

History

After a lesson, a student learning the ancient Roman law system wants to know whether slaves, as the laws state, were “excluded from laws [and] do not have any rights.” In reading a few sources during his research, he recorded the following notes:

- ① Slavery refers to a person who is not a free person in Roman society and is legally regarded as a matter; a person may become a slave by identity at birth and subject to criminal punishment or captured in war; slaves can be liberated and become free. [1]
- ② The release of slaves was an important part of Roman law.
- ③ The Laws of the Twelve Tables contained all the relevant provisions. [2]
- ④ This indicates that there was a slavery phenomenon.

From the end of the Republican period to the Imperial System, the release of slaves became more common with the expansion of the Roman Empire. In the Epistle of the Empire Justice, there were records about the release of a large number of slaves. [3]

Historians say: “A common view in Roman Law is that although slavery is a legitimate social system, it contradicts ‘nature,’ and there are ancient Roman jurists that said from civil law’s point of view, slaves are nothing, but according to the natural law this is not true because all people are equal.” [4]

Sources:

- [1] Roman Law Dictionary
- [2] Laws of the Twelve Tables, Fifth Table, Section 8, Article XI
- [3] Letters of Pliny the Younger on the release of slaves
- [4] Kovalov’s Ancient Roman History

Based on this information, answer the following questions:

1. Which of the above “sources” are historical data (as opposed to second-hand historical data)?
2. In the student’s notes (points ①, ②, ③ and ④), which are factual statements? And which statements are the students’ own evaluations? (4points)
3. Please help this student explain the reasons for the prevalence of the Roman Empire. (4 points)

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