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Epithets and Iconographic Attributes of Kubaba in Syro-Anatolian Iron Age Sources

Abstract: The goddess Kubaba is one of the most attested deities of the Neo-Hittite pantheon, both in written and iconographic sources. The way that the goddess' name is written in Hieroglyphic Luwian inscriptions changes considerably depending on the texts, ranging from being written out in full to abbreviated forms. In these sources, divine names are preceded by the determinative logogram for "god" (DEUS): in the case of Kubaba, this sign is often followed only by the logogram AVIS, to be interpreted as a symbol of the (name of the) goddess itself. Moreover, Kubaba's name occurs in association with some distinctive epithets that highlight different aspects of the goddess. The iconography of Kubaba is also well attested. The characteristic attributes of the goddess are the pomegranate, an object traditionally interpreted as a mirror and a particular shape of headgear. Firstly, the present study aims to focus on the epithets of Kubaba. Secondly, the iconography of Kubaba will be investigated. Lastly, particular focus will be given to possible connections between epithets and iconographic attributes of the deity in order to investigate whether and how they contribute to constructing the divine figure of Kubaba.

1 Introduction

Scholars have devoted many studies to the goddess Kubaba. They have involved a variety of issues, but are mainly related to the nature of the deity, the spread of her cult and her connection with the Phrygian *matarkubileya* and the Greek goddess Kybele.

In fact, as is well known, the first testimonies of the existence of Kubaba date back to the 2nd millennium BCE¹ and some of them testify a connection between the goddess and the city of Karkemish. However, most of the evidence related to Kubaba dates back to the 1st millennium BCE, coming not only from Karkemish itself and other Syro-Anatolian states, but also from the Neo-Assyrian, as well as the Lydian empire. The debate involving the nature of Kubaba is extremely complex. It is indissolubly linked to the uncertainty surrounding the identifiability of one and the same deity in all written and iconographic sources, apparently connected to the goddess, which originate in contexts that are chronologically and geographically different.

¹ Hutter 2017, 114–115; Posani 2014, 549–551.

Leaving aside entangled questions such as those connected with the linguistic and historical relationship between Kubaba, the Phrygian *meter* and Greek Kybele,² this study focusses on investigating the epithets and iconographic attributes of the goddess that can be found in the Syro-Anatolian sources from the 1st millennium BCE.

After the collapse of the Hittite empire (first decades of the 12th century BCE), a number of potentates flourished in the area of south-eastern Anatolia and north-western Syria, consisting of small kingdoms with a fairly regional range. Their rise was probably due to the initiative of high-ranking people or families, in all likelihood descendants of Hittite dignitaries and officials, who took advantage of the vacuum of power left by the collapse of the centralised administration of Hatti to take power over territorially limited municipalities. These kingdoms were rife with multilingualism (Luwian, Aramaean, Phoenician) and cultural hybridity.³ Most of the evidence on Kubaba comes from this cultural and chronological milieu.

An attempt to recognise the characterisation of Kubaba based on a detailed analysis of all her epithets has not yet been undertaken, nor have considerations been developed on the possible links between the epithets of the goddess and her iconographic attributes.

Consequently, this study will first of all focus on the epithets of Kubaba, which occur in the first-millennium Syro-Anatolian texts. The available evidence, consisting of Hieroglyphic Luwian and Aramaic inscriptions, comes with details on the provenance and chronological attribution of the inscriptions (at least when these data are suitable), as well as the different types of text supports.

Secondly, we will investigate the iconography of Kubaba to identify elements that could be useful in order to better understand the characterisation of the goddess.

Lastly, particular focus will be placed on possible connections between textual and iconographic attributes of the deity in order to investigate whether, and if so how, they contribute to constructing the divine figure of Kubaba.

2 Epithets

First of all, it should be noted that the way of writing the name of the goddess in hieroglyphic Luwian inscriptions changes considerably depending on the texts and

² See Oreshko 2021. In the same article, Oreshko discusses the existence of a goddess whose name begins with the syllable *ku-*, attested in the western Anatolian inscription KARAKUYU/KARABEL, which is datable to between 1250 and 1150. In this inscription, the deity bears the title of MAGNUS. DOMINA (the title is discussed at the end of section 2 of this chapter). According to Oreshko, the name of this female deity might be *Kubanda-*, and it could represent a direct linguistic predecessor of Lydian *Kufaws* (140). On *Kubanda-* (*Kubanta-*) see also Oreshko 2013, 410–413; Garcia Trabazo 2017, 208–211; Garcia Trabazo 2019, 284–287.

³ Osborne 2021.

ranges from complete writing to abbreviated forms. A list of attestations of the goddess' name accompanied by an epithet is presented below.

2.1 Karkemish

KARKAMIŠ A23. Portal orthostat, from the area of the Great Staircase. Dated approximately to the 10th century BCE. The author of the inscription is king Katuwas, who claims the re-construction of a temple for Kubaba.

- §3 [. . .m]i[-i-sa]-*a DOMINUS-na-ni-sá (DEUS)ku+AVIS-pa-sa kar-ka-mi-si-za-sa(URBS) MAGNUS.DOMINA-sa₅+ra/i-sa “MANUS”-ti | PUGNUS-ta [me] my master⁴ Kubaba, Queen of Karkemish, raised by the hand
- §10 wa/i-tà-*a (DEUS)ku+AVIS-pa-na | kar-ka | | -mi-si-za-na(URBS) MAGNUS.DOMINA-sa₅+ra/i-na | POST-ni | SOLIUM-nu-wa/i-ha I re-established Kubaba, Queen of Karkemish

KARKAMIŠ A20a. Fragment, probably the pair with KARKAMIŠ A23.

- A20a1 §2 “PODIUM”-ma-tà-si-na (DEUS)ku-AVIS[. . . Kubaba of the Podium⁵

KARKAMIŠ A25a. Fragmentary text, presumably from the Lower Palace area, attributed to king Katuwas.

- §6: (DEUS)ku+AVIS-pa-ha kar-ka-mi-si-i-za(URBS) (MAGNUS.DOMINA)ha-su-sa₅+ra/i-[?] Kubaba, Queen of Karkemish

KARKAMIŠ A31. Basalt stele,⁶ found on the hill slope of the Karkemish citadel, datable to the middle of the 8th century BCE approximately. The back of the stele bears an inscription by Kamanis. The upper part of the stele, previously missing, was recently found in Afşin and brought to the Kahramanmaraş Museum.

4 Translation according to eDiAna (<http://www.ediana.gwi.uni-muenchen.de>), seen 2022.12.08.

5 “Of the precinct”: eDiAna (<http://www.ediana.gwi.uni-muenchen.de>), seen 2022.12.08.

6 See the section 4.1 devoted to the iconography, no. 3.

- §7 (DEUS)ku-AVIS-ia kar-ka-mi-si-zi(URBS) MAGNUS.DOMINA
Kubaba, Queen of Karkemish
- §15 CENTUM (DOMUS)ki-sà-ta+ra/i-sa (DEUS)ku-AVIS-sá
Kubaba of 100 Temples⁷

KARKAMIŠ A18e. Fragment of a monument of uncertain form, apparently a dedication to Kubaba; unclear provenance. Datable on the basis of epigraphic criteria to the reign of Kamanis or later.

- §6: |á-mi-sa DOMINUS-ni-sa (DEUS)ku-AVIS-pa-sá
my master⁸ Kubaba

The POTOROO inscription⁹ consists of eight small plaster plaques, which form the eight faces of an octagonal prism. They bear the inscription on one side. There is no information on its provenance, probably Karkemish or Kummuh. The inscription is approximately datable to the late 9th century BCE. The votive text is a dedication to Kubaba “of the Lawsuit”, an epithet not otherwise attested for this deity. Moreover, here the name of the goddess is unexpectedly written (DEUS)AVIS, whereas usually in inscriptions from Karkemish it is written (DEUS)ku+AVIS.¹⁰

- 2a 'za-a¹-sa |LIS-i-sa (DEUS)AVIS [. . .
this Kubaba of the Lawsuit [. . .
- 6b za-a-sa |LIS-si (DEUS)AVIS
this Kubaba of the Lawsuit

2.2 Kummuh

BOYBEYPINARI 1 and 2. The inscriptions BOYBEYPINARI 1 and 2 encircle two pairs of blocks, each pair originally forming a double podium. BOYBEYPINARI 1 represents the dedication of a throne and a table to the goddess Kubaba by Panamuwatis, wife of Suppiluliumas. BOYBEYPINARI 2 concerns the dedication of a statue of Kubaba by Panamuwatis and also the dedication of a throne and a table by her father, Azamis.

⁷ *kistar(a/i)*:- “(a religious installation)”: eDiAna (<http://www.ediana.gwi.uni-muenchen.de>), seen 2022.12.08.

⁸ Translation according to eDiAna (<http://www.ediana.gwi.uni-muenchen.de>), seen 2022.12.08.

⁹ Edition Hawkins 2010.

¹⁰ This leads Hawkins to suggest Commagene (Kummuh) as another possible area of provenance for the inscription: Hawkins 2010, 187.

The texts date back to Suppiluliumas' reign: he is probably to be identified as Ušpilulume king of Kummuh attested in Assyrian sources for the years 805 and 773 BCE.

- 1 §10 *á-lá/i-sá* [(DEUS)]AVIS
Lady (Queen) Kubaba
- 2 §1 *á-lá/i-na* DEUS.AVIS
Lady (Queen) Kubaba
- 2 §8a *á-lá/i* DEUS.AVIS
Lady (Queen) Kubaba
- 2 §10 (FEMINA)*á-lá/i-na* DEUS.AVIS
Lady (Queen) Kubaba
- 2 §20 *á-lá/i-sa* (DEUS)*ku*-AVIS
Lady (Queen) Kubaba

ANCOZ 1. Two fragments of a basalt basin. It is probably contemporary to the Boybey-pınarı blocks.

- §2 (FEMINA)*á-lá/i* (DEUS)*ku*+AVIS-*pa-pa*[. . .]
Lady (Queen) Kubaba

ANCOZ 5.¹¹ Damaged block, probably datable to the reign of Suppiluliumas.

- §1 (FEMINA)*á-lá/i-sa* (DEUS)AVIS-*sa*
Lady (Queen) Kubaba

ANCOZ 7. Block, completely surrounded by a one-line inscription. Datable to the reign of Suppiluliumas.

- §4 *á-lá/i* (DEUS)AVIS
Lady (Queen) Kubaba
- §9 *á-lá/i* (DEUS)AVIS
Lady (Queen) Kubaba

KÂHTA 1¹² is a fragment found in 2011, most likely originating from Ancoz.

- §1 ^r*á-lá/i* ([D]EUS.AVIS)*ku-pa-pa*¹³
Lady (Queen) Kubaba

¹¹ Edition Poetto 2010.

¹² Edition Simon 2014.

¹³ As noted by Simon, since (DEUS)AVIS+*ku-pa-pa* is not attested elsewhere, it seems more appropriate to transliterate this writing form as (DEUS.AVIS)*ku-pa-pa*: Simon 2014, 248.

2.3 Tabal

SULTANHAN is a long inscription which runs over the four sides and top of a large stele, placed on an inscribed rectangular base. The text is a dedication to Tarhunzas of the Vineyard by Sarwatiwaras, vassal of Wasusarmas. Since Wasusarmas is to be identified with Wassurme found in Assyrian sources, the inscription can be dated to 740–730 BCE approximately.

§32 |*ka+ra/i-mi-si-za-sa* | (DEUS)*ku-AVIS-pa-pa-sa*
Kubaba of Karkemish

2.4 Aramaean Bahadırli Inscription

An interesting occurrence is also found in the Aramaean inscription of Bahadırılı (*KAF*⁵ 278), even if it is datable to the 5th/4th centuries BCE. “This is the boundary/territory¹⁴ of *krbyl* and *kršy*, the city (cities?) which belongs (belong?) to Kubaba¹⁵ of *pwšd/r*, which is in Kastabalay. Whoever surrounds this boundary/territory in front of Kubaba of *pwšd/r*, or (any) other(?) man . . .”. The localisation of Kastabalay (Καστάβαλα in classical sources) is certain: the city sat near Bahadırılı, six kilometres south of Karatepe, in Cilicia.

The discussion surrounding this inscription primarily involves the identification of the toponyms, which are mentioned therein. As for *krbyl* and *kršy*, they have yet to be identified with any certainty. The city of *kršy* is likely to be identified with Kiršu, royal city of the kingdom of Pirindu. The city has been identified with the site of Meydancikkale.¹⁶

As for *pwšd/r*, according to Casabonne,¹⁷ one might suppose that the engraver made a mistake in writing *pwšd/r* instead of *pwrš*. The latter form would match the epithet found in a passage by Strabo¹⁸ referring to the existence, in Castabala, of a temple of the goddess “Artemis Perasia”.

¹⁴ According to the Dictionary of the North-West Semitic Inscriptions, the translation “Territory” seems more appropriated in this context: see Hoftijzer/Jongeling 1995, s.v. *thm*.

¹⁵ The name of the goddess presents, in this case, the female suffix *-h*.

¹⁶ Davesne *et al.* 1987; Casabonne 2005, 70; Forlanini 2017, 244–245, n. 69.

¹⁷ Casabonne 2015, 174. The suggestion proposed by the author is not widely accepted. In fact, Casabonne also mentions a different interpretation, offered by Lebrun, according to which “Perasia” would derive from Hittite/Luwian *parašši-* “reliance?”, which characterises the goddess Ishtar/Shushka “of the Promise”, later assimilated to Kubaba (Lebrun 1989, 87–88).

¹⁸ Str. 12.537.

One may also wonder if there might be a connection with any Hellenised forms of the name of the ancient Anatolian city of Pirwaššuwa.¹⁹ According to Forlanini,²⁰ Pirwassuwa may be connected to the land of Washaniya, which lay west of Kültepe. This localisation does not fit with the localisation of Castabala. Unfortunately, the obscurity regarding the toponyms referred to in the text and the uncertainty surrounding its chronological attribution makes it impossible to speculate any further.

2.5 Uncertain Provenance

GELB orthostat §4 . . .]-sa(URBS) (DEUS)ku-AVIS-sa
Kubaba of Karkemish²¹

2.6 Seals

The PORADA seal is a cylinder seal bearing a 3-word hieroglyphic inscription and 3 figures: a snake with the head of a stag, a human figure wearing Assyrian dress and holding a staff surmounted by a crescent.²² The name of the goddess follows that of the Storm-God Tarhunzas.²³

(DEUS)ku+AVIS *na-wa/i+ra/i-li-sa*
foreign Kubaba

¹⁹ Dupont-Sommer/Robert 1964, 14.

²⁰ Forlanini 2009, 56–57.

²¹ The epithet is partially restored, but the restoration can be considered established.

²² For a detailed description, see Kubala 2015, 32.

²³ Given the scarcity of details on the provenance of this seal, interpreting the epithet attributed here to Kubaba is quite impossible. The seal seems to be datable to the late 8th, even early part of the 7th century BCE. The translation of the adjective as “foreign” is offered by Hawkins in comparison with Cuneiform Luwian *niwaralli-*, “not-own, alien, hostile”, < Cuneiform Luwian-Hieroglyphic Luwian *wara(l)/i-*, “own, proper” (Hawkins 2000, 577). See also Bauer/Rieken 2022, s.v. */niwaralla/i-*. It is interesting that the meaning of this epithet, if the proposed translation is correct, seems to be exactly the opposite of the attribute of Kubaba found in Hdt., 5.102 (a passage devoted to the fire of Sardis and the temple of Kubaba), in which the goddess is referred to as ἐπιχωρῆς θεοῦ Κυβήβης “local goddess Kubaba” (see Posani 2014, 558). On this passage as referring to a Lydian deity which does not represent a borrowed cult of Kubaba in Lydia, see Oreshko 2021.

2.7 Other Epithets Associated with Kubaba

KARKAMIŠ A5a is a funerary inscription, apparently by a private person, incised on a tomb-stone in the shape of an altar from the Kubaba Temple in Karkemish. At §9, the Divine Lady of the Earth is mentioned together with the Sun-God. The title has been interpreted as an epithet of Kubaba.²⁴

§9	TERRA.DEUS.DOMINA Divine Lady of the Earth
§13	TERRA.DEUS.DOMINA Divine Lady of the Earth

The reference to the Earth obviously implies a chthonic characterisation²⁵ of the goddess, which to my knowledge has scarcely been explored so far.

Moreover, Giusfredi²⁶ examines the title MAGNUS.DOMINA (*hassusara/i-*),²⁷ attested three times in the MEHARDE inscription, and MAGNUS.FEMINA, attested in KIRÇOGLU in reference to the goddess Kubaba.

The MEHARDE inscription is a dedication of the stele to the Divine Queen of the Land by Taita (II?), king of Walistin/Palistin during the 10th (or first part of 9th) century BCE.

§1	DEUS.REGIO- <i>ni-sa</i> (MAGNUS.DOMINA) <i>ha-su-sa₅+ra/i-sa</i> the divine Queen of the Land
§6	DEUS.REGIO- <i>ni-si</i> (MAGNUS.DOMINA) <i>ha-su-sa₅+ra/i-sa</i> the divine Queen of the Land
§8	DEUS.REGIO- <i>ni-si</i> (MAGNUS.DOMINA) <i>ha-su-sa₅+ra/i-sa</i> the divine Queen of the Land

The KIRÇOGLU inscription is a dedication of the statue (now largely destroyed) to the Divine Queen of the Land, attributed to the second half of the 8th century BCE. It comes from the Amuq plain, namely from the same territory over which king Taita (II) reigned in the 10th century BCE.

²⁴ Giusfredi 2010, 115; Collins 2004, 89 n. 17; Hawkins 1981a, 147 n. 3. The logogram TERRA (L.201) expresses the word */taskwar(i)-*, “land” (eDiAna, <http://www.ediana.gwi.uni-muenchen.de>, seen 2022.12.08), also in its specific connotation as “earth, ground” (see Hawkins 2000, 184 §9, 635). In several attestations, the word is paired with */tippas-* “sky”. This element contributes, in my opinion, to supporting an interpretation of the title TERRA.DEUS.DOMINA as referring to a chthonic goddess. See recently Lovejoy/Matessi 2023, 119 on this topic.

²⁵ For a recent overview of the use of Ugaritic *'arš*, Akkadian *irsit* and Hebrew *'rš* meaning “nether-world”, see Garbati 2022, 130–131.

²⁶ Giusfredi 2008, 181–182.

²⁷ *hassusara(i)-*: eDiAna (<http://www.ediana.gwi.uni-muenchen.de>), seen 2022.12.08.

§2 (DEUS)REGIO-*ni-sa-na* MAGNUS.FEMINA-*sa₅+ra/i-i*
the divine Queen of the Land

During the Bronze age, Hittite human queens were referred to as MUNUS.LUGAL (besides *tawananna*). Already in the Hittite Empire period, however, the title MUNUS.LUGAL was also attributed to different city-goddesses.²⁸ In all likelihood, the double Sumerogram MUNUS.LUGAL expressed the Anatolian word **ḥaššušara*, “queen”.²⁹ From the 14th century BCE circa, the name of kings and queens, accompanied by their titles, started to be attested on royal seals written digraphically, in hieroglyphic script in the central field and in cuneiform script in the external ring(s).³⁰ On these seals, the title MAGNUS.DOMINA is the hieroglyphic Luwian translation of cuneiform MUNUS.LUGAL GAL. Because of this correspondence, the hieroglyphic form MAGNUS.DOMINA has been interpreted and translated as “Great Queen” by some scholars.³¹ A reading **šalli- ḥaššušara* “Great Queen” for the title MUNUS.LUGAL GAL is however not certain, because attestations with phonetic complements have not yet been found.³² In this contribution, I adopt the traditional translation of the title MAGNUS.DOMINA as “Queen”, mostly because its attested phonetic complementation offers the reading *ḥassusara/i*. This word in all likelihood consists of *ḥaššu*, “king” (Sumerian LUGAL), and the suffix *-sara*, which forms the morphological female construction both in Hittite and in Luwian.³³

Hutter-Braunsar³⁴ speculates about the possibility that the attribution of this title to Kubaba is connected with the role of Karkemish as the political heritage of Hatti after the collapse of the Hittite Empire.³⁵

3 Observations on Kubaba’s Epithets

As we have seen, the majority of attestations of epithets of Kubaba come from Karkemish and Kummuh. Among all the above-mentioned attestations, the written form of the goddess’ name changes considerably.

On the other hand, something constantly present in the writing of the divine name is the logogram AVIS (L.128). The question of the interpretation of AVIS as an ideographic element characterising Kubaba will be discussed in the Iconography section of this article.

28 Haas 1994, 921 s.v. *Ḥaššušara*.

29 Kloekhorst 2008 s.v. *ḥaššu*- “king”; HW² III Lieferung 17 s.v. **ḥaššušara*.

30 Herbordt *et al.* 2011.

31 See, for instance, Oreshko 2013, 381.

32 HW² III Lieferung 17 s.v. **ḥaššušara*-, 7. *ḥaššušara*-/MUNUS.LUGAL mit näherer Bestimmung.

33 Giusfredi 2008, 178.

34 Hutter-Braunsar 2015, 212.

35 On this topic, with reference to the role of the goddess Kubaba, see also Posani 2014.

Focusing on the epithets,³⁶ Kubaba – as is well known – is repeatedly qualified as MAGNUS.DOMINA (*hassusara/i-*) “Queen”.³⁷ This epithet is not attributed to goddesses other than Kubaba in hieroglyphic Luwian sources. Most of all, Kubaba is referred to as “Queen of Karkemish”, a connotation which establishes a strong connection between the goddess and the kingship over the important city on the Euphrates. This aspect is highlighted not only in the inscriptions from Karkemish, but also in the occurrence from Tabal and in the GELB orthostat (even if this last occurrence is restored).

The title */nann(i)-*³⁸ “master” is attested twice: in KARKAMIŠ A23 §3 and in the fragmentary inscription KARKAMIŠ A18e. In the first case, this epithet precedes and reinforces the more common title MAGNUS.DOMINA (*hassusara/i-*). The title *nann(i)-* as a divine epithet is not exclusively attributed to Kubaba. In fact, it occurs in association with different deities and groups of gods.

In the Kummuh area, the epithet *ala*³⁹ is omnipresent. According to Simon, the epithet that appears in the KÂHTA inscription might be connected with the Hurrian word *alla-* “Lady”.⁴⁰ Hutter⁴¹ has provided compelling evidence to confirm that *ala/i* or (FEMINA)*ala/i* are epithets of Kubaba, meaning “Lady” / “Queen”.⁴² Furthermore, the scholar argues that this form is a Hurrian epithet, frequently attested in the sources from the Empire period in association with the goddesses Shaushka, Ḫebat and also once with Piringir. According to Hutter, the epithet attested in the Kummuh area is a Hurrian loanword that is a good match with the title MAGNUS.DOMINA (*hassusara/i-*) characterising the goddess at Karkemish.⁴³

36 For an analysis of the epithets of gods in Luwian hieroglyphic inscriptions, see Hutter-Braunsar 2015. Hutter-Braunsar, following Hübner 2003, 183, analyses the epithets of gods by distinguishing them by category: geographic epithets, epithets expressing power, epithets indicating the functional area or the essence or a quality of the deity, names in genitive case.

37 For an in-depth discussion on the notion of divine sovereignty and its problematic nature, see Lebreton/Marano this volume.

38 See Payne/Bauer 2022, s.v. */nann(i)-/*.

39 The word was previously read as *ata* of uncertain meaning. Rieken and Yakubovich have proposed a new reading of the two signs L.319 and L.172 (*ta*₄ and *ta*₅) as *la/i* and *lá/í*, thus providing evidence for a reading of the present word as *á-lá/í*: Rieken/Yakubovich 2010, 203–204.

40 Simon 2014; de Martino/Giorgieri 2008, 65–67.

41 Hutter 2016.

42 Hutter 2016 conclusively discards the uncertain hypothesis of a syncretism between *ala/i-* and the Anatolian goddess Ala.

43 This title also matches with the title attested in the Bronze Age decree written in Akkadian (RŠ 17.146: PRU IV, 154–157) between the king of Karkemish Ini-Teshub (1270–1220 BCE *ca.*) and the king of Ugarit. The document is aimed at regulating the relationships between the two cities in case merchants in the service of the king of one city are killed when they are in the other city. Kubaba is invoked in the final section as a witness deity together with Adad of the Sky, Shamash of the Sky and two local goddesses. In this context, the goddess is referred to as *l^{da}bētu Ku-ba-ba bēlet māt.al.kar-gamiš* “Lady Kubaba, lady of the Land of Karkemish” (RŠ 17.146, *verso* 50: PRU IV, 157). See also Hawkins 1981b, 258.

Other epithets occur infrequently in some inscriptions from Karkemish: “of the Podium” (KARKAMIŠ A20a1), “of the Lawsuit” (POTOROO), “of 100 Temples” (KARKAMIŠ A31). The epithet “of the Podium” obviously refers to a sculpture, but the inscription is fragmentary and nothing more can be said about this title. “Of the Lawsuit” appears to be an interesting attribute inasmuch as it might be connected with the frequent curse formula involving different deities prosecuting the evildoer.⁴⁴ The same epithet occurs in association with the Sun-God in MARAŞ 1 §6 (restored occurrence).

The epithet “of 100 Temples” is hyperbolic and occurs in the anathemas section of the inscription KARKAMIŠ A31. In this text, Kubaba is the only deity invoked as prosecutor against the evildoer. One may wonder if the emphatic epithet may testify to a broad diffusion of religious installations of Kubaba. Only new archaeological discoveries could offer suitable data in this regard. Nevertheless, epithets such as “Karkemishaeen” or “of *pwsd/r*” can be interpreted as evidence for the existence of different local cults of the goddess.

The epithet found on the PORADA seal is worth analysing. The goddess is qualified here as “foreign”. Highlighting the foreignness of a deity with respect to the context in which the artefact is created is quite unusual. If this epithet is to be considered with hostile connotations, the seal could rather have the function of an amulet⁴⁵ guarding against potential terrifying or angry aspects of the goddess.⁴⁶

If, on the other hand, the “foreign” title refers to a goddess who is not local, one may suppose that the seal comes from an area where Kubaba was not a main deity. At present, it is impossible to verify this hypothesis.

There is a whole series of seals conventionally referred to as “Kubaba seals”, but unfortunately not one of them, except the PORADA seal, bears the epithets of the goddess.

4 Iconography of Kubaba

4.1 Iconographic Representations of the Goddess

A list of representations which can most likely be considered images of the goddess Kubaba is presented below.

⁴⁴ A similar concept was already found in documents dating back to the 2nd millennium BCE, from Anatolia and many other areas of the Ancient Near East: see Hawkins 2000, 418 M, §6/S, §7. In Posani 2021, I suggested a possible connection between the curse formulas involving deities, which prosecute the evildoer, and the existence of priests who can speak in a court on behalf of the deities. On this latter subject, see Sasseville 2018.

⁴⁵ See Mora 1990, 451; Kubala 2015, 11.

⁴⁶ Cf. the terrible aspect of Kubaba which, according to Oreshko, would be attested in BOYBEYPINARI 2 §20: Oreshko 2020, 363–364.

- 1) Fragmentary orthostat from the divine procession.⁴⁷ Long Wall of Sculptures. Karkemish. Suhis's II reign (10th century BCE).

The goddess holds a pomegranate in her right hand and wears headgear in the shape of a low cylinder adorned with rosettes and a horn from which a veil descends.⁴⁸ Her hair is in a pigtail.

- 2) Processional Entry, corner block. Karkemish. Katuwas's reign (late 10th century BCE). The goddess is shown in profile, sitting on a throne, resting on the back of a lion (Fig. 1). She holds a mirror in her right hand and a pomegranate in her left, a high *polos* crowns her head from which an Anatolian-type veil/cloak descends.



Fig. 1: Kubaba (Tayfun Bilgin, www.hittitemonuments.com, v. 1.75).

- 3) Stele. Karkemish. Around the middle of the 8th century BCE.

⁴⁷ Orthmann 1971, tafel 23 b Karkemis C/3.

⁴⁸ According to Brandl the goddess was represented seated: Brandl 2016, 55–56.

Black basalt stele, found on the hill slope of the Karkemish citadel. On the front, it features a high-relief statue of Kubaba, in a long pleated dress, wearing an elaborate necklace and breastplate. Her arms are bent at the chest and she may be holding a mirror in her left hand. At the base, there is a guilloche band. The figure is framed by a decorative border, not perfectly preserved. The head of the goddess, previously missing, was recently found in Afşin.⁴⁹ The goddess, who is depicted facing forwards, wears a crenelated crown over a band with rosettes. Two locks of hair fall on either side of her face.

4) Malatya stele. Late 10th century BCE.

Kubaba is shown in profile, resting on a throne on the back of a bull (Fig. 2).⁵⁰ In her right hand, she holds a mirror. From its *polos* decorated with scales, a veil descends



Fig. 2: Stele of Kubaba and Karhuhas (Tayfun Bilgin, www.hittitemonuments.com, v. 1.75).

⁴⁹ Marchetti/Peker 2018.

⁵⁰ Taracha suggests that the “switch” in animals evident in this relief (where Kubaba is seated on a bull and Karhuhas on a lion) depends not on the relationship of the animals with the deities, but rather with the winged sun-disk above them (Taracha 1987, 270). Collins suggests that the god-animal association was city-specific rather than deity-specific (Collins 2004, 90).

downwards. Her hair is in a pigtail. In front of the goddess, a Stag-God standing on a lion is depicted, carrying in his right hand a spear and in his left hand a 3-pronged object. Above both is a winged sun.

5) Orthostat from the divine procession.⁵¹ Outer Gate to the Citadel. Zincirli. Late 10th or early 9th century BCE.

The goddess is represented facing left. She holds a mirror in her left hand and wears a headdress adorned with rosettes and a horn, from which a zigzagged and decorated veil descends. Her hair is in a pigtail.⁵²

6) Ördekburnu stele.⁵³ Datable to around the late 9th or early 8th century BCE.

The goddess is represented seated, with flat-topped headgear (Fig. 3). A veil and a pigtail can be seen. The object in her right hand can be identified as a mirror.

7) Örtülü stele. 9th–8th century BCE.

The iconography (Fig. 4) is similar to that of Ördekburnu.

8) Zincirli B/3 orthostat⁵⁴ from the Outer Citadel Gate. Early 9th century BCE.

The iconography is similar to that of Ördekburnu.

51 Orthmann 1971, tafel 58 e Zincirli B/13b.

52 Brandl's suggestion to recognise an image of Kubaba in the second goddess represented in the procession of deities from Zincirli is consistent with his observations on the similarities between the divine procession of Zincirli and Karkemish. At the same time, however, I find it difficult not to consider the present depiction as a representation of a standing Kubaba, given the number of attributes which characterise her. As for the second deity, she is depicted sitting and wearing a *polos* and a long veil. Her hair is in a pigtail. She might be holding a mirror in her left hand (Brandl 2016, 54–55). According to Lovejoy/Matessi the goddess Kubaba is depicted twice in this sequence of orthostats (Lovejoy/Matessi 2023, 117).

53 On Ördekburnu stele, Örtülü stele and Zincirli B/3 orthostat I agree with Brandl's suggestion that they may represent the image of "Kubaba of Aram" (Brandl 2016). Thus, I include these figures among Kubaba's representations. Nevertheless, K. Lawson Younger has efficiently casted doubt on Brandl's attempt to identify these figures as representations of Kubaba (Younger 2020, 5). Consequently, the identification under discussion cannot be considered established with certainty yet. On the mention of Kubaba (without epithets) in the inscription on the Kutamuwa stele found in 2008 in the lower town of Sam'al, the capital city of the Aramaean kingdom of Yaudi, see Niehr this volume, with further bibliography. Concerning the writing of the name of the goddess in the Kutamuwa inscription, according to Pardee the final *-w* is quite unexplainable (Pardee 2009, 62). According to Masson Kubaba "conserve ici, comme ailleurs, son nom authentique (*kbbw/kbb-w*) : à défaut sans doute d'un équivalent satisfaisant dans le panthéon sémitique pour sa personnalité complexe" (Masson 2010, 53).

54 Orthmann 1971, tafel 57 c Zincirli B/3.



Fig. 3: Ördekburnu stele (Tayfun Bilgin, www.hittitemonuments.com, v. 1.75).



Fig. 4: Örtülü stele (Tayfun Bilgin, www.hittitemonuments.com, v. 1.75).

9) Bireçik orthostat.⁵⁵ 10th or 9th century BCE.

The goddess, who wears neither cloak nor veil, is represented facing right. She holds a mirror in her right hand and a pomegranate in her left hand and wears a high *polos*, which has one horn on the front and one on the back. A winged sun-disk shines above her head. Her hair is in a pigtail.

Representations dubiously associated to Kubaba.⁵⁶

1) Bas-relief from Karkemish.⁵⁷ Probably 8th century BCE.

The goddess depicted on this extremely damaged relief could be Kubaba. In fact, the headdress, the hairstyle and the seated position in profile are similar to the image of the goddess represented on the orthostat of the procession of deities from the Long Wall of Sculptures.

2) Stele from Domuztepe (Çambel/Özyar 2003, Tafel 228). Probably 9th century BCE.

The goddess wears a long robe and veil. Above her a winged sun disc is depicted. She holds a mirror in her left hand.

3) Gold cup from Hasanlı,⁵⁸ datable to the turn of the 1st millennium BCE.

It appears to have been imported from Syria. Behind the group of three daggers, a female image is represented, slumped on a lion, holding in her left hand a mirror and in the right, perhaps, a spindle: this figure has been identified as Kubaba.

4.2 Iconographic Attributes of Kubaba

4.2.1 Mirror

Bonatz 2000 (p. 82) offers a list of 12 Syro-Anatolian funerary monuments which feature a mirror, both in the hand of a female figure or as a free-standing object. The interpre-

⁵⁵ Orthmann 1971, tafel 5 c Birecik 1.

⁵⁶ About the female figure represented on the Meharde stele, it does not seem to be a portrayal of the goddess Kubaba. As discussed above, the epithet “Divine Queen of the Land” found in the text might refer to the goddess Kubaba, but the iconography of the figure, with hair dressed in Hathor volute, does not seem to offer sufficient clues to interpret the figure as a portrayal of Kubaba. It is noteworthy, however, that the figure is standing on a lion. The statue bearing the KIRÇOĞLU inscription is unfortunately very fragmentary. The figure wears a long-belted skirt, with four pleats at the back. Reference is made in the text to “1000 *parnasa*”, which recalls the epithet “of 100 Temples” found in KARKAMIŞ A31. This is, in any case, not enough to establish a connection between the two monuments. Similarly, I agree with Lanaro in considering the identification of the deity represented on the stele of Tavşantepe (TAVŞANTEPE 1) as Kubaba inconclusive (see Lanaro 2015). The seated female figure portrayed on the relief Ancuzköy 1 is too fragmentary to be interpreted as a depiction of Kubaba.

⁵⁷ Bossert 1942, 74, 220 fig. 868.

⁵⁸ Haas 1994, 527–528 and fig. 101.

tation of the symbolic value of the mirror is a very complex issue. Bonatz⁵⁹ offers some suggestions ranging from the field of beauty to that of the funerary practices to the exchange of prestige objects between Late Bronze Age kings and many others. In regard to the mirror as an attribute of Kubaba, I think that the interpretation of it being a symbol of beauty is to be discarded, notably because the goddess does not look at herself in the mirror but rather exhibits it. In my opinion, the funerary field might be a reasonable starting point for understanding the meaning of this enigmatic attribute of Kubaba within the framework of Syro-Anatolian Iron Age culture.

In this context, the mirror could have played a mediation role for connecting the world of the living with the world of the dead. Kubaba definitely had some chthonic characteristics as testified by the epithet *TERRA.DEUS.DOMINA* which features in the inscription *KARKAMIŠ A5a*, which has been interpreted as referring to the goddess. Moreover, Bonatz mentions a possible magic connection between the mirror and the soul, but unfortunately the scarcity of Syro-Anatolian sources prevents us from analysing this aspect in any depth. Conversely, the concepts of resemblance and similarity, mentioned by Bonatz as well, are in my opinion particularly suitable for analysing the mirror as an attribute of Kubaba. Bonatz examines the Akkadian words meaning “mirror”, namely *nāmaru* and *mašālum*, which derive from *amāru* “to see” and *mašālu* “be the same, be equal”. The Hittite and Luwian words for “mirror” are not known, but the concepts of “seeing” and “resembling” definitely arise as focal points in these cultures. The act of seeing is very well attested, also in its metaphoric value, and it strongly connotes the representation of the relationship between the king and the god.⁶⁰ Moreover, the eye itself may be considered the closest thing to a mirror that exists. The idea of “resembling” is less directly attested, but belongs to the Syro-Anatolian cultural context and features both in the iconography and in the texts. Hittite kings of the late Bronze Age, in fact, used to be portrayed with the features of their protective deity.⁶¹ Furthermore, even the reference to the parent-child relationship (which is also substantiated by similarity) is very present in the imagery and is used, once again, to represent the king-god relationship. I feel that this is the framework within which the symbolic value of Kubaba’s mirror is to be explored. The mirror can be interpreted as a means to connect the human world with a world “beyond”, that can be represented not only by the world of the dead,⁶² but also by the world of the gods.⁶³ Since the mirror creates duplicative relationships, it would

⁵⁹ Bonatz 2000, 82–85.

⁶⁰ See, for instance, the Hittite formulas according to which the gods look at the king, the queen and the land with benevolent eyes: see CHD *s.v.* *šakui-* 1 d 5' a'; 1 d 5' e. 2' *aššu-*.

⁶¹ De Martino 2010, 88–91.

⁶² For a discussion on classic literary passages connected with death lurking behind the mirror, see Frontisi-Ducroux/Vernant 1998, 147–153.

⁶³ In this area, the mirror also plays its role of mediation and meeting. Pausanias (8.37.7) narrates that in Lycosura, in Arcadia, in the temple of Despoina – which is famous, Pausanias refers, for its group of seated statues, which depicts the Despoina, in the company of Demeter (her mother) – “The Arcadians bring into the sanctuary the fruit of all cultivated trees except the pomegranate. On the

therefore have the purpose of reverberating the characteristics of the “queen” goddess on her earthly “substitute”, the king, who must exactly replicate the divine model. This concept of kingship, according to which the king is ultimately an earthly substitute for the deity, is broadly found within ancient Near Eastern cultures⁶⁴ (with the exception of Egypt) and implies that the king is the only representative of the deity on Earth.

Even textual images that connect a parental role to Kubaba can, in my opinion, be read in the same direction, considering the similarity-duplication link that children have with respect to their parents. In this regard, the following passage is worth mentioning: KARKAMIŠ A23 §3 “[me] my master Kubaba, Queen of Karkemish, raised by the hand”. This parental image clarifies that Kubaba acted as a guarantee of royal legitimacy. The following passages of the KARKAMIŠ A21 inscription are also worth mentioning: §10 “and she became (a) father to me”, §12 “and she watched over me like a child, adult . . .”. Even the embrace images found in the inscription KARKAMIŠ A21 aim, in my opinion, to provide a specific idea of kingship, according to which the king must act towards his subjects as the deity acts towards him, namely, he must act like “a mirror” of the goddess.⁶⁵

Furthermore, I feel that such a concept of kingship, expressed by the attribute of the mirror, fits well with the epithet of Kubaba as “queen”. In this regard, we find a clue in a depiction of the Neo-Assyrian queen Naqia, who is represented bringing a palm blossom to her nose. This gesture appears only in portrayals of kings.⁶⁶ This feature is therefore aimed to emphasise her exceptional *status* at court. Since she was a wife, mother and grandmother of three kings and had a huge influence in court, she could boast a royal attribute, such as the mirror that she holds in her left hand. The fact that a Neo-Assyrian queen is portrayed with the mirror of Kubaba confirms, in my opinion, that this attribute must be interpreted in the field of the symbology of kingship.

4.2.2 Pomegranate

Another iconographic attribute of the goddess is the pomegranate. J. Börker-Klähn⁶⁷ argues that in the Near East, as in the classical world, the pomegranate is to be interpreted as a symbol of life and fertility. The only divinity of Asia Minor that it is possi-

right as you go out of the temple there is a mirror fitted into the wall. If anyone looks into this mirror, he will see himself very dimly indeed or not at all, but the actual images of the gods and the throne can be seen quite clearly” (translation by Jones 1935). The effect had to be that of causing a sort of epiphany and the use of the adverb *ἐναργῶς*, “in all clarity”, is eloquent in this sense: the adjective *ἐναργής* in Homer denotes a divine apparition and qualifies the luminous splendor that envelops the deities when they manifest themselves to men, which in Mesopotamian culture is called *melammu*.

⁶⁴ Consider, for instance, the substitute role of Tammuz in the myth of Ishtar’s Descent into the Underworld: in the Mesopotamian world, the king essentially qualifies as the body of the goddess.

⁶⁵ Posani 2020; Posani 2021, 76–84.

⁶⁶ Bonatz 2000, 192 n. 72.

⁶⁷ Börker-Klähn 1971.

ble to connect with the pomegranate is Kubaba. The goddesses Juno Sancta and Juno Assyria Regina Dolichena represented a heritage, up to the Roman age, of the iconography of Kubaba in Asia Minor.

In Muthmann's monograph⁶⁸ on the symbolic meaning of the pomegranate in the ancient world, the fruit is mainly interpreted as a symbol of life in the artistic production of many Mediterranean cultures. According to Muthmann, it manifests its vital power right from its earliest appearance, which was on a vase from Uruk perhaps dating from the 4th millennium BCE. The vase depicts the tree of life producing pomegranate fruit.

The symbolism of the tree of life is extremely complex and runs through the entire history of the ancient Near East. In the Assyria of the second millennium, it would mainly represent the *summa*, the totality of divine powers. Furthermore, the pomegranate is loaded with symbolic value due to it being simultaneously one and many.

Even the king, especially when considered an earthly representative of the deity, is a sort of "one-all". In fact, being the main representative of the priests, the army and the administration, he combines many functions. Then, the pomegranate might rightly be an attribute characteristic of the deity who protects and guarantees the king, namely the one who sublimates and combines all functions in himself.⁶⁹

4.2.3 Headgear

Kubaba's headdress is also worth a brief discussion. In the Hittite world, deities were identified by pointed headdresses, equipped with horns and, sometimes, with semi-ellipses, the number of which was proportional to the hierarchy of importance of the gods represented. Kubaba never wears a pointed cap: instead, she wears a Syrian-style headdress, in the shape of a truncated cone or a low cylinder. It resembles a crown and can have horizontal and vertical subdivisions. Decorative motifs are represented in the sections created.

Thus, the shape of the headdress confirms the Syrian origin of the goddess. Moreover, this kind of *polos* seems to be an attribute qualifying poliad deities. As the protective goddess of Karkemish, Kubaba might well be expected to wear such an attribute.

4.2.4 Lion

The value of the lion as a symbol of kingship is widely diffused. Given that the lion is found in association with a number of different deities, both male and female, I as-

⁶⁸ Muthmann 1982.

⁶⁹ In an interesting document from the Neo-Assyrian age, the prophecy of Mullissu-katbat for Ashurbanipal, the goddess Mullissu / Ishtar of Arbela says: "I will put you between my breasts like a pomegranate" (Parpola 1997, 39, r. 8). In Parpola's opinion the text might refer to a pomegranate-shaped pendant that adorned the goddess' neck.

sume that it is not a symbol specific to Kubaba. As argued by Collins, rather than defining Kubaba's nature, the lion might be interpreted as a symbol of the city of Karkemish and its king. As city-goddess of Karkemish, Kubaba might be expected to be depicted with the lion.⁷⁰

4.2.5 Bird

Finally, one has to consider the presence of the sign AVIS within the name of the goddess. A. Payne has recently devoted a study to this specific topic.⁷¹ AVIS can either follow the syllabogram *ku* – without syllabic value – or completely replace the name of the goddess, expressly acting as a logogram representing Kubaba.⁷² The logogram AVIS (L.128) had different syllabic readings.⁷³ Goedegebuure (2019) has proposed the new value *wa_x* for the sign AVIS, which should be acrophonically derived from the word *wattai-*, “bird” (Sumerian MUŠEN). Goedegebuure offers many clues to this reading.⁷⁴ Interpreting a bird as an animal representation of Kubaba matches some curse formulas in which the goddess is invoked to “harass” somebody or to “eat up his eyes and feet”,⁷⁵ especially if one specifically identifies the bird as a bird of prey. The nature of the bird representing Kubaba is not actually clear. The bird depicted in the GULBENKIAN seal has been interpreted as an eagle.⁷⁶ In this seal, the name of the goddess is not accompanied by epithets, but the fact that it is written like a rebus: AVIS (DEUS)*ku*, is noteworthy. The eagle is also broadly linked to the imagery of kingship in the Hittite world.⁷⁷ One may wonder whether the eagle-like bird representing Kubaba might be connected with the Hittite tradition, according to which the king has the eyes of an eagle and sees like an eagle.⁷⁸ Obviously, it is not possible to establish this connection with any degree of certainty at the moment. The link with the bird might also involve the augurs' rituals. The technique used by the augur consisted in observing the flight of a bird⁷⁹ in order to obtain an answer from the gods concerning unresolved problems. However, the written evidence does not offer any clues to help us establish this kind of connection. What one can retain is that, while the lion is an attribute of the goddess, the bird can be considered her animal representation. A. Payne proposes that the bird

⁷⁰ On the animals' “switch” on the Malatya stele, see above.

⁷¹ Payne 2023.

⁷² Exceptions to these writing forms are found in the GULBENKIAN seal and KÂHTA inscription (on the latter see above).

⁷³ Goedegebuure 2019; Simon 2019.

⁷⁴ Goedegebuure 2019.

⁷⁵ Oreshko 2021, 143.

⁷⁶ Lambert 1979, 32 no. 106; Hawkins 2000, 580.

⁷⁷ Collins 2004.

⁷⁸ For a discussion, see Collins 2004, 86–88 with textual references.

⁷⁹ Bawanypeck 2005; Hutter 2003, 258–259.

sign is to be understood as meta-writing. As such, it acts as a visual meta-discourse showing the domain of the goddess Kubaba as “Mistress of Wild Animals”.⁸⁰ This would not be an isolated case in the Luwian culture, since the name of the god Runtiyas / Karhuhas is also expressed by a logogram depicting a stag.⁸¹ Moreover, the iconographic motif of the bird appears in many Syro-Anatolian reliefs. I wonder whether, in some cases, it might represent Kubaba. Some images are, in my opinion, worth considering.

The first is the image of a bird represented above the staff in the hands of Kamanis’ younger brother (Fig. 5), depicted on the basalt slab which bears the inscription KARKAMIŠ A7c-i (end of the 9th / first half of the 8th century BCE). This inscription consists of a series of epigraphs to the images of the orthostatic cycle which accompanies the inscriptions KARKAMIŠ A6 and A7.



Fig. 5: Royal children (Tayfun Bilgin, www.hittitemonuments.com, v. 1.75).

As Gilibert⁸² observes, at Karkemish, a bird of prey was the animal symbol of the goddess Kubaba, and the silhouette of the bird above the young boy’s staff closely reproduces the Hieroglyphic Luwian logogram used to express Kubaba’s name. The scholar also notes that

⁸⁰ Payne 2023, 249–250.

⁸¹ (DEUS)CERVUS₍₂₎.

⁸² Gilibert 2022, 14.

a cylinder seal⁸³ found nearby proves the existence of a symbolic assemblage consisting of a bird perched on a staff which was probably a locally revered insignia of Kubaba. In the inscription KARKAMIŠ A6 §§20–22, in fact, Kubaba is involved in an oath formula connected to the growth of the children, brothers of Kamanis. The image described of the bird depicted above the staff could then in some way represent an epiphany of the goddess.

The second is the bird represented on the stele D/4 from Maraş,⁸⁴ which bears the inscription MARAŞ 9 (first or second half of the 8th century BCE). Here, a young boy held in the lap of a woman (his mother) holds a leash with a bird perched in his left hand. Below the bird, there is the image of a hinged writing-board fastened with a cord. The boy holds a stylus in his right hand. The text is an epigraph⁸⁵ recording the name of the boy: Tarhupiyas.

On stele B/19 from Maraş⁸⁶ (second half of the 10th / beginning of the 9th century BCE), a woman holding a child is depicted. She holds a mirror in her right hand and in her left hand a lyre, upon which a bird is perched.

On stele B/12 from Maraş⁸⁷ (uncertain date), which represents a sitting woman with a child standing opposite her at a table, the child is holding a bird.

On the small fragment B/21 from Maraş,⁸⁸ a sitting woman and a child holding a bird are depicted.

These images have some common features: they are conceived as representations of children. These children are associated with a bird. Turning to textual evidence, in KARKAMIŠ A21 §§11–12, Kubaba also seems to protect the king (Astirus II) throughout his entire life, right from his childhood. Thus, the goddess seems to have features that connect her with rearing royal children. The children depicted on the reliefs from Maraş perhaps do not belong to the royal family, but they certainly belong to high-ranking families.⁸⁹ These reliefs may then represent young nobles who were supposed to grow up under the protection of Kubaba. In my opinion, this characterisation of Kubaba as a goddess who cares for the growth of children fits well with written evidence. Therefore, the birds represented on the Maraş reliefs can be seen as an expression of her divine figure as well. The funerary stele Maraş B/19 mentioned above is the only relief which combines the symbolic value of mirror and bird. The young figure here could seem to be interpreted as a female child, but this is not the main point. What is notable, in my opinion, is that the figurative apparatus implies an association of two main characterisations of Kubaba, namely as protective deity of children and also as chthonic goddess.

⁸³ Woolley/Barnett 1952, fig. 75.

⁸⁴ Orthmann 1971, tafel 48 d Maraş D/4.

⁸⁵ The epigraph was probably added later: Hawkins 2000, 274.

⁸⁶ Orthmann 1971, tafel 46 d Maraş B/19.

⁸⁷ Orthmann 1971, tafel 45 b Maraş B/12.

⁸⁸ Orthmann 1971, tafel 46 f Maraş B/21.

⁸⁹ See also Gilibert 2022, 12. For a connection of the abovementioned reliefs with the practise of falconry, see Canby 2002, 176.

5 Conclusion

As noted above, the majority of epithets of Kubaba are attested in inscriptions from Karkemish and Kummuh. They provide evidence for establishing a characterisation of the goddess as a protective deity of Karkemish, her figure being deeply linked to the kingship of the city. Moreover, textual evidence suggests the existence of different local cults of the goddess. In the Kummuh area, she is repeatedly qualified as “Lady (Queen)”. The analysis has highlighted, in addition, a chthonic characterisation of Kubaba. This element is also highlighted by the analysis of her iconographic attributes, with special reference to the mirror, considered to be a tool for connecting the human world with the world of the dead and the gods. As such, the mirror has a chthonic connotation. Moreover, with regard to this attribute, an interpretation related to the conceptual field of “resembling” has been suggested. The idea of “duplicating, being equal” is found in Neo-Hittite texts and offers a cultural background consistent with such an interpretation, which further emphasises the role of Kubaba as a goddess connected with kingship and the growth of young princes. The metaphorical world, which involves the relationship between the goddess and the king, as if related by a parental bond, might be interpreted accordingly. As for the pomegranate, a connection with the figure and the role of the king has been also suggested, while the particular shape of the headgear worn by Kubaba testifies the Syrian origin of the deity. In terms of her animal attributes, the lion does not seem to be a specific symbol of Kubaba. Conversely, particular focus has been placed on the AVIS sign, which is always present within the name of the goddess. The hypothesis that the bird could be an animal representation of Kubaba has been formulated. Accordingly, the presence of the bird motif among Neo-Hittite funerary reliefs has been explored. As a result, a link between the presence of the bird and representations involving the growth of noble children has been suggested, based particularly on the analysis of reliefs from Maraş.

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