

## BRONZE DOOR RINGS WITH CUNEIFORM INSCRIPTIONS OF SARDURI II FROM THE UPPER ANZAF FORTRESS\*

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The Anzaf Fortresses consist of the Upper and the Lower Anzaf.<sup>2</sup> 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 the 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 lower city, lying to the south of the fortress, covers an area of 141.000 m<sup>2</sup> (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 (Belli 1999).

The Upper Anzaf Fortress displays all stages of development in Urartian architecture, the buildings within the fortress were 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 have continued since 1991 (Belli 2001: 40). The architectural features of the storeroom complex and the inscribed bronze artefacts found there have been published previously (Belli and Dinçol-Dinçol 2004). The repertoire of inscriptions on bronze objects are enriched by the recent finds (for the former epigraphical material on bronze and stone, cf. Dinçol and Dinçol 1994; Belli 2001; Belli 2004).

Corridor 10 of the storage complex stretches in a north-south direction. It is the main corridor of the storage building, and all the rooms in the west open into it. Due to the difference in 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.

There are numerous door openings on the western and eastern walls of the 46 m long corridor 10, which continues to the south where it meets the courtyard of the Haldi Temple. The main corridor makes a right angle and turns to east. Corridor 10 is 2.5 m

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wide, while corridor 14 turning to the east measures 2 m in width. The latter is 28 m in length and has three door intervals. They have not been excavated however, due to the risk of collapse. It is understood that the doors open to a series of rooms, which apparently had the function of workshops and arsenals, where numerous objects are kept.

Due to the conflagration during the Scythian attack, which burnt down the wooden doors and architectural elements carrying the ceiling, all of the objects and weapons were destroyed. The fire was so severe that the mud-brick hardened and the bronze door rings were destroyed. The rings were presumably two in number, one of which broke up into pieces and partly melted. The highly corroded rings were conserved in the laboratory of Historical and Archaeological Research Center of Van Region of the Faculty of Letters of Istanbul University. We would like to thank Vedat Evren Belli, Tuğba Akar, Uğur Tunalı, Hidayet Bakırcı and Gökçe Tokgönül for their meticulous and attentive work. Our thanks are due to the research assistant Can Avcı who made the drawings of both of the bronze door rings.

#### **Damaged Bronze Door Ring Nr. 1 (Inv. Nr. YAK 2004.10.11)**

It is bigger and heavier compared to the other intact ring, but it is partly melted. The existing handle is 15 cm long, and diameter of the ring is 14 cm (Fig. 3). The section of the ring is 2.5 m in diameter and was massively cast from bronze. It weighs 2.302 kg. The section of the ring, cast from a sand or wax mould, has a circular section. Originally, it must have weighed more than 3400 kg. On the outer surface of the ring, between two 1.2 cm wide lines a cuneiform inscription is read (Fig. 4).

The inscription reads as follows:

*<sup>m.d</sup>Sar<sub>5</sub>-du-ri-ni-e-i ú-ri-iš-hu-si-ni-e-i [<sup>m</sup>A]r-giš-ti-hi-ni-e-i*

“Treasury of Sarduri, son of Argišti”

#### **Intact Bronze Door Ring Nr. 2 (Inv. Nr. YAK 2004.10.12)**

It consists of two rings, big and small, connected by a straight bar and is intact except the piece which is put through the smaller ring to fasten it to the wooden door post. Like the above mentioned damaged ring it was cast from bronze. It is 33 cm in length and weighs 2.804 kg, but originally it must have weighed 2.900 kg. The bigger ring is 12 cm and the smaller is 6 cm in diameter (Fig. 5). The piece attached to the wooden post was hammered from bronze. It is approximately 64 cm long and shaped from a single sheet of bronze. The middle part has a circular and the arms have a rectangular section. The ends of the attachment were sharpened. There is a cuneiform inscription on the outer surface of the bigger ring and the attachment. The inscription on the attachment was heavily worn due to oxidation (Fig. 6-7).

Two similar bronze door rings were unearthed in 1889 during the Toprakkale (Rusahinili) excavation (Lehmann-Haupt 1907: 102 f., fig. 73-74; Lehmann-Haupt 1931: 544), three more in Karmir-Blur and Armavir (Piotrovsky 1950: 20 f., fig. 3, 37, 58,;

Piotrovsky 1955: 95, fig. 56). But the Toprakkale examples do not bear any cuneiform inscription (Wartke 1990: 85). One of the three bronze door rings from Karmir-Blur has an inscription which tells that it belongs to the house of Rusa son of Argišti in *Teišebai URU* (Piotrovsky 1970: Nr. 25.; König 1955–57: Nr. 130 A, Pl. 98). The bronze door ring with cuneiform inscription of Sarduri II in the Upper Anzaf Fortress is the earliest example. As the building inscription on the wall of the Haldi Temple clearly states, the Upper Anzaf Fortress was built by Menua. The existence of bronze door rings of Sarduri II at the fortress is not surprising, since two clay tablets and twenty one bronze objects and weapons with cuneiform inscriptions belong to a period extending from Išpuini to Rusa II. As we mentioned elsewhere, being close to the capital Tušpa, it was also a royal administrative centre, a fact supported by the existence of numerous bronze weapons and objects belonging to Argišti II (Belli 2005).

The inscription on the ring reads as follows:

<sup>[m].d</sup>*Sar<sub>5</sub>-du-r[i]-ni-e-i ú-[r]i-iš-h[u-s]i-ni-e-i <sup>m</sup>[A]r-giš-ti-hi-ni-[e-i]*

“Treasury of Sarduri, son of Argišti”

The inscription on the attachment reads:

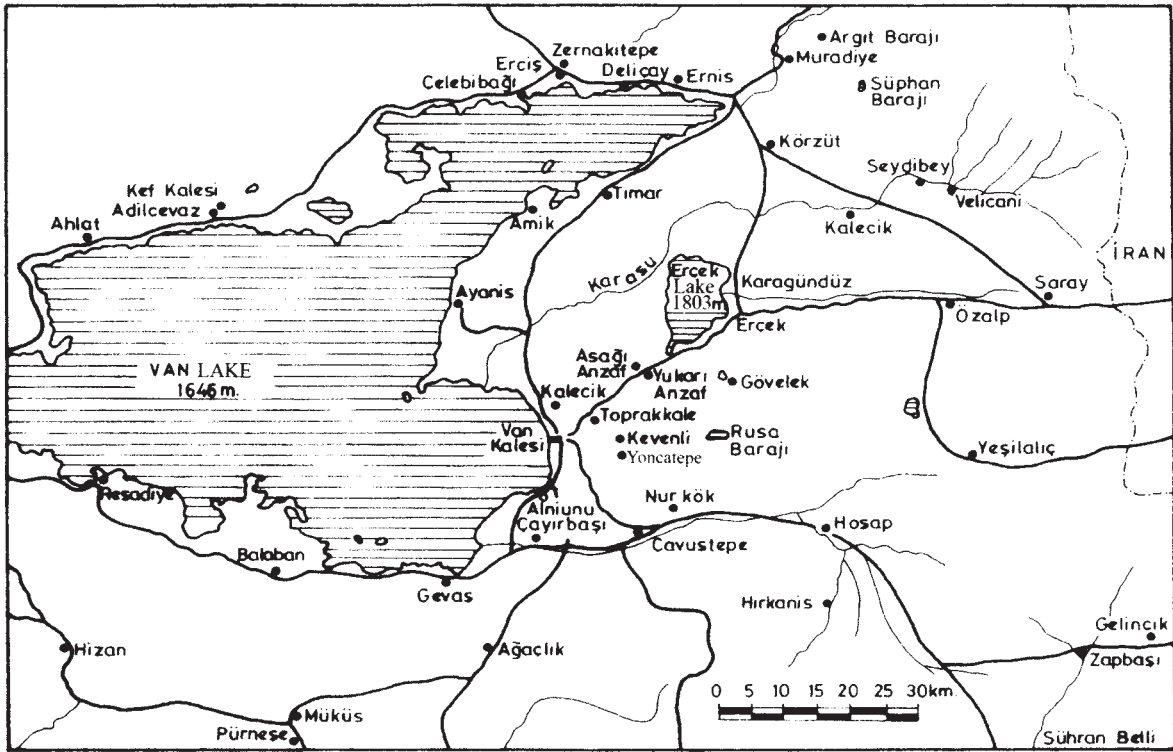
<sup>[m].d</sup>*Sar<sub>5</sub>-du-ri-e-i ú-ri-iš-hi-[si]-n[i-e]-i*

“Treasury of Sarduri”

It is interesting to note that the inscription on the attachment does not bear the name of the father like the like majority of such short inscriptions on bronze objects in contrast to the inscriptions (cf. Merhav 1991: 351-357) on the door rings. Another peculiarity of the inscription on the attachment is the erraneous writing *urišhisi-* instead of *urišhusi-* “treasury” (Salvini 1980: 185-188; compare Seidl 2004: 45-48, where she prefers the more general meaning “magazine”). It should be a scribal error due to the contamination by the related word *urišhi-* “property”.

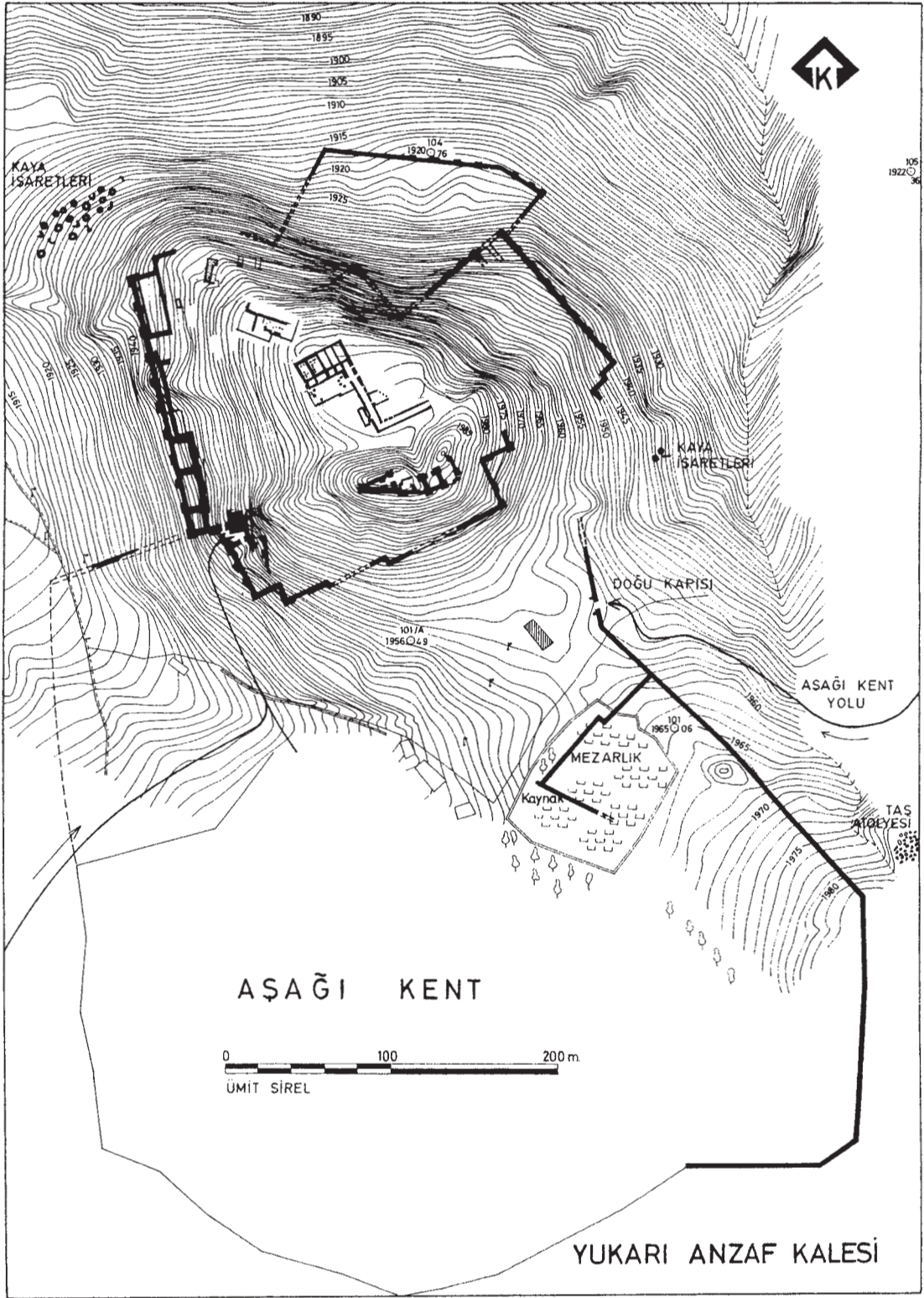
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Map 1. The location of the Upper and the Lower Anzaf Fortresses.





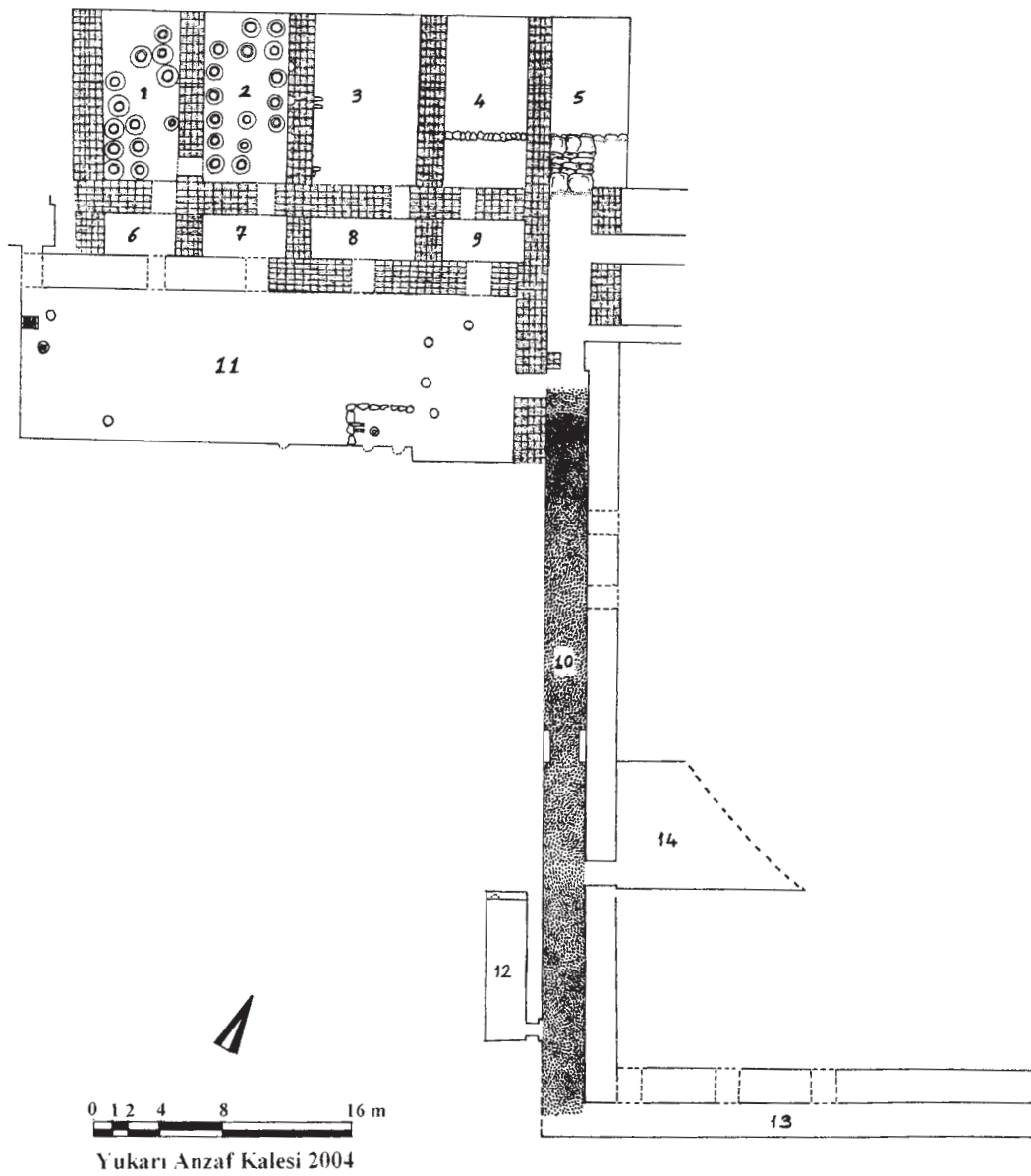


Fig. 2. General plan of the storeroom complex



Fig. 3. Photograph of the damaged door ring.

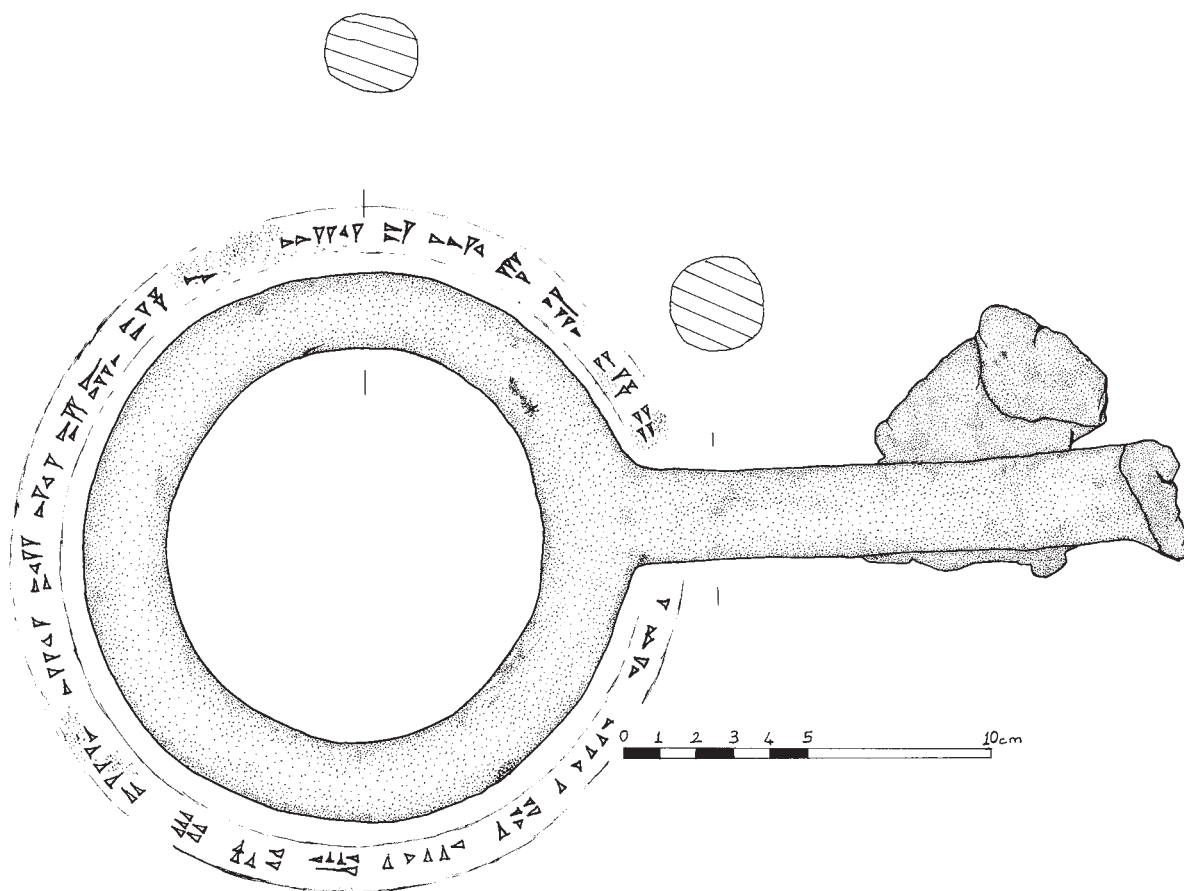


Fig. 4. Drawing of the damaged ring and its inscription.





Fig. 5. Photograph of the intact door ring and its attachment.

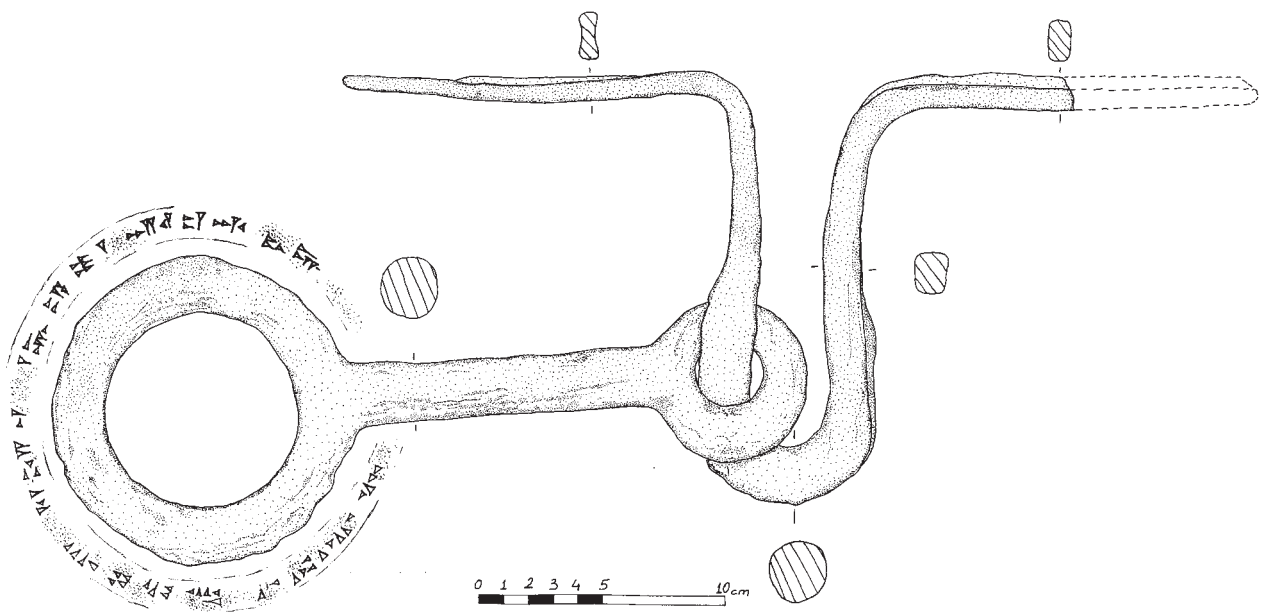


Fig. 6. Drawing of the intact ring with its inscription and the attachment.

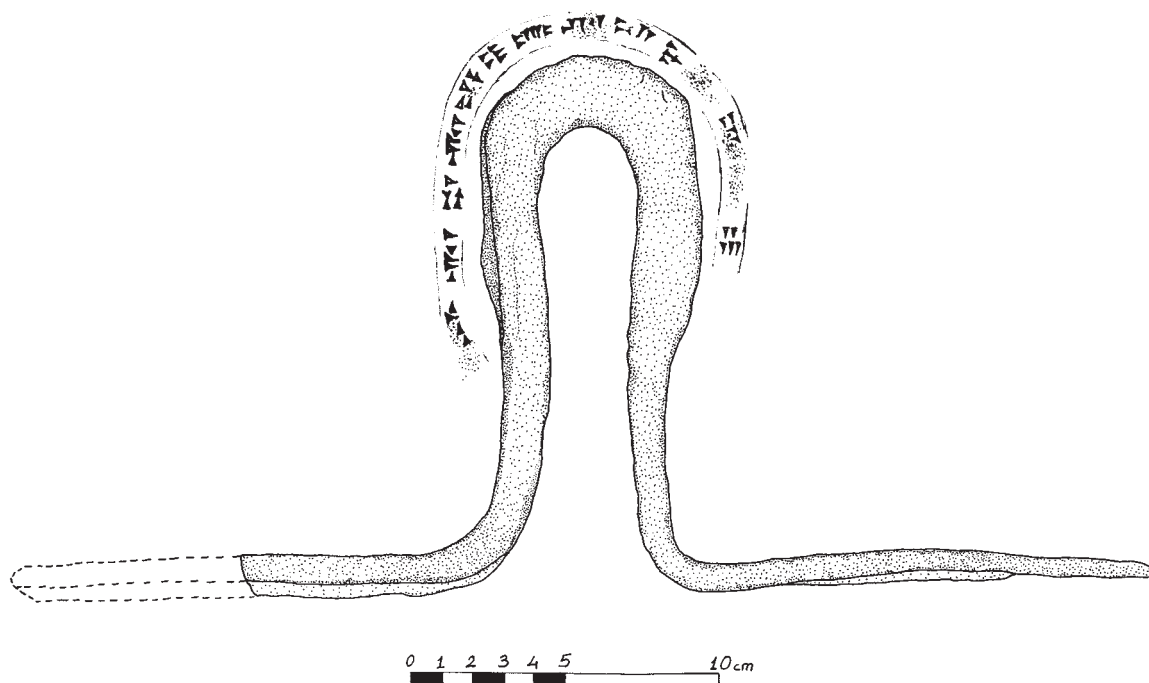


Fig. 7. The inscription on the attachment.