

AMİSOS / AMISOS

Cilt/Volume 3, Sayı/Issue 5 (Aralık/December 2018), ss./pp. 408-454

ISSN: 2587-2222 / e-ISSN: 2587-2230



Makale / Article

Geliş Tarihi/Received: 13. 12. 2018
Kabul Tarihi/Accepted: 17. 12. 2018

RITUAL-WORSHIPPING SCENES AND ARCHITECTURAL IMAGES IN THE ICONOGRAPHY OF URARTIAN BELTS

URARTU KEMERLERİNİN İKONOGRFYASINDAKİ MİMARİ GÖRÜNTÜLERİ VE RİTÜEL TAPINIM SAHNELERİ

Saak TARONTSI*

Abstract

The following article titled "Ritual-Worshipping Scenes and Architectural Images in the Iconography of Urartian Belts" is a continuation of articles in series of monographic writings wholesomely devoted to detailed research of iconographical content of Urartian bronze belts, including the fundamental creative-constructive components and indispensable composite parts, thematical content, narrative scenes, realistic traditional reflections and mythological symbolism of iconographical images. The main thematic focus of this article is the detailed research of Urartian Ritual-Worshipping Belts, especially in the context of determining their content according to the imagery of ritual-worshipping and ceremonial-religious scenes, and architectural landscapes. The task of research included the finding of main bibliographical sources containing relevant images, data and explanatory statements about Urartian ritual-worshipping belts; creating a database of this particular belt types according to sources of publications and places of safekeeping, whether big or small museums or private collections;

* 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.

identification of main themes, narratives and scenery contents; assessment of the overall design and ways of fastening of those belt types; assessing the overall geometrical proportions of those belt types and the implications of the “narrowness” that resulted in their conditional definition as of Narrow Belts; classification and typological assessment of their main and secondary iconographic elements, including various human characters, different sacral objects of individual or collective use; special sacral objects of worship such as single or multiple layered Moon-Crescents and Sun-Disks; diverse human activities and occupations; various scenes of architectural landscapes, castles, fortifications and their details; images of common animals found only in this belt type; images of only imaginary animal type (fish) of Urartian belts; images of mythological (composite) winged beasts made of animal and abstract parts; images of mythological (composite) creatures made of animal, abstract and human parts, as well as attributes of religious-mythological fashion; images of some other elements, not typical, but sometimes found in the iconography of ritual-worshipping belts, such as symbols of Sacred Tree and Winged Sun-Disk; images of musicians and dancers; images of various musical instruments; images of religious acts such as performing rituals ceremonies, libation, praying, worshipping and making wishes to souls of the deceased, spirits of real animal, mythological beasts and creatures, souls of divinities and gods. **The key formula of the transfer of the urartian material culture into urartian spiritual culture is contended,** affirmed on a base of the iconographical contexts and thematic narrative contents of the ritual-worshipped belts; as well as validated through law-governed principles of urartian traditional-religious approaches and major mythological-philosophical concepts that was a base of urartian mindset of symbolical meaningfulness. At the end of the article some hints about the possible nature of urartian artistic conceptuality is given in the context of the crucial role that the urartian culture played in the overall process of urartian nation’s formation. Finally, the overall significance of ritual-worshipping belts is assessed in the fundamental framework of Urartian bronze belts studies, and also the possible effects are predicted on how these newer, informatively significant implications of those scientific archeologic-historic inquiries could progressively and positively contribute to Urartological Studies or Urartology.

Key Words: Urartian, belts, ritual, worshipping, scene, architectural, image, iconography, tradition, culture.

The artistic heritage of urartian civilization is a rich illustration of high historical achievements in creating of one of the most prominent cultures of Anatolia (Asia Minor). The urartian material culture is very unique by various means of artistic expression and the overall meaningful content of its inmost artful representations. The urartian material culture was closely interconnected with the spiritual culture of its people, or, better said, it was a reflections of main livelihood perceptions, core spiritual values, philosophical views and traditional mythological-religious beliefs of ancient urartians. Urartian civilization forged its own high art, unique by its inner motives, unrepeatably by understandings of the life on earth and in mystical realms of mythological worlds. Moreover, the urartian art is considered to be rare not only by contriving the exclusive forms of vision of real and mythical, not only by fashioning their exclusive fabric of taste of forms and meanings, but also by creating the superbly designed **system of meaningful values**. That very system was based on **Hierarchical Order of Valued Phenomena**, which allowed to effectively produce on pieces of art certain combination of richly decorated elements. Each and every of those elements had its own hierarchical place and significance, and, some of them assembled in certain combinations, were able to create numerous valuable artistic sources of understanding such as – **scene, theme, motive, narrative, object, subject, action, figure, symbol, attribute**, etc. As a result, the overall significance of such masterpieces of urartian art were not insomuch in their conditional décor, but, mainly in the **combinational elements of symbolic meaningfulness placed in certain order and described by hierarchical classification and attributive categorization**. **By such definitive attributiveness urartian art as manifestation of material culture become distinguishable as the carrier of sacred spiritual values and advocate of devotional ritual-worshipping culture**. The unique features of artistic representation of material culture made urartian art unmistakably authentic by its own unique criteria. P. Zimansky in his book titled “Urartian Material Culture as State Assemblage: An Anomaly in the Archaeology of Empire” describes Urartian civilization as archeologically unmistakable and the distinctive artifacts of Urartu as material assemblage of a homogeneous culture¹. The author points out that the material culture of Urartu is a product of governmental, state-controlled ideology and the result of a policy of making the artistic representations of urartian material productions uniform, easily recognizable and highly distinguishable from other cultures and their influences. Authors expresses an opinion that all urartian artifacts of various types were united as assemblage of material culture that was controlled by ruling statehood in conditions of stable maintenance of political unity². P. Zimansky also elaborates on the interesting fact that the pieces of urartian material production that had cuneiform inscriptions got exclusively the names of urartian kings and royalties, suggesting that the naming of urartian objects was exceptional in a conditions of religious-theocratic state with the praise of kings and gods, hinting on the coherence of ideological, religious and philosophical bases of urartian material culture³. In his another remarkable book titled “Ancient Ararat: A Handbook of Urartian Studies”, which represents from itself a bibliographical compiling of urartian-related literature divided by sections and certain topics, he returns to urartian material culture, dividing it’s production assemblage into followings categories according to particular modes of recreation and by material of

¹ Zimansky, P.

1995 Urartian Material Culture as State Assemblage: An Anomaly in the Archaeology of Empire, *Bulletin of American Schools of Oriental Research (BASOR)*, 299/300:103.

² Same as above, page 111.

³ Zimansky, P.

1985 *Ecology and Empire: The Structure of the Urartian State*, The Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago, Studies in Ancient Oriental Civilization, number 41, page 60.

production: **a) architecture; b) painting; c) sculpture; d) seals and sealings; e) pottery; f) ivory; g) glass; h) textiles; i) metalwork.** From the types of material production presented, author describes metalworking as highly developed industry of urartians⁴, noting that the best works of urartian art were made of metal. He defines the urartian metalwork as the only type of material culture that is divisible to various subtypes according to overall quantity and distinctive quality of metalworking production: **a) belts; b) plaques; c) cauldrons, candelabra and furniture attachments; d) helmets, weapons and shields; e) horse trappings and chariot fittings; f) pins, fibulae and jewelry(pectorals); g) miscellaneous metal objects; f) mixed groups of metal objects.** The name of a remarkable book-catalog called “Urartu – A Metalworking Center in the First Millennium B.C.E” speaks for itself, exemplifying the ancient state of Urartu as one of the most important metalworking centers of ancient world, truly distinguishable by the avail of best metalworking traditions and by the elaborated high-quality metalworking products, often describable as masterpieces of urartian art. The book-catalog “Urartu – A Metalworking Center in the First Millennium B.C.E” is compiling many articles written by the group of prominent authors, such as O. Belli, P. Calmeyer, U. Seidl, H.J. Kellner, M. Salvini, etc., and is edited by R. Merhav. Particularly interesting, R. Merhav has an article with the subject entirely dedicated to Urartian belts, titled “Grouping and Dating Bronze Belts”, where expresses an opinion that by the quantity of pieces, sophisticated nature of metalworking manufacturing and richness of ornamental-decorations details Urartian bronze belts have no comparison with the other categories of metalworking production⁵. Regarding the ancient state of Urartu as one of the most important metalworking centers of ancient Anatolia and Near East, author delineates the Urartian bronze belts as “the most important and informative remains of the Urartian kingdom”. Noting the high quantity of available belt pieces, counting over 400 in a case of few museums and private collections, author admits that the actual number of those type of artifacts is so high, that it is not known up to date exactly how many of those survived around the world. R. Merhav also noted that Urartian belts were constituting the mass-produced category of metalworking art, noticing the availability of organizable stereotypical elements on them that do require further analytical research and comprehensive overview. He emphasizes the need for the classification of those belts chronologically – trying to define the time of its origination, and, typologically, by dividing those artifacts into certain groups. H.J. Kellner divided Urartian bronze belts into 11 types⁶ according to their iconographical elements and the patterns of their arrangement: **1. Mounted horses and chariots in superimposed registers; 2. Foot soldiers, lions, bulls, winged mythological creatures and Sacred Tree symbol; 3. Hunting and battle scenes with depiction of great dynamism along with geometrical decors and vegetation ornamentation motives; 4. This group is defined by overly saturation and density of all-previously mentioned essential elements available in previous types, as well as by the elaborated compositions of various motifs; 5. The given group also includes figures of foot soldiers (infantry men), horsemen shooting arrows from bows, various types of sacred animals (lions and bulls) and mythological creatures arranged by linear registers in strictly divided zones; 6. This**

⁴ Zimansky, P.;

1998 *Ancient Ararat: A Handbook of Urartian Studies*, Caravan Books, Delmar, New York, 1998, page 199.

⁵ Merhav, R.

1991 *Urartu – A Metalworking Center in the First Millennium B.C.E. - Grouping and Dating of Bronze Belts*, Israel Museum, Jerusalem, page 142.

⁶ Kellner, H.J.

1991 *Gürtelbleche aus Urartu*, Prähistorische Bronzefunde, Abt. XII, Bd. 3, Franz Steiner Verlag, Stuttgart, pages 19-22.

particular group is defined by the avail of extensively arranged flower motifs and garland delineations; 7. This special group is characterized by the availability of ornamental disks and round-shaped motifs of various sizes; 8. Rounded terminals with vertically arranged palmettes is a prominent features of this group; 9. This group is notable by the specific arrangements of mythological creatures and sacred divinities in manner of ostensibly intense scene depiction; 10. Geometrical ornamentation and decoration only is found in the following group; 11. This special group contains variety of ritual-worshipping scenes with intense narratives scenes such as banquets, gift offering women personages in processions, many secondary grade animals (other than sacred animals – lions and bulls), as well as large arrays of assorted architectural elements such as city gates, citadels, fortresses and palaces. Although this type of classification of Urartian belts is approximately reflecting the overall typology of those artifacts, there are certain serious shortcomings in this sort of a division and, therefore, it can't be considered absolute and only partially gives the notion of typological assessment. The reasons beyond the shortcomings are the following: a) this sort of typological assessment of Urartian belts was made only in a basis of 449 samples from various museums and private collections, from which only 350 were illustrated⁷; yet, the actual number of Urartian bronze belts and their fragments, in existence around the world is much more, counting in thousands of examples; as well as not counting examples that as artifacts are not excavated yet up to this particular date. Therefore, **the shortcoming number one is in the fixed number of belts that is quite limited** compared to the actual number of those artifacts, without the availability of universal catalogue of all belts in the world known; b) most of the Urartian bronze belts are of **unknown provenance**, and, therefore, the chronological (according to the time of creation) and geographical (according to the place of creation) identification of the majority of those artifacts created challenging and often an impossible task; without these important ways of identification the full typological analyses and classification of each and every belt or its fragment is virtually impossible; c) the above-presented 11 types of various belts are not absolutely following to the presumed rules of classification, since the **elements described in the given belt type could easily be found in another one**; d) also, **the patterns of elements' arrangement can't be exact since the design of each and every belt varies from example to example**; e) **the patterns of element's arrangement can be combinative and may well overlap, reducing types into subtypes and creating a group that is not determined yet**; f) **the above-presented 11 types are not arranged in proper hierarchical order**, if the group number 10 that ranked as high is comprising from the lowest units of elements' hierarchy – primitive geometrical patterns; g) **the classification of belts shouldn't be regulated by the patterns of elements' coincidental arrangement that could have different number of meaningful units of different significance, but constructively organized by the prevalence of certain essential elements according to their hierarchical significance, philosophical-conceptual status and intrinsic value of symbolical meaningfulness**; and, finally, h) **no Urartian belt is the same as another one**, and, even they might be similar by elements and patterns of arrangement, between them still are profound differences – noticeable and unnoticeable, visible and invisible, apparent and intrinsic. Therefore, in order to avoid the classification process done to the nearest approximation and coincidentally overlapping results, we express an opinion **each and every belt has its own traits, by many means unique and unrepeatable**, and, therefore, **it will be principally correct to carefully examine each and**

⁷ Collon, D.

1993 Review of Gürtelbleche aus Urartu by Hans-Jörg Kellner, *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London*, 56/1:125-127.

every belt or its fragment only in conformity with the information known and compile the unique Descriptive Passport of Urartian Bronze Belt according to a data about that particular artifact's origination and provenance, as well as according to belt's creative-constructive elements' factors of meaningful significance. Besides, no special group is allocated to belts with cuneiform inscriptions, nor their principal significance is outlined. D. Colon at the end of his review of H.J. Kellner's work also direct his critique on the fact that author gave prominence to unprovenanced and looted material; although it can be easily argued against such uncompromised stance, that each and every piece of archaeological piece is of high values, and, that especially concerned with Urartian bronze belts, must be preserved and studied by bringing its status of availability from "uncivilized" into "civilized" one. But, it must be given certain praise to author of comprehensive review, he positively graded the work of H.J. Kellner's at the very beginning of his article, noting that "the metal belts of Urartu are one of the richest and most important sources in any study of the art of this intriguing state, centered on Lake Van in eastern Anatolia but extending north-east into Armenia and east into north-western Iran. These metal belts are possibly the earliest in a widespread fashion during the first half of the first millennium B.C. which spread north into the Caucasus (but the dating of these is uncertain), and west across the Mediterranean and into Hallstatt Europe". Indeed, the "Gürtelbleche aus Urartu" by H.J. Kellner is considering to be one of the most important book-catalogs, where the comprehensive scientific study of Urartian bronze belts was actively undertaken and the first serious effort to classify those artifacts by certain types was ever attempted. Objectively, it must be noted, the H.J. Kellner's way of belts' classification is basically helpful and much suitable for their typological assessment. Even it is partial due to above-mentioned constraints and is not completed by much detailed analyses, it shouldn't be rejected in any form, but, on the contrary, must be revised, updated, reformulated and completed with the extensive knowledge of law-government principles of ancient urartian thinking that made the ideological-philosophical views and religious-mythological believes of urartians to become the mentality. Said by other words, H.J. Kellner's way of belts' classification by means of archaeological-historical stages' development is constituting a reliable basis and a formidable beginning for developing the most advanced methodology for the descriptive analytical studies of Urartian bronze belts. Yet, in order to give the most complete typological assessment of each and every Urartian belt's piece, their system of meaningful values based on the **Hierarchical Order of Valued Phenomena – scene, theme, motive, narrative, object, subject, action, figure, symbol and attribute must apply to each and every iconographical unit of the belt's design, as well as to the overall universally appraised depiction of each and every given belt or its fragment.**

It must be noted again, that as the majority of urartian metalworking art pieces, Urartian belts have their **combinational elements of symbolic meaningfulness placed in certain order and described by hierarchical classification and attributive categorization.** And, the closely interconnected with it **definitive attributiveness of Urartian belt's art as manifestation of material culture become distinguishable as carrier of sacred spiritual values and advocate of devotional ritual-worshipping culture.** Paraphrasing that important key definition we derive an important formula which states that **the ancient urartian material culture had a clear and functionally distinctive purport to serve to the universally sought needs of urartian spiritual culture, or, urartian material culture was a carrier of core sacred spiritual values and devotedly served to a spiritual culture.** If in Urartu **material culture was equal to spiritual culture,** then the naturally arising questions is appearing on how that particular process was reflected in the cultural heritage of urartians. We already came to a reliable conclusion, that the urartian metalwork

comprised the vast majority of urartian artistically decorated artifacts with core elements of sacred religious-mythological and philosophical-esthetical values. In its turn, the overall quantity and variety of types of Urartian bronze belts overwhelmingly exceeds those of other types of metalwork combined. So, if the ancient urartians gave a major priority for the production, distribution, safekeeping and functional utilization of bronze belts, what were their motives beyond such a behavioral activity? Why bronze belts? Well, part of answer to that important dilemma is in the major division of urartian metal artifacts into two main groups of utilization according to a type of population: **a) military attire; b) civil clothing.** The principal difference of Urartian bronze belts from other types of metalworking production is in **the dual mode of usability**; if some metal objects like body armor, shields, helmets, quivers, bows, arrows, maces, swords, daggers, lances, various types of horse equipment were made exclusively for military use, **Urartian bronze belts were used both by military and civilians, largely utilized in all layers of society, by majority of people belonging to large spectrum of population** – peasants, artisans, warriors, traders, government officials, clergy, priests, nobility and royalty. In other words, **Urartian bronze belts were special sacred objects of universal significance** used by people with all walks and fabric of life. Another important reason for the universally widespread use of bronze belts in urartian society was their role as bronze belts were considered **Sacred Talismans, Holy Amulets** or “**Mini-Temples**” **serving the purpose of carrying Divine Forces and the images of Gods, Genies, Sacred Animals and Fantastic Creatures in one given sacral object**, that inspired urartians in their war or piece activities, and, according to their beliefs, helped them to achieve the victory and success in all undertakings⁸. Judging by the huge quantities and numerous varieties of belt types, those amulet-objects were especially popular among ancient urartians. The varying lengths and widths (heights) of Urartian belts provides evidence that those **sacred talismans were worn by both man and women alike.** Moreover, the mass-production of belts were intended to organize the distribution of those vitally important objects to large groups of population, including the people of newly joined regions to Urartian Empire, as well as to many allied nations. The remarkable fact that urartians were able to organize new urban centers at the peripheries of their empire and far away from their traditional development areas such as vicinities of lake Van and Ararat valley, speaks in favor of their ability unite the people of many ethnicities and linguistic means of communications into one solid nation, unbreakable by means of governing ideology and prevalent religious-philosophical beliefs. One of perfect examples of such traditionally Hurrian centers of newly expanded urartian empire serves the area, historically known as Marash or Gurgum and comprising the area of today’s Kahramanmaraş. The quite noticeable collection of urartian artifacts from Kahramanmaraş Archeological Museum includes many types of metalworking production – ritual needles, votive plaques, fibulas, rings, animal figures adorned bracelets and rare fragments of Urartian bronze belts⁹. Such remarkable abundance of votive objects directly connected with urartian religious faith and spiritual practices provides valuable evidence on the fact how urartian religious ideology served as a reliable tool for building their statehood and expand the frontiers of the empire much further into central Anatolia (Asia Minor).

⁸ Tarontsi, S.

2017 Sacred Animals and Fantastic Creatures of Urartian Belts – Mythological Reflections of Urartian Civilization, *The Journal of International AMISOS*, 2/3:127.

⁹ Yiğitpaşa, D., Can, S.

2016 Kahramanmaraş Arkeoloji Müzesi'nden Bir Grup Urartu Metal Eseri, *Mustafa Kemal Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü Dergisi – Mustafa Kemal University Journal of Social Sciences Institute*, 14/37:240.

Urartian bronze belts were strongly hierarchical both by means of typological assessments based on their thematical displays and by means of representation of essential iconographical elements with meaningful symbolism, which taken as a whole system of symbols can be regarded as the iconographical system of strictly regulated, hierarchically arranged and classified by precise degrees of essential iconographical elements. Those essentially important symbolical elements were extremely differing in their typological variables, were strictly hierarchical by contextual-thematic relevance and were classified by their overall functional significances. By its inmost spiritual essentiality those creative-constructive iconographical elements of symbolic meaningfulness were recognized, distinguished and classified by specially measured degrees, ranging from to. **a) from Secondary to Important; b) from Detail to Main; c) from Part to Whole; d) from Component to Complete; e) from Simple to Complex; f) from Relative to Absolute; g) from Non-Animated to Animated; h) from Natural to Supernatural; i) from Real to Surreal; j) from Evident to Imaginary; k) from Earthly to Celestial; l) from Physical to Metaphysical; m) from Material to Spiritual; n) from Human to Divine; o) from Mannish to Godly; p) from Substance to Essence; q) from Known to Unknown; r) from Eyewitness to Mystery, etc.** The various evident examples of the essential creative-constructive iconographical elements of Urartian belts that carry in themselves the notions of symbolic meaningfulness include, but not limited to: **a) geometrical dots, lines, angles, shapes, forms, figures, ornamental parts and decorative motifs; b) organical, vegetation and floral motives; c) Sacred Trees; d) special symbols – simple decorative, composite symbolical (with various meaningfulness) and cosmogonical (planets, stars, celestial objects); e) Winged Sun-Disks; f) simple animals (non-composite) main (sacred) and secondary; g) horses with horse-riders and military horse-carts; h) mythological (composite) animals made from various animal parts; i) mythological (double composite) imaginary beasts and divine deities made from various animal and human parts (usually, animal body with the human head, or, vice-versa, human body with the human head); j) human (simple) characters – military (horsemen and horse-cart riders, soldiers, warriors of various rank), civil (parts of various scenes), priests and clergy (parts of liturgical and ritual-worshipping scenes); k) human (simple) characters – gods and divinities of lower rank; l) human (composite) characters with animalistic attachments – mostly chief gods (main gods of the pantheon) of Urartian religious pantheon – Haldi, Teisheba and Shivini; m) iconographical (simple composite) elements created from the merger of two or more parts, portrayed as a whole detail or essential part of a thematic scenery; n) iconographical elements (amalgamated composite) created from two or more parts, portrayed as a multi-part conflux or essential part of a thematic scenery; o) iconographical elements groups, depicted separately by form and bound to each other by contextual closeness and meaningful affinity, forming group-elements that are united by own context; p) iconographical contextual parts, secluding separate iconographical parts and including group-elements into thematical subcontext, where all iconographical units are united not by own, but by higher superimposed context, etc.** Concerning the hierarchical patterns of urartian metalwork pieces, and, especially bronze belts, T. Lorenz noted in his article titled “Urartian Belts from Martin von Wagner Museum of the University of Wurzburg”¹⁰ that the overall development of urartian artistic mindfulness went on harmonious path from simple to complex, from ornamental motifs to narrative thematic of symbolic meaningfulness.

¹⁰ Lorenz, T.

1984 Urartäischer Bronzegurt im Martin von Wagner Museum der Universität Würzburg, *Archäologischer Anzeiger*, 1:7.

It is quite obvious and self-evident that the well-elaborated creation and effective implementation of such a complicated system of meaningful symbols on Urartian bronze belts that were respectably regarded as **Sacred Talisman, Holy Amulets** or **Mini-Temples of individual use** among ancient urartians, indeed, was **the highest achievement, genial invention and superb proof of the originality and ingenuity of urartian civilization**, the culture of which successfully flourished in Anatolia (Asia Minor). Also, the very purpose and functionality of belts as sacred objects was in affirming and strengthening the core beliefs of ancient inhabitants of Urartu; to serves as reliable identifiers of their national identity and help them in to overcome hardships of war and challenges of peaceful existence. So, were urartians believing to the world other than physical one? Indeed, that inquiry constitute the key question, because their believes were the core of their existential views on law-governed reality and beyond, and their faith was the basis of their entire religious-philosophical ideology. In his remarkable article titled “Tradition of Entombing and Rituals Related to Death in Urartu” D. Yiğitpaşa writes:”**Urartians believed in life after death as in the modern culture**. Entombing, rituals related with death, provisions and gifts left in tomb which have seen through the human history have been the signs that **prove they believe the life after death**. We have obtained information about this task from materials of oblation, helmet, belt and seal mostly¹¹”. Those quite informative references to the archaeological evidence on the believe of urartians on life after death, or, **Afterlife**, are quite valuable in terms of better understanding on significance they have given on the ritual culture devoted to spiritual world. Afterlife was also a basic direction of devotional deeds: rituals and ceremonies of worship, libation, praying to spirits of animals, mythological beasts and mythological creatures, souls of divinities and gods.

Urartian bronze belts with their rich realistic and mythological thematic scenes virtually covered all symbolic variables of special meaningfulness that were constituting the conceptions of urartians of real earthly world and mythological imaginary divine domain. Belts have all kinds of images with visionary iconographical compositions from both worlds, real and mythological – animals real and mythological, scenes of hunt and war, compositions of simple decors with divine symbols, men and gods. Yet, **the meaningful feelings and essential perceptions on how ancient urartians reacted on death as journey to Aftrelife, and, acted on their believes while being in meaningful transition between those two worlds, real and mythological, constitute the subject of very special historic-archaeological interest**. Therefore, the following inquiry of reasonable concerns raises by itself naturally, demanding the comprehensible explaining on how the belts depicted the liturgical, ritual-worshipping scenes of ancient urartians in their iconography.

Urartian bronze belts with ritual-worshipping scenes comprise a special typological group within the classification system of those sacred artifacts. R. Merhav classify this special kind of belts as **narrow type**, describing the profound differences they have comparing to other belt groups¹². Particularly, besides having **exceptional narrowness** with the quite narrow width (height) with an average of 6 cm, this belt types differ by the **sort of the material used** and by the **technological way of production**. Belts with ritual-

¹¹ Yiğitpaşa, D.

2010 Urartu Ölü Gömme Gelenekleri ve Ölümle İlgili Ritüeller, *Atatürk Üniversitesi Güzel Sanatlar Enstitüsü Dergisi, Erzurum*, 25: 177.

¹² Merhav, R.

1991 *Urartu – A Metalworking Center in the First Millennium B.C.E. - Grouping and Dating of Bronze Belts*, Israel Museum, Jerusalem, page 160, figure 6.

worshipping scenes were made from **much thicker metal sheets** than those of ordinary belts. The metalworking methods of their manufacture was dissimilar compared to traditional ways of belt making – usage of **incising and punching techniques from only one side (instead of two sides as in other types of belts)** was utilized for creating iconographical relief images in ritual-worshipping belts' surface. The peculiarity of ritual-worshipping belts was also expressed in **different fashion of lace fastening** and **unlike manner of wearing**. Their edges had no perforated holes as in other types and had no loops with special attachment parts; only one to three large size holes at their endings, made in the middle of the surface's right or left edges. The extreme narrowness and the deviational ways of lace fastening and wearing suggested an alternative fashion for clothing, and, therefore, are suggestive to the version that **ritual-worshipping belts were worn by females – by girls and mature women alike**. The iconographical hint in favor of such a guessing is in the firm fact, that **ritual-worshipping belts were the only type of Urartian belts that contained images of women**. Moreover, often **women occupied the central place and regarded as central figures** in the iconographical context of ritual-worshipping scenery depicted. It is also worth mentioning, that **women also constituted the majority of human characters on some ritual-worshipping belts**. On the particular example from the J.H.Kellner's catalog brought forth by R. Merhav we see the drawing of the half of the belt, where numerous details and characters of various types are available. a) whole double-dot borders along the entire perimeter of the belt, as well as two parallel double-dot crossing the middle section of the belt's surface and dividing into three parts – upper register with image scenery, lower register with image scenery and empty space in and between them (the perforated hole for belt's lace fastening is located at the middle empty space at the right side); b) at the lower register there is an appearance of various women figures moving from left to right into liturgical procession with buckets and some sort of gifts or donations to deities of Afterlife; at the left and right sides of the register there are two basin type altars along with two women figures at the opposites sides of it, making some kind of worshipping action, probably, pouring Holy Water or some sort of a liquid into basin altar, in the middle section there is a long ritual table with two women at each side, stretching some sort of a clothing cover over the surface of the table, possibly, preparing a banquet or a feast in remembrance of the dead, or, in the contrary, in celebration of one the religious festivities (it could be both mourning or celebrating occasions depicted on the belt; although, remembrance of the dead was practiced quite often in ancient Urartu), from the left side of the table there are nine women figures moving from left to right, from the right side – two, moving in the same direction as others; c) the depictions found in the upper register also are quite remarkable, on the left side there is a remarkable display of architectural ensemble, consisting from a long protracting fortress wall, two main gate of different shapes – rectangular and oval, with five outer and four inner towers, and eight buttresses with multi-angled protrusions at the level of the fortress; from the right side figures of ten women moving into procession from left to right are seen. The other example of the belt shown at the end of R. Merhav's article is medium quality black and white photo with hardly recognizable details in almost completely dark background, through which we are able to distinguish the overall features of the artifact with slight damages from the left side. Some iconographical images of that belt include: a) the bordering along the entire perimeter of belt's surface, made of blob-alike cone motifs, located in the middle of belt's surface are six secluded registers made from double dash-dots bordering lines, legibly observable from right to left – first register go of four mythological birds moving from right to left; so are the details of the second register; registers five and six also have same images of sacred birds, with only noticeable difference of moving from left to right (creating the symmetrical image proportion compared to the other side); register number three has images of one divine bird and three sheep (regarded as animals of

secondary significance in Urartian animal pantheon and possibly, intended for making the sacrifice offering to gods, deities and spirits) moving from right to left, and, register number four depicts the same number of animals, one sacred bird and three sheep, only presented in obverse order, first come three sheep and then one divine bird, all moving oppositely, from left to right. Main details of above-mentioned belt are following: a) from the very right, there is an architectural image of a fortress with features of three high outer towers, two fortress roof-level side towers, three windows in the middle of high towers, and three buttresses with multi-angled protrusions, and one half-circled gate entrance; from the very left, same architectural image is available; b) second ensemble of main details include the composition made of three priests, located at the right and left sides of the belt's surface, before the central image; on the right side, priests hold cups, bowls or chalices for ritual drinking, on the left side, one priests holds bowl or chalice, and other two grab long-necked, flask-shaped bottles, jugs or canteens with sacred drink, most likely vine; c) the main central figure of belt's liturgical composition is there is a richly decorated picture of a ritual table with the symbolical object of high esteem, parts of which are formed as sun-shaped disk and half-moon crescents, thus, as a whole, making a sacred lotus-type flower; in a high large-size throne sits an urartian female deity, possibly the supreme goddess Arubani (Warubani) or Bagmashtu (Bagbartu), and, besides her, there is a figure of a female-servant standing behind the throne.

Surprisingly, as we are continuing to assess the essential image components and important iconographical elements of ritual-worshipping Urartian belts, we are noticing not only the avail of female portraits as liturgical procession personages, but also the presence of newer, unusual types of common and mythological animal species not found in other types of belts, but, feasible only in liturgical procession and ritual-worshipping scenes in this particular group of belts. Particularly, besides **sheep** and **mythological bird** portraiture, in other belts of this series we see depicted representations of another important specie, the inhabitants of water environment – **fish**. Interestingly, in the article titled “Representations of Fish in Urartian Culture and Thoughts on a Bronze fish figurine from Ayanis Fortress” two co-authors, A. Batmaz and A. Uhri reflect on the distinctive role of a fish culture in urartian culture, specifying the religious significance of their images through the identification of their religious meanings¹³. Among the examples of various ritual objects with artistic representations of fishes' images, particularly noteworthy is the bronze figurine with fish's image found in Ayanis fortress, as well as some other artifacts found in urartian cultural centers on the shores of lake Van. They also provide as illustrations of sacral objects with images of fish cult some outstanding examples of ritual-worshipping belts from famous U. Seidl's catalog of urartian bronze artifacts. photo number 9 (Photos 43a, 42a and 40c in Seidl's catalog) with three excellent fragment pieces of ritual-worshipping belts and photo number 10 (photo 40b in Seidl's catalog), and, the drawing number 11 (drawing A in Seidl's catalog). Truly, U. Seidl's catalog, titled “Bronze-making Art of Urartu”¹⁴ is considered to be one of the best sources on the systematization of urartian bronze objects with comprehensive explanations of their functional features and excellently made drawings illustrations and high-quality photos. Actually, Seidl's catalog is also highly valued in studies of Urartian

¹³ Batmaz, A., Uhri, A.

2008 Urartu Kültüründe Balık Betimlemesi ve Ayanis Kalesi'nden Tunç Bir Balık Figürini Üzerine Düşünceler, *Arkeoloji Dergisi*, 1:65.

¹⁴ Seidl, U.

2004 *Bronzekunst Urartus*, Verlag Philipp Von Zabern, Mainz am Rhein, pages 105, 106, 139, 141-143.

bronze belts due to overwhelming quantity and outstanding quality of well-represented examples found here. The archeological material of ritual-worshipping belts is very rich too. Especially it is worth outlining the following example of picture drawings – page 139 picture 97, 98, page 141 picture 99, page 142 picture 100, page 143 picture 102 (10 fragments with ritual-worshipping scenes included), page 105 picture 103 (2 images), page 106 picture 104 (20 images) – overall 32 images; and the following examples of black and white photos – table 39 (4 photos), table 40 (6 photos) table 41 (2 photos), table 42 (4 photos), table 43 (4 photos), table 44 (8 photos), table 45 (6 photos) – overall 7 tables with 34 photos: The ritual-worshipping belt's material presented by whole and partial belts, as well as with their numerous fragment is so abundant and extensive that it will require to conduct separate analytical research in order to properly identify all essential iconographical elements and their compositional formulas available in this catalog. From picture drawings the remarkable iconographical elements that are worth paying a great deal of attention are the following one: picture 97 has the depiction of **unknown composite animal – half-horse, half-bull with horns and long nose with circular ending**, as well as depictions of women drinking from jugs and playing a music around the altar of half-triangular, half-rectangular shape; picture 98 depicts a liturgy conducted by women-priestesses around **unusually small table-altar with rectangular frame, straight stands and backwardly raised triangular holdings with lotus-alike worshipping object**; picture 99 has unique features of a **liturgical cart drive either by horses or oxen** (only part of the animal remained seen), playing **various types of unfamiliar musical instruments by women-priestesses reminding a guitar, flute, lyre or cithara, cymbal or handheld drum**, the image of a small liturgical stand with fire and the cauldron with bulls heads on it, around which are two priestesses (the figure of one is only partially seen) standing on small liturgical stool-tabouret platform and pouring a cup of some sort of a liquid (probably holy water) into it; picture 100 has a depiction of a musician holding **an unknown musical instrument of rectangular shape reminding a handheld drum or cymbal**; picture 102-1 portrays urartian goddess sitting on a medium (not a high one) throne behind which there are two servants – one male and one female, and in front of the throne there is a **liturgical table with flower-alike adornments and a priest performing a religious ceremony with shapes of sun disk and a moon crescent**, this picture is also remarkable in terms of showing people of both sexes in one ceremonial scene; picture 102-7 shows very **unusual liturgical furniture piece, reminding a table having legs with bull-hoof endings**; picture 102-9 has unordinary detail of a **priest behind goddesses throne holding in hands a bucket with holy substance (probably holy water or a liturgical vine) and a ritual fan with six straw-like endings**; picture 102-10 shows unusual scene of a goddess on a throne and a ritual table with legs with bull-hoof endings on front, **on the surface of which the holy lotus-alike object and the head of a calf are found**, with two priests behind, one holding a jug with some liquid (water or vine) with one raised hand and a holy bucket with the lower other, **another priest has two unknown objects on hands, on the lowered hand he has some balm or incense and with the other a strange object that could either be a flag on a pole or banner, or, brush or fetlock**; picture 102-11 shows **the priest around the table holding some sort of a globe or blob-alike ball divided on two-half sphere by a dividing line**, and on the ritual table strange shape are noticeable, looking like head and corpse of a bird; picture 102-13 is similar by composition the previous ones, with the exception of the portraits of three priests behind the throne, **two of which are holding long ritual chains and small ritual cups in their hands**, and the third one holds smaller version of previously mentioned object of **a flag on a pole or banner, or, brush or fetlock with smaller pole and wider sides**; picture 103 has some **rare bordering sharp shapes of very large triangles with acute angles** and outstanding panoramic view of a city fortress; picture 104-3 had a nice view of well-decorated wall

towers of a fortress-castle; as well as a **large oval door decorated with circles, round-shape disks with core dots in a center and obliquely skew rectangular shapes made from parallel lines**; picture 104 displays a **rare type of a fortress building with no high towers and four buttresses with multiangled step endings, having column-type protruding wall fragments and fourteen windows looking out from a building structure, reminder that this architectural erection is has not only military use, but also a civil functionality**; picture 104-19 displays a spectacular black painted, triangular shaped high towers with three solid disks around each sharpened ending of a tower, with eight small round windows or defensive apertures from lower side of tower's structure and two massive lines above a oval shaped gate with over forty windows or defensive-apertures, twenty on each lower and higher lines, and two lowest sides of high towers have two additional lattice-grids entrances for moving infantry troops and cavalry in and out of the castle area; all other fragments of the picture 104 display a large variety of architectural modifications of castle-fortresses with five or even six towers, and no other model of a fortress repeats the other, each one is quite unique and unrepeatably: Many remarkable iconographic discoveries are possible to get from photos of Seidl's catalogue: table 39b has a photo of a belt detail with images of a **mythological bird with lion's paths and a massive head with the huge beak**, apparently no such bird exist in the nature and it is rather running than flying bird since it has a massive size and a great mass, the picture of **fish that has a very odd, unrealistic or imaginary shape** also available here; table 39d depicts a liturgical or banquet scene with the **table of atypical shape reminding the letter M with table-clothing and sacral objects on its surface**, on the left side the shape of the mythological bird is seen; table 40a shows a running mythological bird with the composite figure consisting from the fish's tale, high-raised wings (non-typical for other mythological birds from the same series of ritual-worshipping belts) and a longer neck ending with hairy half-circles reminding a beard, with smaller head and sharper beak; table 40c portrays **two dancing female figures, one of whom holds a guitar-type instrument in hand**, with figures of sacral fishes around the scene; table 40 d has a scene with ritual table with addition of excessive elements, usually not available on those type of depictions – running horses of small size; table 40f has quite extraordinary images of three types of animals – from right to left, there are **two fishes with large proportions and emphasized imaginativeness**, in the center there is a most **unique mythological beast with long legs of unknown type, back legs are thinner and front legs are much thicker, all legs have lion paths with large claws, the beast has sharply raised lion tail, "angel-type" wings and smaller head with sharper beak and opened mouth, on the top of the head there is a royal or mythological cockade or hairy hat**, beast holds very large and beautiful horned animal, mountain goat, gazelle or antelope; table 40g got very bizarre depiction of absolutely same mythological beast, that we just described, with the only strange exception of having the head cockade exchanged for thick short horns that are retroverted backwards, or, simple saying, here we have **mythological composite bird with retroverted horns**; table 41 has a photo of a mythological composite bird, four imaginary fishes and three sheep of strangely thin snout and hardly identifiable shapes, **the mythological bird by its overall figure outlines resembles to winged composite animals or divinities, not usually happening in those type of belts**; table 42b displays **very uncommon type of a mythological bird that has a shape and tale of fat fish, legs are thin and concavo-convex, long wings of an eagle extended backwards and a narrow snout of horse or dragon face**; table 4c shows a ritual table with **huge moon-crescent adorned by circular motives that reminds by its distinctive shape a boat, ship or even imaginary sailing ark**; table 43a has a photo of a composition made from **mythological bird with slim figure, large high cockade and a strange tail made from triangular shaped parts and**

reminding a large concave weep, three fishes, two dancers with musical instrument and much smaller mythological bird; table 43b continues displaying iconography of the same belt and on the right side of it shows **quite singular mythological beast with slim miniature body, light flexible legs, well-shapes agile wings, face of a dragon with strangely hanging pennant horns the ending of which are slightly protruding forward just like thick bunch of hairy bundled sheaf**, on the righter side the figure of much smaller mythological bird is barely visible; table 43d shows an **exceptionally rare, queer image which is a mythological creature, rather than mythological beats since it has a figurative body basis of a human with slim proportions and short muscular legs, one of which is holding some sort of a sacred object that is hard to distinguish, perhaps a small-size chick of a bird, and the other holds a long protracted object of rectangular shape that looks like a big bucket, elegant wings folded oppositely to each other on forty five degrees and a delicate face with fine features, long concave beak with slightly folded endings and opened mouth, ear of a donkey or hare (hardly a horn since it is too thin) and cockade made of thick hairy lines made from straight bundles**; table 45f points out into a weird image that is hard to explain by means of ordinary logic – **two mythological birds standing in opposite direction and facing off each other, connected to each other by long flexing rope (well could be the allegorical image of lightning or magical energy from mythological source) attached from their necks**. Other photos of ritual-worshipping belts from Seidl's catalog are also quite worthy of undiverted attention, although their iconographical motifs are ordinary in series or repeat the outlines of above-discussed pictures.

As we can be well admonished from the first-stage analyses of ritual-worshipping belts' iconographical elements of Seidl's catalogue that is really at the very beginning stage and very far from being complete, book-catalogues of urartian metalwork where the section with examples of belts and their fragmental parts are readily available, after all, play very big role in the thorough studies of Urartian bronze belts. H.J. Kellner's catalogue also has remarkable drawings with many outstanding examples of ritual-worshipping belts, noticeable both by avail of remarkable iconographical elements and excellent thematic sceneries. From the outstanding belts with iconographical elements not found or hardly found anywhere else, in Kellner's catalogue we can mention the drawings of the following examples: drawing 251 has impressive theme with figures of four minor mythological birds between swastika signs, two minor mythological birds at the left end side, one major mythological bird with the fish's tail and body, long protracted wings, short neck with slim head and long beak, one peculiar mythological beast with body and head of a bull and large extended wings, one of which is pointed straight out forward, and the other is raised to the forty five degree backwards; **two exceptionally delineated signs of swastika cross with rectangularly shaped hollow centers** (the original use of swastikas usually attributed to civilizations of much later periods of Indo-Aryan cultures, since the world swastika in Sanskrit means "conducive to well being or auspicious", and in Hinduism swastika symbolizes "surya" – the sun, prosperity and good luck), apparently the origins of swastika sign applies to Anatolia (Asia Minor) part of the ancient world and by timely measures of historical timetable goes far before the time period of Indo-Aryans, and, as it provided eyewitness by essential iconographical elements of Urartian ritual-worshipping belts, in **Urartu swastikas were associated with the culture and the worship of sun, as were the symbols of the sun and moon-crescent used as sacral objects and depicted on ritual tables**; drawing 256 has miraculous depictions of mythological beings composed from human and animal parts, from the legs, paws, tails and corpus of the lion, abstractedly shaped flapped wings, and heads of human deities with single horns resembling hats with screwed stripes and round endings at the very top; another

notable mythological being also consists from human and animal parts. tail and body of a fish, two short strong legs with lion paws, face of a human with accurate long hairstyle and elongated thin beard, two odd-looking hands with two long nipper-fingers of scorpion claws, holding with one raised hand a bowl, and with the lowered one the rectangular bucket; other markable mythological iconographical personages include two mythological birds located at the very right edge of the belt; they are standing oppositely to each other in close proximity, their bodies consists of fish tales and body, two strong short legs with lion paws, large high-raised wings, small heads with large hairy cockades and very long narrow beaks with extremely sharp and slightly curved endings tips; next to the symmetrically opposed birds scene there is a very uncommon depiction of two mythological winged horned animals, perhaps, mountain goats, wild gazelles or orixes, standing oppositely at the left and right sides of the very rare variety of Sacred Tree, consisting of a large stem and single branches with fruit, and, seemingly wanting to eat its divine fruit-alike offsprings; finally, other notable detail of this incredible belt is the scene of two priestesses standing at the left and right sides of **large libation vase that is standing on circular base and measuring as tall as the half of average human height**, priestesses are conducting a ritual and pouring a sacred liquid into it by their sacral jugs; drawing 261 contains an **unusual image of ritual stand in a form of narrow tall column**, located right near the throne of a goddess, on the top of the ritual column-stand there are petals of a sacred object of a moon-crescent form; drawing 269 displays another rare variety of libation vessel, consisting from two rounded disk-type, bowl-shaped parts laying on top of each other as layers and connected by narrower and shorter round pallet-tube; the other belt fragment here include a depiction of scarcely happening image of a rectangular ritual stand covered with table-cloth linen and a **sacral object in a rarest form of two moon crescents-petals, smaller putted on top of bigger one, and with the symbol of sun disk at the very top of two moon crescent-petals**; drawing 279, on the contrary, illustrates **the other, “common” type of the same sacral object, consisting only from one strongly bent, concave-shaped moon crescent-petal and a ball-shaped symbol of the sun located at the top of it**. The other substantially important example of the necessitation of ritual-worshipping belts’ iconographical details’ analytical review is the drawing 263 from Kellner’s catalog, where within the scenery of the banquet procession along with dance, music and ritual drinking there is an image of **ritual table with the moon-crescent-petals, where the traditionally acceptable sun-disk compositional element is substituted by two crisscrossed moon crescent resembling sharpened horns; and, most importantly, from one of the horns clouds of smoke got scattered in cloud and dissipated on a higher space soon after; the smoke from the moon-crescent means only one substantially important phenomenon with paramount significance – the ritual incense burning resultant of rising smoke was conducted**, meaning that **this particular ritual was an act of sacral devotion to souls of deceased or to spirits of mythological creatures, divine deities and gods of urartian religious pantheon**. By the way, this exceptional example of ritual-worshipping Urartian belt fragment as the illustration number 17 was included in the article of H. Ergurer titled “Portraying of Humans on the Belts of Urartu”¹⁵, where the author stressed an importance on the fact that the great statehood of Urartu became the primary cultural center among many prominent Anatolian civilizations, having highly centralized political authority, cultural unity and wealth. She emphasized the great significance of Urartian belts as original works in the field of art, where artistic representations served as sources of stylistic and iconographic ornamentations and scenes

¹⁵ Ergurer, H.

2010 Urartu Kemerleri Üzerindeki İnsan Tasvirleri, *Atatürk Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü Dergisi*, 14/2:243-264.

with various elements, thus, making Urartian belts objects comparable to multifarious palette of variegated depictions, ranging from scenes of naturalistic representations to images of fantastic creatures. Author especially concentrates on the topic of human characters portrayals in Urartian belts within various thematic settings of manifold iconographical contexts, and, the special significance is given to depictions of human characters within the ritual-worshipping contexts illustrated.

While expressing our appreciation of huge significance of Kellner's catalog in terms of being so far the only book-catalog in the world that attempted to make a universal compilation of Urartian bronze belts in existence, including belt examples from various museums and collections around the globe, we must notice its minor disadvantage – the avail of drawings only and the complete lack of photographic illustrations. Yet, fortunately for us, some of the other major catalogs from various museums provide good quality photos of the same belt examples, that were presented in Kellner's catalog. For example, the famous book-catalog of O. Taşyürek titles "The Urartian belts in the Adana regional museum"¹⁶ has some remarkable examples of ritual-worshipping belts and their fragments, including some drawings and more photos of them. Particularly, some fine examples of ritual-worshipping belt's image from Taşyürek's catalogue are absolutely the same belts as in Kellner's drawings. photos 21, 22 (table 61 drawing 237); 24 (table 68 drawing 273), 25, 26, 27 (table 67 drawing 251). Those belts were already discussed in details. Only the photo 23 from this catalogue depicting the belt fragment with architectural landscape of six medium towers and a gate from this is not found in Kellner's registry. Yet, the picture of that very architectural detail is available in Figure 5 from Taşyürek's catalogue, so, fortunately, for each and every photo presented there is a corresponding drawing, either covering the detail or the whole belt. Nevertheless, six high-quality black and white photos from this catalog combined excellent drawings from Kellner's catalog are perfectly completing each other, creating a sophisticated understanding of belt's composition and assemblage of iconographical elements. Taşyürek's catalogue is a fine example of medium-size registry of Urartian belts of various typology from local Turkish museums. Yet, surprisingly there is another museum at the different part of the world that issued a catalog of urartian artifacts, depicting mainly with depictions of metalworking produce, including nice examples of Urartian bronze belts – the Ancient Orient Museum in Tokyo, Japan¹⁷. Peculiarly, among some exceptional examples of Urartian belts, there are few paragons of ritual-worshipping type and some of those miraculously have drawings in Kellner's catalog. Those remarkable examples include plate XXII – photo of the whole belt and five photos of various segmental parts of ritual-worshipping belt [the right side of the same belt] (table 67 drawing 256), plate XXIII – 6 photos of various segmental parts of ritual-worshipping belt [the left side of the same belt] (table 67 drawing 256). Contrarily, plate XXIV of Ancient Orient Museum's catalog is not found in the Kellner's catalog. Yet, it has photos of excellently preserved ritual-worshipping belt and four photos of its segmental parts, as well as the fragmental part of another ritual-worshipping belt. The photos of plate XXIV include sphinx-type mythological creature with long legs with lion paws, long tail of unfamiliar kind, massive folded abstract wings, eagle's head with well-fashioned cockade and long beak with rounded concave tip. Next creature from the photo of this plate is mythological winged bull of extraordinary type, with long

¹⁶ Taşyürek, O.A.

1975 *Adana bölge müzesindeki urartu kemerleri – The Urartian belts in the Adana regional museum*, Adana Eski Eserleri Sevenler Derneği Yay, Donmez, Ankara, photos 21, 22, 24, 25, 26, 27.

¹⁷ Tanabe, K., Akora, H., Hayashi, T., Miyashita, S., Ishida, K.

1982 *Studies in the Urartian Bronze Objects from Japanese Collections (1)*, *Bulletin of the Ancient Orient Museum, Tokyo*, IV:plates XXII, XXIII, XXIV.

strong legs ending on unusually large hoofs, lion's tail is raised high above and ends up with tied bunch of thick hairs, wings are accurately folded and straightly directed backwards, neck and face are decorated with round line fragments, ears are long and horns are in upward position. After that there is a photo of a mythological eagle creature, which looks quite similar to the first one, but it is heading to opposite direction. The column from five mythological birds, moving from the right edge of the belt to the left are coming next in series of mythological beasts on this belt, they are relatively small in size compared to other creatures, having fish's tail and body along with slim heads without any cockades and long sharp beaks. Finally, the last photo of main imaginary character portrayed in another ritual-worshipping belt fragment appears in the form of winged mythological creature of extraordinary type and unusual proportions of composite parts. It has lion's legs with huge paws, lion's tail lowered towards the ground level, elegant long body, well-shaped abstract wings in half-flapped and half-raised position, round hat, helmet or crown with sharpened end point, and, most importantly, strangely looking and hardly distinguishable, human-looking face with atypical horns that grow out from a cheek and getting raised up and lowered down a bit, as well as strangely concaved nose that looks like a miniature beak. Ancient Orient Museum's catalog is quite helpful in terms of findings photos of some drawings of Kellner's catalog, as well as in terms of finding some photographic illustrations of belts and their segmented fragments that enrich the collection of known mythological creatures of ritual-worshipping contexts. Remarkably, some additional drawings and photos of ritual-worshipping belts previously found in both Kellner's and Ancient Orient Museum's catalogs are presented by S. Myashita in article titled "Banquet Scenes on Urartian Belts"¹⁸. Author provides the resume-statement on the iconography of Urartian ritual-worshipping belts and emphasized the role of human characters, especially women, in the iconographical portrayals of liturgical, ritual and worshipping scenes.

Interestingly, some impressive examples of Urartian belts and their fragmental parts with ritual-worshipping context can be found not only in big book-catalogues that cover a broad range of urartian metalwork types, but, sometimes, those type of belts are mentioned in various scientific articles on urartian thematic. Moreover, many artifacts that are described in those articles often do not belong to big museum collections, but, on the contrary, can be found in some private collections. The article "An Urartian Belt and Other Unpublished Objects from a Private Collection"¹⁹ written by E. Ertman has an illustration of an Urartian ritual-worshipping belt fragment that is presented as illustrative Plate 7.2.3, found at the ending part of this article. The illustrating photo depict a fragment of a belt with the scene of four tower castle, the slim figure of a mythological bird on the left and the contours of a sacred fish from the right. Author refers to this belt as to one that is from Çavuştepe (Sardurihinili). He points out readers' attention to the structure he defines as "truss platforms" of urartian castle tower and makes a hypothetical assumption that those structures may have been served as platforms for deities when receiving homage or votive gifts. Nevertheless, E. Ertman expresses hope that throughout the process of extensive studies the exact symbolism and iconographical significance of "truss platforms" and their relation to urartian deities will be revealed. While we continued our research of other bibliographical sources on Urartian ritual-worshipping belts, we found out an interesting fact that two such

¹⁸ Miyashita, S.

1983 La scène du banquet dans les ceintures urartéennes, *Festschrift Namio Egami - Egami Namio*, V: 299-322.

¹⁹ Ertman, E.

1994 An Urartian belt and other unpublished objects from a private collection, *Anatolian Iron Ages*, 3:65, 71, plate 7.2.3.

belts found in A. Erzen's book titled "Çavuştepe I – Urartian Architectural Monuments of the 7-th and 6-th Centuries B.C. and a Necropolis of the Middle Age"²⁰ in two photos making an illustrative part of plate XXXIV, were also available in three previously mentioned publications. a) as photo 23 in Taşyürek's catalogue (Plate XXXIV-a), b) as plate III-E in Miyashita's article (Plate XXXIV-b); c) as plate 7.2.3 in Ertman's article (Plate XXXIV-b).

When researching various kinds of Urartian belts, and, especially, the ritual-worshipping types, each and every newly rediscovered artifact is becoming extremely precious by means of finding our new iconographical elements, thematic developments and narrative scenarios. Therefore, no matter on what particular type of bibliographical source we rely, huge or medium size book-catalogs or journal articles, each and every piece of the relevant archeological material, each and every detail is becoming very essential as a great deal of contribution to the process of our research. Good example of such bibliographical source is an article of A. Çilingiroğlu titled "A Banquet Scene on one Urartian Belt Fragment"²¹, where the ritual-worshipping scenes from the Van's museum belt fragment is presented. This piece appeared to be unique by the introduction of many iconographical elements and narrative motives not found in other ritual-worshipping belts or their fragmentary parts. Particularly, worth-mentioning are: richly decorated throne of urartian goddess, the variant names are – Arubani/Warubani or Bagbartu/Bagmashtu, with the exceptionally unique ritual object detail above the throne in a form of disk adorned by twelve buds with beautiful flower endings. Here the number 12 may well represent the 12 months of the year, the round circle above the goddess's throne may well symbolize the sun disk, and the buds with flowers may have special meaningfulness in terms of happiness and joy. This belt is unique by the availability of certain iconographical composition of divine meaning, not found at all in other ritual-worshipping belts – the Sacred Tree with Winged Sun-Disk at the right side of the belt's surface, secluded in separate frame (usually found in another belt types, but not in this particular one). Another Winged Sun-Disk and mysterious ritual object with four wing-like shapes and some bundle protrusion appears on the main surface part of the belt fragment. There is also another rare and unusual version of sacral object depicted on the ritual table in front of the goddess – huge moon crescent with five smaller moo-crescent wrapped inside the big one. Overall, this belt fragment is quite exceptional by means of having some feature of another belt types combined with sacral objects unextended in other belts' iconography.

Nevertheless, despite the fact of appearance of some rare, specific and undistributed sacral objects in iconography of Urartian ritual-worshipping belts, most of the ritual-worshipping items are permanently present in the iconographical set, changing from belt to belt their esthetical forms and functional applications. The best example of such an important iconographic component is the omnipresent object of throne, that has a specific function to serve as a sitting accommodation for urartian goddess. Yet, according to opinion expressed by B. Gökce in her article titled "Women and Their Status in Urartu: A Critical Review"²², it may well be that instead of goddesses the other kinds of high-status women who sat down on

²⁰ Erzen, A.

1988 *Çavuştepe I – Urartian Architectural Monuments of the 7-th and 6-th Centuries B.C. and a Necropolis of the Middle Age*, Atatürk Supreme Council for Culture, Language and History Publications of the Turkish Historical Society Series V, Number 37, Türk Tarih Kurumu Basımevi, plate XXXIV – a, b.

²¹ Çilingiroğlu, A.

1991 Bir Urartu Kemer Parçası Üzerindeki "Ziyafet Sahnesi", *Arkeoloji Dergisi*, II:16, picture1.

²² Gökce, B.

2014 Women and Their Status in Urartu: A Critical Review, *ANES (Ancient Near Eastern Studies)*, 51:242, 244 figure 1, 250 figure 2, 251 figure 3.

the throne could include urartian queens. Particularly, she mentioned such named of urartian queens mentioned in cuneiform inscriptions as Tariria, wife of Menua I and Qaquli, wife of Rusa II. It gives a thought on pursuing the objective of research on the aspects of functionality of various throne types depicted on ritual-worshipping belts. Yet, according of our conviction, regardless of the degree of certitude on who was portrayed sitting on urartian throne that was depicted on urartian belts, goddess or queen, she definitely has a highest position of worshipped and respected female, and, the religious status of the divinity. Another possibility of participation of queens and high-class women in liturgical and ritual processions could be established through their presence on banquet scenes, where they were not only eating food and drinking wine, but, also, had a good chance to worship their major and minor gods and goddesses, as well as to be honored themselves. The fact of presence of urartian queen and noblewomen in banquet festivities may well be established by the avail of their servants, both male and female. Moreover, it could seem traditionally inappropriate to conduct important public events without the inclusion of nobility and high-status layers of urartian population in those arrangements. B. Gocke also discussed the non-elite status of Urartian women, and, in broader range, the position of all women in Urartian territories, including female captives and slaves brought by force from other countries and conquered territories. Raising the issue of overall importance on knowing all vital aspects about the overall positions of all women in Urartu, she presumes that those women who were brought into urartian territory from abroad soon were able to effectively blend into urartian society and got assimilated into urartian population in terms of language, traditions, customs, beliefs and religious practices. She assumes that the adaptation of women of foreign origin to the life in Urartu was also conducted by means of various laborious activities, particularly by working in the fields of agriculture, manufacture and crafts. As tangible proofs of such an adaptation of foreign-origin women to various types of labor in Urartu she brought out both historical pieces of written and visual evidence – the reports written cuneiform inscriptions and the iconographical images of urartian belts. In that regard, she finds especially illustrative the images of working women and their labor instruments from iconographical scenery of ritual-worshipping belts – images of weaving looms and weaving women, women roving wool, women slivering wool, women preparing a felt and women weaving a rug. The role of women depicted on ritual-worshipping belts doesn't got restricted only by manufacturing labor. The other professional activities reflected in the iconography of belts include female musicians playing various familiar and unfamiliar musical instruments: tambourines, castanets, bowls, drums, obols, flutes, guitars, lyres and saz, etc. They were also performing elegant dancing. The other female occupations found in belt's narratives include scenes with female servants walking in processions and carrying various gifts (jewelry, clothing, fabrics, shoes, precious stones, incenses, food, drinks, etc.) and donations to priests, clergy, temples, spirits, mythological beings, gods and goddess. The females are depicted as priestesses serving to goddesses, queens and noblewomen and performing various functions – holding buckets with holy water or liquid, holding cups or jars and pouring holy water or liquid into big libation vessels, performing ritual ceremonies, praying, singing, chanting and conducting incense burning, waiving ritual fans, banners and symbols, and much more. Most likely, women were also preparing food, dishes and drinks for banquets and were decorating temple and palace rooms before banquets, festivities and liturgies. As the main group of artifacts that provided a historically reliable visual evidence on the status, activities and fashion of women in urartian society, ritual-worshipping belts must be considered as artifacts of high importance. B. Gökce also utilized the visual evidence from Urartian belts and other artistic objects to investigate the social-cultural aspects of clothing in Urartu, including types of clothing, fashion designing and functional

usage in the article titled “A Socio-Cultural View on Urartian Clothing”²³, providing many purposively useful illustrations on the subject of study.

The incredible variety of Urartian belt types, and, specifically, the multitude of ritual-worshipping belts’ typological contexts and iconographical variations of the same elements and figures, as well as, so much better, finding new examples is the archeological-historical discovery is serving as a source of inspirationally motivated research and given greatly valued priority in scientific studies of historical urartian heritage. One of those amazing cases of ritual-worshipping belts that previously were in private possession and got transferred into museum custody is well-described in the article of I. Ziffer titled “Four New Belts from the Land of Ararat and the Feast of the Women in Esther 1:9”²⁴. Author talks about in details about completely unknown examples of ritual-worshipping belts until their discovery due to transfer from private Shlomo Moussaieff Collection to Eretz Israel Museum in Tel Aviv. Miraculously, four belts survived long periods of alienation and appear to be in very good conditions: belt number 1 is fully preserved, with the width of 6.7 cm and the length of 70 cm; belt number 2 is fully preserved, with the width of 5.7-6.00 cm and the length of 72 cm; belt number 3 is partially preserved with some ostensible damages to the surface structure, consisting from four separate fragments, with the width of 6.8 cm and the length is not specified; belt number 4 is nearly fully preserved, consisting from six separate fragments, one of which got a hole in it, with the width of 6.8 – 7.00 cm and the length of 74 cm. The inmost iconographical themes and creative-constructive elements of those ritual-worshipping belts are extremely interesting. **The belt number one** is the only sample from four listed belts that has no accompanying drawing to the black and white photo, all other have photos and drawings for each belt, usually divided to two drawings and two photos due to length of the artifacts that creates a need for extension of visual presentation. Belt number one has a long frame stretching across the entire perimeter of the belt, decorated with single or double cones; the first creature is the four-legged winged mythological eagle beast with legs and paws of the lion, long tail standing straight and resembling a club, folded mythological wings, head and long sharp beak of an eagle, with crest-combed cockade; after the beast there are four running mythological birds, with bodies of and tails of the fish, with large flapped wings, with bare heads without cockades and medium size beaks, moving from left to right; following comes the major figure of mythological winged bull, with massive body, legs, hoofs, tail, body and horned head of the bull, and the large abstracted wings folded backwards in symbolic position; three mythological birds similar to above-described ones, but with the flatter heads and longer beaks follow after the mythological bull creature; close to the center of the composition there are figures of two servants holding ceremonial cups in their hands and standing near the ritual table with the sacral object consisting of large moon-crescent and smaller sun-disk; composition from three mythological birds similar to above-described ones moves to opposite direction – from right to left; the rest of the belt’s right side fully repeats the composition of the left one – with figures of mythological winged bull, four mythological birds and the winged mythological eagle beast. **The belt number two** has the following iconographical elements and the order of composition: four-legged winged mythological goat beast, with legs, paws and tail of the lion, folded abstract wings, long neck and the head of the goat with slightly screwed horns; eight mythological birds with

²³ Gökce, B.

2016 Urartu Giyim Kuşamına Sosyo-Kültürel Bir Bakış, *Tarih İncelemeleri Dergisi*, 31/2:445, picture 2.

²⁴ Ziffer, I.

2001 Four New Belts from the Land of Ararat and the Feast of the Women in Esther 1:9, in *S. Parpola and R.M. Whiting (eds.), Sex and Gender in the ancient Near East, Proceedings of the 47-th Rencontre Assyriologique Internationale, Helsinki, Finland, 2001, July 2-6, 47:645-657.*

tails and bodies of the fish, flapped wings, bare heads and long beaks are standing on top of each other by columns of four each, while each column is wrapped around by frame made of circles with core dot centers, and, in and between those two frames with birds there is one “neutral” frame with empty space, that separates lower bird column from upper one; next column is also wrapped the same way, inside of which there are two figures of female servants – one of them is playing a rectangular musical instrument resembling a harp and the other one is holding ceremonial cup, both female servants are pictured in dancing move, and this column is accompanied by “neutral” empty-spaced frame spaced vertically, after which comes come a composition of four running sheep, divided into two columns of four animals each, separated by horizontal “neutral” empty-space frame; next similarly constructed frame accompanied by another vertical by “neutral” empty-spaced frame depicts a major mythological winged deity with the massive body of unusual proportions, long thin legs with lion paws, long tail swirling like a bow or snake with cone-alike ending, half-raised flapped abstracted wings, nice-looking human face with long hairs and a round-cylindrical crown-hat of a divinity with two vertically raised slightly curved horns and a circular top ending with another empty circle as a core; similar composition from eight mythological birds divided into two column of four and separated by already-explained construction follows next; the next scene is ritual-ceremonial by its nature, portraying a goddess (Arubani/Warubani or Bagbartu/Bagmashtu) sitting on a richly decorated throne with lion-paws leg endings, the female servant on the back flapping with a fun above the goddess, and in another hand she has a bunch of ceremonial beads, the other female servant is standing in front of the goddess, with right raised hand she hands over a gift to the goddess, and, with the other, lowered hand she performs a ritual ceremony using a sacral object with one moo-crescent petal and sun-disk with barely seen conical tip; the right half of the belt’s composition depict figure moving from right to left, opposing in movement direction to those in the left side; we see the same depiction of eight mythological birds divided to two parts of four each (although due to the damage and structural surface breaking only figures of six birds are actually seen); same mythological creature with human face, although crown-hat design is slightly different, having a fibula-looking (exact shape forming is not distinguishable) object depicted on its main surface; next goes the group of eight sheep divided to two column of four (probably, used as sacrificial animals in ceremonies of dedication to gods, goddesses, deities, creatures, beasts and spirits), next frame depicts two dancing females, one is holding a round drum-like instrument (reminding modern drum-like instrument in Middle East that is called Riq, which is an oriental variety of tambourine; it us usually made from wooden frame, jingles and a thin, translucent head is made of fish or goat skin) and another one is clapping with two raised hands; after that there is another repetition of two columns of mythological birds making eight; and, finally, pretty much the same winged mythological goat beast appears (only this time its tail is seen due to the lack of the damage that was in a case of the left side of the belt) with the tail evenly curved like a bowl or snake and having no top ending. **The belt number three** is also quite unique by its original iconographic characteristics: the entire perimeter of the belt is framed by cone decors, separate frames for highlighting given figures of their group are made of circles with solid dots, from left to right, seclude in a frame, there is a massively huge figure of a major mythological bird, with features of elegantly shaped tail and body of the bird, large legs with sharp talons majestically raised abstractly featured wings, bold head with greatly looking big eye and sublimely curved large beak; the group of eight sheep divided into two columns of four, lower and upper ones, with no “neutral” empty frame between them, have this animals looking differing from those on previously described belts – they are running wild, eve with their upper legs raised in the air, and have slightly concave horns, not seen in previous belts’ examples; another frame shows the gorgeously-

looking contours of the castle-fortress are coming next, with one high, slim tall high tower and two larger lower side towers, one multiangled buttress in the middle roof, two rectangular side windows and one wide half-round gate-door; next we see two figures of musicians, one is a singer and she is good-fashioned and has a large headwear in a form of crested had made of long-extending feathers, another one in upside-down way holds in hands some strangely-looking stringed musical instrument, reminding a guitar, mandola or mandolin; the theme of ritual session is a theme of next scene, involving a goddess sitting on a throne with legs ending with lion paws, holding in one hand a ceremonial cup for drinking, and, in another one, a bunch of ritual beads; there are two female servants in a back of the throne, one is just standing and the other one holds two ceremonial fans in two hands, oppositely, one in upside-down position and another one raised straightly over the head of a goddess; the women standing in front of a goddess is a priestess, wearing a strangely-looking attire – the ceremonial hat-crown of uneven rectangular shape with lower side raised and having a slight tip, and, on the forehead part of the har-crown there is an oddity in a form of upwardly straight crest with concaved bunch oh hairy endings; the priestess holds two gifts in her hands, one is long and thin, another one is oblong and oval is shape, reminding a large egg; the sacral object on a table is made of sharply bent moon-crescent and a big sun-disk, both decorated by orbital circles made from whole large dots, the moon-crescent has only one orbit, while the sun-disk got two orbital circles; next frame displays a partially preserved figure of a female-servant with interestingly fashioned robe with shapes reminding grape vines and other fruits or berries; and, on the right corner we can observe another imposing figure of major mythological bird, that was artistically made in accordance of exactitude with the same creature that appeared on the left side. **The belt number four** has many newer iconographic components and thematic compilation not found in other three belts: particularly interesting is different design of a frame that goes along the whole perimeter of the belt's surface, but doesn't have separate frame dividing figures and scenes as it was in previously observed three belts; it is made from one line hollow cones confined between two lines of circles with empty dot cores; surprisingly, there is an image of ceremonial cart that is driven by two gorgeously-looking bulls on backs of which there are ceremonial versions of cloth-covers, reminding a saddle, but without the perturbation for sitting on the animals; the cart has a curved top and is adorned by ornaments of triangles and flowers; in front of a cart there is a musician dancing and tabouring a tambourine or riq; the athlete or gymnast tumbling upside down and making inverted stand, while standing with two hands on the ground, as it were with both legs; next to gymnast there is another female dancer – dancing and holding a ceremonial cup in her hands; the next scene is absolutely unique and exceptional in terms of rarity, depicted the ceremony of goddess's or queen's promenade, the goddess or queen is strolling and holding a long scarf in her hands, along with two female attendants, both of whom are holding a big carpet or rug tips with two hands in order to protect the goddess or queen from the scorching sun and preserve her well-being under artificially created shadow; the subsequently following scene depicts another main female character of goddess or queen in a framework of a ritual scene; she is differing from the previous main female character, and it is not possible to discern on who is who, or who is a goddess and who is a queen; yet, beyond any speck of doubt, both of those main female characters have status of a divinity, or, putting it another way, the divine status; the second goddess or queen is praying with both hands raised towards her face, the female attendant that is standing behind her, holds ceremonial cup in her left hand and bowl in her right hand; the female attendant standing after the female divinity holds a ceremonial banner in her right hand and a ceremonial fan or shawl in her left hand; there is a huge ceremonial vase with flower adornment in the middle and a handle in the floor in front of her; next there is ritual table with sacred object made of single hollow moon-crescent and simple hollow sun-disk;

next scene is also ceremonial by nature and involves many personages in action – three female attendants are moving from right to left, one is holding a jug with holy water, wine or juice, another one is holding two ceremonial cups by two hands; third female attendant has a ceremonial tabouret with on it tray in her hands, holding two ceremonial cups and a small moon-crescent on it; the other narrated scene involves around a huge vase or urn of ritual significance, there are two females around it, standing oppositely to each other – one on the left is holding a jug near the vase’s or urn’s surface, probably with the intention of pouring the libation liquid into it, and, one on the right side is putting the right hand inside of vase’s or urn’s surface, probably for tasting a liquid or blessing the libation ceremony; behind her there are three other female attendants moving from right or left, the first one is holding a ceremonial cup in right hand and a ritual bucket on the other, the second one unevenly holds gift donations by both hands, and, the third one unevenly holds two ritual buckets by both hands; there is also one female before the architectural structure on the top right side of the belt, a woman sits on a bare floor and holds in hands a long piece of clothing, perhaps, a food wrap or a tablecloth; finally, the magnificent view of architectural ensemble appears, depicting a castle-fortress with three large outer and two smaller inner high towers, three multiangled buttresses on the medium roof top, two windows on outer high towers and four windows on a wall between them, and one large, half-round oval-shaped door-gate, probably, as entrance to the city complex. The above-presented ritual-worshipping belts are fine examples of historically significant artifacts, that preserve with painstaking details, great artistry and stylistic authenticity the images of all essential iconographic components – simple animals, mythological beasts constructed from animal parts only, mythological creatures made up from animal and human parts, great architectural ensembles, high-ranking divine lady on the throne or in other formal settings – either goddess or queen, female attendants performing ritual ceremonies, dancing females, female musicians, ritual table, ceremonial objects, bull-driven carts, musical instruments, scenes of banquet, food donations, gift giving, praying, great deal of fashion and external adornments of narrowly designed belt’s surface bordering.

All above-described ritual-worshipping belts settings and entourages are uniform and diverse at the same time, creating an impression of a “permanently existent style with many variables and repetitions”, where the detailed assessment of all iconographic details has a priority basis of a primary task. Many of the iconographic elements regarded are completely estranged and unknown to us in terms of cultural understanding and civilizational affiliation, we simply don’t have any clear idea about their exact usage and performing functions. In that respect, the interest in new iconographic finding of ritual-worshipping belts’ essential elements is growing exponentially. The other article of I. Ziffer titled “The Iconography of Cult Stands” investigates the actually important theme of devotional ritual and ceremonial cult stands in ancient words, providing an extensive overview of their historical origins, various background on their utilization and the classification by typological varieties. In particular, she distinguishes the following types of cult stands: 1. Lion Cult Stands; 2. Bull Cult Stands; 3. Sphinx Cult Stands; 4. Winged Disk Cult Stands; 5. Cult Stands with Date Palm of Various Configurations; 6. Columned Cult Stands; 7. Musicians Cult Stand; 8. Paired Females in the Window; 9. Star/Rosette Cult Stands; 10. Cult Stands with Narrative Motifs; 11. Riders Cult Stand²⁵, etc. Author brings out remarkable examples of cults stands and their

²⁵ Ziffer, I.

2010 The Iconography of Cult Stands, in *Yavneh I – The Excavation of the “Temple Hill” Repository Pit and the Cult Stands*, by Ziffer, I., Kletter, R., Zwickel, W., *ORBIS BIBLICUS ET ORIENTALIS*, Series

images from various historical periods and geographical areas of historical research. Particularly noteworthy are materials from Anatolia (Asia Minor) with images of seal impressions from Achemhöyük, Kültepe and Boğazköy, metal stand from Kinik-Kastamonu with ritual bull head, and many other remarkable examples of cult stands. In that regard, the separate undertaking of urartian cult studies on a basis of urartian material culture, whether as real objects or iconographical depictions on urartian metalwork (especially those of Urartian bronze belts, and, particularly – ritual-worshipping belts) is a desirable direction of upcoming archeological-historical study initiatives.

Urartian bronze belts of all types are most unique in terms of richness or ornamentation, images, scenes and themes, simultaneously retaining all essential imagery components and allowing it to classify in a proper manner, and, at the same time, revealing the most amazing finds of fascinating iconographic treasures of all kinds of typological palette – previously unknown variations and newly discovered types of imagery with special symbolic meaningfulness. Therefore, each and every belt piece, whether fully preserved or coming as a fragmented piece, is equally precious by all means of appreciation. In that respect, regardless from where the essential information about each and every artifact is coming from, either from big world-class archaeological museums, or, some smaller regional archeological museum collections, never diminishes our eagerness to thoroughly examine the exemplar that was brought to our attention. The formulative stand of our overall attitude towards fundamental studies fully corresponds with the information about one belt described by R. Çavuşoğlu, in the article titled “An Urartian Women Belt from Erzerum Museum”²⁶, where the main highlights on the unique ritual-worshipping piece were given. Author introduces the half belt fragment from Erzurum Museum that has inventory number 6.87/7.87. He underlines on the affluent imagery of this given belt fragment, noting the incredible iconographic richness of this particular artifact. Indeed, even from a first glance it is becoming obvious, that this fragmentary ritual-worshipping belt piece has incredible iconographic elements and narrative compositions to report. First of all, the most incredible with the ritual goat standing in the middle as the symmetrical point marking between two winged eagle mythological beats, apparently, to serve as an animal sacrifice offering to those ravenous creatures. The goat has long curved horns and firm body, so, presumably, can be referred as wild mountain goat. Two rapacious beasts have massively oblique, strong muscular bodies, four legs and paws of a lion; flapped but raised, artificially narrowed abstract wings, one of the wings is turned backwards in preparing move, the other wing is unnaturally extended forward to the animal of pray or sacrifice, creating an impression of grabbing and possessing motion; the tight necks, predacious faces with razor sharp beaks, heads with cockades risen upwards. Next are four minor mythological birds moving from left to right, having fish tails and bodies, and slightly angled flapped wings, in almost straight forward pointing move as if birds are dancing. Right in the middle there is an unordinary for ritual-worshipping belts scene with Sacred Tree and two animals symmetrically opposing each other; those winged mythological horned animals are even bigger that those given to beasts, they may well be large goats, antelopes, ibexes or orixes, having small mythological

Archaeologica 30, Academic Press Fribourg, Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht Göttingen, Fribourg, Switzerland, Göttingen, Germany; 30:68, figures 5.18, 5.19, 70, figures 5.24-27, 5.28.

²⁶ Çavuşoğlu, R.

2007 *Erzurum Müzesi'nden Bir Urartu Kadın Kemer*, Atatürk Üniversitesi 50. Kuruluş Yıldönümü Arkeoloji Bölümü Armağanı, Doğudan Yükselen Işık Arkeoloji Yazıları, İstanbul, Turkey, 2007, page 208; page 213 drawing 1, photos 1,2; page 214 photos 3,4,5; page 215 photos 6,7,8.

wing attachments that are so miniature, that they are not protruding any further from the outside size of their body measure; moreover, those wings have butterfly-like flanks in their front parts, possibly for keeping them firm and safe; those wings are not natural, are not seen anywhere in natural environment and are symbolic confirmations of animal's mythological beings status; unbelievably they seem to be pushing their corpuses forward, showing an obedient readiness to come to their knees; the Sacred Tree consists of one thick stem and seven branches extending from it, with two additional rames hanging from higher ones and getting connected to lower boughs. Each extending branch is ending with cone-shaped bud, that well may be a fruit; only hanging rames have no bud endings. As a visual treat can be considered the atypical ornament in a form of a six angled zigzag, which separated the architectural ensemble from the rest of a belt from the left side. Actually, the architectural part of the belt is separated by two zigzags, because some fragmentary details remaining display two similar zigzag angles from the left. Zigzag lines are thick and noticeable, although having few deviations from the symmetrical extending of its main line drawing. The image of architectural ensemble lacks few essential elements – there are no towers and windows. The only architectural elements available are two large gate-windows at the sides with buttresses on top, one gate-door with buttress on top, and, six protruding buttresses on the top of double-thickened roof. Nonetheless, the analyses of this fragment brought forth the discoveries of new iconographic elements and modes of the narratives: **a) sacrifice animal in the middle of rapacious mythological beasts, as an outstanding example of simple animal sacrificed to a composite mythological animal; b) mythological winged horned animals that are willingly bending forward and worshipping a magical Sacred Tree.** Also, the outstanding outer frames of the belt fragment made of double hollow cones, as well as inner frames made from circles with whole dots in a center along with frames made of solid thick lines are really worth mentioning, making this incredible piece in the list of most favored finds of Urartian ritual-worshipping belts exemplars.

Sometimes during the process of Urartian bronze belts research, we can witness incredible cases of collaboration between museums and archeologist writers. Such incredible case happened on a base of is a collection of 74 Urartian bronze belts from Rezan Has Museum in Istanbul that serve as an archeological-historical material for the new book-catalog of R. Çavuşoğlu titled “Urartian Belts”²⁷. In this excellent book-catalog many colored photos and drawings of Urartian bronze belts from Rezan Has Museum are available; plus, the very explanatory text about the classification of belts and plates with drawings of typologically divided of urartian iconography examples divided by themes are given. Interestingly, the author provides his own version of Urartian bronze belts' classification, dividing them into three main groups according to their size (width): 1. Wide Belts; 2. Medium Size Belts; 3. Narrow Belts. One of the most noteworthy facts is in the coincidence of the typological definitions of Narrow Belts and Ritual-Worshipping Belts due to the fact of them being classified by different means – Narrow by geometrical proportions and Ritual-Worshipping by thematic narratives and iconographical elements; although they are belonging to the very same type of belts. Author describes Narrow Belts by geometrical parameters: width (height) is in the range between 5.5/6.00 cm and 8.00 cm, and the length is

²⁷ Çavuşoğlu, R.

2014 *Urartu Kemerler – Urartian Belts*, Rezan Has Museum, Istanbul, pages 136-138, page 152 plate I, pages 161-162 plate X.

between 60 cm and 90 cm. Author differentiates Narrow Belts (Ritual-Worshipping Belts) from other groups by means of their decoration, figural motifs and themes. He notices the different arrangement of essential iconographic elements in this type of belts, not moving from the center to the ends as it is a case with other belt types, but, contrarily, moving from both ends to the center of the belt's composition in a symmetrical manner. He also pays attention on the kinds of iconographic elements in this belt type, not often happening or not happening at all in other types. simple animals – sheep, goat, fish; composite animals – mythological birds, mythological eagles, mythological bulls; some composite human figures – with body of mythological animals and human face and hat-crown. Author also pays a great deal of attention to specific thematic content and narratives of this belt type. Scenes of feasts, banquets, liturgies, rituals, ceremonies, worshipping, praying, dancing, singing, play of musical instruments, as well as associated with these settings various human (mainly female) characters of goddesses/queens, ceremonial attendants, servants, priestesses, dancers, acrobats, musicians, singers, and others are immanent only for this belt type. From the depictions of work process and workers he identified weaver looms and weaving women. He also mentions inherent for this belt types only the avail of remarkable architectural features and landscapes, depicting castles with inner and outer towers, buttresses, windows and gate-doors. Author makes note of unique geometrical figures and floral motifs. R. Çavuşoğlu associates only three belts from Rezan Has Museum collection as Narrow Belts (Ritual-Worshipping Belts): Cat No. (Catalog Numbers) 72, 73, 74. All depicted belts have both high-quality color photos and accurately made drawings accompanied with textual definitions; although somewhat small in size, nevertheless, they are sufficient enough to give a complete visual characteristics of belt described. Belt Catalog Number 72 (inventory number 633) represents from itself one whole piece with broken sides, the left side is broken apart with only about half of the surface preserved, and, the left side is almost intact. The belt got excellent framing made of double hollow cone lines – one for outer surface perimeter frame, and the inner one for framing separate iconographical items or scenes. Although damaged, the belt comes as one piece. It has a beautiful dark goldish color patina, and all essential elements on the belt's surface are clearly visible. On the left side of the belt there is a frame with three mythological birds inside, they have tail and body of the fish, slim bald heads and medium-size beaks. Due to the damage to the belt's surface structure, only one frame is seen with the figures of two and the contour of one is seen, although the belt supposed to have two frames, compared to the similar belt's compositional design examples. In the middle of the belt there is a scene with two ceremonial attendant women, one is sitting and praying, while extending her hands higher, and the other one is drinking from the ceremonial cup. Both women are wearing necklaces made of ritual beads. Although better preserved, the right-side frame is also damaged. It depicts figures of eight imaginary fishes, divided to two frames of four fishes each; although, due to the damage of broken side, the exact number of fishes can't be known. All fishes depicted with abstract tails, fat bodies, scales only on the upper side of the body and unusual faces with long sharp noses, underling the artsy-crafty plateresque style of its making, make it much more distinctive from the real fish species. This belt has following measurements: length – 20.9 cm; width (height) – 6 cm. Provenance – unprovenanced. Belt Catalog Number 73 (inventory number 628 a-b) doesn't have a solid structure, it consists from two broken pieces, although, although the upper and lower borders are nicely preserved. The belt fragment's surface has a dark greyish patination with the impression of being nicely polished and all figures are possible to distinguish due to the effect of reflection. The left piece is quite remarkable, it depicts a ritual-ceremonial scene with the elements of banquet. The figure of goddess sitting on a large throne with lion legs dominates the scene, she is holding the ceremonial bead necklace in one hand and is drinking from the ritual cup with the help of other. Behind the throne only the partial contour of a

ceremonial attendant is seen, with the left hand holding the ritual fan raised over the head of the goddess, and, with the other, lowered hand holding the ceremonial bucket. In front of the goddess there is a ritual table with lion legs and two square designed frames, on its surface there is a ceremonial object consisting from one moon-crescent with one sun-disk on top of it. On the other side of the table, oppositely to the goddess's figure, there are images of two ceremonial attendants. The first attendant is wearing a triangularly shaped ritual hat with raised tip, with one hand is touching the ceremonial table, and, with the other is drinking from a ceremonial cup. The other one got no head cover, she is holding two ceremonial buckets in two hands, in lower and upper positions. Also, there is a partially preserved contour of another attendant, turned to other direction from the two, but most of its image is not preserved due to the breakage of metal surface. The belt's second fragment is wholly dedicated to animal theme, with images of mythological birds and imaginary fishes dominating the scenery. Two frames are visible on the surface of the second fragment, made from circles with core solid dots inside. In the upper frame the images of four mythological birds are seen, in the lower one – three imaginary fish figures are possible to discern. By their appearance and body design there are very similar to the previous belt's animal figures. The external frames of two belt fragments are also nicely fashioned, consisting from one main curved line connected by hollow cones, secluded between two additional lines made from circles with core solid dots inside. Two fragments of this belt have following measurements: fragment number 1 – length – 9.1 cm, width (height) – 6.4 cm; fragment number two – length – 10.7 cm, width – 6.7 cm. Provenance – unprovenanced. Belt Catalog Number 74 is just one small fragment of circular form that left from a left side of a belt, the remaining parts are lost. Although presenting a few geometrical details, this piece is quite notable for its unique depiction of waves, perhaps a symbol of the natural water basin – river, lake or sea. The symbolic waves made in a quite masterly way, moving organically and evenly in horizontal lines. To the right side of the wavy pattern, there are couple of vertical arrangements made of strange curvy dots, the origin and meaning of which is unclear. Yet, by taking a guess, it is possible to assume that those curvy dots imitate some sort of natural material, perhaps a wool, fleece, fell or fur. There are two holes for belt fastening, one is made closer to the lower part of the right edge, the other right in the middle close to the right edge side. This piece has following measurements: length – 3.5 cm, width (height) – 5.5 cm. Provenance – Mush province. In the middle of the book-catalog, along with other illustrative drawings, author provides carefully reproduced pictures of various iconographic elements, scenes and themes found in Narrow Belts series (Ritual-Worshipping Belt types). Plate I depicts various models of castle-fortresses, decorated with architectural ornaments, with or without inner or outer towers, with buttresses, windows and gate-doors, framed with different geometrical units – flowers, circles with inner dots and fish-scale alike motifs. Next come presentment of various banquet or feast scenes, which are actually having more ritual-worshipping nature due to avail of a goddess sitting on a throne, and ceremonial female attendants that perform rituals with sacral objects, usually the sun-disks wrapped in one or many layers of moon-crescent petals. There are other objects and connected with them actions – ceremonial fans and waiving, ritual cups and drinking, ceremonial buckets and worshipping, risen hands and praying, etc. Some of the illustrations include various sighs-symbols, as well as ornamented decoration framing units, usually lines of hollow or filled cons. Plate X is entirely dedicated to images of women that mostly can be seen only in ritual-worshipping (narrow) belts: depicting various version of images of a goddess sitting on a throne, women waiving with the loom, baking a bread and preparing a food. Next set of women figures is portrayed in separate context, they are in different poses and having various objects and musical instruments on hands – while dancing, playing music, praying,

performing libation, liturgies, giving away donations, gifts or presents, or, worshipping to divine spirits, souls, mythological animals, mythological beings, minor divinities or major gods. Women's portraiture contains outlines of variously fashioned dresses completed with ritual-ceremonial objects – fans, banners, bead necklaces, cups, jugs, buckets, etc. Next set is dedicated to entertainment scenes, all of them involving dancing and playing all kinds of musical instruments – handheld drums, cymbals, tambourines, riqs, lyres, flutes, citars, guitars, sazes, and many more of unknown for us origin and sound utterings. And, finally, the last set of images of Plate X is wholesomely devoted to picture representations of libation scenes, involving two ceremonial attendants or/and priests, standing oppositely to each other, pouring water, vine or some special ceremonial liquid into vessels, mixing it and performing libation ceremonies. From the left and right from massive sizable libation vessels of various kinds – ceramic urns, vases, pots with multitudinous ways of ornamentation and diversity of designs; as well as we can notice one remarkable scene with metallic (bronze) cauldron with bull-heads attachments. Although R. Çavuşoğlu's book-catalog doesn't have many actual examples of ritual-worshipping (narrow) belts and can't provide the extensive material about those belts especially coming from Rezan Has Museum urartian jewelry collection, nevertheless, the numerous, incredibly drawn and well-explained, classified and typologically divided illustrations are really making this publication quite unique in its kind. Moreover, being especially valuable as an organized effort to unite all belts of Rezan Has Museum in one issuance, R. Çavuşoğlu's book-catalog is considered to be one of the best book-catalogs describing all Urartian bronze belts of Rezan Has Museum's collection, as well as combining with it the theoretical implications and practically drawn and shown illustrations of Urartian belts anywhere; providing both very informative references and classification-typological assessments of all kinds of Urartian belts in existence so far. Therefore, R. Çavuşoğlu's book-catalog titled "Urartian Belts" is an invaluable source for advanced studies of Urartian belts in contextual lights of iconography, thematic and narratives of urartian material and spiritual culture.

Conclusive assessment. This very article titled "Ritual-Worshipping Scenes and Architectural Images in the Iconography of Urartian Belts" represents a special chapter of study, aimed to analyze in details the special topic of ritual-worshipping belts types of Urartian bronze belts, in order to insure the continuation of scientific archeological-historiographical efforts to significantly enrich our knowledge and deepen our thorough understanding of the iconographical contents and thematic narratives of various typological divisions of Urartian bronze belts. This stage of our scientific inquiry concerned one of the least studied and one of the most interesting varieties of Urartian belts that we decided to give a **definitive name of Ritual-Worshipping Belts**. The regularly conducted compiling of varieties of bibliographical sources and gathering the essentially vital information about many incredible exemplars of ritual-worshipping belts from around the globe allowed us to conduct a systematic and detailed investigation of many remarkable belts and their fragmental parts with ritual-worshipping content. The bibliographical sources included many major book-catalogs of various thematical settings, this way or the other having an important data on Urartian bronze belts; dedicated either to broader thematic of urartian art and metalwork, those describing Urartian belts in general context or, even better, book-catalogs of Urartian belts only with the inclusion of those artefacts from many museums or just one museum collection in one publication. No less useful were many remarkably written scientific articles, although somewhat smaller by size and covering less material, yet, sometimes providing a unique material not found anywhere else. Summarizing our research

efforts and analytical undertakings, we would like to underline few important key points concerning the typology of Urartian ritual-worshipping belts:

1. Those belt types are distinguishable by ritual-worshipping content, not found in any other belt types, therefore, there are all necessary qualification implications to typologically assess and classify them as **Ritual-worshipping Belts**.

2. Those belts have certain geometrical proportions of width (height) that are far less than those of other types; the importantly recognizable trait that definitively separates them from the similar artifacts of the same kind, therefore, allowing us also to conditionally define this belt type as **Narrow Belts**;

3. Those belts have **another disposition and size of holes, apertures and empty spacings for fastening**; therefore, otherwise suggesting the differing construction and fashion of those exemplars.

4. **Narrowness of belts, variables of sizeable measures, different modes of fastening and distinctive ways of wearing them** are suggestive of alternative anatomical structure of wearers, therefore, insinuating a possibility of the fact, that the **wearers of those belts were females**.

5. Defining this belt iconography as the only one, singularly and exclusively **depicting diverse images of woman, whether real, noble or divine in character**, definitively strengthens the version in favor of the fact that the **wearers of those belts were of feminine origin, i.e. women**.

6. Ritual-worshipping belts are the only kind of belts displaying **ritual, ceremonial and worshipping scenes – symbolizing the procedural unification of real and mythological worlds, as well as the traditional-religious transformation of material culture into spiritual culture of ancient urartians**.

7. Ritual-worshipping belts are the only kind of belts that are manifesting the distinctive views of various **architectural elements of urartian architecture** – in a form of castle-fortresses, having inner and outer high towers, buttresses on the wall roofs, windows and door-gates, richly decorated with different geometrical motifs. There is a hypothetical suggestion that the door-gates played a major role in depiction of those architectural element, because according to a number of urartian cuneiform inscriptions, urartian kings often dedicated cities and gates to the glory of urartian gods.

8. Ritual-worshipping belts are the only kind of belts that are showing **various human characters, mostly of female origin**, performing different ritual, ceremonial and worshipping actions, who are – goddesses (or queens (varies from belt to belt according to theme and context)), servants, ceremonial attendants, ritual performers, dancers, singers and musicians.

9. Ritual-worshipping belts are the only kind of belts that are displaying **various sacral objects of individual or collective use**, including, ritual furniture in a form of big or medium size thrones of various designs, ritual tables; ritual vessels in a form of ceremonial cups, jugs, big-size ceremonial pottery statically standing on the floor – urns, vases, pots; metallic vessels in a form of bronze cauldrons adorned with bull's head; ceremonial and

ritual objects of personal use, including fans, banners, rugs, bead necklaces, scarfs, etc.; objects of collective ceremonial use - one or few moon-crescents with one sun-disk on top of it.

10. Ritual-worshipping belts are the only kind of belts that are showing **the human characters (mostly female) of musicians, performing on a large variety of musical instruments** – handheld drums, cymbals, tambourines, riqs, lyres, flutes, citars, guitars, sazars, and many more of unknown for us origin and sound utterings.

11. Ritual-worshipping belts are the only kind of belts that are having **the iconographic images of common (simple) animals** not available in any other belt kind, including – sheep, goats, antelopes, etc.

12. Ritual-worshipping belts are the only kind of belts that are having **the iconographic images of imaginary animal kind (with real outlines, but highly stylized forms and details, not found in actual natural environment) not available in any other belt kind, which is only one – fish.**

13. Ritual-worshipping belts are the only kind of belts that are having **the iconographic images of mythological beasts not found or rarely found in any other type of belts, including major mythological (composite) creatures, made of different animal and abstract parts, such as mythological winged bulls, eagles, antelopes, as well as mythological birds made of tail and body of a fish and birdy parts.**

14. Ritual-worshipping belts are the only kind of belts that are having **the iconographic images of mythological (composite) beings, made of animal, abstract and human parts, usually animal parts, abstract wing and human head with hat-crowns of distinctively fashioned symbolic design.**

After all, the huge significance of Urartian ritual-worshipping belts is in their unique culturologic significance, allowing us to reveal the true traditional-religious foundation and mythological-philosophical basis of Urartian people's cultural identity. The Urartian ritual-worshipping belts are truly representing from itself the best examples of **Amulet or Talisman Based Culture**, that effectively realized one of the key formulas of **transforming the well-crafted and elaborately designed urartian material culture into highly developed and conceptually enriched spiritual culture.** Urartian ritual-worshipping belts were best examples on how **the true traditional-religious foundation and mythological-philosophical basis of Urartian people's cultural identity could serve as a main mean of absolutely effective leverage of building the urartian statehood on a base of building the urartian people itself.** Indeed, if we are getting informed from the textual-meaningful contents of many historical cuneiform documents of key importance, as well as from the meaningful-philosophical implications of symbolical-iconographic contexts that are empowered in hugely diverse forms of artistic representations – there were absolutely diverging modes of nation's building in Assyria and Urartu. Under the auspices of rapidly growing Assyrian empire the cardinally preeminent forms of assyrian statehood building were getting accomplished through the policy of contests and spreading of the senses of horror, terror, fear, awe and appalling dreadfulness for having an effect leading to lack of resistance and total obedience under dominating assyrian control. Therefore, not without these key reasons of cause and effect relationship, the **Assyrian Art** reflected that above-prescribed policy, therefore resulting in **publicly based monumental art with the images of powerful grace based on awe-spreading.** On the contrary, exactly opposite to that, the very

process of the formation of urartian empire was not entirely based on military advances, but, mostly was done on a base of linguistic affiliation of Hurrian ethnicities and cultural affiliation of people based on religion, philosophy and amalgamation of traditional values. As a result, contrary to Assyrian artistical methods, **Urartian Art** resulted in the **individually based Amulet or Talisman artistism with the images that were of core values for all urartians, having their hearts and minds being won.** Of course, this very subtext with additional sub context is not exactly corresponding with the declared theme of this very article, and, of course, upon future studies will become quite heated subject of discussion and even arguments. Nonetheless, the inspirational richness of urartian art reflecting the **enormous achievement of building of the most elaborated traditional-religious culture created and constructed by means of one of the most elaborated system of mythological signs and images of ancient Anatolia (Asia Minor) and there of ancient world.** The artistic manifestations of that very developed and perfected system of iconographical signs, symbols, images combined with symbolical themes, narratives and scenery were found mostly on Urartian bronze belts, and, in lesser degree, in the iconographical parts of other metalworking objects of individual use. The most magnificent **imagery of Urartian Ritual-Worshipping Belts is also significant in terms of keeping the historical memory of urartian people alive,** since without those images we could never have any idea about the sacral meaningfulness and cultural symbolism of ancient urartians. Yet, this very chapter in the broader sense in never close to a foreseeable end, and, taking into serious consideration the fundamental importance of the process of detailed analyses and painstaking work in revealing most of the obvious and secretive mindfulness of key concepts of urartian mindset and ideology. Therefore, we still are very positive by the actuality of finding new definitions and conceptual reviews of what was known and not known about Urartian bronze belts, and, especially we are thrilled by the encouraging fact that the overall examination of Urartian Ritual-Worshipping Belts reveled some key aspects on how **ancient urartians transformed the material culture into spiritual culture.** By the way, the fundamental investigation of Urartian bronze belts continues, and, we each and every archaeological and historiographical discovery we are getting closer and to newer points of theoretical awareness of material and culture heritage of Urartu, trying to better comprehend the mindfulness and symbolical meaningful of their rich culture. Based on that theoretical-practical validity, we are considering Urartian bronze belts the highly praised artifacts of archeological historical value and we will proceed with further scientific inquiries in the tedious, yet exiting process of Urartological Studies progressive development that supposedly will elevate the Urartology to a newer, more advanced level and significantly enrich our knowledge of historical past.

Bibliographical Sources of the article titled “Ritual-Worshipping Scenes and Architectural Images in the Iconography of Urartian Belts”.

Batmaz, A., Uhri, A.

2008 Urartu Kültüründe Balık Betimlemesi ve Ayanis Kalesi'nden Tunç Bir Balık Figürünü Üzerine Düşünceler, *Arkeoloji Dergisi*, 1:65.

Collon, D.

1993 Review of Gürtelbleche aus Urartu by Hans-Jörg Kellner, *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London*, 56/1:125-127.

Çavuşoğlu, R.

2007 *Erzurum Müzesi'nden Bir Urartu Kadın Kemeri*, Atatürk Üniversitesi 50. Kuruluş Yıldönümü Arkeoloji Bölümü Armağanı, Doğudan Yükselen Işık Arkeoloji Yazıları, İstanbul, Turkey, 2007, page 208; page 213 drawing 1, photos 1,2; page 214 photos 3,4,5; page 215 photos 6,7,8.

Çavuşoğlu, R.

2014 *Urartu Kemerler – Urartian Belts*, Rezan Has Museum, İstanbul, pages 136-138, page 152 plate I, pages 161-162 plate X.

Çilingiroğlu, A.

1991 Bir Urartu Kemer Parçası Üzerindeki “Ziyafet Sahnesi”, *Arkeoloji Dergisi*, II:16, picture 1.

Ergurer, H.

2010 Urartu Kemerleri Üzerindeki İnsan Tasvirleri, Atatürk Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü Dergisi, 14/2:243-264.

Ertman, E.

1994 An Urartian belt and other unpublished objects from a private collection, *Anatolian Iron Ages*, 3:65, 71, plates 7.2.3.

Erzen, A.

1988 *Çavuştepe I – Urartian Architectural Monuments of the 7-th and 6-th Centuries B.C. and a Necropolis of the Middle Age*, Atatürk Supreme Council for Culture, Language and History Publications of the Turkish Historical Society Series V, Number 37, Türk Tarih Kurumu Basımevi, 1988, plate XXXIV – a, b.

Gökce, B.

2016 Urartu Giyim Kuşamına Sosyo-Kültürel Bir Bakış, *Tarih İncelemeleri Dergisi*, 31/2:445, picture 2.

Gökce, B.

2014 Women and Their Status in Urartu: A Critical Review, *ANES (Ancient Near Eastern Studies)*, 51:242, 244 figure 1, 250 figure 2, 251 figure 3.

Kellner, H.J.

1991 *Gürtelbleche aus Urartu*, Prähistorische Bronzefunde, Abt. XII, Bd. 3, Franz Steiner Verlag, Stuttgart, pages 19-22.

Lorenz, T.

1984 Urartäischer Bronzegurt im Martin von Wagner Museum der Universität Würzburg, *Archäologischer Anzeiger*, 1:7.

Merhav, R.

1991 *Urartu – A Metalworking Center in the First Millennium B.C.E.*, Grouping and Dating of Bronze Belts; Israel Museum, Jerusalem, page 142, page 160 figure 6.

Miyashita, S.

1983 *La scène du banquet dans les ceintures urartéennes*, Festschrift Namio Egami - Egami Namio, V:299-322.

Seidl, U.

2004 *Bronzekunst Urartus*, Verlag Philipp Von Zabern, Mainz am Rhein, pages 105, 106, 139, 141-143.

Tanabe, K., Akora, H., Hayashi, T., Miyashita, S., Ishida, K.

1982 Studies in the Urartian Bronze Objects from Japanese Collections (1); *Bulletin of the Ancient Orient Museum*, IV:plates XXII, XXIII, XXIV.

Tarontsi, S.

2017 Sacred Animals and Fantastic Creatures of Urartian Belts – Mythological Reflections of Urartian Civilization; *The Journal of International AMISOS*, 2/3:127.

Taşyürek, O.A.

1975 *Adana bölge müzesindeki urartu kemerleri – The Urartian belts in the Adana regional museum*, Adana Eski Eserleri Sevenler Derneği Yay, Donmez, Ankara, photos 21, 22, 24, 25, 26, 27.

Yiğitpaşa, D., Can, S.

2016 Kahramanmaraş Arkeoloji Müzesi'nden Bir Grup Urartu Metal Eseri, *Mustafa Kemal Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü Dergisi – Mustafa Kemal University Journal of Social Sciences Institute*, 14/37:240.

Yiğitpaşa, D.

2010 Urartu Ölü Gömme Gelenekleri ve Ölümle İlgili Ritüeller, *Atatürk Üniversitesi Güzel Sanatlar Enstitüsü Dergisi, Erzerum*, 25:177.

Ziffer, I.

2001 Four New Belts from the Land of Ararat and the Feast of the Women in Esther 1:9, in S. Parpola and R.M. Whiting (eds.), *Sex and Gender in the ancient Near East; Proceedings of the 47-th Rencontre Assyriologique Internationale, Helsinki, Finland, 2001, July 2-6*, 47:645-657.

Ziffer, I.

2010 The Iconography of Cult Stands, in *Yavneh I – The Excavation of the “Temple Hill” Repository Pit and the Cult Stands*, by Ziffer, I., Kletter, R., Zwickel, W.; *ORBIS BIBLICUS ET ORIENTALIS, Series Archaeologica 30, Academic Press Fribourg, Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht Göttingen, Fribourg, Switzerland; Göttingen, Germany*; 30:68, figures 5.18, 5.19, 70, figures 5.24-27, 5.28.

Zimansky, P.

1998 *Ancient Ararat: A Handbook of Urartian Studies*, Caravan Books, Delmar, New York, 1998, page 199.

Zimansky, P.

1985 *Ecology and Empire: The Structure of the Urartian State*, The Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago, Studies in Ancient Oriental Civilization, number 41, page 60.

Zimansky,

P.

1995 Urartian Material Culture as State Assemblage: An Anomaly in the Archaeology of Empire, *Bulletin of American Schools of Oriental Research (BASOR)*, 299/300:103,111.

Visual sources of pictures used in article of the article titled “Ritual-Worshipping Scenes and Architectural Images in the Iconography of Urartian Belts”.

Picture 1. Çavuşoğlu, R.; Erzurum Müzesi’nden Bir Urartu Kadın Kemeri; Atatürk Üniversitesi 50. Kuruluş Yıldönümü Arkeoloji Bölümü Armağanı, Doğudan Yükselen Işık Arkeoloji Yazıları, İstanbul, Turkey, 2007, page 215, photo 8.

Picture 2. Ziffer, I.; Four New Belts from the Land of Ararat and the Feast of the Women in Esther 1:9; in S. Parpola and R.M. Whiting (eds.), *Sex and Gender in the ancient Near East; Proceedings of the 47-th Rencontre Assyriologique Internationale, Helsinki, Finland, 2001, July 2-6*, pages 649, photo 1.

Picture 3. Çavuşoğlu, R.; Erzurum Müzesi’nden Bir Urartu Kadın Kemeri; Atatürk Üniversitesi 50. Kuruluş Yıldönümü Arkeoloji Bölümü Armağanı, Doğudan Yükselen Işık Arkeoloji Yazıları, İstanbul, Turkey, 2007, page 213, photo 2.

Picture 4. Tanabe, K.; Akora, H.; Hayashi, T.; Miyashita, S.; Ishida, K.; Studies in the Urartian Bronze Objects from Japanese Collections (1); Bulletin of the Ancient Orient Museum, Tokyo, 1982, Volume IV, plate XXII-2.

Picture 5. Çavuşoğlu, R.; Erzurum Müzesi'nden Bir Urartu Kadın Kemerini; Atatürk Üniversitesi 50. Kuruluş Yıldönümü Arkeoloji Bölümü Armağanı, Doğudan Yükselen Işık Arkeoloji Yazıları, İstanbul, Turkey, 2007, page 215, photo 6.

Picture 6. Ziffer, I.; Four New Belts from the Land of Ararat and the Feast of the Women in Esther 1:9; in S. Parpola and R.M. Whiting (eds.), Sex and Gender in the ancient Near East; Proceedings of the 47-th Rencontre Assyriologique Internationale, Helsinki, Finland, 2001, July 2-6, pages 648, photo 1.

Picture 7. Ziffer, I.; Four New Belts from the Land of Ararat and the Feast of the Women in Esther 1:9; in S. Parpola and R.M. Whiting (eds.), Sex and Gender in the ancient Near East; Proceedings of the 47-th Rencontre Assyriologique Internationale, Helsinki, Finland, 2001, July 2-6, pages 648, photo 2.

Picture 8. Tanabe, K.; Akora, H.; Hayashi, T.; Miyashita, S.; Ishida, K.; Studies in the Urartian Bronze Objects from Japanese Collections (1); Bulletin of the Ancient Orient Museum, Tokyo, 1982, Volume IV, plate XXII-6.

Picture 9. Ziffer, I.; Four New Belts from the Land of Ararat and the Feast of the Women in Esther 1:9; in S. Parpola and R.M. Whiting (eds.), Sex and Gender in the ancient Near East; Proceedings of the 47-th Rencontre Assyriologique Internationale, Helsinki, Finland, 2001, July 2-6, pages 648, photo 2.

Picture 10. Tanabe, K.; Akora, H.; Hayashi, T.; Miyashita, S.; Ishida, K.; Studies in the Urartian Bronze Objects from Japanese Collections (1); Bulletin of the Ancient Orient Museum, Tokyo, 1982, Volume IV, plate XXIII-5.

Picture 11. Çavuşoğlu, R.; Erzurum Müzesi'nden Bir Urartu Kadın Kemerini; Atatürk Üniversitesi 50. Kuruluş Yıldönümü Arkeoloji Bölümü Armağanı, Doğudan Yükselen Işık Arkeoloji Yazıları, İstanbul, Turkey, 2007, page 214, photo 3.

Picture 12. Çavuşoğlu, R.; Urartu Kemerler – Urartian Belts, Rezan Has Museum, İstanbul, pages 136, photo and drawing 72.

Picture 12a. Çavuşoğlu, R.; Urartu Kemerler – Urartian Belts, Rezan Has Museum, İstanbul, page 135.

Picture 12b. Çavuşoğlu, R.; Urartu Kemerler – Urartian Belts, Rezan Has Museum, İstanbul, page 134.

Picture 13. Çavuşoğlu, R.; Erzurum Müzesi'nden Bir Urartu Kadın Kemerini; Atatürk Üniversitesi 50. Kuruluş Yıldönümü Arkeoloji Bölümü Armağanı, Doğudan Yükselen Işık Arkeoloji Yazıları, İstanbul, Turkey, 2007, page 213, drawing 1.

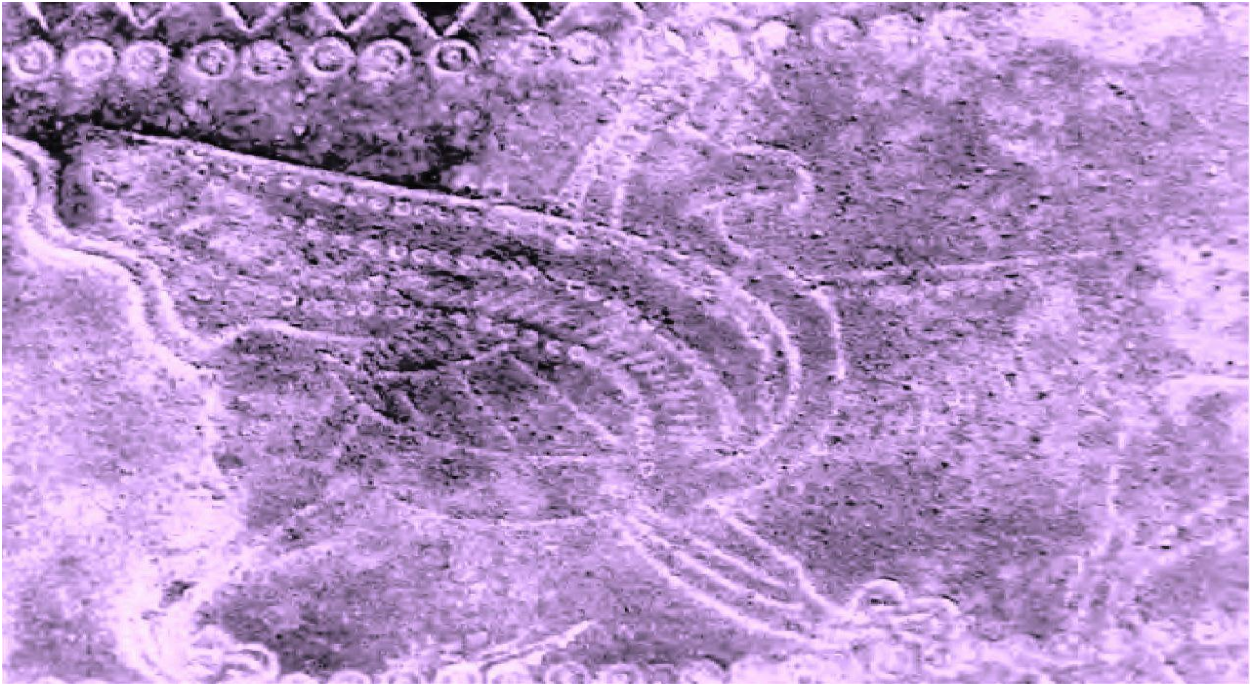
Picture 14. Çavuşoğlu, R.; Urartu Kemerler – Urartian Belts, Rezan Has Museum, İstanbul, page 152, plate I-1-4.

Picture 15. Çavuşoğlu, R.; *Urartu Kemerler – Urartian Belts*, Rezan Has Museum, Istanbul, page 152, plate I-5-9.

Picture 16. Çavuşoğlu, R.; *Urartu Kemerler – Urartian Belts*, Rezan Has Museum, Istanbul, page 152, plate X-1-7.

Picture 17. Çavuşoğlu, R.; *Urartu Kemerler – Urartian Belts*, Rezan Has Museum, Istanbul, page 152, plate X-8-22.

PICTURES



Picture 1. The photo image of winged (composite) mythological beast with body, legs, paws and tail of a lion, abstract wings and head of the eagle with high-raised cockade and long sharp beak; from the iconographical composition of the Urartian Ritual-Worshipping Belt.



Picture 2. The photo image of another, slimmer type of winged (composite) mythological beast with body, legs, paws of a lion, abstract tail and wings, long neck and head of the eagle with high-raised cockade and long sharp beak; from the iconographical composition of the Urartian Ritual-Worshipping Belt.



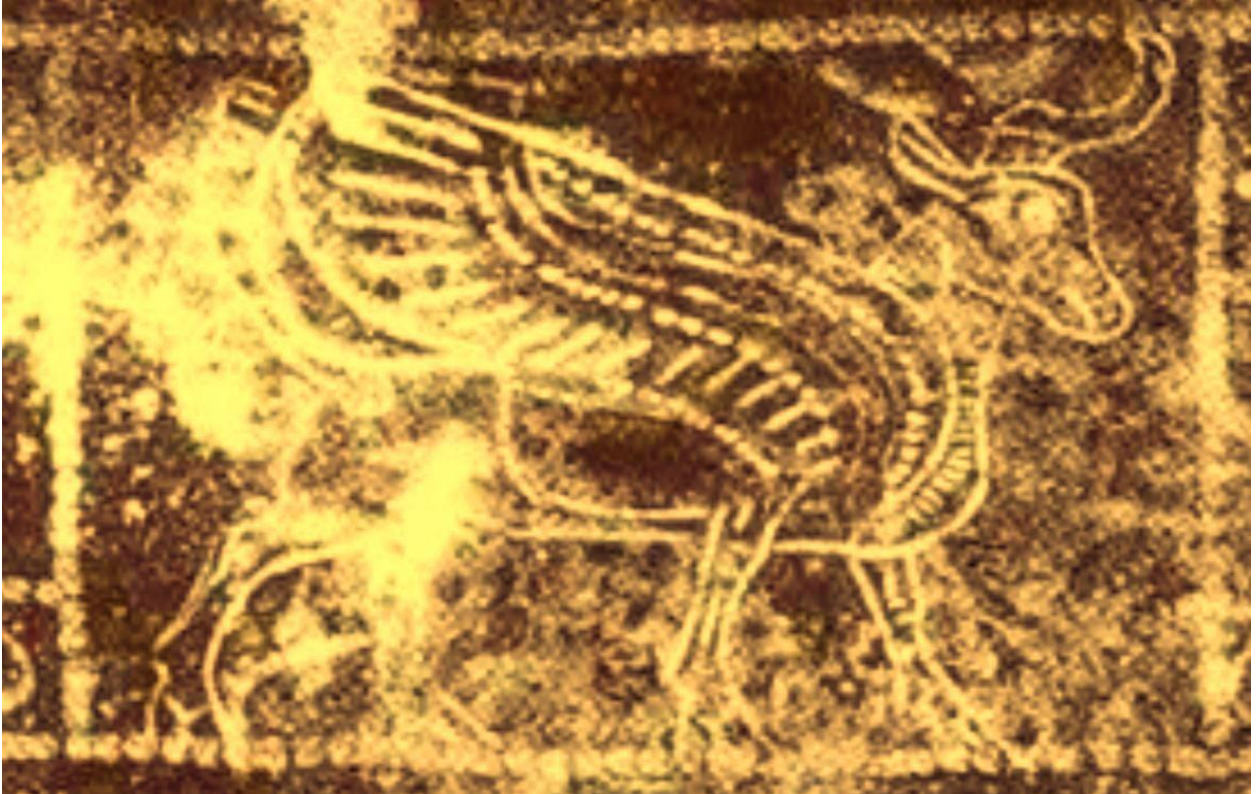
Picture 3. The photo image of similar eagle-headed winged (composite) mythological beast praying on or accepting another animal (simple) – a mountain goat as a homage or sacrificial donation; from the iconographical composition of the Urartian Ritual-Worshipping Belt.



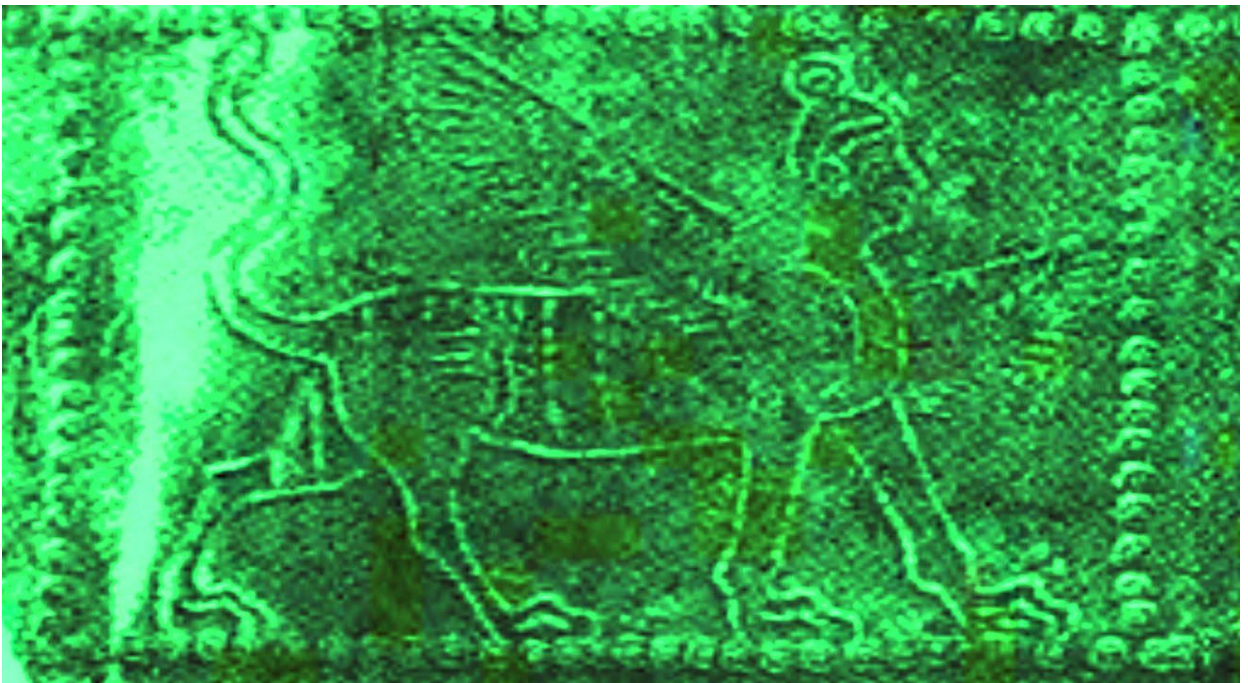
Photo 4. The photo image of two mythological (composite) birds made of lion's legs and paws, tail and body of the fish, long necks, bird's heads with high raised cockade and long curved beaks, birds are standing by symmetrically opposing each other; from the iconographical composition of the Urartian Ritual-Worshipping Belt.



Picture 5. The photo image of three mythological (composite) birds made of tail and body of the fish, semi-abstract wings, medium necks, bird's bare heads with long curved beaks; bird's long wings are flapped in lower and higher positions; birds are moving from left to right in an organized manner; from the iconographical composition of the Urartian Ritual-Worshipping Belt.



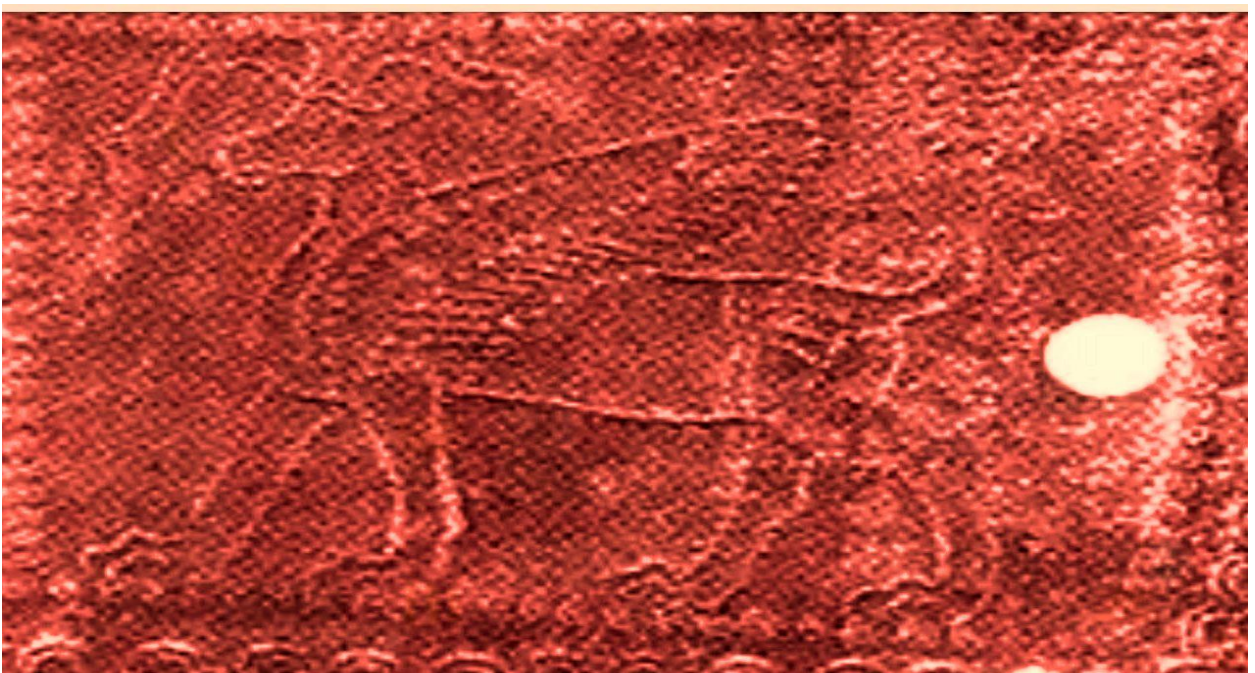
Picture 6. The photo image of winged (composite) mythological beast with body, legs, tail and head of the bull with high raised sharp horns and abstracted wings of divine nature; from the iconographical composition of the Urartian Ritual-Worshipping Belt.



Picture 7. The photo image of winged (composite) mythological creature with body, legs, tail of the lion, flapped abstract wings of divine nature and head of the human with hat-crown with raised horn and celestial disk; from the iconographical composition of the Urartian Ritual-Worshipping Belt.



Picture 8. The photo image of similar winged (composite) mythological creature with body, legs, tail of the lion, flapped abstract wings of divine nature and head of the human with high raised horn and ceremonial beard, with another similar creature nearby; from the iconographical composition of the Urartian Ritual-Worshipping Belt.



Picture 9. The photo image of winged (composite) mythological beast with body, legs of the lion, flapped abstract wings of divine nature and head of the goat with high raised sharp horns; from the iconographical composition of the Urartian Ritual-Worshipping Belt.



Picture 10. The photo image of winged (composite) mythological beasts with legs, bodies, tails and heads of mountain goats with high concave horns and abstract flapped wings of divine nature. Two mythological animals are standing in front of Sacred Tree, symmetrically opposed to each other, slightly leaning over with upper legs in a symbolical pose of worshipping obedience; from the iconographical composition of the Urartian Ritual-Worshipping Belt.



Picture 11. The photo image of similar winged (composite) mythological beasts with legs, unnaturally unproportioned bodies, tails and heads of mountain goats with sharp concave horns and abstractly attached shorts stylized wings of divine nature. Two mythological animals are standing in front of Sacred Tree, symmetrically opposed to each other, slightly bending knees in a symbolical pose of worshipping obedience; from the iconographical composition of the Urartian Ritual-Worshipping Belt.



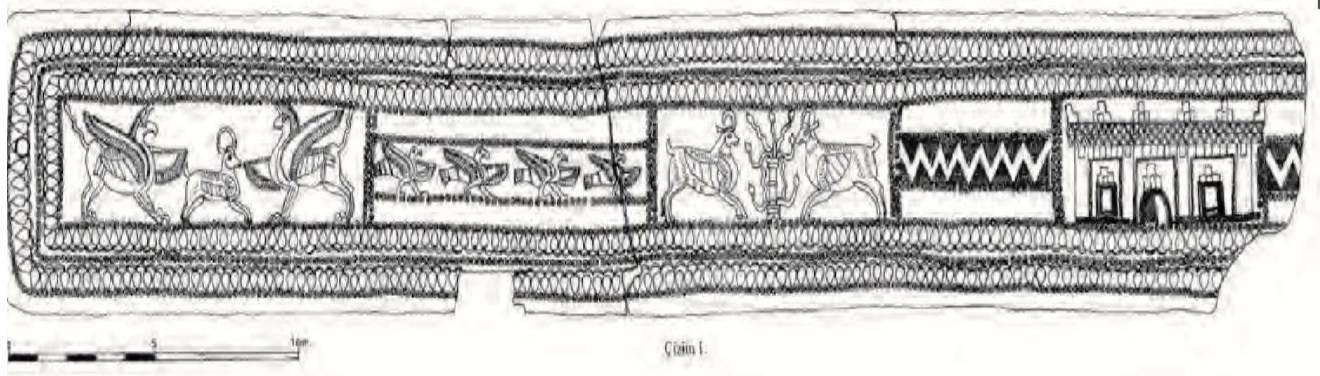
Picture 12. The photo image and the drawing of the Urartian Ritual-Worshipping Belt from Rezan Has Museum (Istanbul, Turkey) collection, with iconographic depictions of imaginary fishes, mythological birds and two female attendants performing a ritual ceremony with praying and drinking from a ceremonial cup.



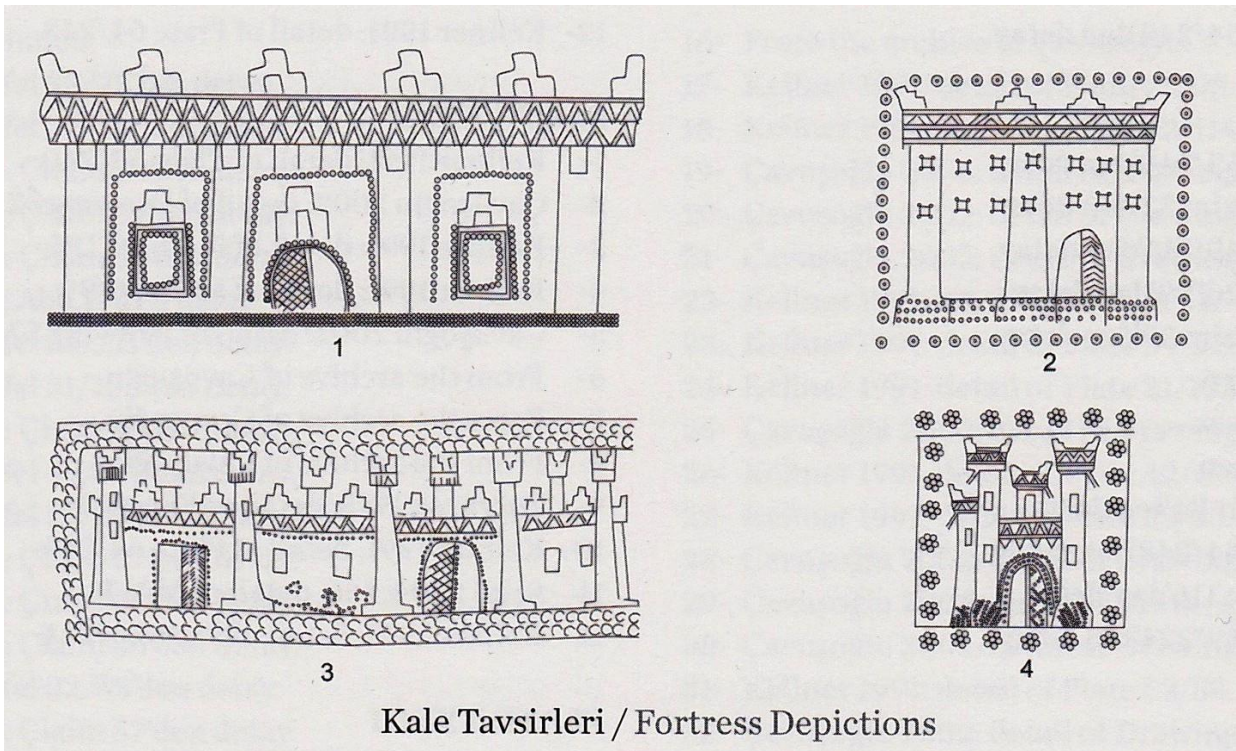
Picture 12a. The photo image of imaginary fishes with abstract tails, oblong bodies, scales only on the upper side of the body and unusual faces with long sharp noses, swimming in a two-line order; detail from the belt presented above.



Picture 12b. The photo image of a ritual ceremony performed by two female attendants, one is drinking from ceremonial cup and the other one is bestowing the holy gift for spirits, souls, gods and divinities; detail from the belt presented above.

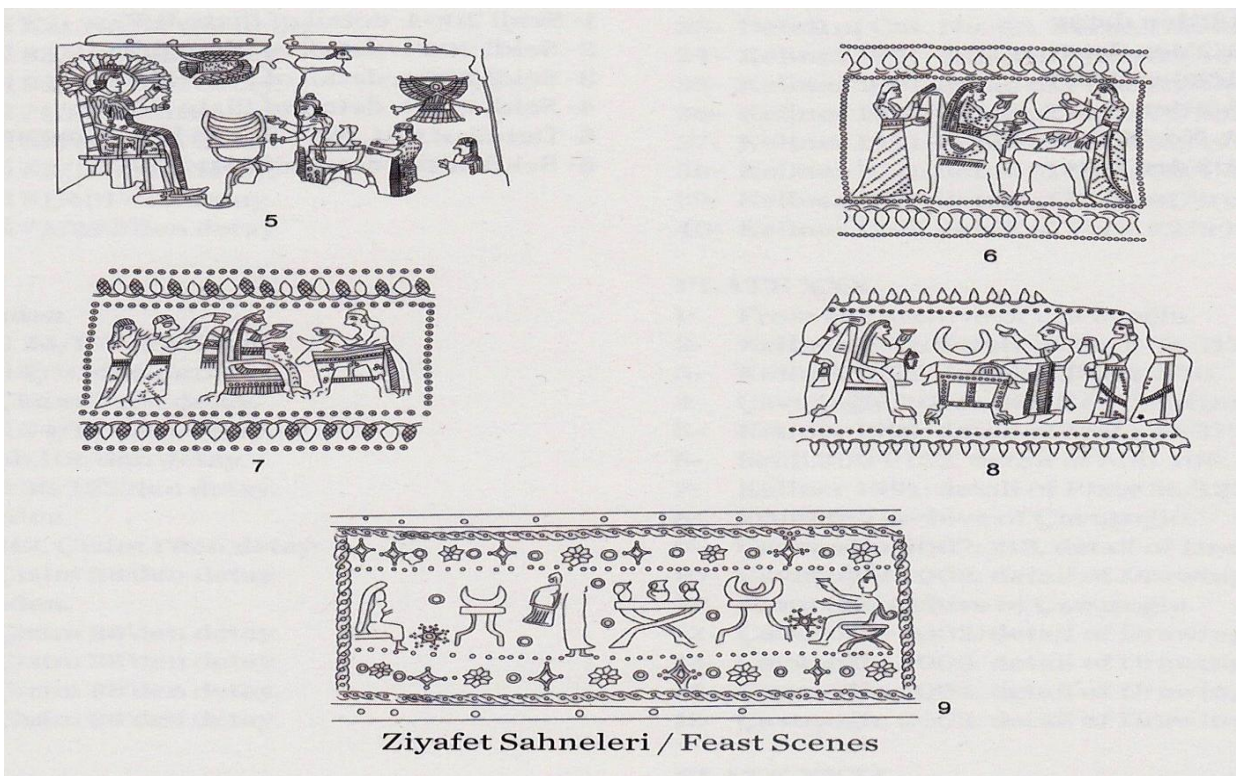


Picture 13. The schematic drawing of an Urartian bronze Ritual-Worshipping Belt with various thematic narratives and iconographical motives: two winged (composite) mythological eagle beasts are accepting as a homage the sacrificial (simple) animal in a form of a mountain goat, there are four winged (composite) mythological birds moving from left to right, two winged (composite) mythological goats are bowing and bending their knees before the Sacred Tree, thick zigzag motif separates the rest of belt from the architectural landscape with images of a castle-fortress.



Kale Tavsirleri / Fortress Depictions

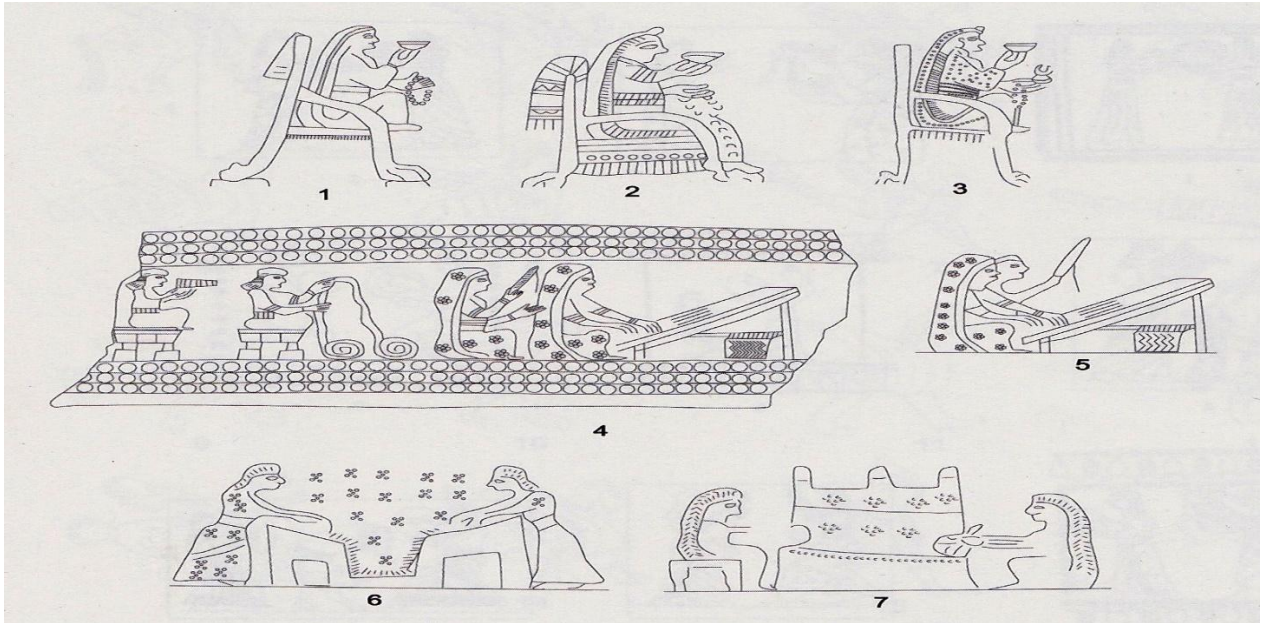
Picture 14. The drawings of various examples of architectural constructions found in the iconography of Urartian Ritual-Worshipping Belts, including depictions of castle-fortresses with diverse details – inner and outer towers, reinforced roofs, buttresses with three-stepped design, door-gates, windows and architectural decorations.



Ziyafet Sahneleri / Feast Scenes

Picture 15. The drawings of various examples of banquet and feasts scenes from the iconographical examples of Urartian Ritual-Worshipping Belts, with the inclusion of themes and narratives of conducting rituals, organizing ceremonies with actions of worshipping,

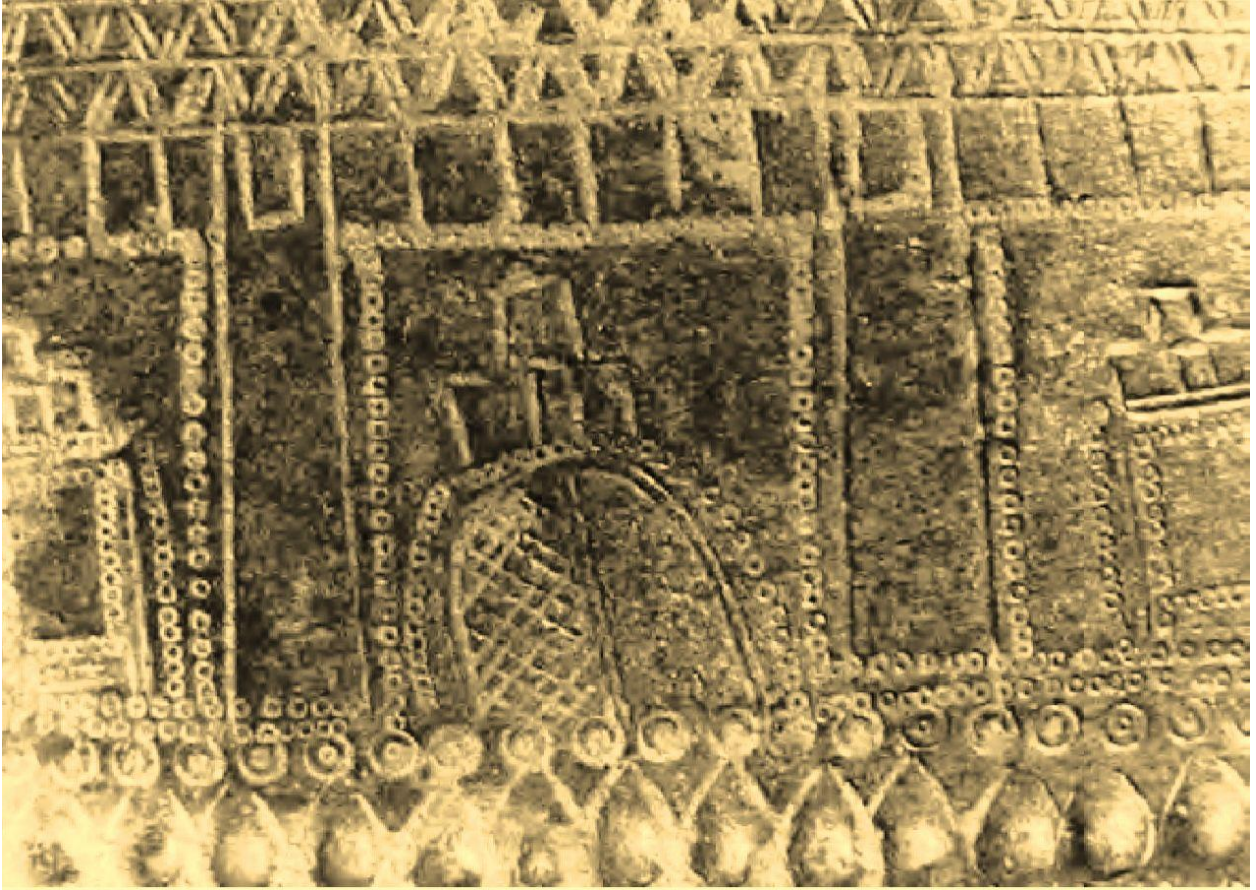
praying, making intimate wishes to spirits, souls, divinities and gods with the help of sacral objects, as well as other actions.



Picture 16. The drawings of various examples of women activities from the iconographical examples of Urartian Ritual-Worshipping Belts, with the inclusion of themes and narratives of goddesses (queens) sitting in a throne and drinking from a ceremonial cup, women weaving a loom, baking a bread and preparing food, as well as other doing other actions.



Picture 17. The drawings of various examples of women portrayals from the iconographical examples of Urartian Ritual-Worshipping Belts, with the inclusion of portraits with diverse objects and performing modes – holding ritual cups and ceremonial buckets and praying, dancing and playing on different musical instruments – handheld drums, tambourines, riqs, flutes, lyres, citars, guitars, thars, sazes and other unknown instruments.



Picture 18. The remarkable detail of an architectural ensemble from the scenery of Urartian Ritual-worshipping Belt: structural parts of the castle-fortress – the wall, parts of the reinforced roof, rectangular windows and door-gates with buttresses on top that are decorated with symbolic tower-shaped entrances of sacral symbolic significance.