

Games, banquets, handouts, and the population of Pompeii as deduced from a new tomb inscription

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The Editorial Committee of JRA greatly appreciates the extraordinary public-spiritedness of the author in making available to the scholarly community the full text of the inscription so soon after its discovery and well before the true editio princeps has been prepared. Recognizing that its interpretation will be the subject of much debate and discussion, which indeed began at the conference “Studium erga populum, studium erga sapientiam, in ricordo di Enzo Lippolis” held in Naples on July 12, 2018, we plan to offer space in vol. 32 for this purpose.

A monumental tomb has been discovered at Pompeii in the Stabian Gate area during renovation work on a public building, constructed in the early 19th c., that currently houses the offices of the Archaeological Park. The tomb is part of a necropolis that developed alongside an important gate in the S sector of the city walls. In this area, 19th-c. investigations brought to light the gate as well as a section of paved road and two *schola* tombs in grey tuff, set directly on the left side of those leaving the city, on public ground and therefore authorised by the *ordo decurionum* (fig. 1).¹ The first of the tombs is that of Marcus Tullius, a prominent figure in Pompeian society known for the dedication of the Temple of Fortuna Augusta; the second belongs to the *duumvir* Marcus Alleius Minius. Research was first conducted here by A. Maiuri, then again in the period 2001-2 when an additional stretch of paved road and two tombs on its right side were brought to light. The new, ongoing excavation, launched in 2016 to consolidate the foundations of the 19th-c. building but complicated by that building's looming presence, led to the rediscovery of a monumental tomb which had actually been found, partially excavated and robbed at the moment of the construction of the 19th-c. building.

The monument, located on the left side of the street, is of a type unparalleled at Pompeii (fig. 2). Above a grey tuff base stands a square-shaped structure with concave sides 6 m long encased in marble. It is made up of a curvilinear seat and shelf and a rectilinear drum bearing a long epigraph on its W side, surmounted by a moulded cornice. The upper part, unfortunately badly damaged by the 19th-c. works, contains the bare cement nucleus of the burial chamber whose vaulted roof has been destroyed (fig. 3). The circular chamber was looted in the 19th c. The access to it was on the E side, opposite the main façade with the inscription. The chamber contained niches to accommodate cinerary urns. The presence on the top of the cornice of impressions of pivots for fixing the marble slab covering the concrete nucleus of the chamber leads us to hypothesise that the upper part of the monument had a core encased in marble, similar to the lower part. The top part of the structure (an aedicule?) is destined to remain unknown unless new chance discoveries are made in the area.

The monument bears a long inscription on its W side (figs. 4-8):

Hic togae virilis suae epulum populo pompeiano triclinis CCCCLVI ita ut in triclinis quinideni homines discumberent (*hedera*). Munus gladiat(ori)um / adeo magnum et splendendum dedit ut cuius ab urbe lautissimae coloniae conferendum esset ut pote cum CCCXVI gladiatores in ludo habuer(it ?) et cum / munus eius in caritate annonae incidisset, propter quod quadriennio eos pavit, potior ei cura civium suorum fuit quam rei familiaris; nam cum

1 G. Stefani, *Pompei oltre la vita. Nuove testimonianze dalle necropoli* (Pompeii 1998) 33-35; A. L. C. Emmerson, “Reconstructing the funerary landscape at Pompeii's Porta Stabia,” *RStPomp* 21 (2010) 77-86; A. Maiuri, “Studi e ricerche sulle fortificazioni di Pompei,” *MemAcLinc* 33 (1930) 191-206.