

*Terentia, Tullia and Publilia: The Women in Cicero's Family.* By SUSAN TREGGIARI. *Women of the Ancient World.* London and New York: Routledge, 2007. Pp. xxii + 228. Paper, \$34.95. ISBN 978-0-415-35179-9.

Most of the source materials we would like to have about women in the ancient world, unfortunately, do not exist. Our view of Cicero's two wives and daughter, like our view of most people in the late Roman Republic, is filtered through the distorting lens of the great orator's egotism. Susan Treggiari (T.) has nevertheless made a laudable effort to reconstruct these women's lives, fishing through his copious correspondence for clues.

After an overview of the social, historical and political situation in Cicero's Rome, T. embarks on a detailed, mainly chronological narrative of his life, interweaving information about his wives and daughter when it exists and speculating when it is absent. The elderly statesman's teenaged second wife Publilia remains little more than a footnote (the marriage was over in a few months). His first wife Terentia, on the other hand, not only appears sporadically throughout Cicero's correspondence (their marriage lasted over 30 years), but was also the recipient of 24 extant letters, the richest cache of non-poetic spousal letters to survive from antiquity. His daughter Tullia is mentioned frequently and affectionately, and her death in her early 30s was the greatest grief of Cicero's personal life. The sources on two of the book's three titular women, then, however patchy, are among the most extensive on any women from ancient Rome.

The social historian must squeeze as much as possible out of scanty evidence and be especially alert to implication and nuance. When T. performs this sort of analysis, her observations are keen. For instance, that Cicero includes a Greek word in a letter to Terentia says much about her literary education; that his curt, trivial letters to her shortly before their divorce survive at all suggests that she preserved them and therefore "had some regard for Cicero's writings" (p. 157). Probably T.'s most elaborate analysis is of Cicero's description of a quarrel between Quintus (Cicero's brother) and Pomponia (Quintus' wife and Atticus' sister), whose jealousy of Quintus' freedman Statius flares up in her pout "I myself am a guest here." As T. notes (p. 81), the letter not only shows the "storminess of the marriage," but "is also significant for suggesting points of tension in any upper-class marriage: the division of responsibilities; the lack of privacy in a slave household; the separations imposed by a husband's career; wives' possible jealousy of trusted slaves and freedmen; wives' need

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to be supreme at least in household management (the 'last straw' as well as the pretext for Pomponia's outburst)."

Elsewhere, however, sources ripe for analysis are embedded with little comment in lists of facts. One example (p. 78): "Cicero was looking after some piece of business for Pilia and expected that this would win Tullia's approval (A 4.16/89.4, Rome, c. 1 July 54). He kept quiet at a trial because his daughter was worried that if he spoke he would offend Clodius. She was unwell. He made the effort to be in Rome to attend the theatre, where he was cheered. Again, we do not know if Terentia went too [endnote, p. 187: A 4.15/90.4, 6, Rome, 27 July 54]." [[1]] The Latin is in fact far richer than T.'s summary would suggest. "About Pilia's matter" (*de re Piliae*), Cicero declares, *in eo me etiam Tulliae meae venditabo*. The verb *venditare*, literally "to seek to sell" (OLD 1.a), here meaning "to seek to recommend oneself (to), pay court (to)" (2.b), yet also used "(w. personal obj., w. ref. to prostitution)" (1.b), is surely an interesting enough locution to merit comment; the word vividly conveys both Cicero's affection and his humorous inversion of gender and power roles in dealing with "my Tullia." Similarly, explaining why he held his tongue at the trial, Cicero writes, *verita est enim pusilla, quae nunc laborat, ne animum Publi offenderem*. Here *pusilla*, the feminine substantive of an adjective meaning "[v]ery small in size, tiny, wee" (OLD 1.a), is a remarkable title for a woman in her 20s (showing Cicero's humor? condescension? affection? ironic self-awareness?). This reader's imagination, at least, needs such concrete tidbits to chew on. Unanswerable questions about who did or did not accompany Cicero on his various travels, like the many speculations beginning "We can imagine," "We can hope," or "We do not know," simply do not stick.

The book's intended audience is also somewhat unclear. The density of details about Cicero's life will be daunting to the non-specialist, as in this breathless travelogue (p. 77): "After the dinner at Crassipes' house on 8 April, Cicero went on a trip, via a friend's house at Anagnia and on to Quintus' villa at Laterium, then to Arpinum for five days, then his villa at Pompeii, and a brief stop at Cumae on the way back. He planned to reach Rome on 6 May. He does not say whether Terentia or Tullia accompanied him, but it seems likely that neither did, since he was travelling fast to check properties." Such minutiae will be of interest mainly to hard-core Cicero enthusiasts or those seeking to solve a particular puzzle. Yet though the "General index" and "Index of persons and Gods" [capitalized *sic!*] provide some assistance (along with a brief chronology, table of ages, family tree, map and bibliography), the absence of an Index Locorum se-

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verely limits the book's usefulness as a scholarly resource. A list of all the references to Terentia and Tullia, or the complete set of letters to Terentia (about ten pages), would have been immensely helpful. Instead, both the "general" and the "serious" reader must search the entire book to see which snippets T. has chosen to include.

As T. admits in her Preface (pp. xi–xii), "In attempting to write their lives, I have fallen between two stools. I want to set out the evidence so that readers can make up their own minds and I want to see things from the women's point of view. I have veered towards the former, so that Cicero, who gives us the evidence, at times usurps centre-stage." Readers endowed with patience and love of Cicero may enjoy this journey through his life, even if the lives of his women remain largely in the subjunctive.

JULIA D. HEJDUK

*Baylor University*

[[1]] Endnotes in scholarly books are an abomination for which there is no excuse in the age of computer typesetting. Would that all publishers might extend their authors—and readers—the courtesy of footnotes!