

WOMEN OF ASSUR AND KANESH

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WOMEN OF ASSUR AND KANESH

Texts from the Archives of Assyrian Merchants

by

Cécile Michel

SBL Press





Atlanta

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SERIES EDITOR'S FOREWORD

Writings from the Ancient World is designed to provide up-to-date, readable English translations of writings recovered from the ancient Near East.

The series is intended to serve the interests of general readers, students, and educators who wish to explore the ancient Near Eastern roots of Western civilization or to compare these earliest written expressions of human thought and activity with writings from other parts of the world. It should also be useful to scholars in the humanities or social sciences who need clear, reliable translations of ancient Near Eastern materials for comparative purposes. Specialists in particular areas of the ancient Near East who need access to texts in the scripts and languages of other areas will also find these translations helpful. Given the wide range of materials translated in the series, different volumes will appeal to different interests. However, these translations make available to all readers of English the world's earliest traditions as well as valuable sources of information on daily life, history, religion, and the like in the preclassical world.

Covering the period from the invention of writing (by 3000 BCE) down to the conquests of Alexander the Great (ca. 330 BCE), the ancient Near East comprised northeast Africa and southwest Asia. The cultures represented within these limits include especially Egyptian, Sumerian, Babylonian, Assyrian, Hittite, Ugaritic, Aramean, Phoenician, and Israelite. It is hoped that Writings from the Ancient World will eventually produce translations of most of the many different genres attested in these cultures: letters (official and private), myths, diplomatic documents, hymns, law collections, monumental inscriptions, tales, and administrative records, to mention but a few.

The Society of Biblical Literature provided significant funding for the Writings from the Ancient World series. In addition, authors have benefited from working in research collections in their respective institutions and beyond. Were it not for such support, the arduous tasks of preparation, translation, editing, and publication could not have been

accomplished or even undertaken. It is the hope of all who have worked on these texts or supported this work that Writings from the Ancient World will open up new horizons and deepen the humanity of all who read these volumes.

Theodore J. Lewis
The Johns Hopkins University

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This research on women documented by the Old Assyrian cuneiform texts, while inspired by the unique content of these sources, has benefited from discussions with several colleagues in various projects and has received financial support from these projects. Within the joint research unit Archéologies et Sciences de l'Antiquité (ArScAn, dir. F. Villeneuve) and especially the team Histoire et Archéologie de l'Orient Cunéiforme (HAROC, dir. D. Agut and A. Tenu), Brigitte Lion and I have been working for many years together on women and gender studies, and our discussions have no doubt influenced my thoughts on certain aspects. Between 2012 and 2015, several members of the team HAROC participated in the bilateral French-Japanese project on the economic role of women in ancient Mesopotamia (ANR Chorus REFEMA, coordinated by Francis Joannès and Fumi Karahashi), a project in which I studied how Assyrian women earned money and managed their goods as businesswomen. The main results were published in 2016 in a collective volume dedicated to *The Role of Women in Work in Society in the Ancient Near East*, ed. Brigitte Lion and Cécile Michel, SANER 13 (Boston: de Gruyter, 2018).

Several of the Assyrian women settled in Anatolia as well as native women are well documented by the tablets unearthed at Kültepe. The Kültepe Archaeological Mission, with its director, Fikri Kulakoğlu, who invited me to join the archaeological team, has allowed me to immerse myself every summer in the site and to better understand the environment of the men and women living in the lower town of Kültepe. Within the framework of the Kültepe International Meetings (KIM) that we built up together in 2013, conferences every two years provide a multi- and interdisciplinary overview of the site and its surroundings. This approach was complemented by two projects that I have carried out in collaboration with Eva Andersson Strand, director of the Centre for Textile Research (Copenhagen, previously directed by Marie-Louise Nosch). The first one, within the framework of the International Research Network

Ancient Textiles from Orient to the Mediterranean (IRN ATOM), was dedicated to textile production in the Middle Bronze Age Near East and involved also Catherine Breniquet (Clermont-Ferrand). The study of Kültepe sealings with textile, thread, cords, and basket imprints, connected to textile tools (spindle whorl and loom weights, fig. 4.1) and data from the Old Assyrian texts, together with a sound knowledge of spinning and weaving techniques, made possible the estimation of the textile production of Assyrian women and the revenues they were earning (chapter 4). This research was further developed within the framework of another project, The Thread of Memory: Kültepe, a Pilot Laboratory for Interdisciplinary Research (Kül-TexT, LabEx Past in Present), which I am coordinating together with Vanessa Tubiana-Brun; this project will result in a documentary movie (*Thus Says Tarām-Kūbi*) and a book for the general public (*Daily Life at Kültepe-Kanes*). Thanks to ATOM and Kül-TexT, but also to the Kültepe Archaeological Mission, our group could work every summer in the best possible conditions at Kültepe.

Since 2015, thanks to the kind invitation of its director, I have joined the Centre for the Study of Manuscript Cultures. There, I carried out research on Old Assyrian paleography together with my doctoral student Wiebke Beyer. This research is linked to the literacy of Old Assyrian individuals, including women (chapter 4), and I am most grateful to the DFG Sonderforschungsbereich 950 project, which supported our regular stays in Ankara to work on the cuneiform tablets at the Museum of Anatolian Civilisations. I wish to warmly thank Michael Friedrich and all the colleagues from Hamburg for lively and enlightening discussions.

I also give my warmest thanks to the Ankara museum staff and to the colleagues of the *tablet seksyonu*, who have always been very helpful, especially Şerife Yılmaz, Rukiye Akdoğan, and İsmet Aykut.

This book would not have been possible without a trio of dear friends who agreed, each in their own way, to review my work and contributed to improve it. The first to work over the text, Benjamin Foster, took on the heavy task of making my English readable, even going so far as to translate the introductions to chapters 2 to 5 from French. Not only did he work on the English text in depth, but he also made various suggestions on the translations of the texts themselves. The second, Klaas Veenhof, reread the texts' edition with the same patient attention as usual. It is not uncommon for the translation of Old Assyrian letters to give rise to different interpretations; it is therefore essential to compare your readings with those of another specialist in this corpus. The third and last, Jerry Cooper,

is at the very origin of this book. It was he who suggested that I publish it in the Writings from the Ancient World series by the Society for Biblical Literature and kindly offered his help, in turn providing a review of the book and providing suggestions and discussions on the translation of certain terms. He also corrected the English of the introduction. I warmly thank Ted Lewis, the general editor in charge of SBL Press Writings from the Ancient World, for his infinite patience and regular reminders. I also address my thanks to the SBL editorial board for accepting this volume in their series and to Bob Buller, Director of SBL Press, for his careful work on the manuscript.

Last but not least, I wish to thank my family for their love, encouragement, and patience: Benoît, with whom I have shared everything for thirty-three years, and our three children, Coralie-Anne, Laureline, and Raphaël, who make us discover the diversity of biology. This book is dedicated to two great women who together total 183 years, Thérèse and Nelly, my mother and mother-in-law, both pioneers and active women, each in their own way, but also mothers, grandmothers, and great-grandmothers of twenty-five and nineteen descendants, respectively, who have thus given us a beautiful tribe that we enjoy bringing together.

Orsay, January 2019

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ABBREVIATIONS AND CONVENTIONS

ABBREVIATIONS AND CONVENTIONS IN TRANSLITERATIONS

le.e.	left edge
lo.e.	lower edge
obv.	obverse
r.e.	right edge
rev.	reverse
u.e.	upper edge
x!(Y)	the correct reading is “x” but “Y” is written on the tablet/ envelope
*	collated sign / collated line
(°)	erased sign, erasure of several signs
(seal X)	seal imprint of X
[...]	broken signs
<x>	sign omitted
«x»	extra sign

Akkadian is in italics, while Sumerian logograms are written in roman. Assyrian and Anatolian proper names are capitalized; this concerns anthroponyms, toponyms, theonyms, months, and so on. But Sumerian logograms are never capitalized, even in proper names.

Numbers in **bold** refer to texts edited in this book.

ABBREVIATIONS AND CONVENTIONS IN TRANSLATIONS

Kaneš	Written most of the time <i>Kà-ni-iš</i> in the texts, is rendered as Kaneš in the translations and comments, following the recent choice of Old Assyrian specialists.
<i>word</i>	Tentative translation.

- (word) Word added in the translation to make the text intelligible in English.

TECHNICAL ABBREVIATIONS AND SYMBOLS

§	section
BCE	before the Common Era
bis	twice
ca.	circa
cf.	<i>confer</i> , compare
chap(s).	chapter(s)
cm	centimeter(s)
col(s.).	column(s)
dir.	director, directed by
DN	divine name, name of deity
et al.	<i>et alii</i> , and others
etc.	<i>et cetera</i> , and so forth, and the rest
fem.	feminine
g	gram(s)
i.e.	<i>id est</i> , that is
kg	kilogram(s)
km	kilometer(s)
L	liter
m	meter(s)
masc.	masculine
n(n).	note(s)
no(s.).	number(s)
n.p.	no place; no publisher; no page
n.s.	new series
pl.	plural; plate
PN	personal name
sg.	singular
<i>sic</i>	thus (indicating that the text is reproduced exactly as written)
sq.	square

ABBREVIATIONS FOR JOURNALS AND SERIES

- AAA *Annals of Archaeology and Anthropology* (Liverpool)

AfO	<i>Archiv für Orientforschung</i> (Vienna)
AfOB	Beihefte zum Archiv für Orientforschung (Vienna)
AHw	Soden, Wolfram von, ed. <i>Akkadisches Handwörterbuch</i> . 3 vols. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1965–1981.
AHDO	<i>Archives d'histoire du droit oriental</i> (Paris)
Akademî Günlügü	<i>Akademî Günlügü Toplumsal Araştırmalar Dergisi</i> (Ankara)
Akkadica	<i>Akkadica</i> (Brussels)
AMD	<i>Ancient Magic and Divination</i> (Leiden)
AMMY	<i>Anadolu Medeniyetleri Müzesi Yıllığı</i> (Ankara)
Anatolica	<i>Anatolica: Annuaire international pour les civilisations de l'Asie antérieure</i> (Istanbul)
AnOr	<i>Analecta Orientalia</i> (Rome)
AnSt	<i>Anatolian Studies: Journal of the British Institute of Archaeology at Ankara</i> (London)
AOAT	<i>Alter Orient und Altes Testament</i> (Münster)
AoF	<i>Altorientalische Forschungen</i> (Berlin)
ArAn	<i>Archivum Anatolicum</i> (Ankara)
Archibab	<i>Archives babylonniennes</i> (XXe–XXVIIe siècles av. J.-C.) (Paris)
ARMT	<i>Archives royales de Mari</i> , traduction (Paris)
ArOr	<i>Archív Orientální</i> (Prague)
AS	<i>Assyriological Studies</i> (Chicago)
ASJ	<i>Acta Sumerologica</i> (Hiroshima)
ATS	<i>Ancient Textiles Series</i> (Oxford)
AulaOr	<i>Aula Orientalis</i> (Barcelona)
BabBib	<i>Babel und Bibel: Old Testament and Semitic Studies</i> (Winona Lake, IN)
BBVO	<i>Berliner Beiträge zum Vorderen Orient</i> (Berlin)
BCAW	<i>Blackwell Companions to the Ancient World</i> (Oxford; Malden, MA)
Belleten	<i>Belleten. Türk Tarih Kurumu</i> (Ankara)
BiOr	<i>Bibliotheca Orientalis</i> (Leuven)
CAD	<i>The Assyrian Dictionary of the Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago</i> . Chicago: The Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago, 1956–2006.
CAHIIJ	<i>Cappadocia Journal of History and Social Sciences</i>
CDLI	Cuneiform Digital Library Initiative. University of California, Los Angeles; University of Oxford; Max

CHANE	Planck Institute for the History of Science, Berlin. https://cdli.ucla.edu/ (Los Angeles; Oxford; Berlin)
CKLR	Culture and History of the Ancient Near East (Leiden)
<i>ClioH</i>	<i>Chicago-Kent Law Review</i> (Chicago)
CMRG	<i>Clio: Histoire, femmes et sociétés</i> (Toulouse)
CNIP	Colloques de la Maison René-Ginouvès (Paris)
CPOA	Carsten Niebuhr Institute Publications (Copenhagen)
CRRAI	Civilisations du Proche-Orient. Série I: Archéologie et environnement (Neuchâtel; Paris)
CSSH	Compte rendu de la Xe Rencontre Assyriologique Internationale (Leiden)
<i>Diogenes</i>	<i>Comparative Studies in Society and History</i> (Cambridge)
DTCFD	<i>Diogenes</i> (London)
EO	<i>Dil ve Tarih-Coğrafya Fakültesi Dergisi</i> (Ankara)
FAOS	<i>Estudios Orientais</i> (Lisbon)
FM	Freiburger Altorientalische Studien. Beihefte: Altassyrische Texte und Untersuchungen (Freiburg)
HANE	Florilegium Marianum (Paris)
HdO	History of the Ancient Near East, Monographs (Padua)
HSAO	History of the Ancient Near East, Monographs (Padua)
HSS	Handbuch der Orientalistik (Leiden)
HUCA	Heidelberg Studien zum Alten Orient (Heidelberg)
HUCASup	Harvard Semitic Studies (Cambridge, MA)
<i>Iraq</i>	<i>Hebrew Union College Annual</i> (Cincinnati)
<i>Isimu</i>	Supplements to Hebrew Union College Annual (Cincinnati)
JANEH	<i>Iraq</i> (London)
JAOS	<i>Isimu: Revista sobre Oriente Próximo y Egipto en la antiguedad</i> (Madrid)
JCS	<i>Journal of Ancient Near Eastern History</i> (Boston)
JCSSup	<i>Journal of the American Oriental Society</i> (Ann Arbor, MI)
JEOL	<i>Journal of Cuneiform Studies</i> (New Haven; Boston)
	Journal of Cuneiform Studies Supplemental Series (Boston; Atlanta)
	<i>Jaarbericht van het Vooraziatisch-Egyptisch Genootschap Ex oriente lux</i> (Leiden)

JESHO	<i>Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient</i> (Leiden)
JNES	<i>Journal of Near Eastern Studies</i> (Chicago)
JSOR	<i>Journal of the Society of Oriental Research</i> (Chicago, Toronto)
KASKAL	<i>Kaskal: Rivista di storia, ambiente e culture del Vicino Oriente antico</i> (Padua; Venice)
KIM	Kültepe International Meetings (Turnhout)
KMMCP	Kayseri Metropolitan Municipality Cultural Publica- tion (Istanbul)
Ktèma	<i>Ktèma: Civilisations de l'Orient, de la Grèce et de Rome antiques</i> (Strasbourg)
LAPO	Littératures anciennes du Proche-Orient (Paris)
LO	Lettres Orientales (Leuven)
MAO	Monografie Archivu Orientálního (Prague)
Mari	<i>Mari: Annales de recherches interdisciplinaires</i> (Paris)
MC	Mesopotamian Civilizations (Winona Lake, IN)
Méditerranées	<i>Méditerranées: Revue du Centre d'Études Internation- ales sur la Romanité</i> (Paris)
Mesopotamia	Mesopotamia: Copenhagen Studies in Assyriology (Copenhagen)
MOS Studies	Middle Eastern Studies Programme (Leiden)
MVAG	<i>Mitteilungen der Vorderasiatischen Gesellschaft</i> (Berlin)
NABU	<i>Nouvelles Assyriologiques Brèves et Utilitaires</i> (Paris)
NdA	<i>Les Nouvelles de l'Archéologie</i> (Paris)
NIN	<i>NIN: Journal of Gender Studies in Antiquity</i> (Leiden)
OA	<i>Oriens Antiquus: Rivista del Centro per le Antichità e la Storia dell'Arte del vicino Oriente</i> (Rome)
OAA	Old Assyrian Archives (subseries of PIHANS, Leiden)
OAAS	Old Assyrian Archives Studies (subseries of PIHANS, Leiden)
OBO	Orbis Biblicus et Orientalis (Fribourg)
Or	<i>Orientalia</i> (Rome)
Orient	<i>Oriento: Bulletin of the Society of Near Eastern Studies in Japan / Nippon Oriento Gakkai</i> (Tokyo)
Paléorient	<i>Paléorient</i> (Paris)
PapVin	<i>Papyrologica Vindobonensis</i> (Vienna)
Philippika	<i>Philippika</i> (Wiesbaden)

PIHANS	Publications de l’Institut historique et archéologique néerlandais de Stamboul (Leiden)
RA	<i>Revue d’Assyriologie et d’archéologie orientale</i> (Paris)
REFEMA	Le rôle économique des femmes en Mésopotamie ancienne (Nanterre, France; Tokyo)
RGC	Recherche sur les grandes civilisations (Paris)
RHA	<i>Revue Hittite et Asianique</i> (Paris)
RHDE	<i>Revue historique de droit français et étranger</i> (Paris)
RIMA	Royal Inscriptions of Mesopotamia, Assyrian Periods (Toronto)
RLA	Ebeling, Erich, Michael P. Streck, Sabine Ecklin, Ernst Weidner, and Gabriella Frantz-Szabo, eds. <i>Reallexikon der Assyriologie und vorderasiatischen Archäologie</i> . Berlin: de Gruyter, 1932–.
RO	<i>Rocznik orientalistyczny</i> (Warsaw)
SANER	Studies in Ancient Near Eastern Records (Berlin)
SANTAG	SANTAG: Arbeiten und Untersuchungen zur Keilschriftkunde (Wiesbaden)
SAOC	Studies in Ancient Oriental Civilization (Chicago)
SDIO	Studia et documenta ad iura Orientis antiqui pertinencia (Leiden)
SMC	Studies in Manuscript Cultures (Berlin)
SSA	Saggi di Storia Antica (Rome)
SSN	Studia Semitica Neerlandica (Assen)
StCh	Studia Chaburensia (Wiesbaden)
Subartu	Subartu: European Centre for Upper Mesopotamian Studies (Turnhout)
Syria	<i>Syria: Revue d’art oriental et d’archéologie</i> (Paris)
T&C	<i>Techniques and Culture</i> (Marseille)
TMRG	Travaux de la Maison René-Ginouvès (Paris)
Topoi	<i>Topoi: Orient, Occident</i> (Lyon)
TopoiSup	Supplements to Topoi: Orient, Occident (Paris)
TTKY	Türk Tarih Kurumu Yayınları (Ankara)
TUAT	Texte aus der Umwelt des Alten Testaments (Gütersloh)
TÜBA-AR	<i>Türkiye Bilimler Akademisi Arkeoloji Dergisi</i> (Ankara)
UET	Ur Excavations Texts
VO	<i>Vicino Oriente</i> (Rome)
VS	Vorderasiatische Schriftdenkmäler der Museen zu Berlin (Berlin)

WAW	Writings from the Ancient World (Atlanta)
WO	<i>Die Welt des Orients</i> (Göttingen; Tübingen)
WSAWM	Why Sciences of the Ancient World Matter (Berlin)
WVDOG	Wissenschaftliche Veröffentlichungen der Deutschen Orient-Gesellschaft (Leipzig; Berlin)
WZKM	Wiener Zeitschrift für die Kunde des Morgenlandes (Vienna)
ZA	<i>Zeitschrift für Assyriologie und Vorderasiatische Archäologie</i> (Berlin; Munich)
ZAR	<i>Zeitschrift für altorientalische und biblische Rechtsgeschichte</i> (Wiesbaden)

ABBREVIATIONS FOR OLD ASSYRIAN CUNEIFORM TEXT PUBLICATIONS

AAA 1/3	Pinches, Theophilus G. 1908. "The Cappadocian Tablets Belonging to the Liverpool Institute of Archaeology." AAA 1:49–80.
Adana 237E	Matouš, Lubor. 1965. "Anatolische Feste nach kappadokischen Tafeln." Pages 175–82 in <i>Studies in Honor of Benno Landsberger on His Seventy-Fifth Birthday, April 21, 1965</i> . Edited by Hans Gustav Güterbock and Thorkild Jacobsen. AS 16. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
AKT 1	Bilgiç, Emin, Hüseyin Sever, Cahit Günbattı, and Sabahattin Bayram. 1990. <i>Ankara Kültepe Tabletleri</i> 1. TTKY 6/33. Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Basımevi.
AKT 2	Bilgiç, Emin, and Sabahattin Bayram. 1995. <i>Ankara Kültepe Tabletleri</i> 2. TTKY 6/33. Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Basımevi.
AKT 3	Bilgiç, Emin, and Cahit Günbattı. 1995. <i>Ankararer Kültepe-Texte</i> 3: <i>Texte der Grabungskampagne 1970</i> . FAOS 3. Stuttgart: Steiner.
AKT 4	Albayrak, İrfan. 2006. (<i>Ankara</i>) <i>Kültepe Tabletleri</i> 4: (<i>Kt o/k</i>). TTKY 6/33b. Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Basımevi.
AKT 5	Veenhof, Klaas R. 2010. (<i>Ankara</i>) <i>Kültepe Tabletleri</i> 5: (<i>Kt 92/k 188–263</i>). TTKY 6/33c. Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Basımevi.

- AKT 6a Larsen, Mogens Trolle. 2010. *The First Two Generations*. Vol. 1 of (*Ankara*) Kültepe Tabletleri 6a: *The Archive of the Šalim-Aššur Family*. TTKY 6/33d-a. Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Basımevi.
- AKT 6b Larsen, Mogens Trolle. 2013. *Ennam-Aššur*. Vol. 2 of (*Ankara*) Kültepe Tabletleri 6b: *The Archive of the Šalim-Aššur Family*. TTKY 6/33d-b. Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Basımevi.
- AKT 6c Larsen, Mogens Trolle. 2014. *Ali-ahum*. Vol. 3 of (*Ankara*) Kültepe Tabletleri 6c: *The Archive of the Šalim-Aššur Family*. TTKY 6/33d-c. Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Basımevi.
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- AKT 6e Larsen, Mogens Trolle. Forthcoming. *Anonymous Texts and Fragments*. Vol. 5 of (*Ankara*) Kültepe Tabletleri 6e: *The Archive of the Šalim-Aššur Family*. TTKY 6/33d-e. Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Basımevi.
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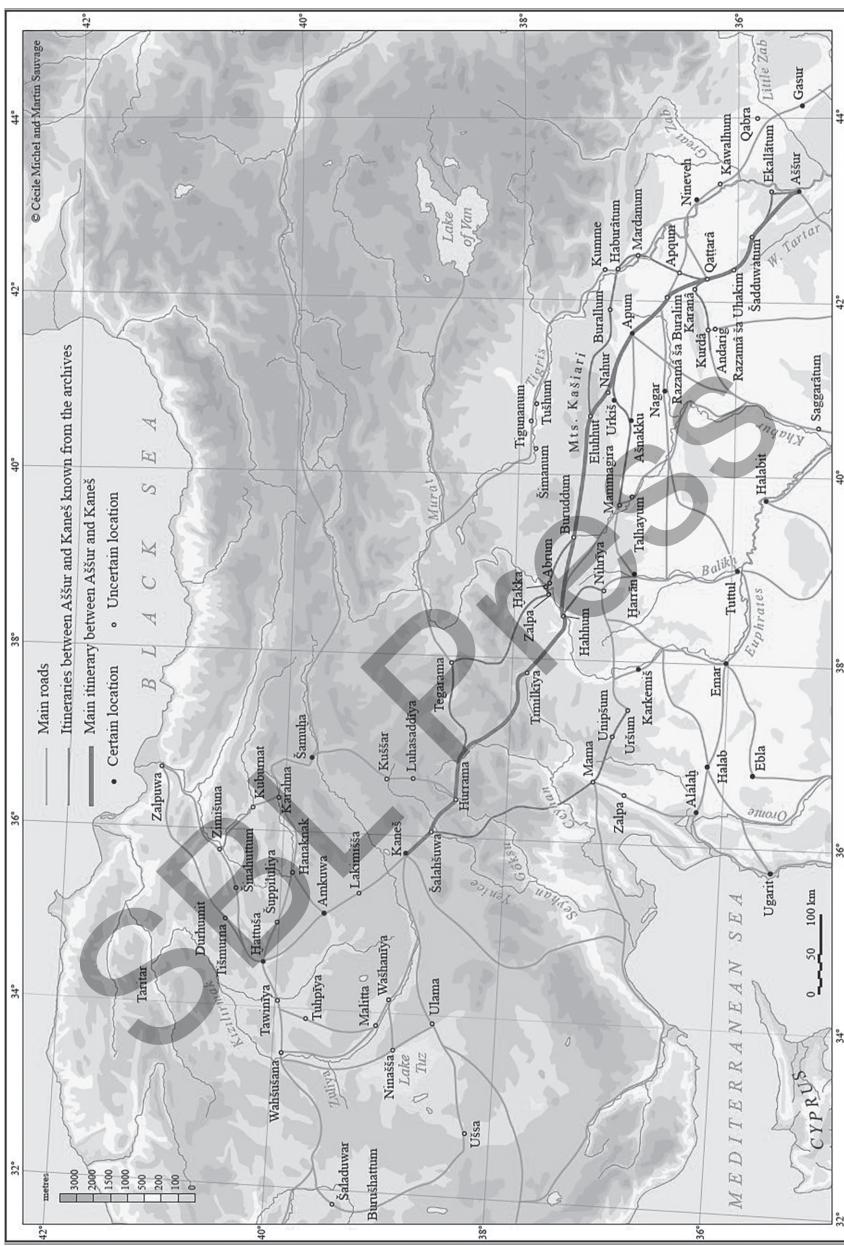
TRANSLATION CHOICES

- ālum* This word means “city,” and by default in Old Assyrian sources it represents “the city (of Aššur).”
- amtum* This word has two different meanings in Old Assyrian sources: “second wife” and “female slave”; its translation in individual texts depends on context.

- gubabtum* This word has been translated here as “consecrated woman,” but in Assyriological literature it is often translated as “priestess.” Since Old Assyrian sources do not document their cultic or religious activities, but only their economic activities, the chosen translation is in line with the data provided by the texts.
- kārum, bēt kārim* The word *kārum* is often translated as “colony” or “trading colony” by scholars; however this term is not satisfactory since it often evokes some kind of domination of a state over a foreign territory (Michel 2014a). In the Old Assyrian texts, the *kārum* refers both to the part of the town where merchants were established and the institution represented by the assembly of the merchants who administered that center, and which had an office and officials. There is no word or expression in English that fits this definition, unlike the French expression *comptoir commercial*. Thus, the Akkadian word is kept in the texts’ translations. In the commentary, the expression “commercial settlement” is used when referring to the area where merchants were established and carried out their activities.
- bēt kārim* This is the office from which the center was administered; it is here translated as “trade bureau.” Note that the building of the *bēt kārim* of Kaneš has not yet been identified.
- mātum* “The country” refers to Central Anatolia.
- ṣabātum* This verb is systematically translated by “to seize” in this volume, but it has a variety of meanings, including “to arrest,” “to convene (witnesses),” “to depose,” or “to question” to ascertain a legal fact.
- suhārtum* “(Young) girl,” often a member of the family.
- suhārum* “Boy,” “servant,” “employee.”

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Map of the Old Assyrian Period