

## **BOTTLES AND NETBAGS – Some additional notes on the article about ‘Syrian bottles’ in ANATOLICA 31, 2005**

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In my article on so-called ‘Syrian Bottles’, published in ANATOLICA 31, 2005, I discussed one possible interpretation of rhombical ‘netbag’ designs, visible as relief decoration on some bottles from the Early Bronze Age occupation levels of Kültepe-Karum Kanesh, as providing a clue to how these vessels might have been wrapped or carried (Fig. 1)<sup>2</sup>.

Traces of such a rhombical ornament seem to be also visible on the famous golden bottle from treasure complex “A”, unearthed by Schliemann in the 19<sup>th</sup> century AD<sup>3</sup>. The contours of this design are marked by fine scratches, with an organic filling still preserved, and some parts are pronounced by low impressions. M. Treister et al. suggest likewise some functional purpose for these decoration traces, so as to attach some organic braiding or a netbag to carry the vessel<sup>4</sup>.

This feature not only links the locally manufactured golden derivative stylistically and chronologically with the ceramic bottles of Early Bronze Age Kanesh at Kayseri, it furthermore points to a distinctive vessel type known from the ‘Royal cemetery’ at Ur in Mesopotamia. From the ‘Royal Grave’ PG.337 comes a metal vessel – a “tierbalgförmiges Gefäß”, as M. Müller-Karpe named it – with interwoven metal wires attached to the body to form a wide spaced netbag for carrying or suspending the container (Fig. 2)<sup>5</sup>. The artefact can be dated securely to the Early Dynastic IIIa-period, to say approx. 2550-2400 BC, which predates or coincides with the chronology of the imported bottles in Anatolia and their local derivatives<sup>6</sup>.

Furthermore another fragment of a highly likely piriform bottle of ‘Syrian’ type made from greyish clay – a ‘classical’ metal vessel imitation – that was found at Acemhöyük near Aksaray in Central Anatolia can be included in our distribution list<sup>7</sup>.

These phenomena might yield some more evidence for an intense Mesopotamian impact on Anatolian artefact production in the developed third millennium BC. Though shedding some light on the discussion of Mesopotamian-Anatolian connections, the questions remains whether we are witnessing the presence of toreutic artisans of

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<sup>2</sup> Zimmermann 2005, 164; 168 Fig. 2,1.2.

<sup>3</sup> Antonova et al. 1996, 32.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.; Treister 2002, 249 f.

<sup>5</sup> Müller-Karpe 1993, 222; Taf. 137,1488; Treister 1993, 250; 240 Fig. 4.

<sup>6</sup> Cf. Zimmermann 2005, 164 f.

<sup>7</sup> Öztan 1989, 409; 418 Fig. 39; Pl. 124,5.

Mesopotamian origin in early Anatolian urban centres, satisfying ‘local demands’ through combining Mesopotamian metalworking skills with Anatolian fashion; or if we are dealing with local metalsmiths imitating Near Eastern style<sup>8</sup>.

## References

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<sup>8</sup> See Treister 2002, 250 for further discussion.



Fig. 1. 'Syrian bottle' with 'netbag' relief decoration from Kültepe, Kayseri (after Özgüç 1986) (Scale approx. 1:2).

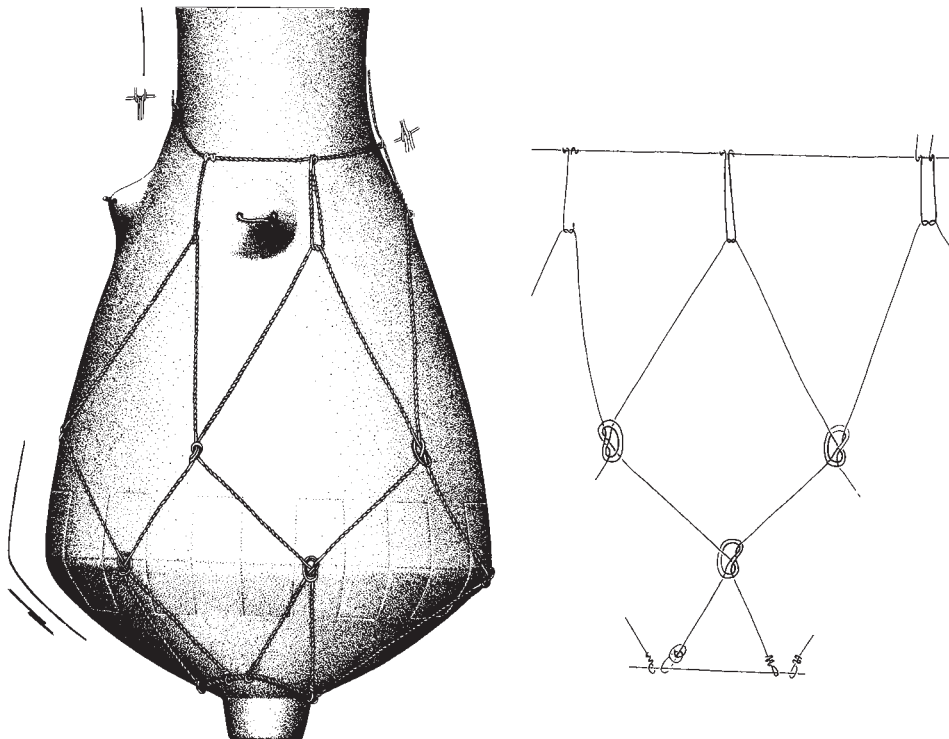


Fig. 2. A so-called "tierbalgförmiges Gefäß" from the Royal Cemetery of Ur, showing a 'netbag' of interwoven metal wires (after Müller-Karpe 1993) (Scale 2:5).