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Funerary Inscriptions Project

Tablet for Hilara (CIL [VI.33824](#))



D[is] [ivy leaf] M[anibus]

CALLIPPVS • L[uci] • CAECILI • IOVINI

ACTOR • FECIT • HILARAE

CONIVGI • INCOMPARABILI •

QVAE • VIXIT • ANNIS • XX • VII •

D[iebus] • XXX • III • ET • SIBI • ET • SVIS • LIBERTIS

LIBERTABVSQVE • POSTERISQVE • EORVM

INFRONT[e] • P[edes] • VII • IN AGRO • P[edes] • VIII •

Translation:

To the Spirits of the Dead
 Callippus, agent of Lucius Caecilius Iovinius,
 made [this monument] for Hilara
 his incomparable wife
 who lived 27 years
 and 33 days and for himself and for his freedmen
 and freedwomen and their posterity,
 In front [width] 8 feet, in field [depth] 8 feet

Description of the Tablet and Interpretation:

This marble tablet for Hilara can probably be dated to the 2nd century CE, due to its abbreviation of *Dis Manibus*. It was discovered behind the Basilica of Saint Paul. The tablet is made of fine marble with beautiful striations. Also, the letters are neatly carved, deeply incised and evenly spaced, set within a box. This monument was not inexpensive. Upon closer inspection, one can see the remnants of red ink within the letters, used to better define the inscription and make it more legible. Interpuncts were used to separate every word, except for *in fronte* and *in agro* in the last line. The ivy leaf between the *D* and *M* in the heading refers to the Roman god Bacchus (the Greek god Dionysus). The plant is associated with his worship because, like the “twice born” god, it reappears in springtime every year, thus suggesting eternal life. The tablet contains a handle-like opening on each side, suggesting that it was fixed across a niche for cinerary urns; however, the size of the burial area indicates not a columbarium but rather a family tomb. The openings permitted mourners to pour offerings to the deceased.

Lucius Caecilius Iovinius was a member of the *gens Caecilia*, a plebian *gens* that was first recorded in written texts during the 5th century BCE. Lucius was a common *praenomen* for the males of this *gens*. The first to achieve the consulship was L. Caecilius Metellus Denter in 284 BCE. Other members of this family were prominent citizens. Iovinius was most likely the former master of both Hilara and Callippus.

Callippus was a freedman who worked under Iovinius as a steward or agent. At first glance, one might assume that Callippus was a slave, due to his Greek name and the lack of a *nomen* or the word *libertus*. However, because he refers to Hilara as his *coniux*, his wife, he must be a freedman, since slaves were not legally able to marry. In addition, his status is confirmed by the fact that he was himself the master of former slaves, and slaves were not permitted to own property. Since Callippus was a freedman of Iovinius, his full name would have been Lucius Caecilius Callippus. Due to Hilara's lack of a *nomen*, one can assume that she was originally a slave, now a freedwoman, probably under the same master as Callippus; her name as a freedwoman would have been Caecilia Hilara. Possibly Callippus had only his and his wife's *cognomina* inscribed on the tablet because their status was obvious and because it saved space and expense. The omission of *libertus* and the master's *praenomen* and *nomen* on funerary inscriptions was common by the 2nd century CE.

The tablet and large burial area for dependents (they seem not to have had children) must have cost a great deal. One wonders how Callippus was able to afford it and the freedpersons he once owned as slaves. He probably continued to work as a paid servant for his master Iovinius after he was freed, or perhaps he belonged to a *collegium* or was a member of a burial association which assisted with acquiring space for burial for its members.

Callippus' dedication to Hilara is moving; he not only describes her as “incomparable” but he notes his young wife's exact age at death to the day. Another interesting aspect of the tablet is its reference to the precise size of the land purchased for burial. Other monuments have been seen to do this, and one such example comes from the inscription for Claudia Semne, *CIL* VI.615593. *ILS* 8063c (<http://www2.cnr.edu/home/araia/ClaudiaSemne.html>). In Claudia's inscription, a detailed description of a garden is given in which her monument is to be held.

GLOSSES:**Di Manes**, m. pl.

the spirits of the dead, the divine spirits. This phrase in the dative case is regularly found at the head of funerary inscriptions from the end of the 1st century BCE through the 2nd century CE.

Callippus

a slave name, possibly of Greek origin.

Lucius Caecilius Iovinius

The male Roman citizen's formal name had three parts: Lucius is the **praenomen**; Caecilius is the **nomen**; Iovinius is the **cognomen**, the name informally used.

Actor, actoris m.

According to the *Oxford Latin Dictionary*, *actor* has multiple meanings:

1. A herdsman, drover.
2. A wielder, a slinger
3. W/ rei, rerum, etc., and alone: performer, doer, transactor, agent
4. W/ causae and alone: a pleader, advocate, prosecuting or defending counsel; also specifically, the prosecutor or plaintiff
5. An actor in a play
6. A steward, manager, bailiff, agent. Also occurs in the titles of various imperial officials.

In this case, steward or agent probably fits best for Callippus.

fecit [hoc monumentum]

made this monument. The phrase is generally omitted from or abbreviated in inscriptions because it is commonly understood.

Hilara

Greek for “*cheerful, merry*”; she was a slave, possibly of the same master as Callippus. Since Greek names for slaves were popular, she and Callippus may not have originated in Greece.

Coniunx, -iugis m. f.

wife; spouse. The use of this word suggests that Hilara and Callippus were freed, since slaves could not legally be married.

Incomparabilis, -e

incomparable.

Quae

who; referring to Hilara.

Vixit

3rd person singular perfect form of **vīvere**, *to live*.

Sibi

dative of the reflexive pronoun.

Suus, -a, -um

one's own; a reflexive adjective.

Libertus, -i m.

freedman.

Libertabusque

-que is an enclitic meaning *and*; the ending **-bus** is an archaic form of the dative plural case to distinguish between male and female gender.

frons, -ntis f.

ablative of space with **in**; the phrase indicates the width of the plot.

Pes, -edis, m.

measurement in Roman feet.

Ager, -gri m.

field; the phrase indicates the depth of the plot.

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