Urartian

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1. HISTORICAL AND CULTURAL CONTEXTS

1.1 History of the language and its speakers

From the late ninth to the late seventh century BC, Urartian was written in the empire of the Urartian kings, stretching from present-day Armenia, Azerbaijan, Iranian Azerbaijan, and northeastern Iraq to the Euphrates. Neither its geographical origin can be conclusively determined, nor the area where Urartian was spoken by a majority of the population. It was probably dominant in the mountainous areas along the upper Zab Valley and around Lake Van. The center of Urartu is the region surrounding Lake Van with its capital of Ŭšpa (citadel of Van). We do not know when the language became extinct, but it is likely that the collapse of what had survived of the empire until the end of the seventh or the beginning of the sixth century BC caused the language to disappear.

Urartian is closely related to Hurrian (see Ch. 9, §1.1), especially to the dialect conventionally called Old Hurrian (see Ch. 9, §1.3). Presumably Urartian branched off from Hurrian not much later than approximately 2000 BC.

The earliest inscriptions of the Urartian kings are written in the Neo-Assyrian script and language (a dialect of Akkadian; see WAL Ch. 8), though after a single generation the Urartian language, for most purposes, replaced the use of Assyrian. The eighth century BC witnessed the climax of Urartian power and the greatest production of Urartian royal inscriptions (the Annals of Argišti I and Sardure II).

The term Urartian is based on the geographical name Urartu, which was used not only by the Assyrians, but by the Urartians themselves when writing in Assyrian. The Urartian equivalent is the name Bia=ne=la “the [people] of [the land of] Bia.” The Urartians’ name for their own language is unknown. The terms Vannic or German chaldisch which can be found in older literature are outdated.

1.2 Sources

Nearly all of the Urartian texts occur as commemorative stone inscriptions on walls, column and pillar bases, steles, and rocks. There are a few clay tablets, which display an experienced hand, suggesting that most likely the scarcity of this medium is due to archaeological accident rather than lack of use. Metal objects from the treasuries of Urartian kings are often inscribed with short proprietorial notes. Sealed clay bullae suggest that at least in the seventh century BC perishable materials like leather were also used for writing.
The earliest Urartian inscriptions can be dated to approximately 820 BC, and the latest were written during the last decades of the seventh century BC. Though there are more than five hundred inscriptions, their linguistic value is limited because of their extreme repetitiveness. There are basically two genres of inscriptions: (i) those which commemorate the building activities of the kings and (ii) those referring to their military campaigns. Apart from these there are a few texts recording cultic prescriptions, especially one long and complete text from the early period of the kingdom (Meher kapısı). Important landmarks lying close to Assyrian territories were made prominent by the erection of bilingual (Urartian and Assyrian) steles, the most famous of which is the Kelišin (“blue stone”) stele. It marked a Zagros pass leading to Mus.=šir, which was of utmost importance to the Urartians as the cult center of their supreme god Ḥaldi.

1.3 Dialects

No dialects of Urartian have been identified, though see §4.3.5.7.

2. WRITING SYSTEMS

2.1 Cuneiform script

Urartian was written in the Akkadian cuneiform script. Like its model, the Urartian writing system uses syllabograms and logograms (or Sumerograms, transcribed with capitals). The sign shapes of the Urartian royal inscriptions are basically those of Neo-Assyrian royal inscriptions, with one innovation: from c. 810 BC onwards, Urartian inscriptions on stone and metal avoid intersecting wedges. There is no convincing argument that some sign forms prove the influence of older traditions.

The syllabary is extremely restricted, with CV signs (57) prevailing over VC signs (19). Some of the VC values most common in the Assyrian cuneiform script are not used at all (aK, iK, uK, il, uh, im, um, en, in, un, uT). Identifying the reason for this simplification of the Assyrian sign inventory is difficult. There are numerous hints that in some cases CV signs actually represent consonants only (in some of the oldest inscriptions the ergative suffix is written with the sign -iš, whereas the normal spelling is -še; the Hurrian equivalent ends consonantally, i.e., -ž). Moreover, in some cases it can be shown that CV signs are likely to represent [VC] syllables: the word kure=l(ə) (written ku-re-e-li) “feet” can be linked to Hurrian ugrı “foot,” also ure=l “feet” (the sign uK does not belong to the Urartian inventory); for inverted readings of CV signs see also §3.5.1. CVC signs are used, though much less frequently than in Assyrian royal inscriptions.

One reason for the abandonment of several VC signs may have been that the Akkadian syllabary neutralized the opposition of voiced and voiceless consonants. The use of CV signs as C signs may thus have been regarded as a means of representing this opposition at the end of syllables. Especially relevant might be the Assyrian model: the inscriptions of Assurnaṣirpal II (887–858 BC) quite often replace a final closed syllable by an open syllable (mostly with <Ci>).

The signs mi and ne do not occur in the Urartian script with syllabic values. Both of the phonetic sequences [mi] and [me] are represented by the sign me (transliterated as me or mi); correspondingly, the sign mi is used for both [ne] and [ni] (transliterated as né or ni). The sign ’a is used as a variant of wa in a number of cases. A few signs are used with values not adopted from Assyrian traditions: for example, ga, gi, and gu used for a voiced fricative (conventionally transliterated as yaₜ, yiᵢ, and yuₓ).
Graphemes representing homorganic consonants are at times used interchangeably: for example, 'a-al-tú-bí: 'a-al-du-bí; su-du-qu-ú-bí: su-ţu-qu-bí.

CVC signs are used, though much less frequently than in Assyrian. Signs for five vowels are attested: a, e, i, u, ū. Variant spellings suggest that u and ū render one vocalic phoneme only, whereas – despite some interchangeability – e and i refer to different vowel phonemes. Only a few homophonic signs are used, namely tu and tú, ar and dr; there are sufficient variant spellings to show that these do not represent different vowel phonemes.

Plene-spelling of vowels is common, though the function of such full representation is not straightforward. There are three possibilities, and each probably actually occurs: (i) a plene-spelling may mark a long vowel; (ii) it may define the quality of the vowel of the preceding CV sign; and (iii) it may simply serve aesthetic purposes in filling a line. In addition, there seems to be ambivalent plene-spelling of vowels. Thus, the final vowel of an i-stem is reduced to ə in word-final position; its graphemic representation is the vowel inherent in a Ce/Ci-sign, to which the vowel sign e may be added: for example, pi-li (li has the values [le] and [li]) or pi-li-e (both transcribed as pilə, “canal,” absolutive). The same grapheme sequence -Ce/i-e, however, can also be used as a variant of the normal spelling -Ce/i-i-e: for example, Ħal-di-i-e or Ħal-di-e (both transcribed as Ħaldi=ə, “to (the god) Ħaldi,” dative).

In letters, a word-divider is used, though not always and not systematically.

2.2 Hieroglyphic script

There are few short inscriptions written in pictographic symbols which have not yet been deciphered. Only two “hieroglyphs” often carved into the neck or body of large storage vessels have been identified, as units of capacity.

3. PHONOLOGY

3.1 Consonants

The cuneiform script distinguishes the following consonants, though not in all positions, and there is uncertainty regarding the value of some (see below). The evidence for the glides w and y is indirect (suggested by spellings such as -ni-i-e, a-i-u-, a-ú-i):

(1) Urartian consonants

| p | t | k | ? |
| b | d | g | |
| ţ | q | |
| s | š | h |
| z | |
| m | n | |
| l | r |
| w | y |

It is unclear to what extent consonantal phonemes may exist which are not distinguished by the script; nor is there agreement concerning the phonetic interpretation of some of the graphic renderings of phonemes.
It is safe to assume a tripartite phonemic opposition between voiced, voiceless, and some third set of stops and postdental fricatives. The third set is represented by the cuneiform signs for the so-called emphatic consonants of Akkadian (ḫ, q, ṣ). In Urartian these perhaps represent voiceless glottalized or aspirated consonants. It is also possible that the labial stops form such a triad with a consonant /p/ graphemically not distinguished from /b/ and /v/. It cannot be determined whether g can represent a voiced fricative in every position or only intervocically. The š syllabograms might represent both a voiced and a voiceless phoneme. The comparison of place names written in Urartian cuneiform and in Greek or Armenian script does not yield unambiguous results, as, especially in the case of Greek, it can hardly be ascertained through what intermediate phonemic systems these names passed.

The “sibilant” system is particularly difficult to reconstruct since even in Akkadian, and in particular Neo-Assyrian, the phonetic value of the cuneiform characters is uncertain. On the basis of Greek and Armenian renderings of Urartian place names I. M. Diakonoff has suggested interpreting š, s, ẓ as /s/, /ʃ/ or /ʃː/ and /tʃ/ or /tʃː/ respectively.

Consonants are (with very few exceptions) not geminated, even when the syllabary allows that possibility. It has been suggested that Urartian lost its geminate consonants (which do exist in Hurrian) before it reached the state of the language preserved in the inscriptions.

Transliterations (marked by single bars) and transcriptions (marked by double bars) in this chapter use the conventional values for the transliteration of the cuneiform signs.

### 3.2 Vowels

The script seems to distinguish four vowel qualities: /a/, /e/, /i/, /u/. It is uncertain whether the interchangeable signs ʰu and ʰu represent not only /u/ but also /o/. Vowel length seems to be indicated by *scriptio plena* (see §2.1), and presumably it was phonemic (see also §3.5.3; in the following morphemic transcriptions vowel length is not represented because of the high degree of graphemic variation). The opposition between /e/ and /i/ seems to be neutralized in final position (realized as [ə]), as can be seen (among other places) among variants using be and bi indiscriminately (nu-na-bi, nu-na-be “he came,” in morphemic transcription both rendered as nun=ɐ=ba). Schwa may be represented by a plene-spelling of the vowel e, e.g., pi-ʰi-e for [pilə].

Spellings like ka-i, ba-ú-še, Te-i-še-ba, e-ú-ri, ú-ru-li-ia-ni, qi-ú-ra-i-e-dì, ḥa-ú-li-ı-e, si-lu-a-di, a-ú-e-ra-, ᵇu-e, Is-pu-i-ni suggest the existence of the diphthongs /ai/, /au/, /ei/, /eu/, /ia/, /ie/, /ia/, /ua/, /ue/, /ui/. It is not always clear, however, whether two adjoining graphemic vowels represent a monosyllabic diphthong; in some cases it can be shown by variant spellings that they do not: thus, te-ra-a-i–with variant te-ra-y/[iʃ]. Some of the diphthongs seem to be historical spellings, because there are variants with monophthongs: for example, qi- (`i-)–ra–“earth”: al-su-i-ši–“greatness”: ka-ú-ke: ka-ú-ke “before me.”

### 3.3 Phonotaxis

The writing system hides many consonant clusters. Any occurring in initial and final position could not be represented orthographically; it is likely, however, that they did not in fact exist.

In medial position most consonantal clusters contain a non-stop as the first consonant: [-ld-], [-lg-], [-lb-], [-lm-], [-ls-], [-ls/z/-]; [-rb-], [-rd-], [-rg-], [-rb-], [-rm-], [-rn-], [-rq-], [-rʃ-], [-rʃː-], [-rt-], [-rz-]; [-mn-]; [-ʃd-], [-ʃg-], [-ʃh-], [-ʃm-], [-ʃp-], [-ʃt-], [-ʃz-]. There are also clusters with initial dental and bilabial stops: for example, [-Tḥ], [-Tŋ], [-Tq]; [-Pb-], [-Pq-], [-Pr-], [-Pʃ-], [-Pt-]. There are no Urartian words with initial [r-]; the royal name *Rusa* probably was pronounced Ursa.
3.4 Accent

Urartian seems to have a stress accent on the penultimate syllable – at least in certain cases, defined by unknown conditions. It is evident that in many cases the final syllable is not stressed, as can be seen from the distribution of *Ce* (interpreted as */Cə*/) symbols in word-final position versus *Ci(-i)* before suffixes: for example, *gu-nu-še* : *gu-nu-ši(-i)-ni(-); pi-šu-(ú-)še* : *pi-šu-ši-ni(-); *šu-e* : *šu-i-ni-*. 

3.5 Phonological processes

Several phonological processes can be identified for Urartian.

3.5.1 Anaptyxis

Some of the attested cases of anaptyxis are most likely graphemic only (see §2.1): *ši-di-iš-tú-ni* : *ši-di-ši-tú-ni* (*šíd=ιš=tú=nο*); *ta-ra-ma-na* : *ta-ar-ma-ni-li* (root: *tarm-*). Other cases appear to be genuinely linguistic; though in the absence of etymologies, they could be explained either by anaptyxis or by syncope: *ni-ir-bi* : *ni-ri-bi*; *zi-il-be* , *zi-il-bi(-i)* : *zi-li-bi(-i)*; *uldə* versus *ul-ú-de-e* “vineyard.”

3.5.2 Syncope

1. The vowel of the plural suffix -*it-* and that of the root-complement -*id-* are lost after [r]: *ar=t=u=me* “they gave me”; *par=t=u* “they took away”; *ter=t=u* “they put up” (compare *kuγ/y=it=u=nο* “they dedicated”); *šer=d=a=l=(e)yο* (also *šer=id=u=l=(e)yο* “who hides [it]”; *ar=d=i=l=anο* “he shall give”; *ter=d=i=l=anο* “he shall put up.” Generally the vowel is preserved elsewhere (though see below): *ab=id=u-; batq=id=u-; erš=id=u-; niš=id=u-; su=id=ul=ul-.*

2. Stems ending in [d] followed by the plural suffix -*it-* drop the sequence [d=i]: for example, *za-tú-me* “they built me [a path],” from *zad-* “build” (if – contrary to §3.1 – Urartian had double consonants, the process would have to be described as syncope with assimilation). It is doubtful whether the same process occurs with stem-final [t]; the form cited in favor of this, *š-id=ισ-tú=ι* → *šid=ištul*, could be first-person singular *ši-d=ισ-tú=ι*.

3. After the sequence of {[lV], [rV] or [nV]} followed by the suffix -*ne-* or -*na-* (see §4.2.4), the vowel (V) is syncopated and the resulting consonant cluster undergoes progressive assimilation (in the case of [liquid + nasal]) and degemination. Thus, as Hurrian reveals, the diachronic process is as follows: *ebani=ne=lo* → *eban=ne=lo* → *ebanela* “countries”; *ereli=ne=lo* → *erel=le=lo* → *erelelo* “kings”; *šeri=na=šo* → *šer-ra=šo* → *šer=šo* “the other/previous (kings).” Note, however, that when the genitive-suffix /i/ intervenes, the changes do not occur: *ebani=in=na=we* dingir “to the gods of the country.”

4. A vowel is lost when occurring between the final [r] or [l] of a root and the ensuing modal suffix [l] (see §4.3.5.3), with assimilation and degemination as in 3 above: *tur=ul=(e)yο* → *tul=l=(e)yο* → *tul(e)yο* “[who] might destroy.”

3.5.3 Vowel contraction

Contraction is difficult to determine because of the ambiguities of the writing system and because of uncertainties surrounding the phonemic system. If the spelling variants with
diphthongs and monophthongs are correctly interpreted as revealing “historical spelling,” rather than accurate synchronic representations (see §3.2), then Proto-Urartian had a tendency to contract diphthongs. Such contraction even occurred across morpheme borders; for example, in the dative of i-stems. The well-attested traditional form is *LEXEME = ə (graphemic Ci-(i-)e), as in Hal-di-i-e (dative: “to [the god] Haldi”); but there are also forms ending in -Ci-i which have been interpreted as a contraction of [i + ə]: for example, e-si-i (dative, “to the place,” from *esi=ə). The plene-writing of the vowel points to the product of contraction being a long vowel.

3.5.4 Assimilation

In addition to those cases of consonant assimilation noted in §3.5.2, 3 and 4, assimilation of vowels occurs in two contexts: (i) the vowel of the verbal suffix -Vst- (see §4.3.2, 6) assimilates to the preceding vowel (so-called vowel harmony); and (ii) the vowel of the plural suffix -it- (see §4.3.4.3) in some cases (e.g., after the root-complement -id-) assimilates to a following vowel [u]: *še(i)r=it=it=u → še-i-ri-du-tú; *su=it=it=u → su-ú-i-du-tú.

3.5.5 Metathesis

Metathesis is seen in uldu versus udul- “vineyard”; see also §4.2.2, 6.

4. MORPHOLOGY

4.1 Word structure

The basic structural characteristics of Urartian seem to be in agreement with those of Hurrian (see Ch. 9, §§ 4.1–3); however, the available data in many cases are insufficient for a functional analysis of the sort possible for Hurrian. A set of root-complements would be expected to modify the semantics of the root, regardless of whether by suffixation, the root forms a noun or verb. Among the less than one hundred semantically more or less well-defined Urartian nouns, however, there seems to be no single one which can be shown to contain the same root-complement as a verb.

4.2 Nominal morphology

The noun (and a small number of nonderived adjectives) consists of (i) a root, (ii) a thematic vowel, and (iii) optionally a derivational suffix. Root-complements (see Ch. 9, §4.3) are seldom attested (for a possible exception see below, §4.2.1); and only few word-formation suffixes (see Ch. 9, §4.4.2) can be found within the limited body of material. As in Hurrian, there are two numbers (singular and plural), but no grammatical genders. To a noun (derived or not) relational, possessive, number, case, and congruence suffixes in a strictly sequential order may be added.

4.2.1 Nominalization of the root

Roots may perhaps be nominalized by the suffixes -i and -u: kapi (a measure of capacity) is likely to be connected with the Hurrian root kapp- “fill” (cf. Hurrian kapp=ar=ní Ch. 9, §4.4.2, 13). The forms ḥa=ə and ašṭ=ašt=ə (two terms for offerings, if correctly segmented) are based on ḥa- “take” and ašṭ- “sacrifice,” and urb=ə “meat offering” on urb- “slaughter.”
4.2.2 Noun-formation and derivational suffixes

In Hurrian grammar two types of derivational formations have been distinguished: one utilizes suffixes (word-formation suffixes) which directly follow the root (and root-complements), and the other utilizes suffixes (derivational suffixes) which follow the so-called thematic vowel. In the latter case, the thematic vowel -i is replaced by the “derivational vowel” -o-. In this paragraph the two sets of suffixes are treated together in alphabetical order, as the Urartian patterns have not yet been fully examined and understood.

1. -(a)d=ə (see Ch. 9, §4.4.2, 1): ẖu-ra-(a-)-de “warrior” (also Hurrian) might be a loan-word from Hurrian, perhaps via Assyrian.
2. -ay ə, adjectives and nouns: s̱i-ra-ba-e “unirrigated” (?), du-ru-ba-i-e “hostile,” ṯu-a-i-e, ṯu-a-y[i], “pure,” tar=ay ə “mighty,” al=ay ə “decision” (al- “speak,” see §4.3.4.4).
3. -aura, patient-oriented participle (see Ch. 9, §4.4.2, 4): ag=aura “something (a canal) which is conducted,” ści=aura “something which is built”; (see also -(u)=rə).
4. -(i)bx: atība “10,000,” nīr(i)ba “wild sheep,” terība “?,” zīliba “seed,” “offspring.”
5. -hra (see Ch. 9, §4.4.6, 1): This suffix forms adjectives of appurtenance used with geographical or tribal names (nisbe): Abiliane=ẖa ebano “the country of Abiliani” (tribal/personal name), Diaue=ẖa “the DIAUEan [king].” Without parallel in Hurrian is its usage in patronyms: Argi=stī “the son of Argištī,” IŠpuine=ẖa, Minua=ẖa, Rusa=ẖa, Sardure=ẖa “plantation” (ter- “plant,” “establish”); and (iii) after a: babana=ẖa (babanas “mountainous region”).

The ending -hra is presumably a suffix complex containing the abstract suffix -sə as in Hurrian (see Ch. 9, §4.4.6, 1G): ẖuri=ṣ̱a “water supply” (?), tui=ṣ̱o “clean place”; uri=ṣ̱o (“weapon,” “piece of equipment”).
6. -hala, -hra (metathesized variants), ethnic terms: mīṣa=hala “the land” belonging to Mīṣa, melīṭ(y)alha “the Meliṭian [king],” puinizha “the Puinizan [king],” iṣqulhul “the ISQULhan,” puinizulha “the PULUZhan [king].”
7. -i(=)ptə, meaning unknown: mer=i(=)ptə “?,” uṣṭ=i=ptə “campaign” (uṣṭ- “go on a campaign”).
8. -ka, meaning unknown (see Ch. 9, §4.4.2, 10): urb-i=ka=naə “sacrificer” (?) (urb- “slaughter”).
9. -la, nouns of profession (see Ch. 9, §4.4.2, 11): erela “king,” ə.nin=la “prince” (?,
10. -na, basic meaning unknown (see Ch. 9, §4.4.2, 13): ti=na “name” (ti- “speak”); additional nouns which have roots not attested in other usage, however, also end in -nə: ebano “country,” iarano (a sanctuary), qarqarano “armor,” sirhano (a building). A functionally different suffix -na, which perhaps is to be distinguished etymologically (see Ch. 9, §4.4.6, 2), seems to form adjectives: quldi=na “uninhabited” (?), “vacant”? (?). Several forms which have been claimed as adjectives, however, presumably are instrumentals: piṣuṣi=na “pleasurable” piṣuṣa “pleasure,” gunuṣi=na “by fight.”
12. -uma, infinitive? (see Ch. 9, §4.4.2, 16): absolutive (?) ḏu-hu-me “offering” (?), directive su-du-me-né-e-de “?.
13. -tu≠hə lucali-tu-he “kingship,” lu-(u)-tu-he “human beings,” ir-nu-tu-he-e “?.”
14. \(-u(=)r\), “subject-oriented participle” with intransitive verbs (see Ch. 9, §4.4.2, 8): 
\(\text{ušt}=u(=)r\) “someone who went out for a campaign,” 
\(\text{man}=u(=)r\) “something which existed” (see also \(-aur\)).

15. \(-us\) (see Ch. 9, §4.4.6, 3): The Hurrian equivalent suggests identifying \(u\) as a suffix of derivation. In only few cases can it be shown that the suffix forms nouns of suitability as in Hurrian: 
\(\text{urišt}=us\) “arsenal, treasury” (\(\text{urišt}\) “weapon, piece of equipment”), 
\(\text{ašš}=us\) “building for cereals” (cf. Hurr. \(\text{až}=o=\dot{g}\) “meal”), 
\(\text{al}=us\) “ruler,” 
\(\text{bad}=us\) “perfection(?),” 
\(\text{pul}=us\) “stela,” 
\(\text{te/ir}=us\) (measure of capacity).

### 4.2.3 Thematic stems

(See Ch. 9, §4.4.3) All nouns end in a vowel. The most frequent vowel is \(-i\) or \(-e\), but there is a good number of nouns in \(-a\) and in \(-u\). No noun ends in a consonant, at least in writing (for the restrictions of the writing system see §2.1).

### 4.2.4 Relational suffixes \(-ne-\) and \(-na-\)

(See Ch. 9, §4.4.7) Urartian \(-ne-\) (sg.) and \(-na-\) (pl.) are anaphoric suffixes. They precede case endings which mark agreement of genitive modifiers or modifiers in \(-\text{ho}\) or \(-us\) (see §4.2.2, 5, 15) with their head noun (Suffixaufnahme, see §5.2): 
\(\text{Minua}=i=\text{ne}=i\) “of the daughter of Minua”; 
\(\text{Ḫaldi}=i=n(e)=\text{e}=\text{patari} \) “for the city of Ḫaldi”; 
\(\text{Ḫaldi}=i=\text{ne}=\text{nušmaši} \) “by the might of Ḫaldi.” In addition to marking agreement with the head noun, \(-na-\) also functions generally as a plural marker, except in the absolutive case (\(-na-\) never occurs in the absolutive; see §4.2.6): 
\(\ast\) \(\text{ereli}=\text{na}=\text{we} \) → \(\text{erel}=\text{la}=\text{we} \) “of kings”; 
\(\text{ḫuradi}=\text{na}=\text{we} \) “to the warriors”; 
\(\text{arniuši}=\text{na}=\text{ni} \) “by the deeds.” In the plural, the suffix of the absolutive plural is \(-\text{ne}=\text{la}\); 
\(\text{ḫuradi}=\text{ne}=\text{la} \) “the warriors.”

### 4.2.5 Possessive suffixes

Only two possessive suffixes are well attested. They take the position after the thematic vowels:

1. **First-person singular** \(-\text{uka}, \text{-uka-} \) (without parallel in Hurrian): 
\(\text{e-ú-ri-u-ke} \) “to my lord”; 
\(\text{e-ba-ni-ú-ke-e-de} \) “into my country”; 
\(\text{e-ba-ni-ú-ka-né} \) “from my country.” 
The suffix also occurs with preposition: 
\(\text{ka-a-ú-ke} \) “in front of me”; for the suffix see also §4.2.7.4.

2. **Third-person singular** \(-\text{iy}, \text{-i(-), iya-} \) (as in Hurrian): 
\(\text{e-ba-ni-i-e} \) “his country”; 
\(\text{ti-i-né} \ldots \text{ar-mu}-\text{zi-i} \ldots \text{zi-il-bi-i} \) “his name, his family”(?), “his seed” (cf. Akkadian \(\text{numun}=\text{sú} \)); 
\(\text{e-ú-ri-i-e} \) “to his lord” (cf. Akkadian \(\text{ana} \ldots \text{EN}=\text{sú} \)); 
\(\text{ulguši}=\text{ya}=\text{na} \text{ edino} \) “for his life.”

### 4.2.6 Case and number suffixes

Urartian, as far as can be determined, is a strictly ergatival language. The agent (subject) of a transitive verb appears in the ergative case; while the patient (object) of a transitive verb and the agent of an intransitive take the absolutive case. There are no hints that there exists a pattern as in Hurrian which encodes agent and patient as absolutive and essive respectively (see Ch. 9, §4.4.9). A special pattern for an action with a virtual but not explicit patient may exist, but cannot be proven.

Nine cases have been identified thus far. The principal differences vis-à-vis Hurrian (see Ch. 9, §4.4.9) are as follows: (i) the absolutive plural utilizes the suffix \(-ne-\) (see §4.2.4)
which in Hurrian is confined to the singular; (ii) the genitive and dative suffixes have a labial continuant only in the plural; (iii) the comitative is marked by a complex suffix (Hurrian \(-ra\)); (iv) the dative also has the function of the Hurrian directive in \(-e\); (v) the Urartian directive is perhaps a complex suffix formed from \(-e\)- (cf. the Hurrian directive) plus the directive suffix \(-d\), the product of Proto-Urarto-Hurrian \(*-da\), preserved in Hurrian and, as archaism, in Urartian; (vi) the Hurrian plural marker \(-a\$z\)- is unknown to Urartian except for a few archaic forms of the directive and ablative plural.

\[
\begin{array}{|c|c|c|}
\hline
 & \text{Singular} & \text{Plural} \\
\hline
\text{Absolutive} & - & -ne=la \\
\text{Ergative} & -\$a, -\$a & -na=\$a \\
\text{Genitive} & -i & -na=\$a \\
\text{Dative} & -\$a(\$ for a-stems) & -na=\$a \\
\text{Directive} & -\$a \& -\$a & -na=(e/i)\$a \\
\text{Comitative} & -ran\$ & -na=ran\$ \\
\text{Ablative-instrumental} & -n\$ & -na=n\$ \\
\text{Ablative} & -dan\$ & -na=\$a=tan\$ \\
\text{Locative} & -a & -na=a=a \\
\hline
\end{array}
\]

### 4.2.7 Pronouns

Urartian is characterized by each of the following pronominal forms.

#### 4.2.7.1 Possessive pronouns

For the possessive suffixes within the suffix chain of the noun see §4.2.5.

#### 4.2.7.2 Pronominal suffixes

The enclitic personal pronouns of Hurrian (see Ch. 9, §4.4.10.1) are only partially attested in Urartian, and they differ in function and distribution. As in Hurrian, they only refer to the participant in the absolutive case. Contrary to Hurrian, in Urartian they cannot be repeated several times within a clause, they cannot be suffixed freely to various words within the clause, and their position is strictly determined.

The suffix \(-d\$\) of the first-person singular corresponds to Hurrian \(-tta/-d\), but it only occurs as a suffix of intransitive verbal forms of the first singular (see §4.3.4.1). The suffix of the third singular, \(-n\$\), corresponds to Hurrian \(-nna/-n\). In most cases, it is associated with an absolutive singular serving as the subject of an intransitive verb, but sometimes also with the object of a transitive verb. It can also follow an interrogative/relative pronoun (\(\text{alu}=\$=\$\)), see §4.2.7.5). The suffix of the third plural, \(-l\$\), corresponds to Hurrian \(-lla/-l\), but its occurrence is restricted to nouns in the absolutive plural. For \(-n\$\) and \(-l\$\) as verbal suffixes see §4.3.4.1 and §4.3.4.3.

A personal suffix without a morphological or functional equivalent in Hurrian is the dative suffix of the first-person singular, \(-m\$: \(\text{ha}\$=i=\$=l=m\$\) “they granted to me” (intr.); \(\text{ar}=\$=m\$ “he gave me”; \(\text{H}\alpha\$i=\$=m\$ “(god) H\alpha\$i (erg.) . . . me”; \(-a\$=\$=\$ “when . . . me”; \(\text{alu}=\$=m\$ “who . . . me.”

#### 4.2.7.3 Independent personal pronouns

Only the following forms have been identified:
1. **First-person singular**: (i) absolute subject of an intransitive verb: *ištíd*; (ii) absolute object of a transitive verb: *šuk*; (iii) ergative: *ieš*; (iv) possessive adjective: *šus* “my” (with suffix -us, see §4.2.2, 15); (v) locative plural: *šusi=na=a*.

2. **Third-person singular**: (i) absolute: *man*; with pronominal suffix -na (see §4.2.7.2): *mani=na*; (ii) possessive adjective: *mas*; plural *masi=ne=l* “his.”

### 4.2.7.4 Deictic pronouns

The two most important deictic pronouns are as follows: (i) the demonstrative pronoun *i(na)*- refers to the object which bears the inscription or which is close to it. In an often attested curse formula it is used anaphorically for actions mentioned immediately before; (ii) *ina-* seems to be restricted to an anaphoric function, possibly including a sense of distance.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Singular</th>
<th>Plural</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Demonstrative</strong></td>
<td><em>in</em></td>
<td><em>ine=la</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>abs (abl)</td>
<td><em>i=ne=la</em></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>abl</td>
<td><em>i=na=na= (i-na- (a-)né)</em></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>ina=n</em></td>
<td><em>ina=ne=la</em></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>locative</td>
<td><em>i=na=a (i-na-a)</em></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anaphoric</td>
<td><em>ina=n</em></td>
<td><em>ina=ne=la</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>abs</td>
<td><em>ina=n</em></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>abl (abl)</td>
<td><em>ina=n</em></td>
<td><em>ina=na=n</em> (i-na-na-né)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In addition, *ina-* serves as the base for other pronouns: (iii) *ina=hó* “such” (dative pl.: *ina=hó=n* “for such / the aforementioned [towns]”); (iv) *ina=uk* “exactly this” (emphatic, identifying; absolute sg.: *in=uk* (i-nu-ke(-e))); ablative-instrumental: *in=uka=n* (i-nu-ka-(a-)né); for the suffix cf. §4.2.5, 1); (v) *in=uka=hó* (a hapaX legomenon, genitive adjective: *i-nu-ka=he- (a-)né*); (vi) *ina* “the said,” “the aforementioned” (absolute sg.: *in=us*; ablative-instrumental(?): *in=usi=n* (i-nu-si-i-né); for the suffix cf. §4.2.2, 15); (vii) *ik=uk* “the same” (attested only in the ablative-instrumental: *ik=uka=n* “the same [year/day/road]”; for the suffix cf. §4.2.5, 1; the root might be connected with Hurrian postposition *egi* “in”); see Ch. 9, §5.1).

### 4.2.7.5 Relative pronoun

The relative pronoun is attested in the forms *al* (absolute sg.), *al=ne=la* → *alel* (absolute pl.), and *alu=š* (ergative). For the vowel shift *i/u* compare the Hurrian pronominal pattern (Ch. 9, §4.4.10.2–3.). The indefinite pronoun *ali=k* “some” seems to be based on the relative pronoun *al*; it is, however, indeclinable.

### 4.3 Verbal morphology

Our knowledge of the Urartian verb is particularly limited. In the stereotypical royal inscriptions, the indicative verbs (with one exception) only describe past actions in the first-person singular, and in the third-person singular and plural.

By way of a summary comparison with Hurrian verbal morphology, the following remarks are offered (see below for specific discussion of the Urartian verb). As in Hurrian, verbs may be marked for modes of action; but in comparison with Hurrian, the preserved verbal forms show far fewer root-complements (regardless of what their function may be). Most of the Hurrian root-complements which modify the meaning of the root prior to the distinction of nominal or verbal inflection are not attested at all in Urartian. Also, as in Hurrian, the valence of a verb (see §4.3.1) is indicated by the so-called class-markers (see §4.3.3); and valence may be changed by changing the class-marker. It has not yet been convincingly shown that Urartian morphologically distinguishes verbal aspects (see §4.3.2, 3) or tenses. A verb is not negated by a suffix as in Hurrian, but by a particle which precedes it (see
§4.4.3). The subject of an intransitive verb is marked by enclitic personal pronouns which are – unlike the Hurrian condition – a constituent part of the verbal form. The transitive-ergatival verb has suffixes which mark the patient. There are, however, two different markers of the third-person singular patient, which are distributed according to agents. Apart from the pronominal suffixes which are etymologically identical with the Hurrian enclitic personal pronouns of the absolutive (see Ch. 9, §4.4.10.1), no person suffixes have been observed. It is, however, possible that the vowel  in the form  is a marker of the third singular agent. The Hurrian plural suffix –aʔ has no counterpart in Urartian verbal inflection (as far as it is known). As in Hurrian, a wide variety of nonindicative moods occur.

4.3.1 Valence

Valence (the number of noun phrases governed by the verb) is indicated by the vowels treated in §4.3.3. As in Hurrian (see Ch. 9, §4.5.1), some roots are attested in both transitive and intransitive use: aš– “enter” (intr.) / “put in”; keš– “advance” / kut– “send, forward, extend, conquer”; naḥ– “sit down” / “carry away”; ši– “come” / “bring”; ušt– “go on a campaign” / “offer,” “present”. Normally, however, the root is attested in either transitive or intransitive usage. As in Hurrian, a change of valence can be marked by the suffix -ul-:

aš=ul=ə “I put in [a garrison],” aš=ul=ə “[when the country] was occupied,” aš=ul=ə “[the palaces] were occupied.”

4.3.2 Undefined verbal suffixes

There are several verbal suffixes immediately following the root, which are morphologically identical with Hurrian suffixes. The scarcity of varying contexts, however, makes it impossible to prove functional identity.

1. -an- (cf. Ch. 9, §4.3 [2D]): ašt=an=ul- “?” , keš=an- “send,” ušš=an- “grant.”
2. -ar- (cf. Ch. 9, §4.3 [2I]): qapq=ar=ul- “besiege”; compare also ub=ar(=)d=ud- , tub=ar(=)d- .
3. -id-, -ud-, -d- (on the background of Hurrian, see Ch. 9, §4.5.4), -id- has been interpreted as a marker of aspect, but there is little Urartian evidence for this or any other interpretation): ab=il=id- “rank among,” batq=id- “restore”(?), e/iš=id- “settle,” iz=id- “order,” ne/ik:id- “?”, nips=id- “sacrifice (an animal in a specific way),” su= id- “force back” (written with i , never e), šer=(i)d- “?”, wel=id- “gather”; kul=ud-, lak=ud- “?” (both a damaging action); tub=ar(=)d- “?”, ub=ar(=)d=ud- “order.” A form -ad- occurs in atq=an=ad- “celebrate.”
4. -il- (cf. Ch. 9, §4.5.2, 1): ab=il=id- “rank among.”
5. -ul- (cf. Ch. 9, §4.5.2, 2): ašt=an=ul- “?” , qapq=ar=ul- “besiege,” su=il=ul- “defeat.”

4.3.3 “Class-markers” (suffixes of valence)

As in Hurrian (see Ch. 9, §4.5.6), the position following the root and the optional root-complements is occupied by a vowel which is called the “class-marker.” In most cases it is either -a- or -u-: -a- indicates single valence and intransitivity, -u- (the equivalent to Hurrian -o-) two valences and ergativity.
Some intransitive verbs have a vowel -e- or -i- of unknown function before the class-marker: bid=i=a- “return” (intr.), hut=i=a- “pray,” kut’e=a- “advance” (but tr. kut- “send,” etc.).

A few intransitive verbs have a class-marker -i-. sul=ušt=i=bə “I prostrated myself,” a(y)=išt=i=bə “[the horse] jumped.”

Some deviating forms (all with a consonant cluster before the class-marker) are not yet well understood: ulh˘ =u=də “I ordered” (intr., hapax), ul=ušt=ai=bə “he marched [ahead]” (besides regular ul=ušt=a=bə).

4.3.4 Person suffixes

The person suffixes of the verb follow the class-marker. Only the first singular, and the third singular and plural are well attested. Other forms are either not attested or questionable (e.g., šid=išt=u=šə “we built it”?).

4.3.4.1 Intransitive verbs

The intransitive verb is conjugated by means of pronominal suffixes (see §4.2.7.2) which correspond to the absolutive enclitic personal pronouns first singular and third singular of Hurrian (see Ch. 9, §4.4.10.1). The third singular is formed by a suffix -bə equivalent to the suffix -b of Old Hurrian. Only the following forms are attested:

(4) | Singular | Plural |
---|---|---|
1st | nun=a=da “I came” |
3rd | nun=a=bə “he came” nun=a=lə “they came” |

4.3.4.2 Stative verbs

The stative verb man- shows a class-marker -u- which formally is identical with the transitive class-marker (for the parallel in Hurrian see Ch. 9, §4.5.11). Different from the intransitive verb (and in agreement with Hurrian) the third-person singular is not marked by a verbal person suffix: man=u=da “I stayed,” man=u “it was” (often with adjective in -ayə [see §4.2.2, 2]), man=u-la “they were,” ali…man=u=lə [-l-i-e] “who may exist,” ali=la…man=u=l=a=la “who (pl.) may be there,” man=u=l=i=nə “may it exist!” See also §4.2.2, 14 and §4.3.5.1.

4.3.4.3 Transitive verbs

Of the person suffixes used with transitive verbs, only a subset is attested; agent (ergative) and patient (absolutive) suffixes are shown in (5). The etymology of the suffix of the first-person singular is still controversial.

(5) | Abs. 3rd sg. | Abs. 3rd pl. |
---|---|---|
Erg. 1st sg. | R=u=bə “I…him” | R=u=bə / R=u=lə “I…them” |
Erg. 3rd sg. | R=u=nə “he…him” | R=u=a=lə “he…them” |
Erg. 3rd pl. | R=it=u=nə “they…him” | R=it=u=lə “they…them” |

The first-person singular stative suffix -nə (see §4.2.7.2) displaces the absolute suffix -nə: ar=u=ma “he gave [it] to me,” *zad=it=u=ma → za=t=u=ma “they built me [the road].”

The comparison with the endings of the intransitive verb shows that both paradigms make use of the same pronominal suffixes: -bə, -nə, and -lə. There are no special suffixes for the person of the agent except the suffix -it- which marks plurality of the agent (for a possible exception see §4.3). The difference between the first- and the third-person agent is encoded by the use of two different suffixes for the patient: the first person of the agent is marked...
by the suffix -bə and the third by -na. Both suffixes refer to the third person of the patient, but -bə – exactly as with Hurrian -b (see Ch. 9, §4.5.9) – is not restricted to the singular. Referring to a plural patient, -bə may be replaced by the pluralic -lə. The occurrence of the suffixes -bə, -na, and -lə in both the transitive and the intransitive paradigms is related to the ergative structure of Urartian: both the patient of the transitive verb and the subject of the intransitive verb are encoded as absolutes.

4.3.4.4  The verb al-

This verb occurs in one form only: alə (a-li, a-li-e), always with a noun in the ergative, but without an absolutive. It introduces direct speech in royal inscriptions and letters (e.g., Lugal=šalə “[thus] says the king”). It has been suggested that the direct speech as a whole is the patient. The verbal status of Urartian alə has long been disputed, but it is confirmed by the Hurrian form a-lu-i-ib “he said.”

4.3.5  Nonindicative moods

As in Hurrian (see Ch. 9, §4.5.12), there is a considerable variety of nonindicative modal forms. Disagreement still exists over terminology, morphology, and relationship with Hurrian modal suffixes. Only the best-established patterns are mentioned here.

4.3.5.1  Imperative

The second singular imperative, both intransitive and transitive, is formed by the root plus the suffix -ə (seldom -i): ul=i (ú-li-i) “go!”; ar=ə (a-ri) “give!”; šat=ə (ša-te-e) “take!”; ti=ə (ti-(i-)e) “speak!”; tur=ə (tú-ri(-e)) “destroy!” Presumably the form ma-nu-ni “may he be/exist!” is to be interpreted as a third-person singular imperative (for the verb man- see §4.3.4.2). Perhaps the vowel u conveys a concept of state like the Hurrian imperative in -o(=nna) (see Ch. 9, §4.5.12.1); for the form ma-ni-nə see §4.3.5.2.

4.3.5.2  Jussive

The jussive is a request in the third person, marked by a suffix -in. This suffix corresponds to the jussive suffix of Hurrian -en, which in the earliest Hurrian has also the form -in (see Ch. 9, §4.5.12.2). Transitive verbs add a pronominal suffix after an anaptyctic vowel i. The plurality of the agent is marked by -it-. Examples follow: (i) tur=in=i=nə (in most cases spelled t´u-ri-ni-nə, once -ni-i-nə) “they (once ‘he’) may destroy him” (usually the plural is not marked; the form [tu]r=ut=in=e=nə, which is attested in the same context, might be the expected plural form with it → ut); (ii) ar=in=i=nə (sum-ni-nə) “he shall give [a cow]”; (iii) plural: ha=it=in(o) (ha-iti-nə) “they shall take”; (iv) aš=ı=st=in(o) (aš-ı-aš-iti-nə) “they shall give as an offering.” The form ma-ni-nə “may he be/exist” is presumably an intransitive jussive of the verb man-: man=ı=in(o); see also §4.3.5.1.

4.3.5.3  Modal -l-

The modal suffix -l- combines with various forms of mood and modifies their meaning in a way which, however, cannot always be well established; for the exact equivalent in Hurrian see Ch. 9, §4.5.12.3.

4.3.5.4  Optative

The optative expresses a wish or a demand. It is formed with the modal suffix -l- and a suffix -o. These suffixes are usually spelled as -lə or, seldom, as -l-e, but never as -l-i-e (as is sometimes the spelling with the conditional; see §4.3.5.5). Most forms are third person,
but there is also at least one form of the first-person singular. The optative may have a
pronominal suffix referring to the patient:

1. **First-person singular:** qapq=ar=u=l=i=nə (qa-ap-qa-ru-li-né) “I wanted to besiege [the
city].”

2. **Third-person singular:** urp=u=l=ə / urp=u=l=i=nə “he shall slaughter
[them]”; nips=id=u=l=ə / nips=id=u=l=i=nə “he shall sacrifice [in a specific way]”; aš-hu-li-né “they shall give as an offering”; meši-ũ-ũ-li-né “they shall gather[?] [the
grapes].” It is not yet clear whether the first of two verbs in the standard curse formula
belongs here: ũ-ru-li-a-né...ũ-lu-li-e “may they . . . him [and] destroy [him].” The
Urartian optative is presumed to be etymologically connected with the Hurrian form
(see Ch. 9, §4.5.12.4).

The optative regularly appears in clauses introduced by ašə. This word is conventionally
translated as the temporal conjunction “when(ever)”; it may, however, contain the ergative
suffix -šə and thus fill the position of the agent in an agent–patient construction, which
otherwise would be vacant. If this interpretation is correct, ašə would encode the concept
of an indefinite agent (“when one/they”). Otherwise, the forms in ašə-clauses would have
to be explained as being intransitivized by the suffix -ul- (see §4.3.1), which, however,
is not likely: ašə...aš=āst=u=l=ə (aš-hta-ãš-tú-li) “when they make an offering” (in a strict
sense: “when they are to make an offering”?); ašə...nek=id=u=l=ə (ni-ki-du-li) “when
they . . . (the canal)”; ašə...teš=u=l=ə (te-šú-li-e) “when they harvest the vineyard.”

### 4.3.5.5 Conditional

The conditional is a form with the modal suffix -l-, which regularly appears in relative
clauses of the curse formula introduced by alu-šə. The verbal form ends in -l-li-e or -l-li-e
(łi represents [li] and [le]), which we normalize here as -l-l(e)y: alu-šə inə dūb-te
tu=l(e)y (“tur=u=l(e)yə)” who(ever) might destroy this inscription”; a-lu-šə pi-i-tú-
li-i-e “who(ever) might smash [it to pieces].”

A good morphological comparison is the Hurrian conditional in -eva (see Ch. 9, §4.5.12.6).

### 4.3.5.6 Desiderative

The desiderative expresses a strong wish. In the context of the Urartian annals this may be
the wish of the royal author (“he shall . . . ”) or the reported wish of an enemy (“I heard
that he intended to . . . ”). The desiderative is formed by the modal -l suffix preceded by
a “class-marker” i (cf. Ch. 9, §4.5.6) and a suffix -anə. The same formation is attested in
Hurrian (see Ch. 9, §4.5.12.7). Examples follow: ar=d=i=l=anə (ar-di-la-né) “he shall
give [tribute]”; ha-ι-la-a-né “[I heard that the country . . . ] intended to conquer [the city . . . ]”; ir-bi-la-[né] “[I heard that the country . . . ] intended to raid [the . . . ].”

### 4.3.5.7 Additional moods

There are more modal forms which, however, are either poorly attested or semantically
difficult:

1. Formed with a complex suffix: (i) -alanəx ha-ia-la-a-né “[never had kings] conquered”
(with a glide y at the morpheme border), pa-a-ra-la-né “[to which never a king] had
brought”; (ii) -alanə qu-du-la-a-né “?” (cf. ũ-ru-li-a-né at §4.3.5.4).

2. The following (dialectal?) forms are only attested in one religious text from the early
period (meher kapısı): ni-ip-si-di-’a-a-le “they shall sacrifice them [in a special way],”
qa-ap-qa-ri-li-né “he shall carry around(??),” urp=u=ə (ur-pu-ũ-e) “he shall(?)
slaughter.”
3. A letter from Bastam has forms which seem to be jussives (first- or third-person singular?): *a-li-le* (al- “speak”), *ar-di-le* (ar- “give”).
4. The form *a-ri-a-ni* has been interpreted as nonindicative, though it could be an indicative (*ar=i=a=n*ə “he does not give her back”[?]) with a perfect parallel in Hurrian (cf. Ch. 9, §4.5.8.10).
5. *mi... kul=it=u=n*ə “they shall not let him [exist]” (cf. Hurrian *koʾl- “let”) may be a vetitive formed by the negative particle *mi* and the indicative.

4.4 Particles

“Particle” will here be defined as a word which cannot take nominal or verbal suffixes.

4.4.1 Conjunctions

The following conjunctions are identified: *ašə* “when(ever)” see §4.3.5.4; *iu* “when” (temporal clause referring to past); *eʾə* (also written *e-ú-e, e-á-i*) “and (also),” *eʾ... eʾə* “as well as”; *mi* “but”; *mi... mi* “neither... nor”; *unə* “or.”

4.4.2 Adverbs

The following adverbial particles are identified: *ainey* “anyone,” *gey* “anything,” *henə* “now,” *iština* “there,” *ištini=na* “from there.”

4.4.3 Negative particles

Negation is accomplished by the particles *ui* “not” and *mi, mi=kui* (prohibitive).

4.5 Numerals

The numerals are almost exclusively written with numerical symbols, rather than being spelled out phonetically. In an annalistic text, the expression meaning “in one year” alternates between *šusini mu* and 1 *mu*. There is, however, a plural *šusina mu*mê which is translated into Assyrian by *ina libbi šanāteya “in my years” (cf. §4.2.7.3). The cardinal 10,000 is *atibi*.

5. SYNTAX

5.1 Word order

As in Hurrian, the agent in ergatival clauses (see §4.2.6) usually takes the initial position, followed by the patient and the verb (SOV), but the sequence *absolutive–ergative–verb* (OSV) also occurs. The dative or instrumental of a god’s name regularly precedes the ergative in the first clause of a text or a paragraph:

(6) A. Ḥaldi=ə... M.=šə... ini pulusə kuḫ/y=u=na
   Ḥaldi=ə... ini pulusə M.=šə... kuḫ/y=u=na
   “To Ḥaldi M. set up this stela”
B. Ḥaldi=i=ne=na ušmaši=na M.=šə I.=šə inilə tarma=ni=la
   ath=u=a=la
   “By the might of Ḥaldi M. [and] I. dug this well”
Otherwise the dative may follow the verb:

(7) \( \text{ê.gal } \text{šıdı=ıšt=una } \text{badusi=y=} \)

“He built a palace up to its perfection(?)”

The verb may be placed in initial position when it is topicalized (particularly in the more vivid inscriptions about military campaigns, often forming chisms with regular clauses):

(8) \( \text{uşt=a=do } \text{Mana=ida } \text{eban=at=una=bo} \)

“Forth I marched towards Mana, and I consumed the land”

In nominal clauses of two absolutives the predicate noun takes the final position:

(9) \( \text{Minua=na...lugarı=ı } \text{in=ula} \)

“M. is the great king”

In a nominal clause indicating a possessive relation with a genitive, the latter takes the initial position:

(10) \( \text{M.=} \text{=ne=i } \text{sila=} \text{=ya } \text{Tariria=} \text{=i } \text{in=} \text{=ula} \)

“This vineyard belongs to T., the wife of M.”

Generally, the genitive may precede or follow its head; in names it regularly takes the initial position: for example, \( \text{Minua=} \text{i=patar} \) “Minua-town”; \( \text{Rusa=} \text{=i=su} \) “Rusa-reservoir.” In titles the genitive follows its head, perhaps following the Akkadian model: \( \text{lůg ál Bia=} \text{i=na=wa} \)

“king of the [people] of Bia.”

Other modifiers usually follow their head, whereas the deictic pronouns precede it: \( \text{lůg ál tarıa} \) “great king”; \( \text{ina=} \text{=la arnişi=} \text{=ne=la} \) “these exploits.”

Urartian has a considerable number of postpositions, which are partially based on the same forms as the postpositions of Hurrian (especially \( \text{edi} \) “person, body,” see Ch. 9, §5.1). Most Urartian postpositions have a suffix -na which is likely to be the ablative-instrumental suffix; there is, however, one postposition which is of locative origin (\( \text{ed(i=} \text{i=} \text{a} \)). In one instance (\( \text{iştini=} \text{y=} \)) the spelling suggests the presence of a third-person singular possessive suffix, as with most Hurrian postpositions. It is quite possible in fact that the majority of Urartian postpositions were formed with this suffix (hence the transcription -(i=)i). The noun governed by the postposition always takes a case ending (\( \text{apt(i=} \text{i=} \text{a} \) “on the side of,” with abl. -danə or abl.-instr.-na, \( \text{bed(i=} \text{i=} \text{=} \text{na} \) “from the side of, on the part of,” with abl.-instr. or loc.; \( \text{ed(i=} \text{i=} \text{=} \text{a} \) “to(wards),” with archaic gen./dat.; \( \text{iştini=} \text{y=} \) (spelled -ni-e, -ni-i-e), \( \text{iştin(i=} \text{i=} \text{=} \text{na} \) “for,” with loc.; \( \text{-ka} \), seldom \( \text{-ka} \) “before, in front of” – with dat. (persons), loc. or abl.-instr. (places, objects), \( \text{kai} \) can take the possessive suffix -ukə (\( \text{kai=} \text{ukə} \) “before me”); \( \text{-ka} \) “from (before),” with abl.-instr. or dat. (?); \( \text{-pe} \) “under,” with dat. or abl.-instr; \( \text{-pe(i=} \text{=} \text{na} \) “from under,” with dat. (?); \( \text{-sə} \) “(with)in,” “in the middle of,” with loc.).

Whether or not a postposition is enclitic cannot be determined in most cases, as the inscriptions do not separate words, and the evidence of the letters which utilize a word-dividing sign is insufficient in most instances. The letters seem to confirm, however, that -\( \text{ka} \) is enclitic, and this may be true for -(\( \text{pe}(i=) \text{=} \text{na} \) and -(\( \text{=} \text{na} \) as well. Even so, the enclitic postpositions clearly have not evolved into true case endings since they are not subject to \( \text{Suffixaufnahme} \) (see §5.2).

A single preposition, parə (“to(wards),” “unto,” usually with dat., sometimes with loc.) has been identified thus far.
5.2 Agreement

As in Hurrian (see Ch. 9, §5.2), a modifier (genitive modifiers and modifiers in -ḥə or -usə; see §4.2.2, 5, 15) agrees with its head. The case endings copied from the head are preceded by the relational suffix -ne- or -na- (see §4.2.4):

(11) A. Minua=i=ne=i  urišhusi=ne=i
   “Of the storehouse of Minua” (object)
B. Ḥaldı=i=na=wə  šešti=na=wə
   “For the gates of Ḥaldı”
C. ḻAD=si=n(e)=i  esi=i
   “On the paternal throne”

5.3 Coordinate and subordinate clauses

Coordinate clauses without a connective form the majority of Urartian texts. There is no pattern of nominalized verbs or verbal nouns as in Hurrian (see Ch. 9, §5.3). Subordinate clauses express a relational or a temporal connection with the main clause. The temporal clause introduced by ašə (see §4.3.5.4) in all attested cases displays a special modal form (optative), which, however, seems to express a wish or intention, not a special form of subordination. The relative clause may use the conditional (see §4.3.5.5); this is always the case in curse formulae which express a potential action. When the action is considered a fact, the relative clause uses the indicative:

(12) alə  ab=a=do  ḥaš=ı(y)=a=l=mə  Dingirmeš
   “What I requested, the gods granted to me”

Temporal clauses referring to the past are introduced by iu “when”; they always take the indicative:

(13) iu Ḥaldı=š=mə  Lugál-tuḥə  ar=u=nə  nah=a=do  ḻAD=si=n(e)=i  esi=i
   lugál-tuḥe=ı=ne=ı
   “When Ḥaldı gave me kingship, I sat down on the paternal throne of kingship”

6. Lexicon

The Urartian lexicon is even less well known than that of Hurrian. The meaning of less than three hundred words has been established, with varying degrees of exactness. For the less than one hundred roots used in verbal forms, approximately 20 percent are also known in Hurrian. This figure obscures the actual close proximity of the two languages: a considerable part of the Urartian corpus is formed by accounts of military campaigns, a genre absent in Hurrian literature; whereas the majority of Hurrian linguistic material is either related to religious ritual or to diplomacy, which are only poorly reflected in the Urartian corpus.

Aside from the basic phonological differences between Urartian and Hurrian (lack of double consonants in Urartian, lack of phonemic voicing in Hurrian), and the open questions concerning vowel length and opposition of /o/ and /u/ in Urartian, the following roots of Urartian and Hurrian (with one exception: nun-) are in total phonological agreement. This is basically true also for the nominal isoglosses below (note, however, differences under
1. **Roots used in verbal forms**: 
   - *ag-* “guide” (H. “take up”); *al-* (H. *ale-*) “speak”; *am-* “burn”;
   - *ar-* “give”; *ash-* “make an offering, sacrifice”; *dur-* “become hostile” (H. only in noun *tori*, *torubi* “enemy”); *
   - *ha-* “take”; *
   - *haz-* “hear” (H. *haz-*); *
   - *hut=i(y)-* “pray” (H. *hud-raise”); *
   - *kul-* “let” (H. *koli-*); *
   - *man-* “be” (H. *mann-*); *
   - *nah-* (H. *nahli-* “sit down”); *
   - *piš-* “rejoice” (only in the noun *pišuš* “joy”); *
   - *piz-* (written with *f* symbols); *
   - *sats-* “take” (H. *satt-*); *
   - *tan-* “do,” “make”; *
   - *ti-* “speak” (H. *tive, tia, tieni* “word”); *
   - *urb-* “slaughter”; *
   - *ušt-* “to leave for a campaign” (H. *ušt=a=nni* “warrior,” “hero”).

2. **Nouns**: 
   - *ate-* “father” (H. *atta=*); *
   - *babani* “mountainous region” (H. *p/faba, p/fabni, p/fabanni* “mountain”); *
   - *edi-* (see §5.1); *
   - *euro* “lord” (H. *evo*); *
   - *eviri* “lordship” (H. *evrišše* “lordship”); *
   - *hars* “road” (H. *hari*); *
   - *huradu* “warrior” (H. *huradi* “a kind of” warrior”); *
   - *išana* “opposite bank, lakeside” (H. *e/išave* “opposite bank”); *
   - *išina* (see §5.1); *
   - *išani* “inside, middle”); *
   - *kur* (ukr*) “foot” (H. *ugri* “foot”); *
   - *pil* “canal” (H. *pilía*); *
   - *pura=me* “coat of mail” (H. *kargarni*, a piece of military equipment); *
   - *sali* “year” (H. *sawala*); *
   - *šešro* “living” (H. *še/ušgurni* “life”); *
   - presumably identical with the archaic element of a personal name *šeširni*); *
   - *šuha* “new” (H. *šuge* “new”); *
   - *šuro* “weapon” (H. *šauri*); *
   - *tarmanila* “spring,” “well” (H. *tarmani* “spring,” “well”); *
   - *taršuani* “man” (H. *taršu(w)ani*); *
   - *uštišnu* (also *tišni*) a part of the body (H. *tižni, tiža* “heart”); *
   - *ula* “another” (H. *oli*).

It cannot be demonstrated that all of these isoglosses were inherited from the proto-language ancestral to Hurrian and Urartian. It is possible that some words (especially military vocabulary) were borrowed from Hurrian into Proto-Urartian in the middle of the second millennium BC.

In several cases, it can be shown that Urartian and Hurrian use different lexemes which apparently only exist in one of the two languages: thus, for “build,” “erect [a building]” Urartian consistently uses *šid=išt-*, whereas Hurrian uses *pa-*.

One word has been claimed as a loan from Akkadian – *kubuša* “helmet.” Even this, however, is questionable, since Akkadian *kubšu* is not a piece of military equipment but a headdress or cap, often made of wool and used by gods, kings, and high officials.

There are no secure examples of borrowings from other languages.

**Bibliography**

There is no Urartian grammar which presents the present state of knowledge of the language. The following monographs are in need of correction and supplementation in the light of the research literature of the last decades:


The indices of the two corpora of text editions may serve as a dictionary:
For history, culture and comprehensive bibliographies see: