

TMA 1

The gravestone of Fabia Honorata shows us a great deal of information about the family that had the gravestone engraved for their beloved daughter with looking at the context and inscriptions that we have been given.

This gravestone was from the ages of 43–410 CE and belonged to Fabia Honorata daughter to the family off the late Fabius Honoratus, tribune of the First Cohort of Vangiones and Aurelia Eglectiane, the Vangiones being one of the first Germanic tribes in the Roman empire which is now known as modern day Germany. This shows us that the family were either descendants off the Germanic romans or some of those who came too Britain which may suggest that the daughter was a victim of war.

From what we know the gravestone was made by a mother and father in memorial for their daughter and doesn't mention any other family members. This suggest that the child was the only child and first born of this family so understandable took the loss pretty tragically and showed by the building of the gravestone. This can also indicate that perhaps the daughter wasn't very old and only a child, with no mention of a partner which was quite commonly found for girls and no mention of any children it would make sense that this was an unfortunate circumstance featuring the death of a young girl. Taking it into account that this could possibly the death of a young daughter could indicate that the death was either due to illness, war or even potentially death in child birth. This is very sad state of affairs but does help to identify to us that this child was loved very much by her mother and father so much so that in her honor they erected a grave stone to keep her in memory forever. The Grave stone itself bar the engravings is plain and sandstone being a very common stone throughout northern England could suggest that the family was rather poor so too the size of the grave. The grave was rather small in comparison to other gravestones which can indicate two things, one, that the family could not afford a large size of rock to construct a fully sized gravestone and or two, children did tend to have smaller gravestones if any which would be further evidence in suggesting that the grave was one of a young girl. The gravestone being built out of sandstone a highly tough rock subject to little erosion and weather effects shows that the family must have really wanted to preserve this memory of their daughter as a slightly more affordable and obtainable e material would have been limestone however this material is subject to water erosion and would not still be present to this day if used for the gravestone. The use of sandstone to construct the gravestone was rather strange as it was not a commonly used material by the Romans with materials such as concrete, stone timber and marble so this can add to the evidence behind the family being less off being unable to afford the more developed materials being used by the romans from construction etc.

We can see from the section,

“Sacred to the spirits of the departed”

That people of this time had strong religious beliefs and believed in the notion of afterlife and that even though their daughter was no longer part of the world her spirit would live on in some shape or form. In Ancient Rome many people worshiped spirits as gods and this could also give a double meaning to the gravestone as a shrine as well as a remembrance and that their daughter had become something greater than them. It was a common thing for many romans of this time period to have shrines in their homes and many would make sacrifices to keep the spirits happy and bring good faith and fortune to the family.

Moving on to the key word,

“tribune”

This is a term for a leader of the village or tribe a sort of champion for the time and gives off how the time period and the whole Roman style of life was very communalized with villages being independent as such and having their own leaders within, it can show that there was care for what people wanted and a means of action for the romans to deliver messages to and from the hierarchy. It can also show that this family was important to the community so a remembrance of the so-called leaders' daughter was a burden not just for the family but for the whole village and area that the tribune looked after. The daughters grave being made by her two Parents is reflective on many of the struggles experienced during the time period with relatively low life expectancy's; very high infant mortality rates and the spread of deadly diseases which would plague over cities and towns and can show deeper meaning into the hardships that was all too familiar for the average family through 43-410 CE.

This source is great evidence for what the time period was like from 43 CE to 410 CE as it is a primary source made at the during the time period, it is rather reliable as it was made by a Tribune who were well respected in the Roman Empire. You cannot get much closer to being in an event gaining an accurate example of how things were than physical evidence so the grave stone acts as a great example as the carvings were left undiscovered and untouched for many thousands of years leading to an altered piece of evidence. With this source it shows things in a rather black and white fashion, with something as personal as the own Mother and Father marking a grave stone for their daughter it is relatively pure and original supposed to looking at fancy buildings or Emperors' grave stones this can give a fairly accurate presentation of family life throughout the empire. I feel that a child's grave is some of the most natural things with innocence and purity, no glamourizing or bias that could potentially corrupt any viewpoints on what society was like.

Although primary sources have many benefits and can be great indicators for evidence and shows of what life was like during this time there does also come many issues associated with these and in particular this source. There are various issues that arise when looking at the gravestone, one being that there is no way to prove that what we are reading and seeing is all true, everyone has the ability to forge things or deceive in

was, although with this source in particular it is not as clear the man or women making this could of quite easily not been a tribune for example, these things for now are too hard to prove with such little evidence. Additionally, the engravings on said gravestone are written in an ancient text which when translating there could be many misinterpretations when deciphering what this ancient language translate too in modern languages as we know today. The gravestone itself is made of stone and stone overtime erodes and changes with engravings starting to disappear or even parts getting faded out overtime, especially when looking at ancient artifacts there is a good chance that what we have discovered or reading is perhaps only part of the story. With primary sources it's all about interpretations, for example with the gravestone there is many phrases or features on the artifact that can be delivered in many varying ways leaving the correct answer unknown and all down to what historians have decided is the meaning be it correct or incorrect it is impossible to tell one hundred percent leaving all theories and interpretations into question. To find a more accurate representation of life it would be conducive to cross reference with other sources to find matches or differences in order to figure out the hidden truth amongst all varying displays of evidence.

To summarize the gravestone of what I have assumed as a young daughters gravestone built by her well sought-after Father and Mother is reflective on the how people lived and how society was from 43-410 CE. The source has many positive and negatives but being a primary source although can show us a great deal about the time there is a few issues regarding validity and understanding of the source with their only being so much you can find out from a gravestone dated thousands of years ago. All in all, the source helps underline many areas of Roman life but also leaves many grey areas to be disassembled.

1451 words

references

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