

Rethinking women and work

Domitia Lucilla

This is Domitia Lucilla Minor, the wife of Marcus Annius Verus and mother of the emperor Marcus Aurelius. Her son mentions what he learnt from his mother in the first lines of his *Meditations*:

Marcus Aurelius *Meditations* 1 (translation G. Long)

... From my grandfather Verus I learned good morals and the government of my temper. From the reputation and remembrance of my father, modesty and a manly character. **From my mother, piety and beneficence, and abstinence, not only from evil deeds, but even from evil thoughts; and further, simplicity in my way of living, far removed from the habits of the rich.**

We have quite a different type of evidence for Domitia Lucilla's life as well though. Roman bricks were marked in the centre with a stamp from the clayfield and manufacturer, and sometimes the year (by mentioning the current consuls). A large number of bricks was found in Portus, near Ostia, with stamps mentioning the clayfields of Domitia Lucilla Minor, like the one below, which reads "Brick-product of Claudius Quinquatralis and Livius Martialis, from the estate of Domitia Lucilla".



Molds like the one below were used to stamp the clay before it was baked.

Only part of the brick and part of the stamp survive, but Domitia Lucilla's name can still be read.



Left: circular molding stamp from Rome, 3rd century AD.
Right: Brickstamp mentioning Domitia Lucilla Minor (Ashmolean).

Why do you think Aurelius has not mentioned her success in business but instead focusses on her piety and frugality?

What aspects of Domitia Lucilla's life might her epitaph have mentioned?

Further reading:

<http://blogs.ashmolean.org/latininscriptions/2015/06/12/she-built-rome-a-different-kind-of-imperial-woman/>