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ROMAN WOMEN IN THE LATE REPUBLIC

A. Some bibliography

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B. Funerary monument in the British Museum (CIL I 1221; c. 100-50 BC)

Aurelius Hermia, freedman of Lucius, butcher from the Viminal Hill:

My partner who departed this life before me was pure of body and loving of spirit. She was the only one for me, and lived her life faithful to her faithful husband, with equal devotion. She never failed in her duties through self-interest or greed. Aurelia, freedwoman of Lucius.

Aurelia Philematio, freedwoman of Lucius. In life, I was given the name Aurelia Philematium (little Kiss) and led a chaste, modest and sheltered life, faithful to my husband. Aurelius, my husband, whom I now sadly miss, was a fellow freedman. He was, in fact, much more to me than even a parent. He took me into his care at the age of seven. Now at the age of forty, I fall into the hands of death. He flourished in the eyes of others due to my constant and close support.



C. Excerpts from Cicero's letters

Fam 6 (XIV.4) (written on his way to Greece, having been forced into exile by Clodius)

Brundisium, 29 April 58

From Tullius to his dear Terentia and Tullia and Marcus greetings.

Ah, what a desperate, pitiful case is mine! What now? Shall I ask you to come—a sick woman, physically and spiritually exhausted? Shall I not ask then? Am I to live without you? Perhaps I should put it like this: if there is any hope of my return, you must build it up, and help in the campaign. On the other hand, if all is over, as I fear, then come to me any way you can. Be sure of one thing: if I have you, I shall not feel that I am utterly lost. But what is to become of my Tulliola? You at home must take care of that—I have nothing to suggest. But assuredly, however matters turn out, the poor little girl's marriage and good name must be a primary consideration. Then there is my son. What will he do? I hope that he will always be clasped to your bosom. I cannot write any more now. Grief clogs my pen.

Fam. 7 (XIV.2) (Written from exile in Greece)

Thessalonica, 5 October 58

From Tullius to his dear Terentia and his dear Tulliola and Marcus greetings.

I see that courage and love shines in all you do, nor does that surprise me. But it is a heart-breaking situation when my distresses are relieved at the cost of so much distress to you. P. Valerius (he tries to help) has written to me an account, which I wept bitterly to read, of how you were taken from the Temple of Vesta to the Tabula Valeria. Ah, my beloved, my heart's longing! To think that you, dearest Terentia, once everybody's refuge in trouble, should now be so tormented! There you are, plunged in tears and mourning, and it is my fault! In saving others, I ruined you and me.

Att. 121 (VI.6) (on his daughter's unexpected marriage to Dolabella, while her father was away governing Cilicia)

Side, ca. 3 August 50

Here am I in my province paying Appius all manner of compliments, when out of the blue I find his prosecutor [Dolabella] becoming my son-in-law! 'Good luck to that,' say you. So, I hope and I am sure you so desire. But believe me it was the last thing I expected. I had actually sent reliable persons to the ladies in connexion with Ti. Nero, who had treated with me. They got to Rome after the engagement ceremony. However, I hope this is better. The ladies are evidently quite charmed with the young man's attentiveness and engaging manners.

Fam. 75 (III.12) (trying to explain to Appius Claudius why his daughter had just married Dolabella, who had put Appius on trial for extortion)

Side, 3 or 4 August 50

From Cicero to Appius Pulcher greetings.

As for me, please for a moment put yourself in my shoes, imagine you are I; and if you have no difficulty in finding what to say, I won't ask you to forgive my embarrassment! I should indeed wish that the arrangement made by my family without my knowledge may turn out well for my dear Tullia and myself, as you are charming and kind enough to desire.

Fam. 92 (VIII.7) (letter from Caelius keeping Cicero up to date with gossip from Rome, while he was in Cilicia)

Rome, April 50

From Caelius to Cicero greetings.

Nothing new has happened really, unless you want to be told such items as the following—which, of course, you do. Young Cornificius has got himself engaged to Orestilla's daughter. Paulla Valeria, Triarius' sister, divorced her husband for no reason the day he was due to get back from his province. She is to marry D. Brutus. Her husband had not yet got back. There have been a good many extraordinary incidents of this sort during your absence. Servius Ocella would never have got anyone to believe he went in for adultery, if he had not been caught twice in three days.

Fam. 300 (13.72) (Cicero asking the governor of Asia, Servilius Isauricus, for favours on behalf of his friend Caerellia who had economic interests in the province)

Rome, 46–44

From M. Cicero to his colleague P. Servilius greetings.

I recommended the financial interests of my friend Caerellia—her investments and property in Asia—to you when we were together at your place in the suburbs, as warmly as I was able; and you, conformably to your habit and the constant flow of your signal services to me, undertook most handsomely to do all I asked. I expect you remember—I know you rarely forget. However, Caerellia's agents write that, because of the size of your province and the quantity of business, you should be frequently reminded.

May I request you therefore to bear in mind the ample undertaking you gave me to do all that your conscience would permit? I believe (but it is for you to consider and judge) that you have a great opportunity to accommodate Caerellia, arising out of the Senate's decree in respect of C. Vennonius' heirs. You will interpret that decree in the light of your own wisdom—I know you have always held the authority of the House in high regard. For the rest, please take it that any kindness you may do Caerellia will greatly oblige me.

Att. 327 (XIII.21a) (Cicero is concerned in this letter about his friend Caerellia having got hold of a copy of his 'On the limits', *De finibus*, before it was supposed to go into circulation)

Arpinum, 30 June or 1 July 45

But how did it slip my mind to tell you? Caerellia, in her amazing ardour for philosophy no doubt, is copying from your people. She has this very work 'On the Limits.' Now I assure you (being human I may be wrong) that she did not get it from my men—it has never been out of my sight. Moreover, so far from making two copies they had difficulty in finishing one. However, I do not hold your people to blame and I don't want you to do so. The oversight was mine, in omitting to say that I did not want it to get into circulation yet. Dear, dear, what a time I have spent on trifles! You see, on serious matters I have nothing to say.

Att. 404 (XV.26) (another reference to Cicero's friend Caerellia who had inherited a share of a property)

Arpinum, 2 July 44

Also please speak frankly to Cascellius about that capital sum of 'Tullius'. It's a trifle, but you did well to notice. Rather sharp practice! If he had put something over on me, as he very nearly did but for your cunning on my side, I should have been vexed. So however it goes I prefer to have a spoke put in the wheel. You will remember when you see Caerellia to convey to her an eighth part of the house, near the temple of Strenia, according to the highest price bid at the auction—380,000, I think.

Cicero, Att. 15.11 (Cicero tells Atticus about a crucial political meeting he had attended with Brutus, Cassius and their female relatives, including Brutus' mother Servilia)

Antium (?), ca. 7 June 44

I arrived at Antium before midday. Brutus was glad to see me. Then before a large company, including Servilia, Tertulla, and Porcia, he asked me what I thought he ought to do. Favonius too was present. I gave the advice I had prepared on the way, to accept the Asiatic corn commission. I said his safety was all that concerned us now; it was the bulwark of the Republic itself. I was fairly launched on this theme when Cassius walked in. I repeated what I had already said, whereupon Cassius, looking most valorous I assure you, the picture of a warrior, announced that he had no intention of going to Sicily. 'Should I have taken an insult as though it had been a favour?' 'What do you mean to do then?' I enquired. He replied that he would go to Greece. 'How about you, Brutus?' said I. 'To Rome' he answered, 'if you agree.' 'But I don't agree at all. You won't be safe there.' 'Well, supposing I could be safe, would you approve?' 'Of course, and what is more I should be against your leaving for a province either now or after your Praetorship. But I cannot advise you to risk your life in Rome.' I went on to state reasons, which no doubt occur to you, why he would not be safe.

A deal of talk followed, in which they complained, Cassius especially, about the opportunities that had been let slip, and Decimus came in for severe criticism. To that I said it was no use crying over spilt milk, but I agreed all the same. And when I began to give my views on what should have been done (nothing original, only what everyone is saying all the time), not however touching on the point that someone else (Antony) ought to have been dealt with, only that they should have summoned the Senate, urged the popular enthusiasm to action with greater vigour, assumed leadership of the whole commonwealth, your lady friend (Sevilia) exclaimed 'Well, upon my word! I never heard the like!' I held my tongue. Anyway, it looked to me as though Cassius would go (Servilia undertook to get the corn commission removed from the decree), and our friend Brutus was soon persuaded to drop his empty talk about wanting to be in Rome.

