



### Fact file: Aper and Caper

In this chapter we see a lot of the two slaves Aper and Caper.

Aper and Caper are not free citizens - they are owned by Balbus, and they don't have many freedoms. They can't own money or property, they can't marry, and their days are filled with duties carried out for their master and mistress.

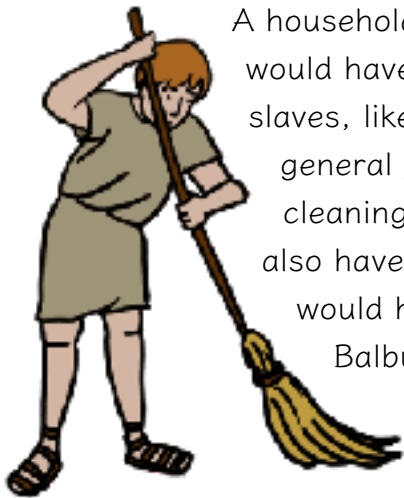
There was a large number of slaves in Herculaneum. Lots of these would have come from the towns nearby: their parents were slaves and therefore they were slaves also. But many slaves were also captured in wars across the empire and brought to the cities in Italy. Slaves could therefore come from a long way away. For example, Dama was probably from Syria.



**A Roman lady having her hair styled by a team of hairdressers, probably slaves.**

A household as big as that of Balbus and Livia would have had many slaves. Some of these slaves, like Aper and Caper, would look after general jobs and do physical labour or cleaning. But a wealthy man like Balbus might also have very skilled and educated slaves, who would have been more expensive to buy.

Balbus and Livia might have owned a skilled gardener, a good cook, a fashionable hairdresser, and an educated accountant, who would have lived in their home.



The life of Aper and Caper might have been tougher than that of the accountant - Aper certainly spends a lot of his time carrying heavy loads! But they were actually quite lucky to be the slaves of a rich man like Balbus. Slaves who worked on building projects, or in the mines, had a much tougher life, and many of them died young because of the hard physical labour.





A slave being set free in an official ceremony. The slave is kneeling.

Aper and Caper might work hard to impress their masters, in the hope that one day they would be given their freedom, like Dama had. Becoming a freedman would mean they'd be able to set up their own business, get married and have children who would be freeborn Roman citizens and be the equals to any other person in the empire.

To free a slave was a big deal. A master could do it in a special ceremony before a judge, or he could declare the slave free before witnesses. Another way to set a slave free was to invite them to have dinner with you - sitting at the table meant a slave was free. If Aper were to be freed, he'd then be known as "Marcus Nonius Aper", after his master Marcus Nonius Balbus - that way everyone would know whose freedman he was.

The Romans thought it was fine to own slaves. What do you think?

