

## *Lion and Bull hunting in the Urartian state*

### *Concept*

Within the frameworks of the International Day for Monuments and Sites, theme of which is the "Heritage of Sport", ICOMOS/Armenia, in a close collaboration with the "Erebuni" Historical & Archaeological Museum-Reserve, is organizing an exhibition entitled "Lion and bull hunting in the Urartian state".

In the religious systems of several regions of Ancient Near East lion hunting, sometimes even bull ritual hunting had an important role. These are demonstrated not only in the various scenes of the Ancient Near East iconography, but also in several written sources.

The «institution» of the lion and bull ritual hunting was mostly widespread during the period of Middle and New reigns of the Assyrian state. Here it was bearing mostly "royal character". In many written sources the Assyrian kings were referred to killing lions and bulls.

The lion and bull hunting was original and unusual competition and included some sporty elements.

As for the Urartian state, we have very few information about the possible existence of the ritual hunting. But in the urartian iconography, there are some scenes, which can prove the existence of the ritual hunting in the kingdom of Van. Such scenes are appeared especially in the Urartian belts depicted with trimmings.

It should be mentioned that "Erebuni" Historical & Archaeological Museum-Reserve is one of the unique institutions, where archaeological artifacts with the scenes of lion and bull hunting are stored. These are fragments of belts found from the Nor Aresh columbarium and from the Biainili vault.

The exhibition will be consist of two posters: banners and above mentioned archaeological artifacts. Each poster will include pictures and written text both in Armenian and in English.

Reference will be made not only to the several sport events of Ancient Near East, to the lion and bull hunting in Ancient Near East and to its signification, but also to the competitions in Urartu.

Reference will also be made to the lion and bull hunting in Urartu, where the scenes of hunting for the above mentioned animals appeared in iconography will be represented in details.



