

Religion at Home and Away

*The Old Assyrian Religious Practices in Assur
and Kültepe-Kaneš*

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1. Introduction

1.1 Research Questions

This paper aims on cross-examining and comparing the religious practices of two Old Assyrian¹ sites, namely Assur in northern Mesopotamia and Kaneš (modern Kültepe) in Anatolia. Via the investigation of the relevant textual and archaeological evidence unearthed in Assur and Kültepe, I will investigate primarily whether the Assyrians who resided in Anatolia maintained their own religious practices, as they were expressed in their home-city Assur, or if they adopted religious practices that can be attributed to the Anatolian tradition. At the same time, I will also deal with the secondary question of whether the religious practices of Kültepe in this period are of strictly Anatolian origin or a by-product of Anatolian tradition and Assyrian influence.

1.2 Corpus and Methods

The Old Assyrian period (table 1) is known for the extensive mobility of Assyrian merchants traveling from Assur to Anatolia to sell goods. This statement points out that the cultural and social aspects of the Old Assyrian period can be detected in Assur and in Anatolian sites with intense Assyrian presence. Therefore, for this study I have chosen to examine the religious practices of the Assyrians in their mother-city Assur and in one of the Anatolian sites in which they settled. Concerning the latter, Kültepe is the ideal site since it has produced sufficient evidence regarding this period and it is still being excavated.

¹ Concerning the various terminology used in this paper in order to refer to a specific chronological period (i.e. Old Assyrian period, Early Bronze Age etc.), see table 1.

In order to answer my research question, I will examine closely both the relevant textual and archaeological evidence from the sites of Assur and Kültepe. That means that I will have to critically analyze the excavation reports of those two sites,² in order to find traces of Old Assyrian religious practices in the architectural remains or in other objects such as pottery, seals, figurines etc. Concerning specifically the site of Kültepe in Anatolia, I will also provide certain parallels from other contemporary and/or earlier Anatolian or Mesopotamian sites, wherever possible, in order to point out the cultural origin of a cultic object and a religious practice in general.

Furthermore, I will study the relevant and available publications of the texts unearthed in both aforementioned sites,³ even though it should be noted that many tablets from the site of Kültepe remain unpublished. Via the aforementioned study, I will decide what further information the texts can provide and how they can be associated with the other material finds. Certainly, I will examine and take into account pertinent articles of secondary literature that analyze the content of the tablets and the meaning and use of the excavated objects. Via the above research methods, I ultimately aim at re-examining and re-evaluating the current evidence and theories on the Old Assyrian religious practices and at creating a more concise and up-to-date overview of the Old Assyrian religious practices.

1.3 Past Research

The Old Assyrian religion has constituted a small part of the Old Assyrian studies and publications, considering that the scholars have been more concentrated on understanding the Old Assyrian economy. This has happened on the one hand, due to the vast amount of textual evidence regarding the Old Assyrian economy and

² See for example the excavation reports of Andrae 1913; 1922; Özgüç 1986a; 1999.

³ For the royal inscriptions of Assur see Grayson 1987. The majority of the private archives from Kültepe can be found in the various volumes of the series Ankara Kültepe Tabletleri, see Bilgiç et al. 1990-2016. Specific Old Assyrian texts from both sites can also be found online in the catalogue of Cuneiform Digital Library Initiative (CDLI), see <http://cdli.ucla.edu/projects/royal/royal.html>.

the trade between Assur and Anatolia and on the other hand, because of the lack of sufficient religious evidence both from Assur and Anatolia.

However, there are certain important past studies that have shed some light on the Old Assyrian religion. For instance, the dissertation of Jak Yakar,⁴ in which he provided a complete report regarding the archaeological evidence on the Anatolian religion of the early second millennium, focusing mostly on the local perspective of the religious practices in several Anatolian sites. A few years later, Hans Hirsch⁵ extracted the religious data from the Old Assyrian texts and created a long list of personal names that contain a theophoric element. Furthermore, Mogens Trolle Larsen in his study on Assur and its colonies,⁶ examined briefly the archaeological and textual evidence of religion in Assur and Anatolia. More recently, Guido Kryszat investigated the practices and the beliefs of the Anatolian community in Kültepe as they were recorded in the Old Assyrian documentation.⁷ During the last decade, Klaas Veenhof and Mogens Trolle Larsen provided an overview of the latest textual evidence on Old Assyrian religion, updating thus the study of Hirsch.⁸ Finally, there are also new articles which enrich our knowledge on the subject, such as the publication of a relevant text from Kültepe by Jan Gerrit Dercksen and the re-interpretation of the stone stelae from Kültepe by Yağmur Heffron.⁹

At the same time, research has been conducted on other instances in human history where mixed settlements were set up and thus locals and “foreigners” interacted culturally for a considerable amount of time. Such a possible example is the late Middle Bronze Age-early Late Bronze Age (table 1) settlement of Akrotiri in Thera, Greece. In this settlement during this period there is a clear change in the local material culture from Cycladic-oriented to Minoan-oriented (the so-called “Minoanization” of the settlement), which has been attributed to intense Minoan

⁴ Yakar 1968.

⁵ Hirsch 1972.

⁶ Larsen 1976.

⁷ Kryszat 2006.

⁸ Veenhof 2008a; Larsen 2015.

⁹ Dercksen 2015b; Heffron 2016 respectively.

influences.¹⁰ For example, a few houses of the settlement adopted specific Minoan architectural features, certain buildings were decorated in Minoan frescoes, in pottery several Minoan vessels were imported and produced locally, the locals adopted the Minoan Linear A script for keeping records etc.¹¹ Concerning the religious practices of the settlement, they offer the same picture, since many Minoan religious symbols have been located both in the plastered wall paintings and in the material culture, such as horns of consecration, tables of offering, rhyta, and stone offering vessels.¹²

However, even if this settlement¹³ had intense foreign cultural influences during a certain period, there cannot be extracted any further conclusions due to the fact that the character of the Minoan presence at the site of Akrotiri is still an open debate. There are many scenarios in order to explain the archaeological finds of this period, ranging from a permanent Minoan political presence after domination, few migrations of Minoan settlers, to merely intense commercial exchanges between the Minoans and the locals.¹⁴ However, so far there is no definite answer to this question.

¹⁰ Davis 2008, 190.

¹¹ Davis 2008, 190-1, 193.

¹² Marinatos 1984, 175.

¹³ I should note here that there are other examples of contemporary settlements in the broader region of the Aegean, which present the same intense Minoan influences. For example, Miletus in Asia Minor, Phylakopi in Melos, Ayia Irini in Kea etc. See Davis 2008.

¹⁴ Davis 2008, 202-5.

2. The Scenery

2.1 *The Old Assyrian Period*

During the first centuries of the second millennium B.C.E., the extensive commercial exchanges between Assur and Anatolia led to the formation of Assyrian interconnected trading settlements in several cities of central Anatolia. That means that the Assyrian merchants acquired commercial “bases” in Anatolia, which allowed them to transport and sell imported goods such as textiles, tin and lapis lazuli in higher prices and in return to ship silver and gold back to Assur (map 1).¹⁵ Their long-distance commercial activities flourished for more than two centuries (ca. 1950-1720 B.C.E.),¹⁶ a period which has obtained various names in the relevant literature, such as “the Old Assyrian period”, “the *kārum* period”, “the Old Assyrian colony period” etc.¹⁷

The aforementioned large-scale commercial network brought to the surface the need of written records in order to document the exchanges, the loans, the debts and other economic affairs among the merchants. From those Old Assyrian economic records, unearthed mostly in Kültepe, it has become known that overall there were forty commercial settlements of two types (*kārum*, *wabartum*),¹⁸ located in Anatolia. Among those were the sites of Alişar Hoyük and Boğazköy, both of which will be used as parallel sites in this study, while Kültepe was the center of the Assyrian commercial network in Anatolia.¹⁹

Few among the unearthed Assyrian texts belong also to the official administration of the two parties, since there have been discovered treaties

¹⁵ Veenhof 2010a, 39.

¹⁶ The Old Assyrian period in archaeological terms covers a part of the Middle Bronze Age (ca. 2000-1550 B.C.E.). The latter term will also be used in some cases in order to chronologically define objects from contemporary sites. For the various chronologies used in this paper see table 1.

¹⁷ Michel 2014, 69.

¹⁸ The former indicates a major and permanent Assyrian settlement such as the ones in Kültepe and Boğazköy, while the latter refers to a trading station such as Alişar Hoyük. See Veenhof 2010a, 44-5.

¹⁹ Michel 2011, 313. Out of the forty settlements mentioned in the texts only three have been successfully identified with an actual site so far. See Bryce 2005, 21-2.

between the Anatolian settlements and the city of Assur. In those it became clear that the Assyrians living in Anatolia were *“administratively and legally independent from the local authorities and that they interacted with them via their representatives. [At the same time,] they were also accorded some protection in the city and on the routes of the kingdom that were guarded by Anatolian. In exchange, they had to pay various taxes to the Anatolian palace.”*²⁰

Concerning the end of the Old Assyrian period in Anatolia, the bulk of our information comes from the ongoing excavations in Kültepe. Thus, the last unearthed document around 1720/19 B.C.E. marks the end of the Old Assyrian period in Anatolia (level Ib), which is also marked archaeologically by a layer of fire that ruined the houses. However, it seems that the people did not evacuate the city, but rather they built new houses on top of the foundation of the previous phase.²¹ This new settlement was very modest in comparison to the previous phase, although according to Kulakoğlu the commercial relationships continued, at least with northern Syria.²² After the end of this settlement Kültepe remained unsettled for about 800 years.²³ It is not clear why the Assyrian settlements ceased to reside in Anatolia, however Veenhof attributed the destructions to political tensions and military actions in the region of Anatolia.²⁴ Kulakoğlu also mentioned natural disasters or changes that affected the region.²⁵

Regarding the end of the Old Assyrian period in Assur, it seems that Assur probably entered a “dark period” with no evidence of written sources and historical data, already before the end of level Ib in Kültepe. The latter might also explain partly the decline of textual and archaeological evidence of this level in Kültepe.²⁶ These “dark ages” are attributed to a political confusion and they are dated

²⁰ Michel 2014, 72. For the treaty of Kültepe with Assur and of Hahhum with Assur see Günbatti 2004, 249-68.

²¹ Kulakoğlu 2014, 86. This new architectural layer is level Ia (ca. 1719-1685 B.C.E.)

²² Kulakoğlu 2014, 86.

²³ See Kulakoğlu 2014, 86-92.

²⁴ Veenhof 2008a, 143.

²⁵ Kulakoğlu 2014, 92. These natural disasters however are dated by Kulakoğlu after 1500 B.C.E.

²⁶ Out of the 23,500 tablets, only 500 belong to level Ib, while several forms of pottery and glyptic art did not survive from level II to level Ib. See Kulakoğlu 2011, 1022-8.

according to Veenhof “*between the end of 18th century and the end of the 15th century B.C.E., when Assur had been able to free itself from political domination by or influence of the Mitanni state.*”²⁷

2.1.1 *Kārum*: A Working Definition

The Old Assyrian documents brought to the surface the term “*kārum*”, specifically when referring to an Old Assyrian settlement in Anatolia (i.e. *kārum Kaneš*). The aforementioned Akkadian word is already known from Babylonian texts of the early second millennium B.C.E. and it was used to describe a similar commercial system of merchants “*who lived together with the local traders in a special area, called kārum, [meaning] ‘quay, harbor’,²⁸ and where they conducted their business in the interest of themselves, their mother-city, and their host city.*”²⁹ Regarding the use of this term in modern literature concerning the Old Assyrian period, apart from being a label for this period in general, it is also used to denote the lower city of the settlement in Kültepe. This association is probably based on the fact that the Assyrians resided in the lower city, however we should bear in mind that in this part of the city local and other foreign merchants resided as well.³⁰ Overall, even though it seems that the term *kārum* probably referred somehow to the Assyrian settlements in Anatolia, as Michel stated since the real extent of the *kārum* is not known and since it is not exactly clear to what it referred to specifically, it should be distinguished from the lower city of Kültepe.³¹ This study will also follow this suggestion and will use the term lower city in order to designate the area where the Assyrian merchants resided in Kültepe.³²

²⁷ Veenhof 2008a, 23.

²⁸ According to Michel this meaning “*corresponds originally to the quay where merchandise was unloaded.*” Michel 2014, 70.

²⁹ Veenhof 2010a, 42.

³⁰ Michel 2014, 69-70.

³¹ Michel 2014, 70.

³² I should note here however that in certain quotations included in this study the term “*kārum*” or “*colony*” will be maintained in order to preserve the originality of the quote.

Furthermore, the same word is translated in modern publications as “colony” or “trading colony”,³³ pointing out political and/or economic dominance of the Assyrians over the Anatolians. However, the studies on the Old Assyrian period proved that the Assyrians did not conquer with military force nor dominated the Anatolian settlements they resided in, and therefore the word “colony” cannot be used to depict the Old Assyrian *kārum* system. More systems have been introduced in order to describe the *kārum* system, such as the “trade diaspora”,³⁴ however there is still no consensus on this matter.

2.2 The Site of Assur

The city of Assur³⁵ in northern Mesopotamia, now known as Qal'at Sherqat in modern-day Iraq, is situated on a cliff at the west bank of the Tigris river (map 2, figure 1). Although, the first settlement of Assur was established in the first half of the third millennium B.C.E., ca. 2600/2400 B.C.E, when the first architectural layer of a temple dedicated to the goddess Ištar was constructed, the city became historically important after 2000 B.C.E., when sufficient written sources appeared.³⁶ The first excavations on the site were conducted by the German Oriental Society under Walter Andrae, between 1903-14.³⁷ Several decades later, the Iraqi Antiquities Authorities began preserving the remains of the site and in 1978 they conducted an excavation and restoration program of the city.³⁸ In 1989 and more recently in 2001, other German expeditions, under Barthel Hrouda and Peter Miglus began archaeological programs in Assur, however due to political events they had to cease.³⁹

³³ Michel 2014, 71.

³⁴ Michel 2014, 71-2; Stein 2008.

³⁵ In order to distinguish the city from the god, I will use the spelling Assur for the former and the spelling Aššur for the latter.

³⁶ Cifarelli 1995, 15; Larsen 1976, 27-8; Veenhof 2008a, 19.

³⁷ Andrae 1909; 1913; 1922.

³⁸ Concerning the excavation reports see for instance Abdul-Razaq 1981, 96; Klengel-Brandt 1995, 20.

³⁹ Hrouda 1991, 95-109; Klengel-Brandt 1995, 20; Miglus et al. 2016.

The city of Assur held a strategical position, considering that its location provided an overview of the valley of the Tigris river. Thus, the city, on the one hand, had important access to the trading routes from southern to northern Mesopotamia and on the other hand, it was in close distance to the routes connecting northern Syria with the land of Elam.⁴⁰

2.3 The Site of Kültepe-Kaneš

The site of ancient Kaneš (modern Kültepe) is situated 22 kilometers north of Kayseri, in central Turkey (map 1). Kültepe has been systematically excavated since 1948 by a Turkish expedition firstly under the direction of Tahsin Özgüç and currently under Fikri Kulakoğlu.⁴¹ The site consists of two parts: a high oval mound and the lower city surrounding the mound (fig. 2).⁴² On the mound, the previous excavator of the site revealed certain monumental buildings, such as a palace, official buildings and two temples (fig. 3).⁴³

The most important building of the mound is the palace, which measures about 110 by 100 meters.⁴⁴ According to Larsen, dendrochronologists have pointed it out that the first construction of the palace was around 1835/32 B.C.E.⁴⁵ Even though one would think that the existence of a palace on the citadel would also offer an important administrative archive, that is not the case in Kültepe. Only forty tablets were found on the citadel, which offer only little information concerning the names of the kings who resided in the palace.⁴⁶ The two temples of the mound will

⁴⁰ Klengel 1995, 21.

⁴¹ Emre 2010, 22; Larsen 2015, 26.

⁴² Bryce 2005; 23; Larsen 2015, 29. The lower city is not completely excavated yet; however, it is thought that it surrounds the mound entirely. See Michel 2014, 70.

⁴³ Özgüç 1999.

⁴⁴ Larsen 2015, 30; Özgüç 1999, 79.

⁴⁵ Larsen 2015, 31.

⁴⁶ Larsen 2015, 31-4; Michel 2014, 69. According to Larsen, most of them remain unpublished. See Larsen 2015, 36-7.

be examined further in the archaeological evidence associated with the religious practices.

Excavations in the lower city have revealed several streets, more than one hundred private houses, as well as remains of a wall which probably encircled the settlement.⁴⁷ However, it is still not known how large the settlement was.⁴⁸ Overall, the excavators have divided the building phases of the lower city in four main levels (IV-I) which correspond to levels 10-6 of the mound (fig. 4, table 1). From those four levels of the lower city, only levels II (ca. 1950-1840/36 B.C.E.) and Ib (ca. 1833/30-1720/19 B.C.E.) produced some 23,500 cuneiform tablets that belong mostly to the private archives of the Assyrian merchants settled in Kültepe. These tablets document the exchanges, the loans, the debts and other economic affairs among the merchants.⁴⁹ Those two levels, therefore, represent the Old Assyrian presence in the site.⁵⁰

Concerning the nature of the Assyrian presence in those two levels, it seems that the very first Assyrians who resided in Kültepe during level II were the eldest sons of trading families who would leave their families in Assur for a few years in order to represent their family firms in Anatolia.⁵¹ Most of the merchants of this first generation after succeeding financially in Kültepe would eventually move back to Assur during the last years of their life.⁵² As more and more Assyrians would reside in Kültepe, their settlement would acquire a more permanent character since they would buy houses from the locals, they would relocate their whole family in Kültepe and in many cases Assyrian men would marry an Anatolian woman.⁵³ It is therefore

⁴⁷ Larsen 2015, 41. I should note here that the wall is not mentioned in any text of level II and Ib. See Dercksen 2004, 101.

⁴⁸ Larsen 2015, 39; Michel 2014, 70.

⁴⁹ Atici et al. 2014, 2.

⁵⁰ Larsen 2015, 39-40; Michel 2014, 70. The two levels were separated by a layer of destruction. See Hertel 2014, 25.

⁵¹ Michel 2014, 78.

⁵² Dercksen 2014, 66.

⁵³ Michel 2014, 78-9; Veenhof 2010a, 55.

evident that the relationship between the merchants and the locals developed gradually from purely commercial to also cultural.⁵⁴

Finally, even though the excavations at the site of Kültepe have revealed several households containing in most cases rich archives of merchants,⁵⁵ a lot of discussion has been made regarding the location of other important buildings which are mentioned in the written sources.⁵⁶ For example, the main official building of the settlement or "the office of the colony" (*bēt kārim*), which was the "seat of the Assyrian administration in Kaneš", and the "the Gate of the divine Aššur" (*bāb Aššur*) or "Gate of the God" (*bāb ilim*) which was associated with oath taking ceremonies.⁵⁷ This gate probably designated the entrance to the temple of Assur in Kültepe, which has not been found.⁵⁸ Concerning the latter I will provide more evidence later, when I will examine the possibility of an Aššur temple existing in Kültepe based on the textual evidence.

⁵⁴ Michel 2014, 79.

⁵⁵ Hertel 2014, 27. I should note here that it is not always clear whether a house belongs to an Assyrian or an Anatolian even when archives are present in the house. For instance, a research conducted by Hertel points out that 28 out of 112 houses in Kültepe contain archives but the identity of the owner is not established. Concerning the rest of the houses of the research, 49 are Assyrian households and have archives that belong to Assyrians, 14 are Anatolian households and contain archival material (mostly unpublished) that belong to an "Anatolian" family and finally 17 houses do not contain any archival material at all. See Hertel 2014, 32.

⁵⁶ Dercksen 2004, 100-4; Larsen 2015, 50-1; Michel 2014, 70.

⁵⁷ Dercksen 2004, 103.

⁵⁸ Dercksen 2004, 101.

3. Ancient Religious Beliefs and Practices

3.1 Definition and Context

Before examining the actual material evidence, which might illustrate the religious beliefs and practices of the Old Assyrian period, it would be useful to provide a short definition of what this paper perceives as ancient religious beliefs and practices. It should be stated from the beginning that it is not the purpose of this paper to provide a list of the Old Assyrian gods, their place in the pantheon and their characteristics. Rather it aims on placing specific objects and spaces, that could have been perceived as divine representations or sacred areas respectively, into the social and humane context. That means that the objects will be examined in association to the cultural background and identity of the people that manufactured and used them and not as an entity on their own. The latter follows Bottéro's study on religion in which he stated that *"a certain religion becomes 'real' through the individuals who practice it"* and who give life to it through the centuries.⁵⁹ The objects or the spaces do not mean anything on their own if they are not associated with the presence of people who would interact with them and who used them for a specific purpose. As Bottéro mentioned *"the religious practices that include the representations of the divine and one's attitude toward it [...] are exclusively and completely the products of one's imagination."*⁶⁰ Therefore, it is essential for a study of religious practices to take into severe consideration the human factor who embodied those beliefs. Especially, regarding the Mesopotamian religion in which *"the divine was portrayed on the human model and was spread out over a whole society of supernatural being, gods whose needs people were expected to fulfill and whose orders were to be carried out with all the devotion, submission but also generosity and ostentation."*⁶¹

⁵⁹ Bottéro 2001, 2.

⁶⁰ Bottéro 2001, 4.

⁶¹ Bottéro 2001, 6.

From the above, it becomes clear that one cannot examine the religious activities of a society without taking into account the actual people who practiced them. The specific use of certain objects, buildings and areas for serving or communicating with the divine, constitutes the application into practice of the religious beliefs of a specific group of people. The association of the religious practices to a cultural tradition and to specific individuals is the focal point of this paper since it is evident that without the human factor the realization of a religion would not be possible.

3.2 Defining the Anatolian and Mesopotamian Religious Practices

In this paper, I will often characterize the cultic objects that point out the religious practices as either “Anatolian/local”, “Mesopotamian” or “hybrid” based on the material evidence, in order to place them into an already existing cultural tradition. Therefore, it becomes essential to provide a definition concerning the aforementioned classifications, before examining the preserved data, even though the division between Anatolian and Mesopotamian evidence is not always clear. Thus, I will consider as Anatolian/local those cultic objects and religious practices that can be traced in the material evidence of Early Bronze Age or Middle Bronze Age (table 1) Anatolian sites with limited or no Assyrian presence or influence. Moreover, as Mesopotamian cultic objects and religious practices I will consider those that can be traced in the material evidence of Early and Middle Bronze Age Mesopotamian sites. Finally, in those cases where parallels cannot be traced I will interpret the cultic objects and the religious practices as the hybrid outcome of the cultural contacts between the Anatolians and the Assyrians in Anatolia.

4. Old Assyrian Religious Practices in Assur

At this part of the paper I will examine the archaeological and textual evidence from the city of Assur, in order to illustrate the Old Assyrian religious practices. Before the actual examination of the material evidence I will provide some further information concerning the two most prominent deities of the Assyrian pantheon.

4.1 God Aššur

Assur's close proximity to the main Sumerian and Babylonian centers of the south played an essential role in its cultural development.⁶² In Assur we can find both the separate identity of northern Mesopotamia as well as the distinctive characteristics of the Sumerian and Babylonian civilization.⁶³ Regarding the Assyrian religion, it seems that on the one hand the Assyrians worshipped, among others, the gods Adad and Ištar, who are identified with the gods Adad and Ištar known from southern Mesopotamia. On the other hand, they also worshipped the god Aššur (fig. 5), who was without a doubt exclusively an Assyrian god without any other known cult centers anywhere else, before the Assyrians established these themselves.⁶⁴

Lambert pointed out that the god Aššur was not a "*deus persona*" at first, since he lacked an explicit identity and a certain "historical" background, by not having family connections with other gods or descriptive epithets connected to his name.⁶⁵ The situation alters under the reign of king Šamši-Adad I (ca. 1808-1776 B.C.E.),⁶⁶ when Aššur took over the identity of the god Enlil, who was originally the patron deity of Nippur and one of the supreme gods of the Sumerian and Babylonian

⁶² Larsen 1976, 109.

⁶³ Larsen 1976, 109.

⁶⁴ Lambert 1983, 82.

⁶⁵ Lambert 1983, 82; Livingstone 1999, 108-9.

⁶⁶ Concerning the chronology of the Old Assyrian kings see also table 2.

pantheon.⁶⁷ Somewhere in the 13th century B.C.E., Aššur adopted fully the family connections and the characteristics of Enlil, such as his wife, Ninlil and later his sons as well.⁶⁸ According to Lambert "*this use of Enlil's wife Ninlil and sons [by Aššur] merely underlines the lack of any native Assyrian wife of his.*"⁶⁹ Certainly, those actions do indicate that the Assyrians wanted to differentiate their own culture and tradition, even though they were still dependent on the Babylonian tradition, and were in need of creating a new patron deity -at least in name- for their city.

Many scholars have pointed out the fact that the city and the god share the same name, and that this fact cannot be coincidental.⁷⁰ For the case of the city, according to Larsen, the name seems to occur already from the late third millennium during the Akkadian period (table 1), whereas for the god it occurs in texts from the Ur III period (table 1).⁷¹ Concerning the Old Assyrian texts, Larsen mentions that it seems that whenever they wanted to refer to the city of Assur, they would simply use the Akkadian word *ālum* ("the city"), but at the same time there are cases where they would also use more elaborate and formal phrases such as *ālum Aššur*, *ālum^{ki} Aššur* etc.⁷² Both Larsen and Lambert concluded that this evidence indicated the facts that there was probably no distinction between the city and the god and that the god Aššur was actually the deified city.⁷³ Lambert went one step further and suggested that "*(...) the natural hill of Assur was (...) a holy spot (..) and that the inhabitants exploited the holiness of their place by converting the 'mountain' into a city, both practically by building and ideologically.*"⁷⁴

⁶⁷ Livingstone 1999, 108.

⁶⁸ Lambert 1983, 82; Livingstone 1999, 109.

⁶⁹ Lambert 1983, 82.

⁷⁰ Lambert 1983, 83; Larsen 1976, 116; Livingstone 1999, 108. I should note here that in the relevant studies it was stated that there is no etymological explanation for the word Assur.

⁷¹ Larsen mentions texts from Gasur that refer to the city. See Larsen 1976, 117.

⁷² Larsen 1976, 117.

⁷³ Lambert 1983, 83; Larsen 1976, 117.

⁷⁴ Lambert 1983, 85-6.

4.2 Goddess Ištar

Another important deity, whose temple in the city of Assur I will examine further in this study, was the goddess Ištar *Aššurītum* (“the Assyrian Ištar”).⁷⁵ Goddess Ištar (fig. 6), also known by her Sumerian name, Inanna, was the most important Mesopotamian goddess of sexual love, fertility and war.⁷⁶ She was related with cults in many Mesopotamian and Sumerian cities apart from Assur, such as Akkad, Babylon, Kish and Uruk.⁷⁷ According to Abusch, “in Uruk, but particularly in Akkad and Assyria, she was a goddess of war and victory.”⁷⁸ In Assur, she was perceived specifically as the consort of the god Aššur, acquiring thus a prominent position among the Assyrian deities.⁷⁹

4.3 Religious Practices in the Archaeological Evidence

The first excavator of Assur, Andrae, was keen on revealing the monumental buildings of the city, unearthing thus overall a few temples and a palace in the upper town of the site, along with a few graves and gates.⁸⁰ More specifically, his excavations unearthed a temple dedicated to Ištar in the central part of the city, a temple to Aššur, a nearby ziggurat, dedicated to Enlil at first and later to Aššur, a double shrine of Anu and Adad and the temple compound for Sîn and Šamaš (fig.

⁷⁵ The earliest royal building inscription associated with the Ištar temple was made by Ilušuma (20th century B.C.E.) and mentioned only the name of Ištar. However, it seems that the rulers who renovated the temple after him called the goddess of the temple Ištar *Aššurītum*. According to Meinhold, Ištar *Aššurītum* should be better translated as “*Ištar belonging to Assur.*” She suggested that the latter referred to the city rather than the god himself, due to the scarce evidence which associate Ištar to the god Aššur. See Meinhold 2009, 51-2.

⁷⁶ Abusch 1999, 452-3.

⁷⁷ Leick 1991, 99-100.

⁷⁸ Abusch 1999, 452.

⁷⁹ Leick 1991, 99.

⁸⁰ Veenhof 2008a, 38. For the material remains of Assur, I have mostly used the excavation reports by Andrae and the catalogue of the Vorderasiatisches Museum in Berlin. See Andrae 1913; 1922; Andrae and Haller 1955; Harper et al. 1995.

1).⁸¹ The temples are not all contemporary to each other and therefore I will only examine the most important temples and their relevant chronological layers.⁸²

4.3.1 The Temple of Ištar

Concerning the cultic complex of Ištar in Assur, it is clearly divided in 8 architectural layers (A-H) that mark the different structural and chronological phases of the temple (table 3).⁸³ Levels F-H represent the older phase of the temple, namely the Early Dynastic period and the Akkadian period (table 1).⁸⁴ The most important of those early architectural layers, is level G, where the so-called "Cult Room" ("*Kultraum*") was found.⁸⁵ Relevant to this study, however, are levels E and D.⁸⁶ Level E of the temple was probably built during the late Ur III/early Old Assyrian periods. Level D of the temple, marks a completely new and enlarged temple, which was also erected during the Old Assyrian period and lasted until the Middle Assyrian period (table 1).⁸⁷ The building of the level D temple is attributed to king Ilušuma (ca. 1990 B.C.E.), based on an inscription of the later king Tukulti-Ninurta I (1244-1208 B.C.E.), stating that when he destroyed the older phase of the temple in order to restore it, he found a building inscription of Ilušuma (text 1).⁸⁸ However, it seems that the building material of level E was reused for the construction of the level D, which caused problems with the dating of each layer and furthermore with their association to a specific king.⁸⁹

Regarding the material evidence from level D of the Ištar temple, Andrae briefly mentioned that 1250 clay vessels, 175 animal bones and 20 fragments of clay

⁸¹ Klengel-Brandt 1995, 17-8.

⁸² As criteria for that statement, I have used the quality of the material remains unearthed from each temple and the overall importance of each deity.

⁸³ Andrae 1922, 5; Bär 2003, 36, 38.

⁸⁴ Klengel 1995, 21; Larsen 1976, 29.

⁸⁵ Andrae 1922, 32; Martin 1995, 25.

⁸⁶ Bär 2003, 36; Veenhof 2008a, 38.

⁸⁷ Veenhof 2008a, 38.

⁸⁸ Andrae 1922, 115-6; Grayson 1987, 254; Veenhof 2008a, 38.

⁸⁹ Bär 2003, 65; Veenhof 2008a, 38.

and stone figurines, mostly of women, were found (fig. 7-9).⁹⁰ Due to the lack of a more elaborate study of the unearthed objects and of further essential material evidence for the Old Assyrian levels, I will also include objects from previous levels which may indicate a long-term religious tradition of the temple.⁹¹ Thus, according to Martin, in the Cult Room of level G, it seems that there was a bench which could have been used as a base for the display of alabaster votive figurines, found in the temple as well.⁹² These small alabaster figurines, depicting either a man or a woman, seem to be influenced by the art of the Early Dynastic period in Mesopotamia.⁹³ In the same level of the Cult Room there were discovered altars in the shape of a house, as well as hollow clay stands (fig. 10-14).⁹⁴

4.3.2 The Temple of Aššur

The other important religious complex in Assur, the temple of Aššur, has also a complicated architectural history. The excavators, concerning the older layers of the building, mark the lack of monumentality suggesting thus a non-religious character of the older construction.⁹⁵ It seems, however, that there was a sanctuary already in the Early Dynastic period based on the discovery of a votive statue.⁹⁶ The remains of the Ur III period are poor and destroyed by those of the Old Assyrian period, to the point that the excavators could not date them with accuracy.⁹⁷ The Old Assyrian remains however, were distinguishable because of the many inscribed bricks of king Erišum I (ca. 1974-1935 B.C.E.), some of which were found in situ in the

⁹⁰ Andrae 1922, 112. Andrae suggested that these statuettes depict the goddess Ištar. See Andrae 1922, 114.

⁹¹ Regarding a stone figurine of a woman that Andrae unearthed from layer E, he suggested that one should be careful in dating the finds, since it was not impossible for certain objects to have fallen from younger to older layers. See Andrae 1922, 112-3.

⁹² Martin 1995, 26.

⁹³ Harper 1995, 28.

⁹⁴ Andrae 1922, pl. 11; Klengel-Brandt 1995, 35-6.

⁹⁵ Andrae and Haller 1955, 11; Van Driel 1969, 6.

⁹⁶ Veenhof 2008a, 38.

⁹⁷ Andrae and Haller 1955, 6.

main inner courtyard of the temple and some in secondary context.⁹⁸ The Old Assyrian levels of the temple attributed to kings Erišum I and Šamši-Adad I were mostly examined by Andrae for their architectural characteristics without referring to any cultic objects or votive offerings being unearthed from the interior.⁹⁹

The most interesting find in the temple was discovered in the Cult Room o, where the excavator found a treasure, described by him as "*copper find*".¹⁰⁰ Even though, the find was discovered in a level not relevant to the Old Assyrian period, it might indicate a long-term religious tradition of cultic objects and practices in the temple. Various metal objects, including male figurines, axes, a mace head etc., were discovered in a ceramic vessel along with layers of charred wood, ash and gravel (fig. 15, 16).¹⁰¹ The figurines suggested a sacrificial act, since in one case the male figure held a small calf with his left hand and with the right one a knife and another male figurine had a lamb laid across the man's extended left fore-arm.¹⁰² The objects were dated around the end of the third millennium B.C.E.¹⁰³

Concerning the sacrificial act which can be thought as a timeless and continuous religious practice, clearly visible by the figurines and the weapons mentioned before, the excavation reports mentioned that layers of ashes were located near the temple of Aššur along with other burned materials.¹⁰⁴ The latter were interpreted as "*open air fireplaces served as places of sacrifice*",¹⁰⁵ indicating thus cultic ceremonies and religious practices outside the temples.

⁹⁸ Larsen 1976, 57; Van Driel 1969, 9; Veenhof 2008a, 39.

⁹⁹ Andrae and Haller 1955, 14-37.

¹⁰⁰ Andrae and Haller 1955, 12; Wartke 1995, 37.

¹⁰¹ Wartke 1995, 37.

¹⁰² Andrae and Haller 1955, 12; Wartke 1995, 39.

¹⁰³ Wartke 1995, 37-9.

¹⁰⁴ Andrae and Haller 1955, 10; Van Driel 1969, 6-7.

¹⁰⁵ Andrae and Haller 1955, 10; Van Driel 1969, 6-7.

4.3.3 Grave 20

Before examining the textual evidence connected to the temples and the religious practices, it would bear interest to examine Grave 20, which is generally thought to be an Old Assyrian one.¹⁰⁶ This grave may offer another perspective of the religious practices, connected with the burial customs, the rituals conducted during the time of the burial and the goods that accompany the dead in the afterlife. I will present some of the most interesting finds from the grave that may provide an overview of the religious practices and rituals during an Old Assyrian burial. Due to the insufficient study of the evidence however and in consequence their further symbolism I will not analyze them in detail.

Grave 20 was unearthed to the east of the temple of Sîn and Šamaš. The grave was a simple rectangular hole and oriented to the northeast to southwest (fig. 17). Since the skeletal remains were quite poor, it was not clear if this was a multiple or a single burial;¹⁰⁷ moreover, the grave was excavated at the beginning of the 20th century when skeletal remains were not considered essential evidence nor relevant to the excavations. This burial was thought to be a significant example of the luxurious trade conducted between Assur and Anatolia, since it has been suggested to be an Old Assyrian merchant's grave.¹⁰⁸ Among other objects, from the interior of the grave there were unearthed four rings, four golden strips called "diadems" placed over the eyes, mouth and ears of the dead, bronze/copper vessels, lead figurines which were typical in second millennium Anatolia, cylinder seals of lapis lazuli, ceramic vessels, a dagger, a handle pan etc. (fig. 18-24).¹⁰⁹ Because of the unique quantity and quality of the burial goods of Grave 20, it has been suggested that at the very least this was a grave belonging to an Assyrian citizen who had

¹⁰⁶ Haller 1954, 10. Wartke based this dating on a cylinder seal with an Ur III presentation scene that was recarved with an early Old Assyrian type representation. See Wartke 1995, 47.

¹⁰⁷ Haller 1954, 10; Wartke 1955, 44. For a more recent study on the grave see Hockmann 2010.

¹⁰⁸ Wartke 1995, 45-7. More specifically, it was dated between king Erišum I and Šamši-Adad I. See Hockmann 2010, 111-3.

¹⁰⁹ Hockmann 2010, 111-3; Wartke 1995, 44-5.

extensive commercial interests with Anatolia.¹¹⁰ Larsen associated this grave with the Old Assyrian settlement in Kültepe, where similar practices of placing thin gold strips are known from the graves found under the houses of the lower city of the settlement.¹¹¹ Wartke, furthermore, connected the grave to an Old Assyrian merchant because of three lapis lazuli cylinder seals found in the grave (fig. 22-24). As he stated, even though *“the lapis lazuli was not commonly used to make seals in the Ur III and Old Assyrian periods, there are Old Assyrian textual references [from Kültepe] concerning seals made of lapis lazuli.”*¹¹² Nowadays, based on Dercksen’s study,¹¹³ it has become clear that during the Old Assyrian period lapis lazuli was obtained from Badakhshan in Afghanistan and it arrived in Assur in order to be exported. It was sold exclusively from the “City Hall” of Assur¹¹⁴ and it was exported to Anatolia where its demand by the elite was high. The semi-precious stone, apart from seals, was also used for the decoration of various objects, for inlays etc.¹¹⁵

4.4 Religious Practices in the Textual Evidence

Almost all Old Assyrian texts found at Assur are royal inscriptions and more specifically building-inscriptions, since the king of Assur was mainly responsible for the building of the temples. Larsen listed the following kings, who were mentioned in the texts concerning their involvement in the construction of the temples: one text of king Šalim-ahum (ca. 2000 B.C.E.) relevant to the temple of Aššur, two texts of Ilušuma (ca. 1990 B.C.E.) about the Ištār temple, fourteen texts of king Erišum I (ca. 1974-1935 B.C.E.) about the temple of Aššur and its close-by buildings and the Adad temple, and four texts of king Ikūnum (ca. 1934-1921 B.C.E.) about the Adad

¹¹⁰ Wartke 1995, 60-1.

¹¹¹ Larsen 2015, 85.

¹¹² Wartke 1995, 60-1.

¹¹³ Dercksen 2004.

¹¹⁴ The “City Hall” or the “Office of the Eponym” was the place in Assur where according to Larsen *“taxes were paid and where a number of other economic and administrative activities were located, and it seems clear that the king had no special authority there.”* See Larsen 2015, 110-1.

¹¹⁵ Dercksen 2004, 18-21; Veenhof 2008a, 84.

temple.¹¹⁶ Furthermore, some textual evidence has been preserved from king Sargon I (ca. 1917-1878 B.C.E.), whose name and title occurs on certain seal impressions from Kültepe. Moreover, at Assur there has been found an inscribed object dedicated to Ištar from an individual dated during the reign of Sargon I.¹¹⁷ Finally, texts have been preserved from king Šamši-Adad I (ca. 1808-1776 B.C.E.), who also left royal inscriptions in order to commemorate his religious constructions.¹¹⁸

Regarding the first king, according to Grayson, an inscription of Šalim-ahum was found on an alabaster block in the eastern corner of the main courtyard of the Aššur temple (text 2).¹¹⁹ In this inscription, the king stated that he built the temple of Aššur after the god ordered it himself (*ḏA-lšūr l É i-ri-iš-su-ma*).¹²⁰ In the same inscription there is also a reference to “*a house of beer vats/a house of the brewing vats/a brewery*” (*bīt hubūrī*).¹²¹ Larsen and Van Driel discussed a chapel built later in the temple of Aššur, known as “kitchen”, which was shared, among others, by the gods Enlil, Dagan and Bēl-labria.¹²² The latter space is thought to be the same as Šalim-ahum's “*house of beer vats.*” Larsen suggested that it could be possible that Šalim-ahum built or repaired some chapels in the main courtyard of the temple of Aššur, but as he later pointed out however, it is not known if there was already a sanctuary at the area.¹²³

Ilušuma's inscriptions commemorate his work of the level D of the Ištar temple.¹²⁴ They do not contain further details regarding the actual construction of the temple, since on the one hand he mostly referred to his other constructions in the city, such as the new wall, and on the other hand, he described his measures concerning the Babylonians (text 3).¹²⁵ The work of Ilušuma regarding the Ištar temple was also commemorated in an inscription of the Middle Assyrian ruler Puzur-

¹¹⁶ Larsen 1976, 56.

¹¹⁷ Grayson 1987, 45-6.

¹¹⁸ Grayson 1987, 47.

¹¹⁹ Grayson 1987, 14; Larsen 1976, 56.

¹²⁰ Grayson 1987, 14; Van Driel 1969, 32.

¹²¹ Grayson 1987, 14; Larsen 1976, 56-7; Van Driel 1969, 33.

¹²² Larsen 1976, 57; Van Driel 1969, 40-3.

¹²³ Larsen 1976, 57.

¹²⁴ Larsen 1976, 59.

¹²⁵ Grayson 1987, 18.

Aššur III, in which it was mentioned that Sargon I restored the structure which Ilušuma had built.¹²⁶

King Erišum I also worked on the temple of Aššur, leaving behind at least 15 inscriptions that recorded his actions.¹²⁷ They were found on various objects such as bricks, stones, a door socket, clay tablets and a fragmentary statue.¹²⁸ Those inscriptions were found in several parts of the temple as well as in their original place in the main inner courtyard of the temple.¹²⁹ Larsen mentioned that even though the king left quite a documentation of his actions behind, it is still difficult to determine what he built exactly, due to the existence of difficult or disputed technical terms in his inscriptions.¹³⁰ For example, in his largest inscription (text 4),¹³¹ Erišum enumerated the buildings that he constructed for the god Aššur. In it, Larsen pointed out the existence of a few terms that cause trouble in meaning. For instance, the word *kaššum* which is quite unknown,¹³² and the term *išāru/išāru*. The latter is defined as "*a special section of the temple complex, outside of the main building that harbored the cella and possibly all buildings within the precinct that were not actually the house of Aššur.*"¹³³ As Larsen noticed, those troubling terms cannot help us determine if Erišum conducted severe construction work on the temple of the god or if he just renovated and fixed some of its parts, completing thus the work of his predecessors.¹³⁴

Regarding the program of Erišum, another important part of his project was the building of a structure called the '*mušlālum*'.¹³⁵ According to Larsen several texts

¹²⁶ For the inscription see Grayson 1987, 91.

¹²⁷ Grayson 1987, 19-39.

¹²⁸ Grayson 1987, 19-40.

¹²⁹ Larsen 1976, 57.

¹³⁰ Larsen 1976, 57- 8.

¹³¹ Inscription number 1 according to Grayson's numbering. Grayson 1987, 19-21; Larsen 1976, 57.

¹³² Civil et al. 1971, 293 defined it as a part of the temple of Aššur and translated with uncertainty as a door. Grayson translated it as courtyard. See Grayson 1987, 20.

¹³³ Gelb et al. 1960, 206; Larsen 1976, 58.

¹³⁴ Larsen 1976, 58; Van Driel 1969, 9.

¹³⁵ Grayson and Larsen translated it as "*Stepgate*". See Grayson 1987, 20-1 and Larsen 1976, 58 respectively. The Assyrian Dictionary of Chicago (CAD) translated it as gate or gatehouse see Civil et al. 1977, 277. In a most recent publication however, Larsen suggested that the Stepgate of the temple of Aššur was part of the *mušlālum* structure. See Larsen 2015, 114-5.

4.4 Religious Practices in the Textual Evidence

mentioned that the latter was associated with the *"dispensation of justice."*¹³⁶ Concerning the location of the structure, Larsen suggested that *"the mušlālum ran along most of the northern front of the city, overhanging the river below."* Regarding the association of the so-called "Stepgate" of the temple of Aššur, which was supposedly in close proximity to the temple, and this structure he mentioned that this was *"the gate of the temple [of Aššur] and a huge ceremonial stairway which connected the sacred area on top of the cliff on which the city is located."*¹³⁷

Finally, it should be noted that two later copies of Erišum's large inscription were also found in a house in level II of the lower city of Kültepe.¹³⁸ Grayson suggested that they were used for school purposes, since as he noticed they contain scribal errors.¹³⁹ However, he also mentioned that the excavators suggested that *"the text was relevant to the oath taking in Kaneš and that it was probably read out during formal occasions."*¹⁴⁰

Concerning king Ikūnum, there is little information from his four preserved inscriptions. However, it seems that he made some further redecorations in the temple of the god Adad, which as he mentioned was built by his father, Erišum I (text 5).¹⁴¹

From the period of king Sargon I, archaeologists have discovered several seal impressions on clay tablets and envelopes from Kültepe.¹⁴² More relevant to this study, however, is a votive offering by a woman named Hadītum, made during Sargon's kingship. The offering was a triangular bronze plate inscribed with a private dedication (text 6). The object was placed in the interior of temple of Ištar in order to secure Hadītum's and her family's well-being.¹⁴³ The latter brings up the question whether some or all citizens had access to the interior of an Assyrian temple or not.

¹³⁶ Larsen 2015, 114.

¹³⁷ Larsen 1976, 58.

¹³⁸ Veenhof 2008a, 35. This can be combined with the fact that according to Özkan *"it is generally accepted that the Assyrian Trading Colonies were established during Erišum's reign about 1920 B.C.E., if not earlier."* Özkan 1993, 502.

¹³⁹ Grayson 1972, 11.

¹⁴⁰ Grayson 1972, 11; 1987, 19.

¹⁴¹ Grayson 1987, 41-2.

¹⁴² Grayson 1987, 45.

¹⁴³ Grayson 1987, 46.

However, it seems more likely that the object was been placed in the temple from a priest and not from the individual herself.

Finally, concerning king Šamši-Adad I, Grayson mentioned that his inscriptions “*mark a major change in style and content*”, since some of them are influenced by the Babylonian tradition in form, content and dialect.¹⁴⁴ His inscriptions are quite scattered, considering that they were discovered in several Mesopotamian provinces such as Nineveh, Mari etc.¹⁴⁵ Those that were found at Assur are mostly related to the building of the temple of Aššur and they were found on stone tablets inside the temple of Aššur.¹⁴⁶ In the inscription, the king on some occasions referred to the temple of Aššur as the temple of Enlil (text 7);¹⁴⁷ the connection between the two gods was examined earlier.

Although there are no texts providing information about the rituals that were performed in an Assyrian temple from the city of Assur, there are private letters found at Kültepe that contain little information about specific Assyrian rituals.¹⁴⁸ More specifically, there are references in the letters of Šīmat-lštar, who was probably a priestess of the god Adad in Aššur, to the so-called *nasbītum*-ritual and *tamrum*-ritual.¹⁴⁹ Even though there not many details concerning the rituals, it seems that the *nasbītum*-ritual “*was held regularly, with a more elaborate version celebrated twice a year.*”¹⁵⁰ Dercksen mentioned that there are also references of an Anatolian ritual by the same name, which involved the local king and probably had a different content than the Assyrian one.¹⁵¹ There is no sufficient information regarding the *tamrum*-ritual, however, it seems that it was connected with the *nasbītum*-ritual.

¹⁴⁴ Grayson 1987, 47.

¹⁴⁵ Grayson 1987, 47.

¹⁴⁶ Grayson 1987, 47.

¹⁴⁷ Grayson 1987, 47, 49.

¹⁴⁸ Dercksen 2015a, 53-4. Even though the following texts are not originated in Assur, I decided to place them in this chapter because they are directly linked to this city’s temples, priests and religious practices.

¹⁴⁹ For the tablets that contain these references see Dercksen 2015a, 53-4.

¹⁵⁰ Dercksen 2015a, 54.

¹⁵¹ Dercksen 2015a, 54.

4.4 Religious Practices in the Textual Evidence

At this point I will examine briefly an economic aspect of the temples and the priests of Assur, revealed by the textual evidence. Although this economic action is not directly associated with the religious practices, it illustrates the involvement of the religious institutions and their representatives into the social and economic life of the city.

The term “*ikribū*” occurs many times in the private archives found at Kültepe, and its meaning is debated.¹⁵² Dercksen stated that the word originates from the verb *karābum* “to pray, to pledge”.¹⁵³ Moreover, the term in question in the singular means “blessing, votive offering” and in the plural “money or goods pledged by a vow to a deity”.¹⁵⁴ This duality in meaning also described its dual role in the religious and economic life. According to Dercksen, it seemed that the term “*ikribū*” during the Old Assyrian period signified “*a type of commercial loan or investment, provided by a temple to a merchant. The plural of ‘votive offering’ is used because the money or the goods bought with it, originate from offerings (in silver or gold) made to the temple.*”¹⁵⁵ This statement demonstrates that the temples in Assur were wealthy, with a large estate at hand and had no hesitation in loaning “public” offerings and goods (which however were thought to belong to the god himself),¹⁵⁶ to individuals such as merchants, in order to use them for commercial purposes. From the texts, according to Dercksen, it became clear that such a loan was a long-term investment, and it could usually be inherited to other family members in the case of the death of the original debtor.¹⁵⁷ Upon repaying the debt, the merchant was expected to manufacture and donate votive offerings to the temple paid with his profit.¹⁵⁸ This is

¹⁵² Dercksen 1998, 75-7; Larsen 1976, 149; Veenhof 1977, 113-4.

¹⁵³ Dercksen 1998, 75.

¹⁵⁴ Dercksen 1998, 75.

¹⁵⁵ Dercksen 1998, 77.

¹⁵⁶ Some of the gods who were “owners” of “*ikribū*” were: Adad, Aššur, Bēlum, Išhara, Ištar, Ninkarrak etc. See Dercksen 1998, 88.

¹⁵⁷ Dercksen 1998, 85. Larsen expressed some uncertainty concerning whether the pledged funds (“*ikribu*”) had to be paid back or not. See Larsen 2015, 264-5.

¹⁵⁸ Dercksen 1998, 84.

evident from an order placed by Aššur-idi in order to acquire a gold disc that he owed to Aššur and which he would pay with the silver of his “*ikribū*” loan.¹⁵⁹

Finally, private letters also from Kültepe revealed specific Assyrian religious representatives associated with trading and economic activities. For instance, there are textual references of daughters of traders becoming Assyrian priestesses (*ugbabtum*) and of specific priests (*kumrum*) of Aššur being involved in the commercial exchanges between Assur and Anatolia.¹⁶⁰ Regarding the latter, there is a reference of a year eponym named Elālī who had the title *sangûm* which according to Veenhof “*in contemporary Babylonia denotes the administrative head of a temple.*”¹⁶¹ The same eponym however as the head of the City Hall of Assur would also be involved in the financial administration and the trade. However, as Veenhof concluded it is not clear from the texts if these priests acted for their own individual interest or on behalf of the temples of Assur and the gods.¹⁶²

4.5 Conclusions

In this chapter I examined the most important Assyrian gods, their temples and cultic objects and the textual evidence from Assur, which either referred to the temples themselves or revealed details concerning the role of the religious individuals in the Old Assyrian society. Overall, the religious evidence concerning Assur, at the moment, consists of monumental architecture on the hill close to the palace, and textual evidence: royal inscriptions concerning the building of those temples and references to priests, festivals and temples in private letters.

From the evidence examined above, it seems that certain ceremonies took place outside of the temple along with the practice of sacrifice. The interior of the temple could have been used to house the statue of the god and the votive offerings

¹⁵⁹ Dercksen 1998, 84.

¹⁶⁰ Veenhof 2008a, 104.

¹⁶¹ Veenhof 2008a, 104-5. Year eponyms were in charge of the main administrative institution in Assur, the City Hall, for one year. Their terms of office were used to date records. See Larsen 2015, 122-30; Veenhof 2008a, 28-31.

¹⁶² Veenhof 2008a, 105.

(i.e figurines, altars etc.). Even though Assur was, without a doubt, an important city for all Assyrians (after all it shared its name with the head god of the Assyrian pantheon), the evidence it has produced is scarce because 1) the site was excavated in the beginning of the last century when the archaeological methods of examining and interpreting the finds were not developed yet, 2) there has not been found any large archival records, and 3) the lower city of the site has not been sufficiently excavated.

Trying to interpret however the existing evidence, such as the location of the temples and the royal inscriptions discovered in them, one might suggest that the current religious picture from Assur is probably limited to the practices of the royal family and members of the elite, who possibly had a closer relationship with the temples. Therefore, in most likelihood, this evidence cannot be applied to the majority of the Assyrians but only to a few of them. One cannot know with certainty if everyone had access to those temples and to the rituals practiced in them (in the interior or the exterior of the temple), or if they were restricted solely to the elite. It is plausible that during a formal cultic festival most citizens were able to attend a ritual on the mound or in the temple, but even so that would represent only a fragment of the religious practices in total. The Assyrian religious picture will be more complete once the lower city of Assur is thoroughly excavated, providing thus more information concerning the possible domestic religious practices of the citizens of Assur, including the merchants that traveled and settled in Anatolia.

5. Old Assyrian Religious Practices in Kültepe-Kaneš

I will now examine the relevant archaeological and textual evidence from the site of Kültepe, in order to investigate the religious activities practiced by the locals and the Assyrians during the Old Assyrian period.

5.1 Religious Practices in the Archaeological Evidence

5.1.1 Architecture

Concerning the architectural evidence of the site,¹⁶³ Özgüç discovered on the mound, west of the palace, two large buildings almost identical, set 40 meters apart (fig. 25), which he interpreted as temples.¹⁶⁴ Those monumental buildings belong to level 7 of the mound's building phases, which corresponds to level Ib of the lower city.¹⁶⁵ Both buildings have a similar construction and structure, namely a rectangular plan with 4 large stone towers projecting at each corner.¹⁶⁶ In order to build the monumental constructions, local andesite stone, mudbrick and wooden beams were used.¹⁶⁷ Both buildings contained a large central hall, which was thought by the excavator to be "*the most important feature of the building.*"¹⁶⁸ In the hall of the first building, the excavator found a small quantity of pottery, parallel in style with that of level Ib of the lower city. More specifically, on the floor of the hall he found four complete vessels, one of them made of stone and potsherds.¹⁶⁹

¹⁶³ For the archaeological evidence from Kültepe I have mostly used the excavation reports and catalogues of Özgüç.

¹⁶⁴ Özgüç 1999, 117. Identical "twin sanctuaries" are also known from the site of Beycesultan in southwestern Turkey (map 3) already from the Early Bronze Age. However, those in Beycesultan are smaller in size and they are built closer together, forming one single unit. For the Early Bronze Age sanctuaries of Beycesultan see Lloyd and Mellaart 1962, 36-57; for the Middle Bronze Age sanctuaries see Lloyd and Mellaart 1965, 39-46; for the Late Bronze Age sanctuaries see Lloyd and Mellaart 1972, 24-37.

¹⁶⁵ Özgüç 1999, 117.

¹⁶⁶ Larsen 2015, 36; Özgüç 1999, 117-9.

¹⁶⁷ Özgüç 1999, 117.

¹⁶⁸ Özgüç 1999, 118.

¹⁶⁹ Özgüç 1999, 118, 120.

Alongside them, he found three Assyrian tablets, which remain unpublished; however, one of them according to Özgüç records the sale of a slave.¹⁷⁰ Özgüç suggested that it was stored in the “temple” so that it would remain secure.¹⁷¹ Both buildings were badly damaged and abandoned as a result of a fire, which affected all the buildings of the same level on the mound.¹⁷²

Regarding the function of two identical preserved buildings, Özgüç suggested that they have to be temples, albeit no cultic furniture or objects such as altars, hearths, benches etc. were found in their interior,¹⁷³ due to the fact that architecturally they cannot have served any other purposes, such as palaces-reception halls or large private houses. He also supported his suggestion with the fact that throughout the extensive excavations of the site no temple had come to light.¹⁷⁴ Özgüç pointed out that those two buildings had no other contemporary parallels in Anatolia or the Near East.¹⁷⁵ He then compared them to Urartian temples of the first millennium B.C.E. in eastern Anatolia.¹⁷⁶

At the same part of the mound, that is west of the palace, the excavator revealed fragments of walls that indicated the plausible existence of other large buildings also destroyed by the aforementioned fire.¹⁷⁷ On the preserved floors of those ruined buildings he found a gold and a bronze cup and a bronze bowl. In addition, he found a rock crystal lion statuette and other burnt pieces of gold objects.¹⁷⁸ The valuable materials of those unearthed objects do point out that the buildings, that they were stored in, were of some importance. The excavator assumed that, due to the fact that these walls are identical to the ones of the two

¹⁷⁰ Larsen 2015, 36-7; Özgüç 1999, 120.

¹⁷¹ Özgüç 1999, 120.

¹⁷² Özgüç 1999, 118.

¹⁷³ Heffron 2016, 26.

¹⁷⁴ Özgüç 1999, 119.

¹⁷⁵ Özgüç 1999, 119.

¹⁷⁶ Larsen 2015, 37; Özgüç 1999, 119.

¹⁷⁷ More specifically, he mentioned the ruins of at least two more buildings with the same plan in the vicinity of those two identical buildings. See Özgüç 1999, 119, 121.

¹⁷⁸ Özgüç 1999, 120-1.

temples located near-by, that part of the mound in level 7 would have been "*a temple district*."¹⁷⁹

The fact that the aforementioned buildings, which could have been associated with the religious practices, were located on the mound makes it more plausible to associate them with the local elite rather than the Assyrians merchants. It does not seem possible for the Assyrians to have built such large temples for their own gods so close to the palace of the local king.¹⁸⁰ Even though the evidence from the interior of the buildings does not point to any cultic function, Özgüç ultimately associated them with the temples that the Anatolian king Anitta claimed in his text to have built in Kültepe sometime in the 18th century, during the last phase of the Old Assyrian presence in Anatolia.¹⁸¹

Regarding the architectural remains of the lower city where the private houses of the Assyrians were located, even though there are no indications of any public buildings, the excavator located upright stones with no obvious architectural function in the interior of certain houses. These stone stelae along with other objects discovered in the private houses, which I will examine later, have been interpreted as a plausible indication of a ritual setting in a domestic environment.¹⁸²

The excavator of those houses had already pointed out that "*the rooms containing a stone stela must be interpreted as a sacred room, a small shrine*."¹⁸³ More recently, in her article about those stone stelae, Heffron mentioned that so far there are only five examples of such stones located in four different "*multi-room*" houses of level I.¹⁸⁴ Özgüç mentioned that another three were removed from their

¹⁷⁹ Özgüç 1999, 121. Certainly, one must keep in mind that a similar construction can also be attributed to the abundance of available material and to the local tradition of constructing a large building.

¹⁸⁰ I should note here, however, that there are textual references in the Old Assyrian archives of Kültepe in which it is mentioned that the worshippers would have "to go up" to reach the temple of Išhara, a Mesopotamian goddess. The latter indicates that they would have to ascent somewhere, maybe climb the mound to reach her temple. See Larsen 2015, 37.

¹⁸¹ For more information on the "Anitta Text" found at Hattuša see Topçuoğlu 2010, 24-9.

¹⁸² Heffron 2016, 26.

¹⁸³ Özgüç 1994a, 224.

¹⁸⁴ Heffron 2016, 26-7. Özgüç at that time was aware of only three of them. See Özgüç 1994a, 224.

original location and were reused as foundation stones in other buildings.¹⁸⁵ According to the description of Özgüç and Heffron, four of those stelae shared the same "*gradually tapering form*", they have four sides worked and their tops are rounded.¹⁸⁶ Their average height according to the excavator is 1 meter.¹⁸⁷ It is possible, as Heffron pointed out, that there could be other stone stelae as well which have not been published yet or even discovered.¹⁸⁸

Stele 1¹⁸⁹ belonged to level Ib and it was found in the southwest corner of a western room of the house in P–R/19–20 squares (fig. 26, 27). In front of the stone stele a trough of andesite was placed, while in the northwestern corner of the room there was a horse-shoe hearth (fig. 28).¹⁹⁰ In the same room the excavators also discovered pottery vessels including a deposit of 25 broken vessels handles with smooth surfaces.¹⁹¹ Heffron mentioned that already the excavators had pointed out a cultic function of this room, suggesting that "*there were drinks poured into the trough in front of the stele which served as an altar, and the handles, deliberately deposited here, were votive objects.*"¹⁹² Heffron concluded that, even though it remains unknown, the selection of the handles must have had some kind of specific meaning.¹⁹³

Stele 2 came from the house in D–F/6–8 squares in level Ib.¹⁹⁴ More specifically, it stood in the southwestern corner of a rather large room which was part of a large house of eight rooms and it was placed within a podium (fig. 30, 31).¹⁹⁵ In the same room there were found an archive of tablets, unopened

¹⁸⁵ Özgüç 1994a, 224.

¹⁸⁶ Heffron 2016, 27; Özgüç 1994a, 224.

¹⁸⁷ Özgüç 1994a, 224.

¹⁸⁸ Heffron 2016, 26.

¹⁸⁹ The numbers of the stelae are based on Heffron's numeration.

¹⁹⁰ Dercksen 2015b, 49; Heffron 2016, 27. An intact horse-shoe shaped pot-stand made of terracotta was also located in Room 5 of the Middle Bronze Age Religious Building in Area R at the site of Beycesultan (fig. 29). See Lloyd and Mellaart 1965, 42-3.

¹⁹¹ Heffron 2016, 27.

¹⁹² Heffron 2016, 28.

¹⁹³ Heffron 2016, 28.

¹⁹⁴ Heffron 2016, 28.

¹⁹⁵ Dercksen 2015b, 49; Heffron 2016, 28.

envelopes, as well as “*the finest pottery*.”¹⁹⁶ According to Dercksen, among the textual evidence there was an envelope and a letter sent by an Assyrian person, a certain Daya, probably to his brother.¹⁹⁷ Concerning the rest of the archive, Dercksen mentioned that they “*deal with business affairs and suggest an Assyrian origin*.”¹⁹⁸ Therefore from the textual evidence, it seems that the house belonged to an Assyrian.¹⁹⁹

Concerning the finds from the rest of the house, in the northeastern corner of the same room, the excavator unearthed a pithos grave (fig. 31).²⁰⁰ Heffron stated that even though the information concerning the burial goods and the grave in general is scarce, the excavation reports mentioned the discovery of an ivory figurine of a nude female placed near the hip of the skeleton (fig. 32).²⁰¹ Just outside of the room with the stele there was also another burial, a cist grave (fig. 31), however, as Heffron mentioned it is not clear if the grave belonged to this structure or to a neighboring one.²⁰² A final essential find of this room, was the discovery of an unusual vessel constructed by two identical compartments in the foundation of a partition wall just across from the stele (fig. 31, 33-34).²⁰³ The two compartments of the vessel had holes filled with pure soil and sealed by stones. The fact that the vessel had no structural function pointed out that it cannot be considered an architectural formation, but rather a “*deliberate selection*.”²⁰⁴ Heffron therefore

¹⁹⁶ Özgüç 1994a, 224. Heffron suggested that the “*finest pottery*” referred to two beak-spouted and two trefoil-mouth pitchers found in this area. See Heffron 2016, 28.

¹⁹⁷ Dercksen 2015b, 50. According to Dercksen, Daya is known from texts found at Boğazköy where he possibly owned a house. See Dercksen 2001, 50-6.

¹⁹⁸ Dercksen 2015b, 50.

¹⁹⁹ Although I should note here that Dercksen pointed out that the tablets do not automatically indicate that the house was used by Assyrians. As he explained there is a case documented by a text of level Ib, in which “*a daughter of a deceased Assyrian kept her father’s documents in his house, which apparently had been confiscated by the local king to give it to one of his Anatolian servants. The documents were to be handed over to the woman’s brothers by the new Anatolian owner only after her death*.” See Dercksen 2015b, 50.

²⁰⁰ Dercksen suggested that the grave is unrelated to the stele. Dercksen 2015b, 49.

²⁰¹ Heffron 2016, 29-30.

²⁰² Heffron 2016, 30.

²⁰³ Heffron 2016, 28.

²⁰⁴ Heffron 2016, 28.

attributed to the foundation deposit a ritual purpose with "*protective and/or cleansing efficacy*."²⁰⁵

Regarding Stele 3, it belonged to a house in LXI/130 square of level Ia.²⁰⁶ According to the excavator, even though the stele was found fallen on the floor, it was probably standing in an upright position originally (fig. 35).²⁰⁷ More attention has to be paid, however, to a "*cult bowl*" found next to the stele, which was thought to have had a libation-ritual purpose (fig. 36).²⁰⁸ The vessel was considered by the excavator to be unique in Kültepe.²⁰⁹ More specifically, it depicts "*zoomorphic protomes*" at its exterior surface, namely two lions, a bull and two antelopes, and a male figurine attached in the interior.²¹⁰

Concerning the last two stelae, there is no concrete information about their location and context. They are considered to belong to level Ib with uncertainty.²¹¹ The two stelae seemed to be connected to one another, and to a (cist) grave located next to them. However, due to inconsistencies of the excavation reports concerning the stratigraphy of the grave and the stelae,²¹² they will not constitute a part of this study.

In her article concerning the interpretation of these particular stone stelae, Heffron examined the various functions of such "*aniconic and anepigraphic markers*" in different contexts and traditions and how these functions could be associated with the Old Assyrian environment in Kültepe.²¹³ Heffron divided their "*functional*" roles in three different categories: 1. Funerary-memorial, 2. Legal and Commemorative and 3. Cultic. Briefly, concerning the first category, Heffron pointed

²⁰⁵ Heffron 2016, 28-9.

²⁰⁶ Heffron 2016, 30; Özgüç 1994a, 224. Even though the stele belonged to the level during which the Old Assyrian documentation in the site had seized, we cannot exclude the possibility of Assyrians still residing in Kültepe.

²⁰⁷ Özgüç 1994a, 224.

²⁰⁸ Heffron 2016, 30; Özgüç 1994a, 224-6.

²⁰⁹ Özgüç 1994a, 224.

²¹⁰ Heffron 2016, 30; Özgüç 1994a, 225.

²¹¹ Heffron 2016, 31.

²¹² Heffron 2016, 31.

²¹³ Heffron 2016, 32.

out that it could be associated to the stelae of Kültepe, taking into account that two of the examined stelae were found in close proximity to a grave.²¹⁴ Furthermore, she provided examples of stelae used as grave markers from cemeteries of the 17th century within Anatolia (such as Ilica, Gordion etc.) and from outside of Anatolia, such as in Syria already from the third millennium, where as she pointed out "*cult stelae have been uncovered at numerous sites including Mari, Ebla, Emar, Tell Munbaqa/Ekalte and Al-Rawda.*"²¹⁵ However, it should be stressed that most of these stelae were connected to the royal sphere of influence. As Heffron concluded it is difficult to associate the stelae from private households in Kültepe with symbols of official/public significance.²¹⁶

Concerning the second category, Heffron referred to the theory of Otto concerning the stelae of Late Bronze Age Syria and their association to economic transactions taking place in domestic shrines.²¹⁷ Heffron then concluded that concerning Kültepe "*a similarly business-oriented component should perhaps not be excluded from the potential range of ritual(ised) activities carried out within the stele-rooms and/or centered directly on the stelae themselves.*"²¹⁸ Finally, regarding the latter category, Heffron associated the stone stelae with the Hittite *huwaši*-stone, which designated standing stones related to ritual actions and libations.²¹⁹ Concerning the "*cultic act of libation*", Heffron provided as an example a contemporary seal from Acemhöyük,²²⁰ dated in ca. 1800-1750 B.C.E., demonstrating an obelisk in the middle of the scene and one male figure located at

²¹⁴ Heffron 2016, 32.

²¹⁵ Heffron 2016, 32-3.

²¹⁶ Heffron 2016, 33.

²¹⁷ Heffron 2016, 33.

²¹⁸ Heffron 2016, 34.

²¹⁹ Heffron 2016, 34.

²²⁰ Acemhöyük is a large mound in central Anatolia. During the Middle Bronze Age, the settlement of Acemhöyük saw a large growth, containing sufficient material evidence (ornaments of lapis lazuli, cuneiform tablets, ivory goods, inscribed bullae etc.), which indicated that the site was contemporary with the level II of the lower city of Kültepe. Based on this evidence, it has been suggested that the site was actively involved in the Old Assyrian trading network. There have been made attempts to identify the site with the ancient city Puruṣhattum or Ulama, known from Old Assyrian texts, however the matter of the identification is still unclear. For the excavations of Acemhöyük see Özgüç 1966 and Kuzuoğlu 2016. For the identification with Puruṣhattum see Bryce 2009, 2-3. For the cuneiform texts see Kuzuoğlu 2016.

each side (fig. 37). One of them is standing and is thought to be holding some kind of vessel in order to make a libation.²²¹

Heffron concluded that the stone stelae of Kültepe "*mark permanent ritual space within domestic houses.*" It is plausible that the rooms containing the stelae were associated with family-based rituals, while Heffron also introduced the possibility "*that each individual house equipped with a stela and thus in possession of a permanent ritual space could have served the cultic needs of several households.*"²²²

In her examination, Heffron is trying to project strongly the connection of such stone stelae to a northern Mesopotamian introduction rather than a local one, even though there is no compelling evidence to connect the relevant houses in Kültepe to the arrival of the Assyrians. However, she suggested that "*the tradition of stone uprights in northern Mesopotamian cultic contexts further supports viewing the Kültepe stelae as an Assyrian introduction to the settlement.*"²²³ Even though she provided many examples from Syrian sites,²²⁴ most of them were connected with official and royal cult or with the marking of graves and the cult of the dead.²²⁵ Both of these cases do not match the stelae located in the interior of a private house, which is not associated with graves in every case.

Without being able to exclude the possibility of Mesopotamian influence, I will also present contemporary and earlier parallels of such stelae from Anatolia,

²²¹ Heffron 2016, 34.

²²² Heffron 2016, 38.

²²³ Heffron 2016, 39.

²²⁴ Unfortunately, there cannot be made any comparison with the private houses of Assur, since they have not been sufficiently excavated. However, on the southern side of the city of Assur, Andrae found two rows of stone stelae, one inscribed with the name of kings and one of officials, set up between the inner-city wall and the outer fortification wall (fig. 38-39). The function of those stelae has been a matter of debate. Andrae suggested that they were part of a monumental stone calendar, based on the fact that the stelae provided with the names of the Assyrian kings in chronological order. See Andrae 1913. Unfortunately, that order begins with the Middle-Assyrian king Eriba-Adad I (ca. 1380-1354 B.C.E.) and therefore it is not contemporary to the Old Assyrian period. See Reade 2004, 458, 464. Even though, the function of these stelae has not been defined yet, it is evident that based on their context and their chronology they cannot be related to those of Kültepe.

²²⁵ Heffron 2016, 32-3.

which can possibly point to an Anatolian tradition of the stone stelae. One example is an upright stone located in the site of Alişar Hoyük from level 1, which is dated by Gorny during the Middle Bronze Age III period (ca. 1750-1650 B.C.E.).²²⁶ The stone was found in the corner of the room 7, which was the largest room of the Building B. In the same room, the excavators discovered a possible altar, sunken jars, storage pots and bowls. The excavators of the site have suggested a possible cult function for the whole Building B, based on the findings of this room and of the neighboring room 9, which contained among others a hearth and 16 burials underneath the floor.²²⁷ The interpretation and the function of Building B remains unclear due to the fact that the excavations of Alişar Hoyük are incomplete. It could have been that this building represented separate private houses and not a unified building as the excavator stated.

Another example which might indicate an earlier and stronger Anatolian tradition of the stone stelae is the site of Beycesultan, in southwestern Turkey (map 3), which was not involved in the Old Assyrian trading network. The excavators of the site located plastered stelae in the interior of shrines of the Early Bronze Age, which have been interpreted as "*schematized deity representations*" (fig. 40).²²⁸ During the Middle Bronze Age, the location (and use?) of those stelae changed, since they were no longer found in the interior of the shrines. However, the excavator revealed a row of 3 upright stone stelae roughly shaped in open space and in close distance from the palace (fig. 41).²²⁹ These stelae were associated by the excavators and other scholars with the monoliths found near the south gate of the citadel in

²²⁶ Gorny 1990, 184. Concerning the role of this site during the Old Assyrian period, based on the textual evidence from this site and from other contemporary sites, Alişar Hoyük is identified possibly with ancient Amkuwa, which was involved in the Old Assyrian trade. However, the texts mention that the city was a trading station (*wabartum*) and not a permanent settlement (*kārum*) of the Assyrians. The latter might indicate that even though there was some Assyrian presence in the site, it was probably not intense and therefore the cultural exchanges would plausibly be limited. For the identification of Alişar Hoyük with Amkuwa see Dercksen 2001, 41-2.

²²⁷ Schmidt 1932, 88-91.

²²⁸ Lloyd and Mellaart 1962, 29, 31; Yakar 1974, 155.

²²⁹ Lloyd and Mellaart 1965, 29; Yakar 1968, 137-8.

Troy VI (ca. 1325-1275 B.C.E.) during the Late Bronze Age (fig. 42).²³⁰ In front of those standing stones there was “a shapeless formation of stones which could have been the base of a small offering-table.”²³¹ Yakar suggested that the monoliths were associated with the palace gate and may have served as an “open sanctuary.”²³² During the Late Bronze Age, according to the excavation reports, there were no indications of stone stelae.²³³

Overall, it seems that the stelae of Beycesultan do not match exactly the case of Kültepe, since the former have been located in public shrines whereas the latter in private houses. However, the fact that they are present in Anatolia already from the Early Bronze Age, may point out an Anatolian religious tradition associated with aniconic religious practices.

5.1.2 Pottery

Pottery may also indicate an important aspect of the religious practices, since vessels played an important role in libations, offerings and rituals. In Kültepe, there were discovered several animal-shaped drinking vessels, which based on their elaborate construction were not suitable for everyday use, but for some kind of rituals.²³⁴ The zoomorphic drinking vessels have been divided by Özgüç in 3 categories based on their representations: 1. drinking cups in the form of standing lions, antelopes, boars, dogs, snails, fish, eagles, partridges and snails, 2. drinking cups in the form of the head of an eagle, bull, rabbit and stylized bovine heads (in this category Özgüç included the boot-shaped cups), and 3. trough or boat-shaped cups with animal-head spouts.²³⁵ Both the previous and current excavators

²³⁰ Lloyd and Mellaart 1956, 117; Yakar 1968, 138.

²³¹ Lloyd and Mellaart 1965, 29.

²³² Yakar 1968, 138.

²³³ Lloyd and Mellaart 1972.

²³⁴ Kulakoğlu 2010, 48; Özgüç 2003, 195.

²³⁵ Özgüç 1986a, 63; 2003, 197. These zoomorphic cult vessels are also described as rhyta in the literature, even if it is not always clear if they are indeed rhyta or simple drinking vessels fashioned in the form of animals. Koehl tried to differentiate the classical term “rhyton” from the zoomorphic

mentioned that such vessels are typical for Kültepe and do not have other parallels.²³⁶ It should be noted however, that there are parallels of such animal-shaped vessels in Alişar Hoyük and Boğazköy,²³⁷ however the variety and certain elaborate forms (such as the vessel in the shape of a boat) can only be found at Kültepe. The tradition of the Old Assyrian drinking vessels continued well into the Old Hittite period, since they are thought to be the forerunners of the Hittite BIBRU drinking vessels, which according to the Hittite texts were used in religious ceremonies.²³⁸

The first category consists of specific complete standing animals. Among the animals however, the excavator mentioned that those in the form of an antelope and a lion are in the majority of Kültepe.²³⁹ Numerous painted lion and antelope drinking vessels were discovered in level II (fig. 43-44), and as the excavator stated "*rhyta in the form of a lion and an antelope were discovered in every case as a pair in the houses of Assyrian and Anatolian traders.*"²⁴⁰ Special attention has been paid to the terracotta boar-shaped vessels, one of which was found in the archive room of the Assyrian merchant Amurru-bani in level II (fig. 45).²⁴¹ According to Özgüç, these boar-shaped drinking vessels were in most cases stored with the tablets of both native and Assyrian merchants.²⁴² Özgüç suggested that "*the wild boar shaped rhyton was used in the cult of Usmu, the two-faced god [probably] to offer*

vessels of the Near East. He determined that the former vessels were used to aerate the wine and to enhance its flavor, while the latter, based on the Hittite textual evidence, were probably used as drinking vessels "*from which the gods and their earthly avatars, the king or royal couple, imbibed.*" He therefore suggested to describe the zoomorphic vessels of the Near East with term BIBRU from the Hittite texts and not with the term rhyton. See Koehl 2013.

²³⁶ Kulakoğlu 2010, 48; Özgüç 2003, 319.

²³⁷ For the former see Gorny 1990, 298-300 and for the latter see Bittel 1975, 5-6.

²³⁸ Kulakoğlu 2010, 48; Özgüç 2003, 195, 201. For example, the Hittite texts mention among others lion (BIBRU.UR.MAH) and boar vessels (BIBRU.SAH). Özgüç 2003, 198, 201.

²³⁹ Özgüç 2003, 201. Antelope was the sacred animal of the local War God and it was also depicted with the so-called Chief Goddess of Kültepe and the Nude Goddess. Kulakoğlu 1999,150; Özgüç 1965, 65, 69-70.

²⁴⁰ Özgüç 2003, 197-8. I should note however that there is at least one set of cultic objects in which there was found only a drinking cup in the shape of an antelope. See Özgüç 1994b, 369.

²⁴¹ Özgüç 1998, 249.

²⁴² Özgüç 1998, 250-1.

libations",²⁴³ since the boar was his sacrificial animal as it became clear from the contemporary seal impressions (fig. 46).

Regarding the second category, the majority of the discovered heads are of a bull or an ox from levels II and Ib-a (fig. 47), while there are only a few examples of other animal heads such as a rabbit, an eagle and a snail.²⁴⁴ As mentioned before, in this category Özgüç included also the so-called boot-shaped cups discovered in pairs in levels II and Ib (fig. 48).²⁴⁵ Most of them are decorated with geometrical designs, while fewer are monochromatic.²⁴⁶

The latter category seems to be the most peculiar and the most interesting one. Özgüç subdivided this category into four groups.²⁴⁷ The first consists of the simplest type of a boat or trough with the neck and head of an animal (fig. 49). In the second type, the legs of an animal are also rendered and the animal is resting on them. The third type has two variants: the first represented by a ram's head with a male figure attached to the long side of the boat (fig. 50), and the second variant is a hybrid type of the second group, namely an animal reclining on four legs, and the third one.

The last group according to Özgüç is represented by a ritual boat discovered in a house of a wealthy Assyrian merchant in level II (fig. 51).²⁴⁸ The technique, the style and the decoration of the boat matched other artifacts discovered in level II of the lower city. As the excavator clearly stated "*the boat was made in one of the*

²⁴³ Özgüç 1965, 61; Özgüç 1998, 255-6. Usmu was a minor Mesopotamian god who functioned as a minister to the god Enki/Ea during the Akkadian period. This god was transmitted from the Mesopotamian to the Anatolian stylistic repertoire during the Old Assyrian period. Even though the god was already connected to the boar in the Mesopotamian art, the posture of the god actually standing on the boar while holding a dagger, which implies a direct sacrificial connection between the god and the animal, was first realized in the art of Kültepe during this period. Black and Green 1992, 110; Özgüç 1965, 60-2; Özgüç 1998, 255-6.

²⁴⁴ Özgüç 2003, 208-11.

²⁴⁵ Özgüç 2003, 212.

²⁴⁶ Kulakoğlu 2010, 48; Özgüç 2003, 212. I should note here that unfortunately I was not able to find more details about their exact findspots.

²⁴⁷ Özgüç 1986a, 67-8; 2003, 213.

²⁴⁸ Özgüç 1994b, 369.

Kanesh workshops."²⁴⁹ It was found together with an antelope, a boar and a snail drinking vessel, cups, bowls and a decorated seashell. Özgüç described this "unique" find as follows: "*the ritual boat is of rectangular prismatic shape and has a spout in ram's-head form at one narrow side. A shrine resembling a tall tower rises on a platform at the middle of the boat. The shrine is open in front, while the side and rear walls each have one large window above and two small windows below. A figure of goddess in a large robe, her arms crossed in front, stands in the shrine, while an eagle with deployed wings sits on a pedestal on its flat roof. A standing crew member holds on oar flat against the boat with both hands. His black painted headgear is tall and pointer. A second male crew member is at the stem, and with open arms grasps or supports the platform which holds up the shrine.*"²⁵⁰

Concerning its cultic interpretation and function, Özgüç associated it with the role of boats in Mesopotamia. As he mentioned, the boats, apart from their practical use in trade and transport, were also present in ritual activities. There are many instances in the Sumerian literature of ceremonial voyages during a festival, in which a deity, or more precisely the statue of the deity, was being transported by boat.²⁵¹ The latter can be associated with the small shrine of the Kültepe boat.

Apart from the literary references, they are such representations in the glyptic iconography, since seals from the Early Dynastic and Akkadian period illustrate ritual voyages during a festival (fig. 52-53).²⁵² Özgüç has interpreted these parallels as "*a link with the Mesopotamian belief and tradition as it illustrates one of the ritual voyages of the Anatolian goddess.*"²⁵³ This cultural influence has been attributed to the international character of the settlement of Kültepe, in which the

²⁴⁹ Özgüç 1994b, 370; 2003, 214.

²⁵⁰ Özgüç 1994b, 370; 2003, 214.

²⁵¹ Özgüç 1994b, 370, 374; 2003; 214. For example, the Sumerian poem *Lugale* in which "god Ninurta travels home in his barge and the boatmen serenade him with a hymn of praise." Another example is the praise song of "Šulgi and Ninlil's barge", which described a festival during Šulgi's reign (ca. 2143 B.C.E.), in which ceremonial barges with statues were transported. See Black and Green 1992, 45, 112; Black et al. 2004, 113-16.

²⁵² Özgüç 1994b, 374; Black and Green 1992, 45.

²⁵³ Özgüç 1994b, 374.

Sumero-Akkadian tradition was incorporated into the local tradition via the Assyrians.²⁵⁴

The exact origin of such animal-shaped drinking vessels as a type is unclear. It has been noticed that handmade animal-shaped vessels are present scarcely during the Neolithic period in the Near East.²⁵⁵ It seems, however, that it was during the Chalcolithic period that the zoomorphic vessels became an essential part of the Mesopotamian religious material culture.²⁵⁶ More specifically, as Koehl mentioned *“in southern Mesopotamia, zoomorphic vessels in the form of complete animals are especially popular from the fourth and third millennia B.C.; their occurrence during the second millennium B.C. is rare.”*²⁵⁷ Concerning their appearance in great quantity and quality in central Anatolia during the second millennium, Koehl associated them to a stag-shaped vessel from Kangal in Eastern Turkey indicating thus a speculative geographical link to northern Mesopotamia.²⁵⁸ It could be therefore that these vessels originated in Mesopotamia and via the intense commercial interactions and cultural exchanges between Anatolia and Mesopotamia, they were possibly transmitted and further developed in Anatolia, acquiring thus a local style, which continued during the next period.

Apart from the animal representations in pottery there have been also found anthropomorphic cups, which Özgüç has divided in 3 groups: 1. drinking cups in human shape, 2. drinking cups in the shape of a human head, and 3. drinking cups decorated with human heads in relief.²⁵⁹ An example of the first category comes

²⁵⁴ Kulakoğlu 2010, 48; Özgüç 1994b, 374. The Mesopotamian tradition of ceremonial ritual voyages with actual boats on a river could have been practiced in Kültepe, since according to Barjamovic there is a river which passes along the site of Kültepe, called nowadays Sarimsakil. The river seemed to have passed by the southern edge of the mound but also from the lower city of Kültepe based on textual references, which imply that a river named *Humatum* (perhaps the same river as the modern one) was located close to the city. See Barjamovic 2011, 238. Therefore, the existence of a river in a close proximity of the city and the presence of boat-shaped vessels could be interpreted as possible indications and representations of a similar practice being performed in Kültepe.

²⁵⁵ Koehl 2013, 239.

²⁵⁶ Koehl 2013, 239.

²⁵⁷ Koehl 2013, 239.

²⁵⁸ Koehl 2013, 240.

²⁵⁹ Özgüç 2003, 222.

from level 8 of the mound of Kültepe, contemporary to level II of the lower city. Concerning the second category a unique example comes from a house of level II, "*found among the domestic inventory*" (fig. 54).²⁶⁰ Özgüç suggested that this vessel represented the face of a dead individual (he did not however provide evidence to support this notion), for which as he mentioned there is no other parallel.²⁶¹ The excavator provided other examples of this category, namely human head-shaped cups from level Ib as well (fig. 55).²⁶² Regarding the latter category, Özgüç provided one example from level II and another from the palace of the mound in a level contemporary with level II (fig. 56).²⁶³ Overall, apart from one exception, Özgüç mentioned that these vessels would be unsuitable for daily use and therefore suggested that they were cult objects, representing possibly native gods and goddesses.²⁶⁴

5.1.3 Figurines

Apart from the pottery, several figurines have also been unearthed in the site. More specifically, Özgüç stated that "*several naked female statuettes of the Nude Goddess were discovered in the kārūm area as burial gifts, found in graves under the floor levels of houses of level Ib.*"²⁶⁵ The figurines were manufactured from different materials such as faience, bronze, ivory, and terracotta.²⁶⁶ Special attention has to be paid to the ivory figurine of a naked woman discovered in a pithos grave under the floor of the room where the second stone stele was found (fig. 32).²⁶⁷ According to the excavator, the figurine represents a nude goddess sitting on a high

²⁶⁰ Özgüç 1986a, 69.

²⁶¹ Özgüç 1986a, 69; 2003, 223.

²⁶² Özgüç 2003, 223.

²⁶³ Concerning the first example, the excavator did not indicate its exact findspot. See Özgüç 2003, 225.

²⁶⁴ Özgüç 2003, 225.

²⁶⁵ Özgüç 2003, 233. Kulakoğlu referred to the Nude Goddess as the "*Principal Goddess.*" See Kulakoğlu 2010, 49.

²⁶⁶ Kulakoğlu 2010, 49; Özgüç 2003, 233.

²⁶⁷ Özgüç 2003, 234.

throne. He suggested that the figurine shares similar properties with Kubaba, an Anatolian goddess of fertility and reproduction (fig. 57).²⁶⁸ Furthermore, Özgüç stated that this figurine is influenced by the naked goddess figurines of Mari in Syria (fig. 58), due to the cultural and commercial relations between Anatolia and Syria. He mentioned that the "*native workshops and skilled artists worked the raw ivory imported from Syria.*"²⁶⁹

Özgüç also mentioned the existence of glazed faience female figurines discovered in the lower city and on the citadel (fig. 59). As the excavator noted most of those figurines were burial gifts discovered in pot-graves under the houses of levels Ia-b.²⁷⁰ According to Özgüç "*the oldest known examples of faience originated in north Mesopotamia and north Syria where they spread to numerous other regions, (...) the style of these is foreign to the native Anatolian style.*" In some cases, the figures (such as the glazed faience figurine, the ivory figurine and the terracotta vessel in the shape of a woman) are depicted "*in the act of offering her breasts held in her hands.*"²⁷¹ This was possibly a religious gesture, indicating perhaps that the figurines could plausibly depict worshippers or priests/priestesses and not the deities themselves.

Special attention has to be paid to a specific category of figurines; those made of lead and their stone moulds. It has been pointed out that they constitute the second largest group of figured objects discovered in Kültepe, right after the seals and the seal impressions.²⁷² According to Özgüç "*the casting of lead figurines from moulds was a native Anatolian custom.*"²⁷³ This notion can be further

²⁶⁸ Özgüç 2003, 234. Several references to Kubaba(t) and her priests can be found in contracts of level II and Ib of the lower city of Kültepe. See Kryszat 2006, 112-3. Concerning the origin of goddess Kubaba, she seems to have had ties with southeast Anatolia and northern Syria since she was an important deity of the cities Alalah and Karkamiš. See Hutter 2017, 114-5; Leick 1991, 105; Taracha 2009, 28-9.

²⁶⁹ Özgüç 2003, 236.

²⁷⁰ Özgüç 1986b 201; 2003, 236. The houses cannot be assigned to either an Anatolian or an Assyrian owner.

²⁷¹ Kulakoğlu 2010, 49; Özgüç 2003, 238-9.

²⁷² Özgüç 2003, 268.

²⁷³ Özgüç 2003, 268. Lead was a cheap and accessible material to the Anatolians.

emphasized by the study of Emre about the Anatolian lead figurines,²⁷⁴ in which it is mentioned that the earliest example of this type is a lead idol from Troy (fig. 60), dated by Blegen in 2500-2200 B.C.E. (Troy III) and by Emre in the previous phase.²⁷⁵ On the other hand, in Assur, according to the finds of the excavation reports, lead figurines were discovered for the first time in the Middle Assyrian phase of the temple of Ištar, during the reign of Tukulti-Ninurta I (ca. 1243-1207 B.C.E.).²⁷⁶

Therefore, it seems that in at least one site of Anatolia the lead figurines were in use already from the Early Bronze Age.²⁷⁷ However, it was during the Old Assyrian period that they were spread extensively in Anatolia and that their production and variety reached its peak in several Anatolian sites with Assyrian presence, such as Alişar Hoyük, Acemhöyük, Boğazköy and Kültepe.²⁷⁸ This fact has been attributed to the intense Mesopotamian-Anatolian relationships of this period and to the cultural exchanges. It seems that the Anatolians were already acquainted with the technique and via the cultural interactions with the Mesopotamians, they developed further the iconographic styles and motifs of the figurines.²⁷⁹

According to the excavator, the majority of the lead figurines and their stone moulds were discovered in the lower city of Kültepe.²⁸⁰ During the excavations, it became clear that the figurines and the moulds belonged to the two different levels of the Old Assyrian lower city and therefore the excavators were able to classify them further based on their style.²⁸¹

²⁷⁴ Emre 1971.

²⁷⁵ Emre 1971, 96.

²⁷⁶ Andrae 1935, 102-6, pl. 44-7.

²⁷⁷ Concerning the aforementioned statement, Emre mentioned the existence of a group of three lead figurines in Louvre which probably originated in Kültepe. A parallel of one of these Louvre figurines representing a man, a woman and a small girl was discovered in Acemhöyük in a level contemporary with level IV-III (late third - early second millennium B.C.E.) of the lower city of Kültepe. The latter therefore strengthens a possible Anatolian tradition of lead figurines present already from the Early Bronze Age in several sites of Anatolia. See Emre 1971, 131-3.

²⁷⁸ Emre 1971, 91-7.

²⁷⁹ Emre 1971, 155.

²⁸⁰ Özgüç 2003, 268.

²⁸¹ Özgüç 2003, 268.

Concerning the Old Assyrian figurines and the moulds from level II of the lower city, Emre has divided them between gods and hybrid creatures.²⁸² She has subdivided the gods in five categories: 1. Mistress of Animals, 2. Master of Animals, 3. Divine Triads, 4. Naked god with a sword, and 5. The goddess supporting her breasts with her hands.²⁸³ I will only refer to specific examples of these categories which bear more information concerning their owner and which demonstrate best from which cultural tradition they have been influenced from. Concerning the second category Özgüç discovered a mould of a master of animals (fig. 61), in the house of an Assyrian merchant called Lāqīpum, in the room where his archive was situated. More specifically, the mould was on the floor, next to the tablets and a grave.²⁸⁴ Emre described the representation of the figures as "*schematized to a degree of abstraction*."²⁸⁵ As she mentioned the animals on the mould were also quite schematic.²⁸⁶ Concerning the origin the motif of the master and mistress of animals, Emre pointed out that in general they appear in the Mesopotamian art from the third millennium B.C.E. onwards. However, she also indicated that the same theme exists in Central Anatolia already in the Neolithic Age based on such figurines from Çatalhöyük.²⁸⁷

A half-broken lead figurine from the fire debris of level II belongs to the fifth category, since it depicts a goddess offering her breasts with her hands (fig. 62).²⁸⁸ According to Emre, the figure probably slipped out of the debris of a building, which was next to the house of a wealthy Assyrian merchant, named Alahum.²⁸⁹ According to Özgüç the figurine should be placed in the last phase of level II since it does not belong to the schematic style of the early figurines.²⁹⁰

²⁸² Emre 1971, 134.

²⁸³ Emre 1971, 134.

²⁸⁴ Emre 1971, 95; Müller-Karpe 1994, 56; Özgüç 2003, 269.

²⁸⁵ Emre 1971, 135.

²⁸⁶ Emre 1971, 135.

²⁸⁷ Emre 1971, 136.

²⁸⁸ Özgüç 2003, 271.

²⁸⁹ Emre 1971, 95.

²⁹⁰ Özgüç 2003, 271.

Concerning the hybrid creatures, Özgüç discovered in the street fill of level II a badly damaged lead figurine of a bull-man.²⁹¹ The figurine has the head of a human and the body of a bull (fig. 63).²⁹² Based on the respective seal motif, N. Özgüç has concluded that *"the bull-man motif is one of the designs imported into Anatolia by the Old Babylonian seals."*²⁹³ In the same category, a mould from level II should be included which depicts two figures; one standing and one sitting (fig. 64).²⁹⁴ Emre stated that *"the bird-like head and the human body of the sitting figure characterizes it as a bird-man."*²⁹⁵ N. Özgüç mentioned that the bird-man appears exclusively on the Anatolian stamp seal impressions.²⁹⁶

It has been noticed that the largest inventory of lead figurines and moulds have originated in level Ib. More specifically, Özgüç mentioned that *"they increase not only in numbers but also in variety."*²⁹⁷ He also pointed out that their facial details as well other corporal characteristics are depicted more naturalistically, contrary to the schematic figurines of the previous phase.²⁹⁸ Based on the artistic production Emre divided the objects into two categories: 1. Local Anatolian and 2. Syrian. Most of these figurines, which were made in the Anatolian style,²⁹⁹ either represented a local god in a completely Anatolian style or a (local?) god that was influenced in his appearance by the north Syrian style. Due to the fact that in both cases, it seems unlikely that their content would possibly concern the Assyrian population directly and because there is no further information concerning the identity of the owners of the figurines, I will not provide any examples from the lead figurines and moulds of level Ib.³⁰⁰

²⁹¹ Özgüç 2003, 271.

²⁹² Emre 1971, 138.

²⁹³ Emre 1971, 138; Özgüç 2003, 271.

²⁹⁴ Özgüç 2003, 271.

²⁹⁵ Emre 1993, 170.

²⁹⁶ Özgüç 2003, 271.

²⁹⁷ Özgüç 2003, 272.

²⁹⁸ Özgüç 2003, 272, 280.

²⁹⁹ Emre 1971, 139.

³⁰⁰ For a detailed description of the figurines and the moulds of this level see Emre 1971, 139-50.

Concerning the interpretation of the representations of the lead figurines the excavator stated that they “*did not represent a specific goddess and her family, but (...) different goddesses, gods, diverse divine families and mythological creatures.*”³⁰¹ That became evident by the increasing numbers of various figures and by the comparison between those figures and the relevant seal impressions. From this comparison, it became also obvious that the figurines included both Anatolian influenced representations (such as the figure of the bird-man) as well as Mesopotamian influenced representations (such as the bull-man). Taking into account the Mesopotamian motifs present in the representations, Emre proposed that the depictions were not limited solely to Anatolian deities, but they also included Mesopotamian ones.³⁰² The latter points out the incorporation of Mesopotamian themes and motifs into the Anatolian tradition. In addition, based on relevant textual evidence, which I will examine later, and on a seal-impression of the Old Babylonian style used by an Assyrian, which depicts the goddess Ištar in her warlike appearance (fig. 65),³⁰³ it seems plausible that Ištar was worshipped at Kültepe. Therefore, we can assume that there is at least the possibility that one or more female lead figurines depict her.

Apart from the interpretation of the depicted figures, the findspots of the figurines may also provide information concerning their use in the religious practices. The fact that the lead figurines were discovered in houses, pits and debris indicates that they were not used as burial gifts or votive offerings, but they probably had “*a repetitive cultic function in the domestic environment.*”³⁰⁴ This notion supports the idea of private domestic cult in Kültepe, also expressed before

³⁰¹ Özgüç 2003, 268.

³⁰² Emre 1971, 156.

³⁰³ Derksen 2015b, 47. The impression of the seal is on a private letter of level II sent by an Assyrian named Aššur-muttabil. For the text see Larsen 1988, 106-8.

³⁰⁴ Emre 1971, 154; Özgüç 2003, 280. I should note here that figurines from other material, such as faience and ivory, have been found as burial gifts. It could be that a figurine made from a luxurious material such as ivory would be more impressive socially as a burial gift during a possible public inhumation, whereas a figurine made out of lead, a cheaper material, would be more suitable in a domestic environment for often use.

with the stone stelae in the interior of private houses in the lower city. Certainly, this idea does not exclude the possibility of a public temple also present in Kültepe.

The discovery of several figurines of various material during the Bronze Age in Anatolia, made it possible to extract some observations concerning their development throughout the various periods. Yakar attempted to examine the development of the type of figurines from the Early to the Middle Bronze Age in the site of Alişar Hoyük, a study which also applies to the site of Kültepe. More specifically, as Yakar and von der Osten, the excavator of Alişar Hoyük, mentioned the Early Bronze Age figurines, which were made either of stone or clay, had a simple structure. That means that the plausible deities that they could have been representing were so schematized to the point that in most of the times the body was similar to a flat disc, since there were no indications of arms, legs or sex (fig. 66).³⁰⁵ These early figurines from both sites are in close relevance to the flat and schematized ones from Beycesultan during the same period (fig. 69).³⁰⁶

Concerning the development of the figurines during the Middle Bronze Age, Yakar stated that even if the motifs and the theme of the figurines in most cases are of possible Anatolian origin, it seems that the notion of the "*schematization*" of the representations has changed.³⁰⁷ The figurines have clearly developed since there is a clear indication of sex, figure and body parts such as legs and arms and therefore

³⁰⁵ Von der Osten 1937, 177; Yakar 1968, 142. Disc-shaped and other quite schematized figurines have also been discovered in Early Bronze Age Kültepe (fig. 67-68). For more information see Öztürk 2013, 157-9.

³⁰⁶ It should be mentioned here that the unearthed figurines from Beycesultan were made from white marble, whereas clay figurines are completely absent. See Lloyd and Mellaart 1962, 266, 273; Yakar 1968, 113.

³⁰⁷ Yakar 1968, 142. I tried to compare the figurines from Kültepe and Alişar to those from the contemporary site of Beycesultan which had no Assyrian influence, however the excavator did not provide any drawing or picture of the one unearthed marble female figurine. See Lloyd and Mellaart 1965, 44.

they are not so schematic anymore but more naturalistic (fig. 32, 70).³⁰⁸ Yakar attributed this change to the cultural connections with Mesopotamia and Syria.³⁰⁹

5.1.4 Seals and Seal Impressions

In order to identify the cultural tradition of the religious figures represented in those figurines, the scholars take into account the contemporary seals and seal impressions from Kültepe. Even though the seals are not religious objects themselves, in many cases they illustrate religious figures, cultic objects, divine processions or even rituals. Since this study does not aim on presenting an extensive analysis and examination of the impressions and the various glyptic styles, I will suffice with mentioning selected seal impressions that may indicate cultural exchanges in the religious sphere and perhaps a more detailed illustration of the actual religious practices.

The earliest seals come from the regions of North Syria and Southeast and Central Anatolia around 7000 B.C.E.³¹⁰ In Mesopotamia, initially stamp seals were used, however around the fourth millennium cylinder seals were introduced via the Sumerians and they replaced gradually the stamp seals.³¹¹ On the contrary, in Anatolia it was not until the Old Assyrian period that the stamp seals fell into disuse and the cylinder seals were manufactured and used widely. During the Old Assyrian period in Kültepe, we find both stamp seals, which is the local tradition and were used almost exclusively by the Anatolians, as well as cylinder seals which were used by both populations and were brought to Kültepe due to the Assyrian

³⁰⁸ Von der Osten 1937, 193.

³⁰⁹ Yakar 1968, 142. There are terracotta figurines from Assur with naturalistic features already from the second half of the third millennium onwards, such as the ones from the Ištar temple (fig. 9-10). For more see Bär 2003, pl. 16, 20; Klengel-Brandt 1995, 116-7.

³¹⁰ Özkan 2010, 148.

³¹¹ Özkan 2010, 148.

influence.³¹² At the end of the Old Assyrian period, the Anatolians returned to their traditional stamp seals.³¹³

Seals in general express ownership, secure the safe and unopened travel of a merchandise and are also used as a personal signature on a document.³¹⁴ Seals were primarily used by merchants, government administrators and officials. Concerning the merchants, they used their seals on "*tablets, bullae and envelopes in which they documented their commercial affairs.*"³¹⁵ Apart from the above, seals were also impressed on the clay stoppers of vessels, on pots, on loom weights, on labels etc.³¹⁶

In Kültepe there have been found mostly impressions of cylinder seals on clay objects, as well as nearly 300 stamp and cylinder seals which were discovered in situ.³¹⁷ Based on the analysis of Özkan out of the 23,500 documents discovered in Kültepe, at least half of them belonged to envelopes, bullae or labels with seal impressions (fig. 71-73).³¹⁸ From the study of the various cylinder and stamp seal impressions it has been concluded that 2000 different seals belong to different people.³¹⁹ According to Özkan, most of the seals belonged to Assyrian merchants, while the rest belonged to local, Hurrian and Syrian merchants. Apart from the merchants, there were also found sealings belonging to local authorities as well as to Old Assyrian officials and kings.³²⁰

Due to the various manufacturing styles of the seals and the seal impressions from Kültepe, scholars have divided them in four main styles of glyptic: 1. The Old

³¹² Larsen 1977, 89; Özkan 2010, 148; Topçuoğlu 2014, 124.

³¹³ Özkan 2010, 148.

³¹⁴ Özkan 2010, 148.

³¹⁵ Özkan 2010, 151. Concerning the function of the bullae, according to Özkan "*bullae were used to provide the security of goods in pots, large packages, baskets and sacks during their transportation. A piece of clay was stuck right on the knot of the rope that tied the goods together, which was then sealed.*" See Özkan 2010, 151.

³¹⁶ Özkan 2010, 151-2.

³¹⁷ Özkan 2010, 148.

³¹⁸ Özkan 2010, 148.

³¹⁹ Özkan 2010, 148. Barjamovic suggested that the population of Kültepe during the 18th century -and possibly in the previous century as well- would be around 25.000 people. Barjamovic 2014, 66.

³²⁰ Özkan 2010, 148. Such as king Sargon I. See Lassen 2014, 118.

Assyrian, 2. The Old Babylonian, 3. The Old Syrian and 4. The Old Anatolian.³²¹ The seals and the seals impressions of the first style represent the largest stylistic group of the material of Kültepe.³²² Lassen suggested that the Old Assyrian style should be divided further in at least two substyles, which indicate two places of production: Kültepe and Assur.³²³ The second style is represented mostly by seals, which are thought to have been produced in and imported from southern Mesopotamia, while the third style originated from the Syrian area. Finally, the last style is a native one, which is subdivided further into more groups due to the various foreign influences.³²⁴

For this examination, I will focus on the Old Assyrian and the Old Anatolian style by pointing out the religious illustrations of gods, worshippers and priests. Apart from the identification of the illustrated gods in order to show an Anatolian or Mesopotamian origin, I will also try to connect the cultural origin of the illustrations with the persons that owned the seals. The latter will illustrate whether the Mesopotamian motifs were strictly associated with the Assyrians and the Anatolian ones with the locals, or if combinations between the two arose.

Most of the seals and seal impressions of the Old Assyrian style come from level II, while they decrease in level Ib due to the limited texts.³²⁵ The principal theme of the Old Assyrian seals in general continues the tradition of the Ur III period with scenes of worship (fig. 74).³²⁶ Certain examples, thus, contain a sitting figure wearing a cap and holding a cup,³²⁷ a worshipper and two (secondary) goddesses

³²¹ Larsen 1977, 89; Özgüç 2003, 291. This division refers strictly to the various styles of the seals and not to the "ethnicity" of the owners.

³²² Lassen 2014, 108.

³²³ Lassen 2014, 107. The first substyle, which Lassen named "*Classic*", appears more conservative without any "foreign" influences. The second one, named "*Assyro-Cappadocian*", includes new motifs and types combining the first style with foreign influences. See Lassen 2014. In this study, however, since the focal point is the content of the illustrations, I will not examine further their stylistic subdivision.

³²⁴ Larsen 1977, 89; Özgüç 2003, 301.

³²⁵ Özgüç 2003, 294.

³²⁶ Özgüç 2003, 292; Teissier 1994, 52.

³²⁷ Lassen suggested that the seated figure is a ruler, while Özgüç suggested that he is an Assyrian god. See Lassen 2014, 110; Özgüç 2003, 292.

leading him (fig. 75). Very often there is a "disc-in-crescent" symbol in front of the seated figure (fig. 75). In certain examples, the disc is replaced by a small bull-altar symbol, or there is a combination of the two (fig. 76-77).³²⁸ In her examination of the bull altar motif, Lassen suggested that the current view that it is an Anatolian motif adopted by Assyrian seal carvers should probably be changed.³²⁹ As she mentioned this motif appears for the first time in an Old Assyrian seal of the more conservative style, which implies no foreign influences. Moreover, the same motif does not appear on Anatolian stamp seals at all, but only on cylinder seals with illustrations that can be attributed to ethnic Assyrians and not Anatolians.³³⁰ Lassen associated the bull altar motif with seals that belonged to officials of Assur, as well as with a seal that belonged to the City Hall of Assur and was found impressed on several bullae at the site of Acemhöyük (fig. 78).³³¹ These seal impressions are contemporary to the post level II period of the lower city of Kültepe, however Dercksen mentioned that this seal was probably in use before this period.³³² The seal had a legend which read *"Belonging to divine Aššur. Of the excise of the City Hall."*³³³ From this inscription, Lassen suggested that *"the seal was directly associated with divine Aššur himself."*³³⁴ From this evidence and from the fact that king Erišum I mentioned in one of his inscriptions about the building of the temple of Aššur in Assur, that the name of the temple is "Wild Bull", Lassen concluded that the bull figure probably represented the god Aššur himself.³³⁵ Certainly, as Lassen pointed out even if this is indeed the case, we cannot assume that the motif would represent the god Aššur for both Assyrian and foreign viewers.³³⁶

While the seals of the Old Assyrian style depict similar religious illustrations in many cases, they also show stylistic differences. For example, in the filling motifs and

³²⁸ Lassen 2014, 111-2.

³²⁹ Lassen 2014, 111.

³³⁰ Lassen 2014, 111-2.

³³¹ Dercksen 2004, 90; Lassen 2014, 112.

³³² Dercksen 2004, 90.

³³³ Dercksen 2004, 90; Lassen 2014, 112.

³³⁴ Dercksen 2004, 90; Lassen 2014, 112.

³³⁵ Grayson 1987, 20; Lassen 2014, 112.

³³⁶ Lassen 2014, 112.

the secondary scenes (see for example the conservative “*Classic*” style in fig. 75 and the hybridized “*Assyro-Cappadocian*” one in fig. 79), which probably has to be attributed to the place of production.³³⁷ Those differences can be explained from the fact that the seals belonging to the more conservative style originated in Assur, while the others were manufactured later in Kültepe, indicating a stylistic experimentation due to the contemporary mixed society.³³⁸

Regarding the owners of the Old Assyrian style, it seems that Lassen has identified some forty owners of the first conservative “*Classic*” style of seals. They are mostly wealthy male Assyrian merchants with the exception of a woman named Lamassi, who was the daughter of an Assyrian merchant and it seems that she never left the city of Assur.³³⁹

Concerning the owners of the second mixed Old Assyrian style, Lassen identified some twenty-five individuals.³⁴⁰ One again the majority of the owners were men with the exception of two women, who were connected with Assur and Assyrian men.³⁴¹ Lassen concluded that “*five to six of the twenty-five identified owners [of the ‘Assyro-Capadocian’ style] can thus be shown to have had close links with Anatolia and Kanesh. While a few of them have clear connection to the Assyrian merchant community, others have no discernible relation to the foreign traders, and probably most of them never left central Anatolia.*”³⁴² Lassen did not provide the exact seal illustrations of those Anatolian seal owners,³⁴³ however from the study of Teissier it seems that the majority of the illustrations depict as the central motif the sitting figure with the disc or the bull in front of him and a few figures approaching

³³⁷ See Lassen 2014, 116.

³³⁸ Lassen 2014, 112, 115.

³³⁹ Lassen 2014, 118. The seal of Lamassi probably ended up in Kültepe from her merchant father Šalim-Aššur, whose archive along with that of his brothers and father, were found in a house of the lower city. See Larsen 2010, 4, 7.

³⁴⁰ Lassen 2014, 118.

³⁴¹ Lassen 2014, 118. Concerning the two women mentioned above, according to Lassen the first one lived in Assur and moved to Kültepe and the second woman was probably of Anatolian origin who was married to an Assyrian merchant and lived permanently in Kültepe. See Lassen 2014, 118.

³⁴² Lassen 2014, 118.

³⁴³ This was probably due to the fact that I could not manage to find her dissertation paper but rather a short article of hers.

him.³⁴⁴ Therefore, it makes sense to assume that at least some of them would belong to the aforementioned Anatolian owners.

Regarding the Anatolian style of the cylinder seals, N. Özgüç has noticed that they have incorporated both the native and foreign motifs.³⁴⁵ Moreover, she managed to divide the Anatolian seals of level II in five groups based on their iconography: 1. Mythological Scenes, 2. Scenes of Worship, 3. Hunting Scenes, 4. Scenes of War, and 5. Friezes.³⁴⁶ I will only deal with the scenes of worship and with the possible owners of the seals.

Özgüç mentioned that the scenes of worship are rare and of secondary importance in the Anatolian group, since as she mentioned "*unmistakable scenes of a human being worshipping a deity number no more than five or six.*"³⁴⁷ Furthermore, Özgüç differentiated the depicted Mesopotamian and local gods based on their separate characteristics.³⁴⁸ According to her then, some of the depicted Mesopotamian gods is firstly the sun-god Šamaš, who is illustrated in 3 types: 1. by holding a ring scepter and a ray emerges from his shoulders, 2. by having flames emerging from his body (fig. 80), and 3. by raising his foot as if stepping on a mountain. Furthermore, the god Adad who is depicted with his thunderbolt and a lion-dragon (fig. 81), the goddess Ištar holding a lion-headed mace in her hand etc.³⁴⁹ However, it should be noted that the aforementioned gods in almost all cases, accompany other gods and are not worshipped alone. Concerning the local gods, Özgüç differentiated them based on their attributes such as the weather god, the war god, the hunting god, the nude goddess etc.³⁵⁰

³⁴⁴ Teissier 1994.

³⁴⁵ I should note here that her study was published in 1965 and therefore her suggestions might be outdated.

³⁴⁶ Özgüç 1965, 48.

³⁴⁷ Özgüç 1965, 48.

³⁴⁸ Özgüç 1965, 59.

³⁴⁹ Özgüç 1965, 59-60. The god Aššur is not included in this list, since Özgüç listed the Babylonian deities on the Anatolian seals, who were plausibly introduced by the Assyrians. However, one may assume that Aššur could also have been depicted as one of those seated gods.

³⁵⁰ Özgüç 1965, 63-73.

Özgüç stated that out of the 200 seal impressions carved in the Anatolian style, not more than 10 carry inscriptions concerning the owner of the seal.³⁵¹ Most of those inscribed impressions belong to Assyrians such as a certain Ikuppiya son of Atata, owner of a seal depicting among others the weather god enthroned. Another example is a certain Ennam-Aššur, son of Puzur-Ištar, owner of a seal depicting among others a seated figure.³⁵² Apart from the inscriptions, the content of the sealed documents and the findspot of the archive may also match a seal impression to a specific person. For example, the seal impressions from the envelopes of the archive of the Anatolian merchant Peruwa located in his house, point out the adoption of “foreign” motifs in the Anatolian style. These seal impressions include, among others, the imported hybrid figure of the bull-man, the goat-fish hybrid which is associated with the sacred hybrid of the Mesopotamian god Ea etc.³⁵³

Overall, it seems that there was a slight inclination of the Assyrians to the Assyrian style and gods and of the Anatolians to the Anatolian style and gods. However, there were still certain cases, where a person could have had as his property seals with depictions of other iconographic styles or influenced by “foreign” motifs and figures.

To conclude, even though the use and function of the seals is clearly not associated with the religious practices, they serve however as a possible illustration of religious practices and as an indication of cultural exchanges in the glyptic art between the two populations. Concerning the former, the depictions may provide an idea as to how the rituals were performed, how the statues of the gods looked like, what kind of cult objects a temple included, since in the worship scenes there is an altar, jars and vases, goblets etc. Regarding the latter, the fact that the Anatolians adopted the cylinder seals and incorporated several Mesopotamian features and figures (such as the Babylonian gods, the bull-man etc.) in their illustrations, points

³⁵¹ This conclusion was based on the textual finds until 1965. In most likelihood, current scholars will have discovered more inscriptions and more owners of seals.

³⁵² Lassen 2014, 114; Özgüç 1965, 76-7, 82.

³⁵³ For the seal impressions of the archive of Peruwa see Özgüç 2006, 23-32. For the texts of the archive see Günbatti 2016.

out the wider adaptability and open-mindedness from the part of the local towards new ideas, styles, motifs. Furthermore, it demonstrates their capability of developing further a new glyptic style together with the "foreigners", the "*Assyro-Cappadocian*", creating thus a hybrid one. The latter could also be used as an indication of how such a mixed society functioned in other cultural and social aspects as well during this period. This notion will be analyzed further in this paper concerning specifically the Old Assyrian religious practices.

5.2 Religious Practices in the Textual Evidence

As it became clear from the archaeological evidence there has not been found any material remains at the site of Kültepe, which could indicate an actual Assyrian temple. However, several scholars have suggested that the Old Assyrian settlements should, in most likelihood, have had some kind of an Assyrian shrine or a sacred area in order to worship at least the principal Assyrian deity, Aššur.³⁵⁴ Even though, the existence of a temple of Aššur (*bēt Aššur*) is mentioned explicitly in the texts only a few times.³⁵⁵

Even though the site of Kültepe has yielded more than 23,500 cuneiform tablets, constituting the third largest corpus of texts written in Akkadian,³⁵⁶ the texts record mostly private and economic affairs of the merchants and therefore specific references on religious buildings and practices are somewhat absent. Be that as it may, there are certain occasional textual references that indicate the existence of at least an Assyrian (public) temple or an Assyrian shrine in domestic environment in Kültepe.

It seems that the presumable temple of Kültepe would be incorporated into the Old Assyrian society in more ways than just for religious purposes, since parts of the temple or its broader area are mentioned in legal texts, pointing out its judicial

³⁵⁴ For example, see Dercksen 2004, 101; Larsen 2015, 265; Veenhof 2008a, 103.

³⁵⁵ Dercksen 2004, 101; Hirsch 1972, 47.

³⁵⁶ Barjamovic 2015, 48.

function as well. For example, Dercksen examined the so-called "Gate of god" which based on a legal text from level Ib it is "*in the sacred precinct (hamrum)*."³⁵⁷ This particular gate has been associated with the god Aššur based on other texts that refer to it as the "Gate of divine Aššur" (*bāb Aššur*).³⁵⁸ It has been argued that the designation of this gate "*probably derives from the circumstance that this gate formed the entrance to the local Assur temple (...) which gave that area the name hamrum 'sacred precinct.'*"³⁵⁹ Dercksen therefore assumed that the specific gate mentioned in the texts obtained its name by actually being a gate of the temple of Aššur (*bēt Aššur*), which in its turn made the whole area sacred. Furthermore, Dercksen proposed that this gate and the temple of Aššur would be located in the lower city and more specifically in a close proximity to the fortification wall around it.³⁶⁰ In any case, it becomes evident that the broader space of the supposed temple apart from the religious purposes that one may attribute to it, was also used as a judicial space in order to trial lawsuits and other legal matters.

In one of the legal texts of level Ib discussed by Dercksen,³⁶¹ the dagger of Aššur (*patrim/ šugarri'im ša Aššur*) is mentioned. A long discussion has been made on that particular expression, which occurs many times in the Old Assyrian legal documents.³⁶² The dagger is thought to be the symbol/emblem of god Aššur, which

³⁵⁷ Dercksen 2004, 101. In a recently published text from level II of the lower city of Kültepe a verdict of the City Assembly of Assur is brought to light (Kt. 92/k 491). In the first line of the text, it is mentioned that the "*The City passed the following verdict before the two large sikkatum's in the holy precinct (hamrum)*." From the latter, it is evident that such a sacred area existed in both Assur and Kültepe and was associated with legal practices and oath taking ceremonies. Concerning the *sikkatum* mentioned in the text, Veenhof suggested that it signified a symbol of the divine Aššur, which was also present in other verdicts. However, it is still not certain what kind of object it would actual be. See Veenhof 2014-2015, 109-25; for the publication of the text see Çayir 2008, 119-20.

³⁵⁸ Dercksen 2004, 101; Hirsch 1972, 7.

³⁵⁹ Dercksen 2004, 101.

³⁶⁰ Dercksen 2001, 100-1; Larsen 2015, 50-1.

³⁶¹ See Dercksen 2004, 101.

³⁶² It is not clear why in the majority the testimonies were given before his dagger (*patrum*), whereas in 60 cases an object named *šugarriā'um* was used instead. Scholars believe that the latter is an alternative to Aššur's dagger; however, the difference between the two terms remains unclear. Veenhof 2014-2015, 114-6. In addition, in some legal texts the phrase also occurs as *mahar patrim/šugarriā'im ša Aššur* which is then translated as "before the dagger-emblem of god Aššur." For more information see Donbaz 2001, 83; Hirsch 1972, 6-7, 66.

was plausibly used in the oath-taking of men.³⁶³ Veenhof explained that such emblems were used to ensure that the speakers would be honest and moreover would invoke the gods to punish them if they lied.³⁶⁴

Moreover, Donbaz suggested that the divine objects mentioned in the legal texts were "*not only emblems of Assur and other deities; people are holding them during the trial,*" based on textual references which included the emblems and an official.³⁶⁵ He furthermore concluded that the official would probably be a high-ranking priest of Assur, who would be responsible of the legal affairs in the Old Assyrian settlements in Anatolia and who would bear the emblems of the god during a trial.³⁶⁶ Finally, in certain cases, Veenhof pointed out that the invocation of god Aššur is accompanied by the invocation of other gods as well. For example, the case where "*Aššur, Amurru(m) and the god of Kaneš*" were invoked together.³⁶⁷

The existence of a temple of Aššur in Kültepe as well as in the majority of the Old Assyrian settlements in Anatolia, became even more real due to a letter addressed by the Assyrian "colony" of Uršu, situated in northern Syria, to the *kārum* of Kültepe (text 8).³⁶⁸ In it, it was reported that thieves had entered the temple of Aššur and had stolen many objects such as the golden sun on Aššur's breast and Aššur's dagger. This information indicates further the existence of a divine statue with several luxurious emblems and objects in the interior of the temple.³⁶⁹

Moreover, there is fewer but equally important textual evidence of a possible sanctuary dedicated to the goddess Ištar at Kültepe. In the oath-taking procedures for example, mentioned before, men would swear on the dagger of Aššur, while if

³⁶³ Donbaz 2001, 83; Veenhof 2008a, 103; 2014-2015, 114.

³⁶⁴ Veenhof 2008a, 103.

³⁶⁵ Donbaz 2001, 88, 92-3; Veenhof 2014-2015, 116-7. For example, Kt 92/k 491: (...) IGI 2 GIŠ.KAK-en GAL-en. The latter has been interpreted as two emblems/pegs (*šugarriā'en*) held by a high military official (*rabi sikkati*). For other textual references see Donbaz 2001, 92; Veenhof 2014-2015; 117.

³⁶⁶ Donbaz 2001, 95.

³⁶⁷ Veenhof 2008a, 103. Amurru(m) was a Mesopotamian god with a well-established cult in Babylonia already from the Ur III period. He was considered to be the son of the important Mesopotamian god Anu. See Leick 1991, 4.

³⁶⁸ Larsen 1976, 261; Veenhof 2008a, 103.

³⁶⁹ Larsen 1976, 261-2; Veenhof 2008a, 103.

women were under oath they would swear on an object of Ištar called *huppum*.³⁷⁰ The use of this sacred object in the court, along with the following evidence, may indicate the existence of a special space, perhaps a sanctuary, used for its storage.

More important textual evidence for the worship and the cultic presence of Ištar at Kültepe was provided by Dercksen.³⁷¹ A recently published text by him, in combination with older texts from the same archive, refer to several incidents of a man named Šu-Ištar and his family. It seems that Šu-Ištar had to go to Assur for three years for unspecified reasons, while his son was responsible for the statue of Ištar and her jewellery.³⁷² In the letter published by Dercksen (text 9), it is mentioned that several objects of the jewellery collection of the goddess's statue were stolen.³⁷³ Due to the fact that the incident mentioned in this letter does not play an important role in the rest of the documents, the aftermath of this letter is not known. In any case, from this text it becomes evident that there was a statue of the goddess with rich objects situated in the house of that priest, similarly to the case of the statue of the god Aššur mentioned before. Based on the above, Dercksen suggested that part of the house of Ištar's priest could have functioned as a cella, a place for the offerings to the goddess.³⁷⁴ Even though the suggestion of Dercksen seems like a plausible explanation for the existence of the deity's statue inside the priest's house, one may also consider that the priest could have been storing the statue for the arrival of a special religious occasion.

In search of another plausible sanctuary of Ištar at Kültepe, Dercksen mentioned the so-called "*temple of Išhara*". This was based on the fact that "*Išhara shared important characteristics with Ishtar as a goddess of love and sexuality and*

³⁷⁰ Michel and Veenhof have interpreted this term as a tambourine. See Michel 1996, 112, 117; Veenhof 2008a, 103. For more information on the oath see Michel 1996, 117. For more information on the textual references of the object see Michel 1996, 112; Dercksen 2015b, 46.

³⁷¹ Dercksen 2015b.

³⁷² Dercksen 2015b, 44.

³⁷³ For a complete list of the stolen objects and a further analysis on them see Dercksen 2015b, 40-3.

³⁷⁴ Dercksen 2015b, 47. I should note here that I was not able to find the excavation report concerning the archaeological finds of the house of this priest, and therefore I do not know if any cultic objects existed in the interior of his house.

both deities received votive offerings in Kanesh according to a letter."³⁷⁵ As he mentioned, the association of the two Mesopotamian goddesses became clear during the Middle Assyrian period when goddess Išhara had a cella in the temple of Ištar in Assur. Concerning the city of Kültepe, according to Dercksen, there are texts that demonstrate that there existed a "temple" of the goddess Išhara, probably located on the mound of the city, but no priest of Išhara is known so far.³⁷⁶

In favor of the private sacred space, Barjamovic and Larsen presented a small text (text 10), which belonged to the archive of Šalim-Aššur. The text might constitute an "*inventory of a private chapel*", intensifying thus the evidence of the existence of private domestic sanctuaries.³⁷⁷ The text is a contract set up at the time when a certain Ennam-Aššur emptied the house of a certain son of Kura. It lists several items that were situated in the house "*in front of his gods*."³⁷⁸ For example, cups, tables, which could serve as a place for the deposition of offerings, a chair, which has been associated with funerary rituals, mentioned in the texts, during which a chair was "removed" symbolically as a rite of passage etc.³⁷⁹

In the sphere of family and private religion one may also find texts, known as incantations, belonging to the private archives. According to Larsen, sometimes the incantations were written down on a tablet in the "amulet" shape, which as he mentioned were known from all periods in Mesopotamia.³⁸⁰ The incantations do not provide instructions concerning the actual ritual, however it seems that it was executed by a priest, probably as part of "*everyday practice rather than a professionalized activity*."³⁸¹ Since they belonged to individuals, it becomes evident

³⁷⁵ Dercksen 2015b, 47.

³⁷⁶ Dercksen 2015b, 47.

³⁷⁷ Barjamovic and Larsen 2008, 153; Heffron 2016, 37-8.

³⁷⁸ This phrase along with the names of the gods which are mentioned in the list (Aššur, Šarru-matan and Uqur) have been interpreted by Larsen as an invocation to the ancestral spirits. He associated the latter with the existence of burials under the floor of the private houses, as a further indication of ancestor cult. See Larsen 2015, 266-7.

³⁷⁹ Barjamovic and Larsen 2008, 153-4; Heffron 2016, 38, 153. Relevant texts discussed by Veenhof deal with the death of Ištar-lamassī and her sons and they mention the financial provision for the bawling and the ritual of "removing the chair" during the mortuary rites. See Veenhof 2008b, 111, 113.

³⁸⁰ Larsen 2015, 260.

³⁸¹ Barjamovic and Larsen 2008, 151; Larsen 2015, 260.

that they would concern problems of the daily life of the merchants and their families, such as dangers of childbirth, diseases of mother and babies, protection from demons and the evil eye, the making of a magic potion etc.³⁸²

From the Old Assyrian contracts, certain evidence on the Anatolian deities also become evident. For example, in several contracts it is mentioned that goddess Anna had a temple and that festivals were organized for her. Other texts point out that Anna was invoked in oaths and as witness on behalf of the Anatolian part.³⁸³ The latter, namely the fact that Anna had equal position in texts with the god Aššur, is considered to prove that she was the counterpart of the god Aššur for the citizens of Kültepe.³⁸⁴

5.3 Conclusions

Although the archaeological and textual data from Kültepe do not paint a clear picture concerning the Old Assyrian religious practices, they do provide evidence which leads to further considerations and assumptions. Both corpora show that both Assyrian and local religious beliefs and practices (references to both Assyrian and Anatolian gods in oaths, seals depicting both Mesopotamian and local gods) and cultic objects (lead figurines of Anatolian tradition and drinking vessels probably of Mesopotamian tradition) were present at the site of Kültepe; however, it is not always clear in what context they were used (public spaces/temples - private houses) or by whom (Assyrian -Anatolian individuals).

Concerning the former, namely the kind of sacred space present in Kültepe, the archaeological evidence indicated strongly the existence of domestic religion rather than public. One should bear in mind of course that one possibility does not

³⁸² Barjamovic and Larsen 2008, 144-5; Larsen 2015, 260-1; Michel 2004.

³⁸³ Kryszat 2006, 118-9.

³⁸⁴ Kryszat 2006, 118-9. This fact has been based mostly on documents of level II. In level Ib, Anna is mentioned only once. The reason for this abrupt change may be attributed to the scarce documents of level Ib. See Kryszat 2006, 119, 121.

exclude the other. However, since in Kültepe there has not been found any remains of an Old Assyrian temple as yet, the evidence (such as the stelae in the interior of houses, the individual figurines and their moulds in the interior or in the proximity of a private house) support the existence of domestic religious practices. The fact that the stelae are only a few in number can be attributed to the fact that a domestic environment could have served as a shrine for more than one family.

On the other hand, the textual evidence confuses this picture, since in a few texts an actual reference to a temple or to some of its parts was made. At the same time, there are also textual references to religious objects such as statues, which imply that there would be a sacred place to house them. Concerning the latter, the possibility of the statues being stored in the private houses of priests or officials can be applied. However, regarding the former there is probably nothing else to assume rather than the actual existence of a temple which has not been discovered yet.

One may get a better insight into the Assyrian and local religious practices if the cultic objects of Kültepe are pinpointed further to their owners and/or to a specific cultural tradition (table 4). For example, regarding the few stone stelae, even though in most cases there is no evidence concerning the owner of the house they were found in, there is one case where there is clear evidence of an Assyrian owner. Although the latter may possibly indicate that the stone stelae could have been located solely in the Assyrian households, one may also assume that some of the rest of the houses could have belonged to the Anatolians as well. Furthermore, one plausible scenario for the function of the houses with the stelae is that they could have served as cultic spaces for one or more families for both the native and the foreign populations. The origin of the stelae is still not certain, since there are earlier examples in both Syria and Anatolia; although the latter seems more plausible.

As far as the drinking vessels are concerned, it seems that they were used by both populations, since they have been found in both contexts. In most likelihood, their type seems to have originated in Mesopotamia. However, the fact that their development in Anatolia during the Old Assyrian period is unique and specific types do not have other parallels apart from the Old Assyrian settlements in Anatolia,

points out an indigenous evolution of this specific type of pottery. This unique production possibly occurred via the cultural exchanges between the local and the foreign populations in Anatolia.

Finally, regarding the lead figures, it is plausible to assume that they were used by both populations since on the one hand some of them or their stone moulds were found in close proximity to or inside Assyrian houses and on the other hand the majority of them probably represented local deities based on the glyptic parallels. In addition, the use of lead to fashion figurines was probably part of the Anatolian cultural tradition. Concerning the figurines from other material, such as faience and ivory, apart from the example of the ivory figurine found in a burial under the house of an Assyrian, there is no other evidence regarding the owners. However, it seems that their technique and material was imported from Syria. One certainly has to keep in mind that the objects that plausibly represented deities could have been interpreted differently depending on the viewer's background.

From the above, it became evident that even in the cases where the ethnicity of the owner of a cultic object is clear, it does not always match the cultural tradition and origin of the object and furthermore of the specific religious practice. This mixed situation of the religious objects and traditions should probably be attributed to the mixed and hybrid character of this settlement during this period. The latter will be better explained and explored further in the next chapter of this paper.

6. Final Conclusions

In this paper, I reviewed the religious evidence, both textually and archaeologically, from the Old Assyrian city-state of Assur and from its most important settlement in Anatolia, Kültepe. This investigation aimed at re-examining, re-evaluating and comparing the existing data and theories on Old Assyrian religious practices in order to establish the measure in which Assyrian and Anatolian concepts, traditions or practicalities influenced each other.

The facts that the lower city of Assur has not been sufficiently excavated and that no Assyrian temple has been discovered so far in Kültepe, limit severely the possible comparison of the religious practices between the two settlements. However, it seems that the Assyrians who resided in Anatolia maintained certain religious practices from their cultural tradition, such as the use of figurines and of the drinking vessels, even if they incorporated them into the existing Anatolian tradition (i.e. the adoption of the lead figurines). In addition, from the examination of the evidence it seems that the local religious practices of this period at Kültepe continued the existing Anatolian tradition, such as the lead figurines and possibly the stone stelae. At the same time, they adopted and incorporated into their own tradition several elements of Mesopotamian or Syrian origin, such as the drinking vessels and the imported luxurious materials in order to fashion figurines.

These cultural borrowings in which various traditions of religious practices were mixed and adjusted where deemed necessary, can be associated with the international character of the city of Kültepe in this period, where different cultural traditions co-existed alongside each other and in many cases, they blended. The latter led scholars to describe the settlement of Kültepe as a hybrid one.³⁸⁵ From the

³⁸⁵ Michel 2014, 79; Yazicioğlu-Santamaria 2015, 94. I should note here that there are many theoretical approaches on hybridity concerning mostly post-colonial cultures or large empires. For example, the study of Wallace-Hadrill 2008, 7-14 regarding the co-existence of various cultural identities during the Roman Empire. Since Kültepe cannot fall into the category of an Assyrian colony and it cannot be considered a part of an empire, I have chosen not to use them.

material evidence of Kültepe, one might see the hybrid identity of the settlement not so much in the new mixed creations of the different populations, since this category as yet only consists of the "*Assyro-Cappadocian*" glyptic style, but more on the level of adopting and incorporating each other's characteristics and elements into existing traditions.³⁸⁶ For example, the adoption of lead figurines and their stone moulds belonging to the Anatolian tradition by Assyrian merchants and the use of the drinking vessels of possible Mesopotamian tradition by the Anatolians. The extensive use of objects already known from either the Mesopotamian or the Anatolian cultural tradition by both populations led to a tremendous development in variety, quality and quantity during this particular period.

Overall, from this investigation, it became clear that the Old Assyrian religious puzzle is far from completed. The examination of the religious evidence both from Assur and Kültepe has stressed the need of further research in order to gain a better and more reliable picture of the religious practices and beliefs during the Old Assyrian period.

³⁸⁶ Certainly, one has to keep in mind that there would also exist perishable material evidence, such as clothes, furniture etc., as well as products of everyday contacts, customs and habits, which we cannot detect in the preserved material culture and therefore we cannot know in which category they would belong to.

7. Appendix

| | |
|--|---|
| <u>Early Bronze Age</u> ca. 3000-2000 B.C.E. | |
| Early Dynastic Period | ca. 2900-2350 B.C.E. |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Early Dynastic I ca. 2900-2750 B.C.E. • Early Dynastic II ca. 2750-2600 B.C.E. • Early Dynastic III ca. 2600-2350 B.C.E. | |
| Akkadian Period | ca. 2334-2154 B.C.E. |
| Ur III Period | ca. 2112-2004 B.C.E. |
| <u>Middle Bronze Age</u> ca. 2000-1600 B.C.E. | |
| Old Assyrian Period | ca. 1950-1720 B.C.E. |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kültepe Lower City Level II ca. 1950-1840/36 B.C.E. • Kültepe Lower City Level Ib 1833/30-1720/19 B.C.E. | |
| <u>Middle Bronze Age - Late Bronze Age</u> ca. 2000-1600 B.C.E. ca. 1600-1200 B.C.E. | |
| “Dark Ages” | ca. late 18 th - early 14 th cent. B.C.E. |
| Middle Assyrian Period | ca. 1363-1050 B.C.E. |
| <u>Iron Age</u> ca. 1100 B.C.E. | |
| Neo-Assyrian Period | ca. 880-612 B.C.E. |

Table 1: Selected Chronology of Anatolian, North and South Mesopotamia. For the specific chronologies, I have used Van de Mierop 2007 and Barjamovic et al. 2012.

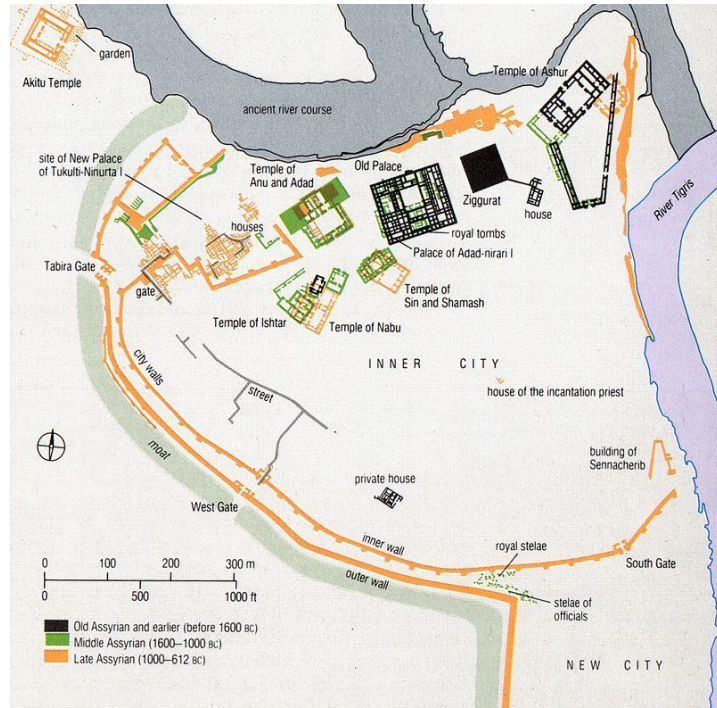


Figure 1: The Site Plan of the City of Assur. en.wikipedia.org



Figure 2: The site of Kültepe. www.kultepe.org.tr

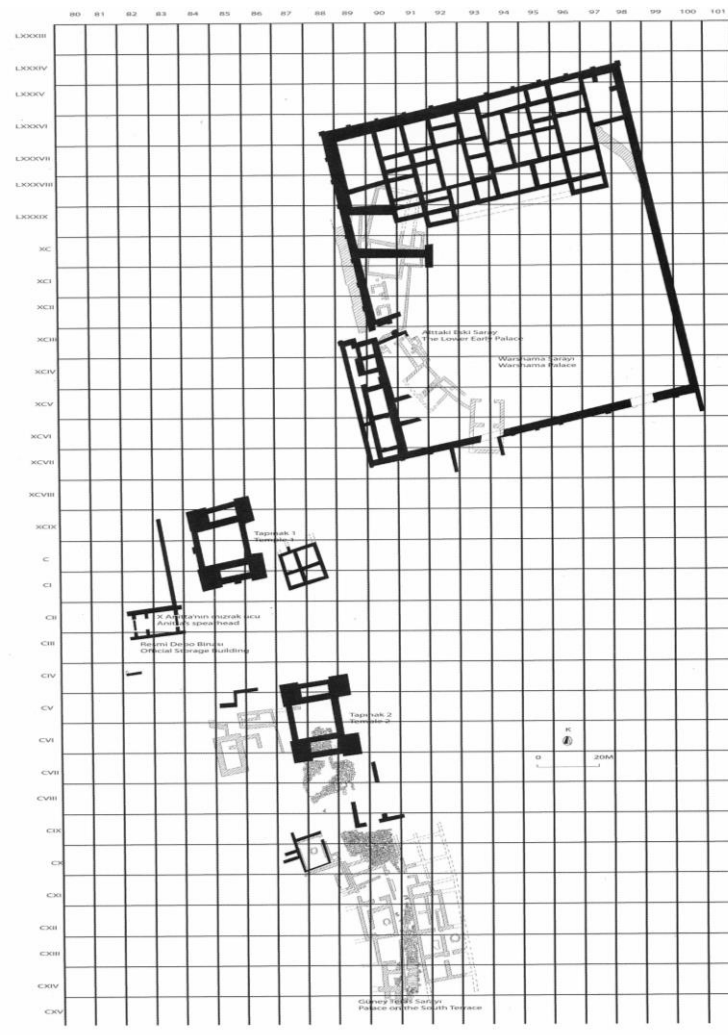


Figure 3: The Palace, the Two Temples and the Official Buildings on the Mound of Kültepe. Kulakoğlu 2010, 42.

| | |
|------------------------|---|
| <i>Kārum</i> Level IV | Late third–early second millennium B.C.E. |
| <i>Kārum</i> Level III | |
| <i>Kārum</i> Level II | ca. 1950–1836 B.C.E. |
| Interval | ca. 1836–1833 B.C.E. |
| <i>Kārum</i> Level Ib | ca. 1833–1719(?) B.C.E. |
| <i>Kārum</i> Level Ia | ca. 1719–1685 (?) B.C.E. |

Figure 4: The Levels of the Lower City of Kültepe. Kulakoğlu 2011, 1019.

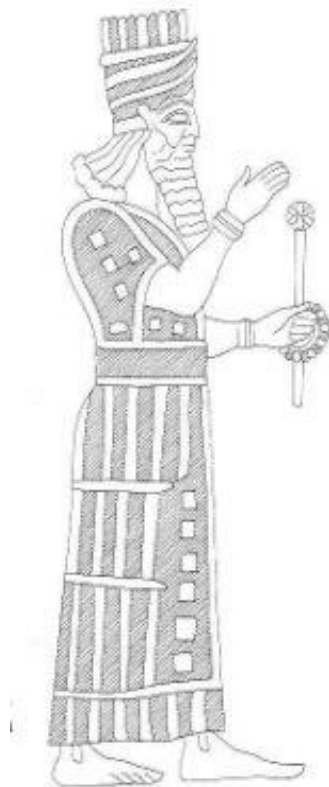


Figure 5: God Aššur from a Blazed Brick Panel of a House in Assur, 9th -7th century B.C.E. Black and Green 1992, 38.

| | <i>AKL name</i> | <i>son of</i> | <i>years</i> | <i>dates BC</i> | <i>dates in Barjamovic et. al.</i> | |
|---|------------------|---------------|--------------|--|------------------------------------|-------|
| 0 | Puzur-Assur (I) | ? | ? | ca. 2010 | | |
| 1 | Šalim-ahum | 30 | ? | ca. 2000 | | |
| 2 | Ilušuma | 31 | ? | ca. 1990 | | |
| "kings [known from] bricks whose <i>limums</i> were not marked/found. | | | | | | |
| 3 | Erišum (I) | 32 | 40 | ca. 1974-1935 | 1969-1930 | |
| 4 | Ikunum | 33 | 14 | ca. 1934-1921 | 1929-1916 | |
| 5 | Šarru-kin | 34 | 40 | ca. 1920-1881 | 1915-1876 | |
| 6 | Puzur-Aššur (II) | 35 | 8 | ca. 1880-1873 | 1875-1868 | |
| 7 | Naram-Suen | 36 | [4] 4? | ca. 1872-1829? | 1867-1824? | |
| | | | | [destruction of <i>kārum</i> Kanesh level II | ca. 1837 | 1832] |
| 8 | Erišum (II) | 36 | [20] ? | ca. 1828?-1809 | 1823?-1809 | |
| 9 | Šamši-Adad (I) | | 33 | ca. 1808-1776 | | |
| 10 | Išme-Dagan | 39 | 40 (?)* | ca. 1775-1736? | | |
| * Figure mentioned in AKL, but doubted for several reasons. | | | | | | |

Table 2: The Chronology of the Old Assyrian Kings. Veenhof 2010b, 33.



Figure 6: Neo-Assyrian Seal of Ištar in Astral Aspect Receiving Worship. Black and Green 1992, 108.

| Die Ištar-Tempel: Neue Schichteneinteilung | | |
|--|--|--|
| Bauzustand | Phasen / Befunde | Datierung |
| H | Längere Benutzungsdauer ohne Phasendifferenzierung | Jüngerfrühdynastisch (FD III) |
| G | Innerhalb des Tempels: G 1 = Cella mit Stein-Installation ----- G 2 = Cella mit Stufe Außerhalb des Tempels: Teilweise Neuerrichtung oder Weiterbenutzung von Räumlichkeiten des Bauzustandes H am Hof | Jüngerfrühdynastisch (FD III) bis Akkad-Zeit |
| GF | Innerhalb des Tempels: Weiterbenutzungs des G-Tempels mit einer Fußbodenerhöhung in der Cella Außerhalb des Tempels: GF 1: Älteres Niveau im Hof und angrenzenden Nebenräumen ----- GF 2: Jüngeres Niveau im Hof und angrenzenden Nebenräumen | Jüngerfrühdynastisch (FD III) bis Akkad-Zeit |
| E (+ Fußböden D – C – B) | Vor der Errichtung des Tempels: Mauerreste ----- E 1 = Ältere Bauphase von Freitreppe und Cella ----- E 2 = Jüngere Bauphase von Freitreppe und Cella = Fußboden D im Hof ----- E 2-C = Fußboden C im Hof ----- E 2-B = Fußboden B im Hof ----- Nach der Benutzung des Tempels: Bestattungen | Ur III- bis altassyrische Zeit |
| D (+ Fußboden A) | Lehmziegelsubstruktionen (D) und aufliegende Kalksteinfundamente des ehemaligen Šarrat-Niphi-Tempels = Fußboden A im Hof | Altassyrische bis mittlassyrische Zeit (1. Hälfte) |
| Ištar-Ašuritu- und Šulmanitu-Tempel | Ziegelpflaster im Hof | Mittlassyrische bis neuassyrische Zeit |
| Wohnhäuser | 1. Ältere Phase ----- 2. Jüngere Phase | Neuassyrische Zeit (2. Hälfte) |
| Nabû-Tempel | Lehmziegelfundamente | Neuassyrische Zeit (Ende) |
| Wohnhäuser | Steinfundamente | Parthisch / Islamisch |
| Hügeloberfläche | Bio- und Sedimentschichten | Rezent |

Table 3: The Architectural Phases of the Ištar Temple in Assur. Bär 2003, 38.

15–57) At that time the temple of the Assyrian Ištar, my mistress, which Ilu-šumma, my forefather, vice-regent of Aššur, a king who preceded me, had previously built — 720 years had passed (and) that temple had become dilapidated and old. At that time, at the beginning of my sovereignty, I cleared away its debris down to the bottom of the foundation pit. I rebuilt Eme, ‘Temple of Cultic Rubrics’, her joyful dwelling, the shrine, her voluptuous dais, (and) the awesome sanctuary; I made them (lit. ‘which were’) more outstanding than before and made (the temple) as beautiful as a heavenly dwelling. I completed (it) from top to bottom (and) deposited my monumental inscriptions.

Text 1: Inscription of Tukulti-Ninurta I. Grayson 1987, 254.

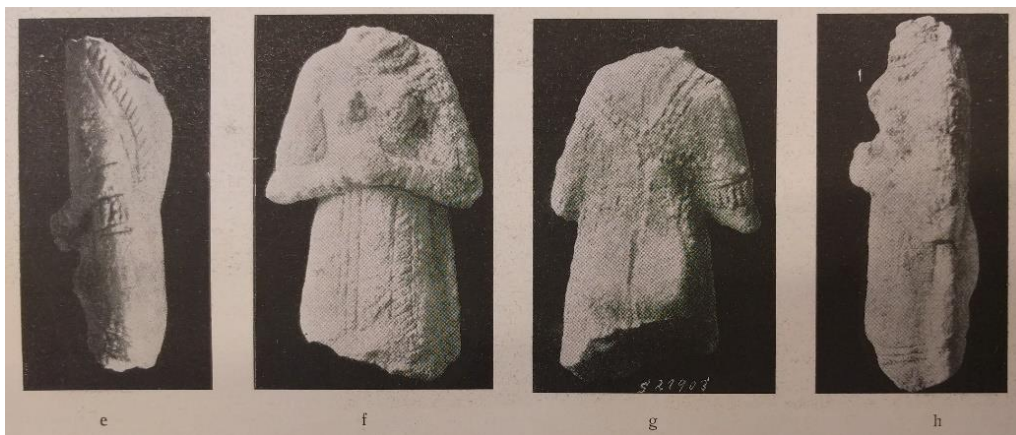


Figure 7: Stone Figure of a Woman from the Ištar Temple. Andrae 1922, table 58.

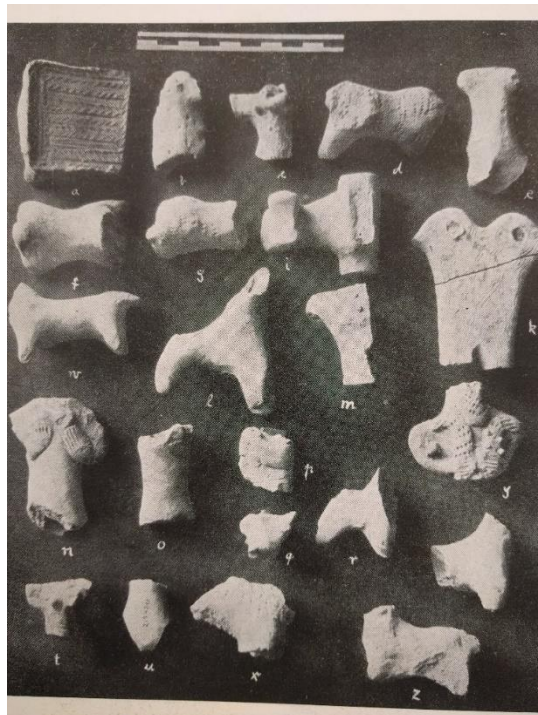


Figure 8: Fragments of Clay Figurines from the Istar Temple. Andrae 1922, table 62.

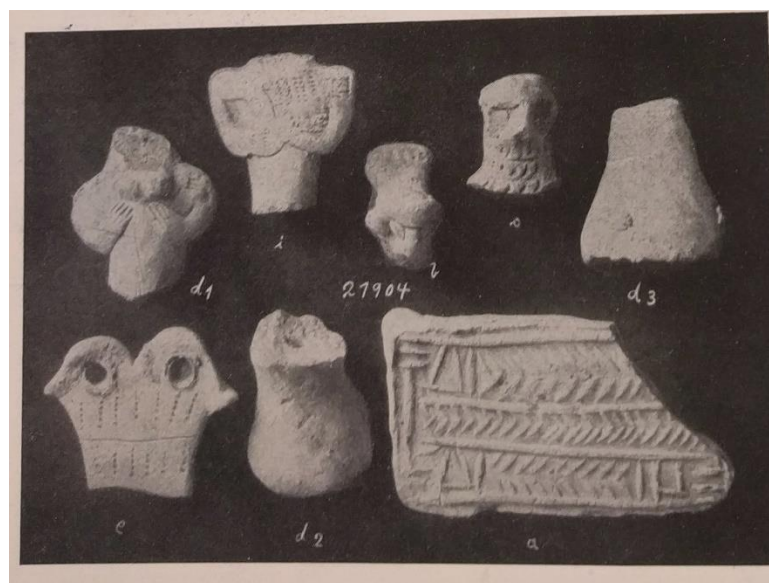


Figure 9: Fragments of Clay Figurines from the Istar Temple. Andrae 1922, table 62.

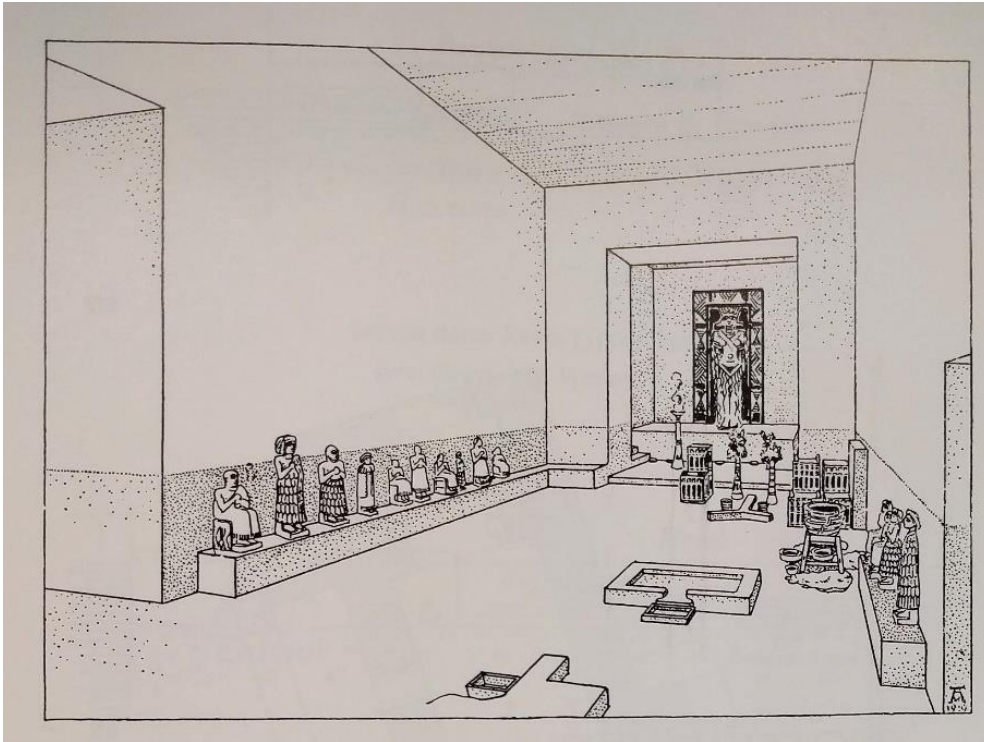


Figure 10: Reconstruction of the "Cult Room" in the Ištar Temple. Bär 2003, 403.

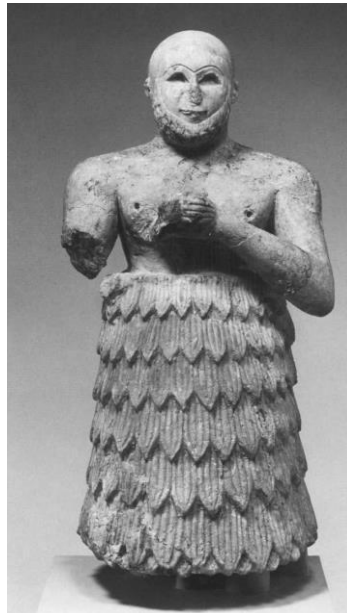


Figure 11: Alabaster Figurine of a Man from the Ištar Temple. Harper 1995, 28.



Figure 12: Alabaster Figurine of a Woman from the Istar Temple. Harper 1995, 29.

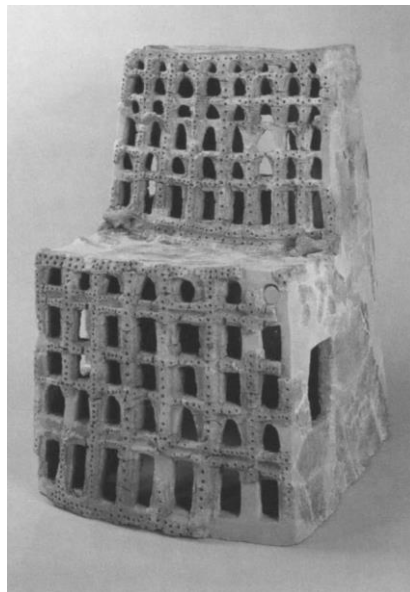


Figure 13: Altar in the Shape of a House from the Istar Temple. Klengel-Brandt 1995, 35.



Figure 14: Hollow Clay Stand from the Ištar Temple. Klengel-Brandt 1995, 36.



Figure 15: Metal Figurines from the Temple of Aššur. Andrae and Haller 1955, table 26.



Figure 16: Metal Objects from the Temple of Aššur. Andrae and Haller 1955, table 27.

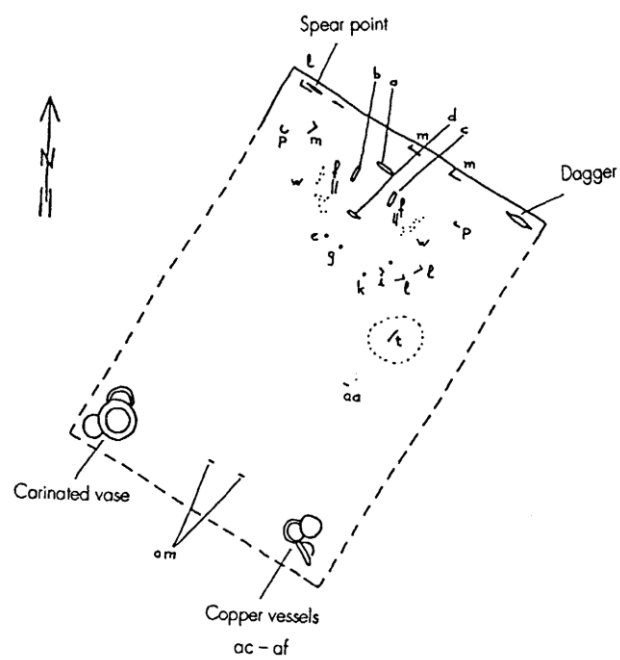


Figure 17: Excavation Sketch of Grave 20. Wartke 1995, 44.

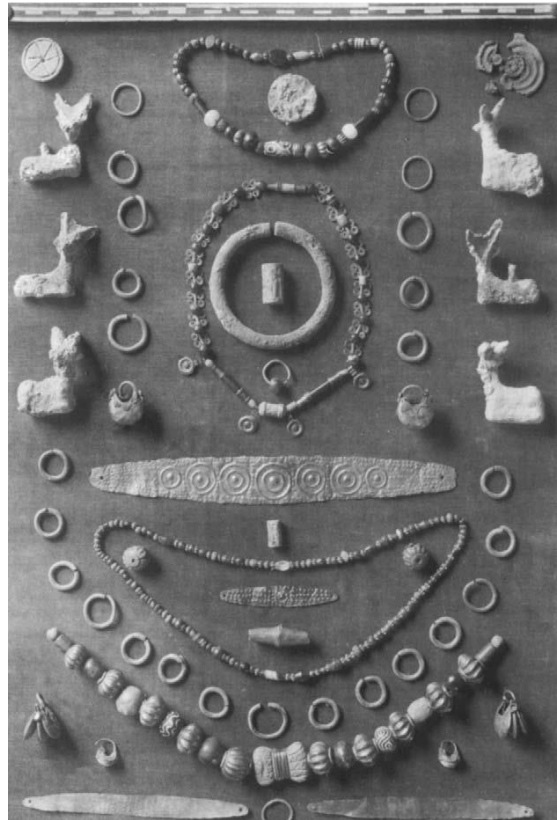


Figure 18: Selected Finds from Grave 20. Wartke 1995, 45.

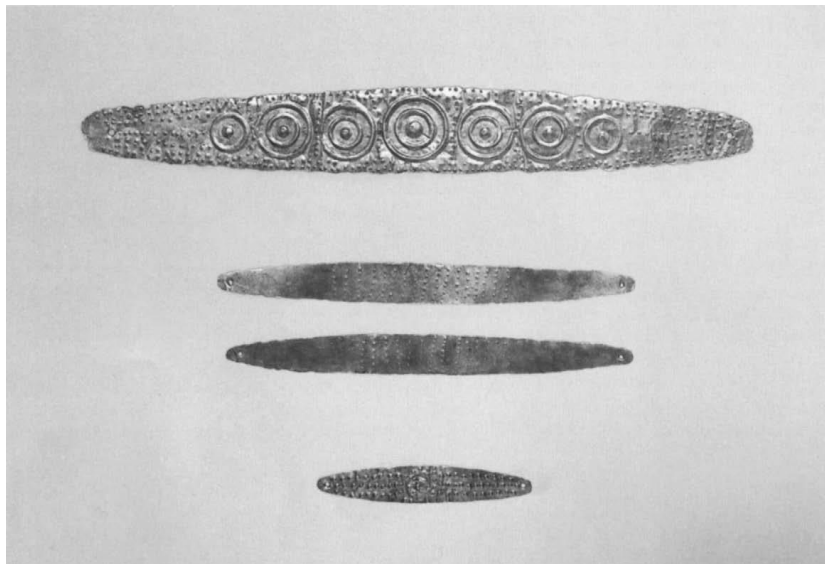


Figure 19: Gold diadems from Grave 20. Aruz 1995a, 48.



Figure 20: Reconstruction of Necklace Beads from Lapis Lazuli, Gold and Cornelian found in Grave 20. Wartke 1995, plate 6.



Figure 21: Gold and Lapis Lazuli Earrings from Grave 20. Benzel 1995, plate 7.



Figure 22: Lapis Lazuli Cylinder Seal and Modern Impression from Grave 20. Aruz 1995b, 60.

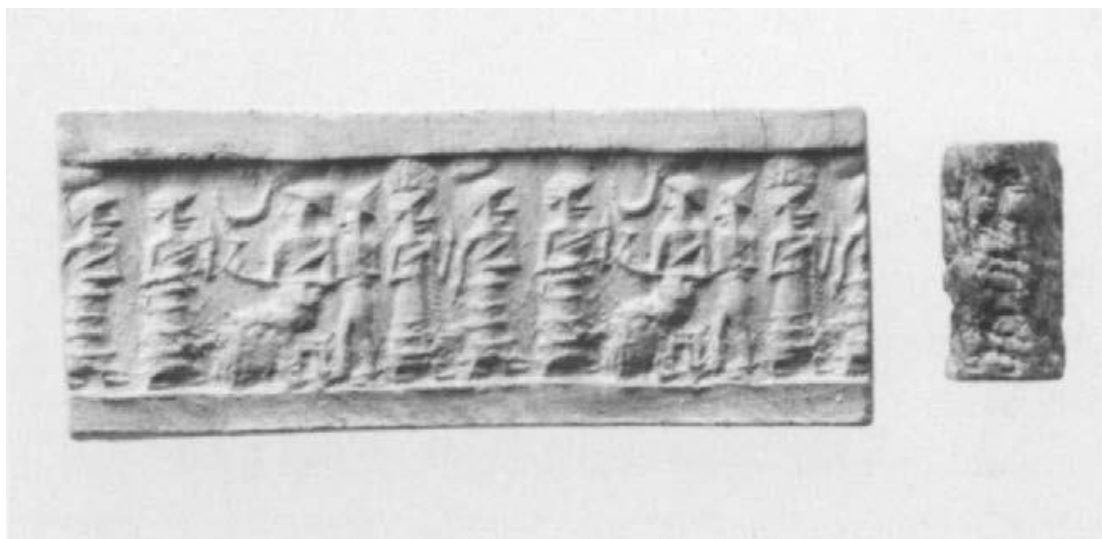


Figure 23: Lapis Lazuli Cylinder Seal and Modern Impression from Grave 20. Aruz 1995b, 61.



Figure 24: Lapis Lazuli Cylinder Seal and Modern Impression from Grave 20. Aruz 1995b, 62.

1-24) Šalim-aḫum, vice-regent of Aššur, son of Puzur-Aššur (I), vice-regent of Aššur: The god Aššur requested of him a temple and he (therefore) built forever a temple of ... The palace of ...(-)Dagan, its shrine, its *temple area*, ..., its house of beer vats and storage area [he built] for (his) life and the life of his city, for the god Aššur.

Lacuna

Text 2: Inscription of Šalim-aḫum. Grayson 1987, 14.

16–48) Ilu-šumma, vice-regent of Aššur, built the temple for the goddess Ištār, his mistress, for his life. A façade (and) new wall I constructed and subdivided house-plots for my city. The god Aššur opened for me two springs in Mount Abih and I made bricks for the wall by these two springs. The water of one spring flowed down to the Aušum Gate (while) the water of the other spring flowed down to the Wertum Gate.

Text 3: Inscription of Ilušuma. Grayson 1987, 17-8.

1–3) [...] ... Erišum, vice-regent of Aššur, [son of Ilu-šumma], vice-regent of Aššur; Ilu-šumma (was) the son of Šalim-aḥum, [vice-regent of Aššur]; Šalim-aḥum (was) the son of Puzur-Aššur (I), [vice-regent of Aššur]:

4–18) Erišum, vice-regent of Aššur: I [built the Step] Gate, the *courtyard*, (and) the chapel [for] my lord. I built a [*high*] throne (and) adorned the front of it with a precious stone (*hušāru*). I installed the doors. With Aššur, my lord, standing by me I reserved land for Aššur, my lord, from the Sheep Gate to the People's Gate. I built all of the *temple area*. I built two beer vats, twins [...]. I placed two duck figures, each (weighing) one talent, by them. I overlaid (the) two *moons* with bronze. I set [...] ornaments, each (weighing) one talent, upon them. The name of the temple is 'Wild Bull'; the name of the [door] is 'Protective Goddess'; the name of the lock is 'Be Strong!'; the name of the threshold is 'Be Alert!'

Text 4: Inscription of Erišum I. Grayson 1987, 20.

1-6) Ikūnum, vice-regent of the god Aššur, son of Erišum (i), vice-regent of the god Aššur:

7-23) Erišum (i) built the temple of the god Adad

and made firm [his] work. Ikū[num], his son, completely ... the temple of the god [Adad] and Lacuna

Text 5: Inscription of Ikūnum. Grayson 1987, 41-2.

1-17) When divine Sargon (was) vice-regent of Aššur, Ḫadītum (or Ḫattītum), wife of *Bēlum-nāda*, dedicated (this) to the Assyrian Ištar, her mistress. She put (the symbol of the) genitalia into (the Ištar temple) for the life of her husband, her (own) life, and the life of her children.

Text 6: Private Dedication during the Reign of Sargon I. Grayson 1987, 46.

18–58) The temple of the god Enlil which Erišum (I), son of Ilu-šumma, had built had become dilapidated and I abandoned it. I constructed the temple of the god Enlil, my lord, the fearful dais, the large chapel, the seat of the god Enlil, my lord, which were methodically made by the skilled work of the building trade within my city Aššur. I roofed the temple with cedar (beams). I erected in the rooms cedar doors with silver and gold *stars*. (Under) the walls of the temple (I placed) silver, gold, lapis lazuli, (and) carnelian; cedar resin, best oil, honey, and ghee I mixed in the mortar. I methodically made the temple of the god Enlil, my lord, and called it Eamkurkurra, ‘The Temple – The Wild Bull of the Lands’, the temple of the god Enlil, my lord, within my city, Aššur.

Text 7: Inscription of Šamši-Adad I. Grayson 1987, 49.

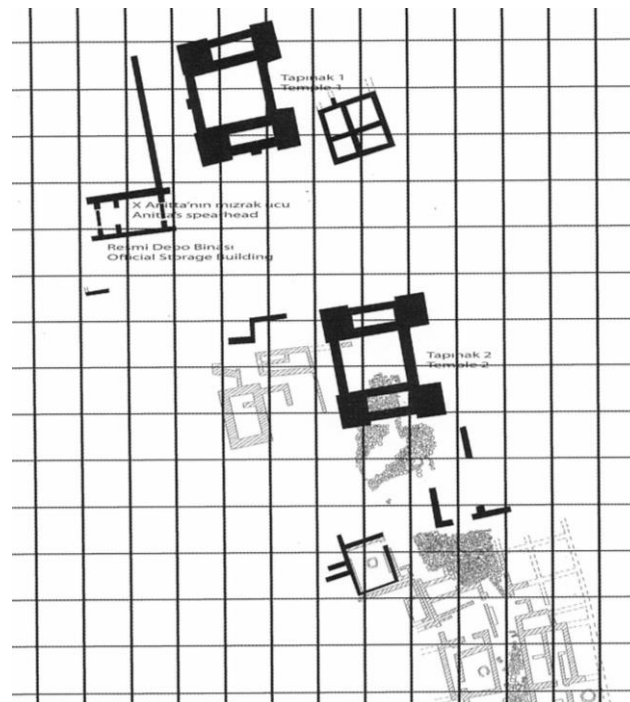


Figure 25: The Two Temples on the Mound of Kültepe. Kulakoğlu 2010, 42.

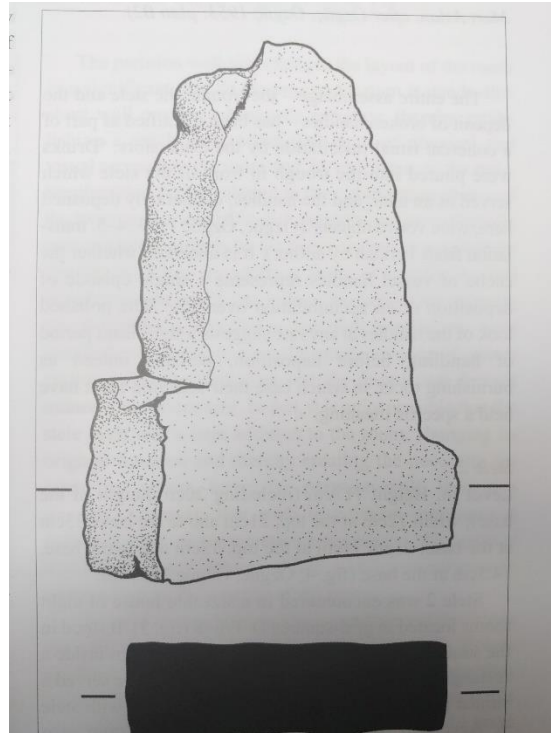


Figure 26: Stone Stele from House in P-R/19-20 Squares of the Lower City of Kültepe, Level Ib. Heffron 2016, 27.



Figure 27: Stone Stele in situ from House in P-R/19-20 Squares of the Lower City of Kültepe, Level Ib. Özgüç and Özgüç 1953, plate VII/25.

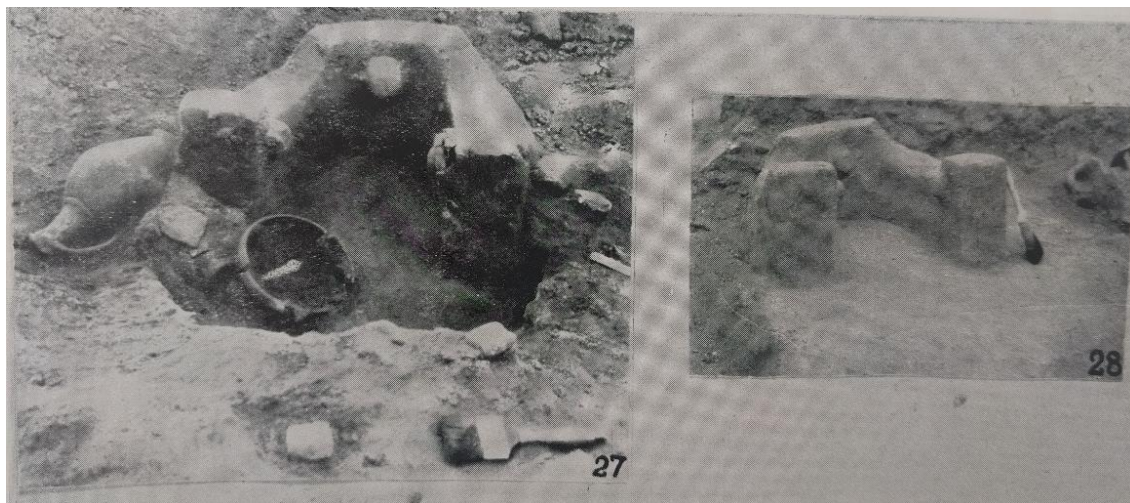


Figure 28: Horse-shoe Hearth from House in P-R/19-20 Squares, Level Ib. Özgüç and Özgüç 1953, plate VIII/27,28.

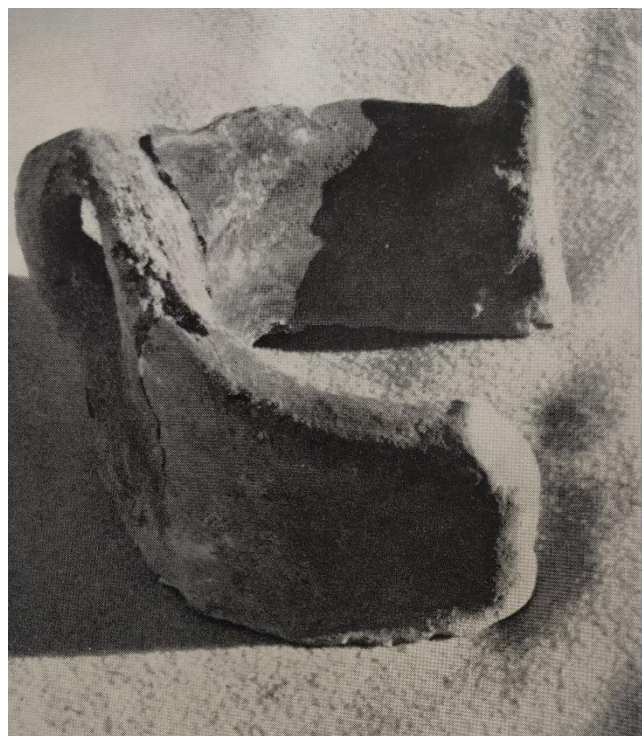


Figure 29: Horse-shoe Shaped Pot-Support from Beycesultan. Lloyd and Mellaart 1965, plate XXIVb.



Figure 30: Stone Stele in situ from House in D–F/6–8 Squares of the Lower City of Kültepe, Level Ib. Özgüç and Özgüç 1953, plate VII/22.

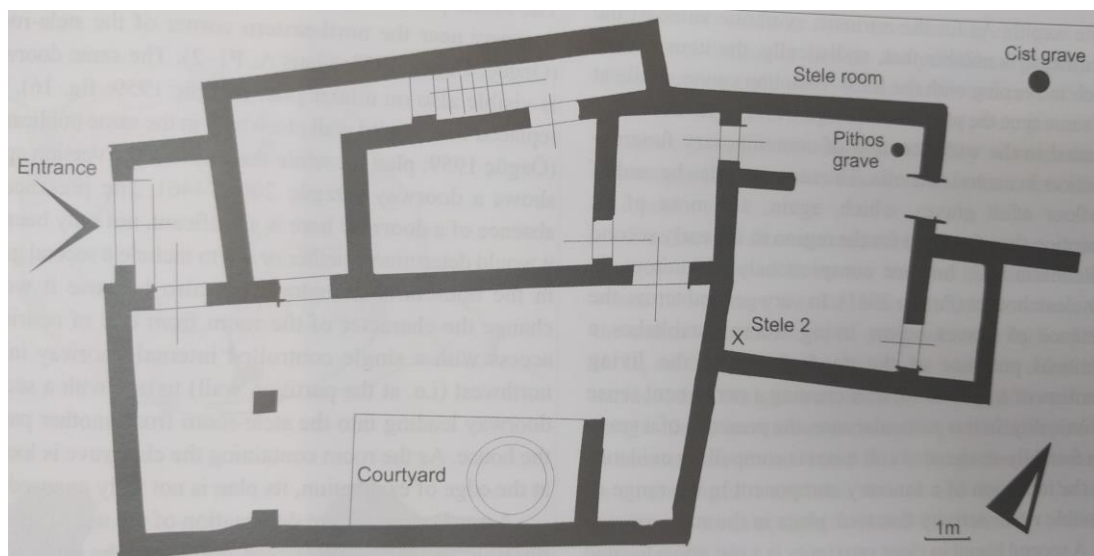


Figure 31: Plan of House in D–F/6–8 Squares. Hefron 2016, 29.



Figure 32: Ivory Figurine from the Pithos Grave of House in D–F/6–8 Squares, Level Ib. www.pinterest.com



Figure 33: The Foundation Deposit inside the Partition Wall. Özgüç and Özgüç 1953, plate XV/59.



Figure 34: The Double-Vessel found inside the Foundation of the Partition Wall. Özgüç and Özgüç 1953, plate XV/61.

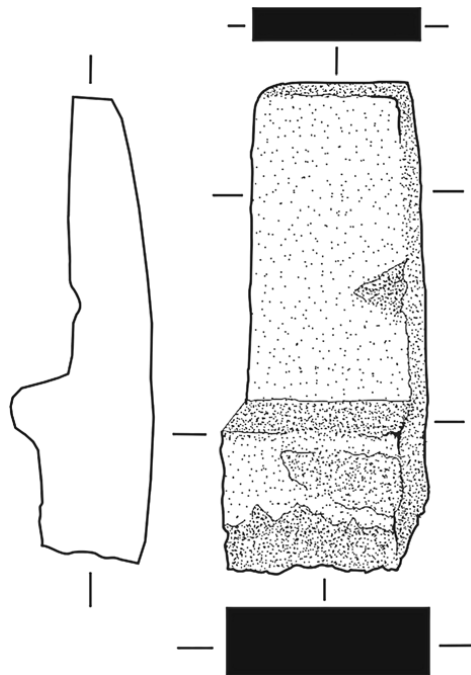


Figure 35: Stone Stele from House in LXI/130 Squares, Level Ia. Heffron 2016, 30.



Figure 36: Zoomorphic Bowl from House in LXI/130 Squares. Özgüç 2003, 229.



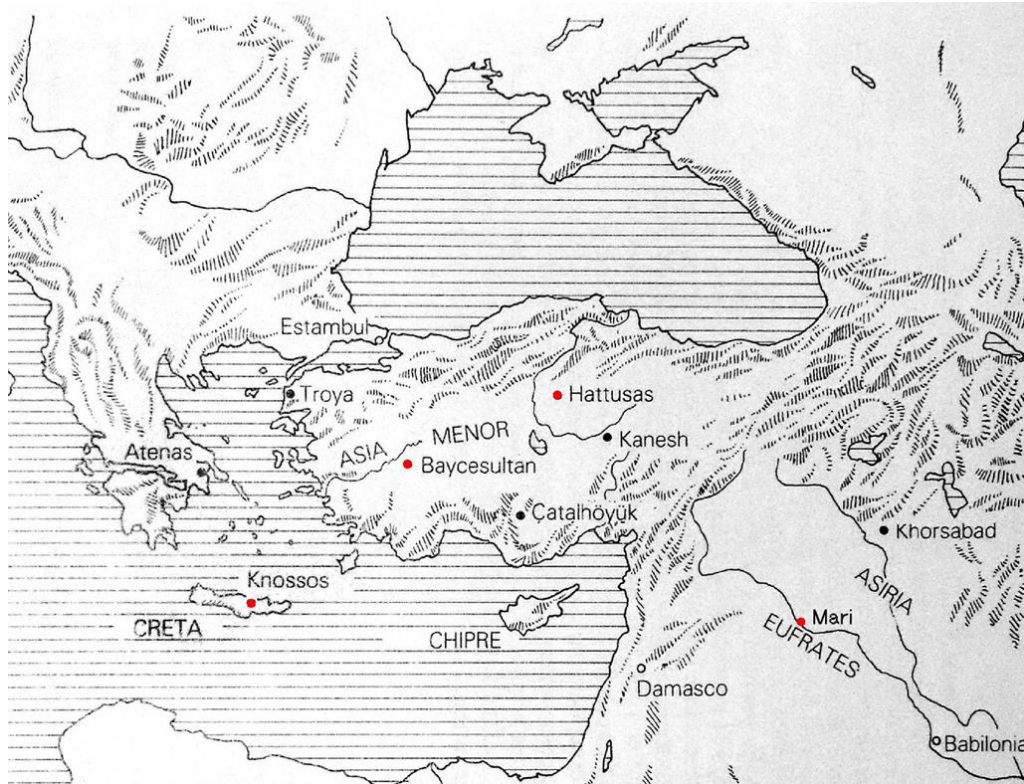
Figure 37: Impression of a Stamp Seal from Acmehöyük. Heffron 2016, 34.



Figure 38: The Stone Stelae from Assur. Andrae 1913, plate IX.



Figure 39: The Stone Stelae from Assur. Andrae 1913, plate IX.



Map 3: Beycesultan in southwestern Anatolia. arkyotras.files.wordpress.com

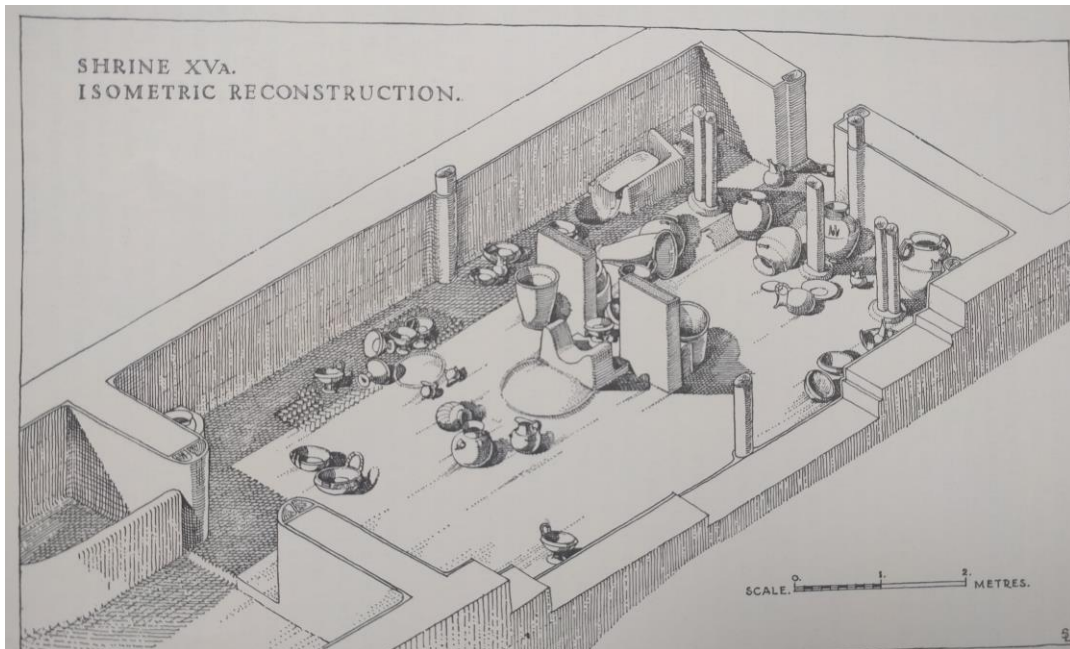


Figure 40: Early Bronze Age Shrine from Beycesultan. Lloyd and Mellaart 1962, 44.



Figure 41: Three Stone Stelae at the western Approach of the Palace of Beycesultan. Lloyd and Mellaart 1956, plate Xb.

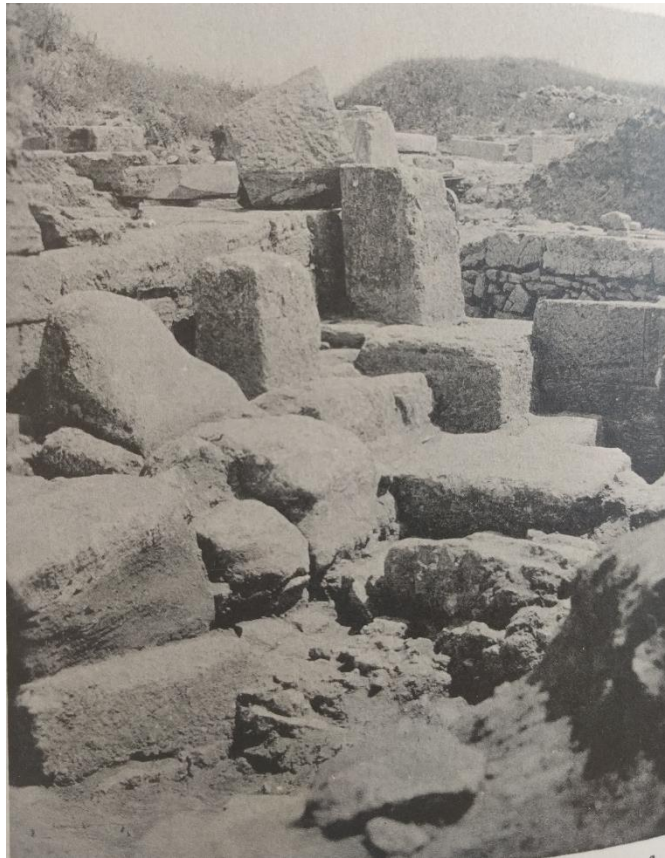


Figure 42: The Monoliths of Troy VI. Blegen et al. 1953, 51.



Figure 43: Painted Drinking Vessel in the Shape of a Standing Lion, Level II. Özgüç 2003, 197.



Figure 44: Painted Drinking Vessel in the Shape of a Standing Antelope, Level II. Özgüç 2003, 198.



Figure 45: Drinking Vessel in the Shape of Standing Boar from a House of Level II. www.pinterest.com



Figure 46: (from left to right): The Hunting God, Usmu and the War God in a Divine Procession. Cylinder Seal Impression from Kültepe. Özgüç 1965, plate VII/20.



Figure 47: Drinking Vessel in the Form of a Bull or Oxen Head from Level II. www.pinterest.com



Figure 48: Painted Drinking Vessels Shaped like Boots from Level II. www.pinterest.com



Figure 49: Drinking Vessel in the Shape of a Trough with Spout of a Water-Buffalo's Head from Level II. Özgüç 2003, 215.

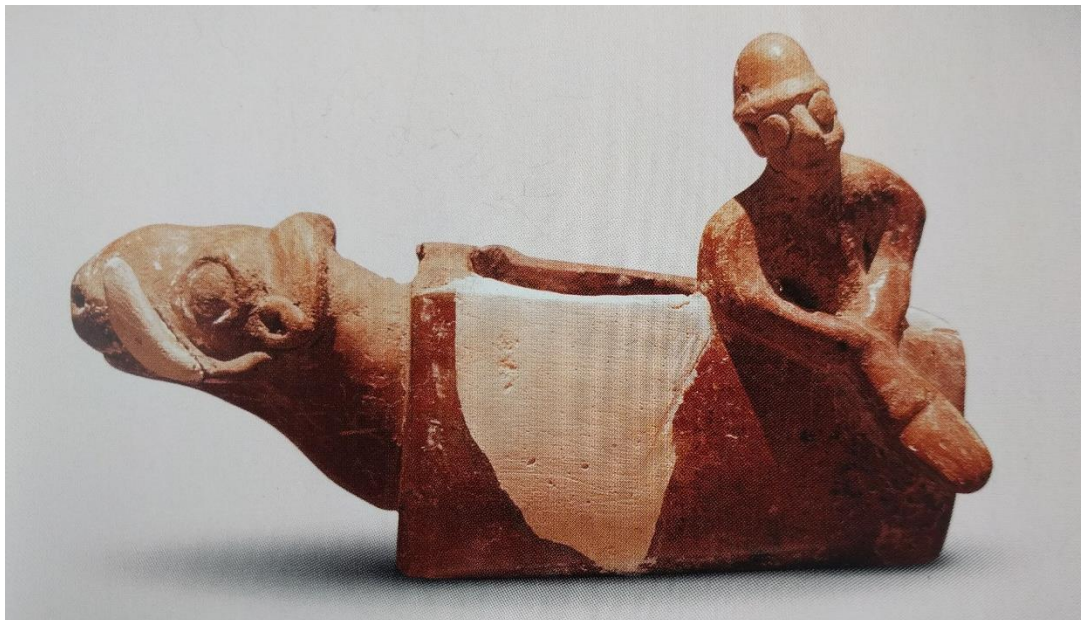


Figure 50: Drinking Vessel in the Shape of a Boat with Spout of a Ram Head. A Boatman on the Long Side of the Boat is Holding an Oar. From Level II. Özgüç 2003, 215.



Figure 51: Cult Vessel of a Boat from Level II. benwitherington.blogspot.nl



Figure 52: A Goddess Travels in her Divine Barge. Mesopotamian Cylinder Seal of the Akkadian Period. Black et al. 2004, 114.



Figure 53: The Sun-God, Šamaš, in his Anthropomorphized Deified Boat. Mesopotamian Cylinder Seal of the Akkadian Period. Black and Green 1992, 45.



Figure 54: Vessel in the Shape of a Human Head, Level II. www.pinterest.com



Figure 55: Anthropomorphic Vessel of Level Ib. www.pinterest.com



Figure 56: Vessel decorated with Female and Male Faces in Relief and Horns Around it from Level II. Özgüç 2003, 226.



Figure 57: Basalt Stele of Goddess Kubaba from Southeastern Anatolia, 9th century B.C.E.
www.britishmuseum.org

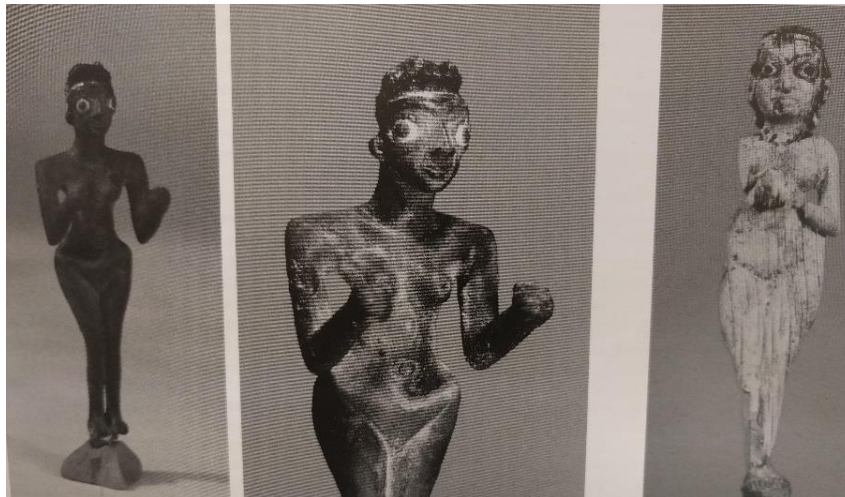


Figure 58: Female Figurines from Electrum and Ivory from Mari during the Akkadian Period. Margueron 2004, 279.



Figure 59: Faience Figurine from Level Ia. Özgüç 2003, 236.



Figure 60: Lead Figurine from Troy. Emre 1971, plate I/1.



Figure 61: Stone Mould of a Master of Animals from Level II. Özgüç 2003, 269.



Figure 62: Lead Figurine of a "Goddess" Offering her Breasts from Level II. www.pinterest.com



Figure 63: The Lead Figurine of a Bull-Man. Emre 1971, plate XII/1.

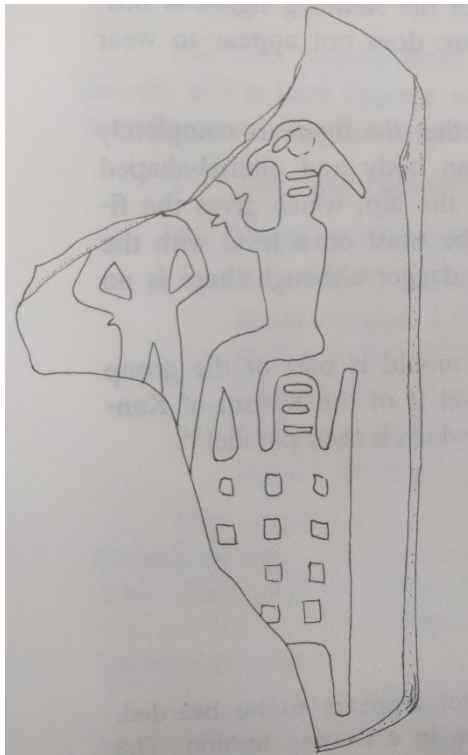


Figure 64: Fragment of a Mould from Level II. Emre 1993, 172.



Figure 65: Impression of a Seal depicting Ištar at the Left. Teissier 1994, no. 634.



Figure 66: Human Figurines from Early Bronze Age Alişar Hoyük. Von der Osten 1937, fig.183.



Figure 67: Alabaster Disc Idol from Early Bronze Age Kültepe. www.pinterest.com

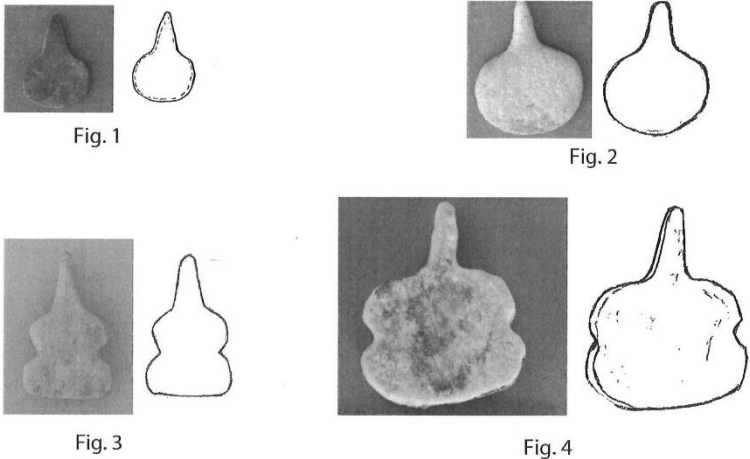


Figure 68: Rounded Bodied Headless Alabaster Figurines from Early Bronze Age Kültepe. Öztürk 2013, 159.

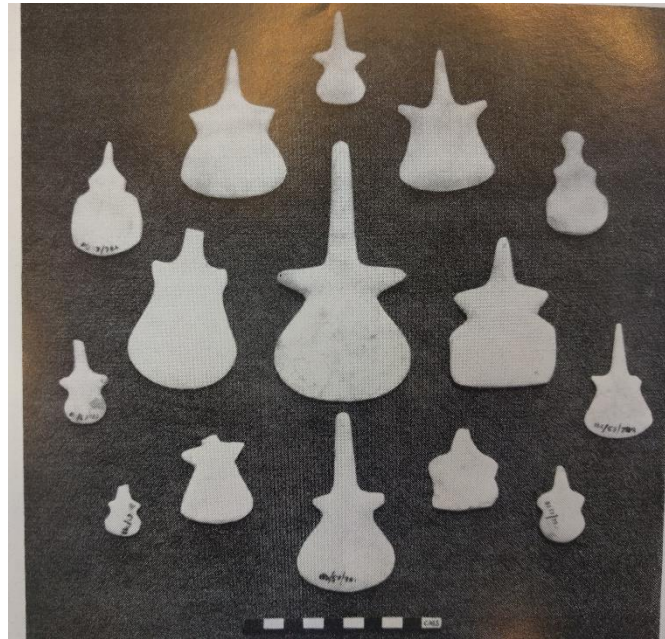


Figure 69: White Marble Figurines from Early Bronze Age Beycesultan. Lloyd and Mellaart 1962, plate XXXII.



Figure 70: Middle Bronze Age Figurines from Alişar Hoyük. Von der Osten 1937, fig. 230.



Figure 71: Sealed Envelopes with Tablets from Kültepe. Özkan 2010, 151.



Figure 72: Sealed Bullae from Kültepe. Özkan 2010, 151.



Figure 73: Labels with Cylinder Seal Impressions from Kültepe. Özkan 2010, 152.



Figure 74: Re-used Cylinder Seal from the Ur III Period found on an Envelope from Kültepe. Özkan 2010, 149.

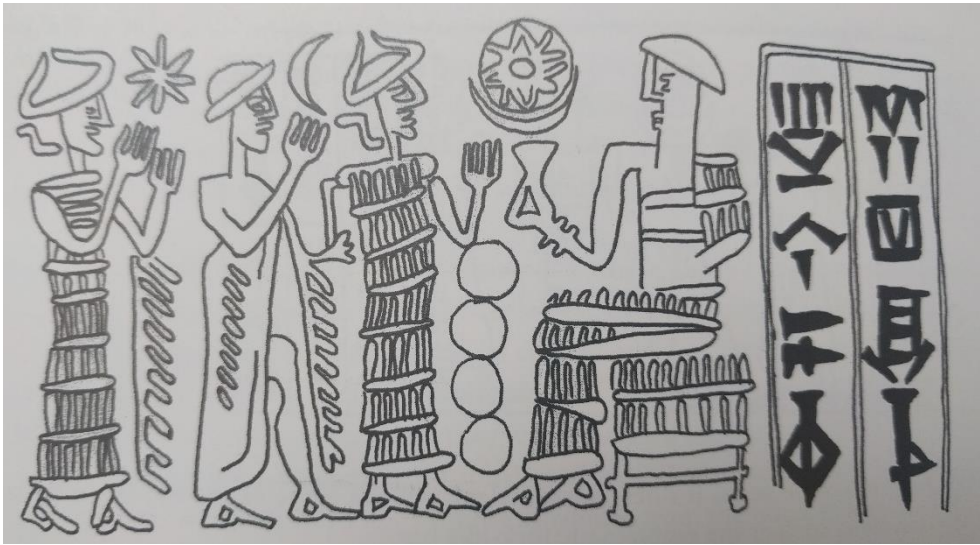


Figure 75: Seal Impression of an Assyrian Merchant in the “Classic” Style, from Level II. Lassen 2014, 110.



Figure 76: An Old Assyrian Seal of the “Classic” Style, Showing a Bull Altar in front of the Seated Figure. Lassen 2014, 111.



Figure 77: An Old Assyrian Seal Showing the Disc-in-Crescent and the Bull Altar in front of the Seated Figure.
Teissier 1994, no. 87.

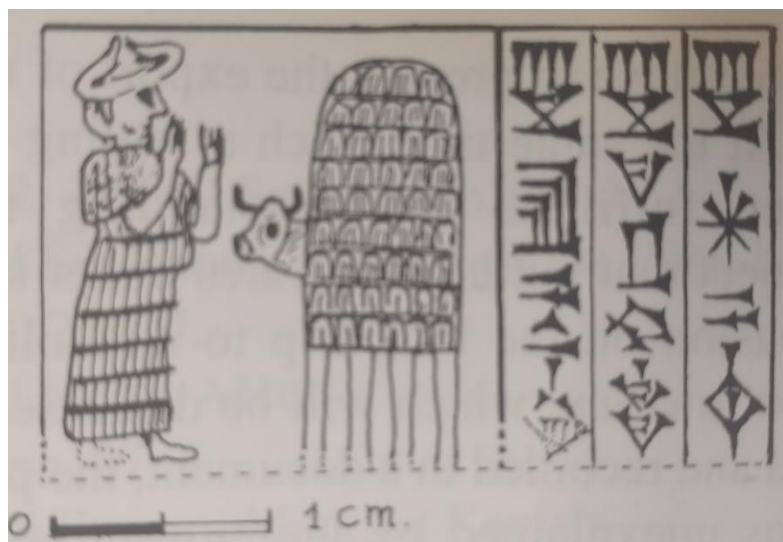


Figure 78: Reconstructed Seal Impression from the site of Acmehöyük. Dercksen 2004, 91.

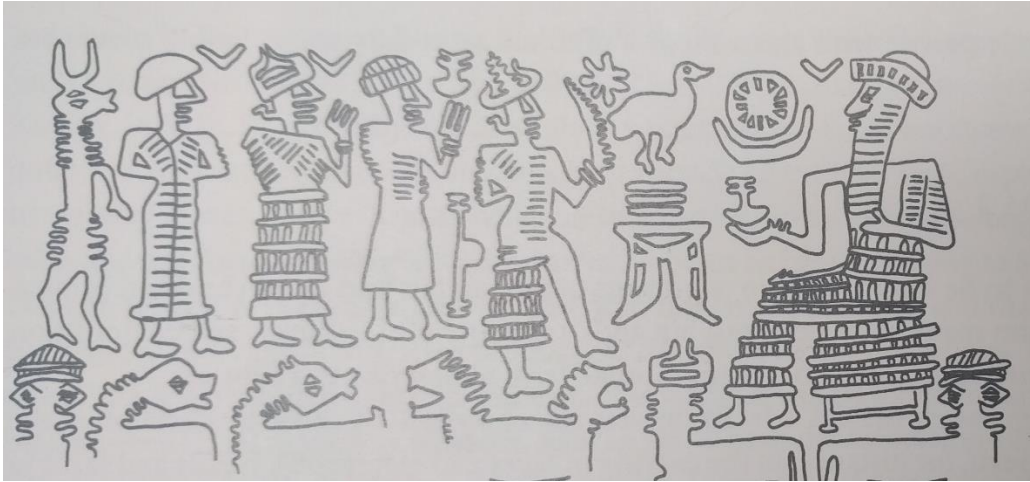


Figure 79: Seal of an Assyrian Merchant in the “Assyro-Cappadocian” Style. The seal shows a variation of the introduction scene on top of a register of animals. Lassen 2014, 114.



Figure 80: God Šamaš at the left with rays coming out of his body. Next to him there is the nude hero in the guise of a water god with flowing streams. Both of them face a seated deity holding a goblet, in front of which there is a disc-in-crescent, a star and a bull-legged altar. Behind him there is a rampant lion-dragon. Özgüç 1965, pl. II/5.



Figure 81: God Adad at the right standing on a lion-dragon. In his left hand, he holds the rein of the dragon together with the thunderbolt symbol. In his right hand, he holds a spear. In the rest of the scene a god stands on a four-wheeled chariot drawn by horses. Özgüç 1965, pl. III/9.

To the Kanesh colony from the Uršu colony:

That which has never happened before has taken place – thieves have entered Aššur's temple and they have stolen the golden sun on Aššur's breast and Aššur's dagger. The Justice(-emblem), the *kalubu*, the *samru'ātum*, the *katappu* – (all) have been taken away. The temple has been picked clean. They left nothing. We searched for the thieves but cannot find them.

Our dear fathers and lords, take care of the matter there!³⁷

Text 8: SUP 7: The Letter sent to Kültepe by the "Colony" of Uršu. Larsen 1976, 261.

- (1-3) To Šu-Ištar, the priest of Ishtar, this is what Aššur-lamassi, Nimar-Ištar and Adad-rabi said:
- (4-12) The day the son of Aplum arrived we chased Aššur-rabi and the daughter of Inah-il out of your house in accordance with your written order; then, we brought your *amtum*-wife Watniašwe and your son Aššur-imitti into your house and she is in possession of the attributes of priesthood.
- (13-19) Aššur-rabi went to the colony and said: “My father sent me a message to leave the house. Select for me five independent traders so that I can entrust the goddess and her jewellery and leave.”
- (19-22) The colony selected five independent traders for him and he entrusted the goddess and her jewellery; she is fine.
- (23-30) [...] the *jewellery* of the [goddess], be it silver or gold [or meteoric iron] or *sādum* gold ... – the selected men wrote (it on) a tablet and gave that to your *amtum*-wife. A second tablet, a copy of it, is at the Office of the Colony.
- (31-35) A dispute arose among your *amtum*-wife, Nimar-Ištar, Aššur-imitti and Ewrimuša, who are in possession of your house, and the taboo of the goddess has been heard.
- (36-40) They went to the colony and the colony sent the same men as previously selected to take care of the goddess; they checked the jewellery of the goddess (with this result):
- (40-50) 12 earrings of meteoric iron; 1 ½ shekel (ca. 12.5 g), a (representation of a) pudendum of gold; 2 beads of gold of two-thirds of a shekel (ca. 5.5 g); half a mina (ca. 249 g) of silver: toggle-pins; 17 stars of silver; a mace of 5/6 shekels (ca. 6.9 g) of silver; (beads of) either *sādum* gold or lapis lazuli weighing 35 shekels (ca. 290.5 g), (forming) the string of beads on her chest – all this is lost. (50-51) The colony cross-examined [them] and they replied: “Yes, we took (it).”

Text 9: Kt c/k 18: The Letter sent to Šu-Ištar by Aššur-lamassi. Dercksen 2015b, 39-40.

[x] tables that were in front of his gods. 1 chair that was in front of Aššur. 1 cup that was in front of Šarru-mātēn. 2 *hawiru* for/of salt, 1 cup of silver and a perfume-flask that was in front of Ukur. 5 weapons, 2 *qablītu*-containers, 1 “heart” of silver, 1 *nikkassu*-emblem (of Šamaš) and 1 wax tablet – all this belonging to Kura’s son, when Ennam-Aššur opened his main building, he left ... for Kura. Witnessed by Kukkuwa and Mannu-kī-iliya.

Text 10: Kt 94/k 670: The Possible “Inventory of a Private Chapel.” Barjamovic and Larsen 2008, 153.

| Objects | Owners | Origin of Cultural Tradition |
|------------------|---|--|
| Stone Stelae | One Stele Located Inside an Assyrian House | Earlier Examples (in different context) from Anatolia and Syria |
| Drinking Vessels | Located in Both Assyrian and Anatolian houses | Present in southern Mesopotamia from Fourth and Third Millennia B.C.E. |
| Figurines | Lead Figurines close to/inside Assyrian Houses Ivory Figurine in an Assyrian House | Lead: Probably Anatolian Tradition Ivory: Probably Syrian Tradition |

Table 4: Overview of the Religious Objects of Kültepe: Owners and Origin of Cultural Tradition.

8. Abbreviations and Bibliography

| | |
|------------------|---|
| <i>AfO</i> | Archiv für Orientforschung |
| <i>Anatolica</i> | Anatolica: Annuaire international pour les civilisations de l'Asie antérieure |
| <i>AnatSt</i> | Anatolian Studies |
| <i>AOAT</i> | Alter Orient und Altes Testament |
| <i>Belleten</i> | Belleten. Türk tarih kurumu |
| <i>Iraq</i> | Iraq, published by the British School of Archaeology in Iraq |
| <i>JESHO</i> | Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient |
| <i>MDOG</i> | Mitteilungen der Deutschen Orient-Gesellschaft zu Berlin |
| <i>OIP</i> | Oriental Institute Publications |
| <i>Sumer</i> | Sumer. A Journal of Archaeology and History in Iraq |
| <i>WVDOG</i> | Wissenschaftliche Veröffentlichung der Deutschen Orient-Gesellschaft |

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