

EXCAVATIONS AT KARATEPE*

In the autumn of 1945, Prof. Dr. Bossert, Dr. H. Çambel, N. Ongunsu and M. Darga, on behalf of the Institute for Research in Ancient Oriental Civilizations of Istanbul University (Faculty of Letters), undertook a journey with the object of investigating the strategic route over the Taurus Pass connecting Kayseri with south-eastern Anatolia and northern Syria in the time of the New Hittite Empire. In the course of this journey they received information of the existence of a stone lion-monument (called *Arslantaş*) in the neighbourhood of Kadirli in the vilâyet of Adana. As the season was already advanced, they were unable to check this information on the spot and had to postpone any investigation until the following year.

In February of 1946 a new journey of exploration was undertaken under the auspices of the same Institute. Two members of this expedition, Prof. Dr. Bossert and Dr. H. Çambel, accompanied by Bay Naci Kum, Director of the Adana Museum, and under the guidance of Bay Ekrem Kuşçu, teacher at the Primary School in Kadirli, paid a visit on horseback to Karatepe, where this monument is situated. Their time being limited and their equipment inadequate, they were obliged to confine themselves to a brief survey.

In the spring of 1947, Prof. Dr. Bossert and *Docent* Dr. Bahadır Alkım were put in charge of a second expedition to Karatepe and the surrounding district for the purpose of a more detailed investigation, and to determine the sites and conditions of possible future excavations². On this occasion they took copies, photographs and squeezes of the Old-Semitic inscriptions, one on the statue of the king³ and one on a portal-lion⁴, studied the surface remains of the walls of the citadel, examined the broken pieces of the orthostates bearing reliefs and Hittite hieroglyphs scattered here and there in the dense forest, and also took the opportunity to visit the ruins on Domuztepe spread over a wide area exactly opposite Karatepe, on the east bank of the Ceyhan (Pyramus).

The archaeological, philological, and historical problems concerning both Karatepe and Domuztepe could only be solved by excavation. And in fact the first attempt at excavation was undertaken last year by the Turkish Historical Society. The General Direction of the Department of Antiquities and Museums of the Turkish Ministry of Education and Faculty of Letters of Istanbul University took part in the excavations and provided the remainder of the funds re-

* The proofs of the English *résumé* have been read by Mr. G. E. Bean of the Classical Philology Dept. of Istanbul University, to whom I wish to express my gratitude.

1 Cf. H. Th. Bossert-H. Çambel, *Karatepe, A Preliminary Report on a New Hittite Site*, Istanbul, 1946, Publications for Research in Ancient Oriental Civilizations of the University of Istanbul No. 1, p. 8.

2 Cf. H. Th. Bossert-U. Bahadır Alkım, *Karatepe, Kadirli and its Environments*, Second Preliminary Report, Istanbul, 1947, Publications of the Institute for Research in Ancient Oriental Civilizations of the University of Istanbul, No. 3.

3 *Ibid.*, pp. 26-28 and figs. 138, 142-153, 216, 219-223.

4 *Ibid.*, p. 28 and figs. 140-141, 224.

quired; we are indebted to all of these three scientific institutions. An expedition consisting of Prof. H. Th. Bossert, Dr. U. Bahadır Alkım, Dr. H. Çambel, Dr. N. Ongunsu and Bay İbrahim Süzen (as topographer and architect) began the excavations on the 11th of September 1947 and the first season's work lasted until December 7th of same year. We are grateful also for the voluntary assistance kindly given, during a part of the season, by Dr. F. Steinherr and Mr. H. Anstock and his wife Dr. Muhibbe Anstock.

The main results are as follows:

I. Excavations and investigations at Karatepe

A) The investigation of the surface remains of the citadel walls:

The ruins of Karatepe (known locally as *Ayrıca tepesi*) which lie about 22 km. south-west of Kadirli at a height of 400 m. above sea-level, comprise a fortified citadel surrounded by walls. The height of the hill itself from the level of the Ceyhan is about 130 m. These walls, built of the local limestone, have a minimum breadth of 2 m. and a maximum breadth of 4 m. Rectangular towers, projecting 4-5 m. at intervals of 7-10 m., surround the walls.

The citadel has two main entrances, one on the north-east and one on the south-west, each connected with one entrance-building; there is a side gate on the west. The shape of the area within the city walls is oval, the longer (north-south) axis of which is about 430 m. and the shorter (east-west) about 190 m.

B) Excavations inside the city walls:

As all the architectural remains were inside the walls and no traces of buildings were visible outside, two places were chosen as starting points for the excavations, one in the area of the inscribed statue of the king, near the south summit of the hill, where a row of orthostates decorated with reliefs had already been found during the second expedition⁵, the other on the north-east slope of the hill where a trace of basalt orthostates had been concealed by the dense and prickly undergrowth; the former is called provisionally «The Upper Excavation» and the latter «The Lower Excavation».

1. Upper Excavation

Architectural finds: An entrance-building and the remains of another building, where the king's statue had been found, were excavated in this area; the latter is connected by a wide door with the former. A ramp, the pavement of which is inlaid with small stones, ascends from the south-west, leads to the entrance-building by a right-angled turn to the north-west forming an entrance-passage on both sides of which were found basalt

⁵ Bossert - Alkım, loc. cit. p. 25 and. figs. 213-214.

orthostates (average dimensions: 0.75 X 1.25 X 0.30 m.) covered with reliefs and inscriptions both in hieroglyphic Hittite and in Old-Semitic (Phoenician?).

This passage rises in four steps to a gate at its north-west end where the floors of two towers, opposite each other, were excavated. A second gate opening in the same direction leads to a double-winged room (about 6 X 15 m.), the east wing of which was in a very bad state of preservation, although the basalt bases of many orthostates, in damaged and scattered condition, have been excavated *in situ*, while the west wing is fairly well preserved. Here were found eight orthostates bearing reliefs, four of which are complete. Since many broken pieces of inscribed and sculptured basalt orthostates were found in both wings, it seems that this room too was originally surrounded with orthostates like the inside walls of the entrance.

The double-winged room opens by a wider door in the middle of its north-west side to an inner hall (?) or inner courtyard containing the king's statue. As the foundations had been laid directly on the virgin rock which is about 25-50 cms. below the present surface, and had been for the most part swept away by rain and floods, it was not easy to determine the limits of this small court.

Sculpture

Portal-Lions and Sphinxes: Several broken pieces belonging to two portal-lions, one incised with Old-Semitic characters, the other with Hittite hieroglyphs, were found at the outer end of the entrance - passage, at the point where the ramp forms a right-angled turn towards the north-west; it seems that these were originally erected one on either side of the entrance.

At the first gate, on the other hand, parts of two portal-lions, one on either side, were excavated *in situ*.

On the left side (north-west) of the door opening on the inner courtyard, a sphinx was found in a bad state of preservation, while on the other side of the same door several broken pieces of varying sizes which seem to belong to a sphinx or a portal-lion, were also found; it is probable that there was originally a sphinx on this side as well.

Reliefs: The reliefs, which form a continuous series along the lower part of the inside of the entrance walls and of the two-winged room, are all of dark grey basalt. They are remarkable especially for the subjects they illustrate. The most interesting are as follows:

- A banquet scene (composed of two orthostates, each divided into two scenes by a horizontal band, and containing in all 17 figures),
- A god holding a rabbit and a falcon (repeated three times, 1 — god holding a rabbit in his right hand and a falcon in his left, stands on a bull; in front of the god a smaller figure with his back to the god 2 — the same god, holding in his left hand a rabbit, and a bird, probably a falcon, in his right; a praying figure fa-

cing the god ⁶; 3 — the same scene but with a figure turning his back to the god ⁷,

Fishing and bird-hunting

scenes ⁸,

Throned Queen

(the queen sits on a throne; behind her stands a maid waving a fan towards her head),

Two bull-men

(they stand antithetically, each holding a sceptre or spear?).

Sculptures: The king's statue, its pedestal depicting a man with arms extended over two bulls ⁹, and a broken piece of a head belonging probably to another statue, are the sculptural finds of the Upper Excavation.

Inscriptions: The most important finds are the inscriptions, which are incised in two different systems: in Old-Semitic characters and in Hittite hieroglyphs.

Two inscriptions in Old-Semitic were already known, one on the king's statue ¹⁰, the other on one of the portal-lions ¹¹. It is now possible in a large measure to restore these two inscriptions, a considerable number of additional fragments having been brought to light during our recent excavation. We had previously suggested that they were quasi-parallel texts ¹²; it now appears, from the study of Prof. Bossert, that they are two versions of the same text.

The Hittite hieroglyphic text is incised on the portal-lions (unfortunately very much damaged), on the orthostates and on the orthostate bases. According to Prof. Bossert's investigations the Old-Semitic and the Hittite hieroglyphic texts are identical. This will greatly facilitate the decipherment of the Hittite hieroglyphs.

2. The Lower Excavation.

Architectural Finds: In this area too an entrance-building has been excavated, the plan of which resembles in some respects that of the Upper Excavation.

A ramp, the pavement of which is inlaid with small stones, ascends from the south-east and, after passing two towers, makes a right-angled turn to the south-west, forming an entrance-passage similar to that in the Upper Excavation. On either side of this passage were excavated orthostates bearing reliefs and ins-

⁶ Cf. Bossert-Alkım, loc. cit. p. 26 and fig. 131.

⁷ Cf. *ibid.*, p. 26 and figs. 129, 132.

⁸ Cf. *ibid.*, p. 26 and fig. 133.

⁹ These animals had been previously identified by us as *lions* (cf. Karatepe, A Preliminary Report, p. 9; and Karatepe, Second Preliminary Report, *passim*). But now it appears from our study that they are *two bulls* (roughly depicted). This suggestion was first made by Prof. Güterbock, to whom we are deeply indebted.

¹⁰ cf. Bossert-Alkım, loc. cit. fig. 216, 219-223

¹¹ *Ibid.* fig. 224.

¹² *Ibid.* p. 28.

criptions, both in Old-Semitic and in Hittite hieroglyphic; at this outer end, where it joins the ramp, are two portal-lions, one on either side. The passage (about 7.5 m. long) ends with a gate, on each side of which there is a sphinx. Beyond the door the passage continues south-west for another 3 m.; at this point it opens into a double-winged room; the east wing of this room is smaller than its west wing, and on a higher level; its preservation is unfortunately poor. Both wings are surrounded with orthostates.

The ground rises to the south of this double room, and we were not able to determine the existence or non-existence of any other building in connection with the main entrance-building, before the advent of winter brought the first season's excavations to an end.

From the deposits of ash and from the tendency of some of the orthostates to flake away at a slight blow it was clear that the entrance-building had suffered from a great fire.

Sculpture

Portal-Lions and sphinxes: Two portal-lions (at the extreme front of the entrance), and two sphinxes (one on either side of the inner gate) were excavated in the Lower Excavation.

Reliefs: About 30 reliefs on basalt orthostates were found *in situ*, all of them resting on basalt bases. From their style the reliefs seem to show Post-Hittite, Syro-Hittite, Egyptian and even Assyrian influence (the last very slight). These reliefs have not yet been studied in detail, but from their general style they may perhaps date from about the 8th century B. C. Some of them are briefly described below:

A deer-hunting scene,

(a figure on the left, equipped with bow and quiver, discharges an arrow at a deer; hunter and deer stand upon two bulls face to face; between the bulls is a mountain-symbol, and below the whole scene is a lotus frieze),

Relief of a woman (goddess?) suckling her child near a palm-tree.

Demon with winged sun-disc on his head,

Several scenes of combat between heroes and lions,

Relief showing two he-goats erect, with Tree of Life between them,

Relief of two warriors, face to face, wearing crested helmets,

Ship-relief,

(the ship is furnished with an awning; in it are 4 figures, and beneath it are fishes and two defeated enemies).

Some of the reliefs have two scenes separated by a line or a frieze. For example, one relief has in its upper panel two vultures devouring a rabbit, and in its lower panel a hero struggling against two lions rampant; on another relief, in the upper panel are three female dancers, and in the lower panel two musicians (one playing a double flute, the other a harp) and three dancers.

Inscriptions: The longest inscriptions in Old-Semitic and in Hittite hieroglyphic hitherto found in the Near East were excavated in this part of Karatepe.

The Old-Semitic inscription was found on the south-east side of the entrance-passage. The writing covers the whole of four orthostates, and continues on the orthostate-bases to the left. The adjoining relief and portal-lion are also inscribed. The inscription on the orthostates is in three columns. The first column (composed of two orthostates, 0.79 X 1.27 m. and 0.24 X 1.25 m. respectively) has 21 lines, the second column (on an orthostate of 0.74 X 1.27 m.) has 19, the third (on an orthostate of 0.78 X 1.25 m.) has 18 lines; after the last line of the third column the inscription continues as a single line on the horizontal surface of the two orthostate bases to the left.

The long Hittite hieroglyphic inscription is incised on the portal-lion, on the orthostates and orthostate bases of the north-west side of the entrance-passage, on the sphinx of this side and on the orthostates and orthostate bases of the two-winged room. According to Prof. Bossert's study the Old-Semitic and Hittite hieroglyphic are bilingual versions of the same text. They also belong to the same king, «*Astwd*». This name has been found and read by Prof. Bossert in the Hittite hieroglyphic text as «*Asitawa(n)da-s*»

Furthermore, the Old-Semitic inscription of the Lower Excavation is nothing other than a third version of the Old-Semitic text of the Upper Excavation. The Karatepe inscriptions thus comprise four identical texts, three in Old Semitic and one in Hittite hieroglyphic. Even the latter contains, in Prof. Bossert's view certain duplicate passages.

Small finds, in both the Upper and Lower Excavations, were remarkably few. A fish-hook (length 4.5 cms., found on the floor, at the foot of the ship-relief in the west wing of the above-mentioned room), a chisel (?), and an incomplete terra-cotta spindle-whorl are among them. From the scarcity of finds it seems likely that the citadel of Karatepe had not been very long occupied before it was plundered and destroyed.

II. Investigations in the immediate vicinity of Karatepe

A) Survey of the Domuztepe ruins :

The ruins of Domuztepe, on a wooded hill on the eastern bank of the river Ceyhan (opposite Karatepe), were investigated in order to determine their relationship with Karatepe. Besides the objects previously examined during the second expedition¹³ - i. e. the basalt pedestal with

¹³ Cf. Bossert-Alkım, Second Preliminary Report, pp. 28-29.

two bull reliefs, many hewn blocks of basalt and a portion of a relief- we found also, on the present occasion the body of a portal-lion, a few basins of basalt, and the remains of walls in a rough style. A plan of the ruins, which are scattered among dense forest, was drawn out according to the remains visible above ground, and the thickly wooded area around the pedestal was cut and cleared. The ruins present a heterogeneous appearance. Objects probably contemporary with those in Karatepe are mixed with objects from the Roman period (potsherds, tiles, etc.). It seems that later, under the Roman dominion, the material of ancient buildings was reused for other purposes.

As conditions were difficult and time too short to begin an excavation here, we confined ourselves to the study of the surface remains on Domuztepe. The solution of the outstanding problems will be the object of subsequent excavations.

B) Excursions to the surrounding district :

On Sundays some of the members of the expedition took the opportunity of making excursions in the neighbourhood of Karatepe. These trips (usually on horseback) also resulted in new discoveries. For instance, architectural remains of a building and a large piece of a basalt dish, both contemporary with Karatepe, were found on a hill (called *Sakartaş*), 2 km. south of Karatepe. Remains of a great building belonging to the Roman period on another hill (called *Dana k a y a*), about 3 km. south of *Sakartaş*, were visited.

Several other monuments (especially Hittite and Roman) were also investigated in this district. The preliminary report of the Karatepe Excavation which will probably appear in a few months' time will deal with these in detail.

U. BAHADIR ALKIM



ORTA ANADOLU'DA ARKEOLOJİK ARAŞTIRMALAR

Kurumumuz üyelerinden Doçent Ekrem Akurgal ve Doçent Sedat Alp, Kurum adına bu yılın Ekim ayında Orta Anadolu'da arkeolojik bir araştırma gezisi yapmışlardır. Bu araştırma esnasında Kayseri'nin güney doğusunda Fraktin, Taşçı, İmamkulu ve Hanyeri abideleri tetkik edilerek üzerlerinde arkeolojik ve filolojik incelemeler yapılmış ve bu arada Taşçı'daki malûm abidenin yüz metre güneyinde şimdiye kadar görülmemiş olan yeni bir kabartma bulunmuştur. Kabartmanın üzerinde Dr. Sedat Alp Urhiteşup'un hiyeroglifini okumuş ve bu tasvirin söz konusu olan kralın prenslik zamanına ait olduğu, bu itibarla da babası büyük kral Muvaattalı'nın günlerine tarihlenmesi icabettiği kanaatine varmıştır.

Adı geçen abideler üzerinde Kurum üyelerinin yaptıkları incelemelerle Hitit arkeolojisi ve dini için yeni malzeme ve yeni yorumlar elde edilmiştir. Bunun dışında Taşçı ve Hanyeri abidelerinin askerî yollar üzerinde, Fraktin ile İmam-