

The Diversity of Cursing Formulae in the Urartian Royal Inscriptions through Time

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Received: 14 February 2023 / Accepted: 18 May 2023

Abstract

To ensure protection from harm and adversaries, the endings of various Urartian royal inscriptions incorporated the cursing formulae. These formulae had similarities and differences in a king's reign or in comparison with the other kings'. This paper aims to discover the diversity of these formulae and to compare them in the reigns of different Urartian kings. The formulae have changed and sometimes developed through the reign of new kings, and the details of the formulae changed through time. Additionally, the role of the three supreme gods of Urartu in these formulae is significant; however, they were not the only gods mentioned. Furthermore, cursing towards the decedents of the enemy was expressed. Cursing the enemy "under the sun" is a challenging expression in the formulae. It may be related to the function of the Urartian Sun God as the "Judge" who punishes the destroyer. Recording ^DUTU instead of Šiwini, Sun God, and ^DIM instead of Teišeba, Weather God, could be due to the significance of Haldi. This could also be due to the fact that the Sumerian variants of sun and weather gods' names were commonly used, or possibly those names ended up being taboos.

Keywords: Urartu, Cursing formula, Sun God.

Introduction

The cursing formulae, which were written at the end of inscriptions, were believed to protect the inscriptions, buildings, temples, fortifications, castles, or artifacts from any potential damage or destruction by the enemy or by malicious individuals. The formulae were harsh and dreadful to prohibit people from damaging the inscriptions or monuments. In order to intimidate the person who aimed to damage the inscription or the building, sometimes the curse targeted the descendants of the destroyer. Plausibly, the enemies were terrified of such powerful words, and in the event that they harbored intentions of destruction, the cursing could prevent them. Therefore, the cursing acted as a powerful weapon against the enemies' destructions (Cameron 2002, 57-58). Additionally, the supreme gods had the most significant role as the powerful protectors of the kingdom. There were similarities

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among cursing formulae of different nations in antiquity, however, their details changed according to the nation, different kings' reigns, and even specific events.

Among the ancient nations, Urartians used the cursing formulae on several royal stone inscriptions. They ruled on the shores of Lakes of Van, Çildir, Sevan, and Urmia from *ca.* the ninth to seventh centuries BC. The cursing formulae of the Urartian kings might seem similar, but they are not identical, whether it is during one king's reign or the following kings'.

There are a few scholars who were interested in some of the cursing formulae, such as Benedict (1960), Gordeziani (2009; 2019), the present author (Dara 2013), and Grekyan (2019).

The author aims to study the cursing formulae used by each king to identify similarities and differences over time. Cursing formulae were already in use before the Urartians, like in the Assyrian inscriptions, and their comparison needs to be examined on their own (See Grekyan 2019, 246).

The Urartian Cursing Formulae

The Urartian royal inscriptions included three main sections: the introduction, the body, and the ending. However, not all inscriptions included all three parts. There were several clichés used in the Urartian inscriptions, but there were even some differences in the details of these clichés. The introductions include the name of at least one god, mostly 𐎧𐎺𐎠, as the king's master and protector. Then, the name of the king, mostly along with the patronyms, was mentioned. The construction, campaign, triumph, sacrifice offering, captives, and the enemies' humiliation were mentioned in the body of the inscription. Finally, the ending of the inscriptions included cursing formulae and sometimes the prayers to the living king (Dara 2013, 27). Whenever an inscription was repeated more than once over a stele, the cursing was usually mentioned only once at the end of the whole inscription on the reverse of the stele.

Benedict (1960, 383-85) asserted that the Urartian cursing formulae are different from the Assyrian ones. To demonstrate this, he presented different parts of some cursing expressions. However, the discovery and translation of more inscriptions presented more information regarding the formulae.

The ending formulae of the Urartian inscriptions included cursing to those who destructed, damaged, hid, displaced, or removed the inscription or the monument. Also, sometimes, the phrase included who erased the king's name and wrote his own in its place. The enemy could even appoint another person to damage the inscription, and that person also deserved to be punished. The turning point of the formula was cursing the name, life, and descendant of the enemy, which was, however, not included in every formula.

The gods who played roles in the ending cursing were either 𐎧𐎺𐎠 himself or the trinity of 𐎧𐎺𐎠, the weather god (Teišeba), and the sun god (Šiwini) or the trinity along

with “other gods.” ^DIM and ^DUTU in the inscriptions are translated as Teišeba and Šiwini (Gordeziani 2009, 62), which will be discussed later.

According to Gordeziani (2009, 62), “under the sun” is regarded as the territory under the authority of the Urartian deities and the deities of the people conquered by the Urtartians. Beyond this territory was chaos and subjected to the power of other deities and people. Possibly, the formula referred to the restriction in offering shelter to a destroyer by other people and gods.

The most ancient Urartian curse sentences were written in the co-regency of Išpuini and Minua, his son (ca. 810-780 BC). Kaleshin stele (Dara 2017, 42 § 37-40) and Surb Pagos stele (Salvini 2008, A 3-4 vo § 21'-34') both included a rather long cursing. In the cursing of Surb Pagos stele it is mentioned that whoever erased or destroyed the inscription or threw it in the water or on the soil or under son, or even appointed somebody to do that, may Țaldi, Weather God, and Sun God bury his name under the ground.² On the stele of Kaleshin (Dara 2017, 42 §30-41), the cursing includes whoever stole the offering of Țaldi's gate or appointed somebody to do that, and hid the stele, may Țaldi destroy his descendent on the ground. Whoever threw (or took) and destroyed the inscription or appointed somebody to do that, may Țaldi, Weather God, Sun God, and the gods of the city of Ardini remove (his) descendent from the earth.³ There is no evidence so far of the previous cursing formulae.

During Minua's reign (ca. 810-780 BC), the construction projects had been developed. Moreover, accordingly, about 155 Royal inscriptions are discovered. Therefore, more cursing formulae are recognized from the monument inscriptions, which are more diverse.

There is a common formula as the king said, “whoever destroyed this inscription, erased it, Țaldi (mostly along Weather God, Sun God and the gods) under Sun God...” Unfortunately, the rest of the cursing, which is an unclear expression⁴ widely occurring also in later inscriptions, is not easy to translate. According to Gordezianai (2019: 320) the final phrase *mì-i ar-ḫi ú-ru-li-a-ni mì i-na-i-ni mì-i na-ra-a a-ú-i-e ú-lu-li-e* is rather obscure and has not been translated although the meanings of the words are specified separately. The approximate translation could be as follows: “Neither shall (he has) a

2. [a]-lu-[še i]-ni [DUB]-te pi-i-tu-[i-e al-lu-[še ip]-ḫu-li-[i?]-e] ra-lu-še qi-u-ra-a ḫi-pu-li [a-lu-še] AMEŠ [ḫu-šu-li-i-e a-lu-še] e-si-ni-e-i [x x x a-lu-še] ^DUTU-ka-i-ni še-er-du-i-e [a]-lu-še a-i-ni-e-[i i-ni-li du-li-e ti]-i-u-li-e tu-u-r-[i-e a]-lu-še u-li-e-še ti-i-u-l-[i-e i-e-š]e za-a-du-u-bi mi-i-ni ^Dḫal-[di-še] ^DIM ^DUTU ku-u-li-tu-u-ni [mi-i ti-i]-ni mi-i zi-li-b[i qi-u-ra]-i-e-di ^D[x x x x x x] i-e ka-a-r[-() x x x]

3. aḫ-lu-še ḫa-iḫ-ni-e-i ḫú-liḫ-[e-i ḫa-i]- ḫdiḫ [x x]-ia-me du-li-i-e x [x x še-er-d]u? ḫli-i-niḫ a-lu-ḫsi-iḫ-na-a-ni x [x x x x?] ḫtaḫ-ni ḫ^{URU} ar-di-ni URU ḫa-šuḫ-li-ḫi-ḫi-ḫi-[e x x x] ḫ^Dḫalḫ-di-ni KÁ a-i-še-e-i ḫḫa-iḫ-[di a-lu]- ḫše du-li-iḫ-e mi ku-ú- i ḫ^Dḫal-diḫ-[še zi-li]-be ḫqi-úḫ-ra-a-e-di ku-lu-di-ḫi-ḫi-[e a-lu]- ḫšeḫ DUB-te i-ni [s]u-ú-i-du-li-i-ḫi-ḫi [x x x x e-si-i]- ḫniḫ a-lu-še ip-ḫu-li-i-e a-lu-še a-ḫi-ḫi-[ni-e-i i-ni]- ḫliḫ du-li-i-e ti-ḫi-úḫ-li-i-e ḫúḫ-[li-li x x] mì-ḫi ^Dḫal-di-iš ^DIM-še ^DUTU-še DINGIR^{MES}-ḫšeḫ [^{URU}ar]- ḫdi-niḫ-ni-na-še zi-ḫi-ḫi-bi qi-ra-e-di ḫku-luḫ-d[ḫi-e mi-i ar-ḫi ú-ru-li-a-ni mi i-na-i-ni mi-i na-ra-a a-ú-i-e ú-lu-li-e

4. mì-i ar-ḫi ú-ru-li-a-ni mì i-na-i-ni mì-i na-ra-a a-ú-i-e ú-lu-li-e

way out, nor shall the god or people lead (him) anywhere.” He suggested that this part reflects the primitive idea about the universe order.

This type of cursing is found in the inscriptions, such as the niches in Van (Salvini 2008, A 5-58 a-c), the inscription of the stele base from Kamişvan (A 5-70 § 1-6), Zivin stele (A 5-4 § 15-16), Palu inscription (A 5-5 § 25-26), Muradiye stele inscription (A 5-22 vo § 10'-26'), Marmos stele (A 5-22 vo § 1'-19') and Dash Tepe (Dara 2017, 66, § 16-23).⁵ Sometimes, certain words such as “destroys” and “erases” were omitted or displaced. Additionally, similar inscriptions have been found on Minua’s canal (Salvini 2008, A 5-12 a-c § 7-14), Palin stele (A 5-8 vo), an inscription in Van region (A 5-68 § 9-17), Leved Baydaş inscription (A 5-12 b § 7-14), Aşağı Micinger inscription (A 5-12 c § 7-14), and Işhanikom inscription (A 5-12 d § 7-14). The end of the inscription is lost but as the upper part resembles the previous ones the cursing is speculated. Although the cursing is to whom destroys the canal or related constructions. In some cases, only the first part of this cursing was written, such as on Karakhan stele (A 5-24 vo § 13-17) and the Anzaf inscription (A 5-62 § 17-19). Additionally, similar cursing was written on the whole reverse side of a stele such as the ending of the inscription on Alazli (A 5-6 vo § 1-18) and Patnos stele (A 5-25 vo § 1-13).

A slightly different cursing is recognized on the Körzüt inscription (A 5-56 § 6-11), and another stele from Karakhan (A 5-76 § 5-17) that states: “whoever destroys this inscription, whoever destroys what I constructed, may Țaldi, Weather God and Sun God destroy him under the sun.”⁶ The person who destroys a city is cursed with a similar formula according to the Taşburun inscription (A 5-1 § 15-24): “Whoever destroys this inscription, whoever erases it, who appoints somebody to do that, to destroy it, to annihilate it, to conquer Luḫiu, to destroy it, may Țaldi, Weather God, Sun God, and gods destroy him under the sun”⁷ Translating the ending proves to be problematic (See Gordezinaï 2019, 320). Sometimes the expression “forces or tells somebody to do that” was used in this type of formula. The reverse of Karagunduz stele (Salvini 2008, A 5-86 § 1-17) contains the following curse: “Whoever destroys this inscription, who destroys it, who tells somebody (to do that), who destroys what I built, may Țaldi, Weather God, Sun God, and gods destroy him under the sun ...”, the rest is difficult to translate. The inscription of Yazilitash (A 5-3) includes who destroyed the inscription, erased it, appointed somebody else to destroy what the king constructed, may the three supreme gods destroy him under the sun.

5. [m^mmi-nu-]a-še ɾa-li-ɾ a-lu-še i-ni [DUB-te pi?-tú-li]-i-e a-l[u-še ú-li i-ni-li du-l]i-i- ɾe-ɾ tú-ri[ni-ni ɸhal-di-še ɸIM-še] ɸ[UTU] ma-a-[ni ɸUTU-ni] pi-i-ni mi-i [ar-ḫi ú]-ru-li-a-ni mi-[i i-na-i-ni mi-i na-a]-ra-a a-[ú-i-e ú-lu-ú-li-e]

6. [a-lu-še i-ni] DUB-t[e tu-li-i-e] a-lu-še u-[li-e-še ti-u-li-e i]eše za-d[u-bi tu-ri-ni-ni ɸhal-di-še ɸIM-še ɸUTU-še ma-a-ni ɸUTU-ni pi-e-i-ni]

7. mi-nu-a-še a-li-e a-lu-še i-ni DUB-te tu-li-e a-lu-še pi-tu-[li]-e a-lu-še a-i-ni-i i-ni-li du-li-e a-lu-še u-li-še ti-u-li-i-e i-e-še ^{URU}lu-ḫi-u-ni-ni ḫa-u-bi tu-r[i-ni-n]i ɸhal-di-še ɸIM-še ɸUTU-še DINGIR^{MES}.še ma-a-ni ɸUTU-ni pi-i-ni mi-i ar-ḫi u-ru-li-a-ni mi-i i-na-a-i-ni mi-i na-a-ra-a a-u-i-e u-[lu-li-e]

There were other rarely used cursing formulae recognized on the inscriptions of Minua as well as Artsoverberd stele (Salvini 2008, A 5-17 vo § 14-21) and an inscription of Van (A 5-18 vo § 15-22) that ended with unknown words. This formula includes cursing the vandal to be punished by Țaldi and other gods.⁸ Additionally, there is a formula discovered on the fragments of the steles from Karakhan (A 5-30 vo § 6-11; A 5-31 vo § 8-13) mentioning “the land or ground”⁹—without ^D determinative sign—along with the punishing gods, which reads as follows: “Whoever erases this inscription, who removes it, who tells somebody to do that, may Țaldi, Weather God, Sun God, the ground (or land) and the gods bury him under the ground.” Perhaps it is a sign of land holiness or importance since the enemy will be buried in the ground. It could also be that there was not enough room, so the ^D had to be eliminated. Another different formula is “whoever destroys it, who (does) evil, who removes it, who destroys it, annihilate it, (may) Țaldi under the sun.”

The cursing of Minua’s reign was rarely about the descendant¹⁰ such as the base of Muş stele (Salvini 2008, A 5-7 vo), and this type of formula was even used in his co-regency with his father. The inscription on the reverse of the Sihke stele (A 5-91 vo § 1-8) states that whoever removes this stele from here, destroys it, may three gods (destroy) his descendant and the descendant’s descendant. Therefore, cursing to the three generations of the destroyer has been used since Minua.

Approximately fifty royal inscriptions dating back to the reign of Arġiŝti I (*ca.* 780-756 BC) have been discovered. However, the cursing formulae were not diverse. According to the Javan Ghale rock inscription (Dara 2017, 74) “Whoever destroys this inscription, may Țaldi under the sun”¹¹ The ending is difficult to translate (See Gordezinaï, 2019: 320). A curse mentioned in the inscription (Salvini 2008, A 8-7 § 11-13), including Quera, Land or Ground God, with ^D determinative, along with Țaldi, unlike the Karakhan inscriptions mentioned above.

The cursing on the eighth column of Arġiŝti’s annals in Khorkhor of Van is written as whoever damaged the inscription, erased it, appointed somebody to do that, destroyed it, annihilated it, destroyed what the king constructed, removed something from there, may three gods and the other gods destroy his descendant and the descendant’s descendant under the sun (Salvini 2008, A 8-3 VIII § 11-13).

The cursing formula is sometimes longer than the inscriptions’ introduction and body. There are three lines of the introduction and body on Arinçkus stele and seven lines of cursing to those who destroyed the inscription, hid it, damaged it, other sides, or told somebody else to do that, may three supreme gods and the other gods under the sun god (Salvini, 2018: A 8-44). The ending part is difficult to translate (see Gordezinaï 2019, 320).

8. a-lu-ŝe ú-la-a ú-e-si-du-li-i-e a-lu-ŝe ú-i-e ŝú-ĥi ba-at-qi-i-a-ni nu-lu-uŝ-tú-ú-i-ni-ni ^Dĥal-di-ŝe e-ú-e DINGIR^{MES}-a-ŝe pa-ri-e e-si-ni te-e-la-a-n

9. qi-ú-ra-a-ŝe

10. armuzi

11. [a-l]u-ŝe [i]-ni IM tú-li-e tú-ri-ni-ni ^Dĥal-di-ŝe ^DUTU-ni pi-ni mi-i ar-ĥi u-ru-li-a-ni

There are also about forty inscriptions discovered from Sarduri II's reign (*ca.* 756-730 BC), among which only about three cursing expressions can be observed: "Whoever destroys this inscription, who erases (it), who removes (it), who tells another one to do that, destroys, annihilates, may Haldi, Weather God and Sun god, his descendant under the sun ..." The rest is difficult to translate (see Gordezinaï 2019, 320) according to Habibuşagi inscription (Salvini 2008, A 9-4 § 35-40). The shorter form of the same formula is used in the Karataş inscription (A 9-11 § 10-11) as whoever took, destroyed, may three supreme gods and other gods punish him under the sun. Furthermore, an extraordinary form of cursing is recognized in Armavir inscription (A 9-13 § 20-28) that is not observed in the previous kings' inscriptions: "Whoever takes (it), who tells another person to do that, destroys, annihilates, ruins, may Haldi, Weather God and Sun god, his descendant's grandchild under the sun ..." with the ending remaining difficult to translate. Cursing generations after the enemy is a very harsh one that is not recognized before this king.

There are about ten inscriptions discovered from Rusa I's (*ca.* 730-713 BC) with only two recognized cursing expressions. The cursing of the Tsovinar inscription is as whoever destroyed the inscription, may Sun God destroy him, his name, and the descendant's grandchild under the sun (Salvini 2008, A 10-2 § 19-20). Moreover, the brief curse on the Mahmoud Abad stone inscription says, "Whoever destroys this inscription in front of the sun ..." (Dara, 2017: 83)¹² with some words difficult to translate (see Gordezinaï 2019, 320).

Less than ten royal inscriptions are available from the reign of Argišti II (*ca.* 713 BC) that mostly end with cursing formulae. There is a very simple curse at the end of Hagi stele (Salvini 2008, A 11-2 vo § 36-38): "Whoever destroys this inscription here." The uncommon ending curse of Thanahat stele (A 11-3) states whoever destroyed the name of the king, annihilated, may three gods destroy his descendant's name under the sun. Razliq (Dara 2017, 108) and Nashteban (Dara 2017, 113) inscriptions bear the following: "whoever destroys my name, erases this inscription, may Haldi, Weather God, Sun god and other gods under the sun."¹³ The cursing of Shisheh inscription (Dara 2017, 119) is slightly different. It curses, "Whoever erases this inscription, destroys my name, annihilates it with writing his name on it, may Haldi, Weather God and Sun god (punish) his name and his descendent under the sun." The long curse on the reverse of the Bulutpinar stele (Salvini 2008, A 11-8 vo § 1-20) says: "Whoever destroys this inscription, whoever erases (it), Who throws (it), who (tells) another person to do that, annihilates, destroys, may Haldi, Weather God and Sun god under the sun ..." and yet, again, the rest is difficult to translate (see Gordezinaï 2019, 320).

Rusa II (*ca.* 685-645 BC) built several edifices, however, only a limited number of distinct and diverse cursing formulae remained on about half of his royal inscriptions.

12. a-lu-še i-ni DUB-te tú-li-i-e mi-i ar-ji-e ú-ru-li-a-ni ^DUTU-ni-ka-a-i

13. a-lu-še ti-ni-ni tú-li-e a-i i-ni DUB-te pi-tú-li-e tú-ri-ni-ni ^Dhal-di-še ^DIM-še ^DUTU-še DINGIR^{MES}-še ma-a-ni ^DUTU-ni pi-i-ni

“Whoever destroys this inscription of Țaldi’s gate, who erases, throws, who removes it, who destroys what I built, (from) Bia Land and enemy land, who destroys my name, put his name (instead), destroys, annihilates, may Țaldi, Weather God, Sun god and the gods, the name of his descendant’s grandchildren under the sun. . . .” Some words at the end prove challenging to translate (see Gordezinaï 2019, 320). The aforementioned curse is cited in the long inscription of Karmir-blur (Salvini 2008, A 12-2 VIII § 4-11). Here, we also find the same method employed by Sarduri to cast a curse on multiple generations of the enemy. The same cursing is declared on the stone block of Adilcevaz (A 12-4 II § 19’-25’). Furthermore, there is a similar cursing written on Zvartnos stele (A 12-8 § 32-47): “Whoever destroys this inscription, removes, throws (it) on the ground, throws (it) in the water, destroys what I built, destroys my name, (writes) his name (instead), from Bia Land or enemy land, may Țaldi, Weather God and Sun god erase his descendant’s name from the earth.” There is a short formula in Ayani (A 12-9 § 14-15) that asserts: “Whoever destroys my name and put his name (instead), destroys, may Țaldi, Weather God and Sun god.” A different cursing is mentioned on the inscription of Adilcevaz (A 12-10 § 3-4) saying: “Whoever destroys this inscription, burns (it), under the sun.” Curses on Urartian metal artifacts are extremely rare. However, there is a different formula on a shield from upper Anzaf offered to Țaldi: “Whoever takes the shield . . . who pours water, who putt up the fire by soil, may my lord Țaldi destroy him” (Çilingirođlu 2004, 259; Batmaz 2012, 4).

Only one curse has been recognized so far among the approximately six royal inscriptions discovered from Rusa III’s reign. It is found on the Savacik stele and is documented as follows (Salvini 2008, A 14-2 vo § 35-49),

I built this lake (water reservoir). Whoever destroys this (stele), erases, destroys, (tells) somebody to destroy, who destroys what I built, who (tells) somebody to do that, tells somebody to destroy, may Țaldi, Weather God, Sun god and gods his descendant’s grandchild under the sun . . .

Once more, the last words are hard to translate (see Gordezinaï 2019, 320). This formula has been used since the era of Sarduri II, whereby the subsequent generations of the destroyer are also cursed.

Analysis and Results

According to the evidence, the first recognized cursing formulae were discovered from the co-regency of Iřpuini and Minua. The length of these curses was considerable. The cursing on Kaleshin includes offering sacrifice to Țaldi’s gate.

The other kings changed the original formulae, and each added or deleted parts of the formulae. Therefore, the cursing formulae can be either similar or distinct throughout their reign. Some expressions were repeated during the reign of different kings of Urartu, but in some cases, they also made changes or added new ideas to the formulae. Even in the time of one king, several forms of the cursing formulae were discovered.

In the reign of Minua, the following curse as whoever destroyed the inscription may three supreme gods punish him under the sun and bury the destroyer's name under the ground was rare. As mentioned earlier, there were several construction projects during the reign of Minua, which led to the recognition of more diverse cursing formulae. Cursing to whoever destroyed the inscription or erased it with the help of three supreme gods "under the sun" was a typical formula. However, sometimes expressions were added, deleted, or displaced. In some cases, the name of the construction or the city to be protected was also mentioned.

Additionally, there were cursing formulae utilized to curse those who hired vandals. There are even different formulae in the same era mentioning the earth or land (without god determinative) along with the names of other gods. The determinative might have been eliminated due to the lack of space. Moreover, mentioning the ground or land could either emphasize its holiness or imply that the destroyer shall be buried in the ground. During Argišti I's rule, the term "the ground" with the determinative was mentioned once, and the phrase "burying the destroyer" was used in inscriptions related to Išpuini and Minua.

Cursing formulae towards the ground is mentioned with the determinative once in Argišti I's reign, and burying the destructor was used in Išpuini and Minua's reign.

The cursing to the destructor's descendent appeared during the reign of Išpuini and Minua. Then, both the descendant and his descendant were cursed during Minua, Argišti I, and Rusa I's reign. Later, there were cursing expressions against the descendant's grandchild from Sarduri II, Rusa II, and Rusa II's reign. This might have happened because more assurances against the destroyers were needed. On the other hand, Rusa II built several constructions, but unlike Minua, he used a few cursing formulae on his monuments. It is possible that his strong belief in the monument's safety or his inclination against employing cursing formulae could have contributed to this.

There are not as many cursing formulae and different ways to curse that were discovered from Argišti I, and Sarduri II's reign. The ending of Argišti's annal includes the common cursing formula. Only three cursing expressions were discovered from the reign of Sarduri II, and only one is unfamiliar. Furthermore, the parts of the cursing formulae that are difficult to translate are also challenging.

Only two recognized cursing expressions were discovered from the reign of Rusa I, including one curse towards the "descendent of the descendent." During Argišti II's reign, Rusa's common formulae were used again.

As mentioned earlier, there were several constructions discovered during the reign of Rusa II. New cursing expressions emerged during his rule. He would curse the destroyer, whether they were from Urartu or an enemy country. He would also curse anyone who wanted to throw the inscription in water and fire or try to put out a fire with soil. "Under the sun" is a challenging expression that was utilized at the end of most

cursing formulae. On account of the discussions with Mirjo Salvini and Marie Claude Trémouille (February 2014), they suggested that it could refer to “the land where the sun shines over.” However, we have a different interpretation of the translation. ^DUTU or Šamaš in Mesopotamia is not simply the sun, but also functions as the judge. Therefore, it is possible that the same was also believed in Urartu. Hence, despite the occasional omission of the determinative sign of god, ^D, it is very likely that the Sun god plays a role in overseeing curses and punishments. It is essential to recall that the Sun God also controlled courts and judgments in Mesopotamia.

Another challenging problem with the cursing formulae is referring to weather and sun gods as ^DIM and ^DUTU instead of their names ^DTeišeba and ^DŠiwini. This happened when their names were mentioned in the other parts of the inscriptions, like the introduction and body. In antiquity, mentioning the names of the gods was taboo in specific regions such as Mesopotamia and Elam.

According to Hinz (1965, 352), the reason for using *DINGIR.GAL* instead of the deity’s name was that the god’s name was considered taboo during the second millennium BC. Moreover, Koch (1995) suggested that Kiririša’s name should not be mentioned in Elamite inscriptions for a while. Probably, due to her name becoming taboo, she acquired the label of “Great Lady.” It was also possible that Kiririša was not the name but merely a nickname for the goddess. It could also be the name of another god or a local goddess who later became very important in the region of Elam. Possibly, the same was believed in Urartu as well. Also, it could be due to respecting the gods. Additionally, it is possible that the weather and sun gods were widely mentioned in their Sumerian forms in the Urartian culture. Therefore, using the name Teišeba and Šiwini instead of ^DIM and ^DUTU in the translations cannot be correct.

The cursing on the steles was usually on the reverse side of the one-language inscriptions, even if the body of the royal inscription was repeated several times on the same stele.

These results are based on the discovered inscriptions. The author hopes for alternative findings if more inscriptions are discovered.

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