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One Unique and Three New Seated Figures from Eastern Rough Cilicia

The subject of this study, one rock-cut relief with a seated figure and three statues of seated figures, were found in the ›Olbian Territory‹¹, which is geographically, politically, and culturally a special area of Eastern Rough Cilicia (fig. 1). There have been many studies undertaken on the plastic art of Eastern Rough Cilicia. Among these sculptures there are many and various works of art, such as statues, rock reliefs, and terracotta figurines and they generally have a common iconography related to the tombs. These iconographies are largely of funerary-banquet reliefs carved for the deceased, soldier reliefs, and family portraits generally carved out as busts. Apart from these, mourning women, scenes of sacrifices, scenes of hunters, and naked male figures are represented in a few examples. These findings are mainly related to tombs and to the cults of the dead. Such rock-cut reliefs and seated statues found in Eastern Rough Cilicia have been discussed in various studies².

The rock relief and the three statues of seated figures which are studied here for the first time, were found during the »Archeological Survey of Urbanization and Rural Settlements in Rough Cilicia« carried out around the rural settlements of Silifke and Erdemli, which are districts of the province of Mersin³.

The rock-cut relief of the seated figure is situated in the Kaleboynu area of Çerçili village in Erdemli. Modern reuse of the area where the rock relief was found has caused much destruction. Therefore it is not possible to get clear information on the settlement, but the fact that it is founded on a high hilly area dominating the valleys would suggest a structure in which settlements are situated on the hills at the edge of the valley to control the roads and the agricultural lands; during the surveys carried out in Eastern Rough Cilicia it was observed through archaeological evidence that such rural settlements were even in use during the Roman period and later⁴.

The seated statues considered in this study were found in settlements which belong to Kümbetbeleni and Güvercinlik, close to the village of Karadedeli in Silifke. The remains of these settlements in the chora of Corasion are situated on hills and their slopes. This hilly area attracts attention due to its position, dominating the basin valley where agricultural activities are carried out. The settlements in Kümbetbeleni and Güvercinlik are positioned so as to dominate the roads inside the valley connecting the settlements of Seleucia ad Calycadnum⁵ (Silifke) with Corasion⁶ and Diocaesarea⁷ (Uzuncaburç). As mentioned above, the settlements are situated on the hills at the edge of the valley to control the roads and the agricultural lands. Among the archaeological remains of settlements there are dwellings, farmhouses, workshops, storage buildings, many burials, and churches of various typologies.

These rural settlements were also part of a systematic layout, and their structures are very similar to each other. In Eastern Rough Cilicia these settlements

1 Olba Territorium is defined as the area between the Lamas and Kalykadnos rivers and was a centre because of its geographical situation; at the same time it was an administrative centre of religious rule between the two rivers. Str. 14, 3, 1; Durugönül 1998.

2 Durugönül 1989; Durugönül 2003; Durugönül 2009. I would like to record my gratitude to Prof. Dr. Serra Durugönül for her constructive ideas.

3 These surveys have been led by Dr. Ümit Aydınoğlu since September 2006.

4 Aydınoğlu 2010; Aydınoğlu – Çakmak 2011; Aydınoğlu 2013.

5 Özyıldırım 2008, 113.

6 Hellenkemper – Hild 1990, 311.

7 Özyıldırım 2008, 113.

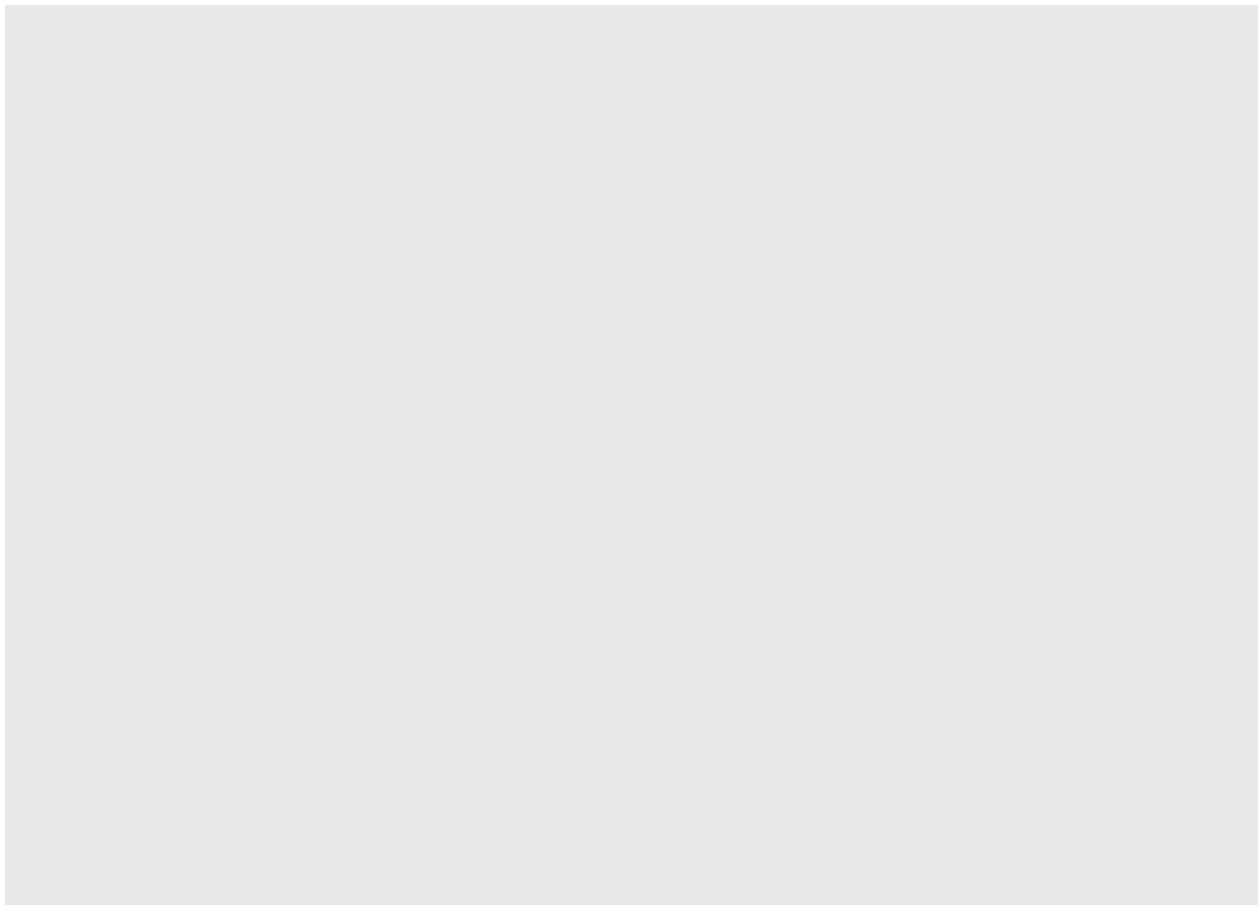


Fig. 1 Map of the Rough Cilician Region

are placed on the chora of the metropolitan cities, which are situated on the coast. They were connected to the metropolitan cities on the coast such as Elaiussa Sebaste or Corycus through ancient roads.

Structures such as farmhouses, workshops, production installations, dwellings, ancient roads, and burials are seen as common specifications of these settlements⁸. Each of the settlements where the four examples that are examined here were found were part of this systematic settlement structure.

Catalogue

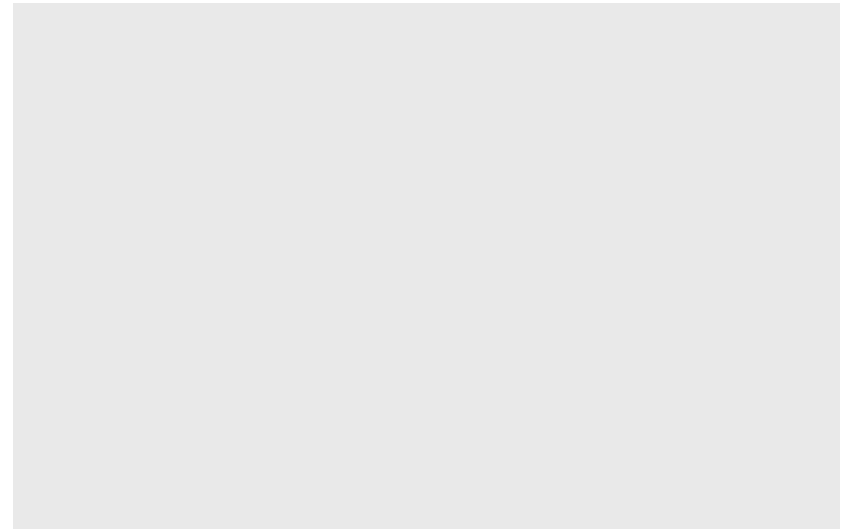
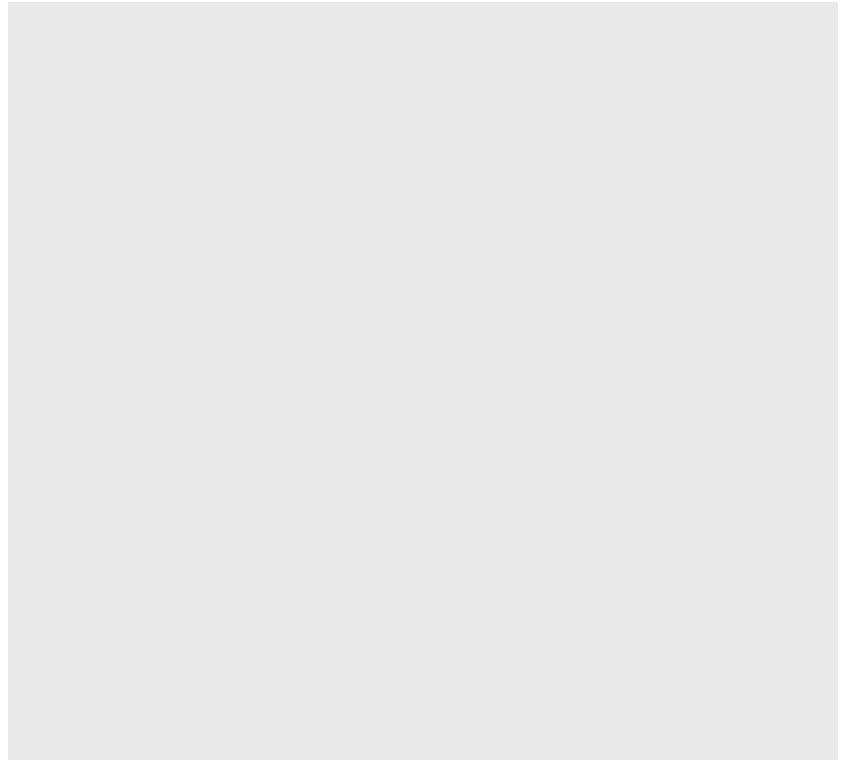
1 Rock-cut relief with a seated figure (figs. 2. 3)

Localisation: Erdemli/Çerçili village – Kaleboynu

Height: 0.95 m; width: 0.50 m

Description: The male figure is represented in a naiskos in the form of an arch measuring 1.15 m × 1.10 m and is carved on a solid rock. The figure is seated on the front of a flat base raised within the naiskos (fig. 2). The right arm of the figure, which is wearing a long himation, is resting on his right knee, the left arm is sticking out of the himation, which is draping his body with one part of it thrown from the rear to the front, and he is holding the hem of the himation with his left hand (fig. 3). The surface of the face and the clothing details of the figure have deteriorated due to natural conditions. However it is still possible to make out his short curly hair. Despite the deterioration, the

⁸ For information about the rural settlement arrangement in Eastern Rough Cilicia and the general specifications of this arrangement see Aydınöglü 2010; Aydınöglü – Çakmak 2011, 80–84; Aydınöglü 2013, 73; Mörel 2014.



Figs. 2.3 Çerçili, rock-cut relief with a seated figure. Cat. 1

9 Ancient settlements and burials found in the Karadedeli – Kümbetbeleni and Güvercinlik areas are studied in detail within the doctoral thesis being written by the author of this article under the supervision of Associate Prof. Dr. Ümit Aydinoğlu, titled »Archeological Evidences of Interaction between Cultures in the Region of Rough Cilicia during the Hellenistic and Roman Periods«.

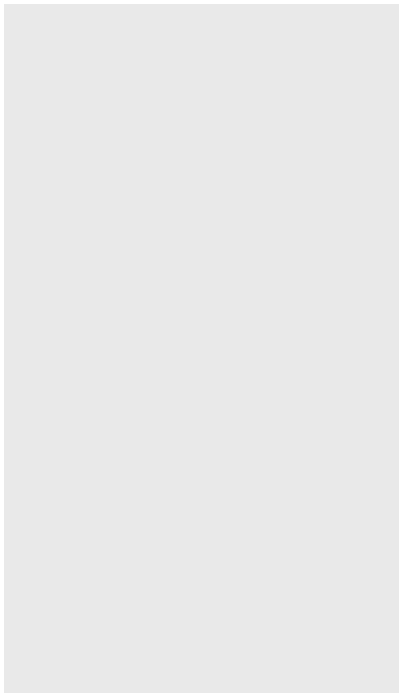
pleats of the clothing on the collar, leg, and left arm are visible. However, the disproportion between the bottom and the top of the figure is striking.

2 Male figure seated on a folding chair (figs. 4–6)

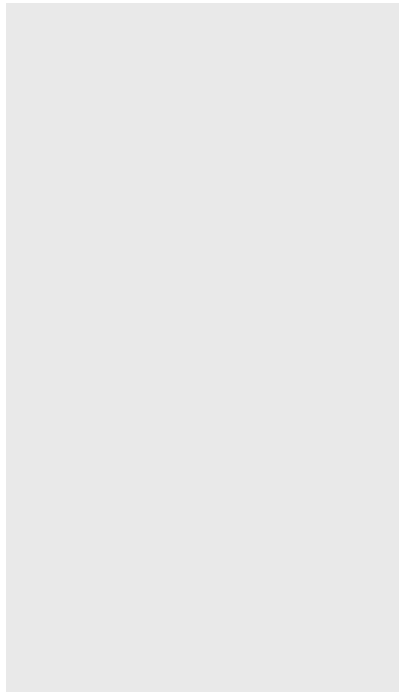
Localisation: Silifke/Karadedeli village – Kümbetbeleni

Height: 1.02 m; width: 0.65 m

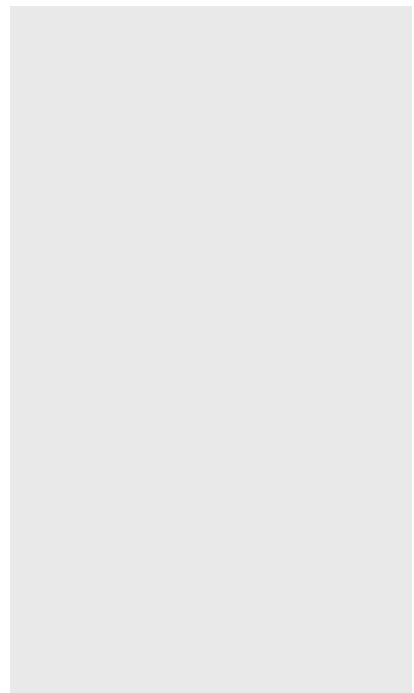
Description: During the surveys in the Kümbetbeleni settlement it was observed that the south west slope of the hilly area was used as a necropolis and that there are many burials of different types⁹ as well as the statue of a male figure seated on a folding chair preserved up to the figure's waist. The head of the statue is broken. The figure is wearing a himation with a chiton



4



5



6

underneath (fig. 4). His right arm is held across his chest holding the left hem and the hand up to his wrist stretches out of the himation. His himation is draping his body with one part of it thrown from the rear to the front. The himation of the figure is carved out in detail. Thick parallel pleats running right to left across the right shoulder and the similar parallel cross pleats under the right arm were sculpted very successfully. Parallel pleats on the long himation can be followed from the upper left leg to the upper rear part of the statue. It can be seen how the pleats of the himation were intact only in front of both legs and are worked deeply to create a light-shadow effect. The swollen part on the left knee of the figure, suggests to the viewer the probability that the left arm had been placed on the left knee (fig. 5).

The chair is carved out in detail and its cross legs can be seen on both sides. While the bottom part of the cross legs of the chair are straight, the upper part is curved. The S twist from the seat to the legs, where the upper parts are left round, is a technical detail to enable the chair to fold, and these details have been transferred to the statue successfully by the sculptor (fig. 6). These kind of seated figures are mostly related to the burials near them. However, because of the destruction of the settlement, it is not possible to relate this statue to any burials found in the settlement.

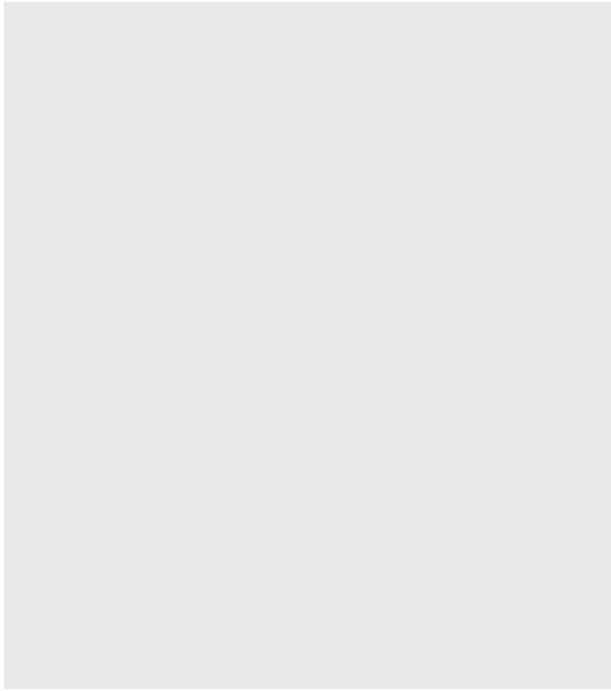
3 Male statue seated on a chair/stool (figs. 7–9)

Localisation: Silifke/Demircili village – Güvercinlik

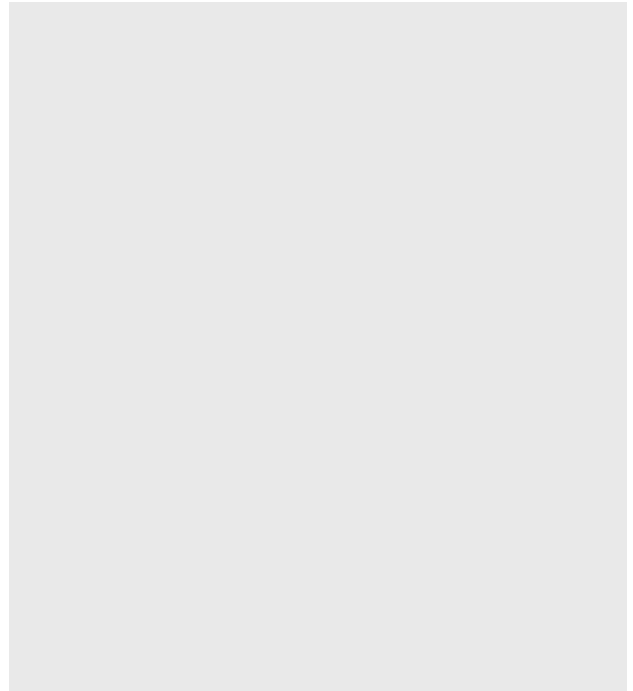
Height: 0.54 m; width: 0.56 m

Description: This is a piece of a seated statue found in the north west of the settlement in the Güvercinlik area near Demircili. Only the front part below the knee of the statue has survived (fig. 7). Rising up from a thin platform, the statue must have been seated on a chair/stool. The legs of the figure are held apart from each other. The ankle and feet visible from beneath the himation reflect only slight details. Even with the limited details, the feet might be thought of as being bare, not wearing any sandals. There are crinkles in

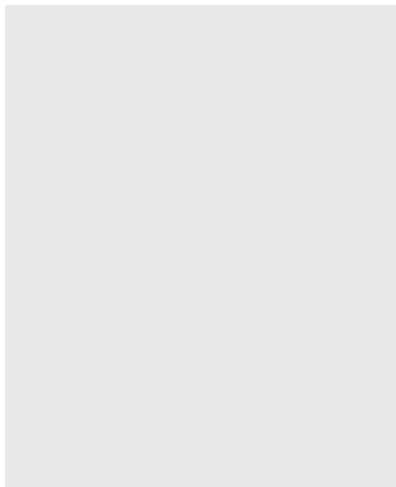
Figs. 4–6 Kümbetbeleni, male figure seated on a folding chair. Cat. 2



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8



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Figs. 7. 8 Güvercinlik, male statue seated on a chair/stool. Cat. 3

Fig. 9 Güvercinlik, vaulted monumental burial just next to Cat. 3

the shape of arches on the himation and the himation is wrapped around the upper body, running down in front, with a curling piece reaching down to the ankles. Therefore it can be said that he was possibly holding this curl with his left hand, on his left knee between his legs; it is a pity that his hand did not survive. This part of the clothing has pleats, carved parallel to each other. In general the pleat details of the himation, which can be observed on a small part between the legs of the figure, are very stylised (fig. 8).

Five metres away from the area where this figure was found there is a vaulted monumental burial. On the front of the monument, the top and bottom stones supporting the vault are left as flat moulds and are not profiled. In contrast, the vault itself is profiled as a three-fascia architrave and in this way the monument gains an effect of being a light and weightless construction. Inside the monument there is a chamosorium and immediately in front of it there is a lid belonging to it (fig. 9).

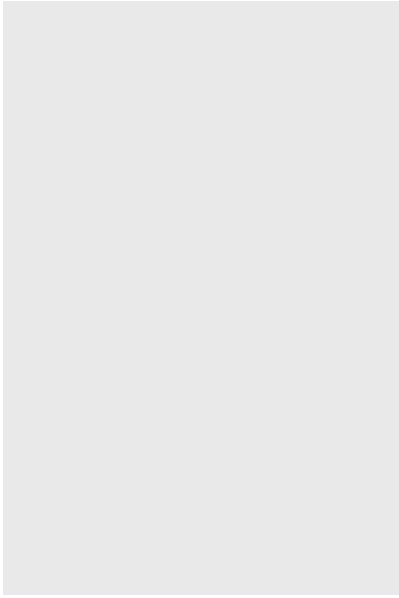
4 Round altar with a male statue seated on a chair (figs. 10–13)

Localisation: Silifke/Demircili village – Güvercinlik area

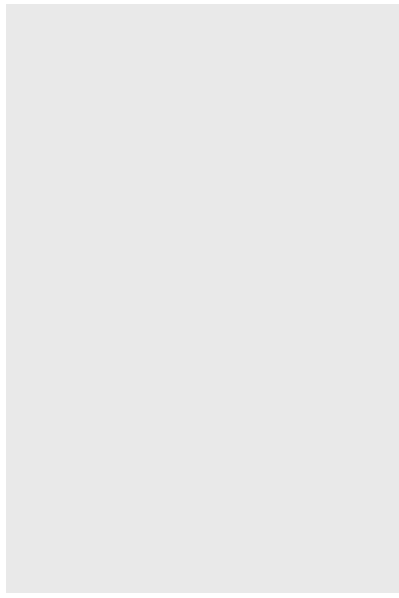
Height: 2.83 m, height of the statue: 1.16 m; width: 0.74 m; altar bottom diameter: 1.05 m, altar top diameter: 1.05 m

Description: Another seated statue in Güvercinlik was found in the centre of the settlement where most of the dwellings and agricultural workshops are situated. This monument is striking; no other similar example is known. The statue was carved out of a local monolithic limestone block and made as one piece with a round altar (fig. 10). Also, just next to it there is a footstool that had served as the base of this statue on the round altar, with two lions' legs at the front (fig. 13).

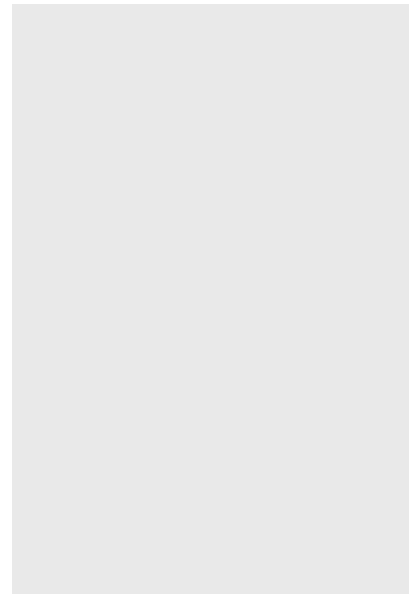
The head of the figure is lost. The legs of the figure are held apart and he is wearing a himation. The himation on the bottom part of the leg is cross-pleated and the part on the upper leg is shaped with straight pleats. Both arms of the figure are held inside the himation and his right arm rests on his stomach,



10



11



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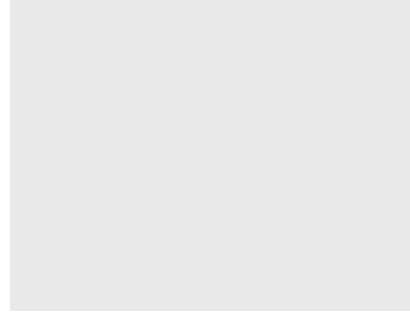
supporting his left arm, which lies across his chest. The himation between the chest and the neck is shaped by many pleats. It drapes his body with one part of it thrown from the rear to the front, and he is holding the hem inside his himation with his right hand. The feet of the folding chair, which the figure is seated on, are very significant: instead of straight, rectangular crossed legs, the legs are shaped into a softer ›S‹ form, which cross each other (fig. 11).

The base plate of the round altar consists of plinthus, torus, trochilus, and torus and, going up to the body, it was profiled with an astragal¹⁰. Branches of ivy, grapes, and flower rosettes as well as a tabula ansata are carved in the middle of the body of the altar. A profiled cyma recta top/crown is shaped as a trochilus, torus, and cyma and forms the part on which the statue is seated (fig. 12).

Interpretation

The relief and statues, studied here for the first time, are very successful examples compared to many other reliefs and statues in the region because of their stylistic details. However, they are iconographically very similar to the statues and reliefs found in Eastern Rough Cilicia. Their iconographical similarities and comparable workmanship is striking, especially in relation with the figures¹¹ found in the rural settlements of the region such as in the villages of Çaltıbozkır¹², Imbriogon Kome (Demircili)¹³, Sarıveliler¹⁴, Mancınık¹⁵, Canbazlı¹⁶, and Sömek¹⁷.

This similarity can also be seen in seated figures found in Eastern Rough Cilicia that are known to belong to burials and are related to the cult of the dead. This is especially significant because the seated figures from the settlements of Mancınık and Canbazlı, together with the examples from Cennet Cehennem, Tülü, and Sancıören¹⁸ were found in situ and associated with tombs, but they are displayed in different ways. The example from Mancınık belongs to a burial complex together with the lion statues and buildings immediately next to it which all stand on the same level. However, the example from



13

Figs. 10–12 Güvercinlik, round altar with a male statue seated on a chair. Cat. 4

Fig. 13 Güvercinlik, base of the round altar cat. 4 with lion claws form

10 Vitruvius, 3, 5, 2, 3.

11 Some of the seated figures mentioned here are displayed in the Silifke museum. For details see Durugönül 2003.

12 Çalık 1997, 221 f. pl. 68 a; Durugönül 2003, 107 f. figs. 11–14; Tepebaş – Durugönül 2013, 88 cat. 54.

13 Çalık 1997, 132 f. pl. 14 b; Durugönül 2003, 110 f. figs. 12–14; Tepebaş – Durugönül 2013, 85 cat. 49.

14 Çalık 1997, 222 pl. 68 b; Durugönül 2003, 108 f. figs. 5–7; Tepebaş – Durugönül 2013, 85 cat. 48.

15 Durugönül 2003, 113.

16 Durugönül 2003, 114 f. fig. 25.

17 Çalık 1997, 221 f. pls. 68 a, b; Durugönül 2003, 108 f. 111 f. 117 figs. 1–3, 18–20; Tepebaş – Durugönül 2013, 87 f. cat. 52, 53, 55.

18 Söğüt 2005, 108, 112 f. 126.

Canbazlı is placed in a naiskos flanked by pilaster columns and also belongs to a burial¹⁹. The examples from Cennet Cehennem, Tülü, and Sancıören differ from the ones above in the way they are displayed: Bilal Söğüt suggests that the examples in these sites were placed on ›T‹-shaped monumental columns in front of the burials, similar to the examples found in the tumuli from Sesönk and Karakuş in Commagene²⁰. Not far away from Commagene, also in Northern Syria²¹, it is possible to come across seated figures, although it is not yet proven that these are related to burials; but the resemblance and the close geographic distance allows the suggestion that they must have served the same purpose, either placed on the ground or on columns.

The examples found in Kümbetbeleni and Güvercinlik settlements are also closely related to the necropoleis around them: The Kümbetbeleni example (Cat. 2, figs. 4–6) was found in a necropolis which is situated in the south east of the settlement. The Güvercinlik example (Cat. 3) was found in the necropolis area in the south of the settlement. There is a vaulted tomb in the vicinity of the statue, so it would be logical to suggest that the statue is related to the cult of the dead. As no remains of any columns were found around them it is suggested that they were burial statues displayed at ground level, as in the Mancınık example.

Also the second statue found in Güvercinlik (Cat. 4) is considered to belong to the vaulted tomb nearby. It is carved out as a monolith together with a round altar and it is known that round altars are mostly situated by tombs, as is the fact with this example²². The round altar under the statue is similar in form to others found in the region but it is bigger as it has been designed to carry the seated statue on it. No other example with a similar typology has been found in the region or in any other area. Therefore, it has to be compared with similar altars or seated statues whether they are displayed at ground level or on a monumental column. In this piece, the existing traditions of round altars and seated statues, which are always seen separately, are here combined in this region for the first time in a new form. The people who ordered this altar with the statue must have had the aim of converting their burial into an effective monument, and must also have been seeking to gain an advantage by combining their economic and cultic expectations. As altars were produced to make offerings in sacred rituals, placing a seated figure on it can be interpreted as a belief that it would increase the holiness of the owner of the tomb.

Also, the rock-cut relief with the seated figure from Çerçili is most similar to the philosopher relief from Tapureli²³ in Eastern Rough Cilicia in both iconography and workmanship. The seated figures can be related to the local elite class: they wanted to be identified as the elite, and so they wished to be immortalised in this role; the most illuminating information relating to this perspective comes from the examples of Tapureli, Çaltıbozkır, Cennet Cehennem, Mancınık, Tülü, and Sancıören. People from local elite families were depicted in the examples found in Cennet Cehennem, Tülü, and Sancıören, and it is suggested that in this way these people, who lived in the rural settlements, demonstrated that they owned and controlled the land²⁴. Also, the above-mentioned seated relief of the male figure in the settlement of Tapureli resembles a philosopher, because he holds a roll and wears a himation, which leaves one shoulder naked; in this way he is therefore interpreted as an aristocrat. As the examples described here are also in seated positions it is suggested that these people could be members of the local elite class. Furthermore, in the Çaltıbozkır example, the wheeled and folding chairs also point to the local elite class²⁵.

19 Durugönül 2003, 114 f.

20 Söğüt 2005, 126–129.

21 Comfort – Ergeç 2001, 43 f.

22 The very bad condition of this tomb does not allow any definition.

23 Durugönül 1989, 46.

24 Söğüt 2005, 131.

25 Pfühl – Möbius 1977–1979, 361; Durugönül 2003, 117.

As a result it also can be suggested that the seated figures found in the Kümbet-beleni, and especially the figure in Güvercinlik (Cat. 4) with the platform with lion claws (fig. 13), wanted to give the impression of belonging to people from local elites or local elite families who lived in, or moved to, these agricultural rural areas as landowners; by displaying themselves with such tomb statues they tried to create an impression that their control of the land continued.

Dating

The earliest archaeological finds from Rough Cilicia²⁶ in stone begin from the time of Seleukos I. Nikator, who founded the town of Seleukeia on the banks of the Kalykadnos²⁷. The number of archaeological, and especially architectural, finds begin to increase from when Seleukos gave greater importance to the region after the treaty of Apameia in 188 B.C. The region actually first flourished during the Roman era. However, the numbers of archaeological finds in stone are still quite low compared to other areas. This situation is closely related to the rough geographical conditions of the region²⁸, which caused the creation of an introverted and unique workmanship style in the region. As a result rock-cut reliefs and other sculptural pieces produced in stone improved to a limited degree over a wide timespan from the 2nd cent. A.D.²⁹ to the 3rd cent. A.D., so they reflect similar iconographic and stylistic perspectives³⁰. This is supported by the fact that important architectural activities also took place between the end of the 2nd cent. A.D. – beginning of the 3rd cent. A.D.³¹. As a result most of the archaeological finds of the region date to this time period. During this process many roads leading to the rural settlements were built or repaired³², and farmhouses and workshops found in rural settlements increased in number. However, the real change and improvement can be traced on sarcophagi³³ and monumental tombs, which possess various typologies³⁴. These tombs are grouped according to the preferences and financial conditions of the tomb owners, with various main and sub types such as temple tombs, arched tombs, grave houses, and sarcophagae. In order to increase the monumentality, these burials were built together with round altars, imagines clipeatae, and T-shaped monumental columns with bust reliefs and seated statues.

The following dates can be offered for the pieces discussed in this article in the frame of this short historical review of the region: Rock-cut reliefs

26 The Cilician region is defined as the geographical area between Alanya and Iskenderun, bordered by the Taurus Mountains in the south of Asia Minor. The region is divided into two areas within itself, Rough Cilicia (Trakheia) and Cilician Plain (Pedias). The region named Rough Cilicia is bordered by Korakeison in the west and the river Lamas in the east. Strabo states that the eastern border of Rough Cilicia is formed by the ancient town called Soloi – Pompeiopolis. Olba Territorium was an area between the Lamas and Kalykadnos rivers which, as well as being a geographical centre, was also a religious administrative centre of the territorium between

the rivers named above. Str. 14, 3, 1; Durugönül 1998.

27 Durugönül 2009, 64.

28 It is suggested by Özgan that the difficult landscape of the region, which affects transport, daily life, and therefore the economy, caused this situation. Özgan 2008, 892.

29 The reliefs of Y1 and A3 are the earliest reliefs in the region and are dated to the 2nd cent. B.C. with the help of the inscriptions on them. Durugönül 1989, 83. 145.

30 Durugönül 2009, 68.

31 Durukan 2003, 234; Durukan 2005, 109; Durukan 2006, 111; Durukan 2007; Durukan 2009; Machatschek 1967, 106;

Machatschek 1974, 261; Wegner 1974, 581; Stillwel 1976, 821 f.; Hellenkemper – Hild 1990, 162; Aydınoglu 1998, 139; Spanu 1999, 371; Schneider 2003b, 263; Spanu 2003, 12; Yegül 2003, 66; Cormack 2004, 197–199; Söğüt 2005, 130 f.; Tekocak 2008, 134.

32 Sayar et al. 1992, 175; MacKay 1969, 41. 50.

33 Machatschek 1967, 46; Koch 2001, 25; Schneider 2003a, 453.

34 Machatschek 1967, 106; Machatschek 1974, 261; Wegner 1974, 581; Durukan 2003, 234; Schneider 2003b, 263; Cormack 2004, 197–199; Durukan 2005, 109; Söğüt 2005, 130; Durukan 2006, 111; Durukan 2007; Durukan 2009.

of the region, either carved on round altars or directly on the main rock as tomb reliefs, are dated to the 2nd–3rd cent. A.D.³⁵. As mentioned above, the seated statue from Çerçili is similar to some other reliefs in Eastern Rough Cilicia, especially to the seated rock-cut relief from Tapureli which depicts a 'philosopher', first of all in its composition and also partially in its stylistic aspects. This relief is dated to the end of the 1st cent. A.D. – beginning of the 2nd cent. A.D.³⁶. It is possible to suggest that the seated statue found in Çerçili (figs. 2, 3) was made in the 2nd cent. A.D. because of the mentioned similarities. A similar dating, to the end of the 2nd cent. A.D. – beginning of the 3rd cent. A.D. has been offered for the statues of the seated figures in the Silifke Museum, which can be compared with the seated rock-cut figure³⁷. Comparable free-standing seated figures are also found in other regions: a seated male figure found in Damascus in southern Syria also shows similarities to the ones from this region and is dated to the 2nd cent. A.D.³⁸.

The dating of architectural monuments supports the dating of seated statues found in their vicinity: similar vaulted monumental tomb examples with sarcophagi, next to which the seated figure of cat. 3 (figs. 7–9) was found, offer such an example and are dated to the 2nd cent. A.D. Other examples of this tomb type are also observed in the N4 necropolis of Elaiussa Sebaste³⁹ and in the ancient settlements in the internal parts of the region such as in Paşlı, Işıkkale, Sömek⁴⁰, Hüsametli, Barakçı, and Aslanlı⁴¹. All these examples date to the Roman period⁴². When it is considered that the tradition of using sarcophagi in the region started from the 2nd cent. A.D. onwards, then it is reasonable to think that the first use of this type of burials with sarcophagi within vaulted tombs also dates to this time period⁴³.

A similar dating is also suggested for the round altars in the region⁴⁴. It is possible to propose the same dating for the round altar with the seated figure in Güvercinlik, too. When all the data are considered altogether it would be right to suggest that the free-standing seated statues from the Kümbetbeleni and Güvercinlik settlements should be dated to the end of the 2nd cent. A.D. – beginning of the 3rd cent. A.D.

35 Durugönül 1989, 71; Özbay 2010, cat. 14, 15; Tepebaş – Durugönül 2013, 116–121.

36 Durugönül 1989, 108 f.

37 Durugönül 2003, 116 f.

38 Parlasca 1982, 13.

39 Machatschek 1967, 84.

40 Mörel 2014, 152, 167 fig. 5.

41 Durukan 2005, 120.

42 There are many comparable Roman examples from other regions. Just to give one example we can recall the one in Termessos. Kubinska 1968, pl. 17. Actually it is possible to find some early examples of these tombs but not in the Cilician Region. One of the best known examples derives from the Pamphylian region, from the ancient settlement of Lyrboton Kome belonging to the Hellenistic period. Çevik 1997, 87–89.

43 Durukan 2005, 119.

44 Durugönül 1989, 71; Kırdemir-Diler 2000; Kırdemir-Diler 2001, 71; Özbay 2010, cat. 14, 15; Tepebaş – Durugönül 2013, 116–121.

Abstract

Ahmet Mörel, One Unique and Three New Seated Figures from Eastern Rough Cilicia

The subject of this study, one rock-cut relief with a seated figure and three statues of seated figures, were found in the Olbian Territory. The rock relief and the three statues of seated figures, which are evaluated here for the first time, were found in surveys carried out around rural settlements. The rock-cut relief of the seated figure is situated in the Kaleboynu area of Çerçili village in Erdemli. The seated statues considered in this study were found in settlements that belong to Kümbetbeleni and Güvercinlik. When all the data are considered together it would be right to suggest that the free-standing seated statues from Kümbetbeleni and Güvercinlik and the rock-cut relief of the seated figure from Çerçili should be dated to the end of the 2nd cent. A.D. – beginning of the 3rd cent. A.D.

Keywords

Cilicia • Olbian Territory • seated figures • rock-cut relief • Roman Imperial Period

Sources of illustrations

Fig. 1: generated by A. Mörel using QuantumGIS software • Figs. 2–13: A. Mörel

Abbreviations

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