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Near Birecik**

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URARTIAN RELIEFS AT ADILCEVAZ, ON LAKE VAN, AND A ROCK RELIEF FROM THE KARASU, NEAR BIRECIK

By C. A. BURNEY AND G. R. J. LAWSON

A. RELIEF FRAGMENTS FROM ADILCEVAZ CASTLE

(Figs. 1 and 2, and Pl. XXXIII)

THE MEDIEVAL CASTLE at Adilceviz, on the north shore of Lake Van, incorporated in its walls fragments of a relief sculpture carved in basalt. Six such fragments have now been recovered.¹ Two Urartian inscribed blocks, also of basalt, which have for some years stood outside the primary school,² had also, no doubt, been used in the wall of the mediaeval castle.

The fragments of sculpture belong to a relief representing a god or king standing on a bull, facing left towards two triple spearheads, placed one above the other. Five of the fragments belong to this figure, but the sixth shows that there was another figure, looking towards the first and likewise facing a triple spearhead. Behind the right-hand figure stands a single triple spearhead, rather taller and more slender than those in the middle, and perhaps fixed on some solid base, only part of which remains. The god or king wears an elaborately decorated garment, probably woven of wool: the pattern, perhaps in gold brocade, is repetitive, with a wide border, edged with a fringe and a band of "herring-bone" pattern. The second figure wears a garment ornamented with the same pattern, but worn differently: the outer cloak or robe falls straight down, showing the kilt over the forward leg. The bull seems to wear a rug on its back, with two large tassels; the lines down the shoulder probably represent five straps.

The restoration of the missing fragments of the right-hand figure is based on several factors. The triple spearheads can be restored with fair certainty and, together with the lines of the body, make it possible to align the four fragments correctly. The topmost fragment and the third one from the top preserve the original right-hand edge of the relief. A photograph of a portion, since lost, of the second fragment gives the line of the shoulder. A single rosette beneath the fringe that runs across the top of the thigh proves that this was not bare. The arrangement of the robe between the legs, where the inner side is displayed, is not—as shown in the restored figure—strictly naturalistic; but one fragment (Pl. XXXIII*b*) shows the leg bare well above the ankle, in such a way as to make it most improbable that the outer robe was represented as returning round the leg. The restoration of a kilt, coming just down to the knee, is based partly on

¹ The recognition of the lowermost block (now in the Van museum) of the main figure is due to the perspicacity of P. Hulin. I am indebted to him for the use of his photographs of three of the blocks.

² F. W. König: *Handbuch der Chaldischen Inschriften* I (Graz, 1955), texts 128 and Inc. I.

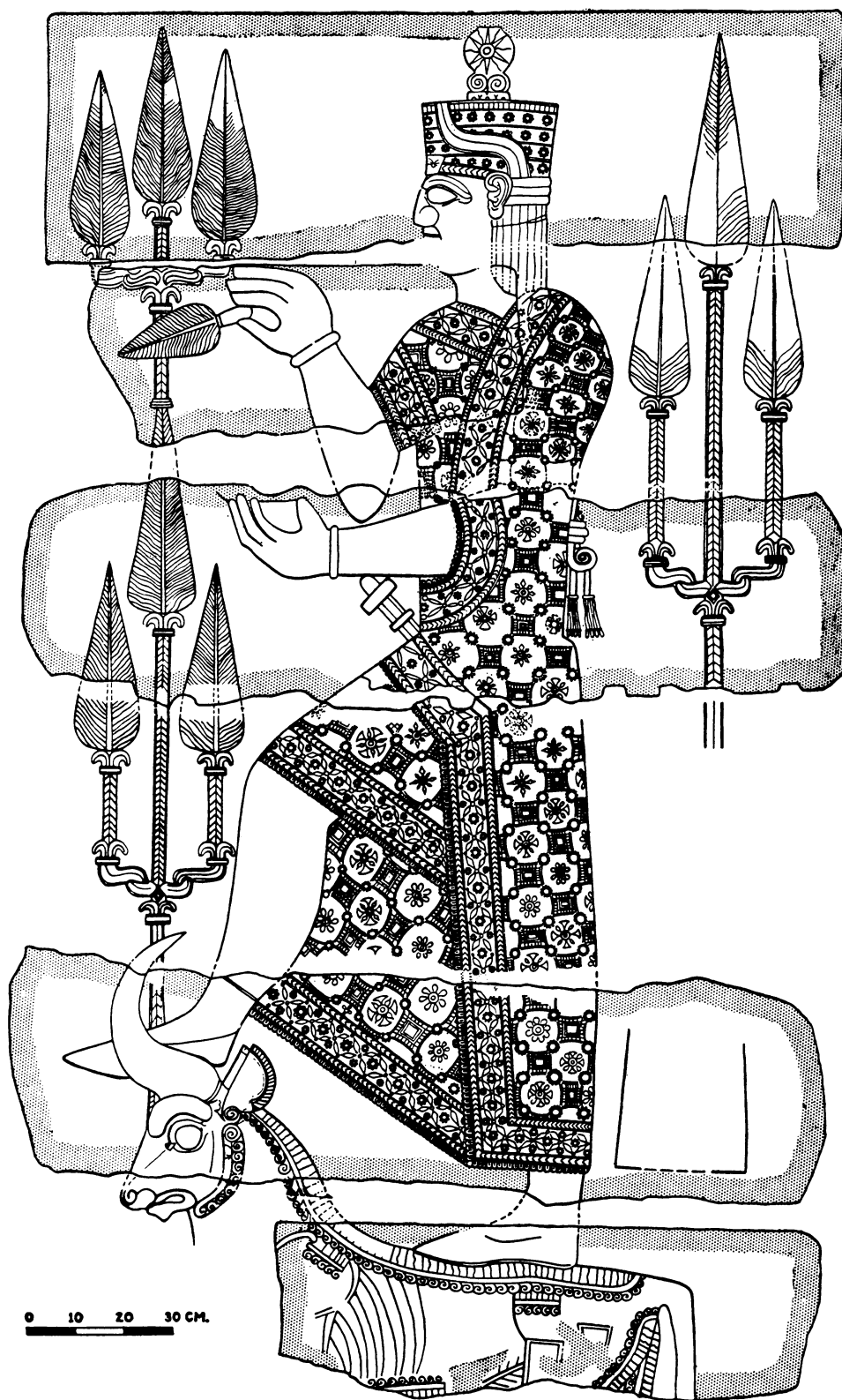


FIG. 2. Urartian relief from Adilcevaz castle.

of the scene apparent. Parallels for figures standing on animals are widespread, both in Anatolia⁴ and in Assyria, particularly at Malatya,⁵ and everywhere it is a god that is so represented. Here the attitude of the figure makes it possibly a king (Rusas II?), though much more probably a god. The fir-cone has innumerable parallels in Assyrian art, and is the most outstandingly Assyrian feature of this relief: its precise significance remains obscure. The tassel on the back of the garments of both figures also has Assyrian parallels.⁶ There is a local parallel for the representation of the bull, in a rock carving from Adilcevaz, now no longer there⁷: the treatment of the back and the neck is identical with that on this relief. The god is wearing clothes of the kind mentioned in Sargon's list of booty from the temple at Muşasir, which includes not only 130 multi-coloured garments but also nine divine robes with ornaments of gold.⁸ The elaborate rosettes and diamonds decorating the god's garments may have been embroidered in wool of different colours, but are more likely to have been in gold, either in brocade or with the rosettes and diamonds of gold, with holes for their attachment to the fabric. These may have been golden garments of the type worn by gods in Assyria and elsewhere, on which rosettes are particularly common; but this motif is too obvious to be of much comparative value.⁹ A bronze corner-piece of a throne, found at Toprakkale and now in the British Museum,¹⁰ has details of decoration closely paralleled in this relief from Adilcevaz: the motif of the Maltese cross with petals is especially distinctive, and the herring-bone pattern is identical; each of the highly stylised plants is bound together in a manner similar to the junction of the triple spearheads on the relief. The two outstanding features of the head-dress (a crown or helmet presumably of metal) are the solar emblem forming its crest and the horn, whose tip is cut off flush with the flat top of the crown: both these are paralleled at Sakçegözü¹¹ and elsewhere, the horns being very common. The crown

⁴ For Urartian parallels, probably from Toprakkale, see H. Th. Bossert: *Altanatolien* (Berlin, 1942), nos. 1169-1170. The theme occurs on seals of the late Bronze Age: e.g. (a) H. G. Güterbock: *Siegel aus Boğazköy* (Berlin, 1942), p. 71, fig. 102a. (b) H. Goldman: *Excavations at Gözlü Kule, Tarsus*, Vol. II (Princeton, 1956), pl. 407, no. 42. It also appears on reliefs: e.g. *Altanatolien*, nos. 570 (Yeniköy) and 857 (Carchemish).

⁵ A. Parrot: *Archéologie Mésopotamienne*, Vol. I (Paris, 1946), pp. 48-9 (fig. 8). Fig. 9 shows the rock relief at Bavian. Both are dated to the reign of Sennacherib.

⁶ e.g. *Assyrian Sculptures in the British Museum, from Shalmaneser III to Sennacherib* (London, 1938), pls. V and XXV. Also H. Frankfort: *The Art and Architecture of the Ancient Orient* (Pelican History of Art, 1954), pls. 88, 89, 95, 96, 109, 116.

⁷ R. D. Barnett: *Iraq XII* (1950), p. 32, fig. 20; cf. the bull on a bronze frieze from Toprakkale (*ibid.*, pl. VIII, I). There seems no reason to date the rock carving before the 7th century.

⁸ F. Thureau-Dangin: *Une Relation de la Huitième Campagne de Sargon* (Paris, 1912), lines 366 and 386.

⁹ A. L. Oppenheim: "The Golden Garments of the Gods", in *JNES*. VIII (1949), pp. 172-193.

¹⁰ R. D. Barnett: *Iraq XII* (1950), pl. II.

¹¹ Bossert: *Altanatolien*, no. 885 (where the two figures are facing inwards towards a tree of life and each is holding an object that may be a fir-cone).

worn by the Achaemenid kings, as portrayed at Persepolis, was of similar shape, but undecorated and without crest.

The significance of this relief is apparent from the curious triple spearheads that stand behind and in front of the god. The temple of Haldi at Muşafir, whose pillage is depicted in a relief from Khorsabad,¹² has a huge spearhead surmounting its gabled roof, in addition to spears on either side of the doorway. The long list of loot from this temple, recorded by Sargon, includes not only 1514 bronze spears but also 96 of silver, which can only have been votive offerings.¹³ The spearhead may therefore have been a symbol attached to the worship of Haldi. The arrangement of the spearheads in this relief, and particularly the junction of the two side-stems with the central one, has a number of parallels in the treasure from Ziwiye and elsewhere,¹⁴ which may support a date for that treasure in the first half of the 7th century B.C. These parallels, however, occur on representations of the tree of life, a theme common also in Assyrian art. It is thus probable that these triple spearheads derive from a highly stylised form, in metal, of the tree of life: this would not be very remarkable, for there is still a widespread veneration for trees in eastern Anatolia.

It may therefore be suggested that this relief portrays the god Haldi standing between emblems associated with his cult. Unfortunately the identity of the second figure, facing the god, is quite uncertain.

Very few Urartian reliefs are known, and none has been found of quality comparable with this. Two small basalt blocks from the Erzurum area¹⁵—one showing a lion, the other a man wearing a woollen garment—can only be Urartian: the lion is finely carved, but the small figure of a man lacks the refinement and detail of the relief from Adilcevaz. These blocks obviously formed part of a frieze. A rock carving at Doğubayazıt must also be Urartian¹⁶: it portrays two figures, both facing right, with a small bull placed just right of the left-hand figure, close to his head. Fragments of a limestone frieze were found at Toprakkale.¹⁷

In spite of the various similarities above mentioned, the relief from Adilcevaz can be said to show a certain originality of treatment. It is noteworthy that the god is beardless. In boldness of outline and refinement of detail this relief compares with the best Assyrian work, and is far superior

¹² Botta : *Monument de Ninive*, Tome II, pl. 141.

¹³ Thureau-Dangin, lines 393 and 378.

¹⁴ A. Godard : *Le Trésor de Ziwiye* (Haarlem, 1950), figs. 10, 13, 18 (gold pectoral); fig. 25 (gold plaque); fig. 48 (plaque from a coffin); fig. 109 (silver plaque). Assyrian parallels are illustrated (figs. 11 and 14). See also other gold plaques from Ziwiye in *Metropolitan Museum of Art Bulletin*, 1955, pp. 217 and 219, and in *University Museum Bulletin* (Philadelphia), Vol. 21, no. 1 (1957), pp. 34-5, and a bronze band from Kars (*ibid.*, p. 219). The bronze helmet of Sarduri from Karmir-Blur has similar representations of the tree of life (R. D. Barnett and W. Watson : *Iraq* XIV (1952), fig. 15 (p. 140), pls. XXXII, 2, and XXXIII, 2).

¹⁵ Now at the Archaeological Museum, Ankara (unpublished).

¹⁶ *RHA*. I/5 (1931), p. 165 and pls. 13 and 14. Reproduced in Bossert : *Altanatolien*, no. 1162, where another rock relief, at Herir-Batas, near Ruwanduz, is illustrated (no. 1161).

¹⁷ R. D. Barnett : *Iraq* XII (1950), fig. 20 (p. 32), and pp. 38-9.

to the reliefs of Carchemish, Malatya, Sakçegözü, Zincirli or Tell Halaf. It may not have been the only Urartian sculpture at Adilcevaz, for the writer was told that some years ago fragments of a relief of a horse and chariot were incorporated in the foundations of a building in the town. The relief here published very probably came from the same building as the inscription of Rusas II outside the school ; if so, it can likewise be dated to his reign (*c.* 680–645 B.C.), at which time there must have been a town of some importance at or near Adilcevaz.

B. RELIEF OF AN URARTIAN CITADEL

(Fig. 3 and Pl. XXXIVa)

Carved on a large basalt block, in the middle of the Urartian fortress of Kefkalesi, above Adilcevaz,¹⁸ was found a representation, in relief and with the details incised, of a castle wall. The block lies at the foot of the southern slope of the small hill that forms the highest part of Kefkalesi, which could have been a keep or citadel. The block, which probably weighs over two tons, must have been deliberately rolled down from above.

This carving represents a castle or citadel wall, crowned with parapets, and with two buttresses and a number of windows. The projection at the bottom, where the surface of the block has been broken away, may be the upper part of a doorway, although it might perhaps be a conventionalized representation of rocks, as on Assyrian reliefs. A projection at the left-hand surviving edge, close to the lower left-hand window, is inexplicable, unless the carving were left unfinished, which seems improbable.

This representation of a citadel is undoubtedly Urartian, since it has a very close parallel in the bronze model from Toprakkale.¹⁹ The parapets may have been like those on the bronze model.²⁰ There is the same decoration beneath the parapets, a style more suited to mud brick than stone, and still found in northern Iraq. The narrow windows differ from those on the bronze model in showing a large lintel above each one. It cannot be certain from either this carving or the model from Toprakkale whether the windows were set back in a rectangular recess or splayed outwards. One of the indications that the two buttresses in fact belong to one large tower is that the inner edge of each one converges slightly on the other ; more obviously, the position of the windows proves that this must represent one tower, very possibly a gate-tower, the original height of which can be estimated by comparison with the upper window and battlements on the left-hand portion of the carving.

The batter on the tower is a feature found in the remains of Urartian fortresses. The available evidence suggests that this may be considered

¹⁸ See my article in *AS.* VII (1957), pp. 37–53, especially pp. 50–1.

¹⁹ R. D. Barnett : *Iraq* XII (1950), pl. 1.

²⁰ Remains of actual parapets have been found at Karmir-Blur (*Karmir-Blur* IV [Erivan, 1955], pp. 102–3). cf. also the parapets of the great stairway at Persepolis (E. F. Schmidt : *Persepolis* I [Chicago, 1953], pl. 19).



(a)



(b)

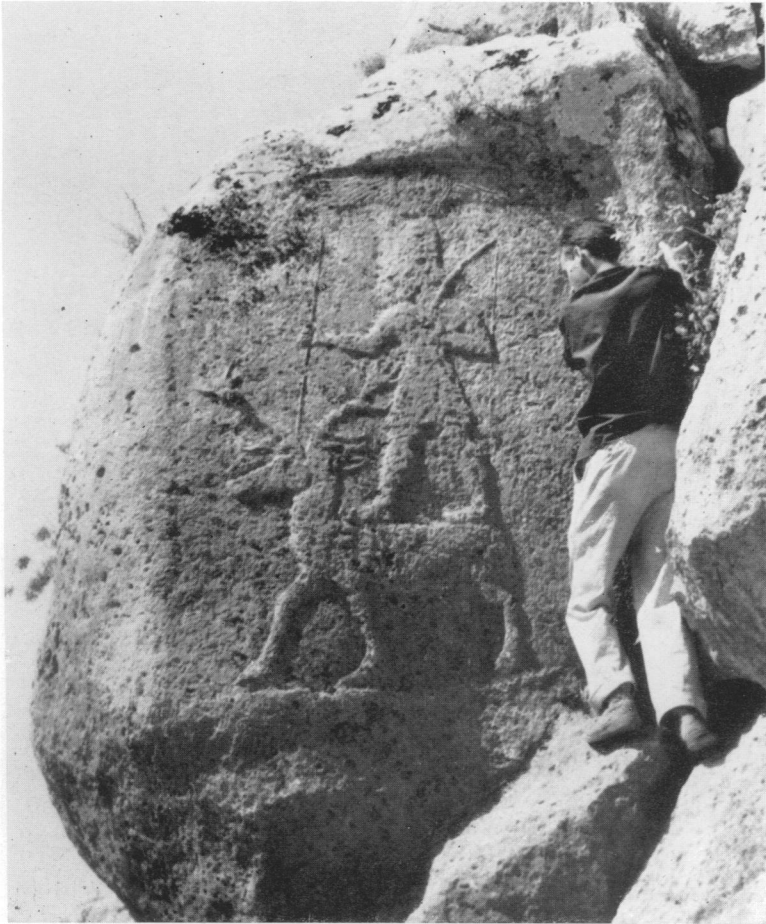


(c)

Fragments of the Urartian relief from Adilcevaz castle.



(a) Urartian relief at Kefkalesi, Adilcevaz.



(b) Rock relief above the Kara Su.

an accurate representation of an Urartian citadel wall. The greater height of the central windows in relation to those on either side may suggest a staircase inside the tower. Both this carving and the model from Toprakkale indicate that the height of these fortress walls was very great,

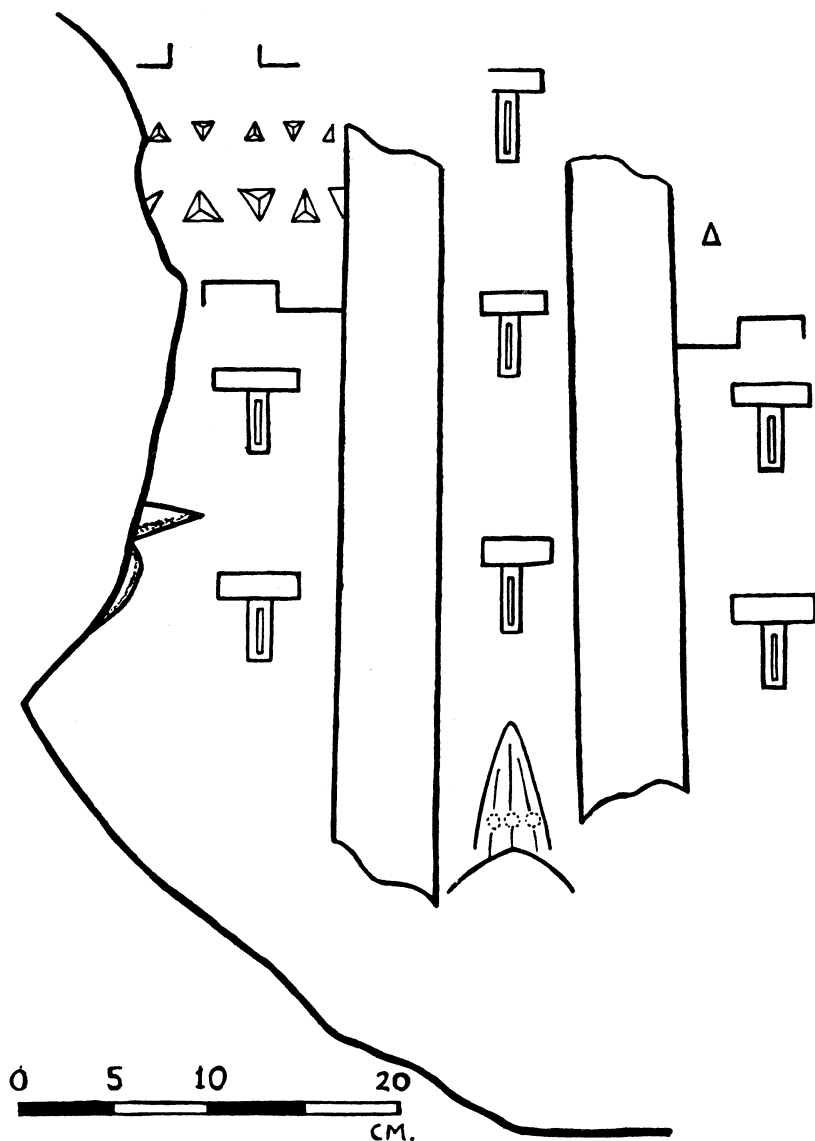


FIG. 3. Urartian relief at Kefkalesi, Adilcevaz.

perhaps twelve metres or more.²¹ The thickness of the walls of Urartian fortresses, usually three or four metres, shows that they could well have been built at least to such a height.

²¹ Sargon II described the walls of the towns of the province of *Sangibutu* as having the height of 120 courses of brick, being at least 12 m. (Thureau-Dangin, line 240).

C. A ROCK RELIEF FROM THE KARASU, NEAR BİRECİK

(Pl. XXXIVb)

High up on a cliff overlooking the winding gorge of the Karasu, not far west of the Euphrates, into which it flows, there is carved a relief portraying a figure standing on a stag. This was recently discovered by Messrs. Krummenacher and Wilson, geologists of the BPM Company, Ankara, while exploring the area. The writer is indebted to them for permission to publish the photograph and details concerning the relief here given.

The relief can be reached from the village of Süpürgüç, two miles to the north-east, and is on the north bank of the Karasu : access is difficult, and a descent from the top of the cliff is necessary.

The carving is in low relief, cut out of soft yellow limestone of Miocene date, somewhat weathered. The figure, undoubtedly a god, is represented standing on a stag and holding in his left hand a bow, in his right a staff. He wears boots with upturned toes, a kilt with a belt round his waist and a pointed cap. Above his head is a winged sun-disc. There is apparently no inscription with the relief.

A date for this relief in the Early Iron Age (i.e. from c. 1000 B.C. to c. 750 B.C.) seems probable, although not certain. One fact in support of such a dating is that, with the exception of Eflatun Pınar,²² the winged sun-disc does not appear over the head of a god during the Hittite New Kingdom. The cap is of "Phrygian" type and likewise suggests an Iron Age date, especially in view of the apparent absence of horns.²³ The kilt seems to have a fringe along the bottom, another Iron Age feature. The proximity of Carchemish²⁴ and other Iron Age (Syro-Hittite) sites with similar carvings in general tends to confirm a date for this newly discovered relief in that period. It must, however, be admitted that the date remains to be proved.

²² H. G. Güterbock, in *Halil Edhem Hattı Kitabı* (Ankara, 1947), pp. 59-62.

²³ cf. E. Akurgal, *Späthethitische Bildkunst* (Ankara, 1949), 1-9.

²⁴ Sir L. Woolley : *Carchemish*, Part III (London, 1952), pl. B58b (similar stag), and pl. B33 (two gods standing on one lion).