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Werner Eck und Peter Funke  
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Marcus Dohnicht, Klaus Hallof,  
Matthäus Heil und Manfred G. Schmidt

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Barbara E. Borg

## In search of senators deceased: Senatorial tomb building reconsidered

When studying metropolitan Roman tombs and burial customs, one is struck by the wealth of evidence for well-off freedmen and their first-generation descendants, but what is conspicuously lacking, at least from the mid-first century CE onwards, is a clearer idea of what the tombs of the first two orders, especially of the senatorial class, looked like. While it has always been acknowledged that inscriptions testify to the continued *erection* of senatorial tombs in suburban Rome, the general belief is that we do not, and cannot know much about them.

However, a contextual approach to the epigraphic evidence can demonstrate that the general ideas and ideologies of the late republican and Augustan elite continue to inform tomb building and decoration at least to the end of the third century.<sup>1</sup>

### 1. Tomb types

While there is indeed little evidence of newly erected senatorial tombs of the first century AD (most likely due to a new decorum after the establishment of the principate), from the beginning of the second century, senators start again to erect impressive tomb monuments. Their most popular type of mausoleum during the second and third centuries is the temple tomb, that is, a tomb that resembles a Roman podium temple with a flight of stairs at the front and a free-standing front porch. This is confirmed by the types of blocks that senatorial tituli are written on, especially architrave blocks such as CIL VI 41090 and 41207; by old and new discoveries of actual buildings (e. g. the tombs of M. Nonius Macrinus<sup>2</sup>); by *imperii insignia* on architectural blocks (such as a pair of *antae* from Ostia<sup>3</sup>); and by their association with villas whose owners are known from other evidence such as inscribed lead pipes (e. g. the tomb of M. Servilius Silanus on the via Latina<sup>4</sup>). In many of these tombs at least the front colonnade consisted of marble. The re-use of this material in later centuries is a major reason for the poor state of preservation of most of these tombs, and their neglect in modern scholarship.

## 2. *Multi-generational use of mausolea*

It is well-known that senatorial families of the late Republic and early imperial period used their tombs over several generations; the Scipiones and the Plautii are particularly well-known examples.<sup>5</sup> It is usually assumed that this habit was largely discontinued for the rest of the imperial period, but again the re-contextualization of epigraphic evidence suggests that it lived on into Late Antiquity. A prominent example is the tomb of the Licinii and Calpurnii on the via Salaria. After Frances Van Keuren was able to confirm its core content and general development, it is now a prime example of a tomb that was established in the first century AD, inherited in the male line into the early second century, bequeathed in the female line to a branch of the Calpurnii, who probably included Ser. Calpurnius Piso Orfitus and his brother L. Calpurnius Proculus Piso (*coss.* 172 and 175), and closed after this branch had become extinct in the early third century at the latest.<sup>6</sup> The family's interest in their ancestry is further confirmed by portraits set up in front of and inside the tomb. The tomb of the Acilii Glabrones on the via Salaria is less well documented, but the attribution is confirmed by sarcophagus inscriptions while the continuous use from the turn of the first and second centuries is demonstrated by archaeology.<sup>7</sup> That these are not mere chance discoveries is further confirmed by the names attested on tomb tituli from Rome and its immediate surroundings. They belong almost exclusively to *homines novi*, or to founders of new family lines with their own onomastic characteristics. They indicate that their descendants did not go on to build a new tomb in each generation, but that they continued the use of the family tomb until the family became extinct.

## 3. *Ideology*

A final aspect that we can start to understand much better through the re-contextualisation of inscriptions is the key ideologies expressed by the decoration, and especially the image decoration of senatorial tombs. The interior decoration of the few better preserved tombs is largely lost, but the remains confirm that the senatorial class mostly preferred marble incrustation to painted images. The same taste for costly materials but rather austere subjects informs senatorial cinerary altars and sarcophagi. The trends suggested by inscribed items are confirmed by further examples that can be attributed only through their context. Except for some Roman myths and Dionysiac themes, both altars and sarcophagi largely refrain from using mythical images but rather prefer garlands, eagles, victories, griffons, religious paraphernalia, portraits, and images referring to their offices, while the most prominent burials are often those in the largest but least decorated sarcophagi. The most prominent themes are therefore monu-

mentality and display of wealth, and references to military victory, offices, and status.

Barbara E. Borg, Exeter  
b.e.borg@ex.ac.uk

#### Notes:

- 1 This question will form a key part of a monograph entitled Borg, B. E., *The art of commemoration in second-century CE Rome* (forthcoming).
- 2 Rossi, D. and M. Arizza (eds), *Sulla via Flaminia: il mausoleo di Marco Nonio Macrino* (2012).
- 3 Schäfer, T., *Imperii insignia, Sella curulis und Fasces: Zur Repräsentation römischer Magistrate* (1989) 375 no. B4 pl. 86; 87.1.
- 4 *LTURS III* (2005) 168 s. v. Latina via (F. Montella)
- 5 *LTUR IV* (1999) 281–5 figs. 136–8 s. v. Sepulcrum (Corneliorum) Scipionum (F. Zevi); Mari, Z., *Tibur IV* (Rome 1991) 196–210 no. 128.
- 6 For the finds see Van Keuren, F., 'Unpublished documents shed new light on the Licinian Tomb, discovered in 1884–1885, Rome', *MAAR* 48 (2003) 53–139, with bibl.
- 7 Tolotti, F., *Il cimitero di Priscilla: studio di topografia e architettura* (Vatican City 1970) for the catacomb in general.

Claudio Zaccaria

### *Et tibi ... et tu.* Forme di dialogo nella necropoli di Aquileia

L'unico tratto di via funeraria visibile *in situ* ad Aquileia è quello a sud-ovest della città. E' comunque possibile immaginare l'impatto dei monumenti (mausolei, edicole con statue, stele a ritratti, are funerarie con rilievi) che si affacciavano sulle vie sepolcrali, esibendo ai passanti *per titulos et imagines* la posizione sociale ed economica dei committenti. Meno evidenti, e spesso frammentarie, sono le testimonianze di dialoghi tra vivi e morti affidati alle iscrizioni.

Le forme di saluto *salvetis/salve*, esclusive dell'età repubblicana, compaiono tra II e I sec. a. C. sulla stele dei fratelli *Spedii* (CIL V 1382), con *ianua Ditis* e *Gorgoneion*, e su quelle di *Q. Ovidius* (IAq 3441) e di un *Pacaenus* (IAq 3443), che presentano onomastica e tipologia di area marsica e sannitica. Nel I sec. a. C. *vale* chiude la dedica a un liberto (CIL V 1191) e appare la forma dialogica [*sal*]ve ... et tu v[ale] (IAq 3466). La prassi del semplice saluto ritorna - nella forma *have* - su sarcofagi di età imperiale (IAq 553, 793, 1114, 1398, 1407; AE