

Roman Nomenclature

A Roman citizen's full name during the Empire consisted of five parts:

- a) *praenomen* (first name): Publius, Lucius, Marcus, etc.
- b) *nomen / gentilicium* (family name): Iulius, Cornelius, Fulvius, etc.
- c) filiation: M. f. = M(arci) f(ilius), *the son of Marcus*
- d) voting tribe: Arn(ensis), Pal(atina), Men(enia), etc. – listed in official contexts
- e) *cognomen* (last name, individual name): Ianuarius, Felix, Priscus, etc.

Thus, a Roman (male) could be called: **A. Clodius A. f. Men. Flaccus**, or
N. Popidius N. f. Celsinus

The *praenomen* was always abbreviated to a single letter, e.g.:

A.	Aulus	N.	Numerius
C.	Gaius	P.	Publius
M.	Marcus	Q.	Quintus

(That's because there were only 12 *praenomina*.)

The *nomen/gentilicium* was the family name that every member of the family shared.

e.g. **Q. Caecilius Iucundus** would have a father named **Caecilius** and a son named **Caecilius**. His daughter, however, would have the feminine form of the name and therefore be named **Caecilia**.

The *cognomen* was unique to each individual and not necessarily inherited.

e.g. **M. Holconius Celer** had a son named **M. Holconius Rufus**.

Roman females had only three parts to their names:

- nomen / gentilicium* (family name): Iulia, Cornelia, Fulvia, etc.
- filiation: M. f. = M(arci) f(ilia), *the daughter of Marcus*
- cognomen* (last name): Ianuaria, Felicia, Prisca, etc.

e.g. **Herennia M. f. Frontina**

If a woman's husband was particularly wealthy or influential, she could include his name in her own (e.g. Herennia Frontina, daughter of Marcus, wife of Publius Caecilius).

A freed slave adopted his owner's name (*praenomen and nomen*) upon manumission, but kept his original name as his *cognomen*. He did not have a tribal affiliation, because he was not a full Roman citizen and could not vote. And, although free, he forever remained an ex-slave or *libertus*, signaled by a different formula in the place of filiation,
e.g. M. l. = M(arci) l(ibertus), *the freedman of Marcus*.

Thus, Quintus Herennius' freedman could be called: **Q. Herennius Q. l. Eutyches**

A slave had only one name, e.g. **Felix**.