

THE DAGGER OF ANITTA

TAHSİN ÖZGÜÇ

The important inscription on the Kültepe dagger, which was found during our excavations of 1954, has recently been published by KEMAL BALKAN¹. He states that the dagger was found in the burnt débris of a building which might have been a palace in view of its imposing architecture². His conclusion is now supported by the evidence obtained from our investigation of the area in 1955, where the dagger or spear-head was found.

This work revealed that the site of the burnt building was subsequently occupied by a structure of Megaron type with two architectural phases which belonged to Level I, the last phase of the Hittite period on the city mound³ (Fig.1). The stone walls of this later construction were found to have almost destroyed the mud-brick and white plastered walls of the second level building beneath it. This destruction was particularly noticeable in the south east corner of square N/38, where the dagger was discovered. In this area the mud-brick walls of the Level II building had disappeared except for part of its stone foundations. However, from this evidence and the well preserved line of the same wall beyond this square, which ran through square P-O/38 to N/38, it was possible to establish the original position of the destroyed section without any difficulty.

This clarification made it possible to establish the relationship of the dagger to the building. Apart from this the dagger, and the bronze vessel which was discovered with it, both showed clear signs of having suffered from a conflagration. The burnt débris in which they were found stretched across both the stone foundations, and the adjoining fragment of contemporary flooring, which still survived in square N/38. On examination the character of this burnt material associated with the bronze objects proved to be identical

¹ Kemal Balkan, *The Chronology of the Karum Kaniš* Ankara 1956, p. 78-79.

² Kemal Balkan, p. 78.

³ *Bulleten* 71, p. 399 and *Anatolian Studies*, Vol. IV, 1954, p. 19.

with that of the débris found elsewhere in the building. In addition the level of the fragment of flooring from square N/38 was identical with the continuation of the earthen floor of the second level building (Fig. 1). Thus, from all the assembled evidence, there can be no doubt that the dagger with inscription and the vessel belonged to the second level building in squares N, O, P, R/36, 37, 38, 39 and that they obviously suffered from the same conflagration.

Before the dagger had been cleaned (Fig.2) and the inscription deciphered (Fig.3), we had already described the Level II structure as a palace building in our news-reports⁴. Now the inscription on the dagger, *the Palace of Anitta, the King*⁵, is now also seem to fit the building very well. But, in spite of all this, *the Palace of Anitta, the King*, does not provide absolute proof that it is identical with the palace of Kültepe. It is still necessary to consider various problems raised by the discovery of the dagger. We must ask ourselves why and where from was the weapon brought to Kaniš, to this particular building. For instance, did Anitta come there from time to time in order to administer the affairs of this important city, from this palace? Again, does the dagger represent an item of tribute, or a present? For the moment we can only ponder these questions; but, at the same time, we cannot deny the important relationship between the inscription and the building in which the dagger was found.

In the light of our most up-to-date results we have now confirmed KEMAL BALKAN's statement that the dagger may be used to prove the building was a palace and that it belonged to Anitta⁶. On the other hand, it is not my business to pass judgement on the conflicting textual evidence which surrounds the enigmatic figure of Anitta. According to many scholars he is the subject of the oldest text written in Hittite, but at the same time he now appears as the possessor of a dagger engraved with an Akkadian inscription. Again, while he is mentioned in an Alişar text as *the Great Prince—rubâum rabium*⁷, he is also referred to in a Cappadocian tablet, which was

⁴ *Türk Tarih Kurumu Yıllık Raporu 1954, Ankara 1955, p. 16 and Anatolian Studies Vol. V, 1955, p. 18.*

⁵ Kemal Balkan, p. 78.

⁶ Kemal Balkan, p. 78.

⁷ Gelb, *Inscriptions from Alişar and Vicinity (OIP 27, p. 50).*

very probably unearthed at Kültepe, as the *Chief of the Escalier—rabi simmiltim*⁸ who stands at the side of his father, King Pithana.

In certain respects, however, the recent excavations at Kültepe may be said to have thrown new light on these controversial matters. In the first place, the discovery of the dagger confirms the information already supplied by the Alişar and Kültepe tablets that Anitta was a historic personality. Secondly, the discovery in 1955 of a series of Assyrian tablets, on the city mound, should also throw light on this dark-age⁹. The tablets were unearthed about eighty metres to the east of the place where the dagger was found, in a separate building of the second level, in the palace of the King of Kaniš. There is every hope, therefore, that their contents will make a most important contribution to our knowledge of early Anatolian history. In short, these tablets represent the most valuable discovery made at Kültepe up to the present time.

On account of its bent tang the Kültepe dagger belongs to the so-called *Cypriot type*. Except for the tip of its tang the dagger is complete, and in remarkably good preservation (Fig 2-3). It was cleaned by Mr. MUSTAFA TUTUŞ who is the technical expert of the Ankara Archaeological Museum. He confirmed that it was made of bronze.

In the present condition the total length of the dagger is 29.1 cm. The length of the blade from shoulder to point is 24.8 centimetres, while its width, at a point level with the upper slits, is 4.4 centimetres. Thus the tang is unusually short in proportion to the length of the blade. It is also unusually broad, measuring 2.1 at its widest point. The shoulders of the weapon are squared. The shape of the blade is slightly convex, and tapers from the shoulders to the point. There is no mid rib. Instead, each side of the blade shows three faces, the broad central one being flanked by two sharply bevelled edges. At the widest part of the blade two long rectangular slits are situated parallel with each other. Directly below them are two identical perforations which have been carefully closed by metal fillings. A possible explanation of this unique feature is that these lower holes were situated too far down the blade, and had to be replaced by the upper ones.

The inscription is situated on the lower half of the blade, on the left hand side. The moon symbol is placed parallel with the *A* and *ni* signs of Anitta's name.

⁸ *TC III*, 124 : 19 - 22 ; see Lewy in *RHA III*, 1934, 1-8. and Kemal Balkan, p. 45.

⁹ They will be published in one of the next issues of *Belleten* by Dr. Kemal Balkan.

The Kültepe dagger represents an example of the well known *Cypriot type*, whose development and distribution have been the subject of an extensive archaeological literature ¹⁰. The daggers and spearheads which come under this heading are all defined by their familiar bent tang, but their shape and form may vary considerably. Thus the Kültepe example has a very distinctive appearance, which differentiates it from the vast majority of this particular type. Its chief distinctions are that it has no mid-rib, a short and wide tang, four slits in the blade, and, of course, an engraved inscription.

Because the Kültepe specimen has three faces on each side of the blade it may be compared to the two daggers from Alacahöyük ¹¹, but, on the other hand, its sharp, angular shoulders give it a greater resemblance to the Gözlükule ¹² and Til-Barsib ¹³ examples, with which it also shares several other features. The last two daggers may owe their unusual appearance to a local specialization peculiar to Cilicia and North Syria in the Early Bronze Age. It appears therefore that the Kültepe dagger, which is the latest of all the *Cypriot* examples from Anatolia, Syria and Iran ¹⁴, is even isolated chronologically from its closest parallels. In addition it was impossible to find any sort of parallel for it among the many metal weapons recovered from karum Kaniš.

Lying beside the dagger we found a badly preserved vessel of bronze (Fig. 4). It was in such a condition that we could no longer determine whether or not it had had an inscription on it. The vessel has the unusual feature of spouts on opposite sides of its rim (Fig. 5). In level Ib at Kaniš karum we found that the same type, without spouts, had been produced in pottery ¹⁵. The illustrated reconstruction in the work of MAHMUT AKOK.

¹⁰ K. Bittel, *Prähistorische Forschung in Kleinasien, Istanbul 1934*, p. 52. and Claude F. A. Schaeffer, *Stratigraphie Comparée* p. 241.

¹¹ Remzi Oğuz Arık, *Alacahöyük Hafriyatı 1935, CCLXXIV ff.* and *Archäologischer Anzeiger 1940*, p. 115-116.

¹² *AJA 1940*, Fig. 19.

¹³ F. Thureau-Dangin et M. Dunan, *Til-Barsib* p. 107, pl. 30,2.

¹⁴ E. F. Schmidt, *Excavations at Tepe-Hissar, Damghan* p. 201, Pl. 51, H3855, H3242.

¹⁵ *Beleten 65*, p. 117, Fig. 21.