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Yervand H. Grekyan. The Urartian Onomasticon: A Prosopographic
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of Archaeology of the National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine,
2024. 214 p. ISBN 978-617-7810-43-7 340

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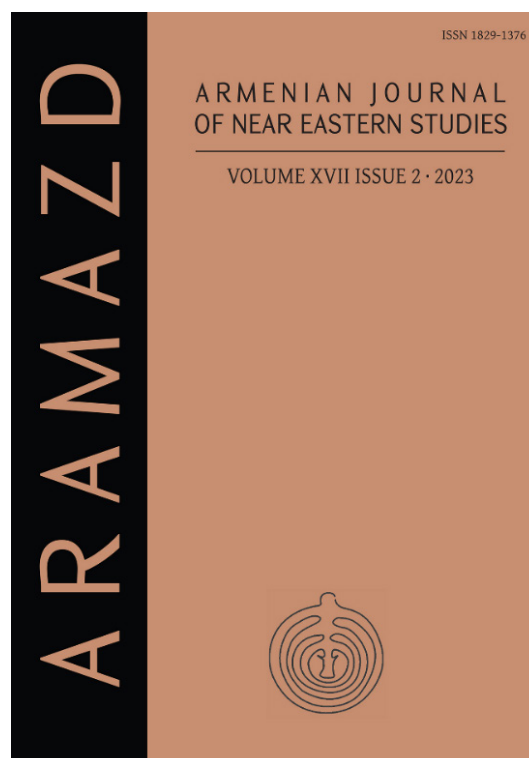
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Reviews

Yervand H. Grekyan. *The Urartian Onomasticon: A Prosopographic Study*, ARAMAZD: Armenian Journal of Near Eastern Studies. Editor-in-Chief Aram Kosyan, Vol. XVII, Issue 2. Association for Near Eastern and Caucasian Studies. Archaeopress Publishing Ltd: Oxford, UK. Yerevan-Oxford 2023. ISSN 1829-1376, ISBN 978-1-80327-706-6. 128 pp. <https://doi.org/10.32028/ajnes.v17i2>

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In the field of Cuneiform Studies, Urartology emerged in the XIX and XX centuries and experienced rapid development. The scope of its study expanded significantly in the second half of the XX century, and this intensive process continues to this day. Political, economic, linguistic, archaeological, and toponymical studies regarding Urartu number in the dozens; however, until 2023, there was no comprehensive work regarding its “Onomasticon”, until the work under discussion by Dr. Yervand H. Grekyan, one of the leading specialists in Urartology, arrived to fill that gap. This work attempts to consolidate all known onomastic and biographical information of the inhabitants of Urartu and other countries of the Armenian Highland, gathered from Royal inscriptions of the Urartian, Neo-Assyrian, Neo- and Late Babylonian, as well as Achaemenid periods. In fact, it is an etymological work of personal names where an attempt has been made to examine almost all known names. One can only imagine the complexities arising from the

depth of the workload and the historical lack of documented material in such studies. As the author notes, linguistic data for the Urartian language is limited, and part of the attested words are *hapax legomena* (page 1).

The work is divided into 16 chapters, which in turn are summarized in five appendices. The author's diagrams and four maps are also of great interest. The study includes an extensive list of personal names—around 300 names—presented in five appendices: Appendix A: “*Anthroponyms attested in the written sources of the Urartian kingdom*” (pp. 45-77), App. B: “*Not secured and disputable names attested in Urartian texts*” (pp. 78-81), App. C: “*Urartian anthroponyms attested in non-Urartian sources*” (pp. 82-94), App. D: “*Theophorous names based on the divine name Haldi attested in Neo-Assyrian and Achaemenid-period cuneiform sources*” (pp. 95-99), App. E: “*The Eastern Taurus: Neo-Assyrian sources*” (pp. 100-109).

Chronologically, regarding this vast onomastic examined, the overwhelming majority of the material relates to the era of Urartian hegemony in the Armenian Highland (IX-VII centuries B.C.).

In this review, given the scarcity of prior study, we will primarily mention the anthroponymy found in Urartian royal inscriptions. Accordingly, of the 157 personal names attested in Urartian sources, 33.05% (calculations and percentages provided by Y. H. Grekyan (pp. 4f., 37, Fig. 7) are etymologized with a Urartian (Hurro-Urartian) linguistic base, even when unclear or disputed names are excluded.

Names of Anatolian origin, including names of kings of Luwian countries, make up about 11.01% (p. 37, Fig. 7) (13 names such as *Aluani* (pp. 24, 47), *Gulili* (pp. 26, 51), *Hilaruada* (pp. 6, 33, 52), *Kika* and *Kika-MAḪ* (pp. 24, 56), *Kuštašpili* (p. 56), *Qasi* (pp. 24, 60), *Qutubili* (pp. 24, 61), *Šaḫu* (pp. 6, 33, 67), *Tata* (pp. 24-27, 68), *Titia* (pp. 26, 33, 68f.), *Tuate* (p. 69), *Uraqi* (pp. 42, 70), and possibly *Qutu[...]* *bau* (pp. 24, 74).

Names of Armenian origin (9 names) account for approximately 7.63% (p. 37, Fig. 7) (*Abilianiše* (pp. 18, 45), *Diušini* (pp. 6, 21f., 50), *Lubšušini* (pp. 21, 42, 56f.), *Nidi* (pp. 22, 59), *Qaquli* (pp. 31, 60), *Šinalibi* (pp. 22, 66), *Urđi* (pp. 22, 70), *Urđini* (p. 70), *Wazâ* (p. 72).

Iranian names (5 names) make up about 4.24% (p. 37, Fig. 7) (*Dada* - also considered possibly Semitic origin - pp. 20, 27, 49f.), *Šagaputara* (pp. 20, 66), *Ulka* (pp. 20, 69), *Uradi* (pp. 20f., 70), *Urzana* (pp. 20, 29, 71, 100).

Balkanic/Phrygian names (4 names) account for 3.39% (notably, all four are Urartian royal names: *Ar(r)āmu* (pp. 5, 22, 83), *Argišti* (the names of the Urartian Kings Argišti Mīnuahī (VIII c. B.C.) and Argišti Rusaḫi (VIII-VII c. B.C.)) (p. 47f., 83f.), *Minua* (pp. 5, 23, 57f.).

Indo-European names reach a count of 31 and make up 26.27% (p. 37), including names like *Murini* (pp. 23, 58), *Murinu* (pp. 23, 58), etc.

Semitic names are 10, comprising about 8.48% (*Adadinirari* (p. 46), *Aššurnirari* (p. 48), *Dada* - also considered possibly Iranian origin - pp. 20, 27, 49f.), *Eiama* (pp. 26f., 50), *Ilzitu* (pp. 27, 31, 53), *Issār-dūri* (pp. 14f., 54, 84ff.), *Mutie* (pp. 27, 58), *Qaqâ* or *Qaqaja* (pp. 31, 60), *Tigursagga* (p. 68), *Zaia* (pp. 27, 33, 73).

Finally, the origin of 38 names (32.2%) remains unknown.

According to Y. H. Grekyan, the picture is nearly the same when considering not just the names, but the number of individuals bearing them (p. 37ff.).

Among the inhabitants of Urartu attested in Neo-Assyrian sources (excluding royal names and names formed on an ethnic basis like “Urartian”), about 65.23% bear Urartian (Hurro-Urartian) names (15 out of 23 persons); 3 bear Semitic names (13.04%); one, *Upû*, is likely Iranian (4.34%); and 4 names are of unknown origin (17.4%).

In the zone of the Eastern Taurus mountains stretching between the Urartian Kingdom and Assyria, 37 personal names of 49 inhabitants are attested in Neo-Assyrian and Urartian sources (pp. 27ff., 37f., 100ff.). Here, a sharp increase in Semitic names is noticeable, especially in Šubria (about one-third of names) and Kumme (about one-fourth), which is explainable by their immediate proximity to the Semitic world and close ties with Assyria. Overall, the percentage of Semitic names in this zone, according to Y. H. Grekyan, is about 21.88%. Hurro-Urartian names number 11 (34.37%). Contrary to expectations, Iranian names are unique (3 names, 9.38%, with disputed etymologies). The number of names of unknown origin here reaches 11 (34.37%).

Notably, according to Y. H. Grekyan, both Urartian and Neo-Assyrian sources essentially outline the same pattern. The main difference lies in the nearly threefold increase in Semitic names in the southern “contact zone” of the Highland. In contrast, the number of Indo-European names is high within the Highland and especially in its northern and northeastern parts (Etiuni). Specifically, the names of most leaders of countries that were part of the Etiunian confederation are etymologized via Armenian, suggesting that Armenian was the dominant spoken language in this zone of the Highland (p. 41ff.).

Concluding the work, Y. H. Grekyan summarizes the results by highlighting the multi-ethnic nature of Urartu and the existence of various spoken languages both within the Highland and the Urartian Kingdom. Through their policy of large-scale resettlement (relocating around one million people, many of whom the author suggests were of “Etiunian” origin), the Urartian authorities - willingly or unwillingly - contributed to the spread of other highland languages, particularly Armenian, within the kingdom. According to the Greek geographer Strabo (II.14.5), by the beginning of the 2nd century B.C., the Highland was already monolingual (Armenian-speaking) (p. 41f.).

In summary, this study is an invaluable and remarkable contribution to the field of Urartology. I recommend this work to everyone engaged in or interested in Urartian studies, as well as to educational institutions and libraries. Despite its positive aspects, Y. H. Grekyan's work naturally has its weaknesses (it could have been published as a separate book with more detailed index of names lists and other minor technical issues), yet these do not diminish the deep scientific nature of the research. It must be valued as an unquestionable contribution to the study of the ethno-linguistic history and culture of not only Urartu but the entire Armenian Highland. Actually, a work has been created that reproduces a vital link in the anthroponymy of the Armenian Highland, which, in our conviction, is of lasting value.