

# RACE MIXTURE IN THE ROMAN EMPIRE

TENNEY FRANK

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*The following article by Tenney Frank originally appeared in the **American Historical Review** (July 1916, vol. 21, no. 4: 689–708). Frank (1876–1939), an American historian, was professor at Johns Hopkins University, Baltimore, Maryland, and the author of several books, including **A History of Rome** (1923), **Economic History of Rome** (1920), **Catullus and Horace** (1928), and **Roman Imperialism** (1914).*

There is one surprise that the historian usually experiences upon his first visit to Rome. It may be at the Galleria Lapidaria of the Vatican or at the Lateran Museum, but, if not elsewhere, it can hardly escape him upon his first walk up the Appian Way. As he stops to decipher the names upon the old tombs that line the road, hoping to chance upon one familiar to him from his Cicero or Livy, he finds praenomen and nomen promising enough, but the cognomina all seem awry. L. Lucretius *Pamphilus*, A. Aemilius *Alexa*, M. Clodius *Philostorgus* do not smack of freshman Latin. And he will not readily find in the Roman writers now extant an answer to the questions that these inscriptions invariably raise. Do these names imply that the Roman stock was completely changed after Cicero's day, and was the satirist recording a fact when he wailed that the Tiber had captured the waters of the Syrian Orontes? If so, are these foreigners ordinary immigrants, or did Rome become a nation of ex-slaves and their offspring? Or does the abundance of Greek cognomina mean that, to a certain extent, a foreign nomenclature has gained respect, so that a Roman dignitary might, so to speak, sign a name like C. Julius Abascantus on the hotel register without any misgivings about the accommodations?

Unfortunately, most of the sociological and political data of the empire are provided by satirists. When Tacitus informs us that in Nero's day a great many of Rome's senators and knights were descendants of slaves and the native stock had dwindled to surprisingly small proportions, we are not sure whether we are not to take it as an exaggerated thrust by an indignant Roman of the old stock. At any rate, this, like similar remarks equally indirect, receives totally different evaluation in the discussion of those who have treated of Rome's society, like Friedländer, Dill, Mommsen, Wallon, and Marquardt. To discover some new light upon these fundamental questions of Roman history, I have tried to gather such fragmentary data as the corpus of inscriptions might afford. This evidence is never decisive in its purport, and it is always, by the very nature of the material, partial in its scope, but at any rate it may help us

to interpret our literary sources to some extent. It has at least convinced me that Juvenal and Tacitus were not exaggerating. It is probable that when these men wrote a very small percentage of the free plebeians on the streets of Rome could prove unmixed Italian descent. By far the larger part – perhaps ninety percent – had Oriental blood in their veins.

My first quest was for information about the stock of the ordinary citizen of Rome during the empire. In the *Corpus of Latin Inscriptions*<sup>1</sup> the editors, after publishing the honorary and sepulchral inscriptions of the nobles and military classes, followed by those of the slaves and humble classes which occur in the *columbaria*, gave the rest of the city's sepulchral inscriptions (19,260) in alphabetical order.<sup>2</sup> Of these I read the 13,900 contained in volume VI., parts 2 and 3, which, despite the occurrence of some slaves as well as of some persons of wealth, represent on the whole the ordinary type of urban plebeians. A mere classification of all these names into lists of natives on the one hand and slaves and foreigners on the other would be of little service, since, obviously, transient foreigners are of little importance in estimating the stock of the permanent population of Rome, and we must face the question at once whether or not the slave and freedman stock permanently merged into the civil population. Furthermore, such lists will be at everyone's hand as soon as the index of the sixth volume of *CIL* is published. In reckoning up the foreign stock, therefore, I have counted only those who, according to the inscriptions, were presumably born at Rome. A somewhat arbitrary definition of limits was necessary since we are seldom given definite information about the place of birth, but as I have used the same classification for the free-born as for the slave-born the results are valid for our purposes. For instance, in getting statistics of birth, I have included all children under ten years of age, assuming that slave children under that age would rarely be brought in from abroad; and if slaves of this class are counted, the free-born of the same class must also be reckoned with. I have also included slave and free-born children who appear to be with father, mother, brother, or sister at Rome, since presumably they would have been sundered from their family if they had been brought in from the foreign market; and again, in order to reach fair results, the corresponding persons of free birth are counted. For reasons which will presently appear I have accepted the Greek cognomen as a true indication of recent foreign extraction, and, since citizens of native stock did not as a rule unite in marriage with *liberti*, a Greek cognomen in a child or one parent is sufficient evidence of status. As is well known, certain Latin cognomina, e.g., *Salvius*, *Hilarus*, *Fortunatus*, were so frequently borne by slaves and freedmen that they were apt to be avoided by the better classes. Nevertheless, since no definite rule is attainable in the matter, I have credited the bearers of all Latin names to the native stock in all cases of doubt.<sup>3</sup>

Classifying in this way the names of the aforesaid 13,900 inscriptions of volume VI., parts 2 and 3, we find that of the 4,485 persons apparently born

at Rome, 3,723 (eighty-three percent) fall into the list which by our criteria represents foreign extraction. This figure is probably not far from correct, but I think it would be raised somewhat if it were possible to decide what proportion of Latin cognomina conceals slaves and *liberti*. For instance, a name like Q. Manlius Restitutus (VI. 22,015) would usually pass with little suspicion. But the inscription also names his father, mother, wife, and two sons, all of whom have Greek cognomina. Because of his parentage I have classed him as of foreign stock, but there are scores of brief inscriptions in which the necessary facts are not provided. In these the subject had to be classed, however erroneously, as Latin.

In order to reckon if possible the margin of error in cases like this, I have attempted to test the respectability of Latin cognomina, but with rather unsatisfactory results. I counted all the names of slaves and freedmen in the indexes of volumes V., IX., XIV., and over a thousand in volume VI., in order to get a group of five thousand bearing the prevalent slave-names. More than half (2,874) have Greek names, the most popular of these being Eros (58 times), Pamphilus (36), Antiochus (34), Hermes (30), Alexander (28), Philomusus (26), Onesimus (22), Philargyrus (21), names, most of which were also very popular among free Greeks and Asiatics. Two thousand one hundred and twenty-six have Latin names, some of which occur with remarkable frequency, e.g., Felix (97), Hilarus -a (64-53), Faustus -a (58-33), Salvius -a (38-18), Fortunatus -a (29-15), Primus -a (51-47), Secundus -a (25-34), Tertius -a (18-18), Auctus -a (24-25), Vitalis (36), Januarius -a (22-6). Now, if we compare these Latin names with those borne by better-class Roman plebeians, by the pretorian guards, for instance (though many descendants of slaves served even in the pretorian guards), we find, despite a certain overlapping, quite a striking difference. Apparently some names had acquired such sordid associations that they were in general avoided by ordinary plebeians. The favorite names on the pretorian lists are Maximus, Proculus, Severus, Verus, Capito, Justus, Celer, Marcellus, Clemens, Victor, and the like. We may not say that any Latin name was confined wholly to slaves, nor would it be possible to give any usable list of relative percentages, but we may at least say that the Romans recognized such names as Salvius, Hilarus, Fortunatus, Optatus, Auctus, Vitalis, Januarius, as being peculiarly appropriate to slaves; and Felix, Faustus, Primus, Primitivus, and a few others must have cast some suspicion upon the bearer. After reviewing in this light the seventeen percent of possible claimants of Latin origin in the alphabetical list of inscriptions in volume VI., parts 2 and 3, I have little doubt that a third of these would, with fuller evidence, be shifted into the class of non-Latins.

On the other hand, the question has been raised whether a man with Greek cognomen must invariably be of foreign stock. Could it not be that Greek names became so popular that, like Biblical and classical names today, they were accepted by Romans of native stock? In the last days of the empire this

may have been the case;<sup>4</sup> but the inscriptions prove that the Greek cognomen was not in good repute. I have tested this matter by classifying all the instances in the 13,900 inscriptions (there are 1,347) where the names of both the father and son appear.<sup>5</sup> From this it appears that fathers with Greek names are very prone to give Latin names to their children, whereas the reverse is not true. The statistics are as follows:

	<u>Greek cognomen</u>		<u>Latin cognomen</u>	
Father	859		488	
Son	<u>Greek</u>	<u>Latin</u>	<u>Greek</u>	<u>Latin</u>
	460	399	53	435

This means that in one generation Greek names diminish from sixty-four percent to thirty-eight percent, or that forty-six percent of the fathers with Greek names give their sons Latin names, while only eleven percent of the Latin fathers give their sons Greek names. And this eleven percent dwindles upon examination into a negligible quantity. For instance, in seventeen of the fifty-three cases the mother's name is Greek, which betrays the true status of the family; and in ten other instances the son's gentile name differs from that of the "father," who is, therefore, probably a stepfather. In almost all of the other twenty-six instances, the inscription is too brief to furnish a fair criterion for judging. Clearly the Greek name was considered as a sign of dubious origin among the Roman plebeians, and the freedman family that rose to any social ambitions made short shrift of it. For these reasons, therefore, I consider that the presence of a Greek name in the immediate family is good evidence that the subject of the inscription is of servile or foreign stock. The conclusion of our pros and cons must be that nearly ninety percent of the Roman-born folk represented in the above-mentioned sepulchral inscriptions of *CIL*, volume VI., parts 2 and 3, are of foreign extraction.

Who are these Romans of the new type and whence do they come? How many are immigrants and how many are of servile extraction? Of what race are they? Seneca happens to make a remark which is often quoted as proof of extensive immigration to Rome. He writes to his mother in derision of Rome:

Of this crowd the greater part have no country; from their own free towns and colonies, in a word, from the whole globe, they are congregated. Some are brought by ambition, some by the call of public duty, or by reason of some mission, others by luxury which seeks a harbor rich and commodious for vices, others by the eager pursuit of liberal studies, others by shows, etc.<sup>6</sup>

Seneca apparently refers in large part to visitors, but also to immigrants. In so far as he has transients in mind we are not concerned with the passage,

for such people did little to affect the permanent racial complexion of Rome's civil population. A passage in Juvenal's third satire is perhaps more to the point, for he seems to imply that the Oriental has come to stay.

While every land...daily pours  
Its starving myriads forth. Hither they come  
To batten on the genial soil of Rome,  
Minions, then lords of every princely dome,  
Grammarians, painter, augur, rhetorician,  
Rope-dancer, conjurer, fiddler, and physician.

This passage clearly suggests that foreigners of their own free will have drifted to Rome in great numbers to make it their place of livelihood and their permanent abode. I cannot here treat the whole problem, but, while agreeing that the implication of this passage is true to a certain degree, I would question whether the generalities in it are not too sweeping. It may well be that many of the ex-slave rabble who spoke the languages of the East imposed upon the uncritical by passing as free-born immigrants. Even freedmen were not beyond pretending<sup>7</sup> that they had voluntarily chosen slavery as a means of attaining to Roman citizenship by way of the *vindicta*. At any rate, the Roman inscriptions have very few records of free-born foreigners. Such men, unless they attained to citizenship,<sup>8</sup> ought to bear names like that in no. 17,171, *Dis man. Epaeneti, Epaeneti F. Ephesio*, but there are not a dozen names of this sort to be found among the inscriptions of volume VI., parts 2 and 3. Nor need we assume that many persons of this kind are concealed among the inscriptions that bear the *tria nomina*, for immigrants of this class did not often perform the services for which the state granted citizenship. There could hardly have been an influx of foreign free-born laborers at Rome, for Rome was not an industrial city and was more than well provided with poor citizens who could not compete with slaves and had to live upon the state's bounty. Indeed, an examination of the laborious article by Kuhn<sup>9</sup> fails to reveal any free-born foreigners among the skilled laborers of the city. In regard to shop-keepers, merchants, and traders we may refer to a careful discussion by Parvan.<sup>10</sup> He has convincingly shown that the retail trade was carried on at Rome, not by foreigners but by Romans of the lower classes, mostly slaves and freedmen, and that while the provincials of Asia and Egypt continued throughout the empire to carry most of the imports of the East to Rome, the Roman houses had charge of the wholesale trade in the city. The free-born foreigner did not make any inroad upon this field. However, in various arts and crafts, such as those mentioned by Juvenal, the free immigrant could gain a livelihood at Rome. Some of the teachers of rhetoric, philosophy, and mathematics, some of the doctors, sculptors, architects, painters, and the like, were citizens of the provincial cities who went to Rome for greater remuneration. But even most of these professions were in the hands of slaves and freedmen who had been given a specialized education by their masters. In volume VI., part 2, which contains the sepulchral inscrip-



tions classified according to arts and crafts, there is very little trace of the free-born foreigner. Among the fifty inscriptions of *medici*, for instance, only two, 9563, 9597, contain sure instances of such foreigners. Among the *grammatici, rhetores, argentarii, structores*, and *pictores*, where they might well be expected, I find no clear case. It is evident then that the sweeping statements of men like Juvenal and Seneca should not be made the basis for assuming a considerable free-born immigration that permanently altered the citizen-body of Rome. These writers apparently did not attempt to discriminate between the various classes that were speaking foreign jargons on the streets of Rome. As a matter of fact, this foreign-speaking population had, for the most part, it seems, learned the languages they used within the city itself from slaves and freedman parents of foreign birth.

If now this great crowd of the city was not of immigrant stock, but rather of servile extraction, the family life of the slaves must have been far more conducive to the propagation of that stock than is usually assumed, and, furthermore, manumission must have been practiced so liberally that the slave-stock could readily merge into the citizen-body. On the latter question our sources are satisfactory; on the former, they have little to say. From Varro (II. i. 26 and x. 6) and Columella (I. 8, 9) it has been well known that slaves on farms and pasturelands were expected to marry and have offspring. The Romans considered this good economy, both because the stock of slaves increased thereby and because the slaves themselves remained better satisfied with their condition. However, partly because there exists no corresponding statement regarding slaves in the city, partly because of a reckless remark made by Plutarch that Cato restricted the cohabitation of his slaves, partly, too, because service in the city household is supposed to have been very exacting, the prevalent opinion seems to be that the marriage of slaves in the urban *familia* was unusual. Hence the statement is frequently made that slavery died perforce when the *pax Romana* of the empire put an end to capture by warfare.

Fortunately the *columbaria* of several Roman households provide a fairly reliable record regarding the prevalence of marriage among city slaves. In *CIL*, VI. 2, some 4,500 brief inscriptions are given, mainly from the rude funeral urns of slaves and poor freedmen of the first century of the empire. About one-third of these are from the *columbaria* of the Livii, Drusi, Marcelli, Statilii, and Volusii, aristocratic households where, presumably, service would be as exacting as anywhere, discipline as strict, and concern for profits from the birth of *vernae* as inconsiderable as anywhere. Furthermore, these inscriptions date from a time when slaves were plentiful and the dearth of captives generally assumed for a later day cannot be posited. Nevertheless, I believe that anyone who will studiously compare the record of offspring in this group of inscriptions with that in ordinary plebeian inscriptions will reach the conclusion that even in these households the slave doorkeepers and cooks and hairdressers and scullery-maids customarily married and had children. The volume is

full of interesting instances: Livia's *sarcinatrix* married her *mentor* (VI. 3,988), Octavia's *ornatrix* was the wife of her keeper of the plate (5,539), Statilius's courier courted the spinning-maid of the household (6,342). In the lists of husbands and wives one finds a chef (7,458), a *vestiarius* (9,963), a *vestifica* (5,206), an *unctor* (6,381), a slave-maid serving as secretary *a manu* (9,540), the keeper of my lady's mirrors (7,297), of her handbag (7,368), of her wardrobe (4,043), of her jewels (7,296), and what not. Now, these inscriptions are all extremely brief. There are a great many like 4,478, *Domitia Sex, l. Artemisia, Tertius, Viator*, where the word *coniunx* or *contubernalis* is probably, though not necessarily, understood. Furthermore, the record of children is not as complete as it would be in inscriptions of the better classes. A slave-child is, of course, not always honored with a record of its brief existence. Moreover, slave families, not being recognized in formal law, were sometimes broken up, so that some of the names fail to appear with the rest of the family. Nevertheless, the proportion of marriages and of offspring recorded by these very inscriptions, brief and incomplete as they are, is remarkably large. In the thousands of inscriptions of the *columbaria* of the Livii, Drusi, Marcelli, and the first eighty of the Volusii (to make the even 1,000) I find,

- 151 inscriptions recording offspring.
- 99 additional inscriptions recording marriage.
- 152 additional inscriptions (like 4,478 quoted above) probably recording marriage.

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Now this is not, of course, as large a proportion as is found in the main body of normal inscriptions. For comparison I give the proportions of 14,000 of volume VI., parts 2 and 3, reduced to the ratio of 1,000:

Per 1,000	Total	
280	3,923	inscriptions recording offspring.
184	2,577	additional inscriptions recording marriage.
39	548	additional inscriptions probably recording marriage.

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Here, as we should expect, the proportion of children is larger, and the long list of inscriptions bearing names of a man and a woman whose relationship is not defined yields in favor of a record of *conjuges*. But, as has been said, the slave inscriptions are far briefer and less complete than the others.

To discover whether the lower proportion in the first list might be due to the brevity of the inscriptions, I compared it with the list of 460 inscriptions of

greater length, edited in volume VI., part 2, 8,639ff., as being *ex familia Augusta*. These inscriptions are longer, to be sure, because the persons designated had reached some degree of prosperity and could afford a few feet of sod with a separate stone. But even these slaves and freedmen were generally required to furnish close and persistent attention to their service. I have again given the numbers in the proportion of 1,000 for the sake of comparison.

Per 1,000	Total	
290	133	inscriptions recording offspring.
220	101	additional inscriptions recording marriage.
78	36	additional inscriptions probably recording marriage.
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588		

From this list, if we may draw any conclusions from such small numbers, it would appear that the imperial slaves and freedmen were more productive than the ordinary citizens of Rome. And I see no reason for doubting that the proportions in the households of the Livii, Drusi, etc., would be nearly as large if the inscriptions were full lapidary ones, instead of the short notices that were painted or cut upon the small space of an urn.

Finally, for the sake of getting a fuller record regarding the poorer classes, I read 3,000 inscriptions of the miscellaneous *columbaria* that follow those of the aristocratic households. These are nos. 4,881-7,881 of volume VI., part 2. A very few of these inscriptions contain names of poor free-born citizens who associated with – in fact were probably related to – slaves and ex-slaves, but the proportion is so small that we may safely use this group for our present purpose. Three thousand inscriptions from miscellaneous *columbaria*:

Per 1,000	Total	
154	462	inscriptions recording offspring.
111	332	additional inscriptions recording marriage.
73	220	additional inscriptions probably recording marriage.
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338		

This group, consisting of the very briefest inscriptions, set up by the poorest of Rome's menial slaves, shows, as we might expect, the smallest birth and marriage rate. But when we compare it with that of the corresponding class engaged in the aristocratic and imperial households, the ratios fall only in proportion to the brevity and inadequacy of the record.



To sum up, then, it would seem that not only were the slaves of the *familia rustica* permitted and encouraged to marry, as Varro and Columella indicate, but – what the literary sources fail to tell – that slaves and freedmen in the *familia urbana* did not differ from country slaves in this respect. And, considering the poverty of those who raised these humble memorials, the brevity of the records, and the ease with which members of such families were separated, the ratio of offspring is strikingly large. We cannot be far from wrong if we infer that the slaves and freedmen<sup>11</sup> of the city were nearly as prolific as the free-born population.

But however numerous the offspring of the servile class, unless the Romans had been liberal in the practice of manumission, these people would not have merged with the civil population. Now, literary and legal records present abundant evidence of an unusual liberality in this practice at Rome, and the facts need not be repeated after the full discussions of Wallon, Buckland, Friedländer, Dill, Lemonnier, and Cicotti. If there were any doubt that the laws passed in the early empire for the partial restriction of manumission did not seriously check the practice, the statistics given at the beginning of the paper would allay it. When from eighty to ninety percent of the urban-born population proves to have been of servile extraction, we can only conclude that manumission was not seriously restricted. I may add that a count of all the slaves and freedmen in the *familiae* of the aristocratic households mentioned above showed that almost a half were *liberti*. It is difficult to believe that this proportion represents the usual practice, however, and, in fact, the figures must be used with caution. On the one hand, they may be too high, for many who served as slaves all their lives were manumitted only in old age, and it must also be recognized that slaves were less apt to be recorded than *liberti*. On the other hand, the figures may in some respects be too low, since there can be little doubt that the designation *liberti* was at times omitted on the simple urns, even though the subject had won his freedom. However, as far as the inscriptions furnish definite evidence, they tell the same tale as the writers of Rome, namely, that slaves were at all times emancipated in great numbers.

When we consider whence these slaves came and of what stock they actually were, we may derive some aid from an essay by Bang, *Die Herkunft der Römischen, Sklaven*. Bang has collected all the inscriptions like *Damas, natione Syrus*, and *C. Ducenius C. lib. natus in Syria*, which reveal the provenance of slaves. Of course, the number of inscriptions giving such information is relatively small, a few hundred in all. It should also be noticed that when a slave gives his nationality he shows a certain pride in it, which, in some cases at least, implies that he is not a normal slave of the mart, born in servitude, but rather a man of free birth who may have come into the trade by capture, abduction, or some other special way. However, with this word of caution we may use Bang's statistics for what they are worth.

A very large proportion in his list (seven-eighths of those dating in our era) came from within the boundaries of the empire. From this we may possibly infer that war-captives were comparatively rare during the empire, and that, though abduction and kidnapping supplied some of the trade, the large bulk of the slaves were actually reared from slave-parents. Doubtless slaves were reared with a view to profit in Greece and the Orient, as well as in Italy, and I see no reason for supposing that the situation there differed much from that of our Southern States where — for obvious economic reasons — the birth-rate of slaves was higher between 1800 and 1860 than the birth-rate of their free descendants has been since then. An examination of the names in Bang's list with reference to the provenance of the bearer will do something toward giving a criterion for judging the source of Italian slaves not otherwise specified. In a very few cases a name appears which is not Greek or Latin but Semitic, Celtic, etc., according to the birthplace of the slave, as, for instance, Malchio, Zizas, Belatusa. Such names are rare and never cause any difficulty. Somewhat more numerous, and equally clear of interpretation, are the generic names that explicitly give the race of the bearer, like Syrus, Cappadox, Gallus, etc. In general, however, slaves have Greek or Latin names, and here difficulties arise, for it has by no means been certain whether or not these names had so distinctively servile a connotation that they might be applied indiscriminately to captives from the North and West, as well as to the slaves of Italy and the East. Nevertheless, there seems to be a fairly uniform practice which differentiated between Greek and Latin names during the empire. Slaves from Greece, from Syria, from Asia Minor, including the province of Asia, Phrygia, Caria, Lycia, Pamphylia, Cappadocia, Bithynia, Paphlagonia, Galatia — that is, from regions where Greek was the language of commerce — regularly bore Greek, rather than Latin, names. Slaves from the North — from Germany to Dacia — as a rule bore Latin names. Presumably their own barbaric names were difficult to pronounce and Greek ones seemed inappropriate. Slaves from Spain and Gaul bore Latin and Greek names in about equal numbers. But here we must apparently discriminate. These provinces were old and commerce had brought into them many Oriental slaves from the market. It may be that the Greek names were applied mostly to slaves of Eastern extraction. This I should judge to be the case at least with the following: Ephesia (Bang, p. 239), Corinthus, Hyginus, Phoebus (his father's name is Greek), Eros (a *Sevir Aug.*), and Philocyrius (p. 240, Hübner reads Philo, Cyprius). In general we may apply these criteria in trying in some measure to decide the provenance of slaves in Italy whose nativity is not specified: bearers of Greek names are in general from the East or descendants of Eastern slaves who have been in the West; bearers of Latin names are partly captives of the North and West, partly, as we have seen from our Roman lists, Easterners and descendants of Easterners who have received Latin names from their masters.

Therefore, when the urban inscriptions show that seventy percent of the city slaves and freedmen bear Greek names and that a large proportion of the

children who have Latin names have parents of Greek names, this at once implies that the East was the source of most of them, and with that inference Bang's conclusions entirely agree. In his list of slaves that specify their origin as being outside of Italy (during the empire), by far the larger portion came from the Orient, especially from Syria and the provinces of Asia Minor, with some from Egypt and Africa (which for racial classification may be taken with the Orient). Some are from Spain and Gaul, but a considerable proportion of these came originally from the East. Very few slaves are recorded from the Alpine and Danube provinces, while Germans rarely appear, except among the imperial bodyguard. Bang remarks that Europeans were of greater service to the empire as soldiers than as servants. This is largely true, but, as Strack has commented,<sup>12</sup> the more robust European war-captives were apt to be chosen for the grueling work in the mines and in industry, and consequently they have largely vanished from the records. Such slaves were probably also the least productive of the class; and this, in turn, helps to explain the strikingly Oriental aspect of the new population.

Up to this point we have dealt mainly with the inscriptions of the city. But they, of course, do not represent the state of affairs in the empire at large. Unfortunately, it is difficult to secure large enough groups of sepulchral inscriptions for other cities and districts to yield reliable average on the points just discussed. However, since the urban inscriptions have presented a general point of view regarding the prolificness of slaves and the significance of the Greek cognomen, it will suffice to record the proportion of servile and Oriental names found in some typical district outside of the city. The proportion of Greek names to Latin among the slaves and *liberti* of the city was, in the inscriptions I recorded, seventy percent versus thirty percent. This is of course very high. In *CIL*, volume XIV. (Latium outside of Rome), the index of cognomina gives 571 to 315, that is, about sixty-four percent to thirty-six percent; volume IX. (Calabria to Picenum), 810 to 714, i.e., fifty-three to forty-seven percent; volume V. (Cisalpine Gaul), 701 to 831, i.e., forty-six to fifty-four percent. This, in fact, is the only part of Italy where the majority of slaves and freedmen recorded did not bear Greek names. As is to be expected, northern slaves, who generally received Latin names, were probably found in larger numbers here; but again it should not be forgotten that a great many of the Latin-named slaves were of Eastern extraction.

In order to get more specific evidence regarding the nature of the population in the West, free as well as servile, we may read the sepulchral inscriptions of some typical towns<sup>13</sup> and districts. I have listed them in four groups: (1) slaves and freedmen bearing Latin names; (2) slaves and freedmen bearing Greek names; (3) free-born citizens with Latin cognomen; (4) free-born citizens with Greek cognomen. Under 3 and 4, I have, except when explicit evidence proved the contrary, credited the *tria nomina* as indication of free birth; but wish again to call attention to the caution contained in note 3. In cases of

doubt the absence of the *gentile* name has been taken as an indication of servile station if the name given is Greek or Latin and not Barbarian.

	1	2	3	4	Sum
Marsi and Vestini, Italy.....	201	119	234	58	612
Beneventum, Italy.....	141	129	297	57	624
Milan and Patavium, North Italy.	182	135	400	93	810
Narbo, Gaul.....	257	160	332	95	844
Gades, Corduba, Hispalis, Emerita, Spain.....	129	101	305	90	625
	910	644	1,568	393	3,515

When the indexes of *CIL* are nearer completion such details will be more readily available and the tedious work of getting full statistics may be undertaken with the hope of reaching some degree of finality. However, the trend is evident in what we have given, and the figures are, I think, fairly representative of the whole. In these towns, as at Rome, the proportion of non-Latin folk is strikingly large. Slaves, freedmen, and citizens of Greek name make up more than half the population, despite the fact that in the nature of the case these are presumably the people least likely to be adequately represented in inscriptions. Furthermore, if the Latin names of freedmen in half the instances conceal persons of Oriental parentage, as they do in the city, the Easterner would be represented by classes 2 and 4, half of class 1, and a part of class 3. How strikingly un-Latin these places must have appeared to those who saw the great crowd of humble slaves, who were buried without ceremony or record in nameless trenches! Yet here are the Marsi, proverbially the hardiest native stock of the Italian mountains; Beneventum, one of Rome's old frontier colonies; Milan and Padua, that drew Latins and Romanized Celts from the richest agricultural districts of the Po valley; the old colony of Narbo, the home of Caesar's famous Tenth Legion — the city that Cicero called *specula populi Romani*; and four cities at the western end of the empire. If we may, as I think fair, infer for these towns what we found to be true at Rome, namely, that slaves were quite as prolific as the civil population, that they merged into the latter, and that Greek names betokened Oriental stock, it is evident that the whole empire was a melting-pot and that the Oriental was always and everywhere a very large part of the ore.

There are other questions that enter into the problem of change of race at Rome, for the solution of which it is even more difficult to obtain statistics. For instance, one asks, without hope of a sufficient answer, why the native stock did not better hold its own. Yet there are at hand not a few reasons. We know

for instance that when Italy had been devastated by Hannibal and a large part of its population put to the sword, immense bodies of slaves were bought up in the East to fill the void; and that during the second century, when the plantation system with its slave service was coming into vogue, the natives were pushed out of the small farms and many disappeared to the provinces of the ever-expanding empire. Thus, during the thirty years before Tiberius Gracchus, the census statistics show no increase. During the first century B.C., the importation of captives and slaves continued, while the free-born citizens were being wasted in the social, Sullan, and civil wars. Augustus affirms that he had had half a million citizens under arms, one-eighth of Rome's citizens, and that the most vigorous part. During the early empire, twenty to thirty legions, drawn of course from the best free stock, spent their twenty years of vigor in garrison duty, while the slaves, exempt from such services, lived at home and increased in number. In other words, the native stock was supported by less than a normal birth-rate, whereas the stock of foreign extraction had not only a fairly normal birth-rate but a liberal quota of manumissions to its advantage. Various other factors, more difficult to estimate, enter into the problem of the gradual attrition of the native stock. It seems clear, for instance, that the old Indo-Germanic custom of "exposing" children never quite disappeared from Rome. Law early restrained the practice and in the empire it was not permitted to expose normal males, and at least the first female must be reared. It is impossible, however, to form any clear judgment from the literary sources as to the extent of this practice during the empire. I thought that a count of the offspring in a large number of inscriptions might throw light upon the question, and found that of the 5,063 children noted in the 19,000 inscriptions read, 3,155, or about 62.3 percent, were males. Perhaps this reflects the operation of the law in question, and shows that the *expositio* of females was actually practiced to some extent. But here too we must remember that the evidence is, by its very nature, of little worth. Boys naturally had a better chance than girls to gain some little distinction and were therefore more apt to leave a sepulchral record. At any rate, if *expositio* was practiced, the inscriptions show little difference in this respect between the children of slaves and freedmen and the children of the ordinary city populace.<sup>14</sup>

But the existence of other forms of "race suicide," so freely gossiped about by writers of the empire, also enters into this question; and here the inscriptions quite fail us. The importance of this consideration must, nevertheless, be kept in mind. Doubtless, as Fustel de Coulanges (*La Cité Antique*) has remarked, it could have been of little importance in the society of the republic so long as the old orthodox faith in ancestral spirits survived, for the happiness of the *manes* depended upon the survival of the family, and this religious incentive probably played the same role in the propagation of the race as the Mosaic injunctions among the Hebrews, which so impressed Tacitus in a more degenerate day of Rome. But religious considerations and customs – which in this



matter emanate from the fundamental instincts that continue the race – were questioned as all else was questioned before Augustus’s day. Then the process of diminution began. The significance of this whole question lies in the fact that “race suicide” then, as now, curtailed the stock of the more sophisticated, that is, of the aristocracy and the rich, who were, to a large extent, the native stock. Juvenal, satirist though he is, may be giving a fact of some social importance when he writes that the poor bore all the burdens of family life, while the rich remained childless:

jacet aurato vix ulla puerpera lecto;  
Tantum artes hujus, tantum medicamina possunt,  
Quae steriles facit.<sup>15</sup>

There may lie here – rare phenomenon – an historic parallel of some meaning. The race of the human animal survives by means of instincts that shaped themselves for that purpose long before rational control came into play. Before our day it has only been at Greece and Rome that these impulses have had to face the obstacle of sophistication. There at least the instinct was beaten, and the race went under. The legislation of Augustus and his successors, while aimed at preserving the native stock, was of the myopic kind so usual in social law-making, and, failing to reckon with the real nature of the problem involved, it utterly missed the mark. By combining epigraphical and literary references, a fairly full history of the noble families can be procured, and this reveals a startling inability of such families to perpetuate themselves. We know, for instance, in Caesar’s day of forty-five patricians, only one of whom is represented by posterity when Hadrian came to power.<sup>16</sup> The Aemilii, Fabii, Claudii, Manlii, Valerii, and all the rest, with the exception of the Cornelii, have disappeared. Augustus and Claudius raised twenty-five families to the patriciate, and all but six of them disappear before Nerva’s reign. Of the families of nearly four hundred senators recorded in 65 A.D. under Nero, all trace of a half is lost by Nerva’s day, a generation later. And the records are so full that these statistics may be assumed to represent with a fair degree of accuracy the disappearance of the male stock of the families in question. Of course members of the aristocracy were the chief sufferers from the tyranny of the century, but this havoc was not all wrought by *delatores* and assassins. The voluntary choice of childlessness accounts largely for the unparalleled condition. This is as far as the records help upon this problem, which, despite the silence, is probably the most important phase of the whole question of the change of race. Be the causes what they may, the rapid decrease of the old aristocracy and the native stock was clearly concomitant with a twofold increase from below: by a more normal birth-rate of the poor, and the constant manumission of slaves.



This Orientalizing of Rome's populace has a more important bearing than is usually accorded it upon the larger question of why the spirit and acts of imperial Rome are totally different from those of the republic, if indeed racial characteristics are not wholly a myth. There is today a healthy activity in the study of the economic factors — unscientific finance, fiscal agriculture, inadequate support of industry and commerce, etc. — that contributed to Rome's decline. But what lay behind and constantly reacted upon all such causes of Rome's disintegration was, after all, to a considerable extent, the fact that the people who built Rome had given way to a different race. The lack of energy and enterprise, the failure of foresight and commonsense, the weakening of moral and political stamina, all were concomitant with the gradual diminution of the stock which, during the earlier days, had displayed these qualities. It would be wholly unfair to pass judgment upon the native qualities of the Orientals without a further study, or to accept the self-complacent slurs of the Romans, who, ignoring certain imaginative and artistic qualities, chose only to see in them unprincipled and servile egoists. We may even admit that had the new races had time to amalgamate and attain a political consciousness, a more brilliant and versatile civilization might have come to birth. That, however, is not the question. It is apparent that at least the political and moral qualities which counted most in the building of the Italian federation, the army organization, the provincial administrative system of the republic, were the qualities most needed in holding the empire together. And however brilliant the endowment of the new citizens, these qualities they lacked. The Trimalchios of the empire were often shrewd and daring businessmen, but their first and obvious task apparently was to climb by the ladder of quick profits to a social position in which their children with Romanized names could comfortably proceed to forget their forebears. The possession of wealth did not, as in the republic, suggest certain duties toward the commonwealth. Narcissus and Pallas might be sagacious politicians, but they were not expected to be statesmen concerned with the continuity of the *mos majorum*. And when, on reading Tacitus, we are amazed at the new servility of Scipios and Messalas, we must recall that these scattered inheritors of the old aristocratic ideals had at their back only an alien rabble of ex-slaves, to whom they would have appealed in vain for a return to ancestral ideas of law and order. They had little choice between servility and suicide, and not a few chose the latter.

It would be illuminating by way of illustration of this change to study the spread of the mystery religions. Cumont seems to think that these cults won many converts among all classes in the West. Toutain, skeptical on this point, assigns not a little of the new religious activity to the rather formal influence of the court at Rome. Dobschütz, a more orthodox churchman, seems to see in the spread of these cults the pervasion of a new and deeper religious spirit, which, in some mystical way, was preparing the old world for Christianity. But is not

the success of the cults in great measure an expression of the religious feelings of the new people themselves? And if it is, may it not be that Occidentals who are actually of Oriental extraction, men of more emotional nature, are simply finding in these cults the satisfaction that, after long deprivation, their temperaments naturally required? When a senator, dignified by the name of M. Aurelius Victor, is found among the votaries of Mithras in the later empire, it may well be that he is the great-grandson of some child kidnapped in Parthia and sold on the block at Rome. Toutain has proved, I think, that in the northern and western provinces the only Oriental cult that took root at all among the real natives was that of Magna Mater, and this goddess, whose cult was directed by the urban priestly board, had had the advantage of centuries of a rather accidental recognition by the Roman state. In the western provinces, the Syrian and Egyptian gods were worshipped chiefly by people who seem not to be native to the soil. The Mithraic worshippers in these provinces were, for the most part, soldiers recruited or formerly stationed in the East, and Orientals who, by way of commerce or the slave-market, had come to live in the West. From the centers where such people lived the cult spread but very slowly.

It would hardly be worth while to attempt any conclusion for the city of Rome, since, as we have seen, the whole stock there had so changed that fair comparisons would be well-nigh unattainable; but the Po valley, that is Cisalpine Gaul, which preserved its Occidental aspect better than any other part of Italy, might yield usable data. For this region nearly one hundred devotees of Oriental gods are recorded in the fifth volume of *CIL*, and, as soldiers and Roman officers are not numerous there, the worshippers may be assumed to represent a normal average for the community. Among them I find only twelve who are actually recorded as slaves or freedmen, but upon examination of the names, more than four-fifths seem, after all, to belong to foreign stock. Nearly half have Greek names. Several are *seviri Augustales*, and, therefore, probably *liberti*; and names like Publicius, Verna, Veronius (at Verona), tell the same tale. Finally, there are several imperial gentile names—Claudius, Flavius, Ulpius, Actius, etc.—which, when found among such people, suggest that the Roman nomenclature is a recent acquisition. There is a residue of only some twelve names the antecedents of which remain undefined. This seems to me to be a fairly typical situation, and not without significance. In short, the mystery cults permeated the city, Italy, and the western provinces only to such an extent as the city and Italy and the provinces were permeated by the stock that had created those religions.

At Rome, Magna Mater was introduced for political reasons during the Punic War, when the city was still Italian. The rites proved to be shocking to the unemotional westerner, who worshipped the staid patrician called Jupiter Optimus Maximus, and were locked in behind a wall. As the urban populace began to change, however, new rites clamored for

admittance, for, as a senator in Nero's days says,<sup>17</sup> "Nationes in familiis habemus, quibus diversi ritus, externa sacra." And as the populace enforced their demands upon the emperor for *panem et circenses*, so they also secured recognition for their *externa sacra*. One after another of the emperors gained popularity with the rabble by erecting a shrine to some foreign Baal, or a statue to Isis in his chapel, in much the same way that our cities are lining their park drives with tributes to Garibaldi, Pulaski, and who knows what -vitch. Finally, in the third and fourth centuries, when even the aristocracy at Rome was almost completely foreign, these Eastern cults, rather than those of old Rome, became the centers of "patrician" opposition to Christianity. In other words, the western invasion of the mystery cults is hardly a miraculous conversion of the even-tempered, practical-minded Indo-European to an orgiastic emotionalism, foreign to his nature. These religions came with their peoples, and in so far as they gained new converts, they attracted for the most part people of Oriental extraction who had temporarily fallen away from native ways in the western world. Christianity, which contained enough Oriental mysticism to appeal to the vast herd of Easterners in the West, and enough Hellenic sanity to captivate the rationalistic Westerner, found, even if one reckons only with social forces, the most congenial soil for growth in the conglomeration of Europeans, Asiatics, and Africans that filled the western Roman Empire in the second century.

This is but one illustration. But it is offered in the hope that a more thorough study of the race question may be made in conjunction with economic and political questions before any attempt is made finally to estimate the factors at work in the change of temper of imperial Rome.

#### ENDNOTES

1. *CIL*, vol. VI., parts 2, 3, 4.
2. Vol. VI., part 4, published in 1902, contains 2,512 additional inscriptions of this class.
3. In epigraphical discussions one constantly meets with the statement that freedmen were compelled to indicate their status by the designation *lib.* or *l.* and that therefore the occurrence of the *tria nomina* without such designation is proof of free birth. Unfortunately, this rule, if indeed it was one, was so frequently broken, that it must be employed with caution. There are hundreds of obvious exceptions where *tria nomina* of respectable appearance impose upon the reader until at the end of the inscription the dedicant's designation of *patronus* or *contubernalis* or *conlibertus* betrays the real status, e. g., VI. 7,849, 14,550, 16,203, 17,562, 20,675, 20,682, 22,299, 22,606, 23,927, 23,989. Again, numerous bearers of faultless *tria nomina* fall under strong *presumption* of being freedmen because of some official title like *sevir* or because their sons prove to being to one of the city tribes; cf. X. 690, 4,620, 6,677; VI. 12,431, 14,045, 20,079. Finally, there are many instances like 14,018. Here a man gives the name of a large family (all with *tria nomina*) including children and a grandchild, but only the youngest, Caesonia M. F. Prima, a child of seven months, bears the *F* which definitely indicates free birth.

Apparently the other members of the family were not entitled to the designation. Compare also 20,123, 20,339, 23,813. Since in cases of doubt I have been compelled to credit bearers of Latin *tria nomina* to the native stock, it will appear that this group has more than received full credit in the accompanying lists.

4. There are not enough datable inscriptions available to show whether the Greek cognomen gained or lost respectability with time. Obviously it may in general be assumed that most of the freedmen who bore the gentile name of Aelius and Aurelius belong to a later date than the general group of those named Julius and Claudius. If we may use this fact as a criterion we may decide that there was little difference between the first and the second century in this matter, since the proportion of Greek cognomina is about the same in the two groups.

5. It is difficult to secure usable statistics in the case of women, since their cognomina may come from almost any relative or near friend. However, an examination of the indexes of names will show that the Greek cognomen was relatively no more popular among the women than among the men.

6. *Ad Helviam*, 6.

7. Petronius, 57.

8. This criterion fails of course after citizenship was given to the provincials in the third century, but when Rome's population was decreasing there probably was not a heavy immigration.

9. *De Opificum Romanorum Condicione* (1910).

10. *Die Nationalität der Kaufleute im Römischen Kaiserreich* (1909).

11. We cannot suppose that most of the children belong to the period subsequent to the liberation of the parents. Very many of the *liberati* recorded were emancipated in old age, and throughout the empire manumission of slaves under 30 years of age was discouraged (Buckland, *Roman Law of Slavery*, p. 542). In a large number of instances the form and contents of the inscriptions show that slave-fathers after emancipation paid the price for children and wife.

12. *Historische Zeitschrift*, CXII. 9.

13. In this list I have omitted imperial officials and soldiers, since they are not likely to be natives of the place.

14. I have compared the respective ratios of the girls and boys of the Julii and the Claudii with those of the Aelii and the Aurelii (who would in general date about a century later) but found no appreciable difference in the percentage. A chronological test seems to be unattainable.

15. VI. 594–596.

16. Stech, in *Klio*, Beiheft X., *Am. Hist. Rev.*, vol. XXI.: 46.

17. Tacitus, *Annales*, XIV. 44.