

Karkemish of the Hittites on the Euphrates New Discoveries and New Acquisitions



ALMA MATER STUDIORUM - UNIVERSITÀ DI BOLOGNA
DIPARTIMENTO DI STORIA CULTURE CIVILTÀ

Karkemish of the Hittites on the Euphrates New Discoveries and New Acquisitions

Ankara, Museum of Anatolian Civilizations, February 2nd to March 26th, 2026

edited by
Nicolò Marchetti

Ante
Quem

OrientLab
Research on the archaeology of the ancient Near East
Series editor: Nicolò Marchetti

www.orientlab.net/pubs

Editorial staff: Vittoria Cardini, Claudia D'Orazio

Text and images are licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution CC
BY-NC-SA 4.0 of the Authors and Ante Quem S.r.l., if not credited otherwise



All images, if not credited otherwise, refer to monuments and material from the site of Karkemish and are the copyright of the Turco-Italian Archaeological Expedition at Karkemish.

Published by Ante Quem S.r.l. and the Department of History and Cultures – University of Bologna
Via Senzanome 10, 40123 Bologna – tel. and fax +39 051 4211109
www.antequem.it

Printed in January 2026

ISBN: 978-88-7849-212-7 (paperback)
ISBN: 978-88-7849-213-4 (online)
doi: 10.12878/orientlab3

FOUNDING UNIVERSITIES



Alma Mater Studiorum - University of Bologna
Department of History and Cultures



Istanbul University
Faculty of Letters - Department of Ancient Languages
and Cultures



Gaziantep University
Faculty of Architecture

FINANCIAL SPONSORS



Alma Mater Studiorum - University of Bologna



Ministero degli Affari Esteri
e della Cooperazione Internazionale



Ministero
dell'Università
e della Ricerca



SANKO Holding

PARTNERSHIPS



Turkish Ministry of Culture and Tourism
Directorate General for Cultural Heritage and
Museums



Museum of Anatolian Civilizations Directorate



Istanbul Archaeological Museums Directorate



Gaziantep Archaeological Museum Directorate



Gaziantep Metropolitan Municipality



Turco-Italian Archaeological
Expedition at Karkamış Höyük

TABLE OF CONTENTS

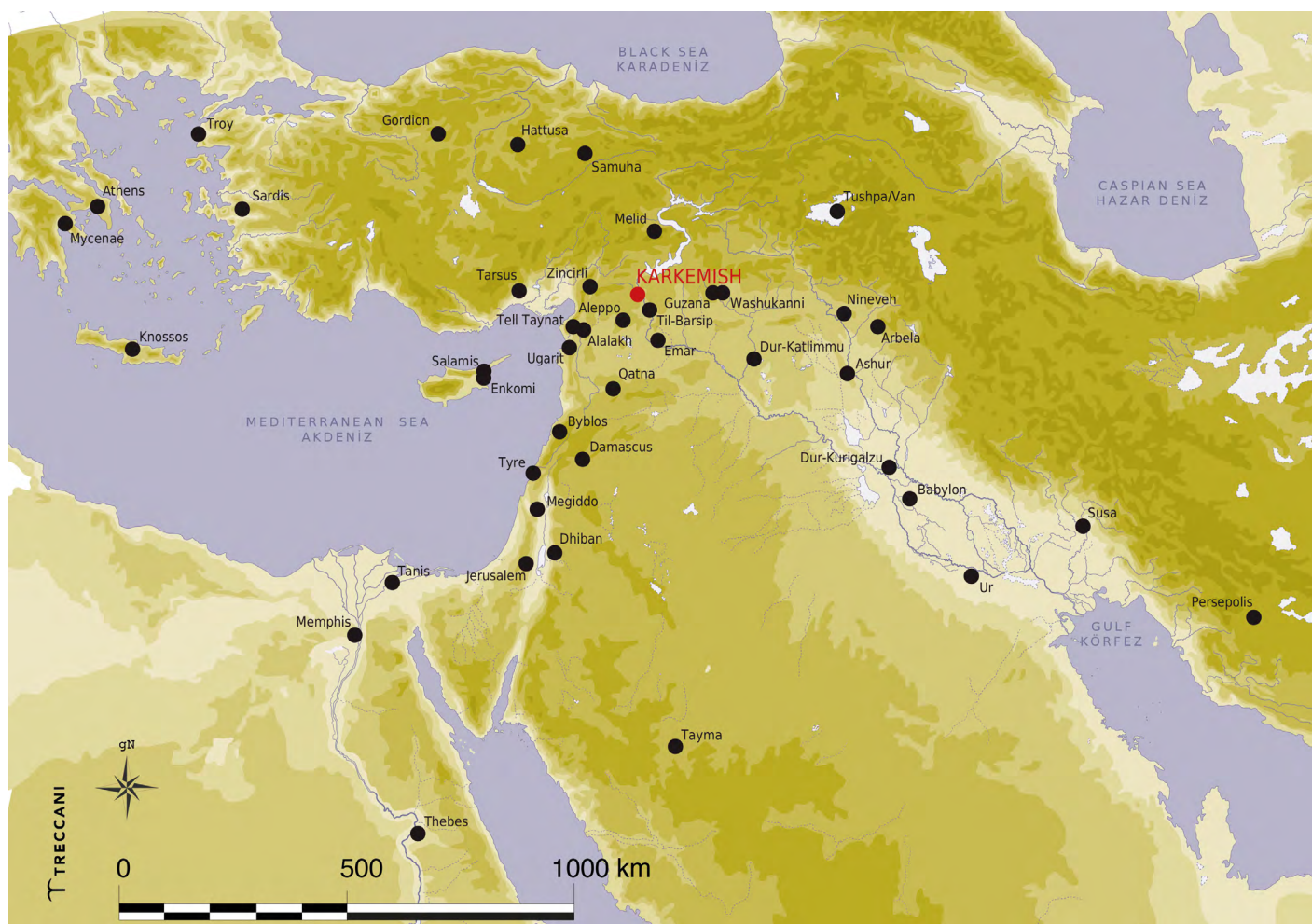
Forewords.....	7
Visual communication at Karkemish between the Imperial and Late Hittite periods NICOLÒ MARCHETTI.....	14
Anatolian hieroglyphic writing at Karkemish HASAN PEKER.....	24
The Late Bronze II and Iron I-II layers at Karkemish VITTORIA CARDINI, CLAUDIA D’ORAZIO, GABRIELE GIACOSA, SARA PIZZIMENTI, ROSA RIVOLTELLA.....	28
The Hittite Empire period sealing archive from Karkemish: a web of officials and economic tasks GIACOMO BENATI, CLAUDIA D’ORAZIO, NICOLÒ MARCHETTI, HASAN PEKER.....	40
A unique Late Hittite monumental cuneiform inscription from Karkemish GIANNI MARCHESI.....	44
The Karkemish archaeological landscape between Late Bronze II and Iron II periods GABRIELE GIACOSA, MEDYA KARAKAYA, MERVE ÖZYİĞİT, BEYAZIT SÖYLEMEZ, İBRAHİM ÜNGÖR.....	46
The bioarchaeology of Karkemish between Late Bronze II and Iron II periods MÜGE ERGUN, ELENA MAINI, ELEONORA SERRONE, RULA SHAFIQ, ALEXANDER WEIDE.....	50
The museum collections from Karkemish in Türkiye UMUT ALAGÖZ, RAHMİ ASAL, ÖZGÜR ÇOMAK, RAMAZAN EKER, YUSUF KİRAÇ, MUSTAFA METİN.....	54
The new arrangement of the Karkemish sculptures in the central hall of the Museum of Anatolian Civilizations UMUT ALAGÖZ, NICOLÒ MARCHETTI, MUSTAFA METİN.....	58
The digital repository for the Late Bronze II sealing archive and the 3D model of Late Hittite Karkemish JACOPO MONASTERO.....	60

CATALOGUE

Nos. 1-57.....66

BIBLIOGRAPHY.....

188





CATALOGUE

Authors' initials:

BB Barbara Bolognani

CDO Claudia D'Orazio

GG Gabriele Giacosa

GM Gianni Marchesi

HP Hasan Peker

LB Lorenzo Bellaviti

MM Mustafa Metin

MYM Mehmet Yiğit Meydan

NM Nicolò Marchetti

SB Sara Bottino

UA Umut Alagöz

*Photos and drawings are reproduced at the scale indicated at the bottom of the page, where present, with the exception of details marked with * and of the 3D models. The museum where the piece is kept is indicated in parentheses after its inventory number.*



Cylinder seal

Excavation no. KH.17.O.448 (Gaziantep)

Material: Hematite

Dimensions: diam. 1.45; h. 3.75 cm

Context: Lower Palace, area C East, Seal-house, fill F.8867 (phase A)

Date: Late Bronze IIB, 13th century BCE

Cat. 1

Description

This is the only seal actually associated with the large deposit of discarded, impressed sealings found below the floor of the so-called Seal-house in area C East (for which see under Cat. nos. 3-4, 14). Of it, quite exceptionally, we also possess an impression (KH.17.O.671) on a sealing applied to a small container, thus showing that the seal was actually one of those involved in the control of the (sealed) goods of the storeroom. The inscribed cylinder is outstanding, both for its dimensions and for the quality of its engraving, which belongs to a court workshop most likely based at Karkemish itself. The scene features a standing Storm-god, who can be identified as such by the horned high cap – horns being a symbol of divinity – and by the thunderbolt held in his left hand (which is, as customary, tripartite but actually here more W-shaped, as in the hieroglyphic logogram for the god's name, L199 TONITRUS, Tarhunna in Hittite, Tarhunza in Luwian, Teshub in Hurrian, Hadad in North-west Semitic). The right hand holds a mace against the shoulder and a dagger is suspended to his short kilt, while the shoes with upturned toes are a typical Hittite rendering. In front of the god, the Great King - wearing a hairy (which usually is plain, instead, but see the contemporary royal seal in Waal 2026: fig. 33.3) skull cap and a long, tasseled robe - extends his right arm in a prayer's gesture with an 'ankh life symbol above his hand and with the left holds the curved staff of his high office known in Hittite texts as *kalmuš*, while a winged sun disk hovering above confirms the visual identification for this



personage assimilated to the Sun-god (who is actually the emperor and not the king of Karkemish, see Aro 2022: 516-518, figs. 11.3b,5a; Beyer 2001: 341-347, figs. 60-61). A guilloche frames the visual field on both edges, with the lines of the cuneiform legend serving as scene divider. Some fillers are placed behind the sovereign: they are not actual writing although they must represent a landscape of symbolic meaning, even if their connective interpretation remains elusive. Some of them are in fact well known motives, such as the (here much stylized and repeated twice, another one appears next to the emperor's right hand) 'ankh life-symbol (L440-441 VITA; Herbordt 2006: 104, fig. 12) as well as the rosette, which is often associated with royalty in imperial Hittite glyptic (cf. Dinçol and Dinçol 2008: pls. 6.56b, 7.66b); on the other hand, the bird of prey, a falcon or an eagle rendered in fine detail, does not seem a hint to the goddess Kubaba because her logogram does not have the outstretched wing (cf. L130 AVIS3), while the X may be the sign for 100 (L399 CENTUM). Overall, they must evoke well-wishing and/or an idea of strength in relation to the Great King. The inscription, both in cuneiform and Anatolian hieroglyphs, gives the name and profession of the owner. The hieroglyphs of the name form the sequence *su* (L370)-L392-*li* (L278), while in cuneiform it is written as ^m*Šu-na-DINGIR-LI*, thus ensuring a reading of the name as Sunaili (Peker 2023a: 131 sub 19, fig.19). In the Karkemish seal, he bears - but only in hieroglyphic writing - the title AULA (L254) "loyal man/loyal nobleman" and his profession is indicated with the sign MAGUS/MEDICUS (L135.2), to be translated as "physician". It has been suggested (Dinçol and Dinçol 2008: 68) that the latter sign is a depiction of a snake: in fact, if one examines the MAGUS/MEDICUS (L135.2) sign intently on this perfectly carved and preserved seal, the depiction supports the idea that, with its blunt muzzle and horn like protrusions, it looks more like a snake than a bird (which somehow suggests a possible, fascinating connection with the snake rod of the Greek healing god Asclepius).

NM, HP