

Alter Orient und Altes Testament

Band 440

What's in a Name?

Terminology related to the Work Force
and Job Categories in the Ancient Near East

Edited by
Agnès Garcia-Ventura



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Veröffentlichungen zur Kultur und Geschichte des Alten Orients
und des Alten Testaments

Band 440

Herausgeber

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Agnès Garcia-Ventura

2018
Ugarit-Verlag
Münster

Thoroughly refereed

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Alter Orient und Altes Testament 440

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www.ugarit-verlag.com

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Printed in Germany

ISBN 978-3-86835-212-2

ISSN 0931-4296

Printed on acid-free paper

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Craftsmen in the Neo-Assyrian Empire

Melanie Groß¹

Brewer, confectioner, sons of the cupbearer, cartwright, architect, scribe, smith, goldsmith, coppersmith, engraver, priest, temple-enterer, bow-maker, weaver, fuller, sash-weaver, tanner of coloured leather, firewood man, gaddāiu, oxherd, fowl-herd, milk man, cook, dishwasher, fowler, boatman, reed-worker, prostitute, son of the female palace slave, farmer, beer man, gardener, vegetable gardener, donkey-driver, horse trainer, lower garment man, alum man, merchant, messenger, palace manager, overseer of the royal tombs, (...) (SAA 12 83: r. 3–17)

This large work force was entrusted to Nergal-āpil-kūmū'a, the official in charge of the ambitious building projects in the new capital of Kalḫu in the reign of Assurnāṣirpal II.² While this list may seem long, it is actually far from exhaustive. The textual records of the Neo-Assyrian period (ca. 934–612 BC) present a unique corpus for the study of officials, professionals and workers, revealing a seemingly infinite range of professional designations, pertaining to managers, secretaries, scholars, clerics, artists, craftsmen, traders, agricultural workers and armed forces.

Assyria's diverse labour force was embedded in a complex system of overlapping spheres and household domains. Like every inhabitant of Assyria, each professional was first of all accountable to the king and a subject of the state. In addition, he or she could be employed on a provincial and municipal level or assigned to specific palaces and temples. Others again belonged to the personal households of the king, his immediate relatives and his officials. Moreover, it has been shown that in addition to the well-documented public sector, a considerable number of professionals and workers was employed in the private sector (Postgate 1987; Radner 2007b).

¹ Leiden University, Institute for Area Studies. This study has been funded by the IAP VII "Greater Mesopotamia. Reconstruction of its Environment and History" and by the ERC-CoG-2015 – ERC Consolidator Grant Project "Persia and Babylonia" (ID 682241). I am most grateful to Jennifer Sarha for proof-reading my English and to Bastian Still who gave me helpful comments and suggestions. The remaining errors are mine. Abbreviations are according to PNA 3/II = Baker, H. D. (2011) (ed.), *The Prosopography of the Neo-Assyrian Empire, Volume 3, Part II: Š–Z*, The Neo-Assyrian Text Corpus Project, Helsinki.

² The edict concerning the appointment of Nergal-āpil-kūmū'a is passed on to us through three fragmentary exemplars written on stone and clay from Nineveh and Kalḫu (SAA 12 82–84).

While some professional groups, such as scholars (e.g. Parpola 1993: XIII–XXVII; Radner 2009) and military troops (e.g. Deszö 2012), have been studied in some detail, others have been left largely untouched. This also pertains to the group of people whose skills were used to give physical shape to the Assyrian Empire and keep it in good repair, i.e. craftsmen. One of the earliest studies dealing with craftsmen in Assyria is Postgate 1979. This article, which is mainly concerned with the economic structure of the Assyrian Empire at large, also considers the available manpower and provides a brief discussion about the craftsmen and their cohorts. This group of professionals is treated again in Postgate 1987, which presents a general investigation of the different types of employment and labour in Assyria. In more recent times Radner (2007b and 2015) has built on Postgate's considerations and, thanks to new textual material, has been able to examine hired work, a type of employment that also applied to some craftsmen, e.g. goldsmiths. The latter have been studied in great detail by Radner (1999a). In her monograph, Radner edited the texts from the archive of the goldsmiths in Assur and studied their contents from a social-economic perspective, addressing topics such as their family organisation and business life. No comparable investigation for other types of craftsmen has been undertaken so far.³

This paper, which draws heavily on my study on the personnel of the Neo-Assyrian royal household,⁴ examines the craftsmen as one distinct group within the wide and diverse range of professionals active in the Neo-Assyrian Empire. For the sake of convenience they will be divided into the following three categories:

- (1) craftsmen processing raw materials
- (2) craftsmen processing leather, wool and textiles
- (3) craftsmen processing food

In this contribution, I will start by looking into the meaning and usage of the two generic terms *ummânu* and *kitkittû* referring to craftsmen. Then I will give a comprehensive overview of the various specialised craftsmen and investigate the linguistic characteristics and the semantic information captured in their titles, which will be summarised in tabulated form. This will be followed by an overview of their organisation and integration into the institutional households of the palace and the temple, which are crucial aspects for understanding the social status as well as the work conditions of these skilled labourers. My study hopes to contribute to a more sophisticated understanding of the dynamics within the artisanal sector of Assyrian society and to provide new insights into the embeddedness of craftsmen in the complex networks of households. Chronologically, the focus will be on the final ca. 150 years of the Assyrian Empire (744–612

³ Note, however, Fales' (1997) brief discussion about professionals and their family organisation in Assur and Gaspa's (2013: 229–235) discussion about weavers and other professions related to the production and the processing of textiles in the Neo-Assyrian Empire. See also Baker 2016. This article could not be included for the present investigation.

⁴ This forthcoming monograph is based on my PhD thesis (defended in Vienna in September 2014), which contains a comprehensive collection of references to Assyrian craftsmen. Note also the index of professionals attested in the Neo-Assyrian sources along with a personal name (Baker 2017).

BC), a period which is exceptionally well documented for our purpose. While this study will draw primarily on everyday documents (legal records, administrative documents and letters), relevant information can also be found in other text groups such as royal inscriptions and lexical lists. The majority of these records emerge from palaces (in Nineveh and Kalḫu), but also private archives (from Assur) provide some valuable information.

1. Generic Terms for Craftsmen

The Neo-Assyrian sources reveal the existence of two terms that were used to refer to craftsmen in a more general sense: *ummānu* (or *mār ummāni*) and *kitkittū* (or *mār kitkittē*). Both have been addressed briefly by Renger (1996: 217) in his overview study of Mesopotamian craftsmen, in connection with Early Dynastic, Ur III and Old Babylonian texts. In the following, we shall take a brief look at the etymology of the two designations and investigate their use and meaning in the Neo-Assyrian text corpus.

1.1. The Experts: *ummānu*

In Neo-Assyrian documentation skilled workers are sometimes referred to as *ummānu* (*ummiānu*). Written syllabically or with the logogram (LÚ.)JUM.ME. A,⁵ *ummānu* is to be distinguished from the word *ummānu*, which is written with the logogram (LÚ.)ERÍN and denotes “military force”, “work force” or even “populace” in general.⁶ The term bears in itself different connotations, ranging from simple “expert” to “scholar” and “craftsman or artisan” (cf. *HAD* 129 s.v. *ummānu*). Notwithstanding its somewhat ambiguous meaning, when taking into account the context in which the term occurs, we can identify a number of instances in which *ummānu* (or *mār ummāni*) clearly refers to craftsmen or artisans.⁷

Let us begin with a well-known account of Esarhaddon concerning his renovation project of Babylon’s temple complex. The king tells us that he initiated a query to the gods in order to determine the right workshop (*bēt mumme*) and the appropriate crew of *mārī ummāni* for manufacturing divine statues for the Babylonian sanctuaries which had been destroyed by his predecessor. The query states that Šamaš and Adad singled out the workshop in Assur and the *ummānus* to execute the work and enter the secret place. Esarhaddon then specifies who exactly were referred to as *ummānus* in this context, enumerating carpenters, goldsmiths, metal-workers and stonecutters (*RINAP* 4 48: r. 61–82). The connection between *ummānu* and the refurbishment of Babylonian sanctuaries as well as the manufacture of divine statues is also found in some letters sent to Esarhaddon (*SAA* 10 354 and 368). Another context in which *ummānus* were being employed for the creation of lion column-bases (*SAA* 1 66) and other monumen-

⁵ Deriving from UMU, = “wise or skillful teacher”, and also related to UMÚN, which *inter alia* stands for “knowledge”, “school”, and “workshop”; see Halloran 2006: 298.

⁶ *CAD* U/W 102–108 s.v. *ummānu* A and *CAD* U/W 111–115 s.v. *ummānu* 2. For a brief description see also Deszö 2012 (Volume 1): 57–58.

⁷ For the scholars (or rather scribes) referred to as *ummānu* see Verderame in this volume.

tal building works (*SAA* 1 179 and 15 280) was the establishment of Dur-Šarrukin by Sargon II. In the latter two letters the *ummānus* were being specified as carpenters and potters. Finally, the professionals listed in the aforementioned edict of Nergal-āpil-kūmū'a are summarised as Assyrian experts (*ummānu Aššurāia*), enterers (*ēribtu*) and performers of corvée-work (*ālik ilki*).⁸ Although not the entire workforce listed here consisted of expert craftsmen, but apparently also involved unskilled and temporarily employed labourers (*ālik ilki*),⁹ this text suggests that a wider range of professionals could occasionally be referred to as *ummānu*.¹⁰

A similar categorisation can be found in the annals of Sargon (Fuchs 1994: 154, Ann. 311–312). The passage tells us that “temple-enterers” (*ēribūt bēti*), craftsmen (*ummānu*), experts (*mūdē šipri*) and military leaders (*ālikūt pāni*) presented cultic leftovers to the king. Of particular interest here is the designation *mūdē šipri*, literally meaning “those who know the work”. This can probably be understood as an apposition to *ummānu*, i.e. “artisans, who know their craft”, which is clearly the case in an inscription of Sargon about his renovations in Babylon.¹¹ According to yet another inscription of this king, Assyrians, “experts in everything” (*mūdūt īni kalama*), were appointed as supervisors (*aklu*) and leaders (*šāpiru*) in the building projects at Dur-Šarrukin (Fuchs 1994: 72, Stier 95–97).¹² Similarly, the skilled men who have been selected to refashion Babylon’s divine statues by Esarhaddon are described as “skilled craftsmen, who know the secret(s) (lore)”.¹³

Another significant term for specifying artisans and stressing their high degree of expertise is the adjective *lē'ū* (“skilled”) together with the corresponding noun *lē'ūtu* (“skill”). While Esarhaddon’s inscription (*RINAP* 4 48) demonstrates an unambiguous usage of *lē'ū* for artisans, this term (as well as the verbal

⁸ *SAA* 12 82: 9'–11', r. 4 and 83: r. 23.

⁹ The “enterers”, for their part, may either denote additional professionals from abroad who “entered” Assyria or professionals who were allowed to enter the Assyrian institutions (in Kalḫu). For the latter note in particular the “temple-enterers”, *ērib-bēt(-ili)*, which are a well-known part of the urban society (e.g. *SAA* 13 128: 12), especially in Babylonia (e.g. *SAA* 13 4: 3 and 5: 3), where they occupied the highest echelons of the local civic and religious institutions (Waerzeggers 2010: 65–76). “Palace enterers” are only attested once in the treaty of Zakūtu (*SAA* 2 8: 8) and may also be referred to by *ēribūte* in a letter to the palace manager (*SAA* 16 50: r. 1); for a discussion see Groß forthcoming.

¹⁰ There is possibly also an administrative document which summarises various different professionals as *ummānu*: ND 2728+ from Kalḫu enumerates brewers, oil-pressers, fowlers, fowl-herds, merchants, camel drivers, potters, horse grooms, cartwrights, architects, wagon makers, tanners, tailors and weavers on its reverse (ND 2728+ r. 1'–16'). This list then possibly concludes with “[sum of x] additional [skilled m]en [...] who they have added” (ND 2728+ l.e. 1–2: [PAB x LÚ.um.ma]-ni tar-di-tú 'x x'-sa [ša x x x] 'ū'-ra-du-u-ni); see Parker 1961: 46, Plate XIV.

¹¹ *RIMB* 2 B.6.22.3 ii 2: UM.ME.A 'mu'-de-e šip-ri.

¹² *aklu* and *šāpiru* are common terms in Babylonia, but occur only rarely in the Neo-Assyrian corpus, in fact especially in records written in the (Standard) Babylonian language (such as the inscriptions and the letters).

¹³ *RINAP* 4 48: r. 81: DUMU.'MEŠ' um-ma-a-ni le-'u-u-ti mu-de-e pi-riš-ti.

form *la'û*) occurs especially in connection with *ummânu* when denoting well versed scholars rather than skilled craftsmen.¹⁴ A less-frequently used synonym of *lê'û* seems to be the Babylonian term *enqû*. Having the general meaning “skilled”, it is occasionally used to qualify artisans (*ummânu*) (*RIMB* 2 B.6.32.13: 23) and in particular master builders (*šitimgallu*) (*RINAP* 3/1 22 vi 57).¹⁵ All these descriptive editions to *ummânu*s or craftsmen have one aspect in common: they stress their top-level training and advanced technical know-how. This, of course, made them into a highly valued work force for any ambitious ruler.

Along with the fact that the majority of the sources are associated with the king and his household, these *ummânu* craftsmen are primarily attested in the context of massive (re-)building projects initiated by Assurnasirpal II and the later Sargonic kings.¹⁶ These exceptional events obviously required a great number of craftsmen at the same time, which could result in a shortage of available specialists. Sennacherib, for example, complains on the occasion of the construction of his “Palace without a Rival”, that preceding kings had exhausted (*šûnu-ḥu*) “all of the ‘sons of craftsmen’” (*gi-mir DUMU um-ma-a-ni*).¹⁷ Hence, in order to satisfy their high demands, kings called upon specialised craftsmen from all over the empire and claimed them from their officials, such as provincial governors (e.g. *SAA* 1 179) and allied sheikhs (e.g. *SAA* 15 280). Moreover, *ummânu*s were even taken from outside the empire and they are occasionally mentioned among the human booty taken from the courts of the defeated Babylonian and Elamite kings.¹⁸

Although the term *ummânu* might occasionally have been used to refer to the whole range of craftsmen, like, for instance, in the decree of Nergal-âpil-kûmû'a,¹⁹ all in all it seems to have been reserved for a much more restricted group of specialists (cf. Nadali / Verderame 2014: 554). The fact that the term *ummânu* refers especially to thoroughly trained and highly qualified craftsmen, made explicit through the qualifications such as *lê'û* and *enqû*, transpires from the specific tasks for which they were employed. It often concerns the construction of representative buildings and the fashioning of divine statues, which also

¹⁴ E.g. *SAA* 10 160: r. 31, 35 and 179: 10–11. Note also the term's usage to express skill in battle, e.g. *TCL* 3: 104: “warriors, tested in battle” (*muntahšû lê'ût taḥāzi*).

¹⁵ *šitimgallu*s are also found with the term *lê'û* in a very similar passage (*RINAP* 4 105 iv 30–31).

¹⁶ This, again, explains why especially craftsmen manufacturing raw materials are attested as *ummânu*s.

¹⁷ *RINAP* 3/1 17 vi 84. Note therefore also the administrative document ND 2728+ (in fn. 10) according to which additional *ummânu* (if restored correctly) are said to have been added.

¹⁸ Sennacherib: *RINAP* 3/1 22 i 33 and Assurbanipal: Borger 1996: 58, Prism A vii 3. Here, however, the term *ummânu* was possibly used to refer to experts in general.

¹⁹ Also some royal inscriptions stress the existence of a whole range of *ummânu*s. Note, for instance, Sennacherib who took “all of the craftsmen, as many as there were” (*si-ḥirti um-ma-a-ni ma-la ba-šû-û*, *RINAP* 3/1 22 i 33–34) from the Babylonian court, or Esarhaddon who mustered “all of his craftsmen” (*gi-mir um-ma-ni-ia*, *RINAP* 4 104 iii 18–19) for the reconstruction work at Babylon.

implies access to restricted spaces and the divine. Finally, the fact that the term *ummânu* was also commonly used to refer to the most erudite of scholars, the king's most immediate advisors, can be taken as a testimony to the distinctive status of craftsmen in the Assyrian society.

1.2. Domestic Personnel: *kitkittû*

Another, more general term for craftsmen is *kitkittû* (together with their trainees *mār kitkittê*), plural *kitkittâte*, which has thus far only been found in the Neo-Assyrian text corpus. This somewhat ambiguous designation has been translated in various different ways, from “craftsmen”,²⁰ “Schmiede”,²¹ and “engineers” (*RINAP* 4 33 iii 17'), to “quartermaster corps” (*SAA* 19 167: r. 1) and even more generally as “employees” (*CTN* 2 199: 6). While these interpretations were rarely clarified or commented, Parpola (2008: 75, fn. 136) remarked in passing that “military craftsmen” (*ummânu*) were differentiated from “quartermaster troops” (*kitkittû*) in royal inscriptions. I would like to take the opportunity to discuss this term here in more detail.

As to its etymology, it is presumably related to the much older term *kiškattû* or *kiškittû*.²² According to *CAD* K (453–454 s.v. *kiškattû* s.v. 1. and 2.), this Sumerian loanword (deriving from GIŠ.KIN.TI, “the one who assigns the workload”) is known already from the Old Akkadian period and refers either to a sort of oven, or to the craftsmen making professional use of such an oven.²³ The ambiguous meaning of this term can also be found in the Epic of Gilgamesh.²⁴ In the Old Babylonian (ca. 1894–1595 BC) version, Gilgamesh invites Enkidu to come with him to the “forge” (*kiškattu*) to manufacture the weapons for their march against Ĥuwawa (George 2003: 200–201). The term is found again in the standard version of the epic when Gilgamesh calls in the “craftsmen, all the smiths” (*ummânu kiškattê kalama*) in order to have them examine the horns of the defeated Bull of Heaven (George 2003: 628–629).²⁵ While *kiškattû* is attested only rarely in the Neo-Assyrian texts, in this corpus the term seems to refer only to the professionals (not to the oven). In one of his inscriptions, Assurbanipal boasts that he can “handle the shields as if he was a *kiškattu*” (translated as “Werkleute” in Streck *Asb.* 256–257 i 24). Also, in a hymn to Ninurta it is said that his head is “Adad, who [created] heaven and earth like a *kiškattu*” (“Werkmeister” according to Falkenstein and Von Soden 1953: 258–259, *KAR* 102: 22').

²⁰ *SAA* 1 177: 11; *SAA* 4 139: 9; *SAA* 12 83: 19'.

²¹ Borger 1996: 105 and 227, *Prism B* vi 31.

²² The (inter-)change /š/ <> /t/ might be related to the phenomenon of the spirantisation of the /t/; see Von Soden 1968: 218 (group a).

²³ Cf. *AHw.* 491 s.v. *kiška/ittû(m)*, giving the meanings “Handwerker” and “Waffenschmied”.

²⁴ The phenomenon of ambiguous meanings of Akkadian terms is also known from several other expressions. For instance, *iškāru* (see below) refers to both raw materials given out for production and either the finished products or the revenue in silver handed in (Postgate 1974: 107).

²⁵ OB III = YBC 2178 iv 161–162 and Standard Gilg. IV: 161–162.

Let us now turn to *kitkittû*. As opposed to *kiškattû*, this term is attested more frequently in the Neo-Assyrian corpus. It appears first of all in the aforementioned edict of Nergal-āpil-kūmū'a. Here, the “*kitkittûs* of the king” are mentioned in a broken and rather unclear passage (*SAA* 12 83: 19'). If restored correctly, one finds a similar reference in a letter to Sargon, where the “*kitkittûs* of the palace (É⁷¹.[GAL])” are said to have received grain rations along with the experts (*ummānu*) in the service of the treasurer (*masennu*) (*SAA* 19 167). Also in the queries to Šamaš concerning possible rebellions against the crown “the entire body of *kitkittûs* [as many as there were]” (*kitkittû gabbu* [*mala bašû*], *SAA* 4 139: 9, 142: 9, 144: 9) is mentioned as part of the staff of the royal household.²⁶ In addition, *kitkittûs* are said to have been taken from the palaces of conquered enemies by Esarhaddon (from Šubria: *RINAP* 4 33 iii 17') and Assurbanipal (from Gambulu: Borger 1996: 105, Prism B vi 31; from Elam: Borger 1996: 56, Prism A vi 89). That *kitkittûs* could also form part of the households of Assyrian state officials becomes clear from a letter to the governor (of Kallū), which mentions the *kitkittûs* of the household of the commander-in-chief (*CTN* 2 199: 6–7). Elsewhere, a cohort of *mār kitkittês* is said to be assigned to Nabû-ušalla, the governor (of Tamnuna) (*SAA* 1 177: 10–12).²⁷ Hence, in the Neo-Assyrian corpus, the *kitkittûs* could apparently represent staff of high-ranking individuals and their households. Finally, it has been argued that *kitkittûs* were also integrated into Assyria's military organisation (Parpola 2008: 92). This can be deduced from the royal inscriptions which tell us, on at least two occasions, that *kitkittûs* together with armed contingents from conquered countries, including charioteers, shield bearers and archers, were assigned to the military cohorts of the Assyrian kings (*RINAP* 4 33 iii 17'; Borger 1996: 58, Prism A vii 3).²⁸

The question that raises itself is: to what kind of staff does the term *kitkittû* refer to? Unfortunately, there is very little evidence that gives explicit information in this respect. In the letter *CTN* 2 199, *kitkittû* is used to refer to “a cook, a confectioner (and) a baker”. Similarly, in the queries to Šamaš “the entire body of *kitkittû*” is preceded by the enumeration of “[lackeys (*ša-bēti-šanie*), tailors,] cupbearers, cooks, confectioners and bakers”.

While this gives us, admittedly, little to hold on to, it at least seems to indicate that *kitkittû* does apply to domestic personnel and especially kitchen staff. This may find support in the fact that among the human booty, which the Assyrian kings brought home from the palaces of their conquered enemies (Šubria, Elam and Gambulu), the *kitkittûs* were clearly set apart from the courtiers (*šar-rēši*, *manzāz pāni*) and the experts (*ummānu*) (and often mentioned in between the two groups).

²⁶ Note here also the *kitkittāte* of Šibaniba (*Billa* 85: 25–26), which may actually denote personnel of the palace in Šibaniba (É.GAL is mentioned in the broken first line). Like with the *ummānu*, the grand total of *kitkittûs* is addressed.

²⁷ For the identification with the governor of Tamnuna see Luppert-Barnard in *PNA* 2/II 900 s.v. Nabû-ušalla 2.

²⁸ Because of these references *CAD* K (454 s.v. *kiškattû* 3.) introduced an additional meaning, namely “engineer (as a category of soldier)”. Also *AHW*. (493 s.v. *kitkittû(m)*) suspects an association with the military sphere and proposes the meaning “pioneer”.

It might be worth noting that there existed a term with a similar connotation to *kitkittû*, namely *nišē bēti*, “people of the house(hold)”.²⁹ Of particular interest in this respect is the inventory of troops stationed in the province Mazamua under the command of the local governor Adad-issē’a. It tells us that his *nišē bēti* (which are clearly separated from the *ummânu*) comprised lackeys, tailors, cup-bearers, confectioners, bakers and cooks (*SAA* 5 215: 15–19).³⁰ Not only does Adad-issē’a distinguish between experts (craftsmen) and his household personnel, but also, the enumeration of the *nišē bēti* corresponds exactly to the list of *kitkittû* staff provided in the queries mentioned above. Hence, the term *nišē bēti* refers to the domestic staff of a specific household or military contingent, a connotation which could also be established for *kitkittû*.

The term *kitkittû* should not be understood as denoting a specific craft or task,³¹ as much as it indicates an affiliation to a household, either of the king or high-ranking officials. As such the *kitkittûs* were also found in the army, but they should not be seen as a military unit per se.

2. Specific Groups of Craftsmen

While discussing the generic terms *ummânu* and *kitkittû*, we already came across different types of craftsmen which were active in the Neo-Assyrian Empire. In order to get a more accurate understanding of the entire range of craftsmen, we will now take a closer look at these professionals. In particular, they will be analysed with regard to both the linguistic background of their titles and the institutional contexts in which they appear.³² We will start with (1) craftsmen processing raw materials, then turn to (2) craftsmen processing leather, wool and textiles and finally end with the (3) craftsmen processing food. It should be noted that this professional categorisation is not simply based on a modern perception, but is also reflected in the ancient sources themselves.

2.1. Craftsmen Processing Raw Materials

The craftsmen processing raw materials include various types of smiths (*nappā-ḥu*, *kuttimmu*, *šarrāpu*, *qurqurru*), makers of bows and arrows (*sasinnu*), stoneworkers (*kapšarru*, *parkullu*, *pallišu*), carpenters (*naggāru*), architects (*šelappā-ii*), master builders (*etinnu*), potters (*paḥḥāru*), reed-workers (*atkuppu*) and perfume makers (*muraqqiu*).³³ Their titles in almost all cases directly refer to their

²⁹ Note here also the related term *nišē ekalli*, “people of the palace”. *nišē ekalli* were taken by Esarhaddon from the defeated king of Sidon, *RINAP* 4 1 ii 75; cf. Sargon and Kiakki, king of Šinuḥtu, Fuchs 1994: 92, Ann. 70.

³⁰ For this group of professionals see also below.

³¹ Note also the broken administrative record from Šibaniba according to which *inter alia* shepherds, scribes, fowl-herds, (palace) women, musicians, carpenters, priests and tanners seem to have had to provide work force in return for the landed property at their disposal. These ERÍN.MEŠ are further said to have to function as *kitkittû* of Šibaniba, if interpreted correctly: PAB 215 ERÍN.MEŠ *ina?* *kitkittâte* [ša] Šibaniba (*Billa* 85: 24–26).

³² For the selection of titles and their explanations given in the tables see *CAD*, *CDA*, Parpola 2007 and also Halloran 2006. Cf. Groß forthcoming.

³³ Although architects and master builders were usually not actively involved in the man-

principal professional activity. In general, they are either based on Sumerian loanwords (e.g. *atkuppu*, *kapšarru*, *naggāru*),³⁴ or represent nominalised *parrās*-forms (e.g. *nappāhu*, *šarrāpu*) and *parris*-forms (i.e. *pallišu*), two word formations which are recurrently used for job titles.³⁵ Based on a participle in the D-stem, *muraqqiu* follows another common form for job titles (see below § 2.2.). An exception is represented by the title *šelappāiu*, which goes back to the Middle Assyrian anthroponym Šalim-pî-Ea and possibly even refers to the founding father of that profession.³⁶ The background of the two titles *qurqurru* and *sasinnu* remains unclear (Table 1).

While the majority of these titles were borne by male workers, three are also attested with their female counterparts: *muraqqītu*, *nappāhtu* and *pallissu* (Table 2). Unfortunately not much can be said about the position and role of these female specialists. However, if nothing else, these attestations demonstrate that women were active as perfume makers, smiths and stone-borers; they should also remind us of the fact that women might have exercised several other crafts too.

In addition to the representatives of these “basic” types of crafts, a range of even more specialised craftsmen is attested in the sources. In fact, quite a number of specialised carpenters, makers of bows and arrows, smiths and stoneworkers are known from the Neo-Assyrian texts, including lexical lists (Table 3).³⁷ Their specialisation is usually expressed by the inclusion of an additional piece of information in their titles, concerning the basic material they worked with (silversmith, bronzesmith, coppersmith, ironsmith and millstone cutter) or related to their end product (cartwright, axe maker, wagon maker, chariot smith, bow-maker and arrow-maker³⁸).

The profession of the goldsmith presents an exception to this rule. It is not referred to by a compound built with *nappāhu*, nor does it seem to have been subsumed under the term *nappāhu* alone. The fact that two separate terms, *kuttimmu* and *šarrāpu*, were in use for goldsmiths, indicates instead that they were clearly distinguished from other smiths. In contrast to, for example, smiths responsible for the production of weapons and tools, goldsmiths (and silversmiths) were engaged in the manufacture of the finest artisanal works such as jewellery and statues.³⁹

ual building works, they are included here because of their great significance as engineers in the royal construction projects (see, e.g., *SAA* 16 111). For the master builders note the article Deller / Parpola 1966.

³⁴ *naggāru* and *pahhāru* even have a Pre-Sumerian origin; see Renger 1996: 213–214.

³⁵ See *GAG* § 55.o 22.a.II and 55.m 20.a.II. In addition to the professional title *parkullu*, note also the abstract form *purkullūtu*, referring to the craft of the *parkullu*. By contrast to the Neo-Babylonian evidence (see, e.g., the index in Bongenaar 1997: 549–556), these abstract forms for professions are only occasionally attested and almost absent for handicraft trades in the Neo-Assyrian sources (see Baker / Groß 2015).

³⁶ Freydank 1985. For the affirmative *āi* or *āiu(m)* see *GAG* § 56.p.

³⁷ It has to be noted that *sasin qašāti* (*MSL* 12 233 ii(B) 23' and 238: r. iv 6) and *sasin šiltāhi* (*MSL* 12 233 ii(B) 24' and 238: r. iv 7) are only known from lexical lists.

³⁸ In case of the arrow-makers, one seems to have distinguished between producers of two different types of arrows (*šiltāhu*, *uṣṣu*).

³⁹ Also a number of the so-called *ša-x-šu* professions (discussed in Radner 1999b: 120–

2.1.1. Institutional Management

The craftsmen processing raw materials were a highly demanded workforce. While a few individual craftsmen are attested as subordinates of high-ranking state officials (e.g. “chariot smith of the household of the commander-in-chief”, *StAT* 1 46: 9’–10’), they were primarily employed by the kings in their large building projects, which involved the construction and equipping of palaces and temples (e.g. *SAA* 12 82, 83). In this context craftsmen were obviously indispensable and, consequently highly valued, but they were also (or especially because of this) dependent workers whose particular place of stay and work was determined by Assyrian officials and the king (e.g. *SAA* 5 71, *SAA* 13 177).

Among the wide range of craftsmen, there are two professions that seem to have occupied a particularly important role in the royal household: goldsmiths and ironsmiths. The latter group’s skills and products were extremely important for fitting out and arming the troops as well as for general repair works (*batqu*, e.g. *CTN* 3 1) for the royal household.⁴⁰ Their strong embeddedness in the palace organisation can also be drawn from a list of rations given to the personnel of the palace at Kilizi (including palace women, servants and weavers) (ND 2803 i 14, see Parker 1961: 55, Plates XXIX–XXX). No less important is the fact that ironsmiths are attested as recipients of wine in two of the wine lists from the Review Palace in Kalḫu (*NWL* 1: r. iii 18 and 4: r. 12). In general these lists mention officials, including military officers and household personnel, such as kitchen staff and a few textile craftsmen as well as entertainers, but only refer to a small number of craftsmen processing raw materials (e.g. an architect: *NWL* 4: r. 9). Groups of ironsmiths, however, occur more often in these lists, pointing to their comparatively significant role in the royal household. This is even more clearly the case for goldsmiths, who are recurrently listed in these ration lists. We find them here either as individual goldsmiths (*NWL* 1: r. iii 24; *CTN* 3 120: 10’ and 145 r. iii 14) or in groups (*NWL* 1 r. iii 15). That some goldsmiths were more or less employed as immediate servants of members of the royal family as well as the king himself is demonstrated by such professional affiliations as “goldsmith of the queen’s household” (*SAA* 16 65: 3) and “goldsmith, servant of the king” (*SAA* 13 27: r. 9–10). As this is only rarely attested for other craftsmen processing raw materials,⁴¹ it is clear that goldsmiths enjoyed the crown’s special interest. This must be related to the fact that they handled highly precious raw

126) were occupied with raw materials. These include the copper man (*ša-erēšu*), armour man (*ša-ḫalluptēšu*), iron man (*ša-parzillēšu*), limestone man (*ša-pūlēšu*), alum man (*ša-gabēšu*), firewood man (*ša-gaššātēšu*), stool man (*ša-kitturrēšu*), basket man (*ša-ḫup-pānēšu*), bundle man (*ša-ebissēšu*) and incense man (*ša-endēšu*). In addition, also the staff man (*ša-ḫuṭārēšu*, *ša-ḫuṭāri*) should be mentioned here. Although all these professions were concerned with raw materials and associated with a particular product or craftwork, it remains undetermined whether they actually processed these materials or were only responsible for their supply, transport and quality (cf. Groß forthcoming).

⁴⁰ For *batqu* and the phrase *batqu kašaru* see Groß forthcoming.

⁴¹ Note, however, the single reference to a “carpenter of the household of the crown prince” (*StAT* 1 23’: 5) and a “master builder of the household of the [crown] prince” if restored correctly (*SAA* 14 166: r. 8).

material and supplied the king and his household with the indispensable luxury furnishings, accessories and jewellery, thus providing Assyrian royalty with the necessary visual features.⁴²

Another important institution employing craftsmen processing raw materials was the temple. An illustrative source in this respect is the broken letter *SAA* 10 97. It informs king Assurbanipal that the son of the deceased stone-borer, an apprentice (*didabû*), is ready for ritual shaving in order to replace his father. Since the shaving was a central act in the process of the appointment and the consecration of priests (Löhnert 2007: 281–282), these stone-borers were not only working for the temple, but represent integral members of the temple community and servants of the gods.⁴³ Other individual craftsmen who worked in the Aššūr Temple, include a bow-maker (*SAA* 14 97: 4–5) and a goldsmith (*OrNS* 37 8: 2–3) – in view of later Neo-Babylonian sources one can expect the latter to have been part of the consecrated temple staff.⁴⁴

Apart from these references to individual craftsmen, the temple institution could also command larger cohorts of specialists. In fact, the employment of entire groups of craftsmen in the temple was quite common, according to the available sources. However, rather than being under the direct command of the temple authorities, it seems to have been a well-established practice for groups of craftsmen to have been assigned workloads inside the temple domain by the palace on a contractual basis. A glimpse into this system is provided by *SAA* 5 294, a written demand for wood, iron and gold, which continues with a claim for grain rations for the artisans (*ummānu*), and then states that “the contract (*riksu*) that the king (...) made with the temples is too small for them [i.e. the craftsmen]” (r. 5–7). The background of this agreement may have been the so-called *iškāru* system, which was fundamental for the production of goods for the palace and the Assyrian state as whole. The basic procedure of this military-like system was that raw material, handed out by the palace to cohorts (*kišru*) of craftsmen under the supervision of a cohort commander (*rab kišri*), had to be processed into final or semifinal products according to a set quota (*iškāru*) and within a prescribed time limit.⁴⁵

While *iškāru* is clearly mentioned in connection with the goldsmith Sīn-na’di (*SAA* 13 28: r. 3–7), this procedure might also have been applied in the case of the seventeen ironsmiths, from whom Esarhaddon received a complaint (*SAA* 16 40) concerning the high amount of weapons they had to manufacture and the lack of a suitable basis of subsistence (by means of agricultural land they were

⁴² Also high officials had single goldsmiths in their service, as indicated by the “goldsmith of the household of the vizier” (*SAA* 6 19: r. 7’). In connection with the specific demand for goldsmiths, it is not surprising that they had a higher status – they even were appointed as mayors of Assur – and were quite wealthy, in comparison to other craftsmen (Radner 1999a: 9, 14–25).

⁴³ Note here also the goldsmith Šēp-Aššūr-ašbat, further described as servant of the king, who was in charge of the offerings pipes of Aššūr and the king (*SAA* 13 27).

⁴⁴ Bongenaar 1997: 363–366 and Waerzeggers 2010: 49.

⁴⁵ On the *iškāru* system (and its development) see Postgate 1974: 108–110 and 1979: 210–213. The organisation of the craftsmen in cohorts has been taken over from the military sphere, Postgate 1979: 210–212 and 1987: 259.

provided with). Like the aforementioned letter *SAA* 5 294, letter *SAA* 16 40 indicates that the conditions under which craftsmen were employed could be harsh: occasionally, the imposed workload was considerably high and the compensation comparatively low or even insufficient. According to the same letter, these conditions became worse by the imposition of additional work obligations, in the form of corvée work (*ilku*), which had to be performed in return for the tenure of land.⁴⁶

Finally, although there is not much information available, most of these groups of craftsmen had some form of internal hierarchy and a guild-like organisation (Radner 1999a: 30–31). This can be taken from such individuals that bore the title *rab-x*, “chief of profession x”. Most if not all the craftsmen discussed here were headed by “*rab-x*-officials”, including architects (*rab šelappāie*), bow-makers (*rab sasinni*), carpenters (*rab naggāri*), goldsmiths (*rab šarrāpi*), master builders (*rab etinni*, *rab etinnāti*), potters (*rab paḥḥāri*) and smiths (*rab nappā-ḥi*).⁴⁷ Although these are mainly attested in the records from the private archives in Assur, which, furthermore, suggest a close connection between the distinct groups of craftsmen and the Aššūr Temple, we expect that similar structures were also in place in the other cities.⁴⁸

2.2. Craftsmen Processing Leather, Wool and Textiles

The second group of craftsmen to be discussed here involves the tanners (*aškā-pu*, *šāripu*), dyers (*mušappiu*, *šāpiu*), bleachers (*pūšāiu*), fullers (*ašlāku*), weavers (*ušpāru*, *ḥundurāiu*), felt workers (*sēpiu*), stitchers (*mugabbū*), knitters (*kāmidu*) and tailors (*kāširu*).⁴⁹ Like the designations for the group of craftsmen discussed above, the titles of craftsmen processing leather, wool and textiles clearly reflect their professional activities, including the processing, dying and

⁴⁶ Cf. the temple weavers who had to perform masonry duty (fn. 55). For *ilku* see Postgate 1974: 90–93 and Radner 2007a: 221–222. Note, for instance, also *CTN* 3 87 which may also deal with *ilku* obligations. According to this administrative text, architects, coppersmiths, carpenters and ironsmiths seem to have been employed as harvesters (*CTN* 3 87: r. 33–36).

⁴⁷ E.g. chief architect: *SAAB* 9 136: r. 12; chief bow-maker: *SAAB* 9 132: r. 10; chief carpenter: *SAA* 6 265: r. 6; chief goldsmith: *StAT* 3 32: r. 15'; chief master builder: *SAA* 16 111: r. 3; chief potter: ND 1120, in Wiseman 1952: 65–66, Plate XXIII; chief smith: *StAT* 3 35 i 8.

⁴⁸ In connection with Assur and the Aššūr Temple it is, nonetheless, worth noting that it seems to have been one of the main centres for craftsmanship throughout the Neo-Assyrian period. This might be related to its role as religious centre and its former role as imperial capital. While the establishment of Kalḫu as the new capital in the reign of Asurnasirpal II may have caused the first transfer of a great many of skilled workers from Assur to Kalḫu (Radner 1999a: 11–12), the role of Assur as “pot for skilled experts” is, furthermore, shown by the designation “from Libbāli”, (= “from the Inner City (of Assur)”) which is occasionally attached to professional titles. This practice was in use not only in earlier Neo-Assyrian times (*CTN* 3 145: r. iii 8, 784 BC), but also in the 7th century (e.g. “architect of Libbāli”, VAT 19519: 3, 626* BC).

⁴⁹ Note that *kāmidu* (*MSL* 12 233 ii(A) 14 and 238: r. v 27) and *mugabbū* (*MSL* 12 233 ii(A) 8 and 238: r. v 26) are only known from lexical lists.

cleaning of their respective materials. These Akkadian job titles either originate from Sumerian words (e.g. *aškāpu*, *ušpāru*), or are formed by participles of the G-stem (e.g. *kāširu*, *šāripu*) and D-stem (e.g. *mušappiu*).⁵⁰ In addition, we come across the title *ḥundurāiu*, which is derived from the gentilic of Ḥundir, a place in the eastern region Mannea and probably refers to carpet-weavers (Table 4).⁵¹ Also the title *pūšāiu* seems to be built with the substantive *pūšū* along with the affirmative *āiu* (*GAG* § 57.p). For two of these job titles, female forms are attested, namely *mušappītu* and *ušpārtu*, dyers and weavers respectively (Table 5). Female professionals dealing with wool and fabrics were not uncommon in Mesopotamia. In fact, the craft of weaving has in general been a sector dominated by women throughout the centuries, according to the available sources.⁵² As to more distinctive specialisations, tanners and weavers were internally further divided according to the final product they manufactured. The weavers, for instance, were specified according to the colours they used and the types of clothes they produced (see Table 6).⁵³

2.2.1. Institutional Management

There can be little doubt that the skilled workers presented in the tables below were in demand in both the temple and the palace households. This is especially true for the tailors who were occasionally specified as “palace servants” (*urad ekalli*, e.g. ND 2498, see Parker 1961: 35–36, Plate XVIII) and who formed an integral part of the domestic staff of the royal household (together with the lackeys, cupbearers, cooks, confectioners, bakers, see below). In addition, one has to stress the importance of the craft of the weavers (both male and female) for the wealth and economic productivity of the queen’s household.⁵⁴ As is evident for the goldsmiths (see above), groups of weavers who have been affiliated with temple households seem to have done at least part of their work on behalf of the palace organisation, in the framework of the aforementioned *iškāru* system. This, for example, transpires from a letter to king Esarhaddon in which a certain Nabû-šarru-ušur reports on the “weavers of Ištar of Arbail” who have been employed to process red wool delivered by the palace.⁵⁵

⁵⁰ For the Pre-Sumerian origin of *ušpāru* or UŠ.BAR; see Renger 1996: 213–214.

⁵¹ For *ḥundurāiu* possibly being carpet-weavers see Fales and Jakob-Rost 1991: 23–24. For the affirmative *āi* or *āiu(m)* see *GAG* § 57.p.

⁵² Note, for instance, Garcia-Ventura 2012: 244–245 (for the Ur III period) and Jakob 2003: 412–416 (for the Middle Assyrian period).

⁵³ Again *ša-x-šu* professions were associated with leather, fabrics and clothing. They include the cap man (*ša-kubšēšu*), tanning fluid man (*ša-kurrēšu*), tunic man (*ša-sāgātēšu*) and leather hides man (*ša-šallēšu*); cf. fn. 39. Note that *aškāp arīte* (*MSL* 12 233 ii(B) 18’) and *aškāp dalāte* (*MSL* 12 233 ii(B) 19’) are only attested in lexical lists.

⁵⁴ Groups of weavers are, for instance, listed in the aforementioned document ND 2803. According to this record, they formed part of the palace personnel (under the *šakintu*) in Arbail, Kilizi and Adian (ND 2803 i 7, 15, 25). For weavers as part of the queen’s household in general see Svärd 2015: 126, 100–102. It seems that, in combination with the weaver, also the fuller played an important role here; see Groß forthcoming.

⁵⁵ *SAA* 16 84. The term *iškāru* is not mentioned here. However, it occurs in connection with temple weavers in *SAA* 13 145: 8 and 186: r. 8’, two letters whose content is related

Compared to the specialists who processed raw materials, skilled workers such as tailors and weavers in general exhibit a more domestic character. Hence, in legal records (mainly among the witnesses) and administrative documents, we often find individual craftsmen bearing titles that specifically affiliate them with the households of members of the royal family,⁵⁶ high-ranking state officials,⁵⁷ and middle-ranking officials.⁵⁸ These craftsmen are also occasionally listed as permanent personnel of state officials in royal grants of tax exemption,⁵⁹ and were occasionally bought and sold. Hence, craftsmen were purchased by officeholders, including cohort commanders (tanner: *SAA* 14 424), chariot drivers (weaver of *šiprātu*-garments: *SAA* 6 301) and palace scribes (tanners: *Edubba* 10 7; weaver of multicoloured cloth: *Edubba* 10 9) and sold by a chief singer (tailor: *SAA* 6 312) as well as a Kummuhean merchant (tanner: *SAA* 14 424) and occasionally even by higher-ranking members of their own craft.⁶⁰ There is one case in which we find a fuller, together with two bakers and a “cap man”, being transferred from father to daughter as part of her inheritance (*SAA* 14 155).

While in general the purchase of such skilled workers seem to have been contracted for the buyer’s personal benefit, one cannot exclude the possibility that some officials, such as a palace scribe, acquired and sold them in their official capacity for the palace or other institutions. At least the priest who, according to *SAA* 12 94, purchased a weaver of multicoloured cloth – previously owned by the sons of a weaver – explicitly did this for his divine lord Ninurta, that is, the Ninurta Temple. In short, the majority of legally transferred craftsmen mentioned above, along with some of their colleagues who are attested with their affiliations or listed in the grants, can be regarded as full members of their masters’ households and sometimes even as personal property of their owners. Depending on the reasons for their dependence (born in dependency, debt bondage),⁶¹ it could have been permanent or only for a limited time or job.

The existing documentation seems to suggest that compared to the first group of craftsmen skilled in the processing of precious raw material, the group made up of leather, wool and textile craftsmen was represented among the lower-ranking and dependent strata of society on a much wider scale. A possible reason might be the fact that the professions of the weaver and tanner, for example,

to the one in *SAA* 16 84; see Groß forthcoming. From *SAA* 13 145 we also learn that temple weavers had to perform masonry duty (*urāsūtu*), presumably as part of their *ilku* obligations.

⁵⁶ E.g. “tailor of the queen”: ND 5448: 1–2, see Parker 1957: 128, Plate XXVIII; “weaver of the household of the queen”: *SAA* 11 222: r. 11–12.

⁵⁷ E.g. “tanner of the governor of Kalḫu”: *SAA* 6 31: r. 25; “tailor and servant of the governor of Kalḫu”: *Edubba* 10 51: r. 8–9, and “tailor, servant of the deputy of the governor of Kalḫu”: *SAA* 6 31: r. 23–24; “weaver of the commander-in-chief”: *CTN* 2 91 t.e. 35.

⁵⁸ E.g. “tailor of the palace supervisor”: *CTN* 2 4: r. 13.

⁵⁹ E.g. weaver of multicoloured cloth of chief eunuch: *SAA* 12 27: 24; fuller: *SAA* 12 63: 2’; dyer: *SAA* 12 65: 4’.

⁶⁰ Tailor: *CTN* 2 6: 3; weaver of multicoloured cloth, sold by the sons of a weaver: *SAA* 12 94.

⁶¹ Note therefore the case of the weaver Urdu-Issār whose debts are paid off by Bēl-taršillumma, governor of Kalḫu (*CTN* 2 91).

required a less extensive (and less expensive) training compared to the profession of gold- or ironsmith, making it more accessible for individuals of unfree status and the lower echelons (including women) in general. Another reason could be sought in the difference in value of the materials these craftsmen processed and produced.⁶² In general, the services and end products of weavers and other, related craftsmen could be afforded by a much larger section of Assyrian society, while delicate gold ornaments were reserved for the wealthy few.⁶³

Finally, as to the hierarchical organisation of these specialised crafts, the available sources reveal the existence of chief fullers (*rab ašlāki*), chief tanners (*rab aškāpi*), chief tailors (*rab kāširi*) and chief weavers (*rab ušpāri*).⁶⁴ Furthermore, a commander-of-ten (*rab ešerti*) of the tanners (*BaM* 16 2: r. 10) and a cohort-commander (*rab kišri*) of the weavers (*SAA* 6 91: r. 3') are attested. While especially the office of the chief tailor seems to have undergone a considerable development towards a military official with no clear link to actual tailors,⁶⁵ the remainder was likely charged with the supervision and coordination of skilled workers of their craft. This can be deduced from the presence of cohort-commanders and the commanders-of-ten.⁶⁶ They were presumably put in charge of specific numbers of weavers or tailors for whose productivity they were responsible. The chief fuller, the chief tanner and the chief weaver, literally “the chief of weavers”, presumably fulfilled a very similar function. It is not impossible that their titles are, at least in some cases, abbreviated forms of the designation “cohort-commander of craft-x”. The chief fuller, clearly had a higher administrative position and is mentioned among senior palace officials in *SAA* 11 36. According to this administrative document he seems to have been responsible for the management and supply of working materials for the fullers, presumably of the entire palace household.

2.3. Artisanal Food Producers

The final group of craftsmen that will be discussed is the one concerned with the production of foodstuffs, involving bakers (*āpiu*), confectioners (*karkadinnu*), cooks (*nuḫatimmu*) and butchers (*nakāsu*, *ṭābiḫu*) as well as brewers (*sirāšū*) and

⁶² It is clear, however, that wool and textiles dyed in red and black were regarded as precious products too (note the textile labels *SAA* 7 93–116).

⁶³ Note here also the two contracts for the apprenticeship as a goldsmith from among the more than thirty Late Babylonian apprenticeship contracts (edited in Hackl 2007–2010: 82–84, nos. 5 and 6). While the majority of the individuals apprenticed for professions such as baker and carpenter were slaves (*urdu*, but also *širku*), the two individuals apprenticed as goldsmiths (for five years) were identified with patronymics instead (Hackl 2011: 710, Table 110; 716–725, Table 114). Furthermore, both contracts include the exceptional agreement that the apprentice, after his apprenticeship, was to become (for a definite period of time) business partner of his master (Hackl 2007–2010: 83).

⁶⁴ E.g. chief fuller: *SAA* 11 36 ii 21; chief tanner: *MSL* 12 233 ii(B) 21' (only attested in a lexical list); chief tailor: *SAA* 14 229: 5'; chief weaver: *SAA* 6 163: r. 14'.

⁶⁵ See Mattila 2014, especially about the chief tailor Milki-rāmu.

⁶⁶ For the ranks of cohort commander and commander-of-ten see in short Postgate 2007: 344–345.

oil-pressers (*ṣāḫitu*).⁶⁷ As was the case with the previous two groups, job titles of food producers originate on the one hand from Sumerian terms (i.e. *nuḫatimmu*), and on the other, are derived from participle forms of Akkadian verbs (e.g. *āpiu*, *ṭābiḫū*). In both cases the underlying meaning reflects the professional activity and serves as a straightforward job description. By contrast, the Akkadian word for brewer, *sirāšū*, presumably derives from a designation for a specific type of beer. The background of the title *karkadinnu*, “confectioner”, remains unclear, although the ending *-ti/ennu* points to a Hurrian origin (cf. Jakob 2003: 396) (Table 7). Female specialists are also represented among the food-producing crafts of the bakers and confectioners (Table 8).⁶⁸

2.3.1. Institutional Management

It is evident that both the palace and the temple had a great need of artisanal food producers. These institutions, however, organised this group of craftsmen in distinctive ways. In the palace one can observe the existence of a set team consisting of cooks (who were mainly concerned with the preparation of meat), confectioners, bakers, along with lackeys, cupbearers and tailors, working in the domestic quarters.⁶⁹ That they formed an integral part of the palace household is also indicated by their frequent occurrence in the aforementioned wine lists.⁷⁰ Their affiliation to the palace is further underlined by the use of explicit titles such as “confectioner of the palace” (e.g. *CTN 3 87*: r. 48) and “cook of the palace” (e.g. *SAA 6 31*: r. 15) as well as additional designations, including “palace servant”, i.e. *urad ekalli* (e.g. cook: *ND 2498*: r. 18', 23'; baker: *NWL 35 ii 6'*) and *ša-rēši* (e.g. cook: *SAA 6 31*: r. 15). Moreover, the king and his immediate relatives had their personal, domestic kitchen staff (e.g. “confectioner of the queen”: *CTN 3 87*: r. 42, “cook of the queen”: *CTN 3 87*: r. 40), as was the case with some high-ranking state officials (e.g. “cook of commander-of-chief”: *CTN 2 92*: 7–8). A special characteristic of at least a part of the palace’s kitchen personnel was their foreign origin (similar to the musicians at the Assyrian court).⁷¹ Hence, in addition to Assyrian and Aramean bakers, one can also find bakers of Suḫean and Chaldean extraction (*NWL 1*: r. iii 12, 19–21). They may have been brought to Assyria as deportees and perhaps recruited for their ability to prepare “exotic” dishes and titbits.

⁶⁷ Domestic personnel such as lackeys (*ša-bēti-šanie*), the cupbearers (*šāqiu*) and dish-washers (*kāpir diqāri*) are not included here.

⁶⁸ We also find a number of titles of the *ša-x-šu* type whose literal meaning points to food and drink. These include the beer man (*ša-billēšu*), soup man (*ša-akussēšu*), pickled meat man (*ša-midlēšu*), candy man (*ša-mutqītēšu*), zikkurra cake man (*ša-siqqurrātēšu*) and regular offering man (*ša-ginēšu*), some of which presumably belonged to the temple institution (cf. Radner 1999b). In addition, a cake man (*ša-muttāqi*) and a meal man (*ša-naptini*) are attested. These titles do not necessarily refer to kitchen personnel, but perhaps rather to the staff concerned with the transportation, supply and quality of these commodities.

⁶⁹ E.g. *SAA 7 21* and *22*, *SAA 4 139* and *142*; see Groß forthcoming.

⁷⁰ E.g. cooks: *NWL 1*: r. iii 11, *CTN 3 129*: 6'; confectioners: *NWL 9*: 29, *NWL 1*: r. iii 17; bakers: *NWL 6*: r. 38', *NWL 33 ii 9*, for all attestations see Groß forthcoming.

⁷¹ Svárd 2015: 127–133, 240–242, Appendix D; and Groß forthcoming.

In the temple household a slightly different group of artisanal food producers was active. The group was in charge of the preparation of meals, specifically for the divine table and presumably therefore also exempted from *corvée* service.⁷² Bakers and brewers, as well as cooks and confectioners,⁷³ are found preparing the offerings to gods, whose leftovers were later distributed and consumed by the priesthood and the king (e.g. *SAA* 12 68 and 69). Again, the use of explicit titles such as “baker of the temple” (e.g. *SAAB* 9 73: r. 29) indicates the particular affiliation of some of these craftsmen to the religious institution.⁷⁴ Presumably also butchers, who were charged with the preparation of huge amounts of meat,⁷⁵ formed a vital element for the food production at the temple and its sacrificial economy.

It might be interesting to note that even if there is no evidence that brewers formed an integral part of the palace household, the latter could still avail itself of their service and expertise through the *iškāru* system (as attested for the Middle Assyrian period; see Jakob 2003: 405). Other food-producing craftsmen that were enrolled in the *iškāru* system were the oil-pressers. This emerges clearly from *KAV* 197 (see Postgate 1974: 363–367). In this letter from Assur, written to a certain Irmulu, a group of twenty oil-presser complain about corruption on the work floor and claim that their *iškāru* quota has been misappropriated.

Finally, let us turn to the internal organisations of these crafts. It has been suggested by Radner (1999a: 31), that the aforementioned Irmulu was the chief oil-presser. While he does not bear a specific title, the designation *rab sāḫiti* is attested in a lexical list (*MSL* 12 233: r. v 17'). Other supervising titles attested in the legal and administrative sources include chief bakers (*rab āpie*), chief confectioners (*rab karkadinni*), chief cooks (*rab nuḫatimmi*), chief brewers (*rab sirāšē*) and chief butchers (*rab tābiḫi*). While in general these titles indicate the existence of a hierarchical organisation, it has already been mentioned earlier that some of them are perhaps misleading. Similar to the chief tailor and chief fuller (see above), the chief cook and perhaps also the chief confectioner seem to have been somewhat detached from their craft. Rather than the actual supervision of cooks and confectioners as well as their production process, these officials seem to have been concerned mainly with the management and transport of the goods produced by their nominal craft on a higher level (Groß forthcoming).

⁷² Note therefore the decree of expenditures for the Aššūr Temple from Adad-nērārī III, where it is said that neither the mayor nor the city overseer shall claim the dedicated baker and brewer (*SAA* 12 68: r. 28–30).

⁷³ Bakers and brewers on the one hand and the cooks and confectioners on the other, often appear in pairs, suggesting that these crafts were closely associated, perhaps due to the use of similar ingredients or culinary technics. See Gaspa 2009–2010: 95, 108.

⁷⁴ In addition, artisanal food producers like cooks (e.g. *SAA* 12 89: 3', 91: 6') and bakers (*SAA* 12 89: 3') were donated to the gods and their temples. There are also a few attestations of granted (e.g. *SAA* 12 27: 35), sold (e.g. *SAA* 6 305: 4) and inherited (e.g. *SAA* 14 155: 10) bakers.

⁷⁵ Note, for instance, the impressive amounts of meat prepared in the course of ceremonial banquets (*SAA* 7 148–154) or the daily offerings in the Aššūr Temple (*SAA* 7 182–206).

3. Conclusion

While the Neo-Assyrian corpus provides evidence for a seemingly endless number of officials, specialists and labourers, this article has focussed specifically on craftsmen, the skilled workers concerned with the production and processing of precious raw materials, leather, wool and textiles as well as foodstuffs. This overview study started off with a discussion of the terms *ummānu* and *kitkittû*, which served as general designations for craftsmen. While the label *ummānu* was clearly used to stress the advanced training and expertise of its bearer, the term *kitkittû* for its part seems to emphasise the craftsmen's affiliation to a household. Moreover, the specific contexts in which these terms occur, indicate that in the Neo-Assyrian period *kitkittû* was primarily reserved for groups of domestic personnel and kitchen staff, whereas *ummānu* referred to expert craftsmen manufacturing raw materials – the masters of their crafts, so to speak – whom the kings deployed in prestigious operations such as the construction of their palaces, the renovation of temples and the fashioning of divine and other monumental statues.

We then turned our attention to the specific designations of craftsmen. Apart from a few exceptions, the formation and meaning of these job titles usually reflect the specific work done by the respective craftsman. A number of titles, such as *pahhāru* and *ušpāru*, are Sumerian loanwords, which can be traced back to the third or even to the fourth millennium BC and date back to the beginnings of professional specialisation in early urban settlements. More common, however, are the Akkadian titles, which had been introduced in the course of the centuries. Finally, the Neo-Assyrian sources reveal a remarkably high degree of specialisation of craftsmen, in particular with regard to the materials these specialists processed and their end products. Even if the studied professions were male-dominated according to the extant documentation, our survey demonstrates that female workers were involved in a wide range of specialised crafts too. Not only are they found among specialists involved in what may be seen as traditional female crafts, including weavers and perfume makers, but perhaps more remarkably in the Neo-Assyrian period women were also occasionally trained as smiths and stone-workers.

Finally, this article tried to lay bare some of the embeddedness of the hierarchically organised groups of craftsmen into the institutional households and provide a general picture of their social status. Although this study gave more of an overview, rather than going very deep into the specifics, it was nonetheless possible to detect some trends among this diverse group of skilled workers. Hence, it should be clear that craftsmen were essential for the Assyrian king and the upkeep of his realm. Both the palace and the temple were in seemingly continuous need of their expertise, which led to a strong integration of these specialists into these institutional households. Although it is clear that free employment (including hired work) did exist in Assyria, the impact of the employment by the larger institutions as well as the smaller households of officials cannot be underestimated, despite the biased nature of the available sources.

Clearly, all the craftsmen were subjected to the different work conditions. It certainly made a difference whether one served as the personal goldsmith of the

king or whether one formed part of a cohort set in the temple whose considerable workload was prescribed by the high-demanding palace economy. The degree of dependency seems to have been especially high among craftsmen processing leather, wool and textiles, judging from the comparatively large amount of these skilled workers being sold and purchased, not only by top-ranking officials. A possible reason for this phenomenon might be that their services and products were in principle more affordable in contrast to expensive end products of craftsmen processing precious raw materials, such as goldsmiths.

Finally this study has also shown that the palace and the temple institutions employed somewhat distinct sets of craftsmen that were organised in different ways for their specific needs. Hence, brewers were often linked to the temple as servants of the gods, while ironsmiths can more generally be found in the palace household, not the least due to their important role for the production of military equipment. As the dominant institution, however, the palace could profit from the temple and its specialised workforces through the ancient old *iškāru* system. According to the available sources, this applied especially to those craftsmen who (as entire groups) were not integral to the palace household, but also to weavers whose production was to great extent managed by the queen's household.

While this overview of the Neo-Assyrian craftsmen may have raised more questions than it could answer, it hopefully showed some of the complexity in which this Iron Age Empire organised its indispensable, yet, easily overlooked specialised workforce. It should be clear that more research is needed before we can fully unravel the world of the Assyrian craftsmen, in terms of their role, their social position and professional organisation, but also their precise activities, financial circumstances and living conditions.

Tables

Title	Formation	Meaning	Translation
<i>atkuppu</i>	Sum. lw. AD.KÍD	AD (raft, plank) + KÍD (to build, make) / KID ₆ (to weave a mat)	reed-worker
<i>etinnu</i>	Sum. lw. DÍM	DÙ (to build) + IM (clay, mud)	master builder
<i>kapšarru</i> (<i>kabšarru</i>)	Sum. lw. KAB.SAR	KAB (cross-piece) + SAR (to inscribe)	engraver
<i>kuttimmu</i> (<i>kuīmu</i>)	Sum. lw. KÙ.DÍM	KÙ (noble metal) + DÍM (to fashion)	goldsmith
<i>muraqqiu</i>	Ptc. of D-stem <i>ruqqû</i>	to prepare perfume	perfume maker
<i>naggāru</i> (<i>nagāru</i>)	Sum. lw. NAGAR	NAGAR = carpenter's chisel / Pre-Sumerian	carpenter
<i>nappāhu</i>	<i>parrās</i> -form of <i>napāhu</i>	to blow	smith
<i>paḥḥāru</i> (<i>paḥāru</i>)	Sum. lw. BAḤĀR	Pre-Sumerian	potter
<i>pallišu</i>	<i>parris</i> -form of <i>palāšu</i>	to perforate, bore	(stone-)borer
<i>parkullu</i>	Sum. lw. BUR.GUL	BUR (stone vessel) + GUL (to destroy)	stonecutter
<i>qurqurru</i> (<i>gurgurru</i>)	—	—	metal-worker
<i>sasīnu</i> (<i>zazīnu</i>)	—	—	bow-maker
<i>šarrāpu</i>	<i>parrās</i> -form of <i>šarāpu</i> A	to burn, fire	goldsmith
<i>šelappāiu</i>	PN + <i>āiu</i>	“of Šalim-pî-Ea”	architect

Table 1: craftsmen processing raw materials.

Title	Formation	Translation
<i>muraqqītu</i>	key word + (a)t-infix	female perfume maker
<i>nappāḥtu</i>	key word + (a)t-infix	female smith
<i>pallissu</i>	key word + (a)t-infix	female (stone-)borer

Table 2: female craftsmen processing raw materials.

	Title	Formation	Translation
Carpenters	<i>naggār mugirri (magarri)</i>	key word + final product	cartwright
	<i>naggār pāši</i>	key word + final product	axe maker
	<i>naggār tallakti</i>	key word + final product	wagon maker
Smiths	<i>nappāḥ erē</i>	key word + material	coppersmith
	<i>nappāḥ parzilli</i>	key word + material	ironsmith
	<i>nappāḥ siparri</i>	key word + material	bronzesmith
	<i>nappāḥu ša mugirri (narkabti)</i>	key word + final product	chariot smith
	<i>šarrāp kaspi</i>	key word + material	silversmith
Bow-makers	<i>sasin qašāti</i>	key word + final product	bow-maker
	<i>sasin šiltāḥi</i>	key word + final product	arrow-maker
	<i>sasin ušši</i>	key word + final product	arrow-maker

Table 3: specialised craftsmen processing raw materials.

Title	Formation	Meaning	Translation
<i>aškāpu</i>	Sum. lw. AŠGAB	KUŠ (leather) + GÚB (to cleanse)	tanner
<i>ašlāku</i>	Sum. lw. AZLAG	A (water) + ZALAG (to cleanse)	fuller
<i>ḥundurāiu</i>	GN + āiu	“from Ḥundir”	carpet-weaver(?)
<i>kāmidu</i>	Ptc. of <i>kamādu</i>	to beat cloth	knitter
<i>kāširu</i>	Ptc. of <i>kašāru</i>	to tie, knot	tailor
<i>mugabbū (mukabbū)</i>	Ptc. of D-stem <i>kubbū</i>	to patch, sew	stitcher
<i>mušappiu (cf. šāpiu)</i>	D-Ptc. <i>šapū (šabā’u)</i>	to soak	dyer
<i>pūšāiu</i>	<i>pūšū + āiu</i>	“of the white spot”	bleacher
<i>sēpiu (sepū)</i>	Ptc. of <i>sepū</i>	to pluck, pull	felt worker
<i>šāpiu (cf. mušappiu)</i>	Ptc. <i>šapū (šabā’u)</i>	to soak	dyer
<i>šāripu</i>	Ptc. of <i>šarāpu</i>	to dye (red)	tanner
<i>ušpāru (išpāru)</i>	Sum. lw. UŠ.BAR	Pre-Sumerian	weaver

Table 4: craftsmen processing leather, wool and textiles.

Title	Formation	Translation
<i>mušappītu</i>	key word + (a)t-infix	female dyer
<i>ušpārtu</i>	key word + (a)t-infix	female weaver

Table 5: female craftsmen processing leather, wool and textiles.

	Title	Formation	Translation
Tanners	<i>aškāp arīte</i>	key word + final product	tanner of shields
	<i>aškāp dalāte</i>	key word + final product	tanner of doors
	<i>šārip duḥšī</i>	key word + final product	tanner of coloured leather
Weavers	<i>ušpār birmi</i>	key word + final product	weaver of multi-coloured cloth
	<i>ušpār šiprāti</i>	key word + final product	scarf weaver

Table 6: specialised craftsmen processing leather and wool.

Title	Formation	Meaning	Translation
<i>āpiu</i>	Ptc. of <i>apū</i> (<i>epū</i>)	to bake	baker
<i>karkadinnu</i>	? + Hurrian ending <i>-ti/ennu</i>	—	confectioner
<i>nākisu</i>	Ptc. of <i>nakāsu</i>	to cut, fell	cutter
<i>nuḥatimmu</i>	Sum. lw. MUḪALDIM	MŪ (to mill, chop, grind, burn) or MU ₁₀ (woman) + ḪAL (to divide, portion) + DĪM (to fashion)	cook
<i>sirāšū</i> (<i>širāšū</i>)	Sum. lw.? ŠIM or related to <i>sirāšu</i> (type of beer)	ŠIM (herb, aromatic wood)	brewer
<i>šāḥitu</i>	Ptc. of <i>šāḥātu</i> Ptc.	to press, squeeze	(oil-)presser
<i>ṭābiḥu</i>	Ptc. of <i>ṭabāḥu</i> Ptc.	to slaughter	butcher

Table 7: artisanal food producers.

Title	Formation	Translation
<i>āpītu</i>	key word + (a)t-infix	female baker
<i>karkadinnutu</i>	key word + (a)t-infix	female confectioner

Table 8: female artisanal food producers.

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