

ROMAN NAMES 3: FREEDMEN AND FREEDWOMEN – Teacher’s Notes

To support:

- GCSE Classical Civilization (OCR): Unit A351: City Life in the Classical World: Rome – the Roman Household
- GCSE Classical Civilization (AQA): Unit 2: Greece and Rome: Drama and Life
- GCSE Latin (OCR): Unit A405: Sources for Latin – 1. Work and domestic life (slaves) and 2. Social life and entertainment (patronage)
- WJEC Certificate in Latin and Roman Civilisation: Topic 9.1. Daily Life in Roman Society and Literature
- Cambridge Latin Course I, Stage 6: Slaves and freedmen

This builds on the topic:

- AshLI – Roman Names 1 (Men and Boys) and 2 (Women and Girls)

Tips:

- The act of freeing a slave is also called manumission (lit. ‘to send from your hand’, i.e. release from your power)
- The round pendant worn by the little boy in the funerary relief on page 1 of the worksheet is called a “bulla”. It was a protective charm worn until the boy became a man, and also showed that he was a Roman citizen. A child born to freedman (after he has been freed) was a first-generation freeborn citizen.

Pronunciation crib sheet:

cognomen – cogg-NOM-enn

libertus/liberta - lib-AIR-tuss/lib-AIR-ta

Marcus Aemilius Vitalis – Markus Eye-MEE-lius Vitt-AHHH-lis

Marci - Markee

nomen – NOM-enn

praenomen – pry-NOM-enn

A. A New Name for a New Life

ANSWERS:

1. Claudia Myrtis
2. Lucius Mussius Gallio
3. Dellia Anna
4. Publius Cornelius Dionysios (pron. *Dye-on-ISS-ee-os*)

B. Reading Latin Inscriptions:

Warm-up:

Often a Roman's *praenomen* was abbreviated to only one or two letters. Can your students guess the names represented by the following?:

A - Aulus

C – Gaius

Cn - Gnaeus

L - Lucius

M – Marcus

O - Octavius

P – Publius

Q – Quintus

Ti – Tiberius

Looking at the Slides:

- *Answers are given on slides 8-13.*
- **Differentiation:** *Younger or less confident pupils may prefer simply to look for the tell-tale L for Libertus/a. More confident students might try to write out the full name in translation.*
- *The dots between letters are called interpuncts and often help you see where one word stops and another begins.*
- *The letter V is often used instead of U.*

Extension Work:

- **Latin literature:** The place of freedmen in Roman society is an important topic, and one which often appears in Latin literature (e.g. Petronius' *Trimalchio's Dinner* (in his *Satyricon*), Pliny the Younger's *Letters* 7.29 and 8.6, Juvenal *Satires* 1, 4, 6, 7, 9, and Tacitus' *Annals* 14.42-5). Students might consider why the picture of freedmen painted by Roman authors (who were male, freeborn and wealthy) was so often unflattering.
- **IT:** Some of the most impressive houses in Pompeii belonged to freedmen, including the House of Vettii (pron. *VET-ee-ee*). Students could gather research on this house for slide presentation or poster, or even a brochure for a Roman Estate Agent.
- **Art:** Students might try making their own inscription by using a pointed tool in soft clay, or by scratching a pre-prepared tablet of air-dried clay painted with a layer of darker paint.

The funerary art of Roman freedmen is very distinctive. Good examples of stone reliefs are on display at the British Museum, and can be seen here:

http://www.britishmuseum.org/research/collection_online/search.aspx?searchText=roman+freedman

- **Creative Writing and Drama:** Students might write a diary entry or devise a dialogue or sketch about being given their freedom, changing their name, and gaining their new rights. Further information on the process may be found online by searching for the "Roman manumission ceremony".

Two books, written for an academic audience, may be useful for project work by older students:

- H. Mouritsen, *The Freedman in the Roman World*, Cambridge 2011
- L.H. Petersen, *The freedman in Roman art and art history*, Cambridge 2006