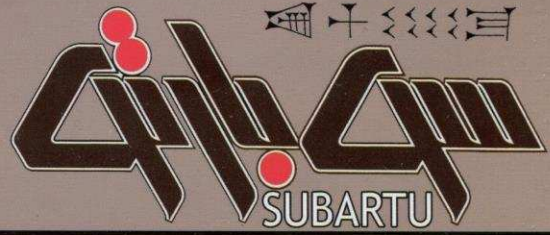


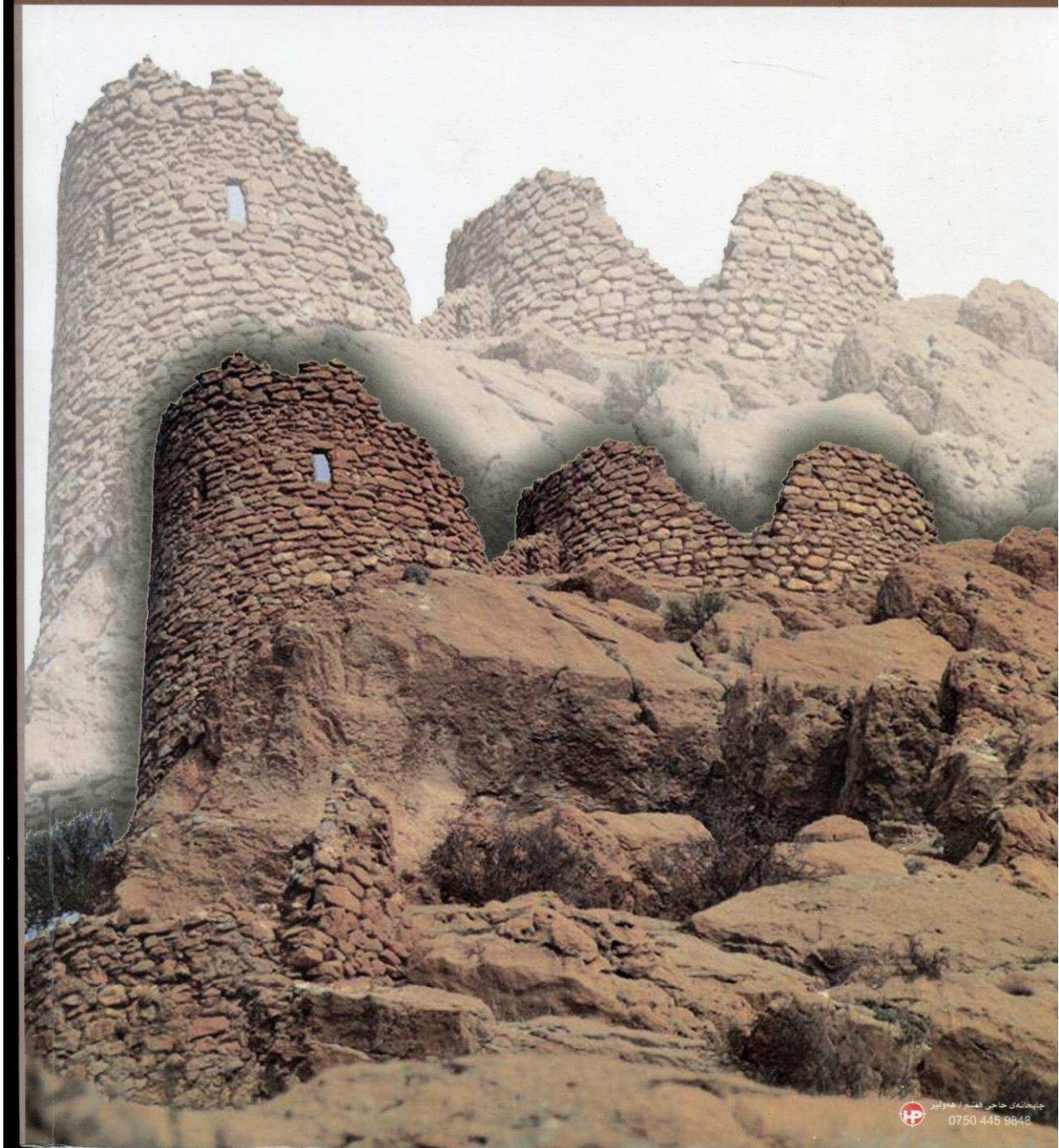


A SCIENTIFIC JOURNAL
DEALS WITH ARCHAEOLOGY AND HERITAGE
ISSUED BY KURDISTAN ARCHAEOLOGY SYNDICATE



eighth year Vo. (8) 2014

مجلة علمية تبحث في الآثار والتراث
تصدرها نقابة الآثاريين الكوردستانيين



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سب ارتو
SUBARTU

ژم 8-اره
سالی ههشتم 2014

گۆفاریکی زانستییه له شوینهوار و کهلهپوور دهدویتی
سهندیگای شوینهوارناسانی کوردستان دهریدهکات

نارییهکان یان (هیند و ئهوروپییهکان)

سههرهتای دهرکهوتنی گلینه

کۆشکی مهحمود باشای جاف

روژه لاتناسان و کاری هه لکۆلینی شوینهواری



أنماط الاستيطان في سومر واکد

الثور المجنح (لاماسو)

المقبرة السلطانية في العمادية

خان لالش في لالش

The temple and city of Muşafir/Ardir
New aspects in the light
of new Archaeological Evidence

Style and Regional Differences
Seljuk Minarets in Persia



Contents of the English Part		
The Sacrifice of Riding Animals In Amorite And Arabic Traditions	Hikmat Derbas	3
The temple and the city of Musasir/Ardini: New aspects in the light of new Archaeological Evidence	Dlshad A. Marf	13
Style and Regional Differences Seljuk Minarets in Persia	Fatima H. Al-Slity	30
Archeological Study of the Marivan Castle (Qal'e Imam) and Identifying of the Damages It has sustained	Hassan Karimian. et al.	40
The Rowanduz Archaeological Program 2013 First Report to the Kurdistan Regional Government	Michael D. Danti	50
Contents of the Kurdish Part		
Aryans of (Indo – Europeans)	Khubeb N.Abdlurahman	4
The Emergence of Pottery	Abdullah B.Zandi	24
Queen Helena the Shining Star of the Arbela and Adiabene	Rezan Q. Ghafury	32
The Minaret of The Great Mosque in Erbil Citadel	Hemn S.Hawrami	39
The palace of Mahmoud Jaf	Mohemd A. Karem	51
The Member of The Great Mosque of Koya	Mahdi J. barznji	75
Orientalists and the archaeological Excavations	Sazan S. Perbal	88
Results of archaeological Excavation of Tell Kilk-Meishk the Second Season 2011	Nuhman J. Ibrahim	93
Preliminary Report on Excavations of the Cemetery (Top Askar Adel Khatat)	Jiretorate Of Germia	133
Thesis and dissertations submitted to the Department of Archaeology of Salahaddin Univeristy.	Zyad A. Muhammed	155
Contents of the Arabic Part		
Settlement Patters In Sumer and Akkad	Jason Ur	159
Winged Bulls (<i>Lamassu</i>) in the Cites of Nimrud and Khorsabad	Zheno A. Saida	190
The Royal Cemetery In Amadiyah (Ameidi)	Abdulla X. Qadir Allay	209
The Khan of Lalish	Zidan R. Bradosty	221
The Big Khan in the City of Balad (Aski Mousel).	Kazem M.Gatah Alzebari	233
Preliminary Report on the Excavation at Tell Rahim	Salah S. Rumayd	243

The temple and the city of Muṣaṣir/Ardini 1

New aspects in the light of new Archaeological Evidence

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Abstract: This paper deals with those Urartian columns which were uncovered by the local people in the village of Mdjeser during activities of construction or cultivation in the last four decades. In addition, some notes about *the architecture of the city of Muṣaṣir depicted on one of the reliefs in the palace of Sargon II at Khorsabad* are given, as well as notes concerning the weather and topography of that area and its effect on the ancient and modern architecture. On the basis of this evidence I add some notes concerning the probable location of *Muṣaṣir/Ardini and of the temple of Haldi*.

Keywords: *Muṣaṣir/Ardini, Haldi Temple, Column basis, Iron Age, The Northern Zagros, Urartu, Assyria, Sidekan, Mdjeser, Shkene.*

Introduction: The long lost religious capital city which was called Muṣaṣir in the Assyrian inscription and Ardini by the Urartians was located in the land of Muṣaṣir. The land of Muṣaṣir was considered by K. Radner to be one of the lands which “formed a string of ‘buffer states’ between the two powers,”² i.e. between Assyria and Urartu. There is agreement among the scholars that ancient Muṣaṣir was located in the territory of the modern villages of Sidekan or Mdjeser³ in the district of Sidekan/Bradost, in the most northeastern corner of Iraq, close to Iran and Turkey.⁴ This identification is based on archaeological evidence and on evidence from the Assyrian and the Urartian texts.⁵

Before the archaeological discoveries in the land of Muṣaṣir, the medieval Muslim author al-Qalqashandi (1355-1418 AD), in his encyclopedia “*Ṣubḥ al-a ‘shā*,” (“The Dawn of the Blind”) was the first to mention stone steles in that area. When he described the fourteenth region of the Kurdish land, he refers to the surrounding Janjarain Mountain of Ushnuya town (which is located east of the Kel-e-shin pass):⁶

“...this mountain is tremendously high, very cold. On the top there are three stone steles. The length of each one is 10 spans of the hand, and its width 7 spans. They are made from greenish stone. On each stone stele there is an inscription, faded away over time. They (i.e. the local people) say that these stone steles are erected as a warning, and tell the story of those who were wiped out over there because of snow, and cold in summer (nights). Now the Zarzarian (people/tribe)⁷ take guard to receive tribute below Janjarain *mountain*. ”⁸

¹I would like to thank those local people who helped me during my field work in the Harir-Ruwanduz-Sidekan areas. My thanks are due first of all to Mr. Adulwahab Soleman, the head of Soran Directorate of Antiquities. Many thanks to Prof. Dr. Wilfred van Soldt, and Dr. Diederik Meijer for their support to the field work and for their comments also. Also I would like to thank Mr. Mohammad Majeed the Mudir-Nahiya of Sidekan, and Mr. Kirmanj Izzat the Qaimaqam of Soran whom for their administrative support. Many thanks to Mr. Abdulrazaq Bapir, Mr. Salam Bradosty, who supports the field work in Mdjeser.

²Radner 2012, p.243ff.

³Rainer Boehmer has identified the Kala-Mdjeser fortifications with ancient Muṣaṣir (see Boehmer, 1979, pp. 50-51; Boehmer, 1973, pp. 31-40). A point to be noted is that the name of the village and the castle (the Kale) are called by the local people Mdjeser. Boehmer registered the name as Mudjesir, but this artificial pronunciation by Boehmer gives ‘artificial similarities’ between the name of the ancient toponym and the name of the modern village, although in reality the village is called by the local people Mdjeser or simply Mdjese. The modern name does not have any meaning in the language of the local Kurdish people.

⁴As an example see, Al-Amin 1952, 61; Boehmer, 1973, pp.31-40; Lanfranchi 1995, p.130, n. 14; Postgate 1995, p.9; Radner 2012, p.250.

⁵Radner 2012: 250.

⁶al-Qalqashandi, Sh. A., *Ṣubḥ al-a ‘shā* (“The Dawn of the Blind”), vol.4, p. 376.

⁷Interestingly in the late 19th century when Lehmann-Haupt visited that area he mentioned the same Zarzarian (tribe) which mentioned by al-Qalqashandi half millennia before him, Lehmann-Haupt recorded their name as Zerza tribe, even he mentioned name of some of the chieftains and other tribes. They are the same modern Zarzarian tribe who live on the same area. For further details see Lehmann-Haupt 1910, p.248ff.

⁸It seems to be the weather at that area not changed a lot since the time of Qalqashandi since the 15th century, when Al-Amin stayed there for a survey during June-July 1951, he said that in the area of Kel-e-Shin the weather was very cold during this summer nights. For further details see, Al-Amin, 1952, p.63.

I assume that these stone 'steles' with faded away inscriptions might be the same as the Urartian steles 'Kel-e-Shin, Topzawa, Merg-e-Karvan' which are erected in the surrounding areas west and northeast of the way to Ushno. al-Qalqashandi mentioned the colour of the steles as greenish, and actually the name of Kel-e-Shin in the local Kurdish language also means a green/blue or grayish-blue stele, although the colour of the stone in reality is grayish-blue. Besides that, he mentioned that at the foot of this mountain where the steles are the guardians take customs tolls, the same place as Kel-e-Shin, where even now there is a customs checkpoint. Also it is considered as one of the points on the Iraqi-Iranian border. In addition, we have the measurements of the stone 'steles' that were mentioned by al-Qalqashandi (10 spans high, 7 wide), where one span is the distance of a fully opened hand, from the tip of the thumb to the little figure. It was used as a measurement in the past. Although we do not know exactly, because there are differences from place to place and from one man's span to another's, generally a span is about 16 cm (9 inches).⁹ The measurements of the Urartian steles are similar to this measurement mentioned by al-Qalqashandi. We know the measurements of the Urartian steles: the Kel-e-Shin stele (height 175cm, width 62cm) and of the Topzawa stele (height 116 cm, width 71.8 cm). If we consider al-Qalqashandi's span as 16cm, the measurement of his stele would be comparable: height 160cm (10 spans of 16cm) and width 70 cm (7 spans of 10cm).¹⁰

The discoveries in the area of Sidekan/Bradost started for the first time in the early 19th century, when the Urartian bilingual stele of Kele-Shin was recorded by Schulz in 1827. After him others visited that area and recorded in detail the Urartian bilingual inscriptions of Topzawa and Kel-e-Shin. They dealt with copying and translating the inscriptions.¹¹ Lehmann-Haupt also visited that area in 1899, and he describes the Urartian steles and some architectural remains at Ashkene in Sidekan.¹² According to him it is to be identified with ancient Muşafir.¹³ In the 1950s, Mahmood Al-Amin for the first time published the stone statues uncovered from Mdjeser.¹⁴ Also al-Amin recorded architectural evidence from Sidekan-Topzawa, and confirmed what had been recorded by Lehmann-Haupt. Al-Amin describes the architectural remains of Shkene in the east of Sidekan thus: "There are remains of ruins of a fortress about 1 mile (south east) of the stele of Topzawa at Shkene, the remains on a hill rising from the surrounding valley about 30m. The walls of the fortress/castle can be seen to have been destroyed, even with its foundations taken away. There are heaps of stones which had been used in the construction of this building. But there are probable remains of the internal walls of a building or palace, looking like the remains of a tower 36m x 32m. It was built with big stones, each one about 3.5-4m. thick. There are remains of foundations of houses inside the internal walls, which were built with small cubic stones. Many stones are visible outside the external wall. In the valley there are remains of a long wall/fortification with small stones."¹⁵

During my fieldwork in recent years I have seen these sites described by Al-Amin, but apart from a few remains of stones or of what might be a foundation of a wall there is nothing else in Shkene. This may be because of cultivation activities, and during the military unrest some looters removed the architectural remains from Shkene.

⁹Baalabaki, 1970, p.883.

¹⁰For further details see: CTU I: 141; CTU III: 322.

¹¹Among them, Rawlinson in 1841, Khanikof in 1852, Blaw in 1858, De Morgan in 1890, Lehmann-Haupt in 1893; for further details see: Al-Amin 1952, 64ff.

¹²Lehmann-Haupt, 1926, pp.288-308.

¹³Lehmann-Haupt, 1926: pp.288-308; Lehmann-Haupt, 1910, pp.241-261; See also, Al-Amin, 1952, pp.61, 69. Unfortunately the original source (Lehmann-Haupt, C. F., Muşafir und der achte Feldzug Sargons II. (714 v. Chr.), Mitteilungen der Vorderasiatisch-Aegyptischen Gesellschaft 21, 1916, 137-40) is not available to me.

¹⁴Al-Amin, 1955, p.224.

¹⁵Al-Amin, 1952, p.70. Al-Amin also visited the area of Ruwanduz and he recorded that "There are remains of ruins of three settlements a few miles distant from south of Ruwanduz far in Farzan, Bestora, and Kurous, the foundation of buildings built with big stones is visible". Al-Amin, 1952, p.69.

In the 1970s, Rainer M. Boehmer recorded other uncovered stone statues, some potsherds and jars. In addition he recorded details of architectural remains, fortifications at the Kala-Mdjeseer and Ashkene (Fig. 6 A). Boehmer also recorded two column bases found in the Kala-Mdjeseer. Boehmer dated most of these architectural remains and even a group of collected ceramics from Ashkene and Mdjeseer to the Iron Age, specifically to the 8th-7th century or earlier;¹⁶ also, he considered one of the columns as Urartian (90-93cm in diameter), and the other one, which had a bell shaped base, as Achaemenid (Fig. 6 B-C).¹⁷ Boehmer compared the uncovered Urartian column of Mdjeseer with the columns of the temple of Çavuştepe.¹⁸ After the 1970s, for more than three decades, this area became a battlefield of the Iraqi-Iranian armies, then Turkish/Iranian armies against Kurdish fighters. Consequently, this area remained virtually closed to archaeological activities.

Since 2005, as a local archaeologist, I have started a fieldwork project in that area. The initial aim of this field work was to survey and record the Late Bronze Age, and the Iron Age sites and objects (also objects now in local museums and collections), which were uncovered accidentally in that area during the military unrest. The results of this field work until now is a record and study of seven human-size stone statues, several jars and pottery fragments, a stamp seal impression on a big jar, and a small bronze statue of a wild goat bearing an inscription. I have also recorded and studied 17 Urartian column bases which have been reused by the local villagers in Mdjeseer during the last 40 years. In addition, I have recorded several archaeological sites and identified/ re-identified some ancient toponyms.¹⁹

The uncovered columns of Mdjeseer: The uncovered column bases were reused by the villagers as column bases, or stairs, or as a seat in front of or inside the courtyard of their houses (Fig.1 A-B; Fig.3). We found some of them in ruins of the destroyed houses,²⁰ or in the vineyards of the village. Most of the columns are made from green basalt, and some of them are made from sandstone, limestone, and marble (Fig.2-3).



Fig. 1: A: Some column bases reused in the courtyard of the Bradostian chieftain in Mdjeseer. (Photo by author).

Fig. 1: B: Two column bases reused by the people of Mdjeseer as stairs in front of their house. (Photo by author).



¹⁶ Boehmer, 1993-1997, p.446ff.

¹⁷ Boehmer, 1993-1997, p.447, fig.4.

¹⁸ Boehmer, 1993-1997, p.447, Abb.3.

¹⁹ This fieldwork, which was conducted during 2005-2012 was facilitated by the Directorate of Antiquities of Soran and Slemani, Erbil museums (I thank them very much for their support). This study since 2011 became part of the “CIANZ= Cultural Interaction Between Assyrian and the Northern Zagros” project of my doctoral research, in the Assyriology Department at Leiden University, which is supervised by Prof. Dr. Wilfred van Soldt and Dr. Diederik Meijer.

The preliminary reports of this field work have been presented by the author in July 2013 as “New Archaeological Evidence from the Land of Muşaşir,” at the 59th Rencontre Assyriologique Internationale in Ghent, Belgium; and in November 2013, “Back to the land of Muşaşir/Ardini-fieldwork 2005-2012” in the International Conference “Archaeological Research in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq and the Adjacent Areas, Athens, November 1st-3rd 2013, organized by Cambridge and Athens universities.

²⁰ Mdjeseer was one of more than 4000 villages destroyed during the genocide in 1987-1988. Even now some families from the village will not go back to rebuild their houses because of the current troubles in this border region.



Fig.2: Some of the uncovered column bases from the village of Mdjeser. (Photo by author)



Fig.3: Some of the uncovered column bases from the village of Mdjeser. (Photo by author)

These columns are generally similar in size. The diameter of most of them between 56-66 cm, but two are different. Of these the smaller one is 33 cm in diameter, and the larger one 95cm in diameter. Most of the columns are 32 or 33 cm high, but two are different. Of these, one is 50cm high, and the other is 61cm high. These differences relate to the type of the stone, since the different columns are carved from other different stone, marble or limestone. Unfortunately, there is no inscription, signs, or symbols on the columns. But one is incised with two horizontal lines around its diameter, and another has an incomplete horizontal line incised parallel to the other lines (Fig.4).

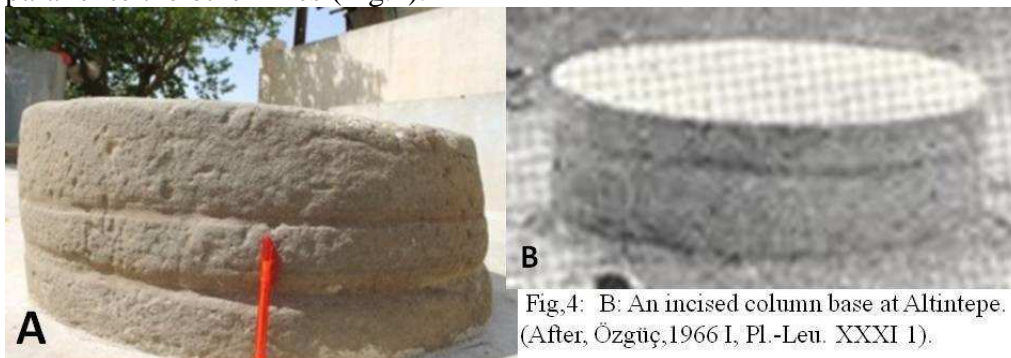


Fig.4: A: The incised column base from Mdjeser. (Photo by author).

Fig.4: B: An incised column base at Altintepe. (After, Özgüç,1966 I, Pl.-Leu. XXXI 1).

Parallels and dating of the columns of Mdjese:

These columns are comparable with others, as already mentioned. Most are made from basalt, similar to traditional Urartian column bases, as used in Urartian temples, such as the column bases at the Haldi temple in Altin-Tepe (See fig.5 A).²¹ Similar columns come from Van (Fig.5 B).²² However, among all the 17 columns of Mdjese none is parallel to the one considered by Boehmer as an Achaemenid column base from Kali-Mdjese (Fig.6 B-C).



Fig. 5.A: Column bases of the temple at Altintepe. (After, Özgüç, 1966, Pl. Leu. XI I).



Fig. 5.B: A column base bearing an inscription of Ishpuini from Patnos, Van Museum. (After Salvini, CTU III, A 2-10).

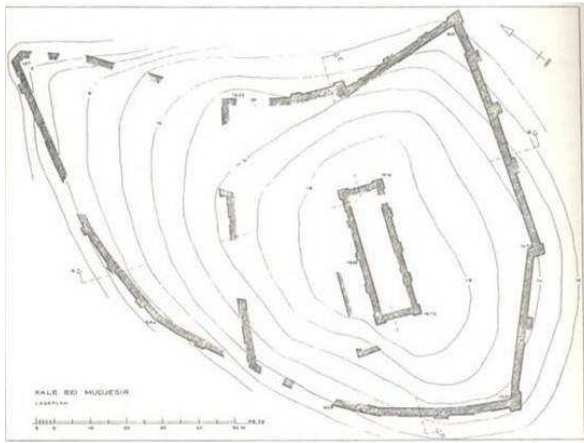


Fig. 6.A: The plan of Kala-Mdjese (after Boehmer 1993-1997, Abb 2).

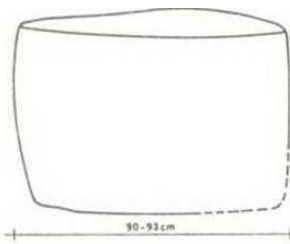


Fig. 6.B: An Urartian column base from Kala-Mdjese. (After Boehmer 1993-1997, Abb 3).

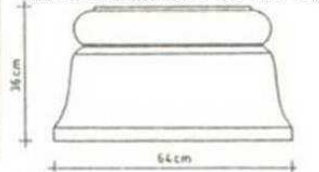


Fig. 6.C: Achaemenid column base from Kala-Mdjese. (After Boehmer 1993-1997, Abb 4)

The incised column of Mdjese is unique among its group. These lines are probably traces of what might have been metal bands around the column. From Altin-Tepe came an identical column base with incised horizontal lines around its diameter (Fig.4).²³

On the basis of the above mentioned parallels with the columns of the Urartian temples in Urartu, the columns of Mdjese may be taken as contemporary with the Bainili/Urartu kingdom. It is a group of 17 columns of Urartian style from the 9th -8th century BC. The column bases of Mdjese come from ruins of an Urartian temple, and if so, this temple should be the long lost temple of Haldi of Muşasir.

New aspects on the temple and city of Muşasir/Ardini: Architecture of the Temple of Haldi and the city of Muşasir/Ardini in the Urartian and Assyrian records

The Temple in the Urartian records

In the Urartian inscriptions the earliest known records came from the bilingual inscriptions on the stele of Kel-e-Shin (late ninth century BC). Ishpuini and his son and co-regent Minua mentioned that they built a temple for Haldi in Ardini/Muşasir. We do not know for sure if that temple was the first temple of Haldi in Muşasir or if the temple already existed, who renovated or extended it, or if it is the first temple of Haldi in Muşasir/Ardini. But in

²¹Özgüç, 1969 Altintepe I, Pl.XI; Özgüç, 1969 *Altintepe II*, Pl.XXXI; Cilingiroğlu, 2011, p.343.

²²The column bears an inscription of the Urartian king Ishpuini son of Sarduri from Patnos (Van Museum): for further details see: CTU III, A 2-10.

²³Özgüç, 1966, Altintepe I, p.40; Cilingiroğlu, 2011, p.343.

the late second millennium BC Shalmanaeser called the city a holy city.²⁴ This means that the city even in the second millennium BC was well known as a holy city, like in the first half of the first millennium BC. Still there is no direct known record of Haldi and its temple in the second millennium BC.

Very probably Haldi was worshipped in Muşaşir/Ardini even before he had been considered by the Urartians as their national god in the early first millennium BC.²⁵ The stele of Kel-e-Shin was erected by the Urartian king Išpuini(c. 825-810 BC ?) and his son and co-regent Minua(c. 815-810?, 810-785 BC?) after their victories and their building a temple for Haldi at Muşaşir/Ardini. According to the inscription, they offered many expensive gifts, weapons and bronze vessels, and much silver, while sacrificing a large number of animals in front of the gates of the temple of Haldi.²⁶

The Urartian king Rusa I (ca. 735-713?/719-713? BC) in the inscription on the stele of Topzawa says that he built a temple for Haldi in Ardini/Muşaşir. He referred also to a festival which continued for 15 days to celebrate his victory over the Assyrian auxiliaries, pushing them out from Muşaşir.²⁷ We do not know for sure if he rebuilt and renovated the temple that had been built by Išpuini and Minua, or if he built a new temple for Haldi. But the inscription of Kel-e-Shin clearly mentions Haldi as well as several other deities including the sun (^DUTU-š/ Šiwini) and the weather god (^DIM-še/ Teišeba).²⁸ The temple was called “*god’s house*” by Rusa I:²⁹ “... ...[. the king]s my fathers (ancestors) of [.] / these [.] . To the city of Muşaşir did not [bring] / [.] I during one expedition ...I brought / [more than all the king]s. to the city of Muşaşir I came down, / [and the king] [closed?] the gate of the god’s house / and fled to Assyria. Haldi, the lord [reopened its] gate; / [the religious practice?] in the midst (of the temple) I performed. Against Urzana I [...] / [his? troo]ps Urzana pr[epared] to the battle against me./ By order of Haldi I, Rusa, /w[ent to the moun]tain of Andarutu [and I de]feated (him). I [took] Urzana with my hand / [and I overpowered him.] I [set] him to his (former) position for the (exercise of) the kingship.”

The gates of the temple were mentioned in the Urartian inscriptions. According to the inscription of Kel-e-Shin, the temple had more than one gate, and they sacrificed a large number of animals in front of the gates of the temple of Haldi.³⁰ The temple of Haldi, its gate and its ‘courtyard’ are mentioned by Rusa I in his inscriptions on the Topzawa, Merge-karvan and Movan steles. For example, on the inscription of Topzawa Rusa I says that Urzana closed the gate of the temple of Haldi, called ‘the gate of the house of the god’.³¹

The temple and the city in the Assyrian records

The city of Arinu(i.e. later Ardini/Muşaşir)³² was described by the Assyrian king Shalmaneser I (1274-1245 BC) as a city founded on bedrock: “*The city Arinu, the holy city founded in bedrock....*”³³ Tiglath-pileser I (1114-1076 BC) also refers that the city Arinu located “... at the foot of Mount Aisa.”³⁴ Also, Sargon II (721-705 BC) refers to Urzana the ruler of Muşaşir/Ardini as “LU.šad-da-a-’u-ú.” i.e. a ‘*mountain dweller*’.³⁵

²⁴ RIMA I, A. o.77.1. 47-48.

²⁵ Taffet and Yakar, 1998, pp. 133-152.

²⁶ For further details see CTU I-III A 3-11; Benedict, 1961, p.337ff.

²⁷ Al-Amin 1952, p.68.

²⁸ CTU A 3-11 20; also, the eighth campaign text of Sargon II refers to deporting the statue of Bagbartu (Bagmaštu), the consort of Haldi as well as the statue of Haldi to Assyria(TCL III Sg. 385). For details about these deities see: Petrosyan, 2007, pp. 188-189.

²⁹ Roaf 2012, p.193. line: 31’-48’

³⁰ Al-Amin 1952, p.66; Also see CTU I-III A 3-11.

³¹ There are similar texts on the steles of Topzawa and Merge Kervan; this text is recorded on the Movana stele, face III, Assyrian version. For the details see: Roaf 2012, p.139.

³² The mentioned city Arinu in the Middle Assyrian inscriptions, considered by K. Radner as the same later Ardini city of the land of Muşaşir. (see: Radner 2012, p.246).

³³ RIMA I, A. o.77.1. 47-48.

³⁴ RIMA 2: A.0.87.1 v 77.

³⁵ TCL III 310; Radner 2012, p.251.

The third line of the inscription on the seal of Urzana refers to the city as “URU.Ú.NAGA¹ MUŠEN¹³⁶ “the city of the raven”. This is interpreted by scholars in various ways. K. Radner says that the raven could be related to Haldi, according to her Mithra was another face of Haldi in the Roman period, and the raven was one of the symbols of Mithra. Also, she supposed that there are underground temples of Mithra in the Bradost caves.³⁷ Others consider Raven as an Assyrian pun on the name of the city.³⁸ More simply when on the seal of Urzana the city is called ‘the raven city’ in my opinion it means that the houses of the city were built on a rocky mountain slope, nesting there like ravens. Similarly, the western traveler Dickson in 1910 called similar houses in the villages of the Northern Zagros “*swallows’ nests*”. So the name ‘raven city’ may not have had anything to do with Haldi and Mithra.³⁹ The author has seen most of the caves and surveyed some of them, and found nothing related to the Iron Age or Roman period, the periods when Haldi or Mithra were worshipped. I conclude that Shalmaneser’s description of the holy city as founded in bedrock, Sargon’s calling Urzana a ‘*mountain dweller*’, and Urzana’s description of his city as “the city of the raven,” all point to the fact that the city was built on a slope in a mountainous area. This is supported by the depiction of the city on the Khorsabad relief and the landscape of Muşaşir (see further below).

The temple and the city in Assyrian art: Although we have no iconographic record depicts the city or the temple in the Urartian art, on the other hand the city is depicted on an Assyrian relief in Sargon’s palace at Khorsabad. That depiction shows the city and its temple being plundered during the eighth campaign of Sargon II in 714 BC (Fig.7 A).

The relief shows some details of the temple, its facade, and its tent shape roof, the platform on which the temple was built, the gate of the temple, and the two guardian statues standing on either side of the temple. Shields hang on the external wall and the roof of the temple. Other details of the walls probably show the columns of the external wall. A statue of a mammal with its baby which is suckling its mother.⁴⁰ The cauldrons in the courtyard of the temple were probably used for some rituals and ceremonies in the courtyard. (see Fig.7 B).

³⁶ Radner 2012, p. 247, note 34.

³⁷ Radner 2012, p. 253.

³⁸ Collon 1987: 87, 405; Radner 2012: 247.

³⁹ Most of the caves of Bradost have been surveyed or excavated and there is no mention of finding or uncovering ‘underground temples of Mithra’ or other gods by the archaeologists. For further details see: Solecki 1952, pp. 37-48; Safar 1950, pp. 118-123; Marf 2009, pp.586-590; Marf, et al., 2011, pp.30-34.

⁴⁰ Also in the text of the eighth campaign Sargon II refers to plundering several animal statues, “...together with a bull of bronze, a cow of bronze, a calf of bronze, I carried off.” (see Lie, 1929: II:160, p.24.) probably the cow and the calf statues are the same which depicted on the relief.

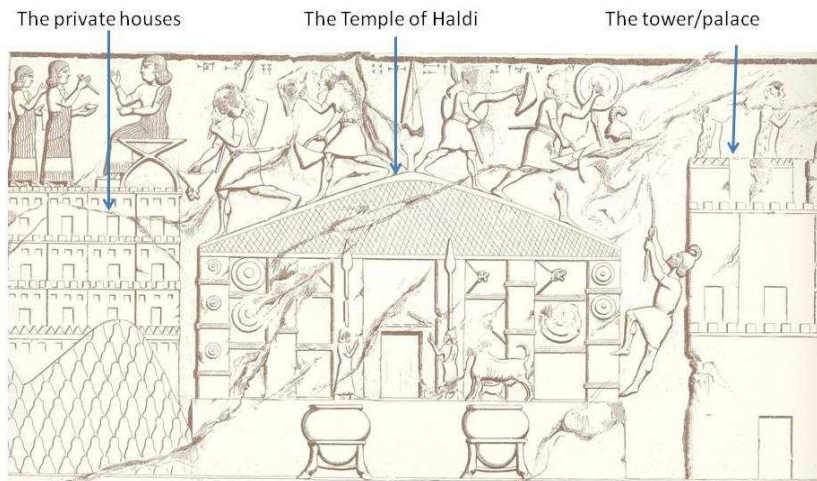


Fig. 7. A: The city, temple, and palace of Muṣaṣir depicted on the Khorsabad relief. Sack of Muṣaṣir in 714 BC. (After Botto & Flandin 1972: Pl.141, Room XIII, slab4).



Fig. 7. B: The temple of Haldi at Musasir. (After Botto & Flandin 1972: Pl.141, Room XIII, slab4).

The platform of the temple of Haldi in Muṣaṣir

Scholars disagree about whether or not to consider the platform as a feature of Urartian temple architecture.⁴¹ No parallel to the platform depicted for the Haldi temple of Muṣaṣir has yet been found, and during excavations at the Urartian temples no platforms have been uncovered, except for the Toprakkale temple, which was built on a platform on the bedrock.⁴²

In my opinion it is the local topography that is the reason for building the temple of Haldi on a platform in Muṣaṣir, so clearly depicted on the Assyrian relief of Khorsabad. The climate was probably another reason for the platform. Flat areas in these valleys in the mountainous areas of the Northern Zagros were scarce, and what plains there were used for cultivation. Probably in the past for the same reason the private houses of the city and the temple of Haldi would have been built on the mountain slope.

The temple was a big building compared to the small private houses. So when they had to build the Haldi temple in Muṣaṣir, they had first to make a platform against the slope, as a base. This platform gave the building a distinctive contour among the other buildings of the city. The temple would also have been protected by this platform from the heavy rain and snow, which blocked the gates and outside doors of the houses when it reached more than a metre high.⁴³

The tent shape roof of the temple of Haldi

The temple of Haldi which was located in the centre of the city is depicted as square shaped with a tent roof.⁴⁴ Boehmer says that the temple of Haldi in Muṣaṣir had a special shape unlike a typical Urartian Tower Temple,⁴⁵

⁴¹For details about this debate see: Cilingiroglu, 2012, pp. 301-302.

⁴² Cilingiroglu, 2012, pp. 301-302.

⁴³Because of much snow which usually melts in late spring. This led to washing away of small objects from the archaeological sites. In my opinion this can be as an answer for the question of some scholars who wondered of why there were so few potsherds on the archaeological sites of that area.

⁴⁴ Boehmer, 1993-1997, p.448..

⁴⁵ Boehmer, 1993-1997, p.448..

if the depiction of the relief was true and the temple had a tent shaped roof, although may future archaeological excavation could prove this or maybe not.⁴⁶ No other temple except that of Haldi in Muşasir and no roofs of Urartian temples have been depicted on reliefs or other iconography, and the information obtained from archaeological excavations about the roofs or roof coverings of Urartian temples is limited. Some scholars have assumed that the roof of the Ayanis temple and other Urartian temples generally were pyramidal,⁴⁷ but the only depicted evidence is the roof of the temple Haldi in Muşasir.

Although the relief shows the temple with a very clear tent shaped roof, we cannot be sure. If the roof was tent shaped, two reasons suggested below may be the explanation.

1. The tent shaped roof of the temple may have originated from the tents of the semi-nomadic peoples of the pre-Musasirians or early Muşasirians.⁴⁸ It might be that this temple existed even before the Urartian considered Haldi as their national god. There is evidence from the late second millennium that the city of Ardini/Muşasir was considered as a holy city before the Urartian kingdom was established.⁴⁹ But until now we have no record about the temple existing before the ninth century BC. The only early recorded evidence came from the inscriptions of the Meher Kapisi and Kel-e-Shin steles from Ishpuini and his son Minua. I hesitantly assume that in the land of Muşasir before the 9th century BC, and even during the political structure of Muşasir (i.e. during 9-7 centuries BC), some inhabitants or what could call pre-Muşasirians were probably semi-nomads and only a minority were sedentary in cities.

⁴⁶Although, there is no mention of destructing of the temple in the Assyrian and Urartian records, but in reality it will be not easy to depict the shape of the roof of the temple via excavation.

⁴⁷ Cilingiroglu, 2012, p. 305.

⁴⁸Although there is no direct evidence yet from material or immaterial culture that the people of the land of Musru/Muşasir were semi-nomads, or some of them were pastorals, but if we look at the Urartian and Assyrian inscriptions we can find what probably indirect referring to existing semi-nomadic pastorals in the land of Muşru/Muşasir, for examples; the text of the stele of Kel-e-Shin refers to large number of animals which had been brought by the Urartian king Išpuini to 'sacrificed' or dedicated to the temple of Haldi at Muşasir /Ardini, the dedicated animals includes "... **1,112 cattle, 9,020 goats(?) (and) sheep as an offering 12,480 large goats(?) for (the?) dedication**" (Benedict, 1961, lines 13-15, pp.382-383). On the other hand Sargon plundered dozens of thousands of animals from the land of Muşasir to Assyria, which were included "692 mules and asses, 920 oxen, 100225 sheep"(see Lie, 1929, 154-155). This huge number of animals only can owing by pastorals or semi-nomads not by inhabitants of villages or cites. Also, it has been suggested that part of the people (around) of Hasanlu were lived in tents or as semi-nomadic pastorals.(Dyson, 1989, p.110).

⁴⁹RIMA I, A. o.77.1. 47-48.

The only material which might support this assumption is the human-size statues discovered in Mdjeser and the surrounding area. Some of these funerary statues have been paralleled by the author to the steles of Hakkari which date back to the Late Bronze Age - Iron Age I.⁵⁰ In my opinion, the tent shape may have come from the shape of the main tent of the chieftain of the semi-nomadic people of Muşafir. This is not surprising if we look at the same area nowadays, where we can see that the majority of the people are still from semi-nomadic tribes. They are living in the villages or settlements during the autumn and winter. They build for their animals a type of stable with tent shaped roof. Some of them do not even have villages, but come down to the western foot of Bradost range where the Upper Zab flows. Here they spend the autumn and winter in shelters, with bases and walls made from stones. The tent shaped roof is made from reeds and wooden spars overlaid with leaves. Sometimes a plastic cover gives additional protection from the rain. (Fig.8. A-B).

Those semi-nomads move every year in April to the high mountains with their animals (sheep, goats, horses, donkeys, dogs, chickens etc). They camp there and erect their black tents, staying until the early autumn.⁵¹

2. Probably the roof of the temple was tent shaped because of the weather and heavy snow in winter in this mountainous area.⁵² At most times of the year it is cold, and in autumn, winter and early spring there are regular falls of snow. Sometimes the snow is more than a metre deep.⁵³

This may have been to avoid the snow piling on the roof. The tent shape allows the snow to slip away from the roofs. If the roof was flat, such a big roof on walls forming a large square would soon collapse under the weight of snow. Too many cubic metres of snow on a flat roof would be disastrous. On the other hand, today most of the houses in the villages in the Zagros are built with flat roofs that keep all the villagers very busy when the snow starts. I remember, when I was a child, when the snow started in winter most of the men and women of the village were removing the snow from the roofs with a special tool, locally called a befr-mal, 'snow-remover.' Sometimes inhabitants of a house were killed because of

⁵⁰Details will be in forthcoming article of the author "*Funeral statues/steles from the land of Muşafir and its surrounding areas (From field work 2005-2012).*"

⁵¹Some even sheltered in the Shanidar Cave. I have seen some of these families when I visited the cave a few years ago. But in 2007 these families were paid to leave the cave forever, to make the cave a tourist attraction.

⁵²As mentioned above Al-Qalqashandi recorded a local story that the reason for erecting the steles was to caution people about the cold and snow of summer in that area. As in the past, so also now every year the modern villagers of that area are cautious about the problems of heavy snow storms, which block the roads between the villages and the surrounding towns in the valleys and plains. As mentioned above, the heavy snow in ancient, medieval and modern times explains that it was snow and the topography that influenced the architectural style of buildings in that area.

⁵³As it was in the past, the ruler of Muşafir Urzana sent a letter to Sargon II, saying that he could not bring or send his tribute of oxen and sheep to Assyria because of the snow. He says: "snow has blocked the roads. (As) I am looking out now, it is impossible: I cannot go empty-handed to the presence of the kin[g]."SAA 5 II 146:7-10. In reality Urzana was right, although we do not know if Sargon II believed him or not!

roofs collapsing under snow. This happened particularly with traditional flat roofs made with wooden columns or spar beams overlaid with leaves and mud. Possibly it was one or both of these reasons that can explain the tent shaped roof of the temple of Haldi.



Fig. 8 A: A mud brick house with flat roof in Sidekan. The roof is built from reeds and wooden spars overlaid with leaves and mud. (Photo by author).



Fig. 8 B: A tent shape winter shelter of the Bradostian shepherds at the foot of the Bradost mountain. (photo by author).

Musasir/Ardini without city walls

There is no doubt that the city of Musasir/Ardini depicted on very special details which is usually not seen on depicting other non-Assyrian cities on the Assyrian reliefs. So that here I discuss what we see it on the relief, and we do not for sure how much this does the relief showed the reality of the architecture of the city and its structures. The relief suggests that the city of Muṣaṣir had not been fortified with a main wall to surround all the main districts of the city. The tower/palace and the temple have been built separately from the houses; they were built together further away on a slope inside the main wall which is partly joined to the mountain.⁵⁴ The private houses of the city have been called by some scholars as fortress on a mountain or temple storage on four levels, or as **“a four-storied building”**⁵⁵ In reality this architectural block beyond the mount represents the private houses of the city, which were built on a slope on the bedrock like ravens’ nests, as described on the seal of Urzana and the inscriptions of Shalmaneser I and Sargon II mentioned above. The audiences’ houses are surrounded with the main wall which is joining in some of its parts with the mound; the wall has a triangular crenellations. Each houses depicted with a rectangular door, and three square windows, the roof of each house has square crenellations (Fig. 8: C).⁵⁶

⁵⁴ Botta & Flandin 1972: Pl.141, Room XIII, slab 4.

⁵⁵ Albenda 1986:91, abb.18, pl.133.

⁵⁶ Albenda 1986:91, abb.18, pl.133.

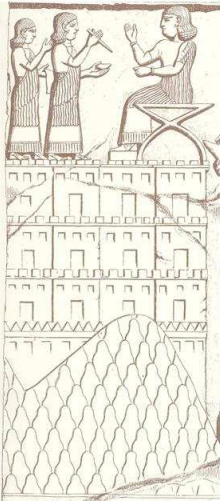


Fig.8.C: The private houses of the city of Muṣaṣir/Ardini which are depicted beyond a mound and a main wall. Details of the relief of Khorsabad that shows the events of the eighth campaign of Sargon II. (After Botta & Flandin 1972: Pl. 141, Room XIII, slab 4).

If we look at the relief of Khorsabad which shows the main parts of the city of Muṣaṣir and its architectural plan, it appears completely different from the other cities depicted on Assyrian reliefs, such as Arbail, Harhar, Panziash and Kišessim in the midst or at the foothills of the Northern Zagros ranges. (See as an example Fig.9: A-C).

Concerning the tower/palace on the right side, the building appears on two levels. It is called by Albenda as a structure with “three-storied building.”⁵⁷ In my opinion this building it has only two stories. The ground floor has a rectangular door, and the first floor has two rectangular doors, the sides of the top roofs of the ground and first floor attached with square crenellations (fig.9.D). The on the top level of the first floor half-height wall attached, which is in reality represents triangular crenellation and it was used by the elite, who are looking at the right, they wearing animal skin cloaks,⁵⁸ the same style of costume of the peoples of the Zagros. Such dress was worn by the Lulubians who fought against Naramsin in the 24th century BC, and by the Muṣaṣirians, the Manneans, and the Medeians during the Iron Age, as can clearly be noticed on the Assyrian reliefs which show delegations from the Zagros wearing leopard skin cloaks.⁵⁹ Moreover, among the well recorded details of some of the Assyrian campaigns during the reign of Sargon II, when the Assyrians attacked some of the cities of the Zagros and fortifications in Mannea and Media and elsewhere,⁶⁰ The depicted local fighters resisting the Assyrian army were wearing sheep fur or leopard skin cloaks.⁶¹

⁵⁷ Albenda 1986:91, abb.18, pl.133.

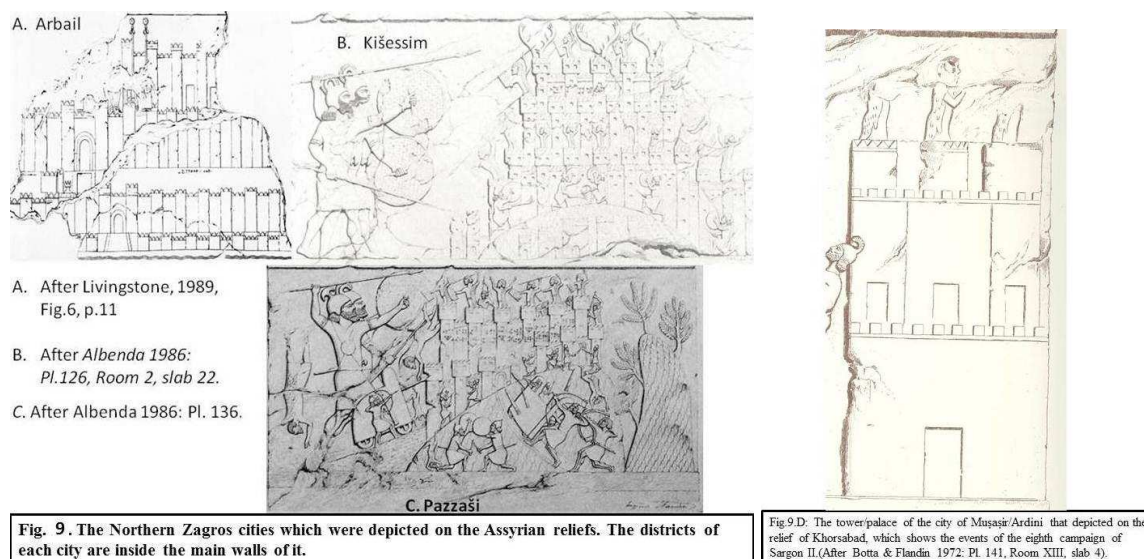
⁵⁸ Albenda 1986:91, abb.18, pl.133.

⁵⁹ Albenda 1986: Pl.33 (Room 10, slabs 13-14); Pl.34 (Room 10, slabs 15).

⁶⁰ Albenda 1986: 68-69, Pl.29, Room 10, slab 6; Pl.30, Room 10, slab 8.

⁶¹ See Albenda 1986: Pl.125; 137); Reade, 1979, p. 78, note 59; Wäfler, 1975, pp.266-288. Also the several Mannean leaders: Malcolm, 1985: 549: Fig.13. (See: Fig. 3 d); Botta & Flandin 1972: Pl.68, Room II, no.22; P.129, Room X, no.7.; Pl.150, Room X, no.8).

Also the warriors of the Mannean city Panzashi wear fur cloaks (Botta & Flandin 1972: Pl.145, Room XIV, 1-2; Albenda 1986: 112, Pl.136, Room 14, slab 2. The campaign against Kisheshlu. (Albenda 1986:111, Pl.137, Room 14, slabs 10-11; Pl.146, Room XIV, no.10-11.



These cities depicted on the Assyrian reliefs are surrounded with city walls. All the buildings (palaces, temples, private houses) are located inside the main walls of the city. This was so even in the land of Mušasir, for the ‘fortress of Zapparia’ is mentioned in the annals of Shalmaneser III (858-824 BC).⁶² But the relief suggests that the city of Mušasir probably was different. What we see on the relief that in Mušasir no wall surrounded all the buildings in the different parts of the city (the palace/tower, the temple and the private houses).⁶³ By contrast, the temple and the palace/castle are built separately from the private houses. Simply, the relief shows that in the city there were three main separate ‘districts’: the tower/palace of Urzana on the right side, the temple in the centre, and the houses of the audience on the left side, beyond the mount built on the slope inside the main wall. If the city of Mušasir was located in the area of Mjeser and Sidekan, very probably the temple and the palace/tower were located at Mdjeser, and the private houses located at Shkene-Sidekan ca. 2km to the north-east. This might explain the scene on the relief of Khorsabad, depicting a mount separating the the audience reception area from the temple and the palace/tower. This makes it a reliable representation of a famous city like Mušasir/Ardini in this narrow valley. Very probably the city was built along the valley from Sidekan to Mdjeser on the bank of the Topzawa River. The river flows down from Topzawa-Sidekan-Mdjeser, and then as far as the Diyana/Ruwanduz valley. From a distance these villages/towns look like blocks. The same building tradition persists for houses in some of the villages in the mountainous area of the Northern Zagros. One example is Rust, a village several miles to the SE of Mdjeser, and others are Hawraman-i-Tekht in Hawraman, Akre to the west of the Upper Zab, and the village of Berzêwa in the Handren (ancient Andaruttu) pass.⁶⁴ (Fig.10 A-C).

Like the private houses of ancient Mušasir, the houses of these modern villages are built on mountain slopes, one over the other. All the houses together from far appear to be multistory flats. These houses have no courtyard, but use the roof of the neighbour below instead. The windows and the doors of the houses are usually located on the frontal façade of the house.

Bertram Dickson described the modern villages of the Zagros and this type of house, and he says:⁶⁵ “As one might expect in a mountainous country, the scenery is sometimes superb, - snow-capped summits and jagged rocky crags with deep gorges and canyons below, while, on the Persian frontier ranges (i.e. the Iranian part of

⁶²Grayson 1996, A.O.102.14 ll. 178-179.

⁶³Also we should keep in mind that the case of depicting the city of Mušasir /Ardini on the Khorsabad relief is somehow different from the depicting other cities in the Zagros, especially the core of the relief focused on plundering the temple of Haldi, as well as the text of the eighth campaign focus on that. So that, might be uncovering the city in future excavation will give the right answer to the question whether the city had main wall(s) or not.

⁶⁴ The Mountain Andaruta separated Mušasir from Hiptunu town. The Andaruta mountain is identified by author with Handerên Mountain. Further details will be in the forthcoming article of the author: “Re-Identifying the Hiptunu town and Andaruttu Mountain.”

⁶⁵Dickson, 1910, p.369.

the Northern Zagros), forest belts intervene between the snows and the canyons; the villages, placed picturesquely like swallows' nests against the hillsides, with their narrow terraces of cultivation, their vineyards and fruit trees, and the ever-present poplar grove to supply timber for house-building, bridges, and every other need.” In ancient Muşaşir, as in the villages of the modern Zagros, the houses of the city are built on a mountain slope (Fig. 8 A-C). It could be for security reasons. Other reasons would be the limited land for cultivation in these mountainous areas to be found in the narrow, deep valleys. It also protects the houses from floods in the spring, when there are storms and the snow of the mountains melts, causing unexpectedly big floods in the valleys.

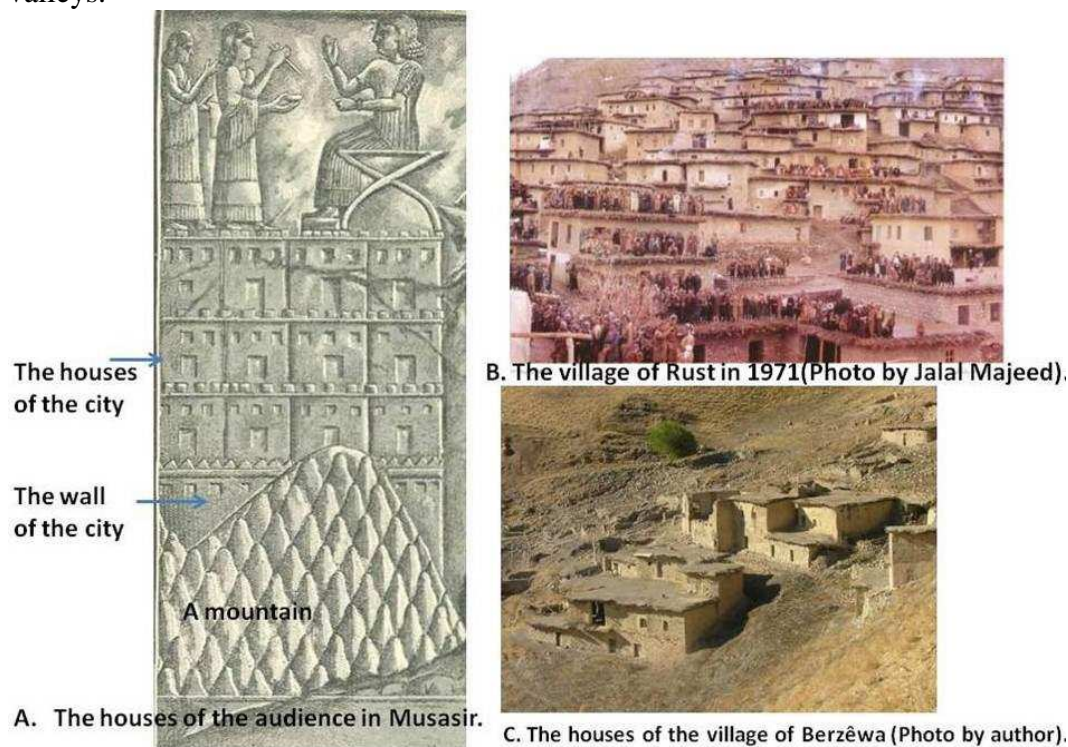


Fig.10. A-C: Houses built on slope mountain in the Northern Zagros.

The location of the Temple of Haldi and the city of Muşaşir/Ardini

The steles were erected on the main trade route through the passes from Muşaşir (modern Sidekan/Bradost) to the Urmia basin or to the Urartian capital.⁶⁶ The inscriptions of both the Topzawa and the Kel-e-Shin steles mention ceremonies and the offering of sacrifices at the temple of Haldi in the city of Ardini, which proves that the city and the temple were located in the district of modern Sidekan/Bradost on the east bank of Tobzawa tributary. These steles were erected on the famous trade route, which can be called an Urartian royal road, from Urartu to the temple of Haldi at Muşaşir/Ardini. It has been suggested by scholars that probably the coronation of new Urartian king was conducted at the temple of Haldi in Ardini.⁶⁷ Some of the Urartian kings devoted big bronze statues of themselves in the temple of Haldi in Muşaşir. A bronze statue of Arishti with its plinth was looted from Muşaşir by Sargon II during his eighth campaign in 714 BC.⁶⁸

On the basis of the above-mentioned evidence, and the uncovered columns in Mdjeser, I can propose that the location of the long-lost legendary temple of Haldi in Muşaşir/Ardini can be identified in the modern village of Mdjeser, in the district of Sidekan/Bradost in the Northern Zagros in Iraqi-Kurdistan (Fig. 11).

⁶⁶Salvini, 1993-1997, p.445.

⁶⁷Roaf, 2012, pp.200f, note.43.

⁶⁸Fuch, A., 2012, p.136.



Fig. 11: The village of Mdjeser. (Photo by author).

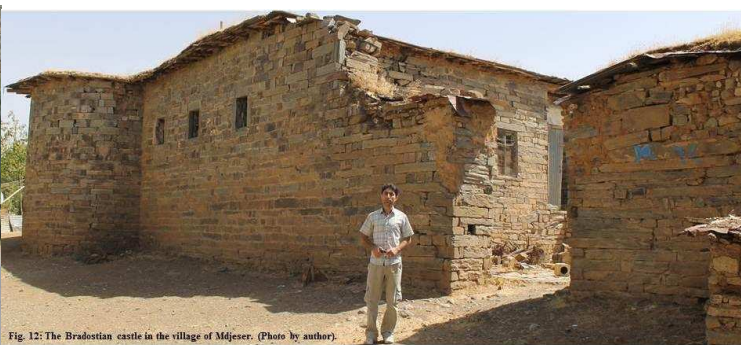


Fig. 12: The Bradostian castle in the village of Mdjeser. (Photo by author).

More precisely, what may be the remains of the temple of Haldi is located in a triangle, less than 2 square km in area, somewhere beneath the house of the Bradostian chieftain, the Bradostian castle, or beneath the stones of a cairn and the soil of a hill which separates the house of the chieftain to the south by a spring and the orchards. There also most of the column bases were uncovered. (Fig.12).

In addition, the Kala-Mdjeser, which was well recorded by R. Boehmer, located a few kilometres away on a hilly place to the south-east of the village needs to be considered. In my opinion very probably the private houses of the city were located in Sidekan in the area of Shkene and its surrounding areas. (Fig.13).



Fig. 13: The village of Sidekan, the main hill/tell in the centre of the village. (Photo by author).

Conclusions

The columns which were uncovered in the village of Mdjeser are contemporary with the Bainili/Urartu kingdom, more precisely to the 9th-7th century BC. They are surely identical to the uncovered columns of the Urartian temples at Altin-Tepe, and other sites.

On the basis of these uncovered columns in Mdjeser, and other published evidence which came from the same area by the other scholars, I can confirm that an Urartian temple or perhaps more precisely the temple of Haldi of Muşasir/Ardini was located in the area of the modern village of Mdjeser.

The temple of Haldi at Muşasir/Ardini, which is depicted on the Khorsabad relief had a tent shaped roof, which might make it unique among other known Urartian temples. This shape may be related to the beginning of the temple as a temple of the chief god. Alternatively, choosing a tent shape for a big building with a 'main large hall' was to protect the roof from the heavy snows of winter. In that case the tent shape was the best choice to protect the main hall of the temple from the deep snow during the cold seasons of year. The tent shape does not

retain snow as a flat roof would. If the roof was flat then after a heavy snowfall snow would have to be removed manually. This is what modern Kurdish villagers do using a befrmal 'snow-remover' on their flat roofs.

The reason for building the high platform on which the temple of Haldi had been built could have been to correct the slope of this mountainous site. In addition, the platform protected the temple from flood and heavy snow. There might also have been ritual reasons for this platform, especially when the temple became crowded with Urartian kings and rulers of the kingdom and their followers during ceremonies or the coronation of Urartian kings in this temple.

The temple had a main gate which was depicted on the Khorsabad relief. This gate was guarded by two life-size standing statues. This main gate was mentioned by Rusa I on the stele of Topzawa. He says that it was closed by Urzana of Muşasir. Probably the temple had more than one gate, before Rusa I, the Urartian kings Ishpuini and his son Minua mentioned sacrifices being offered in front of the gates of the temple of Haldi at Muşasir/Ardini.

The relief of Khorsabad from the palace of Sargon II depicted plundering of the city of Muşasir/Ardini during the eighth campaign of Sargon in 714 BC. The relief shows the city of Muşasir, which included three main separate 'districts': the set of audience houses, the palace/tower, and the temple in between. The houses of the audience were built beyond on a mountain slope, sometimes called temple storage areas. But in this paper I suggested, from evidence in the texts and similar styles of modern village buildings in the same mountainous areas, that these are not flats or a storage area but they are the houses of the city built on a mountain slope. At the end I would like to say that any archaeologist who wants to look for the city of Muşasir will never discover it in a traditional archaeological tell, like most of the Near Eastern cities and towns because, as mentioned above, the city was built on a slope mountain, very probably it is remains located on the east bank of the Topzawa river along the Mdjeser-Sidekan villages.

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