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Imperial Rome: a city of immigrants?¹

Abstract

While it is clear that Rome was both of exceptional size as a city, and had an exceptional number and range of immigrants, it is extraordinarily difficult to have a clear idea either of its absolute size, or its demographic balance between locals and immigrants, citizens and non-citizens, freeborn and freed, slave and free. This paper argues that the impression of precise numbers given for recipients of handouts of grain or cash understates the fluidity of the population, and that the impression of high numbers of freedmen and slaves derived from funerary epitaphs may make as much sense for Rome as it does for Herculaneum, where the demographic balance is better attested.

Ancient Rome enjoys the reputation of the first city before the modern era, at least in Europe, of a million inhabitants.² The figure of a million, though much repeated, is fraught with difficulties, but nobody would wish to deny its exceptional size. Indeed, from one point of view, it makes little sense to talk in terms of precise population figures: the nature of a great city is its fluctuation, the constant movement of people in and outwards, on endlessly varying time-scales.³ But the same is true, perhaps even more so, of a modern megacity, which does not deter us from providing figures which help at least as orders of magnitude. If Rome at its imperial peak was of the order of magnitude of one million, give or take maybe 25%, a constant flux of people coming and going, it was for conditions of antiquity (with consequent limitations on transport, power supply and communications) a remarkable phenomenon.⁴

An inherent part of that phenomenon was migration and movement of people, as indicated both by tens of thousands of grave inscriptions or by contemporary voices, most famously, though contrastingly, that of the younger Seneca, who saw himself as one of a majority of migrants to the city (“Tell them all to answer to their names and ask each, ‘Where is your home town?’ You will see that the majority of the inhabitants are those who have left their home towns and come to the city which is biggest and most beautiful in the world, but not

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² Lo Cascio 2000, 17; for recent overviews, Morley 2013, de Ligt and Tacoma 2016a.

³ Horden and Purcell 2000, 382; cf. Tacoma 2016, 153.

⁴ On Roman city sizes, Wilson 2011; de Ligt 2012.

their place of birth”, *Consolatio ad matrem Helviam* 6.2-3) and that of Juvenal who creates the satirical figure of Umbricius to represent the indignant protests of the locally born against the flood of immigrants, the Tiber swamped by the Orontes (*Satire* 3,58-66).⁵ A longstanding interest by historians in migration to Rome has recently grown, surely under the influence of contemporary events, to a lively debate: the monographs of David Noy⁶ and Cecilia Ricci⁷ have been followed by a wider scale of debate in Rens Tacoma’s monograph,⁸ but above all in the collection of papers on *Migration and Mobility in the Roman Empire*.⁹ Despite, or perhaps because of, this debate, many fundamental issues remain unclear: the scale of migration to Rome, its motivation (between push and pull factors), and above all its composition, in the balance between free migrants and slaves. But the very uncertainties that seem to obstruct us can tell us something about the nature of the city: I want to argue here both that we have underestimated the role of slavery in Roman migration and the range and fluidity of statuses within the city.

Distributions and the count of citizens

It is worth reflecting at the outset why we have such evidence as we have for the population of Rome, and not only what limitations it places on us, but what it tells us about Rome. In general, figures for ancient city populations are very rare and generally not reliable.¹⁰ Rome is the exception, and for a clear reason. Nearly all the figures given by ancient sources that bear on the population of Rome concern the number of citizens entitled to distribution of grain or other benefits; and these figures cluster markedly around the period from the dictatorship of Caesar to the end of the reign of Augustus. The reason for this is evident. On the one hand, as in the *Res Gestae*, there is the desire to boast of the numbers of beneficiaries of imperial generosity. On the other hand, and as the opposite side of the same coin, attention is drawn to success in limiting the burden of such distributions on the public purse. What Augustus boasts of is not his distribution of grain, with the exception of a special distribution in 23 BC, but of cash *congiaria*: he enumerates 6 occasions on which cash was distributed (*RG* 15). The beneficiaries specified were the *plebs urbana*, except that on the occasion of the last distribution, of 2 BC, he defines them as those in receipt of the *frumentum publicum* (*RG* 15.3). Since grain distribution took place on a monthly basis and at public expense and not from the emperor’s personal generosity, it is not relevant to give the changing numbers for recipients of grain, though in specifying the linkage in 2 BC, he is drawing attention to a revision of the list. We infer the numbers receiving grain from the numbers of beneficiaries of cash distributions, which he states as never less than 250,000 until 11 BC, 320,000 in 5 BC, and 200,000 in 2 BC (*RG* 15.1-2).¹¹

The numbers in the *Res Gestae* are conveniently related to the notices given, particularly by Suetonius, for measures taken by Caesar and Augustus to revise the lists of recipients of

⁵ The voices of Rome’s immigrants are nicely evoked by Morley 2003.

⁶ Noy 2000.

⁷ Ricci 2005 and 2006.

⁸ Tacoma 2016.

⁹ de Ligt and Tacoma 2016.

¹⁰ Wilson 2011.

¹¹ See Cooley 2009, 167-174.

frumentum. Caesar introduces a new method of *recensus* (not a census, but a registration of citizens) by neighbourhood through property owners (*vicatim per dominos insularum*) and thereby reduces the number of those in receipt of grain at public expense from 320,000 to 150,000 (Suetonius, *Div. Iul.* 41.3). The number range is remarkably similar to the range Augustus gives. Suetonius similarly reports that Augustus conducted the *recensus* by neighbourhood, *vicatim*, and similarly links this to control of the grain distribution by reducing the number of times people needed to absent themselves from work to pick up their *tesserae* to three per annum (Suetonius, *Div. Aug.* 40.2). Suetonius gives no numbers here, but Dio reports that Augustus in 2 BC reduced the numbers of those entitled to grain to 200,000 (Dio 55.10). His date and figures coincide with those given in the *Res Gestae* for the distribution for ‘those who were then in receipt of *frumentum publicum*’.

What is common to all these passages is that precise numbers are given in contexts where there is concern about entitlement to public benefits. One of the transformations from Republic to Empire, I have argued, is the transformation in the extent of knowledge by the authorities of the composition of the city of Rome, through detailed registration, cataloguing the city by area, and mapping, none of which are attested for the Republic.¹² Detailed knowledge allows control, and among the numerous instruments of control of a city rendered volatile by its sheer size (including policing, flood and fire prevention, and the institution of neighbourhood organisations, *vici*) was the knowledge base acquired through registration at door-to-door level. We do not know whether this *recensus* covered slaves, foreigners, free people of non-citizen status, or even women and children, let alone lodgers and others passing through and not permanently resident in the city. Worse, we do not know whether Augustus, or his *praefectus urbi*, thought it important to have this sort of information. Could he have told us what was the balance between slave and free, citizen and non-citizen, women and men, children and adults, let alone between locally born and immigrant, or between permanent and temporary residents in his metropolis? We only know that both Caesar and Augustus thought it vital to have precise knowledge of the number of citizens resident in Rome entitled to a monthly ration of grain at state expense.

The temptation is to extrapolate from the known to the unknown. Since it is evident that there was a larger number of inhabitants of Rome who were not entitled to such a ration, because not citizens, female or too young, the debate is over how to multiply up from the known to the unknown. There is room for debate and uncertainty in each of these areas. Was the male/female balance normal, or tilted (for instance by a dominance of male freed slaves in the citizen population)? What was the age of entitlement to distributions? What proportion of slaves and ex-slaves was there in the population? How many immigrants, whether citizen or not, were resident in the city? Peter Brunt, with characteristic caution, used a multiplier of 2 rather than 2.5 for women and children, on the grounds that a majority of the citizens (as he maintained) were freedmen, who were less likely to have families, so giving 500,000 to 640,000 citizens, including women and children. To that he added 100,000 to 200,000 slaves, giving a total of around three quarters of a million in Augustus’ day.¹³ Hopkins, with a calculation based on life tables, raised the figure for citizens to 690,000 to 770,000, so bringing the

¹² Wallace-Hadrill 2008, 259-312.

¹³ Brunt 1971, 376-388.

total, following Beloch, to between 800,000 and one million.¹⁴ Subsequently, consensus has stabilized on the figure of up to one million.¹⁵ Yet there are so many unknowns that the greatest danger is to begin to believe in the figure of a million as a given, as does Ricci when she calculates the number of slaves and immigrants by deducting grain recipients plus women plus children from the total to achieve an estimate of 300,000.¹⁶

But all these calculations that rely on multiplying are affected by the dramatic insecurity of the base line from which they start. Are we talking about 320,000 adult male citizens, or 150,000?¹⁷ Evidently the latter figure points to a city half the size of the former. So the first challenge is to understand why these figures vary so much, and by very similar numbers from the dictatorship of Caesar to the reign of Augustus. But what presents a difficulty if your aim is to achieve a hard number for the population of the city becomes illuminating if you ask what the variation tell us about the nature of the city. Just how stable and well-defined was the population of Rome, and what chance did the authorities themselves have of pinning it down? The question then is, What about the nature of the city enabled Caesar and Augustus to cut down their lists by as much as half?

There are several factors, and all are significant. The first, as Suetonius makes explicit, is the use of systematic survey. The republican *census*, which Nicolet rightly regarded as integral to the identity of the citizen under the Republic, was an important instrument for understanding citizen manpower for military purposes, but even if it had been regularly taken, it was not aimed at a count of the citizens in the city itself.¹⁸ How could the republican authorities be certain that a citizen presenting himself for the *frumentum* was actually resident in the city, *domo Roma*? There must have been a strong temptation for any citizen resident within a day's walk of the city to turn up on the appropriate day.¹⁹ If a city breathes in and out, it will do so even more if there are strong incentives to head to the centre. Unless the lists in the hands of the distributing authorities contained precise location about domicile, there must have been a significant grey area around the city of impermanent claimants. Caesar's innovative registration could have had a dramatic impact in these terms alone.

The second factor is the definition of the boundaries of the city. Discussions of the population of Rome typically assume that we know the area of the city to the nearest hectare (i.e. 1,373 ha. for the "Servian" walls, 1,783 for the Aurelian walls), and can thus extrapolate figures based on expected population density.²⁰ Those figures typically use the Aurelian walls to define the city. These evidently have no importance for the reign of Augustus, even as a guideline. But in a standard legal definition, repeated in the *Digest*, by the city of Rome was meant the city within the *pomoerium* and the continuously inhabited area, the *continentia urbis*, up to one mile distant from the *pomoerium*.²¹ Since this definition applied to the powers of the tribunes and other magistrates, it may be an old republican definition, but this does

¹⁴ Hopkins 1978a, 96-98.

¹⁵ Morley 1996, 38; Noy 2000, 16; Lo Cascio 2000; Tacoma 2016, 156.

¹⁶ Ricci 2005, 13.

¹⁷ The figure of 150,000 in AD 14 has been extrapolated from the testamentary distribution by Tiberius, but is not explicitly stated by Augustus.

¹⁸ Nicolet 1978. On the *recensus*, Lo Cascio 1997.

¹⁹ So Hopkins 1978, 96.

²⁰ Hopkins 1978a, 97; Morley 1996, 38; Storey 1997; Lo Cascio 2000, 47.

²¹ Crawford 1996, 380; Goodman 2007, 14-16; Wallace-Hadrill 2015, 127; Todisco 2016.

not mean that it was always applied to entitlement to the *frumentum publicum*. It is possible that it was introduced by Caesar or Augustus in this context to limit the number of claimants. It would have been difficult for Caesar to conduct his survey *vicatim* without knowing the boundaries of the *vici*. But by the same token, Augustus' reform of the *regiones* and *vici* themselves, formally dated to 7 BC, must have enormously increased the ability of the authorities to limit entitlement by domicile.

A third crucial variable is age. At what age did one become entitled? Puberty? The assumption of the *toga virilis*? Some inscriptions of the second/third centuries attest children of 4 and under who were registered.²² Suetonius comments that Augustus exceptionally gave one distribution to young children, though the normal age limit was the eleventh year (*Div. Aug.* 41.2). One possibility is that the extreme variation in numbers is due to different definitions of the age limit. Elio Lo Cascio has suggested that Augustus' different figures represent different age groups: the lowest figure, of 200,000, would represent males over 17; the middling figure of 250,000, males over 10; and the largest of 320,000, all males of any age.²³ If this is right, it would allow us to be remarkably precise about the citizen population, almost doubling the highest figure for women to reach a stable figure of 600,000, one that would work for Caesar and the whole reign of Augustus. But though we must allow that tightening up on the definition of age was one of the instruments available for limiting entitlement, it was surely not, as the previous two factors suggest, the only one, and it was certainly not the one Suetonius thought most important in Caesar's reduction of numbers.

There is a fourth variable, in the actual population of the city. In the same passage in which he reports Caesar's new *recensus*, Suetonius talks about the number of citizens, 80,000, transplanted to overseas colonies (*Div. Iul.* 42.1). Brunt took it that this was a principal mechanism for reducing the city plebs, and that it would account for a reduction of 80,000 in the number of claimants, though observing that this by itself was not enough to explain the drop in numbers. Suetonius immediately goes on to say that Caesar introduced a number of measures to bolster the city population so drained (*ut exhaustae quoque urbis frequentia sup-peteret*), which while confirming the impact of colonization on city population, implies that this was not Caesar's aim, so much as a downside of his colonization programme. And while the explanation may work for the reduction of numbers under Caesar, it will not for Augustus, unless we want to imagine he added members of the plebs to his veteran colonies. However, the critical point remains that the population of the city was not stable, but subject to sharp fluctuations, whether by immigration or emigration. Indeed, one of the factors that might have attracted citizen immigrants was the possibility of access to the distributions, and correspondingly limitations on entitlement may have deterred potential immigrants, or even persuaded the unlucky to depart.

The fifth variable is perhaps the most controversial. Catherine Virlouvet, whose studies of the Roman grain distribution represent the most authoritative accounts available, has consistently argued that Augustus must have excluded freedmen from the distributions in order to achieve his dramatic reductions. Many aspects of Virlouvet's case are persuasive: we cannot see the *frumentatio* in the imperial period as a form of charitable support for the poor, so much as a privilege limited to a *numerus clausus*, a closed shop membership of which was a

²² Virlouvet 1997, amplified in 1995 and 2009, *passim*.

²³ Lo Cascio 2016.

privilege, and indeed was flaunted as a privilege in the dozens of funerary inscriptions where membership is recorded, including details of the day and gate where the ration could be collected.²⁴ Emperors could use it as a reward and incentive, most notably in the entitlement extended to *vigiles* under Septimius Severus who after 3 years' service in Rome acquired full citizenship and rights to their ration. What for demagogues like Gaius Gracchus or Clodius may have been an attempt to improve the living conditions of the poor became in imperial hands a privilege and instrument of control.

The attraction of the hypothesis that first Caesar excluded *liberti* from the distributions, and then, after slippage in the interim by which freedmen were readmitted, Augustus definitively excluded them, is that it offers a convenient explanation of a reduction in numbers of the order of 120,000 in both periods. An incidental benefit of the hypothesis is that it will provide us with a firm figure for the balance of freeborn and freed among the citizens, and one that puts the freeborn in the majority by roughly 2:1. We thus get a stable figure for the male citizen population of 320,000, and an implicit figure for the slave population of twice the number of freedmen, or around 240,000. I shall argue below that this balance of freeborn to freed is implausible. However, the suggestion that *liberti* were excluded by Augustus in itself seems to me highly unlikely.

The crucial argument here is not the testimony of the sources, though it must be said that no source claims that *liberti* were excluded, and at least two sources either directly state or imply that they did draw the *frumentum*. One can, as does Viriouvét, argue around apparent statements by the sources. So the scholiast on Persius states that when Persius talks about "real freedom, not the sort of freedom that allows a Publius from the Velina tribe a ticket to draw his ration of mouldy corn", this is because freedmen were entitled to the ration; but we can object that the scholiast was late and ill-informed, and that Persius meant something else.²⁵ Again, when Philo claims that Augustus was generous to Jews in allowing them to draw their ration on days other than the Sabbath, and explains that Rome was full of Jews because they often came as slaves and were freed, that this may refer to a period preceding the Augustan reform.²⁶ Equally, it can be argued that the inscriptions which celebrate *liberti* entitled to the *frumentum* do so not because this was the norm, but precisely because it was so unusual.²⁷ But such philological arguments end in tangles, and the vital issue is whether it makes sense of the Augustan reforms.

Here the crux must be the major reforms of manumission law undertaken between 2 BC and AD 4. Writing in 7 BC or shortly thereafter (he names the consuls in his preface, at *RA* 1.3), Dionysius of Halicarnassus offers an excursus on the Roman institution of manumission, arguing that though as an institution it had great merits, it was currently subject to abuse, and urging reform by the censors or consuls (*RA* 4.26). Among his complaints about the scandalous reasons for which slaves were given freedom and full citizenship are that some are freed in order to make them eligible for monthly grain distributions and for handouts by philanthropic individuals (and then give their masters a cut of their profits), and that he has known masters who have freed all their slaves in their wills simply to get the repu-

²⁴ Viriouvét 2009.

²⁵ Viriouvét 1995, 224-226.

²⁶ Viriouvét 1995, 227-228.

²⁷ Viriouvét 2009, 50-56.

tation for generosity. His complaints in general, and these in particular, bear a strong relationship to the reforms of manumission law brought in by the *lex Fufia Caninia* of 2 BC and the *lex Aelia Sentia* of AD 4. The second objection was dealt with by the *lex Fufia Caninia*, which limited the proportion of the slave household that could be manumitted in a will. The first complaint was effectively addressed by the very much more complex *lex Aelia Sentia*, which in strictly limiting the circumstances in which a slave could be formally manumitted, by age of both manumitter and manumitted and by moral standing, made it very much harder for owners to give full citizen rights to their slaves. The definition of the status of those manumitted informally or under age as ‘Junian Latins’ without citizen rights (though with the possibility of acquiring them), and of freed slaves who had been physically punished and held to be of poor morals as *dediticii*, without any access to citizenship or even the right to live within one hundred miles of Rome, will have addressed the complaints that citizenship was given to slaves of dubious morality and for suspect reasons such as eligibility for handouts.

Suetonius documents Augustus’ own concern with the sort of malpractice described by Dionysius: when he had proposed a distribution, a *congiarium*, and discovered that many had been manumitted and inserted in the role of citizens (*manumissos insertosque civium numero*), he refused to pay his donative to those who had not been enrolled at the time he promised, an attitude Suetonius commends as showing *gravitas* and *constantia* (*Div. Aug.* 42.2). We may note that the system which Suetonius attributes to Caesar of an annual *subsortitio* to replace vacancies on the list of those eligible for grain would also frustrate those who manumitted slaves at the last minute just to get on the list, which raises the possibility that *congiaria* were not always restricted to those listed as entitled to the *frumentum*.

How then do we explain the dramatic and rapid drop in the numbers of beneficiaries of Augustus’ distributions, from a peak of 320,000 in 5 BC to 200,000 in 2 BC? There is no direct evidence for a reform of 2 BC which excluded all *liberti* from the *frumentum*, which would indeed have resulted in a dramatic drop in the number of recipients. An argument *ex silentio* is always perilous, but such a reform would have been excellent evidence of Augustus’ desire to keep the Roman citizen body free of corruption by servile blood, the theme which Suetonius pursues immediately after talking about Augustus’ *recensus* and concern for the monthly dole (*Div. Aug.* 41.2-3). What he does mention is Augustus’ concern to make freedom, and especially *libertas iusta* (that is, freedom with full citizenship), harder to achieve. This was done by the provisions of the *lex Aelia Sentia*, to which Suetonius is evidently referring.²⁸ One may doubt whether *cives Romani optimo iure*, those with full citizen rights as defined by the *lex Aelia Sentia*, could have been legally excluded from citizen benefits aimed at the *plebs*.²⁹

An alternative approach is to question whether Augustus’ donatives to the *plebs urbana* were defined by eligibility for the *frumentum* before 2 BC, which is the only occasion for which the *Res Gestae* specifies this limitation.³⁰ If he offered a *congiarium* to all Roman citizens of the Roman *plebs*, the definitions of eligibility may have been much looser, and it

²⁸ See the discussion of Wardle (2014) 307.

²⁹ cf. Mouritsen 2013, 122.

³⁰ Cooley 2009, 173-4, commenting on the *Res Gestae* notes that the shift of language to mention entitlement to grain in 2 BC is paralleled in Dio’s narrative, which speaks of earlier handouts as being to the *demos*, and only for 2 BC mentions entitlement to grain (55.10.1 *δεμον του σιτοδοτομενου*).

could have been open to ‘sign up’ for it by last-minute manumission, and indeed by moving into Rome from further afield for the occasion. The distribution of 5 BC evidently generated a significant boost in numbers, from the 250,000 of previous distributions (though the number is a minimum). Already in 7 BC, as shown by Dionysius, people were complaining of potential abuse. In 2 BC Augustus got tough by limiting recipients to those formally enrolled for the *frumentum*, thereby excluding any opportunistic enrolments.

The implications are important. Rather than thinking of the population of Rome as a fixed and stable given, the very numbers recorded by Augustus in the *Res Gestae* imply the sort of flux envisaged by Horden and Purcell: a city that breathed in and out, that had porous boundaries, and a population that constantly changed, and which might have different definitions of what constituted citizen entitlement over the course of time. This will make it harder for us to offer firm population figures and indeed must have made them virtually unattainable even for Augustus. But it also has important implications for the nature of immigration.

Immigration: push and pull factors

That the concentration of the profits of a Mediterranean empire in Rome should have acted as a powerful magnet for immigrants is obvious. As Seneca points out, there is no single factor to explain the phenomenon, and what matters is the sheer diversity of reasons for coming to Rome:

They have flowed together from their municipalities and colonies, indeed from the whole world: some are brought by (political) ambition, some by the obligations of public service, some by the requirement to serve on legations, some by luxury which makes for a place so convenient and rich in vices, some by the aspiration of higher studies, some by shows. Some are brought by friendship, others by hard work that finds ample opportunities for the display of virtue. These have brought their bodies for sale, those their eloquence for sale. There is no type of human that has not rushed together to a city which offers an equally high premium to vices and to virtues. (*Cons. ad Helviam* 6.2-3)

For all the rhetoric of his contrasts of vice and virtue, Seneca makes his point, that Rome drew in all types from ambitious politicians to prostitutes. Implicit in that is also a wide social range, from the elite to penniless fortune-seekers.

What makes that diversity confusing in modern terms is that it cuts across the boundaries of citizenship and non-citizenship. Modern immigrants are not normally citizens (though the UK government confuses matters by calculating immigration as the difference between numbers arriving and numbers leaving in any year, which evidently do include citizens). In Seneca’s picture of migration, those who are already *cives Romani*, but domiciled elsewhere, in the *municipia* and *coloniae* of Italy and the provinces, play a prominent role – he is, after all, one of them. On the other hand, he does not even think of slaves as migrants, though the purchase of slaves by the city rich was a principal cause of forced migration. It is not clear that the Romans regarded migration into the city as problematic, except occasionally for quite specific groups.³¹ On the other hand, it is clear that migration into Roman citizenship, whether through manumission of slaves or by awards of citizenship to free provincials, was a

³¹ Moatti 2000; Tacoma 2016, 85-92.

boundary that was consciously defended, and it is this for which Suetonius praises Augustus (*Div. Aug.* 41.3-4).

One key issue is how far the distribution of monthly rations of grain impacted on immigration. In the late Republic, at least, sources indicate that the dole had a honeypot effect.³² Sallust, discoursing on the wretched condition of the Roman plebs at the time of the Catilinarian conspiracy, represents Rome as a sump into which all disreputable elements have flowed (*Romam sicut in sentinam confluxerant*, 37.5). These include agricultural labourers:

In addition, the youth, who had endured poverty in agricultural labour, induced by private and public largess (*privatis atque publicis largitionibus excita*) preferred leisure in the city to thankless labour (37.7).

Here push and pull factors combine: their agricultural labour leaves them in poverty, and the temptations available in Rome, with public grain distributions augmented by private liberalities of the type which later Augustus offered, represented a pull. Equally explicit is Appian's account of Rome after the assassination of Caesar:

The distribution of grain to the poor, which happens only in Rome, draws the idle and impoverished and hasty from all Italy to Rome. (*BC* 2.120)

Appian's present tense cannot safely be taken as a description of Rome in his own day in the second century AD: he is generalizing about the condition of Rome in the late 40s BC.

Just as Dionysius complains that the *frumentum publicum* was an inducement to manumission of slaves, these passages suggest that it was a draw for agricultural labourers, by implication free citizens. One significant element of migration to Rome will always have been the movement of free men from the countryside of Italy, such *migratio* being one of the rights of a Roman citizen, historically extended with some limitations to Latins.³³ Evidently the availability of a monthly grain ration, one that exceeded the calorific requirement of a single person, was an incentive if available. But the debate is over the effect of Augustus' introduction of a *numerus clausus*. If it took years, as many as ten, to qualify for domicile in Rome, and furthermore there was a waiting list for enrolment, with the choice being made by lot, citizens moving to Rome in the hopes of a life on the dole will have been disappointed, even though it is true that migrants may act under misapprehensions as well as rational calculations.³⁴ But it seems reasonable to suppose that it was precisely in the first century BC, when Rome's main population growth seems to have taken place, that the free poor are most likely to have been sucked in to Rome, and that the effect of imperial restrictions on access to benefits was, intentionally, to staunch the flow. We may note that the *frumentum publicum* does not feature in Seneca's list of inducements to migrate to Rome. Indeed, he seems to be thinking principally of educated people like himself and not of peasants.

Alongside the *frumentum publicum*, a major pull factor must have been the opportunities for employment in Rome.³⁵ Recently discussion has rightly underlined the impact of imperial building programmes. As in the famous anecdote, where Vespasian sees his construction work as a way of 'feeding his little flock' (*plebiculam pascere*, *Div. Vesp.* 18), imperial building generated employment, and in general emperors who built in Rome enjoyed popularity as

³² Discussed by Erdkamp 2016, 54-9.

³³ Sherwin-White 1973, 34, 110.

³⁴ Holleran 2011; Lo Cascio 2006; Erdkamp 2016.

³⁵ Tacoma 2016, 170-203.

against the unpopularity of those who did not (like Tiberius). Between construction projects, transport of merchandise, and the ramifying private sector of businesses, there will have been opportunities, as Seneca puts it, for those who wanted to find scope for their *industria*. What is, of course, impossible to calculate is how far these opportunities served as a magnet for free citizen immigrants.³⁶

In this context, it becomes relevant to ask how far immigration was necessary simply to sustain the population of the city, let alone to increase it. Here debate focuses on the so-called Urban Graveyard Theory.³⁷ It was Keith Hopkins who saw the relevance of Tony Wrigley's studies of early modern London, with the statistics that showed an excess of deaths over births in the capital, and argued that this was a structural feature of major conurbations.³⁸ Neville Morley took this a step further with his calculation that Rome needed 10,000 migrants each year simply to make up the shortfall, a figure accepted by Noy in his study of immigration.³⁹ Part of the case is to stress the unhygienic conditions of the city. The lively picture drawn by Alex Scobie of the filthy conditions of Rome is then used to suggest a high incidence of disease in the capital, especially malaria.⁴⁰

There has been some push-back against this picture, especially among those who work with archaeological evidence.⁴¹ Scobie's picture depends largely on the assembling of anecdotes, always a slippery and two-edged source of evidence. If the young Vespasian as aedile was punished by the Caligula for the filthy condition of Rome's streets (Suetonius, *Div. Vesp.* 5.3), it is at once evidence of filthy streets, and of the expectation that they should be clean. Imperial Rome enjoyed some infrastructural advantages not shared by many cities in nineteenth-century Europe: an abundant fresh water supply, public baths, sewers, and metalled streets, as well as a system of elite officers charged with maintenance of the urban fabric.⁴² But that said, the evidence that malaria was endemic, even hyperendemic, is hard to dismiss (Galen 7.135 states explicitly that Rome was the best place to observe it), and high levels of mortality in a great city are inherently likely. The more tightly people are packed, the more likely disease is to spread, and a high level of immigration is both likely to bring in new diseases, and to expose immigrants to those already endemic in the city. Add to that the likelihood that the contamination of the water supply by its lead piping had a negative impact, particularly on infants,⁴³ and it seems highly improbable that imperial Rome would have been capable of reproducing itself. Immigrants will have been every bit as diverse as Seneca suggests: but the issue is how far numbers were made up by free and voluntary immigration, how far through the route of slavery, an effective mechanism of forced migration?

³⁶ See Holleran 2011.

³⁷ de Ligt 2016, 1.

³⁸ Hopkins 1978b.

³⁹ Morley 1996, 44; Noy 2000, 18.

⁴⁰ Scheidel 2003; Tacoma 2016, 160-163.

⁴¹ Laurence 1997; Lo Cascio 2000, 48-49; Courrier 2014, 104-115.

⁴² Wallace-Hadrill 1991, 242; Davies 2012.

⁴³ See Garnsey 2017.

Slaves and foreigners

When Peter Brunt offered his calculations for the population of Rome, he assumed that a majority of the *plebs* were freedmen. His grounds were the enormous preponderance of *liberti* over *ingenui* in the Roman epigraphic record: above all in tombstones, but also in a range of documents that list Roman citizens. He was well aware of the argument that *liberti* are over-represented, and *ingenui* under-represented, whether for economic reasons or as a matter of cultural choice, but nevertheless, having allowed for exaggeration in the record, thought that as many as two-thirds of Romans were *liberti*. Current consensus tends to doubt this hypothesis, and the most recent contribution by Peter Garnsey and Luuk de Ligt (2016) argues that though the case for a predominance of freedmen works for Herculaneum, it does not for Rome.

Here the conundrum is to work out what significance to give to the evidence we have. It is exactly one hundred years since Tenney Frank published an article entitled, “Race mixture in the Roman Empire”. Starting from the observation that freedmen and people with Greek *cognomina* greatly outnumbered the freeborn in the inscriptions of Rome, he argued that some 90% of the inhabitants were either slaves or ex-slaves or their descendants, that their origins were predominantly from the eastern Mediterranean, that this explains their interest in mystery religions, and that it was not ‘even tempered, practical-minded Indo-Europeans’ who were attracted ‘to an orgiastic emotionalism, foreign to his nature’. Apart from the overtly racist tenor of his interpretation, scholars have questioned both the inferences he drew from Greek *cognomina*, and his treatment of funerary inscriptions as a representative sample of the population.⁴⁴ Lily Ross Taylor in a more careful study based on a sample of the Roman funerary inscriptions (she reckoned the total as 22,000) confirmed the predominance in the record of *liberti*: those explicitly designated as such greatly outnumbered those designated as *ingenui*, while those *incerti* whose status was not flagged explicitly included a substantial proportion of Greek *cognomina*, and were likely to have been freedmen.⁴⁵

But though her study confirmed the predominant presence of freedmen in the epigraphic record, the lasting significance of her article was to challenge whether we could take this record as representative of the actual population. In two ways, she suggested, the record could be skewed. First, the cost of a tombstone makes it unlikely that the poorest are adequately represented, if at all. Here, the observation might seem paradoxical: why should the freeborn be generally poorer than the freed? Of course, there were poor *ingenui* who could not afford marble plaques, but there must also have been poor *liberti*; equally, there must have been *ingenui* as well-off as the *liberti*, yet they are underrepresented. It is clear that women and children are under-represented too. The explanation she offered was that what we are looking at is cultural choice, a marked preference among ex-slaves for commemorating their success in achieving freedom.

The debate has rumbled on without fully satisfactory resolution. Henrik Mouritsen in his authoritative study of freedmen endorsed Taylor’s argument that we are looking at the product of cultural choices, as have several others.⁴⁶ But the ‘cultural choice’ explanation does not

⁴⁴ The correlation of Greek *cognomina* and servile status is confirmed by the detailed studies of Solin 1971 and 1996.

⁴⁵ Taylor 1961.

⁴⁶ Mouritsen 2011, 120-41; see also de Ligt and Garnsey 2016, 85-6; Holleran 2011, 176; Tacoma 2016, 176.

adequately account for the frequency of freedmen in inscriptions listing members of tribes, local associations, corporations and clubs, and other scholars maintain that the imbalance is real, and that there really was a shortage of *ingenui*.⁴⁷

One way to try to resolve this issue is to look beyond Rome, and specifically to Herculaneum (not forgetting Pompeii) where the evidence is extensive. There has been a recent growth of interest in the fragments of the long inscription from the Basilica of Herculaneum which preserves the names of over 500 individuals, apparently all of citizen status, but which implies an original set of panels with as many as four times the number of entries (the ‘Album of Herculaneum’).⁴⁸ Many aspects of this inscription are open to debate, including its purpose, its date, the range of status categories involved, and the principles on which they are ordered. However, the sheer number of names involved implies that they must represent a fairly comprehensive listing of the free males of Herculaneum, rather than a selection tilted to one particular status category, as seemed possible before the size of the document was appreciated, and the hypothesis that it was a list of the *Augustales* prevailed. But the idea that it was a list of *Augustales* was a direct consequence of the substantial preponderance of freedmen in the list.

As in the case of the funerary inscriptions of Rome, we find some people marked by filiation (*Gai filius*, abbreviated as *C.f.*) and by tribe name as *ingenui*, and indeed some of these explicitly belonged to the *Centuria* (or *curia*) *Claudia ingenuorum*. Others, those in the majority, are marked by patrons’ names (*Gai libertus*, abbreviated as *C.l.*). But there is also a substantial number of *incerti*, those without either fathers’ or patrons’ names given. About these is naturally the greatest disagreement. I have suggested that many, though not all, were like L. Venidius Ennychus, whose case is explicitly attested, Junian Latins who had been promoted to citizenship. De Ligt and Garnsey prefer to see them, or some of them, as unpromoted Junian Latins. If they are right, the list will contain the names of some without full Roman citizen rights.

Uncertainty is frustrating, but it is also a salutary reminder that the divisions of Roman society were not always clear-cut and easy for us to follow. The effect of the *lex Aelia Sentia* was to create legal categories of people who were neither simply slave or free, nor simply Roman or foreign. Latini Juniani were free, and enjoyed some of the benefits of Roman citizenship, without being citizens, or indeed foreign (*peregrini*). Thanks to Paul Weaver’s studies,⁴⁹ we can see that their numbers must have been substantial, and that at least one reason for the name forms of the *incerti* of Roman funerary inscriptions, who have neither fathers’ nor patrons’ names, yet have the three names typical of the Roman citizen, is that they were Junian Latins. We must also allow for the *dediticii*, former slaves barred from citizenship by their past conduct, yet still free men. What name forms could be borne by previous Junians promoted, like Ennychus, to full citizenship, we do not know. We should also, in my view, allow for a number of illegitimate children, those with a Roman citizen mother, but not born in *iustum matrimonium* to a Roman citizen father. These might be marked as ‘Spuri fili’, and of these there is just one example in the Herculaneum Album, M. Livius Sp. f. Sabinus, listed among the *incerti*. But given the stringent conditions around *iustum matrimonium*, one would

⁴⁷ Purcell 1994; Jongman 2013; Lo Cascio 2016.

⁴⁸ Camodeca 2008; de Ligt and Garnsey 2012; Wallace-Hadrill 2015; Garnsey and de Ligt 2016.

⁴⁹ Weaver 1990, 1991, 1997.

expect a greater proportion of illegitimate children, and maybe the *incerti* include a number of them.

Amidst all the uncertainties and disputes, one point is clear, that the *ingenui* were in a minority. In the surviving fragments, 73 *ingenui* are listed, as against 323 *liberti* and 104 *incerti*.⁵⁰ Since they are listed in formal civic divisions (*centuriae* or possibly *curiae*) according to status, so that the three categories are always listed separately, and since it is possible to infer from the surviving fragments the number and size of the original panels, which were inscribed in pairs, one framed to the left and the other to the right, each with three columns containing around 66 names per column, it is possible to calculate minimum numbers for the original document: 4 columns with 264 names of *ingenui*, 12 with 792 names for *liberti*, and 5 with 330 names for *incerti*. Of course, there may well have been other panels of which no fragments survive, and de Ligt and Garnsey, suggesting that more panels of the *ingenui* at the beginning of the inscription are missing, raise their numbers to a level with that of the *liberti*. But even so, the predominance of Greek *cognomina* among the *incerti* leaves them concluding that freedmen must have been in the majority over the freeborn.

Most significantly, they argue, since we are looking at a minimum of 850 male ex-slaves, once you allow for females at a very conservative estimate of 300, it implies a slave population of at least twice that size, or over 2,200.⁵¹ In a small population of several thousand (they give 4-5,000), this is a large number; we may note that it is compatible with the estimate that slaves formed half of the urban households of Italian cities.⁵² If you add ex-slaves to slaves, it becomes apparent that the freeborn were in a minority in Herculaneum.

In my own view, their calculations err on the side of generosity in positing more missing panels in order to raise the number of *ingenui*, but we are agreed that we are looking at a society characterised by large numbers of slaves and ex-slaves, together outnumbering the freeborn population. This also fits, in my view, with other aspects of the archaeological record. One is to do with average household size. When I attempted to calculate the likely population of Pompeii and Herculaneum, I was struck by the observation that while the number of ground-floor rooms, which Fiorelli had used as the basis of his population estimates, implied a large population (of up to 20,000 for Pompeii), the number of separate units of habitation implied a much smaller population, unless one assumed that the numbers of persons per house was significantly higher than typical modern figures. A population of 10,000 for Pompeii implied an average household of 8 persons, while 20,000 implied 16 per house. From this I concluded that we were looking not at simple parent-and-child family units, but 'housefuls', including slaves, tenants and lodgers.⁵³

The nature of the housing stock of Pompeii and Herculaneum (and the two towns are remarkably similar in their statistics) has implications for the extent and spread of slavery in these towns. A widespread presence of slaves is the easiest way of accounting for the implicit density of inhabitants per house, even allowing for tenants and live-in lodgers as a common

⁵⁰ My numbers follow Camodeca's text. Mouritsen 2011, 130 gives the figures as 119 *ingenui* and 353 *liberti*, but cannot be reconciled with the text.

⁵¹ Garnsey and de Ligt 2016, 81.

⁵² Hopkins 1978, 68; Jongman 1988, 266.

⁵³ Wallace-Hadrill 1994, 96-99.

phenomenon.⁵⁴ You cannot achieve an *average* figure of 8 persons per house without allowing that even small units might often exceed a standard ‘family’ unit. The sheer number of slaves implicit in the Herculaneum Album cannot all be concentrated in the large houses of the rich, but must spread extensively through the housing stock.

Another important index of the extent of slavery is the skeletal evidence from Herculaneum. Potentially the collection of over 300 skeletons recovered from the area of the seashore in Herculaneum offers a usable sample of the total population, of which it might represent a tenth. Indeed, all sorts of factors might mean that the sample was not representative. One might imagine that the rich would flee from an eruption more readily than the poor, whose entire livelihoods were tied to their homes; or that the young and able-bodied might escape more swiftly than the old and frail, or than women burdened with young children. But the strange observation about the age and sex distribution of the skeletons is that, although there are many women and young children present, and typically clustered in the deepest parts of the vaulting by the shore, nevertheless the young and old are less well represented than adults of 20-50. Different analyses have produced different counts, but there seems to be a significant lack of teenagers. In any case, in a self-reproducing population, there must be larger numbers in the younger cohorts than the older, which is not the case.⁵⁵ We might then conclude that, for whatever reason, this sample of victims was not representative of the entire population. But on the other hand the picture might indeed be compatible with a population that was not reproducing itself, and resorted to slavery to make up numbers. In that sense, the picture is compatible with a town in which the *ingenui* were in a minority.

There is no document comparable to the Herculaneum Album for Pompeii, yet here too the funeral epigraphy points to a preponderance of *liberti* over *ingenui*. Perhaps the most significant evidence is in the lists of signatories to the legal documents of Caecilius Jucundus, analysed by Jongman.⁵⁶ Although the signatories do not include status markers, the tendency for witnesses to sign in a hierarchical order, with members of the elite and *ingenui* preceding *liberti*, together with the strong linkage between freedmen and Greek *cognomina*, leads to the conclusion that a majority of the signatories were not of free birth. Again, that conclusion may be thought to coincide with the funerary evidence,⁵⁷ and with the implications of household size discussed above.

Can the evidence of Herculaneum and Pompeii cast light on Rome? Garnsey and de Ligt have recently argued that, despite the epigraphic evidence, this is not likely to have been the case.⁵⁸ Thanks to a combination of public grain distributions, other imperial handouts, and major construction projects, Rome had more to offer than a tiny settlement like Herculaneum, and had the potential to pull in more free migrants. This may be right, but did it? They base their argument on the likely number of slaves in Rome. If there were around 200,000 slaves, they suggest, we are looking at a maximum of 100,000 freedmen, and a total proportion of

⁵⁴ Pirson 1999 shows the frequency of lodgers, but possibly underestimates in excluding those who did not have a separate external door.

⁵⁵ See Wallace-Hadrill 2011, 128-30; Bisel and Bisel 2002; Capasso 2001; Petrone and Fedele 2002.

⁵⁶ Jongman 1988, 264-73; 2003, 117.

⁵⁷ Mouritsen 2016, 128 argues that the Pompeian elite largely abandoned funerary commemoration in the first century AD, an inference hard to square with Roman practice elsewhere.

⁵⁸ Garnsey and de Ligt 2016.

slaves and freedmen as one third of the population.⁵⁹ It is not clear what the envisaged gender balance in their calculation is, but on their figures, the male *liberti* must have been well under 100,000. Nor do their figures leave much wiggle room for Junian Latins. But the problem is that we have no way of knowing slave numbers. Estimates range from 100,000 (Brunt) to as many as 440,000 (Scheidel's top figure).⁶⁰ Scheidel rightly emphasizes the extreme difficulty of pinning down a figure. He notes with concern a tendency to assume that slaves accounted for one third of the total population on the basis that this is the proportion for the ante-bellum south in America. As he puts it, this idea 'has long been popular in those cases in which the actual share of slaves is thought to be significant but is actually completely unknown' (2005, 65). He is deeply sceptical about previous estimates of the Roman slave population: 'In truth, there is no way to infer overall Roman slave totals either from ancient sources or from carrying capacity' (2005, 66). When he turns to his bottom up approach of looking at individual elements of slavery and estimates urban slavery, he admits, 'I see no way to advance beyond controlled speculation' (2005, 67). He guesses a range of 220-440,000 for Rome, and for computational purposes adopts 300,000 as a working hypothesis.

If we have no way of estimating the numbers of slaves in Rome, we cannot use that as a basis for estimating the number of freedmen. The problem with guesstimating numbers is that over time they turn into definite figures: just as the figure of one million for the population of Rome owes more to repetition than to evidence, the estimate of 200,000 slaves turns an unknown into a figure from which other figures are inferred. In my view, we should underline the unreliability of all figures and guesstimates concerned, and admit that the breakdown of Rome's population, like its total size, is unknowable to us, and was probably unknown to the Romans themselves. What we do know is their perception that there were too few freeborn men, and too many freed. The entire premise of the Augustan marital and manumission legislation is that there was a shortfall of free births, which needed to be encouraged by incentives, and an excess of manumissions, which were limited by restrictions both on wills and on lifetime manumission. Prejudicial remarks about freedmen become only too common in the early empire. These include complaints about growing freedmen numbers.

So in AD 24, when a potential outbreak of a slave rebellion is put down, Tacitus comments that the Rome was in a state of anxiety because of the multitude of slave households, which grew immensely, and the daily diminution of the freeborn plebs (*Ann.* 4.27, *trepidam ob multitudinem familiarum, quae gliscebant inmensum, minore in dies plebe ingenua*). Again, in the great senatorial debate under Nero (AD 61) over the fate of the 400 slaves of the murdered city prefect Pedanius Secundus who lived under the same roof in the city (*Ann.* 14, 42-45), we not only learn (to our astonishment) just how large a slave household in a single house could be (and Pedanius evidently had other properties and other slaves elsewhere), but the ties of solidarity that bound the urban plebs to the slaves. The senate resisted their protests, but their riotous conduct stopped them from putting their death sentence into effect until the emperor intervened with troops. Five years previously, in AD 56, the same senate debated the proposal that *liberti* who showed ingratitude to their patrons should have their freedom revoked. On this occasion the opinion that prevailed was that freedom was inherently irrevoc-

⁵⁹ For very similar calculations, Tacoma 2016, 69 and 177.

⁶⁰ Scheidel 2005, see also Scheidel 1997, and 2004.

cable. The argument against depriving freedmen of their rights hinged on their diffusion in Roman society (*quippe late diffusum id corpus*):

the tribes, the decuries, the ministers of magistrates and priests, the cohorts recruited in the city, very many of the *equites* and even many of the senators were originally drawn from freedmen; if freedmen were set apart for different treatment, it would only make evident the shortage of the freeborn, *penuriam ingenuorum* (*Ann.* 13.27).

Such generalizing statements in Tacitus are unquantifiable. It is doubtful whether the historian, or the senators, or even the emperor, had access to hard figures that would have allowed them to bear out such statements. What is clear is that the perception was that *ingenui* were in short supply.

Conclusions

In this morass of uncertainty and debate, can we draw any firm conclusions about the population of Rome, and the role of immigration in sustaining it? The firm figures which Augustus offers for recipients of his handouts, and of the monthly grain distributions risk seducing us into overly precise population figures. The population of Rome was variable in its nature, changing over time in both its scale and composition. The fact that the numbers of beneficiaries are not stable (say around 250,000), but can drop from 320,000 to 200,000 in a few years show that they are not simply partial population figures, but reflect large variations in the definition of who was eligible for various benefits. The variations might be of age (if Lo Cascio is right), of status (if Virioust is right), but also of location of domicile in a city with remarkably porous boundaries that could spread up to a mile. The variations also betray an increasing anxiety on the part of the emperor not merely to buy popularity with the urban plebs, but to keep the numbers of those entitled under control. The introduction of a *numerus clausus* effectively transformed what had been a right of the Roman citizen to a sought-after privilege.

Nonetheless, vary though the numbers may, it is very hard to imagine that the citizen population of Rome, including women and children, was less than half a million in the Augustan period. The citizen population, however, did not constitute the entire free population. In addition to *cives Romani*, whether freeborn or otherwise, there was an unknown, and after AD 4 gradually growing, number of Junian Latins, manumitted slaves who did not enjoy citizen rights (including access to the grain dole). Since under the *lex Aelia Sentia* anyone freed under the age of 30 should in theory have become a Junian Latin, and since life expectancy was low, it is reasonable to suppose that they became nearly as numerous, if not more so, as the *liberti optimo iure Quiritium*. In addition, there was an unquantifiable number of *peregrini*, freeborn men from across the empire who did not enjoy citizen status. Then there were the slaves, not just in large numbers in rich households, but also in small individual numbers in numerous modest households.

The fact that in the high imperial period freedmen outnumber freeborn, so far as we can see, in tombstones cannot be taken as proof that they were a majority of the population as a whole. The choice to put up a tombstone is both economic and cultural; yet to argue that the freeborn plebs could neither afford nor had the desire to do so raises difficult questions: can the freed really have been systematically better off than the freeborn? Why, if the freed were

so anxious to commemorate their citizen status, did the freeborn not share their urge, and why, if they saw the freeborn abandon the habit, did they not also do so? Why would the children of freedmen who were themselves freeborn not be as well-off and as anxious to commemorate themselves as their parents? But though we cannot have confidence that the freed outnumbered the freeborn, it does seem very likely that the *ingenui* were in the minority of the population of the city at large, once slaves, *liberti* including Junian Latins, and foreigners are taken into account. To judge from discussions in the senate, they seem to have felt outnumbered.

All had to cope with the tendency of great cities to devour their inhabitants, above all one with endemic malaria. Emperors understood the risks. Augustus made enormous efforts to make Rome a safer place to live in, by setting up systems to control fire and floods, by greatly adding to the supply of fresh water, by paving the roads and purging the sewers, and by maintaining law and order with a heavy military presence. All these measures must have tended to limit the Urban Graveyard Effect, and make Rome a healthier place to live. Even so, until the advances of modern medicine, it is unlikely he could hold disease at bay (and Galen confirms the contrary), and it is only too likely that the population failed to reproduce itself. The perceived *inopia ingenuorum* was part of this effect, and Rome was reliant both on the importation of new blood through slavery, and the voluntary migration of free persons from across the empire, in order to maintain its scale.

What follows from this? Even if we cannot put numbers to it, we can accept that Rome enjoyed a diversity of origins of population matched by few other pre-modern cities. It also evidently had both a capacity for integration and a capacity to respect diversity. Slaves could become citizens, and their children could be freeborn citizens. To what extent did the use of the dominant language, Latin, unify them, to what extent was Greek a parallel language in the city? How far did non Greco-Roman languages, Hebrew, Syriac, Celtic, survive in parallel? How far were local cultural diversities compatible with the sense of being Roman?⁶¹

Here, as important as knowing the statistics is to understand how the Romans themselves perceived the phenomenon of immigration. There was evidently a range of opinions: Seneca was considerably more willing to embrace diversity than Juvenal's Umbricius. What did the emperor think? It is not clear to me that, had we been able to ask Augustus himself, he could have told us how many non-citizens there were in Rome. Nor is it clear that he cared. What he counted, and what mattered to him and others, was the citizen body, the *cives Romani iure Quiritium*. If Suetonius suggests that he was anxious to avoid an influx of servile and foreign blood, it was into the citizen body, not into the space of the city of Rome. His legislation was aimed at controlling access to citizenship and its privileges. There is no legislation controlling access to Rome as a city, and as Claudia Moatti has shown, Rome lacked both the sort of toll gates and the civic structures to control the arrival of outsiders.⁶² The Praetorian Prefect had the power to expel trouble-makers; but though there were indeed occasional expulsions under the early empire, they were not of migrants as such, except for one occasion of shortage when Augustus expelled all *peregrini* from the city (Suetonius, *Div. Aug.* 42.3): the more common target was members of foreign cults, astrologers and magicians, and other perceived trouble

⁶¹ See Tacoma 2016, 204-240.

⁶² Moatti 2000 and 2004; Todisco 2005; Moatti and Kaiser 2007.

makers.⁶³ The one case of expulsions on ethnic grounds was of Jews under Tiberius; but this is because they were perceived at one particular moment as troublemakers. The catacombs demonstrate that what was already a significant community in Cicero's day, and acquired some privileges in Augustus' day, survived to be the most visible single diverse community in Rome.⁶⁴

What is the way forward? I doubt if we will ever make much further progress by arguing over numbers. We will have to settle for the observation that migration was a major feature of imperial Rome, indeed fundamental to its character. What we need to understand better is how a city which like many modern cities survived by importing people from outside, differed from them in the extent to which the geographical spread of the area it drew on enabled it to import a deeply diverse population, and by the essential role of slavery, and the integration of slavery not merely into the workforce, but into domestic life and the sort of craft economy that was so closely linked to the domestic. Rome was not like a north American city, in which immigrants could be distinguished by skin colour. It was not like an Ottoman city, in which non-Muslim communities, Jewish, Frankish and Orthodox, were allowed to co-exist with separate identities. It was a multilingual city; but it was not like modern London or Bradford in which linguistically defined communities sit alongside each other. What we need to understand better, in my view, is not what made imperial Rome like modern cities, but what made it different.

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⁶³ Tacoma 2016, 92-104.

⁶⁴ Tacoma 2014.

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