

Book VI.
Title VI.

Concerning respectful conduct to be shown to patrons.
(De obsequiis patronis praestandis.)

Dig. 37.15; Bas. 29.2.10.¹

Headnote.

A freedman owed obsequium to his patron and children. The terms are not, as heretofore stated, easily defined. It included courtesy and respectful conduct. He could not strike or insult his patron, or be insolent toward him or charge him with any fraud in or out of court. It may be doubted whether some of these and other aggravated forms of misconduct were included in the term obsequium. See note to C. 6.7.2. They were required to seek a guardian of a minor of the patron who needed one but had none. C. 5.31.2.

6.6.1. Emperor Alexander to Zoticus.

You cannot bring an action which involves infamy against your patron.
Promulgated May 14 (223).

6.6.2. The same Emperor to Leontogonus.

Freedwomen who are, with the consent of their patron or (otherwise) legally² married, are not compelled to render any freedwomen's service to their patrons.

6.6.3. The same Emperor to Xanthus.

Also those who are manumitted by masters, pursuant to the payment of money,³ must, the law is clear, show respectful conduct due to patrons.
Promulgated November 1 (223).

6.6.4. The same Emperor to Victorionus.

If you used force and insolence toward your manumitter, who, through his kindness in order to liberate you, caused you to be made his adversary,⁴ the president of the province will decide to what extent to punish your unbridled temerity. 1. And, if any money was due you, or you had a dispute with your patron concerning some property, you should not have had immediate recourse to law; but, when you dared to do so, you might at least have submitted the equity of your claim to the judge without insulting words, observing all honor due to the patron.
Promulgated September 30 (224).

¹ It appears as if this reference should be 49.2.10.

² [Blume] Jure - e.g. if the manumitter extorted an oath from her not to marry. See C. 6.4.4.5. According to Bas. 49.2.11, out should be omitted and the constitution should read: If a freedwoman is legally married with the consent, etc.

³ [Blume] Pecunia for pactione. See Bas. 49.2.12.

⁴ [Blume] In a claim for liberation.

6.6.5. Emperor Gordian to Sulpicia.

It is not doubtful that freedmen must be respectful in their conduct toward children of the patron, even though the latter has been condemned. Hence, if they do not acknowledge the reverence due, they deservedly call punishment on themselves.

Promulgated September 3 (240).

6.6.6. The same Emperor to Cornelius.

There is no divided opinion that freedmen and freedwomen, especially those on whom no services (*operae*) were imposed, must show the accustomed respectful conduct toward their manumitters, rather than perform servile labor for them; nor may they be put in chains.

Promulgated March 30 (242).

6.6.7. Emperors Diocletian and Maximian to Metrodorus.

Freedmen of a stepmother should not be permitted to inflict intentional pain or hurt (*injuria*) on stepsons; nor is it to be tolerated that freedmen of your father should, as you state they are, be guilty of such conduct. 1. The president of the province therefore, will not hesitate to grant your request for punishment according to their condition.

Promulgated May 11 (286).

6.6.8. The same Emperors to Hermia.

It is not lawful to refuse to be respectful in your conduct toward your patroness.

Promulgated January 21 (287).