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Ritual Allsorts:

An archaeology of domestic religious admixture in Kültepe-Kaneš

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The Middle Bronze Age city of Kaneš (modern Kültepe in south central Anatolia) is principally famous for the rich corpus of cuneiform documents retrieved from the houses of its resident merchants, most of whom were from the north Mesopotamian city of Assur (Qal'at Sherqat in Iraq) (Fig.1). Equally significant, however, are the physical remains of the dwellings in which Mesopotamian expatriates lived alongside local Anatolians, often within the same households as foreign and local communities intermingled through marriage and business interests. Decades of continuous excavation at Kültepe have exposed large portions of residential neighbourhoods in a well-preserved lower town. Conspicuous within Kültepe's rich household assemblages are portable cult paraphernalia as well as permanent ritual installations which point to a diverse set of ritual practices embedded in domestic settings. This constitutes a substantial body of material evidence with tremendous significance to inform our understanding of the religious life of ancient Kaneš, which has largely remained limited to textual reconstructions to the extent that a meaningful archaeological record for religious practices has been assumed to be non-existent (Barjamovic and Larsen 2008: 153; Taracha 2009: 25).

This article presents an overview of the principal categories of ritually significant artefacts and installations encountered within domestic spaces at Kültepe-Kaneš. In reconstructing how these objects may have functioned within distinct but interrelated customs and practices, inferences made from the archaeological evidence can be further strengthened by textual and iconographic sources. This way, interpretations such as why a particular type of vessel is likely to be associated with ritual activity, or in what order the different stages of a particular rite may have been carried out, can be proposed with greater confidence. The resulting synthesis highlights the distinct ways in which otherwise ordinary living spaces could serve as permanent or *ad hoc* sacred settings.

The nature of the archaeological evidence from Kültepe places this site in an unparalleled position to inform the broader religious history of Anatolia in the Middle Bronze Age. Prior to the emergence of the centralised Hittite state and its official cult (see Gates 2017) which was organised formally around temples, no comparably

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obvious religious institutions/structures are evident in the archaeological record (Heffron 2016: 23-24). In order to investigate the archaeology of religion for Middle Bronze Age Anatolia, one instead has to turn to other bodies of evidence, mostly from extramural cemeteries, most famously at Yanarlar (Emre 1978), Gordion (Mellink 1956) or Ilıca (Orthmann 1967); or the more recently excavated examples from Çavlum (Bilgen 2005) and Dedemezarı (Üyümez *et al.* 2007; see also Koçak 2013). A richer source of archaeological evidence for ritual behaviour can be found at Kültepe-Kaneš, where the excavated remains of private houses also contain graves in addition to a variety of other permanent installations as well as portable paraphernalia.

Evidence for domestic religion at ancient Kaneš holds a significance far beyond the archaeology of ritual at Kültepe or even the general history of Anatolian religion. Given the particular circumstances surrounding Kaneš as headquarters for Assyrian business operations across Anatolia, evidence for domestic ritual activity can shed a great deal of light on the social history of its highly heterogenous community of locals, expatriates and migrants often brought into shared households through mixed marriages. The position of the house as a nexus for cross-cultural interaction at Kaneš is all the more enhanced by the evident concentration of ritual activity in domestic settings which almost certainly acted as a catalyst for cross-cultural exposure and reciprocal amalgamation of Anatolian and Mesopotamian religious traditions (Heffron and Highcock, forthcoming). Household religion at Kaneš is thus not only a fascinating area of investigation in its own right, but can also inform wider discussions of cultural admixture and negotiations of ethno-religious identity in a diverse Middle Bronze Age community.

Historically, however, the archaeology of household religion at Kültepe-Kaneš has not been the subject of detailed contextual discussions or extensive interpretative analysis even though objects of ritual significance, especially vessels, have been a favourite subject in numerous publications (Özgüç 1979; 1991; 1992; 1994; 1998; 2002a; 2002b). Concerned principally with catalogue typologies, previous studies do not consider functional analyses, affordances, or contextual associations of vessels as a means of reconstructing their possible significance and use as ritual objects. Although Tahsin Özgüç has made remarkably intuitive assertions *that* certain objects and object types were used for ritual purposes inside Kanešean homes, he seldom dwelled on the questions of *why* and *how*.

HOUSES AND HOUSEHOLD SPACE AT KÜLTEPE

At its most basic, the ground plan of a typical Kültepe house (e.g. House 1, Fig.2) consists of a large rectangular main room and/or courtyard and a smaller back room, often divided into two individual spaces, each of which can generally be entered directly from the main room and are, therefore, equally physically accessible (see Brusasco 2007). Most houses exposed in Kültepe's Lower Town are elaborations on this basic layout, the larger and more complex structures incorporating more rooms of various sizes added along up to three sides of the main room, but never fully

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surrounded as sometimes encountered in contemporary Mesopotamian domestic architecture.

The main room/courtyard is often paved with flat stones along one wall, which presumably corresponds to an unroofed area. Main room/courtyard spaces are regularly furnished with fire installations (such as large *tandırs* built against a wall, often in the corner of a room and sometimes accompanied by horseshoe hearths and occasionally portable braziers) and 'bath-tubs' (i.e. large, deep, rectangular thick-walled basins of coarse clay most likely used for water storage and/or washing). Cooking vessels and grinding stones are also typically found in these rooms, which must have served as general food preparation and service areas. Presumably these rooms were the busiest and the most public portion of a house, in which the household came together, and guests were received in what we can think of as a semi-formal reception area often accessible directly from the street or else entered through a small 'antechamber'. Internally, the main room/courtyards tend to have the largest number of access points in the form of doorways leading into other rooms in the house. In larger houses, main room/courtyards tend to occupy central positions separating front rooms of high physical accessibility from back rooms that are relatively more private, secluded areas of lower physical accessibility. Doorways, whether internal or external, are almost always positioned near corners and/or on short walls to produce a bent axis approach. Particularly external doorways providing access into the house from the street are often placed near the corner in the long wall of a rectangular room, thus hiding the main portion of the room from direct visual access (e.g. Room 1 in House 2, Fig.3). The excavators cite ample evidence suggesting upper stories were common (Özgüç and Özgüç 1953: 12-14, 101-2; Özgüç 1959: 29-30) and some plans show spaces for staircases (e.g. in one corner of Room 3 in House 1 [Fig.2]; one end of Room 3 in House 3 [Fig.4], or between Rooms 1 and 14 in House 4 [Fig.5]). Sleeping quarters were almost certainly located on upper stories, leaving ground floor areas to be used for storage, food preparation and other household work, and perhaps also to keep animals as is the custom in modern village houses in the region.

On the one hand, *in situ* preservation of a variety of furnishings such as storage vessels, kitchen equipment, or containers for tablets are extremely useful for reconstructing space use on ground floors. On the other hand, unless published photographs actually show assemblages exposed *in situ*, it is not possible to distinguish from excavation reports whether small finds reported for a particular space come from primary contexts such as room floors or from secondary contexts such as fill or collapse layers.

ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVIDENCE FOR RITUAL ACTIVITY

Archaeological evidence for domestic rituals at Kaneš manifest both as fixtures built into the architectural space of the house, an also as portable paraphernalia. Fixed installations consist mainly of graves below room floors, as well as a small number of stone stelae whose function may have included but was not necessarily limited to funerary rites (Heffron 2016). Portable paraphernalia are best represented by a large

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corpus of elaborate ritual vessels, predominantly of zoomorphic character (Fig. 6) but including a range of other shapes as well (Özgüç 2002a; 2002b). Notably, plain 'utilitarian' wares such as spouted pouring vessels or footed bowls, which were no doubt used for a large variety of household tasks, can also be counted among ritual paraphernalia where they occur in contexts and/or clear association with other items suitable for cult activity. Kültepe houses have also produced a variety of supernatural representations in the form of mould-made lead miniatures which may have served as apotropaia (Heffron 2017). The latter function can also be extended to the small number of ritual texts recovered from Kültepe houses (Michel 1997; Barjamovic 2015), which would have been viewed as magical objects with a supernatural agency in their own right (Reiner 1960; Rüster 1983; Heeßel 2004; Panayotov 2018). Those texts whose content aligns closely with the central concerns of family religion such as facilitating a safe birth and the preservation of infants (Michel 1997) are especially significant (see also Barjamovic 2015 on incantation texts from Kültepe).

Permanent installations: stelae

Although small in number, stone stelae make up a conspicuous group of installations marking permanent ritual space above ground. These roughly shaped stone uprights, approximately 1m in height and tapering towards the top, recall the so-called 'obelisk' featured on a stamp seal worship scene from contemporary Acemhöyük (Fig.7), confirming their significance as markers of ritual settings. Where discovered *in situ*, stone stelae were built into stone receptacles and/or in association with pouring vessels (which themselves are in keeping with a ritual function), strongly suggesting they were used for activities involving water, such as liquid offerings (Heffron 2016) or washing (following Winter 1999). There seems to be no clear association between stelae and graves but this does not necessarily exclude funerary rites from the broader range of ritual meaning attributed to these installations (Heffron 2016: 32-33).

Permanent installations: sub-floor graves

The presence of graves below house floors can be viewed as a way in which domestic space was permanently transformed into a liminal space where both the living and dead members of a household co-habited (see Patrier 2013). At Kültepe, in-house graves are a highly conspicuous feature of the residential quarter of the Lower Town, although not all dwellings possess them. There is evidence that some houses served as small-scale grave sites post-abandonment (Yazıcıoğlu Santamaria 2015: 240). Most graves, however, appear to have been placed below living floors and therefore are contemporary with occupation, which means that one of the widespread uses of domestic space (or a selected area within domestic space) was as a primary context of burial and associated mortuary rites at the time of interment as well as continuing funerary rituals after the burial episode, such as offerings or invocations (see below).

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As in contemporary Old Babylonian Ur, where graves have been discovered below the floors of all kinds of rooms, sometimes even in staircase spaces or areas identified as toilets (Battini 1999: pls. 277-79, 301; 2017: 98), the distribution of graves across domestic space in Kanešean houses does not seem to adhere to a strict rule. A broad preference for main room/courtyard areas is nonetheless evident, however, suggesting a patterned rather than random behaviour (Winter 1999). This recalls the broad correspondence between ritually significant installations and reception rooms at Old Babylonian Ur (Battini 2017) and likewise at Nippur where graves are again reported regularly below central rooms (McCown and Haines 1967: 39) in which the family presumably gathered around the main hearth, ate, and perhaps also slept. This in turn implies graveside activity was likewise communal. Main room/courtyard areas (or reception rooms), which are often the most spacious areas in a house, would have accommodated larger gatherings to include most if not all of the members of a household (and perhaps also visitors) as opposed to being restricted to a smaller number of specific individuals. Battini's (2017) proposal to rethink Old Babylonian houses as being equipped with multifunctional reception rooms in which most ritual activity clustered, rather than looking to find designated chapel areas reserved exclusively for cultic use, also applies to Kaneš.

It is not possible to offer here an exhaustive account of all categories of grave goods encountered at Kültepe. The following discussion will therefore focus on two particularly conspicuous types of paraphernalia which lend themselves especially well to inferring funerary rites around the time of burial and are therfore especially informative for reconstructing ritual activity within the domestic setting.

The first category is that of pottery vessels, which are a standard component of graves not only at Kültepe but also in contemporary cemeteries across central Anatolia (see Akyurt 1998). At Kültepe, as elsewhere, vessels recovered in association with burials come mainly in the form of pouring types, among which beak-spouted pitchers are the most common, followed closely by trefoil-mouth jugs and teapots (Figs.8-10).

Needless to say, the basic function of such vessels makes them suitable for a wide range of contexts. Most ubiquitous among these is the beak-spouted pitcher (German *Schnabelkanne;* Turkish *gaga ağızlı testi*), a standard part of the Anatolian ceramics repertoire, with a long history on either side of the second millennium. Notwithstanding their quotidian use as simple household items, the preponderance of beak-spouted pitchers in and around graves across central Anatolia throughout the Bronze Age situates Kültepe securely within the wider context of regional trends attesting to widespread use of these objects as funerary paraphernalia. According to Özgüç (1953), it is often the better quality, thin-walled and highly burnished examples which have been deposited in graves while thicker-walled and generally coarser wares were associated with contexts of daily use above ground. Another popular type of libation vessel is the trefoil-mouth pitcher, often found in similar archaeological contexts as its beak-spouted counterpart. Together with common bi- and quatrefoil forms, the trefoil-mouth pitcher is conspicuous in burials, where the excavators again report higher quality examples (Özgüç and Özgüç 1953: 41).

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Three key ritual functions (none mutually exclusive) can be considered for these objects. The most obvious is as libation vessels used for making liquid offerings to the dead and/or other supernatural entities such as demons or deities whose presence was expected at the time of burial. In iconography, beak-spouted pitchers are familiar from *kārum* period glyptic (e.g. Özgüç 1965: pl.XVI/49b; see also White 1993: 277-78) as well as in later Hittite art, perhaps most famously on the İnandık Vase (Gates 2017: fig.6) where worshippers pour out libations in divine presence. The close similarities between Early Bronze Age forms of beak-spouted pitchers and contemporary lead miniatures (Canby 1965: 45), which, given the likely amuletic use of such miniatures (Heffron 2017) might even suggest that the beak-spouted pitcher was recognised as a visual shorthand for an icon of libation. Furthermore, libation may well have been considered a fundamental function of such vessels as suggested by the Hittite term *išpanduwa-*, which Alp (1967: 518) equates with the archaeologically attested type of the beak-spouted pitcher, derives from the term *šipant-*, "to libate/make an offering." Two other terms, *išpantuzzi* and *išpantuzzieššar*, likewise derived from *šipant-*, appear to be synonymous with each other as well as with *išpanduwa-* and used variously to refer to the libation liquid as well as the vessel itself (Alp 1967: 522, 525). Given the demonstrable continuity between *kārum* period rituals and Hittite cult (Heffron 2020), particularly in relation to the use of ritual vessels (Heffron 2014; Kahya 2017; White 1993: 277-78), it is not unlikely a similar association also existed at Kültepe.

It is equally likely that pouring vessels may have been used to serve drinks to participants at a funeral. Textual evidence from Kültepe corroborates commensality being a part of mortuary rites practiced within Kanešean households. A set of documents relating to the funerary preparations for Ištar-Lamassī, an Assyrian woman whose affairs were settled by her Anatolian second husband Lullu includes itemised lists of funerary expenses for which Lullu was expecting to be reimbursed by his Assyrian in-laws (Veenhof 2008; 2010). Consumables make up a large proportion of the expenses, which suggests a relatively sizeable funerary meal for the family and/or other participants reinforcing the communal aspect of funerary rituals. The preparations for Ištar-Lamassī's funeral also incurred charges for the services of professional wailers, which point to yet another discrete rite around the time of burial, also reinforcing its communal performative aspect.

Finally, we must also acknowledge that spouted pouring vessels may have been used for ritually significant acts of washing/cleansing, as proposed by Winter (1999: 243) for spouted jugs from the Royal Cemetery at Ur. One of Winter's key considerations for such a function is the preponderance of these vessels in the fill surrounding the grave, as opposed to having been placed inside the tomb, next to the deceased. Excavation reports from Kültepe do not provide the necessary resolution of data to say whether any of the pouring vessels attributed to graves were in fact discovered in the surrounding fill. There is, however, evidence for such a pattern from the contemporary extramural cemetery site of Yanarlar. Here, in addition to vessels placed inside the pithoi, Emre (1978: 15) reports that pitchers were regularly found immediately outside, near the mouth of the pithos sealed by a large stone. As such,

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their deposition outside the grave points to a distinct stage of funerary activity. This activity could have involved a round of libation and/or drinks specifically timed post-interment; or to allow participants to ritually cleanse themselves after having attended a funeral. This range of possibilities certainly stands for Kültepe.

A second category of grave good, which, unlike vessels, seem to have served a much narrower, perhaps exclusively funerary purpose, is that of thin sheets of metal (most often gold, occasionally silver and very rarely electrum) which the excavators report having discovered *in situ* on the faces of the deceased, clearly placed as eye and mouth covers (see Heffron 2020) (Fig.11). The textual correlates of eye- and mouth-covers made of gold come from the later Hittite royal funerary ritual (Kassian, Korolëv, Sidel'tsev 2002), at one stage during the course of which the deceased must have been lying in repose, in a kind of farewell ceremony (Van den Hout 1994). Assuming a similar component also existed for funerary rituals carried out in and around the domestic settings which already served as the primary settings of burial (at least for certain individuals) at Kültepe, the residential house also served as designated spaces for performative display (Heffron 2020).

Funerary rites are by no means limited to rituals carried out at or around the time of interment. We know from ample textual references that *kispum* rites, a widespread Mesopotamian practice of making regular food offerings to the family dead, was also practices by Assyrian merchants. Sub-floor graves excavated in Kanešean houses, therefore, can be seen as the focal points of continued funerary rituals – whether they were carried out in Mesopotamian fashion, which we know from texts to recognise as *kispum* and/or according to local Anatolian customs which surely also made similar provisions of the dead.

The extent to which graves below floors were accompanied by installations or portable paraphernalia above ground, however, is not always clear from recorded archaeological evidence. One excellent but rare case of *in situ* evidence from grave-side rituals comes from the house attributed to an Assyrian merchant by the name of Adad-Sululi (House 1, Fig.2). The ground plan shows a modest three-room structure with a typical layout comprising a large main room/courtyard, with two smaller rooms leading out to it from one of the short sides. Adad-Sululi's tablets were located in Room 1. In Room 2, a fruit-stand was discovered *in situ*, where it had been placed on two "carefully laid" flat stones in the south-west corner of the room. In addition, presence of five individual graves below the floor of Room 2 (Özgüç 1959: 27-28) strongly suggests that the fruit-stand on the flagstones marked a ritual installation associated with funerary offerings.

Given the unusual concentration of graves into a relatively small space below the floor of Room 2, Özgüç has suggested this was a 'grave room' set aside exclusively for burial. In several other house he similarly identified 'grave rooms' which were evidently sealed off and abandoned whilst occupation continued in the remainder of the dwelling (Özgüç 1959: 9-12). Published evidence such as *in situ* kitchen facilities in areas ostensibly removed from the quotidian life of the house (Özgüç 1959: 9-10); or the presence of stairways offering alternative points of access into rooms with blocked

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doorways (Özgüç 1959: 39), contradict the exclusionary use of domestic space for burials.

Even if we do accept that the rooms discussed by Özgüç were permanently sealed and abandoned, a demonstrable link with grave construction is not evident. Nothing, in other words, suggests that certain rooms may have gone out of use as the direct result of ritual concerns. The line of reasoning in Battini's (2017: 91) critical reassessment of "sacral" altars even domestic chapels initially proposed for Ur also applies here "it is easier to accept the 'religious' interpretation of an object considered until now as an ordinary one than to refuse the religious interpretation for a common one."

Portable paraphernalia: ritual vessels

Outside of burial contexts, ceramic vessels again make up the most ubiquitous type of portable ritual paraphernalia across Kanešean domestic space. The same generic types that turn up regularly in graves, such as the beak-spouted pitchers, can only be included in this group if and when contextual associations justify such a purpose (e.g. association with stelae as discussed above). Certain other types of elaborate vessels, on the other hand, do invite interpretation as purpose-made artefacts produced *specially* for ritual use, some perhaps even cult objects in their own right. This group is best represented by zoomorphic vessels, but also include anthropomorphic examples as well (Fig.12) (see Heffron 2014: 182-84 for 'divine cups' as possible representations of gods/goddesses). There are also a miscellaneous vessels shaped in the form of various inanimate objects, such as boots or grape clusters which we can assume signified things meaningful in a ritual context (unless they were simply novelty items for amusement).

We know that the zoomorphic vessels from Kültepe houses are the forerunners of the Hittite *BIBRU* vessels, which were used for libations as well as collective acts of cultic drinking referred to as 'god-drinking' (DINGIR *eku*-) in Hittite sources (Heffron 2014). The same phrase, no doubt referring to a comparable drinking rite, has recently been attested in an Old Assyrian text from Kültepe (Kahya 2017), which now validates the proposal that this type of cultic drinking in Hittite temple-based religion had its roots in domestic practices of the *kārum* period at Kaneš (Heffron 2014). These vessels would be suitable as cult objects in their own right as we know Hittite *BIBRU* certainly were (Pilavcı 2017: 137).

Compared to other Anatolian sites, Kültepe boasts by far the most substantial repertoire of zoomorphic vessels, which almost exclusively come from domestic assemblages. Özgüç (1994: 222-3) distinguishes between eight types:

1 Drinking vessels in the shape of standing/reclining animals; or boots
2 Drinking vessels in the shape of a trough or boat, with animal heads as spouts
3 Same as 2) but with the addition of a human figure inside and birds perched on the sides
4 Jugs and pitchers with spouts in the shape of an animal head

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5 Fruit-stands and cups with animal figures on the rim
6 Beak-spouted pitchers with figurines on the handle
7 Jars and beak-spouted pitchers with a human face in relief on the body
8 Jars with animals in relief on the body

There is no one way to organise a typology, which can be constructed in numerous ways depending on why we wish to classify a group of objects in the first place. Specifically in aid of reconstructing ritual practices, it may be more useful to group zoomorphic vessels by the types of activities they could facilitate, that is, by the ways a vessel would be functionally suitable for using/manipulating liquids in a particular way (similarly in Pilavcı 2017 for Hittite *BIBRU*). Considered this way, it is possible to make a distinction between serving vessels which aid precision pouring, such as spouted pitchers or teapots, used as an intermediary receptacle actively transferring liquid, such as four making libations, serving drinks, or for washing. Open vessels can also be used for serving if liquids are removed by means of ladles, dippers, or perhaps directly by drinking cups, like a punch bowl. Open vessels are also suitable for the display of their contents and could equally have been used as receptacles for pouring liquids *in* rather than *out*. Some large open vessels with spouts, and indeed zoomorphic vessels with a high necks placed on the back of the animal and a spout in its mouth were probably designed to serve both purposes, namely to collect the liquid via one opening and to transfer it out the other. Especially for zoomorphic vessels, we cannot ignore that liquid passing *through* the body of an animal is an "evocative process" (Heffron 2014: 275). This would be a distinct function from zoomorphic (or anthropomorphic) vessels which only facilitated a *filling* of a human/animal form with liquid which a participant would then drink directly.

Finally, there are vessels suitable for direct consumption, in the form of small cups with or without handles. Large, open vessels could also have served for direct consumption if used with straws, in Mesopotamian fashion.

Some vessels were probably cult objects in their own right, serving as the *focus* of ritual action rather than tools to carry it out. In particular, vessels bearing crowded scenes of appliqué human and animal figures fit very well into this category as they appear to recreate ritual scenes. A self-referential ritual scene, for instance, is evident from a zoomorphic spouted round bowl occupied by a clay figurine evidently filling a small vessel from a miniature zoomorphic spout (Heffron 2016: 30, fig.8). Some kind of ritual activity also seems to be referenced by shallow, rectangular vessels with ram's head spouts in which oarsmen occasionally appear (Özgüç 2003: 185-92). The most elaborate example of this type carries a tall, structure with windows and a flat roof on which a bird is perched, perhaps representing a shrine (Özgüç 2003: 192; Figs. 222-24). Inside the structure is a female figurine wearing the typical round headdress of divinity, while her companions, one at the back of the bot behind the structure and the other in front, leaning over the edge of the boat as he rows, both sport conical caps worn by male divinities. Özgüç (2003: 186-92) has proposed this vessel to be a direct representation of Mesopotamian religious festivals in which deities (in the form of divine statues) would sail down the river. What is abundantly clear is that this and

other similar vessels do deliberately recreate ritual activities, perhaps even specific events, thereby potentially transforming the function of a vessel from a ritual tool to a ritual in and of itself.

Although contextual information on Kültepe finds leaves much to be desired, there are still some interesting observations to be made from the broad distribution of ritual vessels around domestic houses. Özgüç (1994: 221) reports that unlike ordinary pots and pans found in kitchens and similar work areas, ritual vessels were encountered in "specially prepared places in living rooms or particularly in archive and storage rooms." A close examination of the published excavation records, however, suggests this statement needs some revision.

First to be called into question is the indiscriminate labelling of any and all rooms in which tablets were discovered as 'archive rooms' (Özgüç 2004), a term which misleadingly suggests entire rooms were devoted to the storage of cuneiform documents, when it is far more likely that it was *parts* of rooms reserved for such a purpose. For instance, tablets making up the archive of the merchant Kuliya were discovered *in situ* inside a small recess in the corner of Room 4 in House 5 (Fig.13) attributed to a merchant named Kuliya Veenhof (2010: 13-14) has pointed out that such spaces (described as cupboards by Özgüç) might well correspond to the term *huršum*, as mentioned in a letter addressed to Kuliya from the very same archive: "We opened the *huršum* and took out your tablet coffer (*tamalakkum*) a tablet."

There are numerous examples of cuneiform documents being kept in small storage rooms located in relatively more private parts of a house, no doubt in order to limit and better control access to important documents. Where ritual vessels have also been found in such rooms, we may conclude that these items were also set aside as special items and removed from the sphere of busy daily activity.

In House 6 (Fig.14) ritual vessels were found in two small self-contained storage areas located at the back of the house: a pair of boot-shaped cups placed alongside tablets and envelopes in Room 4, and three zoomorphic vessels (two hares and a pig) in Room 3 which also held a stone-lined bin. In House 7 (Fig.15) two narrow compartments (Rooms 6 and 7) at the south end of Room 3 served as storage spaces exclusively for pottery vessels: a large number of cups, pitchers, teapots and other vessels, alongside which was an anthropomorphic vessel (Özgüç 2003: 214).

More often, however, the great majority of ritual vessels for which findspots have been recorded come not from relatively more secluded back rooms or storage spaces, but from main rooms or courtyards used as kitchen or service areas, sharing the same space with a wide range of quotidian utensils installations such as hearths, large water basins ('bath tubs'), and generic work areas. Perhaps we ought to think in terms of a distinction between settings for the storage of ritual object as opposed to settings of their use (see Battini 2017: 101 for a similar suggestion).

A good example to illustrate this comes from the large house attributed to the Anatolian businessman Peruwa (House 4, Fig.5), boasting more than a dozen rooms only on the ground floor, with a staircase in Room 13 attesting to an upper story. There was plenty of choice for where and how ritual vessel should be kept. Zoomorphic vessels and associated Alişar III ware drinking cups were discovered in Room 1, a

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typical courtyard entered through a small room opening directly onto the street, partly roofed over by a portico and furnished with a sizeable horseshoe hearth on a platform in the corner. Another drinking set, this time consisting of cups placed inside a fruitstand, was discovered in what appears to have been a basement storage area (Room 12) for which the excavation report also records an unspecified number of cuneiform tablets, envelopes, various vessels along the walls including beak-spouted vessels whose mouths were covered (Özgüç 1959: 34-6; 1953: 103-4), indicating that they were full at the time of deposition. Room 9, another storage space, also contained small drinking cups (Özgüç 2003) though these do not seem to have been in association with ritual vessels as part of a special set. It is likely that the vessels in Rooms 12 and 9 were found in a secondary setting of *storage* whereas the set comprising a zoomorphic vessel and Alişar III cups from the main room/courtyard was discovered in its primary setting of *use*.

The large Room 2 of House 8 (Fig.16) is a typical courtyard space which was probably unroofed over the stone paving and large oven built along the east wall. The small stone-paved 'larder' space (Room 1) in the northwest corner contained cooking wares including an *in situ* pot near the oven, an ash pan, an a horseshoe hearth with a grinding stone nearby (Özgüç 1959: 32), consistent with regular domestic activities around food preparation. Room 2 also contained fine wares including a zoomorphic vessel of unspecified type, a bull-spouted fruit-stand, and a ram-spouted boat-vessel, indicating that the presence of special ritual paraphernalia was compatible with all the other domestic tasks this room served to accommodate.

As for the "specially prepared places in living rooms", published reports provide only one case that fits this description. In the courtyard (Room 1) of House 8 (Fig.16), the excavators uncovered what is described as a plastered shelf, upon which was a group of *in situ* fineware vessels including several jars, basket-handled cups, and grape-cluster vessels (Özgüç 1959: 11). These 'good' vessels on display were thus set apart from coarsewares and cooking pots but still kept in the same room.

The overall regularity with which ritual vessels have been discovered the busiest and most public parts of the house rather than being placed more regularly in secluded back rooms or storage areas such as where tablets were often kept would suggest a high degree of embeddedness of ritual within other components of the ordinary life of a household. Furthermore, the ubiquitous presence of ritual vessels in central areas of food processing and other domestic activity further reinforces the communal nature of involving the use of such vessels, again in keeping with shared cultic drinking – we can imagine the members of the household passing drinks around, taking turns consuming.

Communal participation in household rituals is particularly significant in a social context within which many, perhaps most, households were mixed – indeed we do have the archaeological correlates of cult practices pointing both to Syro-Mesopotamian preferences (such as in-house graves, and stone stelae) as well as those of Anatolian origin (such as the funerary eye- and mouth-covers and zoomorphic vessels). Domestic space was therefore not *only* ritual space, but a *composite* space of ritual admixture facilitating and reinforcing coherence within a very diverse social

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context, but presumably also allowing individual preferences and distinct cultural traditions to be played out.

CONCLUSION

In keeping with the broad multifunctionality of domestic spaces in the ancient Near East, residential structures at Kaneš also served a variety of purposes. The conspicuous architectural arrangements of rows of small spaces with direct street access have been identified as possible shops (Özgüç 1953), while assemblages comprising ingots, crucibles, pot bellows, blow pipes, melting pots, and stone moulds (Kulakoğlu and Kangal 2011: 271-80) attest to at least three individual structures to have served as small scale metallurgical workshops (Topçuoğlu 2014: 125-6). Loom weights recovered from private houses (Kulakoğlu and Kangal 2010: 236-7; Lassen 2014: 261) suggest that textile production, whether for household consumption or for economic gain, would also have been part of regular domestic activities. Needless to say, the sheer presence of merchants' cuneiform archives in houses speaks to dwellings doubling as offices where business was often conducted while merchandise was certainly stored in merchants' homes. There is also some evidence that a degree of scribal education was carried out in domestic settings (Barjamovic 2015).

The domestic house also served as a religious setting in which a series of distinct but interrelated spheres of ritual activity took place. Archaeological evidence for household rituals manifests in the form of permanent fixtures as well portable paraphernalia, each pointing to different modes by which the domestic setting could be transformed into a liminal space on a temporary or *ad hoc* basis (Heffron 2016: 26).

Most conspicuously, the presence of sub-floor graves immediately situates the ordinary domestic setting in a permanent state of liminality whereby the worlds of the living and the dead are juxtaposed in a shared space. Whether at Kaneš or elsewhere, the use of domestic setting as funerary settings (the house, effectively, being also a cemetery), suggests a strong sense of family ownership of the dead, and an emphasis on intergenerational continuity whereby the social role of ancestors is configured heavily in relation to the concerns and well-being of the family and the household. It is important to remember that the significance of generational continuity lies not only with a family's relationship with its ancestors in order to maintain ties between the present and the past but extends also into the future as a family seeks to secure the well-being of infants and children through magical protection as well as rites surrounding pregnancy and birth.

Significant in this regard is the motif of what has been called a 'divine family' found frequently in miniature lead figurines (Emre 1971), which almost certainly fulfilled a magically protective function as personal and/or household apotropaia (Heffron 2017). In what is clearly a stock theme usually made up of a standing male and a female holding an infant and sometimes with an additional older child standing at her side, the broad significance of this group is in keeping with ideas of offspring and generational continuity, even though its precise meaning may escape us (Heffron 2017: 288, 293).

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Although not as frequent as graves, other types of installations built into the house such as stone stelae and associated basins, and ritual deposits, further point to the variety of ways in which a house could be marked as a permanent ritual setting. Different installations would have facilitated different types of rituals.

Finally, portable paraphernalia, most conspicuous in the form of a rich variety of vessels suitable for libations, drinking rites, and possibly also acts of ritual washing or cleansing, alert us to yet another level of versatility in the use of domestic space as settings in which to make offerings to supernatural beings such as the dead and/or deities, participate in ritual commensality, and presumably also purificatory rites. Notably, the presence of drinking sets points to the communal aspect of at least some household rituals in which we can expect most or all members to have participated. Among vessels used for ritual purposes, zoomorphic types certainly fulfilled a specialist role in facilitating communication with the divine, as suggested by textual references to ritual drinking acts establishing a bond between human and divine participants (Heffron 2014: 171).

Inevitably, extant evidence can only offer a partial (and surely distorted!) view of the full constellation of ideas surrounding domestic space as ritual settings. Nonetheless, the sources available to us do point to a tremendously wide range of concerns such as the desire to attract good supernatural presence whilst warding off evil; easing rites of passage such as birth and death; invoking and caring for ancestors; and carrying out divine worship through libations and offerings.

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