

Freedmen and Freedwomen

1. What was unique about slavery in ancient Rome?

Slaves in ancient Rome were commonly freed (manumitted) and could often become Roman citizens.

2. How did a freedman get his name?

He took the first two names of his master and added his slave name to them.

ex. Clemens, the slave of Quintus Caecilius Iucundus became:

Quintus Caecilius Clemens

3. What were some of the new rights of a freedman?

1. voting
2. make a will
3. enter into a business agreement
4. get married

4. What limitations were put on the rights of a freedman?

1. could not become a senator or an "eques"
2. a "liberta" could not marry a senator
3. could not serve in the legions
4. could not be a candidate for office

(His children were exempt from these limitations.)

5. What legal obligations did a freedman have towards his former master?

1. he became the client of his former master
2. expected to name his master as his heir in his will
3. couldn't do anything that would hurt his master
4. work a few days a year for his master or give him a sum of money
5. show respect to his former master, attend him on public occasions and assist him in misfortunes.

6. What were some of the responsibilities of a master to his freedman?

1. give "sportula" (handout) at the "salutatio"
2. pay for his funeral and buried his ashes in the family plot
3. be guardian of his children
4. help him start a business
5. give him recommendations

7. How could a freedman expect to be treated by other "full citizens?"

Prejudice was common. A freedman was often ridiculed or even despised. He might be served inferior food at a dinner party. Horace, the poet, praised Maecenas, his patron, for not treating him poorly on account of his freedman heritage.

8. What special privilege was only attainable by freedmen?

They could be chosen as one of the six priests who oversaw the cult dedicated to the worship of the emperor, called "seviri Augustales".

A freedman might also be chosen as an assistant to the emperor known as the "liberti Augusti".

9. How did many Romans look on these freedmen who had these special privileges?

Because they worked closely with the emperor, became very rich and often were the only people that the emperor trusted and confided in, they were commonly despised and feared by other Romans, even by the wealthy and powerful.

*****This is not all you need to know. Re-read the reading.*****