

## Academia

The next day Quintus got up early and hurried to the Academy, carrying the letter which Heliodorus have written to Theomnestus. He (Theomnestus) was head of the school which Plato had founded 300 years before; no school in the whole world was more famous or better than that. When Quintus entered, he saw two young men talking in the hall. He went up to one said, "I am looking for Theomnestus; will you lead me to him?" He replied, "Come with me. I will take you to him." He led Quintus through a very long portico to Theomnestus's study. Quintus thanked him and knocked on the door.

Theomnestus was sitting at a table reading a book. He was an impressive and venerable man; he had a very long beard and a very severe expression. He looked at Quintus and said, "what do you want, young man?" Quintus replied, "I want to become your pupil." He said, "Do you really want to study, or to play?" Quintus answered, "I bring a letter which Heliodorus wrote to you." He took the letter; when he had read it, he smiled at Quintus. "You are a young man of excellent character, as Heliodorus says, and none of his pupils studies harder. And so I shall gladly accept you into the number of my pupils. Go away now. Tomorrow come back to the theater and listen to my lecture."

Quintus returned to the hall delighted. He was approaching the gates when two young men entered laughing and talking loudly. Quintus recognized one; he could scarcely believe his own eyes: there was Marcus Cicero. Quintus called him. He turned around and "Immortal gods !" he said, "don't I see Quintus? There's no one I would rather see from Rome than you (literally: no one has come from Rome more pleasing to me than you). Come with me; we will go into the city and drink some wine."

He led Quintus into the city and soon they were sitting in a pub drinking wine. "Come on, Quintus," he said, "tell me everything. When did you arrive in Athens? What is happening in Rome? What have you heard about my father? Is he remaining in danger or has he gone into retirement (literally: retired into leisure)?" Quintus told him everything about his studies, about the death of Caesar, about the dangers of the city. Marcus said, "You are right Quintus. The times have never been more difficult. That is why (on account of that reason) my father sent me to Athens, because he himself is in the greatest danger. And so I am studying in the Lyceum. But these studies don't please me; I scarcely understand the lectures of Cratippus and the books of philosophers are boring. Besides I have fallen into some difficulty. For I have spent all the money that my father gave me. My father won't send me more money unless he hears a better report of me. What shall I do?"

## Marcus writes a letter to Tiro

Quintus thought a little; then he said, "Marcus, should you write to your father Tiro? Doesn't your father have the greatest confidence in Tiro? If he speaks well of you, doubtless your father will send you more money."

“Quintus,” said Marcus, “you give me excellent advice. I had a letter lately from Tiro. I will write back to him at once.” He sat at the table and wrote the following letter to zero:

Cicero the younger (Cicero son) sends greetings to his dearest (sweetest) Tiro.

I have been waiting keenly for the post man every day; at last he came on the 40<sup>th</sup> day after he left you. His arrival was most pleasing to me; for I both felt the greatest happiness from the letter of my dearest father, and your most delightful letter brought me the greatest joy.

I am glad that doubtless you have had pleasing reports about me, my sweetest Tiro, and that you pass on these reports to others. The errors of my youth have caused me the greatest pain. Now I will report news which will really please you:

I am not only an excellent pupil to Cratippus but even like a son. For I listen to him gladly; I am with him for whole days on end and he very often comes to dinner with me.

Please send me a copyist as soon as you can, who will write out my lecture notes for me. Meanwhile, take care that you keep well.