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## 6. THE CONTRIBUTION OF THE PALMYRA PORTRAIT PROJECT TO RESEARCH ON THE EPIGRAPHY OF PALMYRA

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**ABSTRACT** This paper presents a review of recent publications on Palmyrene epigraphy. First, it gives examples of Greek and mostly Aramaic inscriptions from Palmyra discovered before 2010, or preserved in museums around the world, some never published before. Second, it underlines the contribution of the Palmyra Portrait Project to epigraphy. Initially dedicated to the study of portraits and funerary sculptures, the project has proved to be an important tool for our knowledge of the epigraphy of ancient Palmyra. For instance, it could lead in the coming years to breakthroughs in the research on the palaeography of the inscriptions of Palmyra.

**KEYWORDS** Palmyra; inscriptions; Aramaic; Greek; Latin; Roman Empire; Syria (ancient)

### Introduction

Some years ago, in Warsaw at a conference organized in memory of Khaled As'ad, I presented the projects relating to the epigraphy of Palmyra at a moment when fieldwork had been impossible for five years — and unfortunately the possibility of fieldwork is still very remote.<sup>1</sup> At that time, the Palmyra Portrait Project was at its beginning. Now that several volumes related to the project (most prominently Harald Ingholt's diaries and his

archives)<sup>2</sup> have been published and that the corpus itself will soon be published, this conference is a welcome opportunity to review what has been done on the epigraphy of Palmyra in the last years. I will thus summarize recent research on epigraphy,<sup>3</sup> drawing attention to some key facts and issues, before presenting with a few details the contribution of the publications made in relation to the Palmyra Portrait Project.

To follow up on the questions presented in the conference invitation, some topics and lines of enquiry which deserve future research must be underlined as well. One example that springs to mind could be the necessity to improve our knowledge of palaeography. New research on this area, possibly expanded to other regions of the Near East, could help to grasp the chronology of Palmyrene epigraphy in a better way and thus have an impact on prosopography or social history.

<sup>2</sup> Raja, Steding, and Yon 2021, II, 1799–1806 for the inscriptions published for the first time in the diaries, with pp. 1813–17 containing an index of personal names; Bobou and others 2022, 1848 for a list of unpublished inscriptions.

<sup>3</sup> Following the publication of *PAT* in 1996, and that of the corpus of Greek and Latin inscriptions (*IGLS XVII.1*), which gives the Aramaic part of bilingual and trilingual inscriptions, two papers have collected most of the Aramaic material absent from *PAT* or published after 1996: al-As'ad, Gawlikowski, and Yon 2012; Yon 2013. As an annex to the present paper, I give some corrections to the latter.

<sup>1</sup> Yon 2022a. All thanks are due to Rubina Raja and to the ever-efficient team of the Palmyra Portrait Project (PPP) for the invitation to contribute to the project and for their help, without which this contribution could not have been possible.



Figure 6.1. Greek late antique inscription of Nonnos (photo by author © CNRS Hisoma, Lyon).

### Summary of Recent Research on Epigraphy

#### New Texts from Palmyra and Excavations

In the last ten years or so, most new texts have been published in the context of the publication of earlier excavations, as is the case of the results of Syrian excavations around 2010,<sup>4</sup> the survey of the Palmyrene excavation by the Norwegian team,<sup>5</sup> or again of the survey for the *IGLS XVII.2* (Palmyrene territory). During this last survey, very few new documents have been found. As an example, one can include a late inscription, close to a quarry on the outskirts of Palmyra. The reading is clear enough, with three crosses followed only by the personal name Νόννος (Fig. 6.1).<sup>6</sup>

The inscription is carved on a flat limestone surface, not far from which signs of the exploitation of the quarry in (Late?) Antiquity were still visible, with traces of extracting instruments. The region is situated east of the quarries investigated by Andreas Schmidt-Colinet,

<sup>4</sup> al-As'ad 2013 (only translation of the texts); al-Hariri 2013, 150: ḤBL YDY'BL WML' ḤWHY BNY 'QRBN (Alas, Yedi'bel and Malé his brother, the sons of 'Aqraban); 150: ḤBL ZBYD' BR | ŠM'WN 'QRBN (Alas, Zebidâ son of Šim'on 'Aqraban); ḤBL | TQYM | BRT | ŠHYBY (Alas, Tuqim daughter of Šuḥaibi).

<sup>5</sup> e.g. Meyer 2017, 110, fig. 136, and 187, fig. 276 (the inscriptions, difficult to read and interpret, have not yet been transliterated nor translated).

<sup>6</sup> Dimensions: 20 × 186 cm. Seen in April 2010. Note the ligature between the double N and the last O. See now Yon 2022a, 543–44. No place has been made here for discoveries of inscriptions related to Palmyrenes (traders?) in the surroundings regions, especially on the routes to and from Arabia, in present-day Jordan or Saudi Arabia: see for some recent examples Briquel-Chatonnet and Desreumaux 2018 (Saudi Arabia), Gorea 2023 (Jordan).

north-east of the city, and north of the modern road going to Sukhne.<sup>7</sup> The lesson to be learned from this is that the Palmyrene territory, too, has evidence of the Christian era, and although there were still potential sites there, they were already in grave risk before the war. A neighbouring quarry was being worked on by excavation equipment at the time the Nonnos inscription was found, and a rock at the entrance to the quarry had Palmyrene Aramaic and Safaitic texts engraved on it.

One of the major publications of the works done before 2010 was indeed the volume written by Michał Gawlikowski on the Polish excavations of the Temple of Allat, with an important chapter on epigraphy which includes all the inscriptions discovered in the area.<sup>8</sup>

Likewise, some new Greek and Aramaic inscriptions were discovered by the Italian team during their excavations in the western part of the city, between the Great Colonnade and the wadi.<sup>9</sup> They deserve mention, particularly for a new attestation of an *epimeletes* of the spring, in relation with the god Iaribôles/Yarḥibôl.<sup>10</sup> Two altars were discovered as well, but only one of them was sufficiently preserved to be read: it was dedicated to 'the one who is blessed forever' by a Palmyrene called Bôlmâ son of Yarḥaî.<sup>11</sup>

<sup>7</sup> Schmidt-Colinet 1995; 2017; 2020.

<sup>8</sup> Gawlikowski 2018.

<sup>9</sup> Grassi, Rocca, and Piacentini 2015.

<sup>10</sup> The text is the following (Grassi, Rocca, and Piacentini 2015, 9): [- - -]O[.]ἐπιμελητ[- - -]πηγ[ης ἰ]πὸ Ἰαριβ[ωλου - - -] | μιν[ὸς - - -].

<sup>11</sup> Grassi, Rocca, and Piacentini 2015, 19–20: LBRYK ŠMH L'LM' | RḤMN' ṬB' WTYR' | 'BD WMWD' 'LT' D[H] | [B]WLM' BR YRḤY B[R] | [...Ḥ'HY[- - -] (To the one whose

Due to the situation in Syria, the Direction générale des antiquités et des musées de Syrie (DGAMS) has often published on its website information on confiscated material, among which Palmyrene sculptures and inscriptions figured prominently. They were not publications in the proper sense, but they gave evidence of plundering made on the site after 2010 and of the thriving trade in Palmyrene sculptures.<sup>12</sup>

Trade in Palmyrene antiques has roots in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, with pieces scattered in numerous collections around the world, from Syria to Europe and the Americas. Among them, quite a surprising number are still unpublished, as evidenced by recent publications. I shall give only a few examples.

### The Question of Antiquities Trade

This ubiquity of Palmyrene culture raises the issue of looting and of unpublished objects smuggled out of Syria in recent years. This can be rather problematic in some cases, and this question has been dealt with by Jeremy Hutton when he published reliefs destroyed by ISIS in Mambij. His very clear position must be compared with that of papyrologists.<sup>13</sup>

Situations are very diverse: in the case of the small collection published by Gaby Abou Samra in 2015, the Palmyrene reliefs and inscriptions, some of them bilingual, were part of a private collection acquired before 2010, which was already in Lebanon in 2005, and was recently in the Nabu Art Museum in Ras Chekka el Herri near Tripoli.<sup>14</sup> No information is available on the provenance or the condition of discovery.

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name is blessed forever, the merciful, good, and compassionate, this altar was made in thanksgiving by Bôlmâ son of Yarḥai son of - - -).

<sup>12</sup> Most of the photographs available in 2016 on the DGAM website have now been removed.

<sup>13</sup> Compare Hutton 2017 and Nongbri 2022. Of the six portraits, only three have a partially readable inscription. Hutton 2017, 75, no. 1: ḤBL | Ḥ[GY] BR | QRDWN | BR Ḥ[RY] | ḤGGW BR | YRḤY ('Alas, Ḥaggai son of Kerdôn freedman of Ḥagegû son of Yarḥai', the restoration of l. 2 is highly uncertain); 79, no. 6: ML' | BR | 'T'QB | ḤBL (Malê son of 'Ate'aqab, alas!); on p. 78, no. 3, only the name of the woman 'YT' ('Aitâ) written vertically is visible on the available photographs. See Hutton 2021, 101–04, nos 9, 11, and 14.

<sup>14</sup> Abou Samra 2015. Note the corrections made by Gawlikowski 2020, 170. See as well Yon 2022a, 545 n. 9: the name NḤR' on one of the stelae is obviously NṢR' (Abou Samra 2015, 240–41) and the foundation inscription dated AD 95 has the name of one Elahbel son of Malkû son of Ḥairan Ḥanatê (ḤINT' not ḤILT', as in Abou

The situation is different for a stela with a standing young man now in the Adana Archaeology Museum in Turkey.<sup>15</sup> Thanks to the Ingholt Archive, it is possible to show that the sculpture was already in Adana Archaeology Museum at an early date, probably in the 1970s (if not earlier), as evidenced by the reference on Ingholt's sheet to the book of Stark published in 1971.<sup>16</sup> Likewise, the collection of the Kunsthistorisches Museum in Vienna has already known reliefs, as well as pieces published for the first time in 2010 by G. Plattner, which came to the museum in 1895. They mostly escaped notice, except from Ingholt.<sup>17</sup> Even Ingholt did not know about three busts in the Picardie Museum despite their arrival in the collection in 1927,<sup>18</sup> nor about a bust in the Vatican Museums, where it was already in 1937.<sup>19</sup> In the same manner, a female bust in the Pushkin State Museum in Moscow entered the collection in 1929; it was not noticed until 1990, when Klaus Parlasca published a photograph, but the inscription itself was only put in print in 2018.<sup>20</sup>

The description is sometimes less precise, as in the case of a bust with an inscription acquired in 2011 from a German auction house, which acquired it itself from

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Samra 2015, 224). A cousin of Elahbel would have been Ḥairan son of Yaddai son of Ḥairan Ḥanatê of *PAT* no. 0002 (dated AD 106).

<sup>15</sup> Laflı and Healey 2021.

<sup>16</sup> PS 572 (the contribution of Healey was published too late to be considered in Bobou and others 2022, 716–17). The personal names are not preserved. Healey ('with some reserve and hesitation', Laflı and Healey 2021, 233) reads 'Li[šamš] son of Rab[el]. Alas!'. The R on l. 3 is clearly dotted on the photograph of Healey. It was not visible on the photograph or on the copy available to Ingholt, who reading from a photograph supposed the patronym could have been 'DB, attested just once in Palmyrene epigraphy (Stark 1971, 2). Alternatively, BR + short personal name on l. 2 and RB' 'The elder' on l. 3.

<sup>17</sup> Plattner 2010, 170, no. 8 (PS 257): BR' BR ZBYD' ḤBL ('Bar'â son of Zebidâ, alas!', written vertically); p. 162, no. 2 (PS 389) is very badly preserved.

<sup>18</sup> Bel 2005. Only one of them is inscribed, p. 68: TYM' BR | NS' ḤBL (Taîmê son of Nesâ, alas!).

<sup>19</sup> Krag, Raja and Yon 2019, 94, no. 10: YRḤY | BR' | ḤBL (Yarḥai Bar'â, alas!).

<sup>20</sup> Parlasca 1990, fig. 2; inscription by Lyavdansky 2018, 105–12: 'MT' | BRT 'TY | ḤBL (Amatâ daughter of 'Attaî, alas!). L. 2: Lyavdansky has 'TW, which is a possible reading. The same author gave the first edition of the inscription of a female bust referred to by Ingholt (1928, 144, see PS 459), with a rather uncertain reading: Lyavdansky 2018, 118, BLT' BNT 'Ḥ | ZBDBL ḤB<L> (Beltâ - - - Zabdibel, alas!). L. 1: BNT could be a mistake for BRT 'daughter of' or the Arabic word with the same meaning. Lyavdansky 2018, 118, translates BNT 'Ḥ as 'daughter of Aḥ' or 'daughter of brother'.

a French collection of the 1960s.<sup>21</sup> The same is true for the bust of a priest, bought in Switzerland before 2014 reputedly from ‘a French collection previously in Beirut (Colonel E. Ronde, Saint-Cyr)’.<sup>22</sup>

But often a history of provenance is given, as in the case of a bust donated to the museum in Bilbao by a collector who had bought it in 1996 from an earlier collection acquired in 1972 at an auction in New York with references to an earlier collection again, in Minneapolis.<sup>23</sup> There is no reason to doubt this, but it is nevertheless interesting to note that as often the earliest secure provenance is around 1970, that is prior to 24 April 1972, the date of entry into force of the 1970 UNESCO Convention on the Means of Prohibiting and Preventing the Illicit Import, Export, and Transfer of Ownership of Cultural Property.<sup>24</sup> In any case, thanks to the Palmyra Portrait project database, it is possible to confirm this background as the bust was already in Minneapolis before 1928, the date of Ingholt’s book.<sup>25</sup>

In the case of a double bust from Kansas City in the permanent collections of the Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art,<sup>26</sup> the date of acquisition is later than 1972. Nevertheless, it seems the piece had already been removed from Syria and purchased in the United States around 1965.<sup>27</sup>

Due to greater attention to this kind of issue, most of the recently published Palmyrene inscriptions are unproblematic, with often well-known history. The two busts published by Fred C. Albertson have been in American collections for a little less than a century.<sup>28</sup>



Figure 6.2. Squeeze of a late antique funerary inscription for Ouranios (photo by author © CNRS Hisoma, Lyon).

<sup>21</sup> Nebe 2014, 97: ṢLM | HRMS | ḤBL (Image of Hermes, alas!).

<sup>22</sup> Jenni 2014, 203–08: - - - | ‘GYLW’ | ḤBL (- - - ‘Ogeîlû, alas!). The priest depicted is presumably the son or the grandson of one ‘Ogeîlû.

<sup>23</sup> Corzo Sánchez 2016: TYRDT | BR YRḤY | BR MQY | ‘B’ ḤBL (Tīridat son of Yarḥai son of Maqqai ‘Abbâ, alas!).

<sup>24</sup> On the date and ethical issues involved, see Hutton 2017, 72–73; Cussini and others 2018, 231.

<sup>25</sup> Ingholt 1928, 100 n. 9, PS 192 (= Ingholt 2021, 228–29 n. 9).

<sup>26</sup> Hutton and others 2018b (Kansas City): (on the left side) ‘TNWRY BR | MQYMW | BR ‘TNWRY (‘Atenûrî son of Moqîmû son of ‘Atenûrî); (on the right side) ‘LYT BRT | YDY‘BL | ‘ḤLḤYS ‘TTH (‘Aliyat daughter of Yedi‘bel Aḥalaḥîs, his wife). The last personal name remains unexplained: the Greek name Ἀχελώϊχος is too rare to be considered here. See Hutton 2021 as well, 99–100, no. 7.

<sup>27</sup> Hutton and others 2018b, 282–83.

<sup>28</sup> Albertson 2012, 154–57: NWR‘TH | BR RBY | ḤBL (‘Nûr‘ateh son of Rabbaî, alas!; vertical inscription); 158–59: [-

It is the same for the three busts published by Eleonora Cussini and others in 2018. Accession numbers with 1894 and 1902 refer presumably to the date when the reliefs were bought by the Harvard Art Museums.<sup>29</sup> Related to the American collections are two stelae with representations of standing women in the archaeological study collection of the American Academy in Rome.<sup>30</sup>

- H/Ṣ]Y | [BR]T | ḤBYB’ | ḤBL ([...H/Ṣ]Y daughter of Ḥabîbâ, alas!), with l. 1 illegible on the available photograph. See Hutton 2021, 93–94, nos 1–2.

<sup>29</sup> Cussini and others 2018, 232: ML’ | BR | MQY | ḤBL (Malê son of Maqqai, alas!); ṢLM ḤYRN BR | NS’ ḤBL (Image of Ḥairan son of Nesâ, alas!). In the last inscription, l. 2, Hutton, Greene, and Bonesho read NS’, whereas Cussini has BS’ (on the same page of the paper), which is less convincing. The first letter looks different from the two other ‘B’s of the text (BR and ḤBL). Pp. 234–35: ‘MTLT | BRT | ṢLM | ḤBL (Amatallat daughter of Ṣalam, alas!). See Hutton 2021, 106–08, nos 17–19.

<sup>30</sup> Hutton and Klein 2018, 30–35: MZBT’ | BRT GRM | ḤBL (Mezabbattâ daughter of Geram, alas!); 35–38: ḤBL ‘QM’ (Alas, Aqmê). See Hutton 2021, 105–06, nos 15–16.

In addition to the artefacts originating from Palmyra and present in various museums, an important source on the epigraphy of the city is constituted by the documents kept in the archives. The first that comes to mind is the extensive archive of Ingholt, but other collections are important too, like the large collection of squeezes held by the *IGLS* programme in Lyon. It includes among other things a squeeze of a late antique Greek funerary inscription found in 1961 west of the Palmyra municipality, near the post office (north-west of the archaeological museum). It was not in the Palmyra Museum's storerooms between 1990 and 2000, when the *IGLS* volume was being elaborated (Fig. 6.2).<sup>31</sup>

Other unpublished inscriptions can be found in different collections of archives, in the French Institute at Beirut (archive of Cantineau) and Damascus (photographic archive), or in the Académie des inscriptions et belles-lettres in Paris (Cabinet du corpus).

### New Studies of Previously Known Documents

Since 2010, if publications of new inscriptions have been rare, studies of previously published texts have been more numerous. First mention should be made of the major new book by Aleksandra Kubiak-Schneider based mostly on epigraphic material. *Dédicaces sans théonymes* gives a very interesting corpus of religious inscriptions with a complete commentary.<sup>32</sup> Another small corpus is the paper of Constantin Klein on the inscriptions of the AUB.<sup>33</sup> It ranks well with other, more scattered publications of small collections in different museums. The goal of the major project headed by Jeremy Hutton, the Wisconsin Palmyrene Aramaic Inscription Project (WPAIP), is to recollate the corpus of Palmyrene Aramaic inscriptions, providing detailed photographic records and new editions, in addition to the publication of new

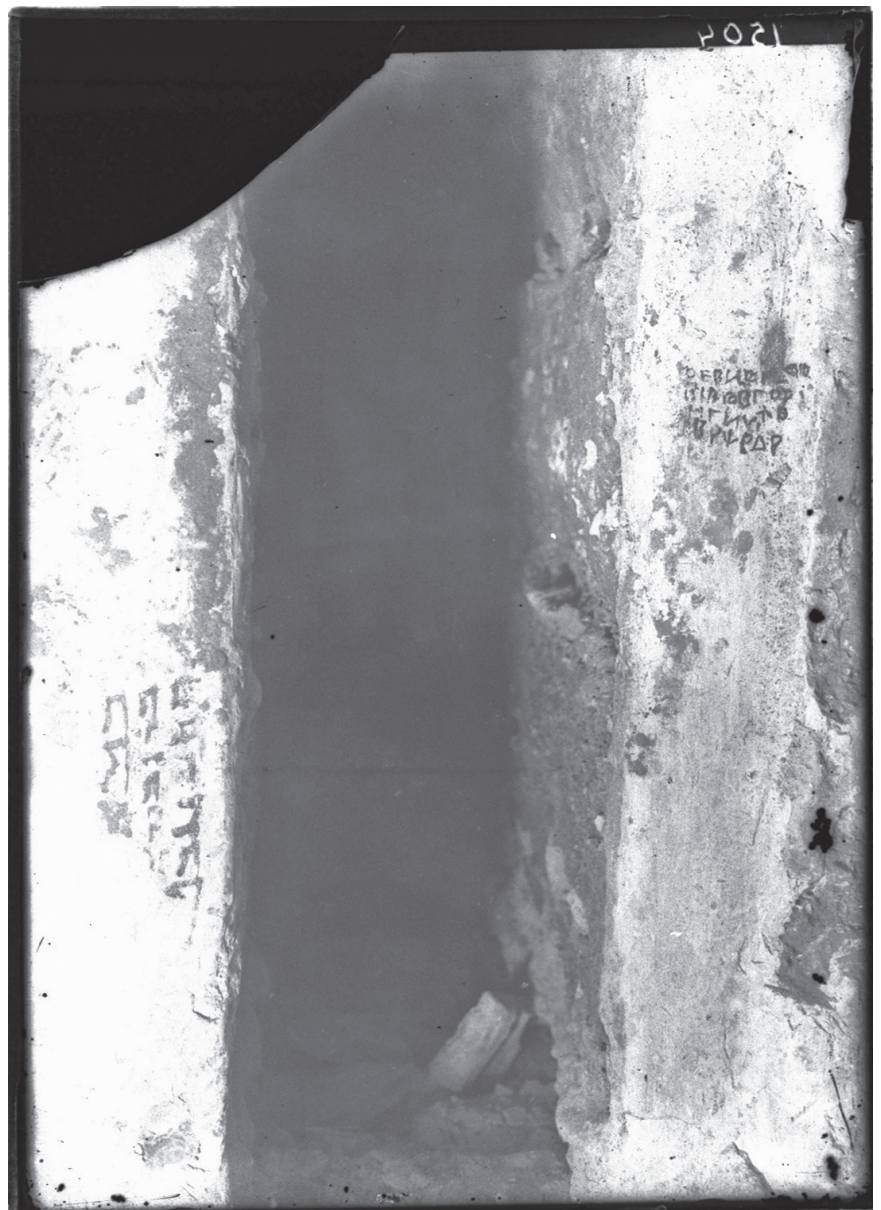


Figure 6.3. Two graffiti from the Tomb of Dionysos (© Photothèque Institut français du Proche-Orient).

inscriptions. This collective work has had impressive results, with various collaborations on inscriptions in the North American museums, but also in Durham,<sup>34</sup> or even inscriptions from Palmyrenes outside of Palmyra (i.e. Romania),<sup>35</sup> and has been materialized by a flow of publications.

<sup>31</sup> Squeeze 700021 (12 January 1961): Ἀναπαύση | Οὐρανίου  
ωμ|α' ἔτ(ους) μη(νός) Γορ(πιαίου). † (May (the Lord) grant rest to  
Uranius, in the year 841, in the month of Gorpaios (September  
AD 530)). See now Yon 2022a, 548.

<sup>32</sup> Kubiak-Schneider 2021.

<sup>33</sup> Klein 2018.

<sup>34</sup> Previously published inscriptions in American or European museums: Greene, Heyn, and Hutton 2012 (Minneapolis); Hutton and others 2013; 2018a, Atwood and others 2018 (Pittsfield); Pruet, Greene, and Hutton 2021 (Saint Louis); Hutton 2018 (Belgrade); Hutton and Kaizer 2022 (Durham).

<sup>35</sup> Harvey, Hutton, and Pruet 2021; Hendricks and others 2019; Hutton and Greene 2016; 2018. Hutton 2019 is the publication of a new text, an ostrakon: 'GN? (the fourth letter is difficult to identify), with a probable reference to a 'symposion' (*PAT*, p. 334).

Figure 6.4. Page 101 of Diary 1 (1924)  
(© Palmyra Portrait Project, Ingholt  
Archive at Ny Carlsberg Glyptotek).

Other projects have dealt with Palmyrene epigraphy; one of the most useful is undoubtedly the translation from Russian of Shifman's edition of the *Tariff* thanks to the work of John Healey.<sup>36</sup> The recent book on the famous painted 'Tombeau des trois frères' presents a new edition of already published inscriptions, and a mention of barely readable texts on the mythological paintings.<sup>37</sup> Last, but not least, the textbook of Eleonora Cussini, *Tadmorana*, is a welcome addition.<sup>38</sup> This very commendable contribution offers an anthology of thirty representative inscriptions, of all types, with translation, and a synthesis on the epigraphy of the city in its various aspects.

As is clear now, the new material from Palmyra has remained rare, and a great deal of the new discoveries and of the studies of material previously known has focused on funerary sculpture, in public or private collections, because the busts have been easy to export since the nineteenth century, in the most surprising locations sometimes.<sup>39</sup>

### *The Contribution of the Palmyra Portrait Project (PPP)*

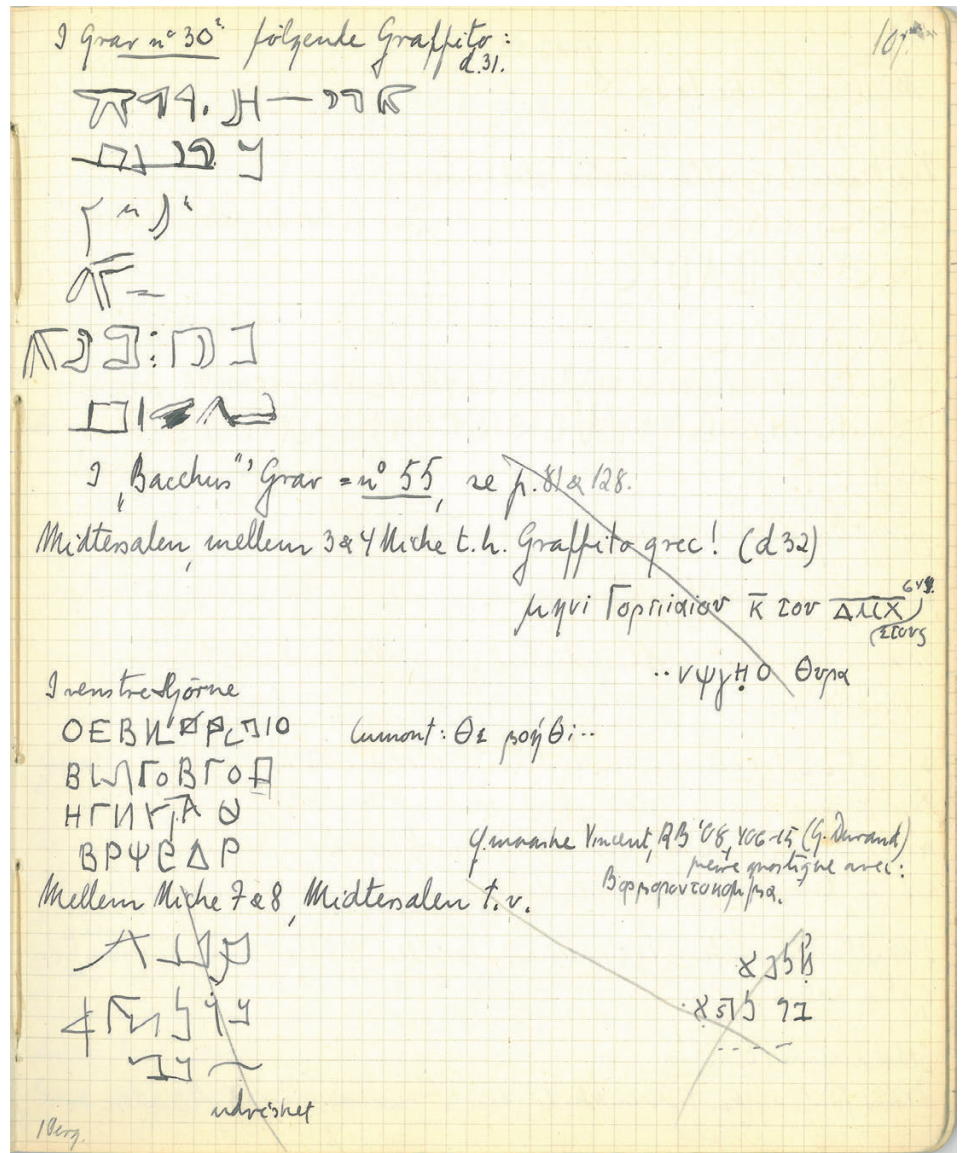
The Palmyra Portrait Project has been part of this trend, but also, in more than one way, a driving force for this renewed interest for funerary sculpture and for Palmyra. I can only present here an assessment of the epigraphic results, now available in the two volumes of the edition of Ingholt's notebooks and in the four volumes of Ingholt's archive.

<sup>36</sup> Shifman 2014.

<sup>37</sup> Eristov and others 2019.

<sup>38</sup> Cussini 2022.

<sup>39</sup> Caveda 2022 (the inscription is *PAT* no. 0647) for a bust in the National Museum of Fine Arts of Havana in Cuba.



### **The Diaries**

Since the *estampages* (squeezes) and photographs he mentioned in the diaries had not been located at the time of publication,<sup>40</sup> we are often at a loss to understand the texts. It may be useful here to remember that the 2021 edition is based almost only on hand copies of inconsistent quality. Mistakes may simply be due to errors made by Ingholt, who was often working under difficult conditions in underground tombs. The recent (re)discovery of some of the squeezes in the 'Cabinet du *Corpus inscriptionum semiticarum*' at the French Academy 'des inscriptions et belles-lettres' will soon

<sup>40</sup> See Bobou and others 2022, *passim*, with numerous mentions of 'est.', 'estamp.', or 'estampages' and lists of photographs taken, e.g. on p. 1479: mention of 'Foto 1' and of 'Est. 412'.

offer ample opportunity to improve the reading and the interpretation of these inscriptions.<sup>41</sup>

The documentation made by Ingholt was in a preliminary state. He surely intended to publish all the inscriptions, but due to insufficient documentation or a lack of time some of the texts were simply left aside. The countless additions in Ingholt's hand, particularly the references to Stark (a book which was published in 1971), show that he kept on working on the diaries until late in his career — as he did on his archive too.

The diaries were notes taken by the author for his own use; for some inscriptions Ingholt had up to three copies spread across the different diaries, sometime very sketchy and tentative. This might explain why sometimes it has been difficult to recognize the text of an already published inscription.<sup>42</sup> In the edition of the diaries published last year, these different readings helped to reconstruct the original inscriptions which were not preserved. All in all, there is quite a big number of new texts. Despite the lack of pictures and other illustrations, our documentation can be supplemented from other sources, first and foremost from the archive of Ingholt himself. A photograph of graffiti in the Tomb of Dionysos matches the copy in the diaries: the three graffiti are related to the family of one Zebîdâ son of Mattanaî. The note 'ph.' does indeed refer to an actual document.<sup>43</sup>

It happens that some of the photographs in the archive of Ifpo relate to the same excavations, as I have had the surprise to discover recently while perusing the files of thousands of digitalized photographs from this institution. Whether they are simply copies of Ingholt's photographs or were made by members of the department of antiquities in the same period is not documented. For instance, a photograph of two graffiti from the archive of the Institut français du Proche-Orient must have been taken in the same Tomb of Dionysos, as is clear thanks to the diaries (Fig. 6.3).



Figure 6.5. Bust of Mašekû. Ingholt Archive, PS 1272 (© Palmyra Portrait Project, Ingholt Archive at Ny Carlsberg Glyptotek, PS 725).

The two graffiti, one Greek and one Aramaic, have been copied by Ingholt and are found in Diary 1 page 101 and 5 pages 17–18 (Fig. 6.4).

The Aramaic text is a declaration of ownership for the niche next to it, for an individual called Bassâ son of Zebîdâ Mattanaî.<sup>44</sup> He is a son of the same Zebîdâ son of Mattanaî, who appears in the graffiti cited above. The second graffiti which appears on the photograph is an apparently later Greek inscription, difficult to read, for which we had only two different and contradictory copies by Ingholt. He gives in both cases a proposal of Franz Cumont for the first line, which could stand for Θεός βοήθει 'God help'. I must admit that despite this new discovery the meaning is not clear at the moment.<sup>45</sup>

Sometimes, the inscriptions have indeed been published, but never with a photograph. Such is the case for a bust from the 'Dépôt des antiquités': only the inscrip-

<sup>41</sup> At the time of writing, it was not immediately clear if the squeezes of the inscriptions not published by Ingholt during his lifetime were included in the collection of the Academy.

<sup>42</sup> See for example Raja, Steding, and Yon 2021, I, 195 n. 1: the altar given as 'unpublished' must correspond to the translation by Chabot 1922, 82, 'Zebîda, fils de Zabdibêl, fils de Iedibêl (septembre 129)', which is *PAT* no. 0343.

<sup>43</sup> See Diary 1, p. 81 (Raja, Steding, and Yon 2021, I, 258–59, with fig. 6.22 on p. 844).

<sup>44</sup> In Aramaic, BS' | BR ZBYD' | MTNY ḤBL (Bassâ son of Zebîdâ Mattanaî, alas!).

<sup>45</sup> I. 2. Γοβροελ? L. 3. Maybe ὁ γράψα[ς].



Figure 6.6. Bust and epitaph of Zebidâ  
(© Photothèque Institut français du Proche-Orient).

tion was published by Jean Cantineau in 1936, with a drawing.<sup>46</sup> The photograph in the archive of Ingholt (Fig. 6.5) is the first illustration of the bust and the first photograph of the text.<sup>47</sup>

In other cases, the bust had been published, but not the inscriptions: an object now in the National Museum of Damascus, in the reconstruction of the Tomb of Yarhai, originally had an inscription which has been broken as shown on the plate of Tanabe's book. An earlier photograph is preserved in the Ifpo archive (Fig. 6.6), which once again can complement Ingholt's archive. Actually, another and different print of the same photograph (where the inscription is less clear) is found in Ingholt's archive.<sup>48</sup>

<sup>46</sup> PS 1072; inscription: *Inv VIII*, 133 = *PAT* no. 1284.

<sup>47</sup> Raja, Steding, and Yon 2021, I, 679, ill. 2.3. For the text and multiple copies of Ingholt, *Diary 1* on p. 18 (pp. 132–33), *Diary 2* on p. 74 (pp. 648–49), and *Diary 3* on p. 53 (pp. 762–63).

<sup>48</sup> Tanabe 1986, pl. 249. Inscription read from the earlier photograph:  $\text{HBL} | \text{ZBYD}' | \text{BR ML}' | \text{ZBYD}'$  (Alas, Zebidâ son of Malê

This male bust depicts a bearded man holding in his left hand an instrument that H. Ingholt and F. C. Albertson recognized as the grip of a sword on other busts and a whip with braided hair in his right hand. Zebidâ, however, did not dress in a 'military' uniform; instead, he wears a cloak that covers a tunic. The left hand simply presses one side of the coat against the body. The bust is included here out of palaeographic curiosity. Resh are dotted as is usual in texts after the second half of the second century, but in l. 2, the D appears to be dotted below, which seems extremely rare, and prefigures the use of Syriac.

The reverse happens as well, in that some of the documents published with the diaries have no counterparts in Ingholt's text.<sup>49</sup> While the diaries were mostly related to excavations in the necropolis, some religious inscriptions coming from other places were shown to Ingholt as well, mostly altars to the so-called 'anonymous god'. Some have been published since then, some were copied so badly that they could not be recognized.<sup>50</sup>

Obviously, funerary inscriptions are the majority in the diaries, mostly busts as in the examples seen above; longer texts more often concern cessions of tombs than foundations. These cession inscriptions form quite a large number of texts, which are sometimes challenging and difficult to interpret.

### The Archives

The archive gathered by Ingholt during his life for his work on Palmyrene portraiture provides rich information on epigraphy.<sup>51</sup> Many of the portraits were inscribed and Ingholt had a good philological background. His interest in epigraphy is mirrored in the transcription of the inscriptions found on Ingholt's documentation; they are very systematic and frequently include lexicographic and philological comments. The various colours and media (pencil, ink, etc.) employed on the sheets make it clear that these comments reflect multiple layers. In a

Zebidâ). The sculpture is PS 796 (see Bobou and others 2022, 743, with Ingholt's reading). See now Yon 2022a, 551.

<sup>49</sup> Raja, Steding, and Yon 2021, I, 851, fig. 6.35: 'QM' BRT HÿRN | 'LHBL 'TT - - - (Aqme daughter of Hâiran Elahbel, wife of - - -). Only traces of letters are visible below.

<sup>50</sup> See e.g. n. 42 above.

<sup>51</sup> Now published as Bobou and others 2022. In what follows, references with PS + number point to the relevant entry in this publication.

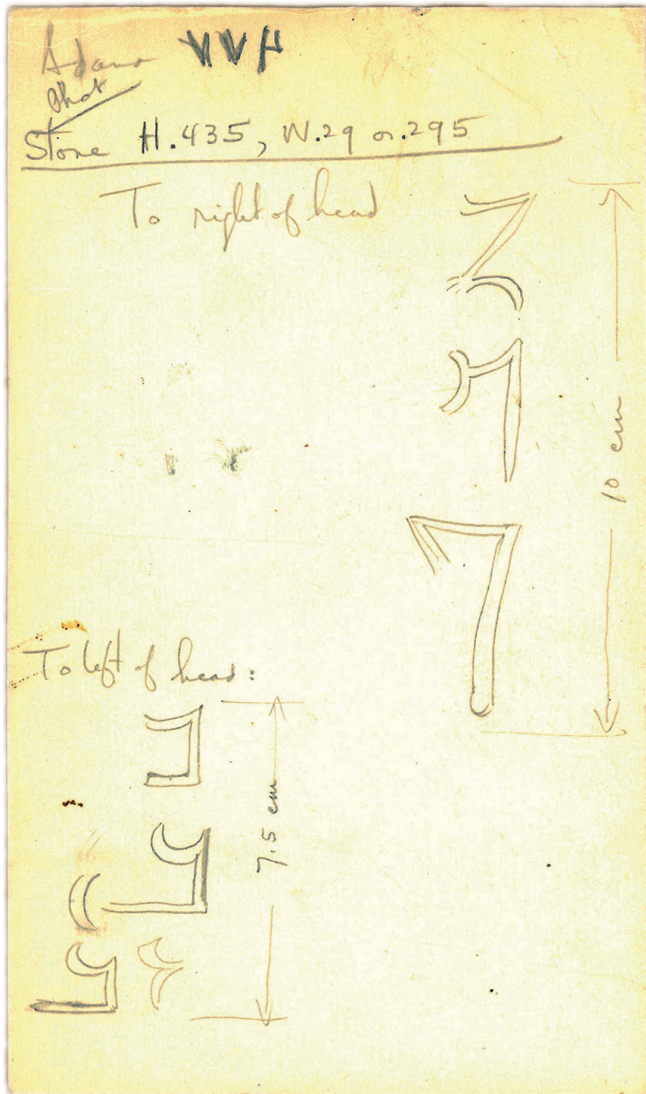


Figure 6.7. Handcopy of PS 572 with facsimile of Palmyrene Aramaic text (© Palmyra Portrait Project, Ingholt Archive at Ny Carlsberg Glyptotek, PS 1109).

few rare cases, a direct facsimile of Palmyrene Aramaic was drawn (Fig. 6.4, top left corner; Fig. 6.7).

Hebrew script was frequently utilized in transcriptions of Palmyrene Aramaic, as was customary among Semitists in the 1920s and 1930s. But, after the Second World War, Roman script began to replace Hebrew more and more, often when writing down other Semitic languages. Ingholt embraced this change, albeit he occasionally combined the two transcribing styles. For instance, the first line on the page for PS 449 reads [TY]MḤ[𐤀] whereas in the second line (ברת) is followed by DRT | ḤBL (Fig. 6.8).

The sheets are informal notes written for personal use. Taking this into account, and despite these limi-

tations, the Ingholt Archive has a lot to offer from the perspective of epigraphy and can provide both new and previously studied material. Here, we can only give a few examples.

Ingholt had only released a Danish translation of PS 377 in his 1928 book. Stark then provided a partial text (basically guesswork) based on the translation, which was subsequently duplicated in *PAT* no. 1778 (but without line division).<sup>52</sup> The edition included in the archive book might be considered the first one. Likewise, PS 451 had never been published with an illustration. The last publication in the *IGLS* volume of this relief from the Istanbul Archaeological Museums presented a dubious reading. Thanks to a photograph in Ingholt's archive, it is possible to be certain of the personal name, which remains unexplained, although it should be compared with Βαδδας or Βαδδηλος at Dura-Europos.<sup>53</sup> The photograph for PS 1026 (*PAT* no. 1327) is the first published for this relief in the 'Dépôt des antiquités de Palmyre' in the 1930s, as is the photograph for PS 841 (*PAT* no. 1279), with a completed reading by Ingholt.<sup>54</sup>

In his extensive survey of documentation, Ingholt had identified new sculptures, almost unknown previously. PS 757 and 817 seem to have been put on sale by the art dealer Asfar and Sarkis in Damascus (in the 1930s?). They have not reappeared in the antique trade since then.<sup>55</sup> PS 278 and 460, now in the Detroit Institute of Arts Museum, had only been published with photographs in a local art magazine with short mentions in Ingholt's *Palmyrener Skulptur*.<sup>56</sup> As exemplified by the two reliefs from Detroit, Ingholt's work on the text was not always successful, due to the poor condition of some reliefs. It explains, too, why some of the readings must be corrected,<sup>57</sup> as can be done by working on the

<sup>52</sup> Ingholt 1928, 132: 'Tammâ, Datter af Sime'ôn'; Stark 1971, 56: 'TM' brt šm'wn, reproduced in *PAT* no. 1778.

<sup>53</sup> See *IGLS* xvii.1, 555. Βαδδεις was the reading of Lidzbarski 1915, 138, followed by Ingholt 1928, 142.

<sup>54</sup> [YR]ḤY BR | [T]YM' ḤBL (Yarḥai son of Ta'imê, alas!). L. 1: [- -]NY BR (Cantineau and *PAT*).

<sup>55</sup> PS 757: 'QM' | BRT 'G' | BR ṢLM' | 'YL' ḤBL (Aqmê daughter of 'Oggâ son of Šalmê Ayyalâ, alas!). PS 817: ZBDBL | BR MLKW' | ḤBL (Zabdibel son of Malkû, alas!). Reading from the photograph and slightly uncertain.

<sup>56</sup> PS 278: --- | --- | 'BD' | ḤBL (--- son of 'Abdâ', alas!). L. 3: Uncertain reading. PS 460: ṢLMT | BRT? | [.]DY[.] | ḤBL (Šalmat daughter of ---, alas!).

<sup>57</sup> PS 1070 (*PAT* no. 1344): ḤBL | Ḥ[L]PT' | BR QWQH' | ḤLPT' (Alas, Ḥalafatâ son of Qôqah Ḥalafatâ). L. 3: *Inv* VIII, 198 (followed by *PAT*) has QWQ' (only example). The photograph of

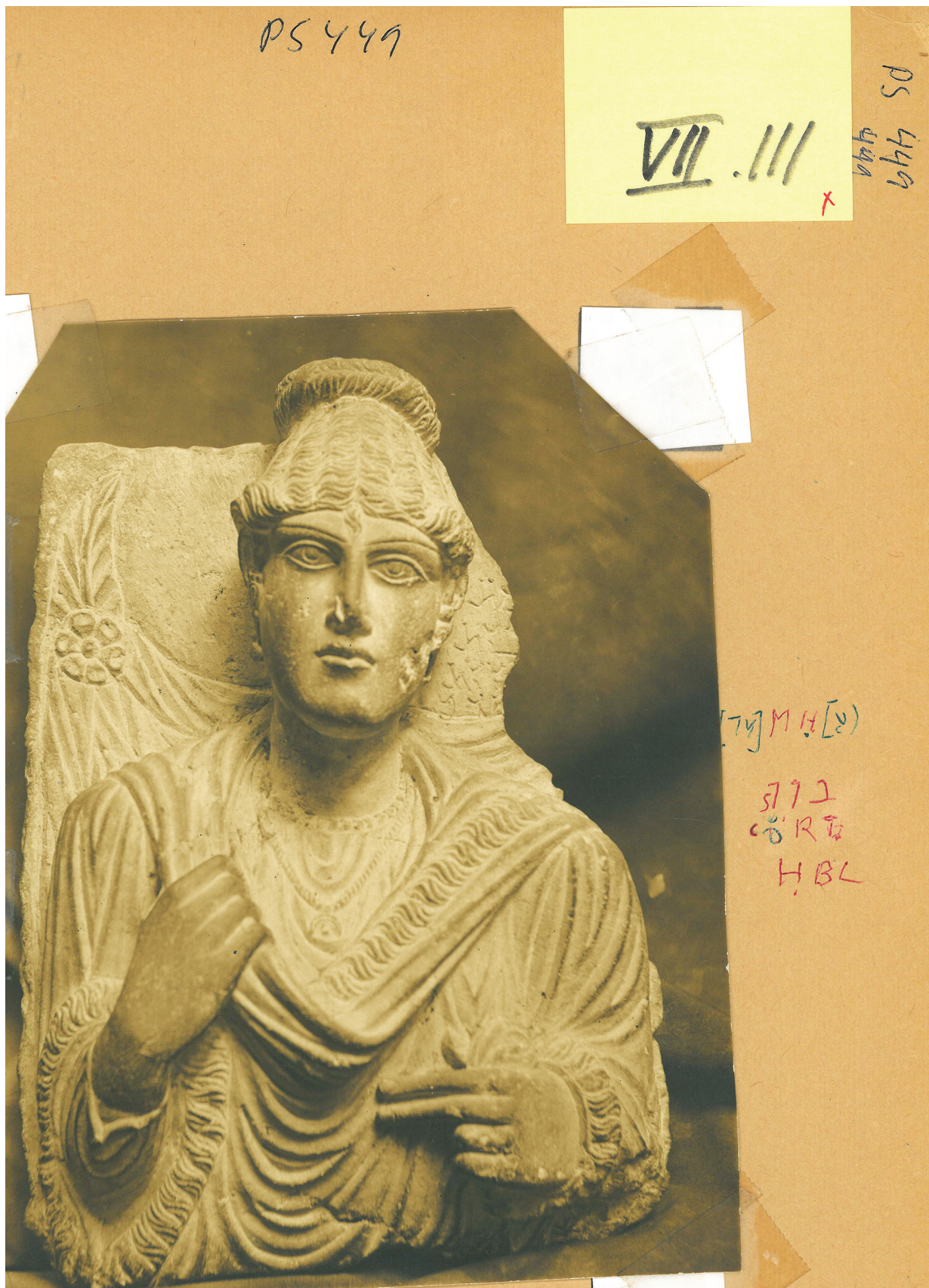


Figure 6.8. Archive sheet for PS 449 (*PAT* no. 0960), with copy of the inscription by Ingholt  
 (© Palmyra Portrait Project, Ingholt Archive at Ny Carlsberg Glyptotek, PS 449).

material itself. Autopsy of the stones by J. Hutton in the Fitzwilliam Museum in Cambridge has permitted the improvement of some readings.<sup>58</sup>

Another aspect underlined in the notes of Harald Ingholt was the question of family relations enlightened by the inscriptions. Beyond the prosopographical interest for social history, Ingholt was right to point out the interest of such relations for art history. For instance, on the sheet for PS 518 (*PAT* no. 0485), he commented ‘Grandfather floruit 95’, thus giving an approximate date for the portrait. He could then compare this date to the one he had obtained through his typological analysis. He used the typology of the Palmyrene script as well, and its evolution, to specify dates, in addition to stylistic analysis.

As a last point on the contribution of the archive, it must be underlined that the documentation gives precious insights into private collections of the time, especially at Beirut and Damascus (people such as Ziade or Asfar and Sarkis). On the sheet, we often have the name of the dealer in antiquities, whereas in the published version in *Berytus*, Ingholt has only ‘in two private collections in Beirut’, without proper names.<sup>59</sup> Ingholt’s expertise, like Henri Seyrig’s, as was his presence in Beirut in the 1930s, certainly made him an asset for local art traders, and he could, in turn, use it for his own research.

### The Corpus

All the reliefs with portraits are now compiled in the database and will be part of the corpus of funerary portraits which is now in preparation. Others can talk much more accurately on the form it will take, with a multi-

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Ingholt allows a correction of the reading: QWQH, which is better attested. PS 1316 as presented in Bobou and others 2022, 1358, must be corrected. Read ʾQMʾ BT | BWLYD ʾGʾ ʾHH | ʾHBL (Aqmê daughter of Bôliada. ‘Oggâ, her brother, alas!’ with l. 3 ʾHH instead of ʾT<T>H (his wife). Likewise, the reading of l. 1 of the Greek version of PS 254 must be corrected (*Νασραλ*- with final Λ, as in *IGLS* xvii.1, 522; the letter is visible in the photograph published in *IGLS*).

<sup>58</sup> See for example Hutton 2021, 95–96, for PS 847: ʾLMT TMWR | BRT WHBLT | ʾTTH (Image of Tamôr daughter of Wahballat, his wife). L. 1. TMWR Hutton, instead of TMʾ (but l. 3 WHBLT is certain, not WHBRT Hutton). TMWR could be a mistake for TDMWR, a well-attested name. As shown by Hutton, the last name of the third text of this banquet relief is certainly ZBDB[WL], not SRB[- -].

<sup>59</sup> Ingholt 1935, 72 n. 79. One of the ‘private collections’ is the collection Ziade (see note on sheet for PS 568).

volume edition planned for the next years. The portraits with inscriptions, whatever their origin, will be included, and unpublished texts are numerous. However, it must be added that the database, which also serves as an archive, will not be published extensively, as in the case of unprovenanced material, without the consent of the rightful owners.

### *What’s Next? As a Conclusion*

This rapid overview of the different projects on the epigraphy of Palmyra has left aside some new and ongoing projects, such as the work in progress on the tesserae. This project initiated by Rubina Raja in 2019 intends to collect tesserae, from private and public collections around the world, focusing on material not included in the *RTP*. This last volume published in 1955 needs revision. Even though the focus of the new project is rather on new tesserae, *RTP* is obviously the starting point. Other members of the team are more involved in this project, but I would like here only to draw attention once again to the archive of the Institut français du Proche-Orient where the original photographs used for the publication of 1955 are available.

As I have tried to show when dealing with the relations between the tesserae and prosopography,<sup>60</sup> one major shortcoming is the way to assign a date to these small objects. Among other methods, palaeography is certainly to be considered. The publication of the corpus with its lavish illustration, like the work on the tesserae could allow for renewed research on the evolution of the Palmyrene script. Every kind of inscriptions must be considered, and especially graffiti, which often use a very specific script, or the tesserae, which have some simplified letter shapes.

The PPP has opened new avenues of research on epigraphy, which can be fruitful for the years to come. In a way, its completion is only a beginning — for epigraphy, but for many other topics too.

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<sup>60</sup> Yon 2022b.

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## Appendix 6.1

## CORRECTIONS AND ADDITIONS TO YON 2013

- 338, cat. no. 1: see now *CIIP* I.1, 421.
- 340, cat. no. 11f: read ḤBY instead of ʿḤBY as in 11c? No photograph available. [PS 1391]
- 344, cat. no. 38: for the last part of the text, follow the reading of Bounni, MTN<sup>2</sup> | BR BRH (Mattanâ son of of his son). In the first part, both reading GDYMY/GRYMY and ʿNQYD/ʿNQYD are possible.
- 344, cat. no. 39: add to the bibliography Hvidberg-Hansen 2008, 21, cat. no. 6.46.<sup>1</sup>
- 345, cat. no. 45: the two parts of the text are *PAT* nos 1136–37 (*Inv* IV, 8ab), but the reading of Cantineau in *Inv* (followed by *PAT*) must be corrected, so TYMH<sup>3</sup> instead of TYMS<sup>3</sup>; see already Starcky 1984, 38–39 (confirmed by the transcription Θαιμας in *IGLS* xvii.1, 402–03, found nearby). The name TYMS<sup>3</sup> must certainly be deleted from the Palmyrene onomasticon. [PS 912]
- 345, cat. no. 46: the text is *PAT* no. 0989.
- 345, cat. no. 47: the text is *PAT* no. 1058, with the correct reading for l. 3, ʿLHBL instead of the misprint ṬLHBL.
- 348, cat. no. 64: the text is *PAT* no. 0114. See PS 1078 for a discussion on the reading of l. 1, highly uncertain.
- 348, cat. no. 66: the text is *PAT* no. 2712.
- 356, cat. no. 116: the text is *PAT* no. 1753 (without line division) [PS 100, corrected reading].
- 356, cat. no. 118: the text is *PAT* no. 1782 (without line division) [PS 429].

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<sup>1</sup> In the same contribution, note an unpublished text, overlooked in Yon 2013: Hvidberg-Hansen 2008, 21, cat. no. 6.47, ZBDBWL | BR | ʿGYLW | ḤBL (Zabdiból son of ʿOgeilû, alas!). Other overlooked contributions in *PAT* and in Yon 2013 are Böhme and Schottruff 1979 (see PS 490, 1469) and Starcky 1984 (PS 442, 443, and 1039).



## Appendix 6.3

DUPLICATES IN PAT<sup>1</sup>

*PAT* no. 0007 = *PAT* no. 0716–17<sup>2</sup>  
*PAT* no. 0063 = *PAT* no. 0453<sup>3</sup>  
*PAT* no. 0119 = *PAT* no. 1949  
*PAT* no. 0325 = *PAT* no. 1590 [PS 960]<sup>4</sup>  
*PAT* no. 0453 = *PAT* no. 0063  
*PAT* no. 0561 = *PAT* no. 1755 [PS 124]  
*PAT* no. 0716 = *PAT* no. 0982 [PS 368]<sup>5</sup>  
*PAT* no. 0716–17 = *PAT* no. 0007  
*PAT* no. 0728 = *PAT* no. 2722 [PS 540]  
*PAT* no. 0892 = *PAT* no. 1762  
*PAT* no. 0937 = *PAT* no. 1756 [PS 141]  
*PAT* no. 0950 = *PAT* no. 1757 [PS 143]  
*PAT* no. 0972 = *PAT* no. 1634 [PS 293]  
*PAT* no. 0982 = *PAT* no. 0716  
*PAT* no. 1002 = *PAT* no. 1658  
*PAT* no. 1061 = *PAT* no. 1125  
*PAT* no. 1125 = *PAT* no. 1061  
*PAT* no. 1179 = *PAT* no. 1594  
*PAT* no. 1590 = *PAT* no. 0325  
*PAT* no. 1594 = *PAT* no. 1179  
*PAT* no. 1634 = *PAT* no. 0972  
*PAT* no. 1658 = *PAT* no. 1002  
*PAT* no. 1755 = *PAT* no. 0561  
*PAT* no. 1756 = *PAT* no. 0937  
*PAT* no. 1757 = *PAT* no. 0950  
*PAT* no. 1762 = *PAT* no. 0892  
*PAT* no. 1949 = *PAT* no. 0119  
*PAT* no. 2722 = *PAT* no. 0728  
*PAT* no. 0752 [PS 465] and *PAT* no. 0889 [PS 439]  
 have the same text, but the reliefs are different.

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<sup>1</sup> The PPP database made it possible to identify these duplicates, thanks to its extensive documentation and illustrations. Some of them had already been pointed out by the authors of *PAT*.

<sup>2</sup> *PAT* no. 0007 (National Museum of Damascus) is *PAT* no. 0717 and the second part of *PAT* no. 0716.

<sup>3</sup> See already Parlasca 2005, 139 n. 14. He reported two other duplicates (below *PAT* no. 1179 = 1594 and 0728 = 2722).

<sup>4</sup> See *IGLS* xvii.1, 320.

<sup>5</sup> *PAT* no. 0982 (*CIS* 4621, Musée du Louvre) is only the first part (female figure) of *PAT* no. 0716.