

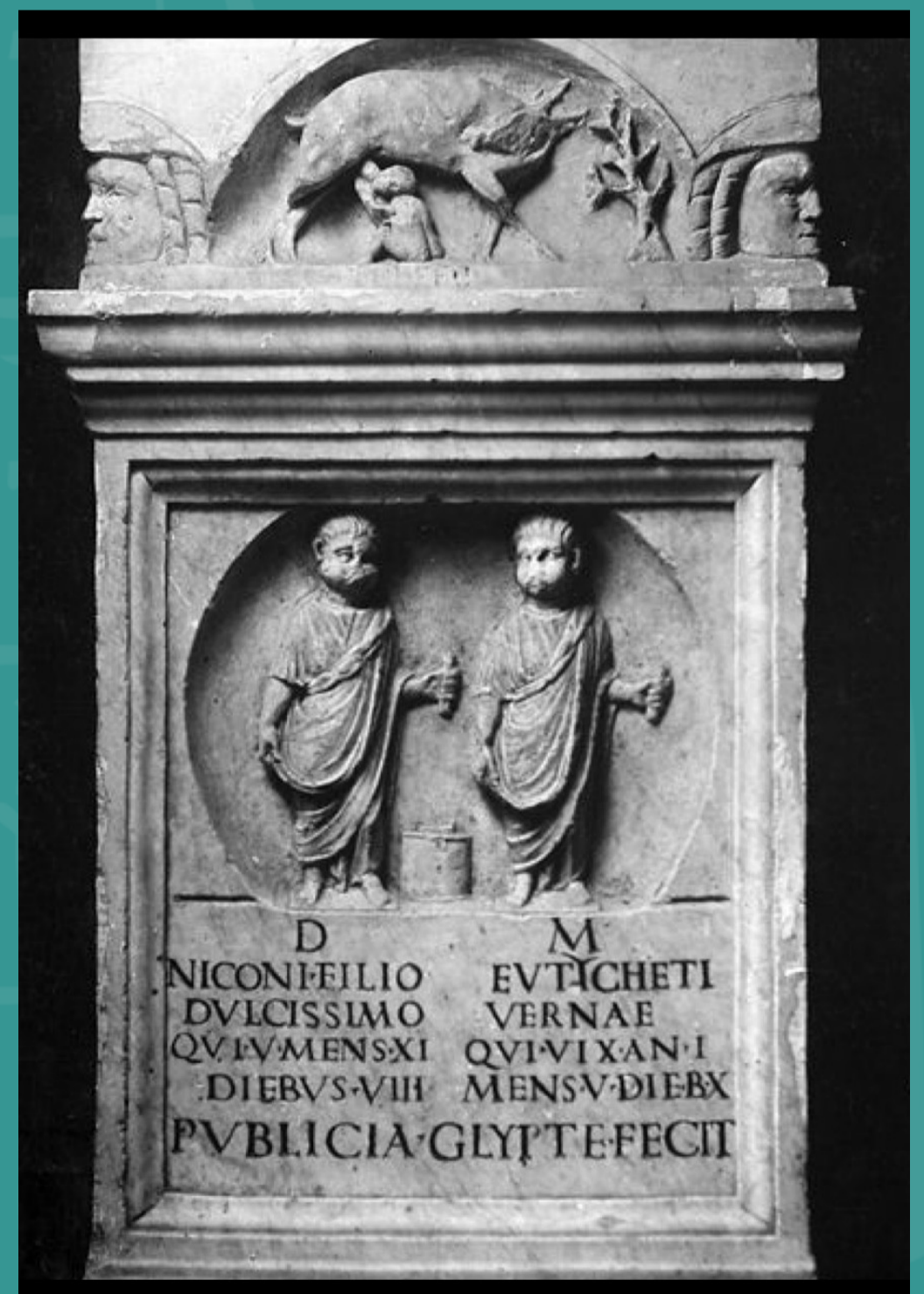
Sarah Levin-Richardson
(Department of Classics, University of Washington)

"Homeborn slaves (vernae) and prostitution at Pompeii"
(Alte Geschichte)

15. Juni 2022, 17.30
Abgusssammlung, SR E.33 (Residenzplatz 1)

Vernae—often but not exclusively understood to be homeborn slaves—are usually thought to have had a privileged role within the ancient Roman household. Indeed, previous studies have highlighted how these individuals were represented with affection or as surrogate members of the freeborn family.

In this talk, I use epigraphic evidence from Pompeii to argue that the reality for at least some veruae was much more grim. Not only are veruae connected to prostitution in over seventy percent of extant appearances of the term, verua was also the single most commonly used descriptor in advertisements for sexual services at Pompeii. Ultimately, I suggest that veruae were not safe from sexual exploitation, and that it may have been their status as veruae that made them attractive to those wishing to purchase sex.



Grabstein des Nico und des Eutyches, Rom, Villa Albani, Inv. 920

(A. Binsfeld, Auf den Spuren der Sklaven im römischen Trier, Funde und Ausgrabungen im Bezirk Trier: Aus der Arbeit des Rheinischen Landesmuseums Trier, Bd. 43, 2011, 12 Abb.1)