Kültepe-Kaneš: A Second Millennium B.C.E. Trading Center on the Central Plateau

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Abstract and Keywords

This article discusses findings from excavations at Kültepe–Kaneš, which is on the ancient trade route connecting central Anatolia to Malatya, a center that always had close links to Mesopotamian cultures. Central Anatolia was also accessible from the Mediterrannean through passes in the Taurus Mountains, such as Yahyalı–Develi, Zamantı–Gezbeli–Sirkeli, or Tufanbeyli–Ceyhan, which led to Kültepe;. The passes were narrow, but convenient in the proper seasons, and were also used during the Hittite Empire period.

Keywords: excavations, archaeological sites, trade routes, Anatolia, Malatya

Kültepe is at the center of the plain formed at the foot of Erciyes Dağı, the highest mountain in the Central Anatolian plateau. The Kızıl Irmak, the longest river in Anatolia, flows from its source in Sivas through the mountainous region north of Kültepe and into the core of the Hittite region. The plain where Kültepe was built is enriched by the alluvial fill of the Sarımsaklı stream, which joins the Karasu to the north of the Kayseri Plain and flows into the Kızıl Irmak. The plain of Kayseri is twenty-five kilometers wide at its maximum; once marshland, it is the most fertile plain in the region, which is mainly steppe land (figure 47.1).

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Figure 47.1 . Aerial view of the Kültepe Mound and the *kārum* from the south.

Kültepe is on the ancient trade route connecting central Anatolia to Malatya, a center that always had close links to Mesopotamian cultures (T. Özgüç 1950). Central Anatolia was also accessible from the Mediterrannean through passes in the Taurus Mountains, such as Yahyalı-Develi, Zamantı-Gezbeli-Sirkeli, or Tufanbeyli-Ceyhan, which led to Kültepe; the passes were narrow but convenient in the proper seasons and were also used during the Hittite Empire period.

(p. 1013) History of Research

Kültepe is one the largest mounds in Anatolia, but also one of the most damaged, primarily by researchers who were unacquainted with scientific excavation methods and techniques; E. Chantre in 1893–94, H. Winckler in 1906, and B. Hrozný in 1925 undertook excavations for the sole purpose of finding tablets and antique objects (T. Özgüç 1999). In addition to these unscientific activities, the local villagers dug into the mound down to the Early Bronze Age strata to remove soil for gardens, building houses, and other residental endeavors; as a result almost a third of the mound is too disturbed for modern scientific investigation.

Scientific excavations started in 1948 under the auspices of the Turkish Historical Association, directed by Tahsin Özgüç and his spouse, Nimet Özgüç, from the Faculty of Languages, History, and Geography of the University of Ankara (T. Özgüç 1950, 1959, 1971, 1986a, 1999, 2003; Özgüç and Özgüç 1953); this team carried out excavations until 2005. Following this, excavation continued with the current expedition directed by Kutlu Emre and by the present author.

Kültepe is formed of two parts. The circular mound is 550 m in diameter and 20 m higher than the surrounding alluvial plain. Because of the fortifications encircling the mound, it is higher at the edges than at the relatively hollow middle. The Lower City surrounds the mound from the north, east, and south in the approximate (p. 1014) shape of a crescent. The waters of Engir Lake extend to the west, a larger lake in antiquity but marshland at present.

The Mound

Mound Levels	Periodization	Major Architecture/Discoveries
Level 18	Early Bronze Age I	
Levels 17–14	Early Bronze Age II	Close relations with Mesopotamia and North Syria and Cilicia; imported pottery from Upper Euphrates
Levels 13–11	Early Bronze Age III	Close relations with Mesopotamia, north Syria, and western Anatolia; appearance of monumental buildings
Levels 10–6	Kingdom of Kaneš in Assyrian Colony Period	Palaces, temples, and an official storage building
Levels 5–4	Iron Age	Late Hittite relief orthostats
Level 3	Hellenistic	City wall
Levels 2–1	Roman	

Intermittent excavations on the mound from 1955 to 2010 reached the earliest phase of the Early Bronze Age I, establishing eighteen cultural levels in all. Due to the depth of the deposits, only Level 18 dates to the Early Bronze I period. Levels 17–14 are dated to Early Bronze Age II. The Early Bronze Age III at Kültepe immediately precedes the Assyrian Colony period, when close links with Mesopotamia and northern Syria were established. During Levels 13–11, Kültepe was enriched with monumental buildings. The close relations between the plateau and northern Mesopotamia are documented with imported pottery, cylinder seals, and metal objects revealed in the excavations. The examples of jewelry at Kültepe that are foreign to central Anatolia are similar to the finds from the Ur III royal tombs. The Early Dynastic and Akkadian Period materials and styles were brought from southern Mesopotamia and northern Syria during this period. The presence of Akkadian and Post-Akkadian cylinder seals at Kültepe, and foreign pottery with origins in the south and southeast, prove the continous nature of the relationships between Kültepe and Mesopotamia (T. Özgüç 1986b, 1999).

Alabaster statuettes of gods and goddesses, peculiar to the Early Bronze II and III period, were discovered in the inner sancta of temples and in the graves. The indigenous characteristics of plastic art in Kültepe are represented by the disc-shaped alabaster idols with long necks and by the enthroned naked alabaster goddesses that hold their breasts. The alabaster gods and goddesses and the lion figures in high relief are more naturalistic in style compared to the metal figures from the north (T. Özgüç 1999).

(p. 1015) Even though contacts were established with culturally developed societies where writing was known, Anatolia had not yet developed or borrowed a writing system. The earliest information from this period is in the legendary "King of Battle/šar tamḫari" texts on the deeds of King Sargon of Akkad and his grandson Narām-Sīn, from the version in the Hittite language written 800 years after the death of Sargon: "'The King of Battle' made war on the city of Purušḫattum (Acemhöyük) because of the complaints of merchants," and in later years, "Narām-Sīn (2260–2223 B.C.E.) defeated the coalition of 17 kings, among them Pampa the King of Ḫatti and Zippani the King of Kaneš." (Veenhof and Eidem 2008)

A text relating a story about King Sargon of Akkad, written in the Old Assyrian dialect and in the style of the period, was discovered in building level II of the *kārum* in the archive of an Assyrian merchant, dated 400 years after Sargon. The Assyrian merchant who lived in Kaneš kept this important text in his house, apparently in memory of the heroic story of the legendary king (Günbattı 1997). However late or legendary these accounts are, the preserved documents prove that in the reign of these two Akkadian kings, relationships had been established between Anatolia and their domains in northern Syria and Mesopotamia.

In the Assyrian Colony period Kültepe was the center of the kingdom of Kaneš (Garelli 1963; Larsen 1967; Veenhof 1972; and see Michel, chapter 13 in this volume). Building levels 10–6 revealed on the mound represent this period. In spite of the earlier damage caused by unscientific probes and by local villagers, the excavations performed by the expedition directed by T. Özgüç obtained essential information on the earliest known kings of Kaneš/Neša, on the palaces where they lived and administered state affairs and which also functioned as caravanserais, on the temples they built, on the technical characteristics of the buildings, their dimensions, outlays, dates, and even on their owners. Three separate palaces have been revealed in Building Levels 7–8 of Kaneš. Each palace has an individual plan.

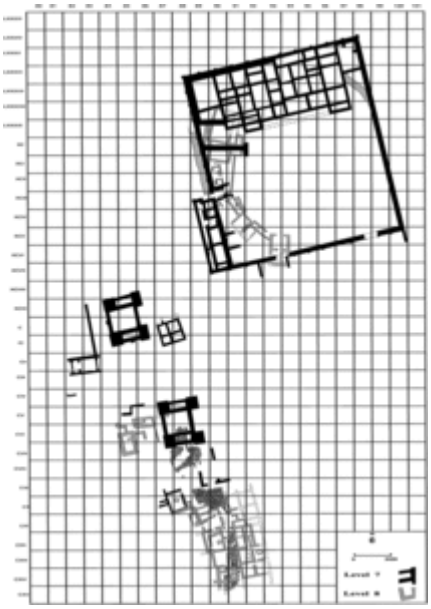

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Figure 47.2 . The general plan of the Old Assyrian Trading Colony period monumental buildings at Kültepe-Kaneš.

There are two palaces in Level 8, the first on the southern terrace of the mound (figure 47.2). This structure corresponds to squares CV-CXV/85–93 and is nearly ninety meters long. The building was to a great extent destroyed in later periods; the southern end could not be excavated because the Roman-Hellenistic fortified city wall corresponding to square CXV/91 was built on it. The palace is composed of a long corridor partly overlaid with wooden planks and partly with large, flat stones, leading to a courtyard with wings on each side. Service rooms, storerooms, and living rooms were revealed in the ground floor of the palace; the upper floor was probably reserved for reception rooms and the royal residence. On the ground floor, the benches along the walls of the rooms with the big fireplaces, the storage jars for grain, and the pitchers in the smaller rooms are indications that the building had a commercial function as well. The contents of the building had been removed before the fire, and very little was left in the rooms except for provision jars and some pottery. Most notable in the fire débris was the discovery of two tablets, a scorched cylinder seal, and a bulla bearing a cylinder seal impression. Most of the pottery is typical of Level II of the *kārum* of Kaneš (see later discussion); as in Level II, the grain storage jars in this building are decorated with paint in the Alişar III style.

(p. 1016) The “Old Palace” is the second administrative building in level 8 of the mound (figure 47.2: LXXXVIII–XCVI/88–94). It is located at the center of the citadel, in an eighty-meter-long excavated area, under the walls and fortifications of the later (p. 1017) Building Level 7 palace, “The Palace of Waršama.” The mudbrick walls were well preserved, and the stone foundations to a lesser extent. The eastern walls of the palace were demolished during the 1925 excavation. As the plan indicates, the western walls of the rooms were cut off to build the later fortifications. Unlike the later palace built above it, the Old Palace is not formed of a single structure but consists of at least three buildings. The entrance to the complex was probably from the south.

Some of the rooms were built at different times, constructed next to others as annexes; others were built close together but on separate foundations. In the northern part of the palace where the large hall stood, there were service units as annexes to the south, with furnaces, ovens, firepots, and floors paved with stone to guard against the damp;

alternatively, it is possible that a small separate building was built next to the main structure. This manner of building is very much in accordance with the old Anatolian building tradition. The monochrome and polychrome pottery found on the floors of rooms are undifferentiated from pottery in *Kārum* Level II. In spite of extensive structural damage, this palace has contributed to our understanding of the history of Neša. The Old Palace and its surrounding four-meter-wide fortification wall built in saw tooth technique were not restored and inhabited after the fire; they were abandoned and a new palace and city wall were subsequently built on their remains.

Very few small objects were found in the Old Palace; the contents were possibly removed before the fire or more probably plundered by the newcomers. In various parts of the structure and in related débris some tablets and envelopes with cylinder seal impressions were found, mostly in fragments. There were no tableware, metal items, cult objects, bullae, or other works of art. Some undamaged vases, kitchen utensils, bronze swords, and written documents were preserved accidentally.

The Building Level 7 palace is known as “The Palace of Waršama” in archaeological literature (figure 47.2: LXXXIV–LXXXVII/88–98). The citadel wall, which also functioned as the enclosure wall for the palace, is 120 × 110 m long, and its foundation is 2.5–4 m thick. There are buttresses at intervals of seven meters to the north, west, and south. The eastern buttresses were destroyed and lost in antiquity. The fortification walls were built simultaneously with the palace, and they were burned and abandoned with it. The palace appears to have been built with a specific plan and constructed on the remains of the Old Palace, in agreement with the topography of the mound; its prime significance is the architectural plan, which is the earliest example of its kind in Anatolia. The system consists of rooms arranged around a central courtyard and is the predecessor of Hittite palaces and temples. In the limited areas that escaped damage in 1925, excavations revealed that the rooms may have been connected to the courtyard by means of corridors. The building materials were stone, mudbricks, wood, and mud. Wooden poles were set up between the foundation stones at regular intervals. The fire that destroyed the palace burned more intensely because of the extensive use of wood.

The palace has forty-two rooms in the north section. The stone foundations are level with the floors, where mudbrick wall construction begins. The palace had two floors, judging from the thick mudbrick walls, the numerous wooden poles and (p. 1018) pillars, the condition of the fire débris filling the rooms, and the stairwells. The main door of the palace is to the west. The entrance is controlled with two reciprocal stone towers and two rooms. The plan of the entrance is similar to the ones at Alişar and is the prototype for Boğazköy’s main doors. Below the walls to the south of the entrance there is a postern, more than two meters high, the earliest example in Anatolia. The letter written by King Anum-Ḫirbi of Mama to King Waršama of Kaneš was discovered under the débris around the northern wall of the portal, on the floor near the northern base of the wall (Balkan 1957).

The excavations to the east of the citadel indicate that on the eastern and central parts of the citadel, the palace was constructed over the remains of buildings dated to the Early Bronze Age. The eastern wall faces of these Early Bronze buildings on the mound were battered, paved, and fortified with flat stones. The monochrome pottery found in these architectural features was identical to Early Bronze Age III pottery discovered in various other sections of Kültepe, offering a building date for these earlier structures.

The small objects found in the Palace of Waršama, in particular the pottery, the stamp seals, and the bullae with stamp seal impressions, were burned and destroyed together with the palace, and some of the pottery was reduced to slag. The finer ware of the palace, metal items, cult objects, works of art, and the archive were either removed before the fire or collected by the newcomers.

In the Assyrian Colony period the palaces of Kaneš had an important additional function. The palaces were also great economic centers where foreign merchants brought their merchandise for safe storage, similar to a caravanserai, and where procedures for commercial taxes were instituted. In this system, the wide courtyards and the numerous storerooms must have been functionally important.

Besides the palaces, two large buildings on the mound, forty meters apart, are remarkable because of their structural plans, both of which have been completely revealed (figure 47.2: XCVIII–CI/84–86 and CIV–CVII/87–89). Both are about 27 × 22 m in size, with large, turret-shaped projections on four corners of both buildings. On the northern and southern faces, between the inner and outer walls, each has a small rectangular room 3 × 10 m in size, with earthen floors. No objects were found on the floors in these rooms. The small rooms in the turrets were filled in with stone rubble of all sizes. There were tablets and a few examples of pottery on the floor of the halls, contemporary with Level Ib of the *kārum* in form and technique. The buildings had been abandoned after a great fire, the common fate of all the monumental buildings on the mound. These two buildings were probably sacred temples, even though there were no statues of deities or altars remaining. It is well known that King Anitta (the first Hittite king) wrote about the temples he built in Neša; the structures were most likely two of the temples mentioned in the Anitta text (Hoffner 1997:183).

The rectangular building corresponding to squares CII–CIII/82–83 is contemporaneous with the temples; one of its rooms functioned as a storeroom for unworked obsidian, and the so-called Anitta dagger (an elaborate spearhead) was discovered on the floor of this building. The rectangular structure, 7.5 m wide and 18 m long, had four sections. The northern and southern walls each extend to the east and (p. 1019) west, forming antehalls at the front and at the back of the building, thereby giving the appearance of a megaron. The spearhead with the Anitta inscription was discovered on the floor of the large room in CII/83. The eastern side of the smaller room contained pieces of unworked obsidian in various sizes, weighing three tons in total.

Building Levels 4–5 represent the Late Hittite period. At this time, Kültepe was the center of one of the kingdoms under the dominion of the Great Land of Tabal. It continued as a strong political unit during the tenth to eighth centuries B.C.E. At about the end of the eighth century B.C.E. Kültepe was captured and destroyed by the Assyrians, at which time the hieroglyphic stelai, the statues, and the relief orthostats were shattered.

The last two ages on the mound are the Hellenistic period, represented by one building level (3), and the Roman period, with two building levels (2–1). The city walls built in the Hellenistic and Roman periods are under the steep sides of the mound. The walls were built over Assyrian Trade Colony period structures, indicating the reduced size of the city in the Hellenistic–Roman age. At this time, a sizable part of the Lower City functioned as a necropolis. Even though some objects of Achaemenid origin were found in the vicinity of Kültepe, no building level in the citadel is associated with the Achaemenids. The mound was abandoned in the late Roman period and remained in ruins during the Byzantine, Seljuk, and Ottoman ages (T. Özgüç 1999).

The Kārum of Kaneš

Mound Levels	Periodization	Cultural Horizons
Kārum Level IV	Late third–early second millennium B.C.E.	ca. 2050/2000–1920 B.C.E.; the first appearance of wheelmade Hittite pottery
Kārum Level III		
Kārum Level II	ca. 1950–1836 B.C.E.	Assyrian merchants arrived and established the trading system in Anatolia
Interval	ca. 1836–1833 B.C.E.	
Kārum Level Ib	ca. 1833–1719(?) B.C.E.	The city of Kaneš resettled after a short duration and lasted until the reign of King Samsuiluna of Babylon
Kārum Level Ia	ca. 1719–1685 (?) B.C.E.	

The Lower City is a part of Kültepe that was inhabited for only about 250 years. “Kaneš Harbor,” the *kārum* Kaneš, the center of the Old Assyrian Trade Colony in Anatolia, is located in the Lower City. According to data available at present, the (p. 1020) Lower City is about two kilometers in diameter and encircles Kültepe mound from the north, east, and south in the shape of a crescent. The west of the mound is marshland. The excavations (which have continued to the present) in the Lower City have revealed four habitation levels, the latest one in two phases. The earliest settlement is Level IV, built on virgin soil. In the small, mudbrick buildings, the earliest examples of wheelmade Hittite pottery were present in smaller numbers along with the handmade monochrome and polychrome pottery. In Level III, on the other hand, the amount of wheelmade pottery exceeds the handmade, polychrome variety. The excavators have dated the two building levels from the end of the third millennium B.C.E. to the beginning of Level II of the *kārum*. No written documents were found in the settlements corresponding to Levels IV and III (Emre 1989).

Building Levels IV and III are succeeded by Level II, when the Assyrian merchants arrived and settled here for commercial activity, leaving behind them thousands of documents in cuneiform writing. According to the earliest *līmu* name attested in these written sources, discovered in 2001, the beginning of trade is dated to 1927 B.C.E.

(Günbattı 2008). Kaneš suffered a great disaster of fire in approximately 1836 B.C.E., corresponding to the reign of King Narām-Sīn of Assur, but was inhabited again a few years later. It was resettled as Building Level Ib, but this period eventually came to an end a short time after 1719 B.C.E. (Günbattı 2008; Veenhof 2003). The *kārum* of Kaneš was in complete decline during Level Ia.

The foreign merchants who came to Kaneš settled on the mound and in the Lower City, which was inhabited by native Anatolians. The *Kārum* II city is composed of quarters, separated by squares and streets usually paved with stone and wide enough for carts to pass through easily. Streets had drainage channels for wastewater, which were paved over with stone slabs. The pavement stones on both sides of the roads served as walkways for the pedestrians and also helped protect the houses from external damage. The discarded pottery sherds on the streets helped stabilize the muddy paths.

The written documents inform us that the *kārum* was a fortified city protected with strong city walls, in both building levels (see Michel, chapter 13 in this volume). Inside these walls the quarters are formed of buildings built very close together, side by side and back to back. Some houses were enlarged with extensions built later, which gave them irregular appearances. The houses are usually in blocks, formed of six to eight residences, built together back to back. The Assyrian merchants either bought existing buildings or had new ones built and lived in these quarters together with the native population. The technique of construction and the materials used for the houses are in the traditional Anatolian style. The houses are built very close together according to indigenous building techniques, on stone foundations with the mudbrick walls supported with wooden timbers; they have two to six rooms and usually two stories. Most Level II buildings have two sections: the living rooms–pantry, and the archive and storage rooms. The walls were plastered and were usually whitewashed more than once. The long and narrow rooms in some houses are paved with stones. The floors are stamped earth.

(p. 1021) The merchant houses have, through continuous excavation, been entirely revealed, complete with contents. In these buildings, the residential parts of the houses are set apart from the comparatively small, locked-up, and sealed archive rooms, and the storage rooms where merchandise was kept to be marketed. The tablets in the archive rooms were arranged on wooden shelves, or stored neatly in pots or wooden chests, or wrapped in matting and placed in sacks, and were classified according to content. The inhabitants of the *Kārum* II city apparently barely escaped from the conflagration that destroyed it, abandoning the tablets and other fireproof objects for later discovery by our excavations. As the fire broke out, many merchants had no chance to send their letters, which were already in their respective envelopes, while some letters they had received remained unopened.

Metal and textiles were of primary importance in this colonial center; in the excavated workshops, both production and retail activities took place (Dercksen 1996). The metal workshops are in various parts of the settlement. The architectural structure of workshops is not different from other houses, but they have large and sturdy furnaces

and the floors are paved with stone. They are identifiable by the stone molds, melting pots, blow-pipes, and bellows they contained, which were much more numerous than a household would normally possess. The people who worked there were mainly indigenous Anatolians. However, they also produced imported forms that were foreign to Anatolia. Judging from the abundant spindle whorls found in houses, the women possibly wove textiles for their husbands, as they did in Assur.

In the *kārum*, in all building levels, the dead were buried in graves under the floors of the houses, either in cist graves or sarcophagi. The form and orientation of graves are not differentiated in the two cities (i.e., *Kārum* Levels II and Ib). Although tomb robbery was already occurring at this time, the still plentiful remaining burial gifts were rich and varied. The dead were buried with their weapons and personal ornaments; they were sent off to the afterworld with pottery or metal vessels for their needs, and even with their capital funds to do business in afterlife, accompanied with depictions of deities according to their religious beliefs.

The Ceramic Assemblage

Kaneš was one of the most distinguished centers of pottery production in the ancient Near East because of its high output and richly varied forms and techniques (Emre 1963, 1989). In this period, Anatolian pottery was at its highest level in the richness and variety of forms and ornamentation. There is no differentiation between the utensils in native households and the households of Assyrian merchants, since all were made in accordance with native traditions.

Much of the *Kārum* Levels IV–III ceramic assemblage has a great deal in common with the style known as Alişar III, based on the assemblage excavated at (p. 1022) Alişar Höyük. Cream slipped and painted in red or black, the Alişar III pottery is peculiar to the Kayseri region, which includes Kültepe; although it appears in Levels IV and III it continued to be used in Level II, though in lesser numbers.

The fast potter’s wheel that was used was highly effective in the production technique and in the variation of forms characterizing the Assyrian Colony period pottery. In their form and technique, the majority of pottery imitates metal vessels used in Anatolia from the beginning of the last quarter of the third millennium B.C.E., which testifies to the potters’ technical competence and contributes to the variety of forms found. Many different forms of pottery appeared for the first time in Level II; some continued into Level Ib, while others disappeared completely. In addition, new forms appeared in Level Ib, and some of these continued to be used in later periods. The rich and varied *kārum* assemblage is not observed in the later Old Hittite Kingdom, or in the Hittite Empire periods. Discoveries at other central Anatolian sites indicate that some main forms from

the Assyrian Colony period continued to be used in the following ages as well (Emre 1963).

The pottery made with the fast potter's wheel is typical to Kaneš with respect to the paste, the slipping and polishing, the techniques of ornamentation, and the variety of forms. Two thirds of the larger vessels are slipped in red, brown, cream, dark gray, buff, and black. The fine paste is mixed with sand. Apart from kitchenware with coarse paste, vessels are always highly burnished. The majority of the pottery is monochrome; there are very few examples of painted pottery, and the painting tradition did not survive long beyond Level Ib.

The jars and the big pots of grain were neatly stored in the storerooms. The houses contained abundant examples of varied pottery types used for tableware. The amount of pottery found in some houses was much more than a family would normally need. Judging from their pristine condition, such pottery was apparently merchandise stored for the market. Some pottery vessels were not suitable for daily use. These are peculiar to Kaneš and do not have parallels in the ancient Near East. They were used for religious rituals or were placed in graves as burial gifts.

In the *kārum* of Kaneš much of the pottery from Levels II and Ib is decorated with animal figures. Most vessels have spouts in the shape of a bull's or ram's head. Similarly, most vessels have animal-shaped handles. The fantastic ornamentation in the form of antelopes, bulls, lions, and birds that were set within the vessel or on the orifice rim are unique to Kültepe (T. Özgüç 2003).

The animal figures in relief depicting the bull, the lion, and the bird, attached to the body of the vessel in appliqué technique, were also later used in the Old Hittite Kingdom, which followed the Assyrian Colony period. The continuation of pottery styles into the "Old Hittite Kingdom Period" beginning with the reign of Ḫattušili, shows closest similarities to the late phase pottery of the Assyrian Trade Colony period (Kulakoğlu 1996). The origins of the terracotta cult objects from the Old Hittite Kingdom period, described as "relief vases," are also linked to Kültepe.

The animal- and bird-shaped terracotta drinking cups are the first examples of zoomorphic vessels made of precious metals, called *BIBRU,* "rhyton," in Akkadian, which were used in religious ceremonies according to Hittite sources. Though the **(p. 1023)** drinking cups found at Kültepe are terracotta, the *BIBRU* mentioned in Hittite texts are made of precious metals! These drinking cups may take the form of a lion, bull, ox, antelope, rabbit, dog, boar, eagle, partridge, or snail; they occur in four main groups. One group depicts animal figures standing or lying on their folded legs; animal heads, especially eagle, form another group. The perched or flying eagles form subgroups in this category. A third group consists of drinking cups that are boat-shaped, with the spout usually formed as the head of a ram or a water buffalo. The legs of the animal are sometimes depicted beneath the boat. The boatmen figurines are at the sides, holding the oars; their bodies below the waist are within the boat. The boat-shaped vessels represent the ritualistic river journey that the deity inside the shrine made during a festival as

described in Sumerian literature. In an international center such as Kaneš it was important to enact rituals from the Sumerian-Akkadian tradition. The fourth group of cult vessels are boot-shaped. They are monochrome, brightly polished, or decorated with geometrical designs; the majority are peculiar to Kültepe. They were usually discovered in the archive rooms (T. Özgüç 2003).

The anthropomorphic vessels and the vessels in the form of human heads and ornamented with human head reliefs were likely not used for mundane purposes. The anthropomorphic vases with or without horns were most probably designated as cult objects. As with the lead figurines (see later discussion), the indigenous gods and goddesses were also portrayed in groups on the clay vases, which probably were used for their cult ceremonies.

Besides native pottery, there were examples of imported vessels as well. The origin of such pottery was usually northern Syria, and they became even more varied in building Level Ib. Because they appear in levels dated with the help of written documents, they can be synchronized with their places of origin (Emre 1994, 1995, 1999).

Other Material Culture

The statuettes of gods and goddesses discovered in Level Ib, following the destruction of Level II, are made of bronze, faience, lead, gold with ivory, and clay (T. Özgüç 2003). The statuettes of the principal goddess, depicted naked and in the act of offering her breasts in her hands, are made of ivory, faience, and bronze. The ivory statuette of the enthroned naked goddess who holds her breasts in her hands was discovered in a Level Ib grave (figure 47.3). This is the prototype of the statuettes of goddesses which were made of bronze and gold during the Hittite Empire period; it is one of the earliest examples depicting the characteristic physiognomic attributes of Hittite art.

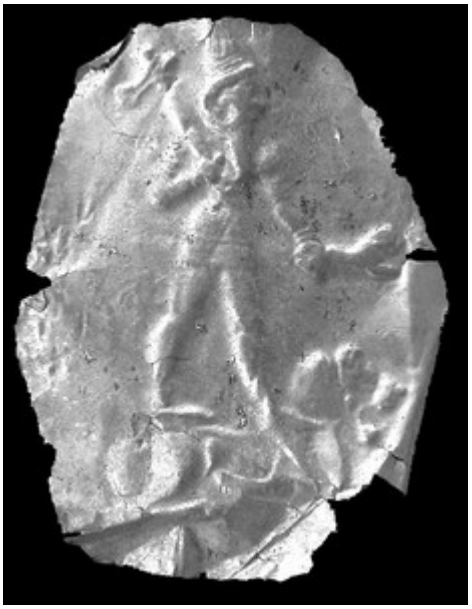
Click to view larger

Figure 47.3 . Ivory statuette of the nude goddess of level Ib.

The lead figurines and stone molds used to cast and duplicate them depict the principal goddess, or the goddess grouped with her children and with mythological (p. 1024) creatures; they attest that the pantheon of this period was composed of distinct deities, differentiated by their individual insignia (Emre 1971). The lead figurines and their stone molds is the second largest group of figural finds at Kültepe, following the seals and seal impressions. The small figurines were destined for religious use and are known to have been widely distributed in the Near East. As with the seal impressions, the figurines represent various gods and goddesses, different divine families, and mythological creatures (Hirsch 1972). It is possible to distinguish the divine beings through their symbols and attributes, but written documents do not provide information on their identities. Most probably they were the “tutelary gods” of the households.

During the Assyrian Trade Colony period the lead figurines depicting gods, goddesses, and divine families began to display a distinct physical appearance, with a large nose, full face, large ears, and a slightly smiling expression on the face. (p. 1025) This physiognomic mode of representation continued until the end of the Hittite Empire period.

The most exciting find from the *kārum* of Kaneš excavation campaign of 2006 is an oval-shaped thin gold folio with the depiction of a deity (Kulakoğlu 2008). The figure stands on a lion; his head and lower body are in profile while his upper body is depicted frontally. In his right hand he holds a shaft-hole ax, resting on his right shoulder; in his left hand he holds the hind legs of a smaller lion figure. Like the lead figurines, this item was a depiction of a god that was kept in a private household. The tablets from the Assyrian Trade Colony period show that people possessed their own personal figurines of the deities. It is worth noting that this item, which displays entirely Hittite stylistic features, was found in Building Layer Ib of the *kārum*. This deity, the earliest example of depictions rendered in the Hittite artistic style, provides further evidence that Hittite art originated in Kültepe (figure 47.4).



Click to view larger

Figure 47.4 . Gold folio with the depiction of a deity found in *Kārum* Ib.

The jewelry made of precious stones and metals, the bronze vessels, and the weapons were mostly discovered in graves (T. Özgüç 1986a). The workshops in Levels Ib and II, which were excavated completely, also contained stone moulds for casting all kinds of metal objects. The weapons, figurines, and pottery imported from northern Syria and Mesopotamia define the international character of this great trading center. Most of the metal objects are made of copper, bronze, silver, gold, electrum, and lead. Copper and bronze vessels, weapons, belt buckles, spools, (p. 1026) cymbals, pins, zoomorphic and anthropomorphic figurines, and rings with various functions constitute an important collection. The cuneiform documents refer to metal objects weighing nearly 100 kg in total, mostly vessels, which were part of the inventory of a merchant’s house. The vessels were formed by using forging and casting techniques, whereas riveting and soldering were used for joining the handles and the other details.

The metal objects left as burial gifts in the tombs of the *kārum* of Kaneš are mainly weapons. Stone molds for casting these weapons were also found in the workshops of Levels II and Ib. Most weapons that were not common in Anatolia were imports from northern Syria and Mesopotamia or were locally manufactured by using the imported examples as models (T. Özgüç 1986a).

Texts And Seals

Seals

Click to view larger

Figure 47.5 . Seal impression of Sargon, king of Assur.

Among the most significant archaeological materials found at Kültepe are the cylinder seals imported to Anatolia from both Mesopotamia and Syria, and the seal impressions (N. Özgüç 1965, 1968). The clay envelopes for the tablets, and the “bullae,” are impressed with cylinder seals in Level II, whereas in Level Ib it may be either cylinder or stamp seals (N. Özgüç 2001, 2006). Beginning from Level Ib the tablets and envelopes were both sealed; toward the end of this period, however, only the tablets were sealed. Usually there are inscriptions and seal impressions on the face of the lumps of clay attached to the portable or nonportable items required to be protected, and to the merchandise, tablets, or personal possessions that were being transported. The cosmopolitan nature of Kültepe’s population led to the development of at least four distinct styles in glyptic art. The cylinder seal impressions discovered in Kültepe are mainly in the Old Assyrian style; the most typical example discovered in Kültepe is the seal of King Sargon of Assur (figure 47.5). The style is differentiated by the sharp body contours of the figures, the forked hands, the schematic faces, and the cross-hatchings that fill in the garments and body details. The main subject matter of Old Assyrian seals, made in the Ur III dynastic tradition, are scenes of worship. In Level Ib there were fewer seals in the Old Assyrian style, reflecting the general course of trade relations, but this earlier tradition continued to some extent in seals carved under its influence. Other variations are the so-called Provincial Old Babylonian style, in which early Babylonian motifs were worked under the influence of the Old Assyrian style, and another tradition where the extremely stylized figures are indicated with angular lines. The typical Old Babylonian style with origins in southern Mesopotamia is notable for its fine workmanship, typified by figures with rounded contours and skillfully used registers, where the worship scenes are again the principal theme.

(p. 1027) The style of a third group of seals from Level II appears to be peculiar to Kaneš and is designated “Syrian-Cappadocian” or “Syrian-Colony”; the most notable features on these seals are the garments of the worshipers wearing caps with narrow edges and overcoats with rounded skirts. These seals appear in three subgroups. The first subgroup is linked to the Ur III dynastic style; these seals are very well modeled and offer the most extensive repertoire. The second subgroup is linear and comprises Syrian elements influenced by the Old Assyrian style. In the third group of seals, which are probably the source of the “Common Style” of the Mitannian period, drilling techniques were used to work the head and shoulders of the figures. The seals of Syrian origin, found in Level Ib,

belong to the Syrian seals group contemporary with King Ḫammurabi of the Old Babylonian dynasty. The deities being worshiped generally wear Old Babylonian garments.

The fourth group is a new style in Level II and is represented by homogenous and highly developed stamp seals unique to Kültepe, called the “Native-Anatolian” group. They are highly individualized, varied in their style and worked in very fine detail; the scenes depicted portray ceremonies, hunting and battle scenes, and processions of deities standing on their sacred animals. All free spaces have been filled with motifs and symbols. The Native-Anatolian style evolved to its highest level at Kültepe and became the source of later Hittite glyptic art.

In the Level Ib Period, in contrast to Level II, the tablets also bore seal impressions. The first group of Level Ib seals in Anatolian style remained true to Level II style, but a second group represents the initial examples of the Hittite stamp seals that became common in later Hittite periods. The stamp seals depict scenes of worship, deities, hybrid creatures, heraldic eagles, animals, and astral motifs. A limited part of Assyrian style seals continue the Level II tradition, whereas others are (p. 1028) influenced by the Old Babylonian style. This characteristic, that is, the multiple use of styles, is a sign of the weakening political relations with Assur. Furthermore, Level II Old Babylonian style seals were kept into Level Ib times, with the depictions modified for reuse. Some seals in the Syrian style continued to be used in the Ib level, and elements of Classical Syrian styles and Egyptianizing techniques also appeared (T. Özgüç 2003).

Tablets

So far, the excavations at Kültepe have brought to light a total of 23,500 tablets, of which 23,000 tablets are from Level II and 500 from Level Ib (see Michel, chapter 13 in this volume for detailed information). A very substantial portion of these finds were from the excavations in the *kārum* area (Bilgiç 1964). The tablets discovered at Kültepe are primarily significant because they represent the beginning of written history in Anatolia. Here at Kültepe Anatolians learned how to read and write for the first time. As a result of Anatolian relations with Mesopotomia and northern Syria, which we learn of through the information gained from these tablets, the people of central Anatolia perfected the skills of establishing and administering a state, and learned about legal systems and bureaucracy. Though no written documents have so far been discovered, and the architectural remains are poor, finds from Level Ia point to the birth of Hittite culture in this period. In particular, data derived from the graves of Level Ia indicate that there was a fairly short interval between the end of the settlement in this level and the establishment of the Old Hittite Kingdom period (Kulakoğlu 1996).

Conclusion

After the end of the Level Ia settlement, the *kārum* area was not inhabited for a long time. In the Iron Age, the signs of habitation we find on the mound do not appear in the Lower City. Judging from the metal coins and the pottery found in the excavations, during the Late Roman period the Lower City was partly used by farming communities, while a portion of it served as a necropolis.

Material cultural remains from the period of the Hittite Empire, one of the three Near Eastern superpowers during the second half of the second millennium B.C.E., have not been discovered at Kültepe. Some coins and pottery finds from the Seljuk and Ottoman periods provide signs of habitation at that time on lands that were part of the city of Kaneš. The regional designation “Karye-i Kınış” from the seventeenth century C.E. judicial registers of Kayseri reflects a memory of the most ancient name of Kaneš, reminding us of the legacy of this most important cultural center of the Middle Bronze Age.

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