

## **The Roman Funerary Inscriptions Project Guidelines for a Classical Humanities Class**

**Collaborative Projects:** To foster an active and collaborative approach to learning students will jointly prepare and present a Roman funerary inscription to the class and submit the written results in a final group report. With guidance from the instructor students will select the inscription from the list of monuments in the Project Monument Options webpage at [http://www2.cnr.edu/home/araia/Raia\\_inscriptions2.html#mon](http://www2.cnr.edu/home/araia/Raia_inscriptions2.html#mon).

### **Description:**

Funerary monuments, damaged though most of them are, are original documents that come from all areas of the Roman world, record the great and the powerless, and encompass hundreds of years of Republican and Imperial history. Funerary inscriptions add breadth, depth, and texture to the corpus of literary sources from Rome. Composed by people from all walks of life, women as well as men, they allow us to "see" and "hear" the otherwise silent many who are on the margins of Roman society, particularly women. However, commemorative inscriptions, couched in formulaic terms and standardized phrases, frequently preserve a culture's most conservative sentiments and expectations.

### **Objectives:**

- Acquaintance with the field of epigraphy through the study of funerary inscriptions
- Appreciation of the value of funerary monuments as textual and visual evidence for women's lives
- Composition of an interpretive text-commentary for intermediate-level Latin students

### **Getting Started:**

Each of you will be assigned to one group for collaborative research:

- Philology (limited to students with knowledge of Latin): translation, and commentary; inscription description
- Ancient history: social history of freedpersons, women, families, names, political or military offices, etc.
- Art and archaeology: inscription description; monument description; portraiture; iconography

### **Project Instructions:**

Note: There are ten steps to this project,. Everyone completes steps 1-5 and 10 and individual groups do the remaining steps, as explained below.

1. Read Paul Shore, *Rest Lightly: An Anthology of Greek & Latin Tomb Inscriptions*, Introduction, pp. 1-7

2. Read John J. Dobbins, “Steps in Reading a Latin Inscription” and follow the instructions online at <http://pompeii.virginia.edu/tti/eb-insc/eb-insc-list.html>.
3. Visit the Roman Funerary Inscriptions Project online at [http://www2.cnr.edu/home/araia/Raia\\_inscriptions.html](http://www2.cnr.edu/home/araia/Raia_inscriptions.html) for the resources that you will need. Study the student projects published on the site.
4. Consult print and Internet sources (see Bibliography below) to familiarize yourselves with the conventions of the genre, especially inscriptional abbreviations and formulaic expressions.
5. Transcription: Studying the image of the inscription, transcribe (record) exactly what you see into a Word document, keeping the line and word arrangement. Then compare it to the photocopied excerpt from *CIL* supplied.

### **Philology Group Instructions**

6. Translation: Resolve (spell out the abbreviated words) and translate the inscription into English.
7. Commentary: Write glosses (i.e., notes and commentary: grammar help, vocabulary, historical or cultural background information, etc.) for each word of the inscription that you think would offer difficulty to an intermediate Latin student and/or for which you have found information (models for lexical and interpretive assistance can be found in Raia et al., *The Worlds of Roman Women* and Cirolao's *Pro Caelio*). Use Allen & Greenough, *New Latin Grammar*.

### **Art and Archaeology Group Instructions**

8. Monument Description: Describe each funerary monument in detail (e.g., date, origin, and appearance of the stone, including lettering and decoration; portrait sculpture, etc.); models for descriptive analysis and transcription may be found in the Kleiner and Harvey books. Prepare an introductory essay describing the monument and inscription, placing it in its historical and cultural context. Note: Students in this group will be provided with a copy of the resolved inscription and a translation.

### **History Group Instructions**

9. Historical essay: Prepare an introductory essay explaining what evidence the monument and inscription provide for women's lives. Include as appropriate information on names, family relationships, women, and other historical, cultural, and social context. Note: Students in this group will be provided with a copy of the resolved inscription and a translation.

### **Presentation and Submission:**

10. Each group will make a 15-minute oral presentation of this assignment to the class and submit a written and an electronic version of your part of the project using the student projects posted online as your guide.