



3. Add another comparison view 🔻 🕄

between the deceased and the commemorators. This change in epigraphic formulae, however, was due to other factors than those that concern us here: it was the vertical relationship of the deceased to God that received the attention, not the horizontal relationships of kinship.⁷⁵ Christians did not introduce religious restrictions on the right to burial in their family or hereditary tombs. There are, however, two apparent exceptions that warrant our attention. The first is an inscription, published by Giovanni Battista De Rossi in 1865, which opened the tomb to freedmen and their descendants on condition that they belonged to the same religion (at religionem pertinentes meam) as their patron, Valerius Mercurius. On paleographical grounds the inscription is dated from the end of the second century. As it was found among other pagan inscriptions or fragments of inscriptions in the Villa Patrizi, on the Via Nomentana, and out of any specific archaeological context, its Christian character is difficult to determine. For De Rossi the use of religio mea was sufficient evidence. But, as we have seen, followers of Cybele, and also those of Isis, use the word religio to speak of their cult and called themselves religiosi. 76 Be that as it may, membership in the same religion was subordinate to membership in the first category, that of the freedmen of Valerius Mercurius and his wife and their descendants. So this monument was a simple family tomb. The same is true of the tomb that Marcus Antonius Restitutus says was constructed for "himself and his household faithful in the Lord."

75. Show, "Latin Funerary Epigraphy and Family Life," 481-83.

76. See Giovanni Battista De Rossi , "Le iscrizioni trovate nei sepolcri all'aperto cielo nella villa Patrizi," Bullettino di archeologia cristiana (1865): 53-54(=CIL 6.10412, ICVR 8. See Gaston Boissier, La religion romaine d'Auguste aux Antonins (Paris: Hachette, 1878), France 1:383 , n.5, for the use of religiosi. Inscriptions of religiosi are now compiled in M. de Souza , Religiosus ou les métamorphoses du "religieux" dans le monde romain, de la fin de la République à l'Empire chrétien (IIe siècle av.]-C-debut du Ve siècle apr. i-C) (PhD diss., Université François Rabelais, Tours, 2001 France), 471-85.







