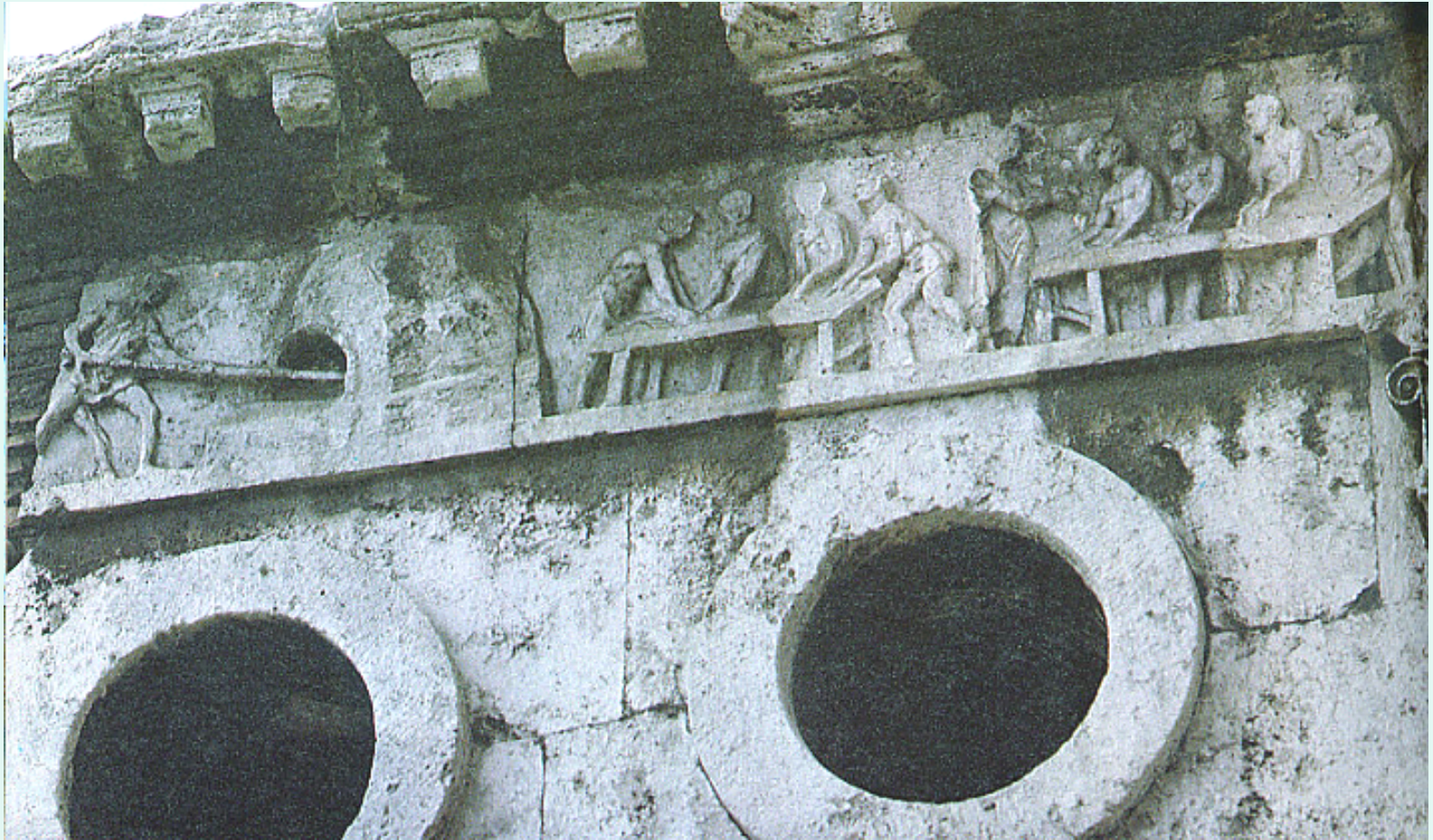


The Roman World: Lecture 20

Workers and Freedmen



Slaves: Manumission

- Freeing slaves in will
- *peculium* - money slave owns
- **freedman** – *libertus* (*liberti*)
- **freedwoman** – *liberta* (*libertae*)

Roman naming customs

Male Roman **citizens** - three names

- Gaius Julius Caesar; Marcus Tullius Cicero

Slaves have one name

- Felix ‘Happy’, Fortunata ‘Lucky woman’
- Greek names - Hermes

Freedmen - three names - two from ex-master

- Gaius Julius Hermes

Freedwomen - two names - one from ex-master

- Modesta - ex-slave of Publius Cornelius Scipio -> Cornelia Modesta

Residual stigma of slave name?

<http://www.duke.edu/~jds15/clst-012/images/freedman.family.dambra.23.jpg>

Freedman's **family tomb** relief, late 1st c. BCE

Official Imperial Art: relief from Altar of Augustan Peace (9BCE),
showing men in *toga*, and women in *stola*

[http://web.mit.edu/
course/21/21h.402/www/
arapacis/images/
procession.jpg](http://web.mit.edu/course/21/21h.402/www/arapacis/images/procession.jpg)

- ‘heroic nudity’
- soldier?
- ex-slaves were not allowed into the army
- freedmen’s children - full citizen rights
- dignified respectability
- old age exaggerated, traditional Roman values
- connection to the ancestral past – denied to freedmen

Sources for Freedmen: Petronius

- Petronius Arbiter
- courtier in emperor Nero's court
- novel: *Satyricon*

Petronius *Satyricon*

- Roman novel: mid-1st c. CE
- ‘Dinner of Trimalchio’
- Trimalchio - enormously wealthy freedman

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- broad **purple** stripe = *latus clavus* worn by senators
- **gold** rings - only senators and equestrians (‘knights’ -second highest social tier)
- 22CE - law against lower orders wearing gold rings
- emperor Claudius (42-54CE) law against freedman posing as equestrian - property confiscated

Petronius *Satyricon*

Trimalchio - enormously wealthy freedman:

- vulgar: bodily functions in public
- ignorance: bad mythology; misuses grammar of Latin language
- tyrannical master

Freedmen in the Imperial Court

- resented by Roman elites - especially senators

Suetonius *Claudius* 28-9:

- Out of **his freedmen**, Claudius had particular respect for Felix, whom he **put in charge of cohorts and cavalry divisions as well as the province of Judaea**, and married him off to three queens...In addition to these, there was Polybius, minister in charge of archives, who often **walked between the two consuls**, but above all **Narcissus**, who was in charge of correspondence, and **Pallas**, who was in charge of accounts. He willingly allowed those two to be **honoured by senatorial decree** not only with huge gifts, but also with the **insignia of high office**, and indeed to embezzle a great deal...

Martial *Epigram* 10.76

(Maevius: free-born Roman, poor

Incitatus: freedman and former mule-driver, but rich)

Fortune, does this seem fair to you?

Meivius is not a citizen of Syria or Parthia,

Or a Cappadocian from the slave auction,

But a native, from the people of Remus and Numa,

A charming, excellent man, an honest friend,

Learned in both languages [Latin and Greek]-

He has only one flaw—but it's a big one—he's a poet.

While Meivius shivers in a frayed cloak,

Incitatus the ex-slave mule-driver is in a bright

red garment

Work

- elite sources: work **not** valued

Cicero *On Duties* 1.150

We generally accept as true the following statements about trades and occupations, with regard to which are **suitable for the free-born** and which are **vulgar** (*sordidi* – **dirty**).

First of all, those occupations are condemned which bring upon you people's **hatred**, such as tax collecting and money-lending.

Also vulgar and unsuitable for the free-born are the occupations of all hired workmen whom we pay for their labour, not for their artistic skills: for with these men their pay is itself a **recompense for slavery**.

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Also to be considered vulgar are retail merchants who buy from wholesale merchants and immediately turn around and resell; for they would not make a profit unless they lied a lot. And **nothing is more shameless than lying**.

All craftsmen, too, are engaged in vulgar occupations, for a workshop or factory can have nothing respectable about it.

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And the **most shameful occupations are those which cater to our sensual pleasures**, 'fish sellers, butchers, cooks, poultry raisers, and fishermen,' as Terence says. Add to these if you like: perfume makers, dancers, and all kinds of performers.

Cicero *On Duties* 1.151

But the professions in which either a higher degree of intelligence is required or from which no small benefit to society is derived — medicine and architecture, for example, and teaching — these are proper for those of the right social position.

Trade, if it is on a small scale, is to be considered vulgar; but if wholesale and on a large scale, importing large quantities from all parts of the world and distributing to many without misrepresentation, it is not to be greatly disparaged. In fact, it even seems to deserve the highest respect, if those who are engaged in it, satisfied with the fortunes they have made, make their way from the port to a country estate, as they have often made it from the sea into port.

But of all the occupations by which gain is secured, none is better than agriculture, none more profitable, none more delightful, none more becoming to a free man.

Cicero *On Duties* 1.150-51

Tripartite spectrum of (dis)honour

- Lowest: hired manual labourer, retail trade, tax collectors, fishmongers, cooks, dancers
 - Middle: educated professionals - medicine, teaching, architects; large scale commerce
 - Highest: agriculture (landowning)
-
- Sandra Joshel *Work, Identity and Legal Status at Rome* (1992): parallels slave/ freedman / freeborn

Work on Funerary Inscriptions

- how did workers represent themselves?
- *Zeno coquus* – ‘Zeno the cook’

Work on Funerary Inscriptions

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- *Zeno coquus* – ‘Zeno the cook’
- ‘Viccentia, sweetest daughter, a weaver of gold, who lived 9 years 9 months’ (*CIL* 6.9213)

Funerary Inscription:

‘Valeria Callityche, freedwoman of Aulus
and Gaia, hairdresser’

(*KM* 1030, Puteoli, S.Italy)

Work on Funerary Inscriptions

- Freed(wo)men collaborate or pay for one another's tombs
- 'Vibia Chresta, freedwoman of Lucius, **put up this monument for herself and her family and for Gaius Rustius Thalossus, freedman of Gaius, her son, and for Vibia Calybenis, a freedwoman procuress, entirely with her own money, without fraud to others. This monument does not pass to the heirs'** (*CIL* 9.2029)

Work on Funerary Inscriptions

- *collegia* – workers' clubs
- *Columbarium* – ‘dove-cote’ – communal spaces for storing ashes
- portrait busts of the deceased

http://www.umich.edu/~kelseydb/Exhibits/Death_on_Display/Cremation_Group/columbarium.html

Columbarium in Rome (1st c. CE)

(Ramage p. 124)

<http://www.hsl.virginia.edu/historical/artifacts/antiqua/women.cfm>

Tomb relief: midwife from Ostia

Scribonia Attice - inscription - tomb for self & family

- <http://www.flickr.com/photos/40097257@N03/6190815040/>

mid 2nd c. CE relief from tomb of butcher

- who is the woman?
- wearing stola

Tomb of Eurysaches
the baker,
near Porta Maggiore

c.50 CE

Andreae, plate 53

- <http://www.flickr.com/photos/21386822@N02/2235247745/>



Tomb of Eurysachos, detail

- baking process in friezes
- urn which holds ashes = “breadbasket”

Sandra Joshel Work, Identity and Legal Status at Rome (Norman: 1992): 166

Freedmen had claims that slaves lacked, namely, family and citizenship. Nonetheless, they occupied a marginal position in society, and the stain of a servile past left them continually vulnerable to denigration...By altering the standard of assessment from **birth** to **economic activity**, the claim gives the freedman a central rather than marginal position.