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Alter item: Recasting Tullia in Cicero's Image

At the death of his daughter Tullia, M. Tullius Cicero experienced an all-time low. Tullia died in December 46 B.C. while the orator was defining his permitted role in Caesar's dictatorship. Already politically debilitated, Cicero was even more devastatingly emasculated at his daughter's death; he withdrew from Rome, the forum, his social responsibilities and even the management of his financial affairs, duties through which Roman society constructed its notions of masculinity. Cicero pined for Tullia in his gardens at Astura for three months, far beyond a decent period of mourning for a Roman man. In March 45, he lit upon a plan that, he tells his friend Atticus, would help relieve his grief for Tullia: building a shrine at Rome to celebrate her apotheosis. Atticus disapproved vigorously of this unprecedented plan and modern commentators have long been puzzled by it. No Roman man, to say nothing of a Roman woman, had been bestowed such an honor before Julius Caesar in 43 B.C. The plan becomes even more curious, however, when he decides upon the desired property: Clodia's gardens on the Tiber.

Several scholars have examined the connection between Roman self-image and domestic architecture. Wiseman notes that Cicero himself envisions the ethos of the homeowner leaving an indelible mark upon the property, which then colored the walls and cast a reflected light upon the next occupant. Indeed, when Cicero speaks of houses, he means the structure, the ethos of the owner, his patrimony and his *familia*, both living and dead. This was his most useful tool in destroying Clodia's credibility in the *Pro Caelio*. It is striking, therefore, that Cicero wishes to honor his respectable daughter, a *materfamilias*, in the same gardens where Clodia oogled men swimming in the Tiber and lured them into her bed.

Most revealing in this plan are the qualities that Cicero demands in the property, specifically, *perpetuitas*, *celebritas* and *propinquitas Romae*. Such qualities are closely related to the very public and masculine world from which Cicero had recently retreated. Furthermore, Tullia's masculinity had long been celebrated in Cicero's letters and anecdotes; he had acknowledged her strength during his exile, *nisi vos* (Tullia et Terentia) *fortiores cognossem quam quemquam virum*, and had called her *effigiem oris, sermonis, animi mei*. By playing down the dissimilarities between himself and his daughter, he found in Tullia his *alter idem*. The manliness of his daughter and the place in which she was to be given so unprecedented an honor combine to serve as a temporary shield behind which the orator retreats until he is able to gain a more powerful and therefore manly stance in political society. Tullia's *fanum* was to be as much about Cicero as it was Tullia.

The choice of Clodia's meretricious property is especially intriguing because in donning the figurative *imago* of his daughter, Cicero can assert the power of his daughter's status as *materfamilias*, a sexually honorable matron, over the compromised Clodia. Indeed, in doing so, Cicero can reclaim his initial victory over the domus of *Clodia* and reenter society from a position of power.