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REFERENCES

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- 1 Rather poorly preserved and carved on a boulder about 300 metres outside the ravine enclosing the five better-known Neo-Elamite reliefs at the open-air sanctuary of Kul-e Farah near Izeh, Kul-e Farah VI (KF VI) has tended to be overlooked or dismissed as an inferior quality production. In this article the author offers the first comprehensive description of the iconography of KF VI—a large-scale figure on a platform supported by platform bearers, followed by registers of worshippers of various statuses and a weapon-bearer—and integrates it with the other five reliefs in terms of composition, style, theme, costumes, and gestures. These elements together with the orientation of the figures towards the reliefs inside the ravine point to the incorporation of KF VI into the broader ideological program of the site, creating a stream of continuity in the performance of cultic ritual and feasting since the carving of the earliest relief, KF IV, up to two centuries earlier.
- 2 Three possible conclusions are drawn for the identity of the large-scale bearded male figure with an Elamite "visor" hairstyle and long garment, who stands on the platform making the "index finger-pointing" gesture: 1) a divine sculpture, 2) a high-status individual/ruler, or 3) a sculpture of a ruler. Since the figure is performing a gesture of worship and his headdress lacks the horns used to demarcate divinities, the first

possibility could probably be ruled out, leaving us with either a ruler or his image. Without explicitly saying so, the author also appears to dismiss the first option and conclude that elite groups must have co-opted the iconography of the divine statue on a platform for their rulers, and concludes, reasonably enough, that KF VI “unveils the articulation by the ruling class of well-established temple and urban/village-based rituals into a non-urban cultic natural setting”. Viewed within its overall context (natural setting and the existing reliefs) the ruler on the platform becomes the pivot for a series of rituals that assert, and reassert, the hierarchy of the society.

- 3 For the scholar interested in Achaemenid Iran, both KF VI and KF III (which probably precedes KF VI chronologically) are important because they offer forerunners for the “large-scale ruler atop a platform supported by platform-bearers” motif broadcasted on the façade of Darius’ rock-cut tomb at Naqsh-e Rostam. In fact, if Álvarez-Mon has correctly assigned KF VI a post-653 BC date based on shared traits with images manufactured during an “Elamo-Assyrian” artistic period linked to Assyrian intervention in the decades following the Ulai River battle of 653 BC, then KF VI would predate the Persian period by no more than a century or so.

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