Protection Epitaphs: Material Connection Between Death and Magic in Ancient Rome

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ABSTRACT

Death culture is a fundamental aspect of human existence, with the primary purpose of commemorating and preserving the identity of the deceased. Epitaphs, a physical object created to mark the tomb, are seen in antiquity and modern cultures. Protection epitaphs, a subset of these epitaphs, are a subculture within ancient Rome that incorporate a request for protection. These epitaphs share a common thread of death culture: care and respect for the dead.

Rituals are cultural practices that follow a set protocol, with roles assigned to the practitioner and target, as well as an observer. In this study of protective death epitaphs, the family (typical practitioner) of the protective epitaph commemorates the deceased or potential target of malicious intent. The ritual is the protocol of placing a statement on a tombstone that asks not to defile the tomb.

The two main types of protection seen in protective death epitaphs are passive and aggressive. Passive protection gives a broad statement in both the request and the potential consequence, while aggressive protection typically gives a broad statement in the request and a more specific consequence.

In conclusion, protection epitaphs are a subset of Roman death culture that emphasizes the importance of care and respect for the dead. This research highlights the underrepresented and marginalized group of people commemorated in these epitaphs and the importance of studying and giving light to their practices and intentions.

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GENERAL AUDIENCE ABSTRACT

Death culture is a significant aspect of human existence, primarily aimed at commemorating and preserving the identity of the deceased. This paper examines a subculture within ancient Rome, specifically nineteen protective epitaphs, which all share a request for protection. These epitaphs are a subset of epitaphs that request extra space on grave markers to steer away potential harm, including the use of magic with malicious intent.

Rituals are cultural practices that follow a set protocol, with roles assigned to the practitioner and target, and sometimes an observer. The deceased or target is commemorated by the family, who performs the protective epitaph. In this study of protective death epitaphs, the two main types of protection seen are passive and aggressive. Passive protection provides a broad statement in both the request and the potential consequence, while aggressive protection typically gives a broad statement in the request and a more specific consequence.

The study of protection epitaphs reveals the common thread of death culture, which is to care and respect the dead. The families commemorated their deceased in these epitaphs, demonstrating the importance of respecting the dead and preserving their identity.

Dedicated to my parents (Tommy and Shelly), my brother (Thomas), and my Bama and Pop (Frances Ann and Bushead) who always believed in my passion for knowledge.

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Chapter 1 - Introduction

Death culture is the thing that separates humans and all other species. Death culture has the primary purpose of commemorating the deceased and preserving their identity which is practiced in all cultures. The act of marking the tomb with an inscription (the physical object created is known in this paper as an epitaph) is seen not only in antiquity but also throughout modern cultures. Epitaphs have a primary purpose of commemorating and preserving the identity of the deceased. The epitaphs studied in this paper represent a small subculture within ancient Rome. These epitaphs differ from the typical Roman epitaph because they incorporate a request for protection. The catalog in this paper includes nineteen protective epitaphs that all share a request for protection in a variety of ways.

Protection epitaphs are a subset of epitaphs where those responsible for determining the text on an epitaph chooses to take up extra space on the grave marker to steer away any potential harm that could come to their loved one's grave including the potential use of magic with malicious intent. An example of this is Catalog Entry #6, where the inscription asks passersby to do no harm to the grave but on the chance, they do harm the grave, that person will live with pain. This research shows a subculture that practices and believes in the efficacy of such protective epitaphs within ancient Roman society. While it is a small community that practices and believes in the use of protection epitaphs, it is important to study and give light to this underrepresented and marginalized group of people that are commemorated in these epitaphs. The catalog of protection epitaphs (tombstones) connected to this work is small but reveals the common thread of

death culture which is to care and respect the dead. The families did what they believed would commemorate their deceased's identity as well as protect them from the living.

There are several terms that will be important throughout this paper. The definition of ritual is a cultural practice that follows a set protocol.[1] In rituals, there are assigned roles: typically, the practitioner and the target. At times an additional role, the observer, is also part of the activity. The practitioner is the person or persons performing the ritual. The target is the person or thing (typical person) that the ritual is aimed at, whether or not they are also performing the ritual. The observer is a witness to a ritual, whether present or not. Within the types of death culture investigated here, a ritual can be a protocol followed to show respect to the deceased (and specifically in the case of this thesis topic, the potential target of malicious intent). The deceased/target is commemorated by the family (typical practitioner of the protective epitaph). Another important term for this thesis is magic. In this context, we define magic as. Within magic, rituals are the protocols followed that are believed to coerce the environment around the practitioner to become more beneficial to themselves or others. Within this study of protective epitaphs, a ritual is the protocol of placing a statement on a tombstone that asks (either in a passive or aggressive fashion, outlined below) not to defile the tomb.

Through an investigation of protective death epitaphs, this paper looks at a specific type of death ritual and their intents. Within the catalog presented, the two main types of protection seen are passive and aggressive. The passive protection gives a broad statement in both the request and the potential consequence. While the aggressive

[1] There are different definitions connected to ritual and this definition is derived from a cumulation of these sources.

protection typically gives a broad statement in the request and a more specific statement in the potential consequence.

There is a probable correlation connected to the creation of protection epitaphs. This correlation is connected to a specific magical object. The magical object known as a curse tablet is believed to have a short list of activation locations, one of them being graves.[2] A conclusion drawn from this connection is made from the protection epitaphs studied in this paper. This conclusion is that protection epitaphs could have been seen as a defensive mechanism against any potential ill intent towards a tomb. Protection epitaphs could most likely be a deterrent from curse tablets as well as other malicious actions potentially done to a grave.

The materials looked at within this study are all connected to death in some way. The main material is the tombstone or grave marker that commemorates the deceased's identity. In the context of this thesis, the protection epitaph is an inscription on the grave marker that not only commemorates the deceased's identity but also holds the additional purpose of protecting the grave from harm. This harm could be passive, such as asking a passerby to not urinate on the tomb, and if they comply they will have a good life (Catalog Entry #5); to aggressive, such as telling the passerby that any harm that comes to the tomb results in a deity attacking the passerby (Catalog Entry #8). The curse tablet is a magical object that is typically created with malicious intent towards someone. This study focuses on protection epitaphs and how they are both connected to death and magic in unique ways. Protection epitaphs can quickly be connected to death because of their

[2] Edmonds, Radcliffe. 2019. Drawing Down the Moon: Magic in the Ancient Greco-Roman World. Princeton University Press. Pg.51.; Gager, John. 1992. Curse Tablets and Binding Spells from the Ancient World. Oxford University Press. Pg. xiix.

primary purpose of commemorating the identity of the deceased. They are connected to magic in a more complex way through the use of curse tablets.

Magic, as a ritual, is considered "non-normative" relative to other rituals. Normative actions are considered acceptable within society. Non-normative actions are not considered normal and are discouraged in some way by society. The spectrum of normative to non-normative behaviors has been viewed as a bell curve by some scholars, in which the normative (and most frequently practiced) actions are at the center, and the non-normative actions (less frequently practiced) are at the edges.[3] In context of the spectrum of behaviors, there is an acknowledgement that the use of a bell-curse for normative and non-normative actions is used solely by modern scholars to categorize behaviors.[4] Magic rituals are less frequently practiced, non-normative and therefore considered outliers within Roman society.

In order to understand protective death epitaphs, we must first understand Roman death culture. Chapter 2 therefore focuses on death culture in ancient Rome, with particular attention given to commemoration and preserving identity of the deceased. Our knowledge of the importance of death culture originates in a document known as the Roman Law of the Twelve Tables which holds what are thought to be the original societal code followed by Romans.[5] Throughout this chapter, we look at and discuss different beliefs Romans had of the soul and its existence after death, using additional

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[3] Edmonds 2019: Presents magic as a discourse that is not solidified in the definitions given in modern scholarship due to the huge cultural variety seen between antiquity and modern views on magic.

[4] Hierarchy of needs is a way modern scholars connect the variables typically seen within non-normative behavior and connect them to the structure of a bell-curve that represent how uncommon these actions were within society. The variables are difficulty to perform, ritual's cost, and perceived efficacy. Edmonds, 2019. From this outline of variables, it is the assumption that non-normative behavior was typically considered hard to perform, expensive, and highly effective.

[5] Harries, Jill. 2007. "Roman Law Codes and the Roman Legal Tradition," in *Beyond Dogmatics, Law and Society in the Roman World."* Edinburg University Press. – The Twelve Tables are discussed more in-depth within Chapter 2.

primary literary works by Cicero and Pliny the Elder. This chapter lays groundwork for understanding the primary purpose of an epitaph, generally speaking, which is to commemorate and preserve the identity of the deceased. It is important to remember that while these protective epitaphs have an additional purpose, they do not exist on their own, but only as an attachment to a general commemorative epitaph.

Chapter 3 focuses on the diverse and complex area of magic and how it can never truly be given a solid and impenetrable definition, but nevertheless, understanding how Romans viewed this mostly non-normative ritual system and its practices shows some alignment with connecting magic and death. The discussion of what magic looked like, how it is represented in primary textual sources, and the other materials modern scholars use to understand ancient magic provides deeper context for protective funerary epitaphs. This chapter also helps contextualize (non-normative) protective magic within the context of (normative) Roman epitaphs. Within this chapter, definitions for materials looked at are laid out as well as the main discussion of materials that are offensive in nature, curse tablets, led to the creation of protective epitaphs (that are defensive in nature).

Chapter 4 brings all the foundational knowledge discussed in chapters 2 and 3 together to analyze the catalog of grave markers with protective death epitaphs. The analysis reveals certain subgroups, and further shows that protective epitaphs can cover a wide range of requests: those asked by the deceased in the inscription (a first-person point-of-view), those that are more passive in nature (where they wish the passerby a good life if they simply do no harm) and those that are more aggressive in nature (that tell the passerby if any harm or ill intent comes to the tomb, there will be a specific

consequence). This chapter also discusses the relatively small size of the catalog and acknowledges that no complete and sure answer can come from this one study due to the sample size, but the analysis and learnings from it are still important simply because they exist. The total quantity of epitaphs helps when looking at how normative the practice of protective epitaphs was, but it does not denote the significance of researching it. Studying and analyzing this small subculture of epitaphs because the micro gives us a lens through which to see an aspect of ancient Roman death culture that we would otherwise miss, but also helps to better understand and contextualize the macro of this society's death culture.

Chapter 2 - Death and Burial Culture

When looking at the purposes an epitaph can have, the vast majority commemorate the dead and materially represent how the deceased's family wanted them to be remembered. Death culture in ancient Rome can be summed up as activities and rituals intended to help remember the identity of the deceased and assist their soul's passing through to the Underworld. Epitaphs appear everywhere in the Roman Empire, but they were most popular from 100 BCE to 500 CE, being especially prevalent during the rise of Augustus.[6] Outside of epitaphs and their highest point of popularity, commemorating the dead and ancient Rome's death culture still existed and was unremitting with or without epitaphs. Epitaphs rose to peak popularity and overall, were not considered the most common practice in ancient Rome's history. With that in mind, the purpose of the epitaph does not change and its invention and use firmly follow the main functions of ancient Rome's death culture.

Ancient Roman death culture is multi-faceted and involved the practice of rituals that were embedded deeply in their society. Death rituals are considered normative actions within a culture, and the understanding of a society's death culture is typically instinctive to that population, thus it is not always described and written about. It is also believed that families were the main people practicing death rituals like burial for their loved ones and carried out all the necessary planning. At times, Roman death beliefs are described in abstract ways. From certain sources, however, we are able to assume some ideas of Roman beliefs about death.

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[6] Woolf, Greg. "Monumental Writing and the Expansion of Roman Society in the Early Empire." *The Journal of Roman Studies* 86 (1996): 22–39. https://doi.org/10.2307/300421. Pg. 23. – The practice of epigraphy rose with Augustus's reign, but for this study it is easier to focus solely on the rise of epitaphs.

FUNERARY RITES AND THE 12 TABLES

In ancient Rome, legislative decisions were guided by twelve inscribed tablets known as the Roman Law of the Twelve Tables. While there is scholarly debate about many aspects of the Twelve Tables, they are typically seen as a set of early legislation that brought together and codified several co-existing legal traditions, appearing first around 450 BCE. The Twelve Tables covered many topics, ranging from court procedures to land rights. Before they became part of ancient Rome's legislative practice, they were known more as a code to follow. There is a lack of scholarly agreement on how the Roman Law of the Twelve Tables was created and later put into legislative practice.[7] These laws were materialized on tablets in 450 BCE and is discussed in works by Livy and Dionysius of Halicarnassus. It is worth noting that the entirety of the tenth table of laws is dedicated to funerary rites.[8] There are four main points with multiple subpoints dealing with different aspects of death culture, including the rituals practiced in a mourning period. The four points are as follows:

1. A strict rule for the location of burials, it states that no burials or burning of the dead is allowed within the city boundaries.
2. The treatment of the deceased's body stating that there is to be no gathering of the bones for a second funeral. There is an exception for this that is strictly set aside for death in battle or abroad.
3. A restriction on the display of wealth by mourners during a time of mourning. This rule against displaying wealth suggests a desire not to draw attention to

[7] Harries. 2007. Pg.88.

[8] The Law of the Twelve Tables was the legislation that was the foundation of all ancient Roman law. It is believed to have been ratified in 449 BCE. It was mainly seen as a consolidation of traditions used in archaic Rome that survived throughout Rome's existence. Look into Steinberg 1982. (Steinberg, Michael. "The Twelve Tables and Their Origins: An Eighteenth-Century Debate." *Journal of the History of Ideas* 43, no. 3 (1982): 379–96. https://doi.org/10.2307/2709429.)

inequalities in death practices. This point also states a prohibition on excessive drinking during the mourning period.

4. The treatment and adornments of the corpse. It states that there is no adorning a corpse with gold, with an exception provided for existing gold dental work done before death.[9]

The funerary rites communicated on the Twelve Tables of Rome show the cultural importance of regulating importance of death culture. This importance is presented by the Romans dedicating an entire table (out of twelve) to death and how the deceased should be treated. Their survival also indicates the central cultural importance of treating the dead correctly and honorably.

The first tenet of the Twelve Tables section on death dictates the location of burials outside of the city walls. The city gates served as marking the separation between the living and the dead, and so as the city of Rome expanded and city walls moved outward, older cemeteries were now within the city. The burial process of cremation was also required to be outside of city walls, which was thought to be done mainly for sanitation purposes. This was done in compliance of the Twelve Tables.[10] Outside of the city walls, land was sectioned off and served as a space solely for burial. These places were known as *necropoli* (which translates into English as 'cities of the dead')[11]. Physical location of burial and the timeframe a family had to bury the deceased went together because of the fear surrounding proper sanitation or what was known as death pollution (the effects the deceased's body had on the living). There were two main considerations thought to

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[9] *Remains of Old Latin, Volume IV: Archaic Inscriptions.* Translated by E. H. Warmington. Loeb Classical Library 359. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1940.
[10] Erasmo, Mario. Death: Antiquity and its Legacy. Oxford University Press. 2012. Pg.38.
[11] Gager, 1992. Pg.11.

surround the physical location of burial being outside the city walls. The first was that death brought pollution and demanded that survivors perform acts of purification and expiation. The second was that to leave a corpse unburied had unpleasant repercussions on the fate of the departed soul.[12]

An epitaph is an important material object in ancient Roman death culture because it is a primary part of commemorating the deceased, and creating an epitaph for a deceased member of society is considered a socially normative practice. A typical epitaph highlighted the deceased's life and virtues, and included a general statement of well wishes for passersby. The most common formula, followed by both Christian and pre-Christian belief systems, was one that wished the deceased a peaceful rest under a light layer of earth. An example from this study's catalog (Catalog Entry #4) shows this common formula in practice. Catalog Entry # 4 bids the passersby farewell and wishes them well if no harm comes to the deceased's tomb. The presence of such formulae in different contexts suggests that grave markers were a social ritual that transcended all social circles and hierarchies.[13] Another common addition to epitaphs was the phrase *Memento Mori. Memento Mori* translates to 'remember (inevitable) death.' This phrase was a popular addition for grave markers overall.[14] Pre-Christian epitaphs often included reference to the *Manes* ('souls") of the dead. This is frequently seen abbreviated as *D.M.* for *Dis Manibus,* translating as "to the spirits of the dead." The practices above were considered normative in ancient Rome.

The materiality of death culture is important to Roman society. Materials in death culture include but are not limited to epitaphs, cinerary urns, processional

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[12] Toynbee, J.M.C. Death and Burial in the Roman World. Thames and Hudson. 1971. Pg.43.
[13] Erasmo, Mario. 2012. Pg.112.
[14] Erasmo, Mario. 2012. Pg.114.

masks/portraits, funeral pyres, etc. According to Cuomo, funerary art was more accessible and popular than literature.[15] This is because a typical Roman was more literate in the symbolism present in visual culture than the text of an inscription.

The physical tomb was considered the *domus aeterna*, or 'eternal home'. The belief that the tomb represented the *domus aeterna* did not deter Romans from believing a deceased soul also resided in the Underworld. Romans combined the potential places for a soul to reside and came to the conclusion that the Underworld was where the deceased soul mainly existed but if the spirit were to temporarily reside on Earth, they would claim residence within their tomb.[16] The belief that souls reside in their tomb, while on Earth, incited the creation of grave gardens in Roman cemeteries. Grave gardens were spaces within a necropolis where the deceased's souls could exist and where the living could eat meals with the dead. They were also known as the *cepotaphium* (translates to 'garden tomb') which implies that they legally belong to the deceased.[17] The materials of tomb markers could include mass graves with a blanket statement or assumed number of deceased people; these usually are for enslaved persons. Cinerary urns are another marker form and are typically found in burial locations like *columbaria*. A columbaria is a location for burial that typically holds cremated remains and is more likely than not a building that people physically enter to see their loved one's grave marker. The materiality of death culture is not just limited to epitaphs but is seen in different forms throughout the entire funerary process as well as differently by individual.

LITERATURE REVIEW

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[15] Cuomo, S. Technology and Culture in Greek and Roman Antiquity. Cambridge University Press. 2007. Pg.81.
[16] Erasmo, Mario. 2012. Pg.123.
[17] Erasmo, Mario. 2012. Pg.128.

These and other aspects of ancient Roman death culture have drawn the attention of scholars from a variety of perspectives. S. Cuomo researches technology in ancient Mediterranean societies (focusing on Greece and Rome). In her research, Cuomo explores how different technicians and professions were embedded within ancient Roman culture. This included how they are represented and commemorated once deceased. Cuomo also looks at how funeral clubs, groups that lower- and middle-class people created to support each other in the costs of funerals, grouped together not only different religions (Christian, Jewish, traditional Roman), but also different trades and their technicians.

Mario Erasmo's scholarship on ancient Roman death culture focuses on the rituals of death as a social phenomenon and also connections between ancient and modern funerary practices. Erasmo looks at modern western funerary practices when comparing it against ancient funerary practices. The comparison between ancient and modern funerary practices is a lens that is explored in this study.

Valerie Hope focuses her research on ancient Roman funerary practices and funerary monuments. Hope constructs her arguments by mainly looking at textual and literary evidence, but also looking at epitaphs and inscriptions. She also explores the different areas of funeral practices but focuses on the importance of ancient Rome's belief in the afterlife and the focus on a proper burial.

J.M.C. Toynbee's focus within her scholarship used in this study is an overall survey of the attitudes and burial customs that ancient Rome practiced. Toynbee also looked at the different burial processes (cremation and inhumation), the physical location of burials, and what ancient Rome's funerary rites were. They take into consideration both

literary and material evidence surrounding the points focused on, especially when looking at the physical location of burials.

These scholars' work helped informed this study's general overview on death especially when looking at the different practices and timeframe a burial occurred in. Their works brought attention to the different materialities within death culture and the different ways these materials helped to commemorate the dead. The works used within this study allowed for protection epitaphs to be looked at not only from their magic connection, but also be thoroughly looked at through their primary purpose of commemorating the deceased.

The scholarship synthesized within this study provides the grounds for an overview of ancient Roman death culture and the beliefs Romans had of the soul and the afterlife. These scholars focused on different levels of specificity surrounding ancient Roman death culture and gave in-depth findings about death in Rome with different methodologies. These works are important to the development of this study due to the specificity in their focus of different areas of death and burial in ancient Rome.

Tomb markers served a primary function in ancient Rome: to engage the living. This engagement took the form of communication with passersby, and the tomb marker's materiality could amplify the communication by bringing attention to the tomb. The markers displayed a summary of the deceased's identity, usually including their family connections and their profession. The symbolism chosen for the marker could also serve the purpose of catching the attention and sympathy of passersby. There is a suggestion that putting one's profession on their epitaph could be to engage the attention of a

passerby and thus better preserve the memory of the deceased.[18] This addition, mainly seen in trades people, could also be a sign of pride with one's professional identity. The pride a person would have in their profession could be shown on an epitaph through symbolism representing their participation within public life. A few examples of this are imagery of a surveyor's *groma* (measuring rod), or a woman's weaving or spinning tools.[19] Within this study's catalog, Catalog Entry #17 is an example that involves decorative reliefs pointing towards the deceased's profession. Another aspect of symbolism on epitaphs is that of religious beliefs. This type of imagery leads to suggestions of important beliefs within that religion as well as the potential of added protection for the deceased as they go to the Underworld.[20] The symbolism of funerary art is impactful, as it shows the societal importance on the display and commemoration of identity. It also shows the importance in Roman society of the relation between art and identity and how funerary art is a common language many Romans would be able to decipher and understand.

The information discussed in the next portion of the chapter is important to the larger concept of death culture within ancient Rome but do not carry significant weight in the context of this catalog's analysis.

Textual sources are a way to discern cultural attitudes, but at the same time need to be taken with a grain of salt. To be sure, we must take into account the cultural, literary, rhetorical, and authorial context of these texts. While looking at the concept of soul transformation in ancient Rome there are two ways it appears to be taken. Cicero was a statesman and writer in late first century BCE whose writings focused on rhetoric and

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[18] Cuomo, S. 2007. Pg.80.
[19] Cuomo, S. 2007. Pg.83.
[20] Cuomo, S. 2007. Pg.83.

politics during the end of the Roman Republic.[21] He focuses on the soul experiencing a migration to a different place. Plautus was a comic playwright of 2nd century BCE, who focuses on the soul surviving death and still existing in the same capacity.

The idea of the soul surviving after death is discussed in Ciceros's *Tusculanae Disputationes,* 1.27:

Itaque unum illud erat insitum priscis illis, quos cascos appellat Ennius, esse in morte sensum neque excessu vitae sic deleri hominem, ut funditus interiret; idque cum multis

aliis rebus, tum e pontificio iure et e caerimoniis sepulcrorum intellegi licet, quas maxumis

ingeniis praediti nec tanta cura coluissent nec violatas tam inexpiabili religione sanxissent, nisi haereret in eorum mentibus mortem non interitum esse omnia tollentem

atque delentem, sed quandam quasi migrationem commutationemque vitae, quae in claris

viris et feminis dux in caelum soleret esse, in ceteris humi retineretur et permaneret tamen.[22]

Accordingly we find in those men of old whom Ennius styled the ancients the fixed belief

that there is sensation in the state of death, and that in quitting life man is not annihilated so

as to perish utterly; this may be gathered, among many other instances, from

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[21] Haskell, Henry Joseph (1964). *This was Cicero*. Fawcett Publications Incorporated. pp. 300–301.
[22] Cicero. Tusculanae Disputationes. 42 BCE.

pontifical law

and the rites of burial, for these rites would not have been so scrupulously observed by men

of commanding ability and their profanation forbidden under penalty of guilt admitting of no

atonement, if **there had not been a fixed conviction in their minds that death was not**

annihilation obliterating and destroying all things, but a kind of shifting and changing

of life which often served as a guide to heaven for illustrious men and women, while for

all others the ghostly life was kept underground, yet all the same survived.[23]

In this passage, Cicero explains an ancient Roman view, that "the ancients the fixed belief that there is sensation in the state of death," which can be taken that a soul continues to live after death. This is clear in the final sentences of the passage, describing death as a "shifting." He looks at death and the soul's continued existence through a dual lens of both religious rites and legal rites. This passage reaches to the past to show the reasons for the society's beliefs. He asserts that since it was believed heavily in the archaic times and did not wrong the dead souls, it is only right to continue this belief wholeheartedly.

While Cicero describes the soul as "migrating", Plautus instead presents the soul as

[23] Cicero. Tusculan Disputations. Translated by J. E. King. Loeb Classical Library 141. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1927.

"surviving" past death. In Plautus'[24] *Mostellaria* the comic playwright implies and later confirms (in the same section) the belief that deceased souls survive. Plautus acknowledges the soul's survival by referencing their ability to haunt the dwellings of the living[25] (*Mostellaria* lines 499-503:

"nam me Acheruntem recipere Orcus noluit, quia praemature vita careo. per

Fidem deceptus sum: hospes [hic] me necavit isque me defodit insepultum clám [ibidem] in

hisce aedibus, scelestus, auri causa."

"Orcus did not want to receive me into the Underworld because I lost my life before my time.

I was deceived in violation of the obligations of hospitality: my host murdered me here and

he secretly put me underground in this house without due rites, for the sake of gold, the

criminal."[26]

Plautus' work shows that, even in a comedic setting, messing with a tomb is serious and not to be done in any form. Death culture is alluded to in literary sources, but not always fully described. The displays of death culture seen throughout Roman antiquity shows the society's attitudes toward death and how they valued funerary customs.

Romans consistently believed that deceased souls can cause change, both physically

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[24] Plautus is a comedy playwright, he wrote in the early stages of Roman theater's development. Plautus' work took early influence from Greek comedy but quickly veered off and revealed a recognizable style of his own.
[25] Toynbee, J.M.C. 1971. Pg.34.
[26] Plautus. *The Ghost*. Mostellaria. Edited and translated by Wolfgang de Melo. Loeb Classical Library. Cambridge, MA. Harvard University Press, 2011.

and spiritually. Souls are seen to have a desire for permanence as well as to be seen by the living. In the physical environment, the concept of soul transformation is often attached to the geography of burial places and the transformation of land from uncultivated space to burial space. The act of burial was seen to cause changes to the landscape, making the practice of commemorating the dead into a form of environmental change. Landscape change due to burial is seen, within Roman death culture, as an attribute of the constant relationship between the living and the dead.[27]

Soul transformation can be investigated through literary sources as surrounded by the imagery of nature. Statius, an epic, lyric, and elegiac poet living 45 to 96 CE embeds the transformation of the landscape in his poetry as he mourns his father in the collection of lyric poetry *Silvae* 5.3.36-40:

adclinis tumulo, quo molle quiescis

iugera nostra tenens, ubi post Aeneia fata

stellatus Latiis ingessit montibus Albam

Ascanius, Phrygio dum pingues sanguine campos

odit et infaustae regnum dotale novercae

leaning against the grave mound in which you rest,

occupying our fields, where after Aeneas' death, starry

Ascanius set Alba among the Latin hills, since he hated

the fields enriched by Phrygian blood and the kingdom

given as a dowry to his unfortunate stepmother.[28]

Within this passage, Statius is mourning his father and comparing his actions to those

[27] Erasmo, Mario. Reading Death in Ancient Rome. The Ohio State University Press. 2008. Pg.3.
[28] Erasmo, Mario. 2008. Pg.4

of heroes of the past. When comparing his father's mound to Aeneas' he is implying that bodies and their burial sites can transform the view of the landscape and how people perceive an area, whether it be a solitary grave or one within a cemetery.

One of the ways ancient Romans expressed their belief in the soul's survival after death was by placing importance on a complete burial. Pliny the Elder expressed a belief that an incomplete commemoration resulted in an incomplete journey to the Underworld. Pliny the Elder, writes *Natural History*, 7.188:

eadem enim vanitas in futurum etiam se propagat et in mortis quoque tempora ipsa sibi vitam mentitur, alias inmortalitatem animae, alias transfigurationem, alias sensum inferis dando et manes colendo deumque faciendo qui iam etiam homo esse desierit"

"for the same vanity prolongs itself also into the future and fabricates for itself **a life lasting even into the period of death, sometimes bestowing on the soul immortality**, sometimes transfiguration, sometimes giving sensation to those below, and worshipping ghosts and making a god of one who has already ceased to be even a man"[29]

Pliny the Elder gives options on what the soul could go through after death; this helps to show that while a belief of immortality of the soul exists, there is always an uncertainty of what happens after death. There was also anxiety about the deceased being stuck on the journey, unable to complete it, and hence becoming a restless spirit. Such anxiety was allayed by the funerary rite of a proper burial. This anxiety manifested itself also in a fear among the living that they, too, could suffer after death from an incomplete burial ritual. This belief caused enough anxiety for the living for them to fear such

[29] Pliny the Elder, *Natural History*. Translated by H. Rackham. LCL 352. Cambridge: Harvard University Press. 1942. Pg. 632-633.

mistreatment when they died.[30] The anxiety can be seen through the funerary rite of proper burial.

Once deceased, there were multiple acceptable methods for preparing the body for burial, the main two were inhumation and cremation. According to Cicero and Pliny the Elder, inhumation was the primitive burial rite in Rome and cremation came later.[31] For an inhumation burial, the preparation involved intricate rituals of washing, anointing, and formally dressing the corpse. The family took great care to avoid coming in contact with the deceased's face mainly because there was a belief surrounding potential spiritual contact with the gods.[32] See, e.g., Pliny the Elder, *Natural History,* 7.187:

"ipsum cremare apud romanos non fuit veteris instituti: terra condebantur. at postquam longinquis bellis obrutos erui cognovere, tunc institutum. et tamen multae familiae priscos servavere ritus, sicut in cornelia nemo ante sullam dictatorem traditur crematus, idque voluisse veritum talionem <e>ruto c. mari cadavere. <sepultus vero intellegatur quoquo modo conditus, humatus vero humo contectus.>"[33]

"Cremation was not actually an old practice at Rome: the dead used to be buried. But cremation was instituted after it became known that the bodies of those fallen in wars abroad were dug up again. All the same many families kept on the old ritual, for instance it is recorded that nobody in the family of the Cornelii was cremated before Sulla the dictator, and that he had desired it because he was afraid of reprisals for having dug up the corpse of Gaius Marius. [But burial is understood to denote any mode of disposal of a corpse, but interment means covering up with earth."

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[30] Erasmo. 2012. Goes more in depth about the process of completing a proper burial.
[31] Toynbee, J.M.C. 1971. Pg.39.
[32] Anderson, Graham. Greek and Roman Folklore: A Handbook. Greenwood Press. 2006. Pg.148.
[33] Pliny the Elder. Natural History. 77-79 CE.

Pliny the Elder describes cremation as not being the old custom for burial, instead, the traditional burial process was inhumation. He then mentions that after Romans had learned that people were digging up bodies of those who had died in distant wars they began to consider cremation to prevent this from happening. He then acknowledges how some families kept the old custom of only practicing inhumation: e.g., the Cornelii did so until the 1st century BCE, when cremation was approved for Sulla only out of fear that his body could be exhumed. Pliny the Elder mentions ancient rites without any specifics, as his purpose is to note the fact of the change from inhumation to cremation rather than the details. The alluding to of the rites alludes to burial and death being common knowledge throughout ancient Roman society. Pliny the Elder's brief discussion of cremation and inhumation gives an example of how funeral preparation was not necessarily diligently and thoroughly written down. When the author's intent was not to describe the practices or rituals. As such these textual sources can be informative, but tantalizing for us as we try to recover the details.

Inhumation and cremation burials each require different preparations and procedures. There are different procedures that can be followed for the two overarching groups: inhumation and cremation. A commonly practiced burial ritual connected with cremation involved *ossilegium* (defined as 'bone gathering'). *Ossilegium* (defined as 'bone collection') had two stages. The first (*os resectum*, defined as 'bone having been cut') included the amputation of a body part, typically a finger. The second step (*os exceptum*, 'bone taken out') included gathering the bone fragments and ashes after cremation and placing them with the amputated body part in the cinerary urn.[34] Burial alone is the bare minimum of the funerary rites discussed above in the Twelve Tables, mainly looking at

[34] Erasmo, Mario. 2008. Pg.54.

the restrictions a family cannot do when burying their deceased: no burial inside the city walls, no second funeral, no heavy displays of wealth while mourning, and no displaying wealth for a corpse's adornment (i.e. no gold).

EVENTS THAT COMMEMORATE THE DEAD

Regular funeral rituals also included festivals and events dedicated to remembering, commemorating, and building relationships with the deceased. These involved activities such as funerary meals, the procession or "*pompa*" (defined as 'procession') leading from the deceased's house to the burial location. The festivals themselves included the *Parentalies* (for commemorating ancestors), the *Rosalia* (the feast of roses); and the *Lemuria* (for the purpose of warding off dead spirits). We can assume these events, mainly the festivals, were important in ancient Roman society because they were publicly practiced and recognized by the Roman calendar. There are estimated to be just over sixty festivals annually on the Roman calendar, with three of them fully dedicated to recognizing the deceased in some form. The importance of death culture and commemorating the deceased is shown in many ways, but these events on the Roman calendar help reinforce death culture's value to the Romans.

Parentalies was set during the week of February 13th through the 21st. This festival was dedicated to the commemoration of ancestors, during which liquid offerings would be made to the deceased, typically through pipes or mosaic floors with holes within the tombs themselves. The last day of the festival was called *Feralia* and was dedicated solely to the worship or recognition of the *Manes.* This stretched over most belief systems and was considered a universal belief that shared by all social circles.

The festival known as *Rosalia* was held during May and June. *Rosalia* was the second festival connected to the deceased/cult of the dead on the Roman calendar. This was

known as the "feast of the roses" and was connected to the cult of the dead somehow, but little is solidly known about the practices within this festival.

Lemuria was also in May and June and the third festival of the dead to appear on the Roman calendar. This festival was known to be apotropaic in nature, involving practices of incantations with the purpose of warding off the spirits of the dead.[35] It is thought that this festival was the conclusion of *Rosalia* and *Parentalies,* because these two festivals welcomed the deceased into the city. The purpose of *Lemuria* was to appease the wandering spirits of the unburied.[36] The unburied were those not given proper funerary rites and were considered dangerous to the living because of this mistreatment. This also pertains to those not buried in accordance with funerary rites led by the tenth of the Twelve Tables.[37] The Romans did not want any harm to come to anyone because of the wandering spirits, so they ritually cast them out of the city walls. These festivals show how Romans respected the dead and death culture partially in fear of potential consequences.

THE DEATHBED

The deathbed is an important place in ancient Roman death culture. On the deathbed, there is a ritual that directly follows death involving the closest family member available at the time of death. Known as the *conclamatio* (defined as 'cry of many others'), it involves the relative catching the final breath with a kiss on the lips, closing the deceased's eyes, and finally calling out their name.[38] The deathbed had a practical place within death culture as well as just a symbolic one. It was an important space to ensure

[35] Erasmo, Mario. 2012. Pg.123.
[36] Scheid, John. An Introduction to Roman Religion. Indiana University Press. 2003. Pg.50.
[37] Scheid, 2003. Pg.169.
[38] Hope, Valerie. Roman Death: The Dying and the Dead in Ancient Rome. Continnum. 2009. Pg.50

that the death itself was properly ceremonial but also that there was no possibility for accusations of foul play of the death itself, and thus the moment of death was observed.[39] Proper practices around the deathbed are the important beginning of an honorable and respectful burial. The deathbed activities are the start of all other funerary practices such as the making of the epitaph (both composing the inscription and its actual carving) (unless the deceased had it made while they were alive), the *pompa*, the funerary meals, and the overall commemoration and remembrance of the deceased.

There were two main offering meals connected with commemorating the recently deceased specifically within the period of mourning associated with the family. On the day of the funeral, the deceased's family would eat a meal to reinforce the events of the day. This meal was known as the *silicernium*, which translates in English as 'funeral feast'. A second family meal known as the *cena novemdialis*, ('nine day meal') was held nine days after the funeral to mark the closing of the period of mourning. According to Erasmo, the *cena novemdialis* began with libations and a sacrifice to the *Manes* before a meal consisting of, "eggs, vegetables, beans, lentils and salt, bread, and poultry.[40]" The beginning and ending funerary meals followed similar outlines with what was eaten and how the family conducted themselves at the grave site. After both meals the remaining food was left at the tomb, and it was believed that if it were stolen or eaten it would cause pollution. These acts of harming the grave can be linked to the purpose and potential drive for having a protection epitaph. The ritual of *cena novemdialis* specifically supports the belief that the deceased's soul survived after death and is to be remembered and respected.

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[39] Hope, Valerie. 2009. Pg.51
[40] Erasmo, Mario. 2012. Pg.123.

Offerings left at the tomb were used to build a relationship between the living and the deceased. These grave site offerings were in the form of foods, liquids, or materials the deceased enjoyed while alive. The practice of such offerings was variation of sharing a meal between the dead and the living. This ritual was believed to erase the figurative and literal boundaries between the dead and the living. The relationship between the living and the deceased was desirable because of the belief that the deceased soul wanted to be commemorated and remembered. This importance of respecting deceased souls is shown also by the three festivals on the Roman calendar that were dedicated to commemorating the deceased as a whole. Protection epitaphs give a materiality to the conscious decision and societal want to protect the dead and their resting place.

It is not documented thoroughly how *pompa* (otherwise known as a funeral procession) worked for lower- and middle-class people in Rome since the main documentation and textual evidence is for the elite class, mainly rulers. Thus, our knowledge of the practice of *pompa* is slightly dubious for a typical Roman. *Pompa* involved an elaborate display and funeral procession toward the Forum or burial place, depending on the societal level of the deceased being celebrated. During the procession, the family was expected to carry or wear the deceased's portraits. These portraits were typically painted on wooden panels and were worn while following the bier carrying the deceased's body. Another important characteristic of a *pompa* was hiring professional mourners and musicians to accompany the procession.[41] There is an obvious difference in scale, cost, and audience throughout different social classes, especially through the documentation of different scales of events. The typical Roman would not have a funeral on this impressive scale.

[41] Erasmo, Mario. 2012. Pg.23. – this aspect of a *pompa* is more heavily connected to an elite's funeral.

CONCLUSION

Ancient Roman death culture has many key points surrounding the treatment of the deceased both physically and spiritually. The Romans cared deeply about their dead by having three festivals fully focusing on their commemoration. The importance of respecting the deceased is also established by an entire table in the Roman Law of the Twelve Tables dedicated to how to treat the deceased and the restrictions the living should follow. The topics discussed and looked at throughout this chapter give an overview of death culture in Rome and allows there to be a point of relation when looking at the catalog in Chapter 4. These areas covered might not all directly relate to the material discussed, but they allow for a greater understanding when looking at the protection epitaphs. The literary evidence reviewed within this paper makes abstract points that show the belief of the soul surviving death and ways the living can commemorate and respect the deceased's souls. While textual and literary evidence does not thoroughly record detailed information surrounding death culture, conclusions can be made based on this textual evidence as well as material evidence such as epitaphs. Epitaphs show that an important way to commemorate the dead is to preserve and remember the deceased's identity. Ancient Roman death culture is multi-faceted and considered normative behavior within their society.

Chapter 3 - Magic in Ancient Rome

The connection between magic and death is not readily apparent in ancient Roman society. Thus, when the two overlap in protection epitaphs, we encounter an area reflecting an interesting Roman subculture. The use of a defensive ritual in death culture can be seen as another way of respecting the deceased and commemorating their identity. It is also connected to the belief (within this subset of epitaphs) that no family wants their deceased to become a restless soul (defined as a soul that is not at peace in their resting place), potentially to be used as an antidote against ill intent.[42] These protection epitaphs are not fully an antidote to a deceased's soul becoming a restless spirit, but these phrases of protection are thought to counteract an potential harm that could come to the grave and the deceased. Understanding ancient Roman's views on magic sheds light onto why this body of tomb markers containing protection epitaphs is important, but not all defensive rituals on epitaphs applies to aggressive forms of "magic" like curse tablets.

Magic in ancient Rome is multi-faceted and exposes how the social hierarchy influenced all aspects of life. Magic is a type of ritual.[43] Unlike religious ritual (as defined in the introduction), and death ritual (as defined in chapter two) magic ritual[44] is an action done outside of a physical interaction with the target completed with the guidance of a magical formula to ensure the person's (either practitioner themselves or an observer) wanted behavior from the target.

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[42] Examples within the catalog that have definitive phrases within their inscription that tell passersby to not approach the tomb with ill intent: Catalog Entry #3, #6, #8, #11, #16, #19.

[43] Edmonds, 2019. Pg.10 "the first distinction that must be drawn is to limit the scope of magic as a discourse of non-normative activity to ritualized activity."

[44] Edmonds, 2019. Pg.7. This scholarship brings up continuously that there is no overarching definition of magic because if it was there would always be an aspect missing or something being included that does not fit just right. Edmonds compares the theories of magic being something of "some particular reality" and "a dynamic social construct". These ideas come to the point of magic being a discourse that can never be truly defined.

The Latin term for the practice magic is *magica* (stemming from the Greek word μαγικόςήόν), related to the term *magi* which translates as a 'learned person'. This sense of the Latin word suggests that the capacity to practice magic is not an innate trait a person can have. Like the practice of religious rituals, magic involves both a practitioner and an action. The practitioner is an individual with special acquired knowledge (the "learned person") and the action is a process intended to enhance an earthly experience.[45] The difference between magic and religious ritual, however, lies in the methods used to achieve the enhanced experience. While both navigate using specified protocols, religious ritual involves normative actions, while magical ritual is typically considered non-normative. Within ancient Roman society, both religious and death ritual, as well as magical ritual, were framed by general societal beliefs.

While religious and death rituals involve practitioners, observers, and targets, so too do magical rituals. A practitioner is someone with the knowledge of magic and how to practice spells, whether they be for the benefit of themselves or someone else. An observer is someone with or without the knowledge of magic that is present or knows about the practice of magic that is taking place by the magic practitioner. The observer is also a role that has the potential to be accidental, the person observing could not know they are witnessing the practice of magic. The target is the person or people the spell is used against, whether it be for beneficial or malicious intent to them.

Ancient magic is researched by modern scholars through primary textual evidence, secondary textual evidence, and material evidence. The primary textual source used to study ancient magic and the main way scholars can prove its practice is the Greek

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[45] Edmonds. 2019. Pg. 11. It involves a ritualized activity (classified by the society it is in) that enhances the person's experience believed to be done through a divine action.

Magical Papyri (GMPT). The papyri compiled within the GMPT are dated from 200 BCE to 500 CE, while Romans were in control of Egypt (where most of these formularies were written) yet little material was found that solely focused on the Roman subset of magic. It is important to be aware that these papyri were made in the Greek-speaking world.

The GMPT is a modern compilation of hundreds of papyri upon which are written magical formularies, as well as instructions for developing charms, amulets, spells. The papyri range in size from small scraps to long scrolls with multiple formularies. Some of the papyri were discovered in Egypt (town of Oxyrhynchus)[46] where some of the papyri found were well-preserved because of Egypt's dry climate. This discovery included all types of papyri from the magical formularies discussed in this paper to tax documentations. It is theorized that the pit-like area they were found in was used to discard trash.[47]

There is a debate as to who in the ancient Mediterranean world would have access to the information provided on these papyri. It is theorized that the papyri versions were one of the ways they were distributed, with the originals most likely from a book, because of the destruction of magical literature. Suetonius recorded that Augustus ordered the destruction of 2,000 magical scrolls in 13 C.E.[48]

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[46] Grenfell, Bernard (1898). "Oxyrhynchus and Its Papyri". In Griffith, F.L. (ed.). *Archaeological Report*: 1896-1897. Egypt Exploration Fund. pp. 1–12, (7). This report discloses how easily accessible these papyri were with Grenfell saying, "The papyri, as a rule, not very far from the surface; in one patch of the ground, indeed, merely turning up the soil with one's boot would frequently disclose a layer of papyri, and it was seldom that we found even tolerably well-preserved documents at a greater depth that ten feet. The explanation is that the damp soaking up from below, owing to the rise of the Nile bed, has proved fatal to what papyri there may have been in the lower levels."

[47] Grenfell, Bernard (1898). "Oxyrhynchus and Its Papyri". In Griffith, F.L. (ed.). *Archaeological Report*: 1896-1897. Egypt Exploration Fund. pp. 1–12, (8).

[48] Betz, Hans Dieter. 1996. Pg.xli; Rives, James. 2011. "Magic in Roman Law: The Reconstruction of a Crime." *Oxford Readings in the Religious History of the Roman Empire: Pagans, Jews, and Christians."* Edited by J.A. North and Simon Price, Pg.71-108. Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press. Rives establishes that by the Twelve Tables magic was considered illegal, but with the exponential shift towards

The GMPT is a composite of primary sources that show ancient magic through its formularies (instructions and processes followed by the magic practitioner). The GMPT is important because it reveals information that was pushed underground by rulers (i.e. Augustus) and the correlation with the religious shift to Christianity that ancient Rome experienced. These formularies are thought to be written cryptically to preserve secrecy because of the societal shift to Christianity. Material evidence reveals how ancient magic was practiced while textual evidence reveals the perceived identity and image of a magic practitioner.

In the Greek Magical Papyri in Translation[49] (GMPT) there is the Table of Spells, it lists the title of the spell[50] that was on the papyri or based on how modern scholars interpret the formula. A newer translation was published in 2022, Greek and Egyptian Magical Formularies (GEMF) by Christopher Faraone and Sofia Tovar. An important difference is the shift from the term 'spell' to 'recipe' for formularies and the division of the papyri into three categories – handbooks, formularies, and activated texts.

Within the list in the book multiple types of magical formula appear. Spells and charms are the most frequently listed. A spell (in this study) is typically a more complex formula (compared to the formula of a charm) with a material object that is to be made with the incantation along with a list of intricate steps that must be followed for the efficacy of the spell to be ensured. An example of the intricacy of a spell is seen in the

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Christianity (that was heavily influenced by leaders like Augustus) there were more obstacles put in place to help the practice and belief of magic to die out.

[49] The corpus includes a wide range of texts scattered throughout the ancient Mediterranean world, with many of the papyrus finds coming from imperial Roman Egypt.

[50] Newer works like Faraone and Tovar's Greco-Egyptian Magical Formularies (2022) discuss the movement away from the deliberate use of the term 'spell' and suggest using 'ritual' as an overarching term. This discussion was a deliberate critique of the GMPT. Within this work, the use of the term spell and ritual as mainly interchangeable within the discussion of magic is purposeful. The use of the term 'ritual' is a general overarching word that encapsulates all works within the GMPT used as examples.

GMPT with PGM IV. 296-466, Wondrous spell for binding a lover. The formula instructs the detailed making of two clay figures with specific traits, the spell that is to be written and recited, and ends with a prayer that belongs to the formula as well.[51] As for curses, there are no formulae in the GMPT (or the GEMF) that are classified as such, but there are formularies instructing the practitioner to make a curse tablet or formula that indicate a spell (or ritual) with more ill intent.[52c]

Alongside spells and charms are curses. Curses are a type of spell that have direct ill-intent toward the target the practitioner is using them against. An example of a curse tablet connected to a spell in the GMPT is PGM VII. 429-58, called "A restraining for anything", instructs the magic practitioner to "engrave in a plate [made] of lead" with a specific text to copy.[53] A curse tablet is a magical object made in accordance with a spell's formula. The specific intent for restraining in "A restraining for anything" formula suggests to modern scholars and potentially ancient magic practitioners that this formula is efficient in binding someone who does not want to be bound. Within the GMPT and the GEMF (and in this study), a charm is a shorter formula (compared to a spell) with no object the practitioner needs to make in order to ensure the charm's efficacy. An example of a charm in the GMPT is PGM IV. 850-929, Charm of Solomon that produces a trance, includes the formula to be spoken and the timeline within which it is to be said.[54]

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[51] Betz, Hans Dieter. 1996. The Greek Magical Papyri: Including the Demotic Spells. The University of Chicago Press. Pg.44-46.
[52] An example is the PGM IV. 296-466 with the title, "Wonderous spell for binding a lover" where the word 'binding' indicates there is no reciprocation of love from the intended target.
[53] Betz, Hans Dieter. 1996. Pg.129-130.
[54] Betz, Hans Dieter. 1996. Pg.55-56.

A curse tablet is an object that results from specific ritualistic behaviors.[55] These tablets are thin sheets of metal, typically lead, on which are inscribed the formula chosen by the practitioner. They are made with the intent to bring a supernatural power against a person and/or their belongings. Curse tablets are a material manifestations of magic that shows the believed efficacy of magic in Roman society, since protection epitaphs were created and seen as the counter object of this ritual material. From a 1985 work, there is a recorded 1,100 curse tablets found with 'over half' being connected to a burial of some sort.[56] Tombs are the recorded findspot for over half of excavated curse tablets).[57] It seems apparent, therefore that a connection between death and magic within ancient Roman society stems from the graves as the activation site of curse tablets. This observation gives material and geographical evidence for why a protective epitaph (with an aggressive or passive defense) would exist at all.

The instructions within magical formularies (found within the GMPT) sometimes guide the magic practitioner to construct an object to accompany the formula that they are following. These objects have a wide range of materiality. The most frequently seen within the GMPT are amulets, kolossoi[58], and curse tablets. Each type of object is connected to a different formulary depending on its malicious or beneficial intentions. Amulets cover an area of general use. Amulets are connected to formularies for both positive and malicious intent. Amulets were most often made from different kinds of

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[55] Curse tablets are not the only material object to come from ritualistic behaviors or material that results from following a magical formula. Look into Gager 1992 for an in-depth study in curse tablets of the ancient world.

[56] Jordan, D. R. 1985. A Survey of Greek Defixiones Not Included in the Special Corpora. Greek, Roman, and Byzantine Studies. Cambridge, MA. Vol. 26, Issue 2. Pg.151-197.

[57] Edmonds. 2019. Pg.65. Footnotes David Jordan's 1985 work "A Survey of Greek Defixiones Not Included in the Special Corpora." *Greek, Roman, and Byzantine Studies* 26 (2). Pg.151-197.

[58] A kolossoi is a magic material that imitates a human form and is connected to spells that ask for a physical representation of the target. For more look into the GMPT and the GEMF for examples and formula concerning kolossoi.

stones, but also smaller pieces of papyri. The important part of an amulet as a magical object is that it is easily transported. An example of an amulet in the GMPT with positive intent is PGM XVIIc. 1-14, which was a small slip of papyrus thought to be used as an amulet connected to a protective formula.[59] This piece of papyrus would have writing, symbols, or both on it depending on the formula chosen for the amulet. On the other hand, kolossoi and curse tablets are more connected to magical formularies with malicious intent. An example of kolossoi in the GMPT is PGM IV. 296-466 where the formula instructs two clay figurines to be made, the male figure in the form of Ares and the female figurine with "her arms behind her back and down on her knees."[60] This curse later instructs the magic practitioner to "take thirteen copper needles and stick 1 in the brain."[61] This spell can be classified as a curse since it has the purpose of being malicious and violent.

A protection epitaph is a phrase made primarily to safeguard the grave of a deceased person. Protection epitaphs were mostly carved in limestone or marble. These objects could be shaped in slabs or blocks and had no requirement for any decorative relief. If the protection epitaph did have decorative reliefs, they focused on the primary use for the object, which was identifying a deceased person's grave. A secondary purpose was to caution observers and practitioners to not use their grave as a depositing place for magical items (mainly curse tablets). Grave markers with protection epitaphs are a materiality of magic that shows the perceived efficacy of magic in Roman society. Protection epitaph efficacy was believed to counteract the efficacy of curse tablets.

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[59] Betz, Hans Dieter. 1996. Pg.255.
[60] Betz, Hans Dieter. 1996. Pg.44.
[61] Betz, Hans Dieter. 1996. Pg.44.

Simply put, curse tablets were employed for over two-hundred years, so yes, they were believed to work.[62]

Secondary textual evidence is found in authors writing about magic and magic practitioners. Authors like Apuleius, Horace, Ovid, and Pliny the Elder each discuss certain aspects of magic, though there is no comprehensive source on the topic. This textual evidence indicates that while magic was pushed underground and thus magic was often practiced in secret, in both pre-Christian and Christian Rome, and it was still a topic of common knowledge (even if that knowledge was generalized or filled with stereotypes). These authors introduce how certain Romans would view and perceive a magic practitioner. For example, Apuleius shows the magic practitioner in his work *Metamorphoses* (1.12-13) as an elderly woman who is not the typical standard of a Roman woman:

> *Ac dum infimum deiectus obliquo aspectu quid rei sit, grabatuli sollertia munitus, opperior, video mulieres duas altioris aetatis. Lucernam lucidam gerebat una, spongiam et nudum gladium altera. Hoc habitu Socratem bene quietum circumstetere. Infit illa cum gladio, 'Hic est, soror Panthia, carus Endymion, hic Catamitus meus, qui diebus ac noctibus illusit aetatulam meam, hic qui meis amoribus subterhabitis non solum me diffamat probris, verum etiam fugam instruit. At ego scilicet Ulixi astu deserta vice Calypsonis aeternam solitudinem flebo.' Et porrecta dextera meque Panthiae suae demonstrato, 'At hic bonus' inquit 'consiliator Aristomenes, qui fugae huius auctor fuit et nunc morti proximus iam*

[62] Gager, John. 1992. Pg.22-23. Quotes Roger Tomlin's work surrounding the efficacy of the Baths of Diocletian and he is quoted very simply, "the practice of inscribing them for two centuries … implies that they did work. Or rather that they were believed to work; and perhaps that this belief is justified."

humi prostratus grabatulo succubans iacet et haec omnia conspicit, impune se relaturum meas contumelias putat. Faxo eum sero, immo statim, immo vero iam nunc, ut et praecedentis dicacitatis et instantis curiositatis paeniteat.'

"Haec ego ut accepi, sudore frigido miser perfluo, tremore viscera quatior, ut grabatulus etiam succussu meo inquietus super dorsum meum palpitando saltaret. At bona Panthia 'Quin igitur,' inquit 'soror, hunc primum bacchatim discerpimus vel membris eius destinatis virilia desecamus?'

Cast down on the floor under the prudent protection of my cot, I watched out of the corner of my eye to see what was happening. I saw two women of rather advanced age, one carrying a lighted lamp and the other a sponge and a naked sword. Thus equipped they surrounded the soundly sleeping Socrates. The one with the sword began: 'This, sister Panthia, is my darling Endymion, my Ganymede. This is the one who made sport of my tender youth day and night, the one who disdained my love and not only slandered me with his insults but even plotted to escape. Shall I, forsooth, deserted like Calypso by the astuteness of a Ulysses, weep in everlasting loneliness?' Then she stretched out her hand and pointed me out to her friend Panthia. 'And this,' she said, 'is the good counsellor Aristomenes, who advised this escape and now lies near death, stretched out on the ground, sprawling under his little cot and watching all this. He thinks he is going to report these insults against me with impunity. Later—no, soon—no, right now—I will make him regret his past raillery and present inquisitiveness.'

"When I heard that, my poor body dissolved in cold sweat, and my insides quivered and trembled so that the cot, disturbed by my own shaking, swayed and

danced on top of my back. 'Well then, sister,' replied the gentle Panthia, 'why not take him first and tear him limb from limb in a Bacchic frenzy, or at least tie him up and cut off his genitals?'[63]

Apuleius is describing an interaction between two magic practitioners (described as old women) planning to enact revenge on Socrates. This is a good text to point out the roles within a magic ritual. The two women are the magic practitioners, Socrates is the target, and Lucius is the observer. This text emphasizes Apuleius' realization that he is a potential observer for a magical ritual that could take place.

Material evidence showing ancient magic gives a more literal lens of how it worked and what a magic practitioner used and did within their practice. Excavations at the village of Karanis (modern Egypt), a more rural village in the Roman empire, have remains pertaining to magic. These materials also potentially help determine accuracy or legitimacy of the GMPT formularies found. In the village of Karanis interesting materials related to ancient magic include a fever amulet, a magical ostracon, a love-inducing ritual, and painted bones. There is no mention of these materials being found in burial sites, but they give a light to how magic was practiced in small towns. These materials show remnants of ancient magic physically practiced in Rome. The fever amulet was made from a small piece of papyri that was inscribed on and thought to be worn by the target of the [64] The formula it parallels in the GMPT suggests it was used to ward off fever and chills. The magical ostracon was an inscribed potsherd with a magical formula

[63] Apuleius, Latin Library, 100 CE – 200 CE, Prose, Novel, Mythography, DOI: 10.4159/DLCL.apuleius-metamorphoses. 1996. Pgs.20-23. Translated by J. Arthur Hanson.
[64] Wilburn, 2012. Pg.109.

that can be directly connected to a magical formula in the GMPT[65]￼ The love-inducing ritual was a group of materials found together that point to a specific formula found in the [66]￼ and included a lead amulet, doll (known as a kolossoi), and three hairpins. The geography of these materials remains pertaining to magic indicates that the shift to Christianity in the city of Rome took longer to reach these rural villages. A group of materials found in Karanis that points to ancient magic is painted. [67] They were found in two excavation sites on the outskirts of the village but not with the burials. There are no formularies that specifically call for the use of bones but connects the use of painted bones as a medium for practicing and executing spells.

MAGIC AND SECRECY

The exploration and discussion within this work surrounding the societal beliefs and perceived identity of a magic practitioner are important to understand in the context of magic but are not analyzed nor fully needed in the understanding of the presented catalog.

An ancient Roman's experience with magic, as a non-normative ritual behavior, would be limited. Exposure would most likely be through accident or coincidence. If not the magic practitioner, the typical Roman would know about non-normative rituals through eyewitness or through descriptions provided either by other eyewitnesses or the practitioner themselves, even when revealing such information is against the practice itself.[68] The assertion of secrecy by the practitioner was seen as *musterion,* a Greek word

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[65] Wilburn, 2012. Pg.118. Betz, 1996. Pg.274-275.
[66] Betz, Hans Dieter. 1996. Pg.256. (PGM XIX.a)
[67] Wilburn, 2012. Pg.140.
[68] Preisendanz, Papyri Graecae Magicae, also known as the Greek Magical Papyri are an important source for the practice of magic in the ancient world. From these texts we learn that magic is intended to be practiced in secrecy. Inevitably, however, at times a practitioner would reveal the magical actions, even when claiming that the actions are meant to be secret, the translation used is a corpus that has a date

which translates as 'sacred secret'.[69] It is from the use of words referencing secrecy that allows scholars to distinguish normative from non-normative rituals in the corpus of Greek Magical Papyri, as well as other texts referencing non-normative behaviors. In other words, secrecy is considered a fundamental aspect of non-normative or magical actions.[70]

PRACTITIONERS AND "THE OTHER"

The identity of a magic practitioner in ancient Rome exposes the rigid social hierarchy and importance of social circles. Literary evidence suggests practitioners were commonly marginalized members of society: women, foreigners, the enslaved, and the poor. These identities are often categorized as "the Other."[71] The evidence from literary sources show that magic practitioners are coded as exotic. The identity surrounding exoticism, in its Roman perception of being a minority, shows that ancient Roman society was wary when accepting people outside of their preconceived 'normal'. While the literary evidence provides vivid pictures of "the exotic other" as practitioner, the material evidence, especially curse tablets, on the other hand, do not point to a specific gender for a magic practitioner. When determining the identity of the practitioner, it is important to consider the type of evidence and the unique qualities inherent in each.

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ranging from second century B.C.E. to fifth century C.E. and includes around 80 handbooks. The two main texts used are: Faraone 2022 and Betz 1996.

[69] *Musterion* originates from Greek and the Latin equivalent is *sacramentum*. The main purpose in using one over the other is *musterion* being used in scholarship revolving around magic. Look into Graf 1997.

[70] Betz, Hans Dieter. 1995. "Secrecy in the Greek Magical Papyri." In H. Kippenberg and G. Stroumsa (eds.). Secrecy and Concealment. Pg. 153-175.

[71] The concept and scholarship surrounding the Other is large and holds great resources for looking into the societal views of minorities and how the Romans viewed and treated people within that identification. This study does see the Other as an identity within the categorization of a magic practitioner but does not surround the in-depth study of the topic. Look into Edmonds 2019. Another work to look in that heavily discusses the Other is Spaeth, Barbette Stanley. 2014. 'From Goddess to Hag: The Greek and the Roman Witch in Classical Literature', in Kimberly B. Stratton, and Dayna S. Kalleres (eds), *Daughters of Hecate: Women and Magic in the Ancient World*. Pg.41-70.

Literature is the primary evidence modern scholars have in assuming the role of gender is society's perception of a magic practitioner's identity. These categorizations are archetypes in literature that reference magic practitioners and actions. Literary examples often focus on women as the primary users of magic, showing Rome's societal belief about most practitioners. Male magic practitioners are rarely seen in ancient literature, while women practitioners are more commonly portrayed and viewed as villainous and deceitful.[72] Horace is a literary source that reflects how female magic practitioners were seen within society. Horace's *Epodes* 17 is the last poem within the *Epodes* and gives an encounter with the witch (or magic practitioner) Canidia. This poem puts Canidia against a man (the narrator) and Horace shows the power Canidia has by giving her the last word which helps to suggest that the typical Roman believed in the power magic practitioners had.[73] In Epodes 17, Horace continuously points out the exoticness of the magic practitioners by introducing them and their rituals with their foreign titles:

> *"Sabella pectus increpare carmina*
> *caputque Marsa dissilire nenia."*
>
> "That Samnite incantations can faze hearts
> and Marsian spells can split a head in two.[74]"

Another term that is accompanied with specific exotic titles like Samnite and Marsian is the generalized term for foreigner: 'barbarian.' The title of exotic is an overall description of a magic practitioner, as seen above, and is not solely describing a female magic practitioner. The exoticism of magic practitioners is seen in Horace's portrayal of Medea in his Epodes 5. The imagery that these titles create for consumers of ancient

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[72] A comparison of female portrayal versus male portrayal within magic is seen through a modern translation from Hippolytus' Haer. 4.37 and Lucan's Pharsalia 6.434-506. Edmonds, 2019.
[73] McCarter, Stephanie 2020. Horace: Epodes, Odes, and Carmen Saeculare. University of Oklahoma Press. Pg.117.
[74] McCarter, Stephanie. Pg.118-119.

Roman literature continued to influence the divide between normative and non-normative behaviors. This division helped to promote cautious behavior when dealing with people outside of ancient Rome's 'normal.' The relationship seen between gender within Roman society and the societal definition of a magic practitioner reveals how Roman society strongly held onto their versions of 'normal'.

The discussion of the connection between women and magic in antiquity continue in modern scholarship. These scholars have concluded that women will always be connected to magic because "men define their cultures' discourses and configure their identities vis-à-vis women," thus, "gender and magic will naturally be combined as discourses of alterity."[75]

The connection of death culture and magic in ancient Roman society focuses on the belief that magical objects are activated by coming into contact with spirits of the dead. Activation of a magical object (such as a curse tablet) is defined as the process of transforming the object, through ritualistic behavior, from normative to non-normative. The process of activation suggests disturbing deceased souls. The location of magic rituals and the location of graves are another connection between death culture and magic.[76] Graves are not the sole place to perform a magic ritual, but some formula refer to a grave being the place to activate a magical object. Grave sites give magic practitioners access to spirits of the dead and it is the center way of communication for the living relatives of the deceased. The specific material that connects death and magic are curse tablets and them being deposited in graves for activation. As mentioned earlier,

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[75] Stratton, Kimberly B. 2014. 'Interrogating the Magic–Gender Connection', in Kimberly B. Stratton, and Dayna S. Kalleres (eds), *Daughters of Hecate: Women and Magic in the Ancient World. Pg.1-38.*
[76] Look into Gager. 1992. and Edmonds. 2019.

curse tablets are a potential reason for protective epitaphs to exist because of the grave being an activation site.

PUBLIC REACTION

The concern for potential observers leads to an assumed anxiety that magic practitioners had when performing magic rituals. There was a universal condemnation of magic within social law due to its antisocial behavior.[77] There was no constructive way that ancient Roman society regulated the perceived use of magic. The literary sources discussed previously stress that magic practitioners" were thought to be foreign, enslaved, poor, women. This reaction gives normative rituals acceptance because they were determined by those in control. An example of a normative ritual is displaying cypress and pine outside of a deceased person's house. The purpose was to acknowledge the deceased's family but also to alert the public to the pollution of death permeating from the house. An offensive, non-normative ritual includes the practice of placing a curse tablet within a grave. This would cause concern throughout the public (especially within the subculture of people who use protective epitaphs) because of the malicious intent the curse tablet holds.

LITERATURE REVIEW

There are multiple scholars that focus on ancient magic and the shift between perspectives of ancient magic and modern magic. Richmond Lattimore, writing in the 1940sand never connected his collection of curse epitaphs (within this study they are referred to as protection epitaphs) to magic. Lattimore labeled the curse epitaphs within the confines of religion. Furthermore, in the catalog of epitaphs Lattimore publishes he extracts the 'curse' (in this paper, there is a shift from the nicheness of 'curse' to a

[77] Social law refers to society's etiquette was what was socially allowed in public versus not.

broader idea of ‘protection’) from its broader epitaph and does not give any material context of the object on which it was inscribed or its findspot. While this work is helpful in a philological context, it does not allow for archaeological insight to be applied because of the lack of geographic and material context given. This paper located surviving works from Lattimore’s collection and expanded it as much as possible with a greater emphasis on the visual and material culture. Lattimore laid a foundation for what a protection epitaph could be in a philological setting, but this work seeks to add the material focus onto it and represent the full object and how it functioned.[78]

Fifty years later in the 1990s, Fritz Graf focused on the different categories of magic in the ancient Greco-Roman world and explored different rituals and what theories are associated with them. Graf also discussed what a magic practitioner is and the presumed connections they have with the mystical world. In his scholarship, Graf evaluates the connection and relationship of magic and religion and how one feeds off the other for their individual existence within society. He also discusses the concept that ancient magic can be portrayed on horizontal and vertical axes by the magic practitioner. The portrayal of ancient magic on axes responds to the question surrounding the target of the practitioner. The horizontal axis is broad and targets more than one person or group. The vertical axis is specific and direct. The vertical axis facilitates a ritual that targets one person for a specific deed they have done against the practitioner.[79]

Magic as a discourse is discussed primarily by Radcliffe Edmonds. Edmonds studies magic in the ancient Greco-Roman world and focuses on the Greek Magical

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[78] Lattimore, Richmond. 1942. Themes in Greek and Latin Epitaphs. Illinois Studies in Language and Literature, Vol. 28, No. 1-2.
[79] Graf, Fritz. 1997. Magic in the Ancient World. Havard University Press. Translated by Franklin Philip. Pg.214.

Papyri and the language within it. Edmonds acknowledges the difficulty in pin-pointing a definition for ancient magic due to the drastic differences between modern and ancient societal views. He does have general guardrails that propose four main attributes of ancient magic. These attributes are described as, "the perceived efficacy of the act, the familiarity of the performance within the cultural tradition, the ends for which the act is performed, and/or the social location of the performer.[80]" Edmonds also argues for a polythetic definition that involve multiple criteria.[81] The study of ancient magic within modern academia centers its studies on how magic was potentially seen by the society and how a society's beliefs shift throughout time.

MATERIAL EXAMPLE

An example to look at and reference back to all the information covered above is the epitaph (Catalog Entry #8) of Caecinia Bassa whose parents wrote her epitaph describing her painful death of sudden sickness and puts a specific curse with a great threat in the phrase, *"si quis forte mea gaudet de morte iniqua, huic sit iniqua Ceres perficiatque fame,*" which translates to, "if anyone by chance rejoices in my unjust death, may Ceres be unjust to them and destroy them with hunger."[82] This epitaph has a specific threat that is placed in a public space so it can be given a horizontal axis. The practice of protection epitaphs leans more on the normative side of the spectrum even with the pagan reference to Ceres.[83] This categorization of a more normative and accepted practice, the protection epitaph is seen throughout the catalog developed for the study. The main focus

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[80] Edmonds. 2019. Pg.5.
[81] Edmonds. 2019. Pg.12.
[82] Epitaph text found in Lattimore, Richmond. 1942.; Phillips, Richard L. "A Prayer for Justice on the Epitaph of Caecinia Bassa ('CIL' VI 7898)." Zeitschrift *Für Papyrologie Und Epigraphik*, vol. 205, 2018, pp. 96–101. *JSTOR*, http://www.jstor.org/stable/26603973.
[83] Pagan reference is connected to the database it was found in Epigraphic Database of Rome (EDR), database number EDR107980.

when looking at a protection epitaph is the belief that mine is stronger than yours and trusting that the curse will keep wayfarers from even considering it a place to activate a curse tablet or any other magical object of the sort. The broad generalization taken from the material example is that if no one violates the tomb, the curse is more successful than if someone does violate the tomb, thus tempting the curse.

This short analysis of the Caecinia Bassa's protection epitaph penetrates the surface on the connection between magic and death when focusing directly on the classification of magic.

CONCLUSION

Ancient magic's evidence is used for different determinations. The material evidence is used for proving that magic was actually practiced and the excavation locations help determine a theoretical geographical profile. The primary textual evidence, the GMPT, is used to visualize what magic practitioners had in their arsenal for spells, charms, curses, etc. and what their formula looked like and what processes they used. The secondary textual evidence gives a generalization of what a typical Roman would think of when magic was mentioned, mainly how the stereotypical magic practitioner was seen to the societal majority. This stereotype (characteristically the societal minority) was created and exemplified by the majority of Roman society, and the majority also had the power to determine what was normative behavior and what was not. Ancient magic and death culture are not inherently connected, but this catalog of epitaphs connects them and exposes a unique subculture followed by a discernable minority within ancient Rome.

Chapter 4 – Analysis of Catalog

INTRODUCTION

An epitaph is the inscription on a piece of stone that represents the commemorated identity of the deceased. A protection epitaph is an epitaph with a request for no harm on it (this request has multiple variations that will be discussed later). In the protection epitaphs looked at here the most frequently seen is a phrase that protects the grave as a place that a passerby might go to with malicious intent. This subset of epitaphs addresses issues pertaining to death and magic in ancient Rome. This catalog of epitaphs is important because it highlights a type of epitaph that seeks to protect the grave of the deceased.

Within this study's catalog there are a total of nineteen protection epitaphs that are dated between the first century B.C.E. through the second century C.E, three in the first century B.C.E., nine in the first century C.E., and seven in the second century C.E. The findspots of these items are primarily within Rome (fifteen out of the nineteen), one was found in Salona, Croatia (#14), one was found in Wesel, Germany (#19), and two have unknown findspots. When analyzing these objects and their presentation, ten of them have figural decoration (or reliefs) of more than a border that frames the text.[84]

The epitaphs within this catalog cover a range of different types of warnings that are unique to this kind of epitaph. Some are direct and more aggressive with their threats, involving specific requests to not do harm to this grave or a specific punishment will be dealt, and others are more passive in nature and rely on the passerby paying no mind to the grave, thus blessing them with a good life. The important takeaway within these more

[84] This is based off of the images found on each of the catalog entries and assumptions made when encountering objects with significant erosion and weathering.

passive epitaphs is that they still have a request of no harm being done to the grave, but instead of a harsh punishment being promised, a good life is offered if the passersby do as the epitaph asks. These epitaphs fit within this genre because of the addition asking for protection included in the commemorative aspect of the epitaph.

Earlier chapters discuss ritual through the lens of death and magic, making the point that in both cases there are participants in the ritual: practitioner, target, observer. We can find these roles on protection epitaphs as well, though sometimes it is important to recognize how these roles are represented within the ritual of protection epitaphs. The practitioner is dependent upon the point of view of the epitaph's inscription. Third person means the practitioner is the deceased's family who wrote the epitaph, and first-person means the practitioner is the deceased themselves (whether they had any say in what the epitaph says). The target of these protection epitaphs are all passersby with malicious intent to harm the grave, and the observer is the community or a passerby who would potentially read it aloud.

This intersection (between magic and death) results in the importance of having a general understanding of both when studying these materials within the curated catalog. This catalog is small in comparison to the surviving number of epitaphs from the same period.[85] Even though this catalog is small, the knowledge gained from studying the objects is not negligible. No matter the number of objects that can be connected to this topic, the information gathered is important because it represents an important subset of

[85] The small size of this catalog is due to a multitude of reasons, within this catalog an object was only added if it had at least one image with it, so it could be visually analyzed. The reasons for images not being found were mainly due to the unknown current location of the item or the museum that was the last known location not getting back via email or not having it in their collection no longer.

epitaphs in ancient Rome that promoted the efficacy of protective epitaphs as well as the idea that curses could make use of the restless dead.

Epigraphy is the study of inscriptions. The surviving number of Latin inscriptions is around 250,000, with epitaphs constituting around 170,000. Within these surviving epitaphs, only nineteen were determined to be protection epitaphs, meaning they make up 3.17% of the epitaphs observed.

Inscriptions can be categorized into several (at times overlapping) categories. Two subcategories include public and private. Public inscriptions are those placed in a public space with open access. Public inscriptions can be official, religious, honorific, funerary, etc. Private inscriptions are those intended for limited access, such as family members, individuals, or members of a select group. Private inscriptions fall into many of the same categories as public (official, religious, honorific, funerary, etc.) but intended for a more restricted audience.[86] Objects such as epitaphs (including protection epitaphs), as defined in chapters two and three are public, funerary, and often commemorative.

Epitaphs are public inscriptions with similarities to honorific inscriptions.[87] This is because both funerary and honorific inscriptions are more likely to have epigraphic bias.[88] Epigraphic bias is the acknowledgement that the writer and epigrapher carry a bias in what they put on the inscription itself. For inscriptions that recognize or commemorate someone's identity, the text is more likely to show their positive attributes. This can be seen in Catalog Entry #4 where the epitaph remembers the deceased as a "good, merciful, loving man." Epigraphic bias is important to remember because of the primary purpose of

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[86] Other types of inscriptions such as graffiti, mosaic/wall paintings, graffiti, inscriptions on everyday objects.
[87] Edmondson, Jonathan. The Oxford Handbook of Roman Epigraphy. 2015. Oxford University Press. Pg. 90-95.
[88] Edmondson. 2015. Pg. 131-148.

epitaphs, remembering the identity of the deceased, thus the family would want to preserve the most upstanding identity for their loved one. There is an instance within this catalog (#10) where the deceased created their own epitaph before they died. Within this example, the deceased acknowledged that they had their epitaph made before they passed with the phrase, "Caius Sempronius Primus Son of Quintus, alive, made this for himself and his spouse."

Comparing these protection epitaphs reveals a lot of similarities between them as well as acute differences. Breaking the catalog into various subsets helps show these comparisons. There are a total of nine subgroups that reveal different priorities within the curses inscribed on the epitaphs. There are three subgroups that encompass most of the catalog: those for children, those including *Dis Manibus* or abbreviations that represent it, and those calling to a certain deity. There are none in the catalog that include all three attributes, but Catalog Entry #2 includes the deceased being a child and it includes *Dis Manibus*.

The other subgroups include hand relief on the epitaph, figural reliefs, wishing the passerby a good life, commemorating more than one person, deceased not named, and mentioning urine in the curse.

The idea of nine subgroups within this catalog of nineteen brings an idea that there is no true discernable attribute that identifies a protection epitaph. Thus, these epitaphs are unique when compared to others because they have a purposeful phrase that acts as a deterrent to some sort of behavior at the grave site.

DIS MANIBUS

The most frequent attribute within this catalog is the inclusion of the phrase *Dis Manibus* or an abbreviation connected to the phrase. The two known abbreviations are

D.M and D.M.S. There are eight epitaphs of the nineteen that include some representation of *Dis Manibus*. This phrase is translated into English as "to the Spirits of the Dead," and is most likely calling to the Underworld spirits that help assist the deceased's soul for a successful journey to the Underworld.

The Catalog Entries that include this phrase are #1, #2, #3, #5, #6, #7, #9, and #17. There is a mostly equal split between the use of the abbreviation and the full phrase. There is a unique outlier within this subgroup, #6, which partially shortens the phrase to be inscribed as, "DIS MAN."

SPECIFIC DEITY

Another common attribute within this catalog is the mentioning of a specific deity for protection or watching over the grave. Epitaphs that include this are #1, #4, #7, #8, #14, and #17. There are a variety of ways that the epitaphs mention the deity and how they are asked to help the grave and the deceased. For example. Catalog Entry #1 reads as "Divine Sun, I entrust to you (the person) who has laid his hands on it (the tomb)." This is calling to the Roman god of the Sun, Sol, and the writer of the epitaph assuming passersby will come with malicious intent toward the grave. In Catalog Entry #8, the deity is presented as, "If anyone by chance rejoices in my unjust death, may Ceres be unjust to him and finish him with hunger." When comparing #1 and #8, there is large difference in the severity of how the deity is asked to handle passersby with malicious intent. Entry #1 vaguely asks Divine Sun to take care of the passerby while Entry #8 gives Ceres a specific punishment to give the passerby. This could be the deceased's family dissuading a potential malicious passerby from even thinking about using the grave to their advantage. Another epitaph that mentions a specific deity is Catalog Entry

#17 and mentions Isis and how she is now quiet but will be angry to anyone who moves the bones or altar at this grave.

An outlier within this subgroup is Catalog Entry #14, which, instead of naming the deity and telling what they will do to passersby with malicious intent, this epitaph has a figural relief of the deity. It is perceived that this a relief of Hecate since it is of a female figure with six arms and in each holds wither a snake or a knife. The inscription has a specific request of what a passerby is not to do, "does not put manure or does not poop or does not urinate, let him encounter those things (goddesses) that are propitious, if he will have been indifferent, he will have been seen." It is implied by the figural relief that Hecate will see the person do this and potentially reap consequences on them.

The mentioning/calling to a specific deity is done in multiple ways, but still results in the same purpose. These epitaphs are asking for that specific deity to watch over the deceased's tomb and protect it from passersby with malicious intent. These epitaphs in particular follow a magical formula type structure. They call out to the deity, ask it for protection of some sort, and give a potential punishment for anyone who does not comply with what is asked.

CHILDREN

There are five epitaphs that are for children, these include Catalog Entries #2, #3, #8, #11, and #15. There is great variety in how these children are commemorated by their parents. All of them mention these epitaphs being made by the child's parents or the parents being mentioned for deeply mourning the loss of their child. For example, in #2 the inscription reads as, "the parents made the sacred tomb for their son," while in #3 the inscription reads as, "she left her father and mother miserable in mourning." They both get the point across of the parents losing a child.

Within the longer of the epitaphs for children, there is a sense of epigraphic bias when the parents describe their deceased child. For example, in #8 the inscription reads as, “Here I Bassa have been placed, a dutiful daughter, a chaste virgin, exceeding all my fellow girls in intelligence.” The parents (the perceived writers of the epitaph) are bragging about their daughter one last time in a form that is potentially seen as eternal and everlasting.

This subgroup overall is more sorrowful when looking at the inscriptions and how much work was put into them.

FIGURAL AND PORTRAIT RELIEFS

There are four epitaphs with figural and/or portrait reliefs that are most likely meant to represent the deceased’s appearance. These are Catalog Entries #3, #10, #14, and #19. These epitaphs have a range of what is included beyond the portrait relief. For example, Catalog Entry #3 includes an elaborate composition that frames the deceased portrait that includes garland, an image of a lion attacking a cornucopia with a winged Eros attempting to stop the lion, a goat-like animal attacking a bull, with different scenes appearing on each side of the pillar-like altar. On the other hand, Catalog Entry #10 is more simplistic with two frontal facing portraits, on the left a male and on the right a female that are depicting the man and his wife being commemorated in the epitaph. Catalog Entry #19 lands in between these two previous examples because while it has more relief decoration than #10, it is not as extravagant as #3. This Catalog Entry

portrays two people, the left a male and the right a female, sitting next to each other frontal facing with a table in front of them and intricate patterns seen in their clothing.[89]

An outlier within this subgroup is Catalog Entry #14. As discussed previously, this epitaph has a figural relief of Hecate rather than a portrait relief representing the deceased.

These decorative reliefs that visibly commemorate the deceased rather than solely relying on the inscription have an added layer of preserving the deceased's identity. We cannot verify that these portrait reliefs actually resemble the deceased, but they potentially hold identifying characteristics. an identifying characteristic of the person such as a hairstyle or hair type, a specific kind of clothing they wore, etc.

EPITAPH FOR MORE THAN ONE PERSON

There are three epitaphs that commemorate more than one person, these include Catalog Entries #10, #18, and #19. There are two ways these epitaphs can show they mark the grave of more than one person. The first is through the inscription. For example, Catalog Entry #18 is mostly a list of names on the multi-sided block. This epitaph is heavily weathered and eroded due to elemental exposure, but there are an estimated thirty people being commemorated on this one epitaph.

The other way epitaphs show that they commemorate more than one person is portrait reliefs (discussed previously). Catalog Entry #10 depicts the couple as well as stating their names. Catalog Entry #19 does the same, the inscription reading, "for Silvano son of Loupus Trevero, equestrian in the wing of Vocontii for thirty years, twelve at equestrian wages, and for his sister Prima, while they were living."

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[89] Catalog Entry #19's decorative relief and inscription is heavily assumed based off of an ink drawing presumably dated to the 15th century and connected to this epitaph by the Bonn - Rheinisches Landesmuseum

These epitaphs that commemorate more than one person are interesting because they show a range of why multiple people would be put on one epitaph. For Catalog Entries #10 and #19 it appears that they most likely wanted to be remembered together, either as husband and wife or as brother and sister. While on the other hand, Catalog Entry #18 had that many names on it most likely out of financial necessity. These people might have only been able to purchase one stone when they put all their funds together.

NO NAME

There are three epitaphs in the catalog that do not have names on them. Whether it is purposeful, there are no images showing that side of the object, or the object is poorly preserved and is missing the area that typically holds the name of the deceased. These three Catalog Entries are #13, #14, and #16. Catalog Entry #13 is a thin and slender rectangular block that is very direct and to the point very simply asking passersby to simply pass by. It says this by being inscribed with, "pass by this work, if I get this from you, may you live happy." It is a more pleasant way of saying stay away from this grave, unlike works seen previously (Catalog Entry #8).

Catalog Entry #14 has been analyzed previously but has not been looked at in this sense of not containing any names of the deceased. This epitaph might preside over a group of graves or an entire cemetery that could be dedicated to a family that all equally worship Hecate. This, of course, is only a theory but is probably, considering this single grave marker could have been the most they could afford.

Catalog Entry #16 is missing the top lines of the epitaph and might have originally had the name(s) of the deceased, but with the available materials it is put into this subgroup. This epitaph is inscribed with a curse that is different from the entire catalog because it not only calls upon the gods but also the Roman people. It does this by

being inscribed with, “If anyone will have harmed this altar, may he have the angry spirit of the Roman people and the will of the gods.”

This subgroup of epitaphs has more unanswered questions than the rest of the subgroups because it brings into question the main purpose of an epitaph, commemorating the identity of the deceased. Maybe there were other materials at the grave that fulfilled that purpose or are the images this catalog has of the objects not representing the entire inscription.

WISHING PASSERBY A GOOD LIFE

There are three epitaphs that wish the passerby a good life if they do not harm the grave. They include Catalog Entries #4, #5, and #13. These epitaphs convey these well wishes for passersby in different ways. Catalog Entry #4 asks the passersby to stay away from the grave but look at the epitaph because of deceased being the “bones of a man who was good, merciful, loving.” Then this epitaph says goodbye to the passersby and sends them on their way. Catalog Entry #5 approaches wishing the passersby a good life in a different way by saying that if the passerby “mix, drink, give (it) to me” they are kind, and implies having a good life. Catalog Entry #13 has been discussed previously and ends the inscription with, “may you live happy.”

This is a unique attribute when compared to other subgroups and how most protection epitaphs are aggressive in their inscriptions to keep passersby away altogether. This attribute may be the deceased’s family showing that their loved one was nice when alive and continues to be in the afterlife. This is an attribute that has more questions than answers when comparing it to the other characteristics the epitaphs in this catalog have.

HANDS

There are two epitaphs in the catalog that have reliefs of hands. They include Catalog Entries #1 and #2. Both sets of hands are outstretched palm facing up and appear to be reaching toward the sky. Neither Catalog Entry #1 nor Catalog Entry #2 have an inscription mentioning the hands. When looking at the iconography of hands related to death in ancient Rome nothing concrete appears in its meaning. There are theories that the hands are representing the deceased from the grave or that they represent the spirits of the dead. Neither of these theories can be proven.

PROTECTION AGAINST URINE

There are two epitaphs that involve urine in the inscriptions. These include Catalog Entries #7 and #14. Both epitaphs include asking passersby not to urinate on the grave. In Catalog Entry #7 it is inscribed with "let no one urinate here," and in Catalog Entry #14 it is inscribed with "does not urinate, let him encounter those things (goddesses) that are propitious." These epitaphs focus their curses around a particular action the deceased does not want at their grave. This is different from the more frequently seen curse of general protection from any kind of malicious intent from a passerby. The request not to urinate on the grave may be because a good amount of epitaphs are placed on the side of the roads and when people are travelling they most likely do not have easy access to a private toilet.

OUTLIER

Within this catalog there is one outlier that does not fit into any subgroup, Catalog Entry #12. It is written for a man who died at twenty-three and the inscription is negative in all areas from commemorating the man's identity to the curse that threatens the passersby. This epitaph's inscription reads as,

> "Unhappy, unworthily and bitterly having been subjected to by unspeakable death killed by a boot and fists, not in accordance with fate, beaten into this darkness because of this I hope that you too die, tortured by[your] evil examples and let it not be allowed to you to see the light from which you have deprived me and may you pay the penalty which you have deserved unjustly defended I console you now."

This epitaph described the deceased's brutal death and points at his attackers mainly but gives room for any other passersby. While the epitaph commemorates the deceased, it mainly focuses on how he should not be dead, and how he is unhappy he is dead.

This outlier brings light to another potential subgroup (with future studies that have an expanded catalog) where the curse is specifically targeted toward the person/people that caused the deceased harm while they were living.

Throughout the analysis and discussion of this catalog many different types of protection epitaphs have been seen. There are some that fit the general definition of a curse where the inscription could be mimicking a magical formula but they are not connected to any known formularies. Other epitaphs are more emotional within their inscriptions and how they depict the deceased. This is mostly seen within the epitaphs of children (look back to Catalog Entries # 3 and #8). Within this small catalog, there is a large variety of different protection epitaph styles that are customized to however the deceased's family see fit to commemorate and protect their loved one.

CONCLUSION

Throughout the analysis of this study's catalog and the different ways curses appear on epitaphs, the importance of studying this material remains the same: it

belonged to an underrepresented and marginalized group of people in Rome who believe in and possibly practice magic. These materials are not commonly seen within the typical modern scholarship surrounding death and especially not seen in Roman historians' work.

As a result, analyzing this material allows for study on the intersection between death and magic in this ancient Roman subculture.

The multitude of subgroups show that there was not a singular correct way to protect your deceased loved ones through their epitaph. Different families saw different types of protection as more important and that is what they chose to include on their loved one’s epitaph.

Chapter 5 - Conclusion

An examination of the epigraphic habit of invoking magical power or protection describes the attitude of this subculture of Romans to magic and death. Burials were clearly regarded as a time of special vulnerability not only for the living while mourning a loss but also for the deceased since they were embarking on their journey to the Underworld. From the perspective of the magic practitioners, tombs were an activation point at which magic could manipulate the living whether for benevolent or malevolent means. The epitaph's author sought to counteract this possibility by enhancing the protective power of the tomb so it might become a safe refuge for the deceased.

It is also key to note that without Richmond Lattimore's 1942 work, Themes in Greek and Latin Epitaphs, with his philological corpus of protection phrases seen on graves, this study would not have had a unique jumping off point.

In the etiological sense, our attempt to build a clearer image of these interrelated themes through analysis of specific word choice, the physical materials, their contextual information (geographic space, time period, etc.), and the discussion surrounding the societal views surrounding normative and non-normative behaviors. The study has shown that protection epitaphs can act as a window into niche mentalities surrounding religion and magic, for as an implicit device this catalog of epitaphs reflects the beliefs and fears of the society that created them. While these protective epitaphs help to fill out the views of the literary sources and belief-systems of the time as they were generally composed by educated persons or persons of high status, the colloquial and protective inscriptions provide a representation of the mystical world as it was understood and believed in by people within this subculture. This dataset brings light and representation to an

underrepresented group of people in the modern historian's eye. This subculture is not the typical Roman seen within modern history books.

The written words etched upon the tombstones serve as a bridge between the living and the dead, symbolizing the enduring connection between the mortal realm and the realm of the deceased. By diving into these protective epitaphs, we weave a narrative that delves into the depths of human existence, exploring the eternal quest for protection in all stages of life and thus, also, death.

Appendix – Catalog

Abbreviations:
CIL: Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum
CLE: Carmina Latina Epigraphica
TM: Trismegistos – a database that catalogs inscriptions and texts from antiquity
EDCS: Epigraphik-Datenbank Clauss/Slaby
EDR: Epigraphic Database Rome
EDH: Epigraphic Database Heidelberg
LUPA: Ubi Erat Lupa – a database focused mainly on Roman stone monuments
MQDQ: Musisque Deoque – a database for Latin poetry
USEP: U.S. Epigraphy Project
VM: Vatican Museum

Catalog Entry 1

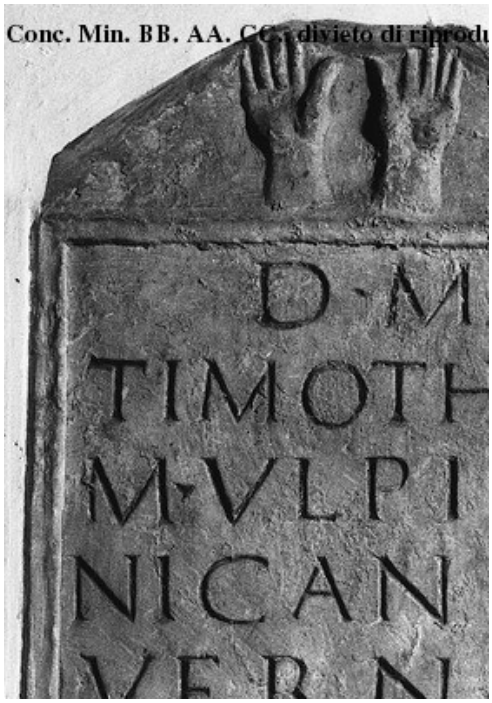
Image: 

Image Source: http://www.edr-edr.it/foto_epigrafi/immagini_uso/118/118029.jpg
Date: 2nd cent. CE (EDR)
Measurements: 23 x 34 cm (EDR)
Material: Marble (TM)
Findspot: Rome, via Appia, Vigna Moroni, today via di Porta S. Sebastiano
Current Location: Rome, Capitoline Museums, inv. NCE 1693
Latin Text:

D·M
TIMOTHEAE
M·VLPIVS
NICANOR
VERNAE

SVAE [·] F
SOL TIBI COMMENDO
QVIMANVSINTVLIT·EI

According to EDCS:
D(is) M(anibus) / Timotheae / M(arcus) Ulpius / Nicanor / vernae / suae f(ecit) / Sol tibi commendo / qui manus intulit ei

Translation:
To the spirits of the dead, For Timothea, Marcus Ulpius Nicanor made (this tomb) for his house-born slave. (Divine) Sun, I entrust to you (the person) who has laid his hands on it (the tomb).

Description: This is a tall rectangular piece topped with an asymmetrical pediment. The right side of the pediment ascends at a steeper incline than the left, creating an off-balanced angle, possibly the result of recutting. The pediment is flattened at the top. Within the pediment are two carved hands with wrists, palm side facing the viewer. The text fills the rectangular frame beneath the pediment. The frame reaches the edges of the stone. The text is centered and is the same size for the first six lines and the last two lines are more compact and smaller in size, letting more letters within those lines.
Commentary: Weird curvature on the right side of the pediment, this could be connected to recutting and potential reuse in a building program. This text is thought to have a metrical nature to it when it was read by passersby.
Sources and Bibliography: CIL VI.2 14099, EDCS15500524, TM277140, EDR118029, Lattimore 122,2, Supplementa Italica. Imagines - Roma 1 498 (Gregori, Gian Luca / Mattei, M. - 1999), Inscriptiones Latinae selectae (ILS) 2.2 8497 a (Dessau, Hermann - 1906)

Catalog Entry 2

Image:(1) 

(2) 

Image Source: Image 1, Image 2
Date: 2nd cent. CE (TM)
Measurements: 29.5 x 29.5 cm (EDR)
Material: Marble (TM)
Findspot: Roma, via Appia, vigna Moroni, oggi via di Porta S. Sebastiano
Current Location: Roma, Musei Capitolini, inv. NCE 1692
Latin Text:

D · M· S

CALLISTO · FILIO

PARENTES
//
QVISQVIS · EI · LAESIT
AVT· NOCVIT·SEVERAE
INMERENTI·DOMINE
SOL·TIBI·COMMENDO
VINDICES·EIVS·MORTEM

According to EDCS:
D(is) M(anibus) s(acrum) / Callisto filio / parentes // quisquis ei laesit / aut nocuit Severae / inmerenti domine / Sol tibi commendo / tu vindices eius mortem

Translation:
To the spirits of the dead, the parents (made) the sacred (tomb?) for their son, Callistus. Whoever damages it or harms underserving Severa, Lord Sun, to you I entrust you avenge his death.

Description: This is an oblong slightly rectangular object with an arched top. This piece has some chips and indents along the edges, but based on available images, it appears to

be mostly preserved to its original dimensions. Within the arch are two hands with wrists, palms facing towards the viewer. The creases of the palms and the joints of the fingers are articulated with thick lines incised into the stone. Beneath the imagery is the text, filling all available space on the slab with centered dots between each word. There are five lines of text. The size of text varies throughout the inscription but follows a general pattern of slight space between the letters and gradually shrinking as it gets to the lower lines. The last line is squished together and the smallest overall.
On the opposite side of the epitaph, there is a small amount of text that appears on an unknown area. There are three lines of text. The image found shows a soft-edged square with slight peaking on the top edge.
Commentary: Back of the epitaph is not mentioned in any of the databases (text-wise), EDR includes the image but does not mention the text on it. Within my best judgment from analyzing the images given, this has potential to be the back of this example. The back and front appear to be connected due to them having a similar text style.
Sources and Bibliography: EDCS15500523, TM278933, EDR121127, CIL 6,14098, Lattimore 122,1, CIL VI.2 14098 b (Bormann, Eugenius / Henzen, Wilhelm / Hülsen, Christianus - 1882), Panciera (ed.), Libitina e dintorni (Libitina 3) p. 405 no. G26 (Papi, Caterina - 2004), Supplementa Italica. Imagines - Roma 1 497 (Gregori, Gian Luca / Mattei, M. - 1999)

Catalog Entry 3

Image:

(1) 

(2) 

(3) 

(4) 

(5)  (6)  (7)

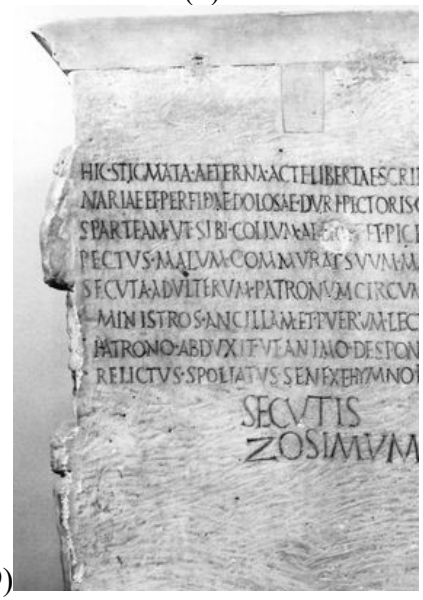
 (8)  (9) 

Image Source: Image 1, Image 2, Image 3, Image 4, Image 5, Image 6, Image 7, Image 8, Image 9
Date: 75 - 99 CE (TM)
Measurements: 102 x 63 x 51 cm (EDR)
Material: Marble (TM)
Findspot: Rome, Latium et Campania, Regio I (found & written) (TM)
Current Location: Firenze, Galleria degli Uffizi, inv. 950 (TM)
Latin Text:

DIS · MANIBUS

IVNIAE·M·F·PROCVLAE·VIX·ANN·VIII·M·XPDVMISEROS
PATREUAET·MATREM·INLVCTVR ELIQVID·FECIT·MIVNT
FVTHROCINVSSIBI--------[F]UTV·SINEFILIAE·ET·PARENTIVM·IN
DIOVISCANT·QVIDQVID[IEQEISPERFROMDIMPIEDIERPENPRI]..DEDE·TV·TI[RI·TESIT]
//
HIC·STIMATA·AETERNA·ACTHIBERTAE·SCRIPTA·SVNTNENE
MARIAEEI·PERFIVAE·DOLORSAE·DVRI·PICTORISCIAVOM·ET·RESTEM
SPARTEAM·VI·SIBI·COLLVM·AI{E}----{E}T·PICEM·CANDENTEM
PECTVS·MALVM·COMMVRATSVVM·MANVMISSACRATIS
SECVTA·ADVITERVM·PATRONVMCIRCVM·SCRIPSIT·EI
MINISTROS·ANCILLAM·ET·PVERVM·LECTO·IACENTI
PATRONO·ABDVXIT·VT·ANIMO·DESPONDERIT·SOIVS
RELICTVS·SPOLIATVS·SEN{e}XEHYMNOFEADES TIMT
SECVTIS
ZOSIMVM

According to EDR:

〈:in parte inferiore〉
Dìs Manibus

〈:in tabula〉
Iuniae M(arci) f(iliae) Proculae, vix(it) ann(is) VIII, m(ensibus) XI, d(iebus) V; miseros patrem et matrem in luctu reliquid, fecit M(arcus) Iuniu[s ---?]
Euphrosynus sibi et 〚+9?+〛 e, tu sine filiae et parentium in u[no ossa]
requ<i>escant. Quidquid nobis feceris, idem tibi speres. Mihi crede tu tibi testis [eris].

〈:in postica〉
Hic stigmata aeterna Acte libertae scripta sunt vene/
nariae et perfidae dolosae duri pectoris: clavom et restem sparteam, ut sibi collum alliget, et picem candentem,
pectus malum commurat suum. Manumissa gratis
secuta adulterum patronum circumscripsit et
ministros ancillam et puerum lecto iacenti
patrono abduxit, ut animo desponderet solus
relictus spoliatus senex. E<t> Hymno {f}fade(m) sti(g)m(a)ta
secutis
Zosimum.

Translation:

To the Spirits of the Dead
<front>
To Junia Procula daughter of Marcus, who lived 8 years, 11 months, 5 days;
She left her father and mother in mourning, Marcus Junius Euphrosynus made [this] for himself and ..... , you allow that the bones of the daughter and parents to rest together

Whatever you will have done to us you should expect the same for yourself. Trust me.
You will be your own witness.
<back>
Here are written the eternal disgraceful acts of a freedwoman,
poisoner, and treacherous, deceitful, of hard heart, a nail, and a rope made of the broom plant (sparteam) so that for herself she bind [her] neck, and burning pitch,
Her own evil chest [commurat?] [manumissacratis—manumissa "(she) having been freed" and cratis/gratis "gratuitously" or [sa]cratis "with spells"?
Having followed/attacked? she bound her adulterous patron and she drew away attendants, a maidservant, and child from the patron lying in bed patron, so that he would despair in his mind, alone, abandoned, robbed/despoiled, an old man,
With these same disgraces? having followed from the hymn?,
Zosimus (in the accusative for some reason)

Description: Tall rectangular pillar that sits vertically with ornate relief. Horned and bearded male heads facing outward are carved on the top left and right corners. Below them on the corners are reliefs of eagles. The top center of the front side has a facing portrait of a young boy with curly hair and soft facial features. This portrait is placed in a concave circle surrounded by a narrow linear frame. Below this portrait is a hanging garland that stretches from one horned head to the other. Above the garland is a relief of a lion attacking a basket of fruit /cornucopia with a winged Eros trying to stop it. Below the garland a second relief depicts a winged goat-like animal attacking a bull. Below this are two words, DIS MANIBUS. On the base of the pillar is the tabula. The first line is the biggest and centered and the rest of the text is the same size and centered.
The left side of the block continues the right side of the man's face with horns in the top right corner of this side and on the top left corner opposite of the man is a relief of a goat head with horns and beneath it in the bottom right corner is the continuation of the relief of the eagle-like bird. Beneath the goat head there is a relief of a female sphinx that sits on the corner like the goat head. There is a relief of hanging garland off of the horns of the goat and the man so it hangs in a U-shape. This serves as a separation between two reliefs that are centered on the left side of the block. The top relief is of a handled vase with a smooth bowl-like shape beneath it holding baby birds with two adult birds on either side of the vase pointing face down to the potential nest. Beneath the hanging garland is a right facing portrait relief of a male sphinx.
On the right side of the block continues the left side of the man's face with horns in the top left corner of this side and on the top right corner there is a relief of a goat head with horns. Beneath the goad head is a relief of a female sphinx. Beneath the man's head is the continued relief of an eagle-like bird. There is a relief of hanging garland off the horns of the man and goat forming a U shape that serves as a separation between reliefs in the center of the right side of the block. The relief in the top center is of a shield that is circular with a circle in the middle and beneath the shield are two birds facing downwards connected at the beaks facing each other. Beneath the hanging garland relief in the bottom center is a boar-like animal that is facing left and in a portrait view and it appears to be eating something shaped like an apple.
The back of the block has no decorative reliefs. It has ten lines of text inscribed. The text is a smaller font that spreads across the width of the block that is a consistent size and

spacing with the exception of the ninth and tenth lines that are one word each and mostly centered in their perspective line. These two lines are double the size of the lines above. The first eight lines have a centered dot in between each word.

Sources and Bibliography: EDR123124, TM279874, CIL 6,20905, CLE00095, EDCS12201586, Lattimore 124,2&3, CIL VI.3 20905 (Bormann, Eugenius / Henzen, Wilhelm / Hülsen, Christianus - 1886), Supplementa Italica. Imagines - Roma 3 3451 (Granino Cecere, Maria Grazia - 2008), Bücheler, Carmina Latina epigraphica (CLE) 1.95 (Bücheler, Franz - 1895)

Catalog Entry 4

Image: 

Image source: http://www.edr-edr.it/edr_programmi/res_complex_comune.php?id_nr=EDR134542
Date: 1st c. BCE (TM)
Measurements: 58 H x 170 L x 29 D cm (EDR)
Material: marble
Findspot: in-situ (as we know)
Current location: Appia, Rome, in-situ
Latin Text:

HOSPESP ESISTEET · HOC AD · GRVMVMA DLAEVAMSNCE · VBEI
CONTINENTVROSSA · HOMINIS · BONIMISERICORDIS · AMANTIS
PAVPER IS ROGOTEVIATOR · MONVMENTOHVIC·NIL · MALEFECERIS
CATEILIVS · SERRANI · L · EVHODVS · MARGARITARIVSDESACRA
VIA · INHOC · MONVMENTO · CONDITVSEST VIATOR · VALE

EX · TESTAMENTO ·IN·HOC· MONVMENTONEMINEM·INFERRI · NEOVE
CONDI·LICET
NISEI·EOS·LIB·OVIRVS·HOCTESTAMENTO·DEDITRIBVOVE

According to EDR:

Hospes resiste et hoc ad grumum ad laevam aspice ubei/
continetur ossa hominis boni, misericordis, amantis
pauperis. Rogo te, viator, monumento huic nil male feceris.
C(aius) Ateilius, Serrani l(ibertus), Euhodus margaritarius de Sacra
Via in hoc monumento conditus est, viator vale.
Ex testamento, in hoc monumento neminem inferri neque

condi licet nisei eos lib(ertos) quibus hoc testamento dedi tribuique

Translation:

Guest, stop your journey and look at the heap of earth to the left
Where are kept the bones of a man who was good, merciful, loving, poor
beseech thee,
traveler, do no harm to this monument.
Caius Ateilius Euhodus, freedman of the Serrani, pearl seller of the Sacred
Way is
buried in this monument
Traveler, good bye. From [the] will, it is permitted for no one to be brought
into nor be
buried except the freedmen to whom I have granted and given in this will

Description: Rectangular slab resting horizontally on brick wall. The slab has a narrow frame around the edge, and the inscription fills the interior, slightly recessed panel. Overall, the surface shows some weathering and abrasion, but the letters are for the most part legible. The right side is complete with little chipping and eroding; the both top and bottom corners on the left edge have chipping and breakage. With these lost pieces there is no text missing. The narrow frame surrounds a rectangular recessed panel on which the inscription appears. There are seven lines of text total, filling the entire panel; the characters are centered. Between the fifth and sixth lines is a purposeful gap. Based on the available photos, the characters in lines one through five lines appear slightly larger and more deeply cut than lines six and seven.

Sources and Bibliography : TM574565, CLE74.3, CIL-I.1027, CIL-VI-9545, EDR134542, Lattimore 119,1, CIL I(2).2.1 1212 (Lommatzsch, Ernest - 1918), Degrassi, Inscriptiones Latinae liberae rei publicae (ILLRP) 2 797 (Degrassi, Attilio - 1963), Inscriptiones Latinae selectae (ILS) 2.2 7602 (Dessau, Hermann - 1906), Bücheler, Carmina Latina epigraphica (CLE) 1 74 (Bücheler, Franz - 1895), CIL VI.2 9545 (Bormann, Eugenius / Henzen, Wilhelm / Hülsen, Christianus - 1882)

Catalog Entry 5

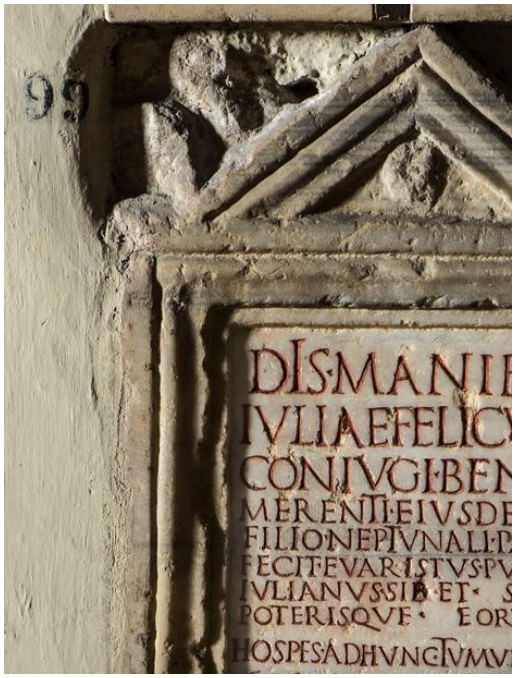
Image: 

Image Source: https://catalogo.museivaticani.va/index.php/Detail/objects/MV.7608.0.0
Date: 1st cent. CE (TM)
Measurements: 49 H x 32 W x 3.2 D cm (VM)
Material: marble (TM)
Findspot: unknown
Current Location: Vatican Museum, inv. MV.7608
Latin Text:

DIS·MANIBVS
IVLIAEFELICVIA[E]
CONIVGI·BENE
MERENTI·EIVSDEM·
FILIO·NEPTVNALI·PATER
FECIT·EVARISTVS·PVBLIC·
IVLIANVS·SIB·ET· SVIS·
POTERISQVE· EORVM
HOSPES·ADHVNC·TVMVLVM
NEMEIASOSSA·PRECANTVR
TECTA·HOMINIS·SIT·SI·GRATVS
HOMOES·MISCEBIBE·DA·MI

According to EDR:

Dis Manibus.
Iuliae Feliculâe,
coniugi bene
merenti eiusdem
filio Neptunali, pater
fecisit Evaristus, 〈:servus〉 public(us)

Iulianus sib(i) et suis
poteris-sque eorum.
hospes, ad hunc tumulum
ne meias ossa precantur
tecta hominis, sit si gratus
homo es, misce, bibe, da mi.

Translation:

To the Spirits of the Dead
Julia Felicula
Good wife
He deserves the same
to the son of Neptune, father
decided Evaristus, public servant
Julian himself and his own
their power
Guest, they beg that at this mound
you not urinate on the covered bones of a person.
But if you are a kind
person, mix, drink, give [it] to me

Description: This object is a tall rectangular slab that sits vertically within a concrete setting. The top has a triangular pediment with each side having a small scroll-like extension next to the base of the triangle. Within the pediment is recessed frame-like with a simple singular floral relief. Beneath this is a rectangular section that is recessed in steps with the inscription. The text has a total of twelve lines that mostly follow a justify alignment. This inscription's first three lines are centered and larger than the lines below. Above the first word on the eighth line there is a word inscribed above about one-third the size of the rest of the text within that line. The bottom eight lines get slightly smaller as they go down with the twelfth line being the smallest.

Sources and Bibliography: EDR126924, TM281377, Lattimore 120,1, CIL VI.1 2357 (Bormann, Eugenius / Henzen, Wilhelm - 1876), Orlandi, Pirro Ligorio, Libri delle iscrizioni latine e greche (Napoli 8) p. 134 (2009), Gionta, Epigrafia umanistica a Roma p. 77 no. 36 (Gionta, D. - 2005), Panciera (ed.), Libitina e dintorni (Libitina 3) p. 405 no. G1 (Papi, Caterina - 2004), Supplementa Italica. Imagines - Roma 2 2645 (Di Stefano Manzella, Ivan / Gregori, Gian Luca - 2003), Bollettino dei monumenti, musei e gallerie pontificie (BMMP) 20 (2000), p. 109 (Ilardi, K. - 2000), Buonocore, Camillo Massimo collezionista di antichità (Xenia antiqua. Monografie 3) p. 194 (Buonocore, Marco - 1996), Di Stefano Manzella, Index inscriptionum Musei Vaticani 1 p. 82 (Di Stefano Manzella, Ivan - 1995), Hermann-Otto, Ex ancilla natus p. 205 no. 27 (Hermann-Otto, Elisabeth - 1994),, Biagio Amata, Cultura e lingue classiche 3. III convegno di aggiornamento e di didattica (Palermo 1989) p. 391-392 (Gamberale, L. - 1993), Almar, Inscriptiones Latinae p. 116 no. 72 (Almar, Knud Paasch - 1990), Inscriptiones Latinae selectae (ILS) 2.2 8204 (Dessau, Hermann - 1906), Bücheler, Carmina Latina epigraphica (CLE) 1 838 (Bücheler, Franz - 1895)

Catalog Entry 6

Image: (1) 

(2) 

Image Source: Image 1 , Image 2
Date: 25 - 75 CE (TM)
Measurements: 78 H x 48 W x 44.5 D cm
Material: Marble
Findspot: Rome, Latium et Campania Regio I (found & written) (TM)
Current Location: Rome, Museo Nazionale delle Terme, inv. 72485 (TM)
Latin Text:

DIS·MAN
CTVLLIV·HESPER
ARAM·FECIT·SIBI·VBI
OSSA·SUA·COLCIANTVP
OVAE[SI]O·[T]ISVIOIAVE
[R]IT·AVTIND[O]EXEM[A]
[L]ITO[E]TO·EIVT[CVM]
[D]O[L]O[E]T·COL[EMEI]
[I]ONO·TEMPOREMVM
ETOVMMO[IOVVOIVE]
[TATI]N[EEREBV]MNOS
[VEITIANT]

According to EDR:

Dìs Man(ibus).
C(aius) Tullius Hesper
aram fecit sibi ubì
ossa sua coiciantur ,
quae si quis violave-
rit aut inde exeme-
rit, opto eì ut cum

dolore corporis
longo tempore vivat
et cum mortuus fue=
rit inferi eum non
recipiant

Translation:

To the Spirits of the Dead
Caius Tullius Hesper
Made an altar for himself where
Bones of him are gathered,
Which if anyone will have violated or will have taken [them] from here
I hope for him that he live with pain in his body
And when he will have died that the underworld gods not take him in

Description: Tall rectangular block with vertical decorative pillar reliefs and horizontal framing surrounding the text. Overall, the piece has little weathering and the text has good legibility. The top right corner is heavily chipped but does not interfere with any of the inscription. The piece has a very detailed decorative relief including narrow framing lines on the top and bottom of the inscription and on the left and right sides there are pillars with decorative swirls on the top imitating classical architecture. Within this overall frame, there is a heavily recessed rectangle with narrow framing lines within it that hold the text inside of it. There are twelve lines of text total, the first line is the biggest which calls the most attention and the rest of the lines are the same size. All the lines are centered with no extra space at the top or bottom that could reflect wanting to add extra text at a later date.

Sources and Bibliography: EDR071725, TM263153, CIL 6,36467, EDCS23801533, EDH028075, Lattimore 122,10, CIL VI.4.2 36467 (Hülsen, Christianus - 1902), Calabi Limentani / Degrassi, Epigrafia latina (4th ed.) p. 194 no. 24 (Calabi Limentani, Ida - 1992), Almar, Inscriptiones Latinae p. 127 no. 82 (Almar, Knud Paasch - 1990), Boschung, Antike Grabaltäre aus den Nekropolen Roms (Acta Bernensia 10) p. 108 no. 843 (Boschung, Dietrich - 1987), Museo Nazionale Romano. Le sculture 1.2 p. 11 no. 9 (Lombardi, A. L. / Bertinetti, Marina - 1981), Candida, Altari e cippi nel Museo Nazionale Romano p. 68 no. 28 (Candida, B. - 1979), Helbig, Führer durch die öffent. Sammlungen klassischer Altertümer in Rom (4th ed.) 3 p. 294 no. 2367 (Helbig, Wolfgang - 1969), Barrow, A selection of Latin inscriptions no. 158 (Barrow, R. H. - 1934), Inscriptiones Latinae selectae (ILS) 2.2 8184 (Dessau, Hermann - 1906), Année épigraphique 1900 4 (1900 [1901])

Catalog Entry 7

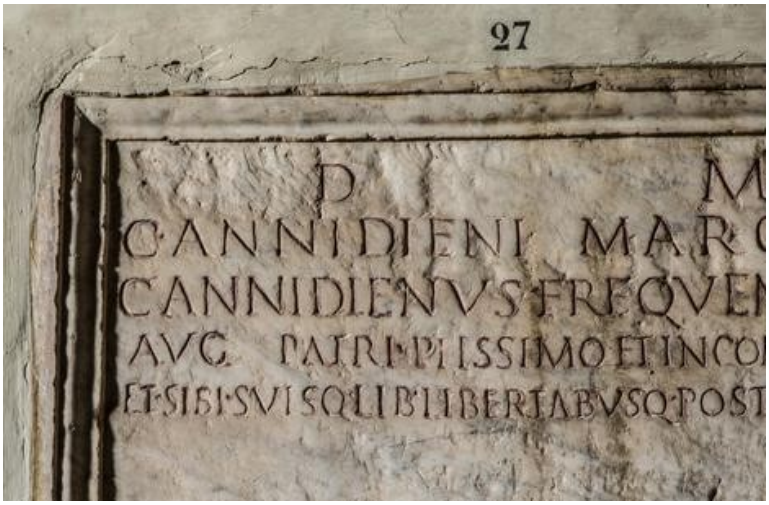
Image: 

Image Source: https://catalogo.museivaticani.va/index.php/Detail/objects/MV.8953.0.0
Date: 151 CE (EDR)
Measurements: 56 H x 100 W cm
Material: marble
Findspot: unknown
Current Location: Rome, Vatican Museum, MV.8953 (VM)
Latin Text:

D M
CANNIDIENI MARCELLI
CANNIDIENVSFREQVENS EVOC
AVC PATRI·PILSSIMOETINCOMARABILI
ET·SIBI·SVISQUBILBERTABVSQ·POSTERISQ EOR

VIPIAEMLIBDMOTSI·DIS·MANIB·NEQVIS HICVRINA
FACIAT EX VIS·O NVTRICIS

According to EDR:

D(is) M(anibus)

C(ai) Annidieni Marcelli,

C(aius) Annidienus Frequens evoc(atus)

Aug(usti) patri piissimo et incomparabili

et sibi suisq(ue) lib(ertis) libertabusq(ue) posterisq(ue) eor(um),

Ulpiae M(arci) lib(ertae) Dmoidi Dis Manib(us) ne quis hic urina(m)

faciat, ex viso nutricis.

Translation:

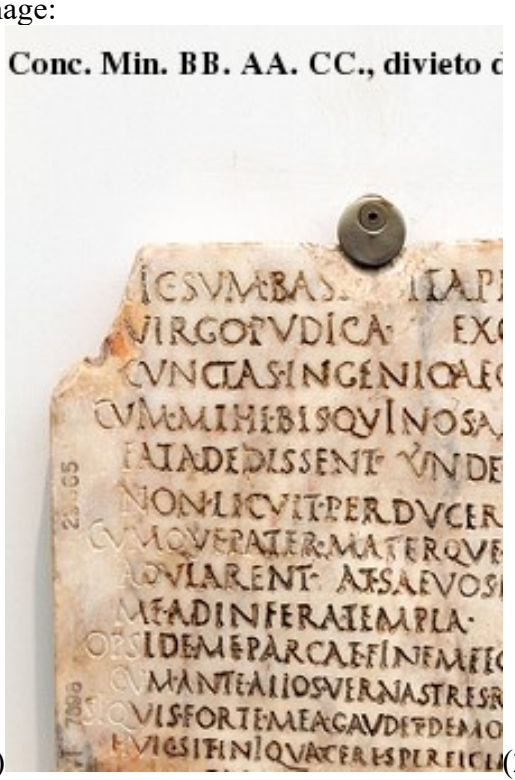
To the Spirits of the Dead
for (the sacred memory of) Caius Annidienus Marcellus
Caius Annidienus Frequens summoned
for the most dutiful and unequaled father of Augustus
and for himself and his freedmen and freedwomen and the descendants of them /
for the underworld gods, for Ulpia Dmois, freedwoman of Marcus, (by the Spirits of the Dead)
let no one urinate here, out of the sight of the nurse

Description: Long rectangular slab sitting horizontally within a setting of concrete, most likely within a wall as a secondary placement. The slab has a framing of narrow lines around the edges that recess quickly. This piece is slightly bumped. The framing leads to a flat plain where the inscription is placed. The inscription is left-aligned with different sizes of text with a pattern of largest at the top graduating to smaller on the bottom. There are six lines of text with the first line consisting of *DM* and the text is centered with a large space between the two letters. Beneath the fifth line there is a purposefully large space between it and the sixth line. Within the first line there are obvious abrasions that are potentially scrubbing of past text to the left of *D* and three lines the height of the text to the left of *M*.

Sources and Bibliography: EDR183891, TM571284, CIL 6,03413, EDCS19000498, Lattimore 120,2, CIL VI.1 3413 (Bormann, Eugenius / Henzen, Wilhelm - 1876), Inscriptiones Latinae selectae (ILS) 2.2 8203 (Dessau, Hermann - 1906)

Catalog Entry 8

Image:

(1) 

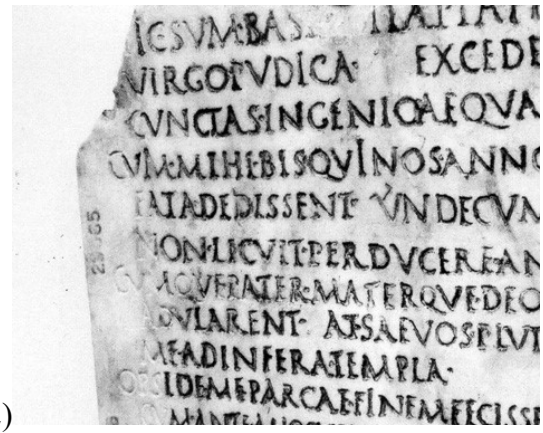
(2) 

Image Source: Image 1 , Image 2
Date: 51 - 100 CE (EDR)
Measurements: 29.4 H x 29.4 W x 2.5 D cm (EDR)
Material: Marble
Findspot: Rome, via Salaria, vigna Nari
Current Location: Rome, Museo Nazionale delle Terme, inv. 29365 (TM)
Latin Text:

[H]IC·SVM·BAS[S]---[I]TAPIA·F[I]
VIRGORVDICA· EXCEDE[N]---
CVNCTAS·INGENICAEQVALIS
CVM·MIHI·BISQVINOSANNOS·MEA
[F]AIADEDISSENT· VNDECVMVM·MI
NON·LICVIT·PERDVCEREA·ANNVM
CVMOVI·PATER·MATERQVE·DEOS·PROME
ADVLARENT· AT·SAEVOS·P·LVIORAIVIT
MEADINFERA·TEMPLA·
OPSIDEM[E]PARCAI·FINEM[EE]CISSE·VIDENTVR
CVM·ANTE·ALIOS·VERNASTRES·RAPVER[E]MIHI
SIQVIS·FORTE·MEA·GAVDE[P]DEMORTE·INIQUVA·
HVIC·SIFINIQVACERI·SPIREICIATQVEFM[A]E
CAECINIAE·SEXF·BASSAE

According to EDR:

Hìc sum Bassa sita, pia filia,
virgo pudìca excedens
cunctas ingenio aequalìs.
Cum mihi bis quìnós annos mea
fata dedissent, úndecumum me
non licuit perducere annum,
cumque pater materque deos pro me
adularent, at saevos Pluto rapuit
me ad infera templa.
Opside me Parcae finem fecisse videntur,
cum ante alios vernas tres rapuere mihì.
Sì quis forte mea gaudet de morte inìqua,
huic sit inìqua Ceres perficiatque fame.
Caeciniae Sex(ti) f(iliae) Bassae.

Translation:

Here I Bassa have been placed, a dutiful daughter, a chaste virgin,
Exceeding all my fellow girls in intelligence.
When my fates had given me twice five years,
It was not permitted that I pass through the (my) eleventh year,
Although my father and mother were worshiping the gods for me,
But the savage Pluto seized me down to the temples of Underworld.
With me as a hostage the Fates seemed to have made and end
Since before me they snatched away three other house-born slaves
If anyone by chance rejoices in my unjust death,
May Ceres be unjust to him and finish him with hunger.
To Caecinia Bassa daughter of Sextus.

Description: Square slab of marble with fourteen lines of text that is mostly centered on the tablet. Overall, the surface shows some weathering but the letters are mostly legible. Each of the corners of the slab are missing, with the top two corners missing text. The text missing was able to be recovered by context clues by epigraphers. There is no decoration on this piece. The fourteen lines are mostly centered, the first three lines are slightly bigger in text size and the most centered. Lines four through nine are slightly smaller than the first three and lean slightly with them rising higher on the left. Lines ten through fourteen are the smallest and are also leaning slightly with them rising higher on the left.

Sources and Bibliography: EDR107980, TM273970, CIL 6,07898, EDCS18700323, Lattimore 123,11, CIL VI.2 7898 (Bormann, Eugenius / Henzen, Wilhelm / Hülsen, Christianus - 1882), ZPE 205 (2018), p. 96 (2018), Friggeri e.a. (ed.), Terme di Diocleziano. La collezione epigrafica p. 554-555 no. IX, 14 (Limón, Maria - 2012), Fernàndez, Poesia epigrafica latina 1 p. 489 (Fernàndez, C. - 1998), Bücheler, Carmina Latina epigraphica (CLE) 2 1058 (Bücheler, Franz - 1897), Phillips, Richard. "A Prayer for Justice on the Epitaph of Caecinia Bassa (CIL VI 7898)," ZPE 205 (2018) 96-101.

Catalog Entry 9

Image: 

Image Source: https://cil.bbaw.de/ace/resources/PH/0005001-0010000/PH0005777.jpg
Date: 2nd cent. CE
Measurements: unknown
Material: Marble
Findspot: unknown spot in Rome
Current Location: Lido di Camaiore (Lucca), proprietà privata (già Roma, Hotel Villa Florence)
Latin Text:

D · M · S
I·VBI·FEIICIS·HIC
SVPIVS·POSITVS·EST
MONEO·TE·IECTIS·[TIT]
TERIS·NECONIEMNS
ET·VELIS·TITIVM·MO
VEREET·CORPORI·IN
IVRIAM·FACERE·SI
OVIS·AVTEM·SIBI·AD
MISERIT·NON·BONO
SVOFECERIT·ET·SVPER[O]S
ET·INFE--·TRAT[O]S
HABEAT·LECTOME
RVPRO[F]VNDE

According to EDR:

D(is) M(anibus) s(acrum)

L(uci) Vibi Felicis. Hic
suptus positus est.
Moneo te lectis lit=
teris, ne contemnas
et velis titulum mo=
vere et corpori in=
iuriam facere. Si
quis autem sibi ad=
miserit, non bono
suo fecerit et superos
《et inferos iratos》
《habeat. Lecto me》 =
《ru(m) profunde.》

Translation:

To the Spirits of the Dead
Lucius Vibi Felicis
he lies beneath here
I warn you with chosen letters,
not to treat (this tomb) with contempt,
and be disposed to move it and do harm to the body.
but if anyone will grant access to himself
he will not have done it for his good
and let him encounter angry gods both above and below.
pour out wine on my bed.

Description: Tall rectangular slab sitting vertically within a setting of concrete that suggests its within a secondary placement. This piece has indents and chips along the right edge but does not interrupt or cause any of the known text to be lost. There are fourteen lines of text with the bottom three lines of text having some damage, including there being a thin chip of text off the twelfth line to the right of center. These three lines also appear darker or to have been inscribed deeper than the other lines above. The fourteenth line has a dent in the center that runs vertically from the top of the line to the bottom edge of the piece. The text is centered, with dots centered in the line in-between each word.

Sources and Bibliography: EDR186342, CIL 6,36537, CLE02164, EDCS23801601, Lattimore 122,8, CIL 06, 36537, cfr. p. 3920, ILS 8198, E. Engström, Carmina Latina Epigraphica, Göteborg 1912, pp. 142-143, nr. 415, CLE 2164, G. Sanders, Bijdrage tot de studie der latijnse metrische grafschriften van het heidense Rome: de begrippen "Licht" en "Duisternis" en verwante themata, Bruxelles 1960, p. 62, con traduzione in olandese delle rr. 4-5 e 13-14, Bull. Comm. Arch. Rom., 90, 1985, p. 274 (M.G. Granino Cecere), https://www.mqdq.it/textsce/CE|appe|1174, C. Fernández Martínez, Poesía epigráfica latina II, Madrid 1999, p. 335, nr. 2164, con traduzione in spagnolo, Cfr. Libitina e dintorni (Libitina 3), Roma 2004, p. 407, G68 (C. Papi)

Catalog Entry 10

Image: 

Image Source: Image 1 , Image 2
Date: 51-100 CE (EDCS)
Measurements: 156 H x 56 W x 26 D cm (LUPA)
Material: Stone (TM)
Findspot: Patavium, Padova, Venetia et Histria Regio X (TM)
Current Location: Padova. Museo Civico agli Eremitani, inv. 70 (LUPA)
Latin Text:

C·SEMPRONIVS
Q·F·PRIMVS·VIV
OS·F·SIB·ET·VXORI·
CLODIAE·SECVND
EI·O·SEMPRONIO
[T]ERTIO·FRATRE[R]VO
[I]N·F·BXXXVI·RE[I]
[R]·XXVI·ILLI·DI
OS·IRATOS·OVC

[P]·OMI[R]CON[V]T·[O]
QVI[P]L[VE]O[MEVIOR]
[VIM·ARIT]

According to LUPA and MQDQ:

C(aius) Sempronius
Q(uinti) f(ilius) Primus viv=
os f(ecit) sib(i) et uxori
Clodiae Secunda(e)
Et Q(uinto) Sempronio
Tertio, fratri suo.
In f(ronte) p(edes) XXXVI, ret(ro)
p(edes) XXVI. Illi de=
os iratos quo=
s omis colunt, si
quis deo ṣẹpụlcrọ
〈:quid?〉 ṿiolarit .

Translation:

Caius Sempronius Primus
son of Quintus while living made (this) for himself and (his) spouse
Clodia Secunda
and for Quintus Sempronius Tertius
his brother.
36 feet across in front and
26 feet in back
let those encounter angry gods, all the ones whom they worship
if anyone will have violated anything concerning (the gods and) the tomb

Description: Tall rectangular slab resting vertically, but with not enough diameter to stand by itself. The slab has a relief sculpture on the top that shows frontal portraits of the couple the grave represents. These reliefs are centered within an arched rectangular alcove. Overall, the surface shows some weathering and abrasion, but the letters are mostly legible. The left edge has chips going down it and the features of the relief portraits have heavier abrasion on areas that poke out more, i.e. their noses. There are eleven lines of text total, they fill the entire panel beneath the relief and the text is mostly centered. The first seven lines of text are more compact and smaller in text size. The rest of the lines are not as level across, bigger text size and more spacious between the letters.
Commentary: The translation has variation to its meaning due to the weathering and potentially missing words (that are being supplied here in theory) that would help complete an unvaried translation.
Sources and Bibliography: EDR178691, CIL 5,03034, EDCS04202081, LUPA14652, TM557418, Lattimore 123,2, CIL V.1 3034 (Mommsen, Theodor - 1872), Bücheler, Carmina Latina epigraphica (CLE) 1 199 (Bücheler, Franz - 1895), SupplIt, 28, 2016, pp.

250-252, ad no. (MS Bassignano), G. Masaro, Metric and affective inscriptions of the X regio augustea, Canterano 2017, pp. 305-309, no. 76

Catalog Entry 11

Image: 

Image Source: http://www.edr-edr.it/edr_programmi/view_img.php?id_nr=140328
Date: 1st cent. CE
Measurements: 50.5 H x 43.5 W cm (EDR)
Material: Marble (TM)
Findspot: Rome, via Appia, Vigna Codini , third columbarium (wall D, row II/III, niche 2) (in-situ) (EDR)
Current location: in situ

Latin Text:

HILARVS AFRICANI·FILIVS
AVGVERNA·ADIVTOR·
ARATIONIBVS·SORORI
SVAE·AMPLIATAE·QVEVIXIT·
MENSIBVS·XI·DIEBVS·XXIII·
DESVO·SE·VIVO·FECIT·ET·SIBI·ET·
SVIS·POSTERISQVE·EORVM·HVIC·
SVIS·POSTERISQVE·EORVM·HVIC·
OSSVARIO·DOLVS·MALVS·ABESTO·
QVOD·SIQVIS·ADVERSVS·EA·Q·S·S·SVNT
FECERIT·INFERET·FISCO·DOMINI·N·
[TIS] VIGINTI·MILLIA·NVMMVM·

According to EDR:

Hilarus Africani filius
Aug(usti) verna, adiutor
a rationibus, sorori
suae Ampliatae que vixit
mensibus XI, diebus XXIII
de suo se vivo fecit et sibi et
suis posteriorisque eorum. Huic
ossuario dolus malus abesto,
quo si quis adversus q(uae) s(upra) s(cripta) sunt

fecerit inferet fisco domini n̄(ostri)
((sestertium)) viginti millia nummum ((palma))

Translation:

Hilarus, son of Africanus,
Home-born enslaved person of Augustus,
assistant to the clerk of accounts,
made this from his own money, while still alive
for his sister Ampliata, who lived
11 months, 23 days,
from his own money, while still alive, made (this, i.e. the tombstone)
and for himself and for his own(family?) and for their descendants.
Let evil deceit stay away from this ossuary.
But if anyone will have acted against the things which have been written above,
he will pay to the fund of our master 20,000 sestertii.

Description: Long rectangular slab sitting horizontally with narrow framing lines surrounding the text within a setting of concrete that could suggest a secondary placement. It has a long crack across the bottom at a slant that is higher on the left side and lower on the right. This crack then breaks into a second, smaller crack on the right end and it quickly slant up to almost the edge of the right side. The edge of the piece is fully framed by two striped recessed lines. The inscription is all centered. The text size decreases slightly with each line down purposefully. The twelve lines of text are centered dots between each word. Beneath the last line of text, there is a line of space before the framework described previously occurs.

Sources and Bibliography: CIL 6,05305, EDCS18800441, TM571983, EDR140328, Lattimore 120,3, CIL VI.2 5305 (Bormann, Eugenius / Henzen, Wilhelm / Hülsen, Christianus - 1882), Libitina and its surroundings (Libitina 3), Rome 2004, p. 385, E8 (C. Caruso); p. 393, F8 (GL Gregori)

Catalog Entry 12

Image: 

Image Source: http://www.edr-edr.it/edr_programmi/view_img.php?id_nr=071792&lang=en
Date: 2nd c. CE (TM)
Measurements: 34.5 H x 25 W x 2.5 D in (USEP)
Material: Marble (USEP)
Findspot: Rome, Corso d'Italia, near church of the Discalced Carmelites
Current Location: Baltimore, The Johns Hopkins University, inv. MD.BALT.JHU.L.81
Latin Text:

P·GRATTIVS·SPI
COL·CELER
HIC·EGONVNCIACEO·GRATTIVS
INFELIX·SV(B)VEGMINE·TERRAI
BA(R)BA·DEPOISITA·PERAGENS
TIRIVM·ET·VICENSIMVMANNVM
INFELIX·IN(NG)N(E)· SVBIECTVS
ACERBE·M[O]--[R]TENETANDA
OCCISVS·CAI[C]--ET·MANIBVS·EXTRA
FATVM·PRO[E]RVSVSINHAS·TINEBRAS
HOC·O[M]O·MORIARE·MALIS· EX
IMP[LI]S·[C]RVCITVS ET·IPSE
NECTEN[V]NC·LICEAT·QVO·MI
PRIVA[S]TI·LVMEN·VIDERE
ET·TV·DESROENAS·QVASMERV[I]---
DEFENSVS · INIQV[E]---
VOS·[NEVECCONS]-------

According to EDR:

P(ublius) Grattius Sp(uri) f(ilius)
Col(lina) Celer.
Hìc ego nunc iaceo Grattius
infelix sub tegmine terrae
barba deposita peragens
tertium et vìcensimum annum
infelix indigne subiectus
acerbe mo--r te nefanda,
occìsus calce et manibus, extra
fatum protrusus in has tenebras
hoc opto moriare malis ex=
emplìs cruciatus et ipse
nec te nunc liceat quo me
prìvastì lumen videre
et tu des poenas quas meruist[i]
defensus inìque
vos nunc ̣c̣ọṇṣ[olor ---]

Translation:

Publius Grattius, son of Spurius,
Collina Celer.
Here I now lie Grattius
unhappy under the roof of the earth
With beard having been, passing through
the third and twentieth year,
Unhappy, unworthily and bitterly having been subjected
to by unspeakable death
killed by a boot and fists, not in accordance with
fate, beaten into this darkness
Because of this I hope that you too die, tortured by[your] evil examples
and let it not be allowed to you to see the light from which you have deprived me
And may you pay the penalty which you have deserved
unjustly defended
I console you now

Description: Rectangular slab sitting vertically but without enough diameter to allow it to sit up by itself, but is not set within anything. The slab has no decoration but text running from the top to the bottom centered. Overall, the surface has light weathering but the inscription is legible. This piece is not complete, it was broken into more than four pieces. The four pieces that remain form the majority of the epitaph. The top third of the piece is intact. There is a vertical break down the center of the bottom section with the right side intact and the left cracked into two pieces. These two pieces are roughly the

same size split horizontally. The bottom edge starts on the left flat and then goes to the right diagonally which is where we lose text. There is a large hole in the center from the breakage and the bottom of the piece is missing including the entire bottom edge and also some of the text. There are an estimated total of eighteen lines all centered. The first line is the largest and the second line is slightly smaller. In between line two and three there is a purposeful gap. Lines four through eighteen are all centered and slightly smaller than line three with consistent spacing and are level across the slab.
Commentary: The diameter can be assumed too thin due to the found image laying it down, but could also be due to the major breakage this piece has encountered.
Sources and Bibliography: EDR071792, TM263192, CIL 6,38425, CLE1948, EDCS22600298, EDH032712, Lattimore 125,1, Année épigraphique 1901 164 (Cagnat, René / Besnier, Maurice - 1901 [1902]), Sanders, Bijdrage tot de studie der Latijnse metrische grafschriften van het heidense Rome p. 117, 175 (1960), Année épigraphique 1901 p. 41 [p. 103 - 164] descr. (Cagnat, René / Besnier, Maurice - 1901 [1902]), Coloros, 34, 1936, pp. 108-109 (H. Armini), G. Sanders, Bijdrage tot de studie der latijnse metrische grafschriften van het heidense Rome: de begrippen "Licht" en "Duisternis" en verwante Themata, Brussel 1960, pp. 117 and 175, Helikon, 3, 1963, p. 298, no. 67 (H. Krummery), Misc. Gr. Rom., 5, 1977, p. 364 (F. Barbieri), Epigraphica, 41, 1979, p. 165 (MP Billanovich), Invig. Luc., 12, 1990, p. 249 (M. Massaro), J. Bodel - S. Tracy, Greek and Latin inscriptions in the USA: a checklist, Rome 1997, p. 72, G. Forni, The Roman tribes, 2, Rome 1999, p. 619, no. 245, Cf. C. Cupitò, The territory between the via Salaria, the Aniene, the Tiber and the via Salaria Vetus: Municipio II, Rome 2007, p. 67, tab. 16., From the municipality to the court. La renovación de las elites romanos, Sevilla 2012, pp. 140-141, ftn. 7 (D. Fasolini), See Chiron, 43, 2013, pp. 141 and 182, nr. 154 (U. Ehmig), HD032712 (A. Scheithauer), http://usepigraphy.brown.edu/projects/usep/inscription/MD.Balt.JHU.L.81/, http://www.mqdq.it/textsce/CE|ce|1948

Catalog Entry 13

Image:

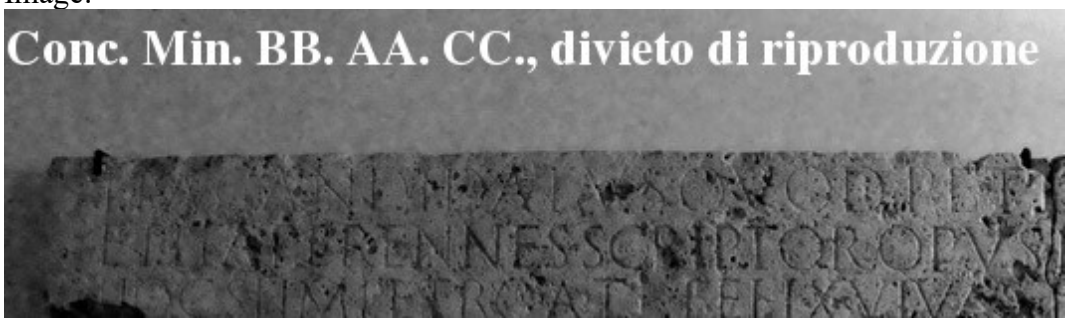


Image Source: http://www.edr-edr.it/edr_programmi/view_img.php?id_nr=122291&lang=en
Date: 27 BCE - 14 CE (EDR)
Measurements: 31.5 H x 250.5 W x 10 D cm (EDR)
Material: Stone (TM)
Findspot: Narni, Italy, Umbria, Regio VI (found & written) (TM)
Current Location: Narni (Terni), Museo Eroli (EDR) (no inv. #)
Latin Text:

[ITAC]ANIDATA(M)SOVODRE
ETITAP[E]RENNESSCRIPTOPVSHOCPRAE(T)ERI
[H]OCSNM[R]ETROAT-FELIXVIV[A]-ISEN[EVALE]

According to EDR:

Ita candidatus quod petit fiat tuus /
et ita perennes scriptor opus hoc praeteri /
hoc si impetro a te felix vivas bene vale

Translation:

So let the candidate which he seeks become yours
And so the perpetual writer pass by this work
If I get this from you, may you live happy. Farewell

Description: Long narrow rectangular block with no decoration sitting horizontally. This piece has chipping and intents along the edges and has weathering and abrasion that makes the text hardly legible. The chipping has caused some loss of the letters but has not caused total loss of its text. There are three lines of text, all centered and all the same size and spacing. The text covers the surface with no indication of any extra text missing or running out of room while inscribing.

Sources and Bibliography: EDR122291, TM288383, EDCS21500049, CIL 11,0426, CLE00194, Lattimore 125,2, CIL XI.2.1 4126 (Bormann, Eugenius - 1901), Fernández Martínez e.a. (ed.), Ex officina. Literature epigráfica en verso p. 158 (2013), Manacorda / Mancini (ed.), Museo della città in palazzo Eroli a Narni p. 206-207 no. 30 (Manacorda, D. / Mancini, F. F. - 2012), Bücheler, Carmina Latina epigraphica (CLE) 1 194 (Bücheler, Franz - 1895)

Catalog Entry 14

Image: 

Image Source: http://lupa.at/9660
Date: 1st - 3rd cent. CE (TM)
Measurements: 46 H x 30 W x 11 D cm
Material: Marble (TM)
Findspot: Salona, Croatia
Current Location: unknown
Latin Text:

QUISQ INTOVICO S TFRCVS NONPOST
ERIT·AVT·NONCACAVERITAVC·NONM[E]
--AVERIT -- HABEAT· ILIAS· PROPITIAS
SI NECIET [E] IT VIDERIT

According to LUPA:

quisq(ue) in eo vico stercus non posu-
erit aut non cacaverit aut non m-
iaverit habeat illas propitias
si neglexerit viderit.

Translation:

whoever in this place
does not put manure or does not poop or does not urinate,
let him encounter those things (goddesses) that are propitious,
if he will have been indifferent,
he will have been seen.

Description: Tall rectangular block that sits vertically with a larger crack through the middle. It is heavily bumped, with a through and through crack running across the

horizontal middle. The torso of the relieved figure is missing due to lack of conservation. There is a heavily recessed relief with a profiled frame, standing three-headed and six-armed with a polos and wearing a long chiton, holding a snake or knife from each hand. This relief is sectioned off by a framing of striped recesses imitating a picture frame. There are four lines of text below centered across the entire length of the piece with dots between each word.

Commentary: This inscription does not vividly mention Hecate, but from other known imagery of Hecate's depiction it can determined that the deity being referenced here is Hecate.

Sources and Bibliography: EDCS27500051, TM184609, CIL 3,01966, LUPA9660, Lattimore 121,5, CIL III.1 1966 (Mommsen, Theodor - 1873), Noll, Die griechischen und lateinischen Inschriften der Wiener Antikensammlung (2nd ed.) 264 (Noll, Rudolf - 1986)

Catalog Entry 15

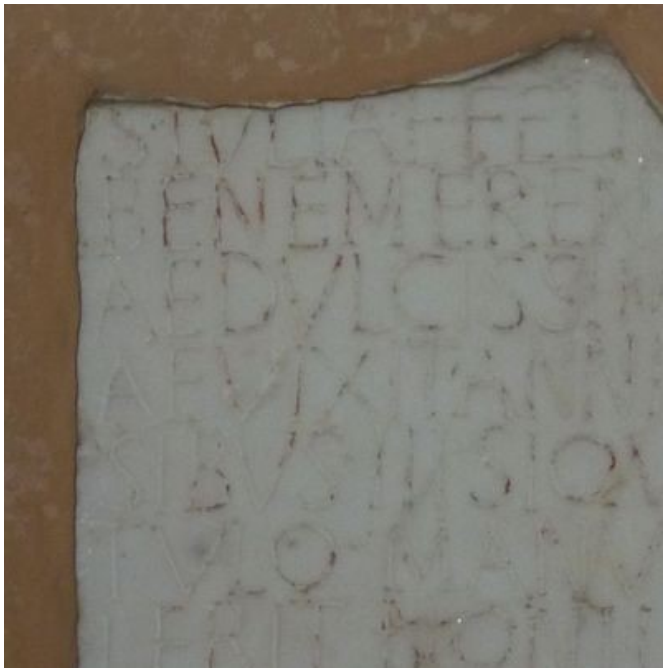
Image: 

Image Source:
https://db.edcs.eu/epigr/bilder.php?s_language=en&bild=$CIL_06_20459.jpg
Example: Lattimore 123, 4
Date: 50 - 99 CE (TM)
Measurements: 28.5 H x 35.5 W x 2.5 D cm (EDR)
Material: Marble (TM)
Findspot: Rome, via Appia, Vigna Cantoni, Monumentum Volusiorum, via Appia Antica (EDR)
Current Locationt: Vatican, Museo Vaticani, Lapidario Profano ex Lateranense, Z, 3v, inv. 25949
Latin Text:

S[T]VLIAE·[E]ELI[L]------
BENEMERENT[I]-----
AEDVLCISSIMA-----
AEVIXITANNISX----
SIBVS[II] SIQVIS[E]
TVLO MANVSINTV
LERIT [M]ONILLVNC
RECIPIATTELLVS

According to EDR and EDCS:

Dis Manibu[s]
Felicis, v(ixit) m(ensibus) VIII.
Volussiae Cheone Corneliae 〈:servant〉
posuit filio suo carissimo

Si quis huhic ammuerit iendem
dolorem experiscatur quem ego
experta sum.

Translation:

To the Spirits of the Dead
Of Felix. He lived eight months
Volussia Cheone Cornelia
he put his dearly beloved son
if whoever this
I who pain
Is to be tested

Translation of text derived from the image alone:

To […],
Well-deserving, most charming,
[she] lived 10 years, two months,
if anyone […] will have laid hands on here,
let the earth take [him].

Description: This is a square slab with not enough diameter to stand upright. The slab is missing significant pieces that include text. The top edge of the slab is missing and it forms a slight peak to the right of center and then slopes down forming the right edge since the top right corner is gone. Which means text is missing from lines one through five on the right edge.. The bottom right corner is missing but it does not interfere with any text within the inscription. This is a white stone slab with eight lines of text that is consistent in size and spacing. The inscription appears to have faded red ink or paint mostly chipped away from possible weathering due to its exposure to the elements.
Commentary: The first Latin text is my own doing with help solely from the image provided to the best of my knowledge. The text I have derived from the image does not fully and coherently match the text found on various databases.
Sources and Bibliography: EDR141485, TM573059, EDCS18301031, CIL 6,07308; ILS 8186; Lattimore 123,4; M. Buonocore, Slaves and freedmen of the Volusi Saturnini. The inscriptions of the columbarium on the ancient Appian Way, Rome 1984, pp. 138-139, no. 108, with photos on plate. XLV, fig. 167; See Libitina and its surroundings (Libitina 3), Rome 2004, p. 405, G8 (C. Papi);
See MT Raepsaet - Charlier, Prosopographie des femmes de l'ordre sénatorial, Louvain 1987, p. 653, no. 836

Catalog Entry 16

Image: 
Image Source: https://cil.bbaw.de/ace/resources/PH/0000001-0005000/PH0003122.jpg
Date: 2nd cent. CE
Measurements: 29 x 37 cm
Material: Marble
Findspot: Rome, S. Benedetto in Piscinula
Current Location: Urbino, Palazzo Ducale, Museo Archeologico Lapidario, Pianterreno, specchio XXII, inv. 41095
Latin Text:

--[Q]VISHANC AI--
[L]AWERITHABEAT
GENIVMIRA(I)VM
POPVLIROMANI
[E]TNVMINADIVO
R[VM]

According to EDR:

[si] quis hanc ar[am] /
laeserit, habeat /
genium iratum /
populi Romani /
et numina divo/rum

Translation:

if anyone will have harmed this altar,
let him encounter the angry spirit
of the Roman people
and the divine power of the gods

Description: Long rectangular slab sitting horizontally, but without enough diameter to sit up by itself. This piece is heavily bumped with the top left, top right, and bottom left corner completely missing. The top left and top right corners are deep enough within the body of the inscription to cause missing text, but the bottom left corner is only missing the framing detail that surrounds the inscription. The bottom right corner is slightly

rounded due to erosion. The text is faintly inscribed and has minimal legibility due to abrasion and exposure to the elements. The edges of the inscription have two lines recessed around creating a frame and then a plain of mostly smooth surface with the text. The six lines of text are centered, with no spaces between the words.

Sources and Bibliography: EDR159661, CIL 6,29944, EDCS17202040, Lattimore 122,5, ILS 3680, M. Luni - G. Gori, 1756-1986. The Archaeological Museum of Urbino, I. History and presentation of the Fabretti and Stoppani collections, Urbino 1986, pp. 190, 1 and 193, with photos, Libitina and surroundings (Libitina 3), Rome 2004, p. 406, G54 (C. Papi),
http://www.culturaitalia.it/opencms/opencms/system/modules/com.culturaitalia_stage.liberologico/templates/museid/viewItem.jsp?language=it&id=oai%3Aculturaitalia.it%3Amuseiditalia-work_93037

Catalog Entry 17

Image: 

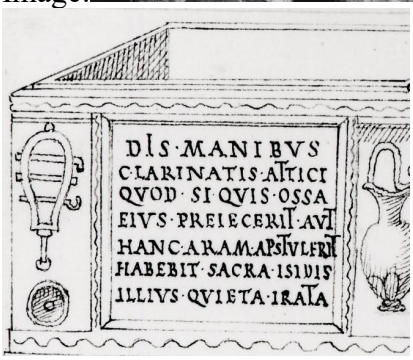


Image Source: Image 1 , Image 2
Date: 2nd cent. CE
Measurements: 23 x 34.5 x 27 cm
Material: Marble
Findspot: unspecified spot in Rome
Current Location: Roma, Musei Capitolini, inv. NCE 1712
Latin Text:

----------S
----------[CI]TICI
---------- SIQVISOSSA
---- SPREIECERITAVI
..ANCARAMAPSTVIERIT
HABEBIT·SACRAISIDIS
ILLIVS·QVIETA·IRATA

According to EDR:

Dis Manibus
C(ai) Larinatis Attici,
quod si quis ossa
eius preiecerit aut
hanc aram apstulerit ,

habebit sacra Isidis
illius quieta irata.

Translation:

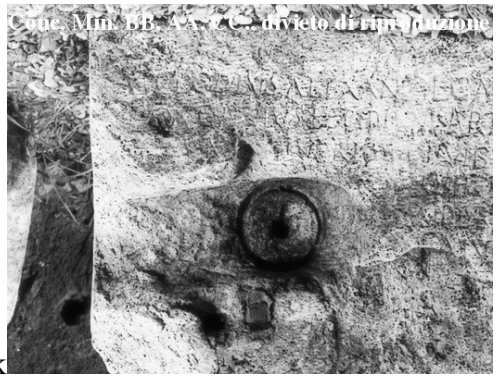
To the spirits of the Dead,
(sacred memory) of Gaius Larinas Atticus,
but if anyone will have thrown his bones for it
or will have taken away this altar,
let him encounter the quiet,
angry rites of that well-known Isis.

Description: Long rectangular slab sitting horizontally with decorative relief on both sides of the centered text. This object appears to be set up on top of a concrete setting that suggests it was found in a secondary placement. This piece is missing a large chunk of the surface layer that takes up about one fourth of the total space. This missing piece creates an asymmetrical W-shape starting a small space to the right of the top left corner and spans across ending a quarter of the way left from the right top corner. There is rectangular space on either side of the relief frame that runs from the top to bottom of each side. These spaces hold a relief image, on the left side it has a circle at the bottom with a line centered on top that connects to an oval that is squared off at the bottom with three horizontal lines running through the oval shape. The right side has a vase shape with an outlined long arch coming out of the top. In between the relief images, the frame containing the inscription begins, it has three layers going inwards to the text. The outermost frame has an inscribed line that has repetitive waves going along it, the middle and innermost frames are the same with them having a straight line recessed within each. The seven texts are centered, the lines all slightly tilt diagonally with the left side slightly higher than the right.
Commentary: There is a drawing of the piece that makes it appear to be a hollowed box on a setting of some kind, this provides evidence pointing toward it being a cinerary urn. There appears to be no decorative reliefs of any of the now four sides with the top of the piece open and revealing the hollowed space.
Sources and Bibliography: EDR121590, TM279135, CIL 6,21129, Lattimore 122,3, CIL VI.3 21129 (Bormann, Eugenius / Henzen, Wilhelm / Hülsen, Christianus - 1886), Panciera (ed.), Libitina e dintorni (Libitina 3) p. 406 no. G36 (Papi, Caterina - 2004), Supplementa Italica., Imagines - Roma 1 2111 (Gregori, Gian Luca / Mattei, M. - 1999), Inscriptiones Latinae selectae (ILS) 2.2 8179 (Dessau, Hermann - 1906) W. Stenhouse, The Paper Museum of Cassiano dal Pozzo. Ancient inscriptions, London 2002, p. 104, no. 47, with apograph and English translation,
http://www.britishmuseum.org/research/collection_online/collection_object_details/collection_image_gallery.aspx?partid=1&assetid=154613001&objectid=1628109

Catalog Entry 18

Image:

(1) Front 

(2) Back 

(3) Left Side 

(4) Right Side 

Image Source: (1) http://www.edr-edr.it/edr_programmi/view_img.php?id_nr=122854&lang=en
(2) http://www.edr-edr.it/edr_programmi/view_img.php?id_nr=122854-1&lang=it

(3) http://www.edr-edr.it/edr_programmi/view_img.php?id_nr=122854-2&lang=it
(4) http://www.edr-edr.it/edr_programmi/view_img.php?id_nr=122854-3&lang=it
Date: 25 BCE - 25 CE (TM)
Measurements: 51 x 55 x 25 cm (EDR)
Material: travertine limestone
Findspot: Rome, Latium et Campangia Regio I (found & written) (TM)
Current Location: Rome, Antiquarium Comunale de Celio NCE 5712 (TM)
Latin Text:

Front
C[R]A[O]IR[A] [SO OIOR HM]
TICVIMS [MTLOIONMO]
[Q]CAE[OIVMA DIDEHLVS]
[EAMESASVMPIR … AE]
[MALERVSMPNO]----------
Q[MANEMVSQE]----------[VME]
[X]----[HIONNSE]----------
---[OCEEDLI]----------

Back
[TICLARNSALIAAN LLARCIELFPFO]

Left Side
QVEIHAI[OHO]OMINA
---[OTMMAEOEV] -- [ERIT]
---[VEISNEOVTRARVIMEOS]
---SV[EMOSNEOINNIOMSSEIT]
Right Side

According to EDR:

〈:anterius〉
C(aius) Papirius ((mulieris)) l(ibertus) Diophanes,
Ligutius Fl(avi) l(ibertus) Dionysius,
Q(uintus) Caecilius Diphilus,
〈:columna I〉
L(ucius) Maesius Amphio,
L(ucius) Valerius Menan(der),
Q(uintus) Rapidius Q(uinti) f(ilius) Caria(---?),
A(ulus) Aquilius Prud(ens),
A(ulus) Petronius Eros,
Eros Lepidi 〈:servus〉 ,

Sex(tus) Volcan(ius) Scael(us),
[---] Alexander,
------?
⟨:columna II⟩
A(ulus) Rustius Here[---],
Hermae Mevi[---],
M(arcus) Veson(ius) Penic[---],
A(ulus) Rustius Sotia[---],
C(aius) Clodius Arna[---],
C(aius) Cedi(us) Diphilus,
A(ulus) Furius Pollo[---],

⟨:in postica⟩
⟨:columna I⟩
C(aius) Clodius Alexan(der),
L(ucius) Canius Lepidi(us),

⟨:columna II⟩
L(ucius) Carvilius [---],
L(ucius) Arrius [---],
S(extus) Vibius Eros,
Q(uintus) [---] Corn[---],
C(aius) Corenus Mar[---],
C(aius) Livius Surus .

⟨:superius⟩
quelle haec nomina
sociorum aboluerit
ut is neque apud deos
superos nec inferos accept(us)
sit.
⟨:in latere intuentibus dextro⟩
Barna Lael[---],
A(ulus) Rustius Lysia,
P(ublius) Arren(us) Heuod(us)
ol(las) [---]

Translation:

Caius Papirius Diophanes, freedman of his wife (?),
Ligutius Dionysius, freedman of Flavius,
Quintus Caecilius Diphilus
⟨:column I⟩
Lucius Maesius Amphius
Lucius Valerius Menander
Quintus Rapidius, son of Quintus Caria(---?),
Aulus Aquilius Prudens

Aulus Petronius Eros
Eros 〈:slave〉 of Lepidus,
Sextus Volcanius Scaelus
[---] Alexander
------?
〈:column 2〉
Aulus Rustius Here[---],
Hermes Mevi[---],
Marcus Vesonius Penic[---],
Aulus Rustius Sotia [---],
Caius Clodius Arna[---],
Caius Cedius Diphilus
Aulus Furius Pollo[---],

〈:in the back〉
〈:column I〉
Caius Clodius Alexander
Lucius Canius Lepidius

〈:column 2〉
Lucius Carvilius [---],
Lucius Arrius [---],
Sextus Vibius Eros
Quintus [---] Corn[---],
Caius Corenus Mar[---],
Caius Livius Surus

〈:in upper part〉
Whoever will have erased/wiped out these names of allies
That he be received neither among the gods
Above nor below

〈:on the right side to the viewers〉
Barna Lael[---],
Aulus Rustius Lysias
Publius Arrenus Heuodus
...ollas...

Description: Long, rectangular block with inscription on five sides. Overall, the inscription is covered in mild weathering and abrasion but the letters are mostly legible. The bottom left corner is missing including chunks of text that are indicated in the Latin text above. This missing piece goes through the entire width of the piece. There appears to be a metal rod going through the middle of the length of the object, this could be evidence from a secondary placement such as architecture. The many lines of text covering the different faces of the piece. Each face contains centered text that is cramped

together. These faces of the object and on the longer faces columns all represent a different deceased person's epitaph.

Sources and Bibliography: EDR122854, TM279736, EDCS16200280, CIL 6,10407, Lattimore122,9, CIL VI.2 10407 (Bormann, Eugenius / Henzen, Wilhelm / Hülsen, Christianus - 1882), Supplementa Italica. Imagines - Roma 2 3408 (Di Stefano Manzella, Ivan / Gregori, Gian Luca - 2003)

Catalog Entry 19

Image: 


Image Source: https://edh.ub.uni-heidelberg.de/edh/inschrift/HD078224
http://lupa.at/img/15531-2.jpg
Date: 71 – 100 CE (EDCS)
Measurements: 128 x 90 x 26 cm (LUPA)
Material: stone (TM)
Findspot: Xanten (Wesel, North Rhine-Westphalia, Germany) (LUPA)
Current Location: Rheinisches Landesmuseum, inv. U102 (LUPA)
Latin Text (according to LUPA, text on object is currently illegible):

Silvano Loupi f(ilio) Trever(o) /
eq(uiti) ala Vocont(iorum) an(norum) XXX /
stip(endiorum) XII et vivis Primae /
sorori eius hered(es) f(aciendum) c(uraverunt) /
vos rogitat quaeso soror unica /
fratris amantis ni dissigilletis / nive violetis opus

Translation:

Heirs took care of this for Silvano son of Loupus Trevero,
equestrian in the wing of Vocontii for thirty years,
twelve at equestrian wages, and
for his sister Prima, while they were living.

the sole sister of a loving brother asks persistently, I beg,
to not unseal nor violate the work (i.e. tomb) here.

Description: Rectangular slab that sits vertically. The surface is heavily eroded and many details of the relief carving and inscription are illegible from the available photograph. The object is a tall rectangular slab with the bottom half heavily abraded and unable to distinguish what was inscribed there. The top half is also heavily abraded but some details can be understood. It includes an alcove with ridges running down from the top center and fanning out. Within the alcove there are two figures seated on stools with the left figure facing front and the right figure set at a three-quarter angle facing the left and some form of hand holding in between. There is a table in between the figures with two forms of vessels.

However, an ink drawing dating to the 15th century and attributed to the Bonn – Rheinisches Landesmuseum provides additional detail no longer visible. The top half has basic detail left and can be described as a recessed funeral meal within a shell niche with man (right) and woman (left) seated on a bench holding hands that fall on the man's left knee. In front there is a table with vessels. Niche framed with a twisted band and leaf rosettes in the spandrels. The main areas of illegible erosion consist of the horizontal lower half of the piece where the inscription resided. It is linearly rectangular. All four corners of the piece are rounded due to erosion.

Commentary: This inscription has a form of an elegiac couplet in the last two lines and this couplet is mentioned in two places this piece is presented. (MQDQ 1006 and CLE 01006)

Sources and Bibliography: EDCS11100749, TM415661, CLE01006, CIL13,08655, LUPA15531, HD078224, Ink Drawing: http://lupa.at/img/15531-2.jpg, Lattimore 119,4, CIL XIII.2.2 8655 (Domaszewski, Alfred von - 1907), CSIR Deutschland III 1 22 (Bauchhenss, Gerhard - 1978), Lehner, Die antiken Steindenkmäler des Provinzialmuseums in Bonn 657 (Lehner, H. - 1918), Bücheler

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