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Anatolian Studies, Vol. 6, Special Number in Honour and in Memory of Professor John Garstang.
(1956), pp. 87-94.

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SOME EARLY ANATOLIAN SHRINES

By WINIFRED LAMB

THERE ARE AS yet no temples in Western Anatolia prior to the first millennium ; no counterparts for the Hittite temples further east. This may be an illusion which further discoveries will dispel, but more probably it is because the west had not yet been brought into contact with the architects and religions which influenced their eastern neighbours. Crete, Greece and the islands built no temples either in those early days : shrines, principally in palaces or private houses, were used for worship instead.¹ There were undoubtedly shrines, as opposed to temples, in Anatolia as well ; mostly from private houses, some better authenticated than others, differing in character according to time and place. It may be useful to review the evidence for shrines both in the western and the eastern regions, though with more emphasis on the former, to deduce as much as we can about their nature, and to decide which of them have acceptable claims.

The first building for consideration is an oblong room at Mersin.² Erected in the Early Chalcolithic Period, Level XX, it survived into the succeeding Middle Chalcolithic Period represented by Level XIX. This survival, together with certain unusual features in the structure and the possibility of a connection with a walled approach, indicated that it was important. Hence the tentative conjecture, on the excavator's part, that it may have been a shrine : an attractive theory in spite of the absence of obviously votive objects inside.

To the second half of the third millennium belongs Room 8 at Kusura³ : a date between 2400 and 2100 would satisfy most chronological schemes. This room, over 6 m. long and entered from a passage, seems to be part of a larger house. It was called a shrine because of its privacy and the presence, near one end, of a short cylindrical terracotta object, plastered at the sides and with traces of burning at the top. This cylinder measured 30 cm. across, and the traces of burning formed a black ring which did not reach either the sides or the centre of the surface : if a post had stood there, the rim would have been blackened too ; moreover, posts supported on bases were hardly if at all used in this stage of the settlement. Have we, then, a small altar for burnt offerings ? A dozen vases, complete or nearly so, lay scattered on the floor ; also a seal ; and a terracotta idol was recovered from a cavity in the wall.

There is another " altar " at Alişar,⁴ belonging to the same period, similar in shape, and with a slight depression in the centre, which was

¹ Also peak sanctuaries. For the Cretan material, see N. Platon, *Κρητικά Χρονικά*, V, pp. 96 ff. ; VIII, pp. 428 ff., to which Mr. Hutchinson has drawn my attention.

² Garstang, *Prehistoric Mersin*, pp. 77, 104, and Fig. 59 on p. 100.

³ Lamb, *Archaeologia*, LXXXVII, pp. 224-6, Fig. 3.

⁴ *OIP.*, XIX, p. 36, and Fig. 37 on p. 37.

darkened by burning but not enough to suggest a fireplace. Only a small area of the surroundings was uncovered. Moreover, a very striking counterpart for the pair was revealed at Jericho a few years ago¹: a small cylindrical pillar which once stood apparently on a pedestal in a niche. Dr. Kenyon believes that the pillar may be a cult object and the room enclosing it a shrine, and this makes our hypothesis about Room 8 in Kusura more plausible. The Jericho finds were early Neolithic; a great space of time divides them from the Anatolian Copper Age; but a remote antiquity for primitive cults need not be surprising.

Certain rooms which were obviously shrines at Kültepe come next chronologically, and show features which may throw light on other places of worship, besides being of great interest for their own sakes. The two rooms which concern us were both built in Period I *b*, therefore between 1850 and 1800 B.C. or shortly afterwards.² Each contained an upright stone slab; a stele. One of them, in Area B, overlooked a stone trough intended for libations, and behind it was a heap of vase-handles³ which are thought to have been votive: there were other pottery fragments in the room too, and a four-handled jar. The stele faces north-west, tapers upwards, was worked smooth, and fixed in place by stones. In the succeeding period, I *a*, it was still standing, and, as Professor Özgüç remarks, its survival and general character recall the much later stele at Karahöyük, which will be referred to in a subsequent paragraph. The other stele, in Area A, had its base in a small square enclosure. Its upper part tapered, lower down it thickened to a rectangular basis, and it looked north-east. This room held tablets and pottery, and below the room was a grave with unusual contents, notably the remarkable ivory figurine of a goddess, which is already well known.⁴ So the stele may have been set up because the grave was there. If so its inclusion in this paper is not wholly appropriate, but for obvious reasons desirable.

Upright slabs, votive objects, and libations seem to have played some part in the ritual which the Kültepe merchants and their associates carried out in these domestic shrines. When we leave them and turn to the potential shrines of west Anatolia and a later date, 1400–1200 B.C., we find stelae or pillars still significant, votive objects, so easily removed or destroyed, not always present, the evidence for libations adequate. Stelae and pillars seem to reflect two distinct traditions, yet one wonders whether the same belief or symbolism originally inspired both. In any case, the pillars, which are small and unpretentious, appear to be descendants not only of the little cylindrical erections at Kusura and Alişar, but also of the one at Jericho. And it is at Kusura and Beycesultan, which represent a particular culture and the same district of south-western Anatolia, that this type is found.

¹ *PEQ.*, 1952–3, p. 72, Pl. XIX, 1.

² T. and N. Özgüç, *Kültepe Kazısı Raporu*, 1949, pp. 118, 120–1, Figs. 11, 22, 25.

³ They had been rubbed smooth as though used for polishing other objects: it is odd that they were chosen for dedication.

⁴ *Belleten*, XVIII, no. 71, pp. 385–7, Fig. 20.

The "pillar-shrine" at Kusura (Pl. V, *a*)¹ was constructed during the town's latest period and penultimate phase, presumably the thirteenth century.² Of its purpose there cannot be much doubt. On a mud-brick platform, and flanked by a higher platform, stood a terracotta erection facing north-east. Originally it was a column square in section, for the upper part had been broken off and lay near by, but the base of the back was reinforced by a projection which curved upwards. Stamped circles adorned the face, and a few appeared on the sides, the edge of the smaller platform being similarly decorated. Behind was an oblong block worn down along the top, composed of mud-bricks carefully white-washed. On the side of the column opposite the higher platform were the remains of one of those terracotta semicircles rather like horseshoes which were so often finished off with ornamental horned ends and may have held a vessel of some kind.³ A pile of seeds, fumitory and heliotrope, covered with potsherds, together with pieces of a trefoil-mouthed jug, lay in front of the column on the lower platform; beyond were more incomplete vases and the skull of an ox.

This shrine marked the highest part of the settlement, in a room or enclosure 4.7 m. wide, with its entrance at the north-east end: in its final state it seems to have been about 8.5 m. long. It cannot have been wholly open, for the terracotta and mud-brick were in too good preservation to have survived prolonged exposure.

A close parallel is provided by the shrines at Beycesultan.⁴ The best-preserved were found in the private houses of Level II, dating from the later part of the thirteenth century, though Mr. Seton Lloyd has noted one in the stratum below. His plans and picture show us the finest example, with its platform and pair of plastered projections running out from a screen or wall: they may have been the emplacement for an altar, as he suggests, or a fireplace, or the frame for a vessel. The column is there, too, small and square in section, but the ash containing animal bones which nearly covered it indicates a slightly different ritual from that at Kusura.⁵ So does the drain leading to a stone sink in the next-door room where a quantity of vases had been deposited, and looking like a channel for libations. Other differences in construction and equipment between the two sites come to mind, but they are likely to be more apparent than real because we are still uncertain about the exact functions of the items in the sanctuaries: we are liable to use the wrong names. Obviously the same pattern is fundamental to both places. Vases on the platform at Beycesultan included a trefoil-mouthed jug, a spit-support was at hand for roasting meat in conformity with local religious custom, and a terracotta "horn" resembling the Kusura ones was recovered from another part of the room.

¹ Reproduced by kind permission of the Society of Antiquaries.

² *Archaeologia*, LXXXVI, p. 12, Pls. IV, V, no. 4.

³ See pp. 100-1.

⁴ *AS.*, V, pp. 44-5, Pl. VI*a*, Fig. 5.

⁵ There was a small quantity of wood-ash above but not round the Kusura pillar, and some in the room beyond the platform.

It is still difficult to assess and explain those horns, and the issue is complicated because at Kusura they were variously shaped and, as the publication shows, used for finishing off little terracotta structures of several kinds.¹ The horns which merit their name best—and the Beycesultan piece was of that type—normally formed the upward-pointing ends of semi-circular fixtures like the one shown in Fig. 1. Therein they recall the more angular hearths with raised ends at Kültepe,² which always, Professor Özgüç informs me, had a raised centrepiece as well: see Plate V (c) and Fig. 2.³ Most were untouched by burning because

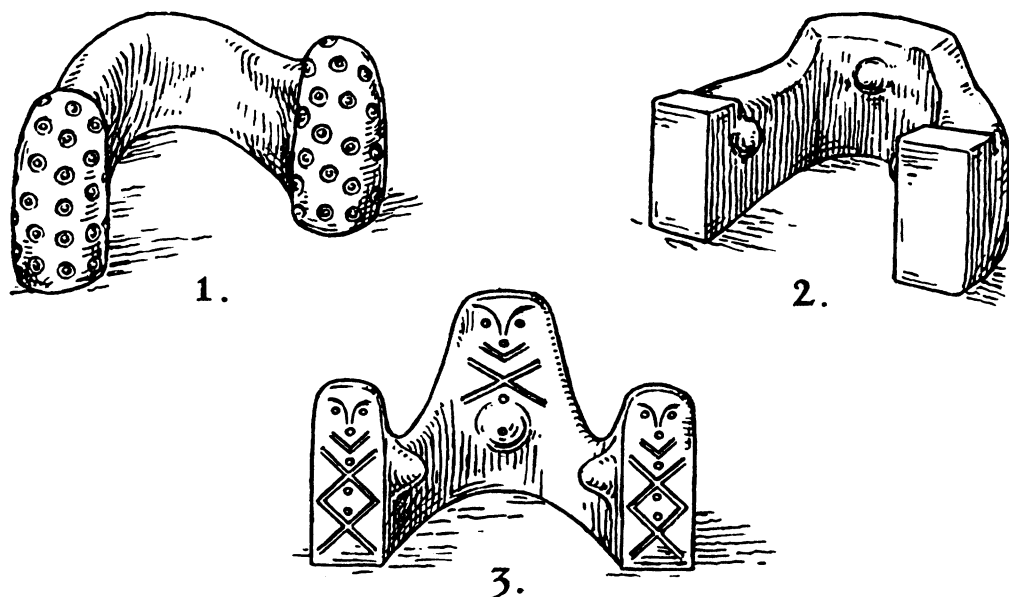


FIG. 1. Horns from Kusura, reconstructed.

FIG. 2. Hearth from Kültepe.

FIG. 3. Pot-stand from Tabara el Akrad.

(Acknowledgments, note 3 below and p. 94.)

they held only embers, which could be obtained from an adjacent oven or fire-pot. There are analogies older still. Over a thousand years prior to the heyday of the Kusura terracottas, people representing a peculiar culture in the Caucasus, north-east Anatolia, Syria, and Palestine made movable potstands in the form of a horseshoe or half-circle, frequently ornamenting ends and centrepieces with human features, as well as sometimes providing interior knobs in the Kültepe style (Fig. 3).⁴ Mr. Sinclair Hood has shown us how the potstands could be placed above fire-holes for cooking. One would like to think that the Kusura

¹ *Archaeologia*, loc. cit., pp. 37-9, Pl. V, nos. 3, 6-8; Fig. 17.

² Özgüç, op. cit., pp. 128-9, Figs. 27-8, 49, 51, 71. From the second level.

³ For permission to reproduce Plate V (c) and Fig. 2 I am deeply indebted to the Türk Tarih Kurumu and to Professor Özgüç, who has also most generously supplied the photographs. Fig. 2 is from op. cit., Fig. 27; Plate V (c) from *Belleten*, XIX, no. 76, p. 452, Fig. 4: a small hearth inside a large one.

⁴ *AS.*, I, pp. 139-140, Fig. 9, redrawn in our Fig. 3 by kind permission of our Institute and Mr. Sinclair Hood; IV, pp. 26, 30-31, and Fig. 3, no. 5.

semicircles were also connected with hearths, but those found in 1935-6, scarcely if at all smoke-stained, had no fireplaces near by from which embers could have been obtained, though two shapeless fragments close to the edge of ashy depressions serve as a warning against hasty generalizations. The suggestion made above that the objects under review could have held ritual or other vessels is maybe supported by the fact that the originally trefoil group, Plate V (b), with its attendant trough, would have served the purpose handsomely.¹

Some horns and terracotta erections were, as we have seen, associated at Kusura and Beycesultan with shrines. And, even without that association, we would inevitably have been reminded of the horns of consecration that were cult objects in other lands. Professor Mallowan has assembled and discussed the evidence concerning them with reference to an early pair from Brak of about 3000 B.C., drawing our attention to the oriental origin of various Minoan cults and beliefs.² He mentions the Kusura horns; and we, turning from them to the column in the shrine there, notice that its side view, which displays the curved support, is very like the familiar Minoan symbol cut in half.³ The symbol in question may, therefore, have influenced the makers of the column, even if we assume that its real ancestors were the short pillars described on pp. 87-8. The smaller Kusura terracottas too Professor Mallowan regards as ultimately derived from oriental prototypes.⁴

The new evidence from Beycesultan certainly supports the theory of a religious interpretation for most of our phenomena, and has shown once again that it was a prevalent custom to provide private houses with places of worship. As to their equipment, Beycesultan and Kusura appear as recipients of an old eastern tradition which in Crete had been given fresh life and a more vivid expression. Between them and Crete there is thus a link, but it is not from remains so late chronologically that we can assess its nature, and Beycesultan itself may soon throw further light on the relation of Crete to western Asia Minor in the earlier half of the second millennium.

Two other possible sanctuaries in the west await description. Both are at Troy, and, since an excavator as cautious and judicious as Professor Blegen submits their claims, we feel that they are already well recommended. Distant from the homeland of the Beycesultan-Kusura cultures, far more remote from Kültepe and four or five hundred years younger, they have nevertheless definite affinities with the Cappadocian

¹ *Archaeologia*, loc. cit., p. 37, Pl. V, no. 6. Reproduced by kind permission of the Society of Antiquaries.

² *Iraq*, IX, p. 184. Some useful references will also be found in A. B. Cook, *Zeus* III, p. 1091.

³ It is of course conceivable that there was originally a twin piece at Kusura, on the opposite side of the higher platform; but no traces were observed, and it would have been very near the lower platform's side.

⁴ Comparable material from Anatolia is referred to by Professor Mallowan and Mr. Sinclair Hood, *Iraq*, IX, loc. cit., and *AS.*, I, loc. cit. Add Arik, *Belleten*, VIII, no. 29, p. 353. Mr. Hood's careful segregation of the "andiron" types should be noted.

site because stelae are either directly or indirectly involved. How stelae played a significant part at Beycesultan itself is described by Mr. Seton Lloyd on pp. 116-7.

In Troy we are no longer concerned with dwelling places but with something more official: the entrance to the sixth city and one of its towers, attributed to the late fourteenth century.¹ It was evident that Tower VI i had a special importance, that both its inside and its outside were holy ground. Just in front of its outer wall was a row of four oblong monoliths which, though subsequently truncated, were originally much taller, but served no structural or decorative purpose. Inside the tower was a room containing a platform of stones surrounding a large block, whereon two circular marks may, Professor Blegen surmises, have been left by the supports of a table for offerings. The arguments which he advances in favour of the religious character of monoliths and tower-chamber carry conviction; they are now reinforced by Mr. Seton Lloyd's discoveries at Beycesultan; and they gain yet more weight if we accept the Professor's conjectural explanation of another building, which had its opening opposite the tower's east wall.

This building is the Anta House.² Long and narrow, and situated just beyond the town wall, it might have been interpreted as a guard-house were not there signs of use in a different way. Traces of burning too extensive to have come from a hearth and not consistent with a general conflagration were found within, while in the earth below ten or more strata indicated that a continuous tradition of lighting fires had existed ever since the early phases of Troy VI and before the Anta House was built. Professor Blegen is, therefore, inclined to believe that here we have a shrine on a sacred spot where a cult had been established long before any enclosure was made: that cult can scarcely have been unconnected with the beliefs attached to the stelae and tower just across the way.

Last on our list comes the room which may be a chapel at Boğazköy³: last not by reason of its date, which must be the fourteenth or thirteenth century, but because it has not much in common with the western shrines hitherto described. Votive objects were indeed present. A heap of mussel shells on the floor has, as Dr. Bittel reminds us, parallels at other sites, and a pile of plates and jugs, together with some other vases which lay scattered about, could only have been made for dedication because they were, with few exceptions, too irregular for practical purposes. Libation seems also to have formed part of the ritual, since a conduit for carrying off liquid had its opening in one of the walls. The central position of the room containing these things, and the fact that its floor was 1.5 m. lower than floors elsewhere in the building gave further grounds for its identification. The alternative would be to associate it

¹ Blegen, *Troy*, III, pp. 95-100, Figs. 35, 37, 47-51, 55, 451, 452. For the date, see pp. 20, 112, and the observations on p. 99.

² *Op. cit.*, pp. 249-254, Figs. 152-4, 156, 164, 451, 471.

³ Bittel and Naumann, *Boğazköy-Hattuša*, 1931-1939, I, pp. 59-61, Plan 4, Pls. 28-9, Fig. 13.

with a grave-cult, since an adjoining chamber held a stele, not in its original position, of Tudhaliyas III or IV. A third room produced two small terracotta idols, rarities in Boğazköy during the Hittite empire, proof that the faiths of the primitive people were not forgotten amid the organized and elaborate religion of a great city.

A fairly large number of potential shrines has now been presented for inspection: each has an independent claim for acceptance, and nearly all those claims would seem to have been established. Moreover, instances which taken singly might have been doubtful receive confirmation from analogous remains produced by fresh excavations. An encouraging thought for excavators.

The mythological aspect of the sanctuaries and their furnishings, theories as to their origins, counterparts which might be found in other lands, are all beyond the scope of this paper. How ancient those origins must be is shown by the cylindrical pedestal from Jericho: how curious the manifestations of the stelae could become by the newly discovered series from Hazor.¹ Survivals of familiar types in later periods might also be recorded; and one, from south-eastern Anatolia, recalls the stele and trough at Kültepe so vividly that it must not be omitted. It is the inscribed slab from Karahöyük near Elbistan² with a trough before it, found by Professor Özgüç in 1947 and mentioned above on p. 88. The inscription as well as the stratigraphy date it to the years not long after 1200 B.C. Particularly interesting is the reverence with which it was treated by a subsequent generation: men presumably ignorant of the stone's history and the rites which had once centred round it, who were faced with the necessity of rebuilding their homes on the soil beside it which had gradually become much higher. An awkward situation. The stone was a holy thing; one would not dare to remove it; but by means of walls and carefully-packed earth one might respectfully preserve and bury it, making sure that no dwelling-place should ever lie just above. And that was what they did.

Thus Karahöyük and still more the other places we have reviewed strengthen the impression which Anatolian archaeology so often leaves on its devotees: an impression of long memories, slow changes, deep-rooted conservatism. Symbols that had a significance during the third millennium were still venerated throughout the comparatively civilized centuries of the second, still recognized in the stormy period which followed, even though those symbols had come to mean something different. As to what that meaning was we can only speculate. We can never be really sure of the concepts in the minds of the people who erected pillars and stelae, burned or poured offerings, dedicated pots, shells, and seeds in their attempts to propitiate the unseen.

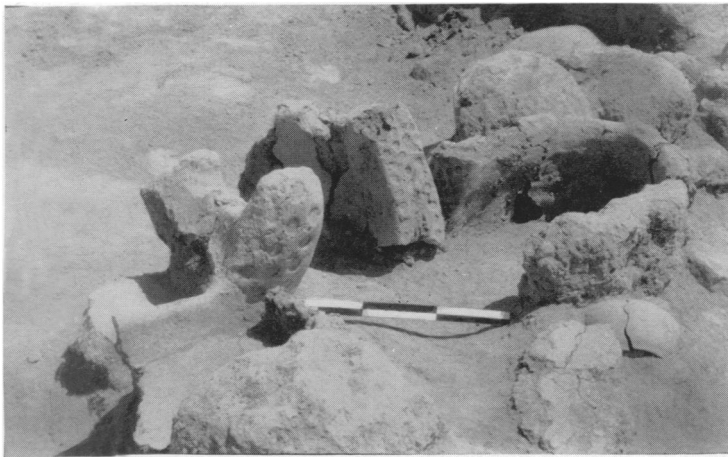
¹ *ILN.*, 14th April, 1956, pp. 298-301, Figs. 10, 11, 14, 16.

² T. and N. Özgüç, *Karahöyük Hafriyatı Raporu*, pp. 69-72, 102-3, Pls. VI, VIII-X.

Acknowledgments.—I would like to express warm thanks to Professor Tahsin Özgüç for giving me information on points connected with Kültepe : my debt to him and to the Türk Tarih Kurumu in connection with Pl. V *c* and Fig. 2 is recorded on p. 100, n. 3. I am also deeply grateful to Mr. Seton Lloyd for help and information on the Beycesultan material, to the Society of Antiquaries for kind permission to reproduce Pl. V *a* and *b*, and to our Institute and Mr. Sinclair Hood for Fig. 3. For the drawings I am indebted to Miss Fremantle.



(a) Shrine at Kusura.



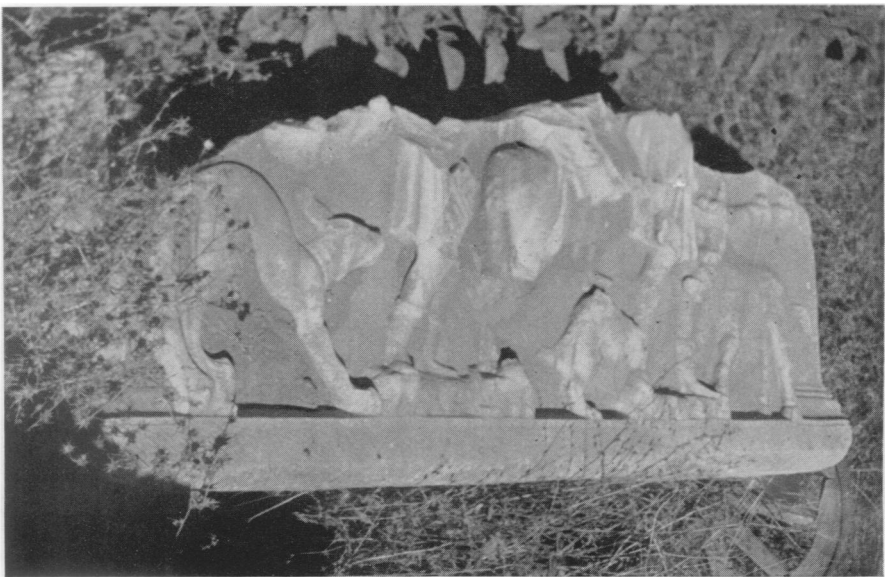
(b) Horned erections at Kusura.



(c) Hearths at Kültepe.



(a) Altar and Rock-carving in the Kara Dag.



(b) Classical Sarcophagus at Mutalip.