

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



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

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

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

edited by
Nicolò Marchetti

Ante
Quem

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

www.orientlab.net/pubs

Editorial staff: Vittoria Cardini, Claudia D'Orazio

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

Printed in January 2026

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

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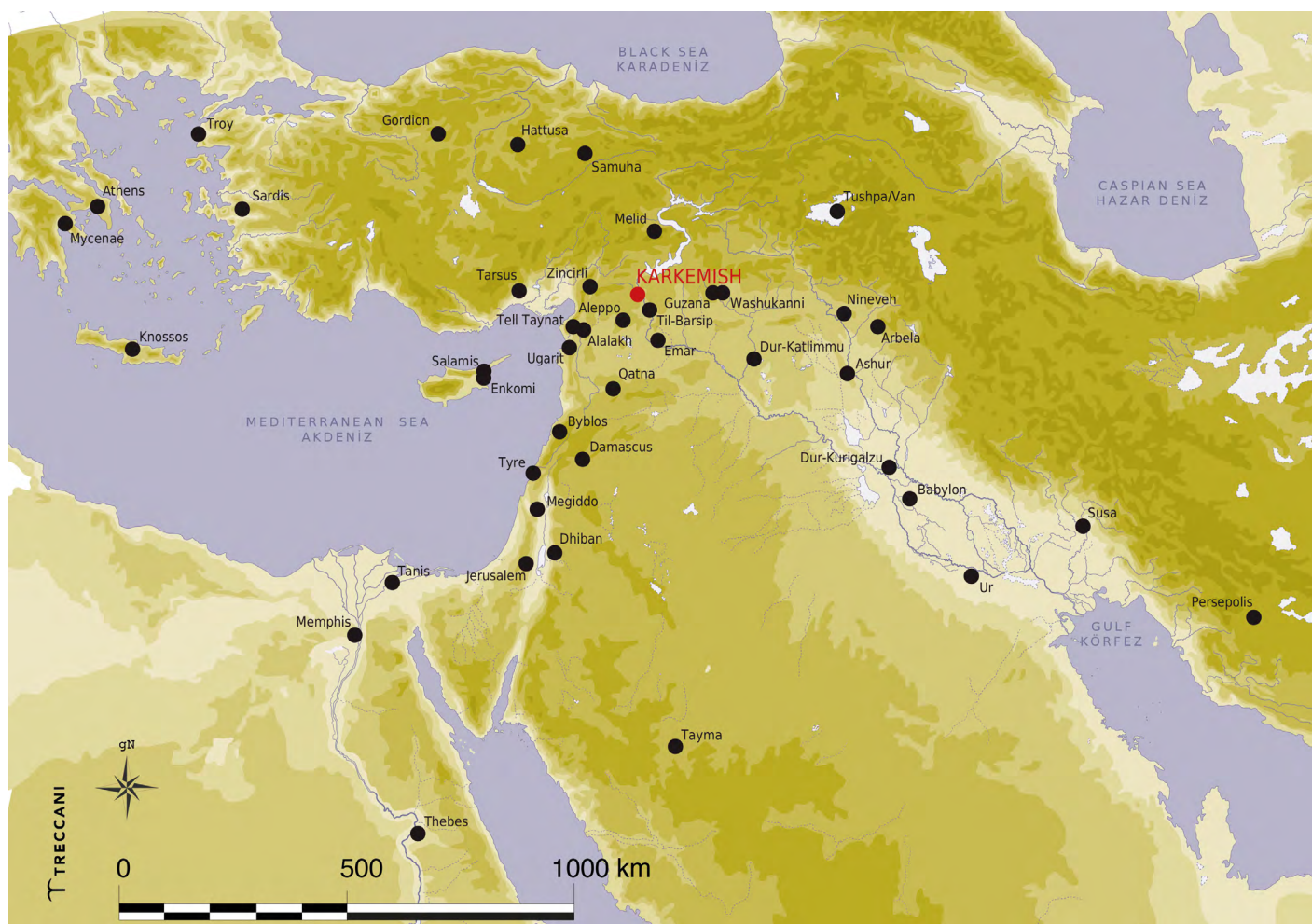
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Authors' initials:

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

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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

Cat. 4

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 $\text{BONUS}_2 \text{ VIR}_2/\text{VIR}_2$ “(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 $\text{BONUS}_2 \text{ VIR}_2$ on two cylinder seal impressions: the one here bears the hieroglyphic inscription $\text{BONUS}_2 \text{ VIR}_2 \text{ zi/a-ni} \text{ SIGILLUM.DOMINUS}$ and, in cuneiform, 1. $\text{NA}^4 \text{KIŠIB}$ 2. mZi-in-ni 3. $\text{LÚ KIŠIB AGRIG ŠÁ LUGAL}$. The supervisor (lú AGRIG) of the collection center ($\text{É} \text{NA}^4 \text{KIŠIB}$, “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