

## **Commemorating Death: Miltiades**

### ***A. Art and Archaeology – Nicholas Vitrano, Nathan Walker, Caroline Hoffman***

This sculpture portrays Miltiades the Younger, the commanding general at the Battle of Marathon. The sculpture alludes to Classical Greek portraiture, depicting the subject as a wise and heroic man in that he has a wizened face, full beard, and full flowing hair. The wizened face and full beard were utilized as signs of virility and wisdom. Miltiades's full flowing hair is reminiscent of that which is associated with Alexander the Great. Miltiades is garbed in some form of a chlamys, worn mainly by young military officials, which lends truth to his military exploits. This bust, in all of its esteem to Greek military success, was most likely once found in a Hellenized Domus. One can surmise this because it was excavated originally in 1553 on the Caelian Hill, once regarded as one of the most fashionable residential districts during the Republic.

This type of bust seems to parallel some of the sculptures and mosaics found in the House of the Faun. The House of the Faun was one of the most lavish homes in Pompeii that contained two atria and two peristyle gardens. Most importantly, it contained an elaborate mosaic of Alexander the Great in battle, among other Greek artist forms eluding to status and class.

Being that this bust was most likely found in a home of an affluent Roman citizen. In viewing such Hellenistic sculptures, it would be known to any Roman citizen that the homeowner was affluent, a person of high class, and culturally sophisticated.

In the Roman context, Miltiades the Younger would represent victory against enemies and defense of the homeland. Romans highly esteemed those that defended their rights and lifestyles, and thus, would have an appreciation for a war hero who was successful in protecting his motherland against foreign invaders. The Latin and Greek inscriptions fortify the allusions that the bust makes to military success.

### ***B. Visual Epigraphy – Robert Warner and Marissa Ilardi***

There are two languages on the stone: the name is written in Greek, below which is a Latin paragraph, then a Greek one, and on the side is an additional Greek paragraph. It seems like the Greek paragraph is well spaced below the name, and the Latin is crammed between, so it seems like an addition to a stolen bust. The Greek writing is given some prominence by virtue of the title being in Greek, as well as there being more of it, and the Latin stands out as a different style of writing. The Greek seems to be directed towards Miltiades, while the Latin is more conversational and to engage with the reader. As such, the Greek might be intended to commemorate Miltiades' war deeds and honor him, while the Roman text is more to engage the reader and help him remember Miltiades. The bust is very Hellenistic in nature, with the curly hair and the regal beard. He also is partially nude which is a common Greek theme. That goes in line with the Roman's desire to emulate the Greeks and appropriate their greatness into the empire. It also coincides with both culture's use of busts and funerary art to commemorate and glorify the deceased, using words such as valor, distinguished, warlike, etc. It also reminds the reader of

the historic Persian and Marathon wars, as Romans and Greeks were both interested in preserving their past.

The text is clearly meant to be read and interacted with, as this would probably stand in the house of an elite Roman. The Latin writing seems to be a conversation with a passerby; as if upon seeing the statue of Miltiades the viewer might ask, “well, what did he do?” and the inscription would then inform them that he conquered Persians in the Battle of Marathon, and died a hero in his homeland, which presumably was Greece.

The name seems to be the most important part of the inscription. It is carved larger and deeper into the stone than the other inscriptions. This would indicate that the Greeks felt that the most important task of the statue was to permanently carve the name Miltiades into history; while the other writings may disintegrate with time, the name would preserve.

### ***C. Historical Context - Benjamin Cohen***

The inscription describes the achievements of Miltiades, who is also depicted on the accompanying bust. He was an Athenian general who defeated the Persians under Darius I at the 490 BCE Battle of Marathon in Attica outside of Athens. He was an Athenian Greek figure with no direct connection to Rome. Although the bust was certainly made some time after Miltiades' 489 BCE death, it was discovered in 1533 and is difficult to date. Although, this piece of art may be reflective of the sentiments of the Greek world hundreds of years before the Romans, the Persian Wars had little to do with the world of early imperial war. This piece is likely an example of wealthy Romans' taste for all things Greek at this time and may have been piece in a collection of Greek statuary.

### ***D. Textual Analysis: Allison Iarocci, Lauren Snyder***

The text on the stone is written in both Greek and Latin. The content of the verses relates to the life of the man that the bust depicts. His name was Miltiades, and was an Athenian general. The verses describe his victory over the Persians at Marathon. The main heading on the stone, written in Greek, is twice as large as the other lines. The inscription is the name of the general. Below that are four more lines. The first two lines are in Latin, followed by two in Greek. They both glorify Miltiades' victory at Marathon, but in slightly different ways.

Both the Greek and Latin appear to be written in prose form, but the Greek seems to be more poetic. The Greek is more engaging and reminds the viewer of the “valor” of Miltiades. The content of the text, which exalts him, makes sense, as this bust would have been a lasting memory of the glory of this man. The Latin, which does address the viewer by beginning with “who, a Persian” is much shorter and less eloquent. This may be because the statue was stolen or copied from a Greek original, with Latin text inserted between the lines of Greek. Visually, the Latin text looks cramped between the Greek.

There is additional text in Greek on the right face of the stone. These lines address Miltiades himself in a prose form. It is a promise that he will not be forgotten and he will always be honored on this “firmly standing earth.” There is no Latin equivalent of this on the stone. The prose just describes the man and his

“warlike deeds” where as the poetry depicts how his glory relates to the viewer and the Roman population.

As amateur rescue archaeologists, it is difficult to find a parallel and relevant literary work. The short amount of time given to us by Maliburton, does not allow for proper research. This is one of the greatest problems with this sort of rescue archaeology, is that to be done properly with great and care and attention to detail, there needs to be a significant amount of time.

The text simply relates to the monument, as the bust is the subject of the text. This sort of bust would have been placed in the home of an elite member of Roman society, who would have been able to read both the Greek and Latin texts. This type of statuary would have been placed in a prominent part of the domus. The content of the text of this statue reminds the owner of the heroism and patriotism of Miltiades.