

THE KARAHASAN BRONZE URARTIAN BELT IN THE ADANA
REGIONAL MUSEUM

O.A. TAŞYÜREK

This belt, purchased by the Adana Regional Museum, has joined one of the important collections of Urartian artifacts in the world and deserves its own place among publications concerning Urartian belts¹.

It was found by local peasants in a small Urartian castle about 10 kms. south of Malazgirt, near Karahasan village, on the road from Malazgirt to Adilcevaz, and brought to the museum in 3 pieces. It is 13 cm. wide, and the left piece is 12,5 cm. long, and between this piece and the large central piece there are perhaps about 15 cms. missing. The large central piece is 44 cms. long. Apparently the next piece – which is 11,5 cm. long, and has a loop-type buckle attached – is the extension of the right hand end of the central piece. This belt was probably about 85 cm. long overall (Fig. 1; Pl. I–IV).

On this belt there are five rows of lions and bulls facing from the centre towards the ends. The embossed figures were probably made by stamping on a mould placed behind the belt and then the fine details were added with sharp-edged or pointed instruments². On the pieces brought to the museum there are 15 rows of figures facing to the right and 9 rows facing to the left. Thus, if it is accepted that the right hand piece is an extension of the central piece, then there must have been either 14 or 16 rows of bulls and lions on the

¹ Among the Urartian artifacts in the Adana Regional Museum are 15 figures, 5 geometric designs, and some 30 fragments of belts. It is a pleasurable duty to express our gratitude to Mr. Ahmet Soydan, who was responsible for the acquisition of the belt described here; to Mr. Rifat Ergeç, the Adana Regional Museum Assistant Archaeologist, and to Mr. Nurettin Dođru, our technician who prepared the drawings. Mr. Muhtar Gücüm did the translation, and Dr. Lisa French did the corrections.

² By examining about 250 specimens of Urartian bronze work in the Adana Museum and holding discussions with craftsmen in Gaziantep – where bronze work is most developed in modern times (on the subject of how an Urartian shield is made, see Y. Boysal, An Urartian shield found in a recent Excavation in Toprakkale, VI Türk Tarih Kongresi Tebliđleri, 1967, p.72 ff). we have arrived at the conclusion that Urartian bronze plaques were made in this way.

right hand part of the belt, counting from the centre (in the drawing 14 have been shown). In fact the figures facing to the left start with a row of bulls and end with a row of lions. The third figure to the left in the top row of the central piece seems to be a lion instead of a bull as the result of an error. Thus, of the 120 figures on the belt, 61 appear to be lions and 59 are bulls. Each figure on the belt itself is about 2,5 cm. square.

It will be useful to examine these groups of lion and bull figures separately in order to get a better understanding of the nature of this artifact.

The Lion Figures: At first glance it can be seen that the legs of the lions are extremely thick and the paws in particular are very large (Fig. 2, Pl. V, I). On the heads, the upper jaw is depicted with a round protruding cheek, and there appears to be a small ring or curl on the forehead. The design of the front part of the body is so executed as to give the impression of a mane, from which one assumes that they depict male lions. As is seen in the majority of Urartian bronze work, the tails of these lions are curled in a crescent over the animals' backs. Except for a single example these tails have no detail on them. The second lion down in the row on the far left of the belt, however, has a detailed tail quite reminiscent of the lion figures on the Sarduri II (764-735 B.C.) shield. The mane on this figure is also more detailed (Fig. 3, Pl. V, 2)³. Also, the feet, which are depicted as overlarge, show considerable detail. Both the upside down tulip design on the forelegs and the detail work of the other legs are also highly reminiscent of the lion figures on the Sarduri II shield *in toto*. In general, the design of lions on this belt, except for the upper jaw, mane, and tail-tip, bear a fascinating resemblance to the lions on the Sarduri II shield⁴.

The Bull Figures: These figures are as detailed as the lion figures. Those facing both right and left have a wealth of detail and decoration, particularly on the heads, necks and legs, and generally present a highly rich appearance. The decorative lines on the back and stomach, and the details on the over thick legs (as in the lion figures) are again reminiscent of the figures on the Sarduri II shield. In particular the upside down tulip motives in the forelegs and the manner in which the hooves are depicted from the front draw attention to

³ E.Akurgal, *Urartäische und Altiranische Kunstzentren*, 1968, abb. 2, 73; B. Piotrovsky, *Urartu* (Nagel), 1969, Pl. 89,92.

⁴ C.Azarpay, *Urartian Art and Artifacts*, 1968, Pl. 19-20; M.N. van Loon, *Urartian Art*, 1966, pl. XXV.

this resemblance (Fig. 4-5, Pl. VI, 1-2)⁵. The main detail which distinguishes the bulls on the Karahasan belt is the fact that their tails are also thrown in a crescent shape over the animals' backs. The tip of the tail is sometimes depicted with vertical and sometimes with horizontal lines.

Even though it appears possible when examining the detail work and general lines of the lions and bulls on the belt to date it to the Sarduri II period, the design of the upper jaw of the lions, and the lack of detail on the lions' tails are more like the lion figures on the Rusa III (625-585 B.C.) shield⁶. A comparison with other Urartian belts in the Adana Regional Museum shows that the tails on the bulls are also reminiscent of the Rusa III period.

Also, if one considers the round protruding cheeks of the upper jaw of the winged lions carrying bows and arrows on the Melgunov sword, and the fact that this sword was dated to 600 B.C.⁷, it is possible to assign our belt to the cubic style defined by Akurgal as the late Urartian period, in which case it can be assumed that it was made sometime towards the end of the 7th century B.C.⁸

⁵ B. Piotrovsky, *Urartu* (Nagel) 1969. Pl. 89-92; M. Riemschneider, *Das Reich am Ararat*, 1967, taf. 21.

⁶ E. Akurgal, *Urartäische und Altiranische Kunstzentren*, P. 73 ff. abb. 31.

⁷ M. I. Artamanov, *Treasures from Scythian Tombs*, 1969, P. 22; Pl. 3; T. T. Rice, *Die Skythen*, 1957, abb. 52.

⁸ See footnote 6 (I would to express my heartfelt thanks to Ord. Prof. Dr. Ekrem Akurgal not only for indicating to me how this belt should be dated but also for all the invaluable help which he has given me).





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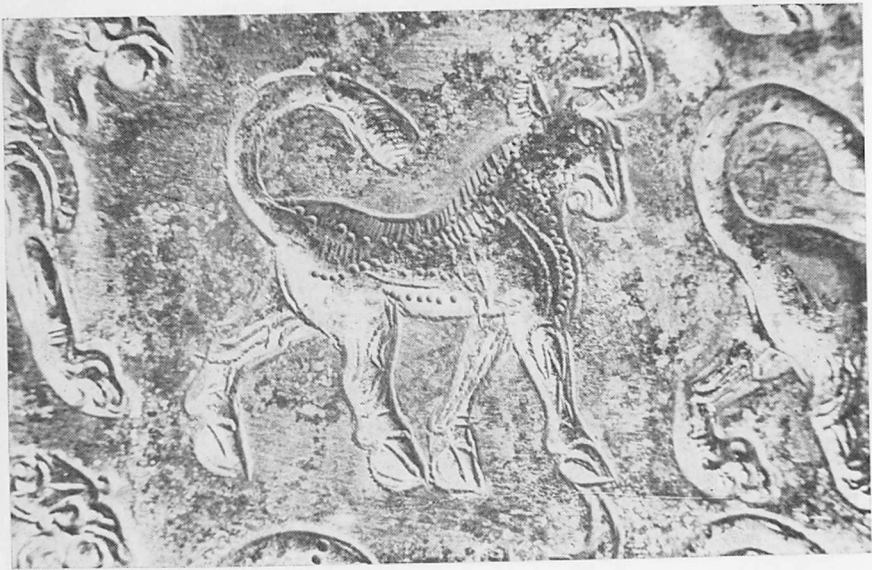
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A HELLENISTIC MOSAIC IN ERYTHRAE*

SHEILA D. CAMPBELL

On the small peninsula which extends west of Izmir is the village of Ildir which occupies the site of ancient Erythrae¹. A mosaic fragment (Pl. I) was found, not in the course of a regular archaeological excavation, but rather in the process of building a new house in the village. Hence nothing is known of its context.

The fragment is approximately 3 metres by 3,5 metres, and contains four colours – black, white, terracotta and brown. The tesserae are irregular in shape, a transitional stage between pebble mosaic and true *opus tessellatum*, or cubed tesserae. They are also quite large, approximately 41 tesserae per square decimetre, although a tesserae count is quite meaningless here because of the irregularity of shape and size. The tesserae are of limestone, and all four colours of stone are locally available. The mosaic consists of a corner fragment with an outer band of black and white triangles, a plain terracotta coloured strip, a band of confronted white winged lions separated by two types of white palmettes on a black background, an inner terracotta coloured border for the white wave crest, and a white innermost rectangle enclosing a white lozenge. The corners produced by this lozenge contain marine animals of some type. Inside the point of the lozenge is a brown four-petalled rosette and in the centre, a 19 cm square patch of cubed tesserae, probably a later repair. There is a rectangular groove in the cement in this part, suggesting that this area might possibly have contained an emblema, perhaps in a terracotta tray, which was later replaced by the cubed tesserae. Since this fragment seems to be a corner piece and symmetrical, one can propose a reconstruction (Pl. III, 1). This reconstruction assumes a composition of four equal sides. However,

*I am grateful to Professor Ekrem Akurgal for permission to present this paper at the annual meetings of the Archaeological Institute of America, Chicago December 1974, and for permission to publish it here. I thank also the artist who did the drawing in Figure 3 a, Mr. Kenneth R. Campbell.

¹ For the ruins of Erythrae see Ekrem Akurgal, *Ancient Civilizations and Ruins of Turkey*, Istanbul 1973, S. 231–234; Cevdet Bayburtluoğlu, *Erythrae*, Ankara 1975 (in Turkish).

the artist who did this drawing pointed out to me that on one side, a lion is equivalent to four wave crests (Pl. II, 1,2) and on the other side only three, and that these three are more closely spaced. In addition, the inner white border is wider on one side than the other. Therefore this was more likely a much larger rectangular pavement, with possibly additional internal rectangular panels.

Since this mosaic fragment can not be dated by its context, we must attempt to assign a date to it on the basis of technique and iconography.

As previously stated, the irregular tesserae indicate a transitional stage between pebble mosaic and true *opus tessellatum*. There are not a great many known examples of mosaic in this technique, and, of those, few are firmly dated.

An example from Palestrina (Pl. IV, 1) is made of irregular tesserae and is not dated. It is technically similar to the Erythrae fragment and of course uses the same outside border of black and white triangles².

A fragment in Troy (Pl. IV, 2) shows large irregular tesserae, verging on cubed tesserae. It also is not dated.

A mosaic from Alexandria (Pl. V, 2) is made of irregular tesserae and contains lead strips for outlining, an indication of a Hellenistic dating³.

Another example of irregular tesserae has been found at Morgantina in Sicily, and has been dated to the mid 3rd century B.C.⁴

At Aphrodisias a mosaic fragment in this transitional technique was found in a temple and has been dated quite firmly on the basis of coin finds to mid 3rd century B.C.⁵

At Delos⁶ there are several pavements of irregular tesserae, dated to approximately mid 2nd century B.C. In these particular examples the main part of the composition is executed in cubed tesserae, while the irregular tesserae are used only as a type of background filler. Certainly by this later date the use of cubed tesserae was well established.

From these examples, it would appear that this technique of using partially shaped stones, or stone chips, was mainly confined to the 3rd and 2nd centuries B.C., and was gradually replaced entirely by cubed tesserae.

² C. Gullini, *I mosaici di Palestrina*, (Rome 1956) pp. 10-14, Pl. 4.

³ Blanche R. Brown, *Ptolemaic Painting in Alexandria*, Pl. XLIV 1.

⁴ K.M. Phillips, Jr., "Subject and Technique in Hellenistic-Roman Mosaics," *Art Bulletin* (1960), Fig. 3.

⁵ Kenan Erim, *American Journal of Archaeology* (1972), P. 184.

⁶ *Les Fouilles de Delos, Les Mosaïques*, Fasc. 29.

There are also a few examples with iconographical similarities. An undated fragment from Alexandria (Pl. VI) executed in pebbles has a border of confronted pairs of winged lions and griffins. The lions have the same pose and "smile" as the Erythrae example and in both cases there is an attempt at shading on the back leg.

A 5th or 4th century B.C. pebble mosaic from Olynthus (Pl. V, 1) shows a similar organization of the pavement, i.e., winged animals alternating with palmettes, and an inner band of wave crest surrounding the central composition.

Finally, we have an example from Assos (Pl. III, 2), tentatively dated by the excavators to the 4th century B.C.⁷ This mosaic exists in a drawing only. After excavation it was transported to the United States, but no record of it exists after 1903. It is not possible to determine from the excavation report whether this mosaic was made of pebbles or of irregular tesserae. However, in view of its very close similarity to the Erythrae mosaic, it is interesting to note the geographical proximity of these two sites. We may have here an indication of a workshop connection.

These examples are not sufficiently firmly dated to be of any help in dating the Erythrae mosaic, but they do establish iconographical prototypes in the same medium. The main argument for dating is that of technique. At Delos, for example, cubed tesserae are used for the main, more important parts of the composition, and the irregular tesserae are relegated to unimportant or fill-in areas. The small patches of cubed tesserae in the Erythrae mosaic are not used in this way. They are plain black and do not add to the composition in any way. Nor can one say here that the irregular tesserae are used simply as filler. The cubed tesserae must be a later repair. Since this technique of irregular tesserae seems to exist mainly between the 3rd and 2nd centuries B.C., with an ever increasing tendency towards the use of cubed tesserae, I suggest a date of mid 3rd century B.C. for the Erythrae fragment. It would not be earlier because the medium has been very skillfully handled to produce a very fluid design, and not later as there appears to be only minimal tendency in this fragment to produce squared or cubed tesserae. Thus we can add one more item to the very short list of Hellenistic mosaics in Anatolia.

⁷ Bacon, Koldewey and Clark, *Investigations at Assos*, P. 119, Fig. 2.

There are also a few groups with leucophaea in the head. An under-
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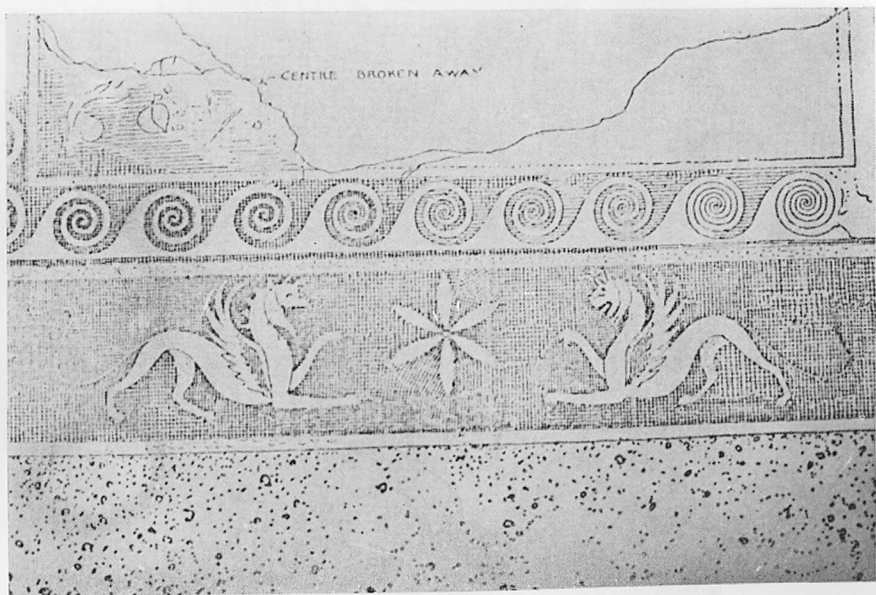
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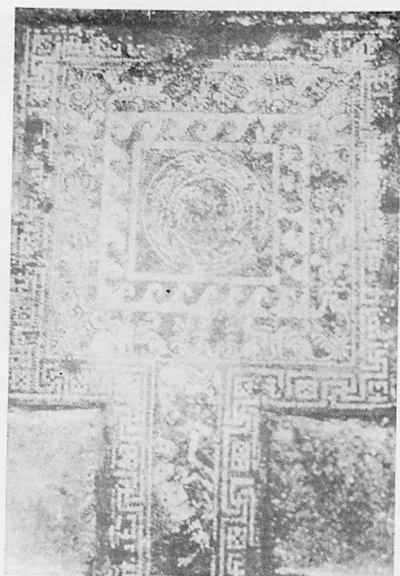
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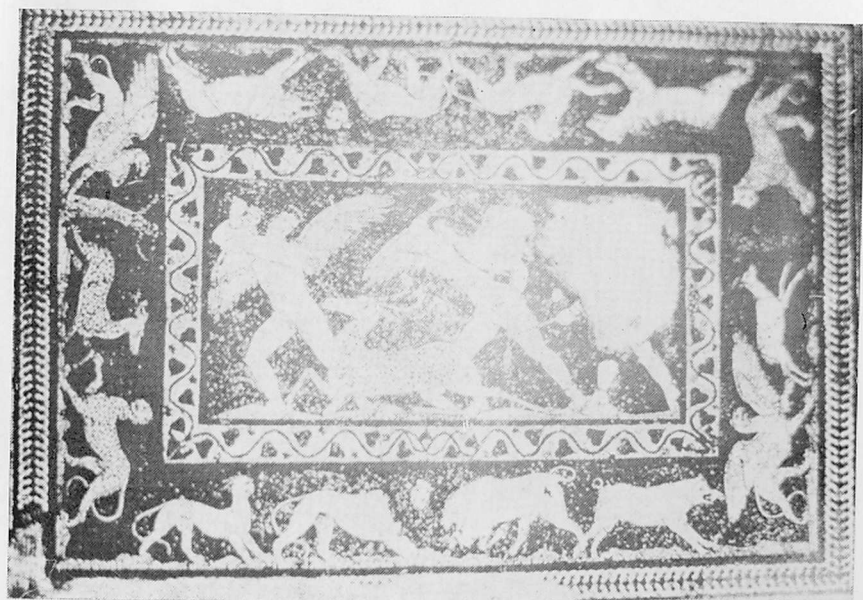
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