



Digging in the Archives

From the History of Oriental Studies
to the History of Ideas

Edited by
Silvia Alaura

EDIZIONI QUASAR
ROMA 2020

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XI

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Introduction

This volume is a collection of essays written primarily by scholars who participated in the one-day conference entitled “Scavi d’archivio: dalla storia dell’orientalistica alla storia delle idee”, held at the Consiglio Nazionale delle Ricerche (CNR), Rome, on 5 November 2013. The main reason for organizing this meeting was the launch of the project named “Gruppo di Ricerca Interdisciplinare di Storia degli Studi Orientali” (GRISSO) – Group for Interdisciplinary Research on the History of Oriental Studies. It was conceived as a research group aiming to analyse the history of archaeological, philological and historical studies of the Ancient Near East and their reception in contemporary and modern society by establishing cross-cultural academic dialogue and international cooperation.

The GRISSO project was hosted by the CNR in what was then the Istituto di Studi sul Mediterraneo Antico (ISMA) (Silvia Alaura, Marco Bonechi, Diego Baldi) and was conceived in collaboration with the University of Rome ‘La Sapienza’ (Davide Nadali, Maria Gabriella Micale) and involving other Italian and foreign universities and institutions such as the Accademia Nazionale dei Lincei – Fondazione Caetani, Rome (Mario Liverani, Valentina Sagaria Rossi), the University of Turin (Stefano de Martino), the University of Florence (Marina Pucci), Ca’ Foscari University of Venice (Stefania Ermidoro), Freie Universität Berlin (Jörg Klinger), Albert-Ludwigs-Universität Freiburg (Lars Petersen) and CNRS – École normale supérieure – EPHE, PSL Université Paris (Annick Fenet). Since then, the project has developed and expanded. Due to the process of reorganization of the Department of Social Sciences and Humanities, Cultural Heritage, CNR, which eventually culminated in the discontinuation of ISMA, since 2019 the GRISSO project has been hosted by the newly founded Istituto di Scienze del Patrimonio Culturale (ISPC).

The Rome conference in 2013 was not limited to the presentation of the new project to the scientific community. The participants engaged in a day of intense discussion. This rich and dynamic experience prompted us to join forces to create a book that would expand the themes of our papers, mainly focusing on the core question of the meaning and potential of archive materials for the history of Oriental Studies. So, shortly afterwards, I invited participants in the conference, together with other colleagues, to contribute to a collective book, which has not therefore been designed as a traditional volume of conference proceedings but rather as a set of scholarly essays that tackle this question through a wide range of case studies from different branches of Oriental Studies. The lively discussions that occurred during and after the conference have helped to enrich the conceptual landscape of this volume, whether or not participants contributed written articles. The final product consists of eighteen chapters organized into three parts, devoted to the following topics: the practice of archaeology with a focus on excavations and institutions; the making of philologies from the early phase to the beginning of specialization; and the integration of Oriental Studies into society. The contributions are deliberately varied and eclectic in terms of their content, style and languages.

I do not intend to discuss the individual chapters in detail here, but I would like to briefly explain the common understanding that forms the basis of the theme and title of this volume. In our shared view, anyone who wants to attempt a history of the discipline today must first of all tackle the archival materials, understood in a broad and inclusive sense encompassing various types of document: not only public records but also documents that are private in nature, whether they be texts (letters, diaries, poetry, interviews, recordings, etc.) or images (drawings, photographs, film, etc.), in addition to publications

that had a limited print run, or that have become rare or difficult to find as a result of past vicissitudes, and so on. The history of Oriental Studies should be written with the archive as its starting point. As a counterbalance to abstract theoretical constructs, the archive offers the weight of events that, though they may be small, cannot be ignored. Indeed, it is not unusual for archival documents to yield information that has not been reflected in the published literature. When we dig around in the archives, facts come to light that are unknown to us, unexpected, sometimes problematic, perhaps contradictory. At other times we may fail to find what we are looking for in the archives, but absence, too, can point to a problem worth investigating. The archive may not offer the truth, but it does produce the necessary elements on which one can base a truthful historical reconstruction. Moreover, through archival documentation, publications can be subjected to critical evaluation.

The archive offers us many resources, but we need take the trouble to seek them out. And usually this is no simple undertaking. It is physically draining, not least because archival materials are often very extensive and difficult to get to grips with. Although nowadays there are IT tools available both for research and for accessing documents in digital format, it continues to be the case that discoveries in the archive often happen fortuitously and the materials must be manually processed. On the other hand, fortunately there is an ever greater awareness of the immense value of a cultural heritage that must be safeguarded, catalogued, organized, promoted, made accessible. The latest challenge lies in the use of new technologies, which involves an intelligent management of work processes.

The history of Oriental Studies is not an exercise in erudition for its own sake: in so far as it is research that is concerned with the birth and development, the systemization and conceptualization of Oriental Studies, it can also be conceived as a history of ideas, at the point where the histories of science, technology and politics intersect. And here, too, a transdisciplinary approach proves to be fruitful. This explains “From the history of Oriental Studies to the history of Ideas”, which is the second part of the title of this volume, which is not dedicated to the history of ideas but which conceives it prospectively as an ultimate destination. Indeed, the materials brought together here represent a first step towards establishing a sort of *syntopicon* of Oriental Studies. And we hope that within the international scientific community this volume might generate further interest in this field of studies and foster discussion of the topics dealt with in it.

The preparation and editing of *Documenta Asiana XI* has taken a long time. Many of the contributions were completed and submitted some years ago. Various factors have contributed to the delay in publication, including personal commitments, the above-mentioned process of reorganization of the CNR institutes and, last but not least, the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic. I therefore apologize for any instances where the bibliography has not been updated, an omission for which the authors themselves are not responsible.

This book is the product of many people’s efforts, and I would like to thank them all. I wish to express my deepest gratitude to Paola Santoro (Director of ISMA in 2013), who has encouraged this project and generously contributed to its realization. My thanks also go to Costanza Miliani, Director of ISPC, for her support. Furthermore, I wish to thank most warmly the members of GRISSO and the other contributors to this volume for agreeing to take part in this initiative with energy and enthusiasm. In addition to the authors, my most sincere thanks go to the many archivists and librarians who have made this volume possible with their painstaking work. A number of colleagues generously agreed to act as anonymous peer reviewers for the various chapters, and their wise suggestions for improvements and additions have been invaluable.

Finally, both the GRISSO project in general and the present volume in particular have greatly benefited from the advice and enthusiastic support of Mario Liverani. During our long and fruitful conversations, he contributed a great deal to my desire to start this project and to see this volume through to publication.

Rome, December 2020

Silvia Alaura

Scavi d'archivio: dalla storia dell'orientalistica alla storia delle idee

Presentazione del Progetto GRISSO

'Gruppo di Ricerca Interdisciplinare di Storia degli Studi Orientali'

5 novembre 2013

Consiglio Nazionale delle Ricerche (CNR), Piazzale Aldo Moro 7, Roma

9,30 – 10,00 *Saluti istituzionali*

Riccardo Pozzo, Direttore del Dipartimento Scienze Umane e Sociali, Patrimonio Culturale – CNR

Paola Santoro, Direttore dell'Istituto di Studi sul Mediterraneo Antico (ISMA), CNR

10,00 – 10,20 *Presentazione del Progetto GRISSO*

Silvia Alaura, ISMA, CNR

10,20 – 11,00 *Sessione I*

Jörg Klinger, Freie Universität Berlin, Institut für Altorientalistik: *Frühe Kontroversen um die Stellung der Hethiter und des Hethitischen*

Marco Bonechi, ISMA, CNR: *Alle origini dell'assiriologia italiana: ricerche d'archivio su Bruto Teloni*

11,30 – 12,45 *Sessione II*

Stefano de Martino, Università di Torino; Centro Scavi di Torino: *L'archivio del Centro Ricerche Archeologiche e Scavi di Torino per il Medio Oriente e l'Asia: progetti e prospettive*

Marina Pucci, Università degli Studi di Firenze; Freie Universität Berlin: *Gli scavi di Carl Humann presso la porta sud della città di Sam'al: la perdita del contesto archeologico degli ortostati decorati*

Davide Nadali – Maria Gabriella Micale, Sapienza, Università di Roma: *L'archeologia delle immagini. Dallo scavo all'archivio*

12,45 – 13,00 *Conclusioni*

Mario Liverani, Sapienza, Università di Roma; Accademia Nazionale dei Lincei

Excavating Zincirli's Archives. The Discovery of the Southern City Gate

Marina Pucci

Since the dawn of archaeological research in the Near East, there has been a tendency to continue excavating new sites in order to generate new information and address specific questions. Each archaeological mission produced an enormous amount of data, archaeological records and objects, which were stored in museums, universities or private archives, and in several cases left neglected.¹ In recent times the relevance of these archives has been reconsidered, not only in view of the history of research, but mainly considering that neither was all available information published, nor were the data now considered crucial thought to be relevant at the time of the excavations or of the first publications.

This contribution deals mainly with the beginning of the excavation at Zincirli (ancient Sam'al, in southeastern Turkey) and with the selection and rejection of information in the course of proceeding from excavations to publication. It shows how the process of selecting data according to specific research focuses entailed progressive loss of information, which can be compensated only by careful archival work. The main aim of this paper is, on the one hand, to provide the "lost" information concerning one specific structure at the site, and on the other to use this as a case study in support of working on long dormant excavations' archives, showing why archaeological projects on previously excavated sites should never neglect to study the archives of the previous excavations.²

The Zincirli archives

The archives of the German excavations at Zincirli are located at the *Vorderasiatisches Museum* in Berlin and consist of artifacts (small finds and pottery) and documents (letters, part of field journals, lists of objects, photos), which are preserved in large folders.³ The museum obtained pottery fragments, as well as all other artefacts, both in the depot and in the exhibit either as a result of an acquisition agreement with the *Orient-Comité*, or as a gift from the *Orient-Comité*.⁴ The written records consist mainly of documents concerning Zincirli that which were kept in the *Orient-Comité* archive (ArOC), including financial, scientific and

¹ Only in recent times, large archives such as Assur's Archive at the *Vorderasiatisches Museum* have been considered for new research projects; in addition, the start of new excavation projects in previously excavated sites has led archaeologists to deal with the archives of the former excavations (e.g. Karkemish, Tell Tayinat, Tell Halaf).

² Accordingly, I thank Prof. David Schloen who encouraged me to carry out this research at the *Vorderasiatisches Museum*. I thank also Dr. Ralf-Bernhard Wartke, who put at my disposal not only the objects and small finds but also the documents of the *Orient-Comité*. Thanks are also due to Dr. Amir Fink who scanned all these documents and gave me a copy.

³ When I looked at this material (together with Amir Fink in 2009) the documents were not inventoried, they were only ordered chronologically, therefore it is not possible to provide inventory numbers. Instead I describe the type of document, the date and, in the case of letters, the sender and the addressee.

⁴ CRÜSEMANN 1998.

personal documents; they were probably given to the *Vorderasiatisches Museum* together with the *Orient-Comité* archive after its closure.⁵

The research activity on this material that has been conducted during the years 2009-2011 was financially supported by the Shelby White and Leon Levy Foundation and focused mainly on the still unpublished pottery inventories and on their original archaeological contexts. The aim of this project was to provide a comprehensive publication of the materials found during the excavations and reconsider the stratigraphy in the light of the analysis of the artefacts.⁶ The written records have been studied and analyzed in order to contextualize the archaeological material kept in the museum and consequently better understand stratigraphy and functional spaces.⁷ The analysis of these written records however allowed also several interesting observations concerning the context of the first excavations, the relationships between the members of the archaeological team and the scientific aims of the archaeological project.

The end of the 19th century and the beginnings of the excavations at Zincirli

By the end of the 19th century, French and English excavations in Mesopotamia, several travels to Anatolia, Syria and Mesopotamia, together with the decipherment of cuneiform had already provided plenty of data on pre-classical cultures in the Near East, especially the Assyrian and Babylonian cultures.⁸ Moreover the opening in the late 1840s of Assyrian and Babylonian collections at both the Louvre in Paris and the British Museum in London excited the European public's curiosity about cultures that until then were known mainly from Biblical records.⁹ For Germany, when it became a unified country in 1871 and could start cultural politics, it became compulsory to dig in the Orient and create a national collection of Oriental antiquities, following in the footsteps of French and English researchers, who had been active for thirty years in the Near East.

As a matter of fact only seven years after the birth of Germany, the first German excavation in the Ottoman Empire opened at the site of Pergamon (modern Turkey) and several surveys took place both in northern Syria (e.g. Commagene expedition in 1883) and in southern Iraq (e.g. Koldewey expedition to Surghul and el Hibba in 1887).¹⁰

Archaeologists and their sponsors had several scientific goals for these excavations, the main one being to provide Berlin with enough materials to open a Near Eastern collection, as had already happened in Paris and London, so that the capital of the young Germany could be at the same level as the other two main European nations. In 1887 both Adolf Erman, professor of Egyptology and director of the Egyptian collection in Berlin, and his friend and colleague Eduard Meyer¹¹ published 1887 articles suggesting the necessity of new Prussian excavations in the Near East and the need of a new Assyrian-Babylonian collection.¹²

⁵ CRÜSEMANN 1998; WARTKE 2005, p. 43.

⁶ The final publication of the artefacts and pottery is currently in preparation.

⁷ This archival research was conducted while I was also actively working on the field in the area near the southern gate of the lower town and therefore I also used the documents at my disposal in order to better understand the archaeological context and the problems which we were facing during the excavation.

⁸ BERNHARDSSON 2005, pp. 19-57.

⁹ BEYER 1989; LANG 2008; OATES 2008.

¹⁰ HUMANN – PUCHSTEIN 1890; KOLDEWEY 1887.

¹¹ For their relationship and their role in the birth of German field research in the Near East see GERTZEN 2013, pp. 301-305; MATTHES 1996 and MATTHES 2008.

¹² Erman wrote in his 1886 letter to Meyer: "Preußen muss graben, damit wir nicht wieder einmal das Nachsehen haben" (KLOFT 2006, p. 298). Meyer published in his 1887 article in the *Deutsche Rundschau* an endorsement to obtain financial support: "Ist es nicht eine Ehrenpflicht, an der Herbeischaffung des neuen Materials sich mit zu beteiligen und dahin zu wirken, dass der reichen Sammlung ägyptischer Alterthümer eine babylonisch-assyrische Abtheilung des Museums ebenbürtig zur Seite tritt? [...]" (MATTHES 2008, p. 230).

The factors that led to the discovery of the site of Zincirli during the Commagene expedition, namely the discovery of the carved orthostats of the citadel gate (*Burgtor*) on that same year and the creation of a financing entity in the form of the *Orient-Comité* have been investigated and discussed by several scholars so that there is no need to discuss them again here.¹³ In addition to those factors, several elements in effect compelled the German academic world to choose Zincirli as the first pre-classical site at which to carry out German archaeological excavations: the presence of carved orthostats and consequently important buildings at the site of Zincirli was certain¹⁴ and the nearby site of Sakçagözü seemed to feature “Assyrian” works of art, similar to those found in Mesopotamia. Furthermore, Osman Hamdi Bey, director of the Ottoman Imperial Museums, strongly encouraged German archaeologists to pursue excavations at Zincirli offering an advantageous agreement on the division of finds. In contrast to the favorable conditions in Anatolia, German presence in Mesopotamia was in its initial stages. Competition with French and English scholars, who had been digging in northern and southern Mesopotamia for many years, slowed down a German start in that area. For all these reasons when the time was mature and the *Orient-Comité* was founded, the site of Zincirli¹⁵ was considered to be the best choice.

Carl Humann, Otto Puchstein and Felix von Luschan were the three scholars who had visited the site during the Commagene expedition in 1883, who strongly encouraged the beginning of archaeological excavations in this area and who would play an active part during the excavations of the site. They had already emphasized in letters and reports that the material culture identified at the site of Zincirli had to be considered different from that known from southern Mesopotamia i.e. it had to be Hittite and could therefore provide interesting new information on this culture.

The most famous artefacts known in Europe at the time belonged to the Assyrian and Babylonian cultural spheres, while the Hittite culture was only known from few sites identified and visited by travelers who crossed Anatolia during the 19th century, who recorded and illustrated mainly the reliefs found at sites such as Yazılıkaya (Charles Texier travelling in 1834 and reporting in 1864) or Alaça Höyük (Georges Perrot travelling in 1854 and reporting in 1887).¹⁶ As yet there were no large scale excavations on Hittite sites (the excavations of Boğazköy would begin in 1906),¹⁷ nor translations of Hittite texts (the Hittite language would be deciphered in 1915), so that there was no basis of knowledge for formulating research questions on the Hittite culture. As Puchstein affirms in his letter to Alexander Conze in May 1883, “die Hittiter wachsen wie Pilze aus dem Boden” and in Zincirli, which they went to visit, “sind mehrere Reliefs in situ gefunden worden, andere sehen nur mit der Spitze aus der Erde hervor”, so that “eine Ausgrabung könnte wohl lohnend werden”.¹⁸ Yet the Assyrianizing carved reliefs at the nearby site of Sakçagözü were considered artistically more valuable – “höhere Kunstwertes” in a 1888 letter to von Luschan¹⁹ – and consequently this second site was in Puchstein’s opinion to be preferred for an excavation: he followed an aesthetic

¹³ WARTKE 2005 and WARTKE 2009; PUCCI 2008; CRÜSEMANN 2001; DÖRNER – DÖRNER 1989; ALAURA 2007.

¹⁴ Osman Hamdi Bey had already exposed part of the citadel gate orthostats when Felix von Luschan and Otto Puchstein visited the site during their Commagene expedition (WARTKE 2005, pp. 8-9).

¹⁵ Officially the expedition was named “Zincirli and Sakçagözü” (WARTKE 2009, pp. 309-310). German archaeologists investigated several neighboring sites but left the site of Sakçagözü untouched. von Luschan in a letter dated to May 8, 1888 states that they (Puchstein and himself) were in Sakçagözü in 1884 to buy the lion hunt relief. Probably the dig permit of Sakçagözü was kept in German hands until in 1907 it was given to John Garstang as a compensation for the Boğazköy permit (ALAURA 2006, pp. 86-89). Garstang visited and investigated the site in 1907-1908 (GARSTANG 1908).

¹⁶ TEXIER 1862; PERROT – CHIPIEZ 1887.

¹⁷ ALAURA 2006, with references. The first excavations at Alaça Höyük carried out by Perrot in 1853 were short. Large-scale excavations at this site would start only in 1908 under the direction of Theodor Macridi Bey (MACRIDIS 1908).

¹⁸ ALAURA 2007, pp. 17 and 18.

¹⁹ ALAURA 2007, p. 18.

ranking, which was at the time influenced by the discoveries in Mesopotamia; the naturalistic way of rendering the figures on the Assyrian or Assyrianizing orthostats, their technical quality, preservation and richness fed the sense of wonder and fulfilled their aesthetic standards.²⁰

Humann's experience as director of the excavations in Pergamon, his long-term residence in Turkey, and his role as "auswärtiger Direktor der Berliner Museen" made him the best candidate for director of the excavations. He organized the beginning of the excavations while residing in Smyrna, obtained on March 28th, 1888 the dig permit and left Smyrna for Alexandretta together with a small group of Greek workers who had excavated at Pergamon before. When this small team headed towards Zincirli in 1888, its participants, and specifically Humann had mainly one goal: "möglichst viele Fundstücke von dort (Zincirli) zu erwerben und den königlichen Museen zu übergeben".²¹

von Luschan attended the second meeting of the *Orient-Comité* in 1888,²² and presented the site and the plans for excavation. By that time, von Luschan had taken part in several expeditions in the Ottoman Empire as a doctor and photographer, without having a direct connection to specific research questions; his participation in the *Orient-Comité* and the consequent decision to finance the excavations at Zincirli enabled him to become the excavation organizer from the Berlin side: he collected the equipment and planned the camp necessary for a long excavation campaign.

Little is known about his scientific aims at the beginning of the excavations. In the final report of the first campaign's excavations addressed by von Luschan to the *Orient-Comité*, he affirms that at the beginning he thought to be able to dig both the sites of Zincirli and Sakçagözü but that Zincirli was much larger than he expected.²³ He arrived in Smyrna on March 15th, 1888 and from there left for Alexandretta with a mason and a servant; there he organized the financial and practical arrangements for the camp in order to be ready for departure at Humann's arrival.

The first campaign and the discovery of the southern gate of the lower town

On April 3rd 1888 Humann landed in Alexandretta, fulfilled his "official" duties (meeting the local representatives, i.e., the Kaymakam), and two days later the wagon train was ready for departure. The trip to Zincirli via Islahiye took three days and Humann in his report gives plenty of information on the geographic features of the area as well as its population. The village of Islahiye is described as consisting of five tents in a swampy landscape: the village was seasonal and nobody inhabited it during the summer, because it was unhealthy. When they arrived on April 8th, Hasan Bey, a Circassian man representing the Kaymakam helped them in the first arrangements, to be carried out on site as they settled down directly on the top of the mound. The mound was without vegetation, the reliefs of the citadel gate that had been exposed by Hamdi Bey in 1883 were not visible anymore; to the west, several Kurds lived in huts with their flocks near a spring; to the north a large swamp covered the area up to the Taurus mountains and extended Southeast/East towards the Kurt Dağ for miles and miles.²⁴

Excavations officially started on April 9th, 1888 seven meters to the south of the citadel gate, in order to continue Hamdi Bey's excavations. From this area they would continue to the north in the area between the citadel gate and the *Quermauerthor*. Although the

²⁰ MICALE 2010; MALLEY 2012.

²¹ Humann's *Feldtagebuch*, 2.04.1888.

²² WARTKE 2009, p. 310.

²³ "Bericht von Herrn F. von Luschan dem Vorstand des *Orient-Comité* überreicht (sic), 12. Oktober 1888".

²⁴ The area of the swamp, which covered almost half of the lower town, was also marked on Robert Koldey's topographic plan drafted two years later and published in VON LUSCHAN 1902, Taf. XXIX.

discovery of an inscribed Assyrian stele in the room of the citadel gate led archaeologists to expect exciting results, the excavations to the north of the citadel gate were quite disappointing: the area was full of ashes without large buildings or monumental finds, therefore two large trenches (*Quergraben* and *Größe Schnitt*)²⁵ were planned in order to investigate the northeastern and the eastern part of the mound. The main aim was to discover representative buildings, which had to be there considering the richness of the gates.

During this first month activity, while Humann was directing the excavations, von Luschan was acting as photographer and accompanied Dr. Franz Winter in several one day trips to neighboring sites as Nikopolis, or to the close cemetery at Tahtalı Pınar, where fragments of a large inscribed statue were found²⁶ and he was consequently not directly involved in the excavations.²⁷

On April 24th Humann decided to dig a well in the lower town in order to gather fresh water for the excavations, and on this occasion he discovered the town wall:

Dabei finde ich wieder, wie schon früher im Nordosten eine Art alten Pflasters. Das war also hier keine Straße, sondern, wie sich beim Begehen zeigt, zog sich eine Mauer auf etwa 200 Schritt Abstand, rings um den Hügel. Dieselbe muß natürlich gegenüber den Propyläen ein Thor gehabt haben. Ich stelle hier 8 Mann um danach zu Graben.²⁸

The fortuitous discovery of the lower town fortification compelled Humann to open a new excavation area in the south in order to better understand the defensive system and urban organization. The next day, the small team excavating at the southern gate of the lower town brought to light a "colossal" lion's head. On May 1st the foundations of the gate were already visible and Humann described in detail the archaeological context: while excavating the eastern side of the gate, they found six carved orthostats collapsed on their faces and fragments of the body likely belonging to the lion's head that was found the previous days; during a week of excavations the workers brought to light part of the lower town's internal gate, eight carved orthostats altogether and the fragments of apparently two lion shaped doorjambs. Humann drew two sketches showing the original location of the orthostats and described the carved figures. The water level in the southern gate of the lower town at that time was approximately 80 cm under the top soil, so that the water reached the knee of the workers excavating the gate, who were pulling the carved blocks out of the marsh. The limits of the entrance chamber were visible as Humann's sketch clearly shows, and most important data concerning the discovery of the orthostats were reported in the *Feldtagebuch* from May 1st to May 19th.²⁹

The following excerpts report the data concerning the southern gate that were recorded in the *Feldtagebuch*:

1.05.88 An dem Thor in der Umfassungsmauer sind die Mauerfundamente zu Tage getreten und zwar die östliche Einfassung des Thores, das mit dem Thore am Fuße des Hügels eine gewisse Analogie hat, nämlich so: in A fanden 4 Reliefböcke, die vor der Mauer auf dem Gesichte liegen, in B standen 2, die ebenso aus das Gesicht gestürzt, aus den ersten liegen. [...] Vom den kolossalen Löwen ist der Leib sehr zerschlagen. Der (nebenbei zersprungene) Restblock muß umgedreht werden, worauf man vielleicht von den Löwen eine Zeichnung machen kann.³⁰

²⁵ Humann in VON LUSCHAN (Hrsg.) 1898, Taf. IX.

²⁶ WARTKE 2009, p. 310; VON LUSCHAN (Hrsg.) 1893, p. 48 and Taf. VIII.

²⁷ von Luschan describes the area of this Islamic cemetery as being amidst the swamp (von Luschan letter May 9th 1888) near a spring, see VON LUSCHAN (Hrsg.) 1893, p. 48.

²⁸ This description, quoted from Humann's *Feldtagebuch* only slightly differs from that published in the report ("Bericht über die erste Ausgrabung von Sindjirli 1888", in VON LUSCHAN (Hrsg.), 1898 p. 94), where he links the visit to the cemetery (located to the east) with the discovery of what he thought was a street and then interpreted as the top of the wall (see also DÖRNER – DÖRNER 1989, p. 292).

²⁹ Humann's *Feldtagebuch*, pp. 9-18.

³⁰ The drawing was probably never done.

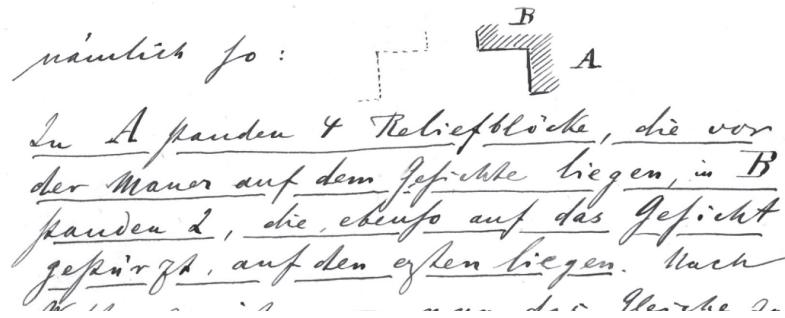


Fig. 1 – Humann’s sketch of the entrance chamber of the internal southern gate of the lower town with provisional location of the orthostats (letter May 3rd 1888), also published in VON LUSCHAN (Hrsg.) 1898, p. 94.

3.05.88 10 Mann sind am Thor in der Umfassungsmauer beschäftigt. Zwei Reliefs wurden dort gehoben

1. Mann mit Adlerkopf, Flügeln und erhobenen Händen
2. Bogenschütze, hintern ihm ein erlegter Hase“ (Fig. 1).

5.05.88 Am Thore in der Umfassungsmauer wird ein dritter Stein gehoben, einen Hirsch mit daraufsitzen dem Hunde vorstellend, also von der Jäger der Ostseite. Hieran schließt sich ein Stein mit zwei übereinanderstehenden Sphinxen. Alles liegt in Sumpfe.

7.05.88 Das Thor der Umfassungsmauer wird ziemlich ganz klar gelegt, die Reliefs der Ostseite sind alle 6 vorhanden, auf der Westseite sieht man nur zwei, nach vorn gestürzte, vielleicht liegen die andere darunter in Sümpfe. Wo der Löwe gestanden hat läßt sich nicht mehr ermitteln.

In dem Außenthor zeigt Relief n.3 (siehe d. 3 Mai) einen Hirsch, auf den ein Hund springt. N.4 zeigt zwei übereinanderstehende Sphinxen.

12.05.88³¹ Am Außenthor ist auf der Ostseite N.5 und N.6 gehoben; einen Reiter vorstellend in der einen Hand ein kurze Dolche, in der andere eine abgeschlagene Kopf; das anderen zeigt einen Hirsch und darunter einen Löwen.

Auf der Westseite sind 2 Reliefs aus dem Sumpf gezogen [...] Diese beiden Reliefs stellen vor: aus eine geflügelten Vogelköpfigen Mann, das andere, etwas abgebrochene, zwei gegenüber stehende menschliche Gestalten. Die Abmeißelung wurde fortgesetzt.

Thus the orthostats were located all in the first entrance chamber, the two bird-headed and winged figures (A4 and A2 in Fig. 2) flanked the entrance symmetrically; to the east a series of scenes (hunt A7 and A8 in Fig. 2, passing fantastic animals A5 in Fig. 2, rider with severed head A3 in Fig. 2, passing wild animals A9 in Fig. 2) decorated the side of the entering niche; probably a seventh orthostats was located on the corner of the eastern tower, while the façades of the towers were plain. On the western side a block with two persons facing each other (A6 in Fig. 2) was located to the west of the bird headed daemon (A4 in Fig. 2) and no further orthostats were recovered.

On May 14th the workers started trimming the carved blocks, chiseling off their back sides in order to reduce their weight for shipping to Istanbul and Berlin.³² This work was

³¹ It is not clear who was writing the *Feldtagebuch*, however we can state that it was neither Humann nor von Luschan: it was not Humann because when he was no longer on the dig the handwriting remains the same, and it was not von Luschan because the *Feldtagebuch* starts during the period when von Luschan was not present. Moreover, von Luschan’s handwriting known from the letters he signed is very different from that of the *Feldtagebuch*. Thus it seems likely that a secretary was writing down what first Humann and later von Luschan dictated. Moreover, from May 9th to May 22th somebody else was writing the *Feldtagebuch*, because this section is in completely different handwriting.

³² This procedure was considered common in the area. The reduced weight not only made their transportation easier and cheaper but lowered the price per block that had to be paid for export of the pieces that were sup-

Excavating Zincirli's Archives



Fig. 2 – Zincirli, Plan of the Southern Town Gate based on Koldewey's drawing and on current excavations (square area). The upper row shows the sequence of the orthostats (drawing: Marina Pucci).



Fig. 3 – View of the mound from the southern gate of the lower town; the carved block reduced to a slab is visible leaning against the wall of the gate. Photograph taken at the end of the first season. The sketch published in VON LUSCHAN (Hrsg.) 1893, p. 1, Abb. 1, was based on this photograph.

carried out directly on the spot where they were found and where Winter a week later sketched the reliefs on the blocks. By the end of the month the eight blocks were ready to be shipped. We have no photographs of this area while it was excavated, probably because in the first two weeks of May von Luschan, who was the official photographer, was taking trips to neighboring sites every day and he did not visit this excavation area in the lower town at all. The first available photograph depicts the mound of Zincirli from the southern gate and the orthostat with stag (A8 in Fig. 2 and Fig. 3), already reduced to a slab, lies in foreground, so that it was probably taken in the period between the end of the excavations in this area and the transport of the slabs on June 13th.³³ Excavations on the southern gate of the lower town stopped because the marsh hindered any attempt to identify the foundations of the gate³⁴ or remains of the town wall.

On June 9th Humann left Zincirli for Constantinople with Hamdi Bey in order to take care of the negotiations for the division of finds, especially of the carved blocks from the mound and from the southern gate, which were the first to leave the excavations. All carved blocks from the citadel gate that had been found by Hamdi Bey were left in Constantinople, as were six of the eight orthostats from the southern gate of the lower town, while the other two were brought to Berlin together with the remaining 32 from the citadel gate.³⁵

posed to be brought to Berlin. Humann in person had already applied this practice of weight reduction in 1883 when he bought the hunt scene from Sakçagözü (HUMANN – PUCHSTEIN 1890, pp. 164-165).

³³ In his letters to Richard von Kaufmann and to a geologist, dated May 9, 1888 and May 10, von Luschan only mentions Humann's discovery of the town wall and of the gates with the carved reliefs. Moreover, according to a letter to von Kaufmann dated June 19 the division of all carved blocks which were packed and sent to Alexandria followed new negotiations between Humann (who was in Mersin) and Hamdi Bey.

³⁴ Humann in VON LUSCHAN (Hrsg.) 1898, p. 94.

³⁵ In a letter to von Kaufmann dated June 19, 1890 (*Vorderasiatisches Museum*, OIC) von Luschan affirms that in the negotiations for the division of the orthostats it would be better to include at least two blocks from the southern gate of the lower town (he suggests to take the one with the severed head) and the so called "moabitische Statue", meaning the statue of Panamuwa II, king of Sam'al, found in the cemetery. As a matter of fact, two blocks from the southern gate of the lower town were brought to Berlin, the one with the rider carrying a severed head and a second one with a winged genius. See also HROUDA – NAGEL – STROMMINGER 2009, pp. 9-12.

Poor health conditions and the fever which worsened Humann's chronic lung disease prevented him from returning to the excavations,³⁶ so that only von Luschan and Winter remained on the field. Since Humann's departure von Luschan acted as deputy director and he resumed the writing of the *Feldtagebuch*: the number of workers from mid-June onwards dropped due to illness and harvest time, so he decided to concentrate all efforts on the mound.

For the following six weeks of work all energy and manpower were focused on the *großes Schnitt* and on the health problems that affected all people working on the excavations, so that von Luschan reported more on the health conditions than on the excavations results. Humann returned to the excavations in July, two weeks before departure (on July 23) in order to take care of the transportation and bureaucracy for the division of the finds.

Reports of the excavations were constantly mailed to Richard von Kaufmann, chairman of the *Orient-Comité*, however they maintained some discretion until the objects arrived in Berlin.

Once the team was back in Berlin (or Smyrna) it became evident that more research needed to be carried out on the site. The archaeologists considered the campaign a success especially in the view of the research on the Hittites: Humann states "wir hatten den gesuchten hittitischen Bau gefunden und nicht einmal unter der Oberfläche; man könnte mit Mut in eine neue Kampagne treten" and Puchstein in a letter to von Luschan dated June 13, 1888 emphasizes how the discovery of the Esarhaddon stela had helped in better defining the dating of those "häßliche" reliefs and consequently in dating the Hittite monumental art.³⁷

Once the difficult first campaign was over the research focus was better defined: the material culture which seemed to prevail in Zincirli was related to a culture (Hittite) different from the better known Neo-Assyrian ones, as expected; however, this culture still was very rich in structures and iconography; therefore it was necessary to investigate the site more fully and gather more data to understand the Hittite culture in detail.³⁸

The years 1890-1898 and 1902: from digging to publication

The following campaign, which based on von Luschan's suggestions took place during the winter and started in January 1890, aimed at an extensive excavation of the acropolis. The team was completely changed: Humann yielded the directorship to von Luschan and left the project; Julius Euting, philologist and illustrator, replaced Winter in the team; Robert Koldewey, who could not pursue his interests in Mesopotamia, replaced Humann as a *Bauforscher* and surveyor.

It was not possible to find a field journal from this period, we may suppose that there was one from Puchstein's quotation of it, but von Luschan was eager to remark a difference with his predecessor also in the way he was documenting the excavations.³⁹

Better weather conditions and especially the dry conditions of the plain during the winter allowed Koldewey to dig and analyze the town wall and the other two gates which were neither identified nor excavated during the first campaign. Excavations at the town wall started immediately in January, while a 70 m long trench was dug from the town wall to the mound wall in order to investigate the lower town.⁴⁰ A month later, both concentric

³⁶ DÖRNER – DÖRNER 1989, p. 282.

³⁷ ALAURA 2007, p. 20.

³⁸ PUCHSTEIN 1890 emphasizes especially the specificity of the iconography and buildings found in this area and their relationship to the Anatolian archaeological evidence.

³⁹ von Luschan in VON LUSCHAN (Hrsg.) 1898, p. 87.

⁴⁰ The location of this trench is marked on the general plan of the town.

town walls were brought to light as well as the complete layout of the other two gates, so that on March 1st von Luschan was able to sketch the layout of the lower town with the three gates in a letter to the chairman of the *Orient-Comité*. Euting, who was part of the team as an illustrator and philologist, reports in his notebook⁴¹ from February 19th to March 12th that he had overseen the works at the southern gate, where “Dort stimmen die sonst üblichen Maße gar nicht, & die Steine scheinen ganz verworfen”.⁴²

As a matter of fact, the southern part of the southern gate was not very well preserved, however its particular layout with double gate structures and protruding towers (Fig. 2), which was different from the other gates, allowed von Luschan (letter dated March 16, 1890) to affirm that it was worth the whole effort. From mid-April onwards the excavations at the southern gate were closed and efforts were focused on the acropolis, where some orthostats (in the area of Hilani III) were coming to light. Excavations in the lower town were then considered finished for this campaign and were not reopened in the following seasons due to the necessity of excavating the acropolis, where so many and more promising buildings were brought to light. Thus the southern gate was investigated in 1888 for three weeks and together with the whole lower enceinte in 1890 for two months.

Publications were planned according to subjects, so that the first volume included mainly an introduction and the inscriptions, which were considered particularly important for dating the archaeological remains.⁴³ The second volume, which included the architectural remains brought to light also during the first campaign, was published two years after Humann’s death and included Humann’s report of the first campaign, which was found in his *Nachlass* and was published by von Luschan.⁴⁴ In this report Humann describes in three lines the discovery of the southern gate and shows a small sketch of the entrance illustrating the approximate archaeological context of the carved blocks.⁴⁵ In the same volume Koldewey described the architectural features of the gate, drafted the plan and its installations emphasizing the military features of the whole layout and presented in detail the plain blocks found collapsed on their faces (Fig. 4) on the eastern tower of the internal gate of the lower town and the fragments of the lion jamb, which were also left on site. The area where the carved blocks were found two years earlier is clearly visible in the plan:⁴⁶ cuts visible in the pebble filling of the entrance chamber attest both the digging activity, which in this area was carried out in a swamp (preventing archaeologists from seeing where they were excavating), and the subsequent removal of the carved blocks. Koldewey stated that the carved orthostats were found in the entrance chamber of the gate (implying that at the time there was still a memory of their original location),⁴⁷ however he was interested in the architectural features and did not include them in its publication; they were published only 12 years after their discovery in a separate volume by von Luschan himself.⁴⁸

von Luschan published the carved slabs of the southern gate using drawings that Winter had drafted on the dig, and photographing the only two blocks which had been brought to the *Vorderasiatisches Museum*.⁴⁹ Thus he had only these two objects at his dispos-

⁴¹ Euting’s notebooks on his stay in Zincirli and on his two trips from Zincirli to north Syria are available online (<http://www.inka.uni-tuebingen.de/cgi-bin/msst?si=md676>). They were transcribed by the *Hans Euting Gesellschaft* and made available also on cd. I thank here Dr. Lars Petersen, who brought this notebook to my attention and Dr. Hanswulf Bloedhorn and Hans Winter, who transcribed these notebooks and digitized all illustrations.

⁴² Euting’s notebook on 19 February 1890 (<http://idb.ub.uni-tuebingen.de/diglit/Md676-8>).

⁴³ VON LUSCHAN (Hrsg.) 1893.

⁴⁴ von Luschan in VON LUSCHAN (Hrsg.) 1898, p. 87.

⁴⁵ Humann in VON LUSCHAN (Hrsg.) 1898, p. 94.

⁴⁶ Koldewey VON LUSCHAN 1898 (Hrsg.), Taf. X.

⁴⁷ Koldewey in VON LUSCHAN (Hrsg.) 1898, p. 113.

⁴⁸ VON LUSCHAN 1902.

⁴⁹ VON LUSCHAN 1902, Taf. XXXV and XXXVI.



Fig. 4 – The eastern tower of the internal southern town gate with plain collapsed orthostats along the wall. Photograph taken during the second excavation campaign (1890) (VON LUSCHAN, Hrsg., 1898, p. 113, Abb. 24).

al in the museum, while the other six were in Constantinople and he could not have known the details of the excavation, because he was not on the field at the time the southern gate was investigated. Moreover, evidently he did not use Humann's *Feldtagebuch*, which was in the *Orient-Comité* archives, nor did he speak to Koldewey, because he affirmed that the original number and the original location of these orthostats could not be reconstructed ("Wie viele ursprünglich waren und in welche Reihenfolge lässt sich nicht mehr ermitteln").⁵⁰ Consequently, he presented and described the slabs in a random sequence according to their iconographic themes and referring to them as belonging in general to the internal southern gate; at this moment the original information was lost. Although both Humann and Koldewey, in their reports published in 1898, stated that the orthostats were located in the entrance chamber of the gate, this information was completely neglected by von Luschan first and by all other scholars afterwards, being in a different volume than the publication of the orthostats themselves. von Luschan obviously could not remember the archaeological context of their retrieval because, first, he was absent during those weeks in 1888, second, he was not even present during the excavations of the complete gate, as the area was assigned to Koldewey and Euting, and third, he considered the discovery of the gate as Humann's.⁵¹

Moreover, because in the period before the First World War the "esthetic value" of the iconography was the only important feature, and the artefacts were considered important as single objects and not in their original context, the rough and "primitive" appearance of these carved blocks made them not particularly interesting and consequently not worth further research.

In the following years, after the last campaign in 1911, the focus of research shifted towards the acropolis and the new structures brought to light in the northwestern area of the mound: the long series of sculptures found on the external walls of Hilani III and the

⁵⁰ VON LUSCHAN 1902, p. 204.

⁵¹ The relationship between Humann and von Luschan during the 1888 campaign might not have been smooth considering some critical notes added by von Luschan during the period in which he was acting as deputy director and on what Puchstein affirms in his letter to von Luschan in 1890: "Über Humann urteilen Sie etwas zu hart" (ALAURO 2007, p. 27).

large number of small finds brought to light in the buildings J and K, gained the scholarly attention of von Luschan and Walter Andrae, who, as director of the *Vorderasiatisches Museum* in Berlin, completed the work when von Luschan died (1924) and published the fifth volume on the small finds.⁵² This publication referred mainly to von Luschan's catalogue of the small finds and intended to insert in the general reassessment of the small finds all von Luschan's notes on the objects. Interestingly not even one single sherd was brought to the museum nor collected from the southern gate area: probably due to the water level, to the need to expose a large area, and to the conditions of preservation of the site, which was neither burnt down, nor rebuilt, archaeologists decided not to collect small finds and pottery, or else, if they were collected, no traces were left in the documents at our disposal.⁵³

The reliefs of the southern gate after the publication

The two slabs in the Pergamon Museum were embedded in the wall together with those of the citadel gate, while the six other ones were fixed to a socle in the exhibit of the Archaeological Museum in Istanbul.

On the site of Zincirli, in the years from 1890, when excavations in the lower town were closed, and 1908, when the last campaign took place, probably the eight large plain blocks that Koldewey illustrated collapsed on their faces in 1890,⁵⁴ were left on the field together with one lion's head,⁵⁵ which Koldewey also sketched in the plan. This lion's head (Fig. 5) was collected together with other pieces left on site by the French army, given as a present to the Louvre by Colonel Norman in 1922⁵⁶ and it is currently on display at the Louvre. This head is the only piece left from the two lion shaped doorjambs described by Humann in his *Feldtagebuch*. The other pieces, although described, were never illustrated and they may have been reemployed in modern buildings.

The area was probably seasonally flooded by the swamp until recent times, when the valley was drained and the lower town was no longer underwater during summer. In the 1960s and 1970s this part of the southern gate was used to gather building materials (as also Helmuth Theodor Bossert in 1958 already states for the houses on the acropolis):⁵⁷ the structure was located immediately under the surface and the large square plain blocks were perfect to be reemployed in new constructions.

Current excavation team carried out fieldwork in the southern gate (Area 4) in 2012 and 2013 with the aim of cleaning the eastern part of the internal gate in order to connect Koldewey's drawing with the archaeological evidence at the site. In addition, we decided to investigate in depth part of the street adjoining the gate and part of the small structures that were found just to the north of the gate itself. Although no definitive dating elements were found, excavations brought to light several building phases and major changes concerning the construction, reuse and repairs of the southern gate, as well as possibly more ancient structures.

Just in the area where Koldewey drafted the plain blocks, during a cleaning we found in 2012 one large squared stone (Fig. 6) whose visible sides were very similar to the back sides of the plain blocks illustrated by Koldewey. Once it was lifted, it became clear that the part that was probably to be considered as its face, had been chiseled off probably to recover building

⁵² VON LUSCHAN – ANDRAE 1943 and also ANDRAE 1943.

⁵³ The small finds registers (years 1890, 1894) which were continuously kept since 1888 in the dig and which are currently available among the documents at the *Vorderasiatisches Museum* (*Sendschirli Verzeichnis der Kleinfunde*) do not include any small finds from the lower town, which suggests that none was collected.

⁵⁴ Koldewey in VON LUSCHAN (Hrsg.) 1898, Taf. X.

⁵⁵ VON LUSCHAN (Hrsg.) 1902, Abb. 93.

⁵⁶ BOSSERT 1960, p. 104 and Tab. XXIV, Abb. 2.

⁵⁷ BOSSERT 1958, p. 399.



Fig. 5 – Head of a lion, probably belonging to the doorjamb, found on the floor. Photograph taken during the second excavation's campaign (1890) (VON LUSCHAN 1902, Abb. 93).



Fig. 6 – One of blocks still found in the southern gate area. 2012 excavation's campaign (photograph: Marina Pucci).

material⁵⁸, while all other dimensions fit with the ones provided by Koldewey.⁵⁹ The dimensions of the faces of the plain blocks (provided by Koldewey) are very similar to those of the carved blocks, so it seems likely that also their thickness (preserved in our block for 80 cm) was similar to that of the plain blocks. This suggests that all blocks, carved and plain, in the upper foundations of the structure were squared with pointed backs (as is the case for example for the carved and plain blocks from the citadel gate) and were a structural part of the gate itself.

⁵⁸ Some recent iron tools and a coin dating to the 1970s were found in the pit dug into the threshold.

⁵⁹ It seems unlikely that the block found represents the back side of the carved ones, because the way it is cut would indicate that the detached surface got broken.

Dating the orthostats

During the 20th century and especially with the publication of the carved orthostats from Hilani III, it became evident that several different carving styles were available at Zincirli, and that these styles were possibly related to different periods of production; the rougher ones were ascribed to older periods and the more naturalistic ones to later phases. Resemblance to Assyrian art was considered an important criterion in assigning the styles to a period before or after the Assyrian conquest of the town.⁶⁰

General studies on Hittites and Anatolia started to treat the so-called late Hittite small states (*Hethitische Kleinfürstentümer*) and their iconographic production in greater detail (in the period before the First World War, Karkemish, Tell Halaf, Sakçagözü, Tell Tayinat and Zincirli were already excavated). In 1914 Meyer mentioned these orthostats from the southern gate of the lower town together with several from Tell Halaf as the best examples of the beginning of art in the Hittite world.⁶¹ Anton Moortgat published four of the six slabs from the southern gate discussing the archaic style in comparison to the remaining iconographic production at the site.⁶² Bossert in his catalogue of finds from Anatolia ascribed the iconographic production at Zincirli to the Hittite cultural sphere, dating the carved orthostats found at the site according to their style and to level of Assyrianization;⁶³ interestingly those from the southern gate of the lower town were not even taken into consideration, nor illustrated,⁶⁴ while he used the different styles excavated at Zincirli to date also other pieces found near the gate itself.⁶⁵ In his later publication on Ancient Syria he also included several orthostats from Zincirli, but again none from the southern gate ascribing to the iconographic production at Zincirli a liminal role between the two (Hittite and Assyria) geographical areas.⁶⁶

With his definitive book on late Hittite art Winfried Orthmann (1971) produced a reference for all the Syro-Hittite carved slabs and statues found until that time, including, when known, the archaeological context: in his catalog the carved block from the southern gate were all listed, described, photographed and inventoried. He noted as their general findspot the southern gate of the lower town, but marked as unknown their original location, following von Luschan's description in their first publication. However, he published all photos of the slabs and was able to analyze them in the museums. When Orthmann described the stylistic groups of iconography at the site,⁶⁷ he grouped all carved blocks (A2-9) from the southern gate and the ninth one (K/4), found reemployed as building material, in the most ancient group at the site: archaic features, absence of modelling, a certain rigidity in the figures, the absence of linear divisional elements, or of detailed rendering of some features were peculiar to this first group of carvings. These observations, which had become conventional in the scholarly literature during the time since the blocks were excavated, led Orthmann to date them to Iron Age I.⁶⁸

At this point the archaic style of the eight carved blocks became their crucial feature and was discussed in all subsequent studies on early Iron Age iconography: all scholars dealing with Syro-Hittite iconography seem to agree on their early dating ranging from the

⁶⁰ The discovery of the Assyrian stela of Esarhaddon in the first year of Humann's excavations established a link between both cultural spheres, the Assyrian one being already well known from finds in Sakçagözü.

⁶¹ MEYER 1914, pp. 58-61.

⁶² MOORTGAT 1932, Taf. 13, 33, 37.1, 37.2.

⁶³ BOSSERT 1942, nn. 889-955.

⁶⁴ He described the lower town and its fortification in a general introduction to the site (BOSSERT 1942, p. 75). Also Margarete Riemschneider who published one of the carved blocks from the southern gate, avoided indicating the archaeological context (RIEMSCHEIDER 1954, Taf. 87).

⁶⁵ BOSSERT 1958: the sphinx and the head fragment, Tab. LVI and LVII 5 and 6.

⁶⁶ BOSSERT 1951, pp. 488, 501, 886f., 978.

⁶⁷ ORTHMANN 1971, pp. 60-61.

⁶⁸ ORTHMANN 1971, p. 462.

10th to the beginning of the 9th century and consequently dating the first reoccupation of the site and the construction of the town wall to this period.⁶⁹

However, their lost archaeological context prevented a proper reconstruction of the spatial organization at the southern gate and led other scholars to suggest possible reconstructions of their original position.⁷⁰ Their uncertain original location and the absence of diagnostic small finds and pottery dating to the Iron Age I in the lower town, also led archaeologists to suggest that these carved blocks were possibly reemployed in the southern gate as the *Kleinorthostaten* from Tell Halaf were reemployed in the Kapara palace, separating the moment of construction of the structure from the period of production of the carvings, which could also be reemployed from different sites. This observation made unnecessary to date the foundation of the lower town of Zincirli in Iron Age I.

Thanks to the retrieval of the original documentation and consequently of the original location of the orthostats, it has been possible to confront this research question in a different way, comparing the southern gate with the only other decorated gate of the town, i.e. the citadel gate and trying to gather information to address, but not definitely solve, this research question.

Comparing the way the figures were arranged in the entrance chamber of the gate, it seems evident that the space organization behind the iconographic assessment of the southern gate of the lower town and of the citadel gate responded to identical criteria: these criteria used the entrance as an axis symmetrical to which the figures were disposed; also the double figures flanking the lion-shaped doorjambs followed a scheme which was employed in the citadel gate and articulated the iconographic discourse by adding single separated scenes with recurring themes in similar positions, such as the hunt scene in the corner, the fantastic animals marching, riders parading, wild animals marching and possibly rulers interacting are all iconographic themes, which are rooted in some cases in the Anatolian Hittite tradition and in others in the north Syrian one, but which however are defined and modelled during the first period of the Iron Age.⁷¹

The similarity of the two gates' spatial organization and general aspect seems to suggest that they were part of a planned iconographic program, which gained standardization and better definition with the decoration of the citadel gate. This observation then implies, that, if the stylistic dating of these slabs is correct, the construction of the southern gate would probably belong to the same period as the production of the carvings and consequently would set the lower town enceinte as one of the first constructions of the settlement, reopening the question of the foundation period of Sam'al and of the uses of the lower town. If an archive may contribute to reopen a research question, only focused field research can and will provide definitive results.

⁶⁹ MAZZONI 2000, tab. 2; PUCCI 2008, pp. 78-80.

⁷⁰ GILBERT 2011, Abb. 14f.

⁷¹ For a detailed analysis of the iconographic apparel, its connection to the citadel gate and to the Hittite iconographic tradition see PUCCI 2015.

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