

misreading of MAR = some case of *Martius*, the name of the month, and PAC part of some case of *pax*, I formed the conjecture that the inscription was a †Christian epitaph, not improbably, as I further ventured to infer from the remains of §*pro funere lucem voluit reddere vite* in the 12th, 13th and 14th lines, of one whose life had been taken by violence, and, possibly, on account of his profession of Christianity. This conjecture was countenanced by the apparent imitation in the 9th and 10th lines of a well-known passage in the *Æneid*—

*At tibi pro scelere, exclamat, pro talibus ausis,
Di, si qua est cælo pietas, quæ talia curet,
Persolvant grates dignas, et præmia reddant—*

a poem, which has been also drawn on by several ancient writers of epitaphs, *e. gr.*, in the celebrated verses on *Papus Antimio*, in De Rossi's *Inscript. Christianæ*, n. 403. See my remarks in "Christian Epitaphs of the first six centuries," p. 27.

Possessed, as I now am, of four copies of the inscription—*a woodcut of Mr. Mossman's drawing, and a photograph (for both of which I am indebted to Dr. Bruce), in addition to the two given in the *Archæologia Eliana*—I propose examining each line, with a view to the development of all that can be read or reasonably inferred. In this examination I dare not hope to attain to more than some degree of probability; the *data* are not sufficient to warrant any expectation of certainty.

The first step is, of course, to determine the text as accurately as we can. With this view, I subjoin the 14 lines as they appear in the four copies, premising that in photographs of worn inscriptions we often find illusory semblances of letters, and consequently such readings should be received with great caution.

† The use of *deposuit* with the day of the month, and *in pace* either immediately after *deposuit* or in some other part of the inscription, is characteristic of early Christian epitaphs. See "Christian Epitaphs of the First Six Centuries."

§ A doubt suggested itself to me whether this form of expression might not have been used to denote the erection of a monument or statue, as in Cicero, *Philipp.* ix.—*Reddita est ei tum a majoribus statua pro vita*, and *Reddite igitur, patres conscripti, ei vitam, cui ademistis; vita enim mortuorum in memoria est posita vivorum*. The objections, however, to this view, arising from the character of the object, and from the phraseology of the inscription, seemed so strong that I soon rejected it.

* Through Dr. Bruce's kindness, I am able to present the reader with a copy of this excellent illustration.