

A CLASSICAL MARBLE HEAD IN THE KRANNERT ART MUSEUM: ISSUES OF
IDENTITY AND MUSEUM ACQUISITION POLICY

BY

MARION C. ARCHER

THESIS

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Adviser:

Professor Eric Hostetter

Abstract

The Bearded Head in the Krannert Art Museum (acquisition number 1970-11-1) poses a significant problem of identification. Although there is no disagreement over the fact that it is a work of ancient art, it is unclear as to the period in which it was created. It has been defined in the past as a work of Greek sculpture, although it is now recognized as possibly having been sculpted in the Roman period. Without any provenance information attached to the head, this identification is suggested only by studying clues found in the sculpture itself. Some of the clues examined in this study include the type of marble used to sculpt the head, tool marks present on the head, and similarities to examples of sculpture with known provenances. Following a close examination of the head and consideration of the possible era of its creation, a history of the acquisition of the head is reconstructed. The head was bought with the understanding that it was a work of Greek art by the assistant to the director of the Krannert Art Museum, who was eager to build an impressive collection of ancient art and may have been taken advantage of by a dealer who was extremely knowledgeable in ancient sculpture. An examination of the two parties' backgrounds as well as correspondence between the assistant to the director and others concerning the head is studied to try and determine whether the dealer was aware of the questionable identification of the head and continued to represent it as a work of Greek art, or whether he was genuinely under the impression that the head was Greek in origin. Analyzing the documents surrounding the acquisition of the head will lead to a greater understanding of the process of the sale of artworks of questionable provenance to small museums without access to the means for thorough professional authentication.

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Introduction

A slightly under life-sized classical marble head of a bearded male in the Ancient Mediterranean gallery at the Krannert Art Museum (henceforth referred to as the KAM head) poses significant problems of identification, date, and origins. (Figs. 1 and 2) Acquired in 1970 without a provenance like so many other ancient works of art acquired from the antiquities market, the KAM head cannot be understood in its specific archaeo-cultural context, which might lead to a positive identification. Thus, without archeological evidence, an analysis of the KAM head must be made based on other criteria. This paper will be divided into two parts: first, an analysis of the type of marble, workmanship, stylistic and iconographical analysis, comparison with other possibly related Greek and Roman heads, and a consideration of possible cultural contexts. The second part will examine the narrative of the acquisition of the head by the Krannert Art Museum and the perils associated with the acquisition of pieces of questionable provenance by smaller museums, whose staff, lacking expertise, are ill-equipped to know what, precisely, they are buying. The history of the purchase is complicated by the interests of three types that did not have the same interests as the Krannert Art Museum: scholars, curators, and dealers.

Condition

The KAM head appears to have originally been a part of a larger work of sculpture, although there is no evidence to indicate whether the head was accidentally broken or deliberately removed from the rest of the sculpture. It is clear that the head was removed sometime in relatively distant past, as the surface color and texture matches that of the rest of the head, rather than the color of the instances of modern damage. The break occurs at the level of the bottom of the figure's beard in the front and the bottom of the hair in the back. The head is covered in an overall warm yellow patina, with an additional speckled brown-black weathering under the chin and beard, along the bottom of the neck, and at the bottom of the hair on the back of the head. Instances of modern damage show the original color of the material to be a cool white. The surface texture is abraded, likely indicating exposure to the elements. No evidence of polychromy remains. In addition to the break at the neck, other relatively old damage includes the loss of the right nostril and tip of the nose and a 2.5 centimeter chip in the right cheek at the cheekbone. Modern damage, distinguishable by the exposure of the white of the bright white of the marble in the locations where this damage occurred, is limited to several small chips in the hair and a few scratches on the top of the head.

Description

The KAM head is a slightly smaller than life-sized head of a mature, bearded male, with hair arranged in loose, wavy, irregular locks long enough to completely cover the ears. Varying levels of detail carved into the hair covering the head are perhaps most evident on the back of the head, which is described no further than with an uneven texture. The crown of the head was left unfinished, with two holes drilled into it in antiquity: one near the center of the head, and the other closer to the back of the head and positioned slightly to the head's left. The face is oval in shape, although the chin is covered with a medium-length beard. Beard and moustache are too abraded to determine the precise arrangement of the whiskers with certainty. His almond-shaped eyes are open and appear to gaze straight forward. Any indication of eyebrows, sculpted or painted, has been lost. The shape of the nose is impossible to determine, as the majority of it is missing. Full lips, slightly parted, are on the sides covered by the heavy moustache.

Marble

An understanding of the type of marble used in the KAM head may be useful as some types of marble were exploited only during certain periods, giving a *terminus post quem* or *ante quem* for works of sculpture done in that particular type of marble.¹ The crystalline structure and original color of the marble can be seen in areas of modern damage to the KAM head. (Fig. 3) The marble is a bright sparkling white, with grain large enough to be visible to the naked eye but no larger than two millimeters in diameter. The size of the grain is often used as a defining characteristic; however, the size of the grain in many marbles often varies even within the same quarry, making this an unreliable way to discriminate between marble types.² The KAM head does not show any distinguishing features such as inclusions or veins that might help lead to an identification. Three types of white marble- Parian, Pentelic, and Carrara- that were most commonly used in Greco-Roman sculpture will be examined as possible identification for the KAM head.

Parian marble is a brilliant white with a large grain.³ This type of marble appears to have first been imported to Attica between 570 and 560 B.C. and begins to replace Naxian as the most utilized type of marble for statuary by 540 B.C.⁴ Parian marble was later replaced by Pentelic marble as the most popular type of white marble at the end of the fifth century,⁵ and it continued

¹ A chemical analysis is the most dependable way to determine the type of marble of which a sculpture is composed. For the purpose of this study, access to the equipment to do a thorough chemical analysis of the KAM head was not available.

² Peter Rockwell, *The Art of Stoneworking: A Reference Guide* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 23.

³ Donald Strong and Amanda Claridge, "Marble Sculpture," in *Roman Crafts*, ed. Donald Strong and David Brown (New York: New York University Press, 1976), 196.

⁴ Mary C. Sturgeon, "Archaic Athens and Cyclades," in *Greek Sculpture: Function, Materials, and Techniques in the Archaic and Classical Periods*, ed. Olga Palagia (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 44.

⁵ Olga Palagia, "Classical Athens," in *Greek Sculpture: Function, Materials, and Techniques in the Archaic and Classical Periods*, ed. Olga Palagia (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 126.

to be used for sculpture into the Roman period.⁶ Descriptions of Parian marble are similar to the type of marble used for the KAM head. However, the identification of the marble of the KAM head as Parian is problematic as the height of the popularity of the use of Parian marble predates the style of the KAM head. If the KAM head, as posited, dates to the fourth century B.C., this would mean that it was not made of the most popular type of marble then in use, which seems unlikely.

Pentelic marble, typically with a fine grain and bright white in color⁷, was first used primarily for funerary reliefs and bases in the second half of the sixth century B.C., becomes more common in the second half of the sixth century,⁸ and is used extensively in the fifth century for both architecture and sculpture.⁹ At the end of the fifth century Pentelic becomes the most popular type of marble and continues to be used through the Roman period.¹⁰ What makes Pentelic a particularly good candidate for the KAM head is the unique characteristic of the manner in which it changes color over time. After prolonged exposure to the atmosphere, the small percentage of iron in Pentelic marble causes the surface to turn a warm golden color.¹¹ Thus, the golden patina of the KAM head is perhaps the best clue as to the type of marble. While the grain of Pentelic marble is typically small and that of the KAM head is medium-grained, grain size is not, in all cases, necessarily an accurate indication of marble type.

⁶ Sturgeon, 44.

⁷ Strong, 196.

⁸ Sturgeon, 32.

⁹ Janet Burnett Grossman, *Looking at Greek and Roman Sculpture in Stone: A Guide to Terms, Styles, and Techniques* (Los Angeles: The J. Paul Getty Museum, 2003), 75.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 75.

¹¹ Grossman, 75. This patina can be seen in the Pentelic marble of the Parthenon.

Carrara White marble is mined from the Apuan Alps in Italy and, by the late first century B.C., becomes the most popular type of marble used in sculpture and architecture in Italy.¹² If the KAM head is of Carrara marble, a Roman date would be most likely for its creation. Carrara is a fine-grained marble with crystals too small to produce the significant sparkling effect that the areas of modern damage on the KAM head reveal.¹³ However, even if Carrara marble thus seems an unlikely candidate for the KAM head, it cannot be ruled out. In sum, while the KAM head seems most likely to be of Pentelic marble, a positive visual identification of the type of marble cannot be assured.

¹² Strong, 196.

¹³ A.W. Lawrence, *Greek and Roman Sculpture* (New York: Harper & Row, 1972), 30.

Technique

A second significant category of evidence that can be examined is the types of tools used to carve the head. Because of abrasion, there are not many tool marks visible on the head and, in any case, the final step in the sculpture process in the Greek and Roman period was to smooth the marble so that tool marks were no longer visible.¹⁴ There are, however, two places on the head where tool marks can be identified: on the neck and in the hair. (Figs. 4 and 5) The entire surface of the neck displays hundreds of very shallow straight lines, often parallel to one another. These marks most likely point to the use of a fine ‘claw’ or tooth-chisel of a type that was in use by 550 B.C.¹⁵ and which remained in use throughout the Roman period, when it was employed primarily as a finishing tool.¹⁶ The continuous and common use of the claw chisel thus does not help identify the age of the KAM head.

Another type of tool, the drill, is perhaps more telling, and evidence for its use is visible in the grooves and holes which define the locks of hair and beard on the KAM head. (Fig. 6) Two dominant methods were used to create long narrow channels on ancient sculpture: by the use of a stationary drill and a running drill. In creating a groove with a stationary drill, the sculptor would drill a series of holes at a ninety degree angle to the surface of the marble and would then use a chisel to knock out the stone between the drill holes, then polish the surfaces of the groove to eliminate any remaining tool marks.¹⁷ The running drill, in contrast, was held at a sharp angle to the surface of the stone and moved along the surface allowing the bit, continuously rotating, to

¹⁴ Barbara A. Barletta, “Archaic and Classical Magna Grecia,” in *Greek Sculpture: Function, Materials, and Techniques in the Archaic and Classical Periods*, ed. Olga Palagia (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 102.

¹⁵ Barletta, 101.

¹⁶ Grossman, 31.

¹⁷ Olga Palagia, “Marble Carving Techniques,” in *Greek Sculpture: Function, Materials, and Techniques in the Archaic and Classical Periods*, ed. Olga Palagia (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 257.

produce a length of groove.¹⁸ The advantage of the running drill over the stationary drill was speed, as the time it took to produce a single groove was a fraction of the time it took to create a series of bored holes and then eliminate the stone between those holes.¹⁹ Tool marks left behind by the running drill includes nicks on the side of the groove, as well as intermittent bumps along the bottom, the result of variations in pressure applied by the sculptor's hand.²⁰ The stationary drill, by contrast, shows a series of shallow holes along the bottom of the channel.²¹ It is rather rare to find traces of either type of drill in the Greek period because significant effort went into removing traces of tool work.²² However, once the surface of the channel has been finished and all tool marks removed, it is nearly impossible to distinguish between the application of the stationary and the running drill.²³ Another characteristic of the running drill is its inability to drill in the shape of sharp angles- when the sculptor using the running drill came to a sharp angle, he would have to lift his drill out and start a new channel.²⁴ Conversely, smoothly drilled S-shaped curves could have only been cut with a running drill.²⁵ While the KAM head does not show nicks and gouges and other marks indicative of either the stationary or running drill in the grooves of the hair, it does show the characteristic deep S-shaped curves of the running drill. (Fig. 7)

If the hair of the KAM head was executed with a running drill, as appears likely, can this tell us something about the period in which it was carved? The date of the introduction of the

¹⁸ Sheila Adam, *The Technique of Greek Sculpture in the Archaic and Classical Periods* (Oxford: Thames and Hudson, 1966), 61.

¹⁹ Strong, 199

²⁰ Palagia, "Marble Carving Techniques," 258.

²¹ Ibid..

²² Strong, 199.

²³ Adam, 62.

²⁴ Adam, 70.

²⁵ Bernard Ashmole, "An Alleged Archaic Group," *The Journal of Hellenic Studies* 50:1 (1930): 104.

running drill is a point of great controversy among art historians.²⁶ Stanley Casson states that the running drill was first used in the archaic period, but only for minor details,²⁷ while Olga Palagia dates the introduction of the running drill to the third or fourth quarter of the fifth century B.C.²⁸ Janet Burnett Grossman suggests that the first evidence of the running drill appears around the year 400 B.C.,²⁹ but Sheila Adam, one of the scholars with the latest date for the introduction of the running drill, dates its introduction to between 370 and 350 B.C.³⁰ If the date of the introduction of the running drill does not rule out a possible date of creation for the KAM head in the fourth century B.C., the first uses of the running drill are not usually found with such frequency in fine detail such as the hair during that period. Rather, in the late fourth century B.C., the running drill was most often used to delineate grooves in drapery.³¹

The use of the running drill was also extremely common in the Roman period, and was such a familiar tool that even delicate details could be achieved sculptors skilled in its technique.³² The most common application of the running drill in the Roman period was for fine detail, such as in the hair of sculpted figures.³³ By the second and third centuries A.D., the use of the running drill for hair was ubiquitous³⁴ and, as the channels in the hair of the KAM head were done with a running drill, it is quite possible that the head dates to the Roman period.

Another feature of the KAM head may or may not give an indication of the period when the head was sculpted- the unfinished state of the back of the head. (Fig. 8) There are late examples

²⁶ Palagia, "Marble Carving Techniques," 258.

²⁷ S. Casson, "Some Technical Methods of Archaic Sculpture," *The Journal of Hellenic Studies* 50:2 (1930): 313.

²⁸ Palagia, "Marble Carving Techniques," 258.

²⁹ Grossman, 96.

³⁰ Adam, 66.

³¹ Grossman, 96.

³² Evelyn B. Harrison, "New Sculpture from the Athenian Agora, 1959," *Hesperia* 29:4 (Oct.-Dec. 1960): 385.

³³ Michael J. Padgett, ed., *Roman Sculpture in the Art Museum: Princeton University* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton Art Museum, 2001), 134-135.

³⁴ Strong, 199.

of Greek free-standing sculpture with unfinished backs, such as a second century B.C. portrait statue from the Greek island of Kos of a bearded man wearing a long cloak with a hole in the back for the insertion of a peg so that it could be attached to a wall.³⁵ In this example, nearly the entire back of the statue was left unfinished. In general, however, and especially in the Classical period, Greek artists fully finished their sculpture on all sides, especially for freestanding sculptures that were not placed against walls such as pedimental sculpture, carved expressly to be placed against the wall high upon the temple.³⁶ By contrast, the level of detail remaining on the abraded surface of the KAM head suggests that it was designed to be viewed at close proximity.

³⁵ Reinhard Lullies, *Greek Sculpture* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, Inc., 1957), 104.

³⁶ Margaret Bieber, *Ancient Copies: Contributions to the History of Greek and Roman Art* (New York: New York University Press, 1977), 174.

Style

The KAM head is stylistically similar to several examples of fourth-century B.C. Attic grave stelae. While earlier grave stelae had been carved in very low relief, the second half of the fourth century B.C. saw an increase in the depth of carving. Many examples were carved so deeply that the figures were sculpted nearly in the round.³⁷ (Fig. 9) Indeed, some figures on fourth century grave stelae carved separately and completely in the round and added to the architectural frame.³⁸ The need for this depth of carving was a result of the development of more complex compositions on grave stelae: rather than a simple design in one plane, the preference in the fourth century was for stelae with overlapping figures in lower relief in the background and figures done in high relief or in the round in the foreground.³⁹ (Fig.11)

A problem with the suggestion of the KAM head as a figure from a Greek grave stele is that it has been characterized as a mythological figure by scholars in the past. It is also possible that the characterization as a mythological figure could have been made to drive up the price of the head. Reliefs on grave stelae of the late fifth and fourth century B.C., of which there are approximately two thousand extant examples,⁴⁰ nearly always, with few exceptions, show representations of the deceased and their family members.⁴¹ This type of subject suggests a generic “type” portrait representation (old man, young man, etc.), rather than an idealized face, such as that of the KAM head. However, the KAM head may not be a case of idealization, but rather generalization. Figures on Attic grave stelae of the fourth century B.C. typically show many similarities among types, perhaps indicating that these grave markers were bought ready-

³⁷ Brunilde Sismondo Ridgway, *Fourth-Century Styles in Greek Sculpture* (Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1997), 160

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 161.

³⁹ K. Friis Johansen, *The Attic Grave-Reliefs of the Classical Period* (Copenhagen: Ejnar Munksgaard, 1951), 43.

⁴⁰ Ridgway, *Fourth-Century Styles*, 157.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 162.

made and an inscription added to personalize the monument.⁴² Standard types of faces and heads existed, as well as standard types of hair and beards, with a longer beard indicating an older man.⁴³ One type of head from fourth century grave stelae bears a striking similarity to the KAM head. (Figs. 11, 12, and 13)

If the KAM head is a part of a grave stele then the time frame when it was carved is limited because there are virtually no examples of grave sculpture between the years of 480 and 431 B.C., most likely due to sumptuary laws.⁴⁴ These laws also brought an end to the short period of production of Greek grave stelae in 317 B.C.⁴⁵ Those made prior to 480 B.C. were done in an Archaic style, while the KAM head is done in the later Classical style.⁴⁶ Thus, if the KAM head was a part of a Greek grave stele, it can probably be dated to between 430 and 317 B.C. The depth of carving may indicate a date later in this period, to the mid fourth century.

Many Roman copies of Greek sculpture were produced expressly for the purpose of positioning in niches in walls, of theaters, baths, fountains, villae, domus, etc.⁴⁷ The backs of these decorative copies in niches were usually unfinished and did not closely correspond to the prototypes which they copied or to other copies of the same prototypes.⁴⁸ Roman architects often used decorative copies to achieve a sense of symmetry, sometimes placing copies of the

⁴² It is generally accepted that stock sarcophagi were the norm in Ancient Rome; the creation of an original sarcophagus made to order for a Roman citizen would have been reserved for the extremely powerful and wealthy.

⁴³ Johannes Bergemann, "Attic Grave Reliefs and Portrait Sculpture in Fourth-Century Athens," in *Early Hellenistic Portraiture: Image, Style, Context*, ed. Peter Schultz and Ralf Van Den Hoff (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 38.

⁴⁴ Palagia, "Classical Athens," 122.

⁴⁵ Ridgway, *Fourth-Century Styles*, 157.

⁴⁶ Palagia, "Classical Athens," 122.

⁴⁷ Cornelius C. Vermeule III, *Greek Sculpture and Roman Taste: The Purpose and Setting of Graeco-Roman Art in Italy and the Greek Imperial East* (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 1977), 14.

⁴⁸ Bieber, 174-175.

same original on opposite ends of a series of niches.⁴⁹ Roman copies of Greek sculpture were numerous, even utilizing multiple copies within the same building. Thus the unfinished back of the KAM head may suggest its creation as a Roman copy to be placed in a niche rather than as a Greek original. That it is of Pentelic marble does not pose a problem given the trade in marbles between Greece and Italy.

Another type of marble sculpture similar to the KAM head in many respects is Roman garden sculpture, which often had figures in a smaller than life-size scale⁵⁰ and drew on classical Greek themes. First, the scale of the KAM head is similar in scale to many examples of this type of Roman sculpture. Second, Roman garden sculpture was often adorned with bronze attachments for wings, diadems, etc.⁵¹ In our example, as in most others, the metal attachments do not survive, but they are known by the holes left behind in the marble.⁵² The KAM head also displays other similarities to Roman garden sculpture, as some examples of this type were not finished in the back of the head because this part was not visible in their intended position.⁵³ The heavy weathering evident on the surface of the KAM head is also consistent with examples of Roman garden sculpture that would have been heavily weathered due to their original display location out of doors and exposed to the elements.⁵⁴

⁴⁹ Vermeule, *Greek Sculpture*, 15.

⁵⁰ Dorothy Kent Hill, "Some Sculpture from Roman Domestic Gardens," in *Ancient Roman Gardens*, ed. Elisabeth B. MacDougall and Wilhelmina F. Jashemski (Washington, D.C.: Dumbarton Oaks Trustees for Harvard University, 1981), 85.

⁵¹ One of many examples is a marble statue of Nike found at the villa of Poppaea at Oplontis once boasted two bronze wings attached to the back. For more on this sculpture, see Stefano De Caro, "The Sculptures of the Villa of Poppaea at Oplontis: A Preliminary Report," in *Ancient Roman Villa Gardens*, ed. Elisabeth Blair MacDougall (Washington, D.C.: Dumbarton Oaks Trustees for Harvard University, 1987), 107. Other known examples of Roman garden sculpture which once had metal attachments are a sculpture of Aphrodite unlacing her sandal, which originally had gold earrings and a statue of Dionysus with a hole drilled in the back of the head, probably for the attachment of a metal diadem (see De Caro, 114, for both examples).

⁵² Sturgeon, 59.

⁵³ De Caro, 90.

⁵⁴ Linda Farrar, *Ancient Roman Gardens* (Stroud, United Kingdom: Sutton Publishing, Ltd., 1998), 123.

Iconography

Iconographical clues to the identification of the subject represented in the KAM head are limited. Multiple mythological figures are represented as mature bearded males, with individual attributes such as staffs or articles of clothing as distinguishing characteristics, but mortals, too, are so depicted. With the absence of a body or any accessories, the KAM head is extremely difficult to identify as any particular mythological figure. It is further possible that the head is an idealized portrait, of which the identity would be nearly impossible to determine without the aid of provenance information to give an idea of the possible owner.

There is, however, one unusual feature of the KAM head that may bear on the identification of the subject. One of the notable features of the KAM head is the unfinished crown of the head which displays two drilled holes, one nearly at the center and the other further toward the back and slightly to the head's left. (Fig. 14) These holes probably allowed for the fastening of an adornment such as hair, jewelry, or clothing in bronze.⁵⁵ Drilling holes into marble sculpture for the addition of bronze elements was common practice in Greek sculpture, especially during the Archaic period, from around 650-480 B.C.⁵⁶ and continued through the Roman period.⁵⁷ There are some examples of fourth-century grave stelae that were adorned with metal attachments, often weapons or jewelry.⁵⁸ In the case of the KAM head, the holes at the top of the head and the unfinished crown suggest the addition of metal locks of hair, a wreath, diadem, helmet, or hat. The fact that the crown of the head is not smooth, but regularly pitted may suggest the

⁵⁵ Palagia, "Classical Athens," 136.

⁵⁶ Brunilde S. Ridgway, "Metal Attachments in Greek Marble Sculpture," in *Marble: Art Historical and Scientific Perspectives on Ancient Sculpture*, Papers Delivered at a Symposium Organized by the Departments of Antiquities and Antiquities Conservation and Held at the J. Paul Getty Museum, April 28-30, 1988 (Malibu: The J. Paul Getty Museum, 1990), 185. The practice of attaching additions made of bronze and other metals probably began as a result of additions of real jewelry and clothing to early wooden Greek sculpture.

⁵⁷ Grossman, 12.

⁵⁸ Ridgway, *Fourth-Century Styles*, 166.

roughening of the surface in preparation for the glue used to attach a hypothetical piece of bronze that covered the entire unfinished area.⁵⁹ This could have been a helmet, but the positioning of the unfinished area may more likely suggest the addition of a polos, a round brimless hat made of felt that fit close to the head.⁶⁰

A comparison of the KAM head and examples of sculpture of similar subject and with holes in their heads and unfinished crowns, especially those with known provenances is useful. Multiple examples of similar marble bearded heads dating to both the Greek and Roman periods exist in various collections. A marble bearded head dating to the second or third century A.D. in the David and Alfred Smart Museum of Art of the University of Chicago is somewhat similar, especially in the hair, the beard, and the parted lips, as well as being unfinished in the back, though not on the crown and so shows no evidence of any metal attachments.⁶¹ (Fig. 15) Like the KAM head, the hair and beard of the Smart museum head are carved extensively with the running drill, evidence used by the Smart Museum to assign the piece a Roman date.⁶² However, the Smart Museum head also differs from the KAM example: the Smart head looks downward with furrowed brow, while the KAM head looks straight ahead. While the beards are of similar length, the hair is also shorter than the KAM head, falling just above the ears. Thus, while differences exist, this comparison between the KAM head and the Smart Museum head may support the idea that the KAM head is Roman in origin, rather than Greek.

Also similar to the KAM head is a 48 centimeter marble head identified as Zeus from Mylasa, now in the Boston Museum of Fine Art. (Figs. 16, 17, and 18) This head was discovered

⁵⁹ Palagia, "Marble Carving Techniques," 262.

⁶⁰ Padgett, 114. The type of hat that may have been attached is a matter of speculation, but the attachment of a polos is supported by the similar example of the Mylasa Zeus, discussed below.

⁶¹ G. Ferrari, C.M. Neilsen, and K. Olson, eds., *The Classical Collection: The David and Alfred Smart Museum of Art, The University of Chicago* (Chicago: David and Alfred Smart Museum of Art, University of Chicago, 1998), 152.

⁶² *Ibid.*

at Mylasa, and is thought to be of the mid-fourth century B.C.⁶³ According to the Boston head's catalogue entry available on the Boston Museum of Fine Art website, the head is carved of Pentelic marble. It shows the same warm golden patina as the KAM head. Not only is the Boston head similar in the facial expression, parted lips, beard, and eyes, but the unfinished back of the head is the same as the KAM head. There is even a similar low bulge in the forehead of the Boston head.⁶⁴ But perhaps the most striking similarity is the unfinished crown of the head and the two drilled holes in nearly the same position.⁶⁵ Differences are also apparent between the Boston head and the KAM head. First, the scale of the heads: the KAM head is slightly under life-size at about 24 centimeters tall, while the Boston head is over life-size at 48 centimeters.⁶⁶ The difference in size does not discount the possibility of a copyist relationship, as copies were not always the same size as the original.⁶⁷ Second, the arrangement of the hair: the ears of the Boston head are exposed, although the hair is roughly the same length as the hair of the KAM head. Finally, the shape of the holes drilled into the crown of the head: the holes on the KAM head are both single circular drill holes, while only one of the holes in the Boston head is a single circular drill hole, the other, is in the shape of a long rectangle. The shape of the holes in the heads of the two sculptures do not necessarily indicate different types of attachments, but the difference is important to note.

The Boston head has been extensively studied. If the KAM Head is a copy of the Boston head type, or of a related piece, the origins of the Boston head may help in understanding the KAM head. Lacey Caskey, the former curator of the Boston Museum of Fine Arts, compares the

⁶³ J.J. Pollitt, *Art and Experience in Classical Greece* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1972), 100.

⁶⁴ Caskey, 61.

⁶⁵ Caskey, 60.

⁶⁶ Caskey, 59.

⁶⁷ Brunilde Sismondo Ridgway, *Roman Copies of Greek Sculpture: The Problem of the Originals* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1984), 99.

Boston head to the now lost famous cryselephantine Olympian Zeus, sculpted by Pheidias.⁶⁸ He compares the Boston head to the Pheidian Zeus based on a coin bearing a representation of the Olympian Zeus that is very similar to the Boston head.⁶⁹ (Fig. 19) What Caskey does not point out in his comparison is the fact that the representation of the Olympian Zeus on the coin does not include a bronze attachment on the crown of the head. While the arrangement of the hair and the facial features of the two are strikingly similar, without such a prominent feature as a bronze polos, the comparison as a possible prototype/copy relationship falls flat.

Another comparison made by several scholars is of the Boston head and the cult image of the Zeus Labraundos.⁷⁰ Lacey Caskey notes that the holes in the unfinished head of the Boston head were most likely for the attachment of a bronze polos.⁷¹ The reason for this comparison is that Mylasa, where the Boston head was found, is the center of the cult of the Zeus Labraundos, who appears on coins and in at least one statuette wearing a polos.⁷² (Figs. 20 and 21) The polos, apparently, was an attribute of the Zeus Labraundos.⁷³

The similarities between the Boston head and the KAM head are impossible to ignore, as there seems to be no other existing Greek or Roman work of sculpture portraying an older bearded man with evidence of a metal attachment besides these two heads. If the correlation can be believed, this suggests that perhaps the KAM head represents the same subject as the Boston head, possibly the Zeus Labraundos. It is also possible that the similarity between the two heads

⁶⁸ Lacey D. Caskey, *Museum of Fine Arts, Boston: Catalogue of Greek and Roman Sculpture* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1925), 60.

⁶⁹ Ibid.

⁷⁰ Cornelius Vermeule, "Large and Small Sculpture in the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston," *The Classical Journal* 63:2 (Nov. 1967), 59.

⁷¹ Caskey, 61.

⁷² Ibid.

⁷³ Pausanias, *Guide to Greece. Vol. 2: Southern Greece*, trans. Peter Levi (New York: Viking Penguin Inc., 1971), 394, note 77.

is pure coincidence, and the two are in no way related. Once again, a possible clue suggests an origin and identity of the KAM head, but no solid evidence.

While attribution of a work of sculpture with or without any provenance information to a particular artist is fraught with difficulties, it would seem that the identification of the period, rather than any suspected (or hoped for) artistic personality, in which the sculpture was made would be the wisest choice of investigation. In the case of Greek sculpture, the problem of Roman copies arises: while the KAM head is Classical in style, this does not necessarily mean it was made in the fifth or fourth century B.C. It could just as easily be a Roman copy of a later fifth- or fourth-century B.C. or yet an original composition made in the Roman period in a Classicizing style and in Greek marble. Aspects of the KAM head such as condition, material, technique, style, and iconography can provide the modern viewer with insights into the origins of the head, but there is no definitive proof of a period of creation without an archaeological provenance. The physical evidence, along with the fact that Roman marble sculpture appears with more regularity than Greek marble sculpture, suggests that the KAM head is most likely a work of art dating to the Roman period.

History of Acquisition

Before its acquisition by the Krannert Art Museum, the only mention of the KAM head in print was in two auction catalogs as a part of two fine art auctions. The first appearance of the KAM head was in a catalog accompanying a 1963 Swiss auction.⁷⁴ The auction, held on October 5, 1963 in Basel, Switzerland, by the Munzen und Medaillen A.G. auction house. At this auction, the head was listed as a “Marble head of a bearded man from an Attic grave monument,”⁷⁵ and was estimated to bring between US \$5600 and \$6600. However, the head remained unsold at the auction, as the US \$5580 reserve was not met.⁷⁶ While the name of the seller was not made available, the current owner of Munzen and Medaillen, Jean-David Cahn, did suggest that the head may have been an American consignment due to the fact that the reserve price was listed in American dollars.⁷⁷ As no provenance or pedigree was provided, it is a certainty that the head was looted.

The next appearance of the head was six years later, in a July 1st, 1969 Sotheby’s auction held in London, where the catalog refers to the head as “A fine Greek marble head of a bearded man with long curly hair, from an Attic grave monument.”⁷⁸ The catalog also gives the head an estimated date of 340 B.C.⁷⁹ As in the earlier auction, the consignor at the Sotheby’s auction asked to remain confidential (perhaps due to the absence of a clear title or a wish not to be identified as a ‘player’ in the market), again possibly suggesting the dubious origins of the head and a certain reluctance to be identified as a seller of stolen goods. The price paid at the auction

⁷⁴ Münzen Und Medaillen A.G., *Auktion XXVI (5 Oktober, 1963), Kunstwerke der Antike: Bronzen, Keramik, Skulpturen* (Basel: Münzen Und Medaillen A.G., 1963).

⁷⁵ Ibid., US price estimation list.

⁷⁶ Jean-David Cahn, e-mail message to author, May 18, 2009.

⁷⁷ Ibid.

⁷⁸ Sotheby & Co., *Catalogue of Egyptian, Western Asiatic, Greek, Etruscan and Roman Antiquities, also Islamic Pottery and Metalwork (July 1, 1969)* (London: Sotheby & Co., 1969), 62.

⁷⁹ Ibid.

for the head is also not listed.⁸⁰ The buyer, however, was Jerome Eisenberg, the then and current owner of the Royal Athena Galleries in New York City,⁸¹ and the price paid for the KAM head at the Sotheby's auction remained confidential.

Eisenberg was presumably in possession of the head for the year between the Sotheby's auction and when he and Muriel Christison at the Krannert Art Museum began their communication. All attempts to reach Eisenberg for the purposes of this study were ignored, including an email and a written letter, both sent in November of 2008.

The first piece of correspondence in the KAM head's file at the Krannert Art Museum is a letter from Muriel Christison to Jerome Eisenberg dated to July 14th of 1970.

Dear Jerry:

I finally have had an opportunity to show your photographs of the Greek head to some of the people here, and there is much enthusiasm for it. I now am writing to ask if you can give us about two months while we accumulate photographs of some other objects, as the desire is to present a group of objects at one time to our patron. That seems to be the procedure which she likes and which has worked well in the past. In other words, we are going to recommend the purchase of the head, and some other material, too, at the same time. We have to wait until all is in hand and until her return from her vacation to do this.

Thus, will you try to hold that head in reserve for us, if you can, until mid-September. Perhaps if I am lucky I can get an answer on it before then. I am really very anxious to see us get started with the classical collection, and I think that would be a good piece to begin with.

It was pleasant seeing you again. With best wishes,

Sincerely yours,

(Mrs.) Muriel B. Christison

⁸⁰ Florent Heinz, e-mail message to author, November 28, 2008.

⁸¹ Florent Heinz, e-mail message to author, November 21, 2008.

Associate Director

Muriel Christison at that time was Assistant to the Director at the Krannert Art Museum, and Jerome Eisenberg, the Director of the Royal Athena Galleries in New York. Christison begins the letter by addressing Eisenberg as “Jerry”, indicating that the two were on familiar terms. Christison mentions that photographs of the head have been met by much enthusiasm by “some of the people” at the museum, and asks Eisenberg to hold the head for two months while photographs of other objects up for sale can be collected. Christison states that it is necessary to present a group of objects for possible acquisition to the museum patron, a procedure that the patron prefers. Christison says that she plans on recommending the acquisition of the head and some other objects to the patron, but only when several objects are available for examination and the patron returns from her vacation. Christison then states in the last line of the letter that she is anxious to start a classical collection at the Krannert Art Museum and that the KAM head would be a “good piece to start with.”⁸²

It is helpful to attempt to determine the level of knowledge of ancient sculpture held by both Jerome Eisenberg and Muriel Christison at this point, in order to understand the tone of the dealings between the two parties. Was Eisenberg aware of the possible Roman origins of the KAM head and chose to sell it as a definite Greek work of art, and was Christison aware of the same, or was the KAM head sold from one unsuspecting party to another?

Jerome Eisenberg holds a Ph.D, although it is not clear in what subject. He studied under Jiri Frel, a professor of Classical Art at Universitas Carolina in Prague and Princeton University, suggesting that Eisenberg’s degree is in the same or a similar subject.⁸³ Eisenberg’s early and

⁸² Muriel Christison, Associate Director of the Krannert Art Museum, to Jerome Eisenberg, 14 July, 1970, KAM head file at Krannert Art Museum, Champaign, Illinois.

⁸³ “Jiri Frel, Getty’s Former Antiquities Curator, dies at 82” *New York Times*, May 17, 2006, 20.

later association with Frel⁸⁴ sets an ominous tone for Eisenberg's credibility. Frel was curator for the Getty Museum from 1973 to 1985, but was fired for acquiring fake antiquities and forging accompanying documents in an attempt to persuade the board to approve the purchase.⁸⁵ Frel also was also found to have acquired many of the pieces for the Getty from two antiquities dealers in Italy who were later investigated for export violations related to the looting of antiquities.⁸⁶ While Eisenberg's association with Frel does not prove that Eisenberg participated in the same practices, Eisenberg's stock did not materialize out of thin air and it certainly suggests that he may well have patronized some of these same contacts to acquire illicit ancient works of art for his gallery.

Eisenberg also has other credentials to suggest a sound knowledge of ancient art, as he has been the director of the Royal Athena Galleries for over 50 years, with his biography on the Royal Athena Gallery website stating his area of expertise as ancient art.⁸⁷ While Eisenberg has not held a continuous position with a university, he has lectured on ancient art at New York University and was a visiting professor at the Institute of Classical Archaeology of the University of Leipzig, Germany in 1996.⁸⁸ Eisenberg was also deemed competent enough in appraisal of antiquities to have appeared as an expert at court hearings and performed appraisals for the Internal Revenue Service, the U.S. Treasury department, the U.S. Customs Service, the Metropolitan Museum of Art, and the J. Paul Getty Museum.⁸⁹ Eisenberg has published several books on ancient art and numismatics, as well as countless articles on a wide range of subjects

⁸⁴ Eisenberg is quoted recounting a story in Frel's obituary in which Eisenberg rushed to Rome several years before Frel's death to consult on a work of art.

⁸⁵ "Jiri Frel," 20.

⁸⁶ "Jiri Frel," 20.

⁸⁷ Royal Athena Gallery, "Introduction," Royal Athena Gallery website, <http://www.royalathena.com/PAGES/intropages/introduction.html>.

⁸⁸ Ibid.

⁸⁹ Ibid.

relating to ancient art. He founded the journal *Minerva: The International Review of Ancient Art and Archaeology* in 1990, continues to hold the title of editor-in-chief and often contributes articles to the publication. Eisenberg is clearly knowledgeable in the field of ancient art, including Greek and Roman sculpture.

Christison also holds an advanced degree in Art History, but not a Ph.D. She earned a BA in the subject 1933 from the University of Minnesota, followed by a diploma in French Medieval art from the University of Paris in 1936, although no degree accompanied this diploma. She earned a second non-degree diploma from the University of Brussels in 1938, this time in the subject of Mosan and Rhenan Art and Flemish painting. She finally returned to the University of Minnesota and received her MA in Art History in 1940.⁹⁰ She stayed at the University of Minnesota until 1947, teaching several Art History and American Studies courses and also working as the head of the Education Department, after which she took a position as Associate Director at the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts in Richmond, Virginia, where she stayed until 1961. Following a one-year project at the Arkansas Arts Center in Little Rock, she took the position of Associate Director at the Krannert Art Museum in 1962.⁹¹ Christison was also well-published, although only two articles were art historical, both on the subject of 19th century American art.⁹² All of her other publications related to her museum work, including museum catalogs published early in her career and essays on museum education in the years leading up to her employment at the Krannert Art Museum.⁹³ Thus, while Christison was knowledgeable in Art History, it appears she had minimal experience or knowledge in the area of ancient art. She

⁹⁰ Urbana, Illinois, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign University Archives, Faculty/Staff Press Release Files, Muriel B. Christison.

⁹¹ Ibid.

⁹² See Christison, Muriel B. "How Buffington Staked His Claim: An Analysis of his Memories and Skyscraper Drawings." *Art Bulletin* 26:1 (March 1944): 13-24 and Christison, Muriel B. "LeRoy S. Buffington and the Minneapolis Boom of the 1880s." *Minnesota History* 23:3 (Sept. 1942): 219-232.

⁹³ Muriel B. Christison Press Release File.

was also experienced in the museum field, but her focus seemed to be more on education through museum objects, rather than research into the objects within the museum. In short, of the parties involved in the purchase, it appears that Jerome Eisenberg would have been much more likely to have been the sophisticated party in the matter of the origins of the KAM head than Christison.

On July 16th, 1970, Eisenberg promptly replies to Christison's request.

Dear Mrs. Christison,

Thank you for your letter of July 14th. I am very pleased to hear that you are interested in the 4th century Greek marble head. Unfortunately I can not reserve the head at this moment for, as I believe I told you last month, the director of a Midwestern Museum had already been offered the head, and as of my telephone conversation with him last week, he had hoped that he could take some action on it by the end of this month. I would be pleased, however, at that time, if I do not have a favorable decision on its purchase by him, to then give you the option until the middle of September. I believe he had been having a problem getting all the trustees together for a meeting; perhaps his loss can be your gain. You certainly could not start off with a finer piece for your Classical collection.

With very best personal wishes,

Jerome M. Eisenberg

Director

Eisenberg informs Christison that he is not able to hold the head for the Krannert because an unnamed "director of a Midwestern Museum" had already been offered the head. According to Eisenberg, this other interested party hoped to be able to take action on the head by the end of July. Eisenberg notes that the other director may have to pass on the head as he was having

trouble getting the trustees for his museum together for a meeting, and Eisenberg ends the letter by saying, “You certainly could not start off with a finer piece for your Classical collection.”⁹⁴

With the knowledge that the KAM head’s identity as a Greek original is in question, the innocent nature of this letter takes on another character. In Christison’s first letter, her admission that she is looking for a piece to with which to begin the Classical collection has given the impression that Christison is not an expert in Classical art. In making this statement, Christison also appears eager to acquire an important piece of Classical art to begin the Classical collection at the Krannert Art Museum to enhance the reputation of the museum.⁹⁵ If Eisenberg had any inclination that the KAM head may have been a Roman copy, he had no plans to divulge this information to Christison. Eisenberg also uses this letter to put pressure on Christison to buy the head sooner rather than later. Like any good used car salesman, he not only suggests that Christison has competition in acquiring the head, but also intimates that time is an issue in the head’s acquisition, as the other museum director, who may or may not exist, is prepared to buy the head by the end of the month. With the knowledge that the provenance of the head is in question, this letter suggests strong-arm sales tactics rather than earnest information.

If there was any response from Christison in relation to the July 16th letter from Eisenberg, there is no record of it in the KAM head’s file. The next letter is another from Eisenberg to Christison, dated July 28th, 1970.

Dear Mrs. Christison,

⁹⁴ Jerome Eisenberg, Director of Royal Athena Gallery, New York, to Muriel Christison, 16 July, 1970, KAM head file at Krannert Art Museum, Champaign, Illinois.

⁹⁵ For a similar example of a museum director eager to acquire a work of ancient art to start their museum’s collection and unknowingly purchasing an inauthentic work, see Butcher, Kevin and David W.J. Gill, “The Director, the Dealer, the Goddess, and her Champions: The Acquisition of the Fitzwilliam Goddess.” *American Journal of Archaeology* 97:3 (July 1993): 383-401.

The Greek head is now being held in reserve for you until September 15th. The other museum just wrote to me: “it does not appear that we will be able to do anything this summer about...the Bryaxis head...Perhaps in the Fall we will be able to come back to this.” So here is your opportunity to pick-up a truly major work of classical Greek art.

I am quite certain that Prof. Langlotz would be more than willing to publish it for you, or, at least give you permission to quote from his correspondence to me giving his reasons for its attribution to Bryaxis.

I do hope that it will be possible to take action on it by the end of August, as I plan to leave on a trip by August 28th.

Very sincerely,

Jerome M. Eisenberg

In this letter, Eisenberg states that the head is now being held for Christison until September 15th, as the director at the other museum has informed him that he will not be able to do anything about the “Bryaxis” head until the Fall. Evidently, the weathered head had been promoted to a rare surviving work by a well-known Greek sculptor. Eisenberg then says, “So here is your opportunity to pick-up a truly major work of classical Greek art.” Eisenberg then says that Professor [Ernst] Langlotz “would be more than willing to publish [the head] for you, or, at least give you permission to quote from his correspondence to me giving his reasons for its attribution to Bryaxis.” Eisenberg then mentions to Christison that he will be going on a trip on August 28th, so, although the head is being held until September 15th, it would be favorable for action to be taken by the end of August.⁹⁶

It appears from this letter that the pressure Eisenberg put on Christison to make a decision on the KAM head by the end of July was not successful, as Christison either failed to reply to Eisenberg’s July 16th letter, or replied in a lost piece of correspondence, that the

⁹⁶ Jerome Eisenberg, Director of Royal Athena Gallery, New York, to Muriel Christison, 28 July 1970, KAM head file at Krannert Art Museum, Champaign, Illinois.

Krannert Art Museum would not be able to purchase the head by the end of July. Eisenberg has not completely dropped the pressure he presented in his earlier letter, however, as the other museum director is still interested in the piece and Eisenberg needs a decision by the end of August because he is going on a trip. Eisenberg also appears to try to increase Christison's interest in the head by reinforcing the head's utterly unfounded association with Bryaxis. This is an example of Eisenberg's awareness that Christison is interested in a truly impressive piece of ancient art with which to begin her collection and his attempt to increase the importance of the KAM head.

Ernst Langlotz (1895-1978), a German specialist in Greek sculpture, first attributed the KAM head to the fourth-century B.C. Greek sculptor Bryaxis in a 1969 letter written to Jerome Eisenberg,⁹⁷ and Langlotz was a scholar with interests in the art market. Hence the question becomes, *cui bono?* Who gains by attributing a weathered head to a major Greek sculptor? Modern identification of the sculptors responsible for works of ancient sculpture done on a stylistic basis tend to create great disagreement, confusion, and are often acts of faith. This effectively renders any attempt at a definitive reconstruction of a known artist's work on stylistic grounds nearly impossible.⁹⁸ Few works of ancient art have attributions that can be authenticated by archaeological or other evidence. At best, a handful of works of the fourth century B.C. are identified by signed bases (not always with surmounting sculpture) or merely by attributions by ancient authors.⁹⁹ Bryaxis is most well-known as one of the four sculptors mentioned by Pliny and Vitruvius who worked on a massive Mausoleum at Helicarnassus commissioned by the Carian ruler Mausolus and completed sometime shortly after his death in

⁹⁷ Ernst Langlotz, Specialist in Greek Sculpture, to Jerome Eisenberg, 21 December 1969, KAM head file at Krannert Art Museum, Champaign, Illinois.

⁹⁸ Ridgway, *Fourth-Century Styles*, 19.

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, 239.

353 B.C.¹⁰⁰ While Pliny tells us that Bryaxis was responsible for the Amazonomachy on the North side, the Mausoleum has been almost entirely lost and those fragments that remain are impossible to attribute to either a sculptor or a particular side of the tomb.¹⁰¹

Aside from the attribution to the Mausoleum, the only other reliable information that can be used to tie Bryaxis to a particular work of sculpture is a single statue base signed in a mid-fourth century script.¹⁰² On the side of the base is a single low relief depicting a man riding a horse.¹⁰³ (Figs. 22 and 23) The attempt to compare the KAM head, sculpted in the round, with this single low relief is pointless. In sum, next to nothing is known about the artist, hence Langlotz' attribution is but an unsubstantiated claim. It is possible that Langlotz never made the attribution in the first place. Langlotz was a key factor in the Getty museum's unhappy decision to buy a kouros that was eventually condemned by many to be a fake. A letter from Langlotz dated to 1952 mentioning his seeing the kouros in Switzerland seemed to establish two important things for the Getty kouros: first, it suggested that the kouros was in existence for at least 30 years prior the kouros' acquisition by the Getty in 1985,¹⁰⁴ and second, the letter was proof of the kouros' ownership outside of Greece prior to the UNESCO treaty of 1970 prohibiting the export of antiquities from their countries of origin without proper documentation. The letter was later proven a forgery, as the postal code on the letter, which had supposedly been sent in 1952, only came into use in 1972.¹⁰⁵ While this incident does not prove the Langlotz letter concerning the KAM head to be fake, it does establish a history of the use of Langlotz' name to falsely promote

¹⁰⁰ Ibid., 119.

¹⁰¹ Lawrence, 200.

¹⁰² Andrew Stewart, *Greek Sculpture: An Exploration, Vol. 1: The Text* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1990), 282.

¹⁰³ Gisela M.A. Richter, *The Sculpture and Sculptors of the Greeks* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1930), 279.

¹⁰⁴ Richard Neer, "Connoisseurship and the Stakes of Style," *Critical Inquiry* 32:1 (Autumn 2005): 4.

¹⁰⁵ Marion True, "The Getty Kouros: Background on the Problem," in *The Getty Kouros Colloquium*, (Malibu: The J. Paul Getty Museum, 1992): 13.

antique works of art. With the knowledge of this history, it is possible to speculate that the attribution from Langlotz was not only wrong, but was done intentionally.

Another letter, from Jerome Eisenberg to Muriel Christison, dated to August 13th, 1970, suggests correspondence that has no other documentation in the KAM head file.

Dear Mrs. Christison:

Thank you for your letter of August 10 and your telephone call of August 12. As per your request, I am sending the Bryaxis head today on approval by REA Air Express. The approval invoice is enclosed as are three more sets of photographs.

I am also enclosing my own translation of Dr. Langlotz's letter. While it is not very polished, it is a nearly literal translation and should serve the purpose.

As I mentioned yesterday, I will donate an object to the museum if the head is purchased- one that we will mutually select from a number of choices.

While my trip plans are a bit vague at the moment, I hope to leave by the 30th and will be back by about Sept. 14th. My secretary, Patricia Cardozo, will be here, however, and can contact me at any time if a problem should arise.

Good luck!

Regards,

Jerome M. Eisenberg

This letter reveals that at least two contacts have occurred since the last letter of July 28th: a letter, dated August 10, 1970, and a telephone call, on August 12, 1970, both from Muriel Christison to Jerome Eisenberg. Although the content of those two contacts is unknown, their result is fairly clear in this letter. Christison, perhaps acting on a slight suspicion, asks to have the KAM head (still being referred to as the "Bryaxis head" by Eisenberg) sent along with three more sets of photographs of the head and Eisenberg's translation of Langlotz' letter attributing

the head to Bryaxis. Eisenberg also emphasizes that he will donate a “free” item to the Krannert Art Museum if the head is purchased from him. The last paragraph of the letter informs Christison of the dates of Eisenberg’s trip, August 30th to September 14th, and instructs Christison to contact him through his secretary if any problems arise in the purchase of the head.

The offer to donate an object to the museum upon purchase of the head is an unusual move, and seems to serve as a bonus to the buyer of a putative “fourth century B.C. Greek head by a prominent artist.” This offer makes Eisenberg seem either shrewd or desperate to sell the head to the Krannert Art Museum. Perhaps Christison’s request for additional photos and Langlotz’ original attribution, along with a translation, made Eisenberg slightly nervous about his ability to maintain the head’s identification as a grandiose and major Greek original upon further investigation. The gifting of a second work of art by Eisenberg also suggests that he may have been significantly overcharging for the KAM head, since, if the head could be sold as a Greek original, the profit would be infinitely higher than that from the sale of the same work as a Roman copy.

The next piece of correspondence in the KAM head file is a rather straightforward letter from Muriel Christison to Jerome Eisenberg, dated August 14th, 1970.

Dear Jerry:

Thank you very much for getting the translation and the additional photographs to me so promptly. I will certainly let you hear as soon as we have any definite decision on the head, which, as I mentioned before, should be in September. If we reach a decision before you return, I will certainly let your secretary know, so that she can send you the news when she writes to you. Have a good trip, and best wishes,

Sincerely yours,

(Mrs.) Muriel B. Christison

Associate Director

This letter written by Christison in response to Eisenberg's previous letter simply thanks Eisenberg for the prompt delivery of the additional photos and translation of the Langlotz letter. She assures Eisenberg that the Krannert Art Museum will have a definite decision by September and if they arrive at their decision any sooner, she will notify Eisenberg's secretary so that she may notify Eisenberg while he is away. Christison makes no mention of Eisenberg's offer of the donation of an additional object upon the purchase of the KAM head.

This letter is the last piece of correspondence between Muriel Christison and Jerome Eisenberg in the Krannert Art Museum's file on the KAM head. The receipt for the purchase of the head is the only piece of evidence regarding the outcome of the purchase negotiations between Christison and Eisenberg. While the price paid by Eisenberg for the KAM head at the 1969 Sotheby's auction is unknown, he likely made a significant profit on the head, if it can be assumed that he paid nearly the same price as the estimated sale price of US \$5580 from the 1963 Münzen und Medaillen auction. The head was sold to the Krannert Art Museum for roughly ten times the estimated sale price of the head at the 1963 auction, only seven years later. Had Muriel Christison done her background research- the Münzen und Medaillen catalog was published- she might have saved tens of thousands of dollars.

One of the most recent additions to the file on the KAM head is a short correspondence between Professor Ann Perkins, the art history professor in the Classics department at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign at the time of the purchase of the KAM head, and Jiri Frel, the then-curator of the J. Paul Getty Museum in Los Angeles. While the letter from Perkins to Frel does not include a date, Frel's letter in response is dated February 7th, 1973.

Dear Dr. Frel:

Here is a photograph of the Krannert head about which I spoke to you in Philadelphia. There is more detail in the face than is visible here. The cheekbones are softly modeled, and there is the typical fourth century horizontal line across the forehead about halfway between the eyebrows and the hairline. All of the carving is fairly coarse. The dimensions are approximately 24 cm. from crown to end of beard and 18 cm maximum width.

As you see, the cutting is invisible from the front, and I doubt that Langlotz knew it was there- at least his description of the head makes no mention of it. The cutting runs from about the apex of the crown back and down to the left side of the head; it is not flat, but has an irregular surface. You asked whether the cutting was ancient, and this I cannot tell, but the surface looks just like the rest of the surface of the piece. There are two holes, one near the apex and the other near the lower edge of the cutting. It has a distinct slant, which is what made me think the head must have been fastened to a sloping frame of some sort. Certainly it is not for the attachment of any kind of headgear.

You said you did not think the head came from a stele, but one of my colleagues tells me he has seen in the National Museum in Athens a group of large stelai from Rhamnous in which the figures project up into the pedimental area. Do you think that is a possibility for our head? The back shows no trace of attachment. The piece is carved fully in the round, but the back is much more cursorily done than the front, suggesting that the head was so placed that the back was invisible, or little visible.

If you are interested, I can send you more and better photographs, but would have to ask you to send them back since they are my only copies. You are welcome to keep this if you wish.

I hope you are enjoying California and wish you all success in your new position. I look forward to seeing you at subsequent meetings.

Sincerely yours,

Ann Perkins

Dear Prof. Perkins:

Thank you very much for your kind letter and the photograph. I remember the head very well from Eisenberg and, of course, I know the heads from Rhamnous you mentioned in the letter, and there are many other large grave stelai with life-size bearded

heads. Nevertheless, your head can't come from a grave stele for several reasons. It is just not the type; the ethos, Stimmung is completely different. It is rather in the category of divine images. Compare the Asklepios from Melos in the British Museum, for example. Also the workmanship of the back doesn't correspond to grave stelai at all. A further study of your piece, which is a very good original of about 330, would be desirable. Langlotz's suggestion of Bryaxis can't be taken seriously.

California is pleasant and I enjoy the job very much.

Sincerely yours,

Jiri Frel

In Perkins' letter to Frel, she asks his opinion on the KAM head, which she had apparently described to him at a meeting between the two in Philadelphia. She mentions that she included a photo of the KAM head with her letter to Frel. Perkins describes the peculiarities of the KAM head, including the unfinished portion of the crown of the head, which she calls a "cutting", the two holes drilled into top of the head, and the fact that the back of the head is carved, although not as carefully as the front and sides, and asks Frel if he thinks it is possible that the KAM head came from a grave stele, given the peculiarities of the head mentioned in the letter.

Frel responds with a short letter and mentions that he remembers the head well from when it was in Jerome Eisenberg's possession. He notes that there are many examples of grave stelai including life-size bearded heads, but comes to the conclusion that the KAM head could not be from a grave stele because first, he does not think it displays the correct "style" for a grave stele, and second, he says that the carving in the back does not "correspond" to a grave stele. He goes on to say that he believes that the head is an original dating to around 330 B.C., and that

Langlotz' suggestion of Bryaxis as the sculptor "cannot be taken seriously".¹⁰⁶ So, Frel preserves the "Greek original" pedigree, but discards "Bryaxis".

Frel and Perkins' correspondence is quite telling and an appropriate closing note to the saga of the purchase of the KAM head. It is of note that Frel had the opportunity to see the head during the year and a half it was in Eisenberg's possession, further reinforcing their close relationship, yet seems to have taken no steps to have the Getty purchase the head. Again, it must be remembered, Frel and Eisenberg were both players whose interests lay in both establishing their own reputations as "connoisseurs" and in driving up prices in the art market. However, Frel is obviously doing Eisenberg no favors, as he does not inflate the importance of the head as Langlotz had. The fact that Frel does not purport the head to be anything particularly important while maintaining a close relationship with Eisenberg suggests that his conclusions about the head contained in this letter to Perkins must be taken as his honest opinion.

A letter dated to August 18th, 1978, nearly a decade after the purchase of the KAM head, is from Cornelius Vermeule, then curator of the Boston Museum of Fine Arts, to Muriel Christison, asking for permission to publish the head in a catalog of Greek and Roman sculpture in North American Museums.

Dear Dr. Christison,

Enclosed is the outline of illustrations for a non-profit, "scholarly" survey of Greek and Roman sculpture in North American Museums, to be published jointly by the J. Paul Getty Museum and The Department of Classical Art, Museum of Fine Arts. No. 39 is your bearded head of a god or elder from a votive or funerary monument. I would like to reproduce the black and white glossy photo long in my possession and will naturally send

¹⁰⁶ Jiri Frel, Curator at the J. Paul Getty Museum, to Ann Perkins, 7 February 1973, KAM head file at Krannert Art Museum, Champaign, Illinois.

your Museum a copy of the book. I have known the head since its days in a Swiss collection and later in England.

Could I ask the Museum's inventory/accession number and donor or fund for the head. And if it has been published in your Bulletin I would be most appreciative of the reference. I have Sotheby's sale, 1 July 1969, no. 117, pl. p. 63; and Münzen und Medaillen, Basel, Sale, 5 Oct. 1963, no. 178, pl. 63 for this splendid Greek original.

With thanks in advance, I am,

Yours very sincerely,

Cornelius Vermeule

Curator

Vermeule mentions that he has known the head since it was in a Swiss collection.

Whether he is referring to the possession of the head by Herbert Cahn at Münzen und Medaillen for sale or an earlier collection is unclear. In the second paragraph, Vermeule asks for any published references to the head, aside from those that he has already found.

While this letter from Cornelius Vermeule appears to be innocuous, the promotion of the KAM head as a "splendid Greek original" by a prominent curator with a bibliography that fills 60 pages¹⁰⁷ is quite an endorsement. Vermeule also appears to have known the head for many years, since it was in a Swiss collection. This dates his knowledge of the head at least as far back as 1963, the year of the Münzen und Medaillen auction. His familiarity with the head makes his opinion as to the origin of the head more believable than if Vermeule had only learned of it since it had been at the Krannert Art Museum. However, Vermeule never indicates that he has had the chance to see the KAM head in person. The endorsement of the head as a Greek original by Vermeule, a scholar whose opinion appears to be trustworthy, serves to further bolster the

¹⁰⁷ "Cornelius Vermeule, at 83; MFA curator jauntily balanced the ancient with the modern" *The Boston Globe*, December 3, 2008, Obituaries, 13B.

possibly faulty identification of the KAM head as a Greek work of art. However, the fact that Vermeule has likely never studied the head closely lends little credibility to this opinion.

Conclusion

The physical evidence established through a study of the KAM head combined with the story of the acquisition of the head leads to conclusion that the KAM head may not be the Greek original it was assumed to be when it arrived at the Krannert Art Museum. The head cannot be conclusively ruled out as a Greek original, but the evidence likely points to a Roman origin for the head. The evidence for the head as a work of Greek art include the style, which fits the category of Greek grave stele very well, the similarities to the Boston head, and the opinions of several scholars, although these opinions are not necessarily to be trusted. The evidence for the head as a work of Roman art include the use of the running drill in the carving of the head and the similarity of the head to known works of Roman garden sculpture. The correspondence between Jerome Eisenberg and Muriel Christison suggests the sale of an item of questionable provenance by a knowledgeable antiquities dealer to an associate director with a rich donor eager to build the collection of ancient art at her small Midwestern museum. Three types of actors were at work in the purchase of the head: scholars, who would have been eager to identify a work of Greek sculpture by a major Greek artist and may have profited from their attributions in the form of a fee from the dealer; curators, who stood to gain favor with dealers by giving the head a Greek provenance and therefore secure future deals for their own museums; and finally dealers, who would have been in a position to gain monetarily from selling a Roman piece as a work of Greek art. Without the knowledge necessary to distinguish between a work of Greek or Roman sculpture, when the latter was in the style of the former, Christison was at the mercy of the dealer. Unfortunately, the KAM head is not the first example of a provincial museum being taken advantage of by a dealer and it will not be the last, but perhaps a lesson can be learned from its acquisition.

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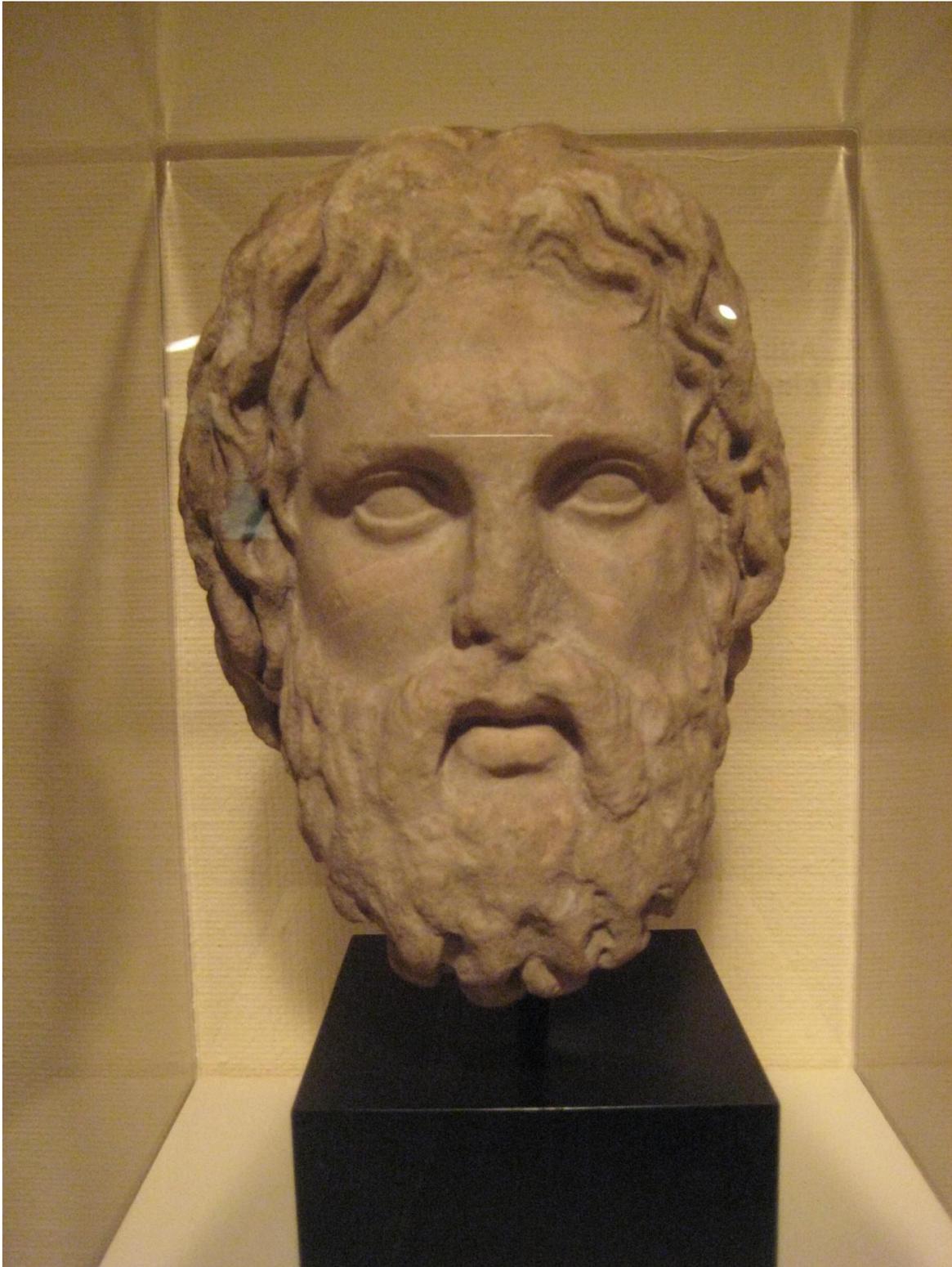
Figures

Figure 1- KAM head, frontal view



Figure 2- KAM head, side view



Figure 3- Modern damage evident in the hair of the KAM head. Note that the color of the marble in areas of modern damage is white, indicating that this was the color of the marble at the time it was quarried and likely at the time of display. The undamaged surface of the marble has developed a warm golden patina over time.

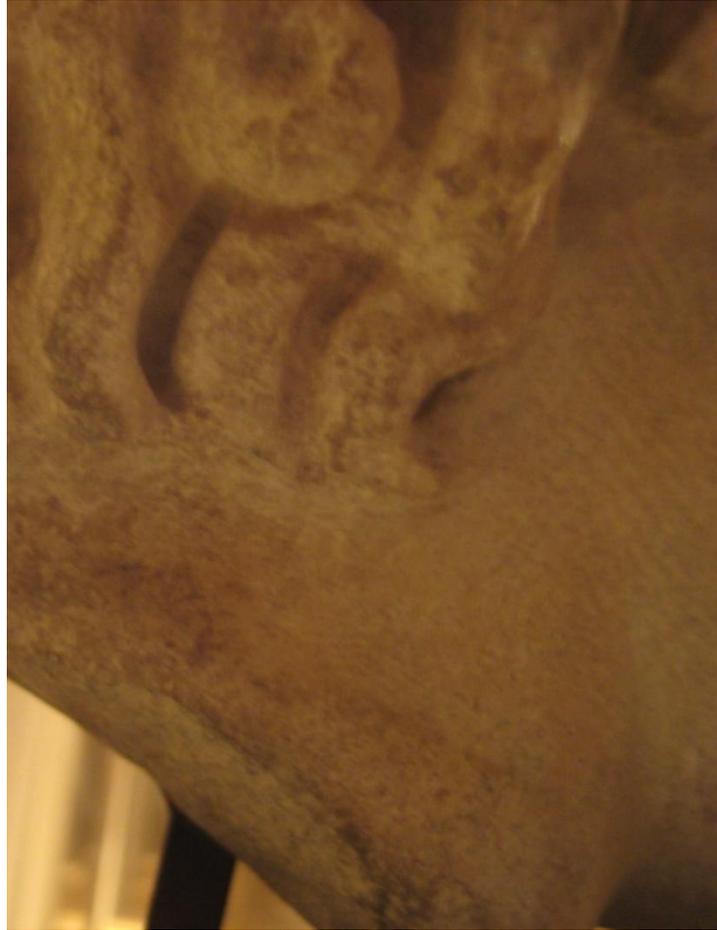


Figure 4- Tool marks on the neck of the KAM that were never extensively smoothed, indicating the use of a fine 'claw' or tooth-chisel

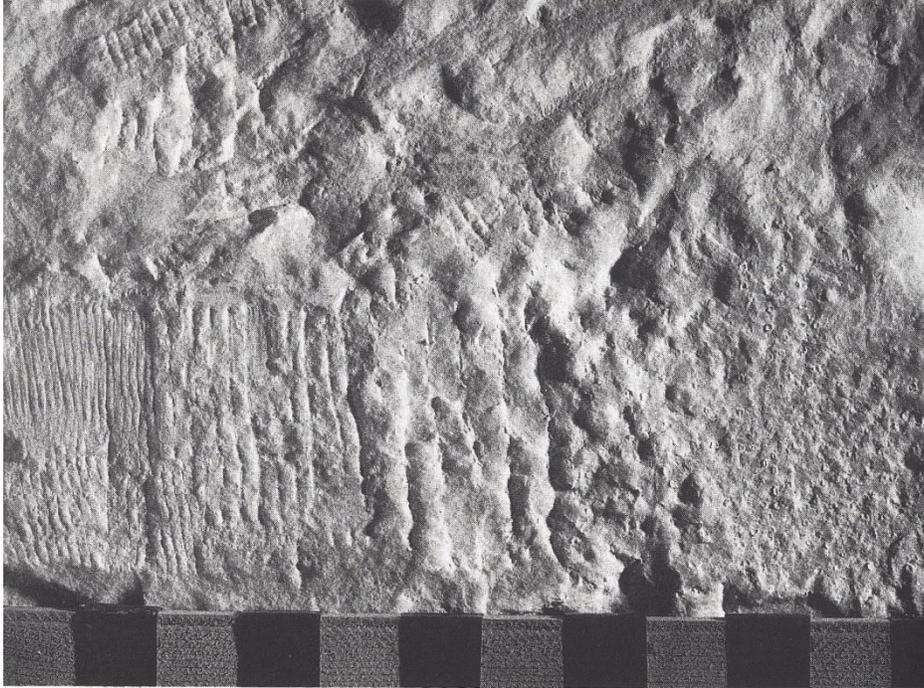


Figure 5- Several different types of tool marks on marble. The leftmost two examples are the marks from two different types of tooth chisels, which are similar to the tool marks on the neck of the KAM head.



Figure 6- Evidence of the use of the drill in the locks of hair of the KAM head

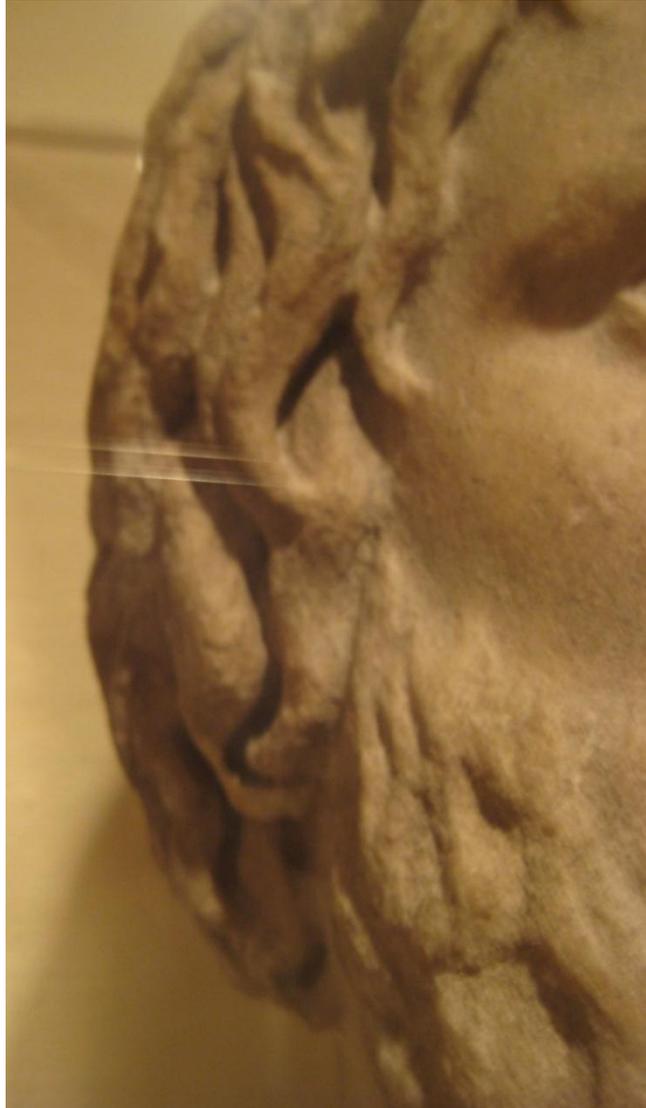


Figure 7- S-curves indicative of the running drill in the hair of the KAM head



Figure 8- The back of the KAM head, which shows much less attention to detail in the carving than the front and sides of the head.



Figure 9- Fourth-century B.C. grave stele showing the degree of the depth of carving- some figures are carved fully in the round, some nearly in the round.



Figure 10- Fourth-century B.C. grave stele showing the preference for multi-depth reliefs



Figure 11- One example of a “type” from fourth-century grave stelae that resembles the KAM head

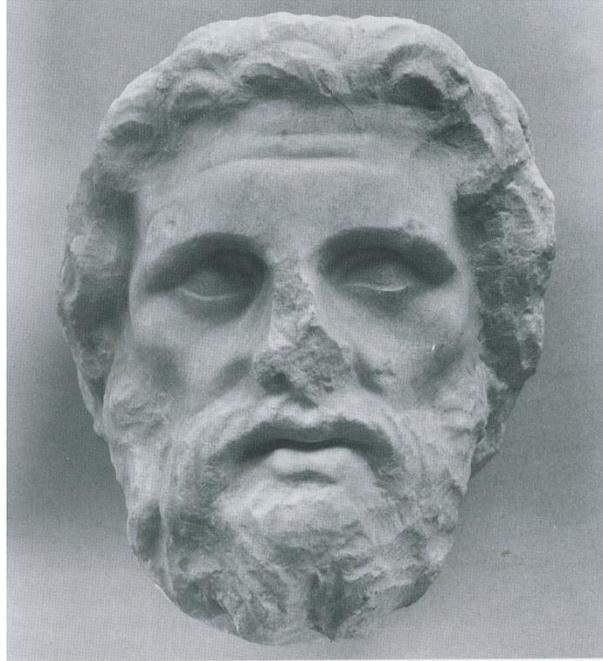


Figure 12- A second example of the “type” on fourth-century grave stelae that resembles the KAM head

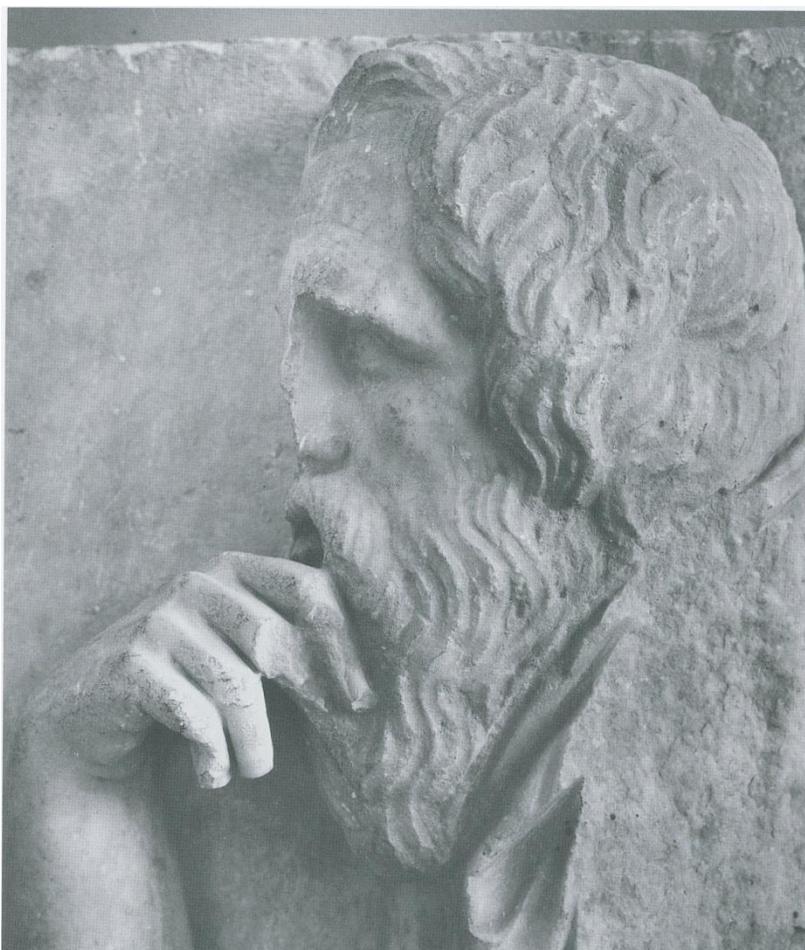


Figure 13- A third example of a “type” from fourth-century grave stelae that resembles the KAM head



Figure 14- Two holes drilled into the unfinished crown of the KAM head

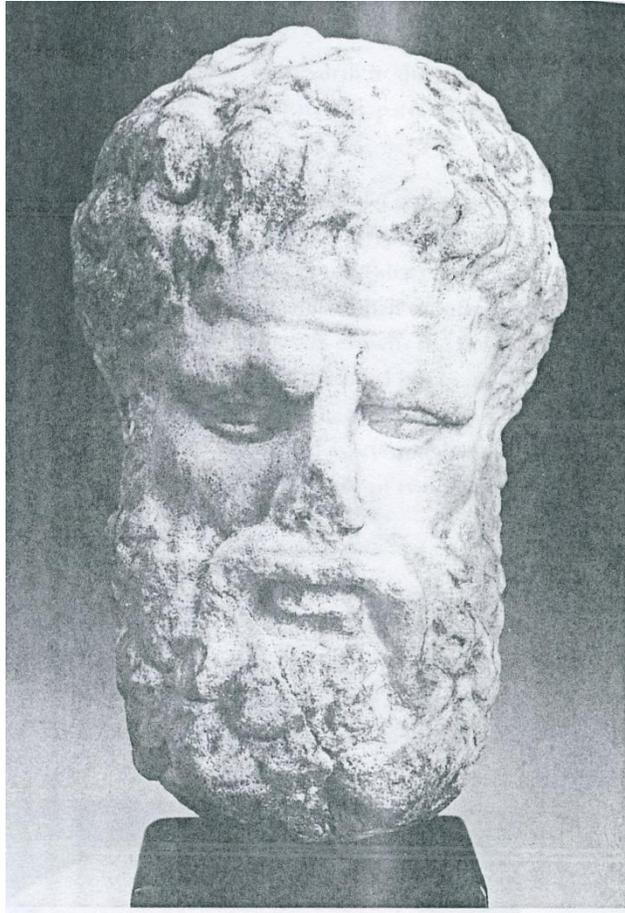


Figure 15- Third-century A.D. Roman head from the David and Alfred Smart Museum of Art

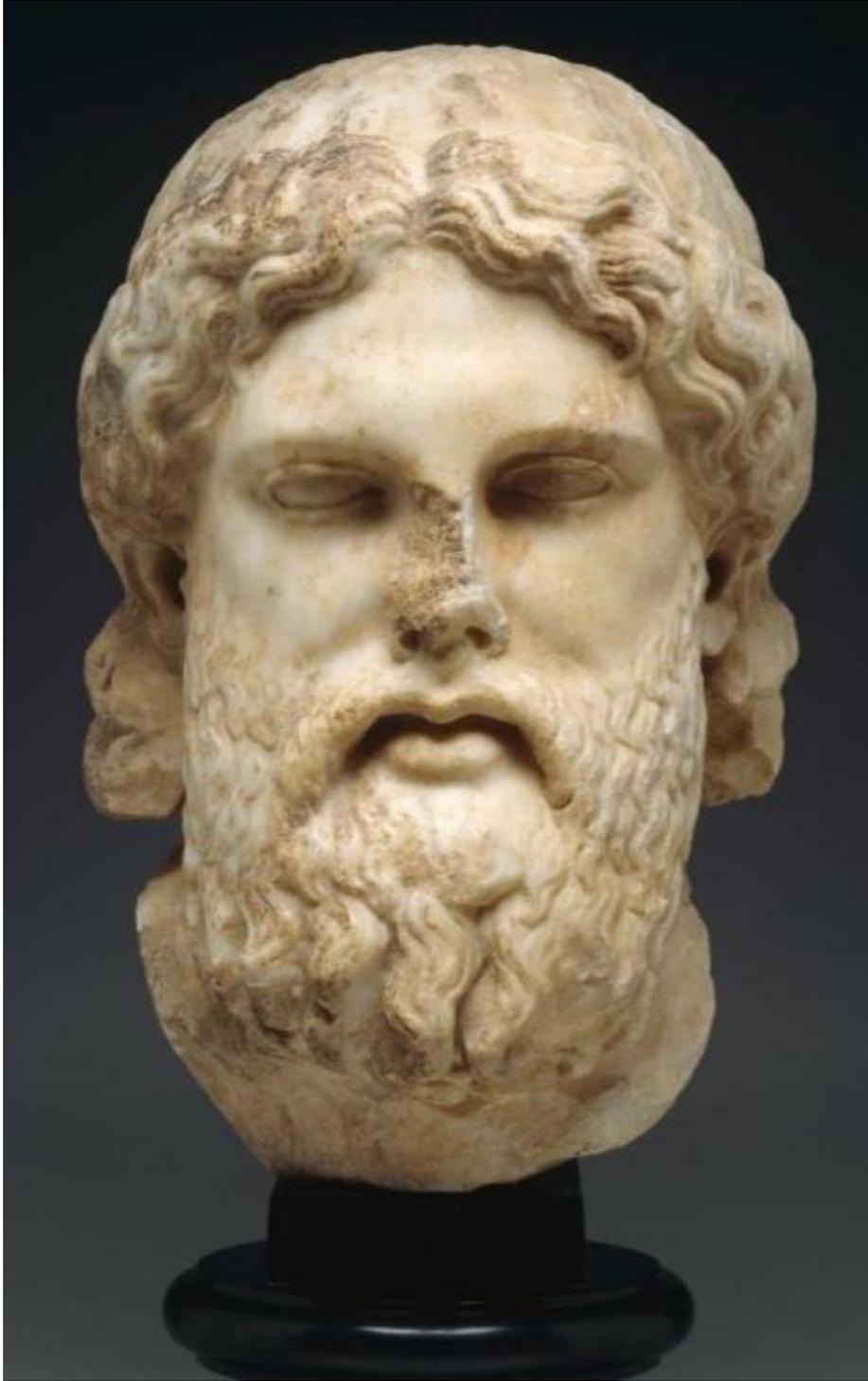


Figure 16- Head of Zeus from Mylasa, currently on display at the Boston Museum of Fine Arts, frontal view

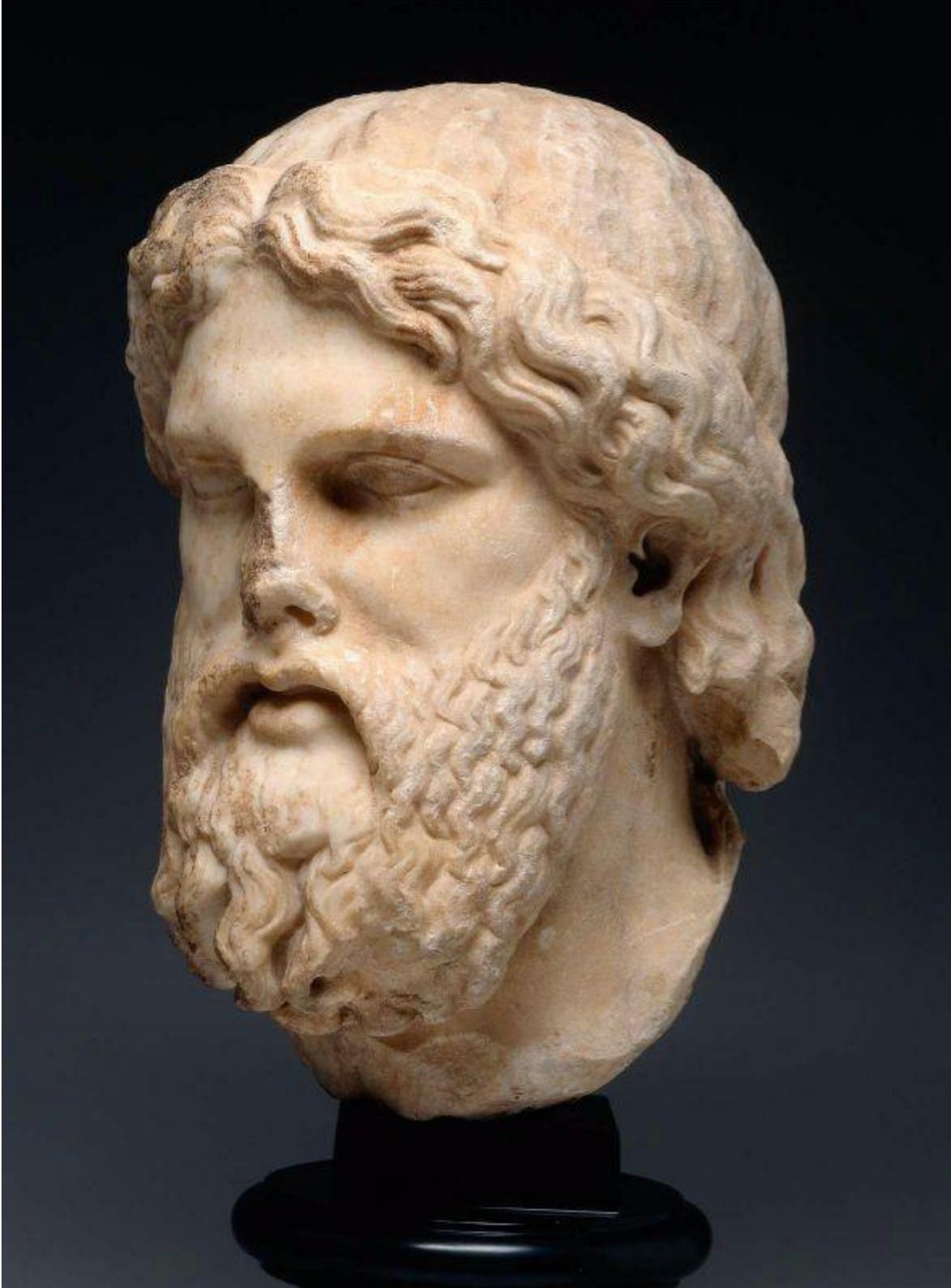


Figure 17- Three-quarters view of Boston head



Figure 18- Top of the Boston head, showing the unfinished crown and drilled holes similar to the KAM head

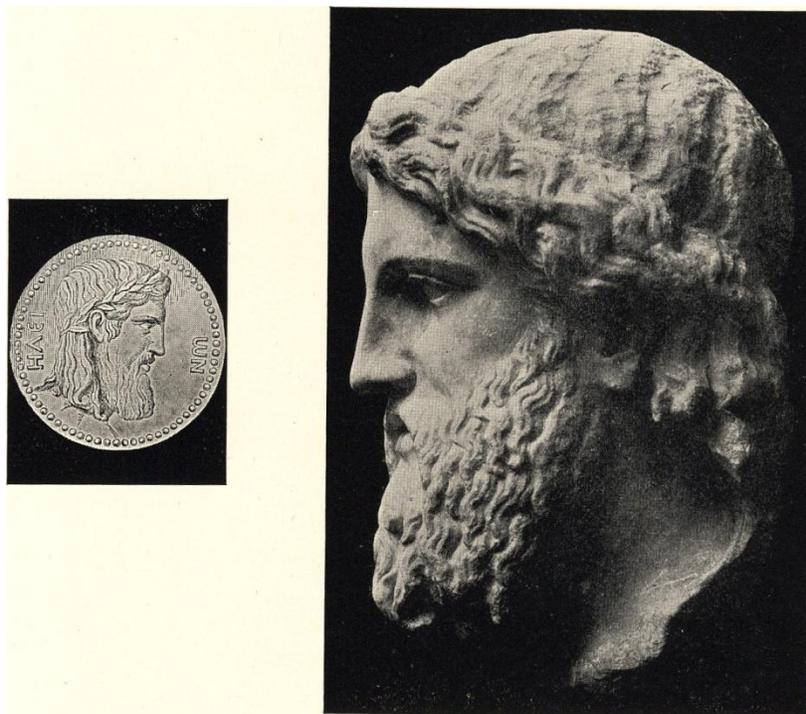


Figure 19- Lacey Caskey's comparison between the Boston head and a coin showing a representation of the Pheidias Zeus



Figure 20- Statuette depicting Zeus Labraundos. The polos that may have once been attached to the Boston and KAM heads is clearly visible in this statuette.



Figure 21- A weathered coin depicting Zeus Labraundos. Still visible is the polos atop the head of the cult figure of Zeus.



Figure 22- Low relief on one side of a statue base attributed to Bryaxis



Figure 23- Fourth-century text on another side of the statue base, including the name Bryaxis

**Appendix A: Correspondence from Krannert Art Museum's file on Bearded Head
(acquisition number 1970-11-1)**

Scans of the original correspondence on the Bearded Head referred to in this thesis can be found in a supplemental file named **AppendixA.pdf**.