

EMPEROR



LATE 19TH CENTURY OIL PAINTING BY SIR LAWRENCE ALMA-TADEMA OF ROMAN EMPEROR CLAUDIUS.



THIS IS A DEPICTION OF THE SOCIAL CLASSES OF ANCIENT ROME. MAKE AN EDUCATED GUESS ABOUT EACH GROUP OF PEOPLE...

The top

Emperor

As absolute ruler of Rome and its enormous empire, the emperor and his family lived in suitable style. They stayed at the best villas, ate the finest food and dressed in only the most magnificent clothes.

Life was luxurious, extravagant and indulgent – the emperor's family could spend their days enjoying their favorite pastimes, like music, poetry, hunting and horse racing.

Palace intrigue

Still, it was not an easy life.

Succession to the emperor was not strictly hereditary: the throne could pass to brothers, stepsons or even favored courtiers and any heir had to be approved by the Senate.

As a result, royal palaces were constantly filled with political intrigue. Potential heirs and their families always needed to be pushing their name, making their claim and hustling for position.

<http://www.pbs.org/empires/romans/empire/patricians.html>

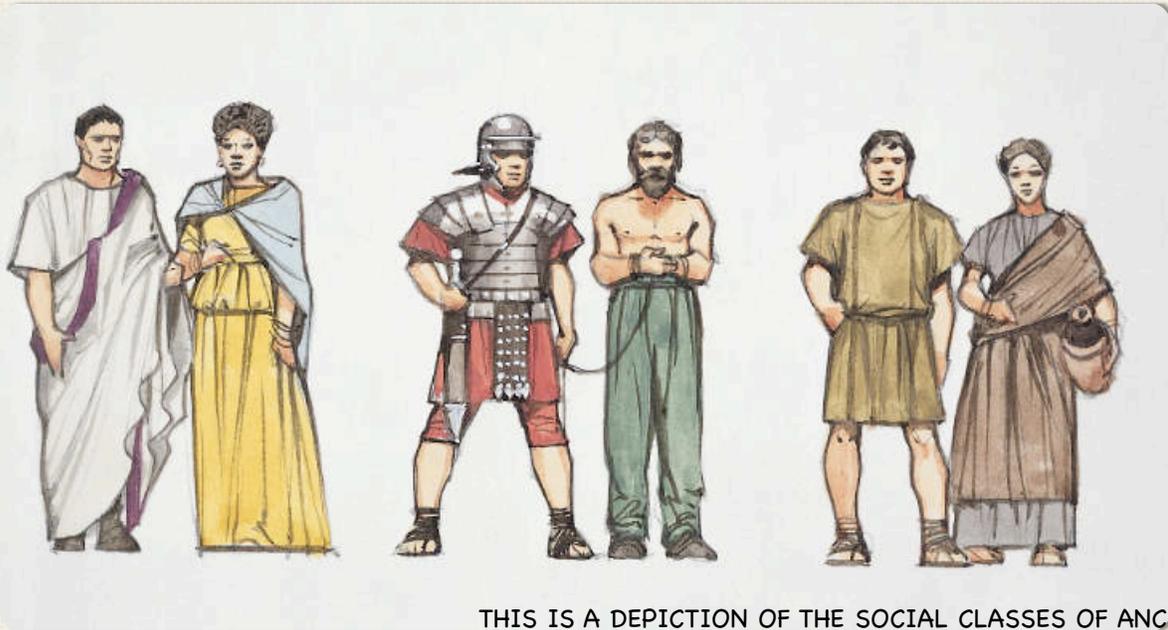
Your Argument on Slavery:

As emperor, you are concerned with keeping the status quo (everything staying the same), you rely on slave labor heavily. You don't understand why anyone would suggest a change. You want law and order to prevail, favor crushing rebellions and getting more slaves through war if necessary.

You think that no change in the current system of slavery is needed.



PATRICIANS



THIS IS A DEPICTION OF THE SOCIAL CLASSES OF ANCIENT ROME. MAKE AN EDUCATED GUESS ABOUT EACH GROUP OF PEOPLE...OR WHICH ONES ARE THE PATRICIANS

A charmed life

Patricians

Ranked just below the emperor and his relatives, the patrician families dominated Rome and its empire. The word “patrician” comes from the Latin “patres”, meaning “fathers”, and these families provided the empire’s political, religious, and military leadership.

Most patricians were wealthy landowners from old families, but the class was open to a chosen few who had been deliberately promoted by the emperor.

A good education

Boys born into a patrician family would receive an extensive education, usually from a private tutor. This would focus on the subjects a sophisticated noble

would be expected to know, as well as some required for his future career. Poetry and literature, history and geography, some mythology and important languages – like Greek – would all be taught.

A privileged position

The patrician class enjoyed few privileges: its members were excused some military duties expected of other citizens, and only patricians could become emperor. But this eligibility carried its own dangers: patricians could find themselves becoming wrapped up in palace intrigue. If they ended up on the losing side, they could easily lose their home, their lands and even their lives.

Apart from the plots and politics,

however, members of both royal and patrician families faced little work or real responsibility and were blessed with a relatively charmed life – certainly compared to the other inhabitants of Rome at the time.

<http://www.pbs.org/empires/romans/empire/patricians.html>

Your Argument on Slavery:

As a patrician you have the most to lose from slave rebellions as you are often the target of their violence and you are closer to slaves than the emperor. Living in fear of rebellion, you are split. Some of you want more lenient treatment of slaves and more rights for slaves to prevent rebellions, and some of you want more strict and severe treatment of slaves.

PLEBIANS



THIS IS A DEPICTION OF THE SOCIAL CLASSES OF ANCIENT ROME. MAKE AN EDUCATED GUESS ABOUT EACH GROUP OF PEOPLE...OR WHICH ONES ARE THE PLEBIANS

Life was a struggle

Rome's working class, the plebeians had little individual power. Grouped together, however, they became a Roman mob and had to be handled carefully.

By the first century CE, plebeians comprised a formal class, which held its own meetings, elected its own officials and kept its own records. The term plebeian referred to all free Roman citizens who were not members of the patrician, senatorial or equestrian classes.

Working class heroes

Plebeians were average working citizens of Rome – farmers, bakers,

builders or craftsmen – who worked hard to support their families and pay their taxes. Over the course of this period, early forms of public welfare were established by Titus and Trajan and, in difficult times, plebeians could ask Roman administrators for help.

We know much less about daily life for the lower classes, such as plebeians. Unlike the more privileged classes, most plebeians could not write and therefore they could not record and preserve their experiences.

Social climbing

Some plebeians, who were doing

reasonably well, might try to save enough money to join the equestrian class. For many, however, life was a daily struggle.

<http://www.pbs.org/empires/romans/empire/plebians.html>

Your Argument on Slavery:

A few plebeians managed to have slaves. Some of you are worried that slavery drives down the wages in your field because some slaves do the same work you do for free. However, if all slaves are freed, you would have less work because they would compete for your jobs. You want slaves prohibited from certain jobs, but able to see their humanity a bit more, and want at least decent working conditions for them.

SLAVES



THIS IS A DEPICTION OF THE SOCIAL CLASSES OF ANCIENT ROME. MAKE AN EDUCATED GUESS ABOUT EACH GROUP OF PEOPLE...OR WHICH ONE IS THE SLAVE

The bottom

Slavery in ancient Rome differed from its modern forms in that it was not based on race.

But like modern slavery, it was an abusive and degrading institution. Cruelty was commonplace.

A common practice

Slavery had a long history in the ancient world and was practiced in Ancient Egypt and Greece, as well as Rome. Most slaves during the Roman Empire were foreigners and, unlike in modern times, Roman slavery was not based on race.

Slaves in Rome might include prisoners of war, sailors captured and sold by pirates, or slaves bought outside Roman territory. In hard times, it was not uncommon for desperate Roman citizens to raise money by selling their children into slavery.

Life as a slave

All slaves and their families were the property of their owners, who could sell or rent them out at any time. Their lives were harsh. Slaves were often whipped, branded or cruelly mistreated. Their owners could also kill them for any reason, and would face no punishment.

Although Romans accepted slavery as the norm, some people – like the poet and philosopher, Seneca – argued that slaves should at least be treated fairly.

Essential labor

Slaves worked everywhere – in private households, in mines and factories, and on farms. They also worked for city governments on engineering projects such as roads, aqueducts and buildings. As a result, they merged easily into the population.

In fact, slaves looked so similar to

Roman citizens that the Senate once considered a plan to make them wear special clothing so that they could be identified at a glance. The idea was rejected because the Senate feared that, if slaves saw how many of them were working in Rome, they might be tempted to join forces and rebel.

http://www.pbs.org/empires/romans/empire/slaves_freemen.html

Your Argument on Slavery:

As a slave, you want slavery abolished, or at least reformed. You are concerned with the brutal conditions and complete lack of rights. You want to be treated as a person and have heard stories of slaves being treated well, but you are concerned that these cases are the exception and not the rule.