

ROYAL INSCRIPTIONS ON BRONZE ARTIFACTS FROM THE UPPER ANZAF FORTRESS AT VAN

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The Anzaf Fortresses consist of two parts, namely the Upper and the Lower Anzaf.² The Lower Anzaf Fortress lies 11 km. north-east of Tuşpa (Van Fortress), the capital of the Urartian Kingdom, and close to the modern Van-Iran railway and main road (Belli 1992: 28) (Map 1).

The Anzaf Fortress, some 900 m. to the south of Lower Anzaf Fortress, was built by Menua, son of the Urartian king Išpuini (c. 810-786 B.C.). As with the Lower Anzaf, we do not know the Urartian name of the Upper Anzaf Fortress. The Upper Anzaf is ten times larger than the Lower Anzaf, covering an area of 60.000 m². At 1995 m. above sea level, the Upper Anzaf is the highest site in Turkey. In contrast to the Lower Anzaf, the Upper Anzaf was built as an important centre for the storage of agricultural products from the surrounding fertile lands. The water collected in the small dam 1 km. to the east, built by King Menua, played a significant role in agriculture (Belli 1995: 27). Amazingly, with minor alterations, this dam is still in use today, aiding cultivation of the fertile land lying to the North. The lower city, lying to the south of the fortress, covers an area of 141.000 m² (Fig. 1). The lower city with its surrounding thick walls, remains within the borders of modern village of Dereüstü (formerly Anzaf). The lower city, one of the best examples of early Urartian settlements, was planned and built at the same time as the fortress.

The earliest known square-planned temple dedicated to Haldi, the national god of the Urartian Kingdom, was built in the Upper Anzaf Fortress (Belli 2004: 284). Also, 22 different monumental marks were hewn into rock-cut surfaces at the eastern and northwestern parts of the fortress, symbolising the sanctity of the fortress (Belli 1989: 98). None of the other fortress built in the reign of King Menua have such a variety of monumental rock-cut signs. If we keep in mind the small number of monumental rock marks at Tuşpa, the Urartian capital, and in the area around Meher Kapısı, we can easily understand that the Upper Anzaf Fortress was an important cultic centre. In addition, the unique depictions of the Urartian deities on the votive shield from the room on the west side of the temple, in which other objects and weapons dedicated to the God Haldi were also found, confirm that the fortress was a cult centre (Belli 1999: 18).

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The Upper Anzaf Fortress displays all stages of development in Urartian architecture, the buildings within the fortress being constructed at different periods during the 200 years that elapsed between its establishment and its collapse. The eastern gate of the lower city, the storage buildings attached to the western fortress walls, the northern and southern gates of the fortress with the High Tower protecting them and the temple with its courtyard were discovered in the excavations which are ongoing since 1991 (Belli 2001a: 40).

Kitchen and Storeroom

The kitchen is to the north of Haldi Temple and in the east of the storeroom 5, having a rectangular plan of 21 m. x 5 m. Its eastern wall has a height of 3.5 m.; the collapsed walls of buildings in the east had heavily destroyed the west wall. The floor is of stamped clay and the room yielded an oven and two pithoi. Among the other finds are lumps of iron, stone bowls, large quantities of lentil (*lens culinaris*) and wild pea (*cicer anatolicum*) and traces of red (hematite), yellow (limonite), blue and white paint (Belli 2001b: 170).

Storerooms with Pithoi

Numerous storerooms with pithoi are located 16 m. north of the kitchen, built adjacently in a north-south direction. The storeroom 1 measures 5 m x10 m and it too has a rectangular plan; its mud-brick walls were painted in blue. Storeroom 2 is entered by a 1.60 m. wide door at the northeast corner of Room 1 and has fourteen pithoi buried into the ground up to their bodies. The diameters of the lips change between 70-80 cm. and some of the pithoi are considerably large in size. These, without doubt, are the earliest examples. There are no cuneiform inscriptions informing us about the amount of liquid they hold, although some signs and ideograms are observed. Most of them are familiar from other Urartian centres, but a minority of signs are new to us.

A wall with a width of 1.60 m. separates storerooms 1 and 2 (Fig. 2). The latter's dimensions are 5mx10m. It bears traces of blue and white paint. The east wall has four niches placed at 1.5 m. intervals. They are 55 cm. high, 60 cm. wide and 55 cm deep, probably carved for placing various objects and vessels. The 1.20 m-wide door opening on the south wall opens into another room, which is linked to the room with pithoi to its east. Each of the sixteen pithoi found in the room, carry scales and stamps. Five of them also have single-line cuneiform inscriptions, bearing the names of the measurement units *akarqi* and *tirusi*. According to the inscriptions, four pithoi hold five *akarqi*, one holds six *akarqi*, while two pithoi can store two, and one pithos three *tirusi*.

Between the storeroom 2 and 3 is a wall with a width of 1.60 m. Room 3 is rectangular in plan and measures 6.5 m. x10 m. Two ovens in front of the southwest wall indicate its use as a kitchen. It is entered from a room in the south via a 1.80 m. wide door opening, which is filled with soil and stones.

A wall of 1.5 m. thickness separates storerooms 3 and 4. Room 4 measures 5 m. x 10 m. and its walls are approximately 4.5 m. high. The southern part was secured as a

kitchen by a wall and on the west wall there is a niche. On the south wall is an opening of 1.75 m high and 80 cm wide, which leads into another room. This room yielded an interesting item, a Scythian harness made of bone. It seems that Scythians temporarily settled in the rooms that survived from the destruction of the fortress where they left their ashes and bones of their meals. The absence of small finds indicates that the Scythians took away all the objects after they had razed the fortress.

Storeroom 5 is located 1.5 m east of storeroom 4. Its north wall collapsed and rolled down because of the steep slope and other storerooms, which must have been to the east suffered from the same fate. The steps adjacent to the southwest wall leads to an opening in the south. These are six in number each with a width of 1.5 m and measure 4.30 m from the floor to the top. It is a typical storeroom opening to other rooms in the south. Similar storerooms with the same plan and design are known from Çavuştepe and Karmir Blur.

The most important aspects of the above mentioned rooms are their connections through small openings, which are also present on their southern walls. We left these intact in order to protect them from collapsing and only excavated the small rooms in the south.

One of these, room 6 to the south of storeroom 1, is measured 2.60 m. x 4.20 m. and on its southeast wall is a 1 m. wide opening, which connects it with another room in the south. Its stamped clay floor was encountered at 4.30 m. below the surface.

To the east of room 6 is room 7, measured 2.50 m x 5 m. A 1.5 m. wide wall divides these two rooms. Its white painted mud-brick walls rise on stone foundations. There is a small opening at the southeast corner leading to the room in the south. The stamped clay floor was reached 4 m. below the surface.

Immediately to the south of storeroom 3 is room 8, which is separated from room 7 by a strong wall of 1.5 m width. A large pithos found at the northeast corner is broken. Its fragments have popular hatched triangle motifs. Similar pithoi are observed in the libation scenes on the bronze belts. A large arched niche is on the east wall, and opening with a width of 1.20 m exists on the south wall, which apparently opened into the great hall.

Room 9, to the south of room 8, is 2.5 m in width and 5 m. in length. On its south wall is an opening leading into the great hall. An arched niche exists on the west wall, but it is smaller than the one in the room 8. Iron arrowheads and sword fragments show that the room served as an arsenal.

Corridor 10 stretches in the north-south direction and is wider and longer, and all the rooms in the west open into it, revealing its function as the main corridor. Due to the elevation Room 5 in the north can be reached by means of six steps. Its white plastered mud-brick walls were built on stone foundations and heavily burnt by a severe fire. Burning roof beams, wooden doors and other wooden objects destroyed everything in the corridor. Pebbles were placed beneath the floor in order to obtain a hard surface, a practice unique to the Urartian fortresses. The end of the corridor is yet to be found, but it appears to extend towards the court of the Haldi temple in the south. The relations of the rooms with the main corridor will be examined next year.

A door, 2 m in height and 1.5 m in width, leads to the great hall (room 11), as do the rooms 8 and 9 with doors on their south walls. The great hall too, was built with mud-brick on stone foundations with white plaster. Three arched niches and a small one apparently for an oil lamp, as can be deduced from the soot traces on the top of the niche, were carved on the south wall. The floor is of stamped clay. Near the centre are four column bases, but only two of them are *in situ*. The fallen walls displaced the rest and the debris also brought two pithoi next to the bases. The bases are of sandstone and their diameter at the mouth is between 50-60 cm. No inscriptions are seen on the bases, but their existence is a proof enough for their greatness.

There is a thick layer of ash on the floor caused by the burnt wooden beams and columns. The present dimension of the hall (room 11) is 10 m. x 14 m, but it probably extends towards west. It is quite clear that the north rooms are linked to the great hall. In the next campaign the door openings of rooms 6 and 7 will be cleared, and we also plan to reach the west wall of the great hall and reveal the relationship between the hall and the rooms in the south.

The main corridor and the great hall have yielded numerous basalt and sandstone grinders, bone loom weights, weaving tools, a bronze bracelet, a knife, a sickle and a needle. These tools suggest that the rooms were used as production workshops. Iron and especially bronze harnesses, arrowheads, and sword fragments come from the room 9. The bronze cast arrowheads and scabbard are heavily oxidized. They are valuable finds since they bear inscriptions, thus their conservation was a long and tiresome process. They first underwent a radiological investigation in the laboratories of the Istanbul Technical University and then were carefully cleaned mechanically and strengthened by chemical solutions against corrosion by specialists in the laboratory of the Department of Restoration and Conservation of Cultural Heritage of the Faculty of Letters of Istanbul University.

New Inscriptions on Bronze Objects

Among the inscribed small finds of the last campaigns of the excavations at the Upper Anzaf Fortress, there is a clay tablet, a bronze arrowhead, a bronze sword sheath and a rectangular bronze sheet, all uncovered in the area of the storerooms (for the previously discovered epigraphic documents at Anzaf, see: Dinçol-Dinçol 1994). Except the tablet, which is being studied by our colleague Mirjo Salvini, the rest will be discussed below.

The rectangular bronze sheet (Fig. 3, 4)

In the great storeroom 11, a rectangular bronze sheet was unearthed, which measures 5 cm x 3, 7 cm has an average thickness of 2 mm. Only one side of it is inscribed and divided into five lines. Between each line there is a blank strip of ca. 2 mm. width. The text reads:

1. ^D*Hal-di-e*
2. *e-ú-ri-e*
3. *i-ni a-še*
4. ^m*Me-nu-a-še*
5. *uš-tú-ú-ni*

“To the God Haldi, to the lord, Menua dedicated this shield”

It is surprising to see this inscription not on a shield itself but on this bronze sheet, since it is the first time we have encountered such a find. At the left edge of the object, there is a protuberance, which probably is the remaining end of a broken loop, which was used to bind it as an explanatory tag to the votive shield. The shield to which this tag belonged has not yet been found.

The bronze arrowhead (Fig. 5, 6, 7)

In the small storeroom 9, a bronze 8 cm long double winged arrowhead with an almost equally long plug to fasten it to the wooden shaft was brought to light. In contrast to the arrowheads at Karmir Blur and Çavuştepe, which bear inscriptions parallel to edges (Piotrovsky 1970: Fig. 54, 55; Vanden Berghe and De Meyer 1982: 138, fig. 33; Erzen 1978: 35, fig. 40), this one has two lines of inscription around the lower part of the body. It reads as follows:

1. ^D*Hal-di-e*
2. ^m*Me-nu-a-še uš-tú-ni*

“Menua dedicated to the God Haldi”

The bronze sword sheath (Fig. 8, 9, 10)

Along with the previously discussed arrowhead, a bronze sword sheath was also discovered in the storeroom 9. Only one inscribed sheath has hitherto been published which according to its inscription is contemporaneous with the Anzaf sheath, but shows a completely different type (Belli 1992: 48-49, Abb. 2, Pl. II, 1). Sheaths found on iron swords bear no inscriptions. One of these examples is kept in the Museum of the Ancient Orient in Berlin, while the other is preserved in the private Ebnöther Collection in Geneva (Wartke *apud* Merhav 1991: 330-331). They display a striking similarity to each other and both of them are decorated in the middle by two flutes. The Anzaf sheath is 11, 5 cm long and is not fluted; instead there is a single carination in the middle on both sides, which divides the surface into two parts. These were used as the lines of the inscription. The sheath found at Karmir Blur (Piotrovsky 1970: Fig. 51, 52, 53) and the sheath on an iron sword in the Adana Museum (Işık 1987: Fn 79 and Zeichnung 13) look very much alike, but both of them are uninscribed. The lines on the obverse of the Anzaf example read as follows:

1. ^d*Hal-di-i-e e-ú-ri-i-e* ^m*Iš-pu-ú-i-ni-[še]*
2. [^m]^d*Sar₅-du-ri-e-hi-ni-še uš-[tú]-ni*

“To the God Haldi, to the lord (has) Išpuini, son of Sarduri dedicated”

On the reverse the following can be seen:

1. [i-ni] pu[?]-ú[?]-i[?]-x-ni ul-gu-ši-ia-[ni] e-d[i-ni]
2. [x-x] x-a-i x-ni [x-x]-ia x x [x x x]

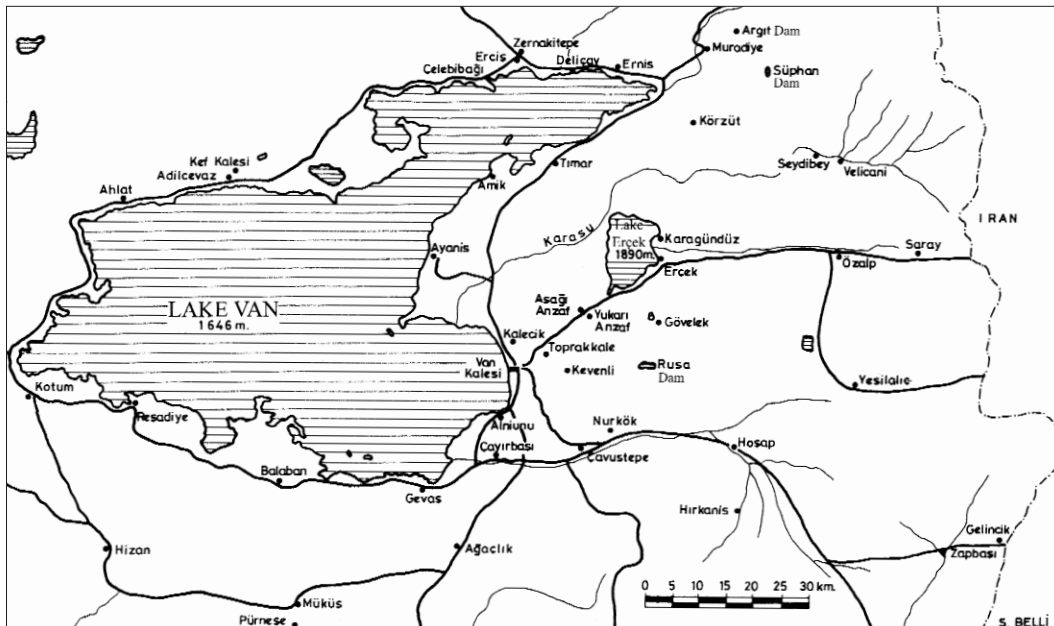
In the first line on this side, which is more corroded than the obverse, one expects to find – depending on hitherto known examples of similar texts – the name of the votive object. Here either the Urartian word for sword, or its sumerogram should be considered. But the traces of cuneiform signs do not allow to interpret them as GÍR “sword” or AN.BAR “iron” or the Akkadian word for sword “patru”. The translation of this should be:

“this sword for his life”

It is beyond our capacity to extract something meaningful from the remaining traces in the second line.

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Map. 1. The location of the Upper and the Lower Anzaf Fortresses.

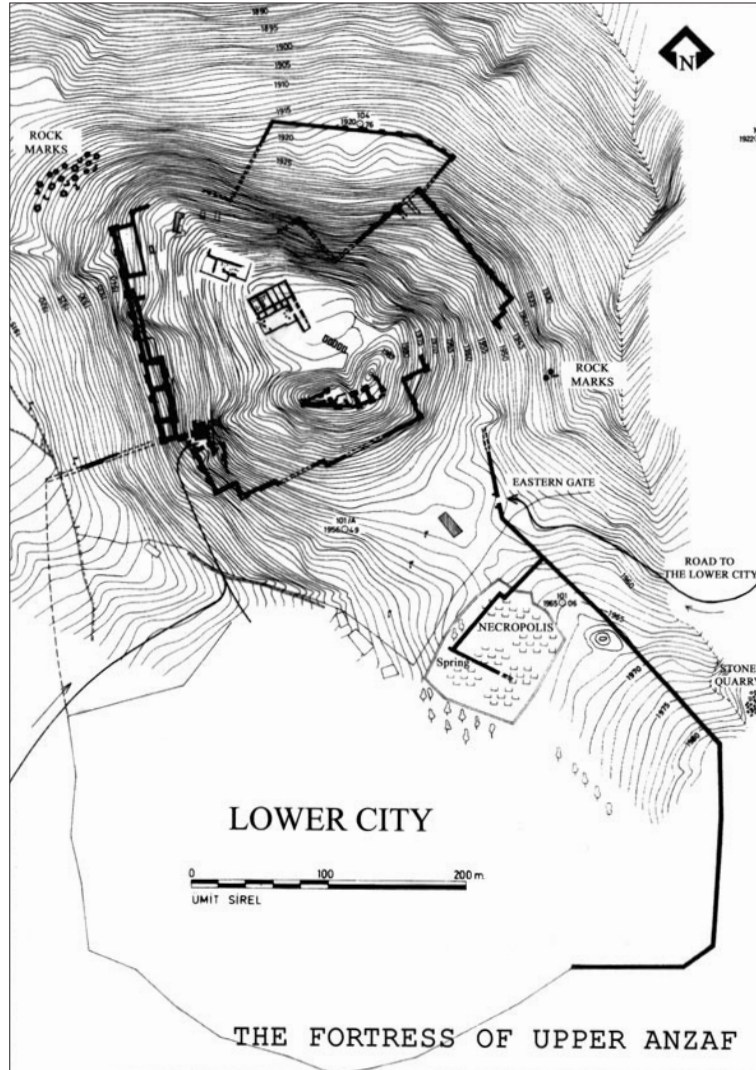


Fig. 1. Topographical plan of the Upper Anzaf Fortress.

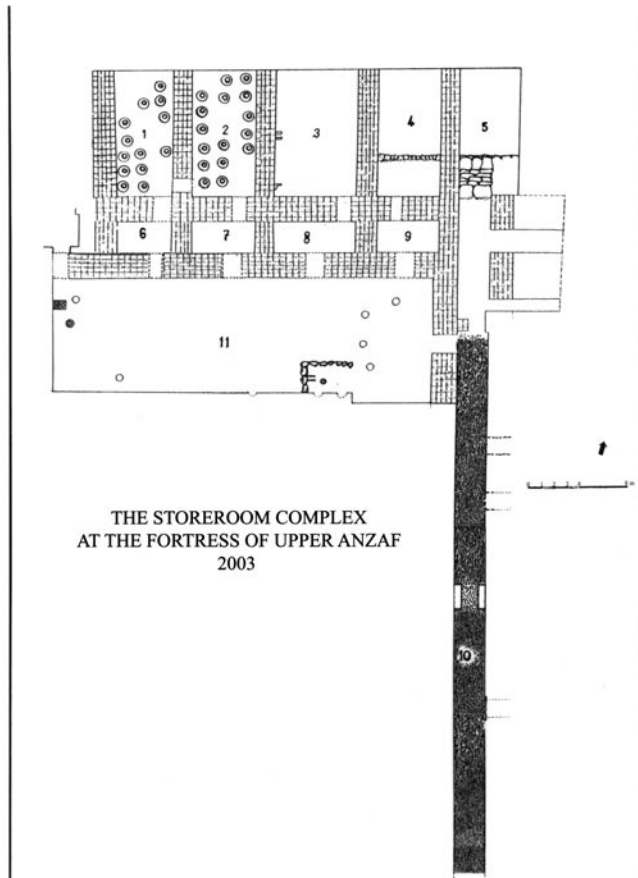


Fig. 2. General plan of the storeroom complex.



Fig. 3. The rectangular bronze sheet.

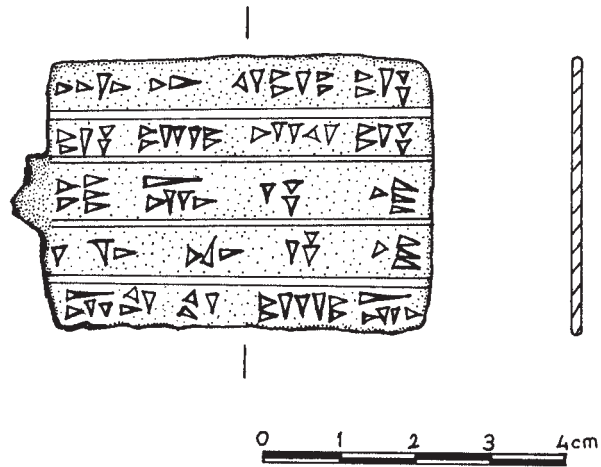


Fig. 4. The inscription on the bronze sheet.



Fig. 5. The arrowhead: obverse.



Fig. 6. The arrowhead: reverse.



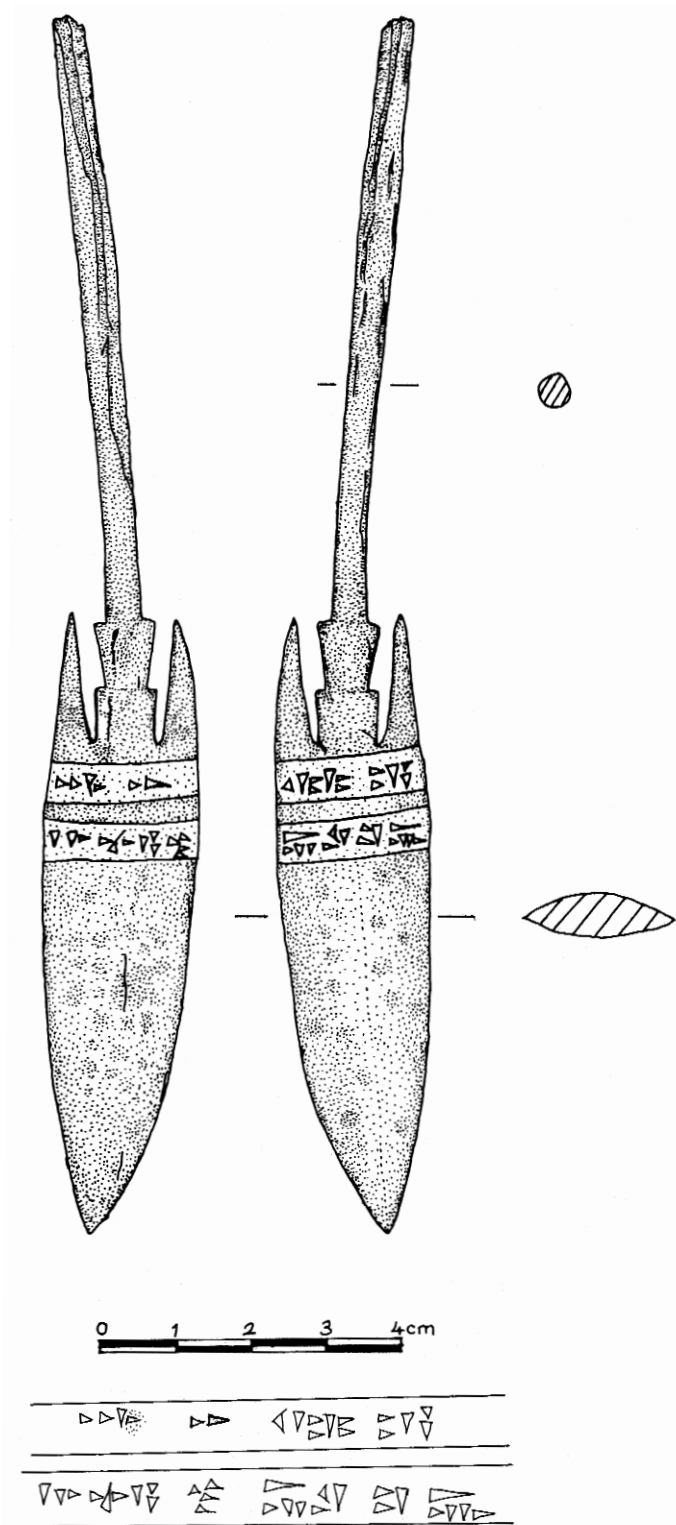


Fig. 7. The inscription around the arrowhead.



Fig. 8. The bronze sheath: obverse.



Fig. 9. The bronze sheath: reverse.

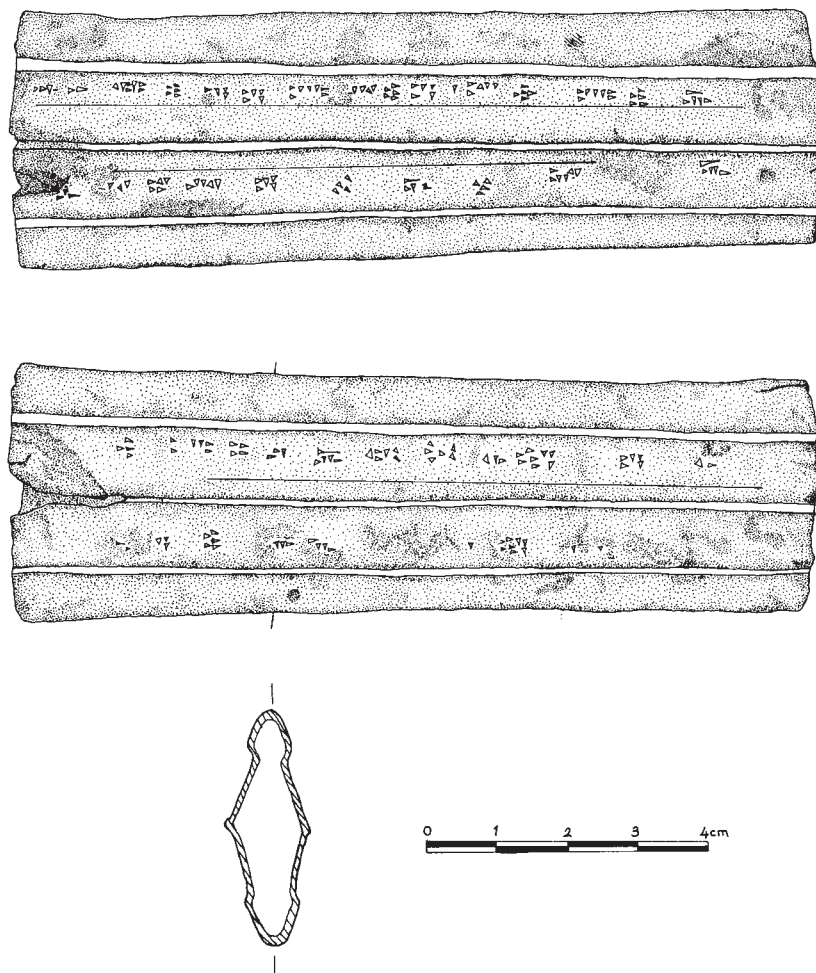


Fig. 10. The inscription on both sides of the sheath.