

Project #1: Funerary Inscription

Transcription of Inscription

DIS MANIBUS

PILIAE PHILTATAE.

M[arcus] PILIVS EVCARPVS

CONIVGI B[ene] M[erenti]

[hoc monumentum]

FECIT ET SIBI.



Description of Monument

This beautiful cinerary urn, made of marble, is intact and is thought to be dated during the 2nd century CE. The structure of the letters supports this estimation as they are characteristic of those contrived during the Imperial period. The letters take the form of the Monumental Alphabet developed during the Republic but perfected during the time of the Empire.

This monument is shaped quite uniquely and seems to evoke the structure of a mausoleum or temple. The lid contains a bust in the center. It may be assumed that this emblem of a human face resembles the freedwoman memorialized in the inscription. The base of the cinerary urn is rectangular and contains many linear designs. The second step is decorated with an elegant border. There is a scallop pattern on this step. A wave and dot motif adorns the base as well as the lid of this cinerary urn. There are two eagles on either side of the inscription. Animals, such as these eagles, are commonly found on Greek and Roman funerary monuments. Birds in flight may suggest the individual's ascent to the after life.

This inscription was dedicated to Pilia Philtata, a freedwoman. The dedicator is Marcus Pilius Eucarpus, her husband. An individual need not infer the relationship between the freedmen. Marcus directly refers to Pilia as his wife and therefore must have entered legal marriage with her. In a case where *coniunx* is not used, an individual may speculate that the couple was not wed.

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Translation of Inscription

To the divine spirits of Pilia Philtata
Marcus Pilius Eucarpus made this monument
for his very well-deserving wife and for himself.

Lexical and Interpretive Commentary

Line 1:

Di Manes m. pl. (idiom) *This phrase is often found on the head of funerary inscriptions dating from the end of the 1st century BCE through the 2nd century CE. It is most often translated as the “spirits of the dead” or “divine spirits”.*

DIS *It is important to note the fact that the “I” in “DIS” is larger than the rest of the letters within the word. This is a rather important indication of the way in which the word should be pronounced and the case it represents. The “I” denotes the long vowel in the word and should therefore be pronounced (dis) and translated in the dative case, “to the divine...”. This use of an enlarged “I” took the place of “EI” which was used in the past for the same purpose.*

Line 2:

Pilia, Pilliae f. *This is the nomen of the freedwoman being memorialized in this inscription; Pillius is the family name of her former master. Therefore, her nomen is the feminine form of this name.*

Philtata, Philtatae f. *This is the cognomen of the freedwoman being memorialized in this inscription. It is a clan name and, in this case, her slave name she acquired either before she became enslaved or while in slavery, given to her by her master. These names often refer to the individual’s country of origin or a personal characteristic.*

Line 3:

M[arcus], Marci m. *This is the first of the three names given to the dedicator of this funerary inscription. He has taken the praenomen, Marcus, of his former master.*

Pilius, Pili m. *This is the nomen, family name, of the freedman’s former master.*

Eucarpus, Eucarpi m. *This is the last of the three names, the cognomen. This is the freedman’s slave name.*

Line 4:

coniunx, coniugis f. *wife*

B[ene] adv. *well, quite, very*

M[erenti] mereo, merere, merui, meritus v. *deserve, merit, have right; present participle agreeing with coniunx*

Line 5:

fecit *understand as direct object hoc monumentum which is sometimes included but always understood when not.*