ALL IN THE FAMILY

Childhood & Fictive Kinship in Roman Society

GAIA GIANNI

All in the Family

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Gaia Gianni

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To my grandparents

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Preface and Acknowledgments

A wise person once told me that, no matter the topic or field of study, everyone always ends up writing a dissertation that is really about themselves. This book, whose predecessor was my dissertation, is even more a reflection of me, my life, my family, and my many pseudofamilial bonds. I was lucky to be raised by amazing parents, who also let other individuals play important roles in my life. Although I am certainly a product of my nuclear and extended family, I am also aware of the important role that neighbors, older playmates, teachers, and friends played in my life. Through them, I came to learn about the existence of foreign languages like English (an older friend told me she had just started learning it in school) and Latin (my fifth-grade teacher wrote *risus abundat in ore stultorum* on the chalkboard). Even though I never did manage to learn to play piano, it was my piano teacher who taught me to appreciate the finer things in life: Latin historiography and fantasy novels.

I cannot deny that my upbringing influences how I think about family, kinship, and interpersonal relations. I am fortunate to have crossed paths with so many individuals who cared for me like a sister, a daughter, or a cousin. Perhaps I am more biased than most when it comes to establishing the importance of fictive kinship, but I also believe that every single reader can think of a friend whom they consider a sibling, or a mentor whom they love like an aunt or an uncle. As we are the sum of all our interactions and what we have learned from them, a myriad of individuals is responsible for making us who we are. Some though are special: they are family to us. This book is born out of the belief that these connections were just as meaningful to individuals living in the ancient world.

Yet this monograph is not only about family and kinship. It is also the product of my love for epigraphy. Becoming an epigraphist was not part of my academic plans. I had taken an epigraphy course during my MA career, but I did not find it particularly interesting (if anything, triumphal arches seemed a bit overrated). I scored an acceptable grade on the exam and moved on. Then, in my very first semester as a PhD student at Brown, I took an

epigraphy seminar. I thought it would be relatively easy since I had taken epigraphy before. I quickly realized that I had been taught the basics of how to read an inscription but not what any of that meant or how to use it to do research. I found myself being completely taken by the lives of enslaved individuals, women, children, freedmen, and everyone else who was not part of the uberelites. It does not escape me that this book is built on their lives and deaths; I can only hope that remembering their names pays off, albeit only in part, the enormous debt I owe them.

That epigraphy course changed my life not only because it introduced me to what I could actually do with inscriptions, but also because it started a series of events that brought me to meeting some of the most important people in my life. Erika Valdivieso and I became friends practicing reading epitaphs together for that class. Julia Lenzi and I first bonded on a research trip to the Johns Hopkins Museum of Art, taking pictures of Roman brick stamps and lead pipes for our final projects for the course. The following semester, Kelly Nguyen and I roomed together and thus became quick friends during a two-week digital epigraphy workshop in Greece. Later that year, Kelly and her husband John introduced me to my partner of ten years. Since then, my epigraphic research has allowed me to meet more and more friends, expand my view of the modern and ancient world, and travel across the United States and Italy to places I would never have otherwise seen. For all these reasons, I am eternally grateful to John Bodel for teaching that seminar in the fall of 2014.

This book would not have been the same without the help and support of my loved ones. I want to thank Janice Machado, Kelly Nguyen Sutherland, and Erika Valdivieso for their friendship and support. I cherished every coffee, phone call, nature walk, and delicious meal I got to share with them. Thank you to Julia Lenzi and her family for everything they have done for me. They took me in for Thanksgiving, Easter, birthdays, Superbowl parties, and all the holidays that people spend with their family. Thank you to Allison Emmerson, Harriet Fertik, Emilia Oddo, and Katie Rask for being my colleagues and friends.

Thank you to my professors and mentors. Thank you to Maurizio Bettini for teaching me, for believing in me and showing me the way. Thank you to Jonathan Conant and Amy Russell for being on my dissertation committee, for their thoughtful and careful feedback, and for writing so many letters of recommendation for me. Thank you to Jeri DeBrohun, Steve Kidd, Lisa Mignone, Graham Oliver, and Pura Nieto Hernandez for being there for me when I needed help, mentorship, or simply a kind word. Thank you to my colleague Dennis Kehoe for reading early drafts of my chapters and introducing me to Ellen Bauerle

at University of Michigan Press. I also owe special thanks to my adviser John Bodel for his constant advice and mentorship; thank you in particular for suggesting the title for this book.

Thank you to Ellen Bauerle, Juliette Snyder, Danielle Coty-Fattal, Mary Hashman, Ellen Douglas, and everyone who worked on the production of my manuscript at the University of Michigan Press. Thank you to the editorial board and to the anonymous peer-reviewers for their useful feedback and suggestions. Thank you to The Ohio State University for funding the publication of this book through the Open Access Monograph Initiative.

Thank you to my fellow graduate students: Sam Butler, Sam Caldis, Scott DiGiulio, Colleen Donahoe, Luther Karper, Dominic Machado, Tara Mulder, Jen Swalec, Mahmoud Samori, Trigg Settle. It is hard to explain how much they impacted my life. I had just moved to the US, but they made me feel at home. I was new to the graduate program, but they immediately made me feel like I belonged. I also want to thank my students. They helped me to carry on during the toughest times, because I needed to go to class and teach them. The satisfaction they give me is unmatched. Thank you to Victoria Lansing for reading everything I write and for being my most successful student: seeing her grow into a scholar has been a privilege.

Thank you to *mamma* Marisa, *babbo* Marco, my brother Stefano, my partner Alex, his parents Don and Marie, and my entire family.

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Abbreviations

The following abbreviations occur in the text and notes. Abbreviations not listed here may be found in the fourth edition of the *Oxford Classical Dictionary*, edited by S. Hornblower, A. Spawforth, and E. Eidinow (2012).

AE	*L'Année Épigraphique*, published in *Revue Archéologique* and separately (1888–)
Anth. Pal.	*Anthologia Palatina*
BCAR	*Bulletino della Commissione Archeologica communale in Roma* (1872–)
CEACelio	G. L. Gregori, *La collezione epigrafica dell'antiquarium comunale del Celio* (Rome, 2001)
CECapitol	*La collezione epigrafica dei musei Capitolini*, ed. Pancera (1987)
CIL	*Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum* (1863–)
CILGM	*Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum et Graecarum Montenegri*, Kotor 2011
CLE	*Carmina Latina Epigraphica*, Leipzig 1930
Dessau, ILS	*Inscriptiones Latinae Selectae*, ed. H. Dessau (1892–1916)
EDCS	Epigraphik-Datenbank Clauss/Slaby
EDR	*Epigraphic Database Roma*
ERAEmerita	L. García Iglesias, *Epigrafía Romana de Augusta Emerita* (Madrid, 1973)
FE	*Ficheiro Epigráfico: Suplemento de Conimbriga* (Coimbra, 2000)
Gregori-2016	G. L. Gregori, "*Domnulo optimo et carissimo*: La dedica funeraria di un *tata* per il suo pupillo (Roma, via Flaminia)," in *Esclaves et maîtres dans le monde romain: Expressions épigraphiques et leurs relations*, ed. M. Dondin-Payre and N. Tran (Rome, 2017), 243–52
ICUR	*Inscriptiones christianae urbis Romae.* Nova series (Rome, 1922–)

IlJug	*Inscriptiones Latinae quae in Iugoslavia repertae et editae sunt*, Ljubljana 1963–1986
ILLRP	*Inscriptiones Latinae Liberae Rei Publicae*, ed. A. Degrassi, 2nd ed., vol. 1 (1965); vol. 2 (1963)
ILSanMichele	H. Thylander, *Inscriptions latines de San Michele d'Axel Munthe*, Opuscula romana 4 (1962)
Inrap	*Institut national de recherches archéologiques preventives* (2019)
InscrIt	*Inscriptiones Italiae* (Rome, 1931)
Salone	*Recherches à Salone* (Copenhagen, 1928)
TLL	*Thesaurus Linguae Latinae* (1990–)

1

Family, Kinship, and Fictive Kinship

We can only guess what Publius Aelius Placentius was thinking about one day, in the middle of the second century CE, when he left his house and went to purchase a tombstone for a man to whom he was not related. Perhaps he haggled with the stonecutter on the price. Perhaps he was too grief-stricken to care about money. It is certain, however, that he commissioned and paid for an inscribed funerary stone for Marcus Aurelius Liberalis. That inscription, which has survived against all odds until today, reads as follows:

> *D*(*is*) *M*(*anibus*).
> *P*(*ublius*) *Ae*˹*l*˺*ius Placentius*
> *nutritori filiorum suorum*
> *dignissimo,*
> *M*(*arco*) *Aurelio Liberali,*
> *b*(*ene*) *m*(*erenti*) *f*(*ecit*).[1]
>
> To the Divine Shades. Publius Aelius Placentius made this for the most trustworthy nurturer of his children, Marcus Aurelius Liberalis, well deserving.

The two named individuals are both free males and do not appear to be biologically or legally related, for they do not share the same family name. Liberalis is commemorated as the *nutritor*, the nurturer, of Placentius' children. No other element is provided to explain their interpersonal relationship. Thus, the commissioner probably felt that the inscription contained all necessary information to make it understandable to any passerby. Yet this brief epitaph prompts several questions: why did Placentius feel that it was his responsibility to provide burial for Liberalis, a man to whom he was not related? Should Liberalis' family

1. *CIL* 6.10766.

have fulfilled that obligation instead? How did Liberalis come to take care of Placentius' offspring? Can we consider Liberalis and Placentius (and his children) to be a family? And, even most importantly, would they have considered themselves to be a family?

As my leading questions no doubt suggest, I believe that these individuals would have considered themselves family. Providing burial for someone is an act of profound importance and, in most cases, is not performed by strangers or acquaintances.[2] Although Placentius and Liberalis might not have represented a traditional family, their bond—and the one they also shared with the unnamed children—was still meaningful. A strong interpersonal affinity that is neither biological nor legally sanctioned through marriage or adoption is defined as fictive kinship. This book focuses on the role of fictive kinship in Roman society during the early imperial period (first–third centuries CE) and how it affected both free and enslaved individuals with regard to their singular and familial identity. Scholars who work on the Roman family have already recognized the importance of nonbiological bonds in addition to those established between parents and their children—the so-called nuclear family.[3] However, this monograph focuses on one specific aspect of fictive kinship: its role as a cultural phenomenon in relation to children. In particular, I investigate the ways in which Roman families formed long-term relationships with persons outside the nuclear family through the presence of children and in turn how these bonds influenced both individual behavior and social practices.

It is undeniable that the nuclear family played a central role in Roman society; however, placing too much emphasis on biological bonds can blind us to the ample evidence which attests to the existence of much more fluid forms of kinship. For example, I believe that the bond between the two men from the inscription above can be described as fictive kinship since Placentius fulfills what has traditionally been a familial duty—to provide burial—and expands it toward the unrelated man who helped raise his children.[4] This is not surprising since children profoundly affect existing interpersonal relations and create new ones, both inside and outside the nuclear family. As anthropologist Alma Gottlieb has noted, children have an innate ability to reshape the lives of individuals

2. I refer to burials performed in general conditions of peace and stability. War and conflict subvert normal burial practices.

3. E.g., Bradley 1991; MacMullen 1984.

4. Most famously, Saller and Shaw (1984, 147–55) found that 75–90 percent of all burials were provided by members of the nuclear family. While their method for counting relationships attested through tombstones has been challenged by Martin (1996, 43–48), who found that the nuclear family took care of burial in up to 68 percent of cases, Edmondson (2005, 187) points out that the major contribution of Saller and Shaw (1984) is ascertaining that funerary commemorations were made by members of the nuclear family in the vast majority of cases.

around them, and therefore we should study their impact on their relatives and broader institutions.[5] Indeed, individuals are often not only the product of their nuclear family but also of a much larger social network made of friends, teachers, nurses, caretakers, surrogate parents, classmates, neighbors, and so on. At times, the bond between children and such individuals becomes so strong that it includes the parents as well. In other words, children work as catalysts to form new bonds for the entire nuclear family. Placentius would have had no need for a nurturer if he did not have any children and—we can guess—would not have developed a close affinity to Liberalis if the man had done a terrible job caring for them. It must be assumed that Liberalis discharged his role as caretaker well, that Placentius' children were attached to him, and thus that Placentius came to think of him as a surrogate member of the family. Therefore, the children played a central role in the development of new fictive kinship ties, working as connecting nodes between the nuclear family and an otherwise unrelated person.

This monograph focuses on the development of fictive kinship in three main case studies related to children: (1) the bond between children nursed by the same woman, known as *collactanei*, or fellow-nurslings; (2) the figure of the male caretaker for young children, or *tata*, and his role in the rearing of children of different social backgrounds; and (3) the connection between enslaved children kept as entertainers, called *delicia*, and their masters who present themselves as pseudoparental figures. I chose to focus my research on these specific topics because they are relatively understudied in modern scholarship.[6] They also allow me to utilize a wide array of sources, such as epigraphic, literary, and anthropological evidence, in order to provide a vivid picture of Roman fictive kinship bonds.

Epigraphic evidence, or inscriptions, accounts for the vast majority of the sources utilized in this book, and the following chapter is solely dedicated to how I interpret and employ them for my research. Inscriptions are ancient texts that were carved primarily in stone and have survived by mere chance or accident until the modern era. They differ from literary texts, which have come to us through a long series of hand-copied manuscripts that were selected and canonized over the centuries, for they are themselves an original and unique copy of what was written by people in the ancient world. In other words, there

5. Gottlieb 2000, 128.

6. A brief appendix by Bradley (1991, 149–54) was the sole work on *collactanei*, until the publication Conesa Navarro 2019. *Tatae* have received more scholarly attention but always as a counterpart of *mammae*: Dixon 1988; Nielsen 1989; Bradley 1991; Laes 2009; Gregori 2016; Borrello 2018; Gianni 2021. As for *delicia*, see Nielsen 1990; Laes 2003; and Laes 2010.

has been no conscious selection process for inscribed texts; nobody decided to preserve what was considered best, or more educational, or more useful. As such, inscriptions represent an incredibly rich mine of sociological and historical evidence that is otherwise unattested in literary sources. It is also important to note that the majority of inscriptions from the Roman world (and the totality of those I employ in my research) are funerary in nature.[7] They are epitaphs inscribed on tombstones, thus often brief and concise texts. Moreover, the so-called Roman epigraphic habit—meaning the widespread custom in Rome, Italy, and the rest of the empire, to set up and dedicate inscriptions—only spans a limited period of time.[8] Indeed, the vast majority of the inscriptions that have survived date between the first and third century CE. Therefore, the chronological scope of the book is also limited to these three centuries, the period also known as the early empire. When I present epigraphic sources throughout the chapters, I do so in a synchronic fashion, for a strictly chronological exposition would not fit with my overall argument. My intention is to bring into focus the presence of fictive kinship in the economy of the Roman family during the early empire. I do not make any claims that are rooted in granular dating, but rather that are based on evidence which spans over three centuries. This is due, first and foremost, to the general lack of available evidence from the ancient world. We simply do not have enough information to hypothesize, for example, that the number of families which included nonbiological or nonlegally sanctioned members increased or declined in the second century CE. I can confidently argue, however, that in the early imperial period the nature and structure of the Roman household was so flexible and multiform as to allow bonds of fictive kinship to be established.

To support and complement the epigraphic evidence, I also employ literary sources from the Greco-Roman world. They have a much longer chronological span and, although I primarily focus on literature produced during the early empire, occasionally I refer to texts that were written outside the first three centuries of the Common Era. In those cases, relative chronology is noted and accounted for in the critical interpretation of the passages. A specific subgroup of literary sources, legal evidence, features an additional challenge. Indeed, most of the legal texts that we possess were collected in the sixth century CE, compiling hundreds of years of Roman legal scholarship, judicial sentences, and laws.

7. Saller and Shaw (1984, 124n1) estimate that funerary epitaphs account for three-quarters of all known inscriptions. This is followed by Bodel (2001, 182n13);); Chioffi (2015, 627).

8. Mocsy (1966) first used the term "epigraphic habit" to describe the spread of the custom of setting up inscriptions to many provinces of the Roman Empire. MacMullen (1982) demonstrated that the number of inscriptions grew steadily in the first two centuries CE, before dropping significantly in the third century. See also Beltrán Lloris 2015, 131–36.

Sometimes, when the names of individual jurists are mentioned, dating can be rather simple. At other times, determining a fixed date proves to be much more arduous. Therefore, I provide a general timeframe for the implementation of certain laws or juridical opinions only when their dating is known.

In addition to epigraphic, literary, and legal sources, I also rely on modern anthropological theories and comparative anthropological evidence. The main goal of using anthropological evidence, which is disseminated throughout the chapters, is to present a different perspective, to which many of us might be blind, since it often diverges from Eurocentric ideas and practices. Truly, it cannot be assumed that the Roman family is equivalent to any modern familial institution. For example, the ubiquity of slavery fundamentally influences Roman familial ideals and practices. Furthermore, the Roman family might share commonalities with some but not other contemporary societies; exploring such differences and similarities might help to push against the boundaries of the field, suggesting questions that might otherwise not become apparent while surveying the ancient sources alone.

Anthropological theories and frameworks have also deeply influenced how I conceive and approach the familial institution. Although each culture has idiosyncratic familial patterns and habits, anthropology can provide scholars with a general approach to the concept of "family," which can then be tailored to the specific needs of any research project. Thus, it is important that I present the main anthropological models that inspired me to find a working definition of family as a fundamental human institution, before applying it to the Roman social milieu.

1.1 Defining Family and Kinship

Everyone would agree that it is difficult to define "family." The word itself evokes images, emotions, and ideals that are unique for each individual. Thus, any person who reads this book approaches it with their own set of preconceived notions about what a family is and ought to be. To find a definition of family that it is broad enough to include every familial unit across time and space, but that also bears meaning and significance, is no easy task. Despite the difficulty in defining it, everyone can recognize a family when they see one, regardless of how many members form it, their age, their gender, their race, their legal status, and so on.

In order to illustrate what "family" is, it also must be considered that families are constantly subject to change. They evolve, sometimes slowly, sometimes rap-

idly, and form new connections without necessarily abandoning previous ones. Therefore, to give a definition of family also means to take into account how it changes. To achieve this goal, several theoretical models have been proposed. I introduce four of the most widely utilized models, without embracing one exclusively. Each of them places emphasis on different important characteristics that are relevant for the study of childhood and the creation of fictive kinship in Roman society, and thus they all serve a useful purpose for my research.

One of the most straightforward ways to think about family is the so-called Small Group Theory. In the early 1950s, Kurt Lewin proposed to envision the family as a small group which is more than the mere sum of its members. These members, in turn, are interdependent; they have a sense of "we-ness" and pursue common goals.[9] Yet this definition is applicable to other small groups, such as a medical research team using the same lab.[10] Nevertheless, Lewin's definition remains broad enough to encompass every kind of family and can be used to build toward a more specific theoretical definition.

Another model used to describe families is the Structural System Framework, which, although retaining some of the features of the Small Group Theory, expands on it. This framework relies on five main points: (1) the family is more than the sum of its members; (2) the words and actions of a member have a circular effect in the group, reacting to and at the same time causing more words and actions; (3) the initial circumstances of a group (or system) cannot predict its future composition; (4) the familial system performs recursive actions within a certain range, in order to avoid destabilizing events; (5) the family is morphogenic—it can change its internal rules, hierarchy and habits, even without pressure from the outside.[11] The Structural System Framework focuses on the interconnection of all the parts of its system (or family members) and postulates that understanding such a system is only possible when looking at all its parts holistically. Moreover, the system's behavior affects its environment and vice versa; feedback, both positive and negative, is central to the development of the system (or family) over time. This model is useful for my research project because it highlights the interdependency of single family members with the whole, and—most importantly—it emphasizes how society and single families can influence each other, evolving over time and creating new patterns.

9. According to the Small Group Theory as expressed by Lewin 1951.

10. Olson 1967.

11. As theorized by Von Bertalanffy 1969. The concept that a system can be more than the sum of its parts was first voiced by the Greek philosopher Democritus. The emergence of information and computer science has also been credited with fostering the development of the system theory for academic purposes: see White and Klein 2002, 119.

In the Symbolic Interaction Framework, families are seen as small social groups in which multiple actors operate. Each personal behavior or action is impossible to understand without knowing the context, the situation, and the meaning that it holds for the actor.[12] Families are responsible for the propagating of such knowledge; nurture exposes the infant to a culture of shared meanings. Therefore, socialization, games, and role play are the means through which, as George Mead postulated, the importation of social symbols is achieved.[13] This model, which stresses the importance of nurture and socialization as means to transfer socially significant symbols, has deeply influenced my thinking. Since my research places children and their shared experience with caretakers and families at the center of its interest, the Symbolic Interaction Theory provides a theoretical foundation for the significance of early socialization, a frequent subject of analysis in this book.

The Ecological Framework emphasizes the high degree of interdependence of human beings with their environment.[14] According to this theory, not only do humans have a highly social nature, but they are also biological beings who strive for survival in their environment.[15] The environment is the physical location in which a family is placed, with idiosyncratic problems and resources, but the family itself can also be seen as a natural environment in which survival is dependent on the ability to fill a niche and adapt to it. Therefore, to fulfill both their social and biological instincts, humans occupy what in ecology are known as niches—understood as the available roles and functions in a family, such as "mother" or "father"—through their remarkable adaptive range; for when a role becomes available, other members of family can step up and claim it. For example, in the case of the death of a parent, it is not uncommon for grandparents, aunts or uncles, a coach or a teacher to function as a surrogate parental figure. This is particularly important for the development of close bonds with individuals outside the nuclear family; when a specific niche is not occupied or is temporarily empty, other individuals can fill it and create a new social connection. In the following chapters, I present several instances in which a non-

12. White and Klein 2002, 63–65.

13. Mead (1934) did not use the concept of socialization but spoke of importation of external symbols through two phases: the play stage and the game stage. In the first phase the child pretends to be someone else (the mother, a firefighter, etc.) through which s/he learns what behaviors such roles encompass. In the game stage, the child incorporates her/himself into the role and interacts with other actors playing the game. This complex social game is a prelude to playing a role in society as adults.

14. Malthus (1798) is regarded as the father of the Ecological Framework, for his publication of *An Essay on the Principle of Population* which first analyzed the relationship between food and population and what influenced that relationship (wars, fertility, religious beliefs, famine).

15. White and Klein 2002, 206–8.

biologically related individual plays a surrogate parental role, likely substituting a missing or absent parent.

These theoretical frameworks are all useful to my research project. No single theory, however, can describe all types of families analyzed in this study. For the scope of this book, which investigates the creation of fictive kinship bonds through the presence of children, it is fundamental to underscore the flexibility of family as a system, rather than its hierarchy or recursive tendencies. Likewise, the importance of infancy and socialization as formative stages for future adults is a central premise of this study, but the emphasis placed on actors and their motivations is not as relevant. Since a general definition of family must be given, based on the approaches surveyed above, I understand "family" to be a flexible system with a certain number of members that share a high degree of interdependency.

Kinship is, if possible, an even more indefinable concept than family. Traditionally, sociologists and anthropologists have recognized two types of kinship: affinity and consanguinity.[16] While these two terms serve many societies well, they fail to account for all the degrees of kinship present across cultures. For example, anthropologist Theresa Holmes has argued that the genealogical paradigm cannot be used to study the Luo people in Kenya, for whom agnation (consanguinity through the male family line only) is only a part of what defines kinship; women, unlike men, are not considered to be a segment in the genealogical tree, but they are at the center of a circle of relatedness that encompasses many culturally, not biologically, related individuals.[17] As this specific case exemplifies, not all modern (or ancient) societies place equal importance on consanguinity in the definition of familial bonds or see kinship as a natural occurrence.[18]

Anthropologist Janet Carsten has proposed to speak of "cultures of relatedness," instead of kinship, to include societies using indigenous languages, which do not necessarily express familiarity through biological proximity.[19] Indeed, if researchers were to speak of cultures of relatedness, it would not be necessary to differentiate between kinship and fictive kinship. However, as scholars are prevalently accustomed to describing and discussing the family as a group based on kinship, the term fictive kinship is still a useful one to identify specific

16. This convention has been adopted since Morgan (1871) used consanguinity to indicate closely biologically related individuals. However, more recently scholars have pointed out how perceiving blood as the fundamental component of kinship is a cultural matter, thus not universal.

17. Holmes 2009.

18. Mintz and Wolf (1950, 354) were the first to recognize ceremonial sponsorship as a type of kinship, in addition to the natural or biological one. El Guindi (2012, 548) presents affinity, consanguinity, and sponsorship as three forms of kinship.

19. Carsten 2000, 4.

figures and roles that are outside the biologically or legally sanctioned familial unit. Based on these considerations, I define fictive kinship as a close connection which resembles a familial bond but is, however, neither biological nor legally sanctioned. In turn, I consider kinship as the bond that encompasses all those relations that are either biological (grandparent-parent-child-siblings) or recognized under the law (husband-wife, adoptive parent-adoptive child).

1.2 Roman Family and Kinship: Law and Practice Among Free and Enslaved

The definitions of family, kinship, and fictive kinship I provided above are meant to be broad and generic. It is necessary, however, to increase the level of specificity to analyze how these concepts relate to the Roman idea of family. Although the English word family derives from the Latin word *familia*, these two words do not necessarily evoke identical sociocultural notions and ideas. Ulpian—a Roman jurist from the third century CE—gives us the best surviving definition of *familia* which, given its length and complexity, I summarize through my own words.

First, Ulpian defines *familia* as "a sort of body defined either by a rule particular to its members or by the common rule of general relationship."[20] Thus, according to the jurist, the family is a group of people brought together by what he calls a rule (*ius*). This rule can be either particular or common. The particular rule, Ulpian further explains, is being under the power of a direct ancestor, like a father or a grandfather, who acts as the *pater familias*, the head of the family.[21] This definition is, perhaps unsurprisingly, similar to Lewin's Small Group Theory introduced in the previous section: a family/*familia* is a group of individuals which shares a sense of "we-ness," which Ulpian identifies as the power or rule of a direct ancestor. From the jurist's words, it seems that the sense of "we-ness" of the Roman family is based on who has power, who is in charge of this small group of people.

However, Ulpian also introduces the possibility of a common rule, a larger and shared sense of "we-ness." By common rule he means all the agnates (or male

20. *Dig.* 50.16.195.2: *familae appellatio refertur et ad corporis cuiusdam significationem, quod aut iure proprio ipsorum aut communi universae cognationis continetur.* The translation is taken from Frier and McGinn (2004, 18).

21. *Dig.* 50.16.195. 2: *Iure proprio familiam dicimus plures personas, quae sunt sub unius potestate aut natura aut iure subiectae, ut puta patrem familias, matrem familias, filium familias, filiam familias quique deinceps vicem eorum sequuntur, ut puta nepotes et neptes et deinceps. pater autem familias appellatur, qui in domo dominium habet, recteque hoc nomine appellatur.*

ancestors) of the family.[22] This no longer fits the definition of family according to the Small Group Theory. It encapsulates all the families that descend from a shared male ancestor who lived in a not-too-distant past. Ulpian says that these people were once under the power of one *pater familias* and therefore come from the same house and stock (*domus et gens*). In the United States, the recent proliferation of genetic testing services, such as "Ancestry" and "23andMe," demonstrates that there is a growing interest—in a country predominantly inhabited by individuals whose ancestors came from different parts of the world—in knowing one's "house and stock." Yet many English speakers, upon hearing the word "family," do not think of their ancestral bloodline but of their immediate family. This is what we would probably call kinship, rather than just family. Thus, the word *familia*, according to Ulpian, although sometimes denoting a smaller familial group, can also refer to a much larger grouping that encompasses, potentially, hundreds of individuals.

Under the appearance of giving one definition of *familia*, Ulpian has actually already provided the descriptions of two different groupings—what we call family and what we call kinship. However, the jurist also stated three additional explanations of what *familia* can mean. First, a group of enslaved people from the same household is also called a *familia*.[23] This use of the term is often attested in Latin literature. Roman historian Richard Saller has demonstrated how *familia* is most frequently used in literary texts to identify only the enslaved members of the household, not the master and his free wife and children.[24] Second, Ulpian declares that a family is also the bloodline of people who share an ancestor who gave origin to the entire stock. The jurist gives the example of the Julian clan, Julius Caesar's bloodline, which allegedly originated from the mythical Iulus, son of Aeneas, who was in turn the son of the goddess Venus.[25] This familial origin might be a distant, even mythical, memory, but it still carries meaning. Third, the term *familia* can also indicate a woman.[26] Ulpian says that a woman can be both the beginning and the end of her own *familia*. Indeed, an unmarried woman who was under the tutelage of her father could enjoy varying degrees of personal and economic independence after his death.[27] Also, married women whose fathers had passed away were often rela-

22. *Dig.* 50.16.195. 2: *communi iure familiam dicimus omnium adgnatorum: nam etsi patre familias mortuo singuli singulas familias habent, tamen omnes, qui sub unius potestate fuerunt, recte eiusdem familiae appellabuntur, qui ex eadem domo et gente proditi sunt.*

23. *Dig.* 50.16.195.3.

24. Saller 1984, 343.

25. *Dig.* 50.16.195.4: *Item appellatur familia plurium personarum, quae ab eiusdem ultimi genitoris sanguine proficiscuntur (sicuti dicimus familiam Iuliam), quasi a fonte quodam memoriae.*

26. *Dig.* 50.16.195.5: *Mulier autem familiae suae et caput et finis est.*

27. Legally, they were required to have a *tutor*, often appointed by the father in his will. The

tively independent, not under the control of their husbands, depending on the form of marriage they entered into; an earlier type of matrimonial agreement called *cum manu* ("with hand"), in which the wife passed from the father's control to her husband's, was almost completely replaced in the early empire with marriage *sine manu* ("without hand"), in which the wife does not fully and legally integrate in the husband's *familia*. Therefore, a woman, after the death of her father, and if unmarried or married *sine manu*, is the beginning of her own *familia*. She is also the end of her *familia*, since women cannot pass their family name (*nomen*) to their offspring, who take the father's name.

As Ulpian's definitions show, the Latin word *familia* can represent various groupings of individuals, distant and close relatives, free and enslaved persons.[28] Therefore, when speaking of the Roman *familia*, it is important to be aware that it carried a wide variety of meanings and associations. This is not completely different from the English word family. As Susanne Dixon pointed out, "family" can come to mean different things in everyday situations.[29] For example, "Do you have a family?" can mean "are you married?" or "do you have children?"; when a wife says "we are having Christmas at my family's this year," it is clear to everyone that the family in question is the wife's parents (and siblings); when the "whole family" goes to a funeral, it includes cousins, aunts and uncles, as well as the spouse and children of the deceased.

I mentioned that Latin writers did not frequently use the word *familia* to indicate the *pater familias*, his wife, and children, what could be called the household's nuclear family. Instead, they used the term *domus*. While the primary meaning of *domus* is household, it is also used to indicate the (free) nuclear family.[30] In this case, borrowing again from the Small Group Theory, it appears that what provides that sense of "we-ness" of the family is the location, the fact that the individuals live under the same roof.

So, while Latin authors refer to their spouse and children by the word *domus*, through a metonymy we might say, they often refer to the enslaved community in their household as *familia*. According to Roman law, the enslaved (*servus*) is not a person. Lacking personhood, the *servus* could not get married, have legitimate children, own property, or pass on his possessions to his descen-

jurist Gaius reports that since 186 BCE a woman could change her *tutor* by selecting a new one (*Inst.* 151–53). Schulz (1951, 185–86) and Gardner (1986, 15) suggest that a woman likely sought a new *tutor* who would easily give his consent to whatever legal or economic action she wished to undertake.

28. Ulpian (*Dig.* 50.16.195.1) also attests that in the Twelve Tables—the first collection of laws in Rome, written in 451–450 BCE—the word *familia* could mean estate.

29. Dixon 1992, 1.

30. Saller 1984, 342–49; Saller 1994, 80–95.

dants.[31] And yet, inscriptions attest that enslaved parents provided burial for their prematurely deceased children. Even if two enslaved parents legally had no rights to their offspring, who could be sold and separated from them at any point, they certainly acted like parents, caring for their children, loving them, and burying them when they died. Epitaphs also attest that de facto marriages between enslaved individuals were memorialized, using the term *contubernalis* rather than *coniunx* (spouse).[32] The fact that Latin had a specific term to describe an extralegal, de facto marriage between two enslaved persons attests to the tension between practice and law. These extralegal marriages were common in enslaved communities, and some enslavers even encouraged them as a way to keep the *servi* and *servae* tied to the household and increase their loyalty.[33] In the section above, I defined kinship as representing biological or legally sanctioned bonds. Yet this definition would only partially apply to enslaved individuals in Roman society. In the eyes of the law, an enslaved person had no parents, no children, no spouses. Nevertheless, we know that enslaved individuals had children and established long-lasting relationships with their partners. The definition of kinship, when applied to Roman society, must include all these familial relationships that were not legally sanctioned. Therefore, kinship in the Roman world comprises every connection that is biological or legally recognized, or socially regarded to be equivalent.

In addition to de facto marriages, literary evidence suggests that some masters granted pseudoinheritance rights to enslaved individuals. Pliny the Younger writes in one of his letters that he allows his dying slaves to write a sort of testament, which he treats as legally binding, to redistribute their possessions among friends and family.[34] Indeed, Roman *servi* could own sums of money—usually small, but considerable at times—that they could save or invest, in hope to buy their freedom one day.[35] Under the law, at the death of the *servus*, this sum of money (*peculium*) would go to the master.[36] Pliny, however, gives up his legal right to the *peculium* and recognizes the right of the enslaved to have heirs. This means that he recognized some level of personhood of the individuals he owned.

31. See Crook (1970, 36–46) for an overview of the rights enjoyed by Roman citizens and other free people, rights which were denied to enslaved individuals.

32. For an analysis of the term *contubernales* in the epitaphs from the city of Rome see Treggiari 1981.

33. See Varro *Rust.* 1.15.5; Columella *Rust*. 1.8.5.

34. Plin. *Ep.* 8.16. The passage is further discussed in the following chapter.

35. The jurist Florentinus (D. 1.15.39) describes the *peculium* as anything the slave has been able to save on his own or has been granted to him by his master or a third party. The *peculium* could include cash, food, animals, objects, and even enslaved persons (called *vicarii*, "underslaves").

36. Legally, the *peculium* belonged to the master; the enslaved had the everyday use of it, but not ownership. See Crook 1970, 189.

The legal definition of freedom and slavery given by the jurist Florentinus in the second century CE also betrays a certain awareness that slavery did not represent a "natural" state for human beings: "freedom is the natural ability to do what one wishes, except if it is prevented by coercion or by law. Slavery is an institution of the law of nations, whereby, contrary to nature, a person is made subject to another's ownership."[37] Freedom is natural self-determination, within the boundaries of the law. Slavery is not a natural state, but it is an institution accepted by nations through their laws. Ulpian's definition of slavery is even more explicit: "Insofar as civil law is concerned, slaves are deemed nonpersons; but not so in natural law, since, insofar as natural law is concerned, all men are equal."[38]

Although these definitions indicate that slavery is unnatural, it would be wrong to suggest that masters generally recognized the humanity of their *servi* and, based on this recognition, treated them humanely. These legal opinions do not mean that everyone, across every stratum of the population, or even among the highly educated, saw the enslaved as inherently human and considered them as such. The same dichotomy and apparent "doublethink" present in the legal definition of slavery, in which an individual can be seen as a slave and as a person at the same time, is also attested in many Latin authors, who rely on their *servi*, being physically, professionally, and even emotionally close to them, and yet profess distance from them. I come back to the issue of slavery and how it influences the interpretation of funerary epitaphs in the next chapter. For now, it is sufficient to note that law and practice can at time be at odds, and only when we juxtapose legal, literary, and epigraphic evidence can we hope to recover a more detailed picture of Roman cultural practices regarding family and kinship.

1.3 Scope and Structure of the Book

This book owes much to previous scholarship on the Roman family. In particular, the work of three scholars has been instrumental in developing my research. First, Keith Bradley's monograph, *Discovering the Roman Family*, was the first major publication to focus on several parafamilial figures, such as child-minders

37. *Dig.* 1.5.4 pr.-1: *Libertas est naturalis facultas eius quod cuique facere libet, nisi si quid vi aut iure prohibetur. Servitus est constitutio iuris gentium, qua quis dominio alieno contra naturam subicitur.* The translation is taken from Frier and McGinn 2004, 14.

38. *Dig.* 50.17.32: *Quod attinet ad ius civile, servi pro nullis habentur: non tamen et iure naturali, quia, quod ad ius naturale attinet, omnes homines aequales sunt.* The translation is taken from Frier and McGinn 2004, 14.

and caretakers, and their roles in the development of the Roman family.[39] In the same work, Bradley also argues that mobility and flexibility were idiosyncratic characteristics of elite Roman families. Although he does not employ anthropological theories or the term fictive kinship, Bradley's research is an invaluable model for this book. Second, Susanne Dixon's *The Roman Family* had a strong influence on my views, for it proposes to understand the Roman family as a naturally flexible and adaptable institution.[40] Although her book remains primarily focused on traditional families (formed by free individuals, based on marriage), Dixon gives space and relevance to alternative kinds of families, such as de facto marriages between enslaved individuals, "mixed marriages" between free and enslaved spouses, and military families. While Dixon does not use the expression fictive kinship, her book is an early example of research into kin-like connection outside the nuclear unit. Third, it is hard to appropriately quantify my debt to Christian Laes' scholarship.[41] His vast research on childhood, children, and childcare in the Roman world have been foundational for how I approach the study of such topics.

One of the major contributions of the aforementioned scholars is the recognition that Roman (both elite and lower class) children enjoyed a high degree of mobility. The offspring of the master moved between multiple households, entrusted to the care of nurses, teachers, and other caretakers, often enslaved.[42] Working class or enslaved mothers also must have relied on extraparental childcare in order to discharge their duties.[43] The high mobility of Roman children is frequently invoked in this book, for I believe it represents a fundamental feature in the creation of fictive kinship ties. Movement between households and multiple caretakers results in children developing connections with individuals besides their parents. Such bonds could at times supplement the existing kinship connections, expanding the familial network beyond the biological family to other members of society. Children, therefore, especially those subject to high mobility, served as connecting nodes or catalysts for the creation of fictive kinship.

39. Bradley 1991.

40. Dixon 1992.

41. To cite only a few: Laes 2003 on *delicia*; Laes 2008 on enslaved child labor; Laes 2015 on the *avia nutrix* of *AE* 2007: 298; Laes 2011 as a leading monograph on children; Laes 2014 on epitaphs for infants.

42. On the mobility of Roman, mostly elite, children see Dixon 1999, 217–19; Bradley 1991, 125–55. Cf. *Dig.* 32.99.3 on the mobility of enslaved children, which is further discussed in chapter 2.

43. Laes (2011, 70) suggests that the master, by entrusting all newborns to a single nurse, would retain more enslaved laborers able to work daily. On women as workforce in agriculture see also Scheidel 1995, 208–13; Roth 2007, 1–24. On women's work in the household see Treggiari 1975b, 65–68; Saller 2003, 185–200.

Although the primary scope of my book is to demonstrate that fictive kinship, especially when developed in relation to children, is not a bug but a feature of Roman families, something worthy of being studied, I also hope that this monograph allows readers to reflect on three main related points. First, that families are and have always been highly adaptive and flexible. In the early 1990s, Susanne Dixon professed her surprise at the strength of popular fantasies, perpetrated by media and politics, that the family is breaking down as an institution.[44] For this to be true, it would require "the family" to be organized in a singular way and to play a single role throughout time and space. Of course, such a univocal institution has never existed at any time in recorded human history. The sociopolitical aim of presenting one type of family as traditional, dating back to some unspecified period in the past, is to implicitly legitimize it and showcase its preferable and superior nature. In truth, nuclear families with two heterosexual spouses have never been the only familial configuration in any known society. The evidence from Rome, such as the inscription for the nurturer Liberalis introduced above (and many others throughout the rest of the book), indicates that familial units came in many possible configurations.

Second, Western societies consider childcare to be a feminine occupation and, more specifically, one that the mother should perform. However, it is important to stress that not every society expects mothers or women to be the sole providers of childcare. Anthropologist Susan Seymour, in particular, pushed against the idea that multiple caretakers or shared care is less advantageous to the child's development than having the mother a sole caretaker. She argued that other systems—such as the shared care and breastfeeding of all infants in the community practiced by the Efe in then Zaire (now the Democratic Republic of the Congo), or the trend witnessed in India to leave children with older female family members while the young mothers go to work to economically help the family—are just as effective parenting models.[45] The idea that a mother should be the primary caregiver of the child is, of course, not exclusive to modern Western societies and can be found in Roman authors as well.[46] Nevertheless, there is ample evidence showing that Roman mothers, both free and enslaved, employed nurses for their infants; as I have already showcased, both male and female caretakers are known to have worked in Rome. Challenging our assumptions about childcare is the first step to unbiasedly interpret that evidence.

Third, every story is worthy of being told. As a social historian, I strive to

44. Dixon 1992, ix.
45. Seymour 2004, 550.
46. The topic is explored at length in chapter 4.

reconstruct the lived experiences of single individuals to better understand the kaleidoscopic reality of Roman society, with all its features and contradictions. Funerary epitaphs and literary sources can tell us all sorts of personal stories: a loving son buried his septuagenarian parents who were married for over fifty years; a manumitted enslaved woman proudly displayed her wealth by purchasing a funerary monument for herself and her family; a father grieved the premature death of his two beloved sons, who were the only family he had left after his wife had died. While these stories might be sad or even tragic, modern readers find them understandable and perhaps relatable. Some other stories are much harder to comprehend or discuss. This book examines several unpleasant and outright uncomfortable topics. The evidence from ancient Rome explicitly mentions the sale and abuse of human beings, children as well as adults. The sexualization of children, in particular, is not something anyone is eager to discuss in detail. Yet I believe that ignoring the evidence we do possess on the lives of these children equates to further silencing and obscuring them. Only by using all the available evidence can we hope to approximate a true picture of Roman society.

This book is divided into six chapters. Chapter 1 has introduced the concepts of family and fictive kinship and presented several models for approaching the study of the familial institution. It also began to introduce concepts and definitions that are specific to the Roman family, such as the legal definition of *familia*, and the tension between law and practice when it comes to discussing kinship and slavery. Chapter 2 serves as an introduction to the epigraphic evidence, with a specific focus on my methodology for interpreting and selecting the epitaphs for this study.

Chapter 3 investigates the creation of fellow nursing in Roman society through the practice of allomaternal feeding and milk-sharing. While mainly focused on the Roman society of the early empire, this chapter also engages with other modern societies which display similar attitudes and views on shared breastfeeding. The chapter further pursues whether these fellow nurslings remained in contact as adults, and what factors hindered or fostered the maintenance of a bond formed in infancy. Chapter 4 explores the role played by male child-minders in Rome, called *tatae*. Contrary to what might be intuitively supposed, childcare was not exclusively performed by women, especially after the breastfeeding phase. Epigraphic evidence suggests that toddlers, boys and girls alike, most commonly between two and five years of age, could be entrusted to a male caretaker. Modern anthropological studies on the gendered labor division in the household in Eastern and Western societies are also introduced. The scope of such comparison is to challenge scholars' projection onto

the Roman household the same gendered labor division that has traditionally been taken for granted.

Chapter 5 discusses a difficult topic: masters sometimes kept home-born enslaved children (*vernae*) as entertainers and objects of their affections, earning them the designation of *delicia*, translated as "pleasurable things." This chapter relies more heavily on literary evidence than any of the previous sections, because in several poetic compositions the masters express deep sorrow for the death of one of these children, whom they claimed to have loved as if they were they own offspring. Nevertheless, this relation between masters and *delicia* is hard to fully understand, for in these poems familial language and tone is often intertwined with sexual lexicon and allusions. Epigraphic evidence does not present the same linguistical and thematic tension, which appears to be exclusive to literary compositions. Chapter 6 is a brief epilogue on fictive kinship, which summarizes the results of my research and suggests possible avenues for further investigation.

2

Reading Inscriptions, Understanding Roman Society

Anyone who has ever been a student knows that to read a text and to comprehend what it means are two different things. Likewise, inscriptions are often easy to read (the actual carved letters are just as simple to read as a modern all-caps text), but to understand what lies beneath the text is much more challenging. Ancient tombstones do not differ much from modern ones; while the names of the deceased present an almost infinite number of variations and combinations, certain terms and phrases—such as "here lies" or "beloved spouse and parent"—are highly standardized. Roman epitaphs indeed provide us with the names of hundreds of thousands of everyday individuals that were not members of the sociopolitical elite.[1] Epitaphs also feature commonly occurring words such as *fecit* (s/he made this) or *fecerunt* (they made this), or relational terms such as mother (*mater*), father (*pater*), son (*filius*), daughter (*filia*), spouse (*coniunx*), and so on. At times, the age of the deceased is given as well.[2] Since certain words and stock phrases were so regularly employed in epitaphs, a system of abbreviations and symbols was devised to reduce the number of letters carved without losing any of the content.

Perhaps the biggest initial difficulty in reading inscriptions is the frequent use of symbols and abbreviations, although their number is finite. For example, the letter F (when found on its own and not part of a word) can be an abbreviation for *filius*, *filia*, *fecit*, or *fecerunt* ("son," "daughter," "s/he made this," or "they made this"). Context determines which is the appropriate one each time. Another common abbreviation is *V.A.* followed by a Roman numeral, which stands for *vixit annis* ("s/he lived" for x number of years).[3] Sometimes epitaphs

1. From the 95,000 Latin inscriptions from Rome, it is possible to identify the names of over 100,000 ordinary men and women, not belonging to the political elite, or to any priesthood, local government, specific trade, or the military, according to Solin 2003.

2. Unlike modern tombstones, ancient epitaphs never provide birth dates and death dates.

3. For the inscriptions presented in this monograph, all of the abbreviations are expanded in Latin and translated into English.

Figure 1. *AE* 1980: 186. ©Ministero della Cultura. Museo Nazionale Romano.

feature symbols as well as abbreviations, as can be observed in the image of the inscription below (fig. 1). Specifically, at the beginning of the first and the second line of the text we can see a glyph that recalls a capital O with a bar in the middle. Moreover, the tenth character of the first line and the seventh character of the fourth line look like a reversed C.

The first symbol is the Greek letter theta (Θ). Indeed, the Greek word for "death" was *thanatos* (θάνατος), so its first letter became a shorthand convention to indicate a deceased individual. Therefore, if the letter appears next to the name of a person, it indicates that the individual is already deceased—with the implication that those who do not bear the same sign were still alive when that

particular inscription was set up.[4] Not unlike in the present, in antiquity people sometimes purchased a funerary monument for themselves and their loved ones when they were still alive, in anticipation of their inescapable fate. The other symbol, a reversed C, stood in for Gaia, a generic feminine name and it is conventionally spelled out in the Latin text as *mulier*, "woman."[5] This inverted C was only used in case a woman had manumitted one of her enslaved people, as it had happened to Lucius Vettius Alexander and Vettia Hospita.

(theta nigrum) L(ucius) Vettius (mulieris) l(ibertus) Alexand(er).
(theta nigrum) Vettia L(uci) f(ilia) Polla.
Vettia L(uci) l(iberta) Eleutheris.
Vettia (mulieris) l(iberta) Hospita.

(deceased) Lucius Vettius Alexander, the freedman of a woman
(deceased) Vettia Polla, the daughter of Lucius.
Vettia Eleutheris, the freedwoman of Lucius.
Vettia Hospita, the freedwoman of a woman.

As an epigraphist and social historian, it is my job to understand who these people were and how they were related to each other based only on a short and highly standardized text which—due to its intrinsic nature—was never supposed to be used for such a task. Vettia Polla was certainly the only person who was born free (*ingenua*), because she included her filiation ("daughter of"), which is the only sure mark of free birth.[6] The other three individuals were freed people (*libertus/a*), meaning that they were once enslaved but—through a process called manumission—they had been granted freedom by their enslaver. All the people named on the tombstone share the same family name; thus, they are, legally speaking, related. As for their names, Alexander and Eleutheris are both of Greek origin; the first was the name of the famous Macedonian king Alexander the Great, and the second derived from the Greek word *eleutheria* (ἐλευθερία), which means freedom. Greek or Greek-sounding appellations were frequently used to name the enslaved individuals, so their designations—in conjunction with the word *libertus/a*—further indicate that

4. The symbol is also called *theta nigrum*, or black theta, for its association with deceased individuals. See also Mednikarova 2001.

5. Roman naming practices for both men and women are discussed in further detail in section 2.2 below. Gaius and Gaia were often used in legal texts to indicate a generic male or female individual.

6. See discussion below on personal status and nomenclature.

they had a servile past.[7] The Latin name Hospita means "hostess," a fitting name for a servant.[8]

The funerary monument also features the portraits of four persons corresponding to the four named individuals on the stone; two figures appear to be larger and are in the foreground. They are a man and a woman who are holding hands, which is a common way to portray married couples. The other two figures are smaller, peering out of the background less prominently, and appear to be female. In general, children and enslaved people were represented in a smaller size, to showcase their relative subordination to the parents or the enslavers.

Until now, I have merely listed what are undisputable facts about this funerary monument. Yet I have not really painted a clear picture of who these people were to each other. It is the epigraphist's job, based on personal experience from reading hundreds of thousands of epitaphs over the years, to present a reasonable scenario of how these people came together and were emotionally, not just legally, related to each other. Indeed, being buried together is an important act of self-representation. Although there are good reasons to be cautious against automatically inferring love and affection from funerary epitaphs, it is undeniable that the choice to include someone in a familial funerary monument is a highly significant gesture.[9] In other words, while we cannot know for certain that these four people had a loving or idyllic relationship, they certainly shared an important bond.

Before presenting what I believe is the most likely explanation for their interpersonal relationship (in truth one of several that could be argued for), I must explain what inscriptions are, how they can be dated, and what role nomenclature plays in understanding their content and identifying the individuals named on the stone.

2.1 The Basics: Materials, Functions, Dating, and Public Display

In the previous chapter, I defined inscriptions as ancient texts that were carved primarily on stone and have survived by mere chance or accident until the

7. Solin (1996, 240) lists over a hundred attestations of the name Alexander for enslaved men. Eleutheris is attested over thirty times (444). See also note 40 of this chapter on the frequent use of Greek names to designate enslaved individuals.

8. Solin (1996, 123) reports five occurrences of the name Hospita.

9. Indeed, there are many reasons why someone might provide burial for someone else. Love and affection for the deceased is certainly one. Being the heir of a deceased person also often required one to perform burial duties, which are sometimes specified in the will.

modern era. Truly, inscriptions could be etched on a wide variety of media, including stones like marble or travertine, but also on metals like bronze. Etchings on walls, which are called graffiti, are also inscriptions. Everyday objects, such as knives, cups, jars, or mirrors, can bear an inscribed text as well.[10] In short, anything written upon a surface—excluding manuscripts, papyri, and ostraca—can be considered an epigraphic text (from the Greek *epigraphein*, "to write upon").[11] Despite this variety, almost all the inscriptions that I present in this and the following chapters are carved on marble or some type of limestone. Since tombstones represent about three quarters of all known inscriptions from the Roman world, it follows that stone is also the most common inscribed material.

Even if the vast majority of inscriptions that survived until modernity are funerary in nature, inscribed texts performed a variety of functions in antiquity: they were used to dedicate buildings, to honor the careers of important people, to thank benefactors, to indicate directions and mileage on a road, to regulate the worship in a temple, to publish laws and decrees, to grant Roman citizenship to veterans, and so on. While there are many useful publications that can inform the reader on the breadth of what epigraphy is and the classification of all its types, genres, scopes, and media, the remainder of this chapter only deals with funerary epitaphs written in Latin, dating from the first to the third century CE and discovered in Rome, the Italian peninsula, and the provinces of the empire.

It is important to underscore that inscriptions are not equally widespread across the Roman Empire. Indeed, the highest number of attested inscriptions comes from Rome and the Italian peninsula.[12] The act of inscribing texts, especially on stone, has been recognized as an idiosyncratic characteristic of Roman culture. Once the Romans developed a widespread habit of setting up inscriptions, they also established a set of formulaic expressions (*formulae*), conventions, modes, and styles which were implemented, with small local variations, throughout the empire.[13] However, not all Roman provinces embraced the epigraphic practice equally; the number of inscriptions found in the provinces of the Hispanic peninsula—Hispania Citerior, Baetica, Lusitania—is very high, comparable to the numbers seen in certain areas of the Italian Peninsula. The

10. These are called *instrumentum domesticum*.

11. The study of manuscripts is called paleography; the study of papyri and ostraca is known as papyrology.

12. The *Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum* (abbreviated as *CIL*), a series of fifteen volumes intended to collect all known Latin inscriptions in the Roman Empire and organized on a geographical basis, reveals that Rome and Italy have the highest number of attested inscriptions.

13. See chapter 1, note 8 on the Roman epigraphic habit.

North African provinces of Africa Proconsularis and Numidia have also produced inscriptions in great number. On the other hand, Britain, the Gallic provinces (with the exception of Gallia Narbonensis), Sicily, Sardinia, and the Alpine provinces have much smaller samples. The discrepancies in the adoption of the epigraphic habit were certainly due to multiple factors, such as the presence or absence of a preexisting interest in public and monumental writing among the local populations that were conquered by the Romans, the widespread use of Latin compared to other local languages, and the integration of local elites into the provincial Roman government and administration.

Concerning the dating of inscriptions, scholars recognized in the 1980s that the majority of surviving inscriptions in Latin were produced in the first three centuries CE. Although inscriptions do not completely disappear after the third century, they are significantly less numerous. For example, I have collected and analyzed over four hundred epitaphs for this project and only two can be dated to the fourth century.[14] It should be remarked that dating inscriptions is more an art than a science. Rarely are we so lucky as to have a *terminus post quem* or *ante quem*; if a known historical actor, such as a senator or an emperor, is named, it is possible to limit the date to a relatively narrow window of time. For instance, one of the epitaphs presented in chapter 5 was dedicated by the third wife of the emperor Claudius, Valeria Messalina, who was killed in 48 CE at the age of twenty-eight.[15] Certainly, the epitaph predates her death, and it can be assumed that she was not a small child when she commissioned a tombstone for one of her enslaved servants. This can give us a chronological window from about 35 to 48 CE. Unfortunately, this example is hardly the norm. In the vast majority of cases other criteria must be employed to provide a possible dating. The shape and font of the carved letters, or letterform, is often used to date inscriptions. Although we can distinguish a certain evolution—from the relatively crude and unrefined letters of the late Republic to the beautifully round "classical" script under Augustus, to the more elongated script under the Severan emperors—letterform cannot always provide a hard and firm dating.[16] First, local variations outside the capital might follow their own trends and taste that do not perfectly match any other area of the empire. Second, imitation of older styles can be a stylistic or ideological choice; third-century monuments may copy earlier Augustan letterforms, as can be observed in the Arch of Constantine. Third, the skill of carvers varies and in turn so does their finished product; a less competent carver might fail to reproduce the style that was currently *en vogue*.

14. Namely, *AE* 2000:192; and ICUR 9.24124.
15. *CIL* 6.28132.
16. For a comprehensive list of dating criteria see Bruun and Edmondson (2015, 15–17).

Other features can aid the epigrapher in dating an inscription. The frequently used formula *Dis Manibus*, often abbreviated to *D. M.*, meaning "To the Divine Shades," became widely employed under the Flavian emperors (69–96 CE) and thereafter. Similarly, the use of marble was rare before the Augustan period. Moreover, nomenclature—meaning Roman naming conventions—evolved through the centuries. Traditionally, male Roman citizens bore three names (*tria nomina*): a first name (*praenomen*), a family name (*nomen*) and an additional personal name or nickname (*cognomen*). Although Roman *praenomina* were once quite varied, by the late Republic only about fifteen of them were commonly used. Since Roman families tended to use only a handful of first names, which were passed on through the generations, it frequently happened that a grandfather, a father, a son, an uncle, and some cousins bore the same combination of *praenomen* and *nomen* (for example, Appius Claudius or Lucius Antonius). The introduction of a third additional name (*cognomen*) perhaps started as a way to differentiate among individuals inside the family itself, as a nickname, but then spread and became publicly used. Conversely, with the rise in popularity of the *cognomen*, the *praenomen* become increasingly less important; so much so that it is always abbreviated to a single letter in epigraphic texts.[17]

In addition to the *tria nomina*, free Roman citizens also included their filiation ("son of") and voting unit (called tribe) as part of their identification. The inclusion of the voting tribe progressively fell out of use, and it is not commonly found in epitaphs.[18] Likewise, filiation, the only sure mark of free birth, became less commonly used as time went on. Longer personal names, featuring more than one family name (*supernomina*) or honorific appellations (*agnomina*) in addition to the standard three names, were popularized in the third century CE and continued into the fourth.[19] Last, slavery and the practice of manumission had substantial effects on the spread of certain *nomina*. Once enslaved individuals were manumitted, they gained the family name of their former enslaver. Therefore, an emperor's freedmen (*liberti*) and freedwomen (*libertae*) all bore his *nomen*. As one of the largest enslavers, imperial households were also frequent manumitters; it is not unsound to hypothesize that people bearing the *nomen* Aelius could have been themselves, or the descendants of, *liberti/ae* of the emperor Publius Aelius Traianus Hadrianus (also known as Hadrian) or of his adoptive son and grandsons (respectively the emperors Antoninus Pius,

17. Aulus (A.), Appius (Ap.), Gaius (C.), Gnaeus (Cn.), Decimus (D.), Lucius (L.), Marcus (M.), Manius (M'.), Publius (P.), Quintus (Q.), Sergius (Ser.), Sextus (Sex.), Spurius (Sp.), Titus (T.), and Tiberius (Ti.).

18. Buonopane (2009, 147).

19. Kajanto (1966).

Marcus Aurelius, and Lucius Verus). This is a reasonable hypothesis because certain family names—like Aelius and Ulpius—were not at all common before the men bearing them became emperors. In the next chapter, I present an epitaph (*CIL* 6.10760) for a man named Publius Aelius Pastor. By considering its letterform and the presence of *Dis Manibus*, in conjunction with the *nomen* Aelius, I can reasonably date the inscription to sometime on or after 117 CE, the year in which Hadrian became emperor. All these elements, while not independently conclusive, can together suggest a sensible dating point.

A fundamental question remains: why did Romans set up inscriptions? Pliny the Elder sees it as a form of rivalry, an educated form of competition (*humanissima ambitio*).[20] He also affirms that this Roman practice derives from the Greek custom of honoring people with statues that bear inscriptions. Therefore, at its core, an epigraphic text is meant to be seen by others. Although some inscriptions can be categorized as private or domestic, generally speaking, all inscriptions are public in the sense that they are meant to be read by an audience of passersby and fellow townsfolk.[21] For example, as many cemeteries were located just outside the city gates, along the road, epitaphs sometimes address a traveler (*viator*) asking him to stop and read their name.

Funerary monuments, moreover, can be seen as a method of showcasing a person's wealth. While inscriptions were not necessarily costly, only a small, self-selected group of people would have had the disposable income needed to buy them. Of course, some funerary monuments, like the tomb of the baker Eurysaces (*CIL* 6.1958), were of a significant size, which attested to the amount of wealth he possessed in life. As such, Eurysaces' mausoleum and its inscribed text function as a public representation of his persona, which would remain a part of the city's landscape for centuries after his physical death. Thus, the choice of a funerary monument and its related epitaph were of great importance and a highly personal act. Indeed, what can be more personal than deciding how (and with whom) to spend the rest of eternity?

2.2 The Central Piece: Nomenclature

The importance of nomenclature for the analysis of inscriptions cannot be overstated. Sometimes a funerary inscription is merely a list of names, with-

20. Plin. *NH* 34.17. See Beltrán Lloris (2015, 131–36) for further discussion.

21. Buonopane (2009, 231) lists only *tabellae ceratae* (wooden tablets covered in wax and etched with a sharp instrument) as private documents for they would be used to record the sale of goods, the payment of a loan, etc. On private documents see also Sandys (1927, 186–88).

out any other indications (such as the inclusion of words like "husband" or "daughter") to help us comprehend who these individuals were. The study and understanding of naming practices in the Roman Empire is key to this effort. I already mentioned that nomenclature can be helpful to date inscriptions, but it is much more useful to identity the status of the deceased. Personal status was a concept of great importance in Roman society. It affected almost every aspect of a person's life and could change over time.

According to Roman law, a person could be freeborn (*ingenuus*), enslaved (*servus*), or formerly enslaved (*libertus*). Moreover, a freeborn person could be a citizen (*civis*) or a foreigner (*peregrinus*). Crucially, a foreigner could be granted Roman citizenship, and all enslaved people who were manumitted by a Roman citizen also gained citizenship upon receiving their freedom from bondage.[22] Conversely, for particularly grave transgressions, a citizen could have their citizenship or freedom revoked through a process called *capitis diminutio*.[23] Thus, a person's status could change over the course of their lives.

Roman nomenclature reflects all these different social statuses. Only a free male Roman citizen can bear the *tria nomina* (*praenomen*, *nomen*, and *cognomen*). So, a man called Marcus Junius Maximus was certainly a free Roman citizen. However, was he freeborn or was he formerly enslaved? The inclusion of filiation ("son of") or pseudofiliation ("freedman of") in the text of an epitaph is the sole method to identify an *ingenuus* ("freeborn") or a *libertus* with absolute certainty. Unfortunately, the use of both filiation and pseudofiliation increasingly declined over the course of the Roman Empire. This is probably due to a variety of reasons, but the high rate of manumission of enslaved people certainly affected it.

Scholars agree that manumission occurred regularly, at least for the enslaved individuals working in urban households.[24] What "regularly" means, however, is difficult to establish.[25] During the early empire, laws were passed to curb the enslavers' manumission practices. Specifically, the *Lex Fufia Cani-*

22. *Acts* 22:28 also attests that individuals in the provinces paid large amounts of money to become Roman citizens.

23. *Dig*. 4.5.11 (Paulus).

24. Alföldy (1972, 116) finds that 98 percent of all surviving epitaphs set up by *servi* and *liberti* come from the *familia urbana*. Weaver (1972, 97–104) believes that manumission was easily achievable for smart, hardworking, and thrifty slaves of the imperial family. Wiedemann (1985, 163) points out that the imperial household was too exceptional to apply its practices to all other Roman households, even the elite ones. Mouritsen (2013, 61–62) finds in his analysis of the *columbaria* of the Volusii and the Statilii that manumission was frequent and early, but in smaller households was probably rarer and later, since the economic effects on the household would have been an important consideration.

25. Joshel (2010, 41) describes manumission as "common." Mouritsen (2013, 53) presents it as "common," but not universal.

nia (2 BCE) imposed limits on how many members of the *familia* could be freed by testamentary manumission (i.e., through a will).[26] Furthermore, the *Lex Aelia Sentia* (4 CE) established that, in order to manumit a slave, the master should be at least twenty years old and the *servus* should have reached the age of thirty.[27] This law, however, also included many exceptions—which are discussed in detail in the following chapter—that allowed for more flexibility.[28] Logic dictates that there would be no need to pass any laws on manumission if it were a rare phenomenon. Yet the existence of the law itself cannot tell scholars what percentage of enslaved individuals were able to obtain their freedom.[29] Despite the restrictions of the *Lex Aelia Sentia*, epigraphic evidence suggests that enslaved persons were often manumitted before they turned thirty.[30] Surveying funerary epitaphs from Rome and the rest of the Italian peninsula, historian Géza Alföldy found that over 65 percent of freedmen and freedwomen had been manumitted under the age of thirty.[31] However, the tendency to commemorate particularly young and tragic deaths is, as I argue below, one of the key features of the Roman epigraphic habit. Therefore, even if there is an abundance of manumitted persons who died young, it does not necessarily mean that their deaths were more common; rather that their deaths were simply memorialized more often.

In a frequently quoted passage, the statesman Cicero—in a senate speech against Mark Antony—affirms that a good *servus* could obtain his freedom in six years.

> Indeed, conscript fathers, when we began to entertain, after six years, hope of freedom, having endured slavery longer than slaves who are parsimonious and hardworking usually do, what vigilance, what cares, what toils ought we to shrink from in order to free the Roman people?[32]

26. Gaius, *Inst*. 1.42–46. Generally, no more than a third of the total number of enslaved persons owned by the deceased's estate could be manumitted.

27. Gaius, *Inst*. 1.18–24.

28. See chapter 3, notes 54 and 56.

29. The *Lex Aelia Sentia* also cannot definitively prove that the majority of slaves were freed shortly after they turned thirty, as Alföldy (1972) proposed and Wiedemann (1985) rejected.

30. Possibly because they fell into the exceptions that the laws accounted for; see further discussion of the *Lex Aelia Sentia* in chapter 3.

31. Alföldy (1972, 107–19) also records that the number of manumitted slaves before thirty years of age is lower in the provinces (40 percent). Weaver (1990, 276) accepts and uses Alföldy's figures, although they have been criticized by Garnsey (1981, 361–62), who stresses that the slaves who received commemoration enjoyed a special relationship with the master and are, therefore, not representative.

32. Cic. *Phil*. 8.32: *Etenim, patres conscripti, cum in spem libertatis sexennio post sumus ingressi diutiusque servitutem perpessi, quam captivi servi frugi et diligentes solent, quas vigilias, quas sollicitudines, quos labores liberandi populi Romani causa recusare debemus?*

Cicero says that good slaves, those deserving of manumission, should be parsimonious and industrious, which is hardly a surprising point of view for an enslaver to hold. What scholars have found surprising though is the specific mention of a six-year time period, wondering if it was an average or ideal timeframe for manumission. Perhaps a round number, such as ten (or twenty) years would be expected. As historian Thomas Wiedemann correctly points out, this reference corresponds to the six years in which the Roman state had been subject to tyrant's rule, from the time that Caesar crossed the Rubicon (January 49 BCE) to Cicero's then present day (February 43 BCE).[33] Therefore, this passage cannot be used to argue that the average or preferred time to "earn" manumission was six years. Cicero is merely arguing that Roman citizens, after bearing the tyranny of Caesar (and Mark Antony) for six years, now—like good *servi*—deserve to be freed from it. In truth, it would be extremely difficult to establish any general practice regarding manumission, since each household was likely unique and had different economic concerns or personal relationships that affected the decision to emancipate a member of the *familia*.

Since manumission was a common occurrence, we can hypothesize that the inclusion of pseudofiliation was probably omitted either because it was not considered to be a highly relevant piece of information, or because *liberti* were trying to obscure their servile past. Many have argued that although *liberti* received citizenship upon manumission and the law did not consider them second-class citizens, on a social level, the so-called stain of servitude (*macula servitudinis*) created a de facto difference in status between those who were born free and those who had acquired freedom.[34]

On the other hand, scholars have long recognized that the recently manumitted and newly minted Roman citizens often spent significant sums of money on their commemorative monuments; it is often the inclusion of pseudofiliation that allows us to recognize them as such.[35] *Liberti* also frequently portrayed themselves wearing a toga, the clothing of a Roman citizen, on their tombstones. This behavior suggests that some were proud of their achievements and wanted to include on their tombstone the abbreviated *L*, the epigraphic shorthand for *libertus/a*, maybe as a reminder of all the adversities and obstacles they had to overcome to become free and have the means to buy a

33. Wiedemann 1985, 165.

34. See Joshel 2010, 42–43; Mouritsen 2011, 10–35; Silver 2013. As for the descendants of servile families, Mouritsen (2011, 264) argues that the "stain of servitude" was not passed on to the next generation, the freeborn children of formerly enslaved parents, as Weaver (1991, 177) previously suggested.

35. E.g., EDR 863, in which the silversmith Publius Curtilius Agatus includes pseudofiliation in his epitaph and proudly wears a toga in his funerary portrait.

funerary monument. Perhaps unsurprisingly, freedmen and freedwomen from the imperial family often included that they were formerly at the service of the emperor, which appears to be a badge of honor; a close connection to the imperial household was something not many could boast. The systematic study of the epitaphs of both imperial *servi* and *liberti*, together known as *familia Caesaris*, was first undertaken by Paul Weaver. In his epigraphic survey, which spans from the reign of Augustus to that of Severus Alexander, Weaver showcases the upward mobility and high social status enjoyed by the members of the *familia Caesaris*, especially the freedmen.[36]

So, while certain individuals were amenable, perhaps even proud, to include pseudofiliation in their final act of self-representation, others did not.[37] For our scope, this is an important factor because even if a person does not include the term *libertus* on their tombstone, we cannot rule out that they had a servile past. For example, the baker Eurysaces, whose unusually large funerary monument I mentioned above, is customarily identified as a freedman, although his epitaph does not mention it. Although we do not know his status for certain, his full name, Marcus Virgilius Eurysaces, sounds like the name of a freedman. Indeed, Greek-sounding names—such as Eutychus, Hermeros, Chresimus, Philetus—were commonly given to enslaved individuals.[38] Upon manumission, an enslaved man would have taken up his former master's *praenomen* and *nomen* but keep his slave-name as the *cognomen*.[39] The frequent use of certain Greek names for enslaved men and women can help scholars identify *liberti* and *libertae* even without pseudofiliation. Of course, it is necessary to exercise caution in these cases: a Greek *cognomen* cannot be a sure indication of enslaved birth. For example, it could have been the name of a person who was enslaved at some point, but then became a family name passed down through generations to nonenslaved individuals.[40]

36. Weaver 1972.

37. Those who did not wish to include the designation *libertus* on their epitaph were probably many, yet their precise number is doomed to remain a mystery. Taylor (1961, 113–32) first argued that, counting those who were certainly enslaved or formerly enslaved and adding an estimate of those who probably were *liberti* but did not advertise it, it would not be impossible that *servi* and *liberti* made up the majority of those who set up inscriptions in Rome during the high empire. This hypothesis was accepted by Shaw (1987, 40) and Treggiari (1991).

38. Enslaved individuals were also given Latin names; they were usually auspicious words such as Fortunatus "Lucky") or represented qualities desirable in a servant, such as Fidelis ("Trustworthy").

39. In the case of freed women, they would take only the *nomen* of the enslaver (since women do not bear a *praenomen*) and keep the single name they bore when enslaved as their *cognomen*.

40. Scholars have long postulated that those who bore Greek cognomina were freedmen or their descendants: Frank 1916, 691; Gordon 1924, 100–105; Taylor 1961, 127; Kajanto 1968, 524. More recently, Solin (2001, 309) has found that, while a majority of enslaved persons bore a Greek name (67 percent), a significant 31.2 percent had a Latin name. Similarly, Hermann-Otto (1994,

To complicate matters further, during the empire, another group of individuals in addition to *ingenui* and *liberti* could bear the *tria nomina*: the Junian Latins.[41] I mentioned above that according to the *Lex Aelia Sentia* the person who manumitted a *servus* should be at least twenty years old, and the enslaved at least thirty years old.[42] When these requirements were not met or the manumission happened among friends (*inter amicos*) instead of in front of a Roman magistrate, the person would be liberated, but only informally, earning the status of Junian Latin.[43] Since this type of manumission did not follow the dictates of the law, it was incomplete and did not grant full freedom; a Junian Latin was free but not a Roman citizen. Through the means of a legal fiction, they were only free until the time of their death.[44] At that moment, they reverted back to an enslaved status. Effectively, this transferred all the economic assets of the informally manumitted person to his enslaver, as happened with the *peculium* of a *servus*.[45] Moreover, Junian Latins also lacked the right to enter into an official marriage (*conubium*), so their children would be freeborn but illegitimate.[46] Scholars agree that Junian Latins would have made up a significant percentage of the population of Roman Italy; however, they are incredibly difficult to identify in the epigraphic record.[47] Thanks to a series of letters from Pliny the Younger, we know that Junian Latins customarily used the *tria nomina*.[48] Moreover, they could not include filiation, because they were not freeborn, nor pseudofiliation, because they were not *liberti*. Combined with the fact that many individuals also did not include filiation or pseudofiliation in their funerary commemorations by choice, Junian Latins become invisible; we know they are there, but we cannot see them.[49]

One additional caveat must be included in the discussion of Roman naming

309) found that *vernae* (or home-born slaves) from private households bore Latin names in almost 63 percent of cases and the remaining 37 percent had Greek names.

41. During the Republic the status of "Latin" also existed, a Roman ally with special privileges but who lacked Roman citizenship. After the Social War (91–87 BCE), all inhabitants of the Italian peninsula were made Roman citizens, thus making the Latin status almost irrelevant. On the legal status of Junian Latins under the *Lex Iunia* and *Lex Aelia Sentia* see Pellecchi 2023.

42. Gaius *Inst*. 1.17. The law also allowed for some exceptions for enslaved persons who shared a close connection to the master (see also Gaius *Inst*. 1.19).

43. Gaius *Inst*. 1.17; 22.

44. See Ando (2015, 316–17) on the legal fiction concerning Junian Latins.

45. Gaius *Inst*. 3.56.

46. On lack of connubium see Crook (1970, 44). Children of a Junian Latin father and a Roman citizen mother were Roman citizens thanks to a *senatus consultum* by Hadrian (Gai. *Inst*. 1.80).

47. See Weaver 1990; Weaver 1997; Mouritsen 2007; Hirt 2018.

48. Plin. *Ep*. 7.16.4, 10.5.2, and 10.104.

49. On identifying Junian Latins in Pompeii see Mouritsen (2007); Emmerson (2011). Furthermore, a multipart study of Junian Latins has been undertaken by López Barja, Doria, and Roth, with their first volume being released in 2023.

practices. As mentioned above, Junian Latins, freed, and freeborn men bore three names. Unfortunately, these three names were not always fully spelled out on funerary epitaphs. Especially among those who lived with little disposable income, it is not unusual to find people commemorated only by a single name, their *cognomen*. As longer epitaphs were certainly more expensive, some families might have only been able to afford a brief text. Thus, even if a man did have a *praenomen* and *nomen*, they could have been omitted due to lack of economic means. This creates a scenario in which it was quite difficult to discern who was a free or freeborn person with low income, or an enslaved individual who only had a single name.[50] At times, other elements in the epitaph can aid the epigraphist in crafting the most plausible hypothesis regarding the status of these single-name individuals.[51] So, while all enslaved individuals bear one designation, the use of a single name is not always or necessarily a sign of bondage.

Thus far, I focused on the nomenclature of male individuals, whether they are free or enslaved, freeborn or manumitted. As for women, the same main principles apply: filiation and pseudofiliation are the only certain markers of free birth and manumission. Until the end of the Republic, women customarily only bore one name: their father's *nomen* in the feminine gender. So, the daughter of Marcus Tullius Cicero was Tullia, and the daughter of Lucius Cornelius Scipio was Cornelia. They had no *praenomen* and no *cognomen*, only the family name. If a family had more than one daughter or in the case of agnatic female cousins, their family members certainly had a system to identify them within the household. In inscriptions, the younger sister is often identified as Minor ("younger"), while the elder is Maior ("older"); for three or more sisters, cardinal numbers could be used, such as Prima ("the first"), Secunda ("the second"), Tertia ("the third").[52] It was only in the late Republic that women started having both a *nomen* and a *cognomen*.[53] Indeed, the three women named in the epitaph I presented at the beginning of the chapter all bear two names (Vettia Polla, Vettia Eleutheris, Vettia Hospita). Since the explosion of the epigraphic habit largely corresponds with the introduction of two names for women, when epigraphists find a woman with a single name, she might be identified as an enslaved person. This is especially true when the name is Greek. For, just as with male names, Greek-sounding designations were often assigned to *servae* by their enslavers. Last, it is important to note that Roman women did not

50. Shaw 2002, 204.

51. See BCAR 1941–181 analyzed below (note 102).

52. Sandys 1927, 210.

53. Salomies 2014, 157. Under Claudius and Nero, it became a rule for all men and women to have a *cognomen* (277–84).

take their husband's family name upon marriage, but they retained their father's name.[54] Therefore, married couples do not (usually) share the same name and can often be recognized in textual epitaphs because the word *coniunx* (spouse) is included.[55]

In this brief overview of conventional naming practices I have not yet discussed the importance of context. We almost never find a person's name by itself; it is often associated with others, on a specific type of monument, with a particular type of letterform. All these factors can work together to help the reader identify the named individuals on the stone. I present this epitaph (fig. 2) to exemplify what I mean.

D(is) M(anibus) s(acrum) Eu{v}aristo
v(ixit) a(nnos) V et Iuliae Succe-
ssae v(ixit) a(nnos) XXXV b(ene) mer-
entibus f(ecit) C(aius) Iulius
Abascantus f(ecit) sibi et
suis posterisq(ue) eoru(m).[56]

Sacred to the Divine Shades. For Euaristus, who lived for five years, and Julia Successa, who lived for thirty-five years. Gaius Julius Abascantus made this for himself, and his people, and their descendants.

There are three named individuals on the stone and, even if no relational words are included in the text of the epitaphs, it is most likely that the deceased child and woman were mother and son.[57] The man is probably the father of the boy and Successa's husband. It is possible that Successa and Abascantus were both formerly enslaved to the Julian family and, upon receiving manumission from the same household, they both gained the same family name. Indeed, Abascantus and Successa are both well attested as names for enslaved individuals.[58] Another possibility could be that Abascantus was Successa's father. The

54. Sometimes scholars refer to certain women such as Clodia, the lover of Catullus and the sister of Clodius Pulcher, as *Clodia Metelli*, literally the Clodia of Metellus, her husband. This is, however, not her official designation; it is merely a way of distinguishing her from her two sisters, also called Clodia.

55. The most obvious exception to this general rule is in the case that a man and a woman were manumitted from the same household: then they would share the same *nomen*.

56. BCAR-1941–181.

57. She is likely not old enough to be his grandmother, and—if we are to accept that they were buried around the same time and the monument was commissioned for both—she would have had him when she was thirty. Since most women got married in their late teens (as per Shaw 1987), one could speculate that Euaristus was not Successa's first child.

58. Solin 1996, 179, 445.

epitaph does not include words such as spouse, wife, or daughter, seemingly leaving open this second possibility. Yet here is where the experience of reading hundreds of thousands of inscriptions comes in. It is quite rare that a father provides burial for an adult daughter, and even more rare for a grandson. In the vast majority of cases, children—until their late teens for girls, until their early twenties for boys—are commemorated by their parents, and adult women and men are commemorated by their spouses.[59] There is yet a third possibility: that Successa and Abascantus share the same family name not because they were freed from the same household (*colliberti*) but because they are siblings. Statistically speaking, siblings commemorate each other less frequently than spouses. Based on the scarce information the epitaph provides, my interpretation relies on what is the most likely scenario, although strictly speaking I cannot definitively prove that Successa and Abascantus were a married couple and the parents of Euaristus.

One question remains: why does the boy only bear one name? Usually, a single name signifies enslaved status. But if his parents are both free, how could the boy be enslaved? Legally speaking, one of many things could have happened; perhaps the mother and father were freed by testamentary manumission, but—due to the quotas prescribed by the *Lex Fufia Caninia*—the son remained in bondage; perhaps, the parents were manumitted once they reached thirty, as the *Lex Aelia Sentia* prescribes, and the child was too young to be manumitted. These hypotheses are seemingly plausible but almost certainly incorrect. Truly, being able to analyze the inscription either in person or through a photograph are the best ways to reconstruct what happened in this case. It is most likely that the carver simply ran out of space. The child probably bore the customary *tria nomina* but since the first two were identical to his father's, they could be inferred from context and were therefore left out due to the lack of space in the epigraphic field.

This is merely one example that illustrates why it is always preferable for scholars to have seen the inscription before performing any type of analysis. The autopsy of the stone itself is often critical to avoid gross misinterpretations.[60] From the analysis of the epitaph for Euaristus and Julia Successa, it is evident that the knowledge of Roman onomastics is foundational to the study

59. See Saller 1987 and Shaw 1987. The average age at marriage for persons outside of the families of senatorial elites was in the late teens for women and mid to late twenties for men. Around this age, the funerary responsibilities switched from parents to spouses, thus altering the pattern of commemoration from the family of origin to the marital unit.

60. Today scholars can rely on a growing number of online databases that include images of inscriptions. Before the advent of these new media, scholars relied on *CIL* which attempted to reproduce the layout and features of the inscriptions it collected.

Figure 2. *BCAR* 1941: 181. ©Sovrintendenza ai Beni Culturali di Roma Capitale.

of epigraphy. Yet understanding the legal and social context of imperial Rome is just as important if one wants to avoid mischaracterization of the evidence. However, even expertise in Roman law and epigraphic practices has to be supplemented with reason, common sense, and, when possible, autopsy.

2.3 Funerary Epitaphs as Evidence: Challenges and Biases

I have described funerary epitaphs as highly standardized forms of communication. Any neophyte to the study of epigraphy will take note that most epitaphs are quite similar, just as modern tombstones more or less all share the same features. This might appear as an obstacle in the study of epigraphy, and sometimes it is. However, the homologized nature of inscriptions also allows scholars to single out those which deviate from the conventional form and recognize them as exceptional. Indeed, such exceptions are significant because they embody a conscious choice to depart from well-established norms and conventions.[61] Although detailed information is lacking, it is generally accepted that the realization of an inscribed monument followed four different phases: the choice of the monument, the selection of the texts to be inscribed, its layout on the stone and, last, its carving.[62] It has been postulated that dedicated stores (*officinae*) kept a stock of different funerary monuments, in a more or less finished form, but lacked the epitaph itself, which was to be carved following the customer's instruction.[63] The fact that certain types of inscriptions have a very specific and standardized set of *formulae* leads researchers to hypothesize the existence of written collections of samples from which the dedicator could choose.[64] Therefore, not abiding by standard conventions could represent a personal and conscious choice on the part of the dedicator. These "divergent" inscriptions can be analyzed on their own, based on their own qualities and idiosyncratic features; they are captivating but can rarely help to draw general conclusions applicable to society at large.

Conversely, when standardized epitaphs are studied together as a group, scholars can more easily find patterns and configurations which can better inform on a society's general practices. However, using epitaphs as a mine for statistical data brings multiple inherent difficulties and biases. First and fore-

61. Bodel 2001, 30–31.

62. On the work inside the carving shops, their stock of ready-to-carve monuments, and the customer's choice of the inscribed text see Buonopane 2009, 65–66; and Edmondson 2015, 114–15.

63. Edmondson (2015, 115) points at *CIL* 6.7393a, a finely refined ash-chest which only features the abbreviation *D(is) M(anibus)*, as proof of the existence of such a custom.

64. Handley 2003, 26; Buonopane 2009, 68.

most, those who could afford to set up a funerary monument and inscription, though simple and unelaborate, represent a self-selecting group of people. Being able to pay for such installations implies a certain kind of economic security.[65] Therefore, the analysis of inscriptions cannot possibly represent a cross-section for the entire population of any given period.

Besides the economic bias, funerary inscriptions also show an age-driven pattern of commemoration that does not reflect the actual mortality of any region in the Roman period.[66] By analyzing age-bearing epitaphs from the Roman Empire and categorizing them into age-groups (0–1 years, 1–9 years, 10–19 years, 20–29 years, and so on), problematic results are obtained. First, the number of commemorations for infants do not reflect the high mortality experienced not only in the Roman Empire but any premodern society.[67] Second, epitaphs commemorating elderly persons record many individuals of remarkable longevity.[68] Likewise, the number of those who have reportedly lived less than 10 years is exceptionally high.[69] These are clearly misrepresentations, due to the fact that young deaths are more tragic and to live an unusually long life is particularly noteworthy. Third, as Duncan-Jones has observed, a suspiciously high percentage of those who did not die in either childhood, adolescence, or advanced elderliness are recorded to have lived for years that are multiples of five.[70] This might be a result of the fact that birth-records were not carefully managed, but it is also likely that there was a widespread propensity to round up ages. All these concurrent factors cause scholars to be rightfully wary of using and trusting age-bearing inscriptions for statistical purposes on life-expectancy.[71]

65. While tombstones were not expensive, not everyone could afford one: Weaver 1972, 179; Bodel 2001, 35.

66. Inscriptions merely provide an insight into general patterns of commemoration, which are ill-equipped to account for periods of mass epidemics, famine, and regional differences in mortality rates, due, for example, to specific climate conditions, such as in the Fayum, as described by Scheidel 2002. On the evidence about plagues affecting the Roman Empire see Scheidel 2001.

67. Parkin (1992, 6) argues that the number of infant deaths recorded on tombstones is considerably lower even than those experienced in modern developed societies. See Laes 2014 on funerary commemoration of infants under one year of age, where he concludes that, although the number of stone epitaphs for infants is lower than the mortality rate, there is no difference in how these infants were commemorated compared to toddlers and teenagers; the same language and conventions are observed.

68. Most famously, Macdonell (1913, 379, table 1) recorded 10,679 age-bearing inscriptions from the province of Africa. Of those, 2,835 give ages of 70 and above (26.5 percent), 317 of 100 and above (2.96 percent), and 27 of 120 and above (0.25 percent). As for the city of Rome, the numbers are quite different: of the 9,849 age-bearing inscriptions (5,905 male and 3,944 female), only 3.37 percent of men (435) and 3.83 percent (151) of women are recorded to have died at 60 years and above. Of these, only 49 men and 10 women are said to have lived to be 90.

69. See Shaw 1984, 492, table C.

70. Duncan-Jones 1990, 79.

71. Parkin (1992, 7) states that the mortality pattern derived from Roman epitaphs, for any age and gender, would be untenable in any real state or society.

Moreover, by comparing sepulchral inscriptions from different areas, it is possible to find geographical and chronological differences in commemorative practices. While it is not surprising that funerary commemorations follow different patterns in some spheres (such as military camps, culturally diverse provinces, etc.), Éry found that this occurred even in the city of Rome; while the 9,980 age-bearing funerary inscriptions written in Latin produce an average life-expectancy of 23 years, those written in Greek (only 822) yield an astonishing 51-year average.[72] These numbers should not be interpreted to demonstrate the fact that the Greek-speaking minority living in Rome had a life expectancy more than twice as long as the Latin-speaking majority. Instead, these figures reflect a difference in the epigraphic habit, in the patterns of commemoration of the two communities.

It is challenging for scholars to properly account for the economic and age-driven biases in a statistical analysis, and the same is true for the gender disparity. Generally, men are commemorated more frequently than women, with an average of three men for every two women.[73] This, of course, does not mean that there were fewer women in the Roman world, but simply that their deaths were commemorated less often. Furthermore, additional biases include the previously mentioned uneven chronological distribution of inscriptions (clustered in the first three centuries CE) and the randomness of the sample.[74] For all these reasons, my study does not heavily rely on statistical analysis of epitaphs. In the upcoming chapters, I sometimes provide percentages of the available epigraphic evidence when they can be a useful tool, but I also acknowledge that such results are always inherently biased.

Before concluding these preliminary remarks on the challenges and biases associated with funerary epitaphs, it is important to state three general but fundamental observations. First, an epitaph is not a picture of real life. It is, at best, a snapshot, taken in a particular moment in time, but, in reality, it is more often a document outside linear time, in which relative chronology bears no meaning. For instance, let us consider *CIL* 6.11085:

D(*is*) *M*(*anibus*).
M(*arco*) *Aemilio, M*(*arci*) *f*(*ilio*),

72. Éry 1969, 60. On different regional and cultural burial practices see Shaw 1984.

73. As discussed in Flory 1975, 10; Parkin 1992, 15; Hasegawa 2005, 65–69. Moreover, as Penner (2011, 151) has shown, the gender disparity is not always consistent; in Livia's *columbarium* the male burials account for 70 percent of the total, in the Statilii's 69 percent, in Marcella's 63 percent, and in the Volusii's 59 percent.

74. Indeed, what building, monument, or cemetery survived from the ancient world was not specifically selected by anyone; it merely happened that something was destroyed and something else was not. Thus, what did survive might not necessarily be as representative as scholars would like.

Marcello patri,
vix(*it*) *ann*(*is*) *LXX*, *et*
M(*arco*) *Aemilio, M*(*arci*) *f*(*ilio*), *Iuliano*
filio, *vix*(*it*) *ann*(*is*) *VIII*, *men-*
sibus VIIII, *dieb*(*us*) *XVII, et Aemiliae, M*(*arci*) *f*(*iliae*), *Marcellae*
filiae, *vix*(*it*) *ann*(*is*) *II*,
mensibus IIII,
et Aemiliae Nigellae Restitutae, matri,
vix(*it*) *ann*(*is*) *L*,
posterisque eorum.
B(onis) b(ene).

To the Divine Shades. For Marcus Aemilius Marcellus, son of Marcus, the father, who lived 70 years, and for Marcus Aemilius Iulianus, son of Marcus, the son, who lived 8 years, 9 months and 17 days, and for Aemilia Marcella, daughter of Marcus, the daughter, who lived 2 years and 4 months, and for Aemilia Nigella Restituta, the mother, who lived 50 years, and for their descendants. May things go well for good people.

This epitaph commemorates four different people who died at different ages and at different times. The two children died very young, while the parents lived on to be fifty and seventy. If we consider the female reproductive limitations, the mother, Aemilia Nigella Restituta, must have died much later than her children, and probably at a time closer to her husband.[75] Yet they all share the same sepulchral inscription where time collapses and levels their lives into timelessness.[76]

Second, the name of the dedicator sometimes does not appear on the stone. This is not the ideal scenario since the relationship between the commemorator and those who are commemorated is at the center of scholarly attention. For example, the inscription presented above does not specifically name a dedicator; it is possible that the parents bought the tomb and left disposition on what to do after their death, or that unnamed family members (or heirs) arranged

75. It is unusual for women to have three names, however, it is not unattested (e.g., *CIL* 8.23327). Brunet (2022, 271) interprets this inscription differently, identifying Marcus Aemilius Marcellus and Aemilia Nigella Restituta as the grandparents of the children.

76. Another example of the same phenomenon is *CIL* 6.10750: *Q(uintus) Aelius / Nireus v(ixit) a(nnis) LXXIIX. / Q(uintus) Aelius / Aelianus v(ixit) a(nnis) IIX*. "Quintus Aelius Nireus lived for seventy-eight years. Quintus Aelius Aelianus lived for eight years." In this case we have a pair of relatives (father and son, or possibly grandfather and grandson) whose identification relies on missing information (i.e., when did they actually die?).

for their commemoration. Another common scenario is exemplified by *CIL* 6.10938:

Ael(iae) Maximi-
nae, quae vi-
xit ann(is) II,
m(ensibus) V.

To Aelia Maximina who lived two years, five months.

Naturally, this toddler could not have provided or arranged for her own burial. Although there is only one name on the stone, someone was taking care of this young child and set up an epitaph for her. It would be unsound to claim that both her parents provided her with burial, for it cannot be excluded that others had performed this duty.[77] As a result, epitaphs such as this cannot give much information on the family's composition; it is clear that the girl was freeborn, but whether she had a living mother and father, or any siblings, is impossible to know.

Third, it is worth observing that epitaphs are ideal representations. Many factors obscure what scholars would like to know, such as the true relationship and daily interaction of people who are commemorated together. All we can see is what the commemorator chose to include and, by definition, exclude from the inscribed text. This is a limitation of the medium itself, the gravestone, and it is just as challenging to work with for contemporary historical research. However, the fact that epitaphs are an ideal representation can also work as an advantage. We can see them as carefully constructed texts which perform one's ultimate self-representation.[78] As such, they are never meaningless.

2.4 Inscribed Communities: Families and *Familiae*

Not everyone in the ancient world could afford to purchase an individual funerary monument. Some, therefore, chose to join burial clubs which were

77. On single parents commemorating their children see Gianni 2023. Caretakers—nurses, grandparents, nannies—are known to perform burial duties for the children they were entrusted with: Bradley 1991; Dixon 1988, 146–55; Laes 2015; Gregori 2016. The topic is explored at length in chapter 3.

78. Note how in the *Satyricon*, the nouveau riche freedman Trimalchio describes how he has been carefully constructing every aspect of his sepulchral monument (Petron. *Sat*. 71.12), well in advance of his death, for it represents an opportunity to present a "new" image of himself and highlight only certain aspects of his personal life.

often organized around professional societies or *collegia*; members paid regular dues to these organizations and, once they died, the collective would take care of their personal burial.[79] These associations were run by governing committees made of *decuriones* ("chiefs" or "magistrates") who regulated the admission to the club. A number of *curatores* ("caretakers") arranged for the practical needs and necessities of the organization, such as coordinating the funerary rites and burial. Some *collegia*, however, could be organized based not upon one's profession but around a single enslaved community; *servi* and *liberti* from elite and affluent households could organize into domestic burial clubs or *collegia domestica*.[80]

The members of a *collegium* were buried together in a specific type of communal tomb, called a *columbarium*; it was a structure with one or more chambers whose walls were filled with small niches, only big enough to store one or two urns, which were accompanied by a simple inscribed label or epitaph below.[81] Arguably, the most famous *columbarium* is the one dedicated to the burial of the *servi* and *liberti* of the empress Livia, the wife of Augustus.[82] Senatorial households, such as the Statilii and the Volusii, also had large *columbaria* where the members of their enslaved *familia* were buried.[83] Archaeologists have found evidence for no less than twenty *columbaria* in the city of Rome.[84] Although we do possess a sizable number of funerary epitaphs from these *columbaria*, there are still many unknowns about how these tombs were purchased, administered, and regulated. Based on the epigraphic evidence, it can be inferred that the *decuriones* of these domestic associations were almost always freedmen of the same household;[85] they controlled admission to the communal burial site, set and collected the dues, and—with the help of caretakers—organized funerals, cared for the maintenance of the tombs, and made offerings to the shades of the deceased during the designated religious festivals.[86] However, who paid for the purchase of the land where the *columbarium* stood or for its construction?

It is possible that the enslaver—the *pater* or *mater familias*—originally pur-

79. On *collegia* see Hasegawa 2005; Perry 2006; Verboven 2011; Borbonus 2014, 139–40. On so-called pseudo-*collegia* see Bodel 2008, 192.

80. The designation *collegia domestica* is often used by modern scholars, although it is only attested once—in *CIL* 6.9148—for the burial club associated with the household of a Sergia Paullina, the wealthy daughter of a consul in the second century CE.

81. The term *columbarium* derives from the Latin word for dove (*columba*), for these burial niches resemble dovecotes.

82. Treggiari 1975b.

83. E.g., Treggiari 1975a; Caldelli and Ricci 1999; Hasegawa 2005; Penner 2011; Mouritsen 2013.

84. Borbonus 2014, 19.

85. Hasegawa 2005, 253.

86. See King (2020) on beliefs and practices associated with the cult of the dead.

chased the *columbarium* but was not closely involved in its day-to-day operations, although the evidence is scant.[87] If we accept this hypothesis, it must also be inquired whether the enslaved and formerly enslaved members of the household were compelled to be buried in the *columbaria* that had been purchased for them. There is evidence to suggest that this was not the case, at least among the Statilii and the *familia Caesaris*. *Servi* and *liberti* from Livia's household were not exclusively buried in her *columbarium*; some purchased their own funerary monuments.[88] Likewise, although they did have a *columbarium* for their *familia*, several freedmen of the Statilii were buried in independent tombs.[89] Thus, it appears that, at least in certain households, the choice of where to be buried fell upon the individual. Those who chose to be buried in a *columbarium* perhaps did it because of economic reasons, lacking funds to afford an individual burial. Many included in their brief epitaph the role that they played in the household, suggesting that they associated a sense of pride with their profession.[90] Indubitably, many also felt an emotional connection to the *columbarium* and those who would occupy it. For someone like a *verna*—meaning someone who was born and raised in the household—to be buried in the domestic *columbarium* probably meant to be placed near their already deceased parents, their childhood friends, and all the other members of the *familia* who had died over the years. Likewise, in the future, their spouses and children would also be buried in the same funerary monument, not too differently from a modern family tomb. Indeed, in his analysis of the major domestic *columbaria*, Hasegawa found that, among the epitaphs in which the name of the commemorator is included, about half of the commemorations were made by family members.[91] What about the other half though?

Not every *verna* spent their entire life enslaved to a single family; a person could be sold away from their parents, or spouse, or children, and would

87. Hasegawa (2005, 262) argues that the masters were "sponsors and benefactors" of the *columbarium* and retained some level of authority over its operations. Indeed, five inscriptions from the *columbarium* of the Volusii mention that their commemoration was done with the master's permission, which suggests that the *pater familias* could grant (or deny!) the right to use the *columbarium*. However, the remaining 294 epitaphs from the same *columbarium* do not include any reference to a similar concession, which might point to the fact that requesting master's approval was *pro forma* and not particularly worthy of being referenced.

88. Treggiari 1975b, 48–49.

89. Mouritsen 2013, 49.

90. Some include: *medicus* (doctor), *ornatrix* (hairdresser), *ad vestem* (keeper of the wardrobe), *cubicularius* (chamber-servant), *faber* (blacksmith), *cantator* (singer), *dispensator* (manager), *ab supellectile* (overseer of the furniture), *rogator* (social secretary in charge of delivering invitations), and *tabularius* (accountant).

91. Hasegawa (2005, 260): for the *columbarium* of the Volusii 63 percent, for the Statilii's 48 percent, and for Livia's 44 percent.

have had to establish new interpersonal connections within the new household. Moreover, not all *servi* and *servae* were born in bondage; countless men and women were forcibly abducted from their land and families in order to be sold as slaves in the Roman markets.[92] In these cases, lacking biological connections, other members of the *familia*—friends and "colleagues"—would step up and assume the funerary duties for the deceased. If we follow Hasegawa's numbers, half of the named dedications from the three largest *columbaria domestica* were individuals who accepted a familial responsibility for a person "unrelated" to them; they acted as surrogate family members or fictive kin.[93]

It is important to acknowledge that *columbaria* might give a skewed prospective on the relationship between enslaver and enslaved. It might appear quite touching that the master and mistress provided adequate burial to their *familia*. Likewise, having *liberti* and *servi* proudly including the role they played in the household on their epitaph might suggest a rosier picture of slavery, which is certainly not part of my aims. While some masters might have cared to provide a proper burial for the enslaved individuals in their household, to buy a piece of property and turn it into a private cemetery—not even for one's entire family, but just for the enslaved community—would have been something few could afford. A *columbarium* raised the status of an elite family, who not only had the means but also the good taste of being a caring and urbane enslaver. Gone were the days of Cato the Elder, who recommended to young property buyers to sell sick and old slaves.[94] Starting in the early empire, some elite masters began to boast their attachment to their *servi/ae* and, more or less subtly, to condemn gratuitous cruelty against the enslaved, while most certainly exploiting their own *servi* and *servae* at every level and embracing slavery as a foundational institution of society.[95] From the point of view of the enslavers, a *columbarium* was an extravagant purchase that only few could afford and that showcased their generous disposition toward their social inferiors.[96]

As for the enslaved, there is reason to accept that *columbaria* were a positive institution. Since they were run and managed by members of the *familia*, *servi*

92. For a discussion on the sustainability of the slave market (whether during the empire the Romans continued to enslave men and women from the provinces or relied on natural reproduction of already enslaved individuals) see Schiedel 1997 and 2005.

93. Hasegawa (2005, 264) described the same phenomenon but called it *pietas* toward the "kin-less."

94. Cato *Agr*. 2: *servum senem, servum morbosum [. . .] vendat*. "Sell the old slave, the sick slave."

95. E.g., masters openly grieving for the death of a *servus/serva*: Plin. *Ep*. 8.16.1; Mart. 1.88, 1.101, 5.34, 6.52, 10.61; Stat. *Sil*. 2.1, 2.6, 5.5. For descriptions of gratuitous cruelty against enslaved persons: Plin. *NH* 9.39.77; Tac. *Ann*. 12.42–45; Mart. 3.94.

96. Hasegawa 2005, 263: "the underlying motive for such generosity would be primarily ostentation."

and *liberti* could exercise some level of agency in how their loved ones and fellow members of the collective were buried. And if, at least in some households, enslaved individuals could choose whether to be buried in the *columbarium* or to buy a separate personal monument, it appears that many decided to spend the rest of eternity alongside the past and future members of the *familia*.

It is quite conceivable that individuals working, sleeping, and laboring side by side would form strong friendship ties and, perhaps by extension, a sort of allegiance to the household.[97] At times, epitaphs can show that enslaved people continued to feel a special connection to their previous *familia*, even if they were inherited or bought by a different one later in life, as *CIL* 6.8754 attests.

D(*is*) *M*(*anibus*).
Photioni,
Caesaris n(*ostri*)
servo coco,
Sestiano
Fabia Iulia
fratri, *b*(*ene*) *m*(*erenti*), *f*(*ecit*).

To the Divine Shades. Fabia Iulia made this for her brother, Photio Sestianus, the slave-cook of our Caesar, well deserving.

The cook Photio, a *servus* of the emperor, is commemorated by his sister. Surprisingly, he bears more than the single name customary for enslaved persons; he is also called Sestianus, which can be loosely translated in this context as "from the household of the Sestia family." Therefore, while he is now part of the imperial household, he was once part of a different *familia*. If the allegiance to a previous household was irrelevant, there would be no reason to include it. Moreover, the suffix *-anus*, which appears in the name Sestianus, is also employed in the case of adoptions, to signal the family of origin of the adoptee. Of course, adopting a son and inheriting/buying a *servus* are two distinct actions; however, they both signify the inclusion of a new person inside the household, leaving the old one behind, though not completely. The old household, the old family still bears meaning.

This is an important insight for the investigation into fictive kinship. I believe that, especially for enslaved individuals who were captured or sold

97. Likewise, negative emotions and even hostility could emerge from living in such close quarters. See below.

without their biological family, the other *servi* played a surrogate familial role. For example, a young boy, separated from his parents, might have looked up to an older man as a stand-in father figure and to children in his age group as allies, playmates, and substitute siblings. A middle-aged woman, kidnapped away from her own land and family, could have found surrogate sisters and daughters in other women of the *familia*. Funerary inscriptions attest terms such as *conservi* ("fellow-slaves") and *colliberti* ("fellow-freedmen"), showcased in the inscription below, which—I argue—can be taken as pseudofamilial terms employed to replace those familial ties that slavery broke or negated.

T(*itus*) *Statulenus Quintio*
ossuarium marmoreum
fecit sibi et T(*ito*) *Statuleno*
Philomuso, *collib*(*erto*), *qui obi*(*i*)*t*
suum diem ann(*orum*) *XXX, et*
Iporae colliber(*tae*) *meae*.[98]

Titus Statulenus Quintio made this marble bone-urn for himself and for Titus Statulenus Philomusus, his fellow-freedman, who died on his day of thirty years, and for Ipora, my fellow freedwoman.

It is hard to ascertain what the relationship between Quintio, Philomusus, and Ipora was. Perhaps they grew up together and were as close as siblings while being biologically unrelated. Maybe Ipora and Quintius were an older couple and acted as surrogate parents when the young Philomusus was brought into their household. Without knowing their age, it is hard to pinpoint a type of relationship with certainty. Yet it is clear that they wanted to be buried together even after they had been manumitted and were free to create new familial connections. In the previous chapter, I introduced the Ecological Framework, which can be used to study the evolution of familial structures over time; when a niche is left empty, such as the parental one, others can step up and fill that space. I believe that in the enslaved *familia* it was possible for people who had lost their biological family to find surrogate familial figures that filled these so-called niches, the emptiness left after one's original familial connections have been destroyed or denied.[99]

It is fundamental to underscore that the epitaphs which attests a close con-

98. *CIL* 6.33704.

99. Joshel (2010, 149) suggests that the relationships within the *familia* perhaps compensated, either as a substitute or a supplement, for the loss of family.

nection between *colliberti* represent only one possible outcome. Not all households included hundreds of enslaved individuals. Not all of them found surrogate family members. Moreover, individual enslavers surely played a role in shaping the relationships among enslaved individuals. Just to give an example, if food and resources were insufficient, *conservi* might fight among themselves rather than unite as a community. If informal unions between men and women could only take place when authorized by the master, as a form of reward to foster loyalty, or conversely as an implicit punishment for those who were deemed undeserving, that would have had a significant impact in the creation of familial bonds in the household.[100]

Thus, an enslaver's approach and attitude toward enslaved *familiae* would have either hindered or fostered a sense of community among the enslaved. I present two literary texts to support my point. These passages were written within a generation of each other by two authors who are members of the same family. Pliny the Elder and his nephew (and adoptive son) Pliny the Younger were both important members of the cultural and political elite between the end of the first and the beginning of the second centuries CE. They wrote extensively through their lives, and their works were meant to be read by their peers; thus, we can infer that the opinions they present, while they might not have been universally shared, were at least somewhat acceptable and understandable to other members of the elite.

> **Pliny the Elder**: To think what life was in the days of old, and what innocence existed when nothing was sealed! Whereas nowadays even articles of food and drink have to be protected against theft by means of a ring: this is the progress achieved by our legions of slaves—a foreign rabble in one's home, so that an attendant to tell people's names now has to be employed even in the case of one's slaves! This was not the way with bygone generations, when a single servant for each master, a member of his master's clan, Marcius' boy or Lucius' boy, took all his meals with the family in common, nor was there any need of precautions in the home to keep watch on the domestics.[101]

100. Varro *Rust*. 1.15.5 and Columella 1.8.5 mention that masters should allow the *villici* (enslaved foremen) to take an informal wife in order to strengthen their loyalty toward the household.

101. Plin. *NH* 33.26: *quae fuit illa vita priscorum, qualis innocentia, in qua nihil signabatur! nunc cibi quoque ac potus anulo vindicantur a rapina. hoc profecere mancipiorum legiones, in domo turba externa ac iam servorum quoque causa nomenclator adhibendus. aliter apud antiquos singuli Marcipores Luciporesve dominorum gentiles omnem victum in promiscuo habebant, nec ulla domi a domesticis custodia opus erat.*

> **Pliny the Younger**: I have been much distressed by illness among my servants, the deaths, too, of some of the younger men. Two facts console me somewhat, though inadequately in trouble like this: I am always ready to grant my slaves their freedom, so I don't feel their death is so untimely when they die free men, and I allow even those who remain slaves to make a sort of will which I treat as legally binding. They set out their instructions and requests as they think fit, and I carry them out as if acting under orders. They can distribute their possessions and make any gifts and bequests they like, within the limits of the household; for the household provides a country and a sort of citizenship for a slave.[102]

Uncle and nephew, on the surface, display different attitudes toward their enslaved communities. Pliny the Elder longs for the old days in which each master had a single *servus* and he was a full member of the master's family, eating at his table. Now—he claims—there are many *servi* in one household, and they are not to be trusted; they will take any opportunity to steal food and wine. The author does not appear concerned that the enslaved persons will steal precious objects but means of subsistence. There is little doubt that most Roman *servi* were—unsurprisingly—poorly fed;[103] hunger likely drove many to stealing food. It is unclear whether Pliny has witnessed *servi* stealing food in his own household, or whether he reports general concerns that enslavers commonly voiced among themselves. Of course, the easiest solution would have been to properly feed the members of the *familia*, but I do not believe that Pliny is actually concerned with the value of what *servi* would potentially steal. Having to put food and wine under lock and key means that the master cannot trust the enslaved individuals in his household; stealing anything, independently from the intrinsic value of what has been taken, is an affront to the authority of the master.

Pliny the Elder also tells us that masters employed a specific *servus* to tell them the names of the other enslaved members of the household. Did Pliny have such a person on staff? Was it a common phenomenon to have a *servus* playing this role or is Pliny making a point by reporting an isolated instance of

102. Plin. *Ep*. 8.16.1–2: *Confecerunt me infirmitates meorum, mortes etiam, et quidem iuvenum. Solacia duo nequaquam paria tanto dolori, solacia tamen: unum facilitas manumittendi (videor enim non omnino immaturos perdidisse, quos iam liberos perdidi), alterum quod permitto servis quoque quasi testamenta facere, eaque ut legitima custodio. Mandant rogantque quod visum; pareo ut iussus. Dividunt donant relinquunt, dumtaxat intra domum; nam servis res publica quaedam et quasi civitas domus est*.

103. See Roth (2007, 25–52) for an analysis of what *servi* ate, based on archaeological, literary, and comparative evidence.

excessive behavior? It appears that this individual functions almost as an interpreter, as a bridge between the enslaver and the community he lords over. This demonstrates that the master has poor knowledge of who lives and works in his household, but still wants to exercise control and instruct his *servi* and *servae*. Poignantly, the older Pliny also nostalgically longs for a time when the enslaved were not their own, separate community, but were truly part of the master's family, symbolized by the detail of sharing food at the same table. However, neither he nor his father nor his grandfather would have witnessed such a time. After the rapid expansion of its empire in the second century BCE, Rome saw an enormous influx of prisoners from all over the Mediterranean basin, who were sold as enslaved laborers to the families who could afford them.[104] At the turn of the millennium, elite Roman families would already have had dozens of *servi* and *servae*. Pliny the Elder knows of these "simpler times," when the only *servus* was a full-fledged member of the master's family, but he has never witnessed them. It is undeniable that Pliny the Elder is deeply concerned with retaining power and authority over the enslaved community, realizing not only that he is an outsider but that he can never trust its members.

The younger Pliny, on the surface, displays a different attitude from his uncle and adoptive father. He professes grief over the loss of members of his *familia* and portrays himself as a generous master; not only does he grant freedom to his *servi* before they die, but in case death might chance upon them unexpectedly, he even allows them to write a will.[105] Yet he places a caveat on such wills; the peculium of the *servus* can only be transferred to another enslaved member of the same household. Thus, the value of the *peculium* remains under Pliny's legal ownership and control. From an economic point of view, this costs nothing to the master as he loses nothing from the household.

Moreover, reading Pliny's words closely, we should note that he does not once mention wives, spouses, or children, or employ any other term that might acknowledge the fact that the deceased had emotional and biological ties to other individuals. He recognizes that the *servi* and *servae* who live and work in the same household make up a community; "the household provides a country and a sort of citizenship for a slave" (*servis res publica quaedam et quasi civitas domus est*).[106] The household functioned as a kind of small state or nation in

104. While Romans practiced slavery for centuries before the exponential growth of their empire, it was only after the second century BCE that the number of enslaved persons being brought to Rome reached the critical proportion which made Roman society a so-called genuine slave society, according to the definition of Finley (1980, 9).

105. Plin. *Ep*. 8.16.

106. Seneca (*Ep*. 47.14) expresses a similar concept: "they consider the household to be a small state" (*domum pusillam rem publicam esse iudicaverunt*).

which the enslaved can find a sense of identity and belonging. So, while Pliny acknowledges that the enslaved have their own community within the limits of his household, he does not go as far as to say that such a community functioned as an extended family. As historian Henrik Mouritsen suggested, it is undeniable that such a miniature society would function as an extended family, encompassing close and distant relatives, as well as old childhood friends.[107] Among such a crowd, old enmities and rivalries would also have found a place, as in any other human grouping. Unfortunately, literary sources do not attest to daily activities, quarrels, and affection between enslaved persons, which would have taken place in any household. Tombstones and funerary epitaphs are also ill-suited to provide a detailed picture of daily interactions. Yet it is unquestionable that enslaved communities within the household were more than a random collection of individuals. They played an important role in the lives of *servi* and *liberti*.

2.5 Treading Between Certainties and Uncertainties

I began this chapter showing the picture of a funerary monument for four people. I listed all the indisputable facts that can be inferred from the analysis of its epitaph and imagery. That type of examination did not take us far; it was clear that two of the individuals were married to each other, that they all came from the same household, that three were previously enslaved and one was freeborn. It was not clear how they came to be buried together or, in other words, how they came to identify themselves as a family. What I present now is the most likely reconstruction of that process. For clarity's sake, I present the text of the funerary inscription again.

(theta nigrum) L(ucius) Vettius (mulieris) l(ibertus) Alexand(er).
(theta nigrum) Vettia L(uci) f(ilia) Polla.
Vettia L(uci) l(iberta) Eleutheris.
Vettia (mulieris) l(iberta) Hospita.

(deceased) Lucius Vettius Alexander, the freedman of a woman
(deceased) Vettia Polla, the daughter of Lucius.
Vettia Eleutheris, the freedwoman of Lucius.
Vettia Hospita, the freedwoman of a woman.

107. Mouritsen 2013, 61.

Freeborn Roman citizen Vettia Polla was married to L. Vettius Alexander, her own freedman. Whether Alexander was a member of her *familia* since she was young and then became part of her inheritance, or if instead she has purchased him herself when she was already an adult, we will never know. What is speculative, yet likely, is that Polla manumitted him and then this allowed them to enter into a legally valid marriage. It is unknown whether they ever had any biological children.[108] When they died, they were buried together, but their final resting place was meant not only for them but also for two additional persons: Eleutheris and Hospita, formerly enslaved women who were manumitted by (Lucius Vettius) Alexander and (Vettia) Polla respectively. In their funerary portrait, Alexander and Polla are represented as larger (and thus more important) figures. I argue that Eleutheris and Hospita are portrayed in a smaller proportion not only because they were formerly enslaved and had received their current free status from the deceased, but because they had taken the role of surrogate children of the couple. I believe that Alexander and Polla had decided to grant freedom to Eleutheris and Hospita, so that each could have heirs, someone who would care for the maintenance of their funerary monument and perform the annual funerary rites.[109] By granting them freedom, a Roman name, and (future) admittance to the family tomb, they effectively turned these women into their legal and de facto successors. It is not possible to know whether the couple had any other enslaved servants in their household. If they did, then they specifically chose these two women over other potential heirs. If they did not, it is still significant that they wanted their only two *servae* to become *libertae* and be buried alongside them. We can only speculate on the reasons why Alexander and Polla manumitted Eleutheris and Hospita. Perhaps they had grown attached to them over the years. It is possible that these women were house-born enslaved children (*vernae*) or foundlings who were raised as enslaved servants and ultimately manumitted.

It is undeniable that the funerary monument for the Vettii represents a familial unit; they are buried together, they share the same name, they are even visually portrayed as a family, with two married "parents" and two daughters. The way in which they became a family was certainly not traditional. Indeed, starting with the union between a freeborn woman and her *libertus*, while not explicitly against the law, was considered to be socially reprehensible.[110]

108. If they did, they could have died in childhood, for there is no mention of them on the family's funerary monument.

109. On the annual festival for the deceased members of one's family, known as Parentalia, see King 2020, 149–79.

110. Ulpian (*Dig*. 23.2.13) considers it disgraceful, but not illegal, for the freeborn woman. The evolution of the legality of such "mixed unions" is surveyed by Evans-Grubbs (1993). Of course,

Famously dubbed as "a marriage more shameful than any adultery" by the rhetorician Seneca the Elder, this matrimonial bond was certainly not perceived to be so dishonorable that the Vettii tried to keep it hidden.[111] They did not necessarily have to include their filiation and pseudofiliation on their tombstone. As for their surrogate daughters, it is unlikely that they were biologically related to Alexander or Polla.[112] Yet even if one were not able to read but could only rely on visual clues to identify who was being commemorated, they could easily be identified as family: two parents and two children.

Throughout the book, I present many such unconventional familial units, in which one or more of the named individuals is a surrogate child, parent, or relative. It cannot be understated how much the institution of slavery influenced how these families were formed and evolved over time, as in the case of the Vettii. It is also important to always keep in mind that the interpretations I propose are exactly that: my personal reconstructions based on the epigraphic, legal, literary, and comparative evidence we currently have access to. At times, it might not be possible to confidently endorse one between two equally likely interpretative scenarios. In those rare cases, I voice my doubts so that the reader can assess on their own what they believe to be the most compelling and credible interpretation. Since my work focuses on fictive kinship and, as I showcase throughout the book, there has been a tendency among scholars to explain relations based on biological kin overlooking other types of bonds, some readers might question whether I express my bias seeing fictive families where it is not necessary to do so. If that were the case, I hope that mine is a corrective bias which introduces new interpretative options that might have been previously overlooked.

In the next chapters, I focus on three specific types of fictive kinship bonds that were developed in connection to *collactanei* (fellow nursling), *tatae* (male nannies), and *delicia* (child "favorites"). Each chapter has its own corpus of inscriptions—which are listed in the appendices—that informs and sustains the analysis of these quasi-familial relations. Before I turn to the specific topics of each chapter, it is necessary to spell out the criteria I used in the selection of the epigraphic evidence. First, I only collected epitaphs in which the relational terms for the named individuals are openly expressed. In other words, an inscription such as the one for the Vettii, or for Euaristus and Julia Suc-

there is ample evidence to indicate that the reverse scenario, where a *patronus* married his *liberta*, was incredibly common: see Perry 2016.

111. Sen. *Controv*. 7.6.

112. We cannot rule out that, if they were *vernae*, their father could have been the master, namely Alexander.

cessa, did not have a place in my selected body of evidence. To only include epitaphs where the relationships between individuals are clearly stated significantly reduces the possibility of mistakenly identifying family members. Not only does the presence of these relational words minimize the risk for mistakes, but it can also give us a glimpse of what the dedicator of the epitaph found to be important. For example, soldiers who served in the same unit might provide burial for a fallen companion and address him as "brother," even if they were not biologically related. To know that they wanted to identify the deceased not merely as a friend or a fellow soldier, but as a brother, provides a clearer picture of how they perceived their relationship with the deceased.

Furthermore, so-called Christian inscriptions are not included in the selected corpora. This is due to two reasons. First, Christianity has its own set of pseudofamilial terminology which deserves its own separate and detailed analysis. Second, since my chronological focus is the first three centuries CE and the number of inscriptions significantly decline in the fourth century, I have not included any inscription that was carved later than that date. Christian epitaphs, for the most part, can be dated to later centuries when Christianity became more widespread.[113] Last, fragmentary epitaphs were included in their respective groupings only if the relevant key term (*collactanei*, *tatae*, and *delicia*) was readable on the stone and was not reconstructed by conjecture. These selection criteria represent how I intend to minimize misrepresentation and produce the most reliable conclusions epigraphic evidence can deliver.

113. Mazzoleni (2014, 445) identifies the end of the sixth century—precisely the papacy of Gregory the Great—as the beginning of the Christian era. Thus, although early Christian inscriptions appear in the second century CE and become more frequent in the fourth, the sixth century marks the beginning of Christian epigraphy.

3

The Bond of Milk

Allomaternal Feeding and Kinship

It has long been recognized that immediate family members are chiefly responsible for performing burial rights in Roman funerary custom. However, even if the role of the nuclear family cannot be understated, there are many instances in which patterns of commemoration are not influenced by a biological connection, but by affection, care, and familiarity. This is particularly evident in the case of children. In the introductory chapter, I suggested that children act as connecting nodes to form new bonds with a vast array of individuals outside the nuclear family, such as nurses, caretakers, surrogate parents, neighbors, and so on.

Much work has already been done on the bond between wet nurses and the children they breastfed, on the status and types of employment of these hired professionals, and on their role across regions of the Roman Empire.[1] Such studies have demonstrated the ubiquity of allomaternal nursing in the Mediterranean basin and the importance of wet nurses in the rearing of children of any status. Given the widespread presence of allomaternal feeding in the ancient world, it follows that it was a rather common experience for a woman to nurse more than one child.

This chapter explores the bonds created between children who nursed from the same woman, also known as *collactanei*. While alternative spellings of the word are attested in funerary epitaphs, for a matter of consistency, I refer to fellow nurslings as *collactanei* throughout the book.[2] In particular, this chapter

1. On Roman wet nurses see Laes 2011, 69–77; Bradley 1991, 13–36; Dixon 1988, 141–49; Joshel 1986, 3–On wet nurses in Greek and biblical literature see Huizenga 2014; Tite 2009.

2. The following variants are attested in epigraphy: *collactius*, *conlactius*, *collacteus, conlacteus* and *collactaneus*, with the first being the most common. Sources disagree on whether these words were synonyms or not. The second-century grammarian Flavius Caper (*De Hortographia* 97.19) writes: *collactaneus est eisdem mammis educatus, collacteus qui ex uno eodemque lacte creatus est*. However, the fourth-century grammarian Charisius (I, 82 K.) affirms *conlactaneus dici debet. nam*

focuses on how the bond between *collactanei*—established in early infancy—was expressed, evolved, and was maintained beyond early childhood. In addition, I seek to understand what type of environment and social conditions promoted or hindered the creation of such connections.

Collactanei are an understudied social group. The only two published works dedicated to *collactanei* are an appendix by Keith Bradley and an article by Pedro David Conesa Navarro.[3] They both focus primarily on inscriptions, which represent the best type of evidence on *collactanei*, in addition to scant literary and legal testimonies. While I am indebted to Bradley's scholarship, my research employs a comparative approach, for the sharing of breastmilk is not isolated to ancient Rome but is a rather widespread phenomenon across time and geographical regions. By investigating attitudes toward allomaternal feeding in societies with more robust documentary evidence regarding this practice, it is possible to compare them to the epigraphic, legal, and literary evidence from Rome. The goal of such comparison is to show that similar attitudes and motivations can be pervasive through time and cultures, even if they might appear distant to each other, and contribute to ongoing debates concerning childcare and breastfeeding in the contemporary discourse. Roman *collactanei* and fellow nurslings from other modern societies have never been compared before, and thus this study breaks new ground on this subject.

3.1 Is Milk Thicker Than Blood? Nursing and Milk-Kinship

Plutarch, in his biography of Cato the Elder, depicts the Republican statesman as an attentive father to his son. Reportedly, the man was often present when his wife bathed and swaddled the child, implying that this was unusual behavior for a father. The biographer adds another peculiar anecdote: Cato's wife nursed the child herself and even shared her breastmilk with other infants present in the household.

> For the mother nursed the son herself, and often by placing the children of slaves at her breast she engendered benevolence for her son from such shared feeding.[4]

collacteus nemo dicit, thus suggesting that one had fallen out of use. The jurists (Gaius, Ulpian, Scaevola) only employ the forms *collactaneus* and *conlactaneus*.

3. Bradley 1991, 149–54; Conesa Navarro 2019.

4. Plut. *Cato Ma.* 20.3: αὐτὴ γὰρ ἔτρεφεν ἰδίῳ γάλακτι: πολλάκις δὲ καὶ τὰ τῶν δούλων παιδάρια τῷ μαστῷ προσιεμένη κατεσκεύαζεν εὔνοιαν ἐκ τῆς συντροφίας πρός τὸν υἱόν.

Plutarch's interest in this particular detail suggests that not only was it odd that a woman of the senatorial elite breastfed her son herself, but it was even more eccentric that she nursed the home-born enslaved children. No other text reports that an elite woman served as a wet nurse for the *vernae* of her family. While this is a unique—or at least rare—type of conduct, much can be inferred regarding the attitudes toward breastmilk and milk-sharing in Roman society that led to such behavior. Indeed, even if Plutarch does not utilize the term *collactanei* or its Greek equivalent σύντροφος (*syntrophos*), Cato's son and all the *vernae* born in the same time period were fellow nurslings.[5] Thus, it is not misguided to utilize this text to help in the analysis of Roman *collactanei* and the type of bond they shared.

Plutarch spells out the reason why Cato's wife—who remains unnamed in the biography but other sources name as Licinia—shared her breastmilk; she wanted to instill in the home-born enslaved children a sense of benevolence (εὔνοια, *eunoia*) toward her son because of their συντροφία (*syntrophia*), literally "shared feeding." Plutarch interprets Licinia's behavior as something she did for her son's ultimate benefit.[6] Was it the act of feeding and sharing something as precious as breastmilk which instilled such benevolence in the *vernae*? Or was it something about the milk itself that influenced the future disposition of the enslaved children?

In order to answer these questions, it is necessary to investigate what beliefs the Romans professed regarding the nature of breastmilk. One of the most explicit discussions on the development and origin of breastmilk is not found in a medical text, but in a miscellaneous, antiquarian work: Macrobius' *Saturnalia*.[7]

5. The term σύντροφος is attested in Greek literature: Eur. *Trag. Fr.* (Nauck) 1046, 3; *Iph. Taur.* 1119; Plut. *Lyc.*16, 4; 27, 1; *Num.* 5, 4. Moreover, it is frequently used in epigraphy. Hatzopoulos (2016, 57) suggests that σύντροφος represents actual or honorific brotherhood.

6. I owe my thanks to Dennis Kehoe for pointing out that Plutarch reports his own interpretation of Licinia's behavior. We do not know for certain whether the woman shared her breastmilk for that reason; perhaps it was an inference made by the biographer. I also thank Zsuzsanna Varhelyi for suggesting that Licinia was maybe nursing other children because she was producing too much breastmilk, which might have caused her pain and inflammation. Since hyperlactation is not an unusual condition, this hypothesis gives an (alternative) practical reason for why Licinia shared her breastmilk with multiple children.

7. Macrobius, an antiquarian author who lived between the fourth and fifth century CE, is a couple of centuries removed in time from the sepulchral epitaphs that are the focus of this chapter. Likewise, Festus and Tertullian, whose work is cited in the following paragraphs, are not contemporaneous to the epigraphic evidence later discussed. Yet the history and development of ideas can span several centuries. It is unlikely that individuals who lived a few hundred years before Macrobius would have had a completely different understanding of pregnancy and lactation, thus it is relevant for the analysis of inscriptions dated from the first to the third century CE.

> This is why nature's providence made the capacity for nursing to coincide with the delivery itself, so that the very act of feeding would cause children and parents to be similar to each other. For after the blood, the very craftsman, has fashioned the body in its every recess and fed it, then the same blood rises to the upper regions of the mother's body as the delivery approaches and, by condensing itself, becomes white milk, so that it might nurture the newborn whom it had previously formed. That is why it is not without reason believed that, as the force and nature of the semen can fashion a likeness of mind and body, likewise the innate qualities and capacities of milk can accomplish the same.[8]

According to Macrobius, blood has the capacity to both give form to the fetus and later to turn into breastmilk. This blood (*sanguis*) can be easily understood to be menstrual fluid, since pregnancy and breastfeeding stop the recurring menstrual period. It is not hard to imagine that, in a world with a less-than-clear understanding of biology and anatomy, this could be a sensible hypothesis. The lack of menstrual blood is accompanied by the development of a fetus and then the presence of breastmilk; thus, it is reasonable to assume that these occurrences are connected.[9]

Moreover, religion can provide further proof of the existence of such cultural belief in Roman society. The Christian author Tertullian, in his attack against traditional Mediterranean cults, names the goddess Fluviona, who supposedly assisted women during pregnancy. It might appear counterintuitive that a goddess named Fluviona, from the Latin verb "to flow" (*fluo*), could help during gestation. Yet Tertullian reports that Fluviona nourished the fetus in the mother's uterus.[10] Festus, a grammarian from the second century CE, provides an explanation: women pray to Juno Fluonia (an alternative spelling

8. Macrob. 5.11.16–17: *Hinc est quod providentia naturae similitudinem natorum atque gignentium ex ipso quoque nutricatu praeparans fecit cum ipso partu alimoniae copiam nasci. Nam postquam sanguis ille opifex in penetralibus suis omne corpus effinxit atque aluit, adventante iam partus tempore idem ad corporis materni superna conscendens in naturam lactis albescit, ut recens natis idem sit altor qui fuerat fabricator. Quamobrem non frustra creditum est, sicut valeat ad fingendas corporis atque animi similitudines vis et natura seminis, non secus ad eandem rem lactis quoque ingenia et proprietates valere.*

9. On *sanguis* becoming milk see also Gell.12.1.12: *an quia spiritu multo et calore exalbuit, non idem sanguis est nunc in uberibus, qui in utero fuit?* "Is the blood that is now in the breasts not the same that it was in the womb, because it has become white from much air and warmth?" The fact that maternal milk derived from blood was universally accepted since Aristotle (776a–b). The Greek physician Soranus (*Gyn.* 2.19) also suggests that a nursing woman should abstain from sex in order not to spoil her milk with menstrual blood or a new pregnancy. See also Galen, *De sanitate tuenda*, 24.

10. Tert. *Ad Nat.* 2.11.1–3.

of Fluviona) because they believed she would hold back the menstrual flow during pregnancy.[11] Thus, both Tertullian and Festus confirm what Macrobius attested: it was believed that menstrual blood remained inside the pregnant body in order to feed the fetus.

Additional information on fetal development and the appearance of breastmilk can be found in Gellius, an antiquarian writer from the second century CE. In his *Attic Nights*, Gellius reports the speech of a famous sophist, the philosopher Favorinus, who expresses strong views on maternal breastfeeding.

> For what type of unnatural, flawed and half-motherhood is it to give birth to a child and immediately send it away from her? To have nourished in her womb with her blood something which she did not see, and not to feed with her own milk what she sees, now living, now human, now begging for the mother's attention?[12]

Leaving aside the fact that Favorinus feels comfortable lecturing a mother on the nature of motherhood and how it should be best performed, his words are rich with insight on the nature of breastmilk. He finds it unreasonable for a mother to stop nourishing her child after the delivery. Although he does not explicitly say that blood and milk are the same substance, they appear to be very closely related, almost as two sides of the same coin.

If indeed milk was believed to be the maternal blood which had undergone a certain transformation, what would be the implications of sharing one's breastmilk, as Licinia did? And how would that influence the selection of a nurse? Perhaps unsurprisingly, Roman (male) authors speak almost universally against turning to enslaved or low-class women to care for elite infants. Once more, it is Favorinus who gives the most fervent attack against such practice:

> What evil, thus, is the reason for corrupting the nobility of body and mind of a newly born human being, formed from good natured seeds, by the alien and degenerate nourishment of another's milk? Especially if the one whom you shall employ to furnish the milk is either a slave or of servile origin and, as it is often the case, of a foreign and barbarous nation, if she is dishonest, ugly, unchaste, and a drunk; for the custom

11. Fest. 82L: *Fluoniam Iunonem mulieres colebant, quod eam sanguinis fluorem in conceptu retinere putabant.*

12. Gell. 12.6. *Quod est enim hoc contra naturam inperfectum atque dimidiatum matris genus, peperisse ac statim a sese abiecisse? aluisse in utero sanguine suo nescio quid quod non videret, non alere nunc suo lacte quod videat, iam viventem, iam hominem, iam matris officia inplorantem?*

> is to employ without any distinction whoever has milk at the time. Are we then to allow this our child to be infected with some dangerous contagion and to bring into his soul and body a breath from the worst body and mind?[13]

Gellius, through Favorinus' speech, depicts allomaternal feeding as a source of detrimental contagions, which can corrupt the body and spirit of a newborn child. The mere fact that the nurse may be an enslaved woman (or a freedwoman) is enough to brand her milk as harmful; the philosopher is worried that, through an exchange of bodily fluids with an unworthy woman, the very nature of the child may be altered.

This passage represents the only instance of a Roman author accusing servile nurses of corrupting infants with their own "degenerate" nature, finding blame in who they are, rather than what they do.[14] Other authors refer to enslaved nurses' specific behaviors which can harm young children. For example, the historian Tacitus, in his *Dialogus de Oratoribus*, has a character named Messalla lament how nowadays children are raised by young enslaved girls, who are not fit for the task of educating young minds, filling them with fairytales (*fabulae*) and delusions (*errores*).[15] The rhetoric teacher Quintilian, who was concerned with the education of future politicians, recommends hiring educated nurses who will not taint the child with unsophisticated speech patterns, which are hard to get rid of.[16] Yet, what Favorinus is arguing is different: the nurse's milk is alien and degenerate. Therefore, at least part of the popular opinion believed that surrogate feeding could change the very nature of the child, making them into something different from their parents; for the nurse infuses the newborn with her own essence.[17]

13. Gell. 12.17–18: *Quae, malum, igitur ratio est nobilitatem istam nati modo hominis corpusque et animum bene ingeniatis primordiis inchoatum insitiuo degenerique alimento lactis alieni corrumpere? praesertim si ista, quam ad praebendum lactem adhibebitis, aut serua aut seruilis est et, ut plerumque solet, externae et barbarae nationis est, si inproba, si informis, si inpudica, si temulenta est; nam plerumque sine discrimine, quaecumque id temporis lactans est, adhiberi solet. Patiemurne igitur infantem hunc nostrum pernicioso contagio infici et spiritum ducere in animum atque in corpus suum ex corpore et animo deterrimo?*

14. The idea of enslaved individuals having a degenerate soul, because of the actions and attitudes that slavery thrusts upon them, continues through late antiquity. The fourth-century CE Greek philosopher Themistius (*Or.* 21.248) affirms that slaves' souls have been twisted and bent out of shape because they had been raised in slavery, thus they had been accustomed since childhood to lie, flatter, deflect, hide, and hate in silence.

15. Tac. *Dial.* 29.

16. Quint. *Inst.* 1.1.4–5.

17. Soranus (*Gyn* 2.19) expresses a similar attitude toward nurses: "because according to nature the nursling becomes similar to the nurse and accordingly becomes ill-natured if the nurse is ill-tempered, but of mild disposition if she is even-tempered."

Although Favorinus does not go as far as to say that nurse and child, through the sharing of breastmilk, partake of the same nature and become, at a certain level, related, he is clearly concerned about the fact that sharing the milk—which is a byproduct of blood—can alter the mind and body of the child. Similar notions are found in several modern societies, in which the act of sharing one's breastmilk is believed to change forever the nature of the child. In particular, anthropologist Peter Parkes has studied numerous premodern and modern Eurasian communities in which the origin and nature of breastmilk is deeply connected to cultural beliefs on kinship.[18] In these societies, which are often but not exclusively Islamic, Parkes found that nurses and their nurslings are believed to be related in a kin-like manner through the exchange of life-giving fluids.[19] Anthropologists call this type of fictive kinship "milk-kinship." Due to their bond, fellow nurslings, or milk-siblings, are considered to be related to each other as if they were siblings, even if they have different biological parents. Because of their milk-kinship, children who have suckled from the same woman are forbidden from getting married in modern Islamic societies even if their blood relations would allow it.[20]

Much like the Romans, modern Islamic societies believe that sharing one's milk and one's blood are similar actions. What differs are the implications that result from such sharing. In the case of Cato's wife, Plutarch suggests that the sharing of her breastmilk would have instilled a sense of benevolence among *collactanei*. The child of the master and the *vernae* would not have become related like siblings, but they would have developed a special bond because of what they had shared in infancy. Conversely, there is ample evidence that attests how the sharing of milk can be considered equivalent to becoming siblings.[21] Two studies published in 2018, conducted in Turkey's urban and rural areas, sought to understand Turkish women's knowledge, attitudes, and views on milk-sharing in general and milk-banking in particular.[22] Indeed, milk-banking has increasingly been used in hospitals' intensive care units, and Tur-

18. Parkes 2003, 2004.

19. In addition to Parkes, MacClancy (2003) has also investigated milk-ties in modern cultures.

20. Parkes (2003, 746) argues that shared nursing is considered to be "filiation through milk" and "with the equivalent notions of incest and marital impediment, is universally recognized in Islamic law."

21. In this section, I showcase only a few examples of how milk-kinship deeply influences contemporary cultural practices. While presenting an evolution of ideas related to milk-sharing across late antiquity, the Middle Ages, and the premodern era until modernity is a worthy and much needed scholarly endeavor, it does not fall inside the scope of this chapter. My aim is merely to show that certain beliefs and attitudes toward breastmilk that the Romans displayed have not completely disappeared. On the sociocultural importance placed on breastmilk today see Falls 2017.

22. Ergin and Utku Uzun (2018) conducted their study in the mountainous Denizli region, while Kadioğlu (2018) did so in Istanbul. On modern allomaternal feeding and human milk banks see Thorley 2009; Hewlett and Winn 2014.

key was debating whether to approve a human milk-banking project. The very idea of milk-banking (collecting women's breastmilk to be used to treat and feed children whom the donor does not know) creates difficulties according to the donor's personal beliefs; this process would create milk-siblings who are not aware of their status. Both studies, conducted in different regions across the country, showed that the vast majority of women were aware of the milk-banking project but would not donate their milk, listing the possibility of marriages between milk-siblings as the main reason for their refusal.[23] Such attitudes are not exclusive to Turkey; a study conducted in Nigeria reports similar findings, where a significant majority of Muslim women being interviewed were against milk-banking.[24] The women living in rural areas of Turkey, however, seemed to have no problems accepting milk from a relative or an acquaintance. Some had direct experience employing or being a wet nurse.[25] Therefore, the problem seems to be the creation of kin-like relations unknown to those who share them, rather than milk-sharing per se.

Moreover, earlier anthropological studies from the second half of the twentieth century also attest that milk-kinship can be found in several modern or premodern civilizations. For example, Ross Dunn's study of Moroccan tribal warfare in the eighteenth century reveals that peace pacts between tribes often involved an exchange of milk from lactating women, which would prevent the children of the two tribes from intermarrying.[26] Likewise, Hamed Ammar's research on a rural village in southern Egypt attests that it was important for individuals to remember who breastfed them, in order to respect marriage taboos.[27] Jane Hanks reports that in a Muslim Thai village the local population was so concerned with the chance of incestuous unions between fellow nurslings that they devised a simple yet effective system: only children of the same sex can be nursed by the same woman.[28]

Roman society does not appear concerned with the same implications of

23. In rural Honaz and Denizli regions, 76.8 percent of the interviewed women list marriages between milk-siblings as their main concern (Ergin and Utku Uzun 2018, 456). In Istanbul, 78.6 percent of the participants in the study said that they would not rely on milk-banking if their child was in an intensive care unit or did not have access to the mother's breastmilk for some other reason (Kadioğlu et al. 2018, 1072). Almost half of the participants (46.8 percent) stated that the use of milk-banking is inappropriate according to Islamic beliefs. Varer et al. (2022) also found similar results among Turkish and refugee Syrian women.

24. A very significant 71 percent of participants in this Nigerian study are against the institution of milk-banking (Ighogboja et al. 1995, 93).

25. Ergin and Utku Uzun (2018, 456) find that 12.5 percent of the participants had had a wet nurse and 8.7 percent had served as wet nurses before.

26. Dunn 1973, 97. On the contemporary phenomenon of milk-kinship in Morocco see Ensel 2002.

27. Ammar 1954, 120.

28. Hanks 1963, 128.

milk sharing that Islamic cultures are. No evidence suggests that milk-kinship also implied a matrimonial restriction among the Romans. However, it should be noted that none of the forty-four inscriptions featuring *collactanei* attests to fellow nurslings as a married couple either.[29] In general, Roman society restricted marital unions rather infrequently. Roman ancestral customs (*mos maiorum*) prohibited relatives up to the seventh degree from being married—although the Julio-Claudian imperial family famously disregarded these unwritten rules.[30] Moreover, Roman law seldom imposed restrictions on unions, and the limitations concerned individuals of different social status.[31] Since based on our evidence the Romans do not express concern about unions between *collactanei*, we can infer that they did not see it as an undesirable practice. So, if the Romans did recognize milk and blood to be closely related as Islamic communities do, several questions arise: why did the Romans not develop a sense of incest associated with the possibility of marrying one's fellow nurslings? What social, economic, and cultural conditions favored or hindered the development of such an association?

It is possible that the household configuration in Roman and Islamic societies played a fundamental role. Islamic polygamy, for example, would have created a household in which other breastfeeding women could be readily available and whose children were already biologically related through the paternal figure, thus making marriage impossible.[32] On the other hand, large Roman elite households would have had several home-born enslaved children (*vernae*), born from several different sets of parents, and whose mothers could help each other by sharing their breastmilk when necessary.[33] Among the Roman lower classes, mothers in need of breastmilk could have turned to friends,

29. Inscriptions are analyzed in detail in the following section of the chapter.

30. Seventh degree relatives include second cousins once removed, second cousins three times removed, and third cousins. In other words, the Roman *mos maiorum* allowed individuals from the same family to be married if they shared the same great-grandparents or great-great-grandparents. Augustus organized the union of his daughter Julia with his nephew Marcellus (so between first cousins, or third degree of relation), and the emperor Claudius married his niece Agrippina (second degree of relation).

31. See Bettini (2009, 29–33) on marriage restrictions among members of the same family. On unions between individuals of different social status, according to the Augustan *lex Iulia* senators were forbidden to marry freedwomen, actresses, and daughters of actors; freeborn men were forbidden to marry prostitutes or procuresses. On shameful forms of marriage for a woman see Evans-Grubbs 1993.

32. It is worth remembering that other cultures did not find marriage between half-siblings to be undesirable; Cornelius Nepos (*Praef.* 4) reports that the Athenian Cimon married his half-sister on his father's side, and it was not considered incestuous, contrary to Roman cultural beliefs.

33. It is also possible, especially in smaller households, that the master fathered children not only with his legitimate wife but also with the enslaved women. In this case, the *vernae* and the master's legitimate offspring would be half-siblings and, if born in the same time period, perhaps even *collactanei*. Roman law or literary texts do not speak of this possible scenario.

neighbors, and acquaintances. In these cases, the children would not have been biologically related and perhaps an interdiction for *collactanei* to marry never developed.

At the beginning of this section, I introduced a passage by Plutarch on the peculiar breastfeeding practice of the wife of Cato. The biographer specifically identifies the sharing of the milk, συντροφία (*syntrophia*), as the basis for the development of a close bond, which he calls εὔνοια (*eunoia*). I translated εὔνοια as "benevolence" and συντροφία as "shared feeding." However, a different translation can better reflect the situation at hand: Plutarch believed that Cato's wife hoped to instill in the home-born slaves a sense of "brotherly affection" toward her son through "milk-kinship." It is impossible to know what Licinia actually hoped for, and we can only indirectly infer her reasons for sharing her breastmilk through the words of Plutarch. If the biographer is correct, then Licinia wanted all the *vernae* to partake of her essence and thus of her affection toward her son. So, she created a cohort of *collactanei* which shared a special bond due to the life-giving fluid they all shared in infancy. It is important to point out that the son of Cato and Licinia is the reason why these new relationships are established, the catalyst to the development of this type of fictive-kinship bonds.

Plutarch portrays the connection between the master's child and the enslaved children in the household as something valuable, which would have given an advantage to Cato's son. Several writers portray *vernae* as their favorite *servi*, possibly because they grew up in the household and were well accustomed to the master's wishes and likely developed a personal rapport with him.[34] However, what Plutarch describes goes much further; the enslaved children from Cato's household would develop affection for the master's son not based on proximity but because, through milk-kinship, they felt like part of the same family. In the previous chapter, I presented a passage from Pliny the Elder in which he lamented how, in "the good old times," Roman families only had one enslaved person per household, who ate at the same table and was truly part of the master's family.[35] The act of sharing nourishment on the same level makes one a member of the family. This is even more true when breastmilk is shared.

Perhaps unsurprisingly, promoting loyalty and affection between an elite child and members of the lower class is a strategy that can be found elsewhere. British Colonel John Biddulph, in his 1880 book on indigenous tribes of the Hindu Kush mountain range, first reported that, in the small kingdom of Chitral in northern Pakistan, the king would order his children to be nursed by

34. See, Hor. *Epod.* 2.65; Mart. 2.90.9, 3.58.22.
35. Plin. *NH* 33.26.

noble women, who would share that duty with as many women as possible, in order to involve the largest possible number of families in the welfare of the royal child.[36] In return, these noble families would receive land and other gifts, including entrance at court. Similarly, noble women would entrust their infants to multiple women of lower status, as a later traveler to the region reported, in hopes that these lower-class families would help and support their children once grown up.[37]

Allomaternal feeding in the kingdom of Chitral shares differences and similarities with the strategy that Licinia, according to Plutarch, employed. In the Chitral case, one child, whose status is higher, is nursed by many women of lower status. In the Roman case study, a woman of higher status nurses both her child and the children of women of lower status. While these two situations might appear opposites, they are relying on the same type of strategy: to share milk among as many individuals as possible in order to give an advantage to the child of higher status. Each "milk-mother" or each milk-sibling represents an advantage, resulting in the expansion of the social and support network of the elite child, who plays the essential role of becoming the connecting node, establishing long-lasting bonds through fictive kinship.

3.2 *Collactanei* in Rome: Social Practices and Fictive Kinship

Although the anecdote about the wife of Cato is the sole literary text that sheds some light on the practice of milk-sharing and the bonds between *collactanei* in Roman cultural practice, epigraphic evidence can further promote a fuller understanding of this phenomenon.

Twenty-eight inscriptions from the city of Rome feature the word *collactaneus*, or its variations *conlactaneus* and *collactius*. An additional eight were found across the Italian peninsula, and eight more are from the provinces. All the inscriptions are funerary epitaphs and are listed in the appendix, which provides the name of the fellow nurslings, their status and age if known, and additional notes on their familial composition if included on the stone.

In this section, I first present the epitaphs from Rome and focus on issues related to the *collactanei*, such as their personal status, bonds with other family members, personal agency, and cultural expectations. Thus, the epitaphs are presented thematically. In the subsequent section, I introduce epitaphs from

36. Biddulph 1880, 82–83. For an analysis of this social practice see MacClancy 2003.
37. Schomberg 1938, 225.

the rest of the peninsula and the provinces, although their limited number and sometimes fragmentary state do not allow for a detailed reconstruction of the social practices outside the capital.

3.2.1 Status and Gender

Regarding the status of the *collactanei*, the majority of the named individuals appears to have been free, although—due to the frequent lack of filiation and pseudofiliation—it is often impossible to establish with certainty whether they were freeborn or freed, as in the case of P(ublius) Aelius Pastor.[38]

D(*is*) *M*(*anibus*)
P(*ubli*) *Aeli Pasto-*
ris. Volusia,
L(*uci*) *f*(*ilia*), *Salviane*
conlacta-5
neo.[39]

To the Divine Shades of P(ublius) Aelius Pastor. Volusia Salviana, the daughter of Lucius, made this for her *collactaneus*.

The inscription presents two free people, a man and a woman, who do not share the same family name, but who did at one point share the same nurse and breastmilk, thus establishing a bond between them. Such a relationship must have been considered important, for it survived beyond their childhood. Although the stone does not report the age of the deceased, these individuals are likely adults, for Volusia Salviana had the means to purchase a tombstone by herself.

In addition to epigraphic evidence, another example of bonds between *collactanei* that lasted into adulthood comes from the myth on the creation of the Arval Brothers, the ancient priesthood dedicated to Dea Dia. It is reported that the priesthood's original members were Romulus himself and the sons of Acca Larentia, his human nurse.[40] Cynthia Bannon has argued that this fraternity was based "not on biological kinship but in social, religious, and political iden-

38. Kajanto (1968, 521) noticed that filiation was falling out of use during the empire, thus its absence did not necessarily indicate a servile background.
39. *CIL* 6.10760.
40. Plin. *NH* 18.6; Gell. 7.7.8.

tity, like the relationship among citizens."[41] While the social, religious, and even political elements cannot be underplayed, however, the shared nursing experience can be seen as the first element that created a sense of brotherhood among the children of Acca Larentia and their fellow nursling, Romulus. Since they were all *collactanei*, their brotherly connection began in early infancy, before religion and politics could play a role in establishing a sense of camaraderie among them.

The Arval brothers were all male *collactanei*. However, the epitaph presented above showed a male and a female fellow nursling who maintained their bond into adulthood. Indeed, even if female *collactanei* are a minority in the corpus, they are not absent and their status ranges from freeborn, to manumitted, to enslaved.[42] *CIL* 6.19112 represents another example of male and female *collactanei* who maintained their bond into adulthood.

L(*ucius*) *Grattidius,* (*mulieris*) *l*(*ibertus*)*, Eunus,*
Grattidia, (*mulieris*) *l*(*iberta*)*, Ploce uxor,*
Maecilia, (*mulieris*) *l*(*iberta*)*, Titia,*
mater Euni,
Maecilia, *Cn*(*aei*) *l*(*iberta*)*, Eleutheris,*
collactanea Euni,
Licinia, T(*iti*) *l*(*iberta*)*, Flora*
mater Plocenis.

L. Grattidius Eunus, freedman of a woman, his wife Grattidia Ploce, a freedwoman of a woman; Meacilia Titia, Eunus' mother, a freedwoman of a woman, Maecilia Eleutheris, the freedwoman of Cnaeus and Eunus' *collactanea*, Licinia Flora, the *liberta* of Titus and Ploce's mother.

The epitaph commemorates a total of five people: a married couple, Lucius Grattidius Eunus and Grattidia Ploce, their respective mothers, Maecilia Titia and Licinia Flora, and an additional woman, Maecilia Eleutheris. Based on their nomenclature, it is possible to infer that the married couple was manumitted from the same household, while their mothers were liberated from two different ones. This gives scholars precious insight on the circulation of enslaved individuals across different houses and families; these mothers and children must have initially lived in the same household, only to be separated, sold

41. Bannon 1997, 173.

42. This is consistent with the bias toward male dedicatees commonly found in epigraphic commemoration, as introduced in the previous chapter.

to different masters and mistresses who eventually granted them freedom.[43] Remarkably, this pair of mothers and children were able to stay in contact and find themselves again once liberated from the bonds of slavery.

The fifth person commemorated in the epitaph, Maecilia Eleutheris, is the fellow nursling of Eunus and was manumitted from the same household as Eunus' mother. In order to be included in such memorial, Eleutheris must have maintained a close connection not only with Eunus' mother (who lived in the same household) but also with Eunus himself.[44] Their bond lasted for decades after they shared the same breastmilk and despite the fact that they lived with two different *familiae*. In this case, Eunus' family is composed by his biologically (mother) and legally (wife, mother-in-law) sanctioned family and a non-kin individual: his fellow nursling. This showcases the flexible nature of the Roman family, which can encompass fictive kin as well as more traditional types of kinship.

3.2.2 The Memory of Breastfeeding: Who Remembers?

The bond between Eunus and Eleutheris survived both slavery and the passing of time. Although their age is not reported on the stone, they were surely adults. Only half of the epitaphs from the corpus bear the age of the deceased (13 out of 28). These individuals are mostly children (6) and teenagers (4).[45] Only four age-bearing inscriptions commemorate adults.[46] Yet, as in the case of the epitaphs analyzed above, it is often possible to identify whether the *collactanei* were adults or children from context.[47]

The survival of the bond between *collactanei* into adulthood must have relied upon several factors, such as the continued memory of their shared feeding. Since infants cannot remember who breastfed them, someone must have informed the fellow nurslings of their special connection. In the case of the wife of Cato—if Plutarch is correct in his interpretation—maybe it was Licinia herself who promoted the memory of her generous act toward the *vernae* to foster affection between her son and his *collactanei*. Licinia represents such a unique case also because she chose freely to act as a wet nurse for the *vernae*.

43. On the circulation of staff in Roman households see Rawson 2005.

44. We cannot know who nursed both Eunus and Eleutheris; perhaps it was Titia (Eunus' mother), but it could also have been another woman in the *familia*. Moreover, it cannot be excluded that the two infants were nursed by more than one nurse, depending on who had available breastmilk or was not occupied with other tasks.

45. Children: *CIL* 6.6324, 12115, 16057, 17682, 36193. Teenagers: *CIL* 6.9901a, 18115, 18553, 29690.

46. *CIL* 6.27119, 28463, 29690.

47. The presence of a spouse is often the clearest indicator of adult age.

This would not have been the case for many enslaved nurses who were coerced into nursing the master's child in addition to their own offspring. However, epigraphy attests that these enslaved women, although they had no choice in the decision of sharing their breastmilk, at times chose to memorialize that act. I believe this was a conscious decision on their part, hoping to give an advantage to their own children by stressing a connection with elite offspring. For example, let us consider *CIL* 6.16057:

> *Communio, verna*
> *Antoniae Augustae,*
> *v(ixit) a(nnis) II, me(n)s(ibus) X,*
> *collacteus Drusi,*
> *Blandi f(ilii).*
>
> Communio, the home-born slave of Antonia Augusta, lived for two years, ten months, the fellow nursling of Drusus, the son of Blandus.

The epitaph commemorates a young, enslaved boy named Communio; he was born in the household of Antonia, the daughter of Mark Antony and Octavia, thus the niece of the emperor Augustus. The text also depicts Communio as the fellow nursling of a freeborn elite boy, Drusus, the son of the senator Rubellius Blandus and Livia Julia, who was Antonia's granddaughter.[48] As Rawson successfully argued, the inscription attests a specific connection between two elite households, Antonia's (the woman who owned Communio) and Julia's (the mother of Drusus); Antonia "lent" a nurse from her own household, a woman who had probably recently given birth, to her granddaughter Livia Julia, to help her with the feeding of her child.[49] Unfortunately, the name of the wet nurse is not included on the stone. She was surely an enslaved woman from the house of Antonia, but her name is unknown.

The inscription also does not explicitly state who set up the commemoration. It is most likely that the commemorator was the unnamed nurse, perhaps with Antonia's blessing. Even in death, Communio's status is one of an exceptional child; he is a home-born slave of Antonia, and he has been a fellow nursling of Drusus. Communio's mother was the person who had the most interest in stressing the connection between her child and the imperial household. By calling her son a *collactaneus*, the enslaved mother forever memorializes that

48. The marriage of Livia Julia and Rubellius Blandus was reportedly seen as a disgrace (Tac. *Ann.* 6.27), because of the difference in status by the two, since Julia was of imperial birth.

49. Rawson 2005, 223–24.

moment in their lives, when Communio and Drusus shared a deep and personal connection based upon the very body of the unnamed nurse.

While Communio's mother had no choice in being "lent" to Julia's household and assigned to breastfeed Drusus, she recognized that such an arrangement could create a possible advantage for her son; thus, she wanted to highlight Comminio's close connection to a member of the imperial family. In a way, she is almost claiming back some of that lost agency, as she attempts to increase the status of her son and thus, perhaps, secure better opportunities for him. If Communio had not died so young, he would have served the imperial family like his mother. Perhaps his *collactaneus* Drusus, now one of the masters, would have felt a sense of affection for Communio and treated him better than the other enslaved persons in the household.

Another similar example is *CIL* 6.6324 (fig. 03), an epitaph from the *columbarium* of the Statilii.[50]

Atticus, f(ilius)
Stactes nutricis,
Sisennae f(ilii) conlacteus,
v(ixit) ann(os) IV.

Atticus, the son of the nurse Stacte, and *conlacteus* of the son of Sisenna, lived for four years.

An enslaved child called Atticus is commemorated as the *collactaneus* of the son of Sisenna Statilius Taurus, who was a consul in 16 CE. Like Communio, Atticus died in early childhood. Both children were likely commemorated by their mothers, since they would have had a reason to highlight the connection between their children and elite offspring. In this case, however, the name of the mother and wet nurse is included on the stone. It is possible to infer that Stacte nursed both her son and the unnamed son of the master. Without the birth of her son Atticus, she would not have been ordered to nurse the master's child and thus, she would not have had the chance to develop—both for herself and her child—a personal connection with Sisenna's son. Atticus served as a catalyst; he gave the opportunity to Stacte to expand her network to include, at least for a limited time, the son of the master.

In the cases of Communio and Atticus, their fellow nurslings were not only

50. The literature on the *columbarium* of the Statilii is extensive. See Caldelli and Ricci 1999; Mouritsen 2013; and Borbonus 2014.

Figure 3. *CIL* 6.6324. ©Ministero della Cultura. Museo Nazionale Romano.

freeborn but also part of some of the most important families of the Roman elite. Yet enslaved parents could commemorate their children as the *collactanei* of free children, even if they were not from the highest social elite, as *CIL* 6.36193 attests.

> *Dis Man*(*ibus*)
> *Sacrum.*
> *Primigenio,*
> *Naevi Clementis*
> *con*⌜*l*⌝*ac*⌜*t*⌝(*aneo*),
> *vixit an*(*n*)*is sex*{*s*},
> *dieb*(*us*) *VIIII,*
> *Primigenius et Clementilla*
> *parentes infelicissimi.*
>
> Sacred to the Divine Shades. The most distraught parents, Primigenius and Clementilla, made this for (*sc.* their son) Primigenius, the *collactaneus* of Naevius Clemens, who lived for six years, nine days.

In this case, parents Primigenius and Clementilla commemorate their six-year-old son, also called Primigenius, as the fellow nursling of a certain Naevius Clemens. It is hard to ascertain who Naevius Clemens might have been; he was not part of the senatorial elite, but there are two lead pipes from Rome bearing the name L. Naevius Clemens.[51] Therefore, this individual (or a member of his family) was affluent enough to have running water in his house, through a private water conduit.[52] It is possible that the parents Primigenius and Clementilla were enslaved in the Naevia household. To them it would have been significant enough that their child was the *collactaneus* of the master's child, even if the family was not part of the senatorial elite.

3.2.3 Legal Evidence on Collactanei

I argued above that the mothers of Communio and Atticus chose to memorialize the connection between their offspring and the master's child because it showcased their sons' favored status among the *vernae*. Had they lived to adulthood, they could have had a personal bond to the new master and, perhaps,

51. *CIL* 15.7499.
52. On private water pipes (*fistulae*) in the city of Rome see de Kleijn 2001, 193ff.

reaped some benefits from it. We can catch a glimpse of the potential preferential treatment that Communio and Atticus never had a chance to experience due to their premature death in *CIL* 6.5939.

Arruntia,
L(*uci*) *l*(*iberta*)*, Cleopatra*
nutrix;
L(*ucius*) *Arruntius, L*(*uci*) *l*(*ibertus*)*,*
Dicaeus conlacteus.

Arruntia Cleopatra, the freedwoman of Lucius, a nurse; Lucius Arruntius Dicaeus, freedman of Lucius, fellow nursling.

Arruntia Cleopatra and Lucius Arruntius Dicaeus are most likely mother and son and were both manumitted by a man called Lucius (Arruntius). Arguably, the following scenario can be reconstructed; Lucius was nursed by Cleopatra when she was still enslaved, thus making Lucius and Dicaeus fellow nurslings. Once Lucius grew up and became the master, he freed Cleopatra and Dicaeus. We can even hypothesize that Lucius was responsible for setting up their burial. Indeed, their designation of nurse and fellow nursling make sense only from the prospective of Lucius. So, even if the dedicator is unnamed, it is possible to make an educated guess and identify him as the master.[53]

Legal evidence supports this interpretation. The *Lex Aelia Sentia* of 4 CE, which regulated manumission, recognized *collactanei* as a protected category. In general terms, Roman law did not allow enslaved individuals to be manumitted before they turned thirty years of age and the person manumitting them was supposed to be at least twenty. Yet the jurist Gaius affirms that it was possible to circumvent the age restrictions of the *Lex Aelia*; a *servus/a* who was less than thirty years old could be freed if they were the father, mother, *paedagogus* or *collactaneus* of the person granting manumission.[54]

Remarkably, the law recognized biological parents to be as significant as fellow nurslings and the *paedagogus* (an enslaved caretaker of young children

53. The other possibility would be that Arruntia Cleopatra and Arruntius Dicaeus left dispositions for their funerary monument to include those specific designations, and their heirs carried out their wishes. In that case, Dicaeus would have purposefully desired to be identified as the master's *collactaneus*, which means he saw such bond as a badge of honor.

54. Gaius *Inst.* 1.39: *Iustae autem causae manumissionis sunt, veluti si quis patrem aut matrem aut paedagogum aut conlactaneum manumittat.* "Admissible causes for manumission are if one manumits one's father, mother, *paedagogus*, or *collactaneus*."

who also oversaw their education).[55] Therefore, the law expected that a master would have felt a special connection with both *collactanei* and *paedagogi* as if they were biologically related. Similarly, the jurist Ulpian reports that it was possible for masters who were eighteen (not twenty, as the *Lex Aelia Sentia* required) to free certain individuals: "if a *collactaneus*, an educator, the *paedagogus* himself, the wet nurse, or their son or daughter, or an *alumnus*, or the *capsarius* (who is the one who carries the books), if they are manumitted in this fashion, such as their master may not ever be less than eighteen."[56] Once more, *collactanei* are grouped together with *paedagogi*, biological relatives (in this case, sons and daughters), and other enslaved persons who would have played an important role in the rearing of the young master, such as nurses and teachers. Thus, the exceptions to the law allowed for both fictive and biological kinship to account for emotional ties that might be deserving of early manumission. Unfortunately, while the epitaph for Arruntia Cleopatra and Lucius Arruntius Dicaeus attests that a nurse and a fellow nursling had been manumitted, it does not provide any information regarding the age of the master or of the deceased. It cannot be proved with certainty that Lucius Arruntius took advantage of the legal exceptions to manumit them. Yet the law accounted for the master's desire to free them.

In another case, a mistress provided burial for a woman who was her *liberta* and fellow nursling.

> *Salvia Tertulla*
> *Laenadi, libertae*
> *et collactiae*
> *bene meranti.*
> *fecit.*[57]
>
> Salvia Tertulla made this for Laenas, her well deserving freedwoman and fellow nursling.

Based on this epitaph, it can be inferred that Salvia Tertulla and (Salvia) Laenas remained close even after the latter was manumitted, which was a com-

55. See Quint. *Inst.* 1.1.8–9 on the low level of education of most *paedagogi*, which rarely goes beyond the knowledge of the alphabet.

56. *Dig.* 40.2.13 (Ulpian): *Si collactaneus, si educator, si paedagogus ipsius, si nutrix, vel filius filiave cuius eorum, vel alumnus, vel capsarius (id est qui portat libros), vel si in hoc manumittatur, ut procurator sit, dummodo non minor annis decem et octo sit.* It should also be noted that all the situations listed by Ulpian suppose that the slave owner is an upper-class male individual.

57. *CIL* 6.25845.

mon phenomenon since freedmen and freedwomen often remained in the same household and continued working for their former master/mistress (also called *dominus/a*).[58] Although we cannot definitively state that Salvia Tertulla took advantage of the exceptions to the law which allowed early manumission in the cases involving fellow nurslings, this inscription nonetheless proves that some enslavers manumitted their *collactanei*.

Last, I introduce an inscription—*CIL* 6.9901a—in which a sister commemorates her brother, the freedman of Vipsania Agrippina. The young man is also identified as the *collactaneus* of (Servius Asinius) Celer, who was one of Vipsania's sons.

M(*arcus*) *Vipsanius*
Agrippinae l(*ibertus*)
Thales conlactani(*us*)
Celeris Galli fili(*i*)
vix{*s*}*it ann*(*os*) *XIIX.*
Chryses frater merenti
fecit.

M. Vipsanius Thales, freedman of Agrippina, the fellow nursling of Celer, the son of Gallus, lived for 18 years. Chryses, his brother, made this for him, well-deserving.

Vipsania Agrippina was the daughter of the great general Agrippa and the first wife of the future emperor Tiberius. After Tiberius was forced to divorce her in order to marry Julia (the daughter of the emperor Augustus), Vipsania married a Roman senator, Gaius Asinius Gallus Salonius.[59] They had no less than five sons, one of whom is named in the inscription.[60] Although Thales is commemorated by his brother as the fellow nursling of a child of the highest Roman elite, he was not the freedman of Celer. Vipsania Agrippina, the mother of his *collactaneus*, manumitted him. Legally speaking, Vipsania should not have been able to fully manumit Thales, since he was under thirty years of age and he was not her father, mother, *paedagogus*, or *collactaneus*, which

58. On the duties and legal implications of being a *libertus/a* see Mouritsen 2011, 36–65.

59. Gaius Asinius Gallus Salonius was the son of the famous orator Gaius Asinius Pollio (76 BCE—5 CE).

60. Gaius Asinius Pollio (consul in 23 CE), Marcus Asinius Agrippa (consul in 25 CE), Gnaeus Asinius Saloninus (died in 22 CE), Servius Asinius Celer (consul in 38 CE), Lucius Asinius Gallus (exiled by Claudius, consul in 62 CE). *CIL* 10.1682 attests the existence of a possible sixth son, only known as Gnaeus Asinius, who may have been a consul in 60 CE.

are—according to the jurist Gaius—the groups which can enjoy early manumission.[61] Yet Roman law also allowed for informal manumission, turning the former *servus* into a Junian Latin.[62] Regardless of how Thales was manumitted, this inscription suggests that, if an enslaved *collactaneus* was manumitted, such concession was not necessarily granted by their fellow nursling. In this case, it appears that the mistress of the household, Vipsania Agrippina herself, felt that Thales was particularly deserving of manumission. Was the fact that he was her son's *collactaneus* the primary reason why Vipsania granted him manumission?[63] Was it rather a contributing factor? While we may never know for what reasons Vipsania Agrippina manumitted Thales, it is undeniable that this funerary commemoration marks him as an exceptional individual; he was Celer's *collactaneus* and Agrippina's *libertus*.

3.2.4 Collactanei *and Familial Relations*

Through the epitaphs surveyed so far, I have shown that the term *collactaneus* subsumes a reciprocal relationship between at least two people who were nursed together. Such relations also affected other family members. I have already presented the inscription commemorating Eunus, his wife, his mother, his mother-in-law, and his *collactanea* Eleutheris. The epitaph showcased well the flexible nature of the Roman family, where biological (mother), legal (wife, mother-in-law), and fictive kinship (fellow nursling) are memorialized together. However, that is hardly an isolated example. Many other tombstones present similar familial patterns.

Dis Manib(*us*).
Primitivo, collactio
v(*ivo*) *bene meranti, fecit*
C(*aius*) *Lucilius Festus, et sibi*
v(*ivus*) *et suis, et Flaviae Hedone*
uxori suae, posterisq(*ue*) *nostris*
libertis libertabusque eorum,
in fronte p(*edes*) *XII in agro p*(*edes*) *XII.*[64]

61. See n. 54.
62. See earlier discussion in chapter 2.
63. In this case, the enslaved woman upon whose body such connection was established is unnamed. Perhaps she was Thales' mother but had already passed away; so he was commemorated by his sister.
64. *CIL* 6.24976.

> To the Divine Shades. C(aius) Lucilius Festus made this for Primitivus, his well-deserving fellow nursling, and himself—as they both are alive—and for his family members, his wife Flavia Hedone, and our descendants, and their freedmen and freedwomen; plot twelve feet wide and twelve feet deep.

The commemorator—C(aius) Lucilius Festus—set up a funerary monument for himself, his *collactaneus* Primitivus (fictive kinship), his wife Flavia Hedone (legal), and their descendants (biological). The text explicitly mentions that the two fellow nurslings were both still alive at the time this tombstone was commissioned. Their age is undetermined, but they were at least in their twenties since, on average, nonelite Roman men tended to get married around their mid- to late-twenties.[65] There is no reason to suspect they were socially expected to be buried together, as for parents or spouses. Rather, they chose to be buried together. These two *collactanei* took their milk-kinship to be as important as a biological connection, supplementing the role traditionally played by parents and other close relatives: to provide burial. It is possible that Primitivus had no other relative who could take care of his funerary arrangements, yet he preferred to be buried with C(aius) Lucilius Festus, his wife and his children, rather than purchasing a small tombstone for himself alone. Unfortunately, the epitaph does not allow us to speculate on what brought Primitivus and Festus to became *collactanei*; were their families neighbors and their mothers shared breastmilk when in need? Was Primitivus a foster child in Festus' household? Unfortunately, we can seldom reconstruct how these interpersonal relationships began.

I mentioned at the beginning of the chapter that only a handful of funerary inscriptions report the age of adult *collactanei*. The epitaph for Ceionius Constantius stands out because not only is his age included, but it also includes several details on the life of the deceased.

> *D*(*is*) *M*(*anibus*).
> *Ceionio Constantio bene meren-*
> *ti, et anim*(*a*)*e innocenti, Tere˹n˺tia ˹Pr˺ocula*
> *collactio suo, qui ˹vi˺ix*(*i*)*t ann*(*os*) *XXX*, *mens*(*es*)
> *tres, dies sex de bono, natus regione Apul˹a˺,*
> *decurio ˹V˺en*(*u*)*sinus.*[66]

65. On age at first marriage see Saller 1987 and Shaw 1987.
66. *CIL* 6.29690.

> To the Divine Shades. Terentia Procula made this for her fellow nursling Ceionius Constantius, a well-deserving and blameless soul, who lived thirty years, three months and six days, born in Apulia, commander of the *decuria* Venusinus.

Ceionius Constantius was born in southern Italy, in Apulia; he was a decurion (a local magistrate); and he was thirty years old when he died. Also, he is surely freeborn since he was a decurion. As for Procula, the lack of filiation does not necessarily indicate a servile origin.[67] The two named individuals do not appear to be related, since they do not share the same family name, although they could be related on the maternal side. Yet, if they were cousins, the term *consobrinus* could have been used to describe their relationship.[68] Instead, Procula chose to call Constantius her fellow nursling, tying their relationship back to an action—the milk-sharing—which happened three decades before.

Moreover, if Constantius was born in Apulia and he was the fellow nursling of Procula, it follows that they were both originally from that southern region. So, when and how did these two *collactanei* from Apulia come to Rome, where the inscription was found? Did they move to Rome as adults or as children with their families? And did the two families make that journey alone or together? Clearly, Terentia Procula believed that their connection to Apulia was important enough to be included in the epitaph. Moreover, Ceionius Constantius was surely freeborn and had considerable wealth in order to be a decurion; Procula was not a freedwoman freed from Constantius' household. So, how did they come to share the same breastmilk?

Before I propose an answer to that question, I introduce another inscription—*CIL* 6.29728—which attests a similar situation.

Di{i}s Manibus
L(uci) Titi, L(uci) f(ilii), Pupinia,
Macri VIvir⌜i⌝
decurio(nis)
Laude Pompeia,
vixit annis
XXX.
Titia Rhope

67. See n. 38. Rawson (2010, 209) posits that Terentia was the enslaved child of the enslaved nurse (from a different household) who breastfed Ceionius.

68. On the use of the term *consobrinus* see Bettini 2009, 22–23.

mater et
Salvius Victor 10
conlac(*teus*) *f*(*ecerunt*).[69]

To the Divine Shades of L. Titius Macer, son of Lucius, of the Pupinia voting tribe, a *sevir*, a decurion in Laus Pompeia, who lived thirty years. His mother Titia Rhope and his *collacteus* Salvius Victor made this.

Like the previous epitaph, this inscription offers an unusual amount of information about the dedicatee: he was freeborn, a member of the local government in the city of Laus Pompeia (a small town in Northern Italy), and a priest of a public cult (*sevir*). Two free individuals took care of his burial; his mother (biological kinship) and his fellow nursling Salvius Victor (fictive kinship). In this case, we can see that not only the bond between L(ucius) Titius Macer and Salvius Victor remained strong for three decades, but that also Titia Rhope had stayed in touch with her son's *collactaneus* during that time.[70] The funerary monument suggests that she knew how to reach out to Salvius Victor to ask him to participate in her son's commemoration and that she considered his presence on her son's tombstone to be justified and appropriate. He was family to them. Moreover, the two *collactanei*, Salvius Victor and L. Titius Macer, were both free individuals; based on their nomenclature, it can be ruled out that Victor was a *verna* born in Macer's household. So, as in the case of Ceionius and Terentia, it is worthwhile to ask: how did they become fellow nurslings?

I believe that the two sets of *collactanei* (Victor and Macer, Constantius and Procula) were part of the same social network, composed of neighbors, business associates, and friends, that represented the social safety net upon which many families relied in their daily lives. It can be useful to introduce a comparison from modern Cape Verde, in which a large portion of its population engages in daily sharing of small objects, goods, food, breastmilk, and attentions, which promotes the creation of a sense of kinship, not based on blood but on care and repetition.[71] This type of kinship has been studied by anthropologist Andrea Lobo, who places children at the center of its development:

69. *CIL* 6.29728.

70. It is notable that mother and son share the same family name: Titia Rhope was perhaps a *liberta* of Lucius Titius, the father of Macer, as Rawson (2010, 210) also suggests.

71. Lobo (2014) focuses on child mobility and its related effects (such as cross feeding and sharing of resources between households) to describe how families, maternities and paternities are molded and influenced by that.

> Their [*sc.* the children's] lives are characterized by intense mobility which places them in the condition of both subject and object of sharing and reciprocity. This child mobility strengthens or creates bonds among groups, produces relations of co-inhabitance and domestic cooperation among people who are laterally co-related, in addition to constructing maternities and paternities.[72]

Given this, if Victor and Macer were born around the same time and lived close by, their mothers could have shared childcare responsibilities, even breastmilk based on availability. Such relationships between the two families might have predated the birth of the children, but it was likely strengthened—if not initiated—by the specific needs that childcare and feeding infants place on individual families, for children can function as catalysts to create new quasi-familial connections between their own nuclear family and individuals outside the bonds of biological kinship. It is important to underscore that these families were not necessarily in financial difficulties. The deceased L. Titius Macer and L. Ceionius Constantius were both *decuriones*, which indicates that they were people of some means. It is unlikely that Macer's and Constantius' families went from a state of poverty to landowning wealth within three decades.[73] Their parents likely had access to multiple enslaved nurses who could breastfeed the newborns. Why would they turn to free women who were part of their social network to nurse their child?

Conceivably, some wealthy parents had an aversion to enslaved (and freed) nurses, which is attested in several Roman authors introduced earlier in this chapter, so they sought out freeborn nurses. Alternatively, it was the physical proximity among families that encouraged these affluent mothers to delegate childcare and nursing responsibilities to a free neighbor who was also nursing an infant. It has been argued that Roman elites and nonelites lived in the same neighborhoods, so more prosperous people could live next to less affluent families.[74] It is plausible that spatial closeness and the availability of breastmilk brought Macer and Victor to become *collactanei*.

As for the specific case of Ceionius Constantius and Terentia Procula, we possess additional information regarding their familial lives; we know that, at some point, they moved from Apulia to Rome. This transition did not lessen the bond between the two fellow nurslings. It is worth asking what could have

72. Lobo 2014, 199.

73. On structural poverty see Holleran 2016, 175–78.

74. For example, in the notorious Suburra neighborhood elite housing is also attested; see Andrews 2014.

brought these two individuals, or even these two families, to migrate to Rome? The Stoic philosopher Seneca affirms that there are many reasons why people decide to emigrate to the capital:

> From their townships and colonies, from the entire world, they have flocked here. Ambition brought some, duty of a public office brought others, an imposed ambassadorial task, the search for a convenient and rich terrain for vice, the desire for higher education, public games; friendship brought some, the ample opportunity for displaying energy by the chance to work brought others; some presented their beauty for sale, others their eloquence.[75]

It is noteworthy that Seneca does not mention familial ties as a reason to come to Rome, but lists friendship. I believe that it is possible that the families of Constantius and Procula were close friends; perhaps their friendship predated the birth of their children, but it was strengthened by the sharing of nursing and childcare responsibilities. In search of larger economic markets, a better education for the children, and more business opportunities, the two families moved to Rome—together or independently—and maintained their close bond. Naturally, Constantius must have gone back to Apulia regularly in order to be a decurion in Venusia. However, when Constantius died in Rome, Procula was the sole person who could provide burial for him, mindful of the connection they shared in infancy and beyond.

Indeed, hope for better social or economic prospects brought many to Rome. For nonelite families, finding employment as a low or high skilled day-laborer in the city was surely possible and not a secondary activity for the urban poor.[76] While men were most likely employed as porters, carpenters, and other physically taxing jobs, nonelite Roman women also needed to work to survive. Women were often employed in their husbands' trade or business, if they owned one. Alternatively, as historian Claire Holleran has suggested, women could work in retail, such as market trading or street vending.[77] Working women, therefore, could not exclusively dedicate themselves to child-rearing. Without a social security net that helped mothers with childcare or in the case where close

75. Sen. *Helv.* 6.2: *Ex municipiis et coloniis suis, ex toto denique orbe terrarum confluxerunt: alios adduxit ambitio, alios necessitas officii publici, alios inposita legatio, alios luxuria opportunum et opulentum uitiis locum quaerens, alios liberalium studiorum cupiditas, alios spectacula; quosdam traxit amicitia, quosdam industria laxam ostendendae uirtuti nancta materiam; quidam uenalem formam attulerunt, quidam uenalem eloquentiam.*

76. Brunt 1980, 100; Temin 2004; Holleran 2016. Contra: Finley 1999, 185–86.

77. Holleran 2013.

relatives were absent, those assistance roles were filled by neighbors, friends, and acquaintances.[78] Epigraphic evidence is largely silent regarding the lower classes who did not have the means to set up an inscription; however, it is easy to imagine that the sharing of nursing and childcare duties would have been beneficial for working women.

To move between households or different caretakers was not unique to the children of working mothers. Roman elite households encompassed a high number of kin and non-kin individuals, from enslaved people to visiting relatives, friends, hired professionals, and stepparents.[79] Elite children were certainly exposed to all of these individuals. Historians have also argued that elite children frequently moved between households during the year, depending on the political and agricultural calendar and their parents' commitments.[80] Each household would have had a different familial configuration, depending on whether the entire nuclear family was traveling together, and on the presence of enslaved staff, neighbors, and visiting friends.[81] Divorces and new marriages would also create often-changing home environments. There is reason to believe that enslaved children had a high degree of mobility as well. Julius Paulus, a third-century CE jurist, reports that *vernae* born in city-households could be sent away to be brought up in country-households.[82] Even if they were not sent away to the countryside—or they were already in a suburban villa—it is extremely unlikely that enslaved women would have been allowed or able to constantly watch over their children.[83] All enslaved infants and toddlers were most likely entrusted to a single enslaved nurse, while the other mothers worked in the household or in the fields. These observations on the mobility of children are further developed in the next chapter, which deals with childcare more specifically.

The practical need of having someone caring for infants while free and

78. I am referring to childcare for infants and toddlers. Older children were most likely put to work, as Holleran (2013, 315) and Laes (2011, 167–216) argue. Not only could they help their mothers in street vending, but also work as craftsmen, delivery boys, and—in the countryside—fieldworkers.

79. Wallace-Hadrill (2003, 4) defines them as "housefuls" instead of households.

80. Bradley (1991, 125–55) speaks of "dislocation of the Roman family" implying a negative connotation; Dixon (1999), however, talks of "circulation," rejecting the assumptions about the detrimental disruption of the family.

81. Dixon 1999, 217–19; Wallace-Hadrill 2003, 4.

82. *Dig.* 32.99.3 (Paulus): *Eum, qui natus est ex ancilla urbana et missus in villam nutriendus, interim in neutris esse quidam putant*. "The one who is born from a female city slave and is sent to the countryside to be reared, that one they consider to be, during that time, neither city nor country slave."

83. On free and enslaved women working in agriculture see Scheidel 1995. Saller (2003), while stressing the importance of enslaved women as labor force in the Roman economy, believes that their primary function and value was their reproductive ability as a source of new enslaved persons.

enslaved mothers went back to work must have promoted allomaternal feeding and created many more *collactanei* than we can find through the epigraphic record. It is impossible to estimate how many *vernae* were nursed by one or more wet nurses, as their mothers were occupied in other tasks. The same can be argued for the children of indigent families. The very structure of the apartments inhabited by the urban poor in Rome created close proximity, which was conducive to the sharing of resources and familiarity with neighbors in addition to biological relatives.[84] Moreover, as historian Sabine Huebner has argued, among the urban lower classes, the maintenance of a multifamily household was not advantageous; contrary to the people living in the countryside, who could generate surplus and had property to pass on, the urban poor had little reason to stay together for multiple generations.[85] Therefore, the lack of close relatives made childcare more dependent on individuals related, not through blood, but through proximity. Not through biological, but fictive kinship.

3.3 *Collactanei* Outside Rome: Evidence from the Rest of Italy and the Provinces

Thus far, I have only presented epigraphic evidence for *collactanei* in Rome. We have seen *collactanei* who are commemorated by their fellow nurslings alone, by family members and fellow nurslings, or by family members who emphasize that the deceased was the fellow nursling of an elite child. Nomenclature has been a precious source of information, although the lack of filiation and pseudofiliation often makes it difficult to know whether specific individuals were freeborn or not. As for the gender of the *collactanei*, while male fellow nurslings represent the majority, women are not absent; *collactaneae* give burial to and receive burial from their male counterparts. In the funerary epitaphs from the rest of the Italian peninsula and the provinces of the empire, it is possible to observe similar patterns to those documented in the evidence from Rome and, in rare cases, some differences.

3.3.1 Outside the Urbs*: Italian Regions*

Only eight inscriptions from peninsular Italy relate to *collactanei*. They have been found in multiple regions, from Venetia to Apulia. Unfortunately, three

84. On Roman housing see Wallace-Hadrill 2003 and Ellis 2000, 73–86.
85. Huebner 2010, 82.

inscriptions are highly fragmentary, so only five epitaphs are complete enough to be analyzed in detail. Before we focus on the content of these Italian inscriptions, it must be pointed out that the number of funerary epitaphs featuring the term *collactaneus* or its variations found in the Italian regions is a much smaller number than those attested in the city of Rome alone (8 vs. 28). This could be due to multiple reasons: differences in epigraphic habit across regions, changes in average familial composition, or scarcity of disposable income or epigraphic workshops. I return to the possible causes of this phenomenon at the end of this section, proposing an explanation for such disparity.

In the previously surveyed epigraphic evidence from Rome, I mentioned that the age of the deceased is often omitted. Among the Italian inscriptions, three bear the age of the deceased: one is too fragmentary to make out an exact age; however, the other two—*CIL* 5.3487 and 10.4917—are precious sources that complement and enrich what has been observed for the epitaphs from Rome. In the section above, I presented the epitaph of Constantius, a thirty-year-old man, set up by his *collactanea* Procula, which attests that the bonds between *collactanei*, even of different genders, could last for several decades. Likewise, *CIL* 5.3487, an inscription from the northern Italian city of Verona, showcases a similar scenario:

D(*is*) *M*(*anibus*)
Anniae
Aquilinae,
collacta
neae pien-
tissimae,
quae vixit
ann(*os*) *XXXVIIII, m*(*enses*)
XI, dies XVI.
C(*aius*) *Iavolenus Seve-*
rus b(*ene*) *m*(*erenti*) *posuit.*

To the Divine Shades of Annia Aquilina, the most pious fellow nursling, who lived for 39 years, 11 months, 16 days. Gaius Iavolenus Severus made this for her well deserving.

In this case, the dedicatee is a woman, Annia Aquilina, who lived for thirty-nine years, eleven months and sixteen days, so only a few days shy of her fortieth birthday. It is uncommon to find such a precise age, counting to months

and days, given for adults; this practice is much more common for children, to underscore their short life and premature death. Such a detailed recording of the woman's age suggests that the commemorator was aware that she was going to turn forty soon, and this was perceived—by the dedicator or the dedicatee—to be an important milestone. Once more, the lack of filiation does not allow us to say whether the named individuals were freeborn, although based on their nomenclature it is a strong possibility. This is also consistent with what can be observed in the Roman evidence: the majority of *collactanei* from Rome were free.

In turn, the other age-bearing inscription from Venusia in Apulia, *CIL* 10.4917, features two enslaved *collactanei*:

Aper, M(*arci*) *Caerdi*
Secundionis
vilic(*us*)*, ann*(*orum*) *XX, h*(*ic*) *s*(*itus*) *e*(*st*).
Firmus conlactius
posuit.

Aper, the *vilicus* of Marcus Caerdus Secundio, aged twenty years, is buried here. His fellow nursling Firmus made this.[86]

Firmus, an enslaved man, set up this epitaph for his *collactaneus* Aper, the enslaved *vilicus* (or estate overseer) of Marcus Caerdus Secundio. The inscription does not clearly state that Aper and Firmus were both part of the household of Caerdus Secundio, but it is a likely assumption. It can be argued that Aper and Firmus were both *vernae* in the same house and were breastfed by the same woman. As time passed, Aper came to a position of certain authority and prestige in the household. We do not know what role Firmus played on the estate, if he paid for the funerary epitaph by himself, or if Aper had set aside a sum for his burial and Firmus executed the deceased's wishes.[87] Yet the inscription attests that even in a smaller city like Venusia, enslaved individuals could commemorate each other as *collactanei*.

Likewise, *CIL* 11.1067, from the northern Italian city of Parma, features a *servus* commemorating another.

86. On the young age of the *vilicus* see Carlsen 1995, 69–70.

87. An enslaved person's *peculium* was legally owned by the master and would revert to the master once the *servus* died (Crook 1970, 188–89). Thus, even if the money had been set aside for burial, under the law the master had to approve such use of the *peculium*.

D(*is*) *M*(*anibus*).
Kalocaerus,
publicus,
Heleno
col(*l*)*actio*
b(*ene*) *m*(*erenti*).

To the Divine Shades. Kalocaerus, a public slave, (made this) for his well deserving fellow nursling Helenus.

In this case, a *servus publicus* remembers his fellow nursling Helenus, a man who also appears to have been enslaved.[88] It difficult to piece together the personal history of the two *collactanei* from such a brief text. It is possible that Kalocaerus and Helenus were born in the same household, and Kalocaerus was later sold or donated to the local city government, becoming a *servus publicus*. Once more, the word *collactaneus*, more than a term like *conservus*, looks back at the childhood experiences that the two men shared and gives a different profundity to their bond.

Two epitaphs, one from Pisaurum and one from Puteoli, remarkably mention *collactanei* who are military men. The inscription from Pisaurum, *CIL* 11.6345, features a soldier of the second praetorian cohort who provides burial to his nurse and his *collactaneus*:

D(*is*) *M*(*anibus*)
Mariae
Marcellinae,
nutrici(*s*) *suae,*
et Caedi Rufini,
conlactanei.
C(*aius*) *Tadius Sabi*
nus, mil(*es*) *coh*(*ortis*) *II pr*(*aetoriae*),
bene merentib(*us*).

To the Divine Shades of Maria Marcellina, his nurse, and Caedius Rufinus, his fellow nursling. Caius Tadius Sabinus, a soldier of the second pretorian cohort, (made this) for them well-deserving.

88. On *servi* owned by the state, a city, or municipality see Luciani 2022.

All the individuals named in the inscription appear to be free, possibly freeborn.[89] While it is not explicitly stated, it is possible that Maria Marcellina was the mother of Caedius Rufinus and worked as a nurse, rearing Caius Tadius Sabinus together wither her son. Being a member of the praetorian guard, Sabinus must have been at least eighteen years of age, most likely older. So, the bond between the two *collactanei* (and the woman who nursed them both) lasted for at least two decades. It is worth asking what factors fostered the longevity of a relation started in infancy. Physical proximity surely played a role; it would have been impossible for Sabinus to remain close to Maria Marcellina and Rufinus if their paths never crossed again before he joined the army.

The other inscription which showcases a military context comes from Puteoli, a rich and ancient Roman colony.

D(*is*) *M*(*anibus*)
Arriae Gemin{*i*}*ae,*
bonae femin(*a*)*e col-*
lactiae Arri Germa-
ni p(*rimi*)*p*(*ili*) *iunioris.*
Iulius Agri{*r*}*ppa marit*(*ae*)
b(*ene*) *m*(*erenti*) *f*(*ecit*).[90]

To the Divine Shades of Arria Gemina, a good woman and fellow nursling of Arrius Germanus, junior primus pilus. Iulius Agrippa made this for his well deserving wife.

In this epitaph, a husband commemorates his wife and refers to her as someone else's *collactanea*. Furthermore, the two *collactanei*—Arria Gemina and Arrius Germanus—share the same *nomen*. This makes them either siblings or *colliberti*. Truly, if they were siblings, why use the term fellow nursling instead of emphasizing a connection that is based on blood?[91] Likewise, if they were manumitted from the same household, why not call them *colliberti*, a term that is much more frequently used in epitaphs? Among the inscriptions from

89. Based on the dating of the inscription (from the middle of the second century to the late third century CE), it is possible that Sabinus was freeborn. For, until the reign of Septimius Severus (193–211 CE), members of the praetorian guard—an elite military unit—were only to be selected from Italy and a handful of provinces, come from respectable families, and display physical and moral strength. See Bingham 2013.

90. *CIL* 10.1778.

91. Technically speaking, most siblings are also *collactanei*, if they were nursed by their biological mother.

Rome, there is a similar case, *CIL* 6.15323, in which two men who share the same family name are also remembered as fellow nurslings.

> *Ti*(*berio*) *Claudio*
> *Zenoni*
> *Ti*(*berius*) *Claudius Eva-*
> *ristus collactio*
> *suo bene merenti*
> *fecit.*
>
> T. Claudius Evaristus made this for his well-deserving *collactius* T. Claudius Zenon.

Based on their nomenclature, Evaristus and Zenon were likely *colliberti*, as well as *collactanei*. While *collibertus* is a term that attests to an ongoing relation between two parties without mentioning when it began, the term *collactaneus/a* places the two individuals together in their early infancy.[92] Thus, the word itself can provide insight into the childhood of the individuals who use it, establishing the longevity of their bond in a way that words like *collibertus* or *conservus* cannot represent. However, in the case of Arria Gemina, it is not her *collactaneus* who provides commemoration for her death, but her husband. The question therefore remains: why would Arria Gemina's husband use so much space in the epitaph commemorating his wife to mention her *collactaneus* Arrius Germanus, the junior centurion of the first cohort of an unknown legion?

There are two possible explanations. The first is that Germanus and Gemina are not just siblings, but twins. While the name Gemina does not necessarily mean that she was a twin, the use of names such as Geminus or Gemellus for actual twins is documented.[93] In this case, the term *collactanea* was possibly employed to show that the twins were breastfed by the same woman and at the same time, contrary to single birth siblings. The second explanation is that the strong Greek influence in Puteoli brought the commissioner of the inscription (or the stonecutter himself) to translate the word σύντροφος (*syntrophos*), which is often used in epitaphs written in Greek to represent both biological and honorific brotherhood, with the Latin term *collactaneus*.[94]

92. Although there are pseudohistorical examples of adult breastfeeding (Plin. *NH* 7.121–22; Val. Max. 5.4.7), breastfeeding remains an activity almost exclusively confined to infant nourishment. On breastmilk as medicinal substance see Mulder 2017, 234–38.

93. Most famously Tiberius Gemellus, the son of Drusus the Younger and Livilla, the grandson of the emperor Tiberius, whose twin brother died in early childhood.

94. Hatzopoulos 2016, 57. There are at least 16 inscriptions that feature two or more σύντροφοι,

Whether Germanus and Gemina were actual siblings or were reared together as siblings, it is evident that Germanus is an important part of Gemina's commemoration. Furthermore, it is possible that Gemina left specific instructions that she wanted Germanus to be featured on her tombstone, or that Germanus left Iulius Agrippa some funds to contribute to Gemina's burial expenses before deployment. Unfortunately, the limitations of the tombstone as a medium pose intrinsic difficulties to reconstruct the full context behind the composition and commissioning of an epitaph.

At the beginning of this section, I noted that the inscriptions attesting fellow nurslings in peninsular Italy are significantly fewer than those found in the city of Rome. I indicated that this could be due to multiple factors, such as differences in access to disposable income, familial compositions, and local epigraphic habit. The inscriptions surveyed in this section already demonstrated one difference compared to the ones from Rome: the explicit reference to a military context.

It would be hazardous to argue from the exiguity of the evidence that in the Italian regions allomaternal feeding was not as widespread as in Rome. While perhaps the number of elite mothers who chose not to breastfeed was lower, the number of free working and enslaved mothers who were not able to produce breastmilk or who were forced to come back to work immediately after birth must have been comparable to the numbers found in Rome. I believe that the scarcity of individuals commemorated as *collactanei* is due in part to the lack of disposable income; a family whose income is primarily based on agriculture will have less available cash at hand to spend on a funerary monument. Moreover, the public display of funerary inscriptions influences how an individual will also set up their own commemorative epitaph in the future; it is possible that in Rome it was more common to see a deceased child identified as someone's *collactaneus*, and the practice inspired others in return. In the eight epitaphs from outside the capital, no child is commemorated as a *collactaneus*. All the fellow nurslings are adults.[95] It is conceivable that outside Rome, Italic people were simply not accustomed to seeing inscriptions for prematurely deceased children who were called fellow nurslings. Lacking a direct example to imitate, this particular kind of funerary epitaph may not have become popular in the rest of the Italian peninsula.[96]

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who are most likely siblings. In addition, the term σύντροφος is used in the singular in at least 175 other inscriptions, often as a relational epithet indicating honorific brotherhood as in *IG* 11.4.1114: Ἡλιόδωρον Αἰσχύλου Ἀντ[ιοχέα]/τὸν σύντροφον τοῦ βασιλέως Σ[ελεύκου]/Φιλοπάτορος. "Heliodorus Antiochus, the son of Aeschylus, the companion of the king Seleucus Philopater."

95. See the appendix 1.2. Also, a third of the inscriptions are highly fragmentary, so no age is legible.

96. The fact that no inscriptions of this kind survive does not mean that they did not exist, it simply suggests that they were not widely represented.

In addition, average familial composition had a direct effect on commemoration of *collactanei*. In Rome, many families had to rely on a network of friends, fellow enslaved persons, acquaintances, and neighbors, because the migratory patterns and life of the urban poor were not conducive to retaining large extended families. Outside the urban areas, it was easier for extended families to stay together, work the fields together, marry within the local community, and rely on members of the family first when breastfeeding and childcare became a concern.[97]

Just as several factors can explain the low number of epitaphs commemorating *collactanei* in the Italian peninsula, multiple circumstances made Rome fertile ground for memorializing fellow nurslings and fictive-kin bonds. By comparing the evidence from Rome and the rest of Italy, it is possible to identify the capital's unique milieu as a decisive factor in the creation and survival of the best epigraphic evidence on *collactanei*.

3.3.2 Collactanei *in the Provinces*

As for funerary epitaphs featuring the term *collactaneus* attested in the provinces, their number is scant: only eight. Three are fragmentary, but only one is unintelligible. Two are from Dalmatia, one from Pannonia Superior, one from Gallia Narbonensis, one from Gallia Lugdunensis, two from Lusitania, and one from Numidia.[98] The two epitaphs from Lusitania are noteworthy because they commemorate the two oldest individuals who were commemorated as *collactanei* that we know of: forty-five-year-old Antonia Cruseis, and forty-seven-year-old Antonia Helice.[99] Even if Antonia Cruseis and Antonia Helice are commemorated by their husband and mother respectively, it is remarkable that over forty years after their infancy, the names of their *collactanei* are still included on their funerary monuments.

The epitaph from Salona in Dalmatia, *CIL* 3.9876, presents a scenario that we have already encountered in the evidence from Rome (*CIL* 6.25845), where a woman provides commemoration for her *liberta* and *collactanea*.[100]

97. This does not mean that extended families were the sole type of familial composition in Roman Italy, merely that they were likely more frequent than nuclear families. See also the conclusion section below.

98. See appendix 1.3.

99. *CIL* 2.104 and *ERAEmerita* 226 respectively.

100. This inscription stands out because it is datable to a later time period, between the fourth and sixth centuries CE.

Ceionia
Ferocilla
Ceioni(*a*)*e Hi-*
lar(*a*)*e, liber-*
t(*a*)*e et col*(*l*)*ac-*
[*tan*]{*a*}*eae in-*
[*felicissimae*].

Ceionia Ferocilla made this for Ceionia Hilara, her most sorrowful freedwoman and fellow nursling.

As I already mentioned, Roman law allowed masters and mistresses to manumit their *collactanei* earlier than normally prescribed in certain situations. Yet we only possess two inscriptions where a *collactanea* is also a freedwoman and is commemorated by her former mistress. Moreover, in both cases, only female fellow nurslings are giving and receiving commemoration. Likewise, Quintus Cervidius Scaevola, a jurist from the second century CE, reports a case in which two women—the former slave-owner (*patrona*) and her *liberta/collactanea*—are involved in a testamentary dispute. The court case revolves around the inheritance of a woman named Titia, between Seia (her *liberta* and *collactanea*) and Pamphilus (another *libertus*). The legal question at hand involves the concept of *fideicommissum*, a type of testamentary trust, by which a trustee is asked to transfer all or some of the inheritance to a third party.[101] Although the issue of *fideicommissum* should be discussed at length in order to fully understand Scaevola's response, it is secondary to the issue at hand.

Titia, by her will, appointed her freedwoman Seia, who was also her *collactanea*, heir to a twelfth part of her estate. She left certain lands to her freedman Pamphilus under a trust, among which were certain fields of large extent, designated as being near Colon; and she afterwards, by a letter, also gave other property to the same freedman, in which letter she referred to Seia and Pamphilus as follows: "To my heirs, Greeting. I wish that everything stated below be carried out, as well as any provisions which I have already made with reference to Pamphilus. If my σύντροφος , Seia, should not become my heir to the share of my estate to

101. On the concept of *fideicommissum* see Johnston 1989, 156–57.

> which I have appointed her, I wish all the lands near Colon to be given to her." As the freedwoman Seia rejected the share of the estate left her by will, and selected what had been given to her by the codicil the question arose, if Pamphilus should claim the same land under the terms of the trust, whether he could be barred by an exception on the ground of bad faith. The answer was that the trusts having reference to the lands, that is to say to those which were situated near Colon, were considered to have been transferred to the freedwoman Seia.[102]

The *liberta* Seia is called a *collactanea*, or σύντροφος (*syntrophos*) in Greek, the original language in which Titia had written to his heirs..[103] The jurist does not seem to consider or acknowledge the fact that the two women had been brought up together in his legal opinion, but rather Scaevola's decision seems to be based on what was the perceived wish of the deceased.[104] Although legally irrelevant, Titia specifically calls Seia her σύντροφος, her *collactanea*.[105] Seia was probably a home-born slave, who grew up with the master's child, Titia, and was ultimately manumitted. Although it cannot be ruled out that Titia and Seia might have been biologically related (since masters had unrestrained sexual access to enslaved individuals in their household), the word σύντροφος alludes to a connection established on a woman's skin and through her breast-milk, not on blood.[106]

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102. *Dig.* 34.4.30.1 (Scaevola 20 *Dig.*): *Titia testamento Seiam libertam eandemque collactaneam ex parte duodecima heredem instituerat, Pamphilo liberto suo praedia per fideicommissum dedit, in quibus et σύγκτησινpraediorum quae appellabatur circa Colonen: eidem liberto postea per epistulam alias etiam res donavit, in quibus de Seia et pamphilo ita est locuta:*

n "Τιτία τοῖς κληρονόμοις μου χαίρειν. Βούλομαι βέβαια εἶναι τὰ ὑποτεταγμένα, ὅσα ἔφθασα εἰς τὸ ὄνομα τὸ Παμφίλου πεποιηκέναι. ἐὰν Σεῖα ἥ σύντροφός μου κληρονόμος μὴ γένηται, ἐξ οὗ γέγραφα αὐτὴν μέρους, βούλομαι αὐτῇ δοθῆναι τὴν σύγκτησιν τὴν περὶ Κολώνην."

quaesitum est, cum Seia liberta omissa parte hereditatis ei testamento adscripta ex codicillis fideicommissum, id est σύγκτησινcirca Colonen, eligat, an, si Pamphilus ex causa fideicommissi eadem praedia vindicet, doli mali exceptione summoveri debeat. respondit translatum videri fideicommissum praediorum, id est σύγκτησινquae est circa Colonen, in Seiam libertam. Translation by P. Scott 1932.

103. Thus, creating an equivalence between *collactaneus* and σύντροφος (*syntrophos*). Moreover, the Greek term ὁμογάλακτος (*homogalactos*) is used in Longus' *Daphnis and Chloe* to describe the same type of relationship: an enslaved messenger from the city identifies himself as familiar with the master's son because they shared the same breastmilk.

104. Cf. *Dig.* 32.41.3 (Scaevola 22 *Dig.*) a case that also involves two parties in disagreement over a woman's inheritance through *fideicommissum*.

105. See notes 5 and 94.

106. Rarely an enslaved person is openly identified as an illegitimate child of the master; the term *filius/a naturalis* is seldom used in epigraphy (e.g., *CIL* 2.1213; *CIL* 6.8098, 10985, 11966, 18658; *CIL* 9.888; *CIL* 14.5150).

3.4 Conclusion

In 1879, social scientist Frédéric Le Play was the first to propose the existence of three types of familial compositions: patriarchal families, popular in non-Western countries, in which all married adult children continue living at the father's house; stem families, prevalent in Europe, in which only the oldest son is chosen as the parents' successor; and unstable families, which today we would call nuclear families. Le Play observed that these so-called unstable families were most popular in postindustrial urban areas in Europe.[107] After that, scholars maintained that in the Western world the passage from stem (or extended) to unstable (or nuclear) family was due to industrialization and urbanization. A hundred years later, in the 1960s, surveying premodern census records from the English village of Clayworth, Peter Laslett found that most household units were nuclear families for well over a century before the Industrial Revolution. He, therefore, suggested that the nuclear family had been the dominant type of household before the changes brought by industrialization and urbanization.[108] While Laslett's research fundamentally changed the scholarly discourse on the evolution of the modern family, it is important to underscore that census records—as Huebner has demonstrated in the case of similar documentation from Roman Egypt—are ill-equipped to give a true picture of a family's evolution.[109] Much like inscriptions, a census record by itself is only a still picture of one specific moment in the family's history; a multigenerational family—with a live-in elderly father, a young married couple, an unmarried son, and one infant—might look completely different in one or two decades. Perhaps it will grow to include more children, or lose one of the adults, or even the infant. In other words, an extended family might become a nuclear family or vice versa before the next census. This makes it extremely difficult to assert that one type of family was the most prevalent in any given historical period.

Within the following two decades, Laslett himself corrected his estimates, suggesting that the nuclear family was not so prevalent both pre- and postindustrialization as he previously believed.[110] Even if nuclear families may have become more prominent after the Industrial Revolution and subsequent urban-

107. Le Play's theories were supported, in the United States, by the Chicago School of Sociology, in particular by Park (1928), who linked the erosion of the kinship networks with social breakdown and moral decay. In the 1960s, Goode (1963) began to question the causal relation between the prevalence of nuclear families in the Western world and urban-industrial revolution.

108. Laslett (1972, 125–58) speaks of "continuity" or "null hypothesis." Hajnal's (1982) research on the marriage patterns in Western Europe further supported Laslett's null hypothesis that the nuclear family had also been prevalent before industrialization.

109. See Huebner 2019.

110. Laslett 1983.

ization, they were not absent or rare before these large-scale events. Likewise, social scientists have pointed out the benefits of preserving an extended family in urban contexts to facilitate integration of recent migrants.[111] Moreover, the role played by fictive kinship among low income and recently immigrant communities in the United States has increasingly been acknowledged as a force that promotes integration and supplements or substitutes for the role of a distant family.[112]

What does this all mean for the Romans? Although Roman society does not share all of the intrinsic features of the Industrial Revolution, ancient Rome did experience significant migratory fluxes both in the Republic and during the empire.[113] Huebner is correct in emphasizing that the urban poor had little incentive to keep a multigenerational family together, lacking goods and properties to pass on. Furthermore, both the high mortality in Roman society and the migratory patterns toward the capital created an environment in which less affluent families most likely lacked a large network of biological connections in Rome. I already mentioned that lack of close relatives fostered relationships based on proximity instead of blood, especially when children are present. I believe that *collactanei* are proof that, if truly many Roman families were not multigenerational and were predominantly nuclear, they still relied on an extended network of individuals which came to be members of the family through care and repetition, rather than traditional familial ties.

Literary texts predominantly identify *collactanei* as home-born slaves. The passage from Plutarch's life of Cato, in particular, depicts the fellow nurslings of the master's son as *vernae*. Likewise, the jurist Gaius implies that one's *collactanei* were often enslaved individuals, for they make up a special category of people who can enjoy "early" manumission.[114] This is not surprising, since literature was produced and consumed by a very specific population group, for whom, it can be argued, *collactanei* were slaves born in their own households. Although some ancient authors warn against using an enslaved person already present in the household as a wet nurse for the master's child, this was clearly the practice, even in the imperial household (as seen in *CIL* 6.6324). The epigraphic evidence, on the other hand, presents a more diverse milieu. Not all the individuals commemorated as *collactanei* are enslaved. Out of the fifty-six *collactanei* from the city of Rome (attested in twenty-eight inscriptions), only

111. Anderson (1971) and Hareven (1982) first suggested that extended families benefited urban integration.

112. Li 1977; Thornton Dill 1994; Kim 2009; Taylor et al. 2013.

113. Holleran 2016; De Ligt and Tacoma 2016.

114. Gaius *Inst.* 1.39.

eleven fellow nurslings are enslaved; nine are freeborn, two are freedmen and the rest are free but of uncertain status. This variety of personal statuses does not correspond to the univocal scenario depicted in the literary texts.

As for the gender of the *collactanei* from Rome, out of twenty-eight pairs of *collactanei* (six of which miss one of the two names), there are only twelve females. Therefore, males represent the vast majority of fellow nurslings who are commemorated as such. The epigraphic evidence from the rest of Italy and the provinces presents a similar prevalence of male *collactanei*: three women out of sixteen from Italy, five out of sixteen from the rest of the empire. Thus, male *collactanei* outnumber female *collactanei* in the epigraphic evidence from all over the Mediterranean. As for the reported age of fellow nurslings, the evidence from Rome and outside Rome differ considerably. Indeed, the epitaphs from the Italian regions and the provinces attest only one child dedicatee; all those who are commemorated as fellow nurslings are adults or of unknown age. On the other hand, the *collactanei* from Rome, while still mostly adults, also feature numerous children (fifteen out of fifty-six). The almost complete absence of children commemorated as *collactanei* outside of Rome is not necessarily statistically significant. As mentioned above, accidents of transmission and the randomness in the survival of inscriptions can account for lack of evidence, especially when the sample is not sizable. In other words, simply because no children are commemorated as *collactanei* in the eight inscriptions from the Italian regions does not mean that such scenarios never occurred, merely that we possess no record of it.

What, then, can be said about *collactanei*? First, literary, legal, and epigraphic evidence indicates that fellow nurslings embodied a socially recognized type of relationship. Roman law accounts for their potential preferential treatment (early manumission) due to their close relationship with the master; *collactanei* are expected to become closely connected with each other. Moreover, *collactanei* are often commemorated or provide commemoration alongside other family members, who must also have recognized the importance of fellow nurslings in the economy of their family lives. Second, the creation of *collactanei* was favored by the widespread use of nurses among all strata of society, from elite to enslaved mothers. Third, Roman mothers might have encouraged bonds between *collactanei* in the hope that they will give a certain advantage to their children (as in the case of Cato's wife and the mother of Communio). I argued that children work as connecting nodes, fostering the creation of relationships with non-kin individuals, who become as close as family members. Evidence supports the hypothesis that fellow nurslings were believed to be connected by a special bond. The funerary epitaphs for *collactanei* suggest that

these fictive kinship bonds, established in early infancy, influenced the life and commemoration of the affected parties for decades to come. Although only a small number of inscriptions attests the existence of *collactanei* both inside and outside the city of Rome, allomaternal feeding was surely widespread and created countless fellow nurslings, who unfortunately did not survive in the epigraphic or literary record. While it is likely that not all *collactanei* maintained a close connection after infancy, these types of bonds existed and influenced Roman social practices beyond what the available evidence can attest.

Now I wish to push this notion even further and suggest that bonds between *collactanei* and their respective families could be passed on to the following generation and were not extinguished when one of the two fellow nurslings passed away.

Volusiae Stratonice,
L(*uci*) *Volusi*, *L*(*uci*) *f*(*ilii*), *Saturnini*
pontif(*icis*) *nutrici, L*(*ucius*) *Volusius*
Zosimus, f(*ilius*), *matri suae piissi-*
mae fecit, et L(*ucio*) *Volusio Zosi-*
mo, L(*uci*) *Volusi*, *patr*ʳ*u*ᵎ*i*, *co-*
lactio. Tampia Priscilla
coniugi suo piissimo et san(*c*)*-*
tissimo fecit et sibi.[115]

Lucius Zosimus, the son, made this for his most pious mother, Volusia Stratonix, the nurse of the *pontifex* Lucius Volusius Saturninus, the son of Lucius, and for Lucius Volusius Zosimus, the fellow nursling of Lucius Volusius, the father. Tampia Priscilla also made this for her most pious and revered husband and for herself.

This inscription features six named individuals, and their relations are not immediately apparent due to traditional Roman onomastics and its implications; everyone shares a very similar (or identical) string of names. I break down this commemorative text and introduce the members of the family one at the time for clarity's sake.

First of all, the epitaph commemorates a woman called Volusia Stratonix. She was the nurse of a freeborn man, called Lucius Volusius Saturninus, who became a member of the college of the pontiffs. It is highly probable that Volu-

115. *CIL* 6.7393.

sia was an enslaved nurse, who later was manumitted, since she shares the same *nomen* of the child she nursed, most likely the master's child. Furthermore, we can infer that Volusia Stratonix was married to a man called Lucius Volusius (no *cognomen* is reported), who was possibly her fellow freedman from the same household. They had one son, called Lucius Volusius Zosimus, who took up the responsibility to commemorate his mother, listing her occupation as a nurse.[116] Yet another person is commemorated together with Volusia Stratonix: a man called Lucius Volusius Zosimus, the homonym of her son. This second Zosimus is identified as the husband of Tampia Priscilla and the fellow nursling of Lucius Volusius, the husband of Volusia and father of the commemorator. The two men, although they share the same exact name, do not appear to be biologically related; one was Lucius Volusius' *collactaneus* and the other was Lucius Volusius' son.

I believe that the following reconstructive scenario well represents the interpersonal relations attested in the epitaph: Lucius Volusius and the deceased Zosimus were both home-born slaves in the same household; they were nursed together (by an unknown woman), grew up together, were manumitted, and maintained a strong bond after manumission. They both got married (L. Volusius to the *colliberta* Volusia Stratonix, and L. Volusius Zosimus to Tampia Priscilla). When L. Volusius and Volusia Stratonix had a son, they named him after the father's fellow nursling, Zosimus. Looking back to the epitaph, it is possible to see that Lucius Volusius Zosimus (the son) set up this funerary monument for his mother and the *collactaneus* of his father, the man he was named after. Even though his father and the *collactaneus* likely shared no biological ties, Lucius Volusius Zosimus (the son) still felt that his homonym was part of the family and it was his responsibility to provide for him.[117] It is also important to underscore that Tampia Priscilla, Lucius Volusius Zosimus' wife, also contributed to the commemoration of her husband and was planning to be buried in the same plot. Therefore, she is a full-fledged member of the family as well.

This is the only instance that I am aware of in which a bond between *collactanei* affects commemorative practices beyond the natural life of a fellow nursling and is taken up by the next generation. At least in this one specific case, fictive kinship was maintained not only for a few decades but also across generations, with the younger members of the family embracing biological kin

116. The father was probably already deceased because he did not partake in the commemoration.

117. It is impossible to rule out that master was the biological father of both. However, the two fellow nurslings surely had different mothers, otherwise they would have been referred as *fratres* (brothers) in the epitaph.

(the mother) and fictive kin (the father's *collactaneus*) alike in the same family funerary monument. We can only speculate how many other families had a similar composition, but their epitaph was lost to time or never carved because the family could not afford to set up an inscription. Yet although the surviving funerary epitaphs cannot give researchers a full and complete picture of life in the Roman world, they can still open and suggest the possibility that fictive kinship played a much larger role in society than we can definitively prove.

4

Male Child-Minders

The Role of Tatae *in Child-Rearing During the Empire*

Dis Manibus
Appuleiae Gratillae,
vix(it) an(nos) XIIII m(enses) VI d(ies) XV.
Fecerunt
Cn(aeus) Cossutius Apriclus
et Appuleia Lochias,
patroni, vernae karissimae
et L(ucius) Appuleius Regillus tata.

To the Divine Shades of Appuleia Gratilla, who lived for fourteen years, six months and fifteen days. Gnaeus Cossutius Apriclus, Appuleia Lochias, her patrons, and her *tata* Lucius Appuleius Regillus made this for the dearest home-born slave.

This inscription (fig. 4) from the city of Rome memorializes a fourteen-year-old woman, Appuleia Gratilla, who was a manumitted *verna*.[1] The individuals who arranged for her commemoration are her former masters, now patrons, Gnaeus Cossutius Apriclus and Appuleia Lochias, plus a third person—Lucius Appuleius Regillus—who is designated as a *tata*. Based on their nomenclature, we can infer that the deceased young woman was previously owned and manumitted by Appuleia Lochias, and so was the *tata*. It is worth asking why these three individuals (two former masters and a *tata*) took care of the burial for Appuleia Gratilla, although they seemingly do not appear to be biologically related to her.[2] In the next chapter, I argue that a quasi-parental relationship could be

1. *AE* 2014: 180.

2. Of course, the master could have been the biological father of any of the *vernae* born into the household. While it is important to remember this possibility, it is almost impossible to definitively prove such relations unless terms such as *filia* or *filia naturalis* are employed in the inscription.

Figure 4. *AE* 2014: 180. ©New York University. Classics Department.

established between home-born enslaved children and their masters. For the scope of this present chapter, I shall only argue that Gnaeus Cossutius Apriclus and Appuleia Lochias are discharging the roles of main commemorators, which is usually a parental duty for children and young unmarried adults.[3] What role, then, did the *tata* Lucius Appuleius Regillus play in this family? What does it mean to be a *tata*?

The term *tata* is scarcely attested in Latin literature. Only Varro mentions this word once, in passing, indicating that *tata* is "baby talk" for father, as *mamma* is for mother.[4] Despite the antiquarian's suggestion, it is well established that the word *mamma* is often used in funerary epitaphs to describe a wet nurse rather than the biological mother.[5] Similarly, in literature, the satirist

3. Saller and Shaw 1984.

4. Varro (81M): *cum cibum ac potionem buas ac pappas vocent et matrem mammam, patrem tatam*. "When they call food and drink *pappa* and *bua*, they also call mother *mamma* and father *tata*." As with the English words "mama" and "papa," many languages have specific terms used as "baby talk" by both adults and children as a form of mixed language that, using reduplication of syllables, helps children to understand "that uttered sounds do not represent a babble, but a senseful, semantic entity" (Jakobson 1962, 540).

5. Bradley 1991, 87–91.

Persius uses the word *mamma* to indicate the person who sings lullabies to children, so most likely a nurse.[6] It is, therefore, at least conceivable that *tata* was similarly used to indicate male individuals who partook in the rearing of a child but were not the biological father.

Epigraphy represents the best evidence to understand who these *tatae* were and whether they were part of the familial unit. There are sixty-four inscriptions from the city of Rome featuring the word *tata*, sixteen from the rest of the Italian peninsula and five from the provinces.[7] These are not insignificant numbers. For comparison's sake, inscriptions from Rome attesting the existence of *collactanei* surveyed in the preceding chapter are twenty-eight and those featuring the word nurse (*nutrix*) are fifty-eight.[8] By analyzing these inscriptions, I argue that it is possible to exclude that *tata* was frequently used—at least in epigraphic diction—as a synonym for father; rather, these *tatae* represent male child-minders, caretakers, and surrogate parental figures.

In the previous chapter, I focused on the bond between *collactanei*, children nursed by the same woman, which is memorialized in epitaphs set up by the parents of fellow nurslings as a mark of distinction and also employed by the fellow nurslings themselves when providing burial for each other decades after their infancy. I also argued that children serve as connecting nodes or catalysts for the formation of such fictive kinship bonds, such as between *collactanei* and their families. Previously, I focused on what anthropologists have called milk-kinship, a type of fictive kinship based on the sharing of breastmilk; in this chapter I turn to another type of the kin-like relation between young children and their not-biologically-related caretakers: nurture kinship. As the word suggests, this type of kinship is based on the repetition of caring acts over a period of time. In the specific case of *tatae*, I contend that they played the role of surrogate parents; the word *tata* expresses nurture, not biological, kinship. My argument is informed by recent scholarship on nurture kinship, in particular by anthropologist Maximilian Holland. He argued that in order to account for the wide variety of human behaviors relating to kinship, we cannot just investigate the biological aspect but must use a sociobiological approach, relying on the sociological evolution of children in their most formative years, observing how children relate (or are allowed to relate) to individuals inside and outside the biological family.[9]

6. Pers. 1. 16–18. Moreover, in the sixth century CE Muscio's *Gynaecia* (1. 88) the term *mamma* is used as a synonym of nurse.

7. See appendix 2.1, 2.2, 2.3.

8. These numbers are in the preceding chapter and Bradley 1991, 14–16.

9. Holland 2012.

Contrary to *collactanei*, who shared life-giving fluids and thus are sometimes believed to be connected on a biological level, the bond between *tatae* and their protégés occurs primarily on an emotional and social level. As I mentioned before, inscriptions cannot be considered to be mere expressions of affection, because Roman burial customs and practices were driven by multiple factors, not merely by emotional attachment.[10] Nevertheless, it is possible to speak of *tatae* in terms of the social role—without discounting or relying only on the emotional role—that they played in the economy of individual families.

Therefore, in this chapter I set out to investigate the fictive kinship ties between *tatae*, whom I interpret to be male caretakers of children, and their young protégées, focusing on the surrogate parental role that these men played. Furthermore, I explore what elements could have hindered or fostered the long-term relationships that child-minders appear to enjoy, not only with the grown children they once cared for, but with their families as well. Scholars have published on *tatae*—often in association with *mammae*—since the late 1980s.[11] While my analysis is indebted to previous scholarship, I present *tatae* as a manifestation of a larger phenomenon, the proliferation of fictive kinship in Roman society, and introduce reflections on modern labor divisions among genders, especially when related to childcare.

Indeed, an additional goal of my book is to dispute the traditionally accepted gendered division of labor inside the Roman household.[12] Some scholars have already recognized that gender stereotypes are often conveyed when talking of child-rearing and education, which do not represent a true picture of Roman society. Over thirty years ago, Keith Bradley dedicated a chapter on the role of men in childcare, drawing attention to this traditionally gendered role.[13] His research fits into the larger debate regarding gendered occupations inside and outside the household. As part of the same trend, Susan Treggiari first compiled an exhaustive list of all job titles attested for women in epigraphy, some

10. As Chaniotis (2012, 97) opined, all inscriptions are expressing some type of emotion, but it is hard to pinpoint what kind, acknowledging that even epitaphs—which might appear to express affection—are influenced by social, cultural, and literary conventions. This issue is further discussed the section below.

11. Dixon 1988; Nielsen 1989; Bradley 1991; Laes 2015; Gregori 2016; Borrello 2018.

12. Saller (2007, 102–7) sketches a brief history of the scholarship on women's participation in the workforce, both inside and outside the household. Scholars disagree on whether women participated in agricultural labor, outside the household; Rathbone (1991) emphasizes that in documentary papyri there is little evidence for women's work in agriculture, while Carlsen (1993, 199 infers from Columella's suggestions (12.3.6) on what the *villica* (the wife of the foreman) and slave women should do on rainy days—thus when they could not work outside—that they usually contributed to the farmwork.

13. Bradley 1991, 76–102.

of which have been traditionally associated with men.[14] Modern gender bias toward certain activities, such as child-rearing or even toward material culture, might lead scholars to misinterpret the evidence we possess. For example, archaeologist Penelope Allison has argued that the occurrence of objects usually associated with feminine tasks in extradomestic spaces, such as sewing needles in military camps, should not be automatically associated with female presence.[15] Soldiers needed to mend their socks, even if society has conditioned us to associate sewing with women. Similarly, if an inscription bears the designation *tata*, some might expect that the word meant father, not a nanny, since in modern Western culture child-minding is still viewed as a feminine task and responsibility; if a man is involved in the commemoration of a child, he must be the father, because what other role can a man play? Yet, as the analysis of the epitaphs indicates, twenty-one inscriptions from the corpus feature both a *tata* and a father explicitly named on the stone, suggesting that the term—at least in some cases and, in my interpretation, in almost all the available evidence—must mean something other than father.

This chapter focuses primarily on the epigraphic attestations of *tatae*, which represent the most significant source of information regarding this group of people, since literary evidence does not—with the exception of the passage from Varro cited above—include references to the word *tata*. However, as I argue toward the end of the chapter, it does not mean that we cannot find depictions of men working as caretakers in literary texts.

4.1 Discovering the Role of the *Tata*: Evidence, Status and Protégés

It is undisputed that *tata* is the masculine equivalent of *mamma*. It is also well attested that the word *mamma*, while it seldom indicates the biological mother, was most commonly used in literary and epigraphic texts to identify wet nurses. Therefore, it would not be unreasonable to hypothesize that *tata* meant—in its most common acceptation—male caretaker of children. Nevertheless, scholars have pointed out that, in an exiguous number of inscriptions, a case can be made for *tata* to be identified as the former master (*patronus*) or even the biological father or grandfather. Based on these instances, some have argued that *tata* stands for *patronus*, father, or grandfather not just in that handful of cases, but that these identifications should be generally applied to all

14. Treggiari 1975b. See also Hemelrijk 2020, 124–82.
15. Allison 2015.

tatae.[16] Admittedly, it is not possible to rule out that, in an exiguous number of cases (precisely two in the entire corpus, according to my interpretation), *tatae* are the former masters of the children they commemorate, but I believe that those rare instances are a manifestation of fictive kinship in which the master happens to discharge the duties of a caretaker and thus takes the name of *tata*.

I think the designation *tata* should be seen as a functional term. It designates a person who plays a specific task (caring for a child), and it is often used in epitaphs in relation to men who do not appear to be biologically related to the children they care for. If we understand *tata* to designate a social role that could be played by several individuals, then that role of the caretaker can be taken up by a close relative or a person outside the nuclear family. Paraphrasing, it is not *tata* that means *patronus*, but a *patronus* could act as a *tata*, as a caretaker.

4.1.1 Presenting the Epigraphic Evidence

The word *tata* appears in sixty-four funerary epitaphs from the city of Rome.[17] Eight are highly fragmentary—meaning that significant parts cannot be reasonably reconstructed—and two are copies.[18] The vast majority of the corpus, therefore, does not present textual difficulties that prevent us from fully reading the text of the epitaphs. Moreover, the funerary inscriptions which attest the presence of *tatae* from the rest of the Italian peninsula are sixteen in number, one of which is fragmentary.[19] The majority of these inscriptions come from townships not far from Rome, such as Ostia, Tibur, Praeneste, and Puteoli. In these cities, the influence from the capital would have been particularly strong, so it is not surprising to find similarities in their epigraphic habit. In the provinces, however, the term *tata* is scantly attested; only six inscriptions feature the designation associated with a male individual.[20] For this reason, in this chapter I focus primarily on the evidence from Rome and the rest of the Italian peninsula, where the evidence is most abundant and cogent.

The epigraphic evidence can be organized not only by the geographical region in which the inscriptions were found but also based on who is giving

16. Nielsen 1989.

17. Listed in appendix 2.1.

18. Also noted in appendix 2.1.

19. See appendix 2.2.

20. See appendix 2.3. In addition, the word *tata* is attested as woman's name three times in Dalmatia (*AE* 1934: 203; *AE* 1966: 387; *CILGM* 340), once in Macedonia (*AE* 2011: 1188), and twice in Moesia Superior (*IlJug*02, 529; *CLE* 1632). In two instances (*AE* 2016: 1291; *CIL* 12.4830), it appears to be used as a *cognomen* (Aurelius Tata Pusintulus; Fulvius Tata), which could be a nickname gained through their role of caretakers, although this remains merely a hypothesis.

and receiving commemoration. For example, among all the epitaphs from the Italian peninsula, a *tata* is providing commemoration for a child or young adult in forty-five instances (out of eighty epitaphs), thus in a little over half of the available evidence. In the remaining corpus, the *tata* is the deceased who receives commemoration, usually from a single male or female individual, who can be identified as the now grown former protégé of the caretaker.

Both groups contribute to the analysis of the role and position played by the *tatae* in Roman families and shared social practices. Indeed, when a *tata* provides commemoration for a child or young adult, he might be the sole commemorator—which suggests that no one else could provide for burial at that moment in time—or be a co-commemorator along with the parents or other biological relatives, indicating that these caretakers were considered to be part of the family. When a *tata* receives commemoration from an adult ward, it implies that the bond between child and caretaker lasted for many years and was considered, as I showcase in the sections below, to be akin to a familial tie. Thus, when *tatae* either give or receive commemoration, the bonds memorialized on the stone can be interpreted as illustrations of fictive kinship relations. In the preceding chapters, I argued that infant children are particularly conducive to the formation of new fictive-kin bonds with individuals outside the nuclear family. Likewise, children who need a caretaker can also function as catalysts, creating new ties between themselves, their caretakers, and their biological family.

4.1.2 Role, Nomenclature, and Status of the Tatae

Compared to *collactanei*, the epitaphs for *tatae* are more numerous and less fragmentary; yet the analysis of the inscriptions presents similar challenges to the ones already observed in the previous chapter.[21] In addition to these obstacles, the inscriptions featuring the term *tata* introduce another problem.[22] The dedicator is sometimes unknown, as attested in *AE* 1973:21 and BCAR 1923: 104.

D(*is*) *M*(*anibus*).
C(*aio*) *Avidio*

21. As explained in chapter 2, some of these difficulties are inherent to the medium itself; tombstones are ill-equipped to give a comprehensive representation of social practices. Other difficulties include the lack of filiation (or pseudofiliation for manumitted individuals) and ages at death in most epitaphs.

22. See *CIL* 6.10938 in chapter 2, section 3.

Sotiricho
tatae.

To the Divine Shades. Monument for the caretaker C. Avidius Sotirichus.

Iunia Amanda
v(*ixit*) *a*(*nnos*) *II*, *men*(*ses*) *VI.*
Tata suus
ol(*lam*) *da*(*t*).

Iunia Amanda lived two years and six months. Her caretaker provided an urn.

The two epitaphs are commemorations set up for and by a *tata*, but in both cases the person who set up the inscription is unnamed. For the first one, it would be difficult to know for sure if the *tata* Sotirichus was commemorated by a former ward, by some family member who wished to highlight his role as a caretaker, or if the deceased himself left precise instructions on how he wanted to be buried and remembered. As for the second inscription, we know that the commemorator was the child's *tata*, but he did not include his name. It might appear striking that a toddler was commemorated only by a caretaker, not by her parents. Epitaphs such as this have led scholars to hypothesize that Varro is correct, and *tata* is "baby-talk" for father. While it is impossible to rule out that Iunia Amanda was commemorated by her biological father, it also cannot be excluded that she was a foster child or a foundling; then her *tata* would have been her caretaker, a surrogate parental figure.

This last possibility seems the most convincing hypothesis based on the additional evidence from the corpus. Indeed, in the majority of the epitaphs, the *tata* does not share the same *nomen* with the children or their families, suggesting that they were not biologically related, as *CECapitol* 87 exemplifies.[23]

D(is) M(anibus)
Eroticeni Bullin(ae?),
q(uae) v(ixit) a(nnos) XIX. Bene merenti,
Claudius Demetrius, tata{s}, fecit.

23. In epitaphs where a child is commemorated, only in 9 percent of cases does the *tata* have the same *nomen* of either the parents or the child, and rises to 27 percent of the epitaphs when the *tata* is the one receiving commemoration.

To the Divine Shades of Erotice Bullina, who lived for nineteen years. Claudius Demetrius, her caretaker, made this for her, most deserving.

Apart from different nomenclature, there is an additional and more persuasive reason why it cannot be argued that *tata* was primarily used as a synonym of father in epigraphic diction. Truly, out of the forty-five epitaphs from Italy that involve a *tata* giving commemoration, twenty-seven feature both the *tata* and the father as co-commemorators of the deceased child, as in *CIL* 6.5642.

D(is) M(anibus) Arminia[e]
Gorgillae
quae vixit ann(is) XV,
mens(ibus) V, diebus VI.
C(aius) Arminius Aphrodisius et
Valeria Gorgilla
parentes filiae
dulcissimae e
C(aius) Taurius
Primitivus
tata infelicissimus
fecerunt.

To the Divine Shades of Arminia Gorgilla, who lived for fifteen years, five months and six days. The parents C. Arminius Aphrodisius and Valeria Gorgilla, the unhappiest caretaker C. Taurius Primitivus made this for their sweetest daughter.

Fifteen-year-old Arminia Gorgilla is commemorated by both her parents and her *tata*, suggesting that the figures of father and male caretaker could coexist, not differently from a mother and a nurse who can play complementing roles in the rearing of a child. I argued that children function as connecting nodes, establishing new bonds between themselves and individuals outside the nuclear family, who in turn can develop ties with other members of the family. In this case, even if Arminia had passed away, her parents felt that her *tata* Taurius Primitivus was an important member of the family, and he should be allowed to participate in the young woman's commemoration. In addition, the *tata* has a different nomenclature than the rest of the named individuals on the stone, further indicating that he was likely not biologically related to the child for whom he cared.

The three *tatae* named thus far—C. Avidius Sotirichus, Claudius Demetrius, C. Taurius Primitivus—are all free men; however, none of them display filiation or pseudofiliation. This is representative of the corpus, since *tatae* are most commonly free men (outnumbering enslaved *tatae* almost two to one).[24] This, however, does not mean they were all freeborn. Remarkably, out of eighty inscriptions, no *tata* displays his filiation, the only sure mark of free birth. Multiple reasons could account for the complete lack of filiation in the corpus. I already mentioned the fact that the lack of filiation became increasingly more common during the empire, but I believe that the scope of these commemorations could also be partially responsible for lack of filiation. In the epitaphs where a *tata* is providing commemoration, the emphasis is placed on the relationship between him and the child (and sometimes the parents), thus the focus is not on the *tata*'s status and ancestry, but on his bond with the child and the familial unit, if present. Additionally, some of these *tatae* could be informally manumitted persons or Junian Latins, who do acquire a new name, but cannot provide filiation—because they are not freeborn—nor pseudofiliation, because they are not formally manumitted, according to the dictates of the law.[25]

Although several *tatae* could have been either Junian Latins or freedmen, it is impossible to speculate on their number. Yet, analyzing individual inscriptions, it is possible to at least hypothesize that certain *tatae* were formally enslaved.

D(*is*) *M*(*anibus*)
C(*aio*) *Iulio Dryanti*
Iulia Secunda tatae
Naevia Sperata con-
iugi b(*ene*) *m*(*erenti*) *fecerunt*
cum que⌜*m*⌝ *vix*(*it*) *a*(*nnos*) *XXVIII.*[26]

To the Divine Shades. Iulia Secunda made this for her caretaker, and Naevia Sperata (made this) for her well-deserving husband, Gaius Iulius Dryas, with whom she lived for 28 years.

In this case, the *tata* Gaius Iulius Dryas is receiving commemoration from his wife, Naevia Sperata, and another woman, Iulia Secunda, who bears the

24. Precisely, forty-three to twenty-seven. Six *tatae* are unnamed, either because the inscription is too fragmentary, or no identification is given; two are freedmen.

25. See chapter 2, section 2.

26. *CIL* 14.1143.

same family name. It is possible that Iulia Secunda was the master's child, whom Dryas cared for when he was still enslaved to the Iulia family and, after receiving manumission, he remained close with the child he helped to raise. Again, it is possible to see that the bond between the (former) child and the *tata* extended to other family members; the wife Naevia Sperata shared her commemorative duties with Iulia Secunda, thus suggesting that she considered the ward to have a legitimate claim of kinship to her husband. Moreover, it is worth noting that the deceased is commemorated first as a *tata*, with the name of Iulia Secunda in emphatic position (immediately following the name of the deceased), and then as the husband of Naevia Sperata. The order of the textual element does not necessarily indicate a hierarchy; it is not my intention to argue that the order in which the names are displayed always expresses a deeper meaning. Yet it would be difficult to argue that the order of the elements in an inscribed text is completely random; at times, it can be used as circumstantial evidence to suggest possible scenarios, rather than to definitively prove them.

Similarly, *CIL* 6.29424 presents a dedicator and a dedicatee who share the same *nomen*.

D(*is*) *M*(*anibus*).
P(*ublio*) *Umbrio*
Macedoni
P(*ublius*) *Umbrius Philippus*
tatae b(*ene*) *m*(*erenti*) *f*(*ecit*).

To the Divine Shades. P. Umbrius Philippus made this for his well-deserving *tata* P. Umbrius Macedo.

At first glance, this inscription could appear to represent a son commemorating his father, since the two men share the same *praenomen* and *nomen*. However, since the designation *tata* is used to identify caretakers rather than biological fathers in the majority of the corpus, it is most likely that Umbrius Philippus was the (now grown) master's child whom Umbrius Macedo had cared for years ago. Macedo was probably an enslaved person, although he does not bear pseudofiliation.[27]

Another *tata* who was almost certainly formerly enslaved is Lucius Modius Urbanus, a man who set up an inscription for his beloved "little master" (*dominulus*), suggesting that the child was the master's son.[28]

27. Solin (1996, 367) lists Macedo as a well-attested servile name.
28. Gregori-2016-3.

L(ucio) M(odio)
Nicephoro,
dom(i)nulo optimo et carissimo,
vix(it) VI,
mensib(us) IX, dieb(us) XXII,
L(ucius) Modius Urbanus
tata fecit.

The caretaker Lucius Modius Urbanus made this for Lucius Modius Nicephorus, his excellent and beloved little master, who lived six (years), nine months and twenty-two days.

Besides the use of the term *dominulus*, the *tata* and the child share the same family name, further indicating that Modius Urbanus was a freedman of the same family. It is worth asking why this six-year-old child, the son of the master, had no one who could provide for his burial except for the *tata*, his freedman caretaker. Maybe the parents were deceased or otherwise not able to contribute to the tombstone for their child; perhaps they were away from Rome and had left the child in the care of Modius Urbanus. Perhaps the parents set up a separate monument. Nevertheless, this *tata* took it upon himself to commemorate his young protégé.

It is most difficult, especially when dealing with prematurely deceased children, not to think that commemoration surmises affection. If a caretaker set up a funerary epitaph for a small child, it is a natural instinct to assume that the commemorator felt a deep fondness for the deceased. While this is most likely true in many cases, we cannot rule out that other factors, besides affection, also played a role in the funerary patterns of commemoration in Roman society. Providing burial can also be a testamentary responsibility of a person's heir, or it can be influenced by social pressure and expectations.[29] Although I do not wish to argue that affection played no role in commemoration, especially when small children are involved, I believe it is important to remember that funerary practices are not merely influenced by emotions but also by social conventions.

Returning to the issue of status, I mentioned that, while the majority of *tatae* are free, one in three is of enslaved status, as in *CIL* 6.20930.

Iustae dulcissim(a)e
vixit ann(os) XVI, d(ies) IIII.

29. As often expressed on the epitaphs themselves with formulaic language such as *ex testamento*, *t*(*estamento*) *f*(*ieri*) *i*(*ussit*), which bring attention to the burial clause of the deceased's will.

Hermes et Successa
parentes fil(iae) karissimae
fecerunt, et Amphio tata,
et sibi, posterisque suis;
in fronte p(edes) VIIII in agro p(edes) VIIII.

To the sweetest Iusta, who lived sixteen years and four days. Her parents Hermes and Successa, and the caretaker Amphio, made this for their dearest daughter, and for themselves and their descendants; the monument is nine feet long and nine feet wide.

All the persons featured in this inscription bear a single name, indicating that they were of enslaved status. The funerary monument purchased by Hermes and Successa, alongside the *tata* Amphio, was surely an expensive one, given its size. This is not surprising, since enslaved individuals could sometimes dispose of a sizable personal estate (*peculium*). For example, in the often cited *CIL* 6.5197, Musicus, a *servus* of the imperial household, an overseer of the treasury for the province of Gallia Lugdunensis, happened to die as he was traveling to Rome with no less than sixteen personal servants (including cook, secretary, butler, and footmen) who were his *vicarii* ("underslaves").[30] In this case, Hermes and Successa used their *peculium* to buy a funerary monument for themselves and their prematurely deceased sixteen-year-old daughter, to which the *tata* Amphio also contributed. The text does not say whether Amphio was owned by Hermes and Successa; he is not called *vicarius*, but *tata*. It is most likely that the three adults were all part of the same household, whether Amphio was a *vicarius* of Hermes and Successa or a fellow-enslaved person. Regardless of who owned Amphio, he is considered to be a member of the family, contributing to the purchase of the family's funerary plot and monument. It is not possible to know when or how Amphio came to know Hermes and Successa; they might have known each other for years before Iusta was born. Yet Amphio is part of the funerary monument not because of his friendship with the parents, but for his role as caretaker of Iusta. Once again, a child functions as a connecting node, as a catalyst for the creation or strengthening of relationships, which led to the establishment of fictive kinship bonds.

Last, I present an epitaph, *CIL* 6.25636, which is not as straightforward as the ones surveyed thus far. There are two dedicatees and two dedicators; two

30. Weaver 1964, 118ff. As property, these enslaved attendants of Musicus would have been part of his *peculium* which the master granted him to use as his own until his death.

individuals appear to be enslaved and two are free, and no one shares the same family name.

D(*is*) *M*(*anibus*).
Rustia Saturnina co(*n*)-
iugi Onesimo bene me-
renti fecit libert(*is*) *liberta-*
bus posterisque eorum.
Ti(*berius*) *Cl*(*audius*) *Pantagathus tatae suo*
fecit; *Rustia Saturnina ollam*
donavit Maio, Caes(*aris*) *n*(*ostri*) *servo, ta-*
tulae suo.

To the Divine Shades. Rustia Saturnina made this for her well-deserving spouse Onesimus and their freedmen and freedwomen and their descendants. Ti. Claudius Pantagathus made this for his *tata*; Rustia Saturnina gave an urn to Maius, a slave of our Caesar, her *tatula*.

The *tata* Onesimus is commemorated by his wife, Rustia Saturnina, and a free man, called Ti. Claudius Pantagathus. He bears a single name, so he could be enslaved; if that were the case, the term spouse (*coniunx*) should be understood to indicate a de facto partnership, not a legally valid marriage. Rustia Saturnina also commemorates another man who bears a single name, her *tatula* Maius. Clearly, *tatula* is a diminutive of *tata*, a term that likely also means caretaker; the use of the diminutive might indicate affection, old age, or even something related to physical appearance.[31] Maius is proudly depicted as a *servus* of the emperor. It is impossible to know which specific emperor is being referenced here, since the inscription is datable from 50 to 200 CE based on epigraphic conventions and paleography. Yet the presence of a free individual called Ti. Claudius Pantagathus might suggest a connection with the first imperial family. It is also challenging to understand what the relations between these four individuals were and how they came in contact with each other. The following reconstruction, though speculative, provides a possible account of their social relations. Rustia Saturnina, Onesimus, Ti. Claudius Pantagathus, and Maius were all, at some point, part of the imperial *familia*. During that period of time, Maius cared for Saturnina, and Onesimus cared for Pantagathus. After some unspecified number of years, Pantagathus was manumitted,

31. See *CIL* 6.16926 below for more on *tatula*.

and Saturnina came to be enslaved to (and later manumitted by) a member of the Rustia family. As for Onesimus, it is unclear whether he was still enslaved or also a freedman, perhaps called Rustius Onesimus, and his *nomen* was not included in the epitaph due to the physical limitations of the stone.[32]

Regardless of what their specific life circumstances actually were, it is clear that these pairs—Saturnina and Maius, Onesimus and Pantagathus—shared some type of relationship, which I believe to be fictive kinship based on nurture and care, but admittedly could be a biological connection. Indeed, if I were to argue that *tata* and *tatula* mean biological father or even grandfather, instead of surrogate parental figure, the reconstruction of this familial grouping would not be significantly affected. As I argue later in this chapter, there are several reasons to reject the hypothesis that *tata* (and *tatula*) mean grandfather, based on average Roman demographics which suggest that only a small percentage of children would have had living grandparents during their lives. Moreover, the terms *avus* and *avia* are attested in the epigraphic record, so it should be asked why "baby-talk" should have been preferred over the normal designation to be displayed in public; last, instances of grandchildren commemorating one of their grandparents are not unattested but extremely rare, since one's children or spouses are the most likely provider of commemoration for aged adults. As for father, I have already mentioned that *tatae* and fathers often appear together to commemorate prematurely deceased children and teenagers, indicating that *tata* was—at least in the majority of instances—a social role played by a different actor.[33] Moreover, *tata* and child share the same *nomen* in only a handful of epitaphs, and this fact can be explained as a result of manumission.

Since in the vast majority of the epitaphs composing our corpus the *tata* cannot be the father, I prefer interpreting the designation as a functional term, a word describing a person who provides care. This person might be a surrogate parental figure, not biologically related to the child, although I am not outright dismissing the possibility that a small portion of these *tatae* could have been fathers or grandfathers, even if these instances are extremely rare.

4.1.3 Whose Tata*? Children and Adults, Status and Gender*

In the preceding section, I presented several inscriptions in which a *tata* was providing commemoration for children ranging from two-year-old toddlers to

32. The inscription, observable in Ancona at the Palazzo Baviera, is carved on a marble slab and the space between letters (and rows) is kept to a minimum. Although the object does present a decorative frame, the text often touches the frame, utilizing all the available space.

33. See n. 24.

nineteen-year-old teenagers. This reflects well the evidence from the corpus. Out of the forty-five inscriptions set up by a *tata* (and additional dedicators) for a deceased protégé, the age of the ward is expressed in thirty cases, so in the majority of the surviving evidence.[34]

The age-bearing inscriptions can be divided into four groups: 0 to 5 years old, 6 to 10 years old, 11 to 20 years old, and over 20 years old.[35] Twenty-three children fall into the 0 to 5 bracket, three in the 6 to 10 bracket, and nine in the 11 to 20 bracket.[36] Only two inscriptions commemorate three individuals who are over 20 years old.[37] These numbers are not surprising: young, premature deaths are always tragic, but the youngest deaths are the most pitiable. Therefore, it is expected that children under the age of five would make up the largest group, accounting for half of the age-bearing inscriptions. Preteens and teenagers are the second largest group.[38] Being so close to adulthood but dying shy of it seem to have been also a particularly pitiable occurrence.

Since I already presented three inscriptions for young adults in the sections above, I focus here on infants and toddlers, the youngest of whom, a five-month-old boy, is remembered in *CIL* 6.11395.

D(*is*) *M*(*anibus*)
Alexandri,
m(*ensium*) *V. Marinus*
pater piissimo
filio fecit et
Anthus tata.

To the Divine Shades of Alexander, five months old. His father Marinus and the caretaker Anthus made this for a most pious son.

The infant is commemorated by his father Marinus and the *tata* Anthus; all the individuals only bear one name, suggesting that they were of enslaved

34. In other words, in 66 percent of cases where the *tata* provides commemoration the age of the deceased is expressed.

35. I chose to divide the age groups in increments of five years because of the importance of multiples of five in age-bearing inscriptions, as already noted by Duncan-Jones (1990, 79).

36. First group: BCAR 1923: 104; *CIL* 6.6703, 11395, 13997, 18196, 18676, 22564, 22802, 23133, 23469, 25301, 27259, 28592, 28906, 29634, 35323, 35530, 36353, 38598; *CIL* 14.1674 (two siblings), 3355; *EDCS* 73100407; InscrIt-04–01, 348. Second group: *Gregori*-2016–13, *CIL* 6.6443, 19552. Third group: *AE* 2014: 180; *CECapitol* 87, *CIL* 6.2334, 5642, 16578, 20930, 37619; *CIL* 9.899; *CIL* 11.1504; *CIL* 14.3844.

37. *CIL* 6.10873 (two siblings) and 17133.

38. Three aforementioned inscriptions—*CIL* 6.5642, 20930, and *CECapitol* 87—commemorated children fifteen, sixteen, and nineteen years old respectively.

status. The mother of the child is notably absent; perhaps she died in childbirth, or—if she was an enslaved woman—was sold to another household. Remarkably, the niche left empty by the maternal figure appears to have been filled by a male caretaker, not by a female wet nurse, who perhaps would be the most logical guess.[39]

The youngest child commemorated by a *tata* outside of Rome is a one-year-old girl from Tibur, a township thirty kilometers from the capital.[40]

D(*is*) *M*(*anibus*).
Fecerunt Ianua-
rius tata et Primi-
tiva nutrix Libera-
tae alumnae quae vi-
xit anno, mensib(*us*) *VIII, die-*
bus XLVII, bene meren(*ti*).

To the Divine Shades. The caretaker Ianuarius and the nurse Primitiva made this for their well-deserving foster child Liberata, who lived one year, eight months, and forty-seven days.

The young Liberata was perhaps a foundling, or the orphaned daughter of friends or family members. Despite their seemingly enslaved status, Ianuarius and Primitiva—who were most likely a couple—had access to enough disposable income to set up an epitaph for a child who died a few months shy of her second birthday.[41] Liberata is the sole child to be openly identified as an *alumna* or foster child in the entire corpus; however, as further evidence shows, she was not the only child whose parents are unknown and was raised by male and female caretakers who acted as surrogate parents. It remains unclear whether Liberata was enslaved or not; as a foundling being raised by two enslaved persons, she probably took their status by association.

A similar inscription, *CIL* 6.10016 (fig. 5), presents two enslaved siblings who were buried by a free couple and a free man:

39. Naturally, if the mother was absent, a nurse must have provided breastmilk for the child in question.

40. *InscrIt* 04–01, 348.

41. It is unclear why her foster parents chose to report her age as one year, eight months and forty-seven days, for forty-seven days amounts to more than a month. Perhaps the number held a special significance for them, or the carver made a mistake.

D(*is*) *M*(*anibus*).
Primitivo et
Calybeni,
sorori eius.
Q(uintus) Attius Hermes,
discenti
pientissimo, et
Herennius
Fortunatus,
tata, et
Herennia
Rhodine, mamma,
b(*ene*) *m*(*erenti*) *fecerunt.*

To the Divine Shades. For Primitivus and Calyben, his sister. Q. Attius Hermes made this for his most pious apprentice, and Herennius Fortunatus, the caretaker, and Herennia Rhodine, the wet nurse, also made this for the well-deserving (siblings).

Primitivus and his sister Calyben are commemorated by Herennius Fortunatus and Herennia Rhodine, their *tata* and *mamma*, and by another man named Q. Attius Hermes, who perhaps contributed to the commemoration of Primitivus alone. The male child is called most pious apprentice (*discens pientissimus*), suggesting that Q. Attius Hermes was the person from whom Primitivus was learning a skill, art, or trade.[42] Apprenticeship was a common practice for both free and enslaved youth, and therefore it is not surprising to see a young enslaved boy being trained by a free individual.[43] It does not appear that Calyben was trained in one particular skill, although based on her age and status, she most likely learned to discharge many domestic tasks and duties. It is clear that Primitivus and Calyben were under the tutelage of their *mamma* and *tata*, a free married couple who were most likely formerly enslaved and manumitted from the same household.[44] Based on the nomenclature and lack of additional information, the two siblings do not seem to have any biological

42. The inscription (preserved in Rome, Musei Capitolini, Sala delle Colombe, NCE 2097) does not include a relief from which a specific trade could be inferred.

43. On apprenticeship as part of the education of slaves: Forbes 1955, 328–34; Bradley 1991, 107–19; Laes and Strubbe 2014, 193–99.

44. Another possibility is that Fortunatus formerly owned Rhodine and he manumitted her in order to marry her.

Figure 5. *CIL* 6.10016. ©Sovrintendenza ai Beni Culturali di Roma Capitale.

relation to the three adults in the inscription: they were likely children enslaved to the Herennii couple, who cared for them and oversaw the apprenticeship of Primitivus. These children could have been purchased or *vernae*, yet they are unlikely to be the biological offspring of Fortunatus and Rhodine. So, if the couple owned these children, why did they call themselves their *mamma* and *tata*, using surrogate parental terms, instead of *domina* and *dominus*? Why set up an inscription to commemorate a child, whose apprenticeship surely costed money but likely had yet to provide economic returns?[45]

Through my admittedly leading questions, I am suggesting that—while we should be wary to speak of affection as the sole or main motivation for providing burial, even when children are involved—Fortunatus and Rhodine present

45. Apprenticeship contracts followed two basic types: either the teaching happened for a fee (paid by their guardian or master) or for free, in exchange for the pupil's labor in the workshop. See Bradley 1991, 103–25; Laes 2011, 191.

themselves as surrogate parental figures and commemorate two children they saw as mere monetary investments waiting to turn a profit. The idea that slavery and affection might coexist, especially when children are involved, leads to complex scenarios, for we know that even in contemporary Western society abuse and love can coexist in a single relationship. Although affection cannot make slavery, violence, or the threat of it acceptable, it is possible that many Roman enslavers experienced a wide spectrum of emotions, maybe contrasting but nevertheless present, toward their individuals they owned.[46] To properly feed, clothe, and educate a *verna* might be perceived an act of kindness by the master himself, but it was an opportunistic act at its core: healthy and trained *servi* are worth more and can be sold at a higher price. However, even if a master might have planned on profiting from the possession or sale of highly trained *vernae*, this does not make the perceived sense of loss any less real when they die an untimely death. Mere grief over economic loss would not justify erecting funerary monuments such as this one. Whatever the lives of Primitivus and Calyben were like, whether they were ever beaten or threatened when they misbehaved, it appears that Fortunatus and Rhodine felt a close bond with the two children. In the following chapter, I focus on *vernae* and the quasi-parental affection that their masters claim to have felt for them, both through literary and epigraphic evidence. Nevertheless, the inscription for Primitivus and Calyben is a remarkable example of a grouping that looks like a family and, despite their differences in status, employs surrogate parental language, thus suggesting that this was a fictive kinship unit.

Yet not all children of enslaved status from our corpus lack biological parents, as *CIL* 6.16578 attests.

D(*is*) *M*(*anibus*)
Crescentillae,
filiae dulcisiimae.
Fecerunt
Crescens pater
et Soteris mater,
quae vixit annis XI,
mensibus VI, dieb(us) II.
Epaphroditus tata

46. Likewise, enslaved individuals may have felt conflicting emotions toward their masters, from fear to hatred, loyalty, love, disgust, longing for approval or vengeance. To reconstruct their emotions is even more difficult given the lack of evidence attesting to their point of view. This topic is further discussed in the following chapter.

posuit
et Ulpi[*ae?*]
Probatae C[.

To the Divine Shades of Crescentilla, sweetest daughter. Her father Crescens and mother Soteris made this for her, who lived eleven years, six months, two days. The caretaker Epaphroditus set it up for her and Ulpia? Probata C?.

Enslaved parents Crescens and Soteris set up a funerary inscription for their eleven-year-old daughter Crescentilla. Moreover, a *tata*—who also appears to be enslaved—called Epaphroditus contributed to the monument, and a second dedicatee, perhaps a manumitted woman called Ulpia Probata, was also included on the stone. Unfortunately, the fragmentary state of the inscription does not allow us to make out the identity and familial role that Probata might have played. It is possible that all the enslaved individuals lived in the same household, and—depending on its size—Epaphroditus could have been a caretaker not only for Crescentilla but also for other enslaved children who were too young to actively work in the household but whose enslaved parents could not oversee while working.[47] I suggested in the preceding chapter that large households would have entrusted breastfeeding *vernae* to only one or two enslaved women at the time, while all the other recent mothers were forced to go back to work. Once a toddler had no more need for a nurse, these children—still too young to be put to work—could be entrusted to a male caretaker as well.[48] In such a way, Epaphroditus could have come to be a quasi-parental figure to Crescentilla and take part in her commemoration alongside her parents, forming a fictive kinship unit around the child.

Apart from a handful of children like Crescentilla, Liberata, and the siblings Primitvus and Calyben, the overwhelming majority of children commemorated by a *tata* (and additional individuals) are free. Out of forty-five inscriptions where a *tata* gives commemoration, only fifteen children (in thirteen epitaphs) are enslaved. These epitaphs are some of the most precious for social historians, since enslaved persons are often invisible in the literary and archaeological

47. As the jurist Ulpian attests, enslaved children over the age of five were deemed fit for work (*Dig*. 7.7.6.1). See also Laes 2008, 241.

48. We can only estimate on how long infants and toddlers were breastfed. Soranus (*Gyn*. 2.20) warns against breastmilk that is too thick or too watery and recommends employing as a nurse a woman who had given birth within two to three months, when the consistency of the milk is just right. Therefore, at least medical writers knew that breastmilk indeed changes consistency and (as we know today) composition, going from colostrum to transitional milk, to mature milk in about three weeks after birth.

records. For this reason, I have discussed these epitaphs at length; however, it should be acknowledged that free protégés are the most numerous in the epigraphic corpus. Indeed, many of the inscriptions already presented in this chapter commemorate free children, such as Arminia Gorgilla, Lucius Modius Nicephorus, Erotice Bullina, and Iunia Amanda. Since those are unproblematic epitaphs, I only refer back to them, for they do not need to be analyzed again in this context. I wish to focus, however, on a small group of puzzling funerary epitaphs in which the deceased child is free, but the parents and *tata* seem to be enslaved, starting with *CIL* 6.6703.

Dis Manibus
Stertiniae Maximae,
Acrati et Molpes fil(*iae*), *vixi*{*i*}*t*
ann(*is*) *III mens*(*ibus*) *X diebus IX.*
Narcissus tata fecit.

To the Divine Shades of Stertinia Maxima, the daughter of Acratus and Molpe, who lived for three years, ten months and nine days. Her caretaker Narcissus made this.

Three-year-old Stertinia Maxima is commemorated by her parents, Acratus and Molpe, and her *tata* Narcissus. While she bears two names and is therefore free, her parents and *tata* appear to be of enslaved status. It is uncommon to find such a young child to be free while her parents are not because, if she was not born from a free mother, then she would have to have been granted early (possibly informal) manumission by the master. As I further explore in the following chapter, literary texts report that young *vernae* were sometimes kept as "pets" to entertain the masters and their guests; they could, therefore, win the favor of the master or mistress, who might grant them manumission in return. The child in question, however, is only three years old; although that might be enough time to develop a distinct personality and inspire the master's affection, a three-year time frame is likely too narrow to become a favorite and be awarded manumission. Other possibilities could explain the girl's status; it cannot be excluded that she was freed through testamentary manumission. Following the *Lex Fufia Caninia*, which put limitations on the number of enslaved persons who could be manumitted by testament depending on the size of the *familia*, Stertinia Maxima could have fallen into the percentage of *servi* who received testamentary manumission, while her parents and caretaker did not.[49]

49. Gaius, *Inst.* 42–46 on the *Lex Fufia Caninia*.

It remains unclear why the deceased master would choose to free a child rather than an adult individual who had loyally served him for decades, like Acratus or Narcissus.

It is most likely that external factors influenced what was included in the text of the inscription; perhaps the parents were not enslaved but still bore only one name because repeating the *nomen* for the mother and father was perhaps viewed as superfluous and too expensive. Inspecting the stone itself—housed in the Museo Nazionale Romano in Rome—it is possible to note that the last line of the text is smaller than the other lines and it even goes over the frame delimiting the epigraphic field. Thus, as the stone could accommodate a limited number of words, the repeated family name was omitted. I present a similar inscription from the Etruscan city of Pisa, *CIL* 11.1504, in which the child is free, but her parents seem to be enslaved.

D(*is*) *M*(*anibus*).
Ummidiae Cale,
Felicio, pater,
Cale, mater,
Myrtilus, tata,
vixit a(*nnis*) *XVI, m*(*ensibus*) *VIIII, dieb*(*us*) *VIII.*

To the Divine Shades. Felicio, the father, Cale, the mother, Myrtilus, the caretaker, (made this) for Ummidia Cale, who lived for sixteen years, nine months, and eight days.

Compared to the inscription above, this dedicatee is significantly older; it seems more plausible that she might have done something or earned more goodwill from her master and mistress to receive manumission. In this case, perhaps literary evidence can help us shed some light on, or at least suggest, a possible explanation for Ummidia Cale's free status.

Martial, an epigrammatic poet from the end of the first century CE, informs us of a scarcely attested practice, to manumit highly deserving enslaved persons on their deathbed, as some type of gift or reward for their faithful service. The poet recounts what appears to be a personal experience; one of his trusted *servi* has fallen fatally ill and Martial manumits him on his deathbed.

Once the faithful hand of my studies, a source of pride to his master and known to the Caesars, Demetrius has deserted his youthful green years; to three lusters four seasons had been added. But lest he had gone down

> to the Stygian shades as a slave, when the evil pestilence had grasped him and was burning him, I gave up every master's right to the sufferer. He was deserving that my gift might have made him well. As his body was giving up, he realized his reward and called me patron, about to descend to the waters of the underworld as a free man.[50]

Martial's epigram is a problematic piece of evidence on multiple levels. First, it is a literary text composed by someone who is consciously trying to present a positive image of himself for his generosity.[51] Second, informally manumitted *servi* would technically become Junian Latins, thus be free only through the means of a legal fiction, which ended at their death. Legally speaking, this was a little more than an empty gesture from the master, allowing the *servus* to die as a free man, while retaining legal claim on his *peculium*.[52] Third, Martial stresses that this man was a particularly skilled and trustworthy slave, thus making his death a rather noteworthy occasion. The very act of writing about it sets this death apart from all the other slave deaths that must have occurred in the poet's household over time.

A funerary inscription from Carthage—*CIL* 8.24734—in the province of Africa Nova, also suggests that deathbed manumissions could occur:

> *Daphnis ego Hermetis coniunx sum libera facta.*
> *Cum dominus vellet primu*(*m*) *Hermes liber ut esset,*
> *fato ego facta prior, fato ego rapta prior.*
> *Quae tuli quod ge*⌜*n*⌝*ui gemitus viro saepe reliqui;*
> *quae, domino invito, vitam dedi proxime nato;*
> *nunc quis alet natum, quis vita*⌜*m*⌝ *longa*(*m*) *ministrat?*
> *me Styga quod rapuit tam cito eni*(*m*) *a*(*d*) *super*⌜*o*⌝*s*
> *pia vixit annis XXV h*(*ic*) *s*(*ita*) *e*(*st*).
>
> I, Daphnis, wife of Hermes, am manumitted, although my master wanted for Hermes to be manumitted first, by fate I was manumitted first, snatched away by fate earlier. What I bore I cry out, I left my hus-

50. *Mart.* 1. 101: *Illa manus quondam studiorum fida meorum / et felix domino notaque Caesaribus, / destituit primos viridis Demetrius annos: / quarta tribus lustris addita messis erat. / ne tamen ad Stygias famulus descenderet umbras, / ureret implicitum cum scelerata lues, / cavimus et domini ius omne remisimus aegro: / munere dignus erat convaluisse meo. / sensit deficiens sua praemia meque patronum / dixit ad infernas liber iturus aquas.*

51. Hopkins (1978, 118) comments on the flattering mirror-image that Martial purposefully presents in this epigram.

52. See Plin. *Ep.* 8.16, discussed in chapter 2.

> band, always crying; I just now gave birth to a son, without the consent of the master; now who will feed my child, who will care for him through his long life?

In this case, it appears that Daphnis, a twenty-five-year-old woman who died in childbirth, was liberated by her master on her deathbed. Although the master wanted to free her partner first, perhaps due to his age and years of service, the unexpected death of Daphnis required a change of plans. Intriguingly, the author of the commemoration specifically includes that this pregnancy was not approved by the master, but he nevertheless granted Daphnis manumission.[53]

Based on literary and epigraphic evidence, it is at least possible that Ummidia Cale, from the epitaph above, was granted her freedom just before she died. Although this was a legally inconsequential action, it could still have provided some relief and comfort to her family, knowing that she died as a free person and was commemorated as such. This remains a speculation, but it is a good reminder that social practices were often more complex and varied than what the majority of available evidence attests.

Thus far, I focused on the status of the children who received commemoration by *tatae* (and often additional individuals). I already discussed their age distribution, with toddlers and older teenagers being the ones who received commemoration more frequently. As for gender, the distribution between male and females is roughly equal among the children receiving commemoration: twenty-four females and twenty-one males. Moreover, surveying the inscriptions in which the ward is the dedicator and the *tata* is the dedicatee, we find that the number of men and women providing burial for their caretakers is once again close to identical: fourteen females and fifteen males. These numbers suggest that the gender of a child did not play a role in the decision to employ male caretakers, nor did it affect a *tata*'s participation in the child's commemoration. It is crucial to emphasize the significance of these figures. Even though women possess a biological advantage to keeping infants alive, namely being able to nurse them, by no means should it be conceived that women alone took care of toddlers in Roman households or that there was a gender-based divide according to which men only oversaw the care of boys. The gendered division

53. This suggests that the master was somehow involved in Daphnis' burial, even if only to approve it without contributing to it monetarily. Indeed, the master is the only one who looks good and munificent: even if Daphnis got pregnant without his consent, he was still kind and generous to her. Conversely, the husband would have had little reason to add that particular detail, unless he had to.

of labor inside a Roman household will be discussed at length toward the end of the chapter; however, it is important to observe that, based on the available evidence, gender did not seem to play a role in the allocation of children to caretakers.

4.2 *Tatae* in the Household: Familial Units and Structures

I mentioned above that the evidence concerning *tatae* can be arranged according to different parameters, such as the physical location where the inscriptions were found, or based on who is giving or receiving commemoration. Additional criteria can be helpful when trying to assess what the prevalent status of *tatae* was or whether gender influenced the employment of a male caretaker. In this section, I divide the inscriptions into four groups, according to the familial composition they showcase: (a) those which only include the name of the *tata* and the child; (b) those which include the names of the *tata*, the child, and at least one of the child's parents; (c) those which feature the names of the *tata*, the child, the parent(s), and other family members; (d) those which are fragmentary or only include a single named person. I gloss over the last group, since there is little that can be inferred from inscriptions that are incomplete or that only feature one name.[54] For the three remaining categories, I analyze them one at a time, starting with the tata-protégé group.

4.2.1 The Tata *and the Protégé*

When discussing the status of *tatae*, I introduced an inscription set up by Lucius Modius Urbanus for his little master (*dominulus*) Lucius Modius Nicephorus. I argued that the lack of participation by the boy's parents is significant, especially if the boy was the master's child, as the inscription seems to suggest. This type of inscription is not rare. Indeed, *tatae* commemorate a child or young adult by themselves in fifteen instances across the corpus. Often, not much can be inferred, such as in the case of *CIL* 14.3844.

D(*is*) *M*(*anibus*).
Servilio Silvano vix(*it*)
ann(*is*) *XII, mens*(*ibus*) *VII,*

54. At the beginning of the chapter, I presented a single name inscription, which only included the name of a free man and the designation *tata* (*AE* 1973: 21).

dieb(*us*) *XV, Septiminus*
tata fecit.

To the Divine Shades. The caretaker Septiminus made this for Servilius Silvanus, who lived for 12 years, 7 months, 15 days.

Septiminus seems to have been a *servus*, while Servilius Silvanus was free. For some reason, the child's parents were not involved in this commemoration; Septimius appears to have been the primary caretaker of Servilius Silvanus, similar to what I already observed in the case of Urbanus and Nicephorus.[55] Nevertheless, this inscription suggests that a *tata* could be a current *servus* (not a freedman as in the case of Urbanus) of the family, who acted as a surrogate parent for this preteen. Unfortunately, nothing else can be said about the individuals named in this epitaph, such as what their relationship was like or what circumstances led Septiminus to be entrusted with the care of Servilius Silvanus.

Other inscriptions, however, attest that a *tata* could also be a person who likely had never been a part of the child's enslaved *familia*.

D(is) M(anibus).
T(iberius) Claudius Eros
Salliae Daphne, t(ata) s(ua)
b(ene) m(erenti), fecit.[56]

To the Divine Shades. The *tata* Tiberius Claudius Eros made this for his Sallia Daphne, well deserving.

We cannot know when or how Claudius Eros came to be Sallia Daphne's caretaker. They do not share the same *nomen*, so he was not once enslaved to Daphne's father. It is possible that Sallia Daphne was a foster child, a foundling, or the daughter of a friend who had left her in the care of Claudius Eros. These, of course, are only hypothetical scenarios. Brief epitaphs such as these cannot shed much light onto familial structures and relations, except from documenting that some children relied on surrogate parental figures to receive burial at the time of their premature death.

55. As I suggested while discussing the epitaph set up by L. Modius Urbanus, the parents of Servilius Silvanus could have commissioned their own separate funerary monument which simply did not survive.

56. *CIL* 6.15034.

However, *tatae* do not just provide commemoration, but they receive it as well. Epitaphs in which the *tata* is the dedicatee attest that the relationship between a child and a caretaker could last for decades, since the now-grown child could afford to buy a funerary monument on their own.

D(is) M(anibus).
Ti(berio) Claudio
Doryphoro
M(arcus) Lucceius
Primigenius
fecit tatae
suo b(ene) m(erenti).[57]

To the Divine Shades. Marcus Lucceius Primigenius made this for his well-deserving caretaker, Tiberius Claudius Doryphorus.

In this epitaph, we can identify a free man, Marcus Lucceius Primigenius, who arranged for the commemoration of his *tata*, Tiberius Claudius Doryphorus, another free man. Although, based on his nomenclature, we can hypothesize that someone in Doryphorus' family or himself was of servile origin, it would be unwise to completely rule out the possibility that he was freeborn.[58] Once more, it is impossible to specifically pinpoint anything about the relationship between Primigenius and Doryphorus, except for the fact that their bond started when Primigenius was a child. Indeed, the use of the word *tata* dates back their connection to Primigenius' childhood; his choice to use a "nursery term" such as *tata* invokes an earlier period of their lives when their bond was formed.

Another inscription where a *tata* receives commemoration from a former ward is *CIL* 6.5337:

D(is) M(anibus)
Cn(aeo) Turranio
Eutucheti
Primilus tatae
suo bene merent(i) fecit.
N(atione) Hispanus is qui fecit.

57. *CIL* 6.15009.
58. See chapter 2, note 40.

To the Divine Shades. Primilus made this for his well-deserving caretaker Cnaeus Turranius Eutuches. The person who made this is Hispanic by nation.

This epitaph attests a rare instance; an enslaved person decided to share their ethnic origin (*natio*) in a funerary context. It is indeed uncommon for *servi* and *liberti* to include the name of the region where they were born and, most likely, abducted from. Although finding an indication of one's national origin is common in epitaphs for members of the military, especially for elite units as the *equites singulares*, only a handful of epitaphs for manumitted or enslaved persons feature that information.[59] Among them, *CIL* 6.17448 represents one of the best examples:

D(*is*) *M*(*anibus*).
Eutychideti, *nat*(*us*)
Graecus qui vixit
a(*nnis*) *XXII, T*(*itus*) *Fla*(*vius*) *Ma*(*n*)*suetus dominus eius b*(*ene*) *m*(*erenti*) *f*(*ecit*).

To the Divine Shades. Titus Flavius Mansuetus, the master, made this for Eutychidis, well-deserving, who was born Greek and lived for 22 years.

Although, on the surface, it may appear that this epitaph and the one immediately above are similar—they are both commemorative in nature and feature an indication of national origin—they are different in one main aspect: in *CIL* 6.5337, Primilus, the Hispanic man, is the one setting up the inscription. As the dedicator, he commissions the monument; he chose to include his own nationality in an epitaph memorializing another man. For some reason, Primilus found it important to include his national origin on that inscription. Conversely, in *CIL* 6.17448, Eutychidis, the Greek enslaved person, is the one receiving commemoration from his master, who arranged for his burial. This means that, although we cannot rule out that Eutychidis felt a certain sense of pride in his national origin, his master chose to have him commemorated as being Greek. Having a Greek *servus* was considered to be a mark of distinction, something that reflected favorably on Flavius Mansuetus himself.

Last, I present a rather unique epitaph—*CIL* 6.4709—which further problematizes the relationship between *tatae* and their protégés.

59. On the use of *natio* see Nguyen 2023.

D(*is*) *M*(*anibus*).
Magia Ianuaria
tatae suo
bene merenti
fecit C(*aio*) *Antonio*
Antonino, *militi*
ex classe praeto-
ria Misenatium;
vix(*it*) *ann*(*os*) *XL, mil*(*itavit*) *XXIV.*

To the Divine Shades. Magia Ianuaria made this for her well-deserving caretaker C. Antonius Antoninus, a soldier from the praetorian fleet at Misenum; he lived forty years, was a soldier for twenty-four.

This is the only case in the corpus in which a *tata* is known to have had a specific profession, namely serving in the military. It is also the only instance in which the age of the *tata* is indicated on the stone. Regrettably, the age of the woman who set up the inscription is not included, but she was likely younger than forty, which is the reported age of the *tata*. Additionally, what makes this inscription even more unique is the fact that this man is remembered as both a soldier (*miles*) and a caretaker (*tata*). Military pride is juxtaposed to a nursery word, creating a rare picture of a multifaced individual, whose military identity is only one part of his persona. If indeed C. Antonius Antoninus lived until his 40s, and he was in the military for twenty-four years, then he would have joined the service at an early age. When and how could he have acted as a caretaker for Magia Ianuaria?

I believe the answer lies in the fact that *tata* is used as a functional term. It conveys a role of surrogate parenthood. It is possible that C. Antonius Antoninus cared for Magia Ianuaria financially; perhaps she was the daughter of a friend or fellow soldier, who left the child to the care of Antoninus after his death. It is also possible that the man watched over Magia Ianuaria when she was a child, before he was old enough to join the military. Anthropologists point out that in contemporary North America, men usually lack any experience with infants until they themselves become parents. Generally speaking, women have more opportunities to work as babysitters, help their mothers with younger siblings, and gain experience with their friends' children.[60] It should

60. This phenomenon is known as "surrogate parenting experience." See Lamb 2004; Rehel 2014, 121.

not be assumed that Roman men and young adults lacked familiarity with small children as their American counterparts often do. If indeed male nannies were well-established figures in Roman households as I believe they were, this could suggest that our modern assumption about Roman men's lack of experience with young children needs to be reassessed.

4.2.2 Tata*, Child, and Parent(s)*

A *tata* often shares funerary duties with at least one of the child's parents, as showcased in several of the aforementioned inscriptions.[61] Specifically, twenty-eight inscriptions feature the *tata*, the child, and at least one parent (with nineteen having the names of both parents on the epitaph), making it one of the most common commemorative patterns that we can discern in the corpus.

D(*is*) *M*(*anibus*).
C(*ai*) *Numisio*
Felicissimo
C(*aius*) *Numisius The-*
seus et Numisia
Urbica filio dul-
cissimo fecer(*unt*),
qui vixit ann(*is*) *IIII diebus LV.*
Mius Fortunatus tata hui-
us.[62]

To the Divine Shades. C. Numisius Theseus, Numisia Urbica made this for their sweetest son C. Numisius Felicissimus, who lived for four years and fifty-five days. His *tata* Mius Fortunatus also made this.

There is nothing particularly remarkable about this epitaph. The parents of the deceased child share the same *nomen*, suggesting that they were once part of the same enslaved *familia*, or that she was his freedwoman. The *tata*—Mius Fortunatus—displays a different family name, and nothing suggests that he was related to the parents; yet it is his role of caretaker that allows him to be part of the familial commemoration for the deceased child.

In a minority of cases—nine out of twenty-eight—only one parent is named

61. As in the epitaphs of Arminia Gorgilla (*CIL* 6.5642), Ummidia Cale (*CIL* 11.1504), Crescentilla (*CIL* 6.16578), etc.

62. *CIL* 6.23113.

alongside the *tata* on the stone.[63] It is not surprising that a male caretaker would be involved in commemorating a child, especially if the biological or legal father was absent; based on the environmental approach to familial structures, once a niche, for example the father's, is left vacant, someone else will step up to fill that niche.

D(*is*) *M*(*anibus*).
L(*ucio*) *Manusio*
Eutycheti
vix(*it*) *an*(*nis*) *III*, *mens*(*ibus*) *X,*
diebus XVI,
Primitiva mat(*er*).
etiam Arius tata
fecer(*unt*).[64]

To the Divine Shades. The mother Primitiva, and also the *tata* Arius, made this for Lucius Manusius Eutyches, who lived for three years, ten months, sixteen days.

The epitaph for this toddler was set up by a mother and a *tata*. Some have suggested that, given the absences of a *pater*, the *tata* named here should be identified as the father.[65] The lack of symmetry with the use of *mater* and *tata*, instead of *mater* and *pater* (or *mamma* and *tata*) is puzzling. Barring a mistake made by the carver, the text of the inscription should reflect the will of the commemorators; so, why choose a traditional designation (*mater*) for one parent and a "nursery term" (*tata*) for the other? It is most reasonable to assume that *tata*, once again, means caretaker, a man whom the child could trust and look upon for guidance and protection. Unfortunately, losing one parent was certainly not a rare occurrence in the ancient world.

Moreover, the duos father-*tata* and mother-*tata* provide burial for children in comparable numbers (in five and four cases, respectively). I have already introduced the epitaph of the five-month-old child, who was commemorated by his father and a *tata*.[66] Although it might appear surprising that a male care-

63. Only the mother: *CIL* 6.22564, 35323 (fragmentary); *CIL* 10.7564; *CIL* 14.1674, 3355. Only the father: *CIL* 6.5941, 11395, 18196, 25301.

64. *CIL* 14.3355.

65. Nielsen (1989) argued that *tata* means father in six inscriptions from Rome; the present inscription was not included in the study, since it was found in Praeneste.

66. *CIL* 6.11395. On single parent commemorative patterns in epitaphs from Rome see Gianni 2023.

taker would fill the niche left empty by a maternal figure, there are other examples of this commemorative pattern.[67]

Although, beginning in the late 1980s, fathers in Western societies have increasingly taken a larger role in the rearing of their children, we still regard childcare as an essentially female activity.[68] A similar attitude is found in Eastern societies, such as in industrialized Korea, where only 3 percent of men take advantage of a government policy allowing both men and woman to take parental leave to care for their preschool children.[69] Intranational labor migration of Chinese and Vietnamese women from the countryside to big metropolitan cities to work as nannies and maids has forced many men to become the primary caretakers of their children, even if this arrangement is at odds with patriarchal traditions.[70] In both scenarios, the established order of society assumes that the mother should serve as the main caretaker. Moreover, it is crucial to add that, in Western societies, even when men are the primary caretakers or share childcare responsibility equally with their female partners, they perceive taking care of their children as a separate and distinct task from taking care of the household at large.[71] A wide list of activities—such as cleaning, doing laundry, or grocery shopping—which are necessary to run a household still fall primarily on women.

Even if child-minding is well-established as a feminine task across many Eastern and Western cultures, it would be wrong to assume that Romans had similar attitudes toward the gendered division of labor in the household. Already in the 1970s, Treggiari challenged some of our modern assumptions about Roman society, showing that enslaved women were sometimes employed in the same kinds of jobs that men usually performed.[72] Hemelrijk also covered this topic in her sourcebook, which includes several examples of women employed in traditionally male occupations.[73] While it might be argued that women have a biological advantage for taking care of children during the first months of their lives—namely being able to produce breastmilk—this stops being relevant in a relatively short period of time. Today, the wide availability

67. E.g., *CIL* 6.18196: *D(is) M(anibus) s(acrum). / L(ucio) Flavio, / L(uci) f(ilio), Anien(si) / Saturnino, / vix(it) an(nos) V m(enses) VI / Fla[vius(?) Eu]hodus(?) / pater Phoebus / tata fecerunt.* "Sacred to the Divine Shades. The father Fla[vius Eu]hodus and the caretaker Phoebus made this for L. Flavius Aniensus Saturninus, the son of Lucius, who lived for five years, six months."

68. Rehel 2014, 110; Chesley 2011, 661; Legerski and Cornwall 2010, 449; Sullivan 2004, 207.

69. Compared to the 57 percent of women (Kim and Cheung 2018, 464). See the same work for a presentation of the strict gender division of labor in Korean households both before and after the birth of children.

70. Fu et al. 2018, 814–19; Hoang and Yeoh 2011, 721.

71. Chesley 2011, 660–63; Rehel 2014, 112.

72. Treggiari 1975b.

73. Hemelrijk 2020, 124ff.

of formula makes this argument even less relevant. As for imperial Rome, it has been suggested that a breastmilk market could have existed around the so-called *columna lactaria*, based on a passage reported by the grammarian Paulus: "the *columna lactaria* in the Forum Holitorium, so called because children were taken there to be fed."[74] If there was such a hotspot for the hiring of nurses or even for the purchase of breastmilk, it would have required some way to store it.[75] Luckily, Soranus, a second-century CE doctor and author of the treatise *Gynecology*, does instruct on the storing of breastmilk and how to recognize if it had gone bad.[76] It can therefore be inferred that storing milk was not only possible but also practiced.[77]

These considerations become superfluous once the child becomes old enough to be weaned off milk. As in the case of L. Flavius Aniensus Saturninus, the five-year-old boy commemorated by his father and an enslaved *tata*, there are no biological reasons to prefer a female over a male caretaker. Arguably, if the father, L. Flavius Euhodus, already had an enslaved person in his household, perhaps an older man who was no longer as physically fit for harsh labor, it would make sense to turn the *servus* into a full time caretaker for the motherless child.[78] Although commemorations for children set up by a *tata* and a single parent account for a minority of cases (nine out of the twenty-eight), they still represent a type of familial composition attested in the evidence.[79]

Thus far, I have focused on cases in which the *tata* and other individuals act as commemorators for deceased children and teenagers. Nevertheless, even when the former ward acts as the dedicator, the epitaphs still showcase the known familial composition "parents-*tata*-child," as *CIL* 6.34206 exemplifies.

D(is) M(anibus).
T(itus) Aconius Karus fec(it)
L(ucio) Mummio Onesimo
tatae suo b(ene) m(erenti), et
Flaviae Hygiae matri

74. Paulus *Ex Fest.* 105 L: *lactaria columna in foro olitorio dicta, quod ibi infantes lacte alendos deferebant.*

75. Mulder 2017, 239.

76. Soranus *Gyn.* 2.22.

77. In addition, buying breastmilk or hiring a nurse, whether at the *columna lactaria* or elsewhere, would have required availability of means; thus, this option might not have been available to every family.

78. Since the mother is not involved in the commemoration, it must be inferred that she was already deceased or otherwise away from her child. For example, in case of divorce, under Roman law the father had sole custody of the children.

79. In recent years, there has been a growing interest in single people and single parents in the Roman world. See Huebner and Laes 2019; González Estrada and Guantes García 2023.

suae et T(ito) Aconio Blasto
patri suuo b(ene) m(erenti), et sibi et
suis posteris(que) eorum.
Vix(it) ann(os) XXI m(enses) III h(oras) VI.

To the Divine Shades. T. Aconius Karus made this for his well-deserving caretaker L. Mummius Onesimus, to his well-deserving mother Flavia Hygia and father T. Aconius Blastus, and to himself and his descendants and theirs. He lived twenty-one years and three months and six hours.

T. Aconius Karus set up an inscription for what are, arguably, the most important people in his life: his mother, his father, and his *tata*. Moreover, the last line of the inscription was carved over the frame and is a later addition to the epitaph; it refers to the dedicator, who conceivably died not long after he commissioned the monument. It is, again, noticeable that the *tata*, L. Mummius Onesimus, does not bear the same *nomen* as the parents.[80] The funerary monument is also explicitly open to the descendants of all the named individuals. We will never know if Flavia Hygia and T. Aconius Blastus had any other children, or if L. Mummius Onesimus had any additional family (spouse, siblings, or children). However, the text leaves open at least the possibility of more persons joining the funerary monument, suggesting that some additional family members indeed existed.

4.2.3 Tata*, Protégé, Parent(s) and Other Family Members*

At times, funerary epitaphs explicitly refer to other persons, whether biological or fictive kin, in addition to the well-established "parents-*tata*-child" commemorative grouping. Only once do we find explicit reference to a living sibling of the deceased, in *CIL* 6.16926:

D(*is*) [*M*(*anibus*)]
Silvin[*ae*, *Tel*]-
esphor[*idi*]. *Do-*
mitius Apollonius,
pater, Do(*mitia*) *Fortunata,*
mater, *Silvanus fra-*

80. It is also worth noting that the name of the *tata* is the first of the dedicatees to be listed, before the dedicator's parents; while not significant per se, this suggests that the man was likely not lower in status than the other individuals.

ter, Iulius Telesphor
tata, Cornelia S˹p˺es
mamma, Threptus
tatula, dulcissimae
et pientissimae ani-
mae innocentissim-
ae fecerunt.

To the Divine Shades of Silvina, (the girl?) of Telesphor. Her father Domitius Apollonius, her mother Domitia Fortunata, her brother Silvanus, her caretaker Iulius Telesphor, her wet nurse Cornelia Spes, her *tatula* Threptus, made this monument for the sweetest, most pious soul, and blameless girl.

This epitaph presents several interpretative challenges. First of all, the first three lines are fragmentary. While they can be reconstructed in different ways, it is agreed that the dedicatee is a female individual named Silvina and that *-esphor-* in the third line is a person's name.[81] Given that, in the seventh line, a certain Iulius Telesphor is named, it is possible that this might have been the same person. This man is identified as the *tata*, who shared commemorative duties with the mother, father, brother, nurse, and *tatula* of the deceased. We cannot know how old Silvina was when she passed away. Perhaps she was not an infant or a toddler, since she had a brother old enough to participate in the purchase of the funerary monument. The presence of a wet nurse, Cornelia Spes, in addition to a *tata* and *tatula* should not be surprising; children could have relied on multiple caretakers in their day-to-day lives.[82] Indeed, I believe that the *tata* Iulius Telesphor and the *tatula* Threptus played a similar role in the household: both acted as caretakers of the same child. It is possible that the use of the diminutive *tatula* for Threptus was due to some characteristic, such as his age, minute stature, or to his enslaved status.

Why, though, would Silvina be called "(the girl) of Telesphor" in the third line? We can exclude that it indicates paternity, since the name of her father is also attested. It is also unlikely that it indicates legal ownership, since Silvina's mother is a free person. Perhaps Iulius Telesphor was her guardian. Perhaps there is a mistake in how we reconstruct that line or even an error in the original carving. Nevertheless, this funerary epitaph clearly represents an extended

81. Solin (1996, 126) reports that this is the sole attestation of the name Silvina.

82. The presence of a *nutrix*, alongside the parents and a *tata*, is not unique to this epitaph: three more inscriptions (*CIL* 6.12133, 35530, and 36353) present a similar commemorative pattern.

family, with biological (child-parents, child-sibling), legal (husband-wife), and fictive (*tata* and *tatula*) kinship, not unlike other families that I have already analyzed in the previous chapter on *collactanei*. Once more, we can see how the biological unit mother-father-child is expanded to include additional individuals who are considered part of the family and who are not out of place in a familial commemoration.

4.3 *Tatae* as Recipients of Funerary Commemoration

In the sections above, I presented a large number of epitaphs in which the male caretaker was a free man, since they account for over two-thirds of the *tatae* from the corpus. Still, it must be acknowledged that countless enslaved men must have played the caretaking role for the master's child and were called *tata*, even if their names were never memorialized on stone. The number of *tatae* that either never received commemoration or whose epitaphs have not survived until modernity must represent 99.9 percent of all the enslaved male caretakers.[83] Therefore, whenever we can catch a glimpse of these lives, it is as precious as it is incomplete. One enslaved caretaker whom we know existed was called Plato, and he was commemorated by the now-adult child whom he had helped to raise.

D(*is*) *M*(*anibus*).
M(*arcus*) *Epidius*
Pamphilus
Platoni
tatae suo
bene merenti
fecit.[84]

To the Divine Shades. M. Epidius Pamphilus made this for his well-deserving caretaker Plato.

This tombstone attests that a man named M. Epidius Pamphilus provided burial for his own *tata* (*tata suus*) Plato. Based on their nomenclature, Pamphi-

83. According to Bodel (2008, 179), the 150,000 surviving inscriptions from Rome account for a mere 1.5 percent of the total burials that a city of one million people would have required over three centuries (from Augustus to Constantine).

84. *CIL* 6.17217.

lus was the master and Plato was enslaved.[85] We cannot know what their relationship was like, whether Plato loved Pamphilus as a son, or resented him for not manumitting him, or wished him ill. We can speculate, however, that Pamphilus did love Plato, not only because of his decision to honor him in death, but also because of the use of *suus*. The expression *tata suus* might appear as a mere statement of facts; Pamphilus did legally own Plato. Yet possessive adjectives are often employed to express deep affection and love, to mark a person, place, or object as one's own beloved. Unfortunately, we do not know anything else about Plato, whether he had any surviving family (by whom, perhaps, he would have preferred to receive burial) or if he was glad to be commemorated by his former protégé.

In the case of free *tatae*, sometimes we can learn more about their lives from the presence of additional commemorators, not just the children they helped to raise. For, while caring for small children could have been both a full time and an emotionally satisfying occupation, no person's life can be reduced to a single role. *CIL* 6.2371 is an excellent example of this; the man is commemorated by three different persons as a friend, husband, and caretaker.

D(*is*) *M*(*anibus*) *s*(*acrum*).
M(*arco*) *Gellio Helio,*
amico optimo,
Restitutus, publicus,
et Gellia Nymphidia,
suo
coniugi karissimo,
et Gellia Florentina,
*tatae pien*ˢ*t*ˢ*issimo, fecerunt.*

Sacred to the Divine Shades. Restitutus, a public slave, Gellia Nymphidia and Gellia Florentina made this for M. Gellius Helius, an excellent friend, most dear husband, and most devout caretaker.

This is a remarkable inscription, for friendship is seldom represented in funerary epitaphs. Even if the epigraphic text gives us basic information about M. Gellius Helius and the people who deemed themselves to be members of his

85. Solin (1996, 260) lists only two attestations for the use of Plato as a name for an enslaved person.

family, it still leaves the reader with countless questions: how did Helius and Restitutus knew each other? Were they enslaved in the same household and later sold to or inherited by different masters? Helius and Nymphidia appear to have been *colliberti*, but were they manumitted together or separately? Was Gellia Florentina the master's child, an *alumna*, or a perhaps a *verna*?

I believe that this inscription showcases the different social roles that Helius played, but it also reflects different times in his life, such as when he cared for Florentina or when his friendship with Restitutus was first established and fostered. The intrinsic limitations of the tombstone as a medium to reconstruct the lived experience of a person and their family do not allow us to know more, but this text still gives us a glimpse of who M. Gellius Helius was and who considered themselves to be closest to him. As Saller and Shaw demonstrated, in the majority of cases, a spouse is the individual who cares for the burial of an adult male or female.[86] Although Gellia Nymphidia had no obligation to include her husband's friend or his protégé in the commemoration, for some reason she deemed them to be family, worthy of being included on the stone.

At the beginning of the chapter, I mentioned that the term *tata* has been variously interpreted by modern scholars, sometimes as caretaker, but often as a synonym for father (*pater*), grandfather (*avus*), and former master (*patronus*). That *tata* cannot mean father in the vast majority of cases has already been established. As for grandfather, the reasons to reject this interpretation are mostly demographic. Indeed, although the term *avus* is attested in epigraphic evidence, it is not a frequently employed term in familial inscriptions.[87] This reflected mortality in the Roman world. Saller estimated that in nonsenatorial families only 19 percent of men at thirty years old (which he considers the usual age at marriage for nonelite men) had living fathers, and this percentage drops to 6 percent ten years later, when we can imagine these men would have become parents themselves.[88] Moreover, if a man did live long enough to see his grandchildren, it is unlikely that he would be commemorated by them at his death.[89] It is also improbable that a grandfather would have found himself to be the sole caretaker (and thus sole commemorator) of his grandchildren.[90] Truly, if Saller's numbers are correct, the general absence of grandfathers in the lives

86. Saller and Shaw 1984.

87. *Avus* is used in epitaphs from Rome in the following cases: *CIL* 6.8108, 9054, 12174, 15053, 15060, 16283, 17692, 18206, 20261, 20670, 21401, 24011, 24354, 24695, 26823, 28706.

88. Saller 1987, 31–33.

89. For it would require everyone else in the family also to be deceased, namely his wife and children, which, though possible, is unlikely.

90. A famous example of a grandmother who appears to be the sole caretaker of her grandchildren is *AE* 2007: 298, and presents her as *avia et nutrix*. See Laes 2015.

of Roman children would have fostered the creation of connections with other adult men, the *tatae*, to whom these young boys and girls might have looked up.[91] *Tatae* would also have filled the role of frequent caretaker that grandparents often play in societies with longer life expectancy.

Yet I do not doubt that some grandfathers acted as caretakers of their grandchildren, if still able to. I believe that only one inscription from the *tatae* epigraphic corpus can represent that scenario.

Dis Man[*ibus sacr*(*um*)].
Iuniae L(*uci*) *f*(*iliae*) *Cele*[*rinae*],
TiTi(*beri*) *Claudii*, *Euschemus et Prim*[*itivus*];
Claudiae Quian(*a*)*e Euschemus sorori,*
Primitivus matri,
Euschemus consobrinae, Samiariae Arethusae.
Isdem corporibus, tra(*ns*)*latis perim*(*issu*) *trib*(*uni*) *pl*(*ebis*), *et*
Ti(*berio*) *Claudio Epaphrodito tatae bene me*(*renti*) *fecer*(*unt*)
et sibi, et suis libertis libertabus, posterisque
eorum.[92]

Sacred to the Divine Shades. The two Ti. Claudii, Euschemus and Primitivus, made this for Iunia Celerina, the daughter of Lucius; Euschemus made this also for Claudia Quiana, his sister, and Primitivus for his mother, and Euschemus' cousin, Samiaria Arethusa. They made this monument for these bodies, which had been moved with the permission of the tribune of the plebs, and for the well-deserving *tata* Ti. Claudius Epaphroditus, and for themselves and their freedmen and freedwomen, and their descendants.

Two related men, Ti. Claudius Euschemus and Ti. Claudius Primitivus, commemorate multiple individuals: the *ingenua* Iunia Celerina; Claudia Quiana (who was Euschemus' sister); Samiaria Arethusa (who is Primitivus' mother and Euschemus' cousin); and the *tata* Ti. Claudius Epaphroditus. In other words, we have a familial nucleus composed of three cousins and one of their sons; in addition, there is a freeborn woman who lacks a familial designation (probably the wife of one of the two commemorators) and a *tata* who shares the dedicators' *nomen*.

91. I owe this observation to the anonymous second reader of my book manuscript.
92. *CIL* 6.20863.

Undoubtably, this epitaph represents a large family. I contend that the *tata*, in this case, can be identified as a grandfather. Indeed, the three cousins represent the core of this family, and cousins share the same grandparents. The inscription also includes a reference to a grant from the *tribunus plebis* to exhume and move the bodies of the other relatives, who died and were buried before the current *monumentum* was bought. Therefore, even if the grandfather had died many years before, his presence in the epitaph is justifiable. If we accept that Epaphroditus was indeed the grandfather of Euchemus, Quiana, and Arethusa, and that he was directly and substantially involved in their upbringing, it could explain how these three cousins developed such close ties. This is clearly a quite unusual inscription and does not represent the norm. Yet, if we continue to define *tata* as a functional role which could be taken up by a different number of individuals, then in this case the *tata* could have been the children's grandfather.

I have not yet addressed the case for and against the hypothesis that *tata* could mean *patronus*. Indeed, three funerary epitaphs feature a man who bears both the designations of *tata* and *patronus*. I present all three of them, beginning with *CIL* 6.22460.

Metilio Eroti
M(*arcus*) *Metilius*
Agrippa patri
et M(*arcus*) *Metilius*
Eupor et
M(*arcus*) *Metilius Eupor*
tat(*a*)*e patrono*
bene merenti fecerunt.

M. Metilius Agrippa made this for his father Metilius Eros, and M. Metilius Eupor and M. Metilius Eupor also made this for his well deserving patron and caretaker.

In this epitaph, Marcus Metilius Agrippa and (if we exclude that there was a mistake) two men—both called Marcus Metilius Eupor—commemorate a person called Metilius Eros: the former as his father, the latter two as their *tata* and *patronus*. I do not believe that the terms *tata* and *patronus* are used as synonyms in this context. Inscriptions can be costly undertakings. For some reason, these two Marci Metilii Eupori thought it was necessary to include both designations to describe their relationship with Metilius Eros. The two men

were clearly manumitted by him, since they bear the same *nomen*; however, the legal term corresponding to that role (*patronus*) did not sufficiently cover or reflect the role that Metilius Eros played in their lives. We can only speculate why the Marci Metillii Eupori wished to include both terms, one indicating a legal relationship and the other a social role. What did Eros do for them? Did he take them under his protection, perhaps teaching them a skill or a type of work? Did he act in a way that was perceived as generous or particularly protective of these two boys? I suggest that, for whatever reason, Metilius Eros was more than a former master; he was also a caretaker and surrogate parental figure. Moreover, it is noticeable that the biological son of the deceased, Marcus Metilius Agrippa, agreed to share the commemorative responsibilities with the two Metellii Eupori. We could assume that, especially if the freedmen had lived in the household for a long time, all three of them knew each other well, perhaps even sharing a sense of kinship. As I opined earlier, there is no reason to suppose that in this case *tata* and *patronus* are synonyms if one simply analyzes the inscription on its own merits.

Truly, the hypothesis that *tata* and *patronus* are synonyms is only based on literary evidence, namely a witty epigram by Martial.

> *Mammas atque tatas habet Afra, sed ipsa tatarum*
> *dici et mammarum maxima mamma potest.*
>
> Afra has many mommies and daddies, but she can be the grandma of all those mommies and daddies.

The target of the invective, a woman named Afra, is being ridiculed because of her age (*maxima*). Citroni and Howell agree that Afra is an aging prostitute, who has many "mommies" and "daddies," but is so old as to be their grandmother.[93] Martial is clearly playing with the ambiguous meaning of *mamma*. Nielsen points out that this is the only literary attestation of a colloquial use of the words *mamma* and *tata* as synonyms of *patrona* and *patronus*; she also suggests that the first *mamma* means *patrona*, while—when it is used in the second verse to refer to Afra—it is "nursery term" for mother.[94] Even if this interpretation might fit well with the Martial poem, it can be slightly adjusted to better reflect the epigraphic evidence. Instead of understanding *mamma* and *tata* as *patroni*, they could be identified as what we might call "sugar mamas"

93. Martial 1.100. Howell 1980, 312–14. Howell 1980, 312–14.
94. Nielsen 1989, 192.

and "sugar daddies," who financially assist their protégé Afra; they are customers who take particular care of her.[95] Once again, if *tata* means caretaker (and *mamma* often means nurse, the most iconic female caretaker) the joke is not lost.

Additional epigraphic evidence also confirms that it is not necessary to identify *tata* and *patronus* as synonyms, even if they are used to designate the same person.

D(is) M(anibus) s(acrum).
C(aio) Vibio Thre-
pto, C(aius) Vibius Tyrannus patro-
nus idem tata eius,
et Vibia Epiteuxis,
mat(er), et Threptus,
public(us) ab censu
pater eius, filio
suo dulcissi(mo), v(ixit) an(nis)
XIII d(iebus) XXVIII et [---]
posteris(que) eorum [---].[96]

Sacred to the Divine Shades. C. Vibius Tyrannus, the patron and caretaker, and Vibia Epiteuxis, the mother, and Threptus, a public slave with censorial duties and the father, made this for his sweetest son, C. Vibius Threptus, who lived thirteen years, twenty-eight days [---] and for their descendants [---].

Thirteen-year-old Vibius Threptus was the freedman of C. Vibius Tyrannus. His premature death is commemorated by his mother (possibly also a freedwoman of Tyrannus), his father (a public *servus*), and the *patronus* himself. It is worth noting that Tyrannus, as the commemorator, would have had a say on what designation to bear in the epigraphic text for which he was paying. We can infer that Tyrannus considered himself to be both the person who manumitted

95. Citroni (1975) has also suggested such interpretation, citing Greek evidence of this usage (e.g., Herodas 1.60; 6.77). Howell (1980, 314) does not accept this interpretation on account of lack of such usage in Latin and of "the inclusion in M. of *mammae*." The first criticism, while valid per se, can be overlooked when we consider that this epigram's probable Greek model, Anth. Pal. 11.67, about an aging prostitute who is as old as Deucalion, dyes her white hair but λέγε πᾶσι τατᾶ, which can be translated as "says *tata* to everyone." The second objection implies that women could not hire other women for sexual companionship, which is incongruous with what we know about Roman sexuality and women's ability to spend their money independently.

96. *CIL* 6.2334.

Threptus and a man who cared for the wellbeing of the boy. Compared to the other inscription, we do not know whether Threptus actually would have called Tyrannus his *tata*, or if Tyrannus took up that designation for himself.[97] Once again, though, the use of both words together suggests that the two terms were different enough to be used in the same context without being redundant.

In the third and final case study—*CIL* 6.11690—the same man is commemorated as the *tata* of one person and the *patronus* of another.

D(is) M(anibus)
Anaea Secun-
da C(aio) Considio
Alcide tatae b-
ene merenti.
Item G(aius) Considius
Alcimus patrono
bene merenti,
libertis libertabus-
que, posterisque.

To the Divine Shades. Anaea Secunda made this for her well-deserving tata C. Considius Alcides. Also C. Considius Alcimus made this for his well-deserving patron, for freedmen and freedwomen, and their descendants.

Clearly, nothing prevented C. Considius Alcimus to fulfill the social role of a *tata*, of a caretaker, and at the same time to own (and later manumit) enslaved individuals. It would be fruitful to know whether Anaea Secunda and C. Considius Alcides were themselves close, or whether they interacted at all. To paraphrase, was Alcimus keeping his role as *tata* separate from his position of complete power and authority over Alcides or did these two worlds intermingle?

Anyone who has had an influential teacher or mentor will recognize the enormous impact that that person has had on their lives, even if they know close to nothing about their families. Likewise, it is not an uncommon experience to attend the funeral of a family member and not know their work colleagues or college friends. We can be sure that Anaea Secunda and C. Considius Alcides felt the duty or responsibility to commemorate C. Considius Alcimus,

97. For example, family friends often refer to themselves as aunts and uncles, whether or not their friends' children actually call them by those words.

but it is hard to say whether they considered each other part of the same fictive family.

4.4 Looking for *Tatae* in All the (Wrong) Places

At the beginning of the chapter, I stated that the term *tata* is scarcely attested in literary texts. Except in the Varronian fragment and the epigram by Martial cited above, the word does not appear in any other literary sources. It is not easy to explain such absence, even considering that vernacular seldom finds a place in high literary undertakings. It is important to point out that *tatae* are also absent from legal documents. Even among inscriptions, no mention of *tatae* appear on epitaphs for senatorial children, and nowhere are the *tatae* themselves commemorated by members of the sociopolitical Roman elite. Naturally, senatorial families relied on a large number of individuals, nurses, caretakers, teachers, and nurturers to raise their children. The silence on *tatae* in the literary, legal, and senatorial epigraphic evidence must be more than a coincidence.

Conversely, *tatae* are well-attested in inscriptions set up by nonsenatorial families. This does not mean that such families were not wealthy, but they simply were not part of the sociopolitical elite. Let us take for example *CIL* 6.12133, a large (and surely expensive) funerary inscription, which is over a meter in length and was carved for a sizable family plot—7.2 meters by 3.6 meters. The stone also features a large relief: two men sitting by a small table with a money box and accounting tools. It is obvious that the family who commissioned this monument was quite affluent. The text of the inscription names several members of this family, including a *tata* named Felix.

L(*ucius*) *Apisius*, *C*(*ai*) *f*(*ilius*), *Scaptia*, *Capitolinus*
ex testamento fieri iussit monumen(*tum*)
arbitratu{m} heredum meorum sibi et suis
[---]*IV*[---] *nutrici I*[---]*ae bene meritae;*
C(*aio*) *Apisio*, *C*(*ai*) *l*(*iberto*),
Epaphrae patri;
C(*aio*) *Apisio*, *C*(*ai*) *f*(*ilio*),
Capitoni frat(*ri*);
C(*aio*) *Apisio*, *C*(*ai*) *l*(*iberto*),
Felici tatae.
Huius monu(*menti*)
dolus mal(*us*)

abesto et
iuris consult(*i*).
Osciae, ((*mulieris*)) *l*(*ibertae*),
Primigeniae
matri;
Apisiae, *C*(*ai*) *f*(*iliae*),
Restitutae
sorori;
et libertis
libertabusq(*ue*)
meis posterisq(*ue*)
eorum.
In ag(*ro*), *p*(*edes*) *XII,*
in fr(*onte*), *p*(*edes*) *XXIV.*
In hoc monumento itus aditus ambitus libertis libertabusque meis omnib(*us*)
pateat heres clavem dato ad sacrificia facienda quotiens quomque opus erit.

Lucius Apisius Capitolinus, the son of Caius, of the voting tribe Scaptia, ordered to set up this monument according to the direction of my heirs for himself and his people: to ----- well deserving wet nurse; to (his) father Caius Apisius Epaphra, freedman of Caius; to (his) brother Caius Apisius Capito, son of Caius; to (his) caretaker Caius Apisius Felix, freedman of Caius; to (his) mother Oscia Primigenia, freedwoman of a woman; to (his) sister Apisia Restituta, daughter of Caius; and to my freedmen and freedwomen and their descendants. Let this monument be free from ill intent and legal quarrel. The monument is twelve feet long, twenty-four feet wide. In this monument, let the right of going, leaving, and going around be allowed. Let the heir give a key to all my freedmen and freedwomen in order to perform sacrifices however often it will be necessary.

In this lengthy inscription, the freeborn L. Apisius Capitolinus commemorates several individuals: a *nutrix* whose name does not survive due to a lacuna in the upper section of the slab (*corona superior*); his father, the freedman C. Apisius Epaphra, his brother Capito, his mother Oscia Primigenia, his sister Restituta, and freed *tata*, C. Apisius Felix. The text also explicitly indicates that the monument is open to the dedicator's freedmen and freedwomen and their descendants. This is a common formula, often employed in funerary epigraphs, which generically refers to the manumitted men and women of the household

without individually naming them. This could be ascribed to multiple reasons; economically, it might have been considered too expensive to name all the *libertae* and *liberti*; their status might not have warranted them, in the eyes of the *patronus*, being individually named. Additionally, there could have been several persons who were not yet manumitted but whom the master intended to free at some point or upon his death. A generic enough formula would have covered all contingencies.

Yet the *tata* Felix and anonymous *nutrix* stand out among all the other unnamed freedmen and freedwomen who are welcome to be buried in the family plot. The *tata* and *nutrix* are listed alongside the biological relatives of the commemorator, his mother, father, brother, and sister. Clearly, the *tata* and *nutrix* were on a par with these individuals and thus part of the family, unlike the other *liberti* and *libertae* who are allowed to use the funerary monument but are not explicitly named.

This inscription attests that, although senatorial families did not set up inscriptions featuring the word *tata*, there was a section of the population—wealthy enough to afford elaborate funerary inscriptions—that did not shrink from including *tatae* in their familial commemorations. It would be impossible to overstate the performative nature of inscriptions; they are a public display first and foremost.[98] Apisius Capitolinus commissioned an expensive monument, which commemorated what he was proud of: his father was a freedman, and he and his siblings were the first freeborn generation of his family; they raised themselves from a humble, servile origin through their business acumen and dedication. The *tata*, one of the freedmen of his father, was part of that success narrative: the Apisii were now the masters who dispensed manumission to those who diligently served the family. We can easily guess that Felix had obtained his manumission because of his excellent work caring for the master's most precious possession, his freeborn children. Indeed, there is no reason to exclude that Felix helped raise all three children, not just Capitolinus.

While it does not include the word *tata*, a poem by Martial seems to represent a man that could easily have been the *tata* Felix: a freedman who has been with the family for a long time, who helped raise the young master and has a position of eminence among the other members of the *familia*.

> You rocked my cradle, Charidemus, you were my guardian in my boyhood and constant companion. Now the napkins darken with my shaven beard and my girl complains of getting pricked by my lips. But for you I

98. See chapter 2, note 20.

> have not grown up. My bailiff goes in terror of you, so does the steward, the house itself dreads you. You don't allow me to play or to fall in love. If you have your way, I am permitted nothing, you are permitted everything. You scold, and spy, and grumble, and sigh; your anger hardly stops short of the cane. If I put on Tyrian clothes or pomade my hair, you exclaim: "Your father never did that." And you count my drinks, knitting your brows, as though the jar came from your own cellar. Stop it. I cannot put up with a Cato for a freedman. My mistress will tell you that I am a man now.[99]

This poem vividly depicts the changing relationship between a young man and the freedman who is credited to have been by his side since he was an infant. Despite their difference in status, the young man seems to have been following Charidemus' advice all his life. The freedman, a not-so-pleasing man despite his name, is portrayed as an authoritative figure, terrorizing the household, and chastising the boy's behavior with words and, perhaps, even corporal punishment.[100] Although it is not directly spelled out, this quasi-tyrannical freedman was likely a *servus* of the speaker's father, for he seems to have direct knowledge of the patriarch's way of life when he was a young man. It is undoubtable that Charidemus knows this family very well, and that he and the speaker enjoy a close relationship.

As classicist Nigel Kay also suggested, I believe that in this poem Martial is speaking in the persona of a young man, not necessarily himself.[101] The speaker insists that he is now too old to be kept on a short leash by the freedman. He is eager to experience all that imperial Rome has to offer, from expensive clothes to perfumed oils and the companionship of women. Despite his firm tone (exemplified by the imperative *desine*), the young man understands the reason why Charidemus perseveres in giving unsolicited advice: to him, he is still a child. Much like a parent, Charidemus cannot see that he is becoming an adult. There is not resentful blame cast at the freedman, but appreciation for his constant companionship is intertwined with desire for more independence.

Usually, the old man in the poem is identified with a *paedagogus*, given that

99. *Mart.* 11.39 (trans. Shackleton Bailey): *Cunarum fueras motor, Charideme, mearum / et pueri custos assiduusque comes. / Iam mihi nigrescunt tonsa sudaria barba / et queritur labris puncta puella meis; / sed tibi non crevi; te noster vilicus horret, / te dispensator, te domus ipsa pavet. / Ludere nec nobis nec tu permittis amare; / nil mihi vis et vis cuncta licere tibi. / Corripis, observas, quereris, suspiria ducis, / et vix a ferulis temperat ira tua. / Si Tyrios sumpsi cultus unxive capillos, / exclamas "numquam fecerat ista pater"; / et numeras nostros astricta fronte trientes, / tamquam de cella sit cadus ille tua. / Desine; non possum libertum ferre Catonem. / Esse virum iam me dicet amica tibi.*

100. *Charis* means grace, kindness, pleasure in Greek.

101. Kay 1985, 153.

he displays all the stereotypical traits of that literary persona.[102] However, it was customary for older boys and girls to have a *paedagogus*, not for infants or toddlers, as Quintilian clearly describes it as a figure similar to what we would today call a tutor.[103] Likewise, in the epigraphic record *paedagogi* are always associated with older children, while *tatae* are most commonly found alongside children in the 0 to 5 age bracket I set out earlier. For these reasons, I believe that the man in Martial's epigram embodies a literary representation of a *tata*—a caretaker of small children, a surrogate parental figure.

Although the word *tata* does not appear in legal and senatorial epigraphic evidence, this does not mean that these roles were absent in the families of the highest elite. Their almost complete absence in these texts is admittedly striking, especially in the legal sources. In the preceding chapter, I presented a passage from the jurist Ulpian listing the individuals who could be manumitted by a master younger than what the *Lex Aelia Sentia* prescribed: "if a *collactaneus*, an *educator*, the *paedagogus* himself, the *nutrix*, or their son or daughter, or an *alumnus*, or the *capsarius* (who is the one who carries the books), if they are manumitted in this fashion, such as their master may not ever be less than eighteen."[104]

Mamma and *tata* are both absent from the list, as well as *nutritor* or *nutricius* (the male nurturer), which are attested roles in the epigraphic lexicon. It does not make much sense that a *nutrix* should be considered worthy of early manumission, but not a *mamma* or *nutritor* who are essentially fulfilling the same role. It is more likely that these terms—*nutrix*, *educator*, *paedadgogus*—are umbrella terms, an "official terminology" which is required in a formal legal document, rather than the nursery terms which are most commonly used in everyday conversation. A *tata* could most likely enjoy the same early manumission as a *paedagogus* because both their roles were to care for the children.

4.5 On Division of Labor in the Modern and Ancient Household

A few times throughout this chapter, I raised the issue of how gender influences the division of labor inside the household. I mentioned that in both modern

102. Kay 1985, 154; Young 1987, 152.

103. Quintilian (*Inst.* 1.1.16), while discussing what is the proper age for children to start learning letters (and thus be entrusted to a *paedagogus*), affirms that the poet Hesiod and the philosopher Eratosthenes suggested the age of seven, while the philosopher Chrysippus believed that literary education should not start before three years of age (*nutrici triennium dederit*). Quintilian concludes that the appropriate age might differ from child to child based on their disposition, but also invites parents not to waste the earliest years.

104. *Dig.* 40.2.13 (Ulpian): *Si collactaneus, si educator, si paedagogus ipsius, si nutrix, vel filius filiave cuius eorum, vel alumnus, vel capsarius (id est qui portat libros), vel si in hoc manumittatur, ut procurator sit, dummodo non minor annis decem et octo sit.*

Western and Eastern societies (though for different reasons) men are playing an increasingly larger role in the rearing of children, although this is usually not matched with an increase in assuming other domestic chores.[105] Modern expectations on what are stereotypically female and male household tasks inevitably colors our understanding of how Roman households were run. My contention is that we are so used to gendered labor that we struggle to acknowledge that it is based on a social construct. I believe this is why Bradley alone interpreted *tatae* as caretakers, rather than finding some legal or biological relation between them and their protégés.[106]

Since the 1990s (when Bradley's work was first published), sociologists have become more interested in studying the division of labor in households across the world. While the fact that women took a significantly larger share of the duties related to homemaking and childcare was never in doubt, such studies did not just serve to confirm that reality.[107] Researchers were also interested in how happy or satisfied were those women who lived in a household where labor is shared along traditional gender roles compared to those women who lived in a household that embraced a more egalitarian approach. Unsurprisingly, studies have repeatedly found that in households where women have a full-time job and the same level of education as their husbands, but are still responsible for the majority of the housework, such women found the division of labor to be unfair to them.[108]

Sweden has become an often-cited case of a country where such unfairness has been recognized and swiftly addressed by the society at large in the last few decades. In the 1990s, research showed becoming a parent in Sweden predominantly affected women (lack of sleep, more cleaning, less personal leisure time, etc.), but in the 2000s, men and women were both found to be similarly affected by the birth of a child.[109] In just ten years, Swedish families saw the share of homemaking and childcare become more equally distributed and that has subsequently continued to improve. Even in countries where educated, working wives are still largely responsible for all the housework, such as in both urban and rural China, these women profess to be less happy in their relationship than women who are completely economically dependent on their husbands.[110]

It has also been reported that women who earn more than their husbands in countries where the traditional gender roles are more strictly observed, such as

105. Even when childcare is shared equally, cleaning, laundry, and grocery shopping are still primarily female tasks (Chesley 2011, 660–63; Rehel 2014, 112).

106. Bradley 1991.

107. Rehel 2014, 110; Chesley 2011, 661; Legerski and Cornwall 2010, 449; Sullivan 2004, 207.

108. E.g., Braun et al. 2008; Song and Lai 2020.

109. Dribe et al. 2009.

110. Kubricht et al. 2017.

Taiwan, will purposefully take on a larger share of the household labor in order to compensate for their abnormal situation.[111] So strong is the societal expectation of what a woman should do that they are willing to play the homemaker role even if their husbands have more free time. This too, however, might soon change; young, unmarried cohabitating couples in China—who are usually more highly educated—report to have discussed and negotiated whether they should follow the traditional division of household labor or split it on more egalitarian lines. Close to 90 percent of the interviewed women desired an equal labor division, although only roughly half of them actually obtained it and almost 40 percent of men in those relationships declared that this more egalitarian split was only a temporary solution.[112]

Coming now to ancient Roman households, scholars are confronted by two insurmountable hurdles; first, it is impossible for us to interview any married couples from the first century CE and ask them about how they negotiated household labor. Second, slavery completely changes the internal gender dynamics of domestic work. Excluding uberelite families who owned hundreds of enslaved individuals, it is unlikely that the families who purchased the epitaphs in our corpus would have had more than a handful of slaves.[113] Still, if an enslaved individual was present in the household, it would be reasonable to assume that they—regardless of their gender—were the ones taking on the majority of household labor (cleaning, cooking, helping with childcare). In the absence of a *servus*, who did what in a Roman household?

An important factor would have been whether the family lived in an urban or rural area. It is impossible to deny that women helped with agricultural tasks, in addition to whatever childcare, cooking, and homemaking responsibilities they might have had. As Scheidel observed, women and children are often ignored when it comes to agricultural labor.[114] Yet plenty of tasks, such as feeding yard animals, picking fruits and vegetables, pulling weeds, and harvesting grapes or olives, do not require considerable physical strength. Age, rather than gender, plays a more prevalent role in whether someone is fit for agricultural labor; a small child or an old person will not be as strong or able to endure fatigue as a young woman. What would happen then, in the case that an old man, perhaps the patriarch, was no longer able to help in the fields? Would he take on childcare responsibilities to allow the young mother(s) in the

111. Hu and Kamo 2007.

112. Song and Lai 2020.

113. Estimates on the enslaved population in Italy vary widely; I follow Scheidel (2005), who postulates that the enslaved population of Roman Italy never exceeded 1,500,000 (oscillating between 220,000 and 440,000 for the city of Rome).

114. Scheidel 1995.

household to contribute to the agricultural labor? Would it make a difference if it was the matriarch instead?[115]

My research on *tatae* has shown that men could be caretakers of young children, even though they were often free men and not biologically related to the child. Epigraphic evidence also indicates that the number of persons commemorated as *tatae* is slightly higher than those honored as *nutrices*; thus, *tatae* were not uncommon figures in Roman society. It follows that it is not unsound to ask whether labor division inside the household—which includes childcare—was perhaps not as gendered as we might imagine. It is true that childcare can be seen as separate from homemaking, as studies conducted in the United States on stay-at-home dads have shown.[116] Yet it is undeniable that both childcare and homemaking are considered feminine tasks today. If childcare, at least in some Roman families, was a responsibility parents shared with a free male caretaker, is it possible that other tasks—cooking, sewing, cleaning—were also regularly performed by free men?

Clearly, men are capable of executing these tasks. Enslaved men routinely performed them. Men serving in the military did as well.[117] In other circumstances where there was a temporary lack of female presence in the household—such as due to a long debilitating illness leaving the wife bedridden, or even in case of premature death—the husband would have been forced to at least make sure that the children did not die and had something to eat. Especially among the urban poor, if a husband did not find a day job, he could have been at home with the children, while his wife worked as a nurse, a street-seller, or a prostitute.[118]

Moreover, epigraphic evidence further suggests that men were at times fulfilling the role of nurturer (*nutritor* or *nutricius*). These terms, derivatives from *nutrio* just like *nutrix*, are often interpreted to mean something closer to "person who rears children," rather than "person who feeds the children."[119] As such, it can be interpreted to be a synonym of *tata*, as *CIL* 6.21432 exemplifies.[120]

Livia, *Sp*(*uri*) *f*(*ilia*), *Pelagia*
nutricio suo bene

115. Seymour (2004, 550) attests that in India children are often left with older female family members while the mothers go to work, sustaining the family economically.

116. See note 105.

117. See Allison (2015) on sewing needles found in military camps.

118. See Holleran (2017) on the availability of day jobs for men and women in Rome.

119. Dixon 1988, 149–55; Bradley 1985.

120. In *CIL* 6.38598 a *tata* and a *nutritor* are both named, suggesting they were not perceived to be completely identical roles, at least by this family.

merenti fecit
C(*aio*) *Mario, C*(*ai*) *l*(*iberto*),
Agathocli.

Livia Pelagia, the daughter of Spurius, made this for her well deserving nurturer Caius Marius Agathocles, the freedman of Caius.

As we have seen in the case of *tatae*, this *nutricius* is free and does not share the same *nomen* as the dedicator. The woman who provides commemoration was possibly an illegitimate child, given her filiation.[121] So she might not have had a father figure in her life growing up, an empty niche that was filled by the freedman Agathocles.[122]

Enslaved individuals could also be reared by a *nutricius*, as *CIL* 6.5405 showcases.

Dis Man(*ibus*).
Euhodus et Eua-
nder Imp(*eratoris*) *Domi-*
tiani n(*ostri*) *ser*(*vi*), *Ti*(*berio*) *Clau-*
dio Epapho nutri-
cio suo bene
merenti fecerunt.

To the Divine Shades. Euhodus and Euander, the slaves of our emperor Domitian, made this for their well-deserving nurturer Ti. Claudius Epaphus.

This inscription attests that the *nutritor* Epaphus was responsible for rearing (and potentially instructing) at least two enslaved individuals from the imperial household. I already mentioned that in large households the *vernae* would likely be entrusted to a single nurse, while all the other recent mothers would

121. Although Spurius was an attested Roman *praenomen* since the Republic, during the imperial period the filiation *Spuri filius/a* was used to indicate illegitimate children (Krawczyk 2017, 24; Rawson 1989, 31).

122. According to the dictates of the *Lex Minicia*, the child of a free woman and an enslaved father should be of enslaved status. However, as Lavan (2021) argues, in order to avoid the negative consequences of this law, the child of such a union could be presented as illegitimate, without legally acknowledging the biological father, and thus taking the status of the mother.

go back to work. Once breastfeeding was no longer necessary, a male *nutritor* could have taken over their care, perhaps even teaching them basic skills.[123]

Last, it is important to underscore that child-rearing can be a long-term profession or a temporary one, as *CIL* 6.9834 suggests.

Cn(*aeus*) *Cornelius*
Atimetus,
Cn(*aei*) *Lentuli Gaetulici*
l(*ibertus*) *et procurator*
eiusdem fidelissimus,
hic sepultus est.
Cossus Cornelius
Cn(*aei*) ⌜*f*⌝(*ilius*) *Lentulus*
Gaetulicus
procuratori suo
fidelissimo et
nutricio piissimo
de suo fecit et
monumentum
in Sabinis suis
in villa
Bruttiana.

Cn. Cornelius Atimetus, the freedman of Cn. Lentulus Gaetulicus and the most faithful manager of the same man, is buried here. Cossus Cornelius Lentulus Gaetulicus, the son of Lentulus, made this from his own money for his most faithful manager and his most pious nurturer and (made) a monument among his Sabine people in the villa Bruttiana.

It appears that the freedman Cn. Cornelius Atimetus was formerly enslaved to a certain Cn. Lentulus Gaetulicus, for whom he worked as the manager of some type of business. However, the same freedman also worked for the master's son, both as his manager and—many years prior—as his *nutritor*. It is easy to see how the man, possibly demonstrating dutiful care for the master's child,

123. For example, someone had to instruct the *vernae* on how to politely address the master or the mistress of the house, teach them how the household was run, and tell them who were frequents guests and friends of the master and how to receive them appropriately, etc.

was "promoted" to the position of foreman (*procurator*), which he kept for many years, working for both the father and the son. Being a foreman, either as an estate manager or a business supervisor, would have been a position of great trust; Cn. Cornelius Atimetus was probably able to demonstrate his skills and grow close to the master (and his son) when he worked as a *nutritor*. The inscription also mentions a second monument in Sabinia, perhaps at the estate where the freedman was born or where he was in charge. Therefore, the former protégé spent money on not one, but two monuments for his *nutritor* and later *procurator*. Moreover, through the epigraphic record, we also find examples of women performing tasks usually associated with men. Hemelrijk's recent collection of inscriptions reports several cases of women employed in traditionally masculine jobs, such as barbers (*tonsatrix*), schoolteachers (*grammatica*), doctors (*medica*), and even gladiators.[124] Although these are rare instances, they attest that crossing the line of gendered labor was not unheard of in ancient Rome.[125]

Let me now return to my hypothetical family of Roman farmers, where the older patriarch is no longer able to work in the fields. I asked whether such a person would take up childcare responsibilities inside his household. In the inscriptions I presented above, all nurturers are freedmen, suggesting that freeborn men (usually) did not take up such roles. Likewise, I mentioned before that none of *tatae* can be identified as freeborn. Therefore, I must at least consider that some freeborn men would have found childcare to be a task below their station. Modern studies suggest that in certain cultures, even when a husband is unemployed, he usually does not take over his (working) wife's household chores, as this could be perceived as a reduction in his status and position in the family.[126]

However, one main difference between Taiwan and the United States, on one hand, and the ancient world, on the other, is the availability of food. To have one additional able-bodied worker—regardless of gender—increases the chances of a more productive yield. I do not see Roman rural communities to be so concerned with the division of labor according to gender that they would not employ their human resources strategically; men and women able to work in the fields should do so, while less demanding tasks—such as watching that the crawling infant does not get hurt, shelling the fava beans from their pods, keeping the fire lit in the kitchen—could be fulfilled by the oldest (or the

124. Hemelrijk 2020.

125. E.g., female doctors (*mediacae*) only account for 5 percent of all known doctors, as Hemelrijk (2020, 125) reports.

126. Hu and Kamo 2007.

youngest) in the family. Although some patriarchs of large households, with hundreds of enslaved individuals working the fields, would never have found themselves in the position of having to physically contribute to the running of the estate with their own labor, we should not forget that our evidence—even inscriptions—is highly biased toward people with disposable income, and they would represent a small percentage of the total population of Rome, Italy, and the provinces.

Our (artificially created) focus on elite or wealthy individuals necessarily gives us a limited picture of the variety of families and situations, which cannot fully represent how families operated, or how gender and labor were negotiated in rural or low-income households. We must suppose unattested scenarios and ask questions, which might never obtain a satisfactory answer, in order to at least acknowledge the lives of those who left no epigraphic or literary trace.

4.6 Conclusions

I began the chapter with the following inscription for a deceased teenager, Appuleia Gratilla, who was commemorated by her patrons and her *tata*, Lucius Appuleius Regillus.[127]

Dis Manibus
Appuleiae Gratillae,
vix(it) an(nos) XIIII m(enses) VI d(ies) XV.
Fecerunt
Cn(aeus) Cossutius Apriclus
et Appuleia Lochias
patroni vernae karissimae
et L(ucius) Appuleius Regillus tata.

To the Divine Shades of Appuleia Gratilla, who lived for fourteen years, six months and fifteen days. Gnaeus Cossutius Apriclus, Appuleia Lochias, her patrons, and her *tata* Lucius Appuleius Regillus made this for the dearest home-born slave.

I asked what the role of the *tata* in this family was and what it means to be a *tata*. I did not ask whether he was a member of the family. His presence in the

127. *AE* 2014: 180.

epitaph already indicates that he was family to both the deceased girl and her *patroni*. Strangers and acquaintances do not set up tombstones for each other. At the same time, blood relations and marriage cannot account for all the familial situations and permutations attested through the epigraphic record. My work aims at underscoring the flexible nature of the Roman family and its ability to grow, in this case due to the presence of Gratilla, a child who acts as a connecting node between herself, her patrons, and her *tata*; none of the adults seem to have been biologically related to her.[128] Based on her tombstone, it appears that Gratilla's primary familial network was composed only of fictive kin.

I mentioned before that infant and child burials are lower than what we should expect given mortality rates in the ancient world. If we were to base ancient demographic analysis on funerary epitaphs alone, we would obtain a mortality rate so low that is unmatched even in modern societies.[129] These precious epitaphs, therefore, stand out because most children would not have received any commemoration. Only one thing sets them apart from all the other deceased children who did not obtain a funerary monument: a family's availability of disposable income at the time when a death occurred. Economic reasons often play a crucial role in what a family is able to do when a loved one dies. It would be a mistake to argue that these children who were commemorated by their parents and their *tata* (or *mamma*, or *nutrix*, or *nutritor*) were somehow more beloved than the deceased children we know existed but of whom no trace survives. Just as we will never know their names, we will never know how many families relied on the help of extrafamilial caretakers or how many *tatae* lost a child they cared for.

Moreover, it is impossible to estimate how many part-time or informal child-minders were involved in the everyday life of a child. Modern studies document how in disadvantaged neighborhoods in the United States some community members, such as crossing guards, librarians, and store clerks, provide children with help on a range of issues from dealing with bullies to providing a supervised safe space to wait for one's parents to come home.[130] These unrecognized support roles, who act beyond their job description, supply children with important resources and help, creating a network of social support. Did ancient Rome's neighborhoods have a similarly unrecognized social support for their community? If children played in the street, would shopkeepers

128. Since she was a *verna*, it is impossible to rule out that the master was her biological father. The *term filius/a naturalis* (natural son/daughter) is the technical designation for the "illegitimate" children of the master born from enslaved women. Such a term, however, is used infrequently in epigraphic evidence, so nothing can be inferred from its absence.

129. Laes 2014.

130. Spilsbury 2005.

or people fetching water at the local fountain feel compelled to keep an eye on them or even help if they fell and hurt themselves?

It is most likely that when Gratilla died, more people than her *patroni* and *tata* noticed and felt her absence: her friends and neighbors, but also the owner of the *popina* down the street where she bought food, or perhaps a young man who was courting her, or a woman who talked to her at the baths. Yet, of all the everyday interactions that Gratilla must have performed during her life, we can only speak with a degree of certainty about three of them: the couple who manumitted her and the *tata* Lucius Appuleius Regillus, who were part of her life and considered themselves to be a familial unit, centered around Gratilla.

5

Delicium Fuit Domini, Spes Grata Parentum

The Multifaced Identity of Roman Delicia

Pueros quidam in hoc mercantur procaces et illorum inpudentiam acuunt ac sub magistro habent, qui probra meditate effundant, nec has contumelias uocamus sed argutias: quanta autem dementia est isdem modo delectari, modo offendi, et rem ab amico dictam maledictum uocare, a seruulo ioculare conuicium!

Thus, some people buy cheeky young slaves, and they sharpen their impudence and keep them under an instructor, in order that they may pour forth meditated abuses; and yet we call this cleverness, not insult. But what madness it is to be amused at one time, at another to be offended by the same things, and to call something a slander if spoken by a friend, if spoken by a young slave a tease!

Seneca, *De Const.* 11.3

"Hulloa, Jim Crow!" said Mr. Shelby, whistling, and snapping a bunch of raisins toward him, "pick that up, now!" The child scampered, with all his little strength, after the prize, while his master laughed. "Come here, Jim Crow," said he. The child came up, and the master patted the curly head, and chucked him under the chin. "Now, Jim, show this gentleman how you can dance and sing." The boy commenced one of those wild, grotesque songs common among the negroes, in a rich, clear voice, accompanying his singing with many comic evolutions of the hands, feet, and whole body, all in perfect time to the music. "Bravo!" said Haley, throwing him a quarter of an orange. "Now, Jim, walk like old Uncle Cudjoe, when he has the rheumatism," said his master. Instantly the flexible limbs of the child assumed the appearance of deformity and distortion, as, with his back humped up, and his master's stick in his

> hand, he hobbled about the room, his childish face drawn into a doleful pucker, and spitting from right to left, in imitation of an old man. Both gentlemen laughed uproariously.
>
> Harriet Beecher Stowe, *Uncle Tom's Cabin* 1.1

The two literary passages above—one written by Seneca in the first century CE and the other published in 1852 by novelist Harriet Beecher Stowe—depict the same type of behavior: keeping young, enslaved children to perform parlor tricks for their masters, as a form of entertainment. Seneca expresses his distaste for the custom of letting children say the darndest things and encouraging such behavior by finding amusement in the shocking and offensive remarks they make. Stowe's novel portrays a similar attitude toward enslaved children: to use them as performers or clowns to please their masters and their masters' guests. In both passages, the children are nameless, only identified as cheeky young slaves (*procaces pueri*) and "Jim Crow," a racist designation used to indicate a type of minstrel or entertainer. Their individual names, it might be argued, are irrelevant to their performance and role. Stowe's passage, in particular, exemplifies that these children are envisioned as little more than trained animals, performing tricks in exchange for bites of food.[1] Seneca also mentions that the bluntness of the children is artificially augmented, for they are placed under the tutelage of a *magister*, a teacher of sorts, who is supposed to train them to amuse.

From both passages, it appears that the entertainment provided by the children is appreciated by the masters. These children are delightful and enjoyable. The Romans used a specific term to describe something or someone that was both pleasurable and endearing: *delicium* or *delicia*.[2] The term always carries strong affective associations and can be applied to different objects of affection: for example, one's hometown (Plin. *Ep.* 1.3.1), daughter (Cic. *Att.* 1.5.8), lover (Cat. 32, 20), and pets (Sen. *Apoc.* 13.3).[3] Yet *delicia* is also commonly used in literary and epigraphic texts as a designation for beloved enslaved—or formerly enslaved—children.

As a term of endearment for enslaved youth, *delicia* is poignantly ambigu-

1. See Bradley (2000) and further discussion below on the animalization of the enslaved.

2. The term is attested both in the neuter (*delicium* singular, *delicia* plural) and feminine (*delicia* singular, *deliciae* plural) gender. For matters of consistency, in this chapter I use *delicium* as a neuter noun. The term *puer delicatus* is also used at times, more in the literary than in the epigraphic record, as a synonym.

3. Bradley 1998, 537. Laes (2003, 304–5) also adds that spoiled children are called *delicati* (e.g., Cic. *De nat. deo.* 1.102); moreover, Catiline and his followers are called *lepidi* et *delicati* (Cic. *In Cat.* 2.23) to indicate their morally bankrupt behavior. As for pets, Catullus is the first to use the word *delicia* to describe his girlfriend's sparrow.

ous, for it can be used to describe not only pets but also family members.[4] Keith Bradley and, more recently, Christian Laes argued for the existence of a connection between enslaved children and pets which can be kept as playthings by the master; although they might be physically close to the master, they are socially inferior to him.[5] I believe that this attitude signals something beyond the efforts of the enslaver to animalize the enslaved in order to retain his superiority. Pets, like children, are often allowed latitudes that adult individuals cannot reach. In the passage above, Seneca specifically mentions that enslaved children are given permission and are even encouraged to be sassy and rude to their masters as a form of entertainment; an adult enslaved person was certainly not granted the same opportunity.[6] Pets and children are not just like any other member of the family; special rules apply to them. Moreover, in *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, Stowe depicts young "Jim Crowe" catching food being thrown at him on the floor, as to a trained dog.[7] On the other hand, *delicium* is also used to refer to one's own child or foster child. As such, *delicia* can also be full-fledged family members. This ambiguity between enslaved children, family members, and pets suggests that the term was used with great flexibility and can be used as an accessway to Roman attitudes toward family formation.

This chapter explores the rapport between beloved enslaved children, the *delicia*, and their masters and mistresses in Roman society, especially in relation to fictive kinship. We possess ample evidence on *delicia*, both in literary and in epigraphic texts. As it is often the case, these two types of sources start from different standpoints; the poetic compositions were all created by slave-owning free men, while the funerary epitaphs for *delicia* were set up by a range of different individuals, not just the master. Still, due to its intrinsic limitations, a tombstone seldom gives any specifics about the lives of these children, and literature—while biased—can provide additional details. It is indeed in literary texts, where deceased enslaved children are eulogized, that pseudoparental language and fictive kinship are employed to represent the bond between masters and their *delicia*. In several poetic compositions, the masters fashion themselves as surrogate parental figures for their beloved enslaved children.

4. As Laes (2003, 298) points out, Veyne first argued that the value of the term *delicium* for social studies lies in its ambiguity (1987, 79). Likewise, Laes' production on *delicia*—frequently cited throughout this chapter—focuses on the varied and nuanced identities of *delicia*.

5. Bradley 1998, 536–38; Laes 2003, 316–17. See also Atherton (1998, 225–26) on the comparison of children, pets, and enslaved individuals first attested in Plato's *Laws* (7.808de).

6. See the episode from Plutarch's *Moralia* in which the consul M. Pupius Piso had ordered his slaves to respond to his questions without adding anything more, lest he would be disturbed by them, which led to paradoxical outcomes. See Bradley 2011, 362.

7. As incapsulated in Van Dam's (1984, 72) definition of *delicium* as "a combination of something like a lap-dog and a fool."

Given the overall topic of the book—the creation of fictive kinship through the catalytic presence of children—this type of evidence cannot be ignored. Yet it should be noted that we have no insight on whether these enslaved children reciprocated their masters' pseudoparental claims. It is also worth mentioning that each Roman household would have had its own idiosyncratic set of characters with individual views and personalities; generalizing on the potential interaction of all masters with enslaved children could only lead to misrepresentations.

Therefore, while I make no general claims about enslaved children that should be blindly applied to an entire society, I also believe that *delicia* are especially well-positioned to help us better understand interpersonal relations inside the Roman household. However, scholars tend to ignore much of the evidence on *delicia* because of its unsettling and disturbing nature. Nobody wants to imagine Cicero or Augustus demanding a performance from a young, enslaved child and throwing some dried figs at them, as if they were trained animals. Furthermore, in a handful of poems which commemorate deceased *delicia*, feelings of paternal affection toward these children are mixed with expressions of sexual desire. To us, this is an immediately repulsive notion. Again, nobody wants to see Martial or Statius as sexual abusers of small children. This reticence is by no means new. As Finley lamented, scholars often choose to be blind to sexual exploitation as a central and recurrent feature of slavery, although evidence of its existence abounds in Greco-Roman literature.[8] It would be disingenuous to ignore some of the evidence on *delicia* because it creates discomfort for the modern reader; despite its abhorrent nature, not discussing it would obfuscate the full picture of *delicia*, further relegating them to the shadows.

5.1 *Pueri*, *Turba Minuta*: "Bands" of Enslaved Children

Stumbling home after a night of drinking, the poet Propertius claims to have seen a brood of naked children, who attacked and captured him:

> Last night, my light, as I wandered drunk without a handful of slaves to guide me, a band of small boys, I know not how many (since fear prevented me from counting them), approached me; some held torches, some arrows, and others were even getting fetters ready for me. But they

8. Finley 1980, 95.

> were naked. One boy, the most impudent of them, said: "Grab him, for you know him well enough. This was the man, the one that the angry lady told us to lay hands on." He spoke, and a noose was already round my neck.[9]

The image of unclothed kids, running around the city to capture a man on behalf of a scorned woman, is bizarre to say the least. Commentators have identified the small naked boys as little Cupids and, thus, making the woman who sent them a Venus-like figure. The entire scene can be read allegorically: the poet, inebriated by wine, is unable to stay away from his mistress because Love would not let him.[10] Building on this interpretation, scholars have suggested additional identities for the Cupids: robbers, *vigiles* (urban watchmen), or *fugitivarii* (catchers of runaway slaves or *fugitivi*).[11] The latter appears to be the most convincing. These children are clearly not committing crimes or surveilling the streets for general disturbances. They are quite literally on the hunt for the poet; they even restrain him with fetters (*vincula*), which are not tools commonly associated with Cupids, but with *fugitivarii*.[12]

Classicist William Slater proposed taking it one step further.[13] The naked children might be Cupids, and even slavecatchers, but they also allude to a popular custom among the Roman elites: to keep bands of children around the household to provide amusement and company. Suetonius, the second-century CE imperial biographer, attests this practice. He reports that Augustus enjoyed playing with enslaved children.

> To relax his spirit, he sometimes fished with hooks, sometimes played marbles and nuts with little boys, whom he sought out everywhere for their lovable faces and chattiness, especially Syrians and Moors.[14]

According to Suetonius, the first emperor liked playing and conversing with these children, admiring their lovely appearance. Such behavior was not unique

9. Propertius 2.29a. *Hesterna, mea lux, cum potus nocte vagarer, / nec me servorum duceret ulla manus, / obvia nescio quot pueri mihi turba minuta / venerat (hos vetuit me numerare timor); / quorum alii faculas, alii retinere sagittas, / pars etiam visa est vincla parare mihi. / Sed nudi fuerant. quorum lascivior unus, / "Arripite hunc," inquit, "iam bene nostis eum / hic erat, hunc mulier nobis irata locavit." / Dixit, et in collo iam mihi nodus erat.*

10. This theme is already attested in Anth. Pal. 5.93 (Rufinus) and 12.118 (Callimachus).

11. Rothstein 1898; Luck 1969, 15–16; Cairns 1971, 455.

12. As Cairns (1971, 456) points out.

13. Slater 1974, 136.

14. Suet. *Aug.* 83: *Animi laxandi causa modo piscabatur hamo, modo talis aut ocellatis nucibusque ludebat cum pueris minutis, quos facie et garrulitate amabilis undique conquirebat, praecipue Mauros et Syros.*

to Augustus.[15] A fragment from the first-century BCE polymath Varro suggests that looking at small children was considered to be a pleasurable activity. "Come to Capua, if you want," he writes in one of his letters, "where you can pleasurably observe small children."[16] Perhaps, the countless videos on social media featuring small children doing something adorable (stumbling on their words, attempting to pet a cat, falling asleep at the dinner table, etc.) embody the same type of mind-set.

From the Suetonian passage, it remains unclear whether the children were *vernae*, who merely happened to roam around the imperial palace, or were enslaved children bought with the specific purpose of acting as beautiful entertainers. The biographer even mentions their preferred ethnicity (*Mauri* and *Syri*), suggesting that their origins played a role in their selection. On the other hand, Seneca is not as detailed when describing the impudent children that are kept as entertainers by the Roman elite. Yet, while their ethnicity is not mentioned, the philosopher explicitly says that people bought these insolent children (*pueros . . . mercantur procaces*), thus they were not home-born. Likewise, the rhetor Quintilian speaks of verbally impudent Egyptian enslaved children, expressing his concern that even freeborn children, at his then-current time, are given great latitude to shock and impress the adults: "We rejoice if they (*sc.* freeborn children) say something shocking and bold; and we do not make an exception for words that, with a smile and a kiss, would be appropriate for Alexandrian *delicia*."[17]

Quintilian explicitly calls these children, who are—undoubtedly—the same type of cheeky enslaved children that Seneca disliked, *delicia*.[18] Evidence, therefore, indicates that small children were kept for their pleasurable appearance and, at times, even trained to entertain their masters and their guests. One cannot help but wonder if the enslaved children who played games with Augustus also received some special training to amuse the emperor. Suetonius only mentions that the children partook in simple games with marbles and nuts, which appear to be everyday activities, not something that required particular train-

15. Later emperors are said to have had sexual relations with their *delicia*: Vitellius (Suet. *Vit.* 12), Titus (Suet. *Tit.* 7), Trajan (Scr. Hist. Aug. *Hadrian*, 4.5), Domitian (Stat. *Sil.* 3.4), Commodus (Herod. 1.71). On the connection between *delicia* and pederasty see Laes 2003, 300–302 and further discussion below.

16. The Varronian fragment (from *Non. Marc. Lexicon*) reads: *minutum: positum pro brevi. Varro Epistulis latinis: veni, sis, Capuam, quod et pueros minutos vides libenter.*

17. Quin. *Inst. Or.* 1.2.7: *Gaudemus si quid licentius dixerint: verba ne Alexandrinis quidem permittenda deliciis risu et osculo excipimus.*

18. On the use of *delicium* in literary texts, Plautus first used it as a synonym of "beloved person." To my knowledge, the first use of the word *delicium* to identify an enslaved child is in Statius' *Silvae* 2.1 which is analyzed below.

ing. Although Seneca specifically says that these children were coached, it does not mean that they were not capable of spontaneous behavior.

Regardless, the evidence shows that bands of small children were a common sight in elite Roman households. Epigraphic texts also attest that some *delicia*, upon their premature death, were connected to important members of the imperial family. The empress Livia Augusta and her granddaughter Livilla are invoked in an inscription—*CIL* 6.20237—for a nine-year-old *delicium* called C. Iulius Prosopa.

Genio
C(*ai*) *Iuli,*
Augustae
l(*iberti*), *Prosopae,*
delicii ipsius
et Liviae Drusi
Caesaris,
vix(*it*) *ann*(*os*) *IX.*

To the tutelary deity of C. Iulius Prosopa, the freedman of Augusta, and the *delicium* of the same and of Livia, the wife of Drusus Caesar, who lived for nine years.

As I mentioned in the previous chapters, based on a strict adherence to the letter of the law, no nine-year-old child could have been formally manumitted. It is possible that Livia Augusta was not concerned with the dictates of the *Lex Aelia Sentia*, or simply did not differentiate between formal and informal manumission. Unfortunately, the inscription does not mention whether C. Iulius Prosopa was a *verna*, or if he was purchased for his beauty or even acting skills (the Greek term πρόσωπον, *prosopon*, can mean face, but also mask and theatrical character).[19] The names of his parents are not reported on the stone, which might indicate that they were not involved in the child's life; perhaps he had been sold to the imperial household without his parents. Certainly, Prosopa was very young at the time of his death, yet it appears that he had had the time to grow close to Livia Augusta and Livilla, whose presence looms large in his commemoration. We cannot know how the child came to be the *delicium* of the empress and her namesake granddaughter. It could be that Prosopa experienced a range of emotions toward them, from the kind of unconditional love

19. Solin (1996, 390) reports that this is the only attestation of this name.

children can display to fear of corporal punishment. Independently from what feelings Prosopa harbored, it is possible that Livia Augusta and Livilla were the ones who commissioned this inscription for him, thus discharging the commemorative role usually performed by the closest kin. If we accept that the two women acted as commemorators, it appears that they felt a special bond with Prosopa, deeper than what they felt for other children who must have lived, worked, and died in the imperial household over time. He was their *delicium*; the possessive genitive used in the text suggets more than mere legal ownership, but also that this child was *their* favorite, their source of joy.

Epigraphic evidence showcases that more *delicia* were associated with other women of the imperial family. *CIL* 6.14959 attests that Antonia Claudia—the first daughter of the emperor Claudius—had a *delicium* called Claudia Eglecte.[20]

Ti(*berio*) *Claudio Karo vix*(*it*) ⌜*a*⌝*n*(*nos*) *VIII, mens*(*es*) *XII, dies XI.*
Dis Manib(*us*).
Claudiae
Eglecte,
Antoniae, divi
Claudi f(*iliae*)*, delicio*
piissimae et b(*ene*) *m*(*erenti*)*,*
v(*ixit*) *a*(*nnos*) *VI, m*(*ensem*) *I, d*(*ies*) *VIIII,*
Threptus Ecloge,
parentes, fec(*erunt*)
Ti(*berius*) *Claud*(*ius*) *Atticus, frater.*
Culturam arae fratrum item
oll(*as*) *IIII oeci magni Atticus adsi*⌜*g*⌝(*navi*) *meis*
Hilaritati Prote et Ampliato. S(*ua*) *p*(*ecunia*) *f*(*ieri*) *i*(*ussit*).

To Tiberius Claudius Karus who lived for eight years, twelve months, eleven days. To the Divine Shades. Threptus and Ecloge, the parents, and Tiberius Claudius, the brother, made (this) for Claudia Eglecte, the *delicium* of Antonia, the daughter of the divine Claudius, the most pious child and well deserving, who lived six years, one month, nine days. I, Atticus, entrusted the care of the altar of my siblings and also of the four urns of the main chamber to my Hilaritas Prote and Ampliatus. He ordered this to be made with his own money.

20. Eglecte is an unusual name; Solin (1996, 462) lists only three instances of its use.

The text of the inscription reflects the changes and additions that the monument underwent over time. Lines 2 to 11 constitute the longest and oldest dedication; parents Threptus and Ecloge—alongside their son Ti. Claudius Atticus—commemorate their daughter Claudia Eglecte. The parents are of enslaved status, while the children are free, almost certainly manumitted.[21] We cannot know how old Atticus was at the time that his six-year-old sister passed away, but he was probably older than her, perhaps in his early teens, since he participated in the commemoration. Compared to the funerary epitaph for Prosopa, this time the commemorative duties are discharged by the closest biological relatives of the *delicium*, not by his master or mistress. Still, the parents chose to include that their daughter was a favorite of Claudia Antonia, which they seem to have taken as a source of pride.

Lines 1 and 12–14 are later additions, most likely carved in two separate occasions. The same commemorators of Claudia Eglecte appear to have added the first line for the subsequent death of another child, Ti. Claudius Karus, who was only eight years old. Karus probably died some time after Claudia Eglecte and his family might have lacked the means to purchase another separate monument. The last three lines are spoken by Atticus—conceivably the only surviving child—in the first person. He entrusts the care of the funerary altar and four urns (two for his siblings, two for his parents?) to two individuals, perhaps his heirs. It is hard to reconstruct who these two people were: maybe his wife and child, maybe two *liberti*.

Additional speculation only brings us further away from the main issue at hand, the *delicia* Eglecte. In this case, the child was not just the *delicium* of the emperor's daughter but had parents and siblings who cared for her. This suggests that *delicia* could be part of a familial and social network that went beyond their relationship with master or mistress. Moreover, another imperial woman, the emperor Claudius' third wife, Messalina, enjoyed the company of *delicia*, as *CIL* 6.28132 attests.

D(*is*) *M*(*anibus*).
L(*ucio*) *Valerio Threpto,*
Valeria Messallina,
delicio suo,
vixit annis XVI,
mensib(*us*) *V, dieb*(*us*) *XIX.*

21. As observed in the case of Prosopa, a six-year-old child is too young to have been fully manumitted under the dictates of the law.

> To the Divine Shades. Valeria Messallina (made this) for Lucius Valerius Threptus, her *delicium*, who lived for 16 years, 5 months, 19 days.

The inscription, while textually straightforward, presents some oddities. First of all, the age at time of death; such a precise calculation is most frequently found for small children rather than teenagers (as in the case of Karus and Eglecte above).[22] Second, it is usually a parent who goes into so much detail about the age of the deceased. It can be hypothesized that Messalina knew this young man since he was born; perhaps she was even present in the household at the moment of his birth. The age of Valerius Threptus offers us another clue into his relationship with Messalina. The empress was only fourteen when she married Claudius and merely twenty-three when she was put to death. Sometime during those nine years, she set up an inscription for her *delicium* Threptus. Given his age, Threptus must have been by Messalina's side since she was a child in her father's household. Messalina and Threptus were probably not so far apart in age. Was he a playmate? Was he a lover? Was he some type of "living doll," something akin to a toy to teach young girls about motherhood? Despite their brief lives, Threptus and Messalina must have spent a large amount of time together, so much that she took it upon herself to provide him with a dignified burial.

The habit of keeping groups of *delicia* for entertainment was not exclusive to the imperial family, as *CIL* 6.36525 showcases.

> [*Hic*] *est s<e>pulta virgo* [*eg*]*regi*{*e*}*is moribus* [---]
> [---], *quae in delici*{*e*}*is fu*[*e*]*rat Vettiae*, *qua*[*e domino*]
> [*placu*]*it*. *Eam morte ob*[*i*]*ṭa diligunt mon*[*umentumque*]
> [*eius fl*]*etu ac muneribus* [*r*]*eplent*, *seque ips*{*e*}[*i deflent*],
> [*vi*]*ṭam esse ereptam sib*{*e*}*i s*[*erva*]*e suis deliciis*, *vitam a*[---].
>
> Here is buried a young woman of exceptional character, . . . who was one of the *delicia* of Vettia, who pleased the master. They loved her and, once she died, they filled up her funerary monument with lamentations and offerings, and they themselves mourned that the life of the enslaved girl, one of their *delicia*, was taken away, a life . . .

22. Similarly, in a funerary inscription from Pisa (*CIL* 11.1477), a seventeen-year-old *delicium* is commemorated by her master and mistress, who count the years, months, days, and hours that she lived for.

This inscription is dated to the first half of the first century BCE.[23] Remarkably, despite the length of the inscription, we do not know the name of the young woman (*virgo*) being commemorated. It cannot be ruled out that her name would have appeared in one if the sections that did not survive. The people who set up this epitaph, her master and mistress, appear to display genuine emotion in response to her death.[24] She was clearly one of many, but also beloved.

Last, I present a curious anecdote concerning the wedding of Octavian and Livia reported by the late second-century CE historian Cassius Dio. Their marriage was notoriously scandalous, not only because the bride was pregnant (by another man) at the time, but also because her first husband gave her away and even attended the wedding.

> The husband himself gave away the bride as a father; and the following incident happened at the wedding banquet. One of those chirping children, such as women keep around them, naked, in groups, for their amusement, seeing Livia reclining with Caesar and away from Nero, who was reclining with another man, went to her and said: "What are you doing here, mistress? For your husband is over there" pointing him out.[25]

Born and raised in the city of Nicaea in the Roman province of Bithynia (modern-day Turkey), Cassius Dio was the son of a Roman senator and a Greek-speaking mother; fluent in both Latin and Greek, he became a Roman senator like his father and resided in Italy but chose to write his historical opus in his native Greek. Although he does not use the term Latin *delicia*, he perfectly describes what the sources have indicated about them; there are chatty and sharp-tongued children who are kept for entertainment. Cassius Dio also affirms that these children are naked and companions to women in particular.[26] This passage can be easily compared with Propertius' description of his "cap-

23. The Latin text presents several spelling archaisms (*heic, ipsei, delicieis*, etc).

24. Vettia, the mistress, might have been the wife of Verres, the governor of Sicily who was famously prosecuted by Cicero in 70 BCE.

25. Dio 48.44.3: ἐξέδωκε δὲ αὐτὴν αὐτὸς ὁ ἀνὴρ ὥσπερ τις πατήρ. καί τι καὶ τοιοῦτον ἐν τῇ ἑστιάσει σφῶν συνηνέχθη: παιδίον τι τῶν ψιθύρων, οἷα αἱ γυναῖκες γυμνὰ ὡς πλήθει ἀθύρουσαι τρέφουσιν, ἰδὸν χωρὶς μὲν τὴν Λιουίαν μετὰ τοῦ Καίσαρος χωρὶς δὲ τὸν Νέρωνα μεθ᾽ ἑτέρου τινὸς κατακείμενον, προσῆλθέ τε αὐτῇ καὶ ἔφη, "τί ποιεῖς ἐνταῦθα, κυρία; ὁ γὰρ ἀνήρ σου," δείξας αὐτόν.

26. It is possible that the historian felt necessary to briefly explain this custom to his readers, who might not have been completely familiar with all Roman practices. Although it cannot be excluded that Greek-speaking elites, in imitation of Roman elites, also adopted the custom of keeping small, enslaved children as entertainers, Cassius Dio described them through a periphrastic explanation; was there no Greek word equivalent to *delicium*?

turers," the small naked children dispatched by his mistress, which we saw at the beginning of this section. Therefore, the forgoing evidence attests that the habit of keeping enslaved children as "pets" was so widespread that a shorthand description was enough to evoke for everyone their identity.

5.2 The Cycle of Erotion

Through the epitaphs and brief literary snippets analyzed thus far, we have encountered several children who can be identified as *delicia*, enslaved pet-children who are a source of delight and amusement for their masters and mistresses. In the passages by Seneca, Quintilian, and Suetonius, these children are presented as a group. However, if we turn to poetic compositions, it is possible to catch a more vivid and detailed picture of individual *delicia*. In the following sections, I present a cycle of three poems (5.34, 5.37, 10.61) by the epigrammatist Martial, where he mourns a young, enslaved girl from his household. In the first poem, Martial entrusts the recently deceased Erotion, his sweetheart (*puella*) and delight (*delicia*), to his parents who also dwell in the darkness of the Underworld.[27]

> This girl, I entrust to you father Fronto and mother Flacilla, my sweetheart and delight, so that the little Erotion would not be frightened by the black shades or by the bewildering mouths of Tartarus' dog. She would have endured the cold of a sixth midwinter, if she had not lived so many days less. May she now play, exuberant among her old patrons, and tweet my name with her stammering mouth. May the turf that covers her soft bones not be hard, and not be heavy upon her, earth: she was not heavy upon you.[28]

Little Erotion seems to truly come alive in this epigram. The poet imagines the child to be afraid of the dark and of the three-headed dog Cerberus, which are plausible reactions for someone who died shy of her sixth birthday. The poet also describes the girl's stammering speech as she calls out his name. Details

27. Mantke (1967–8, 234) proposes that Fronto and Flaccilla were not the poet's parents but Erotion's. See also Sullivan (1991, 2) on Martial's parents.

28. Mart. 5.34: *Hanc tibi, Fronto pater, genetrix Flaccilla, puellam / oscula commendo deliciasque meas, / paruola ne nigras horrescat Erotion umbras / oraque Tartarei prodigiosa canis. /Impletura fuit sextae modo frigora brumae, / uixisset totidem ni minus illa dies. / Inter tam ueteres ludat lasciua patronos /et nomen blaeso garriat ore meum. / Mollia non rigidus caespes tegat ossa nec illi, / terra, grauis fueris: non fuit illa tibi.*

such as these give the impression that Erotion is a real child, not a literary figment. Bell suggested that Erotion could have been the poet's own daughter, birthed by one of his enslaved women; while this hypothesis cannot be ruled out completely, it has been widely rejected based on the content of epigram 5.37 which I present below.[29] It is also important to acknowledge that the last two verses of the poem are a literary variation from the standard epigraphic diction *sit tibi terra levis* ("may the ground be light for you"), which would be commonly found on an actual tombstone. Already in the Hellenistic period, the subgenre of funerary epigrams had become widely popular, and Latin authors built upon that tradition, often making direct reference to the tombstone or the grave itself.[30]

The second poem for Erotion is the longest and has received the most scholarly attention, given the shocking nature of its content.

> The girl sweeter to me than old swans, more tender than a lamb of Galesian Phalantinus, more delicate than a shell of lake Lucrinus, to which you would not prefer the pearls of the Eritrean sea, nor the freshly polished ivory of the Indian elephant, and the first snow and the untouched lily; her hair won the fleece of Baetican sheep, and the braids of the people of the Rhine, and the golden dormouse; her mouth smelled as a rose orchard of Paestum, as that first honey of Attic honeycombs, as that small piece of amber stolen from the hand; compared to that the peacock is unbecoming, the squirrel is unlovable and the phoenix trivial. Erotion is still warm on the recent pyre, whom the bitter law of the most cruel fates finished in her sixth winter, not all gone through, my love, my joy, my playful thing. And Paetus forbids me to be sad and, striking his chest more and more and shaking his head, he says "Are you not ashamed to cry the death of a little home-born slave? I have buried a well-known, excellent, noble and rich wife, and yet I live." What can be stronger than my Paetus? He inherited twenty million sestertii, and yet he lives.[31]

29. Bell 1984, 21. This hypothesis is not accepted by Sullivan (1991, 2n7); Watson (1992, 258n29); and Bernstein (2005, 259n10).

30. For a selection of funerary epigrams in the Palatine Anthology see Cairns (2016, 243–76). On the reception of Greek epigram in imperial Roman authors see Lattimore 1942; Veyne 1964; Sullivan 1991, 78–93; Nisbet 2007, 543–63.

31. Mart. 5.37: *Puella senibus dulcior mihi cycnis, / agno Galaesi mollior Phalantini, / concha Lucrini delicatior stagni, / cui nec lapillos praeferas Erythraeos / nec modo politum pecudis Indicae dentem / niuesque primas liliumque non tactum; / quae crine uicit Baetici gregis uellus / Rhenique nodos aureamque nitelam; / fragrauit ore quod rosarium Paesti, / quod Atticarum prima mella cerarum, / quod sucinorum rapta de manu gleba; / cui conparatus indecens erat pauo, / inamabilis*

This poem can be divided into three sections. In the first one (lines 1–13), Martial compares the object of his delight, an unnamed *puella*, to pleasant sensations and exotic objects (1–6), and praises her hair and mouth (7–13).[32] To compare one's beloved to pleasing things is a trope of erotic poetry, found in Catullus, Horace, and Ovid.[33] Thus, the reader is expecting to discover, in the later sections of the poem, the identity of this marvelously beautiful woman. Martial, as he often accomplishes in his poetic creations, defies and subverts the expectations of his reader. In fact, in the second section of the poem (14–17), the audience discovers—quite shockingly—that Martial has been talking about a small child, a girl who died before her sixth birthday. She is indeed the same Erotion who is also mourned in the same book of epigrams, only a couple of poems before.

Despite this shocking revelation, it is only in the final section of the poem (18–24) that the reader discovers the real objective of the poem. Martial is in contention with a man called Paetus.[34] The two disagree on what can be considered appropriate or inappropriate behavior for a (Roman) man. Paetus believes that excessively mourning Erotion breaks that unwritten code of conduct which men must adhere to. He asks the poet if he is not ashamed (*pudet*) of his excessive grief for an enslaved child; he himself has recently lost his wife and—arguably—should be the most aggrieved. Martial punches back, suggesting that Paetus, far from being aggrieved, is actually enjoying his wife's lavish inheritance. Although the epigrammatist does not explicitly say that Paetus did not love his wife and only married her for her money, this can be inferred as the next logical step. Martial and Paetus (whether he was a real person or a fictional character) embody two different types of masculinity; one is not afraid to show his emotions, but would never be dependent on a woman's wealth, while the other might act as "a real man" but completely relies on his late wife's fortune.

sciurus et frequens phoenix, / adhuc recenti tepet Erotion busto, / quam pessimorum lex amara fatorum / sexta peregit hieme, nec tamen tota, / nostros amores gaudiumque lususque. / Et esse tristem me meus uetat Paetus, / pectusque pulsans pariter et comam uellens: / "Deflere non te uernulae pudet mortem?/ Ego coniugem" inquit "extuli et tamen uiuo, / notam, superbam, nobilem, locupletem." / Quid esse nostro fortius potest Paeto? / Ducentiens accepit, et tamen uiuit!

32. La Penna (1992, 10) argues that these sixteen comparanda engage with all five senses, creating several moments of synesthesia: *dulcior* (v.1) for sound, *mollior* (v.2) for touch, *delicatior* (v.3) for taste and touch, while all the items mentioned in v. 4–8 are all pleasurable to see. Laes (2003, 317) points out that Erotion is compared to several animals (sheep, dormouse, peacock, squirrel), further highlighting the connection between beloved enslaved children and animals.

33. Cat. 17.15–17; Hor. *Od.* 1.19.6; Ov. *Met.* 13.789–804. See also Watson (1992, 254n5).

34. Shackleton Bailey (1993, 385) calls Paetus an "obvious figment." The term *paetus* is an epithet for Venus, meaning "blink-eyed" (Ov. *Ars Am.* 2.659). It was also a cognomen; Livy 27.36 reports an augur named P. Aelius Paetus; Cicero had a friend named L. Papirius Paetus, to whom the letters *Ad Fam.* 9.15–26 are addressed.

Therefore, epigram 5.37 begins as an erotic composition, then assumes funerary tones, and finally ends with a reaffirmation of the poet's values and opinions. In other words, Erotion, while she played a central role in two-thirds of the poem, is a mere expedient, so that Martial can showcase his witticism and savage comebacks. While the poem might have Erotion as its subject, it is not really about her. It is about the poet's grief and his relationship with his peers, other free male individuals.

I mentioned above that epigram 5.37 has received much scholarly attention. Before Watson's 1992 seminal article "Erotion: *puella delicata*?," commentators have often assumed that the relationship between Martial and the girl was platonic, similar to a father-daughter bond.[35] This interpretation relies on the false assumption that "if Martial's sentiments towards a five-year-old girl included an erotic element, then he is a pedophile and as such he would be condemned by a contemporary Roman reader, just as much as by a modern one."[36]

Indeed, this uncomfortable problem has usually been resolved by denying the erotic elements of 5.37. However, the poem unmistakably features themes and vocabulary typical of erotic poetry. I already stated that comparing one's beloved to pleasurable objects is a trope found in Catullus, Horace, and Ovid. Martial and his contemporary readers would definitely have been highly familiar with these poets' works. Furthermore, Martial uses the words *amor*, *gaudium*, and *lusus* (5.37.17) to describe the object of his affection. Since Catullus employed the word *gaudium* (joy) speaking of his deceased brother, this term might be fitting for both funerary and erotic poems.[37] Nevertheless, *lusus* (play) can have erotic connotations. For example, Ovid, in the *Ars Amatoria*, famously employs *lusus* as a metaphor for sex.[38] As for *amor* (love), it would be impossible to argue that the term was not foundational for Roman love elegy.[39] Propertius places it in the first line of his first elegy (1.1.4), thus in a strong and emphatic position. Catullus employs the word *amor* over fifty times in his poems, while Propertius uses it sixty-four times in his first book of elegies alone.[40] Moreover, going back to the first composition for Erotion now with the knowledge of the content of 5.37, it is possible to spot a few words that might have erotic under-

35. Bell (1984) suggests that Erotion was Martial's daughter. Sullivan (1991, 214–15) describes 5.37 as a "clever mixture of traditional motifs" and suggests that the two poems interact to develop an ambiguity that might be used "jocularly."

36. Watson 1992, 258.

37. Cat. 68.22–23: *tecum una tota est nostra sepulta domus, / omnia tecum una perierunt gaudia nostra*. "With you is buried all our family, our every joy has died together with you."

38. Ovid *Am.* 2.3.13. Adams (1982, 162) notes that *lusus* takes its implication from context, thus can fall anywhere between innocent play to intercourse.

39. Gutzwiller 2015, 25.

40. On the use of *amor* in Catullus and Propertius see Gutzwiller 2015, 38–42.

tones, such as *lasciva* (5.34.7) and *osculum* (5.34.2). *Lasciva*, meaning "lewd" or "lascivious," is often employed in love elegy, although it can also express something more neutral like "playful."[41] Likewise, *osculum* can be a romantic kiss, but also the kind of kiss that family members exchange.[42]

Nevertheless, the erotic language present in epigram 5.37 cannot be denied. Martial purposefully planted tropes of love elegy in the poem to lead his reader to believe the *puella* was his "girlfriend," not a five-year-old girl. While it is obvious that Martial wanted to defy the reader's expectations (as he so frequently does in his production) by revealing the age of his *puella* only in the second half of the poem, we must ask whether an ancient reader would have had the same disgusted reaction that such a revelation elicits in us. This seems to be the main reason to reject erotic interpretation of the poem; it cannot be sexual language because Martial's audience would have been appalled. The alternative solution is to admit that Martial's contemporary readers would not have been so shocked or repulsed. Sullivan observed that Martial is rather open in his approval or disapproval of certain sexual practices; pederasty is never condemned, unlike female homosexuality for example.[43] Just like any other writer, Martial was not trying to alienate his audience; we must assume that his views were shared by many, even if only among elite free males. Moreover, in his groundbreaking work on the invention of modern childhood, Ariès argued that a child's sexual innocence is a concept only developed during the seventeenth century.[44] This suggests that attitudes toward sex and sexuality can vary according to the time period. While I cannot help but find the sexualization of children a disgusting practice, I cannot assume that the Romans did as well. Indeed, there is ample evidence to suggest the opposite.

To cite just one example, Petronius' *Satyricon* features three explicit portrayals of young children engaged in sexual activities. Perhaps the most well-known case appears during the *Cena Trimalchionis*, when the host Trimalchio informs his guests that he, as a young enslaved boy, was sexually available to both his master and mistress.[45] The second scene is narrated earlier in the novel; the

41. See TLL 7.2.983.

42. Donatus (*Eun.* 456) attests that *osculum* is the kiss one gives out of duty to family members, *basium* is a romantic but chaste kiss, *suavium* is a lustful kiss (*oscula officiorum sunt, basia pudicorum affectuum, sauia libidinum*). However, *osculum* can be used in relation to a sexual partner as well (Lucr. 4.1108; Cat. 48; Tib. 1.8.37–38; Prop. 2.15.10.) Overall Martial prefers *basium* to *osculum* (29 to 10 uses, respectively, in his poetry, TLL 9.2.1108).

43. Sullivan 1979, 293.

44. Ariès 1965, 101. Laes (2010, 276) also suggests that the strong contrast perceived between children and sexuality is a product of the Victorian era.

45. Petron. *Sat.* 75.11: *Tamen ad delicias ipsimi annos quattuordecim fui. Nec turpe est, quod dominus iubet. Ego tamen et ipsimae satis faciebam.* "But I was delighting the master until I was fourteen. It is not shameful, because the master ordered it. And I also did the mistress alright."

Priapus devotee Quartilla, as she is attempting to convince Giton to have sexual intercourse with a seven-year-old girl named Pannychis, recounts that she herself does not remember ever being a virgin, for she had been having sex since she was an infant.[46] Quartilla's treatment of young Pannychis is supposed to shock the reader, for even Encolpius, the protagonist and narrator, confesses his surprise (*obstupui*); however, his concerns are quelled after Quartilla recounts her own personal story. The third example appears toward the end of the novel as we have it; Encolpius describes the *matrona* Philomela pimping out her own daughter and son to the old poet Eumolpus.[47] The children are called *puer* and *puella*, but their precise age is not given. Of course, the *Satyricon* is meant to be an exaggeration, an over-the-top narrative which amuses and sometimes shock its readers; yet it is not supposed to disgust them, turning them away from the novel, and it is unlikely to have introduced elements that the audience would not have been able to recognize as features of its cultural and social milieu.

Returning now to Erotion, although the erotic language with which she is portrayed is repulsive to a modern reader, we must not project the same reaction onto Martial and his contemporary readers.[48] Words such as delight (*delicia*, 5.34.2), girl (*puella*, 5.37.1), love, joy and playful thing (*amor*, *gaudium*, *lusus*, 5.37.17) should be taken as expressions of erotic language and desire. It is also important to remember that Erotion is an enslaved child, and sexual exploitation is a ubiquitous feature of slavery. Perhaps in an attempt to make this relationship less abhorrent, Watson hypothesized that Martial and Erotion did not have sexual intercourse, but they were involved in some kind of sexual play, "graduating to full-scale sexual relationship when the girl became old enough."[49] A parallel for this hypothesis can be found in an erotic epigram by Philodemus, a Greek poet of the first century BCE:

> Your summer crop does not yet bear its fruit, nor has the grape darkened and brought about its first virginal charms, but already young Loves sharpen their swift arrows, Lysidice, and a hidden fire is smoking. Let us run, we unlucky lovers, before the arrow is on the bow; I prophesy a sudden great fire.[50]

46. Petron. *Sat.* 25.

47. Petron. *Sat.* 140.

48. The three-poem cycle for Erotion is also not an isolated example; Martial himself wrote three poems for a young man, Didymus, whom he called his *delicium* (12.75.6). Ausonius, a fourth-century CE author, wrote a cycle of poems for a beloved *delicium* called Bissula.

49. Watson 1992, 263. See also Laes 2003, 320.

50. Anth. Pal. 7.643: οὔπω σοι καλύκων γυμνὸν θέρος, οὐδὲ μελαίνει / βότρυς ὁ παρθενίους πρωτοβολῶν χάριτας, / ἀλλ᾽ ἤδη θοὰ τόξα νέοι θήγουσιν Ἔρωτες, / Λυσιδίκη, καὶ πῦρ τύφεται ἐγκρύφιον. / φεύγωμεν, δυσέρωτες, ἕως βέλος οὐκ ἐπὶ νευρῇ· / μάντις ἐγὼ μεγάλης αὐτίκα πυρκαϊῆς.

The poem does not mention Lysidice's age; however, it can be inferred that she was quite young, since she is being compared to a premature summer harvest and unripe grapes. Indeed, autumn—not summer—was the season for maturity, both sexual and agricultural.[51] One could argue that Lysidice was a prepubescent girl, who could not yet bear children. Whatever her age might have been, the speaking persona who is initially interested in performing sexual acts with her in the end resolves that she is still too young. Similarly, Horace's *Odes* 2.5 portrays a girl who is not old enough for a full intercourse (1–4: *nondum subacta ferre iugum valet . . . nec tauri ruentis in venerem tolerare pondus*); the poet advises to turn away from green grapes (v. 9–10: *tolle cupidinem inmitis uvae*) and toward darker, more ripened, fruits (10–12: *lividos . . . autumnus racemos purpureo varius colore*). Time will come to pass, the girl will be ready one day (13–15: *currit enim ferox aetas et illi, quos tibi dempserit, adponet annos*).

Although Horace is clearly employing a literary trope—even characterized by the recurring equivalence between young age and light colors—it is reasonable to assume that this kind of argument would have been familiar to a contemporary audience, otherwise the poem would not have resonated. In a similar fashion, although Martial exaggerates, hypersexualizes, and misrepresents for purposes of amusement, he does not invent a new reality.[52] Erotion, whether she was a real person, a combination of multiple girls, or a complete figment of the poet's imagination, represents a plausible and understandable character. It is much harder to hypothesize whether the experience of children like Erotion was rare but attested, mainstream, or even so common as to pass unnoticed. I believe that the last option comes closest to the lived reality of enslaved individuals. As Seneca the Elder puts it, "for a freeborn person (sexual) unchasteness is a crime, for a slave it is a necessity, for a freedman it is a duty."[53]

I come now to the third and last poem of the so-called Erotion cycle—epigram 10.61—which was written several years after the first two.[54]

> Here rests Erotion, a shadow died too young, whom her sixth winter slew by a fate's crime. Whoever will be the king of this little plot after me, give annual offering to her little shades. Thus, may your Lar be eternal, your people be safe, and this stone be the only lamentable thing on your property.[55]

51. Pindar *I.* 1.2.4–5; Virg. *G.* 2.451; Hor. *Epod.* 2.12–18. See also Hor. *Od.* 2.5 mentioned below.
52. Sullivan 1979, 292–93.
53. Sen. *Controv.* 4.10 *inpudicitia in ingenuo crimen est, in servo necessitas, in liberto officium.*
54. The traditional chronology of the publication of Martial's books was first established by Friedlaender (1886). Howell (1980, 6) accepts the same general dating. Citroni (1989, 214) proposed some minor revisions, but the traditional chronology has largely remained the same.
55. Mart. 10.61. *Hic festinata requiescit Erotion umbra, / crimine quam fati sexta peremit hiems.*

This epigram seems to depict the actual tombstone of Erotion, with expressions such as "here rests" (*hic . . . requiescit*) and the mention of divine shades (*umbra*, *Manibus*). We saw that the first epigram closed with a typical funerary epigraphic formula, "may the ground be light for you" (*sit tibi terra levis*). To find direct references to funerary epitaphs is therefore not surprising. What is unexpected, however, is the lack of personal elements in the description of Erotion, who seemed so life-like in epigram 5.34. As for 10.61, I feel that this poem could have been written about any prematurely deceased child, for there is nothing that depicts Erotion as a specific individual. Based on this poem alone, I would argue that Erotion was not a real person but, at best, a mash-up character built upon multiple deceased *vernae* from the poet's household, if not a complete invention. Yet her stammering mouth and golden braids from 5.34 and 5.37 suggest that Erotion had a real counterpart, an "original" girl who, at some point, inspired the poet.

Conversely, when using funerary inscriptions as sources, there is no doubt that the named people were real. However, analyzing tombstones to learn more about everyday activities is often an impossible pursuit. Especially when it concerns sex and sexuality, funerary epitaphs (and inscriptions in general) are particularly ill-suited to investigate patterns of behavior.

D(*is*) *M*(*anibus*).
Pontianae, C(*ai*) *f*(*iliae*), *Primitivae*
coniugi dulcissimae,
pientissimae, karissimae;
fec(*it*) *T*(*itus*) *Flavius Agathopus,*
coniunx infelicissimus,
ultimus suorum,
cum qua vixit
annis XXXX.[56]

To the Divine Shades. For Pontiana Primitiva, the daughter of Caius, a most sweet, pious and dear spouse; Titus Flavius Agathopus made (this monument), her aggrieved husband, the last of her relatives, who lived with her for forty years.

This inscription well illustrates the issue. This couple, who has been married for forty years, might have had a more or less active sexual life, but nonetheless

/ Quisquis eris nostri post me regnator agelli, / manibus exiguis annus iusta dato./ Sic Lare perpetuo, sic turba sospite solus / flebilis in terra sit lapis iste tua.

56. *CIL* 6.24697.

had one. Yet none of the adjectives used by T. Flavius Agathopus to describe his wife (*dulcissima*, *pientissima* and *karissima*) have an erotic connotation. The word spouse (*coniunx*) subsumes the couple's entire sexual life, which remains implicitly assumed.[57] Thus, if it were not commonly accepted that spouses engage in intercourse, it would be impossible to know from an epitaph such as this whether the two individuals had a sexual relationship.

As for *delicium*, how could a modern reader know whether the relationship between a child and their master had a sexual element only based upon epigraphic lexicon? A Roman passerby, reading a funerary epitaph, would have known what *delicium* meant, as they knew what *coniunx* meant, and whether that term always, sometimes, or never involved sexual contact. Paraphrasing, looking for evidence to support or reject the hypothesis that all *delicia* were like Erotion in the epigraphic record would be an impossible quest. The gravestone itself and the epigraphic habit significantly limit what kind of lexicon can be employed in a funerary inscription.

Nevertheless, there is one epitaph which suggests the existence of an intimate (if not sexual) relationship between a twenty-two-year-old man and a seven-year-old *delicium*:

> *M*(*anius*) *Allienus Sp*(*uri*) *f*(*ilius*)
> *Romanus decessit*
> *ann*(*os*) *XXII Gutta*
> *puella delicium eius*
> *ann*(*orum*) *VII eodem die mortua / uno rogo combusta in uno.*
>
> M. Allienus Romanus, the son of Spurius, died in his twenty second year. Gutta, a young girl, his *delicium*, who died on the same day and was burnt on the same pyre, (now) in one tomb.[58]

This inscription features a curious detail regarding the shared funerary pyre. To be buried together is an attested erotic trope, present in Propertius and Ovid.[59] It is difficult to hypothesize based on this epitaph alone if M. Allienus

57. Inscriptions are not adequate loci to express sexual tendencies and habits. Perhaps the only exception is *AE* 1972: 40. This fragmentary inscription commemorates a woman who could have had more than one husband (*maritos*) at the time of her death; the epitaph also expresses a rooted sense of matrimonial unity (*pudor unus*, *unus amor*). Unfortunately, the fragmentary state of the inscription makes additional speculations difficult.

58. *CIL* 6.5163, second column only.

59. Prop. 4.7.94; Ov. *Met.* 4.157. Two additional inscriptions—*CIL* 6.21986 and 24345—feature a shared burial for a master and his *delicium*.

Romanus and Gutta shared a sexual relation, or even if the master was the biological father of the child.[60] Given the difference in age, power, and status, we cannot exclude that Gutta would have been sexually available to M. Allienus Romanus, whether he did take advantage of his position or not. In other words, while sexual implications cannot be always assumed, they cannot be completely ruled out either.

Therefore, even when an epitaph includes the child's parents, it might still show traces of possible sexual exploitation:

D(*is*) *M*(*anibus*)
{*M*}
Palladi; *fecit*
Iulia Graeis mater
pientissima de-
licio Sergiani, *vix*(*it*)
an(*nos*) *V m*(*enses*) *III.*

To the Divine Shades of Palladius/to Pallas, his/her most pious mother Iulia Graeis made this for the *delicium* of Sergianus, who lived for five years and three months.[61]

This five-year-old child is openly called the *delicium* of a man called Sergianus and is commemorated by the mother Iulia Graeis, possibly a freedwoman. The identity of Sergianus is unclear; he was possibly the child's master, because his name—expressed in the possessive genitive—reinforces his claim over the body of the *delicium*. Moreover, I translated the name of the child as either Palladius or Pallas. Indeed, the dative *Palladi* in the third line could be either the genitive of Palladius (a masculine name) or the dative of Pallas, which is a prevalently a feminine name, as documented by Solin.[62] Whether the deceased child was male or female does not affect the issue of possible sexual exploitation. Based on the information available, it is most likely that Sergianus was the former master of Iulia Graeis and claimed ownership over her child, who was likely employed to entertain the master.

Conversely, a handful of epitaphs for *delicia* were certainly set up by their masters.[63]

60. Gutta is a name unattested in Solin 1996.
61. *IL* SanMichele 43.
62. Solin 1996, 271–72.
63. This type of epitaph is further discussed in Section 5.4, which serves as more complete epigraphic overview.

[*Ti*(*berius*) *Cl*]*audius Aug*(*usti*) *l*(*ibertus*) *Dalus*
fecit Moscho l(*iberto*) *et*
vernae suo et delicio
vixit annis V.

Ti. Claudius Dalus, the freedman of Augustus, made this to his freedman Moschus, his home-born slave and *delicium*, who lived five years.[64]

I already mentioned—when analyzing the epitaphs set up by Livia, Livilla, and Messalina—that the dedicatee is too young to have been fully and formally manumitted. Arguably, the dedicator is again a member of the imperial household, a freedman of the emperor. As often happens, it is difficult to ascertain what the relationship between Dalus and Moschus was. Did Dalus, as the master of Moschus, harbor erotic feelings for the boy, as Martial possibly did for Erotion? Was he perhaps both the master and father of the child, a *verna* born into his household? It may never be possible to answer these questions, and the interpretation of these epitaphs will ultimately be left to the reader. Even if we do not know much about Moschus and Dalus, we can at least say that Dalus discharged the commemorative duties usually associated with a parent or a close relative. While it is unlikely that Dalus' *familia* included only a five-year-old boy, it is not unsound to argue that the Augustan freedman considered Moschus to be his responsibility and, as such, part of his family.

Although additional literary and epigraphic texts are analyzed in the sections below, it is worth mentioning that—based on the evidence surveyed thus far—the identity of *delicia* is consistent; they are enslaved (or formerly enslaved) children who are often commemorated by their masters. This might be due to the fact that these children were separated from their parents or, if they were allowed to live in the same household, the master focused his attention on the child alone, remaining uninterested in their extended social and biological network.

5.3 Surrogate Fatherhood in Statius' *Silvae*[65]

Before becoming a literary character in Dante's *Purgatory*, the poet Statius composed a collection of occasional poems called the *Silvae* in the second half of the first century CE. Three of his compositions (2.1, 2.6, 5.5) are dedicated to children like Erotion: enslaved youth who were the *delicia* of their masters and

64. *CIL* 6.14990.

65. While this book is indebted to Laes' scholarship in many ways, this section in particular relies upon his 2010 article on *delicia* in Statius' *Silvae*.

tragically passed away prematurely.[66] In these poems, Statius develops a unique way of presenting the children and the quasi-parental relationship that they shared with their masters. He describes fictive kinship bonds, claiming that these beloved *vernae* were considered akin to the master's offspring.

Much remains unknown about Statius' life, but we do know that he was married to a woman named Claudia and that they had no children. In an emotionally vivid poem, Statius describes the premature death of an enslaved child, born into his household, whom he had taken up as his own son. The poet portrays himself striving to compose a poem in his memory, as he leans against his tombstone thirty days after his death (5.5.24–25: *hoc quoque cum nitor, ter dena luce peracta, /adclinis tumulo en planctus in carmina verto*). In the opening of the poem, Statius clarifies the nature of his relationship with the child.

> Look, the child is snatched away as he clasps my heart and soul with his dying arms—he was not from my stock, he did not bear my name and features; I was not his father. But look at my tears and bruised cheeks, believe my laments, you that have lost a child: I lost a child. Let fathers and mothers come here with open heart. And let her bear the ash and the crime with her eyes, whatever woman carried their children to the funerary pyre under her full breasts with a wavering step and hit her wet chest and extinguished the glowing cinders with her milk.[67]

The poet openly admits that he shared no biological relationship with the child, yet he invokes the emotional support of all parents who prematurely lost their babies. Only they can understand his pain. Immediately from the start of the poem, Statius makes clear that his fatherly emotions, including grief, are just as strong as any other parent's. He equates rather explicitly biological and surrogate parenthood, focusing on the figure of the grieving mother at the funeral of her children. Statius' claims of paternity become even stronger later into the composition:

66. Another poem usually associated with these compositions is 3.4, dedicated to a eunuch called Earinus, who was the favorite of the emperor Domitian. That text, however, does not employ the word *delicium* and openly describes a pederastic relationship between the emperor and a castrated teenager, who is even dressed as a Roman bride (Laes 2010, 261) when brought to the imperial palace to be Domitian's cupbearer. I believe this poem is different enough in content, scope, and language to be analyzed separately from 2.1, 2.6, and 5.5.

67. Statius, *Sil.* 5.5.8–17: *morientibus ecce lacertis /viscera nostra tenens animamque avellitur infans,/ non de stirpe quidem nec qui mea nomina ferret / oraque. Non fueram genitor. Sed cernite fletus / liventesque genas et credite planctibus orbi./ Orbus ego. huc patres et aperto pectore matres / conveniant*; *cineremque oculis et crimina ferte*, / *si qua sub uberibus plenis ad funera natos* / *ipsa gradu labente tulit madidumque cecidit* / *pectus et ardentes restinxit lacte papillas.*

> I did not love a chatty *delicium* acquired from a Pharian ship, a child instructed in the insolence of the Nile, too impudent with his tongue and cheeky remarks; he was mine, mine. I took him up as he fell upon the ground, and I cherished him, anointed with festal oil, asking for new air with his feeble cries, I introduced him to life. What more did his parents bestow on him? I gave you, little one, another birth and freedom when you were still nursing. You smiled at my gifts, not yet knowing gratitude. My love may have been hasty, but hasty with merit, lest such small freedom should miss any day. Should I, as a savage, not accuse all the gods above and unjust Tartarus for their envy ? Should I not grieve for you, dear child? With him alive, I desired no children; from the moment of his birth he enveloped my heart and held it fast; I showed to him words and sounds, addressing his cries and hidden wounds, as you crawled on the ground I lifted you with my right arm to kiss you, and on my loving lap made you cover your already drooping eyes and invite sweet sleep. My name was your first word, my laughter was your game, my face was your joy.[68]

Unfortunately, the poem abruptly ends at this point. Despite the loss of the remainder of the composition, this last section features many significant details. First, Statius clarifies for his audience that this child was no Egyptian jester, purchased for his quick tongue and taught to say witty or scandalous things. In other words, he is not one of those *delicia* that Augustus kept and Seneca complained about.[69] If the boy was not purchased, then he was a *verna*. The poet further stresses this point with the words *meus ille, meus* ("he was mine, mine"). The repetition of the possessive adjective *meus* highlights not

68. Statius, *Sil.* 5.5. 66–87: *Non ego mercatus Pharia de puppe loquaces /delicias doctumque sui convicia Nili / infantem lingua nimium salibusque protervum /dilexi: meus ille, meus. tellure cadentem / aspexi atque unctum genitali carmine fovi, / poscentemque novas tremulis ululatibus auras / inserui vitae. quid plus tribuere parentes? / quin alios ortus libertatemque sub ipsis / uberibus tibi, parve, dedi; heu! munera nostra / rideres ingratus adhuc. properaverit ille, / sed merito properabat, amor, ne perderet ullum / libertas tam parva diem. nonne horridus ipsos / invidia superos iniustaque Tartara pulsem? / nonne gemam te, care puer? quo sospite natos / non cupii; primo gremium qui protinus ortu / implicuit fixitque mihi, cui verba sonosque / monstravi questusque et vulnera caeca resolvi, / reptantemque solo demissus ad oscula dextra / erexi, blandoque sinu iam iamque cadentes / exsopire genas dulcesque accersere somnos. / cui nomen vox prima meum ludusque tenello / risus, et a nostro veniebant gaudia vultu.*

69. It should be noted that while Seneca dislikes the practice of buying and keeping cheeky enslaved children around, in *Ep.* 12.3 he describes the (enslaved) son of his foreman as his former *delicium*, a boy who was his pet slave when they were both much younger. In this case, though, the child would have been a *verna*, not a purchased *servus*. On Seneca and his former *delicium* Felicio see Watson and Watson (2009). Furthermore, Seneca (*Ep.* 83.4) also speaks of a young boy named Pharius, whom he is about to replace with a younger boy.

only his claim of paternity, but also his legal ownership over the boy. The poem claims that—as soon as the child was born—Statius picked him up and held him (71–72), which is a paternal ritual to acknowledge the birth of a legitimate child.[70] This event is meant to mirror the death scene of the boy, who died in the arms of the poet (69–70). Statius has been figuratively holding the child, protecting him, loving him, and watching over him for his whole life. The poet also says that he introduced the boy to life (72) and not even his parents did as much for him, since he gave him true life: he manumitted him (72–74). This type of language fits well with sociologist Orlando Patterson's famous definition of slavery as social death; the enslaved, lacking personhood (legally) has no family, no parents, no children, no past and no future.[71] Through manumission, the enslaved goes through a second birth—the only one that legally matters—and becomes an individual. I believe that Statius is expressing something similar in this passage. He gave the boy a true birth, real personhood, which is more than what his biological parents gave him, which—lest we forget—is life itself.

It is worth pausing for a moment and noting that we also know almost nothing about this boy. We do not know how he died or how old he was. We do not even know his name. Statius mentions some things about him: he laughed, he fell asleep in the master's lap, he crawled, and he cried. None of this is distinctive; these actions are common to every child. It is possible that the boy never reached an age when he could walk or speak in full sentences, thus little else could be said about his actions and distinctive personality. Even if the boy remains unnamed, it would be a mistake to take it as a sign that Statius' affection for him was not deep. On the contrary, Statius appears to value and cherish his role as a surrogate father. His grief is so overwhelming that he struggles to put it into words.

> My strengths are consumed, I have no words to say, my mind does not find anything worth that spark of light. Every speech fails, all words are worthless. Forgive me, boy. You bury me with a fog of sorrows. Ah! It would have been hard, if Thracian Orpheus saw his beloved's wife wound and found a song that was soothing for him, or if Apollo did not stay silent embracing Linus' funerary pyre.[72]

70. *Tollere liberum* (or *suscipere liberum*) is a phrase used in a handful of literary texts to describe a possible ritual where, after the birth of a child, the father could legally recognize them as legitimate by picking them up. This is accepted as a real practice by many scholars including Dixon (1988, 237–40); Bernstein (2005, 260); and Busch (2013, 80). Shaw (2001) cast doubts on the existence of such a ritual and on its legal validity.

71. Patterson 1982.

72. Stat. *Sil.* 5.5.48–56: *absumptae vires et copia fandi / nulla mihi, dignumque nihil mens ful-*

Statius compares himself to the mythological characters Orpheus and Apollo. They were able to sing of their loved ones, Orpheus of his wife and Apollo of his son, and so the poet ought to as well. The manumitted *verna* is just as dear to Statius as a wife is to a husband, as a son to a father. Indeed, even if the poet states that he did not father the boy, throughout the poem parental images are employed to describe their relationship. Surrogate fatherhood is certainly a type of fictive kinship, and it is undeniable that Statius considered the child as his own, for—as he himself says—he had no more desire for biological offspring (79–80: *natos non cupii*).

Statius' lamentation for his boy shares significant similarities with another composition from the poet's earlier work, *Silvae* 2.1. The poem—over two hundred lines long—is a complex composition, full of literary allusions and mythological exempla juxtaposed with pictures of daily life. In the beginning, Statius portrays himself and his friend Atedius Melior after they attended a funeral for a young boy.[73] The poet confesses his previous inability to console his friend, for Melior is suffering such grief.

> Is your desire for tears now sated, are you now fatigued and not resentful of a friend's appeals? Shall I sing now? Look, my face swims through tears and this poem, and sad smudges fall among the words. For I also led forth the solemn procession of the dark funeral and the child's bier (alas a crime!) witnessed by the City; I saw the cruel heaps of ill-fated incense and the soul weeping over his body, and I saw you surpassing the cries of father and the arms of mothers, as you embraced the pyre and were ready to swallow the fire, I—your likeminded companion—could scarcely restrain you and I angered you by restraining you.[74]

From the passage we can infer that Melior has lost a young child and that he surpassed other fathers and mothers in his expression of grief. This might

mine tanto / repperit: inferior vox omnis et omnia sordent / verba. Ignosce, puer: tu me caligine mersum/ obruis. A! *durus, viso si vulnere carae / coniugis invenit caneret quod Thracius Orpheus / dulce sibi, si busta Lini complexus Apollo / non tacuit.*

73. Mart. 6.28 depicts the same funeral, confirming that the procession was witnessed by the entire city of Rome, as Statius himself claims. Bernstein (2005, 260) underscores the public nature of Melior's grief, and Laes (2010, 250) argues that by organizing the funeral the man acts as the boy's social father.

74. Statius, *Sil.* 2.1. 15–25: *iam flendi expleta voluptas, /iamque preces fessus non indignaris amicas? /iamne canam? lacrimis en et mea carmine in ipso / ora natant tristesque cadunt in verba liturae./ ipse etenim tecum nigrae sollemnia pompae / spectatumque Urbi* (*scelus heu!*) *puerile feretrum / produxi; saevos damnati turis acervos /plorantemque animam supra sua funera vidi, / teque patrum gemitus superantem et bracchia matrum / complexumque rogos ignemque haurire parantem / vix tenui similis comes offendique tenendo.*

appear as an exaggeration, as if Melior had something to prove. Statius also says that he had to restrain Melior, because his friend was ready to join the child on the burning funeral pyre. In the previous section, I presented an inscription for a man who was burnt on the same pyre and buried together with his *delicium*.[75] In that case, the man and his *delicium* had probably died around the same time and so they were both supposed to receive funerary rites. As for Melior, while his grief might have made him feel as if he were ready to die, he was still alive and thus did not belong alongside the boy's corpse on the pyre. Yet his desire to be burnt (and likely buried) with the boy is evident. It is also worthwhile to note that the name of the child is not spelled out at the beginning of the poem. However, the careful readers of Statius' *Silvae* Book 2 would already know his identity. Indeed, the poet wrote a brief dedicatory note addressed to Melior, placed at the beginning of the second book, where he lists the subjects of his upcoming poems. There, he says "in the first place there is the poem on the death of our Glaucias, whose most delightful childhood—and such as it often happens to the unfortunates, I embraced you and loved you—now is no longer close to you."[76] In fact, the name Glaucias does not appear in the consolatory poem until the very end, creating a heightened sense of expectation for the name reveal, which is denied to the reader until the conclusion.[77]

As the poem continues, Statius asks Melior to share his pain with him, for he himself is no stranger to grief; his poetry has consoled many mothers and children, and he also had to bury an important member of his family, specifically his father. Then, addressing the beloved boy (*dilecte puer*), he expresses difficulty in deciding which of the child's qualities he should praise first.

> For a long time, deservingly beloved boy, I am torn looking for a worthy beginning and which of your qualities to sing first. On one side, your years standing at the threshold of life, on the other side, your beauty seizes me, and from there your precocious modesty, decency, and propriety more advanced than your years. Oh, where is that pale skin suffused with a blood-like red, and those eyes like stars, radiant lights in the sky, and the collected modesty of your small brow, the noble locks

75. I also mentioned that the trope of being buried together appears in erotic poetry; see further discussion below.

76. Statius *Sil.* 2. *Praef.: primum enim habet Glauciam nostrum, cuius gratissima infantia, et qualem plerumque infelices sortiuntur—apud te complexus amabam—iam non tibi.* The last three words, *iam non tibi*, have puzzled scholars and have been translated in multiple different ways, from "you no longer have" (Laes 2010, 248), to "no longer just for your own sake" (Newlands 2011, 59), to "is not with you anymore" (Van Dam 1984, 56).

77. In contrast, the name Melior is emphatically positioned in the middle of the first line (Newlands 2011, 66).

> above, soft fringe of elegant hair? Where is now that chatty mouth with endearing complaint, those lips redolent of spring flowers as you clasped him, those tears mixed with laughter and that voice sweetened by Hybla's honeycombs, a voice by which a snake would stop hissing and evil stepmothers would want to favor him? I do not add anything to his true good qualities. Alas the milk-white neck, the arms no more weighing upon the master's nape! Oh, where the not distant hope of coming adulthood, and the desired honor on his cheeks, the beard you often swore by?[78]

According to Statius, Melior's boy was exceptionally beautiful: pale skin, red cheeks, starry eyes, small brow, beautiful hair, chatty mouth, and flower-like lips. It should be noted right away that a physical description of the deceased, as Laes pointed out, is highly uncharacteristic to the eulogy mode.[79] Moreover, as Busch observed, the boy's red cheeks and starry eyes find a parallel in Ovid's description of his beloved girl in *Amores* 3.3: "her fair skin blushes with a rose's red . . . her eyes shine like a star."[80]

Statius also claims that the boy displayed modesty (*modestia*) and chastity (*pudor*) that were beyond his years (*maturior*, *praecox*). Such a detailed account of Glaucias' handsome features and the insistence on his chastity and modesty appears to be more fitting for the description of one's lover than a recently departed child. Van Dam and Bernstein have taken these references to the boy's modesty and bashfulness as signs that Statius described a type of nonsexual intimacy, an idealized form of eroticism.[81] Conversely, Busch suggested that blushful modesty was pleasing to the Romans, intensifying their sexual desire.[82] He specifically compares this passage with Ovid's telling of Daphne's metamorphosis. In this version of the myth, when Daphne's father suggests she should

78. Statius, *Sil.* 2.1.36–55: *Iamdudum dignos aditus laudumque tuarum, / o merito dilecte puer, primordia quaerens / distrahor. Hinc anni stantes in limine vitae, / hinc me forma rapit, rapit inde modestia praecox / et pudor et tenero probitas maturior aevo. / O ubi purpureo suffusus sanguine candor / sidereique orbes radiataque lumina caelo / et castigatae collecta modestia frontis / ingenuique super crines mollisque decorae / margo comae? Blandis ubinam ora arguta querelis / osculaque impliciti vernos redolentia flores, /et mixtae risu lacrimae penitusque loquentis / Hyblaeis vox mulsa favis, cui sibila serpens / poneret et saevae vellent servire novercae? /Nil veris affingo bonis. heu lactea colla, / bracchia quo numquam domini sine pondere cervix! / O ubi venturae spes non longinqua iuventae / atque genis optatus honos iurataque multum / barba tibi?*

79. Laes 2011, 224.

80. Ovid, *Am.* 3.3.5, 9. Newlands (2011, 77) also compares this passage to a representation of Apollo in Tibullus (3.4.29–30) and of Narcissus in Ovid's *Metamorphoses* (3.491) where rosy and white tones are a sign of remarkable beauty.

81. Van Dam 1984, 105; Bernstein 2005, 267–68.

82. Busch 2013, 71. On blushing and its usual association with women see Russell 2014, 99. Laes (2011, 224) also points out that modesty is a positive trait associated with freeborn children.

marry, the girl, who aspires to perpetual virginity, blushed in her face with a modest redness.[83] Immediately after, the poet proceeds to describe Apollo's sexual desire for her bashful beauty.[84] Similarly, Horace often pursues apparently uninterested women, while finding overt sexual availability distasteful.[85]

Even without taking into account any love elegy parallels, the detail of the boy clasping Melior's neck might evoke a scene from a mythological painting with two lovers.[86] Moreover, it is through these verses—"Alas the milk-white neck, the arms no more weighing upon the master's nape!"—that the audience unequivocally learns that Melior is the master (*dominus*), thus indicating that Glaucias was an enslaved person.[87] In the verses immediately following this section, Statius further employs erotic tropes.

> Who will strike your breast with the merry talk you loved? Who will dispel your cares, the secrets of your mind? Who shall calm you when furious bile burns, and you are angry at your servants, turning you from your burning wrath to himself? Who will steal from your lips the food you have begun to eat and the wine you have sipped, who will stir trouble with his sweet plundering? Who will jump on your bedsheets and break your morning doziness with his murmurs, who will delay your departures with his embraces and calling you back from that door for kisses? Who shall meet you coming home again, jump to your mouth and hands, embrace your shoulders with his tiny arms? Silent is the house, I say it, desolate the Penates, abandonment in the bedchambers, and gloomy silence at the table.[88]

These lines add another layer to the relationship between Melior and his boy Glaucias. Stealing food from another's mouth is an erotic image, employed

83. Ovid, *Met.* 1.484: *pulchra verecundo suffunditur ora rubore*.

84. Ovid, *Met.* 1.490–96.

85. Hor. (*Od.* 1.25) features perhaps the most explicit poetic scorn of a vulgar, old, and lustful woman. Yet in his *Satire* (1.2.116–19), the poet claims he likes sexual intercourse that comes easy and at hand, such as with an *ancilla* or a *verna*.

86. Against this interpretation, Newlands (2011, 80) lists a few examples of children hanging from their parent's neck, as in Statius *Sil.* 1.2.103; Virgil, *Aen.* 1.715; Plin. *Ep.* 5.16.3.

87. Through Mart. 6.28, we know that Glaucias had been manumitted by Melior, for he is called a *libertus*. Yet in *Silvae* 2.1 Statius does not make any references to the boy's manumission.

88. Stat. *Sil.* 2.1.56–68: *Quis tua colloquiis hilaris mulcebit amatis / pectora, quis curas mentisque arcana remittet? / accensum quis bile fera famulisque tumentem / leniet ardentique in se deflectet ab ira? / Inceptas quis ab ore dapes libataque vina / auferet et dulci turbabit cuncta rapina? / Quis matutinos abrumpet murmure somnos / impositus stratis, abitusque morabitur artis / nexibus aque ipso revocabit ad oscula poste? / obvius intranti rursus quis in ora manusque / prosiliet brevibusque umeros circumdabit ulnis? / muta domus, fateor, desolatique penates, / et situs in thalamis et maesta silentia mensis.*

twice by Ovid.[89] The now empty bedchamber, which was once a daily meeting place for Melior and the child, is also a perplexing element. Some scholars have argued that it is not necessary to interpret any of the actions described in the passage as erotic or sexual. In particular, the fact that the boy arrives in his master's bedroom in the morning and sits above the covers have been taken to indicate that child did not spend the night with Melior.[90] This, nevertheless, is beyond the point. The real question is why would Statius knowingly disseminate into the poem erotic language and images, especially if this was a father-son relationship as expressed at the beginning of the poem?

It is only at this point, seventy lines into the poem, that boy is openly called a *delicium*, an enslaved child born into Melior's household.

> What wonder if your pious foster father (*altor*) honored you with a funeral? You were your master's (*dominus*) respite and harbor in his old age, now his *delicium*, now the sweet care of his heart. You were not displayed in front of a crowd on a foreign revolving platform, nor were you an infant for sale among Pharian goods, spouting manufactured witticisms and concocted remarks, wantonly looking for an owner (*erus*) and tardy to find one. Here is your home, from here your origin; and both your parents have long been dear to your master's household and were freed for your happiness, lest you should resent your stock. But your master immediately took you up from the womb and in his mind declared you his own, as you greeted the bright stars with your first cry, and he took you in his embracing arms and deemed to have fathered you. It is allowed with the approval of venerated parents that I say this, and I pray you, Nature, to whom is given to establish fundamental laws for mankind throughout the world, to give me leave: proximity by blood is not everything and offspring coming down from a series of descendants is not the ultimate bond; new and adopted children often creep deeper than our kindred. Biological children are a necessity, chosen children a joy.[91]

89. Ov. *Am.* 1.4.31–34; *Ars Am.* 1.575–78. Newlands interprets this behavior as "playfulness of children" (2011, 82).

90. As suggested by Van Dam (1984, 106). Newlands (2011, 82) also suggests that Glaucias' behavior reflects his role as Melior's first client, who promptly greets him in the morning. Yet whether they spent the night together or not has no bearing on whether they engaged in sexual relation, which can be performed at any time during of the day.

91. Statius, *Sil.* 2.1.69–88: *Quid mirum, tanto si te pius altor honorat / funere? Tu domino requies portusque senectae, / tu modo deliciae, dulces modo pectore curae. / Non te barbaricae versabat turbo catastae, / nec mixtus Phariis venalis mercibus infans / compositosque sales meditataque verba locutus / quaesisti lascivus erum tardeque parasti. / Hic domus, hinc ortus; dominique penatibus olim*

This passage skillfully intertwines different concepts: Melior is the boy's foster father (*altor*), but he is also his master (*dominus*). The boy is enslaved, yes, but he is not one of those *delicia* who was publicly displayed for sale and who tries to attract the attention of the head of a household with his phony wits. Glaucias was not purchased at the slave-market; he is no foreigner, no stranger to the house of the master, for he sprung from it (*hinc ortus*). Even more, he was picked up by the master (*sustulit*) as soon as he was born. Similarly, in *Silvae* 5.5, Statius also emphasized the "autochthony" of his own beloved *verna*; he also belonged to the household. It has been argued before that *vernae* were considered to be particularly good servants, loyal and accustomed to their masters' needs and preferences since birth.[92] Therefore, it is not surprising that Statius attributes a higher value (whether it be personal, emotional, or monetary) to home-born enslaved individuals. Yet Melior's bond with Glaucias is more than that. The words *genuisse putavit* leave no doubt about it; Melior considered himself to be the father of the boy. This relationship must be considered—from the poet's own words—as an example of fictive kinship.

In this section, we also learn that the child is not an orphan; his parents are both alive and were manumitted in order to please Glaucias.[93] The poem does not feature any additional information about the boy's birth parents and, looking back at the funeral described at the beginning of the poem, it is clear that Melior alone discharged the parental duties of commemoration.[94] Furthermore, Nature herself is invoked to sanction the existence and importance of non-blood-based familiar bonds; recognizing biological children is a necessity, fostering a child is a choice. Statius (and most certainly Melior) are eager to prove that foster children are not just equal to biological offspring, but perhaps even superior. This relationship is not based on obligations, but on a personal choice on the part of the foster parent and the exceptional qualities of a child.[95]

After a lengthy description of the boy's qualities and skills, and of his illness and death (2.1.106–82), toward the end of the poem Statius describes how Glaucias, now arrived in the Underworld, is not alone in the land of eternal darkness.

/ carus uterque parens atque in tua gaudia liber, / ne quererere genus. Raptum sed protinus alvo / sustulit exsultans ac prima lucida voce / astra salutantem dominus sibi mente dicavit, / amplexusque sinu tulit et genuisse putavit. / Fas mihi sanctorum venia dixisse parentum, / tuque oro, Natura, sinas, cui prima per orbem / iura homini sancire datum: non omnia sanguis /proximus aut serie generis demissa propago / alligat; interius nova saepe ascitaque serpunt / pignora conexis. Natos genuisse necesse est, /elegisse iuvat.

92. E.g., Carlsen 2010, 79–80.

93. Statius does not say that the boy himself was manumitted. However, Mart. 6.28 reports that Glaucias was a *libertus*.

94. Laes 2010, 250.

95. Bernstein 2005, 274; Laes 2010, 250–51.

> The child recognized the likeness and lofty features of the noble Blaesus, as he had often seen you at home tying new garlands and polishing the waxen images with your heart. He recognized the man, wandering around the banks of Lethe's waters among the foremost Ausonians and the line of Quirinus; at first, he timidly matches his steps, approaching him in silence, and he pulls the hem of his robe, then followed him more. Blaesus does not ignore him pulling and believes that he is an unknown relative among his descendants. Quickly he understood that this is the beloved child and *delicium* of his dearest friend, the child who consoled him for the death of Blaesus, and he picks him up from the ground and clasps his strong neck, and for a long time holds him by the hand, happy, and presents the gifts of soft Elysium, barren branches, silent birds, pale flowers nipped in the bud. He does not forbid him to remember you, but lovingly joins hearts and shares the boy's love for you and yours for him.[96]

The audience now learns that Melior once had a friend, Blaesus, whose death grieved him so much that he relied on the boy's companionship for solace. Although the child and Blaesus never met, Glaucias is able to recognize his master's friend from wax portraits he had seen in the household. Blaesus initially suspects that the child might be related to him—perhaps one of his grandchildren.[97] Once the boy's identity is revealed, Blaesus takes up Glaucias in his arms and they, now together for all eternity, share the memory of their beloved Melior. The poem has now come full circle; the deceased boy has a new surrogate father, a new parental figure on whom he can rely, and Blaesus has taken up the role that Melior played in the world of the living.[98] This afterlife vignette places further importance on fictive kinship. Although Blaesus initially thinks that the boy might be one of his biological relatives, once he finds out that the boy is only related to him through Melior's friendship and that he is the surrogate son of his friend, he still takes him into his arms and under his

96. Statius, *Sil.* 2.1.191–207: *noverat effigies generosique ardua Blaesi / ora puer, dum saepe domi nova serta ligantem / te videt et similes tergentem pectore ceras. / Hunc ubi Lethaei lustrantem gurgitis oras /Ausonios inter proceres seriemque Quirini / agnovit; timide primum vestigia iungit / accessu tacito summosque lacessit amictus, / inde magis sequitur. Neque enim magis ille trahentem / spernit et ignota credit de stirpe nepotum./ Mox ubi delicias et rari pignus amici / sensit et amissi puerum solacia Blaesi, / tollit humo magnaque ligat cervice diuque / ipse manu gaudens vehit et, quae munera mollis /Elysii, steriles ramos mutasque volucres /porgit et obtunso pallentes germine flores. / Nec prohibet meminisse tui, sed pectora blandus / miscet et alternum pueri partitur amorem.*

97. Van Dam (1984, 166) suggests that Blaesus died when he was already old enough to be a grandfather.

98. Blaesus picks up Glaucias as Melior did when the boy was born, acknowledging him as his own child.

protection.[99] Fictive kinship seems to have a transitive element: the bond that Blaesus and Glaucias felt for Melior can be transferred to each other, replacing an important relationship that death had severed. This scene also recalls the first poem dedicated to Erotion (5.34), where Martial entrusted the young girl to his mother and father who were already in the Underworld.

At the end of the poem, Statius spells out the name of the boy and addresses him one more time:

> Come here, sent from the dark threshold, you who alone have the ability to achieve everything you wish, Glaucias (for neither the ferryman nor the companion of the harsh bar restrains the guiltless souls): soothe his breast, prevent his cheeks from being wet, and fill blissful nights with sweet allocutions and life-like appearance, and say that you have not completely died, and go on to recommend, as you can, to him your grieving sister and unhappy parents.[100]

Statius' final wish is for Glaucias to come visit Melior in his dreams, to console his grief and to entrust to the care of his master his surviving family members, namely his parents and his sister. It is worth noting that the poet never mentioned Glaucias' sister before; this ending is also more "inclusive" than the beginning of the poem, where Melior's unspeakable bereavement by the funerary pyre was the only one that mattered. While throughout the poem there was an insistence on the value, and even superiority, of fictive kinship (e.g., Melior cried more than any mother or father; biological children are an obligation, adoptive children a joyful choice), at the end of the poem Glaucias' birth parents and sister are placed on the same plane as his surrogate father. This emphasis on the biological relatives of Glaucias might appear to undercut Melior's claim of parentage over the boy, especially because the final word of the entire composition is parents (*parentes*). Van Dam argues that, behind this final switch of attention to Glaucias' biological family, Statius is suggesting that Melior's grief is now cured, but he should remember to care for the boy's family in perpetuity.[101] If we accept this interpretation, then Statius—once again—is underscoring the transitive nature of fictive kinship; even if Glaucias is deceased, Melior can still maintain a relationship with his biological family,

99. Laes 2010, 254.

100. Statius, *Sil.* 2.1.227–234: *ades huc emissus ab atro / limine, cui soli cuncta impetrare facultas, Glaucia (nil sontes animas nec portitor arcet / nec durae comes ille serae): tu pectora mulce, / tu prohibe manare genas noctesque beatas / dulcibus alloquiis et vivis vultibus imple / et periisse nega, desolatamque sororem, / qui potes, et miseros perge insinuare parentes.*

101. Van Dam 1984, 186.

mirroring the new familial relationship that the boy and Blaesus now share in the Underworld.

We have seen how the poem centers around kinship and grief, which are both discussed at length. Yet there are those odd allusions to erotic tropes of love elegy. Several scholars have attempted to deny that the composition features any sexual innuendos.[102] After all, Glaucias is only twelve years old, as Statius says in the poem.[103] Still, the amount of detail that goes into the description of the beautiful boy—comparing his lips to flowers, praising his pale skin and red cheeks, his blushing modesty, and stealing morsels of food from the master's mouth—are all elements that cannot be ignored. Glaucias' young age—in addition to Melior's claims of paternity—makes this poem widely uncomfortable for modern readers. Yet Greek epigrams from the *Anthologia Palatina* attest that twelve-year-old boys could be considered sexually attractive. Specifically, two compositions by the poet Straton feature twelve-year-old boys and are rather explicit in their sexual language:

> *A.P.* 12.205: The boy next door titillates me with his bold, alluring glances and his precocious smirk, although he is no older than twelve. Now the unripe grape is unguarded: what is in full bloom, is closed off and guarded.[104]

> *A.P.* 12.4: I enjoy the twelve-year-old in this prime; the thirteen-year-old is even more desirable than him; the fourteen-year-old is a flower sweeter than Eros; even more delightful is one who has just turned fifteen; sixteen year is divine; seventeen is not my pick, but Zeus'; if one has desire for older boys, he is not playing a child's game, but seeks for "reciprocity."[105]

The first poem shares some similarities with Philodemus' epigram for the young Lysidice cited in the section above. In both cases, the poet is attracted to

102. E.g., Newlands 2011.

103. Stat. *Sil.* 2.1.124: "he equals the labors of Hercules with his years" (*Herculeos annis aequare labores*). Mart. 6.28 also affirms that Glaucias was twelve years old.

104. Anth. Pal. 12.205: παῖς τις ὅλως ἁπαλὸς τοῦ γείτονος οὐκ ὀλίγως με / κνίζει: πρὸς τὸ θέλειν δ' οὐκ ἀμήτα γελᾷ: / οὐ πλεῖν δ' ἐστὶν ἐτῶν δύο καὶ δέκα. νῦν ἀφύλακτοι / ὄμφακες: ἢν δ' ἀκμάσῃ, φρούρια καὶ σκόλοπες.

105. Anth. Pal. 12.4: ἀκμῇ δωδεκέτους ἐπιτέρπομαι: ἔστι δὲ τούτου / χὠ τρισκαιδεκέτης πουλὺ ποθεινότερος: / χὠ τὰ δὶς ἑπτὰ νέμων γλυκερώτερον ἄνθος Ἐρώτων, / τερπνότερος δ' ὁ τρίτης πεντάδος ἀρχόμενος: / ἐξεπικαιδέκατον δὲ θεῶν ἔτος: ἑβδόματον δὲ / καὶ δέκατον ζητεῖν οὐκ ἐμόν, ἀλλὰ Διός. / εἰ δ' ἐπὶ πρεσβυτέρους τις ἔχει πόθον, οὐκέτι παίζει, / ἀλλ' ἤδη ζητεῖ "τὸν δ' ἀπαμειβόμενος."

a child who has not yet reached maturity. However, unlike Philodemus, Straton wants to take advantage of the young boy right away, without waiting for him to grow older, lest he would be locked away from his reach.

In the second epigram, Straton lists the ages in which boys are pleasing to him, beginning at twelve and finishing at sixteen. The poem suggests that young boys are only available for a short window in time; pederasty is an acceptable practice, while homosexuality is disallowed.[106] Women, however, whether pre- or postpubescent, are always admissible sexual partners, thus perhaps that is why Lysidice is allowed to "grow riper." The Greeks' taste for young, hairless boys was inherited by the Romans, as Seneca and Martial attest.[107] Therefore, Glaucias, although only twelve, could have inspired sexual admiration.

Perhaps the strongest argument on whether we should consider *Silvae* 2.1 to contain erotic elements comes from Ausonius, a fourth-century CE poet and grammarian. He wrote an epitaph in elegiac verses for a boy also named Glaucias.

> A resplendent dawn was beginning to cover your smooth cheeks when you were just entering your sixteenth year, grown-up Glaucias, and you were already ceasing to look like either boy or girl, when an untimely death took away all your glory. But you will neither be mixing with the common throng of the dead, nor will you fear the Stygian lakes as a weeping shade, but you will either be an Adonis son of Cinyras to Persephone, or the Ganymede of Elysian Jove.[108]

This poem features homoerotic overtones and introduces, in the final verse, a comparison with Ganymede—a well-known mythical figure, the cupbearer of the gods and young lover of Jupiter—which leaves no doubt as to Glaucias' sexual representation. Scholars have long recognized *Silvae* 2.1 to be a model for this poem, although there are some differences between the two compositions. Floridi argued that the main difference is the age of the boy; Ausonius' Glaucias is sixteen years old, not twelve. He is at the cusp of manhood, desirable to goddesses (Persephone) and gods (Jupiter) alike.[109] Thus, the pederastic

106. See Williams 2010, 179–207.

107. Sen. *Ep.* 47.7; Mart. 9.25, 73; 11.8.

108. Auson. *Epig.* 53: *Laeta bis octono tibi iam sub consule pubes / cingebat teneras, Glaucia adulte, genas. / Et iam desieras puer anne puella videri, / cum properata dies abstulit omne decus. / Sed neque functorum socius miscebere vulgo / nec metues Stygios flebilis umbra lacus, / verum aut Persephonae Cinyreius ibis Adonis / aut Iovis Elysii tu Catamitus eris.* Translation by Floridi (2015, 550).

109. Floridi 2015, 553.

and homoerotic themes, while still present, are not as explicit, in accordance with the expectations of a fourth-century audience, which no longer condoned pederasty.[110] However modern scholars wish to interpret *Silvae* 2.1, the poem by Ausonius further indicates that a reader who lived only a few centuries after Statius recognized the poem as featuring homoerotic tropes. Furthermore, Laes suggested that while the erotic nature of *Silvae* 2.1 cannot be denied, it is not necessary to think that the relation between Melior and Glaucias involved penetrative sex, but probably revolved around what he calls "intimate body language."[111] Such an observation might be applied to Martial and Erotion's relationship as well, given that she died when she was only five years old. Truly, it is impossible to reconstruct the relationship between Melior and Glaucias to such a degree of specificity, whether or not it involved a fully developed sexual relationship, or what type of sexual acts were performed. Indeed, it is beyond the point of my argument.

The central issue is that the relationship between Melior and Glaucias is both paternal and erotic; it features fictive kinship elements as well as sexual aspects.[112] This, of course, should not be taken as an argument that fictive kinship always, most times, or even frequently, included a sexual component. Yet it would be disingenuous to dismiss the example of Melior and Glaucias as a mere father-son relationship, or to downplay the deep ambiguity we perceive between the parental and erotic features. Moreover, we know that paternal and sexual roles have not always stayed separate. After all, Cicero—after his divorce from Terentia—was briefly married to a woman named Publilia, who was young enough to be his granddaughter and was probably his ward.[113] Much more recently, United States president Grover Cleveland married a woman almost thirty years his junior, whom he had known since she was an infant; furthermore, after her father had died when she was eleven years old, Cleveland economically supported her and supervised her education, acting as a parental figure until their marriage.

Moreover, while I do not wish to gloss over the sexual abuse that Glaucias and other children like him endured, not just in the ancient world, but across human history, I would be remiss if I did not mention that there are many children who are today, currently sexually abused by their parents, stepparents, relatives, and caretakers. The main difference is that discussion of these relations is confined to the darkest corners of the internet instead of being the sub-

110. Kuefler 2001, 94.
111. Laes 2010, 267.
112. Busch (2013, 63) uses the terms paternal and erotic.
113. Treggiari 2007, 134.

ject of poems to be read at the dinner parties of culturally distinguished elites. Our attitude toward sexuality, childhood, and the sexualization of children has completely changed from two millennia ago; when we read about human trafficking of children and young adults for sexual exploitation—whether it be in Bangladesh, Russia, sub-Saharan Africa, or the United States—we are horrified.[114] Despite our shock, we have no reason to assume that the ambiguous relationship between Melior and Glaucias was perceived to be odd or contrary to societal norms by their contemporaries.

Last, Statius wrote another consolatory poem for the death of one of his friends' *delicium*. Commentators often note how this poem, *Silvae* 2.6, differs from *Silvae* 2.1 which we just analyzed. First, it is noticeably shorter. Second, the relationship between Ursus and his *delicium* Philetus is not described in the same amount of detail. This might be due to the fact that Statius was not as close to Ursus (and Philetus) as he was to Melior (and Glaucias).[115] Indeed, the poet does not speak of his own grief for Philetus, nor does he reference his presence at the funeral. There are also noticeable differences in the content of the poem, once we compare Glaucias and Philetus. While both boys are depicted as remarkably skilled and beautiful, Philetus was still enslaved at the time of his death as is clearly stated in the opening of the poem.

> Too cruel, whoever sets boundaries and limits to mourning! It is sorrowful when parents have to cremate children in their early age or (a crime!) at the cusp of adulthood; it is harsh too to lament the empty side of the bed when a spouse is taken away; tragic is a sister's cry, tragic a brother's wail. But even something from afar penetrates deep and deeper in one's heart, and a smaller injury surpasses greater wounds. You mourn, Ursus, a slave (since Fortune, blind to the meaning of words, thus mixes things up with her hand and does not know the heart), but a pious slave, whose love and loyalty earned these tears, to whom freedom of the mind is more important than family line.[116]

114. Every two years, the United States State Department publishes the "Trafficking in Persons Report," a six-hundred-page document which features individual stories of adults and children who were forced to perform hard labor or were employed for commercial sex and pornography. Human trafficking spans the entire globe, moving people (primarily women and children) from Romania to Italy, from Nigeria to Ghana, from Vietnam to the United Kingdom, but also within a country's own borders as cases in the United States and Canada show. According to data from the 2020 State Department report, the countries with the highest incidence of human trafficking are Eritrea, South Sudan, China, Burma, North Korea, Russia, Belarus, Alegria, Syria, Iran, Afghanistan, Turkmenistan, and Venezuela.

115. In *Sil.* 2 *praef.*, Statius calls Glaucias *nostrum* (ours), indicating how he himself was also close to the boy, not merely to Melior. See Newlands 2011, 59.

116. Statius, *Sil.* 2.6.1–12: *Saeve nimis, lacrimis quisquis discrimina ponis / lugendique modos!*

Laes points out that Statius advances no claims regarding Ursus' paternity over Philetus—contrary to Melior, who is openly called Glaucias' father (*pater*) and foster parent (*altor*).[117] Nevertheless, Ursus' loss of his beloved Philetus is compared to the loss of one's child, spouse, and sibling, thus evoking once again a familiar context and imagery. The consolatory poem focuses on familial bonds, but also on nobility of character. Philetus might be enslaved but he is free by disposition, and such inner freedom is worth more than an illustrious birth.[118] Perhaps this is the reason why Philetus is said to be a willing servant:

> You mourn a human being (woe to me who myself kindle your grief!), yours, Ursus, who wished for sweet bondage, not saddened, who was spontaneously demanding of himself. Who would hold back the tears shed at such a death?[119]

Whether or not Philetus truly felt his bondage to be sweet (*dulce servitium*), the freedom of his character highlights his humanity; although he was enslaved (*famulus*) he was still a person (*homo*).[120] This should not be taken as a claim that personhood should be recognized for all enslaved individuals; Philetus is exceptional.[121] He is worthy of such a consolation; he should be mourned at length. In a rather paradoxical turn, this statement is immediately followed by four examples of animals who are mourned: "even a Parthian mourns his horse killed in battle, the Molossians cry for loyal dogs, birds have pyres, and a stag had Virgil."[122] Despite his inner nobility and character, Philetus is compared to a dog and a horse, making evident how these enslaved *delicia*—although beloved—seem to remain halfway between a family member and a pet. The following verses introduce a comparison between Philetus and four mythological characters (namely Theseus, Paris, Achilles, and Troilus); the poet claims that

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Miserum est primaeva parenti / pignora surgentesque (nefas!) accendere natos; / durum et deserti praerepta coniuge partem / conclamare tori, maesta et lamenta sororum / et fratrum gemitus; alte haec tamen at procul intrat / altius in sensus, maioraque vulnera vincit / plaga minor. famulum (quia rerum nomina caeca / sic miscet Fortuna manu nec pectora novit), / sed famulum gemis, Vrse, pium, sed amore fideque / has meritum lacrimas, cui maior stemmate iuncto / libertas ex mente fuit.

117. Laes 2010, 255.

118. Van Dam 1984, 399.

119. Statius, *Sil.* 2.6.14–18: *hominem gemis (heu mihi! Subdo/ ipse faces), hominem, Vrse, tuum, cui dulce volenti / servitium, cui triste nihil, qui sponte sibique / imperiosus erat. Quisnam haec in funera missos / castiget luctus?*

120. Van Dam 1984, 402.

121. See discussion on legal definitions of slavery and personhood in chapter 1.

122. Statius, *Sil.* 2.6.18–20 *gemit inter bella peremptum / Parthus equum, fidosque canes flevere Molossi, / et volucres habuere rogum cervusque Maronem.*

the enslaved boy was more noble than all of them.[123] Although this is clearly high praise, intended to honor the boy as much as his master, it does not erase the previous comparison of Philetus to animals.[124]

Furthermore, as Glaucias was praised for his remarkable beauty, Statius also dedicates a section to Philetus' handsome features:

> How handsome you were! More handsome than all other boys and men and only slightly less than your master! Only his beauty was before yours, as much as the resplendent moon surpasses the lesser lights, and the Evening Star overwhelms the other stars. You did not have womanly beauty in your appearance, no effeminate charms in your expression, like those people on whom the crime of ambiguous beauty imposes a sex change. Your charms were stern and virile; no impudent glances but attractive eyes burning with austere fire, now like Parthenopaeus handsome in his helmet; your hair simple and unadorned, and your cheeks flushed with blossoming glow, not yet covered with hair.[125]

Compared to Glaucias, the poet here stresses the virility of the child. This might be partially due to the fact that Philetus was fifteen years old when he died, thus closer to the cusp of adulthood.[126] Yet Statius also describes Philetus' beauty, somewhere between a man's and a child's, which has strong pederastic connotations.[127] It should, nevertheless, be noted that Philetus is called neither *delicium* nor *puer delicatus* in the poem. His identification as a *delicium* or *delicatus* comes from the similarities between himself and Glaucias and—to a lesser extent—from the title that manuscripts transmit for 2.6: "Consolation for Flavius Ursus on the death of his delightful boy" (*Consolatio ad Flavium Ursum de amissione pueri delicati*). Although all the poems in the *Silvae* have been transmitted to us with a title, there is reason to suspect that such titles were not written by Statius but by later commentators, sometime before the fifth century

123. Van Dam (1984, 407–9) points out that both Theseus and Paris had to prove their royal birth, and Achilles and Troilus are children of the gods. Philetus was so noble that he could have been royal or even divine offspring.

124. See Mart. 5.37 in which Erotion is compared to several animals (sheep, squirrel, peacock, and dormouse).

125. Statius, *Sil.* 2.6.34–45: *qualis eras! procul en cunctis puerisque virisque / pulchrior et tantum domino minor! illius unus / ante decor, quantum praecedit clara minores / luna faces quantumque alios premit Hesperos ignes. / Non tibi femineum vultu decus oraque supra / mollis honos, qualis dubiae post crimina formae / de sexu transire iubent: torva atque virilis / gratia; nec petulans acies, blandique severo / igne oculi, qualis bellis iam casside visu / Parthenopaeus erat; simplexque horrore decoro / crinis, et obsessae nondum primoque micantes / flore genae.*

126. The age of Philetus is debated; see Van Dam 1984, 432.

127. Van Dam 1984, 413–14; Laes 2010, 256.

CE.[128] Even though we cannot exactly pinpoint when these titles were added, we cannot dismiss the fact that ancient commentators recognized Philetus as a *delicium*.

At the end of the poem, Statius suggests the possibility that a new *delicium*, a new Philetus, will one day come along for Ursus: "Perhaps the Fates or you yourself will give you another Philetus, and you will happily show him decorous customs and manners, and teach him how to love you."[129] Truly, it is only at this point, at the very end of the poem, that the audience learns what is the name of the child being mourned. Notably, Glaucias' name also did not appear in 2.1 until the closing of the composition, although in that case his name, unlike Philetus', had been included in the preface to the second book. Moreover, this ending embodies a variation on a trope found in consolatory texts for parents who have lost a child; either "you still have another child to love and care for" or "you might still beget another child."[130] However, Statius' claim is ambiguous; the allusion to well-known ways to console parents who have lost a child seems to strengthen Ursus' surrogate fatherhood. Yet the variation makes clear that Ursus can, at any time, grant himself—buy for himself—another Philetus. Truly, it is not a matter of whether the Fates will grant him another son, rather if he will decide to acquire another beautiful boy. It is worth pointing out that Statius did not try to console Melior with the same arguments; he did not tell him "You can father a child or buy another *delicium*." This might be because Melior's pain, just after the funeral, was too raw to be receptive to such arguments. It also might be related to Melior's advanced age or Glaucias' identity as a home-born enslaved child, who was not purchased at the market but sprung from the household. As Laes suggests, we cannot assume—based on any of these observations—that the relationship between Ursus and Philetus was not as strong as the one between Melior and Glaucias.[131] We see little of Ursus' pain compared to Melior's, but this seems to be reflective of the men's relation to the poet. Statius was certainly closer to Melior and witnessed much of his grief firsthand, which likely did not happen with Ursus when Philetus died. Therefore, nothing should be inferred about the quality of the bond between Ursus and his enslaved *delicium*.

The three poems analyzed in this section—for Statius' unnamed enslaved child, for Glaucias, and for Philetus—showcase the range of attitudes, emo-

128. Newlands (2011, 7) does not print the titles in her edition of Statius' *Silvae*, while acknowledging that the titles were already known to Sidonius, a fifth-century CE grammarian.

129. Statius, *Sil.* 2.6.103–5: *alium tibi Fata Phileton, / forsan et ipse dabit, moresque habitusque decoros / monstrabit gaudens similemque docebit amari.*

130. Van Dam 1984, 449.

131. Laes 2010, 255.

tions, and feelings that adult, male slaveholders harbored for their *delicia*. The commemoration for Glaucias is the longest and the one which most explicitly speaks of surrogate fatherhood and fosterage as an ethical choice. The unnamed boy from Statius' household, a *verna* like Glaucias, is said to have been enough of a son that the poet did not feel the need for his own biological children while he was alive. Last, Philetus was clearly beloved and admired for his skills, character, and beauty; his loss was heavily felt by his master, as if a family member had died. All these poems highlight how some enslaved children, growing up in such physical proximity with the master, could become more than servants, more than property, and even more than entertainers. While we cannot argue that every enslaved child became a surrogate child and a foster member of the master's family or that every master was interested in having a *delicium*, literary evidence shows that numerous individuals, Martial, Statius, Melior, Augustus, Livia, Ursus, and even Seneca, enjoyed the company and affection of these enslaved children, who were sometimes elevated to a higher status in the household.

One question still remains: what would have happened to these children once they grew out of childhood or adolescence? Melior does not appear to have legally adopted Glaucias; perhaps he was holding off on that until he reached adulthood.[132] Statius might have claimed the boy born into his household as his own heir, had he survived. Perhaps, some of these *vernae* became their master's adoptive children and heirs.[133] Yet many children employed in large households to entertain guests would most likely have transitioned to a different type of occupation within the home. It is impossible to know how many received manumission in recognition of the services and affection they rendered to their masters. In the telling of his own personal history, the freedman Trimalchio suggests that sexual availability to his master and mistress helped him to be manumitted.[134] However, it is more than likely that the majority of *vernae*—whether they were sexually exploited or treated as pets by their masters—never received manumission. One of Seneca's letters can give us a glimpse into the life of a grown *delicium*, once their beauty and charm were no longer available. The philosopher recounts that as he was surveying his estate with the bailiff, he saw a slave he could not recognize:

132. For the Romans adoption is a practice often associated with adults, not children.

133. See *AE* 1896: 37 below.

134. Petron. *Sat.* 75.11. Trimalchio himself had a *delicium*, a grotesquely ugly child called Croesus; this is probably a humorous exaggeration, underlining that Trimalchio was a nouveau riche, as Laes (2003, 303) argued.

> Then I turned to the door and asked: "Who is that broken-down dotard? You have done well to place him at the entrance; for he is outward bound. Where did you get him? What pleasure did it give you to take up for burial some other man's dead?" But the slave said: "Don't you know me, sir? I am Felicio; you used to bring me little images. My father was Philositus the steward, and I am your *delicia*." "The man is clean crazy," I remarked. "Has my *delicium* become a little boy again? But it is quite possible; his teeth are just falling out."[135]

I suspect that this is what happened to many grown *delicia* in elite households; they were moved out of sight and soon forgotten by the master. Although Felicio is the only aged *delicium* that we know of, I do believe that whenever these children were no longer considered cute or funny—or, in other words, could no longer perform the role of ideal children on command—they were simply moved to different tasks inside the household, or even sold. Felicio had been forgotten by his master. His chance of being manumitted was long gone. His youth, charm, and smiles were an ephemeral commodity.

5.4 *Delicia* in the Epigraphic Record of Imperial Rome

As we have seen in the previous chapters, the number of epigraphic sources on fellow-nurslings and on male caretakers was rather small: only forty-four for *collactanei*, and eighty for *tatae*. However, when searching for *delicia* in the epigraphic record, the number of attestations increases significantly. There are one hundred and forty epitaphs from the city of Rome set up for individuals identified as *delicia*, *delicatus* or *delicium*.[136] Ninety-four additional inscriptions were found in the rest of peninsular Italy, and thirty-eight more in the provinces.[137] The sheer number of epitaphs (almost three hundred) commemorating a child or young adult as someone's *delicia* attest the popularity of this term, although quantity does not necessarily provide insight into who these children were or what expectations were attached to the designation they bore.

135. Seneca *Ep.* 12.3. Translated by Gummere 1917 (adapted).

136. Laes (2003, 306) found one hundred and forty-three inscriptions for *delicia* in Rome. I also found a total of one hundred and forty-three, including an inscription for a canine *delicium* (*CIL* 6.5292), for a charioteer as the *delicium* of the Circus (*AE* 1971: 44), and for a *liberta* called the delight of the Roman people (*CIL* 6.10151a). These three epitaphs can be removed from the corpus, for one is a dog and the other two attest a somewhat different use of *delicium*, outside the familial context.

137. A full list of the epitaphs can be found in the appendix.

The vast majority (over two-thirds) of the *delicia* appear to have been either enslaved or manumitted.[138] As for their gender, male and female *delicia* are almost equally attested.[139] When it comes to commemorators, only in a small group of epitaphs (thirty in total), one or both parents are named alongside the child.[140]

D(*is*) *M*(*anibus*)
Abbae M(*arci*) *Iuni Metti*
Rufi delicato vixit
annis XV.
Euphrates et Hinna
parentes infelicis-
simi, *filio dulcissimo*
et piissimo
fecerunt.[141]

To the Divine Shades of Abba, the *delicium* of M. Iunius Mettius Rufus, who lived for fifteen years. His most sorrowful parents, Euphrates and Hinna made this for their sweetest and most pious son.

Notably, the fifteen-year-old Abba is presented as the *delicium* of a free man, most likely the master of the child in question and his parents. This recalls the case of Glaucias; the child is not merely the offspring of two grieving parents, but his status as the *delicium* of the master is also part of his commemoration. At times, it is hard to ascertain whether the *delicium* is a biological child or a freedman or freedwoman of their commemorator, for they share the same family name, as in *CIL* 6.12357.

D(*is*) *M*(*anibus*)
Arrecinae
Gnomes.
Arrecina
Tertulla
delicio suo
fecit.

138. Freeborn *delicia*: 4. *Delicia* of unknown status: 29. Free (not manumitted) *delicia*: 54.
139. Per my own count and confirmed by Laes' (2003, 308) numbers.
140. See appendix.
141. CEACelio 55.

To the Divine Shades of Arrecina Gnome. Arrecina Tertulla made this for her *delicium*.

Based on the information on the stone, it is impossible to establish whether Tertulla manumitted Gnome, or whether she was her birth mother. Given that *delicia* are most statistically likely to be enslaved or formerly enslaved, I am prone to think that Gnome and Tertulla were *liberta* and mistress, rather than daughter and mother, although it cannot be proven beyond doubt.[142]

As for the rest of the corpus, it does not appear that the dedicators were biologically related to the deceased *delicium*, such as in *CIL* 6.19717:

Dis Manib(*us*) *Is*[*i*]*adis.*
Velleius Quartus
delicio suo fecit,
vixit ann(*os*) *IIII mens*(es) *XI d*(*ies*) *V.*

To the Divine Shade of Isias. Velleius Quartus made this for his *delicium*, who lived for four years, eleven months and five days.

Isias is a common name for enslaved persons, and we can identify Valleius Quartus as the master, rather than the father, since no familial language (such as *pater* or *filius*) is employed.[143] Quartus is discharging what is normally a parental duty, to provide burial for a prematurely deceased child, without the mention of his biological parents, not too differently from what we read in Statius' poems for his own *delicium* and for Ursus' Philetus. Rarely, the use of additional designations—such as *verna*, *libertus*, or *dominus*, for instance—provides further evidence that the dedicator and dedicatee were indeed *dominus* and *servus*.[144]

Eutycheti puero,
delicato b(*ene*) *m*(*erenti*).
L(*ucius*) *Fufidius Sporus,*
dominus, fecit.[145]

142. In the appendix, this type of inscription is marked out by the note "same *nomen*," which points to the possibility of a biological connection.
143. Solin 1996, 301.
144. See also *CIL* 6.14990 presented above.
145. *CIL* 6.17416.

> For the well-deserving *delicia*, the boy Eutyches. L. Fufidius Sporus, his master, made it.

Funerary epitaphs, therefore, confirm what was already observed in the literary sources: some slave-owning, free men took care of their *delicia*'s burial and were arguably so struck by these deaths that they deemed it worthwhile to spend money to erect a monument instead of leaving the grave unmarked.

Yet epitaphs also attest other kinds of relationships and domestic arrangements. Let us take, for example, *CIL* 6.14786:

> *D*(*is*) *M*(*anibus*).
> *Parvulus hic situs est*, *vixit tris usque per annos*
> *inque novem menses invalidosq*(*ue*) *dies,*
> *nomine* ⌜*Ch*⌝*r*⌜*y*⌝*soglos*(*s*)*us; amabilis utque, erat infans*
> *flebilis et misere raptus ad inferias.*
> *Saturninus filio, Velia Lalema*
> *delicato suo posuit.*

> To the Divine Shades. A little boy is placed here, who lived three years, and into the nine month and feeble days, by the name of Chrysoglossus; he was a lovable child, a pitiable infant and tragically snatched to the Underworld. Saturninus set this up for his son, and Velia Lalema for her *delicium*.

Velia Lalema and a man bearing only the name of Saturninus commemorate Chrysoglossus, an enslaved boy who died shy of his fourth birthday.[146] There is no mention of the child's biological mother, whom we can hypothesize died or was perhaps sold to a different household; yet, while Velia does not call Chrysoglossus her son (*filius*), she can be seen as a surrogate maternal figure. It is easy to imagine how Velia stepped up to fill the mother's niche, once it was left empty. It is also possible that Velia was the enslaver of Chrysoglossus and his father Saturninus, and as such she had no difficulty in asserting herself as a central figure in the boy's life. Although women could not legally adopt an heir, nothing prevented her from manumitting anyone from the enslaved *familia* and, once they were freed, naming them as heirs. Perhaps Velia would have done that, if the boy had survived and she had no children of her own. Regard-

146. Solin (1996, 237) reports this as the sole attestation of the name Chrysoglossus. Conversely, the name Saturninus (Solin 1996, 25) is widely used to designate enslaved individuals.

less of Velia's intentions for the future, it is obvious that *CIL* 6.14786 represents a family, with biological and fictive kinship, encompassing free and enslaved individuals, but a family, nonetheless.

It also should be noted that slave-owning individuals did not necessarily have to be free. In the previous chapter I mentioned the famous Musicus, a *servus* from the imperial household, who had no less than sixteen *vicarii* as part of his personal entourage. Therefore, some *delicia* were commemorated by their masters who were also enslaved themselves, as in *CIL* 6.4376.

Ti(*beri*) *Claudi, Drus*[*i f*(*ilii*)],
Germanici, *Pothi*
delicium, ⌜*G*⌝*ethus.*

Gethus, the *delicium* of Pothus, the slave of Ti. Claudius Germanicus, the son of Drusus.

Similarly to Musicus, Pothus was a member of imperial enslaved *familia*, for Germanicus was the emperor Tiberius' nephew and adopted son. This association certainly afforded him a certain amount of privilege, economic opportunities, and even prestige. We cannot know how Pothus served Germanicus; perhaps he was one of his personal attendants, business procurators or estate managers. Regardless, Germanicus was certainly in the position of having an enormous staff, which seemingly included Pothus and his *delicium* Gethus.

In other cases, it is possible to identify a preexisting nucleus—namely husband and wife, or parents and child—to which a *delicium* was added in time.

L(*ucius*) *Titius, L*(*uci*)
lib(*ertus*)*, Graptus*
et Barbia Paulin(*a*)*,*
v(*ivi*), *f*(*ecerunt*) *sibi et Primitivo*
delicato ann(*orum*) *VII,*
et Graphice et
Daphno fili(*i*)*s.*
L(*ocus*) *m*(*onumenti*) *in f*(*ronte*) *p*(*edes*) *XVI,*
in agr(*o*) *p*(*edes*) *XX.*
L(*i*)*b*(*ertis*) *et li*(*bertabus*).
H(*oc*) *m*(*onumentum*) *h*(*eredem*) *n*(*on*) *s*(*equetur*).[147]

147. *CIL* 5.1410.

> Lucius Titius Graptus, the freedman of Lucius, and Barbia Paulina, while still alive, made this (monument) for themselves and their *delicium* Primitivus of seven years, and their children Graphice and Daphnus. The area of the funerary monument is 16 feet wide, 20 feet long. For their freedmen and freedwomen. Heirs may not use this monument.

Parents L. Titius Graptus and Barbia Paulina commemorate their two children alongside the *delicium* Primitivus, a seven-year-old enslaved child. It appears that having biological children did not prevent Graptus and Paulina from adding another child to their familial unit. We cannot know how much older or younger Primitivus was compared to Graphice and Daphnus. Maybe they all grew up together, although it cannot be ruled out that the biological children died first, even before Primitivus was born; perhaps the parents decided to buy a funerary monument for the entire family only after the death of Primitivus, while Graphice and Daphnus had initially received individual commemoration. Regardless, it cannot be denied that Graptus and Paulina treated Primitivus as a member of their family, like a foster child worthy of being commemorated alongside their biological offspring. This is far from an isolated case. There are several other epitaphs in which it is possible to recognize how the addition of a *delicium* allowed a family to grow.

L(*ucius*) *Tarius Speratus*
sibi et coniugi
Tariae Gallae
quidquid in hoc
*mon*ˢ*u*ˇ*mento iuris*
nostri est id ego
dono
Primigenio lib(*erto*)
delicio nostro.[148]

> L. Tarius Speratus made this for himself and his spouse Taria Galla; whatever is inside this monument is ours by law, this I give to our freedman, our *delicium*, Primigenius.

This inscription gives us a rare insight into inheritance practices. Tarius Speratus and his wife Taria Galla, seemingly lacking any family members, left

148. *AE* 1896: 37.

their funerary monument (and possibly other possessions) to their freedman Primigenius. The use of the word *delicium* to identify Primigenius suggests that he had been a member of the *familia* since he was a child or even an infant. It is possible that Primigenius acted as a surrogate child, ultimately becoming a surrogate heir for Speratus and Galla; thanks to him, their name and estate would continue to exist.[149] This epitaph certainly represents a familial unit, one that would live on in Primigenius and his heirs. It could be argued that, in cases such as this, *delicium* is acting as a synonym of *alumnus* or *alumna* (foster son and foster daughter). Yet only in one inscription from the corpus, *CIL* 6.38972, is the same child referred to as *delicium* and *alumna*:

D(*is*) *M*(*anibus*).
Threpteni delicatae Aemi-
li Crescentis vixit an-
n(*is*) *II, mens*(*ibus*) *II, diebus XIII;*
fecit Aemilius Ursio
et Aemilia Tyche alum-
nae amantissimae,
sibi, suisque posterisq(*ue*)
eorum.

To the Divine Shades of Threpte the delightful girl of Aemilius Crescens who lived for two years, two months, thirteen days; Aemilius Ursio and Aemilia Tyche made this for their beloved foster daughter, for themselves, and their people and descendants.

Although we cannot hope to fully reconstruct the life of this familial unit, it can be inferred that a child named Threpte was the daughter or home-born slave of a man called Aemilius Crescens;[150] he entrusted the girl to Ursio and Tyche, who were raising her as their own and—if the adjective *amantissima* is to be believed—with much affection. All the adults share the same familial name, suggesting that they were perhaps fellow freedmen (*colliberti*). Alternatively, Aemilius Crescens was the patronus of the couple and ordered them to care for the child as part of the dutiful service that freed people owe to their manumitter. Regardless, the relationship between the couple and Crescens must have predated the birth of Threpte, for she was not entrusted to her foster parents

149. See above on Melior's possible intention of making Glaucias his heir.

150. Note that the biological mother is not named, nor is the father if it was not the master himself.

by chance. It should be noted that, even if the same girl is called *delicium* and *alumna*; she is the *delicium* of one man and the foster daughter of two other people. This suggests that the two terms are used, at least in this specific case, not as synonyms.[151] Yet this does not mean that *delicium*, among other things, could not also indicate surrogate child. Indeed, we have evidence that numerous couples set up commemorations for their *delicia*. It is hard not to see these groups as representing familial units, even if the child in question was not legally adopted. I present three epitaphs which I believe portray families.

D]*is Manib*(*us*).
Rhodope fecerunt Beronice et Dru-
silla delicatae, dulcissimae suae.[152]

To the Divine Shades. Beronice and Drusilla made this for their *delicium*, the sweetest Rhodope.

C(*aius*) *Varius Eutychus*
sibi et Sentiae coniug(*i*)
suae fecit et suis
libertis libertabusq(ue)
et posterisq(ue) eorum
et Sophroneni
delicio suo,
vixit ann(*os*) *X, mens*(*es*) *XI.*[153]

To the Divine Shades. C. Varius Eutychus made this for himself and his wife Sentia and his freedmen and freedwomen and their descendants and for his *delicium* Sophronen, who lived for ten years and eleven months.

M(*arcus*) *Anici*[*us S*]*ex*(*ti*) *f*(*ilius*)
Ser(*gia*) *Bassus,*
Blossia A(*uli*) *l*(*iberta*) *Fausta*
Veneriae delicio
suo fecit.[154]

151. Similarly, in *CIL* 10.8316, the two terms are used in the same epitaph to indicate two separate individuals. See also *CIL* 3.2130, where a girl is called the delightful daughter of a man, but she is the *alumna* of another.
152. *CIL* 6.25375.
153. *CIL* 6.28342.
154. *CIL* 6.34393.

M. Anicius Bassus, the son of Sextus, of the tribe Sergia, (and) Blossia Fausta, the freedwoman of Aulus, made this for their *delicium* Veneria.

Although the technical term *alumnus* or *alumna* is not employed in any of these epitaphs, it would be hard to argue that these groupings of individuals do not display a typical familial configuration (two adults and a child). In all three cases, the *delicia* appear to be enslaved, for they only bear a single name. The status of the parental figures, however, varies: Beronice and Drusilla seem to be enslaved, Eutychus and his wife Sentia are free, Bassus is freeborn and his wife Fausta is a freedwoman. This is consistent with the rest of the corpus. While the status of those who offer commemoration for *delicia* is varied (although mostly free), the vast majority of the *delicia* are enslaved. The second largest group is made up of manumitted *delicia*. Only in one case (*CIL* 6.27470) is the *delicium* surely freeborn. Again, this is not surprising. All the *delicia* from the literary sources were enslaved or manumitted. Enslaved children are more likely to find themselves catching the eye of the master or to become a surrogate for childless couples. As Statius points out in *Silvae* 2.6, Ursus can get himself another *delicium*, another entertainer, or even a surrogate son at any time. He just needs to purchase one. Moreover, the practice of exposing infants—however common or uncommon it might have been—created opportunities for childless couples or for those who could not afford to buy a slave to acquire one.[155] It is hard to hypothesize how many of the *delicia* from our corpus were born from an enslaved mother, kidnapped from a conquered territory, exposed as infants, or even sold into slavery by their parents (a practice which we know existed).[156] When trying to reconstruct the lives of these enslaved *delicia* from largely silent tombstones, it is the historian's duty to present different possible scenarios. I cannot identify who among the *delicia* named on the epitaphs from Rome was once an exposed child subsequently taken up by a childless couple, or by a single woman, or by a single man who wished to have an heir.[157] Still, I must acknowledge such possibilities.

So far, in this section, I have not discussed the erotic connotations that were so often associated with the term *delicia* in the literary sources. I mentioned above that funerary epitaphs are completely ill-equipped to reconstruct sexual practices and behaviors. Furthermore, reading epitaphs like the one set up by Maius and Priapis for their twenty-year-old son Aeolus and their eight-year-old *delicium* Grata, does not come intuitively to a modern reader to suspect that sexual abuse was part of this family's lived reality. I do not wish to argue that we

155. See Corbier (2001) on child exposure in Roman practice.
156. E.g., Vuolanto 2003; Silver 2011, 115–19.
157. With one possible and notable example—*AE* 1896: 37—which I discussed above.

should always think that sexual exploitation was at play in any familial unit that involved *delicia* or enslaved children. Yet the knowledge of Melior's ambiguous parental affection and erotic interest in Glaucias surely affects how I read epitaphs such as *CIL* 6.24158.

Dis Manibus
Phoebionis
vernae et
delici(*i*)
Sulpici Maximi
P(*ubli*) *f*(*ilii*).

To the Divine Shades of Phoebion, the home-born slave and *delicium* of Suplicius Maximus, the son of Publius.

It is impossible for me not to think about Glaucias' funeral and his tombstone when I look at this epitaph. Phoebion, whose age is not given, could have had a life similar to Glaucias; he was born in bondage in the house of his master and thus certainly his mother (and perhaps his father) was a member of the same enslaved *familia*. Yet the epitaph is completely silent about Phoebion's parents. Were they still alive? Were they manumitted, like Glaucias'? Moreover, this epitaph also gives us the opportunity to think about what Glaucias' tombstone could have looked like. Of course, we cannot know whether his biological parents' names were included or not, or if the boy was only commemorated like the *verna* and *delicia* of Melior.

Let us assume, then, that Phoebion and Sulpicius Maximus had a relationship similar to what Glaucias and Melior, or Philetus and Ursus, shared. Would our assumptions change if the age of the *delicium* was expressed, as in *CIL* 6.11585?

Ampliatus,
Lessi Pirithi
delic(*io*),
vixit ann(*os*) *III.*

Ampliatus, the *delicium* of Lessus Pirithus, who lived three years.

Indeed, Martial's erotic appreciation of Erotion's beauty is an example that even a five-year-old girl could be the object of sexual desire. Can we completely

rule out that Ampliatus was ever compelled to partake in sexual play with his master? However, would that assumption be challenged if the commemorator and enslaver were to be a woman? In the *Satyricon*, Trimalchio clearly states that he was sexually available to his master and his mistress alike. In addition, in a rather crude epigram, Martial describes a woman mourning her *delicium*, "a boy aged twice six years, whose cock was not yet a foot and a half."[158] Therefore, we cannot completely rule out that women could share an erotic relationship with their *delicia*. This line of reasoning, in the end, would lead us to argue that every single freed or enslaved individual who was commemorated bearing the designation of *delicium* had been sexually exploited.[159] I am not willing to claim as much, for it could not possibly represent the truth. Some, perhaps even many, of the boys and girls from our epigraphic corpus were engaged in sexual play with their masters or mistresses, but there is no way that such a hypothesis can be proven, quantified, or refuted using funerary epitaphs as the primary source. The only argument I can make is that some *delicia* were commemorated by their parents, by couples who appear to have acted as surrogate parents, and by single male and female individuals who were most likely their masters and mistresses.

5.5 Conclusion

Throughout this chapter, I presented a variety of sources—historical anecdotes, poetic consolations, and funerary epitaphs—trying to understand what the role of *delicia* in a Roman household was and how they affected the development of fictive kinship. In the introductory section, I mentioned that the term *delicium* was not exclusively used in connection with pleasurable enslaved children, but also with pets. This is perhaps best exemplified by a funerary marble slab from Rome (fig. 6) commemorating a certain Synoris and featuring the relief of a dog.[160]

The first question to answer is who is being commemorated here. Synoris is an attested name for enslaved girls and women, but could it be used as a name for dogs as well? In other words, is this an epitaph for a dog or for a human

158. Mart. 7.14.9–10: *bis senos puerum numerantem perdidit annos, / mentula cui nondum sesquipedalis erat.*

159. Herrmann-Otto (1994, 309–10) accepts this and even suggests that so many *deliciae* died young due to the sexual abuse they suffered. Laes (2003, 318) points out that not all *deliciae* shared a sexual relation with their masters and mistresses, and that sexual encounters rarely end up being fatal to those involved.

160. *CIL* 6.5292. *Synoris*, / *ˊG*ʾ*lycon*(*is*) *deliciu*(*m*). "Synoris, the *delicia* of Glycon."

Figure 6. *CIL* 6.5292. ©Ministero della Cultura. Parco Archeologico dell'Appia Antica.

delicium? The custom of writing funerary verse epigrams for the death of dogs and other animals is a Hellenistic subgenre already established in the third century BCE, and it can be hypothesized that actual burial of animals, with an inscribed tombstone, dates to a similar time period.[161] In time, this custom reached Rome as well; both prose and poetry epitaphs for various pets (primarily dogs and horses) have survived through the epigraphic record. While some funerary epitaphs leave no doubt regarding the canine identity of the deceased, the tombstone for Synoris is ambiguous.[162] The representation of the dog could be metaphorical, a visual representation of Synoris' loyalty and closeness to the master. Yet there is no reason to exclude that the *delicium* Synoris was a real dog, and it was the one being commemorated, as Clara Stevanato believes.[163]

Despite this example, it is highly unlikely that any of the inscriptions I presented in the sections above refer to puppies instead of enslaved children. First, no other inscription from the corpus feature reliefs of dogs or other pets. Second, while animal burials are not completely unattested, in her survey of Latin epitaphs for pets, Stevanato found only twenty-two examples (which include some whose interpretation could be challenged) from the entirety of the Roman empire.[164] This suggests that, although some people did provide tombstones for

161. As argued by Van Dam (1984, 336). See Garruli (2014) on Greek funerary epigrams for pets.

162. Most famously, an inscription from the British Museum (*CIL* 6.29896) eulogizes Margarita, a beloved dog; although the inscription does not feature an image of the dog, the text refers to her fur and barking, leaving no doubt that she was a canine.

163. Stevanato 2016, 57.

164. As Stevanato observes (2016, 41), nine from Rome, nine from Italy, and four from the provinces.

their pets, this was not a widespread custom. Third, a certain overlap and flexibility in the use of human terms for pets and animal vocabulary for enslaved children is well attested in literature. Even in the epigraphic record, I can name two famous examples: Cyras, a ten-year-old enslaved girl, is called a *catella* (little she-dog) and Helena, a Maltese dog, is commemorated by her owners as an *alumna* (foster daughter).[165] Nevertheless, it would be unreasonable to argue that *catella* often means girl, or that *alumna* often means dog. These are rather unique cases in which the vocabulary is bent beyond its customary usage.

One might argue that *delicia*, even when they are highly valued, are still closer to pets than offspring. Indeed, looking back at the literary sources attesting the custom of keeping bands of children in elite households to entertain the master and his guests, the comparison with dogs who follow the master around the house is easy to make. Perhaps this was the case in certain households, in which the master or the mistress kept one or more enslaved children around in place of animals such as dogs or birds. Maybe in other households, the master or the mistress grew so attached to one of the children from the enslaved *familia*, that they practically—albeit not legally—adopted them as their own.[166] It is impossible to generalize that all of those who employed *delicia* considered them to be part of their family, as an informally adopted child. Likewise, it is impossible to argue, on the basis of funerary inscriptions, that all the masters who set up dedications to their *delicium* truly felt and acted like a parent. Not only is the language of these epitaphs so standardized that the variations among them are minimal, but even when a text departs from the typical formulaic language, it is difficult to assign parental emotions and behaviors to unknown actors. Let us analyze *CIL* 6.9437.

D(*is*) *M*(*anibus*).
Quicumque es puero lacrimas effunde viator;
bis tulit hic senos primaevi germini⌜s⌝ annos,
deliciumque fuit domini spes grata parentum,
quos male deseruit longo post fata dolori;
noverat hic docta fabricare monilia dextra
et molle in varias aurum disponere gemmas;
nomen erat puero Pagus at nun⌜c⌝ funus acerbum
et cinis in tumulis iacet et sine nomine corpus,

165. EDR 029631 and *CIL* 6.19190.

166. It should always be kept in mind that the master could well be the biological father of children born to enslaved mothers in his household.

qui vixit annis XII,
mensibus VIIII, diebus XIII, ho(ris) VIII.[167]

> To the Divine Shades. Whoever you are, traveler, shed tears for the child; two times six he bore the years of sprouting youth, and he was the *delicium* of his master and beloved hope of his parents, whom he lamentedly abandoned after his death with a long-lasting sorrow; he knew how to craft jewels with his skillful right hand and gently arrange different gems over the gold metal; the name of the child was Pagus and now, buried too young, he lies in a grave as ashes and nameless corpse, who lived for twelve years, nine months, thirteen days and eight hours.

Pagus, a twelve-year-old enslaved child, is commemorated as the *delicium* of his master and the beloved hope of his parents.[168] He worked as a jeweler, probably along with his parents, perhaps in a workshop belonging to their master. It can be inferred that the dedicators of this epitaph were the child's parents and master, although they remain nameless in the commemoration. Moreover, this verse epitaph displays a certain level of originality, including a Virgilian allusion in the ninth verse, and seems to evoke genuine sorrow over the death of Pagus.[169] We cannot know what the relationship between Pagus' parents and the master was, whether they appreciated or resented the enslaver's interest (whether sexual or merely paternal) in their child. It is equally impossible to know what Pagus' disposition toward the master was, his role as a *delicium*, or his jewelry-making profession. Perhaps he had worked as the master's entertainer when he was younger, before he was assigned to his new career as a jeweler. We might never be able to know anything more about Pagus; however, the inclusion of the designation *delicium* on his tombstone allows us to ask questions and speculate what his life might have looked like, even if we cannot resolve the variations and contradictions associated with that social role.

167. *CIL* 6.9437.

168. This expression is found, almost verbatim, in an inscription from Capua, *CIL* 10.4041: *delicium domini, spes expectata parentum.*

169. The poem is written in hexameters and Virgil's *Aen.* 2.557 served as the model for the last hexameter.

6

Epilogue

Throughout the history of Rome, familial terminology has been employed as a metaphor to foster a sense of state-sponsored community. Romulus was often called "the father of the city of Rome" (*parens urbis Romanae*), underscoring the deep bond between the citizens and their first leader.[1] After Romulus, other exceptional men were bestowed the honorary title of *pater patriae* ("father of the fatherland"), among them M. Furius Camillus, Cicero, Augustus, and many of his successors.[2] However, this metaphorical language was not confined to male historical actors. When, at the time of Augustus' death, the senate discussed what title should be granted to his widow Livia, the words *parens* and *mater* were proposed.[3] In the second century CE, Faustina became the first empress to receive the honorary title *mater castrorum* ("mother of the encampment").[4] Julia Domna, a few decades later, was honored with the same title.[5] Therefore, the Romans had no difficulty in projecting fictive parental roles onto their political leaders and their wives.

The metaphorical use of familial terminology was not limited to "mother" and "father." Fictive brotherhood was frequently employed in religious, military, and romantic contexts. For example, the priests for the cult of Dea Dia were called the Arval Brothers (*Fratres Arvales*) and their name allegedly dated back to the founding of Rome.[6] Soldiers who provided burial for fallen comrades often address the deceased as brother (*frater*).[7] The term brother can also

1. E.g., Livy 1.16.

2. Such tradition continued in the United States, where George Washington was given the title of *pater patriae* ("father of the fatherland"). Likewise, the men who united the thirteen American colonies, led the American Revolution, and established the basis for the government of the United States of America are referred to as Founding Fathers.

3. Tac. *Ann.* 1.14.1.

4. Script. Hist. Aug. *Marc. Aur.* 26.8–9.

5. In *CIL* 6.1035, Julia Domna is called *mater Augusti nostri et castrorum et senatus et patriae*.

6. The "original" members of the Arval Brothers were supposedly Romulus and the children of his nurse, Acca Larentia. See Plin. *NH* 18.6; Gell. *NA* 7.7.8.

7. E.g., *CIL* 3.10514, 6.32671, 32730, 32818. See below.

be used to indicate same-sex sexual partners; in the *Satyricon*, Giton is called Encolpius' *frater* multiple times.[8] The Romans, thus, were accustomed to using familial language in a flexible way to reference important, nonbiological connections, or—in other words—fictive kinship.

Yet as I have showcased throughout this book, fictive kinship could also be indicated with specific terms, such as *collactaneus*, *tata*, *mamma*, *nutrix*, *delicium*, and *alumnus*. The existence of such rich terminology—in addition to the metaphorical usage of words employed to describe biological relations—indicates an equally rich and complex network of quasi-familial relations that affected the nature and composition of Roman households and families. In this book, I set out to investigate how such networks of individuals are often influenced by the presence of a child, who acts as a catalyst for the creation of bonds of fictive kinship. Through my three core chapters, I demonstrated that children of any age—from infants to toddlers to teenagers—can be placed at the center of more-or-less extended parafamilial networks. The ubiquity of slavery, the mobility of free and enslaved individuals, and the lack of a state welfare system are some of the important elements that favored the creation and development of bonds outside the so-called nuclear family. It is important to stress how these ties often lasted for years; *collactanei* in their thirties buried their fellow nurslings, and adults participated in the commemorations of their *tatae*. As for *delicia*, the epigraphic corpus often portrays them as rather young children or teenagers; only a handful of epitaphs commemorate *delicia* who are at the cusp of adulthood. Nevertheless, as adults these former *delicia* could still retain a bond with their master or mistress, as in the case of Messalina and Valerius Threptus.

The study of fictive kinship, however, can take numerous other avenues of investigation. While the figure of the *paedagogus* ("educator") has received much scholarly attention, education remains a fruitful area of study for quasi-familial relations. As Quintilian points out, children who are educated together share an unbreakable bond, which has the same sanctity as the bonds between those who are initiated to the same religious mysteries.[9] As an experienced teacher, Quintilian knows that ties between fellow students can be remarkably strong and last for a lifetime, as it happened in the case of two of his pupils, Pliny the Younger and Tacitus, both successful politicians and authors.[10]

8. E.g., Petron. *Sat.* 9.2, 79.9, 97.9, 127.2, 3, 7.

9. Quint. *Inst.* 1.2.20: *Mitto amicitias, quae ad senectutem usque firmissime durant religiosa quadam necessitudine inbutae: neque enim est sanctius sacris isdem quam studiis initiari.*

10. Likewise, today there is a strong expectation in North American popular culture that college students will develop friendships that will last a lifetime.

However, education in Rome was not an exclusive privilege only available to the children of the highest elites. At least from the time of the emperor Tiberius (14–37 CE), *vernae* from the imperial households were educated together in a sort of in-house-school located inside the palace on the Palatine. This school, called *paedagogium*, served multiple purposes; first and foremost, it trained the next generation of imperial staff in its many clerical and administrative tasks. Second, it probably gave the *vernae* who were not yet physically capable of performing heavy labor something to do and prevented them from roaming around the palace grounds creating disturbances, as Mohler suggested.[11] Third, an educated enslaved person could be sold for a much higher price than an illiterate one, so this represented a smart investment at a fairly low cost, for one teacher could instruct dozens of children. Last, it should not be ruled out that masters wished for their *servi* to be educated as a status symbol, to showcase the wealth of their household. Therefore, several elite households, in addition to the emperor's, established similar schools to train their *vernae*.[12]

While we have little insight on how many students attended these *paedagogia*, for how long, or what subjects they learned, we can confidently say that some of these institutions were sizable. A dedicatory inscription from 198 CE lists twenty-four *paedagogi*, all freedmen, who worked at a *paedagogium* located on the Caelian Hill called Caput Africae.[13] Two other contemporary funerary inscriptions record that the school also employed an *unctor* (a masseur for athletics) and a staff of doctors who took care of the physical health of the pupils.[14] From these numbers, we can infer that the school was considerable in size, possibly instructing hundreds of students at different levels of education. Pupils who attended the same *paedagogium* were called *compaedagogitae* ("fellow students").[15] We have six inscriptions from the city of Rome where one or more *compaedagogitae* provided burial to a fellow classmate.[16]

11. Mohler 1940, 266.

12. E.g., Plin. *Ep.* 2.17.7, 24.

13. *CIL* 6.1052. Six of those freedmen self-identify as *vernae*, thus suggesting that they saw it as a distinctive mark. See also *CIL* 6.8982 in which a man provides burial to his brother, a *paedagogus* at Caput Africae: *M(arcus) Aur(elius) Amin/nes f(ecit) P(ublio) A(elio) / Acmazon/ti fratri / p(a) edagogi puer(orum) kap(itis!) Afr(icae).*

14. For the *unctor* see *CIL* 5.1039; for the doctors see *CIL* 6.8977 and 8981. Moreover, *CIL* 6.8977 commemorates a married couple, a *praeceptor Caesaris puerorum* (teacher of Caesar's enslaved children) and an *ornatrix Caesaris puerorum* (hairdresser of Caesar's enslaved children), working for the imperial *paedagogium*.

15. *Compaedagogita* is a compound word like *collactaneus/a*, a term describing a social relation discussed at length in the second chapter, but also to *collibertus/a* ("fellow freedman/woman") and *conservus/a* ("fellow enslaved person"). Similarly, in the miliary sphere, terms such *commanipulares* ("soldier of the same maniple or unit") or *commilitones* ("fellow soldier") are attested as personal designations.

16. *CIL* 6.9759, 9760, 9761, 9762, 9763, 9764.

These young men are of enslaved or manumitted status. Unfortunately, only one inscription—*CIL* 6.9759—includes the age of the deceased. A young man called Erastus was twenty-two years old when he died, although it is not possible to know for sure if he was still attending the school or had already left the *paedagogium* when he passed away.[17] Arguably, the small number of inscriptions featuring this very specific term suggests that the men who were buried and commemorated by their fellow students represent a specific intersection of two conditions: lack of close relatives who could take care of burial, and dying within a few years of "graduation." A complete study of *compaedagogitae* still remains to be done, and it is a project I plan to undertake in the future.[18]

As noted above, Quintilian claimed that pupils who have studied together are as close as those who are initiated to the same religious cult. While research has been conducted on early religious cults and priesthoods, such as Bannon's book on the priesthood of the Fratres Arvales as the brothers of Romulus, it would be fruitful to look at the many cults attested in Rome during the imperial period as fertile territory for the creation of fictive kinship relations.[19] Religion is always a group affair. Even when traditions and cults are carried out inside the familial network, it is not excluded that shared religious practices, such as the frequentation of the same temples or burial sites, created opportunities for the development of fictive kinship bonds. For example, it has been demonstrated that Jewish and Palmyrine communities (located in the Roman neighborhood of Trastevere) retained unique funerary and religious customs for generations.[20] It is not unsound to hypothesize that in these immigrant communities—who shared the languages, traditions, and religious practices of their motherland—it would have been relatively easy for families to know one another and develop close bonds of familiarity.

Moreover, the use of pseudofamilial language is amply attested in another religious community that took root in Rome in the imperial period: Christianity. The use of the term *fratres* to refer to fellow Christians is well known and still in use. In the city of Rome, the use of *fratres* in funerary inscriptions to indicate members of the same religious community is attested from the early third century CE, becoming increasingly more common in the following century. I present an inscription—*CIL* 6.8987—datable to the first half of the third century CE, which illustrates such a use.

17. *CIL* 6.9759: *D*(*is*) *M*(*anibus*) / *Erasto* / *vix*(*it*) *ann*(*os*) / *XXII con/p*(*a*)*edagog/i*[*t*]*ae b*(*ene*) *me*(*renti*). To the Divine Shades. For Erastus, who lived for 22 years, a well deserving fellow student at the *paedagogium*.

18. The topic of education of enslaved children has been treated by Mohler (1940); Forbes (1955); Booth (1979).

19. Bannon 1997.

20. Price 2012; Farrior (forthcoming).

Alexander
Augg(ustorum) ser(vus) fecit,
se ⸢v⸣ivo, Marco filio
dulcis(s)imo, Caputa-
frice(n)si, qui deputa-
batur inter ⸢v⸣estito-
res, qui vixit annis
XVIII, mensibu(s) VIIII,
diebu(s) V. Peto a ⸢v⸣obis
fratres boni per
unum deum ne quis
(h)un(c) tit⸢u⸣l⸢u⸣(m) moles[tet]
pos(t) mort[em meam].

Alexander, the slave of the two Augusti, made this, when he was still alive, for his sweetest son Marcus, a man of Caput Africae, who was classed among the dressers, who lived for 18 years, 9 months, 5 days. I ask you, dear brothers, for the one God, that no one disturb this epitaph after my death.

This epitaph commemorates a young man who recently finished or was completing his training at the *paedagogium* of Caput Africae. It was set up by his father Alexander, an enslaved person from the imperial household.[21] The dear brothers (*fratres boni*) to whom the father entrusts the tombstone after his death are most certainly not the biological siblings of the dedicator, nor his son's schoolmates, but fellow Christians who also buried their dead at the catacomb of Bassilla, where this inscription was found.[22] It appears that Alexander, possibly the only surviving member of his family, had no one else who could take care of his son's tombstone after his eventual death, so he entrusted it to the entire community who used the same burial space, his networks of fictive kin based on a shared religious belief.

Brotherhood among soldiers, especially among those who served in the same unit or maniple, is also frequently attested in funerary epitaphs. Often, soldiers from the same region or nation served together, further strengthening that bond of fictive kinship. In the 1980s, MacMullen published a study on the

21. The coruling emperors mentioned in the inscription would have been, if the dating to the beginning of the third century CE is correct, Geta and Caracalla (211 CE). Moving the dating to the end of the second century CE—as the EDR 29212 edition proposes—would also give Marcus Aurelius and Commodus (177–180 CE) as the possible corulers.

22. Also known as Catacomb of Hermes.

collegia for soldiers of German origin and argued that combat soldiers, especially those who enlisted from the same region and served together, considered their unit as an extended family.[23] In the 2010s, Noy analyzed the role played by extended family members, kin and non-kin, among soldiers who migrated to Rome to serve in the *equites singulares*, an elite regiment entrusted with the protection of the emperor.[24] At times, it is evident that biological and nonbiological family members took upon themselves the commemorative duties, as in *CIL* 3.3558:

D(*is*) *M*(*anibus*).
Pacato, Mucaris,
mil(*iti*) *leg*(*ionis*) *II Adi*(*utricis*),
st⌜*i*⌝*p*(*endiorum*) *X, vixit annis*
XXXV.
Bato, Neritani, co-
m(*m*)*ilitoni obse-*
quentissimo et fra-
tri, ex testamen-
to, fieri curavit,
ex HS n(*ummum*) *DCCC.*

To the Divine Shades. For Pacatus, son of Mucar, a soldier of the second auxiliary legion, who was in the army for ten years, lived thirty-five years. Bato, son of Neritanus, took care of making this (monument) for his most loyal fellow-soldier and brother, as he instructed in his will, for a sum of 800 sestertii.

Based on their filiation, these two soldiers do not appear to be actual siblings.[25] They were serving together and, once Pacatus passed away, Bato took care of his commemoration as it had been instructed in his friend's will. The two men, moreover, are not Roman citizens: they served in an auxiliary legion and only bore a single name, in addition to their patronymic. They are, in every sense except in a biological one, brothers; Bato is Pacatus' commemorator and heir, which are traditionally familial roles.

Another social group of (almost) untapped research potential are aged,

23. MacMullen 1984. On more "traditional" military families, focusing on spouses and children of the enlisted, see Allison 2011; Milne 2012; Phang 2016.

24. Noy 2016. See also Noy 2011 for further discussion of other types of migrant families.

25. There is a possibility, of course, that they had the same mother; however, I believe these two are first fellow soldiers and then became as close as brothers. The order of the epithets used (*commiles*, "fellow soldier," is used before *frater*, "brother") also suggests this interpretation.

single women, often widowed and childless, who are commemorated by their freedmen and freedwomen. To my knowledge, only Ilse Mueller has published on the funerary patterns of commemoration for single women in Rome, with a particular emphasis on elderly women.[26] I believe it would be fruitful to conduct research into single women who manumit their *servi* or *servae* and thus, as *patronae*, become the leaders of a new family. These women, often without children or a spouse, are sometimes commemorated by their freedmen and freedwomen, who could have themselves become *patroni*, as *CIL* 6.25749 attests:

> *Saeniae Eutychiae,*
> *C*(*aius*) *Saenius Eros patronae suae*
> *b*(*ene*) *m*(*erenti*) *f*(*ecit*)*, et sibi et*
> *Saeniae Phasidi coniugi suae, et*
> *Saeniae Eutychiae lib*(*ertae*) *suae, et*
> *libertis libertabusque, posterisque*
> *suis omnibus.*
>
> C. Saenius Eros made this for his well deserving *patrona*, Saenia Eutychia, and for himself and his wife Saenia Phasis, and his freedwoman Saenia Eutychia, and their freedmen and freedwomen, and all their descendants.

In this epitaph the dedicator, C. Saenius Eros, commemorates three women: his *patrona* Saenia Eutychia, his wife Saenia, and his freedwoman who is also called Saenia Eutychia. It is clear that Saenius owed his freedom to Saenia Eutychia "Maior" and his wife, given her *nomen*, did as well.[27] Moreover, C. Saenius Eros named his freedwoman, Saenia Eutychia "Minor," after his patroness. Looking at these four individuals, it is difficult for me not to see a three-generation family, with a matriarch (or grandmother), a married couple, and a freedwoman who acts as a surrogate daughter. I believe that Saenia Eutychia "Minor" is the key to understanding this grouping as a family. According to the epitaph, Eros and Phasis had other freedmen and freedwomen, but they are not named individually; they are welcome to use the burial site, but they are not as important as to have their names carved out on the stone.[28] Thus, Saenia Eutychia "Minor" stood out among all the other *liberti* and *libertae*.

26. Mueller 2010.

27. Phasis is attested as a name for enslaved women in Solin 1996, 568.

28. In the inscription, after the fifth line (where the *liberta* is named) there is a space intentionally left blank of about 15 centimeters, as EDR 159461 attests. It is possible that the space had been left blank so that additional names (potentially other *liberti* and *libertae*) could be included later.

Importantly, she was also the namesake of Eros' *patrona*, who can be seen as the matriarch of this nonbiological family line. As in every Roman family, the young are often named after their ancestors, further underscoring the continuity of the family across generations.

Through these limited examples, I hope to have shown that research into fictive kinship is far from exhausted. While the present book represents the end (for now) of my investigation into how children help constructing and maintaining fictive kinship networks, it is my deepest desire that this scholarly contribution inspires and invites others to pursue fictive kinship and its ties as an access-key into the study of Roman society.

Appendixes

Appendix One

Evidence for Collactanei

TABLE 1.1. Inscriptions from Rome

	1st name[1]	Age[2]	Status[3]	Other relations	2nd name	Status	Notes
1. *AE* 1946: 142	Antiochus Timotheus	A	F	Mother-*nutrix*	(*ignotus*)		Frag.
2. *CECapitol* 70	Tiberius Claudius Zosimus and Epaphra	30 and 10	F	Parents, nephew	Licinia Onesime	F	
3. *CIL* 6.1903	M. Vibius Felix	A	F	Mother	M. Vibius Proclus	F	
4. *CIL* 6.2125	L. Manlius Severus	A	I		(*ignotus*)		
5. *CIL* 6.5939	L.Arruntius Dicaeus	A	L	Mother-*nutrix*	L. Arruntius?	I	
6. *CIL* 6.6324	Atticus	4	S	Mother-*nutrix*	Sisenna	I	Future consul.
7. *CIL* 6.7393	L.Volusius Zosimus	C	F	Mother-*nutrix*	L. Volusius	I	Son of a *pontifex*.
8. *CIL* 6.9745	P. Ciartius Helops		F	*Paedagogus*	L. Ciartius Scyrus	F	
9. *CIL* 6.9901a	M. Vipsanius Thales	18	L		Celer	I	
10. *CIL* 6.10760	P. Aelius Pastor		F		Volusia Salviana	I	
11. *CIL* 6.12115	Aphrodisia	2	S		Apolauste	S	Frag.
12. *CIL* 6.15323	T. Claudius Zenon	A	F		T. Claudius Evaristus	F	
13. *CIL* 6.16057	Communio	2	S	*Domina*	Drusus Blandus	I	
14. *CIL* 6.17388	Euprepius Crescent[inus?]				(*ignotus/a*)		Frag.
15. *CIL* 6.17682	Faenia Priscilla	1	I	Brother, parents	Faenia Hygia	F	
16. *CIL* 6.18115	Flavia Fortunata	16	F		Flavius Iulianus	F	
17. *CIL* 6.18553	Moschis	16	S		(*ignotus/a*)		
18. *CIL* 6.19122	L. Grattidius Eunus	A	F	Mother, wife, mother-in-law	Maecilia Eleutheris	F	
19. *CIL* 6.24975	Lucilius Festus	A	F	Wife	Primitivus	S	
20. *CIL* 6.25087	Pronoea				(*ignotus/a*)		Frag.
21. *CIL* 6.25845	Salvia Terulla	A	F		Laenas	F	

TABLE 1.1—*Continued*

	1st name[1]	Age[2]	Status[3]	Other relations	2nd name	Status	Notes
22. *CIL* 6.27119	Ceionius Constatius	30	F		Terentia Procula	F	
23. *CIL* 6.28463	Hermes	30	S		Titias	S	
24. *CIL* 6.29690	Vennonius	14	S		M. Iulius Iulianus	F	
25. *CIL* 6.29728	L. Titius Pupina Macer	30	I	Mother	Salvius Victor	F	
26. *CIL* 6.35492	Ianuaria		S		(*ignotus/a*)		Frag.
27. *CIL* 6.36193	Primigenius	6	S		Naevius Clemens		
28. *CIL* 6.41112	L. Plotius Liberalis	A	F		L. Plotius Sabinus	F	

1. By definition, *collactanei* is a reciprocal term which refers to at least two individuals.

2. The age is expressed in numbers when the information is available. In cases in which the *collactaneus* is clearly an adult (e.g., is married, is the primary dedicator, holds offices), it is marked by an A. If from context it appears that the *collactaneus* is a child, it is indicated by a C.

3. Status is expressed using the letter I for freeborn (*ingenuus*), L for freedman (*libertus*), S for enslaved (*servus*) and F for free (unsure if freeborn or freedman).

TABLE 1.2. Inscriptions from the Italian Regions

	1st name	Age	Status	Other relations	2nd name	Status	Notes
1. *AE* 1967: 59	Quintus Annius Pallas		F		(*ignotus/a*)		Frag.
2. *AE* 2001: 710	(*ignotus*)				(*ignotus/a*)		Frag.
3. *CIL* 5.3487	Annia Aquilina	39	F		Caius Iavolenus Severus	F	
4. *CIL* 10.1778	Arria Geminia		F	Husband	Arrius Germanus	F	
5. *CIL* 10.4917	Aper	20	S	*Dominus*	Firmus	S	
6. *CIL* 11.1067	Helaenus		S		Klocaetus	S	
7. *CIL* 11.6345	Caedius Rufinus	F	A		Caius Tadius Sabinus	F	
8. *CIL* 14.3812	Paternus			Mother	(*ignotus/a*)		Frag.

TABLE 1.3. Inscriptions from the Provinces

	1st name	Age	Status	Other relations	2nd name	Status	Notes
1. *CIL* 2.104 (Lusitania)	A(ntonia?) Helice	47	F	Mother	Marcus A(ntonius?) Max(imus)	F	
2. *CIL* 3.4218 (Pannonia superior)	Aurelius Flavianus and Aurelius Nemesius		F	Parents	Aurelius Flavinus and Aurelius Leo	F	
3. *CIL* 3.8976 (Dalmatia)	Ceionia Ferocilla		L		Ceionia Hilara	F	Frag.
4. *CIL* 3.14880 (Dalmatia)	(*ignotus/a*)				(*ignotus/a*)		Frag.
5. *CIL* 8.3523 (Numidia)	Claudius Baculus	5	F		Teltonius Erosion	F	
6. *CIL* 12.337 (Gallia Narbonensis)	[Va]l(eria?) Thematiliana		F		(Valerius?)		Frag.
7. *CIL* 13.2104 (Gallia Lugudunensis)	Lucius Claudius Rufinus	A	F		Verina		In meter.
8. *ERAEmerita* 226 (Lusitania)	Antonia Cruseis	45	F	Husband	Antonius Ursianus	F	

Appendix Two

Evidence for Tatae

TABLE 2.1. Inscriptions from Rome

	Name and status of *tata*[1]	Name, age, and status of the child[2]	Name and status of the father	Name and status of the mother	Additional persons and notes
1. *AE* 1973: 21	C. Avidius Soterichus (F)				Unknown dedicator.
2. *AE* 2001: 484	Sophron (S?)	(*ignotus*)			Frag.
3. *AE* 2014: 180	L. Appuleius Regillus (F)	Appuleia Gratilla (14, L)			The child's *patroni* Cn. Cossutus Apriculus and Appuleia Lochias.
4. *BCAR* 1923: 104	(Unnamed)	Iunia Amanda (2, F)			
5. *CECapitol* 87	Claudius Demetrius (F)	Eroticene Bullina (19, F)			
6. *Gregori*-2016–3	L. Modius Urbanus (L)	L. Modius Nicephorus (6, F)			The child is called *dominulus*.
7. *Gregori*-2016–10	M. Iulius Potitus (F)	Iunia Thetis (F)			
8. *CIL* 6.2334	C. Vibius Tyrannus (F)	C. Vibius Threpus (14, F)	Threptus	Vibia Epiteuxis.	
9. *CIL* 6.2373	M. Gellius Helius (F)	Gellia Florentina (F)			A *tata*'s friend and wife are mentioned too.
10. *CIL* 6.3098	C. Antonius Antoninus (F)	Magia Ianuaria (F)			
11. *CIL* 6.4709	(*ignotus*)				Frag.
12. *CIL* 6.5337	Cn. Turranius Euteches (F)	Primilus (S)			
13. *CIL* 6.5642	C. Taurius Primitivus	Arminia Gorgilla (15, F)	C. Arminius Aphrodisius	Valeria Gorgilla	
14. *CIL* 6.5941	Hermes (S)	Arruntia Hermione (F)	Hermias		
15. *CIL* 6.6443	(*ignotus*)	Faustillus Daphnis (7, F)			From the *Monumentum Statiliorum*.

TABLE 2.1—*Continued*

	Name and status of *tata*[1]	Name, age, and status of the child[2]	Name and status of the father	Name and status of the mother	Additional persons and notes
16. *CIL*. 6.6703	Narcissus (S)	Stertinia Maxima (3, F)	Acratus	Molpe	
17. *CIL* 6.10016	Herennius Fortunatus (F)	Primitivus and Calyben (S and S)			Herennia Rhodine *mamma*.
18. *CIL* 6.10873	Cornelius Atimetus (F)	Aelius Primus and Aelius Ingenuus (23, F and 24, F)	Fructus (S)	Aelia Data (F)	
19. *CIL* 6.11395	Anthus (S)	Alexander (5 months, S)	Marinus (S)		
20. *CIL* 6.11690	C. Considius Alcides	Annea Secunda (F)			*Tata* is also the *patronus* of C. Concidius Alcimus.
21. *CIL* 6.12133	C. Apisius Felix (L)	L. Apisius Capitolinus (I)	C. Apisius Epaphras (L)	Oscia Primigenia (L)	Features brother and sister, and unnamed *nutrix*.
22. *CIL* 6.12840	C. Aufidius Faustus (F)	Aufidia Favor (F)			Names a *patrona* and *mamma* called Aufidia Veneria.
23. *CIL* 6.13997	C. Cornelius S[---] (F)	C. Caesiys Try[---] (F, 4)			Frag.
24. *CIL* 6.15009	Ti. Claudius Diryphorus (F)	M. Lucceius Primigenius (F)			
25. *CIL* 6.15034	Ti. Claudius Eros (F)	Sallia Daphne (F)			
26. *CIL* 6.16316	A. Cornelius Stefanus (F)	Pompeia Eutropilla (F)			
27. *CIL* 6.16578	Epaphroditus (S)	Crescentilla (S, 11)	Crescens (S)	Soteris (S)	Last line is fragmentary.
28. *CIL* 6.16854	Q. Marcius Aritonicus (F)	Diocles "Zenon" (S)	Diocles (S)	Marcia Dionysias (F)	Mother and *tata* share the same *nomen*.
29. *CIL* 6.16926	Iulius Telesphorus (F)	Silvina (F?)	Domitius Apollonius (F)	Domitia Fortunata (F)	Also, brother Silvanus and *tatula* Threptus.
30. *CIL* 6.17046	Donatus (S)	Petronia Rome			

TABLE 2.1—*Continued*

	Name and status of *tata*[1]	Name, age, and status of the child[2]	Name and status of the father	Name and status of the mother	Additional persons and notes
31. *CIL* 6.17133	Aulus Egrilius Faustus (F)	Aulus Egrilius Hilarus (F, 25)			Same *nomen*.
32. *CIL* 6.17217	Plato (S)	M. Epidius Pamphilus (F)			
33. *CIL* 6.18196	Phoebus (S)	L. Flavius Aniensis Saturninus (F, 5)	L. Flavius Euhodus (F)		
34. *CIL* 6.18450	Flavius Onesiphorus (F)	Flavia Trophime (F)			Also, the *patronus* C. Ummidius Eufetus.
35. *CIL* 6.18676	(*ignotus*)	Fulvius Hyllus (2)			Frag.
36. *CIL* 6.19506	Q. Histrius Alexander (F)	Rubria (S)			
37. *CIL* 6.19552	Ofellio (S)	Hortensia Iusta (F, 8)	Q. Hortensius Perpetuus (F)		Also, the brother Communis.
38. *CIL* 6.20632	Abscantus (S)	Iulia Primitiva (F)			Also, the *mamma* Obsequens.
39. *CIL* 6.20863	Ti. Claudius Epaphroditus (F)	Ti. Claudius Euschemus? (F)			Three *consobrini* are mentioned.
40. *CIL* 6.20930	Amphio (S)	Iusta (S, 16)	Hermes (S)	Successa (S)	
41. *CIL* 6.22460	Metilius Eros (F)	Two Marci Metilii Eupori (F)			The *tata*'s son is mentioned.
42. *CIL* 6.22564	Ianuarius	T. Minusius Eutyches (3)		Primitiva	
43. *CIL* 6.22802	Hilarus (S)	Victor (S, 2)	Mercurius (S)	Mursine (S)	
44. *CIL* 6.23113	Mius Fortunatus (F)	C. Numisius Felicissimus (4)	C. Numisius Theseus (F)	Numisia Ubrica (F)	
45. *CIL* 6.23469	Onesimus (S)	Galatia (S, 3)	Sympthropus (S)	Acte (S)	
46. *CIL* 6.23792	M. Papirius Primus (F)	Papiria Petale (F)			Also, the *tata*'s wife, Valeria Prepusa.
47. *CIL* 6.25301	Isidorus (S)	C. Quintus Hermia (4)	Farsuleius (S)		Also, the *nutrix* Quintia Partenope.
48. *CIL* 6.25532					Copy of 19506.

TABLE 2.1—*Continued*

	Name and status of *tata*[1]	Name, age, and status of the child[2]	Name and status of the father	Name and status of the mother	Additional persons and notes
49. *CIL* 6.25636	T. Claudius Pantagathus (F)	Rustia Saturnina (F)			Also, the *tata*'s wife and her *tatula* Maius, C. *servus*.
50. *CIL* 6.27259	(*ignotus*)	Terentia Spes (F, 3)	(*ignotus*)	(*ignota*)	Also, an unnamed *avia*.
51. *CIL* 6.27964	L. Valerius Sabbionus (F)	L. Valerius Capotolinus (F)	L. Valerius Acratus (F)	Pontia Veranda (F)	
52. *CIL* 6.28592	Alexander (S)	Verna (S, 2)			
53. *CIL* 6.28906					Copy of 22802.
54. *CIL* 6.29179	Iulius Galata (F)	M. Ulpius Euelpistus (F)	M. Ulpius Philostrogus (F)	Antonia Philete (F)	
55. *CIL* 6.29424	P. Umbrius Macedo (F)	P. Umbrius Philippus (F)			
56. *CIL* 6.29634	Corinthus (S)	Zethus (S, 1)			Also, the *mamma* Nice.
57. *CIL* 6.34206	L. Mummius Onesimus (F)	T. Aconius Karus (F)	T. Aconius Blastus (F)	Flavia Hygia (F)	
58. *CIL* 6.35270	(*ignotus*)	(*ignotus*)			Frag. Also, a *mamma ignota*.
59. *CIL* 6.35323	Fortis (S)	(*ignotus*, 3)		Caenis (S)	Frag.
60. 6.35530	Anthus (S)	Ti. Iulius --- (F, 3)	Terminalis (F)	Iulia Euphrantice (F)	Also the *mamma* Rhoxane.
61. *CIL* 6.35836	Hermes (S)	Megistus Duius (F)			Frag.
62. *CIL* 6.36353	Salonius Epictetus (F)	Silviae (3)	Claudius Protomachus (F)	Claudia Damal	Also, the *mamma* Aphrodia.
63. *CIL* 6.37619	Primus (S)	*Ingenua* (18)			Frag.
64. *CIL* 6.38598	Helius (S)	Manlia Nicephoris (5)			Also, the *mamma* Manlia Modesta and *nutricius* Apollonius.

1. Status is indicated through the following letters: F (free), L (freedman or *libertus*), I (freeborn or *ingenuus*), S (enslaved or *servus*).

2. The term "child" is broadly applied to young adults and teenagers, as it describes the object of the attentions of the *tatae*, their counterpart. Although some of these nurslings are adults, they still remain younger than the *tatae* and their parents, thus justifying the use of the word child in a broader sense.

TABLE 2.2. Inscriptions from the Italian Regions

	Name and status of *tata*	Name, age, and status of the child	Name and status of the father	Name and status of the mother	Additional persons and notes
1. *CIL* 9.899	Publius Tamullius Eros (F)	L. Vitorius Fortunatus (13; F)			Vitoria Briseis *matertera*.
2. *CIL* 9.5228	Primigenius (S)	Philostergus (S) and Successa (S)			Crescentia *mamma*.
3. *CIL* 10.2156	Publius Marcius Fortis (F)	Babullia Hermerotis (F)			
4. *CIL* 10.2918	(*ignontus*)	Rufus			Frag.
5. *CIL* 10.3026	Truttedius Zmaracdus? (F)	Reginus			
6. *CIL* 11.1504	Myrtilus (S)	Ummidia Cale (F. 16)	Felicius	Cale	
7. *CIL* 14.892	Considius Mercurius (F)	Considia Inbenta? (F)			
8. *CIL* 14.1143	Gaius Iulius Dryans (F)	Iulia Secunda (F)			Naevia Sperata *coniunx*.
9. *CIL* 14.1674	Publius Crispius Vitalis (F)	Threptus (2, S) and Iucunda (1, S)		Iucunda (22, S)	
10. *CIL* 14.3355	Arius (S)	Licius Manusius Eutyches (3, F)		Primitiva (S?)	
11. *CIL* 14.3384	Gaius Terentius Anencletus (F)	Terentia Genesis (F)			
12. *CIL* 14.3632	Lucius Vibius Crescens (F)	Cara Salvidiena			
13. *CIL* 14.3844	Septiminus (S)	Servilius Silvanus (12, F)			
14. EDCS-35700043	Hermadion (S)	Syllia Marcia (F)			
15. EDCS-73100407	Publius Crispius Vitalis (F)	Threptus (2, ?)			
16. InscrIt-04–01, 348	Ianuarius (S)	Liberata (1, S)			Primitiva *nutrix*.

TABLE 2.3. Inscriptions from the Provinces

	Name and status of *tata*	Name, age, and status of the child	Name and status of the father	Name and status of the mother	Additional persons and notes
1. *AE* 2015: 1154 (Dacia)	Theimies (S)	Aelius? (F?)			Fragmentary
2. *CIL* 3.9740 (Dalmatia)	Varronianus	Severus			
3. *CIL* 3, 13026 (Dalmatia)	Pr[-]cu[---]	C(laudia) Restituta			
4. *CIL* 10.7564 (Sardinia)	Lucius Cassius Philippus	Lucius Atilius Felix and Lucius Atilius Eutychus		Atiliae Pomptilla	
5. *CIL* 12.452 (Gallia Narb.)	Quintus Minatius Tiridas (F)	Quintus Minatus Celer Claudianus (F)			Plaria Vera *uxor*.
6. *CIL* 12.884 (Gallia Narb.)	Symmachus (S)	Alexandria Victoria (F)			

Appendix Three

Evidence for Delicia

TABLE 3.1. Inscriptions from Rome

	Delicia[1]	Master/Mistress[2]	Parents[3]	Additional individuals	Notes[4]
1. *AE* 1896: 37	Primigenio (L)	L. Taurius Speratus, Taria Galla			
2. *AE* 1903: 160	*Ignotus*				Frag.
3. *AE* 1955: 25	Chrystantus Barbarus (F, 4)	Domitia Augusta	Thymele		
4. *AE* 1984: 91	Vallia Successa (F, 20)	Vallia Epicharis			
5. *AE* 2007: 204	Aphroditenis (S)	Iulia Aphrodite			Frag.
6 *AE* 2000: 192	Dionisius (S)		Flavius Panni[-		Frag.
7. *BCAR* 1923: 110	Paratus (S, 8)	Flavia Agapomene			
8. *BCAR* 1923: 126	C. Sulpicius (F)	Ianuarius			
9. *BCAR* 1989/90: 391	Ciartia Restituta (F, 21)	Ciartia Arete		Secundus (2), son of Restituta	
10. *CEACelio* 55	Abba (S, 15)	Iunius Mettius Rufus	Euphrates and Hinna		
11. *CECapitol* 152	Pyrallis Salvia (F, 5)	Volusia Salvia (35)			
12. *CIL* 6.914	Felicula (S)	Q. Fulvius Stasimus			
13. *CIL* 6.1229	Aponia Pyramis (F, 20)	Arrecina Tertulla			
14. *CIL* 6.1892	Sutoria Psychiarum (L)	M. Sutorius Pamphilus		Sutoria Thais (mother of Pamphilus), M. Sutorius Barnaes (*collibertus* of P.), C. Claudius Posidonius (friend of P.), Suatoria Chelido (wife of P.) and four additional *liberti/ae*	

TABLE 3.1—*Continued*

	Delicia[1]	Master/Mistress[2]	Parents[3]	Additional individuals	Notes[4]
15. *CIL* 6.1963b	Iulia Mercatilla (L)	C. Iulius Amaranthus		Iulia Clara, Iulia Euheria	
16. *CIL* 6.2336	Fortunata (S)	Barbia Secunda		Euvodus, *servus* of Rubianus	
17. *CIL*. 6 3966	Amarantho (S, 3)	Ceryllus			Imp. H.
18. *CIL* 6.4310	*Ignotus* (4)	Attalus			Frag.
19. *CIL* 6.4376	Gethus (S)	Pothus			Imp. H.
20. *CIL* 6.4674	Valeria Vitalis (F)	Hilarus			
21. *CIL* 6.4776	Vitalis (S)	Iulia Glycera, Dardanus			Imp. H.
22. *CIL* 6.5163b	Gutta (S, 7)	M. Allienus Romanus			
23. *CIL* 6.5204	Castus (S)	Fronto			
24. *CIL* 6.5236	Felicula (S, 9)	Iulia Fausta			
25. *CIL* 6.6612	Primigenia (S?)	Valeria Prima		C. Valerius Cosanus (Prima's patron), P. Camelius Salvillus (Prima's husband).	
26. *CIL* 6.6638	Corinthias (S, 9)	Statilius Faustio and Statilia Hedone			
27. *CIL* 6.6670	Rhodenes (S)	Heures			
28. *CIL* 6.7104	Linus (S, 2)				
29. *CIL* 6.7135	Grata (S, 8)	C. Luccius Maius and Luccia Prapis		Q. Pomponius Aeolus (Maius and Prapis' son)	
30. *CIL* 6.7361	Nychius (S)	Volusius Vitalis			
31. *CIL* 6.7560	Cyrilla (S)	Livia Primilla (85)		Pia [—	Frag.
32. *CIL* 6.7592	Secunda (S)	Spurius Carvilius Attalus	Castor and Prima		*Delicia* comm.
33. *CIL* 6.7779	*Ignota* (L, 3)	L. Hermolaus and his wife [—			Frag.
34. *CIL* 6.7935	Veneria (S, 6)	Titinia Prusa (35) and C. Ossonius Gallus			

TABLE 3.1—*Continued*

	Delicia[1]	Master/Mistress[2]	Parents[3]	Additional individuals	Notes[4]
35. *CIL* 6.8514	Primigenius Epagathus (L)		Ephebus		
36. *CIL* 6.9437	Pagus (S, 12)	*Ignotus*	*Ignoti*		
37. *CIL* 6.9667	Primus (L)	M. Allius Pamphilius and Primilla			
38. *CIL* 6.10587	Aebutius Iucindus (F)	Tucen			
39. *CIL* 6.1474	M. Allius Acutus (F, 9)	Ti. Claudius Protus			
40. *CIL* 6.11585	Ampliatus (S, 3)	Lessus Pirithus			
41. *CIL* 6.11842	Apta (S)	Anteia Graphis (L)			
42. *CIL* 6.12096	Apate (S)	Q. Oppius	Laudice		
43. *CIL* 6.12156	L. Aponius Abascantus (F, 4)	T. Flavius Anicetus and Aponia Syrilla			Same *nomen*
44. *CIL* 6.12337	L. Arulenus Prudens (F, 3)	Bassus			
45. *CIL* 6.12335	M. Arrecinus Melior (F, 9)	Arrecina Tertulla			
46. *CIL* 6.12357	Arrecina Gnome	Arrecina Terulla			Same *nomen*
47. *CIL* 6.12782	Dorcas (S); Scylma (S)	M. Vipsanius Diogen; Attia Theonoe		Attia Vitalis (2, sister of Dorcas)	
48. *CIL* 6.14433	Felicula (S)	C. Carrinas Chrestus and Carrinatia Fausta			
49. *CIL* 6.14523	Prim[-	Amabilia Antio[-		L. Cassius Surus (Amabilia's husband), Luria Secunda (daughter), M. Cassius Epaphroditus	
50. *CIL* 6.14786	Chrysoglosus (S, 3)	Velia Lalema	Saturninus		

TABLE 3.1—*Continued*

	Delicia[1]	Master/Mistress[2]	Parents[3]	Additional individuals	Notes[4]
51. *CIL* 6.14949	Claudia Eglectes (F, 8)		Threptus and Ecloge	Ti. Claudius Karus (Eglecte's brother), Ti. Claudius Atticus (Eglecte's brother)	Imp. H.
52. *CIL* 6.14990	(Ti. Claudius) Moschus (L, 5)	Ti. Claudius Dalus			Imp. H.
53. *CIL* 6.15071	Claudius Fortunatus (F, 17)	Claudia Tyche			Same *nomen*.
54. *CIL* 6.15208	Primigenius (S)	Ti. Claudius Phronimus			
55. *CIL* 6.15482	Tyche (S)	Claudius Hermias and Claudia Italia			
56. *CIL* 6.15570	Porphyrius (S)	C. Furinius Faustus		Claudia Psamathes (23), Iucundianus	
57. *CIL* 6.16404	Pusilla (S)	Cominia Coete			
58. *CIL* 6.16055	C. Comisius Helpistus (F, 4)	Comisia			
59. *CIL* 6.16738	Daphnis (S, 8)	Eutyches			
60. *CIL* 6.17149	Elegans Caedix (F, 8)				
61. *CIL* 6.17401	Eutyche Statilia (F, 3)	Nardinus			
62. *CIL* 6.17416	Euthyches (S)	L. Fufidius Sporus			
63. *CIL* 6.17747	Barbara (S, 4)	Faustina			
64. *CIL* 6.18489	Fortunata (S)	Floronia Terulla		Tossiae Feliculae	
65. *CIL* 6.18556	Fortunatus (S)	Sextus Maius		Maia Hospita (mother of Maius)	
66. *CIL* 6.18824	Exsochus (S, 4)	Funia Lucifera and Vesbinus			
67. *CIL* 6.19154	Heteria (S, 5)	Elas and *ignotus/a*			
68. *CIL* 6.19390	Hermes (S)	Claudia Eunia			
69. *CIL* 6.9509	V[-	Homullus			Frag.
70. *CIL* 6.19616	Hymnus (S, 5)	Antiochus	Daphnus		Imp. H

TABLE 3.1—*Continued*

	Delicia[1]	Master/Mistress[2]	Parents[3]	Additional individuals	Notes[4]
71. *CIL* 6.19673	Ilas (S, 2)	Helvidia Priscilla		Helvidia Laodice	
72. *CIL* 6.19717	Isias (S, 4)	Velleius Quartus			
73. *CIL* 6.19861	Primigenius (S)	C. Iulius Atimetus and Tullia Primigenia		Tullius Alexander (Tullia's patron)	Same *nomen*.
74. *CIL* 6.20237	C. Iulius Prosopa (L, 9)	Augusta and Livia			
75. *CIL* 6.21689	Clara (S, 4)			C. Luscius Chares, C. Annius Priamus	
76. *CIL* 6.21986	Terylla (S)	Manlia Quartilla			
77. *CIL* 6.22375	Saturnina (S, 3)	Aulus Memmius Urbanus			
78. *CIL* 6.22740	Musa (S)				
79. *CIL* 6.22983	Nilus (S)	L. Agrius Licinianus			
80. *CIL* 6.23072	Cosmus (S)	Nostia Musa and L. Nostius Philomusus			
81. *CIL* 6.23178	Nympha (S)	Eurhostus			
82. *CIL* 6.23257	L. Octavius Clemens (F, 3)		Hermas		
83. *CIL* 6.4158	Phoebion (S)	Suplicius Maximus			
84. *CIL* 6.24345	Mycale (S)	Plotia Tertia		Sura, C. Pollius Mopsus	
85. *CIL* 6.24768	Selenio (S)	M. Popillius Anthus		Popillia Paramone	
86. *CIL* 6.24829	Glaphyra (S)	Arria Hilara		L. Porcius Gallio, Arria Asia, A. Parvillius Apollophanus	
87. *CIL* 6.24888	Postumia Secunda (F, 8)	M. Septimius Faustus and Postumia Hilara			Same *nomen*.
88. *CIL* 6.24947	Primigenius (S)	Octavia Arche and Longinus		Matilia Doris (wife of Longinus)	
89. *CIL* 6.24949	Primgenia (S, 12)	Lucania Philatate			

TABLE 3.1—*Continued*

	Delicia[1]	Master/Mistress[2]	Parents[3]	Additional individuals	Notes[4]
90. *CIL* 6.24962	Primilla (S, 13)	T. Dulpius Lupercus and Dulpia Erotis			
91. *CIL* 6.24974	Primitivus (S, 1)	M. Fabius Rustiscus and Volusia Secundina			
92. *CIL* 6.25046	Priscus (S, 7)	Augustus	Trophimus		Imp. H.
93. *CIL* 6.25126	A. Publicus Daphis (F, 3)	Valeria Paulina			
94. *CIL* 6.25375	Primigenius (S), Saturninus (S)	L. Rasinius Antiochus and L. Rasinius Daphnus			
95. *CIL* 6.25434	Rhodope (S)	Beronice and Drusilla			
96. *CIL* 6.25459	Larentius Romanus (F)				
97. *CIL* 6.25529	Rubria Hedice (L)	L. Rubrius Varus and Rubria Gemella			
98. *CIL* 6.25808	Salvidiena Faustilla (F, 15)		Salvidiena Hilara		
99. *CIL* 6.25812	Pacata (S)	Salvilla			
100. *CIL* 6.26223	September (S)	Cornelia Primilla			
101. *CIL* 6.26689	Spes (S, 2)	L. Porcius Castresis, Octavia Polla and Sullatius Pollio			
102. *CIL* 6.27075	Syntyche (S, 8)	L. Cornelius Sphorus and Cornelia Quinta			
103. *CIL* 6.27133	Teia Euphrosyne (F)	(Vestal Virgin) Rufina			
104. *CIL* 6.27470	C. Titinius (I)	Cornelia Cleopatra			
105. *CIL* 6.27593	Silia Felicla (L)	Trebellia Tertia			
106. *CIL* 6.27827	Turrania Prepusa (F, 7)	Turrania Polybia			

TABLE 3.1—*Continued*

	Delicia[1]	Master/Mistress[2]	Parents[3]	Additional individuals	Notes[4]
107. *CIL* 6.28132	L. Valerius Threptus (F, 17)	Valeria Messalina			Imp. H.
108. *CIL* 6.28253	Valeria Prisca (I, 23)		*Ignota*		
109. *CIL* 6.28254	Valeria Privata (F, 11)	L. Valerius Acmaeus			
110. *CIL* 6.28342	Sophronen (S, 10)	C. Varius Eutychus and Sentia			
111. *CIL* 6.28637a	Honorius (S)	T. Vestorius		Vesoria Io (Vestorius' sister), Cleopatra (Vestorius' mother), Hermes	Imp. H., Frag.
112. *CIL* 6.29055	Vistinia Halie (L, 3)	Helicen (and Heschius?)			
113. *CIL* 6.30680	Baucas (S)				
114. *CIL* 6.33125	*Ignotus*	Caesar Augustus			Imp. H., Frag.
115. *CIL* 6.33156	Eutyches (S, 10)	P. Fundinius Maximus			
116. *CIL* 6.33594	Lada (L, 1)	Urbana (and Speratus?)			
117. *CIL* 6.33696	Methen (S, 13)	Pomponia Gnoste and T. Vettulenus Hieronymus			
118. *CIL* 6.34393	Veneria (S)	M. Anicus Bassus and Blossia Fausta			

TABLE 3.1—*Continued*

	Delicia[1]	Master/Mistress[2]	Parents[3]	Additional individuals	Notes[4]
119. *CIL* 6.34663	Baebia Hediste (L)	Baebia Peloris		Sextus Baebius Salvius, Baebia Haline and her husband L. Vitellius Barba, L. Vitellius Diochares, L. Baebius Salutaris, Marius Teretina and his wife Popillia Auge	
120. *CIL* 6.35322	Fort[unatus?] (S)	Octavius Eutychius			Frag.
121. *CIL* 6.35793	Vitalis (S)	Aulus Marcius and Marcia			
122. *CIL* 6.36256	Restituta (S, 19)	Volusia Fortunata			
123. CIL 6.36525	Vettia (S)				
124. *CIL* 6.36743	[Primi]genius (S)		*Ignotus*		Frag.
125. *CIL* 6.37482	Nice (S, 9)	Menander and Tertulla			
126. *CIL* 6.37699	Pontia Primigenia (F)	T. Quintius Eros and Pontia Prima		Pontia Secunda (their freedwoman)	
127. *CIL* 6.38008a	Hesperus (S, 2)	Cotilus(?)		M. Antonius T[-	Frag.
128. *CIL* 6.38197	*Ignotus/a*	Claudia Eutuche			Frag.
129. CIL 6.38744	Pinaria Aucta (F, 15)	Autronius			
130. *CIL* 6.38972	Threpten (S)	Aemilius Crescens		Aemilius Ursio and Aemilia Tyche (Threpten's foster-parents)	
131. *CIL* 6.39198	*Ignotus/a* (9)	Freedman of Augustus			Imp. H., Frag.
132. *CIL* 6.39794	Theseus (S, 4)	Camputuleia			
133. EDR 513	Bithynic[us] (S)	Mucia Prim[-			
134. EDR 30455	Claud[-	Claud[-			Frag.
135. EDR 102034	Palladius (S, 5)	Sergianus	Iulia Graeis		

TABLE 3.1—*Continued*

	Delicia[1]	Master/Mistress[2]	Parents[3]	Additional individuals	Notes[4]
136. EDR 149218	Cytetris (S)	Mucia			Frag.
137. EDR 179305	*Ignotus/a* (15)				Frag.
138. EDR 180906	*Ignotus/a*				Frag.
139. ICUR 9, 24124	Respectus (S, 5)				

1. Status is expressed using the letter I for freeborn (*ingenuus*), L for freedman (*libertus*), S for enslaved (*servus*) and F for free (unsure if freeborn or freedman).

2. An individual is deemed to be the master or mistress of a *delicia* in the following cases: (a) when their name is in the genitive to express possession of the *delicia*; (b) when a commemorator of a *delicia* is not a parent.

3. Parents are recognized as such only when the words *mater*, *pater*, *parentes*, *filius* or *filia* are included.

4. Notes are abbreviated: Frag. (inscription is fragmentary), Imp. H. (connection to the imperial household), *Delicia* comm. (the *delicia* acts as the commemorator), Same *nomen* (*delicia* and master/mistress have the same family name, suggesting either filiation or manumission).

TABLE 3.2. Inscriptions from the Italian Regions

	Delicia	Master/Mistress	Parents	Additional individuals	Notes
1. *AE* 1935, 105	C. Valerius Clodianus (F)	C. Valerius Fortunatus and Valeria Chrisis		P. Larcius Hermadio (friend)	Same *nomen*.
2. *AE* 1957, 217	Cn. Domitius (L, 1)	Cn. Domitius Paris	Modestus		
3. *AE* 1974, 257	Valeria Callityche (F) and Epaphra (F)	M. Sirtius			
4. *AE* 1974, 317	Datus (L?)	P. Cissonius Datus and Cissonia Primitiva		Cissonia Restituta and Cissonius Restitutus (siblings of Cissonius Datus)	
5. *AE* 1981, 427	*Ignotus/a*				Frag.
6. *AE* 1983, 224	Hyalissus Lucerinus (F)	Socconus Fronto			Frag.
7. *AE* 1986, 216	*Ignotus/a*				Frag.
8. *AE* 1987, 2531	Bruttius Princepts (F)	Bruttia Callinice			Same *nomen*.
9. *AE* 1999, 544	P. Valerius Felicioni (L, 15)	Valeria Florilla			
10. *AE* 2000, 280	Cre[-	Sac[			Frag.
11. *AE* 2003, 761	Isidorus (S)	Euanthus			
12. *AE* 2013, 364	Specula (S)	Rufilla		Pastor (friend of Rufilla); Crescens Luccius Acastus	
13. *AE* 2013, 526	*Ignotus*	Sex. Peducaeus Eutyches			
14. *AE* 2017, 414	A[- (14)	Cisvitia Prima			Frag.
15. *CIL* 1.3121	Aulus Granus (F)	Fausti Numerii	Numerius Granius Artemus		
16. *CIL* 4.5258	*Ignotus*				Frag.

TABLE 3.2—*Continued*

	Delicia	Master/Mistress	Parents	Additional individuals	Notes
17. *CIL* 5.141	Phaedimus (S)	Caesia Secunda		C. Caesius Maximus (Secunda's father), Socia Maxima (mother), Caesia Paullina (sister), Ceasius Sabinus (brother).	
18.*CIL* 5.647	L. Usius Venustus (F)	L. Usius Philippus		L. Usius Fidus (Philippus' son), L. Usius Thasus (5, son?), Tullia Cypare, Attia Cogitata, L. Usius Euangelus (freedman), Cossutia Tyche.	
19. *CIL* 5.936	Veneria (S)	L. Titus		Titia Fusca (concubine); Vitalis (son); Ingenua (daughter).	
20. *CIL* 5.1013	Didymenus (S)	L. Vallius Auctus and Fructuosa Martialis			
21. *CIL* 5.1137	Dindia Lauris (F, 24)	Caesilia Cinnamis			
22. *CIL* 5.1176	Plectinis (S) and Eclectus (S)			L. Cornelius Epigonus; Flaccus; Didymus	
23. *CIL* 5.1323	Cupita (S) and Melaena (S)	Octavia Procine		C. Octavius Helenus and Octavia Pusilla (freedman/ woman)	

TABLE 3.2—*Continued*

	Delicia	Master/Mistress	Parents	Additional individuals	Notes
24. *CIL* 5. 1405	Phoebus (S, 18) and Restituta (S)	Tertulla		Rufus and Tertia (Tertulla's parents), Ephebus and Lasciva (Tertulla's freedman/ woman)	
25. *CIL* 5.1410	Primitivus (S, 7)	L. Titius Graptus and Barbia Paulina		Graphice and Daphnus (children of Graptus and Paulina)	
26. *CIL* 5.1417	Aphrodisius (S, 6)	Trebia Fortunata			
27. *CIL* 5.1460	Iulia Methe (L)			L. Vinisius Alexander, Vinisia Prima, Inachus (son), Vinusius Florus (freedman), Vinusia Corinna	
28. *CIL* 5.1928	Thallusa (S)	Iulia Nigella			
29. *CIL* 5.2180	Soterichus (S), Gamice (S) and Talia (S)	Sex. Valerius Alcides and Auceiae		Valerius Hermes, Calidius Hermes, Pontius Apollinaris (friends)	
30. *CIL* 5.2417	Festius (S)	Papirius Priscus	*Ignotus pater*		
31. *CIL* 5.3474	Acilia Veneria (F, 26)			M. Acilius Advena, L. Valerius Atimetus.	
32. *CIL* 5.3825	Verecundo (S, 18)	C. Vesius Martialis			
33. *CIL* 5.5148	Martia (S) and Primul[- (S)	Atestia Ide		Atestia Tertia (*patrona* of Ide), Capito Bineta, T. Flavius Celer (friend), Atestia Egnatia	
34. *CIL* 5.6064	C. Valerius Clodianus (F)	C. Valerius Fortunatus and Valeria Chrysis			Same *nomen*.

TABLE 3.2—*Continued*

	Delicia	Master/Mistress	Parents	Additional individuals	Notes
35. *CIL* 5.7014	Aebutia Mele (L)	P. Aebutius Memno			
36. *CIL* 5.7023	Muron (S)	Cornelia Venusta		P. Aebutius (son of Cornelia), Crescens (freed-person)	
37. *CIL* 5.8336	Successus (S, 4)	C. Petronius Amerimnus and Petronia Savarina		Aquilinus (6, son of the couple)	
38. *CIL* 5.8346	Clara (?)	*Ignotus*		Basilius (father), Salvia (freedwoman), Pothina (daughter), Nigrus (son-in-law), Silo (friend), Suave.	Frag.
39. *CIL* 5.8409	Licaa (I)	*Ignotus/a*			Frag.
40. *CIL* 5.8467	Adiectus (F?, 5)	Sex. Terentius Adiectus			
41. *CIL* 9.260	Sextilia Primigenia (L, 14)	T. Mamilius Rufus and Sextilia Data			
42. *CIL* 9.275	Quartilla (S, 3)	Marcilla			
43. *CIL* 9.959	Potestas (S)	Acestia			
44. *CIL* 9.1482	*Ignotus/a*	Procne? P. Flaminius Urbanus (Procne's husband?)			Frag.
45. *CIL* 9.1713	Albanus (S)	Caesellius Surus and Domatia Talia		Q. Caesellius Pamphilus (patron of Surus), Domatia Fausta	
46. *CIL* 9.1721	Iucunda (S)	P. Marcius Philodamus			
47. *CIL* 9.1842	Repentina (S)			Hilarus, Helena	Frag.
48. *CIL* 9.2508	Naevius Eu[-	Naevia Thes[-			Same *nomen*.
49. *CIL* 9.4014	Helenus (S)	Q. Muttius Rufina and Muttia Scudo		Nocelus	

TABLE 3.2—*Continued*

	Delicia	Master/Mistress	Parents	Additional individuals	Notes
50. *CIL* 9.4035	Titiedius Augurius (F, 14)	Q. Gargilius			
51. *CIL* 9.4811	Anicetus (S, 9)	P. Corfidius Primus and Corfidia Prima			
52. *CIL* 9.4921	Secunda (S)	C. Ludius Eros		Ludia Nicia (Eros' patrona), Marcella (3)	
53. *CIL* 9.7306	Lollia Chymasis (L)	Secundilla			
54. *CIL* 9.7763	Vettia Euterpe (L, 14)	P. (Vettius)			
55. *CIL* 9.7986	Parata (S, 11 months)	M. Lollius Onesimus	Paratus and Fortunata		
56. *CIL* 10.662	*Ignotus/a*				Frag.
57. *CIL* 10.1875	Cn. Cornelius (45)	*Ignotus* Augustalis		Antonia Lentybiane (wife of Cornelius)	
58. *CIL* 10.2756	Antistia (S)	Murronia Ianuaria?			
59. *CIL* 10.4041	Bebryx (S)	*Ignotus*	*Ignotus* and *Ignota*		
60. *CIL* 10.4370	Fausta (S)	Q. Florius Liccaeus		Titia Dorcha, Q. Florius Liccaeus	
61. *CIL* 10.5500	Nice (S, 6)	P. Alfi Dionysi and Duilia Apicla			
62. *CIL* 10.5810	Venusta (S, 13)	Themus			
63. *CIL* 10.5921	Amabilis (S, 12)	P. Egulleius Apollonius and Munatia Nobilis			
64. *CIL* 10.5933	Hilara (S, 10)	P. Sestilius Tertius and Laronia Salvia		Antis (slave of Laronia)	
65. *CIL* 10.6630	C. Octavius (F)	Rutilia Nic[- and C. Octavius Av[-		C. Primus (freedman)	Frag.
66. *CIL* 11. 435	Mansuetus (S, 10)	Aemilius Entellus			

TABLE 3.2—*Continued*

	Delicia	Master/Mistress	Parents	Additional individuals	Notes
67. *CIL* 11.900	Argutus (S)	Nonia Anthedo?		Sex. Nonius Nothus, (Nonia) Musa, (Nonia) Areste, C. Calventius Primus, C. Rubrius Probatus, Paullus Pyrallis, Mea Nympha, C. Calventius Tyrus	
68. *CIL* 11.1228	Chloe (S)	(Plotius) Helenus and Iuventia		P. Plotius Atimetus, his wife (Plotia) Celata and thier daughter Vitalis	
69. *CIL* 11.1477	Felicitas (S, 17)				
70. *CIL* 11.3268	L. Cassius Restitutus (F, 4)	Claudia Chrysis			
71. *CIL* 11.4472	C. Larinatus Eron (F, 12), Amerinus (S?, 13)	Naevia Nymphe	C. Larinatus Antiochus and Naevia Melior (parents of Eron?)		
72. *CIL* 11.6140a	Iucunda (S, 16)			L. Canuleius (son?)	Frag.
73. *CIL* 11.6176	Chloe (S)	Sex. Titius Primus		Lucania Benigna (concubine), Titia Creste (freedwoman)	
74. *CIL* 11.6415	Cassonius Vitalis (F), Vestinus (F?), Verecundus (F?), Cassonius Valens (F), Cassonia Vitalis (F)				
75. *CIL* 11.6429	*Ignotus*	L. Murrasius Iustus			
76. *CIL* 11.6690	Pedicatus (S)				

TABLE 3.2—*Continued*

	Delicia	Master/Mistress	Parents	Additional individuals	Notes
77. *CIL* 11.6829	M. Poblicius Ianuarius (F)			M. Poblicius Zosimus, M. Poblicius Philetus, Poblicia Chreste, Caludia	
78. CIL 14.889	Curtia Felicula (F, 10 months)	M. Curtius Sotericus			
79. *CIL* 14.1731	Antia Successa (I, 8)		Antius Successus and Varenes Blastenis		
80. *CIL* 14.2369	Salvidena Corinthia (F)	Calpurnia	Livia Acte (nurse/mother?)	Pompeia Nomas and her mother Pompeia Chrysis	
81. *CIL* 14.2737	Sulpicia Rhanis (L, 17)	(Sulpicius) Trio			
82. *CIL* 14.3907	M. Iulius Saturninus (F)				
83. *CIL* 14.5187	*Ignotus*				Frag.
84. *CIL* 14.3661	Calvinia (I)		Marcus Silanus and Iunia Tyrannis	C. Albius, Thymelus Herculaneus	
85. EDR 98311	Fort[-			Soter?	Frag.
86. EDR 114319	Hermeros (S)	Sex. Magius Serenus			
87. EDR 121557	Expectatus (S, 2)	C. Fannius Anteros et Fannia Secunda			
88. EDR 130901	Paris (S)				Frag.
89. EDR 136896	Eucharistus (S, 2)	T. Terentius Bassus			
90. EDR 138902	Caristus (S)	Iulia Prophasis		C. Iulius Aplus, C. Iulius Cupitus, Iulia Phyllis, Iulia Apula (children of Prophasis)	Imp. H.
91. EDR 145779	Delphis (S, 6)	L. Safinius Fuscus and Maria Prima			

TABLE 3.2—*Continued*

	Delicia	Master/Mistress	Parents	Additional individuals	Notes
92. EDR 158901	*Ignotus*				Frag.
93. EDR 162824	Apolaustus (I)	Suetus Paullinus	C. Lamavus		
94. EDR 166248	Iason (S)	Ambrosia			Imp. H.

TABLE 3.3. Inscriptions from the Provinces

	Delicia	Master/Mistress	Parents	Additional individuals	Notes
1. *AE* 1932, 50 (Germania Super.)	Diadumenus (F, 16)	M. Ulpius Vannius	Felicio		
2. *AE* 1995, 716 (Baetica)	Apolasius (S)	Antistia Prisca (48)			*Delicia* comm.
3. *AE* 2001, 1609	*Ignotus/a*	Lusidenius Glicerus		Secunda (Glicerus' daughter)	Frag.
4. *AE* 2010, 1231	Feresia Valentina (F, 4)	C. Feresius Clytus			Same *nomen*
5. *AE* 2017, 1137 (Dalmatia)	Ursinus (?, 25)	Saufeius Valens			
6. *AE* 2018, 788	Quintilla (S)	M. Curius Quintio and Curia Primula			
7. *CIL* 2.1852	Mercurialis (S, 5)	*Ignotus/a*			
8. *CIL* 3.1899 (Dalmatia)	Ursinus (I?)	M. Allius Firminus	C. Septimius Carpor		
9. *CIL* 3.1903 (Dalmatia)	Valerius (F?, 24)	V. Maximus and C. Vera		C. Vendemia (wife of Valerius?)	
10. *CIL* 3.1905 (Dalmatia)	Victor (S, 8)	Valeria Severina and Messoria Firmionis			
11. *CIL* 3.2130 (Dalmatia)	Valentina (S, 3)	Celerinus	Valentio		
12. *CIL* 3.2244 (Dalmatia)	L. Beabidius Primitivus (F, 12)	L. Baebidius Vitalis and Iulia Quarta		Baebidia Amanda (wife of Primitivus)	Same *nomen*
13. *CIL* 3.2407 (Dalmatia)	L. Iunius Epicfitus (F, 5)	Iunia Trophime			Same *nomen*
14. *CIL* 3.2411 (Dalmatia)	Felicissimus (S, 5)	Laelia Maximina			
15. *CIL* 3.2412 (Dalmatia)	Vitalis (S, 7)	Lalia Sexta			
16. *CIL* 3.2414 (Dalmatia)	Corellia Melete (F)	L. Lartius Terpinus and Corellia Nice			Same *nomen*
17. *CIL* 3.2491 (Dalmatia)	Faventina (S, 10)	Prostinia Procula			
18. *CIL* 3.2503 (Dalmatia)	Nice (S, 13)	Ravonia Placontis		Ravonia Eucarpia (Placontis' mother)	

TABLE 3.3—*Continued*

	Delicia	Master/Mistress	Parents	Additional individuals	Notes
19. *CIL* 3.2693 (Dalmatia)	Musculus (?, 5)	Orestes			
20. *CIL* 3.6429 (Dalmatia)	Fortunata (S, 18)	Maximus Ianuarius			
21. *CIL* 3.9076 (Dalmatia)	Sextus Festivus (F)	Venustus			
22. *CIL* 3.9379 (Dalmatia)	Valeria (S, 4)	M. Aurelius Seneca			
23. *CIL* 3.10004 (Dalmatia)	Isidora (S, 19)	M. Minicius Zosimus			
24. *CIL* 3.12793 (Dalmatia)	Ninsus (S)	Mercurialis			
25. *CIL* 3.12816 (Dalmatia)	Aemilia Dracont[- (F, 20)	Vibialione(?)			
26. *CIL* 3.12817 (Dalmatia)	Pan(?) V(?) (F)	Avitus Mercurialis			
27. *CIL* 3. 14281 (Dalmatia)	Primi[-				Frag.
28. *CIL* 3.14321 (Dalmatia)	Augustio (S)	Q. Publicius and L. Primulus			
29. *CIL* 3.14749 (Dalmatia)	*Ignotus/a*	Aurelius Lucius			Frag.
30. *CIL* 3.14832 (Dalmatia)	Prim[-				Frag.
31. *CIL* 3.14855 (Dalmatia)	Silvina (S, 18)	Barbia Paulla		Quintia (Paulla's mother), L. Barbius (patron/husband?)	Frag.
32. *CIL* 10.8316 (Sicilia)	Germana (S)	Valeria Marcia		Marcius Iustus (Marcia's alumnus)	
33. *CIL* 12.3571 (Gallia Narb.)	Arignotus (S)	Eppia Verula			
34. *CIL* 12.3582 (Gallia Narb.)	Primitiva (S)	Iulia Greacina			Frag.
35. *CIL* 13.3624 (Aquitania)	Madicua (S)	Two women named Securina Ammina		Securinius Amminus (father of Amminae), Ulpia Venaenia (mother)	

TABLE 3.3—*Continued*

	Delicia	Master/Mistress	Parents	Additional individuals	Notes
36. FE 741 (Baetica)	(Val)entina (S)	Caius Lucanus	*Ignotus* and *Ignota*		
37. Inrap-08-10-2019-2 (Gallia Narb.)	Festus (S, 10), Aquila (S, 8)	Iulia Protogenia			
38. Salone-1, 17 (Dalmatia)	Napis (S, 6)	Salvius Crescens and Scania Prima			

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