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## **The Roman world of work : social structures and the urban labour market of Roman Italy in the first three centuries AD**

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# Chapter 4

**Family economics: elite *domus***



## INTRODUCTION

The occupational inscriptions include a striking number of working individuals who can be connected to a larger elite household. Slaves and ex-slaves in the epigraphy from the city of Rome are especially likely to reveal a connection with one of the aristocratic houses. A correlation between the presence of aristocratic households and urban slavery will have had a significant impact on employment opportunities for the free urban population. It will be argued that the elite *domus* were a non-negligible presence in the larger cities of Roman Italy, and that this had important consequences for the urban economy. The elite *domus* and their role in the labour market might be termed the '*domus* economy'.<sup>1</sup>

The elite *domus* of this chapter should be offset against the smaller family units of the preceding chapter. Whereas it is difficult to present a clear-cut definition, I take elite *domus* to be wealthy families, who could afford to have most of the required labour production carried out by subordinates rather than by their own hands. Although some of these dependent workers were freeborn, it must be presumed that in practice this characterisation implied a significant servile presence in the household. Smaller families may of course have included a modest number of dependent labourers, including apprentices, slaves and/or freedmen but, in contrast with the elite, in smaller families the household head and his or her direct relatives would actively contribute their own labour power. It was argued that nonelite families' labour strategies were largely governed by economic motivations. Financial restrictions can be expected to have been less decisive in the more wealthy households of this chapter. Throughout the text I refer to the elite *domus* as upper-class *familiae*, aristocratic households, large domestic household, or other synonyms indiscriminately.

A large servile presence certainly was characteristic of the Roman aristocratic family. Examples abound. Cicero's household staff, for instance, has been charted from his literary output; it is revealed that most of his living-in staff as well as hired labourers were slaves or ex-slaves.<sup>2</sup> Part of the newly-found riches of Petronius' fictional character Trimalchio was that he could boast a substantial number of personnel, and plenty of his slaves, many of them with highly specialized occupations, feature in the *Satyricon*.<sup>3</sup> The consul of AD 43, L. Pedanius Secundus, was said to have owned 400 slaves.<sup>4</sup> Sizeable elite households are attested epigraphically as well: several large columbarium tombs provided collective burial space for the domestic staff of aristocratic families.

1 The insightful term '*domus* economy' was suggested to me by Rens Tacoma.

2 Park (1918) 55-79. Largely slaves and ex-slaves: concluding remarks on pp. 88-9. See also Treggiari (1969b).

3 Cf. Baldwin (1978).

4 Tac. *Ann.* 14.42-45.

The reasons for having numerous slaves were not just economic, regardless of the fact that many of them were put to work. *Noblesse oblige*: for the elite, the number of slaves owned was a significant status indicator. It could be argued that slaves were more important to their aristocratic owners as a visible token of wealth than as labourers. In that scenario, slaves did not need to work to perform their primary, ideological function as a status symbol.<sup>5</sup> Slave-holding for appearance's sake may be classified as conspicuous consumption. And the Romans were not alone in their traditional value judgments of slavery:

[I]n a great many slaveholding societies masters were not interested in what their slaves produced. Indeed, in many of the most important slaveholding societies (...) slaves produced nothing and were economically dependent on their masters or their master's nonslave dependents.<sup>6</sup>

This particular form of conspicuous consumption must have been a great stimulus to the presence of slaves within cities.

It follows from the above that aristocratic households probably were among the most important employers of the slave part of the urban population. If adaptive strategies of the nonelite family were mostly implemented by means of the labour participation of women and children, for the elite *domus* they were probably largely concentrated in the management of slaves and ex-slaves. Wealthy Romans could easily respond to changes in their situation, chiefly through buying, selling, and manumitting slaves. Conversely, elite expenditure was crucial to urban production as a whole, which will have provided employment for the urban freeborn as well. The freeborn population was engaged both directly and indirectly with the elite: as employers, and as market consumers. All of these processes to some extent must have contributed to the reality of the urban market for labour. Elite households made up a very specific sector of the urban labour market that to date has not received proper analysis as such. The aim of this chapter is to illuminate

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5 Mouritsen (2011a) 194–5; Bradley (1994) 15–6; cf Joshel (1992) 150 and *passim*.

6 Patterson (1982) 11.

the ways in which the aristocratic household shaped and influenced the workings of the urban labour market of Roman Italy.<sup>7</sup>

### Chapter outline

This chapter starts off with an attempt to attach a rough sense of magnitude to the concept of a *domus* economy, trying to determine the share of the labour force that the large *domus* stood for. Once the market share of larger *familiae* has been established, we can take a closer look at their workforce. It is apparent at the outset that marked differences in size and make-up between nonelite and elite families are likely to come up. In line with this structural divergence, we may also expect to find distinct cultural or economic considerations and strategies concerning the labour market participation of the (members of) elite *domus*.

The larger household was subjected to a family life cycle of its own. The family life cycle predicts that labour supply and demand within the family change over time, because of the dynamics of demography, notably mortality and fertility, but also because of fluctuations in economic circumstances. Like the nonelite family, the aristocratic household workforce was therefore not a static entity. Quite the opposite is likely to be true: because of its considerable size, the elite family can be expected to have been even more dynamic than the nonelite family, because there were more variables to consider – it concerns more individuals, and even whole families within the *familia*, or even surpassing the boundaries of the household in a wider *domus*-network.

The slave component of the elite *domus* stands out. It will become clear that buying, breeding, selling, and manumitting slaves played a significant part in the adaptive labour strategies of the elite household. Another potentially major economically strategic opportunity for the elite, however, was investment in human capital. Although this thesis has argued that the freeborn, artisans and craftsmen in particular, regularly invested in some kind of job-training for their family, it has often been assumed that much of the available education in the Roman empire actually took place within the

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7 The ultimate elite household, the *familia Caesaris*, features in this chapter only through the personal, domestic households of members of the imperial family. Imperial slaves and freedmen concerned with matters of state are deliberately left out of the analysis: because of their exceptional status, their occupations can be studied more productively in a study focused on the *familia Caesaris* itself, or in an analysis of the administrative machinery of the empire, rather than in this account of servants and slave-jobs within the context of larger households. Such aspects of the *familia Caesaris* have received excellent coverage in Chantraine (1967), Weaver (1972), and Boulvert (1974). Penner (diss. 2013) 9, correctly points out that especially in the early empire, “the boundaries between public civil service and private domestic service were porous and undefined”. As a result, much of her dissertation on the imperial households of the Julio-Claudians is also relevant here.

elite household.<sup>8</sup> Slave and ex-slave labourers from the aristocratic *domus* are attested in a wide variety of jobs that range from unskilled to highly skilled. With regard to the more skilled labourers, this raises the question how and where they learnt their trade. The answer reflects economic strategies of investing in human capital. It is commonly suggested that slaves in the larger household had exceptionally good opportunities to acquire skills, and that (as a result?) skilled work was the prerogative of slaves and ex-slaves. This chapter shows that possibilities for the education of slaves were indeed extensive, and that investment in human capital was high on the household agenda. But the question to what extent this posed limitations to the free population's labour opportunities and, consequently, to what extent we can speak of an integrated labour market, demands a more differentiated and intricate answer.

The final section of this chapter is concerned with columbarium tombs. These so-called *columbaria* are large-scale funerary monuments that are exclusive to the city of Rome under the Principate. Their importance for this chapter lies in the fact that the columbarium tomb population has generally been equated with elite households, in the sense of the elite *domus* which are the topic of this chapter. *Columbaria*, moreover, are exceptional in that they provide us with a relatively well-defined context for the inscriptions they hold. Many of the epitaphs from these tombs also record the profession of the deceased, and occasionally that of the commemorator. The sample thus makes for a perfect case-study of the labourers from the elite *domus*. It is readily admitted that the equation of the tomb population with an aristocratic household is not one hundred per cent accurate for most samples: it will become clear that such direct overlap between columbarium and *domus* is limited to a handful of 'single-family tombs'. It will be argued that the equation is helpful to the current analysis, however, because in most instances the tomb occupants can indeed be related to elite families, even if they are not necessarily from the same household unit.

## **DEMOGRAPHY: THE SERVILE PRESENCE IN ELITE HOUSEHOLDS AND FREE HIRED LABOUR**

This section considers the demographic context for the elite households in terms of the larger urban population or, more specifically, in the context of the available workforce in the cities of Roman Italy. On the reasonable assumption that most of the labourers of the *domus* were slaves and ex-slaves, it deals with the concept of urban slavery first, and tries to establish whether there is any correlation between urban slavery and the

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8 This is voiced among others by Mohler (1940), esp. 262-3; Mohler, Forbes (1955), and Booth (1979) all focus on slave education because of this presumption. Schooling as a slave prerogative is still implicit in the recent work of Saller (2013), for example.

presence of elite households. The free labourers in the service of elite *domus* are investigated subsequently. On the basis of the ancient evidence it remains difficult to find out just how prominent the elite households were within Roman society; this section on demography is a modest attempt to situate the elite household as an employer in the labour market, in terms of its market share.

### Slave labour and the city

The elite tended to cluster together in towns. This is both a contributing factor to, and a result of, high urbanization rates.<sup>9</sup> A strong elite presence in cities should therefore certainly hold for Italy, the heavily urbanized political heart of the Roman empire, which attracted the upper classes from all over the empire. The elite invariably employed slaves, to underline their status. With the consistent presence of the elite in the cities, it can be surmised that there were relatively many slaves in the cities, too. It has indeed been estimated that the percentage of slaves in the city was higher than the percentage of slaves in the countryside,<sup>10</sup> even if many upper class Romans owned a rural estate with its own staff in addition to their property in the city.<sup>11</sup> With the exception of Rome, with its large population of urban freeborn, many urban settlements may have had a slave population of no less than 40 per cent.<sup>12</sup>

A correlation between urban slavery and wealthy households matches the pattern that is evident in the occupational inscriptions. No less than 73.8 per cent of slaves with job-titles were connected to a wealthy household in Joshel's calculations for the capital. This pattern of employment has prompted Joshel to suggest that many of the occupational epitaphs of slaves belonged to aristocratic households, even if we cannot now trace them confidently to a known household.<sup>13</sup> Based on Joshel's findings, equally 73.8 per cent of the occupational inscriptions that are connected to an elite *domus*, concerns

9 De Ligt (2012) 196-7, based on the work of Jongman (1988) 192-8, sp. 196.

10 See also Jongman (2003); Scheidel (2005a) 66; Scheidel (2011a) 289. Conversely, Bradley (1994) 71 apparently does not feel a need to substantiate his claim that "most slaves were *rustici*".

11 Bradley (1994) 58 for the distinction between the urban and rural staff of a slave-owner, the *familia urbana* as opposed to the *familia rustica*.

12 Cf De Ligt (2012) 190 table 4.3; De Ligt and Garnsey (2012) for Herculaneum.

13 Joshel (1992) 74, 98 and table 4.2 on page 99 for the percentage, and at 103 she writes: "Further, I believe that many of the slaves and possible slaves whose epitaphs lack signs of social context did in fact belong to large households. The pattern of their employments resembles that of slaves whose epitaphs confirm their membership in upper-class *familiae*". Moreover, Borbonus (2014) 119 notes a strong similarity in general of status distribution in the *columbaria*-inscriptions, and other *CIL* samples, and remarks: "A factor that probably contributes to this similarity is the provenience of inscriptions that are listed in the *CIL* without context: many of them may stem from now-destroyed *columbaria*".

slave workers.<sup>14</sup> Borbonus' analysis of the combined columbarium tomb population, however, results in a significantly smaller estimate of 25.5 per cent slaves.<sup>15</sup> There should be an explanation for the difference in these two estimates. The criteria to define which inscriptions belonged to a larger household, and which did not, are not easy to define. Most inscriptions lack context, and with the limited information they record the relation to an elite *domus* often cannot be identified. With that in mind, what do these numbers really tell us?

It is clear that slaves and ex-slaves make up a large majority of the occupational inscriptions, and it is also clear that for many of them a connection to an elite *domus* is likely: this in itself underlines the hypothesis of a correlation between slavery and elite presence. But biases in the material evidence may also partly account for the apparent connection between slaves and aristocratic household. For one thing, the well-preserved columbarium tombs from the city of Rome are likely to have swelled the relative numbers attested for slaves in an aristocratic household. It is particularly noteworthy that those in the category 'slaves in a columbarium' are the ones most likely to mention their profession: 44 per cent of slaves in *columbaria* does so.<sup>16</sup> The discrepancy between Borbonus' lower count of 25.5 per cent slaves in the elite household, and Joshel's higher finding of 73.8 per cent slaves recording an occupational title in a private context, is thus explained in part by the difference in a sample of 'occupational inscriptions from *columbaria*' on the one hand, and '*columbaria*-inscriptions in general' on the other.

Slaves and ex-slaves in an aristocratic family were perhaps also more likely to be commemorated than others of the same legal status; servile labourers may have received a proper burial in a smaller household, in the family tomb even, but it was not always a named burial – implicit in the common use of the formula *libertis libertabusque posterisque eorum*. There is no doubt in my mind that servile labourers from elite *domus* are overrepresented in the epigraphic evidence. For all these reasons, an estimate placing 73.8 per cent of the urban slave workforce in elite households in accordance with Joshel's results, is likely to be too high.

To put the epigraphic evidence into perspective, we may compare another way to quantify the slave presence in elite *domus*. Although few scholars have taken up the challenge, Walter Scheidel touches upon the number of slaves in aristocratic *domus* in

14 Joshel (1992) table 4.2 on page 99 provides the numbers from which I calculated the slave percentage in the elite household (slaves in a private context (346)/ all inscriptions from a private context (469), x 100). It appears to be a mere coincidence that the percentage is exactly the same.

15 Borbonus (2014) 121 table 5.

16 Borbonus (2014) 126. Cf the numbers for the *monumentum Liviae* in Treggiari (1975a) 59 table D: only 5 out of 41 slaves do not record a job. It is interesting that in Treggiari's account of Livia's household, almost 50% of the freedmen also record a job there.

an attempt to quantify the slave population of Roman Italy.<sup>17</sup> His model provides us with a very tentative sense of scale. There is no hard evidence for these numbers, but they should be read as informed guesses that are good to think with.<sup>18</sup>

Scheidel's understanding of elite, for calculating purposes, is the total of all senators, knights (*equites*) and councillors (*decuriones*). The number of senators is set at 600, knights at 5,000, and councillors at 20,000. Scheidel takes every senator to have owned 80 slaves, every knight 20 slaves, and every decurion 5 slaves, which makes for a total of 248,000 elite household slaves. This working definition of the elite is of course substantially less inclusive than my definition of the larger household, and Scheidel acknowledges that there are more elite *domus* beyond the three *ordines* that may have owned quite a number of slaves.<sup>19</sup> The resulting figures should therefore be read as a minimum estimate.

Scheidel's numbers can be used to calculate the percentage of elite household slaves. In order to do so, we need to know the total of all slaves in the city as well. Smaller households may also have owned a slave or two, who should be added to the number of urban slaves.<sup>20</sup> Scheidel does so by analogy with the census-data from Roman Egypt (1 slave: 5.8 freeborn). For an urban population of 1.4–1.6 million non-slave and sub-elite urban residents, that means adding another 240,000 – 275,000 slaves living in non-elite households. The calculation leads to a total of ca 500,000 slaves in the cities of Roman Italy. Since most of the numbers fed into the model are likely to be too low, Scheidel doubles the minimum estimates in "controlled speculation". He goes on to say that "[i]f we schematically place all senatorial slaves, half of the equestrian slaves and half of all sub-élite slaves in the capital, we arrive at approximately 220,000 to 440,000 slaves in

**Table 4.1:** Urban slavery and the percentage of slaves in elite households. Numbers derived from Scheidel (2005a).

	Rome	Other cities in Roman Italy
<b>Slaves in urban elite households</b>	100,000	150,000
<b>All urban slaves</b>	220,000	280,000
<b>Slaves in urban elite households (%)</b>	45.4	53.6

17 The following paragraphs are based on the model for "non-agricultural slavery" in Scheidel (2005a) 66-7.

18 Cf Scheidel (2005a) 66 n. 15.

19 Senators, *equites* and *decuriones* add up to 25,600 households. Scheidel (2006) argues for 40,000 elite households. It is reassuring that 40,000 x 6 provides a similar number – 6 being Flory's educated guess for the average number of slaves in a household, Flory (1978) 85.

20 See chapter 3 on slaves in smaller households.

Rome and 280,000 to 560,000 in the other cities.”<sup>21</sup> I tabulated the lower range of these numbers to calculate the percentage of slaves in elite households in table 4.1 – but doubling all estimates leads to the exact same percentages, of course.

What can be gathered from Scheidel’s model, therefore, is that approximately 50 per cent of urban slaves should be located in the elite households. This number is likely to be too low, because of Scheidel’s limited working definition of the elite.<sup>22</sup>

If we offset the epigraphic evidence against the model of Scheidel, a plausible range can be established for how many urban slaves were employed in elite *domus*. Scheidel’s theoretical 50 per cent for Roman Italy is likely to be too low, whereas the 73.8 per cent extracted from Joshel’s sample for the city of Rome is likely to be too high. That leaves me with the hypothesis that most urban slaves, between 50 and 74 per cent, were employed in large domestic households. This finding seems to endorse the proposed correlation between urban slavery and elite presence in the cities. However, Scheidel’s model cannot shed light on the question what proportion of the workforce in the elite *domus* was made up of slaves. The widely differing results from Joshel (73.8 per cent of occupational inscriptions for slaves originate from a private context) and Borbonus (25.5 per cent of the columbarium population were slaves) leave us with something of a conundrum – but perhaps balancing these findings with the data for freedmen can shed some light on the matter.

## Freedmen

The connection between elite *domus* and urban slavery prompts the related question how the elite households tied in with freedmanship. If somewhere between 50–74 per cent of urban slaves were employed in the aristocratic household, it is not too far-fetched to presume that many freedmen were closely related to those households, too; the previous chapter illustrated the fact that ex-slaves often maintained a close relationship with their patrons, and it will become clear that this was no less true for freedmen of wealthy patrons. It is generally presumed that proximity to the master increased the chances of manumission, and such proximity was perhaps most likely in the personal service of a wealthy family – the elite had plenty of employment for slaves in their per-

21 Scheidel (2005a) 67; compare De Ligt (2012) 190 for 700,000 urban slaves in 28 BC, which suggests that Scheidel’s doubling of the estimates was perhaps too crude.

22 Scheidel (2005a) 67 himself notes that “a more pronounced (...) concentration of slave-ownership in the top ranks of Roman society would help redress the apparent imbalance between centre and periphery”. Cf Harper (2011) 38–60, esp. 58–60 with table 1.1 who proffers a similar model for rural and urban households combined to conclude that, “the wealthiest 1.365 percent of Roman society owned 49 percent of slaves”. Harper’s focus is on the later empire, but the numbers fed into this model are equally relevant for the Principate.

sonal vicinity, which should be understood quite literally in the case of, for example, bedchamber servants (*cubicularii*).<sup>23</sup>

Most of the freedmen in *columbaria* are relatively easy to identify as such, since their full names – when recorded – reflect their owner's names.<sup>24</sup> Joshel attributes only 25.9 per cent of the freedmen with occupational title securely to domestic service.<sup>25</sup> Her numbers suggest that, conversely, around 21.3 per cent of work 'in a private context' was filled in by freedmen.<sup>26</sup> The elite *columbaria* attest to many freedmen who were buried there, 22 per cent in Borbonus' calculation.<sup>27</sup> The fact that these numbers sit much closer together than the numbers for slaves, however, should not trick us into believing they mean the same. According to Borbonus, only 11 per cent of the freedmen recorded an occupation.<sup>28</sup> More than half of the individuals with named burial in a columbarium belong to the uncertain category of those who carry the *tria nomina*, but for whom there is no other indication of whether they were free or freed: surely some of them were freedmen, too.<sup>29</sup> On the sole basis of these percentages, we should therefore probably attribute more than 21.3 per cent to freedmen labourers.

A brief exercise may confirm a rough order of magnitude for the number of freedmen. If the 2:1 ratio for slaves:freedmen in the general urban population is applied, as postulated by Garnsey and De Ligt, the percentages for slaves mentioned above (25.5–73.8 per cent) would lead to somewhere between 12.7–37 per cent for freedmen.<sup>30</sup> Since it is impossible to go above 100 per cent, however, the maximum cannot go beyond 33.3 per cent. Joshel's finding of 21.3 per cent does sit nicely in the middle, and would imply a highly plausible 42.6 per cent for slaves. Since there were few if any freeborn in the household (see below), however, to get to 100 per cent we can tentatively place the percentage of freedmen at a third, which leaves two thirds of slaves.

Freedmen, however, may have stayed in the *domus*, but may as well have left after manumission to set up their own workshop and family. The nature of the evidence of

23 Mouritsen (2011a) 196–200.

24 There are exceptions to the rule: some we know were free(d) chose not to sport the *tria nomina*, esp. in 'homogeneous' tombs, Borbonus (2014) 123; there were also 'unrelated freedmen' with a distinct *nomen*, see below.

25 Joshel (1992) 98.

26 Joshel (1992) table 4.2 on page 99, from which I calculated the freedmen percentage in the elite household (freedmen in a private context (109)/ all inscriptions from a private context (469), x 100).

27 Borbonus (2014) 121 table 5 records 50.9 per cent free/d.

28 Borbonus (2014) 126.

29 Borbonus (2014) 121 with table 5.

30 De Ligt and Garnsey (2012), Garnsey and De Ligt (2016); Incidentally the ratios of slaves to freedmen in the Statilian household tomb shows something like this, 68: 32 per cent – though not the Volusian tomb, which has 54: 46 per cent, see Mouritsen (2013) 46–7.

*columbaria*-inscriptions is such that it only accounts for freedmen who were buried in the household tomb. The previous chapter expanded in more detail on how economic bonds between patrons and freedmen continued either way, with or without the formal *operae libertorum*, because freedmen were considered as a quasi-extended family. In other words: freedmen could be linked to the elite household in more than one way, not all of which meant that they would be buried in a columbarium. We may therefore estimate the contribution of freed labour to the elite *domus* to be less than a third, but more than Joshel's 21.3 per cent. Joshel's tally admittedly does go beyond the *columbaria*, but her text indicates that her definition does not include freedmen "in the public world", bankers, salespeople, and artisans, for example – a group that is likely to have been non-negligible.<sup>31</sup> This finding of somewhere between 21.3 and 33.3 per cent freedmen labour in the *domus* also further specifies the numbers for slaves, to more than 66.7 per cent.

One explanation for the freedmen buried in *columbaria* could be that manumission was a deathbed gift. This is particularly plausible for those who died as freedmen under the legal minimum age of 30: under-age death-bed manumission was tolerated. Examples of very young freedmen are not hard to come by.<sup>32</sup> This type of freedman was never truly free and remained a slave their entire lives. Age is not a common feature to record, however. One could therefore plausibly argue that age is recorded particularly to underline special circumstances, such as an early death<sup>33</sup> and, potentially, deathbed manumission. Significantly, of those recorded with age, most under 30 were slaves, and "most slaves were not freed until after the age of twenty".<sup>34</sup> To my mind, therefore, deathbed manumission accounts for no more than a small proportion of the evidence.

In addition to potential deathbed manumissions, there is also the theoretical possibility that freedmen maintained the right to be buried in the household columbarium after leaving the household – and some ostensibly unrelated freedmen gained their burial rights because they were related to one of the tomb's 'inhabitants'.<sup>35</sup> There is thus always a possibility that the freedmen in the *columbaria* were not, or no longer, working for an elite *domus*. All these arrangements are virtually impossible to trace and come to the fore only occasionally.

There is, however, compelling evidence for the fact that at least some of the freedmen did remain within the household after manumission – which suggests that they kept

31 Joshel (1992) 98.

32 The example of the 4-year-old *vestiarius tenuarius*, L. Anicius Felix (*CIL* 6. 6852 cited above) springs to mind.

33 Hopkins (1966) remains the locus classicus; for other problems with age such as age rounding, Scheidel (1996).

34 Mouritsen (2013) 52-53 for both the Volusii and Statilii.

35 See the example of *CIL* 6. 7290 = *CIL* 6. 27557 from the columbarium of the Volusii, discussed below.

working there, too.<sup>36</sup> Such a pattern was perhaps more common in some households than others.<sup>37</sup> The reasons for freedmen to stay are not difficult to think of. Especially in larger households, it is likely that the newly freed had previously engaged in personal relationships with other household members.<sup>38</sup> Joshel points out the simple truth that service occupations like that of a foot servant (*pedisequus*, -a) were rather difficult to carry out in the absence of someone to escort.<sup>39</sup> A good example of a resident freedwoman is Iulia Elate in *CIL* 6. 4002, *pedisequa* to Livia, whose husband M. Iulius Carisius (for whom no occupation is recorded) is also from the same household – the bond with her husband and her service job would be two compelling reasons for her to stay.<sup>40</sup> Even if their job was more ‘marketable’, however, freedmen may have stayed. Thus, we know that Cicero’s gifted and well-educated freedman, Tiro, did not leave Cicero’s side until after his patron’s death.<sup>41</sup> A passage in the *Digest* likewise records a case of a slave who continued his employment as a banker after manumission.<sup>42</sup> Examples like these suggest that many of the *columbaria*-inscriptions do indeed commemorate privileged, freed slaves who still lived and worked in the elite *domus*. Mouritsen recently went even further, arguing that the high manumission rates from the columbarium inscriptions of the Statilian and the Volusian tombs indicate that, in these two households, slaves were freed on the assumption that they remained in the household.<sup>43</sup>

The evidence can only securely attest to continued burial rights of freedmen, however, not continued residence patterns. Whereas Mouritsen may well be correct about the Statilii and the Volusii, many occupational inscriptions from outside the columbarium tombs, conversely, attest to ex-slaves who set up their own household, regularly conjugal couples originating from the same *domus*. It is known that the bulk of all epitaphs was set up by freedmen. This phenomenon is generally attributed to the wish of the

36 Cf. Edmondson (2011) 343: “manumitted slaves (i.e. freedmen and freedwomen) quite frequently remained part of the household even after manumission, as in the household of the Statilii Tauri”.

37 As suggested by Penner (2012) 147 who suggests that the percentages of slave-freed-free of the *monumentum Marcellae* could indicate that this tomb encouraged continued bonds after manumission, in contrast to the Statilian tomb; the latter finding at least sits well with Mouritsen (2013) 58-61. See below.

38 The classic article is Flory (1978); more recently, see Mouritsen (2013) 55 on the mixed status of nuclear families in the households of the Volusii and Statilii; Mouritsen (2011b); and Edmondson (2011). And see below.

39 Joshel (1992) 101.

40 Libertination and marriage are not explicitly mentioned in this epitaph, but the context is strongly suggestive.

41 Park (1918) 63 for a very brief summary (with references) of Tiro’s services to Cicero, including those after manumission; more elaborately, McDermott (1972).

42 *Dig.* 14.3.19.1 (Papinian). To be precise, the slave was an *institor’ apud mensam pecuniis accipiendis’*.

43 Cf Mouritsen (2013) 58, 61.

freedmen population to display their lifetime achievements in public, more than any other social group in the empire.<sup>44</sup> Considering this prominence of freedmen in funerary epigraphy, combined with the significant percentage of slaves who were working for aristocrats, it is highly likely that many of these 'independent freedmen' originally came from elite families. *CIL* 10. 3957 from Capua is an unambiguous example of this: the inscription clearly refers to a separate family tomb for a cabinet maker and his wife, both freedmen by the same principal and therefore probably from the same *domus*.

### **CIL 10. 3957**

M(arcus) Avidius M(arci) l(ibertus) Aesopus sibi et / Avidiae M(arci) l(ibertae)  
Zosimae coniugi / fab(e)r intestin(arius) / h(oc) m(onumentum) s(ive) s(epulcrum)  
e(st) hh(eredes) n(on) s(equetur)

Marcus Avidius Aesopus, freedman of Marcus, [set up this monument] for himself and for Avidia Zosima, freedwoman of Marcus, his wife. He was a cabinet maker. This monument or tomb will not go to the heirs.

This is a clear example of independent freedmen who had left the *domus*, which underlines once more that the attested columbarium tomb population can only provide a minimum for the freedmen percentage in the elite *domus*.

It can be gathered from the above that the elite market share in servile labour was very large by any account. Adding Borbonus' numbers for the slave and freed presence in the columbarium tombs adds up to 47.5 per cent of the household, which is a bare minimum that could potentially be as high as 98.4 per cent – 100 per cent minus the 1.6 Borbonus securely identified as freeborn.<sup>45</sup> That leaves some room for freeborn labourers in elite employment, but it was not necessarily very much.

### **Free hired labour**

In 53 BC Cicero writes to Tiro: "make sure that the doctor is promised whatever wage he demands".<sup>46</sup> Apparently, at the time of the letter in 53 BC, Tiro is unwell and a doctor is hired. Imported products, perishables, and custom-made luxury items could not all be produced within the elite *domus*. If out shopping for exclusive jewellery or other luxury items, the elite might parade the porticoes of the *Saepta Iulia*; if in need of first-quality

44 Mouritsen (2011a) 127–8.

45 Borbonus (2014) 121 table 5.

46 Cic. *Fam.* 6.14.1–2; *Medico, mercedis quantum poscet, promitti iubeto.*

meat, the *macellum* was the place to be.<sup>47</sup> The aristocratic houses must have hired labour and bought produce from free labourers, in addition to the labour or goods provided or produced by their own servile staff and freed labour relations.<sup>48</sup> This pool of free labourers significantly includes independent freedmen. I take 'independent' freedmen to refer to those unrelated to the particular elite *domus* looking to do business with them. To avoid confusion between these independent freedmen and the freedmen labourers who were associated with the household, the latter will be excluded from the following discussion on free hired labour.

Free hired labourers in ancient Rome were not very likely to become a part of the elite family, *familia*, or household. From a broader historical perspective, this statement is not necessarily so obvious as it sounds to our modern western ears: even today, there are families with a living-in *au pair*, for example. In early modern times, certainly, it was common for a free servant to move into the house and be considered as family for the time of their appointment. Young girls from the countryside regularly moved to the city to work as a maid for a few years, and then returned and settled in a marriage. The early modern live-in household staff could be substantial, and included maids, butlers, doorkeepers, child attendants, cooks, and others.<sup>49</sup> In the Roman world, however, most of these service professions were practiced by slaves or ex-slaves. Hired free artisans or craftsmen, conversely, would not be prone to move in – in either time period.<sup>50</sup> Taking in freeborn apprentices or the Roman equivalent of journeymen also was much more likely to be confined to the nonelite household, because the elite *domus* included slave children and youngsters who took this place.

If there were freeborn workers in the elite household, they are hard to trace. The epigraphic record does not include many instances of freeborn domestic workers. For the city of Rome, Joshel found that only one individual who is certainly of free birth can be related to a wealthy household. If we include those she has identified as uncertain freeborn, there are a few more attestations (N=10). These *incerti* of elite households were mostly "architects, doctors, or teachers".<sup>51</sup> This enumeration corresponds exactly

47 Holleran (2012) 232–57 on elite consumption.

48 Park (1918) 78–9 lists tradesmen "from whom Cicero himself bought", among whom some *ingenui*, and mostly *liberti*.

49 Cf, to name but one example, the well-attested household of Joyce Jeffreys in 17<sup>th</sup>-century Hereford: Spicksley (2012).

50 Park (1918) 61 finds that Cicero's *familia* "did not supply skilled artisans", nor "regular artisans". The household of Joyce Jeffreys only supported a jack-of-all-trades.

51 Joshel (1992) 99–100. She suggests that many more *incerti* may have been connected to an elite household, as many *incerti* from an unknown context (public or private) were engaged in "the most typical household jobs", such as the nurse and child minder cited above, or as a personal servant; Joshel (1992) 205 n. 19.

with the jobs that Cicero holds to be “respectable for those whose status they befit”, and this might be one of the reasons why Joshel prefers to see them as freeborn rather than freedmen.<sup>52</sup> In reality, identification of these *incerti* as freeborn workers remains entirely hypothetical.

Borbonus’ analysis of the columbarium tomb population confirms that the freeborn make up only a minority there, 1.6 per cent.<sup>53</sup> Because such people are unlikely to have lived in the household in the first place, this should not come as a surprise. It is rather more noteworthy that *ingenui* are attested in the *columbaria* at all. A closer look at Borbonus’ results brings out once more the significant group of 50.9 per cent ‘free/d’, who carry the *tria nomina* but who cannot otherwise be identified as either *libertus* or *ingenuus*.<sup>54</sup> An estimate of 1.6 per cent may therefore be considered low. Having said that, with Borbonus, I do believe that the majority of this group of ‘free/d’ were in fact freed.

*Ingenui* were less inclined to record their profession than slaves or ex-slaves; indeed the freeborn tended to put up fewer inscriptions altogether. It has been suggested that freeborn employees were more likely to be commemorated by their family than by the *collegia* that in many cases were responsible for the collective columbarium tombs.<sup>55</sup> On this basis one would expect to find a modest freeborn presence in the *columbaria*. Not all of the funerary monuments for the freeborn urban population were inscribed, and not all of those that were graced with an inscription have survived. The more humble grave monuments were probably also the more common, such as amphorae or small markers in the ground that are likely to have been lost over the centuries – that is, if a funerary monument was erected for the burial at all, because not everyone could afford one.<sup>56</sup> These biases in the ancient evidence are another part of the explanation why so few freeborn workers are attested, and why even fewer can be linked to aristocratic *domus*. Still, the pattern is remarkably consistent and suggests that freeborn town-dwellers working and living in the elite household were indeed scarce.

52 *Quibus autem artibus aut prudentia maior inest aut non mediocris utilitas quaeritur ut medicina, ut architectura, ut doctrina rerum honestarum, eae sunt iis, quorum ordini conveniunt, honestae:* Cic. *Off.* 1. 151, translation Finley (1973)<sup>2</sup> 41–2.

53 Borbonus (2014) 121.

54 Borbonus (2014) 121 this group was already referred to above, under ‘freedmen’.

55 Hasegawa (2005) 81–8. Patterson (1992) 23 emphasizes the likelihood of the family and *collegia* working together for an individual burial, which would also facilitate the creation of burials outside of the *columbaria*.

56 E.g. Hope (2009) 159–166 on the variation in funerary markers.

That at least the possibility of working in an elite household existed for the freeborn is proven by Lucianus' satirical piece *On salaried posts in great houses*.<sup>57</sup> It does not become clear exactly what kind of posts are meant, but Lucian talks of educated men in a position of what I would describe as a 'glorified foot servant'; in terms of an actual task, the text merely hints at the possibility of teaching the master's children (19). The existence of other, unskilled positions in the household that were filled by the freeborn poor, however, are also mentioned in passing. Even if Lucian's words are hardly a recommendation for the job – which he sees as selling oneself for wages into the service of an elite employer – the hundreds of thousands looking for a job in the city must have been happy to take up a position in the domestic service of a wealthy master. Lucian acknowledges that for unskilled labourers domestic service is no worse than other jobs (4, underlining his sentiments against 'wage slavery' once more). Apart from the income earned, such labourers perhaps hoped to benefit from the master's patronage. Lucian's second-century satire obviously is not the most factual account, but other literary references are in short supply.

A passage from the jurist Marcian has been adduced as evidence for free *mercennarii* living in their employer's house:<sup>58</sup>

**Dig. 48.19.11.1**

Furta domestica si viliora sunt, publice vindicanda non sunt, nec admittenda est huiusmodi accusatio, cum servus a domino vel libertus a patrono, in cuius domo moratur, vel mercennarius ab eo, cui operas suas locaverat, offeratur questioni: nam domestica furta vocantur quae servi dominis vel liberti patronis vel mercennarii apud quos degunt subripiunt.

If domestic thefts are relatively minor, they are not to be punished publicly, nor is an accusation of this sort to be granted, when a slave shall be brought to question by the master, or a freedman by the patron in whose house he is staying, or a contract worker by him, to whom he hired his labour: because those thefts are called domestic that slaves steal from their masters, or freedmen from their patrons, or contract labourers by those with whom they live.

57 *De mercede conductis*, which in the Loeb edition is characterized by Harmon (1921) 411 as "[a] Hogarthian sketch of the life led by educated Greeks who attached themselves to the households of great Roman lords – and ladies".

58 *Dig. 48.19.11.1* (Marcian); Brunt (1980) 100; Treggiari (1980) 50: "this does not amount to a declaration that all *mercennarii* (or all *liberti*) lived in, nor does it put them on a par with slaves".

Although there has been some debate about the term *mercennarius*, it is now commonly accepted that it generally refers to free labourers – it is certain that there were slave *mercennarii*, too, but whenever reference is made to them it says so explicitly in the texts.<sup>59</sup> This passage from the *Digest*, therefore, presents the possibility that free hired labourers would sometimes (temporarily) move in with their employer. Free *mercennarii* living in the house were not legally part of the family, but that does not mean that they were not considered as such by the outside world.<sup>60</sup> Marcian explicitly indicates that free hired labourers were subject to the ‘justice’ of the employer. Brunt points out that the *mercennarii* from this particular text are likely to have been engaged in occupations other than domestic service.<sup>61</sup> That suggests that there was at least some opportunity for the freeborn to work in the elite *domus*, outside of the domestic sector.

We might expect to find some additional evidence for living-in freeborn workers in sectors such as child care. It seems natural that wet-nurses and pedagogues would have lived in with their charges, just like a governess, nanny, or *au pair* did in later periods. Scholars have indeed emphasized the strong and often lifelong ties maintained between child minders and the family. The bond is evident from the epigraphic record, where nurses and others are frequently linked with the family who employed them.<sup>62</sup> The following texts may illustrate this.

#### **CIL 6. 6686**

Dis Manibus sacru[m] / Ti(berio) Claudio Neothyrsu / qui vix(it) annis XXIII dies  
 XI[3] / Ti(berius) Claudius Stephanus / patrono bene merito de / se et Cacia  
 Restituta nutrix / eius et sibi et suis po(s)terisq(ue) / eoru(m) ita uti cippi fine /  
 fecit libe(n)s animo / [

59 Brunt (1980) pp 100ff. Bürge (1990) has argued at length that the term *mercennarii* refers exclusively to slaves unless explicitly stated otherwise: *mercennarius* in his opinion must refer to another man's slave (renting himself out) living in the employer's *domus*. His claim is convincingly refuted by Möller (1993), however. See also the comments of Scheidel (1994) throughout pages 153–202.

60 To my knowledge it is only when the law states that *publicani* are liable for wrongful acts committed by their subordinates that it includes the freeborn in their *familiae*, and then only “if they were similarly employed”, i.e. in tax-farming. This situation would not be very common; *Dig.* 39.4.1.5 (Ulpian).

61 Brunt (1980) 100: “It is interesting that some *mercennarii* might actually live in the employer's house; we might perhaps think of craftsmen employed in a business, which was carried on in the employer's home; it seems unlikely that free *mercennarii* were used as domestic servants”.

62 Günther (1987) 86, 96 adds that nurses' own families are notably absent from the epigraphic record.

Sacred to the divine spirits. To Tiberius Claudius Neothysus who lived 24 years and 11(?) days. Tiberius Claudius Stephanus to his well-deserving patron from his own funds and Cacia Restituta, his [i.e. Neothysus'] nurse, set this up willingly; also to himself, his [family] and their descendants; as far as the boundary stone.<sup>63</sup>

### **CIL 6. 10766**

D(is) M(anibus) / P(ublius) Aeeius(!) Placentius / nutritori filiorum suorum / dignissimo / M(arco) Aurelio Liberali / b(ene) m(erenti) f(ecit)

To the divine spirits. Publius Aelius Placentius set this up to the carer of his sons, the most honourable and well-deserving Marcus Aurelius Liberalis.

Restituta the nurse and the child minder Liberalis both probably were freeborn workers, considering the fact that they sport the *tria nomina*, while their *praenomen* and *nomina* are different from that of the families they worked with. The majority of child minders, however, were of servile origins.<sup>64</sup> Moreover, even if a nurse were freeborn, we know that nurses did not always move in with their charge. In wet-nursing contracts from Roman Egypt it is regularly specified that the infant will reside in the home of the freeborn nurse.<sup>65</sup> Although that points to labour demand for freeborn women in this sector, it does not make them part of the elite *domus*.

The aristocratic families are more likely to have made extensive use of the labour and produce of free hired labourers living elsewhere than of free living-in staff. As stated above, the elite presence in the city generated ample demand for the (luxury) products and services of free artisans and craftsmen, and so provided a livelihood for many. The doctor hired for Tiro is one example, the architect in *CIL* 10. 8093 is another.<sup>66</sup>

63 The Latin here is difficult to translate though the meaning of the words is perfectly clear; I have taken *sibi* etc. to refer to Stephanus and his family; *ita uti cippi fine* is meant to confirm what has been said before: the monument is open to them, on this burial plot, as far as (in a rare use of *fine* with genitive, Lewis and Short s.v. *finis* I.B2) the *cippus* (which may carry both the meaning of boundary stone and grave marker here).

64 Bradley (1991) 19–20 for nurses, all of servile background, but that finding is outdated. Restituta is not on the list for example; page 82 for *tatae* and *mammae*. Tacitus, *Dial.* 28.4 writes of an *emptae nutricis*, a “bought nurse”, and therefore a slave. Aulus Gellius, *NA* 12.1.1–5 however, writes *adhibendas nutrices*, where *adhibendas* leaves open whether the nurses-to-be-acquired were bought, or hired.

65 See, e.g., *P. Reinach* 2. 103, a wet-nursing contract from Oxyrynchus, 26 CE.

66 *CIL* 10. 8093 = *AE* 2006, 356 (Grumentum). Architects were mostly freeborn.

**CIL 10. 8093**

T(itus) Vettius Q(uinti) f(ilius) / Ser(gia) architectus / porticus de peq(unia) / pagan(ica) faciund(as) / coer(avit) / A(ulo) Hirtio C(aio) Vibio / co(n)s(ulibus)

Titus Vettius Sergia, son of Quintus, architect, arranged for the colonnade to be built, paid for by communal funds, in the year that Aulus Hirtius and Caius Vibius were consuls [43 BC].

It is widely believed that as a rule, free artisans and craftsmen were independent labourers and many business encounters with the elite will indeed have been of a temporary nature, be it a single transaction to buy bread or cater to a dinner, or a contract for the construction of a tomb complex that would take a certain period of time to complete. Rens Tacoma and I have argued elsewhere that the most important document for prices in ancient Rome, Diocletian's *Prices Edict* of 301 AD, underlines the importance of hired labour in the market: it presents daily wages for all kinds of jobs, including those for which we might rather expect priced items, such as a baker, or a gold- or silversmith.<sup>67</sup> What the *Edict* cannot tell us, however, is who were hired: free, freed, or slave labourers. Nor does it tell us whether they lived in with the contractor for the duration of a contract. And although this section presented some evidence for free hired labour, like Cicero's doctor, Park demonstrated almost a century ago that Cicero in fact, insofar as he mentions it in his writings, hired chiefly (someone else's) slaves and ex-slaves.<sup>68</sup>

The evidence taken together suggests that occasionally the freeborn will have worked in elite households. The epigraphic evidence implies that when they did, they were unlikely to be remembered for it. The scarcity of the evidence is thus likely to reflect reality, indicating that the freeborn employees living in the elite *domus* were not numerous. If correct, this implies that the freeborn poor could not find long-term employment within the elite *domus* easily. The market for produce they shared with independent freed labourers, leaving them only a small niche in the urban economy.

This crude demographic analysis of the living-in workers in elite households confirms the suggestion that urban slave labour centred around upper-class *familiae*. The aristocratic *domus* was an important employer in the city, particularly for its numerous slaves and ex-slaves: the resulting lack of vacancies in the household will have restricted labour opportunities in domestic service for the freeborn, and indeed very few free domestic workers are attested.

67 Groen-Vallinga and Tacoma (2017); the *Edict* includes some prices for piecework, too, but the prevalence of hired labour is significant.

68 Park (1918) 71–7.

## THE DYNAMICS OF DEMOGRAPHY WITHIN LARGE SLAVE-OWNING HOUSEHOLDS

The composition of the aristocratic household, like that of a nonelite family, was always changing. The marriages and remarriages of the nobility are relatively well documented – Bradley aptly refers to their “matrimonial careers”.<sup>69</sup> It is certain that many of these marriages concerned strategies, meant to form or strengthen political alliances, because they often reflect contemporary politics.<sup>70</sup> It is not unthinkable that economic aspects also played a part in the marriage practices of the elite, as they did for the nonelite family.<sup>71</sup> In fact, all of the basic demographic ‘strategies’ that were identified for the nonelite will also have been practised by the elite to a certain extent. Children, and the number of children, mattered to the elite family, too: ideally, the family fortune was split up as little as possible.<sup>72</sup> Although the discussion in the previous chapter showed that the extent to which the Romans acted upon such ideals by means of infanticide or exposure is difficult to grasp, the wish for an heir or a son may have induced a form of family planning. Adoption to preserve the family line and the family fortune is one strategy that was perhaps more common among the elite than among the (supposedly) more prolific and (certainly) less affluent nonelite; the evidence for elite adoption at least is more abundant, though that is partly the result of the fact that the elite is better documented overall. Within the aristocratic family, then, the available demographic strategies were broadly similar to those for nonelite families.

The main difference between elite *domus* and nonelite households in terms of demographic changes over the life cycle, is that many of the structural changes to the larger family took place in the servile segment of the family, precisely because slaves and ex-slaves made up such a large part of the household. On the one hand, slaves and ex-slaves were passively subjected to the events in their principal’s life, such as death or divorce: because ‘his’ slaves were legally distinct from ‘her’ slaves, they were separated into two *familiae* if the marriage was broken up.<sup>73</sup> The life course of individual slaves, on the other hand, also contributed to the family life cycle. Slaves were regularly replaced upon death, disease, sale and upon manumission; and slaves could procreate.

69 Bradley (1991) 156.

70 Corbier (1991) 49–63, Bradley (1991) 156–176.

71 Broekaert (2012) and my chapter 3.

72 Champlin (1991) 114–117 illustrates a pattern where sons tended to receive a substantially larger share of the inheritance than daughters. They were clearly favoured over their sisters, who held a smaller share that was often in the form of their dowry. Champlin says nothing about shares for brothers. In my view, such wills were effectively keeping (landed) property together as much as possible.

73 Cf. *Dig.* 29.5.1.15.

Slaves could buy slaves of their own – these *vicarii* are not uncommonly attested – again increasing the number of slaves in the *familia*. Structural change of the family was therefore based on somewhat different demographic factors than the factors influencing the demographic life cycle of smaller families.

An additional slave in the house increases family expenditure through the cost of maintenance, but he or she would also add to the family's collective productivity, or maintain it in case of a replacement. If a slave fell in value because he or she was elderly or unwell, this might prompt the decision to sell.<sup>74</sup> A slave could also be 'removed' from the household through manumission. The motivations underlying manumission are rather more complex than those concerning sale. The question then becomes to what extent economic considerations shaped these deliberate changes in the slave labour force of the aristocratic household. The process of structural change in the large family is impossible to follow, because we simply do not have the data to do so. Following a similar approach to that of the previous chapter, however, we can analyse the ways in which new slaves were added and other slaves removed from the household.

### The sources of slaves

Where did elite families get their slaves from? It is not too difficult to come up with various possible sources of slaves in the Roman empire, but it has proven far more complicated to decide on the relative importance of such sources during the Principate.<sup>75</sup> It has been argued that the slave-market gradually transformed into a system of predominantly home-born slaves under the high empire.<sup>76</sup> During the expansion of the empire, numerous captives of war were put up on the stands.<sup>77</sup> Initially, this will have been the most important source of slaves for sale. In the period under consideration, however, the slave-influx from war and conquest dwindled, for lack of war and conquest. To maintain

74 Cato *RR* 2.7 encourages the sale of everything that is superfluous: e.g., surplus produce, but also old tools or dead-beat oxen – and old or sick slaves.

75 Much has been said in the pioneering work of Jones (1956), and Bradley (1994) 31–56; Finley (1980) 128 is still to the point; the 'grand debate' took place between Harris (1980)(repr. 2011) 57–87, (1994), (1999)(repr. 2011) 88–109; and Scheidel (1997), (2005a), (2011a). See now Silver (2011) for a strikingly different approach.

76 Jones (1956) 193, and especially Scheidel (1997)(2005a), with critique from Harris (1999) who contends that the slave population would have become stable only after the high empire (p. 75): "Something like Scheidel's model (...) must in the end have imposed itself. When?"

77 Scheidel (2011a) 295: "The scale of enslavement was primarily a function of the geographical reach of Roman imperialism"; Welwei (2000) for captive slaves under the Republic; cf Finley (1983<sup>4</sup>) 174 on the continuity of "the army as a slave-supplying instrument"; similarly, at (1980) 128 he notes that although the massive expansion ended, "war did not".

slave numbers, other sources, such as natural reproduction among slaves, must have played an ever more important part.

The means of acquiring slaves was not just a response to the available supply: it also reflects economic considerations, which is why it deserves separate analysis here. We can say that new additions to the slave population of the elite *domus* conform to one of three categories: slaves were bought, inherited, or born within the household.<sup>78</sup>

### *Buying and selling slaves*

Evidence for the slave-trade under the empire is unmistakable, even if the specifics – such as the identity of actual slave-traders – are sometimes difficult to identify.<sup>79</sup>

The (unnamed) *mango* or *venalicius/venaliciarius* (both mean slave-trader) is a familiar stock figure in literature, which suggests he was a familiar figure in the streets of Roman Italy, too. Think of Martial's complaint when a slave boy he wants – excessively priced by the *mango* at a hundred thousand sesterces – is bought instead by the equally excessively wealthy Phoebus, in epigram 1. 58. Although Phoebus' conduct is mocked by the satirist, the passage does suggest that slaves did not come cheap.

This clue from Martial is corroborated by other, scattered indications of slave prices.<sup>80</sup> Slaves are listed as a commodity in Diocletian's *Prices Edict* of AD 301.<sup>81</sup> In the *Edict*, the maximum price is set at 25,000 *denarii* for an adult female slave, and 30,000 for a male of the same age category. The prices for a skilled slave could add up to double that amount.<sup>82</sup> To get a sense of real slave prices, we can compare these sums with the average daily wage in the *Edict* of 50 *denarii* a day for skilled labour and 25 for unskilled work. It means that the cost of buying an unskilled slave amounted to the equivalent of 500–600 days of work for a skilled labourer, and twice as long if that slave was paid for

78 Mouritsen (2013) 67 n. 53 with reference to ps-Quintilian, *Decl. Min.* 311.7 – *aut natus aut relictus hereditate aut emptus*.

79 Bodel (2005), Bradley (1994) 42–3 offers some compelling evidence for the continued importance of the independent slave trade, that was drawing on “a combination of sources”; Finley (1983<sup>4</sup>) on continuous trade in enslaved people, especially from the Danubian and Black Sea regions, from the late 7<sup>th</sup> century BC to the 6<sup>th</sup> century AD; Harris (1980) 129–31 notes on p. 129 “the reticence which surrounded an occupation that was naturally despised by the elite”. *CIL* 10. 8222 (Capua – the slave-trade can only be inferred from the accompanying relief) nevertheless suggests that they sometimes took pride in their trade.

80 For slave prices, see Scheidel (1996), (2005b) esp. 2–8, Ruffing and Drexhage (2008); and Harper (2010) on late antiquity.

81 *Prices Edict* chapter 29; with Scheidel (1996), and Salway (2010).

82 29.8: *Pro mancipio arte instructo pro genere et aetate et qualitate artium inter emptorem vel venditorem de praetio placere conveniet ita ut duplum praetium statutum in mancipium minime excedere*.

by unskilled work.<sup>83</sup> The *Edict* is a late source, but it is reassuring that scattered price data from Roman Italy for the high empire fall in the same order of magnitude.<sup>84</sup> It is clear that, even for the well to do, buying a slave was costly. It is also clear that slaves were being bought and sold regardless.

“Where did the merchandise itself come from when slaveowners were ready to buy?”<sup>85</sup> The attestation of foreign slaves is indicative of a continuous influx of slaves who in all probability were not born into slavery. For some of the slaves in aristocratic households, a foreign background can be inferred from their nomenclature: some have foreign names, and in rare instances their origins have been explicitly recorded.<sup>86</sup> Thus, the couple in *CIL* 6. 6343 is referred to as *Dardana* and *Dardanus*, which suggests that they both came from the province of Moesia (superior, modern Serbia).

### **CIL 6. 6343**

Messia Dardana / quasillaria / fecit lacinthus / unctor Dardanus

To Dardanian Messia, spinning woman. Dardanian lacinthus masseur set up [this monument].

The epitaph, that was recovered from the Stilian household tomb, clearly stresses a common background for this pair, which may be the reason it is included in their epitaph. If not in the case of this particular example, the onomastics of slavery are generally difficult to interpret. Greek names predominate for slaves and ex-slaves in the first two centuries AD. The explanation of this undeniable pattern is rather complex. It was demonstrated that Greek names are a likely indication for servile status – that is, those with Greek names as a rule were (children of ) slaves and ex-slaves – but that

83 The daily wage is taken here excluding the food allowance. On prices and wages in the *Edict*, and on the validity of relating these price data to each other and to the world outside the *Prices Edict*, see Groen-Vallinga and Tacoma (2017).

84 Scheidel (2005b) page 5 on Roman Egypt, page 8 on Roman Italy; slaves remained an expensive good into Late Antiquity, Harper (2010) 230.

85 Bradley (1994) 31.

86 Mouritsen (2013) 58; Hasegawa (2005) 75-9.

such names do not necessarily suggest Greek or even more generally foreign origins.<sup>87</sup> Even so, the popularity of Greek names for slaves may well indicate a continuing and significant presence of bought slaves: in a recent study, Christer Bruun analysed the names of home-born slaves, for whom he finds demonstrably more Latin *cognomina* than for the slave population at large.<sup>88</sup> As Bruun himself points out, the implication is that many individuals on the slave market were not home-born slaves, but ended up there through different channels: if *vernae* had been in the majority, we should expect to find mostly Latin *cognomina* among the servile population, rather than the attested pattern of mainly Greek names for slaves and freedmen.<sup>89</sup>

Many of the slaves in Italy came from within the empire, and often they were locals.<sup>90</sup> This suggests that at least some of them were born as *vernae*. An unknown number may have been enslaved only later in life, by various means. Thus, piracy and kidnapping were known, but are difficult to quantify. Roman society was also familiar with a form of penal slavery, although this was probably a marginal phenomenon, if only because of its often temporary nature.<sup>91</sup> Self-sale and the enslavement of freeborn children, conversely, may not have been quite so marginal.<sup>92</sup> Morris Silver deserves the credit for restoring a focus on the significance of what he calls 'voluntary' or 'contractual slavery'.<sup>93</sup> Since it was established that many Romans lived at or under subsistence levels, it does make sense that for some Romans self-enslavement became a reasonable economic strategy to avert chronic poverty and destitution.<sup>94</sup> If certain jobs, and job-training, were more easily accessible to slaves and freedmen, as I believe to have been the case, this

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87 Solin (1971) demonstrated the earlier supposition that Greek *cognomina* denote a servile status or servile background (p. 121–145), and added the finding that Greek names do not generally refer to Greek or foreign origins (p. 146–158). Silver (2011) 87–8 conversely, hypothesizes that the name-pattern indicates that foreigners from the Greek East of the empire voluntarily sold themselves into slavery to finance migration to the Italian heartland. In his view, their presence in turn inspired a taste to give slaves Greek names.

88 Bruun (2013).

89 Bruun (2013) 33. Either that, "...or they were born in conditions where they never encountered their master and the names were given by a *vilicus* or someone else who routinely chose typical slave names, which mostly were Greek".

90 Silver (2011) 84 with references; cf Scheidel (1997) 164; Finley (1980) 128.

91 On penal slavery: Groen-Vallinga and Tacoma (2015), Millar (1984).

92 Harris (1999), Ramin and Veyne (1981). Both maintain that self-sale was a major source of slaves, or at least "commonplace" (Harris (1999) 73).

93 Silver (2011).

94 See chapter 2 for an indication of living standards. Silver (2011) emphasizes the inherent draw of contractual slavery, however, whereas I believe slavery will always have been a last resort, cf also the comments in Tacoma (2016) 68 with n. 95, and 182–183 with n. 64.

strategy becomes all the more rational. Particularly so, perhaps, if it can be shown that there was also a real chance of early manumission.

Legal evidence acknowledges and accommodates the possibility of becoming a slave willingly.<sup>95</sup> Seneca comments that “the slave-trader benefits those for sale”, which appears to indicate that those for sale actually want to be sold.<sup>96</sup> As noted by Silver, many texts might be interpreted as referring to voluntary slavery. The fact that he sees contractual slaves absolutely everywhere, however, has understandably worked against him.<sup>97</sup> In addition to this, I fail to grasp the significance of singling out this group as a distinct status category, different from freeborn, freed and slave. Freed status will always trump one’s freeborn origins in the eye of the Roman beholder.<sup>98</sup> Examples of ‘freeborn freedmen’ are limited in number and provide inconclusive evidence: they are extraordinary in that they are from the *familia Caesaris*, and from the provinces. One T. Flavius Helius from Asia who holds the curious job-title of *eirenophylax* (peacekeeper), set up a dedication that records both that he is a freedman of the emperor Vespasian, and that he is the son of Glycon, son of Timaos; the text tells us also that Helius is married to a freeborn woman.<sup>99</sup> Compare the following inscription from Africa:

95 Silver (2011) 75–81.

96 Sen. *De ben.* 4.13.3, *mango venalibus prodest*. Harris (1999) records legal references to self-sale in his n. 84 on p. 73. I believe both references to Ulpian are flawed: *Dig* 21.1.17.12 does not refer to self-sale but to fugitive-slaves who seek refuge with a statue of Caesar. *Dig.* 28.3.6.5-6 casually refers to penal slavery, not self-sale.

97 Silver (2013) is a good example, where he argues that contractual slavery was the catalyst for the slave mode of production in the third century.

98 Silver (2011) 90 especially n. 15 makes a point of the fact that Mouritsen (2004) never considered the *incerti* with a ‘respectable’ Latin name to have been voluntary slaves.

99 For the inscription (in Greek): Drew-Bear and Naour, *ANRW* II 18.3 (1990) 1967–77, no. 15 and Kearsley (2001) 118 ff, no. 144. See Weaver (2004) 200 with n. 28; Silver (2011) 90; Tacoma (2016) 182 n.63 notes two additional examples: the first is *CIL* 6. 13328, where an imperial slave (named Numida) at Rome has a free (or freed, but not imperial) mother (Aemilia Primitiva), which probably implies that he was born free, as does their origin in Africa. If I understand correctly, however, Weaver (1972) 177f indicates that a union between imperial freedmen and freeborn women could also produce imperial slaves, so an alternative explanation is that the unknown father was an imperial freedman. The second is *P. Oxy.* 46. 3312, which seems to suggest that a certain (freeborn) Herminos has become a freedman, *pace* Weaver (2004). It states ‘γινωσ οὔ[ν] ὅτι Ἑρμῖνος ἀπῆλθεν ἰς Ῥώμ[ην] καὶ ἀπελευθέρως ἐγένετ[ο] Καίσαρος ἵνα ὀπίκια [= *officia*] λάβ[η].’: “You should know that Herminos has gone off to Rome and become a freedman of Caesar so he can get official posts”, in the translation of Weaver. Though his freedom may plausibly be inferred, technically Herminos’ original legal status is not stated.

**AE 1979, 656**

C(aius) Iulius Aug(usti) l(ibertus) Felix / Accavonis f(ilius) pius / vixit annis LXV h(ic) s(itus) e(st) / C(aius) Iulius C(ai) l(ibertus) Felix f(ilius) patri / posterisq(ue) eius d(e) s(ua) p(ecunia) f(ecit)

Caius Iulius Felix, freedman of Augustus, the pious son of Accavo, lived 65 years, [and] is buried here. Caius Iulius Felix, Jr., freedman of Caius set this up with his own funds to his father and his [father's] descendants.

Weaver and Silver are convinced that these individuals are examples of freeborn men who were freeborn, (voluntarily?) enslaved and subsequently freed.<sup>100</sup> In my view, that is not necessarily what these texts indicate: in the epitaph just cited, Caius Iulius Felix junior used exactly the same form of filiation and libertination as his father does, despite the fact that the son was surely born a slave – or he would not also have been freed. My contention is that the filiation in these examples is a positive appraisal of biological family ties among slaves and ex-slaves, more than anything else – similar to the use of *coniux* for conjugal partners in a union that was not actually recognized by the law. In defense of Morris Silver, however: there must have been many who opted for slavery.

From the viewpoint of the buyer, there were a number of practical economic concerns, which created a continuous demand for slaves. In the words of Mouritsen:

Elite households would have seen a steady influx of newly purchased slaves, who supplemented existing staff members who had died. Slave functions were often highly specialized and vacancies might occur unpredictably before home-born apprentices had been fully trained. Slaves from the market were therefore a natural supplement to the self-regeneration of the *familia*.<sup>101</sup>

Moreover, owning and training skilled slaves of every type may have been exceedingly expensive for all but the wealthiest households. Varro remarks that for the farm, at least, to hire the services of doctors, fullers, and builders from a nearby city (if available) could

100 Weaver (2004) 200 with n. 31; Silver (2011) 90.

101 Mouritsen (2013) 58; Treggiari (1979b) 188-189: "A young Roman considering how to encourage the production of children by the slaves he had inherited from his father might not be able to foresee that he would marry a woman whose dotal estates would unexpectedly involve him in, say, marble-quarrying for which he would need a special staff, or that he would have eight daughters who would need an unusually large complement of maids, or that his only son would be a scholar who needed research assistants with expertise in Etruscan".

be wiser than training its own slaves, “for sometimes the death of one artisan wipes out the profit of the farm”.<sup>102</sup>

Buying slaves at great expense is also a form of conspicuous consumption: because domestic slaves were somewhat of a luxury product, buying slaves – particularly male slaves – was also a means of showing off. Scheidel contends that the continued existence of slavery can only be explained by accepting that ideology and tradition, not economic rationality, lay at the heart of ancient slavery.<sup>103</sup> The cultural expectation that an elite *domus* should entertain numerous slaves, was real. As noted by Mouritsen, however, economic considerations also played a part. The question whether slave-holding was economically viable has not been answered decisively.<sup>104</sup> Nevertheless, it was definitely possible to reap a substantial profit by selling or hiring out slaves. The value of slaves and (skilled) slave labour will be explored further in the section on human capital below.

It seems reasonable to conclude that the slave trade continued under the high empire, but also that a demonstrable shift in the sources of slaves occurred from mainly war captives under the Republic, to a variety of sources in the Principate – including contractual slaves, foreigners, and home-born slaves.

#### *Home-born slaves*

An increasing number of slaves must have been born into slavery. Home-born slaves were called *vernae* or, more matter-of-factly in a legal context, *partus ancillarum* (literally the ‘offspring of slave women’).<sup>105</sup> They had a firm reputation of trustworthiness, for which they were valued highly by their masters.<sup>106</sup> The particular status is proudly advertised in inscriptions by both *vernae* and masters.<sup>107</sup> *Vernae* sometimes record it even

102 RR 1.16.4, *quorum non numquam unius artificis mors tollit fundi fructum* tr. Hooper and Ash (1934, Loeb Classical Library); the passage was brought to my attention by Silver (2011) 100. It is interesting that in this context Varro speaks of a “yearly contract” (*anniversarios*) for doctors, fullers and builders (*medicos, fullones, fabros*).

103 Scheidel (2005b), (2008); White (2008) is unhelpful for a purely economic comparison from the perspective of the owner’s investment, because his argument focuses on welfare economics and allocative efficiency, which is an ethical approach that includes the value of freedom (immeasurable).

104 See introductory chapter.

105 Sigismund-Nielsen (2013) 293 writes on *vernae*: “But it is not under this term that we meet them in the *Digest*. We know them only as the *fili* of a male, high-status slave and his *contubernalis*”. The *Digest* also refers to *partus ancillarum*.

106 Rawson (2013); Bradley (1994) 33 remarks that *vernae* had “a certain *cachet*” (his italics). On *vernae*, see especially Hermann-Otto (1994). Sigismund-Nielsen (2013) 293 seems not to have been able to substantiate her earlier doubts about the special position of *vernae* on the basis of the literary material, (1991) 226.

107 Sigismund-Nielsen (1991) analyses inscriptions from CIL 6.

after manumission, like Anicetus for example, an imperial freedman architect and *verna* referred to in *CIL* 6. 5738, the epitaph for his wife Aurelia Fortunata. More commonly it is used as a term of endearment for a slave-child by his or her master, suggesting ties of affection; although presumably the mention of a home-born slave also advertised the fact that the master possessed the resources to raise one. *CIL* 14. 472 is an elaborate example.

#### **CIL 14. 472**

D(is) M(anibus) / Melioris calculatoris / vixit ann(os) XIII hic tantae memoriae et scientiae / fuit ut ab antiquorum memori[a] usque in diem / finis suae omnium titulos superaverit / singula autem quae sciebat volumin[e] potius / quam titulo scribi potuerunt nam / commentarios artis suae quos reliq(u)it / primus fecit et solus posset imitari si eum / iniq(u)a fata rebus humanis non invidissent / Sex(tus) Aufustius Agreus vernae / suo praeceptor [i]nfelicissimus / fecit / in f(ronte) p(edes) II in ag(ro) p(edes) VI / excessit anno urbis condita / DCCCXCVII

[Sacred] to the divine spirits. To Melior, *calculator*, who lived 13 years. He was of such wisdom and knowledge that he surpassed the renown of all from the memory of the ancients until the day of his passing. The singular things (*singula quae*) that he knew were more voluminous than they could inscribe on his headstone; for the commentaries that he left behind of his art, he was the first to make, and only he could duplicate them, if the hostile fates had not begrudged him the human realm. Sextus Aufustius Agreas to his *verna*, [his] most unhappy instructor, set up this monument. Two feet wide, six feet long. He passed away in the year 897 from the founding of the city [145 AD].

A child born to a slave mother was a slave and belonged to the mother's owner. This was of obvious benefit to the master, and it must have been one of the reasons why slave unions were allowed. If women were kept in slavery longer than men, as can plausibly be argued, this is probably no coincidence and it should be explained in part by the fact that the women were still of child-bearing age.<sup>108</sup> It is a commonplace that at least some slaves were sexually exploited.<sup>109</sup> As a result of sexual exploitation of slave women by their owner, an unknown number of slave children were in fact the biological offspring of the master himself. It is also possible that in some instances the sexual relations of a slave with another slave were forced: Bradley suggests that slave offspring was "so convenient" to owners, that for slave unions "perhaps more than approval was involved".<sup>110</sup> To my knowledge there is no hard evidence for this.

There are certainly clues that the ability to beget children was valued in a slave woman. A female slave was priced highest at the time when her reproductive capacity was highest, between 16–40 years of age.<sup>111</sup> It should be noted, however, that this is also the age when male slaves are most expensive. The *Digest* offers more compelling evidence that slave-owners took an interest in their slave women's offspring. Women who had given birth to several children could apparently be rewarded by manumission, which indicates that there was some encouragement, or at least appreciation, of the fact.<sup>112</sup> Moreover, one could go back on the purchase of a slave woman who was sold "with her offspring added", if she turned out to be infertile or over fifty – which was really the same thing in Roman law.<sup>113</sup> Conversely, it is spelled out that the sale of a woman was considered valid also when she was pregnant – Ulpian continues: "after all, the first and foremost task of women is to conceive and to take care of the child".<sup>114</sup> Elsewhere, however, the same Ulpian notes that "slave women were not simply purchased for that

108 Drawing on the data for Roman Egypt: Scheidel (1997) 160–2, Bagnall and Frier (1994) 94 with n.10 and the age-table (D) on page 342–3.

109 Both male and female slaves, though for obvious reasons the emphasis is on slave women here; Scheidel (2009b) 284–99; repeated in (2011b) 113–4; cf Treggiari (1979b) 192–194, who in addition references the possibility that owners fell in love with slaves, or protected their female slaves from prostitution by contract.

110 Bradley (1994) 50–51, see also Bradley (1987b) on 'slave-breeding'.

111 Cf Bradley (1987a) 55 on thirty Egyptian contracts of sale that demonstrate a correlation "between the age of adult female slaves at the time of sale and the period of expected reproductivity".

112 *Dig.* 1.5.15 (Ulpian); *Dig.* 34.5.10.1 (Ulpian); cf also Colum. *RR* 1.8, 19.

113 *Dig.* 19.1.21 pr: *Si sterilis ancilla sit, cuius partus venit, vel maior annis quinquaginta, cum id emptor ignoraverit, ex empto tenetur venditor.*

114 *Dig.* 21.1.14.1 (Ulpian): *maximum enim ac praecipuum munus feminarum est accipere ac tueri conceptum.*

reason that they bear children".<sup>115</sup> That is to say, women's childbearing potential was definitely a consideration, but it was not the sole reason for purchase.<sup>116</sup>

Relationships between male and female slaves, ideally, could of course also be voluntary. Many epitaphs of slave partners suggest that their unions not uncommonly developed out of affection. Slaves were regularly allowed to engage in *contubernium*, a *de facto* marriage-bond that was recognised by all but the law, since slaves did not have the legal capacity to marry.<sup>117</sup> Whereas it cannot be excluded that slave owners allowed such unions out of the sheer goodness of their hearts, there is some evidence to suggest that consent to *contubernia* was part of a reward system to increase labour productivity – and that would make it a strategic move on the part of the master(s).<sup>118</sup> Moreover, we should consider the fact that the dynamics of the slave population simply came with the phenomenon of slave family formation and slave infants – and that process may not necessarily have been easy to control within a large household, even if the owners had wanted to.

More often than not, a slave found his or her partner within the same *familia*.<sup>119</sup> The following examples are of such *contubernia* between (ex-)slaves from the same household.

115 *Dig.* 5.3.27 pr. (Ulpian). In context: "slave women's children and their children's children should not be considered proceeds (*fructus*), since slave women were not simply purchased for that reason that they bear children, though their offspring does add to an inheritance." – *ancillarum etiam partus et partum partus quamquam fructus non existimantur, quia non temere ancillae eius rei causa comparantur ut pariant, augent tamen hereditatem.*

116 Cf Treggiari (1979b) 186-188.

117 On the legalities and practicalities of *contubernium*, see Treggiari (1991) 52-4, 410-1 and more through her index s.v. *contubernium* and *contubernales*; see also Flory (1978) "Family within *familia*".

118 Bradley (1987a) 50, 51: "permitting marital and familial associations among their slaves could contribute positively to the preservation of social and economic order". Varro *RR* 1.17.5 mentions marriage as a reward for the *vilicus*: "The foremen are to be made more zealous by rewards, and care must be taken that they have a bit of property of their own, and mates from among their fellow-slaves (*coniunctas conservas, e quibus habeant filios*) to bear them children; for by this means they are made more steady and more attached to the place". Tr. Hooper and Ash (1934, Loeb Classical Library).

119 Mouritsen (2013) 54 table 8, for marriages within the Statilian (and Volusian) households; Edmondson (2011) 347; Flory (1978) 82; Treggiari (1973) on the household of the Volusii (and, in passing, on that of the Statilii). With the approval of both masters, however, a relation could also be maintained over two households – presumably the owner of the male partner would be compensated for the benefit of children resulting from the union, who would automatically be assigned to the *familia* and possessions of the woman's owner, for examples see Rawson (1966).

**CIL 6. 33794**

Maritimi / Antoniae Drusi l(iberti) / rogatoris // Quintiae / Antoniae Drusi  
l(ibertae) / cantricis

[Grave] of Maritimus, freedman of Antonia wife of Drusus, questioner.

[Grave] of Quintia, freedwoman of Antonia wife of Drusus, singer.

Maritimus and Quintia both served Antonia Minor, one of the women of the Julio-Claudian family. The juxtaposition of both epitaphs on one memorial plaque suggests that Maritimus and Quintia were partners in a *contubernium*, even if the stone does not record it explicitly. Even if the questioner and singer were not *contubernales*, the existence of other, similar marble plaques juxtaposing husband and wife suggest that they might have been. Leaving no doubts about the nature of the recorded relationship, for example, is *CIL* 6. 6342 from the tomb of the Statilii.

**CIL 6. 6342**

Italia quasillaria / vixit ann(os) XX / Scaeva tabellarius Tauri / coniugi suae fecit

Italia, spinning woman. She lived 20 years. Scaeva, *tabellarius* of Taurus set this up to his wife.

Scaeva refers to his deceased partner with the word for a lawful wife, *coniux*, which can only be a reflection of sentiment, not of the status of their relationship.<sup>120</sup> The union of the Dardanians in *CIL* 6. 6343 cited earlier is a *contubernium*, too; in their case it is one that may even have predated their enslavement, since they were both from the same region. If so, it is an interesting detail that the continuity of their union was allowed for by their masters, again the Statilii.

Accommodating family formation among slaves led to valuable slave offspring and slave families also were a contributing factor tying the freed to their former master's household.<sup>121</sup> There are thus very few reasons why aristocratic masters would be opposed to their slaves and ex-slaves forming families of their own. Especially where it concerns domestic urban slavery rather than chattel slavery, the sources indicate that there was no lack of opportunity for slaves to form a family. This, therefore, cannot

120 *CIL* 10. 3957 quoted above is another example. Treggiari (1979b) 195 (with refs.) points out that even the jurists sometimes use *uxor* rather than the correct *contubernalis*.

121 This chapter, above; Mouritsen (2013) 55 also suggested as much.

have been a limiting factor on slave fertility.<sup>122</sup> *Contubernia* effectually brought an extra demographic factor into play for the household, and could lead to families branching out widely among the servile population of the *domus*.<sup>123</sup> Slave families and *vernae* were therefore a common phenomenon, certainly within elite *domus* of the city. However, this does not mean that slave reproduction alone was enough to fulfil the demand for slaves – the previous section already underlined the evidence for other sources of slaves.

Those inclined to tone down the importance of home-born slaves as a source of slaves, have adduced skewed sex ratios as a major limiting factor on slave reproduction: there were too few slave women.<sup>124</sup> More male than female slave labourers are attested, it is not unlikely that the slaves who were bought in the slave market were chiefly young adult males, and it has been argued that although foundlings perhaps were more likely to be girls, the boys were more likely to be brought up.<sup>125</sup> It becomes difficult to discard entirely the suggestion that men were in the majority among the slave population. Scheidel forcefully advocates that there were as many slave women as there were men, however, and that the sex ratios will have balanced out by the time of the early empire.<sup>126</sup>

I would argue that the solution to maintaining slave fertility, despite a slight misbalance in sex ratio, lies predominantly in the distinctive life course of men and women. By analogy with the general marriage pattern, female slaves undoubtedly ‘married’ earlier than men, and were more likely to remarry and balance out the marriage market; ‘marriage’ here always meaning the quasi-marital form of *contubernium*.<sup>127</sup> Add to that the fact that women probably were manumitted later than men (see below) and that as a result, most of their children were in effect born as slaves, and the sex ratio becomes less of a ‘problem’. And there were other solutions that would support fertility rates. Mouritsen’s analysis of the households of the Statilii and the Volusii demonstrates a skewed sex ratio for both *domus*. Importantly, it also shows that the ‘surplus’ of males, slave, freed, and free, was not necessarily celibate – not infrequently they were married to women from

122 Harris (1980) proffers this as one of the main arguments that would lower slave fertility (according to the addenda to the (2011) reprint, p. 108, he still agrees with his earlier argument).

123 Edmondson (2011) 347 notes that “house-bred slaves (*vernae*) might well have had a number of aunts, uncles and cousins”, with examples on page 348: a maternal uncle (*avunculus*, commemorated in *CIL* 6. 6469), and a paternal uncle (*patruus*, commemorator in *CIL* 6. 6619) whose niece resp. nephew were with them in the household of the Statilii.

124 Especially Harris (1980) pp; (1999) 69–72.

125 Male slaves predominating in the market, e.g. Mouritsen (2013) 58; De Ligt and Garnsey (2012) 86; Helpfully contextualising the gender of *expositi* with references: Evans Grubbs (2013) 90–2.

126 Scheidel (2005a) 71–3; Scheidel (2011a) 307–8.

127 The general marriage pattern is discussed in chapter 3.

outside the household.<sup>128</sup> The incidence of inscriptions that attest to unions between freed slaves with distinct *gentilicia* also supports the suggestion that there were slaves who maintained their ‘marriage-bond’ over two different households.<sup>129</sup> It will also become clear (below) that a large number of individuals was employed in child care, which underlines a significant presence of infants and older children in the household. In sum, there is no evidence for systematic slave breeding, but procreation was accommodated and perhaps encouraged, because slave children were a welcome side-effect of a larger slave *familia*.

The slave members of the family faced considerable insecurity regarding their own biological families; slave parents, spouses, or children could be sold off. The owner need not take the personal lives of his or her slaves into account, dislocating familial bonds. But the slaves’ story may not always have been as grim as some scholars would have it.<sup>130</sup> Edmondson notes that there is evidence that now and then the choice was made to sell a nuclear slave family, or a mother and child, together rather than to separate them; presumably this was better for morale than selling off slave children separately.<sup>131</sup> The latter scenario is nevertheless more commonly attested. Upon the death of the master, too, it is likely that the slaves of the household were scattered among heirs, again not necessarily taking into consideration the slave family. Yet there is evidence that slave parents were allowed to keep in touch with their children over two or sometimes more households.<sup>132</sup> Moreover, there are clues that slave-owners who expected their slaves to be sold off or split up upon their death or, like Cicero for example, upon their exile, were inclined to free more of their slaves in advance.<sup>133</sup> Apparently slave-owners did not always let their personal economic gain preside over more humane considerations. And the slaves of the elite *domus* may well have been the more privileged group in this respect, because of the proximity to their masters.

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128 Mouritsen (2013) 53–5, the pattern is especially clear for the Volusii, where marriages are better documented: 21 % (N=54) of males married an outsider.

129 Rawson (1966) offers some examples.

130 Harper (2011) 77 and especially Bradley (1987a) 47–80 emphasize implicit insecurity; cf Flory (1978) 87.

131 Edmondson (2011) 349–50 with n. 44 for references to contracts of sale on papyri; cf. Treggiari (1979b) 196–201, considers “the legal attitude to slave families [which] became gradually more humane under the empire” (at 196), respecting slave’s family bonds.

132 Rawson (1966) 78–81 for examples of such ‘broken’ slave families, since, paradoxically, the evidence for broken families itself is proof for a continued bond. Sigismund-Nielsen (2013) 292–3 adds some useful primary references.

133 Mouritsen (2011a) 184–5 with references.

*Foundlings or the purchase of infants*

Child slaves were not always born in the household: foundlings and bought infant slaves should also be considered in this context. Most foundlings that were taken up, were raised as a slave.<sup>134</sup> Harris suggested that provincial foundlings – born where life was cheap – were regularly raised to be sold on the slave market in the city of Rome.<sup>135</sup> Children could be bought at reduced prices: slaves age 0-8 were available at half the price of an adult slave or less.<sup>136</sup> These children were not always born into slavery. Parallel to self-enslavement, there must also have been parents who sold their free children into slavery, out of practicality perhaps, out of necessity, or for hope of a better future for their newborn than they had to offer.<sup>137</sup> The legal sources are ambiguous towards the practice, as freedom was absolute in Roman law – but every legal obstacle to child (or self-) sale seems to have had a way around it, including a fictional ‘exposure’ of the infant so that the buyer could claim not to be aware of its free status.<sup>138</sup> It presumably was a profitable arrangement for both seller, and buyer.

Raising a foundling or buying a slave infant may well have been an attractive investment, not just for slave traders but also for an individual household. An infant was much less costly than an adult slave, both in price of purchase and in cost of maintenance. As with home-born slaves, the cost of raising an infant is more gradual than buying an older slave for a substantial sum to be covered all at once. The possibility that some preferred such gradual payment should not be underestimated. The total cost of raising a foundling seems to have been roughly similar to the price of a young adult slave; moreover, these very young individuals would be raised in the household, and they could perhaps reach the same informal status that was awarded to the *vernae* who were so popular for their alleged loyalty.<sup>139</sup>

134 Corbier (2001) 66-7; Harris, especially Harris (1980), argues for the importance of abandoned children as a source of slaves.

135 Harris (2011) 87.

136 E.g. Diocletian's *Prices Edict* of AD 301 chapter 29, 1-7 lists 15,000 for a male or 10,000 denarii for a female slave age 0-8, compared to 30,000 (m) or 25,000 (f) for slaves age 16-40; cf Scheidel (1996), (2005b).

137 Scheidel's (1997) model for the slave population on pages 164-5 predicts that one in five (in one scenario even one in three) mothers bore a child that would become a slave, a number he then dismisses as unrealistic; Silver (2011) 107 thinks it may not be so unrealistic in view of his argument for the predominance of contractual slavery – at the same time he suggests on page 109 that few if any exposed children will have died, because they were in fact sold into slavery. With that he mitigates the numbers in Scheidel's model, who works with an attrition rate among *expositi* of 33%.

138 Silver (2011) 80-1, 83, 107-8 with references to many legal sources.

139 Saller (2013) 73 n.5 offers a very rough calculation of investment in a female foundling in Roman Egypt, compared to buying an older female slave.

There was a risk to the investment, as infant mortality in particular was notoriously high in ancient Rome.<sup>140</sup> A one-year-old had already lived through the most hazardous times, however, and at the age of five, the original life expectancy of around twenty-five years at birth may have been raised to forty. Perhaps, then, it was smarter to buy a slightly older slave child. Apparently, however, the life of a child slave and his or her prospective earnings were worth the gamble to many. Although it would be a while before labour output would reach its maximum potential, children did put in their labour from a very early age onwards.<sup>141</sup> Raising children as slaves was economically rational.

### *Inheritance*

Relocating slaves or acquiring slaves through an inheritance, finally, should probably not be considered as a conscious policy, even if we allow for the possibility that a few master-minds or inheritance hunters did make plans for when their rich aunt, or they themselves, passed away.<sup>142</sup> Although not technically the result of economic strategizing, this way of acquiring slaves may well have been quite common in a high mortality regime.<sup>143</sup> With the passing of an aristocrat, the number of slaves to be relocated could be substantial. It is unlikely that this posed much of a problem: a son or daughter already made use of that very slave *familia* living in the same *domus*, and if that did not work out slaves could be freed or sold if they were unwelcome in the household – with all due considerations of the factors already discussed under the heading of buying and selling above.

Alternatively, testamentary manumission could provide the heir with a freedman, rather than a slave. From the perspective of the deceased master, this had the benefit of not missing out on the slave's services during his lifetime. Making up a will required a delicate balance between benefiting the heir on the one hand and the (ex-)slave on the other, which is why testamentary manumission often specified certain obligations of the freedman to the heir, sometimes including economic contributions such as *operae*.<sup>144</sup> The *lex Fufia Caninia* of 2 BC specified a maximum for the number or percentage of slaves that could be manumitted by will, which could conceivably also be understood as a contribution to help maintain the balance. It should be recalled also that the patron often was heir to a substantial part of a freedman's property, particularly when the

140 Parkin (2013) 46–50 is a recent, sophisticated account of the available models and numbers, and forms the reference for the numbers in this paragraph.

141 *Dig.* 7.7.6.1 (Ulpian) notes that slaves counted as productive from age 5 onwards; cf Laes (2011a) 165 for this and other references to the value of slave child labour.

142 Or those wanting to win imperial favour, Penner (2012) 128.

143 Penner (2012) 125–130 offers a very interesting analysis tracing the origins/circulation of inherited slaves in the Julio–Claudian *domus* through *agnomina*; cf Mouritsen (2013) 60 with n. 53.

144 Because of this delicate balancing-act, Mouritsen (2011a) 180–5, esp. 182 argues that testamentary manumission was probably fairly limited.

freedman had no (freeborn) children.<sup>145</sup> Moreover, since there is sufficient evidence for the continued bonds between patrons and freedmen – in nonelite and elite families alike – it can safely be said that inheriting a freedmen was in many ways as desirable as inheriting a slave.

That on occasion an inheritance of slaves and freedmen did result in economic strategizing, and that there were economic advantages involved, is suggested by Appian. One of the strategizing masterminds who was not certain of his inheritance of freedmen, because he was not a biological son of the deceased he was to inherit from, was Octavian Augustus. In an interesting passage Appian suggests why Octavian would have wanted the people confirm his adoption by Caesar in accordance with the *lex curiata*:<sup>146</sup>

**Appian. BC. 3.13 (94)**

Γαῖω δ' ἦν τά τε ἄλλα λαμπρὰ καὶ ἐξελεύθεροι πολλοὶ τε καὶ πλούσιοι, καὶ διὰ τὸ δ' ἴσως μάλιστα ὁ Καῖσαρ ἐπὶ τῇ προτέρᾳ θέσει, κατὰ διαθήκας οἱ γενομένη, καὶ τῆσδε ἐδεήθη.

Among the other splendid accessories of Caesar was a large number of freedmen, many of them rich, and this was perhaps the principal reason why Octavian wanted the adoption by a vote of the people in addition to the former adoption which came to him by Caesar's will.

Octavian wanted to be absolutely certain that his (testamentary) adoption by Caesar was publicly accepted, because – so Appian – he wanted to profit from the large and, so it is poignantly added, wealthy freed entourage of Caesar. Even though political legitimacy was obviously the most important factor in the reconfirmation of Octavian's adoption, it is striking that Appian singles out this very point.

In sum, it is clear that the decision to acquire new slaves or to sell them was based on economic as well as cultural considerations. The same is true for manumission, which has been the subject of incessant debate among historians and which because of the complexity of the matter deserves to be dealt with in a separate section.

145 Mouritsen (2011a) 238: "Freedmen were expected to consider their patrons in their wills, and if they failed to do so and died without direct natural heirs, the patron could claim half the estate (from Augustus onwards)". The converse – freedmen as heirs to their patron – was not uncommon either, see idem 240-2 and chapter 3 above.

146 Appian. BC 3. 13 (94); transl. H. White (1913 Loeb Classical Library).

## Changing slaves to freedmen: Manumission

Why did Roman masters free so many slaves? At first sight, it seems amazing. Slaves cost money. Skilled or talented slaves apparently stood the best chance of securing their freedom, and they cost a lot of money.<sup>147</sup>

Hopkins sought to explain the economic rationality behind manumission and came up with an answer that was as elegant as it was plausible: slaves generally bought their own freedom, which allowed the owner to buy a replacement.<sup>148</sup> This view has only limited support in the evidence, however. Mouritsen in a recent discussion of the topic has to conclude that in the end, there is no simple economic explanation.<sup>149</sup> This sums up the difficulty in understanding the economics of manumission in twenty-first century terms: manumission does not appear to adhere to any economic rule. Even if the motivations for freeing slaves were not, or not entirely, economically rational, however, freedmanship certainly was an important factor in the way the labour market functioned.

Freedom is considered to be the ultimate reward for slaves. In terms of economics, manumission becomes a positive incentive for slaves, particularly, or so it was argued, for those in “care-intensive” jobs: occupations that required initiative and responsibility from the slave, and that were difficult to supervise.<sup>150</sup> A reward system built around the prospect of freedom can only have functioned if manumission was not granted indiscriminately, which means that slaves working in these positions either stood a better chance to be freed than others, and/or that they were freed at an earlier age. The evidence, however, is not systematic enough to be able to support either of these scenarios. There are a few attestations of very young freedmen: Lucius Anicius Felix for example, a fine tailor (*vestiarius tenuarius*) of only four years old, was freed – though this was probably a case of death-bed manumission. There is also evidence to the contrary. Seventy-year old Oriens, a tailor (*sarcinator*) from Tarentum, judging from his single name, was probably still a slave.<sup>151</sup>

The fragmentary nature of the ancient evidence, and the biases that it entails, do not allow modern scholars to establish the frequency of manumission with any certainty. With

147 Hopkins (1978) 117.

148 Hopkins (1978) 126–131.

149 Mouritsen (2011a) 202: “The Roman system of manumission gave owners considerable scope for rewarding slaves irrespective of their age, gender, and occupation. The result is a picture that does not conform to any narrow economic logic”.

150 Scheidel (2008) with reference to the work of Fenoaltea (1984); Hawkins (forthcoming). Frequent manumission is also crucial to Temin’s understanding of an integrated labour market, Temin (2004a) 522.

151 *CIL* 6. 6852 (Felix) and *AE* 1972, 111 (Oriens).

Mouritsen I hold that manumission was probably “both very common and very selective”.<sup>152</sup> Manumission was not for everyone.<sup>153</sup> It remains to be seen whether manumission was frequent enough to be a strong incentive for self-sale.<sup>154</sup> There does not appear to be a clear pattern as to which slaves were freed and which were not.<sup>155</sup> One of the more convincing selection-criteria, however, appears to have been the opportunity to stand out in the eyes of the master – which provided an advantage for slaves in the domestic context of large urban families in comparison with those working on a rural estate.<sup>156</sup> That particular criterion leveled the chances of manumission, which could potentially have functioned as an added labour incentive: “all had a chance and no one was formally beyond hope”.<sup>157</sup>

Mouritsen recently postulated that manumission of the domestic staff of the Volusii and Statilii was granted on the assumption that the new freedman did not leave the household. By implication, as the author points out, manumission became a nominal gesture of very little practical consequence to the slaves, which would take away much of its economic function as a positive labour incentive.<sup>158</sup> The household *columbaria* of the Volusii and the Statilii show a freed population of 32 per cent and 46 per cent respectively, suggesting that “between a quarter and a third of the household may have been freed at any time”. This matches with an overall manumission rate of more than 50 per cent for slaves over the age of 30. Considering the limited practical effect of manumission if freed slaves did indeed maintain their own jobs in the household, Mouritsen suggests that the chances of manumission for the Volusian and Statilian slave staff may well have been better than for others.<sup>159</sup>

From an elite owner’s perspective, manumission as a strategy to battle the risks of a fluctuating market or to create a flexible work-force is unlikely to have played a part (see

152 Mouritsen (2011a) 140. Mouritsen provides a useful survey of past scholarship on the frequency of manumission on pp. 120–141. On p. 131 he complains that: “Given the state of our evidence, most scholars have remained cautious about the rate of manumission, merely suggesting that many slaves had a ‘good chance’, *vel sim.*”.

153 Interestingly, manumission in Roman Egypt was virtually universal, Tacoma (2006) 257 with reference to the data in Bagnall and Frier (1994).

154 As Silver (2011) 92–3 would have it.

155 Mouritsen (2011a) chapter 5 on manumission, 120–205.

156 E.g. Mouritsen (2013) 59–60.

157 Mouritsen (2011a) 200.

158 Mouritsen (2013) 58–61, at 58: “The high rate of manumission, the commemoration of freedmen alongside other family servants, and the extensive use of *vicarii* all point in that direction”, and at 61: “Manumission was ‘rational’ in the sense that it involved limited losses for the owner, but that does not entail it was therefore part of a logical system of rewards and incentives for slaves performing particularly responsible economic roles”.

159 Mouritsen (2013) 46–7, quote at 53; but see Garnsey and De Ligt (2016) 80 with n. 29 for the implications of Mouritsen’s numbers on general manumission rates.

chapter 3).<sup>160</sup> The manumission tax of 5 per cent is not very likely to have posed an obstacle to a wealthy master, either. In the context of the elite *domus* cultural considerations were equally, if not more, important than strictly monetary concerns. There was social capital in having freedmen. Freedmen brought name recognition, for example, and throngs of dependent freedmen at one's door for the morning *salutatio* can only have been an impressive sight.<sup>161</sup> Even the manumission of a slave on his or her deathbed was perhaps not merely a humanitarian and emotional act, but potentially also an opportunity for "social ostentation".<sup>162</sup> Ancient authors also make a number of (disapproving) references to the idea that slaves sometimes were freed by will, only to ensure a good following in the funerary procession.<sup>163</sup> Whereas we should be careful not to caricaturize this solely as spendthrift of the elite, we may safely concur that "[t]he notion of 'profitable' manumission would have been out of tune with the ideology of the Roman elite".<sup>164</sup>

Finally, there were also slaves who purchased their own freedom, which perhaps modifies any 'pattern' that is visible to modern eyes to some extent, and which was conceivably also the way in which many voluntary slaves may have expected to exit slavery.

## HUMAN CAPITAL

The high degree of specialisation and job differentiation in Roman Italy suggest significant investment in human capital.<sup>165</sup> Scholars have argued that opportunities for job-training were particularly good for slaves, especially so for the slaves in elite households. Indeed, skilled professions are attested chiefly for slaves and for ex-slaves. Skilled slaves and ex-slaves are a logical result of slave education: because human capital is not transferable, skills remain with the slave upon manumission. This is why the supposedly widespread access to education during slavery is considered to be one of the economic advantages of being a freedman.<sup>166</sup> It is also suggested to be one of the reasons that a freeborn pauper should want to sell himself/herself into slavery in the hope of a better

160 With reference to the work of Hawkins (forthcoming), and (2006) in particular.

161 The possibility of Veturius as a brand name was explored above p. 136.

162 Suggested by Mouritsen (2011a) 187, with references to some literary sources of deathbed manumission. Cf the 4 year old tailor L. Anicius Felix, referenced above, and see also below.

163 Mouritsen (2011a) 184 with references n. 295.

164 Mouritsen (2011a) 196. On testamentary manumission: Gai. *Inst.* 1.42-3 specifies that no more than 100 slaves may be freed in one will.

165 See also chapter 3.

166 Treggiari (1969a) 87; Mouritsen (2011a) 219; Verboven (2012a) 94.

life.<sup>167</sup> Peter Temin takes these notions one step further and states that self-sale was “like the process of apprenticeship in early modern Europe”.<sup>168</sup> To my mind, however, that is pushing the argument too far.

The interpretation of job-training as a slave prerogative has given rise to the idea that skilled labour can be equated with slave labour.

The demand for skilled workers was met by the importation of slaves from abroad or the training of slaves bred in the household (*vernae*). *Ingenui* who were not born into a craft had little prospect of acquiring the skills necessary to compete with slaves.<sup>169</sup>

Although Garnsey explicitly mentions the possibility of free artisans who were “born into a craft”, in this quotation he emphasizes the point that skilled labourers were often captives who were already experienced in a trade, or home-born slaves who were taught in the household.<sup>170</sup>

To what extent were schooling and job-training really the prerogative of slaves? Did the freeborn have “little prospect of acquiring skills necessary to compete” with them? Surely the evidence for freeborn artisans, and the representation of freeborn children in apprenticeships in the previous chapter counts for something. Nevertheless, investment in the human capital of slaves deserves close examination in its own right.<sup>171</sup>

Investing in slaves’ education seems to have made economic sense, since skilled slaves apparently were a precious commodity. The produce they were responsible for was worth more, and they would typically command higher prices in the market.<sup>172</sup> Paul refers to a case in which a skilled workman was commissioned by a friend to buy a slave apprentice, who was afterwards sold for double the original price.<sup>173</sup> Likewise, the slave chapter in Diocletian’s *Prices Edict* includes a clause that a skilled slave could be sold for up to twice the standard price for a slave of the same age and gender.<sup>174</sup> According to Plutarch, the

167 cf. Silver (2011); Ramin and Veyne (1981), who believe it to be one of the main sources of slaves. See above.

168 Temin (2004a) 526.

169 Garnsey (1980) 44; cf Mouritsen (2011a) 219 especially n. 63: “There is little evidence that more responsible or specialist functions were filled with hired labour”.

170 Burford (1972); Cf Park (1918) 49, 88-9, who seems to adhere to this scenario also for unskilled labourers.

171 For which the articles by Booth (1979), Forbes (1955), and Mohler (1940) are still relevant.

172 Saller (2013) 78; Mouritsen (2011a) 219: “The slaves’ status as property meant their value could be improved”.

173 *Dig.* 17.1.26.8.

174 *Edict* 29.8, see above; cf *Col. RR.* 3.3.8 (1<sup>st</sup> c. AD), estimating the price of a skilled vine dresser at 6,000–8,000 sesterces, roughly three or four times the price of an adult slave.

elder Cato allowed his slaves to buy slaves and train them for a year, with the specific goal of selling them at a profit.<sup>175</sup> Conversely, Crassus personally invested heavily in the education of his slaves and benefited from their labour himself, again going by Plutarch's account.<sup>176</sup> Moreover, it is unlikely that elite *domus* were capable of replacing all of their skilled personnel with a home-taught individual. Death, illness and various other factors that necessitated replacement could not always have been planned for so there was no way to ensure that a replacement was at the ready.<sup>177</sup> Hence, there must have been quite a market for skilled labour – which, in many instances, meant a market for skilled slaves.

### Household schools and household schooling

The argument for the training of slaves in larger *domus* comes mainly from various references to the so-called *paedagogium*.<sup>178</sup> A *paedagogium* seems to have been an in-house school for slave boys that was part of some larger households. It is best described as a 'page-school', something Columella refers to as "training-schools for the most contemptible vices – the seasoning of food to promote gluttony and the more extravagant serving of courses".<sup>179</sup> These boys were pretty and well-dressed 'pet' slaves, home-born *vernae* in particular.

The evidence on these page-schools is not so straightforward, however. A reference to the *paedagogium* in the *Letters* of Pliny the Younger is exemplary in the lack of information it provides:

#### Plin. Ep. 7.27.13

Puer in paedagogio mixtus pluribus dormiebat: venerunt per fenestras (ita nar-  
rat) in tunicis albis duo cubantemque detonderunt, et qua venerunt recesserunt.  
Hunc quoque tonsum sparsosque circa capillos dies ostendit.

A boy slept in the *paedagogium*, in among many others: two figures in white tunics came through the windows (so he says) and shaved the sleeping boy, and went back the way they came. The day shows this boy bald and amidst scattered locks of hair.<sup>180</sup>

175 Plut. *Cato* 21,7.

176 Plut. *Crass.* 2.4-6; cf Saller (2013) 78: "Plutarch's phrase *organa empsucha* might be translated, with some license, as 'human capital'".

177 Mouritsen (2013) 58, 60, quoted above.

178 Mohler (1940); Forbes (1955); Keegan (2013) 73-5.

179 Forbes (1955) 335; Columella 1 praef. 5; *contemptissimorum vitiorum officinae, gulosius condiendi cibos et luxuriosius fericula struendi*, translation Ash, Loeb Classical Library.

180 Plin. *Ep.* 7.27.13; I translated *ostendit* as a *praesens historicum*, in accordance with the analysis of the narrative modes in Pliny 7.27 by Kroon (2002). See her p. 196 for the probability of reading *ostendit* as historical present rather than perfect.

We are informed that many boys slept over in the *paedagogium*, which is why Mohler takes it to be a kind of boarding school.<sup>181</sup> Unfortunately Pliny offers no further details as to what goes on in the *paedagogia*.

The remains of two archaeological structures in Rome have been nominated as a possible locus for the imperial *paedagogium*, one on the Caelian, one on the Palatine hill. In an analysis of graffiti from the Palatine *paedagogium*, Peter Keegan attempts to demonstrate that slave boys were educated in reading and writing.<sup>182</sup> It is the only evidence that suggests that the *paedagogium* is “where urban slave children were taught the elements of letters and numbers, as well as the finer arts of elegant domestic service”.<sup>183</sup> Keegan’s tentative suggestion is that the *paedagogiani* may even have had the opportunity to learn a job,<sup>184</sup> because a *custos*, *ianitor* (both doorkeepers), *opifer* (helper),<sup>185</sup> and a *perfusor* (bath-servant)<sup>186</sup> are identified in the scribbles. Whereas I am willing to accept that some or even most boys obtained a very basic literacy, I do not think that this necessarily happened in the *paedagogium* (see below). Moreover, the occupations mentioned are few and unskilled, and so I remain unconvinced that any systematic job-training took place in the *paedagogium*. Having said that, Keegan is of course right in his more general observation that the boys were prepared for “personal service at close quarters to the emperor, his family, and the imperial retinue of aristocratic and equestrian retainers.”<sup>187</sup> In my opinion, the remainder of Keegan’s article reads mostly like a strong confirmation of Columella’s prejudices towards the *paedagogium* as a “training school for the most contemptible vices”.

The foregoing discussion raises the question of how widespread and how influential the *paedagogium* as an educational institution really was. If this was indeed “antiquity’s most systematic and durable plan for educating slave children”,<sup>188</sup> Roman plans for slave education in general do not appear to have been systematic or durable. Students from

181 Mohler (1940) 270.

182 Keegan (2013) 75-8. Keegan brings out the “educational heterogeneity” of the graffiti – about 10 per cent exhibits “a certain grade of instruction corresponding suggestively to the use of the building as a *paedagogium*” (76). This educational heterogeneity is then interpreted as a reflection of “the process of learning to write”.

183 Saller (2013) 78; The assumption that language and arithmetic were also taught in the *paedagogium* is widespread: Mohler (1940) and Forbes (1955).

184 Keegan (2013) 79-81.

185 Keegan (2013) 81 thinks this is a slave who provided medical aid, which would make it a highly skilled job. In n. 40 he admits that literally the word means aid-bringer. I should like to add it also means ‘helper’, which may be no more than a generic term for a trusted slave. I know of no other attestation of *opifer* as a job-title.

186 A slave who pours water over bathers.

187 Keegan (2013) 81.

188 Forbes (1955) 336.

the *paedagogium* are attested almost exclusively for the imperial household.<sup>189</sup> The archaeological evidence is for the imperial *paedagogia*, and it should be underlined that the identification of these structures as a *paedagogium* is less than secure.

Many of the elite households included a so-called *paedagogus* (male or female), and it is of course tempting to connect *paedagogi* as teachers to a *paedagogium* – in the sense of school. There is, however, no indication for *paedagogi* in a *paedagogium*, or for a *paedagogium* in the households where a *paedagogus/-a* is attested. Moreover, the occupation of *paedagogus* is not so easy to define.

Apuleius records a *paedagogus* “in the classic role of escorting a boy to and from school”.<sup>190</sup> Lucius the Ass recalls the story of the wife of a town-councillor – a mother of two, an older stepson, and her own boy (of whom it is said that he is over 12 years old). She tries to seduce her stepson and – when the young man does not give in – plans to poison him with the help of her slave.

#### **Apul. Met. 10.5.1–4**

Ac dum de oblationis opportunitate secum noxii deliberant homines, forte fortuna puer ille iunior, proprius pessimae feminae filius, post matutinum laborem studiorum domum se recipiens, prandio iam capto sitiens repertum vini poculum, in quo venenum latebat inclusum, nescius fraudis occultae continuo perduxit haustu. Atque ubi fratri suo paratam mortem ebibit, examinis terrae procumbit, ilicoque repentina pueri pernicie paedagogus commotus ululabili clamore matrem totamque ciet familiam.

But while those two were conferring as to when to offer him the wine, fate chanced to intervene. The younger boy, the stepmother’s own son, came home from morning school for his lunch, and feeling thirsty found the wine, already imbued with poison. Ignorant of the danger lurking there, he drank it in one great gulp, and swallowing the venom destined for his brother fell lifeless to the ground. His servant, terrified at this sudden collapse, raised a cry of horror that brought the mother running along with the whole household.<sup>191</sup>

The story ends well: the boy survives and the stepmother and her slave are punished (*Met.* 10.11-12). For our purposes we may focus on the fact that the younger son, not ac-

189 Keegan (2013) 73-5.

190 Bradley (2012) 85, talking about Ap. *Met.* 10.5.1-4. The reference in Bradley is erroneous (he writes 10.4.5).

191 Translation A.S. Kline, poetryintranslation.com.

tually that young anymore, apparently was accompanied to school by his *paedagogus*,<sup>192</sup> which surely means that the *paedagogus* was not the boy's teacher. Indeed the frequent occurrence of *paedagogi* in the epigraphs suggests that they were the more common child minders. The same story does contain an earlier mention of the elder brother's 'old teacher' (*educator senex*, *Met.* 10.5.4), however, which indicates that this family had access to a teacher, who may or may not have lived in with them. The linguistic connection between *paedagogium* and *paedagogi* is thus misleading.

Attending to children is, in fact, one of the most common professions attested overall for men and, particularly, for women. The household of the Statilii included five *paedagogi*, the household of the Volusii employed three – plus an additional four nurses, and two *grammatici*.<sup>193</sup> Thamyris, slave footservant of Livia, "gives an urn" (*dat ollam*) to his *magister* Cnismus.<sup>194</sup> Although the exact functions of the various child-minders are not always clear, their considerable presence in the aristocratic *domus* demonstrates that the resources for in-house schooling were present. Child-minders themselves proudly advertise that they looked after the elite children – although the epigraphic evidence suggests that both the children of their elite owners and home-born slave boys and girls were left in their care.<sup>195</sup> A single name for pedagogue and charge, for example, suggests servile status for both, as in *CIL* 6.9748 and *CIL* 6. 33894.

#### **CIL 6. 9748**

Hilario / paed(agogo) / Celeris

To Hilarius, pedagogue of Celer.

192 A reference to escorting a slave girl is, e.g., in Terence's *Phormio*: a young man called Phaedria falls in love with a slave girl he cannot have and can therefore only follow her around, v. 86: *in ludum ducere et reducere*; later one of the characters jokingly refers back to this when asking about Phaedria: "What of the pedagogue of that lute-girl?" (*quid paedagogus ille qui citharistram...?*, v. 144).

193 Hasegawa (2005) 36 table 3.4 lists child minders for the households of the Statilii, Volusii, Livia, and Iunii. In this context it is perhaps interesting to note that Mouritsen (2013) considers the Volusian tomb to be the most complete, and therefore the most representative, *columbarium*.

194 *CIL* 6. 4006.

195 Bradley (1991) 37–75 on (male) child attendants of slave children as well as aristocratic children, with appendix of inscriptions from Rome.

**CIL 6. 33894**

D(is) M(anibus) / Rufi qui / vixit an(nos) XIIII / m(enses) VII d(ies) X / Nicepiorus /  
paedag(ogus) b(ene) m(erenti) f(ecit)

To the divine spirits. (Grave of) Rufus. He lived 18 years, 7 months and 10 days.  
Nicepiorus his pedagogue set this up for him. He deserved it.

This scattered evidence appears to support the assumption that young urban slaves – both male and female – may have been taught the basics of reading, writing, and perhaps arithmetic.<sup>196</sup> Their primary education need not have taken place within a *paedagogium* or even within the household: Booth adduces literary evidence that makes it plausible that slaves also attended the ordinary street schools of the *ludi magister* alongside free-born boys and girls.<sup>197</sup> Schooling could be expensive, but it was probably well within the means of the elite: Diocletian's *Price Edict* lists a price of 75 denarii per pupil per month for a *grammaticus*. At a daily wage of 25 denarii a day for unskilled and 50 for skilled work, the investment would soon pay itself back.

A basic education therefore appears to have been regularly available to slaves; but even though it is clear that there were virtually no practical obstacles, it is impossible to say how many actually received such an education.

**Arts and crafts**

It is clear from the evidence that some slaves were skilled beyond a basic education, and were trained in the arts or crafts. From the perspective of the wealthy owner, one option was of course simply to buy skilled slaves on the market – this has already been discussed. All specialised slave artisans nevertheless must have learnt their trade in one of two ways: through learning by doing in the household itself, or through an apprenticeship. The following sections deal with both options for investing in the education of artisans.

*Learning by doing*

Although there is no direct evidence for learning by doing within the aristocratic household, it can be made plausible.<sup>198</sup> From Cicero's correspondence we know of his friend Atticus' sophisticated copy shop. Nepos addresses what was exceptional in Atticus' business, however, and that had everything to do with his slaves.

196 Most extensively: Mohler (1940).

197 Booth (1979) refers specifically to Martial and Petronius, of which Martial *Epig.* 10. 62 is most convincing; on the *ludi magister* see e.g., Laes and Strubbe (2008) 75.

198 Mouritsen (2011a) 212.

**Nep. Att. 13.3–4**

Usus est familia, si utilitate iudicandum est, optima; si forma, vix mediocri. Namque in ea erant pueri litteratissimi, anagnostae optimi et plurimi librarii, ut ne pedisequus quidem quisquam esset, qui non utrumque horum pulchre facere posset, pari modo artifices ceteri, quos cultus domesticus desiderat, apprime boni. (4) Neque tamen horum quemquam nisi domi natum domique factum habuit; quod est signum non solum continentiae, sed etiam diligentiae.

He kept an establishment of slaves (*familia*) of the best kind, if we were to judge of it by its utility, but if by its external show, scarcely coming up to mediocrity; for there were in it well-taught youths, excellent readers, and numerous transcribers of books, insomuch that there was not even a footman (*pedisequus*) that could not act in either of those capacities extremely well. Other kinds of artificers (*artifices caeteri*), also, such as domestic necessities require, were very good there (4) yet he had no one among them that was not born and instructed (*factum*) in his house; all which particulars are proofs, not only of his self-restraint, but of his attention to his affairs.<sup>199</sup>

The slave *familia* of Atticus is praised in all but its beauty (*forma*). Their excellence is explained as a direct result of the fact that they were born, raised and trained in the household – a token of Atticus' *continentia* and *diligentia*, presented by Nepos as the qualities that set Atticus apart in a positive way. The passage thus underlines the existence of learning by doing in the household, but it also points to the fact that this was not necessarily the standard.

While Nepos' account of Atticus raising and educating his own slaves in his household might be viewed as recording a laudable exception, the epigraphic evidence supports the practice of home-schooling artisans as well. The family of the Statilii, for example, clearly focused on textile production.<sup>200</sup> Their household included, among others, no less than eight wool spinners (all female), five seamstresses, four fullers, and three weavers (m/f).<sup>201</sup> This can plausibly be read as relatively direct evidence of learning by doing within the elite household. Epigraphic evidence from the *columbaria* is scanty, but the following inscription from the *monumentum Liviae* is suggestive:

199 Translation Rev. J.S. Watson (1853).

200 On the Statilii and cloth production, Hasegawa (2005) 39–44.

201 Most likely to be contemporaneous: the inscriptions are all dated between 20–97 AD, Buonocore (1984) 44.

**CIL 6. 6376 = ILS 7416a**

Antiocho / magistro / unctores

The masseurs (set up this monument) for their instructor Antiochus

It is not difficult to come up with reasons why a family of aristocrats, or a family of entrepreneurs, should have wanted to train their slaves within the *domus*. The students would soon be able to contribute substantially to the working process, even during the learning process when they had not fully mastered the trade. Their continuous labour contribution would therefore limit the cost of forgone earnings during the time of education, making this type of on the job training a more profitable – or at least less costly – way to invest in human capital.

Occupational inscriptions offer additional evidence for learning by doing, or at least evidence for the education of slaves in the household and of the wide-ranging effects of the *domus* economy. Every job-title for a freedman is an indication of his or her job-training as a slave. The ties between patrons and freedmen were never completely severed. The overwhelming numbers adduced in this chapter above indicate that many freedmen used to be part of a larger aristocratic household when enslaved.

The continued economic bonds between patron and freedman are unambiguously recorded in an inscription as often as they can be postulated. When fellow freedmen are explicitly ascribed the same occupation, surely the assumption that it reflects learning on the job in the household of one's master is not too far-fetched.<sup>202</sup> Small groups of three or more *colliberti* commemorated together are a recurrent phenomenon in the occupational inscriptions.<sup>203</sup> The freedmen of the Veturii who worked in the business of purple-dying together were already mentioned in the previous chapter.<sup>204</sup> Similarly, fellow freedmen who were also co-workers, are attested for the profession of *thurarius* (incense dealer, *CIL* 6. 9934), *gemmarius* (jeweller, *CIL* 6. 9435), *ferrarius* (ironsmith, *CIL* 6. 9398), *aerarius vascularius* (tableware bronze maker, *CIL* 6. 9138), and that of *vestiarius tenuarius* (fine tailor, *CIL* 6. 37826) – and these are just attestations from *CIL* volume 6. The additional example of the tailors in *CIL* 6. 33920 deserves a closer look.<sup>205</sup>

202 The example of *CIL* 6. 9215 discussed in chapter 3 is unique in that it designates both freedman and patron (himself a freedman) as axle-makers.

203 Joshel (1992) 128-45 has much to offer on the occupational inscriptions of freedmen artisans and their relations with patron and *colliberti*.

204 N. 299 with reference to Dixon (2001b).

205 Also singled out by Joshel (1992) 131-3.

**CIL 6. 33920**

P(ublio) Avillio P(ubli) I(iberto) Menandro patrono / post mortem liberti fecerunt et / sibi {i}<et> qui infra scripti sunt / Avillia P(ubli) I(iberta) Philusa / P(ublius) Avillius P(ubli) I(ibertus) Hilarus / P(ublius) Avillius P(ubli) I(ibertus) Anteros / P(ublius) Avillius P(ubli) I(ibertus) Felix / vest{e}<i>[a]ri(i) de Cermalu minusculo a [3] / sobe[

To Publius Avilius Menander, freedman of Publius, patron. His freedmen set this up after his death, also for themselves, [c.q.] those who are recorded below.

Avilia Philusa, freedwoman of Publius; Publius Avilius Hilarus, freedman of Publius; Publius Avilius Anteros, freedman of Publius; Publius Avilius Felix, freedman of Publius. Tailors from the smaller Germalus ...

It should be noted that the patron mentioned in this inscription, Menander, was a freedman himself. The other four – three men and a woman – commemorate him in death, while referring to their current workplace on the Germalus.<sup>206</sup> This epitaph is evidence for the continued bonds between patron and freedmen on a somewhat larger scale than the examples in chapter 3. There can be no doubt that all of these freedmen gained their skills in slavery; we may infer that P. Avilius Menander set up his own independent workshop sometime after manumission, or that he became independent upon the death of his master. He continued the business with his own slaves, whom he subsequently freed. Even if Menander's master were still alive, there was no law to prevent competition between freedmen and their former masters: indeed, in this context the law protects freedmen's interests.<sup>207</sup> Alternatively, Menander could have continued to work for, or with, his former master after manumission, in which case this example would reflect cooperation and continuation of the family business rather than competition.

A different category of inscriptions records *liberti* – a husband and wife – with distinct job-titles. Identical *nomina* suggests they came from the same *familia*; some carry different *nomina*, which illustrates a shared servile history but not in the same household. In most instances couples remained within the shared elite household of origin, as the example of Maritimus and Quintia shows – CIL 6. 33794 quoted above. Others set up their own household, or at least their own epitaph. The fact that husband and wife had distinct occupations was explained in chapter 3 by the fact that both had already learnt

206 The Germalus refers to a part of the Palatine hill.

207 Verboven (2012a) 96; Mouritsen (2011a) 212 n 28.

a trade as slaves in their master's household.<sup>208</sup> This type of epitaph therefore also presents indirect evidence of the *domus* economy.

### *Apprenticeships*

Members of the slave *familia* in a wealthy household could also be apprenticed out rather than home-schooled, just like the slaves from a nonelite family. 12 out of 50 apprenticeship contracts from Roman Egypt were concluded for slave children.<sup>209</sup> The numbers are too small to base strong arguments on, and it should be noted that slavery in Roman Egypt may have been of a different nature than slavery in the cities of Roman Italy: in Egypt slaves only made up 5–10 per cent of the urbanized population, and they are likely to have been mostly household slaves.<sup>210</sup> Seen in that light, 12 slaves out of 50 artisan apprentices is perhaps more than expected.

Within these 10 documents for slave children, there is no apparent discrimination regarding the gender of the child. Their equal representation in apprenticeship contracts notably sets slave girls apart from their freeborn counterparts. It is also remarkable that the documents for slave children are more consistent in terms of the investment than those for freeborn children: slave apprentices generally are paid for their work, save for those in the luxury trades. As a result, the direct and indirect costs of investment in human capital through apprenticeship were mitigated somewhat.

The cost of apprenticing out many slaves could add up, but even so monetary considerations were, or so it must be presumed, less of a problem from the perspective of a wealthy owner than it was for the nonelite. Therefore, the decision must have rested on more practical considerations. If a household essentially was a textile production unit in itself, it would make no sense to apprentice out another weaver when it was so easily taught at home. More importantly, the point of having a slave entourage in the city for the elite was that the slaves would be conspicuously present in the *domus*, in large numbers and at all times. It was also the most pragmatic way to have slaves multi-tasking and/or working after hours, both of which appears to have been normal procedure. Whatever the reasons, most lines of reasoning suggest that learning on the job within the aristocratic household production unit apparently took precedence over apprenticeships. I would go so far as to tentatively suggest that the slave apprentices we know of conceivably originated from nonelite households – though this cannot be more than a suggestion.

Despite the limited quantity of the surviving sources, it seems possible to conclude that elite slave-owners were prone to invest in slaves who showed potential. In-house

208 The category is also discussed under the heading of 'independent women' in chapter 3.

209 See appendix 2.

210 Scheidel (2011a) 289–90.

schools, on-the-job training and even apprenticeships were all very real options. The direct cost of investing in schooling appear to have been relatively modest, tempered by in-house schooling or job-training, so all it took was time and effort; a slave apprentice was regularly – if not always – paid for his or her efforts. Both constructions helped to mitigate the indirect cost of forgone earnings.

In the long run, an educated slave brought many advantages. Education or job-training will have exponentially increased the slave's lifetime earnings. Contrary to the freeborn, slaves could not run away with their human capital.<sup>211</sup> Even the human capital of those slaves who were freed, remained available to their former owners through various forms of dependence. Saller argues that the elite households were in need of trustworthy managers and overseers in particular: "The large *domus* (households) were the largest private productive units in the early empire, requiring coordination, monitoring and record-keeping".<sup>212</sup> This, according to Saller, will have encouraged them to educate their own future administrators, to make sure that these key positions were filled by individuals that could be trusted because of their strong link with the household.<sup>213</sup> If it were merely a matter of training sufficient numbers of managers and overseers, however, as Saller seems to imply, the education of slaves in the elite *domus* arguably would not have left such a clear record. Quite apart from such considerations of reliability, economic opportunism was probably also an important incentive: this chapter pointed out that in the market a skilled slave brought in twice the wages, or twice the price, of an unskilled slave. And there certainly was a market for skilled slaves because, as we have seen, the need for a replacement often arose unexpectedly.

To sum up, household slaves were in a good position to receive a basic education and/or some form of job-training. That means that in terms of skilled work, the freeborn workforce faced some serious competition from the servile population.

## THE EVIDENCE FROM COLUMBARIUM TOMBS

In terms of the occupational inscriptions that form the main dataset used in this study, the larger household is reflected specifically in the epigraphic material from elite *columbaria*. "[C]olumbaria are closed, collective funerary monuments that deposit cremation

211 Saller (2013) 78.

212 Saller (2013) 78.

213 Silver suggests that it was also an incentive for the freeborn to sell themselves into slavery, in order to be eligible for the job, Silver (2011) 89-92, 95. Saller seems to think of home-born slaves in this context, however, which negates that correlation.

ashes in urns and niches on their interior walls'.<sup>214</sup> 'Elite columbaria' more specifically refers to subterranean columbaria only. Columbarium tombs built aboveground form a more diverse tomb type of a later date. Aboveground columbarium tombs were geographically more widespread than the subterranean ones, but the aboveground monuments that I happen to know of as a rule were considerably smaller, raising the suspicion that they were perhaps also rather less likely to concern elite households.<sup>215</sup>

The construction of subterranean *columbaria* was a relatively short-lived phenomenon of the first century AD. Many of the tomb-chambers were used for only a generation or two, which adds to a coherent picture of the tomb population; some tomb populations are more difficult to analyse in their entirety, however, because the *columbarium* remained in use until the second and third centuries. It is also significant that the existence of columbarium tombs was restricted mainly to the capital and its environs.<sup>216</sup> This points to urban elite households as part of the specific nature of the labour market in the city of Rome, which should not come as a surprise: the elite may have clustered in towns more generally, but for the wealthiest senators, there was no place like Rome – so that is where their slave *familiae* resided, and were buried.<sup>217</sup>

It is a fortunate characteristic of the columbarium tomb type that many of the deceased who found their final resting place in them received individual commemoration in an epitaph.<sup>218</sup> The inscriptions reveal that these monuments contained the remains chiefly of slaves and ex-slaves from elite households.<sup>219</sup> That is why this material offers an excellent opportunity to study the composition of aristocratic *domus*.

### Epigraphic evidence for elite *domus* from the *columbaria*

Columbarium tomb inscriptions in Joshel's sample make up 21.4 per cent of the occupational inscriptions from the city of Rome (including slave, freed, and free).<sup>220</sup> Because the

214 Borbonus (2014) 20. Borbonus provides the most recent and extensive study of subterranean *columbaria* to date. Much of the general information that follows was taken from (or corroborated by) his work. Borbonus on p. 18 points out that strictly speaking, *columbarium* refers to one niche only. Technically the tomb should therefore be called '*columbarium* tomb' or '*columbarium* monument', and this I will do. However, *columbarium* has become accepted usage and will be applied here as well. Cf Bodel (2008) 195-6.

215 To my knowledge there is no comprehensive study of this type of tomb, let alone its epigraphic heritage.

216 Borbonus (2014) 146 ff for scarce attestations of *columbaria* outside of Rome; they do not quite match the definition provided.

217 Rens Tacoma pointed out that there is also the practical matter of tufa, that allowed the building of *columbaria* in the vicinity of Rome.

218 Cf. Borbonus (2014) 106–9.

219 Borbonus (2014) 1.

220 Joshel (1992) 73.

*columbaria* are exclusive to Rome, that percentage is lower for Roman Italy as a whole. It is likely that the *columbaria* we know of do not encompass all (occupational) inscriptions that originate from an elite household. Ex-slaves in particular, but also slaves may have been buried outside the household columbarium, as the following epitaph seems to illustrate.<sup>221</sup>

### **CIL 6. 9775**

Doris Statiliae Mino[ris] / pediseq(ua) / Erotis ad i{m}[n]pediment[a] / vixit an(nos)  
XXIII

For Doris, foot servant of Statilia the Younger, (companion) of Eros, caretaker of baggage. She lived 24 years.

Even if it was not actually found *in* the Statilian tomb, there is no doubt in my mind about the affiliations of Doris and Eros. And if the text itself were not clear enough, the editors of *CIL* add that the inscription also appears to have been found near the monument of the Statilii. But not all of the epitaphs for household members buried outside of the *columbarium* can be identified as such as easily as this.

There must also have been several other *domus* of a considerable size that were somewhat less extravagant than the ones we know of. The unique text of *CIL* 14. 5306 from Ostia is interesting in this respect.

### **CIL 14. 5306**

Agathemeris Manliae ser(va) / [Ac]hulea Fabiae ser(va) ornatrix / [C]aletuche  
Vergiliae ser(va) ornatrix / Hilara Licinia[er(va) orn]atrix / Crheste(!) Corn[el]iae  
ser(va) ornatrix / Hilara Seiae ser(va) ornatrix / Moscis ornatrix / Rufa Apeiliae  
ser(va) ornatrix / Chila ornatrix

This is a lead tablet with a list of nine hairdressers, whose single, Greek names indicate slave status. Although the document is obscure in many other respects, the list suggests

221 Penner (2013) 27 notes that “of all Livia’s slaves and freed slaves attested in the inscriptional evidence, slightly more than half come from the Monumentum Liviae, while the remainder were found elsewhere...”.

to me that all of these women served aristocratic women.<sup>222</sup> For seven of nine *ornatrices* an aristocratic owner is mentioned; only for Moscis and Rufa no mistress is recorded.

It is clear that many inscriptions of slaves connected to elite households were also found outside the *columbaria*. Therefore, inscriptions connected to elite households are likely to have made up a larger percentage of the occupational inscriptions from the city of Rome than the 21.4 per cent mentioned above. Indeed, Joshel connects 31.6 per cent of all occupational inscriptions from Rome to a private context.<sup>223</sup> Although Joshel's definition of 'a private context' is nowhere made explicit, the pattern in the occupational inscriptions is clear and can be supported even if we just take into account the more secure evidence of the *columbaria*-inscriptions. It must be concluded that many Romans were employed in the service of wealthy elite *domus* – particularly, but not exclusively, slaves. These findings match up well with the more general pattern outlined above connecting urban slavery with elite households.

A word of caution is in order, however. The epitaphs from elite household columbarium tombs from the city of Rome represent a change in epigraphic habit, a localized "early peak of epigraphic output", that was established because the particular form of a columbarium tomb meant that virtually every tomb occupant received an inscription.<sup>224</sup> That peak of epigraphic output and the additional fact that the *columbaria* have been relatively well preserved, is reflected in the data. In other words: columbarium tombs, and therefore elite households, are overrepresented in the epigraphic data. Moreover, it was apparently more common to record professions in *columbaria* inscriptions than in other epitaphs, increasing the prominence of elite staff labourers among the

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222 The lead indicates that it is a curse tablet, also noted by Meiggs (1960) 226 n. 1; in my view this makes Treggiari's suggestion that the inscription is evidence of a school for hairdressers highly unlikely, Treggiari (1979) n. 47. The inclusion of Agathemeris in this list indicates to me that she was a hairdresser, too, even if this is not stated explicitly.

223 Joshel (1992) 74.

224 Borbonus (2014) 108. Borbonus mentions one columbarium near the Sepulcrum Scipionum (his cat.nr. 1) where this niche-by-niche identification was planned (there are painted tabula ansata under the niches) but this was not executed (they are not filled in); similarly, I noticed that in the smaller columbarium 'of Pomponius Hylas' (nearby) the burials are more numerous than the individuals identified in inscriptions, with coffins under the floor, loose urns added, and so on. The general 'early peak in epigraphic habit' is nevertheless not in doubt.

occupational inscriptions.<sup>225</sup> In the monument of the Statilii, for example, no less than 28 per cent of all individuals recorded an occupation. For all *columbaria* combined the percentage is much lower, but still significant at 15.9 per cent.<sup>226</sup> In contrast, it may be recalled that profession was generally recorded in less than 5 per cent of inscriptions. The question of how representative the numbers are, is ultimately insoluble.

### *Single family tombs*

If the *columbaria* reflect elite households, the assumption that they were set up by aristocratic heads of family follows naturally: they were viewed as monuments *libertis libertabusque*, so to speak. Contrary to earlier and still influential interpretations along these lines, it has now convincingly been argued that the tombs were most likely set up, or at least organized, by household associations (*collegia*).<sup>227</sup> Emphasis on the agency of *collegia* does not preclude the possibility of (financial) support from an elite patron, just like the earlier interpretations left room for the practical responsibilities of the associations, but I embrace the shift in perspective.<sup>228</sup> That the initiative rested with a burial association rather than with the wealthy patrons would explain why the aristocratic family itself was not included in the tombs, why the monuments were of a relatively modest nature and, most significantly, why the tombs cannot always be connected to a single elite family, but regularly include slaves and freedmen of several elite masters in one chamber.<sup>229</sup>

The best means of identifying the household(s) represented in a columbarium is the nomenclature of the deceased. Dorian Borbonus devised a cluster index (“C”) of *nomina* for all *columbaria* to analyse this aspect: in the columbarium ‘of the Statilii’ for example, one would expect to find a clustering of the *nomen* ‘Statilius’. By measuring the cluster-

225 The various households have been said to demonstrate different preferences for what was recorded on the epitaphs, and so occupation may not be as prominent in every tomb: Treggiari’s observation that “fashions vary from *columbarium* to *columbarium*: job data are prominent in the Statilian tomb and family data in the Volusian. There was little room for both on the standard plaque”, (1976) 98, is corroborated by Penner (2012). Whereas there may well have been such a thing as *columbarium*-fashions, the mention of occupation was relatively prominent in most of them; Borbonus (2014) 128 table 9, Penner (2012) 157 figure 10.10, Hasegawa (2005) 32.

226 Hasegawa (2005) 4, 32 table 3.1 for 28 per cent of the individuals in the *columbarium* of the Statilii; cf Borbonus (2014) 128 table 9: 28.8 per cent for the Statilii, 15.9 per cent on average.

227 See now Borbonus (2014) 136 ff; contra Hasegawa (2005), Patterson (1992) 18, and Purcell (1987) all stress the importance of patronage; Note that a (household) association may provide for burial, but that does not necessarily imply the existence of *collegia funeraticia*, see chapter 5.

228 Cf. Treggiari (1975a) 63 with n. 148, who points to the apparent permission of Lucius Noster in some of the Statilian inscriptions, such as *CIL* 6. 7370.

229 Patterson (1992) 18 seems to think that the patron’s natural family was buried in the columbarium tomb, too, but I know of no evidence for this.

ing of *nomina* in each tomb, Borbonus ascertains four ‘single household *columbaria*’ (with  $C > 40$ ): the columbarium of the Statilii does indeed qualify, and in addition so do the columbarium of the Volusii, that of the Iunii Silani, and that of the Arruntii.<sup>230</sup> The case of the Volusii is exceptional because no columbarium structure was ever found, but the collection of epitaphs suggests a similar collective household burial arrangement.<sup>231</sup>

Clustering of *nomina* is somewhat less strong in the columbarium known as that of Livia ( $C = 20/21$ ), yet Treggiari feels that “[t]he individual slave-owner whose household staff can be most fully reconstructed is Augustus’ widow Livia”.<sup>232</sup> In my view it is highly likely that the monument does represent the household of the empress. In this case, however, the cluster index presumably signals the monument’s continued use into the third century, which is why it contains imperial slaves and freedmen of later emperors, for example, in addition to members of Livia’s domestic staff – thereby lowering the cluster index.<sup>233</sup> Moreover, the larger the monument, the more likely it was to contain ‘outsiders’, since slaves and freedmen did not always marry within the household. Even so their families were regularly included.<sup>234</sup> The following example from the Volusian tomb shows that the family connections could branch out far.

**CIL 6. 7290 = CIL 6. 27557**

[Dis] / Manibus [sacru]m / Primigenius L(uci) Volusi / Saturnini ser(vus) ab hospiti(i) s et / paedagog(us) pueror(um) Charidi cont(ubernali) s(uae) b(ene) m(erenti) / T(itus) Iulius Antigonus gener eius / Spurinniae Niceni Torquatianae / nutrici suae bene merenti / sanctae piae amatissimae / fecerunt sibi et suis posterisq(ue) eor(um)

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- 230 Borbonus (2014) 122: “the values exceeding a ‘c’ of forty (...) are ‘single family columbaria’ that accommodated, wholly or predominantly, slaves and freedmen of a single aristocratic household”. The monument ‘of the Carvillii’ has  $C=53$ , but the ten inscriptions also mention others from various families, which is presumably why it is not classified as a single family tomb. The formula for the cluster index is on page 248 n. 53.
- 231 The same is true for the ‘monument’ “of the gens Abuccia”: Borbonus (2014) 28, cat. nr 17; Hasegawa (2005) 4.
- 232 Treggiari (1975a) 48; See for an analysis of Livia’s domestic staff especially Treggiari (1975a), but also Treggiari (1973), (1975b), (1976); Hasegawa (2005).
- 233 Borbonus (2014) 175-6. Conversely, there are also servants of Livia in tombs with other imperial servants, Treggiari (1975a) 65 n.4; Hasegawa (2005) 22.
- 234 See above for *contubernia* and marriages crossing household boundaries; Mouritsen (2013) 54 table 8 includes his count of outsider marriages for the *columbaria* of the Volusii and Statilii for example; It would not be unusual if some of the husband’s slaves had relations with some of the wife’s slaves and thereby ended up in ‘her’ columbarium, a practice Treggiari (1975a) 48 identifies for Livia’s monument.

Sacred to the divine spirits. Primigenius, slave of Lucius Volusius Saturninus, in charge of guests and teacher of the (slave?) children, for Charis, his well-deserving *contubernalis*. Titus Iulius Antigonus his brother-in-law, for Spurinnia Nice Torquatiana, his nurse, a well-deserving, loyal, most amiable woman. They set this up for themselves, their [family] and their descendants.

Apart from two slaves of the household, Primigenius and Charis, the text also includes Antigonus and Torquatiana, who carry the *tria nomina* but who were not freedmen of the Volusii. Apparently, Primigenius' right to use the household tomb extended to his wider family, if it could accommodate for his brother-in-law Antigonus, and Antigonus' (freeborn?) nurse.

There are thus only five single family *columbaria* that could potentially give us an indication of the occupational structure of a single household staff.<sup>235</sup> Even single household tombs do not reflect the occupational structure of a household accurately, however, because the boundaries of who were buried in it and who were not are so blurry. Moreover, it is not certain at all that the epigraphic collection from any one tomb is complete, nor is it always easy to distinguish whether the inscriptions – and therefore the recorded jobs – were contemporaneous or not.

The nomenclature of those buried in single family *columbaria* indicates that the large majority was part of the dominant household. There are many other plausible single family households, however;<sup>236</sup> even in multi-family tombs, a large group of individuals can often be connected to a larger household.<sup>237</sup> In her study of the *familia urbana*, for example, Kinuko Hasegawa distinguishes 15 groups of *columbaria*-inscriptions that can be connected with a known aristocratic family or individual owner.<sup>238</sup> In all likelihood, all columbarium-inscriptions are representative of the domestic staff of elite households, regardless of whether the 'inhabitants' originate from one or from several households. In order to maintain a clear sense of context, however, it is important to keep in mind that there is a difference between single family tombs, multi-family tombs and unconnected attestations of household servants, when discussing the particulars of the large domestic household. Having said that, unrelated individuals were probably a minority.

235 It is no coincidence that Sandra Joshel singles out precisely these five single family *columbaria* in her sample, Joshel (1992) 194 n. 47: "Only *columbaria* that include individuals predominantly from one *familia* are considered". The five single family *columbaria* are only mentioned as an example, however, so she probably includes more of the *columbaria*-inscriptions.

236 Penner (2012) analyses epigraphic data from the five largest *columbaria*, including not only the Statilii, Volusii, and Livia, but also the *monumentum Marcellae* and the *monumentum filiorum Drusi*.

237 E.g. the columbarium 'of the Carvillii', or that of the Stertini, Borbonus (2014) cat. nrs 10 and 27.

238 Hasegawa (2005) 5 table 2.1 lists 16 households, but that of Iunius Silanus is a duplicate entry.

## Occupational differentiation

Many of the occupations recorded for slaves in the *columbaria* are so specific that they make us wonder whether they would have taken up all of the slave's time: Bradley cites the examples of the *ostiarius* (doorkeeper) and *scoparius* (sweeper), but one might also speculate what is the purpose of the nine foot servants in the household of Livia.<sup>239</sup> It is unlikely that they were left idle when their work was done, so they will have been engaged in other activities now and then.<sup>240</sup> Other household slaves who are not recorded with a specific job-title, were probably employed in all tasks imaginable like jacks-of-all-trades. There are two interesting parallel inscriptions of 'multi-tasking' slaves, but they are the only such occupational epitaphs I know of:<sup>241</sup> The first inscription is written on an altar from the *columbarium* of the Volusii, and records a freed *capsarius* (carrier of scroll-holders) who apparently served also (*idem*) as an *a cubiculo* (bedchamber servant) to "our Lucius". The second is for a freed *a cubiculo et procurator* (bedchamber servant and manager), again to "our Lucius".<sup>242</sup> *Lucius noster* freed both of them.

The fact remains that a great variety of jobs is attested for the slaves of elite households.<sup>243</sup> Harper correctly notes that household "scale and specialization were correlated": certainly, elite households were more wealthy and populous, which enabled specialization.<sup>244</sup> One could also imagine that it would be helpful to distinguish between individuals with the same name, such as Hilarus the doorkeeper, Hilarus the surgeon and Hilarus the cashier, who were all part of Livia's household.<sup>245</sup> There could be various other reasons for the fact that job-titles are prominent in the *columbaria*, however.

239 Bradley (1994) 60; for *pedisequi* (male and female) in the household of Livia, see Hasegawa (2005) 33 and Treggiari (1973) 75-6 who only lists seven.

240 Bodel (2011) 326 with n. 25 for references. Harper (2011) 103-5 at 103 sees domestic service as "a way of utilizing the extra time and labor of otherwise productive slaves".

241 But compare also *P. Wisc.* 1.5 (Oxyrynchus, AD 185), which is the contract of lease for a slave woman, who is leased out to help a weaver with his craft, but who can contractually be called back by her owner to bake bread during the night. There is some evidence of moving from one job to another, for which see elsewhere in this thesis.

242 *CIL* 6. 7368: *Di(i)s Manibus / sacrum / L(ucio) Volusio Heraclae / capsario idem / a cubiculo L(uci) n(ostri) / Volusia Prima patron(o) / suo piissimo idem / coniugi bene merent(i) fecit / et sibi p(ermissu) L(uci) n(ostri) / Thyrsa a cell(l)a / v(ixit) a(nnos) XXXV*; and *CIL* 6. 7370: *Dis Manibus / L(ucio) Volusio / Paridi a cubiculo / et procuratori L(uci) n(ostri) / Claudia Helpis cum / Volusia Hamilla et / Volusio Paride / fili(i)s suis coniugi suo / bene merenti / permissu L(uci) n(ostri) / s(ua) p(ecunia) f(ecerunt)*. It is difficult to establish to which Lucius Volusius Saturninus the inscriptions refer, see Hasegawa (2005) 20-1.

243 Emphasized by e.g. Treggiari (1975a) and Bradley (1994) for the household of Livia.

244 Harper (2011) 102.

245 The *ostiarius urbanus* (doorkeeper) of *CIL* 6. 8964; the *medicus chirurgus* (surgeon) of *CIL* 6. 3986; and Hilarus Gugetianus *ad argentum* (cashier) of *CIL* 6. 3941. There was at least one other Hilarus, a freedman of Livia, commemorated without profession in *CIL* 6. 8722.

Bradley quotes the following passage from Columella to argue that there was a practical side to job specialization, encouraging a slave's pride in the assignment as well as conferring the responsibility for it onto him or her.<sup>246</sup>

**Col. RR 1.9.5–6**

... ne confundantur opera familiae, sic ut omnes omnia exsequantur. (6) Nam id minime conducit agricolae, seu quia cum enisus est, non suo sed communi officio proficit, ideoque labori multum se subtrahit; nec tamen viritim malefactum deprehenditur, quod fit a multis.

...the duties of the slaves should not be confused to the point where all take a hand in every task. (6) For this is by no means to the advantage of the husbandman, either because no one regards any particular task as his own or because, when he does make an effort, he is performing a service that is not his own but common to all, and therefore shirks his work to a great extent; and yet the fault cannot be fastened upon any one man because many have a hand in it.

Presumably the motivations of a dependent freedman or even of hired labourers would be similar.

Occupational titles of slaves could be considered also as a means of cataloguing material goods. In the words of Bodel:

[O]ne may reasonably question whether studies of the phenomenon are not more revealing of the Roman mania for classifying property than of the varieties of tasks that Roman slaves actually performed.<sup>247</sup>

The jurists, for one, were indeed much concerned with the job specification of slaves – when they were part of a bequest.<sup>248</sup> The following excerpt from Marcian, however, is illuminating in various ways. The passage is placed in the context of bequests concerning slaves.

246 Bradley (1994) 73; Col. RR 1.9.5–6, transl. Ash (1941, Loeb Classical Library).

247 Bodel (2011) 321. Similarly, Bradley (1994) 57: "It was a habit reflecting the Roman's fixation with categorization and hierarchy".

248 Bodel (2011) 326-7 with n. 26.

**Dig. 32.65.1-2**

1. Si ex officio quis ad artificium transierit, quidam recte putant legatum extinguere, quia officium artificio mutatur: non idem e contrario cum lexicarius cocus postea factus est.

1. If someone proceeds from a job to a craft, one would rightly think to exclude him from the bequest, because the job changed into a craft: that does not hold, conversely, if a litter-bearer is later made a cook.

2. Si unus servus plura artificia sciat et alii coci legati fuerunt, alii textores, alii lexicarii, ei cedere servum dicendum est, cui legati sunt in quo artificio plerumque versabatur.

2. If one slave knows multiple arts and the cooks were bequeathed to one, the weavers to another, the litter-bearers to another, the slave should be ceded to him, to whom are bequeathed those in the craft in which he [the slave] is most often engaged.

The text illustrates not only that it was possible for slaves to proceed in a career, but also that a slave potentially did exercise more than one occupation: the latter theoretical example works with three different engagements for one slave, of which two are perhaps semi-skilled. At the same time it highlights the use of highly specialized slaves as a form of conspicuous consumption.

A brief reference in Tacitus' *Germania* indicates that household specialisation was deemed a sign of civilisation, one that the Germans did not exhibit.

**Tac. Germ. 25.1**

Ceteris servis non in nostrum morem, descriptis per familiam ministeriis, utuntur: suam quisque sedem, suos penates regit.

The other slaves they do not use as we do, with designated duties throughout the household; each one controls his own holding and home.<sup>249</sup>

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249 Tac. *Germ.* 25.1, translation Rives (1999).

Tacitus is not without implied criticism of the Roman sumptuousness as opposed to Germanic simplicity;<sup>250</sup> nevertheless there are other indications that in Roman thought ideally it was not advisable for an aristocrat to have one slave perform more than one job – regardless of how realistic that scenario may have been.<sup>251</sup>

The care with which the manifold occupations are specified in the often brief and modest epitaphs from the columbarium tombs, however, suggests to me that such household specialisation was deemed important beyond mere legalities in the early Roman empire. While job differentiation on *columbaria* inscriptions partly results from the owners' interest in it, the fact that the resulting plethora of job titles was subsequently recorded in such high numbers reflects that to the workers of the servile staff their job-title was a distinctive source of pride.<sup>252</sup>

### Occupational structure

For reasons set out above, no single one columbarium tomb can be expected to provide the material to allow an accurate outline of the occupational structure of the associated aristocratic house. Even if the full collection of inscriptions from one tomb would have survived – and it most certainly has not – there were individuals who were excluded or buried outside the tomb for various reasons; there were also jobs that were not recorded or under-represented; in addition, an epitaph generated around the moment of death generally does not inform the twenty-first century reader about possible previous careers of the deceased in more humble lines of work. That said, the body of *columbaria*-inscriptions offers what is arguably the best opportunity to reconstruct the basic outlines of occupational structure in an important segment of the urban labour market of early imperial Rome.

The organization of labour in an urban elite *domus*, if anything, does not appear to follow any ideal of self-sufficiency. But a single household should not merely be looked at in isolation: spouses had their own separate slave *familiae* and his and her household were – and were expected to – be used in a complementary way.<sup>253</sup> Labour interdependence between aristocratic households even extended to marginally wider family bonds, between siblings, or in-laws.<sup>254</sup> An argument about the self-sufficiency of the household

250 Rives (1999) 61-2 on Tacitus' portrait of the Germani as "moral exemplars" reflecting an idealized past, devoid of the vices that civilization brings.

251 Cic. *Pis.* 67; Ael. *Arist. Rom Or.* 71b; Treggiari (1975a) 61.

252 Joshel (1992) esp. chapter 5.

253 Penner (2012); Cf Treggiari (1975a) 54, who also suggests that Livia "relied on the vaster resources of the ruling Caesar".

254 The interdependence of the elite *domus*, illustrated by means of the Julio-Claudian households, is to my mind the most interesting finding of Penner (2013). Rawson (2005) offers an epigraphic case-study of a wet-nurse who can be traced 'circulating households'.

should therefore be made on the basis of an analysis of the overarching network of two or more elite *familiae* rather than a single household; even then it appears that autarchy was probably never achieved.

The complementary nature of these 'domus-networks' has implications for an understanding of the occupational structure of the elite household. All individual households appear to follow the same blueprint, however. Every single household had a nucleus of domestic servants and personal attendants serving the master or mistress. In line with the legal independence of *familiae* perhaps, each *domus* also seems to have had some form of administrative section. Both categories include chiefly the staff members necessary to run a *domus*. The remainder of the employees were employed in a multitude of professions that, as we shall see, occasionally seem to suggest a kind of specialization for the market.<sup>255</sup>

In terms of the organization of work, the attested job specialization within the *domus* also reflected an internal occupational hierarchy.<sup>256</sup> The household was generally led by a steward (*dispensator*). After that, the situation could become rather more complex. A division into *decuriae* of workers with the accompanying supervisors (*decuriones*) is attested with any credibility only in the enormous household of an emperor or the imperial family.<sup>257</sup> *Praepositi*, too, – superintendents of one group or other – were an imperial exclusive.<sup>258</sup> But where the emperor Claudius had a *decurio cubiculariorum*, other elite households nevertheless sported a *supra cubicularios* to supervise the bedchamber servants – which surely still points to a staff of significant size.<sup>259</sup> There are few if any other supervisory roles that come to the fore: the *supra cocos* was master chef, one may presume, but the *supra iumenta* (person in charge of pack and draft animals) did not necessarily have something to say about the *iumentarii* (drivers of those animals).<sup>260</sup> Examples that are similar in wording, like the *supra/ad valetudinarium* 'in charge of' health (presumably the sickbay *vel sim*), and the *a speculum*, 'in charge of' the mirror, abound, but they were really not overseers of staff.

255 Cf Penner (2012) 148.

256 In very general terms: Bradley (1994) 70.

257 Not so credible by contrast: the *decuriae* in Petr. *Sat.* 47.12; Treggiari (1975a) 60 with references in n. 131. Compare, however, the dedication of the mon. Marcellae, CIL 6. 4421, which also mentions *decuriae*: *C(aius) Claudius Marcellae / Minoris l(ibertus) Phasis decurio / monumentum dedicavit et / decuriae epulum dedit d(e) s(ua) p(ecunia) huic / decuria ex aere conlato imaginem / decreverunt.*

258 E.g. *Praepositus cellariorum*, CIL 6. 8746; *praepositus cocorum*, 8752; *praepositus velariorum*, 9086. A few late, Christian inscriptions for *praepositi* commemorate clergy.

259 *Scriba cubiculariorum item decurio*: AE 1946, 99; similarly CIL 6. 8773 (also imperial); *supra cubicularios*: CIL 6. 4439 (mon. Marcellae), 6645 and 9287 (col. Statilii), 8766 (mon. Livia), and 33842 (unknown origin).

260 *Supra cocos*: CIL 6. 9261.

The phenomenon of slaves or ex-slaves owning – and presumably supervising – slaves (*vicarii*) is a much more prominent feature in the epigraphic data.<sup>261</sup> The following epitaph is a particularly beautiful illustration:

### CIL 6. 6275

Hic est ille situs / qui qualis amicus / amico quaque fide / fuerit mors euit (= fuit)  
indicio / f(unus) f(ecit) / Faustus Erotis / dispensatoris vicarius

Here he is buried, he who was such a great friend and who died through such loyalty to his friend as an indicator of which this burial was set up. Faustus, *vicarius* of Eros the steward.

This epitaph, written on an altar found in the Statilian tomb, is exceptional in form, length and wording: the *amicitia*, friendship, between Faustus, and Eros the *dispensator* is stressed. *Vicarii* in general, however, were not so exceptional. Eros owned another slave (Suavis, CIL 6. 6276), yet he himself may in fact have been the slave of one T. Statilius Posidippus: CIL 6. 6274 mentions an *Eros T(iti) Statili / Posidippi ser(vi) / disp(ensator)*. T. Statilius Posidippus, freedmen to the Statilii and himself apparently not buried in the tomb, had a *familia* of 19 (!) that can be reconstructed from the columbarium.<sup>262</sup>

One text on *vicarii* stands out from the rest and deserves quoting in full.

### CIL 6. 5197

Musico Ti(beri) Caesaris Augusti / Scurrano disp(ensatori) ad fiscum Gallicum  
/ provinciae Lugudunensis / ex vicariis eius qui cum eo Romae cum / decessit  
{e}<f>uerunt bene merito / Venustus negot(iator) / Decimianus sump(tuarius) /  
Dicaeus a manu / Mutatus a manu / Creticus a manu // Agathopus medic(us)  
/ Epaphra ab argent(o) / Primio ab veste / Communis a cubic(ularius) / Pothus  
pediseq(uus) / Tiasus cocus // Facilis pediseq(uus) / Anthus ab arg(ento) / Hedylus  
cubicu(larius) / Firmus cocus / Secunda

To the deserving Musicus Scurranus, slave of Tiberius Caesar Augustus, accountant of the Gallic treasury in the province of Gallia Lugdunensis, from those of his

261 It is well-known for the imperial family, Weaver (1972), or in *columbaria*, Penner (2013); Baba (1990) also notes a number of *opus doliare* stamps that indicate the presence of some slave-owning slaves in the *familia rustica*, too.

262 Mouritsen (2013) 57 discusses both Eros and T. Statilius Posidippus.

slaves (*vicarii*) who were with him when he died at Rome: Venustus, tradesman; Decimianus, cashier; Dicaeus, secretary; Mutatus, secretary; Creticus, secretary; Agathopus, medic; Epaphra, in charge of silver; Primio, in charge of clothes; Communis, bedchamber servant; Pothus, footservant; Tiasus, cook; Facilis, foot-servant; Anthus, in charge of silver; Hedylus, bedchamber servant; Firmus, cook; Secunda.

This is the epitaph of Musicus Scurranus, slave to the emperor Tiberius. It was set up by his 16 *vicarii* – that in itself makes the text unique. In addition the *vicarii* are virtually all mentioned with their occupational title, and that makes it the only inscription known to me in which *vicarii* specify their job.<sup>263</sup>

The complexity of these *familiae* in *familiae* has not yet received proper treatment in itself.<sup>264</sup> The slaves of a slave were legally the property of that slave's owner (thus, Musicus and his *vicarii* were all the property of the emperor Tiberius); but that was not true for the slaves of a freedman. The case of Musicus Scurranus suggests that there may have been individuals who did have a distinct household-within-household catering to their needs – but they were exceptional, universally high-placed and, most likely, imperial slaves and freedmen. The common inclusion of *vicarii* (especially those of freedmen) in the household *columbaria* strongly suggests that these sub-slaves or under-slaves should be considered a part of the household. But the fact that these hierarchies are so meticulously inscribed, suggests that analysis should go beyond "a strong possibility that such servants actually worked for their owner's *domina* or *patrona*."<sup>265</sup>

#### *Domestic service and personal attendance*

All elite *domus* had a core staff of domestic servants and personal attendants.<sup>266</sup> Joshel has plausibly explained the predominance of the service sector among the *columbarium*-inscriptions by the elite's need to be surrounded by servants to demonstrate their wealth and social standing:<sup>267</sup> it is perhaps predominantly in the large number of service jobs that we see reflected the concept of conspicuous consumption. The elite *domus*

263 Could it be significant that the woman, Secunda, is both mentioned last and has no job-title? Günther (1987) 131, 135 suggests that *vicariae* like Secunda were only owned by men, with the regular aim of 'marrying' them. Sometimes they were married, e.g. ILS 7981a and 7981b.

264 With the exception perhaps of Di Porto (1984) who sees the *vicarius* as a kind of *servus communis* and a go-between in economic partnerships/ joint enterprises, but see the critique of Andreau (1999) 68–70.

265 Treggiari (1975a) 51.

266 Joshel (1992) 75 table 3.2 ("Service occupations in the large domestic household"). Pages 145-161 discuss the domestic servant in the context of the large domestic household.

267 Joshel (1992) 73-6.

formed the locus of domestic service in the cities: virtually all employment in this sector can be traced to an aristocratic home.

### Personal attendance

Personal care was all-pervasive for example in the case of Cn. Domitius Tullus, who according to Pliny had become so infirm that to his own despair, he had to have his teeth brushed by servants.<sup>268</sup> Nothing similar to the home care that Tullus required is attested in the inscriptions, though it is plausible that servants were employed for such personal care when necessary. The epitaphs highlight instead that the elite certainly liked to have around a large throng of what could be termed 'luxury' carers, personal servants with a certain skill-set. Masseurs and masseuses (*unctores*), hairdressers (*ornatrices*), barbers (*tonsores*), and perfumers (*unguentarii*) are ubiquitous. The job of hairdresser is for women only: in fact it is the most common single occupation attested for women in the city of Rome save one – for which see below –, and virtually all hairdressers come from elite households.<sup>269</sup> The willingness to record this type of employment illustrates that these personal attendants took pride in their proximity to the masters, as well as in their own skills. Unskilled personal attendance is not recorded. One cannot perhaps get much closer to a master than washing him or her, but the servants of Tullus and others who performed such daily care remain anonymous when we hear of them – as in Pliny – or entirely obscured, since their job-titles do not appear in the *columbaria*.

The *cubicularii* or bedchamber servants referred to earlier deserve separate mention in this context. Despite the fact that *cubicularii* are well-attested, it is unclear what it was exactly that they did, in or regarding the bedchamber (*cubicularium*). However, the frequent recordings of *cubicularii* and their regular manumission suggests to me that their position was highly valued; therefore their tasks probably had less to do with securing clean sheets, than with personal attendance in a wider sense, as informal advisor or confidant. *Cubicularii* of high-placed persons could become men of significant power and wealth.<sup>270</sup> Cleander, a notorious freedman of the emperor Commodus, is an extreme

268 Plin. *Ep.* 8.18.9.

269 Günther (1987) 45-53 on *ornatrices* confirms this pattern, though Günther's sample is limited to freedwomen. On page 50-1 she has a few examples of freedwomen who apparently continued their business outside the household – regardless, I should like to emphasize that these women, too, originally came from an elite *domus*, see also ch. 3.

270 Men of wealth, since they were overwhelmingly male, though there are a few *cubiculariae*: *CIL* 6. 5748, 5942 and 33750, and potentially 9315 (fragm).

example who according to Cassius Dio could profitably control general access to consulships and senatorial status – among other things.<sup>271</sup>

The rather large group of *pedisequi* were personal attendants or foot servants to their individual elite masters. It is interesting that they regularly include in their epitaph whose servant they were, like *Doris Statiliae Mino[ris] / pediseq(ua)* of *CIL* 6. 9775 quoted above.<sup>272</sup> Other examples of foot servants have already been referred to in various contexts. There are both male and female foot servants, and from Livia's monument we also know of a boy (*puer a pedibus*).<sup>273</sup> It is generally assumed that this group is the entourage that accompanied a nobleman or -woman wherever they went. The concentration of *pedisequi* in the city of Rome may perhaps underline the significant presence of elite households there.<sup>274</sup> The relative frequency with which such a 'low' position is inscribed, underlines Joshel's important point that occupation within elite households often designates a feeling of community and one's place within the household – not so much through pride in a job but through collegiality.<sup>275</sup> Collegiality and belonging certainly speak from the following example.

#### **CIL 6. 4355**

Philusa Andraei / liberti uxor / ollam et titulum / datum ab conservas / pedisequas

Philusa wife of Andraeus the freedman (lies here). The urn and plaque were given by her fellow slaves-and-foot servants.

#### Child care

A very large part of domestic service and caring for other people within the elite *domus* was devoted to child care.<sup>276</sup> It is unlikely that these child carers were all engaged only with the master's child(ren); their presence thus supports the earlier supposition that

271 On Cleander's influence see esp. Cass. Dio 73.12. Under Diocletian the imperial '*cubicularius*' officially became one of the four major ministers, overseer of the "palace staff", see e.g. Potter (2009) 184.

272 Or Iulia Elate of *CIL* 6. 4002.

273 *CIL* 6. 4001.

274 Outside of Rome there is only a concentration of *pedisequi* in imperial service from Africa proconsularis (*CIL* 8).

275 Joshel (1992) 97-91.

276 Cf Laes (2016) for the interesting finding that in Late Antiquity these educators were no longer predominantly servile 'professionals' like these, but rather freeborn and family members.

the elite household included a significant number of home-born slaves.<sup>277</sup> Penner identifies no less than 11% of the Volusian staff as engaged in child care, which has led her to tentatively suggest that the Volusii actually specialized in this domain.<sup>278</sup> But it seems to me that child care was integral to the *domus* rather than aimed at the outside world as a business. The high percentage is unsurprising, however, considering the likelihood that children were ubiquitous, and taking into account the real possibility that the Volusian tomb represents one of the two best documented *domus*.<sup>279</sup>

Caring for children starts within the womb, up to and including birth. The Romans must have felt the same way, as a number of elite households attest to an in-house *obstetrix* (midwife) – Livia’s substantial monument includes two.<sup>280</sup> Again, if babies were not a common phenomenon of the *familia*, having an in-house midwife would not make sense.<sup>281</sup>

The newborn infant then required breastfeeding, which in ancient Rome was not necessarily done by the birth mother, for various reasons that do not need to be repeated here.<sup>282</sup> Many children were therefore suckled by a *nutrix*, a wet-nurse, who generally was meant to breastfeed the child for a much longer period than the current western average of 3-6 months. It is thus to be expected that the elite *domus* also included one or more *nutrices* at any one time, and indeed Livia has one, the Statilii have two, the Volusii four.<sup>283</sup> It is not unlikely that often the *nutrix*’ care for the child continued after the weaning period, certainly within the context of the *familia*.<sup>284</sup> Naturally, the actual

277 Hasegawa (2005) 36 does seem to assume that the child minders took care of the master’s children only. Admittedly, it is not impossible.

278 Penner (2012) 148; also in entertainers, who make up an equal 11%.

279 Mouritsen (2013) 44.

280 Among others, the Volusii *CIL* 6. 9725 = 27558; Statilii *CIL* 6. 6325; Antonia Augusta *CIL* 6.8947; Marcella *CIL* 6. 4458; Livia *CIL* 6. 8948, 8949. Unsurprisingly, these slave and freedwomen are all connected with female mistresses. See also Laes (2010) esp. 271-273 with appendix for the full Roman epigraphical dossier on midwives, with at 272 the remark that ‘large families could employ their own midwives’, because 13 out of 31 attestations he finds come from elite families in Rome.

281 It also contradicts the interesting suggestion that women were regularly sent to the rural *familia* to give birth, Treggiari (1979b) 189-190.

282 E.g. Harper (2011) 110-12 at 111-12 notes a “correlation between the practices of child exposure and wet-nursing”; and Bradley (1991) 26.

283 According to Hasegawa (2005) 36. It is obvious that the male equivalent, the *nutritor*, also known epigraphically albeit in far smaller numbers, did not perform the same job. Or did he? Infants in Rome very occasionally were raised by animal milk – despite the considerable risks of giving them non-pasteurized animal milk. So did *nutrix* and *nutritor* perform the same job after all? It is unlikely. The frequent epigraphic connection of *nutritor* with their *alumnus*, and esp. the text of *CIL* 6. 9967 (*Mem(o)riam ex origine vestiariorum in quo [sunt(?)] / nutritores mei ...*), suggests to me that the *nutritor* could be any kind of mentor, also in crafts.

284 Continued service of nurses, e.g. Bradley (1991) 20, 25-8; Günther (1987) 100.

wet-nursing can only be done by women: this is, in fact, the most commonly attested occupation for Roman women, counting slave, freed and free women, in and outside of the elite *domus*.<sup>285</sup> It is the overwhelming number one of the list of jobs for women.

As they grew up, the children were cared for by various other child minders. In the context of the elite *domus*, noteworthy are the *paedagogi*, *educatores* and *grammatici* also encountered earlier in this chapter. *Paedagogi*, as we have seen, provided a more general sort of child care than the specific educational tasks of the *educator* or *grammaticus*. This is probably one of the reasons that the *paedagogi* are by far the largest group of child minders. Though female *paedagogae* are not uncommon, it is noteworthy that men outnumber them by a wide margin.<sup>286</sup>

Domestic service in larger households is where most women are attested, the majority of them in child care, but also as hairdressers and so on.<sup>287</sup> The nine foot servants of Livia are supplemented by various hairdressers, masseuses, but also female doctors and midwives.<sup>288</sup> Domestic service matches well with the Roman ideal of women's domestic nature and their 'natural' place in the house. The incidence of women commemorated with occupation is higher in the *columbaria* than in any other category of inscriptions, and female jobs are usually service jobs.<sup>289</sup> Female owners were more likely to own female staff,<sup>290</sup> but whereas a female *pedisequa*, *cubicularia* and so on was almost certain to work for a woman, a noblewoman could very well have a male *pedisequus/cubicularius/etc.*<sup>291</sup> It is significant to highlight that there were more male than female child minders.<sup>292</sup> In sum, even here, the inscriptions still confirm the relatively poor position of women in the

285 Günther (1987) 98, 100 for her Roman sample. It was already stated above that most nurses were of a servile background, with reference to Bradley (1991) 19-20; see also Harper (2011) 109–12 on the continuance of this practice into Late Antiquity.

286 Günther (1987) 76 records 70 men and 4 women.

287 Cf above; and Joshel (1992) 98 in her wider discussion of Roman labour indeed notes that large households provide "the setting in which women were most likely to name their work, usually as domestic servants of various kinds (especially nurses) and skilled service workers (especially *ornatrices*, hairdressers and maids)." That said, note that the large proportion of freedwomen in childcare (42.6%, or 20 out of 47 women) are left out of Joshel's discussion, "Because gender and status differentiate those in child care from domestic servants as such", p. 145.

288 "Nearly all these women work for women or for or with the children of the house", Treggiari (1979b) 190.

289 41.3 per cent of women is engaged in domestic service; Joshel (1992) 69 table 3.1.

290 Penner (2012), (2013); Treggiari (1975a) 58: "A *domina* employed more women than did a bachelor". On the same page she notes a "low proportion" of women in the *monumentum Liviae*, while actually the 20% is relatively high.

291 Günther (1987) 60.

292 Cf Bradley (1991) 37-75, 'Child care at Rome: the role of men', at 38: "The appearance of female nurses in the service of aristocratic families is not really surprising, but the use of men is rather less predictable at first blush".

labour market. The question remains whether the skewed sex ratios this suggests were a reality, because the demographic analysis above suggested that the gender balance is likely to have been more even in most households, when compared to the exceptional *domus* that provide our epigraphic evidence.

### Other service occupations

The elite *domus* would often include a small medical staff, such as medics, midwives, or the *ad valetudinarium* (in charge of health), the latter of whom was probably more of a healer or nurse in case of less serious illnesses.

In addition to staff looking after people, there was a great variety of servants looking after (an equally wide variety of) possessions, such as an *ab argento* (silver), the *a speculum* ([sic] mirror), *ad imagines* (paintings, statues, (ancestor) portraits?), or the *ad margarita* (pearls). Those working with clothing are somewhat more common, as the *a veste/ad vestem*, or *vestispicae/vestiplica* (folders of clothes).

There are those service workers who are responsible for the running of the household in a practical sense, such as the *atriensis* (majordomo), *rogator* (questioner), *ab admisione* (usher), *nomenclator* (name teller), *ab hospitis* (host).

Strikingly less visible in the epigraphic sources are those domestic servants who kept the household operational in a much more practical sense, by doing the cooking, cleaning, or by supplying water. In the pre-modern world it is very well possible that this category was in fact the largest.<sup>293</sup> A few job-titles can be linked to acquiring and preparing food, though I wonder if the particular functions of the *opsonator* (caterer), *ministrator* (waiter), *praegustator* (taster), and *a cyathos* (cupbearer) for example, were not more closely involved with elite dinner parties than with the household's food. There were few cooks – but cooks could be hired.<sup>294</sup> Interestingly, there appears to be no household that is truly fully staffed (or fully attested, of course); nor can this be solved by a *domus*-network we can trace.

## CONCLUSION

The urban phenomenon of elite *domus* was restricted to the larger cities of Roman Italy where the elite tended to cluster together. Aristocratic households are particularly well-attested for the city of Rome. It has become clear from the above that wherever

293 Harper (2011) 107.

294 Groen-Vallinga and Tacoma (2017); Hasegawa (2005) 45 has five *coci* for the four largest households, four of whom worked for the Statilii. Interestingly Harper (2011) 108 notes that "It is notable how often the job of 'the cook' was a specialized occupation in late antique households".

the elite resided, this significantly changed the make-up of the population, and of the labour force. A large majority of all slaves lived in towns, and more than half of these urban slaves worked in aristocratic houses. Independent freedmen can also often be traced back to a servile history in elite households. The epigraphic sources exacerbate this focus on larger cities and Rome in particular – which is precisely why it is so helpful to look at the uncharted territory of the *domus* economy as a whole.

It has long been known that slaves and ex-slaves predominate in pre-Christian inscriptions from the Roman empire. This is even more prominent in occupational inscriptions, and – as was illustrated in this chapter – the pattern is most explicit for the elite household epitaphs recording job-title, originating from *columbaria*. On the one hand, the *columbaria* themselves make up such a large part of the material that it is difficult to draw firm conclusions about the servile labour population in relation to the free population. On the other hand, it has become clear that elite presence and aristocratic houses did provide substantial employment in the cities, which suggests that the predominance of household labourers in epigraphic data is at least partly a reflection of reality. The overrepresentation of *columbaria* and elite households more generally, combined with a predilection for specialization of job-titles among their staff largely explains the strong occupational differentiation.

One of the main questions that lay at the heart of this chapter, is whether the presence of elite *domus* restricted labour opportunities for the freeborn urban population. The study of occupational inscriptions, and of *columbarium* tombs in particular, confirms the predominance of slaves and ex-slaves within the labour force of elite *domus*, effectively closing off the domestic service sector for the freeborn (but not the freed). Then again, we should perhaps not expect to find freeborn labourers in elite *domus*, since other references indicate that the free working *in* elite households were probably the exception, whereas the free working *for* the aristocrats must have been quite common. The employment generated by the *domus* for the free, and particularly for the freeborn, remains difficult to grasp. The ways in which freedmen maintained and benefited from economic bonds with their families of origin (i.e. the *domus*) sometimes can be recovered from the evidence, whereas the singular bonds of *locatio conductio* with the freeborn remain largely unknown. But free hired labour did include both the freeborn and the freed, thereby increasing competition for the freeborn seeking to gain an income. The ostentatious presence of the often sizeable and certainly numerous elite households must have been an important employer for the free artisans and craftsmen represented within the material – many of whom worked in the more luxury trades and whose work might not be affordable by the masses.

The significant servile presence in occupational inscriptions and in elite households has also given rise to the assumption that education in the Roman world was a slave prerogative. My analysis of human capital suggests that slaves, at least in the context

of labour in the cities of Roman Italy, were indeed in a good position to acquire some skills, varying from a basic education to becoming a fully trained craftsman. Investment in human capital of slaves was economically rational. Education at least doubled the value of a slave on the market, a market for skilled slaves in particular – and this market remained in operation long after the influx of captives had dwindled. A slave could not run off with accumulated knowledge and skills, thus ensuring that the income would go to the owner. Interestingly, the basic slave education did not take the form that scholars have long suggested, that is, through *paedagogia*. Instead, most elite *domus* included various levels of teachers, or alternatively sent their slaves to regular ‘schools’ with the *ludimagister*. Conversely, the arts and crafts were generally taught on the job, in the household, although occasionally both male and female slaves were apprenticed out just like the freeborn. Competition between the servile population and the freeborn population therefore centred especially on skilled work, and in domestic service, which by analogy with early modern patterns is most likely to have impacted women’s job opportunities.

Teachers and child carers in the home also form indirect evidence for the ubiquity of children in the elite home. The majority of these young individuals presumably were slaves, often but certainly not always the offspring of slave-unions. It is clear that slave families within households, and crossing household boundaries (within *domus*-networks perhaps?) were a regular occurrence. The children of the household were not only *vernae*, however, but may have included foundlings, or individuals who were bought on the market. The slave market and the self-replacement hypothesis for the slave population therefore are not mutually exclusive. Servile families included biological ties, as well as the more complex and under-researched hierarchic bonds of (ex-)slaves owning under-slaves (*vicarii*), complicating the demographics of the aristocratic household.

The occupational structure of the upper-class household, large and not-so-large alike, nevertheless appears to follow a standard blueprint: a basis in domestic service, an administrative section, and a part that could specialize for the market. The concept of *domus* networks, derived from the interconnectedness of the Julio-Claudian households as indicated by Lindsey Penner, fundamentally alters our understanding of the occupational structure of individual *domus*. A *domus* network could create more autarchy than might be expected. If aristocratic households could rely on *domus* networks to fulfil most of their labour demands, the need (and thus the opportunities) for free hired labour would be less, and the demand for slave labourers on the market would be determined rather differently. Certainly not all aristocrats entertained a staff as sizeable as the manifest ones that dominate the evidence and the discussion (here as elsewhere), and because of this the influence of *domus* networks on the urban labour market may have been limited. It is difficult to extrapolate the findings for the top aristocratic households to elite households more generally.

