

Karkemish

of the Hittites on the Euphrates

New Discoveries and New Acquisitions



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

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

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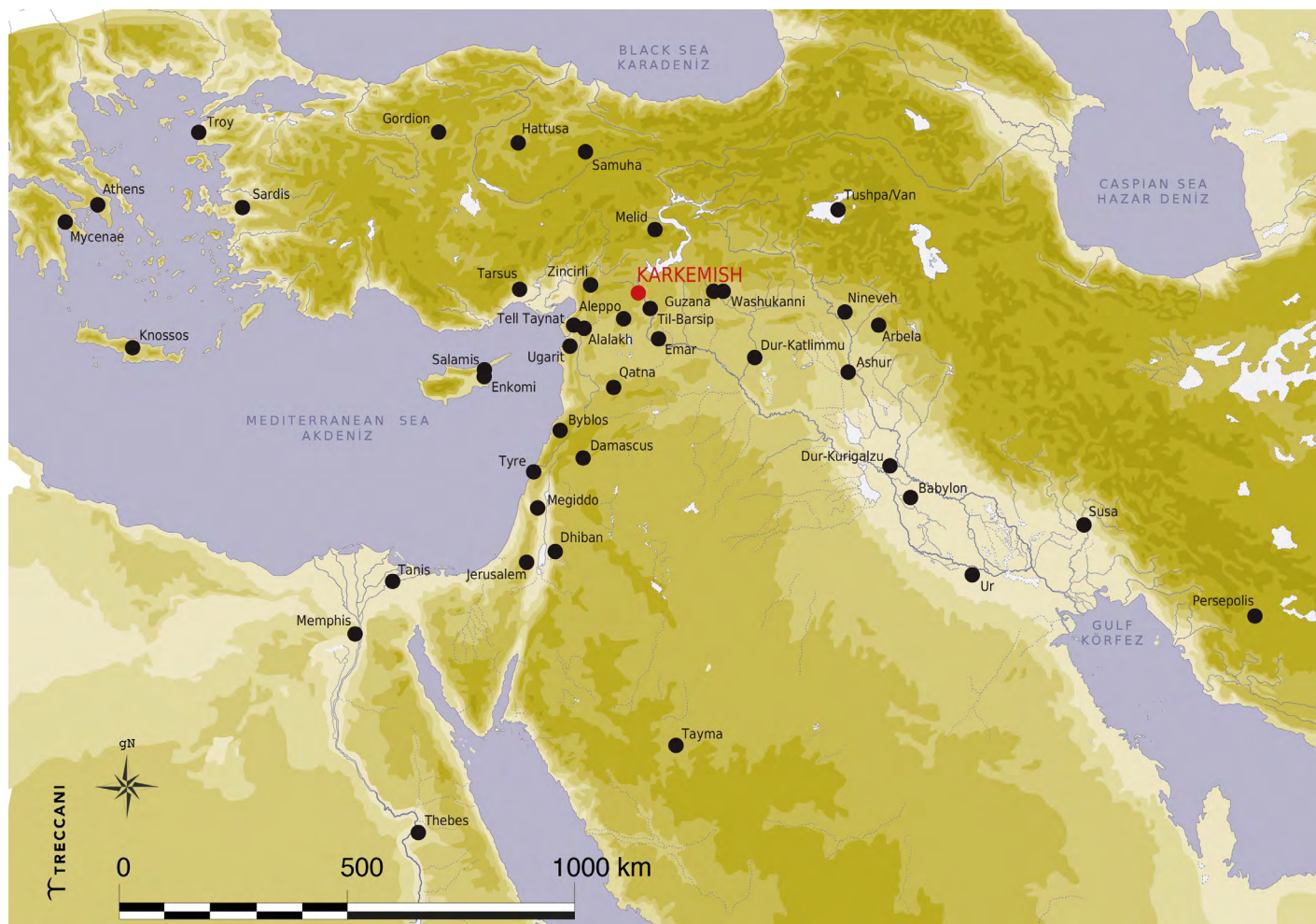
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FOREWORDS

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-

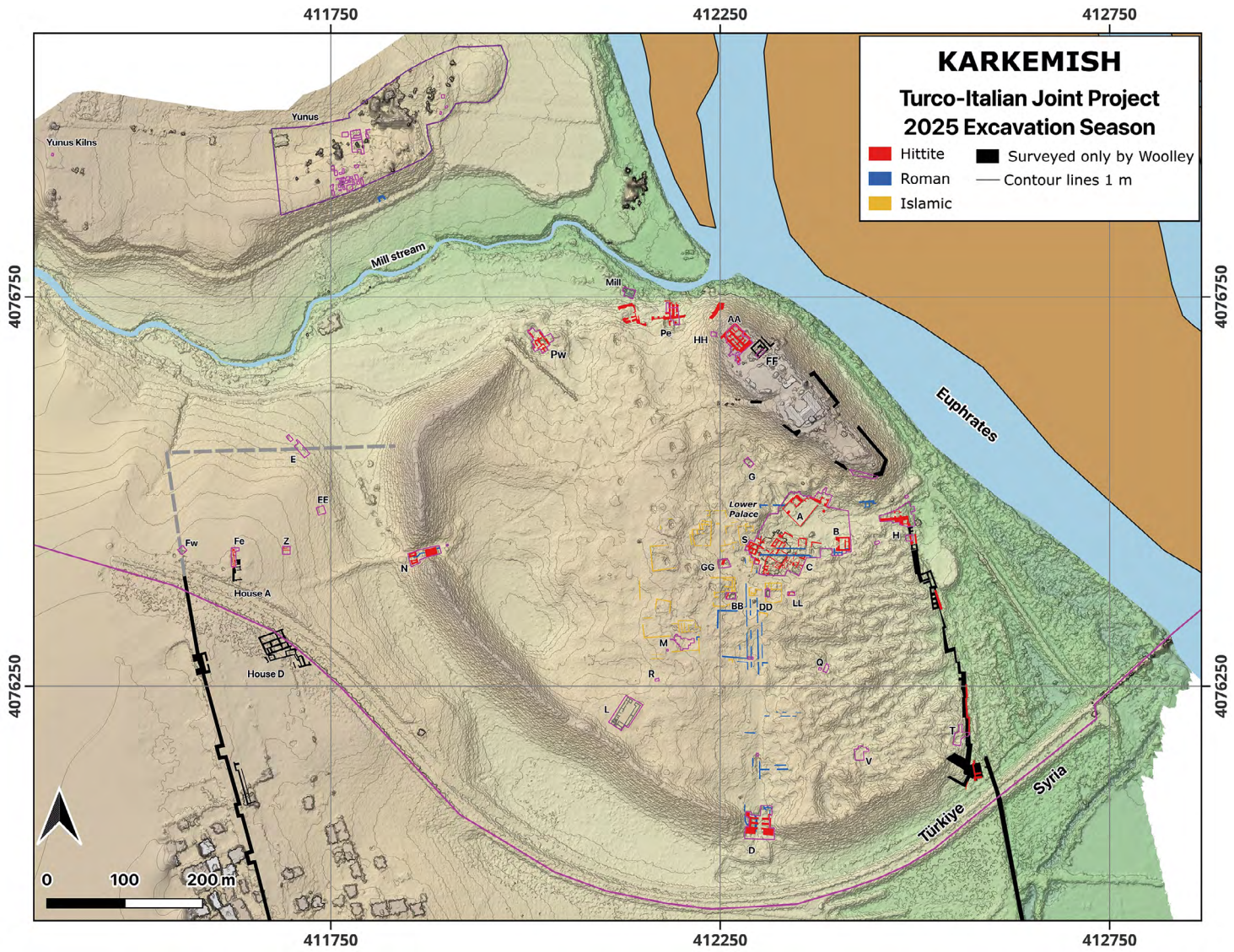
istry for Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation (DGCE 13th Office), that for Universities and Research, the SANKO Holding. We gratefully acknowledge the cooperation with the Turkish Ministry of Culture and Tourism, Directorate General for Cultural Heritage and Museums and its branches in the 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

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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).

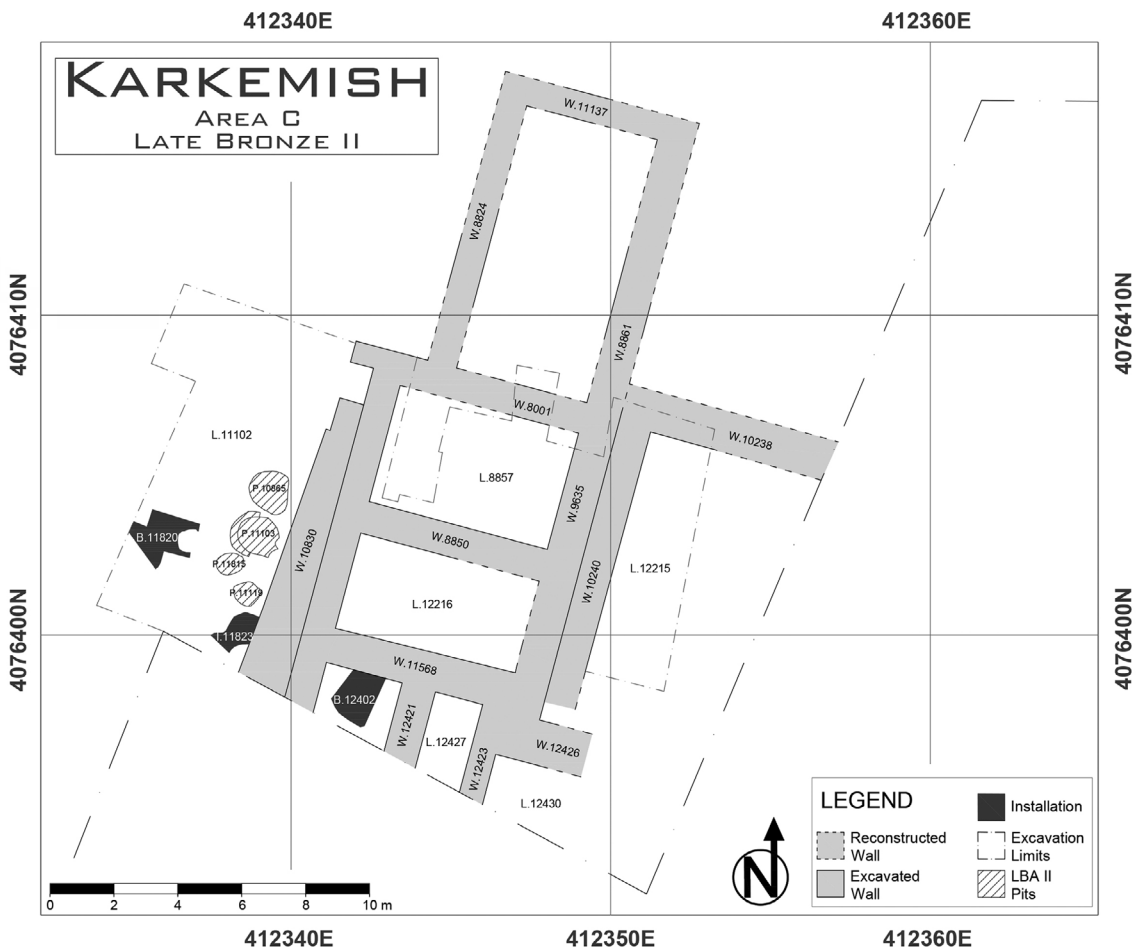


Fig. 6. Plan of the LB II Seal-house excavated in area C East, phase B (by M. Valeri).



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.

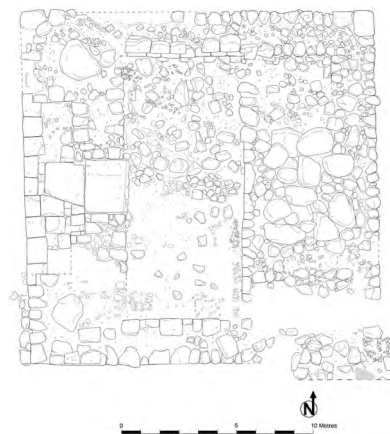
wall across the gate (phase 4) was then built at the end of Iron I (Mantellini and Pizzimenti 2021: 55-63). The fortress-like monumental building along the north-western fortifications (area P West) was renovated including evidence of administrative practices (presence of sealings) in continuity with 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.

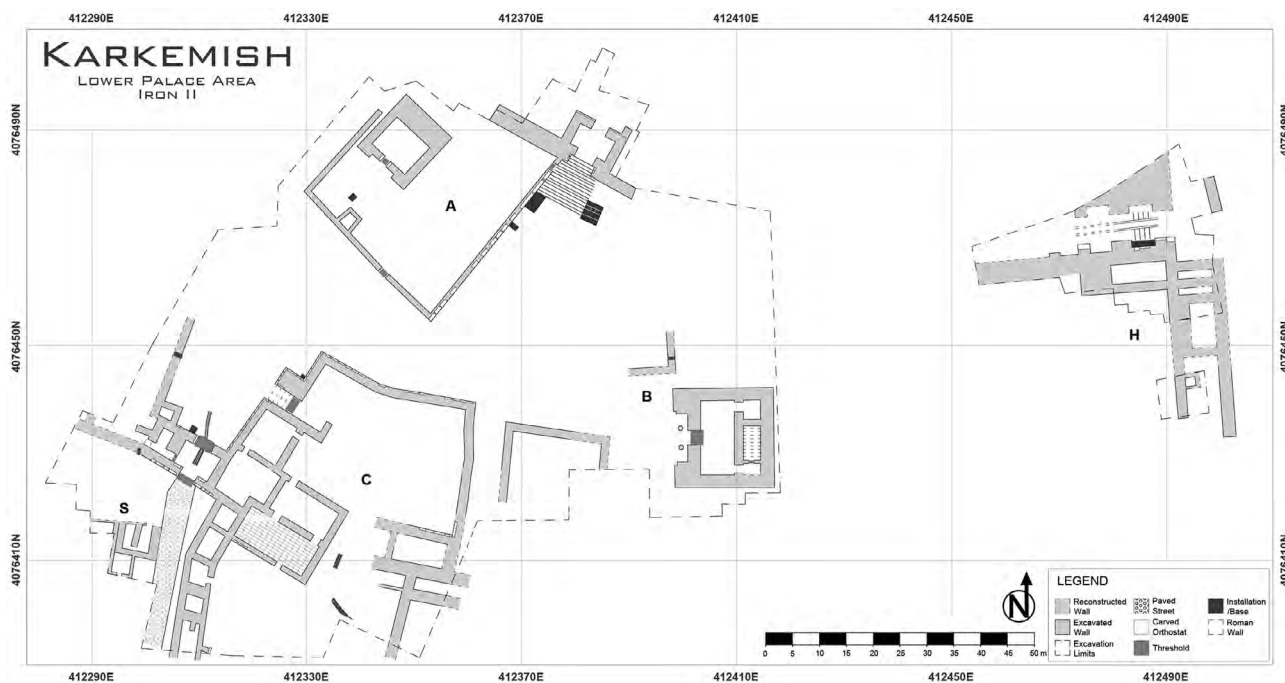


Fig. 10. Plan of the Lower Palace area during the Iron II period (by M. Valeri).



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.