

Annarita S. Bonfanti

Some Reflections on the Use and the Meaning of the Sign LUGAL in Urartian Inscriptions

<https://doi.org/10.1515/aof-2023-0004>

Abstract: The present article is focused on an analysis of the distribution of the Sumerograms MAN and LUGAL in Urartian inscriptions: since they are found in very specific situations, with only one of the two directly referring to the Urartian king, it is likely that they should be intended not as synonyms, but rather as concealing two slightly different meanings. After a brief introduction focused on the use of the two Sumerograms in Assyrian royal titularies, especially in the ones used as models by the Urartians, the paper will focus on the use of the Sumerograms in Urartian inscriptions, concluding with an analysis of an Urartian text on clay tablet, whose translation is still debated.

Keywords: Urartu, Assyria, man, lugal, royal titulary

Introduction

The sign LUGAL (MesZL² 266), “king”, Akkadian *šarrum*, frequently appears in cuneiform epigraphy. It is found, alternating with the Sumerogram MAN (MesZL² 708), in the royal titles of Assyrian rulers of all epochs, and it starts to be particularly used in the Neo-Assyrian period, especially from the reign of Šarru-ukīn (Sargon) II on¹. On the other hand, the Sumerogram LUGAL appears in Urartian epigraphy only a total of 30 times, and it is never attested in the royal titulary of Urartian rulers. This appears to be connected to the model on which Urartian inscriptions were originally based, the epigraphs of the Neo-Assyrian king Aššur-nāšir-apli (Ashurnasirpal) II, where the sign LUGAL is not normally used in the royal titulary, apart from very specific cases. In Urartian epigraphy, however, not only is the sign not usually connected to the reigning king, but it is sometimes linked to other local chiefs inhabiting a somehow delimited region located between the Van and the Sevan lakes.

The Sign LUGAL in the Neo-Assyrian Royal Titularies

Thanks to the analysis carried out by Gernot Wilhelm², it has been possible to establish that the Urartian royal titularies are clearly inspired by the Assyrian ones, particularly from the time of Aššur-nāšir-apli II: for this reason, it is important to analyse the royal titling of the Assyrian ruler in order to highlight the occurrence of the LUGAL and MAN signs, and to understand a possible pattern underlying their distribution. Another Assyrian ruler who influenced Urartian royal titulary, later in time, was Šarru-ukīn II³, as some of the epithets used in his epigraphs are also found in Urartian inscriptions from Rusa, son of Sarduri, onwards. For these reasons, the royal titulary of Aššur-nāšir-apli II and Šarru-ukīn II will be analysed extensively, while that of the other Neo-

¹ I would like to especially thank Dr Birgit Christiansen and all the participants to her course “Introduction to Urartian”, held at Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität of Munich in the winter semester 2021–2022, for helping me develop and discuss the ideas presented in this paper.

² Wilhelm 1986: 110.

³ See fn. 2.

Assyrian rulers will be presented more cursorily. It is important to note, however, that in all Neo-Assyrian inscriptions, the sign LUGAL alternates with the sign MAN, of equivalent meaning, in the royal titulary.

Aššur-nāšir-apli II

In the epigraphs of this ruler, the sign LUGAL appears in only ten occurrences, unlike the sign MAN, which is attested about 400 times⁴. The sequence of titles following the king's name tends to use the Sumerogram MAN:

^mAššur-nāšir-apli MAN dannu MAN ŠU₂ MAN lā šanān MAN kullat kibrāt 4-ta
“Ashurnasirpal, strong king, king of the world, unrivalled king, king of all the four quarters”⁵.

The sign MAN is also found in other formulaic epithets, such as:

MAN mušakniš lā kanšūtešu
“the king who subdues those insubordinate to him”⁶
MAN ša ina tukulti aššur u ^Dšamaš DINGIR.MEŠ tiklēšu mēšeriš
“the king who has always acted justly with the support of Aššur and the god Šamaš”⁷
MAN KUR aššur
“king of Assyria”⁸
MAN lē'ū qabl
“king capable in battle”⁹.

When referring to his predecessors, Aššur-nāšir-apli II also uses the logogram MAN, as in MAN.MEŠ-ni AD.MEŠ-ia, “the kings, my fathers”¹⁰. Finally, besides his own royal titulary or epithets used for his ancestors, the sign MAN is also used in Aššur-nāšir-apli II's inscriptions to refer to foreign kings:

MAN KUR Karduniaš
“the king of Babylonia”¹¹
MAN KUR Hatte
“the king of the land of Ḫatti”¹²
MAN.MEŠ-ni ša KUR.KUR Nairi
“the kings of Nairi”¹³
MAN.MEŠ-ni ša KUR Ḫanigalbat
“the kings of the land Ḫanigalbat”¹⁴

and many other occurrences. MAN is also generally used to render the second part of the name of the god Ea-šarru¹⁵.

⁴ This study has been possible thanks to the online platform RIAo – Royal Inscriptions of Assyria online (<http://oracc.museum.upenn.edu/riao/corpus/>; last visited on October 20th, 2022)

⁵ RIMA 2, 194: A.0.101.1 i 9–10.

⁶ RIMA 2, 194: A.0.101.1 i 14.

⁷ RIMA 2, 195: A.0.101.1 i 22.

⁸ RIMA 2, 195: A.0.101.1 i 28.

⁹ RIMA 2, 196: A.0.101.1 i 34.

¹⁰ RIMA 2, 197: A.0.101.1 i 50.

¹¹ RIMA 2, 208: A.0.101.1 ii 84.

¹² RIMA 2, 217: A.0.101.1 iii 65.

¹³ RIMA 2, 243: A.0.101.17 ii 42–43.

¹⁴ RIMA 2, 244: A.0.101.17 ii 73–74.

¹⁵ RIMA 2, 212: A.0.101.1 ii 135.

LUGAL is instead attested only in the following formulae as part of the royal titulary:

LUGAL EN.MEŠ-*e* (...) LUGAL DU₂ *malikī*¹⁶ (...) LUGAL LUGAL.MEŠ-*ni*
“king of lords (...) king of all princes (...) king of kings”¹⁷.

Elsewhere, the Sumerogram LUGAL is used to denote some Levantine kings, LUGAL.MEŠ-*ni*¹⁸, and in the expression referred to his son “prince among the kings”, NUN EGIR-*u ina* LUGAL.MEŠ-*ni*¹⁹.

Thus, there appears to be a certain constancy in the use of these two Sumerograms: MAN indicates both the current Assyrian king and his predecessors, used in a range of epithets emphasising the ruler’s strength and justice; the same logogram also indicates foreign kings who come into contact with Assyria. LUGAL appears to be used instead only when the epithet attributed to Aššur-nāšir-apli II compares him with other rulers.

LUGAL in Assyrian Inscriptions from the End of the 9th to the End of the 8th Century BCE

As early as the reign of Salmānu-ašarēd (Shalmaneser) III (859–824 BCE), the Sumerogram LUGAL is also used within the royal titulary instead of MAN²⁰; its use is discontinuous, at least until the time of Tukultī-apil-Ešarra (Tiglath-Pileser) III, when it is used more consistently in formulae such as:

LUGAL GAL-*u* LUGAL *dannu* LUGAL ŠU₂ LUGAL KUR *aššur* LUGAL KA₂.DINGIR^{ki} LUGAL KUR *šumeri u* URI^{ki} LUGAL *kibrat* LIMMU₂-*ti*
“Great king, mighty king, king of the world, king of Assyria, king of Babylon, king of Sumer and Akkad, king of the four quarters (of the world)”²¹.

However, it also keeps being employed to indicate foreign kings, as evidenced by passages such as:

bilat LUGAL.MEŠ-*ni* KUR *ḫatti*
“(that was) tribute from the kings of the land Ḫatti”²².

Šarru-ukīn II

The sign LUGAL is found, in various formulae, around 500 times in the inscriptions of Šarru-ukīn II, while the sign MAN is found about 100 times. There is a clear imbalance between the use of these Sumerograms, which is the inverse of what has been observed for the epithets of Aššur-nāšir-apli II. The sign LUGAL is attested in the royal titulary, whereas MAN is used in the same way as it appeared in the epigraphs of Aššur-nāšir-apli II; see, for example:

^mLUGAL-GI.NA *šaknu* ^dEN.LIL₂ NU.EŠ₃ *ba’it* ^daššur *nišit* IGI.II ^danim *u*₃ ^ddagān LUGAL GAL-*u* LUGAL *dannu*
LUGAL KIŠ LUGAL KUR *aššur*^{ki} LUGAL *kibrat arba’i*
“Sargon (II), appointee of the god Enlil, *nešakku*-priest (and) desired object of the god Aššur, chosen of the gods Anu and Dagān, great king, strong king, king of the world, king of Assyria, king of the four quarters”²³

¹⁶ Also in RIMA 2, 263: A.0.101.20: 19.

¹⁷ RIMA 2, 195: A.0.101.1 i 19–21.

¹⁸ RIMA 2, 298: A.0.101.33: 15’.

¹⁹ RIMA 2, 298: A.0.101.33: 27’.

²⁰ See RIMA 3, 57: A.0.102.11 obv. 8’.

²¹ RINAP 1, 116: Tiglath-pileser III 47 obv. 1.

²² RINAP 1, 124: Tiglath-pileser III 47 rev. 24’.

²³ RINAP 2, 53: Sargon II 001: 1.

^mLUGAL-GI.NA LUGAL *šahtu*

“Sargon, the reverent king”²⁴

^mLUGAL-GI.NA LUGAL GAL MAN *dannu* MAN *kiššatim* LUGAL KUR *aššur*^{ki} GIR₃.NITA₂ KA₂.DINGIR.RA.KI MAN²⁵

KUR *šumeri u akkad*

“Sargon (II), great king, strong king, king of the world, king of Assyria, governor of Babylon, king of the land of Sumer and Akkad”²⁶.

The royal titulary, however, also occurs, more rarely, with the Sumerogram MAN:

^mLUGAL-GI.NA MAN *kiššati* MAN KUR *aššur*^{ki} GIR₃.NITA₂ KA₂.DINGIR.RA.KI MAN KUR ‘EME’¹.GI₇ U URI.KI

“Sargon (II), king of the world, king of Assyria, governor of Babylon, king of the land of Sumer and Akkad”²⁷.

It is not possible here to identify a pattern in the distribution of the two Sumerograms, apart from the obvious preference for the sign LUGAL, which in any case still alternates with MAN. LUGAL is also used to indicate foreign rulers, while the sign MAN seems to be almost exclusively addressed to the Assyrian ruler and his predecessors, so that the expression MAN.MEŠ-*ni* AD.MEŠ-*ia*, already encountered in the epigraphs of Aššur-nāšir-apli II, is maintained.

The Sign LUGAL in Urartian Inscriptions

Stone Inscriptions

The Sumerogram LUGAL is first attested in one Urartian inscription from the years of the co-regency of Išpuini and Minua (ca. 820–810 BCE)²⁸: it does not appear in the royal titulary, which rather employs the sign MAN²⁹, but is found within a single epigraph repeated four times in the following expressions:

(1) [bur-ga-la]-‘li LUGAL¹. [MEŠ KUR].e-ti-u₂-hi-[ni]-e-‘li¹ [ar-nu-ia-li]
burgala=li LUGAL^{meš kur} Etü=hinili arnuia=li
enemy-ABS.PLUR. king-PLUR (LAND) Etü-BEL.PLUR.³⁰ rebel-3PLUR.PRET.
“[the ene]my [ki]ngs of [the land] Etü(hi) rebelled”³¹

(2) [bur]-‘ga¹-la-li LUGAL.MEŠ KUR.e-ti-u₂-hi-ni-[li] ‘ar¹-nu-ia-li
burgala=li LUGAL^{meš kur} Etü=hinili arnu=ia=li
enemy-ABS.PLUR. king-PLUR. (LAND) Etü-BEL.PLUR. rebel-3PLUR.PRET.
“The [ene]my kings of the land Etü(hi) rebelled”³²

²⁴ RINAP 2, 96: Sargon II 002: 299.

²⁵ In RINAP 2, 155: Sargon II 008: 1, the sign MAN is replaced by the Sumerogram LUGAL.

²⁶ RINAP 2, 139: Sargon II 007: 1–3.

²⁷ RINAP 2, 175: Sargon II 011: 1–2.

²⁸ For possible chronologies of the Urartian dynastic sequence, see **Table 1**.

²⁹ See, for example, CTU A, 129: 3-2, 3.

³⁰ For this analysis, see Salvini 2018: 487.

³¹ CTU A, 131: 3-4, obv. 13’–15’. The English translations have been provided by the website of the eCUT project (<http://oracc.museum.upenn.edu/ecut/pager/>; last visited on October 20th, 2022).

³² CTU A, 131: 3-4, obv. 3’–4’.

(3) [d^hal-di-ni ma]-^fsi¹-ni GIŠ.š_u-ri-e (...) [KUR].e-ti-u₂-^fhi¹-[na-e]-di ^fLUGAL¹. [MEŠ-di]

Haldi=ni masi=ni ^{giš}šuri (...) ^{kur}Etiu=hi=na=edi LUGAL^{meš}-di

Haldi-ABS. *his*-INSTR. *weapon* (LAND)*Etiu*-BEL.-ART.PLUR.-DIR. *king*-PLUR.-DIR.

“the god Haldi set off with his weapon (...) towards the king[s] of the land Etiu(hi)”³³

(4) [bur]-ga-^fla¹-li LUGAL-^fli-li¹ [KUR].e-[ti-u₂-hi]-ni-^fli¹

burgala=li LUGAL-li=li ^{kur}Etiu=hinili

enemy-ABS.PLUR. *king*-PHON.COMPL.-ABS.PLUR. (LAND)*Etiu*-BEL.PLUR.

“the enemy kings of the land E[tiu(hi)]”³⁴

In the inscriptions of Išpuini and Minua, LUGAL has so far only been documented in one text and it is associated with the rulers of Etiu(hi), a territory mentioned in Urartian epigraphs until the time of Rusa, son of Argišti (possibly, end of the 8th–first half of the 7th century BCE), generally positioned in an area north of Lake Van, probably extending to the southern coast of Lake Sevan³⁵. The territory of Etiu(hi) must have contained multiple political entities, hence the use of the sign LUGAL always expressed in the plural form. It is interesting to note the passage in which these mentions are inserted: it is the account of an Urartian expedition to the territories north of Lake Van, most of which are mentioned by the name of the tribe or ethnic group that inhabited them. Thus, there are mentions of ^mu₂-^fi¹-te₃-ru-[hi^m]^mlu¹-ša₂-a [^m]ka-tar-za-[a], “(the tribes of) the Uīteruḫi, the Luša and the Katar-za”³⁶, followed then by [bur-ga-la]-^fli LUGAL¹. [MEŠ KUR].e-ti-u₂-hi-[ni]-e-^fli¹, “the enemy kings of the land Etiu(hi)”. This is perhaps to be explained by the multitude of small tribes inhabiting the land of Etiu(hi), which made it impossible for the Urartian scribe to enumerate their ethnonyms or the names of their chiefs. In only one case, almost at the end of the epigraph, the kings of Etiu(hi) are mentioned with the Sumerogram MAN^[meš]³⁷: such a mention is unique in the inscription, where, as already seen, foreign kings are named with the sign LUGAL.

The Sumerogram LUGAL is also included in an epigraph of Sarduri, son of Argišti, the rock inscription of Karataş, on the north shore of Lake Van. The logogram is found in the expression:

(5) ^{md}sar₅-du-ri-še a-li-e LUGAL a-li i-si i-ku-ka-ni e-di-ni ša₂-[u₂]-e ma!-nu-li

^{md}Sarduri= še ale LUGAL ali isi ikukani edini šaue manu=li

Sarduri-ERG.SING. *say king* REL.PRON. *place* DEM.PRON. *from/because(?) king/lord(?) be*-3PLUR.PRES.

“Sarduri says: the king who will be *lord* in this same place (...)”³⁸.

A translation “the king who will be king(?) in this same place” would imply that the king was crowned in the Karataş area. As this is unlikely, it is necessary to look for another interpretation. This can and should also take into account the reading of the term ša₂-u₂-e, *šau*³⁹, as GAR-u₂-e offered by Diakonoff⁴⁰, translated into Akkadian as *šaknum*, “appointed”⁴¹. It is possible that the two terms are somehow connected in this sentence, and that the logogram LUGAL does not indicate an actual king, and certainly not an Urartian king, but rather the possible leader of some minor tribe. This meaning would fit well with the passages (1)–(4), where the Etiu(hi) leaders were certainly considered minor kings, perhaps simple heads of local tribes. These minor kings, according to a possible interpretation of passage (5), may also have been appointed by the Urartian sovereign to rule on his behalf on specific territories.

The Sumerogram LUGAL is attested three more times in the same epigraph of Rusa, son of Sarduri; this is the text of the rock epigraph of Tsovinar, on the southern shore of Lake Sevan:

³³ CTU A, 131: 3-4, obv. 16'–20' *passim*.

³⁴ CTU A, 131: 3-4, obv. l. 29'.

³⁵ Dan 2020: 40–41.

³⁶ CTU A, 131: 3-4, obv. 11'–12'.

³⁷ CTU A, 133: 3-4, rev. 11'.

³⁸ CTU A, 437: 9-11, 3-4; translation of the author based on Salvini 2018: 266.

³⁹ Salvini 2018: 412.

⁴⁰ Diakonoff 1963: 67.

⁴¹ See the lemma in CAD 17: 180.

(6) 4 LUGAL.MEŠ i-na-ni ap-ti-ni šu-i-ni-a-[ni]
 4 LUGAL^{meš} ina=ni apti=ni šuini=ani
four king-PLUR. DEM.PRON.-ABL.SING side-ABL.SING. lake-LOC.SING.
 “four kings on this side of the lake”⁴²

(7) [19] LUGAL.MEŠ i-ša₂-ni ap-ti-ni šu-i-ni-a-ni KUR.ba-ba-ni-a 'ku¹-ru-ni-e
 19 LUGAL^{meš} išani apti=ni šui=ni=ani ^{KUR}babani=a kurune
nineteen king-PLUR. DEM.PRON.-ABL.SING. side-ABL.SING lake-LOC.SING. (LAND)mountain-LOC.SING. behind(?)
 “[19] kings on the other side of the lake, behind(?) the mountains”⁴³

(8) PAP 23 LUGAL.MEŠ šu₂-si-ni MU 'KUR₂¹.MEŠ aš₂-gu-bi
 PAP 23 LUGAL^{meš} šusi=ni MU KUR₂^{meš} ašgu=bi
total twenty-three king-PLUR. one-ABL.SING. year enemy-PLUR. conquer-1SING.PRET.
 “altogether I conquered 23 kings as enemies in one year”⁴⁴.

Once again, the LUGAL^{meš} mentioned appear to be minor rulers conquered by the Urartian ruler: these rulers also appear to be the chiefs of tribes located around the Lake Sevan. Another occurrence of the same Sumero-gram in an epigraph of Rusa, son of Sarduri, is to be found in a debated passage of the Movana stele:

(9) 'a¹;-al-du-b[i al?-z]i?-na-i LU[GAL-li? KUR.b]i-a-i-'na¹; ma-nu-'u₂¹?
 'aldu=bi alzinai LUGAL-li ^{KUR}Bia=i=na=a manu
impose-1SING.PRET. alzinai king-PHON.COMPL. (LAND)Bia-LOC.PLUR. be
 “I imposed *alzinai* the king is in Bia (?)”⁴⁵.

Whatever the sentence may mean, and considering that it is incomplete since the previous part is missing, one should note that the LUGAL is not said to be *of* Bia, as normally is expected, but *in* Bia: this may mean that the action taken by the Urartian king, who imposed *alzinai*⁴⁶, was directed to a foreign chief who temporarily stayed in the Urartian territory.

Rusa, son of Erimena, uses the logogram LUGAL in the two stelae of the Keşiş Göl, an artificial lake located about 17 km east of Van⁴⁷. The two attestations are found within a sentence of unclear meaning:

(10) a-u₂-i-e LUGAL-še a-li-i-e ul-ḥu-li-ni
 auie LUGAL-še ale ulhu=lini
 IND.ADJ. king-ERG.SING. say advance-FIN.(?)
 “un (qualche) re dice bisogna(?) avanzare”⁴⁸ (“a king says that one must (?) advance”) ⁴⁹

It is also possible in this case that Rusa is not referring to an Urartian king, but to a local king, although the general context of the epigraph is unclear and not entirely translatable.

The attestations of LUGAL in inscriptions on stone are exhausted by these few and scattered examples, sometimes occurring in contexts that are difficult to understand. In any case, none of the records analysed seem to refer to the Urartian king: LUGAL appears to be an openly enemy king, as is also evidenced by the term *burgalali*,

⁴² CTU A, 496: 10-2, 5.

⁴³ CTU A, 496: 10-2, 12.

⁴⁴ CTU A, 496: 10-2, 13.

⁴⁵ CTU A, 498: 10-3, obv. 53–54. The English translation, not available on eCUT, was provided by the author.

⁴⁶ This word tentatively translated by Salvini (2018: 374) as “rupestre (?)”.

⁴⁷ Salvini 2018: 347.

⁴⁸ CTU A, 621-622: 14-1, obv. 1–2; CTU A, 627: 14-2, l.d. 42–45. The translation offered by M. Salvini differs from the one to be found in the eCUT: “Forever(?) the king should say: ‘It should bring forth(?) (water)’”. This is indicative of the challenge offered by the translation of this passage.

⁴⁹ English translation provided by the author.

“enemy” in the passages (1), (2) and (4), but it is not clear whether he was perceived as a minor king by these rulers. The title is explicitly linked only to the kings of the territory of Etiu(hi) and, later, in passages (6) to (8), to some other rulers around Lake Sevan: it may be possible to infer that the term LUGAL is directly connected to the chiefs of these tribes, who are only indicated with the sign LUGAL⁵⁰. If that assumption is to be held as true, it is also possible to connect to the same local chiefs the other occurrences of the Sumerogram LUGAL: but this is, unfortunately, a field for speculation.

Inscriptions on Clay Tablets

There are no attestations of LUGAL on metal objects, but they are found in inscriptions on clay. The translation of Urartian clay tablets is often complex and sometimes impossible, involving obscure terms, *hapax legomena* and enormous use of Sumerograms, the interpretation of which, applied to the Urartian sphere, is not always possible. For these reasons, a precise analysis of their content cannot always be offered: one can instead observe that the texts are generally regarding daily administration, and interactions between craftsmen and merchants operating within the fortress, possibly not subjects that merit the attention of the sovereign. In general, it can be said that the texts of the tablets bearing the logogram LUGAL open with the sentence:

(11) LUGAL-še a-li
LUGAL-še ali
king-ERG.SING. say
“the king says”⁵¹,

followed by a series of orders to be delivered to various people, supposedly residing in or near the Urartian settlement or fortress. Other formulations containing the logogram LUGAL are:

(12) 'a-al-du LUGAL-li
'aldu LUGAL-li
submit(?) king-PHON.COMPL.
“by command(?) of the king” / “sottoponi(?) il re (al re?)”⁵²

(13) 2 ^{lu}₂ši-ar-di-a-li ^{md}ḥal-di-IR₃-a-ni ^mu₂-ra-di-ni 'a-al-du-u₂-lu-li LUGAL-ka
2 ^{lu}₂šiardia=li ^{md}Ḥaldipura=ni ^mUradi=ni 'aldu=ul=u=li LUGAL-ka
two (MAN)šiardī-ABS.PLUR. (PN)Ḥaldipura-ART.SING. (PN)Uradi-ART.SING. subdue-3PLUR.PRES. king-POSTPOS.
“two šiardī men, Ḥaldipura (and) Uradi, are subdued before the king”⁵³

(14) u₂-u₂-ša₂-a-le pa-ru-ul-tu₂-u₂-bi LUGAL-li 1 ANŠE.KUR.RA
ušale par=ul=tu=bi LUGAL-li 1 ANŠE.KUR.RA
ušale take.away-? king-PHON.COMPL. one horse
“take away the king a horse”⁵⁴

⁵⁰ Except for the previously mentioned case, in CTU 133: 3-4, rev. 11', where they are called MAN^{meš} (see fn. 36).

⁵¹ CTU IV, 135: CT Kb-03, 1; CTU IV, 127: CT Ba-1, 1; CTU IV, 128: CT Ba-2, 1; CTU IV, 150: CT Tk-6, 1.

⁵² CTU IV, 127: CT Ba-01, obv. 4-5. The English translation is offered by the eCUT website, while the Italian one is to be found in Salvini 2012: 127. It should be noted that the verb 'ald=u- is often connected to the logogram LUGAL (see also CTU A, 498: 10-3, obv. 53-54, and the following inscription on tablet, CTU IV, 139: CT Kb-07, obv. 5-7).

⁵³ CTU IV, 139: CT Kb-07, obv. 5-7.

⁵⁴ CTU IV, 139: CT Kb-07, obv. 7-8.

(15) LUGAL-ka ma-nu-u₂-bi
 LUGAL-ka manu=bi
king-POSTPOS. *be*=1SING.PRET.
 “I was in front of the king”⁵⁵

(16) LU₂.¹NAM? ¹[...]la-ti ¹LUGAL ¹[...]a-I
^{1u2}NAM [...]la-ti LUGAL [...]a-I
 (MAN)*governor* ? *king* ?
 “(...) gover[nor?] (...) [ki]ng (...)”⁵⁶.

It is interesting to note that in none of these formulations is the name of the LUGAL mentioned, whereas the standard formulations that appear in stone and rock epigraphs are instead formed by “KN + says”. The reason why the proper name of the LUGAL is not mentioned may be the nature of the tablets themselves, which are objects for everyday use and do not need to specify the name of a king who is known by everyone. But, for this reason, the identity of this “king” is destined to remain unknown. The content of these tablets appears unusual if one thinks that the Urartian king was mainly involved in wars, conquests or building projects, as one should expect from a sovereign: it is also possible to suggest the hypothesis that the LUGAL quoted in the tablets was not the Urartian king, but rather a local governor, probably appointed by the king himself, according to the same meaning previously proposed for inscriptions on stone. Nevertheless, the extremely fragmentary nature of the texts on clay tablets and the great number of words with unknown meanings does not allow further hypothesis to be proposed.

The Text on the Clay Tablet CTU CT Tk-01

On a single tablet from Toprakkale, one can find the only occurrence of the sign LUGAL possibly connected to the Urartian king’s name:

a-lu-ki MU ^m ru-sa-a URU? ^m ar-giš- ¹ te- ¹ hi-ni ¹	The year in which Rusa (was) in the city(?) of Argišti
aluki MU ^m Rusa URU ^m Argišti=hini	
DEM.ADJ. <i>year</i> (PN) <i>Rusa city</i> (PN) <i>Argišti</i> -BEL.	
^m ša ₂ -ga-pu ₂ (TUR)-tar-a MAN ⁵⁷ iš-qu-gu-ul- ¹ hi-e	Šagaputara, the Išqugulian king
^m Šagaputara MAN Išqugul=hi	
(PN) <i>Šagaputara king Išqugul</i> -BEL.	
u ₂ -la- ¹ bi ¹ ^{kur} ma-na-i-di ^m a-ka- ¹ a-e-si-i	went to the land Mana in place of Aka’a.
ula=bi ^{kur} Mana=idi ^m Aka’a=a esi	
go-3SING.PRET. (LAND) <i>Mana</i> -DIR. (PN) <i>Aka’a</i> -LOC. <i>place</i>	
a-še LUGAL-ni ^d hal-di-ni a-šu ₂ -me	(And) when the god Ḫaldi installed me as king
aše LUGAL-ni ^d Hal-di=ni ašu=me	
when king-ABL. (GOD) <i>Ḫaldi</i> -ART. <i>install</i> -1SING.PRON.DAT.	
^m ru-sa-a- ¹ hi-na ^{kur} qi-il-ba-ni-ka-<i>	in Rusaḫinili in front of Mount Qilbani
^m Rusa=hina=a ^{kur} Qilbani=kai	
(PN) <i>Rusa</i> -BEL.-LOC. (LAND) <i>Qilbani</i> -POSTPOS.	

55 CTU IV, 139: CT Kb-07, obv. 19. The expression LUGAL-ka recurs in two other occasions in the same tablet, but the translation of the passage where they are inserted is not possible.

56 CTU IV, 129: CT Ba-03, rev. 2’-3’.

57 But LUGAL in Salvini 2012: 145. The picture of the tablet and the copy of the text (see Salvini 2012: 146) confirm that the correct transliteration is the one given in eCUT, MAN.

E₂.BARA₂-ni i-ni in the sanctuary this (was the booty?)⁵⁸.
 E₂.BARA₂-ni=i ini
 sanctuary-PHON.COMPL.-LOC. DEM.PRON.

As pointed out by Salvini in the publication of the epigraph in the *Corpus dei Testi Urartei*, LUGAL-ni is separated from the personal pronoun suffix -me in the verb *ašu=me*, and could be interpreted as in apposition with Țaldi, which would make explicit his role as king of the gods; however, such an epithet for Țaldi is never attested in Urartian epigraphy, as a connection between the Urartian ruler and the Sumerogram LUGAL is equally never attested. Another solution may be proposed considering that this epithet could be used in a similar way to that of monumental inscriptions, indicating a person who was less powerful than the Urartian king: LUGAL could then refer to Aka'a, mentioned in line 3. The syntactic construction of the sentence appears to be peculiar however one wants to translate it: three hypotheses are anyway worth considering. If one considers both the translations suggested by Salvini, according to which the temporal adverb *aše* would be at the beginning of the sentence with subject Țaldi, LUGAL-ni could be an epithet of the god himself or refer to the object of the sentence, -me, indicating the Urartian ruler author of the tablet.

- If LUGAL-ni is an epithet for Țaldi, in addition to the aforementioned unique attestation, it would also be in the wrong position, since the epithets tend to be placed after the name of the god;
- If LUGAL-ni is a complement referring to the object, the position would still be unusual, since usually the adverb *aše* is followed by the subject or object of the sentence, while the other complements would appear to be after the verb.

Sentences such as “Țaldi gave the kingship to the king” are introduced by the adverb *iu*, which can be translated by German “als” and indicates a certain event in the past, such as the installation of the king on the Urartian throne. The adverb *aše* tends instead to be part of a sentence with a verb in the imperfective ending in -uli, but this is not found here because the verb is in the preterite, *ašu=u=me*.

- If, on the other hand, LUGAL-ni is linked to the preceding sentence and thus to the name of Aka'a, one could hypothesise the construction of a nominal sentence with the verb “to be”, implied, in the form *man=u(=li)*⁵⁹. In this case, the sentence could be translated differently: “The year in which Rusa (was) in the city(?) of Argišti, Šagaputara, the Išqugulian king went to the land Mana, when Aka'a (was) king there”. In such a case, the phonetic complementation -ni could be indicative of an absolute case. The following sentence would not change in meaning, suggesting that the god Țaldi would have settled Rusa in Toprakkale.

Conclusions

The previous analysis has shown that the only title certainly attributable to Urartian rulers since the time of Sarduri (I) was MAN, corresponding to the Urartian term *ereli*, as shown by the phonetic complements affixed to it⁶⁰. However, one should note that also the phonetic complements seldom affixed to the Sumerogram LUGAL⁶¹ point to the reading *ereli*: in that case, the difference between the two terms would only be on a graphic, and not linguistic level. The preference may be explained with the ease of writing the sign MAN rather than LUGAL, especially on a rock surface which would be more subject to breaks, and it would also serve as an explanation for the greater use of LUGAL on clay instead. However, this would not explain the sporadic

⁵⁸ CTU IV, 144: CT Tk-01, rev. 1–6. This is the translation offered by the eCUT website. Salvini (2012: 145) translated instead: “Quell’anno – Rusa – città – Argištihi, (quando) Šagaputara, il re išquguleo, è andato nel paese di Mana sul posto di Aka'a (e) quando Țaldi mi ha insediato come re (oppure: quando il re Țaldi mi ha insediato?) in Rusašinili di fronte al monte Qilbani, nel santuario BARA₂”. Again, an unambiguous translation can't be offered.

⁵⁹ Evidence of omitting the verb “to be” also in the past tense is attested in this same tablet at line 1: “The year in which Rusa (was) in the city(?) of Argišti”.

⁶⁰ See Salvini 2018: 449–450.

⁶¹ See CTU A, 130: 03-04, obv. 29; CTU IV, 127: CT Ba-01, obv. 4–5; CTU IV, 140: CT Kb-07, obv. 5–7.

choice of using the Sumerogram LUGAL in specific contexts in rock epigraphs. This choice may instead be explained with an actual linguistic difference between the two terms, supposing that the sporadic readings of LUGAL with phonetic complementations hide another word ending in -li, for which there is no convincing syllabic evidence by now. One should keep in mind, moreover, that the suffix -li was used to produce names of profession⁶², and therefore it is not unreasonable to suppose the existence, still not proved, of another term indicating the “job” of a governor or a subordinate king.

The preference of MAN over LUGAL can also be explained by the fact that the models for Urartian royal inscriptions, and also for the royal titulary itself, were the epigraphs of the reign of Aššur-nāšir-apli II, in which it is evident that the term *šarru* was rendered using the logogram MAN, easier to write, with a reduced use of the more elaborate Sumerogram LUGAL. With the following rulers, however, the use of LUGAL in Assyrian inscriptions began to increase and it became the main title used by the ruler in the time of Šarru-ukīn II. In Urartu, the sporadic presence of the sign LUGAL is noted more or less from the beginning to the end of the written documentation in Urartian: however, it is not present in the royal titulary, and it never seems to be explicitly linked to the current Urartian ruler. It is not clear, because of the difficulties encountered in translating the tablets, whether the term began to be associated with the Urartian king from a certain period, probably the end of the 8th century BCE, when other royal epithets of Assyrian tradition taken from the epigraphs of Šarru-ukīn II were borrowed. This circumstance could also be due to the very introduction of writing on clay tablets, which is often connected to the reign of Rusa, son of Argišti, rather than to a documentation flaw: writing on clay is easier than writing on stone, and it may have allowed to write some more complicated signs less attested in stone epigraphs. The analysis of the few slightly less obscure passages in the tablet texts could however lead to consider that, even in this case, the LUGAL mentioned was probably not, in fact, the king of Urartu. It does not appear that the two Sumerograms MAN and LUGAL are interchangeable in Urartu: the presence of both terms in the text of a clay tablet⁶³ would in fact indicate the opposite.

It is not possible to propose more precise hypotheses, such as those advanced on the use of EN and LUGAL at Ebla: in that case, the Sumerogram EN indicated the king, while LUGAL was used to designate the most important officials of the Eblaite administration⁶⁴. In the case of Urartu, however, the interpretation of this phenomenon cannot be superimposed on the one used to explain the bizarre use of EN and LUGAL at Ebla⁶⁵, for which it was known that the logogram LUGAL concealed the Akkadian word *šarrum*, different from the word used in Eblaite to indicate the ruler, *malikum*, which therefore required the use of a different logogram. In Urartu, the royal titling was directly derived from the inscriptions of Aššur-nāšir-apli II, in which the use of MAN was prevalent over LUGAL: the Urartian tradition, once this usage was accepted, perpetuated it over time, even when the Sumerogram LUGAL regained preponderance in the Assyrian royal titling. Besides the case of Ebla, where the explanation of the phenomenon is purely lexical, one can also consider the distribution of epithets in the letter of Anum-Ḫirbi, king of Mama, to Waršama, king of Kaneš⁶⁶, in which the use of the words *šarrum*, usually denoting the king, and *rubā'um*, usually meaning “magnate”, is reversed: Anum-Ḫirbi uses *šarrum* to mean vassal kings, and *rubā'um* to mean independent rulers⁶⁷. A similar situation may have occurred in Urartu: after the acquisition of the meaning of MAN as an independent king, the Sumerogram LUGAL may have filled a vacancy in Urartian epigraphy, namely that of a logogram indicating minor kings.

We may therefore reasonably think that MAN and LUGAL indicated two different offices, and that the one indicated by LUGAL was of minor importance. In this way, one could re-read some relationships among Urartu and the neighbouring entities, rethinking the way Urartian rulers referred to themselves in contrast to the others.

⁶² Salvini/Wegner 2014: 21.

⁶³ CTU IV, 145-146: CT Tk-1.

⁶⁴ Archi 2015.

⁶⁵ See Archi 2015: 124–125.

⁶⁶ Published in Balkan 1957.

⁶⁷ Balkan 1957: 26

Table 1: Possible Urartian dynastic sequences as proposed by different scholars.

Salvini 2008	Fuchs 2012	Kroll 2012	Seidl 2004	Roaf 2012
Aramu	Ar(r)ame [Erimena I?]			
Sarduri I, son of Lutibri (840–830)	(Lutibri)			
Išpuini, son of Sarduri (ca. 830–820)	Sarduri I, son of Lutibri (~830)			
Co-regency of Išpuini and Minua (ca. 820–810)	Išpuini, son of Sarduri (~820)			
Minua, son of Išpuini (ca. 810–785/0)	Minua, son of Išpuini (-)			
	(Inušpua)			
Argišti I, son of Minua (785/0–756)	Argišti I, son of Minua (779–764)			
Sarduri II, son of Argišti (756–ca. 730)	Sarduri II, son of Argišti (757–735)			Sarduri, son of Argišti or Sarduri, son of Sarduri (735 or later)
	Sarduri III, son of Sarduri (-)			
Rusa I, son of Sarduri (ca. 730–713)	Rusa I, son of Sarduri (~719–713)		Rusa I, son of Sarduri	Rusa I, son of Erimena (~722–714/3)
Argišti II, son of Rusa (713–?)	Argišti II, son of Rusa (713–709)		Rusa II, son of Erimena	Rusa II, son of Sarduri (714/3)
	Melartua, son of Argišti (709)		Argišti II, son of Rusa	Argišti II, son of Rusa (from 709)
	(Erimena II?)			
Rusa II, son of Argisti (first half of the 7 th century)	Rusa II, son of Erimena (-)	Rusa II, son of Erimena		Rusa III, son of Argišti (from 672)
[Erimena (^{lu2} a-su-li(?))] Rusa, son of Erimena	Rusa III, son of Argišti (673–647)	Rusa III, son of Argišti (second quarter of the 8 th century)		
[Sarduri (^{lu2} a-su-li??)] Son of Rusa III] Sarduri III, son of Sarduri	Sarduri IV, son of Rusa (646–638)			

List of Abbreviations Used in the Text

1sing. = first person singular

3plur. = third person plural

Abs. = absolutive case

Art. = so-called “article” (see Salvini/Wegner 2014: 22–23)

Bel. = suffix indicating possession or belonging

Dem. adj. = demonstrative adjective

Dem. pron. = demonstrative pronoun

Dir. = directive case

Erg. = ergative case

Fin.(?) = final meaning (?)

Ind. adj. = indefinite adjective

Instr. = instrumental case

Loc. = locative case
 Phon. compl. = phonetic complementation
 Plur. = plural
 PN = personal name
 Postpos. = postposition
 Pres. = present
 Pret. = preteritum
 Rel. pron. = relative pronoun
 Sing. = singular

Abbreviations

CTU A = Salvini 2008/2018.
 CTU IV = Salvini 2012.
 MesZL² = Borger 2010.
 RIMA 2 = Grayson 1991.
 RIMA 3 = Grayson 1996.
 RINAP 1 = Tadmor/Yamada 2011.
 RINAP 2 = Frame 2021.

Electronic Sources

RIAO: The Royal Inscriptions of Assyria online Project (<http://oracc.museum.upenn.edu/riao/corpus/>; last visited on October 20th, 2022).
 eCUT: Electronic Corpus of Urartian Texts (eCUT) Project (<http://oracc.museum.upenn.edu/ecut/pager/>; last visited on October 20th, 2022).

Bibliography

- Archi, A. (2015): Les titres de *en et lugal* à Ébla et des cadeaux pour le Roi de Kiš. In: A. Archi, Ebla and Its Archives: Texts, History, and Society (SANER 7), Berlin – Munich – Boston, 123–142.
- Balkan, K. (1957): Letter of King Anum-Hirbi of Mama to King Warshama of Kanish (TTKY 7/31^a), Ankara.
- Borger, R. (2010): Mesopotamisches Zeichenlexikon. Zweite, revidierte und aktualisierte Auflage (AOAT 305), Münster.
- Dan, R. (2020): A Study of the Toponyms of the Kingdom of Bia/Urartu (Serie Orientale Roma NS 19), Rome.
- Diakonoff, I.M. (1963): Urartskij pis'ma i dokumenty, Moscow – Leningrad (in Russian).
- Frame, G. (2021): The Royal Inscriptions of Sargon II, King of Assyria (721–705 BC) (RINAP 2), University Park, Pennsylvania.
- Fuchs, A. (2012): Urartu in der Zeit. In: S. Kroll et al. (ed.), Biainili-Urartu. The Proceedings of the Symposium Held in Munich 12–14 October 2007 (ActIr. 51), Leuven, 135–161.
- Grayson, K.A. (1991): Assyrian Rulers of the Early First Millennium BC I (1114 – 859 BC) (RIMA 2), Toronto.
- Grayson, K.A. (1996): Assyrian Rulers of the Early First Millennium BC II (858–745 BC) (RIMA 3), Toronto.
- Kroll, S. (2012): Salmanassar III. und das frühe Urartu. In: S. Kroll et al. (ed.), Biainili-Urartu. The Proceedings of the Symposium Held in Munich 12–14 October 2007 (ActIr. 51), Leuven, 163–168.
- Roaf, M. (2012): Could Rusa of Erimena have been King of Urartu during Sargon's Eighth Campaign? In: S. Kroll et al. (ed.), Biainili-Urartu. The Proceedings of the Symposium Held in Munich 12–14 October 2007 (ActIr. 51), Leuven, 187–216.
- Salvini, M. (2008): Corpus dei Testi Urartei I. Le iscrizioni su pietra e roccia: i testi (Documenta Asiana 8/1), Rome.
- Salvini, M. (2012): Corpus dei Testi Urartei IV. Iscrizioni su bronzi, argilla e altri supporti; nuove iscrizioni su pietra; paleografia generale (Documenta Asiana 8/4), Rome.
- Salvini, M. (2018). Corpus dei Testi Urartei V. Revisioni delle epigrafi e nuovi testi su pietra e roccia (CTU A); Dizionario urarteo; Schizzo grammaticale della lingua urartea, Paris.
- Salvini, M./I. Wegner (2014): Einführung in die urartäische Sprache, Wiesbaden.
- Seidl, U. (2004): Bronzekunst Urartus, Mainz.
- Tadmor, H./S. Yamada (2011): The Royal Inscriptions of Tiglath-pileser III (744–727 BC), and Shalmaneser V (726–722 BC), Kings of Assyria (RINAP 1), Winona Lake.
- Wilhelm, G. (1986): Urartu als Region der Keilschrift-Kultur. In: V. Haas (ed.), Das Reich Urartu: Ein altorientalisches Staat im 1. Jahrtausend v. Chr. (Xenia 17), Konstanz, 95–113.