

A HITTITE JAR WITH ANIMAL FIGURE

A fragment of a jar (No. 9124) from Kayseri, now in the Archeological Museum, Ankara is a typical exemplar of relieved Hittite pottery. I am very much obliged to the Archeologist Mr. Nuri Gökçe for his kind permission to publish this beautiful piece (fig. 1-2).

The profile of this big, brick-red jar which was made with help of the potters wheel must have widened in a curve, although the rim is missing. The jar has the shape of an egg, with a wide neck and stretched shoulders. The ribbon-shaped handle has a dark-red, well polished dead-colour. At its right is a relief painted with three black strings on a dark-red dead-colour. This relief must have been an animal design, now missing. As the greater part of the jar is lost it cannot be said whether the jar had two or four handles and an animal figure on each of it. But the size of the jar and the elegance of its handle make it likely that it originally had four handles¹. By a lucky chance the animal is not damaged; it is placed above the handle, its head plastic, the body in relief. neck and head are not adequate to the body. The neck which is thicker than the body is turned away so that the animal looks to the side. It is hard to decide to which specimen this short-necked animal with its cut tail may belong; it may be a sheep of the merinos type. The long, slender face and the prominent eyes of this animal which has short, upright horns remind of figures from Kültepe which we have studied in a former publication², whereas the position of its bent legs and the relieved body are related to an animal relief found on a jar from Alişar³. Some traces seem to prove that the figure originally was coloured, the colour later wiped off.

The custom of ornamenting jars, dishes etc with human or animal figures is typical for the early Hittite period. Pieces of burned pottery from Alişar have animal figures at the handles, the mouth, the shoulders, in brief at every possible part of the vessel⁴. But this piece from Kayseri is without parallels as it shows animal representations above the handle. As some parts of the jar and especially the animal were coloured and as the style of the animal is the same as the style of animals on vessels and rhytons from the early Hittite period, this jar, too, must belong to the first part of second millenium B. C.. The piece the origin of which is unknown, is likely to come from Kültepe where Hittite pottery with animal representations are very common.

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¹ the jar may have had the shape of OIP XXIX, plate VII, b 2543.

² Revue de la Faculté de Langues, Ankara, vol. 5, No. 1, p. 133-5

³ OIP XXIX, fig. 156, d 2996.

⁴ OIP XXIX, fig. 155-165; more pieces of this type are known now, coming from other excavations.