

Marcus Encolpus' Tomb Inscription

Post by “Cassius” of July 6, 2023 at 1:15 PM

Directing your attention to footnote 57 of the below clip (rather than to the highlighted text) contains some interesting and specifically Epicurean text referring to Marcus Encolpus' friends and his position on key Epicurean issues.

It would be interesting to track down the full Latin and maybe find a photo.

Found at Naples, of Republican date⁵² and with Greek overtones,⁵³ it commemorates someone otherwise known to us not as an Epicurean but as an entrepreneur (he rebuilt the Odeon of Pericles at Athens after its destruction by Sulla). There is no sustainable link with the Pisones, Philodemus, or Lucretius. But as a bit of Epicurean poetry, the distich dovetails with the flourishing Epicureanism in Campania in the late Republic, perhaps of the 'voluptuary variety' attacked by Cicero in *Against Piso*.⁵⁴ The epitaph describes the dead Stallius, formerly a member of the pleasure-loving Epicurean *chorus*, guarding his *sedes* in death.⁵⁵ As an Epicurean,⁵⁶ he presumably also watched carefully over his domain during his life, concerned with how best to administer it. Now his effigy, as the inscription announces, guards *has sedes* for all time. They remain strictly mundane.⁵⁷ As an Epicurean he expected no other, but believed he had attained the kind of timeless ideal of pleasure in life proclaimed in his epitaph, as he thought of himself as watching over it eternally (*tuetur*).

⁵¹ CLE 961 = CIL 10.2971 = ILS 7781. The epitaph was brought to my attention by Ted Courtney, whose edition of and commentary on it is invaluable: *Musa Lapidaria: A Selection of Latin Verse Inscriptions* (Atlanta 1995) 48 (no. 22) and 241 (comm.). Further discussion in M. Leiwo, *Neapolitana: A Study of Population and Language in Graeco-Roman Naples* (Comm. Human. Litt. 102, Helsinki 1994) 130–31, who comments on the Campanian Greek traces in its latinity. The epitaph is not mentioned by M. Gigante, *Civiltà delle forme letterarie nell'antica Pompei* (Naples 1979), but see id., "Virgilio all'ombra del Vesuvio," *Cerc* 31 (2001) (forthcoming).

⁵² On metrical grounds (scansions *Stalliu'* and *Hauranu'*).

⁵³ The termination *-eius* is "pure Greek" (Courtney). For the *χορός* of philosophers see on Philod. *De piet.* 2491.

⁵⁴ So Courtney: "The tone is very much that of *Epicuri de grege porcum*."

⁵⁵ *Sedes* could of course mean simply 'environs,' 'situation.' But *tuetur* suggests proprietary rights, an ironical topos in monumental epitaphs.

⁵⁶ Actually *Epicureius* (here transferred poetically to *chorus*) indicates that Stallius was no mere Epicurean, but rather an Epicurean *philosophus*, i.e. teacher. Cf. the other instances of *Epicureius*, *Stoicus*, and *philosophus* cited in CIL ad loc.; for philosophical designations in inscriptions and papyri see J. and L. Robert, *REG* 71 (1958) 197–200.

⁵⁷ Perhaps as a sort of guardian deity, continuing to keep a benign watch over the property (see *OLD* s.v. *tueri* 2b). Cf. the divine *sedes* of *Lucr.* 3.18. The point is made more bluntly in *IGUR* 1245 (Rome II/III) in which the wealthy Epicurean M. Antonius Encolpus grants space in his tomb to his many *liberti* (except one, who is explicitly excluded), declaring to anyone who cares to read that now that he is dead he can categorically deny the existence of the river of Hades, of Charon, Aiakos and the hound Kerberos (ll. 14–15).

⁵⁸ Cf. H. Nettleship, *Ancient Lives of Virgil* (Oxford 1879) 37.

⁵⁹ Vergil's debt to Naples here is echoed by Ovid in his telling of Aesculapius' arrival in Italy: *Met.* 15.711–12 *Herculeamque urbem Stabiasque et in otia natam / Parthenopen*. Cf. *Stat. Silv.* 4.4.52–55 where Parthenope = Vergil.

This comes from the post here: [Names Applied to the Epicureans by Themselves Or Others](#)

Post by “Cassius” of July 7, 2023 at 9:15 AM

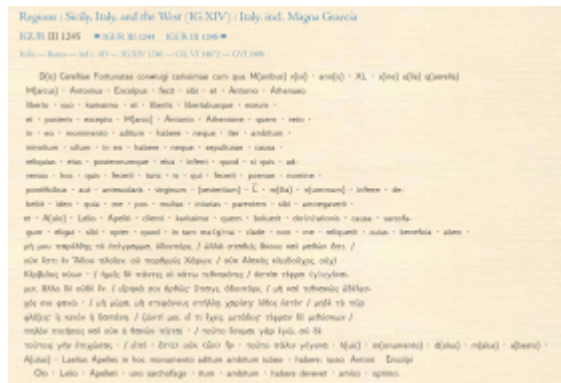
57 Perhaps as a sort of guardian deity, continuing to keep a benign watch over the property (see *OLD* s.v. *tueri* 2b). Cf. the divine *sedes* of *Lucretius* 3.18. The point is made more bluntly in *IGUR 1245* (Rome II/III) in which the wealthy Epicurean *M. Antonius Encolpus* grants space in his tomb to his many *liberti* (except one, who is explicitly excluded), declaring to anyone who cares to read that now that he is dead he can categorically deny the existence of the river of Hades, of *Charon*, *Aiakos* and the hound *Kerberos* (ll. 14–15).

This is the text to which it would be interesting to find the Latin, and to scrutinize exactly what he says - including what I would say is probably a good sense of humor!

Post by “Cassius” of July 7, 2023 at 9:16 AM

[Not sure yet if this is the correct text:](#)

[IGUR III 1245 - PHI Greek Inscriptions](#)



D(is) Cerelliae Fortunatae coniugi carissimae cum qua M(anibus) v(ixi) • ann(is) • XL • s(ine) u(lla) q(uerella)

M(arcus) • Antonius • Encolpus • fecit • sibi • et • Antonio • Athenaeo

liberto • suo • karissimo • et • libertis • libertabusque • eorum •
et • posteris • excepto • M(arco) • Antonio • Athenione • quem • veto •
in • eo • monumento • aditum • habere • neque • iter • ambitum •
introitum • ullum • in eo • habere • neque • sepulturae • causa •
reliquias • eius • posterorumque • eius • inferri • quod • si quis • ad-
versus • hoc • quis • fecerit • tunc • is • qui • fecerit • poenae • nomine •
pontificibus • aut • antescolaris • virginum • (sestertium) • L • m(ilia) • n(ummum) • inferre •
de-
bebit • ideo • quia • me • pos • multas • iniurias • parentem • sibi • amnegaverit •
et • A(ulo) • Lelio • Apeliti • clienti • karissimo • quem • boluerit • do<n>ationis • causa •
sarcofa-
gum • eligat • sibi • opter • quod • in tam ma<g>na • clade • non • me • reliquerit • cuius •
beneficia • abeo

Post by “Cassius” of July 7, 2023 at 9:26 AM

This original text may be better than the footnote as it appears significantly more detailed.

Hope we can eventually find a photo of it.

Post by “Don” of July 7, 2023 at 10:32 AM

This is a great find. I'll work on the Greek eventually unless someone else wants to! Up for grabs.

I ran the first Latin part through Google Translate:

Dis Cerellia Fortunata, my dearest wife, with whom I have lived 40 years without any complaint, Marcus Antonius Encolpus made for himself and Antonius Athenaeus his dearest freedman and their freedmen and liberties and their posterity except • Marcus Antonius Athenianus, whom I

forbid to have access to that monument nor the path around the entrance to have none in it, nor for the sake of burial to bring the remains of him and his descendants, because if anyone does anything against this, then the one who did it in the name of punishment to the pontiffs or to the "antescolaris" virgins will have to bring 50,000 sesterces in money, because he has denied me many wrongs to his parent and to Aulus Laelius Apelitis, the dearest client whom he chooses for the donation of the sarcophagus, he chooses for himself, because he has not left me in such a great defeat, whose benefits I leave.

("antescolaris" is a kind of teacher)

Post by "Joshua" of July 7, 2023 at 10:54 AM

Translated:

[Marcus Antonius Encolpus: Unbelieving Epitaph \(From Greek\)](#)

Skepticism about the afterlife is not recent. Even in societies of millennia past that might strike us as being immensely superstitious, th...

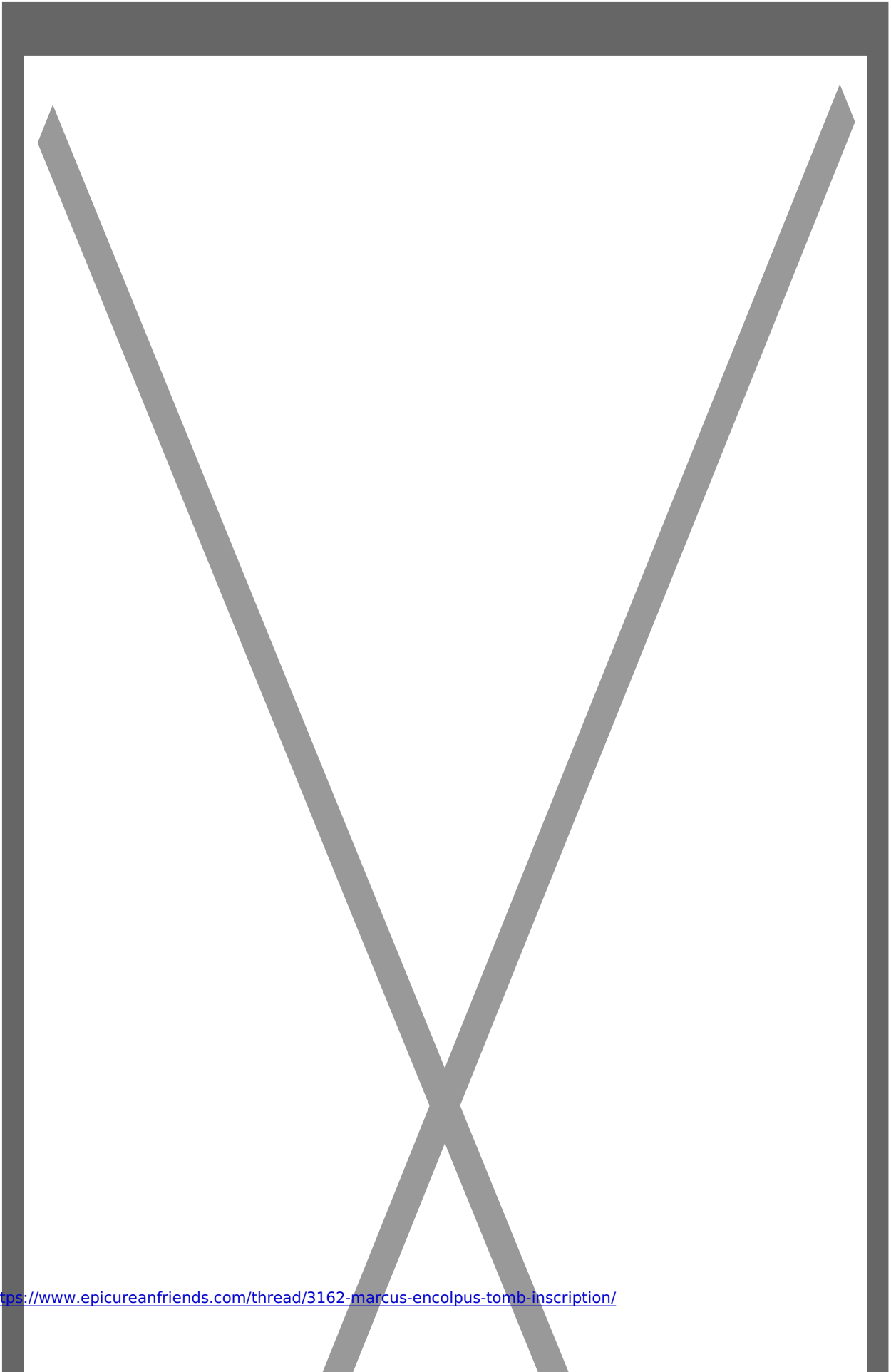
poemsintranslation.blogspot.com

"Dis" is not part of his wife's name, but seems to relate to the word discedere, "to depart". He built the tomb after she died (departed), for both of them, as well as for their liberti, freed slaves.

Post by "Don" of July 7, 2023 at 10:58 AM

Could it be for Dis (the name of Pluto?)?

Image not found or type unknown



Post by “Cassius” of July 7, 2023 at 11:18 AM

So this is combined Italian and Greek, but found in Italy? I would not have thought that inscriptions would be combined in different languages like that

[Regions Sicily, Italy, and the West \(IG XIV\) Italy, incl. Magna Graecia](#)

[IGUR III 1245](#) [IGUR III 1244](#) [IGUR III 1246](#)

[]

Italia — Roma — 3rd c. AD — IG XIV 1746 — CIL VI 14672 — GVI 1906

Post by “Don” of July 7, 2023 at 11:20 AM

[Quote from Cassius](#)

So this is combined Italian and Greek, but found in Italy? I would not have thought that inscriptions would be combined in different languages like that

[Regions Sicily, Italy, and the West \(IG XIV\) Italy, incl. Magna Graecia](#)

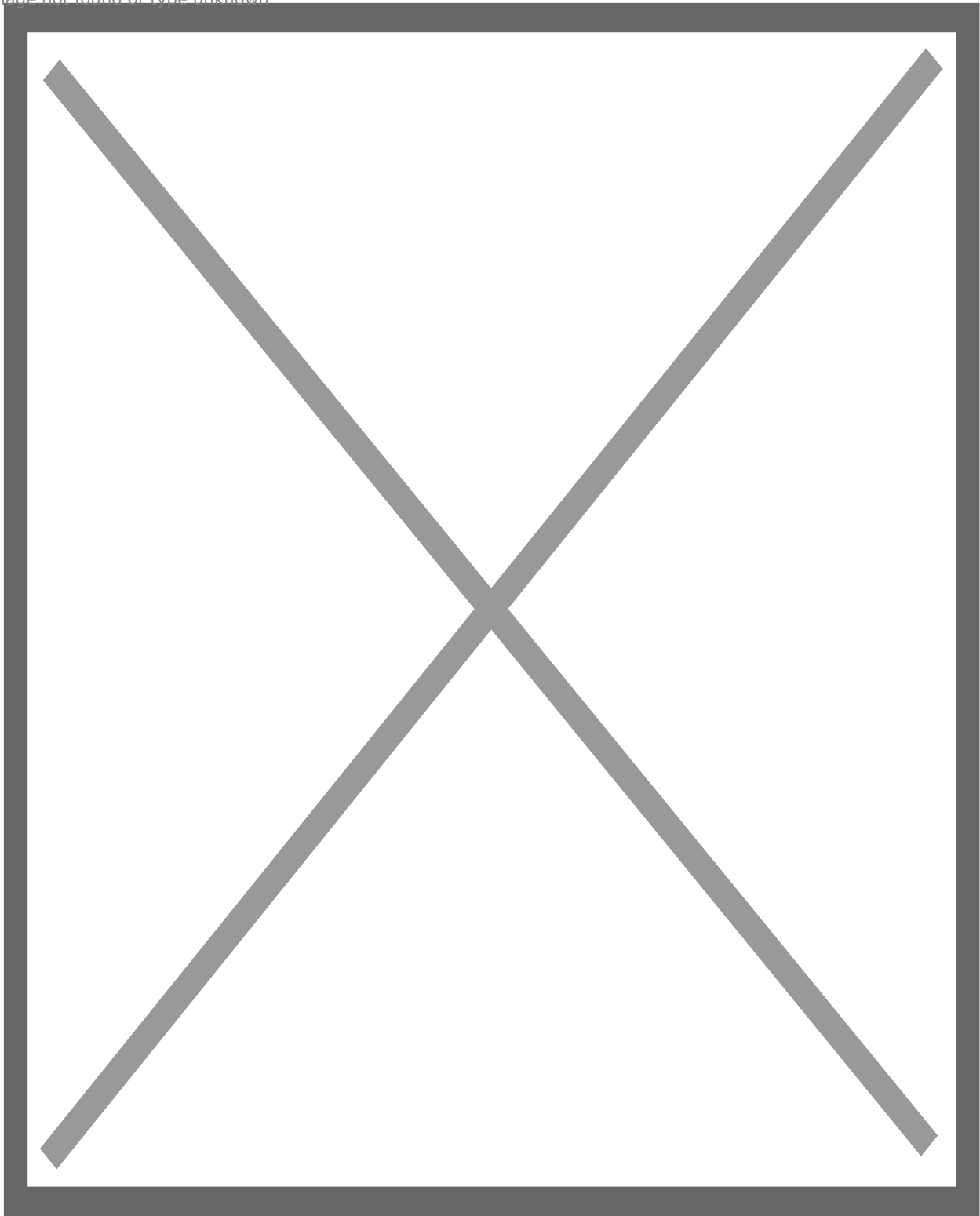
[IGUR III 1245](#) [IGUR III 1244](#) [IGUR III 1246](#)

[]

Italia — Roma — 3rd c. AD — IG XIV 1746 — CIL VI 14672 — GVI 1906

Oh, Greek culture and language were ubiquitous in the Mediterranean. "Magna Graecia" is Greater Greece

Image not found or type unknown



[Magna Graecia - Wikipedia](https://en.wikipedia.org)
en.wikipedia.org

Post by "Joshua" of July 7, 2023 at 11:48 AM

That's the whole significance of the Rosetta stone, being carved in two languages and in three scripts (going from memory).

Post by "Don" of July 7, 2023 at 12:19 PM

[Quote from Joshua](#)

Translated:

<http://poemsintranslation.blogspot.com/2014/12/marcus...ellias.html?m=1>

"Dis" is not part of his wife's name, but seems to relate to the word discedere, "to depart". He built the tomb after she died (departed), for both of them, as well as for their liberti, freed slaves.

That's a great find, Joshua! Well done!

I had just begun to translate the Greek, and, yep, That's a good fluid translation there! I'm going to paste their translation here because it's too good for people to miss if they don't click the link:

Do not pass by my epitaph, dear passer-by.

Stop. Read and learn, and when you understand, go on:

There is no Charon waiting on a boat in Hades.

No judge named Aeacus, no dog called Cerberus.

All of us who've gone dead down here are now no more

Than rotting bone and ash. I've told it as it is

And have no more to say. Now, passer-by, go on

And know I keep the rule of dead men: tell no tales.

This tomb's just stone. So bring no myrrh or garlands.

Do not waste money on a fire.

If you want to gift me something, you should have

Done it when I was still alive.

If you mix wine with ash you just get mud.

Besides, the dead do not drink wine.

Just sprinkle some soil. Say: what I was before

I was, I have become once more.

Post by “Joshua” of July 7, 2023 at 1:35 PM

Quote

Could it be for Dis (the name of Pluto?)?

That's very likely part of the equation!

Post by “Bryan” of July 7, 2023 at 6:47 PM

Good stuff guys. The Greek looks something like

"μή μου παρέλθης τὸ ἐπίγραμμα, ὁδοιπόρε,

ἀλλὰ σταθεὶς ἄκουε καὶ μαθῶν ἄπι.

οὐκ ἔστι ἐν Ἄδου πλοῖν, οὐ πορθμεὺς Χάρων,

οὐκ Αἰακὸς κλειδοῦχος, οὐχὶ Κέρβελος κύων.

ἡμεῖς δὲ πάντες οἱ κάτω τεθνηκότες

ὄστέα τέφρα γεγόναμεν, ἄλλο δὲ οὐδὲ ἔν.

εἴρηκά σοι ὀρθῶς. ὕπαγε, ὁδοιπόρε,

μη καὶ τεθνακῶς ἀδέλεσχός σοι φανῶ.

[μη μύρα, μη στεφάνους στήλλη χαρίση λίθος ἐστίν.]

μηδὲ τὸ πῦρ φλέξεις. ἰς κενὸν ἢ δαπάνη.

ζῶντί μοι, εἴ τι ἔχεις, μετάδος. τέφραν δὲ μεθύσκων

πηλὸν ποιήσεις καὶ οὐκ ὁ θανῶν πίεται.

τοῦτο ἔσομαι γὰρ ἐγώ, σὺ δὲ τούτοις γῆν ἐπιχώσας.

εἰπέ. ὅτι οὐκ ὦν ἦν. τοῦτο πάλιν γέγονα."

Which is something like "Do not pass by my epitaph, traveler, but stand and listen. But, having learned, depart. There is no boat in Hades, no ferryman Charon, no key-bearer Aeacus, no Cerberus. We have all become ashes, bones of the dead below, and there is no other way. I have spoken rightly to you. Now go on! Traveler- do not let me, who has died, appear to you as a ghost. Please refrain from presenting fragrances or sending floral arrangements. This is just stone. Do not kindle the fire. It is a waste of effort. Give what you have to the living. For the dead, mixing ashes with clay will suffice, and the dead do not drink. Having returned to the earth, this is what I will be to you. Tell them: 'He who did not exist, came into being - (then) he went back!'"

Post by "Don" of July 7, 2023 at 7:11 PM

I like the poetic aspect of the one Joshua found.

But I really like the more literal translation that Bryan offered above!

Once again, translation is hard 🤔 😊 😬

Post by "Eikadistes" of July 7, 2023 at 9:11 PM

Speaking of Epicurean tombs, I came across another inscription that incorporates the "*fui, non fui, no sum, non curo*" epitaph. This inscription comes from the tombstone of a Greek Gladiator named Antiochas (c. 2nd-century BCE)

ΑΝΤΙΟΧΑΣ Ο ΠΡΙΝ ΕΦΕΣΙΣ.

ΟΥΚ ΗΜΗΝ ΚΑΙ ΓΕΝΑΜΗΝ·

ΟΥΚ ΙΜΙ ΚΑΙ ΟΥ ΜΕΛΙ ΜΟΙ·

ΧΑΙΡΕΤΕ ΠΑΡΟΔΙΤΑΙ.

Ἀτιοχᾶ[ς] [ὁ πρὶν] Ἐφέσις.

[Ο]ὐκ ἤμην [καὶ] γενάμην·

οὐκ ἰμί καὶ [ο]ὐ μέλι μοι·

χ[α]ίρετε παροδίται.

Antiochas formerly named Ephesios.

I was not alive and was born.

I am no longer alive and do not mind.

Hello, passers-by!