



**News from the Lands
of the Hittites**
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Scientific journal for Anatolian research
by



Università degli Studi Suor Orsola Benincasa



Centro Ricerche Archeologiche e Scavi di Torino per il Medio Oriente e l'Asia

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L'immagine del frontespizio è tratta da Marcella Frangipane et al. in questo volume:
"figurative bas-reliefs from the destruction of Phase IIIA.2, Arslantepe".

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Foreword

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Anatolia, which makes the greatest part of the territory of the modern state of Turkey, is home to a great number of archaeological sites and artistic treasures from the Palaeolithic to the Ottoman age, and thus, it is a privileged research field for archaeologists and historians. Its geographical position at the centre of routes and networks between the East and the West eased the interaction with other countries and cultures.

This issue of the journal *News from the Lands of the Hittites* collects a series of essays on Turkish pre-classical sites where an Italian archaeological expedition is currently working. We are grateful to His Excellence Massimo Gaiani, Italy's Ambassador to Turkey, for having accepted our invitation to introduce the volume with his preface, and we fully agree with him when he writes, quoting Leonardo da Vinci, that "the path to meaningful discoveries is shorter when different actors work side-by-side towards the same goal". This volume indeed is the result of the collaboration of researchers from different ages and scientific backgrounds: archaeologists, philologists, and experts of archaeometry, who have worked and still work together aiming to better understanding the past of Anatolia.

We owe Andrea Balletta, Cultural Promotion Attaché at the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, a presentation of the chain of connections that support Italian archaeological activities in Turkey and an excellent survey of the expeditions that are active in Anatolia. As Dr. Balletta writes, the archaeological work in a foreign country not only is an academic discipline, but also contributes to the exchange of know how between different states and to the establishment of friendly and productive relationships.

The six archaeological sites included in this volume refer to different periods of the preclassical history of Anatolia and are located in various regions. The site of Niğde Kınık Höyük, in Cappadocia, gives a very interesting documentation on the transitional period from the end of the Late Bronze Age and the first centuries of the Iron Age. The evidence coming from Kınık contribute to enlighten the so-called Dark Age, that now seems to be less and less dark.

The archaeological investigations in the site of Arslantepe – Malatya, which began in 1961, have revealed the life of this settlement from the 4th millennium BCE until the Iron Age. For Hittitologists, Malatya is a centre of a great interest, because it lays in a contested periphery. It survived the fall of the Hittite Empire and became the capital of a Neo-Hittite polity, until it was conquered by the Neo-Assyrian emperor Sargon II.

The Hittite city of Zippalanda was a religious centre and the seat of the temple of the Storm-god. We knew from the Hittite tablets that it was located near to Mount Taha, and the site of Uşaklı Höyük, which is close to the Kerkenes Dağ, is the perfect candidate for the ancient Zippalanda. The archaeological excavations have brought to light the remains of a huge temple whose architectural layout can be compared to that of the Temple I in Hattusa and to the Great Temple in Sarissa.

The excavations at Sirkeli Höyük, in Plain Cilicia, are not directed by an Italian Archaeologist, but by our colleague Mirko Novák of the University of Bern. Nevertheless, this site has been included in the present volume because the interdisciplinary team of the University of Suor Orsola Benincasa (Naples) is working on the 3D scanning of the Hittite rock reliefs located on the north-eastern corner of the mound of Sirkeli. This settlement can be identified with the ancient city of Kummani, and is a key site for the knowledge of Cilicia from the 3rd to the 1st millennium BC. Cilicia corresponded to the Hittite province of Kizzuwatna, a region that was a bridge between Syria and Anatolia and contributed to the spread of the Hurrian tradition into the Hittite kingdom.

Archaeology more and more needs the support of the “hard sciences”, and the essay on the 3D scanning survey conducted at Hattusa clearly demonstrates how significant the results of the interdisciplinary collaboration are. The Hieroglyphic inscriptions of Nişantaş, Süsburg, and Yazılıkay can now be better read in their virtual representation than in the original form.

The last site included in this volume is Karkemish - Jerablus. As it is well known, this site had been investigated by the famous archaeologist Leonard Woolley and by his even more famous collaborator Lawrence of Arabia. Karkemish played a significant role in the history of the ancient Near East in the 2nd and the 1st millennium BC. It inherited the tradition of the Hittite Empire after its collapse and was the capital of a Neo-Hittite polity. The recent excavations have significantly increased our knowledge of this city and continue to unearth artistic treasures.

Arslantepe: new data on the formation of the Neo-Hittite kingdom of Melid

MARCELLA FRANGIPANE (M.F.) - FRANCESCA BALOSSI RESTELLI (F.B.R.) -
FRANCESCO DI FILIPPO (F.D.F.) - FEDERICO MANUELLI (F.M.) - LUCIA MORI (L.M.)

ABSTRACT

Excavations of the 2nd and 1st millennia BC remains have characterized the early history of researches at Arslantepe, shedding light on the monumentality and historical importance of the site in the Hittite and especially Neo-Hittite periods. After a long interruption, investigations on the Iron Age levels have been recently resumed, in order to both re-examine the old evidence and obtain new information, with the help of modern methodologies, on these important phases in the long site's history. The article offers a summarized update of the results of the activities conducted in the northern sectors of the Arslantepe mound from 2007 to 2019, presenting a detailed sequence of levels from the end of the Late Bronze Age to the latest Iron Age phases, showing architecture and materials as well as setting the discoveries in their historical context. The recent investigations have shown that the last Neo-Hittite phase of the 8th century BC, characterized by the erection of the well-known "Lions' Gate" and its famous celebrative apparatus, is the result of a long and continuous development process which has its roots in the final Late Bronze Age, thus revealing the uniqueness of Arslantepe as a case study for the reconstruction and understanding of the formation of the Neo-Hittite states.

PART 1. BRIEF NOTES ON THE STUDY HISTORY AND THE RECENT RESUMPTION OF INVESTIGATIONS (M.F.)

Arslantepe was already well known at the beginning of the last century essentially depending on the important role that the site was believed to have played in the Neo-Hittite period (early 1st millennium BC) judging from the discovery of some important stone bas-reliefs in the vicinity of the *tell*, to which they had certainly belonged. Among them, a lion statue standing on the top of the mound and visible from the surrounding territory and the village of Orduzu at the foot of the mound, probably gave the site its name: *Arslan*=lion and *tepe*=mound. These monuments were also the object of the interest of the famous archaeologist and traveller Gertrude Bell, who photographed them when she visited Arslantepe in 1909 on one of her fascinating trip in the Near East.

The assumption that Arslantepe had been an important Neo-Hittite centre was later to be confirmed in the 1930s when a French expedition, led by Louis Delaporte, began excavating the site, bringing to light impressive remains of the final stages of the long Iron Age site's sequence. The most famous find was the monumental town gate, flanked by two lion statues, known as the "Lions' Gate" which, through a paved road, gave access to the city (**Fig. 1**).¹ Arslantepe was with some certainty the Melid mentioned in the Assyrian texts (Malitiya in the Hittite sources), the capital of one of the Neo-Hittite kingdoms that had arisen along the Euphrates after the collapse of the Central Anatolian Hittite State and the consequent political upheaval in the periphery of the empire after 1200 BC. The level of the "Lions' Gate" marked the end of the Neo-Hittite town which,

1 DELAPORTE 1940.

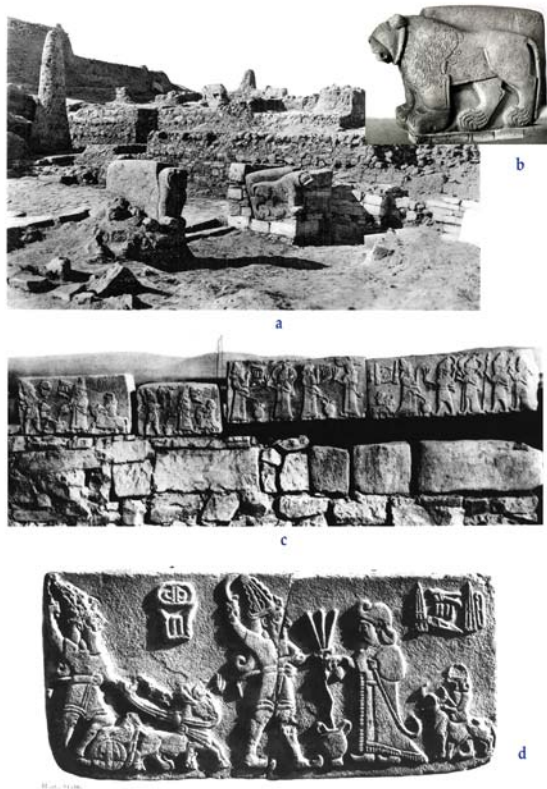


Fig. 1. Arslantepe. The Neo-Hittite “Lions’ Gate” (a) and the bas-reliefs from the Gate area (b) (from DELAPORTE 1940).

according to the texts, was destroyed by Neo-Assyrian King Sargon II in 712 BC.² An interesting and dramatic evidence of this can also be found in the probably deliberate knocking down of the statue of a king (maybe Tarhunazi) located in front of the gate (**Fig. 2**).³ The archaeological proof of the Assyrian conquest of the city and the replacement of the local political institutions was a fairly imposing building erected in proximity of the “Lions’ Gate”, which had been brought to light by L. Delaporte and was subsequently rediscovered in the course of the Italian excavations (see **Fig. 5b**).

Delaporte’s excavations were interrupted by the Second World War and, apart from a short-lived and limited resumption of the investigations by Claude Schaeffer immediately after the war, the site remained unexplored for about a decade.

² LIVERANI 2012b: 341-342.

³ MORI forthcoming.



Fig. 2. Arslantepe. The statue of a Melidean king (possibly Tarhunazi) fallen and then intentionally buried in front of the “Lions’ Gate” (from DELAPORTE 1940, Pl. XXVIII, 2).

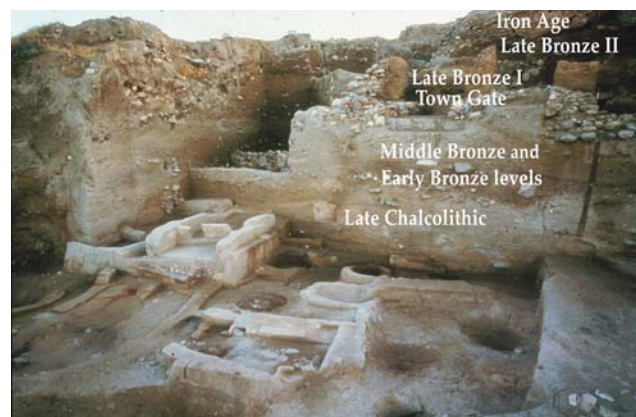


Fig. 3. Arslantepe. Stratification of levels and periods visible in the NE profile of the mound.

When the Italian research began in 1961, it was no coincidence that the expedition was initially promoted by the hittitologist Piero Meriggi, from the University of Pavia, who entrusted the direction in the field to the archaeologist Salvatore M. Puglisi, from Sapienza University of Rome. Meriggi, probably disappointed by the lack of findings of philological evidence of interest to him, soon decided to leave the project and Puglisi took over its direction.

Puglisi, as a prehistoric archaeologist interested in stratigraphy and long-term developments, while continuing his work in the north-eastern area of the mound where the Neo-Hittite remains had already been brought to light, also tried to investigate the archaeological sequence of the mound, stratigraphically excavating along its

northern outer edge, running throughout the entire succession of levels forming the *tell* in that area (**Fig. 3**). It was thus discovered that the history of Arslantepe had begun at least as early as the 4th millennium BC, and the research was then oriented in two directions: 1) on the one hand, the investigation of the earliest levels visible at the base of the sequence on the bedrock,⁴ and 2) on the other hand, the excavation of new sectors in the upper part of the mound, where a succession of Late Bronze Age levels and a series of superimposed monumental city gates were brought to light.⁵ The excavation of these levels made it possible to begin to analyse the 2nd millennium BC, evidencing clear contacts with the Hittite world in Central Anatolia, from the formation of the Old Kingdom until the mature Empire phase, when Arslantepe became one of the easternmost sites under the influence of the Hittite State in the Euphrates valley.

The prehistoric levels brought to light along the mound profile had moreover demonstrated the importance of the pre-Hittite phases in the site, particularly the Late Chalcolithic and Early Bronze Age periods, leading Puglisi and his assistant at that time, Alba Palmieri, to expand the research to the opposite and hitherto unexplored south-western area of the *tell*. This research immediately proved to be very promising with the discovery of a “temple” from the end of the 4th millennium BC, destroyed by fire and with a wealth of *in situ* materials, which prompted the archaeologists to expand more the investigations in this new area.⁶ The discovery here of a long and continuous sequence of settlements from the 4th and 3rd millennia BC, as well as the finding of other monumental buildings related to the temple that gradually appeared to be a very early “palace complex”,⁷ led to a change of research strategies, concentrating work on this area of the mound.

4 PALMIERI 1969; 1978.

5 PUGLISI - MERIGGI 1964; PECORELLA 1975; PALMIERI 1978.

6 PALMIERI 1973.

7 FRANGIPANE 2012; 2016; 2019.

As a consequence of this, the excavation of the Hittite and Neo-Hittite levels in the north-eastern area of the *tell* was interrupted for over thirty years.

Arslantepe was increasingly emerging as a major important 4th millennium BC political and economic centre. But the researches were also evidencing the crucial though varying role played by the site throughout its long and uninterrupted history. And many questions still remained to be answered about the site’s other moment of glory in the Neo-Hittite era, when it had once again acquired the role of a dominant centre over its territory and surrounding regions, not to mention the phases that this new era had preceded, namely, the Late Bronze Age, when Arslantepe marked the border where the Hittite and Assyrian worlds met, and clashed.

A recent thorough study of the archaeological materials from the Late Bronze Age levels excavated in the 60s and 70s at Arslantepe has highlighted the complexity of the site’s cultural and political identity, as well as its external relationships, in the 2nd millennium BC. It clearly revealed the numerous cultural traits that Arslantepe shared with the Central Anatolian and Hittite world – including aesthetic aspects of craft productions and important architectural elements, such as the shape of the city gates –, and at the same time numerous original and autonomous features linked to both local traditions and other neighbouring cultural environments.⁸

What, then, was the nature of the Hittite influence on the site? How far had this influence involved the political structures of government and organisation of the territory and how far had it affected the life of the local people?

It would have only been possible to answer these questions by expanding research to the 2nd millennium BC levels related to this period, as well as by investigating the phases immediately following it, after the so-called crisis of the Central

8 MANUELLI 2013.

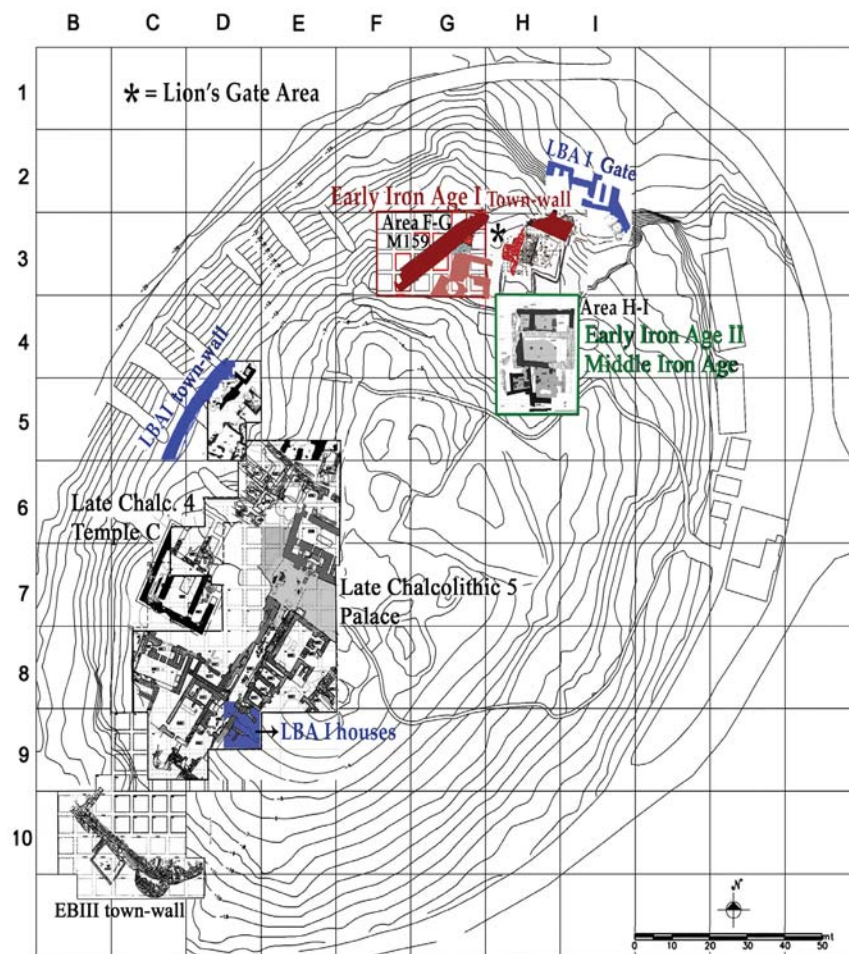


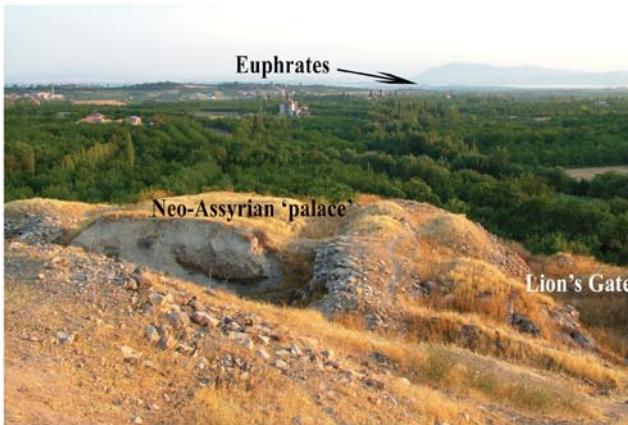
Fig. 4. Plan of the Arslantepe mound with the excavated areas and some of the main structures brought to light so far (the different phases of Late Bronze and Iron Age are evidenced in colour).

Anatolian empire and before the formation of the new Neo-Hittite political entity in the 1st millennium BC.

We therefore decided, in 2007, to resume excavations in the north-eastern area of the mound to more thoroughly and extensively investigate these topics by also using new field strategies and methods (Fig. 4). The goals were: 1) to analyse the historical process following the collapse and disintegration of Hittite Empire until the formation of the new autonomous Neo-Hittite kingdoms on the Euphrates; and 2) to subsequently expand the research on the phases in which Arslantepe entered the orbit of the Hittite State and the Central Anatolian world, analysing the degree of political and cultural

involvement of the site in the multiform and vast regional ambit considered to have been under the influence of that “empire”. Arslantepe, with its long and uninterrupted sequence, was an ideal laboratory for this study.

The excavations began in the area immediately to the west of the place where the “Lions’ Gate” had been found (area F-G) and where the sequence was still relatively safe, ending with the Neo-Assyrian palace whose foundations had not yet been removed (Figs. 4 and 5). After documenting and removing the foundations of this building, a careful stratigraphic investigation started on the underlying Iron Age levels, with the intention of reaching the transitional phases between the Hittite imperial period, documented



a



a



b



b

Fig. 5. Arslantepe. Remains of the Neo-Assyrian ‘Palace’ before and after the recent resumption of the excavations in the NE sector of the mound.

Fig. 6. Arslantepe. Operation area H-I before and after the recent resumption of the excavations. The Iron Age I town-wall from area F-G is also visible in the background of picture b.

there by the so-called “Imperial Gate”⁹ located slightly to the north-east of this excavation area, and the fully developed Neo-Hittite architectural phases represented by the “Lions’ Gate”.

It was later, in 2016, that another excavation area was opened to the east/south-east of the F-G operation sector (area H-I) with the aim of investigating the Iron Age sequence in the innermost area of the citadel, farther from the city walls (**Figs. 4** and **6**). Here the huge stone foundations of the perimeter wall of a large building which had been previously brought to light by Puglisi¹⁰ gave hope that important structures of the town would be found there.

The excavations in both areas, despite the poor state of conservation of most of the buildings – all quite close to the surface and in some cases partly damaged by old excavations –, produced extremely interesting results that have significantly shed fresh light on what we know of the history of these periods.

One of the important results that emerged in area F-G, near the town-walls, was a detailed sequence of the mature Iron Age building levels and levels representing the transition from the Late Bronze Age, all together covering the time span between the 13th and 8th century BC. Most of these levels (those referring to the middle and late phases of the sequence) could be correlated with corresponding levels brought to light in the operation sectors H-I, whereas we have to

9 PECORELLA 1975.

10 PUGLISI 1964: fig. 5, pl. LXI.1.

CHRONOLOGY			EXCAVATION SECTORS F 3-4, G 3-4 (area close to the town-wall)	EXCAVATION SECTORS H-I 4-5	
Site Periods	Relative Chronology	Absolute chronology		Northern sector (close to town-wall): H 3, H 4 (2-3)	Southern sector (inner area of the “citadel”): H 4 (6-10) (13-15), H 5, I 4-5
Arslantepe IIB	Late Iron Age	Based on historical data 712-650 BC	- Neo-Assyrian Building (A1139) and re-use of the ‘Lion’s Gate’		- Fragmentary remains of a second paved court (A1428, A1429) - Fragmentary remains of a stone paved court (A1430)
Arslantepe IIA.2	Middle Iron Age	850-712 BC	- ‘Pillared hall’ (A1142) and ‘Lion’s Gate’ - Early ‘Pillared hall’ with columns (A1168, A1154)		- Very fragmentary remains of a possible pillared room or court (A1431, A1432)
Arslantepe IIA.1			- First “terracing wall” (A1210, M170, M188, M184)	- Wall foundations	- Area with plastered pits and sunken pithoi (A1433) - Building XLV with re-building phases and a horseshoe-shaped fireplace (A1432, A1434, A1435)
Arslantepe IIIB	Early Iron Age II	Based on C14 dates 1000-850 BC	- New pits on the disused town-wall - New destruction of the town-wall M159 - Large silos, pits, and fragmentary remains of structures re-using the town-wall M159	- Room foundations - Re-use of the town-wall and adjacent rooms	- Defunctionalization and reuse of the monumental Building XLVI , with annexed open areas for domestic activities and a kitchen (A1438, A1440, A1467) - Monumental Building XLVI and related areas
Arslantepe IIIA.2	Early Iron Age I	1200-1000 BC	- First destruction of the town-wall M159 - Town-wall M159 and related floors	- Town-wall and adjacent room (M253, A1506)	
Arslantepe IIIA.1	Final Late Bronze Age	1250-1200 BC	- “Green buildings” (A1279, A1426), their collapse and filling - Round structure	- Emergent structures still to be investigated	- Emergent structures still to be investigated (A1517)

Tab. 1. Chronology of the final Late Bronze Age and Iron Age sequence at Arslantepe.

wait for new excavation campaigns to carry out research in the most ancient levels of the Iron Age in this area.

We are, however, already able to reconstruct a detailed sequence of archaeological phases,

corroborated by numerous C14 dates,¹¹ which outlines interesting developments at the site in the course of the Iron Age, beginning with the end of the Late Bronze Age, as summarised in **Tab. 1**.

11 MANUELLI *et al.* in press.

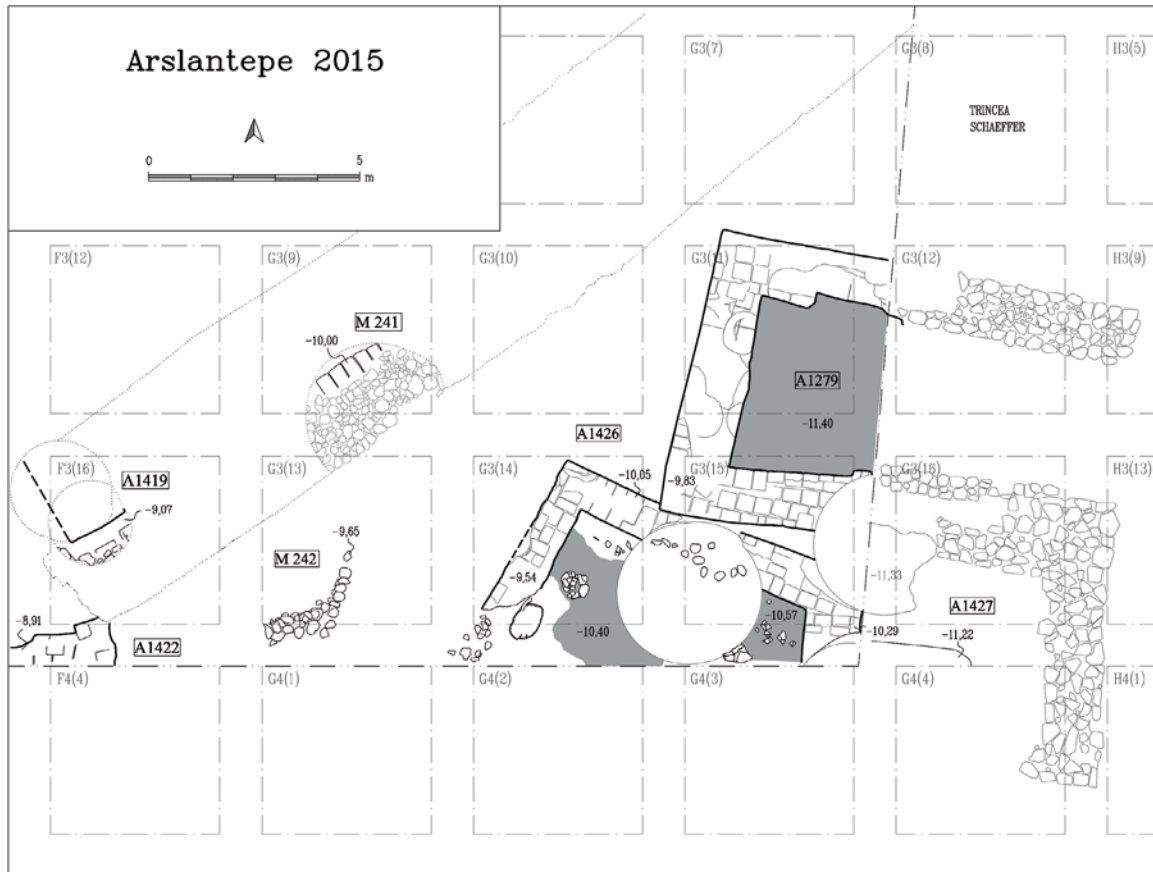


Fig. 7. Plan of the “Green Buildings” (Arslantepe Phase IIIA.1).

PART 2. FROM THE LATE BRONZE TO IRON AGE: THE SEQUENCE

Arslantepe IIIA.1 - IIIA.2 (Final Late Bronze Age and Early Iron Age I)
(F.M.)

Phase IIIA.1

An early sequence of Iron Age levels has been reached so far mostly in the F-G sector. The Arslantepe IIIA.1 phase has been indeed excavated in a rather restricted area, when compared with the extension of the investigation of later phases. This is due to the overlaying monumental structures and the difficulty in removing them.

Two large rooms, whose thick walls were made of greenish-coloured mud bricks (the so-called “green buildings”), have been unearthed.¹²

The walls were covered with several layers of thick plaster and have been preserved for a maximum height of ca. 1.5 meter (Fig. 7). The stone foundation has been found at different elevations following a NE-SW slope, showing that the structures were built after heavily terracing the underlying levels. The walls of the rooms are clearly misaligned and their bricks are not structurally bound, indicating several phases of construction and use. No traces of a final destruction by fire have been recognized, and the rooms were intentionally filled probably following their collapse.¹³

The first of these rooms (A1279), has been found completely empty, giving the impression of cleared of all content before being abandoned, probably following a new urban planning.¹⁴

¹² MANUELLI 2020: 115-117.

¹³ FRANGIPANE *et al.* 2017: 84-89.

¹⁴ FRANGIPANE *et al.* 2018.



Fig. 8. Arslantepe Phase IIIA.1:
The “Green Buildings” (a) and the tower (b).

The second room (A1426) had some few *in situ* materials (**Fig. 8a**), among which a large-sized krater embedded into the floor, and a circular stone structure probably made to support some kind of vessel or installation. The integration of the results with those from the old excavations in this sector allows reconstructing the original dimension of room A1279 to 10 by 5 meters,¹⁵ which might indicate a representative (or at least non-domestic) use of this space.

Underneath the rooms, traces of a round structure filled with mud-brick pieces, probably the remains of a tower related to a fortification system, have been discovered and only partially excavated (**Fig. 8b**).¹⁶ Despite the fact that the exact

relationship between the two rooms and the tower is not completely clear yet, the use in this case as well of green-coloured mud bricks and the absence of any burnt traces suggest the existence of one single “green level” characterized by several phases construction. Further east, some scattered remains of plastered walls likewise built with greenish-coloured mud bricks also testify to the existence of a larger and coherent architectural plan.

Although still at a very preliminary stage, significant associations can be made with some structures recently excavated in the H-I sector. Here the remains of a large room with a set of fire installations, built with the same typical green mud bricks, have been found almost completely destroyed by the superimposed later structures.

The “green level” has been directly built on top of the destruction layer of the so-called “Hittite Imperial Gate” (Arslantepe IV), brought to light during the old Italian excavations in the 1960s, which consisted of a chambered gateway associated with part of a fortification wall.¹⁷ The direct superimposition of fortification systems marks the existence of an unbroken sequence of construction that does not show any stratigraphic or architectural hiatus (**Fig. 9a**). The recent integration into this picture of a new set of high precision radiocarbon dating is improving our knowledge about the site’s history during the Late Bronze - Iron Age transition. The results actually show that the “green buildings” and the life span of Arslantepe IIIA.1 date to the 13th century BC, setting a higher *terminus ante quem* for the destruction of the “Imperial Gate”.¹⁸ This implies that Arslantepe IIIA.1 represents the end of the Late Bronze Age, opening to fascinating historical perspectives to be thoroughly investigated in the future. Moreover, it further emphasises the complexity of the historical period that characterized the end of the Hittite Empire and the rise of the following decentralized Iron Age kingdoms.¹⁹

¹⁵ PECORELLA 1975: 14-16.

¹⁶ MANUELLI 2018: 149-150.

¹⁷ PECORELLA 1975: 3-5; MANUELLI 2013: 406-409.

¹⁸ MANUELLI *et al.* in press.

¹⁹ FRANGIPANE *et al.* 2018.



Fig. 9. The final Late Bronze Age and the Iron Age I levels: The excavated sequence (a) and the bas-reliefs (b).

Phase IIIA.2

The “green buildings” in the F-G sector have been sealed by a thin mud-plastered floor associated with an imposing fortification wall of mud bricks on a stone foundation (Arslantepe IIIA.2) (Fig. 10). Wall M159 was 4-meter-wide and has been preserved for a length of ca. 40 meters and a height of up to 4 meters including the foundation (Fig. 9a). The excavation revealed that it was built on several terraces with different elevations, following the ancient slope created by the construction of the “green level”.²⁰ Indeed, the foundation is massive on its eastern side, where it reaches almost 2 meters in height, while it gradually decreases westwards. Remarkably, the deep cut of a set of later pits

reveals that the outer northern side of M159 was not built on stones rather directly on a thick layer of compact dark clay soil. This testifies to an interesting mixed technique, the use of which was probably still due to the morphology of the pre-existing mound slope. Radiocarbon dating from the wall itself and its destruction allows to set the construction and use of this level between the late-13th and the late-11th century BC.²¹

The downfall of the fortification was particularly catastrophic, as a thick layer of heavily burnt debris stemming from its collapse has been found over a large area.²² The resumption of the investigations in the H-I sector, where a continuation of the enclosure eastward has been

20 FRANGIPANE *et al.* 2017: 81-83.

21 MANUELLI *et al.* in press.

22 MANUELLI - MORI 2016: 216-221.

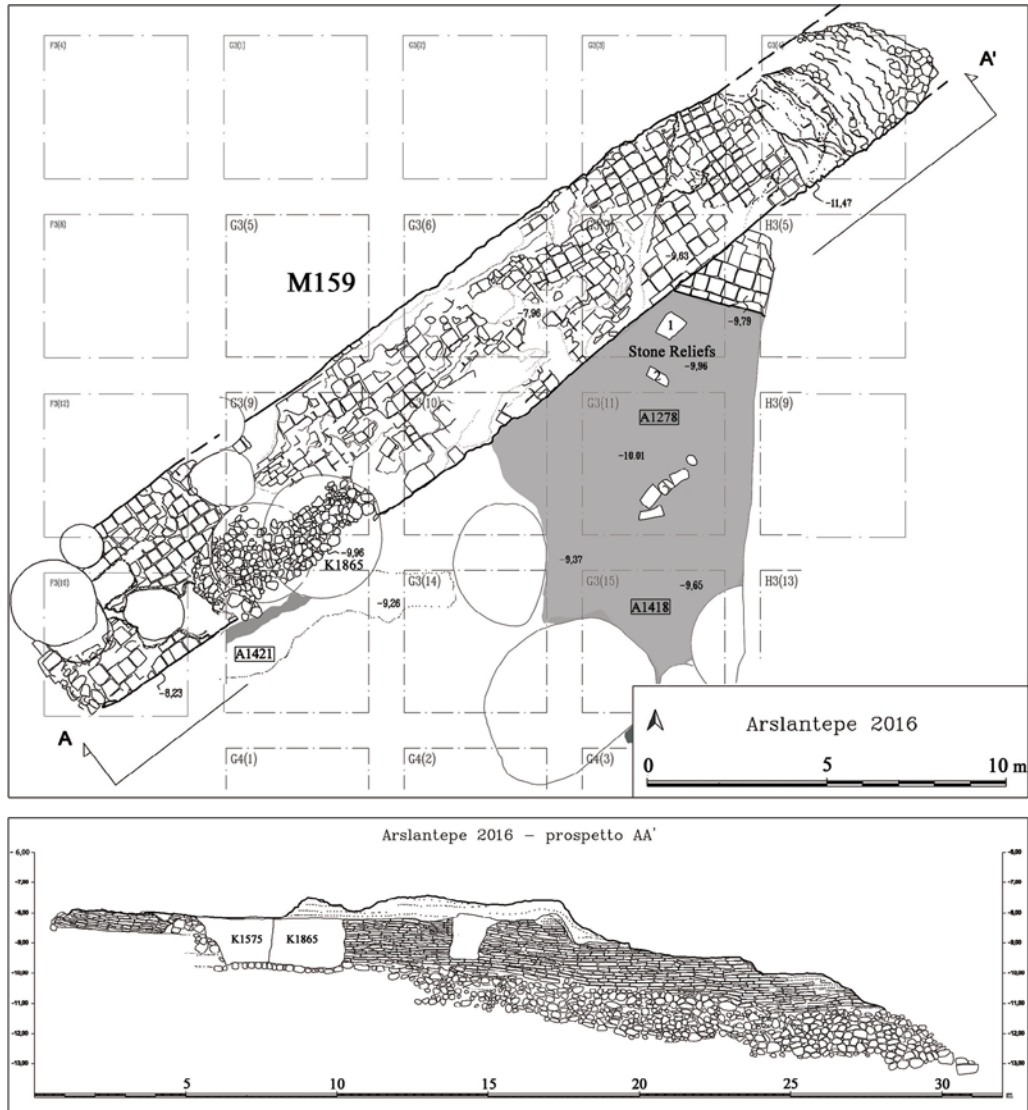


Fig. 10. Arslantepe Phase IIIA: The fortification wall, plan and profile.

identified, allows for a better understanding of the fortification wall construction and use. In association with the new segment of the wall (M253) a floor level with some *in situ* material and installations (A1506) has been discovered, once again deeply affected by a violent conflagration.

It is reasonable to believe that a monumental gate was built at the point where M159 and M253 joined.²³ In fact, this is the location where the “Lions’ Gate” had been found, and where C. Schaeffer claimed to have found an earlier gate

system underneath it.²⁴ Two figurative bas-reliefs found in the G3 sector lying on the floor surface associated with the fortification wall M159, further corroborate the assumption that a possible gate may have existed not far from this area (Fig. 9b). The persistence in the same place of a monumental access to the citadel, following the “Imperial Gate” and preceding the “Lions’ Gate”, is a further evidence of the already mentioned continuity of the fortification systems at the site from the advanced Late Bronze Age to the Iron Age.

23 MANUELLI - MORI 2016: 222-228.

24 ALVARO 2012.

Arslantepe IIIB (Early Iron Age II) (L.M.)

The period immediately following the destruction of the huge fortification wall M159 had been previously interpreted as a minor occupational phase in the site, with a partial abandonment and decay of the area²⁵ before the revival of the Melid kingdom in the 9th and 8th centuries BC. The resumption of the excavation has provided new evidence that completely altered the previous interpretations and brought new insights into the history of the site.

This phase is characterized by a radical change in architecture, which shows a differentiation in use of the inner citadel area adjacent to the fortification wall. Several large silos were excavated, cutting the collapse layers of wall M159 (**Fig. 11**). They have a circular or roughly elliptical shape and are up to 4 meters in diameter. The inner surface shows traces of a thick chaff plaster, and they were probably used to store cereals. Several pits were also found in the area, some of them contemporary to the silos, and some others dug immediately after the dismissal of them, suggesting that the entire area was devoted to storage activities for a long time span in the Iron Age II.²⁶ The construction of a series of granaries inside the citadel opens to interesting historical questions regarding the economic and political relation of the site with the surrounding territory in this phase.

This is even more interesting if we consider the likely contemporaneity of these silos with an imposing ceremonial/cultic building (Building XLVI) standing to the south-east of those structures, towards the inside of the citadel (**Fig. 12**).

Building XLVI (**Fig. 13**) was unfortunately mainly preserved in its foundation and has been completely exposed: it is composed of a large elongated rectangular columned hall, flanked by two smaller rooms adjacent to its northern long



Fig. 11. Panoramic view of the silos area, in proximity of the citadel wall.

side, where the entrance could have been possibly located.²⁷ The main room was a large space (15 x 10 meters), whose roofing was supported by three columns or pillars, aligned along its longitudinal axis. Huge stone boulders were used to build the foundations of the walls. Mud bricks were only poorly preserved for a single or a couple of rows along the southern wall, because the structure was razed after its complete abandonment. Its monumentality was nevertheless manifest and has been confirmed by the most recent excavations. The main hall had protruding stone platforms, in its western and eastern facades, forming huge steps which decorated the base of the visible outer wall along the pathway that led from the city gate to the core of the citadel (**Fig. 14**). Moreover, the whole building was standing as an isolated structure. Floors, partly paved by cobbles and partly by stone slabs, surrounded the building on at least three of its sides, suggesting the presence of unroofed areas. Along its southern side, a large courtyard with some installations, such as a shallow basin with traces of yellow ocher in its filling, was found. Its floor was partly paved with stones and partly plastered with a compact white lime. Some post holes and a large pillar housing along its central axis were probably built to sustain some light roofing (**Fig. 15**).

25 LIVERANI 2012: 338 and Table 1.

26 FRANGIPANE *et al.* 2017; MANUELLI 2020.

27 FRANGIPANE *et al.* 2019: 27-28.

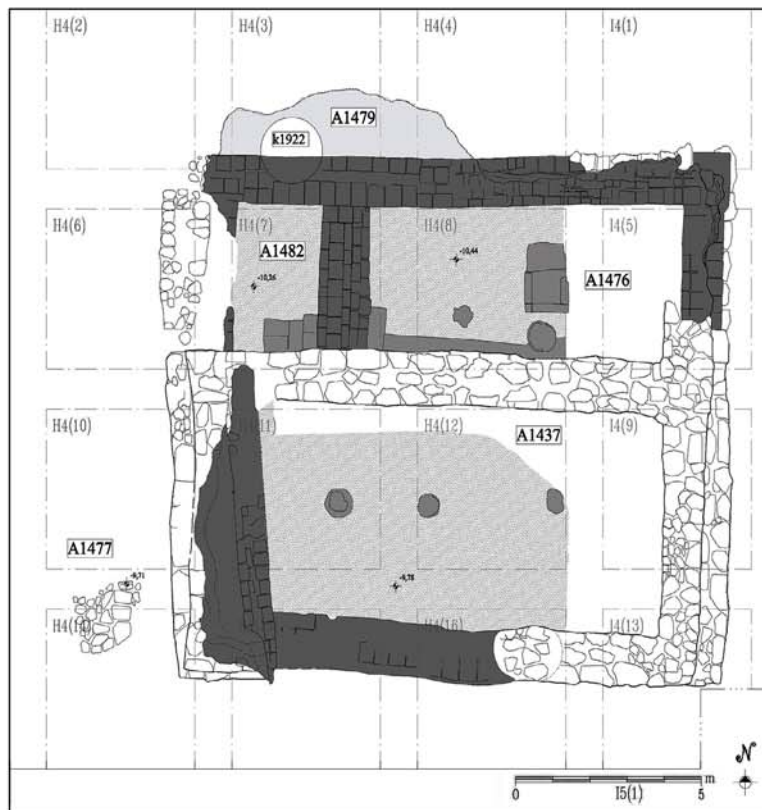
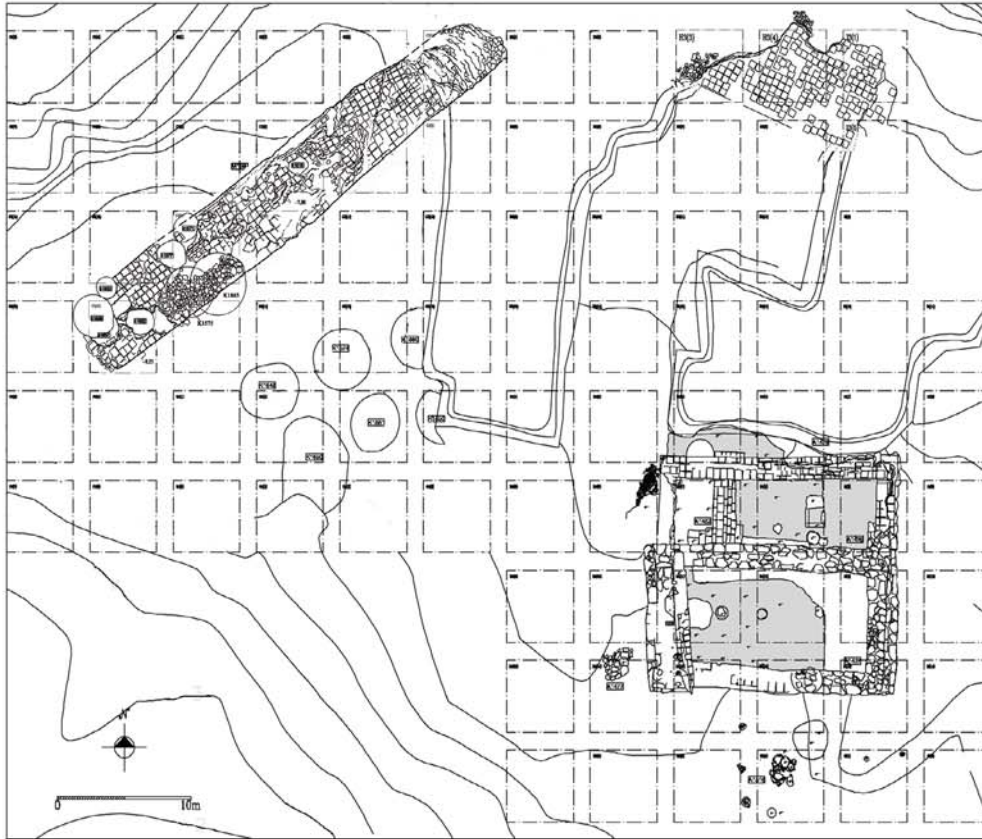


Fig. 12. Plan of the structures of Phase IIB: the silos to the north-west and Building XLVI to the south-east, with a detailed plan of Building XLVI.



Fig. 13. General view of Building XLVI from north-west.



Fig. 14. The stone platform protruding from Building XLVI façade, view from the west.



Fig. 15. The courtyard to the south of Building XLVI.

Building XLVI was the first monument people faced entering the Melid's citadel through the adjacent city-gate and access road, in the 10th century BC, and it must have had a visual and perceptual impact on them. Moreover, it is the earliest columned building found in the site during the Iron Age phase, and predates the later columned hall of Phase IIA, creating a reference model and probably an inspiration for the architecture of the following period. However, the function of the building is still debatable, due to the paucity of material found *in situ*, on the preserved floors. The presence of small structures in the larger of the side rooms flanking the hall, among which were a stone base or pillar and a rectangular mud brick plastered basin (Fig. 13), suggests some sort of "ceremonial" or "ritual" function. In the contemporary architecture of the Luwio-Aramaic region, no exact parallel has been identified up to now. However, in the southern Levantine area, temples with an

elongated rectangular room with columns flanked by smaller spaces have been found in sites such as Ekron (Building 350, Stratum V)²⁸ and Ashdod (Building 5337, Stratum XII).²⁹

A direct stratigraphic connection between Building XLVI and the silos was not preserved, because of the presence of the old excavation trenches in the area of the city gate.³⁰ Nonetheless the archaeological sequence in both areas, together with the analysis of ceramics and a set of highly coherent C14 dating, anchor those structures approximately to the same period (see Tab. 1). In the light of these new data, this period needs to be reconsidered as far as the history of the site is concerned.

Questions also arise as to the relation of Building XLVI to the gate and fortification area.

28 DOTHAN - GITIN 1997: 32.

29 DOTHAN - BEN-SHLOMO 2005: 26-30.

30 DELAPORTE 1940; PECORELLA 1975.

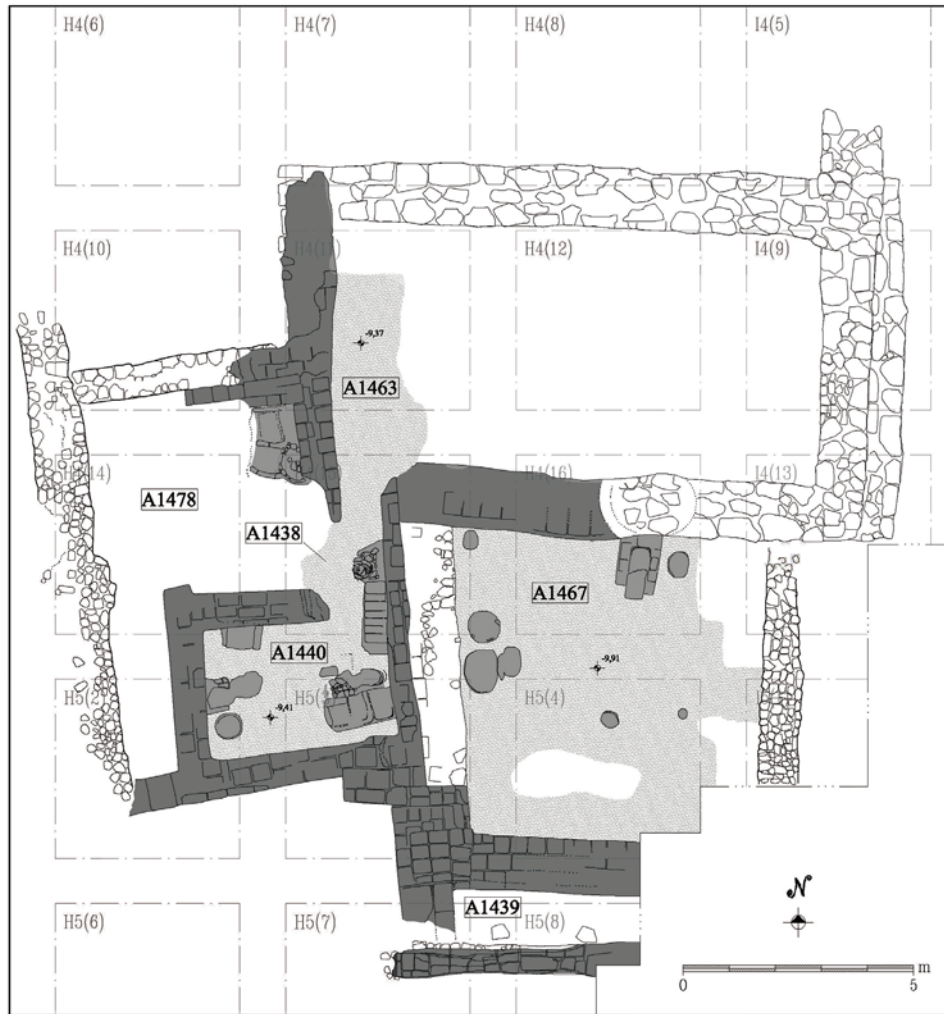


Fig. 16. Plan of the H-I area after the abandonment of Building XLVI, with the kitchen (A1440) and large courtyard (A1467).

Was the citadel wall M159 still standing and reused in this period? A positive answer might come from the 2019 excavation results, which resumed the archaeological activities also on a preserved spur to the east of the gate area. Several rooms, preserved only at the foundation level, were detected in proximity to the citadel wall. Moreover, part of the fortification structures showed evidence of refurbishing, which probably occurred in this period .

Building XLVI was abandoned and emptied and was partially razed in the following building phase. After its abandonment, the area underwent major changes: on the partially razed walls of Building XLVI's central hall small-

scale domestic structures were built to the west (A1438, A1440), while a large room – or maybe again an open area (A1467) covered the previous courtyard to the south (**Fig. 16**).

The function of the entire area significantly changed. Fire installations, mostly related to cooking activities, were present in the area adjacent to the south wall of Building XLVI.³¹ Room A1440 was a well-preserved kitchen, with a small *tandır*, and a grinding installation, composed of a large plastered basin probably used for the collection of flour, and a complete set of grinding equipment, consisting of two

³¹ FRANGIPANE *et al.* 2019: 28-29.



a



b

Fig. 17. The earliest floor of kitchen A1440, with a series of *tandır* rebuilding (a); the latest floor of the same kitchen, with a stepped working platform and the remains of a large *pithos* inserted in the floor (b).

saddle shaped grinding slabs with upper grinders, placed in its proximity. The original floor was replastered in a second phase and several of the small structures were also reused (**Fig. 17**). The room was related to another area that, in the later phase, was used as a storage, as suggested by the setting of a large *pithos* embedded in the floor.

These structures were abandoned and dumping layers with piles of ashes filled the large spaces, on top of which later Building XLV was erected. At the same time, in the north-eastern area, the granaries were totally obliterated by the construction of differently arranged buildings, the so-called “First Terracing Wall”, which later led to the construction of the “Lions’ Gate”.

Arslantepe IIA.1 - IIA.2 - IIB (Middle and Late Iron Age) (F.D.F)

The most notable feature of the Arslantepe Period II is certainly the construction and use of the “Lions’ Gate”.³² Nowadays, only the deep trench where the gate system was excavated is still visible. West of this trench in the F-G sector, since 2007 a series of superimposed building levels were identified and studied in detail.³³ East and South-East of the “Lions’ Gate” trench, in the H-I sector, the stratigraphic sequence has been preserved only to a limited extent, due to early soundings. Yet, although a direct relationship between the two sectors is still missing, several levels can be tentatively synchronized (**Fig. 18**).



Fig. 18. Aerial view of excavated areas with the “Lions’ Gate” trench in the middle.

Phase IIA.1

Radical changes were brought about in the F-G sectors during Phase IIA.1 (**Fig. 19**). On top of the massif fortification wall M159, the poorly preserved remains of a building (A1210) and a terracing wall (M170, the so-called “First Terracing Wall”) have been unearthed (**Fig. 20**). While the terracing wall is relatively well preserved, the building (A1210) is impossible to

³² DELAPORTE 1940.

³³ LIVERANI 2012; MANUELLI 2012.

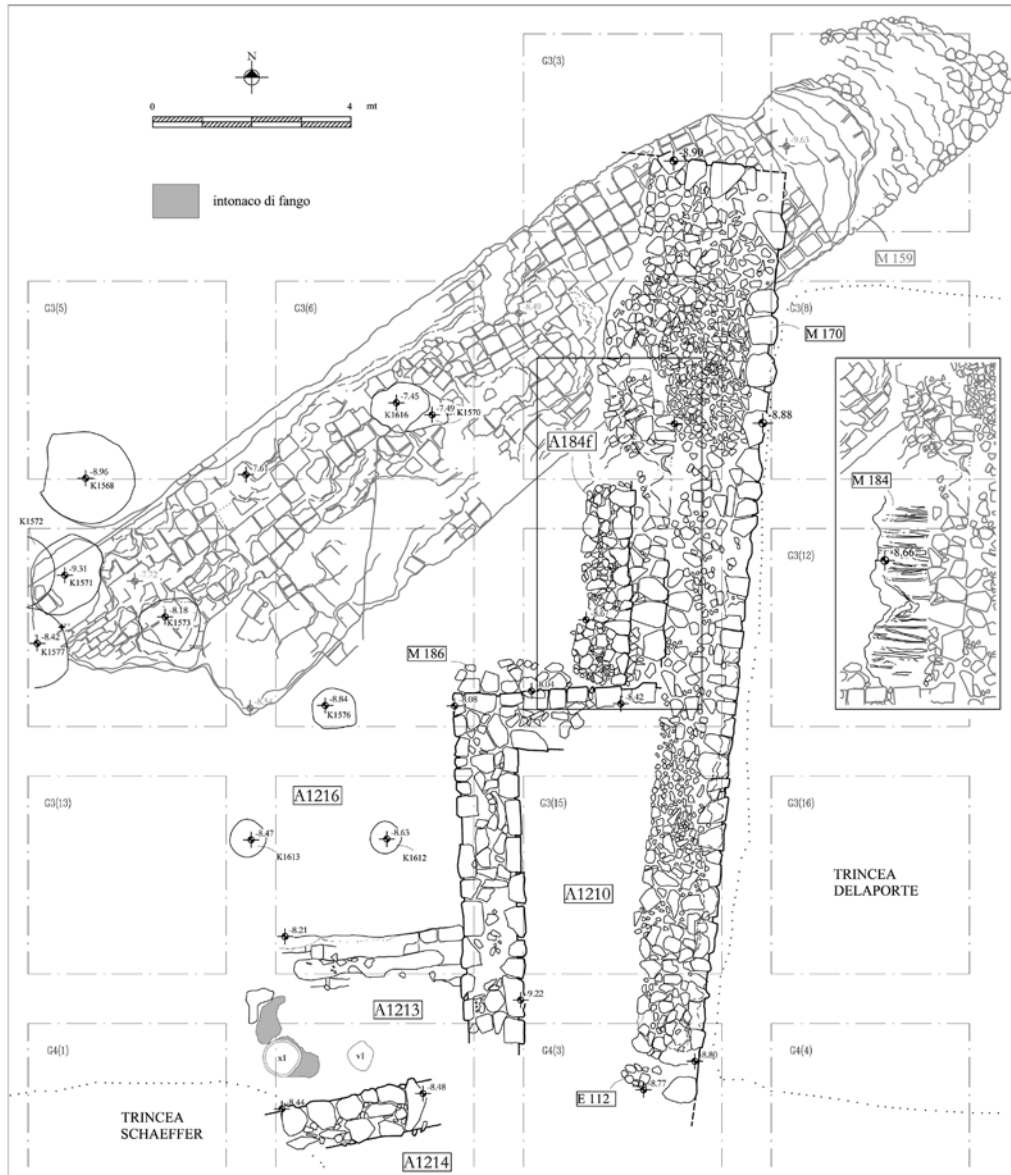


Fig. 19. Arslantepe Phase IIA.1: plan of the “First Terracing Wall”.

reconstruct in detail, as later foundation walls cut the remains of this structure (**Fig. 21**). Notwithstanding the bad state of preservation, it can be assumed that these structures correspond to the first phase of construction of the “Lions’ Gate”. Indeed, the “First Terracing Wall” seems to be the same displayed in Delaporte’s pictures,³⁴ and it is likely that the first phase of the gate system was originally linked to it.³⁵

From this phase onward, all the superimposed structures following the terracing wall M170 maintained a similar N-S orientation.

As far as the south-east area H-I is concerned, a large building made of at least three rooms (Building XLV - **Fig. 22**) has been brought to light. This is also presumably contemporary to the “First Terracing Wall” in the F-G area. It is a relatively large structure, albeit poorly preserved, whose original extension is difficult to establish due to the erosion of its western and eastern edges

34 DELAPORTE 1940: pl. XIII, 2.

35 MANUELLI 2010: 71-75; LIVERANI - FRANGIPANE 2013: 356-357.



Fig. 20. Arslantepe Phase IIA.1: “First Terracing Wall” (M170) from south.



Fig. 21. Arslantepe Phase IIA.1: “First Terracing Wall” (remains of the building A1210) from west.

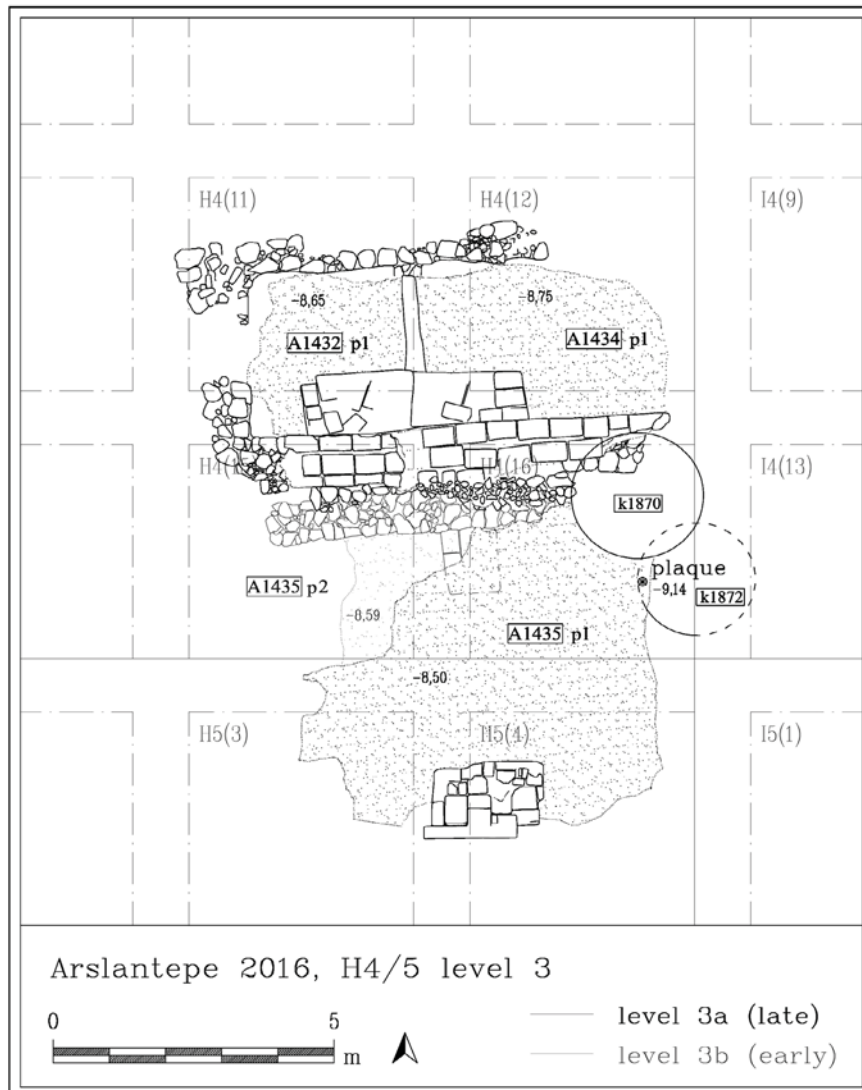


Fig. 22. Arslantepe Phase IIA.1: plan of the Building XLV.

(**Fig. 23**). In the larger room (A1435) a double horseshoe-shaped hearth (ca. 2 x 1.5 meters) was unearthed, as well as two column bases aligned along the room's E-W axis. No traces of fire or sudden destruction have been recognised. In addition, few *in situ* materials have been found there, although several floor levels have been exposed. It was very likely that the building was intentionally emptied, giving the impression of a regular cycle of architectural re-building phases without any sharp or dramatic events.

As an outstanding finding within such a building, an ivory plaque was found in a small pit, partially (partially sealed) sealed by one of the floors of the main room (A1435). It belongs to the so-called "Flame and Frond" northern Syrian carving school (see below). The plaque is also important in that it offers a *terminus post quem* for dating the building to the end of the 8th century BC.³⁶

Phases IIA.2-IIB

During Arslantepe IIA.2 (**Fig. 24**), a new monumental organization of the area west of the "Lions' Gate" started, as shown by the construction of a new building, which was to be renewed several times. The excavated structures, the so-called "Pillared Hall" (A1142, A1168), were undoubtedly part of a broader architectural complex extending westward and southward (beyond the excavation limit), which may have also been conceived as a terraced building (**Fig. 25**). This is suggested by the north and west massive perimeter walls (2.5 meters) that appear to have been built against the soil, cutting the existing deposit. In contrast, the building's eastern wall opened to the "Lions' Gate" front square.

The main hall (ca. 15 x 12 meters) had two main construction phases. During the first phase (A1168), the hall featured three rows of columns organized along the E-W axis, and it was paved with river pebbles of small size and large stone slabs, partly displaced over time (sub-phases A and B). A similar arrangement of the space was

accomplished later (A1142) when a new paving, entirely built of river pebbles of medium size, and two rows of four pillars each were built.

After more than five decades, the excavations' resumption of the H-I sectors finally provided a new key to the understanding of the Arslantepe Iron Age sequence as a coherent whole. During the 2016 campaign, a series of superimposed floors paved with large stone slabs have been discovered: A1428, A1429 (upper) and A1430 (lower) (**Fig. 26**). A badly damaged building, characterized by the presence of regular, large post-holes has been found, under the abovementioned stone slab floors. Although the lack of any stratigraphic link between the H-I and the F-G sectors makes it difficult to synchronize the two areas precisely, a relationship between the different phases of the "Pillared Hall" and the post-holes as well as stone slab floors must exist. In fact, it appears that the most recent stone slab floor (A1428, A1429) was related to a similar structure excavated in the F-G sector (A1140, A1189), as well as to the stone-paved area exposed by Delaporte during the early exploration at Arslantepe.

During Arslantepe IIB, while the "Pillared Hall" (A1142) was severely destroyed, the "Lions' Gate" survived,³⁷ facing to the south to a large paved plaza which led to the inner city (**Fig. 27a**).³⁸ West of the "Lions' Gate", earlier structures were dismantled when the Assyrians conquered Melid and they erected a new monumental building (A1139). Such building was already exposed by Delaporte, its foundations being still visible when we resumed the excavations in this part of the mound (**Fig. 27b**). This building must have been part of a larger terraced architectural complex³⁹ extending toward the central part of the mound along its main N-S axis (**Fig. 5b**).

37 MORI forthcoming.

38 DELAPORTE 1933: pl. M5.

39 LIVERANI 2012; MANUELLI 2009.

36 MANUELLI - PITTMAN 2018.



a



b

Fig. 23. Arslantepe Phase IIA.1: Building XLV a. from the east; b. from the west.



Fig. 24. Arslantepe Phase IIA.2: plan of the “Pillared Hall” (sub-phases A1142).



Fig. 25. Arslantepe Phase IIA.2: “Pillared Hall” (A1142) from the east.

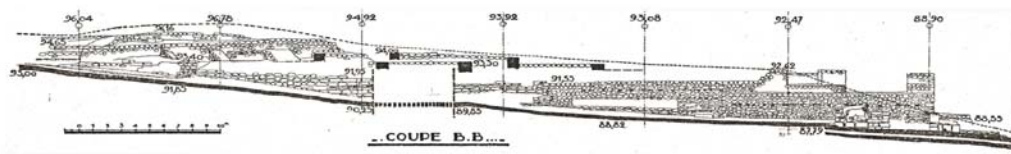


Fig. 26. Arslantepe Phase IIA.2: stone slabs paving (A1428/A1429) from the north.

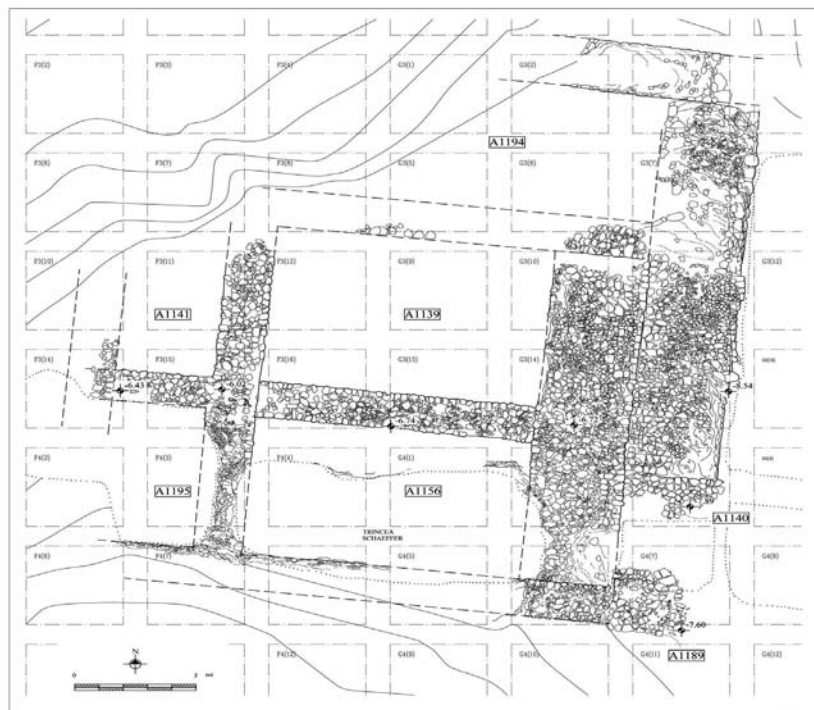
PART 3. ARSLANTEPE AND THE SURROUNDING WORLD

Archaeological evidence (F.M.)

Over the centuries, the history of Arslantepe has been always characterized by a unique combination of local traditions and foreign influences.⁴⁰ This cultural blend is also remarkable during the late 2nd and the early 1st millennium BC. During this period, the archaeological evidence can be used alongside historical sources for a broad reconstruction of the complex interactions and multicultural propensity of the site.



a



b

Fig. 27. Arslantepe Phase IIB. (a) Prospect of the “Lions’ Gate” and terraced structures from the east (from Delaporte 1933: pl. M5). (b) Plan of the Assyrian building (A1139).

The chambered gateway of Period IV displays interesting parallels with Hittite prototypes, although the absence of a casemate wall associated with it certainly reveals the existence of a peculiar arrangement.⁴¹ Material coming from the level of destruction of the gate system, testifies to a clear connection with the Hittite culture (**Fig. 28**). The occurrence of metal weapons and especially of some Hittite-style biconvex seals, sometimes bearing Luwian hieroglyphic inscriptions, stresses the strong link that the site had with the Hittite motherland during the late 14th and early 13th centuries BC.⁴² Pottery production of Period IV shows a strong standardization through the spread of mineral-tempered common wares as well as a clear decline of the shape variability and increased number of typical Central Anatolian forms.⁴³

Some of these aspects show an interesting continuity during the following period (**Fig. 29**). The abovementioned standardization of the pottery production is now even more evident in fabrics, shapes and methods of manufacture. Pastes are pale in colours and fabrics mixed with vegetable and mineral inclusions. Surface treatments are basically absent and the open shapes are almost exclusively characterized by the presence of straight wall-profiles and round bases flat-bowls.⁴⁴ Nonetheless, a new set of shapes, e.g. trefoil jugs, handled jars, small squat body cooking-pots and neckless *pithoi*, as well as the presence of the well-known clay spool-shaped loom weights, reflects a new set of connections with sites located southwards, from the Middle Euphrates valley to the Levantine territories and spanning from the late 13th to the 10th century BC.⁴⁵

This interesting dichotomy between continuity and innovation is also evident in the figurative bas-reliefs brought to light in association with the destruction of the IIIA.2 fortification wall (**Fig. 30**). The reliefs belong to the so-called III Malatya Style, which involves single apotropaic creatures and antithetical figures.⁴⁶ The persistence of the Hittite imperial tradition is evident and predominant in the stylistic aspects of the individual motifs and anatomic details of the new bas-reliefs. Nonetheless, their iconographic repertoire is linked to a new set of themes and figurative scenes typical of the advanced 10th century BC Syro-Mesopotamia tradition, such as those from the “Herald Wall” and the early-cycles of the “Kings Gate” at Karkemiš, as well as the final phase of the Storm-God temple at Aleppo.⁴⁷ It is important to stress that the context of discovery of the reliefs testifies that this sculptural cycle represented the last phase of decorative renovation of the citadel of Arslantepe before the conflagration that brought an end to the settlement at ca. the beginning of the 10th century BC.⁴⁸ It further supports the fact that most of the sculptures found in association with the “Lions’ Gate” were actually reused from earlier structures.

Despite the fact that the destruction of the fortification wall marked an interesting change in the occupation pattern of the northern part of the site, interesting elements of continuity with the former Late Bronze and Early Iron Age traditions still characterize Arslantepe IIIB. This is first of all evident in the reuse of the enclosure itself. Moreover, the presence of an area specifically devoted to storage activities stresses some interesting connections with the former Hittite tradition of accumulation and redistribution. The large pits, although they have been found filled with earth and debris during their final use as a dump, are of particular significance. Their internal

40 FRANGIPANE - LIVERANI 2013: 349-352.

41 MIELKE 2018: 69-75.

42 MANUELLI 2013: 216-221; 389-391; MORA 2013: 266-270.

43 MANUELLI 2017: 148-149.

44 MANUELLI 2018: 146-155.

45 VENTURI 2007: 261-294; BLAYLOCK 2016: 6-13; PUCCI 2020.

46 ORTHMANN 1971: 94-95.

47 GILIBERT 2015: 139-145; MANUELLI 2020: 121-123.

48 MANUELLI - MORI 2016: 222-228.

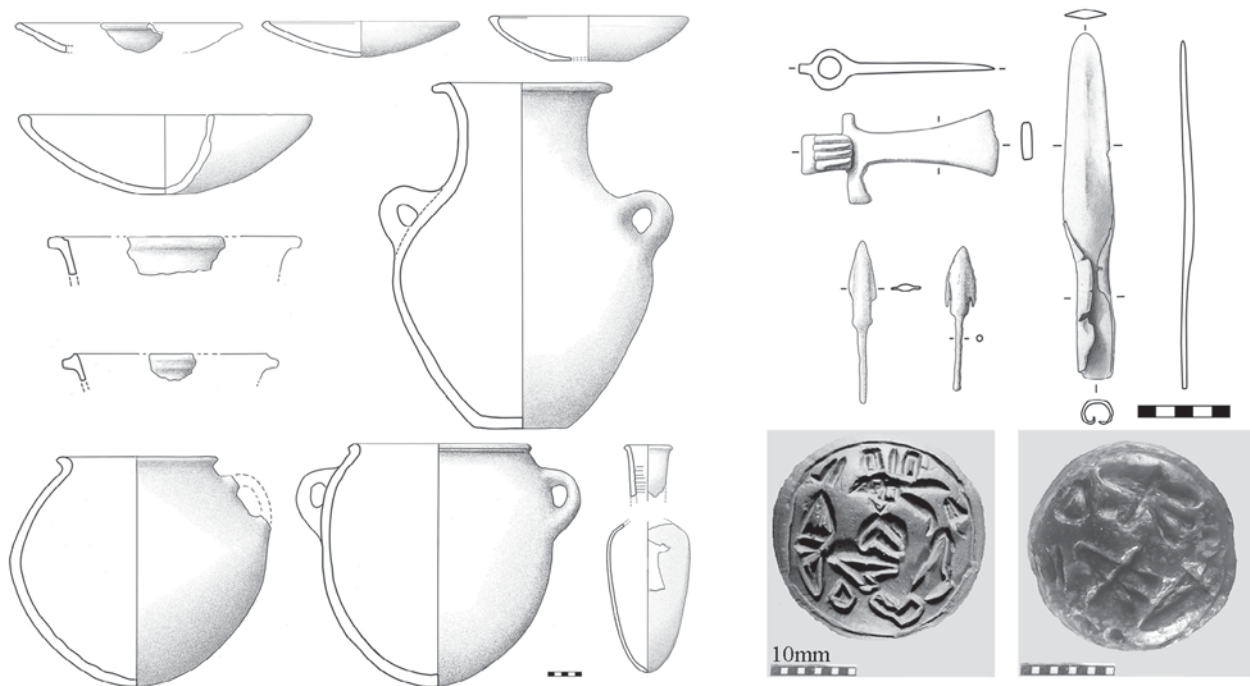


Fig. 28. Pottery assemblage, metal weapons and biconvex seals from Period IV contexts.

partitions, installations, as well as thick chaff plaster probably indicate a function as grain deposit, as is suggested by the presence of similar facilities in other Iron Age sites as well as by the recent studies conducted at the site of Kınık Höyük in South-Central Anatolia.⁴⁹ Interestingly, practices of large-scale centralized storing in the form of massive silos is a distinctive marker of the Hittite economy, as the excavations in the main Central Anatolian sites have shown.⁵⁰

Nevertheless, Phase IIIB also displays an unquestionably strengthening of the relationships established with the Levantine region. As mentioned previously, at the current state of the research the contemporaneity of the silos levels with the monumental Building XLVI can only be assumed. This is however supported by the appearance in both contexts of an important collection of red slip ware, which is characterized by a wide variability (Fig. 31). Indeed, the coating consists of either a thick red

layer accurately burnished or a light orange wash only hastily finished, while morphologically the common carinated bowl shape occurs together with larger and deeper open shapes and jugs.⁵¹ Red slip ware is considered one of the hallmarks of the whole Levantine area from the 9th to the 7th century BC.⁵² The exact chronology and dynamics of circulation of this production is still a matter of discussion among scholars, especially considering that each region and sometimes each site shows its own local inventory and local tradition.⁵³ However, its presence in large quantities at Arslantepe testifies to fascinating relationships during the Iron Age II with the inner Syrian territories.⁵⁴

The analysis of the monumental Building XLVI, although preliminary, seems even more to emphasize the existence of this trend. The architecture and findings suggest a public use of the

49 CASTELLANO 2018.

50 CZICHON *et al.* 2016: 38-42; SEEHER 2018: 66-73; 85-87.

51 FRANGIPANE *et al.* 2019: 27-30.

52 SOLDI 2013.

53 SOLDI, PUCCI 2019.

54 MANUELLI 2019: 165-166.

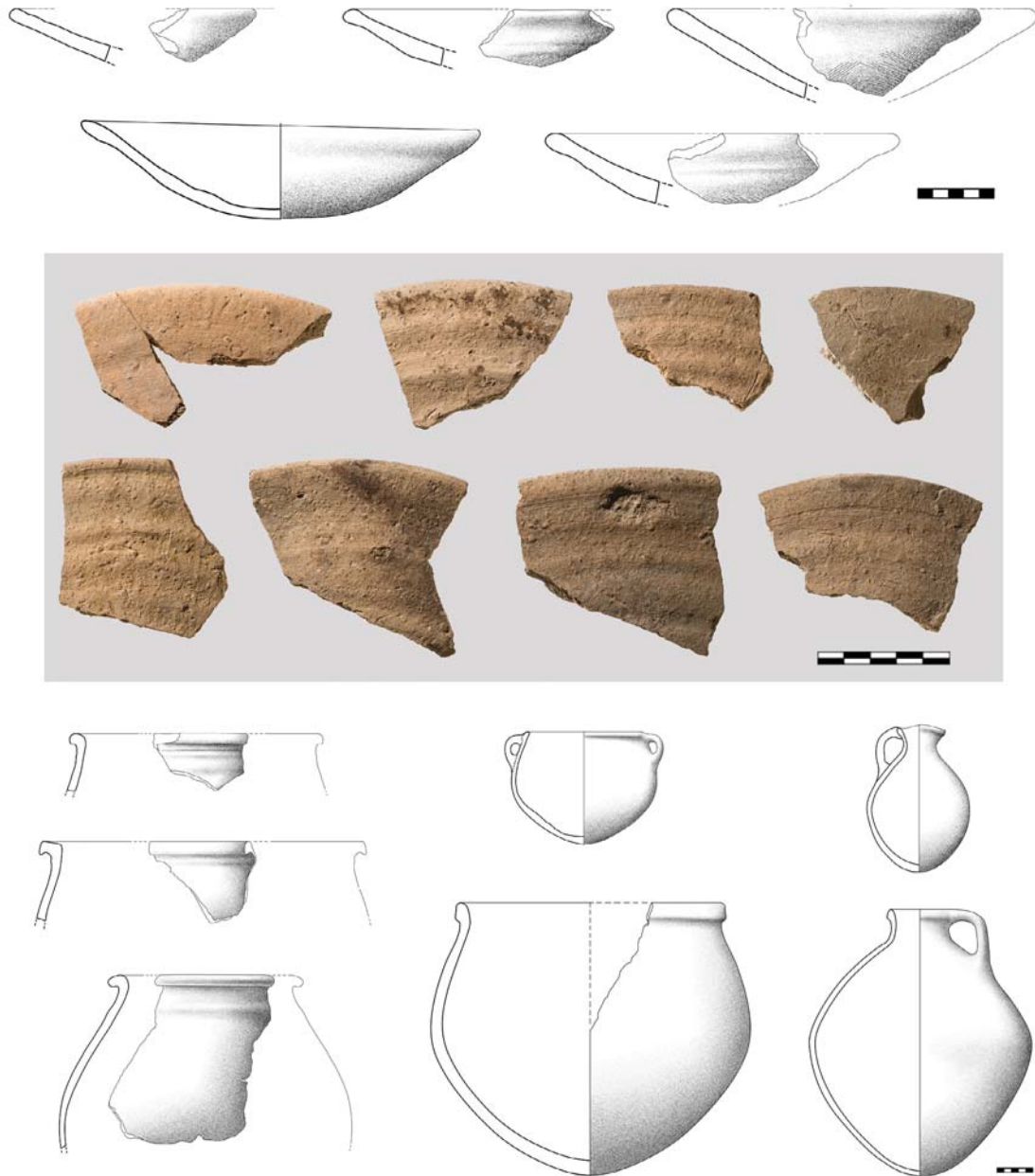


Fig. 29. Pottery assemblage from Phases IIIA.1-2.

structure, maybe for ceremonial activities. Notably, the layout characterized by a rectangular main hall provided with columns and flanked by smaller, elongated rooms shows intriguing similarities with some south Levantine Iron Age cultic buildings.⁵⁵

The appearance of yet other new relationships during Phase IIIB is attested by the occurrence of

the so-called grooved ware.⁵⁶ Although it is still sporadic in both the monumental Building XLVI and the silos level, a remarkable assemblage has been found *in situ* on the floor of kitchen A1440 (**Fig. 32**). At Arslantepe this production is mostly wheel-made and medium fired with dark coarse fabrics. The most common shape is a carinated bowl with grooved lines deeply incised on its

55 MIERSE 2012: 72-83.

56 FRANGIPANE *et al.* 2019: 29-30.



Fig. 30. The figurative bas-reliefs from the destruction of Phase IIIA.2.

shoulder and sometimes supplied with handles and spouts. Grooved ware is mostly typical of the Iron Age in eastern Anatolian, up to north-western Iran and Armenia.⁵⁷ According to its distribution on the sites located along the western side of the Euphrates, this production does not appear in these regions before the 9th century BC.⁵⁸

Concerning the later levels of the sequence, it is important to note that unfortunately, due to the presence of modern intrusions of the old excavations, only some restricted material has been found in reliable contexts. The biggest source of information comes of course from the monumental “Pillared Hall” of Phase IIA. Since the whole sequence of the pillared hall floor levels shows a clear direct stratigraphic connection with the terracing wall belonging to the “Lions’ Gate”,⁵⁹ the pottery material sealed between these floors provides a confident dating for the use of the gate system during the 8th century BC.⁶⁰ Alongside the

continuation of the most relevant ceramic classes already attested in Phase IIIB, i.e. red slip and grooved ware, a new set of monochrome and bichrome painted wares also appear.⁶¹ This includes on one side wheel-made and well fired body jars decorated with linear painted motifs on white or red-slipped surfaces (**Fig. 33a**), which reveal direct affinities with the “White Painted”, “Bichrome” and “Black-on-Red” wares attested in the Cypro-Pheoenician world from approximately the mid-9th century BC.⁶² On the other side, painted jars slipped in white and decorated with brown linear paint as well as bichrome red and black-brown patterns occur (**Fig. 33b**). They found a direct link with the “Early Phrygian” and “Bichrome Phrygian” productions attested in Central Anatolia mostly during the Middle Iron Age.⁶³

The multi-roomed Building XLV discovered in the H-I sector was most probably constructed in association with the earliest phase of the “Pillared Hall”. Besides the presence of the

57 ERDEM 2012.

58 BLAYLOCK 2016: 15-20.

59 LIVERANI 2010: 667-668; ALVARO 2012.

60 MANUELLI 2011.

61 MANUELLI 2010: 75-79; MANUELLI 2019: 165-168.

62 GILBOA 2015.

63 BOSSERT 2000: 46-51; SAMS 2012: 61-63.

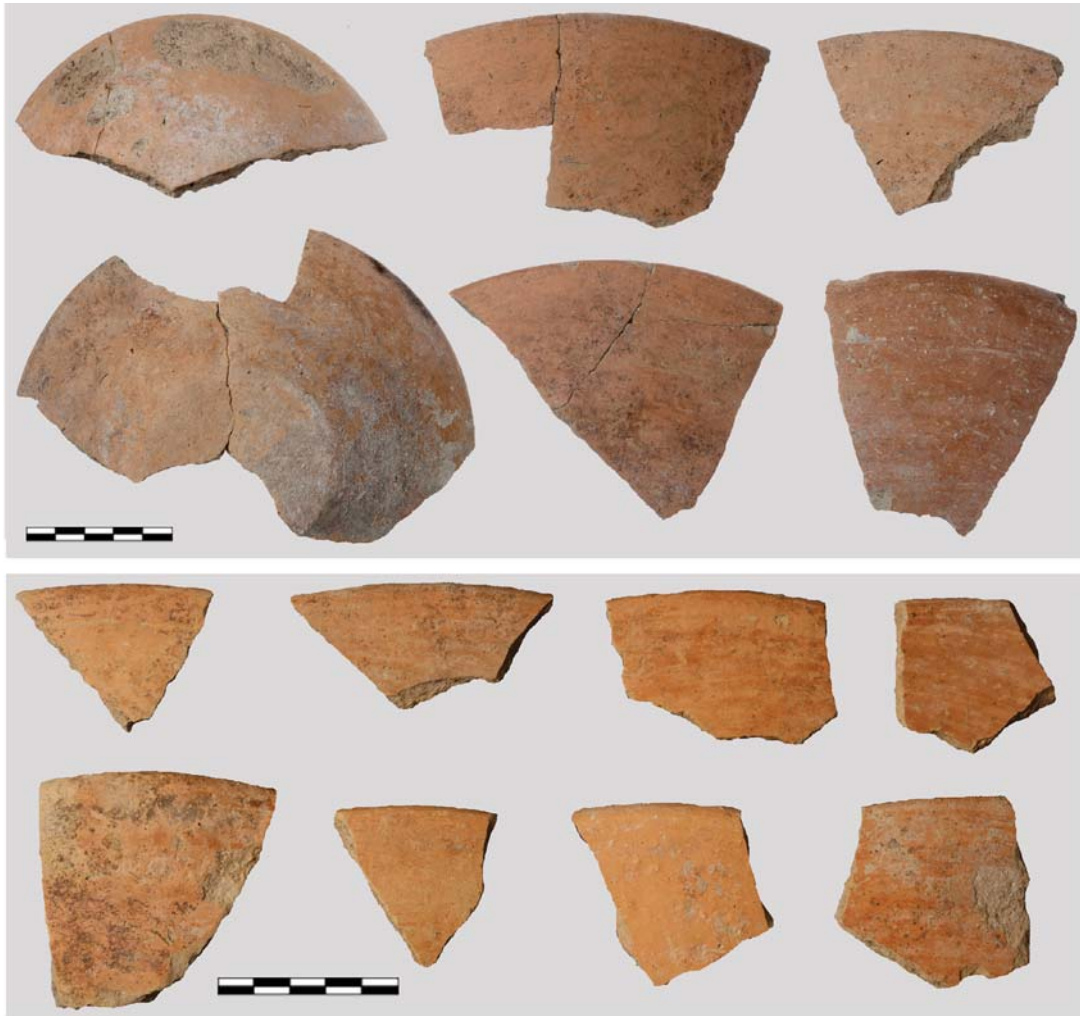


Fig. 31. Red slip ware collection from Phase IIIB.

abovementioned painted wares, the discovery of the ivory plaque in relation to this building phase certainly deserves some further comments (**Fig. 34**). Stylistic features link it to north Syrian ivories known in large numbers from Nimrud.⁶⁴ Distinctive markings on the animals' bodies and features of the central volute tree lead placing the plaque in the much discussed "Flame and Frond" group of north Syrian ivories, further illustrating the cross-culturality of the site during this period.⁶⁵

Only few observations can be raised for the following Assyrian levels of Phase IIB. The large

representative building was certainly constructed in association with the final use of the "Lions' Gate".⁶⁶ Its layout closely resembles those of the main provincial palaces broadly known from excavations conducted outside the Assyrian motherland.⁶⁷ Despite the fact that most of the bas-reliefs found in the "Lions' Gate" or its vicinity were reused as *spolia* originally coming from earlier structures, e.g. the IIIA.2 fortification wall, the royal statue buried in front of the gate is of particular interest.⁶⁸ Indeed, it heavily shows Assyrian characters in its accoutrements and

64 HERMANN 1989.

65 MANUELLI - PITTMAN 2018.

66 LIVERANI 2010: 649-654.

67 MCGINNIS *et al.* 2016.

68 OSBORNE 2014: 206-209.



Fig. 32. Grooved ware collection from Phase IIIB.

anatomic details, which leads to assume the existence of strong influences exerted by foreign styles for the creation of new visual codes.

Historical evidence

(F.D.F., L.M.)

Between the 15th and the 14th centuries BC, the high course of the Euphrates was a region in turmoil. Sources such as the so-called “Indictment of Mita” or the historical prologue of the Šattiwaza treaty (CTH 51) hint at the existence of a multitude of small to middle-rank political entities, often governed by community bodies or “Elders”.⁶⁹ They were at a perpetual state of

conflict, implying consistent displacements of people, mercenaries and deportees.⁷⁰ Within this context, Išuwa certainly represented the most strenuous competitor of Hittites’ interest in the area.⁷¹ With changing fortunes, long-term conflicts between the two kingdoms caused the alternating overcome of one over the other, until Suppiluliuma I definitely prevailed upon the tenacious neighbor around the third quarter of the 14th century BC. At that time, borderline cities on the Euphrates were finally embedded into the Hittite Kingdom. Interestingly, it is precisely at this point in time that at Arslantepe (Period IV) the material culture adheres much more strictly

⁶⁹ LIVERANI 2004.

⁷⁰ FORLANINI 2010.

⁷¹ FORLANINI 2014.



Fig. 33. Pottery collection from Phase IIA: Cypro-Phoenician (a) and Phrygian (b) wares.

to North-Central Anatolian canons.⁷² Although a Central Anatolian influence is already clearly discernible from the Old Hittite age, the site probably entered the political sphere of the Hittite kingdom from this phase only.

Arslantepe, known in the Hittite cuneiform sources as Malt/dya / Malitya,⁷³ became a strategic

fortified center on the eastern borderland.⁷⁴ Although the ancient enemy had been defeated around the middle of the 13th century BC, the new, dynamic Assyrian kings were to threaten the Euphrates frontier once again.⁷⁵ Malatya then seems to have maintained its liminal function of military outpost until the end of the Hittite supremacy in this area (Arslantepe IIIA.1).

71 MANUELLI 2012; 2013.

73 ARCHI 2004.

74 LIVERANI 2012.

75 TORRI 2005; DE MARTINO 2012.



Fig. 34. The ivory plaque from Building XLV.

With the end of the Late Bronze Age, when the former Hittite territories were balkanized into rump states, Malatya became one of the major Neo-Hittite kingdoms (Arslantepe IIIA.2-IIA). For the first time in the history of the site, a dynastic line of rulers is mentioned in local written sources (early 12th - end of 11th centuries BC). Their names and dynastic titles are attested by various display inscriptions, either carved in the orthostats reused into the “Lions’ Gate”,⁷⁶ or in rock outcrops and *stelae*, which are spread all over the country, even at a considerable distance from the capital. Thanks to these sources, at least three separate genealogies can be arranged, supposedly in sequence (Tab 2).⁷⁷

The “first” dynasty of Malatya is attested in inscriptions stemming from Arslantepe, Elbistan, and the Tohma Su basin. These early rulers claim their ancestral lineage with the Hittite Royal family, boasting to be descendants of Kuzi-Teššub, son of Talmi-Teššub, kings of Karkemiš. As Hawkins and Weeden put it: «Are we then to understand that Karkamish and Malatya formed some kind of political unit in the Early Iron Age? Or is it merely that the local kings legitimized their claims via the king of Karkamish as direct descendant of the Great Kings of Hattusa?».⁷⁸

Be that as it may, one must consider that with the sole exception of GÜRÜN, where the name Kuzi-Teššub is actually mentioned, all the remaining documents belonging to the so-called MALATYA group seem to refer to the two kingdoms as separated political entities already from the third quarter of the 12th century BC.⁷⁹

Considerations on the status of these “trans-Euphratean” city-states may also be addressed through the Assyrian perspective, as slightly later documents report. When, at the very end of the 12th century BC (ca. 1100 BC), Tiglat-Pileser I of Assyria (ca. 1114-1086 BC) encountered Ini-Teššub, “king of the land of Hatti” (commonly assumed as Karkemiš), and Allumari, the ruler of Malatya, they were clearly perceived as ruling on separate political entities.

Despite the lack of further historical evidence, it appears that during this early phase of the Iron Age, the kingdom of Melid focused on reorganization of both city and surrounding territory. The geographical distribution of the early local inscriptions in the area of Elbistan and in the upper Tohma Su basin shows that the “first” Melidean dynasty already had extended its control over the western regions, which in turn evidently had a special meaning and importance to those kings.⁸⁰ They boasted the foundation of new cities, the (re)organization of population within a renewed agricultural landscape, and the setting of new roads to connect the nodes of the regional polity.⁸¹ These extraordinary organizational efforts are evident also in the building of a new, imposing fortification system at Arslantepe in Phase IIIA.2. It seems likely that the effectiveness of this defensive arrangement, dominating the plain from the top of the mound, discouraged Tiglat-Pileser from taking the city. In fact, the Assyrian king approached Malatya in 1100 BC, but he did not siege it, limiting himself to receiving tribute from Allumari.⁸²

76 MANUELLI - MORI 2016.

77 DOĞAN-ALPARSLAN - ALPARSLAN 2013.

78 HAWKINS - WEEDEN 2016: 10.

79 GIUSFREDI 2010: 46.

80 LIVERANI 2012: 338; DI FILIPPO - MORI 2019.

81 HARMANŞAH 2011.

82 LIVERANI 2012: 338.

The local early Iron Age elite was actually able to manage and control a quite large regional territory, even beyond the Malatya plain itself. This phenomenon must be framed in the broader picture of the Syro-Anatolian cultural and political dynamics. Thanks to new data from current excavations at Arslantepe, we may now better appreciate the 1200 BC transition. As a matter of fact, the collapse of the Late Bronze Age palatial system marked a deep historical hiatus, but the process was uneven, resulting in a regional diversity marking the beginning of the Iron Age. In certain regions, such as the Amuq valley and south-eastern Anatolia, the process is probably better conceptualized as a formative phase, with an emphasis on the creation of new regional networks with cultural and commercial connections, rather than as a period of disruption and collapse.⁸³

Although the Malatya rulers of the “second” and “third” dynasties from the beginning of the 11th century through the early 10th century BC are attested on some orthostats reused into the “Lions’ Gate”, little can be said on the historical events that took place in this period. At the beginning of the 10th century BC a violent, widespread conflagration brought the settlement to an end, as promptly shown by the destruction of the fortification system M159.

From the beginning of the 10th century to the mid of the 9th century BC – that is from the estimated date of the last ruler according to local inscriptions (Mariti) up to the king of Melid (Lalli) mentioned in the Assyrian annals – no external epigraphic sources are available. Such a lack of textual evidence, following the destruction of the town wall and paired with a radical change in the occupation pattern at the site, had fostered the interpretation of Arslantepe IIIB as a phase of seasonal, ephemeral occupation (the so-called “squatters” period).⁸⁴ However, the enlargement of the

excavated area and a more in-depth analysis of the evidence lead us to reconsider such interpretation. As mentioned above, the very beginning of the Arslantepe IIIB seems to have been characterized by the construction of the monumental Building XLVI, presumably a cultic structure, with strong ties with the Levant. On the other hand, the still inexplicable demise of such an imposing structure, a set of interconnected structures for food process activities was found in the areas adjacent to the abandoned Building XLVI.

During the century and a half that followed the decay of the ancient city wall and the fall of the “first” dynasty, the kingdom of Melid seems to be anything but quiescent. Despite the lack of textual evidence, the original local reinterpretation of many features of material culture from the southern Taurus and north-eastern Anatolia entails the existence of a dynamic social organization, capable of managing new contacts, as well as of receiving and taking advantage from new influences. In other terms, we can now identify a level of organization at the site during Phase IIIB, which can no longer be ascribed to sporadic occupations as previously thought.

In this period, the Assyrian pressure was no longer present in the region. Local policies experienced their autonomy before the emergence of the Urartian expansion and the following renewed Neo-Assyrian military campaigns. In the whole Syro-Anatolian area, this phase was marked by the flourishing of the Aramaic kingdoms, to which Arslantepe, according to the new archaeological evidence, was somehow related.

It is no coincidence that, when an Assyrian army crossed the Euphrates again in the mid of the 9th century BC, Melid is reported to control one of the critical crossroads of the communication network extending south of the Taurus, the fortress of Uetaš, nearby modern Gölbaşı lake.⁸⁵

83 KNAPP - MANNING 2016.

84 LIVERANI 2012; FRANGIPANE - LIVERANI 2013: 357-359.

85 DI FILIPPO - MORI 2018: 46-47.

		Malatya	Assyria	Urartu
1200 BCE	IIIA.2	Kuzi-Teššub PUGNUS-mili (I) Runtiyas — Arnuwantis (I) PUGNUS-mili (II) = Allumari (?) Arnuwantis (II)	Tiglat-Pileser I	
1100 BCE		“Second” dynasty CRUS + RAI (= Taras?) Wasuruntiyas Halpasulupis	*Ashur-bel-kala	
1000 BCE		“Third” dynasty Suwarimi Mariti		
900 BCE	IIIB			
800 BCE	IIA	Lalli Šahu (= Sahwi?) Hilaruada Sulumal Gunzinanu	Salmanassar III Tiglat-Pileser III Sargon II	*Minua *Argišti Sarduri II
700 BCE	IIB	Tarhunazi (defeated in 712 BC) Mutallu (Muwatalli of Kummukh) Mugallu	Esarhaddon	
650 BCE			Assurbanipal	

Tab. 2. Dynastic sequence of the Melidean kings attested in the epigraphic sources showing the ascertained synchronisms with Assyria and Urartu. (*Foreign kings mentioning Malatya but not the contemporary Melidean king).

Likewise, it is precisely at the end of Arslantepe IIIB that the territory of the kingdom of Melid seems to have reached its maximum extension.⁸⁶

The epigraphic finds of the Assyrian kings in the 9th century BC provide us again with written sources mentioning Malatya under the reigns of Ashurnasirpal II (883-859 BC) and Shalmanassar III (858-824 BC). Together with

the Urartian sources, the annals of the Assyrian kings from the second half of the 9th to the end of the 8th century BC, represent the main source of information on the political history of the Neo-Hittite kingdom of Melid.⁸⁷ And it is from these sources that we can partially reconstruct a sequence of local kings, often mentioned in the process of bargaining a favorable treatment

86 DI FILIPPO - MORI 2019: 178 and Fig.3.

87 LIVERANI 2012: 338-343 and Tab. I.

with the stronger opponents (**Tab. 2**). Lalli the Melidean is among a group of kings “on the opposite bank of the Euphrates” from the Assyrian perspective, offering tribute at the site of Aššur-uter-ašbat (Pitru), on the Sājūr river, in order to avoid an attack of the Assyrian army, in the 6th campaign of Shalmanassar III (852 BC).

The reiterated campaigns of the Assyrian kings did not bring destruction in the heart of the Melidean kingdom in the 9th century BC, even if the Anatolian polities began to experience that potential threat.

But the main danger by the end of the century came from the east, with the interference and expansion of the Urartian kingdom. A first mention is under Menua (ca. 810-780 BC) who did not conquer the Malatya plain, but started a process which led the northern part of the region (the Elazig province) to fall under the Urartian political sphere of control. The Malatya plain represented the western border of the kingdom, and, although Minua’s successors, Argishti I and Sarduri II, mention it, and the last king, in particular, boasted to have reached Malatya and defeated his king Hilaruada (ca. 753 BC), the region retained a local dynasty, which probably resisted and regained full autonomy when the Urartian pressure was less tight.

This historical period corresponds to Arslantepe IIA, which is characterized by the development of a distinctive monumental architecture, marking the foundation of the fully established Neo-Hittite kingdom of Melid culminating in the “Lions’ Gate”. The Urartian military pressure, followed by the Assyrian one in the period immediately after, might have stimulated the cohesion of the kingdom, and strengthened the ruling elite against the outer treath. By the half of the 8th century BC, Urartu had to face the expansion of Assyria under Tiglat-Pileser III, and after the defeat at Kishtan, it was no longer able to threaten the Assyrian hegemony in the region. In this period, the Assyrian exploration phase came to an end, while a new era of direct control of the fringe

countries began.⁸⁸ Malatya was part of this process. The Melidean king Sulumal (maybe direct successor of Hilaruada), who had joined the coalition against Assyria, together with Sarduri II, was allowed to retain the throne by becoming tributary to Assyria for the rest of his reign.⁸⁹ Two successors are known from Sargon II’s annals: Gunzinanu, deposed by the Assyrian king after taking part in uprisings against the Assyrian control; and Tarhunazi, appointed by Sargon in place of Gunzinanu, but again guilty, according to the Assyrian version, of withholding tributes. In 712 BC the city was conquered and destroyed by the Assyrian army and this was the end of the local Melidean rulers, even if the town somehow survived and probably entered in the sphere of influence of Tabal. As a matter of fact, Assyrian sources dated to king Esarhaddon mention a campaign against the Melidean king Mugallu, maybe the same ruler attested again under the reign of Ashurbanipal as king of Tabal.⁹⁰

PART 4. FINAL REMARKS AND FUTURE PERSPECTIVES

(M.F., F.B.R.)

A few concluding remarks

The long and detailed sequence of the Iron Age building and rebuilding levels brought to light so far at Arslantepe in recent years, despite the still relatively limited size of the areas excavated since the resumption of researches in 2007, has made it possible to reconstruct the fundamental continuity in the historical development of the site, even through the fractures and disruptive events that caused substantial changes and political upheavals in the neighbouring Near

88 LIVERANI 2017: 91-93.

89 BRYCE 2012: 108.

90 GIUSFREDI 2010: 63; BRYCE 2012: 293.

Eastern civilisations between the late 2nd and early 1st millennium BC.

An interesting persistence of Central Anatolian traditions has been found in the transitional phases IIIA.1 and IIIA.2, dated to the final centuries of the 2nd millennium BC (ca. 1250-1000), while at the same time new connections with the Middle Euphrates valley and the Levantine region appeared in the material culture. The bas-reliefs found near the fortification wall M159 also point to this mixture of cultural traditions, with persistent elements linked to the previous Central Anatolian connections and new features of southern origin.⁹¹

In the following IIIB phase, the Central Anatolian-related cultural traits were still present, and mostly relate to certain organisational aspects linked to the economic management sphere, such as the storage system using an assemblage of large silos located close to the town wall. But relations with the southern regions appear to have further strengthened, as indicated both by ceramic productions such as the red slip ware, that spread widely in the Levant and inner Syria,⁹² and by some architectural features recognisable in the probably cultic Building XLVI.⁹³ The site seems to increasingly orient towards the south / south-east in its external relations, gradually easing its strong links with Central Anatolia.

The increasing independence of Arslantepe from the Central Anatolian influence probably also had to do with the further enlargement of its interregional relations, also accompanied by the resumption of the old traditional links with North-East Anatolia and the Southern Caucasus, as suggested by the significantly increase in the amount of the so-called grooved ware (typical of those regions) at the very end of Phase IIIB.⁹⁴

Neither did the substantial continuity of the material culture break down when, in Phase IIA, a significant change occurred in the planimetric arrangement of the citadel, with a new organisation of differently oriented buildings and the construction of the monumental “Pillared Hall” close to the town gate. The previous links with the south and south-east were still alive in ceramic productions, made even more evident by the presence of the beautiful carved ivory plaque referred to the so-called “Flame and Frond” northern Syrian style.⁹⁵ And the connections with the north-east were also confirmed. But the appearance of a new class of painted pottery once again shows the progressive widening of the site’s relations, this time back to Central Anatolia, with the Phrygian world. This is consistent with the renewed and enhanced dominant role of Arslantepe as the capital of an important autonomous kingdom in a region that constituted a geographical, political and cultural border between great civilisations and state/imperial systems that, precisely in the northern Euphrates area, had met and clashed for millennia.

The excavations have therefore already made it possible to recognise a long preparatory phase for the construction of the new Neo-Hittite kingdom of Melid, in which, despite the crises and profound changes in most of the regions affected by the imperial expansions in the 2nd millennium BC, the developments on the site were characterised by a substantial continuity that never broke completely, albeit with the progressive modification and expansion of external relations. However, there are interesting moments of change and ups and downs that must be the subject of further investigations.

91 See above; MANUELLI - Mori 2016; MANUELLI - PITTMAN 2018.

92 FRANGIPANE *et al* 2019; MANUELLI 2019.

93 See MORI above.

94 See MANUELLI above.

95 MANUELLI - PITTMAN 2018.

Future Perspectives

After sixty years of uninterrupted excavations at Arslantepe, a great deal still remains to be uncovered and understood. This is particularly true of the Late Bronze and Iron Age levels, where investigations had been interrupted for several years. The possibility of analysing the stratigraphic sequence in detail and of extensively exposing the synchronic levels belonging to these crucial periods in the history of the site provides a unique tool for an in-depth understanding of the nature of those occupations and the relations between Melid and the rest of the surrounding world (Hittites, Assyrians, Urartians, Aramaic kingdoms). Several times in these past sixty years we have seen how continued and extensive excavations have sometimes led to a reconsideration of previous interpretations and have opened up new perspectives regarding the site's socio-political features and identity, and also to re-thinking its role in the regional and international arena.

This is particularly true in the case of the Iron Age Arslantepe Phase IIIB, whose levels, that have been more extensively investigated in recent campaigns, now suggest a less temporary and flimsy occupation than previously thought. This phase constitutes one of the above mentioned possible crucial moments of change that needs to be further explored.

Our first objective in future investigations is therefore to expand overall the excavated areas on the north-eastern zone of the mound to investigate the Iron Age and final Late Bronze levels, by enlarging the operations towards the inner citadel, where the topography of the mound

suggests that these levels are best preserved. In the mid-term we will also consider expanding the investigation to the more southern and southeastern areas of the mound that could provide a true perception of the actual dimensions and characteristics of the final Late Bronze Age and Iron Age fortified citadels. Continuing the research into the core of the settlement will offer a better understanding of the crucial transition from the period of the Hittite Empire influence on the region to what we assume to have been the consolidation of increasingly independent local authorities after the empire's collapse. It is in these phases that we can find the roots of the kingdom of Melid and its main features.

In the same areas, we also plan to investigate the settlement layout in the Late Bronze Age, during the Hittite Empire period, more thoroughly exploring the nature of the cultural and political relations that the site and its leaders established with the Central Anatolian State, as well as the connections they had maintained or built up with other neighbouring or distant regions.

While we will carry out research on the fortified area of the Hittite citadel, work will also be conducted at the base of the mound, where the possible lower town is as yet completely unknown. Following a preliminary electromagnetic survey of the plain surrounding the site carried out in 2020, we plan to perform geomagnetic prospections in the places that have appeared to be most promising. This may pave the way for a whole new programme of research in a lower town, which may yield fundamental information on the nature of possible late "urban" developments in this previously non-urbanised region.

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