

READING

Cicero left a large collection of letters, which tell us a great deal about him as a private person. They not only illustrate the family life of an upper-class Roman of the last century BCE, but also reveal much about the psychology of Cicero as an individual. When Cicero was sent into exile to Greece by his political enemies, he wrote letters full of laments, resentment, and despair. In many of them, though, we detect tender love for his wife Terentia and for his children. Such a letter is presented below.

When the early Renaissance Italian author Petrarch (1304–1374) discovered Cicero’s correspondence, he was dismayed to find that Cicero, whom he had earlier known only from his speeches and philosophical essays, was, as a private individual, subject to powerful emotions and plagued by human feelings. Although Cicero had been dead for centuries, Petrarch responded by writing Cicero a letter of his own, full of harsh criticism.

CICERO TERENCEAE SALŪTEM PLŪRIMAM DĪCIT

- 1 Epistulam tuam, mea Terentia, nunc teneō. Epistulam tamen tuam nōn solum cum gaudiō, sed etiam cum lacrimis legō. Nam longē ā patriā, longē ā familiā sum miser. Dē tē, dē filiā et dē filiō semper cōgitō. Animus dolet. Mala cōsilia ā malis viris contrā mē parantur et
- 5 auxilium mihi ā bonis viris darī debet. Tē, Terentia mea, valdē amō et ā tē epistulās longās expectō. Sī epistulās tuās legō, tē in animō meō videō. Tē ipsam, filium, filiam pulchram bene cūrāre debēs. Valē!



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