

Cornelia Fortunata, Tomi. 2nd Century CE

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In order to protect the funerary monument listed above, the following authors have contributed to this detailed report:

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A. Art and Archaeology

Represented on this stone is a couple that wanted to be portrayed as wealthier than they were. The husband, M. Cornelius Stabilio, is reclining on a couch while his wife, Cornelia Fortuna is sitting next to him. This arrangement is typical of a couple during dinner parties or banquets. They are dressed in togas, the dress of Roman citizens. Below on the left is a slave carrying something into the banquet, such as a jug of wine. Three flowers appear under the couch, and to the right is a Roman goddess, likely Venus, the goddess of love and beauty. These images help convey to the viewer how beautiful and loving Cornelia was to her husband.

Various elements of this stone are also present in other, more famous Roman funerary sculptures. For example, on this stone, the living husband is portrayed next to the deceased wife like on the Relief of the Gessii and on portrait the relief of Eurysaces and Atistia from the Tomb of Eurysaces. The stone itself is similar to the shrines that emulate the tombs of the elite, such as the Monument of the Rabirii. The forms and figures on this stone are in that style, not of the non-elite.

Either the couple or Timotheus, the man who funded this

stone, wanted passersby to think of the pair as a wealthy couple that frequently attended or hosted banquets. While the couple may have been wealthy enough to have at least attended a few dinner parties, they certainly were not a regular occurrence. Otherwise, the stone likely would have been much more elaborate, and it probably would have been funded by Cornelius, the husband.

Given that it is not in the worst shape compared to some other monuments, although lacking some vividness and detail, you can still make out what the words say. Again with the exception of the statues atop the monument and the picture below, it is in okay shape. If I were to recreate what it looked like in the Roman era it would of had much sharper imagery, not as dulled down obviously. Also the statues would have been in tact, with their heads and extremities. As far as what the Romans would have viewed it as another death memento to a loved fallen family member.

The art and the text are directly related as we think that the text tells the story of a loved wife (reclined statue figure), loved by her husband very much which leads us to believe that he is the other statue figure next to her. This to me would be perceived as a common monument to a fallen family member back in Roman times.

B. Visual Epigraphy

According to the inscription, Timotheus son of Nonius dedicated the stele to Cornelia Fortuna Stabilio, wife of M. Cornelius Stabilio. The stele commemorating Cornelia, found in the Greek colony, Tomi, contains an inscription of both Greek and Latin text. The incorporation of both languages in the inscription makes sense, for the Romans captured Tomi in 29 B.C. The coexistence of Greek and Latin reveals the importance of the succession of languages on funerary steles. It is plausible to assert that Greek would precede Latin on the inscription, for Tomi is a Greek colony, and the first language on the inscription is usually either the official language issued by the state or the first language

of the community. The second language, Latin in this case, is more personal and can deviate from the dominant official language. Thus, it is appropriate to assume that Cornelia and Cornelius are Roman citizens. Such an assertion is supported by the married couple's Roman garb – the toga, the funerary banquet setting, as well as a typical Roman convention where the man is depicted reclining while the woman sits by his side.

The inscription was carved so that the text is easily legible; however, the text lacks word separations, especially in the Greek portion, which makes reading the inscription difficult for someone who is not well versed in the languages. Visually balanced, one language does not explicitly have prominence or importance over the other. But in terms of the Roman custom of dual language placement mentioned above, the Latin portion of the inscription has a greater importance to Cornelia and her husband. The visual epigraphy is essential for understanding the specifics of the stele – an understanding of Cornelia and her husband, as well as their place in society. The Greek text explicitly addresses the reader, “Get to know, oh stranger...” and bids the reader farewell, “...go well and be lucky.” It also informs the reader that Cornelia's stele was dedicated by Timotheus, and relates the loving relationship between husband and wife. The Latin text, on the other hand, is more formal. It appoints Timotheus as the commissioner, states Cornelia's age, and justifies this monument as “for the sake of her [Cornelia's] memory.”

C. History and Prosopography

This tomb is dedicated to the late Cornelia Stabilio wife of Cornelius Stabilio and mother of Timotheus. The family looks to have been a prosperous, judging by their relaxed positions and beautiful Greek inspired drapery (implying worldly knowledge and sophistication) Cornelia is literally emphasizing the inscription dedicated on the tomb as wise, gentle and loving towards Cornelius. While it appears now that the couple died in wealth, the

carvings that they lie above can allude to their occupations of the past. In the right corner there is a figure balancing baskets, maybe vases such as an amphora or hydra used to carry water. A division is created by Cornelia's legs and on the other side are tall beautiful trees. This gives the possibility that at one point Cornelia and her husband worked really hard maybe through agriculture, and became economically prosperous.

Another possible interpretation is growth, the garden symbolizing the growth of both in agricultural methods and the Roman Empire. The figure in the left hand corner is dressed with more drapery, symbolizing greater wealth while the figure in the right in what looks to be work pants and doing manual labor could represent the hard work of the romans to further secure the wealth and build Rome.

The figures have no heads and their bodies are heavily draped, but the lack of an L to symbolize Liberta leads me to believe they were not slaves.

The tomb is dated Tomi 2nd cent CE. During this time Rome witnessed the Pax Romana, or Roman Peace, and during this two hundred year period Rome expanded its borders significantly. Also During this time, the emperors worked to improve the cities infrastructure and worked to beautify the empire. It is very possible that the tomb, specifically the carvings underneath the couple refer to a speech made by a wealthy land owner Aelius Aristides, who delivered a panegyric, or public speech praising the accomplishment of the Pax Romana and Rome's greatness. In his highly stylized speech, Aristides says

“As on a holiday, the entire civilized world lays down the weapons that were its ancient burden and has turned to adornment and all glad thoughts, with the power to realize them.... Cities glisten with radiance and charm, and the entire earth has been made beautiful like a garden.”

The tomb could plausibly be of a family who, like Aristides was

given Roman citizenship and greatly admired the growth and achievements of Rome during the time of the Pax Romana. The reclined poses of the figures reflect the opulence felt at the time as well as cosmopolite spirit ingrained and perpetuated by the emperors of the time. The way Cornelia's body is turned it looks as though while she is comforting her husband, they are both appreciating the beautiful garden that is beneath them, the garden a symbol for the glory and beautification of Rome.

D. Textual Analysis

To begin analyzing the inscriptions of this funerary stele from Tomi, it is important to keep in mind the order of the language register. As previously noted in this report, the text directly below the feasting figures begins with Greek lettering and ends with Latin. Beyond this observable analysis the translations of the Greek and Latin text serve as very important evidence for not only the identities of the honored figures, but also the value of such a rare funerary artifact from the ancient world.

By the 2nd century C.E. the Roman world had extended its borders to its greatest extent, and the Philhellene emperor Hadrian, lover of all things Greek, inspired his subjects all over the empire in outlying provinces to study and honor the Greek language and culture of the past. This funerary stele alludes to the extent of Hadrian's influence, since the more poetic narrative section of the inscription is the first part written in Greek. The Latin inscriptions at the bottom of the stele serve a more basic identification purpose of Cornelia Fortuna herself including her age, where she lies, and the patron of the funerary monument.

The Greek inscriptions translated allude to the compassion and wisdom of the patron, Timotheus. The first sentence of the text explains his involvement in this meaningful dedication that Cornelia should "enjoy!" However, Timotheus honors himself more than Cornelia and her husband even though they are fixed

atop the funerary monument itself in stone form. Timotheos is the first word of the inscription and this section of the Greek text stands alone outside the dramatic inlaid text of the rest of the Greek narrative. In other words, the single, most important message Timotheus wishes to convey to passersby that may only glance or read even just one line of the inscriptions is the book-end words of this first sentence: Timotheus...Enjoy! Not only should Cornelia enjoy this commemoration, but all those who witness this monument should enjoy the gesture of Timotheus for he will enjoy having his name be the first to be read as long as the monument is not destroyed or lost. The first sentence stands as a symbolic support outside the rest of the narrative, which visually conveys to the viewer where the support for this monument comes from as the relief figures rest comfortably and “gently” above that single line.

Further, the rest of the Greek narrative relates directly to the figures and their demeanor. Feasting at a banquet with her husband, Cornelia is sculpted with her left arm resting on the thigh of her husband. The text reads that she was “wise, gently, loving toward her husband.” However, the text goes on to say that “she left him in pain and tears,” which also adds to the dramatic image of support Timotheus is trying to convey. By writing that she left her husband so dramatically the reader begins to acquire a more vivid reminder of the loving support that Timotheus provides by filling the void for her husband and having this monument erected.

Lastly, the Latin text is inscribed much more clearly and spaced out at the bottom of the stele. Because this portion of the text is less of a narrative, it is important to note that Latin was chosen for clarity and more common reading purposes. Additionally, “Hic Sita Est” written in a much larger text size translates to “Here She Lies,” and can be compared to the modern day phrase “Rest in Peace.” The inscription does not include the *ic*, *ita*, or *st* endings to those words, which alludes to the idea that this phrase was common in the ancient world and probably used on many funerary monuments. Most importantly, however, the last line of the text honors the patron yet

again. Timotheus finishes the inscription with another praise of himself by writing that it was his “resources” that allowed for the commission of this work. Although he makes sure to write that this stele was “for the sake of her memory,” it is clear from the first line of the text to the last line that Timotheus, son of Nonius, wishes for his memory to live on with this monument. It appears that honor meant a lot in the ancient Roman world, and honor for oneself always was maintained even in light of honoring others.

This detailed analysis of the Cornelia Fortunata funerary monument should be considered thoroughly. The authors of this report request that this artifact be preserved, and would welcome an opportunity to appear before the Maliburton executives to discuss this report or specific questions. Thank you.

Most Respectfully,

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