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Cécile Michel

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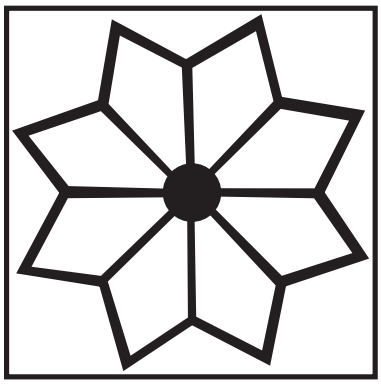
CURRENT RESEARCH AT KÜLTEPE-KANESH



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Number 4

CURRENT RESEARCH AT KÜLTEPE-KANESH

CURRENT RESEARCH AT KÜLTEPE-KANESH

An Interdisciplinary and Integrative Approach to Trade Networks, Internationalism, and Identity

edited by

Levent Atici, Fikri Kulakoğlu,
Gojko Barjamovic, and Andrew Fairbairn

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RECENT RESEARCH AT KÜLTEPE-KANESH

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CONSIDERATIONS ON THE ASSYRIAN SETTLEMENT AT KANESH

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Abstract

Since the discovery, at the end of the nineteenth century CE, of the Old Assyrian merchant archives in the houses of Kültepe lower city, the status of the Assyrian settlement at Kanesh has been much debated. After a summary of the various translations proposed for the word *kārum* up to now, this chapter considers the recent suggestion of G. Stein to define the Assyrian *kārum*s in Anatolia as "trade diasporas." A study of the Kültepe lower city population, its geographic distribution, and its material culture allows a new understanding of the dynamic relations between Assyrians and Anatolians during the nineteenth and eighteenth centuries BCE.

At the end of the twentieth and beginning of the nineteenth centuries BCE, Assyrian merchants originating from Assur developed a long-distance trade in central Anatolia and settled there progressively in some forty towns. Their commercial activities prospered during slightly more than two centuries, a period traditionally called the "Old Assyrian" or "*kārum* period." The center of their operations was located at Kanesh (modern Kültepe) where, according to written records dated to the first half of the nineteenth century BCE, several hundreds of them lived more or less permanently.

Kültepe was divided into two major areas: the citadel with its palace, official buildings, and temples, and the lower city, often considered in the publications as the *kārum* Kanesh mentioned in the tablets. The site has produced up to now some 22,500 cuneiform texts: only forty tablets were found on the citadel, the remaining come from the private houses of the lower city (Michel 2003, 116–17; 2006; 2012). These archives, which belonged in the great majority to Assyrians, also provide data concerning the population of the lower city: natives, Assyrians, and other foreigners, though such divisions must be made, when filiation is unknown, by the language of personal names.

The status of the Assyrian settlement at Kanesh has been much debated. This chapter considers the recent and interesting suggestion of G. Stein to define the Assyrian *kārum*s in Anatolia as "trade diasporas" (Stein 2008). A brief summary of the various translations proposed for the word *kārum* will be followed by an analysis of the Kültepe lower-city population and its geographic distribution. The study of material culture affords a provisional understanding of the dynamic relations between Assyrians and the native inhabitants of the city over the two centuries covering the Old Assyrian period.

Kārum Kanesh

The kārum *and the Lower City*

Until now, in the absence of a specific Akkadian word to designate it, the lower city at Kültepe has often been equated with the Assyrian term *kārum*. Its chronology is divided into four main levels (IV–I)—the last level being divided in two (Ib–Ia)—which correspond to the levels 10–6 of the citadel, but only Levels II (ca. 1940–1935) and Ib (ca. 1932–1710) produced written documentation (Özgüç 1986a; Kulakoğlu 2010; Barjmaovic, Hertel, and Larsen, 2012). Kültepe lower city's stratigraphy is used as the chronological scale of reference for the whole Anatolian plateau between the end of the third millennium and the beginning of the seventeenth century BCE (Michel 2011a). This period, which corresponds approximately to the Middle Bronze Age, is characterized in Anatolia as an important phase of urbanization with a flourishing material culture mixing native and foreign styles.

The use of the word *kārum* to denote the whole Kültepe lower city is problematic. Indeed, we have no indication about the real extent of the *kārum*, and the texts do not mention the existence of fortifications or any other physical element that would delineate the *kārum*'s perimeter. But we know from the archaeology that the lower city was surrounded by fortifications. However, only a fraction of it has been excavated. According to F. Kulakoğlu (2010), director of the excavations, who has surveyed several areas in the last seasons, the lower-city settlement was two kilometers in diameter and completely surrounded the citadel (p. 45). The main official building of the *kārum* (*bēt kārim*) has not been recovered so far. The *bāb kārim*, "gate of the *kārum*," which is mentioned in some texts as a place where legal actions took place, could refer to the main entrance of the *bēt kārim* (*AKT* 3 67:34). This suggestion would make a nice parallel with the "Gate of the God/Gate of Assur" (*bāb ilim/bāb Assur*), which was the entrance to the sacred precinct (*hamrum*) of the Assur temple (Matouš 1974; Dercksen 2004a, 101). As we do not know exactly what the word *kārum* referred to, and since it is unlikely that it corresponded precisely to the lower city, the two entities must be distinguished (Michel 2013).

A Translation of kārum *as "Colony"?*

In Mesopotamia, the Akkadian word *kārum* means "port, quay"; it corresponded originally to the quay where merchandise was unloaded. At the beginning of the second millennium BCE, it referred to a "harbor" where commercial exchanges took place. According to the Mari royal archives (eighteenth century BCE), foreign merchants were living in various cities of the kingdom, in the *kārum*s located outside of the fortifications surrounding the city's public buildings. For example, Assyrian merchants had residences in Shehna (Tell Leilan; Michel, 1996a; *ARMT* 26/2, Nos. 315–316). The *kārum*s enjoyed a special political and administrative status; at Mari, for example, its population was exempted from conscription (Michel 1996a). In Anatolia, the status of *kārum* Kanesh was more complex since it was the administrative center of the forty *kārum*s and *wabartum*s settled by Assyrians in central Anatolia. It was at the head of the hierarchical system and functioned as a kind of extension of the Assur city government (Larsen 1976, 227–332; Dercksen 2004a, 99–118; Veenhof 2008a, 180–82).

The cuneiform tablets discovered mainly in the Kültepe lower-city private houses, and belonging for the most part to a period of sixty years, influenced early historians and economists. The *kārum* Kanesh, for example, was used by K. Polanyi to set up his marketless administrated trade model (Polanyi 1957, 1963; comments by Gledhill and Larsen 1982; Veenhof 1988; Michel 2005). The first historical reconstructions of the Assyrian settlement at Kanesh date from the 1920s, although the site was not yet regularly excavated. They depicted the Old Assyrian *kārum* system as colonies of a strong Assyrian Empire with an extent from the Tigris to Halys (Lewy 1925), or as trade colonies dependent on the Assur state and tolerated by local rulers (Landsberger 1925). By 1963, when the Turkish excavations at Kültepe had run fifteen years, P. Garelli definitively rejected the idea of an Assyrian Empire with its colonies. He gave to the word *kārum* the double meaning of "commercial center established in a city" and "assembly of the merchants" who administer that center (Garelli 1963, 368–74).

Today, the translations of the word *kārum* in publications dedicated to the Old Assyrian period vary according to the speakers of various languages:

- "colony" or "trading colony" for English speaking scholars,
- "Handelskolonie" for German authors,
- "comptoir de commerce" (= trading post) in French publications.

The words colony and colonialism have been studied in detail by Stein (2002); his arguments are summarized hereafter. Their meanings are tightly linked; the word colonialism corresponds "to the establishment and maintenance, for an extended time, of rule over an alien people that is separate from and subordinate to the ruling power" (p. 28); thus a colony is a territory abroad under the political control of its mother state. This meaning is much influenced by European colonialism and indeed French classic dictionaries always refer to "occupied foreign territory" and its "dependence" on the state.[1] Since this is an anachronism, Stein proposes a more-neutral definition that fits better for colony prior to European colonialism: "(a colony is) an implanted settlement established by one society in either uninhabited territory or the territory of another society. The implanted settlement is established for long-term residence by all or part of the population and is both spatially and socially distinguishable from the communities of a host society. The settlement onset is marked by a distinct formal corporate identity as a community with cultural/ritual, economic, military, or political ties to its homeland, but the homeland need not politically dominate the implanted settlement" (p. 30).

In 2008, Stein updated his definition of the colonial system, amending the binary scheme, colonizer and colonized, and considered three heterogeneous nodes—mother country, colonies, local societies—observing a great diversity within each group in gender, social, and ethnic groups. He studied the contacts between these nodes and noted that there was no asymmetric exchange or economic and political domination of the Assyrians over the communities with which they lived in Anatolia. Thus, he rightly concluded that we cannot use the word "colonies" to depict the Assyrian *kārum* system.

Today, everyone agrees a "colonial system" does not describe the Assyrian *kārum* system in Anatolia, but even so, many colleagues still use the word colony to translate the word *kārum*.[2]

The kārum *as a "Trade Diaspora"*

In his 2008 article, Stein explained that the trade diaspora model fits well with the Assyrian *kārum*s in Anatolia. According to him, "members of the trading group move into new areas, settle down in market or transport centers along major trade routes and specialize in exchange while maintaining a separate cultural identity from their host community.… The group has its own political organization … and some level of judicial autonomy as well. Trade diasporas also strongly emphasize their distinctive cultural identity … diaspora identity can also be expressed through linguistic, religious, or other cultural criteria" (pp. 33–35).

This model, which allows many variations, has already been used for the ancient Near East by Stein to explain the Uruk colonization of Anatolia during the fourth millennium BCE (Stein 1999; response by Cleuziou 1999), and by B. Faist (2001) for the Middle Assyrian period. The organization of the Assyrians in Anatolia shows several aspects fitting well such a definition of the trade diaspora. For example, the Assyrians living in Kanesh had their

1. See for example definitions given by the Littré, in which the "colony" corresponds to an "établissement fondé par une nation dans un pays étranger … Territoire occupé par une nation en dehors de ses propres frontières. Elle l'administre et le maintien dans un état de dépendance" (E. Littré, *Dictionnaire de la langue française*, Paris 1873, 670) or by the *Larousse*: "territoire occupé et administré par une nation en dehors de ses frontières, et demeurant attaché à la métropole par des liens politiques et économiques étroits" (*Larousse illustré*, 2010, 221).

2. It seems that the word "colony" has a stronger political connotation in French than in English. Note that some colleagues propose their own definition of the word "colony" before using it, as recently Dercksen 2008a, 120: "The word 'colony' employed in this article refers to a settlement of a group of foreign merchants who maintain ties with the mother city Assur, and not to an area under the political control of Assur."

own political organization: the *kārum* assembly prerogatives were economical, legal, and political. The office of the *kārum*, kind of extension of Assur government, levied taxes on caravans, fixed the rate of loan interest, managed the credit invested by its members, and organized a periodical settlement of accounts. It worked as a court of law and gave its verdicts. It was also in charge of diplomatic contacts and treaties with the local rulers.

However, other aspects of the trade diaspora are less convincing. It does not seem that the Assyrians preserved their own social and cultural identity very different from that of their hosts during the whole "*kārum* period." In an article published in 2005, A. Gräff already refuted the trade diaspora model for the Assyrian settlement in Anatolia, on the basis that there was no physical segregation of the ethnic groups in Kültepe lower city. I arrived at similar conclusions based on material culture and other features presented below (Michel 2010a; in press a and b). By contrast, Dercksen (2008a, 123) wrote: "this [i.e., the trade diaspora] model does offer a good explanation for the Old Assyrian trade."

The Population of Kültepe's Lower City

Anatolians, Assyrians, and Other Foreigners

Various ethnic groups lived together in the lower city of Kanesh and are mainly documented through the Assyrian archives. The Assyrians designated the local population by the generic term *nuʾāʾum*, "native (Anatolian)," while the Anatolians used the word *tamkārum* "the merchant" to refer to Assyrians. Indeed, all the Assyrians living in the lower city were merchants. Many of the native inhabitants of the lower city were merchants as well. They bore personal Indo-European names with either a Hittite or Luwian etymology; others had names of Hattic (an agglutinative language) origin (Garelli 1963, 127–68; Veenhof 1982; Dercksen 2002, 2004b; Goedegebuure 2008; Michel 2010a, in press a).

Not surprisingly, the Assyrians formed the best-documented group of the lower city since most of the archives belonged to them. During the Level II period, there were between five and eight hundred Assyrians at Kanesh.[3] They were administratively and legally independent from the local authorities and interacted with them via the *kārum* representatives; their rights and duties were determined by sworn commercial agreements. The few treaties discovered showed that the Assyrians were granted permission to reside in Kanesh. They also were accorded some protections in the city and on the routes of the kingdom that were guarded by Anatolians. In exchange, they had to pay various taxes to the Anatolian palace (Michel 2001, No. 87; Veenhof 2003a; Günbattı 2004). Even if these agreements recognized the mutual and complementary interests of both parties, they were written from one side and focused on the obligations and rights of the Anatolian rulers (Veenhof 2008a, 214).

Other foreigners visited the city occasionally or on a regular basis for trade purposes; they are referred to in the tablets according to the languages they spoke.[4] Some merchants were identified as natives of Ebla (Bilgiç 1992; *TPAK* 1 109:4; Kt 88/k 525:5–6, by courtesy of Çeçen; Kt 91/k 338:2, by courtesy of Veenhof; Kt 94/k 421:28, by courtesy of Larsen), or bore names with an Amorite or Hurrian etymology; the latter were mentioned for the most part in the archives dating from the Level Ib (Balkan 1957; Hecker 1996; Miller 2001, 93–94; Veenhof 2008b; Wilhelm 2008; Michel 2010b, in press a).

3. See Hertel, in this volume. Such an estimate is based on the occurrences of Assyrian proper names in connection to Kanesh, but it is not always clear whether these Assyrians were actually living in Kanesh or only visiting it.

4. As an example, a rule of the Assur city assembly prohibited Assyrians from selling gold to Akkadians (Babylonians), Amorites (in the Upper Djezira), and Subarians (Hurrians); see Michel 2001, No. 2; Veenhof 2003a, 2008b.

Archives Belonging to Assyrians and Archives Belonging to Anatolians

It has been asserted that, without the archives, it would have been impossible to detect the Assyrian presence at Kanesh because Assyrian and Anatolian houses and furniture were identical (Özgüç 2003, 98). In order to check this argument, it is necessary to identify the owners of the excavated houses in the lower city with the help of the unearthed archives (Michel 2011b, 2013). This study is mainly possible for the excavation seasons from 1948 to 1986, the latter date being the publication of the last report on the lower city excavations (Özgüç 1986a). Aerial photographs of the site show that the extension of the excavations has been enlarged considerably since then (Google Earth, 38°51'11"N et 35°38'22"E).

Making an inventory of the archives belonging to Anatolian merchants, called hereafter simply "Anatolian archives" even if written in the Old Assyrian script and dialect, was a challenge since they remain, for the most part, unpublished. Thus, it is difficult to estimate the fraction of Kültepe texts belonging to Anatolians, but it seems that it is quite limited. Anatolian archives are unequally distributed between Level II and Ib: there would be less than 5 percent of Level II archives belonging to Anatolians, while for Level Ib, 25 percent of the archives would concern Anatolians (Michel 2011b). Notable distinctions in the texts come from the oral use of different languages. Texts written by Anatolians show peculiarities in the writing of proper names, preferences in the choice of some signs, and incorrect in the use of grammatical genders (Kienast 1984, 31–35; Dercksen 2007, 26–28; Kryszat 2008; Michel 2011b); such differences are not always significant. About a dozen of the available archives of Level II belong to Anatolians. Besides the one of Peruwa, which comprises about 150 documents, they usually include fewer than a dozen texts each. For Level Ib, they are more numerous (Veenhof 1978; Donbaz 1988, 1989, 1993, 2004; Dercksen 2004b).

Assyrian and Anatolian archives are different in their number and composition. As already said, Anatolian archives constitute only a few texts while Assyrian archives include usually several hundreds of texts, up to a thousand or more for one house. This is fully comprehensible since the language and script used are those of the Assyrians, borrowed by the Anatolians. Peruwa's archives are predominantly made up of loans or purchase contracts of houses, fields, and slaves, and a few family contracts (Michel 2011b and purchase contracts published by Kienast (1984). In comparison, an Assyrian archive contains letters, legal texts, and private notices in equal numbers (Michel 1998, 2008a; Veenhof 2003b; Larsen 2008). Indeed, the documentary needs of the two groups of population were different. Assyrians, far away from their homeland, needed to communicate with their families and colleagues in Assur; they kept in their archives documents related to their commercial operations. In Anatolia, they bought houses and slaves only occasionally. In contrast, Anatolians had no need of long-distance communication; they invested in land and slaves, and the wealthy ones loaned silver (Dercksen 2004b; Kryszat 2008; Michel 2011b).[5]

Distribution of the Assyrians and Anatolians in the Lower City

In a trade-diaspora model, ethnically distinct traders occupy enclaves within widely dispersed host communities (Stein 1999). For the Assyrian settlement at Kanesh this could imply a clear spatial separation between quarters inhabited by Assyrians and quarters where Anatolians lived. Such an analysis must be done with respect to the chronological distinction between Levels II and Ib, a distinction that is problematic since, according to the Kültepe Eponym List (KEL), both levels were separated by only three years (Günbattı 2008; Barjamovic, Hertel, and Larsen 2012). Due to the lack of data for Level Ib, only Level II will be taken into account.

Reports of the Kültepe lower-city excavations allow reconstructing partially the plan of the zone A–Z/5–30 (zone 110–132/LIII–LXXVIII of the new grid, which does not fit exactly the old one), which corresponds to part

5. Anatolian contracts use dates based on seasons and religious festivals; see Veenhof 2008a, 234–45; Michel 2010c.

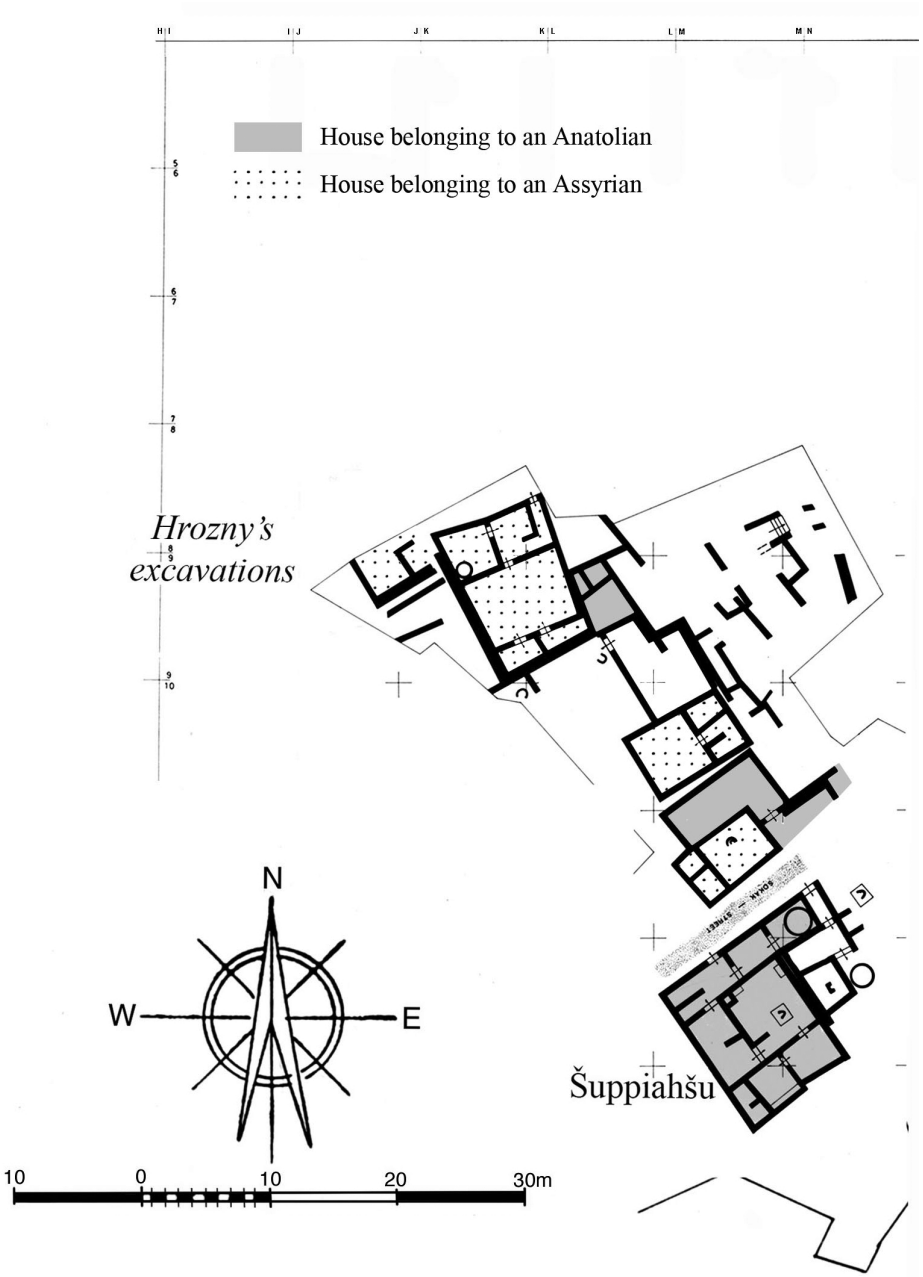

Fig. 1. Kültepe lower city, zone I–N/8–13.

of the excavated surface (Michel 2011b, 2013). In the area southeast of this zone (T–Z/23–28), several archives belonging to Anatolians have been discovered, as those of Peruwa and Shakdunuwa (Michel 2011b; 128–132/LXXI–LXXVIII of the new grid). Houses of the zone N–Y/19–22 belonged to Assyrians as Alahum, Buzutaya, Luzina, Tab-ahum, and Uzua and to Anatolians like Sharabunuwa or Sharnikan whose house has a wall in common with the house of Tab-ahum (Michel 2013; 123–131/LXX–LXXV of the new grid). In the northwest area, west to the zone excavated by B. Hrozný who in 1925 unearthed the archives of Pushu-ken and Imdilum, there is

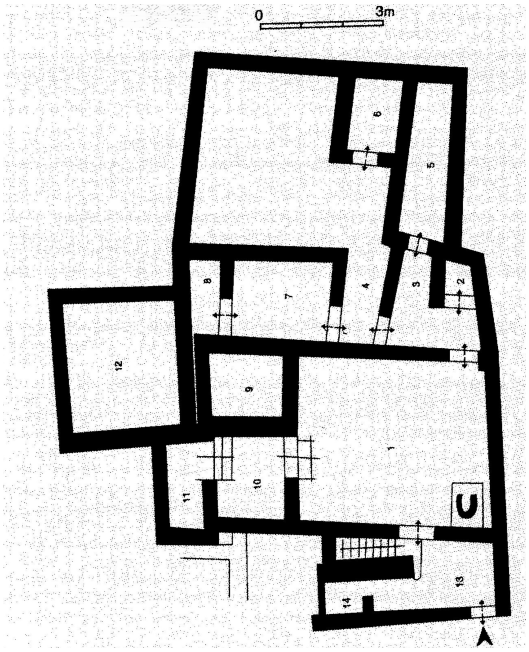

Fig. 2. The house of Peruwa. After Özgüç 2003, 85.

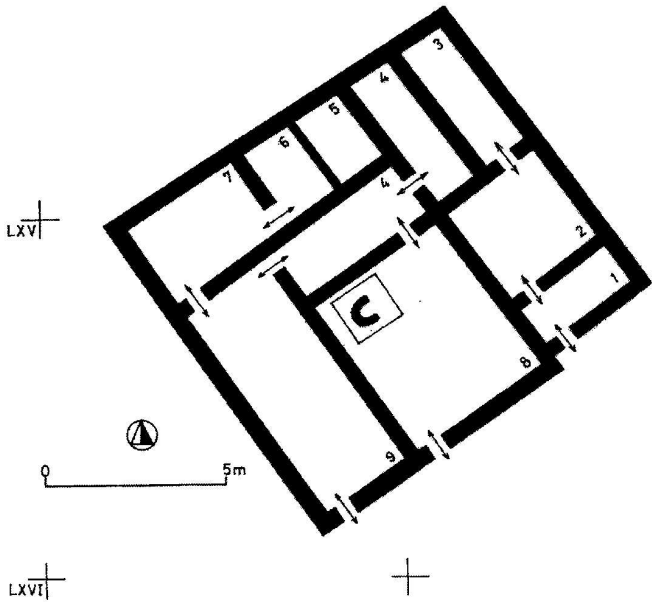

Fig. 3. The house of Shalim-Assur. After Özgüç 2001, 369.

a concentration of houses belonging to Assyrians (Hrozný 1927). But this area has been much damaged by illicit excavations. Moreover, Hrozný himself bought from local peasants more than half of the tablets he brought back. A clear mixed residential zone is located in I–N/8–13, where we find at least three houses belonging to Assyrian merchants and three houses belonging to Anatolian merchants among which is the large house of Shuppiahshu (120–123/LVI–LXI of the new grid; Gräff 2005; Michel 2011b, 2013; and fig. 1 here). So, if some areas presented a majority of houses in which Assyrians were living, others housed a completely mixed population: There was no clear physical segregation in terms of neighborhoods between the two communities.

Cultural Borrowings between Assyrians and Anatolians

In his definition of trade diasporas, Stein (2008, 33–35) underlined the fact that they "strongly emphasize their distinctive cultural identity" which can "be expressed through linguistic, religious, or other cultural criteria."

The Houses and Their Content

The identification of some houses belonging to Anatolian and Assyrian merchants in the lower city allows comparisons concerning architecture and artifacts. Since the Old Assyrian harbor at Assur has not been excavated, we know very little about Assyrian houses of this period. Textual documentation indicates that they were organized in a number of rooms around a central space (Michel 1996b); their total size could be about a hundred square meters (1,076 sq. ft.; *TC* 2 11; Veenhof 2011).

At Kanesh, the houses of Peruwa or Shuppiahshu show typical Anatolian features (figs. 1, 2). More generally, according to Gräff, who studied the Assyrian houses of Tell Taja, Kültepe lower-city houses all followed the Anatolian plan, lacking, for example, a central court (Gräff 2005). The house of Shalim-Assur, excavated in 1994

in squares LXV–LXVI/130–131, is very-well preserved (fig. 3). It is a large building of 115.5 m^2, divided into nine rooms, and had a second floor. T. Özgüç (2001) noted its unique character in the lower city. But its only notable difference is the absence of adjacent houses, as remarked by M. T. Larsen (2010, 3–6), who studied the archives found in it. This house was inhabited during two generations by an Assyrian family; its archives, which contained more than a thousand tablets, were found in rooms 5 and 6. There is no difference between the houses inhabited by Anatolians and those in which Assyrians lived (Özgüç 2003; Kulakoğlu 2010). Indeed, as witnessed by many purchase contracts, Assyrians bought houses from local inhabitants, or planned their houses according to the local style and with materials at hand.

For the same practical reasons, the Assyrians used the pottery produced by local craftspeople for their everyday use and seem even to have appropriated ritual ceramics in the shape of animals or boats. For example, an Assyrian house excavated in 1992 contained such a boat with a goddess in her temple (Kt 92/k 17; Özgüç 2003, 216–19; Kulakoğlu and Kangal 2010, 266–67, No. 224). Kültepe was an important center of ceramic production at the beginning of the second millennium BCE; its characteristic ceramics were in use for several centuries (Özgüç 2003, 142–229; Kulakoğlu 2010). During the "*kārum* period" new styles were introduced, of pre-Hittite or Syrian influence (Emre 2010; Kontani 2010). Pots that could be qualified as "Assyrian" were extremely rare, and there was clearly no production of Assyrian ceramics at Kanesh. Thus, the Assyrians used the same vessels as the Anatolians. Stein (2008, 34) rightly argued that this "reflects pragmatic considerations on the part of the Old Assyrian merchants" and proposed two explanations for this statement. First, the weight of the pottery forbade its transport over long distance. Second, postulating that ceramics were produced by women, he suggested that there were very few Assyrian women at Kanesh to generate a local production according to Assyrian canons. But we have no indication that ceramics were produced by women, and such a statement assumes a static situation. If the first generations of Assyrians settled at Kanesh were mainly men, later on, women of various Assyrian social milieus came and married Assyrian or local merchants (see below).

As well, since the Assyrians were living in the same environment as the Anatolians, they were certainly eating the same type of food. Archaeobotanical and archaeozoological studies for the Kültepe lower town began only a few years ago.[6] Stein suggested that a detailed house-by-house analysis could perhaps determine some different traditions between the two communities. When feasible, such a study could be completed by textual data. Some texts, for example, indicate that in Assur, beer was made only of barley while in Kanesh, it was prepared from both barley and wheat (Michel 1997; Dercksen 2008b). Even if it is possible that the Assyrians kept some culinary habits in preparing their food, the differences might not be as clear as suggested.

Textiles could also have been a good marker to identify differences between Assyrian and Anatolian techniques and fashions, some of which were marked by textile terminology (Michel and Veenhof 2010, 223–31). Unfortunately, as for the rest of the Near East, textile remains are almost inexistent, and a systematic study of textile imprints on clay is still to be done.[7] Miniature scenes engraved on cylinder seals and their imprints seem to show different clothing fashions or weaving techniques. Anatolians apparently wove twilled fabrics while Assyrian women in Assur were mainly producing the Mesopotamian plain-weave fabrics (Breniquet 2008, 217–313; Lassen 2011). We have no indication about the clothes worn by Assyrians in Kanesh; the Anatolian elite used the expensive Assyrian or Babylonian textiles for their clothing, while the low-status people may have weaved themselves the textiles they needed.

Various other objects of daily life index the presence of Assyrians or Anatolians in a specific house. As an example, weights, which are necessary tools for the merchant in his professional activities, could be used as such a marker. The lower-city houses produced some 150 stone weights, from less than one gram to more than five kilos

6. See the contributions of L. Atici and A. Fairbairn in this volume.

7. An international team of experts started such a project in September 2013 within the frame of the cooperation project PICS Textiles from Orient to Mediterranean (CNRS – DNRF).

(Özgüç 1986a, 78–81; Kulakoğlu and Kangal 2010, 319–23).[8] Textual documentation has shown that the Anatolian mina weighed about 10 percent less than the Assyrian mina (Kt u/k 3; Dercksen 1996, 87). It appears that two weights, both dated to Level II, might correspond respectively to the Assyrian and to the Anatolian minas. The first one, Kt 02/k 140, made of haematite, weighs 493 grams and was found in an Assyrian house, while the second one, Kt f/k 103, made of stone, weights 444 grams, and was discovered in the house of an Anatolian merchant (Kulakoğlu and Kangal 2010, Nos. 395, 391).[9]

Language, Writing, Seals

Stein (2008, 34) stressed the use of different languages as one of the most important characteristic feature to determine social identity. He noted that the Old Assyrian dialect "shows almost no loan words or other linguistic borrowings from the local culture." This assumption was based on a study published by K. R. Veenhof in 1977, when very few Kültepe archives preserved at the Ankara museum were deciphered and published (Emre 2010). In the last twenty years, the available documentation has been multiplied by three, and it has been shown that the Assyrian merchants adapted their vocabulary to local realities: their archives contain many words borrowed from early Hittite, Luwian, or Hurrian (Dercksen 2007). Many pieces of furniture or foodstuffs, for example, were designated by their local names. Several Anatolian officials bore titles that were translated from Old Hittite or built on Hurrian words (Michel in press a). Assyrians and Anatolians interacted on a daily basis in the lower city, and even if they used different languages, communication remained possible. The interpreters or translators (*targumannum*) were quite few, and mainly working in the context of diplomatic relationships between local palaces and the *kārum* offices (Ulshöfer 2000). Thus, we may assume that bilingualism was quite common among the merchants, a situation that increased with the increase of mixed marriages (Michel 2008b, 2011b; see below).

The few archives belonging to Anatolians, as Peruwa, witness their personal use of the cuneiform syllabic signs of the Assyrians. They did not try to adapt it to their own language as was later done by the Hittites. Instead, they used the Old Assyrian dialect, which became the diplomatic language between the Anatolian courts.[10] It seems that the Old Assyrian syllabary was quite simplified—fewer than two-hundred signs—and thus used by a large number of merchants; some Assyrian women and several Anatolian merchants knew enough signs to be able to read and write documents (Michel 2008c, 2009; texts written by Anatolians show errors clearly indicating the different linguistic environments).

Seals and sealings also witness various influences between local and imported styles (Lumsden 2008). The Anatolians, who traditionally used stamp seals on envelopes, bullae, or doors, began using cylinder seals under the influence of the Assyrians. They developed a local style that borrowed elements from Babylonian, Assyrian, and Syrian styles, all of which had arrived through trade. The cylinder seals decorated with this new Old Anatolian style were used both by Anatolians and Assyrians (Lassen 2012, 253–56). Seals of any style, even old Ur III seals, could be recycled and used by its new owner, either Assyrian or Anatolian. Glyptic thus witnesses a real acculturation phenomenon between both communities.

8. I am very grateful to F. Kulakoğlu who shared with me all his data on Kültepe weights.

9. Weights and weight practices are being studying in detail by F. Kulakoğlu and myself. The archives unearthed in 1954 (Kt f/k) have been studied by L. Umur; they belonged to Peruwa.

10. See as an example the famous letter sent by Anum-Hirbi to Warshama; published by Balkan 1957, 6–9; Michel 2001, No. 62; comments by Veenhof 2008a, 48; Michel 2011b. This letter has been written by an Assyrian merchant who had received a scribal education. Note that the number "7" is written on three rows, as in the Old Babylonian schools, when it is usually written on two rows in the Old Assyrian tablets.

Religion

The Assyrian merchants settled in central Anatolia were attached to their gods, their religion, and worship. They took oath in the front of an Assur symbol that was deposited in a shrine or temple dedicated to the god. There was even a statue of the Assyrian god wearing luxurious clothes and jewels (for a description of the god's statue in the temple of Assur at Urshu, see *Babyloniaca* 6, 191; Larsen 1976, 261; Kryszat 1995; Michel 2001, No. 251; in press b). They buried their dead family members under the floor of their houses, with personal belongings and various objects to help the journey of the spirit of the dead toward the Netherworld (Veenhof 2008c; Michel 2008d). Among the material excavated in Level Ib graves, archaeologists found some objects showing styles and techniques unknown in Anatolia and that came from Mesopotamia. Among these we can mention a pig's head in agate with eyes in lapis lazuli (Kt 95/k 110; Özgüç 1998, figs. 6a–b, found in a cist grave in grids LIII–LIV/117–118), or a naked goddess made in bronze and wearing the Mesopotamian traditional divine tiara (Kt 82/k 110; Özgüç 1986b).

A study of the jewels, and especially the sun discs, offered by the Assyrian merchants to their gods, showed that these objects were made in Anatolia (Michel in press b). Assyrians appreciated Anatolian craftsmen's skills and ordered occasionally from a local goldsmith the construction of a golden jewel to be sent to Assur. Assyrians living in Kanesh could also dedicate the same type of jewels to the local goddess Anna. One may wonder why Assyrians who venerated their own gods as well as an Anatolian deity offered the same gifts? Even if they were faithful to their gods and cultic habits in a temple dedicated locally to the god Assur (Matouš 1974; Özgüç 1999), the Assyrians respected and worshiped the goddess of Kanesh, Annā. For their part, Anatolians could occasionally swear to a symbol of the god Assur (Dercksen 2008). All this underscores the reciprocal borrowings between the communities in the lower city (Michel 2010a).

Relationships between Assyrians and Anatolians: A Dynamic Overview

The previous paragraphs have shown that the trade diaspora model to characterize the Assyrian *kārum* in Anatolia appears to be inaccurate on some points. Indeed, this model was based on a static view of the Assyrian settlement at Kanesh. There was, however, an important evolution in the relationships between the two communities over the two centuries covered by Levels II and Ib; this evolution is well described by the many recent studies based on family archives (Veenhof 1982; Dercksen 2002; Michel 2010a, 2011a; Barjamovic, Hertel, and Larsen 2012).

Kültepe Lower City during the Level II Period

The very first Assyrians to settle at Kanesh, usually the eldest sons of trading families, came to Anatolia to represent their family firms; they left their wives and children at Assur. Their relationships with the local inhabitants were based mainly on commercial interests. They were not necessarily from the wealthiest families of Assur, but they were often richer than the indigenous population. Thus, during the first phase of Level II, Anatolians acted as clients of the Assyrians: they purchased Assyrian goods for which they paid cash or established credit. Those who did not belong to the local elite appeared often in the records as debtors to the Anatolians, owing small amounts of silver, copper, or grain. The Assyrians returned regularly to Assur to take over their family affairs. After a few decades in Kanesh, they became quickly the major creditors in the lower city; many of them bought houses, which were large enough to offer room for those who had no pied-à-terre in Kanesh (Michel and Garelli 1997, 27–34). They could buy slaves or the commodities they needed, such as grain, oil, animals, or wool, on the local market.

As more and more Assyrians settled in Kanesh and in other Anatolian towns, the relations between the two communities changed. During their long stay in Anatolia, the Assyrians contracted a second marriage, most of the

time with an Anatolian woman (Michel 2008b).[11] This was done according to two rules: they could not have two wives with the same status (*aššatum* "main wife," *amtum* "secondary wife") and they could not have both wives at the same place. The Anatolian wives of the Assyrian merchants stayed at home in Kanesh, bringing up their children, taking care of the household, and had agricultural tasks, while their husbands were travelling and trading inside Anatolia and sometimes to Assur where their Assyrian wives were waiting for them. When the Assyrians went to retire at Assur, they left their Anatolian wives and drew up a divorce contract: the women kept the house in which they lived, the furniture, and received some financial compensation.

In a further stage, Assyrian women came with their husbands and brought up their children in Kanesh. Several Anatolians living in the lower city gradually climbed upwards on the social scale through the business they had with the Assyrians, sometimes acting as creditors for them. Some of them, like Enisharu, integrated Assyrian families by choosing their spouses among the Assyrian community (Veenhof 1978). Certain Assyrian widows married Anatolians, attracted by the fact that, in the Anatolian tradition, man and woman were equal in law once they married. Among the houses excavated in Level II and identified as belonging to Anatolian merchants, there are huge houses in which were a large number of rooms. The house of Peruwa—a man active in KEL 96, some forty years before the end of Kültepe lower city Level II—was built over 224 square meters and was divided into fourteen rooms. Slightly smaller, the house of Shuppiahshu covered 130 square meters spread over eight rooms (T. Özgüç 1959, 92–94, fig. 50; Michel 2011b). In general, the Anatolians who left archives appear as quite wealthy: owner of a village, allied to Assyrians by means of a family link (mixed marriage), or bearing important cultic functions.

During Level II, contacts between Assyrians and Anatolians thus exceeded commercial relations, and with the growth of mixed marriages, acculturation increased in the Kültepe lower city community; in several families, brothers and sisters bore Assyrian as well as Anatolian names.

Kültepe Lower City Level Ib Period

The Assyrian population of Kanesh decreased perceptibly during the second half of the nineteenth century (at the end of the Level II; Barjamovic, Hertel, and Larsen [2012, 55–73] observed that many of the important Assyrian merchants disappeared from the archives some twenty years before the end of Level II); nevertheless, long-distance trade continued with Assur. According to the royal archives discovered at Mari and dating to the first half of the eighteenth century BCE, huge Assyrian caravans of three hundred donkeys still travelled to Anatolia, crossing the Upper Jezirah (*ARMT* 26/2 432). Assyrian investors in Assur and owners of accounts at the *bēt kārim* in Kanesh still made profits from the trade. But other Assyrian merchants, more and more involved in the local copper and wool trade, seem to have lost contact with Assur and became impoverished.

Level Ib treaties concluded with the ruler of Kanesh during the second half of the eighteenth century and with Hahhum dignitaries, make a distinction between the Assyrians who were settled in Kanesh (*wašbūtum*), and those still involved in the caravan trade with Assur (*ālikū ša harrān ālim*; Günbattı 2004; Veenhof 2008a, 183–218; Barjamovic, Hertel, and Larsen 2012, 73–80). These sworn agreements witness a different situation than during the former period. During Level II, Anatolian rulers had to "wash the debts" of the local population who were transformed as debt-slaves working for the Assyrians. During Level Ib, specific clauses take care to protect strongly indebted Assyrians whose households were detained by Kaneshites, *hapīrū*, or the local prince (Veenhof 2008a, 147–82). When the *ālikū ša harrān ālim* Assyrians left Kanesh because of a deteriorated political situation in Anatolia, the few Assyrians immersed in a hybrid Assyrio-Anatolian community definitively lost contact with their mother city and their cultural identity: writing disappeared from Anatolia during this century.

11. In the first Greek colonies, we observe as well the phenomenon of mixed marriages after one or two generations. See Esposito and Zurbach 2010.

Conclusion

The Old Assyrian *kārum*s in Anatolia, are arguably unique, and their designation by the word "colonies" is not satisfactory, as this term denotes some kind of domination of a state over a foreign territory. Note that some English dictionaries give a much more wider definition for "colony" in modern applications: "A settlement in a new country; a body of people who settle in a new locality, forming a community subject to or connected with their parent state; the community so formed, consisting of the original settlers and their descendants and successors, as long as the connection with the parent state is kept up" (OED). Such a definition could fit the first phase of the Assyrian *kārum* in Kanesh, but seems less appropriate for the time where mixed marriages developed between the two communities. We observe cultural transmissions both ways, which could be a sign of acculturation.

At least, we have shown that the trade-diaspora model is not completely appropriate to the situation since there is over time no strong distinctive cultural identity of the Assyrians settled in Anatolia. A dynamic view over two centuries of the Assyrian settlement at Kanesh—as well presumably in the other Assyrian *kārum*s and *wabartum*s throughout Anatolia—shows a significant evolution of the relations between Assyrian and Anatolian communities, and even, if considering the extremes, an inversion of the relations from creditors to debtors and vice versa.

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