

# ANATOLIA AND THE JAZIRA DURING THE OLD ASSYRIAN PERIOD

Edited by  
J. G. DERCKSEN

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A general view of Kültepe-Kaneš in 2006. Photo by courtesy of F. Kulakoğlu.

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## PREFACE

This volume is based on papers presented at the symposium entitled “Anatolia and the Jazira during the Old Assyrian period”, held from 15-16 December 2005 in Leiden. It was the third of a series of symposia jointly organized by the *Netherlands Institute for the Near East* (NINO) and the *Department of Languages and Cultures of Mesopotamia and Anatolia* (TCMA) at Leiden University. The symposium and the present publication were made possible by financial support from these two organizations as well as from the *Research School of Asian, African, and Amerindian Studies* (CNWS), the *Leids Universiteits Fonds/Byvanck*, and the *Koninklijke Nederlandse Akademie van Wetenschappen*. Unfortunately it has not been possible to include here the papers presented by Tony Wilkinson “The settlements in the Jazira during the Old Assyrian Colony Period” and Sachihiko Omura “The extent of the Old Assyrian Colony Period in Anatolia”, and the part of Guido Kryszat’s paper that dealt with religion at Kaneš has been published in *AoF* 33/1 (2006).

Leiden, April 2008

J. G. Dercksen

## INTRODUCTION

Jan Gerrit Dercksen (Leiden)

The symposium “Anatolia and the Jazira during the Old Assyrian Period” offered a platform for specialists in the archaeology and history of the Old Assyrian and Old Babylonian periods in Anatolia and Northern Syria / North Western Iraq to discuss the impact of the Assyrian long-distance trade on this region during the first centuries of the second millennium BC. The exchange of information and ideas between archaeologists and philologists proved fruitful.

The richest sources of information for the trade as well as for Anatolian society are the documents in the Old Assyrian dialect that have been found in Anatolia and in the Jazira. In addition there are valuable references to the Assyrian trade in texts found at Mari. But even now the most important single source by far is the assemblage of more than 20,000 tablets excavated from the ruins of the lower city of Kültepe-Kaneš. The regular excavations at Kültepe were started in 1948 under the auspices of the Turkish Historical Society. At first they were conducted by Tahsin Özgüç and after his death, since 2006 by Fikri Kulakoğlu. Thousands of texts from Level II (destroyed *c.* 1836 BC) are currently being prepared for publication and will be available for research in the near future. The growing number of texts from Level Ib (roughly corresponding to the 18<sup>th</sup> century) adds to our understanding of this period in which Kaneš became one of the dominant political powers in pre-Hittite Anatolia.

All this evidence makes the Old Assyrian long-distance trade the best documented in antiquity, and it marks an unsurpassed achievement for any city-state in Ancient Mesopotamian history. The ongoing publication of documents increases our knowledge of the period, especially since they also contain the first direct evidence about Anatolia from native sources. The reconstruction of the chronology —Assyrian documents and those from Samsi-Addu’s kingdom of Upper Mesopotamia are dated by the year-eponym (*limum*) officiating in Assur— has been considerably advanced by the identification of the Kültepe Eponym List by Klaas Veenhof and the anticipated publication of an eponym list that covers the greatest part of the Level Ib period announced by Cahit Günbatti.

In addition to the texts found at Kültepe, Boğazköy, Alişar and Acemhöyük, written evidence from the Colony Period has now been discovered at Kaman Kalehöyük and Kayalıpınar in Central Anatolia, as well as in Tell Arbid in the centre of the Habur Triangle referred to in this volume by Jesper Eidem (Addendum).

The evidence from and about the Jazira will be found in the first part of this book, and articles on various topics concerning Anatolia in the second.

### *The Jazira*

The results of surveys in Northern Syria and NW Iraq, which suggest a marked contrast in the number of settlements in the Western Habur region as opposed to that in the central

and eastern parts during the first centuries of the second millennium, were covered by Wilkinson. The greater number of settlements in the central and eastern Ḥabur clearly is related to the Assyrian caravans travelling through this part of the Jazira. The perspective gained from the written evidence is discussed by Veenhof, Eidem and Guichard. Veenhof deals with questions of geography, in particular the area where the Euphrates was crossed and the caravan routes that connected the Jazira with Anatolia. Eidem discusses the evidence about Assyrian merchants at Tell Leilan, while that about Naḥur and a curious episode in the diplomatic relations between Zimri-Lim of Mari and a king of Kaneš are described by Guichard.

### *Anatolia*

In the paper delivered by Omura, he investigated the extent of the material culture typical for the Colony Period, with its distinctive red-slipped pottery. He classified the different types of mounds that exist from this period and gave an overview of these on the basis of his surveys in Central Anatolia.

The ancient geography of Anatolia is of great importance for the basic understanding of the historical developments as is shown in the contributions of Forlanini and Barjamovic. Although much progress has been made in the last decades by combining evidence from Hittite and Old Assyrian sources, ongoing or new excavations and newly available texts make it possible to refine current interpretations. Forlanini presents a comprehensive reconstruction by using Hittite and Assyrian sources. Barjamovic's unorthodox definition of the area of activity of the Assyrian merchants, placing the city of Puruṣḫattum much more to the West than hitherto accepted, has important consequences for the role of this trade within a much larger interregional network of exchange. The article by Dönmez and Beyazıt presents the results of surveys in the Central Black Sea region which may help locate ancient Zalpa.

The texts from Kültepe are written in the Old Assyrian dialect, but non-Akkadian words as well as personal names offer a window on the complex linguistic reality of the region. Goedegebuure offers a new interpretation on the relationship between Hattian and Hittite in Central Anatolia, whereas Wilhelm discusses the evidence in Kültepe texts for the Hurrian presence in Northern Syria. Démare-Lafont gives an overview of legal aspects of the trade in a historical perspective. A detailed analysis of the role which women played in Assyrian colonial society at Kaneš is presented by Michel. Pertinent observations on the use of writing in Anatolia by Assyrians and Anatolians are given by Kryszat.

## THE JAZIRA