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A Hurrian-Mitanni Temple in Müslüman-tepe in The Upper Tigris and New Findings

Yukarı Dicle Bölgesinde Müslüman-tepe’de Açığa Çıkarılan Bir Hurri-Mitanni Tapınağı ve Ortaya Koyduğu Yeni Bulgular

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ÖZ

Müslüman-tepe Yukarı Dicle Bölgesinde Hurri-Mitanni kültürleri açısından önemli bir merkezdir. Eski Tunç Çağında sur ile çevrili saray yapısı dikkat çekicidir. Orta Tunç Çağına tarihlendirilen tapınak yapısı ve içindeki *in-situ* kült objeleri Hurri-Mitanni Dönemi tapınak mimarisi ve dini ritüelleri hakkında önemli bulgular sunmaktadır. Yapılan karşılaştırmalarda Müslüman-tepe’nin Saray ve Tapınağının Kuzey Suriye’deki özellikle de Amik ovasındaki Hurrilerle ilişkili Orta Tunç Çağı Saray ve Tapınaklarının öncüleri olabileceği sonucuna ulaşılmıştır. Kült objeleri gerek tapınak içinde gerekse dışarıda icra edilen Hurri(-Mitanni) dini bayram ve ritüellerinin anlaşılmasına imkân vermiştir. Müslüman-tepe kazıları, Hititlerin baharda kutladıkları bayramı olan AN.TAH.ŞUM’un Hurri kökenine ilişkin yazılı belgelerin yanısıra arkeolojik kanıtlar sunmuştur. Tapınak buluntuları ilginç bir biçimde daha önce Gütterbock’un İlluyanka Efsanesi bağlamında dikkat çektiği Hurri-Greek panteon ilişkisine yeni bir boyut kazandırmıştır; Atina’da Apollo Tapınağında açığa çıkarılan kehanetle ilgili Zeus Ompholosu kaidesi ve çarkıfelek mili (silindirik taşı)nın bir benzeri Müslüman-tepe Hurri-Mitanni tapınağından ele geçmiştir. Böylece Eski Önasya dünyasıyla Antik Yunan dünyası arasında bilinen birçok direkt ya da dolaylı ilişkiyi pekiştirmiştir.

ABSTRACT

Concerning the Hurrian and Mitanni period, Muslumantepe appears to had been an important center in the Upper Tigris region. What is particularly remarkable here is a palace structure from the Early Bronze Age surrounded by city walls. The temple from the Middle Bronze Age and the *in-situ* cult objects provide important insights into the temple architecture and religious rituals of the Hurrian-Mitanni Period. The comparisons show that the Palace and Temple in Müslüman-tepe could be the earliest of the Middle Bronze Age Palaces and Temples related to the Hurrians in Northern Syria, especially in the Amuq Plain. The cult objects provide a better insight into Hurrian-Mitanni religious festivals and rituals conducted both inside and outside the temples. The excavations in Müslüman-tepe provided archaeological evidence supporting the written documents on the Hurrian origins of AN.TAH.ŞUM, the spring festival celebrated by the Hittites. Interestingly, the temple artifacts have added a new dimension to the relationship between the Hurri-Greek Pantheon, to which Gütterbock had previously drawn attention in the context of the Illuyanka myth. The Zeus Omphalos pedestal related to the oracle well unearthed in the Temple of Apollo in Athens, as well as a similar variant of the wheel of fortune shaft made from cylindrical stone were discovered at the Hurrian-Mitanni Temple in Müslüman-tepe. In this way, many known direct or indirect relations between the ancient Asia Minor and the ancient Greek world were acknowledged.

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Introduction

This article introduces to readers the Hurrian-Mitanni temple excavated in Müslümantepe during salvage excavations at the Ilisu Dam in the Upper Tigris and the ritual objects discovered *in-situ*. Written documents dating to the Sumerian / Akkadian Period refer to the Upper Tigris as Subartu/Hanigalbat and at times Hurrian lands (Speiser, 1948: pp.1-13; Wilhelm, 1989: pp.17-25). Ancient Assyrian written documents and the Hittite documents from the reign of Ḫattušili also refer to the Upper Tigris as the Hurrian lands (Wilhelm, 1989: pp.21-22; Karg, 1999: pp.274-276; Novak, 2007: pp.389-390). Therefore, it is expected that Müslümantepe which belongs to the 2nd millennium B.C. is related to the Hurrians. The temple and the *in-situ* artifacts presented in this article supports this historical background. As stated in the article, all artifacts point towards the Hurrian-Mitanni culture. Therefore, the Müslümantepe temple was designated as a Hurrian-Mitanni temple. In this context, the focus will be on the architectural plan, phases of use and the arrangement of outbuilding and courtyard of this temple from the Middle Bronze Age as well as the ritualistic functions and aim of use of this artifacts. In addition, there will also be a discussion about the ritual aspects of the Müslümantepe temple and the artifacts found in. The article will try to build a picture of what a Hurrian (-Mitanni) ritual, which is little known from written documents, looks like, how it is performed and which objects are used at such celebrations and rituals. By doing so, artifacts from archaeological excavations will be combined with the objective illustrations of a religious ritual to help them be made more palpable and understandable.

Excavations carried out within the Ilisu Dam Salvage Excavation Project in the Upper Tigris yielded a number of new insights into the formation process of Upper Mesopotamian Bronze Age cultures. Religious activities in Salat Tepe originating from the Akkadian period, ritual activities carried out in the Middle Bronze Age and the earthquake layer (Ökse, 2009: pp.279-280; 2015: pp.123-128, Fig. 1-11; Ökse, 2015a: pp.125-126, pp.133-136, Fig. 1-12) as well as Ritual Area from the Middle Bronze Age in Hirbemerdon (Laneri et al., 2015: pp.553-564) are important discoveries shedding light on the Akkadian Subartu/Hanigalbat lands (Speiser, 1948: pp.1-13; Wilhelm, 1989: pp.17-25; Jankowska, 1991: pp.238-241; Ökse, 2014: pp.43-45). The Early Bronze Age tombs in Müslümantepe as well as the palace and the Hurrian-Mitanni temple excavated in 2017 within the city wall are unique in terms of explaining the administrative and religious practices of Bronze Age cultures observed in the Upper Tigris region (Fig. 1).

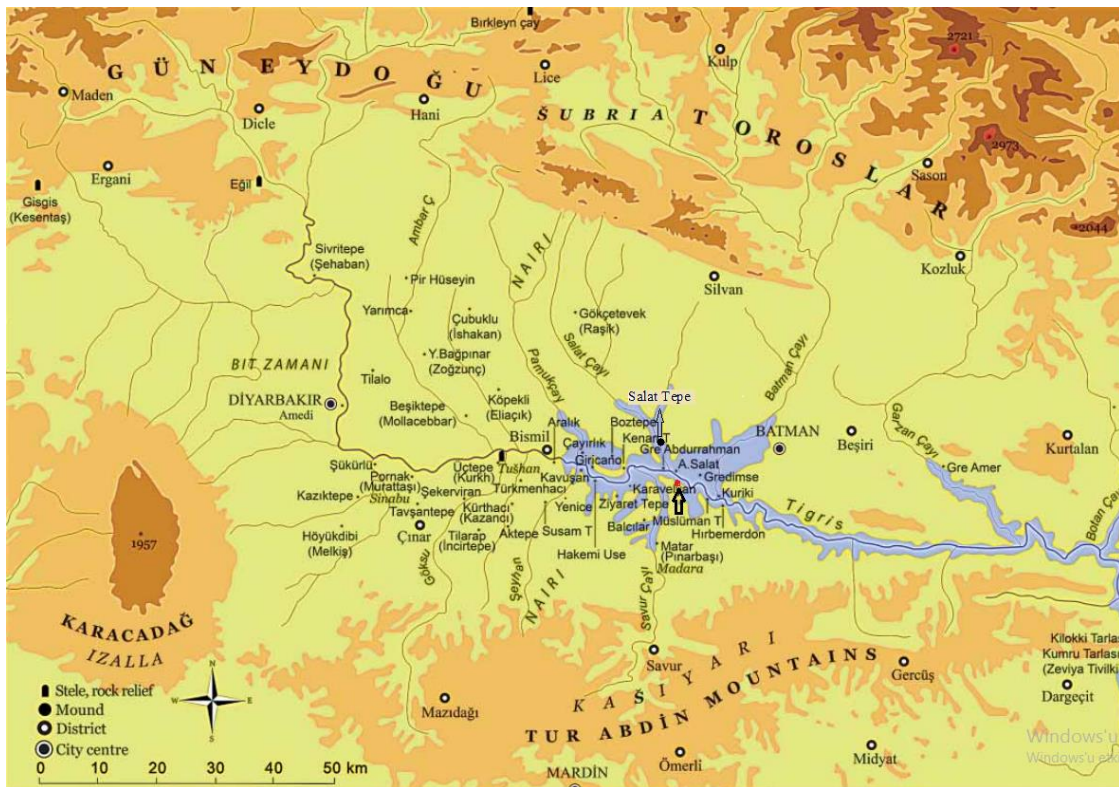


Fig. 1: Upper Tigris: Settlement Areas Explored within the Ilisu Dam Project (Köroğlu, 2018: p.325; Fig. 1)

Müslümantepe is located in the village of Şahintepe, district of Bismil, province of Diyarbakir. The settlement was established on the southern bank of the Tigris, i.e. on the right bank of the Upper Tigris in the Neolithic age, on a +4, -5 peninsular terrace set of an Early Holocene sedimentation creeping up to the bottom of the river (Kuzucuoğlu, 2002, pp.760-765; 767-770. Doğan, 2005: pp.75-86).¹ The settlement expanded over the entire natural peninsula during the Chalcolithic Age and especially in the Late Uruk Period covers an area of ca. 50 hectares. However, as we know from the stele of Naramsin in Pir Hüseyin and the Akkadian religious architecture in Salat Tepe, due to the Akkadian military campaigns, the city receded behind the defensive wall built on Müslümantepe (the mound) rising on the Tigris terrace (Karg, 1999: pp.272-283; Algaze and Peasnell, 2010: pp.165-195; Ur, 2010: pp.387-431; Ökse, 2014: pp.43-45). The southern part of the peninsula has since been used as a cemetery. The mound, which rises on an area of about 40 hectares, was continuously inhabited during the Hurrian-Mitanni Period in the Middle and Late Bronze ages. On the basis of the surface samples outside the city walls, where administrative and religious buildings from the Middle Bronze Age were found, and according to the artifacts gleaned from the soundings, it was determined that the settlement spread over an area of about 120 hectares, towards the hills located between the cemetery and the southern border of the village (Fig. 2).

¹ During the Müslümantepe excavations carried out within the Ilisu Dam Salvage Excavation Project, the virgin soil is not reached; however, the excavations allowed access to elevations containing Halaf pottery.

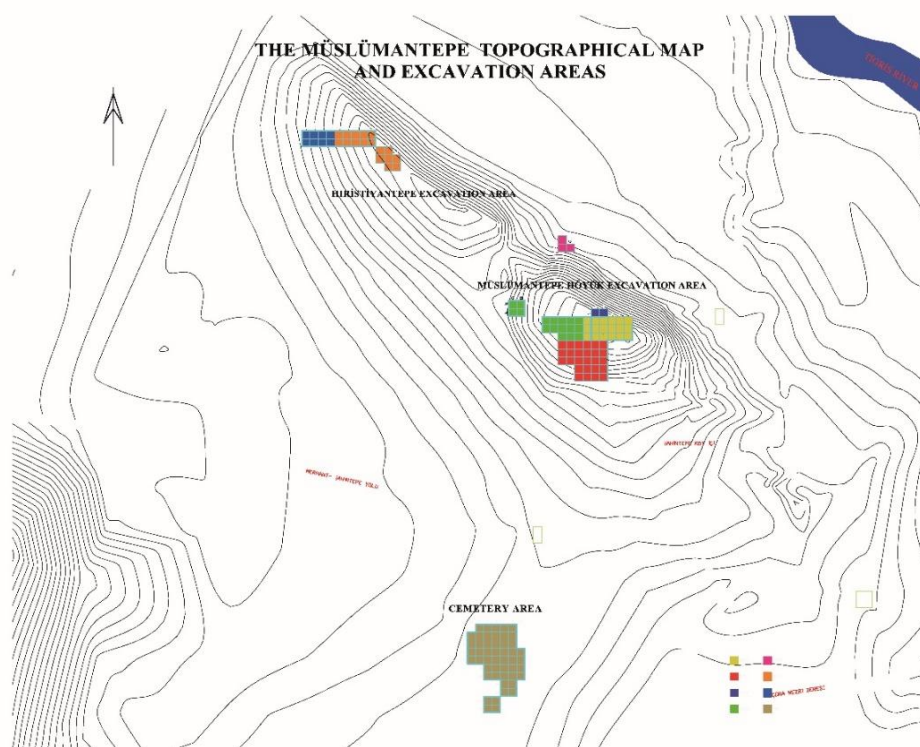


Fig. 2: Müslümantepe Topographic Map and Excavation Areas

The excavations in Müslümantepe were carried out between 2000 and 2018 by a team led and supervised by the author, interrupted for a period of four terms. Excavations were carried out in three areas: Müslümantepe (Höyük), Hristiyantepe (Lower Section) and the Cemetery. Although the virgin soil could not be reached during the excavations in Müslümantepe, its stratigraphic development was largely mapped out. In the northern part of the mound Halaf and Obeid sherds are found in mixed layers. The fragments from the same group of ceramic were excavated in Hristiyantepe, and also in the mound (Müslümantepe) during the excavations in 2015-2017. An intramural structure with pise walls dating back to the late Chalcolithic Period were recovered at the cemetery as well as isolated cylinder seals from the Late Uruk Period. Architectural remains from this period were also discovered in Hristiyantepe including intramural pot graves (all are infant graves) and ceramic sherds. In the Chalcolithic layers of Hristiyantepe, typical examples of Karaz Ware also form an exquisite collection. In this respect, Müslümantepe occupies a privileged position in the Upper Tigris region.

In the early phases of the Early Bronze Age Müslümantepe, took on the appearance of a town with a palace and its outbuildings, was surrounded by a city wall from the south. In this way, surrounded from the north by the Tigris, it was fortified from the south by the city wall and transformed into a secured settlement area. The palace within the city walls was reached during the excavations in 2017, but not yet fully excavated (Fig.19). Still, what has been unearthed from the graves in the cemetery shed some light on the period. The graves unearthed here including stone cists, mud brick cists, chamber tombs and pithos burials mostly date back to the Sumerian-Akkadian Period. The Nineveh V Ware and Metallic Ware pots from the Early Dynastic II-III periods and Akkadian Period are burial finds. These graves also contained pottery identified as *Red Brown Wash Ware* (RBWW) and *Dark Rimmed Orange Bowls* (DROB) which were associated with Hurrians or using by the Hurrians. In Hristiyantepe, the city wall from the Early Bronze Age is just below the surface. The city wall in Müslümantepe was situated beneath the architectural structures from the Middle Bronze Age. Architectural

remain from the Middle Bronze Age were established on the area through terracing depending on the southern slope of the mound.

The temples of the Middle Bronze Age, which are the subject of this study, developed in two phases. Of these, the temple representing the first phase is contemporary with the buildings destroyed by an earthquake happened in the 18th century BC in Salat Tepe (Ökse, 2010: pp.466-467). The second phase ended with a fire in early 17th century BC.² The early Mitanni cylinder seal and the *in-situ* artifacts uncovered on the foundation of the second phase of the temple can be considered as new evidence establishing the beginning of the Hurrian-Mitanni relationship. According to the publications, the Mitanni is originated either from India or Northwest Iran, or they were a tribe living together with the Hurrians (in Subartu). However, it became a great power dominating the Hurrians towards the middle of the 16th century BC (Wihelm, 1989: pp. 5, 17-25; Jankowska, 1991: pp.238-241; Yakar, 2007: pp.408-411; Diakonoff, 1984: pp.8-9/10; Diakonoff, 1991: pp.291-294). However, the temple and the related artifacts unearthed during the excavations in Müslümantepe and the radiocarbon analysis of these artifacts show that the sovereignty relations between Hurrians and Mitannis date back to the early 17th century BC. Müslümantepe features on a large scale late Bronze Age and Middle Assyrian levels, as well as pit-houses from the Iron Age. Besides the architectural remains in the Müslümantepe, the Smelting Furnaces installations the Middle and Late Assyrian period were discovered directly above the city wall in Hristiyantepe excavation area. The large settlement area comprising Müslümantepe and Hristiyantepe, was used as a cemetery during the Islamic Period (between the 13th and 19th centuries).

The hilly landscape surrounding the mound were until recently covered with oaks, the remains of ancient forests. As Erinç stated, brown forest soil spreads over a large region between Mardin, Diyarbakır and Siirt (Erinç, 1980: pp.65-72). However, these oak forests were converted into agricultural lands tilled with modern machinery, with only sparse trees on the hills. The south and northeast of Müslümantepe is covered with fertile alluvial plains where agricultural activities are carried out. Archaeozoological analysis of animal bones obtained from disposal sites from the Hurrian-Mitanni Period demonstrate that the diet of the ancient inhabitants of Müslümantepe included domestic animals such as sheep, goats and cattle as well as wild animals such as red deer and wild boars (Berthon, 2011: pp.176-178; Fig. IV.4-IV.5, Tab. IV.2). The carbonated wheat and barley remains discovered both in the disposal sites and in the storeroom of the fire-damaged temple attest to the advanced presence of agricultural activities in Müslümantepe. Archaeobotanical investigations on waste from the Middle Bronze layers revealed grains such as barley, durum wheat, bread wheat and einkorn wheat, and pulses such as lentils, vetches and vetchling, and the plants of fruits such as olives and grapevines. Also, wild fruit and plant seeds that were used as fodder were found.³

There is general agreement that the agricultural settlements in the Upper Tigris region, which date back to the Akkadian Period, as well as the associated practices of allotment and management continued well into the Hurrian-Mitanni Period with only minor changes (Diakonof, 1984: pp.5/10-6/10; Jankowska, 1991: pp.244-249; Yakar, 2007: pp. 407-417). In this context, agricultural units in the Upper Tigris region that were called *dimtu* in the Middle Bronze Age and *dunnu* in the Middle and Late Assyrian Periods, which symbolize a certain

² The Hurrian-Mitanni Temple dates from a time between 1760-1610 BC according to the analysis of the grains discovered on its base (Beta Lab. 273561).

³ Emel Oybak Dönmez, (Prof. Dr.) Faculty Member at Hacettepe University, Department of Biology, Müslümantepe 2012 Archaeobotanical Analysis Results Report (unpublished)

administrative structure, economic organization and production method.⁴ The stratigraphic development of Müslümantepe, in particular the architectural remains and artifacts at the cemetery, show that the settlement used to be a town closely connected with Mesopotamia in the Late Uruk Period. Müslümantepe has the appearance of a city from the Early Bronze Age which is surrounded by a city wall. As in Arslantepe, this city features a combination of the cultures of Early Dynastic and Akkadians - which are the continuation of the Late Uruk Period - and possibly the Transcaucasian culture associated with Hurrians (Frangipane, 2012: pp. 237-260). According to written documents from this period, the Upper Tigris region was referred to as Subartu in relation to the Hurrians (Speiser, 1948: pp.1-13; Wilhelm, 1989: pp.1-12; Kelly-Buccellati, M., 2007: pp.141-150). In the early phase of the Middle Bronze Age, Müslümantepe, which had a palace, appears as a Hurrian town with its pottery and Karaz-type hearths, dominated by the Transcaucasian culture. Hattušili I organized a military campaign against the Hurrian kingdom of Tikuanni in the Upper Tigris region (Wilhelm, 1989: pp.21-22; Karg, 1999: pp.274-276). Towards the middle of the Middle Bronze Age, Müslümantepe, which contained a temple, workshop and domestic buildings, had the appearance of an important center controlling the surrounding Hurrian-Mitanni *dimtu* settlements.

The Temple and Cult Objects

The Temple

Publications on Hurrian temples so far refer to architectural characteristics with local variations rather than a unique plan. In fact, instead of a monumental kind of structure seen in the other cultures of Northern Mesopotamia, they are either an adaptation of Hurrian domestic architecture or are referred to as architectural spaces where religious rituals are performed as part of a complicated administrative structure. To these kinds of buildings also belong the sacred areas and/or rituel performed places in Hirbemerdon Tepe and Salat Tepe in the Upper Tigris region (Laneri et al.; 2015: pp.537-545. Fig. 4, Ökse, 2015a: pp.123-136). Whereas, in cities like Tell Mozan / Urkish, Tell Brak and Tell Atchana in Upper Habur and Northern Syria densely populated by Hurrians, structures located in the center of settlements high on a platform with cult objects where religious rituals were performed were referred to as temples (Kelly-Buccellati, M., 2004: pp. 67-89; Oates, et al., 1997; vol.1: pp.13-15; 23-31; Laner and Schwartz, 2011: pp.341-346). The temple in Müslümantepe was also built on a high platform built compacted clay at the highest point of the Höyük at the center of the settlement. The temple, which was surrounded by a perimeter wall, could be reached from the south by a staircase, and its entrance was secured by a guardroom. In this context, the Müslümantepe temple is unique for the Upper Tigris region and, in terms of planning, appears to have been the predecessor of Upper Habur and Northern Syrian Hurrian temples (Kelly-Buccellati, M., 2007: pp.141-151; Fig. 1,2,5; Laneri and Schwartz, 2011: p. 343; Fig. 14.3).

⁴ *Dimtu*, meaning castle, looks like a city surrounded by a wall inhabited and managed by a large family that controlled the surrounding lands of an *Ewro*. The rest of the family lived on the farms in the villages near the *dimtu*. As far as *dimtu* settlements were concerned, the indivisibility of the land and the administrative and religious authority of the *Ewro* were undisputed. As in Arapha, *dimtu* settlements had craftsmen like potters, merchants, fullers, shepherds, gardeners and wool shearers (Diakonof, 1984: pp.5/10-6/10; Jankowska, 1991: pp.244-245; Yakar, 2007: pp.412-413; Ökse vd., 2012: pp. 78-84). In the Middle and Late Assyrian Period, farms defined as *dunnu* could be family property, while they could also be walled settlements containing arable lands, pastures, shepherds and farmers where managers and craftsmen living in the city could be shareholders. As in Grecano, a Middle Assyrian *dunnu* could also be the farm of a person living in the city (Tuşhan) (Yakar, 2007: p.416; Schachner, 2018: pp.111-114).

The Middle Bronze Age settlement of Müslümantepe, also containing the temple discussed in this article, stretches over a wide area bordered by Hristiyantepe, the Cemetery and southern part of the Şahintepe village. In the MT-1 excavations area, at the top of the mound has unearthed a temple and its outbuildings. In MT-2 excavations area found a street which is providing access to the temple of the top. Beside the street, was identified a priest's house which contained some artifacts related to the trade. At the MT-4 excavations area in the lower of the street workshops and civil houses were discovered. In MT-4, between the perimeter wall of the temple and the street leading to the temple, civilian structures located parallel to the slope of the mound as well as other structures and outbuildings used to maintain domestic life, such as a pottery kiln and a bakery oven (Fig. 3).



Fig. 3: Müslümantepe Excavation Area, Middle Bronze Age Temple, Civilian Buildings, Streets and Alleys

The initial traces of the temple located in areas MT-1 and MT-2 were found towards the end of the 2007 season and uncovered during the excavations in 2008 along with the *in-situ* artifacts. Located within the boundaries of the excavation area MT-1 and the STU / Trenches 41-42-43, the temple has a quasi-square appearance measuring 8.70x9.25 m. The main structure is divided into two rectangular rooms separated by a central wall. Therefore; forming an ante-cella-cella design. The entrance is from the southeast direction is 90 cm wide. The entrances at the front and rear places are on the same axis. The entrance room is accessible via a raised three-step staircase (Fig. 4-5).

There is a courtyard in the eastern wing, i.e. opposite to the entrance of the temple. Cooking and storage areas were identified in the buildings in the courtyard. In the south a bakery oven used for the temple was excavated. Around the temple and its related buildings is a perimeter wall. A sentry room was excavated in the upper part of the staircase leading to the southern entrance of the temple, where it meets the perimeter wall on the east. The fortified

sanctuary housing the temple and the related buildings could be reached only through this staircase and by passing through the sentry room on the staircase. The temple was built with mudbrick on stone foundations. The wall thickness is 1.28 m. The mudbrick walls were partially destroyed by the upper layers (especially pit-houses of the Iron Age).

The temple had two phases and was used for a long time. The first phase ended with an earthquake dated to the Middle Bronze Age, as known from other settlements in the region such as in Salat Tepe and Hirbemerdon Tepe (Ökse et al.; 2009: pp. 279-280). In the second phase, some of these buildings were repaired and re-erected, the doors and windows that providing access to each other were clad with mudbrick, while some of them were left in ruins and were used in a space-saving and therefore more modest way. In that context, the entry to the small room in front of the temple was covered with a wall, with the interior filled with rubble and shaped into a kind of terrace. A new form of space functionality was created by the redesign of the rear area. On the northern wing of the rectangular main room, a 1.2 m high brick wall divided the room into two parts. With this new arrangement the earliest example of a Mitannian temple plan is created, as known from Tell Brak (Oates, et al, 1997; vol.1: pp. 4, Fig. 12; pp.14, fig.28). In regard to the sludge plaster, the maintained height of the thin wall should correspond to its original height. The temple, which was destroyed by a great fire, had two floors (Fig. 5). The thickness of the foundation walls being more than one meter and according to the *in-situ* material found on both floors collapsed on top of each other prove. The ascent to the upper floor must have been from inside through the section behind the folding screen via a wooden staircase. During the excavations in 2011, the mudbrick walls and stone foundations of the temple is uncovered. A terracotta cylinder seal from the early Mitanni period was found on the stone foundation inside the mudbrick mortar (Fig. 6). The seal reflects the iconographic features of the early Mitanni period. The technical and typological development of the seal and the pottery found inside the temple are compatible. According to the radiocarbon analysis carried out on wheat and barley samples obtained from the burned layer, the late phase of the temple was dated back to the 18th and 17th centuries BC. The priest's lodgings outside the wall surrounding the temple were also two stories high like the temple and consumed by the same fire. On the upper floor of the burned layer, cult objects related to individual worship were uncovered, as well as an insulated platform for water supply. In the basement, which was used as a warehouse, storage containers and a bulla with a cylinder seal impression were uncovered (Fig. 7). The artifacts in the priest's residences are compatible with the temple artifacts both in terms of technique and typology and the worship scene depicted on the bulla featuring an ancient Syrian style seal (Tosun, 1956; pp.48-60, Fig.20,28; Özgüç, 1968; pp.16-19, 27-29, Fig. 13/B, 18/E, 20/C; Erkanal, 1993; pp.17, 23-24, 93, Fig. 3, I-A/06, 7, I-A/13, 26, VII3-F04).



Fig. 4: The Fire Damaged Temple in Müslümantepe and *In-Situ* Artifacts



Fig. 5: Temple Structure and Usage Phases

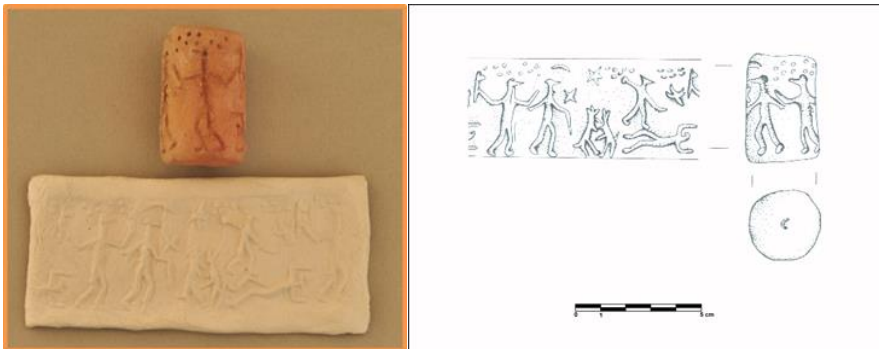


Fig. 6: Early Mitanni Period Cylinder Seal



Fig. 7: Bulla with a Cylinder Seal Impression

Cult Objects

All *in-situ* artifacts discovered at the temple belong to the second phase recovered from the large section at the southern part of the Cella. Some of the artifacts discovered on two different floor relate to religious ceremonies performed with food, drinks and cooking for the

rituals as well as storage of the offerings. The artifacts related to religious ceremonies were found on the upper floor, while the artifacts related to cooking and storage on the lower floor.

The artifacts uncovered on upper floor indicate that these were cult objects related to two different rituals. Of these, a terracotta pedestal and a cylindrical stone sitting vertically on it, as well as a bowl whose bottom was removed, must have been the instruments for an oracle ritual (Fig. 14a-b-c). Other items found were portable ritual items, both inside and outside the temple, which were likely used during the spring festival, such as *AN.TAH.ŠUM*⁵. The ritual objects include two Karaz-type mobile hearths (Fig. 10a-b), a portable adoration vessel (Fig. 11a-b), an altar with massive interiors and a pedestal (Fig. 12a-b), a bronze scraper (Fig. 15a-b) and a painted vessel including carbonized plant remains probably used as censer (Fig. 13a-b). A *Dark Rimmed Orange Bowl (DROB)* (Fig. 18a), two Mitannian cups (Fig. 17a-b) and a small pot (Fig. 18d) which uncovered on the lower floor, must have been used in the *AN.TAH.ŠUM* ritual celebrated outside the temple (Ardzinba, 2010: pp.75-86).

Items found on the lower floor include an unportable hearth, two Mitannian cups lined along the eastern wall with carbonized plant remains inside (Fig. 17a-b), a red-polished deep jar with a large rim (Fig. 17b), a thin-walled, *Dark Rimmed Orange Bowl (DROB)*, a fine bowl, an oil lamp, and a small pot. In addition, amongst broken pieces of pottery scattered around the place, two lids, probably belonging storage vessels have been found (Fig. 19a-b). One of the interesting artifacts was a kind of bowl that looks like a lid on one side and a shallow bowl on the other side with a handle and a rounded hollow in the middle, which was probably used during the ritual of Libation (Fig. 8). Carbonized barley and wheat deposits were uncovered around the hearth.



Fig. 8: Cult Objects from the Temple

⁵ *AN.TAH.ŠUM*, A spring festival named after crocus a bulbous plant that blooms in spring in April, was celebrated across Anatolia. Hittite texts mention these festivals were performed for 38 days (Ünal, 2016: pp.125-127).

Object from the Upper Floor

Karaz-Type Mobile Hearths

Transcaucasian culture reaching from Southern Caucasus to the slopes of the Taurus Mountains, horseshoe-shaped hearths appeared in the beginning of the late Chalcolithic Age. These hearths were used for long periods of time in the region as already uncovered in Sakyol-Pulur and Norşun Tepe (Simonyan and Rothman, 2015; pp.1-46, Fig. 11; Takaoğlu, 2000; pp.11-16, Fig. 2). Since the early phase of the Middle Bronze Age, Karaz-type hearths with geometric decorations have been widely used in the Amuq Plain and the Habur region i.e. in almost all places populated by the Hurrians, like in Müslümantepe (Fig. 11) (Kelly-Buccellati, M., 2007: p.146: Fig.9; Akar and Kara, 2018: p.113; Fig. 11, 12, 14). The hearths recovered in the Müslümantepe temple are products of the same tradition. In contrast to the previous examples, the bottoms of the ends of hearths in Müslümantepe temple were removed and handles were engraved on both sides for carrying. The base of the hearths was removed to make their moving to the outdoor easier. The handles carved from the sides made the hearths more comfortable for mobile using. The side wall/wall(s) and the monolithic protrusion on the back of the central part were preserved and decorated with geometric grooves according to old tradition (Frangipane, 2011: p.174). Only half of these two hearths were found from the excavations at Musluman Tepe. Although the temple was closely examined, the missing parts of the hearts were not found. Interestingly, only the right halves of both hearths were recovered (Fig. 11a-b). Similar hearths were also discovered in Hirbemerdon Tepe in the Upper Tigris region (Laneri and Schwartz, 2011: p.352).

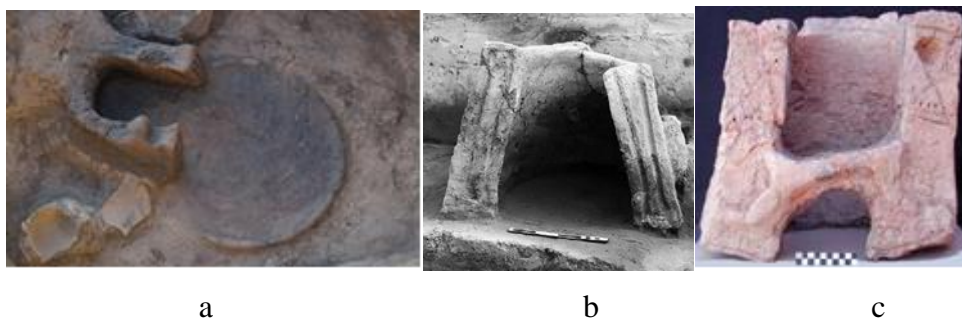


Fig. 9: Karaz-type hearths unearthed in Müslümantepe (a) - Toprakhisar (b) - Urkish (c)

Adoration Vessel (Altar)

Similar special types of vessels, often referred to as oil lamps, have been found in the Upper Tigris region. (Laneri et al.; 2015; pp.542-545, Fig. 8-9) The vessel recovered in Müslümantepe resembles, however, an altar peculiar to temples (Fig. 10a). What makes different options for naming these items possible is that these vessels have a composite form. While the vessel resembles an oil lamp for burning incense/fumes, in other aspects it reminds an Altar or a Ryton used during libation (since it has a drain). The adoration vessel found in Müslümantepe has the shape of a two-storey temple/building. The lower floor consists of posts standing on a pedestal and symbolizing the four corners. The second floor has circular lines, and is relatively smaller with its upper part formed as a bowl with a drain. A goddess is peering outside from the front section of the upper floor. All four sides of the goddess is featured by four horn protomes highlighting the sacredness of the place. The ones on the left are intact while the horns on the right are broken. The iconographic features of the goddess are rather remarkably. The head of a figurine recovered at Tell Brak is similar, dated to late 3th. millennium BC (McDonald, 2001; vol.2. p.269, Fig. 286). A similar head of a figurine from the Middle Bronze Age has been found in Kenan Tepe (Parker, 2011; p.733, Fig. 19). The hairstyle

features feathery curls covering the forehead and the face contours. The nose is arched and pointed like a beak. The jaw and mouth are not distinctive. The hands are outstretched, as if embracing an object. After shaping, however, the hands were either cut off before painting or the shape of a wing was intended to be given. The whole body appears to be dressed down to the toes. The toes have the shape of a claw with rough lines. In this context, the beak, bird's eye, feathery bird's head and bird's claw featured in the iconography are reminiscent of an early-period griffon iconography (Fig. 10a-b). To hazard a guess concerning how the adoration vessel was utilized, it can be assumed that a liquid in the bowl flows down the drain, between the of the griffon shaped figure illustrated on the upper floor of the temple model

Altar

Among the remains of the fire-damaged temple - in terms of mobile cult objects - is an altar recovered on the surface of the upper floor. This handmade altar with massive interiors, a pedestal of its own, a round body and a height of about 30 cm must have mainly been used for solid sacrifices such as bread. In the Hittite religious texts, believed to have been derived from Hurrian religious rituals, the '*Salli Aessar*' bread sacrifice is described as having been performed by a priest or king splitting and placing sliced or unsliced bread on the altar as an offering to gods (Ardzinba, 2010; pp.85-86). In fact, the cake/bread mold found on the lower floor of the temple (Fig. 12a-b) points to bread sacrifices performed in religious rituals.

Painted Vase

The broken vase found scattered on the upper floor, has the form of a vessel, by some colleagues referred to as 'Mitannian Cup' (Fig. 13a) (D'Agostino, 2016; p.542: Fig. 2/4; Ay, 2013; p.275: Fig.7). It contained herbal remains such as white carbonated leaves and/or flowers, probably used to burn incense. The vase slightly leans outward featuring a plain edge, conical body and a flat bottom on a wheel. During restauration, it was discovered that it featured figures decorated with paint following a firing process. Most of paint fell off and remained only on figures identified on the basis of traces discovered here and there. On the vessel a standing human figure can be distinguished and a second figure pulling a horse's reins towards the first figure. Behind the horse figure two other figures are recognizable, one with hair floating in the air and the other, only visible from the waist downwards. However, these distorted remains do not give us a full picture of the images. Immediately above the horse figure is perched a bird figure that resembles a partridge (Fig. 13a-b). In broad brush strokes, the center stage seems to have been dominated by a ruler or a religious elite with an attendant on the fringes bringing him his horse. It probably represents an outdoor scene.

Wheel of Fortune Oracle Objects

The ritual objects; one of them a pedestal of terracotta, and its middle part is shaped like an omphalos. The other one is a cylindrical stone with a pointed end standing vertically on the omphalos, (Fig. 14a). The omphalos pedestal is referred to in literature as 'Zeus Omphalos' (Klímeczak, 2016: p.3). In the excavation at the Apollo's oracle center at Athens, during 2016 excavation season was unearthed a very similar example (Fig 14b). This pedestal, which is recognized as the omphalos of the world, and the cylindrical stone sitting on it and, as the legend goes, was thrown by Zeus from paradise, are used together with a bowl removed bottom (Klímeczak, 2016; p.1-3). The bowl with removed bottom which was recovered from the Müslümantepe temple is bent inwards, thickened outwards, has a hammerhead, a rim and a round body. It is decorated in tape like paint embellishments in orange arranged horizontally on a beige clay (Fig. 14c). It is reminiscent of the Middle Bronze Age Painted Habur Ware in terms of its color-decorations and the vessel shape.

Bronze Scraper

More interesting is a bronze object (Fig. 15a) found on the upper floor of the temple, which we consider to be a scraper. The object was created by forging a 6 cm long and 2.5 cm wide bronze plate and has the shape of a scraper extending from the handle towards the rim. The rim has a broken blunt edge, probably due to wear and tear. The handle is perforated with rivet/nails for fastening objects (Fig. 15a-b). Such objects are mentioned in texts describing Hurrian-Hittite rituals. These scrapers were used to open the pits for offerings to the underworld gods, as observed abundantly in Ağıl Önü in Ortaköy/Şapinuva (Süel, 2010: pp.31-52; Ardzinba, 2010: pp.75-86; Kıymet, 2018: pp.48-51). In the same vein, this object is probably a scraper which was used to open the pits for offerings to the underground gods in Müslüman-tepe.



a b

Fig. 10a-b: Karaz-Type Portable Hearths



a b

Fig. 11a-b: Adoration Vessel



a b a b

Fig. 12a-b:Altar

Fig. 13a-b: Paint Decorated Vase



Fig. 13 Drawing

Fig. 14a-b-c: Wheel of Fortune Oracle Objects



Fig. 14a: Müslüman-tepe Omphalos Pedestal
And The Wheel of Fortune Shaft



Fig.14b: Athens, Temple of Apollo, Zeus
Omphalos and Wheel of Fortune Shaft



c1

c2

Fig. 14c 1-2: Bowl with a Cut-Out Bottom



a

b

Fig. 15a-b: The Scraper Bronze Object

Objects from The Lower Floor

Cake/Bread Mold

The vessel which we believe was used as a cake/bread mold has the shape of a bowl and features deep grooves on its inner surface, similar to modern cake molds (Fig. 16a-b). The bowl was found in fragments inside the remains of a fireplace (probably the fire originated in this fireplace) on the surface of the lower floor of the temple. Due to the fire, it turned quite dark as it was "fired" for a second time, since the vessel suffered deformations and ruptures occurred in the inner surface, due to the high temperature. On the less affected outer surface, the bowl features paint in orange. With regard to the form, the vessel seems to have been formed in a special mold (cake mold) (Fig. 16a-b). Sweet (unsliced) and sour (sliced) bread were largely sacrificed during Hurrian-Hittite religious rituals (Ardzinba, 2010: pp.75-86, Alp, 1999: pp.59-61). In this context, it is not surprising that the inventory of the Müslümantepe temple contained a cake/bread mold. From the other archaeological excavations, however, no information was obtained that such a cake mold had been recovered.

Cult Vessels

Two vases are found among the ruins on the ground floor. Considering the vessel types, they have a slightly everted rim, a cylindrical body and a flat bottom (Fig 17a-b). The type of this vessels has been referred by some colleagues as 'Mitanni Cup' (D'Agostino,2016: 519; fig.355). The vessels were found lined up vertically, besides the bottom of the wall. A residue white ash in one is striking. The carbonized white ashes seem to have been plant or plant sap residue associated with burn incense. Similar vessels were found at Tell Brak (Oates, et all, 1997, vol.2, pp.519-521; Fig.1408,1421). These vessels were probably used for storing's plant extracts and leaves for the rituals.

Red Burnished Vase

The largest vessel in the temple's inventory, was found broken and scattered on the lower floor probably due to the impact of the fire (Fig. 17a). During restoration, it was observed that the reassembled rim parts took on different hues depending on different levels of heat they were exposed to, after being broken and scattered. The vessel with a vertical posture, drawn outwards with a simple rim has an oval body and a flat bottom. It is decorated with a shallow horizontal groove running parallel to the shoulder. The vessel is coated with a wine-red paint and was burnished (Fig. 17c). This group of pottery, the *Red Brown Wash Ware (RBWW)*, is recovered in Hirbemerdon Tepe and Salat Tepe, and was commonly used in Upper Tigris region during the Middle Bronze Age (D'Agostino, 2016; p.487: Fig. 194-195; 489: Fig. 216; 491: Fig. 218). Larger vessel of the *Red Brown Wash Ware (RBWW)* were also used as pithoi for burials in the cemetery area. This vessel was possibly used for the storage of liquid or solid material used for the performance of religious rituals.

Red Burnished Bowl

A bowl discovered in the fire layer on the surface of the lower floor was found broken and scattered, exposed to different levels of heat with its pieces taking on different hues (Fig. 18a). The bowl consisting of many pieces was restored. The bowl is bent outwards, has a simple rim, a rounded body and a rounded bottom. Although there were minor changes to form, they were produced according to the same tradition as Dark Rimmed Orange Bowls (DROB) discovered at the cemeteries in Müslümantepe from the 3rd millennium BC. Similar versions are known to have been found in Hirbemerdon Tepe (D'Agostino, 2016; p.597: Fig. 781). Although its function in the temple is not fully understood, but it is believed to be a bowl used in rituals. In fact, a similar bowl in Salat Tepe containing piglets' skeleton was placed among

the early Middle Bronze Age, level stones foundation (Ökse, 2015a; p.133: Fig. 3). Two further bowls with same features from Müslüman-tepe, which comprise two human figures made of clay and one animal bone, were discovered among the early Middle Bronze Age stones foundation's.

Tiny Bowl

This thick-walled, handmade bowl with a coarse clay and a round, shallow body contains carbonized organic residues (Fig. 18b). However, these remains have not yet been analyzed. This bowl was probably used to measure and/or to transfer liquid or solid offerings into another container stored in the temple's storage.

Oil Lamp

An oil lamp was recovered among the mish-mash of pottery fragments found in the fire layer on the lower floor (Fig. 18c). This tiny, thick-walled, handmade oil lamp made with a coarse clay was probably used as a lighting device on the lower floor.

Small Pot

Among other storage vessels, was discovered a small pot with a short flaring neck and, a rounded body and a flat bottom (Fig. 18d). Although its function is not exactly known, it is assumed that liquid or solid ritual materials may have been placed in the vessel, which resemble other lids discovered in the same period in terms of its clay form; so, its mouth was probably closed with a lid.

Lids

Three lids scattered around were found between the storage containers on the lower floor (Fig. 19a-b-c). Two of the three handmade lids with a coarse clay have relatively large diameters, with one having a rectangular and the other a crescent shaped handle (Fig. 19a-b). Possibly both lids were used for covering the pots and pans discovered in this area. Similar versions were also found in Hirbemerdon Tepe (D'Agostino, 2016; p.557: Fig. 498-499). The smaller one seems to have been used for a more demanding purpose than merely a lid. Its arched body bent inward is bowl-shaped. In the middle of the rounded is a handle (Fig. 19c). It is assumed that it was a ritual vessel which was used for liquid sacrifices to spread blessing to the worshipper.



Fig. 16a-b: Cake/Bread Mold

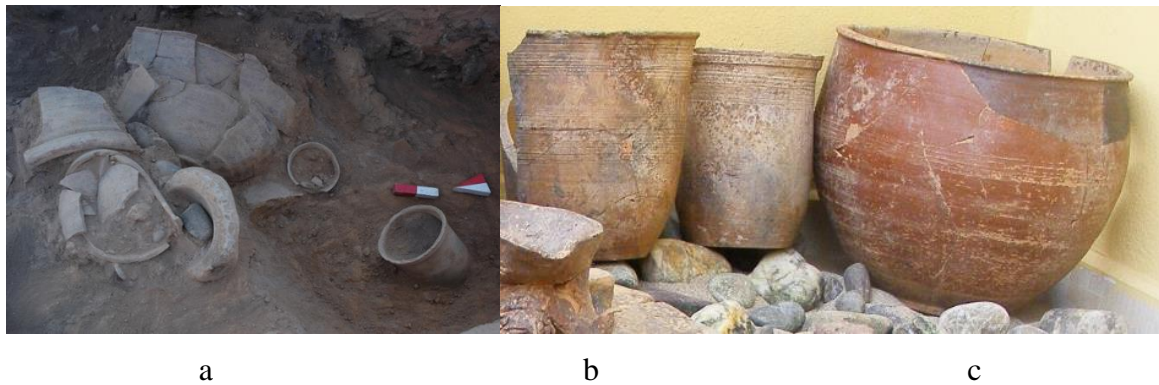


Fig. 17 a-b: Lower Floor In-Situ Cult Vases and the Red Burnished Vase c

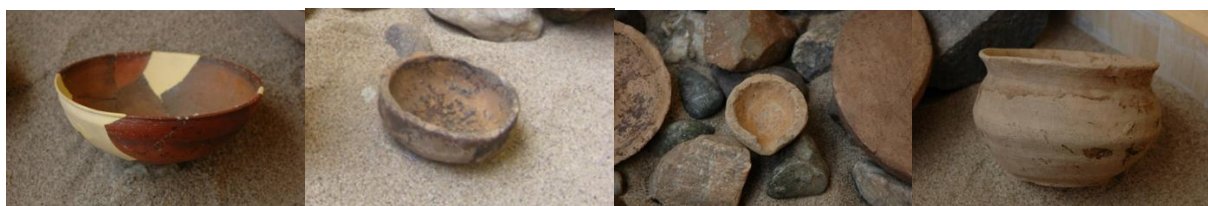


Fig. 18: Bowl (a), Tiny Bowl (b), Oil Lamp (c) and Small Pot (d)
On the Surface of the Lower Floor

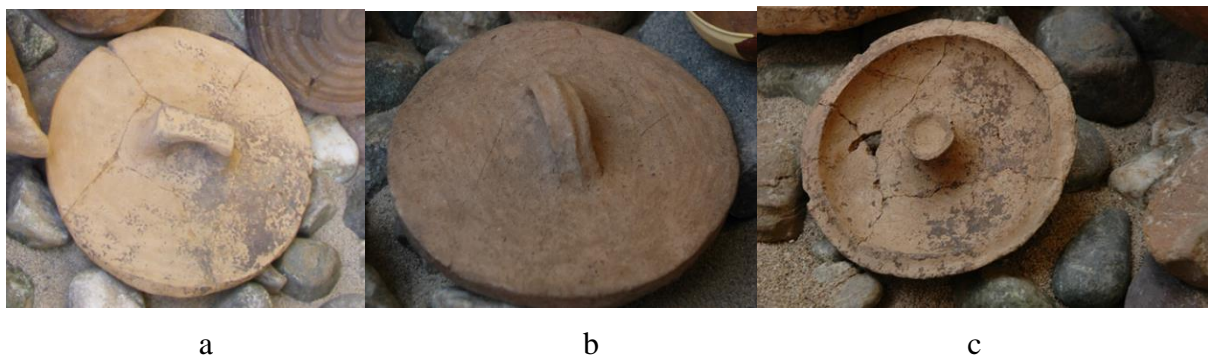


Fig. 19a-b-c: Lids Discovered on the Surface of the Lower Floor

Assessment and Conclusion

Müslüman-tepe has the potential to have been the center of a Hurrian Kingdom dating back to the Akkadian period (from the end of the 3rd millennium B.C. to early the beginning of the 2nd millennium B.C.) on account of the palace surrounded by a city-wall that was unearthed during excavation in 2017. Most of southeastern wing the palace is remain under the temple, and part of it has excavated. During the excavations at northwestern of the palace in the central hall unearthed a big hearth. Maybe this side of the palace is an administrative area. But we have not any archeological evidence to understand the functional of two wings of the palace (Fig. 20). As in the temple, which is the subject of this article, the palace is very similar to the palace and temples in Tell Atchana (Fig. 21). On the other hand, it is assumed that the Müslüman-tepe Palace was used about 200 years earlier. In this context, the Müslüman-tepe Palace is unique⁶ to the Upper Tigris region and the earliest example of Northern Syria Hurrian

⁶ Akkadian layers were discovered in settlements at the bottom of the Tigris, such as Hirbemerdon (Laneri et al.;

palaces and temples like in Tell Atchana. Müslümantepe's temple and palace architecture and its tradition of a hearth appears to be related with the Amuq Plain (Tell Atchana (Laneri and Schwartz, 2011: p.343; Fig. 14.3), Kinet Höyük (Gates, 2013: pp.223-234; Fig. 5), Toprakhisar Höyük (Akar and Kara, 2018: p.115; Fig. 17)) and Oylum Höyük in Kilis (Engin, 2019: p.15; Fig. 1-2). The horseshoe-shaped hearth in Toprakhisar is almost identical to the Müslümantepe Karaz-type hearth (Akar and Kara, 2018: pp.85-115; Fig. 14).

The Middle Bronze Age temple destroyed by a fire has two phases and two floors. The first phase refers to the Hurrian Period of the first quarter of the 2nd millennium B.C. whilst the second phase is associated with the Hurrian-Mitannian Period of the second quarter of the 2nd millennium B.C. The first phase consists of two spaces arranged in a sequential manner which are interconnected. Front and rear entrance doors face towards the east and are on the same axis. The rear room is accessible via a three-stepped staircase at the entrance to the door. As in the second phase, this rear room must have been the most sacred palace during the first phase.⁷ Judging by the remains of the foundations of the building, it is likely that the building also had two floors during the first phase. Only a few evidences have been recovered that would allow us to draw a picture of the state of the temple during this phase. During the first phase of the temple, namely in the first half of the 2nd millennium B.C, Müslümantepe must have been a Hurrian (*Ewro*) - *dimtu* administrative center that had the appearance of a castle, ruled by an Ewri and surrounded by great farmlands (Diakonof, 1984: pp.5/10-6/10, Yakar, 2007: pp.407-417; Jankowska, 1991: pp. 228-260), vineyards and gardens (Dönmez, 2019; pp.1-4), advanced animal farms (Berthon, 2011; pp.176-178) and sprawling workshops at the *Höyük*. However, due to the devastating effects of the earthquake also known to have hit Salat Tepe, the Hittite military campaigns to the Hurri centers in the Upper Tigris region and the centralization of the Mitannian state, which began to dominate the region in the same period, Müslümantepe was run by a degraded temple whose influence had probably been reduced. In the second phase of the temple, which constitutes the subject of the article, this *dimtu* administrative center, which had craftsmen working in its workshops as well as farmers, gardeners and shepherds, might have been ruled by a priest bound to a powerful Mitannian leader. After the earthquake, the settlement was rebuilt in smaller dimensions on the foundations of the previous phase. This new phase is more like a renovation phase than a construction undertaken from the remaining architectural elements. It is also noteworthy that the traces of the fire were found only in the temple and in the priest's house. The fact that the fire in question affected only religious/administrative structures indicates the possibility of arson due to a heterodox conflict concerning the temple/administration or a military campaign by Assyrians and even Hittites (Karg, 1999: pp.273-276; Novak, 2007: pp.389-390; Schachner, 2018: pp.111-114).

2015:553-564), Kuriki Höyük (Genç and Köse; 2017: pp.279-304), Ahmetli (Laneri et al.; 2015:pp. 557-559), Salat Tepe (Ökse, 2014; pp.43-45) and Gre Dimse (Karg, 1999: pp.248-250) which were excavated during Ilisu Dam Salvage Excavation Works. But none of them had a palace and/or a temple within the city wall representing the presence of such a strong central authority as that in Müslümantepe. In this context, these centers in the hinterland of Müslümantepe must have been administered from the palace in Müslümantepe during this period. The existence of a complex temple in Müslümantepe in the following early Middle Bronze Age is also important in terms of showing the continuation of that relationship of sovereignty.

⁷ In the second phase of the temple, the partition of the back room (Cella) by a wall may have been the earliest building model of the Mitanni temple, which will emerge in the Upper Habur Region. Moreover, in this case brought a new dimension to the debate about the fact that the Mitannian maybe were not come from anywhere but they are a member of the converted their faith Hurrian community.

An analysis of the cult objects recovered from the temple in terms of both their technical and typological aspects and their functions and in terms of their *in-situ* positions in the temple shows that these were used during indoors (inside the temple) rituals and outdoors (outside the temple) rituals. In terms of their function, the mentioned objects represent two different categories of rituals performed by the priests for the same religious purposes. Of these, mud brick, stone and bowl with a removed bottom, which we call the ritual objects of the wheel of fortune, might have been ritual objects used by the Hurrians during oracles. The adoration vessel, Karaz-type portable hearths, vases, the bread/cake mold, unportable altar and typical Mitanni decorated cup must have been mostly associated with rituals such as *AN.TAH.ŠUM* (*Salli Ašessar*) involving incense, liquid libations and bread offerings, which might have been celebrated with the beginning of spring outside the temple (Ardzinba, 2010: pp.75-86; Ünal, 2019: pp.129-158).

Karaz-type hearths had been widespread since the late Chalcolithic Age from the Eastern Anatolian region all the way to northern Syria. Unportable versions of them were placed on the floor of the living rooms with the back parts and the sides decorated with a human face and at others with geometric motifs. They might have symbolized family gatherings around the (holy) hearth. Indeed, an unportable Karaz-type hearth was excavated in Müslümantepe inside a room. However, its portable versions are very rarely used for outdoor rituals (Ardzinba, 2010: pp.77-88). The fact that only the right half of the mobile Müslümantepe hearths were recovered suggests that the hearths were split in the middle or slammed to the ground⁸ as a symbolic expression of the end of the ritual, just like with bread offerings.

There are various assumptions concerning the function of the composite vessel, depicting a two-storey temple model that we call an adoration vessel. Clay plates with a chamber and picturesque embellishments recovered during excavations in the Upper Tigris region are referred to in scientific publications as oil lamps and also ritual objects (Laneri and Schwartz; 2011: pp.351-354; Fig. 14.5; Laneri et al.; 2015: pp.542-545, 558) For us, however, this definition is incomplete. When considered in the context of other pots and pans, this artifact recovered in Müslümantepe may have served as an incense burner owing to the plant extracts, leaves and plant roots in the spouted bowl on its top⁹, or it may have been employed as an altar in a libation ritual through dripping a liquid offering inside, or as recommended by other colleagues, it might have been used as a kind of oil lamp through putting oil inside (Özfiat, 2005; Plate XCIV Fig. 7; Plate XCV Fig. 13; Ökse and Görmüş, 2006;p. 176:Fig. 21; Laneri and Schwartz; 2011: p.353; Fig. 14.5; Laneri et al.; 2015: p.543:Fig. 8-9, 544: Fig. 10). From our point of view, the fact that the vessel was found in the temple and its status as one of the most vital fixtures in a religious ritual renders its identity as an adoration vessel more accurate. In the vessel's depiction of the second floor of the temple, there is the figure of either a priestess or a goddess looking as if peering out from a window, which in itself raises questions. At first glance, one sees a figure like a priestess dressed from head to toe. However, upon closer look, it is revealed that the depicted figure is that of a bird rather than a human being. And therefore, the figure we see on the second floor of the temple is not the depiction of a human but that of a

⁸ With regard to the assumption that the decorated plates uncovered in the ritual area at Hirbemerdon were broken or slammed to the ground to symbolize the end of the ritual performance, it is also possible that the hearths recovered in Müslümantepe were also broken and had missing parts due to the same reason (Laneri et al.; 2015: pp.558; footnote: 126-127).

⁹ Indeed, a similar pot uncovered from Salattepe was described as an 'incense pot' (Ökse, Görmüş, Bozkurt, 2015b: pp.52).

bird-human (griffon?). In that respect, the adoration vessel found in Müslümantepe becomes even more important. In this context, the depicted bird-human figure is an important find both in terms of its relationship to the Hurrian culture and the fact that the griffon became recognizable at such an early point in time.

Some of the temple/cult objects found in Müslümantepe resemble the ritual pots and pans used during *AN.TAH.ŠUM* celebrations of Hittites also attended by the King, which are assumed to have originated from Hurrians. All members of the community took part in the ‘Great Assembly’ ‘*Salli Ašessar*’¹⁰ portion of the *AN.TAH.ŠUM* celebrations, which were held outside the temple in the open air and lasted for days. Documents telling about such rituals mention that the ritual used to be held by the river side. Those who participated in the rituals were invited by the priests to stand up, all those present would chant divine songs. The priest presiding over the ceremony would take the bread offering, halve it and place it on the altar in the middle. At the priest's request, the participants would gather around the burning holy hearth / altar, the priest would put wine into a bowl and distribute it evenly to the participants, who would all drink it in honor of God. That concluded the Great Assembly (Pankush) state of the ritual (Ardzinba, 2010: pp. 75-86; Ünal, 2019: pp. 129-158).

Similar versions of the oracle objects found in the temple were recovered in 2016 from the Temple of Apollo in Athens. The artifacts in Athens are assumed to be about 2000 years younger than those recovered in Müslümantepe. The terracotta pedestal carved from the middle that represents the omphalos of the wheel of fortune as well as the vertical stone with a sharpened end placed above it represent the Omphalos of the World. Looking at the practices of fortune-telling at Apollo's temple, oracles were made about the distant and near future as well as routine oracles about illnesses, travels to other lands, matters of the heart and simple everyday matters (Kłimczak, 2016: pp.1-3). In a suggestion concerning oracle performance, a virgin priestess standing before the Omphalos that represents the center of the world holds a bowl with a cut-out bottom in her hand. The priest standing next to her pours water from the jug he holds in his hand into the bowl. The water that flows through the bowl and meets the pointed end of the stone representing the Omphalos is scattered around and takes different

¹⁰ Salli Ašessar in Hittite means the Great Session with reference to a ritual performance. Over time it turned into a secular administrative assembly, called Pankush (Ardzinba, 2010: pp.75-86; Ünal, 2019: pp.129-158). Salli Ašessar, however, also evokes Semitic connotations in one aspect. In fact, the word *Sallu* is Akkadian and means praying and figurative worship. The word *Ašša* means perfect and wonderful in Sumerian while *Šir* means singing/chanting divine songs/making beautiful sounds. On that basis, *Salli Aššašir* as a whole could mean ‘singing divine songs with a beautiful voice and praying.’ Nowadays, Muslims perform prayers (*namaz*) as a ritual, which in Arabic means *Sala* referring to collective prayer/worship. In fact, the imam shouts ‘Hayya A’l El-Sala’ during the call to prayers, inviting people to a mass ritual, a sort of collaborative act and sharing. Mass prayers are led by leading members of society. In this context, as in Salli Ašessar, everyone is encouraged to participate in the ritual and the ritual (or Sala) is performed by the leader of the community. In Arabic, the word *A’ša* refers to a certain time of the day (evening) as well as being full, feeding others and feast. In fact, Christian Arabs called the Last Supper of Jesus Christ ‘A’ša-i Rabbani’, i.e. the divine feeding. Here Jesus Christ, like the Hittite King and High Priest, broke bread and shared it with his disciples saying ‘This is my flesh,’ and gave them wine from the bowl he held saying ‘This is my blood,’ feeding his disciples both physically and morally. This ritual meal is an A’ša ritual. On that basis Salli Ašessar, as performed by the Hittites, was a ritual presided over by the King, who was also the High Priest, in which everyone took part and where both the participants and the gods were fed. Therefore, it can be argued that there is a degree of kinship and/or similarities in terms of performance between Salli Ašessar and Sala and A’ša-i Rabbani rituals.

Sallu: <http://www.assyrianlanguages.org/akkadian/dosearch.php?searchkey=2745&language=id>

Ašša: <http://psd.museum.upenn.edu/nepsd-frame.html>

Šir: <http://psd.museum.upenn.edu/nepsd-frame.html>

shapes. The priest would thus try to make sense of the forms that appear and make oracles about the event or person concerned. The discovery of Greek oracle ritual implements at a temple dated 18th-17th century BC in Müslüman-tepe which is about 2500 km east from Greece shows that this practice existed in the ancient Northern Mesopotamia much earlier. Both the distance and the long-time difference show that some traditions can last for thousands of years. Basing on Gütterbock's view that the Greek Theogony written by Hesiod is based on the Hurrian myth of Illuyanka (Wilhelm, 1989: pp.4-6), we suggest that the oracle rituals in the Hurrian-Mitannian temple in Müslüman-tepe had been the proto-type of oracle rituals in the temple of Apollo in Athens. In this context, the transfer of Hurrian cults, myths and rituals to the Greek world through the Hittites/Luwians reinforces many direct or indirect relationships between the ancient Anatolia and the ancient Greek world. As archaeological and philological evidence of such mythical transfers increases, it becomes even more important to determine the origins of Greek religious rituals.



Fig. 20: Müslüman-tepe Temple and Palace

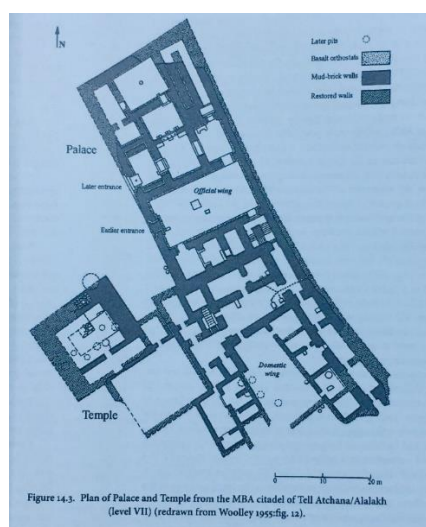


Fig. 21: Tell Atchana/Alalah Temple and Palace (Laneri and Schwartz, 2011: p.343; Fig. 14.3)

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