants are infantry warriors or hunters on foot, and cavalymen or horsemen hunters, while no image of war chariot is seen. This piece got uncommon feature of horsemen hunters depiction in formation of parallel pares that artistically create an impression of close cavalry formation. There are two lions on the scene: one is with missing head due to damage to the belt, shown in reclining position under hoofs of cavalryman, while the other lion is in despair, roaring and turning head towards galloping horsemen hunters.



Photo 7. A unique piece of Urartian bronze belt with the exceptionally rare depiction of a battle scene. The battle retrospective is displayed with fine artistical taste with elements of brutality, symbolism and mythologism blended together in organic dynamism. Brutality is reflected in the figure of decapitated body with the head thrown nearby, symbolism is in the image of Sacred Eagle (-Arsibi-) with its mighty spirit supporting the battle process, and, mythologism is in Sun Disks and figures of Winged Bulls (one of them is with lion paw, while two have lion's tail) as objects of sacred mythological realm.

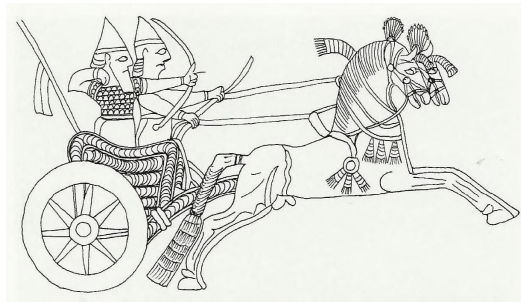
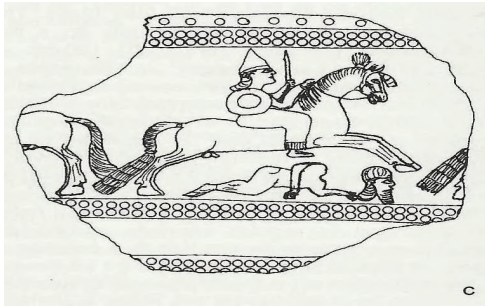
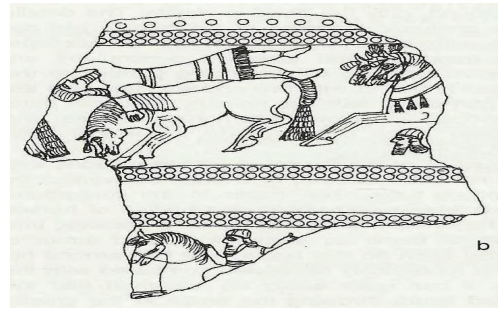
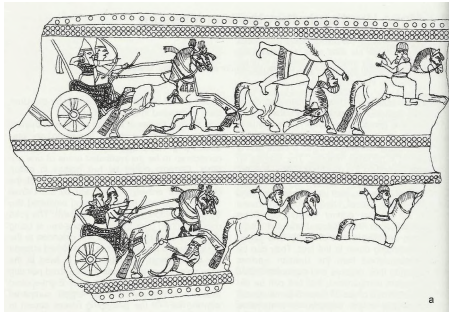


Photo 8 (a, b, c, d) – Remarkable drawings from the actual imagery of fragments from one unique Urartian belt. Partially remaining fragments reveal dramatic depictions of battle scenes with participation of war chariots and horsemen of cavalry. From the enemy side there is a loose horse along with bodies of adversary either wounded by arrow or falling down from the horse, while the other body shown with merciless brutality – decapitated and thrown under hoofs of urartian horse. Yet, despite some excessive views of unprecedented savagery, the renderings of war chariots are splendid and promote the spirit of dynamic force, combat readiness and ability to contribute to the winning factor in battle.



Photo 9 – Well-preserved partial fragment of Urartian bronze belt with unique picture of horseman in full parading outfit. His well-groomed and nicely adorned horse is charging forward, while horseman holding a bow. The arrow is not seen, perhaps it is supposed to be assumed that the arrow is already flying towards the enemies or already struck a foe. The whole fragment is divide into two horizontally divided registers with horseman in one and three mythical creatures on the other.

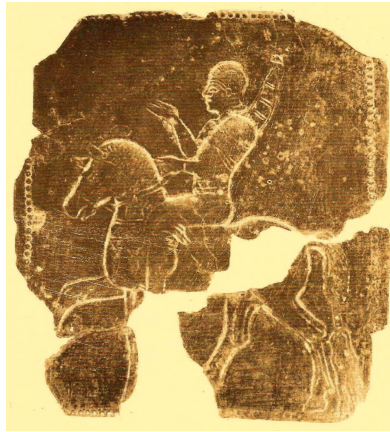


Photo 10. A fragmentary image from a piece of Urartian bronze belt partially showing a horseman in parading outfit, wearing a special helmet and having a quiver-like device leaving an impression of a holy weapon, with one hand holding the horse gear in control, and with the other performing some kind of a gesture with religious or mythological significance.

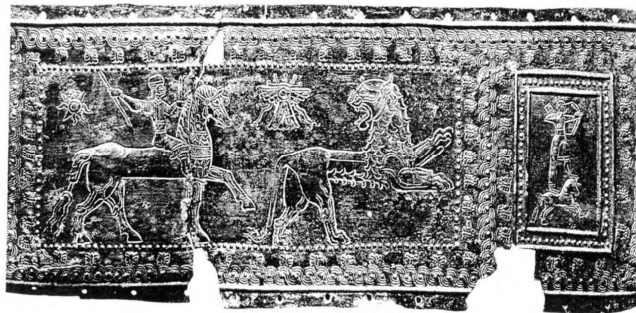


Photo 11. An outstanding fragment of Urartian bronze belt with great scene of hunt, where the central figure is the horseman in full parading outfit holding a spear or lance, his prey is wild raging lion with two paws extended in the air and head turned back towards the direction of the hunter, while all hunting progression has an impression of a festive procession blessed by Holy Signs of Holy six-pointed Star and Winged Sun-Disk.



Photo 12. Image from Urartian bronze belt with astounding portrayal of mythological Winged horse with outstanding figural features, well-groomed and in parading outfit, charging forward with heroic mood and the overwhelmingly winning spirit.



Photo 13. Fragment of Urartian bronze belt with remarkable scene of two deities standing on backs of running bulls, shooting arrows from bows; ahead of them we see mythological Winged horses running, galloping and leaping forward in a dramatically dynamic position.



Photo 14. Fragment of Urartian bronze belt with the scene of a mythical creature with human body and head of the horse, in kneeling (worshipping) position, with long quiver visible on its back, shooting an arrow from a bow.





Photo 15 (a, b, c, d) – Fragment of Urartian bronze belt nicely portraying four finest and rarest examples of complex Composite Fantastic Sphinxical Creatures with Winged Horse's Body, Lion's Legs and Human Face, wearing Crowned Tiara and holding a special weapon resembling a bow with one hand and the Holy Scepter on the other, swiftly galloping forward in a dramatical warlike motion.



Photo 15. Fragment of Urartian bronze belt with the image of a deity of god wearing a Holy Crown, standing on a mythological Winged Horse and shooting an arrow from a bow.