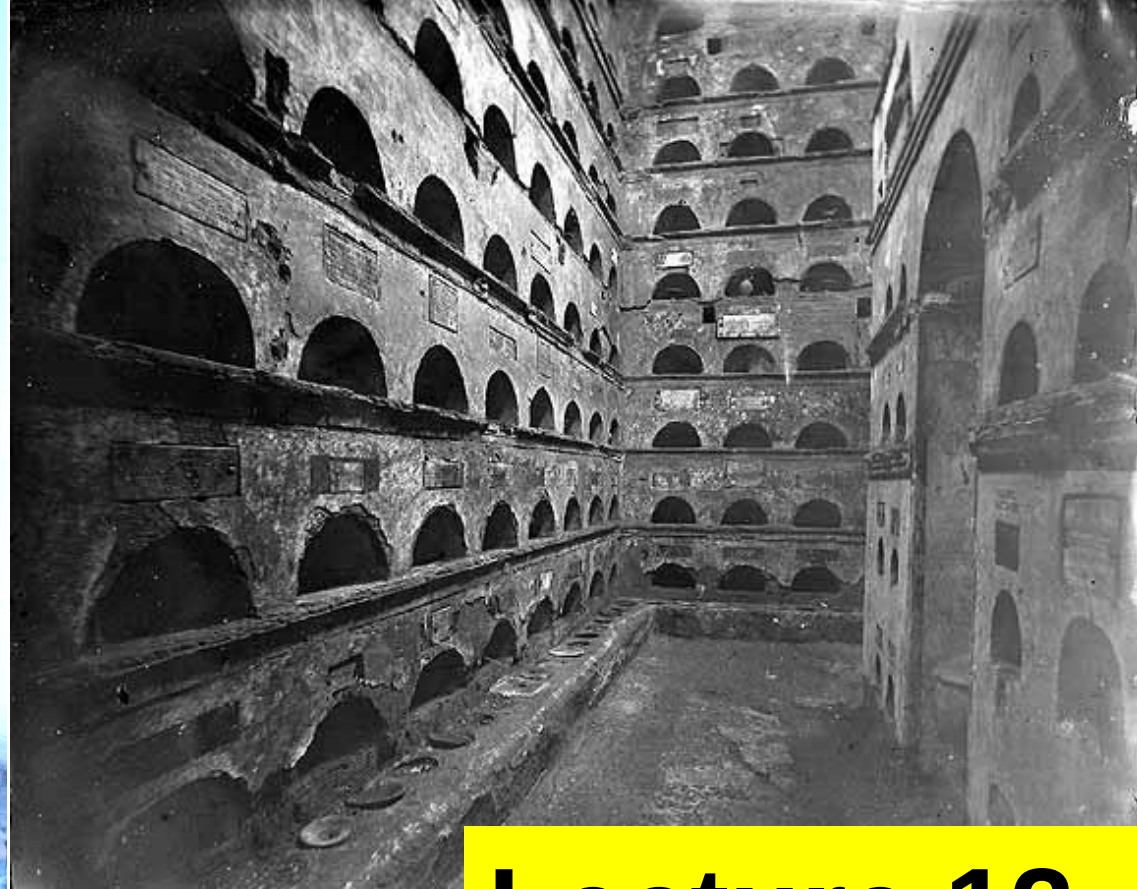




Lecture 12: Romans and Death.

The Romans and Death

- For Romans death was closely connected with the memory or remembrance of the dead (*memoria*).
- *Memoria* = afterlife
- The survival of the remembrance was emphasised through visual and written record.
- Evidence on death: literature, epigraphy, iconography, archaeology and material culture
- Death and social stratification

Family and Memoria: *imagines maiorum*



Pliny the Elder, Naturalis Historia 35, 4-6: “But on the contrary, in the days of our ancestors, it was these that were to be seen in their halls, and not statues made by foreign artists, or works in bronze or marble: **portraits modelled in wax** were arranged, each in its separate niche, to be always in readiness to accompany the funeral processions of the family; occasions on which every member of the family that had ever existed was always present. The **pedigree**, too, of the individual was traced in lines upon each of these coloured portraits. Their muniment-rooms, too, were filled with archives and memoirs, stating what each had done when holding the magistracy“

Roman funerary customs

- Cremation was the typical procedure used in Roman funerals: the ashes from a cremation were gathered and placed in a small stone chest, an urn or other container
- Inhumation: increasingly popular from the third century AD



Cremation. Example

- Inscription from the tomb of Sextus Aemilius Baro, Rome 52 BC:

Sex(tus) Aemilius Sex(ti) l(ibertus) /Baro /
frummentar(ius) / **in ignem inlatus est** /
prid(ie) Non(as) Quinct(iles) / Cn(aeo)
Pompeio co(n)s(ule) ter(ium?)

“Sextus Aemilius Baro, freedman of Sextus, a corn merchant, was brought to the pyre, on the day before the Nones of Quinctilis, in the third consulship of Gnaeus Pompeius (6 July 52 BC)”

Inhumation. Roman sarcophagi



*Sarcophagus of
Hercules, ca.
250.*

*Ludovisi sarcophagus,
mid. 3rd c. AD. Battle
between Romans and
Barbarians*



Representations of the deceased

- Funeral banquet: with or without the dead person. To celebrate the anniversary of the death.

- Pompeii:

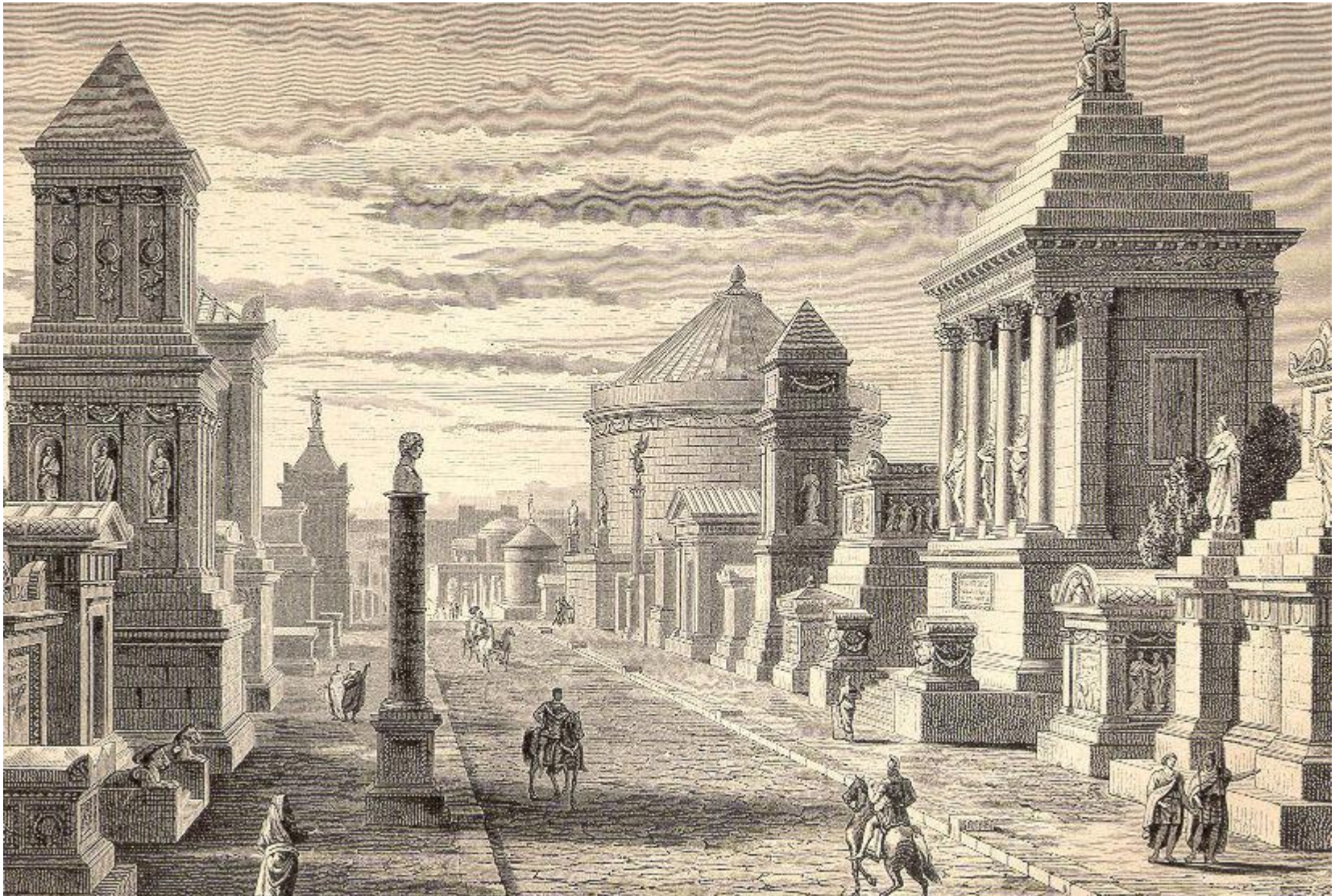
C(aio) Vestorio Prisco
aedil(i); vixit annis XXII,
locus sepulturae datus **et in**
funere HS MM d(ecreto)
d(ecurionum) Multis Prisca
mater p(ecunia) s(ua)



Tombs and Roads: Via Appia



Tombs and Roads: Via Appia



Via Appia



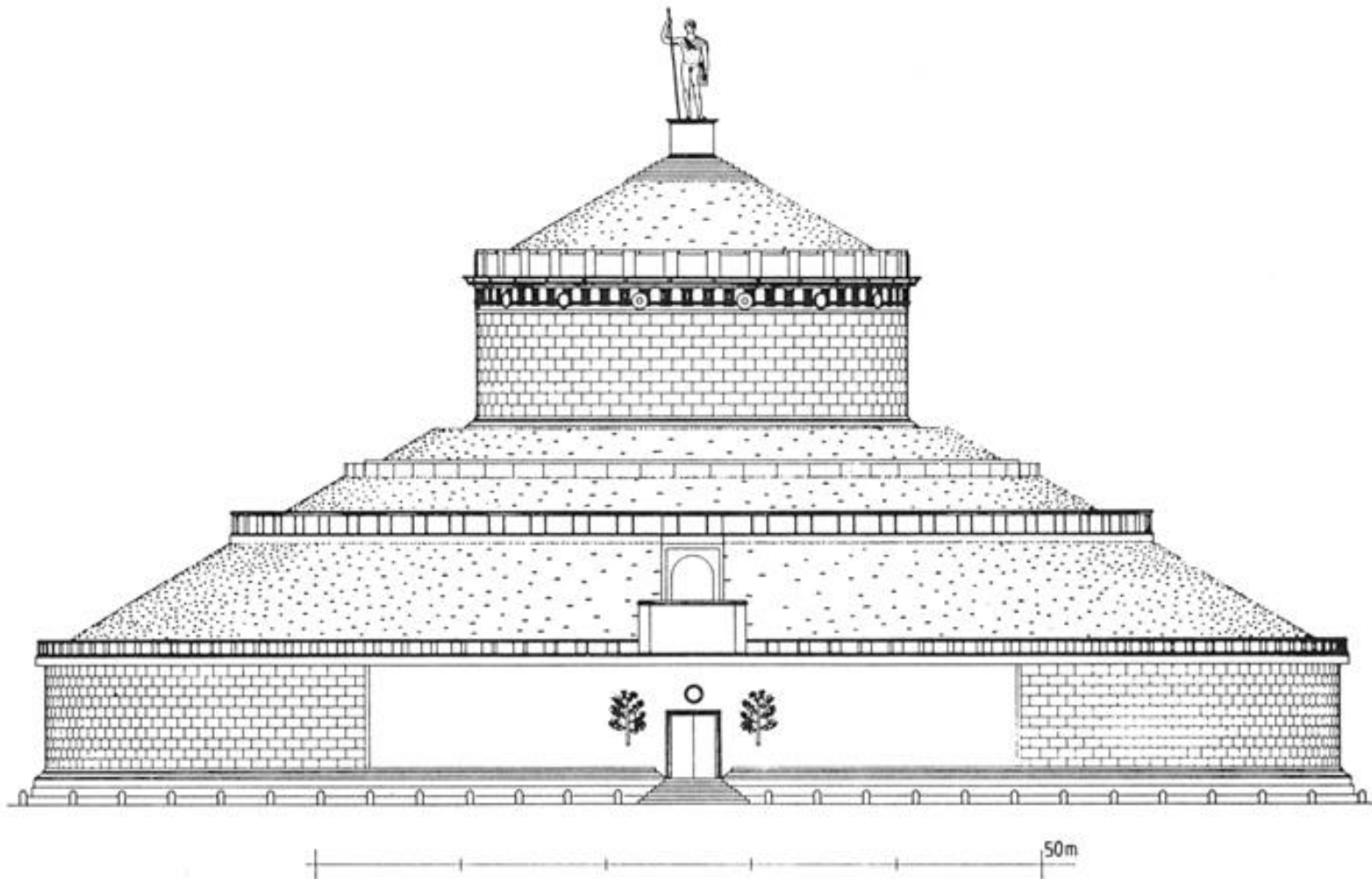
Via Appia Tomb of Caecilia Metella



VEDUTA del Latr. superiore del Mausoleo di Caecilia Metella, a sinistra, detto Cavo di
cavando fu demolito in buona parte, e quella ne resta visibile delle officine brulle protesse



Augustus' Mausoleum



Tombs and social stratification: Pyramid of C. Cestius (12 BC)



Ostia. Necropolis. Columbarium



Ostia. Columbarium with niches for urns.



Pompeii



Pompeii. Funerary monuments



Funerary inscriptions

- The most important testimonies on the life of the lower social strata in Rome, generally ignored by literary sources.
- Essential documents on social stratification and mobility.
- Information on: family, age, profession, origin, social relationships, public function, beliefs and religious associations,...

Funerary inscriptions: Main abbreviations

- **D D** = dono dedit (dedicated as gift)
- **D M** = Dis Manibus / **D M S** = Dis Manibus Sacrum (to the gods of the underworld)
- **F C** = Faciendum curavit (responsible for the making)
- **H D S P** = heres de suo posuit (his heirs themselves placed this)
- **H E T F** = heres ex testamento fecit (his heirs placed this as stipulated in his will)
- **H E T P** = heres ex testamento posuit (his heirs had this made as stipulated in his will)
- **H F C** = heres faciendum curavit (his heirs attended to/were responsible for the making [of this])

Epigraphy. Main abbreviations

- **H S E** = hic situs est (here he lies)
- **POS** = posuit (he has placed [this])
- **STTL** = sed tibi terra levis (May the *earth* be light upon you)
- **BM** = bene merenti (who well deerved it)



Funerary Inscriptions. Examples

D(IS) M(ANIBUS)
CAECILIUS AVIT
US EMER(ITA) AUGUSTA
OPTIO LEG(IONIS) XX
V(ALERIAE) V(ICTRICIS) ST(I)PENDORIUM XV VIX(IT)
AN(NOS) XXXIII
H(ERES) F(ACIDENDUM) C(URAVIT)

To the spirits of the departed
Caecilius Avitus
from Emerita Augusta
Optio of the 20th Legion
Valeria Victrix of 15 years service
lived 34 years
his heirs had this done

Epigraphy. Funerary inscriptions. Examples

- AE 1991 (1)
AE 1991, 0172a (2) (AD 1-50)

Dis Manib(us).

M(arco) Attìo Plocamo,
M(arcus) Attius Helenus
patrono suo
bene merenti fecit.

(To the gods of the underworld, Marcus Attius Helenus erected (this) for/to Marcus Attius Plocamus, his patron, who well deserved it)

Epigraphy. Funerary inscriptions. Examples

- Rome, via Ostiense, Not. Sc., 1919, p. 292, nr. 1
(AD 1-100)

US

Fortunatus
et Brittia Melpusa
filio benemerenti.

Epigraphy. Funerary inscriptions. Examples

Rome, Not. Sc., 1918, p. 21, nr. 3 (AD 1-100)

- Dīs Man(ibus).
Liviae Eutychiae
Q(uintus) Fonteius Modestus
et Q(uintus) Fonteius Abascant(us)
fecerunt sibi et
posterisq(ue) suis.

Epigraphy. Funerary inscriptions. Examples

- Rome, Via Sacra. Not. Sc., 1923, p. 370 (AD 101-200)

D(is) M(anibus)
Mindiae
Dynamini,
quae vix(it) an(nos) IX,
5 diēs XIIIX.
Haec condita
est **in sarcophago**.
P(ublius) Mindius Leonas
pater fil(iae) fec(it).

Epigraphy. Funerary inscriptions. Examples

- Rome, Not. Sc., 1920, p. 287, nr. 2 (AD 1-100)

D(is) M(anibus).
Refriae Agele
quae vix(it) ann(is) LX.
Faenia Apricla
matri dulcissi=
mae et pientissi=
mae b(ene) m(erenti) f(ecit).

Epigraphy. Funerary inscriptions

- Supp Itt, 02, 1983, p. 205, nr. 3 (con foto) (G. Mennella) - AE 1984 (1)
AE 1984, 0419 (2)
(AD 101-200)

D(is) M(anibus).

D(ecimo) Petronio

D(ecimi) f(ilio) Stel(latina) Proculo.

Vix(it) ann(is) XLV, mens(ibus) I,

dieb(us) VIII, h(oris) VIII.

5 Petronia Tyche patro=

no ben(e) mer(enti) fecit.

Funerary inscriptions, CIL VI 16740

“Daphnis and Chryseis, ex-slaves of Laco, for their Fortunatus. He lived 8 years. He perished in a pool in the Baths of Mars.”

Funerary relief. Liberti

- British Museum: funerary relief of Aurelius Hermia and his wife Aurelia Philematium, liberti (CIL 01.01221, c. 80 BC)



Funerary relief. Liberti. Medicus



Funerary relief. Liberti



Pompeii. Grave of L. Barbidius Communis



Pompeii. Tomb of M. Octavius



Pompeii. Tomb of M. Octavius

„M(arcus) Octavius M)arci) f(ilius)
Men(enia) et Vertia C(aiae) l(iberta)
Philumina in loco communi
monument(um) communem sibi et
postereisque suis fecerunt“

(Marcus Octavius, son of Marcus, from the
tribe Menenia, and Vertia Philumina,
liberta of Caia, built a common grave on
on common place for themselves and their
descendants)

Pompeii. Liberti. Grave of Flavius Philoxenus



Pompeii. Liberti. Grave of Cuspius Cyrus



Pompeii. Women. CIL X 998. Tomb of Mamia



- Mamiae P(ublii) f(iliae) sacerdoti publicae locus sepultar(ae) datus decurionum decreto

Women and Funerary Inscriptions. Pompeii

- **AE 1913, 71:** “To Septumia, daughter of Lucius. Granted by decree of the town councillors a burial place and 2000 sesterces for the funeral. Antistia Prima, daughter of Publius, her daughter, built (this monument).”
- **AE 1990, 179a:** “To Gaius Veranius Rufus, son of Quintus, duumvir; Verania Clara, freedwoman of Quintus, to her excellent patron, for herself and her household.”
- **AE 1990, 177a:** “Caecilia Agathia, freedwoman of Lucius, in her lifetime constructed (this) for herself and for Lucius Caecilius Dioscurides of Lucius, her husband.”

Funerary epitaphs. CIL iii 2083 (Salona).

- “Papiria Rhome made this [monument] for herself while alive, and for Papiria Cladilla aged 19, and for P.Papirius Proculus aged 13(?), her children. Here the wretched(?) mother held two funerals, and she buried their bones with rites that are not just. For at Rome a falling roof tile carried off Proculus. The deceased Cladilla lay on her funeral pyre at Sipontum. Your parental wishes did you harm. The cruel gods gave more good things so they could take more away. Also for P.Papirius Cladus her husband and for P.Papirius Celerio and Paipirai Hispanilla her ex-slaves.”

Pompeii. Tomb of P.Vesonius Phileros, AE 1986, 166a



"Publius Vesonius Phileros, freedman of a woman, Augustalis, built this monument for himself and his kin in his life time, for Vesonia daughter of Publius, his patron, and for Marcus Orfellius Faustus, son of Marcus, his friend"



Pompeii. Tomb of P. Vesonius Phileros, AE 1964, 160

“Stranger, delay a brief while if it is not troublesome, and learn what to avoid. This man whom I had hoped was my friend, I am forsaking: a case was maliciously brought against me; I was charged and legal proceedings were instituted; I give thanks to the gods and to my innocence, I was freed from all distress, May neither the household gods nor the gods below receive the one who misrepresented our affairs”

An imaginary epitaph. Petronius, Satyricon 71. The death of Trimalchio

HERE RESTS G POMPEIUS TRIMALCHIO
FREEDMAN OF MAECENAS DECREED
AUGUSTAL, SEVIR IN HIS ABSENCE
HE COULD HAVE BEEN A MEMBER OF
EVERY DECURIA OF ROME BUT WOULD
NOT CONSCIENTIOUS BRAVE LOYAL
HE GREW RICH FROM LITTLE AND LEFT
THIRTY MILLION SESTERCES BEHIND
HE NEVER HEARD A PHILOSOPHER
FAREWELL TRIMALCHIO
FAREWELL PASSERBY”