

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

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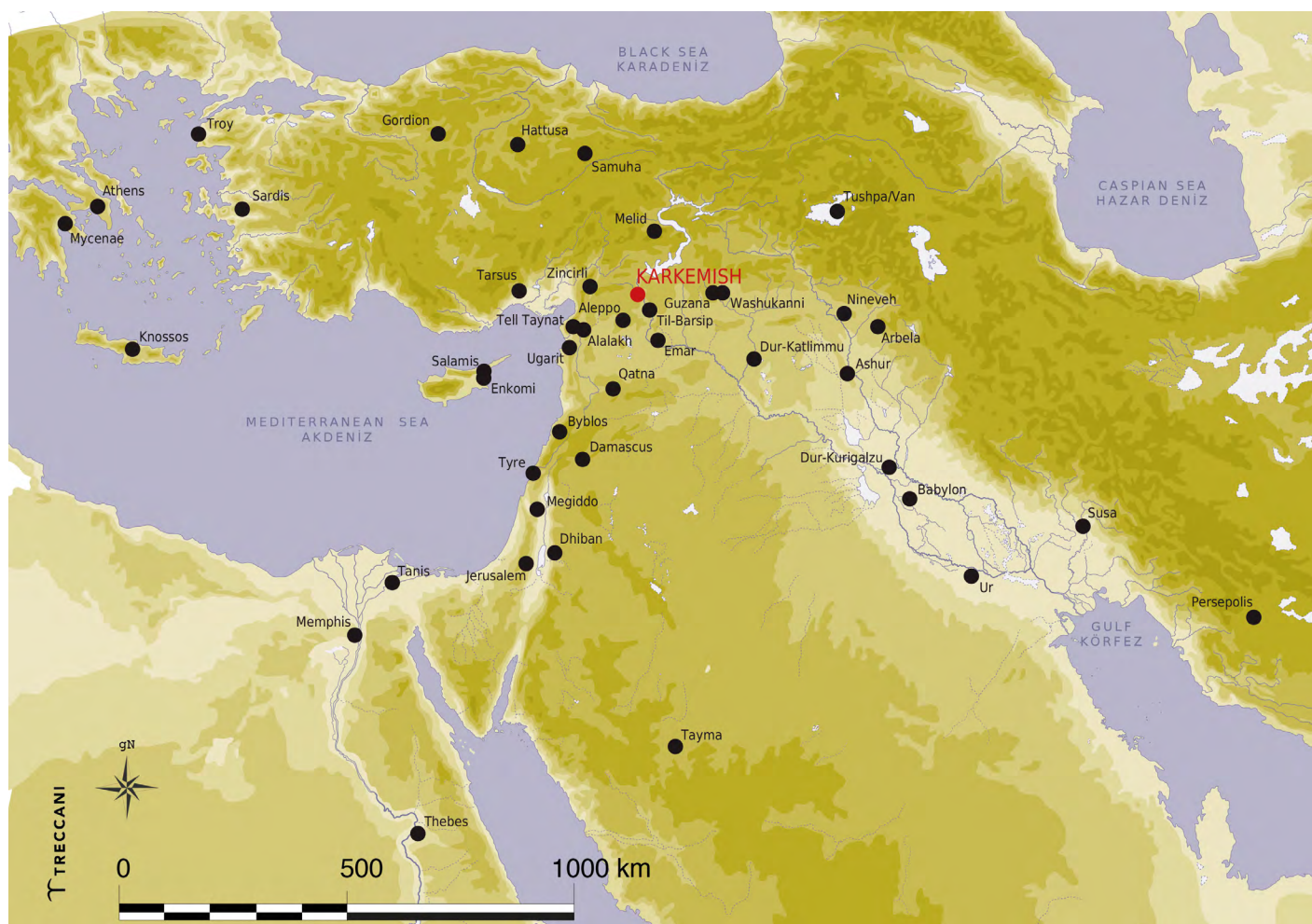
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27

28



Impressed sealings

Cat. 27
28
29
30

Excavation no. KH.20.O.284 (Gaziantep)

Dimensions: h. 1.7; w. 3.6; th. 1.2 cm

Excavation no. KH.20.O.283 (Gaziantep)

Dimensions: l. 4.3; w. 4.2; th. 1.5 cm

Excavation no. KH.20.O.286 (Gaziantep)

Dimensions: l. 2.7; w. 2.4; th. 1.6 cm

Excavation no. KH.20.O.285 (Gaziantep)

Dimensions: l. 2.7; w. 2.1; th. 1.7 cm

Material: Clay

Context: Lower Palace, area C Center, fill F.11109

Date: Early Iron I, c. mid-late 12th century BCE

The study of the back of these sealings reveals that three of them were originally fastened to a cylindrical wooden-peg (closing a door or a lid) with at least four laps of twisted string around it (Cat. nos. 27-29), as shown by the concave surface on the reverse and the negative impressions of string (four laps in Cat. no. 27, two in Cat. no. 29, while Cat. no. 28 presents the string imprint on the obverse, probably as the return part of the string). One sealing had been likely secured to a wooden box or lid, as indicated by the negative trace of flat wooden strips on the base (Cat. no. 30). Traces of fingerprints are visible on the obverse of two sealings (Cat. nos. 27-28). They were found within a deposit of one hundred sealings spread over the floor of room L.11115 of an Iron I building, built immediately above the Late Bronze II Seal-house, of which it seems to have kept the same administrative functions. 67 very fragmentary sealings had been impressed with the same circular stamp seal (the original diameter of which was 3.5 cm, see

Description



29



30



the graphic reconstruction) and Cat. nos. 27-30 each show some parts of its iconography and legend. A female figure holding a rod (a symbol of authority) is depicted standing with extended arms, the right one bent upwards. The details are rendered in a very fine manner, such as the lips and the ear. The woman seems to wear a hairy cap (unless it is a render of hair with a head-band) and has a strand of long hair on the back. The long robe, with a belt and a tassel at the bottom, has sleeves and its fabric is rendered with vertical strokes. There are two women's names on the reconstruction of this seal. Behind the figure, there is the standard hieroglyphic Iron Age Seal Inscription formula (but without phonetic complements for the personal names in genitive), possibly the earliest attested one. Its transcription runs: *zi/a-wa/i* BONUS₂ SIGILLUM *ma-ti-i(a)* BONUS₂ FEMINA, and in front of the figure: DARE-*ma-á-la-zu(wa/i)* BONUS₂ FEMINA. The translation is: This good seal (is of) Matiya, the wealthy woman / (and of) Piyama-Al(l)anzu(wa) the wealthy woman. Matiya is attested both as a male name in cuneiform sources (Laroche 1966: 790; Gelb, Purves and MacRae 1943: 96-97), as well as a female one at Nuzi (Gelb, Purves and MacRae 1943: 97). Al(l)anzu(wa) is a goddess, one of the granddaughters of Hebat (Hawkins 2024: 14, cf. YAZILIKAYA no. 45; Hutter 2021: 185). The administrative prominence of the personage(s) using this seal (either one of the seal's owners or a person acting on behalf of them) is shown by the simple fact that two thirds of the sealings in the deposit were impressed by this seal. That the seal belongs to two women is further proof of the economic role which women could have in Hittite society during the Empire (Weeden 2026) and - we have now learnt - also in the post-Empire periods.

CDO, NM, HP

Peker 2023b: 362, note 11

References