

"DULCISSIMAE PUELLAE"

Translations by Judith Lynn Sebesta

CAECINIA BASSA *CIL 6.7898, CLE 01058*

[h]IC SVM BAS(sa sit)A, PIA FI[lia],
VIRGO PVDICA, EXCEDEN[s]
CVNCTAS INGENIO AEQVALIS.
CVM MIHI BIS QVINOS ANNOS MEA
FATA DEDISSENT VNDECVMVM ME
NON LICVIT PERDVCERE ANNVM.
CVMQVE PATER MATERQVE DEOS PRO ME
ADVLARENT AT SAEVOS PLVTO RAPVIT
ME AD INFERA TEMPLA.

¹OPSIDE ME PARCAE FINEM FECISSE VIDENTVR
CVM ANTE ALIOS VERNAS TRES RAPVERE MIHI.
SI QVIS FORTE MEA GAVDET DE MORTE INIQVA
HVIC SIT INIQVA CERES PERFICIATQVE FAME.
CAECINIAE SEX[ti] F[iliae] BASSAE

[hoc monumentum sacrum est]

¹Four lines of elegiac poetry begin here

EUCHARIS *CIL 6.10096, ILS 5213*

EUCHARIS LICINIAE L. DOCTA ERUDITA OMNES ARTES
VIRGO VIXIT AN[nis] XIII.
HEUS! OCULO ERRANTE QUI ASPICIS LETI DOMUS
MORARE GRESSUM ET TITULUM NOSTRUM PERLEGE,
AMOR PARENTIS QUEM DEDIT NATAE SUAE
UBI SE RELIQUIAE CONLOCARENT CORPORIS.
5 HIC VIRIDIS AETAS CUM FLORERET ARTIBUS
CRESCENTE ET AEVO GLORIAM CONSCENDERET,
PROPERAVIT HORA TRISTIS FATALIS MEA
ET DENEGAVIT ULTRA VITAE SPIRITUM.
DOCTA ERUDITA PAENE MUSARUM MANU,
QUAE MODO NOBILIUM LUDOS DECORAVI CHORO
ET GRAECA IN SCAENA PRIMA POPULO APPARUI.
EN HOC IN TUMULO CINEREM NOSTRI CORPORIS
INFESTAE PARCAE DEPOSIERUNT CARMINE.
STUDIUM PATRONAE, CURA, AMOR, LAUDES, DECUS
SILENT AMBUSTO CORPORE ET LETO TACENT.
RELIQUI FLETUM NATA GENITORI MEO
ET ANTECESSI, GENITA POST, LETI DIEM.
BIS HIC SEPTENI MECUM NATALES DIES
TENEBRIS TENENTUR DITIS AETERNA DOMU.
ROGO, UT DISCEDENS TERRAM MIHI DICAS LEVEM.

¹The meter is iambic senarius.

Here I, Bassa, am placed, a dutiful daughter,
chaste virgin, surpassing all my equals in my
intelligence.

Although my fates had given me twice five years, I was
not permitted to live out my eleventh year. And
although my father and mother kept making obeisance
to the gods on my behalf, yet still cruel Pluto carried
me off to his underworld (lower regions).

²While/As I am a hostage, the Fates seem to have
made an end (to my life) when they snatched, before,
three other home-born slaves from me. If anyone, by
chance, rejoices in my unfair death, may Ceres be
unfair to this person and may she destroy him with
famine.

This monument is sacred to Caecinia Bassa, daughter
of Sextus.

² Lines 10-11 are difficult to translate, and *WRW* welcomes
teachers' and classes' suggestions!

Eucharis, freedwoman of Licinia, learned, educated in
all the arts, a maiden, lived fourteen years.

Alas! You who look with passing eye on this home of
Death, pause your step and read through our epitaph,
which the love of a parent gave to his daughter when
the remains of her body settled themselves down.
Though this my green age was flourishing in the arts
and was rising in glory as my age was increasing, my
sad, deadly hour hastened on and denied me further
the breath of life. I was learned and educated almost
by the hand of the Muses, I who recently adorned the
performances for the nobility in the chorus and was
the first to appear to the Roman people in Greek
performance. Behold in this grave the hostile Fates
deposited the ash of our body with a (funeral) song.
The support of my patroness, her care, love, praises,
honor are silent now that my body has been burned
and grow still with my death. I, the daughter, left
weeping to my father, and though born after him, I
went first to the day of death. My birthdays twice
seven are held with me here among the shades in the
eternal home of Dis. I ask that as you depart you pray
the earth may be light upon me.