

**SYMPOSIUM I**

# **URARTIANS**

**A CIVILIZATION IN THE EASTERN ANATOLIA**

**Editors**

**Altan Çilingirođlu - Kemalettin Korođlu  
Zeynep Çulha - Günřil Öncü**

**The Proceedings of the 1<sup>st</sup> International  
Symposium held at İstanbul  
13-15 October, 2014**



**URARTIANS: A Civilization in the Eastern Anatolia**

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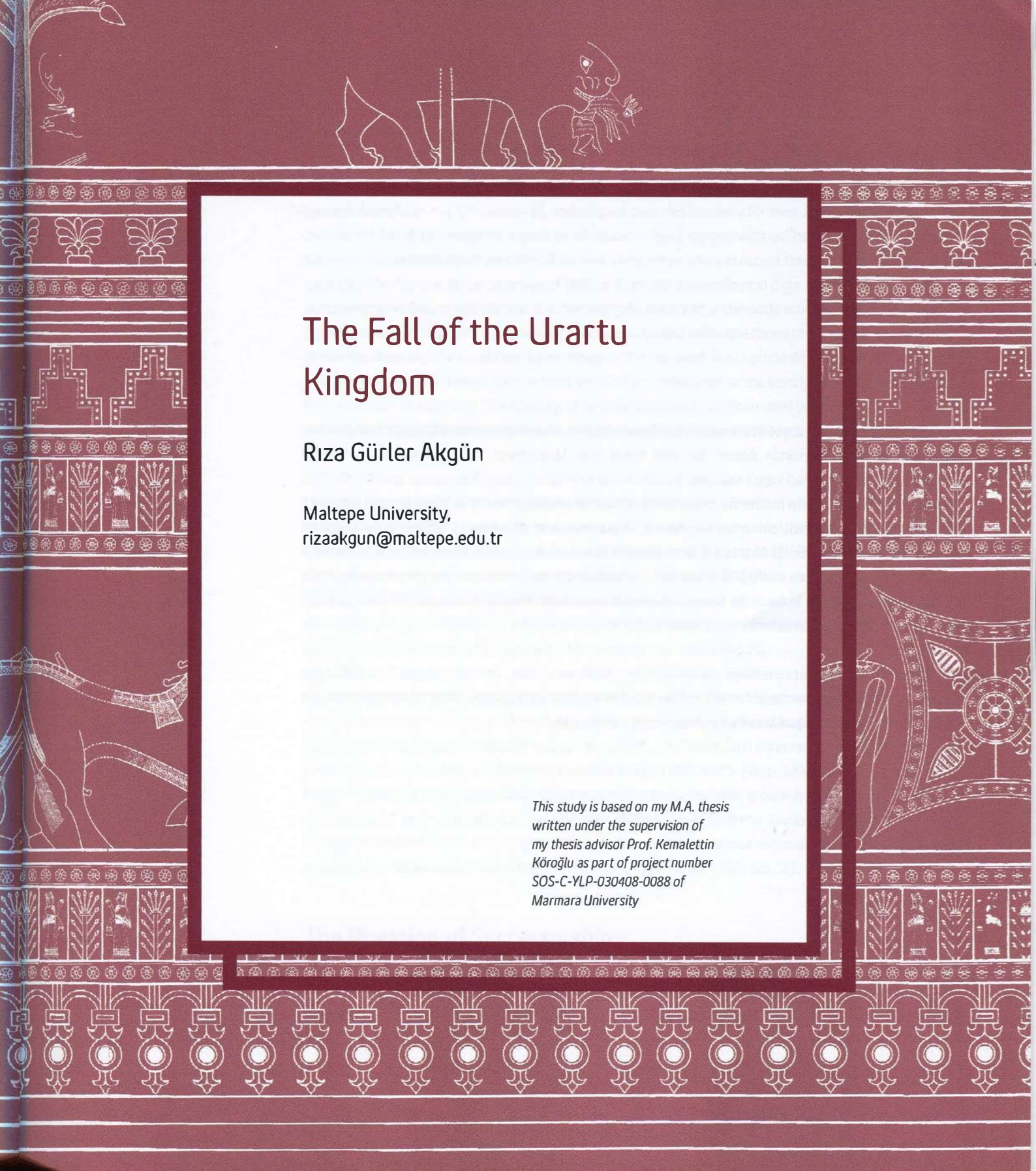
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# The Fall of the Urartu Kingdom

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# The Fall of the Urartu Kingdom

Rıza Gürler Akgün

## Özet

Merkezi güçlü devlet yapısı, şehircilik anlayışı, gelişkin mimarisi, maden işleme teknolojisi vb. özellikleriyle Anadolu uygarlıkları içerisinde önemli bir yere sahip olan Urartuların tarih sahnesinden çekilmesi belirsizliklerle dolu bir süreci kapsamaktadır. Bunda Urartu Krallığı'nın yıkılışı konusunun özellikle filolojik kaynakların aktardığı bilgilerin üzerine inşa edilmiş olması ve arkeolojik verilerin katkılarında yeterince yararlanılmamış oluşu etkili olmuştur. Bu durum, Urartu'nun son dönemlerini yaşarken çevresindeki güçlerle olan ilişkisinin niteliği; Urartu tahtında hangi kralların oturduğu ve bunların kronolojisi; devletin kimler tarafından ne zaman yıkıldığı gibi sorulara cevap bulmayı zorlaştırmıştır. Ayrıca yıkılış sürecinde Urartu Krallığı'nın içinde bulunduğu siyasal, ekonomik, askeri vb. koşulların durumu ile yıkılışa giden sürecin dönüm noktaları da yeterince tartışılmamıştır.

Bu çalışmada Urartu devlet sisteminin çöküşü bir süreç olarak ele alınmış, özellikle arkeolojik kazılarla gün yüzüne çıkartılan Urartu kentlerinden elde edilen "son fotoğraflar" ile filolojik verilerin karşılaştırılmasıyla yukarıdaki soruların birçoğunun cevapları bulunmaya çalışılmıştır.

## Introduction

The Urartu Kingdom succeeded in establishing a central administrative system for the first time in Eastern Anatolia in mid-9<sup>th</sup> century BC and reigned over this territory for over 200 years. Therefore, the decline and fall of this kingdom is quite an intriguing subject replete with unknowns and question marks. Although this process has drawn the interest of some researchers in recent times, studies on the subject have been limited due to the shortage of both written and archaeological data. Hence, many answers pertaining to its fall remain unclear. It is, for example, uncertain if the decline began in one particular region and spread to others or occurred collectively. Among other questions to be answered are whether or not the state and the royal families continued after the great fires seen in different strata across Urartian centers; and if kings such as Rusa and Sarduri -mentioned in the inscription tablets- were, in fact, members of a dynasty. The scarcity of written documents that can shed light upon the demise of the Urartu Kingdom has compelled us to study archaeological remains to reach certain conclusions on this process.

Until the reign of the Urartian king known in the literature as Rusa II, whom we will refer to as Rusa, son of Argishti in this article, new formations had begun to emerge around the Urartu Kingdom that ruled over a sprawling territory extending from Lake Urmia Basin in the east to the Euphrates in the west, the Caucasus in the north and the Taurus Mountains in the south. The Meds and the Babylonians were gaining strength in Iran and Mesopotamia, respectively. Moreover, societies of nomadic nature, such as the Scythian and Cimmerian were becoming more influential in Asia Minor (Köroğlu 2008: 175-182; Roaf 1996: 192, 198; Rollinger 2012: pp. 180-183; Zimansly 2011: pp. 106-121).

As mentioned in Assyrian inscriptions, the Urartu Kingdom had encountered waves of Cimmerian migration in mid-8<sup>th</sup> century BC. Both Rusa I and his son Argishti II suffered heavy losses in their struggle against the Cimmerians. During the reign of Argishti II, the Cimmerians traversed the Urartian lands and began living near Shubria, a buffer zone between Assyria and Urartu (Starr 1990: No. 18; Lanfranchi – Parpola 1990: 145; Sivas 1991: 155). The status quo of these nomadic groups is not clearly known due to the scarcity of inscription tablets from the reign of Rusa, son of Erimena. During the reign of Rusa, son of Argishti, on the other hand, Assyrian inscriptions are cited as source material to suggest some kind of collaboration between the Urartians and the Cimmerians (Starr 1990: No. 18).

## The Question of Successorship

One of the most complicated points of the study we have conducted to understand the decline and fall of Urartu is, without doubt, the succession of the Urartian kings in the 7<sup>th</sup> century BC. The inscriptions

1 <sup>ST</sup> OPINION	2 <sup>ND</sup> OPINION	3 <sup>RD</sup> OPINION
I. Sarduri	I. Sarduri	I. Sarduri
Ishpuini	Ishpuini	Ishpuini
Menua	Menua	Menua
I. Argishti	I. Argishti	I. Argishti
II. Sarduri	II. Sarduri	II. Sarduri
I. Rusa	I. Rusa	Sarduri, son of Sarduri
II. Argishti	II. Argishti	I. Rusa
Rusa, son of Argishti	Rusa, son of Argishti	II. Argishti
Sarduri, son of Rusa	Erimena	Erimena
Sarduri, son of Sarduri	Rusa, son of Erimena	Rusa, son of Erimena
Erimena	Sarduri, son of Rusa	Rusa, son of Argishti
Rusa, son of Erimena	Sarduri, son of Sarduri	Sarduri, son of Rusa

Fig. 1 Widely acknowledged lists of Urartian Kings, (This table uses Piotrovsky 1969, Barnett 1982, Belli 1982, Çilingiroğlu 1997, Salvini 2006a and Fuchs – Kroll 2008 as references)

reveal historic characters such as Erimena, Rusa, son of Erimena, Rusa, son of Argishti, Rusa, son of Rusa, Sarduri, son of Rusa, and Sarduri that all presumably lived in the 7<sup>th</sup> century. In the widely acknowledged lists of kings, all of the kings are recognized as having been enthroned as Urartian kings after Rusa, son of Argishti (Fig. 1).

In order to make a healthier assessment, we must first look at building inscriptions, for their existence demonstrate that the state and the king are both powerful enough to become engaged in construction. Among the last Urartian kings, Rusa, son of Argishti, as well as Rusa, son of Erimena have building inscriptions. This is an important point, which shows that during the reign of Rusa, son of Erimena, the Urartu Kingdom, as mentioned above, had the power to engage in construction activities. There is hardly enough evidence; however, on the existence of a strong state during the reigns of the other names mentioned as kings. Therefore, pinpointing the decline and fall of the Urartu Kingdom is directly related to the order in which these two kings (Son of Argishti, Rusa and son of Erimena, Rusa,) were enthroned (Fig. 2).

An important data on this subject has been presented by Mirjo Salvini. The Gövelek Stele, Salvini studied appears to have changed the generally known presupposition of Rusa, son of Argishti in the general order of kings and the construction of Toprakkale (Salvini 2002; Salvini 2006b; Salvini 2012:



	Name of the City	Stela, Stone Plaque	Bedrock	Metal Object	Tablet	Bulla
ERIMENA	Karmir Blur				✓	
	Toprakkale			✓		
RUSA, SON OF ERIMENA	Gövelek	✓				
	Savacık	✓				
	Keşiş Lake	✓				
	Arin-berd	✓				
	Armavir-blur	✓				
	Ayanis	✓			✓	✓
RUSA, SON OF ARGISHTI	Toprakkale			✓	✓	✓
	Kef Kalesi	✓				
	Adilcevaz	✓				
	Kaleköy	✓	✓			
	Maku	✓				
	Bastam	✓				✓
	Zvartnots	✓				
	Karmir-blur	✓			✓	✓
Armavir-blur	✓					
SARDURI, SON OF RUSA	Karmir-blur				✓	
SARDURI, SON OF SARDURI	Bastam				✓	
	Karmir-blur			✓	✓	
RUSA, SON OF RUSA	Karmir-blur				✓	

Fig. 2 Provenance and Types of Urartian Inscriptions during the Period of Decline and Fall

131, Fuchs 2012, Kroll 2012, Seidl 2012, Roaf 2012, Kroll-Roaf-Zimansky 2012). If the Gövelek Stele is, in fact, part of the Keşiş Lake Stele, it clearly reads that the king that built Toprakkale was none other than Rusa, son of Erimena. In that case, Rusa, son of Erimena, known as Rusa III must have ascended the throne before Rusa, son of Argishti, known as Rusa II because the tablet discovered in Toprakkale indicates that Rusa, son of Argishti was enthroned in Toprakkale (Payne 2006: 12.3.5). In other words, Rusa, son of Argishti had been enthroned in a city, namely Toprakkale, which was founded before his time. Furthermore, none of the inscription tablets of Rusa, son of Argishti mention his as the founder of Toprakkale.

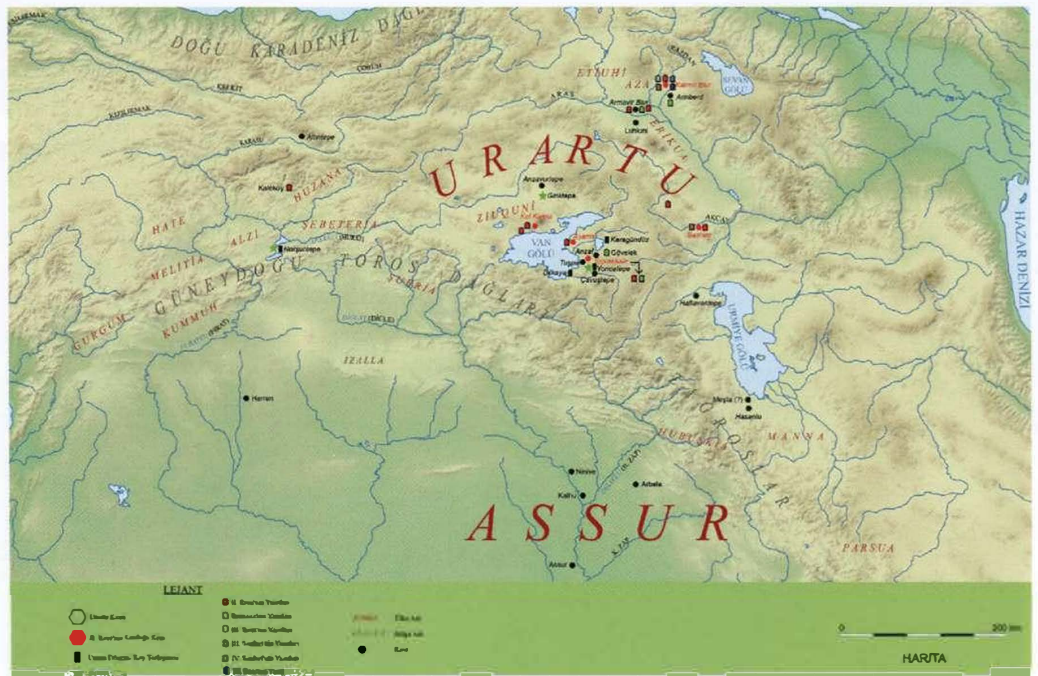
The entirety of the views citing Rusa, son of Argishti as the founder of Toprakkale is based on the Keşiş Lake Stele. During the earliest studies, the Rusa mentioned in the Keşiş Lake Stele was identified as Rusa, son of Sarduri II, i.e., Rusa I. The increase in the volume of Urartian excavations and particularly in the unearthing of the cities founded by Rusa, son of Argishti brought to fore the view that the Keşiş Lake Stele could belong to this particular king. However, as stated above, Salvini's proposed the idea that the Keşiş Lake and Gövelek Steles could be fragments of the same Stele (Çilingiroğlu 2008; Salvini 2006b; Salvini 2012). Indeed, this view is based on the strongest evidence suggesting to which King Rusa the Keşiş Lake Stele could possibly belong. Therefore, it would not be erroneous to claim that the Keşiş Lake Stele belongs to Rusa, son of Erimena.

Other evidence also supports the view that Rusa, son of Erimena was enthroned before Rusa, son of Argishti. A Stele belonging to Rusa, son of Erimena discovered in Savacık village of Van is one such evidence (Salvini 2006b). In terms of its content, the said Stele is similar to the Gövelek Stele and relates the endeavors of Rusa, son of Erimena in the region. Salvini has associated this particular Stele with the Stele of Keşiş Lake (Salvini 2006b: 250; figür 32). In addition, as we will detail below, it appears that almost all of the Urartian cities fell during the reign of Rusa, son of Argishti.

The inscription tablets of Rusa, son of Erimena have been encountered in centers in the Aras River Basin founded by earlier Urartian kings such as Arin-berd and Armavir. However, the absence of his inscriptions in cities from the reign of Rusa, son of Argishti, such as Ayanis, Bastam, Kef Fortress, and Karmir-blur indicate that these cities had not yet been built during his reign (Fig.3).

The fact remains that when we compare the symbols and ornamentations on metal works between the reigns of Rusa, son of Erimena and Rusa, son of Argishti, we find a significant distinction. While the ornamentation style from the reign of Rusa, son of Erimena resembles the style of earlier periods, the style from the reign of Rusa, son of Argishti is markedly different (Seidl 2012: 179-181).

Fig. 3 Urartian Geography and the Distribution of the Inscriptions of the Last Kings – Rulers of Urartu.



When we piece together all this information, we conclude that Rusa, son of Erimena was enthroned before Rusa, son of Argishti and thus Rusa, son of Erimena should be referred to as Rusa II and Rusa, son of Argishti should be acknowledged as Rusa III.

Inscription tablets from the reign of Rusa, son of Argishti mostly recount construction and development initiatives. Unlike inscription tablets of earlier Urartian kings, these particular tablets make less of a mention of military campaigns. The construction activities described in the tablets are also supported by archaeological data. The tablets point to a change in the state policies. Indeed, the reign of Rusa, son of Argishti has always been categorized by scholars as a period of renaissance in every domain. The cities he founded and the developments in the field of arts have left their imprint on this period. Under this king's rule, the Urartu Kingdom emerges as a force that even Assyrian King Esarhaddon fears (Starr 1990: No. 18).

Compared to their counterparts founded by earlier Urartian kings, the cities from the reign of Rusa, son of Argishti sprawl across a larger area. The size of the lower cities on the skirts of the citadels in particular demonstrates the density of the population (Stone – Zimansky 2001; Stone 2012: 99). Inscription tablets of Rusa, son of Argishti reveal that people from other lands were brought to these cities (Payne 2006: 12.2.9).

The intense construction activities during the reign of Rusa, son of Argishti placed a great burden on the kingdom<sup>1</sup>. Considering the limited areas for agriculture across the Urartian lands in particular, feeding these people around the cities must have posed some serious problems. Add to that the possibility of draughts, natural disasters, epidemics, etc., during this period, we can assume that expansion inevitably brought with it a range of other problems.

Following the reign of Rusa, son of Argishti, the tradition of having inscription tablets written was largely abandoned. Sarduri, son of Rusa, Sarduri, son of Sarduri, and Rusa, son of Rusa are among members of the dynasty emerging from the limited number of Urartian inscription tablets in the kingdom's final period. However, not only there is insufficient evidence to prove that all of these rulers were kings, but –with a few exceptions– there is also no evidence to indicate that these individuals lived after Rusa, son of Argishti.

Some researchers suggest that the Urartian inscription LUA.NIN-li found on the seal imprints on the tablets should be read as LUA.ZUM.-li and that this denotes not a prince, but an official (Hellwag 2005). Since both the title and the period in which these individuals lived remain open to discussion, this aforementioned proposition seems plausible.

As an exception, an Assyrian tablet dated to 643 BC mentions the presence of an Urartian king named Ištar-dûri (Sarduri) (Luckenbill 1968: No. 834). Considering the fact that almost all Urartian cities fell during the reign of Rusa, son of Argishti, it can be said that this individual was not a king that held the central authority of Urartians. It is known that prior to the establishment of the Urartu Kingdom, all tribal chiefs, beys, or rulers in Eastern Anatolia were referred to as kings in Assyrian inscription tablets. It can thus be assumed that the Sarduri mentioned here was either a ruler during the reign of Rusa, son of Argishti or a member of the dynasty that lived after the fall of the central authority of the Urartu Kingdom.

Almost all of the written documents from dynasty members that presumably lived after the reign of Rusa, son of Argishti were discovered in Karmir-blur (Fig. 2). This leads researchers to suspect that as of Rusa, son of Argishti, the Urartian dynasty may have withdrawn to the north of the country. Despite all, it still remains unclear for the time being if there were any other kings succeeding Rusa, son of Argishti and if there were, what their realm of sovereignty and level of authority were.

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1. Partially supporting our view, Çilingiroğlu also states that the construction activities during the reign of Rusa, son of Argishti, as well as the depletion of finances may have played an important role in the decline and fall of the Urartians (See Çilingiroğlu 2002: 484 – 488). Similarly, noting that Rusa, son of Argishti was the last Urartian king engaged in grand construction projects, Zimansky attributes the contrast between the destruction of settlements during his rule and the regular abandonment of these settlements to the people's reaction to Rusa II's endeavors. (See Zimansky 2005: 235)

Fig. 4 Fire marks in  
Upper Anzaf



## Farewell: Doors closing, cities burning...

The last king known to have founded cities in the Urartu Kingdom is Rusa, son of Argishti. The kings that presumably ascended the throne after him did not establish any more cities. The various strata of remains from Urartian cities help us much more than the inscriptions do in terms of understanding this particular period.

All of the cities studied in virtually all the studied areas of the vast land of Urartians perished in fires. These fires particularly damaged the citadels of the cities. The burning of the wooden columns and pillars carrying the buildings led to the collapse of buildings with high mudbrick walls. The fire transformed the adobe blocks into bricks and led to the fragmentation of large basalt blocks. This reveals the severity of the fire (Çilingiroğlu 2001b). Paul Zimansky, who conducted several excavations in the lower city of Ayanis, relates that the settlements around the citadels seem not to have been burned down. While this is an important detail, the scarcity of excavations in the lower cities makes it difficult for us to obtain some clear information about these areas. (Fig. 4).

A significant condition encountered in the various strata of destruction is as follows: the doors were walled and blocked before the fires. This is the most important archaeological evidence revealing the presence of a threat lingering over Urartian centers. The northern entrance in Bastam (Kleiss 1996: 293), the main door entrance in the southeast direction in Ayanis (Çilingiroğlu 2001a: 28 – 29; Çevik 2008: 14), the eastern main entrance of the palace in the western citadel in Armavir-blur (Martirosjan 1974: Plate XXVIII) and the doorways of the pavilion building in Yoncatepe as well as the village homes from the same period have all been walled and blocked (Fig. 5).

It is known that the door of the storage room with large pillars in the citadel of Upper Anzaf Fortress, the excavations in which we partook, was closed off and the main gate providing access to the citadel was narrowed. The walling of these gates was, of course, not enough to prevent a large army from accessing the citadel. This might have been a sign that the threat was from the nomadic groups invading the Urartian lands. Assyrian written documents relate that nomadic tribes such as Cimmerians and Scythians began posing problems for Urartu as of the second half of 8<sup>th</sup> century BC. Rapidly increasing in number within and around the land of Urartians, these groups became a threat for Urartian cities towards the end of the reign on Rusa, son of Argishti. Precautions such as walling the gates must have been taken to avoid the threat posed by crowded nomadic groups. Another possibility we can propose is the idea that residents of the clearly abandoned Urartian cities did contemplate returning home. Considering the presence of a non-military threat in particular, the walling of the gates is important, as it reflects the idea of return even though it does not physically protect the cities.

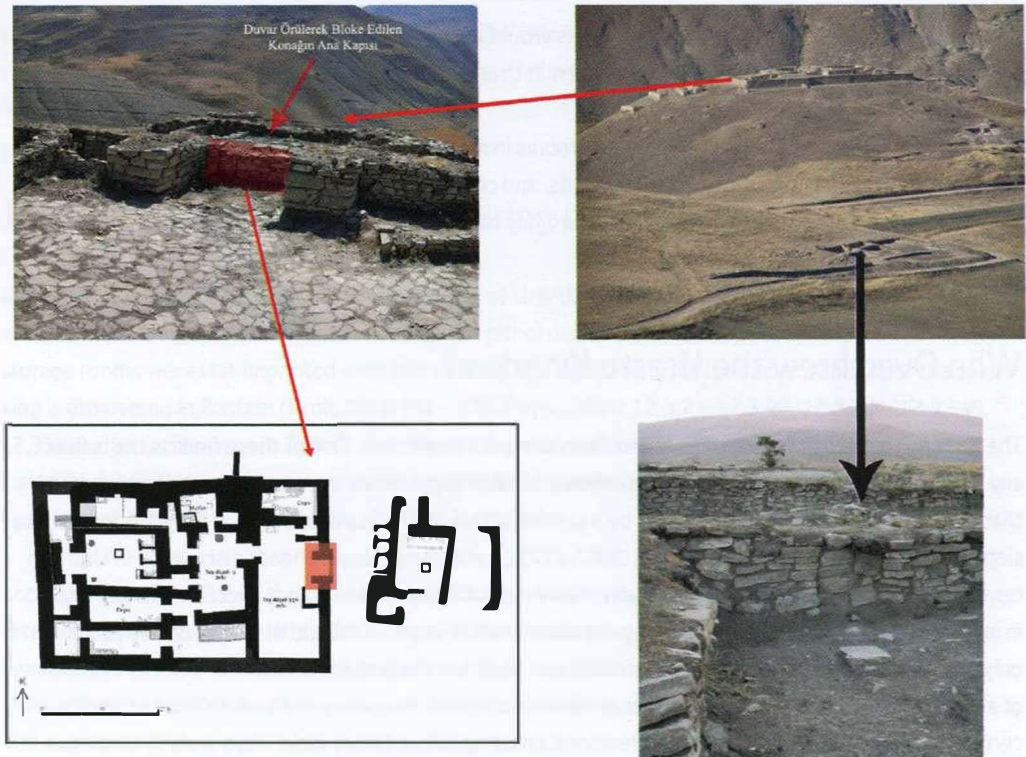


Fig. 5 The walled main gate of Yoncatepe Pavilion

Another common characteristic of Urartian centers is that they are all abandoned. The valuable movable goods in the cities were either taken along during this exodus or were looted by invaders. For example, the golden plates surrounding a podium inside the Ayanis Haldi Temple were taken away (Çilingiroğlu 2007). These must have been stolen before Ayanis burned down or before the fire enveloped the citadel. The most important sign of this abandonment was the absence of any skeletons of people that were trapped in the fire during the great fires across the habitations. With a few exceptions, there are no traces of corpses in the Urartian settlements. This is the clearest evidence that there were no humans during the fire that led to the destruction of Urartian settlements.

A relevant question would be to ask how a fire broke out in these cities. Quite possibly, the cities were first looted by invading migrant groups and then burned down. As it is widely known, burning down cities and settlements was a demonstration of power in ancient times and was an important tool of propaganda. Still, the demolition of Urartian cities and the ensuing fire have also been associated with the earthquake factor as well (Çilingiroğlu 2007: 82; Sağlamlıtur 2009: 565). Nevertheless, the spread of the Urartu Kingdom across a vast geography renders the earthquake factor obscure. Still, even if

there were a devastating earthquake, its effects would only remain local. At this point, we are once again reminded of the absence of any human skeletons in Urartian cities.

The excavations have shown that the storage rooms in many Urartian cities were replete with goods. The jars here are filled with wheat, barley, lentils, and chickpeas. Based on this fact, some researchers have suggested that the destruction of the cities may have taken place in the fall season (Kleiss 1979: 73 – 75).

## Who Overthrew the Urartu Kingdom?

The finds on the abandonment of Urartian cities are quite significant. One of these finds is the lack of any evidence of war or battle at Urartian centers. Until present times, many researchers have claimed that the cities may have been destroyed by a sudden attack of the Scythians or that they fell following a siege (Barnett 1982; Belli 1998: 29; Belli 2002: 277). Scythian-style spearheads discovered in Urartian centers were cited as evidence of this claim. However, such spearheads do not exceed a few in number in most of the cities. In places where they are discovered in larger numbers, they are concentrated only in certain parts of the towns. Therefore, these finds are not enough to consider them as evidence of a possible attack or siege. The absence of skeletons or their weaponry makes it difficult to ascribe a certain meaning to the spearheads. Furthermore, these spearheads may have been used by Urartians as well. Archaeological excavations have revealed that Urartians also possessed similar spearheads and spurred iron spearheads (Derin – Muscarella 2001). Although it has been noted that some of the spearheads discovered in the Çavuştepe excavations were discovered embedded in the wall, there is no discussion on their quantity and how effective they would have been in the destruction of the city; they are merely associated with the fall of the city instead (Erzen 1978: 6). This phenomenon is not particular to Çavuştepe, but is seen in every excavated Urartian center. Even if only a single spearhead was discovered, its presence was used as the basis for the argument that the Scythians caused the fall of the cities (Belli 1998: 29; Belli 2002: 277). Although it is quite possible that the Urartu Kingdom may have been overthrown by Scythian or Cimmerian nomadic groups, the view that the destruction occurred after a sudden attack is merely a figment of imagination.

In addition to the view arguing the downfall of Urartu Kingdom by Scythians, a similar view attributing its demise to the Meds have also found many proponents among researchers. The relationship between the fall of Urartu and the Meds is based merely on Herodotus' account that the battle between the Meds and the Lydians ended with a solar eclipse in 585 BC (Herodotos: I, 103). Researchers have suggested that if the Meds had gone that far into Anatolia around these dates, they may have overthrown the Urartu Kingdom to reach these lands. The absence of any finds related to

the Meds in the various strata of destruction in the cities or in documents pertaining to the downfall or the Urartu Kingdom, which we believe withdrew from the stage of history in mid-7th century BC, renders this view obsolete.

## The Status Quo of the Cities during the Downfall

Another interesting revelation of the excavations at Urartian centers is the appearance of only the name of Rusa, son of Argishti in the bullae found on the pithoi discovered in storage rooms. The pithoi in the storage rooms were last imprinted with seals during his reign. The highest number of bullae of the said king is discovered in Bastam (Kroll 1984: 151 – 170, Payne 2006: 12.3.7 – 12.3.23, 12.3.30 – 12.3.649, 12.3.650 – 891). Similarly, in Ayanis, there are no finds related to any other king that succeeded Rusa, son of Argishti. This is an important data suggesting the possibility that the cities fell during the reign of Rusa, son of Argishti.

Located in Van Lake Basin, the Urartian capital Tushpa also reveals no finds on the presence of a king after Rusa, son of Argishti. While 7th century BC has been documented in Van Fortress Mound, the lower city of Tushpa, archaeological finds do not yield any clear information about the end of the Urartu Kingdom. However, the fire stratum is also present here as well. Architectural remains and archaeological finds are similar to their counterparts in the cities of Rusa, son of Argishti. Having resumed under the direction of Erkan Konyar as of 2010, the excavations seem likely to make significant contributions to the subject of the decline and fall of the Urartu Kingdom (Konyar 2011; Konyar *et al.* 2013). A clay tablet discovered in the Urartian areas in the 2014 excavation season and dated to 7<sup>th</sup> century BC is the most important sign of this.

Founded by Rusa, son of Argishti in Van Lake Basin, Ayanis and Kef Fortresses were also demolished in a similar manner towards mid-7th century and were not rebuilt by the Urartians. It appears that the fires that broke out in the cities Upper Anzaf founded earlier by Menua, Çavuştepe founded by Sarduri II, and Toprakkale founded by Rusa, son of Argishti were related to the events that brought the end of Rusa's cities.

It can be said that the villages in Van Lake Basin were also exposed to fires during this period and were eventually abandoned. In Yoncatepe pavilion and village homes, where finds are more conspicuously preserved, the walling of the gates and their exposure to fire, the storage rooms filled with grains, as well as finds dated to the 7<sup>th</sup> century BC such as fibulae, and Scythian-style spearheads seem to be related to the abandonment of the cities of the same period.

Located in the northern part of Van Lake, Giriktepe pavilion, on the other hand, had been burned down and disappeared with 44 people inside it. It is important, as it is the only Urartian dwelling in which numerous people died. The scarcity of reports and publications on the excavations conducted here makes it impossible for us to study this particular pavilion in detail with respect to the fall of the Urartu Kingdom (Balkan 1964).

Founded in the Aras River basin by Rusa, son of Argishti, Karmir-blur and Bastam perished in fires. Similarly, Arin-berd and Armavir-blur founded in the Aras River basin during the reign of Argishti I also disappeared in a fire.

## Final Dates on the Urartians

As Urartu began to disintegrate, the tribes particularly living in closed basins were hanging to the state by a thread. The destruction of Urartian cities by nomadic/migrant groups brought the end of the dynasty and, by extension, central authority. Following the overthrow of the Urartian dynasty, the administrative mechanism that had controlled the region since 9<sup>th</sup> century BC also ended. No powerful political authority emerged in that region as of this date, nor were big cities established. Quite possibly, some of the tribes comprising Urartu migrated from the region whereas others, as centuries before, continued to exist as small formations influential in limited areas in the same region. The presence of these tribes may have been reflected in the Babylonian tablets. In a tablet dated to 609 BC, King Nabopolassar of Babel speaks of Urashtu Grayson 1975: No. 3). Dated to 594 BC, the Torah (Old Testament) mentions Urartu as *rrt* (Old Testament, book 2 19: 37). Finally, the chronicle of King Nabodinus of Babel dated 547 BC, also mentions the Urashtu region (Rollinger 2008: 57). What is intended by that is not the Urartu Kingdom. However, the continued denomination of the region with a name that phonetically recalls Urartu may possibly indicate that even after the fall of the kingdom, the Urartian culture was upheld, at least for some time, by the tribes in the region.

## Conclusion

The Urartu Kingdom witnessed the invasion of migrant groups, particularly in 7<sup>th</sup> century BC unable to prevent the migrations, the Urartian kings were in dire straits. Particularly Rusa, the son of Arghisti's undertaking of monumental construction and development activities, perhaps to avoid the decline of state authority and his initiative to use immigrants he brought as slaves/workers from outside Urartian lands backfired and accelerated the fall of the kingdom. Perhaps, such extravagant spending also had a negative impact of the kingdom's finances. After all, a significant number of people were employed for

construction, which subsequently led to the problem of accommodation and provisions. This particular problem must have been reflected on the affiliated tribes and societies of Urartu as heavy taxes were levied and solicited severe reactions. These tribes may have gotten rid of the military and financial obligations to the state at the first opportunity they were able to grasp.

The presence of migrant groups possibly upset the locals living in Urartian cities and the cities were abandoned as the volume of migration and eventually invasion grew exponentially. The gates of many of the abandoned cities were walled to avoid access, possibly with the hope that the locals would return one day.

All these events transpired in mid-7<sup>th</sup> century BC during the reign of Rusa, son of Argishti and state authority collapsed. Princes of the dynasty or administrators quite possibly migrated to the north and, as we learn from Assyrian tablets, made considerable efforts to reinstate state authority. However, a similar administration was not established again in the Urartian geography as of the second half of 7<sup>th</sup> century BC.

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