

## NEW EVIDENCE FROM ANATOLIA REGARDING BULL-LEAPING SCENES IN THE ART OF THE AEGEAN AND THE NEAR EAST

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During a regional survey conducted in 1997 in the province of Çorum an Early Hittite period site was identified at a spot known as Hüseyindedede Tepe, which lies approximately 2 km. south of the small town of Yörüklü in the district of Sungurlu<sup>1</sup>. Amongst the finds from the site was a relief vase that provides an important Hittite example of a bull-leaping scene<sup>2</sup>.

The vase was one of two vessels with relief decoration that were found, together with other Hittite vessels of various forms, in a room belonging to the Early Hittite period<sup>3</sup>. It constitutes, after the Inandık Vase, only the second complete example of a Hittite vessel that is decorated with representations of musicians, dancers and acrobats. The Inandık Vase and the other vase from Hüseyindedede have a total of four panels of figural decoration<sup>4</sup>. These frieze panels depict various scenes relating to a religious ceremony or festival, with the scenes arranged in order from bottom to top. On the present example, however, there is only one frieze panel, which has as its subject a scene of dancers and musicians together with a bull accompanied by acrobats<sup>5</sup>. The vase is of great significance for Hittite art and archaeology, being an absolutely unique find (Fig. 1a-c).

The figures on the Hüseyindedede Vase are arranged in a single row. There are thirteen human figures (Fig. 1b), of which seven face right and four left, while two of the acrobats are shown in the act of somersaulting over the bull, one backwards and the other forwards (Fig. 1c). The bull is also shown in profile to the right. The figures may be described from left to right as follows:

<sup>1</sup> The Çorum Survey was initiated in 1996 and remains an on-going project, directed by Tunç Sipahi and Tayfun Yıldırım. The important discoveries made in 1997 were communicated to Chris Lightfoot, who subsequently received our permission to publish a brief note about them; see Lightfoot, C., 1998. Excavations were begun at Hüseyindedede Tepesi in 1997 in conjunction with the Çorum Museum. The work revealed part of a building complex belonging to the Old Hittite Period. The excavations, like the survey, are continuing under the direction of Tunç Sipahi and Tayfun Yıldırım. This article was translated from Turkish by Chris Lightfoot, to whom I extend my sincere thanks.

<sup>2</sup> Yıldırım, T. and Sipahi, T., 1999, 435. The Hüseyindedede Vase has been restored by Tayfun Yıldırım while the drawings are by Tunç Sipahi. The vase is now in the Çorum Archaeological Museum (Inv. No. 1-1-99).

<sup>3</sup> The rest of the pottery found at Hüseyindedede has been completely restored, while only a small part of the other relief vase remains missing.

<sup>4</sup> This vase has also been restored and will soon be published.

<sup>5</sup> Sipahi, T., 2000 (forthcoming), where a detailed discussion of the is given.

1. A dancing woman, holding hands with another woman in front of her
2. Another dancing woman, holding hands with the woman behind her
3. A woman holding up a pair of cymbals
4. A man also holding up a pair of cymbals
5. A man playing a stringed instrument (*saz*)
6. A crouching man holding up a pair of cymbals
7. Another crouching man holding up a pair of cymbals
8. A man, standing, holding up a pair of cymbals
9. A man leaping off the ground
10. A man somersaulting backwards
11. A man somersaulting forwards over the bull's back
12. Bull advancing right
13. A smaller male figure holding the bull by the head
14. A man playing a stringed instrument (*saz*)<sup>6</sup>

The figures may be divided up into separate groups. Those of the first group, comprising figures 1-5, are musicians and dancers (or singers). Apart from figure 5, all of the figures in this group face to the right.

A second, larger group is made up of figures 8-14. Here the figures of the bull and acrobats are flanked by two musicians, one playing cymbals, the other a lute (Fig. 1c).

Between these groups come figures 6 and 7, the two crouching men playing cymbals. These figures, however, may be taken together with figures 1-5, in which case the frieze can be divided into two halves. To the left is a group of seven figures, male and female, who are musicians and dancers (or singers), while to the right are the three acrobats, the bull and its attendant, and two more musicians.

Whichever way one wishes to divide the frieze into groups, it is clear that all of the figures are participating in one and the same event, and the focus of attention is the bull with the acrobats, while the other figures engaged in dancing or making music are peripheral to this main activity. There is no reason to doubt that the scene created here by a Hittite craftsman represents something that he had either seen himself or knew about in real life.

The action that involves the bull and acrobats shown here is known from parallels elsewhere in the ancient Near East and the Aegean, where it has been given the general name of "bull-leaping". It is appropriate, therefore, to set the scene on the Hüseyindede Vase in the context of these other examples.

### **Bull-Leaping**

Bull-leaping scenes first became known to the archaeological world when examples were found in Minoan and Mycenaean art<sup>7</sup>. Ever since H. Schliemann found a fresco

<sup>6</sup> "Lute" in English.

<sup>7</sup> Evans, A., 1921, 248.

containing a bull-leaping scene during his excavations at Tiryns in 1884 the subject has aroused considerable interest<sup>8</sup>. Later, further examples of bull-leaping came to light in the excavations at Knossos; these included both frescoes and sealings<sup>9</sup>. A. Evans also found Minoan bronze objects that were decorated with figures performing acrobatics over a bull. By comparing these with the frescoes and sealings, he was able to interpret the scenes and prepare schematic drawings of them (Figs. 12-13)<sup>10</sup>. Further research was subsequently carried out by Younger, who added a third group of bull-leaping scenes to the types already defined by Evans and Sakellariou<sup>11</sup>. The groups are defined as follows:

Type I. The acrobat approaches the bull from the front, grabs his horns, somersaults backwards and lands feet first on his back before springing to the ground (Evans position) (Fig. 11, 12 and 20).

Type II. The acrobat again approaches from the front, dives forward over the bull's horns without touching them and then pushes himself off the animal's back with his hands to land on the ground with a backward somersault (Diving position) (Figs. 13, 17 and 19).

Type III. The bull-leaper is depicted suspended in the air above the bull, facing the same way as the animal. Sometimes he is shown clinging on to the bull's horns or back (The schema of the floating leaper) (Fig. 18)<sup>12</sup>.

The scene depicted on the Hüseyindede Vase bears some relation to all three of these type-groups, but amongst them it shows the closest resemblance to Type III. It cannot be ascribed to Type II, since the figure standing in front of the bull effectively prevents the acrobats from approaching and leaping over the animal from the front. Nevertheless, the acrobats in the present case are depicted in positions that correspond to those adopted by figures in both Type II and III.

Scenes that belong to Type III are found on objects that generally have been attributed to the Minoan period (Late Minoan IIIB)<sup>13</sup>. Various scholars, including M. Shaw, J.G. Younger, Hallager-Hallager and Morgan, have thus seen bull-leaping as a Cretan

<sup>8</sup> Younger, J.G., 1976, 1. For bull-leaping, see Niemeier; Wolf-Dietrich and B., 1998, 80 n. 122; for frescoes, see Shaw, M., 1996, 167 n. 3.

<sup>9</sup> Younger, J.G., 1976, 125. There is a considerable number of objects from the Aegean and Near East that show scenes of bull-leaping; they include wall-paintings, seals, stone rhyta and carved ivory. Here only some of the Aegean examples have been used for purposes of identification and comparison.

<sup>10</sup> Evans, A. 1921, fig. 5.

<sup>11</sup> Younger, J.G., 1976, 125.

<sup>12</sup> Younger concluded from a study of 17 examples that "all Type III would seem then to be a desired aesthetic trait"; Younger, J.G., 1976, 132. In such representations the leaper approaches the bull from the side in order to get on to his back. The Hüseyindede bull-leaping scene supports this conclusion and shows that it reflects an actual scene. On the other bull-leaping scenes the leaper approaches from the front and jumps over the bull.

<sup>13</sup> Younger, J.G., 1976, 136.

characteristic and have proposed that it is probably an activity associated specifically with Knossos<sup>14</sup>. Frescoes found at Tell El Dab'a in Egypt, excavated by M. Bietak in two buildings and dated by him to the 18th dynasty, have provided new evidence on the subject, for they include scenes of bull-leaping in the Minoan tradition (Fig. 14)<sup>15</sup>. Although they show Minoan characteristics with regard to subject, style and iconography, they also contain local Egyptian features. For this reason it has been argued that the frescoes were produced by Cretan-taught workmen rather than by Minoan craftsmen themselves<sup>16</sup>.

Apart from in the Minoan world, important discoveries concerning bull-leaping have been made in the region of ancient Syria. These have considerable significance for both the spread and the origins of bull-leaping scenes. A cylinder seal impression (Fig. 3) on an envelope found in the palace of Level VII at Alalakh depicts two naked male figures performing handstands on the back of a bull<sup>17</sup>. Between the two acrobats is an "ankh" sign. The seal is dated to the Old Babylonian Period (19th-18th century BC). A similar scene is represented on a seal in the Erlenmeyer Collection (Fig. 4)<sup>18</sup>. Two figures are again doing handstands on the bull's back, but here there is the addition of a larger-scale figure holding the animal by the horns<sup>19</sup>. A Syrian seal in the Seyrig Collection (Fig.5) has a somewhat different representation<sup>20</sup>. It shows one man stretched out face down above a bull; behind the bull stands a second figure with arm raised as if preparing to leap, while a third acrobat seems to be caught in the act of diving over the bull's horns. Another Syrian sealing (Fig. 6) bears a representation in the top left corner of a naked female figure bull-leaping, while a kneeling figure in front of the bull is drawing a bow<sup>21</sup>. Female bull-leapers are also known in Minoan and Mycenaean art. The seal itself is regarded by D. Collon as being slightly earlier than the Aleppo group of Syrian seals<sup>22</sup>.

A sealing identified as once belonging to Samiya, a servant of Shamsi-Adad, provides another example from Syria that has a bearing on bull-leaping scenes (Fig. 7)<sup>23</sup>. This seal is also known from fragments of impressions that have been found at Mari, Sippar and

<sup>14</sup> Manning, S.W., 1999, 104.

<sup>15</sup> Bietak, M., 1992, 26; Bietak, M. and Marinatos, N., 1995, 49; Bietak, M., 1996, pls. IV-VI A; Shaw, M. 1996, If 4; Collon, D., 1994, 83; Rehak, P., 1997, 400.

<sup>16</sup> Rehak, P., 1997, 401.

<sup>17</sup> These sealings are found on a fragmentary clay envelope in the Hatay Archaeological Museum, where they were studied by D. Collon; for their publication, see Collon, D., 1975, nos. 111-122; 1994, 81, figs. 1-2; 1982, fig.1/6.

<sup>18</sup> Collon, D., 1982, fig.1/7.

<sup>19</sup> D. Collon, in referring to these two seals, intended to show that bull-leaping was an Aegean phenomenon, but in fact she ended up by drawing the opposition conclusion. Moreover, despite the problem of dating with regard to the Syrian seals, D. Collon admits that they are about a century earlier than the Aegean examples. She also makes the following comment, which of greater relevance to the subject under discussion here: "*It is probable that athletes, together with musicians and dancing girls toured the countries of the Eastern Mediterranean and gave performances, possibly within the context of religious festivals*"; see Collon, D., 1982, 34.

<sup>20</sup> Seyrig, H., 1955, 34, pl. IV, 2; 1956, 173, fig. 7.

<sup>21</sup> Safadi, H. El-, 1974, no. 126.

<sup>22</sup> Collon, D., 1994, 82.

<sup>23</sup> Amiet, P., 1961, 6, fig. 8.

Tel Leilan<sup>24</sup>. The seal is divided into two horizontal friezes by an intervening central band of intertwined strands<sup>25</sup>. In the upper frieze one figure is holding a bull by the horn with his left hand, while in his raised right hand there is an object that ends in a crescent motif. His stance is, therefore, comparable to that of the figure standing in front of the bull on the Hüseyindede Vase. Behind the bull is another figure whose right leg is raised so that his foot almost touches the bent rear leg of the bull. This detail, too, may be compared with the pose of the figure that is performing a somersault behind the bull on the Hüseyindede Vase. It suggests that both figures are probably shown performing a similar action. The scene is repeated with minor differences on the same seal; the figure again holds the bull by the horns, but here the animal is shown kneeling. The seal is dated to ca. 1800 BC<sup>26</sup>. D. Collon attributes the bull scene to J.G. Younger's Type III but sees this Syrian representation of the "floating leaper design" as being more complete than the Mycenaean version.

Another example on a seal from Syria (Fig. 8) shows a naked male figure with arms raised running towards a bull. It may be taken as a rather schematic representation of a bull-leaping scene at the moment just before the acrobat leaps over the bull<sup>27</sup>. A somewhat different scene is depicted on another seal (Fig. 9); the bull-leaper is shown in mid-air above the bull's horns as if he is being lifted by them<sup>28</sup>. It may be regarded as a variant of the "bull-grabbling" scene that is known from the Aegean (Figs. 15, 16)<sup>29</sup>. Finally, on Syrian examples of bull-leaping one also finds a figure standing facing backwards on the bull's back (Fig. 10)<sup>30</sup>. His right arm is extended forwards as if he is about to jump. This may be interpreted as representing a different stage of the action shown on the Hüseyindede Vase.

In 1994 D. Collon rightly commented that there were no finds from the Near East that could shed any further light on bull-leaping<sup>31</sup>. Until now scenes of bull-leaping have been known from finds in the Aegean, Egypt and Syria. Although it has generally been accepted that in terms of date and origin the bull-leaping scene comes from Knossos, the examples found on Syrian seals provide some new insight into the subject. It has been stressed by one group of scholars that the bull-leaping scenes on Syrian seals are related to those found in the Aegean world. Bietak, Aruz, Shaw, Wolf and Niemeier all share the view that the Syrian seals are influenced by Minoan representations of bull-leaping<sup>32</sup>. It is thus generally assumed that such scenes were introduced from the Aegean. In 1930, however, A. Evans made the point that the origins of the bull-leaping practice could be other than in Crete and, drawing on the evidence of the seals, suggested Anatolia as a possible source. Zeuner in his 1963

<sup>24</sup> Collon, D., 1994, 82.

<sup>25</sup> Amiet, P., 1961, 6, fig. 8. P. Amiet completed the drawing of this seal by comparing with other, similar examples and filling in the missing sections.

<sup>26</sup> Collon, D., 1984, 82.

<sup>27</sup> Seyrig, H., 1956, 171, fig. 3.

<sup>28</sup> Seyrig, H., 1963, pl. XXI, no. 1; Collon; D., 1994, 83.

<sup>29</sup> Evans, A., 1921, 256.

<sup>30</sup> Seyrig, H., 1963, pl. XXI, no.4.

<sup>31</sup> Collon 1994, 84.

<sup>32</sup> Niemeier, Wolf-Dietrich and B., 1998, 80, footnote 122.

publication on domesticated animals studied the sport of bull-leaping in his entry of Cretan bulls and came to a different conclusion. He expressed the opinion that the Cretan bull sport had received its inspiration from Egypt<sup>33</sup>.

Now, however, the appearance of a bull-leaping scene in an Early Hittite Period context offers a completely new insight into the subject and firmly puts the spotlight on Anatolia. The Hüseyindede Vase provides important new evidence for consideration in the debate on the origins, development and spread of the bull-leaping tradition.

### **The Scene on the Hüseyindede Vase**

The following discussion will focus on the figures on the frieze that have been given the numbers 9-11. They are the ones that represent the basic scene that makes up the action of leaping over a bull. One figure (No. 11) is shown standing with his back arched and arms outstretched behind him on the bull's back. His feet are placed on the animal's hind quarters, while his face is turned skywards. His position on the bull most closely resembles that of figures in Younger's Type III<sup>34</sup>. Amongst the examples of this group the figure on the Zakro seal (Fig.19) can be seen to have adopted exactly the same position as the man on the Hüseyindede Vase, although another seal, in the Seyrig Collection, also stands as a close parallel. Neither of these seals, however, shows the acrobat's position as clearly and precisely as on the Hüseyindede Vase (Fig. 1c). Here the figure is static, poised motionless on the bull's back, even though around him the music and dancing that form part of the bull-leaping ritual clearly continue around him. There is, therefore, an essential difference in the way the bull-leaping scene is represented here.

No. 9 is further back behind the bull and is presented as taking a running jump at the animal with his arms held out from his sides. The closest parallel to this figure is on the *nandık* Vase<sup>35</sup>. A similar figure is also depicted on a fragmentary Early Hittite relief vase found at Bogazköy; his arms are outstretched while his legs are held together as he prepares to jump<sup>36</sup>. It is possible to recognize this position as representing the action of a dancer or acrobat participating in some form of performance or ritual.

No. 10 is shown immediately behind the bull. He is performing a backward somersault as he pushes off with one foot, using the joint in the bull's hind leg as his springboard. As stated above, this position finds its closest parallel in the action of the figure in the *Samiya* seal, where the acrobat raises his foot towards the bull's hind leg<sup>37</sup>.

<sup>33</sup> Zeuner, F.E., 1963, 229.

<sup>34</sup> The Aegean examples that show actual scenes are, according to J.G Younger, restricted to Types I and II. Those of Type III are in part a visual ending of the other two types. He also regarded the action depicted by Type III as a later and more artistic representation of the bull-leaping scene (Younger, J.G.,1976, 132).

<sup>35</sup> Özgüç, T., 1988, fig. 64 no. 5. The lower half of this figure is missing and, on the drawing, has been reconstructed by using the figure of an acrobat (no. 58) on the uppermost frieze on the *nandık* Vase.

<sup>36</sup> Boehmer, R.M., 1983, no. 28. These examples show that this position was regularly depicted in the same way by Hittite craftsmen, even though they must have worked at different production centres. Indeed, the arrangement and portrayal of the figures on relief vases show marked similarities despite their differences in style

<sup>37</sup> Collon, D., 1994, pl. 2/6. On Syrian seals with bull-leaping scenes the action of standing on the animal's back or of leaping over it is represented in a wholly symbolic way.

The three Hüseyindede figures (Nos. 9, 10 and 11) are identical in their dress and facial features. Taken together, however, they cannot be regarded as an artistic representation of different stages of a single bull-leaping action for the simple reason that the positions of the figures do not correspond to such a sequence. For example, the figure (No. 12) on the bull's back has his head arched forward and his legs bent back on its hind quarters, whereas the other acrobat (No. 10) has his head and body in the reverse position. The impression is thus given that the two acrobats or dancers are moving in opposite directions and are performing actions that, though related, are quite distinct from each other. Consequently, it may be argued that three different stages of a performance involving a man and a bull are depicted. A single dancer or acrobat, represented by the three figures (Nos. 9, 10 and 11), initially carries out some leaping or jumping movements on the ground beside the bull. He then mounts the bull and performs other exercises on the animal's back. In the schematic drawings produced by Evans (Figs. 12-13) the figures that are shown in similar positions to the two Hüseyindede acrobats achieve their bull-leaping over a moving animal. This is quite unlike the scene on the Hüseyindede Vase, where the figure appears to perform his movements around the bull and then take up a static arched position on its back (Fig. 1c).

It is a favorite technique in Hittite art to show a subject as a sort of comic strip with the same figure or figures repeated at different stages of an action<sup>38</sup>. H.G. Güterbock in 1955 first called this the "continuous style" of representing the principal figure of a scene<sup>39</sup>. The *nandik* Vase provides us with one of the best examples. On the uppermost frieze is a scene involving the sacred union of a male and female figure (a god and goddess), while the same figures are repeated again and again in various different actions throughout the lower friezes<sup>40</sup>. The same treatment can be seen on later Hittite objects such as the Schimmel silver rhyton<sup>41</sup>.

There are clear differences between the composition of the bull-leaping scene on the Hüseyindede Vase – with its group of dancers and acrobat on and around the bull – and the standard bull-leaping action that is regarded as being of Cretan origin. Here, to the accompaniment of music and dancing, acrobats appear to perform as part of some cult ceremony measured rhythmic actions on and around a motionless bull. Their performance, too, is in part dance, in part acrobatics. It is quite different from the Minoan representations, where the bull-leaping seems to be more of a sporting activity involving athletes standing on or jumping off the back of a charging bull. This, at least, is how the scene has been interpreted by western scholars<sup>42</sup>. The scene is thus seen as a demonstration of the athletes' daring and skill

<sup>38</sup> Clear examples for this tradition also exist in the later Hittite periods. The Schimmel stag rhyton has a scene on a single decorative frieze that depicts a figure making a libation to a god. The scene is shown in three stages. A metal vessel found near Kastamonu has on its upper frieze a hunting scene in which the various stages of the action – the wounding and death of the deer – are shown; see Emre, K. and Çınaroglu, A., 1993, fig. 23.

<sup>39</sup> Güterbock, H.G., 1957, 64-5.

<sup>40</sup> Özgüç, T., 1988, fig. 64.

<sup>41</sup> Opifcius, R.M., 1989, 360 footnote 23. R.M. Opifcius noted that the three figures on the Schimmel silver rhyton look very much alike, and so he concluded that they represent the same figure shown in different poses to indicate different stages in the action.

<sup>42</sup> Ward, A., 1968, 117.

(Figs. 17-21). But in some of these representations the bull is being held by the horns by an assistant (Fig. 11)<sup>43</sup>. In this case the animal appears to be a motionless, docile and domesticated animal that bears a closer resemblance to the one shown on the Hüseyindede Vase. Indeed, here the lines shown beside its mouth may be taken to indicate a halter.

If the Hittite scene took place in a temple courtyard<sup>44</sup> or in a cult room<sup>45</sup> as part of a ceremony to the accompaniment of a band of musicians with dancing and acrobatics, it would have been essential to keep the bull under tight control and to hold him in a steady position<sup>46</sup>. This would seem to be the function of the figure (No. 13) that is holding the bull (No. 12) under his control with one hand, while with the other he raises aloft an object of some sort. He is probably directing the dancers and musicians, and that the object in his raised hand is a baton or rattle with which he marks the tempo or signals to the performers to begin or stop.

The details of the this scene seen here for the first time in Anatolia on an object belonging to the Early Hittite period include new elements and are clearly different from the examples of the scenes known from the Aegean, Egypt and Syria. These variations can be summarized as follows:

1. The Hittite figure on the bull's back is shown in a static position, his legs apart, his head turned upwards and his back arched parallel to that of the bull, while the other two figures are shown performing other gymnastic-like movements around the bull, probably as preliminaries to mounting the animal in the same way.

2. Another figure holds the bull by a halter, while he raises in his other hand an object that seems to have some significance for the ceremony. No other example of a bull-leaping scene shows this feature; the closest one comes to it is where the bul is held by the horns.

3. The bull-leaping is performed before a group of dancers and musicians, and was carried out in a measured, rhythmic fashion, indicating that the action clearly had some religious significance as part of a ritual ceremony.

From the perspective of Hittite representative art the scene that includes the action on the bull's back appears as a totally new subject. It is true that surviving texts tell us that various dancing and acrobatic activities were performed at Hittite ceremonies to the accompaniment of music.<sup>47</sup> Music, dance, mime and athletics all played an important role in Hittite reli-

<sup>43</sup> According to F.E. Zeuner, there is no clear consensus of opinion about whether the bulls of Minoan Crete were domesticated or not. However, since they are usually depicted as being of the piebald and skewbald varieties, he concluded that it is more likely that they are domesticated since wild bulls do not have such dappled hides; see Zeuner, F.E., 1963, 229.

<sup>44</sup> The building at Hüseyindede in which the Hittite pottery, including the relief vases, was found is in all probability a cult building or temple. The excavations there are continuing.

<sup>45</sup> Alp, S., 1999, 1.

<sup>46</sup> In fact, in bull-leaping scenes the bulls are generally shown as moving; the "flying gallop" position is a characteristic common to Aegean, Egyptian and Syrian examples. In this respect, the present Hittite example is exceptional.

<sup>47</sup> Alp, S., 1999, 1; De Martino, S., 1995, 2668; Dinçol, B., 1999, 2.



gion and its festivals. It has been pointed out that these elements could have a Hurrian-Luwian origin. In 1995 H.G. Güterbock, while studying the *huhupal*, published a translation of part of the “Lallupiya Ritual” text (KUB XXV 37 + KUB XXXV 131 + 132)<sup>48</sup>. The document that explains the ceremony is a text of Luwian origin, and it also mentions songs in Luwian. That part of the text not covered by H.G. Güterbock’s article comprises nine lines, of which the first (KUB XXXV 132 Rs. III) forms a passage that could be relevant to subject of this discussion<sup>49</sup>. The tablet, however, is broken at this point and so the text is incomplete, but it appears to read “he (?) leaps and to the bull...” If this reconstruction of the text is correct, it would seem to describe an act that is similar to that shown in the scene on the Hüseyindede Vase<sup>50</sup>. In all likelihood the text makes reference to a scene that involves a bull dance.

The bull that figures in the ritual shown on the Hüseyindede Vase is, of course, one of the oldest animal symbols found in Anatolian art and religion. We find the earliest representations of bulls and actions involving bulls in Anatolia in the Neolithic Age. The famous wall-painting from Çatalhöyük<sup>51</sup> (Fig. 2) that shows a large bull surrounded by diminutive human figures has been taken to represent not a hunt scene but some form of cult ceremony<sup>52</sup>. The tiny figure shown on the bull’s back calls to mind the position adopted in some bull-leaping scenes. In addition, as they are arranged in rows, the other figures could be regarded as representing dancers<sup>53</sup>. The wall-painting may thus be the earliest example in Anatolian art of a ceremony in which an acrobatic or dancing act is performed on a bull accompanied by other figures that hold music instruments and weapons in their hands. The Çatalhöyük evidence certainly indicates that activities (perhaps of a religious nature) involving bulls were an important part of life in Anatolia as early as the Neolithic Age<sup>54</sup>. The fact that the wall-painting comes from a building that has been described as a shrine rather than a house emphasizes the importance and significance of such actions<sup>55</sup>. It also goes to prove that A. Evans was right in thinking that bull-leaping originated elsewhere than in Crete and that the custom probably had its origins in Anatolia<sup>56</sup>.

The bull continued to be an important feature of cult rituals throughout the Chalcolithic and Early Bronze Ages<sup>57</sup>. In the latter period representations of bulls indicate

<sup>48</sup> Güterbock, H.G., 1995, 63-9.

<sup>49</sup> Starke, von F., 1985, 346. This information derives from a search through publications about the Lallupiya text, which contains references, as indicated in Güterbock’s article, to dancing and music.

<sup>50</sup> The translation of this part of the text has kindly been provided by Doç. Dr. Cem Karasu.

<sup>51</sup> This wall-painting was found in the building designated as Shrine F V; see Mellaart, J., 1966, pls. LI/a, LIV/a,b.

<sup>52</sup> The other walls of the shrine are decorated with wall-painting that depict figures dancing around animals; see Mellaart, J., 1966, 191, pl. LXI/a,b.

<sup>53</sup> They may be taken to represent the earliest evidence for the (folk) tradition of dancing hand-in-hand around an animal. If so, this tradition may be traced back in Anatolia to the Neolithic Age; see Mellaart, J., 1966, 191 and pl. LXI/b.

<sup>54</sup> According to H.R. Cohen, this scene represents a depiction, in the guise of a sporting activity, of the act of domestication of a bull by separating it from the herd; see Cohen, H.R., 1970, 123.<sup>55</sup> Mellaart, J., 1966, 191.

<sup>56</sup> Evans, A., 1930, 205.

<sup>57</sup> Espinosa, M.S., 1998, 41; Arık, R.O., 1937, pl. CXC.

that the bull cult had reached a level of some considerable importance. Cylinder seals belonging to the Assyrian Trading Period frequently depict bulls in religious scenes. Gods are shown either around bulls or sometimes even standing on top of them<sup>58</sup>. On one seal of typical Anatolian style a naked man is shown on a bull's back. He holds the bull's halter as he kneels and performs various exercises. M. Matousová-Rajmová has studied the seal comparing it to representations of dance scenes and has identified the figure's actions as acrobatics<sup>59</sup>. Although the scene on this seal does not correspond exactly to any known representation of bull-leaping, it is nevertheless important evidence for the fact that dancing or acrobatic exercises on a bull's back may have a place in the Assyrian Trading Period. At the end of the same period we also find pottery decorated with depictions of bulls<sup>60</sup>.

The bull as the animal symbol of the Storm God appears frequently on Early Hittite relief vases<sup>61</sup>. T. Özgüç has emphasized that vessels of this type are ritual objects belonging to a bull cult used in temples dedicated to the Storm God<sup>62</sup>. Indeed, it is clear that the bull is one of the most common animal representations on other Early Hittite relief vases too<sup>63</sup>. For example, on the *nandık* Vase there is a scene depicting a bull sacrifice, while the panels on the other relief vessel found at Hüseyindede contain several bull figures.

## Conclusion

The action depicted on the Hüseyindede Vase that involves the acrobat on the bull's back should not be taken to represent a sporting activity. Rather, it would seem to be more correct to describe it as a "bull dance" that had some sort of religious significance. The origins of such a tradition, as indicated above, can be traced as far back as the Neolithic Age, for the same scene including dancing is found at Çatalhöyük. Luwian texts also indicate that the action of leaping onto/off a bull was accompanied by dancing and music. It would seem that this custom reached its most developed form in the Early Hittite period.

The questions and controversies surrounding the dating of the Minoan and Mycenaean bull-leaping representations have yet to be resolved. There are numerous different opinions and theories<sup>64</sup>, but the earliest dating for such scenes is provided by a sealing found at Knossos that is attributed to the time of Middle Minoan IIIB-Late Minoan IA<sup>65</sup>. In general, however, bull games or bull-leaping scenes only begin to appear in the New Palace period in

<sup>58</sup> Özgüç, N., 1965, 32.

<sup>59</sup> Matousová-Rajmová, M., 1989, 248, fig. 5.

<sup>60</sup> Özgüç 1983, 423, pls. 85, 2 and 86, 1.

<sup>61</sup> Boehmer 1983, 45-46.

<sup>62</sup> Özgüç, T., 1988, 52.

<sup>63</sup> The origins of Early Hittite relief pottery may be traced back as far as the very last phases of the Assyrian Colony period; see Özgüç, T., 1988, 53.

<sup>64</sup> Most recently, these views and ideas have been collected together by Manning, who evaluated them in the light of the most recent finds; see Manning, S.W., 1999, *passim*.

<sup>65</sup> Evans, A., 1930 (Vol. III), 218, fig. 149; Manning, S.W., 1999, 102.

Crete<sup>66</sup>. The wall-paintings that depict bull-leaping scenes provide a more secure date<sup>67</sup>. The example at Tel -El Dab'a in Egypt can be compared to Mycenaean frescoes from Crete and can be evaluated within the framework of the chronology of the Aegean world. But the Tell El-Dab'a wall-paintings in general can also be attributed to the beginning of the Egyptian 18th dynasty, thereby providing a link with the art of Crete and the Aegean in the Late Minoan IB period (or later)<sup>68</sup>. They must have been executed in the Hyksos Period, and so the Late Minoan IB period in the Aegean corresponds to the New Kingdom in Egypt<sup>69</sup>. The Syrian seals are dated to the 18th and early 17th centuries BC. This indicates that the seals, at least in part, pre-date the examples known in the Aegean world.<sup>70</sup>

The Hüseyindede Vase with its depiction of bull-leaping/bull-dancing was found in a building dating to the Early Hittite period. The fragments of the other relief vase found at the site are decorated with friezes that show a close resemblance in subject matter and style to the *nandık* Vase. A document about the donation of some property was also found at *nandık*; it has been dated to the middle of the reign of Hattushili I<sup>71</sup>. According Tahsin Özgüç has concluded that the *nandık*tepe temple was built either by Hattushili I or a single generation earlier, and that it must have been abandoned at the end of Hattushili's reign or during the disturbances that marked the end of the reign of Murshili I<sup>72</sup>. It is at least clear that the *nandık* temple site was not active for a long time. The Early Hittite occupation of Hüseyindede Tepesi is also single period; both the pottery assemblage and the architecture display a marked similarity to the material at *nandık* and indicate that it falls into the same time frame<sup>73</sup>. Moreover, the pottery from Hüseyindede finds parallels that found in Level 3c in the Lower City at Bogazköy<sup>74</sup> Level IVc in the Upper City<sup>75</sup>, and Levels IV-IIIa/b at Alaca Höyük<sup>76</sup>. As at *nandık*, the finds from Hüseyindede indicate that the site was occupied only for a brief period before it was abandoned. The Hüseyindede Vase may, therefore, have been made in the reign of Hattushili I and have continued in use into the period immediately afterwards<sup>77</sup>. So, while scenes of bull-leaping in Mycenaean art belong principally to the Late Minoan IIIB period<sup>78</sup>, in Anatolia this type of activity is most commonly represented on objects that date to the time of Hattushili I.

<sup>66</sup> Manning, S.W., 1999, 102. For a chronological table, see Rehak, P. and Younger, J.G., 1998, pl. XXV.

<sup>67</sup> Manning, S.W., 1999, 103.

<sup>68</sup> Manning, S.W., 1999, 117-18.

<sup>69</sup> Manning, S.W., 1999, 107, 109

<sup>70</sup> Collon, D., 1982, 34.

<sup>71</sup> Balkan, K., 1973, 57-8.

<sup>72</sup> Özgüç, T., 1988, 42.

<sup>73</sup> Özgüç, T., 1988, 12, pl. 28, 1 a-b, illus. 17.

<sup>74</sup> Neve, P., 1984, 70, fig. 7.

<sup>75</sup> Fischer, F., 1963, 129, pl. 49/409.

<sup>76</sup> Koşay, H.Z., 1951, pl. XLVII/illus.1; Koşay, H.Z., and Akok, M., 1966, pls. 105/Al.g.46, 106/Al.g.322, and 110/Al.c.359.

<sup>77</sup> N. Özgüç and H.G. Güterbock both expressed the opinion that the Kanesh documents indicate that the interval between Anitta and Labarna was shorter than previously thought. Their views have been accepted by Tahsin Özgüç, who consequently stated that the dating of the temple's construction can only be attributed to the time of Hattushili (Özgüç, T., 1988, 42).

<sup>78</sup> This date is given by Younger; see Younger, J.G., 1976, 136.

In the discussion set out above it was emphasized that the action involving the bull as depicted on the Hüseyindede Vase does not correspond closely to any of the types that have been defined by Younger. If we accept that the Hüseyindede scene belongs to some degree to his Group III, it has to be admitted that the composition that depicts the figure known as the floating leaper was created in Anatolia long before it found use in the Aegean. An alternative view would be to see the action represented on the Hüseyindede Vase as belonging to a different type of activity. In this case, we must take not simply the Aegean examples of bull-leaping for our typology, but those from the Near East as well, thereby adding a Group IV. The Hüseyindede Vase also provides evidence for the fact that representations of bull-leaping were known to various different cultural groups in the eastern Mediterranean from the beginning of the second millennium BC onwards. This popular motif, however, may have been rendered differently in the separate regions according to local customs and perceptions.

Thus, in conclusion, it is now possible to affirm that there existed in Central Anatolia in the 17th century BC an independent tradition of bull-leaping. It was probably of local origin and involved a ritual that may be more accurately described as a bull-dance<sup>79</sup>.

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<sup>79</sup> Compare D. Collon's comment that "If we are in seeking the immediate antecedents of Minoan bull-leaping outside Crete, then Syria must be a strong contender for this honour" (Collon, D. 1984, 84).

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Fig. 1a. The Hüseyindede Vase.

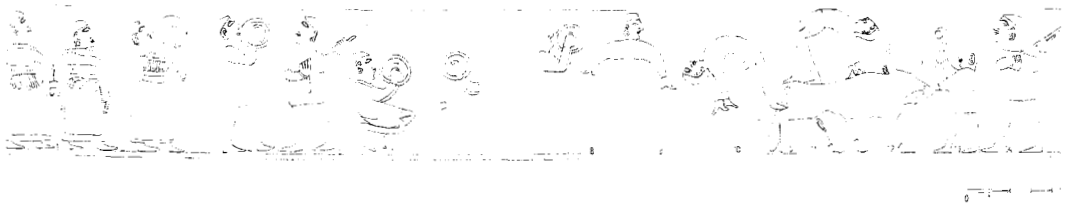


Fig. 1b. The frieze on the Hüseyindede Vase.

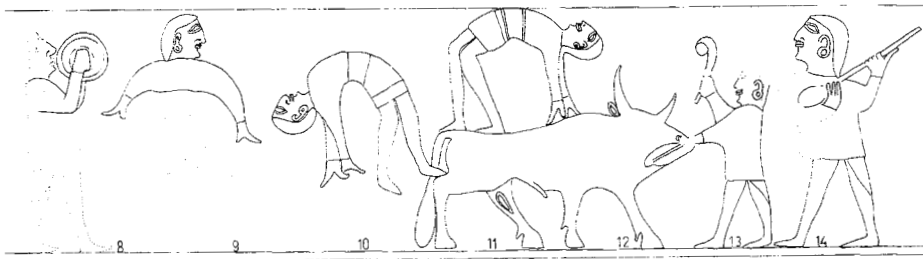


Fig. 1c. Detail of the bull-leaping scene on the Hüseyindede Vase.



Fig. 2. Çatalhöyük wall-painting (after Mellaart, J. 1996, pl. IVb).



Fig. 3. Detail of a sealing on an envelope found in level VII at Alalakh

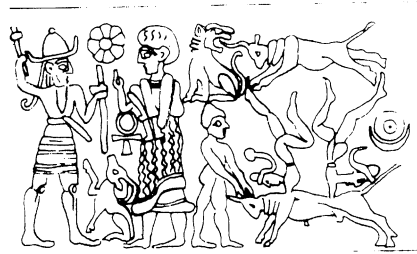


Fig. 4. Detail of a Syrian seal in the Erlenmeyer Collection (after Porada 1973, pl. XXXIV:2; Collon, D., 1982, 41 no. 7).

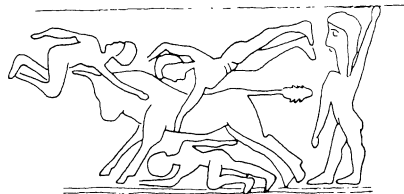


Fig. 5. Detail of a Syrian seal in the Seyrig Collection (after Collon, D., 1994, pl. 1/4). (after Porada 1973, pl. XXXIV:2; Collon, D., 1982, 41 no. 7).



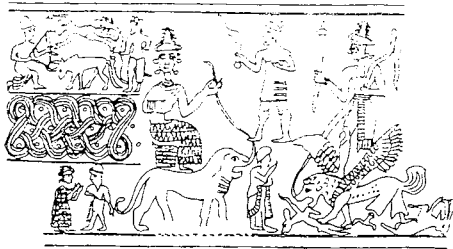


Fig. 6. Syrian seal, formerly in Munich, present whereabouts unknown (after Safadi, H. El-, 1974, no 126)

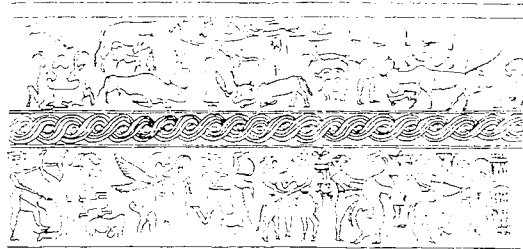


Fig. 7. Syrian seal in Paris (after Amiet, P., 1961, fig. 8).

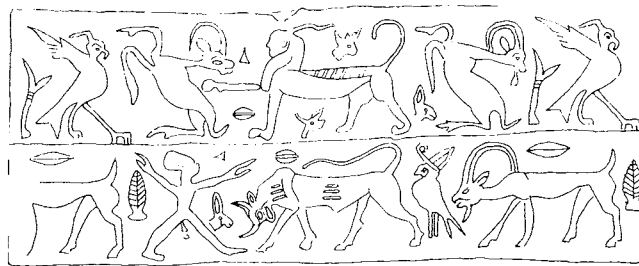


Fig. 8. Syrian seal in the Newell Collection (after Seyrig, H., 1956; 171 fig. 3).



Fig. 9. Syrian seal in the Seyrig Collection (after Seyrig, h., 1963, pl. XXI,1).



Fig. 10. Syrian seal in the Seyrig Collection (after Seyrig, H., 1963, pl. XXI/4).

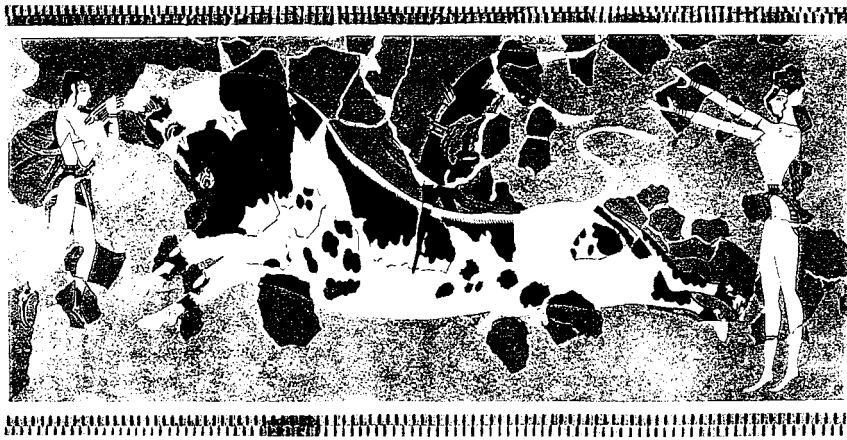


Fig. 11. Bull-leaping scene on a wall-painting, Knossos (after Evans, A., 1930, fig. 144).



Fig. 12. Schematic drawing of bull-leaping — Type I (after Younger, J.G., 1976, ill. 1).

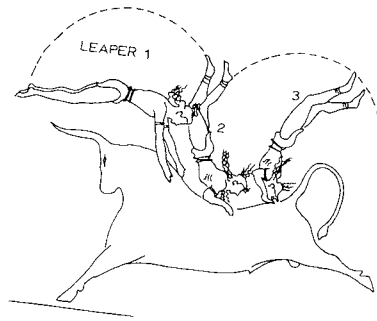


Fig. 13. Schematic drawing of bull-leaping — Type II (after Younger, J.G., 1976, ill. 2).

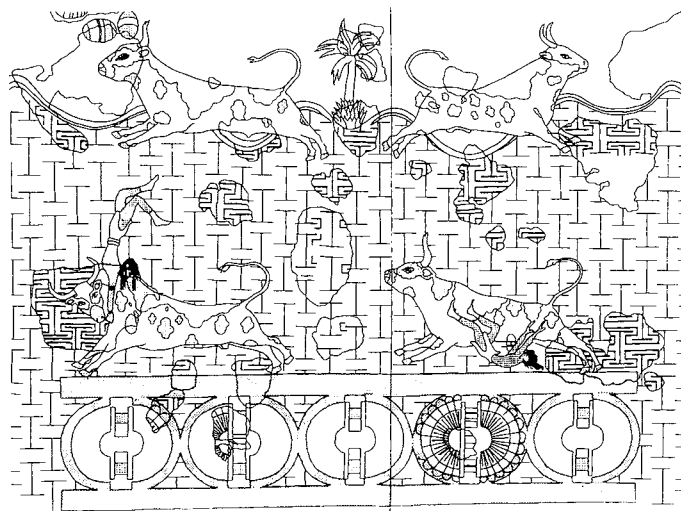


Fig. 14. Restoration of the wall-painting depicting bull-leaping, Tell El Dab'a (after Bietak, M., 1996, pl. IV).

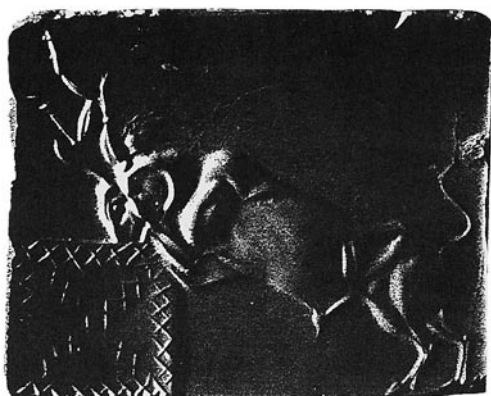


Fig. 15. Gem with bull-grabbling scene  
(after Evans, A., 1930, fig. 129).

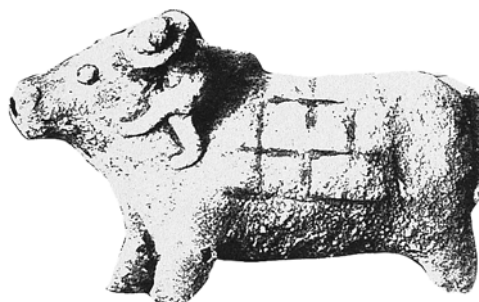


Fig. 16. Bull-grabbling rhyton  
(after Espinosa, M.S., 1998, illus. 3).



Fig. 17. Seal with bull-leaping scene,  
Minoan (after Matz, T., 1957, no. T 51)



Fig. 18. Seal with bull-leaping scene, Praisos  
(after Younger, J.G., 1976, fig. 21).



Fig. 19. Seal with bull-leaping scene, Zakro  
Hoard (after Evans, A., 1921, fig. 8; DN:11).

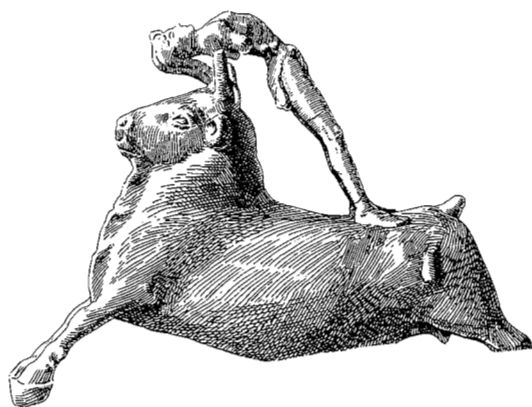


Fig. 20. Bronze bull-leaping figure from Crete,  
reconstruction drawing  
(after Evans, A., 1930, 248, Figs. 2a-b).



Fig. 21. Seal with bull-leaping scene, temple  
repository, Knossos  
(after Evans, A., 1921, fig. 6).