

-THE KEBEN HITTITE ROCK RELIEF FROM SİLİFKE- *

O. AYTUĞ TAŞYÜREK

The existence of a rock relief in the İçel district some 20 km. North of Silifke county and about 2 km. East of the Silifke-Mut road was reported by M. Belen, the director of the Silifke Museum 1, in February 1975. The above mentioned locality was visited and explored with the help of Y. Karalar, who is an assistant at the Adana Museum, and C. Weatherford (M. A) from Maryland University. According to information obtained from the villagers of Keben, the route previous to the modern road passed by the relief, and this route is still in existence today.

The relief is located on the steeply sloping rocky area which is about 1 km. North of the modern Keben village and overlooks the Göksu valley (Pl. 1). Its approximate measurements are 100 x 150 cm. in a niche 10 cm. deep (Pl. 2). Since the relief stands about 4 m. above the ground level it has survived to the present day in a fairly good condition (Pl. 3) 2.

The relief is 140 cm. in length and it probably depicts a female figure who is shown walking to the right with her hands stretched forward (Pl. 4). The head of the figure is covered; she wears a cape on her back with a long dress underneath. The eyes of the figure, which are shown

from the front, are large and almond shaped. Probably her hands and the ends of the headgear were broken by stones thrown at her from down below. The nose is large and we are not certain whether she is holding something in her hands or not, but it is probable that she is holding a branch of a tree. The plain clothes of the figure would mean she is depicted in a religious ceremonial outfit 3. The facial details are not very clear.

It is observed that, as at Keben, other rock reliefs of the Hittite period in Cilicia and the neighbouring areas usually tend to be located near water or along the streams. Sirkeli 4, Gezbeli 5, Karasu 6, Ef-latun pınar 7 and İvriz 8 can be given as the most important examples. Bearing in mind that these reliefs date to the Hittite Empire (1450-1200 B.C.) and Late Hittite (1200-700 B.C.) periods, the Keben relief can be dated to this period with certainty. However, it is quite difficult to determine to which period of these approximately 700 years between 1400-700 B.C. the monument belongs. Unfortunately the face of the Keben relief does not give enough clues for a stylistic analysis. Nevertheless in view of the historical evidence which places Cilicia under Hittite domination in the empire period, as of

• I would like to thank Mr. Turhan Kamil, for the translation of this article into English.

¹ Thanks are due to M. Belen, the director of the Silifke Museum, for informing us of the existence of this rock relief which had been located by some of our colleagues but has not been published.

² The position of the relief high above the ground level makes exact measuring difficult.

³ See, E. Akurgal, *The Hittites*, 1963 (Pi. 114.).

⁴ *Ibid.* p. 15 pi. XX.

⁵ U. B. Alkım, *Anatolia I (Archaeology Mundi)*, 1968. Pi. 112-3.

⁶ C. A. Burney, G. R. J. Lawson, *AS. VII* (1958). Pi. XXXIV; b.

⁷ E. Akurgal, "The Hittites", p. 12 Pi. XXI.

⁸ *Ibid.* p. 141, Pi. XXIV.

the finds from Tarsus excavations⁹ and the rock reliefs of Sirkeli¹⁰, Gezbeli¹¹, and Hemite¹² it would not be too wrong to date the Keben relief to the Hittite Empire period. In the absence of Aramaic influence the figure's prominent and large nose, shown as a continuation of the forehead, admit this opinion (Pi. 5)¹³.

Surface survey in the vicinity of the relief has revealed no Hittite settlement in the area. Only on the slopes leading into the Göksu valley and about 300 m. away from the relief, several characteristic rockcut tombs of the Roman period and some surface pottery sherds of the Roman period were found.

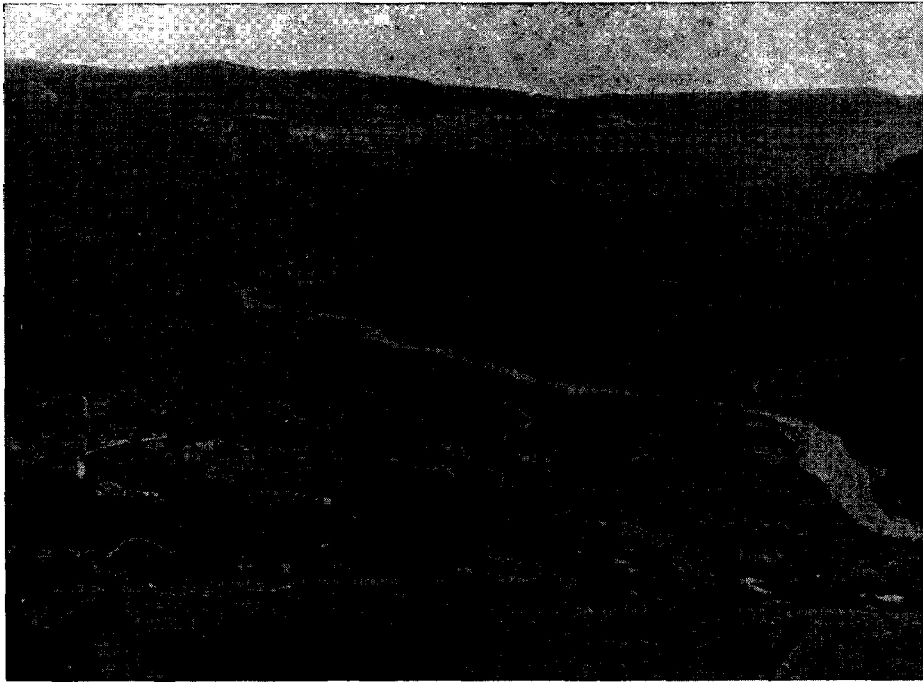
⁹ H. Goldman, "Excavations at Gözlükule", Tarsus. *Il; Text*, 1956, p. 242 ff. Pi. *il*, Fig. 401-8, 456.

¹⁰ See, note 4.

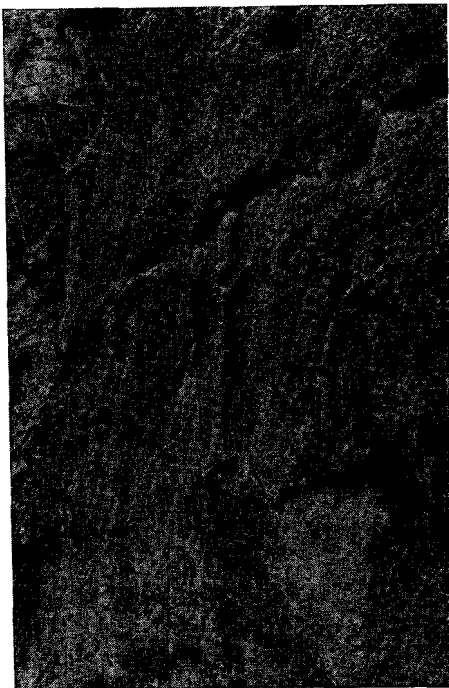
¹¹ See, note 5.

¹² This rock relief is situated by the Kadirli - Osmaniye road along the Ceyhan River and near Hemite village. See, U. B. Alkım. "Anatolia I", p. 220.

¹³ See, E. Akurgal, *The Hittites*, pi. 65.



1

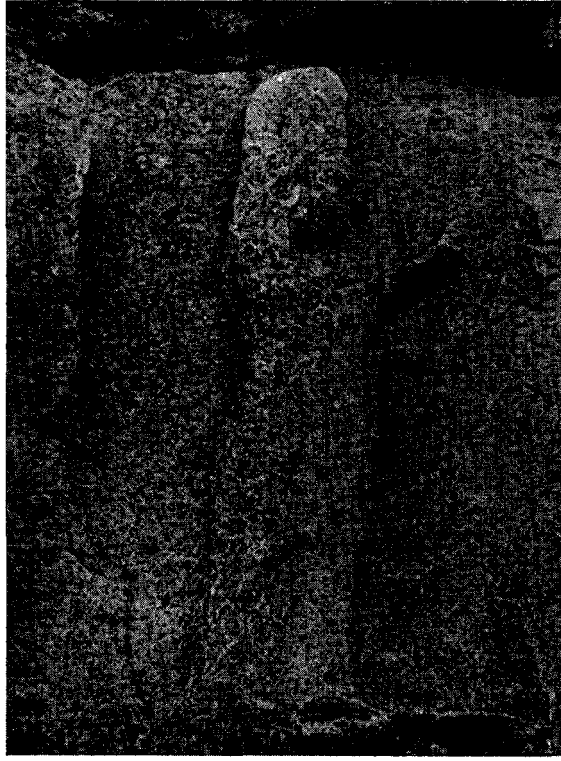


2

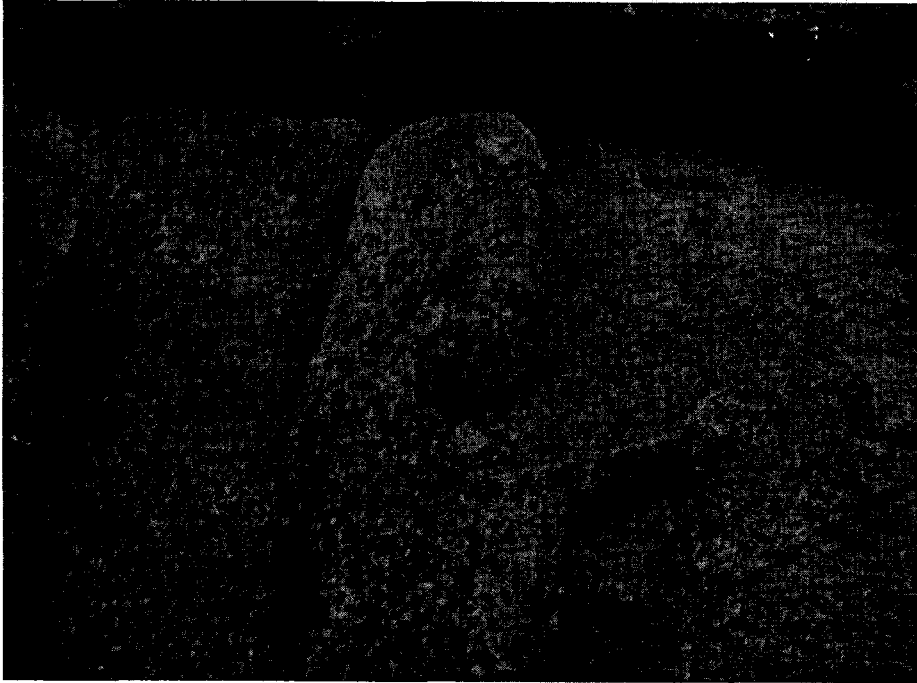


3

0



4



5

5