

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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edited by
Nicolò Marchetti

Ante
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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 ÖZYIĞIT, 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

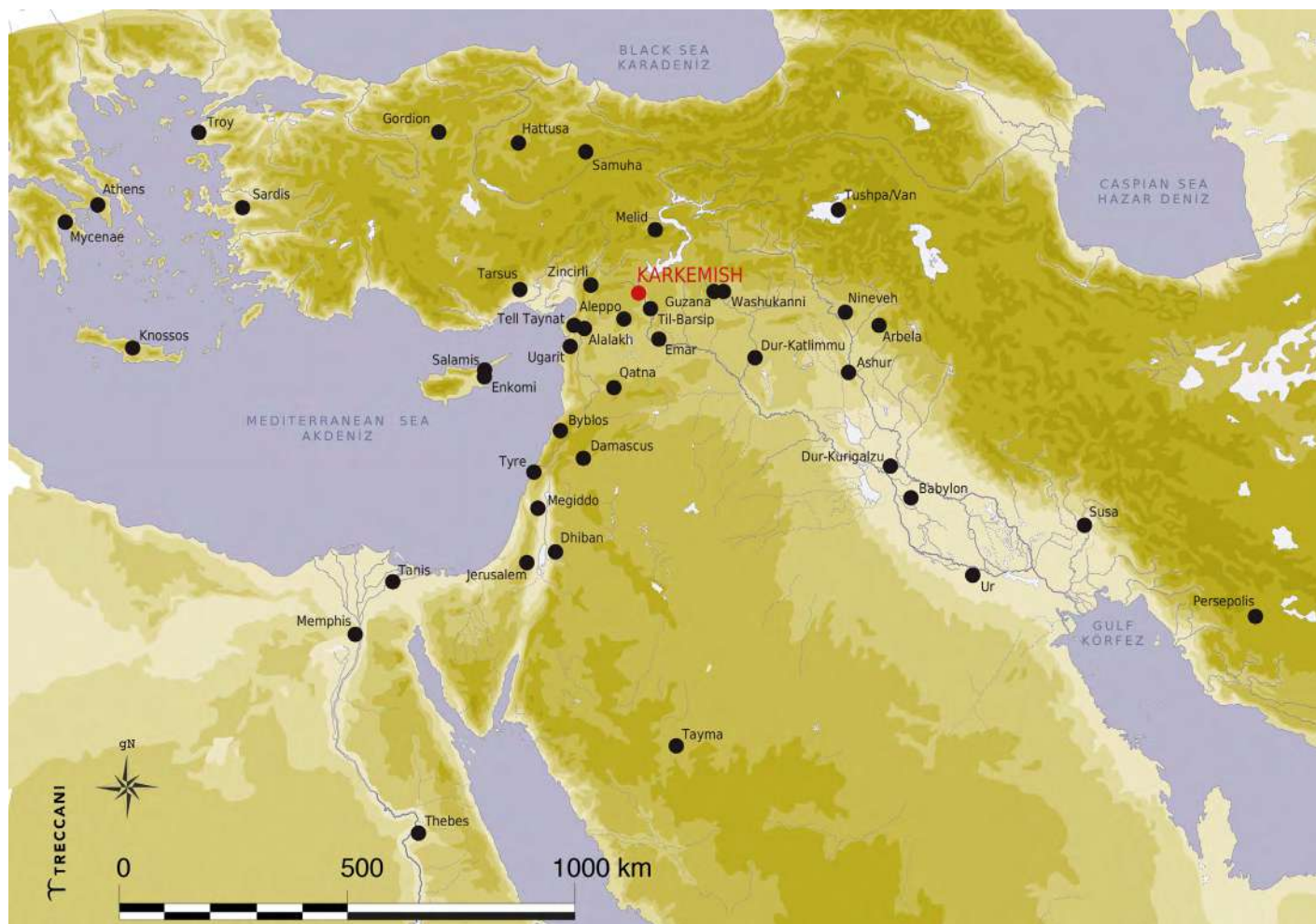
CATALOGUE

Nos. 1-57.....

66

BIBLIOGRAPHY.....

188



FOREWORDS

Karkemish, situated on the banks of the Euphrates River at a strategic crossing between Anatolia and Mesopotamia, emerged as one of the most significant commercial and political centers of the Ancient Near East. During the Hittite Empire period, the settlement acquired the character of a frontier city and an administrative hub, and it continued to maintain its importance after the collapse of the empire as the capital of one of the Late Hittite kingdoms. The orthostats, inscriptions, and architectural remains that have survived from this long historical trajectory provide direct insight into the artistic production, religious thought, and political organization of the Hittite Empire and Late Hittite periods. In particular, the war scenes, royal representations, and depictions of deities carved on the orthostats clearly articulate the ideological framework and concepts of power that shaped the period. In this respect, Karkemish and its associated archaeological remains occupy a prominent position in scholarly research as a key reference point for understanding political continuity, cultural interaction, and artistic development in the histories of Anatolia and North Mesopotamia. The first systematic archaeological excavations at the site were conducted between 1911 and 1914 under the direction of the British archaeologists David Hogarth and Leonard Woolley. During these campaigns, T. E. Lawrence (Lawrence of Arabia), who was present in the region in his capacity as an archaeologist before becoming a war intelligence officer, provided logistical support and contributed to field organization. Woolley's excavations brought to light palace complexes, monumental gateways, and orthostats with a wide range of thematic content; these discoveries clearly demonstrate that Karkemish had reached a high level of political organization and artistic production in the Late Hittite period. A substantial portion of the orthostats, inscriptions, sculp-

tures, and architectural fragments recovered from the excavations at Karkemish is today displayed in the collection of the Museum of Anatolian Civilizations. These reliefs—depicting scenes of hunting, warfare, banqueting, public presentation, processions of gods, and ceremonial processions involving priests and priestesses—occupy a distinguished position within the Iron Age Near Eastern artistic repertoire, both for their iconographic diversity and their state of preservation. Through these works, visitors are able to apprehend the political and religious structures of the Late Hittite period not solely through written sources, but within a comprehensive historical framework grounded in visual and material evidence and situated within the broader Anatolian chronology. In this respect, the Karkemish reliefs constitute one of the Museum's most prominent collection groups, as they vividly reflect the characteristic stylistic features of Late Hittite art. The gathering of these objects within the Museum of Anatolian Civilizations allows Karkemish to be considered not merely as a regional center, but within the broader framework of the long-term political and cultural transformations of Anatolian history. Within the Museum's chronological narrative—extending from prehistory to the Ottoman period—the Hittite Empire and Late Hittite phases acquire a concrete and legible structure through the Karkemish material, enabling visitors to trace a historical continuity that extends from a local archaeological context to the wider Anatolian landscape. The transfer of the archaeological finds uncovered at Karkemish to Ankara is directly linked to the cultural policies adopted by Mustafa Kemal Atatürk during the formative years of the Republic. This approach—emphasizing the centralized protection, documentation, and scholarly investigation of archaeological heritage—reflects a deliberate effort to

reposition Anatolia's multilayered past within a newly articulated national historical narrative. Within this framework, Hamit Zübeyir Koşay played an active role in overseeing excavations conducted according to scientific standards, in the systematic classification of the finds, and in their relocation to Ankara, thereby making them accessible within the public sphere; his efforts contributed significantly to the institutional foundations of Republican archaeology. Koşay's work, both at Karkemish and across Anatolia more broadly, enabled archaeological heritage to be removed from a strictly local context and integrated into a centralized museum narrative. In this respect, the display of the Karkemish material in the Stone Artefacts Hall of the Museum of Anatolian Civilizations may be regarded as a tangible indicator of the process through which historical consciousness began to be structured through museums in the early Republican period. In this respect, the Museum of Anatolian Civilizations has transformed Karkemish from an archaeological heritage confined to its excavation site into one of the principal institutional frameworks through which it has gained national and international visibility. The finds from Karkemish clearly demonstrate that, following the collapse of the Hittite Empire, political and cultural order in Anatolia did not disappear but instead persisted in reconfigured forms at centers such as Karkemish. Consequently, within the Museum's narrative, Karkemish has become one of the primary reference points through which political continuity in Anatolian history can be traced. The exhibition Karkemish of the Hittites on the Euphrates: New Discoveries and New Acquisitions, organized thanks to the collaboration between the Universities of Bologna, Istanbul, Gaziantep and the Museum of Anatolian Civilizations, provides a framework in which the finds recovered

from the excavations at Karkemish are examined within their historical contexts and in light of current scholarly approaches. This project demonstrates that the tradition of scholarly research on Karkemish — spanning more than a century — continues without interruption through contemporary contributions. We extend our gratitude to all institutions that supported the realization of the exhibition, foremost among them the Ministry of Culture and Tourism, as well as the University of Bologna and the SANKO Holding.

Yusuf Kiraç and Umut Alagöz

*Director and Deputy Director
The Museum of Anatolian Civilizations*

Anatolia is a unique geography where civilizations were born, cultures were blended, and some of the most striking chapters of human history were written. With its past extending over more than six thousand years, we experience the great honor and excitement of bringing together with you, here in our capital Ankara, through this exhibition, the magnificent heritage of the ancient city of Karkemish, which has left deep and lasting traces in the memory of these ancient lands. As SANKO Holding, throughout our 120-year corporate history rooted in this geography, we have carried out our industrial and production activities with a sense of responsibility toward contributing to society. For us, the preservation of cultural heritage is an indispensable cornerstone of a sustainable future, just as much as economic development. With the understanding inherited from our founders and serving as the compass of our Group — “Those who do not protect their past have no future” — we regard the preservation of the values entrusted to us by these lands not merely as a corporate responsibility, but as a debt to our homeland. At Karkemish, one of the most important crossroads of world history, we have taken pride since 2015 in supporting the archaeological excavations meticulously conducted by the Turco–Italian joint expedition under the auspices of the Ministry of Culture and Tourism of the Republic of Türkiye. At the same time, through our engineering vision, we have also contributed to history’s resistance to time: the Lower Palace Protective Shelter Project, realized by one of our group companies, Poligon Construction, admired within the archaeological community for its originality and inaugurated in 2024, stands as a concrete expression of SANKO’s sensitivity toward cultural heritage and its vision of “preservation through continuity.” This exhibition held at the Museum of Anatolian Civiliza-

tions, together with the catalogue you hold in your hands, brings to light a memory that lay buried beneath the soil for thousands of years and presents it to large audiences. On these pages, every sculpture restored through the meticulous work of specialists and every small find on display whispers the stories of the people who once lived on these lands, who produced, and who shaped life. On this cultural and institutional journey extending from Zeugma to Karkemish, I would like to express my most sincere thanks, on behalf of myself and the SANKO Group, to our esteemed archaeological teams who work devotedly in the field, to the valued representatives of our Ministry, and to everyone who contributed to the realization of this precious exhibition, which brings the historical depth of Gaziantep into the international world of science and culture. I invite you to become a part of this ancient story carried from the banks of the Euphrates to our capital city, and I would like to emphasize once again that we will continue to build the future with the inspiration we draw from the past.

Respectfully,

*Adil Sani Konukoğlu
Chairman of the Board
SANKO Holding*

A public exhibition is an occasion to assess, reflect, celebrate and plan around a project, while at the same time serving the fundamental duty of communicating to the people new results about a scientific quest made possible by the collective support it has received. On the fifteenth year of fieldwork by the Turco-Italian Archaeological Expedition at Karkemish by the Universities of Bologna, Istanbul and Gaziantep, all these aspects are present at this event which marks both a milestone and a renewed starting point for the next phases of research. As scholars rooted in Open Science, we publish in Open Access and we share the underlying data: we develop and make public 3D models of scientific accuracy, we have strived both to open the site, located in a military area, to visitors and to build a multidisciplinary environment in which specialists bring their own perspectives and approaches around the shared goal of putting forward explanatory models of the past. Karkemish is an ancient site as well as a modern community and they both have become woven into the fabrics of our lives, much as it happened more than a century ago to the protagonists of the memorable archaeological exploration by the British Museum. To the people of Karkamış and nearby villages and to the friends and Authorities in Gaziantep, who have always fully supported us, we owe a debt which can only be honored through our enduring commitment to produce a sustainable future for the site, while contributing to the development of all the area for cultural as well environmental tourism. The Turco-Italian Archaeological Expedition at Karkemish by the universities of Bologna, Istanbul and Gaziantep (represented by Hasan Peker and Mustafa Özakça and now by Medya Karakaya and Mehmet Yiğit Meydan) is funded by the University of Bologna, the Italian Min-

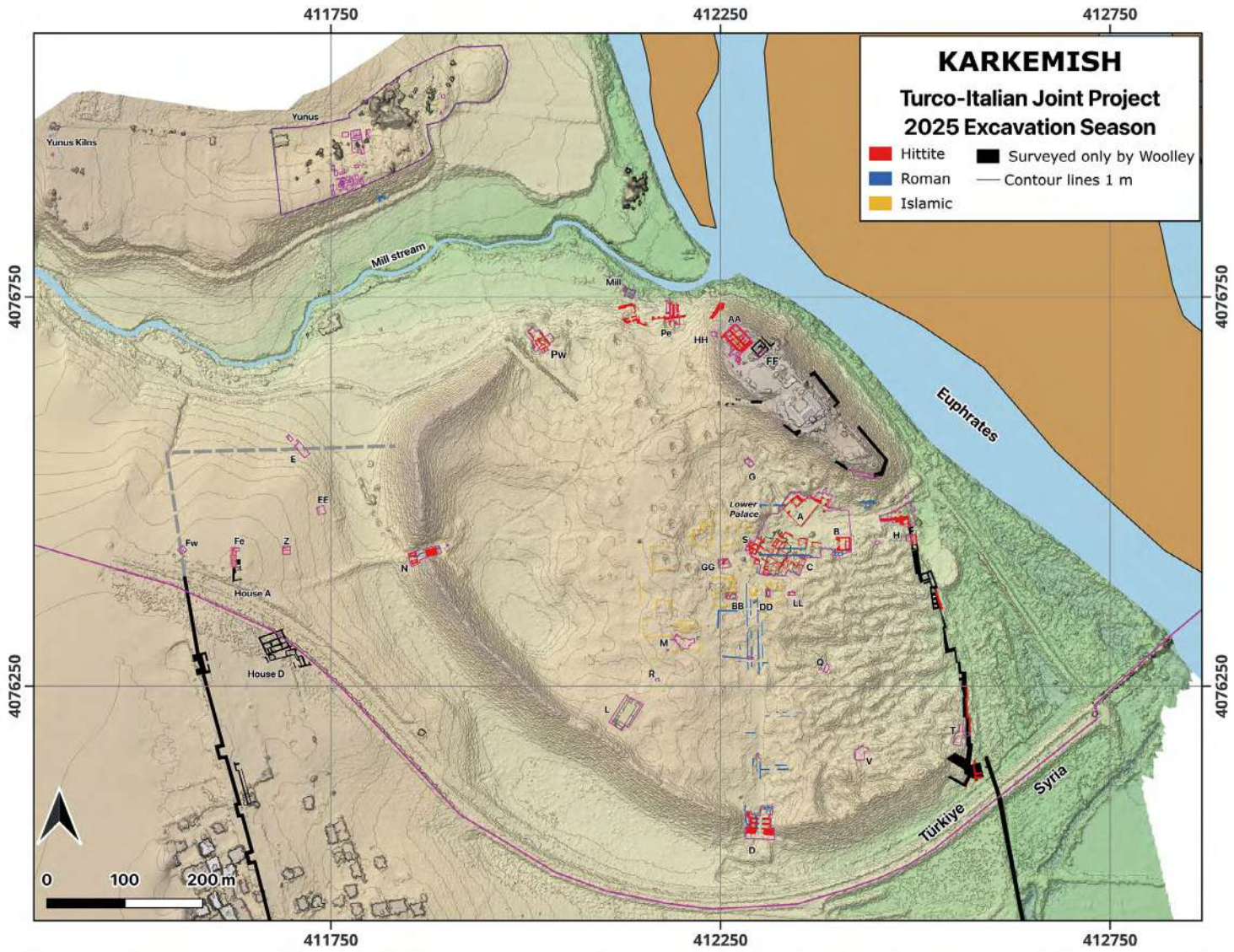
istry for Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation (DGCE 13th Office), that for Universities and Research, the SANKO Holding. We gratefully acknowledge the cooperation with the Turkish Ministry of Culture and Tourism, Directorate General for Cultural Heritage and Museums and its branches in the province of Gaziantep. Gaziantep Metropolitan Municipality, Gaziantep Governorate, Karkamış Municipality and Karkamış Local Governorate have constantly helped us in every way. The Italian Embassy in Ankara and the Italian Cultural Institute in Istanbul have always followed us with keen attention. It has been thanks to the generous and friendly reception of museum curators that we have been able to read anew the evidence, which had been documented and collected by the previous expedition, in light of our enhanced understanding of the site, through many study periods during the years (I filed museum collections thanks to the help mainly of Luisa Guerri, Antonio Bonomo and Federico Zaina). Besides the joins of new fragments to the sculptures exhibited in the main hall (for which see pp. 58-59), this exhibition presents to the public 57 objects from Turkish museums of significant historical importance spanning a period of 600 years when Hittite culture was prevalent at the site (1300-700 BCE), of which 28 unpublished and 29 – although published previously (but in many cases nothing more was known about their whereabouts) – presented here with new data, photos and interpretations. The Museum of Anatolian Civilizations has always welcomed us: this exhibition crowns years of collaboration and exchanges and we are very grateful to our colleagues Yusuf Kiraç and Umut Alagöz for deciding it together with the conservation program, building on the work carried out

with my friend Mustafa Metin, curator of the Karkemish section at the Museum, without whose keen availability, knowledge and commitment nothing would have been possible. At the Istanbul Archaeological Museums, first Zeynep Kızıltan and then Rahmi Asal as successive directors, together with our colleagues curators, allowed us to seamlessly study through their holdings from Karkemish. Gaziantep Archaeological Museum is our trusted and close partner in each endeavor, including the current one, and Özgür Çomak, Ramazan Eker, Mehmet Sait Yılmaz, Sait Uslu, Halil and Elif Yılmaz deserve our deepest gratitude. This exhibition and catalogue would not have been possible without the help of close friends, colleagues and collaborators. With Hasan Peker, who for many years has been deputy director of the Expedition, we have shared the exhibition concept and we sharpened our views on the ancient history of Karkemish through countless discussions down into the night: the format we have chosen is to let each object add a piece of history until composing a coherent historical framework after reading the whole catalogue. Claudia D’Orazio has been invaluable through all the preparatory and execution stages, and she keenly contributed to the redaction of the catalogue. Vittoria Cardini did an amazing job in typesetting both versions of the catalogue with her usual care and acumen. Jacopo Monastero is the driving force behind our 3D approach and he has realized the models of the glyptics publicly shared on https://www.orientlab.net/digital_museum/, as well as the immersive model of the Late Hittite monumental core of Karkemish at <https://www.orientlab.net/3d-kark/> (building on the photogrammetry carried out in Ankara by Giampaolo Luglio). Eleonora Mariani, Francesca Cavaliere and Gabriele Giacosa carefully checked and formatted the bibliography. Francesco

Prezioso masterfully took the object photos both at the dig house and in the museums, while Marco Valeri produced the maps and the cutouts of the images. Finally, we could not dream of a more committed translator, for the Turkish version of this Catalogue, than Bakış Çoğal, who availed herself of the technical consultancy of Yusuf Gürkan Ergin. The publisher, Marco Destro of Ante Quem, spent together with Enrico Galli a great deal of time in securing the best publishing result. Pınar Ulutaş of SANKO proved as usual to be an incredibly effective media manager. To all of them I wish to express my deepest gratitude and admiration. Finally, the SANKO Holding and Adil Sani Konukoğlu have since a decade believed in the Karkemish project as a means to develop the area, protect heritage and pursue new knowledge. Their generous commitment continued with the support which they extended to the Museum of Anatolian Civilizations for the conservation works carried in the main hall there involving, in the case of the larger orthostats, their temporary removal from the display walls and, in the case of the King’s Gate, their rearrangement within the Museum itself, thus setting a standard for a model cooperation between the public and private sectors.

Nicolò Marchetti

*Director of the
Turco-Italian Archaeological Expedition at Karkemish
Alma Mater Studiorum - University of Bologna*



VISUAL COMMUNICATION AT KARKEMISH BETWEEN THE IMPERIAL AND LATE HITTITE PERIODS

Nicolò Marchetti

When we started in 2011 the renewed joint excavations at Karkemish, among our main immediate aims there was to check the stratigraphy, chronology and layout of the famous monuments uncovered a century earlier by the past expedition, as well as to initiate a systematic exploration of all the different sectors of the city with a view to understand in detail how it functioned and developed through time. The wealth of visual finds from the British Museum excavations at Karkemish between 1878-1881, 1911-1914 and 1920 (when the site became part of an off-limits Turkish military area, see Marchetti 2014c) could not be precisely linked to the stratigraphy of the site due to the inadequate excavation methods, as well as to the still then incomplete picture given by philological analysis: the Iron age monuments exposed were later on grossly correlated with one another and the sculptures have since been put into a sequence on the basis of philological and/or stylistic arguments. After fifteen years of fieldwork at Karkemish, we have retrieved much new evidence for the Bronze and Iron ages (see the map on p. 13) as well as for the relevant monumental artistic production, which is mainly, but not uniquely, connected with the rulers' commissions (during the Iron age commoners could in fact dedicate stelae in temples and in the Yunus necropolis). That production was intended for three different type of contexts: temple areas, city gates and palatial compounds. The sculpted cycles have thus far been dated on epigraphic, as well as stylistic grounds, but our excavations

supplied a firmer context. Furthermore, what is emerging in full is the interplay between the so-called major and minor arts, expressions of a society whose embedded visual codes freely flowed from one medium to another (Winter 1983). As for the settlement history during the periods with which we are concerned here, we have recovered extensive evidence all over the Inner Town that a conflagration took place at the end of Late Bronze I (hereafter LB): we tentatively link this evidence to the Hittite takeover of the city around the middle of the 14th century BCE by Suppiluliuma I. Reconstruction seems to have followed suit (during what we call LB IIA) in all areas according to local cultural traditions, albeit with a grand coherent new urban plan (which then shaped the layout of the city down to Roman times). The pre-existing fortification system – massive earthen ramparts still towering up to 22 m above the surrounding outer plain and built during the 20th century BCE – remained into use, but the West Gate was blocked, the North-Western Fort and the massive building AA on the acropolis were built at this time and the mud-brick River Wall was replaced by another one with stone foundations (see pp. 28-30). In what is called the Lower Palace area at the south-eastern foot of the acropolis, two tower temples were built at the beginning of LB II, as well as an administrative building in LB IIB (the “Seal-house,” see p. 30), where more than 700 clay sealings were found. The latter evidence with its seal impressions helps us in

defining a glyptic workshop active at the site in the 13th century BCE (Figs. 1-2), one in which Anatolian iconographies were seamlessly integrated in the Syrian repertoire and stylistic canons (and media as well, since cylinder seals are rather typical of Syria and stamp seals of Anatolia since the Middle Bronze age), as the evidence from contemporary Emar down on the Euphrates first showed in detail (Beyer 2001). We may even perhaps note an internal development from phase A to B (a period spanning a decade at most, on stratigraphic as well as prosopographical grounds, see under Cat. no. 4), when the naturalistically rendered figures are represented, in the upper level, above acolyte animals or genies (cf. e.g. Cat. nos. 1-2 vs. Cat. nos. 4-7). The different levels of bureaucratic organization and allegiance, intended as differential access (also visually expressed) to power structures, may be shown by the fact that at Karkemish the officials in the central administrative core used seals with mostly Anatolian iconographies,



Fig. 1. Some of the impressed sealings from the Seal-house of Late Bronze IIB, 13th century BCE, area C East, 2019 season.

where present, and with legends, both cuneiform and hieroglyphic (Cat. nos. 1-11), while in the peripheral Fortress P the seals were only cylindrical, uninscribed and featuring Syrian motives (only 7 sealings out of 57 bore impressions, however, see D’Orazio 2021). Popular Syrian productions are attested elsewhere at the site (Cat. nos. 20-21). Hittite imperial control of North Syria manifested itself also in the construction of monumental complexes, in which, for the first time systematically, architectural sculptures were set into the walls, as in the temples of the Storm-god at Aleppo (Fig. 3; Kohlmeyer 2013; Hawkins 2011) and of ‘Ain Dara (Novák 2014). At Karkemish we have the so-called Hilani in area B, in fact an in antis temple of the Syrian cultural tradition type, which supplies some similar evidence as those other two LB II cultic buildings: three orthostat fragments with reliefs of bull-men found in and around the Hilani do share some common features among them (Fig. 4), both iconographically and stylistically, being slightly

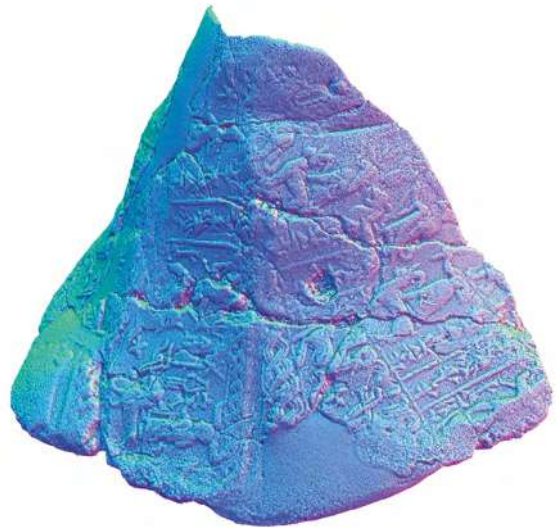


Fig. 2. Digital 3D model of the sealing applied to a door-peg and impressed multiple times with a cylinder seal belonging to Zinni I (Cat. no. 4), the storehouse administrator of the Hittite royal court in Karkemish (by J. Monastero).



Fig. 3. The cella of the Storm-god temple in the Aleppo citadel, in background one can see the cult relief of Late Bronze IIB, 13th century BCE, with bull-men at the sides and, to the left, the mostly 10th century BCE sculpted orthostats of the pedestal (courtesy of K. Kohlmeyer and J. D. Hawkins[†]).

smaller and with more accurately incised details than other decorated orthostats found in the vicinities and they may thus be attributed to LB II. They must have been minor, side motifs of a major element now lost: it is not possible to say for sure where they originally stood, but, since the cella still keeps plain orthostats in situ, the best hypothesis sees them placed along the façade of the Hilani (Marchetti 2016a). A single fragment of a basalt statue discovered in 2025 in the Water Gate, of a standing male figure with long robe, could be dated by Hasan Peker to the Hittite Empire on the basis of its inscription, thus providing a glimpse into other kinds of monumental artworks of the period. If we can now understand how architectural decoration came to be at Karkemish, assessing the evidence from the beginning of Iron I is on the other hand challenging, being a

period which in general presents interpretative uncertainties at regional level as well. A breakthrough came from Hasan Peker's work on the chronology of the hieroglyphic inscriptions from the region: it was especially his accurate dating of the Malatya rulers (Peker 2022a: table 2; Hawkins 2000: 306 had already suspicions), which bears consequences because of their names carved on sculpted specimens from the Lion Gate of Arslantepe. The relief series from the Water Gate in area H at Karkemish (Fig. 5; Woolley 1921: pls. B.28-31a-b) may in fact on stylistic grounds be closely compared with the Malatya Lion Gate series (e.g. Hawkins 2000: 309-310, V.9. Malatya 8, pl. 149), whose PUGNUS.MI-LI may likely be the I of that name, i.e. the son of Kuzi-Teshub (see Table 1 on p. 26): given the fact that the latter may be pegged to the early-mid 12th century BCE, the Water Gate reliefs

cannot be much later and thus they significantly predate the Suhi-Katuwa(-Suhi) dynasty. That is the same time when new visual and verbal formulae were devised in glyptics as well (see Cat. nos. 23-30; cf. the locks of hair of the officials in Cat. nos. 24-25 with those in the orthostats of the Water gate, Fig. 5; Woolley 1921: pl. B.30a-b), developing codes of the Empire into a new, characteristic media constellation. It is only with the stele by Suhi I, found in 2011, that we have a securely dated monument (around 975 BCE; Dinçol et al. 2014a; 2014b), from a ruler under whom the increasing autonomy of the Karkemish local dynasty in respect of the Great Kings of Hittite descent started to take place (see Table 2 on p. 27). Starting from the mid-10th century BCE the rulers of Karkemish began competing in embellishing the town in the search for the consensus of an urban population which seems to have taken part to “civic rituals” mainly taking place into public spaces, especially open plazas next to temples: it was there that the greatest effort for visual communication and communal ritual performances was enacted by the rulers of the city (Fig. 6). The Long Wall of Sculpture may be ascribed to Suhi II thanks to an inscription of his on one of the slabs of the outer temenos wall of the Storm-god temple (which, founded in LB II, was refurbished by Katuwa as he states in the inscriptions on the door-jambs). The Long Wall of Sculpture is opened by a procession of deities led by the Storm-god and in front of these images, as Suhi II tells us in his inscription, the people assembled in the plaza were supposed to depose offerings (but according to their relative personal wealth). It was however the ruler Katuwa, great-grandson of Suhi I and son of Suhi II, who, at the close of the 10th century BCE, built the most lavishly decorated complex in the inner town, a large palace, bordering the temple plaza to the South, organized into different pavilions as our excavations revealed (Marchetti and Peker 2019-2020). The outer walls of the building had a dado of slabs alternating in black (basalt) and white (limestone). The selection of themes echoes very precisely the earliest sculpted cycles from Zincirli/Sam'al (those from the South Gate and the Citadel Gate), a clear indication of the shared visual culture and messaging among the polities from this period. Notwithstanding many



Fig. 4. Fragments of basalt orthostats carved with bullman's hands and hoofs, tail and spear (KH.11.O.210 and KH.12.O.90+255, h. 19 and 17 cm), from the "Hilani" temple, area B, 13th century BCE.

different datings proposed for the sculptures in this area, we can now confidently assign all of them to Katuwa: thus, there must have been various workshops active at the same time, which explains the stylistic differences noted. In our phase 10 of area C, the palace of Katuwa included Woolley's King's Gate (Fig. 7; see also p. 59 and Figs. 1-2), Processional Entry and Herald's Wall (so-called because of its mostly symmetric contest scenes) on the western and northern sides, in front of the reliefs of which, again, offerings were intended to be made during public rituals, as Katuwa himself prescribes in inscriptions embedded therein. Our



Fig. 5. Limestone orthostat KH.11.O.206 with the Storm-god ascending his chariot while an unknown ruler performs a libation in front of him, late 12th or early 11th century BCE, h. 123 cm, Water Gate, area H, in situ.

Expedition has uncovered a row of slabs with gazelle bearers decorating the outer, southern wall of the palace (Fig. 8), while the eastern side of the palace featured orthostats with fantastic animals striding to the right (its sculpted orthostats keep being found in the excavations up to 2025; Fig. 9). The King's Gate lead to a large paved area around which public buildings, currently under excavation, were located: in areas GG and BB, Iron II monumental, though razed remains have been revealed, while in area LL we have begun exposing what is likely an Iron II temple, where in situ on the floor there was an inscribed round statue base dedicated by Katuwa. The 9th century represents a documentary void (a fact actually which has been explained as a weakening of the ruling house operated by the elites, who promoted their own visual representation through stelae, see Bonatz 2000; see also Swartz Dodd 2013 for trajectories similar to Karkemish sketched for the Kahramanmaraş area). We do, in fact,

have some stelae from the countryside of Karkemish belonging to local leaders professing their allegiance to the ruling family of Katuwa and his son, Suhi III (we learned his name only very recently): the standard iconography features a goddess protecting the tiny figure of the leader (two identical specimens were found in the Karkemish territory; Peker 2022b), of which one inscribed, but one also comes from Tell Ahmar/Til Barsip, highlighting once again how models were widely shared). It is only with the regent Yariri at the close of that century that a new monument by the ruling house, the Royal Buttress, is attested. Our excavations revealed that it was laid over much earlier sculpted slabs in limestone with animal contest scenes and passing bulls, revealing a pattern of reuse and recycling concurrent with the changing monumental face of the city. After his coming-of-age, Kamani produced a score of monuments. It is likely, albeit not certain, that the limestone stat-

ue (almost identical to one from Arslantepe) with inscribed socle and the lion found in the South Gate belong to this king. The recently recomposed stele of Kubaba “Queen of Karkemish,” originally dedicated by him in her temple precinct of the acropolis, documents in full the iconography of the main goddess of Karkemish around 790 BCE (Fig. 10; Marchetti and Peker 2018). From the Storm-god temple area, a fragment of a stele found by Woolley was recently read as portraying this god and attributed again to Kamani (Marchetti 2016a: 376-378, figs. 11-12). The close of the 8th century, and actually the end of Late Hittite monumental art at the site, is represented by the series of basalt sculptures at the top of the Great Staircase in area A East, which are usually attributed to Astiru II. Some of the themes which were selected by the monumental art, were favored also in minor arts: in addition to the pyxides (Cat. nos. 38-40; see D’Orazio 2022; 2025), it is espe-

cially glyptics, which allows us to gaze on elite members’ preferred self-representation in media which were at their disposal. Hunting, but depicted according to a variety of scenes, was the most popular, heroic theme of the cylinder seals, which were quite tall in order to have a wider field. Seal Cat. no. 33 is one of the most remarkable seals found at Karkemish and it belongs to a group which do share characteristic which were first partly recognized by Collon (2001: 35, singling out the notched borders as a typical feature, to which one can also add Woolley 1921: pl. 26.b5) and which can now be described as the Iron II glyptic repertoire of the Karkemish workshops. We have in fact to distinguish between the cylinder seals from the city itself, which are the best executed, with carefully arranged scenes and figures rendered with attention to details and a fuller style (in addition to Cat. no. 33, see also Woolley 1921: pls. 25.b3, 26.b12 [=Collon 2001: pl. I.2] and two beautiful seals in the



Fig. 6. UAV view of the Lower Palace area at the end of the 2017 excavation season. On the bottom and on the left the temples in areas A and B, the palace of Katuwa is in center-background.

Istanbul Archaeological Museums, inv. nos. 6948 and 6956; Fig. 11), and those coming from the countryside, more linear and schematic (from Merj Hamis/Yurtbağı and elsewhere, see Collon 2001: pl. I.1, 4, 6, 8-9, featuring hunting scenes but also animal rows and mythical winged creatures). When Sargon II in 717 BCE decided to conquer Karkemish in order to start through its fabulous booty the construction of his new capital of Dur-Sharrukin in Assyria, he took pains at the same time to carefully administering it, possibly with the aim of turning it into the main Assyrian outpost in the Levant (as the three extraordinary inscribed fragmentary clay cylinders by this king found in 2015 hint to; Marchesi

2019). However, the Assyrians, themselves masters of visual communication, could not stand the existence of public programs from alternative visual codes and the Late Hittite sculpted cycles were obliterated by erecting against them some benches or removed altogether and reused as building materials. No new large-scale visual kits were realized: only two stelae of Sargon II, inscribed in cuneiform and fragments of which have been found both during the old and new excavations in the Lower Palace area, stood to remind the inhabitants of Karkemish (as at many other Levantine cities) that from that moment on the only legitimation came from the Assyrian sovereign and his distant national god Ashur.



Fig. 7. Limestone orthostat KH.13.O.1277+KH.16.O.771, late 10th century BCE, h. 104 cm, King's Gate, area C, in situ.



Fig. 8. Basalt and limestone orthostats with gazelle bearers from the time of the ruler Katuwa (925-900 BCE) along the southern side of his palace, in situ.



Fig. 9. Limestone orthostat KH.15.O.415+KH.25.O.660, late 10th century BCE, h. 84 cm, area of the eastern outer wall of Katuwa's palace, area C South, in situ.



Fig. 10. The stele of Kubaba dedicated by Kamani in her temple precinct on the acropolis as it has been recomposed (presumed height c. 230 cm): fragment A is kept in the British Museum (ME125007), b1 in the Vatican Museums (126705), b3, C, D and E in Gaziantep Museum (KH.13.O.739, KH.15.O.690, KH.12.O.607, KH.14.O.283 respectively).



Fig. 11. Gray stone cylinder seal with a bull hunting scene from the chariot and astral symbols on top, 9th-8th centuries BCE, inv. no. 6948, h. 4.1 cm (courtesy of the Istanbul Archaeological Museums). The seal is inscribed in hieroglyphs with the usual Iron age formula (“This seal is of”) and the name of the owner follows in a quasi-cryptographic script (Hasan Peker, personal communication).

ANATOLIAN HIEROGLYPHIC WRITING AT KARKEMISH

Hasan Peker

The first state of Anatolia, and later the first empire, was founded by the Hittites, who spoke Hittite (they called their own language Nes(umn)ili = ‘(in) the language of (the city of) Nesa). The personal names of Hittite speakers (Kloekhorst 2019: 264), along with their close linguistic relatives, the Luwian speakers (Yakubovich 2009: 212), have been documented since the Assyrian Trade Colonies period (c. 1940-1720 BCE). Around the mid-18th century BCE, Pithana of Kuššar and his son Anitta established a state that included Kaneš (=Nesa). The bureaucracy of these Hittite-speaking rulers faced the challenge of adapting a foreign writing system to their own language. Such an adaptation process may be schematized as follows:

1. Adoption of the writing system with its language
2. Adaptation of the writing system to the target language
 - 2A. Production of documents in both languages
 - 2B. Production of documents in the target language only.

The Hittite-speaking bureaucracy of the Kuššar-Kaneš state produced Old Assyrian documents in Old Assyrian cuneiform during the first phase of the process, through translators. Hittite speakers reached the second phase after an interval (or perhaps a process) of about a hundred years, with the establishment of the Hittite state by the House of Hattusa. In the capital city of Hattusa, the founding king Hattusili I is introduced as a man from Kussara, and his deeds are

recorded in both Hittite (Güterbock and Otten 1960: no. 2) and Akkadian (Güterbock and Otten 1960: no. 1), while the deeds of King Anitta of Kussara and his father Pithana are also recorded in Hittite in the archives (Figulla 1923: no. 22). While Hittite speakers were building their bureaucracy using cuneiform writing, they, along with Luwian speakers, added another writing system to their state bureaucracy. Anatolian hieroglyphic writing (sometimes mistakenly referred to as Luwian or Hittite hieroglyphic writing in popular literature) was devised since the founding of the Hittite state for writing names, professions, and titles on seals. It is generally accepted that this writing system, consisting of word signs (logograms) and phonetic signs (syllables), was invented in the capital by a group speaking Hittite and Luwian (Yakubovich 2008). While there is no consensus on when it was invented, the prevailing idea is that it happened during the 15th century BCE or later (Mora 2025 with references). However, the Anatolian hieroglyphic writing system must have been invented much earlier than is generally accepted. The hieroglyphic signs with clear logographic and phonetic values fixed on Tyszkiewicz [IANNUS2-VIR = Izzumiziti cf. Weeden 2018: 58], Louvre (*MI-ZI/A* / 4-VIR, cf. Parrot 1951] and Boğazköy documents – all dating from before the 15th century BCE (Dinçol and Dinçol 2008: cat. nos. 1-41) – indicate that this writing system was invented earlier. Considering, in particular, the iconographic features of the Tyszkiewicz seal (Fig. 1) and contemporary

material (scenes centered on Usmu, the vizier of Ea; bird/eagle-headed men documented at Konya Karahöyük just before the Hittite state; series of animal heads, etc.), it must be traced back to the beginning of the Hittite state's establishment (cf. Weeden 2018). Furthermore, the invention of Anatolian Hieroglyphic writing is not the case of a society inventing a writing system from scratch. As mentioned above, the inventors of that writing were professionals with a background in writing practices, who knew how to assign acrophonic sound values and word values to drawings of objects and entities. Therefore, the symbolic values and forms agreed upon at the founding of the Hittite state continued to exist with the same values until the end of the 8th century BCE (or even the 7th century BCE, see Peker 2016: 40-41, cat. no. 25, pl. XXX.1). Therefore, Anatolian hieroglyphic writing was a full writing system since its invention. Today, the only documents that may prove that Anatolian hieroglyphic writing was a full writing system are the rare painted specimens: one of the most striking examples was found at Karkemish in a layer of the Empire period (Cat. no. 12). Among the surviving Anatolian hieroglyphic documents from the period up to the fall of the Hittite Empire (Table 1), only the long inscriptions of the last Hittite kings (Tudhaliya IV and Suppiluliuma II) exist and the language of these inscriptions is Luwian (only the epithets of Teshub's calves at Yazılıkaya are in Hurrian). Knowledge of Anatolian hieroglyphic writing was preserved by the Late Hittite kingdom of Karkemish, which survived the fall of the Hittite Empire, until the end of the 8th century BCE. Kuzi-Teshub, the last king of Karkemish during the Hittite imperial period, is recorded in the inscriptions of the kingdom of Malatya as the Great King and Hero of Karkemish (Table 1). His seal runs as follows (Fig. 2; cf. Hawkins 2024: 292).

(Hieroglyphic)

(A) (DEUS)TONITRUS

Teshub

(B) REX *ku-zi/a-TASU-pa* REX *kar-ka-mi-sà*(REGIO)

King Kuzi-Teshub, king of the land of Karkemish,



Fig. 1. The Tyszkiewicz cylinder and stamp seal (hematite, h. 5.8 cm, by courtesy of the Boston Museum of Fine Arts).



Fig. 2. Seal impression of the king of Karkemish Kuzi-Teshub from Lidar Höyük (after Hawkins 2000: pl. 328.a,c).

(C) REX *TAL(A)-mi-TASU-pa* REX *kar-ka-mi-sà*(REGIO)
King Talmi-Teshub's, king of the land of Karkemish,

(D) DEUS-*ni-ti u-ni-mi-sa* UNUS FILIUS
only son recognized by the gods.

(Cuneiform)

'ku-zi-^dte-šub LUGAL [KUR][*kar*]-*ga-miš* UR.SAG
[DUMU] I[*tal*]-*mi-^dte-šub*] LUGAL KUR *kar-ga-[miš]*
UR.SAG

Kuzi-Teshub, king of the land of [Kar]kemish, Hero, son of [Tal]mi-[Tešub], king of the land of Karkemish, Hero.

Most of the hieroglyphic written documents from the Iron Age come in fact from the kingdom of Karkemish (Hawkins and Peker 2014). The earliest examples of the continuity of the Hittite cultural and administrative heritage after the end of the Hattusa dynasty were found at Karkemish (Cat. nos. 27-30). The very first inscribed document which was found on the first day of the renewed excavations at the site, the stele of Suhi I (Dinçol et al. 2014), has enabled us to determine the kinship ties [REX (VIR2)L461] between the successors of Kuzi-Teshub and him. The successors, sons, and second-degree sons (L461) of Kuzi-Teshub, the great-great-grandson of Suppiluliuma I, the Hittite Great King who conquered Karkemish and transformed the Hittite state into an empire, and their successors, ruled in the Late Hittite

kingdom of Karkemish for approximately five more centuries (Table 2). The Anatolian hieroglyphic writing was called “the writing of the city [of Karkemish]” in an inscription by Yariri (Fig. 3), one of the polyglot rulers of Karkemish in the early 8th century BCE, and it spread from Karkemish and North Syria to Central Anatolia (TABAL inscriptions) and the kingdom of Urartu (ALTINTEPE volume measurements) during approximately the last century of its existence.

Note: above and in the entries of the Catalogue, the siglum L followed by a number refers to the numbering of hieroglyphic signs by Laroche 1960. Geographical names in caps (e.g. TABAL) refer to the classification of inscriptions in Hawkins 2000; 2024.



Fig. 3. The front side of Yariri's Royal Buttress (c. 825-800 BCE) with the integration of the new fragments found in the excavations and the storerooms (courtesy of the Museum of Anatolian Civilizations, Ankara). See also p. 59, Table 1.

	KARKEMISH	HATTI
1300	Piyassili <i>Šarri-Kušuh</i> 1328-1310	Suppiluliuma I (1355-1322)
		Arnuwanda II (1322-1321)
		Mursili II (1321-1295)
	Šahurunuwa 1310-1260	Muwattalli II (1295-1272)
		Mursili III <i>Urhi-Tešub</i> (1272-1267)
		Hattusili III (1267-1237)
	Ini-Tešub 1260-1220	Tudhaliya IV (1237-1212)
Mazi-Karhuha 1220-1210	Kurunt(iy)a <i>Ulmi-Tešub</i> 1212-1207	
Talmi-Tešub 1210-1200	Arnuwanda III (1207-1202)	
1200	Kuzi-Tešub	Suppiluliuma II (1202-)
		MALATYA
		<u>PUGNUS.ML.LI I</u>
	Iri-Tešub	Runtiya & Arnuwanti I
	Huwa-Šarruma?	PUGNUS.ML.LI II
	Arnuwanti II	
1100	<i>Ini-Tešub</i>	<i>Allumari</i>
	Piyassili?	father of CRUS+RA/I
		CRUS+RA/I
	Tudhaliya I	Wasuruntiya
	Sapaziti	<u>Halpasulupi</u>

Table 1. Kings/country-lords of Karkemish, Malatya and Hatti, 13th-12th centuries BCE (after Peker 2022a: 93). Underlining indicates the (VIR2)L462 REX = “King’s secondary son” title.

	KARKEMISH	
1000	Ura-Tarhunza	Suhi I
	Ninuwi?	Astuwalamanza (975-950)
	Tudhaliya II	Suhi II (950-925)
		Katuwa (925-900)
900	Suhi III	
	Sangara (875-848)	
	Isarwilamuwa	
	Kuwalanamuwa	
	Astiru(wa) I (810-790)	Yariri (810-785)
800	Kamani (790-760)	Sastura (785-750)
	Astiru II (760-738)	
	<i>Pi(ya)s(s)iri</i> (738-717)	

Table 2. (Great) kings/country-lords of Karkemish, 10th-8th centuries BCE (after Peker 2022a: 94). Underlining indicates the (VIR2)L462 REX = “King’s secondary son” title, italics kings only known from Assyrian sources and bold the rulers bearing the title Great King or King.

THE LATE BRONZE II AND IRON I-II LAYERS AT KARKEMISH

Vittoria Cardini, Claudia D’Orazio, Gabriele Giacosa, Sara Pizzimenti and Rosa Rivoltella

The renewed Turco-Italian excavations carried out at Karkemish between 2011 and 2025 have yielded many significant results ranging in time from the Halaf to the Abbasid periods, i.e. from the 6th millennium BCE to the late 1st millennium CE. The period of Hittite domination at the site (c. 1330-717 BCE), which is also known by written sources but which we mainly define archaeologically on the basis of changes in the pottery assemblages, is represented by several monuments which do supply much data for outlining the urban history of the settlement (Table 1).

The Late Bronze II period

The Late Bronze II period (hereafter LB II) at Karkemish was characterized by a profound reorganization of the urban layout (Marchetti, Peker and Zaina 2019-2020), following its establishment as a regional capital under the Hittite imperial authority (De Martino 2022: 234). On the acropolis mound, the political and cultic core of the site, a major undertaking of the period was the construction of a large building on the north-western edge of the Acropolis (area AA). The monumental building, of which two major refurbishments have been documented, features a complex internal layout defined by two exceptionally thick inner walls, each 3 m wide and preserved up to 1.5 m high, that run Northwest–Southeast and divide the structure into three non-communicating sectors, featuring a total of 19 small and medium-sized rooms documented up to 2023 (Figs.

1-2). Although finds were limited, several rooms indicate specialized activities. In the northern sector, the two southernmost rooms show evidence of food production, including a large oven and grinding implements, while rooms in the central sector yielded concentrations of animal bones and flints, pointing to a different type of food processing. Stratigraphic data indicate that the entire building was eventually emptied, abandoned, and subsequently leveled. Our interpretation is that it may have been part of the cultic precinct of Kubaba (the stele dedicated to the patron goddess of the city came from this area; Marchetti and Peker 2018). Other excavated LB II monumental mudbrick remains in area FF must have been connected with the same complex. Evidence for the LB II occupation in the Inner Town was mostly uncovered along the southern foot of the mound. Excavations in area G displayed a significant reorganization of the built environment (phase 13): the domestic structure belonging to the preceding LB I period (phases 16-14) was demolished and replaced by a pebble surface, composed of medium and large pebbles densely packed and frequently intermixed with pottery sherds and animal bones. This feature has been interpreted as a street or as an open space (Pizzimenti 2018: 23-25). It is to the South-East, that an administrative and cultic area public in character was established: the so-called Lower Palace area, which persisted into the Iron III period, appears in fact to have been established by the beginning of the LB II



Fig. 1. Aerial view from the South of the LB II monumental building on the Acropolis (area AA). Area FF is visible in the lower right corner.



Fig. 2. View from the South of the central sector in the LB II monumental building, area AA.

phase, at the onset of Hittite dominance (Marchetti 2016a). The sector included two temples connected to an administrative complex in area C. The temple of the Storm-god in area A features an in antis layout, with a single cella with tower-like projections set into an open plaza, at the opposite side of which stood the so-called Hilani (area B), a monumental in antis structure as well, although it nearly doubles the Storm-god temple in extension and it is located on higher grounds. Both structures remained in use into the Late Hittite period (Iron I and II). The LB II dating for their foundation has now been proved by stratigraphy and by a few reliefs likely belonging to the original decorative program, small orthostats with bull-men which in style can be compared with those in the temples of Aleppo and 'Ain Dara (Marchetti 2016a). In association with these buildings, recent investigations in the southern sector of the Lower Palace area (area C) uncovered part of a large building connected to the Imperial Hittite administration (phase 12) (Fig. 6). The terrain sloped towards the East and the building - with mudbrick walls (preserved up to c. 1 m in height) and floors of beaten earth, but badly damaged by Iron age structures and still later pits - was terraced accordingly: the layout exposed so far features two sectors, with the western one having four rooms along a North-South. The excavations of the two central rooms (Fig. 3-5) yielded hundreds of discarded clay sealings, partly sealed under the floor and the wall between them (and thus having been discarded before the construction of that dividing wall, phase A) and partly in the collapsed fill of those rooms and of the courtyard laying on higher ground to the West (phase B). The building, after the title of one of the officials documented in their seal impressions on the sealings, may have been called the Seal-house (see Cat. no. 4), a storeroom under state control. To the North-West of the building there was a roadway over which pots and bones were discarded in droves (see Cat. nos. 12, 14, 19), while on the opposite side there was a building with a different orientation, a feature which was kept down to Iron III and which explains the angle within the Herald's Wall (see the plan Fig. 10). The administrative complex remained in use until the end of the LB II, when the rooms were levelled and sealed, without any trace of fire or vio-

lent destruction, for the construction of the Iron I structures. The LB II period also represented a time of significant modifications to the defensive system and access points to the Inner Town, given the new imperial status of Karkemish. Investigations in the Inner West Gate (area N) - which had been in use during the LB I period - showed that the older gateway was blocked by an "early blocking wall" during the LB II (phase 8; Mantellini and Pizzimenti 2021: 29-35). Along the northern fortification line, the Western Fortress (Area P West) exhibits two architectural phases within the LB II period (Fig. 7). The earlier phase (phase 8) comprises a large structure with six rooms. In the subsequent phase 7, the area underwent substantial reorganization, marked by the construction of a new monumental building with walls between 2 and 3 m thick. This structure, set on a slightly different orientation, comprises at least ten rooms. A series of clay sealings bearing impressions of cylinder seals of Syrian styles highlights a different functional pattern than that of the Seal-house (D'Orazio 2021: 59-61). On the opposite edge of the Inner Town, access to the Lower Palace area from the Euphrates riverbank was assured by the presence of a monumental gate bordering the southernmost edge of the acropolis mound (area H), at least since LB I (Woolley 1921: 103-117; Marchetti 2014c: 237). The LB II phase of this Water Gate (phase 4) was preserved at foundation level and featured a two-rooms layout.

The Iron I period

The end of the Late Bronze age and the beginning of the Iron age remained a significant gap in the archaeological sequence of Karkemish until the Turco-Italian excavations provided much new evidence for the period. While a tale of uncertainty and dramatic changes was reported by some written sources following the fall of the Hittite Empire and the redefinition of the political and societal spheres in the region (Hawkins and Weeden 2016: 9-10), the archaeological sequence has demonstrated a substantial continuity in the urban occupation at Karkemish. Several archaeological operations in the Inner Town show the persistence of the urban core, with the Lower Palace area keeping a preeminent public role. For in-



Fig. 3. The stratigraphy of area C East under excavation, seen from South-West: to the right one can note the stone foundations of the Iron II palace, next to the sounding reaching the deposit below the floor of room L.8857 in the western sector of the LB II Seal-house.



Fig. 4. View from the South of the phase A deposit with impressed sealings below the floor of room L.8857 under excavation within the LB II Seal-house.



Fig. 5. View of room L.12216 in the eastern sector of the LB II Seal-house in area C East under excavation, with a beer jar in which two pottery lamps were found (see Cat. no. 17).

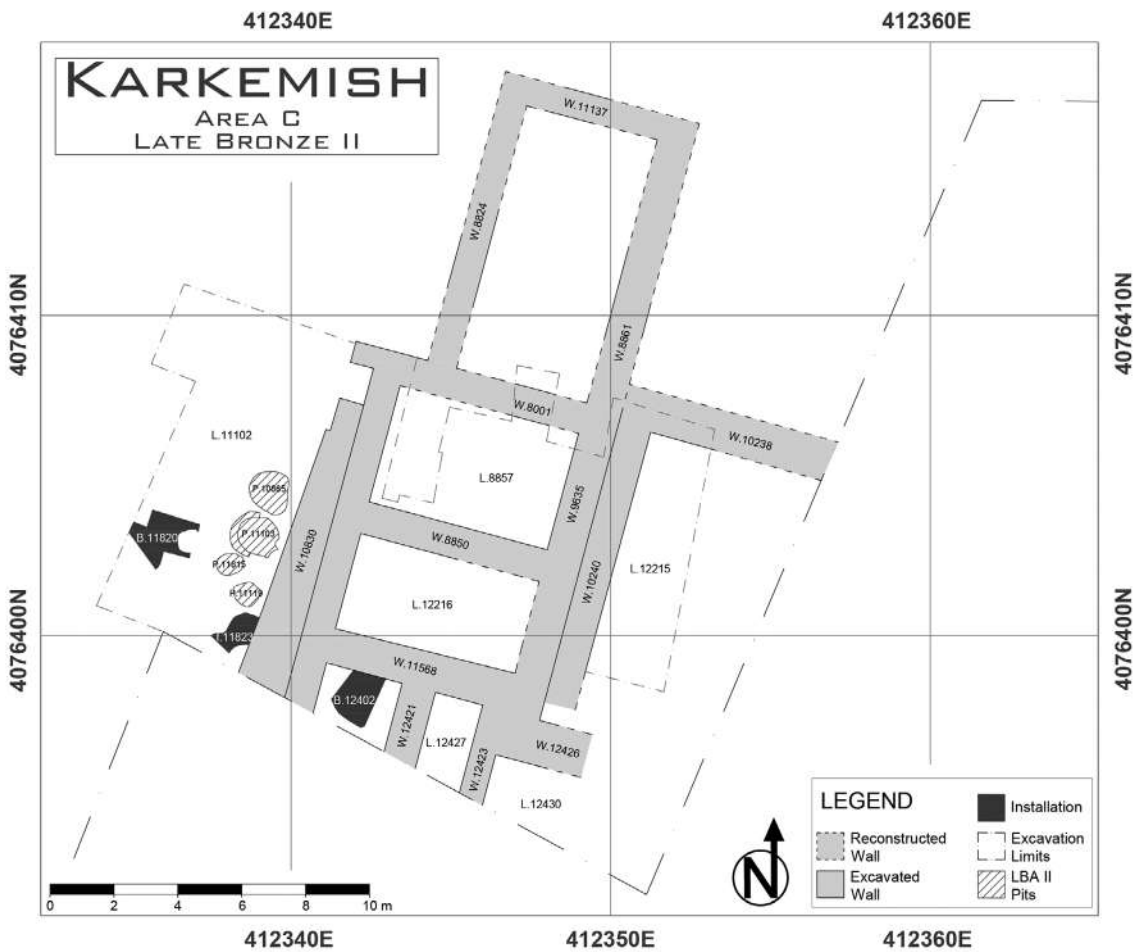


Fig. 6. Plan of the LB II Seal-house excavated in area C East, phase B (by M. Valeri).



Fig. 7. LB II structures of the Western Fortress in area P West under excavation, from the South.

stance, Iron I layers were exposed in the deep sounding of Area G (phase 12), featuring a sequence of pebbled floors connected to an open area (Zaina 2018c: 116-119), in continuity with the LB II occupation (phase 13). A large storage complex was built on the western edge of the Lower Palace (area S) and remained in use throughout Iron I (phase 12), until it was obliterated first by the King's Gate in the 10th century BCE (Fig. 8). The building has a partially round plan, with mudbrick walls and internal spaces of different sizes, paved with floors of beaten earth above pebbled layers. Rooms equipped with installations (trashing bins, circular ovens or tannur) connected to the processing of agricultural products are located on its western side. The topographic position and the large scale (c. 20x17 m) of the construction suggest that it was a public enterprise for the collection and control of the agricultural output, a practice well attested in the Hittite and post-Hittite world (Balza 2017; Castellano 2018).

Further Iron I evidence was collected across the central part of the Lower Palace (area C), which appears to have remained an area of public economic activities (D'Orazio et al. 2019-2020). Fragmentary architectural remains were uncovered because of the leveling suffered from the Iron II palatial complex. In the eastern sector, the earlier Seal-house was reconstructed along a similar floor plan (phase 11): its tannur, clay installations, storage features, and over 200 sealings (Fig. 9) and a button seal (Cat. nos. 23-30) attest to food-processing and storage functions, confirming the continuity of productive and administrative practices. In the western sector, there seems to have been a forerunner of the Iron II palace: we exposed part of a residential area, with rooms and a bathroom paved in baked bricks with a latrine. A pattern of continuity was also recorded in the Inner Town fortification, where West Gate (area N), was in use throughout the period with the construction of a series of stone drains (phases 7 and 5). Finally, a new blocking



Fig. 8. View of the Iron I storage building in area S under excavation, from the west. The semi-circular layout of the structure with inner orthogonal walls is visible (phase 11). Several mudbrick walls are cut by Iron IB/IIA ovens (phase 10).



Fig. 9. Deposit of early Iron I clay sealings (phase 11) under excavation in storeroom L.11115, area C East, from the West.

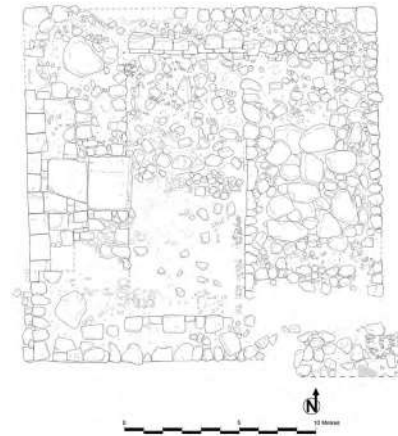
wall across the gate (phase 4) was then built at the end of Iron I (Mantellini and Pizzimenti 2021: 55-63). The fortress-like monumental building along the north-western fortifications (area P West) was renovated including evidence of administrative practices (presence of sealings) in continuity with the previous LB II use of the building. The structure of the Water Gate built in LB II (phase 4) remained in use during the transition to Iron I with little or no structural changes, and the gate remained the main access to the Inner Town from the Euphrates riverbank.

The Iron II period

Iron II is one of the best-known periods at the site as far as the general lines of the urban development are concerned, although the strong continuity with Iron III means that stratified materials from Iron II were not particularly abundant (Marchetti and Peker 2019-2020). The phase with monumental art of the palatial and cultic buildings within the Lower Palace area can be attributed to this period (Fig. 10). While the temples in areas A (Fig. 11) and B (Fig. 12) continued into use, it was in the mid-10th century BCE that the former was enclosed by a temenos and the decorative setting of the so-called Long Wall of Sculptures was installed. The discovery of bronze figurines within the temples provided significant insights on the cult practices occurring in these contexts (Marchetti 2014b; Cat. nos. 43-44). The construction of Katuwa's Palace (phase 10), together with its decorated Herald's Wall, Processional Entry and King's Gate to the West, occurred towards the end of that century (Marchetti 2019: 158-159) above the levelled Iron I remains. The complex (Figs. 13-14) was organized around two internal units (in which two subphases of occupation have been observed) bordered to the West by a cobbled road leading to what we now think is a large palace compound, while to the East an open area separated it from another monumental building, now almost only preserved at foundation level. Later structural additions to the architectural landscape of the Lower Palace area were the Royal Buttress at the end of the 9th century BCE and the Great Staircase towards the mid-8th century BCE. Recent investigations in the Inner Town, specifically South

and West of the Lower Palace area revealed the presence of additional monumental buildings dating to Iron II (areas BB, GG, LL), which are currently under investigation (Fig. 15). In area G, the sequence of pebbled floors did continue into the Iron II (phases 11-9), showing a marked continuity of use for it as an open area (Zaina 2018c: 120-129). Domestic buildings were uncovered in the southeastern sector of the Inner Town (area V - phase 3): built during the 8th century BCE, they remained occupied into the Neo-Assyrian period (Iron IIIA). Monumentality can be also documented in the fortification system: the last pre-Classical reconstruction of the Water Gate (area H) occurred at the transition between Iron I and II (phase 3). Although only its southern section is preserved, the layout of the new gate - with three piers defining two rooms - parallels the earlier construction upon which it was founded (Fig. 16). The foundations and the socle inside the gate passage were built with stone blocks, while the elevation was originally in mudbricks. The thick sequence of floors recently exposed inside the passage demonstrate the constant use of the gate as a main access to the Lower Palace area from the Euphrates bank. The South Gate (area D) represented the main land access to the Inner Town in Iron II, and its construction may be ascribed to this period based on its layout, with two large internal compartments, and in part also of its architectural decoration (Fig. 17). Recent investigations on the south-western slope of the mound (area HH) uncovered the presence of domestic units mostly dating to Iron II. The expansion of the city beyond the Inner Town fortification and the development of the Outer Town started in Iron II: in area F, located West of the West Gate, a sequence of domestic buildings built on virgin soil was uncovered (phases 7-5; Fig. 18). The date of construction of the external city walls (Outer Fortification), most of them remaining in the Syrian side, is still unclear, i.e. whether they were already built in this period or under the Neo-Assyrian rule (Iron IIIA; Zaina 2019). In the necropolis of Yunus, located on the small limestone plateau North of the Mill Stream and investigated by both the British (Woolley 1914; 1939) and Turco-Italian expeditions (Bolognani, Giacosa and Zaina 2021), some incineration burials dating to the 8th century BCE were uncovered. Although the size and composition of the

funerary assemblages could significantly vary based on the rank and wealth of the deceased, burnt remains were placed in ceramic urns associated with pottery and stone vessels. Funerary stone fittings such as stelae and offering tables (several of which are nowadays visible over the plateau and on its slopes, although not in their original position), were installed as markers and focal points around which the burials were distributed (Bolognani 2021).



Detailed plan of the “Hilani” temple.

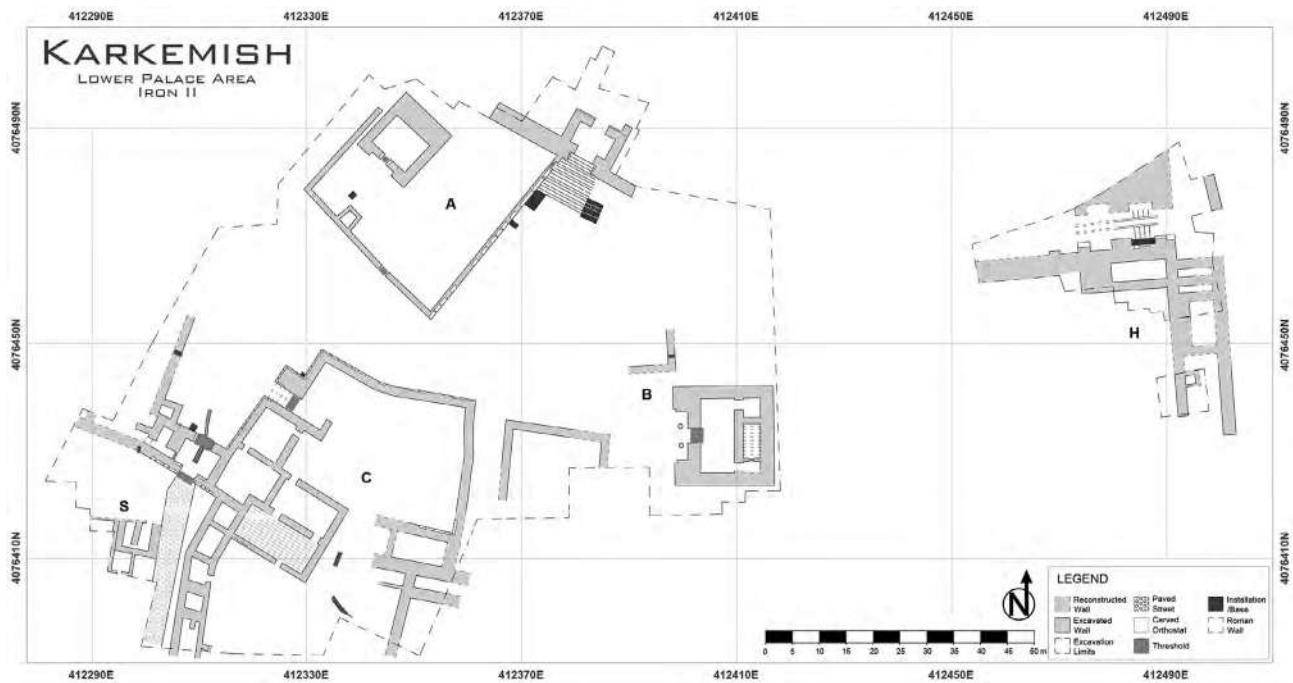


Fig. 10. Plan of the Lower Palace area during the Iron II period (by M. Valeri).



Fig. 11. View from the West of Temple A and its pebbled forecourt, with the Great Staircase in the background.



Fig. 12. View from South-West of Temple B “Hilani”, with Roman foundations in the foreground.



Fig. 13. The Iron II cobbled road, in foreground, running along Katuwa's Palace, visible in background (phase 10a), seen from South-West.



Fig. 14. The Iron II open area to the South of Katuwa's Palace, with to the right the visitors' path in front of the sculpted orthostats of the southern boundary wall, under the hi-tech shelter built by the SANKO Holding in 2024, view from South-East.



Fig. 15. Aerial view of area LL, where a possible Iron II temple was identified in 2025; Katuwa's Palace lay under the shelter built by the SANKO Holding, view from the South-East.



Fig. 16. Aerial view from the West of the Iron II structures (phase 3) of the Water Gate (area H) at the end of the 2025 campaign.



Fig. 17. Aerial view from the North of the Iron II structures (phase 4) of the South Gate (area D), with in the central background the paved roadway continuing to the South.



Fig. 18. Aerial view from the South of the Iron II (phases 7-5) domestic mudbrick structures at a deeper elevation than the superficial Iron III buildings and Woolley's House A in area F.

Sector	Area	Late Bronze II			Iron I					Iron II			
<i>Acropolis</i>													
	Area AA	3a	3b	2	/					/			
	Area FF	3			2					/			
<i>Lower Palace area</i>													
	Area A	4					3						
	Area B	3					2						
	Area C	12			11					10a	10b	10c	
	Area S (King's Gate)	13			12	11a	11b	11c	11d	11e	10	9a	9b
<i>Inner Town</i>													
	Area G	13			12					11			
	Area T	4			/					/			
	Area V	/			/					/		3a	
<i>Gates and fortifications</i>													
	Area H (Water Gate)	4					3						
	Area N (West Gate)	8			7	6	5	4	/				
	Area D (South Gate)	/			/					4			
	Area P West	8	7	6	5			4		3	2		
<i>Outer Town</i>													
	Area F	/			/					7	6	5	

Table 1. Comparative stratigraphy between the excavation areas at Karkemish, in which phases ranging in date between LB II and Iron II have been documented.

THE HITTITE EMPIRE PERIOD SEALING ARCHIVE FROM KARKEMISH: A WEB OF OFFICIALS AND ECONOMIC TASKS

Giacomo Benati, Claudia D’Orazio, Nicolò Marchetti and Hasan Peker

After being conquered and incorporated into the Hittite empire (c. 1330 BCE), the key city of Karkemish on the Euphrates became the seat of a viceroy and the main administrative center in the newly constituted Syrian province, as gleaned from textual and glyptic materials retrieved at Hattusa, Ugarit, Emar and elsewhere (Mora 2008; 2010; 2014). The importance of Karkemish in the administrative structure of the empire, had been, so far, gleaned uniquely from indirect evidence, since direct archeological or textual evidence from the site of Karkemish was lacking. Between the 2017 and 2023 excavation campaigns, the Turco-Italian Expedition discovered around 700 clay sealings dating from the middle of the 13th century BCE in the core public district of this capital city, in areas C East and C Center. Of them, 547 sealings and a cylinder seal (see also Cat. nos. 1-3) were retrieved from the deposit below the floors of the later building (phase A). A total of 153 sealings were found in the fills above the floors of the building (see also Cat. nos. 4-11), mainly from the western courtyard (phase B; for a description of the stratigraphy, see p. 30, figs. 3-6). The sealings pertain to the management of the local “Seal-house”, or treasury, managed by the top officials of the Karkemish royal court: it was a pivotal node in a network of institutions that were at the core of the political economy of the Hittite state (Fig. 1). An analytical methodology, consisting of functional, iconographic, prosopographic and network analyses has been developed in order to achieve

a fuller understanding of the administrative and socio-economic framework within which sealing technologies were employed at Karkemish at the time of the Hittite Empire. The analysis of the clay sealings targeted the examination of the impressions on their back, i.e. negative traces left on the reverses of the sealings, that, once properly understood, can reveal information about the goods that were sealed and how they were sealed. The majority of sealings were at-



Fig. 1. Group of impressed sealings from the Seal-house in area C East, excavated during the 2017 campaign.

tached to movable containers as wooden boxes/chests, baskets, bags, reed containers and some pottery vessels (Cat. no. 2-3, 5-9, 11), while only a few examples can be attributed to door-closing systems (Cat. no. 4 and fig. on p. 186). Hanging sealings are also rarely attested (see Cat no. 10). On the other hand, the study of the seal impressions preserved on the obverse of the sealings allowed us to reconstruct in the first place the typology and number of seals used by Karkemish administrative officials in this locus. Over 100 different seals belonging to over 80 officials were recognized in the corpus including button seals, stamp seals, cylinder seals, and signet rings with readable, or partially readable, names, titles and professions (see Peker 2023a). The most frequent sealers in the corpus are Paya, active in phase A and specialized in sealing leather bundles (Fig. 2), Taya, specialized in wooden chests and baskets (Cat. nos. 2, 6, 7), and Zinni (I) seems to be a mix of the other two but with the very rare specialization in vessels as well (Cat. no. 10) (see also Marchetti, Peker and Zaina 2019-2020: 267-268). Taya and Zinni are found both in phases A and B, with Zinni (I) probably promoted to the role of ‘Lord of the seal’ (SIGILLUM.DOMINUS, on his cylinder seal, Cat. no. 4) in the later phase (Peker 2023a: 133-134). Overall, the administrative framework of the Karkemish sealings revolved around the management of a state-run storehouse. This is suggested by three strands of evidence: 1) The retrieval of a sealing impressed by a seal belonging to an official responsible for the “seal-house” (É^{NA4}KIŠIB) institution within our sample; 2) The overlap between the type of containers reconstructed from the back of the seal-impressions within our sample and the ones registered in the so-called “storeroom inventory texts” (Kořak 1982; Van den Hout 2012: 45-47; Mora 2012: 61-64); 3) The fact that in both our sample and in the inventory texts, princes and top officials of the court were in charge of deposit and control operations. A tablet from Emar informs us about the existence of a very high official bearing the title of “master of the *abussi*-storehouse of Ini-Teshub” (D’Alfonso 2001: 273-274; Bilgin 2018: 75 n. 220, 318), which indicates that both an *abussi*-storehouse – of seemingly royal nature – and a seal-house were in function at Karkemish during the



Fig. 2. Container sealing (KH.17.O.691) impressed with Paya’s button seal from the Seal-house, phase A (see Peker 2023a: 129, no. fig. 12, table 2).

reign of this very king. Therefore, the Karkemish sealings must have pertained to the administration of a local storehouse that was either a “seal-house” = É^{NA4}KIŠIB, headed by the AGRIG and LU É^{NA4}KIŠIB officials, “storehouse administrators” (cf. Cat. no. 4), or perhaps, the É *ABUSSI*, “storehouse”, headed by the EN É *ABUSSI*, “master of the storehouse” (cf. Kořak 1982: 49, 63; Singer 1984: 112 n. 81). The *abussi*-house was a place in which precious items were stored, with a possible cultic specialization (Bilgin 2018: 318), whereas the seal-house could manage agricultural produce as well as craft items, garments and textiles in particular (Singer 1984; Kořak 1982). More generally, according to the inventory texts, the state storehouses received goods stored in containers, along with packing lists, incoming via caravan expeditions as taxes, elite gifts or traded items (Kořak 1982; Siegelova 1986; cf. Bilgin 2018: 444). Subsequently, inside the storehouse, the containers were checked by officials, and the contents of a number of these packing lists were entered into tablets (Kořak 1982: 91; Bilgin 2018: 316). In a final act, the containers were sealed and the packages exited the storehouse to be shipped in other locations. The storeroom inventories almost exclusively deal with

luxury items – garments, wool, linen, precious stones, metal items and raw metals, etc. – allocated to institutions (temples, military garrisons, etc.), attached craftsmen and high-ranking individuals, i.e. state officials and members of the elite (cf. Kořak 1982: 195-203; Vigo 2019: 144). The integrated analysis of administrative practices, storage, official titles and networking presented above allows us to further elaborate into the bureaucratic structure of Karkemish during the Empire. The administration of the Karkemish storehouse(s) involved three ranks of officials. An upper rank composed of high dignitaries – among which feature prominently members of the extended royal family – who oversaw inspection, transportation and registration of precious materials channeled through the institutional storehouses. They did so in conjunction with a small group of high officials that were seemingly tasked with registration of goods coming from/traveling abroad, and with a larger group of mid/low officials that were seemingly tasked with the routine activities involved in storing and checking goods. The mid/low level layer of the official administration at Karkemish was composed of officials bearing titles such as “courtier”, “notables”, “physicians”, etc. In the Niřantepe archive, indeed, “courtiers” are very frequently attested (Bilgin 2018: 393) and they were probably in charge of the basic tasks connected to the day-to-day administration of institutional storehouses. The main synchronism between the Emar documentation and the new sealing archive from Karkemish is represented by the seal of Ewri-Teshub, a diviner known both from Karkemish (Peker 2023a: 128 no. 7, figs. 6-7, together with Sunaili and Zinni I, cf. Cat. nos. 1, 4 and the discussion under Cat. no. 10; Fig. 3) and from Emar (Beyer 2001: 56-57, A14; Arnaud 1986: 225, no. 212), on a document in which the people involved are in their turn associated on other tablets with the (seal of the) king of Karkemish Ini-Teshub (Cohen 2009: 24 note 80; Arnaud 1986: 217-220, nos. 206-207), indicating a date around the central decades of the 13th century BCE for the Karkemish archive. Texts and glyptic materials from Emar, Ugarit and Hattusa, in fact show that high dignitaries from Karkemish took part in the administration of the Syrian provinces by covering various official



Fig. 3. Small container sealing (KH.17.O.671) with the cylinder seals impressions of Ewri-Teshub, Sunaili and Taya from the Seal-house, phase A. For the actual seal of Sunaili, see Cat. no. 1.

activities (Mora 2008; 2010; 2014). Many “princes” and Karkemish officials traveled in their province and abroad to oversee administrative, judicial and diplomatic affairs (Bilgin 2018: 75 n. 220; Figs. 4-5). Similarly, high officials were also involved in the management of royal storehouses in Hattusa, particularly during the second half of the 13th century BCE (Mora 2008: 562-563). Numerous clay sealings impressed with seals belonging to Karkemish “princes” have been found in the main store deposits of Hattusa and in the Westbau complex on Nişantepe – possibly a seal-house.

Although the list of high dignitaries from Karkemish active at Hattusa compiled by Mora (2012) do not present overlaps with the current list of seal-bearers active in the Karkemish seal-house, the fact that several “princes” and seal-bearing officials were involved in storeroom operations in Karkemish and in Hattusa, clearly indicates that, by the time of Ini-Teshub, Karkemish was indeed integrated within the network of storehouses centered upon Hattusa, in line with the two-staged administrative system sketched by Singer (1984: 113).



Fig. 4. Jar sealing from the LB II fortress of Tell Faq'ous impressed with the signet ring of tartanu Shaggar-abu, a high-ranking official possibly connected with the Karkemish administration (after Beyer 2001: 454, no. B10, pl. 37.a).

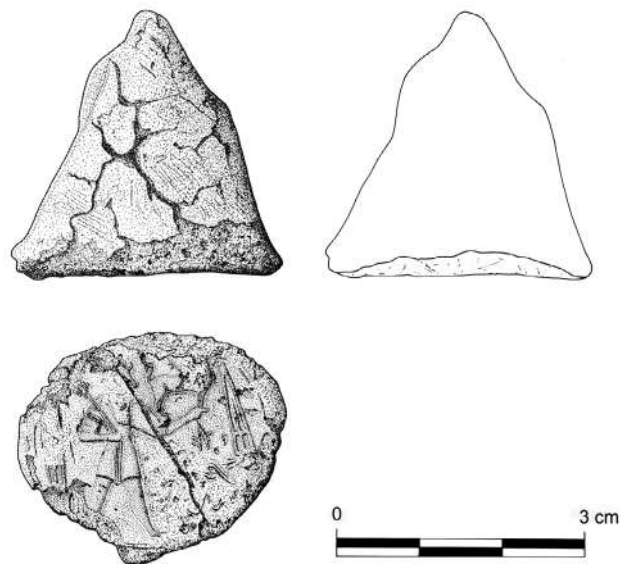


Fig. 5. Conical hanging sealing from Oylum Höyük impressed with the stamp seal of Ini-Teshub (after Engin 2019: 128, drawing 1).

A UNIQUE LATE HITTITE MONUMENTAL CUNEIFORM INSCRIPTION FROM KARKEMISH

Gianni Marchesi

During the 1911 and 1912 excavations at Karkemish, the British Museum team recovered, in the Water Gate area, a fragmentary inscription consisting of ten basalt pieces inscribed with cuneiform signs (Woolley and Barnett 1952: 265). The fragments were subsequently lost. In the final publication of the British Museum excavations, Woolley and Barnett could only reproduce a photograph of paper squeezes made from the fragments (Figs. 1-2), noting that the squeezes had been produced by individuals unfamiliar with cuneiform writing (Woolley and Barnett 1952: 279 n. 3). The inscription was designated A33.i* (after Woolley and Barnett 1952: pl. A.33, figure i*, where the asterisk marks the reproduction of squeezes), and its component fragments were — mostly arbitrarily — numbered 1 through 10 (ibid., 279 and pl. A.33). While nine of these fragments are now lost, one — Frag. i 9 (= Cat. no. 37) — resurfaced in 2012 in the storerooms of the Anadolu Medeniyetleri Müzesi in Ankara, where it was identified by the Turco-Italian Archaeological Expedition to Karkemish and assigned the tracking QR code TR001009519. This discovery prompted a renewed study of this document. The inscription in question has long been erroneously attributed to a Luwian king whose name has been read either as Asatuwatemais (in older scholarship) or Astuwalamanza (in current usage) (see Woolley and Barnett 1952: 265; Güterbock 1954: 110; cf. Ussishkin 1967: 89-91). This misattribution arose from the fact that the first syllabogram in the writing of the name is *ás* or *ás̄*, com-

bined with the mistaken belief that the recovered fragments originally belonged to a plinth that once rested on the back of a lion statue bearing a hieroglyphic Luwian inscription of this ruler (Woolley and Barnett 1952: 265). The recent re-examination has shown that the alleged bilingual text does not, in fact, exist; the two inscriptions — the cunei-



Fig. 1. Paper squeezes of fragments of the cuneiform inscription A33.i (by courtesy of the Trustees of the British Museum).*

form one and the hieroglyphic one (for which see Woolley 1921: pl. A.14b-b*; Hawkins 2000: 84-86 and pl. 3, KARKAMIŠ A14b; Peker 2022a: 14-15, no. 4) — do not come from the same monument (Marchesi forthcoming). The cuneiform text almost certainly belongs instead to Astiru II, the penultimate Neo-Hittite king of Karkemish, who ruled prior to 738 BCE (Hawkins and Weeden 2016: 15; Peker 2022a: 94, table 3). His name is indeed partially preserved in Frag. *i** 1 line 1, which should probably be restored as ^más-t[i-ru]. Unfortunately, only limited portions of the inscription have survived, and no coherent, continuous text can be reconstructed. Only a few fragments contain sign sequences that yield intelligible stretches of text. Asti-

ru's title — [LU]GAL *Gar-g[a-mis]*, “[ki]ng of Kark[emish]” — appears in Frag. *i** 4, while Kubaba, the patron goddess of the city, is designated as GAŠAN *Gar-[ga-mis]*, “queen of Kar[kemish]”, in Frag. *i* 9 (= Cat. no. 37). Despite the scant textual information it preserves, this inscription is nonetheless highly significant, since no other cuneiform inscriptions of Neo-Hittite rulers are known. The use of the cuneiform script by Astiru II in a monumental inscription set at the riverine gate of the city likely reflects the cultural influence exerted by Assyria on Karkemish during the 8th century BCE, when the city was presumably a vassal and tributary of the Assyrian Empire (cf. Hawkins and Weeden 2016: 13).

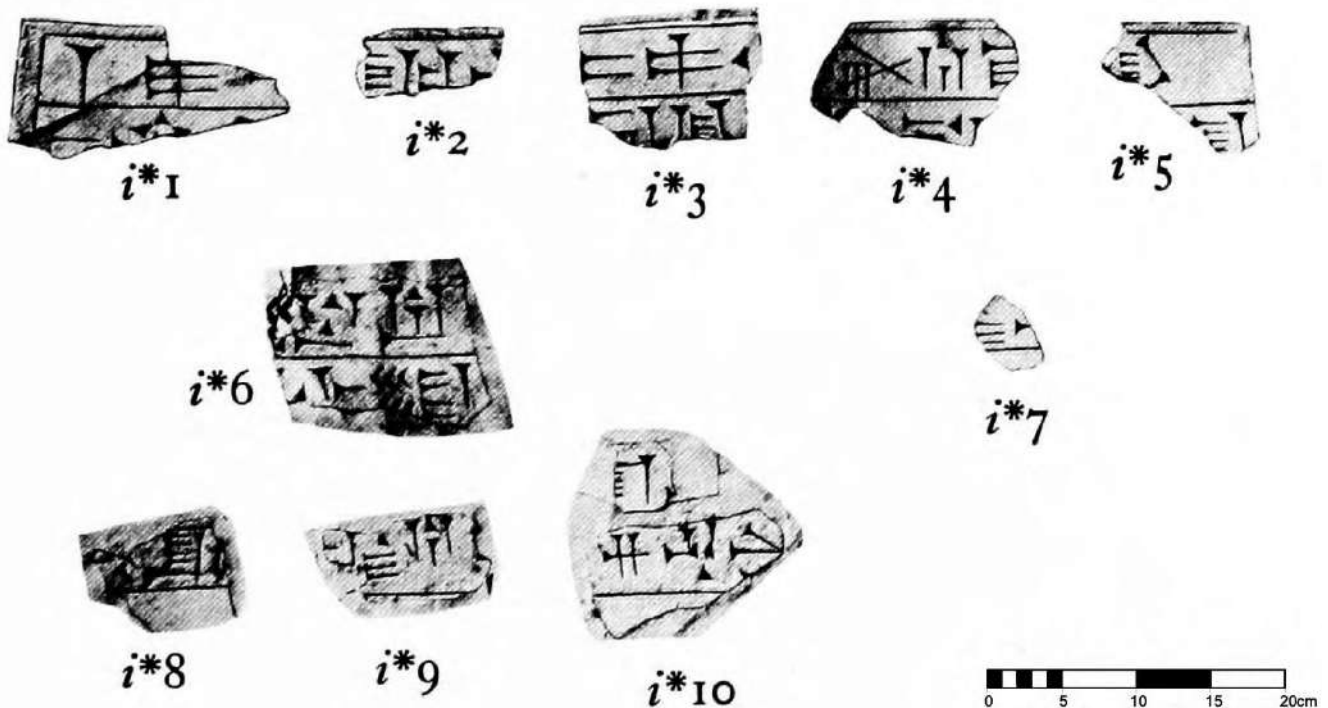


Fig. 2. Paper squeezes of fragments of the cuneiform inscription A33.i* — bis (after Woolley and Barnett 1952: pl. 33.i9).

THE KARKEMISH ARCHAEOLOGICAL LANDSCAPE BETWEEN LATE BRONZE II AND IRON II

Gabriele Giacosa, Medya Karakaya, Merve Özyiğit, Beyazıt Söylemez and Ibrahim Üngör

The site of Karkemish, positioned on a terrace on the western bank of the Euphrates River, represented for two millennia the main urban center for an extensive hinterland in terms of political, administrative and economic organization. The geology of the region includes different units ranging from the Quaternary alluvium to Eocene and Miocene limestone plateaux, dotted by occasional basalt outcrop, with a terrain elevation ranging between 350 m and 850 m above sea level (Kesici 1994; Sönmez 2016; Stechepinsky 1943: 114; Yücel 1987; Demir et al. 2008). Along the Euphrates, geoarchaeological research has identified evidence of recurring events of deposition and erosion, indicating that the floodplain level gradually rose over time, resulting in most Chalcolithic and Early Bronze Age settlements being buried by later alluvial sediment (Wilkinson 2007: 34-35) or badly eroded (Ricci 2023: 16; Dittmann et al. 2001; 2002; Sertok, Kulakoğlu and Squadrone 2011). On the other hand, the limestone terraces and water-carved valleys stretching behind the riverbank feature a high concentration of Bronze and Iron Age sites (Ricci 2023; Wilkinson 2007; Wilkinson, Peltenburg and Barbanes Wilkinson 2016). Finally, a network of plains (Altınova–İnnaplı, Nizip, Haral, Tilbeşar, and Oğuzeli) extending on the western bank of the Euphrates, irrigated by several of its tributaries, and experiencing no substantial geomorphological modifications since the Paleolithic period, was a primary hub for agriculture and animal husbandry. In fact, although annual precipitations roughly range between

300 and 500 mm, the presence of permanent and seasonal watercourses – such as the Sajur River – created a fertile riverine landscape with highly favourable conditions for human settlement (Kalelioğlu 1966; Erdoğan 2011: 89-93). Beyond the excavation of larger sites such as Karkemish (Marchetti 2019-2020), the presence and distribution of sites in the region was mainly recorded through regional surveys (Archi, Pecorella and Salvini 1971; Sanlaville 1985; Algaze, Breuninger and Knudstad 1994; Wilkinson, Peltenburg and Barbanes Wilkinson 2016; Üngör et al. 2023; 2025) on both sides of the Turco-Syrian border. Several of these projects occurred as a result of the planning and construction of multiple hydro-electric dams along the Euphrates watercourse since the 1970s, which resulted in large areas along its banks being flooded (Marchetti et al. 2020). International initiatives were launched to identify and record the archaeological landscape before it would become inaccessible after the rise in water level and the creation of reservoirs (Fig. 1). A reassessment of previous results started in 2021 through a survey project by Erzincan University (Gaziantep İli ve İlçeleri Demir Çağları Yüzey Araştırması – GDA), having as one of its main aims to analyze the archaeological landscape also in the light of the last decades of rapid economic development and its environmental consequences. The primary role taken by Karkemish during the Late Bronze and Iron ages is reflected on the occupation and distribution patterns of sites of its hinterland. In historical



Fig. 1. View looking South towards the current Euphrates western riverbank from the summit of Şaraga Höyük, now largely flooded by the Karkamiş Dam reservoir. The mound of Aktepe is visible in the central background (photo taken in October 2025).

terms, the Euphrates western riverbank was integrated into the Hittite empire around 1340 BCE and, because of its strategic position, Karkemish became the seat of power for a viceroy entrusted with the control of the Syrian territories (De Martino 2022: 234). This new administrative role had a certain impact in terms of land and settlement organization. Previous archaeological investigations did not provide accurate insights on the Late Bronze period in the region around Karkemish, mostly due to an unclear distinction between the MBA and LBA ceramic horizons (Lawrence and Ricci 2016: 51-53). Nevertheless, it appears that the decline in the number of occupied settlements, started in the later EBA and

continued in the MBA, did not decelerate nor halt during the LBA. The occupation of the latter period was concentrated on few long-lived, fortified sites along the Euphrates corridor – such as Aktepe Höyük (recently revisited by the GDA team) and Şaraga Höyük (Sertok, Kulakoğlu and Squadrone 2004; 2011), located respectively 7 and 10 km North of Karkemish – with the aim of controlling the river traffic through strategic crossing points, acting at the same time as defence of the agricultural countryside (the East bank was not presumably under the control of Karkemish; Fig. 2). The collapse of Hittite central authority at the end of the 13th century BCE does not appear to have negatively im-

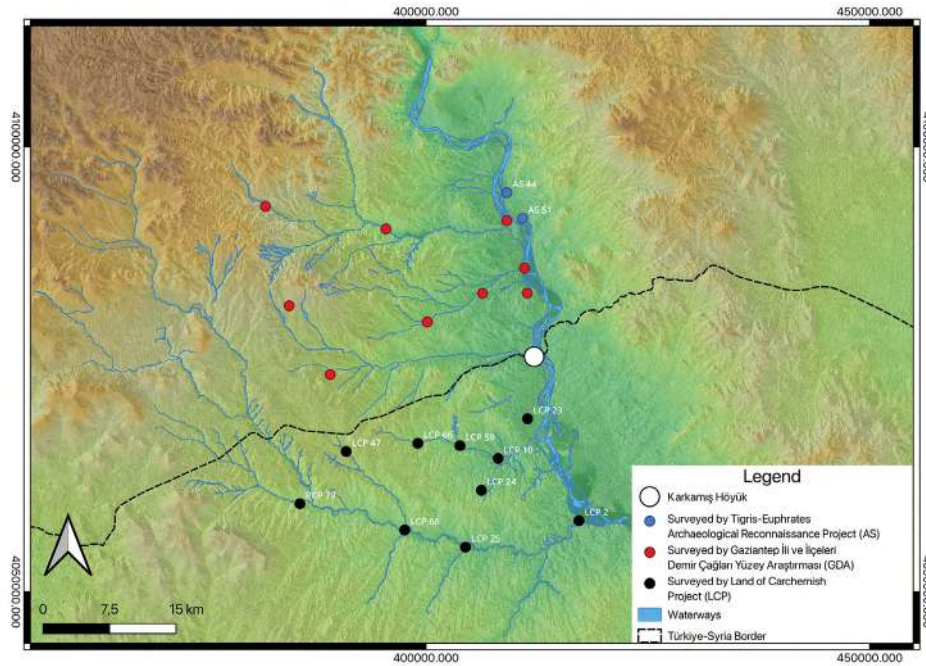


Fig. 2. Distribution map of the LB I-II sites in the hinterland of Karkemish, differentiated by the survey project that identified and investigated them (elaboration by M. Karakaya).

pacted the settlement distribution in the Euphrates valley. For instance, no evidence of destruction was recorded in the excavated levels of Karkemish in relation to the transition between Late Bronze II and Iron I. Uninterrupted LBA-IA sequences along the Upper Euphrates were also uncovered during the salvage excavations at Şaraga Höyük and Tille Höyük (Blaylock 2009). This continuity in occupation is also reflected in the Iron I material record: the persistence of LB ceramic shapes in the final centuries of the 2nd millennium BCE has been recorded along the Euphrates valley (Giacosa and Zaina 2020; Manuelli 2020a; 2020b). This material persistence, however, has affected the visibility of the Iron I occupation during surface collections. Despite this ambiguity, Karkemish remained a significant player in the upper and middle river valley during the Iron

II, until the progressive encroachment and ultimate conquest of the city by the Assyrians in 717 BCE (Marchesi 2019). The urban growth of Karkemish with the occupation of the Outer Town in the early 8th century BCE (Zaina 2019), directly related to this progressive process of administrative and economic expansion in the region, was paralleled by the rise in number of rural settlements: notably, over 52% of the occupied sites is located in the fertile plains along the western bank of the Euphrates (Fig. 3). This period featured both the continued use and expansion of mound-based sites, together with the reoccupation of previously abandoned locations (Lawrence and Ricci 2016: 53-55). At the same time, flat sites or low mounds – such as Jerablus Tahtani Village (LCP 6) and Dadate-North (LCP 37) – positioned along the Euphrates or seasonal watercourses, or close to known

inland routes, made their appearance in the 8th century BCE (Wilkinson 2016: 81). The degree of territorial control exercised by Karkemish is clarified by the recovery of over twenty Hieroglyphic Luwian inscriptions dating to the Iron II from the funerary area of Yunus and the broader countryside within the presumed boundaries of the Late Hittite state (Peker 2022a; 2022b), which report the presence of multiple officials in charge of the management of the land. These inscriptions are not only associated with regular settlements but also to cemeteries and cultic sites – Karanfil or Yurtbağı Höyük in the immediate surroundings of Karkemish, among others – that demonstrate the shaping of a diversified landscape. Further evidence of control over the countryside for agricultural exploitation includes the creation and maintenance of canals (Wilkinson 2016: 94-97): although difficult to date precisely, the presence of Iron age sites along

them – such as in the case of Majra Saghir West/al-Tukhar (LCP 56) – argues for their creation and use during this period, as claimed in epigraphic sources (Hawkins 2000: 131). This territorial organization was not disrupted by the Assyrian conquest and settlement of rural areas continued and expanded into the 7th century BCE (Iron Age III). The proliferation of occupied sites throughout the Iron age is undeniable and the Late Hittite period at Karkemish was certainly a time of economic and demographic growth: however, as previously explained, the substantial difference in settlement density between the Iron II and the previous periods does not depend on an actual proportion, but is the result of the methodological approach adopted in previous surveys, something which in fact provides us with an opportunity for a renewed analysis of settlement trajectories between the Bronze and Iron ages.

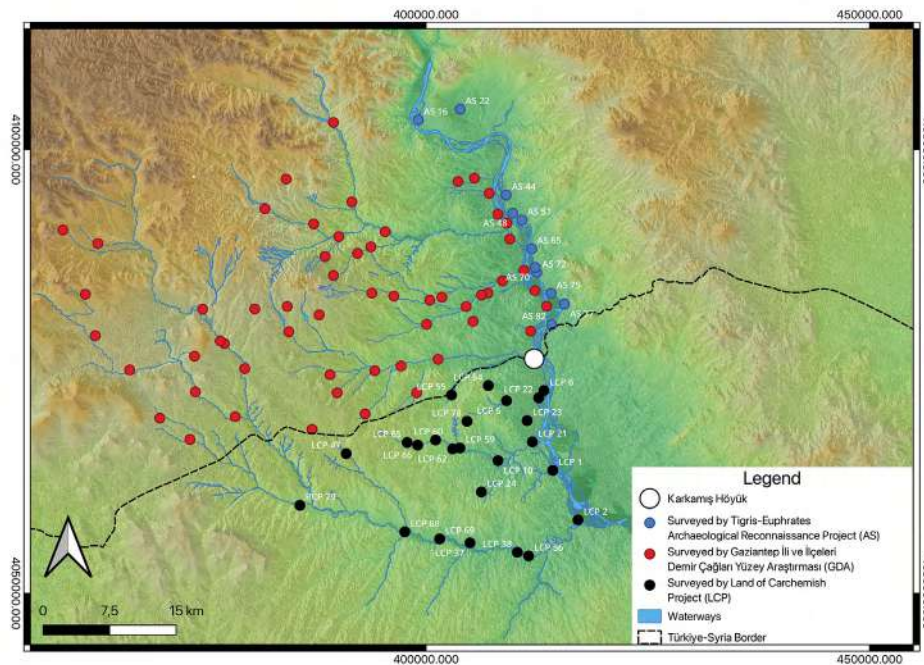


Fig. 3. Distribution map of the Iron I-III sites in the hinterland of Karkemish, differentiated by the survey project that identified and investigated them (elaboration by M. Karakaya).

THE BIOARCHAEOLOGY OF KARKEMISH BETWEEN LATE BRONZE II AND IRON II PERIODS

Müge Ergun, Elena Maini, Eleonora Serrone, Rula Shafiq and Alexander Weide

Bioarchaeology at Karkemish offers privileged insights into daily life, past populations and subsistence practices over more than three thousand years. By reconstructing the subsistence economy, and evaluating the role of agriculture within it, bioarchaeological analyses also reveal how social organisation evolved in response to the major socio-political transformations that shaped the city through time.

Zooarchaeology

The analysis of animal remains — mainly from the acropolis and the Lower Palace area, including administrative, cultic and productive areas — reveals a stable resource-management system based on pastoralism, complemented by hunting and the exploitation of Euphrates River resources. Domestic species dominate all occupational phases at the site between the Late Bronze Age and the Iron II period. Sheep and goats are the most frequent taxa, exploited both for meat and for secondary products such as milk and wool. The identification of the exploited species, based on about 5,600 osteological fragments, provides a clear reconstruction of key economic dynamics (Fig. 1). Sheep/goats, pigs and cattle form the core of domestic husbandry, but their relative abundance varies by context, reflecting the distinct functions of different city sectors. Areas rich in domestic installations and *tannur* ovens show strong evidence for butchery and food preparation, whereas palace and cultic buildings display activities linked to



Fig. 1. An example of a faunal assemblage from area S found in the Iron I levels.

elite display, including royal hunting. The correspondence between architectural contexts and zooarchaeological markers — cut marks, burning and intentional fragmentation — indicates well-defined food-processing practices. Hunting, while less frequent, played a consistent complementary role, especially for deer, gazelles and small wild mammals, demonstrating the continuing integration of surrounding landscapes — riverbanks, floodplain and uplands — into the urban economy. The Euphrates also provided aquatic taxa and turtles, mostly from refuse and food-processing deposits. Biometric and taphonomic data point to an intensive

but well-organised management system: cattle were primarily used as draught animals and slaughtered at maturity, while sheep and goats were selectively culled to optimise both meat production and secondary resources. This pattern, stable throughout the second and first millennia BCE, reflects the economic resilience of a major political centre in the Middle Euphrates valley. Clusters of animal remains in palace and administrative complexes indicate specialised activities, likely connected to rationing, ceremonial practices or official banquets. These results complement textual and administrative records, shedding light on the political and economic system of the Hittite capital. Overall, the zooarchaeological record of Karkemish depicts an urban system in which the acquisition, processing and consumption of animal resources were central to domestic economies, ritual practices and the wider administrative framework.

EM, ES

Archaeobotany

Archaeobotany is the study of plant remains from archaeological contexts and has the aim of understanding agriculture, plant foods, and people's relationship with the environment. Systematic archaeobotanical research assesses crop diversity and agricultural production throughout the occupation periods of the site. Our research project started in 2024 has the goal of revealing context-specific information about food production and consumption practices through time, informing about changing socio-political dynamics at the site. Systematic sampling, referring to taking soil samples from well-defined archaeological units (e.g. floors, hearths and silos), allows us to make thorough comparisons between plant remains from domestic and administrative contexts. This approach reveals spatial and temporal patterns in plant use, crop growing conditions and economic adaptations, which can inform about social and political dynamics and transformations at Karkemish. A further goal is to use the archaeobotanical results to assess the site's integration into the wider northern Mesopotamian and northern Syrian trade systems. Archaeobotanical sampling at Karkemish started in 2011 and covers Late Bronze age structures on the Acropolis and in the lower town, including domestic areas with food storage

and processing contexts and parts of an administrative complex. The archaeobotanical assemblage shows a typical crop spectrum with barley (*Hordeum vulgare*), emmer (*Triticum dicoccum*), einkorn (*Triticum monococcum*), timopheev's wheat (*Triticum timopheevii* s.l.) and naked wheat (*Triticum aestivum/durum*). Rarer finds of pulses, including lentil (*Lens culinaris*), pea (*Pisum sativum*), and bitter vetch (*Vicia ervilia*), complement the Late Bronze Age crop spectrum. These data derive from only three flotation samples but already show a high diversity of cultivated crops, which supported the economy of Karkemish as a regional Hittite capital. The sampled early Iron age structures mainly belong to the Lower Palace and encompass economic buildings with food storage and cooking facilities. The early Iron age crop spectrum is comparable to that of the Late Bronze age, which is expected due to the continuity in occupation at Karkemish. Additional crops include chickpea (*Cicer arietinum*), grape (*Vitis vinifera*) and olive (*Olea europaea*), although their absence in the Late Bronze age contexts is likely due to the small sample size analysed thus far (Fig. 2). Two seeds of sesame (*Sesamum indicum*) point towards the presence of an oil crop in the early Iron I, while rare finds of pistachio (*Pistacia* sp.) and possible almond (cf. Amyg-



Fig. 2. Charred botanical remains from area S found in the Iron II levels: wood charcoal and olive stones.



Fig. 3. Cremation urn YU.14.P.68/5 (YU.14.S.62) in grave G.4067 of an adult female in the Yunus necropolis, Iron II.



Fig. 4. Interior view of the cremation urn YU.21.P.45/2 (YU.21.S.19) from grave G.12119 of an adult male in the Yunus necropolis, Iron II.

dalus sp.) indicate the consumption of further tree crops. This principal crop spectrum continues into the Neo-Assyrian and Achaemenid periods (Iron III and IV). However, more samples will need to be analysed to draw reliable conclusions about changes in crop production through time. The samples analysed so far also contained a rich wild seed flora and charred animal dung remains. While the arable weeds enable to reconstruct crop growing conditions and cultivation systems in more detail in the future, the seeds deriving from dung are indicative for the use of livestock dung as an alternative fuel source. Further analyses of the dung fragments themselves have the potential to reveal animal foddering practices, grazing habitats, and the environmental contexts of animal husbandry at Karkemish.

ME, AW

Human Osteoarchaeology

The study of human skeletal remains from Karkemish implements the contextual approach in which all available lines of evidence including the age and sex of the interment, burial customs, grave structure, integrated within socio-cultural contexts (Knüsel 2010). There is limited evidence of burials dating from Late Bronze II to Iron II (the bulk of the human remains from the site dates in fact from the later Iron age), with the majority coming from poorly preserved contexts and represented by few bone fragments only. However, the few intact burials can still provide a glimpse into the lives and mortuary treatment of past individuals. The Late Bronze II evidence is represented by a few samples of human bones found scattered above floors: their interpretation is problematic, possibly deriving from the levelling of

earlier fills containing burials. Thus, what has been retrieved are the remains of three individuals, each represented by one bone element: an adult with an age estimate between 25-55 (foot phalange), a young adult aged 17-25 (upper incisor tooth), and a juvenile aged 8-14 years (hand phalange). At Karkemish, there is no evidence found for human burials dating to the Iron I. The Iron II is represented by eight incineration graves from the Yunus necropolis. The majority of the cremation urns have been disturbed in antiquity, leaving just two intact urns with a good preservation of the cremated bones (Fig. 3). The human remains represent a mixture of age groups, ranging from infants to adults, with a maximum age of around 55 years. Five individuals are of unknown biological sex, with only two determined as females and one male. All the cremated bones were exposed to a high fire temperature, of 600 °C and above. In terms of burial objects, only G. 4067, a cremation urn for an adult female aged 40-45 years, had the remains of cremated sheep/goat astragalus bones placed with the human remains. The adult male in G.12119 had no objects or animal bones buried with him (Fig. 4). The majority of the urns were sealed by white plaster at the neck area, over which a ceramic platter was placed. Several platters were also plaster-sealed, featuring a central perforation that could have a libation function during the burial ceremony. The final stages of mortuary treatment during the Iron Age II was the placement of the cremation urn, along with associated platter and other burial objects in a deep pit dug into the natural ground in the Yunus necropolis.

RS

THE MUSEUM COLLECTIONS FROM KARKEMISH IN TÜRKİYE

Umut Alagöz, Rahmi Asal, Özgür Çomak, Ramazan Eker, Yusuf Kiraç and Mustafa Metin

The long standing cooperation between the Turkish Ministry of Culture and Tourism and the Turco-Italian Archaeological Expedition to Karkemish resulted, in addition to fieldwork, also in a full restudy program of the collections of material from Karkemish which are held in Türkiye. Before the Turco-Italian Expedition started work there in 2011, the excavations at Karkemish were all carried out by the British Museum of London. The first period, between 1878 and 1881, was antecedent to the promulgation of the Third Legislation of Antiquities on February 1884, which forbade the export of antiquities and thus several pieces were shipped to London at the end of that enterprise. It was the founder of museology in Turkey, Osman Hamdi bey, who drafted that law as director of the Imperial Museum since 1881, so when a new firman for Karkemish was signed in 1910 the British Museum had to agree that all excavated antiquities were going to be sent to Istanbul and these represent the first nucleus in Türkiye of the collections of objects from the site. The last year of British excavations, in the Spring of 1920, took instead place under the authority of French occupation forces. Istanbul Archaeological Museums hold 265 small objects from those excavations (divided between the Oriental and Classical sections), sent there between 1911 and 1914 (although circa one hundred pieces from Karkemish arrived at the British Museum during those same years, the same thing which happened with other foreign excavations in the Otto-

man Empire from that time). The pottery vessels which were sent there as well, seem to have been moved to safety during the Second World War and have not been located yet, besides 231 sherds of Halaf date (for which see Dirvana 1944; Campeggi 2020: 2-3, note 5). Thus far, only a few items have been displayed in Istanbul Archaeological Museums. The period between the two World Wars was a difficult one for the site: many sculpted and inscribed stone fragments were smuggled out of the Republic territory and they ended up in such world museums such as the Louvre in Paris, the British Museum in London and the Vatican Museums in Rome, in addition to a single piece in the Sadberk Hanım Museum in Istanbul (Hawkins 2000; for the latter piece, see *ibid.*, pp. 117-118, II.18/A26a1, pls. 26-27, inv. 6869). During the 1930s, the Ministry of Public Instruction arranged for the removal from Karkemish of all artworks and objects which could be found there (but see Marchetti 2014a for those which had been previously buried under the old dig house when reused as a barrack) and they were sent by railway first to Adana and then to Ankara, where a project for the exhibition of the main sculptures and inscriptions in the central hall of the Bedesten (where they still are) was prepared by Hans Gustav Güterbock (1939-1941), along with other Hittite sculpted antiquities. The permanent exhibition opened to the public in 1943 and it was realized according to a modern vision of presenting the finds according to the same order as the context in which they were discovered

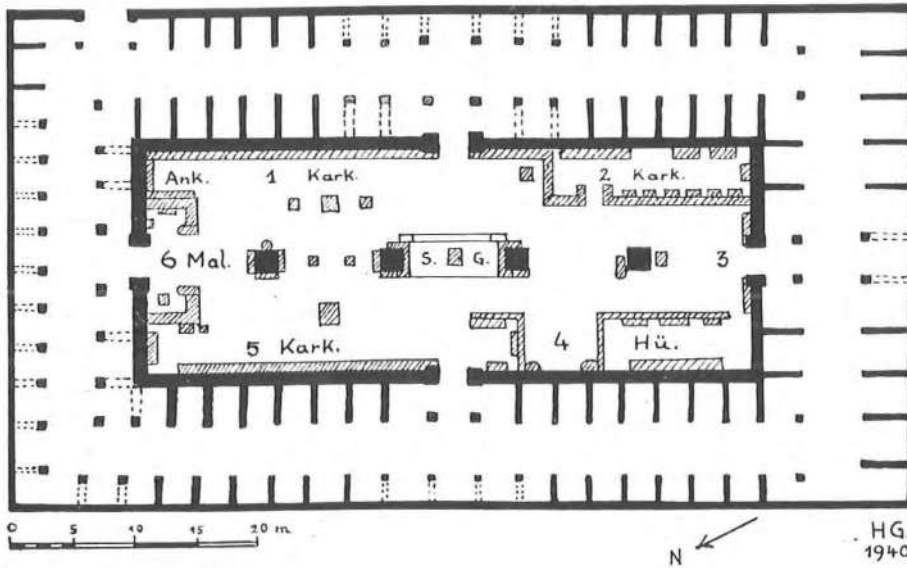


Fig. 1. Plan of the central hall of the Museum of Anatolian Civilizations in Ankara. 1-6 = wall numbers; Ank. = Ankara area; Kark. = Karkemish; S. G. = Sakçegözü / Coba Höyük; Hü. = [Alaca] Hüyük; Mal. = Malatya / Arslantepe (after Güterbock 1939-1941: figure on p. 347).

(Güterbock 1946; 1954), thus allowing a glimpse into their original architectural setting (Figs. 1-2). However, hundreds of pieces from the site remained in the storerooms under both the Bedesten, the adjoining Kurşunlu Han and in the gardens of the museum, where scholars could study them during occasional research visits (Ussishkin 1967; Hawkins 2000). Before the recent exchange with Gaziantep Museum (for which see below) and besides the pieces exhibited in the hall, in the Ankara main store thus there were 262 sculpted items, 166 inscriptions, 156 other kind of objects (Fig. 3), plus c. 100 other items in the garden and two minor storerooms, in addition to a store in the Citadel tower of Beşiktepe (on which see Gallerani, Vacca and Zaina 2017). The renewed archaeological project at Karkemish since 2011 entailed that Gaziantep Archaeological Museum has now become the recipient of a constant flow of yearly additions to its collections deriving from the excavations at the site and the display hall has been updated and enlarged constantly (until on 6th February 2023 a devastating earthquake forced the Archaeological Museum to close its doors, but after intense repairs it is going to reopen in the course of 2026).

Before 2011, a few sculptures and some chance finds had been transported from the site to the museum, including an orthostat from the King's Gate now sent to Ankara. In fact, in 2021 an exchange of pieces was organized between the two museums: the Turco-Italian Expedition had excavated new or newly recovered fragments which completed previously known monuments and so 17 fragments were sent to Ankara and 34 to Gaziantep. Finally, the top part of a very important stele from Karkemish, which had been smuggled in 1982 and was then found again, was moved from the Kahramanmaraş Museum to Gaziantep in 2016 (Marchetti and Peker 2018). From the account above, it is clear how the Turkish Ministry of Culture and Tourism has a dynamic and strategic approach towards a scientifically informed public exhibition of finds of historical importance, keeping at the centre the archaeological site and its multi-faceted contexts. The current Karkemish exhibition epitomizes the collaboration between researchers, whether on the field, in archives or in storerooms, focused on discovering and shaping new vistas on our past and communicating them to the public.

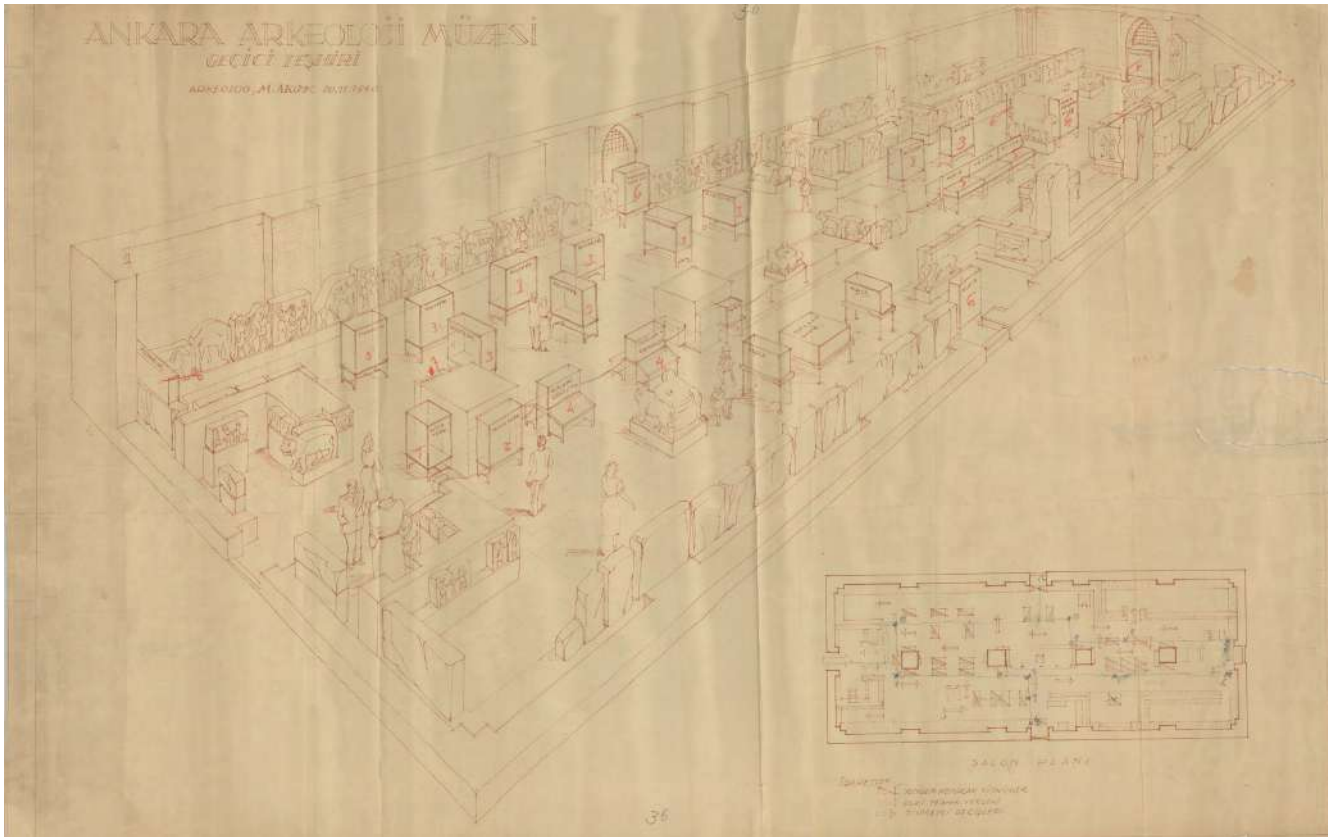


Fig. 2. Perspective view of the same hall as in Fig. 1 (courtesy of the Museum of Anatolian Civilizations, Ankara).



Fig. 3. A shelf in the main Karkemish storage under the Bedesten in the Museum of Anatolian Civilizations before the recent renovations; one can note the QR codes of the Turco-Italian Expedition to Karkemish attached with elastic strings to the pieces.

THE NEW ARRANGEMENT OF THE KARKEMISH SCULPTURES IN THE CENTRAL HALL OF THE MUSEUM OF ANATOLIAN CIVILIZATIONS

Umut Alagöz, Nicolò Marchetti and Mustafa Metin

When in 1943 the core of the newly created Museum of Anatolian Civilizations opened in the Bedesten (market hall) of Mahmut Paşa, the idea was to celebrate the recently discovered preclassical civilization of the Hittites, which Atatürk wanted to promote as one of the most significant segments of a national discourse about collective historical identity of the young Republic. Thus, the architectural sculptures and display inscriptions discovered at the key sites of Anatolia dating from the mid of the 2nd to the mid of the 1st millennium BCE were exhibited with the idea of partly recreating the original monumental effect (German scholars then working in Turkey had of course also in mind the Berlin museums). For the monuments from Karkemish which had reached Ankara in the preceding years (but a fair number remained at the site and were then rediscovered by the Turco-Italian Expedition after 2011, besides those which had been shipped to London), one could rely on two published reports (Hogarth 1914; Woolley 1921), while the third and final volume at the time was not yet published and Hans Güterbock thus corresponded with Richard Barnett in London on the correct sequence of reliefs (Güterbock 1954). The Long Wall of Sculpture with the Great Lion slab, the Herald's Wall and the Processional Entry with the Royal Buttress (and, even if incomplete, the Water Gate too) were reconstructed and positioned in an almost completely correct way (except B44b and B46 which were inverted - thus losing sight of the sculpted short

side of the latter - and what remained of B55b was wrongly assigned to the Long Wall of Sculpture, from which it was instead wrongly excluded B43a placed in the gallery and exhibited in two separate fragments, now joined in the new arrangement). The King's Gate slabs were instead dispersed between the niches along the garden (orthostat B56a), the gallery behind the Processional Entry (three orthostats, B55a, B58b, B47a left background; see wall 2 in Güterbock 1939-1941: fig. on p. 347) and the short side of the Bedesten (wall 3, *ibid.*; two orthostats, B57b, B58a), in addition to the already mentioned B55b. Famous monuments originally found in the vicinities were instead placed according to a correct logic, i.e. Atrisuhas statue B25, Katuwa's slab and obelisk A12 and A13d and the inscribed door jambs from the King's Gate A9-10 and from the Storm God's temple A11b-c (see Table 1 for an explanation of these codes). This is not the place to list the many monuments excavated at Karkemish by the British Museum expedition which have been found again during the Turco-Italian excavations: as hinted in the preceding essay, the newly discovered or rediscovered pieces which could be joined to specimens exhibited in the Bedesten were sent back to Ankara, where they were complemented by a few joins identified in the main storage during the restudy project (Table 1). Six orthostats and the obelisk (on which see also Peker and Weeden 2014: fig. 2) have thus been integrated with previously missing pieces, mostly re-excavated in the British Museum dig house at the



Fig. 1. Limestone orthostat inv. 5998, previously kept in the Museum of Gaziantep, at the time of its arrival in Ankara (B56b; h. 87, w. 95, th. 63 cm), Katuwa's King's Gate (c. 925-900 BCE).

site (area L, for which see Di Cristina 2014), while two new fragments were found in layers of Abbasid date in area C in the Lower Palace. One orthostat, kept in the storage at Gaziantep Museum, was recognized by N. Marchetti from a publication (Balcioğlu 2009: 23) as being the same with B56b from the King's Gate (Fig. 1) and was included in the exchange of pieces, with the idea of completing the original project through a new display of the King's Gate (Fig. 2). The space in the hall was not enough for moving also the portal lions (B55a and B47a left background, which remained in the gallery) and so on wall 3, in addition to B57b and B58a,

INV. NO.	ANKARA HALL JOIN	PROV.	MONUMENT
KH.11.O.552	inv. 106 / A12	Area L	Katuwa's obelisk
KH.12.O.307	inv. 9669 / B14b	Area C	Katuwa's Herald's Wall
KH.12.O.515	inv. 61 (58) / B56a	Area C	Katuwa's King's gate
KH.14.O.800	inv. 70 / B13b	Area L	Katuwa's Herald's Wall
KH.17.O.271	inv. 92 / A7g - B7b	Area L	Yariri's Royal Buttress
KH.19.O.61	inv. 90 / A6 - B6	Area L	Yariri's Royal Buttress
inv. 5998	- / B56b	Gaz. storage	Katuwa's King's gate
inv. 92E	inv. 92 / B7b	Ank. storage	Yariri's Royal Buttress
inv. 9668a-c	inv. 9668 / B13a	Ank. storage	Katuwa's Herald's Wall

Table 1. List of the specimens joined to the pieces exhibited in the Bedesten (inv. 5998 is a complete orthostat). A and B codes refer to the plates of the British Museum reports (Hogarth 1914; Woolley 1921; Woolley and Barnett 1952).

another four orthostats were exhibited to the right side of the hall doorway (Fig. 2 bottom). So, B58b was moved there from the gallery, B55b (which had lost its upper half since the 1920s) from the Long Wall of Sculpture, B56a - with the newly joined head KH.12.O.515 - from the garden, adding B56b which had arrived from Gaziantep (Fig. 1). In the Museum, of the original monument are now missing just B59 (currently lost, only the deer's head remains in situ, KH.14.O.275) and a newly discovered limestone complete slab with a winged bull, exhibited in situ (see p. 20, Fig. 7; KH.13.O.1277+KH.16.O.771; Marchetti 2019a: fig. 7). Although this joint project for a partial new setting of the Bedesten has been some years in the making, it could only be finalized with the support of the SANKO Holding, which since 2015 helps with the conservation and presentation of the unique site of Karkemish.

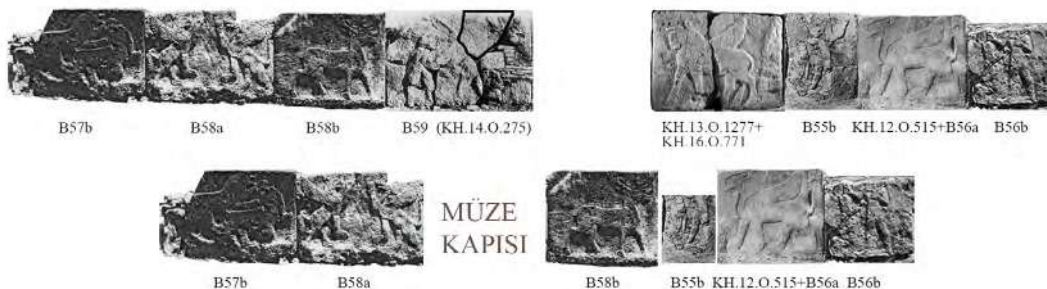


Fig. 2. The King's Gate as it was at Karkemish (above) and as it is now in the Museum (below).

THE DIGITAL REPOSITORY OF THE LATE BRONZE II SEALING ARCHIVE AND THE 3D MODEL OF LATE HITTITE KARKEMISH

Jacopo Monastero

The archaeological site of Karkemish has long been recognized as one of the principal centers of the Late Bronze and Iron ages for its political and cultural significance within the Levant. While the site first attracted scholarly attention for its monumental architecture and art from the Iron II period, among the most important scientific discoveries by the Turco-Italian Archaeological Expedition at Karkemish there is now the extensive archive of clay sealings dating to the Late Bronze II, a collection that provides a rare and invaluable insight into the administrative systems, visual language, and socioeconomic networks of the Hittite world. In recent years, new digital technologies have profoundly expanded the ways in which these materials can be documented, studied, and made accessible, both to scholars and the public. In this context, the creation of a dedicated digital repository for the sealing archive as well as the development of a detailed 3D model of the Late Hittite city represent major advancements in both archaeological research and heritage dissemination.

High-Resolution Documentation of the Sealing Archive Through Photogrammetry

The foundation of this digital project lies in the precise and systematic documentation of the sealings using advanced photogrammetric techniques (Guerra et al. 2019). Each artifact was positioned on a turntable provided with precise auto-detecting markers to ensure the entire coverage of the inquired subject and, at the same time, providing a high

degree of accuracy of image acquisition. Controlled flash lighting provided consistent illumination, reducing shadows and highlights that might obscure critical surface details. A thoroughly calibrated camera system was used to guarantee accurate geometric scaling and faithful color reproduction. This methodological rigor allowed the creation of highly detailed photographic datasets for each sealing. The images were processed using Agisoft Metashape 2.0.4, a specialized photogrammetry software capable of generating dense point clouds, high-resolution meshes, and photorealistic textures (Fig. 1). The resulting 3D models capture not only



Fig. 1. Photogrammetric model of cylinder seal YU.25.O.5 from the necropolis of Yunus produced using Agisoft Metashape©.

the impressed iconography — depictions of deities, royal figures, heraldic motifs, and administrative symbols — but also micro-features such as fabric impressions, fingerprints, abrasion marks, and traces of the sealing process itself.

Enhancing Visibility Through Digital Post-Processing

A key advantage of digital 3D documentation is the ability to apply visualization tools and post-processing techniques that significantly enhance the legibility of the objects (Mara et al. 2010). Through interactive rendering environments, it becomes possible to manipulate virtual lighting conditions, adjust contrast, and apply directional shading in ways that reveal extremely subtle details. Virtual magnification allows close inspection without the risk of damaging the often-fragile originals (Fig. 2). Furthermore, the ability to rotate models freely or isolate specific features gives

scholars and viewers an unprecedented level of access and interpretive control. These enhancements are particularly valuable for sealings, the iconographic and administrative functions of which rely on the clarity of very small, tightly packed designs. Details that might be invisible or barely perceptible on the original objects — whether due to wear, uneven preservation, or simple scale — can be revealed with remarkable clarity in the virtual environment. Such digital enhancements not only support academic study but also enable non-specialists to appreciate the craftsmanship and symbolic language embedded in these artifacts.

Online Dissemination Through 3DHOP and Omeka

Once processed and optimized for online visualization, the 3D models were integrated into a digital platform combining two complementary systems: 3DHOP (3D Heritage On-

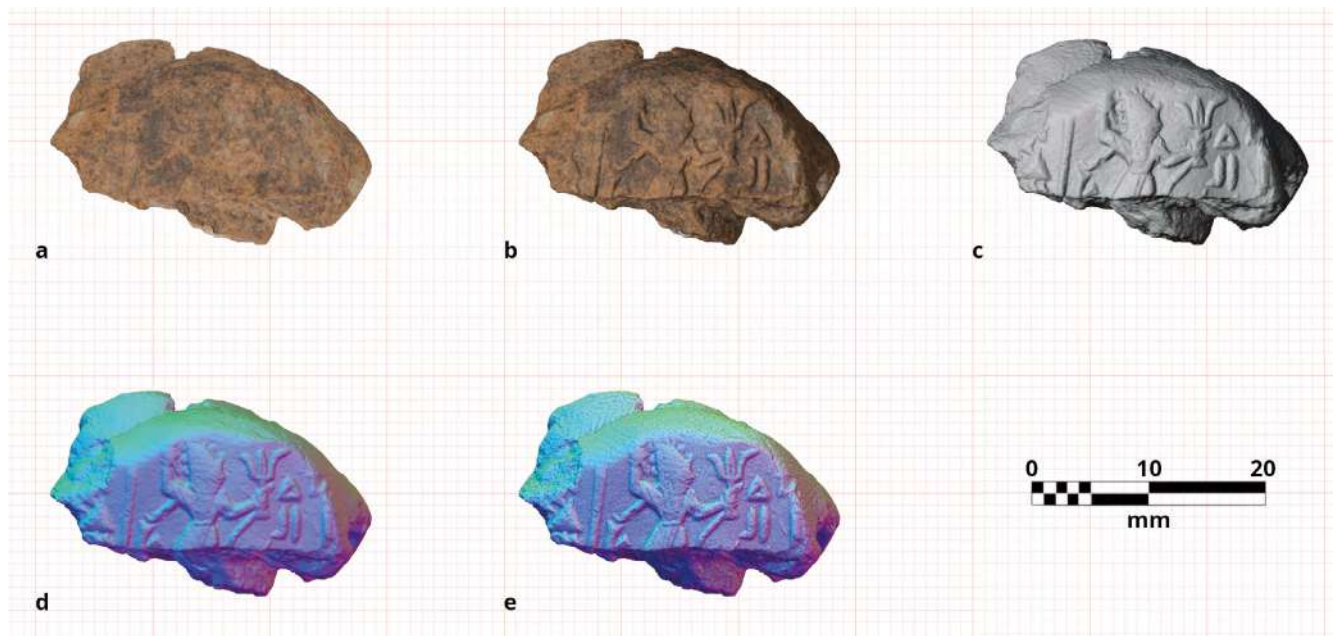


Fig. 2. Using various post processing techniques it is possible to enhance details on the mesh of the sealing KH.20.O.91: **a**, original model with texture; **b**, original model with directional light; **c**, model with directional light but without texture; **d**, model with normal MatCap and directional light; **e**, model with normal MatCap and cavity filter.

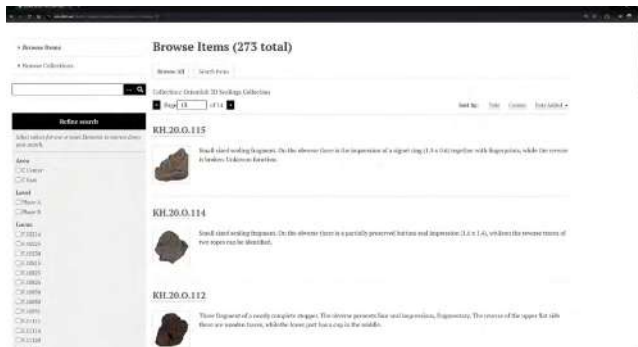


Fig. 3. Online 3D database of the Late Bronze clay sealings with advanced search tool.

line Presenter, Potenziani et al. 2015; <https://3dhop.net/>) and Omeka (Fig. 3; <https://omeka.org>). 3DHOP provides an in-browser environment for interactive manipulation of 3D models, allowing users to zoom, rotate, change lighting, and explore details without the need for specialized software (https://www.orientlab.net/digital_museum/). It is designed specifically for cultural heritage applications, ensuring smooth performance even with high-resolution models. Omeka serves as the metadata and cataloging layer. Each sealing is accompanied by detailed archaeological documentation — including provenance, chronology, stratigraphic context, typological classification, description of iconographic or the indication about the administrative officer. The integration of 3DHOP models into Omeka ensures that each 3D visualization is embedded within a proper scholarly record, offering both intuitive exploration and rigorous contextual information. The resulting digital archive democratizes access to the sealing corpus, making it available to researchers, educators, students, and the general public worldwide. It also provides a permanent safeguard for the preservation of the archive, protecting it against physical deterioration and ensuring that the data remains available for future generations of study.

The 3D Model of Late Hittite Karkemish

Parallel to the creation of the sealing repository, the project has also developed a detailed 3D reconstruction of Karkem-

ish during the Late Hittite period (Fig. 4). This virtual environment, grounded in archaeological evidence, architectural analysis, and historical sources, offers a broader interpretive context for the urban archaeological landscape (Monastero 2023; <https://www.orientlab.net/3d-kark/>). The 3D model aims to virtually reintegrate the decorated orthostats, most of which are kept in the Museum of Anatolian Civilizations in Ankara, into their original context, while reconstructing the monumental architecture of the site, including the city gates, processional streets and the main public and administrative buildings (Monastero 2018). The virtual reconstruction integrates data from decades of excavation and survey, allowing viewers to envision spatial relationships that shaped ritual, political, and administrative activities. Within this reconstructed environment, the carved orthostats gain new interpretive dimensions: they are not simply isolated artifacts but components of an intricate figurative system embedded in a vibrant urban political and religious landscape. The combination of object-level digitization and site-level modeling thus creates a holistic digital ecosystem capable of illustrating how social and religious practices were enacted within the physical realities of ancient Karkemish.

A New Framework for Archaeological Research and Public Engagement

Together, the digital repository of the sealing archive and the 3D reconstruction of Late Hittite Karkemish exemplify the transformative potential of digital humanities methods in archaeology. They offer scholars new ways to analyze material culture, from micro-level examination of sealing impressions to macro-level understanding of administrative systems and urban space. At the same time, they enhance public engagement by presenting complex archaeological materials in accessible and visually compelling ways. This integrated digital initiative ensures that the legacy of Karkemish — its artistic traditions, administrative structures, and architectural achievements — can be explored with a clarity and immediacy unimaginable even a decade ago. By combining meticulous physical documentation with sophisticated digital visualization, the project stands as a model for the preservation, study, and dissemination of archaeological heritage.



Fig. 4. Multi-layered reconstruction of the Iron II Lower Palace area, browsable tool available at <https://www.orientlab.net/3d-kark/>.



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 ^mŠu-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



Cat. 2

Impressed sealing

Excavation no. KH.17.O.531 (Gaziantep)

Material: Clay

Dimensions: l. 2.3; w. 3.5; th. 3.4 cm

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

Date: Late Bronze IIB, 13th century BCE

Description

The reverse of the sealing shows the negative impression of an angled wooden surface, which suggests that the sealing was placed on the edge of a wooden box. On the obverse there are two seal impressions made from two different seals, a cylinder seal and a signet ring, both belonging to the same prince named Taya (meaning “man” in Hurrian), one of the few who is attested in both phases and who in total had three cylinder seals (C1-3), four button seals (B1-4) and four signet rings (S1-4), see also Cat. nos. 6-7 (Peker 2023a: 131-133, no. 22, table 3, fig. 22a-n). The cylinder seal (C2; h 3.2 cm) features, between guilloches, a Storm-god in smiting position (in other impressions by the same seal, the mace and the tall horned cap are visible) holding a large axe (Beyer 2001: 303-304, fig. 33 calls him the Syrian Ba’al), in front of, probably, two other deities, a female one crowned and with a long flounced dress with rolled vertical border (possibly the Aleppine Hepat), and a male figure with tall cap, dress to the knee and an object in his right hand. The legend reads in hieroglyphic writing: *tá-i(a)* AURIGA₂ (DEUS) *ku*+AQUILA = Taya, Charioteer of the goddess Kubaba; in cuneiform: 1. ^{NA4}KIŠIB 2. ^mTá-’e-e 3. AŠ LUGAL = Seal of Taya, (elder) son of the king. The signet ring (S2), with a fine ladder motif along the edge, has the same hieroglyphic legend as above. In other impressions, Taya carries also the title of vizier, thus having had diplomatic and commercial responsibilities in addition to his cultic ones.

CDO, NM, HP



Cat. 3

Impressed sealing

Excavation no. KH.19.O.304 (Gaziantep)

Material: Clay

Dimensions: l. 5.1; w. 3.5; th. 3.4 cm

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

Date: Late Bronze IIB, 13th century BCE

Description

Large, nearly complete clay sealing from the deposit in the lowermost layer in the Seal-house (phase A), lying below the floors and walls of the western sector of that complex: the deposit included 547 sealings, both impressed and not, and represents a discarded archive, sealed by a construction level with open and closed spaces, from which another 153 sealings were retrieved (phase B), mainly from the courtyard to the West of the building. The reverse shows the negative impressions of two strings wrapped around a rounded object (bundle) with a smooth surface. On the obverse there are four impressions of a circular stamp seal (diam. 1.7 cm) with a field surrounded by a notched border. The hieroglyphs of the name of the owner are the ibex *sà* (L104 = CAPRA₂)+*US* (L421)-*ka* (L434)-CERVUS₂ (L102.1)-*t*[*i*?] (L90), which can be read Šaušga-Runtiya. No title or profession is given. The name Šaušga-Runtiya is attested in both cuneiform and hieroglyphic sources (Laroche 1966: 1144; Herbordt 2005: 271), but there is not enough evidence available to equate the personage from Karkemish with one of the individuals documented so far.

CDO, NM, HP

Peker 2023a: 130, no. 17, fig. 17, table 1

References



Cat. 4

Impressed sealing

Excavation no. KH.20.O.160 (Gaziantep)

Material: Clay

Dimensions: l. 3.4; w. 8.8; th. 1.9 cm

Context: Lower Palace, area C Center, Seal-house, fill F.10825 (phase B)

Date: Late Bronze IIB, 13th century BCE

Description

Half of a large, conical-shaped door-peg sealing. It was found in the fill above the courtyard to the West of the Seal-house (from that same fill come also Cat. nos. 5 and 8). The large lump of clay was used to secure a door, possibly the main entrance to the storehouse: the lump of clay was applied on a cylinder peg made of wood (diam. 3 cm) fixed in the wall and tied with three/four laps of a twisted string (diam. 0.4 cm) set into the door, as revealed by the negative traces left on the inner section of the cone. The base is flat with very light grains, likely deriving from the wall plaster against which the lump of clay was pressed (see the graphical reconstruction). The obverse of the sealing is entirely covered by seven impressions from the same cylinder seal, which can be almost completely reconstructed by digitally combining them (see Peker 2023a: 133-134, no. 26, fig. 26b, table 4, listing all the glyptic evidence we have at Karkemish for the owner of this seal). The seal has been engraved in the Karkemish court style, which adapts Hittite motives (rendered with painstaking attention to volumes and details) to the continuous field of the cylinder seal, a medium rather typical of Syria. The Storm-god - wearing a multiple-horned cap and a kilt - with his right hand holds up a mace in “smiting”-position and with the left one holds the tripartite thunderbolt and a leash to the muzzle of the bull upon which he is standing. In front of him there are another two figures standing, respectively, upon a lion and an ibex both on a leash: a Great King with long robe, the *kalmuš*



stick and an *'ankh* life symbol in his right hand under a winged sun disk (cf. Cat. no. 1) and a deity, with a skirt opening on the right leg and a single-horned cap, holding an axe with a multi-spike tang, possibly the god Sharruma (see Beyer 2001: 335-336, fig. 55 and fig. 98 for the axe). The scene is framed by two guilloches, above which there are the grooves left by the metal cap (presumably of gold) originally fixed to the seal (which is 3.2 cm high, 3.7 cm with the caps). The owner, whose name is written both with hieroglyphic and cuneiform signs, is a certain Zinni (a name of Hurrian origin and the I of that name, to distinguish him from a namesake in the same archive), of whom we think we can reconstruct the career: he first bears just the title BONUS₂ VIR₂/VIR₂ “(wealthy) (noble) man” on sealings impressed by two button seals and three signet rings in the lowermost layer (phase A). In his later career, i.e. on his seal impressions from the upper layer (phase B), Zinni’s titles are SIGILLUM.DOMINUS, “lord of the seal”, LÚ KIŠIB “man of the seal” and AGRIG ŠÁ LUGAL “storehouse administrator of the king”, which are written in addition to the title BONUS₂ VIR₂ on two cylinder seal impressions: the one here bears the hieroglyphic inscription BONUS₂ VIR₂ *zi/a-ni* SIGILLUM.DOMINUS and, in cuneiform, 1. ^{NA4}KIŠIB 2. ^m*Zi-in-ni* 3. LÚ KIŠIB AGRIG ŠÁ LUGAL. The supervisor (lú AGRIG) of the collection center (É.^{NA4}KIŠIB, “house of the seal/sealing house” = warehouse/depot) disbursed supplies for religious ceremonies, temple expenses and their personnel, military equipment, and other expenditures (Gates and Peker 2025: 48).

CDO, NM, HP



Cat. 5

Impressed sealing

Excavation no. KH.20.O.99 (Gaziantep)

Material: Clay

Dimensions: l. 5.7; w. 4.0; th. 2.4 cm

Context: Lower Palace, area C Center, Seal-house, fill F.10825 (phase B)

Date: Late Bronze IIB, 13th century BCE

Description

Sealing originally placed against the rim and neck of a vessel, covered with a piece of fabric tied with at least three laps of strings. On the obverse of the sealing there are three impressions of two different cylinder seals. One of them is very partially preserved, showing a guilloche and the beginning of a name written in cuneiform Aza... The other seal (h. 3.3 cm) is the product of the Karkemish glyptic workshop, with carefully executed and arranged figures between guilloches. The left part of the field is not fully preserved, the main deity was present there, certainly the Storm-god because an arm with a mace in smiting position is preserved along the cuneiform legend (he stands on two Mountain-gods with curved necks). In front of him there are the Great King under a winged sun disk behind whom is a god (of uncertain identification, perhaps Nergal or Karhuha, see Marchesi and Marchetti 2019: 528-529, note 26) with single-horned cap, bow and spear, each standing above a kneeling genie. The legend (known also from other sealings) reads in hieroglyphic:]-*pari-ki-sà* AULA = Abarikisa loyal (noble)man; and in cuneiform: 1. ^N[^{A4}KIŠIB] 2. ^mA-*ba-r*[i-... ^L] ^ÜD[UGUD?] = S[eal] of Abar[ikisa] the di[gnitary]. The first part of the name is composed with Abari, a local Hurrian god.

CDO, NM, HP

Peker 2023a: 127, no. 2, fig. 1, p. 128, no. 4, fig. 3, table 1

References



6



7



Impressed sealings

Cat. 6
7

Excavation no. KH.20.O.78 (Gaziantep)

Dimensions: l. 3.3; w. 2.0; th. 1.3 cm

Context: Lower Palace, area C Center, Seal-house, fill F.10826 (phase B)

Excavation no. KH.20.O.17 (Gaziantep)

Dimensions: h. 4.7; w. 3.8; th. 2.0 cm

Context: Lower Palace, area C East, fill F.4353

Material: Clay

Date: Late Bronze IIB, 13th century BCE

Two different sealings impressed with the same stamp seal. The first is a small sealing fragment with two impressions, possibly applied against a vessel neck, found in the fill above the courtyard to the West of the Seal-house. The second one is a stopper nearly flat on the top which is stamped, as are the upper sides with another five seal impressions, while the lower part is square in section. The round stamp is prince Taya's second button seal (B2, see under Cat. no. 2), which has a reconstructed diameter of 3.4 cm (2.5 inner roundel + 0.45 the frame): a worshiper (possibly Taya himself because of his lock or horn, cf. Beyer 2001: 347-351, fig. 63) raising his right hand in a prayer gesture stands on two mountain peaks in front of a Stag-god (see Beyer 2001: 330-331, fig. 51) standing on a leashed deer and holding a mace and an axe with a multi-spike tang. The style, as well as the medium are purely Anatolian. The inscription says: *tá-i(a) AURIGA₂ (DEUS)ku+AQUILA* = Taya, Charioteer of Kubaba, a ceremonial title linked to the city's patron goddess.

Description

CDO, NM, HP

Peker 2023a: fig. 22c

References



Cat. 8

Impressed sealing

Excavation no. KH.20.O.98 (Gaziantep)

Material: Clay

Dimensions: l. 4.9; w. 2.9; th. 2.0 cm

Context: Lower Palace, area C Center, Seal-house, fill F.10825 (phase B)

Date: Late Bronze IIB, 13th century BCE

Description

Medium-sized sack sealing, found in the fill over the courtyard to the West of the Seal-house (phase B). On the reverse there are negative traces of folds, probably of a sack made of leather, closed with a string, visible along the broken section. The obverse of the sealing has been impressed eight times, partially overlapping, with the same signet ring. The hieroglyphs giving the name and profession of the owner are placed along the vertical axis and also left and right in the oval area surrounded by a ladder band: *tá* (L29)-*ki* (L446)-*SARMA* (L80) / *SCRIBA* (L326) / *BONUS*₂ *SCRIBA* = Taki-Šarruma, scribe, wealthy scribe. It is possible that the person here is the same person as the prince Taki-Šarruma attested at Hattusa and Ugarit (Laroche 1966: 1209; Herbordt 2005: 228 and 176; Dinçol and Dinçol 2008: 272), if we assume that this seal belongs to a phase of his career before he became the “Chief Scribe.”

CDO, NM, HP



Impressed sealing

Excavation no. KH.20.O.195 (Gaziantep)

Material: Clay

Dimensions: l. 5.9; w. 3.5; th. 1.3 cm

Context: Lower Palace, area C Center, Seal-house, fill F.10826 (phase B)

Date: Late Bronze IIB, 13th century BCE

Cat. 9

Sealing applied to a large container, as the negative impressions of large twisted ropes on the reverse show, found in the fill over the courtyard to the West of the Seal-house. On the obverse of the sealing there are seven impressions, partially overlapping, of the same round stamp seal. The hieroglyphs of the name of the owner are surrounded by a frame made by alternating stylised life symbols (see under Cat. no. 1) and triangles between two simple lines and they read: *ti* (L90)-*li* (L278)-*SARMA* (L80) = Tili-Šarruma. This personage, whose title or profession is not specified, must have been a different individual from the namesakes hitherto attested in cuneiform and hieroglyphic sources (Laroche 1966: 1326; Herbordt 2005: 275).

CDO, NM, HP

Description

Peker 2023a: 133, no. 23, table 1, fig. 23

References



Cat. 10

Impressed sealing

Excavation no. KH.21.O.460 (Gaziantep)

Material: Clay

Dimensions: l. 3.1; w. 2.1; th. 1.9 cm

Context: Lower Palace, area C East, Seal-house, fill F.11576 (phase B)

Date: Late Bronze IIB, 13th century BCE

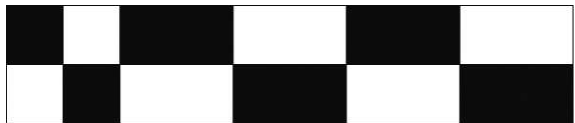
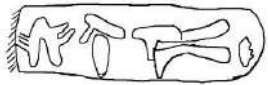
Description

Complete hanging sealing, drop-shaped, with a pierced hole on the top for the string encased into the lump of clay, from the eastern room in the Seal-house. Hanging sealings (or bulla in literature), cone-, pyramid-, drop- and cylinder-shaped, are mainly known from Hittite contexts in Anatolia (see Cat. no. 26), secured to written documents by means of tiny strings (Herbordt 2005: 33-34, fig. 18.a-b; Waal 2023: 138-142). The sealing presents, on one side and the base, four impressions of the same signet ring bearing the owner's name, Piradu, both in cuneiform and hieroglyphic writing, respectively *[pi/pi]-ra-du* and *pi (L66)+ra/i (L383)-tu (L88)*, accompanied by his title, AULA (L254) "loyal (noble)man" and likely profession, MAGNUS[?].X[?]. While the name Piradu, probably of Hurrian origin, is common in Middle Assyrian sources, it is possible that we are here dealing with the same person attested at Emar, if the Mutri-Teshub of two documents from that site (Beyer 2001: 136, B46, Msk 73.1019 and Arnaud 1986: 261, Msk 7441) is actually one and the same person, because in one Piradu is mentioned and in the other one Ewri-Teshub, a diviner whose seal is known both from Karkemish (with Sunaili and Zinni I; cf. Cat. nos. 1, 4 and see Peker 2023a: 128 no. 7, figs. 6-7) and Emar (Beyer 2001: 56-57, A14).

CDO, NM, HP

Peker 2023a: 130, no. 14, fig. 14

References



Cat. 11

Impressed sealing

Excavation no. KH.17.O.89 (Gaziantep)

Material: Clay

Dimensions: h. 3.6; w. 5.2; th. 2.4 cm

Context: Lower Palace, area C East, fill F. 8051

Date: Late Bronze IIB or early Iron I, 13th or 12th century BCE

Description

Because the sealing was found within the fill of an Iron II pit (P.8050) cutting into the Late Bronze IIB and Iron I layers, we cannot date it by stratigraphic means and it may well belong to an immediately post-Imperial phase. It was applied against the neck and rim of a juglet (diam. ca. 5 cm), probably markedly outturned, covered with a piece of fabric, perhaps an open weaved gauze made out of fine threads, bound with two rows of cord (0.2 cm diam.), the negative signs of which can be seen along the broken section of the sealing. On the obverse it bears two impressions of the same signet ring engraved with Anatolian hieroglyphs giving the owner's name: *i(a)* (L209) – *zi/a* (L376) – *tá* (L29) which can be read as Iz(z)ita, a name hitherto not attested. This seal is distinct from other 13th century BCE signet ring examples (as Cat. nos. 2, 8, 10) and it may also date from a slightly later period having no decoration and a simple linear arrangement of the signs, thus its date can be broadly determined as between the late 13th and the mid-12th centuries BCE (in the latter case, being contemporary with Cat. nos. 24-30).

CDO, NM, HP

Peker 2020: 318-319, fig. 5

References



1



2



3



5



4 (composite rendering)

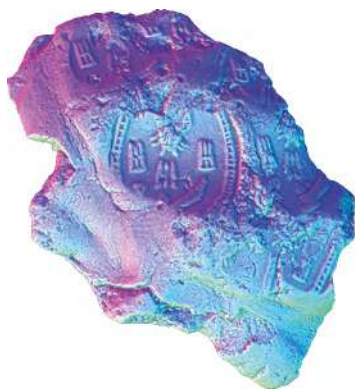
not to scale



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8



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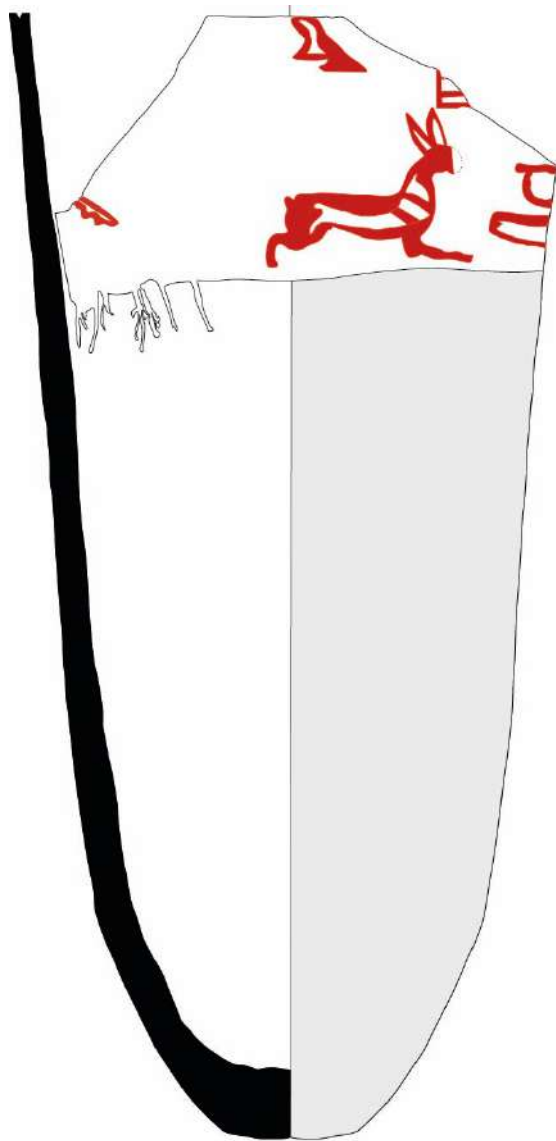


10



11





Cat. 12

Jar with painted hieroglyphs

Excavation no. KH.21.O.735 / KH.21.P.579/56 (Gaziantep)

Material: Pottery

Dimensions: max diam. 24; wall th. 1.3; base diam. 5.2; h. 46 cm

Context: Lower Palace, area C North, fill F.12300

Date: Late Bronze IIB, late 13th century BCE

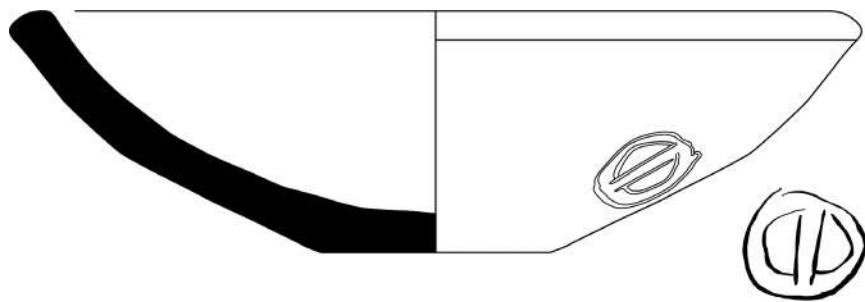
Description

The lower part of jar illustrated here was found discarded together with a large amount of broken pottery of similar date over a roadway (L.12301) flanking to the North-West the Seal-House, associated with two worn seals (one is Cat. no. 19) and plenty of animal bones (as it happened quite typically with ancient roads). The upper part of the jar is missing and the rest of associated vessels are incomplete as well, since they were thrown away when broken, as shown by the many bowls bearing the hieroglyphic sign DEUS (among which Cat. nos. 13-14). This bottom part of jar (with a small flat base) must have belonged to a typical shape found throughout Hittite sites, a single-handled jar with a narrow and long neck (Mielke 2022: figs. 13.2 sub 3, 13.7 sub 6 with p. 684), a vessel which could also be fairly large as in this case (Schoop 2009: 152, fig. 13.1; 2011: 253, fig. 4.3 classifies it as the shape of the drab ware class used for storage). Whether the Karkemish specimen contained liquids, such as wine, or dry products we cannot say. The vase (with a low frequency of small mineral and vegetal grits and having a fabric of colors 7.5YR 5/4 and 2.5Y 5/1 according to the Munsell codes) was burnished and its central part was painted white with hieroglyphs painted in red over that field, a completely unique feature. The content of the inscription is most interesting: a personal name, ...patu (written [...]pa (L334)-tu (L89)) with his title of “City administrator” ([UR]BS.LEPUS, which may be equated with the Sumerian logogram MAŠKIM.URU^{KI} attested in cuneiform sources; see Peker 2023a: 134;



Pecchioli Daddi 1982: 447-449). There are also some less clear hieroglyphic signs such as *li* (L278?) above the sign LEPUS and *a* (L450) on the far left. This governor (the same title as in the Iron II bronze seal Cat. no. 34) may have been based either at Karkemish with some specific delegated tasks from the king or at some other location within the kingdom of Karkemish. The DEUS bowls (Cat. nos. 13-14), and also this painted jar if the former hypothesis holds true, must have pertained to a public organization, likely connected to the two nearby temples in areas A and B respectively dedicated to the Storm-god and (possibly) Nikarawa, since they in fact were built during the Late Bronze II period (see Marchetti 2016a).

NM, HP



*



Cat. 13

Inscribed bowl

Excavation no. KH.24.O.501 / KH.24.P.93/1 (Gaziantep)

Material: Pottery

Dimensions: diam. 21; wall th. 0.9; base diam. 5.4; h. 6 cm

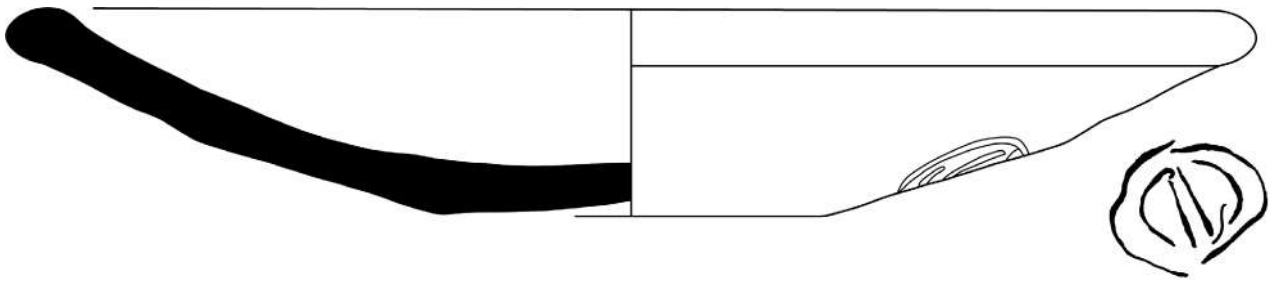
Context: Lower Palace, area C North, fill F.13981

Date: Late Bronze IIB, 13th century BCE

Description

The bowl, similar in shape but with a deeper profile in respect of Cat. no. 14, features a fabric with fine texture and of light colour (10YR 8/3), with an outer surface untreated and undecorated, except for a DEUS hieroglyphic sign, incised before firing. Parallels can be found in contemporary layers at Hattusa (Gruber 2017: 106, pl. 157.1-11) and Kuşaklı-Sarissa (Mielke 2006: 117-118). Undecorated plates and shallow bowls – often labelled as “Drab Ware” – are recurrent elements in the Imperial Hittite ceramic horizon, attested in different sites across central Anatolia (Henrickson 2002: 126; Schoop 2003: 172-174) and in Hittite-controlled regions (Horowitz 2015: fig. 7.5: 6). The plain features of these vessels, with positive effects on rapid production and widespread circulation, has been connected to the presence of an organised Hittite administration engaged with the redistribution of goods to civil and military officials (Peker 2020: 318). An articulated typology of incised patterns, both before and after firing, is attested in Anatolia during the Late Bronze age (Glatz 2012). For instance, the presence of potmarks in association with plain ware vessels was interpreted as evidence of professionalism of local potters in Cilicia (Gates 2001). The presence of incised hieroglyphic signs is a more specialized indication of a direct institutional connection for the pottery assemblage (see Cat. no. 14; cf. also Schachner 2024: figs. 246-247, 249-250).

GG, HP



Cat. 14

Inscribed bowl

Excavation no. KH.21.O.670 / KH.21.P.579/11 (Gaziantep)

Material: Pottery

Dimensions: diam. 24; wall th. 0.7; base diam. 7.4; h. 4 cm

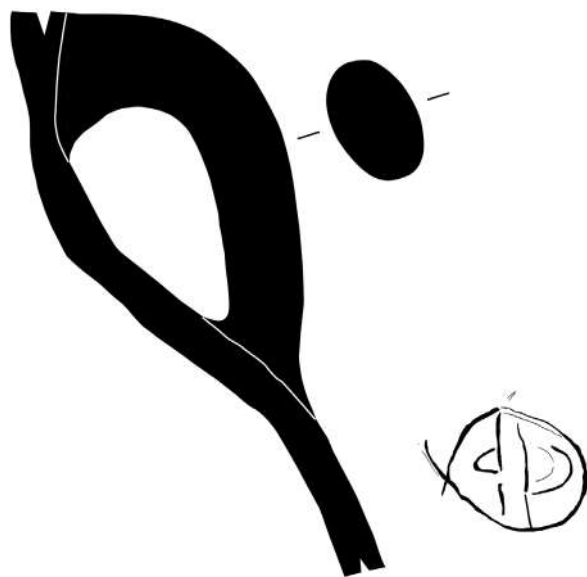
Context: Lower Palace, area C North, fill F.12300

Date: Late Bronze IIB, 13th century BCE

Description

This shallow, undecorated bowl with rounded rim shows a relatively coarse manufacture: its buff/light brownish fabric (10YR 6/3) includes frequent medium-size grit and chaff inclusions visible on the outer surface, which was partially burnished. A potmark-like sign was incised before firing on the lower part of the vessel: it is the hieroglyphic sign for deity, DEUS. At Karkemish 48 specimens of bowls (see also Cat. no. 13) with this same sign were retrieved in the Late Bronze II levels of areas C East and C North (both inside and outside the Seal-house, this bowl was smashed with many other similarly incised specimens on roadway L.12301, whence Cat. nos.12 and 19 also come), which lay close to the two temples in areas A and B (founded in that period, see Marchetti 2016a). Our preliminary theory goes that these marked vessels show an economic connection of sorts with the nearby sacred area(s). Interestingly, Karkemish is the only site where the DEUS sign appears on vessels, while at Late Bronze II Kinet Höyük there are MAGNUS.DOMUS/palace and SPICA/grain (Gates and Peker 2025), while from the temple sector in the Upper City of Hattusa we have REX/king, DOMUS/house and SPICA/grain (Parzinger and Sanz 1992: pl. 73.162-168; Herboldt and von Wickede 2021: pl. XXVI.1-4).

GG, HP



*



Cat. 15

Inscribed jar sherd

Museum no. KH.17.O.266 / KH.17.P.807/34 (Gaziantep)

Material: Pottery

Dimensions: h. 15.5; wall th. 1.1; w. 12.2 cm

Context: Lower Palace, area C East, Seal-house, fill F.8851 (phase B)

Date: Late Bronze IIB, 13th century BCE

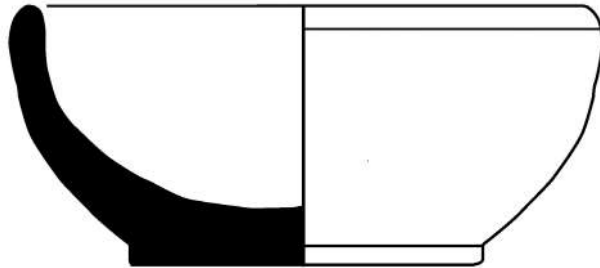
Description

This fragment with handle originally belonged to a storage or transport jar or even, but less likely, a large jug. The absence of diagnostic elements such as the rim does not allow to find precise parallels, but such vessels are a standard presence in Hittite residential contexts (Parzinger and Sanz 1992: pl. 13.5; Schoop 2011: 253; Mielke 2022: fig. 13.2, 3). The outer surface shows a light whitish coating or wash on the light brownish/buff fabric (10YR 5/2). In this case, the DEUS sign, incised on the surface before the vessel's firing, is located below the lower end of the handle, as seldom attested (Mielke 2006: pl. 84). In fact, among the pottery shapes with the incised DEUS sign, this is the only closed one, all the others being open bowls. Handles were often impressed with stamp seals, so this may be considered a variant of that practice (Gates and Peker 2025: 42, fig. 8; Herboldt and von Wickede 2021: pl. XXVI.5-6). The sherd was found in a room (L.8857) of the Seal-house together with an impressed sealing (Peker 2020: 317-318, fig. 2), from the second phase of use of that administrative building.

GG, HP

Peker 2020: 318, figs. 3-4

References



Cat. 16

Miniature bowl

Excavation no. KH.20.P.178/1 (Gaziantep)

Material: Pottery

Dimensions: diam. 8; wall th. 0.6; base diam. 4.5; h. 3.6 cm

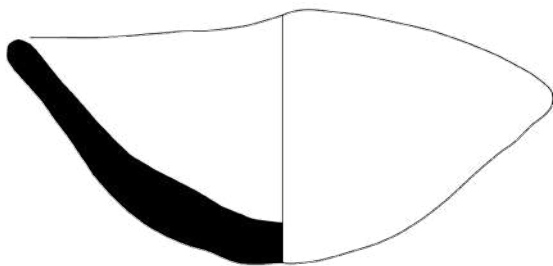
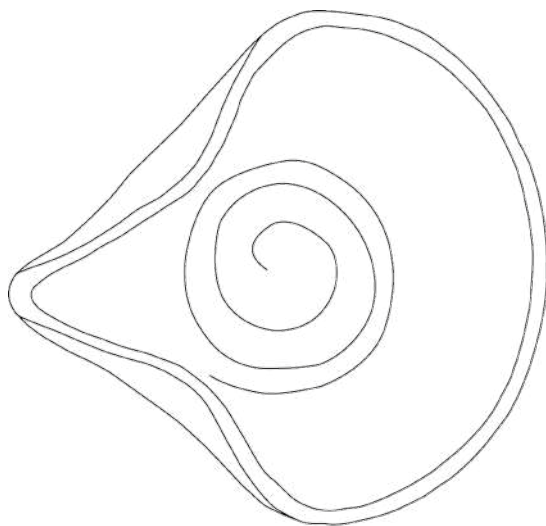
Context: Lower Palace, area C Center, fill F.11104

Date: Late Bronze IIB, 13th century BCE

Description

The morphological and technological features of this miniature hemispheric bowl are indicators for its chronology and function. The vessel is wheelmade but its base is roughly string-cut and not refined, resulting in an irregular footing. The fabric is reddish (5YR 7/4) and includes medium-size grits, while the surface remains unpolished and plain. These elements allow to place the vessel within the Late Bronze II ceramic production of Hittite tradition attested at several sites of north-central Anatolia (Parzinger and Sanz 1992: pl. 6.9-20; Glatz 2009: fig. 2.1; Mielke 2006: pl. 80.9-10; Mielke 2022: fig. 13.2, 15), as part of a class of miniature wares – together with hand or moulded plates and one-handled juglets also found in northern Syria (Horowitz 2015: 169-171) – which has been associated to votive and feasting ceremonies (Glatz 2015: 196). For instance, deposits of these peculiar vessels were found in “sacred pools” and temple buildings at Hattusa (Schoop 2011: 247-249; see also Schoop 2009: 155, fig. 13.2-3).

GG



Lamp

Museum no. KH.21.P.79/2 (Gaziantep)

Material: Pottery

Dimensions: h. 7; rim th. 0.5; wall th. 0.6; base th. 0.7 cm

Context: Lower Palace, area C East, Seal-house, fill F.11594

Date: Late Bronze IIB, 13th century BCE

Cat. 17

Description

Lamps are commonly found during the investigation of residential contexts and may feature different shapes and sizes based on the context of provenance and period. This lamp and an identical one were found within a beer jar from the eastern sector of the Seal-house. The lamp, made on the slow wheel with the coil technique, features a simple rim pinched into a trefoil shape and a rounded base. The dark reddish colour of the fabric (2.5YR 6/6) reveals a low firing temperature ($\pm 500^{\circ}\text{C}$), a common practice to provide enough elasticity to stand the contact with fire and/or a source of great heat. In general, the fabric is quite coarse and a consistent quantity (between 10% and 20%) of grit is included in its matrix. The limited burnt traces localised on both sides of the rim, where the wicks were placed within the olive oil or fat fuel, may suggest a relatively short use of the lamp. With its plain design, this type of lamp was extremely popular and widespread across both the northern (Pucci 2019: 250-251) and the southern Levant (Koch et al. 2025), during several centuries.

GG



Cat. 18

Biconvex seal

Museum no. 6968 (Istanbul)

Material: Red stone

Dimensions: diam. 2; th. 1.3 cm (perf. diam. 1 cm)

Context: British Museum excavations

Date: Late Bronze IIB, 13th century BCE

Description

Biconvex seal, made of red stone. The seal is engraved on both sides with the same Anatolian hieroglyphs of the name of the seal owner, framed by a ladder motif. The same motif decorates the side of the perforated seal. The inscription reads $BONUS_2 VIR_2 \times 2 wa/i-sa-i(a) = Wasaya$, the wealthy man. The name is hitherto not attested, but etymologically it must derive from *wasa-*, “goodness, favor” in Luwian. Nothing is known about the context of retrieval for this object, but the title and the decoration type employed firmly date it to the Empire period (cf. Dinçol and Dinçol 2008: cat. nos. 161-167, pls. 15-16, 174-178, pl. 17).

HP

Dinçol 1983: 206, 237-238, cat. no. 27, pl. 27

References



Cat. 19

Biconvex stamp seal

Excavation no. KH.21.O.500 (Gaziantep)

Material: Steatite

Dimensions: diam. 3.0; th. 1.1 (perf. diam. 0.4)

Context: Lower Palace, area C North, fill F.12300

Date: Late Bronze IIB, 13th century BCE

Description

This complete, perforated biconvex seal was found in a debris layer above roadway L.12301 along the Seal-house, together with a cylinder seal (KH.21.O.501), thirteen bowl fragments with DEUS marks (e.g. Cat. no. 14) and a painted pithos (Cat. no. 12). The seal is engraved on one side with Anatolian hieroglyphs, giving us the name of the seal owner, framed by a simple ladder motif, typical of the Empire period (see Cat. no. 18). The hieroglyphs of the name form the sequence *wal/i*[?] (L439 without central stroke and squares with open bottom) *-ni*[?] (L411 unexpected periods at the open ends) *-ti*[?] (L90? with a longer ankle) *-*a*[?] (L450), which can be read very tentatively as Awa/initi, a hapax however. All hieroglyphic signs, with the exception of *ti* (L90[?]), are either made in a sketchy and unusual way or they are unknown signs. On the opposite side there is a sketched figure of a worshiper (?) with a pointed nose and bob hair. The personage is bent slightly forward with stretched arms; legs are depicted with wide upturned feet. The figure is framed by a simplified irregular ladder motif. Iconographic parallels can be found with cloaked worshipers among the seal impressions from the Nişantepe deposit at Hattusa (Herbordt 2005: 58-60, fig. 40) and from Gözlü Kule/Tarsus (Gelb 1956: 252, cat. no. 50, figs. 403, 407). When compared to those specimens, the Karkemish seal shows a less refined execution, representing a local product of the Late Empire period (late 13th century BCE).

CDO, HP



Cat. 20

Cylinder seal

Excavation no. KH.20.O.132 (Gaziantep)

Material: Faience

Dimensions: diam. 1.0; h. 2.1 cm (perf. diam. 0.3 cm)

Context: Acropolis, area AA, monumental building, fill F.10753

Date: Late Bronze II, 14th-13th centuries BCE

Description

Cylinder seal retrieved from the second phase of use in the Late Bronze II monumental building in the north-western sector of the acropolis mound (the other seal from the area is Cat. no. 21). It was found in the collapse layer (F.10753) over a floor (L.9839) in the south-western wing. The seal is made of whitish faience (a silica-based vitreous material) and features a complex scene, in a style of the so-called Common-style glyptic tradition (see Salje 1990; Porada and Collon 2016: 87-90, pls. 16-18). This includes a standing, apparently naked hero, bearded, wearing a rounded cap and a chignon on the back of the neck. He holds, with his left hand, an oryx with long horns by one hind leg. In front of the personage, on the upper register, there is a schematic winged sun (or a bird with spread wings), next to a couchant winged griffin and a couple of recumbent four-legged quadrupeds, an ibex looking backwards to the left and a gazelle to the right. In the lower register, there are two slain (?) male figures. The head and eyes of the animals are made by centre-dot circles, while the bodies and legs are formed by slender lines that contribute to the general dynamism of the scene. Overall, the iconography, style and composition are close to Mittani style seals and seal impressions from Tell Munbaqa (Werner 2004: 10-14, pls. 9-11), Alalakh (Collon 1982: 87-90, nos. 64-67) and Ugarit (Schaeffer-Forrer 1983: 150-155, nos. RS.25.254-255, 380,385; Amiet 1992: 35-36, nos. 53-54).

CDO



Cat. 21

Cylinder seal

Excavation no. KH.21.O.186 (Gaziantep)

Material: Stone

Dimensions: diam. 1; h. 2.2 cm (perf. diam. 0.4 cm)

Context: Acropolis, area AA, fill F.11703

Date: Late Bronze II, 14th-13th centuries BCE

Description

Cylinder seal retrieved from the fill (F.11703) of a Hellenistic period pit (P.11704), cut into the a mudbrick wall (W.11388) of the Late Bronze II monumental building. The surface of the seal, made of calcareous stone, appears quite worn and, thus, only a tentative interpretation of the engraved scene can be proposed. A possible schematic standing figure with a long robe can be recognized between two spears or vegetal elements. This latter kind of oblique strokes pointing downwards can be seen on a group of seals from Ugarit (Amiet 1992: fig. 24, nos. 125-127). Next, there are two rampart quadrupeds, possibly equids with their calves next to them. Schematic theories of animals are also found among the Syrian style seals from Ugarit (ibid., 41-44, figs. 14-18). Overall, based on stylistic and iconographic comparisons, it is possible to ascribe this seal to the local Syrian glyptic production of the later second millennium BCE, quite different in quality of execution and style from the other cylinder seal found in area AA (see Cat. no. 20).

CDO



Cat. 22

Inscribed bowl

Museum no. 29-1-79 (Ankara)

Material: Silver

Dimensions: diam. 20.2; h. 7.3 cm

Context: Unknown provenance (it was already in the museum before 1960)

Date: Late Bronze IIB, late 13th century BCE

Description

Hemispherical bowl of hammered silver with a single recessed band around the rim, below which are two engraved inscriptions (one almost complete and the other partly missing; Peker 2022: 8-9). Inscr. A: § 1 *zi/a-wa/i-ti CAELUM.PI sa-ma-i(a)-*a REGIO.HATTI (VIR₂)L273.SIGILLUM i(a)-zi/a-tà REX ma-zi/a-kar-hu-ha REX PRAE-na / § 2 tara/i-wa/i-zi/a-wa/i(REGIO) REL+ra/i MONS. [TU] LABARNA.LA hu-la-i(a)-tá wa/i-na-*a pa-ti-i(a)-*a ANNUS-i(a) i(a)-zi/a-tà / Inscr. B: *zi/a CAELUM.PI SCRIBA.2 pi-t[i-L31]8[?] [...] L414[...]* = This bowl Asmaya, the seal-carver of the Land of Hatti, made it in the presence of King Mazi-Karhuha. He made it in the year when Tudhaliya, the Labarna, defeated (the land of) Tarwiza / Penti-Teshub[?], the scribe 2(nd degree), c[arved it] (Peker 2022: 8). That the object comes from Karkemish rests primarily on the presence of the divine name Karhuha, a deity attested almost exclusively at the site, where he was the city-god. Tudhaliya can only be the fourth emperor of that name because he bears the title Labarna, while Mazi-Karhuha should be the same king (of Karkemish) attested at Ugarit as Maziya, as first proposed by D'Alfonso and Cohen (2021).*

UA, MM, MYM, HP

References

Toker 1992: 166, 221, no. 144; Peker 2022: 8-9; Hawkins 2024: 87-90, pls. 61-63; L. D'Alfonso and Y. Cohen, "Mazi-Karhuha, King of Karkemish and Hittite Syria at the End of the 13th Century," *Akkadica* 142 (2021), pp. 63-77



Cat. 23

Biconvex stamp seal

Excavation no. KH.19.O.137 (Gaziantep)

Material: Hematite

Dimensions: diam. 2.4; th. 1.5 cm (perf. diam. 0.4 cm)

Context: Lower Palace, area C East, fill F.9664

Date: Late Bronze IIB, late 13th century BCE

Description

Biconvex button seal, made of black hematite, found in an Iron I layer of the kitchen sector of the administrative building of that period. The perforated seal is engraved, on both sides, with the same Anatolian hieroglyphic signs, framed by a notched border. A simple groove decorates the side. The hieroglyphs include the name and title of the seal's owner, which read BONUS₂ VIR₂ x 2, OMNIS-zi/a = Wealthy-man Pu(z)zi/Pu(z)zi(ya). The name here is not the one listed by Laroche (1966: 1064), but his namesakes are attested in cuneiform sources from the 3rd millennium BCE (Dalley, Walker and Hawkins 1976: 210; Richter 2016: 241). The seal is quite worn, which fits well with its interpretation as an heirloom: in fact, the same dating arguments of Cat. no. 18 apply (e.g. Wealthy as a title is not attested after Late Bronze II without the Iron Age Seal Formula "This seal (is) of PN", cf. in fact Cat. nos. 27-30). It is not unusual to find seals from the preceding period in early Iron age layers, at the same time when new visual languages were devised in glyptics (Mazzoni 2013: 572-573), as the new evidence from Karkemish shows (Cat. nos. 24-30).

HP



Cat. 24

Impressed sealing

Excavation no. KH.19.O.113 (Gaziantep)

Material: Clay

Dimensions: l. 2.7; w. 2.2; th. 1.3 cm

Context: Lower Palace, area C East, fill F.9640

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

Description

Fragmentary sealing applied to a container, either a wooden box or a flat lid. The reverse of the sealing is flat and shows the negative trace of wooden slats, while along the broken section there are negative marks of the rope and knot fastening the container, against which the lump of clay was placed. An impression of a cylinder seal is only partially preserved: it shows a standing male figure facing to the right with stretched arms and finely rendered fingers (cf. the posture of the personage in Cat. nos. 27-30) and a thick strand of hair on the nape, which is very similar to Cat. no. 25. Of the name of the seal's owner, written hieroglyphically, only the last syllable is readable: á (L19)-[...]—*sa* (L415), with *-sa* being the genitive case for the Iron Age Seal Inscription formula “This seal is of PN” (compare Cat. nos. 25 and 27-30). The importance of the Iron I corpus of sealings from Karkemish is made clear by the very limited amount of comparable material from other sites (Mazzoni 2013: 571-573): after the collapse of the trade networks and administrative structures of the Late Bronze age, their reorganization which followed in Iron I is still poorly known (Genz [2009: 312-313; 2011: 355] stresses that no evidence for administrative activities is to be found in Anatolia during the early Iron age) and the new evidence from Karkemish shows that - notwithstanding the urban and political continuity at Karkemish itself - new formulae, both visual and epigraphical, were devised.

CDO, NM, HP



Impressed sealing

Excavation no. KH.19.O.110 (Gaziantep)

Material: Clay

Dimensions: h. 1.9; w. 0.7; th. 0.7 cm

Context: Lower Palace, area C East, fill F.9632

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

Cat. 25

Description

Fragmentary clay sealing, placed against the neck of a vessel, although no traces of cloth cover or string are preserved on its back. The sealing was impressed with a cylinder seal, featuring two standing male figures facing at the edge of the central scene, not preserved (the hieroglyphic inscription stands as a divider). Of one of them only a thick strand of hair on the back of the head remains, while of the opposite figure a powerfully rendered body, sporting a belt at the waist, and a horizontal left arm may be discerned. The hieroglyphic inscription actually supplies the name of the owner: [...] ^h*wa/i-su-na-sa* “[This seal is] of Wasuna,” which is the same formula as in the contemporary seal impressions Cat. nos. 24 and 27-30. All these sealings were found in different parts and phases of the early Iron I reconstruction (with several inner refurbishments) of the Late Bronze II Seal-house (for which see above under Cat. nos. 3-4, 14), when a sector for the processing of food was added to the east, featuring benches and circular ovens and siloses. A room farther to the West, along the presumable limit of the building and directly above the earlier rooms which had already that same function, seems to have been used as a storeroom judging from the number of sealings found there (Cat. nos. 27-30).

CDO, NM, HP



Cat. 26

Impressed sealing

Excavation no. KH.19.O.512 (Gaziantep)

Material: Clay

Dimensions: l. 2.5; w. 2.0; th. 1.4 cm

Context: Lower Palace, area C East, fill F.10236

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

Description

Complete hanging sealing, drop-shaped with a circular hole on the top left by the encasement of a double rope and with flattened sides. It bears five impressions of a stamp seal, one for each of the four sides and one on the base, alongside fingerprints. The seal impressions show possible geometric motifs on both sides of a dividing line, although they are too faint for a more accurate interpretation. Despite the lack of traces of the original carrier, it is possible to suggest that the hanging sealing was knotted to a written document, perhaps a wooden board, based on typological comparisons from the region (Waal 2023: 138-142; 2026: 747-748). This follows the Anatolian tradition of the Late Bronze age of sealing wooden writing boards and cuneiform tablets with strings and lumps of clay, testified by the large deposits of sealings from Nişantepe (Herbordt 2005; 2011) and Kayalıpınar (Maner et al. 2024: 442-443; see also Cat. no. 10). This practice appears in substitution of the Mesopotamian tradition of impressing the seals directly on the clay of the cuneiform documents (Waal 2026: 752-753). The presence of this type of sealing in the Iron I levels provides further evidence for the continuity of administrative practices at Karkemish after the fall of the Hittite empire (one may perhaps also compare a signet ring impression on a sealing from a layer, Cat. no. 11).

CDO, NM



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



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



Inlay or element of furniture

Excavation no. KH.21.O.288 (Gaziantep)

Material: Bone

Dimensions: l. 3.4; w. 1.5; th. 0.5 cm (perf. diam. 0.3 cm)

Context: Lower Palace, area C East, floor L.11582

Date: Iron I, mid-12th-11th centuries BCE

Cat. 31

Description

Fragmentary bone plaque, found in the preparation layer of an Iron I floor of beaten earth (L.11582) in the administrative building which followed the Seal-house. The front side presents a polished surface with an incised geometric decoration consisting of two crossed between parallel lines (one on the top and two at the bottom). Near the upper edge, a pierced hole indicates that it was possibly affixed to a composite artifact with a small nail, such as an inlaid furniture piece. Parallels can be seen among the Levantine ivory and bone industry that goes back to the Middle Bronze age (Peyronel 2016: 848-850). As for the Iron age, rectangular bone plaques and strips with perforation holes and geometric decoration can be found, for instance in the North Levant, at Chatal Höyük (Pucci 2019: 249-250, cat. nos. 561-563, 574-576) and at Zincirli (von Luschan and Andrae 1943: 124, 172, pl. 59.o).

CDO



Arrowhead

Excavation no. KH.24.O.170 (Gaziantep)

Material: Iron

Dimensions: l. 7.5; w. 2.2; th. 0.8 cm

Context: Lower Palace, area C East, fill F.9664

Date: Iron I, mid-12th-11th centuries BCE

Cat. 32

Description

The iron arrowhead, almost entirely preserved, comes from room L.9671 of the Iron I administrative building above the preceding Late Bronze II Seal-house. It has a rhomboid shape and an elongated tang, characteristics that allow it to be compared with Nimrud Type 1 (Curtis 2013: 39-43, pl. XI.151-152; Stronach 1958: pl. XXXIII.1-2). Arrowheads of this type are characterized by a flat, leaf-shaped blade and tapered tangs; there is often no clear distinction between the blade and the tang, as the blade gradually tapers to merge with the latter. The shape of the blade may vary slightly: in most cases, it retains a leaf-like configuration, but sometimes it may take on an ovoid profile. This is the most widely attested and common type in the repertoire of arrowheads. We can see how the same type can be traced in examples of bronze arrowheads from the end of the 2nd millennium BCE, which seem to constitute the prototype. With the beginning of the 1st millennium BCE, iron gradually became the preferred material to produce arrowheads, but the shape remained the same. Examples and parallels can be found both at the site of Karkemish (Woolley 1921: pl. 22.b) and at Gözlü Kule (Goldman 1963: pl. 171.64,69). Furthermore, examples of iron arrowheads dating back to the Iron I period can be found at sites in the southern Levant such as Beer-Sheba or Kinneret (Muhly, Maddin and Stech 1990: pl. 113.2).

LB



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Cat. 33

Cylinder seal

Excavation no. YU.25.O.5 (Gaziantep)

Material: Steatite or chlorite

Dimensions: diam. 1.7; h. 4.8 cm (perf. diam. 0.5 cm)

Context: Yunus necropolis, area 26, fill F.15017

Date: Early Iron II, late 10th-9th centuries BCE

Description

The cylinder seal was found in the upper fill of a grave from the Hellenistic period (G.15015) in the Yunus necropolis. The grave, dug in a narrow and deep pit, had been robbed in antiquity of its rich contents (but a few of them remained, such as some golden leaves under the skull): rather than being a heirloom within the funerary assemblage, we think that this much earlier seal must have fallen into the robber's pit as deriving from another robbed, nearby grave of the Iron age, as so many other examples prove that was the case in the cemetery area. The seal is quite exceptional both in its dimensions, and in its careful and detailed execution over two registers: above, the kneeling archer, with a dagger at the waist and wearing a kilt, aims at an ibex looking backwards and at a deer, while below a lion attacks a charging bull (both motifs closely recall the King's Gate reliefs by the ruler Katuwa of the end of the 10th century BCE, Woolley and Barnett 1952: pls. B.57-60). A scorpion, a fish and a star are fillers (probably also charged with vague symbolic meanings) introduced to better give a tapestry effect to the whole scene. The seal shares several features (such as the notched borders) with other specimens from the area, which contributes to the definition of the main glyptic workshop active at the site (see above pp. 19-20, Fig. 11).

NM



19



20



21



24

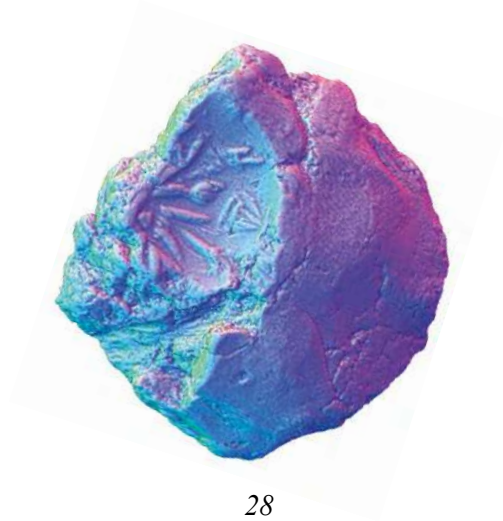


25

not to scale



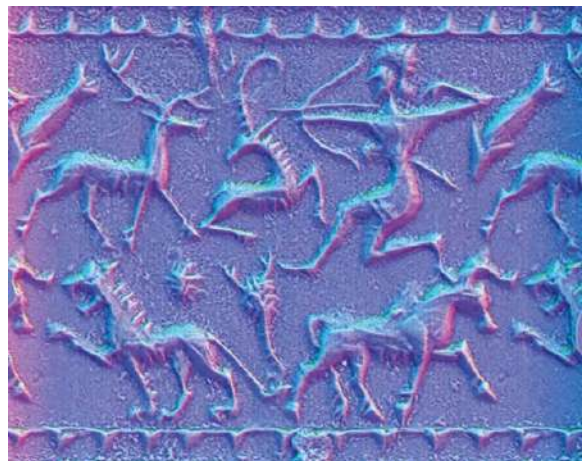
27



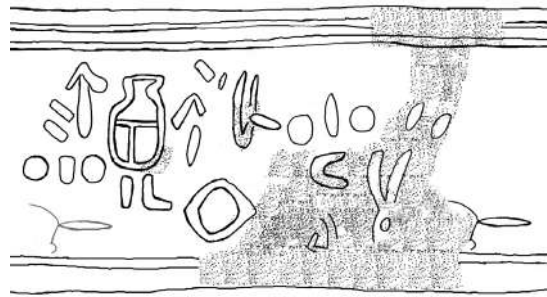
28



26



33



Cylinder seal

Excavation no. KH.11.O.65 (Gaziantep)

Material: Bronze

Dimensions: diam. 1.3; h. 2.8 cm (perf. diam. 0.25 cm)

Context: Lower Palace, Hilani temple, area B, F.109

Date: Early Iron II, late 10th-9th centuries BCE

Cat. 34

In 2011, upon restarting the excavations in the Hilani temple, a bronze cylinder seal with an outstanding hieroglyphic inscription was found in the surface fill (F.109) of cella L.110. The seal is made of solid bronze and has an axial perforation: it was likely cast from a wax model. The surface is partly corroded. The inscription is placed between a double line on top and a single one on the bottom. The date of the seal is based on epigraphic arguments. The inscription, following the Iron Age Seal formula, reads: *za-wa/i* "SIGILLUM"²- *zi 'A+ra/i-ku-wa/i-ni-s[a]* LEP[US₂]+RA/I(?) = This seal (is) of Ara/ikuwani, the governor (?). We are not yet informed well enough on the administrative structure of Late Hittite Karkemish, but in any case what we presumably have here is a high official of the court dedicating an object in the main temple of the lower town.

HP

Description

Dinçol, Dinçol and Peker 2014; Peker 2016: 23-24, cat. 8, pl. XIII.1-2

References



Inscribed sherd

Museum no. 6975 (Istanbul)

Material: Pottery

Dimensions: h. 8.1; wall th. 1.5; w. 6.2 cm

Context: British Museum excavations, Lower Palace, found between the Great Staircase and the Water Gate

Date: Late Iron II, 8th century BCE

Cat. 35

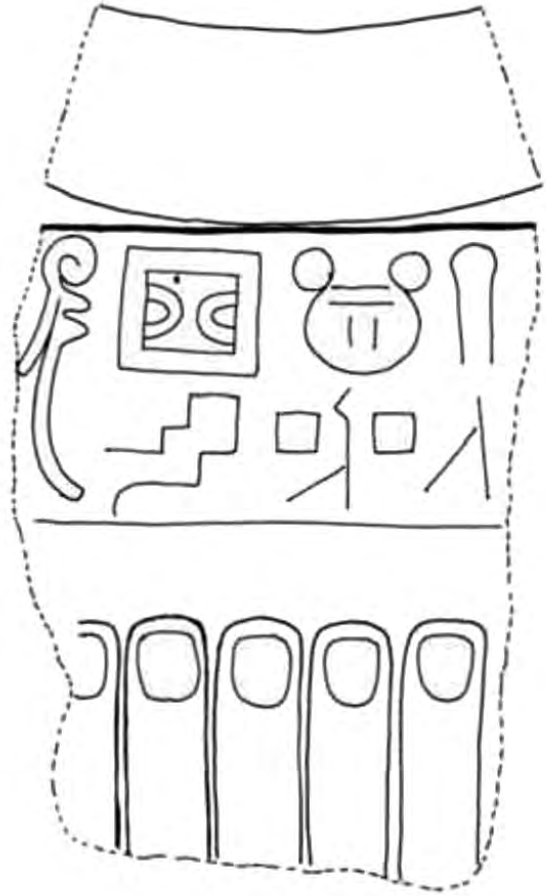
It is difficult to identify the reference vessel shape for this ceramic wall fragment. The thickness of the fragment and the relatively fine texture of the fabric, however, suggest that the original shape may be a closed container such as a jar or jug, although one cannot exclude that we are here dealing with a clay cylinder. The fragment carries a hieroglyphic Luwian inscription - written vertically as the inner wheel lines make clear and it is thus so reproduced here - incised on its outer surface before firing (which proves that this is a “pot inscription”). Three columns of the inscription are preserved: c.1 *za-[...]ʷa/i-hu-ha-[...]* / c.2 *á-pa-la-[...] [...]x-wa/i-z[a/i ...]* / c.3 *x-sa[...]* = This [...] Wahuha..., [son ofʷ?] Apala... Although the text is insufficiently preserved, it looks like that the inscription was a dedicatory one.

NM, HP

Description

Woolley and Barnett 1952: 159, fig. 62; Hawkins 2000: 223, II.73, pl. 90

References



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Cat. 36

Inscribed and decorated mortar

Museum no. 2037 / 10896 (Ankara)

Material: Basalt

Dimensions: h. 27; w. 21; th. 7.5 cm

Context: British Museum excavations, Lower Palace area, surface find

Date: Late Iron II, 8th century BCE

Fragment of a large mortar found together with a second piece, currently lost. The vessel has a rim with a thick banded lip flat on top, with an incised hieroglyphic inscription on the outside, under which the body is decorated with a continuous frieze of five human fingers with nails, carved in low relief. The inscription on the two fragments reads as follows: No. 2: ...-m]i²-sa SERVUS-la/i [... / No. 1: ... -t]ara/i²-i-pa-wa/i+ra/i DOMUS-ni-L375 [... = ...] servant [of ... / ...] but they [...] Parnili [... Parnili is clearly a personal name who is possibly the same individual attested in ASSUR letter *d* § 1 (Peker 2023b: 363, 365 with note 25). Two inscribed basalt vessels similar to the Karkemish mortar are known: one shows a more elaborate decoration (Hawkins 2000: 558, XII.3 BEIRUT, pl. 317), while the second comes from Babylon and says “These bowls Runtiyas placed before the Storm-god of Aleppo” (Hawkins 2000: 396-397, VIII.3 BABYLON 3, pl. 212), an indication that these objects might have been connected to sacred areas. In Ankara there are another two basalt container fragments from Karkemish with thick rims, but without inscription, and human fingers on the outside (unpublished, TR001009112 and TR01009253).

CDO, HP

Woolley 1921: pl. A.16e, e*1-2; Hawkins 2000: 198, no. 62, KARKAMIŠ A16e, pl. 78. Both are reproduced here, by courtesy

*Description**References*



Fragment of a monumental cuneiform inscription of Astiru II, king of Karkemish
Museum tracking QR code TR001009519 (Ankara)

Material: basalt

Dimensions: l. 15.5; w. 12 cm

Context: British Museum excavations, Water Gate area

Date: Late Iron II, mid-8th century BCE

Cat. 37

This object is the only surviving piece of a series of ten inscribed fragments that once belonged to a royal inscription of Astiru II, the penultimate Neo-Hittite king of Karkemish (see above, pp. 44-45). The other nine fragments were lost after their discovery during the 1911 and 1912 excavation campaigns at Karkemish conducted by the British team under the direction of Hogarth (1911) and Woolley (1912). The preserved fragment bears only two cuneiform signs — GAŠAN and GAR — which may confidently be understood as the beginning of the phrase GAŠAN *Gar-[ga-mis]*, “queen of Karkemish”, a well-attested epithet of Kubaba, the city-goddess of Karkemish (Hawkins 1980-1983: 258, §§ 2.3 and 3.2). Notably, while the form and spelling of the city’s name are characteristically Assyrian (Bagg 2007: 70-71), the distinctive shape of the GAŠAN sign instead reflects a Hittite writing tradition (Rüster and Neu 1989: 260, no. 336).

GM

Description

Woolley and Barnett 1952: pl. A33.i9

References



Pyxis lid

Excavation no. KH.17.900

Material: Limestone

Dimensioni: l. 8.9 cm; w. 5.0 cm; th. 1.1 cm

Context: Acropolis mound, area AA, fill F.9947

Datazione: Iron II, 9th-8th centuries BCE

Cat. 38

Pyxis lid found on the edge of Hellenistic pit P.9448 cutting one of the rooms of the Late Bronze Age II palace on the Acropolis mound, area AA. The rounded lid, of which only a half is preserved, has two vertical grooves framing the side hole for the pivot of the sliding lid. The top is carved with a heraldic scene showing two standing bull-men on the sides of a palm tree (the lower edges are preserved), framed by a guilloche motif. Another guilloche is carved along the edge, interrupted by three rosette panels. Stone pyxides (see also Cat. nos. 39 and 40) are a peculiar class of object from North Syrian sites manufactured between the 10th and 7th centuries BCE (see Winter 1983; Mazzoni 2001; 2005). Karkemish was one of the centers of their manufacture, alongside Tell Afis and Chatal Höyük (D’Orazio 2022; 2025). The Karkemish workshop was active during the Iron II period (possibly continuing also in the Iron III) featuring an elaborate/narrative style, including hunting and contest scenes on the containers, while on the lids there are animal combats and heraldic figures. Rosette panels and guilloche frames, which appear on this lid, are also characteristic elements of the Karkemish production.

CDO

Description

D’Orazio 2022: 82, 89, cat. no. 1, fig. 2

References



Pyxis lid

Museum no. 6970 (Istanbul)

Material: Steatite or diorite

Dimensions: l. 6.92; w. 6.83; th. 1.9 cm

Context: British Museum excavations, acropolis mound, surface find

Date: Iron II, 9th-8th centuries BCE

Cat. 39

Fragmentary lid belongs to a round stone pyxis: it was acquired by Woolley, having been allegedly found on the acropolis mound. It is carved with a hunting scene on the top and a guilloche on the edge. Stone pyxides were likely used as containers for spices, oils, cosmetics and other kinds of expensive perishable substances. These were likely consumed during rituals performed by elite groups: this interpretation seems to be confirmed by the depiction of pyxides in banquet scenes on funerary stelae, as the Katumuwa stele from Zincirli, as well as on the dining table of Ashurbanipal's "Garden scene" at Nineveh. At Karkemish, in particular, such rituals may have been performed in the plaza between the Storm-God temple, the Hilani and the palace compound (where in fact a pyxis fragment was found in 2014, D'Orazio 2025: 71-72, fig. 2, table 1).

CDO

Description

Woolley 1921: pl. 28.2-2; Winter 1983: 184, pl. XLIX.a; Mazzoni 2001: 294-295, 297; Wicke 2008: 272, no. Kar k.3, pl. 42.g-h; D'Orazio 2022: 89, cat. no. 5, fig. 5

References



Pyxis

Museum no. 6976 (Istanbul)

Material: Steatite

Dimensioni: h. 5.1; w. 7 cm

Context: British Museum excavations, acropolis mound, trench C

Date: Iron II, 9th-8th centuries BCE

Cat. 40

Fragmentary round pyxis container with at least two inner compartments, made of steatite. It was retrieved in 1911 by Hogarth on the acropolis, in his trench C, located above the Water Postern and near the Roman temple, in association with seemingly Iron III materials, although the pyxis dates to the Iron II period, based on typological and iconographic parallels. The scene features, on the left, a deer above a recumbent bull, and, on the right, a tree with three curving branches, carved in low relief. The deer and the bull find comparisons with the contest scenes among heroes and animals of the Herald's Wall (Hogarth 1914: pl. B10.a, B13.a; Woolley and Barnett 1952: pl. B49.b); volute trees are a common theme in small-scale arts in the Northern Levant during the earlier Iron age, but they feature also on large monuments, e.g. on an orthostat of the Herald's Wall (Hogarth 1914: pl. B13.b).

CDO

Description

Woolley 1921: pl. 28.1; Woolley and Barnett 1952: 206, n. 2; D'Orazio 2022: 89, cat. no. 4, fig. 6

References

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Incense burner or altar model

Excavation no. KH.13.O.63 (Gaziantep)

Material: Limestone

Dimensions: h. 6.9; w. 4.2; th. 4 cm

Context: Lower Palace, area A West, fill F.1824

Date: Iron II, 9th-8th centuries BCE

Cat. 41

Description

Small limestone parallelepiped with figural graffiti, possibly used as incense burner or altar model, from a topsoil layer (F.1824) to the west of the Storm-god temple. Cut-marks in the middle part indicate later re-use of the artefact. On one side, it is possible to distinguish the bottom part of a figure, with pointed feet and fringed long robe, standing above a crouching lion, that can be compared with the Great Lion slab (Woolley and Barnett 1952: pl. B.33). On the next side, there is the head of a male figure with a plait of hair which finds comparisons among the male figures carrying calves of the Processional Entry (Woolley 1921: pls. B.22b, B.23a-b, B.24a). On the third decorated side (the last one is plain), faint sketched lines might represent a standing animal next to a tree, a theme known in the outer citadel gate at Zincirli (von Luschan 1902: pl. 38.a). Based on the above mentioned iconographic comparisons, a 9th-8th cent. BCE date might be proposed for the manufacture of the artifact. As for its function, morphological similarities can be seen with the incense burners and altar models from the southern Levant, e.g. from Lachish (Tufnell 1953: 383-384, pls. 68-71, also decorated with sketched motifs). Hence, the Karkemish incense burner/altar model seems a product of popular art, perhaps in connection with cult practices in the area next to the Storm-god temple during the Iron II period.

CDO



Kohl box

Museum no. 6974 (Istanbul)

Material: Limestone

Dimensions: h. 4.7; w. 7; th. 1.4 cm (perf. diam. 0.2 cm)

Context: British Museum excavations, Inner town

Date: Iron II, 9th-8th centuries BCE

Cat. 42

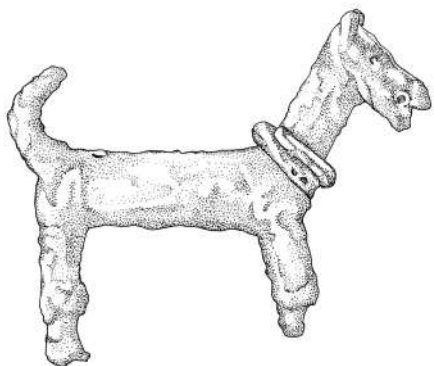
Rectangular kohl box, made of limestone and with three parallel cylindrical hollows (intended to contain the cosmetic substance) on the top short side, while the suspension holes at the corners are broken. The front side has a figurative scene depicting a man looking backwards while riding a bull with the arms stretched out. The rider, with a large almond-shaped eye and a pointed helmet with two strands of hair on the back, is likely an archer, with his bow depicted on the upper right corner (for representations of bull riders on glyptic, see Meyer 2008: 129-130, no. 314, fig. 102.1). The back side shows geometrical patterns with crosshatch between notched borders and parallel lines. On one short side there is an unclear motif, possibly a zig-zag. Another smaller kohl box, made of steatite and with two hollows and incised decoration, from the British Museum excavations at Karkemish is unpublished (Istanbul Museum inv. no. 6973). Rectangular cosmetic containers of this kind are a popular class of objects across different sites in North Syria during the earlier Iron age period, with examples from Hama (Riis 1948: 179-180, 230.d,e), Tell Afis (Cecchini 2010: 412-413, figs. 1-3), and Chatal Höyük (Pucci 2019: 237-239, cat. nos. 361–380, 383-390, fig. 97, pl. 176).

CDO

Description

Woolley and Barnett 1952: pl. 71.e1

References



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Dog figurine

Excavation no. KH.12.O.142 (Gaziantep)

Material: Bronze

Dimensions: h. 8; w. 11.8; th. 2.9 cm

Context: Lower Palace, area B, “Hilani” temple, fill F.809

Date: Late Bronze II or Iron II (14th-13th or 9th-8th centuries BCE)

Cat. 43

Description

Near the stone threshold (L.828) that led to a staircase to the roof of the temple in area B (mistakenly called “Hilani” by the British excavators in 1914), on a floor covered by a fill (F.809) containing Iron II pottery, there was a bronze statuette of a quadruped, most likely in a secondary position. The figurine appears to depict a dog with a collar around its neck, with claws also visible on its front paws. Although the short, curved tail could also suggest a lion, the collar supports an identification for it as a domestic animal rather than a wild one. A tenon under each pair of joined paws was intended to be inserted into a lost base. Although it was initially dated to Iron II, it is also possible that it dates back to Late Bronze II on the basis of its resemblance with three bronze canid figurines, probably with a votive function, from Middle Assyrian levels at Tell Rimah (Mallowan 1986: 149-151, pl. 28). If the later dating is confirmed (Marchetti 2014b), it seems that it rather had an apotropaic function, without specific references to a divine figure, while, if it dates back to Late Bronze II (as it seems more likely), then it would retain a votive character and a connection with the goddess Nikarawa/Gula (see Marchetti 2024a), the possible titular deity of the temple.

NM

Marchetti 2014b: 315-317, fig. 4, pls. XXX-XXXI; 2024a (note that the correct inventory number is KH.12.O.142, and not KH.12.O.464)

References



Storm-god figurine

Excavation no. KH.11.O.516 (Gaziantep)

Material: Bronze

Dimensions: h. 18.9; w. 6.4; th. 4 cm

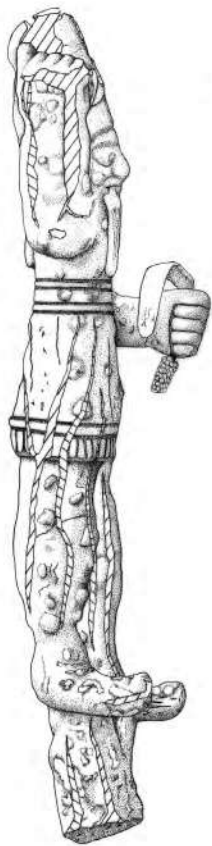
Context: Lower Palace, area A West, Storm-god temple, fill F.92

Date: Early Iron II, late 10th century BCE

Cat. 44

Description

A bronze statuette, intentionally broken into two pieces in antiquity, was found against the back wall of the cella in the temple of the Storm-god, just below its floor L.12 (Marchetti 2014b: pl. XXII). Notwithstanding the severe corrosion suffered (the metal had formed deep vertical cracks), the robust and plastic modelling of the original cast was still quite evident. The statuette, made in the lost-wax technique, represents a god, as the headgear with rounded top and two pairs of horns (of which two stumps remain along the left side) show. A flat and straight plait falls over the back and this may well be the three-dimensional reproduction of the tress which is represented in seals and reliefs on the Storm-god's back. The face is delicately modelled and displays a finely worked beard. The god wears a shirt (with sleeves indicated by a double incision) and a skirt with tasselled fringe. The right hand is raised in the smiting position and held a lost object, probably an axe if we compare it with the representation of the Storm-god in the Long Wall of Sculpture at Karkemish by the ruler Suhi II (Woolley and Barnett 1952: pl. B.38). The left hand holds a dagger, seemingly, which is made of silver and ends in a hilt shaped as a bunch, perhaps of grapes. The figurine wears shoes with upturned toes, under which there is a completely preserved tenon for the insertion into a base, now lost. As for the dating and the identification of the subject depicted, we must revert to comparisons from the site itself. There are two representations of the Storm-god among the reliefs by the ruler Katuwa from the Herald's Wall (Woolley



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and Barnett 1952: pls. B.11a, B.16a), the former of which presents identical details with our statuette, i.e. headgear, beard, shirt and shoes, to the extent that an attribution of the bronze statuette to Katuwa seems compelling. Since Katuwa is responsible both for building his palace decorated with reliefs and refurbishing the temple of the Storm-god (Hawkins 2000: 108-112 sub II.13+14, pls. 18-21), it is just likely that when he performed the latter operation he also dedicated a cultic statuette, which after some time was buried within the cella. The interment of the two pieces 60 cm apart shows that the breakage had been intentional and may thus have had a ritual character, perhaps in connection with a renewal of the cult statue.

NM

Marchetti 2014b: 310-315, fig. 3, pls. XXII-XXV

References



Bowl

Museum no. 4754 (Istanbul)

Material: Bronze

Dimensions: diam. 15.2; h. 3.6 cm

Context: British Museum excavations, likely from the necropolis of Yunus

Date: Late Iron II, 8th century BCE

Cat. 45

Description

The bowl, which is hemispherical and simple in shape, has a central knob on the base, surrounded by a ring decoration (minor damages have occurred as one can notice in the digitally remastered legacy photo). An identical specimen from the necropolis of Yunus (Woolley 1939: 32, pl. XVII.d2 from tomb YC 58) may suggest a similar provenance. The presence of a hump in the center of metal bowls is documented since at least the Late Bronze age: Luschey (1939) sketches the transition from more archaic and simpler types to more elaborate forms. Among the early shapes are simple bowls with knobs (Luschey 1939: nos. 5, 6, 12), which can be compared with the Karkemish specimen. A vase with an omphalos base is known from 1st millennium BCE burials at Jerablus (Philip 2015: 142, pl. 65.7), while various examples of shallow open bowls with a central umbo come from the nearby necropolis of Deve Höyük, mostly of Achaemenid date (Moorey 1980: 32, fig. 6.83). Specific comparisons can be found with Phrygian bronze production from Gordion now dated to the Middle Phrygian period, 800-540 BCE (Rose and Darbyshire 2011: 62, fig. 4.5 from tumulus MM to be dated in the third quarter of the 8th century BCE; see also Curtis 1988: pl. 115), a general chronology confirmed by the phialai from the Archaic Cyprus I and II periods, 750-475 BCE (Matthäus 1985).

LB



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Bowl

Museum no. 4755 (Istanbul)

Material: Bronze

Dimensions: diam. 15; h. 4.5 cm

Context: British Museum excavations, Yunus necropolis, tomb YC 50

Date: Late Iron II, 8th century BCE

Cat. 46

The bronze hemispherical bowl, preserved well enough as to keep its gilded-like surface (as also in Cat. nos. 45 and 47), was used to cover the cinerary urn in tomb YC 50, one of the few burials uncovered by the British Museum's expedition between 1913 and 1914 which could be dated to Iron II, also because of the association with a Phrygian imported cup (Woolley 1939: 31, pls. XII.c, XIX.a; for the dating of this tomb see Cavriani 2021: 126, n. 6). Comparisons with Cyprus (Matthäus 1985) indicate that shallow bowls were already present from Geometric Cyprus I (ca. 1050–950 BCE) and continued until Archaic Cyprus II (ca. 600–475 BCE). A similar continuity for this type is also attested in the Near East (Woolley 1939; Riis 1948; Moorey 1980) and in the Mediterranean, especially during the Orientalizing period (Markoe 1985). Bronze bowls served as covers for ceramic containers in 7th century BCE burials at Tell Shiukh Fawqani (Luciani 2005: 936-937), a site showing evidence for bronze and iron working activities (Bachelot and Fales 2005: I-VI), as might also be expected for Karkemish.

LB

Description

Woolley 1939: pl. XVII.c2

References



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Bowl

Museum no. 4757 (Istanbul)

Material: Bronze

Dimensions: diam. 13.1; h. 4.1 cm

Context: British Museum excavations, Yunus necropolis, tomb YC 47

Date: Late Iron II or III, 8th or 7th century BCE

Cat. 47

This bronze bowl comes from tomb YC 47, discovered during the excavations conducted by the British Museum in the Yunus necropolis and actually dating to the Iron III or early 7th century because of the presence of a Cypriot juglet (Woolley 1939: 30-31, pls. XVI.b3, XIV.f). The metal artifact - which can perhaps be a heirloom because of its near identity with Cat. no. 46 - is hemispherical in shape and belongs to the category of shallow open bowls, characterized by sub-vertical walls and a distinctly hemispherical base, sometimes slightly convex. A significant contextual comparison comes from the necropolis of Hama, where a similar bowl, hemispherical in shape and with traces of “gilding”, was found used as the lid of a cinerary urn dating from Iron II (Riis 1948: 137, G VIII 522), with remains of linen on the outer surface. This use also seems to have occurred in the burials at Yunus, where cinerary urns could be covered with metal bowls and show traces of cloth. Similar hemispherical bowls have been found in Palestinian and Cypriot tombs dating back to the early first millennium BCE and are still documented in the 5th century BCE necropolis of Deve Höyük (Moorey 1980: 31), showing that this tradition had a long history in the Levant.

LB

Woolley 1939: pl. XVII.c1

Description

References



Zoomorphic basin

Museum no. A9905 (Ankara)

Material: Basalt

Dimensions: h. 9.5; w. 9.9; th. 15.4 cm

Context: British Museum excavations

Date: Late Iron II or III, 8th or 7th century BCE

Cat. 48

Rectangular basalt basin (or, rather, zoomorphic mortar) featuring a figurative decoration in low relief with vegetal and animal motifs: two bull protomes are carved on one of the short sides, with a tree engraved between them. On the back side there is a leafy motif, while on the long sides there are, respectively, a caprid and, perhaps, a bovid standing between two trees and in front of a tree. Small basalt basins, approximately 14–36 cm long, 10–15 cm wide, and 4–16 cm high, with zoomorphic protomes and often decorated, are well known from North Syria and North Mesopotamia and it has thus been suggested that it was there their primary production area between the 9th to the 6th centuries BCE (Squitieri 2017: 44; Bombardieri 2010: 129-130; Searight, Reade and Finkel 2008: 66; Riis 1990: 74). The shallow cavities of these objects made them particularly suitable for food-processing activities (Squitieri 2017: 45; Bombardieri 2008), i.e. as mortars. These items have also been described, not convincingly, as “offering tables” (Lloyd 1954: 110) or “incense burners” (Curvers and Schwartz 2002-2003: 81; for other, seemingly untenable, religious interpretations see Riis 1990: 74; Squitieri 2017: 45, 194-196; Makinson 2005: 424-425).

SB

Description

Bombardieri 2008: 279, pl. 2.10 after Lloyd 1954: pl. VIII. 6, 7; Bombardieri 2010: pl. 161.2; Guerri 2014: 145, fig. 1

References



Tripod

Museum no. A9413 / 60196 (Ankara)

Material: Basalt

Dimensions: h. 19.4; diam. 34.3 cm

Context: British Museum excavations, Yunus necropolis, tomb YC 54

Date: Late Iron II or III, 8th or 7th century BCE

Cat. 49

Tripod bowl with a support formed by three bars joining the feet to a central pivot, found under the cinerary urn of an Iron III tomb in the necropolis of Yunus. Such vessels are known since the Bronze Age in Syria (at Tell Munbaqa and Tell Mishrifeh) and in Palestine (at Tell el-‘Ajjul; Merluzzi 2008: 335-336, fig. 4.f,i). Specimens dated to the Iron II and III have been found at Beth Shean, Deir ‘Alla, Hazor, Qatna, Tell Judeidah, Zincirli and Tell Halaf, as well as at Karkemish (Squitieri 2017: 73), sometimes even being decorated such as a specimen from Tell Halaf bearing a relief decoration with rosettes and animals (Hrouda 1962: 67, pls. 6-7). Among the stone vessels retrieved during the excavations by the Turco-Italian expedition at Karkemish, at least one fragmentary vase (KH.11.O.295), dating to Iron II, can be attributed to this type of tripod, which continues into Iron III.

Description

SB

Woolley 1939: 32, pl. XVII.b3; Woolley and Barnett 1952: pl. 69.c; Guerri 2014: 145, fig. 2

References



Mortar

Museum no. A9406 / 1168 / 60_3_96 (Ankara)

Material: Basalt

Dimensions: diam. 17; h. 17.5 cm.

Context: British Museum excavations

Date: Late Iron II, 8th century BCE

Cat. 50

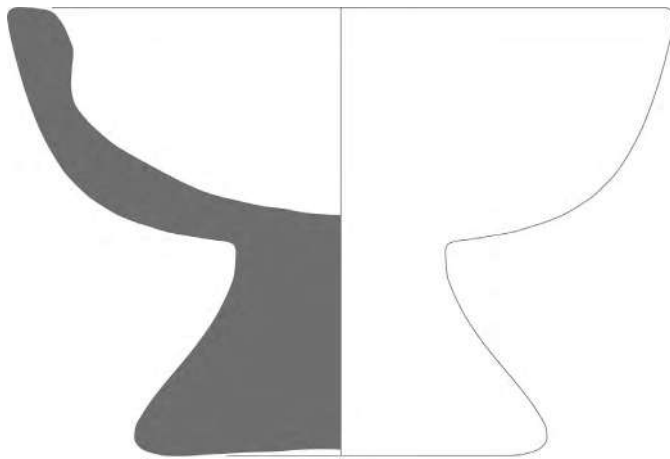
Basalt mortar decorated in low relief with a geometric (probably vegetal) motif and resting on a high trumpet-shaped base with a ridge along its upper edge. The exact place of retrieval of this piece is not known: it was described by the excavators as a “basalt mortar with petal decoration”. The likeliest dating for this object seems to be the later Iron II, i.e. the 8th century BCE, although one cannot, however, exclude also the following century for it since parallels for a basalt vase with this petal-like ornamentation have yet to be identified. In fact, its distinctive decoration recalls that of a column base from Building I, Floor 2 at Tell Tayinat (Haines 1971: 49-50, 66, pl. 78 c), the destruction of which occurred in the 8th century BCE (cf. also undated column bases from the Karkemish area, Woolley 1921: fig. 61).

Description

SB

Woolley and Barnett 1952: 271, pl. 69.e

References



Pedestal bowl

Excavation no. YU.21.O.12 (Gaziantep)

Material: Basalt

Dimensions: diam. 30; h. 20; wall th. 2.5 cm

Context: Yunus necropolis, area 17, tomb G.11677

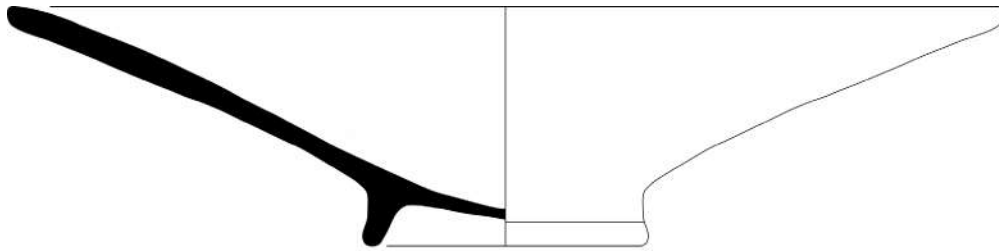
Date: Late Iron II, 8th century BCE

Cat. 51

Description

Basalt bowl on a trumpet foot, a type of vessel that was common in the Levant during the Iron II and III (Squitieri 2017: 61–65, fig. 5.11e). Comparable examples are known from Zincirli, Tell Halaf, Chatal Höyük, Tell Tayinat (*ibid.*), Hama (Riis 1990: 69, fig. 34.54-58), and Tell Mastuma (Iwasaki et al. 2009: 499, fig. 8.37.2), as well as in burials from the Yunus necropolis at Karkemish (Woolley 1939: 21-35, pl. XVII.b1, from the slightly later Iron III tombs YC32 and YC81). It is precisely the association of this specimen with pottery vessels from Iron II (Cat. nos. 52-53) which proves a relative early dating for it. These bowls are thought to have been elite items: statistical analyses have suggested that this type of basalt vessel was used as funerary urns at Karkemish (specifically in the Yunus necropolis) by members of the elite to signify their social status (Squitieri 2017: 170). Furthermore, in several Syro-Hittite banquet scenes, a small pedestal bowl appears as central items (Searight, Reade and Finkel 2008: 62.445-446). In the Museum of Anatolian Civilizations in Ankara are kept another two objects from the Karkemish area similar to this bowl type (TR001009178 and TR001009197).

SB



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Cat. 52

Plate

Excavation no. YU.21.P.18/1 (Gaziantep)

Material: Pottery

Dimensions: diam. 46; wall th. 1.2; base th. 1; h. 11.2 cm

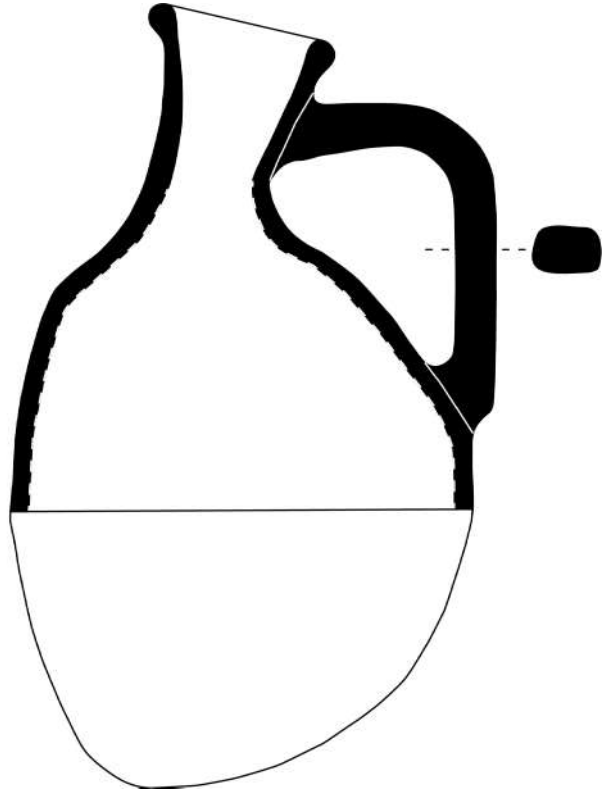
Context: Yunus necropolis, area 17, tomb G.11677

Date: Late Iron II, 8th century BCE

Description

This large plate or platter, together with an askós (Cat. no. 53) and a stone high-footed bowl (Cat. no. 51), was part of the funerary assemblage of a cremation burial (G.11677) in the cemetery located upon the low hill of Yunus to the north of Karkemish. The vessel, with a plain straight rim and a ring base, displays a light reddish fabric (2.5YR 7/3), the outer surface of which is burnished. This type is commonly attested, besides at Karkemish (Woolley 1939: pl. XV.b,c2), in the assemblages dating from Iron II of several other sites along the Euphrates such as Tille Höyük (Blaylock 2016: fig. 11.10) and Tell Shiukh Fawqani (Luciani 2005: pl. 2), and in northern Syria Tell Afis (Mazzoni 2014: figs. 17.1-3, 18.1-3). The funerary practice of cremation became widespread in south-western Asia during the Iron age (Mazzoni 2000: 34-35): at Yunus the remains were placed in urns (jars or kraters), often decorated with painted motifs, with the optional presence of ceramic, stone or metal vessels as grave goods connected both to the status of the deceased and to the rituals performed during and after the burial ceremony (see Woolley 1939 for an overview). In this context, plates and bowls were a standard component of the funerary assemblages (Woolley 1914: 95), either placed above the urn or, as in the case of G.11677, below it, in its turn resting above the basalt vase Cat. no. 51.

GG



Cat. 53

Flask

Excavation no. YU.21.P.18/3 (Gaziantep)

Material: Pottery

Dimensions: diam. 4; wall th. 0.5; h. 10.5 cm.

Context: Yunus necropolis, area 17, tomb G.11677

Date: Late Iron II, 8th century BCE

Description

This vessel may be called as a flask or askós, with square handle and narrow flaring neck. The irregular profile, with a slightly concave base and a rounder body, was assembled through different wheelmade or coiled parts, then refined by hand: the shape is connected to the so-called pilgrim-flasks which have a long tradition in the region. The reddish fabric (5YR 7/4) displays a fine grit matrix, while the outer surface was completely coated with a layer of burnished whitish slip, now only visible in a few spots since the long exposure to the calcareous soil of the Yunus plateau resulted in the disappearance of most of the original clay film. The vessel was part of a funerary assemblage featuring a large plate (Cat. no. 52) and a stone high-footed bowl (Cat. no. 51), while only the ring base of the urn (YU.21.P.18/2) containing the cremated remains was preserved, due to tomb robbing in antiquity. The presence in a funerary assemblage of the askós seems connected to the offering of wine for the deceased during the burial ceremony, a well-attested practice during the Iron age in south-western Asia (Bonatz 2014: 40): already attested at Karkemish in both the British (Woolley 1939: pl. XXIV.J5) and the Turco-Italian excavations at Yunus, regional parallels can be found in the contemporary late Iron II phase (Cimetière IV) of the Hama necropolis in central Syria (Riis 1948: figs. 84-85) and in the Middle Euphrates valley at Tell Jurn Kabir (Eidem and Ackermann 1999: fig. 9b.5).

GG



54



55



Miniature plates

Cat. **54**
55
56

Excavation no. KH.13.P.950/1 (Gaziantep)

Dimensions: diam. 9; wall th. 0.5; base th. 0.6; h. 1.8 cm

Excavation no. KH.13.P.950/2 (Gaziantep)

Dimensions: diam. 8; wall th. 0.2; base th. 0.6; h. 2 cm

Excavation no. KH.13.P.950/3 (Gaziantep)

Dimensions: diam. 8.4; wall th. 0.5; base th. 0.6; h. 1.6 cm

Material: Pottery

Context: Lower Palace, area C South, fill F.2766

Date: Iron II, 9th-8th centuries BCE

This set of miniature plates was found in one of the rooms of Katuwa's Palace: it refers to the Iron II occupation level of the building (phase 10) and so they are firmly dated by their stratigraphy. The vessels are similar in size (8-9 cm of diameter range) with few morphological differences: the profile of the shapes is convex with slightly flaring walls, and the bases appear to have been string-cut and not remodelled afterwards. The vessels are wheelmade and then refined by hand, the fabric has a fine texture, with few grit inclusions and a buff/light brownish colour (5YR 7/4, 5YR 7/6 and 5YR 7/3, respectively). Both their inner and outer surfaces are plain with no surface treatment or decoration. Plates and shallow bowls are a recurrent shape in the ceramic horizon of the Upper and Middle Euphrates valley during Iron II: parallels can be found at Arslantepe

Description



56



54



55



56



(Manuelli 2013: fig. 6.8), Tell Sheikh Hassan (Schneider 1999: fig. 4.4) and Tell Shiukh Fawqani (Luciani 2015: pl. 2.22-23). The miniature size of the plates from Karkemish seems related to their function within a palatial context: open shapes are recurrent in banquet scenes on funerary reliefs and stelae, visible on a small table or in the hands of the personages represented (Bonatz 2000: 90-92). Similar miniature plates have also been found in the Iron II and III burials of the Yunus necropolis, repurposed as lids for narrow-necked urns.

GG



Lion figurine

Museum no. 4830 (Istanbul)

Material: Terracotta

Dimensions: h. 6; w. 2.2; th. 2.8 cm

Context: British Museum excavations, Lower Palace, from a likely pit in the plaza in front of the Great Staircase

Date: Late Iron II, 8th century BCE

Cat. 57

Description

Small hand-modelled clay figurine representing a crouched quadruped, likely a lion/ess. The head is rendered with simple yet expressive modelling: the snout is broad, with deeply incised lines marking the mouth and suggesting teeth or whisker pads. The eyes appear to be formed by short incisions, while the upper part of the muzzle bears additional linear marks representing fur. The body has several vertical incisions along the flank to indicate ribbing or pelt patterning. The limbs are only lightly sketched: all four legs are shaped from a single continuous mass of clay, with minimal anatomical separation, the anus also having been indicated as customary in lion representations. This lion figurine was recovered by the British Museum expedition in front of the Great Staircase, from a context of unclear nature but rich in finds (see its discussion in Woolley and Barnett 1952: 174). The figurine belongs to the Syrian late Iron age coroplastic tradition. Lion figurines in this period are extremely rare and are known only at Tell Rifaat (Seton-Williams 1967: 25), Neirab (Carrière and Barrois 1927: 203, fig. 11, pl. XLIX, no. 20) and Tartus (Louvre AO 1582 and perhaps AO 1148). Lion or sphinx paws are also reproduced on two plaques, likely part of small stands, from Zincirli (von Luschan and Andrae 1943: pls. 9i, 10a; Bolognani 2017: 275-276, table 45, R10-458). These examples vary greatly, however, in size and style. The precise dating of the Karkemish specimen remains uncertain. The object was associated with fragmented basalt sculptures from Iron II, a period in which lions were a

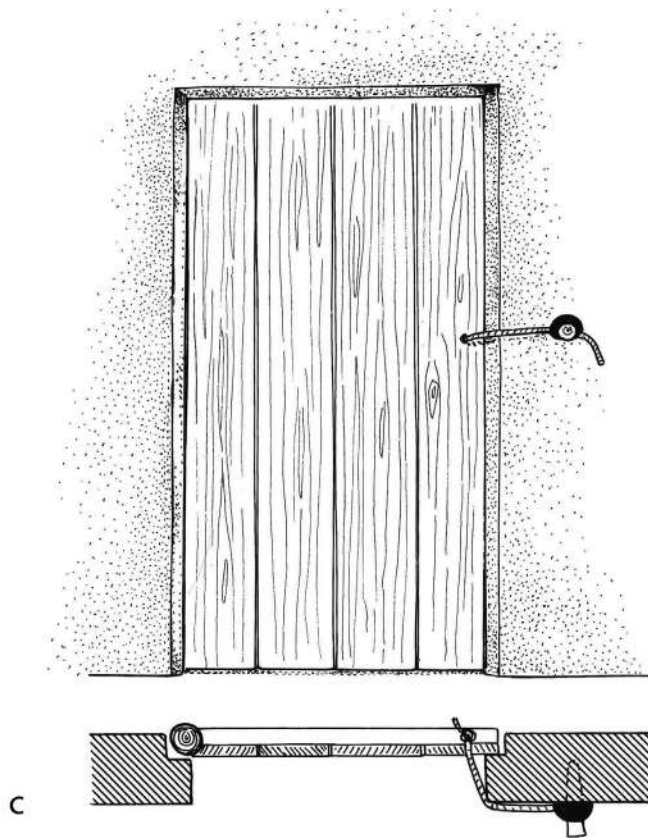
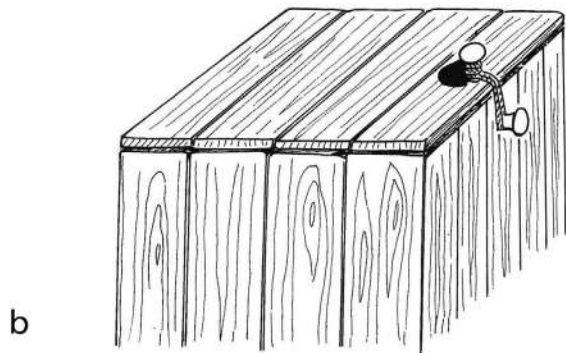
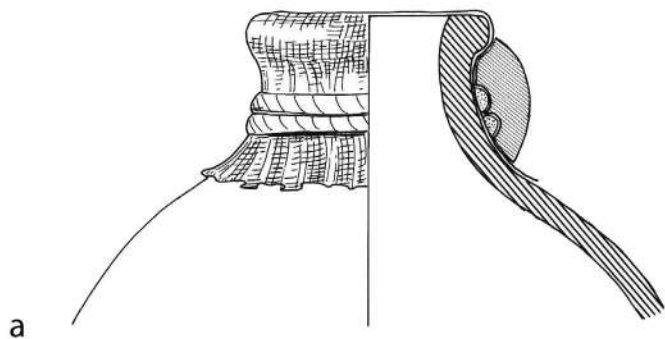


favored motif. However, the majority of clay figurines at the site date to Iron III. Notably, the only other lion specimen within the figurine corpus from Karkemish displays significantly different stylistic features (Bolognani 2017: cat. no. 695). Among other visual media, we find a striking resemblance with an Iron I stone figurine from Çatal Höyük in the ‘Amuq region (Pucci 2019: 281, A27009, cat. no. 1121, pl. 186c from a mid-N phase level). The detailed anatomical rendering and the compact modeling of the Karkemish figurine seem to reproduce the typical detailing of ribs, muscles, and fur of lions carved in ivory belonging to the North Syrian style (Thureau-Dangin et al. 1931: pl. XLIII; von Luschan and Andrae 1943: pls. 64-65; Barnett 1975: pls. XVIII, XX-XXII, XXV-XXVI, XXXVI, L; Herrmann 1989: 86-87, 97-99, figs. 1c, 4d-e; Herrmann, Laidlaw and Coffey 2009: 94-95, 100, 169-170, fig. 39, pls. 26, 52-59, 61, 67, 91-92, 107, M-O). Given these stylistic affinities, the most plausible dating for this piece is the 8th century BCE, a period when the North Syrian craft production was at its peak.

BB

Woolley and Barnett 1952: 175, 258, pl. 71a

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Graphical reconstruction of different sealing systems: a. on a pottery vessel covered with fabric, b. on the pegs of a wooden box, and c. on a wooden door-peg fixed to the wall (after Otto 2004: pls. 107.3, 108.2, 114.3b).



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