Funerary Portrait Of A Palmyrene Priest

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ABSTRACT

This article presents the results of an examination of a sculpted portrait head from Palmyra (Syria) that was donated to Canterbury Museum in 1980. On the basis of a detailed study of the sculpture, it is proposed that it represents a priest and was originally attached to a funerary statue of a figure reclining either in a banquet relief or on the lid of a sarcophagus placed in one of Palmyra's many tombs. A third century CE date is suggested on the basis of facial features and attributes that accord with other portraits dated by inscriptions. Furthermore, this period was popular for the production of funerary banquet reliefs with figures carved fully in the round.

KEY WORDS

Palmyra; portraiture; funerary sculpture; tombs; priests.

INTRODUCTION

While on active service in Syria during World War Two, a New Zealand soldier purchased a sculpted marble head from the Hotel Zenobia in the ancient site of Palmyra (now Tadmor) in Syria. He brought this artefact back home to New Zealand and in 1980 donated it to Canterbury Museum in Christchurch. This article presents the key results of a study of this sculpture.[1] It describes and identifies the head, discusses its proposed original placement and function, and dates it according to stylistic analysis. This information will contribute to scholarship on Palmyrene sculpture and portraiture, and the head will be a new addition to the approximately 2,000 Palmyrene sculpted portraits held in museums all over the world.[2]

According to the soldier's notes on the purchase of this artefact, he was given the choice of two sculpted heads by an employee of the Hotel Zenobia.[3] He was told that one represented the renowned Zenobia, Queen of Palmyra in the third century CE, while the other represented her husband, King Odenathus. The soldier chose the supposed head of Odenathus, as the female head was damaged. Yet, the portrait bears no inscription or characterising features that could demonstrate that it represents Odenathus. Furthermore, no certain large-scale images of Odenathus have yet been discovered and therefore knowledge of his appearance is limited.[4] Such fictitious claims are commonly made by antiquities dealers as a selling tactic and as a way to increase the value of an artefact. The eagerness of archaeologists and scholars to find representations of royal personages also plays a part in propagating false identifications, as an incident in the nineteenth century exploits of William Wright reveals. During his exploration of the ruins of Palmyra (before any formal excavations had begun), Wright was intent on finding the statue of Zenobia that once stood on the bracket of a column in the

central colonnaded street, according to the surviving inscription. He encouraged the local workers to find the statue in the surrounding rubble by offering a reward. Since the workers were keen for the reward, they almost immediately found two sculpted female heads.[5] This story explains the eagerness with which portraits found out of context are identified as representing one or the other of the famed royal couple.

PALMYRA AND ITS PORTRAITURE

Palmyra is located in an oasis in the Syrian Desert, approximately mid-way between the Mediterranean and the Euphrates (Pl 1), and flourished during the first three centuries CE until its destruction by Aurelian in 272 CE. Palmyra's inclusion in the eastern part of the Roman Empire during these centuries transformed the appearance of the city, which acquired a new monumental aspect and all the typical amenities of Greco-Roman cities of the eastern Mediterranean (Pl 2).[6] This transformation was also a result of the wealth and prosperity of the Palmyrenes, who gained economically through involvement in the trade of luxury goods between the Parthian and Roman empires, and the natural resources of the city such as the Efqa spring, fertile soil and nearby sources of limestone and marble.

Besides financing building projects in the urban centre, the affluent inhabitants of Palmyra expressed their wealth and social standing by building monumental family tombs outside the city. Among the more than 150 tombs, three types exist.[7] The most monumental of these are the multi-storied tower tombs that are prominent in the landscape and are the earliest type of monumental tomb to appear in Palmyra (Pl 3). The earliest, the Tomb of 'Atenatan, was built in 9 BCE.[8] From around the end of the 1st century CE, hypogea (subterranean chambers) began to be constructed, solving the problem of space limitations. Finally, tombs imitating temples (*temple tombs* or *funerary temples*) became popular from around the mid-2nd century CE onwards, the best known being Tomb 86 at the end of the Colonnaded Street (Pl 2). Burial took place mainly in *loculi* (funerary compartments) in the walls, but also sometimes in sarcophagi (stone coffins). The dead were wrapped in cloth that had been soaked with resin.[9]

Several of the tombs are decorated with fresco paintings and stucco, such as the Hypogeum of the Three Brothers (140 CE).[10] However, most ubiquitous is the sculpture that adorns the tombs, mainly in the form of funerary portraits of the deceased. While portraits of Palmyrenes are also known in non-funerary contexts, such as in reliefs in sanctuaries or the honorific statues set up in the city centre, the largest corpus comes from the tombs.[11] The funerary portraits were an effective means by which individuals and families could display their social and cultural identities, and they provide scholars with a wealth of information on the lives of the Palmyrenes, their artistic developments, and their funerary practices and beliefs.

Most common are the portrait busts carved in relief on rectangular limestone slabs that sealed the *loculus* where the individual was buried (Pls 4 and 5). These portraits of men, women and children are fairly generic and are not realistic depictions of the individuals.[12] Rather, the identity of the deceased was conveyed through the inscriptions accompanying the portraits, and their attributes, clothing and gestures.[13] Women are often heavily adorned with jewellery and veils and are sometimes accompanied by their children, showing their roles as mothers, or by domestic items that recall their household duties.[14] Priests can be identified by their clothing, which conformed to a specific dress code, and also by the cultic objects and religious equipment they hold.[15] The iconography reveals important information about the individual's role in the civic and religious life of Palmyra. These memorials to the deceased, which also symbolised the essence or soul of the individual (*nefesh*[16]), sealed rows and rows of *loculi* in the walls and gave the tomb chamber the appearance of a portrait gallery.[17]

Funerary sculpture is also found in banquet reliefs or on the lids of sarcophagi, where the tomb founder or head of the family is seen reclining and accompanied by his (smaller) family members (Pl 6a-b).[18] The base of the relief or the sarcophagus itself is often modelled to represent a banqueting couch (*kline*) and sometimes contains further reliefs.[19] These sculptural groups often take the most prominent position in the tomb chamber and are aligned with the entranceway. Sarcophagi are often arranged in *triclinium* (three couches) form to recreate the banquet scene.[20] Banquet reliefs are also

found in prominent positions on the facades of tower tombs, such as on the Tomb of Kithôt dated to 40 CE (Pl 7).[21]

Notably, the reclining banqueters wear Parthian costume, including embroidered long-sleeved tunic, trousers and cloak (Pl 8), while the men in the relief busts are dressed in Greco-Roman attire including tunic and *himation* (outer garment/cloak).[22] This distinction has recently been explored by Maura Heyn, who stresses the various identities these individuals wished to portray, and in particular their role in religious and civic duties.[23] These differences also remind us of the various cultural traditions that influenced the local funerary sculpture in Palmyra, mainly Greco-Roman and Parthian, as a result of commercial and political relations. The idea of the portrait bust and many of its elements is in fact a Roman tradition, while the frontality, patterning and tendencies towards abstraction are typical of Parthian art.[24] The various features from these traditions were combined, through the medium of the Roman model, to create a new and unique type of portraiture that is distinctly Palmyrene and that expressed the prestige and cultural affiliations of the urban elite who had become wealthy under Roman rule.[25]

THE PALMYRENE HEAD IN CANTERBURY MUSEUM

Description

The Palmyrene head in the collection of Canterbury Museum, which is carved in marble, is 20.6cm in height, 9.5cm in width and 15.8cm in diameter and thus slightly under life size (Pl 9).[26] It has been broken off at the neck and reinforced with the addition of a mortar base, and has a large piece of stone still attached to the back (Pl 10). The object depicts a young man wearing the *modius* (6.5cm high), the cylindrical headgear of Palmyrene priests.[27] There are two vertical furrows carved into the front of the cap, and a laurel wreath surrounds the *modius* and contains a central rosette with six petals (Pl 11). Beneath the edge of the *modius* there is a continuous horizontal groove. The top of the cap is rougher than the rest of the face, which is ovoid and has an ageless and androgynous quality (Pl 9). The eyes are large, oval and not incised, but they have heavily defined eyelids, and the eyebrows, which are indicated by curved grooves, echo their shape. There is a clear

indication of tear ducts. The nose is aquiline and the lips are small and thin, with a slightly bigger lower lip. The neck has a curved line suggesting a fold of flesh. Although the *modius* covers most of the forehead, there is no indication of hair anywhere on the head. The ears are small and crudely carved. The left ear has the suggestion of an inner section and seems to be more finished than the right ear, which still has stone attached to the back of it (Pls 12 and 13). In fact, the right side of the head is less finished than the left. The blank band of the wreath continues further around the left side than the right, and the stone on the right side has an unfinished quality. There is a slight asymmetry in the face, indicating a slight turn of the head to the (viewer's) left.

The stone is a poor-quality marble with black veins, cracks, impurities and visible crystals.[28] Weathering has caused some yellowing all over the head, but generally its condition is excellent. A number of vertical and horizontal cut marks on the right side of the head reveal the white colour of the marble beneath. The vertical cuts are marks made by the original sculptor using either the flat or curved chisel, as Palmyrene sculptors seldom removed the marks of their tools.[29] The horizontal cuts are more like rough gashes, probably made later during removal of the head from its original context. Other signs of ancient tool-work are evident in the faint scratch marks covering the face, indicative of the curved chisel used for finishing work. Finally, there are red paint traces on the top of the *modius*, throughout the garland wreath, above the right ear and by the left vertical groove of the *modius*. Palmyrene sculpture was commonly painted and red was used abundantly, even to colour entire faces.[30] An unidentifiable rusty yellow mark on the left side of the chin may be a later intrusion.

In sum, the head illustrates the typical style of Palmyrene portraiture, with its large eyes, simplified features, blank expression, frontality, rigidity and lack of individualism.[31] Fortunately, the distinctive headgear provides us with clues as to the identity of the individual portrayed.

Identification

The individual portrayed in this sculpted head is unquestionably a priest given the *modius* or distinctive

cylindrical cap, which was worn only by Palmyrene priests.[32] Numerous sculpted examples of priests are known from funerary sculpture in tombs (Pl 6a-b) and reliefs from sanctuaries, in which they are shown performing religious acts, such as sacrifices.[33] Inscriptions accompanying images on *tesserae* (small terracotta squares used as admission tickets to sacred feasts) identify them as priests.[34] A similar priestly headdress was in use in Hellenistic Phoenicia, while a *modius*-like cap was a sign of dignity reserved for satraps (provincial governors in the ancient Persian empire).[35] Colledge identifies the two vertical furrows on the *modius* as seams, indicating an attached cloth, while the curved groove below represents a skullcap worn beneath.[36] Stucky suggests that the *modius* was made of felt.[37] Some *modii* were left unadorned, while others, like that on the head in question, were encircled with wreaths of laurel, olive or oak.[38] These wreaths were tied on with ribbons, as the undecorated band around the left side of the head suggests (Pl 13). Due to traces of gilding found on the wreath of one *modius*, Stucky believes that in reality the foliage of these wreaths was made of gold.[39] Some wreaths on *modii* carried medallions with miniature busts in them, either of priests or bearded men.[40] These miniature busts may have represented the priest's ancestors, or as Ingholt has suggested, may have marked status either within the city or the religious hierarchy.[41] Many wreaths carried a central rosette, a common Palmyrene floral motif, like the one found on the Canterbury Museum head.[42]

Scholars have debated the use of wreaths on *modii*, and several theories persist. Gawlikowski considers them to be the sign of apotheosis of dead priests, while Ingholt thinks they are signs of priestly dignity.[43] While Gawlikowski's theory is attractive, he has not considered those priests whose *modii* lack wreaths. Stucky believes the different foliage used on the wreaths indicates devotion to different gods.[44] He suggests that olive was for the priests of Baalshamin and laurel was for the priests of Bel, as these are most frequent both in the decorative foliage found on architectural features in sanctuaries and on the *tesserae* related to the different cults.[45] It is possible that the different wreaths signified ranks within the religious cult, such as the high priest or *symposiarch*. A relief from the sanctuary of Nebû supports this view, where a grandson places a laurel wreath on the *modius* of his grandfather, suggesting that

the wreath was an honour one attained.[46] Furthermore, a banquet relief from the Hypogeum of Artaban shows a priest about to be crowned with a wreath, again placing emphasis on the act of crowning.[47]

Every man who is represented wearing the *modius* is also beardless, and there is no indication of hair under the cap. Such a custom of shaving the head and face appears to have been common for these priests.[48] There are several men who are represented with a *modius* beside them on a cushion or pillar, but they are always bearded, such as the funerary relief bust of Iarḥai.[49] Ingholt suggests that these men belonged to a lower rank within the clergy, or else died before they were able to wear the *modius*, as all such images are in a funerary context.[50] However, these theories are difficult to prove given that so little is known of the structure of the priesthoods in Palmyra.[51]

The priests of Palmyra belonged to the city's various sanctuaries and enjoyed a high status within the community.[52] They are mainly represented as attending the cultic feasts (*marzēhā*) at the sanctuaries, which played an important social and political role, and performing sacrifices to the gods.[53] The former activity is indicated by *tesserae* and inscriptions, while the latter is shown in several reliefs, such as those from the Temple of Bel, where priests pour incense on the flame of a *thymiaterion* (incense burner).[54] The priests depicted in the funerary busts from the tombs hold other cultic objects related to religious duties such as laurel sprigs, bowls, *alabastra* (oil flasks), incense boxes, *unguentaria* (perfume bottles) and the *schedula* (a slip of papyrus).[55]

Original Context

Despite the poor quality of the marble of the head, the surface is well preserved and all the features are intact. It is likely that the sculpture originally stood inside, rather than outside, where it was protected from damage by the desert wind and sandblasting. Given the amount of funerary sculpture in Palmyra, it most probably originates from a tomb, where the atmospheric moisture gradually caused the discolouration. The stone mass at the back of the head appears to have been left there as a support and to prevent breakage at the neck. Its unfinished quality and the yellow discolouration throughout the stone support this view.

If it had been broken off a relief then the marble at the back would appear rougher and would be whiter than the rest of the head. The stone mass would not have been visible, since the head was meant to be viewed frontally. Similar stones masses are found on the back of priests reclining in banquet reliefs from the Tomb of 'Alainê and the Hypogeum of Shalamallat, where the figures are carved almost in the round.[56] Therefore, given these observations, and the size and form of the head, it is probable that it originates from the body of a priest reclining in a banquet relief or on the lid of his sarcophagus in a prominent position in the tomb.[57] As mentioned above, these sculptural groups were often reserved for the tomb owners and heads of the families, and were placed prominently at the back of the chambers in specially created niches, or on the facades of the tower tombs (Pls 6a-b, 7). The banquet relief, carved on a sizeable rectangular slab, sometimes also sealed a number of *loculi*. The main figure, usually a priest dressed in Parthian costume, typically reclines on a sculpted couch, with his right hand resting on his knee and his left hand holding laurel wreaths or banqueting items (Pls 6b, 8).[58] To his right, his family are usually depicted as smaller, subsidiary figures. In other examples, two priests recline together, as in the Tomb of 'Alainê.[59] Although we call these groups *reliefs*, the heads and shoulders of the figures are often freestanding.

These banquet reliefs were sometimes placed around three sides of the chamber to recreate a real banquet in triclinium form. Such an arrangement was also made with the sarcophagi that carried banquet reliefs on their lids.[60] This practice was especially popular in the third century CE, when sculptors began to carve the scenes on the sarcophagi lids fully in the round.[61] Representing the deceased as a reclining banqueter was a common motif in the ancient world.[62] In this way, the dead could be seen to enjoy the act of feasting for eternity. However, it is not clear whether their own funerary feasts are being recalled, or the cultic feasts they attended when they were alive.[63] Since priests are so often found in these banquet scenes, it is likely that they are linked to religious activities during their lifetime.[64] As suggested by the large amount of *tesserae* discovered in the sanctuaries, cultic feasts were important religious services in the city. Therefore, it is unsurprising that we find priests depicted in this act in their tombs.

We cannot be certain of more details of the original context of the head under discussion. What is certain, however, is that the main individuals portrayed reclining in the banquet reliefs were prominent and affluent members of Palmyrene society given the size of the sculpture, the contrast of the smaller, subsidiary figures, the position in the tomb and the inscriptions naming them.[65] It may be that these priests held the position of *symposiarch* (leader of the feasts) during their lifetimes, which subsequently accorded them such prominence in the funerary context.

Date

Ingholt was the first scholar to establish a dating system for the Palmyrene portraits based upon stylistic details and dated inscriptions.[66] Colledge later modified this classification, and this is still widely used in scholarship.[67] According to certain facial features and other details, the Canterbury Museum head belongs to Colledge's *Subdivision N* in Group Three, which would indicate that it was produced between 200 and 273 CE.[68] These features include the unincised eyes, the single curved grooves for the eyebrows and the presence of the tear ducts, which only appear on sculpted portraits after 150 CE.[69] Other indications that support such a date are the marks of the curved and flat chisel on the neck, which were commonly used tools in the third century CE, as well as the appearance of the laurel wreath, which only occurred after 140 CE.[70] Furthermore, as mentioned above, the third century was the most popular period for the production of funerary banquet reliefs with figures carved fully in the round.[71]

CONCLUSION

The Palmyrene head at Canterbury Museum represents a priest and was probably produced in the third century CE. It was originally attached to a figure reclining either in a banquet relief or on the lid of a sarcophagus placed in a central position of a tomb at Palmyra. As is indicated by numerous other examples, these figures of priests held banqueting utensils and wore an elaborate, brightly painted Parthian outfit. They were normally part of a group sculpture with family members, and had an inscription providing a name and a date. The affluence of this priest is suggested by the size of the sculpture and the use of marble. As a priest, he would have enjoyed a high status within Palmyrene society and played an

important religious, social and political role in the life of the city. One such duty was participation in the sacred banquets, which this priest enjoyed for eternity by being represented in a banquet scene in his tomb.

END NOTES

[1] Research for this article initially occurred as part of the author's BA (Hons) thesis in the Department of Classics at the University of Canterbury in 2002. I am most grateful to my supervisor, Alison Griffith (University of Canterbury) and to Roger Fyfe (Senior Curator, Canterbury Museum) who made the sculpture available for study. I would also like to thank the following scholars for their help and advice during this research: Waleed Asa'ad, Khaled Al-As'ad, Lidewijde de Jong, Susan Downey, Robert Duff, Elisabeth Fontan, Maura Heyn, Norton Hiller, Ted Kaizer, and Doug Neil. In addition, I would like to acknowledge the National Museum of Damascus for their helpful comments on the artefact, and Keble College (University of Oxford) for funding a trip to study the Palmyrene funerary sculpture at the Ny Carlsberg Glyptotek, Copenhagen, in 2008.

[2] A project has recently been initiated at the University of Aarhus to catalogue and study all known Palmyrene funerary portraits as one corpus: http://projects.au.dk/palmyraportrait/project/.

[3] Related Documents, EA1980.282, Canterbury Museum.

[4] We know that a statue of Odenathus was erected in the main Colonnaded Street in Palmyra according to a surviving inscription on one of the columns: *CIS* ii.3946. Ingholt (1976, 115) identified two sculpted heads as representing Odenathus (one from the Ny Carlsberg Glyptotek in Copenhagen and the other from the Archaeological Museum in Istanbul) due to their monumentality and regal countenance. However, the unknown context and lack of epigraphic evidence make such an identification difficult to prove (Ploug 1995, 227; Hartmann 2001, 87). For the life and career of Odenathus, see Smith 2013, 131; Yon 2002, 143-150; Gawlikowski 1985, 251-261.

[5] Wright 1895, 127-130.

[6] Heyn 2010, 631.

[7] A lengthy bibliography exists for Palmyrene tombs. For a summary of recent scholarship, see Saito 2005, 151-153. Gawlikowski (2005, 44-73) also provides an up-to-date review of the tomb architecture. See also Schmidt-Colinet 1997, 159-170.

[8] Gawlikowski 2005, 47.

[9] Gawlikowski 2005, 50; For burial practices in the tombs, see Saito 2005.

[10] Colledge 1976, 198-199, pls 115-118.

[11] Colledge 1976, 89.

[12] Colledge 1976, 62; Morehart 1956-57, 75.

[13] These inscriptions, mainly written in Palmyrene Aramaic, record the name of the deceased, his or her ancestors and usually a date. They have not only enabled scholars to trace the development of the sculpture, but also allowed the formation of genealogical tables of Palmyrene families, for example see tables in Bounni & Sadurska 1994. For clothing and gestures, see Heyn 2008 and 2010.

[14] See for example the funerary portrait of Aqmê with her children (Istanbul 3751): Colledge 1976, 187, pl 83; Heyn 2010, 635-636.

[15] See for example the funerary portrait of the priest Wahballat (Toronto Royal Ontario Museum 425): Colledge 1976, 82, pl 66.

[16] Colledge 1976, 58; Gawlikowski 2005, 53.

[17] See an image of the reconstruction of the Tomb of Iarhai in Browning 1979, 199, pl 140.

[18] For discussion, see Colledge 1976, 73-78.

[19] Heyn 2008, 175-176.

[20] Gawlikowski 2005, 54.

[21] Will 1951, 70.

[22] See for example Heyn 2008, 171, pl 6-1.

[23] Heyn 2008, 170-193.

[24] Colledge 1976, 138; Heyn 2008, 170, 172; 2010, 634. For Roman funerary portraits, see Kleiner 1977; Ingholt 1954; Seyrig 1950, 4. For a discussion on the development of Palmyrene sculpture, see Morehart 1956-57, 52-83.

[25] Heyn 2010, 635, 644.

[26] The width was taken at the widest point around the ears. The top of the head measures 37.5cm in width, while the bottom measures 29cm.

[27] A *modius* is originally a Roman grain measure, but the term is used by modern scholars to describe these caps due to similarities in appearance.

[28] While most of the Palmyrene sculpture is carved from limestone, the quarries of which are 15 km north-east from the city (Schmidt-Colinet 1995, 53), marble was also available from quarries in the region of as-Sukkari and Bazurieh, 22 km to the south (Bounni & al-As'ad 1982, 128-129). Dodge (1988, 223) describes this marble as one of poor quality, with crystals varying in size and black veins running throughout, that weathers to a honey colour. This description matches the condition of the stone of our head. The identification as marble was also confirmed by Norton

Hiller, former geologist of Canterbury Museum.

[29] Colledge 1976, 111.

[30] Colledge 1976, 119. For example, there is a head of a priest painted with a red face and red wreath, and black pupils, eyebrows and cap in the Palmyra Museum (Cat 111, 1959).

[31] Morehart 1956-57, 75-76, 79; Colledge 1976, 218.

[32] Colledge 1976, 140; Taha 1982, 119; Kaizer 2002, 235-236.

[33] For example on reliefs from the Temple of Bel: see Colledge 1976, 36, Fig 14.

[34] Ingholt et al. 1955. For images of priests, see Pls 35-36.

[35] Stucky 1973, 176.

[36] Colledge 1976, 140.

[37] Stucky 1973, 172.

[38] For types of *modius*, see Colledge 1976, 246.

[39] Stucky 1973, 173.

[40] Many examples of such wreaths can be found in the Ny Carlsberg Glyptotek Museum in Copenhagen (for example Ploug 1995, 167 Cat no 66, 104, 236).

[41] Ingholt 1934, 34, n 27. Such wreaths with medallions are also found on the heads of men without *modii*. Ingholt suggests they are symbols of distinction given by the city or by religious authorities.

[42] For another example, see the 2nd century CE bust of a priest (Cat No. 23) from the Hypogeum of Artaban: Bounni & Sadurska 1994, 28, fig 70.

[43] Gawlikowski 1966, 76; Ingholt 1934, 35. For more recent interpretations, see Rumscheid 2000, 93-108.

[44] Stucky 1973, 178.

[45] Stucky 1973, 179. See also discussion in Heyn 2008, 188-190.

[46] Colledge 1976, 41 Pl 21 (Palmyra Museum 2228/7957); Stucky 1973, 167.

[47] Heyn 2010, 641, Pl 8; Bounni & Sadurska 1994, 184,

[48] Heyn 2008, 184.

[49] Colledge 1976, 86, pl 79 (Louvre 2398).

[50] Ingholt 1954.

[51] Kaizer 2002, 258.

[52] For discussion on the Palmyrene priesthood, see Kaizer 2002, 234-243.

[53] Kaizer 2002, 165, 221-229, 235, 257.

[54] Seyrig 1934, 154-86, pls 18, 23; Heyn 2008, 186.

[55] For example Heyn 2010, 642, fig 10 (Pittsfield, Massachusetts, Berkshire Museum, inv no. 1903.7.2). See Heyn 2010, 642-643.

[56] Tanabe 1986, pl 398.

[57] Parlasca notes how the heads were often knocked off such reliefs to be sold on the antiquities market. He

refers to the head of a priest that once originated from a sculptural group atop a sarcophagus lid: 1995, 69-70, pl 12.

[58] A well-preserved example can be seen outside the Palmyra Museum: Heyn 2008, 173, pl 6-2. For the costume of the banqueters, see Heyn 2008, 183-189.

[59] Sadurska & Bounni 1994, 172-179.

[60] For example in the Tomb of Maqqai (229 CE): Colledge 1976, 194, pl 102.

[61] Colledge 1976, 77; Heyn 2008, 181-183.

[62] See Heyn (2008, 182) for discussion of the banqueting motif.

[63] Colledge 1976, 132.

[64] Heyn 2008, 181-183.

[65] Heyn 2008, 182.

[66] Ingholt 1928.

[67] Colledge 1976, 245-264.

[68] Colledge 1976, 251-252. For other priest heads from banquet reliefs belonging to this chronological group, see Ploug 1995 (nos. 104, 105, 106, 107, 108, 109, 110, 111).

[69] Colledge 1976, 69.

[70] Colledge 1976, 111, 140.

[71] Colledge 1976, 77, 241.

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Pl 1: The Near East and Egypt (Map by A Wilkins).

Pl 2: Temple Tomb no 86 at the end of the Colonnaded Street, Palmyra (Photograph by L Wadeson).

Pl 3: Tower tombs in the 'Valley of the Tombs', Palmyra (Photograph by L Wadeson).

Pl 4: Loculi (burial compartments) in a Palmyrene tomb (Photograph by L Wadeson; courtesy of Palmyra Museum).

Pl 5: Mid-2nd century AD funerary portrait of a man, Palmyra (Photograph by A Kropp; courtesy of Palmyra Museum)

Pl 6b: Banquet group (detail) in the Tomb of Borpha and Bôlhâ, Palmyra (Photograph by L Wadeson; courtesy of Palmyra Museum).

Pl 6a: Banquet group in the Tomb of Borpha and Bôlhâ, Palmyra (Photograph by L Wadeson; courtesy of Palmyra Museum).

**Pl 7:** Banquet relief on the Tomb of Kithôt, Palmyra (Photograph by L Wadeson).

Pl 8: Reclining banqueter in Parthian costume in the Tomb of Elahbêl, Palmyra (Photograph by L Wadeson; courtesy of Palmyra Museum).

Pl 9: Palmyrene sculpted head (front view), Canterbury Museum (Courtesy of Canterbury Museum).

Pl 10: Palmyrene sculpted head (back view), Canterbury Museum (Courtesy of Canterbury Museum).
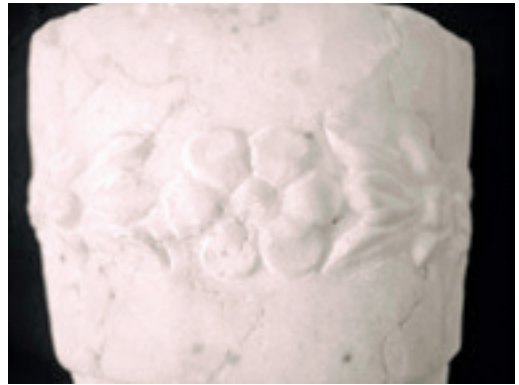
Pl 11: Palmyrene sculpted head (detail of wreath), Canterbury Museum (Courtesy of Canterbury Museum).

Pl 12: Palmyrene sculpted head (right side), Canterbury Museum (Courtesy of Canterbury Museum).

Pl 13: Palmyrene sculpted head (left side), Canterbury Museum (Courtesy of Canterbury Museum).