

# ON THE PROBLEM OF THE SUCCESSION OF THE BIAINIAN KINGS OF THE ARARAT (URARTU) KINGDOM IN THE SECOND HALF OF THE 8<sup>th</sup> - THE FIRST HALF OF THE 7<sup>th</sup> CENTURY B.C.

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The chronology of the succession of the Biainian kings of the second half of the 8<sup>th</sup> – the first half of the 7<sup>th</sup> century B.C. of the history of Armenia has its gravity in the circle of the research problems on the Ararat (Urartu)-Van Kingdom history. According to the previously existing viewpoint in historiography “the end of the chronology” of the reign of the kings of the Kingdom of Van reaches the years of the Median-Lyidian war – 590-585BC, connecting it to the conquest of the Kingdom of Van by the Medians<sup>1</sup>. Nevertheless, a number of questions, especially concerning the reign of the last kings of the Kingdom of Van still remain debatable. Particularly problematic are the interpretations concerning the reign and chronology of Sarduri III, Sarduri IV, Erimena, Rusa III and Rusa IV who supposedly succeeded Rusa II and are known from the inscriptions of the Ararat (Biainian) kingdom<sup>2</sup>.

In 2006 a new inscription was discovered from the Havadzor settlement neighboring the city of Van and composed in the name of *Erimena's son Rusa*<sup>3</sup>, in which Rusa is introduced as the builder of the reservoir called the “Rusa's sea” and canal, as well as of the city Rusakhinili : “[i]-u' mru-sa-hi-ni-li ši-du-u'-l[i]”<sup>4</sup>.

Before that the first mention of the city Rusakhinili had been attributed to Rusa II: in the inscription found in “Rusa's small city” the king stated that it was he who made Rusakhinili the royal residence<sup>5</sup>. These two pieces of information contradict each other from the chronological point of view: if Erimena's son Rusa was the real founder of the city Rusakhinili, and it was turned into the royal residence by the king known to us as

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<sup>1</sup> See Lehmann-Haupt C. F., *Armenien einst und jetzt*, II, 1, Berlin-Leipzig, 1926, S. 25: Աղոնց Ն., Հայաստանի ցամաքաբանություն, Երևան, 1972, էջ 195: Пиотровский Б., Ванское царство (Урарту), Москва, 1959, с. 42.: Арутюнян Н. В., Биайнили (Урарту), Ереван, 1970, с. 334.

<sup>2</sup> The majority of the researchers were inclined to such chronological sequence based on the identification of the name and patronymic. Unlike the existing opinions I. Dyakonov restored the order of the kings that followed Rusa II in another way: Rusa II had two sons – Rusa and Sarduri, of whom reigned the latter, followed by Erimena – Rusa II's brother or uncle, who was followed by his son Rusa III, and the last king of the kingdom was Sarduri IV – Sarduri III's son. The author did not include Rusa's son Rusa in the list of kings, not considering him a king (Дьяконов И. М., Урартские письма и документы, М.-Л., 1963, с. 32-34).

<sup>3</sup> See Salvini M., *Corpus dei testi urartei*, Roma, 2008, A14-2.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

<sup>5</sup> Арутюнян Н.В., Корпус урартских клинообразных надписей (henceforth КУКН), Ереван, 2001, N412 а.

Rusa II, then the period of reign of Erimena's son Rusa should be dated earlier than that of Rusa II.

In 743 BC Sarduri II was defeated near the Syrian city Arpad<sup>6</sup>, which must be the reason why from the end of 740s BC there is almost no material related to the history of the Kingdom of Van – that is why the problem of Sarduri II's successor is debatable as well. The name of Sarduri II was last mentioned in the inscription of Assyrian king Tiglatpalasar III (745-727 BC) in 735 BC<sup>7</sup>. Several versions have been suggested about the chronology of the reign of the successors of Sarduri II. The problem has been connected with the determination of the period of Erimena's son Rusa.

The next king known from the inscriptions of Ararat kingdom, who bears the name *Sardurihi* (Sarduri's son) in his inscriptions, is the king, known to us as Rusa I<sup>8</sup>. The king Ursa (Rusa) of the Kingdom of Van is mentioned in the Assyrian inscriptions stating about the events of the 6<sup>th</sup> year of Sargon II's reign (722/1-705 BC)<sup>9</sup>.

At the early 20<sup>th</sup> century renowned Orientalists K.F. Lehmann-Haupt and F. Thureau-Dangin thought that at the end of Sarduri II's reign, after the Assyrian campaign, due to the unstable internal situation the throne passed to Rusa I who was not Sarduri's immediate heir. K.F. Lehmann-Haupt considered that Rusa originated from Ishpuini's son Sarduri<sup>10</sup>, and Sargon II testifies to the fact that Rusa's statue was in Mutsatsir<sup>11</sup>. K.F. Lehmann-Haupt attributed the construction of the new capital city Rusakhinili to this Rusa. F. Thureau-Dangin considered that the king following Sarduri II was Erimena's son Rusa, seeing him as the founder of a new dynasty<sup>12</sup>. The authors rely to Sargon II's testimony that in the temple of Musasir (Mutsatsir) Rusa's was statue on which was written that "his hand took the power"<sup>13</sup> in the Kingdom of Van. From the mentioned testimonies it can only be clearly stated that the newly enthroned Rusa I had to take drastic measures "to reunify the divided country by means of weapons"<sup>14</sup>.

M. Roaf, following F. Thureau-Dangin's viewpoint, also believes that Erimena's son Rusa reigned after Sarduri II and he was Sargon II's rival, and Sarduri's son Rusa

<sup>6</sup> See Арутюнян Н. В., Биайнили (Урарту), с. 266.

<sup>7</sup> See Дьяконов И. М., Ассиро-вавилонские источники по истории Урарту (henceforth АВИИУ), - "Вестник древней истории", 1951, N 1, 42.

<sup>8</sup> See КУКН, 387, 388, 389.

<sup>9</sup> See АВИИУ, 46 (52).

<sup>10</sup> See Lehmann-Haupt C. F., Armenien einst und jetzt, II, 2, Berlin-Leipzig, 1931, S. 461, 685.

<sup>11</sup> See АВИИУ, 49 (346).

<sup>12</sup> See Thureau-Dangin F., Une relation de la huitième campagne de Sargon, Paris, 1912, p. XIX. To substantiate his viewpoint F. Thureau-Dangin also testified to the fact that in the description of Sargon II's campaign of the 8<sup>th</sup> year in the district of Armarili are mentioned Rusa's hometown Arbu and Sarduri's town Riar, near which his brothers lived (see АВИИУ, 49-269). According to the author Rusa's hometown was opposite Sarduri's town (see in detail Thureau-Dangin F., op. cit., p. 9). It should also be noted that F. Thureau-Dangin was not familiar with the inscriptions in which Rusa called himself the son of Sarduri.

<sup>13</sup> See АВИИУ, 49 (367).

<sup>14</sup> Պետրոսյան Ա., Դասերը և եռադասության դրսևորումները հին Հայաստանում, Երևան, 2006, էջ 202:

that we know followed him and reigned in 714/3-709 BC<sup>15</sup>. “To disparage” his rival Rusa (the son of Sarduri) Sargon II spared no words but there is no mention in the inscription that Rusa occupied the throne illegally<sup>16</sup>.

U. Seidl dated the period of reign of Erimena’s son Rusa in 714/3-709 BC or at the first quarter of the 7<sup>th</sup> century. For such a dating the author relies on the mention of the city Rusakhinili in a duplicate of the above-mentioned inscription, without any distinctive mountain - Kilibani or Eiduru which is a proof for the author that there was no second city of the same name<sup>17</sup>. The author substantiates his theory also by the stylistic similarity of the inscriptions and pictography of lions on the bronze shields of Argishti II and Erimena’s son Rusa.

After Rusa I’s defeat and death in 714 BC the inscriptions “remain silent” for rather a long time. M. Salvini considers insubstantial to date Erimena’s son Rusa’s reign to the short period after Sargon II’s campaign up to 709 BC<sup>18</sup>, since the king needed a long period for such construction after the Assyrian campaign<sup>19</sup>. Therefore, it is necessary to view with some reservations the testimony that the construction of the city Rusakhinili started during the reign of Erimena’s son Rusa.

According to Asarhadon’s (681-669 BC) inscription, in connection with the events of Arme-Shupria, a king named Rusa is mentioned in 675/672 BC in the Kingdom of Van<sup>20</sup>. In his inscriptions this king mentions himself as Argishti’s son and notes that he has inherited his father’s throne<sup>21</sup>. In the Assyrian sources a king named Rusa had been mentioned once more in 654/652 BC when Assyria had destroyed Elam and received Rusa’s ambassadors<sup>22</sup>. The period of Rusa II’s reign was conditionally dated to 685-645 BC. Rusa II was the only king of the Kingdom of Van whose reign included such a long period<sup>23</sup>.

Following F. König, M. Salvini considers that the ambassadors of the new king of the Kingdom of Van Rusa III (the son of Erimena) were in Nineveh<sup>24</sup>. According to M. Salvini, Rusa II constructed the city Rusakhinili and Erimena’s son Rusa reconstructed it. The researcher explains the mention of the city Rusakhinili in the inscription without a

<sup>15</sup> See Roaf M., Thureau-Dangin, Lehmann-Haupt, Rusa Sardurihi and Rusa Erimenaḫi, - «Aramazd», vol. V., Erevan, 2010, p. 78.

<sup>16</sup> See Արհնեց Ն., նշվ. աշխ., էջ 191, 192.

<sup>17</sup> See Seidl U., Wer gründete Rusakhinili/Toprakkale?, - «Aramazd», vol. II., Erevan, 2007, S. 140-141.

<sup>18</sup> In the Sargon II’s inscription dated 709 BC Argishti is mentioned as king of the Kingdom of Van, who introduces himself as Rusa’s son in his inscriptions (see АВИИУ, 54 (112), КУКН, 406, 407).

<sup>19</sup> See Salvini M., Argishti, Rusa, Erimena, Rusa und die Löwenschwänze: Eine urartäische Palastgeschichte des VII. Jh. v. Chr., - «Aramazd», vol. II, Erevan, 2007, S. 158.

<sup>20</sup> See АВИИУ, 67.

<sup>21</sup> See КУКН, 424.

<sup>22</sup> See АВИИУ, 76.

<sup>23</sup> F. König distinguishes the kings Rusa mentioned in the Assyrian inscriptions in 675/672 BC and in 654/652 as Rusa II and Erimena’s son Rusa (see in detail König F. W., Handbuch der chaldischen Inschriften, I, Craz, 1955, S.1).

<sup>24</sup> See Salvini M., Geschichte und Kultur der Urartäer, Darmstadt, 1995, S. 110.

distinctive mountain by the fact that the other city of the same name in that region had already been destroyed<sup>25</sup>.

One of the controversial issues of Biainian Studies remains the identification of Rusa's father Erimena<sup>26</sup>. Up to now the only inscription (a seal on a clay epistle) attributed to Erimena, which served as a basis for the researches to consider him a king of the Kingdom of Van, was found from Teishebaini (Karmir Blur) constructed by Rusa II<sup>27</sup>. However, as A. Movsisyan mentions, the only proof that Erimena reigned, as the above-mentioned inscription is considered to be, in fact does not exist: by this the researcher considers to be invented the period of reign (up to 20-25 years) attributed to Erimena<sup>28</sup>. The use of seals in the Kingdom of Van became popular during the reign of Rusa II, and the above-mentioned seal belongs to a prince judging from its style<sup>29</sup>. These arguments testify to the fact that Erimena's son Rusa was Rusa II's contemporary<sup>30</sup>. Judging from the inscriptions in which Erimena's son Rusa (III) did not bear a royal title before his reign, it may be supposed that he occupied an important administrative position in the north-eastern regions of the kingdom, as a representative of the reigning dynasty<sup>31</sup>.

After Rusa II (in unknown to us circumstances<sup>32</sup>) the paternal throne had not been inherited by his sons Sarduri and Rusa. A more likely version of the reign of Erimena's son Rusa can be considered the period after Rusa II - ca 653-646/642 BC<sup>33</sup>. In 646/642 the name of Ishtarduri (Sarduri) - king of the Kingdom of Van, is mentioned in the Assyrian inscriptions<sup>34</sup>. Two Sarduris - the son of Rusa and the son of Sarduri are

<sup>25</sup> See Salvini M., Argiști, Rusa, Erimena, Rusa und Löwenschwänze, S.159.

<sup>26</sup> See Մուշեղյան Ա., «Արամ» անունը հայ ժողովրդի երկրորդ ցեղանուն, «Պատմա-քանասիրական հանդես», N 1, Երևան 2007, էջ 233.

<sup>27</sup> See Дьяконов И. М., Урартские письма и документы, с. 28.

<sup>28</sup> See Մովսիսյան Ա., Կարևոր մի ուղղում (Կարմիր բլուրի սեպագիր սալիկներից մեկի առնչությամբ), «Մերձավոր և Միջին Արևելքի երկրներ և ժողովուրդներ», XIX, Երևան, 2000, էջ 138. Besides, the author considers that this inscription also belongs to Erimena's son Rusa and it is insubstantial to attribute it to Erimena (see *ibid*).

<sup>29</sup> See Hellwag U., "Sohn der Königin" lu A.NIN-li oder "Wasserwirtschaftsminister" lu A.ZUM-li? Überlegungen zu einem „fragwürdigen“ Amt am urartäischen Königshof, - "Akkadica" 117, 2000, S. 21, 29: Kroll S., Urartus Untergang in anderer Sicht, - *IstMitt*, 34, 1984, S. 162.

<sup>30</sup> See Медведская И.Н., Древний Иран накануне империй (IX-VI вв. до н. э.). История Мидийского царства, Санкт-Петербург, 2010, с. 150.

<sup>31</sup> See КУКН, 443, 444.

<sup>32</sup> The excavations in "Rusa's small city" that started in 1970s gave an opportunity to reconsider the opinions about the last period of the history of the Kingdom of Van. As a result of excavations it was revealed that the city was built and destroyed during the reign of Rusa II, as the finds were dated only to the period of his reign (Kroll S., Bastam II, Ausgrabungen in den urartäischen Anlagen 1977-1978, Berlin, 1988, S. 78, 173). Thus, it was assumed that Teishebaini and Rusakhinili Eiduruka-Ayanis, founded by Rusa II, were also destroyed at the same time as "Rusa's small city". About some suppositions concerning the causes of destruction of the mentioned cities see Медведская И. Н., *op. cit.*, p. 145, 146.

<sup>33</sup> Hellwag U., Der Niedergang Urartus, BIAINILI-URARTU, The Proceedings of the Symposium held in Munich 12-14 October 2007. Edited by S. Kroll, C. Gruber, U. Hellwag, M. Roaf & P. Zimansky, Peeters, 2012, S. 231.

<sup>34</sup> АВВИУ, 72.

known to us from the cuneiform inscriptions of the Kingdom of Van. In the inscriptions found from Karmir Blur Rusa's son Sarduri does not bear any royal title and so far there is no fact to consider him a king of the Kingdom of Van<sup>35</sup>. Sarduri's son Sarduri bears the title characteristic of the kings of the Kingdom of Van - "Lord of the city Tosp"<sup>36</sup>. N. Harutyunyan considered Rusa's son Rusa, known from the inscriptions of Karmir Blur, the last king of the Kingdom of Van during whose reign Teishebaini was destroyed<sup>37</sup>. There are facts neither about the establishment of the Median rule, nor the reign of Rusa as the last king of the Kingdom of Van<sup>38</sup>. After the mention of Sarduri in 646/642 the Biainian inscriptions "keep silence" and there are no testimonies about other kings so far. It can be assumed that Sarduri's son Sarduri was one of Rusa II's heirs or relatives<sup>39</sup>.

ՄՃaga-DUMU mentioned in Rusa II's inscription<sup>40</sup> is identified by H. Karagyozyan with the Armenian king Paruyr's father Skayordi Haykazun, mentioned by Movses Khorenatsi<sup>41</sup>. For the preservation and development of the Armenian statehood as regards the political developments of the 7<sup>th</sup> century BC, the contribution of Skayordi Haykazun and especially his son Paruyr Haykazun was important in the struggle against Assyria together with Media and Babylon, which ended with the fall of Nineveh in 612 BC and the recognition of Paruyr Haykazun as the Armenian king<sup>42</sup>.

<sup>35</sup> КУКН, 430, 431. Kroll S., Urartus Untergang in anderer Sicht, S. 169.

<sup>36</sup> КУКН, 428.

<sup>37</sup> Арутюнян Н. В., Некоторые вопросы последнего периода истории Урарту, "Древний Восток", Ереван, 1976, с.112.

<sup>38</sup> Hellwag U., Der Niedergang Urartus, S. 231; Kroll S., "Medes and Persians in Transcaucasia: archaeological horizons in northwestern-Iran and Transcaucasia", in: G.B. Lanfranchi, M. Roaf, R. Rollinger, Continuity of Empire (?). Assyria, Media, Persia, Padova, 2003, p. 285.

<sup>39</sup> Kroll S., Urartus Untergang in anderer Sicht, S.165.

<sup>40</sup> КУКН, 412.

<sup>41</sup> See Վարապետյան Յ., Սեպագիր տեղանուններ, Երևան, 1988, էջ 273-276. H. Karagyozyan considers insufficient the transcriptions and translations (Sagashtara, Shagatara, Shaga) suggested before (see Меликишвили Г. А., Урартские клинообразные надписи, М., 1960, N 286, Дьяконов И. М., Урартские письма и документы, N12; König F. W., op. cit., N 131) and the conclusions based on them – unfounded. Noting that Movses Khorenatsi, calling Paruyr "skayordi/սկայորդի" means "son of a giant" whose ancestor Hayk was a giant himself and from the tribe of the giants originating from gods, A. Musheghyan expressed an opinion that Ճaga is neither a proper name, nor an ethnonym "sak" or Scythian, but it means "a giant" = old Armenian "skai – Rusa giant". He came to such a conclusion by considering the Assyrian ideograph *DAN.NU* and the Biainian ՃAGA being identical and expressing one's own might and the country's power (see in detail Ա. Մուշեղյան, Մովսես Խորենացու դարը, Երևան, 2007, էջ 163-165).

<sup>42</sup> See Մովսես Խորենացի, Պատմութիւն Հայոց, Երևան, 1991, էջ 65. Դանիելյան Է. Լ., Հայոց պետությունը մ.թ.ա. IX-VII դարերում. – see Դանիելյան Է. Լ., Մելքոնյան Ա. Ա., Հայոց պատմություն. հնագույն ժամանակներից մինչև մեր օրերը, Երևան, 2008, էջ 35-36, Danielyan E. L., Civilizational Foundations of the Armenian State System and Modern Challenges. –Fundamental Armenology, issue 2, 2015, pp. 314-315.