‘The greatest and finest service’ (Cicero)

- It was forbidden by the Cincian Law in 204 to pay for legal advice, which was why patrons were expected and needed to provide legal assistance to their clients.
- Legal competence and ability to plead a case increased an individual’s prestige as well as the number of those loyal to him by placing them in his debt.
- It created a ‘symbolic capital’ that was the product of trust and loyalty, of an honourable reputation and influence, and could be mobilised in all the various circumstances of social and political life.
  - Cato the Elder, when he first came to Rome, did not have a network of friends. In order to get followers for a political career, he offered his services to anyone he could, so that the people would be in debt to him. He even went on tour around the small towns and principalities in the outskirts of Rome to do this.

Duties and responsibilities of patrons and clients:
- Patrons
  - Being educated, they explained the law to their clients, sought to protect them, not to impose a burden on them. They offered advice on matters of daily living. They could also bring suits on behalf of their clients.
- Clients
  - Clients assured their patrons of financial support, contributing to the dowry of their patron’s daughter, collecting ransom for a patron who had been captured or a fine levied against them, etc. They also had a political function, as they voted for their patrons in elections, etc.

‘Salutatio’ – the morning levee

- Rome life became centred on patronage. The morning salutation was the cliental ritual to greet the patron at his house at daybreak. Lines of clients queued up each morning at the door of a powerful man.

‘Aditus’ – open door

- The notion of a patron having his door open to clients at all times.

Social and political features of the patron-client relationship:
- The Twelve Tables stated that no patron could harm his client, and if a patron were to harm his client, he would be punished with death.
- Patronage was a form of political communication between those in power and those not. The patrons could effect political decisions on behalf of their clients.
- A network of clients provided votes in political elections. They also provided escorting processions, which showed the popularity of the patron, the strength of his patronage, his capacity to mobilise electorate, and also hindered other politicians.

Mutual benefits of patronage:
- It was a collective ritual that united all the clients, and legal help was received in return for votes.