

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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TABLE OF CONTENTS

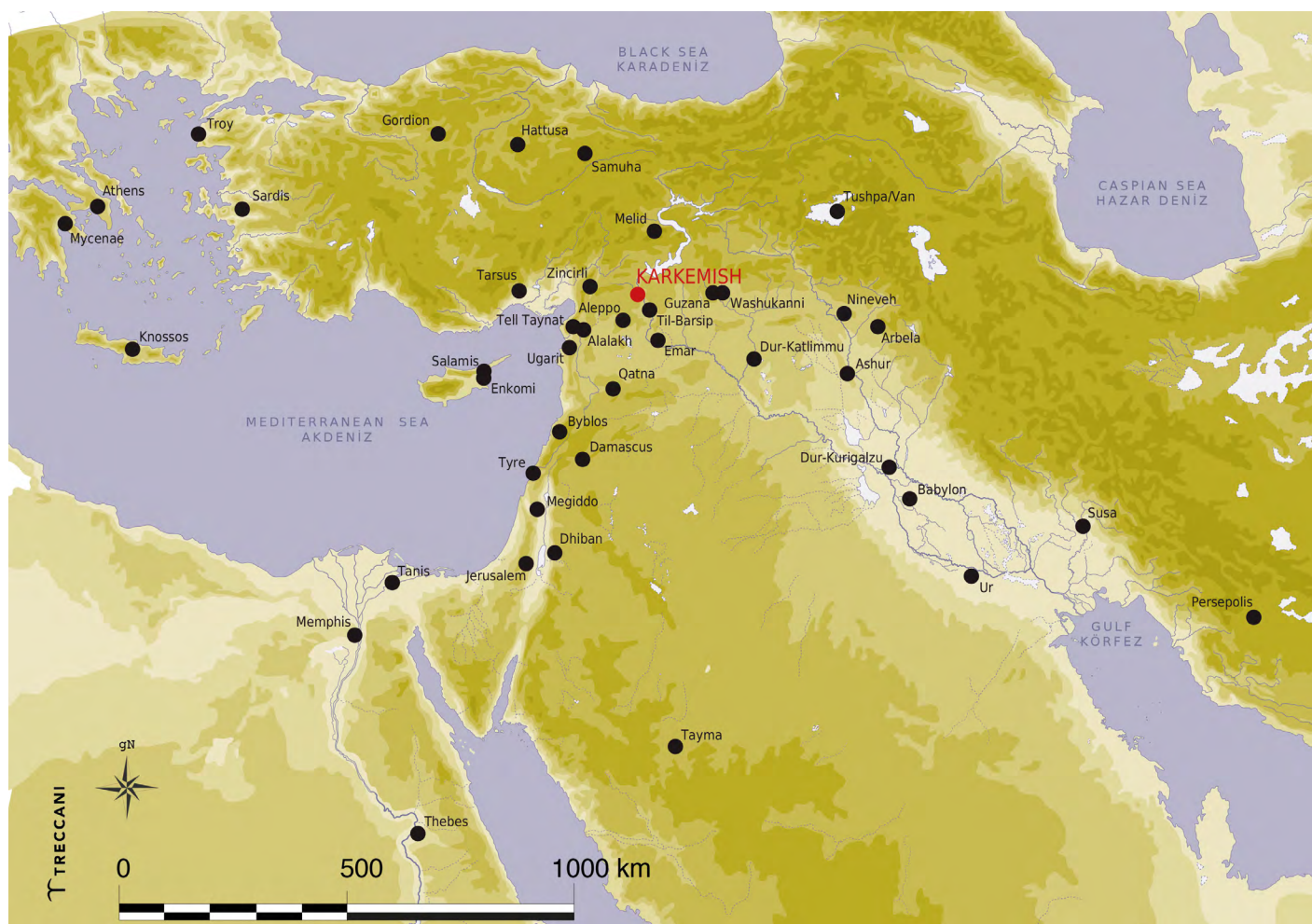
Forewords.....	7
Visual communication at Karkemish between the Imperial and Late Hittite periods NICOLÒ MARCHETTI.....	14
Anatolian hieroglyphic writing at Karkemish HASAN PEKER.....	24
The Late Bronze II and Iron I-II layers at Karkemish VITTORIA CARDINI, CLAUDIA D’ORAZIO, GABRIELE GIACOSA, SARA PIZZIMENTI,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

CATALOGUE

Nos. 1-57.....66

BIBLIOGRAPHY.....

188





CATALOGUE

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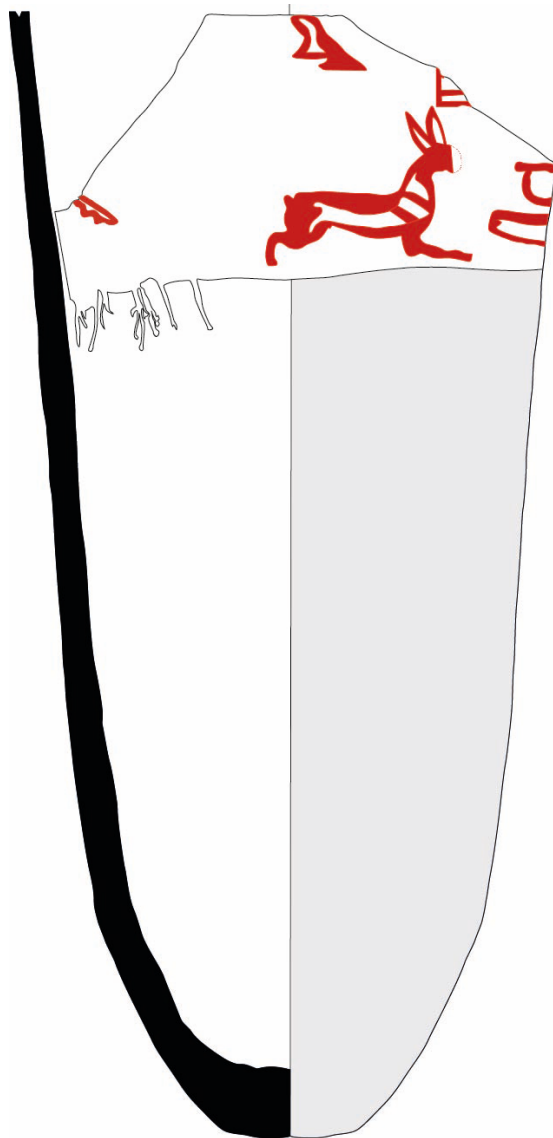
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Cat. 12

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