Material Culture and Women's Religious Experience in Antiquity

An Interdisciplinary Symposium

Edited by
Mark D. Ellison, Catherine Gines Taylor,
and Carolyn Osiek

LEXINGTON BOOKS/FORTRESS ACADEMIC
Lanham • Boulder • New York • London

Published by Lexington Books/Fortress Academic
Lexington Books is an imprint of The Rowman & Littlefield Publishing Group, Inc.
4501 Forbes Boulevard, Suite 200, Lanham, Maryland 20706
www.rowman.com

86-90 Paul Street, London EC2A 4NE

Cover image credits:
Top: The infancy of Moses panel, west wall, Dura-Europos synagogue. Scanned image, Yale University Art Gallery, Dura-Europos Collection.

Bottom, left: Palmyrene funerary relief, ca. 50–150 CE. Public domain, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, metmuseum.org.

Bottom, right: Veneranda fresco, Domitilla catacomb. Public domain. From Josef Wilpert, *Die Malereien der Katakomben Roms* (Freiburg: Herder, 1903), Taf. 213

British Library Cataloguing in Publication Information Available

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

ISBN 978-1-7936-1193-2 (cloth : alk. paper)
ISBN 978-1-7936-1194-9 (electronic)

♾™ The paper used in this publication meets the minimum requirements of American National Standard for Information Sciences—Permanence of Paper for Printed Library Materials, ANSI/NISO Z39.48-1992.

Contents

Chapter 7

Assessing the Roles of Women in New Syrian Funerary Reliefs in Japanese Collections

Kerry Hull and Lincoln H. Blumell

The ancient site of Palmyra, Syria, has produced a large sculptural and epigraphic corpus of material from the Roman period (ca. 64 BC–AD 273). Of the roughly three thousand extant funerary portraits from this site, nearly half depict females.[1] Accordingly, this corpus provides a rich iconographic record to investigate the role of women in ancient Palmyrene, and perhaps larger Syrian, society. In this study, we will broach this subject by presenting an edition of an unpublished Palmyrene funerary inscription accompanied by a female funerary portrait that we recently discovered in a private collection in Japan. Using this new monument as a point of departure, we will examine various aspects of female lifestyle, status, and embodied lives, particularly as they relate to the *pudicitia* gesture. As part of this examination, we will also discuss the iconography of two funerary stelae from Manbij (Syria), both of which depict women, that are currently housed in the Okayama Orient Museum in Japan and that we recently published.[2] Finally, we will examine another female funerary relief from Palmyra that is housed in the Hirayama Ikuo Silk Road Museum in Japan to help illustrate specific iconographic markers related to women, such as the high-whorl spindle, distaff, and key, as we query their intended messaging.

LIFE AND DEATH IN PALMYRA

The ancient city of Palmyra, Syria, or Tadmor (its earlier Arabic name), was a burgeoning city during the early Roman period. Palmyra fell under the auspices of Rome when Pompey annexed it in 64 BC and fell fully under Roman control during the reign of Tiberius (AD 14–37). Since Palmyra

was situated at a key juncture between the Parthian and Roman empires, it became an important "caravan city" where Roman, Greek, and Parthian cultures merged. Though Palmyra was under Roman rule, Greek and Aramaic were privileged over Latin as the languages most commonly attested in the epigraphic record.[3]

Most of the tombs from Palmyra that have produced funerary inscriptions and sculptures consist of family or tribal burials in which hundreds of individuals were interred in a single mortuary complex. Of these, two primary mortuary complexes dominate: (1) a hypogeum, or subterranean tomb, which became the preferred burial type by the middle of the second century AD, and (2) above-ground tower tombs or mausoleums. In both kinds of complexes, burial slots, or *loculi*, were often sealed with sculpted funerary busts bearing images of the deceased. About one-third of these *loculi* reliefs have inscriptions, usually biographic and written primarily in Palmyrene Aramaic, but some are written in Greek and to a lesser extent Latin.[4]

The Palmyrene conception of the tomb and *loculi* reliefs remains somewhat enigmatic. On the one hand, funerary sculptures may have been meant to provide glimpses into the personalities of the deceased while living—or at least perhaps how they or others wanted them to be remembered. Yet on the other hand, Palmyrene portraiture is well known to be generic and formulaic at times, seemingly targeting an "idealized beauty."[5] While individuals are often shown "expressionless"[6] in rigid frontality—a highly uncommon feature in Mediterranean art—certain emotive states can be discerned in some instances. Linguistic evidence, however, suggests that *loculi* busts intended to embody aspects of the individual. Indeed, these busts were sometimes called *npš'* in Aramaic, which means "soul," "person," or "self," and is cognate to the Hebrew *nefesh*, meaning the "soul," "life," or "emotion" of an individual.[7]

THE ROLES OF WOMEN IN PALMYRA

Epigraphic evidence has greatly contributed to our knowledge of the role of women in Palmyrene society. While female funerary iconography has also aided our understanding, as Eleonora Cussini cautions, relying strictly on female iconography to apprehend the role of women in Palmyra can at times be misleading;[8] reliefs tend to stress the domestic sphere, whereas epigraphic data reveal that women performed various roles that extended well beyond the traditional domestic realm.[9] For example, in the epigraphic record we learn of women commissioning funerary reliefs (PAT 0840), buying and selling properties (PAT 2727), erecting funerary reliefs to honor relatives (PAT 1417, PAT 0334, PAT 0356), and dedicating monuments and inscriptions (PAT 1417).

Turning to female Palmyrene iconography, the spindle and distaff have traditionally been considered markers of feminine gender and have usually been thought to symbolize a woman's work in the domestic sphere, more particularly in the occupation of *lanificium* (work in wool). In some reliefs, women seem to be pointing directly to the spindle and distaff with their right hand,[10] which has been interpreted deictically as if to draw attention to them.[11] While this could be a way to call explicit attention to their work in the domestic domain, and more specifically that these women, and perhaps even their families, were involved in textile production[12] (as the spindle and distaff could represent other facets of a woman's life), other possibilities exist.[13] For example, in Roman culture the spindle and distaff at once represented the quotidian responsibilities of women while also serving as an ideological precedent for a virtuous woman as the *materfamilias*.[14]

Before the mid-second century, the spindle and distaff were the items most often held by women in Palmyrene sculpture. This changed, however, after about AD 200, when for reasons not fully understood, women were rarely depicted holding them. Some have proposed that this iconographic modification is suggestive of a change in the role of women, or possibly a shift in characteristics that became salient in female society.[15] Of the women in Palmyrene funerary sculpture that hold the spindle and distaff, over half also raise their hand near their face,[16] a feature also commonly found in greater Syria. For example, a recently published funerary relief from the modern Syrian city of Manbij (ancient Hierapolis), currently housed in the Okayama Orient Museum in Japan, shows a woman, Fortunata, with her right hand raised against her right cheek in the *pudicitia* pose while her left hand holds a spindle and distaff (figure 7.1).[17]

Another recently published gravestone from the same locale and collection similarly depicts two women symmetrically positioned with their left arms raised up, with their hands on their cheeks, and they hold in their right hands a spindle and distaff (figure 7.2). Some have therefore suggested that for Palmyra the spindle and distaff may have been gradually replaced as "attributes of the female signifier" by the raised-hand gesture during the second century.[18]

In sum, almost by default, female roles in Syrian society have traditionally been interpreted through the lens of spindles and distaffs, indicative of domestic abilities; however, they may contain deeper symbolic meanings such as virtue, industry, and creation.[19] The diachronic implications of the spindle and distaff as semiotic markers, however, are still not well understood in Palmyra. Does the shift during the second century away from representing the spindle and distaff represent a change in female roles in Palmyrene society, perhaps indicating, as some have argued,[20] an increasing emancipation[21] of women? Possibly, but iconographic analysis alone will not fully answer this question.[22]

Figure 7.1 Funerary Bust of Fortunata, from Manbij, Dated to September 6, AD 103, Okayama Orient Museum, Japan. *Source*: Photograph: Lincoln Blumell.

Pudicitia

In the Roman world, perhaps the best-known gesture of a woman was that of the *pudicitia*, in which a woman rests one arm across her waist as she raises her other hand onto or near her face. Often a woman will hold the edge of her *himation* (or *palla*), which is sometimes draped over the head in the form of a veil. The *pudicitia* gesture is commonly interpreted as representing the "modesty," "virtue," or even "chastity" of the woman, one who fully embodies a proper female in society—what one scholar calls the "exemplar of feminine docility and faithfulness."[23] The *pudicitia* gesture is also thought to characterize a woman as a capable householder[24] and perhaps even has higher associations with spiritual fortitude and fertility.[25] Additionally, the raising of the hand up to the face may have had an apotropaic function.[26] In other cases, the *pudicitia* gesture seems closely associated with scenes of mourning.[27] At Palmyra, the *pudicitia* gesture appears in nearly three-quarters of female funerary busts and never with males (which is not true for Rome, however), perhaps suggestive of its role in representing mourning in addition

Figure 7.2 Limestone Funerary Monument from Manbij, Okayama Orient Museum, Japan. *Source*: Photograph: Lincoln Blumell.

to a woman's virtue. In particular, the reaching up and touching of the veil could at once symbolize modesty,[28] while the act of pulling the veil over her face to hide her tears symbolizes mourning.[29]

Keys

Keys are another potential indicator of women's roles in ancient Syrian society that can be interpreted through iconographic and epigraphic investigation. A *loculus* relief from Palmyra in the Hirayama Ikuo Silk Road Museum[30] provides a good example in which the representation of a key is part of female accouterment (figures 7.3 and 7.4). The Aramaic text on the right side of the monument identifies the woman:

1. *'qm'* Aqma,
2. *brt* daughter of,
3. *'sy'* Asya.
4. *ḥbl* Alas!

Aqma is shown elegantly dressed in a cloak and tunic, wearing bracelets and a trapezoidal brooch, all with gold paint as extant polychromy. Hanging from the brooch is a key with Greek letters written on it. Typically, the key appears either hanging from the brooch or held in the woman's hand. An important clue to the meaning of the key in this context comes from a text on

Figure 7.3 Aqma, Daughter of Asya. Hirayama Ikuo Silk Road Museum, Japan. *Source*: Photographs: Kerry Hull.

a monument housed in Copenhagen in the Ny Carlsberg Glyptotek museum. In Palmyrene Aramaic it reads *bt 'lm'*, or house of eternity" (CIS II, 4323), a euphemism (CIS II, 4323, 4323 bis et ter), a euphemism for "tomb" that is attested in Syriac, Nabataean, and Jewish Aramaic, in addition to Palmyrene Aramaic.[31] If these are to be interpreted as literal keys to the tomb of which women were in charge of mortality,[32] this could suggest a religious role in funerary rites. These keys may in fact be for tombs or may represent keys to the afterlife.[33] In this regard, it is noteworthy that women almost always appear when lion-head door knockers are depicted in Palmyrene iconography.[34] Might this suggest they held the keys to the gates of eternity?[35] It is a plausible interpretation and would indicate an important afterlife role for women.[36]

Figure 7.4 Close-Up of Key Hanging from Brooch with Greek Letters. Hirayama Ikuo Silk Road Museum, Japan. *Source*: Photographs: Kerry Hull.

A NEW PALMYRENE FEMALE FUNERARY RELIEF SCULPTURE

In 2019, we discovered an unpublished female *loculus* relief from Palmyra in Kirishima, Japan, at the Matsushita Museum of Art, a private museum that opened in 1983. The museum's first director, Kanetomo Matsushita, was an artist and physician with a passion for collecting art. Dr. Matsushita traveled extensively throughout the Middle East and Europe in the mid-twentieth century and acquired a remarkable collection of art from the ancient world, especially from Egypt and the Near East.

Among a number of other Palmyrene and Syrian sculptures in their collection, the Matsushita Museum of Art has a limestone female funerary bust that, on stylistic grounds, clearly comes from Palmyra (figure 7.5). The monument measures 52 cm high and 48 cm wide. A photo of the sculpture appears on page 45 of the museum's catalog,[37] but the object has not received scholarly attention or been formally published. The image carved in high relief shows the bust of an elegantly dressed female, identified in the inscription by the name *L'wmt*. As is typical for women in Palmyra on funerary reliefs, the

Figure 7.5 *Loculus* Relief from Palmyra, in the Matsushita Museum of Art, Japan. *Source*: Photo: Kerry Hull.

Matsushita relief shows *L'wmt* wearing a tunic, a cloak, and a veil that covers her head. The cloak is attached to the tunic by a brooch above her left breast. A veil covers the turban on her head and falls vertically along her right side. Her brow is thick and pronounced. A diadem with a turban headdress appears above the forehead, a combination distinctive in Palmyrene funerary monuments.[38] The specific designs on female headdresses at Palmyra may be indigenous motifs associated with specific clans or families.[39] On the Matsushita relief, the diadem below the turban has a repoussé floral design with panels to each side with a stacked leaf-like motif. Very similar frontlet designs are found on other Palmyrene monuments.[40]

L'wmt's right arm rests horizontally across her lower chest and is covered gently by the pleats of her cloak. Her right hand holds the edge of her cloak, although several of the fingers are slightly damaged. While the left arm is

broken off at the elbow, it is clear that her arm was raised up to or near the veil adjacent to her left cheek in the well-known *pudicitia* pose, representing here either the Roman notion of an idealized *matrona* (industrious, honorable, fertile), the act of mourning, or perhaps simply adding the notion of gravitas to the moment.[41] At Palmyra, the latter meaning seems to be the dominant one, but assigning a definitive semiotic value to the *pudicitia* pose at Palmyra is problematic.[42]

Several items of jewelry appear on the Matsushita relief. Jewelry on female monuments generally increases in popularity in Palmyra around AD 150–200[43] and becomes a standard way to depict elite women, quite unlike their Roman counterparts at the time.[44] While erosion to the chest area of the Matsushita relief inhibits a detailed analysis, at least three necklaces are visible. The first fits tightly around *L'wmt*'s neck and may be composed of pearls. Additionally, she wears earrings, evidenced by the remains of a dumbbell earring on her left ear. Earrings are one of the most commonly found items of jewelry in Palmyrene tombs of females and are primarily made of bronze and silver.[45]

While no epigraphic date is provided on the monument,[46] dating the Matsushita *loculus* relief is possible thanks to Inholt's original division of Palmyrene funerary sculptures into three major time periods: Period I, AD 50–150; Period II, AD 150–200; and Period III, AD 200–273 (with some revisions by Colledge).[47] Period I women show very little adornment such as jewelry, and they commonly hold a spindle and distaff in their left hand. In Period II, women begin to hold their veils with their right hand.[48] The spindles and distaffs of Period I fade out by the mid-second century,[49] and wearing jewelry begins to surge. In Period III, jewelry use continues to increase, and women start to hold their veil with their *left* hand.[50] In the Matsushita relief, *L'wmt*, adorned with necklaces and earrings and holding her veil with the left hand, is suggestive of a Period III (AD 200–273) dating for the bust. Additional indicators of a Period III dating come from the brooch and earrings. While very little detail remains, the brooch is noticeably large, a feature characteristic of Period III styles at Palmyra.[51] Also, the dumbbell style of earring is typical for Period III at Palmyra, lending further weight to its third-century dating.[52] Note that a comparable Palmyrene relief sculpture with the same diadem design, gestures, dumbbell earrings, and other features likewise dates to AD 210–230.[53] Sadurska[54] suggests that this final stage of Palmyrene society when lavish jewelry becomes widespread in the iconography represents "tiefgreifende ökonomische und soziale Veränderungen" ("profound economic and social change") throughout Palmyra.

The upper-right portion of the relief bears a four-line[55] epitaph in Palmyrene Aramaic (figure 7.6):

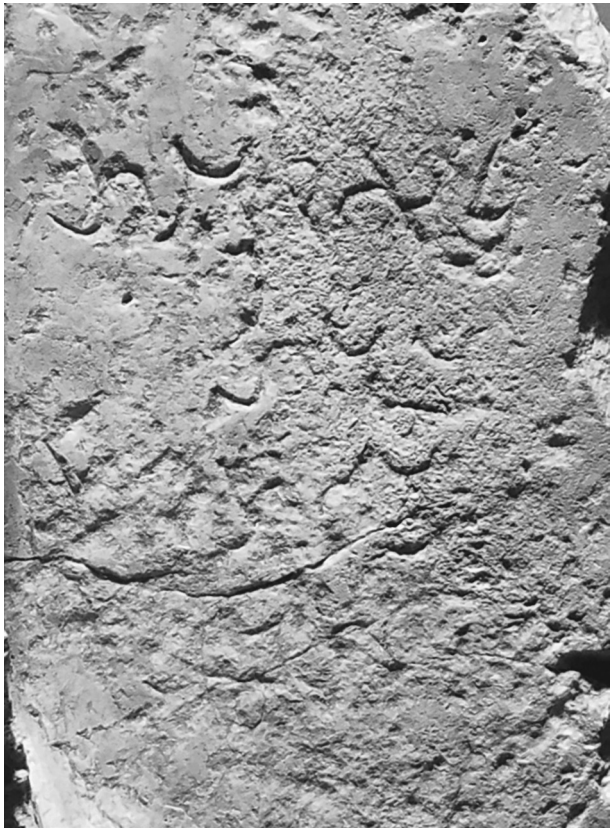

Figure 7.6 L'wmt, Daughter of Kîtôt, Matsushita Museum of Art.*Source*: Photo: Lincoln Blumell.

1. *l'wmt* L'wmt,
2. *brt* daughter of,
3. *kytwt* Kîtôt.
4. *ḥbl* Alas!

The text contains the woman's name and her patronym. The name *L'wmt* is significant as it is the only known attestation in the Palmyrene corpus. The structure of the name, however, is somewhat enigmatic. As the first letter is a *lamad*, it is possible the name is a prepositional phrase construction, with the *l-* being the preposition "for" or "belonging to." Names sometimes take the form of prepositional phrases,[56] such as *lhdd* ("For/Belonging to Hadad")[57] (PAT nos. 0043:4, 0067:2, 0072:1), *lšgl'* ("For/Belonging to Šangilā")[58] (PAT no. 2590Rev:1), *lrmn* ("For /Belonging to Ramman"),[59] and *lšmš* ("For/Belonging to Šamaš").[60] If *L'wmt* is a prepositional construction, the name

itself would be *'wmt*, which is similarly unattested. Another possibility is that it is a verbal sentence, as in the name-phrase *lwṭb* ("May [DN] do good").[61]

The second name, *Kytwt* (Kîtôt),[62] is known from Palmyra, particularly within a family in the first half of the first century AD. A grandfather and grandson of the Mattabôl tribe both bear the name *Kytwt* and are associated with the family who built Tower no. 44 at Palmyra in the Valley of the Tombs in the Western Necropolis. One inscription (PAT 0463, CIS 4115 [de 41]) at the site speaks of both of these individuals named *Kytwt*[63]: *kytwt | br tymrṣw br kytwt br tym' rb' dy mn pḥd bny | [mt]bwl* ("Kîtôt, son of Taîmarsû, son of Kîtôt, son of Taimā *rb'*,[64] who is from the tribe of *Benê* Mattabôl"). Another inscription (PAT 0464) from Tower no. 44,[65] dating to AD 40, explains the genealogy of Kîtôt, son of Taîmarsû, who is the owner of the tomb[66]:

[byrḥ sywn] šnt 3.100+40+10+2 | [ṣlmy' 'ln] dy kytwt br | [tymrṣw wdy myš] brt | [mlkw 'tt]h wdy lšmš | [brh wdy šlmn] brh wdy | mlkw 'lymh

[In the month Siwan], the year 351, [these statues are those] of Kîtôt, son of [Taîmarsû, and of Maîshâ], daughter of [Malku], his wife, and of Lishamsh, [his son, and of Shalman], his son, and of Malku, his servant.

Kîtôt, son of Taimā *rb'*, is associated with the AD 9 date, which is one of the earliest at Palmyra.[67] The second date of this tomb is AD 40,[68] corresponding to year 351 in the Seleucid era.[69] Both of these males named Kîtôt are part of the Sokkayaî, one of the families in the Mattabôl tribe,[70] who built two tombs in Palmyra associated with the Tower of Kîtôt.[71] However, these Kîtôt individuals date far too early to fit our iconographic dating of the Matsushita relief to Period III (AD 200–273).

There are several other occurrences of the name Kîtôt that occur at Palmyra that we could consider. There is a *Kytwt*, who is the son of Mezabbana, a relationship that is expressed three times on PAT 0091: *kytwt mzbn'*, "Kîtôt (son of) Mezabbana." In addition, an inscription from a tomb wall (PAT 0089) reads *kytwt mzbn'*, "Kîtôt (son of) Mezabbana." Similarly, another tomb graffiti inscription (PAT 0083) mentions *kytwt mzbn' 't'qb*, "Kîtôt (son of) Mezabbana, (son of) 'Ate'aqab." Piersimoni[72] dates this Kîtôt to AD 180, which is reasonably close to the iconographic dating we propose for the Kîtôt mentioned on the Matsushita relief.

Finally, one inscription on a male funerary bust in the Antakya Museum (inv. 9041) contains another instance of the name *Kytwt*: *Kyt[w]t br | ml' zbd' ḥbl*, "Kîtôt son of Male (son of) Zabḍa. Alas!" Meischner and Cussini[73] date this monument to the late second century, which would correspond well with the iconographic dating of the Matsushita relief. We therefore provisionally suggest this to be the best candidate for Kîtôt, father of *L'wmt*.

Since all *loculi* reliefs at Palmyra certainly represent individuals of wealth who could afford such elaborate burials,[74] we can assume *L'wmt* was likewise a woman of means in Palmyra. Her physical accouterments such as dress and jewelry further evince her status.

CONCLUSION

The Matsushita relief introduces us to a woman named *L'wmt*, daughter of a man named Kîtôt. This funerary bust presents the only known example of the female name *L'wmt* in Palmyra or greater Syria. While we are unable to outline a secure prosopography for *L'wmt*, a possible candidate for her father Kîtôt from extant sources seems to be an individual from the late second century AD in Palmyra, which corresponds comfortably to our dating of the Matsushita relief to Period III (AD 200–273) based on iconographic evidence. The rich adornment and elegant *pudicitia* gesture on the Matsushita relief evoke notions of propriety, elegance, and important female virtues such as spiritual fortitude and industriousness, those of the Roman *matrona*. In Palmyra, however, the ostensible *pudicitia* pose may not have the singular function of showing a woman's femininity, grace, and domestic abilities as it also overlaps considerably with cultural roles as mourners. Spindles and distaffs—common to many female funerary busts in Palmyra—likewise seem to be polyvalent symbols, representing at once the domestic sphere but also signaling the attributes of virtue and industry.

Epigraphic data make clear that Palmyrene women could be involved in building monumental tombs, commissioning funerary reliefs, honoring relatives, buying and selling properties, offering inscriptions to gods, and restoring religious buildings. In addition, recent evidence suggests that women could have been scribes in Palmyra, based on a funerary bust showing a female holding a stylus.[75] Furthermore, females depicted wearing or holding keys may indicate that they were thought to hold the keys to either the tomb itself in this life, the "house of eternity," or to the Otherworld, thereby providing insight into their roles in life and death.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

We would like to express gratitude to Ms. Naoko Ibuse, curator of the Matsushita Museum of Art, for her kind assistance during our three-day research visit to the museum and for permission to publish the Matsushita relief. In addition, we thank Hiroshi Sudo, curator of the Okayama Orient Museum, for permission to photograph and publish the monuments from

Manbij as well as for his hospitality and helpfulness during our visit. We would like to thank Rubina Raja, director of the Palmyra Portrait Project, for her kind assistance in identifying the Matsushita relief as unpublished. We are also grateful to Michal Gawlikowski for providing informative insights on the inscription of the Matsushita relief.

SOURCE ABBREVIATIONS AND SIGLA

CIS *Corpus Inscriptionum Semiticarum. Pars secunda, tomus tertius. Inscriptiones Palmyrenae* (Paris: Academie des Inscriptions et Belles Lettres, 1926).

PAT Delbert R. Hillers and Elenora Cussini. *Palmyrene Aramaic Texts* (Baltimore, 1996).

NOTES

1. Rubina Raja, "'You Can Leave Your Hat On': Priestly Representations from Palmyra: Between Visual Genre, Religious Importance and Social Status," in *Beyond Priesthood: Religious Entrepreneurs and Innovators in the Roman Empire*, ed. Richard L. Gordon, Georgia Petridou, and Jörg Rüpke (Berlin/Boston: De Gruyter, 2017), 417–42. See also Maura K. Heyn, "Gesture and Identity in the Funerary Art of Palmyra," *American Journal of Archaeology* 114, no. 2 (2010): 631–61.

2. Lincoln H. Blumell and Kerry Hull, "Two Greek Epitaphs from the Middle Eastern Cultural Center in Tokyo, Japan," *Journal of Epigraphic Studies* 2 (2019): 77–84.

3. Jean-Baptiste Yon, "Bilinguisme et trilinguisme à Palmyre." *MOM Éditions 37*, no. 1 (2008): 195–211.

4. Most Palmyrene *loculi* reliefs were looted in the eighteenth to nineteenth centuries and now can be found across the globe, from Wyoming to Japan.

5. Rachel Meyers, "Female Portraiture and Female Patronage in the High Imperial Period," in *A Companion to Women in the Ancient World*, eds. Sharon L. James and Sheila Dillon (Chichester, UK: Wiley-Blackwell, 2012), 353–56.

6. Signe Krag and Rubina Raja, "Representations of Women and Children in Palmyrene Funerary *Loculus* Reliefs, *Loculus* Stelae, and Wall Paintings," *Zeitschrift für Orient-Archäologie* 9 (2016): 134–78, note that serenity and calmness are hallmarks of Palmyrene sculptural depictions. These authors also note that facial expressions were only one way in which individualism was depicted in Palmyrene art, others being gestures, inscriptions, and constellations of family members.

7. M. A. R. Colledge, *The Art of Palmyra* (London: Westview Press, 1976), 62. For a fuller discussion of *nefesh*, see A. J. Kropp and Rubina Raja, "The Palmyra Portrait Project," *Syria: Archéologie, Art et Histoire* 91 (2014): 393–408.

8. Eleonora Cussini, "Beyond the Spindle: Investigating the Role of Palmyrene Women," in *A Journey to Palmyra; Collected Essays to Remember Delbert R.*

Hillers, ed. Eleonora Cussini (Leiden: Brill, 2005), 27–43. As Cussini cautions (p. 38), "We may conclude by noting that assumptions on a secondary role of Palmyrene women based on gendered iconography and specifically on the presence of the discussed items in female portraits are misleading and do not do justice to the picture resulting from the inscriptions."

9. Eleonora Cussini, "Transfer of Property at Palmyra," *Aram* 7 (1995): 27, 33, 36–38. See also Cynthia Finlayson, Review of *Roman Palmyra: Identity, Community, and State Formation*, by Andrew M. Smith II, *Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research* 372 (2014): 246–49.

10. For example, F. Hvidberg-Hansen and G. Ploug, *Palmyra Samlingen: Katalog, Ny Carlsberg Glyptotek* (Copenhagen: Ny Carlsberg Glyptotek, 1993), 67; CIS 4488; CIS 4354; CIS 4008.

11. Heyn, "Gesture and Identity," 641.

12. B. Fowlkes-Childs and M. Seymour, *The World between Empires: Art and Identity in the Ancient Middle East* (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2019), 169.

13. Catherine G. Taylor, *Late Antique Images of the Virgin Annunciate Spinning: Allotting the Scarlet and the Purple* (Leiden: Brill, 2018), 17, 27, notes that cross-culturally the spindle and distaff have powerful symbolic associations with virtue, wisdom, and industry.

14. Taylor, *Late Antique Images*, 14 and 51. On another note, while some neighboring cultures clearly associated the spindle and distaff with certain goddesses, such as the Hittite goddess of fortune; Ishtar, the Akkadian and Sumerian goddess; Anat and Ashirtu, the Canaanite goddesses; Uttu, the Mesopotamian goddess; and the Fates, the Greek goddesses of fortune and destiny, there is little evidence of such a connection in Palmyra that would suggest elevating this female symbol to destiny "weaving" deities.

15. Colledge, *Art of Palmyra*, 151.

16. Heyn, "Gesture and Identity," 636.

17. Blumell and Hull, "Two Greek Epitaphs," 78, figure 1. Based on epigraphic evidence, we date this monument to September 6, AD 103.

18. Heyn, "Gesture and Identity," 636.

19. Taylor, *Late Antique Images*. For a discussion of possibly links of the spindle and distaff to a Syrian goddess who controlled fate and "wove" destinies, see Cynthia Finlayson, "The Women of Palmyra: Textile Workshops and the Influence of the Silk Trade in Roman Syria," *Textile Society of America Symposium Proceedings*, https://digitalcommons.unl.edu/tsaconf/385.

20. Anna Sadurska, "L'art et la société. Recherches iconologiques sur l'art funéraire de Palmyre," *Archeologia* 45 (1994): 17.

21. The status of women in Palmyrene society increased steadily into the third century AD, culminating in Zenobia becoming queen. Earlier portrayals of women in a patriarchal society such as Palmyra, however, "reinforce[d] their subordinate position in the community" (Maura K. Heyn, "Embodied Identities in the Funerary Portraiture of Palmyra," in *Palmyra: Mirage in the Desert*, ed. Joan Aruz [New York, NY: Metropolitan Museum of Art 2016], 116). A. M. Smith II, *Roman Palmyra:*

Identity, Community, and State Formation (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 102, similarly notes that "an obvious social distinction existed at Palmyra based on gender. Males dominated Palmyrene society; women were subordinates." For arguments against "emancipation" representing a change in domestic responsibilities, see Maura K. Heyn, "Status and Stasis: Looking at Women in the Palmyrene Tomb," in *World of Palmyra. Palmyrenske Strudier*, ed. Rubina Raja and Andreas Kropp (Copenhagen: Royal Danish Academy of Sciences and Letters, 2016), 200.

22. Finlayson, "Review." See also Cussini, "Beyond the Spindle."

23. M. George, "Family Imagery and Family Values in Roman Italy," in *The Roman Family in the Empire: Rome, Italy, and Beyond*, ed. M. George (Oxford: Oxford University Press. 2005), 41.

24. Heyn, "Gesture and Identity"; cf. G. Davies, "The Body Language of Palmyra and Rome," in *Positions and Professions in Palmyra = Palmyrenske Studien/ Palmyrene Studies*, vol. 2, eds. T. Long and A. H. Sørensen (Copenhagen: Royal Danish Academy of Science and Letters, 2017), 20–36.

25. Taylor, *Late Antique Images*, 218.

26. L. Dirven, "Aspects of Hatrene Religion: A Note on the Statues of Kings and Nobles from Hatra," in *The Variety of Local Religious Life in the Near East: In the Hellenistic and Roman Periods*, ed. T. Kaizer (Boston: Brill, 2008), 237.

27. Zanker argues it has nothing to do with mourning per se; rather it emphasizes a woman's modesty and restraint. See P. Zanker, "The Hellenistic Grave Stelai from Smyrna: Identity and Self-Image in the Polis," in *Images and Ideologies: Self-Definition in the Hellenistic World*, eds. A. Bulloch, E. S. Gruen, A. A. Long, and A. Stewart (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993), 222–26. Cf. R. R. R. Smith, 1991, *Hellenistic Sculpture: A Handbook* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1991), 84. N. Kaltsas and D. Hardy, *Sculpture in the National Archaeological Museum, Athens* (Los Angeles: J. Paul Getty Museum, 2002), 199. I. B. Romano, *Classical Sculpture: Catalogue of the Cypriot, Greek, and Roman Stone Sculpture in the University of Pennsylvania Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology, 2011), 33.

28. Anna Sadurska, "Die palmyrenische Grabskulptur," *Das Altertum* 34 (1988): 22, has argued that the veil could also be viewed symbolically as "trennmarkierung zwischen der Welt der Lebenden und der Toten" ("the dividing line between the world of the living and the dead") in funerary reliefs.

29. In a similar vein, Thetis, mother to Achilles, wore a black veil to hide her grief in *Iliad* 24, 83–96, 90–91.

30. This monument (C4523) has been previously published by Klaus Parlasca, "Ikonographische Probleme palmyrenischer Grabreliefs," *Damaszener Mitteilungen* 3 (1988): 215–21. See also Jean-Baptiste Yon, *Inscriptions grecques et latines de la Syrie, XVII/1: Palmyre* (BAH 195) (Beirut: IFPO, 2012), 418 no. 561. We are grateful to Rubina Raja for pointing us to both of these sources. The monument, however, had been lost to scholars until we located it in storage at the Hirayama Ikuo Silk Road Museum in Japan in 2018.

31. J. F. Healey, *Aramaic Inscriptions and Documents of the Roman Period* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 238.

32. Łukasz Sokołowski, "Portraying the Literacy of Palmyra: The Evidence of Funerary Sculpture and Their Interpretation," *Études et Travaux XXVII (Institut des Cultures Méditerranéennes et Orientales de l'Académie Polonaise des Sciences*, 2014), 393.

33. Colledge, *Art of Palmyra*, 70. See also Maura K. Heyn, "Female Portraiture in Palmyra," in *A Companion to Women in the Ancient World*, eds. S. James and S. Dillon (Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2012), 439.

34. For example, Hvidberg-Hansen and Ploug, *Palmyra Samlingen,* 67; CIS 4488.

35. H. J. W. Drijvers, "After Life and Funerary Symbolism in Palmyrene Religion," in *La soteriologia dei culti orientali nell'Impero Romano*, eds. U. Bianchi and M. J. Vermaseren (Leiden: Brill, 1982), 720.

36. Heyn, "Female Portraiture in Palmyra," 439, also suggests a more quotidian meaning as simply a key to a jewelry box or representing the woman's control of domestic matters.

37. Kanesuke Matsushita, Fumiko Furue, and Hideo Suimoto, 松下美術コレクション (Kagoshima: Matsushita Museum of Art, 1993).

38. D. Mackay, "The Jewellery of Palmyra and Its Significance," *Iraq* 11, no. 2 (1949): 78. Cf. N. U. R. I. T. H. Kenaan-Kedar, "Sculpted Palmyrian Funerary Female Portraits with Extensive Jewelry Sets: A Revisionist Reading of Their Meanings and Impact," in *Art History 2012—The Future Is Now: Studies in Honor of Vladimir Peter Goss Celebrating His 70th Birthday* , eds. M. Capetić, D. Dujmović, V. Jukić, and A. Nikoloska (2012), 108–20.

39. As Sadurska notes, Palmyrene women "tragen meistens einheimische Gewänder, die sich sehr deutlich von der griechisch-römischen Tracht unterscheiden." See Anna Sadurska, "Die palmyrenische Grabskulptur," 18. See also Finlayson, "*Women of Palmyra*." Cf. Cynthia Finlayson, "Veil, Turban, and Headpiece: Female Status and Funerary Portraiture at Palmyra, Syria" (PhD diss, University of Iowa, 1998).

40. Cf. Hvidberg-Hansen and Ploug, *Palmyra Samlingen*, 123.

41. As Heyn, "Gesture and Identity," 634, has noted, of the 262 funerary reliefs depicting women, 70 percent (187 cases) raise either their right or left arm.

42. Heyn, "Gesture and Identity," 634, however, has cautioned that the *pudicitia* gesture at Palmyra "could just have been a conventional way to portray women, modeled on Roman example without the concomitant social baggage."

43. Colledge, *Art of Palmyra*, 70.

44. Jewelry is depicted with women significantly more often in Palmyra than in Rome. A. Raat, "Diadems: A Girl's Best Friend? Jewellery Finds and Sculptural Representations of Jewellery from Rome and Palmyra in the First Two Centuries AD" (master's thesis, Leiden University, 2013), 94.

45. Raat, *Diadems: A Girl's Best Friend?*, 63–64. See also Kyohite Saito, "Palmyrene Burial Practices from Funerary Goods," in *A Journey to Palmyra: Collected Essays to Remember Delbert R. Hillers*, ed. Eleonora Cussini (Leiden: Brill, 2005), 44–45. L. De Jong, *The Archaeology of Death in Roman Syria: Burial, Commemoration, and Empire* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017), 81–82.

46. Roughly 10 percent of Palmyrene reliefs contain an epigraphic date. Kropp and Raja, "*Palmyra Portrait Project*," 397.

47. Colledge, *Art of Palmyra*, 53–64.
48. Heyn, "Embodied Identities," 199–200.
49. Heyn, "Gesture and Identity," 632.
50. Heyn, "Female Portraiture in Palmyra," 44.
51. Mackay, "Jewellery of Palmyra," 179.
52. Raat, *Diadems: A Girl's Best Friend?*, 63–64, notes that "dumb-bell earrings are only represented on busts in the period ca. 140–200 AD." See also Fowlkes-Childs and Seymour, "*World between Empires*," 173. Cf. Mackay, "Jewellery of Palmyra," 180–81.
53. Harald Ingholt, *Studier over Palmyrensk Skulptur* (Copenhagen: C. A. Reitzels Forlag, 1928), 145, PS 472.
54. Sadurska, "Die palmyrenische Grabskulptur," 19.
55. There is evidence of a fourth line of text, but the poor condition of that area of the monument precludes further analysis.
56. E. Marcato, *Personal Names in the Aramaic Inscriptions of Hatra* (Venezia: Edizioni Ca'Foscari Digital Publishing, 2018), 74–75.
57. Klaus Beyer, *Die aramäischen Inschriften aus Assur, Hatra und dem übrigen Ostmesopotamien* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1998), 114.
58. J. K. Stark, *Personal Names in Palmyrene Inscriptions* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1971), 80.
59. Stark, *Personal Names*, 93.
60. Stark, *Personal Names*, 93.
61. Beyer, *Die aramäischen Inschriften*, 114. Cf. Marcato, *Personal Names*, 74.
62. The root underlying the name *Kytwt* is not at all clear. According to Caquot and Stark, *Kytwt* "pourrait être un nom de scheme *qaytūl*," possibly formed on the root *kit*, but a *kyt or *kwt root is unattested. André Caquot and J. K. Stark, "Personal Names in Palmyrene Inscriptions," *Revue de l'histoire des religions* 182, no. 2 (1972): 201. Stark, *Personal Names*, 92, notes that none of the suggested etymologies for *Kytwt* is compelling.
63. Gawlikowski, "*Monuments funéraires de Palmyre*," 185.
64. The term *rb'* is commonly found at the end of genealogies. For a full discussion of the term and its use, see Smith, "Identity, Community," 88–97.
65. Tower 44 was recently destroyed by ISIS. See Dana Ballout, "Islamic State Destroys Ancient Tombs in Palmyra," *Wall Street Journal*, September 4, 2015.
66. Andrew M. Smith, "Identity, Community, and State Formation at Roman Palmyra" (PhD diss., University of Maryland, 2004), 184.
67. P. Piersimoni, "The Palmyrene Prosopography" (PhD diss., University of London, 1995), 584.
68. Smith, "Identity, Community," 184, dates it to 355 in the Seleucid calendar (AD 44).
69. See E. Will, "Le relief de la tour de Kithot et le banquet funéraire à Palmyre," *Syria* 28, nos. 1–2 (1951): 70.
70. Jean-Baptiste Yon, "Index," in *Les notables de Palmyre* [online] (Beyrouth: Presses de l'Ifpo, 2002), http://books.openedition.org/ifpo/3777.
71. Piersimoni, "Palmyrene Prosopography," 538–39.

72. Piersimoni, "Palmyrene Prosopography," 592.

73. Jutta Meischner and Eleonora Cussini, "Vier palmyrenische Grabreliefs im Museum von Antakya," *Archäologischer Anzeiger* 2 (2003): 97, 100–01.

74. E. Cussini, "Regina, Martay and the Others: Stories of Palmyrene Women, *Orientalia* 73(2), Nova Series (2004): 236n7.

75. Smith, "Identity, Community," 102, figure 4.12.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Ballout, D. "Islamic State Destroys Ancient Tombs in Palmyra." *Wall Street Journal*, September 4, 2015.

Beyer, K. *Die aramäischen Inschriften aus Assur, Hatra und dem übrigen Ostmesopotamien (datiert 44 v. Chr. bis 238 n. Chr.)*. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1998.

Blumell, L. H., and K. Hull. "Two Greek Epitaphs in the Middle Eastern Cultural Center in Tokyo, Japan." *Journal of Epigraphic Studies* 2 (2019): 77–84.

Caquot André, and J. K. Stark. "Personal Names in Palmyrene Inscriptions." *Revue de l'histoire des religions* 182, no. 2 (1972): 200–02.

Colledge, M. A. R. *The Art of Palmyra*. London: Westview Press, 1976.

Cussini, E. "Beyond the Spindle: Investigating the Role of Palmyrene Women." In *A Journey to Palmyra: Collected Essays to Remember Delbert R. Hillers*, edited by E. Cussini, 27–43. Leiden: Brill, 2005.

Cussini, E. "Regina, Martay and the Others: Stories of Palmyrene Women." *Orientalia* 73, no. 2 Nova Series (2004): 235–44.

Cussini, E. "Transfer of Property at Palmyra." *ARAM Periodical* 7, no. 1 (1995): 233–50.

Davies, G. "The Body Language of Palmyra and Rome." In *Positions and Professions in Palmyra = Palmyrenske Studien/Palmyrene Studies*, vol. 2, edited by T. Long and A. H. Sørensen, 20–36. Copenhagen: Royal Danish Academy of Science and Letters, 2017.

De Jong, L. *The Archaeology of Death in Roman Syria: Burial, Commemoration, and Empire*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017.

Dirven, L. "Aspects of Hatrene Religion: A Note on the Statues of Kings and Nobles from Hatra." In *The Variety of Local Religious Life in the Near East: In the Hellenistic and Roman Periods*, edited by T. Kaizer, 209–46. Boston: Brill, 2008.

Drijvers, H. J. W. "After Life and Funerary Symbolism in Palmyrene Religion." In *La soteriologia dei culti orientali nell'Impero Romano*, edited by U. Bianchi and M. J. Vermaseren, 709–33. Leiden: Brill, 1982.

Finlayson, C. Review of *Roman Palmyra: Identity, Community, and State* Formation, by A. M. Smith II. *Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research* 372 (2014): 246–49.

Finlayson, C. "Veil, Turban, and Headpiece: Female Status and Funerary Portraiture at Palmyra, Syria." PhD diss., University of Iowa, 1998.

Finlayson, C. "The Women of Palmyra: Textile Workshops and the Influence of the Silk Trade in Roman Syria." *Textile Society of America Symposium Proceedings*, https://digitalcommons.unl.edu/tsaconf/385

Fowlkes-Childs, B., and M. Seymour. *The World between Empires: Art and Identity in the Ancient Middle East*. New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2019.

George, M. "Family Imagery and Family Values in Roman Italy." In *The Roman Family in the Empire: Rome, Italy, and Beyond*, edited by M. George, 37–66. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005.

Gawlikowski, M. "Palmyra 1992," *Polish Archeology in the Mediterranean 4* (Reports 1992) (1993): 111–18.

Gawlikowski, M. "The City of the Dead." In *A Journey to Palmyra: Collected Essays to Remember Delbert R. Hillers*, edited by E. Cussini, 44–73. Leiden–Boston: Brill, 2005.

Healey, J. F. *Aramaic Inscriptions and Documents of the Roman Period*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009.

Heyn, M. K. "Embodied Identities in the Funerary Portraiture of Palmyra." In *Palmyra: Mirage in the Desert*, edited by J. Aruz, 110–19. New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2010.

Heyn, M. K. "Female Portraiture in Palmyra." In *A Companion to Women in the Ancient World*, edited by S. James and S. Dillon, 439–41. Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2012.

Heyn, M. K. "Gesture and Identity in the Funerary Art of Palmyra." *American Journal of Archaeology* 114, no. 2 (2010): 631–61.

Heyn, M. K. "Status and Stasis: Looking at Women in the Palmyrene Tomb." In *World of Palmyra. Palmyrenske Strudier*, edited by R. Raja and A. Kropp, 197–209. Copenhagen: Royal Danish Academy of Sciences and Letters, 2016.

Hughes, L. "The Chaste Roman Matron: Recasting Roman Sculpture's Visual Paradigm." Unpublished manuscript, n.d.

Hvidberg-Hansen, F., and G. Ploug. *Palmyra Samlingen: Katalog, Ny Carlsberg Glyptotek*. Copenhagen: Ny Carlsberg Glyptotek, 1993.

Ingholt, H. *Studier over Palmyrensk Skulptur*. Copenhagen: C. A. Reitzels Forlag, 1928.

Kaltsas, N., and D. Hardy. *Sculpture in the National Archaeological Museum, Athens*. Los Angeles: J. Paul Getty Museum, 2002.

Kenaan-Kedar, N. U. R. I. T. H. "Sculpted Palmyrian Funerary Female Portraits with Extensive Jewelry Sets: A Revisionist Reading of Their Meanings and Impact." In *Art History 2012—The Future Is Now: Studies in Honor of Vladimir Peter Goss Celebrating His 70th Birthday*, edited by M. Capetić, D. Dujmović, V. Jukić, and A. Nikoloska, 108–20. 2012.

Krag, S., and R. Raja. "Representations of Women and Children in Palmyrene Funerary *Loculus* Reliefs, *Loculus* Stelae, and Wall Paintings," *Zeitschrift für Orient-Archäologie* 9 (2016): 134–78.

Kropp, A. J., and R. Raja. "The Palmyra Portrait Project." *Syria: Archéologie, Art et Histoire* 91 (2014): 393–408.

Mackay, D. "The Jewellery of Palmyra and Its Significance." *Iraq* 11, no. 2 (1949): 160–87.

Marcato, E. *Personal Names in the Aramaic Inscriptions of Hatra*. Venezia: Edizioni Ca'Foscari Digital Publishing, 2018.

Matsushita, K., F. Furue, and H. Suimoto. 松下美術コレクション . Kagoshima: Matsushita Museum of Art, 1993.

Meischner, J., and E. Cussini. "Vier palmyrenische Grabreliefs im Museum von Antakya." *Archäologischer Anzeiger* 2 (2003): 97–105.

Meyers, R. "Female Portraiture and Female Patronage in the High Imperial Period." In *A Companion to Women in the Ancient World*, edited by S. L. James and S. Dillon, 353–56. Chichester, UK: Wiley-Blackwell.

Nosch, M. L., and C. Gillis. *Ancient Textiles: Production, Crafts and Society*, vol. 1. Oxford: Oxbow Books, 2007.

Parlasca, K. "Ikonographische Probleme palmyrenischer Grabreliefs." *Damaszener Mitteilungen* 3 (1988): 215–21.

Piersimoni, P. "The Palmyrene Prosopography." PhD diss., University of London, 1995.

Raat, A. "Diadems: A Girl's Best Friend? Jewellery Finds and Sculptural Representations of Jewellery from Rome and Palmyra in the First Two Centuries AD." Master's thesis, Leiden University, 2013.

Raja, R. "You Can Leave Your Hat On": Priestly Representations from Palmyra: Between Visual Genre, Religious Importance and Social Status. In *Beyond Priesthood: Religious Entrepreneurs and Innovators in the Roman Empire*, edited by R. L. Gordon, G. Petridou, and J. Rüpke, 417–42. Berlin: De Gruyter, 2017.

Romano, I. B. *Classical Sculpture: Catalogue of the Cypriot, Greek, and Roman Stone Sculpture in the University of Pennsylvania Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology, 2011.

Sadurska, A. "Die palmyrenische Grabskulptur." *Das Altertum* 34 (1988): 14–23.

Sadurska, A. "L'art et la société. Recherches iconologiques sur l'art funéraire de Palmyre." *Archeologia* 45 (1994): 11–23.

Saito, K. "Palmyrene Burial Practices from Funerary Goods." In *A Journey to Palmyra: Collected Essays to Remember Delbert R. Hillers*, edited by E. Cussini, 150–65. Leiden: Brill, 2005.

Smith, R. R. R. *Hellenistic Sculpture: A Handbook*. London: Thames and Hudson, 1991.

Smith II, A. M. *Roman Palmyra: Identity, Community, and State Formation*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013.

Sokołowski, Ł. "Portraying the Literacy of Palmyra: The Evidence of Funerary Sculpture and Their Interpretation." *Études et Travaux XXVII.* Institut des Cultures Méditerranéennes et Orientales de l'Académie Polonaise des Sciences, 2014, 367–403.

Stark, J. K. *Personal Names in Palmyrene Inscriptions*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1971.

Stol, M. *Women in the Ancient Near East*, translated by H. Richardson and M. Richardson. Berlin: De Gruyter, 2016.

Taylor, C. G. *Late Antique Images of the Virgin Annunciate Spinning: Allotting the Scarlet and the Purple*. Leiden: Brill, 2018.

Will, E. "Le relief de la tour de Kithot et le banquet funéraire à Palmyre," *Syria* 28, nos. 1–2 (1951): 70–100.

Yon, J. B. "Bilinguisme et trilinguisme à Palmyre." *MOM Éditions* 37, no. 1 (2008): 195–211.

Yon, J. B. "Index." In *Les notables de Palmyre* [online]. Beyrouth: Presses de l'Ifpo, 2002. http://books.openedition.org/ifpo/3777.

Yon, J. B. *Inscriptions grecques et latines de la Syrie*, XVII/1: Palmyre (BAH 195). Beirut: Ifpo, 2012.

Zanker, P. "The Hellenistic Grave Stelai from Smyrna: Identity and Self-Image in the Polis." In *Images and Ideologies: Self-Definition in the Hellenistic World*, edited by A. Bulloch, E. S. Gruen, A. A. Long, and A. Stewart, 212–30. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993.