

Commemorating Death – Group 5 - Sarah Engle (C), Emily Gilbert (C), Yeein Lee (B), Kelly Loughed (A), Jeanette Miranda (A), James Morris (D), Courtney Smith (B), Catherine Teitz (A)

Commemorating Death--Group 5: Homonoëa

A. Art and Archaeology - *Catherine Teitz, Kelly Loughed, Jeanette Miranda*

The artistic elements of this monument contribute to our understanding of Atimetus and Homonoëaby by solidifying their desired image as both free and educated individuals. While the monument relies mainly upon text to depict the two, the artistic elements are key in revealing the deceased's personalities.

The monument represents deceased freedmen through usage of an inscription, bordered by multiple frames of ornate decorations. Notably, the structure lacks a physical representation of the deceased's visage and instead relies on inscriptions to memorialize the freedmen. The artistic elements of the monument serve to highlight the text rather than the text complementing the art. The decorations include designs that are delicate, and disguise the heavy material of the stone; in a way they are reminiscent of the decorations on Corinthian columns. This type of detailed art rewards the passersby who stop for a longer look. The garlands on the base of the design also evoke the Ara Pacis Augustae, suggesting that the monument was constructed relatively soon after the Ara Pacis' completion. Perhaps this resemblance is a reference to the freedman's connection to the imperial family (his master was a former slave of Tiberius).

The monument, reminiscent of an altar, measures five Roman feet (roughly equivalent to the modern Imperial foot) across its face and is four Roman feet deep on either side. Because text is only inscribed on three faces, it is possible to infer that it was located somewhere where the back side would not be visible - either along the road or attached to another building. The conversation with the passer-by, one "who make(s) [his] way with a worried mind," further indicates that this was placed prominently along a roadway.

The lavish designs complement the attitude of the text. While the garlands denote a connection to the imperial family and the Corinthian-style ornate decorations evoke illustriousness, the text also portrays the deceased as someone worthy of an elaborate burial. The Greek passage, teeming with mythological allusions, suggests that the deceased was educated enough to understand such an inscription; the elegiac couplets, rather than plain prose, additionally elevate the deceased to a lofty level, reminding the reader of polished love elegies and all-encompassing work of Ovid's *Fasti*. These literary references may represent the freedmen's attempt to overcompensate for their humble past by emphasizing their new wealth, which has enabled them to become educated, perhaps to become literate in both Latin and Greek and enjoy the literature of both languages. The inscription emphasizes to the passerby this education, a privilege of their wealth.

While the monument itself is not particularly unique, it is rare and valuable for its completeness and representativeness, both in art and text. The position of the freedmen within the imperial structure additionally documents the pervasive nature of social class through generations. The preservation of the entire monument, not simply the text, is integral to understanding the freedmen's own perception of their place in society and what they desired to project to passersby.

B. Visual Epigraphy - *Yeein Jennifer Lee and Courtney Smith*

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When viewing this monument, it is important to think about how the text was intended to be read in Roman times. The ancients read everything out loud, so would have been the inscriptions on this epitaph too. The inscriptions can be categorized into five parts. Three on the front face include: the dedicator's information in Latin, Homonoëa's description and introduction of herself in Greek, and a description of the size of the plot in Latin. One inscription on the right face is Homonoëa's comment to a passer-by and the passer-by's response in Latin. The left face has Atimetus, Homonoëa's husband, remarks to Homonoëa and her response to Atimetus in Latin.

The text on the stone appears clear and concise as the carver evidently paid much attention to detail. The letters are delineated in a uniform block style with consistent spacing and alignment. The dedicator's information appears larger than the subsequent text on the stone. The words are separated by circular dots that add clarity to the text, shedding light on the dedicator's intentions to make the inscription easy to read and understand. The text is lined with a decorative border that brings attention to the prose and frames it accordingly.

The stone is primarily inscribed in the official language of the state, Latin. However, writing in Greek immediately follows the dedicator's information. This lyrical prose with literary references and mythological associations adds a personal touch to the text and reveals the unique individuality of Atimetus and Homonoëa. The succession of languages on the stone signifies great importance in terms of solidifying one's identity. Atimetus and Homonoëa organized their text through clearly distinct sections that facilitated comprehension. The introduction, Greek prose, conversation with a passerby, and intimate exchange between husband and wife is assembled in a very straightforward arrangement of text and engraving style.

Except for the dedicator's information and description of the size of the plot, everything else is written in discursive manner. Since there are minimum three party involved in these; Atimetus, Homonoëa, and passer-by; we can imagine that three people or at least a person with three different voices reading out this epitaph. From the description of Homonoëa and introduction of herself in the front face, the reader gets the idea that the voice to be read aloud should be harmonious since Homonoëa was "sweeter-voiced than the sirens", and "golden than Aphrodite." Romans' aspiration to elevate themselves to the level of divinity was intense, and because Homonoëa's social status as a freed slave, it seems likely that in her present days she would have not been able to enjoy the best lifestyle amongst others. To add, only this part of epigraph is written in Greek while others are all in Latin, invoking sense of privacy. In the tradition of showing respect to the deceased, the reader performing out Homonoëa would have tried one's best to sound as pleasant and soft as possible, as if this act would alleviate Homonoëa's soul.

Then the discourse between Homonoëa and the passer-by on the right face of the epitaph would continue the reader's elaborate performance. Homonoëa's account will again be read in soft and sad voice, while the response from the passer-by will be more of a solemn tone, assuaging Homonoëa and her worry of her bereaved husband. On the left face, another voice for Atimetus comes into action. His saying is more of a love sonnet to his Homonoëa. One can imagine a reader reading out this inscription with composed, sad and endearing voice. Homonoëa's response to her husband also greatly displays love between them. By reading out these inscriptions in sad and soft voice, the readers would have felt this strong feeling between the

Commemorating Death – Group 5 - Sarah Engle (C), Emily Gilbert (C), Yeein Lee (B), Kelly Lougheed (A), Jeanette Miranda (A), James Morris (D), Courtney Smith (B), Catherine Teitz (A) couple, and been able to think of Homonoea more dearly once again.

The three sides of the epigraph are surrounded with vegetable design which one can note similarity with Emperor Augustus' own art work. Nevertheless, the whole ornamental design is not lavishly ostentatious as matched with aristocrats' artworks. These create a combined effect of solemnness and humbleness of Homonoea. We can also note sensuality and feminine senses from flowers and curvy designs of stems and leaves on the border inscriptions, instantly evoking delicate and beautiful images of the deceased.

C. History - *Sarah Engle, Emily Gilbert and James Morris*

This tomb was erected by Atimetus for himself and his wife Claudia Homonoea, his "fellow freedwoman and companion." The tomb was created by Atimetus in order to commemorate Claudia's death, and he intends to subsequently be buried with her upon his passing. Several lines hint that Claudia died before her husband, such as, "Husband, do not batter your youth with weeping or distress my death with mourning" (25). With respect to their professions, the inscription clearly states that Atimetus was a slave connected to the imperial family (we can deduce this from the fact that his master's master was an emperor). There is textual evidence illustrating that his wife was possibly a courtesan: "I...to whom the Charities who granted beauty, whom Athena instructed in all arts" (11-12). The inscription consists of both Latin and Greek writing (e.g. lines 3-8, which contain a description Homonoea, are in Greek). Therefore, we think these two individuals were possibly of Greek origin (to make a better assumption, it would be necessary to know if many Roman citizens at this time could speak Greek in addition to Latin).

This monument contains no direct visual evidence alluding to a specific date. However, it is possible to estimate one through textual analysis. Atimetus is the freedman of a former slave of the emperor Tiberius Caesar (who died in 37 AD). The average lifespan of a Roman, having survived childhood, was around 40-50 years. Assuming that these men died shortly after their masters, we can estimate that this monument was erected around 50-55 AD. The best way to confirm this date would be to search for Roman epitaphs of similar styles (i.e. those with matching borders, shallow relief, etc.) that have inscribed dates.

If our dating assumption is correct, then this monument would have been erected during the reign of either Claudius (who reigned from 41 to 54 AD) or the infamous Nero (54-68 AD). Claudius began his reign as emperor with a lack of cohesive support from the Roman people, and as a result he was in dire need of a military victory in order to obtain more public support. It is possible that this monument was erected around the time that Claudius decided to invade Britain (a mission that Julius Caesar attempted unsuccessfully). His successor Nero was adopted by his great-uncle Claudius in order to become his heir and successor. Nero's rule is typically associated with extravagance and periods of tyranny.

D. Textual Analysis

Our group did not have anyone assigned to section D; for a short commentary see the end of sections A and B.