

CENTURIONS AT AMITERNUM: NOTES ON THE APISIUS FAMILY

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RELIEFS EXCAVATED FROM THE ENVIRONS of the ancient city of Amiternum, located approximately one hundred and thirty-five kilometres northeast of Rome, warrant a new interpretation.¹ The first, depicting two armed individuals with their attendants, represents gladiators engaged in combat (Plate 1). The more famous of the two, because of its depiction of the deceased on the funerary bier, is the funeral procession or *pompa funebris* (Plate 2).² This image includes family members, musicians, and attendants, as well as military symbols for this life and religious symbols for the hereafter which the deceased or members of his family may have wished to emphasize. Scholars have taken a keen interest in this particular relief because it provides a rare glimpse into the depiction of Roman funerary processions known to us mainly through literary sources.³

My concern, however, lies in providing the name and occupation of the deceased portrayed on the funeral bier in order to shed light on both his ambitions and those of his family in Amiternum's society. By carefully examining the archaeological context, iconography, and the inscriptions themselves, it will be possible to demonstrate how the family, members of the *gens Apisia*, wished to have this centurion memorialized. In particular an epitaph found in the original cache helps to make a positive identification of the deceased as one Publius Apisius, a centurion who was commemorated on a funerary monument located near Amiternum during the first half of the first century B.C.E. This epitaph and other features from the original find are frequently cited, yet what is often overlooked—and what I would like to elaborate upon further—is how the pieces of the monument fit together.⁴ The discussion will then turn to the epitaph of the freedman Publius Apisius Salvius (*CIL* IX.4226). The epitaph of this former

I would like to thank the anonymous referees of *Phoenix* for their detailed assessments, which have helped to improve the overall argument. Special thanks also go to Karen E. Ros, Hanne Sigismund Nielsen, Peter Toohey, and Aaron Hughes for their comments on this piece. Initial funding for this project was made possible by a SSHRC Dissertation Fellowship (1996–97).

¹Leosini 1879: 145–147; Persichetti 1908: 15–25 and 1912: 298–310; Strong 1912: 153–156; Fuhrmann 1949: 23–65; Felletti Maj 1977: 119–124; Segenni 1979: 39–41; Kleiner 1992: 103–105. The most extensive treatment of this relief is found in Franchi 1963–64: 23–32. More recently see Bodel 1999: 259–282; Holliday 2002: 142–144.

²The only other example that depicts the deceased lying in state comes from the late Flavian or early Trajanic Tomb of the Haterii: see Kleiner 1992: 196–199.

³The sources focus on the funerary processions of the aristocratic freeborn elite. For a rich discussion concerning the funerals of Roman aristocrats, see Flower 1996.

⁴Luisa Franchi (1963–64: 23) has stated that it is difficult to identify the owner of the monument positively. In her view, none of the extant epigraphic evidence provides measurements that would

slave has never seen any detailed discussion in terms of his relation to the *gens Apisia*. This study will argue, however, that the reliefs and the inscriptions taken together show how the Apisii, though not of aristocratic birth, commemorated themselves as a family with great social ambitions.

I. DESCRIPTION OF THE FIND-SPOT AND THE RELIEFS

Amiternum is a site rarely mentioned in the ancient literary sources.⁵ The archaeological remains, however, can shed unexpected light on its former inhabitants. Primarily late republican and imperial in date, this evidence includes tombs, inscriptions, baths, an aqueduct, villas, a theatre, and an amphitheatre.⁶ Of particular interest is a stretch of the ancient Via Salaria located one kilometre south of the amphitheatre.⁷ Here, in 1874, thanks to the construction of a modern roadway leading to the nearby town of Preturo, excavators found several tombs. The finds included four *tympaña*, numerous inscriptions, and two carved reliefs from a group of tombs dating from the late Republican to early Augustan periods.⁸ The two reliefs that are the focus of my discussion derive from this group of tombs. Even though the tomb from which these reliefs originated was not found intact, it seems likely—on the basis of material, measurements, and construction techniques—that both reliefs are from the same tomb.⁹ First, they are both fashioned from the same local limestone.¹⁰ Second, the dimensions of each relief are similar. The gladiatorial relief measures 1.65 m long, 0.715 m wide, and 0.48 m deep, while the funerary procession relief measures 1.64 m long, 0.65 m wide and 0.40 m deep. Third, construction methods also indicate that the reliefs come from the same tomb. The two reliefs are meant to be inserted into the wall of the monument but do not constitute part of a continuous frieze.¹¹ In addition the backs of the slabs have been left unfinished; slight recesses appear on the upper edges that would fit into projecting nodules of another slab; and

have corresponded to the monument. Her line of reasoning, however, is faulty since the monument was not found *in situ*; nor does a *titulus* have to be the same size as the reliefs.

⁵References to Amiternum include Col. 10, 422; Liv. 26.11; Plin. *HN* 3.12.17; and Hier. *Chron.* a. Abr. 1930.

⁶*Princeton Encyclopedia of Classical Sites* s.v. Amiternum. See also Segenni 1985 and Gallo 1995 for a detailed account of the remains from Amiternum and its environs.

⁷Franchi (1963–64: 23) incorrectly calls it the Via Caecilia.

⁸The finds are now housed in the Museo Nazionale d'Abruzzo in L'Aquila. See Leosini 1879: 145–147 and Persichetti 1912: 298–310; see also *CIL* IX.4454, 4460, 4465–67, 4471, 4477, 4480, 4480a, 4482, 4486, 4487.

⁹Franchi (1963–64: 23–24) has established that the reliefs have come from the same monument on the basis of material, measurements, and construction techniques. She does not, however, mention tomb type.

¹⁰See Franchi 1963–64: 23–24, 31–32, n. 63. The limestone of medium hardness is most likely the one that Vitruvius says was quarried near Amiternum (*De arch.* 2.7.1).

¹¹The isolation of the figures within a frame indicates that these reliefs are not part of a continuous frieze: see Felletti Maj 1977: 120.

traces of lead on the procession relief suggest use of clamping to create further stability.¹²

Dates for the reliefs ranging as early as the first century B.C.E. and as late as first century C.E. have been suggested.¹³ I argue that iconographic clues such as armament, clothing, and hairstyles establish a late Republican date for these reliefs, more specifically, the first half of the first century B.C.E. The helmets and shields depicted on the gladiatorial relief find close stylistic parallels with traditional military equipment used in the Republic.¹⁴ For example, each fighter wears a ribbed helmet with curved triangular cheek-pieces extending from each side of his head, similar to the type seen near the funeral bier of the deceased on the procession relief. The figure on the right wears a plumed helmet whereas the figure on the left has an elephant trunk extension affixed to the helmet. These items have stylistic parallels with helmets of the late second and late first centuries B.C.E., while larger cheek pieces were characteristic of the imperial period.¹⁵ The shields also provide important evidence for dating the relief to the late Republic. Shields excavated from this period are similar to those depicted on the relief. They are rectangular and have spines running down the middle, as well as rectangular metal bosses that intersect the spines.¹⁶

The second of the two reliefs, commonly known as the "funeral procession" or *pompa funebris*, also includes important stylistic clues, such as hair and clothing styles, that confirm a date in the first half of the first century B.C.E. The women who appear in the upper left-hand corner of the relief wear a hairstyle that is characteristic of the early to mid-first century B.C.E.¹⁷ The clothing styles of the male and female figures depicted on this relief also date to the first half of the first century B.C.E. The pallbearers and musicians wear short-sleeved tunics and form-fitting togas (the *toga exigua*) with heavily bunched fabric at the waist and hemlines falling just below the knee;¹⁸ and the female figures in the upper left center of the relief wear tunics and *pallae* that also date to between 75 and 40 B.C.E.¹⁹ Both reliefs, independently of one another, give indications of having been created in the first half of the first century B.C.E.

¹² Franchi (1963–64: 23–24) believes that these recesses would have held either inscriptions or the cornice of the tomb.

¹³ For an early date (mid-first century B.C.E.), see Franchi 1963–64: 31–32. Kleiner (1992: 104) assigns these reliefs to the Augustan period. Although he does not provide an explanation, Moretti (1968: 278, 284) assigns a first-century C.E. date for the procession relief and a second- to first-century B.C.E. date for the gladiator relief.

¹⁴ Felletti Maj 1977: 120; Junkelmann 2000: 37.

¹⁵ Bishop and Coulston 1993: 60. For helmets of the Celtic-Italic tradition, see Junkelmann 2000: 51–66.

¹⁶ Bishop and Coulston 1993: 82.

¹⁷ Kleiner 1977: 27–131.

¹⁸ Kleiner 1992: 144–145; Kleiner 1977: 40; Kleiner and Kleiner 1980–81: 125–127; Richardson and Richardson, Jr. 1966: 261–263.

¹⁹ Kleiner 1977: 155.

II. IDENTIFYING THE DECEASED

It is my contention that the deceased figure represented on the funerary bier of the *pompa funebris* can be named. In the past, based upon purely iconographic analyses dealing with composition and symbolism, scholars have described the deceased as an important citizen—perhaps a magistrate, a soldier, or even a freed slave.²⁰ The most commonly accepted description is of him as a soldier, but he has been left unnamed. Inscriptions from the original find-spot, however, can help to solve this particular piece of the puzzle.²¹ I suggest that the deceased depicted on the funerary bier in the *pompa funebris* relief is Publius Apisius, a centurion. By showing that the funerary monument that housed these ornate reliefs was a family tomb belonging to the Apisius household, the argument for the association of the reliefs with the centurion can be strengthened. To demonstrate this, a systematic examination of the inscriptions belonging to the Apisii from Amiternum is essential.

CIL I².1870=*CIL* IX.4454=*ILLRP* 501. Found in a cache of inscriptions outside Amiternum (Preturo): 0.37 m x 0.62 m. Local limestone.

Fulonia T.f.

P.Apsi.P.f.

centur.

In fron.p.XVI.

Fulonia, daughter of Titus. [In memory of] Publius Apisius, son of Publius, centurion. 16 feet in front.

CIL I².1863=*CIL* IX.4465. Found in a cache of inscriptions outside Amiternum (Preturo). 0.54 m x 0.37 m: 0.50 m x 0.37 m; 0.60 m x 0.48 m. Local limestone. Three different *tituli* with identical text reading:²²

L. Apsi. Tit.f.

Maiai.L.f.

Apisiai.L.f.

C.Apsi.L.f.

[In memory of] Lucius Apisius, son of Titus.

[In memory of] Maia, daughter of Lucius.

²⁰ Persichetti (1908: 18) first noted that the deceased was a figure in the Roman army, making this claim solely on the basis of the iconographic evidence. Franchi (1963–64: 27) believed that the deceased was a municipal official. Segenni (1979: 40) maintained that the deceased was a Roman soldier, but did not support this claim with any epigraphic evidence. Kleiner (1992: 103–105) does not specify directly that the deceased was a freed slave, although she categorizes the relief under the art of the freed slave. Most recently, Holliday (2002: 142–144) has postulated that we are dealing with a local magistrate.

²¹ Leosini 1879: 145–147. See *CIL* IX.4454, 4458–60, 4465–67, 4471, 4480, 4482, 4486, 4487, 4491.

²² Mommsen notes that there are only two stelai (*CIL* X.4465).

[In memory of] Apisia, daughter of Lucius.
 [In memory of] Caius Apisius, son of Lucius.

CIL IX.4237. Found in the pavement of the church in S. Vittorino. No longer extant.²³

L. Apisi. Tit. f.
Maiai. L. f.
Apisiai. L. f. f.
L. Apisi. L. f. f.
C. Apisi. L. f. f.
Arbitratu. Apisiae. Rufillae

[In memory of] Lucius Apisius, son of Titus.
 [In memory of] Maia, daughter of Lucius.
 [In memory of] Apisia, daughter of Lucius.
 [In memory of] Lucius Apisius, son of Lucius.
 [In memory of] Caius Apisius, son of Lucius.
 In accordance with the execution of the will under Apisia Rufilla.

CIL IX.4466. Found in a cache of inscriptions outside Amiternum (Preturo): 0.47 m x 0.71 m. Local limestone.

[//////////]
L. Apisi. L. l. Stat.

[In memory of] Lucius Apisius Statius, freedman of Lucius.

CIL I².1864 = CIL IX.4467. Found in a cache of inscriptions outside Amiternum (Preturo): 0.47 m x 0.59 m. Local limestone.

[//////////]
L. Apisi. L. l. Stati
Lacutulana. C. l.
Aprodisiae

[In memory of] Lucius Apisius Statius, freedman of Lucius.
 [In memory of] Lacutulana Aprodisia, freedwoman of Caius.

CIL IX.4226. Found with the inscribed side down in the church at S. Vittorino. No further information available.

P. Apisio. P. l.
Salvio
Mag. Ludi Quinctia P. l. Ammia

To Publius Apisius Salvius, freedman of Publius, *magister ludi*. Quinctia Ammia, freedwoman of Publius [dedicated this monument].

²³ For a discussion of the additional “f” appearing in lines 3–5 of this inscription, see below, 83.

Because of the Romans' rigid rules regarding names on the one hand, and their habit of indicating that manumitted slaves took the family names of their former masters on the other, it is possible to establish a tentative stemma of members of the *familia* in Amiternum sharing the infrequent *nomen* Apisius.²⁴ One can first establish that the Fulonia (freeborn daughter of Titus) mentioned in *CIL* IX.4454 was likely older than the centurion Publius mentioned in the same epitaph,²⁵ and may indeed have been his mother. If so, she will have been married to the Publius Apisius mentioned here as the decedant's father.²⁶ In addition to the *praenomen* Publius, we find the *praenomen* Lucius attested at Amiternum. For example, a Lucius Apisius is commemorated together with a woman, probably his wife, named Maia, daughter of Lucius. In the same epitaph are mentioned, either as commemorators or as commemorated, an Apisia, daughter of Lucius; Lucius and Caius Apisius, sons of Lucius; and an Apisia Rufilla. These Apisii are likely to be the sons and daughters of Lucius Apisius and Maia.

Their nomenclature suggests that Lucius Apisius (husband of Maia) is related to the centurion Publius Apisius. The closest relationship possible is that of first cousin since their fathers' *praenomina* are not identical. At present the Apisius family can be traced one generation back to the grandfather of Lucius Tit. f. (*CIL* IX.4327) and Publius Apisius, the centurion.

The Apisius family did not belong to the upper classes. Its members were freeborn, had been in Amiternum for at least two generations, and one of them had a career as centurion. It is not unreasonable to suggest that these were socially ambitious people, as can be seen from the funerary reliefs together with the epitaphs that are the focus of this discussion. Whether they succeeded in their social ambitions we cannot say, since epigraphic evidence naming the household is weak after the late Republic. In the light of these findings we can tentatively establish a stemma of the Apisius family residing in Amiternum (Fig. 1: dotted lines represent a freed-slave/owner relationship).

The *nomen* Apisius is not a popular name in the epigraphic record: only sixteen examples exist.²⁷ This complex stemma, when used in conjunction with other epigraphic evidence naming relatives of the *gens* Apisia, indicates that this family had several closely related members in Amiternum. The main corpus of evidence (six examples) for the *gens* Apisia comes from Amiternum.

It is evident from *CIL* IX.4237 and 4467 that Lucius Apisius was married and raised a family. He is commemorated with Maia as well as with his children:

²⁴For other inscriptions naming the Apisii, see *AE* 1937, 216; *CIL* V.549, 5947, 6864; *CIL* VI.12133; *CIL* VIII.4661; *CIL* IX.5112; *CIL* X.3156; *CIL* XII.3415; *IlT* X.4.3. A future project explores the roles that the Apisii played in Roman society.

²⁵Mommsen and Degraffi (*ILLRP* 501) note, however, that the centurion inscription possesses letter forms in the first line (*Fulonia Tit.f.*) that are older than the remaining three. Hence, the centurion inscription, in their opinion, was a later addition. This is a possibility, but a deviation in the letter forms in the first line may rather imply a different stonemason.

²⁶It is not uncommon for a spouse to be commemorated on a different monument.

²⁷See above, n. 24.

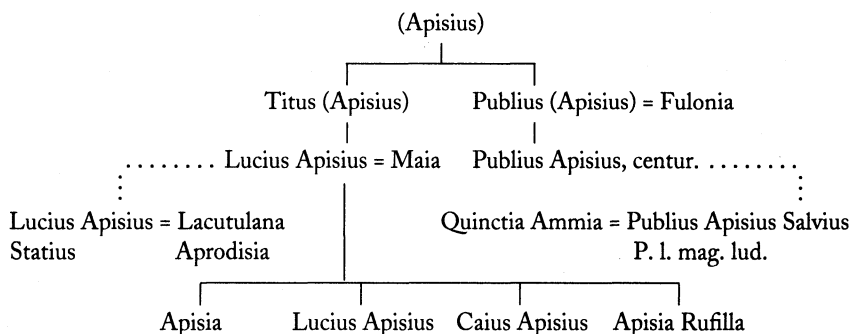


Fig. 1.

two sons, Lucius and Caius, and two daughters, Apisia and Apisia Rufilla. He also had a freed slave, Lucius Apisius Statius, who is commemorated twice: once in *CIL* IX.4466 (number 5) and, again, in *CIL* IX.4467 (number 6), where he appears with his partner, Lacutulana Aprodisia.²⁸

The two inscriptions naming the freed slave Lucius Apisius Statius offer important pieces of evidence to suggest that we are dealing with a family tomb that was reused over time. In his discussion of the Statius inscriptions, Mommsen states that they were found together with *CIL* IX.4454 (number 3) and that they possess old letter forms (late Republican in date) of good quality. The similarity in the letter forms and the fact that they come from the same findspot provides the basis to suggest that these are all part of the same family tomb.

Do other inscriptions referring to the *gens* Apisia belong to the same monument? There is evidence overlooked by Mommsen indicating that this is indeed the case. Although Mommsen noted the similarity between *CIL* IX.4237 (number 2) and *CIL* IX.4465 (number 4), he did not mention that lines 4 and 6, appearing in *CIL* IX.4237 (number 2), do not appear in *CIL* IX.4465 (number 4). Nor did he mention the appearance of the additional “f” in lines 3–5 of *CIL* IX.4237 (number 2). Although this additional “f” may be a stonecutter’s error, it may also be taken as the abbreviation *fecerunt* and imply that the Apisii mentioned with it should be taken grammatically as the subjects (and therefore the dedicators) of this monument in an extremely clumsy formulation. *CIL* IX.4237 (number 2), then, is more recent and informs its readers that another family member has died, Lucius Apisius, the son of Lucius. Thus, Apisia Rufilla was the only one left to carry out the obligations to build the monument.²⁹ Taken together, these inscriptions provide important evidence that the Apisii, both free and freed, used the tomb over time. This is not surprising as multiple *tituli* or

²⁸The name Lacutulana is rare in the epigraphic corpus and is only found in the environs of Amiternum: see *CIL* IX.4179, 4239.

²⁹Segenni (1990: 43) regards Apisia Rufilla as a freed slave because she is the only individual that is named with a *cognomen*. It is more likely, however, that she has simply adopted a diminutive form of her father’s *cognomen* (Rufus), “little red-haired one.”

inscriptions could have been affixed to one single tomb. Similar examples of *tituli* of different sizes and even, sometimes, material, occur in family tombs at Ostia.³⁰

Amongst these inscriptions belonging to the family tomb of the household with the family name of Apisius is one of special interest which names Publius Apisius, son of Publius, a centurion (*CIL* IX.4454). He was an individual who, upon retirement from service in the army, may have returned to or settled at Amiternum with increased wealth and new social ambitions. Another inscription, *CIL* IX.4226, names Publius Apisius Salvius, a freed slave (*libertus*) of Publius, likely the same centurion Publius Apisius who is the focus of this discussion.

An archaeological context for this epitaph would help to establish Publius Apisius Salvius' relationship to our centurion. Unfortunately, it is housed in the church at S. Vittorino and its original context is unknown. Since *CIL* IX.4226 was also found at the church, however, the possibility exists that this inscription may be part of the same tomb monument. One important clue to establish if this inscription does indeed belong to the same monument lies in the nomenclature of Quinctia Ammia, freedwoman of Publius, whose name also appears in *CIL* IX.4226. She has a relative whose name is cited in an inscription that comes from the same findspot as the inscriptions that were affixed to the *gens Apisia* monument. *CIL* IX.4482 refers to two inscriptions that both read:

P. Quinctius. P. l. Alexsander

Publius Quinctius Alexsander, freedman of Publius.

Publius Quinctius Alexsander is a *collibertus* of our Quinctia Ammia. Surely, it is no coincidence that his epitaph is found in close proximity to the *gens Apisia* tomb since friends, relatives, and members of the same *familia* were often buried near or in the family tomb.³¹ This provides strong evidence to suggest that *CIL* IX.4226 came from the same family tomb and implies that Salvius was a former slave of our centurion.

Other clues, such as nomenclature and the use (or non-use) of formulaic phrases, also suggest that Salvius was the freed slave of our centurion. The *cognomen* Salvius was a slave name used as early as the second century B.C.E. and continued in use into the late Republic under Sulla and Caesar.³² Moreover, phrases such as *dis manibus* (to the spirits of the dead) and references to the age of the deceased are lacking in the inscription. Because of the *cognomen* and the lack of specific phrases, the inscription may date to the late Republic or even early Empire, placing it within close proximity to the dates of the reliefs discussed

³⁰Multiple *tituli* can be affixed to a single tomb monument, as at Ostia: see, for example, Squarciapino 1958: 71–73, 146–147; Boschung 1987: 114–118.

³¹See especially Sigismund Nielsen 1996: 48–52.

³²For the *cognomen* Salvius, see Solin 1997: 7. Salvius was also an Oscan *praenomen*. It is possible that our freed slave's former master derived from the educated classes that used Oscan prior to the Social Wars.

earlier. It therefore seems very likely that Publius Apisius Salvius was the freed slave of our centurion.

Salvius, if he was indeed a slave in the household of Publius Apisius the centurion, will have held an occupation based on his master's needs and his own ability. Once freed, he would have continued to be engaged in the occupation he acquired as a slave.³³ In order to establish a more precise understanding of Publius Apisius Salvius' occupation, we must define *magister ludi*, the phrase that follows Salvius' name in the inscription. With only four references in the epigraphic record, the phrase *magister ludi* is rare.³⁴ Moreover, these references do not provide a definitive meaning for this occupation. The literary sources, however, show that a *magister ludi* was usually a teacher of literature in the Roman world. He typically taught both girls and boys, aged seven to eleven, how to read, write, and do basic math.³⁵ The soldier's relatives and, perhaps, certain inhabitants from the environs of Amiternum could well have benefited from his former slave's literary skills. The presence of such an individual would have benefited the community as a whole³⁶ and would certainly have been commensurate with the elevated status of the centurion. Possession of such a highly trained slave would have been of significant importance for a socially ambitious man.

To sum up the argument thus far, we have seen that the gladiatorial and *pompa funebris* reliefs belong on the same funerary monument and I have argued that certain Apisian inscriptions found at Amiternum belong to the same monument. Now I shall consider the evidence that Publius Apisius the centurion is the deceased figure depicted on the funerary bier of the procession relief. I shall then suggest that members of the Apisius family have commemorated the deceased's elevated status.

To establish this identification, a re-reading of the iconographic evidence is imperative. Special attention must be given to key symbols on the procession relief, namely the vine staff, helmet, wreath, and palm leaf. All suggest that the deceased wished to be depicted as a brave and disciplined individual who held an important role in the Roman army and society. The centurion, both a prominent officer (that is, one who received a promotion over time) and a disciplinary figure, was often identified in the literary sources by his long vine staff or *vitis*.³⁷ The *vitis* also appears on one of the Amiternum reliefs. Turning back again to the image of the deceased on the procession relief (Plate 2), one sees the figure holding in the left hand a long vine staff or *vitis* that identifies the deceased as a centurion. The length of the staff as depicted on the reliefs corresponds to actual examples,

³³ Treggiari 1969: 87.

³⁴ *CIL* II.5181; *CIL* IX.4226; *ILLRP* 726; *ILTun.* 1086. A fifth inscription, from Capua, cites one Philocalus, a *magister ludi litterari*: Eckert 1988: 163, cat. no. 46.

³⁵ *DarSag* s.v. *ludus*, *ludus magister*; *RE* s.v. *schulen* (Rom); *TLL* s.v. *magister*.

³⁶ Cf. Plin. *Ep.* 4.13 on the school he established at Comum.

³⁷ Tac. *Ann.* 1.23. The repercussions of a soldier attempting to refuse punishment by the staff were also serious and could result in death: see *Dig.* 49.16.13.4; Brand 1968: 80–81.



Fig. 2. Aureus of Magnus.

Reproduced with permission from the British Museum.

which extend up to the waist and usually have a knob on the end.³⁸ Similar representations of the *vitis* also appear on select funerary stelae that include the rank of the centurion in their inscriptions.³⁹ Another symbol appearing on the procession relief indicates that the deceased may have had a military connection. At the top right hand corner of the canopy rests a helmet. It has a wide brim and is divided by four ribs, a type used by soldiers in the late Republic.⁴⁰ Simonetta Segenni has made the interesting suggestion that the presence of the helmet on the funerary bier has some connection with Pompey's veterans.⁴¹ Earlier, I noted that one of the helmets in the gladiator relief had an elephant trunk affixed to it. This helmet too is very similar to one depicted on an *aureus* of Pompey honoring his victory in North Africa in 72 B.C.E. (Fig. 2).⁴² Perhaps the individual honored on this monument was affiliated with Pompey's troops in North Africa. Both the symbolism of the helmet and the dating of the reliefs to the first half of

³⁸ Bishop and Coulston 1993: 105.

³⁹ Persichetti (1908: 18) first observed that the staff on the Amiternum relief was a *vitis*. Claudio Franzoni has collected numerous examples of stelae with centurions holding the *vitis*. In contrast to the Amiternum example that shows the deceased reclining, these stelae typically depict a single, full- or half-length frontal figure. See, for example, Franzoni 1987: cat. nos. 26 (pl. 13.1, 14.1), 30 (pl. 16.1, 17.1), 44 (pl. 21.3). An additional reference to a centurion holding a *vitis* appears in Franzoni 1987: 111, pl. 32.2.

⁴⁰ Junkelmann 2000: 36.

⁴¹ Segenni (1979: 40–41) connects the presence of the helmet on the bier with a specific type of cult worship at Amiternum frequented by the military, namely that of the goddess Dea Syria. To connect the iconography of the canopy with Dea Syria in view of Pompey's Syrian campaign is problematic, however, especially since these motifs were already well attested in the area before this period. Star and crescent moon designs were commonly employed to allude to the afterlife: see Crawford 1999: 19; and cf. an Etruscan gold pectoral dating to the seventh century B.C.E. (Morandi 1990: 23–27); a third century B.C.E. *aes grave* (Pettazoni 1956: figs. 18–20); a second century B.C.E. *denarius* (cat. no. 303, *BMCRR* Italy 645); and an *aureus* from the mid first century (cat. no. 494/20a, *BMCRR* Rome 4285).

⁴² See, for example, the *aureus* of Magnus, *BMCRR* East 20: Crawford 1999: 412–413.

the first century B.C.E. support the connection. Lawrence Keppie, however, has demonstrated that many veterans returned to their original homes after having completed their service.⁴³ It is very likely, therefore, that our centurion has either come back to Amiternum or has been settled as a veteran. In either case, he would wish to show off his elevated wealth and status.

The wreath worn on the deceased's head also emphasizes a military connection as well as his elevated status. The wreath could, for instance, symbolize the *corona civica*, or civic crown (Plate 2). Made of oak leaves, it was awarded to a soldier of any rank for saving the life of a citizen.⁴⁴ Although it is difficult to make out the shape of the leaves on the relief, the wreath's presence also signifies the elevated position in society of the deceased. Cicero states that the individual who displayed a wreath at his funeral could only do so because he had acquired it in life (*Leg.* 11.24.6). The wreath offers another indication that the deceased depicted on this relief was a prominent soldier during his lifetime.

Another final military decoration on this relief is the palm leaf or *palma*, the symbol of military victory. Situated in the lower left-hand corner of the relief, directly behind the pallbearers carrying the funeral bier, is a male figure dressed in a short tunic. He carries a pail or *situla* in his right hand and a palm leaf in his left (Plate 2).⁴⁵ The palm leaves of the victorious military man are referred to frequently in the literary sources.⁴⁶ The family of the deceased has thus chosen to emphasize symbols (the palm, the wreath, and the *vitis*) that embody the military prowess of the deceased. The use of such symbols, especially the *vitis*, suggest that the military rank emphasized here is that of centurion. All the symbols indicate to the passerby that not only did this individual serve in the Roman army, but that his family members wished to depict his elevated social status as a result of his military service. It seems likely, then, that the *pompa funebris* is indeed for Publius Apisius, the centurion named in *CIL* IX.4454 (number 3). The reliefs not only establish a military connection for the deceased but also a gladiatorial one. As mentioned earlier, the relief with two combatants and their attendants depicts a gladiatorial contest. On one level, this could represent a scene from funerary *munera*, but on another level it may imply a specifically military interest in the gladiators. On the basis of iconographic analyses of other funerary monuments illustrating gladiators engaged in combat, it is generally accepted that the two combatants represent the *bustuarii* who traditionally fought at the funeral pyre at the games in honor of the dead.⁴⁷

⁴³ Keppie 1983: 40.

⁴⁴ Keppie 1984: 231; Watson 1969: 115.

⁴⁵ According to Franchi (1963–64: 26, n. 25), this individual is associated with a figure commonly seen on late Etruscan urns that depict the journey to Hades. Alternatively she thinks that he may also be the *pollinctor*, the person in charge of washing and preparing the body for the funeral pyre.

⁴⁶ For the palm leaf as symbolic of military victory in general, see *TLL* s.v. *palma*. For the victorious gladiator, see especially Cic. *Rosc. Am.* 6.17.

⁴⁷ Coarelli 1963–64: 85–105.

These games, either of Etruscan or Campanian origin, were an expensive funerary rite considered as something "owed" to the deceased. In the Italian municipalities, they were part of duties or *munera* that wealthy individuals carried out in a private or public context to boost their own status within the community.⁴⁸ *Munera* that were funerary in nature included gladiatorial combats held in honor of both public and private individuals, centurions included.⁴⁹ Suetonius, for example, describes the civil discord that erupted among the inhabitants of Pollentia, who forbade the removal of a centurion's corpse from the forum unless the heirs provided a gladiatorial show to honor the deceased (*Tib.* 37.3).⁵⁰ The gladiators depicted on funerary monuments, moreover, wear equipment used not only by gladiators themselves but also by local soldiers.⁵¹ Such is the case in the Amitemum relief as well, on which the clothing, armaments, and weaponry of the gladiators show close stylistic parallels with late Republican military equipment.⁵²

Clearly the presence of the combat could signify one part of the funerary games, but the gladiators may also have had a military connection. Gladiators, for example, could be called up for combat in times of civic unrest during the late Republic or simply used to entertain the local inhabitants of a particular colony or municipality.⁵³ During the late Republic, these combats could be staged at the amphitheatre or, if an amphitheatre did not exist, in the local forum.⁵⁴ One need only think of Rome and other towns in Italy to recall that the forum was the site of gladiatorial games during the late Republic.⁵⁵ Both soldiers or gladiators, moreover, also trained in a *campus* located outside the city walls.⁵⁶

The military may have had some interest in the gladiators for two reasons. They could be used either to provide combat skills for recruits in need of training

⁴⁸ Early interpretations of the "gladiatorial" relief inferred that the two figures represented either Samnite or Sabine warriors engaged in battle: see Ghislanzoni 1908: 590; Weege 1909: 154; Kleiner 1992: 103. For the legal definition of *munera* with bibliography, see Berger 1953: s.v. *munera*; Wiedemann 1992: 6–7; see also Hopkins 1983. For *munera* specifically in the Italian municipalities, see Fora 1996: 57–63.

⁴⁹ Edmondson (1996: 76) notes, "*Munera* sponsored by magistrates . . . receive little attention [in the literary sources] and those sponsored by private individuals receive none."

⁵⁰ Fora 1996: 58 with additional bibliography on this particular passage.

⁵¹ Coarelli 1963–64: 87–89.

⁵² See above, 79. The iconography of gladiators depicted in late Republican military gear requires further investigation and will be part of a future project. The overlap in gear is especially interesting when we remember that gladiators were held in disdain after the revolt of Spartacus in 73–71 B.C.E.

⁵³ Potter 1999: 311; Hope 2000: 111.

⁵⁴ See Hope 2000: 111; Golvin 1988: 154–56; Welch 1994: 59–80. Le Roux (1990) finds the connection tenuous at best.

⁵⁵ Welch (1994: 59–80) discusses a section in Vitruvius (5.1–2) explaining that the close inter-columniations in the Greek fora indicate that the same plan cannot be followed in the cities of Italy. She goes on to say that this is because in the Italian municipalities and colonies gladiatorial shows could be performed in the forum.

⁵⁶ Wiedemann (1992: 45–46) has shown how gladiators trained *iuventus* groups, organizations formed for the purpose of educating Roman youth in the art of weaponry.

or simply as a source of entertainment. As Katherine Welch has outlined in her discussion of the origin of late Republican arenas, Cicero, Valerius Maximus, and Suetonius all attest that either scenario could apply.⁵⁷

Moreover, as Carlin Barton has demonstrated, for the Roman soldier, the gladiator became a metaphor for bravery, discipline, and victory.⁵⁸

CONCLUSION

The connection between military and gladiatorial combat in the sources is paralleled on the Amiternum relief. The gladiator relief read together with the procession relief indicates on one level that the relatives of Publius Apisius, the centurion, wished to depict him receiving gladiatorial games at his funeral. The Amiternum reliefs now offer the viewer more than a glimpse into funerary rites in the Roman world. The family of the Apisii has sought to create a pedigree for themselves by offering an impressive funerary monument complete with elaborate reliefs and references to family. One of the Apisii, depicted on the procession relief, was Publius Apisius, a centurion, perhaps enrolled in Pompey's army, who may have returned to Amiternum with an elevated social standing or the ambition to achieve it. An important figure in this town, he received elaborate funerary reliefs from his family that befitted a distinguished role in public life. Publius Apisius, moreover, had a *magister ludi*, indicated by the inscription of his freed slave, Publius Apisius Salvius. A teacher of literature would have been an asset to select members of Amiternum's youth and again may have advertised Publius Apisius' social ambitions. Close reading of both the iconography and the inscriptions from one funerary monument can thus tell us much about the social context of this ambitious family in the troubled period of the late Republic.

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⁵⁷ Welch's analysis (1994: 63–64) of the ancient sources focuses on Cic. *Cael.* 11, *De or.* 2.84; and Suet. *Caes.* 31. Most telling, however, is the account in Valerius Maximus 2.3.2 that Rutilius Rufus (cos. 105 B.C.E.) sent for instructors from the gladiatorial school of C. Aurelius Scaurus to train his troops.

⁵⁸ Barton 1993: 40–46.

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CENTURIONS AT AMITERNUM



Plate 1. Gladiatorial Combat.

Museo Nazionale, L'Aquila. Reproduced with permission DAIR 67.478.



Plate 2. Funeral Procession.

Museo Nazionale, L'Aquila. Reproduced with permission DAIR 85.1276.