

ANGELA TERYAN

HISTORY OF THE COUNTRY OF ARARAT

IV-I MILLENNIA B.C.



YEREVAN 2023



The Middle East According to the Bible



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Nother Goddess Anahit

ԵՐԵՎԱՆ 2023

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Haya (Enki) and Goddess Inanna

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The work “History of the country of Ararat” is the sum of decades of studies and published books of the ancient period of Armenian history, which were published by the editorship

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TERYAN ANGELA

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The history of the Ararat (Armenia, Hayq) country of IV–I millennia B.C. is presented. According to Mesopotamian written sources, Ararat is the land of creation, where a great civilization was created.

PREFACE

One of the ancient peoples of the world, the Hay-Armens, have a history that is shrouded in misunderstanding and mystery. The Armenian Highlands, the land of Ararat, is the cradle of creation of man, and the creation of civilization by the gods. The ancient world knew these things. That circumstance did not give rest to the tribes and peoples living around us. Military campaigns and wars were started to take over the spiritual and cultural materials created in the land of Ararat. Over thousands of years, many cultural values have been destroyed (often intentionally); spiritual values have also been forgotten (the worship of gods, ideologies). However, not everything was destroyed. The Armenian lands, mountains, stones, the people's memory, preserved some testimonies, facts, traditions, and legends, which allow us to present that millennia-long Armenian history to the world.

Ancient written sources help to study Armenian history, with rock carvings and cuneiform inscriptions. There are multitudes of resources about Armenians and Armenian history in the cuneiform inscriptions of the ancient peoples of Near East Asia, the Sumerians, Akkadians, Babylonians, Egyptians, Hittites, Hurri-Mitannians, and Assyrians, which are dated to the IV-I millennia B.C.

Later, in the middle of the I millennium B.C., the history of their time and people was written down by Greeks, followed by Romans and other peoples' historians. Unfortunately, Armenian historiography begins relating the history of Armenians from the A.D. 5th century. The entire Armenian chronicle created before that was destroyed during the adoption of Christianity. The cult of the Armenian god of writing, Tir, attests that there was Armenian writing and literature prior to the Christian era.

Mesopotamian mythology is the best source for studying the history of Mother Earth and humanity. The creation of the cosmos, the world, and humanity, as well as the mysteries of life and death, have always interested people, prompting them to write studies. Religions have been developed in an attempt to answer humanity's aforementioned questions of interest. Nonetheless, there are no complete answers; so, the search continues. The search again leads us to Mesopotamian, Armenian, Near East Asian, and Egyptian mythological stories, in which many questions related to the history of Mother Earth and the creation of man are revealed.

Studies allow us to conclude, mythological stories are the key to understanding the creation of the world and man. They are also extremely important in the study of Armenian history. In those mythologies, there are many references to a mountainous country near the sources of the Tigris and Euphrates rivers: the sacred land of Aratta (the land of Ararat). The land of Ararat, Hayq and the Armenian people, from the beginning, had close economic, cultural, commercial, and other ties with the city-states and state entities of Mesopotamia. They also worshiped the same gods (AR-AN, Inanna-Anahit, Dumuzi-Tammuz-Ara the Handsome, Naru, Nara-Nari, Nar, Shara-Shar).

Sadly, as mentioned above, ancient Armenian written sources, pagan literature, was completely destroyed at various times, for various reasons. Thus, researchers have a very difficult time when they study the era of ancient Armenian history, since cuneiform is often interpreted in many ways (read and interpreted incorrectly, inappropriate vowels are introduced in texts written without vowels, etc...). However, the people preserved stories, poems, and songs related to their ancient history, which are very important for the study of the ancient period of Armenian history. The lyric poem “**Sasna Tsrer**” (“Daredevils of Sassoun”) is just such an invaluable written resource, which, being passed down from generation to generation, was preserved as an oral dialogue, and written down in the mid-19th century. Another priceless written source is Movses Khorenatsi’s work, “**History of the Armenians**”.

Nevertheless, in order to study the history of this Armenian ancient period, it is necessary to consult Mesopotamian written sources, which help make it possible to restore the ancient period of Armenian history to some extent. Besides being constantly mentioned in ancient written sources, the land of Ararat, Hayq-Armenia, has been presented in all of the maps from the ancient world, even in the times when it was not an independent state. In the second half of the 19th century, for political purposes, some European researchers noticed a tendency to ignore Hayq and the Armenians, or to present Armenian history in a distorted way. Soviet historiography continued that trend, actively reducing the role of Hayq and the Armenian people in world history. Thankfully, the Armenian historians of today have been given the opportunity to present their people’s true history. This presented work is just such an attempt- to write Armenian history based on the evidence from ancient written sources.

CHAPTER FIRST

ARMENIAN HIGHLANDS: CRADLE OF CREATION

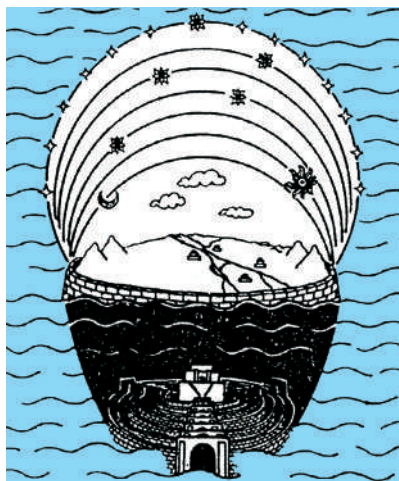
Throughout time, people have continuously concerned themselves with the following questions: where is the land of creation and where was humanity created?, What appearance did the created person have?, In what language did he speak?, Did all of humanity come from one common ancestral grandfather or grandmother...? Whichever way we look at it, the questions are many but the answers are rarely satisfactory. Let us revisit the questions regarding man that are listed above, and attempt to find answers from within ancient Mesopotamian written sources.

Information regarding humanity's creation has been preserved in written sources from the ancient peoples of Near East Asia (Asia Minor).. There is evidence in the Sumerian "Creation of the World", "Enki and the World Order", and "Enki and Ninmah", in the Akkadian "Atrahasis", and in the Sumerian-Akkadian "Gilgamesh" as well as additional poems and mythological dialogues.

According to the Sumerian mythological account of the creation of the world and humanity, the freshwater sources, upon which our world is located, are called **Abzu**. The Akkadians called it **Apsu**, and the Hurrians **Apsuv**. Abzu, along with other names (i.e. Kur, Eden, Irigal) is also called **Arali** (or Harali). The mythology tells that Arali, the headwaters of rivers, is also the land found at the mouth of the Underground River (found on the earth, the source of rivers) that ties together the World Ocean to Earth. The lord of Abzu was Enki-Haya, the god (goddess) of wisdom. In Mesopotamian mythology, Abzu was also an underground kingdom deep within the earth, or some kind of habitat on the earth, where the gods dwelled and protected powerful secrets and the almighty laws called **Me**.

From the names mentioned above, **Arali-Harali** draws immediate attention because its **Ar-Har** root connects it to the Armenian Highlands, as well as numerous Armenian toponyms within that region from that time. The second part of Arali's name, **-ali**, is a toponymic component (Ex: Armariali or Armarili, Mananaghi, **Daranaghi**, "I" to "gh" phonetic change). Offering critical clarification on the matter is a Sumerian map (diagram etched onto a brick) from the middle of the III millennium B.C., which depicts the World Ocean with Mother Earth floating above it and the seven heavenly firmaments (Picture 1: a modern depiction of the map). Upon Mother Earth, Abzu, the entrance (gateway) is clearly visible, from where the Underground or World River originates. The area where that river emerges from Mother Earth is visible; this is the origin of the Euphrates and Tigris rivers. Mountains are also depicted. Also visible is the lord of Abzu's, Enki-Haya's, underground temple (or palace).

To clarify this issue further, it is of great interest to examine the Sumerian-Akkadian images and seals dating from the III-II millennia B.C.. In one of the recovered seals (Picture 2: circa 2200 B.C.), the Sumerians depicted the god Enki-Haya in the freshwater World Ocean that is located below Abzu-Arali. He is sitting on a throne, surrounded by numerous fountains and fish resembling a gate. The two fountains (or streams) originating from his shoulders symbolize the Euphrates and Tigris rivers.



Picture 1



Modern geographic map of the area.



Picture 2

The images depicted on the discovered seals are of very great thematic importance. One of the seals (Figure 3: second half of III millennium B.C.) depicts the dwelling place of the gods. Depicted are the gods Enlil, Inanna, Utu (shown in between two mountains), Haya-Enki, the two-faced Isimud who was a servant to Haya-Enki, mountains (clearly visible are two mountain peaks), the tree of life, animals, etc. Of the gods, Haya-Enki is depicted resting his foot on a mountain while from his shoulders flow out two fountains (Tigris, Euphrates rivers) in which fish are swimming. On another seal, the fountains of water originate from Enki-Haya's fingers. All of the water fountains shown in the images undoubtedly symbolize the Euphrates and Tigris rivers. These two vast Mesopotamian rivers originate from the Armenian Highlands, the land of Ararat.



Picture 3

The Mesopotamian ancient written sources also help illuminate where the gods were located and, in turn, the original country of human inhabitation. The 11th tablet of the Sumerian-Akkadian “Gilgamesh” epic tells of Utnapishtim who gained immortality through obtaining the Flower of Life despite great difficulty (climbing challenging mountains, crossing over seas). Utnapishtim tells Gilgamesh the story of the great gods (Anu, Enlil, Ea, Ninurta) who willed a flood, of which Utnapishtim was forewarned and saved by the god Ea (Haya) and eventually received immortality from the gods. He settled near the land of the lord of Abzu, Haya (Ea), near the source of the rivers, which was also on the path to the dwelling place of the gods.

We can see that Gilgamesh crossed over mountains and seas (most likely the Euphrates River which originates in the Armenian Highlands) to reach the land of the gods and immortals. Hence, the road that started in Mesopotamia must have brought Gilgamesh to the Armenian Highlands, the source of the Euphrates and Tigris rivers, the land of Ararat.

Therefore, in the aforementioned Sumerian map, images, and seals, the land that is found near the source of the Euphrates and Tigris rivers is the inhabitation of the gods. The depictions are of the land of Ararat.

Sumerian written sources also provide information regarding the creation of humanity. According to the Sumerian poem “Enki and Ninmah”, the lesser gods (the Annunaki and Igigi) who lived in the land of Arali and toiled over difficult work, were constantly complaining about their daily exhausting workload. Upon learning of their complaints, Enki-Haya decides to help them. He undertakes the creation of other working creatures in order to free the lesser gods from their earthly labors.

A council of the gods is called whereby the chief god An (Ar in the ancient Armenian pantheon) approves the notion of creating new working creatures: humans. Appointed to create the working creature is the mother of the gods, Ninmah (also called Nintu and Ninhursag).

Let Ninmah, mother of the gods, present herself,
Let her create man (lulu).
The burden of the gods we will put on him...
Let man take the yoke from the gods
“Enki and Ninmah”

In the “council” of the gods, it was decided to sacrifice one of the gods (one of the Annunaki)- the wise Geshtu (Heshtiu). And so, the gods set about creating a working creature. Ninmah, with the help of Enki-Haya, creates a creature out of clay mixed with the blood of Geshtu, the god sacrificed at the border of heaven and earth. After several **unsuccessful attempts**, they produce a creature which they then endow with breath and life. The Sumerians called the new creation **Namlulu** (Nam. Lu.Lu) or **Umul** meaning “human creature.” Following a series of trials, a more ideal creature was created which was called **Lulu** (meaning mixed or obtained, according to “Atrahasis”). The newly created creature, according to Sumerian depictions, was similar to modern man in which, as we observe, are present both **heavenly** (the blood of the slain God) and **earthly** (clay) elements.

Regarding creation, in the Akkadian (Babylonian) mythology, according to the poem “Enuma Elish” (“When on high...”), Apsu (Abzu), the embodiment of the World Ocean and procreative forces, and Tiamat, the primordial foremother, “mix together their waters” and give birth to the first generation of gods. This young generation, however, with their chaotic behavior (making loud and happy noises) greatly annoy Apsu, so he decides to destroy them. A battle ensues between the older and younger generations of gods. A member of the younger generation of gods, Haya, kills Apsu. Atop the murdered Apsu (the World Ocean) Haya constructs his abode, calling it Apsu, and he gives rise to Marduk (mard-uk), followed by the entire human race.



Image of god, Lagash,
mid- 3rd millennium B.C.



The man made in the image of god
mid-3rd millennium B.C., Mari



The goddess Inanna-Anahit



The woman made in the image of
goddess, Northern Mesopotamia, Louvre



Sumerian sculpture, late 3rd millennium B.C.,
city of Eshnunna (now Tell-Asmar, Iraq)



King-Leader, Verin Naver,
first half of the 2nd millennium B.C., HMA

In other ancient Mesopotamian written sources (“Atrahasis”, “Gilgamesh”) Haya always protects human beings, becoming the human race’s patron deity for salvation. Thus, according to the mythological dialogue of the “Atrahasis”, the gods created people so the people could support the needs of the gods with sacrificial offerings. However, from the loud noise the people made on earth, the angry gods decided once again to inflict them with famine, plague, and, finally, a flood to completely wipe out the human race. Regarding the impending flood, the benevolent god Ea (Haya) warns his beloved **Atra-Hasis**. The warned Atra-Hasis builds a ship, settles in it with his family and belongings, and is saved. Then the gods, so as not to break their oath against destroying all mortals, grant Atra-Hasis the gift of immortality.

At about the same time, this story is also presented in the Sumerian-Akkadian “Gilgamesh” epic, on the 11th tablet. In this poem about the impending great flood, the pious **Utnapishtim** is forewarned by Ea-Haya (the Sumerian text discovered in Nippur tells of salvation from the flood for the king of the city of Shuruppak, called **Ziusudra**, whose name in the Akkadian translation is Utnapishtim, meaning “long life found”). Utnapishtim also builds a ship which, after travelling on the waters, comes to rest atop Mount Nisir (Nitsir). On the seventh day Utnapishtim emerges from the ark and offers sacrifices and incense on the mountaintop. Then the gods award Utnapishtim with immortality and settle him near the mouth of the Underground River that originates from the World Ocean- this is in the country of Ararat.

In the IV-III centuries B.C., the historian Berossus in his famous work *Babylonika* (also called *History of Babylonia* or *Chaldaika*) wrote that the **Land of the Gods**, where mankind found his salvation, is **Armenia**. The priest Berossus wrote his works drawing from preserved cuneiform resources stored in temples. Excerpts from Berossus’s work have been preserved in the writings of Eusebius of Caesarea (thanks to its translation into Armenian). Presented in the preserved portions of his work is one Mesopotamian version of the World Flood myth in which the flood-surviving hero bears the Hellenized name **Xisuthros**. According to Berossus, the god (or titan) Kronos warns Xisuthros of the coming flood and tells him that in order to be saved he will need to build a ship. To Xisuthros’ question of where to go in order to be saved, the answer that is heard is, “**the country of the gods.**” After the flood, when the ark finds rest in the mountains, they are informed that they are located in the **country of the gods- Armenia**. Then, Xisuthros and his wife, by the will of the gods, gain immortality and are granted the right to live in the **country of the gods**¹. It is important to note that the other survivors were not allowed to live in the country of the gods, and they were ordered to return to Babylon. We can see that **not all people were allowed to live in the country of the gods, the land of Ararat.**

¹ Eusebius of Caesarea of Pamphylia, *Chronology*, Part I, Venice, 1818.

In the Sumerian lyric poem “*Enmerkar and the Lord of Aratta*” (“Enmerkar and the High Priest of Aratta”), there is also a mention of a **flood** in which the gods, specifically the mighty goddess Inanna, save the human inhabitants of Aratta. The testament is as follows:

572 (people [?]), those who stood in the **flood**
573 after that thing, when the **flood** was raging
574 Inanna, ruler of all the lands,
575 Beloved of Dumuzi
576 sprinkled with the Water of Life
577 And throughout all the country (**Aratta**), the trees (?) at her command grew
“Enmerkar and the Lord of Aratta”

But why is it that the gods help the country of Ararat’s people of Aratta? The answer is given in the lyric poem “Enmerkar and the Lord of Aratta”:

567 People (of Aratta) are **superior** to other people
568 People, whom Dumuzi **selected** from among all people
569 (People) who carry out the enlightened Inanna’s holy words
“Enmerkar and the Lord of Aratta”

From these verses it is once more made clear that Aratta (the land of Ararat) is **the country of the chosen people of the gods**.

We surmise, the flood occurred before the creation of Sumerian and other ancient lyric poems. This means the “land of the immortals” mentioned in the Sumerian records, the country of Ararat (=Aratta), existed before the flood. It is not coincidental that during the time of the Flood, according to the Bible, humanity was saved by the will of the gods by finding refuge in the mountains (country) of Ararat, in the same place where humanity was created.

According to Mesopotamian written sources, man was alone in the beginning, but then, from his successful species, other people were created (copied, cloned). Later, the gods endowed humanity with male and female characteristics and granted them permission to reproduce their own kind. Let us remember, Enki-Haya’s expression: “O Earth..., may your people multiply” (from “Enki and the Creation of the World”). However, the gods did not endow humanity with immortality, but rather **their fate was decided by Enki-Haya**. We notice that in Mesopotamian mythological dialogues, woman and man are created in the same way, and not in the way the Bible presents, in which woman is created from Adam’s rib.

The created human women turn out to be so beautiful and perfect that the gods take them as “wives”. Thus, Enki-Haya and his mortal wife bear children, a **son called Adapa** (“fallen”, from the poem “Adapa’s Story”) and a **daughter called Titi** (“full of life”).

In ancient Mesopotamian images the created human beings are of the European race, specifically represented as the Armenoid anthropological type (e.g. Gudea, Sumerian images and sculptures...). However, the highest beings created by the gods were other **races** also (it is assumed that the Semitic tribes were created in the image of the Anunnaki and Igigi; also, the chief Babylonian god, Marduk, was initially a representative of the Igigi).

Mesopotamian cuneiform texts are frequently accompanied by thematically relevant images which are very important for analyzing the subject matter. Equally important are the Sumerian-Akkadian, Babylonian, and Hurrian-Hittite seals on which the scenes of the mythological plots are depicted. Let us present a series of images related to the creation of humanity.



Ninmah and Enki-Haya are preparing for the creation of humanity. A mixture was formed out of the blood of a god (Geshtu, the cosmos) and clay (the earth) which needed to be carried to term by a goddess (an Anunnaki). We can see test tubes, beakers, and a long knife, presumably to cut the infant's umbilical cord. Sumerian cuneiform texts and accompanying images, mid III millennium B.C.



Examples of unsuccessfully created humans (dog-headed, cloven-hoofed), Sumerian seal.



Satisfied with the outcome, Ninmah blesses and ceremoniously presents the newborn human in his arms to Lulu; seal.



Ninmah presents an example of the successful human he created to Haya (accompanying him on the left side is Ningishzida). In the image, all the gods, excluding man, are wearing hats (crowns) with horn-like protrusions which represent their divine status. The vessels full of water and fountains streaming out from Haya's shoulders symbolize the Tigris and Euphrates rivers, which once again testifies that man was created in the Armenian Highlands. The seal bears the inscription, "Gudea, Lord of Lagash". Mid III millennium B.C.



Haya along with his successfully created human being, Lulu, who was made to perform work. From Haya's elbows originate two fountains: the Tigris and Euphrates rivers. Image from a cuneiform text



Daughter of Man, Lagash,
2200 B.C., Louvre



Son of Man, young Gudea,
Lagash, 2200 B.C., Louvre



Goddess Ninsun, relief sculpture,
mid 3rd millennium B.C., Louvre



Daughter of Man, Sumer

Myths, legendary dialogues, and poems regarding creation were also produced in the Armenian Highlands, but only a negligible portion of them has reached us. From the preserved ancient dialogues, the oldest Hurrian-Armenian poems we have are “**Kingship in Heaven**” and “**The Birth of Vahagn**”. As with the poem “Kingship in Heaven”, other ancient Hurrian written inscriptions have been preserved thanks to Hittite translations. The Hittite culture is closely connected with the Armenian Highlands and Hurrian culture.

Let us acquaint ourselves with the mythology regarding creation that comes from the Armenian Highlands. The poem “Kingship in Heaven”, which consists of four parts, tells the story of the first three generations of gods: **Alalu**, **Anu**, and **Kumarbi**, and the birth of the children of **Earth**. The creation of humanity is detailed in the fourth part of the poem, when the children of Earth, the humans, are born. The poem tells how the Heavenly Charioteer (Sun-God, Father God) comes from heaven to Apsu,

a place under Ea-Haya's dominion, in his "Celestial Chariot" and along with Mother Earth (Haya) gives birth to the "Children of Earth", which Haya then takes under her patronage. Regarding creation, one of the best mythological accounts created and preserved in the Armenian Highlands is the poem "The Birth of Vahagn", which comes to us from M. Khorenatsi's book *History of the Armenians* (A.D. 5th century). The poem's wonderful lines describe the birth of the sun and fire god, Vahagn, as well as the birth of humanity:

In travail were heaven and earth,
In travail, too, the scarlet sea!
The travail held in the sea the small red reed.
Through the hollow of the stalk came forth smoke,
Through the hollow of the stalk came forth flame,
And out of the flame a youth ran!
Fiery hair had he,
Ay, too, he had flaming beard,
And his eyes, they were as suns!

We can see that in the poem, in the creation of the gods (and humanity), the participants are Heaven, Earth, and the Sun-God ("scarlet sea"). In the Hurrian poem the Sun-God (Heavenly Charioteer), Heaven, and Earth take part in the creation of humanity.

The Armenian epic tale "***Sasna Tsrer***" ("Daredevils of Sassoun") also contains preserved testimonies regarding creation. The epic begins with the Armenian King Gagik's daughter, Tsovinar, and the extraordinary birth of her twin sons, Sanasar and Baghdasar. Tsovinar, the goddess of the waters and seas, becomes a historical figure within the tale as the daughter of King Gagik. Tsovinar is so beautiful that word of her beauty reaches the Caliph of Baghdad. The Caliph expresses his desire to marry the Armenian princess, otherwise, he threatens to start a war. Everyone is against the marriage, including King Gagik, Tsovinar, and all their nation's people. In the end, in order to avoid war and casualties, Tsovinar agrees to go to Baghdad. In her willingness to save innocent lives, we see her divine nature displayed. However, Tsovinar sets one condition: before leaving she must participate in the Feast of the Ascension. King Gagik agrees and Tsovinar attends the event with a group of ladies. During the celebration Tsovinar takes a walk along the seashore. She is extremely thirsty but the seawater is salty, so Tsovinar appeals to god with a request:

Lord, please open a fountain of water here,
Also unto me, give light and hope
By the will of god, a stream was opened
And delicious water came rushing forth

Passing through the sea, Tsovinar reaches the clear and cold water flowing from the spring in the rocks and drinks one full handful of water and one-half of a handful. After this, she gives birth to twin boys: Sanasar and Baghdasar. We surmise that, by

the will of god, water becomes the genesis of life (cf. “Enuma Elish” poem, in which the first generation of gods on earth are born of water).

The country of the gods and immortals, the paradise of the Armenian Highlands as mentioned in the Bible, is called the land of Ararat. This corresponds to the ancient Armenian country names mentioned by 5th century historian Movses Khorenatsi’s *History of the Armenians*, where the countries are called **Ararad/ Ararat** and **Harq**. Khorenatsi, referencing the Assyrian historian Mar Abas Catina, writes that after the unsuccessful attempt to build the Tower of Babel, Togarmah’s son, the brave and valiant leader Hayq (an ancestor of Japheth), was unwilling to submit to the Titan Bel. After the birth of his son Aramaneak in Babylon, Hayq departed to the country of ARARAD. (south of Lake Van). Then he gave that area as an inheritance to Kadmos, Aramaneak’s son. Hayq and his people then moved to the northwest, settling in a field atop a highland plateau, and called that place HARQ (northwest of Lake Van). Therefore those who dwelt here are the generations of the house of Togarmah. Additionally, Ghevond Alishan determined that the Paradise of the Bible was in the land of Ayrarat, in the northern part of the Tsaghkants Mountains, in the Tsaghkot province. It is where the place of Voski (Gold) or Voskik² was located, near the springs of Aratsani. Let us discuss the names **Ararat** and **Harq**.

According to Armenian historiography, **Ararat/ Ararad** is the ancient name of the country of Armenia. The two components of the name -arar + -at allow us to conclude that this name is inextricably connected to the act of creating and the creation of man. Ararat’s primary component **arar-** denotes **creation** or **constructive formation**. The component **-at** is a toponymic designation (we will discuss the name Ararat later in greater detail).

As we can see, the ancient Armenian place-name **ARARAT** has distinctively Armenian origin and **etymology** and references **creation** and **location**. All of this attests to **the country of Ararat as the initial land of creation**.

In Khorenatsi’s work, the other ancient name for the Armenian homeland is **Harq**, meaning “country of the fathers”. However, in this case, the name (Harq) has much deeper roots and significance. From Khorenatsi’s explanation, we understand that Harq is where our maker, God the Father, the Creator, dwelled (as well as other gods). In Armenian, the suffix **-k** can have either plural or locative properties.

Therefore, the place-name **HARQ refers to the land of the Father God (the fathers’ and gods’ country), which was firstly the home of the gods (on earth) then of mortals, after man was created**. This explanation of the name Hark is found in various other testimonies in additional Armenian chronicles.

Thus, according to the *Ashkarhatsuyts* (Geography, 7th century) Hayq the Great’s first nation, the home of the gods, was **High Hayq** (Bardzr Hayq) which is distinguished by its geographically elevated position over the Armenian Highlands. “Indeed, as the

² T. Hakobyan, St. Melik-Bakhshyan, H. Barseghyan, HHSTB, Yerevan, 1986, vol. 2, p. 149.

name indicates, High Hayq is not only higher than Armenia's (other) parts, but also the rest of Earth, which is why this territory was called Apex of Earth. The four sides of the world emit water, and from it four mighty rivers flow forth"³. In this "high" region of the Armenian Highlands, the Armenian gods **Aramazd** (Daranaghyats province, town of Ani or Hani), **Anahit** (Yekeghyats province, town of Yeritsa), **Mihr** (Derjan province, town of Bagayarich), and **Nane** (Yekeghyats province, town of Til) were honored with temples, shrines, and other sanctuaries for worship.

Ancient High Hayq's famous center of worship, in the town of Ashtishat (Hashtishat) in the region of Turuberan (Taron), contained pagan temples dedicated to Anahit, Astghik, and Vahagn. Turuberan is home to the vast Byurakn (Bingyol) mountain range and its prominent Sermants (Srmants) peak. Mount Sermants is also called "(of the) Perfect Earth", from which many springs originate⁴. Going back to Khorenatsi's testimony, Hayq "with his remaining people... continues to move northwest and settles down in a field on a high plateau, and he calls this mountainous field by the name Hayq". In this section of his work, Khorenatsi seems to give an ideal description of the Byurakn plateau. However, Hayq, which according to the *Ashkarhatsuyts* was the 9th province of Turuberan, was actually much more extensive in ancient times, incorporating within itself the territories of High Hayq and additional lands of Turuberan.

According to Armenian chroniclers (Pavstos Buzand/ Faustus of Byzantium) the abode of the gods was in High Hayq's Yekeghyats province's (Yerznka region) **Great Mountain**, which is called "**throne of Anahit**" (or "throne of Nahta")⁵. The names are a testament to the dwelling places of the gods. Additional examples include Mount **Aragats** (throne of Arali) and Mount **Ara** of the Ararat mountains, and Mount **Me-hogats** (throne of Mihr) from the Gegharkunik region of Syunik⁶.

Hence, regarding creation, the ancient lyric poems, myths, and legendary dialogues compiled from Mesopotamia, Asia Minor, and the Armenian Highlands, attest to the fact that humanity was created at the source of the Tigris and Euphrates rivers, within the Armenian Highlands, in the land of ARARAT.

³ S. Yeremian, Armenia according to "Ashkaratsuytsi", Yerevan, 1963, p. 106.

⁴ S. Yeremian, Armenia according to "Ashkaratsuytsi", p. 108.

⁵ Pavstos Buzand, History of the Armenians, Yerevan, 1987, pp. 334-335.

⁶ G. Ghapantsyan, The Cult of Ara the Handsome, Yerevan, 1945, p. 98.

AR-ARA (ARARICH - CREATOR, HAYR ASTVATS - FATHER GOD) THE PRIMARY GOD OF THE LAND OF ARARAT

AR ARARICH (AR CREATOR) is the primary god of ancient Armenian theology—the Father God. Within old Armenian literary sources, there is very little information regarding the worship of the god Ar.⁷ The first mention of Ar-Ara's name is in Movses Khorenatsi's work *History of the Armenians*. Khorenatsi recounts 11 Armenian patriarchs descended from Noah's son Japheth; among them is Ara the Handsome, son of Aram. It is known, when Khorenatsi wrote his work he included cultural folklore and borrowed work from Assyrian historian Mar Abas Catina, whose original writings have not been preserved. Thanks to Khorenatsi, we have the story of "Ara the Handsome and Semiramis". The story is about Assyrian king Ninus's wife Semiramis who hears about the beauty of the Armenian king Ara the Handsome. Following the death of her husband, Semiramis sends messengers to Ara the Handsome offering a marriage proposal and promising Ara the Assyrian throne in return. Nevertheless, Ara rejects her offer. In a fit of rage, Semiramis goes to Hayq with a large army. In the ensuing battle, Ara is killed. Semiramis commands that Ara's corpse be placed in the upper room of the palace so that her gods may resurrect him. When this does not succeed, Semiramis orders the body to be buried, dresses up one of Ara's relatives in his garments, and, in order to appease the angered people, she declares that her gods have resurrected Ara. Khorenatsi attests that Semiramis subsequently handed the Armenian throne over to Ara's son, Ara Arayan.

It is apparent, Khorenatsi and other Armenian historians considered Ara the Handsome to be a real, historical person with many characteristics of the God AR (beauty, goodness, bravery). Afterwards, the people endowed him with a dying-reviving ability, greatly desiring that the beloved ruler be resurrected, just as the Sun-God was.

From the Greek authors, Plato's story about **Er-Armenios** (Myth of Er) is especially interesting. In Plato's (4th century B.C.) work *Republic* (Chapter 10), he tells a story about a brave man, Er the son of Armenios, from Pamphylia (Cilicia) who dies on the battlefield. On the 12th day, after the collection of the corpses, when his body is placed on a funeral pyre, he comes back to life and begins to recount his experience in the afterlife.⁸ Er's (Ar's) father's name, Armenios, proves that the legend originated in Hayq. In this story about Er-Ara, we encounter the death-resurrection nature of the god AR.

Ancient written inscriptions attest to additional names beginning with Ar-Er. An inscription from the reign of King Tukulti-Ninurta I of Assyria (1244-1208 B.C.) mentions a foreigner named **Errimena**.⁹ In his inscriptions, King Rusa III (617-609

⁷ Both names of the god, Ar and Ara, are used.

⁸ Plato, *Republic*, Moscow, 1929, p. 614.

⁹ "Ancient East", journal ("Древний Восток"), 2, 1976, pp. 87-88.

B.C.) of Ararat-Urartu calls himself Rusa Erimenahi¹⁰, meaning “Rusa son of Erimena”. Rusa’s surname **Erimena** has but one explanation: it is an Armenian kingly patronymic (Armenak), with the Erimena variant.

One of Europe’s ancient peoples, the Celts, have heroes named **Er**, **Eriy**, and **Eremon** in their mythologies.¹¹ Encyclopaedia Britannica, basing their claims on one Irish myth, attest that a group of warriors from the vicinity of Greece conquered Ireland, displacing the earlier tribe that occupied that region who worshiped the god Danu. Among the warriors were the brothers **Ayr** (Ire) and **Eremon** (or alternatively father and son). **Ire** was proclaimed king of the land and bestowed his name upon the country- **Ireland**.¹²

The testimony of the Jewish historian Flavius Josephus (1st century B.C.) is also interesting. He reported that King David (a Jew) marched against King Adrazar of Dzopk (Tsopq), the son of Ara.¹³ Rather than describing the king as Armenian or from Hayq, the narrator says he is a **son of Ara**. Mar Abas Catina refers to Ara the Handsome as **Arayan Ara** (Ara son of Ara).¹⁴ These are the main sources that provide information about AR-ER-ARA.

In Armenian historiography, Ara the Handsome is either accepted as a historical figure (M. Emin, R. Ishkhanian), or rejected (G. Ghapantsyan, N. Adontz, A. Matikian). Those who accept the historicity of Ara the Handsome rely on the testimony of Khorenatsi as well as other Armenian and foreign authors. They attest that Ara the Handsome was a real and historical king of Hayq who ruled at the beginning of the I millennium B.C..

Those who reject the historicity of Ara the Handsome claim that he was simply the god of spring, awakening, and war, and the story of “Ara the Handsome and Semiramis” is a myth. They emphasize that Ara’s death and resurrection is an attribute of godliness, comparing him to the Babylonian Tammuz, Phoenician Adonis (who later passed to the Greeks), Egyptian Osiris, Phrygian Attis, Semitic Eshmun, and other gods who were reborn after death. While we can agree that Ara the Handsome is a real and historical person, he is a later figure that has nothing to do with the ancient and widespread cult of AR-ARA in the Armenian Highlands. The name Ara is a very popular and beloved name among Armenians.

Therefore, in the Armenian Highlands there was the **AR-ARA** God (from time immemorial), as well as a king called **Ara the Handsome** (early I millennium B.C.). The aforementioned names Arayan Ara, Er-Armenios, and Ayr-Eremon are definitively related to the name of the AR God, his worship, and prevalence.

¹⁰ UKN (YKH), 287–295.

¹¹ MNM, I, p. 54, II, p. 636.

¹² *M. Gavukchyan*, 1973, p. 365–366 (E.C. Quiggin, Encyclopaedia Britannica ch. 13, Ed. 1926, Ireland).

¹³ *H. Flavios*, Antig Jud, Lib. 7, car 51.

¹⁴ *Movses Khorenatsi*, History of the Armenians, Yerevan, 1981, p. 77.

We find that in Armenia, Mesopotamia, Asia Minor, Greece, India, Iran, and other places, the names of many ancient gods begin with the component **AR**. Some of these gods include: **Aruru** (pre-Sumerian mother goddess), **Ara the Handsome** and **Aramazd** (Armenian mythology), **Arma** (Hittite-Luwian moon goddess), **Ar-a-a**, **Ardi**, **Arsimela**, **Aratsa**, **Artsibidini**, **Ayraini**, **Erina**, and **Ura** (Ararat-Urartu mythology), **Armaiti** (Iranian mythology), **Artemis** (Artemida) and **Aries** (Greek mythology), **Aruna**, **Aryaman**, and **Aranyan** (Vedic gods), and **Ra** (**Ra=Ar**, Egyptian sun god).

The names of these gods allow us to confirm that the name of the primary god of Armenian theology is pronounced “**AR**”¹⁵ (in Sumerian mythology the primary god is pronounced “An” [heaven], and “Anu” in Akkadian theology). G. Ghapantsyan noted, “Armenians once called god AR”.¹⁶ M. Kavoukjian also accepts AR as the ancient name of god.

Ar also stands out in **Er**, **Ir**, **Ur**, **Or**, and the following: **Er**, **Eriu**, and **Eremon** (heroes in Celtic mythology), **Er Armenios** (the dying-reviving character in Plato’s *Republic*), **Uranus** (Ur=Ar, the Greek sky god), **Rod** (the main god of the Slavic pantheon), **Orey** (ancestor of the Slavs), **Yarilo** (also called **Yarovit**, the son of Rod and the god of fertility and agriculture), etc.

It is apparent that **Ar** is the prefix for the names of many ancient gods and brave, noble heroes. Let us also mention the titles given to leaders within human society, for example **arqa** (Hayq), **pharaon** (Egypt), **caesar** (Rome), **tsar** (Russia), and **karol** (Europe).

Research shows, the name of the AR God is the root word from which the majority of Armenian (also other Indo-European languages) words are derived. The ancient Armenian words **arev** (sun), **arpi** (dawn), **arshaluys** (dawning), **arusyak** (Venus), and others are associated with **light**, **brightness**, or the color **white**. We can conclude that the original meaning of the word AR was light or brightness.¹⁷

Ar is always present, whether overtly or covertly, within the Armenian language (and its dialects). **Ar** can appear at the beginning, middle, or end of a word. Examples are multitudinous and include: **aregak** (sun), **aryun** (blood), **art** (field), **aror** (wooden plough), **aros** (uncultivated land), **arqa** (king), **artsiv** (eagle), **aryuts** (lion), **aragil** (stork), **arahet** (path), as well as **yerkink** (heaven, er/ar-life*), **yerkir** (earth, er/ar-create, created, created place**), **garun** (spring), **gari** (barley), **varel** (steer), **zartnel** (wake up), **bardzranal** (rise up), etc.

¹⁵ Some scholars reject the existence of the God AR on the grounds that there is no god named AR in ancient written sources. On that front, let us remember that the AR God’s name is deeply ancient. The most ancient written sources date from the end of the IV millennium B.C. to the beginning of the III millennium B.C.. Furthermore, it is roundly accepted that modern civilization has a history of about 14-15 thousand years. Therefore, on account of its very deep antiquity, the AR God may not appear in the surviving written sources. Even still, the names of the ancient gods of Near East Asia, particularly the Armenian deities (Aruru, Ara the Handsome, Aramazd, Arma, Ares, Aras...) allow us to conclude that it was not by chance that the Creator was called AR.

¹⁶ G. Ghapantsyan, *Hittite Gods Among Armenians*, Yerevan, 1940.

¹⁷ The root AR is also associated with the Sumerian word meaning “pure”. A. Davtian, *Bazmavep*, 2009.

There is no lasting evidence in the written records regarding the temples, sanctuaries, or celebrations to the AR God, but there is no doubt that they existed. We know that the ancient spiritual centers were in the cities of **Ardini** (Musasir, southeastern part of the Armenian Highlands) and **Ashtishat** (Harq province). We cannot exclude the possibility that there were temples dedicated to the AR God in these cities. Ardini is mentioned in inscriptions from Ararat-Urartian and Assyrian kings, but it is undoubtedly significantly older and was already an established spiritual center, otherwise it would have been built in the center of the kingdom and not on its southern borders. Fortunately, the A.D. 1st century temple of Garni, dedicated to the Sun-God, has survived until today, and was built in the style of the temple of Ardini (Musasir).



The Creator/God the Father's anthropomorphized image (authorized case) on the gavit of Noravank Monastery, designed by the architect Momik, A.D. 13th century.

The Creator holds in his hand the head of the first man he created and breathes life into him.

The AR God had his own dedicated holiday within the year. In all likelihood, it was celebrated on March 21st, the day of the spring equinox, when the harsh winter of the Armenian Highlands subsides and spring follows with the victory of the sun and daylight over the night and darkness. The AR God was the god of the sun, spring, nature, and awakening so it is natural that his feast day would be celebrated on the spring equinox of March 21st. Our ancestors considered that day the beginning of the new year. The Matenadaran possesses a small fragment of a record (manuscript number 1999) that shows a parallel list of ancient Armenian and Roman months. The document is titled "Correspondance of Armenian and Roman Months". The list begins with Navasardi: "Navasardi, which is March, then Hori which is April", and concludes with the months "Hrotits to February".¹⁸ From the Indo-Europeans, the Iranians retained the ancestral order of starting the New Year on March 21st. Armenian pagan records have preserved traces from the worship of the sun god AR. The 6th month of the pagan calendar was called **Arats**, "this meant the days of the Arers (the Armens) and was dedicated to the celebration of the AR God".¹⁹

¹⁸ A. Abrahamyan, *Armenian Script and Writing*, Yerevan, 1973, p. 99.

¹⁹ M. Gavukchyan, *The Origin of Armen and Hay Names and Urartu*, Beirut, 1973, p. 123.

A. Matikian writes, “Arats must mean days of Ara”. It is particularly interesting that the month of March was called Aries in the pagan calendars of Thessaly (Greece) and corresponds to the Armenian months of February-March, if January is counted from August.²⁰ In Rome, the first month of spring was called March, in honor of Mars, the god of spring, awakening, and agriculture (and the god of war from the 3rd century B.C. onward). The celebrations dedicated to him took place in that month. Showing great affinity to those of the AR God are the festivals and celebrations dedicated to the Slavic god Yarilo, god of the sun, spring, harvest, and war which were also celebrated in early spring and summer.²¹ The image of the AR God has not been preserved for us today, surely due to its very deep antiquity.

Thus, since prehistoric times, worship of AR the CREATOR has been maintained in the Armenian Highlands and has often been integrated into the concept of the Sun-God.

²⁰ A. Matikian, *Ara the Handsome*, Vienna, 1930, p. 314.

²¹ BSE (БСЭ), 1931, v. 65.

AR THE CREATOR AND THE CONCEPTION OF THE SUN-GOD

In the consciousness of an Armenian, **AR** the Creator was identified with light, radiance, and warmth- the characteristics of the Sun-God. Without these things the human environment, both flora and fauna, would be impossible on Mother Earth. Therefore, created man turned the Sun into god and worshiped it.

That Armenians were once sun worshipers is attested to by scarce bibliographic evidence. After the adoption of Christianity, there were people in Hayq, sometimes entire communities, who did not renounce the old religion. Chroniclers called them arevordiner or arevordik, meaning **children of the sun**. Nerses Shnorhali called the sun worshippers of the city of Samostia arevordik and persuaded the spiritual leaders that they were “satan worshipping devil worshippers” in order to convert them. David Alavka vordi considered the Paulicians to be a “nation” of arevordiner. Yeznik Koghbatsi, debating against paganism and glorifying Christianity, provides the following beautiful description of the Sun-God, “And yet with life, they say, all creatures are dependent on him by nature, as rays are dependent upon solar generation. And he himself is one and many, and many and one, as the sun is one and many; for it is a wheel with many spokes.”²² Essentially, everything in nature was dependent on the sun, which was a wheel with many rays. We encounter this image of the sun-wheel throughout the Armenian Highlands on numerous and varied cultural materials, from rock carvings to medieval household goods and jewelry.

Mkhitar Aparantsi wrote, “Սոքա (արևորդիք) ոչ ունին գիր և դպրություն, այլ ավանդությամբ ուսուցանեն հարքն զորդիսն ի վրեանց զոր նախնիք նոցա ուսեալք էին ի Զրադաշտ մոգէ անդրուշանին պետէ. և ընդ որ (կողմն) երթայ արեգակն ընդ այնմ երկրպագեն, և պատուեն զծառն բարտի և զշուշան ծաղիկն և զբամբակին և զայլսն... Սոցա առաջնորդն կոչի Հազրպետ...” “These (arevordi-sons of the sun) have neither writing nor education, they teach with fables. Their ancestors were Zoroastrians who learned from the magus Zradasht (Zoroaster). They would put fire into the andrushan (fire altar) and whichever way (direction) the sun shined they would face and worship, and honor it with poplar, lily flowers, cottonwood, and the like... Their leader is called Hazrpēt...”²³ We can see that the arevordik (sons of the Sun) prayed facing the direction where the sun was at the moment. During prayer, they held up poplar, lily, and cottonwood before the sun. The arevordiner believed that humans are the children of the sun, and the moon is their benevolent uncle whom they must respect. If they did otherwise, they would become sick with diseases. To help prevent this, they hung up moon-shaped charms.²⁴

²² Yeznik Koghbatsi, *Yeghts Aghandots*, Tiflis, 1914, p. 142.

²³ Gh. Alishan, *Old Faith or Pagan Religion of Armenians*, Venice, 1910, p. 103.

²⁴ V. Bdoyan, *Armenian Ethnography*, Yerevan, 1974, p. 206.

Sun worship has persisted for a long time amongst Armenians, reaching up to the Late Middle Ages and beyond. It was not only widespread in Hayq, but throughout all of Mesopotamia. As we can see, sun worship was deeply ingrained into the people. The cult has lasted for thousands of years, expressing itself in the worship of the AR-Sun-God, Vahagn-Sun-God, and Mihr-Sun-God.

It should be noted that the songs dedicated to the Sun-God were performed not only by priests in temples, but also by gusans (singer-poets, Goghtn province), the working class, and other groups. The religious songs (hymns) sung to the Sun-God were never forgotten, even after the spread of Christianity. They integrated into the church worship service and are still performed in ceremonies today.



Image of the Sun-God,
Middle Ages, Aghavnadzor



Image of the Sun-God,
Middle Ages, Goris

Let us now turn to the understanding of god. There are copious explanations that pertain to the understanding of god, but no single person, religion, or ideology has provided an exhaustive and definitive answer to what is meant by god (astvats-Armenian, **dieu**- French, **gott**- German, **dios**- Spanish, **bog**- Russian).

In Old Armenian, **god** was pronounced **astvats/astuats** (modern pronunciation is astvats). In the Vedas, we find the word **asti** (to be), in the Zend (from the Avesta's texts) it is **sti** (creation), which is derived from the Indo-European root **es/ as** (to be).²⁵ Ast also implies **strength, power**.

The concept of god (astvats) can also be understood as “ast + tvats” (god + given), that is: heavenly beings or forces sent by the Creator, that were endowed to perform work here. As we can see, the understanding of god includes **to be, to make, to create, to act**, and /Էություն/ the entity, gist /implication of active beings/. However, these traits are not equal to the understanding of the Creator in an absolute sense because the gods are the children of God the Father. They receive their divine power from the ultimate Creator.

²⁵ H. Acharian, Armenian Etymological Dictionary, n. 1, Yerevan, 1971, pp. 276–277.

We can see, in the ancient pagan Armenian faith there is a Creator along with gods, deities, and other beings who receive their power from the Creator- God the Father. This means the ancient Armenian faith and religion, paganism, was canonical. However, the representatives of the ancient Armenian faith were slandered by Christians as idolators “idol, statue of god worshipers”, which thoroughly characterizes that era and the Armenian people’s worship of their national gods.

Therefore, it can be said that the ancient Armenian faith differentiated between the concepts of Creator and God. During the Christian era, the Creator and God were integrated (even using the same phraseology for the Creator God).

The ancient Armenian faith’s **gods Aramazd, Anahit, Vahagn, Astghik, Mihr, Tir, Nane**, and others are gods of light, and were depicted with human features. The Armenian gods stand out for their virtuous conduct and goodness. They have no animosity towards humanity or each other. We do not see Armenian gods waging war. During the celebrations of their holidays, there were no blood rituals or sacrifices (in sharp contrast to other national gods, i.e. the Mesopotamian god Moloch who received child sacrifices from prominent families).



Image of God the Father (the Sun-God),
artist: Gor Abrahamyan

Let us look at the meaning of the word դից (dits). In ancient Aryan (Indo-European) languages there are words that allow us to understand the meaning of the word **dits**. In Armenian- **div, tiv**, and **devtsazn**, Sanskrit- **devas**, Avestan- **daeva**, Pahlavi and Middle Persian- **dev**, Latin- **deus**, and Greek- **dios**, all imply a state of **illuminated, radiant, being**.²⁶ These examples allow us to conclude that the word **dits** or **dik** are derived from Indo-European (Aryan) **dev, div, devas**, essentially a “being of light” (and from this same vein we have the hero Davit from the Armenian epic *Sasna Tsrer*). However, over time **dev, dive** took on the meaning of “evil spirit

²⁶ H. Acharian, n. 1, 1971, p. 281.

or demon". The word Diutsazun, which means "son of dits (god)", implies that there were people on earth who were the offspring of the gods' enlightened beings. Later on, the word became widespread and came to mean giant, strong person.

The Hye-Armens who lived in the country of Ararat abided by the Creator's commandments and laws, and they viewed Mother Earth as an embodiment of goodness and light. This is evidenced by the Armenian pantheon of gods, which differs from those of other nations in that there is no evil god. Armenian gods have one nature; they are almighty, omnipotent gods, of an enlightened nature. The reasoning of the Armenians concluded that the world was created by an enlightened and just Creator, so it could not be evil. The belief that there are evil powers and evil spirits who sponsor malice, injustice, and violence was held from the beginning, but that made no difference. The Hye-Armens did not have evil deities because their spiritual perceptions confirmed that gods could not be evil. The individual person had the capacity for evil when they had strayed from the Creator's specified path, and when one's soul lacked love for the Creator and humanity.

Thus, in the country of Ararat, Hayq, there was a religious following (Ara-ism) of AR THE CREATOR THE FATHER GOD, which originated in the Armenian Highlands at the dawn of human history. Subsequently, with the migration of the Armeno-Aryan races, it spread to Mesopotamia, Asia Minor, and even further. In the collective Armenian consciousness, the Creator (AR) became identified with the sun as the giver of light, brilliance, and warmth, and, over time, he was worshiped as the Sun-God.

AR THE CREATOR AND ARMENIAN GEOGRAPHIC AND PERSONAL NAMES

The Armenian Highlands and the surrounding area is a unique place in the world where many geographical and personal names begin with (or contain) the roots Ar-, Er-, Ir-, and Ur-. First, let us examine the personal names.

The initial written records we encounter of personal names beginning with Ar, are dated from the first half of the II millennium B.C.. The names belong to the Armenian Hurri-Mitannian empire's kings. Some of those names are **Artatama**, **Artashumara**, and **Artamania**. These names are written in Akkadian-Babylonian, which affects their proper spelling and pronunciation because of their adaptation and translation into a foreign language and cuneiform.

In Movses Khorenatsi's work History of the Armenians, many of the ancient Armenian patriarchal names begin with Ar: **Aramaneak**, **Harma**, **Aram**, **Ara**, and **Ara the Handsome**. Also mentioned are the names **Artavazd**, **Artashes**, **Arshak**, **Arsham**, **Artavan**, **Arkeghayos**, and **Arshavir**. To the aforementioned names let us add **Armenak**, **Artan**, **Argam**, **Arbak**, **Artsrun**, and **Armihr**. In the inscriptions of the Ararat-Urartian kings, we encounter the names **Arame**, **Argishti**, **Erimena**, and **Rusa-Ursa**. In inscriptions from Persian king Darius I, we see the name **Arakha**. The daughter of King Tigran the Great (Tigran II) was named **Ariazate**.

There are numerous names beginning with Ar in Ancient Greek and Old Iranian.²⁷ So we do not overburden our work with names, let us refer specifically to the Greek historian Herodotus. In his work Histories, we encounter various feminine and masculine Iranian and Greek names beginning with Ar. The Iranian names are Artayunte (feminine), Aristone (feminine), Ariobignes, Artayukte, Arismardos, Artembares, Artayos, Artyupios, Arsames, Aryuandes, Artaxayes, Artabazos, Artanes, Artabanos, Artyupos, Artaxerxes, and Ariagos... (a man).

The Greek names are Ariadne (feminine), Argea (feminine), Artemis (feminine), Aristas, Argeos, and Aristodemos (a man). The Iranian names are undoubtedly presented in their Hellenized forms. The Greeks rarely use these names now, and the Iranians have all but forgotten them. In contrast to the Iranians and Greeks, to this day, Armenians continue to use their ancient names.

Many personal names (as well as surnames) containing the root **Ar** have been preserved among other Indo-European peoples. The leader of the Germanic Cherusci tribe that rebelled against the Romans (continue to next page) was named **Armin** or **Arminius** (early A.D. 1st century).²⁸ The Gothic leader who defeated the Slavonic Venedi tribe was named **Ermanaric** (A.D. 6th century).²⁹ Additional names include

²⁷ E. Grantovskii, Early History of the Iranian Tribes of Perednei Asia, Moscow, 1970, pp. 119, 121, 212, 214.

²⁸ Tacite, Analles, books I, II, XII, XIII.

²⁹ N. Karamzin, History of the Russian State, Moscow, 1990, p. 14.

Armaneak, Armen, Arman, Armand (Harmand), Arten, Arteng, German (Herman), Yaroslav, Yaromir, Yaropolk, Yariga, Yargin, Yarovoi, and others.

The Hay-Armens named many things after AR the Creator God, not merely one tribe or location, but numerous geographic locations in the Armenian Highlands including rivers, mountains, towns, buildings, and cities.

As evidenced by recovered ancient sources (Hittite, Assyrian, “Uartian”, Greek), the Ar root is used extensively for the names of geographic locations in various parts of the Armenian Highlands. Toponyms beginning with **Ar** (or **Ur**) are also mentioned in the areas surrounding the Armenian Highlands such as Ur, Uruk, Urha, Arrapkha, and others. Those settlements were likely founded by migrating Armenian-Aryan tribes.

Let us also mention the names Ararat, Aratta, Armani, Arme, Armina, Urme, and Ararat-Urartu. In Akkadian sources, we encounter the toponyms Aravanna and Arauna. Ancient Hittite sources mention Arauna, Aravana, Arats, Aratsashtia, Armatan, Aripisa, and Arnia (Arnis). The city of Aran (Aranis) and its road stations were on the eastern frontier of the Hittite kingdom. Within the Hittite Empire, we find the Arina region (or city).

Geographic names in the Armenian Highlands that begin with **Ar** are especially common, as evidenced by Assyrian cuneiform records. There are geographic regions, large and small settlements, mountains, rivers, fortress-cities, and more. Let us name a few: **Regions:** Armali, Armanzu, Armarili, Arme (Urme), Arsianish, Aramale (Aramali), Arania, Arzabia, Arzav, Arzon, Arzun, Artuini, Ariani, Arumu, Arkueni, Haria..., **Settlements/ Fortress-Cities:** Armunu, Arna, Arnia, Arsi, Artkun, Armali, Arame (castle), Arbu, Ardini, Ardupa, Arzabia, Arkania, Arzashku (Archesh), Aridu, Arinu, Artsania (city of Arzn), Artsashku (Artsn), Arura, Aramunk (Aramus)..., **Mountains/ Peaks:** Arsabia, Arsia, Arsidu, Ararad, Ardikshi, Ardyusi, Arzanibu, Arkania, Arua, Aruma, Aruni, Arut...

In the records of Ararat-Urartian kings, we encounter numerous toponyms beginning with Ar. They are as follows: **Territories:** Arme-Shupria, Aramale (Aramali), Arkuki, Arhi, Armarilu (Arмали), Arsuini, Artaziani Urtekhe (Arstakh)... **Cities:** Armali, Ara(t)ni, Arina, Arzani (Aratsani), etc.

In written sources from the start of the 5th century, we encounter even more ancient Armenian place-names with an Ar root: Armavir (city), Araman and Aramana (villages), Aramanyak and Artagers (fortresses), Arman-Arana (Arme-Shupria), and Armatas-Amara (Artsakh).

Greek written sources mention the cities of Aramea (Arame, Aramis) and Arangas. Also, Greek historians referred to Lake Van as Arestusa, Arestia, and Arsen (Arsene). They called the Araks River by the name Ares.

Let us continue our list of names: **Villages** - Aramis (Zangezur), Aramo (Cilicia), Aramon (now Aramus), Arashat (Vaspurakan), Arbat (Arevmtyan/ Western Armenia, province of Yerevan), Argo (Kharberd province), and Artos.

Territories - Araguni or Areguni, Aran or Arran, Arania, Armanu, Artsi. Cities - Arbela, Argina, Argisha, Argos, Arzangan (Yerznka). Mountains - Artos. Let us also note Ararat, Aragats, Araks, Aratsani, Areguni, Artaz, Areni, Armavir, Artashat, Arjesh, Aruj, Artsakh, Armash, Artsn, Yeritsa, Yerznka, and Yerevan.

The sheer diversity and prevalence of toponyms beginning with Ar in the Armenian Highlands is most certainly not incidental; it is intimately connected to the name of AR the Creator, and with his worship. For thousands of years, the people have continually passed on their beloved god's name to their children and dwelling places.

In Europe, there are numerous geographic locations beginning with **Ar**. Without comment, we will list some examples: **Rivers** - Ara, Arma, Varmena, Arno, Arman-tia, Aragon, Araisa, Alma, Albina, Almana, Alara, Elba (L-R phonetic interchange); **Mountains** - Aralar, Aramo, Aramur, Araxamendi (Spain); Settlements - Armorica, Harmina (France), Araz, Aria, Aran, Arango, Aranikho (Spain), etc. Let us add Iran (Aran) and Alania (L-R phonetic interchange).

Greece also had many toponyms that began with Ar. Some of these include (according to Herodotus): **Cities** - Artake, Armatides, Argolis (Argos); **Rivers** - Artanes, Arteskos, and Arares.

Armenian and foreign researchers have always been interested in the name of Armenia's 13th capital: Yerevan. Multiple studies and articles have been written by authors with varying theories regarding the origin of the name Yerevan. Some studies allow us to conclude the name Yerevan has ties to the name of Ar the Creator. The Armenian record attests to the names Erivan, Arivan, Yerevan, Irevan, which begin with the Ar-, Er-, Ir- components. The second component of the name (-van) references a geographic location. Therefore, Yerevan along with its variants Arevan, Aravan, Erivan, etc are made up of **Ar-**, **Er-** and **-van** components, which has the meaning of the **settlement of the Ari/Eri tribe**. This topic is very important so we will discuss the origin of the name Yerevan in a separate section.

CHAPTER SECOND

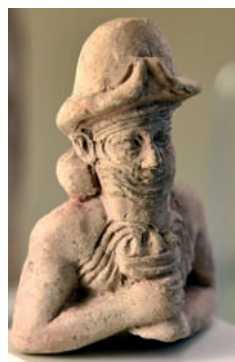
HAYA

LORD OF EARTH

Haya (Enki) is the lord of wisdom, Mother Earth, and water sources. Within Armenian chronicles, there is no information regarding Haya. However, our people's endonym Հայ (Hay) compels us to turn to the ancient Mesopotamian written sources regarding the almighty Haya.



Haya, Lord of Earth (En-ki),
III millennium B.C.



Haya (En-ki),
III millennium B.C., Urr

Ancient Mesopotamian written sources state that the head gods of the Sumerian pantheon were **AN (the skay)** and his wife **KI** (the Earth, note the Armenian word for woman is կին kin). **AN** embodied the beginning of males, and **KI** the beginning of females³⁰. These two “very beginnings”, An and Ki, were birthed by the primeval ocean. An and Ki mated and produced Enlil, the god of the air, who divided the heavens from the earth. During that process, An rose up to heaven but Enlil brought his mother, Ki, down to earth. This event is documented in the Sumerian-Akkadian “Epic of Gilgamesh” and the poem “Enkidu and the Underworld”.

According to the poem, in the beginning heaven and earth were one (chaos). The separation of heaven and earth was the beginning of the creation of the world. An is an almighty god, but he almost never gets involved with earthly life. His divine attributes and power to act on earth, he gave to his children, Enlil and Enki-Haya. However, An keeps track of everything to make sure it follows the established order. An is the father of all the gods, earning the title “Father of Gods”. An’s eldest child, **Enlil**, (in Akkadian sources **Ellil**, **Bel**) is the god of the air, but equal to him in strength is **Enki** (in Akkadian sources **Haya**, **Ea**), the lord of Mother Earth. An’s other offspring are **Inanna** the goddess of fertility, love, and war (**Ishtar** in Akkadian sources, **Anahit** in Armenian sources), **Utu** the god of the sun and justice (called Shamash, meaning “sun”, in the

³⁰ The Sumerian pantheon of gods has similarities, as well as differences, with the Akkadian and Babylonian pantheons. However, since the Sumerian pantheon is the oldest, it was the basis of all the Mesopotamian deities.

Akkadian pantheon; Sun-God in the Armenian pantheon), **Nanna** the goddess of the moon (**Sin** in the Akkadian pantheon; the Armenian word for moon is լուսին *lusin*), **Ninurta** the goddess of agricultural work, and also the **Igigi** and **Anunnaki**.

In recovered depictions (seals, ancient texts, accompanying images, stelae monuments, sculptures), we see the gods standing before the enthroned An. The symbol of the gods is a **horned crown, or a hat with special horn-like protrusions**. The Armenian gods stand out because of their strikingly similar hats, called **mihrakan hats** (much later Armenian kings are depicted wearing mihrakan hats). In the Ararat-Urartian pantheon, the god Haldi was likewise often depicted wearing a hat with horned parts.



Adoration of Ani, seal, Mari (Tell Hariri), All the gods are wearing helmet-hats with horned parts, mid-III millennium B.C., Damascus, National Museum



Haya-Enki (segment of a larger seal)



Haldi, bronze statue, near Rusahinili in Van, 8th-7th centuries B.C.



The god Mihr with a mihrakan hat, Sanctuary of Nemrut



Armenian king Trdat III wearing a mihrakan hat, Versailles

It is clear that the names **An** and **Ar** are phonetically similar. Also, both gods operate in the heavens and embody male characteristics. The Sumerians, without giving a name, call the place of the activity of the primary god An “**Heaven**”. But the god has no name, as long as An (heaven) is the place of action. We notice a similarity in both sound and meaning between the Sumerian **Ki** and Armenian **Ki-n**, which represent a feminine quality for a subject or object. The Sumerians did the same with **Enki** (Lord of the Earth) and **Enlil** (Lord of the Air), naming the gods after the **domains they act within**.

Besides the primary god An and the other almighty gods, the remaining gods are divided into two main groups: **heavenly** (Igigi- “those who came down from heaven”) and **earthly** and **underworld** (Anunnaki- “Anu’s younger generation”). The Igigi are also called **angels**, but “Igigi” means guardians, watchers. Anunnaki means the offspring of An and Ki. Armenians called the Anunnaki **kajer, kajker** (brave/ courageous, some dialects use alternate pronunciations). The fact that the Anunnaki and Igigi were also gods is confirmed in the poem “Enki and the World Order”:

The Anunnaki, the almighty gods,
Desired to live amongst you (humans).

In the poem “Enki and the World Order”, Enki-Haya declares himself the Lord of the Anunnaki, to whom they bow in reverence (in this poem Enki-Haya affirms himself as An’s firstborn on the earth):

I am the lord of the Anunnaki,
I am he, the firstborn of the sacred An.

.....
The Great Prince (Enki-Haya), who came to his world
Worshipped by the Anunnaki as is appropriate.
“To God, the greatest Me, holy Me the guardian,
Who rules the universe”.

“Enki and the World Order” or “Enki and the Creation of the World”

Enki-Haya acts upon the earth himself and through the Anunnaki (spirits, courageous ones). The Babylonians called the Anunnaki SER (“Big Snake” or “Dragon”). Besides qajer, kajker, the Armenians also called them vishapner (dragons).



Bird-headed, humanlike, winged beings (spirits, courageous ones, Anunnaki), by the Tree of Life, bronze plate, Mesopotamia, III millennium B.C.



Bird-headed, humanlike, winged beings (spirits, courageous ones, Anunnaki), by the Tree of Life, at the top is the Sun-God's winged image, stone receptacle covering, Teishebaini (Karmir Blur), 8-7th century B.C., HMA

An, Enki-Haya, Enlil, Ninmach, Utu, Nanna, Ninhursag, and others were the gods of the Anunnaki and Igigi. However, for the created humans, all of the higher beings were Gods (An, Enki, Ninmach..., also the Igigi and Anunnaki). Let us also mention that humans portray gods (An, Enki-Haya, Ninmach,...) as themselves, as if the gods made man in their image. They also portrayed the Anunnaki and Igigi as they are (not with human faces, figures, likeness). From then on, we have the incomprehensible and often inexplicable images of idols today.



Gods: Enlil, Anunnaki or Igigi, An (center), Utu, Anunnaki or Igigi, Enki-Haya, Sumerian sculptures, IV-III millennia B.C.

According to new studies, during the Sumerian period in the Armenian Highlands, the state of **Ararat** (Ururut-Ararat) existed with **Aratta** as its center (early III millennium B.C.). Dating from the same period, the inscriptions of Ebla attest to the Armenian **Ha-a** ethnonym and the toponym **Armi**. It is believed that for some unknown reason (perhaps they did not deem it important), the Sumerians did not write down the proper names of the gods **Ar, Haya, Nar, Qajk** (Brave, Anunnaki), and others. Instead they used the realm within which the god operated (heaven, earth, autumn [phenomena]), as a characterizing word.

The Akkadian pantheon, which was adapted from the Sumerians, has slightly modified names for the deities. An is pronounced Anu, Enlil is pronounced Ellil..., and Enki's name becomes **Haya**, which is immensely important for the study of Armenian ancient history. We have to think that the Akkadians, who were of Semitic origin, initially lived peacefully with the Sumerians and were aware of the worship of the god Haya that existed in the Sumerian homeland, the land of Ararat. They also knew of the Armenian Highlands inhabitants' endonym "Hay", and in their discourse they use Enki's alternate name, **Haya**, for "lord of the earth".

According to the poem "The Creation of the World", or "Enki and the World Order", the Sumerian pantheon's primary generation's three almighty gods were An, Enlil, and Enki-Haya. Let us focus on Enki-Haya.

Enki-Haya, as has been noted, was lord of Mother Earth, wisdom, and the water resources of the world. In Sumerian written sources, the gods name is **Enki** "lord of the earth", in Akkadian written sources **Haya/ Ea**, and in Babylonian sources he is called **Oannes/ Ohannes**.³¹

Enki-Haya was the offspring of the chief deity An and the goddess Nannu. Sumerian texts represent Enki as a bold, wise, and compassionate god. Enki-Haya has been pictured with an illuminating torch. As the god of the waters, streams, and oceans, he is also depicted with water fountains flowing from his shoulders, usually with fish swimming in the water. Due to his position as the god over the waters, he was also associated with the moon, which produces the high and low tides. This is evidenced by the presence of the moon in depictions of Enki.

Thus, in the Sumerian-Akkadian dialogues regarding the gods, Enki-Haya had "Seven Sages" who were sages and counselors that were called **Abgallu/ Abgal** (Abgal-lu = "water large man", Sumerian written sources), **Apkallu** (Akkadian), or **Umanu** ("Gilgamesh" poem) that were created by Enki-Haya and came to the world from the World Ocean to enlighten and civilize humanity. The Abgallu are often depicted with half-man and half-fish characteristics. In many images, a fish head is part of the decoration on the god's head. In Berossus' work, the Abgallu are depicted as fish-like men who were sent by the gods to impart knowledge to humanity. Berossus calls the Abgallu by the name Ohannes (Oannes). Berossus writes about Ohannes, "Ohannes spent his days amongst men, devoid of any sustenance, teaching them writing, sciences, and various vocations, and also instituting cities, building temples, jurisprudence, geometry, while simultaneously teaching them to cultivate grain, gardening, and generally everything needed for civilized life". In the form of fish-like, half-man, half-fish creatures, Enki-Haya had his representatives. It is likely that snake-dragons were also such representations, as seen in the land of Ararat (Hayq) depicted on the famous dragon-stones (vishapner). Those dragon-stones were placed on mountains

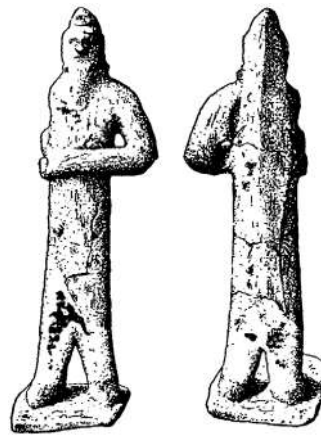
³¹ For clarity, let us remember that the common Armenian names Ohan, Ohannes (John) are, as we can see, very ancient names.

and at the sources of rivers and streams, for Ohannes would be coming out of the World Ocean and into the terrestrial world of earth in the vicinity of water sources. In the pantheon of Ararat-Urartu, we encounter an image of a fish-like god. Such a clay figurine was recovered during the excavations at Teishebaini (Karmir Blur).

Enki-Haya possessed titles of **wisdom** and **intellect**. This god was an almighty god, so mighty that he appears to be like a creator god- “Nudimmud”. We already mentioned that in the Sumerian religious texts, the creation of the world and humanity was done via the underworld’s freshwater World Ocean called Abzu, upon which the earth is found. In the Mesopotamian written records, Abzu is also called Arali (Harali), as in “Enki and Ninmah”. The ruler over Abzu-Arali was Enki-Haya. The mysteries of the universe resided within Abzu-Arali: **Me** (collection of mysteries). Their guardian is Enki-Haya (“Inanna and Enki” poem).



Ohannes in a fish-like garment, relief sculpture from Nimrud, Temple of Ninurta



Clay figurine of a fish-like god, Teishebaini (Karmir Blur, Yerevan), HMA



Dragonstone (Vishapakar), Geghama Mountains



Fish-like stone cutting, Geghama Mountains, III-II millennia B.C. (possibly earlier)

Haya played a significant role in the creation of humanity, and he was also viewed as benevolent towards people. He protects people from the wrath of the gods, makes new discoveries, and brings about knowledge that is needed to ensure humanity's existence on the earth. Haya also decided people's destinies and was concerned about their fate. Additionally, "so people would not be like wild animals" he wrote sacred laws, **Me**, that humanity needed to accept and respect. Scholars call **Me** the **godly laws** or **godly cannons**. We encounter Me's laws in Sumerian prayers and myths. In the poem "Enki and the World Order", the world is managed by the unchanging laws of **Me**, which apply to all aspects of life.

Me's ordinances are about craftwork, the arts, human conduct and behavior, things pertaining to life and death, societal governance, and the supreme authority that **stands above all** and reigns over the mysteries of the universe. In the poem "Enki and Inanna", over one hundred Me are listed, more than half of which have been deciphered. They were deciphered and read in orderly understandable groupings:

Justice: a heroic spirit, wisdom, honesty, goodness, truth, flood, weapons, **ter-Professional-Artisan:** builder, tanner, basket maker, blacksmith, metallurgist.

Royal insignia: authority of the gods, throne, crown, sceptre, kingly authority, nobility.

Priestly positions and understandings, those who are involved with religious and spiritual matters. Noble sanctuaries, do not descend into the underworld kingdom, getting out of the underworld kingdom. Also mentioned are the arts, battle flags, debauchery and sacred purification, musical instruments, the art of scribeship ...³²

Let us continue listing them: absolute supremacy and godly power, crown, throne, the exalted staff (sceptre), kingly authority, noble origin, bravery, magical garments, military might, also shepherding, skilled processing of skins and wool, secrets of metal processing, craft of woodworking, craft of basket weaving, art of clay figurines, art of preparing stone sculptures, secrets to maintaining writing, as well as the power to make the flute and harp play sweet and pleasant sounds.

In the **Me**, there are laws regarding good and evil. It is also stated that **every thing (or phenomenon) in life coincides with an idea or word subject to the gods**. According to the beliefs of the Sumerians, to master Me meant complete authority over the earth. This was the reason that the gods (as well as humans) battled, often even warred, to master those divine laws. That was also the reason Enki-Haya hid them somewhere that only he knew of.

In Sumerian legends ("Enmerkar and the Lord of Aratta", "Lugalbanda in the Mountain Cave") as well as Akkadian-Babylonian legends ("Gilgamesh"), it becomes apparent that the Armenian Highlands are where we find Aratta (as well as the land of Ararat), **high mountains, the immortals, gods, sacred laws and holy rituals**. One can posit that the sacred laws and holy rituals of Me were the same sanctified laws and cannons that were sacredly observed by the Hye-Armens.

³² S. Kramer. Sumeria. The First Civilization on Earth, 2010.

The **Me** cannons are those laws which became the basis for all subsequently written codes of conduct, commandments, and laws.

Hence, the formula to live by (codes, social and familial), the laws of Me, were given to humanity from the gods, so we must assume that this was also the lifestyle of the gods. If everything was given by the gods, **then language was also given by the gods**, presumably the same language they spoke. Since the Armenian tongue is one of the world's most ancient languages, it is possible that it is the language of the gods. In this case, let us remember the words of the English poet Lord Byron, who equated the Armenian language with the language spoken by the gods. This expression could only be uttered by an extremely gifted thinker. Enki-Haya continuously gave his help to humanity. In the poem "Enki and the World Order", Haya-Enki appears as the universal defender of order. Along with Enlil, he creates the plant and animal kingdoms. He travels through the world, fertilizing it, and deciding the fates of cities and countries. He fills the Tigris and Euphrates rivers, which symbolize the world's water resources, with life-giving waters that produce an abundance of marine life. Then, navigating along the Tigris and Euphrates rivers, Enki-Haya gives humanity and the world the ability to live prosperously. He creates the pickaxe, plough, molds for making bricks, the idea for building homes and cities, the secrets to processing metals, etc.

Enki helps humanity make discoveries in gardening, horticulture, and flax cultivation. He teaches humans to use medicinal herbs to fight against illness. In order to properly organize the work, each branch of the economy is assigned the patronage of a deity. **Enkimdu** gives instructions on how to build canals and dig out riverbeds. **Enbilulu** took care of the water supply of the Euphrates and Tigris rivers. For wild animals and livestock herds: the king of the mountains, **Sumukan**. Enki-Haya appointed his offspring, **Dumuzi**, to fertilization of soil and as the patron of vegetation and the natural cycle of life and death. In the poem "About Lahar and Ashna", Haya placed the particularly important cultivation of **grain crops** and the **art of winemaking** under the patronage of the goddess **Ashna**.³³ To **Lahar**, he assigned the patronage of cattle and milk production. Enki-Haya instructed women on how to weave canvas (cloth) to make clothing. The production of weaving was under the patronage of the goddess **Uttu**, who was given the secrets to "making thread". Finally, the already regulated world's management and maintenance was assigned to the **sun god, Utu**.³⁸ After setting everything up, Haya-Enki would retreat back to the underworld depths of **Engur**, depths that could not be perceived by any other god. As we can see, Haya created life on Mother Earth and engineered it. We also see, on Mother Earth every thing is ideal and harmonious for human life and proliferation (sun, fire, water, earth, rain, forests...).

³³ We can make the connection that with Armenian lavash (lav- ash=hats [bread]= hatsabuys [bread grain]) ashnan-atsan, ashun (autumn); the words have a connection to the name of the patron saint of bread grains, the goddess Ashnan.

In the poem “Enki and the World Order” (or “Enki and the Creation of the World”), Enki-Haya speaks about the increasing, accumulating population of Earth.

O Earth, let all things be multiplied, all that you have,
Let your people be multiplied[...]

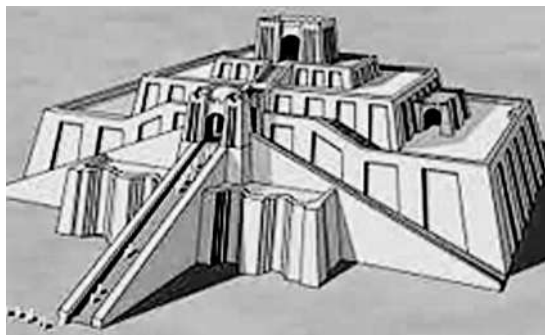


Enki-Haya with the Tree of Life, giving a ring (symbol of totality) and sceptre (symbol of collective power) to Gudea the ruler of Lagash.



The goddess Ashna (namesake of the Armenian word աշուն - ashun - “autumn”)

Enki-Haya always protects humanity in the ancient Mesopotamian written sources and testimonies (“Atrahasis”, “Gilgamesh”), serving as the patron of the salvation of the human race. Let us remember, in the Babylonian myth “Atrahasis” the gods became angered by the noisiness of the humans on the earth and decide that by famine, pestilence, and finally a flood they will destroy the human race. Haya warned Atra-Hasis about the impending flood. In the Sumerian-Akkadian “Gilgamesh”, on the eleventh tablet, the pious Utnapishtim is warned of the impending flood by Ea-Haya (in the Sumerian version Ziusudra is saved from the flood, which is equal to the Akkadian translation of Utnapishtim- “long life found”).



Sumerian ziggurat temple (reconstruction): At the top of the ziggurat is where the temple was found, representing the physical and spiritual superiority of god over humanity. Regular mortals were not allowed to ascend the temple (much like regular people were not allowed to climb to the summit of Mount Ararat, where the people believed that the gods dwelled). Only the priests had access to those places, to engage in sacred rituals. Let us remember, Sumerian texts say Armenian master builders (citizens of Aratta) built the temples using Armenian building materials.

Thus, we conclude that the Ruler of the Earth, the almighty god Haya, who also bears the title of Creator, not only participates in the creation of the human race, but he always protects them from the wrath of the gods that the human race often provokes through their behavior and actions.

The god that was unfavorably disposed towards the human race was Enlil, who was against the creation of humanity from the beginning. Enlil's hostile behavior is shown more than once in the form of floods, pestilences, and the like, to eradicate the human race. However, Haya always found a way to save humanity via dreams or otherwise warning pious people about a coming disaster.

Thankfully, Movses Khorenatsi's book, "*History of the Armenians*", gave us the story of "Hayk and Bel", which should be considered a reverberation of the struggle between Haya and Enlil (Bel). The Akkadians refer to Enlil as Ellil or Bel.

The war between Hayk and Bel was a war of the gods. Enlil was opposed to the existence of humanity and tried at every convenient opportunity to destroy the human race. In this sense, Hayk and Bel's war was also directed towards the human race. We must not consider it accidental that the Armenian hero named Hayk, the son of Haya, defeats Bel (Enlil).



Hayk shooting Bel with an arrow, artist: R. Kocharyan

Movses Khorenatsi writes the following about the origin of the Armenian hero Hayk: "The first of the gods was awesome and visible, and the cause of the great good in the world, the world and it's multitude of men, giant men... One of the Ary-ans was a Japhethian called Hayk, the famous and brave leader, with a thick bow he was a powerful archer."³⁴

³⁴ *Movses Khorenatsi*, 1981, p. 39.



Burly, colossal men, ancient site of Asatibada-Karatepe, Cilicia, mid II millennium B.C.



Burly, colossal man,
ancient site of Asatibada-Karatepe,
Cilicia, mid II millennium B.C.



Burly, colossal Patriarch Hayk's stat
Yerevan, 1970, credit: K. Nurijanian

Like the ancient Mesopotamian written sources, the Bible also attests: “As men began to populate the earth and had daughters, the sons of God, seeing that the daughters of men were very beautiful, took them as wives, whoever they chose. The Lord said, “My spirit will not remain in these men forever, because they are of the flesh. Let the limit of their lives be 120 years... In those days giants lived upon the earth. And the sons of God had children with the daughters of men. Those were the giants, from ancient times, they are the men of name”.³⁵

Let us pay close attention to the following section: “Those were the giants, from ancient times, they are the men of name”. Let us also remember Khorenatsi’s mention of Arayan Arayits (Ara the Handsome’s son), born to Skayordi, and also his son Paruir of Skayordi⁴¹³⁶ (Hskayordun*), which, in all likelihood, is what is meant, not “son of

³⁵ Genesis, 6:1, 6:2, 6:4.

³⁶ Movses Khorenatsi, 1981, pp. 73, 75.

Saki, Skuiti” as is presented to us in Armenian historiography. Rather, it has the meaning “hskayi vordi” (son of giants). It is interesting that in all ancient inscriptions, the pharaohs, *translators note: In Armenian hska (հսկա) means giant and vordi (որդի) means son. Skayordun/ Hskayordun denotes “son of giants”. lords, kings, and caesars attribute their ancestry to the gods, declaring that they were born from a union of god and earthly women. This means that they were also endowed cosmic beings, with attributes specific to deities. As a symbol of their godliness, Mesopotamian lords depicted themselves with the decorative horn-like hats (crowns) that the gods wore.

Throughout the Armenian Highlands there are place-names and personal names adapted from the name of the god **Haya**. Let us list them: **Personal Names:** Hayk, Haykaram, Haykak, Haykaz, Haykazum, Hayr, Haykuhi, Haykandukht, Haykanush, Hayots...

Place-names: Hayq, Haykashen, Hayanist (Ayanist), Hayka Dzor, Hayots Dzor, Haykaberd...

In the mythology of the ancient peoples of Near East Asia, there is evidence of the worship of the goddess **Haya** (Aya, Ea). Thus, in the Akkadian (Babylonian-Assyrian) mythology, the sun god Shamash’s wife is called **Aya**. In Hittite mythology, the Tree of Life was placed in front of the dying-resurrecting god Telipinu. The golden fleece that hung from it was called **Ea**. In Greek mythology, in order to get their hands on the golden fleece hanging from the sacred tree, the brave Greeks on the ship “Argo” marched to the Sun God Helios’ son Aeëtes’ (Aietes) land of **Ea**. We notice that in Hittite mythology, the golden fleece on the Tree of Life is called **Ea-Aya**, but in Greek mythology the sacred tree and golden fleece reside in a land called **Ea**.

In one of the ancient Armenian kingdoms, that of Ararat-Urartu, there is yet a temple that contains relics from the worship of the goddess Aya-Haya, handed down from the goddess **Aya**, who was already an established goddess. In Assyria, in the time of Sargon II (721-705 B.C.), there still existed the worship of the the Lord of Earth **Ea**, with her former attributes as the goddess of wisdom and intelligence.

In Greek mythology (Hesiod’s “Theogony”), Mother Earth is called **Gaia** (Aia). As the ancient Mother Goddess, Aia-Gaia made a sizable impression on Greek spiritual perceptions, and, as such, the Greeks used the word aia to refer to the **land**, the **earth**, and **mothers**. With the same spiritual perceptions, the goddess Aya-Haya also guided the Armenians in calling the grandmother (Մեծ մոր, mets-mor, great mother) **aia** (Artsakh, Syunik).

Thus, concerning the ancient mythological accounts of creation and dialogues of Mesopotamia, the Armenian Highlands, and other countries of Near East Asia, there is evidence that very long ago, at the dawn of human history, there existed a cult of the god of **Mother Earth Haya (Ea, Aia)**.

REGARDING THE ORIGIN OF THE HAY-ARMEN ENDONYM

The Hay-Armen endonyms of the Armenians are from deep antiquity. In order to understand the origin, essence, and meaning of Hay-Armen we must return, once again, to the Mesopotamian ancient written resources.

As has already been noted regarding the creation of humanity, ancient mythologies and dialogues from Mesopotamia and Asia Minor testify that with the help of the Lord of the Earth **Haya-Enki** and the knowledge of the Chief God An-Anu (AR-ARAYI), in the Armenian Highlands, the area around the source of the Tigris and Eurphrates rivers, the human race was created. The humans (tribe) created in the name of the god Haya, Lord of Mother Earth, called themselves Hay (Armenian), which denotes **an inhabitant of the earth, an earth-dweller, or earthly being. The territory inhabited by the Hay tribe was called HAYQ**

An interesting aspect of reality is that no other nation, **besides the Armenians, refer to Armenians as “Hay”. It seems as if only the children of the god Haya, the Armenians, were to proclaim aloud the name of the god Haya.**

The human being created in the Armenian Highlands, the resident of the earth, the Hay, combines the worship of Haya the Lord of Mother Earth and the father of the cosmos AR the Creator, considering himself the son of AR: **Arma, Aram, Armen**. The Indo-European words **ma, me** (also man, men) have “spawn, birth, son” and “human” connotations.⁴⁴³⁷ The same connotation is present in the name Aram, in the -am component (with the inversion of ma: am=ma, also Gegham, Vahram, Vram). **The inhabitants of the earth, the Hays, called the place of their creation, their land, ARARAT.**

New studies conducted on Sumerian lyric poems reveal additional explanations regarding the **Armen** name. The lyric poem “Enki and the World Order”, attests to the fact that Haya had a great role in the creation of humanity, and he was favorably disposed towards people. He protected people from the wrath of the gods, helped them make discoveries, and gave them knowledge, all of which were necessary for humanity’s continued existence on earth. For that purpose, he wrote the **sacred laws** called **Me**. According to “Enki and the World Order”, the world is managed by the unchanging laws of **Me**, which pertain to all aspects of life. The laws of **Me** are also the universal **supreme authority**, existing above all else, as well as the scientific foundation of the universe. Me’s laws operated in Ararat (Aratta)- the land of creation, sacred laws, rituals, and immortals (“Enmerkar and the Lord of Aratta”, “Lugalbanda and Enmerkar”, “Enmerkar and Ensuhkeshdanna”). This means that **the human being created in Ararat, the land of creation, is the bearer of that sacred and powerful science: Me.**

³⁷ H. Acharian, Armenian Etymological Dictionary, Yerevan, 1977, pp. 278–279.

Therefore, the name **ARME-N** means **the inhabitants of that land which bears God's (AR) sacred laws (ME)**. It is apparent that the names **Hay** and **Armen** were applied to the same tribe of people, characterizing one of the world's most ancient human races. The names combined both **heavenly** (spiritual, intellectual) and **earthly** (external, physical) qualities.

At the beginning of the III millennium B.C., Semitic tribes appeared from the Arabian Peninsula, Northern Mesopotamia, and the southern part of the Armenian Highlands; they were the Akkadians, and later the Babylonians and Assyrians. They called the inhabitants of the Armenian Highlands the **Arma-Arme(n)s**. As for the land, they called it **Armani, Aramani, and Armina**.

The ancient written sources that were discovered which attest to the **Hay (haa)** and **Arme(n)** names, were found in Ebla (previously the locality of Tell-Mardikh, south of Aleppo) in the 1970s in an inscription by King Ebrium (24th century B.C.), written in Akkadian. In that inscription, there is a section listing goods that were gifted to different people from King Ebrium. The section is as follows: "high quality fabrics, one delicate fabric, one multi-colored fabric for the intermediary (authorized) Hay (ha-a)..., one gold ingot (20 sickles) for the Hay..." and also, "one fabric for Muri Armits (of Arm), one fabric, one high quality multi-colored garment for Malumi Armits (of Arm)".³⁸

We can see that the name Hay is used in this inscription as a tribal designation for **ha-a**, and Armits (of Arm) denotes a toponym (country, settlement), the countries of Muri and Malumi. The **Hay** name (Haya), as used for a tribal name, is encountered in the inscriptions discovered in the ancient Assyrian capital city of Ashur, which is dated to the III-II millennia B.C.. The relevant part of this inscription is as follows: "... these two vessels were intended (for) the Ameatsi market... in the five day week of Ashur-Ennami of the god Tashmet... Haji's (Hayi) son (=resident of Haji) prepared..." One researcher, the linguist V. Ivanov, likens the expression "**Hayi's son**" to "**resident of Hayi**", which can also be understood as "son of the god Haya", or even "resident of the Hye (Hayq) country". Ivanov interprets the cunieform **Ha-a**, as an ethnonym and toponym to the Armenians (Hyer) and reads it as **Ha-ya (Haya)**.

Therefore, the Hay-Armens, one of the old world's ancient races, links their name "Hay" to the name of the god Haya, which means that the god Haya is the namesake of Armenians. In this case, let us once again remember Khorenatsi's testimony, "Fearsome and renowned were the first of the gods... **Before them came the race of giants**,... One of these was **Hapetosyan Hayk**...". From this account, we can conclude that the Armenian patriarch Hayk was the son of god (in this case the son of Haya).

³⁸ V. Ivanov, Identification of Different Chronological Layers in Ancient Armenian and the Problem of the Original Structure of the Text of the Hymn to Vahagn, PBH, 1983, N. 4, p. 31.

Of equal importance is the **Armen** component of the Hay-Armen name. The Hay-Armen **ar-men, ar-man (son of Ar)** name suggests that **the inhabitants of the Land of Ararat were the descendants of Ar the Creator, the Father God**. Let's add: also carriers of **Me**.

As we can see, according to ancient written sources, the **Hay** and **Armen** names are deeply archaic (IV-III millennia B.C., or even older).

The inhabitants of the earth were aware of the gods and other cosmic beings from very early times. This is evidenced by the images depicted on petroglyphs, pottery fragments, clay tablets, seals, and the like. The inhabitants of Mesopotamia and Ararat also knew about them.



Reconstruction

Rocket-like contraption with an astronaut (the "astronaut's" head is missing), Van (Rusahinili), 8th century B.C., discovered in 1975, Istanbul Archaeology Museum.



Sumerian sculptures, IV millennium B.C.. The sons and daughters of men (armenoid anthropological types). Sumerians placed statuettes in praying positions within their temples, believing that human sculptures and real humans had a meaningful connection. They believed the prayer of a sculpture had the same power as that of a living person.

In many Indo-European languages the word **hay** expresses lofty, masculine qualities. For example, in English **high** means **elevated, noble, stately, grand, ideal, likely**; in French **haute** means **elevated, noble, stately, of nobility, strong, honest**; in German **hoch** means **elevated, of nobility, noble, strong**.

High quality properties are also attached to the word **ari**. In the Vedas, the word **ari (arya)** denotes **bravery, vigor, goodness, honesty, nobility, elite birth, and sacredness**. In Avestan, the word **ariyce** means **self-sacrificing, brave, devoted, and upright**. In Greek, the word **ares** means **brave, heroic, fearless, and virtuous**. In Irish, the word **er** means **good, honest, and elevated**. In Latin, the word **ari** means **heroic**. In Gothic, the word **era** means **human**³⁹. Let us also remember, in Armenian the word **ari** means **brave, heroic, and noble**.

Thus, the Hay and Armen names of the inhabitants of the Armenian Highlands refer to a very early, ancient period in history. Their origin, both meaning and roots, reach back to the time of creation. They testify that the creation of the Hay-Armen race in the Armenian Highlands is one of the most ancient races on Mother Earth.

To summarize: **The inhabitants of the earth, the Hays, called their place of creation, their territory, ARARAT, and the area inhabited by the people of the Armenian race was called HAYQ.** It is appropriate to say that **the inhabitants of the Armenian Highlands used their Hay-Armen names as a connection, or bridge, in the Universe, uniting Mother Earth (Haya, Aya, Ea) with the Cosmos (AR the Creator God, Father God).**

REGARDING THE NAME HAYASTAN

Let us discuss the country of Armenia's endonym- **Hayastan**. From the early Middle Ages on, within the Armenian record, the name Hayastan has been used instead of the name **Hayq**. We will try to understand what the consequences were for that change in the name of our country. First, let us examine the names Greater Armenia and Lesser Armenia (Armenia Minor).

After the invasions of Alexander the Great, following the destruction of Achaemenid Persia, the Armenian generals Yervand and Mihrvahisht organized the retreat of the Armenian army fighting in the Battle of Gaugamela (331 B.C.) back to their homeland, declaring Hayq an independent and sovereign kingdom. Afterwards, the majority of the Armenian Highlands was declared under the kingship of Yervand, resulting in that country's name being called **Greater Armenia** (Yervand III, 330–300 B.C.). Mihrvahisht (Mitraustes) was declared king of the significantly smaller region west of the Euphrates, which was called **Lesser Armenia**.

³⁹ For more on this topic, see K. Sukiasyan, *Armenner and Ararat*, Los Angeles, 1996, pp. 22, 23, 34.



The Armenian (Hay) world **Greater Armenia**, **Lesser Armenia**, **Gilician Armenia**

In the time of the Artashesians and Arshakunis, the southern regions of Vaspurakan and the regions to the north and west of Lake Kaputan formed the state or province of Nor Shirakan/ Noshirakan (according to Agathangelos there was a locality called Shirakan within the state).

The Roman Empire and Persia, understanding that neither of them could conquer the totality of Hayq, began to provoke instability within the country. In the year 375, after the Roman's assassinated the Pope-Emperor, an atmosphere of distrust was created in the court and the country. The Romans and Persians did everything they could to sow internal discord and division in the country. They succeeded in their efforts. Disunited were the leaders, being oriented towards either Rome or Persia. Disunited were the court and the church; disunited were the Arshakunis and Mamikonyans. Having successfully created favorable conditions, the Roman and Persian empires agreed in 387 to partition Greater Hayq.

After that division, the greater part of the province of Nor Shirakan was incorporated into Persia and renamed ParskaHayq (the name ParskaHayq is mentioned in the Armenian chronicle "Ashkharatsuyts").

Following the separation of Greater Armenia, Roman historians⁴⁰ subject to Byzantium began using the name **Armenia** to refer to Hayastan. The area subject to Persia was called **Persarmenia** (ParskaHayq). As we can see, there was already a state with the name ParskaHayq. If Persarmenia was translated into Armenian, it would be a repetitive name. In these conditions, Armenian chroniclers did not want to use the names Persarmenia or ParskaHayq, so they used the name **Hayastan** instead. The component **-stan** is considered an Indo- European toponymic particle. However, if we pay close attention, we notice that the ending **-stan** bears some

⁴⁰ Procopius of Caesarea, The Persian War, Book 1, Ch. 10.

distant similarity to the toponymic particle of **-sa (-asa)**, from the place-name of Hayasa, used to describe Hayq in Hittite written sources. The name Hayastan was used for the first time by Koryun (mid-5th century), followed by Agathangelos (5th century), and other historians.

Until the year 387, Armenian written sources utilize the name **Greater Armenia** when referring to this time period. Around this time, Greek and Roman written sources also use the name Armenia Major. After the 387 separation, the names **Hayq** (Armenian written sources) and **Armenia** (Roman written sources) are used. The “Ashkharatsuyts” (7th century) **still used the name Hayq**.⁴¹

Medieval Armenian historical writings consistently used the name Hayastan, which then became widespread within the common vernacular and pushed out **Hayq**, the ancient name of the Armenian nation.⁴²

After the 387 separation of Hayq, Lesser Armenia (Hayq) continued to be called Armenia Minor.

⁴¹ S. Yeremyan, Armenia According to the “Ashkharatsuyts”, p. 15, line 3.

⁴² Let us note that until half of the CE 1st millennium Armenians had last names (familial names) ending with **uni, unts, ents**, which showed belonging to a given lineage. Those family names mostly belong to nobility, chieftains, and royalty. Presently, Armenian last names end in **yan, ian, ean, eants**. They are mentioned in the “Gahnamak” (Rank of Nobility), (4th century). Persians also have last names ending in ian due to the widespread use of an as a plural component. With them, whenever a name (patronym) ends with the component i, the plural additive an is applied to form ian. This is very similar to the Armenian ian, yan name endings.

CHAPTER THIRD

ARARAT

ANCIENT ARMENIAN LAND

ANCIENT WRITTEN SOURCES REGARDING THE LAND OF ARARAT

Near East Asia's written sources, in particular the ancient Mesopotamia (Sumerian, Akkadian, Hurrian, Hittite, Babylonian, Assyrian) sources, testify that Armenians and the history of Armenia are thousands of years old. Ancient written sources use the following names for our land ARARAT (URURUT), ARATTA (city-state) (IV-III millennia B.C., Sumerian lyric poetry), ARME(N), HA-A, (mid-III millennium B.C., written sources discovered in Ebla), ARMANI (late-III millennium B.C., Akkadian written sources), HAYASA, AZZI, HURRI, MITANI, NAHARAINI (mid-II millennium B.C., Hittite, Egyptian, Hurrian written sources), NAIRI, URARTU, SUBARTU, BIAINILI (late-II millennium-early I millennium B.C., Assyrian, "Urtartian" written records), ARIM (12th century B.C., Iliac), then, ARMENIA (mid-I millennium B.C., Greek written sources), ARMINA (Old Persian), URASHTU (Babylonian), HARMINUUA (Elamite) (mid-I millennium B.C., Darius I's trilingual Behistun Inscription), ARARAT (late II millennium B.C., 7th-6th centuries B.C. – Bible).

With such a diverse array of names, a frequent question is asked: which is our nation's ancient name? Let us attempt to answer this question. First, let us turn to our nation's frequently used name, **Ararat**.

Research shows, an accurate reading of the ancient written sources is extremely important for Armenian history. This is evidenced by one particular Sumerian lyric poem, "Enmerkar and the High Priest of Aratta", in parallel comparisons of the English and Russian translations. In Herman Vanstiphout's 2003 English publication of the cuneiform lyric poem, line 437 of the text states: *kur ur₃ -ur₃ -ru-[da]-ni aratta*⁴³ However, in the same lines of the English translation, the Aratta portion is read, but *kur (country) ur₃ -ur₃ -ru-[da]-ni* is not read.⁴⁴

In the Russian publication, in text transliterated from the cuneiform, the name reads as *kur-ùr-ùr-ru ... Aratta*⁴⁵, but in this translation, only Aratta is present.

The lyric poem's English and Russian editions of the text, transliterated from the cuneiform, deem the section *ku ur₃ -ur₃ -ru-[da]-ni* "unreadable", but it can be read as UR-UR-RU-TA-ni, or even AR-AR-RA-TA-ni (AR-AR-AT). In this case, we can say that in the lyric poem "Enmerkar and the Lord of Aratta" our nation's ancient name of **Ararat**, in the form of **Uruuruta**, is the land mentioned in that section (the **ni** component denotes a toponym).

⁴³ Herman L.J. Vanstiphout, *Epics of Sumerian Kings: The Matter of Aratta*, Atlanta, GA: Society of Biblical Literature, 2003, pp. 80-81.

⁴⁴ A. Davtyan has paid close attention to this case. To the lyric poem's English publication of the cuneiform text, on the aforementioned line 437, which states *ku ur₃ -ur₃ -ru-[da]-ni*, Davtyan reads it as *Uruurutani*- rightfully connecting it with the name Ararat. A. Davtyan, *Bazmavep (journal)*, 2009, pp. 173-179.

As we can see, the translators of the lyric poem “Enmerkar and the Lord of Aratta” ignore kur ur₃ -ur₃ -ru-[da]-ni. They either do not read it because they do not understand it, or because they do not want to read the name of the country. Let us present the lyric poem “Enmerkar and the Lord of Aratta” in the English and Russian transcribed text translations.

English version: transcription

435 kiğ₂-gi₄-a aratta^{ki}-aš du-a-ni
 U₅ mušen-gin₇ hur-sağ-ğ₂ nim-gin₇ sahar 'niğin'-a
 Hl. SUHUR^{ku6}- gin₇ kur ur₃ -ur₃ -ru-[da]-ni aratta^{ki}-aš 'ba'-teğ₃

Herman L.J. Vanstiphout, Epics of Sumerian Kings: The Matter of Aratta (transcribed text of the cuneiform record [line 437]), where it is written kur ur₃ -ur₃ -ru-[da]-ni aratta^{ki} (p. 80).

Translation

The messenger's race to Aratta 435
 Was like the U-bird('s flight) over the hills, like a fly('s dsshing) over the dust.
 He darted over the highland like a swimming carp and reached Aratta⁴⁵.

Herman L.J. Vanstiphout, Epics of Sumerian kings; the matter of Aratta (English translation, where the following is left out: ur₃ -ur₃ -ru-[da]-ni (p. 81).

Russian version: transcription

436 kin-gi₄-a Aratta^{ki}-aš du-a-ni
 437 ? mušen-gim hur-sag-ga nim-gim sahar-nigin-a
 438 ? Ku₆ -gim, kur-ùr-ùr-ru ... Aratta^{ki} - aš ba-te
 439 kisal-Aratta^{ki} -ka gir-húl-la mi-ni-in-gub
 440 ensi-na mu-un-du

Kaneva I.T., Enmerkar and the High Priest of Aratta, VDI, 1964, n. 4, p. 201 (transcribed text of the cuneiform record which appears as: kur-ur ur-ru ... Aratta^{ki} line 438)

Translation

436 Гонец, в Аратту идущий,
 437 подобно птице в горах, подобно мухе в сгруженной пыли,
 438 подобно рыбе к Аратте приблизился.
 439 ВО двор Аратты радостно вступил,
 440 К своему -энси подошел,
 441 Приказ, который он нес, исполняет.

Kaneva I.T., Enmerkar and the High Priest of Aratta, VDI, 1964, n. 4, p. 215. (The Russian translation appears without the name kur-ur-ur-ru, line 438, only Aratta is noted.)

⁴⁵ Birds, bees, and fish, according to A. Davtyan, symbolize the mountains over which the bird flies, the forests and valleys in which there are wild bee's nests, and the carp fish symbolizes the rivers, especially the Euphrates. A. Davtyan, Bazmavep, 2009.

Let us also present the Armenian translation:

435 Սուրհանդակը Արատտա գնացող,
436 Նման թռչունի՝ լեռների վրայով թռչող, նման ծաղկափողուց ազատված մեղվի,
437 Նա սուրաց լեռնաշխարհով, ինչպես ձուկը ծածան (կարպ),
438 Եվ հասավ երկիրը Ուրուրուտանի՝ Արատտա:
439 Արատտայի պալատ նա ուրախ ոտք դրեց,
440 Իր էնսիին (*տիրոջը*) մոտ գնաց:
441 Նամակը, որ բերում էր, տեղ էր հասցված:

As we can see, the correct reading of this section of “Enmerkar and the Lord of Aratta” is extremely important for the clarification of the ancient name of our country. We note that the names **Ururut** and **Ararat** are very similar. We also note that Ururut is similar to the name Urartu (Ararat). Therefore, it is appropriate to say that the names Ururut and Urartu are variants of the name Ararat, which once again proves that the Armenian nation’s ancient name is Ararat. Aratta is the land of Ararat’s spiritual, economic, and cultural central hub (we will discuss this in more detail later).

Also of great interest are lines 439-441 of “Enmerkar and the Lord of Arrata”. We notice, the messenger that has come from Uruk to the palace of Aratta in order to deliver the order, draws near to Ensi, his master, who is the high priest of Aratta. This fact is interesting because it makes one think that the people of Uruk recognized the authority of the high priest of Aratta. It could be connected to Aratta being the land of their ancestors, and having common gods with an overall common worship (i.e. Enki, Inanna, Dumuzi...). It is known, for example, that Aratta’s patron deity, the goddess Inanna, later became the patron of Uruk. In that city, there is a beautiful, large temple dedicated to her.

One of the ancient written sources, the Bible, refers to the ancient kingdom of the Armenian Highlands by the name **Ararat** (also **Ararad**). The original **Hebrew** Bible in the **Old Greek** translation (Septuagint) and the Assyrian (Peshitta) translation refer to Armenia by the name **Ararat** or **Ararad**. The Bible attests that the **Assyrian** king Sennacherib’s (705-681 B.C.) sons Adrammelech and Sharezer killed their father and escaped to the land of **Ararat**.⁴⁶

The Bible also testifies to the same case in the book of “Isaiah”.⁴⁷ In the original **Hebrew** and **Latin** translations (Vulgate), the country that Adrammelech and Sharezer sought shelter in is called **Ararat**.⁴⁸

Let us note, in “Isaiah”, in the Qumran manuscripts, Ararat is mentioned as **rrt** (**hwrrt**), which can be read as **Ararat**, **Urarat**, **Ururut**, and **Urartu**.

The land of **Ararat** is also known as the mountainous land (country) of Noah’s Ark. About that account, the Bible states that in the time of the World Flood, after

⁴⁶ The Chaldean (Assyrian-Babylonian, northern Semitic dialect) translation of the Bible uses the name Kardu (K-ardu).

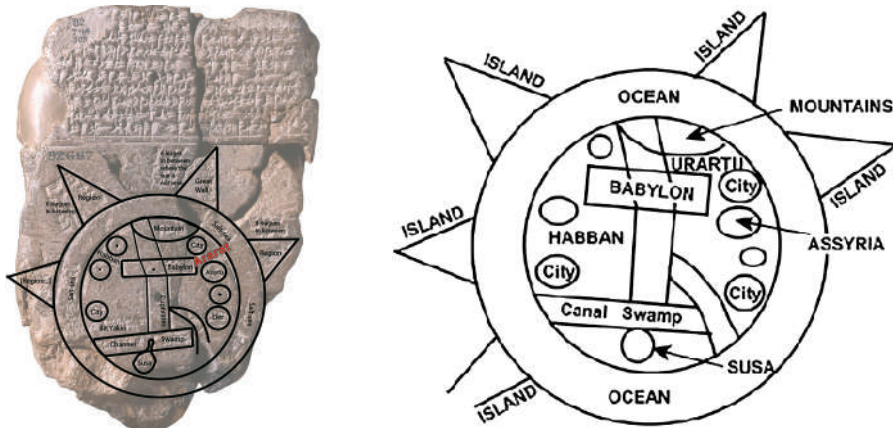
⁴⁷ Isaiah 37:38.

⁴⁸ The Greek and Arabic translations of the Bible refer to the Hye nation as **Armenia**, but the Assyrian and Chaldean translations use **Kardu**.

Noah's ark was carried upon the waters for 40 days, in the seventh month, on the seventeenth day of the month, the ark came to rest on the **mountains of Ararat**.⁴⁹

There is also a testimony about the **land of Ararat** in the book of "Jeremiah". "Raise up a signal in the land, sound the trumpet among the nations, prepare the nations against her, call together against her the kingdoms of **Ararat**, Minni, and Ashkenaz". This section from "Jeremiah" is about an attack on Babylon. The destruction of the city dates to **594-592 B.C.**

Approximately the same dates (6th century B.C.) are found on a map discovered in Babylon in which the important kingdoms and cities of that time are specified. Written on the northeast section of the map is **ARARAT (Urartu)**.



Babylonian stellate map, VI c. B.C.

In Armenian historiography, the name Ararat/Ararat is mentioned as the ancient place-name of Armenia. Movses Khorenatsi referencing Mar Abas Catina writes that in Babylon, after failing to build the tower, Togarmah's (Japheth's ancestor) son, the brave leader Hayq, unwilling to obey the Titan Bel, following the birth of his son Aramaneak, goes to the land of Ararat, which is located in the northern regions.⁵⁰ Then, in that area, the land of Ararat, he gifts his ancestral homeland to his grandson Cadmus, Aramaneak's son. Let us pay close attention to Khorenatsi's "northern designation" for the land of Ararat. That is almost exactly located in the center of the Armenian Highlands, where the Ararat or Ayrarat territory was. As we can see, in the ancient written sources, the names that are used are **Ararat** and **Ararat**. The accepted and prevalent name amongst Armenians was **Ararat**, whose harmonious pronunciation is more natural sounding to our language.

From the 13th century B.C., the established state structures in the Armenian Highlands were referred to by the Assyrians as **Uruatri**, **Uratri**, and **Urartu** (also **Nairi**, Urumu, Subartu-Shubartu, Shupria). In the written records of Shalmaneser I (1274–1245 B.C.) in which he tells about his raids in the Armenian Highlands, the

⁴⁹ Genesis 8:4-5.

⁵⁰ *Movses Khorenatsi*, 1981, p. 41.

name of **Uruatri** appears for the first time as follows, “In the year of my reign, the Uruatrians rebelled against me and I ascended their mighty mountains.”⁵¹ From the 9th century B.C. on, the Assyrian kings more frequently use the name Urartu (Ararat) (along with the name Nairi). The written records show **rrt**, which scholars then read as Urartu. Thus, it is accepted that Urartu is the Assyrian version of the name Ararat. Therefore, we can say that at the end of the II millennium B.C. and beginning of the I millennium, the established state in the Armenian Highlands must rightfully be called **ARARAT**. This is what we mentioned from Khorenatsi before. According to him, the land of Ararat is found on the northern side of the Armenian Highlands, which has been known since ancient times under the name Ararat or Ayrarat. This means Ararat-Urartu was found northeast of Lake Van (before it expanded further), and not southeast of Lake Van as accepted in the historical record. The first known king of Ararat-Urartu was Aram, whose name also attests to this fact.

In Armenian historiography, many researchers have engaged in explaining the meaning of the name **Ararat**. Historian Movses Khorenatsi ties the origin of the name **Ararat** (Ayrarat) to the name of King Ara the Handsome. In the battle between Ara the Handsome and Semiramis’ armies, Ara the Handsome was killed. According to Khorenatsi, the field was named **Ayrarat**, after the Armenian king’s name.⁵²

G. Ghapantsyan explains the name of Ararat on the basis of Khorenatsi’s “Arayi Dasht” (Ara’s Field) reasoning. Ghapantsyan claims that in **Ararat**, the component **-arat** “in some language perhaps meant ‘field’ (maybe art*)”, or perhaps Ararat was derived from the forms ur-art, Ar-art, which had the connotation of Ara’s field.⁵³

New studies regarding the name **Ararat**, which we’ve already mentioned, allow us to make the claim that the country’s name, with its **arar-** and **-at** components, has a connection to the act of creation and the creation of humanity. The first component **arar-** from the name **Ararat** means **to create** (արարել, ararel), **to make**. The **-at** component of the name denotes a toponym, or place-name (e.g. Tanbat, Shaghat, Npat, Vorduat, Vagharshapat, and also բացաւ [batsat=space], անապատ [anapat=desert], հեղեղաւ [hegheghat=ravine], խորխորաւ [khorkhorat=rift]). Therefore, it is appropriate to say that the ancient Armenian country name of Ararat, in its origin and pronunciation, was Armenian. It referred to creation and construction in a particular place or locality.

Thus, when referring to the ancient state established in the Armenian Highlands, Sumerian lyric poems used the name **Uruut-Ararat**. The Bible (end of the II millennium B.C.) uses the name **Ararat**, and the Assyrian written sources (end of II millennium B.C., beginning of I millennium) utilize **Uruatri**, **Uratri**, and **Urartu**, which, as we mentioned earlier, are variants of the name **Ararat**. In the star-shaped Babylonian map (beginning of the 6 century B.C.), the name Ararat (Urartu) is used. Therefore, the Armenian nation’s ancient and accepted name is **ARARAT**.

⁵¹ AVIIIU, 2.

⁵² *Movses Khorenatsi*, 1981, pp. 61, 63.

⁵³ G. Ghapantsyan, *The Cult of Ara the Handsome*, Yerevan, 1945, p. 151 (and footnote).

ANCIENT HABITATIONS IN THE LAND OF ARARAT

ARATTA

(City-state)

IV–III Millennia B.C.

In Sumerian lyric poetry, there are multiple mentions of a city or state called Aratta,⁵⁴ with whom the Sumerians were involved in economic, cultural, and military relations. Those dealings are attested to in the lyric poems “Enmerkar and the Lord of Aratta” (or “Enmerkar and the High Priest of Aratta”), “Lugalbanda in the Mountain Cave”, “Lugalbanda and Enmerkar”, and “Enmerkar and Ensuhkeshdanna” (early III millennium B.C.).⁵⁵ There are also mentions of Aratta in the Sumerian-Akkadian epic “Gilgamesh”, and the lyric poem “Gilgamesh and the Land of the Immortals”. By studying these written sources, we understand that Aratta is characterized as a mountainous region, having sturdy walls, and it is a country. In historiography, it is more widely accepted that Aratta is a state. However, in recent years, Armenian historiography has begun to advance the notion that Aratta is a city-state. Nevertheless, as is always the case, with time new investigations are done and novel viewpoints are advanced. Let us now turn towards the aforementioned query: is Aratta a state, city, or city-state?

To obtain the answer to our question, we turn to Mesopotamian, mostly Sumerian, ancient written sources. Sumerian texts refer to Aratta with the attribute (determinant) KI- (Aratta^k), which designates the reading is both a country and a city. By studying “Enmerkar and the Lord of Aratta”, we conclude that more is said about Aratta the city, which is found amongst mountains and has sturdy walls. Aratta was the residence of the lord of the land, the high priest. The inhabitants were artisans- builders, copper miners, goldsmiths, silversmiths, carpenters, and also horse trainers. In the poem, Aratta is mentioned as a city numerous times (lines 115, 118, 173, 188, 191, 193, 196, 285, 356, 439, 550, 554). The following are some examples:

⁵⁴ There are various opinions regarding the location of Aratta. Citing the Sumerian lyric poem “Enmerkar and the High Priest of Aratta”, the road from Sumer to Aratta passed through Elam’s countries (cities) of Susa and Anshan. Additionally, an inscription by Assyrian king Sargon II (721-705) references a river named Aratta in the basin of Lake Urmia. (AVIUI, 49[6]), the researchers S. Kramer (The Sumerians, Chicago, 1963), I. Kaneva (Kaneva I.T., Enmerkar and the High Priest of Aratta), V. Masson, Central Asia and the Ancient East, M-L, 1964) and others, place Aratta in areas east of Sumer, in Iran. Kramer places Aratta in between Lake Urmia and the Caspian Sea, in the low-lying area. However, a more precise and careful study of the Sumerian epic allows us to also put forward another point of view. Thus, according to M. Gavoukchyan, Aratta was located in the Armenian Highlands (Armenia, Subartu, and Sumer, Beirut, 1988). Those who also confirm Aratta is in the Armenian Highlands are A. Movsisian (Aratta, Yerevan, 1990, “About the Location of the Land of Aratta in the Sumerian Epic”, *Traber*, 1990, n. 7, p. 73), E. Danielyan (History of Armenia, Yerevan, 1999), and others.

⁵⁵ *Kramer S.N.*, The Sumerians, Chicago, 1963; Kaneva, I., Herald of Ancient History, 1964, 4.

115 The **city's** [inhabitants], I will drive away, like wild doves from the trees,
118 The ashes [of Aratta], as from a destroyed **city**, I will gather up
171 Five mountains, six mountains, seven mountains he traversed, (the messenger)
172 [He lifted his gaze], he approached Aratta,
173 [**Palace of Aratta**] he joyfully stepped,
356 The messenger of **Aratta, (of the palace)**, looked out
550 **The white walls of Aratta**, built into the mountains
635 In that **city** [Aratta],
636 Feasts were not [ending]
637 Every day is not [ending],
.....

Examples of portrayals as a country, from the same poem, are as follows:

224 Aratta, **country** of sacred rites
276 **Country** of sacred rites
338 The high priest sent the messenger to a foreign **country**,
339 Going to Aratta, verbatim he adds:

When the messenger of Enmerkar, the lord of Uruk (Kulab), demands that the lord of Aratta submit to his lord, who is sponsored by the mighty goddess Inanna, he receives the following response:

220 Messenger, speak to your lord, Kulab's high priest
221 I am the high priest, appointed (by Inanna's) fair hand,
222 Recipient of the sceptre from the king of heaven (Utu),
223 Of the nine, all the laws, the holy Inanna,
224 Aratta, **country of the sacred rites**, she has brought me.
225 The mountains in front of her, like a large gate, she appointed me
226 **How can Aratta submit to Uruk**

“Enmerkar and the Lord of Aratta”

It becomes clear from the lyric poem “Enmerkar and the Lord of Aratta” that Aratta (the city) was the place of residence of the high priest. It is also evident that the high priest was the ruler of the country, the king. This means that according to this poem, **Aratta was a prominent spiritual, political, and economic center**.

In the lyric poem we also meet **the people of Aratta at the temples of Aratta...** with neutral expressions.

In the mythological dialogue “Lugalbanda and Enmerkar”, Enmerkar, the lord of Uruk, is joined by Lugalbanda, a hero of Uruk, and they are planning a raid on Aratta.

The king in those days decided to march against the **city**,
Enmerkar, son of Utu,
Towards the mountainous Aratta, **holy land of sacred rites**,
He decided to set off.
The **disobedient country** he was going to destroy.

Those heroes, along with the army, crossed the Hurum Mountains with great difficulty. They pass the river and arrive at the walls of Aratta, but they are not able to capture the city. The poem “Lugalbanda and Enmerkar” describes Aratta as **a city with strong walls** whose gallant defenders will not allow the lord of Uruk and the renowned hero Lugalbanda, those who tried to organize a raid on the city, to come near the city’s walls.

The ending of the poem has not been preserved, however it ends with a praising of Aratta, which compels us to infer that an understanding was reached and Uruk received gold, silver, lapis lazuli, and master builders. In this lyric poem, Aratta is primarily referred to as a city.

Aratta’s jagged walls- green lapis lazuli,
Walls and watchtowers- gleaming red,
 Its clay- **ingots of tin-** heavenly clay,
 Obtained in the **forested mountains.**

“Lugalbanda and Enmerkar”



Sumerian soldiers, 1st half of the III millennium B.C. (the Araratian infantry was probably similar to this), segment of a battle flag (standard), Berlin Museum.



Sumerian battle chariot, segment of a battle flag 1st half of the III millennium B.C.



Shield bearer on horseback end of III millennium B.C.

In the mythological dialogue “**Enmerkar and Ensuhkeshdanna**”, the lord of Aratta, Ensuhkeshdanna, sends a messenger to the king of Uruk demanding that he accept his dominance, and to return the center of worship of the goddess Inanna to Aratta. It turns out that, in Aratta (the city), there is a temple of lapis lazuli dedicated to Inanna. In this poem, for the Sumerians, Aratta is a **distant, shining, country of sacred rites**.

Aratta, country far away, of sacred rites
“Enmerkar and Ensuhkeshdanna”

In the poem “Gilgamesh and the Land of the Immortals”, from the Sumerian-Akkadian epic “Gilgamesh”, the lord of Uruk, Gilgamesh, the son of the goddess Ninsun and Lugalbanda the hero of Uruk, becomes afraid of his own mortality after witnessing many deaths. He decides he wants to gain immortality. With that in mind, he sets out on his way to “**the land of the immortals**”, **Aratta**, whose path is shown to him by “seven omniscient, spiritual, and all-moving beings”, instructed by the Sun God Utu.

Seven were they,
44 They are heavenly stars,
Aware of the country’s paths,
Shining inside the heavenly stars,
Towards Aratta they show the path.
Bringers of the sun/ Westerners [showing the path],
Seers of the enemy nations,
They are doves [dashing on the earth],
Knowers of the mountainous nations.
“Gilgamesh and the Land of the Immortals”

And unto Gilgamesh, one of the “omniscient, spiritual, and all-moving” beings (the scorpion) showing him the path to Aratta says:

Go Gilgamesh, on your difficult way,
May you pass the **Mashu** Mountains,
The forests and the mountains may you courageously pass,
The mountain gates are open for you.
“Gilgamesh and the Land of the Immortals”

Let us remember, the precise location of Aratta is not yet fully determined. With respect to that question, there are different points of view. S. Kramer places Aratta in the vicinity of Lake Urmia, or the area to the east of the lake. M. Kavoukjian associates Aratta with the Metsamor settlement and places its location there.⁵⁶

⁵⁶ M. Gavukchyan, *Studies of the Ancient History of Armenians*, Yerevan, 2010, pp. 242-248.

A. Movsisian places Aratta in the center of the Armenian Highlands, towards the western regions.⁵⁷ A. Davtyan believes that for the city-state of Aratta, “the presumptive area should be sought in the Tsaghkants (Npatakan) Mountains, at the source of the Western Euphrates (Aratsani), Chorokh, and Tortum headwaters.⁵⁸ There is a strong likelihood that Aratta is found in the Metsamor settlement of the Ararat plains, due to the fact that Metsamor is located in the center of the land of Ararat. It had strong walls, advanced metal cultivation, palaces, temple complexes, sanctuaries, writings yet to be deciphered, and more. Aratta was a mountainous “country”, which could only be reached after crossing seven mountains. According to the poem “Gilgamesh and the Land of the Immortals”, Aratta is the “land of immortals” and it is found on the far side of the Masu Mountains, when approaching from Mesopotamia. On the far side of the Masu (Masis) Mountains is the Ararat Valley where a multitude of Armenian habitations are found, including the Metsamor settlement, whose ancient name is unknown, and is a site older than the Bronze Age. It is interesting that the Sev Jur (Black Water) River that runs near the settlement was previously called the Metsamor* River, in honor of the great Armenian Mother Goddess Anahit (Metsamor is a compound word formed from mets (great, large) + mor (mother)).



Mesopotamia in the 3rd millennium B.C., author M. Gavukchyan

⁵⁷ A. Movsisian, On the question of the Location of the Country of Aratta in the Sumerian Epic, *Uraber (journal)*, 1990, n. 7, p. 73.

⁵⁸ A. Davtyan, On the question of the Location of the Country of Aratta, *Bazmavep*, 2009, pp. 173–179.

It has already been noted that Ghevond Alishan placed the location of heaven (the land of creation) in the land of Ayrarat's Tsakhkot province, in the vicinity of the Aratsani River. It is on the northern side of the Tsakhkunyats Mountains, where the locality of Voski or Voskik is found.

In ancient written sources, we observe that Aratta is mentioned as a city and as a country, albeit, it is more often cited as a city- the spiritual, cultural, and economic capital, in which the priest-king resides. In comparison, let us remember that in Mesopotamian written sources (beginning of IV-III millennia B.C.) numerous cities and city-states are mentioned. Those mentioned are as follows: **Uruk, Kulab, Eridu, Ur, Anshan, Umma, Zabalam, Akkad, Babylon..., and also Aratta.**

Uruk (Sumerian: Unug, Babylonian: Arek) was an ancient Sumerian city (found near Baghdad, 300km south). **Kulab** was a city that was part of Uruk, but had been a separate settlement earlier on. **Eridu** was the Sumerian spiritual epicenter; its patron deity was Enki-Haya (**Eridu=Erebu**). **Ur** (Urim) was an ancient city (20km southwest of the city Nasiriyah, Iraq) that is dated to the end of the V millennium B.C. period.

Anshan is the ancient capital city of Elam, before Susa (Shosh). **Umma** was a city on the banks of the Tigris; **Zabalam** was a city in Sumer, not far from Uruk. As mentioned earlier, the city of **Aratta** is also mentioned numerous times. Let us also note the **Shengavit** settlement (city), which is dated to the IV-II millennia B.C. (the ancient name is unknown).

Now, let us compare the references made to the cities of Uruk and Aratta. The ruler and high priest of the city of Uruk is Enmerkar, who is sponsored by Inanna. The goddess is the patron deity of Uruk and her cardinal temple is found there. **Aratta** also has a ruler and high priest (according to the lyric poem "Enmerkar and Ensuhkeshdanna" the **priest-ruler's** name is Ensuhkeshdanna, in other cases the name is unknown). Aratta's priest-ruler is also sponsored by Inanna and was appointed by her. Inanna is also the patron goddess of Aratta and has a grand temple there made of lapis lazuli. Lines 557-561 of the lyric poem attest to Inanna's temple in the **city of Aratta**, where the high priest of Aratta tells the messenger the following:

Inanna, the goddess of all nations, altogether
Her home (?), she did not abandon Aratta and to Uruk did not express (favor)
Her lapis lazuli temple she did not leave and has not expressed
(favor towards) the temple of Eanna.
"Enmerkar and the Lord of Aratta"

Uruk is the capital city of Sumer, therefore Aratta must also have been a capital city. It is not possible for a city to attack a country or to speak the language of threats and ultimatums, regardless of how powerful the patron goddess Inanna was. As mentioned above, she was also the protector and patron goddess of Aratta.

We already noted that Sumerian lyric poetry provides information regarding a very important event. In the lyric poem "Enmerkar and the High Priest of Aratta",

there is a mention of Inanna finding favor with the people of Aratta during the time of the **Great Flood**, and of her having saved them. The lyric poem “Gilgamesh and the Land of the Immortals” also mentions that “the land of sacred rites” is the habitation (country) where humanity was saved during the time of the flood. As we can see, the flood occurred well before the creation of the Sumerian epic and other poetry. This means that the “land of the immortals” mentioned in the lyric poem “Gilgamesh” is the land of Ararat mentioned in the Bible, the place where humanity, by the will of the gods, found salvation during the time of the flood. As has already been mentioned, the authors of the Bible, using the preserved temple records of Mesopotamia, mainly the Sumerian-Akkadian written sources, note the mountains of Ararat (country) as the location of salvation. Why are the mountains of Aratta not mentioned as the place of salvation? An appropriate response is because Aratta was the capital city of the **country of Ararat**, where the priest-king dwelled. Aratta was the country’s spiritual, cultural, and economic capital. It is not by chance that the established state in the beginning of the I millennium B.C. in the Armenian Highlands was called **Ararat** (Urartu).

Next, let us focus on the name **Aratta**. It seems likely that Aratta is a variant of the name **Ararat**, however the aforementioned research allows us to posit that **Aratta** and **Ararat** have differing meanings and explanations. The name Aratta’s primary **Ar-** component ties it to the name of AR the Creator. The second component **-atta**, by definition and phonetic quality, are tied to the restored form of the Indo-European word **atta**, bearing the meaning “father, mother, ancestor”.⁵⁹

Therefore, the name Aratta means **AR the Father God- “father’s, ancestor’s city, country”**. For cohesion, let us remember Khorenatsi’s explanation of the place-name Hayq is “the country of the fathers and ancestors”. In this way, the name **Aratta** makes sense of, and links together, all other Armenian place-names and geographic locations that begin with **Ar**.

Thus, **Aratta** is the country of Ararat’s spiritual, cultural, and economic epicenter- the capital city (also a city-state).

⁵⁹ It is widely accepted that in Indo-European languages the original word for **hayr** (հայր, father) is the restored form **pater**. In Indo-European languages (Slavik, Baltic) the “atta” form can be used for “father” in place of “pater” (Sanskrit **atta**=father, Greek **aiia**=father, Latin **atta**=father, Gothic **atta**=father, Albanian **at**=father, Russian **отец**/otets=father, [H. Acharyan, HAB, 1977, p. 32]). We can add to that Hurrian **atta**=father, Urartian **atte**=father (Dyakonov, I., *Languages of Ancient Western Asia*, Moscow, 1967, p. 113; G. Jahukyan, 1987, p. 427), also in some Armenian dialects the word **ադե** (ade) is used for father. As we can see, **atta** is an ancient Indo-European word used to imply “father, mother, ancestor”. Let us note, non Indo-European languages also use the Indo-European **atta** “father” in related words with the same connotation. For example, in Hungarian the word **atya**=father and in Turkish **ata**=father. (H. Acharyan, HAB, 1977, p. 32; Turkish-Russian Dictionary, Moscow, 1945, p. 44).

SUMERIAN WRITTEN SOURCE REGARDING ARATTA

In Sumerian written sources, there are multitudes of testimonies regarding economics, social life, trade, culture, and other interactions with the people of Aratta. It has already been mentioned that the initial residence of the Sumerians was in the area south of the Armenian Highlands. By the IV millennium B.C., the Sumerians were already in Lower Mesopotamia. Many of the heroes in Sumerian lyric poems and epic tales are tied to Aratta, and the actions attributed to them take place in the Armenian Highlands (in Aratta). Let us look at a number of the testimonies.

According to the dialogue of “Enmerkar and the Lord of Aratta”, **Inanna is the patron goddess of Aratta**. Aratta is the location of Inanna’s primary temple, which was incredibly beautiful and was built under her patronage. However, that temple was located under the care of her beloved Dumuzi. From there, the cult of Inanna spread out to Sumer and Inanna also became the patron goddess of Uruk. Before that time, the patron deity of Uruk was the primary god of the Sumerian pantheon, An, who is considered Inanna’s father. It is unclear why Inanna replaced An as the patron deity of Uruk.

“From the great heavens to the great underworlds...” in the mythological dialogue, as they arrive at the gates of the palace of the underworld kingdom, Inanna proclaims to her servant companion:

Go, turn back, Ninshubur.

Do not forget my instructions.

Inanna approaches the palace: the **lapiz lazuli mountain**,

She rushes to the gates of the underground kingdom...

These lines suggest that the entrance to the underworld kingdom could be found in the Armenian Highlands. It is known that the Sumerians received lapis lazuli from Aratta (the land of Ararat), which means that the **mountain-like lapis lazuli palace**, where the entrance of the underworld kingdom was located, was found in the Armenian Highlands⁶⁰. The Fortress of Van bears a resemblance to **a mountain-like palace**, where the cave (gateway) “Mher’s Door” is found, into which the hero Pokr Mher, from the Armenian epic novel *Sasna Tsrer*, disappears. It is believed that the Armenian hero will come out from there when the time is right. Mher’s Door is also mentioned in the cuneiform inscriptions of the Ararat-Urartian kings Ishpuini (825-810 B.C.) and Menua (810-786 B.C.), alongside a long list of the names of the gods, indicating the special significance of that door.

⁶⁰ Lapis lazuli is also called «Armenian stone».



Fortress of Van (strikingly similar to the mountain-like palace)



Fortress of Van,
Mher's Door - "God's Door"

The dialogue "Tammuz and Ishtar" reveals that the underworld kingdom's palace's **gates were forged out of copper**. The Armenian Highlands are very rich in copper and other metals. The prayers of Tammuz and Ishtar describe a needle-leaved tree (hawthorn, pomegranate, fir) which does not grow in the deltas of the Tigris and Euphrates. **Those trees grow in the mountains**, where the Sumerians came from. We should also consider the Shengavitian (or Kura-Araxian) metal-like polished pottery (clay) that is attested to in an excerpt from the dialogue "Lugalbanda and Enmerkar":

Aratta's jagged walls- **green lapis lazuli**,
Walls and towers- radiant red,
Her clay- tin ingots- **heavenly clay**,
Obtained in **forested mountains**.

The **forested mountains** are reminiscent of the forested mountains of the Armenian Highlands (mountains covered in coniferous trees). However, in Mesopotamia there are no mountains, let alone forested mountains.

The centers of Sumerian worship, **the mountain-shaped ziggurats**, serve as evidence that the Sumerians considered **mountains to be sacred**. One section from the mythological dialogue "Inanna and Dumuzi" hints at the Armenian Highlands. It recounts that the heavenly goddess, the enchanting beauty, the illuminated Inanna, lived in the palace at the edge of heaven (the edge of the sky), from which, every morning, her brother, Utu- the radiant god of the sun, would go for a ride in his carriage. **In Mesopotamian mythological dialogues, the sun rises and sets from the Masu-Mashu (Sis-Masis) mountains** (Sis and Masis are the Armenian names for Little Ararat and Greater Ararat).



The sun god Utu and the dual summit Masu (Masis) Mountain, the place where the sun rises. Seal. Greater Masis (Ararat) is represented on the left side, as it would appear from Mesopotamia, stamp, III millennium, British Museum

In the lyric poem “**Enmerkar and the Lord of Aratta**”, or “**Enmerkar and the High Priest of Aratta**”, there are even more testimonies regarding Aratta. The events highlighted in the dialogue occurred in the time when Utu (a demigod born of Shamash and his mortal wife) was the high priest and lord of the Uruk temple. Around 2900 B.C., the throne passed to his son Enmerkar, who built the city of Uruk. It is also mentioned that **Uruk was founded by people who came from Aratta**. Enmerkar is able to convince Inanna to make Uruk her home and become its patron deity, replacing An who did not permanently dwell there. Priest-king Enmerkar specifically reconstructed the E-anna temple (“An’s home”) for Inanna, transforming it into a magnificent temple. After securing support from the goddess Inanna who promised to protect him, Enmerkar sends a messenger to Aratta on her advice. He tells the Arattians to send gold, silver, and precious stones along with builders to the temple dedicated to Enki, in the city of Eridu, in order to construct a temple. The messenger travels over seven mountains to reach the Lord of Aratta’s palace and informs him of Enmerkar’s requirements. If conditions are not met, he threatens to destroy Aratta, drive the people into slavery, and kill the high priest. The priest-king of Aratta (his name is unknown) is not afraid of the threats. He refuses to acquiesce to the demands and proudly announces that Inanna proclaimed his kingship and he is under the protection of her patronage.

I am the high priest, appointed by (Inanna’s) just hand,
 I received a sceptre from the king of heaven (Anu),
 Nine of all laws, of enlightened Inanna
 Aratta, **land of pure rituals**, brought me truth,
 Mountains placed before him like a gate,
How Aratta can subjugate Uruk

.....
 The mountain (Aratta) is mighty, imbued with wisdom,
 It is like the evening dusk, which goes to the native home.

“Enmerkar and the Lord of Aratta”

Then, the messenger informs him that Inanna is now in Uruk and is in full support of Enmerkar. This information confuses the Lord of Aratta, and, after thinking it over for a time, he responds to the messenger, "Inform Enmerkar that it is in his best interest to not make an enemy of Aratta, for right now in Aratta there are sacrifices and prayers taking place, therefore there are no people who can take precious stones and building materials to Uruk for the construction of the temple". He also reminds him that Aratta is a **formidable enemy** ("a cleverly punishing hero") and instead of a war he offers to arrange a duel between two warriors who will represent each side. He also notes, if Inanna is patronizing Uruk, then Aratta also has its benevolent goddess, Lamassu. For that reason, it is better for Enmerkar to send wheat to Aratta, and in that case, he and the people of Aratta will fulfill Enmerkar's request. After receiving that reply, Enmerkar consults the goddess of wisdom Nidaba and, with her advice, performs some kind of ritual ceremony that ensures Uruk a plentiful harvest. Next, he sends a caravan loaded with grain to Aratta and orders the messenger to once again present his requests: to send precious stones, gold, silver, and builders to Uruk. The inhabitants of Aratta happily greet the large quantity of grain and are ready to grant Enmerkar's request to send precious stones and builders to Uruk to build the temple. However, the Lord of Aratta flatly refuses the messenger and demands that the people of Uruk must pay taxes to him. After receiving such a reply, Enmerkar again performs a ritual ceremony with an herb called "sushima" and, without any further requirement, sends his messenger back to Aratta a third time, instructing the Lord of Aratta to tell about the **spear**. It is possible this was a mystery, which needed to be revealed by Aratta's high priest. To that riddle, the Lord of Aratta replies with his own riddle: Enmerkar needs to prepare a spear, one that is not prepared from cedar, not cypress, not maple tree, not gold, and not silver. Enmerkar, probably with the help of Enki, solves the riddle. He prepares the spear and sends it to Aratta with his messenger. Realizing that the riddle has been solved, the Lord of Aratta decides to get out of his situation by proposing a new riddle. He proposes a warrior be sent to Aratta, one that should not be black, not white, not brown, not yellow, and not multicolored. If Enmerkar accepts that offer and sends a warrior, then, they will battle and the mightiest will be made known. The messenger once again returns to Uruk and presents the Lord of Aratta's reply to Enmerkar. After hearing the reply, he says a prayer and then replies with another riddle. He proposes that a garment be prepared, one that is not black, white, yellow, red..., he also agrees to the dual, but again requires precious stones and builders. If conditions are not met, he threatens to destroy Aratta. However, his assignment becomes so convoluted that the messenger is unable to remember and repeat it. So, Enmerkar writes it **on a clay tablet** (the first evidence of writing). The messenger

delivers the inscribed tablet to the Lord of Aratta and waits for his reply. The Lord of Aratta informs the messenger that **the writing is not in their language** and he is unable to read it. Enmerkar sends yet another message written on a clay tile, this time written in the native tongue of the Arattians. It is interesting that this time there are promises along with the threats, that is: share the seeds of the “ancient wheat” that are stored in the temple of An. It is believed that there was a lengthy drought in Aratta and the Arattians were in need of seeds, in order to recover the yield of grain crops. Further reading of the text makes it clear, as the Lord of Aratta was reading the message, he was thinking about how to respond to Enmerkar’s demands, to accept or reject them. Suddenly, Ishkur, the god of rain and storms, came to the aid of the Arattians. “At that moment over the city there is a storm like a roaring lion, the sound of which causes the earth to shake and the mountains to tremble. The wind and the storm bring the seeds of wheat and beans and abundance returns to the **weathered walled Aratta**”. Undoubtedly, Ishkur acted on her knowledge of Inanna’s capriciousness and unpredictability. The goddess, showing favor towards her native city of Aratta, sent help to its inhabitants. The goddess brought a large quantity of grain and beans and stacked them up before the Lord of Aratta. Now there was no need to concede to Uruk’s supremacy, and the Lord of Aratta informs the messenger that, “Inanna, queen of the land, has not forsaken the House of Aratta (temple), for she has not left Aratta for Uruk, and she continues to help the Arattians”.

Then, Inanna organizes a large celebration in Aratta dedicated to Dumuzi’s annual rebirth. Under these conditions, Enmerkar decides to peacefully end his ongoing contention and sends baskets full of grain to Aratta. He also sends livestock to be used as a sacrifice for the ongoing festivities. In turn, the Arattians gather gold, silver, lapis lazuli, and in return for the grain and fruits sent to them by the people of Uruk, they send builders to Uruk to construct the temple of Inanna. The new temple was magnificent, with towering columns and adorned with ornaments.

The ending of the poem “Enmerkar and the Lord of Aratta” is very enlightening. It appears as if someone (presumably Inanna) made it clear to Enmerkar that during the time of celebration, all problems must be resolved peaceably, and not with warfare. As we can see, by Inanna’s will, the longest known “diplomatic war” in history ended in peace. However, Inanna became enamored with the idea of living in the mighty temple of Uruk and became a “traveling goddess”. Her domain was actually Aratta, but she dwelled in Uruk and she “was a bird from one city to the next, in her heavenly ship” which she herself drove, or her companion Nangal.



“Heavenly ship”



Passenger of the “heavenly ship”
Inanna-Ishtar clothed in a space suit,
image on the wall of the Ashur Temple

The poem **“Lugalbanda and Mount Hurrum”** also recounts raids against Aratta carried out by Enmerkar, the ruler of Uruk. He amasses a formidable army from the citizens of Uruk, along with seven unnamed generals, and under the leadership of the famous general Lugalbanda, he begins his invasion. The army reaches Mount Hurrum where Lugalbanda suddenly becomes ill. His companions, believing he is dead, choose to abandon him there, deciding that they will collect his corpse on their way back to Uruk. However, the extremely ill Lugalbanda begins praying to the Sun-God, Moon-God, and Venus-God, which bring him back to good health. Afterwards, Lugalbanda searches for and finds the army and joins them. The remainder of the text is extremely damaged and the conclusion of the story is unknown.

The mythological dialogue **“Enmerkar and Ensuhkeshdanna”** tells of the Lord of Aratta, Ensuhkeshdanna, sending a messenger to the king of Uruk, demanding that he accept his dominance and transfer the center of worship for the goddess Inanna to Aratta. Enmerkar’s response is harsh and disrespectful. He makes a long list detailing that he is the beloved of the gods, and he expresses perplexity at the idea of Inanna leaving the awesome Uruk for Aratta. Enmerkar also says that Ensuhkeshdanna must submit to Enmerkar in order to resolve the incident. The messenger brings this reply to Aratta. Ensuhkeshdanna gathers a council of priests in order to respond to the message. The Lord of Aratta resolves to punish the insolent Enmerkar by announcing a war. A priest called Urgirnunna, referred to in the text as **mashmash** or **manmash**, says that with his magical powers he can subjugate the people of Uruk. Delighted and excited, Ensuhkeshdanna rewards him handsomely, giving him five minas of gold and five minas of silver, he sends him to Uruk. Along the way, the priest stops at the barn of the goddess Nidaba where he drinks the sanctified milk of a cow and goat, after which the cows and goats cease to produce milk. Mashmash had likely cast some sort of spell. The shepherds are on their knees

praying for help to the sun god Utu. The priest continues on his journey and encounters the old woman Sagburru, probably sent to him from the gods. They compete with each other in magic and Sagburru prevails. She says to the priest that he has probably lost his mind if he dares to come to Uruk, the city of the gods, and practice magic there. Mashmash the priest, understanding that an unhappy fate awaits him, begs for forgiveness, but Sagburru is unmoved. She kills the priest and throws his corpse into the river. Upon finding out about the death of the priest, the Lord of Aratta sends a messenger to Uruk to report that he accepts their conditions.

In the mythological dialogue “**Lugalbanda and Enmerkar**”, it is again noted that the ruler of Uruk, Enmerkar, and his heroic companion, Lugalbanda, go on an incursion to Aratta.

With great difficulty, they pass the Hurum mountains and rivers and finally reach the walls of Aratta where they are unable to siege the city. The situation gradually becomes hopeless.

Like a field in the wind, the mountains criss-cross like a snake,
Two double hours until the city.
Before the walls of Aratta
It is the armies of Kulab and Uruk,
From the city arrows fly, as rain from clouds,
Wetting rocks, like immense hail,
Under the walls of Aratta tumult and uproar.

Days go by, the month is ending,
Already the year is passing,
Heaven gifts earth a new harvest,
They look at the field with malice,
Fear is already getting under the skin.

Stones fly, like immense hail,
The roads and paths are all closed,
Coniferous mountain trees like a wall,
Intertwined like dragons,
How to approach the city, nobody knows.
But returning to Kulab, they also did not dare.

Enmerkar thinks he has somehow angered the goddess Inanna, since she has abandoned him in this difficult time and has not aided him in capturing Aratta. He decides to send a messenger to Uruk to beg Inanna for help. However, nobody is willing to undertake this difficult task since they would have to cross the Hurum Mountains again. All of a sudden, Lugalbanda says that he will take Enmerkar's message to Inanna. His comrades try to talk him out of it, saying that it is impossible

for him to get across that difficult and dangerous path alone. However Lugalbanda, without revealing his secret plan of how he will reach Uruk, sets off on his journey. Immediately he is transported to Inanna's palace where he falls before her in prayer and verbatim reports Enmerkar's requests to her. Taking pity and granting his prayers, Inanna teaches him what will need to be done. However, none of what Inanna says can be understood, but it is interesting that there is no mention of military assistance. It was about some kind of unusual fish that needed to be caught from the river and also to construct a boat made from tamarisk. Enmerkar does everything exactly as it is requested of him.

They must catch the fish, cook it, prepare it,
Taste it with Inanna's battle sword,
His army will march forward
Pure silver he will take,
Polished lapis lazuli he will take,
With sword and fire he will be victorious,
Aratta's casting molds he will acquire.

The conclusion of the poem has not been preserved, but it ends with praise for Aratta, leading us to believe that an agreement is reached and Uruk received gold, silver, lapis lazuli, and skilled builders.

The mythological dialogue "Lugalbanda and Enmerkar" also tells of one more occurrence. Many years ago, a warring Semitic tribe attacked and obliterated the city of Ur, and thereafter besieged the city of Uruk. Enmerkar decides that it is necessary to plead for help from **Inanna in Aratta**. Unfortunately he is unable to find someone brave enough for the dangerous journey to Aratta to deliver his message to Inanna. Unexpectedly, Lugalbanda declares that he will get the message there, by himself. Cutting across seven mountains stretching from the beginning to end of the city of Anshan, Lugalbanda arrives in Aratta. In Aratta, **Inanna warmly welcomes him** and asks why he has come all the way from Uruk to Aratta without any comrades. Lugalbanda repeats Enmerkar's request for assistance. However, Inanna's reply is not clear.

The frequent mention of Aratta in Sumerian texts allows us to conclude that Aratta was a well known land to the Sumerians, with which they had various connections (friendly, hostile, economic, trade related, cultural). Aratta was a mountainous "country" which was reached by crossing seven mountains.

Aratta's location ("mountainous land"), metal mines, and abundance of building materials (gold, silver, bronze, lapis lazuli, marble) along with its master craftsmen and other characteristics fully corresponds to being the important center of the ancient country of Ararat that was formed in the Armenian Highlands.

INANNA

PATRON GODDESS OF ARATTA AND URUK

Inanna (Innin, Ninanna, Ununith) is a chief goddess in the Sumerian pantheon whose name means “**Queen of Heaven**”. In the Sumerian pantheon, Inanna is considered the goddess of fertility, love, and war. Inanna was also worshiped as the cosmic (astral) deity “morning star” (the planet Venus). She was an almighty goddess, and it was she who was destined to pass through the path of death and rebirth. It is assumed that the name **Inanna** is of Sumerian origin, but the cult of the goddess Inanna **originated abroad**.

It is apparent from Sumerian texts (“Enmerkar and the Lord of Aratta”, “Lugalbanda and Enmerkar”,...) that **Inanna was previously the patron deity of Aratta**. Let us remember, the initial places of inhabitation of the Sumerians were the southern regions of the Armenian Highlands. Therefore, it is acceptable to say that the tribes which moved south from the Armenian Highlands took the gods of their homeland with them, in this case the worship of Inanna. The goddess from the Armenian Highlands with the same characteristics (love, beauty, and fertility) is called **Anahit**. Later, the worship of Inanna passed onto the Akkadians, where the goddess received the new name Ishtar, meaning ‘star’. Other Semitic tribes (Babylonians, Assyrians) also refer to Inanna as Ishtar.

Sumerian texts make it clear that Inanna was not a chief goddess from the beginning, but for the sake of her beauty, charm, and wit she was able to become one. Inanna succeeded in becoming the beloved of the supreme god An (as well as his granddaughter). An-Anu lovingly called Inanna by the name Anunith (Anu’s love). We can see that the name **Anunith** is very similar to the name of the Armenian goddess **Anahit**.



Inanna wearing a helmet-hat with horn-like parts, end of III millennium B.C.



Inanna as the goddess of war, standing on the back of her sacred animal- the lion. The goddess' crown is adorned with her symbolic star, an image of the planet Venus. Relief-carving, Tell-Asmar, IX century B.C.

Inanna was the patron deity of Uruk (including the small cities of Zabalam and Kulab that grew out of Uruk). Her symbols were a round ring with a ribbon (or braid) and a multipetal rose, which symbolizes an image of a star. Inanna's brother is the god of the sun, **Utu**. Metaphorically, Inanna has often been considered Haya-Enki's daughter, due to her intelligence and wisdom. Inanna is not characterized as a mother-goddess figure.



Pictured are Ereshkigal, Inanna, Nann, and Utu; stamp.

There are many mythological dialogues (lyric poems) about Inanna in Sumerian written accounts. In the account “**Enki and the World Order**”, Inanna complains to the Lord of the Earth Enki-Haya, that she did not receive any godly responsibility when the duties were handed out. Enki calms her down and grants her **charm, beauty**, and the **responsibility of military sponsorship**. In the dialogue of “Enki and the World Order” there is very important information regarding the foundation of civilizations: human society, human relations, and the board of destinies- **Me**. That information is connected to the activities of Inanna. The dialogue tells that, wanting to enhance the glory of Uruk, Inanna decides to utilize her feminine charm and shrewdness to obtain the **Me**, which was kept by Enki in the city of Eridu. To accomplish the goal, Inanna travels to Eridu. Enki greets her in friendship. A feast is arranged, during which Inanna realizes that Enki is drunk, so she begs for him to give her the **Me**. Drunk from wine and enchanted by Inanna, Enki-Haya is unable to refuse the goddess' appeal and he gifts her the **Me**. After that, he orders the readying of the Cosmic Ship and loads it with the godly laws of **Me**. Enki also gifts Inanna the ability to feel joy in her heart, eternal feminine charm, and the cold calmness of a eunuch. He makes her a ruler-priestess and gives her the freedom of a temple priestess. A **Cosmic Ship** is loaded up with truth, justice, goodness, carefulness, trial and courts (resolution), victory, peace, and spiritual and physical purity. Alongside them is placed protest and enmity, strife and rage, fear and horror, war and destruction, lies and fatigue, anguish of heart and spiritual harmony.



Haya-Enki in Eridu with the Tree of Life, giving Inanna gifts that symbolize ruling authority; imprinted seal, III millennium B.C.

After receiving the gifts of the ring and sceptre, Inanna says a quick farewell to Enki and, bearing her precious gifts in the **Cosmic Ship**, she goes back to Uruk. However, Enki sobers up quickly and realizes that he has made a big mistake, so led by his advisor, Isimud, he sends demons (lakhmans) that are instructed to pursue Inanna and return the **Cosmic Ship** with the **Me**. At every station on the road between Eridu and Uruk, battles take place between the forces of Inanna and Enki. In the end, Inanna is successful in getting the **Me** to Uruk, where the inhabitants greet their beloved goddess with great triumph and joy. After appropriating the **Me**, Inanna becomes even more wise and powerful in the eyes of the gods. Inanna's patron city of Uruk also becomes even more mighty. Eridu, deprived of the **Me**, is gradually deprived of its glory, and in the early III millennium B.C. the inhabitants abandon the city. In Uruk, hymns are dedicated to Inanna that praise her charm, beauty, etc.

Lord of the **Me**, brilliantly sparkling daylight,
 Woman of justice, clothed in radiance
 Beloved of heaven and earth,
 Mistress of all beautiful adornments,
 Justly crowned beloved, appointed mistress,
 Seven **Me** always in hand,
 O Mistress, defender of the mighty **Me**.

"Enki and the World Order"

In the mythological dialogue "**Inanna and Mount Ebih**" Inanna is portrayed as a militant goddess that fights the personified monster Ebih. To better understand Inanna's character, we must turn to the lyric poem "**Inanna and Dumuzi**". The poem tells of the heavenly, charming, beautiful, and enlightened Inanna who lives in a **splendid palace at the top of the heavens. Every morning from the top of heaven, her brother, the radiant sun god Utu, would go out for a ride in his carriage** (let us remember that in Mesopotamia the sun rises and sets from the Masu/Mashu Mountains). Inanna shined from the heavens like a bright planet (Venus). She often came down to earth from heaven, and from her touch the soil would become

teeming with green grass and flowers. She was the patron of barns, where grains, meat, wool, and food were stored. **She was the goddess of fertility.**

Inanna was so beautiful that both **Dumuzi** (“true, native son”), the patron deity of shepherds, and **Enkimdu**, the patron deity of agriculture, fell in love with her at the same time. Inanna’s brother, the sun god Utu, implores her to select Dumuzi. Inanna prefers Enkimdu whom she is in love with. Dumuzi goes to Inanna and begins to persuade her, listing his advantages:

In what way am I inferior to the farmer Enkimdu,
Is he better than I? I dominate streams and canals,
I, who am the ruler of rakes and meadows.

.....
From barley he brews soul intoxicating beer,
But the milk from my sheep is more delicious and healthy.
He offers you bodily satiating bread and plant foods.
But for you I will prepare the finest varieties of cheese,
Whose flavor is more pleasant than honey.

“Inanna and Dumuzi”

Dumuzi’s words and her brother Utu’s exhortations had an effect on Inanna, so she chose Dumuzi. Going against her own inclination, Inanna chose the meek and gentle Dumuzi. However, after the long-awaited marriage, a cruel fate befalls Dumuzi, eventually ending with his death.

The lines of the dialogue dedicated to Inanna end with Inanna’s decision to descend to the underworld. The dialogues “**From the Great Heavens to the Great Underworlds...**” and “**Ishtar and Tammuz**” tell of these adventures.

In the Sumerian version of the dialogue (“From the Great Heavens to the Great Underworlds...”), which is undoubtedly the original, ancient version, Inanna, knowing full well that there is no coming back from the Underworld Kingdom, the “land of no return”, decides to descend there. The ruler of the Underworld Kingdom is her sister, the goddess Ereshkigal. This desire of Inanna is explained by her ambitious nature, that is, to submit herself to the Underworld Kingdom. Knowing that her sister does not allow any god to descend to the Underworld Kingdom, Inanna decides to sneak in cunningly under the pretext of attending a ritual ceremony for her sister’s dead husband. However, before going to the underworld, fearing that Ereshkigal will sentence her to death, she instructs her servant that if she does not return in three days, then let her organize a **mourning ritual** dedicated to Inanna at the tomb. She wants her to cry, beat drums, scratch her face, inflict wounds on her body, wear sackcloth like a beggar, and, after that, set off to find the three almighty gods **Enlil** (Nippur), the Moon-God **Nanna** (Ur), and the god of wisdom **Enki** so that she may beg for them to save Inanna’s life. After giving this assignment, Inanna clothes herself in a luxurious outfit, decorates herself with jewelry, which holds her secret powers, and sets off towards the Underworld Kingdom.

100. Her secret powers, which are seven, she gathered.

.....
On her head is the “Shugur” crown of Eden.

On her forehead is the ribbon “Wonderfully Decorated”.

105. In her hands are the marks of authority and judgment,

A necklace of lapis lazuli hugs her neck,

A dual pendant adorns her breast,

Gold bracelets are around her hands.



Inanna (left) with the symbolic star representing the planet Venus.

On the right is Ereshkigal who, seeing her sister as a rival, decides to kill her

When Inanna arrives at the eastern edge of the kingdom, she finds Ereshkigal's mountain-like palace which is constructed of lapis lazuli. Ereshkigal senses danger, but nonetheless commands that Inanna be let in. However, according to the accepted order in the Underworld Kingdom, at each gate ⁷² It is assumed that “Eden's crown of Shugur” signifies “that which allows one to go far”. There is also the belief that “Shugur” may imply “ritual, ordination”.

she had to remove one of her garments and jewels, which stored her power. Against her wishes, Inanna fulfills that requirement and stands before Ereshkigal and the seven Anunnaki judges of the kingdom. Suspecting her sister to have dishonest intentions, as well as a desire to become the ruler of the underworld, Ereshkigal looks at her with “eyes of death” and Inanna turns into a corpse which they hang her from a hook on the wall. On the fourth day, when her servant realizes that her ruler has not come back, she performs a mourning ceremony for her and afterwards visits each of the three gods. Enlil and Nanna refuse to offer help, **but Enki, realizing that the loss of the goddess of love and fertility will bring great misfortune to the earth, decides that he will help.** His assistants are able to procure Inanna's corpse and bring her back to life by sprinkling her with “lifegiving water” and touching her with “lifegiving plants”. Nonetheless, seven underworld Anunnaki-Gods block Inanna's path to the world above. Inanna, in accordance with the rules of the “land of

no return”, which are unchanging rules for both gods and humans, could not leave that world without leaving a substitute there in her place. Inanna promises to find a substitute and begins her return back to earth, accompanied by a group of demons whose job it is to bring back the goddess’ chosen substitute. Bypassing a number of her friends, Inanna and the demons reach Kulab where they encounter her husband, Dumuzi. Instead of mourning his wife’s death, he sits calmly on his throne, clothed in a magnificent outfit. He does not bow his head to Inanna, as his predecessors had done. Inanna is fiercely angered by this scene so she indicates Dumuzi as her substitute, causing the demons to begin clawing at him. The unfortunate Dumuzi implores Inanna’s brother, the sun god Utu, with prayers for help. Utu decides to grant his request and causes him to regrow his arms and legs like those of a lizard, whereby Dumuzi is able to run away to safety.

This is how the dialogue of the Sumerian text concludes, but a continuation to the story is made possible thanks to the discovery of a much later text called “Complaints of the Heart” or “Dumuzi’s Dream”. According to the new texts Dumuzi, having run away from the demons, goes into hiding to a place known to his sister Geshtinanna and her friend. The friend, bribed by the demons that are hunting Dumuzi, reveals his hiding place. Dumuzi manages to escape to an even further place. However, in the end the demons are able to catch him. Dumuzi’s sister, Geshtinanna, announces that she is prepared to sacrifice herself in place of Dumuzi to the “land of no return”. Inanna, who had the role of judge, returned the verdict “half a year for the brother, half a year for the sister”, so each had to take their turn in the “land of no return”.

After the verdict, when Geshtinanna occupied Dumuzi’s place in the underworld, Dumuzi and Inanna would spend the half year together. When Dumuzi and Inanna were together, rituals would take place in Sumer dedicated to the beloved gods. When Dumuzi and Inanna were together, spring would begin on the earth. On the earth, “milk flowed like a river, the bread crops ripened, fruit bearing trees blossomed”. The references to the the awakening of life and nature suggest that the celebrations happened in spring (most likely in March). There is a testimony in the lyric poem “Enmerkar and the Lord of Aratta” that states Inanna would organize celebrations every year for the yearly rebirth of Dumuzi.

In later versions of the text (Babylonian) Dumuzi is presented under the name Tammuz, and Inanna is called Ishtar (“Tammuz and Ishtar”).

In this lyric poem, the gorgeous Ishtar goes to the underworld to bring back her deceased husband Tammuz. Passing through the grim **palace’s copper gates** that bar her way, Ishtar appears in the underworld and, after many difficult trials (she even dies), thanks to the help of Haya-Ea she comes back to life and comes back to the earth, bringing with her the revived Tammuz. Along with their revival and return, the plant and animal realms also experience rebirth, including humanity as well.

After studying the lyric poems, we notice that in the beginning Inanna preferred the patron deity of agriculture Enkimdu, which is evidence of sedentism. However,

later, under different circumstances, she chose the patron deity of shepherds, Dumuzi-Tammuz. The researchers that have studied the meanings of the lyric poem connect the change to the fact that agriculture was initially the important means of life in the delta. However, when the tribes of Semitic herdsmen (Akkadians, Assyrian-Babylonians) appeared in Sumer and the areas surrounding Mesopotamia, the worship of the patron deity of shepherds, Tammuz (Dumuzi), gained greater importance. It is obvious that the Sumerians brought the dialogue of “Inanna and Dumuzi” with them from their ancestors when they began to settle in the delta, and the Sumerian version is the oldest.

According to the lyric poem “Enmerkar and the Lord of Aratta”, **Inanna was the patron deity of Aratta**, and even after she became the patron deity of Uruk, she did not forsake the inhabitants of Aratta. In the time of the Great Flood, as has been noted, Inanna and her lover Dumuzi, who had become the patron of Aratta, saved the people of Aratta (the land of Ararat). Aratta has always been under Inanna’s (Anahit’s) protection and patronage.

DUMUZI

PATRON DEITY OF ARATTA

Dumuzi is the son of Enki-Haya, mothered by the goddess Turtur (Sirdur). His sister is Geshtinanna. The mythological dialogue “Enki and the World Order”, testifies that Enki-Haya appoints his son Dumuzi (“true, native son”) as the patron god of the fertility of soil and over the natural world, with its dying-reviving cycles. Dumuzi is also the patron deity of shepherds. In the mythological dialogues, especially those sections dedicated to Inanna, Dumuzi is mentioned. Those dialogues (“Inanna and Dumuzi”, “Courtship of Dumuzi”) allow us to draw certain conclusions regarding Dumuzi. He is in love with Inanna, the goddess of love and fertility. After many great efforts, he becomes her husband. However, Inanna finds herself trapped in the underworld and she must give Dumuzi as a ransom to the underworld goddess so she can escape. He must spend six months there, during which time there is a drought on the earth. For the following six months, Dumuzi is resurrected and his life is restored to him (characteristics of a death-resurrection nature). At the time of Dumuzi’s rebirths, grand celebrations were held. The lyric poem “Enmerkar and the Lord of Aratta” testifies that Inanna would organize grand celebrations dedicated to Dumuzi’s annual rebirth.



Dumuzi



Dumuzi

It is known that after Inanna became the patron deity of Uruk, she gave Dumuzi the role of patron deity of Aratta. Therefore, Inanna did not forsake her role as the protector of Aratta. She still did work there and was connected to Dumuzi, Aratta, and the Arattians.

The dying-reviving god of the Akkadian-Babylonian mythology is Tammuz, also known as Ara the Handsome in the Armenian pantheon. The Armenian character Ara the Handsome has similarities to the Mesopotamian dying-reviving gods, in that he also possesses a dying-reviving nature. There is also a love story connected to

Ara the Handsome. Let us remember Movses Khorenatsi's *History of the Armenians* where we find the story of "Ara the Handsome and Semiramis". According to that story, the Assyrian Queen Semiramis falls in love with the Armenian King Ara the Handsome. However, in this story, the woman is unsuccessful. Not by begging, or threatening, or even by waging war in the battlefield, Semiramis is not able to capture Ara the Handsome's love, who stays faithful to his fatherland and family and repeatedly repudiates Semiramis' advances. The scorned woman rallies her army against Armenia. In the ensuing battle, Ara the Handsome is killed. The disappointed Semiramis calls out for help to the spirits (dog-headed creatures) in an attempt to bring Ara the Handsome back from the other world. Some time later, Semiramis announces that she has succeeded in bringing back Ara the Handsome, however, Khorenatsi tells that she was unsuccessful (let us remember that his writing was done in the Christian era). The similar contents of all these stories testify that "Inanna and Dumuzi", "Tammuz and Ishtar", and "Ara the Handsome and Semiramis" all arose in the same environment, the Armenian Highlands and Mesopotamia, which, as we can see, are very closely connected to each other in all respects.

PORTASAR

X MILLENNIUM B.C.

Portasar is an ancient religious site from the Neolithic Period that is located in the Armenian cultural sphere, south of the Armenian Highlands, fifteen kilometers northeast of the ancient Armenian Mesopotamian city of Urha (Edessa, Urfa). This ancient site is the oldest ritual structure that has ever been discovered. Unearthing the cultural layers of Portasar (three layers), allows us to posit that it was the center of religious ceremonies of a sedentary civilization for several millennia.

The ancient site of Portasar was investigated by the German archaeologist Klaus Schmidt beginning in 1994. It is believed that only 5% of the area has been excavated. In Karlsruhe, Germany, a summary of the results of archaeological excavations between 1960-2007 was held, which was organized by the archaeologist Klaus Schmidt. More than 500 archaeological materials were found which presented Portasar as belonging to a culture that is 12,000 years old. Discoveries at the ancient site include arrowheads and spearheads made of obsidian, as well as waste from their production, which means that they were constructed there.



Portasar

Undoubtedly, the monument was named Portasar denoting **life, the center of the earth, navel, mountain**. Moreover, the monument's name, Portasar, was bestowed upon it by people who knew that it was a religious institution, knew about the earthly life and afterlife, and had a religious cult dedicated to the bird-like god Anggh (Angel, Griffin), who was the bridge between the two worlds. (* In Armenian, Portasar is a compound word from պորտ (port) navel + սար (sar) mountain).

At Portasar, we encounter stone monuments upon which there are depictions of birds (storks), spiders, oxen, lions, and other animals. Stone monuments (cross-statues, stone stelae, stone idols, later on cross-stones) have always been present in Hayq. One of the stone monuments at the ancient site bears an image of a griffin. According to ancient Armenian beliefs, Anggh was a bird-like, angel-like god. The 7th century historian Sebeos testifies that in Hayq there was a religious cult dedicated to the **bird-like angel-god Angegh (Anggh)** which represented the underworld.⁶¹ Depicted on the stone monument, above the arm of the Angegh god, is a sun orb, allowing us to conclude that the god Angegh connected the earth with the underworld. As we can see, the underworld (Angegh's kingdom) and life on earth (the sun) are connected to one another. Let us also note that in the Armenian translation of the Bible, the Sumerian-Akkadian underworld god, Nergal, is called Angegh.

Angegh's (Angel's) center of worship was located in Greater Armenian's state of Aghdznik, in the province of Angegh tun (**Angel Tun**). In Armenian tun (տուն) means house/home. Angegh Tun means "house of Angegh".



An image of the bird-like Angegh /Angel god, Portasar

Historian Pavstos Buzand (5th century) has an interesting testimony regarding the city of Urha. Commenting on the works of the Armenian Pope-King (A.D. 353-374), Buzand tells of him sending deputies to the king of Greece saying, "Caesarea and ten other cities were ours, give them back. The city of Urha was also built by our ancestors, so if you do not want a mutiny to break out, give them back, or the alternative is a great war between us."⁶²

⁶¹ *Sebeos*, History, Yerevan, 2005, pp. 15, 55. HJP, 1971, n. 1, p. 484.

⁶² *Pavstos Buzand*, History of the Armenians, Yerevan, 1968, p. 270 (ch. 32).

As noted above, the structure could have been named **Portasar** by the Hay-Armens, who were native to that area and understood the religious nature of the monument. In contrast, the Turkish peoples who inhabited that area 8-9 centuries ago could not have known the mountain was actually a cultural monument. We can assume that this is enough evidence to conclude that the Hay-Armens, the indigenous and ancient inhabitants of the area, named the religious monument of **Portasar**. Later on, the Turks, having occupied the region, called the mountain Göbekli Tepe (swollen mountain, potbelly mountain) and they are trying to present the monument to the world under that name.

Let us also note, in Armenia it is very often the case that place-names point out the meaning and subject matter of the given place. Examples of this include the following: Gandzasar (treasure mountain), Ukhtasar (pilgrimage mountain), Yerkatasar (iron mountain), Amulsar (barren mountain), Pandisar... Portasar is another such case.

Hence, the name **Portasar** is an ancient name that correctly identifies the significance, content, and meaning of the ancient structure found in the Armenian Highlands. This monument from Armenian Mesopotamia is about 12,000 years old and provides proof which allows us to say that Armenia is one of the (if not the most) ancient and significant epicenters of modern civilization.

SHENGAVIT

IV-II MILLENNIA B.C.

In the Armenian Highlands, dating to the Eneolithic (Calcolithic, Copper Age) time period, there is a well studied settlement southwest of Yerevan, on the left side of the Hrazdan River's (then called the Yerevanyan Lake) high bank, called the Shengavit settlement. Archaeologists have been busily researching it since 1936. In the same year, under the leadership of archaeologist E. Bayburdian, archaeological excavations of the settlement began. The work continued until 1938, but then the monument was forgotten for twenty years. In 1958, led by the efforts of archaeologist S. Sardarian, excavations began on a six hectare area of the ancient site, which lasted until the year 1980. Excavations resumed once again in 2000 led by archaeologist H. Simonyan. Thanks to these excavations we have a more complete understanding regarding the site of ancient Shengavit.

By virtue of the work done throughout all the years of excavations, it turns out that the settlement gives a complete picture of the Eneolithic culture. At Shengavit there are four archaeological layers which have arisen over millenia and comprise a cultural layer of about four meters. The settlement is dated between IV-II millennia B.C.. The recovered remains of the settlement date to the Early, Middle, and Late Eneolithic eras. Shengavit is currently the only settlement where all the successive stages of the Eneolithic culture have been found- Early, Middle, and Late Eneolithic eras, encompassing all of the cultural characteristics.

The Eneolithic culture was typified by a sedentary economic system that included advanced agriculture, animal husbandry, and skilled craftsmanship, especially high-level metalworking. Standing out for its uniqueness is the pottery art, which is distinguished by its black, metal-like polished lustre. Geometric patterns and hemispherical rings adorn the gleaming pottery. A characteristic feature of this culture is the bicolor of the outer shell- shiny and black on the outside, but red or pink on the inside.

The boundaries of the distribution of Shengavitian (or Kura-Araxian) culture, particularly that of its pottery, are very large. Studies allow us to conclude that this culture originated in the center of the Armenian Highlands- in Ararat (or Ayrarat). From there, it expanded outward all the way to the foothills of the Caucasus, Lake Urmia, the Euphrates River, Assyria, and Palestine (Khirbet Kerak). Let us return to the cultural layers of the Shengavit settlement.

The Shengavit-1 settlement (the bottom layer) is a Late Neolithic (New Stone Age) monument. The aforementioned pottery (bowls, pots, cups, etc.) and pottery fragments are a mixture of clay and harder materials.⁷⁶ In Shengavit's earliest layer, we find feminine figurines made of clay and stone, which symbolize the worship of women.

The pottery found in the Shengavit-2 layer is even more perfectly crafted and exquisite. They are gray or red on the inside with an exterior surface that is either black or red-orange and polished (often gleaming at the level of a metal), featuring

ornate carvings and geometric patterns, as well as images of birds, goats, horses, and deer. In the other two cultural layers of Shengavit, we encounter similar types of pottery shell fragments. Additional discoveries include bull-headed hearths on horseshoe-shaped pedestals, stone tools, and more. Of the items that have been discovered, the metal (copper) tools and jewelry are of special significance.

During the excavations of this layer, the accommodations of our ancestors dwellings were also revealed to us. They lived in round dwellings of six to eight meters in diameter and in rectangular houses adjacent to them.⁶³ Excavations show Shengavit had advanced architecture. The plan of the settlement shows a deliberate system of construction. Surrounding the round dwellings are clusters of rectangular and diagonal rooms, used for differing domestic and economic purposes. The houses' walls had a base made of stone, on which a raw layer of brick was erected. The interior walls were plastered, and in some places remnants of paint are visible.⁶⁴ In the middle of the lodging was a large, smooth-surfaced stone base which supported the central column that held up the roof. The roof was conical and constructed of sticks and reeds, similar to the distinctive Armenian **hazarashen** roof construction. This type of home construction has been preserved in the Armenian Highlands for a long time. For millennia, up to the 19th and 20th centuries, Armenian settlements, particularly villages, were built in this same way and were called **hazarashen**. The rectangular homes had a flat roof.



Shengavit settlement



Ancient Yerevan- Shengavit. Reconstruction

In the center of the rectangular rooms, a mobile, round hearth was placed upon a special pedestal. Hearths were used for ritual as well as household purposes. They were decorated with reliefs featuring geometric embellishments. Each hearth has three bull-headed protrusions upon which bowls were placed and heated up. The floor of the dwellings was paved with cobblestone, or small pebbles, which were plastered with clay mortar.

⁶³ S.Sardaryan, *Primitive Society in Armenia*, Yerevan, 1967, p. 171.

⁶⁴ Yuly Tamanyan, *Shengavit*, 1987 (pamphlet).

In order to protect the settlement from attacks by other tribes or wild animals, they built a wall around it that was equipped with towers. The composition of the walls of Shengavit are cyclopean, built of rough basalt and massive boulders, without the use of mortar. Under the wall, on the northern side, a paved road leading down to the Hrazdan River was discovered. Since the river is at a lower elevation than the settlement, it is assumed that they would raise the water in some way.

The third and fourth cultural layers of Shengavit show further development of agriculture and animal husbandry. The majority of tools are still constructed of stone, and are long knives with thin blades, scrapers, arrowheads, and sickle tips made of flint and obsidian. Also present are chiseled stone hammers, axes, mortars, pestles, mills, and pickaxes. Objects made from bone were also found including thread spinning bobbins, arrows, needles, fishhooks, etc. Additional finds include beads, spherical baubles, etc. Copper items are found along with the stone and bone tools, and their number increases in the upper layer. Clay pots stand out for their incredible beauty. They are adorned with engravings of delicate geometric lines and illustrations. The fourth and uppermost cultural layer of Shengavit is especially rich, at which time the pottery reaches a level of exceptional craftsmanship. Discoveries of large and small bowls, pitchers, jars, clay pots, cups, pans, vases, and spouted bowls attest to this.



Shengavitian pottery

The Eneolithic culture of the Armenian Highlands is known as the culture of geometric patterned engravings and black lustrous pottery. It is named the **Shengavitian culture** in honor of the settlement.

During the Shengavit excavations, a very important discovery of a mausoleum was found just outside the walls of the settlement, which dates to the same Eneolithic time period. The tombs are rectangular in shape with tens of bodies buried in each mausoleum. They are assumed to be family tombs. Inside each tomb, alongside the deceased bodies, clay pots, weapons or other personal items, sardine and jasper beads, arrowheads made of flint and obsidian, copper items, bracelets, pins, axes, chiseling tools, and gold and silver jewelry were placed.

Now let us focus on the archaeological excavations and their outcomes and attempt to answer a few questions: who lived in the ancient settlement of Shengavit?, what did they occupy their time with?, and what kind of socio-economic and social relations existed there?

Studies of the remains of the tombs discovered outside the settlement walls show that the gravesite's "owners belong to the round, short-skulled (brachycephalic) anthropological type"⁶⁵ (that is Armenoid). One of the recovered skulls has been restored by Professor A. Chakharyan. It is homologous to the Armenoid anthropological type found throughout the Armenian Highlands.



The restored head of an inhabitant of Shengavit
(restored by proff. A. Chaqharyan)

The inhabitants of Shengavit were engaged in **agriculture**. This is evidenced by the discoveries of grain wells of barley, wheat, and millet, as well as stone pickaxes, mills, mortars, sickles, and bronze scythes. The grain wells found at Shengavit could hold between 2-4 tons of grain.

The inhabitants of Shengavit were engaged in **animal husbandry**. The bones of bulls, sheep, goats, domestic pigs, horses, donkeys, and dogs indicate an advanced level of animal husbandry. The heads of two horse figurines were found in addition to depictions of horses on pottery.

Shengavit was a nexus for **craftsmanship**. During excavations carried out in 2000, in the lower horizon of the settlement, an entire district for copper mining was discovered, where there is a copper smelter, crucibles, and an assembly of equipment for processing ore.⁶⁰ The great magnitude of copper production (and export) is evidenced by the findings in the lower layer of Shengavit. The amount of previously molten copper recovered in the crucibles of one workshop was more than 300kg.⁶⁶

There is no indication of social stratification in the lower cultural layers of Shengavit. The accompanying material in the tombs is alike for all. During the new excavations, some elements of socio-economic stratification become visible, especially in the upper fourth cultural level (early II millennium B.C., Late Eneolithic). During the 2003 excavations, it became known that different building materials were used to construct the dwellings. Additionally, economic buildings and grain wells were found beside the homes of the wealthy class. A seal was found in one of the excavated

⁶⁵ S. Sardaryan, 1967, p. 250.

⁶⁶ H. Simonyan, L. Khachatryan, 2003 Excavations of the Shengavit Settlement. The Culture of Ancient Armenia, Yerevan, 2005 (materials of the republican scientific periodical), p. 57.

pits.⁶⁷ The seal was an individual and personal symbol of affirmation. We can assume, a personal seal was affixed to one's own personal grain well. The well could also be public and the sealer could be someone with authority. Regardless, the point is the symbol designating such authority. Maces made of semi-precious stones also testify to the varying positions of power and wealth.

Therefore, it is possible to say that in Shengavit's upper/fourth cultural layer, there are **elements of social stratification**.

As we can see, Shengavit bears a number of characteristics that are indicative of early civilizations- **agriculture, animal husbandry, metalworking, ceremonial objects**.

The early civilization was characterized by a unique arrangement of settlements, in which there was a central dwelling surrounded by a formation of other dwellings. In Shengavit's vicinity, in the Aresh district (area near the Kayaranamerdz square), the satellite monuments of Tairov and Khorum were formed.⁶⁸ Shengavit did not develop alone. Like other ancient Near East communities, it was a central settlement around which other settlements began to develop. This phenomenon became continuous. Subsequently, when the Shengavit settlement no longer existed, new settlements were established around it, especially on the nearby hills (near the Kayaranamerdz square, Tsitsernakaberd, Arin Berd Hill, Karmir Blur).

Inferences we can make from the material include the following:

Shengavit was built according to a **methodical plan**, like the other early cities of the ancient Near East. Shengavit was a walled settlement. Under the wall of Shengavit, a paved tunnel was discovered through which the settlement received water from the Hrazdan River. Ritual ceremonies were performed in Shengavit. In the upper cultural layer of Shengavit, we observe elements of social stratification and the emergence of private property. The inhabitants of Shengavit belong to the Armenoid anthropological type of the European race.

The Shengavit settlement existed for nearly two millennia. At the end of the II millennium B.C., life here was extinguished. However, life continues today in the area around Yerevan. This is evidenced by the cultural riches found in the ancient settlements and tombs in various districts of Yerevan. The culture of Shengavit, having existed for nearly two thousand years, has not been lost. It remains in Yerevan through other parts of today's Yerevan: **Avan, Kanaker, Zeytun, and Aresh** districts, **Tsitsernakaberd** (early II millennium B.C. - mid II millennium B.C.), **Karmir Berd, Karmir Blur** (late II millennium B.C.), and in excavations conducted elsewhere through which cultural riches have been discovered. The Shengavitian type of pottery is found in the burial grounds of Karmir Berd (near the Institute of Physics), located on the right bank of the Hrazdan River. The unearthed pottery art samples are of black

⁶⁷ H.Simonyan, L.Khachatryan, 2003 Excavations of the Shengavit Settlement. The Culture of Ancient Armenia, Yerevan, 2005 (materials of the republican scientific periodical), p. 57.

⁶⁸ E. Khanzadian, The Culture of the Armenian Highlands, III Millennium B.C., Yerevan, 1967.

and colorful shells (late II millennium B.C.). The pre-Urartian settlement of Karmir Blur, located beneath the “Urartian” cultural layer of the city of Teishebaini, is dated to the 13th-8th centuries B.C..

... Excavations of this lower layer revealed dwellings like the habitations of Shengavit, great quantities of Late Bronze Age illustrious black pottery, stone and metal objects, clay idols, hearths,⁶⁹ and more.

Let us now consider the ancient settlement of Shengavit and review the questions regarding the age of Yerevan.

YEREVAN IS 6000 YEARS OLD

The ancient Shengavit settlement, located in the vicinity of Yerevan, contains both Neolithic (New Stone Age) and Eneolithic (Copper Age) culture. It is identified with the excavated settlements at the lower levels of the renowned cities of the ancient world like Eridu, Ur, Uruk, Kish, Nineveh, Shushi (Suza), Troy, Crete, and Mycenae, which are dated to IV-II millennia B.C.. It is well established that each of the aforementioned settlements is between four to six thousand years old. In order to determine the age of an ancient settlement, one must take into account the cultural layers that are uncovered during excavations and their respective dates. Ancient written sources from Near East Asia refer to the aforementioned settlements from approximately III-II millennia B.C.. As we can see, in order to determine the ages of those cities, the ancient written sources were not taken into account, but rather the archaeological materials discovered from the excavations. Nevertheless, when the age of Yerevan was determined, the first written mention of the name on a cuneiform inscription (Erebuni) was taken into account.

We know that in 782 B.C., King Argishti I of the Armenian Ararat-Urartu kingdom established a fortress-city called Erebuni on Arin-Berd Hill, in the modern day territory of Yerevan, and legitimized it in a cuneiform inscription. Yerevan's age is calculated just that simply- from the year 782 B.C.. It turns out that Eridu, Ur, Uruk, Nineveh, Shushi, and the other cities are four to six thousand years old, but Yerevan, in whose vicinity we find Shengavit with a history of over six thousand years old, is merely 2800 years old. Yet unknown are the ancient names of those settlements from the IV-II millennia B.C. located in Yerevan's vicinity, the presently called Shengavit, Avan, Zeytun (Kirza), Tsitsernakaberd, and others. There is no information regarding the names in the ancient written sources. The first settlement found in the vicinity of Yerevan is Erebuni, about which Argishti I left an inscription regarding its establish-

⁶⁹ S. Yesayan, Karmir Blur, Yerevan, 1982, pp. 57-66. S. Yesayan, Armenia's Archaeology, Yerevan, 1992.

ment and naming. If the aforementioned ancient cities that were contemporaneous with the Shengavit settlement had other names, then Shengavit must have also had another name. We must take into account that it was a prominent settlement (city).

The ancient Sumerian city of **Eridu** (Eri-du) has a name similar to that of Erebuni (Ere-buni). Eridu (also known as Eredu, Eridug, Urudug) is dated to the V millennium B.C.. However, the oldest mention of it in the ancient written sources is from mid-III millennium B.C.. The last mentions of Eridu are from the 8th-7th centuries B.C. (indicated by Assyrian King Sargon II, 772-705 B.C., and his son Sennacherib). In the span of thousands of years, the name Eridu has undergone minor changes: Eredu, Eridug, Urudug. We notice, in the time of ancient Sumerian settlements, the roots Er (Ar) and Ur were used often: Eridu, Ur, Uruk, Urua. It is well known that the ancestral settlements of the Sumerians were the southern regions of the Armenian Highlands.⁷⁰ The **Er (Ar)** component of the names **Eridu** and **Erebuni** allow us to say that both have a connection to the name of the AR God. We also notice that the **-du** and **-bun** components of **Ere-du** and **Ere-buni** are very similar. All this allows us to conclude that today's Shengavit settlement could have borne the ancient name **Erebuni (Erebun, Erbun)**, which was preserved for several thousand years, until Argishti I reused that name for a newly established fortress near the settlement.

Yerevan's 2,750th anniversary was celebrated in 1968, in the years of Soviet domination, when any manifestation of national identity was suppressed by the Soviet overlords. Then, suddenly, under such conditions, it was acceptable to celebrate Yerevan's birthday with such grandeur. On the face of it, it was a joyful anomaly, but in the Soviet state nothing was done incidentally. Every move was tightly controlled and calculated. They razed and equalized the cultures, histories, and languages of the peoples living there. Great control was especially necessary for Armenian history and the Armenian language. We would do well to remember that Soviet historiography considered Georgians, Azerbaijanis, and Armenians (in that order) to be the successors of the Urartian culture. They claimed the history of Armenians began at the end of the I millennium B.C.. Therefore, the Soviet government could not allow the capital city of the Armenians to have a history of six thousand years.

The 2,750 year old history of Yerevan was authenticated by Argishti's cuneiform inscription, which was impossible to deny, and the celebration of the city's founding was engineered at the highest levels.

Being cast into question is the hypothesis that the settlement with a 6000 year old history in the vicinity of Yerevan, is not the settlement bearing the name Erebuni (or Yerevan). A more serious question was asked: why is it not said that Yerevan is 100,000 years old? After all, the archaeological materials found in the Yerevan Cave,

⁷⁰ Researchers of the origins of Sumerian or Eridu culture place it in Armenian/Northern Mesopotamia, *History of the Ancient East*, Moscow, 1983, part 1, p. 72.

located on the banks of the Hrazdan River near Yerevan Lake, are more than 100,000 years old. As we can see from this question, it becomes clear that Yerevan was inhabited tens of thousands of years ago, and continues to be inhabited until today. It is widely believed that the civilization created by modern man has a history of 14-15 thousand years. We can also infer, Yerevan has not only been inhabited for thousands of years, but it is one of the preeminent settlements of Near East Asia and the Armenian Highlands from the Eneolithic Age. Today, if the ancient name of the settlement in Yerevan, in the Shengavit district, is unknown, that does not mean that we should not remember it and connect it with Yerevan. After all, today's city of Yerevan is the sum total of the districts within it (Shengavit, Avan, Zeytun, Aresh, Tsitsernakaberd...), in each of which we have discovered artifacts from ancient settlements and cultural treasures. Each district is an integral part of Yerevan; each district's history, a part of the history of the city of Yerevan. The history of the entirety of its districts, is the history of Yerevan in its entirety.

Therefore, if we take into account the history of the city of Yerevan's Shengavit district, we can say that Yerevan, the capital city of Armenia, is 6000 years old. It is one of the world's most blessed cities, having been continuously inhabited for millennia, and continuing to be so today.



Ancient Yerevan-Shengavit, author G.Khanaghyan, HMY

METSAMOR IV-II MILLENIA B.C.

One of the preeminent centers of the Early Bronze Age culture of the Ararat Valley is the ancient fortress-settlement of Metsamor, located about 35 kilometers west of Yerevan on the banks of the Metsamor River. It is among the world's most ancient and important Early Bronze Age metalworking sites. Since 1965, excavations have been taking place routinely at Metsamor. The excavated cultural layers pertain to the Bronze (Early, Middle, and Late) and Iron Age, and are dated from the mid-IV millennium B.C. to II millennium B.C.. Layers from the Middle Ages were also discovered (even up to the 18th century). This is revealed to us by the recovered plain and glazed pottery, recreational objects, Cilician King Levon II's coin (1270-1289), a Mongolian coin minted in Tabriz (16th century), a Western European coin (13th-14th centuries), etc. All of this testifies that the settlement has been continuously inhabited, operating as a crossroads for western trade. The name of the settlement is unknown, and for that reason the ancient site is called Metsamor, after the nearby river. Studies of the excavated materials reveal that the settlement occupied an area of 10.5 hectares and contained a citadel surrounded by a mighty cyclopean wall. Outside of the walls, round dwellings were built with economic buildings adjacent to them. The Late Bronze Age (mid-II millennium B.C.) stands out for its class stratification, evidenced by the rich findings in the excavated tombs, which certainly belonged to the city's upper-class members.



The cyclopean wall of the Metsamor citadel

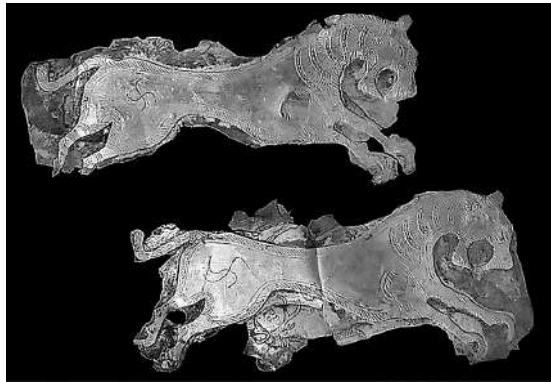
In the Early Iron Age (11th-9th centuries B.C.), Metsamor was already an established city. The city's buildings, citadel, and residential districts occupied an area of 100 hectares. Aggregated in the citadel were palace structures, a temple complex with seven sanctuaries (sun, moon, and the five planets visible to the naked eye), auxiliary economic buildings, and production complexes.

The fortress, protected by mighty cyclopean walls, was inhabited by the ruling and priestly classes. A graveyard was discovered 0.5 kilometers away from the citadel, where rulers and other important people were buried. This is evidenced by the sacrificed steeds, horned bovines, dogs, and even servants and slaves. Also discovered

in the tombs were glazed pottery shells, intricate wooden jewelry boxes, a terracotta flask, and goods made from gold, silver, and semi-precious stones that were illustrated with mythological scenes. Seeds from grapes and pears were also found, which tells us that fruit was utilized during the burial rites.

The materials found during the excavations testify that the inhabitants of Metsamor were engaged in artistry, trade, agriculture, gardening, and animal husbandry. Ancient smelting complexes and foundries for copper and bronze were also found, along with waste and casting molds which show metal production existed on a large-scale. Let us also note, the entire copper smelting system (smelters and furnaces) was built into the rocks.

During the excavations of Metsamor, a frog-like weight made of agate was found which belonged to the Babylonian ruler Ulam-Buriaš (16th century B.C.). The weight of the frog, 1 siglu (about 8.5 grams), is inscribed on it. A seal made of cornelius and decorated with Egyptian hieroglyphs, belonging to the Babylonian ruler Kurigalzu I (15th century B.C.), was also found. These findings reveal that Metsamor has been on the crossroads of trade routes since ancient times. Also found during the excavations were two Egyptian dung beetles. In those times, rulers of the ancient world were interested in Hayq because of its metals, especially bronze, which was necessary for production of weapons and military munitions. Other findings at Metsamor include gold jewelry, the oldest of which is a child's hair accessory that dates to the first half of the III millennium B.C..



A gold plate fashioned in the image of a lion.

The silver belt adorned with the gold plates bearing the image of a lion are very unique. Pictured on the back side of the animal's body is the swastika, a symbol of the sun. Also unique is the golden, half-moon shaped ornament that is found only in Metsamor.

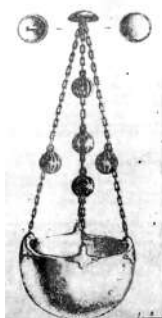
Metsamor is also one of Armenia's ancient spiritual centers. During the excavations, a priest's tomb was unearthed which contained beautifully decorated ritual vessels, a censer, a censer-pedestal used during worship, and other valuable items which are dated to the mid II millennium B.C.. Pictured on the censer-pedestal are

swastikas and images of goats and other animals. This confirms that Metsamor was a spiritual center where ritual ceremonies dedicated to ancient Armenian gods were conducted. Knowledge of astronomy was vital for performing ritual ceremonies. It is assumed that the platforms found here were used as an astral observatory.



Metsamor Observatory, 28-26th centuries B.C.

It is also assumed that Mother Anahit's chief temple was constructed on the banks of the Metsamor River, atop a high hill. According to one view, this is where the extant name of the Metsamor settlement (Mets [great] + Mayr [mother]) originated. During the archaeological excavations, many phalluses were found here which are related to the worship of the fertility goddess, Mother Anahit.



Ritual vessel, Metsamor



Idol, Metsamor, mid II millennium B.C.

The settlement also had other temples which were located on the hills. We find religious symbols and symbolic texts on rock formations, in which the concepts of “star” and “heaven” are recognized. There are also undeciphered engravings.⁷¹

A historical-archaeological park-museum was opened in Metsamor in 1968, which preserves and exhibits more than 27,000 valuable objects found in the ancient site.

⁷¹ “Metsamor Museum of the History of Mining and Metallurgy”, Museum-sanctuary guide, Yerevan, 1970, p. 7, authors: K. Mkrtchyan, E. Khanzadyan.

EARLY STATE FORMATIONS IN THE ARMENIAN HIGHLANDS END OF III MILLENNIUM B.C.

ARMANI

There is evidence in the inscriptions of Akkadian king Naram-Sin, dated to the second half of the III millennium, of an ancient state called Armani that existed in the Armenian Highlands.

The Akkadian king Sargon (also called Sargon the Great, 2316-2261 B.C.) succeeded in uniting the Semitic tribes that appeared in Mesopotamia from the Arabian Peninsula, thereby creating the Akkadian Empire. Sargon pursued a policy of conquest. His grandson, Naram-Sin (Naram-Suen, 2236-2200 B.C.) furthered this policy. The raids organized by the tyrannical kings of Akkad against the neighboring countries, including those of the Armenian Highlands, were accompanied by murder, looting, and destruction. A number of countries united against Akkad. From a recovered inscription written in Hittite, known as “Naram-Suen and his Enemies”, it becomes clear that during one of Naram-Sin’s organized raids to the north, 17 allied countries came out against him with united forces. The inscription lists the names of the countries as well as their kings (rulers)⁷². Eleventh among the countries mentioned is the land of **Armani**, whose leader was **Madakina**. Armani corresponds geographically to Aghdznik-Sassoun (including the region of Diyarbakir). This area is referred to in later written sources under the names Armana⁷³, Alzia, Alše (Hittite), Alzini/Alzi (Assyrian), and Urme/Arme/Alze⁷⁴ (Ararat-Urartian).

One of the inscriptions of Naram-Suen (written in Akkadian) proclaims, “Divine Naram-Suen, the mighty king of the four corners (of the world), the conqueror of Armani...”⁷⁵ (the rest of the inscription is damaged). Another discovered inscription (in Akkadian) seems to fill in the missing part of the aforementioned inscription. In that inscription, engraved upon marble, it proclaims, “The divine Naram-Suen, mighty King of the Four Corners (of the world), conqueror of Armani and Ibla”.⁷⁶

Naram-Suen attached great importance to his conquest of Armani by mentioning it in his inscriptions. The victory monument erected in Aghdznik attests that, within that

⁷² B. Hrozní, Naram-Sin et Ses Ennemis d'après un Texte Hittite, 'Archiv Orientalni', 1929, Vol.1, N 1.

⁷³ A chronicle of the Hittite king Tudhaliya IV (1250-1220 B.C.) mentions the land name Armana, identified with the name Arme (A. Kifshin, Geographical concepts of ancient Sumerians at the time of Gude's father, Palestinskii Sbornic, 13 (76), M-L, 1965, p. 65: Assyrian king Tiglath-Pileser I (1115-1077 B.C.) mentions the name Urume (AVIUI, I (II, 89)).

⁷⁴ King Menua of Ararat-Urartu (810-786 B.C.) used the name **Urmeuhi**, Argishti I (786-764 B.C.) used the name **Urme**, and Sarduri I (764-735 B.C.) used **Arme** in their respective inscriptions. (UKN, 40, 128A, 156D).

⁷⁵ G. Barton, The Royal Inscriptions of Sumer and Akkad. London, 1929, p. 141.

M. Gavukchyan, 1973, pp. 17-18.

⁷⁶ G. Barton, 1929, p. 139. M. Gavukchyan, 1973, p. 30.

area, Naram-Suen met and waged a battle against the united forces of 17 countries.⁷⁷ That inscription also attests that Sargon the Akkadian, grandfather of Naram-Suen, also undertook an expedition to the land of Armani. These repeated raids are the best evidence of the fact that the Armenians, as well as the inhabitants of other parts of the Armenian Highlands, consistently resisted the Akkadians, entering into a military alliance with neighboring tribes and states (Elam).

Thus, the name Armani mentioned in the inscriptions of the Akkadian ruler Naram-Suen is one of the ancient names given to Armenian state organizations (2nd half of the III millennium B.C.).

GUTIAN KINGDOM

In Mesopotamia and the southern parts of the Armenian Highlands, the situation worsened when the Akkadian dictator-king Naram-Sin declared himself a god and sanctified his declaration through faithful priests. He honored himself with the title of “King of the Four Corners of the World”. His act angered other priests and residents. To quell their anger and rebellion, Naram-Sin attacked the Sumerian city of Nippur with a large army, destroying the temple of the city’s patron god Enlil. The priests and inhabitants of the city called for help from the inhabitants of the Kordvats Mountains (Armenian tribes) in the south of the Armenian Highlands, whom the inhabitants of Nippur called **Gutians** (also **Kutians**). The Guti were the strongest and most organized among the 17 countries. The Guti leader and high-priest Enridavizir (also Enridavazir, Enridapazir) came to the aid of Nippur with his army. He managed to save Enlil’s temple, preventing the Akkadians from razing it to the ground. This event is reported by Enridavizir in a 500-line inscription written on his behalf in the temple of Nippur.⁷⁸

It is known that the arrogant and cruel ruler of Akkad, Naram-Suen, was killed in a battle with the Guti around 2200 B.C., after which Enridavizir, who called himself “Great King of the Land of the Kuti”, took on the title “King of the Four Corners of the World” from the slain Naram-Suen. Enridavizir was not only a brilliant general but also a skilled organizer, as he was very successful in accomplishing the purpose for which he was sent to Mesopotamia, to end the Naram-Suen tyranny and ensure peaceful coexistence for all the tribes inhabiting Mesopotamia.

Led by Enridavizir, the raid was also intended to put an end to the marauding raids of the Akkadians. For more than 100 years following the invasion, the Guti successfully ruled Sumer, often through governors appointed from the local nobility.

⁷⁷ Naram-Suen was killed in a battle with the Gutians (Kutians), the inhabitants of the Kordvats Mountains, circa 2200 B.C.

⁷⁸ historic.ru/books, B.A. Turaev. History of the Ancient East. Speech of the Semites. 1935.

CHAPTER FOURTH

THE ARMENIAN HIGHLANDS CRADLE OF CIVILIZATION

NEAR EAST ASIA'S ANCIENT CULTURAL MATERIALS AND THE HURRIANS (HAY-ARMENS)

Archaeological excavations carried out in Near East Asia, particularly in the Armenian Highlands in the 19th-20th centuries, testify that in those areas, between the VIII-IV millennia B.C., mighty cultures existed which are well known under the names Konya Plain, Neolithic, Halaf-Hassuna (later Samarra), Shengavit or Kura-Araxes, and others. Researchers consider the motherland of these cultures to be Armenian Mesopotamia (Northern Mesopotamia), the Armenian Highlands, and the surrounding areas. At the origin of the creation of those cultures and civilizations are the natives of the Armenian Highlands- the Hurrians (Hay-Armens). Let us examine those cultures.

Neolithic culture (VIII-VII millennia B.C.): One of the ancient settlements found in the Armenian Highlands is Çayönü Tepesi, located in the Arguna village area of Aghdznik (Kharberd plain, now Diyarbakir). Other Neolithic settlements include the Aragats mountain system, Azokh (Artsakh), the Hrazdan River basin, Yerevan 1, Nurnus, Zaghan, Barozh (near Talin), Teghut, Kghzyak hill (Adablur), Mashtots Hill, Verin Khatunarkh (Ararat plains), Ani Pemza (Shirak), and more. Additional monuments with chronological and cultural (obsidian, pottery) appeal are Asia Minor's western region (VII-VI millennia B.C.), Konya Plain (Çatalhöyük, Alacahöyük, Hacilar), Armenian or Northern Mesopotamia (VI-V millennia B.C., Halaf-Hassuna, Samarra), Mersin Cilicia, Tarsus settlement (V millennium B.C.), and the Jordanian Jericho (VIII-VII millennia B.C.).

The VI-V millennia B.C. Near East Asian settlement of **Halaf** or **Hassuna** (also **Halaf-Hassuna**), is a well studied Neolithic cultural site. The belt of influence of the Halaf culture covers the area between the Euphrates and Great Zab rivers. In the north, its effect is felt on the Taurus Mountains and the regions further up. This culture is very great. It is believed to have been created by tribes from the north, with the center of creation of the culture, particularly the fine and lustrous patterned pottery, set in Armenian Mesopotamia.⁷⁹ The origin center of Hassuna culture is also tied to the southern portions of the Armenian Highlands and Armenian Mesopotamia, and the area between Mardin and Diyarbakir (Amid). The highest stage of Hassuna culture is the **Samarra** culture (north of Baghdad, middle area of the Tigris current). The extent of the Halaf monuments to the north, suggests that their bearers could have been inhabitants of the mountains or foothills⁸⁰, who descended to the lowlands to engage more successfully in agriculture and animal husbandry. All of the inhabitants of these settlements were farmers, herdsman, and hunters. They formed the earliest centers for agriculture and animal husbandry.

⁷⁹ J. Mellart, *Ancient Civilizations of the Near East*, Moscow, 1982, p. 112 (the author uses the name Turkish Mesopotamia), IDV, 1, p. 74.

⁸⁰ J. Mellart, p. 138, (note 35).

In all of the ancient settlements of Near East Asia, from Chatal Hyuk to the Zagros Mountains (Shanidar), Palestine (Jericho), and Lower Mesopotamia, tens of thousands of items made of obsidian (knives, daggers, spear tips, and also mirrors) have been found. Starting in the Armenian Highlands, the “obsidian pathway” stretches for thousands of kilometers towards the far corners of Near East Asia.⁸¹ It is interesting that the Neolithic settlements of Hayq very often have much older lower cultural layers (Aragats mountain system, Azokh, Hrazdan River basin, Yerevan 1, Nurnus).

The next stage in the development of human society is the period of **metalworking**. The Armenian Highlands is rich in various metal mines (copper, lead, silver, iron). It is accepted that the Armenian Highlands is an ancient center of metal mining and metalworking (Shengavit, Metsamor, Garni, Mokhrablur in Nakhichevan, Artashavan). Studies show, the earliest samples of metal objects, as well as the raw material of pure copper, came from the Armenian Highlands and reached Mesopotamia, Egypt, and other areas devoid of metal mines. This is evidenced by the cultural objects excavated in the settlements of Near East Asia. Their forms, embellishments, and preparation techniques are strikingly similar to the cultural characteristics discovered in the Armenian Highlands.

From the V-III millennia B.C., which is included in the **Early Bronze Age**, a highly advanced culture was formed in the Armenian Highlands, which is named the **Shengavit** or **Kura-Araxes culture**. This cultural belt is very broad, beginning in the center of the Armenian Highlands and spreading to the mainland; in the southeast it reaches Lake Urmia (Geoy Tepe, Yanik Tepe), northward it reaches Trekht (Trialeti), southward to Asorik (Amuk 1, 2) and Palestine (Khirbet-Kerak, Beth-Shan), and westward to the Euphrates River. Typical of this culture is beautiful and advanced pottery, which has a characteristic two-tone feature, black and lustrous on the outside and red-pink on the inside, decorated with reliefs or engraved embellishments. It is also common for only one side of the shell to be decorated. The monuments of the Shengavit culture found outside of the Armenian Highlands, are the well-studied Palestinian monuments (Khirbet Kerak, Beth-Shan). This culture is called Khirbet-Kerakian, after the aforementioned settlement.

Therefore, it is appropriate to say that in the valleys of the headwaters of the Tigris, and middle and upper regions of the Euphrates, we find the culture of sedentary farmers and herdsmen that was the basis for all the later achievements of Mesopotamian civilization.⁸²

To summarize, in the VII millennium B.C., highly advanced tribes from the north entered the Jordan Valley and Palestine. They used tools made from obsidian, created delicate pottery, and built walled settlements with houses of stone (Konya Plain culture). According to researchers, the ancient inhabitants of the Amuk Valley came

⁸¹ Report of the Archaeological Commission for 1899, St. Petersburg, 1902, p. 71. S. Sardarian, 1967, p. 151.

⁸² J. Mellart, p. 121.

from the north- the Armenian Highlands (researchers use the incorrect “Anatolia” terminology). One group of researchers (R. and L. Braidwood and A. Jessen), taking a cautious approach, found that there was a short-term and speedy entrance of the population from Western Armenia to Syria-Palestine⁸³

In the VI-V millennia B.C., a new cultural channel spread through Near East Asia from the north. That culture is called **Halaf-Hassuna**, and its cultural center was located in the southern parts of the **Armenian Highlands** and **Armenian Mesopotamia**.

In the V-III millennia B.C., tribes bearing the **Shengavit** (or **Kura-Araxes**) culture appeared in Near East Asia, reaching all the way to Syria and Palestine. The Shengavit culture has its origin in the north (Armenian Highlands).

As we can see, from time to time, new, fresh, more advanced, and ideally suited cultural waves spread through Near East Asia, bringing with them tribes that created an elevated culture and had a higher level of development. The cultural characteristics found outside of the Armenian Highlands share commonalities with cultural characteristics found in various settlements of the Armenian Highlands (obsidian tools, early traces of agriculture and animal husbandry, early metalworking, pottery, the Sun-God and its symbols of the cross, swastika, lion, bull, and other cult symbols).

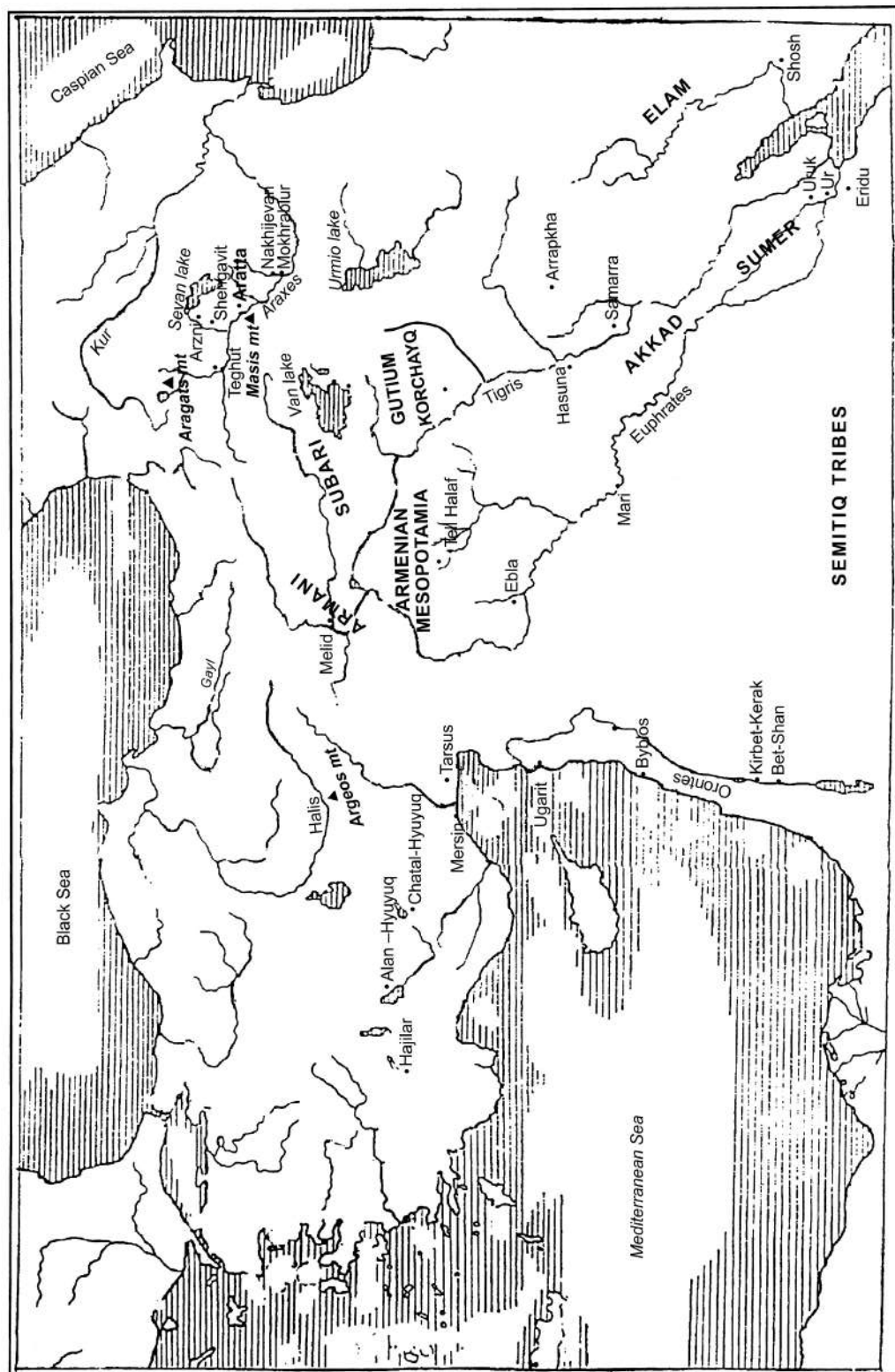
Therefore, it is appropriate to say, the region where advanced cultures were created is the north: the Armenian Highlands and its surrounding areas.

Tribes bearing a new culture spread it to areas previously inhabited by the tribes that came before them. Trade, economic, and cultural ties have always existed between them. This is evidenced by the fact that these settlements’ cultural layers do not show traces of violence and destruction, as we see, for example, during the propagation of the foreign Ubaid culture (also foreign tribes around 4750 B.C.). These semi-nomadic Semitic tribes from the south, carried their culture north (Upper or Armenian Mesopotamia) along the streams of the Tigris and Euphrates rivers, invading the flourishing settlements (Arpachiyah) of those regions. They reached as far as the eastern shores of the Mediterranean (Byblos) and Cilicia (Mersin), and Lake Urmia to the east (it is believed that the nomad tribes bearing the Ubaid culture destroyed the Halaf culture). Results of the excavations show, in one series of settlements, newcomers were antagonized. In Arpachiyah we encounter ravaged buildings and instances of mass destruction. This is the first instance of semi-nomadic Semitic tribes moving northward. Research and evidence show the south was always influenced by the north. There was an influx of culture and tribal migrations towards the southern regions of Mesopotamia.

Who created the IX-IV millennia B.C. ancient cultures of Near East Asia? Which tribes were the agricultural-herdsmen that had reached such a high level of advanced pottery? Who was familiar with early metalworking and lived north of Mesopotamia in the territory northeast of Syria-Palestine?

⁸³ HJP, 1971, p. 140.

Near East in the VI-III millennia B.C.



Written sources are not available from the X-V millennia B.C., so it is uncertain what the ancient tribes called themselves. The languages the tribes spoke is also unknown. Researchers refer to these tribes by the ambiguous names **Proto-Euphratean** and **Proto-Tigrisean**. Studies of written sources show that in the III millennium B.C., Northern Mesopotamia, Northern Syria, and the Zagros foothills, where those cultures were being created, were inhabited by people called **Hurrians** in written texts, whom scholars consider indigenous to the Armenian Highlands. In this regard, it is appropriate to remember the words of the English researcher Robert Ellis. Studying the history of this period he concluded, “Asia Minor was inhabited by Thracians, Lydians, Phrygians, Pelasgians, Trojans, Etruscans and other tribes, **who were Armenian tribes that spoke Armenian**”⁸⁴ (dialects). According to R. Ellis, from Armenia to Italy, the line of Armenian speakers was interrupted when a Syrian (or Assyrian) people rose up from the south and appeared between Phrygia and Armenia, cutting off their kinship ties, and calling itself Capadocia, in the eastern part of which Armenian is also spoken. Then, those tribes west of the Armenian Highlands began developing independently, and later spread westwards towards Greece, the Apennine Peninsula, the Balkans, and Europe.

Thus, we can conclude that the ancient cultures produced in Near East Asia have great commonalities with the characteristics of the ancient culture produced in the Armenian Highlands. Therefore, the inhabitants of the Armenian Highlands, the Hay-Armens, who are referred to in the ancient written sources as **Hurrians**, **Subartians**, **Mitannian**, **Nairians**, and other names, participated in the creation of the ancient civilization of Near East Asia, including the creation of cultural materials.

⁸⁴ Robert Ellis, The Armenian Origins of the Etruscans, 1861: <http://www.hayagitaran.info/>.

ANCIENT ARMENIAN EMPIRES

MITANNI (HURRI-MITANNI), II MILLENNIUM B.C.

Written texts discovered in the excavations of Near East Asia (Hattusa, Alalakh, Arrapkha) and Egypt (Amarna) testify, in the first half of the II millennium B.C., a mighty empire was formed in Near East Asia called Mitanni. The borders ranged from the Mediterranean Sea, to Cilicia, and the foothills of the Caucasus. The majority of the empire's population, according to written sources, were Hurrians, which researchers consider indigenous to the Armenian Highlands.⁸⁵ Written sources from that era testify, a political situation had developed in the region when the inhabitants of the Armenian Highlands and its surrounding areas found it necessary to confront the growing power of Hatti and Egypt.

In the 17th-16th centuries B.C., between the Van-Urmia lakes and the Zagros Mountains, leaders (kings) of the Hurrian and Mitanni tribes living in the area decided to unite the various small kingdoms and tribes of the southern Armenian Highlands and create the Kingdom of Mitanni. The capital of Mitanni was Washukanni. The Hurrians are known for their mighty culture, which had a great impact on the development of Hittite, Egyptian, Semitic, particularly Assyrian and Babylonian, and other cultures. Some scholars engaged with Hurrian history and culture are H. Winckler, E. Vaidner, P. Jensen, L. Messerschmidt, A. Sayce, F. Bork, A. Ungnad, E. Speiser, G. Wilhelm, A. Kammenhuber, A. Khachatryan, and I. Dyakonov. There are a number of controversial issues in Hurrian studies, including the following: what kind of relationship did the Hurrians have with the Mitannians?, with the Subartians?, with the "Urartians"? Was there only one (Mitanni), or two states (Hurri and Mitanni)? Who were the inhabitants of the land of Hurri-Mitanni? Were they Aryan, Semitic, or other tribes?

A widely popular belief among researchers is that Mitanni was ruled by Aryan (Mitannian) elite, led by an Aryan dynasty⁸⁶ The researchers H. Winckler, E. Vaidner (*Politische Dokumente aus Kleinasien*), Contunon, Cohen, and A. Meyen believe that the Kingdom of Mitanni included the entirety of the Armenian Highlands.⁸⁷ E. Vaidner found that in the era of the predecessors of Mitannian King Tushratta, Hurri included Mesopotamia and Hayq. H. Winckler placed the borders of Mitanni at the Caucasus.

The Kingdom of Mitanni, formed in the southern part of the Armenian Highlands, is referenced by many different names in the written sources from Near East Asia. The Amarna letters mention the names **Naharini** "**Mesopotamia**"⁸⁸, **Hani-Rabbat**, **Hanigalbat**, **Haligalbat**, **Mitanni**, and **Alshe** (**Alze**, **Aghdznik**). Western Semites use the name **Naharain** ("land of rivers") for Mitanni.⁸⁹

⁸⁵ IDM, 1982, Moscow, p. 186.

⁸⁶ O. Gerni, Hittites, Moscow, 1987, p. 27.

⁸⁷ Handes Amsorya, 1913, 4.

⁸⁸ H. Winckler, Newsletter, 1926, 1.

⁸⁹ Ed. Meyer, Newsletter, 1926, 1.

In the written texts, the name of the land is written as **Mitanni**, **Mitani**, or **Mit-tanni**. There are no mentions in Armenian writing sources from the Middle Ages (beginning in the 5th century) citing kingdoms named Hurri, Mitanni, or Urartu. However, some memories have been preserved in the writings of Movses Khorenatsi and other historians (the story of Hayq and Bel as the clashes of Armenian (Aryan) and Semitic worlds, the ruler of the world Aram, Patriarch Zarmayr, the stories and dialogues regarding Ara the Handsome and Semiramis).

Researchers encountered their first Hurrian words in an Akkadian dictionary of synonyms. Those words had the symbols **SU (-bir^{KI})**, which matched with the name **Subartu**, as encountered in other Akkadian texts (the ancient variant is **Šubur**, which relates to the Old Akkadian of the Naram-Suen era). Among the ancient written sources regarding the Hurrians, there are important diplomatic texts found at Amarna. One is a letter from the Mitannian King Tushratta written in the Mitanni dialect, prefaced by a greeting text written in Akkadian. From the middle Syrian city of Tunib, Hattusa, and other settlements, texts have been discovered that mention the names **Mitanni** and **Hurri**, also including Mitannian (Hurrian) words and sentences. In the world of research, great interest has been generated from the inscriptions regarding the **Hurri** and **Mitanni** names used for the inhabitants of the Mitanni region.

Hurri was initially read in texts as **har**. Some researchers have tied this reading to the Aryan name, and regard Hurrian as an Aryan language. Other researchers consider only the Mitanni to be Aryan.⁹⁰ However, this point of view was rejected when texts recovered from Hattusa were written in the differing form **hu-ur**.

Researchers turned their attention to the fact that Hurrian and “Uartian” are very closely related.⁹¹ This fact has received close attention from I. Dyakonov,⁹² G. Melikishvili, A. Kammenhuber, G. Jahukyan, and others. They furthered the belief that Hurrian and “Uartian” came from the same language (proto Hurro-Uartian), and each of them is a branch from one common language.

In the research community, scientific disputes have arisen regarding Hurrians being an ancient ethnic group in Near East Asia and Mesopotamia. A. Ungnad believed that the Hurrians were an ancient Mesopotamian ethnic group that operated in that region from the Neolithic, starting from the New Stone Age⁹³ (VIII-V millennia B.C.). According to him, the Hurri-Mitanni, the Aryans, are the fountainhead of the creation of ancient culture and civilization in Near East Asia. Those opposed to

⁹⁰ B. Hrozný, *Archiv, Oriental*, n. 3, 1929, 296, A. Khachatryan, 1933, p. 153.

⁹¹ A. Sayce, *The Language of Mitanni* Proceedings of the Society of Biblical Archaeology, 1890; P. Jensen, *Vorstudien Zur Entrifferung des Mitanni*, 1891; Friedrich, “Zwei churritisch-urartische Wortgleichungen”, *Handes Amsorya*, 1961.

⁹² I. Dyakonov, *Languages of Ancient Western Asia*, Moscow, 1967; I. Dyakonov, *Prehistory of the Armenian People*, Yerevan, 1968.

⁹³ A. Ungnad, *Subartu*, Berlin-Leipzig, 1936.

his opinion claim it is not supported by historical records, and that Ungnad takes a racial approach. They see the Aryan race and culture as having been handed over to the Hurri-Mitannians.

According to another view, the Mitanni were conquering Aryan tribes who came from some other place (Caucasus, India), conquered the inhabitants of the Armenian Highlands, the Hurrians, and established the Kingdom of Mitanni with an Aryan elite.

Yet another view states that the **Subartians** are the most ancient ethnic group of Northern Mesopotamia, and the Hurrians were later arrivals who migrated from the northeastern foothills of Northern Mesopotamia, the southern regions of the Armenian Highlands, at the end of the III millennium B.C..

Until the mid-20th century, it was accepted that two tribes lived in Mitanni (or Hanigalbat), the non-Indo-European natives, known as the Subartians, and the migrating Indo-Europeans, the Aryans (Hurri-Mitannians). As we can see, regarding the history of Mitanni, many views and opinions have been put forward which not only do not answer existing questions, but have also caused new contradictions. For example, contradictions can be seen in the works of Soviet scientists from the mid-20th century. Soviet historiography posits that the Armenian Highlands were the homeland of the Hurri-Mitannians, but the majority of researchers (I. Diakonoff) did not consider them (and also Urartians) Indo-Europeans. In the 1980s, a series of researchers (T. Gamkrelidze, V. Ivanov) wrote works in which they included the Armenian Highlands and its surrounding territories as the ancestral homeland of the Indo-Europeans.

Controversies also abound in regards to cultural matters. For example, the Khirbet Kerak culture of the 27th-26th centuries B.C. is attributed to the Hurrians, but researchers do not see the Hurrians in that region (Palestine and Syria) until the II millennium B.C. (according to recovered written inscriptions). Extremely important questions regarding the name and ethnic classification of the Mitanni people remain unsolved. Who were the Hurrians; who were the Mitannians? Are these nominal designations simply differing names for the same tribe, or the names of two distinct tribes? What does Hurri mean; what does Mitanni mean? As we can see, many of the foremost questions continue to remain unresolved. Let us turn to those and other questions that pertain to the history and culture of the Kingdom of Mitanni established in the Armenian Highlands.

One of the important topics discussed by researchers regards the population of Mitanni: were the Hurrians and Mitannians the same people, or different? Kings from Mitanni and surrounding empires have responded to this question in their written inscriptions. Written on the the seal of the Mitanni king Sausadattar is "Sausadattar... King of Maiteni". In the text of a treaty discovered at Alalakh, Sausadattar is referred to as "King of the Hurrian warriors". In a letter to the Egyptian pharaoh, another Mitanni king, Tushratta, refers to himself as a "Hurrian King" and to his nation as "Hurrian". In another instance, he calls himself "King of Mitanni".

In the 1930s, Professor A. Khachatryan referred to the history of the Hurrians and the Kingdom of Mitanni in his written research.⁹⁴ A. Khachatryan traced the roots of Armenian history back to Mitanni, also including “Urartu” in the history of the Armenian people. M. Gavukchyan also referred to the history of the Hurrians and Mitanni.⁹⁵ His research also concluded that the Hurrians were native inhabitants of the Armenian Highlands, noting a connection between the Huri and Hay-Har names.

Later researchers from Soviet Armenia repeated, nearly identically, other Soviet researchers, most notably I. Dyakonov and his opinion of the history of the Hurrians and Kingdom of Mitanni.

The relationship between Mitanni and Urartu is of great importance to the study of ancient Armenian history. The widespread and extensively accepted viewpoint is that the Hurrians and Urartians belonged to the Hurrian-Urartian language family. There are linguistic and cultural commonalities between Hurrians and Uruartians (Hurrian-Urartian relations are in need of a deep and multifaceted study). Research shows that both the Hurrians (Harrians) and Urartians (Araratians) are native to the Armenian Highlands, and their names appear in the written sources of Near East Asia between III-I millennia B.C. in the form of foreign cuneiform and with foreign-sounding Hurrian, Urartian, and other names.

Thus, the history of Mitanni is a vital portion of Armenian history. It is the history of the first known, powerful, Armenian state established in the Armenian Highlands. The civilization they established served as a basis for the creation and advancement of the cultures of people who appeared later in Near East Asia. Let us turn our attention towards the ancient written sources of Near East Asia, where there are testimonies regarding Mitanni and the Hurrians.

⁹⁴ “The Aryan Class in Pre-Urartian Armenia”, Teghekagir, article, 1929, 4. A. Khachatryan, History of the Cuneiform Period of Armenia, work, Yerevan, 1933.

⁹⁵ M. Gavukchyan, The Origin of the Armen and Hay Names, and Urartu, Beirut, 1973.

ANCIENT WRITTEN SOURCES OF NEAR EAST ASIA REGARDING THE HURRIANS

Near East Asia's ancient written sources (Sumerian, Akkadian, Hittite, Egyptian, Hurrian) testify, in the III millennium B.C., the Armenian Highlands and its surrounding territories were inhabited by Hurrians. Additionally, Hurrian populations were found in Cilicia (Kizzuwatna), Northern Syria, the Amuk Valley, Armenian/Northern Mesopotamia, the Euphrates Valley, Assyria, the area around Kirkuk (Arrapkha), the western side of the Zagros Mountains, and the vicinity of Lake Urmia (Kaputan, Mantienne). Since ancient times, Hurrian tribes peacefully expanded to the eastern shores of the Mediterranean Sea, Palestine and Jerusalem⁹⁶ (founded by them), Ugarit, Ashur⁹⁷ (founded by them), Nineveh⁹⁸ (founded by them), Babylon⁹⁹ (founded by them), and other territories. The boundary to the north is not mentioned. Written sources are silent about it, probably because of the fact that the entire Armenian Highlands was populated with Hurrians (Armenians), and further north (Caucasus Mountains) there was no strong neighbor to cause conflict or enter into economic and trade relations with. According to H. Winckler, "The Hurrian state extended safely to the Caucasus in the north."¹⁰⁰

Sumerians called the areas inhabited by the Hurrians, the southern parts of the Armenian Highlands and Northern Mesopotamia, **Su-bir**¹⁰¹ (Su^{ki} for short), and the Akkadians called it **Subaru, Subari, Subartu (Šubartu)**. In Akkadian inscriptions, the terms subartum, subaru, subaretsi mean inhabitant of Subaru, and were used synonymously with Hurrian. It is accepted that Subir is a geographical name, therefore the inhabitants of that land were called Hurrians.

⁹⁶ *Manetho*, The Aegyptiace..., p. 89, E. Danielyan, 1997, p. 73.

⁹⁷ Ancient written sources consider Kikkia, Aushpia or Ushpia, and Adasia (Adas) as the founders and initial inhabitants of Ashur, all of which have Hurrian names. IDV, II, p. 25. A. Khachatryan, 1933, pp. 77–78.

⁹⁸ IDV, II, p. 92. Scholars consider Hurrians to be the founders of Nineveh (the name Nineveh is considered a Hurrian name). Additionally, experts believe that the Armenoid type prevailed amongst the population of Assyria (S. Smith, *Early History of Assyria*, p. 151, A. Khachatryan, 1933, p. 78). This can be explained by the fact that **in the II millennium B.C., that area (future Assyria) had a Hurrian population that was subjected to an influx of Semitic tribes, however the Armenoid type managed to prevail.**

⁹⁹ Researchers are furthering the belief that Babylon was founded by the Hurrians, and the first inhabitants here were Hurrians, until the time of the reign of Hammurabi (1792-1750) (A. Khachatryan, 1933, p. 78) (Teghekgagir, 1926, 1, p. 31).

¹⁰⁰ H. Winckler, Aryans According to the Bogaz-Koi Inscriptions, HA, 1913, April (translated from the original German by H. Matikyan).

¹⁰¹ I. Dyakonov, 1967, p. 117, A. Khachatryan, 1933, p. 163-164, B. Hrozní, Archive, vol. 2, 1929, p. 98. In the 16th century B.C., the Egyptians called both Palestine and Syria by the name Hurri (Hrw/Hor), who, at that time, were most likely inhabitants of Hurri. The local vassal kings were majority Hurris, related to the Hurri royal house by dynastic or familial ties.

The Egyptians (18th Dynasty of Egypt, 1660-1100) use the name **h'rw**¹⁰² (read as haru, huru) to refer to the Hurrians. Egyptians also used the names **Nhrjn**, **Nakhri-na**, **Nakharini** (**Nakharina**), which meant “land of rivers”. In the Amarna letters, we also encounter the names **Naharini** “Mesopotamia”, **Khani-Rabbat**, **Khanigalban**, **Khaligalban**, **Maittani**, and **Mittani**.¹⁰³

Akkadian (Babylonian, Assyrian) written sources use the names **Hanigalbat**, **Haligalbat**, **Hanagalbat**.¹⁰⁴² The territory (nation) between the branches of the Euphrates and the upper reaches of the Tigris was called Khanigalbat.

The bilingual (Hittite, Akkadian) Hittite inscriptions discovered in Hattusa use the name **Hurri** (**Hurla**) in the Hittite portions. The Akkadian variants of the name are **Hanigalbat**, **Haligalbat**.¹⁰⁵ The Hittites more commonly used the **Hurla** form in their inscriptions, mainly acting as the collective name of the people, an ethnonym. It is only used once as the name of a nation.

The Hittites use the name **Haiasha** in reference to the state entity of the Armenian Highlands. The state formed in the north of the Armenian Highlands is called Haiasha (Khayasha), which researchers definitively read as Hayasa, that is, “land of the Hays”.

Let us turn to the reading of the name Hurri, as pertaining to the ancient written sources. The **hu-u-ur-** grouping in cuneiform inscriptions has been read by a number of scholars (H. Winckler, Ed. Meyer, E. Waidner, E. Forer, Weissbach) as **har** (also **ar**), and other scholars (B. Hrozni, A. Ungnad) as **hur**. In the time when the reading was **har**, scholars associated the name with that of the Aryans, and they considered Hurrian an old Aryan language. Later, in texts discovered in Hattusa, **hurlili** (Hittite **hurla** - “huri”) was read **hurri**. With this finding, the **harri** form was rejected and, along with it, the notion that the Hurrians were Aryan. In the academic sphere, the name **hurri-khurri** was legitimized.

We can see that in both names, huri and hari, the component ar (ur) is present, which can be presented in the forms ur, ir, and er. Therefore, we can say that **huri** and **hari**, with their **-ar**, **-ur** roots, are connected with the name of the Ar-God and the Armenian Highlands. In Hittite cuneiform texts, the h and **h** (**kh**) sounds are indistinguishable and scholars conventionally read that sound as **h** (**kh**). In both cases, we find the **ar-**, **ur-** components of proper names to be a very common occurrence within the Armenian Highlands (let us note that in the Van dialect, **h** is pronounced **kh**).

We also notice that the readings of both the toponym and the ethnonym **kh-ari** (**h-ari**) correspond to the group of names for Armenia **Harq** (**Hayq**), **Haria**, **Harminuia**. And the reading of **h-uri** corresponds to the group of names **Ururutani**, **Urtu** (**Ararat**), **Urme** (**Arme**).

¹⁰² AVIUI, 1, 3.

¹⁰³ G. Wilhelm, The Ancient Hurrians, Moscow, 1992, p. 54.

¹⁰⁴ I. Dyakonov, Aryans in the Middle East: The End of a Myth, VDI, 1970, 4, p. 60. I. Dyakonov, 1967, p. 117.

¹⁰⁵ VDI, 1969, 1, pp. 71–73.

Furthermore, both readings, **huri** and **hari**, are names given to the natives of the Armenian Highlands by outsiders (exonyms), and their **ar-**, **ur-** components are connected to the Armenian Highlands and original Armenian endonyms.

Inscriptions (Egyptian, Hittite, Hurrian) reveal that unlike the Mitanni designation, the **Hurri** name appears as a name for the collective population, the name of the ethnic group of the kingdom. The Mitanni name was bestowed upon the kingdom established in the 16th century B.C.. Dissent over the throne and schemes from outside forces caused the division of Mitanni into two parts: **Mitanni** (the southern part of the kingdom) and **Hurri** (the northern part of the kingdom). The whole kingdom continued to be populated by Hurrians (Armenians). The division was never an ethnic separation because **the Mitanni tribe continued to refer to itself as Hurri**. This is confirmed by inscriptions from both Mitannian and neighboring kings, as enumerated above. Even after the destruction of the Kingdom of Mitanni, ancient texts continue to use the name **Hurri** to refer to the natives of the Armenian Highlands. The name **Hori(m)** is used in the Bible, not as a direct testament, but certainly in relation to the Hurrians.

Thus, both Hurri and Mitanni are names for the same tribe, indigenous to the Armenian Highlands. They are the ancient names bestowed upon the Hay-Armens. In this sense, it is interesting to note one of G. Contenau's conclusions. He wrote, "From the monuments representing the Hurrians, it can be seen that they had a round skull and a high nasal bone (big nose). Therefore, in accordance with the monuments, the anthropological group of the Hurrians is close to the modern Armenians".¹⁰⁶

HURRIAN WRITTEN SOURCES

Old Akkadian inscriptions were found in Urkesh (Northern Mesopotamia, near modern day Mardin) and Navar (Valley of the Diyala River, a southeastern tributary of the Tigris River) which are dated to the second half of the III millennium B.C. (24th-22nd centuries). The inscription discovered in Urkesh is an ancient text written in Khurri. It is a record constructed by the Urkesh priest-king Tishari (Tish-atal). Another source that dates to the same period is the inscription on a bronze plate belonging to King Arisen, or Arishen, of Navar, dedicated to the temple of the god Nergal, lord of the city of Khaniluma. The name was initially read as **Arisen**, and later on as **Arišen**. Notice that the name Arisen, or Arishen, consists of two Indo-European components: **Ari-** (Ar) and **-sen** (=shen). The component **-sen** (sen=son=sin) means son or offspring (the Armenian component **-zun** also has the same meaning, i.e. Hayqazun, Ishkhanazun). Thus, the name **Arisen** means **son of Ari (Ar)**.

¹⁰⁶ G. Contenau, *The Civilization of the Hittites and Hurrites of Mitanni*, Paris, 1948, p. 29.

Regrettably, the annals of the Hurrian kings have not yet been discovered, though they certainly did exist. Treaties and texts such as those discovered in Amarna and Hattusa undoubtedly existed in Washukanni as well. Hurrian “royal annals” are believed to have existed, but they have not survived to the present day (or are yet to be discovered). In the “Hittite Annals”, we encounter expressions and definitions that match those used in inscriptions from “Urartian” kings. These phrases are not found in Assyrian inscriptions. Therefore, it is acceptable to assume that there were “Hurrian Annals” that the “Urartians” inherited, and the Hittites benefitted from them in their own time.

The most ancient and prominent Hurrian text is a letter from Mitanni king Tushratta to Egyptian pharaoh Amenhotep III¹⁰⁷ (first half of the 14th century B.C., discovered in the Amarna archives). One might think, if a letter addressed to the pharaoh was written in Hurrian, then the Egyptians must have been able to read and understand that language.

Information regarding the Hurrians and instances of Hurrian names are attested to in texts from the 3rd Dynasty of Ur (approximately 2100-2000 B.C.), as well as texts discovered in Nippur, Shosh, Arrapkha, Nuzi, Ashur, Babylon, Mari, Alalakh Ugarit, and other ancient settlements (trade contracts, letters, Hurrian words, names of officials, a Sumerian-Hurrian dictionary written in Akkadian).

Let us discuss an important question pondered by researchers: are the inhabitants of Mitanni, the **Hurrians** and **Mitannians**, the same people, or different tribes?

Hurrian kings call themselves **Hurri**, but their land is primarily called **Mitanni**. The earlier kings, Shuttarna I and Shaushtatar, called themselves kings of Maiteni (as written on the seal of Shaushtatar- “Shaushtatar... King of Maiteni”). In a contractual text recovered from Alalakh, Shaushtatar is attested to as “King of the Hurrian warriors”, and Parattarna is called “King of the Hurrian people”. Tushratta refers to his land as **Hurriohe**, “Hurrian”, and he calls himself “King of Hurri”.¹⁰⁸ In another instance, he designates himself “King of Mitanni”. During the power struggle for the throne between Tushratta and his brother, Artatama II, Hittite sources refer to Tushratta as “King of the land of Mitanni” and to Artatama as “King of the Hurrian lands”.

As we can see, the kings of Mitanni designated themselves as **Hurri** (King of the Hurris), and their land as **Mitanni**. The Hittites do just the same, regularly referring to the people as **Hurrians**. The text of a signed contract between the king of Hatti, Suppiluliuma I, and the king of Mitanni, Shattiwaza, states, “Let this (treaty) be read again and again before the king of the land of Mitanni and the people of Hurri”. From this and other similar inscriptions, it is clear that for the fulfillment of the treaty, both the king and the Hurrian people bear equal responsibility. If the Hurrians were not equal to the Mitannians as the endemic citizens of their land, they would not bear

¹⁰⁷ A. Khachatryan, *Armenian Cuneiform. Regional History*, Yerevan, 1933, pp. 188-190, 271.

¹⁰⁸ I. Gelb, *Hurrians...*, 15, 73.

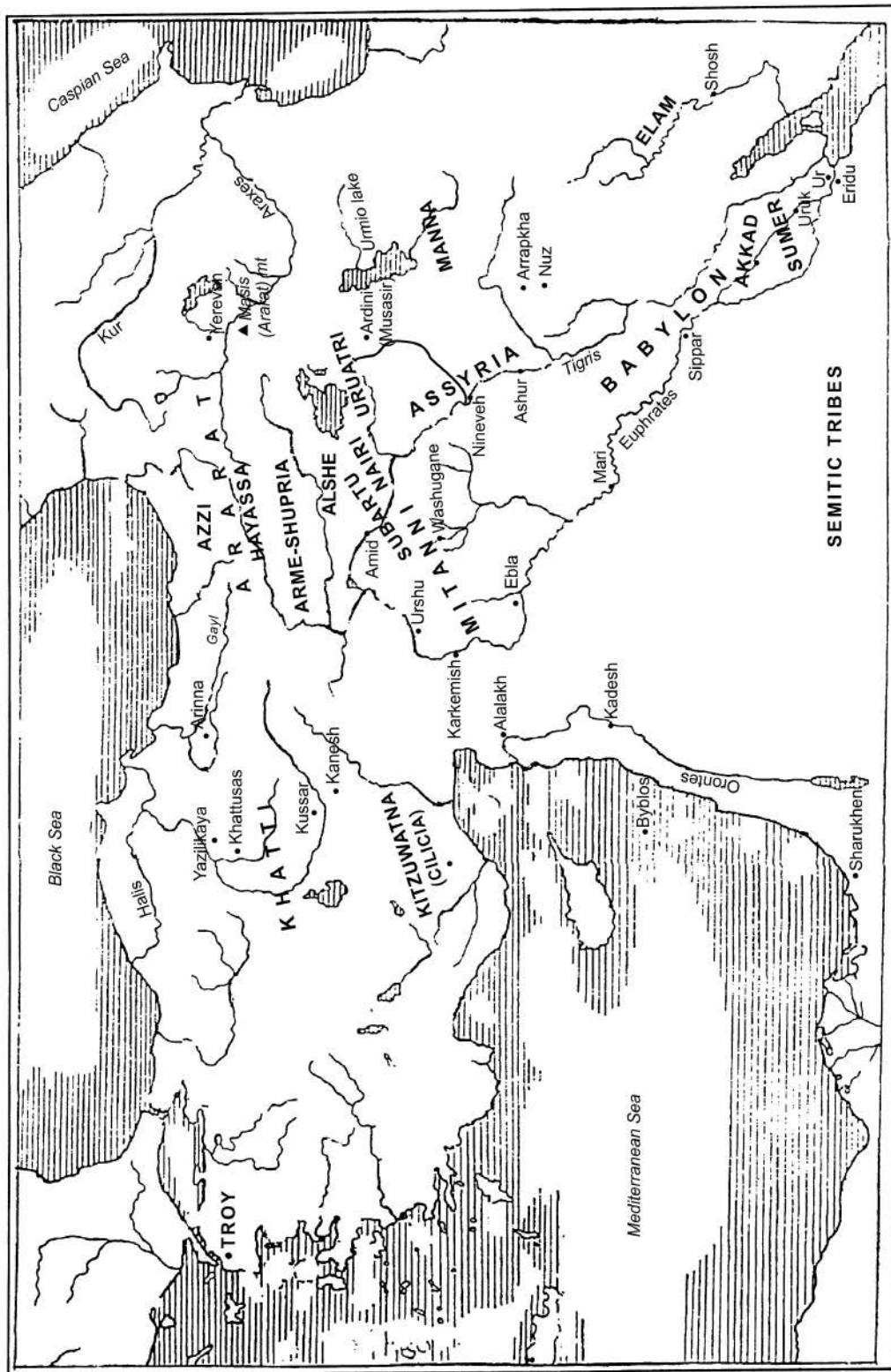
equal responsibility for the fate of the kingdom. If the Hurrians were conquered and the nobility was a Mitannian elite of Aryan origin, then equality between them is incongruous. There are no historical instances of conquerors (rulers) and the conquered governing a country together with equal rights. Therefore, it becomes inappropriate to designate the Mitannians as an Aryan tribe that, allegedly, came from elsewhere and conquered the Armenian Highlands in order to create the Mitanni state with an Aryan elite. Both **Hurrian** and **Mittanian** are designations for the same people. Hurri is comprehensive, while Mitanni is the name of one of the tribes.

Studying written texts, we notice that a significant number of Hurri-Mitannian personal names contain the component Ar (Er). Besides the aforementioned Arisen (Urkes), the texts mention **Arsih** (Arsiih), **Erisim** (Errisim) (Cappadocian texts), **Aria**, **Aramusuni** (Araammusuni) (Tell-Atchana), **Ari-Kumme** (Ashur), **Ariphura** (Ariiphuura), **Arihuha** (Nuzi), **Arimemme**, **Arip-atal**, **Ariphuppi**, **Aritupuk** (Third Dynasty of Ur), and **Artashumara**, **Artatama** (kings of Mitanni). Hurrian words were discovered in Boğazköy, in an ancient manual titled “A Treatise on Equestrianism”, that is translated (or written) from Hurrian into Hittite. They include names about horse breeding and horse racing, and the names of numbers: **aika** (one), **tri** (three), **panca** (five), **sapta** (seven), **nava** (nine).¹¹⁰⁹ However, there are many mistakes in the text, and the author’s understanding of the Hittite language is lacking, so much so, that it is very obvious the book was written by a foreigner, that is, by a Hurrian who is a resident of Mitanni. Not understanding Hittite well, he abundantly uses his native, Hurrian language. These are the Hurrian words that researchers compare to Sanskrit, formulating the opinion that this was an Aryan language of a tribe that came from India, the same language of the Hurrian nobility in Mitanni.

Regarding ancient Hurrian texts, many samples of vocabulary are found in Hattusa and from archives in various places around the former Hittite state; they are religious, mythological, and legendary texts, enumerating the names of gods, etc. The Hittite versions of these texts mention descriptions of ritual ceremonies, Hittite translations of Hurrian writings, myths, poems, dialogues (“Song of Hedammu”, “Song of Kumarbi”, “Kingship in Heaven”), and also the Hurrian version of “Gilgamesh”. These works are but a small surviving remnant of the great body of Hurrian literature. In all, there are more than 500 lines of inscribed texts and about 250 Hurrian words. Hurrian language and grammar has been studied by L. Messerschmidt, A. Gyotsen, E. Speiser, and others. Grammatical examination of Hurrian is complicated by the use of Akkadian cuneiform and the distinctiveness of the Hurrian language. The writing is syllabic, and within syllabic texts, repeated mute consonants are not written. Specific to Hurrian writing is the inclusion of redundant vowels. This form of writing is shared by the “Uartians” as well. Thus, the Hurrian word Me-i-nu-a is written in Uartian as Minua; the Hurrian word e-u-ri-i-e is written in Uartian as ewrija.¹¹¹⁰

¹¹⁰⁹ A. Khachatryan, 1933, pp. 194-195.

¹¹¹⁰ I. Dyakonov, 1967, p. 122.



Near East II-I millennia B.C.

Researchers note that the Hurrians were not a single nation, but rather a union of closely related tribes. In that massive area, the Armenian Highlands and its surrounding territories, naturally, there could not be one unified, cultured language. In each geographic space, in the Major and Minor Armenian nations, people spoke with specialized dialects, which were often difficult to understand even between kindred tribes. The dialect of the Hurrians in Mitanni was different from the Hurrians in Ugarit, Syria, Arraphka, Kizzuwatna-Cilicia, etc. Scholars (M. Khachikyan) note the following dialects: **Urkesh** (Tishata inscription), **Babylon** (inscriptions discovered in Babylon and Mari), **Sumerian-Hurrian lexicon**, **Ugarit** (with two subdialects), **Hattusa** archives, **Mitanni** (Tushratta's letter), **Alalakh**, **Arrapkha**,¹¹¹ and others. Researchers (I. Diakonoff) note, the language of the Urkesh inscription can be considered both Old Hurrian and Old "Uartian", since it is equally similar to Hurrian from the II millennium B.C. and Uartian from the I millennium B.C.. We can consider this proof that the "Uartian" cuneiform did not originate from the Akkadian script of the Assyrian group, but from the Hurri-Mitannian group.¹¹²

As we can see, the area where written texts about the Hurrians have been found is very broad. The information testifies that in the III-II millennia B.C. and earlier, Cilicia, Northern Syria, Northern Mesopotamia, and the areas east of the Tigris (the Armenian Highlands), were inhabited by the Hurrians (Hay-Armens), who spoke various dialects of Hurrian (Hayeren, Armenian). Let us note, the Armenians, living in vast areas, always had numerous dialects, many of which are still living dialects to this day.

¹¹¹ M. Khachikyan, *Hurrian and Uartian Languages*, Yerevan, 1985, p. 19.

¹¹² I. Dyakonov, 1968, p. 14; I. Dyakonov, 1967, p. 119.

THE FORMATION OF THE KINGDOM OF MITANNI

Hittite and Egyptian texts are essential for understanding the formation of the Kingdom of Mitanni. We find historical facts in written sources of Hittite kings and Egyptian pharaohs that explain the basis for the formation and strengthening of the Mitanni state.

At that time, one of Near East Asia's powerful states was Hatti, a Hittite state whose kings were often invading and looting neighboring lands. During those raids, the Hittites increasingly encountered resistance from the Hurrian side. The Hurrians aided the other tribes and nations that were being subjected to Hittite attacks. This was the beginning of the Hurrian-Hittite military conflicts. Written sources testify, under attack by the Hittites, the kingdoms and cities of Northern Syria and Upper Mesopotamia turned to the Hurrians for help. The king of Hatti, Hattusili I, during his incursions into those territories, had to fight difficult battles against the Hurrians. Hittite written sources ("Annals") assert that in response to their attacks, the Hurrians did not hesitate with their retaliatory strikes.

Hittite texts bear witness that Hatti experienced many attacks: "The enemy came from the land of Kaska and destroyed the land..., From Artsava, the enemy entered the land..., The enemy came from Araunna..., The enemy appeared from Isuva..., The enemy appeared from Attsi..., The enemy came from Armatana and he also destroyed Hatti..."¹¹³ These attacks were unquestionably carried out by the Hurrians, and their burgeoning state, Mitanni. Hattusili I records in his inscription that, taking advantage of the Hurrian attack, kingdoms and city-states in Northern Syria and Asia Minor declared their independence from the Hittites. The success of the Hurrians was unmistakable. Later on, retaliatory raids with varying outcomes continued, as attested to by written sources.

At the beginning of the II millennium B.C., the Hurrians still had a mighty, centralized state. There were sovereign kingdoms with their own leaders, the "warrior kings of the Hurrians". Concerning the Hittites and the Hurrians, except for the military engagements, there are no testaments in the Old Hittite sources regarding their other relations. However, based on the fact that the king of Hatti, Hattusili I, sent statues of Hurrian deities and other valuable religious objects from Khassuv to his country, it can be said, from very early on, Hurrians had a substantial influence on Hittite culture and the formation and development of religious beliefs.

In the III-II millennia B.C., the Hurrians were actively in contact with not only the Hittites, but also the Egyptians, next to whom they appeared after the appropriation of Syria-Palestine. In the mid-III millennium B.C., Syria-Palestine was penetrated by tribes from the Armenian Highlands bearing the Shengavitian, or Kura-Araxes, culture. Here they created the Khirbet-Kerakian culture (named after the settlement of the same name). In the early II millennium B.C., Northern Syria and the Orontes River Valley

¹¹³ O. Gerni, Hittites, p. 28.

were mostly inhabited by indigenous people from the Armenian Highlands, the Hurrians, and the population mostly spoke Hurrian (there were also a Semitic population).

It is well established that Armenian tribes mastered the art of metalworking (copper, bronze, iron) very early on. It is also documented that Hayq is one of the oldest locations of horse domestication, and the Armenians precipitated the use of horses for military purposes. They also had chariots, which allowed them to cover great distances quickly. It is widely accepted that horse breeding, chariot warfare tactics, and fortress building were spread and developed by the Hurrians through Mesopotamia, Northern Syria, and Egypt.¹¹⁴

At the end of the 18th century B.C., after conquering the eastern shores of the Mediterranean Sea, Phoenicia, Palestine, and Syria, the Hurrians arrived in the neighborhood of Egypt. The Egyptian pharaohs of the 12th and 13th dynasties were often rapacious, organizing raids into the Hurrian populated Syria-Palestine. Around 1650 B.C., the Hurrian (Hyksos) invasions of Egypt can be considered retaliatory. The base of the Hyksos was the Armenian Highlands, Subartu and Mitanni¹¹⁵ (E. Forer, M. Oppenheim).

The raids from the Armenian Highlands against Egypt have given rise to a variety of opinions among researchers. The ethnic affiliation of the Hyksos has become a topic of discussion. The preserved written sources report only fragmented information. The Egyptian priest Manetho (4th century B.C.) offers valuable information. Taking advantage of the now lost ancient written sources from Egyptian temples, he wrote a history of Egypt, of which only sections of its Greek translation have survived in the works of Flavius Josephus and Eusebius of Caesarea. From the preserved sections of Manetho's work, we learn that around 1650 B.C., from Palestine to Egypt, the Nile Delta was invaded by brigades of courageous mountain warriors driving chariots and armed with impenetrable armour, razor-sharp swords, and iron arrows. They easily defeated the Egyptian infantry and captured Egypt. Manetho writes, they "easily took over our country without war". He calls the invading highlanders Hyksos, which means "kings of shepherds" or "kings of foreign nations".¹¹⁶ In ancient times, the word shepherd was synonymous with leader.

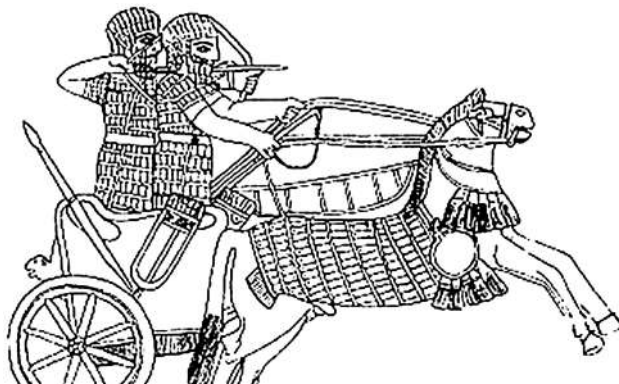
The Hyksos, led by the generals Salitis, Hian, and Apopi, successively occupied the northern regions of Egypt. Their leaders began to bear the title of pharaoh. Manetho testifies that the pharaohs of the 15th and 16th dynasties were Hyksos. He recounts the names of the pharaohs of the 15th Dynasty. In addition to the aforementioned general-pharaohs, he also mentions Bnon, Apachnan, Assis (or Kertos), and other Hyksos pharaohs. The Hyksos founded a new capital city called Avaris, and before that they had founded Jerusalem in Canaan.¹¹⁷

¹¹⁴ IDV, II, p. 236.

¹¹⁵ Scholars generally agree that the Hyksos were inhabitants of the Armenian Highlands, from Subartu. E. Forer writes that the starting point of the Hyksos was Subartu. E. Oppenheim also notes that the Hyksos were Subartians, under the kingship of Mitanni. A. Khachatryan, 1933, p. 82.

¹¹⁶ Bazmavep, 1912, 7–9, pp. 280–286.

¹¹⁷ *Manetho, Aegyptiace...*, p. 89.



Armored Armenian (Hurri) warriors driving a chariot. The horses are also protected with metal armour. Relief image, Charchemish, II millennium B.C., Museum of Berlin

The Hyksos ruled Egypt for about 108 years. Eusebius of Caesarea's work *Chronicon* is essential for resolving the question of the ethnic affiliation of the Hyksos. Portions of that work have been preserved in an Armenian translation. The Armenian translation refers to the conquerors as **hak**, excluding the Greek suffix -sos. Member of the Mekhitarist order, H.Y. Avger, in the middle of the 19th century, turned his attention to the **hak** name, relating it to the Armenian **hay** endonym¹¹⁸ Let us note that in some Armenian dialects, Hayq (hay) is pronounced with the varying forms **hek** (Aintap) and **khek** (Mokq province). We can see that hek, khek, and hak are very similar. Therefore, it is appropriate to say that the **hik**, **hak** forms are variations of the names **hay** and **Hayq**.

Several facts ("mountainous country", "courageous mountain warriors", possession of horses, chariots, and iron weaponry) indicate that in 1650 B.C., the conquerors that easily overtook Egypt, the Hyksos or Haksos, were the natives of the Armenian Highlands- the Hurrians (Hay-Armens). It is also remarkable that the Hyksos considered themselves Arevi vordiner (sons of the Sun), and it was due to their influence that sun worship in Egypt became a national practice (worship of the Ra /Ar God).

The Egyptians considered them foreigners and, at the beginning of the 16th century B.C., a struggle against the Hyksos began. This was begun by the pharaohs of the 17th Dynasty. During the 18th Dynasty (1580-1314), pharaoh Ahmose I captured Avaris and ejected the Hyksos further into Asia. Ahmose I followed the Hyksos into Palestine. This was the beginning of the long lasting Egypt-Mitanni military conflicts. As we can see, by kicking the Hyksos out of their land, the Egyptians provoked war with the Hurrian state of Mitanni, blaming this nation and its Hurrian inhabitants for the disaster caused in Egypt.

¹¹⁸ Bazmavep, 1912, 7-9, pp. 289-297.

MITANNI: MIGHTY KINGDOM OF NEAR EAST ASIA

In the 15th century B.C. hostile neighbors, Hittites and Egyptians, began operating in the vicinity of the Hurrians. The Hittites sought to expand their domain into the Hurrian populated Northern Syria and Northern Mesopotamia, while the Egyptians began planned raids into Syria-Palestine, also majority Hurrian settlements. In order to face these two formidable neighbors and their sinister operations, it was vital for the Hurrians to unite and form a strong state. This plan was successfully implemented by the Hurri-Mitanni tribal leaders (kings).

Written sources from Near East Asia (Hittite, Egyptian), dating to the 16th century B.C., attest that a new and powerful state had arisen in the Near East: Mitanni. Studies allow us to conclude that the leaders of the Hurrian Mitanni tribe, living between the Van-Urmia lakes and Zagros Mountains, were able to unite the various Hurrian tribes and create the Kingdom of Mitanni, with a capital city at Washukanni. We notice external threat was an important condition that led to the creation of the kingdom. Egypt, neighboring the Hurrians, was gaining strength since it expelled the Hyksos (Hurrians). Hatti had also grown into a threatening neighbor for the Hurrians. The course of events shows that the external threat was the imperative factor that united the Hurrian tribes, creating a formidable state under the leadership of a mighty king.

Until the unification of the Hurrian tribes and the creation of the Kingdom of Mitanni, Hittite texts routinely refer to the “Hurri warrior kings” and their military union. During the struggle against the Hittites, the king of the Mitanni tribe succeeded in leading the already established “Hurrian warrior kings”, then went on to unify the “lands of the kings of the Hurrian tribes”. As we can see, in a time of great external danger, military union of the tribes was followed by political and economic union as well.

The first king of Mitanni, founder of the state and dynasty, remains unknown. The first king attested to in written sources is the son of Kirta, **Shuttarna I** (also Suttarna, late 16th century B.C.), whose seal, both a representation of the state and “dynasty”, was later used by King Sausadattar (first half of the 15th century B.C.). Discovered in Alalakh, the seal reads, “Suttarna, son of Kirta, King of Mitanni”.¹¹⁹ It is unknown whether Kirta was a historical king. Suttarna was succeeded by Parattarna (start of 15th century B.C.). During this king’s reign, there is relatively more information about events and the political situation, thanks to the discovered inscription of King Idrimi of Mukiš (Alalakh). Idrini states that a group of Syrian cities, including Aleppo, were insubordinate to him and he was forced to flee. He then entered into negotiations with the king of Mitanni, signed a treaty, and, acknowledging his hegemony, “with the help of the mighty King of Mitanni Parattarna” he restored his father’s throne.

¹¹⁹ A. Kammenhuber, *The Aryans...*, pp. 62-63. I. Dyakonov, *Aryans...*, VDI, 1970, 4, p. 48.

In Idrimi's text, Parattarna is "King of the people of Hurri". As a result of these negotiations, Parattarna established Mitannian supremacy in Northern Syria and the banks of the Orontes River. Afterwards, he organized raids against Hatti and sacked several cities, meeting almost no resistance. Inscriptions found in Nuzi record the death of Parattarna.

There is relatively more information regarding Mitanni's next king, Parattarna's son, Sausadattar (first half of the 15th century B.C.). A seal found in Nuzi reads, "Sausadattar, King of Mitanni". On an inscription discovered in Alalakh, his name is written as Sausadattar. In this case it is also unknown whether his father, Parsadattar, was a king or not. Mitannian kings often used their paternal (ancestral) "dynastic seals". This testifies that **the throne was held by the same ruling house, and passed down from father to son.**

Sausadattar conducted his foreign policy successfully. During one of his raids, he captured Ashur and the temple of the god of Ashur, taking its gold plated door back, as spoils, to his capital city Washukanni. Afterwards, Sausadattar rid Ashur of its local government and established a city council, unto which he appointed his own representative, or **sukallu**. Sausadattar also spread his influence south of Ashur to the Hurrian populated Arrapkha, which was also able to retain its autonomy.

Mitanni reached its height of power and success during the reign of Sausadattar. His influence reached to the eastern coast of the Mediterranean, from Kizzuwatna-Cilicia to Ashur, Arrapkha, the Tigris and Euphrates river valleys, and territories even further north. The kingdoms subject to Mitanni included the **Kingdom of Alalakh** (also Mukish, Amuk Valley, now Atshana, northwest part of Syria), **Kingdom of Arrapkha** (near Kerkuk), **Nuzi** (near Kerkuk), which was a prominent city in Arrapkha, **Kingdom of Kanesh** (Upper Euphrates bank), **Kingdom of Mari** (Middle Euphrates bank), **Hassuwa** (in Commagene, west of the Euphrates, Northern Syria's main city), **Kingdom of Halab** (Khalpe, Aleppo, Yamhad), **Kingdom of Ugarit** (Amuk Valley), **Kingdom of Carchemish** (Amuk Valley, Euphrates bank), and the **Kingdom of Kizzuwatna-Cilicia**.

The state of Mitanni was established and strengthened due to foreign military and political matters. Egyptian pharaohs continued to raid and pillage their way towards Syria-Palestine. Attacks were organized by Ahmose I and Thutmose I (second half of 16th century B.C.). Thutmose I easily marched through Syria-Palestine and reached the Orontes River banks. All forces stood up and united against the Egyptians, from Palestine to the Euphrates River. The resistance was organized and lauded by Mitanni.

At **Kadesh**, Thutmose I succeeded in mounting an unexpected attack, and defeating the forces united against him in battle. With an abundance of booty and captives, he returned to Egypt. During the battle at Kadesh, Mitanni aided the "united forces" with soldiers (700) and horses (50).



Mitanni at the height of its power, about 1400 B.C.

After that, Egyptian raids continued annually. During his next raid, Thutmose I, once again, easily crossed Syria-Palestine and reached the Euphrates River bank. On the shores of the Euphrates, the Egyptians encountered the Mitannian king's resistance forces. In the ensuing battle, the Egyptians were victorious. At the Euphrates shore Thutmose left an inscription, upon which he declared himself the "Ruler of the World". Again, with an abundance of booty and slaves, Thutmose I returned to Egypt.

The inscriptions belonging to Thutmose I are the first to mention the name **Maitanni**, and later **Mitanni**. Following the death of Thutmose I, there was peace in the land. After a few months, Thutmose I's successor, his son Thutmose II, passed away and the throne passed to Thutmose III. However, it was a woman, Hatshepsut, who usurped his throne. After the death of Hatshepsut, Thutmose III was proclaimed pharaoh (second half of the 15th century B.C.). During the reign of the new pharaoh, drastic foreign policy changes were made.

Active military campaigns began under Thutmose III. With a mighty army, he invaded Asia and captured Palestine, Phoenicia, and Syria. During this campaign, near **Megiddo**, he was fortunate enough to defeat the king of Kadesh's unified forces and capture Kadesh. Mitanni again encouraged and aided the united forces. Following Kadesh, Thutmose III also captured Carchemish and, in the central reaches of the Euphrates River, he entered the territory of Mitanni. The king of Mitanni retreated to the left bank of the Euphrates. At Thutmose's command, they made boats from cedar in Phoenicia and in carts they brought them to the bank of the Euphrates River. After crossing the Euphrates, Thutmose was unable to find the king of Mitanni. On

the eastern shore of the river, upon a rock near the inscription of his grandfather Thutmose I, Thutmose III left a new inscription commemorating his success. Far from invading the depths of the country, he returned by the same route.

Let us note, the information regarding the attacks of the Egyptians are one-sided. They are predominantly inscriptions by pharaohs, which do not allow us to form a complete picture of the military operations. Despite his military successes, Thutmose III was unable to establish himself in Northern Syria, or even to make it a fixed part of his empire. Immediately after the Egyptians left, anti-Egyptian uprisings began. The cities of Tunib and Kadesh revolted. Again, Mitanni inspired and aided them. Thutmose III was forced to organize a new attack. Nearly every year during his long reign, Thutmose III organized an attack against Syria-Palestine. During the course of most of these attacks, the pharaoh clashed with Mitannian vassal kings. His victories were mostly against allies of Mitanni, who led vassal kingdoms that were subject to them. They were certainly organized and controlled by Mitanni. Egyptian inscriptions tell a very interesting story. During one of Amenhotep II's raids, the Egyptians were able to capture an investigator of the Mitanni king Sausadattar, who was delivering a letter that had been tied to his neck, to one of the kings of Syria-Palestine.¹²⁰ Let us note, this is the oldest known case that involves using the services of a detective. Although Thutmose III reached the borders of Mitanni, he was unable to enter the land and conquer or defeat the Hurrians. King Sausadattar was a contemporary of Thutmose III. The result of long-lasting military conflicts between Thutmose III and Sausadattar was an eventual peace treaty. Northern Syria, with Kadesh and Aleppo, remained with Mitanni, and Palestine and Southern Syria passed to Egypt.

These military operations dealt a heavy blow to the economic growth of the Eastern Mediterranean coastal regions and Northern Mesopotamia. As a result of the Egyptian raids, trade perished, and prosperous and developing cities were destroyed. By imposing taxes on nations in this territory, the Egyptians took from them gold, silver, and other goods, including slaves.

After the death of Thutmose III, Syria-Palestine tried to shake off the Egyptian yoke. However, Thutmose III's son and successor, Amenhotep II (end of the 15th century B.C.), was even more persistent and hostile in his dealings with Syria-Palestine. In the seventh year of his reign, he organized a new attack against Syria-Palestine, reached the banks of the Euphrates, and returned home with plenty of booty and captives. Under Amenhotep II, there were no major achievements. It seems as if the borders were readjusted and a new treaty was established with the Hurrians.

Following the death of Amenhotep II, the throne passed to his son, Thutmose IV. He was the last pharaoh of the 18th Dynasty of Egypt that made it to the banks of the Euphrates. During the reign of Thutmose IV, friendly relations were established with Mitanni. In the north, a new enemy had appeared- Hatti. Thutmose IV was compelled

¹²⁰ IDM, 1982, p. 224.

to enter into negotiations with Mitannian king Artatama I. A peace treaty was signed and Carchemish, Aleppo, and Alalakh remained in Mitanni's sphere of influence. Mitanni gained access to the Mediterranean Sea. Palestine and Syria's southern regions were awarded to Egypt. The peace treaty was strengthened by marriage. Artatama's daughter (known in Egypt as Mutemuya) was given in marriage to Thutmose IV. Upon his death, the throne passed to Amenhotep III (about 1400 B.C.). This pharaoh was not in Syria-Palestine. He received tribute from them, and often had to send a small number of troops there to maintain "law and order".



Mutemuya



A Hurri-Mitannian
(Armenian) woman,
Egyptian mural

During the reign of Amenhotep III (this pharaoh was Mutemuya's son), military conflicts ceased, followed by the implementation and strengthening of economic and diplomatic relations between Egypt and Mitanni. Amenhotep III instituted kinship with Mitanni. One of his favorite wives was Tia, daughter of the prince of Nihria (Nairi), whom he married in the second year of his reign. Tia was not only beautiful, but she was a very intelligent princess who, despite her non-royal origin, held an influential position in the royal court.



Nairi prince Yua



Tia

Under these conditions, after genial and neighborly relations were established between Egypt and Mitanni, favorable conditions were created for the economic and cultural development of Mitanni and Syria-Palestine. Mitanni, occupying a favorable

geographic position (the center of Asia Minor), held all channels of communication in its hands, connecting Lower Mesopotamia with the eastern shores of the Mediterranean Sea and the central and western parts of Asia Minor. Political and trade relations of all kinds had been opposed by the Hurrians. After improving relations with Egypt, Mitanni was able to become even more prosperous and powerful. However, the situation intensified around 1345 B.C. when the proactive, zealous, and diplomatically skilled Suppiluliumas I (1345-1322) ascended the throne of Hatti. He had a great desire to make Hatti a powerful state. In the past, all attempts at Hittite expansion, especially into the rich and prosperous Hurrian populated Syria, were a failure due to the military might of the Hurrians. During the era of the New Hittite Kingdom (1450-1200), Hurrian-Hittite military conflicts resumed. This gave rise to Suppiluliumas I, who pursued an aggressive policy toward his neighbors.

Mitannian king Suttarna II was succeeded by his son, Artashumara. However, Artashumara was not destined to rule for long. Following Suttarna's reign, a struggle for the throne ensued between Artashumara and Suttarna's brother, Artatama. He managed to gain high-ranking supporters, one of whom, the traitor Utkhi, murdered Artashumara. Due to ongoing conspiracies and intrigues, Hurri-Mitanni divided into two parts- Hurri and Mitanni. **Hurri**, made up of the central and northern territories of the kingdom (Aratsani River basin), was passed to Artatama II; **Mitanni**, the southwest territories, Aghdznik (Arzanene) and Northern Mesopotamia (Tigris River basin), were given to Artashumara's younger brother Tushratta I, who ascended to the throne with the help of the supporters of the murdered Artashumara. We can also assume that the chaos in Mitanni originated from vying political orientations, that is, to align with Egypt or Hatti. Ascending the throne in Mitanni, Tushratta avenged his brother's murder by killing the conspirators, including Utkhi, the main organizer of the plot who "had done so much harm to the country", Tushratta wrote to Amenhotep III¹²¹. By punishing the conspirators, Tushratta was able to restore friendly relations with Egypt, which, in response to the above mentioned events, cut diplomatic relations with Mitanni. Then, at the cost of heavy casualties, Tushratta was able to expel the Hittites from the country. Under the leadership of Tushratta, Mitanni was given the chance to live in peace again. However, Suppiluliumas was preparing a decisive new blow. It is an arduous task to properly secure one's defenses. Simultaneously, the Hittites were at war with another Armenian state- Hayasa. Suppiluliumas succeeded in entering into negotiations and securing a peace treaty with the aged king of Hayasa, Hukkanai. Hukkanai vowed his allegiance to the Hittite king. He even committed to assisting the Hittites in their military raids. Suppiluliumas managed to enact a mutually beneficial treaty with another kingdom in the Armenian Highlands, King Antaratali of Alzi (Alshe, Aghdznik). He already had the support of the Hurrian king Artatama II.

¹²¹ IDV, I, p. 289; A. Khachatryan, 1933, p. 330 (footnote).



Tushratta's letter to Amenhotep III



Nefertiti

Securing a strong defense, Suppiluliumas prepared for a new offensive attack. Left without any allies or friendly neighboring states, Tushratta continued to hinge his hopes on Egypt and Amenhotep III. Discovered in Amarna, his letters to the pharaoh assert that he was willing to continue his friendship with Amenhotep III at any cost. They were certainly aware that the Hittites were planning a new attack and it was critical for Tushratta to prepare as well. For this, he would need lots of gold which he could no longer receive from the nearby kings, since they were either under the influence of the Hittites (Alzi, Kizzuwatna) or they were not subject to Mitanni (Ashur, Babylon). In his letters, Tushratta was constantly asking for gold from his only friend, Amenhotep III. His expectations to receive it grew when the already aged Amenhotep III expressed his desire to wed Tushratta's daughter, Tadu-Hepa. This marriage can be interpreted as the manifestation of a military alliance, as long as Egypt was sending military aid to Mitanni to help them deal with Hatti. Military negotiations were the dowry to be given for the bride. This problem is resolved in the only letter written by Tushratta in Hurrian. The contents of the letter are as follows: "To Nimmuria, King of Egypt, my brother, my son-in-law, whom I love, who loves me, say. This is what Tushratta says, King of Mitanni, your father-in-law, who loves you, your brother. ...My brother wanted a wife, and I obliged him, and she went to my brother...". However, Tushratta never received the large quantity of gold he was expecting. Nevertheless, Tushratta blessed his daughter and sent her to Egypt, where both the pharaoh and the Egyptian people welcomed the beautiful Mitannian princess with warmth and great festivities. The Egyptians were very fond of the bride and, appreciating her beauty, they named her Nefertiti, which means "**the beautiful one has come**".

However, the aged pharaoh soon became ill and passed away. The throne passed to his son, Amenhotep IV (later Akhenaten), whose mother (Tia) was also a Hurrian. The new pharaoh immediately told Tushratta the news about his father's death and asked him to continue the friendship he started with his father, since his father "decided to accept Tushratta's daughter as his wife, as the princess of the south and north, the lady of both countries"¹²².

Amenhotep IV is remembered as the sun-worshipping pharaoh. He took on the name Akhenaten, "Sun Disc", and initiated a great religious revolution in Egypt, instituting the worship of the Sun. The worship of the god Ra was preserved from the ancient religion. Playing a huge role in that religious revolution was his wife, Nefertiti. Amenhotep IV, or Akhenaten, had neither the desire, nor the funds to keep Syria-Palestine. His financial resources were spent on building temples dedicated to the sun, establishing a new city (Akhetaten), and performing religious ceremonies. Successive events show, the friendship between the new pharaoh Amenhotep IV and Tushratta was not long lasting. Due to the sharp change in the political climate, Egypt became an unstable support for Mitanni.

MITANNI – HATTI CONFLICT

MITANNI'S WEAKENING AND DECLINE

The schemes of King Suppiluliumas of Hatti continued on. Securing a strong defense and preparing accordingly for his offensive, he advanced against Mitanni. Following the streams of the Euphrates in the north, the Hittites moved against the centers of Mitanni's kingdom: Carchemish and Washukanni. The impetus behind the Hittite attack was immense. Tushratta refrained from going into battle, choosing instead to flee. He was subsequently murdered by an unnamed son and his servants. The Hittites entered Washukanni and appointed Artatama II as king of Mitanni. They looted and destroyed Washukanni's royal palace.

During that raid, Suppiluliumas seized the Mitanni regions between the branches of the Euphrates and the Mediterranean Sea. The Hittites occupied Lebanon and Syria whose princes (leaders), being deprived of Mitanni's aid, submitted to the Hittites. Turning towards Egypt at the border, the Hittite-Egyptian conflicts commenced. However, the conquered Carchemish, Alalakh, and other settlements remained Hurrian-populated and kept their traditions (names, culture).

Political turmoil and intrigues continued in Mitanni. Suppiluliumas decided to create a new Mitannian state that would act as an intermediary (buffer zone) between burgeoning Assyria and Hatti. Tushratta's son, Shattiwaza, was used in order to create

¹²² F. Petrie, *A History of Egypt...*, p. 182. A. Khachatryan, 1933, p. 352.

that state. It was necessary to return the son to his father's throne. For this reason, Suppiluliumas decided to use his own son, the king of Carchemish, Piyassili. Suppiluliumas could not do this himself, since he was the one who had appointed Artatama II to the Mitanni throne. Piyassili (royal name Sarri-Kusuh) and Shattiwaza were assigned to regain the throne of Mitanni. Reconquering Mitanni and entering the capital Washukanni was not difficult as long as the citizens and nobility were unhappy with Artatama's son Shuttarna for his atrocities. Before Shattiwaza, son of Tushratta, the gates of the capital were opened. The Kingdom of Mitanni recovered, but it was no longer the mighty state it had once been. This new state was a vassal, subject to Hatti.

Hatti, Babylon, Alshen (Alzi, Aghdznik), and the growing Ashur (future Assyria) actively participated in the weakening and decay of Mitanni. Embroiled in struggles over control of the throne, Mitanni was unable to maintain the integrity of its territories. Shattuara I, Wasashatta, and Shattuara II, the kings of the small divisions of Mitanni who were subject to Hatti, often rebelled and attempted to become politically independent, but they were met with defeat. The Assyrian kings Adad-Nirari I (1296-1264) and Shalmaneser I (1263-1234) give reports of those events.

During these rebellions, the Hurrians often united. **Babkhi** ("Mountainous", country), **Kadmukhi** (upstream regions of the Tigris), **Alzi** (Alshe in Hittite texts, Alzi(ni) or Aghdznik in "Urartian" texts), **Purulumzi**, and other nations are mentioned. As seen by the inscription of Tukulti-Ninurta, the union of Hurrian states was reestablished, but it was defeated.

As we can see, Assyrian texts attest that during the period from the end of the II millennium to the beginning of the I millennium, minor Hurrian states (kingdoms) existed in the Armenian Highlands and, whenever necessary, united in the face of existential danger (in this case before Assyria).

After the fall of Mitanni, written sources in Hittite and Akkadian gradually stopped using the name Mitanni. However, they continued to use the terms **Hurrian nations** and **Hanigalbat**. Additionally, the names Hurri and Hanigalbat were also used during the period of Mitanni's existence.

Due to pressure from the new Semitic tribes (Amorites, Suteans, Ahlamu, Yauri) advancing from the south and Lower Mesopotamia, and the growing power of Assyria, the natives of Northern Mesopotamia and the Armenian Highlands, the Armenian tribes (Hurrians), were progressively pushed towards the mountains and further north into the depths of the country.

During the 9th-8th centuries B.C., Southern Syria, with its capital of Damascus, had already become Semiticized (conventionally called "Arameans"), but Northern Syria continued to resist against the pressure from Semitic tribes, and had preserved the memory of its non-Semitic origin. This is attested to by the fact that in the 9th century B.C., the rulers of the newly established Armenian state of Ararat-Urartu, Menua I (810-786), Argishti I (786-764), and Sarduri II (786-735), reached the banks of the Euphrates and Melid (Malatya), Carchemish, Kummuh (Commagene),

and other regions, and the populations did not attempt a resistance, but sided with them “perhaps feeling some ethnic or cultural affinity for the Urartians” (O. Gerni). The same transpired during Tigran the Great’s era (95-55), when the inhabitants of Syria-Palestine, without resistance, voluntarily embraced Tigran’s kingship.

In the mid-13th century B.C., the story of the ancient Armenian Kingdom of Mitanni in the Armenian Highlands came to an end. The history of Mitanni, the state’s history, concluded, but the people lived on. After Mitanni, in the early 12th century B.C., Hatti first disappeared from the scene of history (national unrest, epidemics, “migration of sea peoples”), followed by the Egypt of the pharaohs (end of I millennium B.C.). In Syria and Egypt, Semitic tribes gained strength and created state entities (Assyria, Babylon). Hatti and Egypt disappeared, leaving behind only their names and cultural relics, but Mitanni experienced a rebirth in the 9th century B.C., in the form of the new Armenian state of Ararat-Urartu.

MATERIAL CULTURE

During Mitanni’s reign, two major discoveries were made that enriched both Phoenicia and Syria’s cultures.

In the 18th-17th centuries B.C., in Hurrian-populated Northern Syria and Upper Mesopotamia, the art of making **opaque colored glassware** was invented. This art form was quickly imitated by the inhabitants of Lower Mesopotamia, the Phoenicians, Egyptians, and Babylonians. For a long time the Hurrians and Phoenicians had a monopoly on making glassware and selling it around the world.

It is believed, the Hurrians were the first to make bronze lamellar armour, perfect bronze helmets, and bronze swords. Mitanni was also the most ancient land to practice horse breeding and chariot making.

Comparatively, two types of Hurrian cultural materials are well researched: **pottery and cylindrical seals**.

In the 15th century B.C. in Near East Asia, unique pottery was introduced, with a distribution area correspondent to the territory of the Kingdom of Mitanni, including the vassal states to the east and west. The pottery is unique in its forms and embellishments. There are slender vessels and bowls with short legs (seated). They range from red-brown to black or brown backgrounds with (in that time) white depictions of geometric shapes, animals, and plants.

The Hurrian culture’s acclaimed style of **cylindrical seals** is considered a major achievement, featuring a particular cylindrical type and constructed of black hematite and other metals. Hurrian seals are decorated with images of mythological beings, winged sphinxes, lions, goats, and deer with sculptured braided borders. The seal artists filled the surfaces with images in such a way, so as not to leave negative space. **Kerkukian seals** had a huge influence on Assyrian seal production.



Mitannian pottery, Alalakh



Shaushtatar's cylindrical seal with the winged sun disc



Tushratta's cylindrical seal



Hurrian cylindrical seal

The Hurrian cultural area was very broad. Shared characteristics in pottery, weaponry, construction, architecture, and other fields allow researchers to conclude that there were strong connections between the inhabitants of Upper Mesopotamia, Northern Syria, the Armenian Highlands, and Transcaucasia. "In the II millennium B.C., there was likely a homogenous ethnic Hurrian population from Arrapkha, North Mitanni to modern Armenia and South Georgia (likely to the Caucasus Mountains)".¹²³ There are great similarities between Sumerian (Sumerian-Akkadian) and Hurrian cultural values. Hurrian influence on Hittite culture was extensive. From the mid II millennium B.C., Semitic Ashur (future Assyria) also bore Hurrian cultural influence.

¹²³ IDV, II, p. 90.

SOCIO-ECONOMIC RELATIONS IN MITANNI

Nobility: Information about Hurrian society and the socio-economic relations that existed there are attested to in written texts. Archives from three cities on the periphery of the Mitanni empire, from the Kingdom of Arrapkha, have been discovered: **Arrapkha** (“city of the Gods”), **Nuzi** (now Yorgha Tepe, 15 km away from Kirkuk), and **Gasuri** (now Tell-al-Fakhar, 45 km southwest of Kirkuk). During the excavations, incredibly significant texts were discovered, bearing in mind that there are such sparse Hurrian written sources. The inhabitants of those cities were Hurrians. They predominantly engaged in farming, craftsmanship, and trade.



Hurrian nobility, images from Mitannian seals



Hurrian noble



Governor, Mari



Inhabitants, Mari

The agricultural population lived in large familial communities. The familial community was called a **dimtu** (tower) in Hurrian (burgana in “Urartian”). Each family unit lived in a dimtu, or fortress-tower. Livestock was kept on the ground floor of the tower, and members of the family lived on the upper floor. There were also village homes, or **aluns**, that were gathered around the fortified settlements (dimtus), creating cities. Inside the city were temples, where the ruling class operated and where the council of elders gathered. Cities were subject to the king.



Clay smoker, in the image of the fortress-tower

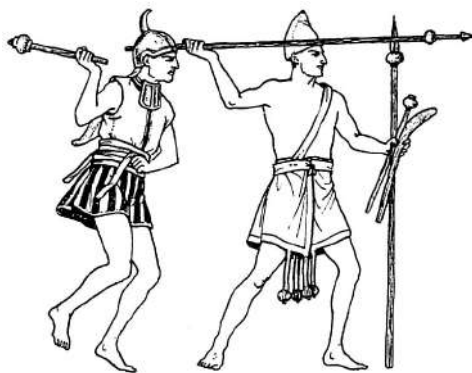


Hurrian settlement, village "homes" called aluns, Hittite relief sculpture

Army: The fighting force of the Mitanni army were the soldiers, specifically the cavalry, who were renowned in the ancient world. Let us remember that in the Early Middle Ages as well, the Armenian cavalry was widely celebrated in Near East Asia. The Armenian Highlands was rich with metal mines, and Armenians processed metals (copper, bronze, iron) very early on. Armenians were also ahead of the curve in constructing metal weaponry. They were armed with the best weapons of the time. Hayq is one of the oldest areas of horse domestication and, early on, Armenians utilized horses on the battlefield. Armenians (Hurrians, Hayasans) were skilled riders and charioteers.



Hurrian soldiers in a chariot



Hurrian soldiers with a mace and spear

Hurrians had organized combat units called **marianni** who were the elite fighting forces of the Hurrian army. Studies reveal that marianni (mariannu) meant "noble riding class". The marianni surrounded the king, and in turn the marianni were surrounded by additional marianni. The marianni were brave fighters and skilled

riders, well armed with metal (iron) weaponry and protected by metal armour. Their horses were also well protected (cf. the Hyksos). It was difficult to take the marianni as captives; they would rather die than be captured by the hands of the enemy. This is confirmed in the inscriptions of the Egyptian pharaohs, which apply special emphasis to each captured marianni.

The Mitanni army consisted of a noble cavalry class that drove chariots, the marianni, as well as a cavalry and infantry. The Mitanni, like the Hayasans, were renowned for their skilled charioteers, and they were happy to share their expertise with the Hittites and Assyrians. This collective fighting force was headed by the king.

At the head of the Mitanni state was the king, the monarch. However, this monarchy was different from Egypt, Babylon, and other monarchies in the region because the monarch had unlimited power and acted as the direct representative of god upon the earth. In Mitanni, the king was surrounded by “Hurrian men” (council of elders), who participated in the management of the nation. This is confirmed in the texts of the official contracts between the kings of Mitanni and Hatti. The official contract signed between Suppiluliumas I and Mitanni king Shattiwaza states, “Always, again and again, let this (text) be read before the king of the land of Mitanni and the people of the land of Hurri”. Also, “If I, Prince Shattiwaza, and we, Hurrians, do not keep the words of this covenant and oath, then may the gods, the owners of the oath, destroy us”.

In Mitanni, the throne was hereditary, it passed to the eldest son of the primary wife. The royal court had a monopoly on the metal exports from Mitanni. In Mitanni (and the kingdoms within its dominion), the following order of management was imposed: king, council of elders, tribal head (patriarch), people’s gathering, village community.

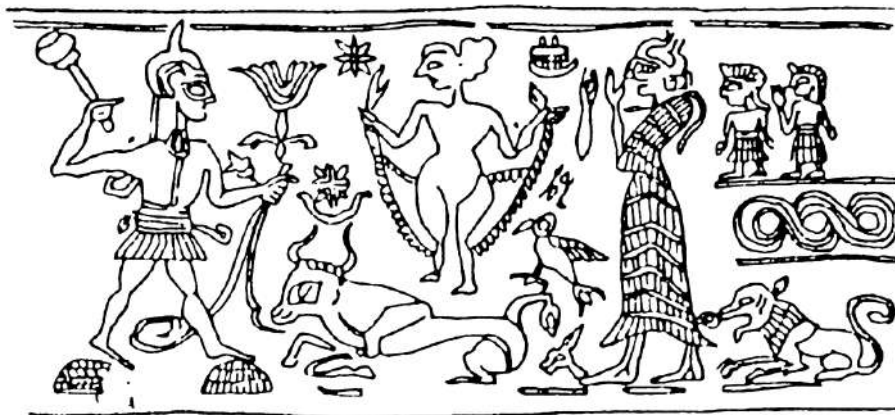
Mythology: Regarding the questions of Hurrian culture, religion, worship, and mythology, information from written sources has been discovered in Hattusa, Mari, Ugarit, Arrapkha, Babylon, and other ancient settlements. Of special significance are the written sources from the royal archives discovered in Hattusa, which contain evidence about Hurrian ritual and religious ceremonies. Those Hittite texts are translations from the Hittite language that are also written in Akkadian by Hurrian “scribes”.

Let us turn our attention to Hurrian mythology. Information regarding Hurrian gods and mythology has reached us through Hittite written sources, that is, Hittite translations, as well as signed treaties between Hurrian and Hittite kings. The text of the signed treaty between Suppiluliumas I and Shattiwaza records the names of the four Aryan deities: **Mithra, Varuna, Indra, and Nasatia**. Scholars agree that the gods mentioned in the treaty are the same gods named in the *Rigveda*: **Mithra, Varuna, Indra, and Nasatia (Ashviner)**.

The discovery of the Hittite translation of the Hurrian poem “Kingship in Heaven”, is a very valuable written text which describes how the four gods of the Hurrian pantheon successively replace one another in heaven: **Alalu, Anu, Kumarbi**, and the **Thunder God (Teshub)**. The fourth part of this poem is especially important, telling

of the birth of the children of the earth. The poem preserves one of the ancient traditions of the creation of man on Mother Earth; that man was created on earth (Apsuv, Armenian Highlands) by a combination of earthly and heavenly powers. The poem also recounts the names of additional gods and goddesses like **Naras**, **Enlil**, the **Sun-God (Arev)**, **Zababa**, and others. The Hurrian pantheon contained the “older generation of gods”, whose leader was Kumarbi, and the “younger generation”, whose leader was the god of thunder and lighting, Teshub.

In the Hurrian pantheon, the sun god was called **Šimige** (**Šivini** in the Ararat-Urartian pantheon), and the moon god was **Kušuḫ** (also **Kujukh**). The goddess of fertility, love, and war was **Šauška** (“Weapon”). Šauška is also known under the name **Hepat** or **Khebat**, who is Teshub’s twin. Šauška was often depicted with wings and standing on the back of a lion (winged goddess). The gods **Anu** and **Ea-Haya** also have their place in the Hurrian pantheon.



Teshub (left) standing on dual mountain tops, holding up a mace;
Hepat standing on the back of a bull. Cylinder seal.

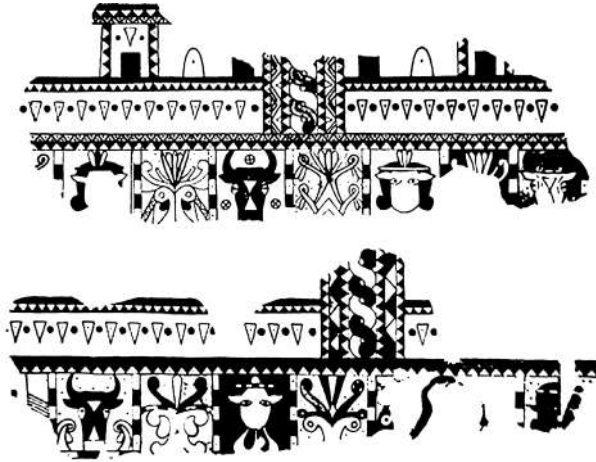


Hurrian god (Tayde)



Hurrian (Hittite) gods, Khattusas (Yazilikaya)

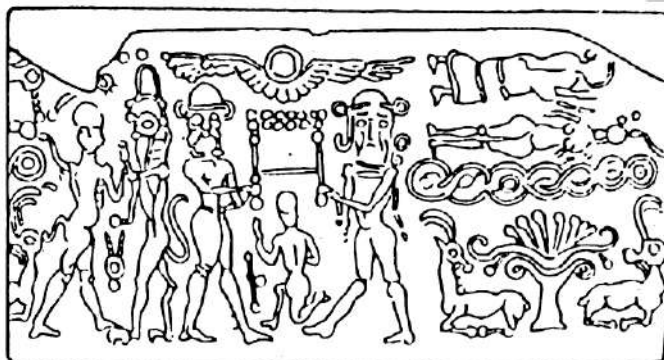
Another important god was **Šiduri** (“Virgin”), who is the virgin-mistress of the house of the gods (housekeeper). Šiduri is present in the Akkadian version of the epic “Gilgamesh”. Additional gods include **Ishtar** (Uzhkhar), **Kubaba** (Kibele), **Pendigal** (believed to be the goddess of the moon or underworld), **Nikkal**, **Till** (son of Teshub), **Nubadiz**, and others.



Mural from the palace of Nuzi; with the images of the gods Teshub, Hepat, and Till (cf. the murals of Erebuni)

In the rock pictograph materials of the Hittite religious center Yazilikaya (near Boğazköy), there are illustrations of the gods of the Hittite pantheon, which researchers consider Hurrian gods. The basis for this belief is that the Hurrian names of the gods are written in Luwian. Also represented in the Hittite pantheon are the Near East Asian (Hurrian) gods Anu, Antu, Ellil, Ninlil, Ea, and others.

Depictions of lions on the walls of the temple of Ishtar-Šauška in Nuzi, testify to the worship of lions. During rituals, lion-shaped vessels were used to hold sacred liquids. The Hurrians worshipped the tri-legged **hearth**, which they often deified and offered sacrifices to. Hurrian and Hittite pantheons have many commonalities. However, the Hurrian pantheon’s influence on the Hittites can certainly be felt.



Cylinder seal depicting a ritual ceremony, in the center is a winged sun disc

Summary: In the 15th-14th centuries B.C. in the southern Armenian Highlands, in the territories between Lake Van and the Zagros Mountains, leaders (kings) of the Hurrian (Armenian) and Mitannian tribes succeeded in uniting multiple Hurrian (Armenian) tribes, both small and mid-size state entities, to create the mighty Kingdom of Mitanni, whose borders extended from the Mediterranean Sea's eastern coastal regions to Cilicia and on to Ashur, Nineveh, Arrapkha (Kirkuk), and the foothills of the Caucasus.

This is among the world's oldest areas of civilization and cultural creation. Between the 8th-4th millennia B.C., mighty cultures such as the **Konya Plain, Neolithic, Halaf-Hassuna** (later **Samarra**), **Shengavitian** or **Kura-Araxes**, and others were created here. The homeland of these cultures is Armenian/Northern Mesopotamia, the Armenian Highlands and its surrounding territories. Standing at the origin of creation for those cultures and civilizations are the natives of the Armenian Highlands, the Hurrians (Hay-Armens).

The inhabitants of the Armenian Highlands, the Hay-Armens (Hurrians), from the earliest times, were engaged in **agriculture, animal husbandry, pottery, and metal processing**. It is well known that **these cultural elements are at the foundation of early human civilization**. The creation of wealth and culture caught the attention of the tribes neighboring the Hay-Armens, and in the III-II millennia B.C. (likely also earlier), Semitic tribes (Akkadians, Babylonians, Assyrians) and Egyptian pharaohs began their predatory, destructive raids against Armenian or Northern Mesopotamia, the Armenian Highlands and its surrounding territories. For a long time, the Hurrian kings managed to keep the country free from internal discontent and dissension. However, provocations from external enemies (Hatti, Semitic Babylon, and Ashur) resulted in struggles for the throne within the country, which would become fatal for Mitanni. First, Mitanni split into two, Hurri and Mitanni, and later, unable to resist the Semitic tribes, especially the constant attacks from the rapidly expanding Ashur (future Assyria), Mitanni was defeated and ceased to exist as a state.

From the beginning of the III millennium B.C., an influx of Semitic peoples began pouring into the Hurrian-populated Armenian or Northern Mesopotamia, Southern Mesopotamia, the southern regions of the Armenian Highlands, eastern coastal regions of the Mediterranean, Palestine, Syria, Jordan, Phoenicia (Lebanon), and other areas, becoming even stronger after the decline and fall of Mitanni. The conflicts that would cause the Semitization of the Mesopotamian-Armenian Highlands had begun. The echoes of those conflicts are preserved in M. Khorenatsi's "*History of the Armenians*", through the dialogues of "Hayk and Bel", "Ara the Handsome and Semiramis", the story of King Aram, etc.

The once Hurrian (Armenian) dominated Babylon, Ashur, Nineveh, Jerusalem, Arrapkha (Kirkuk), most of Northern Mesopotamia, and the eastern coast of the Mediterranean Sea gradually became Semiticized. The ever-increasing influx of Semitic tribes, which happened in various ways (military attacks, peaceful migrations), caused

the Armenian (Hurrian) tribes to be pushed further into the mountains. Those who remained in the plains were surrounded by Semitic tribes, cut off from their fellow tribesmen, and, although there were long-lasting confrontations, they eventually assimilated with them. This is the reason the populations within Assyria, Babylon, the eastern coastal regions of the Mediterranean Sea, Syria-Palestine, Lebanon, and other places had many inhabitants belonging to the Armenoid anthropological type.

The history of Mitanni is an extremely important part of Armenian history. It is the first mighty state we know of established within the Armenian Highlands, whose created civilization was the basis for the creation and advancement of the cultures of the future peoples of Near East Asia.

Mitanni King List		Approximate Dates
Kirta	mid-16th century B.C.	1550–1525
Shuttarna I	2nd half of 16th century B.C.	1525–1500
Parattarna	early 15th century B.C.	1500–1470
Sausadattar	1st half of 15th century B.C.	1470–1430
Artatama I	late 15th century B.C.	1430–1400
Shuttarna II	early 14th century B.C.	1400–1375
Artashumara	----	
Tushratta	mid-14th century B.C.	1375–1350
Artatama II	mid-14th century B.C.	1350–1340
Shuttarna III	2nd half of 14th century B.C.	1340–1320
Shattiwaza	late 14th century B.C.	1320–1300
Shattuara I	early 13th century B.C.	1300–1285
Wasashatta	1st half of 13th century B.C.	1285–1275
Shattuara II	1st half of 13th century B.C.	1275–1260

HAYASA

II MILLENNIUM B.C.

In the mid II millennium B.C., in the northwestern Armenian Highlands, in the territories of Greater Hayq and Lesser Hayq, from the sources of the Euphrates, Araks, and Chorokh rivers until the Black Sea, a state entity had formed that is attested to in Hittite written records under the names **Hayasa**, **Azzi**, and **Tegarama** (or Togarma).¹²⁴

Inscriptions of the Hittite kings Tudhaliya III, Suppiluliumas I, Mursilis II, Hattusili III, and others tell about the raids into the country of Hayasa.

Found most commonly in the records is the **Hayasa** form of the name. In Hittite inscriptions, after encountering the Hayasa toponym, scholars (E. Forrer, P. Kretschmer, G. Ghapantsian)¹²⁵ immediately noticed a connection with the names Hay, Hayq, Hayastan, and Hayasa. P. Kretschmer proved linguistically that in the name **Hayasa**, the base **haya-hayo** is combined with the Hittite-Luwian toponymic ending **-sa** (-asa).¹²⁶ As we can see, the Hittites named it in Hayeren (Armenian) after their own endonym: **hay**.¹²⁷ Therefore, Hayasa means land of Hay (Armenians).

Inscriptions refer to the nation of Hayasa under the alternate name Azzi, which was the capital state of Hayasa (located in the Chorokh River basin). Scholars connect the name Azzi to the Armenian word *azn* (ազն), meaning tribe, generation, family, race.¹²⁸ According to the dominant viewpoint, Azzi is considered synonymous with Hayasa.

The state of Hayasa is mentioned for the first time in Hittite king Mursilis II's "Annals", where he records information about the raids of his grandfather, Tudhaliya III, and his grandfather's son, Suppiluliumas. The "Annals" testify that the king of Hatti, Tudhaliya III, organized and participated in two raids on Hayasa with his son,

¹²⁴ The name **Teg-Arama (Tegarama)** consists of the components **tog, teg** and **arma-arama**, the first of which means "race, tribe, house, country", and the second is a tribal name. Tegarama means arma-armens tribe, race, country, house (HJP, 1961, pr. 1, p. 121). The name Tegarama, or Togarama, is identified with the country of Togarmah in the original Hebrew Bible (Ezekiel 27:14), Till-Garimmu in Assyrian-Babylonian inscriptions, and Tunn Torgoma in the Greek translation of the Bible. It is located in Gamirk-Cappadocia.

¹²⁵ E. Forrer, *Hajasa-Azzi, Caucasia*, 1931, p. 9. P. Kretschmer, *Der Nationate Name Der Armenier Haikh*, 1932, number 1–7, Armenian summary: *Handes Amsorya*, 1937, numbers 7–8, pp. 429–432. Ghapantsian Gr., *Hayasa- The Cradle of Armenians*, Yerevan, 1947.

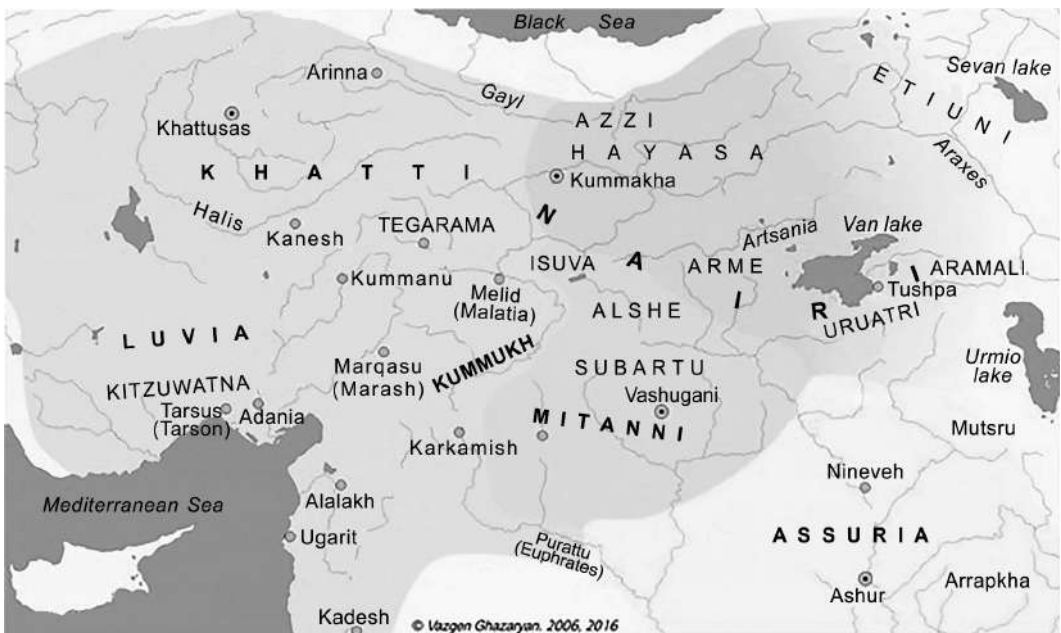
¹²⁶ G. Ghapantsian compared personal names from Hayasa with Hurrian ones (Ghapantsian Gr., *Hayasa- The Cradle of Armenians*, pp. 64-78), and he concluded that the language of the people of Hayasa was Hurrian. Ghapantsian's viewpoint is even more persuasive today, since both the Hurrians and Hayasans were natives of the Armenian Highlands, the Armenians. Later, G. Jahukyan proved that Hayasan is an Indo-European language, and we see a strong substrate of Hayasan in Armenian (G. Jahukyan, 1987, p. 281).

¹²⁷ Let us note, in Hittite inscriptions of *h* and *h* (*kh*), the same cuneiform symbol, *h* (*kh*), is used to designate either sound for the written toponyms. It is not accidental that scholars accepted and circulated the name of the country as Hayasa, and not Khayasa.

¹²⁸ G. Jahukyan, *The Hayasa language and its Relation to the Indo-European Languages*, Yerevan, 1964, p. 78.

Suppiluliumas. It is evident from that inscription that Tudhaliya III attacked Hayasa unexpectedly and was successful. However, his success was short lived because the Armenians quickly regained their strength and kicked the Hittites out of their country.

A second attack was organized with greater force, and led by the crown prince Suppiluliumas. This time the Hittites collided with the Armenian army, “infantry and charioteers”, who were led by King **Karanni** of Hayasa. The main battle commenced on the right bank of the Euphrates River, in the vicinity of the city of **Kumakha** (Com-magene, south of Malatya). During this battle, the Hittites did not succeed in achieving a decisive victory, as they subsequently launched more attacks. Researchers consider Kummakha the capital city of Hayasa, later comparing it to the settlements known as Kumakh-Ani or Daranaghi Ani. It is also believed that the name of the settlement Daranaghi Ani was named after the Hayasan king Anniyash.



Near East 15th-12th centuries B.C.

Hatti had great hopes of expanding, especially into the rich and prosperous Mitanni (present day Syria). All attempts at Hittite expansion ultimately ended in failure, facing the military might of Mitanni, the regional superpower at the time. Suppiluliumas I had a strong desire to turn Hatti into a powerful state. To achieve this, it was imperative to weaken Mitanni. Preparing a new attack, he tirelessly worked to ensure it would be a successful raid. To pull it off, it was necessary to make sure he could not be attacked from the rear. On the eve of the planned invasion, the Hittites were at war with Hayasa. It was critical to quickly end that war. Suppiluliumas managed to enter into negotiations and sign a peace treaty with the king of Hayasa, **Hukkana**. Hukkana, the aged king of Hayasa, preferred to sign a peace treaty with the Hittites. In accordance with the treaty, the Hayasans were expected to send military aid to

the Hittites during their raids against other nations. Hukkana was expected to keep quiet about the military secrets he was privy to, regarding future Hittite raids. The peace treaty benefitted the Hittites since they were able to temporarily isolate the Armenians, and even use their military prowess during their own raids. In order to strengthen the treaty, Suppiluliumas gave his sister in marriage to Hukkana, under the condition that she be his primary wife. According to the Hittite “Annals”, this treaty of friendship lasted until the passing of Hukkana. After that, mutual raids continued between Hatti and Hayasa.

Inscriptions confirm, when the Hittite king Mursilis II was involved in long lasting war with another of his neighbors, the Armenian king **Mariyas’s** son, **Anniyas**, prepared attacks against the Hittite nation. During one of those attacks, Anniyash took away a large amount of prisoners and booty. Mursilis demanded that they be returned, but his demand was rejected. Following this, the Hittites resumed military operations, which lasted four years, and did not bring prosperity to either side. In 1330 B.C., Mursilis gathered a large group of forces and decisively attacked. The Armenians tried to use their mountains and fortresses, but the Hittites bypassed those fortifications, arrived at the unprotected settlements, and, at the cost of heavy casualties, they captured them. However, the Hittites were unable to effectively assert their control over Hayasa. Later texts confirm that in the 14th-13th centuries B.C., the Armenians formed an alliance with the Hittites, and they were not a part of the Hittite kingdom.

The text of the peace treaty signed between Suppiluliumas and Hukkana affirms that there was no tyrannical regime in Hayasa. Suppiluliumas doesn’t address Hukkana, but rather the “people of Hayasa”, which means that the king ruled with the “people of Hayasa” or a council of elders. Hayasa also did not practice slavery. This is bolstered by the fact that slaves would often flee from Hatti to Hayasa, where they were given the opportunity to live as free people. The inhabitants were engaged in agriculture (in particular grape growing, in the text of Suppiluliumas treaty he threatens to destroy the Hayasans grape fields if they break the terms of the treaty), animal husbandry, craftsmanship, and metalworking.

Hayasa had a fighting army that consisted of charioteers, cavalry, and infantry. According to inscriptions, Hayasa was able to bring forth an army of 700 chariots and 10,000 infantry, which was a considerable force for that era. The Hayasans, the Armenians, were also excellent warriors, who were respected and valued, even by their enemies. The neighboring kings gladly accepted them into their service, particularly the Hittite kings during that time. Mursilis II’s inscription asserts that during one of his raids he hired 3,000 Armenian (Azzi) mercenary-warriors from Hayasa for his army, to serve as infantrymen and charioteers.

Hayasa is mentioned for the last time at the end of the 13th century B.C. in a Hittite text, as an enemy of Hatti.¹²⁹

¹²⁹ HJP, 1971, p. 201, footnote 41.

STATE FORMATIONS IN THE ARMENIAN HIGHLANDS END OF II MILLENNIUM B.C.

ARME-SHUPRIA

In the southern and central regions of the Armenian Highlands, after the fall of the mighty Kingdom of Mitanni, in the mid-13th century B.C., small kingdoms were created in the former area of Mitanni: **Shupria** (also Shubria, upper reaches of the Tigris River), **Isuva** (Tsopq, lower and middle reaches of the Aratsani River and further north), **Babkhi** (vicinity of the Armenian Taurus Mountains), and others.

These kingdoms are attested to in the inscriptions of Assyrian kings, who continued to organize campaigns against the southern parts of the Armenian Highlands. These frequently occurring raids provided a cause for the unification of the small Armenian kingdoms. In the southwest regions of the Armenian Highlands, the states of Tsopq and Ardznik created the state entity of Arme-Shupria, a tribal unification made up of Urumeans (according to Assyrian inscriptions) or Arme-Shuprians (Ara-rat-Urartian inscriptions), the Mushki, and other tribes from the Armenian Highlands.

Let us note, at the end of the II millennium B.C. to the early I millennium B.C., Assyrian-Babylonian written sources utilize the ancient name **Subartu** or **Šubartu**, taken from Sumerian-Akkadian sources, which is equivalent to the name Mitanni.

Sumerians from Northern Mesopotamia, more precisely the region of the middle and upper reaches of the Tigris (the future Hurri-Mitanni territory), use the name **Subir**, and the Akkadians use **Subari**, **Subartu**, or **Šubartu**. In their inscriptions, Adad-nirari I (14th century B.C.) and Tukulti-Ninurta (13th century B.C.) use the name **Subartu** (Šubartu) when referring to Armenian Mesopotamia (Hurri-Mitanni).¹³⁰ However, in the time of Tiglath-Pileser I (1115-1077) and Ashurnasirpal II (884-859), Subartu-Subria was not the main area of Hurri-Mitanni, but rather the northwestern part of the Hurri-Mitannian state (Aghdznik-Sassoun), whose inhabitants were considered Hurrians by the Assyrians.¹³¹ In this territory, Subartu-Shupria, Tiglath-Pileser I, during his fourth raid, refers to it as Hanigalbat (Haligalbat). Tiglath-Pileser I also uses the name Mitanni to refer to Armenian Mesopotamia. In one of his inscriptions, Tiglath-Pileser I writes, "Under the patronage of Abnil, my guardian god, in the wilderness of the land of Mitanni... I put an end to the lives of four raging bulls".¹³² This was in the time when Mitanni had broken down. The weight of the struggle against the Assyrians shifted to other parts of the Armenian Highlands: Shupria, Nairi, Urumu, and Uruatri. Semiticized Mitanni was not a threat to Assyria. Raids organized by Assyrian kings, after the fall of Mitanni, against the southwest areas of the Armenian Highlands, were the impetus behind the unification of the small kingdoms there. As mentioned above, the state entity of Arme-Shupria was formed.

¹³⁰ AVIIIU, 1, 3.

¹³¹ AVIIIU, 2, 89, 23, 26.

¹³² A. Khachatryan, 1933, p. 50.

Along with the Shupria and Shubria names, scholars also use the name **Urumu**. Later on, in the 8th century B.C., Shupria is included in the newly formed Ararat-Urartu state entity in the Armenian Highlands. In the inscriptions of Ararat-Urartian kings, Shupria is called **Arme**, **Urme** (also Urmeukhi, Urmeuni), which implies that the tribes that participated in the formation of this state were Armenian tribes. The capital city of Arme Shupria was Nitziriani, with no consensus on its precise location. Possible locations include the settlement of Angegh, or Nprkert.

The creation of the state of Arme-Shupria in close proximity to Assyria caused concerns among the Assyrian rulers, and in 1115 B.C., Tiglath-Pileser I ascended the throne in Assyria and began organizing raids against Shupria. In his inscriptions, Tiglath-Pileser I reports that half a century before his kingship, the Mushki (from Mush) had captured the countries of Alzi (Aghdznik) and Purulumzi, who then refused to pay taxes to the Assyrians. In Tiglath-Pileser's first year of reign, the Mushki, Arim-Armens, and other tribes who joined up with them, restarted attacks against the southern part of Northern Mesopotamia, capturing the nation of Kadmukh. Led by five kings, their army of 20,000 troops took control of the state of Kadmukh, on the right bank of the Tigris (south of the upper reaches of the Western Tigris).

Assyrian king Tiglath-Pileser I decided to organize a powerful raid to decisively crush the union of Armenian tribes. The battle took place in the nation of Kadmukh and ended in victory for the Assyrians. Thousands of soldiers were killed and 6,000 soldiers were taken captive. However, the inhabitants of Kadmukh refused to pay taxes to the Assyrians and joined forces with the Mushki. Troops from Babkhi, mountain dwelling Hurrians (Armenians), also came to their aid and joined them. In a new battle near the Name River, a tributary of the Tigris, Tiglath-Pileser I was once again victorious against the united forces. Again, there were great spoils and many captives were taken, one of which was a "king" of the mountaineers, Kali-Teshub's son Kili-Teshub, who was also called Irrupi.¹³³ Continuing his raid, Tiglath-Pileser I besieged the Urakhinash fortress, around the upper reaches of the Tigris. Its king, Shadi-Teshub, son of Khattukhi, surrendered to save the castle from destruction.

Excited by his successfulness, the following year (1114 B.C.) Tiglath-Pileser I organized more raids against Alzi and Purulumzi, who had once again refused to pay him tribute. "I subjugated the land of the strong and disobedient Shubari. I placed the heavy yoke of my lordship on the lands of Alzi and Purulumzi, who had ceased paying taxes and tribute", wrote Tiglath-Pileser I on his inscription.¹³⁴ It is evident that the Assyrians were constantly organizing new raids in the Armenian Highlands, which clearly shows their success was partial and temporary.

In the 9th century B.C., in the fight against Assyria, a new mighty empire was formed in the Armenian Highlands: Ararat-Urartu. In order to achieve decisive victory against Assyria, it was imperative to unite all the state entities, large and small,

¹³³ HJPK, p. 17.

¹³⁴ HJPK, p. 18.

in the Armenian Highlands. The unification process did not go easily. The first king of Ararat-Urartu was Menua, who captured the field of Taron, under the control of Arme-Shupria, in order to unite the Armenian kingdoms. However, he was unsuccessful in the end. Arme-Shupria (Sassoun) was finally united with Ararat-Urartu under Argishti I. In 773 B.C., he organized a new attack against Arme-Shupria. Argishti I recounts these events in his inscriptions.

“I rose up (to attack) the land of Urme, I conquered the land of Urme, destroyed the land. I got as far as... the country, I burned the towns, I took the men (and) women to the land of Biainili, altogether 24 thousand 813 men in one year, some I killed, others I took alive (I took them too) 25 horses... 744 thousand head large horned cattle, 48825 head small horned cattle”. It is appropriate to think that these atrocities (displacing thousands of people to other parts of the country, seizing large and small horned cattle) were committed in order to subdue Arme-Shupria (Sassoun). These numbers speak to Arme-Shupria’s immense economy and the great quantity of human resources they possessed.

Discovered in Van, Sarduri II’s (764-735) inscription states that Arme-Shupria rebelled again and in 751 B.C., Sarduri II embarked on a raid and pacified the region, once again uniting Ararat-Urartu. Sarduri II’s inscription is the first to mention the name of the country of **Arme**.

One of the Assyrian kings, Asarhaddon (681-669), makes it clear in his inscription that Arme-Shupria had once again achieved independence. It also becomes clear that in Arme-Shupria there existed a unique social situation, in which people were more free than in the neighboring countries. This is why so many slaves and other subjects fled from the neighboring countries and sought refuge there. This is recounted in Assyrian king Asarhaddon’s letters to Arme-Shupria’s (Sassoun’s) king Nik-Teshub. In an attempt to take back his escaped subjects from Arme-Shupria, Asarhaddon sent four letters to the Armenian king, who did not meet the demand of the Assyrian king. The disgruntled Asarhaddon writes in his third letter, “It is unheard of that a mighty king should repeat himself a second time, and I, a mighty king, write to you for the third time... Since you do not fear my threats, you do not put aside your pride, thereby you push me to unsheath the mighty weapon of Ashur and prepare for an attack”¹³⁵

Insubordinate, and preserving his independence to some extent, the ruler of Arme-Shupria’s audacity was certainly due to the fact that he felt he was strong. Let us note, after lengthy preparations (nearly 8 years), in 673 B.C., Asarhaddon finally launched a raid against Arme-Shupria, as a result of which he received his subjects back, mutilating them beforehand to the horror of the other subjects. As a sign of good will, king of Ararat-Urartu Rusa II (685-645) returned the subjects that had fled to Arme-Shupria. After that battle, Shupria lost its independence, but subsequent incidents show that this territory was a part of the Armenian state created under the leadership of the Yervandunis (580 B.C.).

¹³⁵ AVIIIU, 67(g).

NAIRI

II MILLENNIUM B.C.

In the 14th-10th centuries B.C., Assyrian written sources report information about a group of kingdoms, state entities, formed in the western regions of the Armenian Highlands, in the areas of the upper reaches of the Tigris and Euphrates rivers, which are referred to collectively as the “countries” of Nairi. The state entities mentioned are **Kadmukhi** (Corduene), **Mushki** (Moks), **Alzi** (Aghdznik), **Arme-Shupria** (Armenian Mesopotamia, Sassoun), **Ishuva** (Tsopq), **Dayaeni** (Tayk), and other names.¹⁴⁴ It is accepted that **Nairi** means “land of rivers”.¹³⁶



Nairi

¹³⁶ Let us note, later, from the mid I millennium B.C., Greek authors (Herodotus, Xenophon, Strabo) refer to the inhabitants of the Armenian Highlands as **Kardukhs** (Korduks), **Alarods** (Ararat), **Pasyans** (Basen), **Sayspers** (Sper), **Taokhs** (Tayk), and other names, which are naturally associated with the geographic names of the areas and emphasize the locality, province, state, and not the race (ethnic affiliation). Today we use the distinctions Loretsi, Artsakhtsi, Zangezurtsi, and other names which do not account for tribal affiliations or race, but designate Armenians from Lori, Armenians from Artsakh, or Armenians from Zangezur; all of which are collectively Armenian. For comparison, let us note that the ancient Greeks were also called Acaean, Spartans, Dorians, Macedonians, etc.

According to the opinion of scholar M. Gavukchian, Nairi (nur, nuira, nura) is of Semitic origin and means “land of fire / sun”.¹³⁷ Another viewpoint claims Nairi means “highlands”, nau-a meaning “stone” and i-ri meaning “settlement”, which are in Assyrian, but borrowed from Sumerian.¹³⁸

The name Nairi is mentioned for the first time in the inscription of Assyrian king Salmanasar I (1274-1245 B.C.). Salmanasar states that during his raids in the north, he conquered the land of Nairi, among other countries. Salmanasar’s son, Tukulti-Ninurta I (1261-1239 B.C.) also organized raids against the land of Nairi, at which time he was met by a resistance including 43 (40) tribal leaders, whom the Assyrian inscriptions call “kings”. In Salmanasar I’s inscription, we encounter the name Uruatri for the first time. The Assyrian kings continued their looting raids into the Armenian Highlands. Tiglath-Pileser I (1115-1077 B.C.) organized a raid against “the lands of far away kings, who were on the shores of the Upper Lake (Lake Van) and have never been conquered”. With great difficulty, his army overcame 16 mighty mountains, crossed the Purattu River (Euphrates), and prepared to attack. He was met by the unified military forces of 23, then 60 tribes from the country of Nairi. Regarding this, Tiglath-Pileser writes, “Altogether 23 kings of the country of Nairi, united their countries, their their chariots, and their troops, and they willed to fight and do battle”¹³⁹ According to the inscription, the Nairian tribes had 120 chariots. It becomes clear from the inscription that other Nairian tribes came to the aid of the countries of Nairi, led by their kings, and the number of tribes totalled 60.

We notice that regularly the Nairi “countries” united their armed forces in order to resist the destructive and avaricious raids of the Assyrians. This inscriptions makes it clear that Tiglath- Pileser I was successful and turned the country of Nairi into taxpayers. “The extensive country of Nairi, the entirety of its borders, I took possession of”, writes the king of Assyria.¹⁴⁰

Another king of Assyria, Ashurnasirpal II (883-859 B.C.) organized four raids against the country of Nairi, during which he dealt cruelly with the resistant and unsubmitive Nairi tribes, imposing heavy taxes on the inhabitants. In his inscription, he writes, “In the country of Nairi, 250 cities with mighty walls, I destroyed, dismantled, I turned it into a ruined and desolate country”.

Assyria’s new king, Salmanasar III (858-824), had to execute new punitive raids into the Armenian Highlands. “In the 15th year of my reign, I went to the land of Nairi”, then entering the mountain passes, “From the Urartian Aramu cities to the source of the Euphrates, I dismantled, I destroyed, I burned them with fire”, writes Salmanasar III.¹⁴¹

¹³⁷ M. Gavukchyan, 1973, (p. 177).

¹³⁸ V. Khachatryan, Armenia in the XV–VII Centuries B.C., Yerevan, 1998, p. 83.

¹³⁹ HJPK, p. 19.

¹⁴⁰ HJPK, p. 20.

¹⁴¹ HJPK, p. 23.

For the next king of Assyria, Sargon II (721-705), a new raid is again necessary against the country of Nairi. His inscriptions tell that during one of his attacks, he overcame the hard to reach, towering mountains, canyons, and dense forests of the Armenians, until he reached Armarili (Armariali, located between Lake Van and Lake Urmia), Ayadu (Hayadu, likely located to the north of Lake Van), and other nations.

Conquering the area of Uayais, on the outskirts of Ararat-Urartu, and the strong city of the same name, he got closer to King Yanzu's country, in the land of Nairi. The king of Nairi destroyed the country and, in order to save it from a massacre, he personally presented himself to Sargon II, bringing with him tribute (draft horses, large and small horned cattle).¹⁴² The frequent destructive and ravenous raids by the Assyrian kings led to the Nairian tribes uniting yet again, creating a powerful entity. In the battle against Assyria in the IX century B.C., after Mitanni's dissolution, a new and powerful state was formed in the Armenian Highlands, which included Nairi. The entities of Nairi and Ararat-Urartu were made up of the same ethnicity, Hay-Armens, as confirmed in both Assyrian and Ararat-Urartian inscriptions. In their inscriptions, Assyrian kings Adad-nirari II (911-890) and Ashurnasirpal II (883-859) use the names Urartu and Nairi synonymously, which becomes common in the inscriptions of later time periods. Sargon II continues to call the nation of Nairi by the name Urartu in his inscriptions; he calls Lake Van the sea of the country of Nairi.¹⁴³

The first kings of Ararat-Urartu called themselves kings of Nairi. King Sarduri I (840-825) writes in his inscriptions (in Assyrian), "Sarduri's inscription, son of Lutipri, of the Great King, King of the Universe, King of Nairi, who has no equal..."¹⁴⁴

Starting from the XIII century B.C., we notice Assyrian written sources begin using the names Uruatri, Uratri, and Urartu along with the name Nairi. This indicates Nairi and Ararat-Urartu are interchangeable names for one Armenian nation.

¹⁴² HJPK, p. 33.

¹⁴³ AVIIU, 46, 47, 49, 51.

¹⁴⁴ UKN, 1.

CHAPTER FIFTH

THE FORMATION OF ARARAT KINGDOM (ARARAT-URARTU)

II MILLENNIUM B.C., ARAMIAN DYNASTY

Written sources from the 13th century B.C., as already mentioned, utilize the names Uruatri, Uratri, and Urartu interchangeably with Nairi. In Assyrian king Salmanasar I's (1274-1245) inscription, we encounter the name of the tribal association of Uruatri for the first time. "In the year of my reign, the Uruatrians rebelled against me. I organized the assembly of my troops and climbed their mighty mountains... Their... 8 nations and their world forces I defeated. Their 51 cities I destroyed, I burned down, the tactician, their possessions I stole. Their chosen generation I took into my service, I imposed heavy taxes... The city of Arinnu, who... despised the god Ashur... I destroyed, I burned down...", wrote the king of Assyria.¹⁴⁵ We observe that Uruatri was a union of eight small kingdoms.

It has already been noted that scholars place the central districts of Ararat-Urartu in the southeastern region of Lake Van. Ararat-Urartu's central districts are also northeast of Lake Van, in the middle of the Armenian Highlands, which was known in ancient times by the name Ararat or Ayrarat.¹⁴⁶ The last version is more plausible, as evidenced by the ancient name Ararat, which the Assyrians rendered as Urartu.

In the inscription of Assyrian king Ashurnasirpal II (883-859), the name Urartu is used instead of Uruatri.

The inscriptions of the Assyrian kings indicate that they regularly embarked on destructive, pillaging raids against the Armenian Highlands. During those raids, they brutally exterminated the inhabitants, robbing, destroying, and burning hundreds of settlements, gardens, vineyards, capturing tens of thousands of able-bodied residents. Raids of the settlements and temples brought the Assyrians enormous wealth, including gold, silver, bronze, iron, and tens of thousands of small and large horned cattle, which they write about in their inscriptions with great pride. For the small Armenian kingdoms, it was crucial to unify and put an end to this situation. This task was accomplished by the people living around Lake Van, the "Uruatrians" (Araratians), whose kings succeeded in unifying the tribes of the Armenian Highlands and forming one, unified, mighty nation, which the Assyrian inscriptions would call **Urartu**. It is well known that the name Urartu is the Assyrian variant of the name Ararat. It is widely accepted in historiography to use the name Urartu for this particular Armenian state. They, the "Urartians", called their state Biainili. Ararat-Urartian kings use this name in their inscriptions to refer to their country. Biainili, without the -ili toponymic component, reads **Biain**, which becomes Vian, Van in the Van dialect.

¹⁴⁵ HJPK, p. 14.

¹⁴⁶ M. Katvalyan, On the Location of the Cradle of the "World" Urartu, article, (online version).

The exact time of the founding of Ararat kingdom (Urartu) is unknown. The first known king of the state was Aram (860-843), who is referenced under the names Arame and Aramu. The capital city was Tushpa (Van).

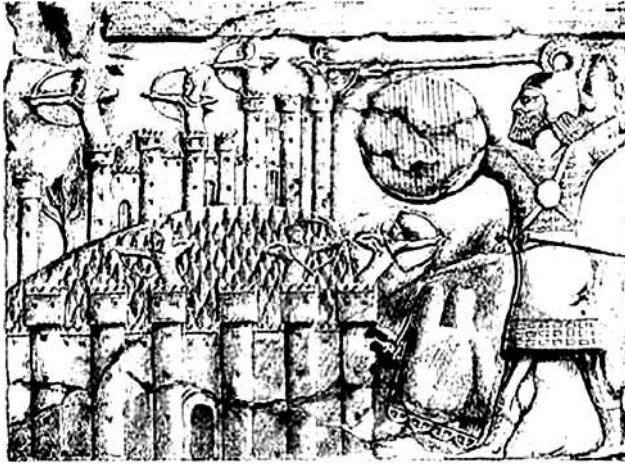
We notice that the first king of Ararat-Urartu is Aram, therefore this 300 year period of Hayq's history, when the throne of the country was passed down from father to son, can be called the period of the **Aramian dynasty**. For comparison, let us remember the Yervandyan, Artashesyan, Arshakuni, Bagratuni, Rubenian, and Hetumian dynastic names, which were also derived from the names of their first kings.

Assyria attempted to destroy this newly founded Armenian state with a decisive blow. From the very beginning of his reign, Salmanasar III (858–824) organized a series of raids against the Armenian Highlands. During his first raid, he captured and looted the border fortress-city of Sugunia. For his second raid, he captured and destroyed a series of Armenian kingdoms (Alzi, Sukhmi, Dayaene) Tayk) and cities, including Khubushkia, a suburb of Nairi. “(I went to) The royal city of Artsashku (Artski), of Urartian Aramu. Aramu put his hope in the multitude of his troops, to fight and do battle, he brought out many of his horsemen against me. I defeated him and plundered his horses and war equipment...”, writes Salmanasar III. The inscription attests that King Aram, avoiding a new battle, took part of his army and went away to the mountains. However, Shalmaneser III finds it necessary to undertake another, a third, attack against Ararat-Urartu. He proudly writes in his inscription, “From Aramu’s Urartian cities to the source of the Euphrates (Aratzani) River, I destroyed, I demolished, I burned them with fire”.



Armenian warriors crossing over mountains, Balavat Gates

Salmanasar III attached special significance to his raids against Ararat-Urartu. He not only wrote about them, he had scenes from his capture of Sugunia and Arzashkun carved onto the bronze plates hanging from his gates at Balawat, his palace (near Nineveh). The scenes are very important for our understanding of the architectural design of ancient Armenian castles and cities. The depictions of the capture of Sugunia show a burning castle, walls, and towers. The defenders of the castle are also depicted, warriors wielding spears and archery bows. In the foreground is the Assyrian assault.



The heroic defense of Sugunia. The architectural structure of the castle is very beautiful. The walls, towers, and arched gates are symmetrical and striking. Balavat Gates, British Museum.

The sculpture of the capture of Arzashkun depicts a battle scene. Another depiction shows a burning castle, without defenders.



Battle of Arzashkun, Balavat Gates

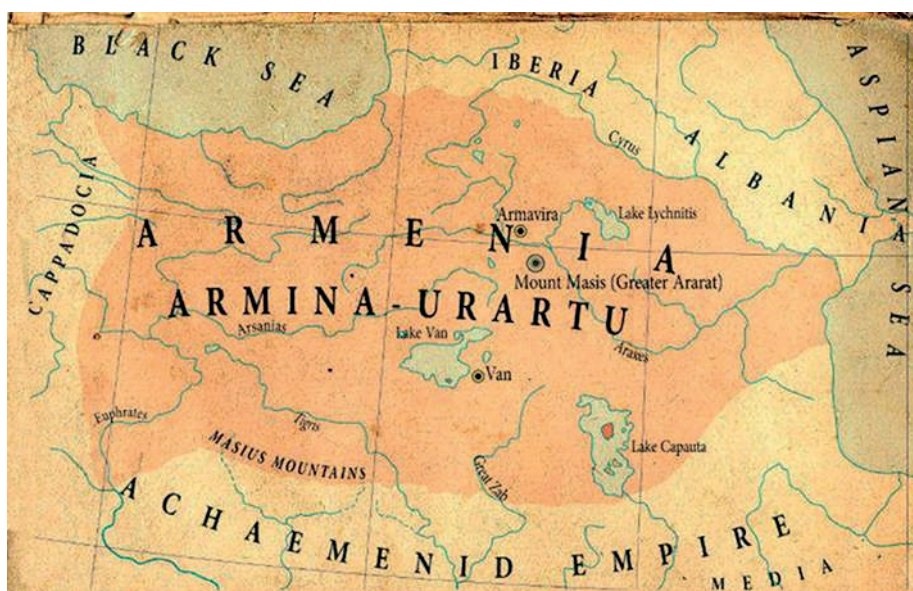


Capture of Arzashkun, Balavat Gates

ARARAT KINGDOM – ASSYRIAN CONFLICT STRUGGLE FOR THE STRONGER STATE

Sarduri I (840-825). The fourth battle with the Assyrians was headed by the aging Salmanasar III's military commander, Dayyan-Assur. This time, they were met with a new king of Ararat kingdom, Sarduri I, whom the Assyrians called Sidur. This time, Dayyan-Assur does not dare to enter the depths of the country, because he is met with absolute resistance from Sarduri.

Shalmaneser III's annals claim that the Assyrians were victorious, however, this win is not recorded in the usual prideful and arrogant manner that was typical of Assyrian victories. We get the impression that Sarduri put up a mighty resistance, and in their later raids, the Assyrians no longer venture into the depths of the country. They are satisfied with occupying and looting the settlements on the periphery. The internal situation in Assyria was not calm either. There was dissension and disputes over the throne, which weakened the empire. Under these conditions, having a period of relative peace, Sarduri I is able to strengthen the foundations of the state, complete structural works, and so on. It is known that he moved the capital city from Arzashkun to Tushpa (Van). An inscription carved on the wall of the city's citadel by Sarduri I reads, "Sarduri's inscription, son of Lutipri, of the Great King, King of the Universe, King of Nairi, who has no equal, Glorious Shepherd, who does not fear a battle, who subdues the disobedient..., who received tribute from all kings... I brought the stones from Alniun (city), I built the ramparts like this".¹⁴⁷ This inscription testifies that Sarduri I is brave, unafraid to fight, subdues the disobedient, receives tribute from them, builds ramparts, and so on.



¹⁴⁷ HJPK, pp. 39-40. UKN, 1.

The work started under Sarduri I, strengthening the state and building new infrastructure, was carried on by his son, Ishpuini (825-810). In the bilingual (Assyrian-Urartian) Kelishin Stele (ParskaHayq) inscription of Ishpuini, and his successor Menua, is where we encounter the first use of the name Biainili. The Assyrian version states, “King of the land of Nairi”, and the “Urartian” text states, “King of the land of Biainili”.¹⁴⁸



Kelishin (Parskahayq) Stele bilingual inscription

In the world of academia, there are a large number of scholars (A. Gytse, J. Garstang, Gr. Ghapantsyan, B. Piotrovsky) who hold the belief that “Assyrians called the country of the Hurrians Nairi, and they see Hurrian political traditions within the formation of the state of Urartu”.¹⁴⁹ A. Gytse was convinced that the Hurrians, Mitannians, and Urartians were one people, albeit represented by different governing entities. He writes, “The Hurrians of Nairi, in the 9th century B.C., united and, under the leadership of Lutipri’s son Sarduri, they created the state of Urartu”.¹⁵⁰

Ishpuini (825-810). We learn about the works of Ishpuini thanks to his inscriptions discovered on the rocky cliffs of Van and elsewhere. Ishpuini’s contemporary counterpart in Assyria was King Shamshi-Adad V (823-810), who, with great effort, managed to unite his own country. However, it was no longer the former indomitable Assyria. Ararat kingdom was on an upward path, but Assyria’s raids were no longer as prosperous as they had once been. Shamshi-Adad succeeded in breaking into the outskirts of Ararat kingdom but once. The Assyrian king tells that he captured **from**

¹⁴⁸ UKN, 19–27, HJP, 1971, p. 291.

¹⁴⁹ B. Piotrovsky, *Kingdom of Van (Urartu)*, Moscow, 1959, p. 49.

¹⁵⁰ B. Piotrovsky, 1959, p. 50.

Ushpinai (Ishpuini) 11 cities and their peripheral settlements, and received a tribute of draft horses from the king of Nairi.¹⁵¹

Ishpuini took over the throne at a mature age. In the beginning, he ruled alone, and later with his son Menua. They left inscriptions detailing their activities, which are in localized cuneiform writing and in the “Urartian” language. Their inscriptions tell of their raids, the expansion of their state borders, and the strengthening and building of new infrastructure. Ishpuini, putting great importance on strengthening the national defense, built several fortresses.



The king of Ishpuini, his wife, Prince Memua and his tutor-priest worship the god Haldi, bronze plate, Van

Ishpuini held the titles “Great King”, “Mighty King”, “King of the Universe”, and “King of the lands of Nairi, Sura, and Biaina”. Religious reforms were also instituted in his time. A national pantheon of gods was selected, with the chief deity being Haldi. Inscriptions place special emphasis on the information regarding the erection of a temple to the chief god Haldi. In the time of the joint kingship of Ishpuini and Menua, not only were fortresses built, but also temples. The names of the deities and the number of animals sacrificed to them were inscribed in the carvings of the Van Fortress, which is called by the name “Haldian Gates” (later “Mher’s Door”). “Haldian Gates” implies that the god would emerge from there, through the cavities of the rocks.

Military reforms were conducted as well, thanks to which a permanent, standing army was created. The inscriptions inform of additional mercenary troops, which were recruited from non-subordinate tribes.¹⁵² During Ishpuini’s reign, the state borders were expanded, in the south from Lake Urmia to the land of Parsua (later Parsq), in the north to the Haykakan Par mountain range, and, even further north, from the upper reaches of the Araks River until the border of the country of Etiuni.

¹⁵¹ AVIIIU, 73.

¹⁵² HJPK, p. 42.

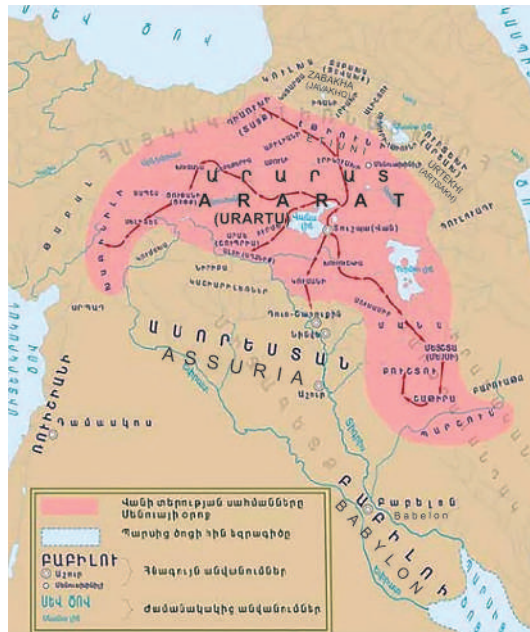


Belt fragment. Ararat-Urartu's king and queen are depicted, the king is holding a sacred wine cup. To the right is the beautiful fortress of the capital city of Tushpa, with serrated-top enclosures, towers, watchtowers, and an arched sculpted gateway. 9th century B.C.. Comparable to castles built in Europe in the Middle Ages.

In the final years of his life, Ishpuini handed the throne over to his son, Menua, and he assumed the office of priest, engaging in spiritual activities. **Ararat kingdom would continue to become even more powerful under the leadership of King Menua I.**

ARARAT KINGDOM MIGHTY STATE OF NEAR EAST ASIA

Menua I (810-786). During the reign of Menua I, Ararat kingdom grew more powerful. Written records assert that Menua I organized successful raids in the northeast, reaching the Chorokh River basin, Araks River, Ararat Valley, and Lake Sevan. On the right bank of the Araks River, he subdued the nation of Erikuakhi. Then, understanding the importance of the Ararat Valley as a means for strengthening the kingdom, he crossed the Araks River and entered the Ararat Valley, on the right bank of the river, building the fortress-city of Menuakhinili as a base, further strengthening his position in the area. Appointing a governor and stationing a garrison there, Menua continued advancing further into the Ararat Valley. Menua and the other kings of Ararat kingdom constructed numerous fortresses, which later flourished into settlements. The establishment of fortresses allowed the strengthening of those areas. It also ensured their safety and provided a foundation for successful military operations in the future. The inscriptions of the Assyrian kings, with their accompanying images and sculptures (Balavat Gates), testify that Armenian castles and fortresses were architectural marvels, with their serrated-top enclosures, and numerous towers. Castles were often built upon hills and cliffs, for a better view of their surroundings, and at the same time making it all the more difficult for an enemy to conquer.



Ararat-Urartu during the reign of Menua

Building upon his success, Menua also subjected the lands of the Etiuni (from the Ararat Valley to Lake Sevan) and Diauehi (Tayk). These victories in the north further strengthened the position of Ararat-Urartu, and secured their defenses. In these conditions, Menua aimed to expand the borders of his state to the west and southwest. Successfully accomplishing these goals, he united Ararat-Urartu with Tsupani (Tsopq), Melitia (Malatya), Arme-Urme, Alzi (Aghdznik), Khate, and other nations. As we can see, Menua was uniting the small Armenian kingdoms of the Armenian Highlands. Thanks to Menua I's military successes, Ararat-Urartu became one of Near East Asia's superpowers, who could now hold their own in a fight against the mighty Assyria. But, at this point, Assyria was not trying to invade the territory of Ararat-Urartu. Military engagements commenced in border regions or in other nations (Manna, Khubushkia).

Menua also placed great importance on the economic growth of the nation. During his reign, an extensive irrigation network was built. Menua I built a 72 kilometer canal, the "Menua Canal", that survives to this day, and was used to transport water for drinking and irrigation to the capital city of Tushpa. Menua left inscriptions along the length of the canal, 14 of which have survived. In the inscriptions he curses, by the hand of the gods, anybody who dares to break the inscriptions or credit themselves with the building of the canal. Later, Armenians called it the "Semiramis Canal", crediting the Assyrian queen for its construction. Menua I also established canals between Lake Van and other regions in the south. Menua also writes in his inscriptions that he founded a vineyard, which he called "Menua's Vineyard". The wine they extracted from the grapes was used during sacrifices and celebrations dedicated to the gods. It is assumed that he also founded a hospital, called "Menua's Hospital". The king of

Ararat kingdom ends his inscriptions with a curse against those who destroy or erase his inscriptions: “Let Haldi destroy him from under the sun”.¹⁵³

Menua also established a racetrack where he trained. In one of his inscriptions he writes, “By the power of Haldi, Menua son of Ishpuini says, it was from this place that the steed, named Eagle, leapt twenty-two cubits”¹⁵⁴

Ararat–Urartu experienced still greater achievements under the reign of Menua I’s son, Argishti I, reaching the height of the empire’s political and military greatness.

Argishti I (786-764). Argishti I was a mighty king of Ararat kingdom, who succeeded in uniting the entire Armenian Highlands into Near East Asia’s most powerful empire. He was able to put the once mighty Assyria on the back burner, and neutralize the threat from that country. He spent the majority of his reign involved in military battles, which he wrote about on Van’s **Khorkhor** rock, called the **Khorkhorian** annals. Those annals show that from the start of his reign, Argishti was compelled to organize campaigns against the north, which had once again been occupied by the nations of Diauehi (Tayk) and Eriakhi (Shirak), who likely tried to disobey the central authority after the passing of Menua. During his next raids, Argishti also subdued Zabakha (Javakhk), a strong kingdom of Etiuni, and reached Lake Sevan.

Successfully completing his raids in the north, in 782 B.C. Argishti I organized a raid into the southwest, during which time he reconquered Tsopq, Melitia (Malatya), and a cluster of areas in Northern Mesopotamia. After his successes in the north and southwest, Ararat kingdom gained even more strength, fortifying its position in the area.

Argishti I felt himself strong and mighty enough to enter into conflict with Assyria. He had his first military clash against Assyria in 781 B.C. in Khubushkia (Eastern Tigris Valley), where Argishti was victorious. Then, building on the momentum from his success, Argishti rapidly marched his army to the southeast, capturing a number of countries south of Lake Urmia that had been under the Assyrian sphere of influence. In 780 B.C., the Assyrians attempted to break in through the country’s southern border, but Argishti I managed to defeat the Assyrians and push them out of the country. Advancing in his success, Argishti pursued them, but this time the Assyrians put up a resistance, causing Argishti to abandon his pursuit. Argishti’s fame had spread and his name alone struck the Assyrians with dread and fear. This is mentioned by Assyrian king Salmanasar III’s military commander, Shamshilu who admits, “The name of Argishti the Urartian is frightening like a heavy gale, his powers are vast”.¹⁵⁵

Military skirmishes and alternating raids and battles continued. Over the following years, Argishti I succeeded in taking over Manna, Bushtu, Parsua, and other countries, moving into the territory of Assyria, where he returned home with great

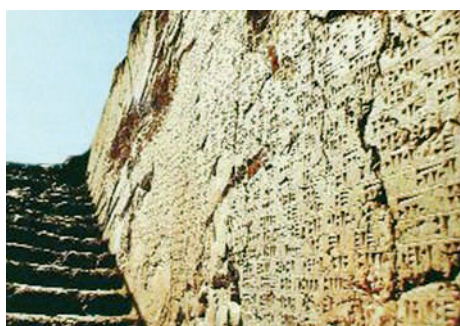
¹⁵³ HJPK, p. 51.

¹⁵⁴ HJPK, 1981, p. 52. One cubit is 51.8 centimeters. Menua’s horse likely jumped 11 meters and 39 centimeters, which remained unsurpassed for nearly 2800 years until 1975 when a German, called Bergman, leapt 22 meters and 16 centimeters on his steed, Swinger.

¹⁵⁵ AVIUI, 38.

riches and captives. Let us note, in the inscriptions of Argishti I and other kings, we do not come across hideous atrocities (rivers flowing with blood, stacking mountains of human skulls, the blinding of tens of thousands of captives, burning vineyards and gardens) as done, and pridefully bragged about in writings, by Assyrian kings. In the Khorkhorian annals, Argishti writes, "...some I killed, some I took captive..."¹⁵⁶

Argishti I, like the other kings of Ararat kingdom, concerned himself with construction. The Khorkhorian annals tell that Argishti I, in his fifth year of reign, 782 B.C., founded a city-fortress, which he called Erebuni. Regarding that event, the Khorkhorian annals testify, "By the command of the god Haldi, Argishti, son of Menua, built the city of Erebuni for the glory of Biainili... The land was barren... I performed mighty works here. From the countries of Hatti and Tsopani I settled 6,600 soldiers".¹⁵⁷ In that inscription, the name Erebuni appears, however, it is not clear exactly where the new settlement was founded. But in Yerevan, in the year 1950, during the excavations of the Arin Berd Hill, two similar inscriptions were discovered, upon which were written, "By the grace of the god Haldi, Argishti, son of Menua, I built this magnificent fortress, I called it Erebuni, for the glory of the country of Biainili. The land was barren. I performed mighty works here...".¹⁵⁸ It became clear, both inscriptions indicated the establishment of Erebuni-Yerevan.



Fragment from the Khorkhorian annals



Argishti I's inscription on the establishment of Erebuni, Arin Berd

In his eleventh year of reign, 776 B.C., Argishti built one more city-fortress in the country of Aza, left bank of the Araks River (Ararat Valley), which he called by his name, Argishtikhinili (later called Armavir). These city-fortresses became extremely important military, economic, and administrative centers for the northern regions of country. In Erebuni and Argishtikhinili, palace buildings, barracks, temples, storehouses, and other buildings were constructed. Canals were built in the vicinity of the city-fortresses, allowing for vineyards and gardens.

Thus, during the reign of Argishti I, Ararat kingdom became one of the most powerful states in the region, whose borders stretched westward to the upper reaches

¹⁵⁶ HJPK, pp. 57-66.

¹⁵⁷ UKN, 28. HJPK, p. 57.

¹⁵⁸ HJPK, p. 55.

of the Euphrates River, to Assyria in the south, Lake Urmia in the east, and north to the Chorokh River Basin, Chldr Lake, and Lake Sevan. In 764 B.C., Argishti I's son, Sarduri II, ascended the throne.



Ararat-Urartu in the 9th-7th centuries B.C.

Sarduri II (764-735). The events that occurred during the reign of Sarduri II are recorded in his inscriptions, which have been discovered in the modern day territory of Iran, on the left bank of the Euphrates River, near Lake Sevan and the settlement of Tsovak, on the shores of Lake Van near Arjesh, and so on. Sarduri II also wrote annals, which were discovered in the rocky cliffs of Van, on the southern side. The wide geographic distribution of the inscriptions testifies to the large scale raids he organized. Building on the northern territorial successes of his predecessors, Sarduri again subjugated the countries of Eriakhi (Shirak) and Etiuni. He reached the western regions of Lake Sevan, establishing his rule over the countries of Uelikukh, Arkukin, and Urtekhe (Artsakh). During his raids in the north and northwest, after passing Chldr Lake, Sarduri reached the shores of the Black Sea, the country of Colchis (Kolkhida), subjugated the tribes living there, and returned with great treasures.

Under these conditions, Sarduri organized raids against the southeast, from the territory south of Lake Urmia until he reached Babilu (Babylon). Thereafter, developing his strategy, Sarduri entered Assyria and defeated the army of Ashur-nirari IV (753-746). Aiming to isolate Assyria from the west, Sarduri organized a new successful campaign against the land of Kummukh (Commagene). After these achievements, Sarduri created a military alliance against Assyria, whose members included Ararat kingdom, Melitia, Kummukh, Arpad, and other small nations in the area.

As his predecessors did, Sarduri II engaged in the advancement of the country's economy. He executed great works of construction. In multiple cities in the country,

Tushpa, Argishtikhinili, Erebuni, and others, he built castles, temples, barracks, storehouses, and canals, and established vineyards and gardens.

The final years of Sarduri II's reign were not peaceful. The threat coming from Ararat kingdom forced the Assyrian ruling elite to unite. In 745 B.C., Tiglath-Pileser III ascended the Assyrian throne and was successful in restraining and uniting the diverging forces and reorganizing the army. The king of Assyria also focused special attention on creating a spy network. In 743 B.C., Tiglath-Pileser III attacked Arpad, an ally of Ararat kingdom. Sarduri II and the other allies hurried to their aid. During the ensuing battle in Arpad, Sarduri and his allies were defeated. Having suffered heavy losses, Sarduri had to abandon the battlefield in order to save his life. "I pursued him as far as the bridge over the Euphrates, to the border of Urartu", wrote Tiglath-Pileser III in his annals¹⁵⁹ Tiglath-Pileser gained a victory in Commagene as well. Then, giving chase to Sarduri, Tiglath-Pileser III invaded Ararat kingdom with great force, and surrounded the capital city of Tushpa. The Assyrians were unsuccessful in capturing the capital city, and after looting and destroying a series of settlements, they returned to Assyria. These defeats brought severe consequences for the stability of the country. A number of outlying, and even central, countries broke away and declared their independence.

Thus, during the reign of Sarduri II, the empowered Ararat kingdom was able to maintain its leading position for several decades, but at the end of his reign, he lost a portion of his territories in the south and east. Under these harsh conditions, in 735 B.C., the son of Sarduri II, Rusa I, ascended the throne.

Rusa I (735-713). During the early years of his reign, Rusa I managed to avoid clashing with the Assyrians. He occupied his time sorting out internal state matters. In order to strengthen his control over his domain, he placed limitations on the right of kings, governors, and tribal leaders of the adjacent states. Then, he appointed governors from within his council of elders, who were tasked with supervising activities, or else to personally manage a given territory. After enhancing his position inside the country, Rusa focused on strengthening his position in the north, in the Lake Sevan basin and the surrounding countries. As a result of his well planned raids, he was able to regenerate a powerful standing in the north. On the shore of Lake Sevan, near the modern city of Gavar, inscriptions have been discovered that allow one to image Rusa I's endeavors in that region. The inscription is as follows: "By the power of Haldi, Rusa, son of Sarduri, says: I subjugated the royal nation of Velikukhe, made him a servant, appointed a governor to the nation, confirmed his as a governor, I built Haldian gates and a magnificent castle..."¹⁶⁰

As his predecessors had done, Rusa I established castles, cities, canals, and gardens. He founded the city of Rusakhinili (near Tushpa, its suburb), named after himself, and created an artificial lake to provide water for the plains and gardens, which he called Rusa's Lake.

¹⁵⁹ AVIUI, 41.

¹⁶⁰ HJPK, p. 84.

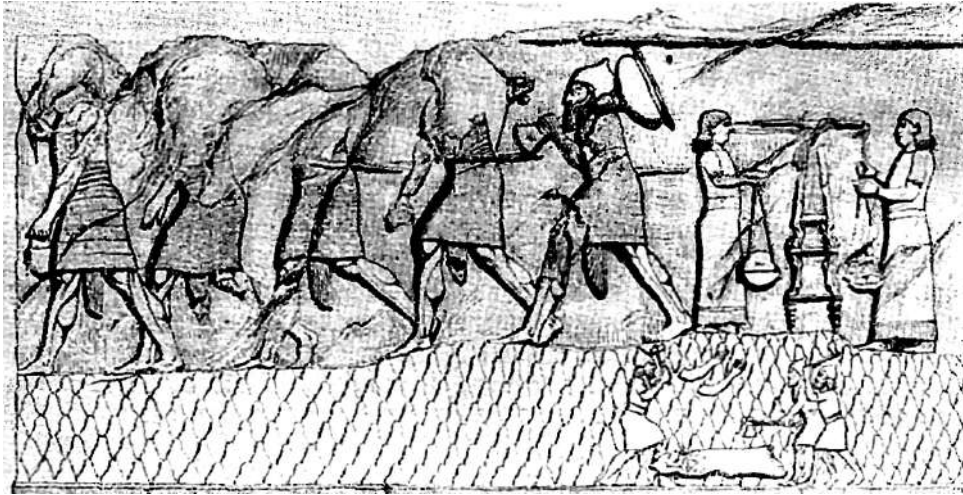
The military victories he gained in the north allowed Rusa I to envision the possible victories awaiting him in the south. Favorable conditions were created for just that. In 727 B.C., Salmanasar V assumed the Assyrian throne, amidst internal discontent over his policies. One of Rusa's inscriptions (Topuzava) testifies that he experienced military successes in the south, strengthening the strategically important Ardini (Musasir), which was also a spiritual center. However, the situation changed when Sargon II (721-705) assumed the Assyrian throne, who was successful in bringing law and order to his country. After this, he prepared a decisive attack against Ararat kingdom. Under these conditions, Rusa I was forced to wage war on his northern border against a new enemy, the Cimmerians, who, having crossed the Caucasus Mountains, had begun marauding the country's border lands. In the ensuing battle, Rusa's army was defeated. Fueled by the loss, riots began breaking out in the country. A group of central and peripheral provinces rebelled and declared their independence. Turbulence also infected the troops. With the help of his loyal troops, Rusa was able to quell the rebellion within the army. He was also able to restore order to the central territories. Despite these hardships, Rusa I was able to keep his country together.

Through his scouts, Assyrian king Sargon II kept tabs on the events transpiring in Ararat kingdom while preparing for an attack. Sensing the danger of the situation, Rusa I began seeking allies. The small countries and cities that opposed Assyria created a confederation, which united with the nation of Mannaea. To assert his hegemony over Mannaea, Sargon II decides to initiate an attack in 714 B.C.. Rusa decides to enter into a critical battle, however, knowing from his spies about the attack and battle being prepared, under the cover of night, Sargon makes a surprise attack against Rusa's army on Mana's Mount Uaush, and is successful. Rusa is able to flee the battlefield and arrive in Tushpa. Building on his success, Sargon II invades Ararat kingdom unhindered, leaving a path of destroyed, burned, and plundered settlements in his wake. He also captures Ardini-Musasir, plundering the vast wealth stored there in the king's palace and Haldi's temple. Sargon II had scenes from the seizure and looting of Haldi's temple in Ardini-Musasir carved into the bronze gates of his palace at Dur-Sharruki.

Many gold, silver, and bronze items were stolen from the palace of King Urzana and Haldi's temple in Ardini-Musasir. Among the stolen gold items are shields (6 units, Haldi's temple), swords, a lock shaped like a human hand, armchairs covered in gold and silver, and large amounts of jewelry and other valuables. One of the golden swords weighed 13 kilograms (26 minas).

Among the stolen silver items are shields (20 units), spears (96 units), bows, quivers, swords, a sceptre, large bowls (basins, 67 units), 393 light and heavy bowls, numerous jewels and other items, which according to inscriptions were made on site.¹⁶¹ The listed items attest to how advanced the level of crafting in gold and silver were in the land of Ararat (Urartu).

¹⁶¹ HJP, 1971, p. 381.



The Assyrians pillaging the temple of Haldi in Ardini (Musasir). In the lower segment of the image, soldiers are dismembering the bronze statue of the king of Ararat kingdom, who is wearing a helmet and has his right hand raised in a saluting position. The statue weighed about 60 talents. Dur-Sharruki.

One year after these events, Rusa I passes away. However, Sargon II writes in his inscription that, upon Rusa I's hearing of the Musasir temple being taken over and pillaged by him, he committed suicide. This does not seem to correspond with reality, due to the fact that Rusa I is mentioned in Assyrian inscriptions a year after these events transpired. Rusa I was succeeded by his son, Argishti II.

Argishti II (714–685). Argishti II understood that he had to implement prudent policies to ensure the security of the country. Assyria understood that Ararat kingdom posed a threat as well, and had not yet been definitively crushed. Spies on both sides were incessantly reporting intel on the events happening in each country. Under these conditions, both sides abstained from active military operations. However, Assyrian king Sennacherib (705–680) started military operations against Elam, Media, and other small nations, resulting in the weakening of his position in the north. This prompted Argishti II to further strengthen his own position in the north. A raid is conducted, which results in the subjugation of Arkhuru, Ushulune, Bukuru, and other nations, which are located in the territory of the lower reaches of the Araks River.¹⁶² Presumably, it was during this raid that Argishti II reached the shores of the Caspian Sea.¹⁶³

Argishti II also accomplished building projects. He built a castle and canals, and planted vineyards and orchards with fruit-bearing trees. As a result of Argishti's well-balanced policies, Ararat kingdom was able to recover from a grievous defeat at the hands of Sargon II. Ararat kingdom grew more powerful during the reign of Argishti II's son, Rusa II.

¹⁶² HJPK, pp. 8–88.

¹⁶³ HJP, 1971, p. 332.

Rusa II (685–645). Rusa II achieved some success in both his foreign and domestic policies. Forming an alliance with the Cimmerians at the northern borders of the state, and utilising their forces, Rusa organized a campaign against the west. The alliance proved to be vital since the council of elders formed in the army had become insubordinate. The raid ended in success. He captured Mushkin (Phrygia), Hatti, and Halitun, which are located in the eastern part of Asia Minor.

Rusa II is also well known for his building projects, especially in the Ararat Valley. During the excavations of the Zvartnots temple, an inscription that was discovered there attests that Rusa planted vineyards, gardens, and forests, and in order to water them he built a canal which transported water from the Ildaruni (Hrazdan) River to the Ararat Valley. Let us note, the canal is still functional today.

In the present day territory of Yerevan, Karmir Blur, Rusa II established a new city-fortress, which he named Teishebaini (early 7th century B.C.), after the god Teisheba. Teishebaini became an important strategic, religious, and cultural center for the northern part of the country.



The city-fortress of Teishebaini (reconstruction),
by architect-remodeler R. Sargsyan

However, Rusa II was not able to continue engaging in peaceful building projects. New, dangerous enemies appeared from the north, Scythians, who settled into the Caucasus and began organizing predatory raids into the countries of Near East Asia, at that time Assyria. Assyria managed to form an alliance with the Scythians, and use their strength against its own enemies. Rusa II tried to establish friendly relations with Assyria to avoid an invasion from the Scythians, but his efforts did not yield desirable results. Instigated by Assyria, the Scythians attacked Ararat kingdom's ally, the Cimmerians, crushing them. Then, they entered northeastern territory of the country, destroying and pillaging multiple settlements. This blow by the Scythians greatly weakened Ararat kingdom. Under these trying conditions, Rusa II was succeeded by his son, Sarduri III.

THE POLITICAL SITUATION IN NEAR EAST ASIA

THE DECLINE OF ARARAT KINGDOM

Sarduri III (645-625). Sarduri III tried to enter into relations with Assyria, and to keep the integrity of his state. However, at the end of the 7th century, a new state arose, Media. Median tribes successfully united and created a nation. Media became exceptionally powerful during the reign of Kiaxar (625-585), who allied with Babylon in 612 B.C., and captured and ravaged the Assyrian capital Nineveh. Following this defeat, Assyria crumbled. Their territory was divided between Media and Babylon. Historical patriarch, Movses Khorenatsi, attests that one of the Armenian leaders (forefathers), Paruyr Skayordi, allied his military detachment with the Medes and participated in the sacking and destruction of Nineveh. In exchange for this assistance, Kiaxar recognized Paruyr Skayordi as king of the Armenians. It is assumed that Paruyr Skayordi was proclaimed the king of one of the Armenian state entities, Arme-Shupria (Armenia). Arme-Shupria (Sassoun region) always stood out for its rebellious spirit, and could have declared its independence from Ararat kingdom when the central government was weakened.

The central Armenian kingdom, Ararat kingdom, who was Assyria's ally at this time, was also under attack. In 609 B.C., the Medians and their allies invaded Ararat kingdom, captured the capital city Tushpa, and wreaked havoc there. This is attested to in the "Babylonian Chronicles". According to the information discovered on the fragmented inscriptions, for about half a century Ararat kingdom had a succession of several kings: Sarduri IV (635-625?), Erimeña (625-617?), Rusa III (617-609?), and Rusa IV (609-590?). During the reigns of these kings, the state consistently experienced territorial losses. Around 590 B.C., the Medians attacked Ararat kingdom's northern territory, approaching the Ararat Valley and ravaging several settlements along the way, including Teishebaini. We presume by this time Ararat kingdom was debilitated, the central government was unable to organize an adequate defense for the nation, its territorial integrity, and independence.

Thus, in the early 9th century B.C., the Ararat-Urartu kings from the **Aramian dynasty** were able to unite the small Armenian kingdoms of the Armenian Highlands after the fall of the Kingdom of Mitanni. They created one of the strongest states in the region, and for nearly three centuries they put up a heroic fight against one of Near East Asia's mightiest kingdoms, Assyria. They safeguarded the independence, and future, of the Armenian people.

The history of the kingdom of Ararat-Urartu concludes at around 590 B.C.. Under these difficult political conditions, the representatives of the **Yervanduni dynasty** take power into their hands in Hayq (the land of Ararat). A dynastic transition took place (or a royal coup). The history of the era of the Yervanduni dynasty of Hayq begins with the first king, Yervand I (580-560 B.C.).

ARARAT KINGDOM'S SOCIO-ECONOMIC RELATIONS: CULTURE, CRAFTSMANSHIP

Craftsmanship experienced especially significant development in the country. Archaeological excavations at different settlements have yielded a multitude of varying and beautiful weaponry, jewelry, and household goods made out of clay, copper, bronze, iron, gold, silver, assorted stones, and other materials. The excavations also unearthed wool, flax linen, and leather fabric scraps.

Craftsmen had achieved unparalleled skill and mastery, especially in the production of elegant gold and silver objects. During excavations, many opulent pieces were found, including rings, bracelets, earrings, temple ornaments, and other objects crafted with great sophistication. Additional crafts made of precious metals included gold and silver weaponry, daggers, swords, spears, shields, quivers, sceptres, throne fragments, bowls, censers, latches, and more. Gold, silver, and bronze weapons were donated to temples, especially temples to the god Haldi, under whose patronage the kings organized their raids. These donations, especially the shields, which were adorned with battle images of chariots, infantry, and cavalry, were hung from the walls of temples.



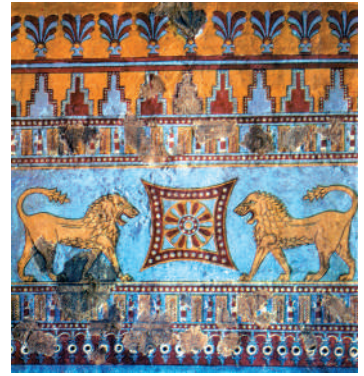
Sarduri II's bronze shield and quiver

ARCHITECTURE

The art of architecture had significantly increased in sophistication in Ararat kingdom. The kings of Ararat kingdom established multitudes of castles, cities, palaces, temples, storehouses, and more. The cities were methodically planned out. Citadels were erected on high ground or hilltops, and surrounded by mighty walls with serrated tops. The city was built outside of the citadel, and was inhabited by craftsmen, merchants, and others. Excavations in the cities of Tushpa-Van, Erebuni, Teishebaini, and Argishtikhinili show that built into the citadels were palace complexes, temples, barracks, granaries, wine cellars, workshops, and so on. The city spread around the citadel was often walled in as well. Residing inside the citadel were the king, or governor, with his attendants and soldiers. Different fortress-cities built in different locations served as economic and military bases. Temples were built in the cities dedicated to gods, especially the god Haldi, as well as the patron deity of that city.

FINE ARTS

The inhabitants of the country Ararat were not only skillful builders, but also skilled artists. The expertly decorated palace and temple walls were adorned with beautiful and colorful murals featuring gods, kings, priests, various creatures, and sacred trees and plants. Statuettes and sculptures of gods, people, and animals fashioned from metal (bronze, iron), stone, and animal horns were recovered during excavations. In Teishebaini (Karmir Blur), statuettes of the god Teisheba and the goddess Arubani (Bakbarthu) were found. Strikingly beautiful bronze helmets, shields, and quivers were also found bearing images of gods, kings, chariots, horsemen, lions, bulls, and winged beings.



Murals, Erebuni (cf. Mitannian murals)



Adoration of the Tree of Life, mural, VIIIc. B.C.
Chmin (Altin tepe), Western Armenia

WRITING AND LANGUAGE

We receive information about the works done by the Araratian kings through their directed cuneiform inscriptions. Reports of their military raids and construction works were preserved and have reached us today. There are more than 600 cuneiform inscriptions of a religious or socio-economic nature carved on cliffs, stone cuttings, clay, metals, and other objects. The inscriptions are genuine, similar in type and form, repeating the same words many times. The inscriptions during the reign of Sarduri I and his successors were written in Assyrian localized cuneiform. During the reign of Ishpuini, a local cuneiform system was created. The cuneiform is syllabary, written from left to right, without hyphenation. Aside from cuneiform, they also utilized hieroglyphs.

Scholars consider the language of the cuneiform inscriptions of the kings of Mitanni (Hurri Mitanni) to be related to the language of the cuneiform inscriptions of the Araratian kings. Hurrian spelling is characterized by the use of extra vowels. This type of writing is also inherent in “Uartian” spelling. It has also been noted that the language of the Hurrian inscriptions found in Urkesh is similar to “Uartian”. Scholars (I. Dyakonov) note the language from those inscriptions can be considered Hurrian or Uartian, since it equally resembles both Hurrian from the II millennium B.C. and Uartian from the I millennium B.C.. Thus, there is conclusive evidence that Uartian cuneiform originated from the Hurri-Mitannian group, and not Akkadian writing from the Assyrian group.¹⁶⁴ The Ararat–Uartian and Hurrian languages are structurally congruent. Their phonetic formats also share similarities. In both languages, we encounter the same inflectional endings, pronouns, and suffixes. In turn, Hurrian and Ararat–Uartian have significant similarities to Armenian, including:

Hurrian

salora
halul
khindzori
nuranti
amma

Armenian

salor (սալոր, plum)
khaghogh (խաղող, grape)
khndzor (խնձոր, apple)
nur (նուր, pomegranate)
ama (ամա/ մայր, mother)

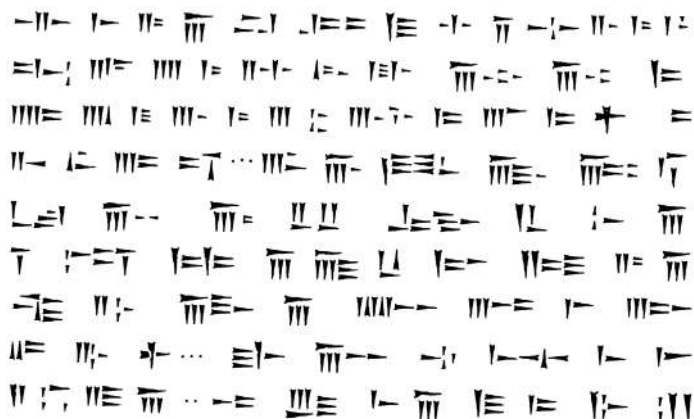
“Uartian”

Evri “lord”
suri “weapon”
tsari
ultu

Armenian

avri (ալի, god)
sur (սուր, sword/ sharp)
tsar (ծառ, tree)
ught (ուղտ, camel)

¹⁶⁴ I. Dyakonov, 1968, p. 14; I. Dyakonov, 1967, p. 119.



Sarduri II's cuneiform inscription, carved on a cliff near the village of Tsovak. Sarduri writes, "The god Haldi went on a campaign with his weapon, he defeated the nation of Arkikuni. Sarduri says, I went out on a campaign and captured the nation of Arkakuni. I made it to the nation of Urtekhene. By the power of Haldi, Sarduri, son of Argishti, Powerful King, Mighty King, King of Kings, Lord of Tushpa".

AGRICULTURE

The kings of Ararat-Urartu placed great importance on the development of the nation's agriculture. Vineyards were established, orchards of fruit trees planted, grain sowed, and so on. To irrigate all of these, they built multiple canals. Evidently, when building these canals, it was often necessary to dig tunnels in the mountains. Tunnels were also dug out while building roads.

An extensive irrigation network was built in the country during the time of Menua I. During Menua's reign, the 72 kilometer long canal of the Ancient East, "Menua's Canal" (later attributed to Assyrian queen Semiramis), that is still in operation today, was built to supply drinking water and irrigation to the capital city Tushpa (Van). Menua also built canals from the south of Lake Van to other areas. Rusa II, while founding cities, including Rusakhinili (near Tushpa), not only established canals and gardens, but also an artificial lake to water and cultivate the valley. The reservoir was called Rusa's Lake in his honor.

A canal was also established in Teishebaini (Karmir Blur), which transported water from the Hrazdan (Ildaruni) River to the Ararat Valley. This canal has also been preserved to this day. The inhabitants were engaged in agriculture, farming, and viticulture. Viticulture was one of the most important branches of the Araratian economy. The Armenian Highlands offered favorable conditions for the development of viticulture. It is not incidental that every king established a vineyard and installed canals. Nearly every city had large wine storehouses. During the excavations of Teishebaini (Karmir Blur), vessels were discovered for the production of beer, with traces of beer brewed from barley and millet.

The inhabitants were also engaged in animal husbandry, especially in the mountain and foothill areas.

STATE ORDER

In the Kingdom of Ararat-Urartu, the head of the country was the king, whose position was hereditary and power was absolute. The members of the royal family, the king's brothers, children, and other relatives, also played an important role in the management of the country.

Administratively, the state was divided into large provinces which were appointed governors by the royal court. In some cases, dominion was left to former kings or chieftains in conquered countries, who were required to pay tribute and provide soldiers for planned future raids. Advisors (council of elders) held an important position in the management of the nation, and they were representatives of influential families. Information was discovered on cuneiform tablet inscriptions at Toprakkale (Erzurum, Sper province) regarding the royal court; it is a list based on Rusa I's courtiers of his city, Rusakhinili (a suburb of Tushpa). The list is quite extensive, consisting of 5,507 people, of which 1,113 are unnamed, 3,784 are eunuchs (including various officials), 162 servants (including 10 winemakers), and 400 other people, likely soldiers, craftsmen, service staff,¹⁶⁵ etc. In the court, great confidence was placed in the eunuchs, who were often entrusted with important positions. In an inscription discovered at Teishebaini, the following government officials are mentioned: "one with a seal", "account persons", "money persons", "sowing persons", "baker" (cook), and "senior shepherd"¹⁶⁶ It is particularly interesting that in Rusakhinili, 119 people worked under the "account persons" (modern day economist) title.

The earthly king's patron was the chief god Haldi; in turn, the king was his representative on the earth. The king carried out all his work on the earth in the name of Haldi, and under the patronage of Haldi.

THE MILITARY

Information regarding the military has been preserved in the inscriptions of kings Ishpuini and Menua I. In the battles fought against the countries in the upper reaches of the Araks River and further north, the Urartian army numbered 15,000 infantry, several thousand (exact thousand unknown)... and 460 cavalry, and 66 chariots. As we notice, the army was made up of infantry, cavalry, and chariots. The following, in turn, consisted of spearmen, axe wielders, bowmen, and other units. Those who served on the striking force of the Ararat kingdom military, the elite forces ("the royal regiment"), were noble-born youths who received military training and seasoned, skilled warriors.

Armenians have always placed great emphasis on their cavalry, and the reputation of the Armenian cavalymen was widespread throughout all of Near East Asia. The

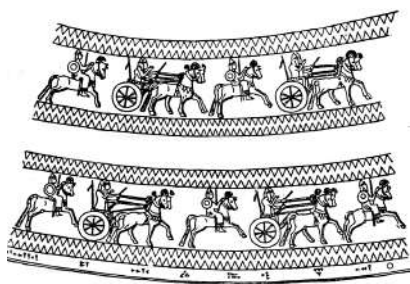
¹⁶⁵ HJP, 1971, p. 344; I. Dyakonov, *Urartian Letters and Documents*, M-L, 1963, pp. 25–26, 39.

¹⁶⁶ I. Dyakonov, *Urartian Letters and Documents*, No. 2, 5, 7.

country had specialized horse-breeding farms for the kingdom, which provided the army with steeds for combat. It is well known, on the eastern (Subi province) and northeastern (Bari province) sides of Lake Urmia, there were royal horse-breeding farms and stables, which supplied trained horses for the “royal regiment”. The soldiers were armed with the best weaponry of the time. They had weapons of iron and bronze, and were protected with armour, shields, and helmets. During the archaeological excavations at Teishebaini (Karmir Blur), Erebuni (Arin Berd), and other localities, discoveries were made of bronze shields, helmets, quivers, and belts emblazoned with images of chariots, horsemen, and infantrymen, which allow us to draw conclusions about the armament of the Ararat kingdom army.



Infantry and charioteer warriors, bronze plate, Erebuni, 8th century B.C. (marching army of Argishti I)



Mounted and charioteer warriors, section from Argishti I's helmet, 8th century B.C.



Spearman and bowman infantry warriors, fragment of a quiver, early 1st millennium B.C.

The military also had subdivisions of **engineers** and **scouts**. There was a **commander in chief** (turtan) and **second in command** (second turtan). Also mentioned are **colonels**, **chieftains**, **engineering commanders**, and **captains**.¹⁶⁷ The army was mostly recruited from the population of free craftsmen and agriculturalists within the country. They also utilized the armed forces of subjugated countries and prisoners of war. We deduce that Ararat-Urartu had a well-developed administrative and military state apparatus, which is specific to a highly advanced state.

¹⁶⁷ AVIUI, 50, (3, 32, 38).

Thus, the state of Ararat kingdom, created in the Armenian Highlands in the 9th century B.C., existed for nearly three centuries. Built on the continuation of the **Hurri-Mitanni traditions**, they created a highly advanced culture, which still surprises and captivates us today with its originality and refined artfulness.

THE ARARAT KINGDOM PANTHEON

There is information regarding the pantheon of Ararat kingdom near the Van Fortress, in the carved rock inscriptions, which is known as the “Haldian Gates” (“Mher’s Door”). The authors of those inscriptions, as noted above, were kings Ishpuini (825-810 B.C.) and Menua I (810-786 B.C.), during whose time the pantheon of the country was settled and brought together. The inscription mentions the names of 72 deities. The number of animals they require for sacrifice is also listed. Let us discuss a few of the deities of the Ararat kingdom pantheon.



Mher’s Door, Van

HALDI

Haldi is the chief god of the pantheon of Ararat kingdom. In the bilingual Kelishin Stele, the god’s name is written in “Urartian” as **Aldi**, and takes the form **Haldi** (Khaldi) in the Assyrian version. In contrast to the majority of the gods in the ancient Armenian pantheon, there is ample information regarding Haldi, thanks to recovered inscriptions and cultural materials (murals, relief sculptures, weaponry, jewelry).



Haldi standing on a lion, Erebuni

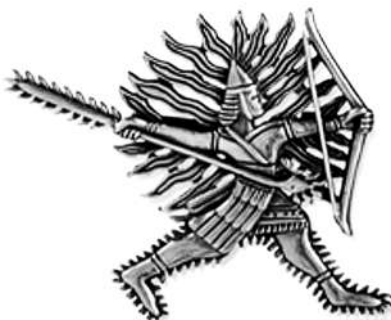
Haldi is often depicted sitting on a throne, standing on a lion, standing on a bull, and so on. Clearly visible on his headgear are horn-like protrusions, which are a symbol of divine origin.

Haldi was the god of life, vegetation, agriculture, building, and war. Although the Araratian pantheon had a sun god (Shivini), Haldi was also god of the sun, since he has all the qualifying attributes that are indicative of a sun god. His accompanying symbols are the lion and eagle, he is depicted as a winged deity, he is depicted with rays of light, etc.



Pendant with an image of Haldi (gold, silver),
8th-7th centuries B.C., Metropolitan Museum

The building projects and military raids of the kings of the Aramian dynasty were consecrated in the name of Haldi. In inscriptions, we continually encounter “by the power of the god Haldi”, “Haldi raided, subdued the land of Hatti under his own weapons...”, “Argishti, son of Menua, says: Haldi gave me strength and gave me power”, “For the sake of Haldi, I performed these feats in one year”, and other similar expressions.



Haldi was a god of war and the sun

Haldi is often mentioned as a god of war and victory, since, in the imagination of the king and the people, he was leading their armies and bringing them victory. Argishti I refers to this in the Khorkhorian annals of Van, “Haldi is my strongman, Haldi’s weapon is my strength...”.¹⁶⁸

¹⁶⁸ HJPK, p. 59.



Haldi, standing on a lion, gives a bow and arrow to a king in military vestments going on a raid. The star (Venus) symbolizes that the raid was favored by the god; gold pendant, from the area of Van, 8th century B.C.

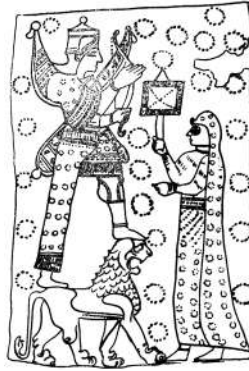
Haldi was also the god of life, since he was most often asked for “life, happiness, greatness”. He was the patron of craftsmen, creative works, construction, and agriculture, since cities, temples, written inscriptions, canals, and gardens were established in his name.

Haldi’s main temple was located in the southern region of the Armenian Highlands, in the city of Ardini (Mutsatsir or Musasir in Assyrian). That temple was also called “Shield House”, since shields hung down from the frontal facades and pillars of the temple. At both sides of the entrance, there were two large spears and two statues in praying positions. The spear was considered a symbol of the war god Haldi.



Haldi's temple in Ardini-Musasir
(according. Sargon II's palace's relief image), 714 B.C.

Since Ardini was located in the southern region of the Armenian Highlands, which often did not enter the bounds of Ararat kingdom, it is appropriate to conclude that **Ardini was an ancient sanctuary in the Armenian Highlands** from much earlier times. Let us also note, this temple was where kings from the Aramian (Araratian) dynasty were coronated. This is also where the royal treasures were kept. It is perceptible that the Ardini-Musasir temple of Haldi (and the other temples) served as a prototype for classical Greco-Roman architecture.



Haldi and Arubani.

Haldi standing on a lion, Arubani with a flag and a long veil

The name of the god Haldi seems to be a combination of the Armenian nominative gods Haya (Hay-di=Hal-di) and AR (AR=Al-di, “L” to “R” phonetic change). We observe that the name **Ardini** (Ar-di-ni) also has a connection with the name of the god AR, and means **city of the AR god** (in Armenian, the words **di**, **dik** relate to god). Many Araratian settlements contain the suffix **ni**, **ne** such as Erebuni, Teishebaini, and Etiuni (the similarities between the Haya-Haldi names will be discussed in a separate section). The goddess Arubani (Bakbartu) was the god Haldi’s wife.

TEISHEBA

Teisheba was the second god in the Araratian pantheon. He was the god of war, storms, and thunder and lightning (cf. the Hurri-Mitannian god Teshub). The expression “armies of the god Teisheba” is related to the worship of Teisheba, which is connected to his being a god of war as well.



Teisheba standing on a bull



Statuette of the god Teisheba,
battle flag’s (standard) upper portion,
Teishebaini, Karmir Blur

According to the inscription at “Mher’s Door”, Teisheba’s centers of worship were located in the cities of Kumenu and Eridia. The cities dedicated to the god Teisheba, built in the Ararat Valley and on the shores of Lake Sevan, attest to the prevalence of the worship of Teisheba. The first of these was established on the shores of Lake Sevan by Rusa I and is “the god Teisheba’s city”. The other, Teishebaini (Karmir Blur), was built by Rusa II in the current location of Yerevan.

Teisheba’s wife was the goddess Huba (Khuba) (**compare** the Hurri-Mitannian goddess Hebat). **compare**

SHIVINI

An important god in the Araratian pantheon was **Shivini**, god of the sun (**compare** to the Hurri-Mitannian god Shimige). **Shivini’s** name is mentioned third on the “Mher’s Door” inscription, after the gods Haldi and Teisheba. Study of this inscription reveals that the mythological beings “**Artuuarasi**” are connected to the worship of Shivini, as “armies of the god Shivini”. According to the “Mher’s Door” inscriptions, Shivini’s cult was centered around the cities of Tushpa and Uishini. Shivini’s wife was the goddess **Tushpuea**.



Shivini

ARUBANI

Arubani (Bakbartu) was the chief goddess of the Araratian pantheon, and the wife of Haldi. She is the only goddess that is mentioned in both the “Mher’s Door” inscription and other inscriptions as well. It is interesting that the mention of Arubani’s name is in relation to the building of infrastructure and the establishment of gardens. This allows us to assert that Arubani was not only the chief goddess of the pantheon, but also the patron deity of fertility, artists, and craftsmen. She is often pictured sitting on a throne with a branch in her hand. This goddess’s cult was centered around Ardini.



Arubani, IX century, bronze, Van

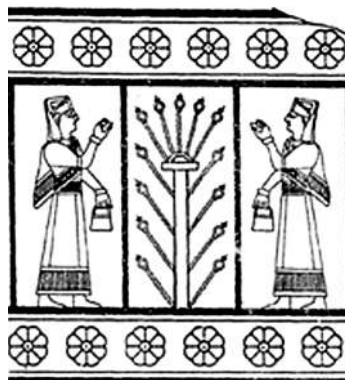


The queen prayerfully approaches enthroned goddess Arubani. Gold pendant, Rusakhinili (near Van), 7th century B.C.. veils, which have formed an integral part of Armenian women's clothing for thousands of years.



Pendant, with an image of Haldi and Arubani enthroned, silver, Berlin Museum

Inscriptions also mention **Khuthaini** (believed to be the god of fate), **Sielardi** (moon goddess), **Urat**, **Ivarsha**, **Aniku**, and other deities. The tree of life (plane tree, poplar) was also an object of worship in Ararat kingdom.



Priests, mural, Rusakhinili

CHAPTER SIXTH

ARMENIA DURING THE YERVANDUNI DYNASTY 580–201 B.C.

The Armenian Yervanduni¹⁶⁹ (Arvanduni) nakharar house representatives were the hereditary princes from the Hayots Dzor (Aruandunik) province, south of Van. Fragmentary historical information attests that the Yervandunis originated from the country of Matiene (Manna), next to Musasir-Ardini. The Roman historian Pliny the Elder (early 1st century) mentions the **Orontid** tribe's presence in that area.¹⁷⁰

The representatives of the Yervanduni dynasty had good relations with the Medes, and even established ties with them through marriage. By taking advantage of their ties and cooperating with the Medes, the Yervandunis took over Tushpa and its surrounding territories, once the domain of the kings of Ararat-Urartu, which had undergone seizure and destruction in 609 B.C., at the hands of the Medes. Tushpa was renamed Yervandavan. In his work “*History of the House of Artsruni*”, Tovma Artsruni provides vague information about King Yervand, who lived in the province of Tosp, which was eventually renamed Yervandavan in his honor.¹⁷¹ In a number of handwritten archives (18th century), the city of Van is referred to as Yervandavan¹⁷² and Yervandakan. The first representative of this dynasty was Yervand I (580–560 B.C.), whom Khorenatsi calls Sakavakyats.

The development of historical events show the Yervandunis were able to unite the large and small Armenian kingdoms, including Arme-Shupria. A united Armenian state was formed, which in early Armenian medieval historiography is called **Hayq**, but which the neighboring states refer to as **Armenia**. Movses Khorenatsi referred to the Yervandunis as Hayqazians. According to information from the *Cyropaedia*, the borders of Hayq (Armenia) were extensive, including the territories from Lake Van to Lake Urmia and the areas of Lesser Hayq and Greater Hayq. Tushpa, Van, became the capital city of the state. There was a dynastic change in Hayq, likely due to a palace coup, because the kings of Ararat-Urartu, the representatives of the Aramian dynasty, were no longer able to ensure the security and integrity of the country. We notice that many Armenian toponyms, dynastic names, and names of nakharars (nobles) contain the **ni** (or **nik**) and **uni** components found also in “Urartian” written sources. Let us mention some of them: Toponyms: Ardnik, Syunik, Gegharkunik, Grdmanik, Rshtunik, Apahunik, Bznunik...; Houses of Nakharars: Silkuni, Rshtuni, Artsruni, Vahuni, Khorkhoruni, Amatuni, Gnuni...; also Aratsani, Garni, Arzni, etc. Additionally,

¹⁶⁹ In Armenian historiography, the Yervanduni dynasty is also called the Arvanduni dynasty (S.Yeremyan, *Armenia According to the “Ashkharatsuyts”*, pp. 51, 108).

¹⁷⁰ *Plinius*, VI, 1, 18.

¹⁷¹ *Tovma Artsruni*, *History of the House of Artsruni*, 1887, 50.

¹⁷² Mesrop Magistros Archive, file 33, p. 270 (Matenadaran).

in Movses Khorenatsi's work "*History of the Armenians*" and the "*Gahnamak*", the following nakharar houses and dynastic names are mentioned: **Artsruni**, **Mandakuni**, **Amatuni**, **Marzpetuni**, and **Muratsan**. These are much earlier names of Mitannian origin, which date back to the time of Mitanni (start of II millennium B.C.).

Critically important to the research of this time period's history, Hayq's history, is the trilingual Behistun Inscription of Persian king Darius I, which utilizes three names for Armenia: **Armina** (Old Persian), **Urashtu** (Babylonian), and **Harminuia** (Elamite). This inscription proves, in the Armenian Highlands there have continuously been Armenian states, which their neighbors have called by a variety of names.

ARMENIAN-MEDIAN RELATIONS

Movses Khorenatsi asserts that the friendly relations between the Armenians and Medians did not continue for long. Media pursued an aggressive policy in the region, replacing the former allied and friendly relations with hostile relations. Yervand I was forced to become a junior ally of the Medes, to pay tribute and provide soldiers for their military campaigns. The Greek historian Xenophon (5th-4th century B.C.) has provided us with essential information for that time period, in his work "*Cyropaedia*". According to his records, the Armenian king, taking advantage of the war between Media and Babylon, decides to rebel against the Medes. Xenophon does not mention the name of the Armenian king, he uses the titles "King of the Armens" and "Armen King". However, based on the information preserved by Khorenatsi, he is assumed to be Yervand Sakavakyats. The Median king Azhdahak (Astyages, 585-550) sent his military commander, Cyrus, to quell the rebellion. Being informed of this, Yervand assembles his army and prepares for battle. However, the cunning Cyrus is able to capture Yervand and the members of his family. To Cyrus's question, "Why do you neither pay your dues, nor send troops, and why have you started building fortifications?", the Armenian king answers, "I aspired for freedom because I preferred to be free myself, or to free my sons". The situation is resolved through the mediation of Yervand's son, the crown prince Tigran, who, in his childhood, was a friend of Cyrus at the court of the Medes, a fellow soldier, and hunting companion. An agreement is reached in which previous obligations are upheld, however, the size of the tribute is increased. Xenophon reports the Armenian troops consisted of 8,000 cavalrymen and 40,000 infantrymen. To aid in the wars of the Medes, Cyrus commandeered half of the Armenian army, 4,000 cavalrymen and 20,000 infantrymen. Khorenatsi also writes about the affectionate and friendly relationship between Tigran Yervanduni and Cyrus.¹⁷³

¹⁷³ *Movses Khorenatsi*, 1981, pp. 85–89.



Kingdom of the Yervandunis. Armenia (Hayq) at the time of the Yervandunis.

The supremacy of the Medes does not last long in Near East Asia. Within the Median elite and in the royal court, dissent begins brewing against Azhdahak. Grievances escalated into a rebellion, led by the aforementioned military commander, the Persian Cyrus, from the Achaemenid dynasty. Three years of fighting ended in a victory for Cyrus. This was the founding of the Persian Achaemenid dynasty. During this struggle, the Armenians were Persian allies. After Yervand Sakavakyats, **Tigran Yervanduni** (560-535) and Cyrus (550-529) signed a treaty of friendship. Due to a scarcity of sources, it is assumed that Hayq was independent for some time. However, in the west, on the eve of organizing an invasion of Asia Minor, in 564 B.C. Cyrus entered Hayq as well, in order to fully secure his rear. Again, Hayq was obliged to pay tribute and provide soldiers for their future raids. Cyrus, and later on his son Cambyses (529-522), organized successful raids against the western areas of Asia Minor, reaching the shores of the Aegean Sea. They captured Babylon in 538 B.C., and Egypt in the year 525. According to Xenophon (*"Anabasis"* or *"March of the Ten Thousand"*), the Armenian cavalry and infantry, under the leadership of Tigran (later King **Tigran I**) and Cambyses, assisted in the capture of Babylon.¹⁷⁴

¹⁷⁴ Xenophon, *Cyropaedia* (translated by H. Manandyan), H. Manandyan, n. 1, Yerevan, 1977, pp. 384-400.

ARMENIAN-PARTHIAN RELATIONS. GREATER ARMENIA IN THE ACHAEMENID STATE. STRUGGLE FOR THE RESTORATION OF INDEPENDENCE

After the death of Cambyses, after internal battles in the country, Darius I (522-486) ascended the throne. Right from the first year of his reign, several countries rebelled. Hayq also rebelled, proclaiming its independence. Darius made great efforts to squash the rebellions. This is attested to in the aforementioned Behistun Inscription. To stop the rebellion, Darius sent his Armenian general Dadarsi to Armenia, but he was unable to suppress the rebellion of his compatriots, suffering defeat at the three ensuing battles. Darius sent a new army to Armenia, headed by a new general, Vahumisa the Persian. After two battles, Vahumisa was successful in quelling the Armenian rebellion. Darius's inscription does not mention the name of the Armenian general that successfully fought five battles against the Persian generals Dadarsi and Vahumisa. It is likely Darius did not want to eternalize the name of the Armenian general who rebelled against him. The Armenian king Tigran I was succeeded by his son, **Vahagn** (531 or 530 B.C.), therefore, it is likely that this Vahagn was the commander of the Armenian army that fought against Darius.¹⁷⁵ It is remarkable that, in Babylon, the anti-Persian rebellion was led by an Armenian called Arakha, son of Haldita. This rebellion was also put down, and Arakha was sentenced to death.

After suppressing the rebellions, Darius I instituted a series of reforms in an attempt to reinforce his rule. The country was divided into twenty provinces, or satrapies, each headed by a governor, which were called satraps. Within each satrapy, the ruling satrap had absolute power. They collected the tribute, organized an order of guards, provided safe roads, and so on. Armenia was included in the composition of the thirteenth and eighteenth satrapies. It is assumed that the center of the thirteenth satrapy was Van, and the eighteenth was Erebuni-Yerevan.¹⁷⁶ The Greek historian Herodotus (V century B.C.) testifies, the main country of the thirteenth satrapy, Armenia, paid an annual tribute of 400 talents of silver to Persia and provided 20,000 horses to the Persian army. The eighteenth satrapy paid 200 talents of silver. Darius I spent considerable time constructing roadways. He built a "Royal Road" that was about 2,000 kilometers long, which passed through the southern portion of Armenia (Tsopq, Aghdznik). The road stretched from the kingdom's east to its west, from the capital city Shosh to the Aegean Sea.

¹⁷⁵ *H. Ter-Movsesyan*, *History of the Armenians*, Venice, 1922, p. 140, L. Shahinyan, *Armenia and the First Arshakunis*, Yerevan, 1993, p. 289.

¹⁷⁶ *H. Jamkochian*, *History of the Armenian People*, Yerevan, 1975, p. 90, HJP, 1971, p. 452.

XENOPHON REGARDING ARMENIA ("ANABASIS", "CYROPAEDIA")

Xenophon's work, "*Anabasis*", provides information regarding the history of Hayq at the start of the 4th century B.C.. In 401 B.C., disputes over the throne began in Persia between two brothers, Cyrus the Younger and Artaxerxes II. In the hope of securing concessions, the Greeks decided to assist Cyrus the Younger, at his request, and sent 10,000 troops to Persia. In the ensuing fight, Cyrus was defeated and killed. The Greeks attempted to retreat to the shores of the Black Sea through Mesopotamia, by way of Corduene and Hayq, and from there, to their homeland. The Greek historian Xenophon was part of the Greek army, and he described the retreat of the Greek soldiers, as both a participant and witness. From Corduene, the Greeks entered into Armenia, which, according to Xenophon, was "a spacious, rich, and prosperous country" and was under the rule of the Orontas¹⁷⁷ (Yervand), which means that Yervand was the satrap of Armenia (the king, viceroy).

According to Xenophon, Yervand was a nobleman of great integrity, who was married to the daughter of the Achaemenid king Artaxerxes I, proving that Orontes-Yervand was a representative of the dynastic family of Yervanduni, and was **Yervand II** (404-360), the king of Hayq. One of Strabo's testimonies confirms that Orontes-Yervand was Hyudarnes, a fellow soldier of Darius I's ancestor.¹⁷⁸ Then, according to Xenophon, the Greeks continued their journey, reaching the Teleroas (Meghraget) River, and upon passing it, they reached Western Armenia, which was governed by (vizier) Tiribaz. Xenophon mentions the administrative regions of Armenia and Western Armenia. With relative accuracy, it is assumed that Armenia included the southern and eastern regions of the Armenian Highlands, while Western Armenia included the central and northwestern regions. We notice that Yervand is referred to as a satrap (viceroy, local king), and Tiribaz as a governor. This fact confirms there was one country overall, Armenia (Hayq), and Western Armenia was a region of Hayq-Armenia. This also attests to the fact that Hayq-Armenia was an expansive country, and from the management point of view, an administrative division of the country was pragmatic. It is also interesting that Yervand and Tiribaz were able to mint coins with their own images on them.



Yervand II, gold coin



Tiribaz, silver coin

¹⁷⁷ Xenophon, *Anabasis*, Yerevan, 1970, book 3.

¹⁷⁸ Strabo, *Geography*, XI, 14, 15.

According to Xenophon's *Anabasis*, Armenia was populated mainly by Hays. In order to go from the Kentrites River (Eastern Tigris) to the southern shores of the Black Sea, the Greeks passed through numerous Armenian villages. According to Xenophon, the majority of the Armenian population was engaged in an agrarian economy. In the villages, the "homes were full" of food, and all homes had wheat, barley, bread, aromatic wine, fragrant oils, raisins, legumes, lard, beef cattle, game meat, and more. Xenophon writes, "There was wheat and barley and legumes, and in jars there were reeds, large and small, without notes. When one is thirsty, they must put that reed into their mouth and suck. And it was very strong, if it was not mixed with water, but for the accustomed person, it was a very delicious drink".¹⁷⁹



Armenians enjoying beer, picture credit: R. Kocharian

Xenophon also wrote that each village had its own village chief. A village had a "council of elders" which contained a group of "celebrated Armens". Especially interesting is the report in the *Anabasis* about palace-fortresses, which belonged to the satraps, and all around them were multitudes of villages. He also recounts that Yervand's troops consisted mostly of Armenians. He also used the service of mercenaries. The *Anabasis* gives some insight into 5th-4th century B.C. Armenian political, economic, and social life. We can conclude that Xenophon mainly described Armenian villages, since the Greeks were in retreat and wanting to avoid large cities and settlements.

¹⁷⁹ *Xenophon, Anabasis*, book IV.

ARMENIA AND THE CONQUEST OF ALEXANDER THE GREAT

In the first half of the 4th century B.C., Achaemenid Persia was diminishing in power. This state was built by the force of arms, and, from time to time, the central forces took advantage of the favorable situation created for them in the center. During this time, in the west, Macedonia, located at the center of the Balkan Peninsula, was gaining strength. King Philip (359-336) was able to unite the Greeks with the other city-states of the peninsula. Inheriting his father's throne, Philip's son, Alexander (336-323) was devising far-reaching plans, the main goal of which was to free the cities of the western part of Asia Minor from the yoke of the Persians. In 334 B.C., the Macedonian army, under the leadership of Alexander the Great, invaded Asia Minor.

The wars between the Greeks and Persians commenced. In 333 B.C., in the Issus plain (Cilicia), one of the major battles took place (Battle of Issus). The Armenians were allies of the Persians during that battle, fighting in the left wing of the Persian army, with the Medes on the right, and the Persians in the center. It is estimated that 47,000 Armenian troops, cavalry and infantry, were led by **Vahe Haykazuni**, who, according to Movses Khorenatsi, fought valiantly, but was killed on the battlefield.¹⁸⁰ Although the Persian army outnumbered Alexander's army, the battle ended with the defeat of the Persians. The reason for the defeat was the weak right wing of the army, the Medes, who panicked and abandoned their positions, causing the entire army to retreat. Leaving behind his family and relatives, the panic-stricken Persian king, Darius III, fled the battle.

The next major battle, which was the decisive battle of that war, occurred in 331 B.C., not far from the ruins of Nineveh, near the settlement of Gaugamela. The historian Arrian wrote, during the Battle of Gaugamela, Armenian cavalry and infantry fought alongside the Persians, under the leadership of Orontes (Yervand) and Mithraust (Mihrvahisht).¹⁸¹ Historian Curtius Rufus wrote, "Standing on the right wing were the Armenians of Greater Hayq, the Cadusii, Cappadocians, Assyrians, and Medes".¹⁸² This battle also ended in the defeat of the Persians, and the fleeing of Persian king Darius III from the battlefield. The right wing of the Persian army, where the Armenian regiment was fighting, heroically resisted the Macedonian troops and continued the battle, even as the Persians, led by Darius, fled the battlefield, haphazard and terror-stricken. The Armenian forces fought with such bravery and tenacity that the commander of the Macedonian army, Parmenion, asked for Alexander's help, who, at the time, was hotly pursuing Darius on his flight from the battlefield. Alexander broke off the chase and came to Parmenion's aid. Returning quickly to the battlefield, Alexander immediately attacked the retreating Armenian

¹⁸⁰ *Movses Khorenatsi*, 1981, p. 102.

¹⁸¹ *Arrian*, III, 8, 5, 11, 7. *Curt, Ruf.*, book IV, 12, 10, 12. HJP, n. 1, 1971, p. 494.

¹⁸² *Quintus Curtius Rufus*, *Histories of Alexander the Great*, books IV, XII.

army. However, before Alexander's eyes, an unexpected turn of events unfolded on the battlefield. The heroic Armenian warriors quickly regrouped and, having received an order to "retreat with a swift march", the Armenian cavalry not only stopped the blows from Parmenion's army's counterattack from the center, but also attacked the cavalry under the command of Alexander, who had appeared alongside Parmenion in an attempt to provide him with aid. This was incredibly brazen, and entirely unexpected by Alexander. He was astonished that the retreating army could attempt such a daring tactic. The Armenian cavalry became the masters of the situation on the battlefield. With an unstoppable attack, they broke through the Macedonian cavalry at their rear, and broke free of their encirclement. Of great importance in all of this were the competent tactics of Yervand and Mihrvahisht, who successfully carried out the "retreat" by getting the Armenian cavalry safely and securely to Hayq.



An illustration in the Armenian translation of the story of Alexander the Great. It is likely the Armenian artist depicted Armenian warriors on horseback (Armenian cavalry), 14th century

The Armenian and Macedonian troops met on another occasion as well. Alexander the Great sent his army to Hayq, led by his general Menon, to capture the territories around the gold mines of the province of Sper (Sispirites in Greek sources) in Greater Hayq. However, as confirmed by Strabo, the Macedonian army was crushed head on, and the Armenians choked Menon to death by pouring molten gold down his throat.¹⁸³

After the heroic confrontation of the Armenian army in the Battle of Gaugemala, and the defeat of the Macedonian army led by General Menon in Armenia, Alexander the Great no longer risked trying to organize a new campaign against Armenia. Armenia remained free from Alexander the Great's campaigns.

¹⁸³ *Strabo*, Geography, XI, 14, 9.

The Greek historian Arrianos, who enjoyed the privilege of consulting Alexander the Great's campaign diaries, as well as the works of Ptolemy and Aristobulus who were direct participants in the campaign, does not mention the name Armenia in his detailed account of the conquests and countries subjugated by Alexander.¹⁸⁴



Alexander the Great's empire and Armenia.
We observe that Armenia was not a part of the empire.

Alexander the Great, and his successors, did not attempt to subjugate Armenia. Roman historian Pompeius Trogus (1st century B.C. to A.D. 1st century) wrote, "Neither Alexander, who conquered all of Asia, nor his descendants or heirs, could interfere in the affairs of Greater Hayq and Lesser Hayq" (record from Trogus's book *Historiae Phillippicae*, which has reached us via the 3rd century book *History of the Ancient World* by Roman historian Marcus Junianus Justinus)

Alexander the Great had many successes which allowed him to create a vast empire, with borders stretching from the Balkans to the Indian Ocean. However, this mighty empire had a very short lifespan. Upon his death in 323 B.C., Alexander's generals created several states. Macedonia and Greece created a separate state, General Ptolemy established the Ptolemaic Kingdom in Egypt, and General Seleucus established the Seleucid Empire in the conquered Asian territories.

Alexander's invasions resulted in the intersecting of Hellenistic and Ancient Eastern cultures, resulting in the creation of a new culture that had a beneficial effect on the development of later cultures that arose from the peoples of the empire. Hellenistic culture also permeated Hayq.

¹⁸⁴ HJP, 1971, p. 501.

THE RESTORATION OF ARMENIAN'S INDEPENDENCE

After the Battle of Gaugemala and the collapse of Achaemenid Persia, those nations which had not been conquered by Alexander declared their independence. Yervand and Mihrvahisht, after organizing the successful retreat of the Armenian army to their homeland, declared Hayq an independent kingdom. Yervand was proclaimed the king of Greater Armenia (**Yervand III**, 330-300 B.C.). Slightly later, Mihrvahisht was proclaimed the king of Lesser Armenia.¹⁸⁵ Of the Armenian territories, only Lesser Armenia was incorporated into Alexander the Great's empire, and after his death (323 B.C.) and the fragmentation of the empire, it became an independent kingdom. In the mid-4th century B.C., the Yervandunis succeeded in uniting the greater part of the Armenian Highlands. Among the members of the state were Commagene, Tsopq, Aghdznig, most of Vaspurakan, Turuberan, Ayarat, Gugark, Tayq, Syunik, Artsakh, and Utik.

Under these conditions, the role of the Ararat Valley increased, where a large network of canals was built in the Ararat kingdom period, contributing both to agriculture and the development of crafts, trade, and settlement. The capital city also moved to the Ararat Valley. In the vicinity of the former Argishtikhinili, the Yervandunis established a new capital city: Armavir. Construction projects in Ayarat gained even more momentum during the reign of King **Yervand IV** (approximately 230-201). Moses Khorenatsi attests, Yervand IV established the new and beautiful capital city of Yervandashat near the confluence of the Araks and Akhurian rivers, relocating the court there from Armavir. The new capital city had a citadel with high walls, and the walls had copper doors. However, Yervand IV did not relocate the statues of the gods (idols) to the new capital city. Khorenatsi writes that when Yervand built his city, he moved everything there from Armavir, except the idols, because, "He did not consider it useful to move them to his city, so that maybe, when the people come there to offer sacrifices, the city will not be carefully guarded".¹⁸⁶ For that reason, a new small city, Bagaran, was established not far from Yervandashat, and all the idols (statues of the gods) were transferred there from Armavir. He also constructed new temples and appointed his brother, Yervazin, as priest.

The Yervandunis also founded the towns of Yervandakert, Bagaran, Yervandavan, Nakhijevan, Vardkesavan (later called Vagharshapat), Yerazgavors, and others.

The Armenian states of Commagene and Tsopq, in terms of economics and culture, were more closely connected to the countries of Mesopotamia than to Greater

¹⁸⁵ After the invasions of Alexander the Great, following the destruction of Achaemenid Persia, the Armenian generals Yervand and Mihrvahisht organized the retreat of the Armenian army fighting in the Battle of Gaugamela (331 B.C.) back to their homeland, declaring Hayq an independent and sovereign kingdom. Afterwards, the majority of the Armenian Highlands was declared under the kingship of Yervand, resulting in that country's name being called Greater Hayq (Armenia Major, Greater Armenia) (Yervand III, 330-300 B.C.). Mihrvahisht (Mitraustes) was declared king of the significantly smaller region west of the Euphrates, which was called Lesser Hayq. (Armenia Minor, Lesser Armenia).

¹⁸⁶ *Moses Khorenatsi*, 1981, p. 197.

Armenia. In the mid-3rd century B.C., those states separated and became self-governing kingdoms. The man proclaimed as king of those lands was Samos (260-240), who was from the Yervanduni dynasty. On the banks of the Euphrates River he established the capital city of Samosat. Samos was succeeded by his son, Arsham (240-220), who built the city of Arshamashat in Tsopq, and the city of Arsamela, or Arshameya, in Commagene. It is assumed that after the death of Arsham, Commagene and Tsopq divided, creating two independent kingdoms, where, once again, the Yervandunis reigned. The capital of Tsopq was Arshamashat, which was located near the Aratsani River. Another prominent city in Tsopq was Arkatiakert (Carcathiocerta), near the Tigris River. All these cities were not only administrative, but also important craft and trade centers. The kings of Tsopq minted coins with their own names and images.



Coin of King Arsham of Tsopq

In 212 B.C., Seleucid king Antiochus III, who had strengthened the kingdom considerably, asserted his dominance over Tsopq. Then, he had the disobedient king of Tsopq, Xerxes, killed and appointed a new governor, Zareh (Zariadres), who was from the same dynasty.

Yervand IV's royal court, and the people in his circle, were staunchly Hellenistic. The king surrounded himself with Hellenized representatives of the Armenian elite, undoubtedly causing some dissatisfaction amongst the Armenian elite. Yervand was aware of the tension. He not only began fearing the dissatisfied Armenian elite, but also the people at large. As mentioned above, he did not relocate the statues of idols to Yervandashat out of fear that his safety would be compromised during sacrifices made in the presence of the people.

Under these conditions, the strengthened Antiochus III became increasingly involved in the internal affairs of Greater Hayq. With his help, the Armenian opposition leader of the council of elders, Artashes (Artaxias), began a struggle against Yervand IV. It is believed that Artashes was a representative in the council of elders in Atropatene,¹⁸⁷ or the council of elders of Eastern Armenia, who were displeased with Yervand. Antiochus aided Artashes by providing him with an army. The nakharars and troops of Utqi also backed Artashes.

¹⁸⁷ HJP, 1971, p. 516.



Armenia in the 2nd century B.C.

Artashes began his operations against Yervand IV from Utqi, where the king was located at that time. Securing Utqi and the shores of the Gegham Sea, and with Aragats strengthening his rear, he advanced head-on against Yervand's army. The battle took place in one locality, which was later called Yervandavan (Khorenatsi explains the meaning of the toponym as "I drove away Yervand"), and it ended in the defeat of Yervand.¹⁸⁸ Yervand was killed in the battle.

The history of the Yervanduni dynasty concludes in the year 201 B.C.. Antiochus III appointed Artashes as the governor (strategist) of Greater Hayq.

At the beginning of the 2nd century B.C., a new power appeared, Rome, who, having established its dominance over Greece, became a threat for Asia Minor. The clash between the Romans and Seleucids was inevitable. In 190 B.C., near the town of **Magnesia**, Antiochus III suffered a crushing defeat in a battle against Rome. This initiated the destruction of the Seleucid Empire. The countries under its domain, Greater Hayq and Tsopq, rebelled and declared their independence. Artashes was named the king of Greater Hayq, and Zareh was named king in Tsopq. Under the leadership of Artashes I, a new dynasty came to power in Hayq, the **Artashesian dynasty** (Artaxiad).

¹⁸⁸ *Movses Khorenatsi*, 1981, pp. 201, 205. HJP, n. I, 1971, p. 516. Khorenatsi notes, while compiling his history, he utilized the A.D. 2nd century historian-priest Oghyump's (Olympus') temple scrolls.

CHAPTER SEVENTH

ARMENIA IN THE TIME OF THE ARTASHESIAN DYNASTY

189 B.C. – 1 B.C.

THE UNIFICATION OF GREATER ARMENIA: ARTASHES I

Written on inscriptions (deemed Aramaic) at the boundary markers of King Artashes I (189-160 B.C.), he names himself “son of Zareh Yervanduni”. This indicates that Artashes was from the Yervanduni dynasty, and therefore the rightful heir of the royal lineage. From the beginning of his kingship, Artashes I capitalized on the defeat of Antiochus III and the weakening of the Seleucid Empire to begin the task of unifying the Armenian lands. In a relatively short time, he was able to unite the once detached peripheral provinces from the time of the Yervandunis, to create a mighty and integrated state. Strabo (63 B.C. – A.D. 23) provides detailed information regarding the unification efforts of Artashes. At the beginning of his reign, Artashes I campaigned in the east and reached the shores of the Caspian Sea, thanks to which Greater Hayq was united with the state of Caspian or Caspi (the nation of Caspi, according to Khorenatsi), which the Armenians called Paytakaran.



Artashes I the Pious (189–160 B.C.)

The king of Tsopq, Zareh, also expanded his territory, into the Anti-Taurus regions. After the death of Zareh, Artashes I attempted to unite Tsopq with Greater Hayq, but he was unsuccessful. However, in a short amount of time, Artashes was able to create an extensive and mighty state, whose borders contained almost the entirety of the Armenian Highlands. The unification process was successful because the entirety of the inhabitants of the territory spoke Armenian. Strabo writes, “...Both of them (Artashes I, Zareh) grew by occupying lands from surrounding nations. From the Medes Caspian, Pavnitis, and Basoropeda, from the Iberians at the foot of Mount Pariadres, and Khorzene, and Gogarene, which is on the other side of Kur...”¹⁸⁹ In the same writing, Strabo attests that in the time of Artashes, Hayq was “monolingual”,

¹⁸⁹ *Strabo*, XI, 14, 5.

that is, everyone spoke Armenian. Thus, it is more accurate to consider this process **the reunification of the Armenian territories inhabited by Armenians**, and not as a conquest, as Strabo presents, while confirming that everyone spoke Armenian.

Completing the borders of the country, Artashes proceeded to legal reforms in the country's governance. In order to strengthen the nation's defense, he divided it into four sections, creating eastern, western, southern, and northern partitions, or consulates, to which he appointed generals (consuls) from his sons and relatives. He also enlarged the army and further militarized it. He entrusted the position of priest to his son, Majan. Administratively, the country was divided into 15 territories and 120 prefectures.

Artashes I also carried out land reforms, aimed at resolving conflicts between large landowners and village communities. For this purpose, he redistributed land and placed special border markers, with his name on them, between villages and farms. Several border markers have been discovered. On the shores of Lake Sevan, in the fields of the Tsakqar village, a border marker was found with five lines of writing that stated, “(King Artashes), (son of Zareh), (Yervanduni, division) (the land) (parts)” (presumably between villages). In the Teghut village, located in the Ijevan region, a border marker was discovered with five lines stating, “(King Artashes Yervanduni), (son of Zareh, **Pious** crownbearer), (..... in his 10th year. Artashes), (son of Zareh, divided), (the land between the villages)”.¹⁹⁰ As we can see, King Artashes considered himself a “Pious king” (Բարի թագաւոր). The border markers, which were erected around 180 B.C., have crown-like edges at the top, and projections (for example, Teghutin) at their base for mounting upon a pedestal.



The border marker of Artashes I

Movses Khorenatsi, speaking about the land reforms of Artashes, wrote, “In the time of Artashes, there was no uncultivated soil left in our Armenian lands, not in the mountains, nor the valleys, so built up was our country”.¹⁹¹

¹⁹⁰ Teghekagir, 1957, number 10, pp. 105-109; HJPK, pp. 205, 207.

¹⁹¹ *Movses Khorenatsi*, 1981, p. 225.

The creation of a centralized and united Armenian state, coupled with the reforms of Artashes I, contributed to the strengthening of Hayq. Hayq became one of the mighty nations of Near East Asia. Artashes established a new capital city in the Ararat Valley, on the banks of the Araks River, calling it Artashat (Artaxata) in his honor.¹⁹² Greek historians Strabo and Plutarch attribute the honor of choosing the location of Artashat and designing the capital city to the Carthaginian general Hannibal, who had taken refuge in Armenia. Artashat was so exquisite that Strabo nicknamed it “the beautiful city”, and Plutarch called it “the Armenian Carthage”. There were magnificent palaces, temples (in those years, the temple of the Mother God Anahit), local coin minting, theatres, and more. The royal court also relocated to Artashat. Aside from Artashat, the Armenian king also established several other cities in various regions of the nation, naming two of them, Zarishat and Zarehavan, in honor of his father.

In his inscriptions, Artashes I is called “Good”, “Pious”. However, historians have also added the titles “Great” and “World Ruler”, which likewise reflect the high status of the Armenian king Artashes I. The people constructed many stories about their beloved king. A few of them have reached us through Khorenatsi’s work *History of the Armenians*.

One of those stories is “Artashes and Satenik”. According to the story, Artashes fought battles near the Kur River against the Alans and northern mountain tribes, and he defeated them. During the course of one of the battles, the Armenian king captured the daughter of the king of the Alans, and later made her his wife. Artashes I had a long reign, and the entire nation mourned his passing. Khorenatsi writes that the grief of the people was immense over the passing of their beloved king, so immense that many people committed suicide beside his deathbed. Witnessing this, his son, Prince Artavazd (Artavasdes), complained, “When you went, and took all the country with you, how shall I reign over these ruins...”¹⁹³

Thus, the reign of Artashes I over Greater Hayq was a time of unification, and development for economic and cultural life. After Artashes I, the throne was inherited by his eldest son, Artavazd I (160-115).

There is little information regarding **Artavazd I**. Thanks to the book of third century chronicler Justinus, fragments have reached us from the work of the 1st century B.C. Roman historian Pompeius Trogus. Justinus, telling of the many wars fought by the Parthian king Mihrdat II (123-88), writes, “Lastly, he fought against the Armenian king Artavazd”.¹⁹⁴ As they attest, Mihrdat II warred against Hayq, but he did not conquer the country. Artavazd was forced to accept Parthian suzerainty, and since he did not have an heir, his brother Tiran’s (also Tigran, according to Appianus) son, Tigran, was given as a hostage to the Parthians.

Artavazd I was succeeded by **Tiran-Tigran I (115-95)**, the father of the great Armenian king Tigran II. The years of Tiran-Tigran’s reign were peaceful. Khorenatsi writes that he did not accomplish great works, and lived a comfortable life.

¹⁹² *Movses Khorenatsi*, 1981, p. 211.

¹⁹³ *Movses Khorenatsi*, 1981, p. 231.

¹⁹⁴ *Pompeius Trogus*, Excerpts, (by way of Justinus); HJPK, p. 220.

ARMENIA THE GLOBAL EMPIRE

TIGRAN II THE GREAT

In the year 95 B.C., the most powerful and remarkable Armenian king, Tigran II (95-55), ascended the throne, the grandson of Artashes I and the son of Tiran-Tigran. In Armenian historiography, Tigran II is bestowed the title Tigran the Great, owing to the great works he accomplished during his reign. At the time of his father Tiran-Tigran I's passing, Tigran was a pseudo-hostage in the Parthian royal court. Considering these circumstances, the Parthians believed Tigran would make a desirable candidate for them to place on the Armenian throne. Coming to an agreement, Tigran relinquished 70 valleys in the borderland regions to the Parthians, was freed from his bondage, and immediately returned to Hayq to claim the Armenian throne. At this time, he was 45 years old.



A coin with Tigran II's image



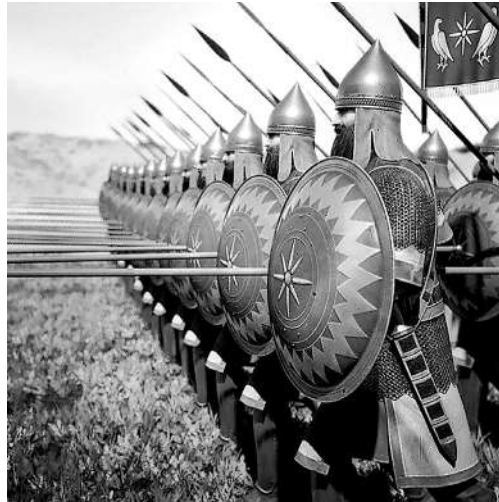
Tigran the Great

Tigran II ascended the throne at the time when a new power, Rome, had reached Near East Asia. Like the Parthians, the Romans were trying to assert their hegemony over the region. In 133 B.C., the Romans captured the kingdom of Pergamon; that was their first conquest in Asia Minor. In 102 B.C., they conquered Mountainous Cilicia. Charged by those victories, Rome continued its policy of aggression. Galatia, Bithynia, and Cappadocia quickly came under their influence. After this, the Romans appeared directly on the border of Hayq. A serious existential threat was created for our nation; the Parthians were operating from the east, and the Romans from the west. However, in the beginning of the 1st century B.C., the situation changed. Civil wars broke out in Rome, followed by a slave revolt and a struggle against pirates. In 88 B.C., the Parthian king Mithridates II passed away, and fights over the throne and riots began in the Parthian kingdom. Armenian king Tigran II, showing great talent, cleverly used this time to unify the Armenian lands and strengthen the country.¹⁹⁵ In

¹⁹⁵ In the 2nd-1st centuries B.C., important information about Armenian history is presented in the works of the Greek and Roman historians Polybius (*The Histories*, book 8, book 16), Strabo (*Geography*, 184

94 B.C., Tigran II attacked Tsopq, ruled by King Artanes, and subjugated it, connecting that region with Hayq. Then, he connected Hayq with the provinces of Yekeghyats and Daranaghyats. The joining of Tsopq with Hayq was immensely important to the unification and strengthening of the country. The annexation of Tsopq, which was economically developed and had strong western ties, was of great political and economic importance.

At this time, active operations were beginning in Asia Minor via the Pontic Kingdom, led by Mihrdat (Mithridates) the Pontian (also called Mithridates VI Eupator, 111-63). Conquering a series of nations, including Lesser Hayq, Colchis, the Bosphorus, and other nations, Mihrdat's goal was to drive the Romans out of Asia Minor and create a large empire. To secure his defenses from the east, and to receive military aid from the Armenians, he entered into negotiations with Tigran II. The negotiations concluded agreeably, since the Armenian king was also motivated to strengthen Near East Asia. In 94 B.C., a treaty was signed which was directed against Rome. To strengthen the alliance, Mihrdat's daughter, Cleopatra, was given to Tigran II in marriage.



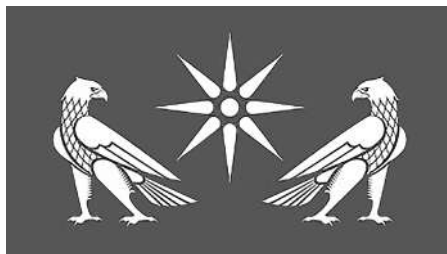
Armenian infantry, reconstruction by artist A. Avagyan

After the formalization of the treaty, in 93 B.C., Tigran II and Mihrdat of Pontus decided to capture the strategically located territory of Cappadocia from the Romans, which then changed hands a few times. In 89 B.C., it was once again held by the Romans. In the same year, by the initiative of the Romans, the Pontic-Roman (Mithridatic) wars ensued, which concluded in 84 B.C. with the defeat of Mihrdat. Tigran, taking advantage of the situation when the hostilities were raging between Rome and Pontus, decided to strike the Parthian Kingdom that was threatening Hayq from the east.

11/14/), Appianus (book 11, Syrian, book 12, Mithridatic), Plutarch (Parallel Lives, Crassus, 32, Pompey, 33, Antonius), Dio Cassius (Roman History, books 36, 40, 49), and others. Without their reported information, sources regarding Armenian history in that era would be exceedingly rare.

In 88 B.C., Tigran II regained control over the 70 valleys he had ceded to the Parthians for his release from captivity. Successfully building on his attack, in 88-85 B.C., Tigran conquered Atropatene and Media, followed by Northern Mesopotamia. He subjugated the city of Ecbatana, which was the location of the summer residence of the Parthian Arsakunis. After the loss of significant territories, the Parthians begged for peace. In 85 B.C., a peace treaty was signed, according to which the Parthians acknowledged Tigran's hegemony, accepting his sovereignty, and renounced the title "King of Kings" in favor of the Armenian king. Following this, Tigran subjugated Commagene, and launched an attack against the ever-weakening Seleucid Empire, whose elites were trying to maintain their own wealth and power via the support of foreign kings. In 84 B.C., without resistance, the Armenian troops entered into the open gates of Antioch. Then, without serious resistance, the Armenian troops took control of Syria and the Cilician Valley. A strong resistance was not shown because the important trade routes connecting Syria with Asia Minor and Mesopotamia were in the hands of the Armenians. Tigran turned the grand and affluent Seleucid capital city Antioch into one of his own capitals. Gold and silver coins, featuring the image of Tigran II, were minted in that city.

Tigran's goal was to reach the Mediterranean Sea. To do this, it was critical to capture Phoenicia, whose cities were predominantly on the shore, and trade was conducted by way of the sea. The cities of Phoenicia showed stubborn resistance against the Armenian troops, and after long lasting battles, only a few cities were subdued. The southern areas of the state showed especially strong resistance, namely Ptolemais, which was a stronghold of the Seleucid queen Cleopatra Selene. Breaking through the resistance, Tigran II captured the city of Ptolemais and imprisoned the queen, whom he later executed. Tigran's successes greatly perturbed the states neighboring Phoenicia. The queen of Judea, to inhibit the entry of the Armenian troops, sent lavish gifts and willingly submitted to Tigran.



The Artashesian coat of arms

After 25 years of victorious wars, the Armenian king Tigran the Great created an enormous empire, whose borders stretched from the Caspian Sea to the Mediterranean Sea and the borders of Egypt. Armenia evolved into one of the greatest kingdoms in Near East Asia. Regarding Tigran the Great, Plutarch writes, "He had many kings as attendants, and four of them he kept constantly with him as companions

or bodyguards; when he went on horseback, they, dressed in short chitons, ran by his side, and when he was seated and engaged in official business, they stood around him, their hands on their chests...”¹⁹⁶



Tigran the Great with his four companion kings,
artist: Giovanni Fusaro

Tigran the Great, knowing well that the empire's defense and independence were inextricably connected, created a powerful military, which later included auxiliary forces from subjugated countries and mercenaries.

The various nations and people that made up the empire were at different levels of development. There were both densely and sparsely populated areas. There were both developed, profitable cities, and underdeveloped cities. The conquered peoples were also at different levels of development. Viceroyalties were established to govern the vast country. Successful conquests and the collection of taxes from subjugated countries brought enormous wealth into the country, contributing to its economic rise. Crafts and tourism developed with new momentum, new cities and settlements were built, and people from various places were brought into the region, including Greeks, Assyrians, Jews, and others.

To effectively govern the massive country, Tigran II built a new capital city, between 80-70 B.C., in the province of Aghdznik, naming it Tigranakert, in honor of himself. Roman historian Appianus wrote that Tigranakert was established in the region where Tigran, returning from captivity, was proclaimed king.¹⁹⁷ The location of the new capital city was fortunate. The Ararat Valley, Black Sea, and Northern Mesopotamia were all in the vicinity, putting it at a crossroads between various trade routes. Tigran built a luxurious capital, surrounded by high walls. The walls were so wide that there were storehouses and stables inside them. The city had a citadel, with the king's sumptuous

¹⁹⁶ *Plutarch*, *Parallel Lives*, *Lucullus*, 21, HJPK, p. 232.

¹⁹⁷ *Appianus*, book 12, *The Mithridatic Wars*, ch. 67, HJPK, p. 257.

palace just outside the walls, surrounded by parks, gardens, and pools filled with fish. Near the palace were hunting grounds. In order to quickly develop the new capital city, as well as other cities, Tigran forcibly migrated nearly half a million people from conquered countries and settled them in Armenian cities. Many of those new inhabitants were craftsmen and merchants. Some were slaves or farmers. It is believed that Tigranakert had nearly 300,000 residents. In order to retain a dominant Armenian population in Tigranakert, Tigran II forced the Armenian nobility to relocate and settle there. Appianus writes, "...Tigranakert, that city which the king established in his honor, he called on the best in the country to go there, threatening that whatever they did not bring with them would be confiscated".¹⁹⁸ Tigranakert became one of the most beautiful, grand, and wealthy cities in Near East Asia.

ARMENIAN-ROMAN WARS

In 73 B.C., a new war began between Mihrdat the Pontian and the Romans. At the beginning of the war, fortune was on Mihrdat's side, however, one year later, he suffered defeat at the hands of the Roman general Lucullus, and he retreated to Pontus. Wanting to continue his fight against the Romans, Mihrdat asked for help from the Parthians, Scythians, and even his own son, the viceroy of the Bosporan Kingdom. Nevertheless, he was met with refusal by all. Mihrdat requested help from the Armenian king as well, sending the Greek philosopher and historian M. Skepsats as an ambassador.¹⁹⁹ However, the ambassador, being ill-disposed towards Mihrdat, convinced Tigran II not to help the Pontians. Tigran was not inclined to go to war with Rome, and decided not to provide Mihrdat with troops. The Romans also offered false assurances to Tigran, claiming they had no hostile intentions against Hayq. Unable to acquire help from anyone, Mihrdat suffered defeat and fled with his troops to Armenia. Wanting to remain neutral, Tigran did not accept him personally, but allowed him to take refuge in one of the country's peripheral provinces.

Having defeated Mihrdat, Lucullus had a great desire to conquer Hayq as well, and add to his laurels the honor of triumphing over the Armenian king. In 71 B.C., Lucullus sent a delegation to Tigran, demanding that he hand over Mihrdat the Pontian. Tigran rejected his proposal. Meanwhile, the Roman delegates were spying out the land, gathering important data. In 69 B.C., Roman troops swiftly invaded Tsopq, knowing in advance that Tigran and his troops were in the south of the country. After capturing Tsopq, Lucullus marched toward the capital city of Tigranakert. Receiving the news of Lucullus's invading army, Tigran the Great, with his 6,000 man regiment, hurried to reach his capital. Simultaneously, he was devising an operation to resist the Romans. To protect the capital city, 2,000 cavalry troops, under the command of General Merujan,

¹⁹⁸ *Appianus*, book 12, ch. 84, HJPK, p. 258.

¹⁹⁹ *Plutarch*, *Parallel Lives*, Lucullus, 22. HJPK, p. 233.

were tasked with slowing the entrance of Lucullus into the city. However, in the grossly unequal battle that ensued, the Armenian cavalry was defeated. Breaking through the Armenian resistance, the Romans seized Tigranakert. After travelling more than 1,000 kilometers, Tigran arrived in Tigranakert, realizing that it had already been captured by the Romans. Until the entire army was gathered together, a battle was not feasible. Still, the Armenian king's wife, and many of his treasures, were in Tigranakert. It was obligatory to get his wife and treasures out of the city. With only limited forces available, a bold plan was devised and implemented. One of the Armenian cavalry regiments broke through the ring of encirclement, from the outside, infiltrating the besieged city with a surprise attack, and before the Roman soldiers had time to realize what was happening, they made off with the women and treasures.²⁰⁰

Tigran, having returned to Hayq, called on Mihrdat and they decided to fight in unison. In order to divide the Roman forces, Tigran gave 10,000 troops to Mihrdat and sent him back to Pontus, with the intention of starting a struggle there against the Romans. Tigran also began amassing new troops to go into battle.

The battle commenced on October 6th, 69 B.C., near **Tigranakert**. At the start of the battle, the Roman cavalry attacked the center mass of the Armenian troops, then feigned escape, causing the Armenian army to pursue them. A chaotic scene unfolded, but the Romans, who were now behind the Armenian army, turned back to make a deliberate attack. The Armenian army was defeated due to poor organization and hastiness. Roman historians write that the Armenian army suffered tens of thousands of casualties. Following this victory, Lucullus tightened his control over Tigranakert. The city's garrison and inhabitants heroically defended their city for nearly five months, but after the defeat of the Armenian troops, the city's foreign population rebelled. The Romans also bribed the Greek mercenaries in the city, who treacherously opened the gates for the Romans to invade Tigranakert. The Romans looted and destroyed the Armenian capital. Lucullus sent the Greeks and other foreigners that assisted him back to their native lands, as a reward for their help. This defeat caused serious consequences for the country. A series of nations, Assyria, Phoenicia, the Cilician Valley, and Commagene, were cut off, and became Roman provinces. After the fall of Tigranakert, the winter cold set in and both sides ceased military operations, opting instead to plan ahead for future conflicts. Lucullus, feeling unsafe in Tigranakert and fearing a hostile environment, took his army to the friendly Roman province Corduene for the winter.

Taking advantage of the interlude, Tigran the Great immediately began planning his upcoming military campaigns. During those intermediary winter months, he recruited new soldiers and rebuilt his army. The Armenian army was divided into two halves: cavalry and infantry. Tigran the Great headed the cavalry, while Mihrdat the Pontian led the infantry. Knowing about this, Lucullus understood that the Armenian king was preparing for a lengthy altercation. It was crucial to defeat Tigran and

²⁰⁰ Appianus, *The Mithridatic Wars*, book 12, ch. 85.

compel him into a peace treaty with oppressive conditions. Near the end of spring in 68 B.C., Lucullus marched towards Artashat. He wanted to force Tigran into a new battle in which he could destroy the Armenian army head on and take control of Artashat. However, it soon became clear that the Armenian army was avoiding a head on battle, and was retreating slowly into the depths of the country. One interesting detail about the new tactic was **the Roman forces were always kept in between the Armenian infantry and cavalry**, therefore one of them was always able to strike the enemy. The Roman army was subjected to unexpected and daring attacks by the Armenians, especially at night. These sudden attacks kept the Romans in a constant state of anxiety, since it was causing them significant losses. The Armenians also managed to disrupt the supply chain of the enemy with regular, small skirmishes.

Tigran the Great's chosen tactic justified itself. After a three month retreat, Lucullus's exhausted and enfeebled army reached the Aratsani gorge in mid-September, 68 B.C.. Ahead was the Haykakan Par mountain range, and just beyond that, the Armenian capital of Artashat, called "the Armenian Carthage" for its grandeur. The Romans attempted to cross the Aratsani, head towards Artashat, and engage in battle against the Armenian troops in a location favorable for themselves. However, the Armenian cavalry, under the leadership of Tigran the Great, rapidly marched to the **Aratsani gorge**, preventing the Romans from advancing. A battle was unavoidable, so both sides engaged. The Armenian cavalry initially organized a deceptive escape, which obfuscated the enemy's battle order. Then, they turned back under the leadership of the king, Tigran the Great, and launched a counterattack. Armenian light-armed horsemen inflicted heavy losses against the Romans with poisonous and clawed arrows. Greek historian Cassius Dio writes, "The Armenians killed many of the Romans by shooting them with arrows, and many were also wounded with serious wounds that were difficult to treat because the Armenians used double-pointed arrows".²⁰¹ The Roman army was thoroughly defeated.

At the Battle of Aratsani, Tigran the Great manifested himself as a brilliant military strategist. This battle was especially meaningful. A heavy blow was delivered to the seemingly invincible Roman army. Lucullus was forced to leave the borders of Armenia. The Romans were also driven out of Northern Mesopotamia, Corduene, and Pontus. The Romans first offensive against the East had failed.

Following these events, favorable conditions seemed to have been created for the restoration of power. On the contrary, disputes over the throne began within the country, fueled by representatives from the ruling elite that were dissatisfied with Tigran the Great. Tigran's sons faced riots and treacherous schemes. Zareh, Tigran's oldest son, was the head of the conspirators, but he was killed in the ongoing fighting. Tigran's middle son, whose name is unknown, was also killed as a fellow conspirator. An even more stubborn fight for the throne was started by Tigran, Tigran the Great's younger son, who is known as Tigran the Younger. He organized an unsuccessful riot in 67 B.C., and was forced to flee to the Parthians. The Parthian king Phraates

²⁰¹ *Cassius Dio*, XXXVI, 3, 4; HJP, 1971, n. 1, p. 593; HJPK, p. 277.

III welcomed him and wed him to his daughter, with the hope that one day he would ascend the Armenian throne. Tigran the Younger also assisted his grandfather, Mihrdat the Pontian, who was hopeful that he might use the Armenian troops if Tigran the Younger took control of the Armenian throne. All the conspirators against Tigran the Great were children of Mihrdat the Pontian's daughter, Cleopatra. Just like his older brothers, Tigran the Younger also failed. He and the Parthian king invaded Hayq, got all the way to Artashat, but faced a formidable resistance. They were then crushed by Tigran the Great. Alas, Tigran the Younger, giving up hope that the Parthians would help him gain the throne, fled to the Romans.

The Romans were displeased at Lucullus' failed invasions in Asia Minor. In 67 B.C., the Senate decided to appoint Pompey as the commander of Rome's army in the East. In a relatively short time, Pompey was able to amass 60,000 troops, and, in the spring of 66 B.C. they attacked Pontus. Mihrdat the Pontian was barely able to gather 32,000 troops. Realizing the forces were grossly disproportionate, Mihrdat began engaging in guerilla warfare. Nevertheless, Pompey surrounded Mihrdat's troops in a narrow gorge in Lesser Hayq and crushed them. Mihrdat escaped to the Bosphorus (Crimea), and there he ended his own life. The Romans conquered Pontus and Lesser Hayq, turning them into Roman provinces.

Before starting a war with Mihrdat, the Romans entered into negotiations with the Parthians, promising to give them back the lands in Mesopotamia that were conquered by Tigran. The Parthian king Phraates III accepted these conditions. Tigran the Younger also played a role in the treaty signed between Rome and Parthia. Subsequent events reveal that the Romans broke the treaty they signed with Parthia, not allowing them to strengthen their position in Corduene and Armenian Mesopotamia, as they had agreed, following the conquest. Those territories were later surrendered to the Armenian king, Tigran the Great, "a friend and ally of Rome". This move was calculated in such a way as to disallow the Parthians from gaining any additional strength. Phraates III understood his costly mistake, but it was too late, and he was forced into silence.

After defeating Mihrdat the Pontian, Pompey launched an attack on Hayq, marching toward Artashat. A challenging situation was created; Tigran the Great did not have any allies. Mihrdat the Pontian had been crushed, and the Parthians had allied with Rome. Conditions inside the country were also unstable. Under these conditions, in order to spare the country from unnecessary destruction, and to buy himself time, Tigran offered to reconcile with Pompey, and he was accepted.²⁰² According to Roman historians (Plutarch, Cassius Dio), Tigran the Great voluntarily went to Pompey's military base. Appianus also confirms that Tigran went willingly to Pompey, also including, "Some also testify that Tigranes was invited in advance by Pompey".²⁰³ Appianus attests that Pompey respected the Armenian king's decision to do this, writing, "Pompey, in honor of him, ordered his tribunes and horsemen to go to meet him".²⁰⁴

²⁰² *Plutarch*, *Parallel Lives*, Pompey, 33. HJPK, p. 267.

²⁰³ *Appianus*, *The Mithridatic Wars*, 12, 104. HJPK, p. 261.

²⁰⁴ *Appianus*, *The Mithridatic Wars*, 12, 104. HJPK, p. 261.

In the autumn of 66 B.C., a peace treaty was signed between Rome and Hayq. According to the treaty, Tigran the Great renounced all his occupied countries, and Tigran the Younger was named king of Tsopq. Appianus also writes that Pompey reconciled the father and son, Tigran the Great and Tigran the Younger, so that upon the death of Tigran the Great, his son would also rule Greater Hayq. A war penalty of 12,000 talents was to be paid from the treasury of Tsopq. Tigran the Great was declared “a friend and ally of Rome”.

Thus, as a result of Rome’s imperialist policies and internal conflicts, the empire created by Tigran the Great began crumbling. Hayq was contracted within the borders of the Armenian Highlands and ceased to be a superpower in Near East Asia. Tigran continued his reign for another ten years, and passed away in 55 B.C., at 85 years old. The Armenian throne was inherited by Tigran the Great’s son, Artavazd II (Artavasdes II).

THE STRUGGLE AGAINST ROME TO RESTORE INDEPENDENCE

During the reign of **Artavazd II (55-34 B.C.)**, Hayq was a vast and powerful nation. It possessed a sufficient military and material resources, that both the Romans and the Parthians were trying to use. The Parthians understood their past mistakes and were attempting to ally themselves with the Armenians. In turn, Artavazd wanted to restore the country’s complete independence, eliminating its reliance on Rome.

In 60 B.C., a triarchy (triumvirate) was created in Rome, made up of Pompey, Julius Caesar, and Crassus. The administration of the countries in the East was assigned to Crassus.



Young Crown Prince
Artavazd, son of Tigran II



Coin bearing the image of Artavazd II

In 54 B.C., Crassus began gearing up to attack the Parthian Kingdom. Getting wind of his plan, Artavazd advised Crassus to invade Parthia via the southern mountain region of Hayq. By doing so, the Armenian king was aiming to secure Hayq’s safety from a Parthian attack, when the auxiliary Armenian army being lent to the Romans left Hayq. However, Crassus opted to take the route that passed through the Meso-
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potamian lowlands. In the spring of 53 B.C., Crassus' army launched an attack on the Parthians. Nevertheless, the Parthians, under the leadership of General Suren, defeated the Romans near the city of Carrhae; Crassus was killed. General Suren sent Crassus' severed head to the city of Artashat, where, at that time, the Parthian king Orodes resided. There were great celebrations held in Artashat, on account of the military victory and the wedding of Orodes' son to the sister of Artavazd.²⁰⁵ As a result of the joint actions of the Armenians and Parthians, Syria, Phoenicia, and Palestine were liberated from the Romans. Utilizing this Roman defeat, Artavazd II restored independence to Hayq.

In 43 B.C., the second triumvirate of Rome was established, consisting of Octavion, Mark Antony, and Lepidus. The responsibility of managing the East was assigned to Mark Antony. In 38 B.C., Mark Antony amassed many troops in the East. Bearing in mind Crassus' unsuccessful invasion, Mark Antony began his campaign against Parthia in the regions of Hayq and Atropatene. Under the leadership of General Canidius, Roman troops invaded Hayq in 37 B.C.. The Parthians were unable to assist the Armenians, as there was internal political turmoil in their kingdom, eventually leading to the reign of Orodes' son, Phraates IV, who murdered his father, brothers, and many prominent Parthians to do away with his competitors. Under these conditions, the Armenian king, left without allies, was forced to once again accept the hegemony of the Romans, resigning himself to the responsibilities associated with being "a friend and ally of Rome". In 36 B.C., Mark Antony began his invasion of Parthia. The Armenian cavalry participated in that campaign. Mark Antony's troops were met with strong resistance in Gandzak, the capital of Atropatene, located southeast of Lake Urmia. A Parthian cavalry of 50,000 troops came to their aid. Falling into an encirclement, the Romans experienced significantly heavy losses. Their military armaments and the soldiers guarding them were destroyed. The Armenian cavalry did not help the Romans, as they did not want to fight against the Parthians. Artavazd, concerned about the future of the country and wanting to preserve an alliance with the Parthians, realized that the Romans were losing and decided to return to Hayq with his army.

Having suffered heavy losses and unable to achieve victory, Mark Antony decided to retreat to Hayq. Feigning friendliness, Mark Antony secured food and money for his troops in Hayq. However, he did not feel safe in Hayq. Mark Antony was afraid the Armenians, Parthians, and Medes would unite, and, under the conditions of winter, destroy his entire army. He decided to leave and install himself in Syria. Later, Mark Antony blamed Artavazd for his defeats, accusing him of betrayal. In 34 B.C., Mark Antony marched toward Artashat, stealthily invading Hayq via Lesser Hayq. To save his country from certain destruction, Artavazd personally met with Mark Antony, but the Romans had him arrested.

The outraged military and citizens proclaimed Artashes, son of Artavazd, the king. Battles ensued, leading to losses on the side of the ill prepared Armenian troops.

²⁰⁵ *Plutarch*, *Parallel Lives*, Crassus, 32. HJPK, p. 270.

Artashes II (34-20) decided to leave the country and go to Parthia. In turn, the Romans began plundering the nation, including the temples. Evidently, Mark Antony stole the golden statue of the goddess Anahit from a temple in the town of Yeriza, in the Yekeghyats province. Having plundered vast amounts of wealth, Mark Antony returned to Egypt, taking with him Artavazd II, his wife, and two sons, Tigran and Artavazd. A celebration was organized in Egypt on behalf of Mark Antony's so-called victory, during which the Armenian king and his family members were threatened with death for refusing to worship the queen of Egypt, Cleopatra. Writing about this incident, Roman historian Cassius Dio states, "The Armenians showed the greatness of their souls, therefore, they earned a glorious name".²⁰⁶ Mark Antony's failure in the Parthian invasion caused discontent in Rome. Taking advantage of the discontent, Octavian went into battle against Mark Antony. In 31 B.C., near Cape Actium, a battle was waged that concluded in the defeat of Mark Antony.

THE POLITICAL SITUATION AT THE CLOSE OF THE 1ST CENTURY DECLINE OF THE ARTASHESIAN DYNASTY

In 31 B.C., Artashes II (30-20 B.C.), seeking refuge with the Parthians, marched into Hayq with Armenian and Parthian troops, and wiped the Romans out of the country. The independence of Hayq was reestablished. Having allied himself with the Parthians, Artashes II led an independent policy, staunchly opposed to Rome. Taking advantage of Rome's preoccupation with the Battle of Actium, Artashes attacked Atropatene, an ally of the Romans, with his Armenian-Parthian troops, captured the king of their state, and joined Atropatene to Hayq. The years of Artashes II's reign were relatively peaceful. He minted coins that proclaimed him "King of Kings".



A coin bearing the image of Artashes II

Rome was unable to tolerate an independent and powerful Hayq. The new caesar of Rome, Caesar Augustus, came to the east, Syria, in 20 B.C.. Parthian king Phraates IV feared an invasion from Rome and entered into an agreement with them, in which he returned Roman captives and acknowledged Roman sovereignty over

²⁰⁶ *Cassius Dio*, *History of Rome*, book 49, ch. 40/3. HJPK, 296.

Hayq. Thereafter, Augustus sent a large company of troops to Hayq, led by Tiberius Claudius, ordering the dethronement of Artashes II and the enthroning of his brother Tigran, who had lived many years in Rome as a hostage. Before the Romans could reach Artashat, the representatives of the pro-Roman council of elders in the court, working at the behest of the Romans, organized the murder of Artashes and destroyed the defense capabilities of the country. The Romans entered Artashat without encountering any resistance and named Artavazd II's second son, Tigran, king of the Armenians. The establishment of Roman supremacy in Hayq and the ascension to the throne of the pro-Roman **Tigran III** (20-8 B.C.) were considered by the Romans to be their major victory in the East. To commemorate the occasion, Augustus had gold and silver coins minted with the inscription "Armenia conquered". However, hatred for the Romans was so intense in Hayq that Tigran III soon changed his allegiance, choosing to side with the Parthians.

Following the death of Tigran III, the Armenians, without the approval of Rome, placed Tigran III's son, **Tigran IV** (8-1 B.C.), on the throne. The new Armenian king reasserted Armenian independence and conducted sovereign policy. In the time of Tigran IV, minted coins were inscribed with "King of Kings", which meant Hayq was an independent country. However, Rome did not want to come to terms with the reality that Hayq's king was sovereignly conducting his own policies. In 6 B.C., Rome sent an army to Hayq and dethroned Tigran IV and his sister Erato, and replaced them with their brother Artavazd II's son **Artavazd**, who had also lived in Rome as a captive for 25 years. Not able to accept this, the population once again rebelled in 2 B.C. and returned the throne to Tigran IV and his sister Erato. On the other hand, during this time period, the Parthian king Phraates IV had become a Romanophile, unlike the Armenians. Tigran IV, having considered the unfavorable situation, entered into negotiations with the Romans and signed a treaty. In 1 B.C., he was killed in a battle against Caucasian mountaineers. His sister, Erato, abdicated the throne. Thus, an important period in Armenian history was concluded, the era of the Artashesian dynasty, which lasted about two centuries (189-1 B.C.).

List of Artashesian Rulers
(189 B.C. - 1 B.C.)

Artashes I	189 B.C. - 160 B.C.
Artavazd I	160 B.C. - 115 B.C.
Tigran I	115 B.C. - 95 B.C.
Tigran II the Great	95 B.C. - 55 B.C.
Artavazd II	55 B.C. - 34 B.C.
Artashes II	30 B.C. - 20 B.C.
Tigran III	20 B.C. - 8 B.C.
Tigran IV & Erato	8 B.C. - 1 B.C.

THE YERVANDUNI AND ARTASHESIAN PANTHEONS

In the time of the Yervandunis and Artashesians, just as in the time of the Aramian dynasty of Mitanni and Ararat-Urartu, a religious system was established at the state level. From the mid I millennium B.C. until the acceptance of Christianity (A.D. 301), pan-Armenian deities were worshiped in Hayq. Those gods included Aramazd, Vahagn, Anahit, Astghik, Mihr, Tir, Nane, Vanatur, and more. Ancient written sources from Mesopotamia and Near East Asia attest to these gods from times much earlier than I millennium B.C.. Let us examine those deities.



Armenian gods: Vahagn, Anahit, Aramazd, Mihr, Tir;
Sanctuary of Nemrut (Reconstruction)



King of Commagene, Antiochus (69-34 B.C.) with the god Vahagn.
Antiochus on Mount Nemrut, undertaking the creation of a universal
center of worship of the Armenian gods. He sought the gods' favor
by picturing himself with them. Relief sculpture, Sanctuary of Nemrut

ARAMAZD

Aramazd is the chief deity in the late pagan period of the Armenian pantheon, the creator of the heavens and earth. Armenian king Trdat III (A.D. 287-330) proclaimed, “Aramazd, the great and mighty, the creator of heaven and earth, and the father of all”²⁰⁷

This is a testament to the fact that the Armenian pantheon contained a **chief god** and additional **gods**. Aramazd was considered the god who provided “**fertile abundance**”. In his welcome proclamation to the people, King Trdat said, “May greetings and peace come with the help of the gods, fertile abundance, come from Aramazd...”²⁰⁸ As we can see, Trdat esteemed Aramazd as the guardian of the earth, the giver of “fertile abundance”.



Aramazd, Sanctuary of Nemrut,
Western Armenia, 1st century B.C.

Aramazd is the father of the goddesses Anahit and Astghik, as well as the father of the god Mihr. We cannot offer a definitive answer as to when and under what conditions Aramazd became the chief deity of the Armenian pantheon. Historical research shows that in Hayq, at the beginning of the II millennium B.C., the cult of Aramazd was already widespread. Aramazd is an indigenous Armenian god, as evidenced by his name, which is composed of the components **Aram** (Ar-am=ma) and **azd** (ast, astvats, i.e. the Armenian word for god). Thus, Aramazd can be etymologically derived from “Ararich” (Creator), a god descended from Ar, essentially the **Aram-god**.

There is a viewpoint that the Armenian Aramazd is a variation of the Persian god Ahura Mazda, and the worship of this god passed into Armenia from Iran. Some believe that the name Ahura Mazda is a combination of the components **Ahura** “god” and **Mazda** “supreme wisdom”. This explanation is not applicable to the Armenian Aramazd, since, as mentioned above, Aramazd is connected to the name of the ancient god of the Armenian Highlands, Ar-Ara.

²⁰⁷ *Agathangelos*, 1983, p. 47.

²⁰⁸ *Agathangelos*, 1983, p. 81.

Aramazd was one of the most beloved of the Armenian gods, and his worship was diffused through the vast Armenian lands, preserved for a long time amongst the people. It is appropriate to think that King Trdat's expression, "**great and mighty Aramazd**", means Aramazd is the the Ar tribe's (Aryan) god. This expression also points to Aramazd being an ancient god of the Hay-Armen inhabitants of the Armenian Highlands.

The holidays dedicated to Aramazd were celebrated with great festivity, at the beginning of Navasard (August), on the ancient Armenian calendar. During those festivals, white male goats, mules, and horses were sacrificed. The 15th day of each month on the Armenian pagan calendar was named in honor of Aramazd. The major temple dedicated to Aramazd was located in the Ani (Hani, Ani-Kamakh) settlement of Upper Hayq in the Daranaghyats province. The mausoleum and treasures of the Armenian royal Arshakuni kings were also located in Ani-Kamakh (cf. Ardini-Musasir, where the treasures of the Aramyan dynasty era were kept). Telling of the destruction of the temple of Aramazd, Agathangelos writes, (Gregory) "...He went and arrived at the rugged terrain called Ani, the royal burial site of the tombs of the Armenian kings. There they destroyed the statue of the god Zeus Aramazd, who was called the Father of all Gods. There also the sign of the cross was raised, and the village, and its fortifications, was dedicated to the service of the church".²⁰⁹

There were also temples dedicated to Aramazd in Bagavan, on Mount Paghato, and other places. The cult of Aramazd was also prevalent in Iran (Ahura Mazda) and Georgia (Armazi).

²⁰⁹ *Agathangelos*, 1983, p. 441.

MOTHER GODDESS ANAHIT

The mother goddess of the Armenians is Anahit, the Great Lady, the patron deity and protector of the Armenian lands, the glory and life-giver of the Armenian people. She is the goddess of motherhood, fertility, prudence, vigilance, and honor, as well as the mother of all good things. The cult of the most beloved Armenian goddess Anahit has prevailed in Hayq since time immemorial. Anahit is the daughter of Aramazd, the chief deity of the old Armenian pantheon.²¹⁰

Nevertheless, the cult of the goddess Anahit is significantly older. An important piece of evidence was found from the Assyrian king Salmanasar III's (858–824 B.C.) Balawat Gates, on a bronze plate. In the record of the expeditions conducted against Ararat-Urartu, we find the following piece of important information: "I conquered the city of Upumu, the city of Anahit of Shupria"²¹¹ (now the Fum settlement in Sassoun). **This is an ancient testimony of the cult of Anahit in Hayq (Shupria, Sassoun) (9th century B.C.).**



Goddess Anahit, British Museum, photographed by A. Oshakantsu

Regarding the goddess Anahit, the Armenian king Trdat, before he adopted Christianity, told the Parthian Gregory, "...This Great Lady Anahit, who is the glory and life-giver of our people, whom all the kings worship,... She is the mother of all temperance, the benefactress of the whole human race, and the daughter of the great Aramazd of Ar"²¹² In another excerpt, Trdat III tells Gregory the Parthian, "You also disrespected the **Great Anahit**, by whom our Armenian country lives and receives life".²¹³

²¹⁰ The Christian authors of the Haysmavurk (Synaxarium) write, "The female figure is Anahit, wife of Aramazd", however, King Trdat identifies the goddess Anahit as simply the daughter of Aramazd and "Mother of all prudence".

²¹¹ <http://annales.info/urartu/avi/029.htm>.

²¹² *Agathangelos*, 1983, p. 41.

²¹³ *Agathangelos*, 1983, p. 47.

As the goddess of motherhood, Anahit was often depicted with a child on her lap, with a long veil specifically worn by Armenian women (cf. veil of the goddess Arubani). **The Armenians believed that thanks to Mother Anahit, there always was, is, and shall continue to be, an Armenian world.** Armenian kings, when initiating any business, sought patronage, success, and life from the Great Lady Anahit. Evidently, when Armenian king Artashes I was ill, he sent a representative to Yeriza, to the temple of Anahit, to ask her for health and longevity for the king.²¹⁴ In this case, the goddess was unable to save the life of the mortal king, and he died before the ambassador returned.

The worship of Anahit was widespread in Hayq. In the Yekeghyats province, Taron, Vaspurakan, Armavir, Artashat, Gardman, and other places, temples and sanctuaries were built that were dedicated to the goddess Anahit. The Mother Goddess Anahit was the patron deity of the entire nation and the royal Armenian cities, hence why the capital cities in Armenia were called **mayrakaghak**, mother-city. Temples honoring the Mother Goddess Anahit were located in the mother cities, and in prominent, large cities.



Goddess Anahit (wearing a long veil) with a child,
Armavir, 4th century B.C.

Goddess Anahit's main temple was located in the Yekeghyats province of Upper Hayq, in the town of Erez (Yeriza) near the Gayl (Halis) River. Her worship was so prolific here that the entire province, until A.D. 301, was called Anahitian. According to Faustus of Byzantium, the large mountain in Upper Hayq's Yekeghyats province (region of Yerznka) was called "**Throne of Anahit**"²¹⁵ In the temple of Anahit, in the town of Yeriza, stood a **gold statue** of the Mother Goddess, for which Anahit is known in the ancient Armenian sources under the alternative names **Gold-Mother, Gold-Birth, Gold-Piece, and Gold-Tree** (Gold-Arm).²¹⁶ Of all the Armenian deities, only

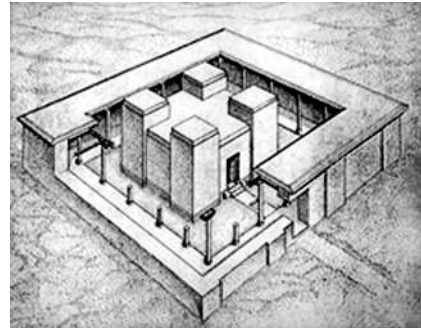
²¹⁴ Gh. Alishan, *Old Religion...* section on "Anahit", p. 13.

²¹⁵ P. Buzand, *History of the Armenians*, 1987, pp. 334–335.

²¹⁶ Agathangelos, 1983, p. 453.

Anahit had a statue cast from gold, and wreathes woven from fresh tree branches were always placed on her statue. Greek and Roman historians (Strabo, Dio, XXXVI, 5, Pliny, V, 24) attest that hundreds of women and men, called saint-worshippers (hierodules), served at Anahit's temple. Plutarch (A.D. 46-127) asserts that on the left bank of the Euphrates River, Anahit's temples were spread out, where white, sacrificial heifers grazed, marked with a torch-shaped flag on their foreheads.²¹⁷

The gold cast statue of Anahit in the temple of Eriza was very large. In 34 B.C., the Roman general Mark Antony, during his Parthian raids, entered the town of Yeriza. His soldiers looted the temple treasures, barbarically smashed the gold statue into bits and pieces, divided it amongst themselves, and took it to Rome. A Roman soldier who participated in the plundering organized a sumptuous feast in honor of Caesar Augustus. When Caesar asked about the statue of Anahit, the soldier replied that he was the first to attack the statue and the cost of that feast was covered by a piece of gold from the leg of the statue of Anahit. Following this, there were rumors that the first soldier (and the others) who had attacked the statue of Anahit was struck with blindness, then he went insane and died.



Ruins of the temple of the goddess Anahit, Yeriza (Yerznka, now Erzincan), Western Armenia (current state and reconstruction)



Image of a bull dedicated to the goddess Anahit on the wall of the early medieval church of Yeriza, 4th-6th centuries (the image is likely from an earlier date), ancient site of Yeriza (Voske Blur / Altintepe)

²¹⁷ *Plutarch*, Lucullus, 24. HJP, n. 1, 1971, p. 903.

After the destruction inflicted by the Romans, probably under the rule of Artashes II (30-20 B.C.), the gold statue of the goddess Anahit was again erected in the city of Yeriza, only to be destroyed again during the time of the spread of Christianity in Hayq. Agathangelos writes, “Those who arrived there with the converted army, Saint Grigor together with the king, smashed the golden statue of Anahit, destroyed the whole place, despoiled it, gave away all the gold and silver as booty...”²¹⁸

Other than gold statues, the Armenian temples dedicated to the goddess Anahit contained silver, bronze, and marble statues of her. At the end of the 19th century, near Yerznka on the banks of the Euphrates, the bronze head and arms of a statue of Anahit were discovered and taken to England. They are now housed at the British Museum (a replica is kept at the Armenian History Museum). The statue (head) of the goddess Anahit kept at the museum bears a unique hat (though incomplete and damaged). The goddess’s hairstyle and hat with horn-like protrusions are reminiscent of the hairstyles and special horned hats of the Mesopotamian goddesses (Inanna). This similarity also bolsters the fact that Anahit is an ancient Armenian goddess.

The Armenians held many holidays and festivals in honor of the goddess Anahit. One of these was celebrated in the spring, in the month of Arats (April 6th). This spring festival was celebrated by Armenians as a sort of **Mother’s Day**, with incense to the Mother Goddess Anahit. On this day, the Armenians brought flowers and fresh boughs and wreaths as presents to the temples and statues of Anahit. In the era of Christianity, the holiday was renamed Avetyats Ton (Feast of the Annunciation) and commemorates Mary, the mother of Christ.

Also celebrated in the spring (mid-March) in honor of Anahit was the festival of **Tsaghkazard** (Tsarzardar). This holiday is associated with the awakening of nature, as spring sets in after the end of winter, which welcomes the beginning of new hopes and expectations. On that day, people went to temples with fresh twigs and branches of willow in their hands, which were then blessed by the priests. They were thought to possess magical powers of goodness, abundance, and fertility. The blessed willow branches were taken home and kept until the following spring. People believed that those sacred branches would bring good fortune, abundance, and blessings to their families. Unfortunately, many rituals of the holiday have not been preserved. They have been forgotten, as this holiday’s meaning was also changed and adapted to the new religion, becoming a holiday that symbolizes the entry of Jesus Christ into Jerusalem, where people welcomed him with fresh olive branches.

Another prominent and beloved holiday dedicated to the goddess Anahit was **khaghoghornnek**, the blessing of the grapes. The beloved goddess’s main holiday of Khaghoghornnek was celebrated with grandeur on the 15th day of Navasard (August), corresponding with the ripening and harvest of fruits and crops. According to the “**Haysmavurk**”, this holiday was celebrated on the ԺԵ of Navasard (August 15).

²¹⁸ Agathangelos, 1983, p. 437.



The glorification of Anahit Ditsamor, artist R. Kocharyan

On that holiday, thousands of pilgrims gathered around the temples of Anahit and, in many cases, the pilgrims would hold small replica statues in their hands, high above their heads, and circle around the temple. Khaghoghohrhnek was a popular holiday in which the entire nation participated. The head of the goddess Anahit that was found at Mount Nemrut is decorated with fruits, including clusters of grapes.



Goddess Anahit,
Sanctuary of Nemrut



Goddess Anahit,
British Museum

Celebrated with great fanfare, Anahit's festival was associated with the ripening of fruits, crops, and good things, becoming a zodiac festival of harvest time. During Khaghoghohrhnek, priests performed a ritual of praise, then the harvest would begin. The first blessed fruits were gifted to Anahit's temple, grapes, peaches, figs, etc. The holiday was attended by the extravagantly dressed king, queen, and their accompanying entourage, consisting of nobility and representatives of the royal houses. The

ceremonies were accompanied by prayers, ritual songs and dances, games, and rich and sumptuous feasts that lasted for several days. “The women and girls, the youth and the elderly, although strangers to one another, they will start a communal dance to the sounds of drums and horns, knees bending, heads bobbing, feet stomping, but all in coordination and unison, they will dance, clap their hands, and sing”.²¹⁹ Also on that day, the adolescent girls and boys would engage in dates and courtship, because the youth believed that the meetings and acquaintanceships made on the holiday of Mother Goddess Anahit would bring them happiness and good fortune.

In the year 301, a religious revolution took place in Armenia, and Christianity was recognized as the official religion of the state. From the works of Agathangelos, Zenob Glak the Syrian, and other historians, it is apparent that the Armenian population was opposed to the new religion, even resulting in clashes and battles. Nonetheless, the king (Trdat III) became a Christian and, with the help of his newly Christianized army, Christianity was victorious. Let us note that there were many foreigners within the army, especially Romans. During the spread of Christianity, the Armenian temples were destroyed and looted, and the Armenian civilization and culture that had been created over millennia was wiped out, including the ancient manuscripts stored in the temples. The loss of that culture is also the reason why very little has been preserved about the ancient history of Armenians. Armenian historians and scholars have had to collect bits and pieces and, with difficulty, complete the history of the pre-Christian era of Armenian history. Even though the new religion prevailed, the population quietly and discreetly preserved the worship of the old gods (rugs and carpets were woven, pottery items were crafted: salt containers, jugs, bowls, and jars with symbolic images of ancient gods...). The Armenians also preserved the names of their beloved gods and goddesses, naming their sons and daughters Aramazd, Anahit, Mihr, Vahagn, Astghik, Nane...

Following the victory of Christianity, many of the Armenian religious (pagan) holidays, rituals, ceremonies, even the music and songs (hymns) were imported into the new Christian religion by Gregory the Parthian. The worship of Anahit was converted into the worship of Mary the Theotokos. Many ritualistic and cultic elements once dedicated to Anahit were attributed to Mary, the mother of Jesus.

Let us focus on a question that began circulating at the end of the 19th century. In the realm of historiography, there is a viewpoint that the worship of Anahit was imported to Hayq from Iran. This does not coincide with reality, since the Iranian tribes left their ancestral homeland, the Armenian Highlands, and migrated towards the east, to their current place of residence, taking with them the gods worshipped by their ancestors, which included the worship of Mother Anahit. Many facts are also against that viewpoint. The Iranian pantheon is not distinguished by the worship of goddesses. The goddess Anahit (**Ardvi Sura Anahita**, or Nahit) did not enjoy the ample love and respect in Iran that she received in Hayq. Strabo writes, “All Persian

²¹⁹ K.V. Melik-Pashayan, *The Cult of Goddess Anahit*, Yerevan, 1963, pp. 126-137.

deities are also worshiped by Medians and Armenians, but the worship of Anahit among Armenians surpasses all...”²²⁰ These arguments allow us to conclude that the cult of Anahit permeated from Armenia into Persia.

Let us reference one of Strabo’s testimonies which is very often manipulated (on some occasions, it has been asserted that, while writing his works, Strabo used the works of other authors without confirming their truthfulness, often expressed his own personal beliefs, made generalizations, interpretations, etc.) Strabo, located in Syria (around Semitic tribes), near the temples dedicated to Ishtar, wrote about hetaerism, ritual immorality (according to Ghevond Alishan, “pagan disorder”), attributing it to Hayq, especially to the temples of Anahit, where pagan “disorders” allegedly occurred after celebrations and feasts. Let us remember, the Semitic environment was very different from the Armenian-Aryan environment, in terms of moral characteristics. Mesopotamian gods and goddesses (also Greek deities), Inanna-Ishtar, Astarte, Cybele..., were cunning, vengeful, and loose with their behavior and morals. On the other hand, Armenian deities were distinguished by their prudence, modesty, and virtuous behavior and morality. This is all the more true for Mother Goddess Anahit, **the goddess of prudence, chastity, and decency**, who, in depictions and statues, is often portrayed with a child. Therefore, it is not sensible to imagine that “ritual immorality” would be included in the celebrations of holidays held in her honor. Moral standards have always been respected and upheld in Hayq. If such immoral practices were common in the Armenian lands, Christian historians of the early period would have definitely written about them, claiming that Christianity morally enhanced the Armenian people. Meanwhile, Agathangelos, as noted above, wrote, “...Especially this Great Lady Anahit, who is the glory and life-giver of our people, whom all the kings worship,... She is **the mother of all temperance**, the benefactress of the whole human race...”²²¹ Thus, it is not possible that the holidays held in her honor would be filled with “immorality”. This is one of the cases in which Strabo’s testimony does not coincide with the actuality of the Armenian environment.



Goddess Inanna



Goddess Anahit

²²⁰ *Strabo*, XI, 14, 16, HJP, 1971, p. 902.

²²¹ *Agathangelos*, 1983, p. 437.

Let us return to the discussion of the goddesses Inanna and Anahit (in the section dedicated to Inanna we covered the commonalities of the goddesses Inanna-Anunit-Anahit). Both of them are the same Mother Goddess. In Hayq, the goddess was called **Anahit**, but in Sumer, **Inanna**. However, if Anahit retained her characteristically benevolent features in the land of Ararat for millennia, then in Sumer, and subsequently the Akkadian-Babylonian environment (amongst the Semitic tribes), Inanna-Ishtar acquired such characteristics that would have been unacceptable in the Hay-Aryan environment (she is cunning, self-righteous, vengeful, has loose morals and behavior, sacrifices innocent gods to achieve her goals...).

The Armenian Anahit is portrayed in Sumer as **Inanna**, **Inana**, **Anunit**, and in the Semitic environment of the Akkadian-Babylonians as **Ishtar**. Later on, the cult of Anahit also spread to the Greeks as **Anaitis (Artemis)**, to the Romans as **Diana** (Diana=Anaid, reserved letters), to the Persians as **Ardvi Sura Anahita**, and others. In Ugarit and Canaan, the chief deity El (Ellil) had a daughter named **Anat**. In the city of Sippar, Inanna was worshiped under the name **Anunit**. Strabo asserts that on the border of Lesser Hayq, in the cities of Zela and Komana in Pontus, there were pilgrimage sites and temples honoring Anahit.²²² The name Anahit is also mentioned as **Aneai**, **Aneid**, **Anii**, and **Ani**²²³. Given these numerous examples, it is appropriate to claim that the name of Ani, the capital city of the Bagratunis, is associated with the name of the goddess Anahit.

The holidays held in honor of Anahit, which were celebrated at the beginning of April and middle of August, allow us to conclude that her worship was tied to the start of the agricultural season, and the harvest at the end of it. It also means that, in the beginning, she could have been worshiped by sedentary farming tribes, such as the Armenian tribes.

Let us also remember, during Anahit's holidays, barren women presented gifts to Anahit, wishing to secure her favor so she would grant them a child. Ethnographer E. Lalayan writes, "During Vardavar, barren women make a pilgrimage to the Tsakhkevank Cave in Mount Ara, where they stand under the water dripping from the ceiling and pray that the virgin Varvare will grant them a child. If this seemingly sacred water drips on their head, they believe that they will have a child". This was a request and prayer directed towards Mother Goddess Anahit, even though Anahit's name is not mentioned, it has been replaced by the virgin Varvare since the old gods were prohibited during the era of Christianity.

The pomegranate was Anahit's symbol. In the later pagan period, Anahit was identified with the **moon**. The 19th day of every month of the pagan Armenian calendar was called after her name.

Anahit, Aramazd and Vahagn formed the holy triad of gods in the Armenian pantheon.

²²² Strabo, XII, 3, 36–37.

²²³ Gh. Alishan, Old Religion..., section on "Anahit", p. 15.

Under the Armenian king Yervand II (404-360 B.C.), during the reign of Tiribaz (end of the 5th century B.C.), the satrap of the western part of Armenia and Capadocia, a coin was minted that depicted a goddess on one side (it is assumed to be the goddess Anahit). On the opposite side a god is pictured seated upon a throne (assumed to be Aaramazd), holding a sceptre in his hand. A cluster of grapes and an ear of wheat are depicted on the front, which, as we know, symbolized fertility. The letter “T” is noted under the throne, which is connected to Hayq’s nickname, “House of Torgom”. It is assumed that the coins were minted in the city of Soli in Cilicia, or in Malatya.²²⁴



Coins bearing the image of the goddess Anahit (wearing a hat with horns), 5th century B.C.

The remembrance and worship of the protector of the Armenian world, Mother Goddess Anahit, still lives on within the Armenian people. This is evidenced by the coin and paper drams bearing her image that were issued in the Republic of Armenia. The first gold coin made in the republic was dedicated to the goddess Anahit. The commemorative coin went into circulation on July 5, 1997.



Gold coin dedicated to the goddess Anahit, 1997

²²⁴ Ethnography event, XXII book, 1912, 1, pp. 219, 230.

VAHAGN

Vahagn is one of the most beloved gods of the Armenian pantheon. He is the god of the sun, war, thunder, and lightning. Vahagn is also known by his nickname “Vishapakagh” (Dragon Reaper). Petroglyphs in the Geghama and Syunik mountains (VI-III millennia B.C.) contain many images corresponding to the character of Vahagn the Vishapakagh (also Vishapaspan, Dragon Slayer). Vahagn was initially the god of thunder and lightning, later taking on the attributes of the sun and war god, becoming an almighty god. Thanks to Khorenatsi, the miraculous account of the birth of the sun, Vahagn, has been preserved for us in a poem called “The Birth of Vahagn”:

In travail were heaven and earth,
In travail, too, the scarlet sea!
The travail held in the sea the small red reed.
Through the hollow of the stalk came forth smoke,
Through the hollow of the stalk came forth flame,
And out of the flame a youth ran!
Fiery hair had he,
Ay, too, he had flaming beard,
And his eyes, they were as suns!²²⁵



Vahagn, Sanctuary of Nemrut,
1st century B.C.



Vahagn Vishapakagh, Yerevan, 1968,
by sculptor K. Nurijanyan

Ghevond Alishan, referencing one of the priests of old, writes, “Some people worshipped the Sun and called him Vahagn”.²²⁶ It is accepted in Armenian historiography (A. Matikian, M. Abeghian, N. Adonts) that, over time, Vahagn acquired the characteristics of the sun god. It is also a well established viewpoint that the cult of Vahagn originated in the Armenian Highlands in very early times.

²²⁵ *Movses Khorenatsi*, 1981, p. 102.

²²⁶ *Gh. Alishan*, *Old Religion...*, 1910, p. 96.

There are scholars (Vindishman, Lazard, Geltser) that conflate the Armenian Vahagn with the god Verethragna from the Iranian Avesta, claiming he is of Iranian origin, which is rejected by the majority of Armenian scholars.

A prevalent viewpoint held by Armenian historiographers is that the name Vahagn comes from the Indo-European name **Bahagin** (god), with the standard **b** sound becoming a **v** sound.²²⁷ In one group of Indo-European languages, the root **bah** (**vah**) means “god”, for example, the Pahlavian **bag** or Russian **bog**. In the Armenian names **Bagin**, **Bagavan**, **Bagarich**, and **Bagaran**, the “bag” component, again, implies god. **Bah** (**Vah**) is the root of the name Vahagn, and the suffix **agn** also suggests that we are dealing with an Indo-European word. Ghevond Alishan concerned himself with the root **agn**: “The Indian (Sanskrit) Akni, Latin gnis, Greek Ayvos, are these not synonymous?”,²²⁸ asked the great scientist. New studies on the Indo-European homeland and mother tongue allow us to assert that all of the aforementioned words, including the Russian **ogon** and Armenian **krak** (**ag**), are synonyms from cognate languages that mean **fire**. Thus, the name Vahagn is a fusion of the components **Vah**- “god” and **-agn** “flame, fire”, and implies **the god of flame, fire (the sun)**.

As previously mentioned, Vahagn was also the Armenian god of war. Armenian kings and generals appealed to the power of Vahagn, along with a series of other gods. Let us remember, the greeting proclamation of King Trdat I (66-88) addressed to the Armenian people, the princes, satraps, agents, freemen, and builders, when he said, “May greetings and peace come with the help of the gods: fertile abundance from Aramazd, guardianship from the Lady Anahit, courage to all the Armenians of the world from the brave Vahagn”.²²⁹

Vahagn’s wife was Astghik, the goddess of love and beauty. The main temple dedicated to Vahagn was located in the town of Ashtishat in Taron. There were also pagan temples near Mount Varaga, in the village of Ahevakan, in the Derjan province of Upper Hay.

Vahagn is one of the unique gods to whom a priestly lineage was devoted. This family was called the **Vahuniq**, and the members were required to serve Vahagn in his dedicated temples.²³⁰ Sadly, during the time of the spread of Christianity, the temples of Vahagn were eradicated. Agathangelos writes about how the temple of Vahagn in the town of Ashtishat was destroyed, which was “Full of gold, silver, and many gifts from great kings. It was the eighth renowned (locale) of worship in the name of Vishapakagh Vahagn, the place of the sacrifices of the kings of Greater Hayq, on the slope of Mount Qarqe, on the Euphrates River, in front of Mount Taurus, which was called Ashtishat due to the abundance of places of worship. Because, at that time, there were still three altars in it, the first one was the Vahevanyan temple, the second was Voskemayr, the name of the goddess Vosketsin and the altar was also called Voskemayr, Voskehat, and the third one was the temple of the goddess Astghik,

²²⁷ HSH, n. 11, p. 242.

²²⁸ Gh. Alishan, *Old Religion...*, 1910, p. 96.

²²⁹ *Agathangelos*, 1983, p. 80.

²³⁰ *Movses Khorenatsi*, 1981, p. 131.

called Chamber of Vahagn... So, Saint Gregory chose that place to destroy, because yet more ignorant people were offering sacrifices on these remaining pagan altars”²³¹

It is assumed that the **Vahevanyan temple** was a massive structure, consisting of three separate altars. The central altar was dedicated to Vahagn, and contained a large statue of him. A second altar was dedicated to the **goddess Voskemayr** (Golden Mother), **Vosketsin** (Golden Birth), and this altar was likewise named the **altar of the goddess Voskehat** (Golden Piece), **Voskemayr** (the goddess **Anahit**). The third altar was dedicated to the goddess Astghik. There were statues of Anahit Mother Goddess and Goddess Astghik inside their altars. Astghik was considered the bride of Vahagn, and her chamber was called “Chamber of Vahagn”.

An opulent pagan temple library, which was also completely destroyed, was located in Ashtishat. After persistent fighting, Gregory the Parthian’s company of troops ravaged the main temple of Vahagn, which became the site of the first Armenian Mother Church, Holy Trinity Church of Ashtishat. This is attested to by Faustus of Byzantium, Zenob Glak, and Hovhan Mamikonyan (*History of Taron*). Tovma Artsruni testifies that there were temples honoring Vahagn in Pokr Aghbak and Tosp.



A carving depicting the birth of Vahagn. Discovered in Western Armenia (Urfa) in the foundation of an Armenian church. This finding provides evidence that the church was built upon the ruins of a pagan temple.

Destroying temples from the Armenian religion and eradicating ancient manuscripts, Gregory the Parthian wanted to eliminate the ancient Armenian faith and the worship of those gods. Ghevond Alishan writes, “With great difficulty, Gregory the Illuminator erased the worship of Vahagn, for the priests and people obstinately worshiped him” (G. Alishan, *Old Religion...*). The people worshiped and protected the belief and memory of their beloved god. This is evidenced by one piece of the poem “The Birth of Vahagn”, which, nearly two centuries after the adoption of Christianity, was written down in the 5th century work by Movses Khorenatsi, from the minstrels of the Goght province. The 27th day of each month in the Armenian pagan calendar was dedicated to Vahagn.

²³¹ *Agathangelos*, 1983, pp. 453, 455.

MIHR

Mihr was the god of the sun, fire, and light in the Armenian pantheon. He was the son of the chief deity Aramazd (the god Ar-Ara-Aram)²³² The first written source we encounter which mentions the name of the god Mihr, in its variant form **Mitra**, is the treaty signed between the Hurri-Mitannian king Shattiwaza (Mattiwaza, 1350 B.C. - unknown) and Hittite king Suppiluliumas (1380-1346 B.C.)²³³

Although there are very few literary mentions of Mihr, in old Armenian myths and epics there are many heroes who match Mihr's description (Artavazd, Big and Little Mher from "*Sasna Tsrer*"). Artavazd, who later became an evil force, was chained to Mount Masis, and Little Mher was locked in Agravaqar, a cave near Van (Mher's Door). However, the people believe that they will return from that closed place and save the world.

There is an interesting myth about Mihr, the content of which is as follows: Mihr is the son of Aramazd, born from the rocks, and brought up by shepherds. After he is born, Mihr decides to test his strength against the sun, and he defeats it. He comes to an agreement with the sun that, as a reward, Mihr's head will be adorned with a crown of sun rays.



The birth of Mihr, relief, sculpture, Rome



Mihr with the crown of the sun relief sculpture, Rome

According to one other ancient tradition, the world is represented as a saltwater sea (Lake Van) with a rock in the center, and when the sky splits open above it, light falls upon the rock and Mihr is born, naked, except for an Armenian hat on his head and a torch in his left hand, with which he illuminates the world.

Mihr's primary heroic act is the slaying of Aramazd's prior creation, the cosmic golden bull. Mihr creates the world from the members of the slain bull, establishing the divine laws of the universe. From the blood of the slain bull came forth all the

²³² The name **Armihir**, composed of the names **Ar** and **Mihr**, is mentioned in the work of Kaghankatvatsi. Movses Kaghankatvatsi, *History of the Country of Aghvanq*, Yerevan, 1969, p. 134.

²³³ A. *Khachatryan*, 1933, p. 483 (book appendix).

power of the fruitfulness of the earth. Finally, Mihr yokes four horses to the sun chariot and ascends to heaven, and from there he watches over the people and the earth. But he will return again, to save humanity from evil and create a blessed kingdom.²³⁴ In the epic “*Sasna Tsrer*”, the Armenian people retained the character of the god Mihr, imparting his characteristics into the two heroes, Big Mher and Little Mher. Big Mher is one of the most beloved characters in Armenian legends. In this character, he is a demigod. He is the son of the cosmic hero born from the waters, Sanasar (grandchild of the foremother Tsovinar). When he was still young, there was famine and scarcity in Sassoun. The cause of this was a tremendous lion that had appeared in the mountains, and was blocking the path into Sassoun, ravaging all who crossed his path, and not allowing bread or any other goods into Sassoun. Being made aware of this predicament, Big Mher sets off the next day to fight the lion. When the lion sees Mher, he furiously charges forward. Mher, who was unfamiliar with the lion, learned from his companions that the lion was coming, and, exclaiming the ancestral oath, “Bread and wine, the living god”, and, unarmed, he attacks the beast. The Sasna hero puts one hand on the upper jaw of the lion, the other on the lower one, and tears the beast into two halves, putting one half on one side of the road, the other half on the other side, and returning to Sassoun. Thereafter, he is called **Lion Mher**. It is interesting that in some variations of the story, Mher does not kill a lion, however, he is still called Lion Mher. It is assumed that this name could have originally meant “similarity to a lion”, “a lion’s form”. This assumption is based on the fact that in several Roman sculptures Mher-Mitra is **depicted with the head of a lion and the body of a man**. Hence, the name Lion Mher was preserved in some tellings of “*Sasna Tsrer*”.

Little Mher is also one of the beloved heroes of *Sasna Tsrer*, the grandson of Big Mher and the son of David. Little Mher, likewise, performs a series of heroic deeds. He fights against the enemies of the Sasnas and defeats them all. Eventually, even the ground can no longer bear the weight of the immortal and heirless Mher, and his feet sink into the dirt. Desperate, Mher goes to the graves of his dead parents to ask for help. His parents advise him to go to Agravakar. By God’s command, the Agravakar rock, near Van, opens, Mher enters the rock on a horse, and the rock closes behind him. The Armenian epic tells of a time when Mher will come out of the rock. It will be in the time when the old world is torn down and the new one is built up, when injustice disappears and there is an abundance of good things, when barley becomes the size of walnuts and wheat the size of rose hips, when the soil becomes just and is able to endure under Mher’s feet.

²³⁴ Gh. Alishan, *Old Religion...*, 1910, p. 305.



Mihr, Sanctuary of Nemrut



Mihr with a crown of the sun, Sanctuary of Nemrut

The cult of Mihr was especially widespread under the Roman Empire. Based on the universal worship of Mihr, **Mithraism** was formed in the 4th-2nd centuries B.C., **the primary notion of which is the second coming of the benevolent god Mihr.** Mihr was considered a savior and messiah. According to the Mithraites, at the second coming of Mihr the world will be delivered from evil forces and death, and a blessed kingdom will be established on the earth, and all the dead will receive the terrible judgment of Mihr, the guilty will be punished, and the righteous will be resurrected.

The birth of Mihr was celebrated on December 25, when the triumph of the sunlight begins, when the light of the day defeats the dark of the night. Christianity absorbed many of the elements of Mithraism (the birthday of Christ, ascension into heaven, second coming). Christianity also borrowed Mihr's birthday (December 25), turning it into the day of Christ's birth (the Armenian Church did not accept this, they celebrate the birth of Christ on January 6). Additionally, pagan temples in Hayq were called "mehyans", which scholars (M. Emin, De Lezard) believe was derived from the name of the god Mihr²³⁵

Let us focus on the special hat that is called a **mihraikan**. As we can see, mihraikan hats, with their pointed end, are similar to the sharp-tipped hats worn by the Mesopotamian gods, which, as we already mentioned, have horn-like protrusions. This is a symbol of cosmic, divine origin. Horn-like protrusions are not prominent on Mihr's hat, however, the overall form and characteristics of the hats are similar to the hats of the Mesopotamian gods. The so-called mihraikan or Armenian hats are also worn by the Armenian gods (the Armenian gods found at the Sanctuary of Nemrut are wearing mihraikan hats). Armenian kings also wore mihraikan hats (Tigran III). The king's tall crown (hat) with short spikes also has the same meaning, to emphasize the divine origin of a king or ruler.

²³⁵ T. Avdalbekyan, *Mihr in Armenia*, Vienna, 1929, p. 2.



Mihr slays the bull, 2nd century, Rome, National Museum

The holiday dedicated to Mihr was celebrated with great splendor in Hayq. A great quantity of horses were sacrificed for the occasion. Strabo attests, every year the Armenian satrap would send 20,000 foals to the king of Persia for Mihr's holiday²³⁶ If they sent that great abundance of horses to the Persian king, then we must assume thousands of horses were also sacrificed in Armenia.

The seventh month of the Armenian pagan calendar, which corresponds to the modern month of February, was called **Mehekan**, and the eighth day of each month was called **Mihr**. Vanakan Vardapet derives the name Mehekan from the word "mah" (death), because in that month nature is blanketed in snow, the plants and trees cease to grow, and they leave an impression of death. All of the holidays dedicated to Mihr were celebrated in the winter (December 25, mid-February: Trndez), when the natural world was dormant. It is appropriate to assume that the name Mihr (Mher) comes from Mah + ER (AR). Winter is followed by spring, and the dead natural world, and the beloved god, are resurrected (the death-rebirth nature of AR-Ara, the second coming of Mihr following his death).



Temple of Mihr, Garni, A.D. 1st century

²³⁶ *Strabo*, books XI, XIV, 9.

The main temple dedicated to Mihr in Hayq was located in Upper Hayq's Derjan province, in the town of Bagarich (Bagayari). There were also temples in Vaspurakan, Taron, Syunik, and more. The Temple of Garni is also dedicated to him. There is a statue of Mihr at the sanctuary on the top of Mount Nemrut, he is seated on the left side of Aramazd. Armenian pagan shrines, **mehyans**, derive their name from the god Mihr, as well as numerous personal names like Mihran, Mihrdat, Mihrnerseh, Mehrujan, Mihrazat, Mihrishat, Mihrhorik, and others

The cult of Mihr extended to India, Iran, Greece, Rome, Georgia, Albania, and further. He was called Mihr in Persia, Mithra in Rome. The supreme god of the Icelanders was called Maedras.²³⁷



The guardians of the ancient spiritual values of the Armenian world, priests, preparing for a ritual ceremony. The mihraikan hat worn by the priests is noteworthy. Relief sculpture, Bayazet

²³⁷ Gh. Alishan, *Old Religion...*, section on "Mihr", p. 20.

ASTGHİK

Astghik was the Armenian goddess of love, beauty, and water. This goddess was beloved among the Armenian people, just like the goddess Anahit. The goddess of love and beauty was also captivatingly beautiful. In the second half of the 19th century, the philologist Garegin Srvandztyants wrote down an interesting legend from Taron about Astghik. The story tells that the goddess Astghik had a habit of swimming in the Gur-gur gorge of the Aratsani River. In order to admire her beauty, the adolescent boys would light bonfires on the slopes of the Taron mountains, so they could watch the bathing goddess. However, the goddess shrouded the field of Taron in mist every night to hide herself from their gaze, and the efforts of the youths were in vain. The legend also tells that this fog was why that area was called Mush.²³⁸ Astghik was honored with the names **Vosketsghi** (one with golden arms) and **Vardamat** (one with roses for fingers).²³⁹ The holidays of the Vosketsghi and Vardamat goddess was celebrated in mid-July. During the holiday, roses and rose petals were strewn across Astghik's temples and statues, and doves, considered sacred, were released. Apparently, Astghik's nickname "Vardamat" (one with roses for fingers) originated from the tradition of giving her roses. The holiday was called **Vardavar**. According to one viewpoint, the name Vardavar is connected to the Indo-European words water, wede, and voda. That day placed great emphasis on water, which was much needed in the summer heat. In mid-summer, the fields and plains were in need of water since the rains were becoming scarce, so the Armenians appealed to their gods to send rain, water. By sprinkling water on each other, people hoped for rain from the gods, especially from the goddess Astghik. As we can see, **Vardavar was a ritual ceremony** which was turned into a holiday in which people requested rain and water from the goddess Astghik.

Vardavar was also one of the first festivals associated with harvest, the rituals of which were partially dedicated to the deities providing harvest and beneficence. Ears of corn were donated to the temples during Vardavar, and people implored the gods to protect the fields and gardens from disasters (drought, hail, grasshoppers).

During Vardavar, people decorated their homes with fresh tree branches, gave flowers to each other, released doves, sprinkled water on each other, decorated the foreheads and horns of livestock with garlands of flowers, and more. During the celebrations, games and parties were also organized, during which there was an abundance of singing and dancing. However, the holiday, as mentioned, mainly consisted of water games in which men, women, children, and even the elderly splashed water on each other.

²³⁸ G. Srvandztyants, *Grots-brots*, K. Polis, 1874, pp. 97-98.. The Armenian word for fog is մշուշ (mshush).

²³⁹ Gh. Alishan, *Old Religion...*, p. 304.



Goddess Astghik, artist: Ruben Kocharyan

The holiday was accompanied by great festivities and ceremonies, which brought people an abundance of joy. The holiday of Vardavar was beloved by the people, therefore, it is not coincidental that the people preserved the holiday for millennia, even to this day.

One of the main temples dedicated to Astghik was located in Ashtishat, in the Vahevanyan temple complex, which, as previously mentioned, has an altar called “Vahagn’s Chamber”, where Astghik would encounter her beloved Vahagn. The convergence (or marriage) of Astghik and Vahagn was considered sacred, for at that time it caused rain to fall upon the earth, everything flourished, and this provided people with a plentiful harvest (cf. the sacred marriage of Inanna). This particular altar of Astghik was also torn down during the time of the adoption of Christianity. The meaning behind the holiday of Vardavar was deliberately changed by Gregory the Parthian, being called “the brightest appearance of Christ on Mount Tabor”.²⁴⁰

Later on, the Christian church replaced the holiday of Vardavar with the Feast of the Transfiguration of Christ, adapting the rituals and traditions to the new religion. They called the spashing of water a symbol of the Great Flood, the release of doves a symbol of the same deed done by Noah, and they even turned the goddess Astghik into a daughter of Noah.

Besides Ashtishat, there were temples honoring Astghik in the town of Artamet near Lake Van, on Mount Paghato in the province of Andzevats, in Artashat, and other places. The seventh day of each month in the Hayqian pagan calendar bears the name of the goddess Astghik.

²⁴⁰ Gh. Alishan, *Old Religion...*, p. 305.

NANE

Nane was the Armenian pantheon's goddess of wisdom, war, and victory. She is the daughter of Aramazd, the chief god of the pantheon. The cult of Nane is closely connected to the cult of the Mother Goddess, Anahit. It should not be considered coincidental that Nane's temple was located in the town of Til in Yekeghyats province, in the vicinity of Anahit's temple. A sign of the widespread affection and great love for Nane is the fact that, to this day, Armenians call their grandmothers "nan" or "nani".



Goddess Nane, artist: R. Kocharyan

There was a temple dedicated to the goddess Nane in the town of Til, which was destroyed during the Christianization of Armenia.

TIR

Tir was the Armenian pantheon's god of wisdom, schooling, writing, and science. This Armenian god was Aramazd's scribe (or messenger). Included in the priestly sciences or wisdom was divination, especially the interpretation of dreams. Thus, the god Tir was also called **Yerazatsuyts** (dream-shower) and **Yerazahan** (dream-reader), which means that priests learned the art of divination of dreams from him. Ancient Armenians called the places of Tir's worship Yerazamuin ("place where dreams appear"). This was where pilgrims received the interpretation and prophetic meaning of their dreams from the god Tir, through the priests (oracles). Tir was also the registrar of the evil and good deeds that people did, the one who would guide the souls of the deceased to the underworld. As a scribe, Tir recorded the births and deaths of all people in his register for a whole month, and for the remaining eleven months **he endowed artists with a creative spirit.**



Tir, Sanctuary of Nemrut

The place of worship for the god Tir was in the vicinity of Artashat, and was called the sofa of Aramazd's (Ormzd's) scribe (temple for teaching knowledge), where the priests learned science and wisdom. Agathangelos also testifies to the destruction of the cultic centers dedicated to Tir. He writes, "Then the king immediately issued an order,... to hand over the work to the blessed Gregory, so that the former native, ancient, ancestral so-called gods, who are not gods, would be removed from memory, erased from the middle. Then the king himself, along with the entire army, moved from the city of Vagharshapat to the city of Artashat... First, on the way, they met a scribe of clerical science from the sofa of Ormzd's (Aramazd's) scribe, from the cult of yerazatsuyts, yerazahan, the temple of the study of wisdom of the god Tir, and the first thing they did was dismantle, burn, and destroy it".²⁴¹



Temple of the god Tir, Yerazamuin.
Reconstruction, F. Devezjan

The fourth month of the ancient Armenian pagan calendar was named **Tre**. During the Hellenistic era, Tir was identified with Apollo and Hermes. Personal names derived from Tir include Tiran, Tirit, Tiribaz, Tirots, Tigran, Trdat, and more.

²⁴¹ *Agathangelos*, 1983, p. 437.

ANGEKH (ANGGH, ANGEL)

Angekh was the ancient Armenian bird-like angel god. The 7th century historian Sebeos attests, there was a cult in Armenia dedicated to the bird-like angel god **Angekh** (Anggh), which tied together the earthly and heavenly worlds.²⁴² The center of worship of this deity was in the state of Aghdznik in Greater Hayq, in the province of **Angekh Tun** (Angel's home). In the center of Angekh Tun province was the fortress-city of Anggh (now the village of Edil, north of Diyarbekir, Western Armenia). In the inscriptions of the Ararat-Urartian kings, the province of **Angekh Tun** was in the center of the land of Arme. The prevalence of settlements in Armenia bearing the name of the god Angekh attest to his widespread worship. Some of these settlements include **Anggh** (Ayrarat's Tsaghkotn province), **Angeghi**, **Angeghakot**, **Angeghadzor** (Syunik), **Anggh** (near Lake Van), and others.

In the Armenian translation of the Bible, the name of the Sumerian-Akkadian underworld god, Nergal, is translated to Angekh.

Let us note, in the ancient settlement of Portasar (Göbekli Tepe, about 12,000 years old), near the Armenian Mesopotamian city of Urha (Urfa, Edessa), a stone monument was discovered upon which the god Angekh (Anggh) was depicted. This confirms that the people living in that settlement worshiped the bird-like deity. They were aware of both an earthy realm, and an afterlife; they believed that this god connected those two worlds.



Image of the winged deity Angekh / Angel
on a stone monument Portasar

The 12,000-year-old ancient stone monument found in Armenian Mesopotamia is the archeological evidence that, along with comparative linguistics, allows us to assert that the Anglo-German names Angela, Angelina, and Angel, the French names Angel, Angela, and Angelica, and the Italian-Spanish names Angela, Anjela, and Anjel are derived from the ancient Armenian bird-like deity Angekh, represented in the languages of various Indo-European peoples (Indo-European dialects).

²⁴² *Sebeos*, History, 2005, pp. 15, 55, HJP, 1971, p. 484.

VANATUR

Amanor and **Vanatur** are uniquely Armenian gods. Vanatur was the **god of hospitality**. This Armenian god was the patron of guests, pilgrims, and foreign travelers, “the giver of their shelter, refuge”. **Vanatur** literally means **giver of shelter, lodging**, and he symbolized the hosting and caretaking of the many guests and pilgrims who visited Bagavan, on Navasard and other days.

Vanatur’s holiday was celebrated at the beginning of the ancient Armenian pagan calendar, “At the head of the year, on the first day of Amanor (New Year), for which he was often called the Amanorya god”. On the first day of Navasard, when the fruits began to ripen, the people gathered in the province of Bagrevand, at the Bagavan temple, at the foot of Mount Npat, where they assembled in lodges dedicated to Vanatur, and celebrated Vanatur’s feast with great splendor, organizing a huge celebration.

After proclaiming Christianity as the state religion, in order to thwart the celebration of the Vanatur holiday, Gregory the Parthian repurposed it as the festival of Sts. Karapet and Atenagines. Regarding this Agathangelos writes, “And he (Gregory the Parthian) ordered the establishment of a great holiday in remembrance of the martyrs he brought, to replace the worship of the frivolous god of fruitfulness, **the god of Amanor** (New Year), on the feast day of the **Hospitable Vanatur**, which in the past was joyfully celebrated in the same place on the day of Navasard”²⁴³ Based on this evidence, Amanor and Vanatur are often equated. Vanatur is noted as a description of Amanor, which denotes **giving shelter, hospitality**.

²⁴³ *Agathangelos*, 1983, p. 467.

AMANOR

Amanor is also a unique Armenian god. Like Vanatur, Amanor was also a beloved deity. Amanor, which means **New Year** in ancient Armenian, was personified by the god who was considered “**the most fruitful of new fruits**”. His festival and worship took place during the days of Armenian New Year, on Navasard, which was at the end of July and beginning of August according to the ancient Armenian pagan calendar. These were the months in which fruits ripened and were harvested.

The celebrations around Navasard were nationwide holidays, and were accompanied by great splendor and merriment. However, these celebrations were held with even greater pomp in one of the Armenian spiritual centers located in the plains of Bagrevand province, called **Bagavan**, the name of which translates to “deity-place” or “god-place”. This town contained the places of worship for the gods of the New Year, of Amanor and the Hospitable Vanatur. If Amanor symbolized the new year and its new fruits, then Vanatur, which literally means “giver of shelter, hospitable”, symbolizes hospitality, giving place and lodging to the many thousands of guests and pilgrims who visited Bagavan on Navasard and other days.

SPANDARAMET

The ancient Armenian god of the underworld was Spandaramet, or Sandaramet, who was often identified with the subterranean, the realm of the dead, or directly with hell.

SUMMARY

This work presents the history of the Armenians (Hay-Armens), one of the oldest nations in the world, from the time of creation to the end of the I millennium B.C..

The written sources of Mesopotamia, in particular the Sumerian mythological epic poems (“Enmerkar and the Lord of Aratta”), indicate that in the IV-III millennia B.C., a country called Ararat, the integral part of which was the city of Aratta (capital, city-state), existed in the Armenian Highlands. Aratta, the spiritual and cultural center of the land of Ararat, was the residence of a priest-king. Aratta was closely associated with the Sumerian city of Uruk through economic, cultural, military, and other ties.

According to Mesopotamian epic poems, Ararat is the epicenter of creation, which initially was the land of the gods, then, that of humanity.

Summarizing the Sumerian mythological legends and lyric poems, as well as the images on seals and clay tablets, reveals that

Ararat (Aratta) is the residence of the gods (“Enmerkar and the Lord of Aratta”, “Gilgamesh and the Land of the Immortals”, “History of Babylonia” by Berossus).

The people of Ararat (Aratta) are protected by god (“Enmerkar and the Lord of Aratta”).

Ararat (Aratta) is the country of sacred laws and rites (“Enmerkar and the Lord of Aratta”, “Lugalbanda and Enmerkar”, “Enmerkar and Ensuhkeshdanna”).

The secret of immortality is hidden in the land of Ararat (Aratta) (“Gilgamesh and the Land of the Immortals”).

Ararat is the country of the rebirth of mankind following the Great Flood (Bible).

According to the written sources, the states **called Ararat, Aratta (city-state), Mitanni (Hurri-Mitanni), Armani, Hayasa, Nairi, Arme-Shupria, Ararat-Urartu, Armenia, Armina, Hayq**, etc. were established in the Armenian Highlands, forming six millennia of Armenian history. This work discusses Armenian history and statehood in detail, from the period of IV-I millennia B.C.

HAY-ARMEN ETHNONYMS: The ancient written sources of Mesopotamia, particularly of Sumer, help us understand the origin, essence, and meaning of the Hay-Armen names. The lyric poems “Enki and Ninmach” and “Atrahasis” testify that man was created by the gods in the region of the sources of the Tigris and Euphrates rivers, in the Armenian Highlands. The man (tribe) created in the name of the god Haya, the ruler of Mother Earth, called himself Hay, which means **inhabitant of the earth**.

According to one of the widely held beliefs in historiography, the name Armenian is related to the name of the god **AR**, the Creator, and means **son of AR**.

However, new studies of Sumerian poetry provide a novel explanation for the name **Armen**. In the poem “Enki and the World Order”, Haya helps humanity acquire knowledge that will ensure their existence on earth. For this purpose, he writes **sacred laws** called **Me**. The laws of **Me** operated in Ararat (Aratta), **the land of creation, sacred laws, rites, and immortals**.

Therefore, the man created in the land of creation, in Ararat, is the bearer of that sacred and powerful science, **Me-ARME-N**, this is, bearer of **divine (AR) sacred laws**. As we can see, Hay and Armen are divine names given to the same tribe, the Hay-Armenians.

APPENDIX

ANCIENT ARMENIAN CILICIA

Cilicia is the southwestern continuation of the Armenian Highlands. Geographically, Cilicia and Armenia are divided by the Euphrates River. Herodotus writes, “The border between Cilicia and Armenia is the navigable river called Euphrates”²⁴⁴ Since ancient times, Cilicia has always been found within the Armenian cultural area. In this way, the history of Cilicia is an inseparable part of the history of Hayq.

Every Armenian considers Cilicia and its history dear and close to their heart. A series of questions immediately arises. Was the love and devotion of Armenians towards Cilicia accidental? Was the creation of an Armenian kingdom in Cilicia in the year 1080 coincidental? Was there a precedent for the creation of an Armenian state in Cilicia before? Let us focus on these and other pertinent questions.

Scholars concerned with the history of Cilicia mainly focus their attention on the history of the creation of the Armenian kingdom of Cilicia, ignoring, or sidestepping, the ancient period entirely. Meanwhile, research reveals that the ancient period of Cilicia’s history is particularly significant. Material and spiritual cultural artifacts discovered during archaeological excavations reveal that Cilicia and its history, since ancient times, has been closely connected to Hayq and the Armenian Highlands. Let us return to the aforementioned questions and attempt to answer them, and a number of other questions, from a fresh perspective.

Cilicia is one of the ancient countries of Near East Asia, and the culture created there is an integral part of its ancient civilization. Traces of the cultural values (material, spiritual) found here date as far back as the VI-V millennia B.C..

Cilicia can be divided into two main regions, Cilician Plains (south and eastern) and Mountainous Cilicia (north and eastern, including coastal Cilicia). G. Alishan called Mountainous Cilicia the “Throne of Cilicia”.²⁴⁵ Cilicia is separated from Syria by the Amanus Mountains, in the south-east of the country. Cilicia is surrounded by mountain ranges on three sides, by the Taurus, Anti-Taurus, and Amanus, and it is washed by the waters of the Mediterranean Sea from the south.

The mountain ranges of Mountainous Cilicia, whose peaks often reach heights of 3500 meters, as well as the many castles and fortresses (more than 100 of them by the 11th century, including Lambron and Vahkan) built there, acted as natural (mountains) and artificial (fortresses) defensive fortifications, which protected Cilicia from enemy attacks.

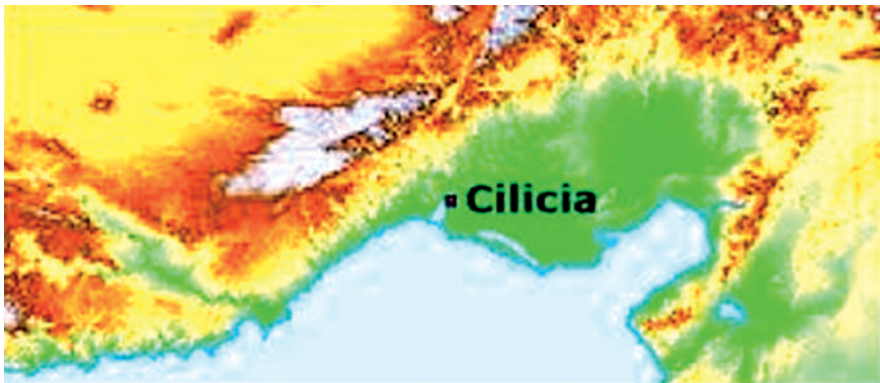
Ancient written sources from Near East Asia (Hittite, Hurrian) testify that in the III-II millennia B.C., Cilicia (Kizzuwatna, Kizzuwadna) was inhabited by Hurrians (let us remember, for the name of the natives of the Armenian Highlands, scholars pronounce the hu-ur cuneiform grouping from ancient written sources as hur or har).

²⁴⁴ *Herodotus*, Book V, 52, Yerevan, 1986, p. 307.

²⁴⁵ *Gh. Alishan*, Sisuan, 1885, p. 4.

In one of his inscriptions, Akkadian king Naram-Suen (21st century B.C.) writes, “The conqueror from Subaru to the forest of cedars”, that is, Phoenicia, Lebanon, and Cilicia. As we can see, Subaru stretched from Akkad to Phoenicia and Cilicia. It is well established that the inhabitants of Subaru were Hurrians (Subaru or Subir is a geographic name, not an ethnonym). Thus, Naram-Suen’s inscription confirms that at the end of the III millennium B.C., the lands from the Zagros to Cilicia (including the Armenian Highlands) were inhabited by Hurrians, Hay-Armens.

Scholars (J. Parch, E. Markvart, H. Manandyan) consider Kizzuwatna-Cilicia an **ancient Aryan territory**.²⁴⁶ They place **Arimaïs**, the land of volcanoes mentioned in Homer’s *Iliad*, around Cilicia’s Mount Argaeus (now Erciyes),²⁴⁷ and identify the **Arim** living there with the **Armens** (Aryans). Let us remember, one of Plato’s heroes, **Er Armenios**, was also from Cilicia (Pamphylia).²⁴⁸



Field and Mountain Cilicia

The archaeological excavations conducted in Cilicia (Mersin, Tarsus) in the 19th-20th centuries confirm that Cilicia is the location of an ancient civilization. The cultural materials discovered in Mersin and Tarsus (Tarsos, Tarson, Tarsis) during the excavations are dated to VI-V millennia B.C.. The ancient site of Yumuktepe in Mersin is a well-studied Neolithic settlement dating back to the VI millennium B.C..

The cultural layers at this settlement are nearly 25 meters deep.²⁴⁹ The tell consists of 32-33 cultural layers, 8-9 of which (nearly 10 meters) are dated to the Neolithic period. The materials dated to this era are similar to those found in the Neolithic tells of Kghzyak Blur, Mashtotsi Blur, and materials found in other monuments also located in the Ararat Valley. Some of the items that were found include work and household tools made of stone, mainly obsidian, hook inserts, arrowheads, beads made from

²⁴⁶ H. Manandyan, *An Investigative Review of the History of the Armenian People*, Yerevan, 1977, n. 1, p. 25.

²⁴⁷ Homer, *Iliad*, Yerevan, 1987, p. 69.

²⁴⁸ Plato, *Republic*, Moscow, 1929, p. 614.

²⁴⁹ T. Garstang, *Prehistory Mersin*, Oxford, 1933, p. 11. S. Sardaryan, *Primitive Society in Armenia*, 1967, p. 152.

bone, needles, and more. Both simple (gray, mixed media) and fine quality (lustrous, black, red) pottery was discovered, which have simplistic decorations²⁵⁰ (1-2 rows of lines, nail imprints, winding lines, round or oval indented patterns, combed stamps). Pottery specimens with glued edges were found. Such samples are also found in the Neolithic site of Mashtots Blur.

Mersin was the site of a vast Neolithic sedentary agricultural and animal husbandry community, with a developed economy and culture.²⁵¹ Early Mersinian culture has also been found at Tarsus, another ancient site in Cilicia not far (about 20 kilometers) from Yumuktepe. Tarsus, in turn, shares similarities with the Neolithic Barozh (Arevut) and Zagha (Vayots Dzor) settlements of the Armenian Highlands. Mersin and Tarsus, like the other ancient settlements of the Armenian Highlands (Shengavit, Shresh Blur, Kghzyak Blur, Mokhrablur), contain Eneolithic (Copper Stone Age) culture, which follows the Neolithic, and is characterized by black, shiny pottery, adorned with geometric patterns.

Mersin continued to exist as a settlement in the later period as well. In the 25th upper horizon of the ancient site, colored pottery was found with red patterns on a gray background. These findings date to the Early Eneolithic period (IV millennium B.C.). This type of shell was also discovered in the Armenian, or Northern, Mesopotamian Hassuna²⁵² cultural settlement, in the second layer of the Kghzyak Blur in the Ararat Valley, and the fourth layer of Ras Shamra in Syria. Colorful shells were also found in Tarsus, which date to the Late Eneolithic period.²⁵³ Let us note, many prominent and well-studied Neolithic sites of Near East Asia, including those known by Turkish names, such as the settlements of Çatalhöyük, Alacahöyük, Amik Valley, and other monuments, are located in the vicinity of Cilicia.

The **Neolithic** (VI-V millennia B.C.) and **Eneolithic** (IV millennium B.C.) pottery of the Armenian Highlands and Cilicia (Mersin, Tarsus) has obvious cultural commonalities and associations with those of Syria and Palestine (Khirbet Kerak).²⁵⁴ The cultural commonalities allow us to assert that the ethnic element behind the creation and disbursement of these cultures is also the same, in this case the natives of the Armenian Highlands, the Hay-Armens (Hay-Aryans).

The ancient written sources regarding Cilicia are very sparse, and the existing ones speak of the fires from the first half of the II millennium B.C.. In written sources, the name of the land is written as **Kizzuwatna (Kizzuwadna)**. Kizzuwatna-Cilicia included Antique Cilicia and the area around present day Adana, extending to the banks of the Ceyhan and Seykhan (Piramos and Saros in Greek) rivers, to Cappadocia (inclusive). The spiritual center was Kummanni (Comana during Roman times). The

²⁵⁰ J. Melart, *Ancient Civilizations of the Near East*, Moscow, 1982, p. 60.

²⁵¹ S. Sardaryan, 1967, p. 152.

²⁵² J. Melart, 1982, p. 64.

²⁵³ T. Garstang, *Prehistory Mersin...*, Tarsus, vol. 3, p. 359, n. 390. S. Sardaryan, 1967, p. 215.

²⁵⁴ S. Sardaryan, 1967, p. 255.

date of the creation of the independent state of Kizzuwatna is unknown. It may have been created after the Hurrian invasion of Hatti, around 1510 B.C., during the reign of King Hantilis. Around 1480 B.C., the city (country) of Adan (Adana) participated in the alliance formed against the Hittite king Ammunas.²⁵⁵

Kizzuwatna's independence is also emphasized in the later period. King **Ishputahshu** (about 1460 B.C.), whose seal was discovered during the excavations of Tarsus, claimed the title of Great King. Ishputahshu also signed a treaty with the king of Hatti. These types of treaties were signed by other kings as well, **Ekhey** and **Paddatishu**.

During the time of Tsidantes, the successor of Hittite king Mursilis II (1345-1320), the King **Pilliya** of Kizzuwatna, along with the Hittite king, signed a treaty to end a war. This treaty (also treaties signed later) makes it clear that Kizzuwatna was not a vassal of Hatti in the usual sense, since both parties were careful to fulfill their commitments.

Ancient written sources testify that Cilicia-Kizzuwatna was predominantly a Hurrian-populated settlement in the III-II millennia B.C.. It is well established that this is the area where Hurrian customs, traditions, gods, and other cultural values entered the Hattian and Hittite courts.

The initial kings of the first dynasty of the New Hittite Kingdom (1450-1175) bear Hurrian names. However, they also have Hittite royal names. For example, the Hurrian name of Muvatalli was Tešub, the Hurrian name of Mursilis was Urhi Teššob, the Hurrian name of Tudhaliya III was Sarruma²⁵⁶ and so on. It is assumed that this dynasty of the New Hittite Kingdom descended from Cilicia-Kizzuwatna. The wife of Hittite king Hattusili III (13th century) was **Puduhepa**, the daughter of the high priest of Kizzuwatna, who was an influential **tawanna** in the royal court²⁵⁷ During the reign of Hittite king Arnuwanda I (early 13th century), Kizzuwatna is referred to as a special territory, but also as part of the country. During Arnuwanda's reign, a strong spiritual and cultural influence from Kizzuwatna is evident over Hatti. Exuberant ritual traditions, worship of gods, lifestyle, and customs were acquired from the Hurrians.

The cultural materials discovered during the archaeological excavations of Cilicia-Kizzuwatna are connected to the Armenian Highlands and surrounding areas. These areas were not only in the sphere of cultural and economic influence of the states created in the Armenian Highlands, but were also an integral part of the powerful states created in the Armenian Highlands, including Mitanni (Hurri-Mitanni), and were administratively subordinate to the central government, having their own rulers (princes). Written sources attest, from time to time, Kizzuwatna was subordinate to the king of Hatti (Tutkhalias, Arnuwanda I, Suppiluliumas I), whenever the Hittites were successful in their military raids.

In the early 14th century B.C., the charismatic and bold Suppiluliumas I (1380-1346) ascended the throne of Hatti. He had a great desire to expand his country and

²⁵⁵ I. Dyakonov, *Herald of Ancient History*, 1970, 4, p. 44.

²⁵⁶ G. Wilhelm, *The Ancient People of the Hurrians*, Moscow, 1992, p. 53.

²⁵⁷ IDV, Moscow, 1988, n. 2, p. 151.

dominate Assyria, Syria and the shores of the Mediterranean Sea. However, these lands were under the control of the mighty Hurrian state of Mitanni. Battles ensued between Hatti and Mitanni. Turmoil over the throne and treacherous scheming helped Suppiluliumas succeeded in defeating Mitanni. The country was torn to pieces and divided amongst Hatti, Babylon, and Ashur (future Assyria). After the fall of Mitanni, Kizzuwatna found itself isolated. However, Kizzuwatna-Cilicia's influence in the Hittite court was very great, and Suppiluliumas I gave special treatment to Kizzuwatna. He signed a treaty with the king of Kizzuwatna, Sunassura. The treaty granted Kizzuwatna a semi-independent status, but the king was subject to Hatti. He committed to supply the king of Hatti with 100 charioteers and 1000 infantry soldiers during times of war. In the text of the treaty, Suppiluliumas writes, "The Hurrians called Sunassura a slave, but My Sun (the New Hittite Kingdom title for kings) made him a legitimate king"²⁵⁸ This inscription is hyperbolic, since Sunassura²⁵⁹ could not have been a slave in his country. He was simply a local leader appointed (or chosen) by the Mitanni, and was subordinate to the central government, the king of Mitanni. Suppiluliumas, by lifting him up and calling him a king, was attempting to curry favor with Sunassura.

Kizzuwatna, especially its spiritual center Kummanni, had great impact and influence over Hatti. Suppiluliumas appointed his son, Telipinu, as the high priest of Kummanni.

At the end of the II millennium B.C., shortly after Mitanni, as with many of the nations created in Near East Asia, Hatti too disappeared from the scene of history, having been defeated by Egypt and succumbing to the invasion of the "Sea Peoples".

At the end of the II millennium B.C. and start of the I millennium B.C., the written sources of Near East Asia (Assyrian, Ararat-Urartian) continue to provide information about Cilicia-Cilacu (Kilacu) and the surrounding territories. During one of his raids, Assyrian king Tiglath-Pileser I (1115-1077) attacked the mighty and disobedient city (state) of Melidia (Malatya), in the land of Hanigalbat²⁶⁰ Two kings of Ararat-Urartu, Argishti I (786-764) and Sarduri II (764-735), both crossed the Euphrates River and raided Melid-Malatya. Son and successor of Sarduri II, Rusa I (735-713), reached Cilacu(Kilaku)-Cilicia²⁶¹during one of his incursions, once again incorporating this region into the Armenian state of Ararat-Urartu, founded in the Armenian Highlands. In the 6th century B.C., new states and rulers once again appeared in Near East Asia. Cyrus the Great (550-529), founder of Achaemenid Persia, and his son Cambyses (529-522) conquered land and expanded the borders of their empire. In 546 B.C., they subjugated Asia Minor, including Cilicia, and reached the shores of the Aegean Sea.

²⁵⁸ A. Khachatryan, 1933, p. 498.

²⁵⁹ As we can see, there was a king in Cilicia-Kizzuwatna in the mid II millennium B.C. called Sunassura or Sanasurra. This name clearly has an Indo-European basis: san (sun). It is very similar to the name of the hero Sanasar from "Sasna Tsrer".

²⁶⁰ AVIU, 10 (5, 33), HJPK, p. 20.

²⁶¹ UKN, 1960.

In 334 B.C., Alexander the Great crossed the Hellespont (Dardanelles Strait) and, near the Granicus River, defeated the combined armies of the satraps of Asia Minor from Persia. Then, he conquered Asia Minor, Cilicia, and Syria. After Alexander's death, in 323 B.C., his enormous empire was divided between three of his generals. Cilicia was included in the composition of the Seleucid Empire.

In the mid-2nd century B.C., Rome began pursuing a policy of conquest in the East. In 102 B.C., the Romans subjugated the western portion of Mountainous Cilicia, later subjugating the entirety of Cilicia. The praetor of Cilicia in 95 B.C. was Sulla. The Roman and Parthian danger forced the Armenians to unite. In 95 B.C., Tigran the Great (95-55) ascended the throne of Armenia, and during his time Armenia became one of the mightiest kingdoms in Near East Asia. From 84-83 B.C., the Armenian forces, without any real resistance, captured all of Syria and Cilicia. However, in 69 B.C., at the Battle of Tigranakert, after the defeat of the Armenian forces, Syria, Cilicia, and other territories were separated from Armenia and became Roman provinces. Following that, Cilicia became a part of the Eastern Roman Empire, or Byzantine Empire. After the Greco-Roman conquests, other people besides Armenians began to settle in Cilicia, including Greeks and Assyrians. However, the population always remained predominantly Armenian. The 4th century Roman historian Ammianus attests, the Gulf of Issus (now Alexandretta) was once called the "Armenian Gulf".²⁶²

After the first and second divisions of Armenia between Byzantium and Persia, Byzantium adopted the western regions that came under its control: Cappadocia, Syria, Cilicia, and other territories from the south. As a result of that political situation, the number of Armenians in those areas increased even more.

In the 7th century, the Arabs captured the Cilician Plains and kept it in their possession until the 10th century. In the 10th century, Byzantium reconquered Cilicia, turning it into a region of the Byzantine Empire. During this time, Byzantium continued the policy of deporting Armenians, resettling them in areas west of the Euphrates. With this, they were attempting to empty Hayq of all its Armenians, using them as a bulwark against the Arabs, and using the military strength of the Armenians against the Arabs and various threatening tribes from the West, finally aiming to convert the Armenians into Greeks. Various means were used for deportation, ranging from threats and violence to the granting of very large and extensive claims and estates in new places. Princes and nobles relocated with their kin and subjects. They handed over their ancestral lands and domains, and instead received estates in Cilicia, Syria, Cappadocia, and lands west of the Euphrates from the Byzantine emperor. In 1044, Gregory Pahlavuni surrendered his native Bjni and received an estate in Mesopotamia instead. In 1065, King Gagik of Kars surrendered his kingdom to Byzantium

²⁶² H. Jamkochyan, *History of the Armenian People*, Yerevan, 1975, p. 507.

and relocated to Cilicia.²⁶³ Prince Oshin of Gandzak left his native Mayreats in 1073, moving his clan to Cilicia.²⁶⁴

In the 1140s, in the territories west of the Euphrates, the displaced Armenian population and Armenian nobility created Armenian principalities, which later united to create the Armenian Kingdom of Cilicia.

In 1080, one of **Gagik II** Bagratuni's (1043-1045) adjutants, **Ruben**, succeeded in creating a new Armenian principality in Cilicia (which later became a kingdom), which lasted until 1375 (nearly 300 years).

At the end of the 12th century, new states appeared in Near East Asia, the Egyptian (Ayyubid) and Iconian (Rum) sultanates. The Seljuk (Turkoman) Sultanate of Iconium was gaining victories in their fight against Byzantium, expanding into the territories of Asia Minor, at the expense of the weakening Byzantium.

The Egyptian sultanate was also accumulating successes. One after another, they conquered Mesopotamia, Syria, the Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem (1187), and reaching the borders of the Latin kingdom of Antioch, bordering Cilicia. Both the Iconian and Egyptian sultanates were enemies of Cilicia. Under these conditions, the ruling crown of Cilicia passed to Levon II (1185-1219). In 1187, from the northwest, the troops of the Iconian sultan attacked Cilicia, and, pillaging the country, reached the capital city of Sis, which had been established in 1173. Not far from Sis, in a place called Ravin, Levon II smashed the Turkomans and kicked all of them out of the country.

From the Amanus Mountains, the sultan of Egypt also broke into Cilicia. Levon II was again successful, defeating the Arabs. As we can see, external threats were very great. It was these threats that forced the Armenians to unite once again. Levon II and his successors made diplomatic achievements, the result of which was the creation of the Armenian Kingdom of Cilicia.

Levon II's role was especially monumental (after being crowned as Levon I, according to G. Alishan), he was capable of selecting the proper direction in the midst of difficult political conditions. He established connections with European monarchs, cooperated with the Crusaders, and, after receiving crowns from the emperors of Byzantium (1196) and Germany (1198), was solemnly crowned in the city of Tarsus. In 1045, after the decline of the Bagratuni Kingdom, an Armenian kingdom was once again established in Near East Asia. The newly formed Armenian state was nearly 40,000 square kilometers, with a population of about 1 million. The largest cities of the state were **Sis**, **Tarsus**, **Adana**, **Anazarba**, **Mamestia**, **Ayas**, and **Corycos**. The latter two were also major ports.

In the year 1226 in Cilicia, the Hetumian royal family, descended from Armenian nobility, was established, when Hetoum, the son of Constantine of Baberon, married the daughter of Levon I (Levon II), Zabel. During the reign of Hetoum I, the Mongol-Tatar incursions began in Asia Minor.

²⁶³ *Matevos Urhayetsi*, Chronicle, 1898, p. 151.

²⁶⁴ *Samuel Anetsi*, Collection of Historical Books, 1893, p. 117. G. Alishan, Sisuan, p. 77.



The Fortress of Sis (now Kozan Castle)



Levon Fortress (Levonkla) built by Levon II

Due to hostility from the surrounding countries (Iconian and Egyptian sultanates), Cilicia decided not to clash with the Mongols, and entering into negotiations with them led to the formation of an alliance. This was a sensible policy at the time. The Mongols did not invade Cilicia; the country was spared from Mongol desolation.

In 1254, Hetoum I departed from Karakor to meet with Möngke Khan and sign a treaty that was mutually beneficial for both parties. The Mongols were securing an ally in Near East Asia, and the Armenians were defending their independence and, with the help of the Mongols, adding new regions to their kingdom. Cilicia's good fortune perturbed their enemies, especially the sultan of Egypt. After the decline of the Mongols, Cilicia attempted to secure help from Christian Europe. However, this kindled the hostility of Egypt against the Armenians. The Egyptians blamed the Armenians for inciting a new European crusade. In 1335, 1336, and 1337, the Egyptians executed a series of attacks against Cilicia. A heavy agreement was signed in 1337, which transferred control of the country's southeastern regions and the Port of Ayas to the Egyptians. Levon IV (Levon V) Lusignan decided against negotiating with the European states and the Roman Pope. A dire situation was created for the Armenian Kingdom of Cilicia. Surrounded by Muslim states, Levon IV (Levon V, 1320-1342) and Levon V (Levon 6, 1374-1375) practiced pro-Latin politics. Because of this, as well as religious disputes at court, the country stood on the brink of destruction. In 1375, despite the bravery of the Armenian warriors, the Egyptian Mamluks captured the capital city of Sis. The history of the Armenian Kingdom of Cilicia came to an end.

Thus, Cilicia and its population (Hurrian = Hay-Armen), a part of Armenian history as creators, bearers, and proliferators of spiritual and material cultural values created in Armenia since ancient times, also shared the fate of the motherland. Cilicia was also subjected to numerous attacks and conquests. It was captured by the Greeks, Persians, Romans, Byzantines, Arabs, and Turks. As was the rest of Western Armenia, from 1915-1923 Cilicia was subjected to genocide at the hands of the Turks, and Cilicia was emptied of Armenians. Today, depopulated Cilicia, like Western Armenia, awaits the return of its indigenous inhabitants, the Armenians.

REGARDING THE ORIGIN OF THE NAME YEREVAN

Yerevan is one of the oldest cities in the world. Archaeological excavations conducted in its territory show humans lived here tens of thousands of years ago. It is important to note, the territory of Yerevan has been continuously inhabited. Research reveals that various settlements arose there in different time periods and, for varying reasons, were destroyed. Chronologically, the oldest settlement discovered in the territory of the city is the Yerevan or Hrazdan Cave (near Lake Yerevan, on the left bank of the Hrazdan River), the oldest lower layer of which (from 4-5 cultural layers) dates to the Mousterian culture (100,000-35,000 years old). Then, in the territory of Yerevan, new settlements indicating signs of human habitation were discovered, creating a complete chain of historical monuments. The settlements are as follows: Shengavit (IV-II millennia B.C.), the districts of Tsitsernakaberd, Avan, Zeytoun, and Aresh (Kayaranamerdz Square) (mid II millennium B.C.), Karmir Berd (late II millennium B.C.), Karmir Blur (late II millennium B.C. - early I millennium B.C.), Arin Berd (Erebuni, early I millennium B.C.), Avan-Arinj (2nd-1st centuries B.C.), Early Medieval Yerevan (city center), Yerevan Berd (A.D. 7th century, A.D. 16th century), and so on.

Scholars (G. Alishan, G. Inchichyan) and foreign travelers who visited Yerevan (J. Chardin, Robert Ker Porter, William Auzley, H.F.B. Lynch) were especially interested in the etymology of the name **Yerevan**. The name **Yerevan** is initially mentioned in Armenian literature in the form “Yeruan”, in an ancient 5th century record (*Ancient and Modern History of David and Movses Khorenatsi, Epistle of Dionysius*, K. Polis, 1874). The second mention of Yerevan is from the year 607, when Davit Yerets and a monk named Zojik from Yerevan participated in a church meeting called in Dvin (*Girk Tghtots*, Ancestral bibliography, 1901). The 7th century historian Sebeos has a testimony regarding Yerevan from the years 642-643, tied to the Arab conquests (Sebeos, *Histories*, 1672, Manuscript log, 2639). In the works of Hovhannes Draskhanakerttsi (9th-10th centuries, “*History of Armenia*”), S. Anetsu (12th century, *Collection of History Books*), Stephen Orbelian (13th century, *History of the Province of Syunik*), and other historians, there is information about Yerevan. In Armenian historiography, Yerevan is mentioned as **Yereuan**, **Ereuan**, **Ervan**, **Eruan**, **Arevan**,²⁶⁵ and in other forms. In the works of foreign travelers and investigators, Yerevan is mentioned as **Erivan**, **Irvan**, **Iravan**, **Erevan**, **Irevan**,²⁶⁶ and in other forms. It is believed that in the work *Geography* by the Greek geographer Claudius Ptolemy (2nd century) the settlement mentioned as Tervan²⁶⁷ is actually Yerevan, and the Y was mistakenly written as a T. On his map, Tervan is mentioned in the same geographical latitude as Yerevan.

²⁶⁵ Gh. Alishan, *Ayrarat*, p. 259. Handes Amsorya, 1934, numbers 5-7, pp. 327-328. T. Hakobyan, *History of Yerevan*, n. 1, Yerevan, 1969, pp. 96-99.

²⁶⁶ H. Hakobyan, *Ughegrutyunner*, n. 6, Yerevan, 1934. T. Hakobyan, n. 1, pp. 96-99.

²⁶⁷ R. Galchian, *Armenia in Global Cartography*, Yerevan, 2005.

There are many interpretations and legends surrounding the name of Yerevan. The oldest and the most widespread interpretation is connected to the name of Forefather Noah. According to the popular legend, after the Great Flood, when the water receded, Noah saw land from Mount Ararat and cried, “Yerevats, Yerevats!” (It appeared!), which was later modified to Yerevan. This legend is very old and has always been popular amongst the people. Foreign travelers who visited Yerevan confirm that they heard this legend from the residents. One of the first to attest to this was the French traveler Jean Chardin, who was in Yerevan from 1672-1673.²⁶⁸ The local Armenians told Chardin that Yerevan was Noah’s place of residence before the flood, and it was rebuilt in the same place after the flood.²⁶⁹ The name of Yerevan and the city’s establishment are also tied to Noah by William Auzley, Robert Ker Porter,²⁷⁰ A. Hagstauzen, Linch,²⁷¹ and others. Armenian historiographers G. Inchichyan,²⁷² M. Sm-batyan, and others have also touched upon this legend. This point of view still remains a popular tradition, proving that Yerevan is a very ancient settlement.

Another prevalent viewpoint explaining the name of Yerevan connects it to the name of Yervand IV (220-201 B.C.), the last king of the Yervanduni dynasty. H. Nalyan posits, that Yerevan is the capital Yervandashat, built by King Yervand; other scholars think that it is the city Yervandavan. Foreign travellers also testify that, according to the legend widespread among the Armenians, the name of **Yerevan** was taken from the name of King Yervand.²⁷³ One other explanation, a Turkish-Persian legend, tells that the name of Yerevan was formed after the name of Persian khan Revan-Ghuli. This opinion is inadmissible, because that khan had ruled Yerevan in the beginning of the 16th century, but Yerevan, and its name, have a history dating back thousands of years.

In the 19th-20th centuries, the discovery and deciphering of ancient Armenian cuneiform inscriptions from the empire of Ararat-Urartu (Biainili, Kingdom of Van) made it possible not only to correct a number of geographical names, but also to explain their meaning in a new way. In “Urartian” inscriptions, we read the names **Eriani**, **Eriakhi**, and **Erebuni**. An inscription from King Rusa I (735-713), which was discovered in the village of Tsovinar on the shore of Lake Sevan, along with 22 other geographic names, the name Eriani is mentioned.²⁷⁴ Russian archaeologist M. Nikolsky

²⁶⁸ Chardin edit Paris, 1811, Ts. 2, r. 169, H.F.B. Lynch, *Armenia*, 1910, v. 1, p. 273.

²⁶⁹ Chardin considers this tradition unbelievable, because, according to him, Armenian was a new language, unknown 700 years before. He is also skeptical of the Tervan/Yerevan connection in Ptolemy’s map, since, according to him, there were no ancient monuments in Armenia. Chardin’s *Journey Through the Caucasus 1672-1773*, T., 1902, pp. 243-245. T. Hakobyan, n. 1, p. 99 (footnote 3).

²⁷⁰ H. Hakobyan, *Ughegrutyunner*, pp. 454, 761.

²⁷¹ H.F.B. Lynch, *Armenia*, v. 1, p. 273.

²⁷² G. Inchichyan, *Hnakhosutiun Ashkharhagrakan Hayastaneayts’ Ashkharhi*, n.1, Venice, 1835, pp. 273-274.

²⁷³ H.F.B. Lynch, *Armenia*, v.1, p. 273. H. Hakobyan, *Ughegrutyunner*, pp. 453-454.

²⁷⁴ B. Piotrovsky, *Moscow*, 1959, p. 91. HJPK, Yerevan, 1981, p. 85.

places Eriani (the country) in the vicinity of Yerevan, at the Arin Berd Hill, and he derives the name Yerevan from Eriani.²⁷⁵ Y. Shahaziz,²⁷⁶ K. Samvelyan²⁷⁷ and other scientists also accept this point of view. Of great importance was Nikolsky's hunch, that ancient Yerevan was to be found in the area of Arin Berd Hill, where another Russian researcher, archaeologist A. Ivanovsky, first studied and described the ruins of the fortress²⁷⁸ Eriani has also been placed in the area around Lake Sevan (I. Meshchaninov, G. Melikishvili, G. Ghapantsyan).²⁷⁹ G. Ghapantsyan identified and linked the fortress and the land of **Eriani** with the name of the **Eria (Aria)** tribe. He considered the land of Eriani to be the land of the Eria (Aria) tribe. Ghapantsyan also linked the Eria (Aria) tribe with the land of Eriakhi, which is sometimes identified with the land of Eriani. Ghapantsyan placed Eriakhi in the vicinity of Kumayri. Getting back to the name of the Eri (Ari) tribe, Ghapantsyan considered it possible that the name **Yerevan** came from **Eri-avan** (land of Eri), whose pronunciation eventually became Yerevan. Ghapantsyan, deriving the name Yerevan from the name of the Eria (Aria) tribe and country, simultaneously considered it mysterious, since, according to him, the Eria tribe and the country (Eriakh) were located in the territory of Gyumri. As we can see, among the various hypotheses and points of view, Ghapantsyan put forward the idea that the name Yerevan can be explained as "**land of Eri**".²⁸⁰

The inscription found during the excavations of Arin Berd Hill (K. Hovhannisyan) in 1950, and the Khorkhorian memorial (annals) carved on the cliffs of Van discovered by Orientalist F. Schultz, were of great importance for clarifying the issues of the foundation and location of Yerevan. In that inscription, the name of the settlement Ereuni is mentioned, which was founded by Argishti I (786-764 B.C.), but it was unclear where the new settlement was founded. In the Khorkhorian annals Argishti I writes, "By the command of the god Haldi, Argishti, son of Menua, built the city of Ereuni for the glory of Biainili... The land was barren... I performed mighty works here. From the countries of Hatti and Tsopani I settled 6,600 soldiers".²⁸¹ The inscription found at Arin Berd attests, "By the glory of the god Haldi, Argishti, son of Menua, I built this magnificent fortress, calling it Irbuni, for the glory of the land of Biainili. The land was barren. I performed mighty works here".²⁸²

²⁷⁵ M. Nikolsky, *Cuneiform Inscriptions of Transcaucasia*, "Materials of Archeology of the Caucasus", 5, Moscow, 1896, p. 97.

²⁷⁶ Y. Shahaziz, *Ancient Yerevan*, Yerevan, 1931, p. 7.

²⁷⁷ K. Samvelyan, *The Culture of Ancient Armenia*, Yerevan, 1931, n. 1, p. 82.

²⁷⁸ *Materials of the Archeology of the Caucasus*, 5, pp. 97-98.

²⁷⁹ *University of Yerevan, Scientific Papers*, 1940, n. 14, pp. 321-322.

²⁸⁰ G. Ghapantsyan, *The Story of Ara the Handsome*, 1945, p. 151 (footnote).

²⁸¹ UKN, 28. HJPK, p. 57.

²⁸² HJPK, p. 55.



The inscription of Argishti I regarding the establishment of the Erebuni Fortress, 782 B.C.

These two inscriptions, and an inscription found at the Arin Berd Hill by P. Ter-Avetisyan, made it possible to specify the location of the fortress of Erebuni built by Argishti, as well as the year of the foundation of the fortress: 782 B.C..

After the discovery and reading of the Arin Berd inscription, a viewpoint gained popularity amongst researchers (B. Piotrovsky, M. Israyelyan, K. Hovhannisyan) that the name of Yerevan was derived from the name of Erebuni. M. Israyelyan expressed the opinion that Erebuni means “Victory”.²⁸³ Diakonoff expounded a different opinion on the explanation of the name Erebuni. He divided Erebuni into the components Ere-ebani and speculated that it meant **land of the tribe of Ere**²⁸⁴ As we can see, this explanation is similar to that of G. Ghapantsyan.

All of the aforementioned explanations have been accepted or rejected by scholars over the years. At the end of the 20th century, start of the 21st century, the question of the etymology of Yerevan, once again began receiving attention from researchers. New views and opinions gained popularity. Let us explore some of those views.

Urartologist H. Karageozyan reads the name mentioned in Argishti I's inscription as “Yerebune” (from the unattested form Yerebon), and he finds that Yerebune originated from the components **Yer** or **Yere** (bune), which means “happy city”²⁸⁵ E. Danielyan believes that the name Erebuni comes from the name of Ara the Handsome.²⁸⁶ An attempt is being made to connect the name Yerevan with the words “yerevats, yerevan” (visible), when the actions of the defenders of the fortresses in times of danger were coordinated by fire signals.²⁸⁷ There are also scholars that

²⁸³ M. Israyelyan, *The History of the Fortress-City Erebuni*, Yerevan, 1971, p. 13.

²⁸⁴ *Herald of Ancient History*, 1956, 2, p. 62.

²⁸⁵ H. Karageozyan, *The Armenian Highlands in Cuneiform Sources*, n. 1, book 1, Yerevan, 1998, pp. 79-81.

²⁸⁶ E. Danielyan, *Ancient Armenian Mythological Theories About the Starry Sky*, PBH, 1989, n. 3, p. 111 (footnote).

²⁸⁷ V. Vahradyan, *The Name of the City of Yerevan*, A Collection of Scientific Articles Dedicated to Issues of the History of Yerevan, Yerevan, 2006, pp. 210-223.

suggest leaving the explanation of the etymology of Yerevan to the future, when new inscriptions are discovered. Nonetheless, it is not possible to say for sure whether discoveries of new inscriptions will say more than merely the name Erebuni.

The names mentioned in the inscriptions of Argishti I are the oldest known written references to the name of Yerevan-Erebuni (they are also read as Irpuni, Erbuni, Yerebuni). It is well established that the territory of Yerevan was populated long before the fortress of Erebuni was established. The original names of the oldest settlements discovered in the territory of Yerevan, especially Shengavit which is about 6000 years old, are unknown. In this sense, the name of **Erebuni**, as the most ancient name we know of for the capital city of Armenia, is especially significant. In ancient times, it was common to name a newly built settlement after the name of the founder, the king, or one of the gods. We know that later on, in 776 B.C., Argishti I established a settlement in the Ararat Valley, on the left bank of the Araks River, which was called Argishtikhinili²⁸⁸ (later Armavir) in his honor. In this case, it is acceptable to think that Argishti I either retained the name of another ancient settlement in the area that was known to him, or he named it after the **Eri, Ari** tribe (land). Let us note, near the Tsovinar village carved on high cliffs, Ararat-Urartian king Rusa I's (735-713) inscription names the conquered lands around the Lake Sevan basin, each beginning with Ar, Er, and Ir: Arkuki, Aria, Eria, Erieltua, Irkima²⁸⁹ and so on.

It is interesting that the forefathers of Indo-Europeans, the Aryan tribes which migrated away from the Armenian Highlands and the surrounding territories, remember that they belong to the Aryan tribe, and mention it in written sources (Indian Vedas, Iranian "Avesta", Behistun Inscription of Persian king Darius I). The inscriptions of the kings of Ararat-Urartu, as well as the literary works of the Armenian Middle Ages, do not draw attention to that fact. We can assume that since they were living in their ancestral homeland, they had no need to continually memorialize it. Under these conditions, Argishti I established a settlement and named it in honor of the god of the land, Ar, or the Ari/Eri tribe (or he retained the existing ancient name). The most ancient settlement that has been discovered in the vicinity of Yerevan is Shengavit, which is dated to the IV-II millennia B.C. (or V-III millennia). How it came to be called Shengavit is unknown; however, many Mesopotamian settlements contemporaneous with Shengavit, such as Eredu (Eridu), Ur, Uruk, Nineveh, and others, have retained their names for thousands of years. The name of Erebuni, which is similar to the name of the ancient Sumerian settlement of Eredu (Er-edu), allows us to make some assumptions. Eredu is dated to the V millennium B.C., but written sources only mention it from the III millennium B.C.. The final mentions of Eredu are from the 8th-7th centuries B.C.. During those millennia, the name Eredu has undergone minor changes: Eridu, Eridug, Urudug. All of this, allows us to conclude that the Shengavit settlement of today could have carried the name "Erebuni", which has been preserved for millennia. We can assume that Ar-

²⁸⁸ UKN, 127.

²⁸⁹ UKN, 266, p. 329.

gishti I, upon founding the fortress, did not call it by a new name, but by the name of the ancient settlement in the area, “Erebuni”, today’s Shengavit. As mentioned above, G. Ghapantsyan put forward this explanation in a cursory way back in the 1930s and 40s. I. Diakanoff advanced the idea that Erebuni is named after the Ari (Eri) tribe. Let us try to develop this idea further.

It is well established, in the Armenian Highlands there are a substantial number of geographical (as well as personal) names beginning with Ar (also Er, Ur, Ir): Ararat, Aragats, Ara, Araks, Aratsani, Armavir, Artashat... This phenomenon is linked to the name of the Creator God (Ar Ararich) and the natives of the Armenian Highlands, the Hay-Armens (Aris, Eris), who worshiped him.

We notice that the names of Erivan, Arivan, Yerevan, Irevan also begin with the components **Ar-**, **Er-**, and **Ir-**. The second half of the name is the component **-van**. In the Armenian Highlands there are scores of toponyms that contain the suffix **-van**: Van, Nakhijevan, Ijevan, Ditsavan, Otevan, Avan, Vank, and so on. In all of these examples, **-van** denotes “place, settlement”. The name Yerevan also contains the component **-van**. The **Ar-**, **Er-** component (root) of the name, in this case, is related to the names of the Ari, Eri tribe, and the Ar Creator (Ar Ararich) god. Thus, we can surmise, the variations of the name Yerevan, that is Arevan, Aravan, Erivan, and so on, are composed of the components **Ar-**, **Er-**, and **-van** (uan), and relate to the **god Ar** or the **Ari/Eri** (tribe).

The name Erebuni mentioned in the inscription of Argishti I, also lends credibility to the Ar God or Ari-Eri tribal name explanation. In Urartian cuneiform, **ebani** means “land, settlement”.²⁹⁰ Researchers consider Armenian **avan** and **ebani**, known from Urartian inscriptions, as synonymous.²⁹¹ As we can see, in this case as well, Erebuni can be read as the land of the Ar God or the land of the Ari/Eri tribe. It is relevant to remember that in the writings of foreign travelers, Yerevan is mentioned in the Persian forms Irivan, Irevan, Irvan, Iravan, and Erivan.²⁹² The versions of Yerevan used by the Iranians, Hayq’s ancient neighbors and relatives, also proves that the name **Yerevan** means tribe of Ari/Eri. For comparison, let us look at the name Iran, a case in the Iranian language in which Ar takes the form Ir. One researcher (Anketil) even implies that the name **Yerevan** is similar to the ancestral Aryan land of Eerien Veedjo, or Iran Vedj, mentioned in the *Zend-Avesta*.²⁹³

Therefore, it is appropriate to say that the name of the Armenian capital of Yerevan comes from **Ar Ararich** or the **land of the Ari/Eri** tribe, and means **settlement of the Aryans**.

From the materials of the Yerevan-2 conference, 2009.

Երևան-2 գիտաժողովի նյութերից, 2009 թ.

²⁹⁰ UKN, 28, also p. 393.

²⁹¹ G. Jahukyan, History of the Armenian Language: Pre-Literary Period, Yerevan, 1987, p. 428.

²⁹² H. Hakobyan, Ughegrutyunner, p. 453. R. Galchian, Armenia in Global Cartography.

²⁹³ H. Hakobyan, Ughegrutyunner, pp. 453-454.

REGARDING THE NAMES AND WORSHIP OF THE GODS HALDI AND HAYA

The chief deity of the Ararat-Urartian state (the time period of the Aramian dynasty) pantheon is Haldi (Khaldi). Unlike most of the other gods in the Armenian pantheon, there is a substantial amount of information about Haldi from recovered inscriptions and other culturally valuable artifacts (murals, relief sculptures, weaponry, jewelry) upon which Haldi's name is written, or he is pictured.²⁹⁴

Haldi is depicted sitting on a throne, standing on the back of a lion or bull, and in other positions. In his depictions, horn-like protrusions are visible on his crown, which, as evidenced by images of Mesopotamian (Sumerian, Akkadian, Babylonian) gods, are a sign of cosmic divinity. The gods were also depicted wearing pointed hats, upon which horn-like protrusions were visible.

The chief god of the Ararat-Urartian pantheon, Haldi, was the god of **life, flora, agriculture, war, and building**. Although the Ararat-Urartian pantheon has a specific sun deity (Shivini), Haldi was also a sun god, since he possessed all the characteristics which were specific to a sun god (his companions and symbols are the lion, bull, and eagle). He has also been depicted as a winged deity, illustrated with rays of light, and so on.

In one of the inscriptions of Assyrian king Sargon II (722-705 B.C.), there is a testimony about the consecration ceremony of King Rusa I (735-714 B.C.) of Ararat-Urartu in Haldi's temple at Ardini-Musasir. It tells that after offering numerous sacrifices of fatted oxen and sheep to Haldi, and a sumptuous feast for the citizens, Rusa I is "crowned before Haldi, his god, with the veil of dominion, and given the kingly sceptre to wield, and the people shout the name of the king"²⁹⁵ (let us remember that in Mesopotamia, in Sumer, Akkad, and Babylon, kings also received the sceptre from Haya, lord of Mother Earth, as a divine sign of authority).

The building projects and military campaigns of the Ararat-Urartian kings were blessed in the name of Haldi.

In written inscriptions, we continually encounter, "By the power of the god Hald, Haldi invaded, subdued the land of Hatti under his own arms...";²⁹⁶ "Argishti, son of Menua, says, 'Haldi awarded me both courage and strength'", "For the sake of Haldi, I performed these feats in one year", and other similar phrases. In the minds of the king and the people, as the god of **war and victory**, Haldi led their armies and awarded them victory. This is attested to in the Khorkhorian annals of Van by Argishti I, "**Haldi is my might, the Haldian weapon is my might...**"²⁹⁷ The temple of Haldi

²⁹⁴ This section and the section on "Haldi" were written at different times, therefore there are repetitions.

²⁹⁵ AVIU, 49 (309); HJPK, p. 83.

²⁹⁶ HJPK, pp. 61, 65.

²⁹⁷ HJPK, p. 59.

found in Ardini-Musasir was called “House of the Shield”, since shields were hung from the frontal facade and pillars of the temple, and on both sides of the entrance two large spears were placed, and two statues in a praying position. The spear was considered a symbol of Haldi, the god of war. A chariot with a large spear in it went ahead of the marching army.²⁹⁸

Haldi was also the god of **life**, since, above all, he was asked most often for “life, happiness, honor”. He was also the patron of the **crafts, creation, construction, and agriculture**, since it was in his honor that cities were established, temples built, inscriptions written, canals dug, gardens planted, and so on.

As we can see, Haldi was the patron of multiple phenomena, which often had their own dedicated deities. It is apparent that various deities merged into the cult of the god Haldi, as if to complete his cult. Haldi’s character traits mirror those of the god Haya-Enki, known from Sumerian-Akkadian written sources. Thus, according to the Sumerian poem “Enki and the World Order”, Enki-Haya, after the creation of man, travels and teaches people how to adapt and live on Mother Earth. Navigating the Tigris and Euphrates rivers, Enki-Haya gave human beings knowledge and the opportunity to prosper. He gave them civilization: endowing them with the hoe and plow, teaching them to make pottery, work metals, build canals, houses, and cities...

According to unearthed ancient texts, it is known that Haya and Haldi are ancient gods of Mesopotamia and its surrounding territory, in particular the Armenian Highlands. However, surprisingly, the Armenian pantheon of the later period did not preserve any memory of either Haya or Haldi. Let us attempt to answer why it was not saved, or maybe how it was saved in an unexpected way. First, let us focus on the names of those gods.

The pantheon of Ararat-Urartu is considered one of the most important parts of the Armenian pantheon. The chief deity of that pantheon is presented in cuneiform written sources as **Haldi**, **Khaldi**, **Aldi**, and also **Hayq**, **Haghd**i, and other forms.

In the “Urartian” portion of the bilingual Kelishin (southwestern part of Lake Urmia) stele, the god’s name is mentioned as **Aldi**, and the Assyrian version is **Haldi**.²⁹⁹ The god’s name is also written as **Haldi**. These are the accepted variants, but, as always, researchers have put forward other options as well. One group of scholars (K. Lehman-Haupt, N. Mar, G. Melikishvili, B. Piotrovsky) express the viewpoint that the basis of the name Khaldi is the Caucasian root **khal**, which means “heaven”, therefore Khaldi is the god of the sky, while “di” is simply a suffix.³⁰⁰ G. Jahukyan thinks the god **Haldi’s** name is derived from two components, Hal-di. He associates the first component, **Hal**, with the Armenian word **hagh** (time), and the second component **di** with the word god. Jahukyan believes Haldi should be read as **Hagh-di**, which means

²⁹⁸ I. Dyakonov, On the Question of the Haldi Symbol, *Ancient East*, 1983, 4, p. 193.

²⁹⁹ UKN, 193.

³⁰⁰ B. Piotrovsky, 1959, p. 224. UKN, p. 427.

“god of time” (because the classification of years, months, days, hours was done by priests, the representatives of the gods, in temples).³⁰¹ A. Gharagyozyan suggests, the toponym Ardini is a variant of the name Haldi,³⁰² which was the main center of worship to Haldi.³⁰³ Haldi is also read as Hayq (M. Kavoukjian, R. Ishkhanyan). Additionally, Khaldi has been compared to Mihr.³⁰⁴

V. Sargsyan, examining the name **Haldi**, believes that the basis for the god’s name is the Armenian word **yaght**, “great, plentiful, noble, brave”, and he interprets the name as “victorious”. He considers **Haldi** the **god of victory and war**, comparing him with the god Vahagn.³⁰⁵ S. Ayvazyan identifies the component -di from Haldi with the Armenian root word di-, “deity, god” (Indo-European= *dhēs). Regarding the component **hal**, he writes that, given the solar nature of Haldi, he thinks it must originate from the Indo-European s(a)uH-el- (“sun”) root word.³⁰⁶ According to S. Ayvazyan, the Greek pantheon’s sun god Helios also originates from the same root, whose Hel- component is similar to the “Urartian” Haldi’s prefix Hal. S. Ayvazyan spells Haldi’s name as Hal-Di, which translates to “sun-god”.

A. Gharagyozyan believes the god Haldi’s name is based on the root **hal-**, derived from the Indo-European Armenian root **al** (ala) “bright red, fire, flame”.³⁰⁷ A. Petrosyan connects Haldi’s name’s hal- component with the Indo-European root word *wel.³⁰⁸

Besides “Urartian” texts, Haldi is also mentioned in Assyrian inscriptions. The name Khaldi occurs as a personal name in the forms Haldia, Haldi-e, and Haldi. Scholars date these inscriptions to the 13th century B.C. (according to Italian M. Salvini). Considering this is the “pre-Urartian” period, researchers (M. Salvini) believe that the bearers of these personal names were not “Urartians”. However, there is a viewpoint (G. Fraydank) that the presence of these personal names allows us to talk about the close relationship between the Assyrians and “Urartians”.³⁰⁹ From the Achaemenid texts we have recovered a personal name composed of **Haldi** (**Haldita’s**

³⁰¹ G. Jahukyan, *On the Possible Armenian Character of the Introductory Formulas of Urartian Inscriptions*, PBH, 2000, n. 3, pp. 124-129, note 8.

³⁰² A. Gharagyozyan, *On the Question of the Etymology of the Deity Haldi*, *Collection of Scientific Articles*, Gavar State University, 13, 2011, pp. 203-209.

³⁰³ The spiritual center of the country was named AR-di-ni, derived from Ar-god (city), and -ni, a toponymic particle. However, the name Ardini is not tied to the name Haya.

³⁰⁴ A. Petrosyan, 2004. *Armenian Mher, Western Mithra, and Urartian Khaldi*. *The Armenian Epic “Sasna Tsrer” and the Epic Heritage of the World*, Yerevan, 42-60.

³⁰⁵ V. Sargsyan, *Urartian Civilization and the Question of Basque Ancestry*, Yerevan, 1998, 52-63.

³⁰⁶ S. Ayvazyan, *Etymologies of Urartian Mythological Names*, *Articles of Armenian Studies*, Journal, 2017, N 1 (13).

³⁰⁷ A. Gharagyozyan, 2011, 203.

³⁰⁸ A. Petrosyan, *The Triad of Urartian Major Gods and the Problem of the Origin of the State’s Ruling Elite*, PBH, 2, 2002, 243-270.

³⁰⁹ Fraydank G., *New Data on the Relations of the Middle Assyrian Kingdom With the Northern and Northwestern Countries*, *Ancient East*, 1976, 2, 88.

son Arakha).³¹⁰ In Persian king Darius I's Behistun Inscription, it is written, "While I was in Persia and Media, Babylon rebelled against me a second time. A man named Arakha, an Armen, the son of Khaldita, rebelled in Babylon... At that time the Babylonians became rebellious and went over to the side of Arakha. He took control of Babylon and became king there" (this is in 522 B.C.). Arakha's father's name, **Haldita**, is very interesting. The first component of the name, is the name of the god Haldi, and the second portion, **ta**, is thought to mean "**to give, given, was given**", that is, given by Haldi (cf. Աստվածատուր - Astvatsatur- given by God).

As we can see, scholars interpret the name Haldi as meaning **Solar, Victory, Time, Heavenly, War** God. As noted above, the god's name is written in the forms **Haldi, Khaldi, Aldi, and Ardi**, as well as **Hayq, Haghdi**. We notice that there is some confusion in the reading of the name of Haldi, the main god of Ararat-Urartu, and the interpretation of the god's name. Especially puzzling is the reading of the name **Khaldi**. Why is **Khaldi's** name not mentioned in written sources before or after Ararat-Urartu? Why did Armenian mythology of the later period not preserve any memory of that god? Let us remember, for example, that the god Teshub is in both the Hurri-Mitannian and Ararat-Urartian pantheons. The Hurrian pantheon contains a sun god, which is presented as **Shimage** (known in the south as Shimika, Shimidi), as Shivini in the Ararat-Urartian pantheon, and as Shiva in the Indian pantheon. The text of the treaty signed between the king of Hatti, Suppiluliumas I, and the king of Mitanni, Shattiwaza, mentions the names of four gods: **Mithra, Varuna, Indra**, and **Nasatia**. Scholars agree that the names of the gods mentioned in the treaty identify with the gods **Mithra, Varuna, Indra**, and **Nasatia (Ashviner)** from the *Rigveda*. We notice, there are many traces, memories, and testimonies of ancient gods in successive pantheons (Armenian and non-Armenian). However, there is nothing about Haldi or Haya.

Perhaps, Haldi's name should be read differently, for example **Hay-di**. In this case, **the god's name would be interpreted as the "Hay (Haya) god"**. If this view persisted, many questions would be clarified. The chief deity of the Ararat-Urartian pantheon shares many of his attributes, and many images representing Haldi correspond thematically to many characteristics and images of the god Haya-Enki (often seated on a throne, has an important position among the other gods who often glorify him, he has the characteristics of a ruler: a sceptre, ring, a presence with the Tree of Life, he is pictured as a winged sun god, he crowns kings, hands out symbols of power, gives the gift of life, has canals, fortresses, and cities built in

³¹⁰ *Struve V. V.*, New Data of the History of Armenia, Attested by the Behistun Inscription, Proceedings of the Academy of Sciences of the Armenian SSR, 1946, 8, 31-338. S. Hmayakyan, The State Religion of the Kingdom of Van, Yerevan, 1990, p. 38.

his honor...). The **di** component (**di-q**) of Haldi implies godliness.³¹¹ Let us also note, the chief deity of Assyria, Ashur, has often been compared to Enlil (lord of the air, the expanse between the cosmos and earth). In that time period, the chief deity of Ararat-Urartu was Haldi, who also had absolute supremacy in the state. That Haldi was the ancient and prominent god of the Armenian Highlands is evidenced by an Assyrian written source which states, "...in all of Urartu there was none greater than him, in Heaven and Earth".³¹² Haya (Enki) was also such a great god, in Heaven and Earth. **If Ashur identified with Enlil, then Haldi could certainly have identified with Enlil's brother, Haya (En-ki = lord of the earth).**

Let us turn our attention to the worship of the god Haya-Enki. Haya (Enki) is one of the ancient gods attested to in Mesopotamian written sources, lord of the Cosmos and the son of An. Enlil was also An's son. Enki-Haya was the lord of Mother Earth, who, according to Sumerian-Akkadian written sources, with the knowledge of the chief god (Ararich, Ar, An, Anu), played an important role in the creation of humanity on earth. According to new research, the Armenian endonym "Hay" is connected to the name of the god Haya.

We will turn once again to Mesopotamian ancient written sources. The oldest written source (24th century B.C.) that has been discovered which mentions the name Hay (**ha-a**) is the Akkadian inscription of King Ebrium found in Ebla³¹³ (now the settlement of Tell-Mardikh, south of Aleppo). A text recovered from Ashur (III-I millennia B.C.) also contains a testimony regarding a son of Hay (or a resident of Hay). That testimony states, "...these two vessels are intended (for) the market of the Ameites, ...in the five-day week of the god Tashmet of Ashur-Ennam, ... the son of **Hay** (= residents of Hay) prepared it...". The linguistic scholar V. Ivanov equates the expression **son of a Hay** with the expression **resident of Hay**, which can be understood both as the **son of the god Haya**, and as **a resident of the Hay country (Hayq)**. The cuneiform grouping **Ha-a**, as an ethnonym and toponym, V. Ivanov connects with Armenians (Hays), and he reads it as **Haya**. As we can see, the name Hay is connected to the name of the god Haya. The name Hayq is also connected with the god Haya. Let us remember Khorenatsi's attestation, "The first of the gods were formidable and renowned... Before them came the race of giants,... Hayq of Hapetos was among these..."³¹⁴ This testimony allows us to conclude that the Armenian patriarch Hayq was the son of a god (in this case, a son of Haya).

³¹¹ H. Acharyan, Dictionary of Armenian Personal Names, n. 1, p. 672. G. B. Jahukyan, History of the Armenian Language, Prehistoric Period, Yerevan, 1987, p. 443. Jahukyan notes, after the introduction of Christianity, the name dik took on the meaning of a specifically pagan god, as opposed to the general word god.

³¹² Y. Grekyan, On the Origins of Monotheism (From the Worship of the Gods Ashur and Khaldi to Christ), "The Historical and Cultural Heritage of the Armenian Highlands", Materials from an international conference, 2012, June 24- July 1, Yerevan-Stepanakert.

³¹³ V. Ivanov, Identification of Different Chronological Layers in Ancient Armenian and the Problem of the Initial Structure of the Text of the Hymn Ba/x/agnu, PBH, 1983, n. 4, p. 31.

³¹⁴ Movses Khorenatsi, 1981, p. 39.

In this way, the name of our people, Hay, is connected with the god Haya, and with a proper reading of the name Haya, the chief deity of the Ararat-Urartian pantheon, the name of the lost god is restored and, with it, one of the missing links in the chain of thousands of years of Armenian history. Let us note, as with other instances, in this instance also Armenian dialects come to our aid. In the Artsakh dialect, the god/goddess Haya has been preserved in the form **Aya**, which means **Grand Mother, foremother**. In the Gardman-Utiq and Artsakh dialects, a wife calls her husband **our Hay** (մեր հայը), which, in this case, has to do with nationality or tribe name. In the Ararat-Urartian pantheon (9th-8th centuries B.C.), there is a goddess named **Aya**,³¹⁵ although this goddess is a lesser deity. With this in mind, it is appropriate to say that even though the god's name was lost (or forgotten), the god **Hay-a** is always there, is always present among Armenians, as the endonym of the collective ethnos, tribe, and nation: **Hay**. It is interesting that only we, the Hays, call ourselves **HAY**, invoking the name of **HAYA** every time we do so, the **lord of Mother Earth**.

Let us also refer to a point that exists in historiography. One group of researchers refers to the inhabitants of Ararat-Urartu after the name of the god Khal (Haldi), calling them **Khaldians, (Khaldayer)**, based on the testimony of the Greek historian Xenophon (5th-4th centuries B.C.), who mentions the **Khaldian** tribe of the Armenian Highlands³¹⁶ Most researchers connect this name to the chief deity of the Ararat-Urartians, Khaldi.³¹⁷ Based on that, H. Ajaryan, calls Urartu by the name **Khaldistan** or **Khaldia**,³¹⁸ S. Burney calls it “Khaldistan” (Burney Ch. 1993: *The God Haldi and the Urartian State...*, 107), and in his work I. Meshchaninov calls it “**Khaldovedeni**” (I. Meshchaninov, *Khaldovedeni, History of Ancient Van*, Baku, 1927 B. /in Russian/). They also call the language of the natives of Ararat-Urartu Khaldian.³¹⁹ They are also often mistakenly called **Chaldeans**, after a Semitic people living in southern Babylon. We notice that all of these opinions and viewpoints are connected to the **h-kh** phonetic sound changes (note that Greeks do not pronounce the “h” sound).

As a matter of course, it can be said that the name of the chief deity of the Ararat-Urartian pantheon, Haldi, and many of his defining characteristics suggest that **Hal-di** may in fact be **Hay-di, “the god Haya”**. Let us remember, mistakes often happen when reading the cuneiform inscriptions of ancient written sources.

From the materials of the Yerevan-5 conference, 2018.

Երևան-5 գիտաժողովի նյութերից, 2018 թ.

³¹⁵ HJPK, 1981, pp. 46-47.

³¹⁶ *Xenophon*, *Anabasis*, Yerevan, 1970, p. 284.

³¹⁷ *N. Marr*, *The Tribal Composition of the Population of the Caucasus*, *Classification of the peoples of the Caucasus* Petrograd, 1920, I. Meshchaninov, 1927, F. König, *Die Keilinschriften von Patnoths*, WZKM. 52, 1955.

³¹⁸ *H. Acharyan*, *Armenian History Interwoven with General History*, Yerevan, YPH, 2004, p. 28.

³¹⁹ *L. Babayan*, *The “Khaldar” Name*, *Ethnography*, 1897 (2), pp. 300-306; (K. F. Lehman-Haupt, *Zeitschrift für Ethnologie*, 1936).

HISTORY OF THE EASTERN SIDE OF ARMENIA. AGHVANK, GARDMAN, UTIQ (BOOK SUMMARY)

The territory between the lower streams of the Araks and Kur rivers (Gardman, Utiq, Artsakh, Paytakaran), is known in Armenian history under the names “the eastern side of Armenia”, “the eastern world”, and “world of Aghvank”.³²⁰ The area between the Sevan and Mrav watershed mountain ranges and the Kur River of the same territory, was known as **Gardman** in Armenian historiography in the early Middle Ages. Gardman is also known under the names **Utiq**, **Shakashen (Shikashen)**, and **Arshakashen**. In the *Ashkharatsuyts* (“World Map”, early VII century), the twelfth province of Greater Hayq is called Utiq, which consists of eight districts: **Aran-rot**, **Tri (Tre)**, **Rot-Parsean**, **Aghoue**, **Tus-Kustak**, **Gardman**, **Shakashen**, and **Uti Arandzak (Ut-Rostak)**. Due to administrative changes, the number of provinces increased to nine, after the addition of Tavush. As we can see, **the names Gardman, Utiq, and Shakashen (Shikashen) used for the provinces, are also names of districts**. According to the position occupied by the rulers of the district, in the given period the province was named after the district: Gardman, Utiq, Shakashen (Shikashen). Thus, all three names carry equal weight.

New studies being carried out allow us to assert that the world of Armenian Aghvan included not only the West Kur, but also the plain of the Left Bank Kur, to the southern branches and gorges of the Caucasus Mountains, to the places of residence of the Caucasian tribes living there, as evidenced by Greek, Roman and Armenian historians (this issue is discussed in detail in the paper).

Let us focus on the names of Aghvank, Gardman, Utiq, and Shakashen. The name **Gardman** consists of the components **gard** (weapon)- and **-man** (human), and it is believed to bear the meaning “**people (land) of arms**”. The name Uti (Utiq), according to popular opinion, comes from the name **Etiuni** (land, tribe) mentioned in Araratian (Uartian) cuneiform inscriptions (Nikolsky M.V., *Cuneiform Inscriptions of Transcaucasia*, MAK, V, p. 92). According to one of the new views put forward, the name **Shikashen (Shakashen)** is derived from the root **Shek-**.

At the end of the 19th century and start of the 20th century, archaeological excavations in Gardman yielded amazing artifacts including bronze items, weaponry, jewelry, beautifully decorated clay vessels, and more. The clay vessels are exceptionally lovely, designed with geometric shapes (crosses, swastikas, circles), plants (Tree of Life), animals (goats, bucks, deer, horses, dogs, snakes), and images of people. Depicted on many of the recovered items is the Sun-God’s symbol, the swastika (arevakhach, “sun-cross”). Unfortunately, many of the traces of the findings have

³²⁰ The work “History of the Eastern Side of Armenia. Aghvanq, Gardman, Utiq”, was published in 2015 and 2021. The “Summary” of the book is presented.

been lost (Meshchaninov I, *Transcaucasian Hieroglyphic*, Messages, GAIMK, 1932, 34, p. 55). The majority of them were sent to St. Petersburg, Moscow, and Tbilisi; a particularly large number of items were sent to the Caucasian Museum in Tbilisi (*Collection of the Caucasian Museum*, vol. VI, p. 123-125; S. Karapetyan, “Armenian Collection of the Caucasian Museum”, Yerevan. 2004).

Since the mid-20th century, the Soviet, mainly Azeri, specialists have been conducting new archaeological excavations in the Gardman area (Kandak-Mingechaur, Gandzak, Khanlar, Shamkhor, Ghazakh, Hartshangist [Chovdar], Khachi Aghbiur [Khachbulag]). The findings of the excavations, which date to the III-I millennia B.C., were taken to Baku and stored in museums there (Guide to the Exhibitions of the Azerbaijan History Museum, Baku, 1958). Today, these items are the main cultural values on the basis of which the Azeris are trying to create a history for themselves.

The Armenian Highlands and the surrounding areas, including Gardman, are an important center of Eneolithic (Copper Age, V-IV millennia B.C.) culture. Well studied Eneolithic sites in the Ararat Valley include Khatunarch, Mokhrablur (Ejmiadzin), and Teghut, and forming the continuation of the Ararat Valley are the sites of Ghazakh, Shomu Tepe, Toyre Tepe, Gargalar Tepe, Baba-Dervish, and other settlements of the Aghstev River valley. The sanders, mortars and crushers found in the Turkish-named settlements of the Aghstev River valley, allow us to conclude that the inhabitants were mainly engaged in agriculture, growing grain plants. The discovery of an abundance of cattle bones, belonging to small and large bovines, testify that the inhabitants also practiced animal husbandry.



The states of Armenia (to the northeast is Gardman –Utiq)

Gardman is one of the most well known centers of the Kura-Araxes culture (IV-II millennia B.C.). The first archaeological materials of this culture were discovered in 1869 near the village of Zaglik (Gandzak region), and in 1879 in Armavir (Armavir region). The recovered materials were initially studied and described by B. A. Kuftin, conditionally calling it the Kura-Araxes culture (Kuftin B. A., Urartian “Columbarium” at the foot of Ararat and Kuro-Araks Neolithic, “Bulletin of the State Museum of Georgia”, 1943, v. 13 V). One of the oldest settlements in the Armenian Highlands, and in the world of Gardman, is Mingechaur (Kandak) in the Armenian province of Aghberd (now Aghdash), where archaeological excavations have discovered remarkable cultural values representing the culture of the Kura-Araxes (III-II millennia B.C.). In the excavations conducted between 1946-1950, more than 14,000 archaeological objects were unearthed, which were spread out over an area of 35,000m². The example of one tomb is enough to confirm just how rich they are in cultural valuables. For example, an entire large showcase-cabinet in the Museum of History of Azerbaijan displays multiple items found in the tomb of just one nobleman (Exhibition guide..., 1958). Special attention should be paid to the animal-shaped, bird-shaped, mixed hybrid and other shaped clay vessels, as well as the elongated shoe-shaped vessels and rhytons, which actually had ritual significance. Excavations in 1948 were important in determining the ethnicity and Christianity of the ancient and medieval inhabitants of Kandak-Mingechaur. During the excavations, a church temple, buildings, pillar anchors, remains of windows and doors, and other architectural details were found, on which the letters of the Armenian alphabet are clearly visible. There are also writings which are considered Albanian. Bronze and iron crosses were also discovered, remains of incense sticks, and so on.

The Kura-Araxes culture was followed by the Middle Bronze Age (21st-19th centuries B.C.), cultures of the Late Bronze and Iron Ages (18th-7th centuries B.C.). Archaeological excavations indicate that Gardman was included in the cultural area of the Armenian Highlands, and the culture created in this territory is closely related to the culture created in other parts of the Armenian Highlands.

The Kura-Araxes culture, and all other cultures, are cultures **defined by agricultural, sedentary tribes, which is characteristic of the natives of the Armenian Highlands, the Hay-Armens**. Another agricultural and sedentary culture is the Yaloilutepe culture (Kapaghak, now the vicinity of Gabala, Kutkashen) of the Kur Left Bank, which is dated to the 3rd-1st centuries B.C..

Since ancient times, all the Armenian states have tried to unite the Armenian tribes and state formations living in the territories from the Mediterranean Sea to the Black Sea and the Caspian Sea. Inscriptions of the kings of the ancient Armenian state of Ararat-Urartu (9th-7th centuries B.C.) Ishpuini, Argishti I, Sarduri II, and others, testify that as a result of their campaigns to unite the Armenian Highlands, Gardman and Artsakh became part of the Armenian state of Ararat-Urartu.

Greek and Roman historians (Strabo, Polybius, Pliny the Elder, Plutarch, Pliny) provide information about the Albanian and Caucasian mountain tribes in the period up to the end of the I millennium B.C., from sources consulting older written sources (lost records of biographers and companions of the Seleucid commander Patrocles, Roman commanders Lucullus, Pompey and Antony).

They mention the tribes of **Alban**, **Udini**, **Utidorsi**, **Uiti**, **Lbin** (Lpni), **Silvii** or **Silver** (Chighb), **Didur** (Didoy), **Sod**, **Gel**, **Lek** (**Leg**), and others living in the coastal areas of the Caspian Sea and the mountainous areas of the Samur River, to the Caucasus Mountains and the land of Iberia. In Armenian written sources, Movses Khorenatsi (5th century), Yeghishe, Pavstos Buzand (5th century), *Ashkharhatsuyts* (7th century), and Movses Kaghankatvatsi (7th century), the same tribal territories are mentioned under the names **Maskut**, **Aghuatakan** (Akhti), **Ghek** (Tsakhur), **Tav-aspar** (Tabasarantsi), **Lek** (Lezgi), **Gar Gar**, **Khundz**, **Hejmatan**, **Lpni** (Lahichner), **Didoy**, **Chighb**, and others. We notice the tribes they mention are Caucasian tribes, living to the north of the branches of the Caucasian mountain ranges and the coastal areas of the Caspian Sea.

In the works of Greek and Roman historians, and on the basis of their information on ancient maps of the world, (Strabo, 1st century B.C. to A.D. 1st century, *Geography*, XI, chapters III, 2, 14 [4]; Ptolemy, 2nd century, *Geography*, VI, XI, 3) Gardman-Utiq is always marked within the borders of Armenia, and the Kur River is considered the natural border of Armenia. The Kur River is attested to as the natural border of Greater Hayq according to *Ashkharatsuyts*. However, the Greek historians (Strabo) and the Armenian *Ashkharatsuyts*, testify to the Armenian provinces on the Left Bank Kur River. Strabo mentions the Armenian provinces of **Khorzene** (Kgharjk) and **Cambysene** (Komissene, Kambejan) (Strabo, *Geography*, XI, chapter III, 2, 14/4). The province of **Anahtakan Yerkir** is mentioned by Flavius Josephus (1st century, it has reached us through Cassius Dio; Cassius Dio, *History of Rome*, book XXXVI, 5).

The provinces of **Aghberd** (also **Kaghadasht**, **Kaladzor**, later Aghdash), **Dasht-i-Bazkan** (Hejeri, now Ujari, located in the Shirvan steppe), **Kapaghak** (also **Vostan-i-marzpan**, now Kabala) and others are mentioned in the *Ashkharatsuyts*. Ancient written sources allow us to assert that the area from the Left Bank Kur to the foot of the Caucasus Mountains, was populated by Armenians and was a constituent part of the Armenian region of Aghvank.

The historian Movses Khorenatsi (5th century) reports important evidence about the origin of the name Aghvank, and about the boundaries of the land of Aghvank. He writes that the Sisak clan, native to Hayq, inherited **the plain of Aghvan and the mountain adjacent to the plain** (at the foot of the Caucasus Mountains). Then, the Armenian king Vagharshak appointed Aran, the son of Sisak, as a prefect **in the eastern-northern region of Armenia, along the course of the great river called Kur, which passes through a large plain**. Writing about the origin of the name Aghvank,

Khorenatsi states that **the world (the region) was called Aghvank, after (Sisak's) sweet (=aghu) character**, because he was nicknamed "aghu" (sweet, pleasant). The children of the descendants of Aran ruled **Utqi, Gardman, and Tsavdek (Artsakh)** (M. Khorenatsi, *History of Armenia*, 1981, pp. 127, 129).

Gardman-Utiq was part of the Armenian state during the Ararat-Urartian Aramian dynasty (9th-6th centuries B.C.), as well as the Yervanduni (6th-2nd centuries B.C.), Artashesian (2nd century B.C. - A.D. 1st century), Arshakuni (A.D. 1st-4th centuries), Bagratuni (A.D. 9th-11th centuries) and Zakaryan (A.D. 12th-13th centuries) dynasties. However, Gardman-Utiq was often separated from Hayq and absorbed into foreign states. The first treaty that separated Gardman from Hayq was signed between Rome and Persia in 363. In 371, during the reign of the Pope King, Gardman reunited with Hayq.

The first division of Armenia between Rome and Persia took place in the year 387. Gardman, along with the other peripheral provinces, was again separated from Hayq and integrated with Persia. In the mid-5th century, Gardman and Artsakh were incorporated into the newly established province of Aghvank. Following this administrative change, the church of that district was separated and was called the Catholicosate of Aghvan, remaining subordinate to the Armenian Church of the Enlightenment.

In 7th century Armenia (let us note that following the first division of Hayq, Armenian chroniclers began using the name Hayastan), Aghvank (and Gardman) was subordinate to Arabic rule, and was included in the governorship of Armina (Armenia). The Arabs pursued a policy of converting the peoples they conquered to Islam. Subjects that converted to Islam were exempted from taxes, received benefits, were appointed to various positions, and so on. As a result of this policy, many tribes, including Caucasian tribes, adopted Islam. The Armenian subjects, thanks to their strong culture, language, writing, religion and traditions, were able to preserve their ethnic identity.

In the year 885, Armenian statehood was restored. The weakening Arab caliphate recognized Armenia's independence. Ashot Bagratuni (Ashot I, 885-890) was proclaimed king of Armenia. Showing great stately, diplomatic, and military skill, Ashot I Bagratuni was able to unite many Armenian principalities in the restored Armenian state, including Artsakh and Gardman. At the end of the 9th century, the border of Bagratuni Armenia reached to the Kur River in the northeast. However, the Bagratunis did not succeed in uniting Armenia into one single state. As a result of the short-sighted policy of Byzantium in 1045, the Kingdom of Bagratunian Ani was destroyed. Deprived of military might, Armenia found itself in an unprotected position. This short-sighted policy of Byzantium was fatal for both Armenia and Byzantium itself. In 1047, Armenia was invaded by new, very dangerous enemies, the Seljuk Turks, who defeated the Byzantines near Manazkert in 1071. A defenseless Armenia (also Gardman), followed by Byzantium, was conquered by the Seljuk Turks. Relatively free from the Seljuk invasions, Georgia was able to conduct successful

military operations under the leadership of the Armenian commanders Zakare and Ivane Zakaryan. In 1196, Zakare and Ivane defeated the army of Amir in Gandzak. Gardman, along with other Armenian territories, were passed to the Zakaryans. However, new enemies continued to appear. The Seljuk Turks (11th century) were followed by the Mongol Tatars (13th century); then, the hordes of Timur Lenk (14th century) appeared. On the eve of the Mongol Tatar invasions, the demographic picture in Transcaucasia changed dramatically. In Atropatene, the Turkic-speaking element became dominant. The populations of the territories to the north of the Left Bank Kur River gradually became Turkified. Turkish, Tatar, and Kurdish tribes settled in the fertile plains and valleys of the Armenian Highlands (Gardman, Nakhijevan). The indigenous Armenian population of Gardman and Nakhijevan was forcibly resettled during the reign of Timur Lenk's son, Miran Shah (1396). Under these conditions, the Armenian rural communities of the foothill and mountain regions proved to be viable, preserving their traditional settlements, principles, and customs.

From 1512 until 1639, in short intervals, Armenia became a military theatre during the wars between Ottoman Turkey and Safavid Iran. Armenian localities and provinces were subjected to the forces of the shah or sultan. A treaty signed in 1639 gave Persia total control over the historical Armenian states of Syunik, Artsakh, Gardman, Paytakaran, and ParskaHayq, as well as the eastern parts of the states of Ayrarat, Gugark, and Vaspurakan. The mountaineers of the Caucasus, especially the Lezgis, continued their plundering attacks. They forced thousands of Armenians into captivity, predominantly women and children. This is the reason that modern populations of people dwelling in the Caucasus, especially the Lezgis and Avars, contain such a large number of phenotypically Armenian people (representatives of the Armenoid anthropological type). Gardman Armenians also appeared in Georgia for various reasons (captivity, famine, epidemics, emigration). As a result, in Kakheti, Tiflis (Havlabar), and other settlements of Georgia, the Armenian population was constantly increasing, in particular the number of Gardman Armenians.

Having been physically separated from Armenia, Gardman was able to keep its ties to Mother Armenia through spiritual and cultural means. Within the community of Gardman Armenians, widespread oral stories, traditions, legends, songs, dances, ritual ceremonies, and other elements testify that a spiritual connection has always existed between Gardman and the other Armenian lands. Gardman khachkars (cross-stones) and the art of rug making are subjects of a separate study. Gardman khachkars are especially beautiful, decorated with delicate plant patterns, images of animals, and human figures. Unfortunately, the majority of them have been destroyed. Today, Azeris are trying to appropriate the Armenian khachkars, claiming they are Albanian. The same beautiful, elegant images of plants and animals, as well as human forms, are depicted on Gardman carpets. It should be noted, most of the khachkars have been destroyed and, like other Armenian monuments, our carpets now decorate the museums of Azerbaijan.

Back in the 1950s and 1960s, with far-reaching goals in mind, Azeris bought handmade Armenian carpets from Armenian villagers, or exchanged those carpets with factory manufactured carpets. Carpets, as well as other culturally valuable materials created by the Gardman Armenians, appear in the museums of Azerbaijan as archaeological finds. A carpet museum was created in Baku, and carpet making was declared an important branch of culture created by the Azeri people. An Armenian carpet, like a khachkar, was created for a specific reason, and inscriptions were made on the carpets documenting such information (names, years). Azeris have found ways to remove Armenian inscriptions from carpets. They cut off and remove this part of the carpet, then claim that these are normal signs of wear. Additionally, in the collections of carpets called Azeri, there are a large number of carpets representing not only the settlements of West Kur, but also the settlements of Shamakh, Nukh (now Shaki), and other settlements of the Left Bank Kur River, which are considered to be the original settlements of Armenians. In the 16th-17th centuries in Shirvan, there were about 60 Armenian villages. The European traveler Adam Olearius (17th century) attests to this fact (Leo, n. 3, 1969, p. 169). The Armenian inhabitants of these settlements were Islamized between the 18th and 19th centuries, or regularly massacred (the most recent was the massacre of the Armenian residents of Nukhi and Shamakhi in 1918).

At the start of the 19th century, with the active participation of Armenians, Russians settled in Transcaucasia. The Russo-Persian war occurred between 1804-1813. In 1813, according to the treaty concluded in Gulistan, the Karabakh and Gandzak khanates were transferred to Russia, along with Georgia, historical Aghvank (Albania), and other Armenian territories. After the khanate of Gandzak (Ganja) came under Russian occupation, it was renamed the province of Elizavetpol. In 1828, after Eastern Armenia came under Russian occupation, the Armenian population migrated from Persia, Western Armenia, and elsewhere to the Ararat Valley, Artsakh, Gardman, and Javakhk. The immigrants mostly settled in the former abandoned Armenian settlements, where traces of Armenian buildings (monasteries, churches, khachkars, graves with Armenian inscriptions) have been preserved. Completely disregarding the existence of ancient Armenian monuments in those settlements (some dating to the 5th-7th centuries), Azeri (and Georgian) historians falsely claim that Armenians were not in these territories until after 1828.

Armenians had high hopes that the Russians, their brothers in the Christian faith, would put an end to the interethnic conflicts which had caused great suffering for the Armenians. However, the Russian tsars were not interested in the security of the peoples living within their empire, even the Christians, or the well-being of the Armenians. As other foreign rulers had done, the Russian tsars pursued a policy of expelling Armenians from Armenia. The Armenians were encouraged to migrate to the occupied territories near the Caspian in the North Caucasus, and Russian (also German) immigrants settled in Gardman and other native Armenian areas. Everything was done (new administrative

divisions, emigration) to ensure that the Armenians did not form a majority in their homeland. Subsequent events showed that between 1905-1906, with the connivance of the Russian government, Armenian-Turkish (Tatar) clashes began in Transcaucasia (allegedly at the instigation of international secret organizations).

At the end of the 19th century, Bishop Makar Barkhudaryants reports interesting information about the multilingual tribes living in Gardman, Artsakh, and the areas north of the Kur River, up to South Dagestan and Absheron. In 1890, he was present in those areas, where he wrote down what he saw and heard, and published them in a valuable work (Makar Barkhudaryants, *History of Aghvan*, n. 1, Vagharshapat, 1902, n. 2, Tiflis, 1907) which plays a very important role in the study of the history of Aghvank (Gardman-Utiq, Artsakh). As if it were an established fact, the author painfully attests to **many Armenian villages that were forcibly converted to Islam and became Turkish-speaking**. Barkhudaryants was writing around 1711-1722 about the Muslimization of the Armenian population of Shaki province, which was carried out by force. He writes about **Vantam** (“ijevan tal”, to give lodging), **Kutkashen** (“khuti vra shinvats”, built on a ledge), **Zardun, Bum, Khachmas** (“khachi masunk”, relic of the cross), **Patar, Vardanlu** (“Vardani gyugh”, Vardan’s village), **Ermanit** (“Hayi gyugh”, Armenian village), **Mukhants** (“mukhn antsats”, the smoke passed), **Oraban** (“orva khosk/gorts”, daily word/work), **Kungivt** (“kuneh gtnogh”, finder of sleep), **Ptez** (“partez”, garden), **Zayzit, Kish** (Gis), **Kokhmukh** (“mukheh kokhel votkov”, stomp out the smoke), **Malgh** (“malukh”, rope) and other settlements, whose inhabitants were Islamized. Let us add a few more: **Balakhani, Bibi Eybat, Aresh, Khanabad, Kendek, Gavarli**... The Muslimized Armenians retained their Armenian names and traditions for a long time. They continued to kiss the khachkars, frequent pilgrimage sites, light candles during prayer, make the sign of the cross over their sleeping children, knead dough with the meal taken from the fire, etc. The most striking difference between them and the Turk-Tatars are the external features. Muslimized Armenians have typical Armenian phenotypes, adhering to the Europoid race’s Armenoid anthropological type (round, short skull with a flat backing, high nasal bone, large eyes, wavy hair, light skin), in contrast to the Turk-Tatar, which are classified as a Mongoloid anthropological type (long head, protruding cheekbones, dark and slanted eyes, low nasal root, developed fold of the upper eyelid [epicanthus], dark skin often with yellow undertones). As the inhabitants of the settlements were Muslimized, the names of the settlements began to change. For example, **Vardanakert** became Javad, **Paytakaran** became Salyani, **Yevtnaporakian Bagin** became Surakhani, **Alevan** became Avsharan, **Aghberd** became Aghdash, and **Bagu** became Baku (Bag=Bog, cf. Bagavan, Bagnayr, Bagayarich).

At the end of the 19th century, the territories south of the Kur River, Gardman and Artsakh, continued to be predominantly populated by Armenians. M. Barkhudaryants offers some interesting information about the largely and partially Armenian-populated Artsakh and Gardman provinces, including Gandzak, Yelenendorf (Khanlar), Shamkor,

Ghazakh, and other cities, as well as Getashen, Banants, Voskanapat, Mirzik, Brajur, Karhat, Kirants, and ten other settlements. However, many provinces were emptied of Armenian inhabitants. Most of the steppe provinces were inhabited by nomadic **Muslim Arabs**. **Tatar tribes** occupied the valleys of the Zakam River, and the newly arrived **Kurdish tribes** occupied the provinces of Artsakhi Tsar, Vaykunik, Harchlank, and Berdadzor. The majority of those tribes were also nomads.

The Russian tsars' anti-Armenian policies (disallowing the Armenian-populated territories from unifying) were continued by the Bolshevik and Soviet leaders. Taking advantage of the situation created after the Russian revolutions of 1917, in May 1918 with the help of leaders of secret organizations (Trotsky, Zinoviev, Kamenev, Enver, Kemal) with well-developed and far-reaching plans, a new Turkish state called Azerbaijan was created in Transcaucasia. International agent L. Trotsky had repeatedly expressed that, for the sake of the victory of the world revolution, Armenians should make concessions in favor of Turkey. He wrote about it in an openly anti-Armenian article titled "Armenia and Turkey at the Upcoming Conference", which was published in the journal "Zhizn Natsionalnoy" on March 4, 1921.

Soviet power was established in Azerbaijan on April 28, 1920. The borders of the Soviet republics were determined arbitrarily. In some cases, the area's ethnic population was taken into account, in other places, it was ignored. Thus, the Armenian majority populated regions of Gardman, Artsakh, and Nakhijevan became part of the newly created Turkic state called Azerbaijan. In the native homeland of other ethnic groups (Armenians, Caucasian tribes, Iranian tribes) (Left Bank Kur, Right Bank Kur: Gardman, Artsakh, Paytakaran, Nakhijevan, the southeastern part of Dagestan, the coastal regions of the southwestern part of the Caspian Sea) a state called Azerbaijan was created, whose very name did not even belong to him. The name Azerbaijan, which has been presented as a name meaning "land of fire" since the Soviet years, is a distorted form of the name Atropatene (named in honor of the Median general Atropates). The name Azerbaijan was selected by the Bolshevik leaders with a long-term scheme in mind. They wanted to export the revolution to neighboring countries, including Iran, with hopes that Iranian Azerbaijan would join the newly created Soviet Azeri state. The national composition of this state was also not homogeneous; it consisted of Muslimized Caucasian tribes (Lpin-Lahich, Lez-Lezgis, Tavaspar-Tavasparians, Gel-Gilians, Udis, Ghek-Tsakhuris), Mongol-Tatars, Seljuk Turks (Turkmen), Arabs, Iranian tribes (Talış, Tater), Armenians forcibly converted to Islam (including tens of thousands of Turkish children born to Armenian women), and from the Muslimized descendants of other tribes and peoples who appeared in that area, who were known under the general name of Tatars from the end of the 19th century. In 1926, during the All-Union Census of 1926, Transcaucasian Tatars and Turks were registered under the name "Caucasian Tatars". After 1936, only "Caucasian Tatars" accepted the name Azeri, and they began presenting themselves with that name.

In the Soviet years, the government of Azerbaijan, with the support of Soviet scientists, in particular orientalists and historians, tried to rewrite the history of Azerbaijan in various ways, presenting it as a country with an ancient history. Anything of cultural value that was ever created on the territory of Azerbaijan was appropriated (archaeological objects, ethnographic material, folklore, prominent individuals). The Christian cultural relics (churches, monasteries, khachkars) which could not be appropriated, were attributed to Albanian tribes, whose heirs the Azeris consider themselves.

But who are the Albanians? What is their origin? What is their name? Albanian, or Aghvan? What territory did they live in? What culture did they create? What culture do modern Azeris consider “Albanian”? These are the questions that arise when studying the written sources regarding **Albania** (Greco-Roman sources) and **Aghvank** (Armenian sources). All researchers agree that it is definitely impossible to talk about a state called Albania and the people of Albania. It seems that there is a kingdom (state) named Albania or Aghvank, but there are no visible people named Alban or Agvan; there is no visible ethnic community. Meanwhile, it is directly noted that the history of Albania is closely connected with Armenia, the Armenian kings and catholicoi, the Armenian noble class, and the people. This is the reason why, not seeing an Albanian or Aghvan people, many researchers (N. Marr, G. Klaproth) identify the Albanians mentioned by Greek and Roman authors with the Alans (Marr, N., *Caucasian Tribal Names and Their Local Parallels*, Petrograd, 1922, Trever K., *Essays...*, p. 30). S. Yeremyan believes that “Ibin” is the transliterated form of “alban” (Yeremyan, S., M Kalankatuysky about the embassy of the Albanian prince Varaz-Trdat..., Zap. IV. AN. USSR, vol. VII, pp. 148-149). Even K. Trever admits that it is impossible to talk about any Albanian ethnic group or ethnic community, since the “26 languages” mentioned by Strabo (Strabo does not mention the tribe, people, kingly terms) are 26 different languages, and that “they have no common language, no single tribe, no single people, no single kingdom” (Trever, K., *Essays...*, p. 59). Trever goes on to write, it is impossible to accurately determine either the name or the occupied territory of the union created under the leadership of the Albans, since there is very little linguistic, ethnographic, and archaeological information available (Trever, K., *Essays...*, p. 49). Additionally, the historian Bakikhanov, while writing the history of Azerbaijan, studied the testimonies of ancient authors, paid attention to toponyms, and tried to clarify a number of issues (Albanian tribes, their struggle against conquerors, the origin of the name Albania). Examining the historical geography and place names of Albania, Bakikhanov determined that ancient Albania was in the territories of Shirvan and Dagestan (Abas-Kuli-aga [Kudsi] Bakikhanov, *Gulistan-Iram...* Baku, 1926. *Essays on the History of Historical Science in the USSR*, vol. 1, p. 641. The work was originally written in Persian, then translated into Russian by the author. Trever, K., *Essays...*, p. 26).

On the basis of what facts, conclusions and consequences do some Azeris (and Dagestanis) claim that Artsakh, Gardman-Utiq, and even Syunik are Albanian terri-

tories? The answer to the question is connected with the information “heard from others” by Strabo, circulated since the beginning of the 20th century, according to which, “it is said that the Armenian king Artashes I conquered lands from the surrounding nations” (Strabo, XI, 14, 5). This point of view, as well as other issues related to Albania-Aghvank, received a new development in Soviet historiography, where an attempt was made to equalize and level the histories and cultures of all the peoples of the USSR. The Armenian people, with an old, rich history and great culture, suffered the most from that policy, a part of which, Aghvank (Gardman-Utiq, Artsakh, and Paytakaran), was again separated from Armenia and annexed to the Turkish state of Azerbaijan. Published works of **B. Ribakov** (“The Crisis of the Slave System and the Emergence of the Feudal System on the Territory of the USSR”, III-IX centuries, Moscow, 1958, Essays on the History of the USSR), **K. Trever** (Trever, K., *Essays on the History and Culture of Caucasian Albania, IV Century B.C.. - A.D. 7th Century*, M-L, 1959, in russian), **V. Minorski** (History of Shirvan and Derbend X-XI Centuries, Moscow, 1963), and other authors, based on the information reported by Strabo, conclude that the Right Bank Kur River (Gardman-Utiq, Artsakh) was joined to Armenia during the reign of Artashes I (189-160 B.C.), after which the inhabitants allegedly became Armenian.

Let us focus on one book, K. Trevor’s famous work, *Essays on the History and Culture of Caucasian Albania, IV Century B.C.. - A.D. 7th Century*. This work gives answers to the questions regarding Albania. In this work, as with other cases, to put it mildly, a number of issues have been interpreted incorrectly, including the borders of ancient Armenia (during the time of Artashes I), the reasons for the creation of the Albanian kingdom, information about the state of Syunik-Sisakan, the nationality of Movses Kaghanatvatsi, and more. It should be noted, the aforementioned statements from Strabo do not mention Artsakh, Gardman-Utiq, or Shakashen. In the same place, Strabo mentions that in the territories united by Artashes I, “everyone is monolingual”, that is, all the inhabitants speak Armenian. Let us also note, Artashes I was one of the representatives of the Council of Elders of Eastern Armenia. He began his military operations against Yervand IV in Utiq, and he was helped by the ministers of Uteatsots as well as the troops there (M. Khorenatsi, book II, ch. 44). A point of view put forward by the researchers H. Brown and G. Klimov in 1954, and again by I. Diakonoff in 1978 (I. Diakonoff, *The Ancient East*, Yerevan, 1978, [Collection]; Article: *Hurrian-Urartian and East Caucasian Languages*), should also be noted. According to this view, the languages of the East Caucasian tribes are connected with the languages of the Hurri-Mitannians and Ararat-Urartians. Note that those names are the ancient names used in Sumerian, Akkadian, Egyptian, Hittite, and other ancient cuneiform written sources for **Hay-Armens**, the natives of the Armenian Highlands. However, this view is not widely accepted among researchers. On the basis of these views and assumptions put forward and presented to them, the Azeri researchers include Artsakh and Gardman-Utiq in the borders of their imagined state of Albania,

and even speak about including Lake Sevan and Syunik. Meanwhile, the study of the works of Armenian historians, as well as the created political situation (the first and second divisions of Armenia, the need to fight against the repeated invasions of Caucasian mountaineers and other nomadic tribes) allows us to say that the works of historians present the Armenian peripheral state created in the territories separated from Hayq in the 4th century (after A.D. 387), as the kingdom of Aghvank (after 510 or 523, it was a marzban), which had an Armenian population and Christian faith, and was closely related to Armenia in spiritual, cultural, economic, and other aspects. Its leaders, kings, and catholicoi were connected to Armenia, Armenian kings, and Armenian catholicoi; constantly consulting with them, maintaining strong friendly ties, and often allying together in the fight against the Caucasian highlanders, various nomadic tribes that regularly appeared, and the Persian court.

The testimonies about the above-mentioned tribes made by Greek and Roman historians, refer to the Caucasian tribes living in the branches of the Caucasus Mountains, in the mountains and canyons. We notice that there is no central ethnic group, language, territory, or culture. These tribes spoke different languages and were at different levels of development. At best, they could band together to fight some external threat, in this case Roman invasions (as in the cases of Orois or Zober), or to organize marauding, predatory raids, the evidence of which is plentiful. Therefore, relying on information **curated** by Greek and Roman authors and saying that in the middle of the 1st century B.C., in the territory of the Left Bank Kur River, the state of Albania was formed from a union of tribes speaking 26 different languages, is a far-fetched assumption that is not supported by facts and evidence. Until the A.D. 4th century, in Greco-Roman written sources, there is only fragmentary information about Caspian-Kazbers, Albanians, and other tribes, related to Roman-Parthian wars, Armenian-Roman and Armenian-Parthian relations. We get additional information about Aghvank mainly through Armenian historians (Movses Khorenatsi, Pavstos Buzand, Ghazar Parpetsi, Movses Koghankatvatsi, *Ashkharatsuyts*) and Armenian written sources, which testify that in the north-eastern part of the Left Bank Kur in the Near Caspian region, at the beginning of the 4th century, the kingdom of the Maskut was formed under the leadership of the Parthian Arshakunis. Furthermore, Armenian historians attest to the the kingdom of Aghvank, its Armenian Aranshahik kings, the later marzpan formation of Aghvank (510), and other issues. The kingdom of the Maskut is presented by many researchers as the kingdom of Aghvank, which is incorrect because the Maskut tribe spoke an Iranian dialect and lived in the area between the Caspian Sea and Caucasus Mountains.

The majority of the tribes mentioned above by Greek, Roman, and Armenian historians, the **Aghuatakans** (now Akhti), **Gheker** (now Tsakurs), **Tavaspars** (now Tabasarantsis), **Leker** (now Lezgis), **Lpnis** (now Lahich), **Didoy** (Didoeti), and others, converted to Islam during Arab occupation and still live in their original places of residence in the areas between the southern spurs of the Caucasus Mountains and

the Caspian Sea, in Dagestan, Azerbaijan, and Georgia. Again, let us note, those Caucasian tribes are connected to the kingdom of Aghvank that was formed in the Armenian-inhabited areas of Eastern Armenia, on the right and left banks of the Kur River, to protect Armenia, Persia, and other areas of the Caucasus from the attacks of the Caucasus mountaineers and nomadic tribes (under the patronage of Persia and Byzantium, Aghvank was assigned the role of a buffer state). In the year 510 (523), after the dissolution of the kingdom of Aghvan, Persian marzspans began to rule the country. In order to strengthen the Aghvank marzban formation, a number of territories of the Left Bank Kur were joined to it: Bazkan, Khoruan, Shruan, Choghan, as well as the Ghekats and Tavaspar provinces and the city of Darband (Derbend) with its fortifications. This was the largest territorial inclusion of Aghvank province (according to *Ashkharatsuyts*, an area of 72,204 km², Aghvank is presented with these boundaries in table 42 of Trever's aforementioned book).

There are various explanations about the origin of the names **Albania** and **Aghvank**. As mentioned above, Khorenatsi associated the name Aghvank with the "agu" ("sweet") character of Sisak, a descendant of the Armenian patriarch Hayq, from whom the name of the region **Aghvank** arose. The name **Aghvank** mentioned in Armenian written sources, and the name **Albania** mentioned in Greco-Roman written sources do not seem to be alike at first glance, but more careful scrutiny reveals their similarities. We know that when foreigners are unable to pronounce a given name, they use a phonetic substitution to better suit it to their specific language. We can assume that in this instance, the Armenian name **Aghvank** (Alvank) was phonetically altered by Greeks and Romans into the form **Albania**, to suit their languages (gh-l and v-b phonetic changes were implemented).

Apart from the names Albania and Aghvank, the names Bun Aghvank, Caucasian Aghvank, and Armenian Aghvank were also used for this territory of Eastern Armenia. This variety (or jumble) of names occurred in the marzban period (after 510), after the first (387) and second (591) divisions of Armenia, when, as mentioned above, provinces inhabited by Caucasian tribes (Tavaspark, Maskut, Shogha, Gheck, Darband) were added to the Armenian-populated Aghvank, which was separated from Armenia and passed to Persia. The presence of the Udis and Gargars in Aghvank suggests that they (a part of the tribe) came down from their original places of residence, the Caucasus Mountains (Gargars) and the area between the Caspian Sea and the coastal mountains (Udis), to the fertile plain of the Kur River inhabited by Armenians (it is assumed that they were harassed by the Alans), where Mesrop Mashtots created a script for the Gargars in the 5th century. There is a viewpoint (A. Hakobyan) that the name Gargar is an arbitrary name, which was bestowed upon the wild northern tribes which appeared on the Left Bank Kur by Movses Khorenatsi (A. Hakobyan, *Albania-Aluank in Greek-Latin and Ancient Armenian Sources*, Yerevan, 1987, pp. 72-74). And the Udis, having found themselves in the Armenian environment, accepted Christianity, then shared the fate of Armenians: they forcibly became

Muslims, migrated, or perished (in the Soviet years, a small group of them lived in the villages of Nizh and Vardashen of the Nukhi [now Shaki] region).

Thus, it is appropriate to claim that **Aghvank (Albania)** is the name of a territory, a region (Right Bank Kur, Left Bank Kur, Gardman, Utiq, Artsakh), and not an ethnonym. Its inhabitants are Armenians, who did not, and do not, call themselves anything else (including my grandfathers and distant ancestors).

Gardman, which was annexed to Azerbaijan during the Soviet years, was divided into several regions: Dashkesan, Khanlar, Ghazakh, Shamkhor, Getabek, Touz, Kasum-Ismaïlov (Gyorani), and Shahumyan.

The desire of all the administrators of Soviet Azerbaijan was the same: create a homogeneous Turkish state. However, this proved difficult to implement in the case of Armenians, who had lived and continued to live in the land of their ancestors for thousands of years, had created a great culture, and were connected with Armenia by strong spiritual ties. That is the reason the government of Azerbaijan conducted an anti-Armenian policy from the very outset of its creation. Using economic, cultural, and educational issues, as well as violence and blackmail, the leaders of Azerbaijan pursued a policy of forcing Armenians out of their ancestral homeland. With emphatic slogans, they declare their country the most international country of the USSR, where representatives of different nations live in solidarity: Russians, Armenians, Jews, Ukrainians, Dagestanis, and representatives of other peoples. Unfortunately, not meeting serious opposition from the governments of Soviet Armenia and the USSR, the government of Azerbaijan managed to implement its plans. The history of the beginning of the century was repeated in 1988-1990, when in order to save the communist regime, with the permission of the Soviet authorities, anti-Armenian pogroms were organized in Sumgait, Baku, Gandzak, and other places.

The Gardman Armenians, who waited with great hope for the Christian Russians from the 18th century, linked the success of their liberation struggle with the Russians' arrival. However, after nearly 200 years, the Gardman Armenians, who had done so much to strengthen the success of Russian weapons in Transcaucasia, were pushed out of their cradle and scattered into the world between 1988-1992, with the help of the same Russian military forces. Taking advantage of its autonomous status, Artsakh was able to win the war imposed upon it, and was liberated from Turkish rule. However, the victory is not final, as most of the Armenian Aghvan lands, including Gardman, are still in captivity, as are other Armenian lands. A proud and heroic citizen of Gardman cannot come to terms with the reality that exists there today. We believe that the day will come when Armenian carpets will again be woven in the world of Gardman, temples and khachkars will be built, and Armenian archaeologists will excavate settlements and proudly present to the world the high culture and civilization created by their ancestors.

WORLD FLOOD AND THE LAND OF ARARAT

In ancient Mesopotamian written sources (lyric poems, “Atrahasis”, “Gilgamesh”), the Lord of Mother Earth, Haya (En-Ki= Lord of the Earth), playing a great role in the creation of humanity, constantly provides people with protection, eventually becoming the savior of the human race. The activities of the human beings regularly annoys the gods, especially the Lord of the Earth, Enlil, who decides to destroy humanity. Let us discuss those lyric poems.

The Sumerian version of the flood myth was discovered during the excavations of the city of Nippur, and published in the year 1914. The inscription is not complete, the preserved portion is only 1/3 of the total inscription. We learn about subsequent events through Akkadian written sources. The preserved Sumerian texts tells a story in which created humanity was given wisdom (ME), and founded five cities. Then, it recounts a council held by the gods. We are told that **Ziusudra**, the benevolent king of the city of Shuruppak, a priest of the God of the Earth Enki, overhears a message from someone, probably Enki, through a temple wall that the council of gods, at the behest of Enlil, God of the Heavens, has decided to wipe out the human race through a Great Flood..., (there is no continuation). Then, it is written that the Flood lasts seven days and seven nights, after which Ziusudra comes out of the ship and sacrifices oxen and sheep to the gods, for his salvation. In the last section of the epic poem, Ziusudra falls on his face and worships the chief deity Anu, as well as Enlil, who promise to restore life on earth. They also grant Ziusudra (which is translated to Utnapishtim in Akkadian and means “long life found”) immortality and settle him in the land of **Dilmun**, in the place where the sun rises. Let us note, from a Mesopotamian perspective, the sun rose from the Masu-Mashu (Sis-Masis) Mountains, in the land of Ararat. There is no doubt that the land of Dilmun coincides topographically with the Biblical Paradise. About this, Sumerologist S. Kramer writes, “There are several reports that the Biblical Paradise extended east of Palestine in Eden, where the four great rivers originate, including the Tigris and Euphrates. It turns out that it is the same Sumerian paradise, the land of Dilmun”. According to the Sumerians, immortal gods lived in the land of Dilman, and only one man who “found long life”, Utnapishtim, was allowed to live in the land of the gods³²¹.

We notice that the Land of Dilmun is Paradise that is the Land of Ararat (Aratta) where the sun rises, where the four rivers of Paradise take their sources, where the secret of immortality can be found, which means that it is a land of sacred laws and rituals, where the gods used to live and later there lived people selected by the gods. Those people preserved divine sacred laws and followed them (ME), where no earthborn was allowed to enter...

³²¹ The land of Tilmun (Dilmun) is mentioned in written sources as a mythological land.

In the Sumerian lyric poem “**Enmerkar and the Lord of Aratta**”, there is another testament to a **flood**, during which time the gods, in this case Haya’s beloved and almighty Inanna, continue to save humanity, the inhabitants of Aratta. The testimony goes as follows:

572 (humanity ?), who were in the **flood**,
573 after that, when the **flood** was raging,
574 Inanna, the mistress of all lands,
575 Dumuzi’s beloved,
576 sprinkled it with the Water of Life,
577 And in all the land of Aratta, the trees grew at her command.

Kaneva I.T., “Enmerkar and the High Priest of Aratta”

The reason why the gods come to the aid of the land of Ararat, the people in Aratta, is found in the lyric poem “Enmerkar and the Lord of Aratta”:

567 Its (Aratta’s) people are distinct from other people;
568 They are a nation Dumuzi selected among the other nations,
569 One that firmly establishes the holy word of Inanna!

*Herman L.J. Vanstiphout, “Enmerkar and the Lord of Aratta”,
(Epics of Sumerian Kings: Atlanta, 2003)*

From these lines, it becomes clear once again that Aratta (the land of Ararat) is **the land of the gods’ chosen people**.

We notice that the flood occurred before the creation of the Sumerian and other lyric poems. This means that the land of Ararat, the “land of the immortals”, mentioned in the Sumerian poem existed before the flood.

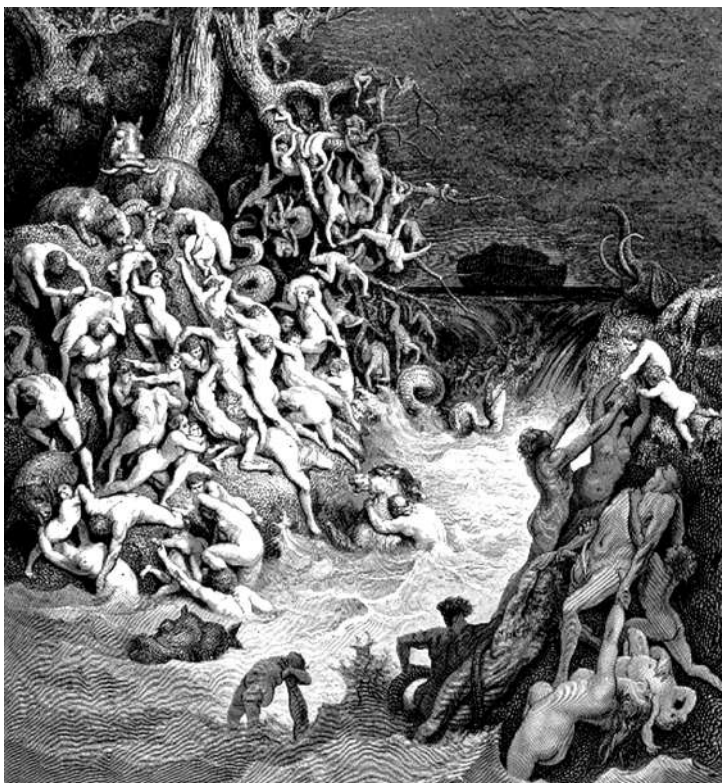
A flood is also mentioned in the Akkadian lyric poem “**Atrahasis**”, which was discovered during the excavation of the ancient city of Sippar. The text is in Akkadian and is dated to the XVII century B.C.. The text tells that the gods were tired of doing difficult labor, so they decided to create humanity to work in their place. The goddess Ninti created 7 men and 7 women out of clay. After several centuries, the humans grow substantially in number. Over time, the loud noises that the humans make begins to disturb Enlil. The god Namtar tries to eliminate humanity with a plague, but the people, on the advice of the wise and pious Atra-Hasis (“extremely wise”), offer the gods sacrifices, and the plague is stopped.

However, on Enlil’s order, Adad spreads a drought, but the people build a temple to Adad on the advice of Atra-Hasis, and the drought ends. The council of the gods decides to eradicate humanity with a flood. All of the gods, at Enlil’s request, swear they will not help the human beings.



The text of “Atrahasis”,
British Museum

Nonetheless, Ea (Enki) warns Atra-Hasis about the coming flood and, after drawing the blueprint of a ship on the sand, he orders him to build a ship and to bring with him grain, his wife, family, relatives, workers, as well as domestic and wild animals... Atra-Hasis decides to inform the elders about it, and they decide to build the ship together. Then, when the full moon arrives, Atra-Hasis gathers his family and relatives and boards the ship. Rain falls for 7 days and 7 nights; the flood begins. The goddess Ninti mourns for humanity and its destruction.



World Flood, artist: G. Doré

The continuation of the text tells that Atra-Hasis, having survived the flood, offers sacrifices to the gods and expresses satisfaction for their salvation. Enlil becomes angered when he finds out about the saved humans, but Enki promises that he was the one who helped them. The gods decide to slow down the human population growth. Goddess Ninti takes measures to stunt the growth of humanity (baby-killing demons appear, certain groups of priestesses are forbidden to have children). The gods grant Atra-Hasis immortality, so as not to break their promise and destroy all mortal men.

The Sumerian-Akkadian myth “Gilgamesh” was created based on Sumerian lore. The most complete version of the epic was found during excavations in Nineveh in the mid-19th century. That text is dated to the 7th century B.C., however it contains layers dating back to the 23rd-22nd centuries B.C..

The main hero of the myth is the demi-god and king of Uruk, Gilgamesh, who befriends Enkidu, who lives amongst the wild animals. They fight, then become friends and start engaging in heroism together. They fight Humbaba, the protector of the mountain cedars, then they fight a bull, and so on. The slaying of Humbaba provokes the wrath of the gods, and Enkidu is killed. The death of Enkidu shocks Gilgamesh. He understands his own mortality for the first time, and realizes that death is the fate of all men.



The text of “Gilgamesh” about the Great Flood, British Museum

However, he cannot accept the idea of death and begins to wander in search of immortality. In his wanderings, Gilgamesh passes through mountain passes and reaches the Mashu (Masis) Mountains, the location where the sun rises and sets. The underworld gates which begin there are guarded by menacing looking scorpions.



Masu-Mashu mountains, from where the Sun, the Utu God, rises and sets.
Scorpions guarding the gates of the mountains are also depicted

Gilgamesh tells them that he was horrified by the death of his friend, therefore, he is going to Utnapishtim, who conquered death, to learn the secret to immortality.



Beyond the Masu (Sis-Masis) Mountains,
the magical garden of the gods' abode, the Ararat Valley

The scorpion allows him to cross the Mashu (Masu) Mountains, the gates of the mountains open, and walking through the thick darkness, Gilgamesh reaches a distant light and magical garden. Siduri, the steward of the gods and the magical garden, knowing of Gilgamesh's purpose, says:

The life for which you search, you will not find.
When the gods created man,-
They held life in their hands.

HAP, 1982, p. 149

Gilgamesh, thanks to his persistence and will, meets Urshanabi, the immortal Utnapishtim's ferryman. He builds a boat and, accompanied by Urshanabi, crosses the waters of death and reaches Utnapishtim.



Gilgamesh cuts stakes and builds a boat
to cross the waters of death and reach Utnapishtim

Utnapishtim, knowing of Gilgamesh's purpose for coming to him, reports that he has no advice or answer for him, so long as the boundaries exist between his kind, the imperfect, and the gods:

I look at you Utnapishtim,
The size of your body is not unusual, you are the way I am,...
Tell me, how did you survive, and find life amongst the gods?

HAP, p. 157

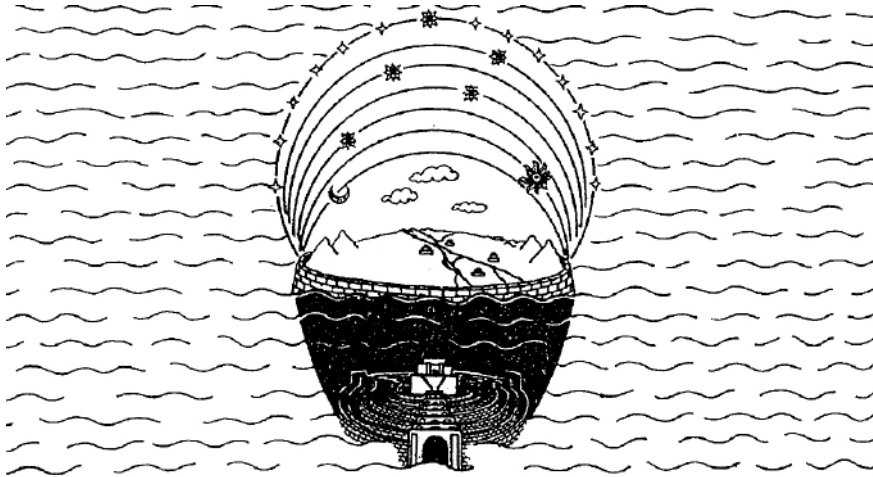
Utnapishtim says that he will tell him the secret to his immortality. His story goes as follows: The Council of the Gods, at the behest of Ellil (En-lil = lord of sky), the enemy of the people, the lord of the sky, decides to wipe out the inhabitants of the city of Shuruppak on the banks of the Euphrates with a flood. All of the gods, including the enlightened Ea (Enki-Haya), are sworn to secrecy. However, the protector of humanity, Haya-Ea reveals the secret to Utnapishtim, through the wall of the reed house, and tells him to build a four-cornered ship, covered with a roof, and load every living thing into it. Utnapishtim does exactly that, he builds a ship in preparation for the impending disaster. When the rains begin to fall heavily, Utnapishtim gathers his family, relatives, and all the animals into the ship and tars the door shut.



Utnapishtim inside the ark of salvation

The rain and storms continue, and the waters begin to cover everything on the face of the earth, plains, fields, and mountains. People can no longer see each other; they are not visible from the heavens either. For 7 days and 7 nights, the rains continue. From the power of the flood and storm, the gods were terrified and they rose up and departed from Anu's heavens. Ishtar, the patroness of the gods, regrets agreeing to the destruction of humanity through a flood, and the Anunnaki gods weep for the annihilation of man. Eventually, on the seventh day, the rain and storms subside. The sea calms and the ship comes to rest near Mount Nisir (Nitsir). Hoping to find land, Utnapishtim sends out a dove, then a swallow, who come back to him without finding any land. But the released crow, discerning a drop in the water, does

not return. Coming out of the ship, Utnapishtim performs a sacrifice and then burns incense, the fragrance of which reaches the gods who gather around the sacrificer. Witnessing the anger of the gods, then their joy at the salvation of man, Ellil touches Utnapishtim and his wife, blesses them, and grants them immortality. He settles them at the mouth of the Underworld River that originates from the World Ocean, that is in the land of Ararat.



The mountainous Ararat land at the mouth of the Underworld River, which originates from the world ocean, in the region of the sources of the Tigris and Euphrates rivers Sumerian clay tablet, III millennium B.C.



Utnapishtim with his wife, Sumerian sculpture

Then, Utnapishtim tells Gilgamesh that the council of the gods will not be assembled again for his sake, and immortality will not be granted to him, for there is no seat reserved for his imperfection in the assembly of the gods. Utnapishtim's wife pities Gilgamesh and convinces Utnapishtim to reveal to Gilgamesh the knowledge about the secret of the flower, which, once acquired, will keep him young forever. Gilgamesh manages to find the flower in the depths of the sea, but he is unable to use it because a snake ends up swallowing it.

In the IV-III centuries B.C., the historian Berossus asserts in his famous work *Babylonika* (*History of Babylonia*, or *Chaldaika*) that the **Land of the Gods**, where humanity received its salvation, was **Armenia**. Berossus, a priest, took advantage of the cuneiform written sources preserved in temples when he assembled his work. Portions of Berossus' work have been preserved in the work of Eusebius of Caesarea (thanks to the Armenian translation). Of the preserved fragments, one of them presents a Mesopotamian version of the World Flood, in which the hero saved from the flood is presented with the Hellenized name **Xisuthros (Xisutr)**. According to Berossus, the god (or Titan) Kronos warns Xisuthros about the flood and tells him that in order to be saved he must build a ship. When Xisuthros asks where he must go to be saved, he is answered **the land of the gods**. After the flood, when the ark comes to rest upon the mountains, Xisuthros and his wife are granted immortality from the gods and given permission to live in **the land of the gods**. The other survivors of the flood, after waiting a long time at the altar for Xisuthros and his wife, hear a voice from heaven say, "Do not search for water, do not call for their names in vain. For their piety, the gods took them, and they now live with us". When the people asked what land they were in, an answer came from heaven: "You are in Armenia. You must go south".³²² They obeyed the order, offered sacrifices to the gods, and migrated south to Babylon.¹ A noteworthy fact in Berossus' work is that the other saved people are not allowed to live in the land of the gods, in Ararat, but are instead commanded to go to Babylon. We notice that **not all people were allowed to live in the land of the gods, the land of Ararat**.



Xisuthros and his wife are given permission to live in the land of the gods, Armenia.

The Bible and the Land of Ararat. The written sources of Near East Asia from the I millennium B.C. continue to speak of creation, of the world, the gods, and the creation of humanity, and also of the ungodly deeds of man, the anger of the gods,

³²² Eusebius of Caesarea, Chronicle, section A, Venice, 1818.

and the destruction of humanity by the flood. The Bible is such a written source. The written sources (lyric poems, myths, mythological discourses) created in Near East Asia, Mesopotamia, and Egypt (Akhenaten's new religion) were collected and presented in the Old Testament of the Bible by the 8th-6th century B.C. Jewish prophets (the New Testament was written in the A.D. 1st-2nd centuries). The Old Testament contains information about creation, earthly paradise, the World Flood, the land of Ararat, and the salvation of the human race. The Bible reiterates the familiar story from the Sumerian-Akkadian written sources. Man, created by his Creator, angers God again with his lack of good character (this time because of evil and envy) and is in danger of being destroyed by the flood. But there is a path to salvation; it is goodness and piety. And for the salvation of the human race, God chooses just such a pious person: Noah. Warned by God of the impending flood, Noah behaves like the Sumerian Ziusudra and the Akkadian Utnapishtim had behaved. He builds an ark and gathers his family and animals of every kind (in pairs) from the earth into it. The rains fall for 40 days and 40 nights; everything is covered by the waters. After being tossed about on the waters for 40 days, the ark comes to rest on the mountains of Ararat. Then, the rain ceases, the waters recede, and Noah comes out of the ark and offers sacrifices to God for his salvation. After the flood, in the mountains of Ararat, the **Eternal Covenant** of God and man (Noah and his descendants) is confirmed, "made for eternal ages, the sign of which is this: the bow shall be seen in the cloud"³²³ (rainbow)³²⁴.



"Noah's Sacrifice", artist: I. Kokh, 1803, Frankfurt Main Gallery.
od blessed Noah and his descendants by making a covenant with him.

³²³ Genesis, 9:8-16:

³²⁴ Movses Khorenatsi, not opposing the Bible, brings Hayk into the land of Ararat from Babylon.

Greek mythology also has an account of the World Flood, which has reached us through Hesiod's poem "Works and Days". In the Greek version, the gods **destroyed four generations of humans** which were created in the golden age, the silver age, the copper age and the iron age, due to their evil and envy. However, Prometheus' son Deucalion and his wife were saved during the last Iron Age flood. On his father's advice, Deucalion made a huge chest and entered it with his wife. After nine days of tossing about on the water, the chest comes to rest on the summit of **Nis** (cf. Nisir) on Mount Parnassas. Tradition further relates that at the command of Zeus, the human race once again multiplied on earth.³²⁵ An ancient Greek tradition tells that Deucalion and his wife Pyrrha had children, Hellen and Andropomos, from whom descended the Hellenes and the Armenians.³²⁶

Summary: After **Ziusudra** was saved from the Flood, he settled in the land of **Dilmun**, the place where the sun rose (Armenian Highlands).

The goddess Inanna saved the inhabitants of **Aratta** during the time of the Flood.

Utnapishtim settled down **at the mouth of the Underworld River** that originates from the World Ocean, that is the land of Ararat (Armenian Highlands).

Xisuthros received permission from the gods to live in **the land of the gods: Armenia**.

Noah finds salvation in the **mountains of Ararat**.

We notice, those pious people who were saved from the Flood and given immortality, were given permission to dwell in **Ararat (the land of Ararat), Armenia, and the mountains of Ararat**. The **land of Dilmun** and **the land at the mouth of the Underworld River** that originates from the World Ocean correspond geographically to the land of Ararat (Armenian Highlands).

The ancient written sources of **Mesopotamia** testify that man was created in the land of Ararat, and he moved away from his homeland, settled in other territories, forgot the laws of the sacred **ME** operating in his homeland, the land of Ararat (Aratta), and due to his wickedness and arrogance, was in danger of extinction. However, by the will of the benevolent gods, through a pious person (people), humanity is saved, taking refuge in the mountainous **land of ARARAT**, where he was created.

³²⁵ M. Bartikyan, *Pagan Hellada or the Idol Hellen*, Athens, 1936, pp. 32-36.

³²⁶ H. Ter-Movsisyan, *History of Armenia*, Venice, 1922, pp. 119-120.

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ABBREVIATIONS

- HA** – Handes Amsorya (Հանդես Ամսօրեայ), journal
- HAP** – Hin Arevelki Poezia (Poetry of the Ancient East ,Հին Արևելքի Պոեզիա)
- HJP** – Hay Joghovrdi Patmutyun (History of Armenian People)
- HJPK** – Hay Joghovrdi Patmutyan Krestomatia (Chrestomatia of the History of the Armenian People)
- HSB** – Hayqakan Sovetakan Hanragitaran (Armenian Soviet Encyclopedia)
- PBH** – Patma-Banasirakan Handes (History-philological Journal)
- HHSTB** – Hayastani yev Harakits Shrajanneri Teghanunneri Bararan (Dictionary of Place Names of Armenia and Adjacent Regions, Հայաստանի և Հարակից Շրջանների Տեղանունների Բառարան)
- AVIU** – Assiro-Vavilonskiye Istochniki po Istorii Urartu (Assyro-Babylonian Sources by History of Urartu, Ассиро-Вавилонские Источники по Истории Урарту)
- VDI** – Vestnik Drevney Istorii (Herald of Ancient History, Вестник Древней Истории)
- IDV** – Istoriya Drevnego Vostoka (History of the Ancient East, История Древнего Востока)
- IDM** – Istoriya Drevnego mira (History of the Ancient World, История Древнего мира)
- MNM** – Mify Narodov Mira (Myths of the Peoples of the World, Мифы Народов Мира)
- UKN** – Urartskiy Klinoobraznyye Nadpisi (Urartian Cuneiform Inscriptions, Урартские Клинообразные Надписи)
- HMA** – History Museum of Armenia
- HMY** – History Museum of Yerevan
- BSE** – Bolshaya Sovetskaya Entsiklopediya (Great Soviet Encyclopedia)

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ANGELA (ANZHELA) AVETISI TERYAN
HISTORIAN

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Angela Teryan

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