
INTRODUCTION

In the study of social structure in the Roman world of the first and second centuries AD nothing is more important or more complex than the slave and freed slave classes. Their numbers, although not absolutely determinable, were large and even predominant in many urban and some rural areas. Most urban slaves of average intelligence and application had a reasonable expectation of early manumission and often of continued association with their patron. They enjoyed a high rate of social advancement, which was often much greater than that of the freeborn proletariat. The fundamental social legislation of Augustus attempted to provide a stable social hierarchy based on legal status. But, at the same time, there was in the early Imperial period a degree of social mobility sufficient to prevent the structure breaking down in violence and social discontent. Among the mobile sections of society the slave-born classes played a significant role.

But the status ladder within these classes themselves is both long and complex. From the point of view of juridical status, there is not only the fundamental distinction between slaves (*servi*) who are without rights, and freed slaves or freedmen (*liberti*) who are citizens, but there are also further distinctions within each of these classes – formally manumitted freedmen with full citizenship, informally manumitted freedmen (*Latini Iuniani*) who did not acquire Roman citizenship, but only Latin status without full political rights, and *dediticii* who could never become Roman citizens. Among the slaves there were those whose masters were free and those whose masters were themselves slaves (*servi vicarii*). From the point of view of social or occupational status the differences are even greater, depending on the status of the master or patron. They range from the freedmen and slaves of the emperor himself and of other wealthy *nobiles*, all the way to the penal slaves in the mines. The owners of slaves were typically not only freeborn citizens, especially the members of the senatorial and equestrian orders, but also many freedmen and slaves themselves. It is important, therefore, for any deeper analysis of the social structure of the early Empire to distinguish between the different status-groups of the slave-born classes in general, in order to isolate, if possible, those elements of exceptionally high status and mobility which were an example and incentive to the rest. The most important of these in

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the early Empire were the slaves and freedmen of the emperor, the *Familia Caesaris*.

The *Familia Caesaris* was intrinsically important because the master and patron of its members was the emperor himself. This alone was sufficient to accord them high status in slave-born society. The *Familia Caesaris* is also important to us because of its continuity – its development can be studied in detail over a long period extending from the time of Augustus to the early third century, when the epigraphical evidence ceases. Each succeeding emperor inherited the ownership and patronal rights over the slaves and freedmen of his predecessor. As a general rule, a continuity was maintained between one reign and the next in the personnel of the domestic Palace service and especially in the Imperial administration properly so-called. The careers of individual freedmen can frequently be traced without interruption through the reign, or even several reigns, following that of the manumitting emperor. The longest career was that of the father of Claudius Etruscus¹ which began under Tiberius and ended under Domitian, but there were many like Graptus who in AD 58 had been familiar with the Palace since the days of Tiberius,² and C. Iulius Aug. I. Samius, freed by Gaius, who held a procuratorial post under both Claudius and Nero.³ The bulk of the Imperial civil service was made up of those who were below equestrian rank and who were almost entirely the emperor's freedmen and slaves. The administrative and social history of these levels of the civil service is of particular interest and importance, but has nevertheless been grievously neglected.

From the methodological point of view also, the *Familia Caesaris* is a particularly suitable group for such a study. By contrast with most other groups in the sub-equestrian levels of society, the individual slaves and freedmen who comprised the emperor's *familia* can be positively identified. Equally important, they can mostly be readily dated. In the chronological and status wilderness of the sepulchral inscriptions these two advantages together are almost unique; and the scale on which they occur is certainly unparalleled.

To the single personal name, which was the only name a slave possessed in normal circumstances, the emperor's slaves added the distinctive mark of status 'Caes(aris) ser(vus)' or 'Aug(usti) vern(a)', or simply 'Aug(usti)' or 'Caes(aris)'. The emperor's freedmen, in addition to the usual *tria nomina* of a Roman citizen (*praenomen*, *nomen (gentilicium)* and *cognomen*), took the status indication 'Aug(usti) lib(ertus)' or 'Aug(usti) l(ibertus)'. This they displayed with pride as a status symbol even in the period beginning with the first century AD when the freedmen of private citizens were ceasing to use any

¹ *PIR*², c 763; and especially Statius, *Silvae* iii. 3. See Part III, below, pp. 284 f.

² Tacitus, *Ann.* xiii. 47; *PIR*¹, G 140.

³ XIV 3644 = D 1942.

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form of freedman indication at all.¹ Imperial freedmen would thus appear as, e.g., Ti. Claudius Aug. l. Onesimus, T. Flavius Aug. lib. Onesimus, M. Ulpius Aug. lib. Onesimus, etc., in each case deriving their *praenomen* and *nomen* from the emperor who manumitted them: e.g. 'Ti. Claudius' from Claudius or Nero, 'T. Flavius' from Vespasian, Titus or Domitian, 'M. Ulpius' from Trajan, and so on. In many cases they omitted their *praenomen* and *nomen* and would appear with *cognomen* (personal name) and status indication only, e.g. Onesimus Aug. lib., still positively identified as a freedman of an emperor.

The criteria for dating the inscriptions of these Imperial freedmen and slaves are more complex and, indeed, have advanced considerably in sophistication as a result of recent studies.² But the basic chronological framework is derived from the *nomina gentilicia* of the freedmen which occur in the majority of their inscriptions: Iulius, Claudius, Flavius, Ulpius, Aelius, Aurelius, Septimius, and some associated with other non-reigning members of the Imperial family. These Imperial *nomina* when used in conjunction with the Imperial freedman status indication establish positive chronological limits for a very large number of inscriptions, and can be used in turn to establish secondary chronological criteria based, for example, on the form of the status indication for both Imperial freedmen and slaves.

Thirdly, the Imperial slaves and freedmen who can be thus identified and dated are sufficiently numerous to permit a quasi-statistical treatment of the wealth of data which their inscriptions afford – over four thousand individuals in all are recorded.³

From the social point of view, however, the Familia Caesaris was far from homogeneous. It comprised in the first instance the slaves that belonged to or came into the possession of successive emperors either as personal property by family inheritance, private bequest, gift or by purchase, or as part of the

¹ L. R. Taylor, 'Freedmen and Freeborn in the Epitaphs of Imperial Rome', *AJPh* 82 (1961), 113 f.

² Cf. H. Chantraine, *Freigelassene und Sklaven im Dienst der römischen Kaiser* (Wiesbaden, 1967); and see Part I below.

³ Statistics in the full sense that will satisfy the mathematical purist are not to be looked for in ancient studies. We have no means of determining the *proportion* of Imperial freedmen and slaves of the Familia Caesaris whose names have survived in any given period, nor can we even be sure that the proportion is the same for different periods, e.g. for the Julian (early first century), Flavian (late first century) or Aurelian (late second century–early third century) periods. The results will depend mainly on the nature of the question under consideration. Despite the pessimistic warnings of F. G. Maier, 'Römische Bevölkerungsgeschichte und Inschriftenstatistik', *Historia* 2 (1954), 318–51, about the use of statistics in ancient demographic and social studies, the attempt should be made where feasible, as with the Familia Caesaris, and not abandoned on *a priori* grounds. For some of the kinds of problems involved in this area and the results to be expected, see M. K. Hopkins, 'The Age of Roman Girls at Marriage', *Population Studies* 18 (1965), 309–27; and 'On the Probable Age Structure of the Roman Population', *Population Studies* 20 (1966), 245–64 (with numerous further references); and for freedmen, Taylor, 113–32.

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patrimonium which passed from each emperor to his successor by virtue of his official position, irrespective of family connections. The basic relationship between the ordinary *Caesaris servus* and the emperor, while it was essentially the legal one between master and slave,¹ was complicated by the great size and geographical diffusion of the *Familia Caesaris* throughout the empire. Hence the multiplicity of opportunities for professional and social advancement, and corresponding differentiation between the successful and the unsuccessful.

In the second place, the *Familia Caesaris* included those ex-slaves who had been manumitted by an emperor either during his lifetime or after his death by testament. The relationship here between *Augusti libertus* and emperor was that of *clientela*, in its formal obligatory aspect, with the rights and obligations which this would confer on both *libertus* and *patronus*.² Among the Imperial freedmen there are marked differences of social status, which largely depend, as with the slaves, on the particular branch of the emperor's service to which they belonged and on the professional grade and rate of advancement achieved within that service. Hence in addition to the legal categories it is necessary to describe the *Familia Caesaris* from the point of view of the functions of the slaves and freedmen who comprised its services.

The traditional division of any large *familia* into the *familia urbana* (slaves attached to the household of their master in the city), and *familia rustica* (slaves working on the rural estates of their master) is not appropriate for the *Familia Caesaris*.³ On the domestic side, one might equate the Palace management and staff in Rome with the *familia urbana*. On the other hand, the management and staff of the patrimonial estates and other property throughout the empire, in so far as freedmen and slaves with Imperial status

¹ For all legal aspects of Roman slavery see the full treatment of W. W. Buckland, *The Roman Law of Slavery* (Cambridge, 1908), and M. Kaser, *Das Römische Privatrecht*, 2 vols. (Munich, 1955). See also the useful *Encyclopedic Dictionary of Roman Law* (Philadelphia, 1953) by A. Berger. The bibliography of Roman slavery in general is very extensive: cf. R. H. Barrow, *Slavery in the Roman Empire* (London, 1928), W. L. Westermann, *The Slave Systems of Greek and Roman Antiquity* (Philadelphia, 1955) and the works there cited. Also see the Bibliographical Essay in *Slavery in Classical Antiquity: Views and Controversies*, ed. M. I. Finley (Cambridge, 1960), pp. 229–35.

² On *liberti* the best general treatments are: Vitucci, *Diz. Epig.* iv (1958), 905 f., and A. M. Duff, *Freedmen in the Early Roman Empire* (Oxford, 1928, repr. Heffer 1958); Lécivain in D-S III, 1200 f. is sometimes useful. I have not seen C. Cosentini, *Studi sui liberti* (Catania, 1948; II 1950). On legal relations between patron and freedmen: *Dig.* xxxvii. 14 (de iure patronatus); ib. 15 (de obsequiis parentibus et patronis praestandis); xxxviii. 1 (de operis libertorum). Kaser, ZSS 58 (1938), 88 f., *Röm. Privatrecht*, I, 103 f., 256 f. Duff, *Freedmen*, pp. 36 f. On *clientes*: A. von Premerstein, P-W IV, 23 f. Th. Mommsen, *Römische Forschungen*, I (Berlin, 1864), 255 f.; *Römische Staatsrecht*, III (3rd ed. Leipzig, 1887–8, repr. Basle, 1952), 54 f.

³ *Dig.* I. 16.166 (Pomponius): 'urbana familia et rustica non loco sed genere distinguitur'; cf. *CIL* VI 1747; VIII 5704; IX 825, 3028 = D 7367; XII 1025; and Bömer, I, 440 f. For a full list of occupations illustrating the division of labour, see Marquardt, *Privatleben der Römer*, I (2nd ed. Leipzig, 1879), 137 f. – *familia rustica*: 137 f.; *familia urbana*: 142 f.

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indication were involved, can scarcely be said to belong to a *familia rustica*. Their affinities are much more with the domestic and in some cases with the administrative service. This applies even to those who call themselves *vilici* (estate managers), an occupational term traditionally associated with the *familia rustica*. The slave workers in the Imperial mines and quarries and on the estates, with rare exceptions, did not carry the Imperial status indication; they were of very low status, inferior to the *aquarii* for example, who only occasionally had the Imperial status indication, *Caesaris servus* or its variants. Although they could be said to make up a *familia rustica*, they do not belong to the Familia Caesaris status group we are considering. Even more clearly, the freedman heads of departments and the subordinate officials, both clerical and sub-clerical, of many administrative departments in Rome and the provinces do not easily fit into the category of *familia urbana*. The fact is that the Familia Caesaris, consisting essentially of the private staff of the emperor who came to perform public or semi-public functions, broke through all the traditional categories belonging to the *familia* of a *privatus*, and came to form what was virtually an *ordo libertorum et servorum principis*, a new 'estate' or status-group in the hierarchy of Roman Imperial society.¹

The most important functional division within the Familia Caesaris is between the staff engaged in the personal service of the emperor as the greatest of the noble Roman magnates, an extension of the domestic household of any wealthy Roman, on the one hand, and on the other, the staff assisting the emperor in his duties as magistrate, albeit one with a vast and ill-defined sphere of competence. Not that any clear-cut separation of these functions into domestic on the one hand, and administrative on the other is possible. The very nature of the Imperial position in the context of social and political change ruled this out. The emperor's *patrimonium*,² for example, held an ambivalent position as more than personal and less than state property attached to the Imperial title. It was not to be disposed of by will as if

¹ The suggestion that the Imperial slaves and freedmen, as an élite status-group in Roman Imperial society, may well be described in terms of an *ordo* is due to Boulvert. For discussion on this, as on much else, I am grateful to him.

² On the private fortune of Augustus, its growth from gifts, legacies and inheritances, and the expenditure from this source for public purposes: Augustus, *Res Gest.* 15, 18; Suetonius, *Aug.* 101; Dio, liii. 28. Cf. M. Rostovtzeff, *SEHRE*², pp. 55 f., 561 f. (nn. 16–17). On the *patrimonium*: O. Hirschfeld, 'Der Grundbesitz der römischen Kaiser in den ersten drei Jahrhunderten', *Klio* 2 (1902), 46 f. = *Kleine Schriften*, 516 f.; R. S. Rogers, 'The Roman Emperors as Heirs and Legatees', *TAPA* 78 (1947), 140 f.; F. Millar, 'The Fiscus in the First Two Centuries', *JRS* 53 (1963), 29 f.; and esp. P. A. Brunt, 'The "Fiscus" and its Development', *JRS* 56 (1966), 75 f. (The last four articles mentioned give full references to the evidence.) See now also: G. Boulvert, 'Tacite et le Fiscus', *Rev. Hist. de Droit franç. et étrang.* (1970), 430–8. Rostovtzeff (*SEHRE*², p. 562 n. 17) observed that the evidence on the fortunes and property of Augustus' family, his friends and associates had never been collected and investigated; this gap has at least been partly filled by the recent studies cited above.

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belonging to a private estate.¹ And what of the disputed meaning of the term *fiscus* and the part that it played in the financial structure of the empire?² Even the private property of a new *princeps* and of a new Imperial dynasty could not be insulated from the rest of the Imperial *patrimonium* ; it was simply added to it and passed *en bloc* to the next succeeding *princeps* , whether he was a relative or not. Thus, the *figlinae Domitianae* , the property of Domitia Lucilla, inherited by her son Marcus Aurelius, passed into the Imperial *patrimonium* and completed the Imperial monopoly of the brick industry in the mid-second century.³

The broad distinction is between (A) the staff employed in the daily maintenance, provisioning and supervision of residences and properties for the emperor's personal upkeep, enjoyment and consumption, and (B) the staff engaged in supervising the revenue-producing Imperial properties or in the basically financial and administrative functions of the civil service proper. Careers of individual freedmen and slaves could embrace both types of service, but rarely, and usually only at the topmost levels open to them.

A. The domestic group includes the staff of the Imperial Palace on the Palatine, the *domus Augustiana* , and of the villas and residences at Tibur, Tusculum, Alsium, Antium, Caieta, Tarracina, Pausilypum and elsewhere in Italy, the Imperial gardens in Rome, such as the *horti Sallustiani* , *Serviliani* , *Maiani et Lamiani* , and others at Puteoli, Surrentum and elsewhere.

Their duties ranged from the menial, such as *custos* and *aedituus* (guard and keeper), *lecticarius* (litter-bearer), through those with some degree of responsibility or skill, *topiarius* (ornamental gardener), *tricliniarchus* (who was in charge of the dining-room), *praegustator* (Imperial taster), *archimagirus* (head chef), and the almost absurdly minute differentiation of duties that seems to have been characteristic of the Palatine establishment, to the managerial posts of *procurator* and *subprocurator domus Augustianae* . The head of the domestic organisation, with overall financial responsibility for its budget, was the *procurator castrensis* . The latter post formed part of the normal freedman procuratorial career which could include posts in both the domestic and administrative services, particularly in those posts where financial experience and ability was at a premium. Even more influential,

¹ The same applies to the *res privata* in view of the evidence that its establishment as a separate branch of the administration dates back to the Antonine period at least to Antoninus Pius. See: H. Nesselhauf, 'Patrimonium und res privata des römischen Kaisers', *Historia Augusta Colloquium* 1963 (= *Antiquitas* 4, 1964), 73 f.; Boulvert, *EAI* , pp. 300 f.

² Cf. *Dig.* xliii. 8.2.4: 'res enim fiscales quasi propriae et privatae principis sunt'. For a good collection of material on the *fiscus* and discussion see the articles of Millar, Brunt and Boulvert referred to above (p. 5 n. 2).

³ On the *figlinae Domitianae* see H. Bloch, *I bolli laterizi e la storia edilizia romana* (Rome, 1947), p. 339. Further examples in Millar, 'The Fiscus in the First Two Centuries', at pp. 41 f. and n. 176.

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especially under particularly susceptible emperors, were the *cubicularii* who, together with the freedmen *ab admissione*, controlled access to the emperor, and because of their close and confidential contact with the emperor exercised a potent but unofficial (hence uncontrolled) influence on matters of policy outside their strictly domestic sphere.¹

B. The administrative staff were employed in a wide variety of departments including all aspects of the receipt and payment of funds under the emperor's control, as well as many concerned with public services such as aqueducts, libraries, the post, roads, public works and buildings, and Imperial enterprises such as mines, marble quarries, and the mint. Here too the range in status is wide, extending from the sub-clerical functionaries, of whom the *pedisequi*, *custodes*, *nomenclatores* and *tabellarii* are typical, through the junior and intermediate clerical grades of *adiutor*, *vicarius*, *dispensator*, *a commentariis* and *tabularius*, and those of senior clerical rank, the *tabularii a rationibus* and the *proximi*, to the senior administrative positions of *procurator*, *a rationibus*, *ab epistulis*, *a libellis* and others of undisputed eminence. Again, there is a wide variation in the status attached to a post of the same rank in different departments, for example the numerous departments in Rome concerned principally with finance, ranging from the central finance bureaux of the *a rationibus* and the *ratio patrimonii*, down to the department responsible for the most minor tax. There is also the status dimension which is linked with the location of different sections of the same department; the head office in Rome naturally took precedence over the branch offices in the provincial centres, and even here the differences between, for example, Carthage, Ephesus, Lugdunum, Virunum, Sarmizegetusa and Apulum have to be taken into account in presenting the full status picture.

Lastly, there are the Imperial slaves and freedmen found in private commercial and industrial enterprises on their own account or otherwise engaged in activities not connected with the emperor's service. Many members of the *Familia Caesaris* had occupational titles which indicate that they practised a skilled trade, *vestifex* or *vestifica* (tailor, dressmaker), for instance, or *caelator* (engraver), *argentarius* (silver-smith), *speclariarius* (mirror-maker) and many others.² These, however, were engaged in domestic production for the Imperial household, and by so doing contributed to its economic self-

¹ Under the absolutist regime of the later empire, the ex-slave eunuchs held the highest positions in the Palace domestic service and were, indeed, among the most important in the empire. Two of the chief posts were the *praepositus sacri cubiculi* and the *primicerius sacri cubiculi*; these represent a formal recognition of, and a formidable increase in, the power of the officials of the Imperial Bedchamber. See Jones, *LRE*, II, 566 f.; III, 162 f. (references). Also M. K. Hopkins, 'Eunuchs in Politics in the Later Roman Empire', *Proc. Camb. Phil. Soc.* 9 (1963), 62 f.

² Boulvert, *EAI*, pp. 27 f.

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sufficiency. While it is possible that some of their products were sold on the open market or even to other members of the *Familia*, this was not the primary purpose of these activities.

Similarly, the emperor's building activities required a work force of skilled craftsmen and unskilled labour; these activities also had as a necessary consequence the acquisition of control by the emperor over the sources of supply for building materials. Craftsmen who worked outside the household, such as *lapidarii* (stonemasons), *marmorarii* (marble-cutters), *structores* (carpenters), *architecti* (master-builders), were engaged on projects under Imperial direction and not working, except incidentally, on their own account. The Imperial freedmen *offinatores* (workshop supervisors) whose names appear on the lead *fistulae* produced in the Imperial factories were Imperial employees, as were those found in the brick industry, where the Imperial monopoly was more complete.

Apart from their participation as workers or managers in Imperial enterprises, the main contribution of Imperial freedmen and slaves to the general commercial and industrial life of the empire was not active working competition in private enterprise. Their contribution lay rather in the capital which they could supply. Many of the freedmen became modestly or even exceedingly wealthy. Like other Roman capitalists they invested if possible in land, but also in industry. Evidence is not plentiful. The estates of Pallas in Egypt, the ownership of the *figlinae Ociana* by Ti. Iulius (Aug. lib.) Optatus *praefectus classis Misenensis*, and of the *praedia Quintanensia* by Agathyrus, freedman of Trajan or Plotina, are examples of investment in property by members of the *Familia Caesaris*, a practice that can be assumed to have been fairly common.¹ But on the inscriptions, which are mostly sepulchral, the Imperial status indication together with an occupational title reveal a post in the emperor's service, not independent private activity on their own account.

THE SOURCES

The primary material for the study of the *Familia Caesaris* is predominantly inscriptional. A great mass of inscriptions directly relevant to the subject is to be found in the volumes of the *Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum* and in the supplementary epigraphical publications embracing all parts of the Roman empire. These are mainly sepulchral, but also include many dedications and public documentary inscriptions. From them no fewer than four thousand

¹ On Imperial slaves and freedmen in industry see esp. H. Gummerus, art. 'Industrie und Handel', P-W IX (1916), 1455 f.; H. Bloch, *I bolli laterizi*, pp. 14 f., 90, 209 f. For Pallas: *P. Ryl.* II 255; *P. Bour.* 42.4.

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individual slaves and freedmen of the emperor can be identified. The very magnitude of the list, and the fact that, in particular, *CIL* Volume VI is deficient in indexes of any kind, except the *Index nominum*, has inspired in scholars a despair as complete as it has been justified.¹ A systematic collection of this material was an essential preliminary to a detailed study of the *Familia Caesaris*. As the indexes of the *CIL* are not consistently reliable for information on status indication, I have made an independent search of all volumes. Most of the inscriptions are brief, but nearly all give some information, however exiguous, about wives, family relationships, ages, etc. and nearly half of them mention occupations and official posts held and membership of *collegia*, benefactions and municipal honours received, if any. The treatment of this material is basically statistical rather than prosopographical, except for freedmen in the senior ranks. One of the limitations of this material is the restricted range of the information given. Another is the uneven distribution of it throughout the various regions of the empire, partly because of the haphazard chance of archaeological discovery. Nearly three-quarters of all the inscriptions come from Rome, and over four-fifths from Rome and Italy together. The provinces, with the notable exception of Africa and some administrative centres such as Ephesus and Lugdunum, are under-represented, in particular the Greek-speaking region of the empire, except Asia Minor. There are barely two hundred Greek inscriptions, or only five per cent of the whole. This makes any statistical comparison of one province or group of provinces with another very hazardous and subject to caution.

Complementary to the inscriptions, but less important for this subject, is the literary evidence. This is abundant for the first century in Tacitus, Suetonius and Cassius Dio, but less satisfactory both in quality and quantity for the second and early third centuries with the *Historia Augusta*, Herodian and the fragments of Cassius Dio. There are discussions and remarks of varying value in Strabo, Philo, Pliny the Elder, Seneca, Josephus, Pliny the Younger, Epictetus, Frontinus, Plutarch, Martial, Statius, Juvenal, Fronto and others. But on the *Familia Caesaris* the literary sources as a whole are prejudiced, sensational, repetitive and depressing. Casual references, for example, in Pliny, Tacitus and Martial reveal a common attitude towards the emperor's freedmen and slaves. The degree of control exercised over his 'famuli' was one of the criteria for distinguishing an emperor's worth in the

¹ Mention should be made here of the project, now completed, under the direction of Dr E. J. Jory at the University of Western Australia and to be published under the auspices of *CIL* at the Deutsche Akademie der Wissenschaften zu Berlin, to produce a complete word-index, *index cognominum*, *index fragmentorum*, etc. to *CIL* Vol. VI using advanced computer methods. Such an index should greatly assist studies in this and other fields where the primary evidence is predominantly epigraphic, voluminous, and heavily concentrated in Volume VI of *CIL*.

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eyes of his class-conscious contemporaries.¹ Their range of interest is largely confined to the few freedmen at the top whose careers impinged on politics. Among the literary authorities, it would perhaps be naive to expect the consular historians, such as Tacitus and Cassius Dio, to admit slaves and freedmen regularly into their pages, unless to provide spectacular examples of non-virtue. But Pallas, Narcissus, Callistus and other notorious top freedmen are so untypical of the ordinary freedman personnel in the administration, both in their influence and affluence, that their cases must be used with caution. Their careers, however, do raise the questions of how and from what beginnings they rose to eminence. Tacitus is of no special value to us here. He is consistently indignant about freedmen and his main indignation is reserved for the *potentia* exercised by Imperial freedmen. The key words in the discussion of the occupational aspect of the Familia Caesaris, such as *tabularius*, *dispensator*, *vicarius*, with a single exception (*Hist.* i. 49), simply do not occur in Tacitus, nor does he ever seem to use the word 'procurator' of freedmen.² It is mostly from writers such as the senatorial Frontinus and Pliny, and the equestrians Suetonius and the elder Pliny, working inside the administration and writing technical or anecdotal works, that we get the valuable but meagre literary information relevant to this subject.³

The papyrological evidence concerns almost entirely the administration of Egypt. Because of the nature of the documents and a tendency by Imperial freedmen and slaves to omit the formal status indication in them, or have it omitted by others, this material presents problems of its own and needs separate treatment as, indeed, does the place of Egypt in the provincial administrative system.

The legal sources, which are very voluminous on Roman slavery in general, contain a large number of references to the Familia Caesaris, although the majority of the relevant legal texts themselves belong to the period after the early third century and concern the fiscal slaves of a later period than that with which we are here concerned. The difficulty here is to decide with any

¹ Pliny, *Panegy.* 88: 'plerique principes cum essent civium domini, libertorum erant servi; horum consiliis, horum nutu regebantur...'; Martial, ix. 79.1: 'oderat ante ducum famulos turbamque priorem et Palatinum Roma supercilium...'; Tacitus, *Hist.* i. 49: '(Galba) amicorum libertorumque, ubi in bonos incidisset, sine reprehensione patiens, si mali forent, usque ad culpam ignarus'.

² See D. Stockton, *Historia* 10 (1961), 116 f. esp. at 119 n. 11.

³ Suetonius, more successfully than Tacitus, writes 'sine studio et ira' on the subject of the Imperial freedmen and slaves and is often more rewarding for his factual attitudes; e.g. *Calig.* 56: 'non sine conscientia potentissimorum libertorum praefectorumque praetorii'; in discussing the preparations for Gaius' assassination, Suetonius juxtaposes Imperial freedmen and the praetorian prefects, qualifying both groups with the epithet *potentissimi*, but refraining from further comment on the role of the freedmen, except perhaps by implication in mentioning them first. One cannot see Tacitus being so restrained.