



Gender, Manumission, and the Roman Freedwoman

By Matthew J. Perry

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Gender, Manumission, and the Roman Freedwoman examines the distinct problem posed by the manumission of female slaves in ancient Rome. The sexual identities of a female slave and a female citizen were fundamentally incompatible, as the former was principally defined by her sexual availability and the latter by her sexual integrity. Accordingly, those evaluating the manumission process needed to reconcile a woman's experiences as a slave with the expectations and moral rigor required of the female citizen. The figure of the freedwoman-fictionalized and real-provides an extraordinary lens into the matter of how Romans understood, debated, and experienced the sheer magnitude of the transition from slave to citizen, the various social factors that impinged upon this process, and the community stakes in the institution of manumission.

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Editorial Review

About the Author

Matthew J. Perry is Assistant Professor of History at John Jay College of Criminal Justice, City University of New York. His research focuses on Roman social history, especially issues related to gender, sexuality, law, and social status. He is the recipient of PSC-CUNY Research Awards (2009-13). His work has appeared in the Ancient History Bulletin.

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