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## The Kārum Period on the Plateau

Cécile Michel

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THE OXFORD HANDBOOK OF

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**ANCIENT  
ANATOLIA**  
.....

10,000–323 B.C.E.

*Edited by*

SHARON R. STEADMAN  
AND GREGORY McMAHON

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*The Middle Bronze Age*

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## CHAPTER 13

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# THE *KĀRUM* PERIOD ON THE PLATEAU

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CÉCILE MICHEL

DURING the first centuries of the second millennium B.C.E., Assyrian merchants originating from Assur, on the Upper Tigris, organized large-scale commercial exchanges with central Anatolia. They settled in several localities, called *kārum*s. This Akkadian word, which usually designates the quay or port in Mesopotamian cities, refers in Anatolia to the Assyrian merchant district and its administrative building. Thus, the *kārum* period—which comprises the Old Assyrian period—covers the time during which the Assyrians traded in Anatolia, from the middle of the twentieth to the end of the eighteenth century B.C.E.; it corresponds, more or less, to the Middle Bronze Age. In Anatolia, this period is characterized by an important phase of urbanization, with a flourishing material culture mixing native and foreign styles.

The center of the Assyrian commercial network in Anatolia was located at Kaniš, later Neša (modern Kültepe), northeast of Kayseri. The site has been excavated without interruption for sixty years, first by T. Özgüç and K. Emre (1948–2005), and then by F. Kulakoğlu (since 2006; see Kulakoğlu, chapter 47 in this volume). Its stratigraphy serves as the chronological scale of reference for the Anatolian plateau during the first half of the second millennium B.C.E. The site is divided into two major sectors: the citadel and the *kārum* (T. Özgüç 2003). Among the eighteen occupational levels distinguished in the citadel, ranging from the Early Bronze Age to the Roman Empire, Levels 10–6 date to the Middle Bronze Age. The *kārum*, north and east of the citadel, has its own stratigraphy.

The phase called *Kārum* II represents the main period of activity of the Assyrian merchants in Anatolia. They were still living and working there during *Kārum* Ib; Level Ia corresponds to the period following their departure. Written documents

Citadel Levels	<i>Kārum</i> Levels	Date
10	IV	End of the third mill. B.C.E.
9	III	End of the third mill. B.C.E.
8	II (Assyrian archives)	Mid-twentieth–nineteenth cent. B.C.E.
7	Ib (Assyrian archives)	Eighteenth cent. B.C.E.
6	Ia	Beginning of the seventeenth cent. B.C.E.

have been uncovered only in Levels II and Ib. The *kārum* period lasted about three and a half centuries.

The Assyrian trade network covered the major part of central Anatolia, where many of the sites that include Middle Bronze Age levels are located. East of the plateau, the Assyrian caravans coming from the Mesopotamian Plain had to cross the Taurus Range through a limited number of passes. Southeast of the Taurus, the Euphrates was another natural border (Barjamovic 2011; Veenhof 2008b; see Laneri and Schwartz, chapter 14 in this volume; figure 13.1). To the west, located on the border of the plateau, the most important excavated site, Beycesultan, five kilometers southwest of Çivril, did not produce any seals or seal impressions that might attest to a potential involvement in the Assyrian trade. Its ceramics show local developments and are quite different from those found in the central Anatolian sites (Joukowsky 1996). By contrast, at Karahöyük Konya, one of the very few known Middle Bronze settlements located in the area southwest of the Tuz Gölü, the excavations unearthed a large number of seal impressions (Alp 1968). The *kārum* period on the Anatolian plateau is documented by more than 24,000 cuneiform documents, written mainly by Assyrian merchants who settled in Kaniš and other localities. These archives give some data about the institutions, economy, and society of the Anatolian kingdoms, as well as elements of their political and economic history.

## ARCHAEOLOGICAL DATA

Two different sets of data are available to study the *kārum* period in central Anatolia: the archaeological exploration of many sites as well as large areas of the plateau, and the cuneiform documents mainly found at Kültepe. I explore the archaeological information first.

At the beginning of the second millennium B.C.E., much of the Anatolian plateau was covered with woods. In addition to agricultural and pasture lands, the region also had numerous mineral resources. Many archaeological sites located by surveys and unearthed by excavations were occupied during the *kārum* period, but very few of them have been identified by their ancient names, apart from Kültepe,

which is the ancient city of Kaniš, Boğazköy, the ancient Hattuş, and Alişar Höyük, whose ancient name was Amkuwa, later Ankuwa.

## General Presentation

The Anatolian plateau may be divided into several different areas, each having its own resources (Yakar 2000). The primary and most densely inhabited area is the central part of this plateau. The Kızıl Irmak, which cuts through the plateau, works as a natural border. The area located inside the bend of the river is a rich and fertile land, with metal ores on the north. This is where the biggest settlements of the Middle Bronze Age lie (Barjamovic 2011; Sagona and Zimansky 2009:225–52). West of the river, the density of sites decreases; the land is drier, although the Tuz Gölü provides an important mineral resource. The southwestern part of the plateau, the Konya Plain, is well watered but counts only a small number of settlements, whose population lives mainly on agriculture and animal husbandry. Southeast of the river lies the Kayseri Plain; Kültepe is one of the few Middle Bronze Age sites in this area. The other sites, of much smaller size, are concentrated further east, in the Göksun, Elazığ, and Elbistan Plains. In the north, the Pontic region is well known for its natural resources in copper, silver, and wood. Thus, between the Yeşil Irmak and the Kızıl Irmak, there are several important urban centers dated from this period (Dönmez and Beyazit 2008).

The *kārum* period saw the development of several fortified towns on the main roads showing an organization similar to that of Kültepe: a huge palace as well as



Figure 13.1. Map of Anatolia and Upper Mesopotamia during the *kārūm* period.

several temples built on the top of the mound, with a lower terrace, where the occupation area is made up of two-storey houses constructed with wood and mudbricks over stone foundations (T. Özgüç 2003). Kültepe provided a rich *Kārum* II level, whereas other cities like Acemhöyük, Alişar, and Boğazköy present an important *Kārum* Ib level (figure 13.1).

## Important Middle Bronze Sites

In addition to Kültepe, which is the key site for this period, and Boğazköy, the later capital of the Hittites, a small number of excavated sites that include important Middle Bronze Age levels deserve a short discussion.

Acemhöyük, one of the biggest mounds (800 × 700 m) dated to the *kārum* period, is located 18 km northwest of Aksaray, south of the Tuz Gölü. This large oval mound, occupied since the Early Bronze Age, was excavated in the 1960s by Nimet Özgüç and later Aliye Öztan (Ankara University). Its stratigraphy includes twelve levels; Levels 3 and 4 belong to the Middle Bronze Age. The main excavated buildings are two palaces dated from *Kārum* Ib, Sarıkaya in the southeast, and Hatipler in the northwest, along with the West/Service Building. Dendrochronological analyses of the Sarıkaya palace wood beams suggest a date around 1777/1774 B.C.E. (Kuniholm et al. 2005; Michel and Rocher 2000). The site was destroyed by fire at the end of the *Kārum* Ib period. No commercial district has been found, and the site did not produce cuneiform tablets. However, many objects were discovered, including clay bullae with short cuneiform inscriptions and seal impressions of Šamši-Adad I, king of Upper Mesopotamia, and of his servants (Karaduman 2008; Veenhof 1993), seals, various ceramics and rhyta, bone tools, stone axes, faience animal figurines, and objects made of rock crystal, ivory, silver, and bronze (Joukowsky 1996:224–25; N. Özgüç 1966; Öztan 2007). The site has long been identified with Buruṣḫattum (most recently Kawakami 2006), but we know now that this town should be located further west (Barjamovic 2011, 2008; Hecker 2006).

Alişar, the ancient town of Amkuwa, written Ankuwa in the Hittite sources (Gorny 1995), is a large settlement of central Anatolia (520 × 350 m); it lies north of the village of the same name, in the plain irrigated by the Kanak Suyu, in the southeast of Yozgat province. The main mound is surrounded, on the southeast side, by a crescent-shaped lower town called the Terrace; the site was inhabited from the fourth to the first millennium B.C.E. It was first excavated by H. H. von der Osten (Oriental Institute, Chicago, 1927–32); then, in 1993, by R. L. Gorny, who focused on the Late Bronze Age levels. The layer corresponding to the *kārum* period was formerly called Stratum II, later renamed Levels 11T and 10T. Cuneiform tablets were found mainly in Level 10 (Dercksen 2001; Michel 2003a:126–27). During the Hittite Empire, Alişar was a provincial town; it was destroyed by fire at the end of the Late Bronze Age. Several other settlements feature important Middle Bronze occupational levels, including Boğazköy/Hattuš(a), Kaman Kalehöyük,

and Kültepe/Kaniš. All of these sites can be found in part V, “Key Sites,” in this volume.

## Material Culture

At the beginning of the second millennium B.C.E., some sites on the plateau became very large, like Acemhöyük (fifty-six hectares), Karahöyük Konya (fifty hectares), Kültepe (fifty hectares), and Alişar (twenty-eight hectares). For reasons still being discussed by scholars, they attracted the interest of Assyrian merchants during this period (Lumsden 2008). The creation of *kārums* and *wabartums* (smaller trading posts) brought important sociopolitical and economic changes that influenced local Anatolian material culture. New ceramic traditions and miniature art on cylinder seals flourished; at the same time, production became standardized. Besides the Early Bronze (EB) III Cappadocian ware, characterized by open vessels with colored geometric decorations, there was a significant production of large wheelmade vessels, with red or brownish slips and fine decorated rectangles, and pitchers with curved spouts and high pedestals. Some ceramics were decorated with animal figures on the rim or handles; this tradition continues into Hittite wares of the Late Bronze Age (Sagona and Zimansky 2009:225–52). Some ceramics were imported from Mesopotamia (Emre 1995, 1999; Joukowsky 1996; Kulakoğlu 1996). There was an important tradition of figurative art with zoomorphological rhyta, and lead and ivory figurines, many unearthed in graves. The buried bodies under the floors of the houses together with the artifacts found in the graves attest to Assyrian burial customs (Emre 2008). The impact of trade is also visible in the standardization of weights and of molds for casting metal bars (Dercksen 1996).

The seal industry is the best example of these transformations; seals are good witnesses of the many influences existing between local styles and imports. Mesopotamian cylinder seals were widely used in Anatolia in the Old Assyrian period, although Anatolian stamp seals also remained in use (see Kulakoğlu, chapter 47 in this volume). Four main stylistic groups of cylinder seals may be distinguished, among which three were imported: the Old Babylonian group typically shows presentation scenes of a human being to a seated divinity, the Old Assyrian group includes many procession scenes, the Old Syrian group started with small representations whose size and precision grew during the *kārum* period, and the Old Anatolian iconography combined several elements and filled the empty spaces with animal figures (Blocher 2003; N. Özgüç 1965, 2006; Tessier 1994). The seals of this last group were used both by Assyrians and Anatolians (figure 13.2). At the same time, some Ur III cylinder seals were still in use. During the *Kārum* Ib period, the importance of stamp seals with geometric, floral, and animal representations grew and took over the cylinder seals in the local administrations (Lumsden 2008). The evidence of the material culture shows that during the *kārum* period, Anatolia saw a permanent evolution, partly because of the Assyrian presence.



Figure 13.2. Envelope of a loan contract bearing Old Assyrian and Old Anatolian seal imprints (Kt 93/k 941a, Kültepe, *Kārum* II, photo C. Michel).

## TEXTUAL DATA

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The cuneiform texts discovered in central Anatolia, produced by merchants of Assur, are written in an Old Assyrian dialect of Akkadian. Even if their main purpose was to keep records of long-distance trade, they documented several aspects of the sociopolitical and economic history of ancient Anatolia.

## Epigraphic Discoveries

The *kārum* period is well documented by 22,660 cuneiform tablets, discovered mostly at Kültepe (Michel 2003a, 2006a). The huge *Kārum* Ib palace, built on the top of the citadel, was empty at the time of its destruction by fire, so almost no tablets were found in it. Only forty cuneiform tablets were found in the citadel, mainly in the ruins of houses dated both from Level II and Ib. A vast majority, 22,000 texts, were discovered in private houses of the *kārum* dated from Level II. Only 420 tablets come from the later Ib level (eighteenth century B.C.E.). The tablets were lying in warehouses, originally stored in groups of twenty to thirty units in baskets, boxes, or clay jars with sealed clay labels. Most of the archaeological material found in the houses was of a purely Anatolian style. The Assyrians used local products, and thus the tablets are the main artifacts allowing an identification of their owner's ethnic origin. Some Anatolians living in the *kārum* were involved in the trade but did not play a role in the administration of the trading post.

Besides Kültepe, other sites have produced few documents. Seventy-two documents were unearthed in a layer dated from *Kārum* Ib, in the lower town at Boğazköy, ancient Hattuš(a), capital of the later Hittite Empire (Dercksen 2001:49–60). Alişar, the old city of Amkuwa, has produced sixty-three tablets, also predominantly belonging to *Kārum* Ib (Dercksen 2001:39–49). One text was found at Kaman Kalehöyük in 2001 (Yoshida 2002) and another one at Kayalıpınar in 2005 (Sommerfeld 2006).

These tablets constitute the private archives of Assyrian merchants settled at Kaniš, and few of them belonged to Anatolian traders. Archives are made up of private letters protected during their transport by clay envelopes, legal documents including various contracts involving many Anatolians, and various lists, private notices, and memoranda. The local population is often referred to in these business relationships. The letters provide us with some data about the organization of the trade, the relations with the local population, and insights into the geopolitical and economical situation of central Anatolia.

## Historical Documents and Chronology

The Old Assyrian tablets are mainly commercial, but several documents deal with other topics: family contracts, school tablets, and incantations (Michel 2003a:135–41). A few historical texts were discovered at Kültepe: two copies of the Assyrian king Erišum I's inscriptions and an Old Assyrian Sargon legend. Several copies of the Kültepe eponym list have been published recently: six copies date from *Kārum* II and one from *Kārum* Ib (Günbatti 2008a, 2008b; Veenhof 2003a). Among the first group, the most complete copy reveals the succession of 129 eponym names (*limum*), each corresponding to a year, and the reign of the Assyrian kings to which they belong, from Erišum I (1974–1935 B.C.E.) to Narām-Sîn (1872–1829/19 B.C.E.). Most of the archives discovered in Kültepe contexts are dated from the first half of the nineteenth century B.C.E.; this period ended at some point during the last decades



of the century. According to Kültepe eponym list manuscript G, *Kārum Ib* covered the whole eighteenth century B.C.E. These tablets help us reconstruct the Assyrian and Anatolian chronologies (Barjamovic, Hertel, and Larsen forthcoming). The treaties concluded between Assyrian institutions and local Anatolian rulers to support the long-distance trade, as well as many of the letters, give an insight into Anatolian history as well. Four treaties were found, three of them dating from *Kārum Ib* (Çeçen and Hecker 1995; Günbattı 2004; Veenhof 2008a:183–218; figure 13.3); one was found at Tell Leilan (Eidem 1991).

The political and administrative structure of the Anatolian kingdoms is only visible through their contacts with the Assyrian merchants. For the most part, the documents are not dated and are usually rather short and laconic; for example we do not know the main city-states' rulers' names. The citadel produced a unique letter, dated from *Kārum Ib*, sent by Anum-Hirbi, king of Mamma, to Waršama, king of Kaniš (Balkan 1957; Michel 2001:no. 62).



Figure 13.3. Reverse of the treaty between Kaniš and the Assyrians (Kt 00/6, Kültepe, *Kārum Ib*, photo C. Michel).

## POLITICAL HISTORY OF THE PLATEAU DURING THE KĀRUM PERIOD

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At the beginning of the second millennium B.C.E., the Anatolian plateau appears to be politically fragmented. There were numerous centers, some of them small fortified city-states, others real territorial states, with a capital and several villages. We have almost no information about their hierarchy, but one can imagine that the Assyrians settled in the biggest and economically strongest ones. The data provided by the archives concern predominantly the Anatolian élite, that is, kings and palace officials with whom the Assyrian traders dealt; they also document each event that affected trade. The few extant Anatolian archives also deal with the trade and consist mostly of loans and sale contracts (Albayrak 2005; Donbaz 1988; Veenhof 1978).

### Political Powers

#### *Countries and Cities*

The Assyrian vocabulary referring to Anatolian political powers is quite vague. The word for land, *mātum*, refers to the territory of a city-state but corresponds as well to the countryside. During *Kārum* II, the texts mention the lands of *Burušhattum*, *Kaniš*, *Luhusaddia* (east of *Kaniš*), *Waḥšušana* (north of the *Tuz Gölü*), and *Zalpa*, to the north. The toponym *Ḥattum* does not correspond to a town but to the land inside the *Kızıl Irmak* bend; it contained several cities, among which are *Amkuwa*, *Ḥattuš*, *Tawinia*, and *Tuḥpia* (figure 13.1). During the *Kārum* Ib period, the land of *Mamma* became more important, and both *Kaniš* and *Mamma* had vassal states. The archives mention hundreds of toponyms corresponding either to small villages or to bigger towns which might be centers of independent states (Michel 2008c). Twenty cities housed a *kārum* during the Level II period<sup>1</sup> and fifteen a *wabartum*.<sup>2</sup> During the Level Ib period, the data give a list of fewer than ten *kārum*s<sup>3</sup> and five *wabartum*s;<sup>4</sup> important centers like *Burušhattum* had disappeared from the Assyrian trade network, perhaps being too far west (Dercksen 2001:60–61; it could be located at *Karahöyük Konya*).

*Kaniš* might have been the first town settled by the Assyrians; it certainly remained their administrative center during the whole period. Anatolian archives as well as tablets from the citadel, with a list of the palace personnel, give names of villages belonging to the *Kaniš* state. During *Kārum* II, the city was surrounded by ten or so villages; during *Kārum* Ib, the kingdom was apparently even bigger, with almost twenty villages (Dercksen 2004; Forlanini 1992; Günbattu 1987).

### Anatolian Rulers and Political History

Each city-state, whatever its size, had its local dynasties. The Anatolian rulers were called *rubā'um* (“prince”) and *rubātum* (“princess”) or designated with a *nisbe* (nisbes derive from a place-name and are used to indicate the geographical origin

of people and objects), for example, Waḥšušanaium, “the Man of Waḥšušana.”<sup>5</sup> A prince is attested during *Kārum* II in more than fifteen towns;<sup>6</sup> in Buruḥattum, the local ruler is occasionally designated as the “great prince” (*rubā’um rabium*). The Assyrian archives never give the name of the local king, except for Labarša, whose accession to the throne of an unknown city-state is used to date a transaction. At the end of *Kārum* II, a text mentions the death of Luḥusaddia’s prince, Asu (Kryszat 2008b:156–59). Letters refer to hostilities, rebellions, the death of a local ruler, and so on, but no names or dates are given.

During *Kārum* II, there are several mentions of coalitions between Anatolian kingdoms, for example, between Waḥšušana and Kaniš, and between the rulers of Šinaḥutum, Amkuwa, and Kapitra, who made an alliance against Hattuš at the end of *Kārum* II or the beginning of *Kārum* Ib (Larsen 1972; Michel 2001: no. 63). Similarly, wars and hostilities between two cities are discussed in some letters because they could slow down or stop the trade. Thus, a conflict between Tawiniya and perhaps Waḥšana involved an Assyrian accused by the second of acting as a spy for the first city (Günbattı 2001; Michel 2008c; Michel and Garelli 1996). The western cities of Buruḥattum and Waḥšušana were often fighting against each other, sometimes involving Šaladuwar; the Assyrian community had to leave Waḥšušana at the end of *Kārum* II, while Buruḥattum became more influential (Barjamovic, Hertel, and Larsen forthcoming; Veenhof forthcoming). Several kingdoms experienced local revolts, for example in Haḥḥum, Kunanamit, Buruḥattum, Waḥšušana, or in Ulama where turmoil started after the death of the king (Michel 2008c; figure 13.1). Travels of kings are also mentioned because they disrupted the caravan traffic. These movements indicate the existence of diplomatic and political contacts among the Anatolian rulers.

The situation is quite different during *Kārum* Ib. Thanks to Anatolian legal documents that were written under the supervision of the local ruler and/or the “chief of the stairway” (Donbaz 1989, 1993, 2004), it is possible to reconstruct the sequence of Kaniš kings during this later period: Ḥurmeli (or ruler of Mamma?), Ḥarpatiwa, Inar and his son and successor Waršama, Piṭhana and his son and successor Anitta (Great King), and Zuzu (Great King) (Barjamovic, Hertel, and Larsen forthcoming; Dercksen 2004; Forlanini 1995, 2004, 2008; Kryszat 2008b:161–65, 2008c; Michel 2001:117–23; Veenhof 2008a:167–73).<sup>7</sup> According to the letter sent by king Anum-Ḥirbi of Mamma to Waršama of Kaniš and discovered in the Kültepe palace, the king of Taišama (a vassal kingdom of Kaniš), taking advantage of a defeat of Anum-Ḥirbi, invaded his territory and looted some of his villages (Balkan 1957; Miller 2001). Anum-Ḥirbi, protesting, mentioned the long siege of Ḥarsamna by Inar. A recently excavated Old Assyrian letter sent to *kārum* Kaniš by Assur’s assembly refers to the war between Ḥarsamna and Zalpa, just after Išme-Dagan ascended the throne (Günbattı 2005). A Hittite document, Anitta’s *res gestae*, also gives some elements of Anatolian political history (Caruba 2003). Anitta’s father, Piṭhana, ruler of Kuššara, conquered Neša (Kaniš) during a night raid and captured its king, Waršama. Anitta, who became king of Kaniš and Amkuwa, achieved also several military conquests and took the title

Great King. A bronze dagger bearing Anitta's name was found in a building south-east of the citadel of Kaniš. Zuzu, king of Alaḫzina, also conquered Kaniš and took the title of Great King for himself; he ruled at the end of the eighteenth century B.C.E. The end of *Kārum* Ib might in fact be the result of Anatolian rivalries between several powerful kingdoms.

During *Kārum* Ia, there were still foreign travelers in Kaniš according to the archaeological remains, such as "Syrian bottles" or a Mesopotamian cylinder seal (Emre 1995, 1999; Kulakoğlu 2008), but no epigraphic material is extant from this period.

## The Anatolian Palace and its Administration

The prince or royal couple lived in the palace, a huge building that represented the center of the Anatolian administration and could host hundreds of people; the enclosure wall of the Kültepe Ib palace is 110 × 120 m (T. Özgüç 2003:187–92, and see Kulakoğlu, chapter 47 in this volume). During *Kārum* II, the palaces, which are the local authorities with whom the Assyrians had to deal, are attested for several towns,<sup>8</sup> but for *Kārum* Ib, only the palace of Šalahšuwa is mentioned. The palace administration, headed by the royal couple, comprised many officials in charge of different services, workers, and craftsmen. The archives quote fifty different Anatolian titles; this high number indicates that the Anatolian administration was highly structured. The titles referred to in the Old Assyrian texts are translations into Assyrian of Anatolian realities. Among the highest officials, the "chief of the stairway" could correspond to the crown prince, whereas the *rabi sikkitim* ("chief of the . . .") had military and trade duties. The "chief scepter bearer," the "chief cup-bearer," and the "chief of tables" were directly attached to the service of the king. The craftsmen were under the supervision of the "chief of the workers," distributed among various services, each of them with a chief ("chief of the fullers," "chief of the blacksmiths," etc.). The duties of some others are not clear to us, for example the *šinaḫilum*, "man in second" or the steward (*alahḫinnum*). It was possible to bear two different titles, and some of these could be given by the prince in exchange for a gift (Veenhof 2008a:219–45).

## ECONOMY AND TRADE

The Anatolian palaces were also economic centers that dealt with the Assyrian merchants: their wealth came from the production of their fields and their metallurgical resources. But they were also in need of tin, textiles, and other raw material brought by the Assyrians.

## Agriculture, Animal Husbandry, and Food Production

The economy of the Anatolian cities was mainly based on agriculture and animal husbandry, depending on villages and domains. The land was owned by farmers and palace officials, although some fields belonged to the palace itself. The rest of the population—town inhabitants and foreign merchants in the *kārum*—had no land and depended on the surplus food sold on the market (Dercksen 2008a). Along the roads, some inns were able to feed huge quantities of people and animals forming the Assyrian caravans. Some lands were linked to a service obligation (*tuzinum*); domains (*ubādinnum*) were offered by the king to its high officials (Dercksen 2004 and later discussion herein). Some private properties (*bētum*) also existed. The landowners had to give part of their harvest to the palace in taxes. The owners of whole villages could provide enormous amounts of grain in loans, whereas poor farmers could only produce for their own subsistence and were obliged to borrow grain from local dignitaries, palace officials, and priests to make it to the next harvest, sometimes giving their own fields as security. Joint land ownership was quite common. Anatolian loan contracts are dated according to the agricultural calendar.

Archaeobotanical studies at Kaman Kalehöyük counted half a dozen cereal varieties, but according to the texts, the biggest part of the nonirrigated land was planted with barley and wheat (Dercksen 2008b). The grain might be put in large bags to be sold on the market or in huge jars to be stored in palace storerooms under the responsibility of a “chief of the storehouses.” Cereals were ground into flour to make bread or prepared into different kinds of bulgur and porridges, and fermented barley and malt were used to prepare beer (Michel 1997, 2009). Sesame oil was used for food but also for lamps and perfumes; a “chief of oil” was in charge of the collection of oil and its distribution inside the palace. *Ḥaḥḥum* and *Kaniš* are well known for their oil production. Irrigated parcels were used as orchards whose owners had to pay a tax to the chief of the irrigated fields. In the gardens, people grew vegetables, fruit trees, and animal fodder (Michel 1997; Sturm 2008). They also cultivated aromatic plants and spices. The palace had its own orchards, with gardeners. Grapes were cultivated north of *Kaniš* and made into wine.

The steppe and fallow fields were used as pasture for herds of sheep and goats. These animals were bred for their meat and fat, their milk, and their wool, which was sold by the palace. Wool from *Mamma* and *Luhusaddia* could be found in marketplaces. The “chief of the herdsmen” could be very wealthy. According to the *Kārum* Ib letter of the king of *Mamma*, the palace owned horses, mules, dogs, and oxen (Dercksen 2008a). Archaeozoological studies in *Kaman Kalehöyük* and *Acemhöyük* show that Anatolians ate mainly sheep and goats, as well as some cattle and pigs. In private gardens, people could keep a few animals, but the consumption of meat was a privilege of wealthy people (Michel 1997, 2006c).

## Metal Resources

Mining and metallurgy were the other main resource of the Anatolian plateau (Dercksen 2005; see Muhly, chapter 39 in this volume). Metal production was a

primary attraction for the Assyrians, who wanted to bring gold and silver back to their homeland. There were galena and argentiferous lead deposits in the area of Bolkaradağ, south of Niğde, in the Taurus Mountains (Yener 1986). Silver was also found further west, in the area of Buruṣḫattum, a main silver market according to the texts. The metal was melted, refined, and circulated in the form of ingots, bracelets, rings, and scraps. Silver was the main means of payment in Anatolia besides copper and grain. Part of the silver was exchanged for gold by the Assyrians. There were sources of gold in the west and southwest of Anatolia (Jesus 1980) and in the Haḫḫum Mountains, northeast of Malatya (Gudea, Statue B, vi 33–35; Edzard 1997:34). The Assyrians could buy gold in Buruṣḫattum, Waḫṣušana, Durḫumit, and Kaniš. The metal circulated in the form of nuggets, rings, beads, and various objects; one shekel (about 8.3 g) of gold amounted to six to eight shekels of silver.

Many Anatolian copper mines were exploited during the *kārum* period; this very cheap metal was used as a means of payment for daily products or small purchases, to make objects, or alloyed with tin to produce bronze. The main copper exploitations were located along the Black Sea coast in the area of the Kızıl Irmak or near Ergani (Dercksen 1996). Thus, Durḫumit appears to have been the location of the principal copper market, besides Taritar or Tišmurna, which produced poor-quality copper (Michel 1991:fig. 13.1). From there, the Assyrian merchants brought the metal in huge quantities to the western and southern cities of Buruṣḫattum and Waḫṣušana, or to Kaniš, to exchange it, after treatment, for silver. The metal was sold in the form of ingots, small blocks, scraps, or even old sickles. To prepare the bronze needed in daily activities, Anatolians depended on the Assyrian caravans bringing the tin from the northwest of Iran and Uzbekistan. Three circular tin ingots, weighing between twenty-five and fifty grams, have been found in a *Kārum* Ib house at Kaniš. The bronze was produced locally, by Anatolian metalworkers (Sturm 2001), to make tools, weapons, and household objects, many of which have been found in the houses and graves of the *kārum*: spearheads, axes, daggers, forks, needles, nails, and chains (T. Özgüç 1986, 2003). The textual documentation mentions a variety of pots, cauldrons, knives, spoons, hoes, axes, sickles, and so on (Dercksen 1996:76–80). Metal workshops have been found at Kültepe; they contained numerous molds for bronze tools, weapons, and ingots (Müller-Karpe 1994:49–66; T. Özgüç 1986:39–51). Other metals circulated in small quantities, such as the expensive native iron imported from Assur or found on the plateau in small deposits; two iron blocks have been unearthed in Peruwa's house in the *kārum* of Kaniš.

## Trade and Commercial Treaties

The inhabitants of Kaniš could buy grain, slaves, animals, and various commodities on the local market. For tin and textiles, the palace and the élite dealt with the Assyrian merchants; the exchanges were ruled by commercial treaties concluded

with each Anatolian ruler. According to these texts, in exchange for several taxes levied on the Assyrian caravans in both directions, the Anatolian ruler promised to protect individuals and goods. In case of murder, he had to deliver the murderer. If goods were lost, he had to replace them. If caravan traffic was stopped because of war, he was sure to be supplied with tin. The Assyrians were settled in *kārums* and *wabartums* that were legally independent from the local authorities. They were protected in the *kārums* as well as on the roads. Anatolian rulers were eager to sign the treaties that guaranteed these relationships to get some profit out of the trade, which was mutually beneficial to both parties.

*Kārum* Ib treaties found in Kaniš and concluded with the ruler of Kaniš, during the reign of Anitta or Zuzu, and with Ḫaḫḫum dignitaries (Günbattı 2004) show a slightly different situation than during *Kārum* II. Some Assyrians, settled in Kaniš and not involved any more in the international trade, were less rich, being strongly indebted and even detained by Anatolians as debt slaves, whereas during the former period, Anatolian rulers had to “wash the debts” of the local population, who were often deeply indebted to Assyrians. In Ḫaḫḫum, three dignitaries were allowed to levy taxes and receive gifts: the “export ministry,” the “second in command,” and the “son-in-law” (Veenhof 2008a:147–82).

## THE SOCIETY OF KANIŠ

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### Social Classes of Anatolian Society

Anatolian society showed an important difference between the palace and its high officials on one hand, and the rest of the population, predominantly farmers and shepherds, on the other. These latter were free but poor people who belonged to the lower class (*ḫupšum*); they were cultivating just enough land for their family subsistence and often had to borrow grain to survive. The land belonged predominantly to the urban élite and to the palace. The high palace officials received some domains and even whole villages from the king, either as a gift that could be sold or as compensation for a service obligation (Dercksen 2004). There were different kinds of service obligation. The *arḫālum*, originally an agricultural tool, encompassed several forms of service, among which was the *unuššum corvée*, attested during *Kārum* Ib (Dercksen 2004:140–47).

Slaves were in charge of different tasks in the households; many of them were debt slaves, sold into slavery by themselves or by a parent. They could be redeemed if double (or more) of the original price was paid within a restricted time limit. Anatolian slave sales were supervised by the local ruler or his representative; the seller was liable to heavy penalties in the case of a claim against the buyer.

## Ethnic Origins of the Kaniš Population

In the *kārum*, Assyrians lived near local merchants. They owned a house in the *kārum*, and bought slaves, food, oil, and wood from the local population. They apparently did not wish to own land, but some Assyrians had a field gained as security for a loan. The Assyrians referred to local inhabitants as *nuwa'um* (Anatolian) without any distinction, but onomastic studies provide us with some clues about their ethnic origin. The anthroponyms quoted in the tablets belong to several different languages, as indicated by some loanwords: Hattic, Luwian, Hittite, and Hurrian (Dercksen 2002; Garelli 1963:127–68; Goedegebuure 2008; Michel 2001:40–41; Wilhelm 2008). The Hattian people spoke an agglutinative language that does not belong to any known linguistic family; they were already settled in the bend of the Kızıl Irmak in the third millennium B.C.E. The Indo-European Luwians arrived in central Anatolia during the last centuries of the third millennium B.C.E. The Hittites came into this area perhaps at the very beginning of the second millennium B.C.E., and they adopted many cultural features of the Hattians. The Indo-European Hittite language was later called *nešili*, “from the city of Neša” (Kaniš). Hurrians arrived from the mountains of Upper Mesopotamia and were well established in the eastern part of Anatolia during the *Kārum* Ib period; the best-known king bearing a Hurrian name was Anum-Ḫirbi, king of Mamma (Wilhelm 2008).

## Communication between Assyrians and Anatolians

Assyrians and Anatolians apparently had no communication problems, so bilingualism must have been fairly common. The very few translators mentioned in the documents were employed by the palace administrations (Michel 2008a, 2010; Ulshöfer 2000; Veenhof 1982). The Assyrians introduced writing to Anatolia, and there is no evidence of an attempt by the Anatolians to adapt the cuneiform script to their language during the *kārum* period. Old Assyrian was used in the commercial treaties drawn between Assyrians and local rulers; it even served as the diplomatic written language between the Anatolian kings. Treaties and royal letters were certainly written by official scribes employed by the palaces. Some Anatolians, such as Peruwa, whose archives were discovered in the *kārum*, adopted the cuneiform script and Old Assyrian dialect. In fact, the Assyrians themselves used a simplified cuneiform script with fewer than 200 signs. Many Assyrians were able to read and write, and this might have encouraged the local people to learn to read and write as well (Kryszat 2008a; Michel 2008a).

The Old Assyrian dialect shows several loanwords borrowed from the Hattic language spoken in the city at least since the beginning of the nineteenth century B.C.E. (Dercksen 2007). Moreover, some Anatolian officials bore titles that did not exist in the Assyrian administration and were thus translated from Hittite or built on Hurrian words; this makes the work of the historians who try to understand the function and activities behind them more complicated.



## Family

Marriage and divorce contracts give information on local family law. Husband and wife enjoyed equal status, and they owned house and goods in common. Both could divorce, and contracts were established under the supervision of the local ruler and his second-in-command. In case of divorce, they shared their house, or the wife could take everything out of the house, including the slaves, and give up her rights on the domain and the linked service obligation (*tuzinnum*). Once the divorce was settled, if the husband or wife made a claim, he or she was subject to a heavy fine and there could even be a death penalty (Veenhof 2003b). After the divorce, children were brought up by either the wife or the husband. When an Anatolian was indebted, he could give his wife and children as a guarantee to his creditor; if he could not pay his debt, then his wife and children became the property of the creditor and they lost their liberty (Michel 2003b).

Adoption is also attested; the adopted child lived with his or her new family. Adults were adopted for economic reasons. One tablet describes a couple who adopted a young man, who then had to sustain his new parents and became their unique heir (Michel 1998; Veenhof 2003b). Several Anatolian contracts dated from *Kārum* Ib show joint ownership among two to four young men presented as brothers (*athū*); they had to share the household with their old parents, even if some of them were already married, to maintain an economically strong household. They thus shared the service duties linked to the property. They could divide the property between them only after the death of their parents (Veenhof 1997).

## The Mixed Community

The relationships between Anatolians and Assyrians were primarily commercial. The first generation of Assyrians who came to Anatolia was made up from men who left their families in Assur; their involvement in the Anatolian society was a purely economical one. They stayed for a while in Anatolia and came back to Assur because they had to take over their family affairs. As more and more Assyrians settled in Kaniš and in other *kārum*s and *wabartum*s, the relations between the two populations changed (Michel 2010; Veenhof 1982). During their long stay in Anatolia, the Assyrians often contracted a second marriage, most of the time with an Anatolian woman. This was done with respect to two rules: they could not have two wives with the same status (*aššatum*, “main wife,” *amtum*, “secondary wife”), and they could not have both wives in the same place (Kienast 2008; Michel 2006b; Veenhof 2003b). The Anatolian wives of the Assyrian merchants stayed at home in Kaniš, bringing up their children, taking care of the household, and doing agricultural tasks, while their husbands were traveling and trading inside Anatolia and sometimes as far as to Assur where their Assyrian wives were waiting for them. When some of the Assyrians went to retire in Assur, they left their Anatolian wives and drew up a divorce contract; the women typically could keep the house in which they lived, the furniture, and some divorce money (Michel 2008b). They usually kept their younger

children, the father paying for their upbringing, but he could decide to take some of his Anatolian children to Assur.

Many Anatolians living in the *kārum* could improve their position in society through the business they conducted with the Assyrians. Some even acted as creditors toward Assyrians and integrated with the Assyrian family firms by choosing their spouses from among the Assyrian community. With the increase of mixed marriages, the *kārum* became a “social colony”—so much so that in several families, brothers and sisters bore Assyrian as well as Anatolian names.

## CONCLUSION

The Old Assyrian presence in Anatolia, known best through its archives excavated at Kültepe, gives an important insight into local culture and history. During the *kārum* period, the Anatolian plateau was divided into city-states and small territorial states, which, through coalitions and wars, became more or less influential. Each state had its own dynasty, with a prince or royal couple who lived in the palace, which represented the state administrative center. Anatolian states developed a very highly organized administration, according to the fifty official titles mentioned in the Old Assyrian archives, without having their own writing system.

The Assyrian presence in central Anatolia during the nineteenth and eighteenth centuries B.C.E. did not have a political character but was purely economic. The Assyrians represented the most numerous foreign people in Anatolia and the best structured community in the *kārum* of Kaniš, where they lived together with local inhabitants and other foreigners. The relationships between Assyrians and Anatolians were first commercial and then evolved with an increasing number of mixed marriages between the two communities into a “social colony.”

The nineteenth century B.C.E. is very well documented, but there are many fewer tablets for the eighteenth century B.C.E., and we do not know how the Old Assyrian trade in Anatolia came to an end. A general impoverishment of the Assyrians not involved anymore in the international trade can be observed. Their departure seems to be the consequence of a deteriorated political situation among the Anatolian states. With the departure of the Assyrians, writing disappeared from Anatolia within a century, to be reintroduced later in a different form by the Hittites.

## NOTES

1. Buruṣhattum, Durḥumit, Ḥaḥḥum, Ḥattuš, Kaniš, Niḥria, Nenašša, Šaladuwar, Šalahšuwa, Šamuḥa, Šimala, Šinaḥutum, Tawinia, Tegarama, Timilkia, Tišmurna, Tuḥpiya, Uršu, Waḥšušana, southern Zalpa.

2. Amkuwa, Ḥanaknak, Ḥurrama, Karaḥna, Kuburnat, Kuššara, Mamma, Šamuḥa, Šuppilulia, Ulama, Upē, Ušša, Wašḥania, northern Zalpa, Zimishuna.
3. Durḥumit, Kaniš, Kuburnat, Šamuḥa, Šaladuwar, Šuppilulia, Tawinia, Tegarama, Waḥšušana?, Wašḥania.
4. Amkuwa, Ḥurrama?, Mamma, Šamuḥa, Tegarama, Timilkia?
5. Some rulers are mentioned by a nisbe in Hattuš, Nenašša, Waḥšušana, and Timilkia.
6. Amkuwa, Buruḥattum, Durḥumit, Hattuš, Ḥurrama, Kaniš, Kuburnat, Luḥusaddia, Mamma, Nenašša, Šinahutum, Tawinia, Timilkia, Tuḥpia, Waḥšušana, Wašḥania.
7. During this period, rulers are also attested in Amkuwa, Kaniš, Luḥusaddia, Mamma, Šalahšuwa, and Tawinia.
8. Buruḥattum (Garelli 1989), Durḥumit (Michel 1991), Ḥurrama, Kaniš, Luḥusaddia, Niḥria, Nenašša, Šamuḥa, Tegarama, Tišmurna, Waḥšušana, Wašḥania, and both Zalpas.

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