

THE BRONZE STATUETTE FROM VAN AT THE LOUVRE MUSEUM

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The bronze statuette discovered in the basin of Lake Van in 1872 currently is exhibited at the Louvre Museum.



It is an exclusive value in the Armenian music history. The bronze figurine is of 6.5 cm. height and introduces a sitting man playing wind instrument. This statuette depicting a musician is one of ancient specimens excavated in the Armenian Highland¹.

¹ Բարսեղյան Է.Ա., Հայ հին երաժշտության բրոնզե արձագանքը Լուվրի թանգարանում, "Յառաջ", "Միտք և արվեստ" շաբաթաթերթ, Փարիզ, 05.01.1992: Rapport aux Universitet de Liege "L'écho de bronze de la musique ancienne arménienne au Musée du Louvre"/in: Liège, 1994. – Etudes et Recherches Archéologique de la Musée / l'Université de Liège, 61, Sons originels de la musique/: préhistoire de la musique.



The bronze statuette from Van

The figurine has a “crest-like” hairdo (or a hat) with a small hole in the upper part (0,3 cm.). It is notable that this bronze statuette (dated to the 2nd millennium B.C. among the exhibits of the Louvre Museum)² belongs to a number of statuettes discovered in different locations of Armenia which are dated to the 3rd -1st millennia B.C.³. The human statuettes of almost the same proportions (6,5-8 cm.) and of a similar and different functional types (of clay and metal) have been discovered in different regions of the Armenian Highland. The discovered statuettes have been studied by Kh. Samuelyan⁴, Erv. Lalayan, A.A. Zakharov⁵, S. V. Bessonov⁶, S. Barkhudarian⁷, S. G. Goyan⁸, S.A.Easyan,⁹

Zh.Kachatryan and others. Archaeological data testifies to that Armenian musical instruments have been known since the 3rd-2nd millennia¹⁰.

² Joueur de flute assis, MNB-938. The Famous Armenian writer Raffi (Hakob Melik-Hakobian) (1835-1888) noted in his book *Kaytzer* [Sparks] (1883-84) that Armenian peasants in the vicinities of Van and Rusahinili found copper artifacts including statuettes of humans (“copper humans”). All these archaeological finds were stored in the Museum of Varaga Monastery (Դաֆֆի, Երկերի ժողովածու, հ. 6, “Կայծեր”, Երևան 1986, էջ 64).

³ Generally, big experience of making clay statuettes was at the basis of creating bronze statuettes. The art of creating anthropomorphic clay figurines comes from the Eneolithic epoch in the Armenian Highland. S.Esayan noted: “Human image had a significant place in ancient art of the Armenian Highland. It is introduced by not big but valuable specimens with large and small plastic and perfect images of hunting and agricultural rituals, etc. These multiple and diverse images reached us from the Neolithic Age in the form of small sculpture and images and sceneries made on pottery”. The researcher paid especial attention to “the anthropomorphic statuettes dated to the 7th-3rd millennia B.C. discovered during excavations from the archaeological monuments of the Neolithic and the Early Bronze Ages, as well as due to accidental finds in different places of the Armenian Highland, which were widely spread in settled, early farming cultures” (Եսայան Ս. Ա., Հին Հայաստանի մարդակերպ արձանիկները (մ. թ. ա. VII-III հազարամյակներ), Պատմա-բանասիրական հանդես (ՊԲՀ), № 1, 1987, p. 126).

⁴ Սամուելյան Խ., Հին Հայաստանի կուլտուրան. 2-րդ հատ.: Բրոնզե ու վաղագույն երկաթե դար. Նյութական կուլտուրա, Երևան, 1941, էջ 108:

⁵ Захаров А. А., Кавказ, Малая Азия и Эгейский мир, Труды секции археологии Института археологии и искусствознания. Вып. II. РАНИОН, М., 1928, с.34-36, Табл. II, рис. 1.

⁶ Бессонов С. В., Бронзовые статуэтки из Сарыкамыш, Известия Института наук и искусств ССР Армении, Ереван, 1930, N 4, с. 57-74.

⁷ Բարխուդարյան Ս., Վելիքովսի երկիր (Գեղարքունիք), Նյութեր Հին Հայաստանի պատմության, հատոր 1, Երևան 1935, էջ 184-185:

⁸ Гоян Г., 2000 лет армянского театра, Москва, 1952, т. 1, с. 236-274.

⁹ Եսայան Ս. Ա., Զանգեզուրի հնագիտական հուշարձանները, “Լրաբեր” հաս. գիտ., N 4, 1972, էջ 69-70:

¹⁰ Խանզադյան Է., Հայկական հին երաժշտական գործիքները, «Աշխատություններ» Հայաստանի պետական պատմական թանգարանի, հ. 5, Երևան, 1959, էջ 62-93, հմմտ. Khachatryan Zh. D., Representations of Music on Armenian Terracottas and Toreutics (Second Millennium B. C. - Third Century A.D.), Imago Musicae XVIII/XIX, 2001/2002, pp. 85-98. Բորիսյան Ա., Բրոնզեդարյան Հայաստանի երաժշտական գործիքները, Շնորհի ի վերուստ. առասպել, ծես և պատմություն, Երևան, 2008, էջ 241-242: Պետրոսյան Ա.,

It is worth to mention that the Armenian Highland is rich in copper ore and, consequently, in monuments of the Bronze Age¹¹. Moreover, similar bronze statuettes (with some differences) have been discovered in Syria, Asia Minor, “The Aegean world” including Greece, Southern Italy and Etruria¹².



“Bronzettis” from Sardinia



An Etrusque “bronzetti” A “bronzetti” from Karkhemish¹³

Աղավնատնից հայտնաբերված երաժիշտի թրծակալե արձանիկ, ՊԲՀ, № 2, 2014, էջ 140-144). In the antique period among many others, a clay figurine representing a winged youth playing a pipe was discovered. It concerns “the syncretic image of Eros or Attis, which was equated with Ara the Beautiful in ancient Armenia” (Խաչատրյան Փ., Կավե արձանիկների պատկերագրությունը, ՊԲՀ, № 1, 2002, էջ 197, 199-201):

¹¹ Мартиросян А. А., Армения в эпоху бронзы и раннего железа, Ереван, 1964. Նույնի, Հայաստանի ուշբրոնզեդարյան քանդակագործությունը (մ.թ.ա. XIV- X դդ.), “Լրաբեր” հաս. գիտ., № 12, էջ 45-54:

¹² Borio Antonio, Bronzes miniatures de la Sardaigne antique, le “Currier de l’UNESCO, Paris, Sept. 1966, p.21.

¹³ Лисициан С. С., Старинные пляски и театральные представления амянского народа, т.1, Ереван, 1958, илл. в табл. LXIV.

Abovementioned researchers have emphasized the cultic significance of these kind of statuettes from different places. Antonio Borio writing about the statuettes excavated in Sardinia (which he named “bronzetti”) noted that some statuettes have hooks (to hang on a string) which is one more proof of their cultic significance¹⁴. Thus, the upper small hole of the statuette from Van, probably was also made with the same purpose.

The data of archaeological materials and medieval miniatures (illuminated manuscripts) about the Armenian musical instruments have already attained attention of the researchers¹⁵. Pipes made from bone were discovered during the archaeological excavations in Garni and Dvin.



A pipe from Garni

An opinion has been expressed that the pipes with 5 holes had cultic significance as they were made of the bone of crane (or stork), which in ancient Armenian and some other countries symbolized a herald of spring and sun¹⁶. It is notable that in ancient times the figure “five” was associated with the famous five planets: Jupiter, Saturn, Mars, Mercury and Venus¹⁷.

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Կոմիտաս Վարդապետ "Հայ գեղջուկ երաժշտություն", գլ. Բ, "Նուագական երաժշտություն", Փարիզ "Անահիտ" հանդես(revue), 1938, էջ 41-48: Կ, Ղաֆաղարյան, Ղվին քաղաքը և նրա պեղումները, Երևան, 1952, էջ 72: Արաքեյան Բ. Ն., Гарин, И., Ереван, 1957, с. 75. Лисициан С. С., Старинные пляски и театральные представления амянского народа, т. 1, Ереван 1958. Ջանփոլադյան Հ., Դվինի պեղումներից հայտնաբերված ապակե սրվակ, Հայաստանի պետական պատմական թանգարան, "Աշխատություններ", հ. V, Երևան, 1959, էջ 149-150: Քոչարյան Ա., Երաժշտական գործքները Հայաստանում, Գիտություն և տեխնիկա, N 1-2, 1970. Kocharyan A., Percussion and Wind musical Instruments in Armenia, Erevan, 2008. Արաքեյան Բ. Ն., Клад серебряных изделий из Эребуни, Советская археология, 1971, № 1, с. 143-157. Тер-Мартirosов Ф. И., Терракоты из Арташата, Лրաբեր, 1973, 4, с. 82-91. Оганесян А. Л., Музыка в древней Армении, ՊԲՀ, 1973, N 2, էջ 61-76: Կարախանյան Գ. Լ., Երաժիշտ կատարողների քանդակներ XII-XIII դդ. խաչքարերի վրա, Лրաբեր, 1976, N 3, էջ 99-105: Тагмизян Н. К., Теория музыки в Древней Армении, Ереван, 1977.

¹⁶ Ղազիյան Ա., Արև-արեգակի պաշտամունքի վերապրուկները հայ ժողովրդական հեքիաթի մի տիպում, ՊԲՀ, № 3, 2011, էջ 208-212, cf. "The Egyptian hieroglyphic *benu*, which is a figure of a heron or crane (and thus akin to the phoenix), was employed to designate the rising sun" (Superstitions concerning birds <http://www.sacred-texts.com/etc/bb/bb05.htm>). "The crane was usually considered to be a bird of Apollo the sun god as a herald of spring and light" (Mythology And Folklore) <https://sites.google.com/site/ancientwings2013/mythology-and-folklore>

¹⁷ Քոչարյան Ա., Միափող սրինգ, "Լրաբեր" հաս. գիտ., N 11, 1962, Երևան, էջ 68: Danielian E.L., Barsegian E.A., Artistic Transformation of Cosmological Notions in the Material Culture of Ancient Armenia, Yerevan 1985, pp. 84-86. The Fourth International Symposium on Armenian art (Theses of reports). According to mythological notions, crane was a divine bird (Hopkins E. W., Epic Mythology, New York, 1969, p. 19). Acharyan H. studying etymology of the word *krunk* (crane) in comparison with Hittite, Old Greek, Latin, Old High and Modern German, Anglo-Saxon, Cornish (Kernewek), Cymraeg (Welsh), Breton, Lithuanian, Latvian (Lettish), Old Prussian, Old Slavonic, Russian, Serbian, Polish and differentiating from Persian and Kurdish, concluded that it is a native Armenian word proto-form of which is *gurōng-* of the Proto-Indo-European language (Աճառյան Հր., Հայերեն արմատական բառարան, Բ,



Armenian duduk

From ancient times sunrise melodies in Armenia were performed, particularly at wedding parties, funerals or other ceremonies. These melodies were played by Armenian wind instruments – սրինգ, զուրնա-դուդուկ (pipe), սրինգ, շվի (flaute), շեփոր, կռածո փող (trompette), եղջերափող (horn).

There was a belief in the Ancient East that the sun died at night and revived in the morning. Such a perception found its reflection in the riddles written for children by the Catholicos of Armenia, Nerses IV Shnorhali (Gracious, 1166-1173): “It is born, grows and dies at the same day. Then with a new breath it puts on bright clothes” (The Sun)¹⁸.

Taking into consideration the belief that the sounds of wind instrument gave a breath to the dead²⁰, it can be supposed that by playing sunrise melodies (sahari) people magically facilitated the “revival” of the Sun.

Judging from the average comparative sizes of the bronze statuette from Van it can be supposed that the full-scale instrument's length was 47-50 cm. The Armenian *zourna*, a wind instrument of this size was widely used in the basin of Lake Van until the Armenian Genocide.

Armenian *zourna* has been preserved and in Eastern Armenia and at the south-eastern coast of the Black Sea among Hamshen Armenians.

A double flute depicted on the silver rhyton (the 4th BC) from Erebuni²¹ is a good example of an ancient wind instrument.

Armenian *zourna* in the Van basin¹⁹

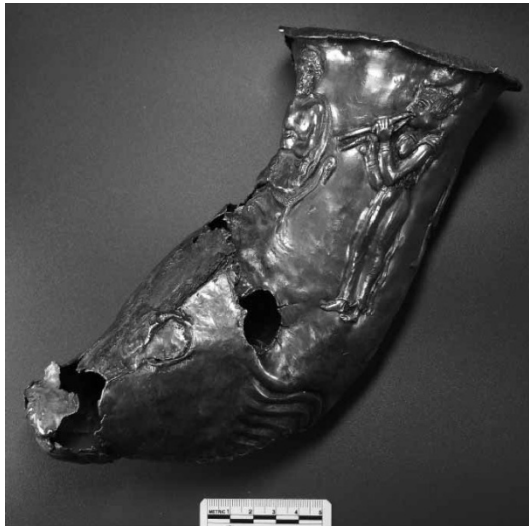
Երևան, 1973, էջ 673). Without taking into account the H. Acharyan's work, recently has been proposed a supposition about “the possibility that the Armenian word might be a mere onomatopoeic coinage of no great antiquity” (Gąsirowski P., Gruit grus: The Indo-European names of the crane. - Studia Etymologica Cracoviensia 18, 2013, 8. Arm. kirownk, pp. 62-64). Such a supposition is ungrounded because it needs thorough substantiation (ed.).

¹⁸ Ներսես Շնորհալի, Հանելուկներ, Երևան, 1984, էջ 5:

¹⁹ Հայկական տարագ. հնագույն ժամանակներից մինչև մեր օրերը: Ուսումնասիրությունը և նկարները Առաքել Պատրիկի: Երկրորդ հրատ., Երևան, 1983, Տարագային քարտեզ:

²⁰ Kathi Meyer-Baerp, Music of the Spheres and the Dance of Death: Studies in Musical Iconology, New York, 1970, p. 339.

²¹ Аракелян Б. Н., op. cit., p. 143-158. Առաքելյան Բ., Ակնարկներ Հին Հայաստանի արվեստի պատմության, Երևան, 1976, էջ 55: Бarseghyan Э. А., Античная свирель на серебряном ритоне из Эребуни, “Լրաբեր” հաս. գիտ., 1990, N 10, էջ 65-67. Маркарян А., Серебряный ритон из Эребуни, ՊԲՀ, № 2, 2002, с. 167. Hacatrian Ž., Markarian A., 2003: I rhyta di Erebuni nel contesto dell'arte achemenide e greco-persiana // Parthica.5, 9-20, M.Treister, The Treasure of Silver Rhyta from Erebuni, p. 119 http://www.academia.edu/5578797/M._Treister_The_Treasure_of_Silver_Rhyta_from_Erebuni._I._The_Calf-Head_Rhyton



The rhyton in the form of a head of a young calf.
Erebuni Museum. Photo M.Treister

There was a belief in Ancient East that the wind instruments as a symbol of vital breath contributed to "resurrection from the dead". The sound of the pipe was considered the symbol of God's voice²⁴. It is not a coincidence that in one of his *taghs* St. Grigor Narekatsi called for to sing the Lord's Ascension with "the sound of the trumpet"²⁵.

The worship festival of the ancient Armenian God, Ara the Beautiful was celebrated near the Lezk village, on the slopes of a mountain near Lake Van²⁶. Ritual dances were performed under the sounds of *zourna*²⁷.

According to a Greek myth about a reed instrument, a pair of pipes called "aulos"²²: "Minerva [Athena] is said to have been the first to make pipes from deer bones and to have come to the banquet of the gods to play. Juno [Hera] and Venus [Aphrodite] made fun of her because she was grey-eyed and puffed out her cheeks, so when mocked in her playing and called ugly she came to the forest of Ida to a spring, as she played she viewed herself in the water, and saw that she was rightly mocked. Because of this she threw away the pipes and vowed that whoever picked them up would be punished severely. Marsyas, a shepherd, son of Oeagrus, one of the satyrs, found them, and by practicing assiduously kept making sweeter sounds day by day, so that he challenged Apollo to play the lure in a contest with him."²³



Greek avlos

²² Barker A., Greek Musical Writings: Volume 1, The Musician and His Art, Cambridge, 1989, p. 74, n. 79.

²³ Pseudo-Hyginus, Fabulae 165 (trans. Grant) (Roman mythographer, 2nd A.D.) <http://www.theoi.com/Olympios/AthenaMyths.html> Pythagoras thought the aulos had an assertive tone, suited to large gatherings (Iamblichus: On the Pythagorean Life. Translated with notes and introduction by Gillian Clark, Cambridge, 1989, p. 49).

²⁴ Exodus, 19: 16, 19; 20: 18, 19.

²⁵ Գրիգոր Նարեկացի, Տաղ Համբարձման, "Տաղեր" (գրաբար և աշխարհաբար), Երևան 2013, էջ 74-75:

²⁶ Абебян М., "История древнеармянской литературы", Ереван, 1975, с. 27. The toponym Lezk is derived from the Armenian word լիզել (lick). According to a legend preserved by Movses Khorenatsi, Ara after being killed in a battle for the freedom of the Motherland, was resurrected by gods who licked him (Մովսես Խորենացի, Պատմութիւն Հայոց, Երևան, 1991, Ա, ԺԵ). In mythology licking dog-spirits were known under the name of *Aralezes*.



Armenian zurna

It can be said that the image of the bronze statuette from Van had connection with the worship of the spring blossom and fruitfulness known under the name of Ara the Beautiful. The symbol of fertility - fallos is present there, as well as in the "bronzettis" excavated in other areas.

There is another interesting version of the Van bronze statuette's instrument which belongs to horns. As it is known from ancient written sources and medieval miniature painting, there were used as natural, as well as copper-hammered types in Armenia. Some of their versions had holes and were named "trumpet". Copper trumpets and horns that were blared during the military ceremonies and festive rites were called "military" polyphonic or "four sounded" trumpets.

It was possible to clarify the presence of sound holes on pipes and trumpets by means of a comparative analysis of miniature painting²⁸ by the method of study of musical instruments.



Mat..6670, 130b, XVIIc., Kars region



Mat. 3387, 112b, 1635, New Jugha

²⁷ Лисициан С., *op. cit.*, p.161, табл. LXXXI. A sample of zurna from Shatakh, Western Armenia.

²⁸ Guevorkian A., *The Crafts and Mode of Life in Armenian Miniatures*, Matenadaran, Yerevan, 1978, pp. 115-125.



Mat. 5783, 17b, 1588, Mokka'

Mat. 317, 2a, 1675, Baghesh²⁹

A version of a labial trumpet is present in the 15th century miniature of Artshesh (21), which is very like European medieval cornets called "cornet a buquin". Taking into consideration the sizes of *Hamshen zourna* we decided to recreate a version of the ancient Armenian instrument preferring the traditional apricot wood.



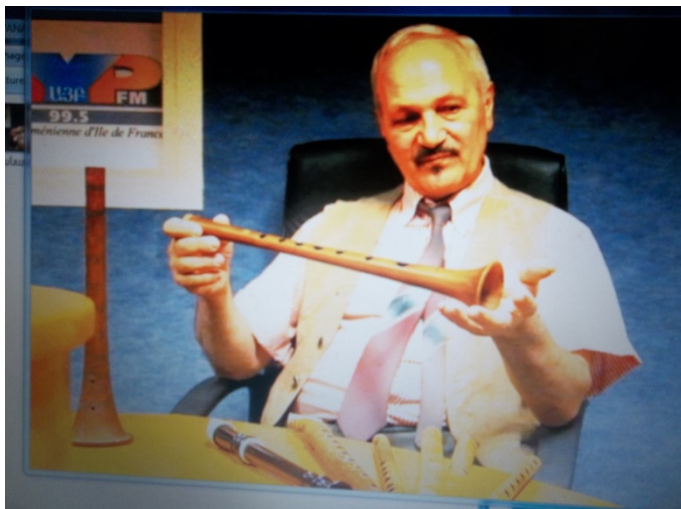
303 Armenian national musical instruments. XV- XVI cc. High relief on a stone near Gavar (on the southern shore of Lake Sevan)

It is mostly spread in the land of "*Prunus armenicum*"³⁰. Apricot wood is resonant, stable and has a quality of gaining beautiful, natural brown shades.

²⁹ Ibid., plates XLIII-XLVIII.

³⁰ Danielyan E.L., *Prunus Armeniaca*: Originated in Armenia, 21st CENTURY, № 2, pp. 79-94.

Finally the instrument was made and introduced to the Folk commission of Composers Union of Armenia.



The author with the replica of the “Vanapogh” (“Van-trumpet”) of the Lake Van and exhibited in the Louvre Museum we called “Van-trumpet”.

It was awarded excellent by the specialists and was recommended to be exhibited in the “Sardarapat State Museum of Ethnography and History of the National Liberation Struggle of Armenia”. The replica of the trumpet was awarded with the bronze medal of “The Exhibition of National Costumes and instruments” in Moscow.

The instrument of “bronze musician” excavated from the coasts

ARMENIAN KINGDOMS (III-II millennia B.C.)

