

To Terentia, Tulliola, and Young Cicero (at Rome) Brundisium,
29 April

Yes, I do write to you less often than I might,
because, though I am always wretched,
yet when I write to you or read a letter from you,
I am in such floods of tears
that I cannot endure it.
Oh, that I had clung less to life!
I should at least never have known real sorrow, or not much of it,
in my life.
Yet if fortune has reserved for me any hope of recovering at any
time any position again,
I was not utterly wrong to do so:
if these miseries are to be permanent,
I only wish, my dear,
to see you as soon as possible and to die in your arms,
since neither gods,
whom you have worshipped with such pure devotion,
nor men,
whom I have ever served,
have made us any return.
I have been thirteen days at Brundisium in the house of M.Laenius
Flaccus,
a very excellent man,
who has despised the risk to his fortunes and civil existence in
comparison to keeping me safe,
nor has been induced by the penalty of a most iniquitous law
to refuse me the rights and good offices of hospitality and
friendship.
May I sometime have the opportunity of repaying him!
Feel gratitude I always shall.
I set out from Brundisium on the 29th of April,
and intend going through Macedonia to Cyzicus.
What a fall! What a disaster!
What can I say?
Should I ask you to come
—a woman of weak health and broken spirit?
Should I refrain from asking you?
Am I to be without you, then?
I think the best course is this:
if there is any hope of my restoration,
stay to promote it and push the thing on:
but if, as I fear, it proves hopeless,
pray come to me by any means in your power.
Be sure of this,
that if I have you I shall not think myself wholly lost.
But what is to become of my darling Tullia?
You must see to that now:
I can think of nothing.
But certainly, however things turn out,
we must do everything to promote that poor little girl's married
happiness and reputation.
Again, what is my boy Cicero to do?
Let him, at any rate, be ever in my bosom and in my arms.
I can't write more.
A fit of weeping hinders me.
I don't know how you have got on;

Cicero, Letters to Friends, XIV.4

Scr. Brundisii prid. Kalendas Maias a.u.c. 696. TULLIUS S. D.
TERENTIAE ET TULLIAE ET CICERONI SUIS.

Ego minus saepe do ad vos litteras, quam possum,
propterea quod cum omnia mihi tempora sunt misera,
tum vero, cum aut scribo ad vos aut vestras lego,
conficior lacrimis sic,
ut ferre non possim.
Quod utinam minus vitae cupidi fuissetus!
certe nihil aut non multum in vita mali vidissetus.
Quod si nos ad aliquam alicuius commodi aliquando
recuperandi spem fortuna reservavit,
minus est erratum a nobis;
si haec mala fixa sunt,
ego vero te quam primum, mea vita,
cupio videre et in tuo complexu emori,
quoniam neque di,
quos tu castissime coluisti,
neque homines,
quibus ego semper servivi,
nobis gratiam rettulerunt.
Nos Brundisii apud M. Laenium Flaccum dies XIII fuimus,
virum optimum,
qui periculum fortunarum et capitis sui prae mea salute
neglexit
neque legis improbissimae poena deductus est,
quo minus hospitii et amicitiae ius officiumque praestaret:
huic utinam aliquando gratiam referre possimus!
habebimus quidem semper.
Brundisio profecti sumus a.d. II K. Mai.:
per Macedoniam Cyzicum petebamus.
O me perditum! O afflictum!
Quid enim?
Rogem te, ut venias?
Mulierem aegram, et corpore et animo confectam.
Non rogem?
Sine te igitur sim?
Opinor, sic agam:
si est spes nostri reditus,
eam confirmes et rem adiuves;
sin, ut ego metuo, transactum est,
quoquo modo potes ad me fac venias.
Unum hoc scito:
si te habebo, non mihi videbor plane perisse.
Sed quid Tulliola mea fiet?
iam id vos videte:
mihi deest consilium.
Sed certe, quoquo modo se res habebit,
illius misellae et matrimonio et famae serviendum est.
Quid? Cicero meus quid aget?
iste vero sit in sinu semper et complexu meo.
Non queo plura iam scribere:
impedit maeror.
Tu quid egeris, nescio:

whether you are left in possession of anything,
 or have been, as I fear, entirely plundered.
 Piso, as you say,
 I hope will always be our friend.
 As to the manumission of the slaves
 you need not be uneasy.
 To begin with,
 the promise made to yours was that you would treat them
 according as each severally deserved.
 So far Orpheus has behaved well,
 besides him no one very markedly so.
 With the rest of the slaves the arrangement is that,
 if my property is forfeited,
 they should become my freedmen,
 supposing them to be able to maintain at law that status.
 But if my property remained in my ownership,
 they were to continue slaves,
 with the exception of a very few.
 But these are trifles.
 To return to your advice,
 that I should keep up my courage
 and not give up hope of recovering my position,
 I only wish that there were any good grounds
 for entertaining such a hope.
 As it is, when, alas! shall I get a letter from you?
 Who will bring it me?
 I would have waited for it at Brundisium,
 but the sailors would not allow it,
 being unwilling to lose a favourable wind.
 For the rest,
 put as dignified a face on the matter as you can, my dear Terentia.
 Our life is over: we have had our day:
 it is not any fault of ours that has ruined us, but our virtue.
 I have made no false step,
 except in not losing my life when I lost my honours.
 But since our children preferred my living,
 let us bear everything else, however intolerable.
 And yet I, who encourage you,
 cannot encourage myself.
 I have sent that faithful fellow Clodius Philhetærus home, because
 he was hampered with weakness of the eyes.
 Sallustius seems likely to outdo everybody in his attentions.
 Pescennius is exceedingly kind to me;
 and I have hopes that he will always be attentive to you.
 Sicca had said that he would accompany me;
 but he has left Brundisium.
 Take the greatest care of your health,
 and believe me
 that I am more affected by your distress than my own.
 My dear Terentia,
 most faithful and best of wives,
 and my darling little daughter, and that last hope of my race,
 Cicero, good-bye!
 29 April, from Brundisium.

utrum aliquid teneas an,
 quod metuo, plane sis spoliata.
 Pisonem, ut scribis,
 spero fore semper nostrum.
 De familia liberanda
 nihil est quod te moveat:
 primum tuis ita promissum est,
 te facturam esse,
 ut quisque esset meritus;
 est autem in officio adhuc Orpheus,
 praeterea magno opere nemo;
 ceterorum servorum ea causa est,
 ut, si res a nobis abisset,
 liberti nostri essent,
 si obtinere potuissent,
 sin ad nos pertineret,
 servirent
 praeterquam oppido pauci.
 Sed haec minora sunt.
 Tu quod me hortaris,
 ut animo sim magno
 et spem habeam recuperandae salutis,
 id velim sit eiusmodi,
 ut recte sperare possimus.
 Nunc miser quando tuas iam litteras accipiam?
 quis ad me perferet?
 quas ego exspectassem Brundisii,
 si esset licitum per nautas,
 qui tempestatem praetermittere noluerunt.
 Quod reliquum est,
 sustenta te, mea Terentia, ut potes.
 Honestissime viximus, floruimus:
 non vitium nostrum, sed virtus nostra nos afflixit;
 peccatum est nullum,
 nisi quod non una animam cum ornamentis amisimus;
 sed, si hoc fuit liberis nostris gratius, nos vivere,
 cetera, quamquam ferenda non sunt, feramus.
 Atqui ego, qui te confirmo,
 ipse me non possum.
 Clodium Philetærum, quod valetudine oculorum impediabatur,
 hominem fidelem, remisi.
 Sallustius officio vincit omnes.
 Pescennius est perbenevolus nobis,
 quem semper spero tui fore observantem.
 Sicca dixerat se mecum fore,
 sed Brundisio discessit.
 Cura, quoad potes, ut valeas
 et sic existimes,
 me vehementius tua miseria quam mea commoveri.
 Mea Terentia,
 fidissima atque optima uxor,
 et mea carissima filiola et spes reliqua nostra,
 Cicero, valete.
 Pr. K. Mai. Brundisio.

English: <http://oll.libertyfund.org/> Latin: <http://www.thelatinlibrary.com/cicero/fam14.shtml#4> Accessed August 19, 2007