

The aim of SPECTRA Newsletters is to explore forgotten roots of present-day traditions for the general reader.

What follows are excerpts from my research **Catalogue E** in which drinking vessels crop up so often that I thought it worth bringing them all together to explore the phenomenon of the drinks ceremony in our society. In the West today the commonest way to mark an event is to drink on it, its roots in the ancient world being both royal and religious. What we read from the cups and bowls discussed below are dimensions of cosmic symbolism worth reincorporating into our smaller-scale gatherings. Due to time/space restrictions although we have not watered down the academic tone of the presentation, by shortening it the sequence of the material has changed and the illustrations not only align in the full two-part Catalogue. Where references have dropped out, the complete **Catalogue E**<sup>1</sup> does give them in full.

**LET'S TAKE A CUP AND DRINK IT UP FOR THE SAKE OF AULD LANG SYNE**



**THE SYRO-HITTITE INTERNATIONAL STYLE ON THE KINIK DRINKING BOWL**

Due to its domed shape the Kinik Bowl - like the 14C Ras Shamra bowl (**BaLu-31**, Aleppo Museum no.4572) it is often compared to - is the type of silver-gold or bronze bowl of early vintage overtly used for the depiction of cosmic symbolism - as opposed to the scores of later, more run-of-the-mill decorative bowls hoarded in large numbers at Nimrud (**ForAtt-38**) by the Assyrians, seemingly for bullion rather than special ritual use. In **Chapter 19** we devote an entire section to an early zodiac depicted on the bowl known as the Faroughi Bowl (**Ill. 19-151/III. 19-160/III. 19-165**), from its iconography probably dating from the last quarter of the 2M and one of the earliest intentionally astronomical bowls - if not the first. Indeed, in J D Hawkins' commentary on his translation of the inscription on the rim of the Kinik bowl (given in the full drawing of the iconographic programme below), he points out that the Hittite logogram for 'SKY' is a bowl, 'presumably because the sky was

<sup>1</sup> Accessed from the [www.layish.co.uk](http://www.layish.co.uk) Home Page from the centre square, and again through the centre square from that level, to reach the Catalogues.



conceived as an inverted bowl'. In a way such bowls can almost be classed as miniature variations of the Homeric Achilles' Shield which of course had a much wider circumference, providing ample space to depict a more complex cosmic scheme. (its astronomy is discussed in *Catalogue E*).

The griffins flanking stylized trees of life round the Kinik bowl's central rosette are familiar creatures of the International Style, while the register above shows lion-bull attacks - a *Bilateral Attack*, a *Forward Attack* and a pair of lions grappling with each other. The interspersed stag and boar aimed at by two Hittite spearsmen in the strip above should probably be taken as the Spring and Autumn equinox animals, leaving the lion-bull attacks to mark solstices. Uniquely on the Kinik bowl these seem to be BIVISUALS inserted into a standard Hittite ritual hunt with one hunter in front of a tree with symbolic backpack (see the Hittite rhyta discussed later), early form of the cornucopia and used by Perseus as the *kibisis* holding the Gorgon head. These traditional seasonal animals also decorated the Eurasian Trialeti bucket and goblet (*III. 9-25*).

#### HOMERIC AND UGARITIC SYMPOSIUM DRINKING RITUALS

We have quoted elsewhere in this chapter how 'Sidonian bowls' were valued by the Achaeans and sometimes given as prizes, and it is worth raising here an interesting contrast made in a paper by Loretz<sup>3</sup> between drinking rituals in the Homeric and Ugaritic worlds featuring cups, beakers, bowls or jugs, pointing to close overlaps (despite differences of level) between these two particular cultures. This all helps to add more pieces to the jigsaw of traditions passed on within the Achaean/Trojan Aegean and Levantine worlds – these ones related to the central significance of the sacred drink in Indo-European cosmologies (whether *haoma*, *soma*, wine or beer - explored more deeply later) where the symbolic drinking vessels are often decorated with astronomical or eschatological references. It is possible to make such comparisons because in this period, as Gordon<sup>4</sup> puts it, 'In spite of great ethnic diversity, and of regional individuality, the ancient Near East was the scene of so much give-and-take that we may speak of an ancient Near Eastern civilization'. As keynote for the theme of his paper, Loretz gives as the text for discussion a handful of lines in Ugarit (tablet KTU 1.3 I 10-15a) describing how *RDMNS* the cup-bearer hands a drinking vessel to Baal, just returned from the killing fields of the Underworld and enthroned on the holy mountain of Mt Šaphon on New Year's day, (the four words describing it are emphasised in small capitals below):

<i>KRPNM b klat ydh</i>	he placed drinking vessels in his hand:
<i>BK rb ʿzm</i>	a beaker of the highest Lord;
<i>RDN mt šmm</i>	a rhyton of Death and Heaven [= Baal on the Ugaritic Mt Olympus];
<i>KS qdš l tphnh atht</i>	a holy bowl not seen by the likes of woman;
<i>KRPN l tʿn athrt</i>	a cup [of a kind even] unknown to [Goddess] Athirat.

<sup>3</sup> O Loretz 'Die Gefäße *Rdmns* für ein Marziḫu-Gelage zu Ehren Baals und der Nestorbecher der Ilias (zu mykenisch-ugaritischen Beziehungen nach)' in O Loretz et al (eds) *Ex Mesopotamia et Syria Lux: Festschrift für Manfred Dietrich zu seinem 65. Geburtstag* Münster 2002

<sup>4</sup> C Gordon 'Ugaritic Guilds and Homeric Demiurgoi' in S S Weinberg (ed.) *The Aegean and the Near East: Studies Presented to Hetty Goldman* Locust Valley NY 1956 136-43

The varied names for the vessel are not easy to translate, and need not necessarily refer to four *different* vessels successively handed to Baal as Loretz and most translators think. Astour<sup>5</sup>, for instance, has a convincing alternative translation concerning the root KRP/KRB which he associated with the Cherub who stands with the cupbearer on the Holy Mountain, covering it with the wings of his protection, as similarly described in **Ezekiel 28** 11-19. Half of Loretz' paper consists of the alternative translations given by many scholars – the wording above gives my selection of what appear to be the most intelligible renditions in the light of his subsequent cosmological interpretation of the lines. For a start, *bk* and *beaker* are close etymologically – and, of course, *rdn* and *rhyton* - here Astour classes the latter as a person's name, which does not fit, but *RDMNS* himself is cited by him from several other pieces of textual evidence as the prototype of Ganymede a son of Tros, King of Troy, who became Zeus' cupbearer (**Iliad XX** 231-5<sup>6</sup>). He is the beautiful young man who equates to the *Rhadamanthys* who crops up in several Greek traditions, described in **Iliad XXIV** 321-2 as a son of Zeus and Europa, sister of Cadmus of Thebes - and thus brother to Minos of Crete (the latter in **Odyssey XI** 567-71 is even given the role of Judge of the Underworld). Astour also refers to accounts of a Boeotian cult of Rhadamanthys – a territory of Greece particularly associated with links to Canaan/Phoenicia, the overall network of links between Ugarit and Bronze Age Boeotia and the Troad manifesting itself these very genealogies.

Then comes *ks*, taken by most translators as a much larger vessel (a jug or pitcher, perhaps on the scale of the Inandik or Hüseyindede ceramic beer vases described later on, leaving *krpn* as the straightforward word for *cup* repeated in the first and last lines, which for our purposes I am speculatively taking as *bowl*, with the other three words after it being in apposition, describing the same one vessel handed to Baal with the heavenly drink of Life and Death (*mt šmm*). We cannot linger to discuss the niceties of individual translations as covered by Loretz, but since it is absurd four different vessels should be handed, one by one, to Baal, we hope our choices above convey the overall sense of the passage before moving on to simply take on board his comparison of that passage with the account of Nestor's Cup as given in **Iliad XI** 632-41:

*On it [the table] she [the lady Hecamede] put a bronze dish with an onion to flavour the drink, some yellow honey, and sacred barley-meal; and beside these a magnificent beaker adorned with golden studs which the old man had brought from home. It had four handles, each supported by two legs, and on top of each, facing one another, a pair of golden doves were feeding. Anyone else would have found it difficult to shift the beaker from the table when it was full, but Nestor, old as he was, could lift it without trouble. In this cup their comely attendant mixed them the pottage with Pramnian wine, and after making it ready by grating into it some goats-milk cheese with a bronze grater and sprinkling white barley on top, she invited them to drink, which they did.*  
(E.V. Rieu translation)

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<sup>5</sup> M C Astour 'RDMN/RHADAMANTHYS and the Motif of Selective Immortality' in M Dietrich et al. (eds) *"Und Mose schrieb dieses Leid auf": Festschrift für Oswald Loretz* Münster 1998

<sup>6</sup> As Astour points out, elsewhere in the *Iliad* the role of cupbearer is taken by Hebe – and, significantly, once by Hephaestus.

As with the vessel(s) handed to Baal, the imagination is progressively moved from a dish with an onion, honey and barley-meal on it, to a beaker or large cup described as such a hefty vessel that only a warrior could lift it when full. The difference between the two passages concerns the presence of the presiding lady in Nestor's court preparing the meal - at a purely human level taking the part of *RDMNS* - who also adds condiments to the wine-full cup, where the Ugaritic passage emphasises that the vessel it talks is of a kind not handleable by women or even known of by Goddess Athirat Herself. Rather, Loretz argues, this is a description of a heavenly bowl known only in terms of the dome of heaven, with the *RDN mt šmm* revealing its true nature as a model of the sky itself – the sky being one and the same as the Lord of Life and Death, Baal (Mt Saphon/Mt Olympus) being at the centre of the circles of heaven. Loretz paraphrases G Fuchs<sup>7</sup>:

*Dabei sind die Grenzen zwischen dem 'Globus' als Zeichen der Weltherrschaft und ihrem Träger fließend, so dass die Gottheit mit dem Becher und die Gottheit als Becher nicht mehr streng zu trennen sind. Der Gott Baal mit dem Becher ist also nicht nur der Herr des Kosmos, sondern auch der Kosmos selbst'.*

We have left out the intermediate nuances leading to this conclusion for readers to consult in Loretz' paper themselves, so valuable in bringing us to the appropriate level of interpretation for the symbolic overtones of the Kinik bowl iconography we began with – when understood in Loretz' terms as a vessel appropriate for a funerary commemorative drinking feast (*Marzihu*<sup>8</sup>-Lage) –here in the Baal myth held on Mt Şaphon by the God who himself has conquered Death/Mot. Since further on in the same passage the cup-bearer *RDMN* closes the proceedings by singing with sweet voice accompanied by cymbals, we can mentally compare this scene to those given under our ENTERTAINMENT heading further on. Placing the heavenly cupbearer on an exalted plane, Loretz explains him as 'der ugaritische Orpheus', whose 'enge Verbindung mit dem aus dem Totenreich auf seinen Thronszitz Şaphon zurückgekehrten Baal zeigt an dass auch RDMN dem Lebensbereich des Wettergottes zugeordnet ist [und].... dürften auch die griechischen Mythen über Rhadamanthys widerspiegeln, die ihn gleichfalls in Regionen ansiedeln, die dem Tod entrückt sind'.

#### **ELAMITE, AMORITE AND PROTOZOROASTRIAN SACRED DRINKING RITUAL VESSELS**

As we have said, the Kinik Bowl, unusual in combining both Hittite and Levantine imagery, is a cadre of bowl which can be accorded a cosmic level of interpretation. Drinking rites are signalled by Kurochkin<sup>9</sup> as a particularly Central Asian activity that through Mitanni influence spread into Syro-Mesopotamia and India. If the reader goes through all the decorated vases, goblets, cups, bowls and beakers illustrated in **Catalogue E** (mostly of silver, gold or bronze, but sometimes also of ivory or clay) - from as far east as

<sup>7</sup> G Fuchs 'Das Symbol des Bechers in Ugarit und Israel' in A Graupner et al (eds) *Verbindungslinien: Festschrift für Werner H Schmidt zum 65. Geburtstag* Neukirchen-Vluyn 2000 65-84

<sup>8</sup> T Dawson *Whisper of Stone* Alresford 2009 p.168

<sup>9</sup> G N Kurochkin 'The Archaeological Search for the Near Eastern Aryans and the Royal Cemetery of Marlik in northern Iran' in A Parpola et al. (eds) *South Asian Archaeology 1993* Helsinki 1994 389-95

Quetta to as far west as Dendra in Greece – we can surely agree that Kurochkin identifies yet another powerful trend from Central Asia the Mitanni-linked élites in Syro-Mesopotamia fell under. Later we will be able to give more detail about the spread of the Proto-Zoroastrian sacred drinking culture, whether shamanic, dedicatory or in celebration of calendrical turning points. Their variety certainly bears out the lines quoted by Loretz giving different names for several types of drinking vessel made to hold the brew put in Baal’s hands – whether tot-small or communally huge.

### RITUALS ON MIDDLE ASSYRIAN SEALS

The resuscitation of the old motifs and design formulas of the old tradition continued to hold symbolic currency for the Semitic Assyrians, with the core New Year/Ishtar symbol of lion attacking bull given the many variations in treatment pointed out in all our Catalogue entries. We do not need to dwell on their astronomical implications here, but with the theme of Central Asian influence in mind, we highlight here one or two interesting observations made by both Canby<sup>10</sup> and Herzfeld<sup>11</sup> regarding the appearance on Middle Assyrian seals of what we might call the ‘flaming brazier’, sometimes part of the drinking ritual. Canby’s interest was initiated by an uncatalogued seal in the Smithsonian Museum originally donated by the Rev. William Frederic Williams<sup>12</sup>, a missionary in the Nimrud area at the time of Layard’s excavations who knew him and built up a small personal seal collection that he took back to America. The damaged, banded agate seal has a two-register design (Canby’s figs 1&2, the sealing reproduced below left), with the intact upper register showing a chariot scene next to the statue of an enthroned God or Goddess before an officiating priest - a flaming brazier between them (arrowed) as focus of the ritual.



**III.9- 153:** (Left) seal from the William F Williams collection and (right) scene similar to its central group showing Baal with flaming brazier  
Canby likens the latter group to a vividly down-to-earth version on a Middle Assyrian seal in the British Museum (above right) dated by Mayer-Opificus<sup>13</sup> (from the style of Baal’s hair and beard) to the reign of

<sup>10</sup> J V Canby ‘A Glyptic Question’ in *Aspects of Art and Iconography: Anatolia and its Neighbors - Studies in Honor of Nimet Özgüç* Ankara 1993 111-115, & pl. xvii

<sup>11</sup> E Herzfeld ‘Die Kunst des zweiten Jahrtausends in Vorderasien II: Die Mesopotamische Gruppe Anzugliedernde Siegel’ *Archaeologische Mitteilungen Aus Iran (AMI) IX* (Old Series) 1938, 1-89 –quoted earlier. The first and last pages of the paper are useful – otherwise the author spends pages in an exhaustive analysis of variations in the design of the Mitanni and Middle Assyrian Tree of Life too detailed to end in seeing the wood for the trees...

<sup>12</sup> Frederick Williams was also instrumental in helping ‘to secure reliefs from Nimrud from Layard for American colleges and universities’. (*ibid.*)

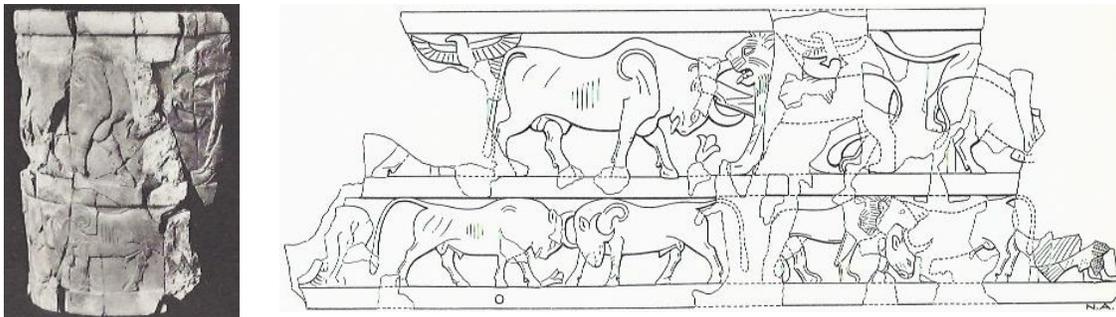
<sup>13</sup> R Mayer-Opificus ‘Bemerkungen zur Mittelassyrischen Glyptik des 13 und 12 Jhds. V.Chr.’ in P Matthiae et al. (eds) *Insight Through Images: Festschrift Edith Porada* Malibu 1986 She usefully lists key experts’ papers on Middle Assyrian seals, quoting the accepted view that they developed from Mitanni examples (perhaps slightly underestimating the contribution of Kassite designs that also played an important part.).

Tukulti-Ninurta I. She refers to Herzfeld’s deep knowledge of Indo-Iranian texts which mention the ‘self-feeding flame’ of *naphtha* which appears from seal evidence already to be being exploited in order to adhere to the central tenet of the Proto-Zoroastrian/Vedic rite of keeping the eternal flame burning. When one thinks of the presently-known oil and gas areas of southern Russia, Turkmenistan, Northern Iraq and Western Iran, it is just those places that are mentioned in the later Yashts or by Classical writers as providing that ‘flame that lives in the underground waters’<sup>14</sup> that needs no fuel to burn. **Strabo LVII** mentions its availability on the banks of the Oxus, and Alexander the Great in his travels in the region is shown the phenomenon. To the Zoroastrians as such, the flame was associated, not simply with the aureole of both the monarch and the God Ahura Mazda Himself, but its physical availability from Caspian Sea to the Persian Gulf was a marker of the ‘arischen ländern ... in gegenwart und in zukunft’. The argument does not hold that the braziers shown in the two seals are simply incense burners because incense works on smouldering fuels, with no vigorous flame – and there is no sign of physical pieces of fuel such as logs protruding. We do not, of course, class the Assyrians as Proto-Zoroastrians, but we can at least flag up use of *naphtha* for their own purposes as another sign of intermittent Central Asian infiltration into their temple practices that went along with the Soma/Haoma drinking rituals (the R̥gveda repeatedly refers to Earth and Heaven as two bowls that need to be kept apart from each other).

### DRINKING CUPS IN IVORY, GOLD AND CLAY FROM CANAAN AND CYPRUS

#### CANAANITE IVORIES FROM LACHISH AND MEGIDDO

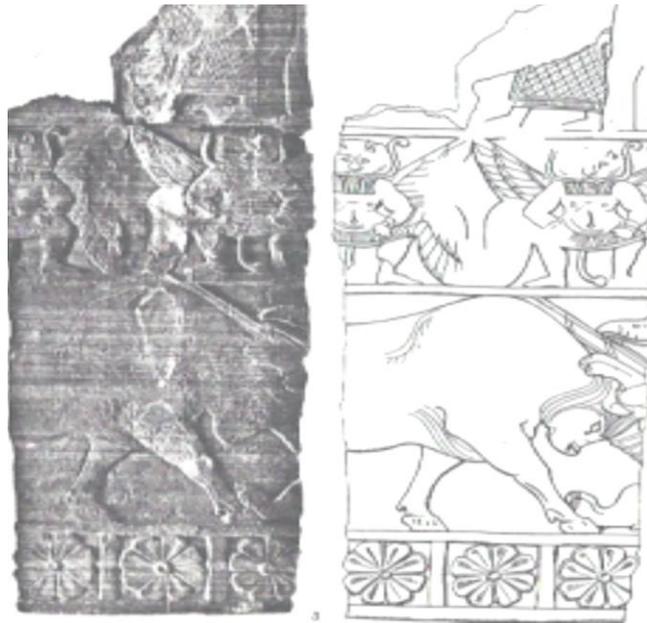
The act of deliberately hiding the Lachish pyxis in a cache within the last shrine level (**III. 9-205**) of its temple underlines the conclusion that this container - and the decoration on it – must have had high ritual



significance. We have seen on 2M seals from the same *koine* how the stand-off and neck-bite versions of the lion-bull *Forward Attack* were often used on seals, and in the context of their multi-level reference to the Calendar, the Goddess Ishtar and the authority of a local temple or ruler, the cup appropriately channels all these meanings. Looking at what remains of another ivory mug from Megiddo (below) - also with a lion-bull attack on it, along with one or two more items we will move on to consider the varied reasons behind holding a drinking ritual.

<sup>14</sup> Hence an etymological link drawn by Herzfeld between *NaP[H]T[H]a* and the God NePTUNE

What remains of the Megiddo mug (below), found in a secular context, appears to refer to the owner's allegiance to an Egyptian-style administration blended with local Syro-Mesopotamian cultural mainstays.



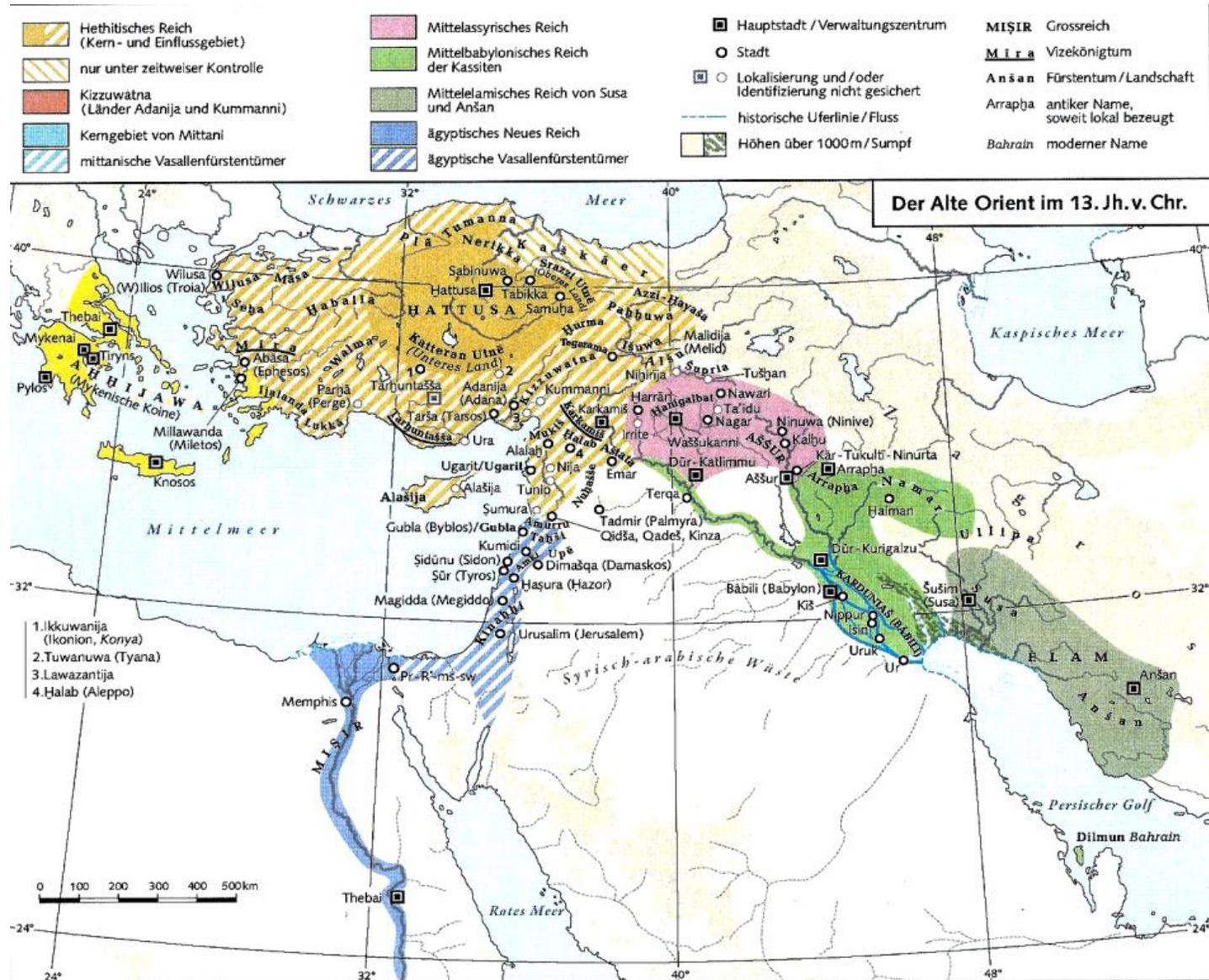
Samarian ivories use the same motifs probably for secular and decorative use on furniture, of which the Crowfoots write: 'no other finds have told us so much about the art of the Israelite Monarchy'. This is because the imagery of the ivories accords with the lines described in the *Book of Kings* about the decoration of the interior of Solomon's Temple – carved by craftsmen known to have been loaned to Solomon by Ahab within Canaanite territory. The next jug takes us more deeply into the First Millennium.

*A DRINKS CEREMONY ON PAINTED CLAY FROM CYPRUS (THE KHRYSOCHOU JUG)*



*III.9-154: Iconography of the Jug with New Year celebration drinking scene from Cyprus – Karageorghis *ibid.*; (right) the Hubbard Amphora – Dikaïos pl.7*

Leonard Woolley attributed the style changes on such drinking vessels as due to 'an invasion of Cyprus at the beginning of the Iron Age by two kindred but distinct types whose original home was probably Asia Minor' (*AJ XVII*,1 p.10) – which we could take to mean 'displaced Mitanni'. To this recipe, from other



The Political Scene after 1300 -second frontispiece map from B Eder et al (eds) Policies of Exchange: Political Systems and Modes of Interaction in the Aegean and the Near East in the 2M BC Vienna 2015 [better definition can be obtained by printing this page on A3 paper, or enlarging it on-screen]

scholars' opinions, we should also add a strong sub-Mycenaean component after increasing numbers of colonial Mycenaeans settled on the island following the destruction of their palaces on the mainland. The map above shows the fragmented political geography for this scenario - on which we can certainly place this jug as a late arrival to the corpus of decorated vessels as used in drinking rituals adopted throughout the Mitanno-Āryan-infused Levant. Its material may be humble, but the depictions on it have the primitive vigour of the rough and ready leader shown on it as adopting the key **CANEA** image of the *Forward Attack* on a vessel that could indicate his status as local Calendar-keeper, in a personal rendering unashamedly portraying himself in local gear with a 'skin-head' hairstyle of the type noted amongst the Sea Peoples. Karageorghis not only points out the closeness of decorative style on this vase to another one found earlier at the same site depicting a chariot team painted with the same provincial crudity, but also reminds us of another drinking scene depicted on an amphora from north-eastern Cyprus known as the Hubbard Amphora (above right)<sup>15</sup>.

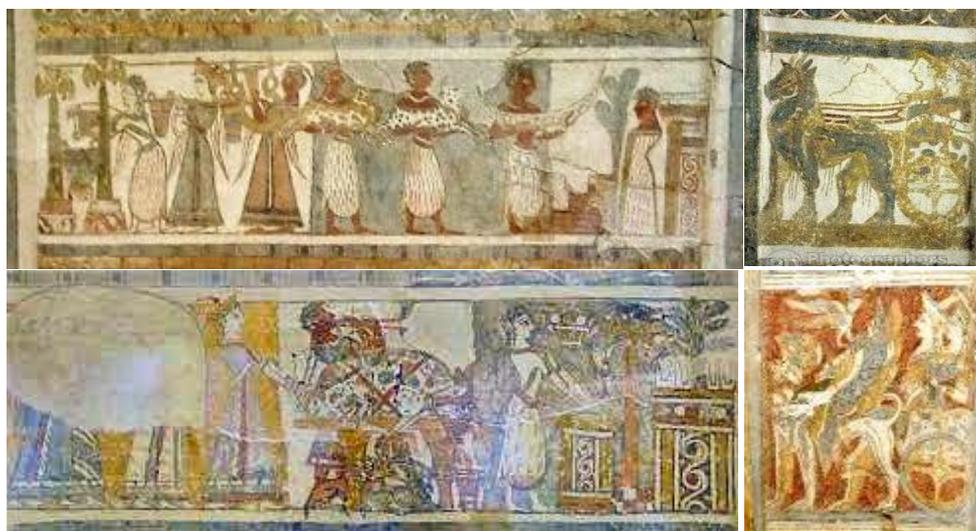
Indeed, on the Cyprus jug the sphinxes either side of the palm tree wear the same type of polos as the rider on the chariot vase, with a tassel threading out at the top - one of the most tangible links to Mitanni culture. Karageorghis reads both human figures on the jug as female, but due to the presence of the *Forward Attack* in the overall scheme, on initial scrutiny it looks like a local chief's New Year celebration – but this could turn out to be very wrong - as we will find out shortly. Certainly the iconographic programme on it mirrors the drinking scene analysed by Dikaios on the Hubbard Amphora (the next illustration shows details of the narrative register on both sides of the vase). The celebrants suck their drink from an amphora through a straw held in one hand (now a recognisable Syro-Hittite custom), while holding (not so clear on the amphora) a small cup or bowl in the other hand. Fish brought in by attendants appear to be the main food of the feast (corresponding, Karageorghis points out, to actual remains of fish-bones in bowls in the Salamis graves he had just excavated). There is more to say about their significance shortly.



*Close-ups of front and back designs on the Hubbard Amphora – Dikaios pl.8)*

<sup>15</sup> P Dikaios 'An Iron Age Painted Amphora in the Cyprus Museum' *Annual of the British School at Athens XXXVII* London 1940 57-72

As against the pair on the Khrysochou jug, on the Hubbard amphora one sphinx with elongated wing and wearing the same ovoid polos with tassel sniffs a lily as it guards the enthroned figure from behind. At the far end of the front scene on the other side is the protome of a bull, presumed to be the animal already sacrificed. On the back of the vase attendants brandish bunches of leaves or leafy fans, and the man holding up a lyre in the chain of linked figures in Hubbard Amphora procession confirms the idea of such an event as including music and dancing. When Dikaios compares the scene with those on the Ayia Triadha sarcophagus (below) the matches with Mycenaean iconography on the coffin's long sides are interesting. There is no enthroned figure, but we have a procession of celebrants accompanied by harpist and pipes-player; the sacrificial ox is shown trussed up on the table; on both sides a priestess pours liquid (wine, blood or water?) from a jug, first on a flourishing tree and shrine with sighting horns on one side, and second before a twin set of double axes forming obelisks at one end and a shrine of the dead (with effigy) at the other. At the small ends of the coffin are chariots, one drawn by horses, the other by a griffin - for which we now have some idea of their astronomical (solar) and funerary (ideas of resurrection) significance. In other words, the scenes cover similar themes to those on the Mycenaean mythological gold rings concerning life, death and resurrection, commemorated by the bull sacrifice: though there is no drinking scene, the jug-pouring implies libations into the ground instead. Looking back at the enthroned figure on the Hubbard amphora Dikaios comes to the conclusion that, since the vase had been placed in a tomb the decoration should also be read at a funerary level as representing the deified deceased at a funerary meal (he notes also matches with the iconography of



the Ahiram sarcophagus (14-13C) on which, again, the deceased king is shown on a sphinx throne, facing an oncoming procession ending in a chariot rider. Jung<sup>16</sup> notes, in fact, how profusely Mycenaean pictorial pottery flourished in Cyprus, most notably the chariot kraters – and it is interesting that at Ugarit (where the highest number of chariot kraters were found) Sauvage *ibid.* noted such kraters were often found in burials with horse bones and chariot remains - supporting the idea, says Jung, ‘that the

<sup>16</sup> R Jung 'Imported Mycenaean Pottery in the East: Distribution, Context and Interpretation' in **B Eder et al eds Policies of Exchange: Political Systems and Modes of Interaction in the Aegean and the Near East in the 2M BC** Vienna 2015 243-273

socially powerful and royally privileged Mariannu charioteers had a predilection for Aegean chariot motifs’.

#### THE PRIEST-MAGICIAN'S MUG

A further drinking scene on a clay drink container – this time from Ras Shamra-Ugarit - should be brought in here to throw a powerful spot-light on possible alternative readings for the identity of the seated figure and attendant on the Cyprus jug, radically opening up our view on the possibilities of what the ritual shown on it might be. It is shown on a drinking vessel known as the Priest-Magician mug (below - RS24/440 – Schaeffer<sup>17</sup>) fig.1), on the basis of which Monchambert<sup>18</sup> suggests there must have been a school of ceramicists at Ugarit catering for less-than-royal local clients - raising the possibility that the jug, amphora *and* cup could all have originated from there at a period when under strongest local combined Mitanni-Mycenaean influence. Nonetheless, Jung makes the point from sherd counts at



*(Top) Design on mug found in the ' Priest-Magician's Room', Ugarit – Jung fig.8; (lower left) photo of the mug – Schaeffer 1966 pl.1; (lower right) relief interpreted by Schaeffer as the God El with attendant replenishing his drinking bowl from a jug – Schaeffer 1937<sup>19</sup> pl.XVII (note El's other hand raised in greeting – or in blessing)*

recently reassessed Levantine palace sites such as Qatna that such pottery was not necessarily only supported by sub-élites, as Mycenaean illustrated pottery was popular all over the Aegean and Levant.

We note straight away on the mug (illustrated above) that the seated drinking figure again holds out a small bowl in one hand, and this time himself wears the polos with long, curled tassel coming out at the top - and again there is a (fragmentary) attendant (perhaps originally wearing a similar polos) moving

<sup>17</sup> C F A Schaeffer 'Nouveaux témoignages du culte de El et de Baal à Ras Shamra-Ugarit et ailleurs en Syrie-Palestine' *Syria XLIII* 1966 1-19 and 4 plates

<sup>18</sup> J-Y Monchambert 'Une École de Peintres-Céramistes à Ougarit?' in V Matoïan et al (eds) *Études Ougaritiques II (Ras Shamra-Ougarit XX)* Leuven 2012 159-66

<sup>19</sup> C F-A Schaeffer 'Les Fouilles de Ras Shamra-Ugarit Huitième Campagne (Printemps 1936): Rapport sommaire' *Syria XVIII* 1937 125-54 and plates

forward to fill the huge mixing amphora on the table in front of him from a jug. In an interesting step of intuition Montchambert reads the trio of bird, fish and horse as referring to Air, Water and Earth (c.f. the Zoroastrian Heptad at *III. 9-204*). If this is correct, it is a further pointer to the ultimately Central Asian nature of the drinking ritual (c.f. also the Kültepe seals in *Catalogue C* showing similar scenes).

Schaeffer's own retrospective account of the discovery of the mug in 'the Priest-Magician's house' and his interpretation of it in relation to other items it was found with – most specifically a tablet with an Ugaritic text describing a banquet held by the God El - leads us to consider an entirely new level of what it (and therefore the other drinking scenes on the other vessels) might represent. El, father of Baal, in the Levant represented the Upper Waters of the Firmament (hence also often spoken of in terms of Ea/Neptune – also a God of the Waters). He stands beyond Baal's atmosphere (somewhat like Imdugud in olden days) – on our God Table equated with Kronos/Saturn – and variously described as 'Father of the Years', 'Father of the Gods' or 'Creator of Humanity'. Although Eternal, in relation to the usurper Baal coming in from the Hurro-Hittite world<sup>20</sup>, El is visualised as a grandfather figure with pointed beard, decidedly starting to fail in his powers and liable to inebriation. A fragmentary passage on the tablet then describes how during the feast a two-horned, long-tailed monster emerges to confront him – from earlier material by now a familiar story (however no monster appears on the mug). Schaeffer imaginatively characterizes all the dots in the background as 'points représentant des astres', and sees the two figures as El being served by the king of Ugarit. He rates the polos with curly stamen as either a divine headdress or, 'porté[es] sur certain monuments d'Ugarit par le roi' (though Pope takes this headdress as *only* worn by divine figures). Schaeffer sees a direct parallel with the stone relief of El discovered in the Temple to Baal at Ugarit (illustrated above) where again an enthroned, bearded figure with horned headdress holding out a bowl in his hand is served by a pharaonic-looking man with jug about to pour, a bull-head sceptre in the other hand (Pope reads it as a serpent). Above is the winged Sun, the wings being the convention for referring to the Sky, where El is brought in as Saturn- or Sun-in-the-Sky. In a nutshell, Schaeffer interprets the two figures on the mug as the king of Ugarit paying respects to El in what amounts to a vassaldom ritual.

Five years later Pope begs to differ with Schaeffer's interpretation by leaning on different Ugaritic texts that also mean Montchambert's view of the bird, horse and fish can be replaced by convincing and extremely interesting readings. He puts aside the tablet describing El's banquet that Schaeffer found next to the mug (translated for him by Virolleaud) as irrelevant, stating, 'Every major detail in the scene on the mug [can be] ...accounted for in the first half of Ugaritic Myth II AB'<sup>21</sup>. The fact that in the myth the name of the principal drinking vessel is given as either *ḫptr* or *ḫprt*, 'both of them Hurrian loanwords designating cult vessels of metal, gold and copper, occurring in inventories from Qaṭna, Nuzi

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<sup>20</sup> L K Handy in *Among the Host of Heaven* Winona Lake 1994 well describes the difficulties of pinning down the identities of the Ugaritic Gods due to the fact there is so little contemporary textual information surviving to go by.

<sup>21</sup> Numbered UT51/CTCA 4,II

and Alalakh' – and that Ventris and Chadwick<sup>22</sup>'s analysis of Mycenaean inventories include the *opitetere* and the *kurusupa* (of similar etymology) to describe the same kinds of vessel (the vocabulary of both deriving from Akkadian originals) underlining that common Mitanni-Mycenaean osmosis.

In fact, in the mug scene the amphora sits on little cones set on a frame which Pope manages to explain as mounds of charcoal on a brazier which heat the drink. In the myth Asherah, El's consort discards her clothing in the sea, puts a vessel on the fire and makes ready to approach El with a request. As she does this, she looks up and sees her children, Anat and Baal approaching and worries that something has happened to them – but they explain they are coming to ask permission from El for Baal to build himself a house, and they ask Asherah for her help in pressing their case. She calls for her grooms to get her stallion/she-ass ready, and they 'put Asherah on the back of the stallion, on the beauteous back of the stud', Baal returns to Mt Saphon, leaving her to it - while we are told Anat goes on ahead to prepare the way. When Asherah finally arrives in El's domain he says 'Thou art surely famished, having journeyed; thou art surely thirsty, having travelled: Eat, yea drink'. If this is the text to be applied to the mug, does this mean the fragmentary second figure pouring the drink into the amphora is female, representing Asherah, and is the horse the steed she has just dismounted from<sup>23</sup>? The fish, Pope<sup>24</sup> suggests, alludes to 'the watery nature of El's abode', with the pocked background representing, not stars, but water.

And what about the bird? Pope brings together several quotations describing Anat's locomotion in the form of a bird (just like her counterpart, Athena) as, for example, in the epithet, 'Anat, Super Flyer, She who soars' (RS 24.252 ONV. 6-9). As Pope puts it, 'Although nothing is said about Anat during Asherah's entreaty of El, the circumstances indicate that she was present and listening to the conversation'. After Asherah has extracted permission from El, the eavesdropping Anat sets off to take the news to Baal, a repeat of what happens in the Elkunirsa myth, whereby Anat listens to the conversation between Elkunirsa and his wife *in the form of an owl perched on his shoulder*, flying off to tell Baal afterwards.

### **OCCASIONS FOR DRINKING CEREMONIES**

Our journey through possible interpretations for the matching elements on the Cyprus jug and the Priest-Magician's mug is an object lesson in the pitfalls of jumping to conclusions and/or aligning text to pictures appropriately or inappropriately. One can only put forward alternatives on the understanding that they are as close as we can get on the evidence we have. Such variations mean this is an opportune point at which to remind ourselves of the many reasons for 'putting on' drinking events. From my research so far I now treat the presence of the lion-prey group against such scenes as indicating they are New Year celebrations. Interestingly, this is barely mentioned as a reason for a drinking ritual in the

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<sup>22</sup> M Ventris and J Chadwick *Documents in Mycenaean Greek* Cambridge 1959 – see pp. 327, 324, 330, 402

<sup>23</sup> Anat, too, is referred to as riding a horse – perhaps more often than Asherah: see K van der Toorn 'Goddesses in Early Israelite Religion' in L Goodison et al (eds) *Ancient Goddesses* London 1998

<sup>24</sup> M H Pope 'The Scene on the Drinking Mug from Ugarit' in H Goedicke (ed.) *Near Eastern Studies in Honour of W F Albright* Baltimore 1971 393-405

papers given at a conference on ancient drinking held in Rome in 1990<sup>25</sup>. On the other hand some interesting points were raised by leading authorities in Ancient Near Eastern culture:

- Bottéro<sup>26</sup> cites quotations from the 3-2M literature which appreciate the relaxing effect drink has on the individual. Sheer conviviality can be the reason for having a party - more true in modern society than for ancient governments conscious of maintaining ceremonial links with the Cosmos. But - just as today – such occasions provide the setting for getting people – and Gods - into a benevolent mood (as in the story of Inanna and Enki) – or for coming together to make an important decision, such that even the Gods will assemble together as a large family to agree on a course of action (as when the Pantheon assemble at a banquet (*qerêtu*) to nominate Marduk as their avenger in the great battle with Tiamat). As Bottéro puts it, 'Là encore le banquet s'est trouvé le seul cadre véritablement approprié à une aussi grande reorganization de la 'famille' des dieux'. Closely bound up with the ceremony, however - as with the scene on the Priest-Magician's mug – is plain public assertion of authority.
- Pinnock<sup>27</sup> covers familiar territory from the 3M on, and we need not refer to obvious occasions already dealt with to mark marriages, funerals, oath-taking, commemoration of the ancestors (*kispu*) or the sealing of political alliances, whereby holding up the cup and drinking together implied both the binding of familial ties as well as demonstrations of vassalage and respect (under the latter criterion we could put Schaeffer's interpretation of the Priest-Magician's mug). Her discussion of the banquet scene in the Syrian region adds most - in her view they usually depict 'two personages, always males, facing each other and holding a cup in one hand, sometimes on both sides of a loaded table', seen by her as either divine figures, royal figures - or a mixture of both (as Schaeffer does) - and often to do with asserting royal power. She refers to the large statues of Ebla and Tell Halaf that show seated males holding a cup in one hand, testifying to 'the presence of a ritual, or of a tradition according to which kings or high priests were represented in public places of the towns as sitting statues holding a cup'.
- Mazzoni<sup>28</sup> gives a thorough assessment of the huge variety and amount of bulk liquid storage, pouring and drinking vessels found at Ebla in particular, with 'a high frequency documented in the equipment of Palace G' – to which she makes a direct connection with 'the cups held in the hands by the figures of the worshippers of statuary or in the banquet scenes on cylinder seals'.
- Finally, Michalowski<sup>29</sup> homes in on the quest in ancient cultures to achieve 'altered states of consciousness' and the problem of translating the plant names given in the texts from which

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<sup>25</sup> L Milano (ed.) *Drinking in Ancient Societies* Padual 1994

<sup>26</sup> J Bottéro 'Boisson, Banquet et Vie Sssociale en Mésopotamie' 3-13

<sup>27</sup> F Pinnock 'Considerations on the Banquet Theme in the Figurative Art of Mesopotamia and Syria 15-26 and plates

<sup>28</sup> S Mazzoni 'Drinking Vessels in Syria: Ebla and the Early Bronze Age' 245-255

<sup>29</sup> P Michalowski 'The Drinking Gods: Alcohol in Mesopotamian Ritual and Mythology' 27-44

appropriate brews could have been extracted, making precise identification of the ingredients elusive. He does not dwell on the divinatory help such substances can provide, concentrating mostly on their association with sexual ritual or the celebration of military victories. The mixture of sacred with profane behavior on such occasions enabled that communication between king or priest with God or Goddess, thanks to the boost of the sacred drink – and we should not leave out the idea these drinking scenes are intended to portray that connection between worlds. He ends with the idea of ‘the drinking vessel as a symbol of sovereignty and vassalage’, depending on the rank of the figure holding the drink - and the relationship of the second figure to them.

With such scenarios in mind, looking back at the drinking scenes depicted on the vessels shown so far, we now see the multiple possibilities available for interpretation - if we only know the full context. Now there is a further stage we can go in order to lock these last pieces into a more extended picture.

#### *JAHWEH'S CUP, JAHWEH'S DRINK - AND JAHWEH AS THE CUP*

Given the general equivalence in different eras between Abu in the 3M, EL in the 2M, and Jahweh in the 1M - and the fact that Asherah is mentioned as Jahweh's consort in the Bible - the identification of EL on the stela *and* then the mug by Schaeffer (accepted by Pope as valid) points to a further allowable expansion to the textual support to be brought into the conversation on drinking vessels in drinking ritual – raised in the papers of two scholars published in the same Festschrift who use Biblical sources.



The starting point in Schunk<sup>30</sup>'s paper is an actual cup - the Ain Samiya cup (above) - archaeologically speaking an actual ritual cup found in the Jerusalem locality (on first glance at its decoration we are reminded of the monster that appears during Baal's feast in the Ugaritic text mentioned earlier). Schunk asks what scenes with a cup like this one, held up in one hand, should signify – could it be the gesture of making a toast; could it be being offered for replenishment – or could it even be being proffered to the person before him to themselves take a sip? Certainly from Old Testament mentions (all references given in great detail by Schunk) it becomes clear that Jahweh has a Cup, whose contents he gives to others to drink from – not only to bring reward and fulfilment ('my cup overflows'), but also punishment – such that it is the very embodiment of retribution. For those who have behaved well, the

<sup>30</sup> C-D Schunk 'Der Becher Jahwes: Weinbecher – Taumelbecher – Zomesbecher' in A Graupner et al (eds) *Verbindungslinien: Festschrift Werner H Schmidt* Neukirchen-Vluyn 2000 323-30

drink offered from Jahweh's Cup brings happiness, but for those who have not, the drink is an expression of God's wrath, acting like poison, leading to death. Everyone receives their deserved drink on the Day of El/Jahweh (in other words on Judgement Day). Even in the New Testament, Christ in the Garden of Gethsemane at the nadir of his mission, hoping to avoid the Fate set out for him, prays to his Father, 'Abba, let this Cup pass from me' – and of course the Cup is central to Holy Communion and the idea of partaking briefly in an altered state of self-identification with Christ, wisdom and immortality (in the Bible the drink in question is always Wine).

Fuchs<sup>31</sup> confirms these direction of thought and then takes the enquiry further to look for the foundations of this Old Testament imagery in the earlier Ugaritic/Canaanite literature. Her references are manifold, so we can only pick out key points to give a taste of their richness. She reminds the reader that the metal treasures of the Temple famously included the two Cups of Jahweh - one of silver and the other of gold (possibly lunar and solar references) - their existence confirmed in Josephus (*BJ6*, 388). Both in the story of Aqhat and in the Baal Cycle, Danil invites Anat - or El invites Athirat/Asherah - to 'drink the blood of the plants from a gold beaker– and then from a silver one'. As Fuchs puts it, 'Setzen die o.g. goldenen und silbernen Becher im Jerusalemer Heiligtum diese uralte Tradition der kanaanäischen Götter fort?' In the story of Keret, again it is El (at the request of Baal) who blesses the King through drinks offered from vessels held in his left and right hands (*KIII*,ii, 16-20). Again the direction is *from* the God *to* the King.

The Cup in certain contexts indeed stands for Jahweh himself (*Psalms 16,5*) and in later times coins of the region stamped with a Cup stood for the theocratic state ('A gold beaker is Babylon in the Hand of Jahweh...' (*Jeremiah 51,7*)). This idea is also rooted in Ugaritic mythology (*BV*,i 10-17) where Baal's mighty bowl - which cannot be seen from Athirat's limited perspective - is the Cosmos itself. In our introductory discussion of the Kinik Bowl, this is the text discussed by Loretz (*KTU 1.3 I 10-15a*) describing the many different vessels handed by cupbearer *RDMNS* to Baal – perhaps alluding to the varying distances of the planetary spheres. Fuchs gives other cross-references to the idea – that for instance the Mandaean expression for the highest divine sphere is *mana rabba* or 'Great Container' – possibly the same referent for the Sea of Brass in the courtyard of Solomon's Temple. As Fuchs says, it is not much of a jump to have the God holding the Bowl of the Universe to be seen as one and the same as the Bowl itself: '[so] ist er sozusagen ein ugaritischer Atlas oder dessen Pendant, der Hethitische Weltenriese Upelluri' (the basis of the Greek version, of Apollo/Upelluri, Lord of the Zodiac, is thus a smooth translation/transition).

### **NOMADIC ORIGINS OF THE INDO-EUROPEAN SACRED DRINKING RITE**

The final angle – as referred to by Michalowski above - requires deeper scrutiny: how important was the underlay of Proto-Zoroastrianism to the drinking ritual, established centuries before? It makes

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<sup>31</sup> G Fuchs 'Das Symbol des Bechers in Ugarit und Israel' in A Graupner et al (eds) *ibid.* 65-84

sense to look at the reasons behind Central Asian drinking rites, not so much deduced from artefacts now, but from Vedic or Avestan texts where there are enough mentions to realise these began simply - within a nomadic setting. From the *ṚGVEDA* we understand such occasions were particularly linked with the Maruts (the Winds) surrounding Indra and the Aśvin-Nāsatyau Vortex (which has connotations both with horses *and* the whirlwind of the twisted snake-legs of the Snake Lady discussed at length elsewhere in the Catalogue). The Maruts were libated in celebrations by none other than that class of noble young horsemen<sup>32</sup>, the *mariyanni*, often accompanied by chanting, singing and simple pipe music. Haudry<sup>33</sup>'s paper on the subject is sufficiently vivid to call up the main facts:

- ★ The original sacrifice using the Soma/Haoma must have originated in a period before the split between Indian and Iranian –to before the demonization of the Maruts in the late *AVESTA* as 'Bad Spirits';
- ★ The Avestan word for 'sacrifice', *yasna*, means 'banquet';
- ★ The *SĀMAVEDA* is a collection of songs sung at the sacrifice - at which participants sought 'une commune ivresse unissant les Dieux aux hommes', as Haudry translates it;
- ★ In the earliest days the banquet would have been 'plutôt maigre', consisting of clarified butter, fresh and soured milk, little baked cakes made of rice and/or wheat – and above all the *Soma* (probably ephedra juice) diluted with water or milk – sometimes mixed with honey (the Avestan *Haoma* being the equivalent);
- ★ Not only would the *Soma* be consumed by the participants, but it would also be offered back to the Gods, poured over the fire and/or earth (and at some point later animal sacrifices were added, often to replace human sacrifice);
- ★ The *Soma* was sometimes addressed as a God itself – good and bad people/demons were said to perform the same libations to it (including the Turanian dragon Azi Dahāka);
- ★ The signs are that the instigatory celebrants were the young nomadic horseman class who saw themselves as embodying a particular set of Gods – 'les Maruts se partagent entre la société humaine, où ils représentent les marya/jeunes hommes' et le domaine cosmique, où ils représentent les vents d'orage... d'origine ou secondairement, les Maruts sont liés à un groupe de jeunes gens dans lequel, à en juger par les hymnes védiques qui leur soit adressés, apparaissent conjointement armés de parades, parures et fards, musiques, chants et danses, femmes, et tout ce qui constitue ou agrmente la fête ...';
- ★ Thus, rather than imagining a 'banquet of the Gods' in an ideal heavenly city (as on Saphon or Olympus), in Central Asia the Gods are not far away, invoked at the sacrifice ground

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<sup>32</sup> On balance, H Falk in 'Das Reitpferd im Vedischen Indien' in B Hänsel et al (eds) *ibid.* states: 'Das Pferd wurde im 2. Jahrtausend v.Chr. nach Indien eingeführt', but that 'Alle archäologischen, literarischen und hippologischen Voraussetzungen sprechen dafür, dass Reiten schon vor dem *ṚgVeda* zu den Transportmethoden der Indo-Arier gehörte'.

<sup>33</sup> J Haudry 'Banquets, Musiques et Parures: La Fête avant le Palais' *Journal Asiatique* **CXCIX**,2 2011 539-547

itself. *Soma* was offered to the Maruts, inseparable companions of the Warrior God Indra and, as just quoted, particularly associated also with the entertainments described;

- ★ The hymns mention the elaborate self-anointing and self-adornment of the Maruts/marya with parures such as bracelets, rings, torques and pectorals – to the extent they are described as ‘They who dress like women’ (compare with Mycenaean warriors). Known as the ‘bards of Indra’, ‘rhythmant [leur chant] autour de lui ... dans l’ivresse du *Soma*’ they are famed as singers of hymns. Singing or chanting could be sufficient to accompany the sacrifice, though sometimes they danced, ‘la poitrine [constellée] de plaques d’or’.

Haudry distils the above information from many texts, often fragmentary, that had been written retrospectively in different periods (somewhat like the *Iliad*, the chronology of actual events described always problematic and the subject of much speculation). Haudry’s point is to form a picture of how the sacrifice was enacted *before* its institutionalisation ‘dans the palais’ (hence the title of his paper). At this stage such occasions seem to have been rural and somewhat rough and ready, losing that open-air quality considerably once formalised in the restricted palace settings. As Haudry puts it, once the Soma ritual became part of formal court life, ‘*Avec Indra, les Maruts quittent la sphere cosmique des vents d’orage terrifiants et devastateur pour entrer dans la sphere sociale des rapports entre le seigneur et ses compagnons*’, which gives in a nutshell how Mitanni life developed following their infiltration into Mesopotamia and Syria and the ensuing growth of their empire in the Levant.

#### ZOROASTRIANISM AND THE CANAANITE TRADITION

Linking back to our previous section on Jahweh, we should mention here Sherwin<sup>34</sup>’s quotation of Mary Boyce<sup>35</sup>’s insistence that Zoroastrian threads within the Canaanite tradition (meaning the Judaic tradition too) probably began c.1400-1000 in the slip-stream of the Mitanni presence, and that the Proto-Zoroastrians of that period were located ‘somewhere in the south Russian steppes’ (others think Seistan<sup>36</sup>). Gnoli (see later footnote) was more precise: ‘the northernmost regions where Zoroaster carried out his work were Bactria and Araeia and southernmost Drangiana and Arachosia...’. Here we have to distinguish between the question of Zoroaster the historical prophet’s emergence in the 6C BC in that region - and the fact that he embodied a millennia-long tradition of astronomical observation by nameless astronomer-priests/Magi before him. These days the tradition in the 2M is called ‘Proto-Zoroastrianism’ – in archaeological terms associated with the BMAC<sup>37</sup> region by Sarianidi<sup>38</sup>.

In its formative stages this band of nomadic, celibate *maryas* loyal to each other as ‘the chosen few’ - devoted to Truth (*Satya*) and Cosmic Law (*Rta*) - played hard (drinking and singing in the company of

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<sup>34</sup> S J Sherwin ‘Old Testament Monotheism and Zoroastrian Influence’ in R P Gordon (ed.) *The God of Israel* Cambridge 2007

<sup>35</sup> M Boyce A *History of Zoroastrianism I & II* Leiden 1975/1982. See also M Boyce ‘Zoroastrianism: A Shadowy but Powerful Presence in the Judaeo-Christian World’ (4<sup>1st</sup> Lecture of the Friends of Dr Williams London 1987

<sup>36</sup> See the discussion of the Zoroastrian Astronomical Tradition in the full *Catalogue E (Iconography Section)*.

<sup>37</sup> BMAC is the abbreviation for ‘Bactria-Margiana Archaeological Complex’ used by Sarianidi

<sup>38</sup> Also explained at full length *passim* in *Catalogue E*

the Gods) because they also fought hard, in ‘un rôle politique, activité de justicier’. One might imagine that, like their Mycenaean cousins, they were at their best living the nomad ethic but had to adapt when briefly taking on and mastering the urban territories of the Levant.

### **EARLIER NOMADIC DRINKING TRADITIONS**

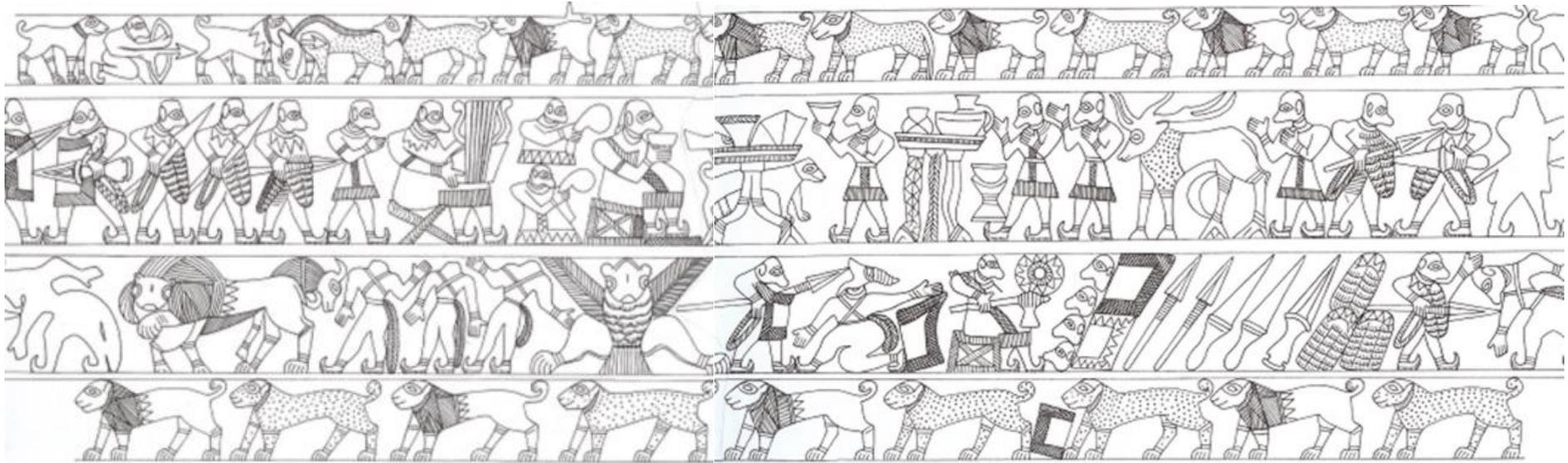
In tracking the crossover process between **CANEA** motifs and new BMAC images coming into the Levant we can look at the iconography of three much earlier drinking vessels: the Karashamb goblet and two ‘Amorite’ beakers - all three of which we understand straight away as products of nomadic societies interacting with urban conventions while still asserting their own cruder identity.



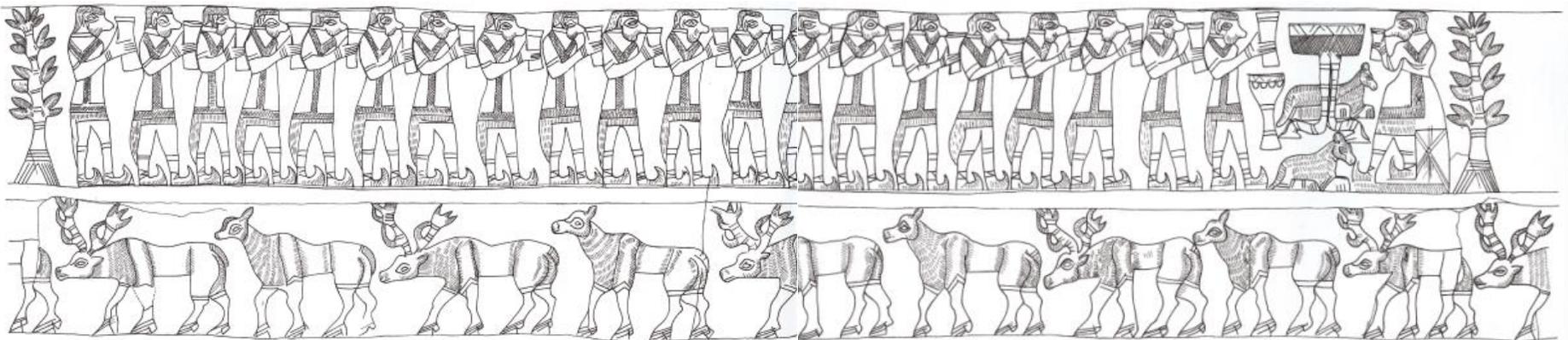
In the period the Karashamb goblet, above, was made (along with the Trialeti cup<sup>39</sup> which serves as a useful foil, given it shares some of its iconographical idiosyncrasies), such a drinking vessel was rare for the territory where it was found, since (along with the crescentic axe and elaborate necklace found next to it) it undoubtedly proclaimed the status of an owner whose social climbing had attained tangible results, much as the Eurasian Maikop chieftains a millennium or two before (**Ratt-10** - and also **III.9-92**, reminding us ‘the oldest sword in the world’ was Eurasian). Ritual drinking cups are shown in use in one cultic scene on the goblet itself, giving an idea of the high occasion it must have been used for – as also on the Trialeti cup where an entire procession of men each holds up a cup as they process towards the figure of authority (God or Ruler) seated before a similar table and bowl on stand. This latter is from a nearby site in Armenia and was probably made in the same workshop or even by the same craftsman. Thanks to the full drawings of their iconography (next illustrations) made by Boehmer (*ibid.*) for their systematic analysis, one further, perhaps startling conclusion emerges about the goblet’s cultural

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<sup>39</sup> Illustrated early in **Catalogue E**



III.9- 1: Main registers of the Karashamb beaker iconography– from Boehmer et al. *ibid.*, Beilage 1



III.9- 2: The two registers of the iconography of the Trialeti silver beaker – from Boehmer et al. *ibid.*, Beilage 2

borrowings – that although the mainline iconography owes inspiration to Eblan culture, small details more familiar from artefacts made in the mountain regions of Akkadian Susiana or the desert sites of south-western Iran like Tepe Yahya or Shahdad (see Kohl's map **III.9-23**) provide supplementary clues to enable complete decoding of the pictography, proving the nomads of Eurasia were linked by alternative networks connecting the mountain or foothill communities of Central Asia that completely by-passed societies living in the urban complexes along the riverine plains further south.

**THE SIX REGISTERS OF THE KARASHAMB GOBLET**

Omitting the petalled calyx at register 5 and a row of criss-crossing lions and lionesses/leopardesses round the goblet foot at Register 6 (led by a single lion facing outwards), **III.9- 1** above delineates the top four registers of the vase (Register 4 is again a procession of contrasting lions and leopardesses).

**OVERVIEW**

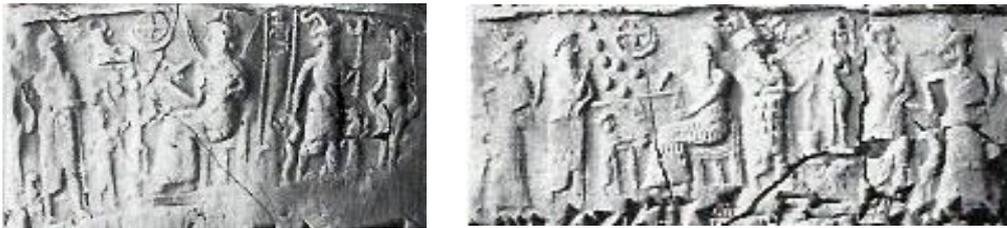
- ◇ On *Register 1* at the top, the kneeling bowman aiming at a lion biting a boar on its face (another arrow pierces its shoulder) forms the focal point for a procession round the circumference of lions and leopards - perhaps representing days and nights (a plausible astronomical interpretation given the possible significance of the Bowman as Sirius).
- ◇ On *Register 3* a lion looking out as it attacks a goat from the front is almost on the same vertical as the upper *Forward Attack*, crossing right over its prey as in the second seal of **ForAtt-12**. That vertical line-up between the two lion attacks and the lion facing outwards from the procession in *Register 6* appears to be one 'front view' for the goblet.
- ◇ The main narrative bands in *Registers 2* and *3* then have independent culminating centrepieces further round the vase, each centring on an enthroned figure.
- ◇ We see at once a deliberate contrast between a feasting scene on *Register 2* and a war scene on *Register 3* – noting in general that all the men represented have big proboscis noses and shaven faces and heads and wear the typical pointed shoes we associate with mountain people; all the soldiers have leggings and top coats short at the front to allow movement, with a back tail stretching down their calves, in some respects giving the same effect as the Mitanni hero loin-cloth worn in the Perati seal shown later (**ForAtt-25**). In contrast, at the feasting scenario officials indoors have bare legs and wear short tunics with woven borders much like the courtiers' dress on the Inandik Vase analysed later.

We can now analyse in detail the contrasted scenes of Peace and War on the two main registers.

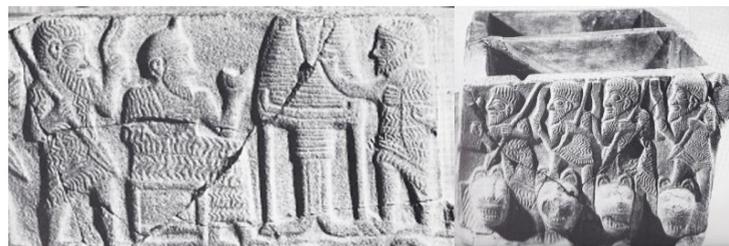
**REGISTER 2 ON THE KARASHAMB GOBLET**

The feasting scene centres on a seated man Boehmer interprets as a Ruler, possibly the owner of the cup himself, and in contrast to everyone else's shaven heads he has a topknot and fringed edge to his wrapped robe. Backed by soldiers with shields and over-sized spears or daggers with crescentic handles

led in by a courtier, he is entertained by a musician playing a lyre-type instrument along with two crouching percussionists<sup>40</sup> (the crouching figures truncated at the hips, often with bulging forelegs – is a stylistic feature found on seals or figurines from places in southern Iran such as Susa, Shahdad or Tepe Yahya (e.g. *III. 9-168* and *III. 9-172*). Perhaps the most interesting parallels to be seen are with the troupes of seated musicians that appear not only on the Trans-Elamite seals discussed by Edith Porada (*Error! Reference source not found.* and *Error! Reference source not found.*), but also on the Hittite narrative vases of Hüseyindede (*III.9-164*) and Inandikdepe (*III.9-167*) analysed later. In the next register the ruler holds a goblet to his lips whilst a dignitary at the first table in front of him also holds up a beaker to join the toast. Such an audience scene portrays similar iconography to that on the cluster of Syro-Cappadocian seals featuring the peak-capped Ruler<sup>41</sup> discussed in *Catalogue C* under *Ratt-18* (repeated below)<sup>42</sup> at the moment Shamash raises the cup in the presence of Baal, Ishtar and the *Sibitti* (Ursa Major/Minor). Michel<sup>43</sup> quotes Karum texts referring to Eblans living in Kanesh and in another paper on-line<sup>44</sup> gives precise information about metal availability in Anatolia (mostly copper and silver) that attracted traders with Asian tin to swap.



*III.9- 3: Seals 692 and 693 from Özgüç (ibid.) discussed in full in Catalogue C under Ratt-18 featuring the peak-capped ruler* Matthiae<sup>45</sup> points out that the peaked cap was the early headgear of the bearded Eblan ruler, seen worn both on the long side of the double basin of *ForAtt-14* and on that of c.1900 found in the entrance area of Temple B1 (below), corresponding to the timing of his appearance on the Kültepe seals above



*III.9- 4: (Left) Audience scene with peak-capped ruler and dignitary making the toast either side of a bull-legged table on the long*

<sup>40</sup> Boehmer has other ideas about what the instruments they hold could alternatively be, since on a seal from Tchoga Mish, instruments of the same shape are being blown, and thus may be bagpipes.

<sup>41</sup> See especially pl.XLII, nos 692 and 693 illustrated above, as originally photographed in N Özgüç 'Vorläufiger Bericht über die 1948 und 1949 Gefundenen Siegel und Siegelabdrücke' in T & N Özgüç *Bericht über die im Auftrage der Türkischen Historischen Gesellschaft 1949 durchgeführten Ausgrabungen* Ankara 1953.

<sup>42</sup> See also F Pinnock 'Some Thoughts about the Transmission of Iconographies between North Syria and Cappadocia 3-2M BC' in in P Matthiae et al. (eds) *Proceedings of the 1st International Congress on the Archaeology of the Ancient Near East [CAANE] Vol.2* Rome 2000 1397-1415

<sup>43</sup> C Michel 'Central Anatolia in the Nineteenth and Eighteenth Centuries BC' in Cancik-Kirschbaum op.cit. 111-135

<sup>44</sup> [http://www.mae.u-paris10.fr/arscan/IMG/pdf/Michel\\_2008\\_ArScAn8.pdf](http://www.mae.u-paris10.fr/arscan/IMG/pdf/Michel_2008_ArScAn8.pdf)

<sup>45</sup> P Matthiae 'The Lions of the Great Goddess of Ebla: A Hypothesis about some Archaic Old Syrian Cylinders' (1993), reprinted in Matthiae & Pinnock *ibid.* 2013, pp 383-391 (paper B13)

# THE CANON OF ANCIENT NEAR EASTERN ART

## CATALOGUES OF EVIDENCE

### E: THE FORWARD ATTACK ART HISTORY CHRONOLOGICAL FOCUS

side of the Eblan Temple B double basin (right) now in the Damascus Museum – *Matthiae I Tesori da Ebla pl.58* and relevant to our analysis of the Mitanni ‘Baal heroes’.

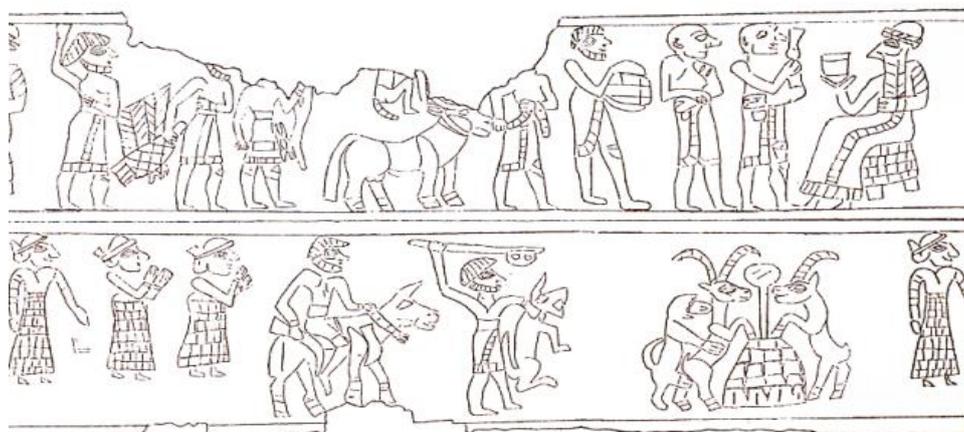
Two early 2M Amorite bronze beakers from the North Syrian region, probably made a century or so later (the one below left already described under *Ratt-16*) show a similar mixture of nomadic elements fused with Mesopotamian iconography:



III.9- 5: The two beakers described by Schlossman<sup>46</sup>. (drawings of the iconography follow)

#### BEAKER 1: AMORITE DONKEYS

These roughly contemporary, unprovenanced beakers described by Schlossman (*ibid.*) follow the tradition as seen on the Ur Standard - of post-war processions and celebrations in honour of kings and gods, and are punctuated by symbols for just two or three principal gods. Although sometimes classed as Amorite because of the inclusion of donkeys, other motifs are purely Mitanni, so that the beakers embody two nomadic cross-currents – the one from the Semitic heartlands of Arabia to the south, the other from Central Asia to the north. Already analysed in



III.9-158: Iconography of Beaker 1, originally on loan to the Israel Museum by Elie Borowski

<sup>46</sup> See Betty L. Schlossman 'Two North Mesopotamian Bronze Beakers of the Early Second Millennium BC' *AfO XXV* 1975,143-60

# THE CANON OF ANCIENT NEAR EASTERN ART

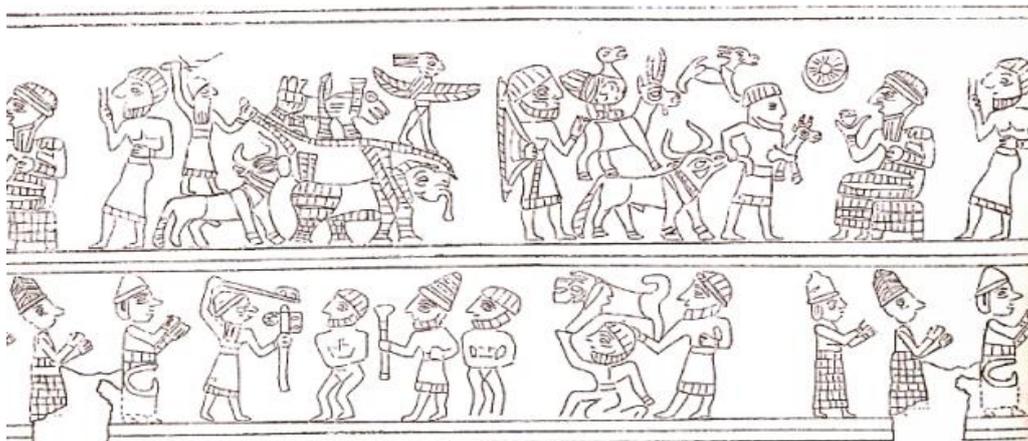
## CATALOGUES OF EVIDENCE

### E: THE FORWARD ATTACK ART HISTORY CHRONOLOGICAL FOCUS

detail in *Catalogue C* as **Ratt-16**, Beaker 1 (above) shows on the top row a tribute procession bringing gifts to a seated ruler with cup upheld at the moment of taking the oath (but we now know he could be a God giving his blessing), whilst on the bottom row the *Rear Attack* on one of the goats placed heraldically either side of an Asherah indicates the procession towards it to be in honour of the Gods involving these particular animals - probably Tammuz and Ishtar – while the figure brandishing the fenestrated axe has been interpreted as Baal – here holding up in the other hand a sacrificial baby donkey (or is it a dog?). Schlossman interprets the animal led by a rope on the top register as a bull, and that carried by the figure with the fenestrated axe as a lion, but its ears are too long, and both are now thought to be donkeys, the latter possibly the foal of the donkey following it (for the Amorites, in a ritual in honour of Ishtar the female donkey was sometimes ritually washed, rather than sacrificed). Schlossmann mentions also the remains of what is either a monkey or foetus over the top donkey's back which I now interpret as Kothar - the Syrian equivalent of Ptah/Hephaistos – the Craftsman God taken up by the Mycenaeans extensively discussed earlier in the Catalogue. Much as on the Karashamb goblet, there are several Syro-Sumerian ritual features, but adapted to local tribal use – here, seemingly, by an Amorite tribe. It should be noted, however, that the icon of lion attacking one of the pair of heraldic goats is almost exactly repeated on the base of the BMAC stamp seal of a camel with bull-leaping scene on the back (see p.31 below) which is probably earlier in date.

### BEAKER 2: THE MITTANNI DRAGON, ANZU AND THE WIND GYMNAST

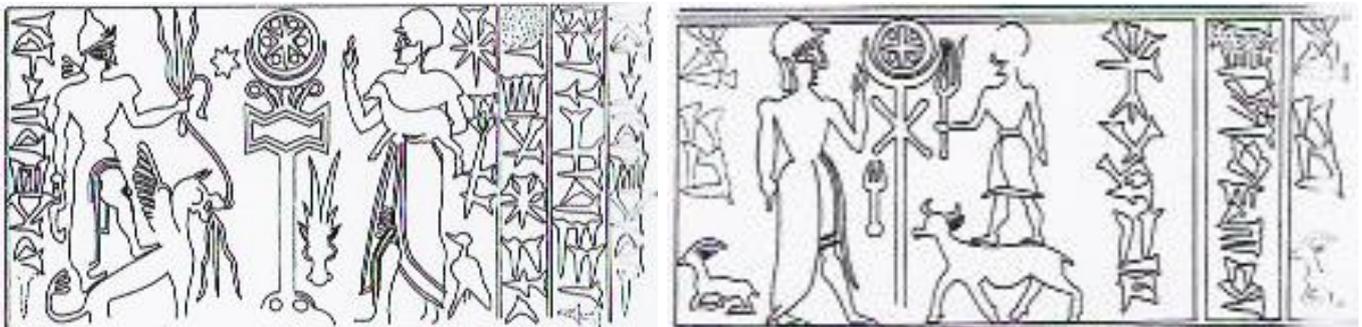
The second beaker, less well-known, is in some ways more revealing in its judicial placement of the main gods in full descriptive detail at certain points and from one perspective could be described as following familiar 2M North Syrian formulae in subject and layout. But this one is even more mould- breaking on the part of its nomadic owners than Beaker 1 – not so much in its Sumero-Amorite characteristics this time, but in its provincial adaptation of features known in more polished examples as part of mainstream Mitanni imagery (Ninurta- Anzu DIVERSION 6).



**III.9- 159: Iconography of Beaker 2, Brooklyn Museum, said to have been found in Luristan**

**TOP REGISTER: SHAMASH AND THE STORM GOD**

On the top row of this beaker the expected enthroned figure appears, holding up his cup, but this time with the Sun-in-Crescent next to him, indicating that he must be Shamash (c.f. Shamash on the Karashamb goblet). Bowman and herdsman offer him bull, goat, kid and bird, one standing over the other in receding size. Then the group behind shows a God standing on a bull, holding both it and a hybrid vomiting, feathered lion on two separate leashes (perhaps an indication of the dual cultural background of the owner of this beaker) – the latter monster much on the lines of the dragon-lion on the Ebla ablution basin (**ForAtt-14** and **III.9-19**), again with a stream of vomit/water coming out of its mouth to convey the idea of a roaring storm. Lambert<sup>47</sup> stresses how the Anatolian textual sources emphasise the Storm God Teššub as the creator of terrestrial water (rain becoming rivers), important for the farmers of mountain regions not using irrigation - as opposed to the underground waters of the *Apsu* associated with Ea. To understand the context for the dual steed, on Nuzi seals the Storm God is usually shown standing on the back of the feathered lion with streams of water coming out of its mouth (as below left), but one Nuzi seal in the Silwa-Teššub Archive still has him on the old-fashioned, straightforward Anatolian-type bull steed (below right).



**III.9- 160: Two seals showing the Hurrian and Anatolian steeds of the Storm God -Stein NuziCat-406 and 302**

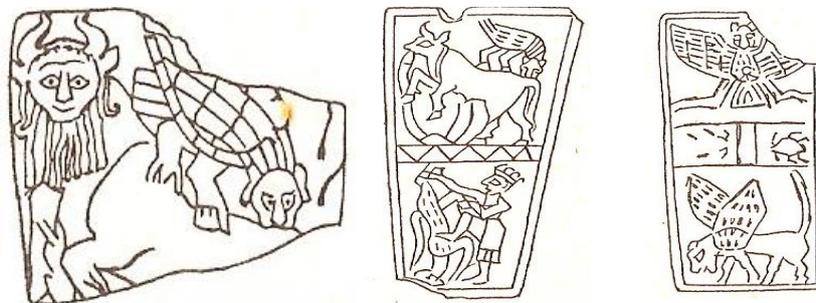
In contrast to the drama of his own thunder, lightning and rain, the texts confirm that in the 2M Teššub was often approached in the same breath as Shamash the Sun (actually also part of ‘weather’) at the top rank of the Anatolian Pantheon, his attribute of forked lightning held in the hand sometimes manifesting as a tree. The overlap between Teššub and Baal varies from area to area, with the general emphasis on Teššub being mostly a weather God as opposed to Baal, predominantly (but not exclusively) a warrior God who nearly always holds two weapons - as he appears in this beaker’s second register. The beaker thus differentiates between the two Gods, avoiding the ambiguity of role seen in their prototype Ninurta, whose 3M vaguer responsibilities matched those of the first Ṛgvedic Gods as described by MacDonnell *ibid*. But

<sup>47</sup> W G Lambert ‘Trees, Snakes and Gods in Ancient Syria and Anatolia’ *BSOAS XLVIII* 1985 435-451

there is more to say about this group on the beaker since we catch sight of a phase in the depiction of the story of Ninurta's battle with Anzu and the Winds as originally quoted it in the Ninurta myth.

**BOTTOM REGISTER: ANZU AND THE WINDS**

Two small hybrids are perched on the leash securing the winged lion monster. One at first sight looks like the lion-eagle Imdugud in the more rarely seen sideways version landing on the back of a bull/bull-man (as in the Tello shell engravings below left and centre, already demonic in appearance and more like the predecessor of Anzu. Interestingly, in the Perati seal (**ForAtt-25** – detail below) the winged human bestraddling the *Forward Attack* holds up spindly versions of this lion-bird creature, here with full lion body and long ass-ears (compare with the horse or donkey ears on the Neo-Assyrian and Neo-Babylonian versions of Anzu (**III.9- 174**), and keeping



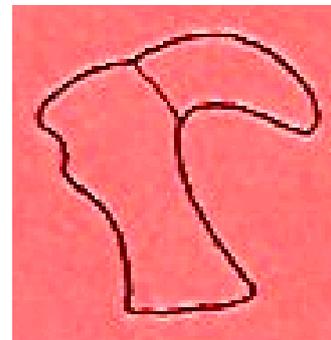
**III.9- 161: Precedents for Beaker 2 iconography: engravings on pieces of shell inlay from Tello with lion-bird demon on the bull-man/bull's back, and in straightforward spread-eagle position with roaring winged lion underneath** in mind the donkey content of Beaker 1. Since there are two of them, treated as prey, they seem more likely now to be demons rather than the God Imdugud (they are certainly not shown as a hieratic divine presence with wings benignly outstretched as in the Tello shell piece above right – which happens also to have an embryonic version of the Storm-God winged lion underneath it – in vomiting position, but no vomit/roar).



**III.9- 162: (Left) Winged figure on the Perati seal (ForAtt-25) holding up two lion-eagle hybrids (c.f. III.9- 161); (right) Compare with dress and physique of Amenhotep II as Libyan God Tanen, wearing the North African penis sheath (Cairo Museum)**

The other hybrid on Beaker 2's lion-monster leash is a little squat woman with hair blown backwards as if teetering on the dragon's back, balancing herself with outstretched wings.

Schlossman points out that such wind-blown females occasionally appear on Hurrian/Mitanni seals in various positions (as on the seals in the coming two illustrations) and could represent a wind, or winds (Collon<sup>48</sup> in her paper on Ninurta's iconography accepts this interpretation). The Spencer-Churchill seal Schlossman cites in particular (below) shows three acrobatic winged females with windblown hair appearing to represent the varied directions of the Winds of the Storm God – and presided over by the Snake Lady with entwined legs as the Wind Vortex: she and one of the Wind figures are shown in the same poses as their appearance on the rare OB sealings discussed early in the Catalogue. The Storm God himself is interposed as a secondary figure standing on the vomiting winged lion, as on the beaker and sealing of Iṭḫi-Teššub coming.



**III.9-163: (Left) Impression of the Spencer-Churchill seal BM 134773 1966 - 2 -18.34 - Schlossman's comparandum (her fig. 18); (right) one of the many zodiacal clay figurines from Petsophas and Traostalos studied by Blomberg who points out 'kometos' is Greek for both 'head with long hair', and 'comet' – Blomberg *ibid.* 2000 fig.10**

In much the same way as the myth of **Ninurta and Anzu** does, we remember from our discussion of Mitanni Gods related to ancient India how *Varuṇa* is roughly the equivalent of the Mitanni Weather God - and Ṛgvedic hymns in his praise specifically mention the winds that accompany him.

**TEŠŠUB, IŠTAR AND THE FOUR WINDS IN THE MITANNI & CENTRAL ASIAN TRADITION**

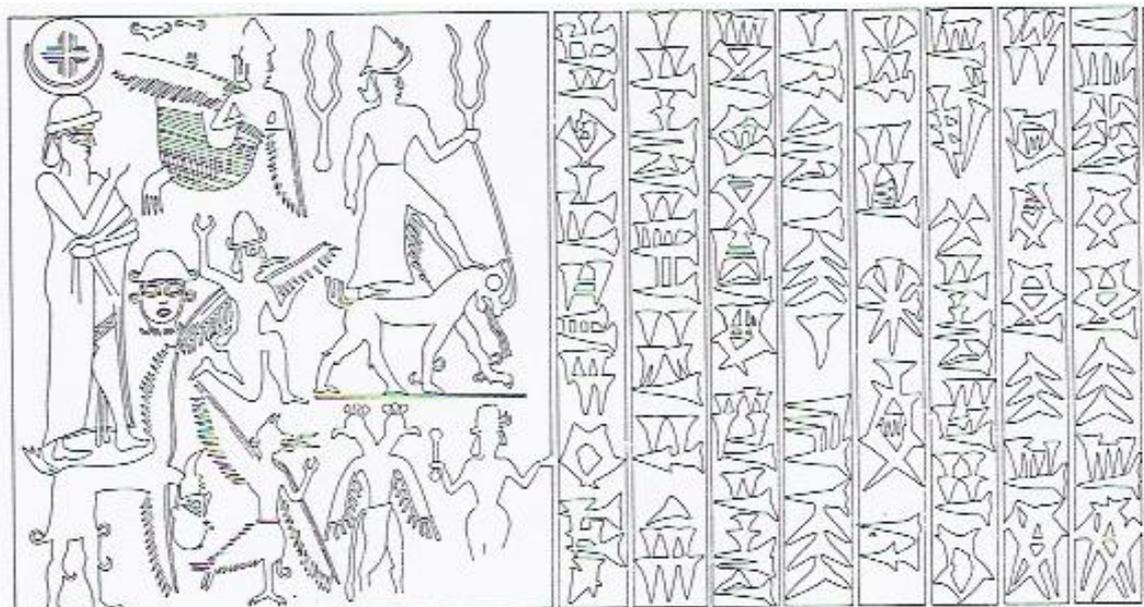
Going back to the first group of figures on Beaker 2, even the bowman and the first tier of creatures walking towards Shamash could be read on the astronomical level as the sequence of constellations Sirius, Taurus, the Aselli stars (donkey reference) in Cancer, Aquila, and the Kids of Auriga – all of them important anchor constellations in calendar-fixing. Then on the second register come variations akin to the same register on Beaker 1 –the conventional lion-tamer group is shown as a wrestler heaving a lion over his head (Schlossman believed the lion is attacking him, but probably not). Then the man wielding both fenestrated axe and mace must be Baal the Warrior God (on this beaker differentiated from the Storm God), overseeing the capture of prisoners, with possibly by the owner of the cup on their right – also holding a mace; at the same time three priestly figures (replacing the three priestesses or minor goddesses on Beaker 1) walk behind Baal in their ritual flounced skirts and layered conical hats.

<sup>48</sup> D Collon 'The Iconography of Ninurta' in Paul Taylor (ed.) *The Iconography of Cyklinder Seals (Warburg Institute Colloquia 9)* 2006 100-109

In conclusion, even on these small provincial beakers the key theme is the contrast between War and Peace celebrations – both sponsored by the Gods, rendered in provincial fashion with different local characters presiding. The fact that Beaker 2 was found in the mountains of western Iran bears out its use of a dual-culture iconography, partly borrowed from the urban centres of the plains and partly deriving from the Mitanni homelands, passed along piedmont networks in an imaginative nomadic blend - and perhaps to be seen as a contrast to the seemingly more culturally uncouth Amorite scenes of Beaker 1 (or is that just because donkeys are included?).

Though overall the beaker's second cluster of figures on the top register appears to show a Mitanni/Hurrian<sup>49</sup> version of the Storm God and his helpers, given our analysis of the astronomical representation of Cardinal Signs as separate animals or as lion/bull/man/scorpion hybrid dragons, as suggested earlier it appears equally to refer to Teššub/Ninurta's mastery over all four directions of the sky - revealed in weather by the Four Winds – by reining them in and taming them as forces that separately are inimical to cosmic order. In much the same vein as his representation on Beaker 2 is the Kassite-style Nuzi seal of Iṭḫi-Teššub discussed by Diana Stein<sup>50</sup> (below) which she interprets in terms of the Storm God surrounded by local manifestations of Shaushga/Ishtar, his consort but let us look again.

I suggested very early on (p.20) that the twists of the Snake Lady's legs could represent the *vartis/Vortex* of the Ašvinau-Nāsatyau. She is accompanied by Wind Gymnasts who appear to be the equivalent of the Vedic Maruts. On the Iṭḫi-Teššub seal, apart from the worshipper at the left of the scene and a naked Ishtar with mirror in the bottom right corner, the Storm God Himself is depicted in



**III.9-164: The sealing of Iṭḫi-Teššub (Stein NuziCat-659, its iconography also discussed by Porada<sup>51</sup>)**

<sup>49</sup> For the difference between Hurrians and the Mitanni, see Gernot Wilhelm op.cit

<sup>50</sup> Diana Stein 'Mythologische Inhalte der Nuzi-Glyptik' in V Haas (ed.) *Hurriter und Hurritisch* Konstanz 1988,173-209

<sup>51</sup> E Porada, 'Remarks on Mitannian (Hurrian) and Middle Assyrian Glyptic Art' *Akkadica XIII 1979* 2-25 and figs. 1-14

## THE CANON OF ANCIENT NEAR EASTERN ART

### CATALOGUES OF EVIDENCE

#### E: THE FORWARD ATTACK ART HISTORY CHRONOLOGICAL FOCUS

due Mitanni style at the top right, followed by a train of four double-winged creatures and the two-headed eagle-man of the Sky at the bottom (c.f. below the 2M Central Asian example on a typical Bactrian ritual shaft-hole axe, whose shape is based on the original shoulder-blades used as weapons in the Palaeolithic). We are reminded of quintessential Āryan cosmology in the Zoroastrian reverence for the purity of the Four Elements of Water, Air, Fire and Earth and ask ourselves whether it is not in play here. The four seemingly demonic winged hybrids again indicate different orientations or wind directions through their poses and wing positioning, and taken as a group are even more meaningful as winds working through the Four Elements, more or less distinguishable as Water = fish, Air = bird/wings, Fire/lightning=flames and Earth=serpent/human.



**III.9- 165: (Left) Late3M-early 2M Bactrian ceremonial silver-gilt bronze shaft-hole axe with winged lion-snake monster, double-headed eagle-man and boar –MMA; (right) a pure Forward Attack (Face-Bite) variant, George Ortiz Collection. I believe both axes are referencing the Circumpolar star zone (often the Boar replaces the Bear) with Leo at the Ecliptic**

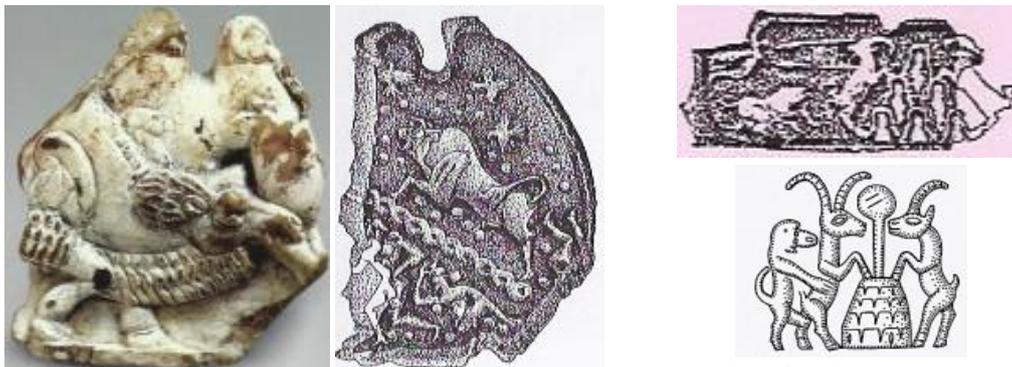
Thus it seems the only figure with any true precedent for representing Ishtar is the front-facing nude holding up drumsticks or mirrors at the bottom right corner of the seal, and looking back at the Spencer-Churchill seal the winged female with back-blown hair and double-snakes instead of legs is the figure that makes most sense as another form of Ishtar on that seal, warranting further discussion later in relation to her appearance on other artefacts (including a Kassite *kudurru* in the British Museum).

These last drinking vessels convey some idea of the nomadic roots of drinking rituals going back to a much earlier time than the Cyprus pieces – but again they are pieces that belonged to local chieftains balancing a life of independence with interaction and borrowings from urban Mesopotamia. Now we are ready to consider the blend of drinking with other entertainments in general – very much the background for understanding both the Mitanni, and their related cousins, the Mycenaeans.

### ENTERTAINMENT AND CULT DRINKING IN CENTRAL ASIA

The inclusion of bull-leaping scenes with the lion-prey group in the various Mitanni seals we have dealt with in this Catalogue - crowned by one Nuzi sealing that expands the activity to include other modes of acrobatics - leads us to the realization that bull-leaping was but one variation in a programme of celebration and entertainment organized for important occasions.

If we are to labour the point again about the Mitanni being the ‘connective tissue’ between Central Asia/India and the Near East, then starting from the distance of the Central Asian perspective, Sarianidi<sup>52</sup> wrote of a new find: ‘The excavations in Togolok-21 brought to light a unique amulet [illustrated below] carved in the shape of a Bactrian camel. On its back there is a running ox and an acrobat jumping over the animal that greatly resembles the scenes of *tauromachia*...’. Not so often shown is its stamp seal base which shows a *Rear Attack* on one of the goats either side of a monticule - exactly as in the group on the lower register of the first Amorite Beaker described above (detail reproduced again below bottom right):



*Ratt-16 detail*

**III.9- 6: (Left and centre) 2M camel amulet of creamy stone from southern courtyard at Togolok-21 in the BMAC (front and back views) – AFC-265 and Hiebert<sup>53</sup> fig.9.2 – not to forget what is possibly a stamp seal element on its chipped base (top right), its iconography to be compared with the grouping of lion attacking one of the two ibex either side of a monticule on Beaker 1**

If the lion-prey group – in this catalogue meaning the *Forward Attack* – signifies the New Year, then we are starting to build up a picture of how the festival was celebrated over a very wide area, much akin to our full account of the *Feast of Ishtar* at Mari in **Catalogue C**, at which music and games were part of the celebrations marking the occasion of the annual *Now Ruz* ‘gathering of the clans’ in processions of tribes bringing tribute to their overlord. Since on the camel seal we have a definitive example from Central Asia, it is worth spending time bringing alongside it comparable artefacts decorated with similar scenes showing combinations of processions, tribute-bringing, music-making, acrobatics and other rituals (often with the lion-bull motif woven in) to widen our awareness of shared cultural events with local variations that certainly lasted into Achaemenid times in the case of Persepolis.

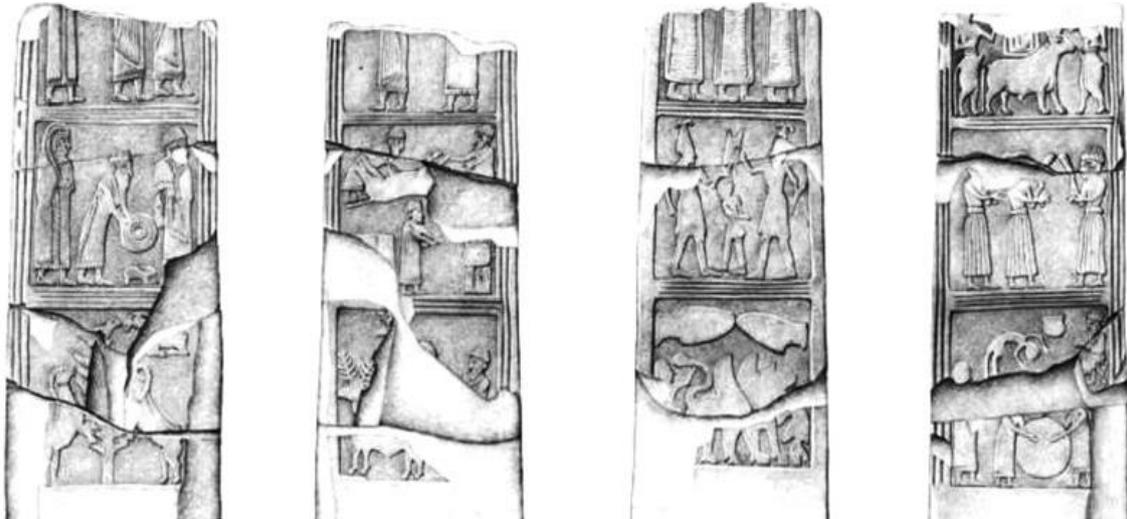
### **NEW YEAR CELEBRATIONS ON LARGER ARTEFACTS**

We referred in **Catalogue D** to the Ishtar Obelisk at Ebla, and on its right-hand facet shown below are the remains of an acrobat scene with a pair of people banging a large drum, at two removes from a bull worship panel higher up – according with Ebla’s life in Mitanni-dominated territory at the time. (Here I cannot resist mentioning Lady Drower’s visit to Yazidi territory in

<sup>52</sup> V I Sarianidi ‘The Palace and Necropolis of Gonur’ in Ligabue, G (Sponsor) *Margiana Gonur-depe Necropolis* Venice 2002

<sup>53</sup> F T Hiebert (foreword C Lamberg-Karlovskyy/Preface V I Sarianidi) *Origins of the Bronze Age Oasis Civilization in Central Asia* Cambridge Mass 1994

1941<sup>54</sup> where at the principal autumn equinox festival a large garlanded bull was sacrificed, accompanied by music and dancing, the main instruments still the tambour drum and binary Pan-pipe.) Remains of an inscription on the obelisk led Matthiae to the conclusion that what he



**III.9- 7: Drawing of the damaged four facets of the Ishtar Obelisk from Matthiae *ibid.* – note especially the scenes far right**

interpreted as bull-leaping games must have been held in honour of Ishtar<sup>55</sup>. This makes sense, given Ebla’s Anatolian contacts –especially after Mitanni occupation of the kingdom of Yamhad, that included Ebla and other towns within its orbit. As well as the camel amulet and another Central Asian seal (**III.9-389/181**) that will appear outside this DIVERSION much later, many pieces illustrated in this catalogue show acrobatic events and groups playing music as part of religious ritual – and are particularly richly represented on two Hittite vases which will form the climax of this section shortly, all appearing to show the kind of celebratory entertainment that had already been going on in the times of the Karashamb goblet (**ForAtt-13 & III.9-219/11**).

**INFORMATION ON FESTIVALS FROM THE COURT ARCHIVES AT EBLA AND MARI**

I rely on two papers that usefully summarise key information about festivals in the 2M Near East, one from Ebla’s perspective, the other (after describing some Hittite vases or drinking vessels) from a more Indo-European angle from within the Hitto-Mitanni heartland. These will be sufficient to give some understanding of most of the other ‘entertainment event’ images coming into this Catalogue on several other items, with the lion-prey group seemingly intended as a pointer to the type of festival celebrated.

**THE EBLA RECORDS**

<sup>54</sup> E S Drower *Peacock Angel 1941* London 1941, reprinted Delhi 2013

<sup>55</sup> First published in an *Ägypten und Levant* volume c.2011-13 not available for reference by this writer – but followed up in Matthiae ‘On the Origin of Middle Assyrian Obelisks’ in P Ciafardini et al (eds) *From the Treasures of Syria [Stefania Mazzoni Festschrift]* Leiden 2015 143, and see *fn. 164, Catalogue D*

Biga<sup>56</sup> studied royal archives of Ebla - starting from c.2300 up to the fall of Ebla – that mention supplies ordered for various festivals over the years, not simply food and drink (wine and beer) for sumptuous banquets, but also semi-precious stones for jewellery, and party dress textiles for the royal women. Many different types of garment and textile are described in the Ebla texts to enrobe the royal women for the event, some fabric even using silver and gold thread. The jewellery would have been of the kind studied in DIVERSION 3, and new pieces of finery would also be assigned on the occasion of the installation of a new priestess (as we know from records at Émar and the priestess necklaces of Uruk and Gonur). From the photos below of the best Palazzo G at Ebla had to offer in the actual archaeological record, misleadingly (in contradiction with the texts), nothing special was left behind in terms of quality of materials used or inventiveness of workmanship. But this could be due to the efficacy of looters. The mentions of jewellery in the texts are summed up as follows by Biga, quoting Archi:

*Des colliers d'or et de diverses sortes de pierres précieuses, broches, épingles à habits, bracelets, décorations en argent pour les coiffes de cheveux figuraient parmi les bijoux mis par les dames à l'occasion des mariages ou qui étaient enterrées avec elles dans la tombe<sup>57</sup>.*



**III.9- 8: Necklaces of glass or chalcedonic type found at Ebla – Pinnock<sup>58</sup> her pl.XLII Cat. no.118 (left) of glass paste and pl.XXXII Cat no. 58 (top right) of rock crystal & (bottom right) Cat. no. 63 of carnelian beads in different shades of orange/red**

The Ebla records also describe further archives of the palace administration that refer to the hiring of cooks, musicians, singers and dancers. Altogether, several kinds of court event were

<sup>56</sup> M-G Biga 'Les Occasions de Fêtes à la Cour d'Ébla' *Journal Asiatique* CCIX 2011 479-494

<sup>57</sup> A Archi 'Jewels for the Ladies of Ebla' *ZA XCII* 161-99

<sup>58</sup> F Pinnock *ibid.* 1993

the excuse for organising a *ḫul* (programme of entertainment) which would also involve the lavish exchange of presents from high to low. The main ones were:

- (i) Victory celebrations;
- (ii) Marriages (often inter-dynastic), births and funerals;
- (iii) Reassertion of kingship at gatherings of vassals bringing annual tribute;
- (iv) Festivals in honour of principal Gods or Goddesses, and the Ancestors - and
- (v) Welcome of diplomatic missions coming to swear the oath of allegiance.

We look briefly at each of these in turn.

**(i) VICTORY CELEBRATIONS**

Texts mention one arranged for the return of the general and his army from Ebla's long campaign against Mari.

**(ii) INTER-DYNASTIC MARRIAGES**

There are full records about supplies ordered for marriages of Eblan royalty to cement alliances between Eblan princesses and kings or princes from Emar, Mari, Byblos, Harran and Kish (the latter sending exotic animals as wedding gifts, including 14 bears). All we know about the ceremony itself is that the groom poured oil over the head of his bride at the high point of the proceedings. The texts mention fabrics awarded to those officiating at the ceremony, including the singers and flute and lyre players. The same documents mention the male and female dancers and jugglers who also took part (such players are mentioned in the Mari archive too). To describe but one marriage specified in the archives, possibly the most notable took place between princess Tagriš-Damu with prince Ultumḫuḫu of Nagar (Tell Brak). Following negotiations at Nagar, the King and prince of Nagar made the return visit for the nuptial ceremony, bringing not only their own singers, dancers and jugglers, but also special horse-tumbling acrobats (Nagar was especially known for a certain type of horse (BAR.AN in the texts): Mitanni connections to Central Asia in particular would explain their easy access to musicians, jugglers and acrobats).

**(iii) REASSERTION OF KINGSHIP AT GATHERINGS OF VASSALS BRINGING ANNUAL TRIBUTE**

The festival concerning 'renewal of kingship' involved visits by allies and vassals acknowledging his higher authority: in the light of later versions of this type of event (as at Persepolis, for instance, or as described of David in *Chronicles I Chapters 15&16*<sup>59</sup>), it is likely this took place at the New Year, in Spring (though Biga says there is no textual proof from Ebla that such an event did take place then, though that is what the lion-prey group on Eblan artefacts seems to point to). At Ebla these assertion of kingship proceedings are recorded as lasting 21 days, divided into three lots of seven days – pointing to similarities of

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<sup>59</sup> 'And David gathered all Israel together to Jerusalem .... and David spake to the chief of the Levites to appoint their brethren to be the singers with instruments of music, psalteries and harps and cymbals sounding, by lifting up the voice with joy'.

duration to the Ishtar Festival at Mari at the New Year. This seemed to be the kind of event described by Turner<sup>60</sup> as 'marking a whole group's passage from one culturally defined season to another in the annual cycle, where solar, lunar, planetary and stellar cycles may be involved'. At Ebla on one occasion we know from the texts that the aftermath involved the 'progress' of the king and queen in a cart drawn by oxen round key outlying towns.

**(iv) WORSHIP IN HONOUR OF PRINCIPAL GODS OR GODDESSES – AND THE ANCESTORS**

The principal Divine Couple of Ebla - Kura and his consort Barama - were given special attention in the temple calendar – in the same way Ishtar, Baal and Dagan were the centre of attention at Mari – with high points at the New Year celebrations. At Ebla there was also a temple dedicated to the full Pantheon of Gods, usually the termination point for a big procession to round off the Renewal of Kingship marathon: at points in between, the commemoration of the Ancestors would also have taken place (see our short study of baetyls earlier – as well as the fuller discussion of baetyls in *Catalogues C* and *D*).

**(v) WELCOME OF DIPLOMATIC MISSIONS.**

In the interests of forging an especially important newly agreed alliance, a welcome reception would be laid on with many of the same ingredients as deployed at marriages and divine rituals, which meant hiring dancers, musicians, singers and performers of various kinds of acrobatics during and after the banquet with the vassal-oath-swearing at its centre.

**THE MARI RECORD**

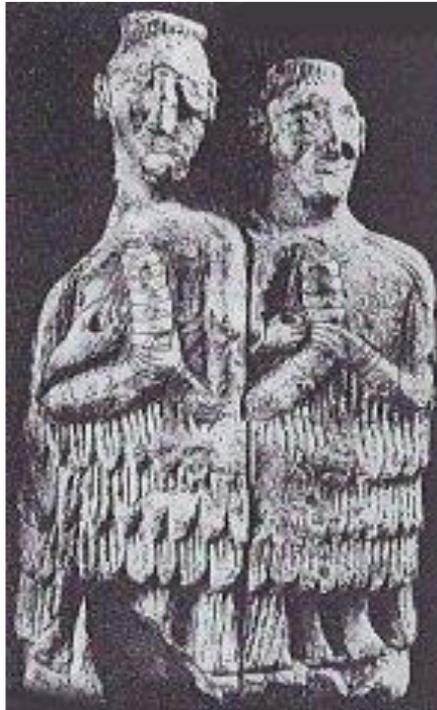
The ceramic banqueting crockery found at Mari is well-known, decorated with calendrical images that include the *Uruk Stance* lion-prey group (see *Catalogue B, Urusta-25*) and other familiar **CANEA** icons such as the paired goats either side of a bush on a hillock (as just seen in *III.9- 6* above). Thus as well as having some idea of the court furniture (*ForAtt-11*) the textual records of feasting requirements at Ebla are tangibly backed up by this kind of Mari crockery (though Biga points out Ebla's precious metal dining sets will have long since been looted out).

The Ebla records taken as a whole mention some dozens of singers and dancers of both sexes; instrumentalists who played flutes, harps, lyres, tambourines, cymbals, trumpets (and the names of other instruments which so far cannot be translated). The badly abraded statue below was found in the Temple of Ishtar at Mari, and it took some time before the specialist<sup>61</sup> trying to make sense of it realised that it shows a pair of harpists plucking at the strings (see the lines added to the photograph). She believed that 'bien que trouvé à l'écart des autres statuettes dans le quartier des prêtres du temple, cell-ci peut bien être l'ex-voto des harpists du temple en

<sup>60</sup> See V Turner *Dramas, Fields and Metaphors* London 1974 and 'Betwixt and Between: The Liminal Period in Rites de Passage' in W A Lessa et al (eds) *Reader in Comparative Religion: An Anthropological Approach* New York 1972

<sup>61</sup> M C Williamson 'Les Harpes Sculptées du Temple d'Ishtar à Mari' *Syria XLVI* 1969 209-224

train de célébrer leurs actes de vénération individuels devant la déesse Ishtar'. In fact it appears to have been in the nature of ritual entertainment that it was nearly always bound up with that particular goddess and her consort.



**III.9- 9: Limestone sculpture of a pair of harpists from the Temple of Ishtar, Mari – from Williamson**

We study Central Asian trumpets later - outside this DIVERSION – it was probably the ancestor of the present-day North Indian shahnai (**III.9- 17**) with a heart-breaking sound akin to our oboe. When inter-court relations were good, specialist performers were sometimes sent on loan to other kingdoms – as in the case of the horse acrobats sent from Nagar mentioned earlier. We looked in detail at documentation surviving from Mari in **Catalogue C** on how acrobatic performances and human –v- animal struggles formed part of the entertainment for the New Year Celebrations in Baal and Ishtar's honour. We could thus view lion-taming scenes - as on the Shaushtatar seal or Beaker 2 above with lion-tamer holding a lion over his head - as on OB seals - as variations on shows of strength involving struggles with other humans, or animals (and that included bull-leaping). These were early forms of what often later became purely athletic games<sup>62</sup> for celebrations held at significant calendrical turning points, especially in the Greek world. The Gilgamesh-type man-lion struggle seems to have been adopted by the Myceneans with alacrity (see the seal in the Vapheio Hoard **CMS I-228**), since it perfectly expresses a warrior prowess more extreme than the wild animal hunt, and a later DIVERSION about Mycenean interaction with lions looks further into its cultural significance. These daring

<sup>62</sup> J Puhvel 'Hittite Athletics as Prefigurations of Ancient Greek Games' in W J Raschke (ed.) *The Archaeology of the Olympics* Wisconsin 1988 29-30

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man-bull/man-lion fights would in time become regular public spectacles, as in the Roman Coliseum – though in fact a pale shadow of their original raw, savage and intensely religious nature two millennia before in Central Asia and the Near East.

#### RITUAL GOBLETS IN CENTRAL ASIA AND MYCENAEAN CUSTOM

Looking at the broader picture, we notice a widespread convention in the use of ritual cups of silver or gold (usually on a more modest scale) for chieftain and/or priestly leaders. They are decorated at varying levels of complexity and sophistication with pattern, animals or longer narratives and the drink they would have contained on high occasions was of no light significance, related to the decoration. For that wider view, to the West we can position the frequent alternate pairs of gold and silver cups found in several Mycenaean warrior or priestess graves, so well-known we need not illustrate them all, but taken from each of his volumes Persson's evocation below left of the presumed priestess from Dendra Chamber Tomb 10 dressed in some of the finery found in it and holding up its gold cup (closeup below top right) is



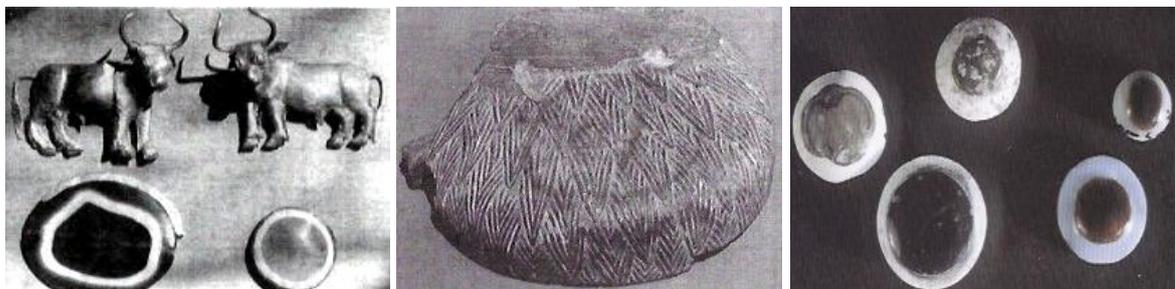
**III.9- 10:** (Left) Some of the grave goods from Dendra Chamber tomb 10 imagined as worn placed over a figure from a Thebes fresco – Persson *New Tombs* fig. 105; (top right) closeup of the goldcup she holds; (bottom right) the Dendra octopus cup imaginative – while the famous gold octopus cup from the male Tholos burial as illustrated by Gilliéron is shown beneath (more on the relationship between Athena and the Octopus in the *Iconography* Section). Other Mycenaean vessels, some with narratives of bull-chasing as on the main gold Vapheio cup, are matched in the eastern Indus region by gold cups and bowls from



**III.9- 11: (Left and centre) Gold goblet with four lions (with bushy wolf or fox-tails) over a large entwined serpentine guilloche in the Quetta hoard - Jarrige & Hassan *ibid.* fig.12/right, AFC-271 - Karachi Museum Baluchistan; (right) one of the Fullol bowls Fullol<sup>63</sup> with more sedate walking bulls on them (above right), or the repoussé gold goblet (above left and centre) with four lions with wolf tails pacing over two entwined snakes from the Quetta deposit, all bearing the hallmarks of the same ritual drinking culture - not from a tomb this time, but part of a typical assemblage deserving further scrutiny under the next heading.**

**THE QUETTA PEDESTAL GOBLET**

The Quetta pedestal cup illustrated above left was of a shape often used in BMAC ceramics, and was found not only with other BMAC-type objects such as the marble colonettes and sighting rods of Gonur, but was also accompanied by a collection of hundreds of tiny gold beads and gold or eye agate pendants (below left) which probably added up to one or two necklaces<sup>64</sup> which we could, as with the Dendra priestess, perhaps, position on a contemporary proto-Afghan figure such as the remains of the crouching female statue in *kaunakès* found in the same hoard (below centre) - the only unlooted figure of this type found in context. Jarrige and



**III.9- 12: (Left) Carnelian and violet chalcedony eye agate pendants and two bull pendants in the Quetta deposit; (centre) remains of a typical female limestone and steatite figurine from the same hoard – Jarrige & Hassan *figs* 8/10; (right) similar eye agates from the royal palace at Ras Shamra – *Matoian op.cit. pl.xvii,1***

Hassan compare the bull pendants above (which have detachable tails) to the depiction of the four bulls on the silver cup discussed by Deshayes in the next two illustrations whose narrative we shortly analyse. The Quetta goblet itself is unusual in that the four lions on it are composites of Asiatic lion and wolf, for the bushy tail is certainly not leonine. Here we call to mind the silver casket from Bactria (**AFC-254**) with its procession of high-relief lions and lion-prey groups on

<sup>63</sup> M Tosi et al 'The Fullol Hoard: a New Find from Bronze Age Afghanistan' *East and West XXII* 9-17

<sup>64</sup> Jarrige and Hassan compare a necklace remnant of the Mohenjo-Daro type from Mehrgarh: a pendant of small beads of lapislazuli, turquoise and gold. Apparently in the Chagai Hills nearby (cited earlier for its marbles) small deposits of turquoise and lapis lazuli do occur – as well as huge copper deposits. And in the tombs of Neolithic Mehrgarh lapis lazuli and turquoise beads are found.

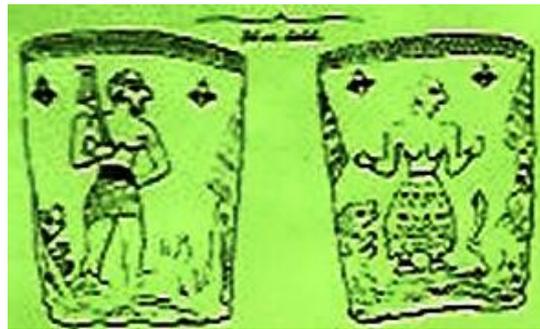
the sides (see **Ratt-16**) which has two wolves on the lid reclining on a deer carcass – in other words, in the spectrum between wild and domesticated, in this part of the world the wolf plays a strong part in animal iconography between lion and dog (we have already noted the silver wolf head from Altyn Depe (Ill.9- 27) which was found in the same room of the priest's tomb as the silver-gilt bull-head with turquoise insets, again alongside colonette and grooved disc like those from Hissar and the Quetta deposit. As Jarrige and Hassan conclude, 'The discoveries of Mehrgarh VIII, Sibri and the Quetta deposit show that the Bolan Pass was controlled for some time by groups having close connections with other populations living on the Iranian Plateau and in south Central Asia', and the array of similar objects in use at these sites 'indicates a wide distribution of common beliefs and ritual practices among groups forming otherwise rather different cultural entities'. Archaeologists increasingly began to ask what stage of Indo-European archaeology these assemblages represent. For the time being we simply register that when Jarrige and Hassan note the appearance of the same clusters of objects in the Hissar IIIC and Tureng-Tepe complexes, for instance, they rate them as marking a BMAC cultural invasion, and that the regions participating in it 'are precisely where many specialists would locate proto-Indo-Iranian groups as early as the end of the 3M'.

**A SILVER CUP FROM BACTRIA, CLASSED WITH THE ASTRABAD CUP**

From the BMAC territory itself (though without definite provenance) comes the almost pure silver vase shown below from the early 2M - thought by Deshayes<sup>65</sup> to be a precious metal cup



<sup>65</sup> J Deshayes 'À propos des Terrasses Hautes de la Fin du IIIe Millénaire en Iran et en Asie Centrale' in *Le Plateau Iranien et l'Asie Centrale dès Origines à la Conquête Islamique (Colloques Internationaux du CNRS no.567)* Paris 1977 95-111



**III.9- 13: (Top) Cylindrical silver cup with frieze of musicians and singers on upper register (note the main figure, left centre, playing a trumpet) and ploughing scenes on the lower register – AFC-257 (see roll-out in the next illustration); (bottom) drawing of the Astrabad gold cup which appears to have been of the same type (note the four flies – c.f. III.9-209/1)**

of the type described as part of the now lost Astrabad treasure<sup>66</sup> for which we now only have drawings (above, bottom row). The figures in the drawing are described by Rostovtzeff as in Sumerian dress, flanked by animals and cypress trees, possibly representing early versions of Baal (with his axe) and Ishtar (flanked by lions). In the original description of the finds Bode *ibid.* also noticed what he thought were four bees (but could be flies) in the spaces between the figures. (We look into the Underworld Journey significance of the flies in the *Iconography Section.*) The Astrabad treasure is now thought to have come from the Tureng Tepe tell close to Astrabad (where later a BMAC colonette was found). It is laid out in terraces much along the lines of Mundigak or the Altintepe complexes and, as pointed out by Joan Aruz in the Metropolitan Museum catalogue entry for the Bactrian silver cup above (no doubt quoting Deshayes *ibid.*), both can be grouped with items in the Fullol hoard (III.9- 11), the site not far from the Sar-i-Sang lapis lazuli mines in Badakhshan, perhaps an indicator of the wealth deriving from that ancient trade underpinned by a successful agricultural way of life.

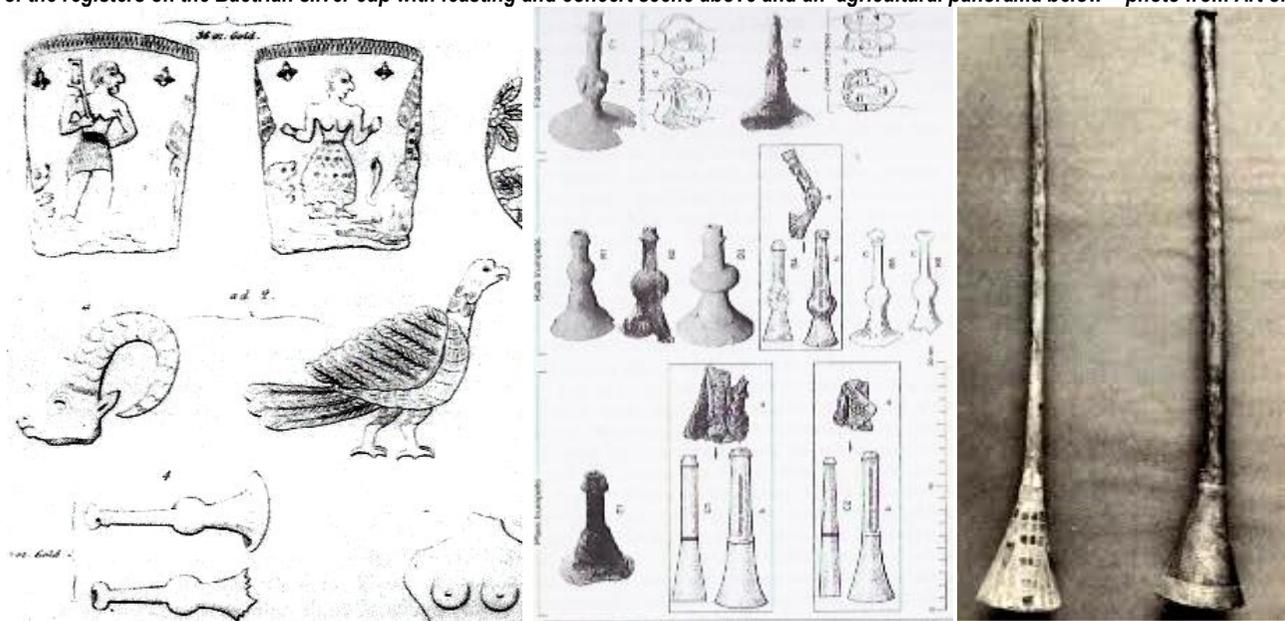
if we turn our attention back to the Bactrian silver cup, looking at its narrative rolled-out as two long friezes as below, the main themes are clear. The lower register shows a symmetrical agricultural scene with two pairs of cattle pulling ploughs each guided by a man, meeting head to head to mark a vertical axis (it is difficult to discern what is between them (possibly a byre full of straw, or a landscape). Behind them on each side the cattle are goaded forward by a man with a branch. Behind the group on the right, a man with a square tray (seen most clearly in the detail of III.9- 16 left) is scattering seed in the wake of the plough: he stands underneath the principal pair of celebrants, forming a secondary vertical axis. The top register shows a banqueting-cum-concert scene in the Central Asian or Elamite style, everyone seated on the ground with their knees bunched up so their robes form oblongs across their legs forming a base for their torsos. It looks exactly like a present-day Indian Classical Music concert, where

<sup>66</sup> Reported by M Rostovtzeff in 'The Sumerian Treasure of Astrabad' *JEA VI* 1920 4-27, referring in turn to Baron Clement Augustus de Bode 'On a recently opened Tumulus in the neighbourhood of Asterabad, forming part of ancient Hyrcania and the country of the Parthians' *Archéologia XXX* 1834 1-15 & 36-64

the instrumentalists and singers all sit cross-legged and raise their arms in emphatic gestures to each other as they mark the beat or nod to each other to express the mood of the raga (the square box in front of one of them resembles the present-day ubiquitous accordion played in such ensembles!). Going by the person raising a cup to their mouth, the bowl of fruit and loaves of bread, the narrative on the cup surely records a harvest celebration, led by the trumpeter on the left of the central pair either side of the bowl of fruits. Looked at under the magnifying glass, the trumpet player has a speckled bead in his headdress and two more round his neck, suggestive of agates, marking him as the king, chieftain or high priest. With this figure we



III.9- 14: : Enlarged roll-out of the registers on the Bactrian silver cup with feasting and concert scene above and an agricultural panorama below – photo from Art of the First Cities cat – AFC-257

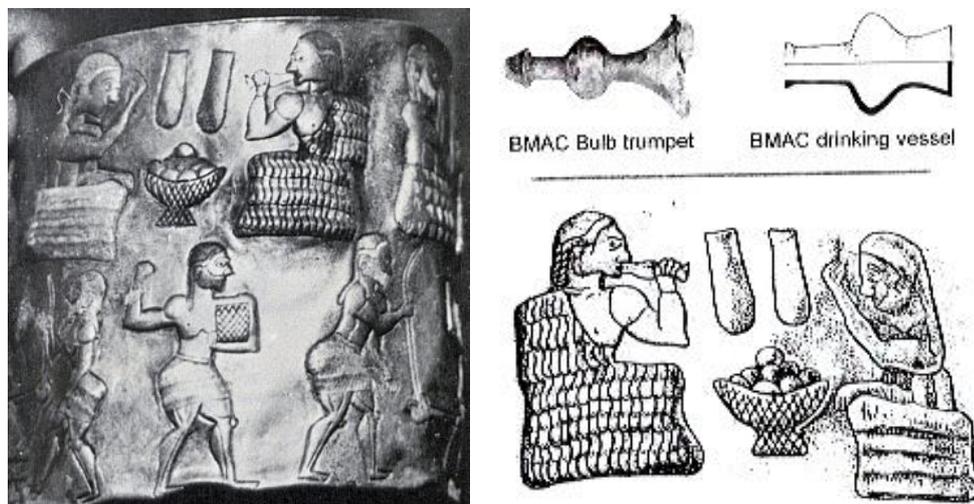


III.9- 15: (Top) Original plate with drawing at top of two sides of a gold vessel from the so-called Astrabad hoard showing male and female figures flanked by animals and vegetation– detail from Archéologia XXX pl.xvi: Note also the Bactrian trumpets, captioned as gold; (centre) types of BMAC trumpet – Lawergren fig. 3; (right) the two war trumpets found in Tutankhamun's tomb

return to the theme of ritual musical entertainment – now stopping to take a further look at the use of the trumpet in the BMAC.

**THE BACTRIAN TRUMPETS**

The inclusion on the same original engraved plate describing the Astrabad treasure (*III.9- 15* left) showing a drawing of two gold trumpets actually gives an anchor date for that hoard, and Lawergren<sup>67</sup> has put forward a convincing argument for the central presiding figure on the silver Bactrian cup as being a trumpet player rather than raising a cup to his mouth. Unfortunately, as he admits in a key illustration (below right), there are certain Bactrian drinking vessels fashioned in almost the same form as the trumpets, still leaving us with a certain ambiguity.



*III.9- 16: (Left) The trumpet player on the cylindrical cup - Deshayes fig. 7; (right) Lawergren's fig. 26 (deliberately reversed)*

Nevertheless, the detail of the figure (reversed in his drawing) shows the mouthpiece going over the top of the mouth and up to the nose in the blowing position - rather than *into* the mouth, as if drinking from it - so I believe his perceptive observation should be accepted.

To summarise his long and interesting paper, in a nutshell most Bactrian bulb trumpets were short and would have played a high note, much like a bugle. The majority of trumpets come from elite Gonur tombs, indicating this was the originating area for the instrument. His composite illustration (*III.9- 15* centre) showing variations of this trumpet at different sites illustrates those found at Gonur, Astrabad, Hissar and Shahdad, some of which had human or animal heads in place of the bulb, others were longer with a smaller bulb, and some examples did not have a bulb at all (C1 and C2 are from Hissar, for instance). As time went on and a lower note was required, the pipe was made longer – as in the fascinating case of the two trumpets found in Tutankhamun's tomb (*III.9- 15*), bringing the latter into the shahnai family tree, still the instrument of choice today in NW India, with a haunting sound like an oboe, evocative of the

<sup>67</sup> B Lawergren (*ibid.*)

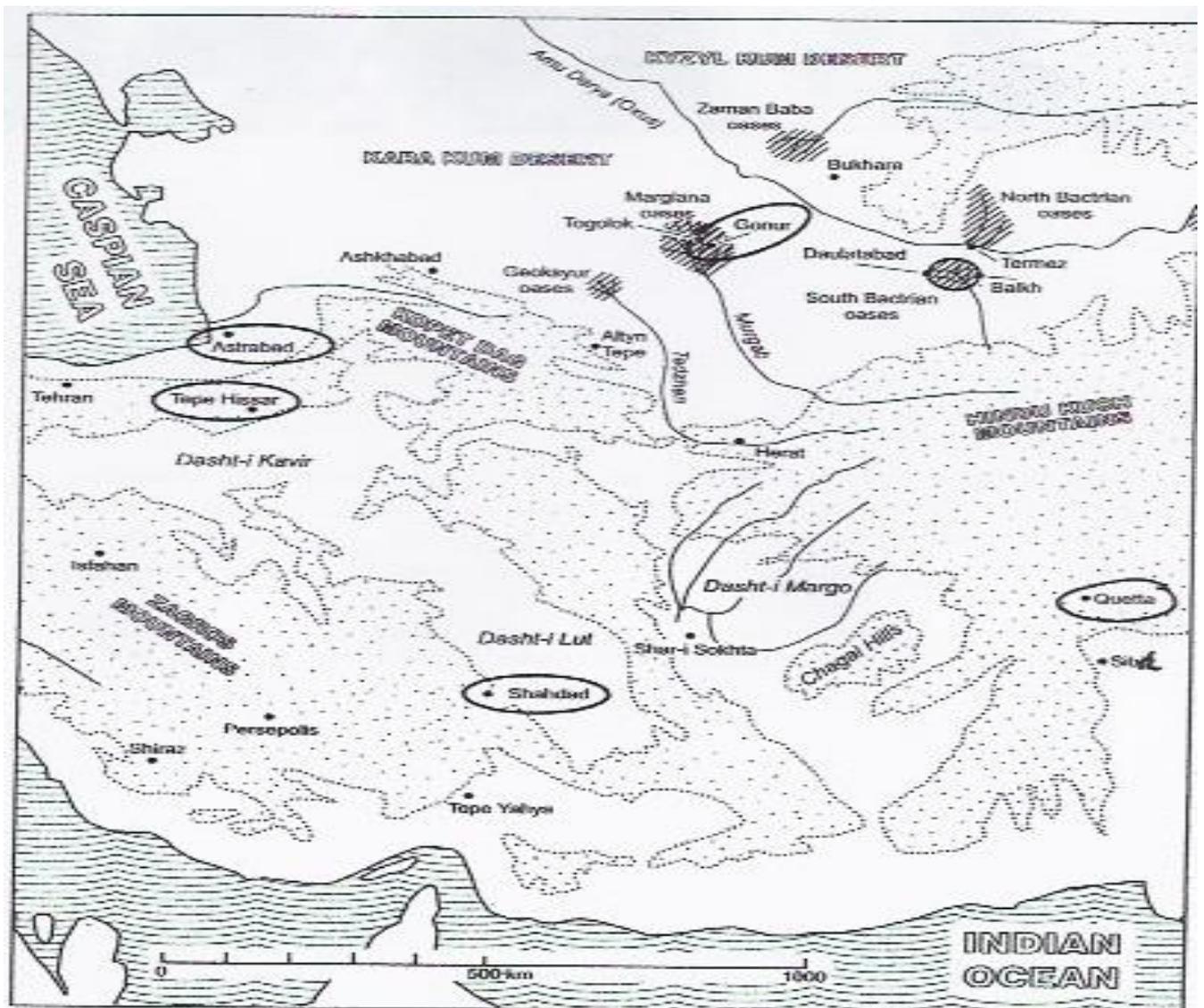
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human voice or an animal cry. We are not absolutely certain about the original role of the trumpets, since on the whole their note range would have been extremely limited, sounding



III.9- 17 (Left) Silver trumpet from Bactria owned by the Louvre – Lawergren fig. 11; (right) Bismillah Khan playing the shahnai about two octaves higher than Middle C (the longer the tube, the lower the note). However, just as on Egyptian wall-paintings the type of trumpet found in Tutankhamun’s tomb (perhaps presents from the Mitanni) are shown on wall-paintings being blown to signal orders to



III.9- 18: Lawergren’s useful map circling sites ‘intruded into by the BMAC heartland’ that included trumpet finds

the army<sup>68</sup>, so is it pretty certain the BMAC trumpets were also used like bugles to signal not simply the start or end of actions but also as animal sound lures when hunting. Lawergren notes the mention in the *Vendidad* of the trumpet given by Ahura Mazda to Yima in an Avestan myth at the beginning of Time, along with a whip, with which to lure all creatures to safety in hard times. Since the sacred texts say Zoroastrian rituals were devoid of music, so in the cup's feasting scene it is more likely the trumpet-player is enacting the main use of the trumpet as described in fragmentary literary evidence – that it was a hunting horn to imitate deer calls, making it possible to approach and kill them. This would mean that the double frieze on the silver cup celebrates both hunting and farming at the time of harvest – and as a purely Central Asian piece - as to be expected – there is no accompanying gloss of a lion-bull attack group.

### THE HITTITE AND ANCIENT GREEK WORLDS

Our DIVERSION has served to highlight the interconnectedness over vast areas of drinking celebrations at the turning points of the year that still survive today. Again we come back to the key role played by the overlooked Mitanni who originated in Central Asia and transmitted many customs and images further West, as far as the Levanto-Mycenaean world – which we can track through certain Nuzi seals depicting scenes of drinking, acrobatics, music and feasting. Often we cannot tell when wine was the drink, and when it was soma, but certainly beer was reserved for the very large pots and drunk through straws.

This brings us to two large Hittite clay vases and some rhyta decorated with fascinating variations on what was still essentially a nomadic, Indo-European form of entertainment going back partly to an even earlier wave of Āryan infiltration (the Hittites were first into Anatolia) – and then we will complete our journey by ending with a Corinthian Red Figure Greek krater (wine-mixing bowl) just as huge, and just as profusely covered with pictures.

### THE HÜSEYINDEDE VASE

Taracha<sup>69</sup> was one of the first to realise that written evidence about bull-games proving they are part of Hittite culture can be massively extended by considering artefacts along with texts, referring in particular to the decoration on the Hüseyindede vase rim (a site not far from Hattusas) first published by Sipahi<sup>70</sup> (illustration below) - referred to already in relation to **BaLu-16** in *Catalogue D* for the bull-leaping detail on the neck in **(III. 8-19)**.

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<sup>68</sup> H Hickman *La Trompette dans l'Égypte Ancienne* [Supplément aux Annales du Service des Antiquités de l'Égypte no.1], Cairo 1978 The Wikipedia entry for **TUTANKHAMUN'S TRUMPETS** is striking: *There have been some claims made by Zahi Hawass, former Minister of State for Antiquities Affairs, and Egyptologist Hala Hassan, curator of the Tutankhamun collection at the Egyptian Museum, that the two trumpets contain "magical powers" and have the apparent ability to summon War. The evening they were first played in 1939, the power cut out at the Cairo Museum five minutes before scheduled to go on air, and the BBC were forced to record the sounding of the trumpets by candle light. Five months after the radio broadcast, Britain entered World War II and the war in Europe began. The trumpets were again said to have been played before the 1967 Six-Day War, before the 1990 Persian Gulf War, and most recently, the bronze trumpet was played one week before the Egyptian Revolution of 2011 by a Cairo Museum staff member to a Japanese delegation. This same bronze trumpet was subsequently stolen from the Cairo Museum during the Egyptian looting and riots of 2011, yet mysteriously returned some weeks later.*

<sup>69</sup> P Taracha 'Bull-Leaping on a Hittite Vase: New Light on Anatolian and Minoan Religion' *Archeologia* (Warsaw) **LIII** 2002 7-20

<sup>70</sup> T Sipahi 'New Evidence from Anatolia Regarding Bull-Leaping Scenes in the Art of the Aegean and the Near East' *Anatolica xxvii* 2001 107-125

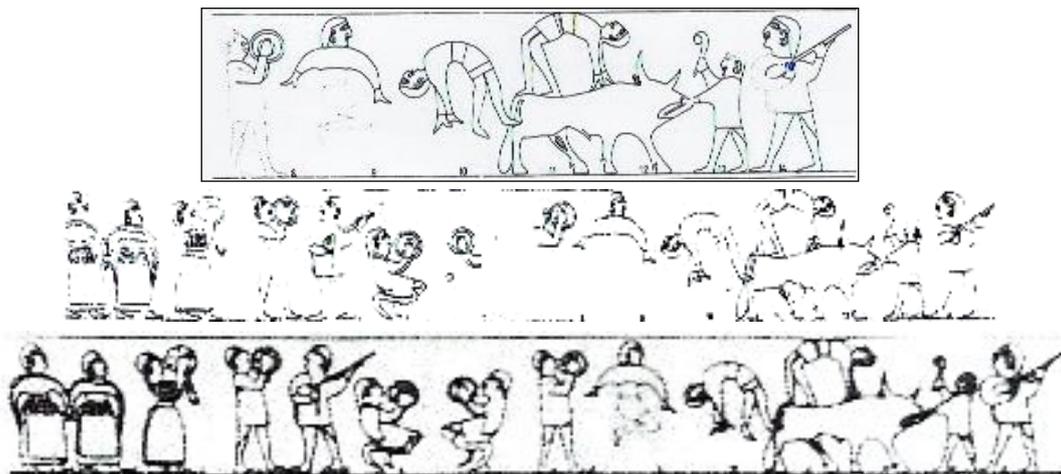
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**III.9- 19: The Hüseyindede vase (Metropolitan Museum BBcat-73) with bull-leaping detail on rim, the main bull-leaper in exactly the same pose as the acrobat on the Ishtar obelisk (III.9- 7)**

It is well-known Hurrian Gods and rituals were adopted both in Hatti and Kizzuwatna (Wilhelm *op.cit.*). Amongst these a Hittite text very recently translated by Franca Peccholi Daddi and cited by Taracha talks of a festival held for the Goddess Tetešhapi (herself of Hatti origin) that begins with the attendance of a priestess at the temple of Telipinu (more or less the Hittite equivalent of the Syrian Storm God, Baal) when ‘they beat the *argami* and the cymbals’ in front of her. Bread for the God is prepared and as the priestess sits at the window ‘a performer incites a *huria*-bull of the God’ (the word *huria* being *Hurrian*, is used to describe the special bull assigned to Baal). A cup-bearer at an upper window hands the priestess a libation vase, and then the priest of the Storm God stands up holding a silver vessel on which the priestess must lay her hand. He then ‘pours a libation through the window to the bull’. Another text describes how the bull is led back to his pen. A further ritual of libation to the bull is also extant on another tablet. The veneration of the Storm God as Bull was not uncommon, and



**III.9- 20: (Top) Bull-leaping section of the Hüseyindede vase decoration (the least damaged c.f. the seal at Error! Reference source not found.); (centre) full strip of rim scene showing the acrobats and musicians that complete the bull-leaping scene—Sipahi figs 1c/b, the latter’s ambiguous damaged areas more strongly brought out in the enhanced version used in Taracha’s fig.3 (bottom)**

appears on several Hittite and Cappodocian seals as well as the two cult vases we analyse here. With the mention in another text of the phrase (in Luwian) ‘he leaps and to the bull’ (quoted by Taracha from Sipahi) we start to gather up minute pieces filling in the gaps of an emerging mosaic sufficient to indicate what Taracha calls an ‘all-Anatolian tradition of bull-games’. **Text KBo23.55 I 2’-33** ‘is one of a

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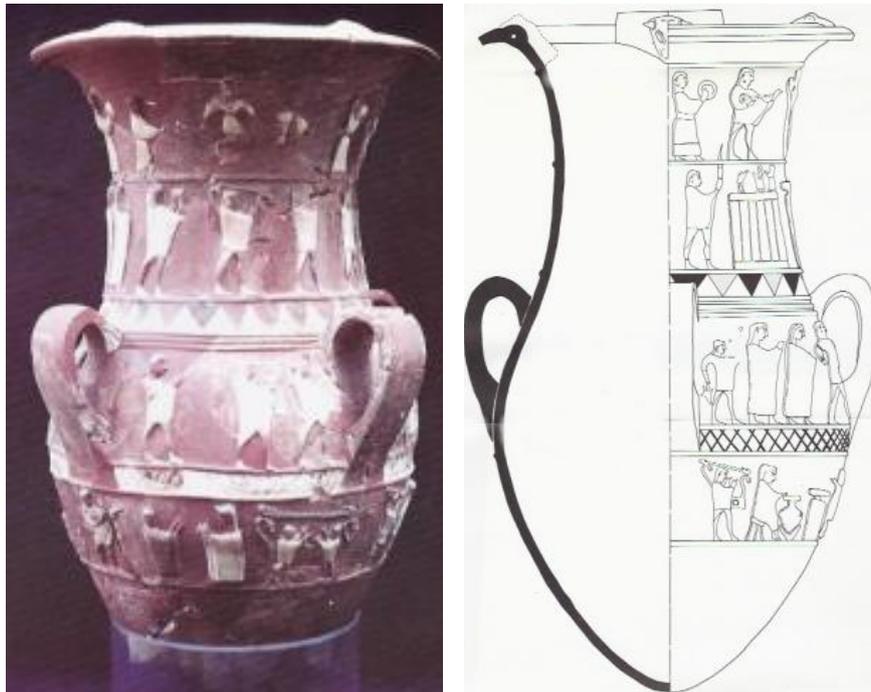
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handful of Hittite texts referring to bull games, but also mentions the presence of leopards, bears and rams - along with wrestlers and boxers<sup>71</sup>. Wrestling and boxing events are followed by ram and bull-wrestling (it is not clear whether between humans and animals or between animals of the same kind). The technical term for the bull wrestling is *tarpa tiya*, and Gilan suggests these words could be translated as 'bull-leaping', rather than 'bull-wrestling'. Taracha ends with the conclusion that the bull-leaping must have been in honour of the Storm God, whose animal is, of course, the Bull – while we have the opposing view of Matthiae that bull-leaping was probably enacted in honour of Ishtar. Since they were a couple and at times interchangeable, both are probably true.

#### THE INANDIKTEPE VASE

The egg-bodied Hüseyindede vessel, which seems to match several aspects of the texts he quotes, then called to Taracha's mind a similar, more fully decorated vessel from Inandiktepe excavated by T Özgüç<sup>72</sup> as early as the 1960s which, although not this time including a bull-leaping scene, shows an even more



III.9- 21: The Inandik Vase drawn and in colour – from Özgüç

precisely defined troupe of musicians and acrobats celebrating what appears overall to have been stages in a Sacred Marriage ceremony – perhaps enacted in Spring at New Year – a rite evidently adopted by the Hittites from the Near East (as to be expected on a Hittite object the lion-prey motif does not feature, but in fact the Sacred Marriage image could be the substitute indicator of New Year celebrations). Taracha compares its iconographic programme (shortly analysed in full below) against that of the Hüseyindede vase, bringing out their similarities and contrasts. Both vases have in common the attendance of musicians, but on the Inandik vase they have more elaborate instruments - and

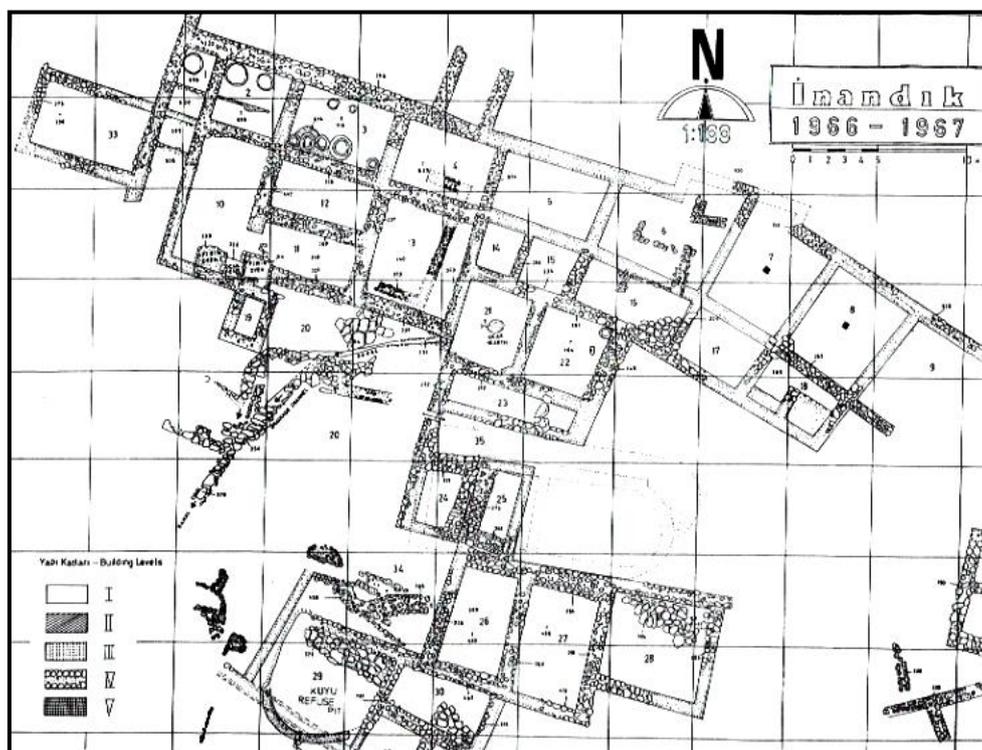
<sup>71</sup> For text, translation and commentary, see A Gilan 'Kampfspiele in hethitischen Festritualen' in *V Haas Festschrift* (fn.Error! Bookmark not defined.)

<sup>72</sup> T Özgüç *Inandiktepe: An important cult center in the Old Hittite Period* Ankara 1988

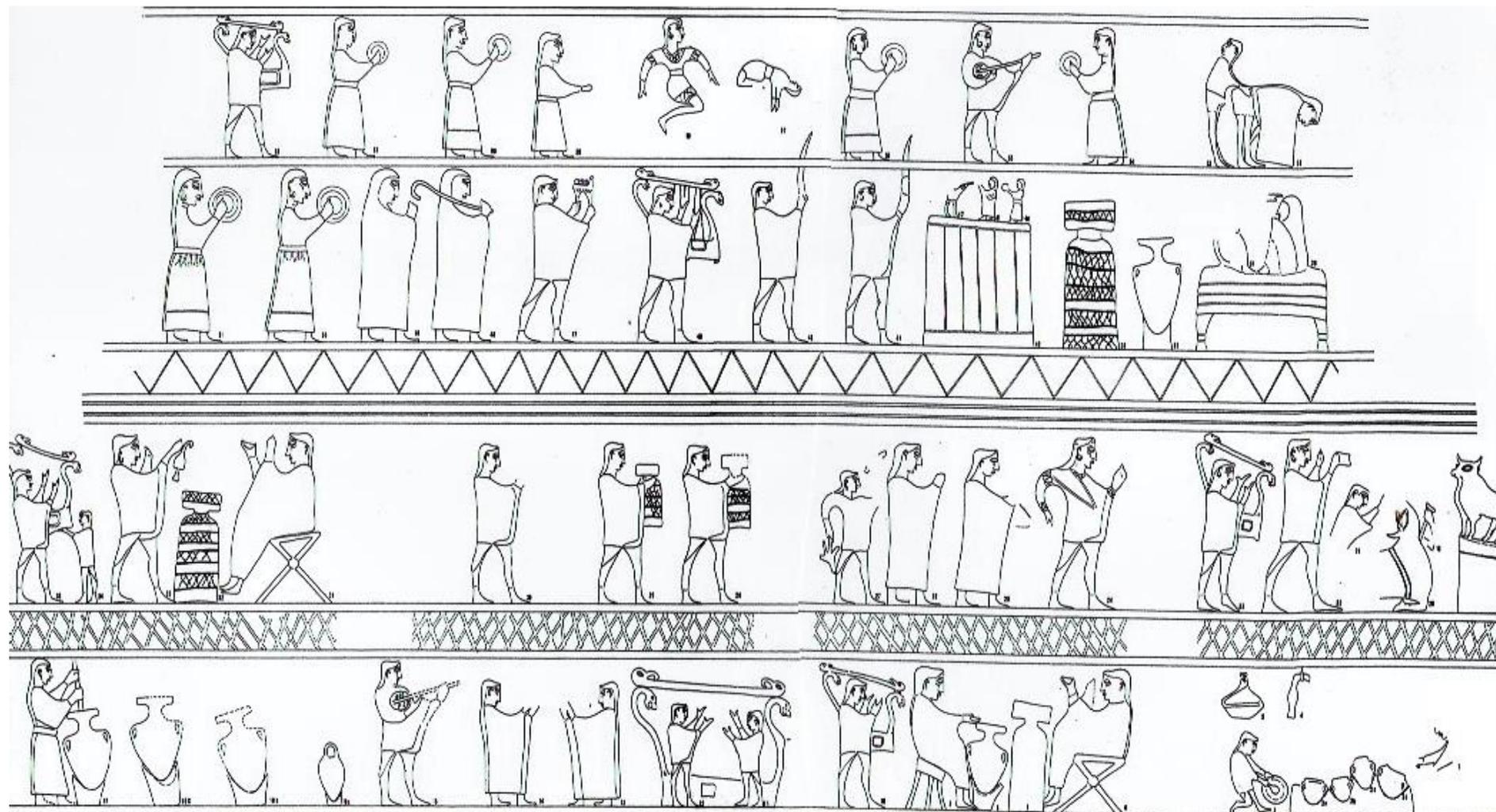
acrobats in several different acts of leaping and turning. But the Hüseyindedede bottle is unique in incorporating a bull-leaping scene - with even a pair of acrobats (or musicians) performing a crouching dance clashing their own cymbals.

It is worth running through the programme of the Inandiktepe vase in full detail. Also of ceramic, it is a larger version of the same bottle shape the Hüseyindedede vase has, but with a flatter base - and so large (0.82m high) that it needed the addition of four handles (see **III.9- 24**). Some decades since its discovery, late in the day it has attracted new interest, not simply because of the iconographic matches between the two vessels, but because of the even fuller complement of cult scenes introduced compared to those of Hüseyindedede - and on which Tahsin Özgüç in the original archaeological report devoted many pages of commentary. But before we do that let us first consider its context.

It was on the basis of inspection of the vase back in Ankara - after a test bull-dozing of the northern walls of the building had unfortunately crushed it and other vases in Room 3 (see plan below) - that the decision to excavate was made. It became clear after excavation of the site that the plastered walls of the temple of Inandik, sited on a rocky hill-top with rooms terraced on several levels (perhaps deliberately planned as a 'high place' or *bamah* and somewhat reminiscent of the layout of Mycenae's Cult Centre - c.f. the plan below with **III. 9-309/101**) were bare of ornament. Rather than wall paintings in the Syrian tradition - or rock reliefs with processions of the Divine Pantheon as at Yazilikaya -- the vase alone appears to have been chosen as sufficient vehicle to commemorate in elaborate detail the stages of cult enactment that must at one time have been conducted in the temple. Whether the ritual



**III.9- 22: Plan of the Inandik temple with rooms 1-4 of the temple at top left, on the north side of the hill slope – from Özgüç**



*III.9- 23: Full iconographic programme of the Inandiktepe Vase, including similar music and acrobat scenes as on the Hüseyindede vase – from Özgüç*

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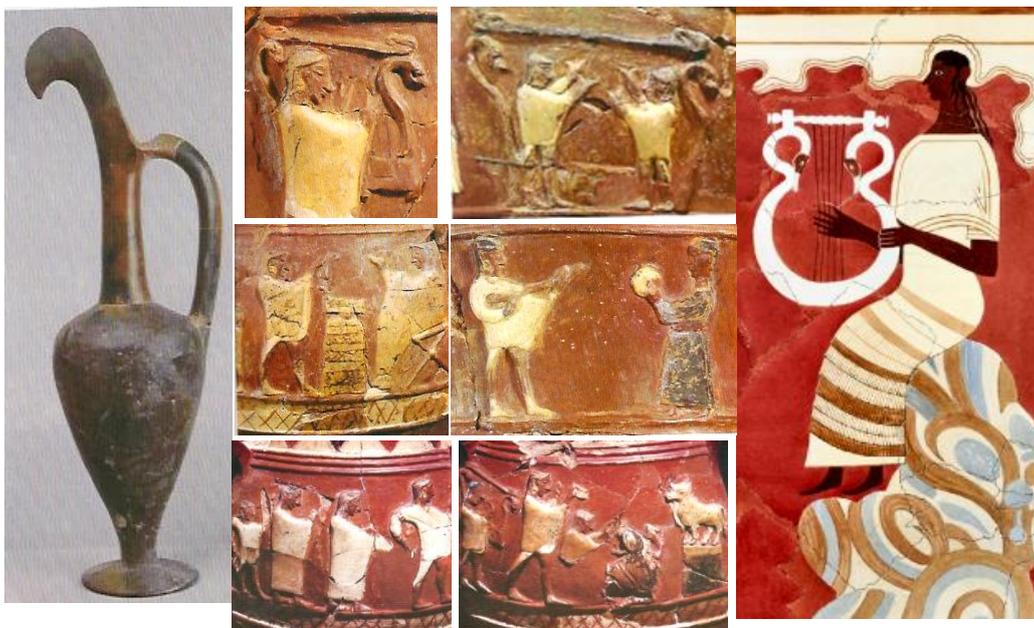
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ensued after relevant planetary observations had been made from a courtyard or a certain small room in the palace— as is the supposition for Mycenae or the Knossos South House – we shall never know, but the rambling plans of the Inandik and Mycenae cult centres - and their siting on a hill-top - are strangely close. If the rites amounted to an Inner Mystery, then the pot could easily be stored away from the non-initiated when not in use.

#### INCLUSION OF THE LION-PREY SUBJECT ON RITUAL VASES AND CUPS

Our task is not so much to analyse the iconography of the vase in exhaustive detail at this point, as to note similarities in its decoration to the more restricted iconographic programme of the Hüseyindede vase, noting at the same time that on the Karashamb goblet (**Foratt-13**) and related bull-leaper seals of **Foratt-24**, the *Forward Attack* comes into the mix as the more usual Levanto-Eurasian pointer to the traditional Old Syrian New Year festival.

Overall Özgüç finds some difficulty in distinguishing between males and females, though in general all females are either covered from head to toe in a *chador* type garment (as worn in Persia today) or if not covered, they are shown with long hair running down their back, reaching down to the heels. From this it is clear there are female musicians as well as male, the former restricted to cymbals. The males play several impressive lyres with swan-head or lion-head finials (compare not only with the Karashamb lyre-player, but also with the lyre-player of Pylos, shown below right) – and one typical court figure with bare legs (the dress in much the same convention as at the Karashamb court) plays a mandolin-type instrument known today in the region as the *saz*.



III.9- 24: (Left) One of the bird-beaked Inandik libation jugs; (centre columns) details of individual groups including (top row) the two kinds of harp, (centre right) the saz player, and (bottom row right) the bull sacrifice scene; (right column) the Pylos lyre player

On the drawing above at the extreme right, three images mark the keynote central axis on the vase cutting through three of the four registers (much like the two vertical *foci* connecting the registers on

the Karashamb goblet): the top two are the sexual act on the top and the figures on the bed beneath read by Özgüç as a God (damaged) about to raise the veil of his Consort crouched before him (a replica of the Inandik Vase appears behind him, indicating its importance in the rites). The third focal point is the statue of the God Baal-Teshub as end-point of the procession on the third register - with the remains of a bull-sacrifice scene directly in front of it (similar to that on the Ishtar Obelisk).

Özgüç believed the miniature trio in the second register to be standing on a temple structure<sup>73</sup>, the two figures striding before them either holding aloft swords or long wind instruments cutting into the register above. The T-shapes throughout are pedestal altars in Özgüç' estimation, while the 'walking stick' held by one of the chadored ladies is probably the *lituus* of royal authority (a variation on Ishtar's rod and ring) while the figure in front of her holds up a ritual object whose nature we cannot discern.

Özgüç' copious photographs are helpful for close-ups of the individual details of the separate scenes (examples above): just as on the limestone plaque of **ForAtt-8** with its compact top scene indicating a similar feasting rite with lyre-player over a *Forward Attack*, interspersed throughout the Inandik event are dancers, acrobats and music - on the vase dominated by the magnificent two-man giant harp with swan/eagle and lion-head finials. On the question of how to distinguish Gods from mortals, apart from Baal's bull statue they appear, Özgüç thinks, to be in anthropomorphic form and wearing dark clothing, contrasting with the cream or red clothing of the human participants - though I think he meant to say they are the seated figures, since I see no dark clothing. Certainly the seated figure on the camp stool is taken by Özgüç to be a God, attended to by a servant libating from a bird-beak jug (actual red and black polished examples were found in the temple) – on two seals of the Vapheio Hoard used also to indicate ritual context when held by the Minoan genius). On the lowest register the general feasting and drinking ritual following the Sacred Marriage and Bull Sacrifice is depicted – to Özgüç featuring another pair of seated Gods - with added peripheral domestic scenes of container sorting and brew preparation. On other objects from Inandik other iconographic details (shown below) dwell on Baal and his consort



**III.9- 25: (Left) Bull terra cotta figures; (centre) inside rim of the Inandikdepe vase; (right) cup with clay figurine of naked woman inside – all found at the site**

Shaushga/Ishtar as celebrated in North Syria overall. Polished bull statuettes as at other Anatolian sites were found, and the rim of the Inandik vase itself (above centre) has four hollow terra cotta bull-heads,

<sup>73</sup> This might just correspond to a line quoted by Gilan *ibid.* in his footnote 39: "One *Purapši*-priest who stands upon the roof and speaks encouraging things to the king, as follows: 'O king, fear not! The Storm God will put the enemies and the enemy lands under your feet, and you will crush them like empty vessels'".

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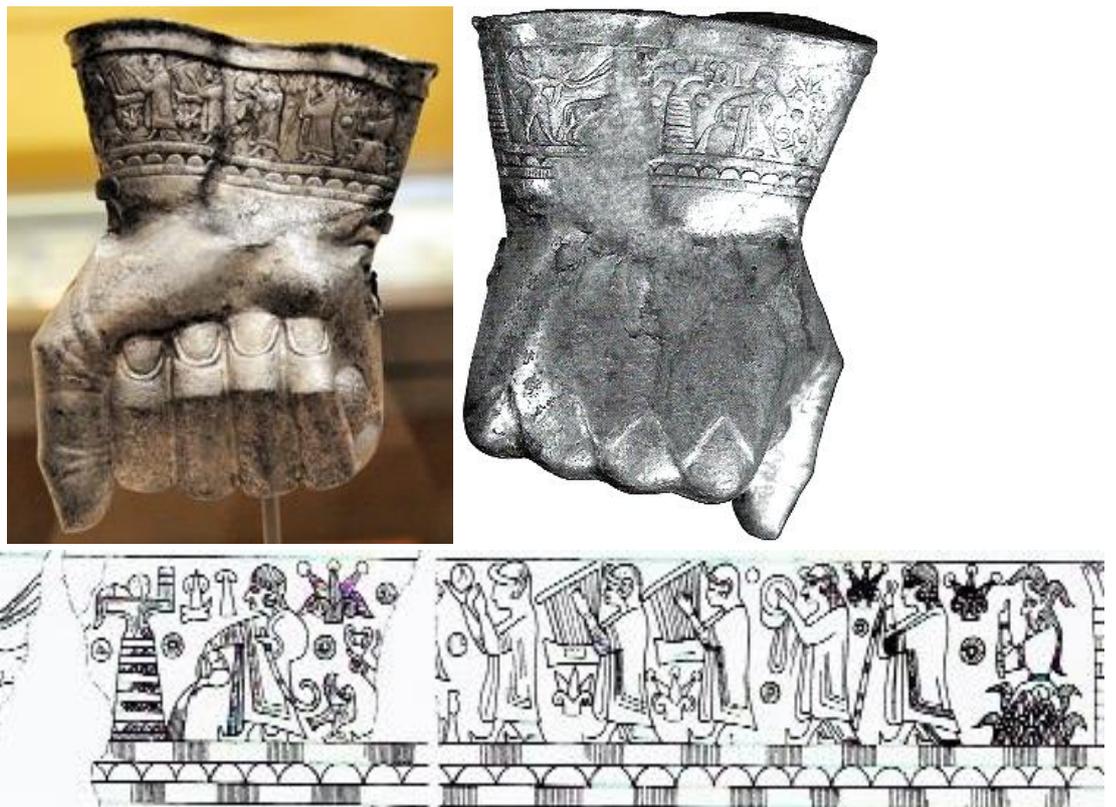
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one acting as an inner spout for liquid poured into a rectangular hollow behind it. The drinking cup above right, close in style to Minoan/ Mycenaean cups, has a naked female or Goddess seated inside – perhaps a celebratory item used in the drinking ritual in Her honour, possibly linked to the Sacred Marriage ceremony shown on the vase.

#### OTHER HITTITE VESSELS WITH RITUAL NARRATIVE DECORATION

To these ceramic vases we can add two Hittite silver vessels to our ‘entertainment’ portfolio, decorated also with similar, though much shorter, ritual scenes. The first is a rhyton in the form of a fist, bought on



III.9- 26: Hittite silver fist vessel with ritual procession round the cuff – MFA Boston (top photo left) Metropolitan Museum of Art NY, BBCat-108;(top photo right) Güterbock fig.3.3; (bottom) drawing of procession on cuff - BBCat-108

the market and initially thought to be Assyrian (on loan to the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, numbered MFA RL 144.1977). It was made from one sheet of metal and originally had a handle soldered on it from lip to ball of the palm, over the image of the tower. The clenched fist was a ritual gesture often used by cult participants, and the joint authors<sup>74</sup> who analysed it believed the shape means it is an offering in itself, perhaps used to pour libations if not a drinking vessel. It is the inclusion of the musicians that is of particular interest to us here, so again - without getting lost in too much detail - we have a scene with a tower and striding Weather God and bull at one end and Mountain/Vegetation God at the other. Between runs a procession led by the Hittite King Tudhaliya (two hieroglyphs name him – probably Tudhaliya II or III), followed by assistants and musicians. The king himself (holding the lituus) libates at

<sup>74</sup> H G Güterbock and T Kendall 'A Hittite Silver Vessel in the Form of a Fist' in J B Carter et al. (eds) *The Ages of Homer: A Tribute to Emily Townsend Vermeule* Austin 1995 45-60

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an altar with bread and other offerings on it: on the ground behind him is a falcon – which is the reason J V Canby initially interpreted the vessel as a ritual falconer’s glove – falconry being prominent in Hittite culture (it features again in the next piece). A kneeling figure behind the king is damaged, then a standing figure may be bringing the God’s bread as already seen on the altar with other offerings. Behind are two harpists, a cymbalist and a figure holding a long wind instrument which may be related to the Bactrian silver trumpets<sup>75</sup>. A similar narrative strip was added to the Schimmel stag rhyton (below left), referred to by Güterbock and Kendall –with aspects of its iconography also discussed at



**III.9- 27: (Top left) Schimmel stag cup of silver – with drawing of relief scene on rim at bottom row – both from BBCat-107; (top centre) Anatolian silver stag cult vessel from Mycenae Shaft Grave IV – Köhl fig.3.9 – Athens Museum no. 388; (top right) another specifically Eurasian animal is the wolf, this gold head of one from Altyn Depe – Masson *ibid.*pl.xxiii,2**

some length by Watkins<sup>76</sup> (his fig.1). Again a figure libates to a Stag God, followed by a standing attendant offering up the God’s bread and a kneeling figure (intact this time) with wine offering. Behind the incense burner and Stag God, Telepinu, God of Falcons, sits on a cross-legged stool with falcon on his wrist, while behind him, the hunt now over, a sacrificed stag is placed under a tree with hunting bag and quiver above (note again Vas’ilkov *ibid.* for the cult status given by early steppe Indo-Europeans to the quiver - and also the tree/stag preferences on the Trialeti vase, *III. 9-220/12*). We learn from Calvert Watkins (*op.cit*) that the hunting bag was the Hittite precursor to Athena’s aegis (and later the cornucopia), brimming with all the gifts the ruler would be given by his God for the successful administration of his land. He matches the scene to a surviving fragmentary version of the story of the Return of Telepinus:

<sup>75</sup> B Lawergren ‘Oxus Trumpets c.2200-1800: Material Overview, Usage, Societa Role, and Catalog’ in *Iranica Antiqua XXXVIII* 2003 41-118

<sup>76</sup> C Watkins ‘Homer and Hittite Revisited II’ in K A Yener et al. (eds) *Recent Developments in Hittite Archaeology and History* Winona Lake 2002 167-176

*Before Telepinu stands an eya tree;  
From the eya tree is hung a sheepskin hunting bag.  
In it lies Long Years  
In it lies Progeny – Sons, Daughters  
In it lies Growth of Mortal Man, Cattle, Sheep  
In it lies Manhood, Power  
In it lies Eternity  
In it lies Integrity, Endurance  
In it lies Assent, Obedience  
In it lies Satiety*

*Telepinus lifted it up for the King and gave him every good thing. (KUB 33.12 iv 13ff)*

One cannot resist comparing this highly worked item with the silver stag vessel from Shaft Grave IV at Mycenae (above top centre), probably simply a drinking vessel, thought to have been adapted by its unknowing recipients to pour liquid through one of the nostrils<sup>77</sup>. Köhl was inclined to think the Mycenaeans would not have known how to use it in the cult setting and that probably its metal content of almost pure silver was the reason they kept it, possibly the result of a diplomatic gift exchange with the Hittites before Trojan War times ended such relations. Its closest parallels, he thinks 'are certainly the stag-, lion-, and bull-shaped vessels from Kültepe, dating to the 19-18C BC'.

#### **INCLUSION OR ABSENCE OF THE LION-BULL ATTACK IN THE GOBLET OR VASE NARRATIVES**

We decided to dwell at length on the Inandik and Hüseyindede vases partly because of the many connections we can make with the narratives on the Karashamb goblet of some centuries earlier. When taking into account fragments of similar figured vases cited by Özgüç found at other sites, it is not unrealistic to see a widespread tradition of myth and ritual illustrated on cult vessels as extending from Karashamb and Trialeti in metal, down to the elaborately painted pottery from later Hittite sites, and that drinking from these special narrative vessels usually featured as the central focus of ritual or entertainment activities impossible to separate from each other. Being considerably earlier in date, we can take the Karashamb goblet as the prototype against which to note how much the Hüseyindede and Inandik vase programmes overlap:

- The focal points on the Inandik top three registers (erotic scene; Gods on the bed; bull sacrifice before bull statue) line up vertically as the frontal view of the vase, in the same way the Karashamb goblet has two optimum viewing lines;
- The standard dress for the average court attendant on both is a short cape with undershirt trailing to the back of the knees – otherwise they are bare-legged with pointed shoes;
- Gods, Goddesses or Rulers are allocated at one or two per register, providing secondary foci for the processions<sup>78</sup> of participants;
- Musicians always accompany the celebrations.

<sup>77</sup> R B Köhl 'The Silver Stag "Bibru" from Mycenae' in J B Carter et al (eds) *The Ages of Homer: A Tribute to Emily Townsend Vermeule* Austin 1995 60-66

<sup>78</sup> See also S de Martino 'Music, Dance and Processions in Hittite Anatolia' in J M Sasson (ed.) *Civilisations of the Ancient Near East IV* NY 1995 2667

Points of difference between them are that the Hittite pots leave out the theme of War, while the Inandik vase specifically introduces the Sacred Marriage theme as the prime focus of the rituals. The Karashamb goblet evokes the presence of the key Gods in their more old-fashioned Sumerian animal forms, celebrating the New Year festivities and endorsement of the Ruler's authority with conservative iconography (and there are no acrobats) – this may explain the inclusion of the lion and prey, not seen on the Hüseyindede or Inandik vases – but the lion and prey symbol is rarely, if at all, used in homeland Hittite iconography anyway. This is a point of difference between the Hittites and the Mitanni, who certainly on seals go to great pains have the lion and prey symbol included as a BIVISUAL alongside their indigenous forms of God/Goddess.

The ruddy colour of the somewhat crude Inandik Vase seen in Özgüç' copious photographs are in a way prophetic of the more refined Greek red- and black-figure vase traditions emerging a few centuries later. Two in particular can be classed alongside the narrative vases of the Hittite world, covered with scenes again involving a marriage and a display of the full Pantheon of Gods.

### **THE FRANÇOIS VASE**

The iconography of the monumental François Vase of c.570BC (**ForAtt-47**) had no need to compress its narratives, since it is large enough to devote entire registers to hunting, racing or war scenes, with an animal procession on a lower register that includes the four *Forward Attacks* shown as separate line drawings in the Catalogue entry, probably representing the Four Seasons. In many ways the Greek equivalent of the Karashamb goblet or Inandik vase, apart from noting how the vase keeps to the Archaic convention of illustrating scenes from the *Iliad* on the register above the four *Forward Attacks*, it is worth spending some time on the full iconographic programme - only recently satisfactorily analysed in telling detail by Hedreen<sup>79</sup> (discussed in **Catalogue E** in full). Unfortunately apart from the front view given in the Catalogue entry, I could not track down a comprehensively drawn roll-out of all the registers<sup>80</sup> running round to include the back, like the ones we have been able to reproduce for the Karashamb Goblet or the Inandik Vase – which means it is a vase to be visited and inspected in person at the Florence Archaeological Museum. We have to bear in mind, too, that the vase is badly damaged. Of monumental size even in vase terms, overall this Black-Figure volute krater - found in Chiusi but made and painted in Athens - adheres to the comparatively new Archaic idiom of bringing together the theme of war – notably the Trojan War and two of its key heroes, Patroclus and Achilles – with a principal register devoted to the display of the newly canonical Pantheon of Gods (reproduced as a line drawing further below) in a grand procession on the occasion of their attendance at the marriage of

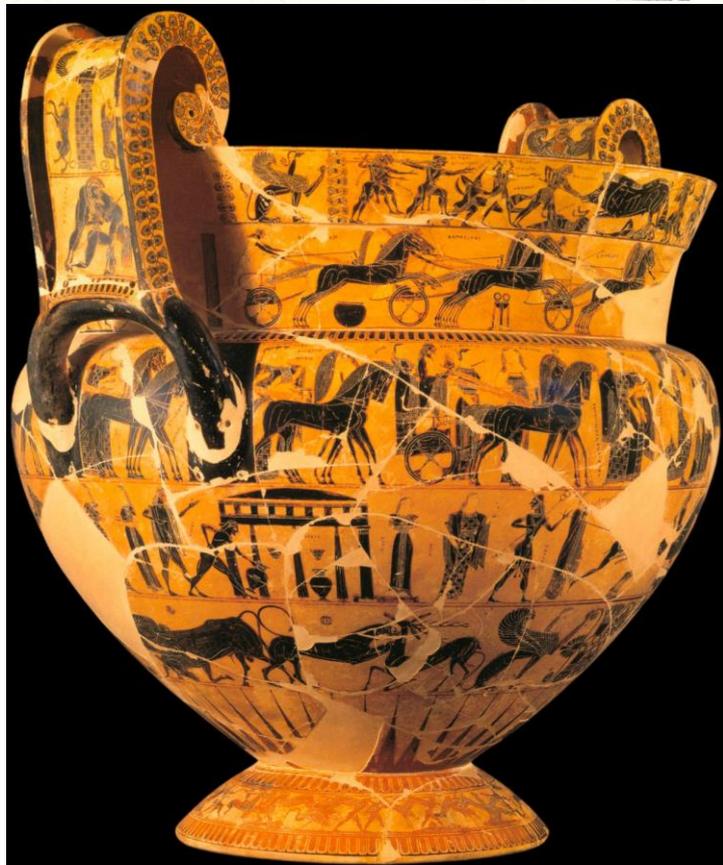
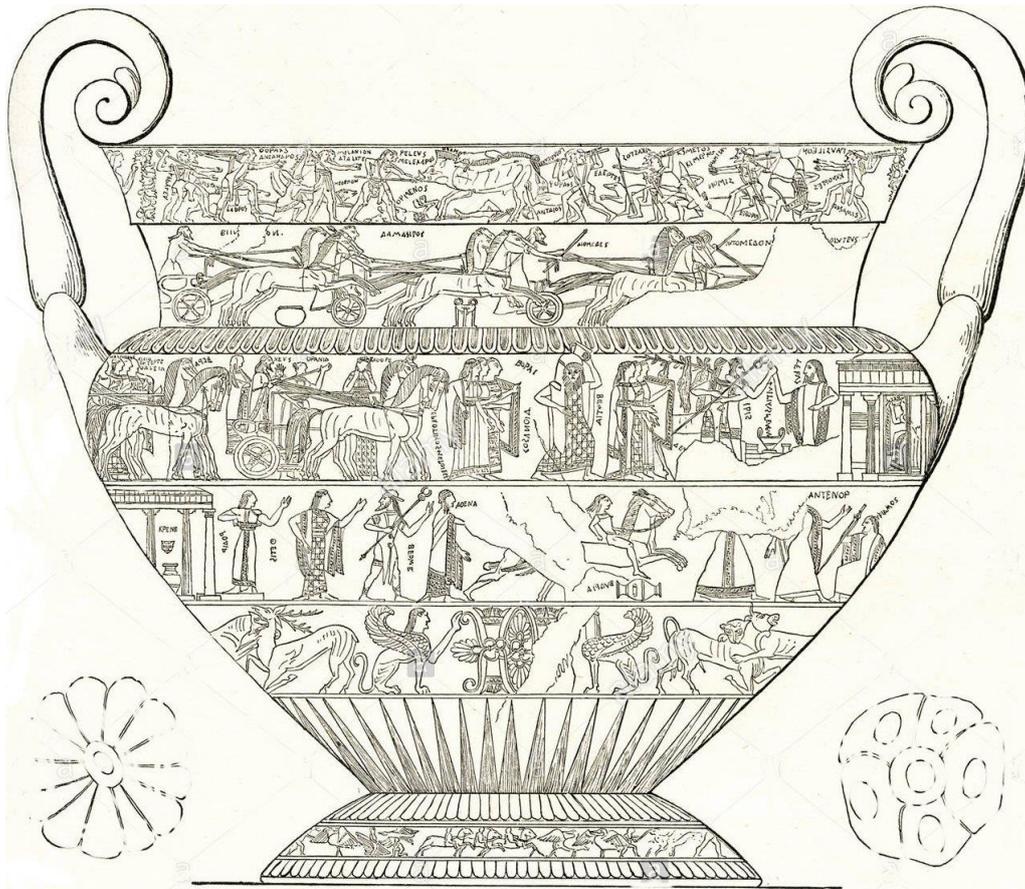
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<sup>79</sup> G Hedreen 'Pictorial Subjectivity and the Shield of Achilles on the François Vase', Chapter 5 in his *The Image of the Artist in Archaic and Classical Greece* Cambridge 2015

<sup>80</sup> Apart from Hedreen's rather small illustrations, the next most comprehensive coverage of the imagery is given by K-H Pridik via this link <https://www.kihowb.de/wp-content/uploads/2015/01/PridikDieFrancois-Vase.pdf>

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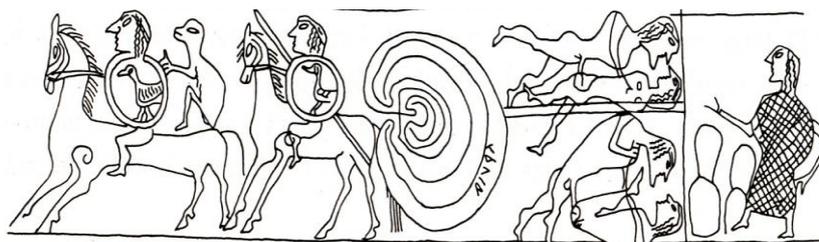
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Peleus and Thetis (almost, but not quite, duplicating the procession of Gods<sup>81</sup> in very similar order and appearance on the Sophilos Dinos in the British Museum, made c.560BC). In these processions the Gods no longer stand on their animal familiars but now fashionably drive chariots – just as described in the *Iliad*. Again the BM vase should be inspected in person, since notoriously difficult to photograph.

Hedreen argues for three overarching themes that link the different subjects on the registers of the François Vase together, laid out in the table below, starting from the top of the vase (1) and working down (A and B refer to Front and Back). The hero Theseus starts the story off at the top of the vase,

REGISTER	SUBJECT	REGISTER	SUBJECT
1A	Calydonian boar hunt with Peleus and other heroes	1B	Celebrations of Theseus in a crane dance with the 14 Athenian youths and maidens saved from Crete's labyrinth and its Minotaur
2A	The battle between the Lapiths and Centaurs at the wedding of Lapith King Peirinhoos, with Theseus fighting on the side of the Lapiths	2B	The funeral games of Patroclus, concentrating on the chariot race
3	A procession of the Gods (all of them named) attending the wedding of mortal Peleus to the Goddess Thetis, mother of Achilles – almost a replica of the one on the Sophilos Dinos from 10 years earlier – see Kothar discussion in DIVERSION 9		
4A	Achilles' pursuit of Troilos on horseback, while his father, Priam looks down from the walls of Troy	4B	The first ever representation of Hephaistos's return to Olympus to free his mother, Hera, from the throne he made for her as a trap
5A	A band of mythical animals such as sphinxes and griffins, interspersed with four <i>Forward Attacks</i>		
6A	The battle of the Pygmies, riding goats, with the cranes		
On the sides of each handle is a Gorgon, Artemis as Mistress of the Animals and Ajax carrying the body of Achilles			

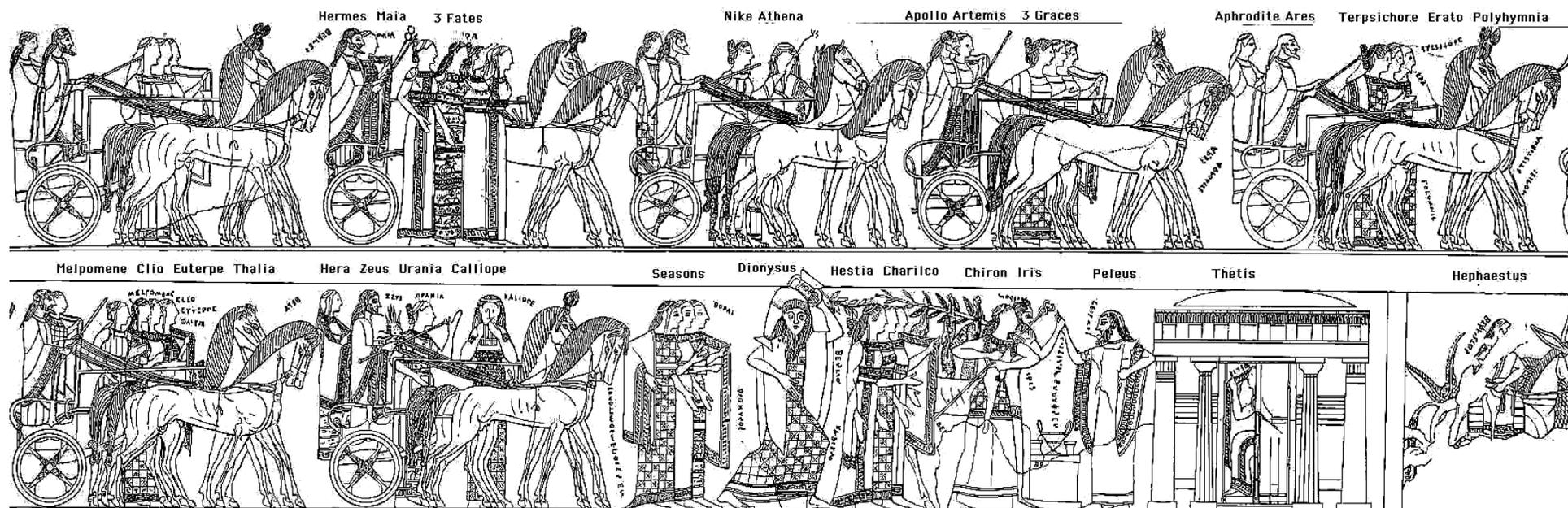
who has escaped Daedalos' labyrinth and saved the 14 potential victims of the Minotaur from being sacrificed (he features again in the battle of Lapiths and Centaurs on the next register). This calls to



mind the decoration on the Tragliatella Oinoche (its narrative register shown above) that uncannily brings together images of the Sacred Marriage (Helen and Paris), departure for the Trojan War and even the labyrinth (labelled TROIÀ in reverse writing inside).

In the procession of Gods on the next register Hephaistos, though not strictly one of the Gods of Olympus, nonetheless brings up the rear of the procession, riding a mule to indicate his lower status, his lame feet dangling in twisted directions. They all ride forward to attend the wedding of Thetis to Peleus. They are the future parents of Achilles – and we then remember it is to Hephaistos Thetis runs during the Trojan War, when she comes to ask him to make a new suit of armour for Achilles. On the

<sup>81</sup> Well analysed in 'Gods on Earth: The Wedding of Peleus and Thetis' in Tyler Jo Smith et al (eds) *A Companion to Greek Art* Oxford 2012, section 20.3.



*Procession of the Greek Pantheon on the François Vase, beginning top left at the END of the procession and ending with the reception at its front, bottom right: Dionysos is half way along looking out with the amphora perched on his shoulder*



*Photographic details of the procession of the Pantheon on the Sophilos Dinos showing the comprehensive labelling of Gods and Goddesses in chariots interspersed with groups of minor deities – (centre) the welcoming party greeting the front of the procession arriving for the wedding; (right) detail of fragments from a ‘Sophilos Dinos school’ vase from Izmir (Turkey)<sup>82</sup> showing a similar marriage procession, here with the profiles of Paris and Helen standing in their chariot - duly captioned*

<sup>82</sup> Illustrated in Güven Bakir *Sophilos: Ein Beitrag zu seinem Stil* Mainz-am-Rhein 1981, vase A 21 pl.45 – no. 3332 in the Izmir Archaeological Museum

corresponding other halves of registers 1, 2 and 4 Peleus features once, and Achilles twice, providing the crossovers with the Hephaistos tale.

We have not yet finished with the story of Hephaistos and Achilles' armour (including the shield), but remind the reader that we re-run of some of these *Iliad* events in more depth in a DIVERSION on SIRIUS that covers three astronomically significant moments in the Trojan War, involving Achilles' Shield. Hephaistos decorated it with Night and Day sky scenes in the centre<sup>83</sup>, surrounding it with bands illustrating human activities in everyday society (see *III. 9-75* and *III. 9-76*) – one or two of them even repeated on the François Vase – see Hedreen for fuller details.

Back to finishing our journey down its registers, Hephaistos the uncouth newcomer, manual worker God features again on the back of the Vase on the fourth register which recounts how Hephaistos, an outsider God with a new function, like Dionysos, is nonetheless summoned by the Gods to come back to Olympus. He had taken revenge on his mother, Hera, for disowning him (horrified at his disability she had tossed him from Olympus down onto the island of Lemnos) – by creating a throne from which she could not rise once she sat in it. The Return of Hephaistos shows the Gods receiving him as he comes back to release Hera from the clutches of the throne, preceded by Dionysos as go-between. Dionysos also appears in the Gods' procession holding a golden vase Hephaistos has made - linked to another story - but because he looks out at us, the onlookers, it probably doubles as the artists' reference to the François Vase itself as if made through the invocation and power of Hephaistos in person.

The very bottom register shows the battle between the Pygmies and the Cranes, a choice of subject one might not understand – but Hedreen shows from the sources that the Pygmies were once understood as 'the children of Hephaistos', living far south in Africa, while the Cranes - usually living in the far north of Central Asia along with creatures like boars - in the winter fly south to Africa. Hence the top and bottom registers of the Vase refer to the extreme North and South of the Greek-known world, making the Vase, like the Shield of Achilles, into a microcosm of the world itself. One might at first think that the Vase lacks the astronomical ingredient seen at the centre of the Achilles Shield of Hephaistos, but the second-last register with its sphinxes, griffins and four *Forward Attacks* does at least by its summary references to the Four Seasons, Solstices/Equinoxes and the matter of Intercalation, allude to the fixed turning points in the framework of the Greek Calendar. For its conscious emulation of the Achilles Shield, we must mentally hold it over to add as an exhibit, in vase form, to our SIRIUS DIVERSION (given in the full *Catalogue E*).

In Ann Birchall's short paper describing the accession of the Sophilos Dinos into the British Museum in 1972<sup>84</sup> she usefully goes through the names of all the deities making their way on it towards Peleus, who are

<sup>83</sup> Hedreen refers to the description by a slave of the ceremonial tent in Euripides' *Ion* (the play begins in front of the Temple of Apollo at Delphi) as 'lined with spoils he took from the Amazons' that included one tapestry showing the Sun-God in a chariot drawn by four horses and another - as on the Achilles' Shield centre boss - with 'the Pleiades and sword-bearing Orion, and above them the Bear pivoting round the pole on his golden tail'.

<sup>84</sup> A Birchall 'A New Acquisition: An Early Attic Bowl with Stand, Signed by Sophilos' *British Museum Quarterly XXXVI* 1971-2 London 107-10 pls xxxiv-xxxvii

*led by Iris in winged boots and carrying her herald's wand; behind her come Hestia and Demeter together; then Chariklo (wife of the centaur Cheiron) and Leto; Dionysos comes alone; alone too follows Hebe in richly ornamented robe; then the centaur Cheiron, a hunter returned from the chase, with a bough in his hand and several quarry slung from a branch over his left shoulder; behind him Themis, closely followed by three Nymphs; then comes a chariot driven by Zeus and Hera and accompanied by Poseidon and Amphitrite; Ares and Aphrodite ride in a third chariot which five Muses accompany, the central one drawn frontally and playing the syrinx; a fourth chariot, with three more Muses as escort, brings Apollo with his lyre and Hermes; the last chariot, accompanied probably by (three) Moirai, brings Athene and Artemis with her bow; behind comes Okeanos the river-god with his bull's horn but here also represented as 'old man of the sea' with monster coils, fish and snake; then, together, come Tethys grandmother of Thetis, and Eileithya the goddess of childbirth (her presence making a subtle allusion to the offspring of the marriage, Achilles); last of all comes Hephaistos, the smith god, with his mule, the animal slightly overlapping the columns of the side of the house across from Peleus – for the procession has now encircled the entire vase.*

Newcomer God Hephaistos/Kothar is the unifying figure linking the narrative registers precisely because he is the God of the potters and painters of these vases – as well representing the New Order of the Cosmos. Seen on the close-up photos of the fragments of the Sophilos Dinos vase above, each God, Goddess and host of related minor deities is labelled in Greek, and similarly so in even fuller detail on the François Vase. The two processions are all but the same – with one exception pointed out by Hedreen *ibid.*. Just behind the front group of Gods approaching the welcome party at the temple building where Peleus and Thetis are to be married appears that figure of Dionysos facing outwards, looking out at us and making much of the huge pot over his shoulder: This is Indian Dionysos, God of drink and drinking pots, alluding to the François Vase itself – and bringing attention to the artists who made it. Dionysos appears at this point on the Sophilos Dinos too, but not facing outwards so dramatically, or brandishing an amphora. And again at the very end of both processions – on his mule – comes Hephaistos, last but not least. The grand procession starts and ends at the house of the newly wedded couple, Peleus greeting the guests with Thetis glimpsed briefly inside the columned building on the François Vase as painted by Kleitias - invisible on the version painted by Sophilos. The wedding between Thetis and Peleus was fateful, since the birth of their son, Achilles, led to a sequence of events culminating in the Trojan War.

### CONCLUSION

Coming back to the François Vase, Hedreen's entire book is about the self-awareness of Archaic Greek artists, who were now not only signing their work, but also in subtle ways showing off. Magisterially, he gathers together all the sources and all the arguments to show that the François Vase is as much about its creators as attempting to be a *speculum mundi*. Signed twice by its potter and painter, though at first look-

through it might appear from the *Iliad* scenes that the chief protagonist holding it all together is Achilles, it is in fact the many references to Hephaistos on most of its registers that leads us to realise the vase is almost a votive offering to the God of metalwork and craft on the part of the two artists who made it. Hephaistos was ultimately an introduction to the Greek world from Central Asia - successor not simply to Cretan Daedalos, but Ugaritic Kothar and Indus Vishvakarma behind him— hence the late introduction to the Pantheon and the disdainful treatment of him by the Gods as ‘the worker-God’ who gets his hands dirty.

In this newsletter, which simply cherry-picks from *Catalogue E* some stepping-stones from my research into *THE LION AND PREY AND ITS MEANING IN THE CANON OF ANCIENT NEAR EASTERN ART*, having looked at examples of imagery on drinking vessels coming in from Central Asia and penetrating the **CANEA** region and setting an example for the Levantine and Mycenaean worlds, from the drinking vessels chosen for this piece my overall view is that we can trace all the way back to nomadic, Central Asian precedents how pictorial court narrative in later Greek art on a wine vessel for a great occasion still required the presence of the Gods – even if by Greek times artistic showing off silently tried to upstage the usual military heroes.

