Book of abstracts

Funerary Portraits in Greater Roman Syria

15-16 June 2017
The Royal Danish Academy of Sciences and Letters,
Copenhagen, Denmark

Organisers:
Michael Blömer
Rubina Raja

UrbNet,
Aarhus University

http://urbnet.au.dk/events/2017/funeraryportraiture/

UrbNet
CENTRE FOR URBAN NETWORK EVOLUTIONS

Danmarks Grundforskningsfond
Danish National Research Foundation

ELITE FORSK

AARHUS UNIVERSITY

2

Hierapolis-Manbij, Funerary bust, Max von Oppenheim, 1911, Hausarchiv des Bankhauses Sal, Oppenheim.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

4

OUTLINE

In many regions of the Near East a surge in the sculptural habit can be found from around the 1st century CE. In particular, a sudden and explosive rise in the production of funerary sculpture can be observed from the late 1st century CE onwards. The best known and most outstanding example is Palmyra, where thousands of funerary reliefs depicting the deceased were produced in the 1st/2nd/3rd centuries CE. However, the trend in Palmyra was not an isolated phenomenon. Roughly contemporary with the beginning of the production in Palmyra, large quantities of funerary sculpture were produced in Zeugma and Hierapolis. Furthermore, funerary steles are known from rural areas of North Syria and Central Syria, from Emesa and Epiphanea, the Hauran, Lebanon as well as the Decapolis region. Portraiture found its way into the funerary sphere and in many places became an integrated part of how individuals were honored and remembered in more or less public and private settings. The portraiture from the Roman period in Greater Syria, however, is quite diverse. Some portrait traditions display provincial traits, latching on to the fashions which were current in contemporary Roman portraiture, while other places, most prominently Palmyra, show strong local developments in a portraiture style, which cannot be termed as provincial. These portrait traditions will at this event be discussed within a regional setting based on case studies of the various traditions, including the funerary traditions and monuments, in the regions within Greater Syria.

The aim of the conference is to provide an up-to-date survey of locally produced funerary sculpture and the funerary traditions from the regions of ancient Syria in order to bring new perspectives into play in the academic debate. The main focus will be on funerary reliefs and sculpture, but in order to get as holistic a picture as possible statues in the round, busts, funerary mosaics and paintings will be taken into consideration as well. This is an important undertaking, since until now few attempts have been made to merge local and regional studies in Syrian sculpture in order to develop an integrated transregional picture of sculptural development and funerary iconography in the Roman Near East. The presentation and discussion of material from as many regions as possible will facilitate on the one hand the identification of mutual influences, interconnections, and iconographical analogies.

On the other hand, it will give the opportunity to recognize boundaries and breaks between traditions (chronologically and regionally), regional differences and insular phenomena. A number of other research questions related to funerary sculpture in Syria are also desirable to address. In particular, it seems worthwhile to reconsider upon which models the sculpture and its iconography has been based. While it can hardly be denied that Roman impact has fostered the reintroduction of the sculptural habit in numerous places, it is less certain to what degree locally produced sculpture can be directly linked to actual Hellenistic or Roman archetypes. The often cited influence of early imperial funerary reliefs from Rome and Italy, for example, seems questionable and needs to be revised in the light of new knowledge and material. Funerary steles of Roman soldiers in the Near East are frequently cited as another source of inspiration, but the influence of this large group of monuments on the local perception of funerary commemoration has not been studied in any detail so far. Apart from tracking external influences, regard to indigenous traditions that shaped local funerary sculpture and its iconography should also be paid.

Furthermore the original contexts of the funerary sculpture in Syria should be taken into consideration in order to comprehend the thoughts behind the original set-ups/contexts. Funerary sculpture was inherently part of the decoration of a tomb monument. Thus, the types of the various tombs would strongly have influenced the shape, the size and also the design of the sculpture displayed in a tomb. This interconnection between the function and form of funerary sculpture has often been neglected.

PROGRAMME

THURSDAY 15 JUNE 2017		
8:45-9:15	Registration and coffee	
9:15-9:30	**Welcome** Michael Blömer and Rubina Raja	
9:30-10:00 10:00-10:30	**Shifting the Paradigms: Research on the Funerary Portraiture of Greater Roman Syria** Michael Blömer and Rubina Raja Discussion	Chair: Kenneth Lapatin
10:30-11:00 11:00-11:30	**Syrians in a Greek Dress? Antiochene Identity and Funerary Reliefs** Andrea DeGiorgi Discussion	Chair: Michael Blömer
11:30-12:00 12:00-12:30	**Talking Images: Family Graves in the South Necropoleis in Zeugma** Kutalmış Görkay Discussion	
12:30-13:30	Lunch	
13:30-14:00 14:00-14:30	**Being Different from Others: About Women´s Clothing in Northern Syria Depicted on Funerary Reliefs from Hierapolis/Manbij and Zeugma** Jutta Rumscheid Discussion	Chair: Rubina Raja
14:30-15:00 15:00-15:30	**Funerary Sculpture from the North Syrian Hinterland** Michael Blömer Discussion	
15:30-16:00	Break	
16:00-16:30 16:30-17:00	**Public and Funerary Portraiture in Palmyra: Portrait Habits at a Cross-road** Rubina Raja Discussion	Chair: Kenneth Lapatin
17:00-17:30 17:30-18:00	**The Portrait Mummies of Roman Egypt as Vehicles of Personal Commemoration at the Tomb** Christopher Hallett Discussion	

18:00-18:30 18:30-19:00	**Female Funerary Portraiture from Palmyra, Syria** Signe Krag Discussion	
19:00	Drinks at the Royal Academy, followed by dinner in town	

FRIDAY 16 JUNE 2017:		
9:00-9:30 9:30-10:00	**Attic Funerary Portraiture in the Roman Period** Sheila Dillon Discussion	Chair: Michael Blömer
10:00-10:30 10:30-11:00	**The Designs of Soldiers' Gravestones in Roman Syria: Imports and Impact** Michael A. Speidel Discussion	
11:00-11:45	Lunch	
11:45-14:30	Long break Visit to Ny Carlsberg Glyptotek (speakers)	
14:30-15:00 15:00-15:30	**Petrified Memories: On Some Funerary Portraits from Roman Lebanon** Bilal Annan Discussion	Chair: Kenneth Lapatin
15:30-16:00	Break	
16:30-17:00 17:00-17:30	**Roman Period Portrait Habit in the Funerary Sculpture of Northern Jordan: Local and Foreign Influences and their Implications** Achim Lichtenberger – Rubina Raja Discussion	
17:00-17:30	Final discussion - Recap	
18:00	Dinner in town	

ABSTRACTS

Apameia, Funerary stele, Apameia Museum.

Shifting the Paradigms: Research on the Funerary Portraiture of Greater Roman Syria

Michael Blömer (Aarhus University)
michael.bloemer@cas.au.dk

Rubina Raja m(Aarhus University)
rubina.raja@cas.au.dk

Our paper aims at identifying and discussing new avenues of research that may further our understanding of the formation and articulation of local funerary sculpture of ancient Syria from a trans-local perspective. Many regions of this vast area developed distinct modes and styles of funerary representation, but at the same time it is possible to identify recurrent patterns and motifs that occurred in different parts of Syria. It is, however, surprising that so far few attempts have been made to study the variety of locally produced funerary sculpture of ancient Syria in a holistic and comparative way. One reason is the frequent assumption that the funerary portraits are local responses to global trends created in the imperial centres rather than, in the first place, genuine expressions of local identities and regional cultural affiliations. Accordingly, the proximity to or deviation from Roman imperial art has attracted more attention than regional interconnections and networks. This needs to be revised. The reconsideration and disentanglement of the interplay between local, regional and global trends in the funerary portraiture has the potential to significantly change our understanding of the development of local sculpture in the Roman Near East.

Other aspects need to be factored in more consistently as well in the study of funerary representations, such as the agency of the past and the understanding of the local situations in a diachronic perspective. Moreover, funerary portraits should not be considered as isolated monuments, but within their original overall setting. Local tomb types and burial rites clearly had an impact on the format and the design of funerary sculpture. The material used for the production of portraits affected the style of the final product, too. Finally, it is necessary to overcome modern political boundaries that frequently obstructed the study of local portraits of Roman Syria. To get the full picture, the funerary traditions of all parts of ancient Syria need to be taken equally weighted.

10

Syrians in a Greek Dress? Antiochene Identity and Funerary Reliefs

Andrea DeGiorgi (Florida State University)
adegiorgi@fsu.edu

Eighty-five years ago the Antioch excavations of Princeton University and affiliates gathered a wealth of finds that, albeit complicated, offers glimpses of a city that played a key role in the shaping of politics and cultures in the Greek and Roman East for more than a millennium. Mosaics, glass, ceramics, sculpture: these are but some poignant fragments of a long narrative of settlement, adaptation, ingenuity, and cultural transformation. For all their controversies -not least the hastiness and inadequacy of their documentation- these artifacts nevertheless speak to us of the daily routines of the Antiochenes and illustrate what life was like on the ground. Recently, the New Committee for the Excavation of Antioch and its Vicinity has taken up the challenge to publish hitherto overlooked artifacts. It also purports to re-examine excavation data and rectify provenience/context information for discrete classes of finds. My study of a small corpus of grave stelai stems from this initiative and brings into sharper focus the problem of funerary imagery at Antioch insofar as it addresses questions about iconography and preservation of memory. Whether the construing of the images and the wording of the epitaphs may signal funerary habits that reflect a corporate identity is the question at stake. Additionally, I probe the stelai's visual idioms in an effort to chart the dialogue between the local figurative culture and external traditions, as well as the means with which Antioch was part of a broader network of shared visual repertoires.

Talking Images: Family Graves in the South Necropoleis in Zeugma

Kutalmış Görkay (Ankara University)
kgorkay@ankara.edu.tr

Roman houses in Zeugma, well-known for their mosaics, belonged to owners of varying social status, including tradesmen, Roman governors, and veterans. Homes were the domain of private life where in cultural, official, ethnic, and social identities of their owners became evident. Mosaics probably associated the house owners with intellectual and mythological themes that they could directly and creatively choose for projecting a certain image to their guests. Yet it was with their graves that their claim of cultural and familial identity had to be fit into existing templates portraying their specific cultural and ethnic identities and indicating their social status. The necropoleis of Zeugma, which were erected around the ancient routes that intersected in the city and connected it with many other major cities, represent the multiplicity of socio-cultural identities that existed at the juncture of those heavily used routes.

A variety of burial customs were manifested in the necropoleis between the late third century BCE and the third century CE, while some graves were reused until the fourth century CE. An accumulation of various burial types coexisted, corresponding to the demands of the cosmopolitan population of this frontier city at the crossroads. In these graves, the carved identities and self-representations are various. They follow the iconographic conventions of East Greek and North Syrian sculpture as well Roman funerary portrait sculpture from the western Roman world. Many grave chambers were designed as a triclinium, emulating the reception room of the house in which the deceased members of a family had lived their most joyful moments with acquaintances. A grave chamber in the south necropolis is a good example of this phenomenon. The chamber was designed as a triclinium which is entered through a vestibule. This is also a typical scheme of the reception rooms of houses in Zeugma. The vestibule in the houses is functioned as a salutatory anteroom for guests participating in the convivium in the triclinium. In the vestibule of the grave however the portrait statues of deceased family members salute the visitors. Many of the portrait statues set up in the vestibules of the grave chambers in the South Necropolis at Zeugma are shown wearing chiton and himation, appropriate costumes for new Roman citizens in the Greek east, indicating a culturally specific self-representation of educated elite. Large number of bust portraits of women who are Semitic in origin, are represented through ethnic dress and bodily adornment which are visibly and publicly communicated in their carved images.

(Cont. from previous page)

The graves in the South Necropoleis are “domus aternea” of large families as well as their whole household and they functioned as a family memorial where descendants and the family members, even perhaps their slaves would refresh their memory and their ancestral identity by visiting these sculpturally decorated memorials during funerary banquets on special days. Therefore, the portrait statues of the deceased family members in the graves communicate with the whole living household “tota domus” and not only speak about memory of the family but also shed light on cultural and social transformation of the “familia” in successive periods.

Being Different from Others: About Women's Clothing in Northern Syria Depicted on Funerary Reliefs from Hierapolis/Manbij and Zeugma

Jutta Rumscheid (Universität Bonn)
j.rumscheid@gmx.de

As in numerous scholarly studies about funerary monuments in Roman provinces described, clothing and hairstyle of men usually followed those of the Imperial House, while several women, depicted on funerary reliefs of eastern as well as of western Roman provinces, rather stick with local traditions. Based on the funerary monuments at Hierapolis and Zeugma clothing, headgears and hairstyles of the women will be presented and compared. Examples which are owned by museums and private collection outside Syria will also be considered. In order to emphasize the regional differences of the headgears, it is necessary to show some examples of headgears of women at Edessa/Osrhoene, Hatra and Palmyra. Beyond the depicted portraits their attributes provide further information. Finally an attempt will be made to answer the question about the cultural influences.

14

Funerary Sculpture from the North Syrian Hinterland

Michael Blömer (Aarhus University)
michael.bloemer@cas.au.dk

Research in the funerary sculpture of ancient Syria very often focusses on the large urban centers, whereas the rural areas are rarely considered as production centers in their own right. However, in order to better understand the dynamic interplay of local identities and trans-local trends in the creation and proliferation of funerary iconographies in Roman Syria, the study of sculpture from rural areas provides important additional data. As a case study, I will examine the funerary sculpture from the drainage basin of the Sajur River, a fertile region along the border between Syria and Turkey. The area was densely occupied in antiquity and we can easily trace a network of villages thriving in the Roman and Late Roman period. Over the last decades, about 70 funerary steles have been recovered from this region, most of which are now in the Gaziantep Museum. They date to the 2nd century CE and represent a very distinctive group of funerary sculpture. On the one hand, they are influenced by the funerary sculpture of the neighbouring cities of Zeugma and Hierapolis. On the other hand, they display specific characteristics that appear to be rooted in to local traditions. Moreover, the visual culture of the region displays certain traits that are also characteristic for other rural areas of Central and South Syria. Therefore an examination of the funerary sculpture from the Sajur region offers the opportunity to highlight the local, regional and supra-regional entanglements of indigenous communities of Syria in the Roman period.

Public and Funerary Portraiture in Palmyra: Portrait Habits at a Crossroad

Rubina Raja (Aarhus University)
rubina.raja@cas.au.dk

The habit of setting up portraits in the private, public and funerary sphere was well-known in Palmyra from the first century CE onwards. The Palmyrene funerary portraiture constitutes the largest corpus of grave portraits from one single site in the ancient world. Within the Palmyra Portrait Project a corpus of these, amounting to more than 3,000, has been collected. The public and private realm in Palmyra constitute a different case, since the state of preservation is much less good than in the funerary sphere. Funerary portraiture in Palmyra was produced for approximately 300 years and 3 percent of the portraits are dated by inscriptions, which give a unique opportunity to study the development of these portraits over time. It has often been claimed that these portraits were provincial portraits, which only adhered to Roman fashions and trends. However, when studying the complete corpus of these portraits it becomes clear that they had a trajectory of their own, which did not centre on outside models and trends exclusively, but was in dialogue with local traditions as well as portrait traditions from the east. This paper will focus on setting out lines of enquiry into these portraits as a group of their own as well as consider the question about whether Palmyra could have been the centre for transmission of the portrait habit in the Roman period to other regions in Greater Syria.

The Portrait Mummies of Roman Egypt as Vehicles of Personal Commemoration at the Tomb

Christopher Hallett (UC Berkeley)
chrishallett@berkeley.edu

In the Roman period the tendency to individualize or "personalize" the Egyptian mummy (or its case), which had to some extent always existed in Pharaonic culture, became much more pronounced. The process culminated in the creation of the "portrait mummy", or "portrait shroud" which carried a vividly painted representation of the deceased, and showed him or her in contemporary clothing. Such portraits included considerable personal detail—right down to the rendering of individual hairstyles (and styled beard for mature men), and to fashion jewelry and extravagantly colored garments for women.

What were the aims or goals of this "personalization" of the mummy? Specialists have repeatedly asked whether these Roman portrait mummies may have been intended to be displayed and viewed differently from earlier mummies. For it has been suspected that Roman mummies were starting to acquire a more distinctly commemorative function—something close to the kind of personal commemoration we find in the funerary monuments of other areas of the Roman empire.

In this paper a number of different interpretations of the Roman portrait mummy will be considered, and some of the competing interpretations assessed, with the aim of arriving at a fuller and more nuanced understanding of the evidence.

Female Funerary Portraiture from Palmyra, Syria

Signe Krag (Aarhus University)
skrag@cas.au.dk

The ancient city of Palmyra, located in modern Syria, has revealed the largest quantity of funerary portraits of men, women and children in Greater Syria. This paper will address female funerary portraits from the city. The portraits were produced from the late first century BC to the third century AD and were once situated within monumental funerary buildings surrounding the city. The funerary portraits are highly diverse counting loculus reliefs, stelae, banquet reliefs, sarcophagi, freestanding sculptures and wall paintings. The Palmyrene portrait tradition and the variety in the funerary portraiture are explored including the context in which the portraits were once situated.

Frequently the Palmyrene funerary portraits are approached as highly provincial; however, the portrait tradition has an exceedingly local character drawing little on fashions seen in Hellenistic and Roman portraiture as well as in Greater Syria. It is thus especially interesting to look into the strong portrait style which developed in Palmyra itself. An evaluation of fashions and influences in the female portraits, whether local Hellenistic, Roman, or from Greater Syria, is undertaken to gain a broader understanding of the Palmyrene portrait habit and to explicitly bring forth the local characteristics.

18

Attic Funerary Portraiture in the Roman Period

Sheila Dillon (Duke University)
sheila.dillon@duke.edu

Funerary portraiture in Athens has an astonishingly long history. From the kouroi and korai of the Archaic period to the figural stelai of the Roman period, we can trace the representation of individual identities, the iconography of the family, and the visualization of collective civic norms across many centuries. In fact, sculpture from the realm of the dead presents the largest genre of visual evidence for understanding how the people of Athens saw themselves and – perhaps more to the point—how they wished to be seen and to be remembered by others. This paper focuses on the evidence for Attic funerary portraiture of the Roman period, including newly created figural stelai, statuary found in funerary contexts, and re-used funerary monuments from the Classical period; Attic grave reliefs that show women in the dress of Isis are also a particularly important local phenomenon. I survey the formats that Roman-period funerary monuments took, the range of costumes and figural types, and the styles of the portrait heads. While recent research on Attic grave stelai of the Roman period has suggested that the reintroduction of figural funerary monuments was due to influence from Italy, I maintain that the local Athenian context and local history are more salient. In addition, although Roman metropolitan hairstyles are typically used as a yardstick against which to evaluate Attic funerary portraiture, particularly in the case of women, I argue that earlier Classical and Hellenistic funerary portraiture were a more important source of inspiration for the appearance and style of these later monuments. Even those Attic funerary portraits that do follow metropolitan Roman hairstyles are probably better seen as representing their subjects as fashionably up-to-date, rather than as communicating a particularly Roman charge to their viewers. In sum, I aim to show that the local context and the local audience are key to the interpretation of Attic funerary portraiture in the Roman period.

The Designs of Soldiers' Gravestones in Roman Syria: Imports and Impact

Michael A. Speidel (Universität Zürich)
mspeidel@sunrise.ch

Roman soldiers had set ideas about their gravestones. Thus, for instance, it mattered very much where their funerary monuments stood. For, as a general rule, their gravestones were expected to address either the soldier's native community at home or the community of his fellow soldiers from near and far. A remote battle field or a road through the countryside may have been a place to die and get buried, but not one to set up a funerary monument. For the design of their epitaphs, soldiers also had a set of iconographic choices and standard formulations in Latin and Greek at their disposal that were popular with the military throughout the Empire. At the same time, however, young men at the age of recruitment are likely to have joined the Roman army with a fully developed cultural imprint from their various native regions. Moreover, Roman soldiers were always (if to varying degrees) embedded in the local society and culture of their garrison places. The paper therefore addresses three questions: how did the many different cultural influences combine to impact on the development of soldiers' gravestones in Roman Syria? Did soldiers' gravestones influence the local production of funerary sculpture and funerary traditions? Or was the opposite more important: were local funerary customs and iconographic traditions responsible for significant traits of Roman soldiers' gravestones in the Roman Near East?

20

The Funerary Portrait and the Sepulchral Contexts of "Roman" Sidon

Helen Ackers (Duke University)
helenackers24@gmail.com

Situated on the coast of modern Lebanon the ancient Phoenician city of Sidon remains on the outskirts of mainstream 'Roman' archaeology. Sidon is most frequently discussed in relation to its Phoenician and Hellenistic histories and even when its later Roman history is considered, its cultural outputs are largely viewed through this 'Hellenic' lens. This historiography is in large part understandable if one considers the heady cultural legacy of Sidon, its fantastic Hellenic material culture, such as the sarcophagi from the rulers of Sidon's tomb complex, or the ancient Phoenician history of the city. Nevertheless, Sidon was an important centre in the Roman Near East and, as Jong notes, the assumption that Roman cultural influence in this area was limited to the military and economic sphere must be questioned (2010, 598). It is for this reason that the funerary art and tombs of Sidon provide an important opportunity to understand the cultivation of cultural identities in this region during the Roman period.

In contrast to the Hellenistic Royal tombs, the necropolises of Sidon commemorate a larger and socially diverse sector of Sidonian society. The scale of sepulchral options reflects this economic and cultural diversity: from grand imported marble sarcophagi and painted tombs to more modest stelai. The focus of this talk will be the use of portraits, dating between the first to third centuries AD, within these funerary contexts. I will consider what material, workmanship, inscriptions and iconography can tell us about the cultural identity of the commemorate, dedicate and craftsperson. I will discuss these portraits within the context of the Sidonian tomb, considering how the portrait interacted with and contributed to other elements of funerary ritual and commemoration. I will also briefly consider how my findings relate to broader regional 'trends' as expressed in the rock-cut tombs, hypogea and sarcophagi of Tyre, the Bekaa valley and the Roman colony and regional centre Berytus. Just as it may be too readily assumed that Sidonians defined themselves purely in terms of their Hellenic history the utilization of portraits in funerary contexts may be too simplistically interpreted as symbols of 'Romanisation'. In this paper, through understanding how funerary portraits were used in Sidonian tombs, I hope to problematize the historiographical polarization of Near Eastern material culture into 'regional'/'Hellenic'/'Eastern' or 'Roman' and arrive at a more historically relevant interpretation.

Female Funerary Portraiture from the Coastal Region of Roman Syria

Karl-Uwe Mahler (Johannes Gutenberg-Universität Mainz)
kumahler@gmx.de

Due to its geographic location and frequently changing zones of political influence, the Phoenician coast was coined by various cultural influences mirrored in portraiture to a greater or lesser extent. In order to deal with the complex phenomenon of female funerary portraiture and its respective regional traditions, we need to take a cross-genre approach to the existing archaeological evidence from that region. The spectrum to be examined includes painted grave steles and grave reliefs, sarcophagi, as well as busts and statues.

Particularly in the case of the latter material group, however, a problem arises: finding spot and finding context are frequently unknown. In Beirut, for example, some female portrait statues typologically resembling the Herculaneum Women cannot be restricted to certain types of usage and can be found in different contexts. In individual cases, an unequivocal connection to a grave context can therefore be neither presumed nor negated. On this account and because of the fact that there is only a small number of Roman female portrait heads in this region, portraits on sarcophagus lids like the ones from Tyros shall be included into the examination. It should be considered, however, that this different genre might feature different elaboration processes. Against this background, it will be necessary to examine in how far the chosen genre and thereby its related specific functional context has contributed to the form of the sculptures. The chosen materials, be they valuable and imported like marble or locally existing rocks like limestone, are another category which could have had an impact on the form.

If occasionally there are cases among the mentioned examples in which it is hard to determine whether it was imported or locally produced, especially steles and reliefs will be able to provide further information. Iconographic characteristics and particularly elements of the attire point to local traditions. On the basis of, for example, the pillar tombstone from Qartaba, the alternation of Roman influence and indigenous forms shall be discussed.

22

Petrified Memories: On Some Funerary Portraits from Roman Lebanon

Bilal Annan (Institut français du Proche-Orient)
b.annan@ifporient.org

While funerary portraiture is documented in the Phoenician cities established on the coast of modern Lebanon as early as the Persian period, and throughout the Hellenistic era, when portraits of the dead were to be found adorning anthropoid sarcophagi or painted stelai in Sidon, the habit of fixing one's image on one's funerary monument gained effective momentum in this region during the Imperial period, and more precisely in the second and third centuries C.E., a period which has given us a wealth of such documentation.

In this presentation, we will examine the extant funerary portraits originating from coastal cities such as Tripoli, Berytus, Sidon and Tyre, as well as documents hailing from Heliopolis and Niha in the hinterland. The resulting corpus of portraits strikes us by its rich variety, both in terms of techniques and iconography. Images of the deceased are indeed attested on sarcophagi, both imported and of local manufacture, stelai, funerary busts, mural paintings, statues, rock-cut reliefs, cippi and on a Sidonian mosaic. Furthermore, while the "Totenmahl" motif was certainly favoured in the Imperial period, denoting opulence and a cosmopolitan lifestyle, the patrons of such commemorative artefacts would often rely on a wide range of alternative motifs (Normaltypus, funerary bust, paideia, etc.) to convey their social standing and worldly achievements.

The interest of these portraits also lies in the relatively abundant Latin or Greek inscriptions that accompanied them, and which often provide us with precious details of their professions, social positions, religious beliefs and self-ascribed identities.

Finally, we shall strive to determine the original architectural setting of these funerary portraits, in an effort to resuscitate the viewers' lived experience and understand the manners in which such images were incorporated into funerary rituals and would serve the commemorative ends for which they were designed.

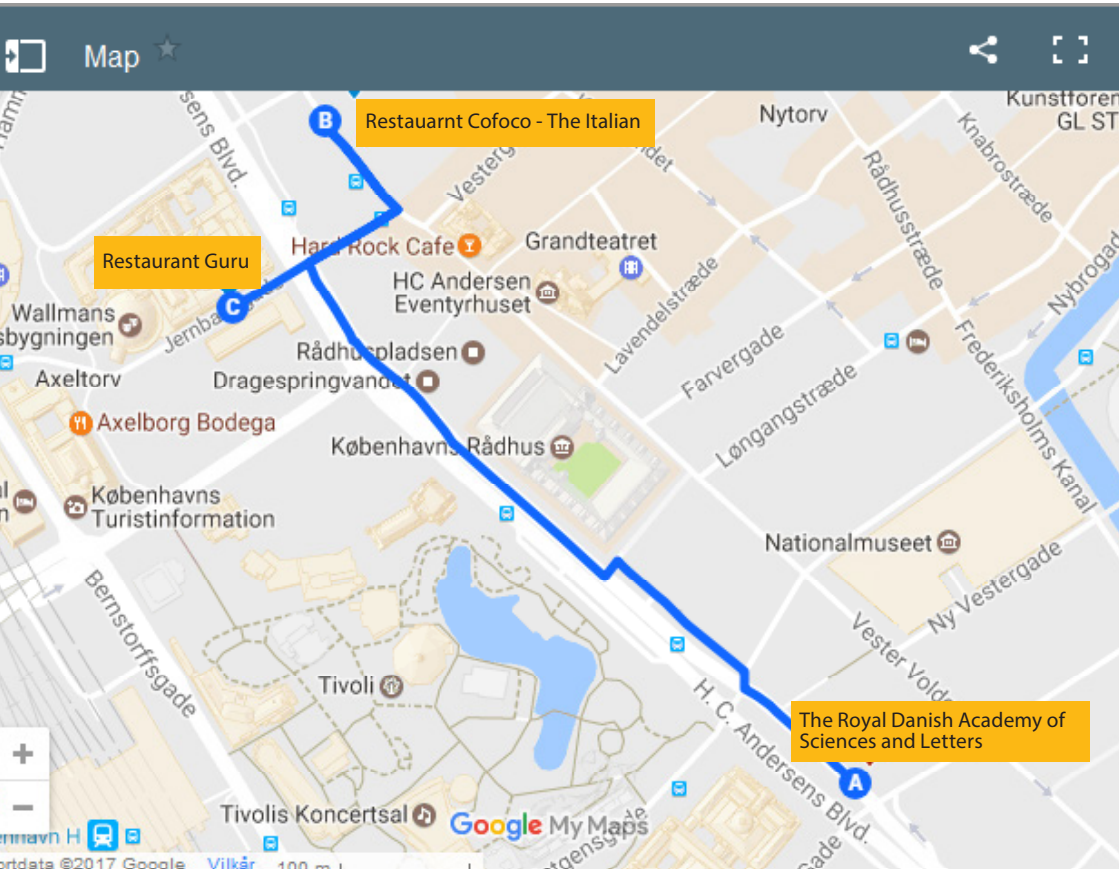
Roman Period Portrait Habit in the Funerary Sculpture of Northern Jordan: Local and Foreign Influences and their Implications

Achim Lichtenberger (Westfälische Wilhelms-Universität Münster)
lichtenb@uni-muenster.de

Rubina Raja (Aarhus University)
rubina.raja@cas.au.dk

Funerary portraiture in the Near East has become a topic of discussion in the last years' of scholarship once again. However, the funerary sculpture of Northern Jordan has received little attention in this connection. There are several reasons for that. For one the sculpture, often in the shape of funerary busts, are not of what we perceive as a high quality and secondly it has not been collected in a corpus and thirdly a strict typology and chronology of the sculpture does not exist. Nonetheless this portraiture, which it was, no matter the quality, deserves attention as a group of its own. The genesis of the portrait habit in the realm of the funerary sphere needs to be investigated in more detail in order to understand the mechanisms behind the rise to this habit, which caught on, although not as strongly as for example in Palmyra. The spread of this tradition of depicting the deceased in the Roman period in bust shapes on stone stelae or reliefs should be understood within a regional and local tradition of adaptation of impulses coming from other leading centres of the region and not exclusively from Rome itself. In this paper considerations on means of transmissions and adaptations will be made as well as a discussion of development of the funerary portrait habit in the region of Northern Jordan in the Roman period.

SPEAKERS' DINNERS



Thursday 15 June at 20:00
Restaurant Cofoco - The Italian
Vester Voldgade 25, 1552 København V

Friday 16 June at 18:00
Restaurant Guru
Jernbanegade 3, 1608 København V

ORGANISERS

Assistant Professor Michael blömer
Aarhus University

Phone: +45 8716 2543
Email: michael.bloemer@cas.au.dk

Professor Rubina Raja
Aarhus University

Phone: +45 2718 8390
Email: rubina.raja@cas.au.dk

Website:
http://urbnet.au.dk/events/2017/funeraryportraiture/

Funerary stele from Emesa, Archaeological Museum Damascus Inv. 3097.

Hierapolis-Manbij, Funerary stele, Max von Oppenheim, 1911, Hausarchiv des Bankhauses Sal, Oppenheim.

Funerary portraits from Palmyra, 1884, John Henry Haynes, Wolfe Expedition, Cornell University Library, J. R. Sitlington Sterrett Collection of Archaeological Photographs.

Funerary portraits from Palmyra, 1884, John Henry Haynes, Wolfe Expedition, Cornell University Library, J. R. Sitlington Sterrett Collection of Archaeological Photographs.

Funerary Portraiture in Greater Roman Syria
Organised by Michael Blömer and Rubina Raja (UrbNet, Aarhus University)

Book of Abstracts, published May 2017
Editors: Michael Blömer, Christina Levisen and Rubina Raja

Front cover: Funerary stele from Hierapolis, Max von Oppenheim, 1911, Hausarchiv des Bankhauses Sal, Oppenheim
Back cover: Funerary stele from Hierapolis, Max von Oppenheim, 1911, Hausarchiv des Bankhauses Sal, Oppenheim

Printed in Aarhus, Denmark (SUN-Tryk, AU)