

THE ASSYRIAN COLONY AT KANESH

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The Anitta Text mentions towns in Anatolia that King Anitta of Kuššara and later Neša (Kanesh) subjugated during the formation of his kingdom, which brought Central Anatolia under a single rule. These towns range from Zalpuwa-on-Sea to Puruṣḫanda. The same area was traversed by Assyrian merchants some 100 years before. Due to their presence we possess the earliest references to Ḫattuš and other cities in Anatolia.

The sources

Writing in Anatolia starts shortly after the beginning of the Middle Bronze Age. From approximately the middle of the 20th century until about 1725 BC, written evidence on Anatolia derives from clay tablets with texts written in the Old Assyrian dialect of Akkadian. These tablets share a distinctive form of cuneiform script and are called 'Cappadocian' or 'Old Assyrian'. The first label refers to the fact that the first such texts to come to light were sold in the Central Anatolian city of Kayseri during the 1870s and were supposedly written in a native, Cappadocian language; the second label describes the historical period in which they were written. Whereas the term Cappadocian is sufficiently neutral to be applied to all texts discovered in the region, it excludes material discovered elsewhere, including lands bordering on Anatolia, such as Ḫaḫḫum (located near the Euphrates in the vicinity of Samsat), or even some further away, e.g. Tell Leilan in Northern Syria. The label 'Old Assyrian' indicates that the texts date to the time of Old Assyrian Assur, from the end of the Ur III dominance over that city until well into the 18th century BC; it comprises the Old Assyrian dynasty, the reigns of Samsi-Addu, Išme-Dagan and his son Mut-Asqur and the restoration of Assyrian sovereignty under Puzur-Sin and other rulers. The label is somewhat misleading since it occasionally refers to the Akkadian dialect of the period and not to the ethnonym of the writers; in fact, the Old Assyrian dialect of Akkadian was also employed by Anatolians (or on their behalf) to write documents.

At present, texts (including inscribed clay bullae) have been unearthed in Kültepe (about 23,000),¹ Alişar Höyük,² Boğazköy,³ Acemhöyük,⁴ Kaman Kalehöyük⁵ and Kayalıpınar (Kp 05/120, by courtesy of A. Müller-Karpe). By far the most important site is Kültepe, more precisely the lower town, east of the city mound, where the main settlement (the Karum) of Assyrian traders in Anatolia was situated. Due to this circumstance our present knowledge focuses on the situation in ancient Kanesh. The time during which Assyrian commercial activity is recorded in Anatolia coincides with part of the period during which the lower town of Kültepe existed; hence the term Karum Period or Assyrian Colony Period is used for this epoch.

The chronological framework

The period of Assyrian commercial activity in Anatolia was one of unparalleled economic growth and cultural experimentation. The chronological framework for this period is based on archaeological and philological data from Kanesh and Assur. The stratigraphy of the lower town of Kanesh offers a rough, temporal division. It consists of five occupational levels. The oldest ones, Levels IV and III,⁶ did not yield any texts and the same applies to the most recent layer, Level Ia. Level IV is dated by pottery from about 2000 BC. The period of documented Assyrian involvement falls in Levels II and Ib, both rich in textual data and iconography. A further refinement of the chronology of this period is possible with the help of references to kings of Assur or elsewhere in Mesopotamia and to the names of year-eponyms of Assur.⁷ From King Erişum I onward, each year was indicated by the name of

¹ C. Michel, *Old Assyrian Bibliography* (Old Assyrian Archives, Studies I), Leiden 2003.

² J.G. Dercksen, "‘When we met in Hattuş’. Trade according to Old Assyrian texts from Alişar and Boğazköy", in: W.H. van Soldt et al. (eds.), *Veenhof Anniversary Volume* (PIHANS 89), Leiden 2001, 39-66.

³ J.G. Dercksen, op. cit.

⁴ Ö. Tunca, "Cylinder seal inscriptions of Šamši-Adad I and his officials from Acemhöyük", in: K. Emre e.a. (eds.), *Tahsin Özgüç'e Armağan - Anatolia and the Ancient Near East. Studies in Honor of Tahsin Özgüç*, Ankara 1989, 481-483; K.R. Veenhof, "On the identification and implications of some bullae from Acemhöyük and Kültepe", in: M.J. Mellink e.a. (eds.), *Nimet Özgüç'e Armağan. Aspects of Art and Iconography: Anatolia and its Neighbors. Studies in Honor of Nimet Özgüç*, Ankara 1993, 645-657.

⁵ D. Yoshida, "Ein altassyrischer Text aus Kaman-Kalehöyük", *Kaman-Kalehöyük* 11 (Anatolian Archaeological Studies Vol. 11), 2002, 133-137.

⁶ K. Emre, "Pottery of Levels III and IV at the Karum of Kanesh", in: K. Emre e.a. (eds.), *Tahsin Özgüç'e Armağan*, 111-128.

⁷ See K.R. Veenhof, *The Old Assyrian List of Year Eponyms from Karum Kanish and its Chronological Implications*, Ankara 2003.

the person who held the important but still obscure office of *limum* 'eponym' in Assur. Tablets containing parts of the eponym-list of Assur have been discovered in Kültepe and in Mari. An important text which provides most of the years of the Level Ib-period will be edited by C. Günbattı. All these texts together contain the sequence of year-eponyms from Level II and the greater part of Level Ib. Until recently, Level II was thought to have lasted some 70 years, from 1920-1850; whereas Level Ib was considered to begin at the time of Samsi-Addu and last about 70 years, roughly until the beginning of the reign of Samsuiluna of Babylon. Now it is clear that Level II lasted for about a century until its destruction in approximately 1836 BC. The earliest eponym mentioned in a text found in Kültepe is no. 47 from ca. 1928 BC. The city was rebuilt some time after its destruction and the occupation during Level Ib lasted until about 1725.

Some texts contemporary with the Level II-period at Kanesh have been discovered at Boğazköy, and others contemporary with the Level Ib period at Acemhöyük, Alişar (ancient Amkuwa) and also Boğazköy. Occupational levels from the Karum Period at other sites in Anatolia can be identified by the presence of a brightly polished red ware, often with a distinctive triangular handle.

The origins of the Assyrian presence

The Assyrian trade in Anatolia was already fully developed at the time when the first written evidence on it appears. Its history and the way in which Assur acquired a base at Kanesh have to be reconstructed with the help of archaeological remains and textual evidence.

The presence of Assyrian merchants in Kanesh and their activities elsewhere in Anatolia presuppose the existence of stable states with rulers able to provide the security needed for merchants to travel and conduct trade. The two (perhaps the only) technical advantages the Assyrians had over the Anatolians were their highly developed commercial skills and their ability to write. The political power the Assyrians were able to muster had its origin in their monopoly on the delivery of tin to Anatolia. The material culture of the Assyrians in Anatolia did not differ from that of the local population; their houses were constructed in the local style and they used the same pottery. It is only with the discovery of texts in a house that the identity of its ancient occupants can be established. In the absence of any text from Levels IV and III, it remains unclear whether Assyrians or other foreign merchants had already settled in Kanesh during those periods. The houses had a simpler ground plan and were built with cheaper materials than those of Level II,

which suggests a less wealthy population.⁸ It is often thought that the Assyrian trade with Anatolia as we know it began during the reign of King Ilušumma and was further developed under his successor Erišum I (ca. 1974-1935 BC). This is based on an inscription in which Ilušumma declares how he established the freedom of the Akkadians, a measure which has been linked to the economic opening of Assur to transit trade.⁹ Moreover, the office of year-eponym, thought to have come to prominence in the wake of the prosperity of the important families of the town and intended to somehow balance the power of the king, seems to start with the reign of Erišum, and he is indeed the first king of Assur whose seal impression has been found in Level II (case fragment Kt 83/k 246), although this does not necessarily mean that the sealed case stems from his reign.¹⁰ After an initial phase of small-scale trade, Assyrian merchants would have settled in Kanesh on a more permanent basis and spread from there to other parts of Anatolia.

Excavations in the Early Bronze Age levels at Kültepe, when the city of Kanesh was concentrated on the mound, brought proof for the thesis that the city had prospered during the last centuries of the third millennium, most likely due to its being part of the larger trading network that connected Babylonia and Syria with Anatolia during the Old Akkadian Empire period and the Ur III period.¹¹ Apart from pottery which shows evidence of contacts with Syria, a cylinder seal (Kt e/t 180), which by its legend clearly originated from Assur, was discovered in Level 11a from the EB IIIa period.¹² Whether an Assyrian had brought the seal to Kültepe must remain uncertain but cannot be excluded. It is possible that Assyrian merchants had already visited Kanesh before the Old Assyrian period.

⁸ K. Emre, op. cit. For the Karum Period, see also A. Schachner, *Von der Rundhütte zum Kaufmannshaus. Kulturhistorische Untersuchungen zur Entwicklung prähistorischer Wohnhäuser in Zentral-, Ost- und Südostanatolien* (BAR International Series 807), Oxford 1999, Band I, 80-82 and 165-173.

⁹ M.T. Larsen, *The Old Assyrian City-State and its Colonies* (Mesopotamia 4), Copenhagen 1976; J.G. Dercksen, "Die Stadt Assur als Wirtschaftsmacht", in: J.-W. Meyer/W. Sommerfeld (eds.), *2000 v. Chr. Politische, wirtschaftliche und kulturelle Entwicklung im Zeichen einer Jahrtausendwende* (CDOG 3), Saarbrücken 2004, 155-169.

¹⁰ See the examples collected by G. Kryszat, "Wer schrieb die Waklum-Briefe?", in: J.G. Dercksen (ed.), *Assyria and Beyond. Studies Presented to Mogens Trolle Larsen* (PIHANS 100), 353-358.

¹¹ T. Özgüç, "New observations on the relationship of Kültepe with Southeast Anatolia and North Syria during the Third Millennium B.C.", J.V. Canby et al. (eds.), *Ancient Anatolia: Aspects of Change and Cultural Development. Essays in Honor of Machteld J. Mellink*, Madison, 1986, 31-47. A. Schachner, op. cit., Band I, 95.

¹² See K. Balkan, *Letter of King Anum-Hirbi of Mama to King Warshama of Kanish* (TTKY VII/31a), Ankara 1957, 2, Fig. 12.

The trading system of the Karum Period

Whereas the origins of the Assyrian trade with Anatolia necessarily remain obscure, the system that functioned during the Karum Period is relatively clear. The city-state of Assur, favoured by its geographical location, had become a centre for transit trade. Caravans from the south transported high quality products of the Akkadian textile industry, while from the south-east, presumably from Susa, tin (*annukum*, mined somewhere to the north-east of Iran) was shipped to Assur. These products, together with smaller quantities of lapis lazuli, carnelian and other luxury goods, were purchased by Assyrian merchants and brought by donkey caravan to Anatolia, in particular to Kanesh, the main settlement there. These imported goods were traded for silver and gold which was collected at Kanesh, and the precious metals were despatched to Assur where they were needed to be reinvested in merchandise. The Assyrians are also known to have traded in copper and wool in considerable quantities over large distances in Central Anatolia; like their role in the trade in *perdum*-animals,¹³ these activities result from their position as cross-cultural brokers.

It was not only the merchandise, but also the transport animals (dark-skinned donkeys known as *emārum šallāmum*) and their equipment (including the pack-saddle and the bags) that were purchased in Assur. Detailed information about the assembly of a caravan in Assur stems from the so-called caravan accounts, letters sent by the representatives in Assur to the head of the Kanesh-branch.¹⁴ A typical donkey-load consisted of two half-packs with 65 pounds of tin each, wrapped in cheap pieces of cloth.¹⁵ The merchandise was put under seals until it was opened, normally in Kanesh. A quantity of unsealed tin was provided for the caravan leader to cover small payments en route for taxes and other travel expenses. The Assyrians had established settlements in the main towns on the caravan route and in economically important regions. The first group consisted of *kārum*-settlements

¹³ C. Michel, "The *perdum*-mule, a mount for distinguished persons in Mesopotamia" (2004), available online, www.svenska-institutet-rom.org/pecus/michel.pdf.

¹⁴ See M.T. Larsen, *Old Assyrian Caravan Procedures* (PIHANS 22), Istanbul 1967.

¹⁵ See J.G. Dercksen, *Old Assyrian Institutions* (PIHANS 98; MOS Studies 4), Leiden 2004, 278, with previous literature.

in Northern Mesopotamia and Syria, between Assur itself and the crossing places over the Euphrates; the second group was in Central Anatolia.¹⁶

After travelling through the Jazira the Assyrian caravans reached the Euphrates. It is known that there was a crossing by boat (OA *ilippum*) near Ḥaḥḥum, where the rulers of the city controlled the crossing point and were responsible for the safe passage of the merchants and their possessions according to a treaty from Level Ib.¹⁷ Ḥaḥḥum was also an important caravan stop, where the loads could be prepared for the journey across the mountains into Anatolia.¹⁸ Zalpa was also on the route coming from the East, and together with Ḥaḥḥum gave access to the main route to Kanesh. Another though less used route led through Uršu.¹⁹ Most caravans to Kanesh travelled via Timelkiya, Hurrama, and Šalaḥšuwa.²⁰

The Treaty with Ḥaḥḥum stipulates the right of the Palace to levy *nishātum*-tax and to pre-empt a limited number of textiles.²¹ A similar privilege was afforded to the Palace of Kanesh, where the *nishātum*-tax on incoming tin was usually at the rate of 2 to 65, and its right to pre-emption (*ša šimim*) permitted it to buy up to 10 per cent of the textiles at a discount price; this is well-known from the texts from Level II and features in a treaty from Level Ib as well.²² A caravan would be cleared by the local authorities after the

¹⁶ Attested Assyrian trading posts during the 19th-18th c. BC in Northern Mesopotamia and in Anatolia in alphabetic order (*k* = *kārum* 'colony'; *w* = *wabartum* 'trading station'):

Between Assur and Ḥaḥḥum: *Apum* (*k* II, *k* Ib), *Badna* (*w* II), *Buruddum* (*k* II), *Eluḥut* (*k* II), *Ḥaḥḥum* (*k* II, *k* Ib), *Nihriya* (*k* II), *Šimala* (*k* II), *Upi* (*w* II), *Uršu* (*k* II), *Zalpa* (*k* II).

In Anatolia: *Amkuwa* (*w* II, *w* Ib), *Durḥumit* (*k* II, *k* Ib), *Ḥanaknak* (*w* II), *Ḥattuš* (*k* II), *Hurrama* (*k* II), *Kaneš* (*k* II, *k* Ib), *Kuburnat* (*w* II), *Kuššara* (*w* II, *w* Ib), *Mama* (*w* II, *w* Ib), *Purušhattum* (*k* II), *Šalaḥšuwa* (*k* II), *Šalatuwar* (*w* II), *Šamuḥa* (*w* Ib), *Šinaḥnum* (*w* II), *Šupululiya* (*w* II and *k* II), *Tawiniya* (*k* II, *k* Ib), *Tegarama* (*k* II), *Timelkiya* (*k* II, *k* Ib), *Tišmurna* (*w* II), *Tuḥpiya* (*w* II), *Ulamma* (*w* II), *Ušša* (*w* II), *Waḥšušana* (*k* II, *k* Ib), *Waḥšaniya* (*w* II, *k* Ib), *Zalpa* (*w* II, *w* Ib), *Zimišhuna* (*w* II).

¹⁷ C. Günbattu, "Two treaty texts found at Kültepe", in: Dercksen (ed.), *Assyria and Beyond. Studies Larsen*, 249-268; see also Professor Günbattu's article in this volume.

¹⁸ P. Garelli, "Ḥaḥḥum. Un relais Assyrien sur la route commerciale de la Cappadoce", in: CRRAI 34, Ankara 1998, 451-456.

¹⁹ OAA 1, no. 18, 32-33: "If you are afraid (to go) to Ḥaḥḥum, then go to Uršu instead."

²⁰ For a recent discussion of Anatolian geography, see G. Barjamovic, *A Historical Geography of Ancient Anatolia in the Assyrian Colony Period* (PhD Dissertation University of Copenhagen 2005).

²¹ From Col. I (= III in the publication): "The *mušium*-official will take 5 *kutānum*-textiles and he will pay 6 2/3 shekels of silver for each, 2 textiles the son/brother-in-law will take and pay 9 1/3 shekels of silver for each, 1 textile the *šinaḥilum*-official will take and pay [x] shekels of silver."

²² C. Günbattu, op. cit.

donkeys had been led up to the palace, where the loads were checked and the taxes levied. Once the goods were cleared the caravan could descend to the lower town, where the owner or his representatives had their house and office. The payment for the textiles taken under the right of pre-emption was made through the Assyrian *kārum*-office.

It is important to stress here that practically all of the imported tin and textiles were destined for the Anatolian market; apart from isolated references, no imports from Assur were sold in the Jazira. The chief consumers were the local palaces in the various states and their magnates. The textiles in particular satisfied the tastes for luxury of the social elite and large quantities of woollen cloth were occasionally ordered to serve as gifts.²³

The place where the imports were sold was determined by the logistic possibilities of the firm and by the prevailing market situation, and several major economic areas can be distinguished in Central Anatolia. First of all there was the state of Kanesh, which was closest to Syria and Mesopotamia. Then to the north was the important copper producing region, with Durḥumit as its main trading centre.²⁴ Still further north was Zalpa (perhaps to be identified with İkiztepe), which probably connected Anatolia with the Black Sea region to the west. West of the Kızılırmak were the major cities of Waḥšušana and Puruḥhattum; the latter connected the Central Anatolian area with West Anatolia and the Aegean region and formed the westernmost limit of Assyrian commercial activity.²⁵ Different flow-patterns for goods are discernable: copper was brought from Durḥumit and towns in its vicinity to the main cities, Kanesh, Waḥšušana and Puruḥhattum. Silver and gold came from Waḥšušana and Puruḥhattum. The Assyrians had to sell their goods where other commodities were available in exchange: for copper this meant the region of Durḥumit, and for silver and gold it meant the west. Copper was not the ultimate object of the traders, for those of them who dealt with copper on a regular or large scale arranged for its shipment to the main cities, where it was exchanged for silver and gold. The Assyrians similarly engaged in the inner-Anatolian trade in wool, but on a smaller level. It can be as-

²³ A good example is the cancellation of an order of 130 textiles by an *alahhinnum* according to BIN 4, 45, see Dercksen, *Institutions*, 146.

²⁴ On this aspect of trade, see J.G. Dercksen, *The Old Assyrian Copper Trade in Anatolia* (PIHANS 75), Leiden 1996. For the evidence on Durḥumit, cf. C. Michel, "Durḥumit, son commerce et ses marchands", in: D. Charpin and F. Joannès (eds.), *Marchands, diplomates et empereurs. Etudes sur la civilisation mésopotamienne offertes à Paul Garelli*, Paris 1991, 253-273.

²⁵ P. Garelli, "Le marché de Buruḥhattum", in: K. Emre et al. (eds.), *Tahsin Özgüç'e Armağan*, 149-152.

sumed that some of the imported tin and textiles did not remain in Anatolia but were exported to neighbouring countries; similarly, some of the precious metals which were obtained as the proceeds of sales may have originated in the Aegean. This possibility is not surprising in view of the large distances over which the tin and textiles had already been traded.

An extensive network of larger (*kārum*) and smaller (*wabartum*) trading settlements, stretching from the copper mining areas near Durhumit to Purušhattum in the west, permitted the permanent stationing of representatives or agents in different parts of Anatolia and the development of friendly ties with the local palaces. As a result of this, the merchants in Kanesh had direct access to the necessary market information and this greatly facilitated the commercial operations. Some merchants aimed to sell their goods in Kanesh, either directly or by entrusting merchandise to an agent. Most of the sales were on credit, but sometimes, depending on the personal situation of the owner, payment in cash was demanded. The credit sales to agents account for many of the debt-notes that have been found at Kanesh, in which the debtor promises to pay a given amount of (mostly) refined silver (*kaspum šarrupum*) within a specified period of time. Frequently, goods were sent on from Kanesh to Durhumit, Waḫšušana or Purušhattum. Certain firms, such as that of Uṣur-ša-Ištar, specialised in trade with Durhumit, whereas others appear more active in the west.²⁶

The proceeds of the sale of the imported commodities and of what had been obtained in Anatolia were collected in Kanesh and from there sent to Assur. The greater amount of the silver and gold shipped to Assur was reinvested in merchandise; part of it, however, usually amounting to a few shekels of silver served as a gift or was intended as an offering (*niqi'um*) to business partners and relatives. Considerable quantities of silver were brought to the capital in this way; one document lists the total value in silver of a homebound caravan as a little over 18 talents, and another mentions almost 12 talents.²⁷

Contacts between Assyrians and the elite of Kanesh: the case of Itūr-il

The interaction between Assyrian merchants and the local elite will be sketched by the case of Itūr-il. Information about this man stems almost exclusively from texts that were excavated by B. Hrozný in 1925 and earlier. The small number of these texts suggests that his archive was not in Kanesh

²⁶ Dercksen, *Copper Trade*.

²⁷ Dercksen, *Institutions*, 161f.

anymore when the Level II city was destroyed, and some of the texts in which Itūr-il occurs may stem from other archives, perhaps that of his son Ḥanu. The available documents contain a small dossier that is concerned with transactions with the ruler of Tuḫpiya (situated east of the Kızılırmak, in the western border of the Central Anatolian region dominated by the trade with Durhumit), to whom Itūr-il sent goods through Ennum-Aššur, Šu-Laban, Išme-Aššur and Šu-Bēlum (*TC* 1, 39; *Kt* 85/k 27²⁸). The name of one of Itūr-il's sons is given in the protocol of a legal case between Šu-Laban and Ḥanu son of Itūr-il (*Kt* j/k 80) concerning textiles for the king of Tuḫpiya. After the death of Itūr-il, Ḥanu took over his father's business, which explains why he figures in *KT* 106, a text which will be discussed in some detail below. He also figures in a few other texts from *Kt* j/k, which suggests that one text group among those tablets was that of Ḥanu. A letter from Itūr-il among the *Kt* j/k group mentions Alabum, Saḫar-ili and Azu,²⁹ and in it he requests *perdum*-animals in exchange for iron ore he has sent to a king (perhaps the king of Tuḫpiya); so it is plausible that Azu was a brother of Ḥanu.

Itūr-il collaborated with Pūšu-kēn, who acted as his representative, according to *TTC* 24. In view of this relationship, the same Itūr-il may have brought an important consignment of gold and silver for Buzazu (a son of Pūšu-kēn) to Assur around the year *KEL* 103 (*Or* 50, p.102 no. 3). Furthermore, Itūr-il may have been among Imdi-ilum's representatives in Kanesh.

As far as Itūr-il's commercial activities are concerned, the limited documentation reveals some interesting details. According to the letter *WAG* 48-1462,³⁰ Itūr-il had sent a total of 16 minas of silver to Ennam-Aššur in order to buy gold for him. He was an accepted partner of the ruler of Tuḫpiya; the few texts that deal with this show how he sent him some textiles as merchandise (and some as a gift) and *ašium* metal as merchandise. Itūr-il also dealt with other high-ranking Anatolians, among whom was one named Karriya, who may have been the Chief of the Table of the Queen (*rabi paššūri ša rubātīm*) of Kanesh. Karriya is the name of an Anatolian and not that of an

²⁸ C. Günbattı, "Two new tablets throwing light on the relations between Anatolian kings and Assyrian merchants in the period of the Assyrian colonies", *ArAn* 2 (1996) 25-37.

²⁹ *Kt* j/k 623 published by S. Yılmaz, "KÜ.AN (amutum) madeni ile ilgili 3 yeni belge", *Anadolu Medeniyetleri Müzesi Yılığ* 2002 (Ankara 2003), 158-171, cf. J.G. Dercksen, *NABU* 2003/45.

³⁰ M.T. Larsen, "Four letters from the Walters Art Gallery, Baltimore", in: B. Hruška/G. Komoróczy (eds.), *Festschrift Lubor Matouš*, Budapest 1978, II. 113-130. Photo of the text is online, www.cdli.ucla.edu/WaltersArtGallery/P272898.jpg

Assyrian, which rests on two facts: he falls under the jurisdiction of the king of Kanesh, and he and his sons possess 'villages'. His unfortunate fate in Kanesh is hinted at in KTK 106, which appears to be the only surviving document about this case. The text reads:

(1-4) The King and the Queen gave Karriya, his wife, and his sons because of the (debt of) 40 minas of silver to Itūr-il.

(5-8) Šupunaḥšu, son of Šarama, the chief *alahhinnu*m of the general, is guarantor for 20 minas of silver. From month VII, eponym Sama (=KEL 110), he (Šupunaḥšu) will pay 10 minas of silver before the autumn (and) he will pay (another) 10 minas of silver before the next autumn; for the remainder of the silver, 20 minas, Šupunaḥšu returned Karriya, his wife, and his sons to Hanu and they will pay the 20 minas of silver to him.

(19-22) The silver is tied to the head of Karriya, his wife, his sons and to their house(s) and their villages.

(23-24) Before the Chief of the Stairway; before the priest³¹ of Ḫigiša.³²

The royal couple, the highest authorities in the country of Kanesh, handed their subject Karriya and his family over to the Assyrian creditor to settle his debt of about 20 kg of silver. A high functionary assumes responsibility as guarantor and agrees to pay half the debt over a two-year period. Moreover, he acts as the *Gestellungsbürge* for the other half of the debt by transferring the debtor and his family to Hanu, the son of the creditor; this indicates that Itūr-il, the original creditor, had died and now his son is distraining the defaulting Anatolian. The measures a creditor in Anatolia could resort to on default of payment were the same as those known from Assur or Babylonia; depending on the wealth of the debtor, the creditor could distrain members of the household, including the debtor himself, or his possessions could be

³¹ On the use of the word *kumrum* in Kültepe, see now G. Kryszat, "Herrscher, Herrschaft und Kulttradition in Anatolien nach den Quellen aus den altassyrischen Handelskolonien – Teil 2: Götter, Priester und Feste Anatoliens", *AoF* 33 (2006), 102-124, esp. p.104f.

³² Jankovskaja, KTK no. 106 (previously published as Golénischeff 11); edition and study: J. Lewy, EL no. 188.

(Obv.) (1) [a-na 40] ma-na KÙ.BABBAR Kà-ri-a (2) [a-ša]-sù ù me-er-e-šu (3) ru-ba-um : ù ru-ba-tum (4) a-na I-tur-a-DINGIR : i-dí-nu (5) a-na 20 ma-na KÙ.BABBAR (6) [Š]u-pu-na-aḥ-šu DUMU Ša-ra-ma (7) GAL a-lá-ḫi-nim ša GAL sí-ki-tim (8) qá-ta-tum iš-tù (9) ITU.KAM ší-ip-im : li-mu-um (10) Šá-ma : 10 ma-na KÙ.BABBAR (11) a-na ḫa-ar-pí-im (Lo.E.) (12) i-ša-qal 10 ma-na (Rev.) (13) KÙ.BABBAR a-na ša-ni-ù-tim (14) ḫa-ar-pé i-ša-qal-ma (15) a-na ší-tí : KÙ.BABBAR 20 ma-na-im (16) Kà-ri-a : a-ša-sù ù me-er-e-šu (17) Šu-pu-na-aḥ-šu a-na Ḫa-nu (18) ú-ta-er-ma 20 ma-na KÙ.BABBAR (19) i-ša-qú-lu-šu KÙ.BABBAR i-na (20) qá-qá-ad Kà-ri-a : a-ší-tí-šu (21) me-er-e-šu : É be-ti-šu-nu (22) ú a-lá-né-šu-nu ra-ki-is (23) IGI GAL sí-mi-il-tim (24) IGI ku-um-ri ša Ḫi-gi-šá.

sold or taken over by the creditor. Ultimately the debtor and his family could be sold as slaves.³³

The pledges listed in this text comprise all the possessions of the family of Karriya, including that of his grown-up sons. The inclusion of the villages or estates of Karriya and his sons as sureties is an indication of the amount of landed property that the elite of Kanesh could possess. We know from title deeds that such estates could be valued in terms of silver and that they were sometimes sold.³⁴ It remains unknown by what means Karriya would have been able to pay off the debt; he could possibly pay from the produce of his land or from the sale of some or all of it.

The size of his debt suggests that Karriya was a regular customer for luxury items from Itūr-il. Among other Anatolians in debt were Ḫaršunuman, a priest of the Sun-god, who owed 11 minas of silver to Pūšu-kēn (ATHE 2), and Tarmana, who owed 12 minas of silver including interest to Buzazu (ATHE 12). The Assyrian authorities could impose a ban on transactions with a defaulting Anatolian until he could settle his debts; Kt a/k 606/b (unp. Ankara), for example, is a verdict by a colony (probably that of Kanesh) to the effect that no one is to sell goods to the household of the *alahhinnu*m until his creditors are paid. It might require a good deal of patience from the Assyrian merchants before the Anatolian lord was willing to pay, as can be seen from the case of Aššur-malik. He had a long-running claim against Ḫappuala, the Shepherd of the Queen in Kanesh, and asked his father Innaya and representatives to intervene on his behalf. According to ICK I 13 (edited C. Michel, Innaya II no. 159) he wrote:

"Ḫappuala, the Shepherd of the Queen, owes me 12 1/2 minas of silver and 100 sacks of barley. I possess his valid bond impressed with his seal. For four years, in accordance with the decree of (the colony of) Kanesh, interest has been accruing to him.³⁵ You are my fathers, my lords! Make him pay the silver, the capital sum, and the grain as well as you can, and charge him for the interest on the silver and on the grain and let him give it annually. You are my fathers, my lords! Take care and do your utmost to take my capital of

³³ See K.R. Veenhof, "The Old Assyrian period", in: R. Westbrook/R. Jasnow (eds.), *Security for Debt in Ancient Near Eastern Law* (CHANE 9), Leiden/Boston/Köln 2001, 93-159.

³⁴ A village is sold for 5 minas of silver according to Kt c/k 1641 (I. Albayrak, "Fünf Urkunden aus dem Archiv von Peruwa, Sohn von Šuppibra", *JEOL* 39 (2005), 95-105). Another village is sold for 2 minas by a great *alahhinnu*m and others in Kt f/k 68 (unp. Ankara).

³⁵ This refers to the rate of interest of 30 per cent p.a. fixed by the Colony of Kanesh and usually employed to charge Assyrian debtors.

silver and grain, and write a debt-note (*iṣurtum*)³⁶ for him for the interest on the silver and the grain.”

There are only two witnesses to this settlement, both high-ranking functionaries in Kanesh: the Chief of the Stairway and the priest of divine Ḫigiša, whose name is perhaps Šiwašme'i. This and the fact that the guarantor is another functionary suggest that the debtor also belonged to the elite of Kanesh. The titles of Anatolian functionaries are always given in Akkadian (*rubāum* 'king', *kumrum* 'priest', *rabi* ... 'head of ...'); the word in the native language is never used. However, a few words are Akkadianized Hurrian, such as *alahḫinnum* and *šinaḫilum* (the latter only used for a functionary in Ḫaḫḫum). Like the word *unušsum* meaning a type of service obligation,³⁷ this reflects the influence of Hurrianized areas in northern Syria in the official vocabulary of government.

The nature of the trade colonies

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. Early in the history of Old Assyrian studies there was controversy about the nature of these settlements and the word 'colony' was used in both meanings. B. Landsberger, followed by the mainstream of specialists since, regarded them as trading colonies established by peaceful means and comparable to those of Genoa and Venice.³⁸ J. Lewy, on the other hand, maintained the view that "the political and administrative conditions obtaining in Halys Assyria (i.e., Lewy's designation of the area of Assyrian activity in Anatolia) during the period covered by the bulk of the Kültepe texts at present available are due to the annexation of Cappadocia by an empire builder who made his conquest safe by settling Assyrians in the numerous towns of Asia Minor which figure in the Old Assyrian texts in part as *kârû* and in part as *wubârâtum*."³⁹ For Lewy the *kârûm*

³⁶ Possibly denoting a wax-covered writing board, often used to record claims on Anatolian palaces and high functionaries, see K.R. Veenhof, "Old Assyrian *iṣurtum*, Akkadian *eṣṣerum* and Hittite *GIŠ.HUR*", in: *Studio Historiae Ardens. Ancient Near Eastern Studies Presented to Philo H.J. Houwink ten Cate on the Occasion of his 65th Birthday* (PIHANS 74), Leiden 1995, 311-332.

³⁷ J.G. Dercksen, "Some elements of Old Anatolian society in Kaniš", in: Dercksen (ed.), *Assyria and Beyond. Studies Larsen*, 137-177.

³⁸ B. Landsberger, "Assyrische Handelskolonien in Kleinasien aus dem dritten Jahrtausend", *Der Alte Orient* 24/4 (1925), 5f.

³⁹ J. Lewy, "On some institutions of the Old Assyrian empire", *HUCA* 27 (1956), 1-79, esp. p.53.

at Kanesh was the seat of power of the government of 'Halys Assyria', but for others it was the central Assyrian colony in Anatolia.

The Assyrian colony at Kanesh was a semi-autonomous organization of Assyrian citizens residing in that city, whose rights and duties towards the local king were laid down in sworn treaties. The colony enjoyed full extra-territorial rights, including the protection of people and property against armed robbery and the freedom of movement. These rights were recorded in a treaty which further dealt with the privilege of the local king to levy taxes and to pre-empt textiles.⁴⁰ Concerning matters of wider political significance or legal disputes among Assyrians (such as the right to engage an attorney (*rābišum*) or the forced transfer of witnesses to Assur), the colony of Kanesh was an extension of the city council of Assur. The King of Assur communicated the decisions of this council to the colony by letter (the so-called *waklum*-letters), and emissaries from the city of Assur (*šiprū ša ālim*) could be sent to the colony to lead or supervise treaty negotiations with Anatolian rulers.

The government of the colony of Kanesh was in many respects a mirror-image of that of the city-state of Assur itself.⁴¹ A plenary council (*puḫrum*) represented the upper and lower segments of Assyrian colonial society (the *kārûm šaḫer rabi*) and was led by a secretary (*tupšarrum*). The functionaries of the colony were recruited from among the 'grand' members (*rabiuttum*); these were independent merchants, often referred to as *šāqil dātīm*, who would pay a substantial fee known as *dātum*, which allowed them a reduction of the *šadduatum*-tax of the colony of Kanesh in Anatolia. A group of at least three representatives of the colony were called 'eponym' (*līmum*) and they led financial operations. Of greater importance were the 'week-eponyms' (*ḫamuštum*); each period of 7 days was named after a pair of these functionaries until shortly before the end of the period of Level II.⁴² The

⁴⁰ On treaties, see S. Çeçen and K. Hecker, "ina mātika eblum. Zu einem neuen Text zum Wegerecht in der Kültepe-Zeit", in: M. Dietrich – O. Loretz (eds.), *Vom Alten Orient zum Alten Testament. Festschrift für Wolfram Freiherrn von Soden zum 85. Geburtstag* (AOAT 240), Neukirchen-Vluyn 1995, 31-41; C. Günbattı, "Two treaty texts found at Kültepe", in: Dercksen (ed.), *Assyria and Beyond. Studies Larsen*, 249-268 (cf. now V. Donbaz, "An Old Assyrian treaty from Kültepe", *JCS* 57 (2005), 63-68). A treaty from Tell Leilan was published by J. Eidem, "An Old Assyrian treaty from Tell Leilan", Charpin and Joannès (eds.), *Marchands, diplomates et empereurs. Etudes Garelli*, 185-207.

⁴¹ Cf. Larsen, *The Old Assyrian City-State*.

⁴² For arguments that *ḫamuštum* refers to a period of 7 days, see K.R. Veenhof, "The Old Assyrian *ḫamuštum* period: a seven-day week", *JEOL* 34 (1995-96), 5-26. For the office and the week-eponyms, see G. Kryszat, *Zur Chronologie der Kaufmannsarchive aus der Schicht 2 des Kārûm Kaneš* (OAAS 2), Leiden 2004, 159-197.

range of activities of the *līmum* and of the *hamuštum* in the colony is still unclear. On a formal level contacts between the palace and the colony were conducted through a delegation of the merchants, but in fact an important trader often enjoyed direct access to the rulers and grandees, for whom he was the ideal neutral go-between when it came to obtaining any elite goods they wanted.

The widely occurring phenomenon of the interests of mother land and colony gradually diverging will apply to the Old Assyrian colony, and further research is bound to increase our present knowledge of the changes that developed in its trade and community. We are clearly not dealing with highly developed Assyrians among simpler native Anatolians, but they were more or less equal partners.⁴³ The houses of the Assyrians were concentrated in certain areas of the lower city, but they did not form a separate quarter. The sustained and regular contact between the Assyrians and the local inhabitants of Kanesh led to forms of cultural exchange to be seen on different levels.⁴⁴ Most obvious is the introduction of the typical tools of Mesopotamian bureaucracy (and perhaps also of the inherent Mesopotamian traditions) for the Anatolian elite. There does not seem to have been a writing system in Anatolia prior to the Karum Period, and so it were the colonial encounters that led to the introduction of written documentation for palace administration as well as for the social elite. A considerable number of Anatolians used a cylinder seal and not an Anatolian stamp seal; this is particularly clear from those documents in the archive of Peruwa in which only Anatolians are named.⁴⁵ Cultural hybridity, through which identity is merged and transformed, is seen to increase through inter-communal relationships, when more and more Assyrian men marry Anatolian wives and raise their families in Kanesh;⁴⁶ less frequently an Assyrian woman would marry an Anatolian.⁴⁷

⁴³ Cf. G.J. Stein, *The Archaeology of Colonial Encounters*, Santa Fe 2005, 17: "an essential symmetry in power relations".

⁴⁴ J.G. Dercksen, "Kultureller und wirtschaftlicher Austausch zwischen Assyriern und Anatoliern (Anfang des zweiten Jahrtausends v. Chr.)", in: H. Blum – B. Faist/P. Pfälzner – A.-M. Wittke (eds.), *Brückenland Anatolien? Ursachen, Extensität und Modi des Kulturaustausches zwischen Anatolien und seinen Nachbarn*, Tübingen 2002, 35-44.

⁴⁵ Drawings of the seals in N. Özgüç, *Kültepe-Kaniš/Neša: Seal Impressions on the Clay Envelopes from the Archives of the Native Peruwa and Assyrian Trader Ušur-ša-Ištar son of Aššur-imittī*, Ankara 2006.

⁴⁶ Cf. C. Michel, "Les malheurs de Kunnanīya, femme de marchand", *ArAn* 3 (1997) 239-253.

⁴⁷ K.R. Veenhof, "Old Assyrian and ancient Anatolian evidence for the care of the elderly", in: M. Stol – S.P. Vleeming (eds.), *The Care of the Elderly in the Ancient Near East*, Leiden/Boston/Köln 1998, 119-160, esp. p. 126.

This presupposes the use of one or more common languages and the sharing of values. There is some degree of religious conflation, for the city god of Kanesh, Anna, was also venerated by Assyrians, and Anatolians occasionally swear to a symbol of the Assyrian national deity Aššur. Finally, iconography shows some borrowings in the repertoire of cylinder seal impressions, such as the goat-fish or deities standing on an animal.

The archaeological record does not show any significant difference in material culture between the colonists and the natives in Kanesh. The influence of Anatolian culture was accepted in the daily life of the Assyrians, although there may have been some distinctive Assyrian features, such as in dress. Since all the basic and most of the luxury food-stuffs and beverages were available on the local market this suggests that Assyrians shared the local elite diet.

The theoretical models that have been used to explain the Assyrian colonies in Anatolia include that of acculturation and that of a trade diaspora. The world system model, however, which presupposes the dominance of a core region over the less developed periphery, does not consider existing political forces in the periphery and so clearly does not apply to this situation.

The acculturation model has limited value for it seeks to explain how a weaker recipient culture accepts innovations from a more developed donor culture. Although the Assyrians undoubtedly possessed superior skills as far as writing is concerned and were very advanced in commercial techniques and organization, they are not so superior as regards material culture.

Recent studies have investigated how the trade diasporas model, with its initial emphasis on the need for cross-cultural brokers to bridge cultural differences,⁴⁸ and subsequently how these settlements were agents in cultural exchange, can be applied to the Old Assyrian trading colony. But one aspect of this model supposes a physical segregation of the foreign traders from the host community, and this does not apply here. That is why Andreas Gräff dismissed this model as insufficient after his analysis of evidence from the excavations at Kültepe.⁴⁹ On the other hand, Gil Stein has argued convincingly that this model does offer a good explanation for the Old Assyrian trade.⁵⁰

⁴⁸ Philip D. Curtin, *Cross-Cultural Trade in World History*, Cambridge/New York, 1984.

⁴⁹ Andreas Gräff, "Thoughts about the Assyrian presence in Anatolia in the early 2nd millennium", *AoF* 32 (2005), 158-167.

⁵⁰ Gil J. Stein, *op. cit.*

The physical end of the Assyrian colony at Kanesh is marked by the destruction of the city of Level Ib, but the trade had probably already suffered severely from the impact of political and military developments in Mesopotamia, notably by the destruction of Tell Leilan by Samsuiluna and changes in the availability of tin and textiles.⁵¹ Being unable to import tin and textiles on a regular and sufficiently large scale, which had formed the backbone of the caravan trade, there was no viable basis for an Assyrian economic system that had invested most of its profits in Assur and not in Kanesh. The negative effects of these economic developments on the colony were intensified by one of a different but interconnected nature: the progressive loss of corporate identity of the Assyrian settlement. This identity, as we know it during the Level II-period, must have changed considerably during the next century, with the result that the Assyrians in Anatolia ultimately became an ethnic minority. Philip Curtin noted that the foreign traders who acted as neutral mediators became the victims of their own success because “centuries or even decades of mediation reduced cross-cultural differences and hence the need for cross-cultural brokers.”⁵² One can assume that this at some point affected the trade in copper and wool in Anatolia, which is attested in some detail during the Level II-period, but not during the Ib-period. The memory of the once flourishing Assyrian trading colonies soon disappeared in Anatolia, but in Mesopotamia it survived and was incorporated into traditions of the Old Akkadian King Sargon, who, according to the composition ‘King of Battle’, is reputed to have come to the rescue of merchants in distant Purušhanda.⁵³

⁵¹ D. Charpin, “Histoire politique du Proche-Orient amorrite (2002-1595)” (OBO 160/4), p.351.

⁵² Curtin, *op. cit.*, 3.

⁵³ Edition in J.G. Westenholz, *Legends of the Kings of Akkade* (MesCiv 7) Winona Lake 1997. See also J.G. Westenholz, “Relations between Mesopotamia and Anatolia in the age of the Sargonic kings”, CRRAl 34, Ankara 1998, 5-22.