

## M. Caelius Rufus: Who Was He?

M. Caelius Rufus is well known as Cicero's protégé, client, correspondent and friend. Born in 88 or 87 BCE (Dyck 2013), he first comes to our attention when accused *de vi* on multiple counts and defended by Cicero in 56 BCE. The trial was notorious, marked by the presence of Cicero's *bête noire* P. Clodius Pulcher and his loose-living sister, Clodia, alleged to be Caelius' mistress and the object of a murder plot hatched by him. For better or for worse, Caelius' fame (or infamy) is closely connected with this trial, even though he was acquitted.

But there is much more to Caelius than his run-in with the law in 56. After the *tirocinium fori* under Cicero's tutelage, he had a reasonably successful political career, reaching the praetorship in 48 BCE (Broughton, 1951); he was active in the law courts; NUMBER letters of his correspondence with Cicero are extant. Much is known about Caelius, but the importance of his actions and the impact of his behavior on events of the late Roman republic are often overlooked, overshadowed by the famous trial and the friendship of his mentor Cicero.

In this paper I will discuss Caelius' career: his forensic and public oratory, his shifting political alliances and evolving relationships (characterized by both *amicitia* and *inimicitia*) with powerful contemporaries including Caesar, Pompey Clodius, Milo, and of course Cicero. I will look at some of Cicero's comments about his young friend in the Letters and elsewhere; *testimonia* regarding his speeches (Malcovati 1955); scholia; and various other sources concerning Caelius' programs and politics, with a view to illuminating some perhaps unappreciated aspects of his role in the waning years of the Roman republic.

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