

BELLARIA LXXXI



WOMEN'S LIVES FROM ROMAN INSCRIPTIONS

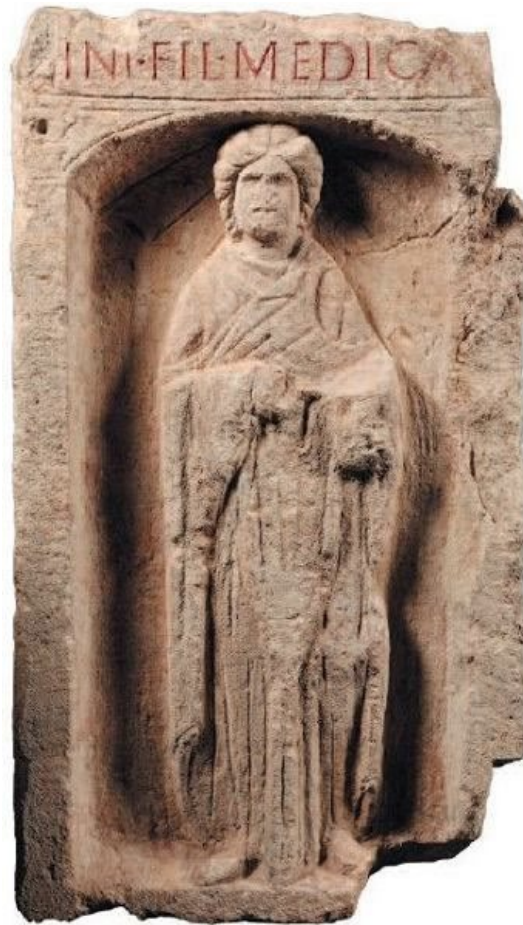
By kind permission of Cambridge University Press, this series is based entirely on Emily A. Hemelrijk's superb *Women and Society in the Roman World: A Sourcebook of Inscription from the Roman West* (Cambridge 2021).

III OCCUPATIONS

Introduction

Since the job of a Roman female citizen was to become a wife and raise a family, occupations gleaned from inscriptions are virtually exclusively the work of men, slaves and freedmen and freedwomen. Nor is the evidence very plentiful: about 200 female professionals are mentioned out of c. 2,500 occupational inscriptions from Roman Italy, even fewer from the provinces. Presumably plenty of women worked in lowly occupations that invited no record.

Medical professions



A female doctor

5 A doctor educator

*IGUR*675

Rome

Mid-1st century AD

Comment: it looks as if Tiberius might have trained Resituta as a doctor

For Tiberius Claudius Alcimus—doctor to the emperor (and a patron and teacher good and worthy)—Resituta made this. He lived for 82 years.

Τιβερίῳ Κλαυδίῳ Ἀλκίμῳ ἰατρῶ Καίσαρος ἐποίησε Ῥεσιτοῦτα πατρῶνι καὶ καθηγητῇ ἀγαθῷ καὶ ἀξίῳ· ἔζησε ἔτη πβ´.

11 Scribonia Attice

*IP*Ostie-A, 222

Ostia, Italy

Mid-2nd century AD



Scribonia (midwife) helping her husband Amerimnus (a doctor)

Comment: given the size of the monument and of their household, Scribonia and her husband had done well in their careers.

[In the margin above] Let this monument be free of foul wrongdoing
huic monumento dolus malus abesto.

[In the inscription panel] To the spirits of the dead. Scribonia Attice made this for herself and Marcus Alpus Amerimnus, her husband, and for Scribonia Callityche, her mother, and for Diocles and for the family and freedmen and freedwomen and their descendants, except for Panaratus and Prosdocia. This monument will not pass to an unrelated heir.

Dis Manibus. Scribonia Attice fecit sibi et Marco Ulpio Amerimno, coniugi, et Scriboniae Callityche, matri, et Diocli et suis et libertis libertabusque posterisque eorum, praeter Panaratum et Prosdocia. hoc monumentum heredem exterum non sequetur

Wet nurses

15 Salvidiena Hilara

CIL 6, 25808

Rome

Imperial period

Comment: mamma was regularly used of a wet-nurse as well as of a mother. Salvidiena Hilara, freedwoman of Quintus, set this up during her lifetime for Salvidiena Faustilla, her delight, who was skilled in all arts. You have left your 'mummy' sorrowing, mourning and lamenting. She lived fifteen years, three

months, eleven days and seven hours. An evil fate has robbed me of the maiden. My dear little darling, you have left your mummy full of sorrow.

uiuā Saluidiena, Quinti liberta, Hilara Saluidienae Faustillae, deliciae suae, eruditae omnibus artibus. reliquisti mammam tuam gementem, plangentem, plorantem. uixit annis XV, mensibus III, diebus XI, horis VII. uirginem eripuit fatus malus. destituisti, uitilla mea, miseram mammam tuam.

Education

27 Thalassia

CIL 6, 9792

Rome

c. AD 200

To the Spirits of the Dead. You wished to precede me in death, my most venerable wife, leaving me in tears. If there is anything good in the Underworld—I, however, lead a dreadful life without you—be happy there too, sweetest Thalassia, nanny of a very famous man [=senator] and my partner for forty years. Papirius Vitalis, her husband, [skilled] in the art of painting, made this for an incomparable woman, for himself and for his relatives.

Dis Manibus. praecedere uoluisti, sanctissima coniux, ut me relinqueres in lacrimis. si est aliquit in infernas partes bene—ego autem sine te uitam sordidam exigo—esto felix et ibi, dulcissima Thalassia, educatrix clarissimi uiri et mihi in conuio per annos XXXX. Papirius Vitalis, arte pictoria, maritus eius, feminae incomparabili fecit sibi et suis.



Limestone monument to the wet-nurse
(*nutrix*) Severina



28 A female grammarian

AE1994, 1903

Caesarea, Mauretania Caesariensis.

Mid-2nd century AD

Comment: Volusia married late and taught as an expert on linguistic and literary questions.

Sacred to the Spirits of the Dead. For Volusia Tertullina, chaste wife and incomparable grammarian, who lived 43 years, 3 months and 5 days, of which 20 years, 1 month and 14 days were with her husband. Domitius Flavianus [made this for his] incomparable [wife].

Dis Manibus sacrum. Volusiae Tertullinae, maritae castae et incomparabili grammaticae, quae uixit annos XLIII, menses III, dies V, quae cum marito fecit annos XX, mensem I, dies XIII. Domitius Flavianus incomparabili ...

29 A philosopher learned in all arts

CIL 6, 33898

Rome

Imperial period

Dutiful Euphrosyne, learned in the nine Muses, philosopher, lived for 20 years.
Euphrosyne pia, docta nouem Musis, philosopha, uixit annos XX.

Readers, secretaries and librarians

30 Derceto, reader for a Vestal

CIL 6, 33473

Rome

Early 1st century AD

[Left] Derceto, reader for the [Vestal] Virgin Aurelia
[In verse] Completing my 20th year, unhappily, I died.

*Derceto, Aureliae Virginis lectrix.
annum uicensimum exsigens, misera, occidi.*

33 A secretary

CIL 6, 9541

Rome

Imperial period

Tyche, secretary of Balbilla. Hermes made this for his well-deserving wife.
Tyche, a manu Balbilles. Hermes coniugi bene merenti fecit

34 A stenographer in Greek

CIL 6, 33892

Rome

Imperial period

Sacred to the Spirits of the Dead of Hapate, shorthand writer in Greek, who lived 25 years. Pittosus made this for his sweetest wife.

Dis Manibus sacrum Hapateni, notariae Graecae, quae uixit annos XXV. Pittosus fecit coniugi dulcissimae.

Hairdressers and Barbers

Comment: these would be working either in a domestic or professional capacity.

38 Psamate

CIL 6, 9732

Rome

Early 1st century AD

Psamate (slave) of Furia, hairdresser, lived 18 years. Mithrodates (slave) of Flaccus Thorius, baker, made this.

Psamate, Furiæ ornatricis, uixit annos XIIX. Mithrodates, pistor Flacci Thori, fecit.

40 Nostia Daphne, Marcus Quadratus and Nostia Cleopatra

CIL 6, 9736 = *CIL* 6, 37469, *ILS* 9426

Rome

Early 1st century AD

Comment: these all worked in the Vicus Longus, one of Rome's main shopping streets. Marcus may have been married to Daphne.

[On a marble plaque]

Nostia Daphne, freedwoman of a woman, hairdresser from the Vicus Longus
Nostia, mulieris liberta, Daphne, ornatricis de uico Longo.

[On a marble plaque]

Marcus Nerius Quadratus, freedman of Marcus, goldsmith from the Vicus Longus
Marcus Nerius, Marci libertus, Quadratus, aurifex de uico Longo.

[On a marble plaque and on the front of the altar]
Nostia Cleopatra, freedwoman of Daphne, hairdresser from the Vicus Longus
Nostia Cleopatra Daphnidis liberta, Cleopatra, ornatrix de uico Longo

Trades and Crafts



Sellia Ephyre [wife of] Quintus Futius Olympicus

Comment: Rome was full of workshops where skilled craftsmen and women met the demand for high-quality luxury goods for the wealthy. Many would have learned the business as slaves and set up on their own, with their ex-owner's (=patron's) help

46 An embroiderer in gold thread

CIL 6, 9214 = ILS 7692

Rome

1st half of 1st century AD

[On the lid]

Sellia Ephyre, embroiderer in gold thread, on the Via Sacra

Sellia Ephyre, de sacra uia auriuestris.

[On the rim]

[Wife] of Quintius Futius Olympicus

Quinti Futi Olympici

49 A silk worker

CIL 6, 9891

Rome

Imperial period

To the Spirits of the Dead. To Claudius Bacchylus, lived 49 years. Data, silk-worker, made for her well-deserving partner and for herself

Dis Manibus. Claudio Bacchylo, uixit annos XLIX. Data, sericaria, contubernali bene merenti et sibi constituit

50 Nail makers



Roman nails

CIL 5, 7023

Augusta Taurinorum, Italy

Imperial period

While living Cornelia Venusta, freedwoman of Lucius, a nail-maker, made [this monument] for herself and Publius Aebutius, son of Marcus, [of the voting tribe] Stellatina, a nail-maker and an *Augustalis* [cult priest of Augustus], and for the freedwoman Crescens and Muro, their delight.

uiu fecit Cornelia, Luci liberta, Venusta, clauaria, sibi et Publio Aebutio, Marci filio, Stellatina, clauario, Augustali uiro, et Crescenti, libertae et Muro, delicatae.

51 A shoemaker

CIL 14, 4698

Ostia, Italy
AD 175-180



The high-backed chair suggests she was a manager, overseeing production and trade

This tomb Marcus Acilius Is[...] granted as a gift to Septimia Stratonice, shoemaker and his dearest friend, because of her good deeds towards him. The half [?] part is for Acilius Fortunatianus, his son.

Hoc sepulcrum Marcus Acilius Is... cessit donatione Septimiae Stratonice, sutrici, amicae carissimae, ob bene facta ab ea in se. dimidia[?] parte et... Acilio Fortunatiano, filio

57 Tailors of fine clothing

CIL 6, 37826

Rome

Imperial period

Comment: note that Camera Iarine, who married her ex-slave, was responsible for all this.

Camera Iarine, freedwoman of Lucius, made this for Lucius Camerius Thraso, freedman of Lucius, her patron, and for his patron Lucius Camerius Alexander,

freedman of Lucius, and Lucius Camerius Onesimus, her own freedman and husband, and for all their descendants: tailors of fine clothing from the Vicus Tuscus.

Cameria, Luci liberta, Iarine fecit Lucio Camerio, Luci liberto, Thrasoni, patrono, et Lucio Camerio, Luci liberto, Alexandro, patrono eius, et Lucio Camerio Onesimo, liberto et viro suo, posterisque omnibus: vestiariis tenuariis de vico Tusco.

62 A baker



CIL 9, 4721
Reate, Italy
1st century AD

Coment: here two freedwomen, of the same freed woman, are remembered.

Fonteia Gnome, freedwoman of a woman, Fonteia Fausta, freedwoman of a woman, baker. [Dimensions] 12 feet wide.

Fonteia, mulieris liberta, Gnome, Fonteia, mulieris liberta, Fausta, furnaria. in fronte pedes XII.

65 A fish vendor

CIL 6, 9801 = ILS 7500
Rome
Early 2nd century AD



Aurelia Nais, freedwoman of Gaius, fish-vendor in the Warehouses of Galba, Gaius Aurelius Phileros, freedman of Gaius, her patron, and Lucius Verus Secundus, freedman of Lucius [set this up]

Aurelia, Cai liberta, Nais, piscatrix de horreis Galbae. Caius Aurelius, Cai libertus, Phileros, patronus, Lucius Valerius, Luci libertus, Secundus.

72 A trader of olive oil and wine

AE1973, 71

Rome

AD 130-170

For her [mother: name lost] a merchant of olive oil from Baetica province [in Spain], of incomparable chastity, and for Gnaeus Coelius Maculus, her most dutiful father—her parents—Coelia Mascellina made [this monument].

negotiatrici[?] oleariae ex prouincia Baetica item uini, castitate incomparabili, Cnaeo Coelio Masculo, patri piisimo, Coelia Mascellina parentibus fecit.

Entertainers and bar personnel

81 Epitaph of a Greek mime actress

IG14, 2342

Aquileia, Italy

AD 222-235



Bassilla, pointing, as if reciting

[In verse] For her who once earned resounding fame on the stage among many peoples and cities for her multifaceted talent in mimes and also in choruses of dancers and singers, the mime actress Bassilla, 5 the tenth Muse, who often died on stage, but never in *this* way, the actor and expert in reciting, Heracleides, set up this stele. Indeed, in death she received equal honour as in life, since her body was laid to rest in soil sacred to the Muses. [In prose] That's all I have to say. Your fellow actors say: 'Good courage, Bassilla, no one is immortal.'

Τὴν πολλοῖς δήμοισι πάρος πολλαῖς δὲ πόλεσσι / δόξαν φωνάεσαν ἐνὶ
 σκηναῖσι λαβοῦσαν, / παντοίης ἀρετῆς ἐν μείμοις εἶτα χοροῖσι / πολλάκις ἐν
 θυμέλαις, ἀλλ' οὐχ οὕτω δὲ θανούσῃ, / 5 τῇ δεκάτῃ Μούσῃ τὸ λαλεῖν σοφὸς
 μουσικὸν Ἡρακλείδης / μειμάδι Βασσίλλῃ στήλῃν θέτο βιολόγος φῶς· / ἦ δὴ
 καὶ νέκυς οὔσα ἴσην βίου ἔλλαχε· τειμήν, / μουσικὸν εἰς δάπεδον σῶμ'
 ἀναπαυσάμενη./ Ταῦτα· οἱ σύσκηνοί σου λέγουσιν· 'εὐψύχει, Βάσιλλα,
 οὐδεὶς ἀθάνατος.'

90 A singer and water-organ player

C/L 3, 10501

Aquincum, Pannonia inferior.

1st half of the 3rd century AD



Note the water organ

[In verse] Enclosed in stone lies my loyal and dear wife, Sabina. Thoroughly learned in the arts, she alone surpassed her husband. Her voice was pleasing, she plucked the strings with her thumb, but suddenly carried off she is now silent. She lived thrice ten years, ah alas less five, but she had three further months and lived twice seven days more. While she lived, she held sway as a favourite organ player respected by the people. Whoever you are who reads this, be happy. May the gods preserve you and sing with tender voice: Aelia Sabina, farewell. [In prose] Titus Aelius Justus, salaried organ-player of the *Legio II Adiutrix*, commissioned this for his wife.

*clausa iacet lapidi coniunx pia cara Sabdina, / artibus edocta superabat sola
maritum. / uox ei grata fuit, pusabat pollice chordas, / se cito rapta silet. ter denos
duxerat annos, / heu male quinque minus, se plus tres menses habebat, / bis
septemque dies uixit. haec ipsa superstes / spectata in opulo hydraula grata
regebat. / sis felix, quicumque legis; te numina seruent, / et pia uoce cane: Aelia
Sabina uale. / Titus Aelius lustus, hydraularius salariarius legionis II Adiutricis,
coniugi faciendum curauit.*

97 A humorous sign for an inn

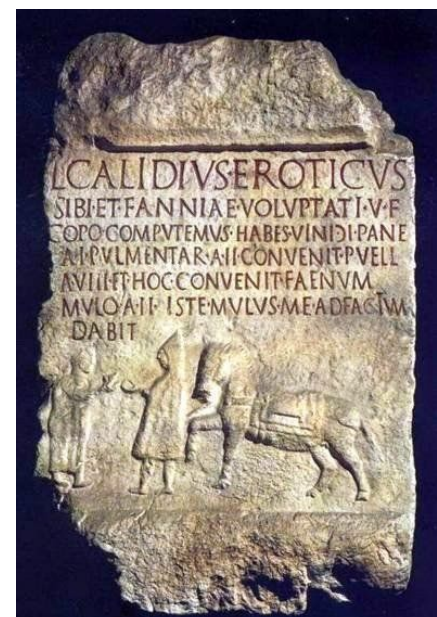
CIL 9, 2689

Aesernia, Italy

2nd century AD

Comment: note the Benny Hill-style joke names signalling the services on offer on this mock funeral stele

Lucius Calidius Eroticus made this for himself and for Fannia Voluptas when alive. 'Innkeeper, let us prepare the bill.' 'You had one pint of wine, bread for



1 as, a meal for 2 asses.' 'That's right.' 'A girl for 8 asses.' 'That is also right.' 'Hay for the mule: 2 asses.' 'That damn mule will ruin me!'

Lucius Calidius Eroticus sibi et Fanniae Voluptati uiuus fecit: 'copo computemus'. 'habes uini sextarium I, panem asse I, pulmentarium assibus II'. 'conuenit'. 'puellam assibus VIII.' 'et hoc conuenit'. 'faenum mulo assibus II'. 'iste mulus me ad factum dabit!'

Managers

113 The manager Caecilia Amanda

CIL 15, 192

Rome

AD 193-217

Comment: Caecilia's career as manager of imperial brick production lasted some twenty years.

Brickwork from the domain of our lord Augustus, from the clay deposits called the [*Domitiana*] *Veteres*. [Under the direction] of Caecilia Amanda.

opus doliare de praediis domini nostri Augusti, ex figlinis ueteribus; Caeciliae Amanda.

116 Annea Jucunda

CIL 15, 7303

Rome

AD 116-117

Comment: this notice comes from the lead pipes on a public fountain

Of the emperor Caesar Nerva Trajanus Optimus Augustus Germanicus Dacicus Parthicus. Under the supervision of the *procurator* of the domain Annea Iucunda made this.

Imperatoris Caesaris Neruae Traiani Optimi Augusti Germanici Dacici Parthici. Sub cura procuratoris patrimonii, Annea Iucunda fecit.

120 Umbricia Fortunata



CIL 4, 5688
Pompeii, Italy
Mid-1st century AD

The flower of [= the best] mackerel sauce [garum], [from the house of] of Scaurus, made by Umbricia
Gari flos scombri Scauri ab Umbricia.

126 The baths of Aurelia Faustina

CIL 14, 4015
Ficulea, Italy
2nd century AD

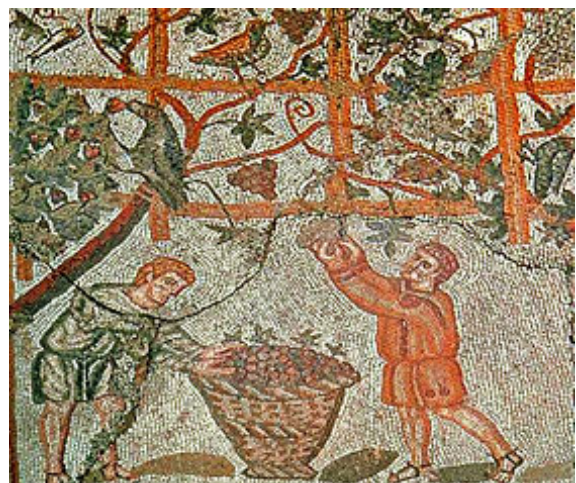
In this bath complex of Aurelia Faustina, a bather can bathe in civilised fashion and every refinement is provided.

in his praediis Aureliae Faustinae balineus lauatur more urbico et omnis humanitas praestatur.

127 Sale of wine-harvest

AE 1999, 449
Herculaneum, Italy
16 October AD 40

Comment: from a tablet recording the sale of grapes for 18000ss, a transaction carried



out by Nico, the slave of the owner Herennia Tertia. The purchaser will repay his debt on March 1st AD 39

Nico, slave of Herennia Tertia, has stipulated that 1,800 sesterces of good alloy will be justly given on the coming 1 March because of the sold products of the Cadian farm. Lucius Annius Agathemerus made the promise. Transacted at Nola on the seventeenth day before the Kalends of November (16 October) In the consulship of Marcus Cluvius and Marcus Furnius Augurinus

HS MCCM Kalendis Martiis primis ob fructum fundi Cadiani uenditum probos recte dari stipulatus est Nico[?], Herenniae Tertiae, seruus. spondit Lucius Annius Agathemerus. Actum Nolae XVII Kalendas Nouembres, Marco Cluuio, Marco Furnio Augurino consulibus.

Next week: Social relations, travel and migration