FOREIGN INFILTRATION INTO ROME
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AS VIEWED BY JUVENAL

AND

OTHER WRITERS OF THE EARLY EMPIRE

By

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A thesis
Submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies
in Partial Fulfilment of the Requirements
for the Degree
Master of Arts

McMaster University
May 1965
MASTER OF ARTS (1965)  
(Latin)  
McMASTER UNIVERSITY  
Hamilton, Ontario.

TITLE: Foreign Infiltration into Rome, as viewed by Juvenal and other writers of the Early Empire.

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SUPERVISOR: Dr. D.M. Shepherd.

NUMBER OF PAGES: 111, 108.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Juvenal's hatred of foreigners is always commented upon by those who write about the satirist and his work, but, as far as I have been able to discover, further details concerning his discrimination are not forthcoming. In this paper, I shall endeavour to collect and examine Juvenal's comments on the different races he mentions as being in evidence at Rome, and ascertain whether or not he is fair in his judgment of them. But before beginning, since immigration to Rome was by no means confined to the age of Juvenal, I feel a brief history of the influx of foreigners to the city over the years would be of benefit in giving us a clear background of the capital's racial situation at the time we are studying.

From the time when Rome first came into contact with Greece and the East, the number of her foreigners steadily grew, the beginning of this influx coinciding with the great conquests after the Punic wars and continuing unabated throughout the republican period. During the last century of the republic, the foreign population of Rome increased very rapidly and in many ways came to affect the whole life of the city and its institutions. Immigration of Greeks from southern Italy was succeeded by the
incoming of racial elements from the provinces of Asia Minor, Syria, Egypt, Greece, Africa and Spain, and gradually from Gaul and the Danube lands; and it seems that from the beginning of the second century B.C. there was a constant increase in the population of Rome except for brief periods, and that at the beginning of the empire one million inhabitants crowded the city.\(^1\)

To this increase in the population the native stock seems not to have contributed much. Decimated by the long wars fought by citizen armies which secured to Rome a Mediterranean empire, its ranks were thinned still further by the withdrawal of colonies of citizens to the provinces and by a heavy decline in the birth-rate, even among the poorer classes. Thus the native Roman and Italian population steadily dwindled and the gaps had to be filled by new races.

Some of the new immigrants settled in Rome by free choice; others were compelled to do so such as members of the senatorial class obliged by the emperors to live in Rome, their slaves, prisoners of war and slaves brought to the city for sale. The largest share of the foreign population was probably made up of slaves, former slaves and their descendants. The Romans were very

\(^1\)In the second century B.C. Rome was already over-populated and Professor Tenney Frank concludes that nine-tenths of the population of Rome under the early empire was of foreign descent. St. Jerome records in his Chronicle the result of the census of 88 B.C. of 463,000 people, made without regard to sex, age, status or nationality. Thirty years later the figure was considerably higher, if it is true, as Incan's commentator asserts, that when Pompey took over the Annona in September 57 B.C., he succeeded in getting the grain to feed a minimum of 480,000 mouths. Carcopino, Daily Life in Ancient Rome, London 1941, p.17 and 34.
generous in their manumission and the servile element contributed an important part to the free population of foreign birth or descent.

During four centuries of wars and expansion, the victorious armies had brought to Rome thousands of captives of all races from the conquered lands. Moreover, Rome inherited the slave-trade from the Phoenicians and the Greeks. During the republic, the servile population in Rome must have been permanently on the increase, but it was in the last two centuries B.C. that its growth was swiftest - the age of Rome's Mediterranean expansion, when Gaul, Spain, Africa and almost the whole of the civilised East was reduced under her yoke and enslaved. Sardinians, Gersans and other western races were added to the list with every new addition to the empire.

There is thus no doubt that the slave-population of Rome was of cosmopolitan origin, though it seems that the Greek and oriental stock was and remained numerically preponderant all through republican and imperial times, and that the slaves from the eastern provinces played a more important part in Roman life than did those from the west.²

But besides increasing the number of slaves, successful warfare also increased Rome's wealth. Accordingly there was built up a large trade in foodstuffs and luxuries which were imported from the provinces. At the same time, new crafts and

²This impression is obtained from Roman writers and especially from names of slaves and persons of servile descent in the literary and historical sources, and found by hundreds in Roman funerary inscriptions. La Piana, "Foreign Groups in Rome during the First Centuries of the Empire", Harvard Theological Review, 20 (1927), p.190.
trades from abroad were introduced into the city and carried on in local shops for local needs. A large commercial class was formed, consisting of importers, transportation contractors, shopkeepers, and tradesmen and craftsmen of all kinds. These were mostly foreigners, ingenui, liberti or even slaves, for the old Roman aristocracy shunned commerce, the laws of the republic actually forbidding senators and men in high political positions to engage in any sort of trade. Nevertheless the growth of public and private business called for a vast amount of labour, so because slaves were easier and cheaper to acquire for work than free men, it was they who were used in the new trades, industries and public entertainments.

Besides foreigners employed in trade and commerce, there were also in Rome other peregrini who exercised an enormous influence in all spheres of Roman life. Such were the astrologers, teachers, lawyers and philosophers. Still other

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3 A large majority of the merchants in Rome were from the eastern provinces. Greeks from southern Italy undoubtedly played a considerable part in Roman commerce in republican times, but with the successive annexation of new provinces and the opening of new fields of exploitation, and the increase in the amount and variety of the products imported into Rome, the South Italians were superseded by Greeks of the Hellenistic countries, Syrians and other orientals. Ibid, p.254.
foreign elements were found in the military stations. The camps were most of the time centres of foreign infiltration into Roman life. When we reflect on the part the imperial soldier played not only in Roman politics, but also in spreading foreign religions and cults and in the whole social life of Rome, we are forced to recognise the vast importance of the presence of these foreign elements in the military stations of Rome.

Rome eventually became so saturated by foreigners that in Juvenal's time the cosmopolitan character of the city had never been so distinctly marked. Roman society was always in a state of flux as intercommunication was established on all sides between nations and classes, drawing them together and fusing them. Thus the distance between the Roman and the foreigner, the citizen and the peregrinus, was ever being lessened. The true Roman was sub-

4 After the re-establishment of peace by Augustus, the praetorian guard, the equites singulares, the cohortes urbanae and the vigiles were all in Rome. Large groups of classiarii also had their barracks in the city, especially in winter, and later yet other military bodies were established there, for example the frumentarii and various kinds of stationarii. Under Augustus, the auxiliary troops were drawn from the provinces. From the time of Vespasian even the legions were made up mostly from the provincial middle classes. Marines were mainly provincials and the lower classes and freedmen were admitted to their ranks even in Augustus' time. As is shown by the inscriptions, many of them were orientals. The equites singulares appear to have often been natives of the northern provinces, including Germania and Britannia. Ibid., p.221-5.

5 The history of the artistic development of Rome, especially in architecture and the plastic arts, might also cast light on this topic, but it is too lengthy to develop here. One example though is Strzygowski's conclusion in his Origin of Christian Church Art, Oxford 1925, p.65, where he writes that the temple of Minerva Medica in Rome appears to him to have been built by Armenian workmen who "at that time were to be found in large numbers in Rome".
emerged on every social plane by the multitude of provincials who brought with them from every corner of the universe their speech, manners, customs and superstitions. Even those who most loudly advertised their xenophobia were themselves but recent newcomers to Rome, seeking to defend their adopted home against still fresh incursions. Eventually in the senate, men from Gaul, Spain and Africa sat side by side; and even the Roman emperors, Roman citizens but newly naturalised, came from towns or villages beyond the mountains or seas. Rome was indeed a melting-pot, in which the people were continually being subjected to new processes of assimilation. The main difficulty when speaking of foreigners in the imperial period, arises from the fact that the continuous absorption of the various foreign elements makes it impossible to draw a line at any given moment between what was still a foreign element and what had ceased to be such. In the ever-growing process of ethical, social, religious and cultural syncretism which was taking place in Rome, the word 'foreigner' changed its meaning. The foreigners of a former generation were the Romans of the next, till finally the cosmopolitanism of the Roman population became the true ethical and social characteristic of the city.

6Carcopino, op. cit. p.55.

7Trajan and Hadrian were born in Spanish Italica in Baetica.
Such was the result of the process, but in the process itself, the distinction between foreigners and non-foreigners was always present and important. Although already during the first century of the empire, the old Roman stock was being submerged by racial mixture and the old aristocracy was disappearing before a new aristocracy mostly of provincial origin, yet these new Romans inherited all the older prejudice, fear and contempt for the last-comers. Periodical reactions on the part of the native population and especially of the conservative classes, found expression in the occasional drastic laws which resulted in the expulsion of all foreigners or of certain groups. But even when actually and severely enforced, these expulsions did not eliminate the foreign element from Rome, for that, as we have seen, consisted mainly of slaves whose work was indispensable, and of freedmen who now possessed Roman citizenship; these had become an integral part of the plebs urbana and could not be expelled.

So despite all measures, the foreign population of Rome assumed still greater proportions and importance, and even became a political force in the hands of demagogues in the civil wars and the tumults of the last part of the republican régime. Rome was to be no longer an Italian community, but the denationalised capital of many nations; and this prophecy, together with Lucan's

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in Book 7, 541-4, eventually came true.\textsuperscript{9}

Compared with the importation of slaves, immigration of
free men cannot have been very large; for Rome, which had no
industries not in servile hands, could not easily attract the
free foreign workman. However, immigration of free labour is not
to be excluded altogether as one of the contributing elements to
the foreign population of Rome. Opportunities, especially for
skilled workers, though scarce, were not entirely lacking.\textsuperscript{10}

But more important was the immigration of merchants and
professional men, especially after the beginning of the empire,
when the re-establishment of peace, the re-organisation of the
provinces and increasing prosperity could not fail to attract to
the capital large numbers of provincials, led by commercial,
political or other motives. There is no doubt that there was at
all times in imperial Rome a large crowd of these foreign
merchants, artists, architects, men of letters, philosophers,
doctors, teachers, students, musicians, dancers and adventurers
of every sort. These were both free men and freedmen of all
races, naturally attracted by the superior civilisation and
wealth of Rome, to whom the capital offered better chances of

\textsuperscript{9}\textit{cf. also Plutarch Moralia 2, 470}\textsuperscript{d}.

\textsuperscript{10}Rostovtzeff, \textit{The Social and Economic History of the
Roman Empire}, Oxford 1926, p.539, n.41 and p.498 n.33; M.E.
T. Frank, \textit{An Economic History of Rome}, 2nd ed. Baltimore, 1927,
chapter on Pompeii, esp. p.369.
success than the provincial towns. Natives of Athens, Pergamum, Rhodes, Antioch, Alexandria and other cities of the Hellenistic world came to Rome for higher pay and the Roman franchise; and as luxury increased still further, so did the numbers of foreign slaves, actors, athletes, dancers, astrologers and rhetoricians. Seneca, in his De Consolatione ad Helviam 6, gives a rhetorical, but impressive enumeration of the various motives that brought all these types to Rome. He writes:

"Come now, look at this throng, for which the houses of our immense city scarcely supply enough room: the greater part of this crowd have no country; they have congregated from their own free towns and colonies, in short, from the whole world. Some are led by ambition, some by the calls of public duty or charged with some mission; others by luxury, which seeks a rich and plentiful haven for vices; others by eager pursuit of liberal studies; yet others by the shows; some friendship has allured; others diligence, which has won a wide field for the display of virtue; some have brought their beauty to market; some their eloquence. All classes of men flock together into a city which sets a high price both on virtues and vices. Did all these be summoned by name and ask each where he was born; you will find that the great bulk of them are such as have left their own homes to come to a city, vast it is true, and beautiful, yet not their own."

This passage and that in Juvenal's third satire, 11.62ff., clearly suggest that foreigners of their own free will drifted into Rome in great numbers to make it their own place of livelihood. No doubt both writers are speaking rhetorically and indulging in some exaggeration, but there is no serious reason to doubt that professional men and adventurers did flock to Rome as they do nowadays to the great cities of the world. In such a large city

as Rome in imperial times, there must have been plenty of opportunities for professional men and peregrini from the provinces. The very fact that in republican times there is mention of expulsion or proposals of expulsion from Rome of precisely such men, and that at other times they were protected and encouraged to settle there, as under Julius Caesar, shows their numbers were considerable and their services needed.

We have seen above how the foreign population contributed to the plebs urbana, but it also, and in a large measure, increased the numbers of the wealthy classes. The senatorial and equestrian aristocracy was soon filled by new families of provincial origin, which took the place of the old Roman aristocratic families of republican times, either extinct through lack of offspring or destroyed by the proscriptions and ruthless persecutions of the imperial period. After the time of Claudius, the provincial aristocracy, not only of Italy, but also of Gaul, Spain and Africa filled the senatorial and equestrian ranks.12 Most of the aristocracy were rich provincial land-owners, but on entering the imperial service, they became connected with the city of Rome perhaps far more intimately than with their native city, for they took up residence in the capital and invested at least

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12 Few orientals entered the senate before the third century A.D., but their numbers increased after Caracalla. In Piana, op. cit. p.195.
Thus, about the middle of the first century A.D., the foreign element was already prominent in the Roman population. It had begun to make a deep inroad into the senatorial and equestrian classes, formed a large part of the piebs urbana, and contributed the whole servile class and a large population of peregrini. Virtually the same situation is found in the second and third centuries, with only certain changes in the proportion of the various contributing elements. There was at all times in Rome then, a process of racial mixture and adjustment kept up by the constant new influx of foreign elements and traditions.

Rome had changed considerably with the admixture of the eastern populations, and by the end of the second century A.D., according to Athenaeus, presented the aspect of a vast conglomeration of cities brought together from various parts of the Roman world. No less emphatic is the description of Aelius Aristides in his Panegyric of Rome, which ends: "it is safe to say that what cannot be found in Rome cannot be found anywhere."¹⁴

This cosmopolitan character of the population of Rome is often mentioned by writers belonging to the various centuries from the

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¹³ There was also in Rome, together with the large body of wealthy wholesale merchants and retail traders, shipowners, thrifty imperial freemen and rich bankers, among all of whom the foreign element was largely represented. La Plana, op. cit. p.197.

time of Cicero to Olympiodorus in the fifth century.\textsuperscript{15}

By the late empire, things had come to such a pitch that even the broad-minded and sensible Pliny complained: "Alienis pedibus asbulamus, alienis oculis agnosceimus, aliena memoria salutamus, aliena vivimus opera," adding sarcastically: "Nihil aliud pro nostro habemus quam delicias." To a man of the Elder Cato's type, the main objection to foreigners was their incapacity to understand and live by the traditions of the Roman mores maiorum; their culture was not actually despicable, but it increased artificial needs and weakened the native race; their sciences were mostly nonsense and the earlier Romans who had not known them had been better for it. The general attitude of the Romans to the newcomers was one of disdain and coldness.\textsuperscript{17} For they despised barbarians who, however integrated their culture, could not read or write, cure their own illnesses, and had no

\textsuperscript{15} For example: Cicero, de pettiones cons. 54: "Roma est civitas ex nationum conventu constituta"; Olympiodorus, quoted by Photius, Bibliotheca, ed. Bekker, p.63: \textit{Eis o\'mos i\'otu pe\'lei polis i\'otel yuriz ke\'bei}.\textsuperscript{16}

\textsuperscript{16} M.N. 29, 1, 8.

\textsuperscript{17} E.g. Marcus Cornelius Fronto, an African, the teacher of Marcus Aurelius, a man who became senator and consul designatus, of large culture and considered the most elegant Latin writer of his time, complains in his letters that he has never found any sincere or warm friendship among the Romans. La Piana, \textit{op. cit.} p.227.
standards beyond those of a tiny tribe.

Those who were in the society, but not of it, like the Jews, were distrusted. However, it must be made clear that if a Jewess or a Syrian is despised as a wife by a free man, it is because she comes from a despised race or because she practised barbarous rites, not because her skin was dark, for in Rome there was no colour-bar. Aristocratic prejudice might shrink from Cleopatra as Empress of Rome, but this was chiefly because of the slight to Roman women, for even those senators who raised any protest soon married Syrians and women of mixed descent. The Greek East bound to itself the West with stronger bonds than literature and art; and Rome, though at first resisting, soon became a willing prisoner.

18 On xenophobia in antiquity, see T.J. Haarhoff, The Stranger at the Gate, Oxford 1948.
CHAPTER 2

THE GREEKS

The indignation of the old type of Roman which Juvenal shares with Cato, was most outspoken against the Greeks and orientals, on whom fell the largest share of responsibility for the contamination of Roman society and morals; but even the westerners, many of them from Roman colonies and of Roman descent, did not remain unscathed by the abuse of the Roman writers.1

But the Greeks were considered most abhorrent. A Roman of the conservative class, even when he began to know and appreciate the glories of Greek civilisation, set himself to learn from the Greeks something of the arts and sciences, or adopted Greek customs and the Greek language, nevertheless did not hesitate to express with brutal frankness his utter contempt for the Graeculi from Greece and the Hellenised countries of Asia Minor who tramped the pavements of Rome in search of a livelihood. For him they were the degenerate descendants of a mighty race, whose glory had vanished forever, giving place to the

1 An interesting study on the various judgments passed by Latin writers on the character of the nationalities of the Roman world is made by E. Wolfflin, "Zur Psychologie der Volker des Alterthums", in Archiv für lateinische Lexikographie und Grammatik, Leipzig, 1892, pp.133-146, 333-342. See also Friedlander, Roman Life and Manners under the Early Empire, London, 1908-13, 1, 104 ff.
triumphant power of Rome. The very least that the Romans of the cultured class could say about the Greeks was that they did not restrain their levitas even before sacred things, and that they never respected promises or oaths.  

The common people too, who did not know and did not care to know the glory of Greece, saw in the Graeculi only a crowd of parasites and schemers, who were always ready to bid for the favour of the rich by adulation and abject servility, but who were lazy and cowardly in the face of adversity and danger. Otium Graecum was proverbial, and Cicero did not hesitate to affirm that "omnes Graeci neglegentiores sunt", that they were cowards, loquacious, inept, and above all that they possessed a shameless readiness to flatter the rich in the hope of getting money, or at least a supper. These were in truth all common characteristics of many immigrants from the Hellenised provinces, and caused the invention of a new verb "pergraecari".

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2 Cicero pro Flacco 4, 9, says: "Hoc dice de toto genere Graecorum, de multarum artium disciplinam, non adimo sermonis leporem, ingeniorum acumen, dicendi copias: testimoniorum religionem et fidem nunquam ista natio coluit."

3 Epp. Fam. 16, 4, 2: "Non satis animosi hostem ausplicere non possunt" Tusc. 2, 65; De orat. 1, 105; "hoc vitio-ineptum esse-cumulata est eruditissima Graecorum natio" De orat. 2, 17; "Graeca adulatio!", Tac. ann. 6, 18.

4 This, according to the grammarian Festus, meant "epulis et potationibus inservire", ed. Lindsay, Leipzig 1913, 15, 235.
Other Roman authors held similar opinions of the Greeks. In a passage quoted in Pliny's *Natural History* 15, 5, Cato called them "nequissimum et indocile genus" and ends a long indictment by saying, 29, 9: "Satis est ingenia Graecorum inspicere, non perdiscere". Seneca warned: "Avoid all contact with Greeks, for it is they who introduce and encourage vice," and Juvenal wrote sixty-seven lines of sharp invective aimed mainly at this type of immigrant in Satire 3, lines 58-125.

After their arrival in Rome, many of the foreigners, as Juvenal says, Satire 3, 69ff., make for the Esquiline where are to be found the houses of the rich. They ingratiate themselves with their masters and completely supplant the less versatile Romans, "viscera magnarum domum dominique futuri", being the class "divitibus . . . acceptissima", ibid. 1, 58. Later, because of their ability to turn their hands to anything, 7

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5 Epp. 123, 8 Loeb Class. Lib. 3, 428.

6 A common complaint of guests at a feast was: (Lucian de merc. cond. 17) *movis tuis esse queri totius universitas e Romanum mulis.* Lucian, ibid. 26 gives an account of the treatment of learned Greeks at the tables of great Roman patrons in his time.

7 Horace, *ep. 2*, 1, 32-35; Pliny *pan.* 13, 5; Cicero, *in Pius.* § 70.
and their varied gifts, they would be manumitted, a common occurrence, especially in the vast familia of the Caesars where such liberti often rose to great importance in the household and even in the government.

But how insulting for the free Roman to give place to these foreigners on every occasion, Juvenal remarks, ibid. 61-61. Although the Greeks are a nation of liars (Satire 10, 174), and employ the most abject and bare-faced flattery, their words carry more conviction than those of the Romans (Satire 3, 92), who, Juvenal admits, play the same game, though not so competently.

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8 Greek and oriental slaves from lands of ancient civilisations were more useful and usually more docile than other foreigners. Many were well-trained not only for domestic, but also professional service, e.g. doctors, artists, actors, copyists, secretaries.

Juvenal says they were quick-witted, bold, and possessed a speech that was ready and gushing (3,73-4). For the latter point see also Seneca, opp. 49, 10; Pliny, opp. 5, 20, 4; Petronius 2; Suet. Aug. 26; Cicero, pro Flacco, 9; Brutus 51, 325; Quintilian 12, 10, 10; Plutarch, Anton. 2; Val. Max. 2, 2, 2.

9 Friedländer 1, p.178; Lucian de merc. cond. 35.

10 See below, pp.25, 26, 34-36, 41, n.46.

11 On the excessive adulation of the Athenians, see Pliny, N.H. 29, 17; and cf. Athenaeus 6, 253ff. where he describes the court paid to Demetrius and adds, p.254: τοίοις ὁτ' ἐγενομένοι όσ' ἁγνὴν κολύεται θρίον χαλεπότατον, λυσσάν ἐμφαλουσάς λύπον τῇ πολέι.

12 We see here that Juvenal is against Greeks not on moral grounds, but because he is jealous of their success where Romans fail.
He continues his tirade by imputing to the Greeks gross immorality and accuses them of prying into family secrets in order to gain power in the household. Once the Greek is established in the home, the honest Roman client, unable to lie or flatter as well as he, however long and faithful his service, is speedily ousted by the intrigues and venom of his selfish opponent (11, 119-24). Philosophers set no example either, for even they turn informers and betray their friends and disciples to ruin (11, 116-8). Yet what else could be expected from a nation which indulges in such pastimes as the *malaestra*, 1. 115, a characteristic Greek institution which was never popular among the Romans, who considered the form of exercise unpractical, indecent, and sure to produce an indolent type of character. 13

After such derogatory remarks made by Juvenal, it is only fair to state that many Greeks filled higher positions than that of the informer, flatterer, vagabond or parasite. In the arts and sciences, particularly in medicine, they outdistanced all rivals:

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13 See also Tac. *ann.* 14, 20; Pliny *sep.* 1, 22, 6; Plutarch *qu. Rom.* 40; Sen. *brev. vit.* 12; Pliny, *N.H.* 15, 3 (4) and 39, 8 (1) and 35, 47 (13); Horace, *sat.* 2, 2, 22ff. and *sep.* 2, 1, 33; Varro *fr.* 2, pr. 1-2; Cicero *de rep.* 4, 9 and *Tusc.* 4, 70; Plut. *admir.* 5, 9, pp. 751ff. and *sep.* 40, p. 274; Tac. 14, 30; Petronius 85; Pliny *sep.* 9, 22, 1-3, 7 and 10, 49; Lucian, *de bello civili,* 7, 271.

Greek athletic art was never adopted by the Romans. The crowd, addicted to the thrills of the Colosseum, looked on the Greek games as colourless and tame; the upper classes professed to detest an exotic degeneracy and immorality in their nudism. *Carpopho,* op. *cit.* p. 245.
yet the Roman looked askance even at their medical skill. Cato the Censor, in a treatise addressed to his son and quoted by Pliny with approval in his Natural Histories, 29, 7 (2), says that the Greek doctors are "nequissimus et inductus genus" and that they have sworn amongst themselves to kill all non-Greeks with their medicine! Medicine was not a profession to which the Romans themselves were greatly attracted, and Pliny (N.H. 29, 8 (1)), notes that very few practiced the art, and those who did he calls "ad Graecos transfuges". According to Pliny, medicine was a profession thought not to be in keeping with Roman gravitas. And Juvenal does not miss an opportunity to scoff at the Greek powers of healing. In Satire 10, 219ff., he states that the number of illnesses besetting an old man are more numerous even than the number of sick menThemison has killed in a single autumn! And Archigenes, another famous Greek doctor, is called upon in Satire 14, 1, 252 to come to the aid of an impatient heir with his poisons or fatal medicines.

No doubt many Greek doctors were quacks, murderers and voracious crooks, for Pliny explains more fully that it was not the actual practice of medicine that the old Romans condemned, but

14 N.H. 29, 5 (1).

15 In actual fact the Romans of Pliny's time had more confidence in Greek and oriental physicians than in the Roman ones. La Piana, op. cit. p.269.

16 N.H. 29, 8.
the methods used, and above all, the fact that the life of the sick was exploited for gain. His wrath is aroused especially by the part played by such doctors in plots for poisoning emperors and wealthy men. However, in spite of hostile opinion on the part of the more conservative, when all the Greeks were expelled from Italy, even after Cato's time, an exception was made for the medici, as Greek and oriental doctors were generally welcomed and accepted with their art, and famous medici who went to Rome to practice were numerous. 17

But Juvenal is not content with criticising merely Greek doctors. He detests all Greek influence which he says is everywhere nowadays, and in Satire 10, 2, 100ff., his thoughts return to the good old days when people were content with simplicity and the simple-living soldier had no taste for, or knowledge of, Greek art. Any treasures allotted to him as his share of the booty were put to practical use in the service of the state, and not used solely for decorative purposes, as now. Today, the

odus miles eating his farrata has been superseded by the dives

decked with perfume and roses, and banqueting on turbot and venison,

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17. Such is learned about foreign doctors in Rome from the inscriptions of the columbaria belonging to collegia domestica. A glance at these shows medici with Greek and oriental names and a variety of specialisations. We find not only general practitioners (medici), but surgeons (medici chirurgi), oculists (medici ocularii), aurists (medici auricularii), and even female slaves and freedwomen who practised medicine (medicae) and midwives (physiatriae) besides veterinarians (mulomedici). In large households, such as that of the imperial palace, there were even supra medici. La Piana, op. cit., p. 270.
but not even hungry unless his expensive table rests on an ivory pedestal! Cretonius, Satire 14, 11.86ff., is a typical example of such wealthy Romans as existed under the empire. Seized by a mania for building, he dwarfed even the shrines of Fortune and Hercules by his villas of Grecian marble; his son followed suit, but on a more luxurious scale.

Yet men are no more afflicted by these Grecizing tendencies than women. In Satire 6, 11.185ff., Juvenal says that nothing could be more rancidum than the fact that no woman believes she is beautiful unless she has converted herself into a Greek. So she speaks in Greek, pours forth all her emotions in Greek and even makes love in Greek fashion. Nor are the common folk the only culprits; for the emperor Nero even pandered to Greek ideas, haunting foreign stages and actually rejoicing when he earned the Greek parsley-crown.29

There was among the Greeks however, besides those at whom Juvenal so enjoys scoffing, a large element of the cultivated

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18 It is noteworthy that Juvenal's prostitutes are given Greek names in Satires 1, 35; 3, 136; 5, 141; 6, 123; 10, 237. For the practice of giving Greek names to prostitutes in Rome, see A. Cordier, Le Vocabulaire épique dans l'Énéide, Paris 1939, p.116.

Also the actors who allow infatuated women to buy their favours are corrupt Greeks.

Other Greek names are found. For example, in Satire 11, 137, Tryphena, Gr. Τρυφήνα, means delicatissima - a suitable name for an expert in this coetardish craft. Some of the daintiness also have foreign names, or are derogatively called 'Scythian', 'Gaetulan' etc.

19 Satire 5, 234ff.
classes - teachers of grammar and philosophy and artists and merchants, whose contribution to the literary, artistic and commercial life of the city was of greatest importance to the development of Roman civilisation. Even Juvenal himself admits (Satire 15, 110ff.) that Athenian civilisation is to be respected, though he cannot avoid the temptation to say that Rome has now snatched the leadership of the world from Greece.

In actual fact, the Romans were constantly strengthening their bonds with Greek culture, which had been the most potent influence on their development from the third century on, and they had come steadily into close contact with the Hellenised East. For Romans had studied in Athens and Rhodes, and soldiers had served in provinces of the East - all of whom continually brought back to Rome ideas that prevailed in the great cultural centres of the Greek world. Greek philosophers, 20 rhetoricians and poets were teaching in Rome, living in the houses of the nobles and meeting the society of the day. And in the lower stratum of the population, the eastern slave who had won his freedom was rising to prominence through his ability as craftsman and merchant, whereas his children, as Roman citizens, were intermarrying with the depleted Roman stock. On the whole, the

20 In Satire 7, Juvenal does not mention philosophy. He distrusted professional philosophers, and anyhow, most were Greeks. He omits also scientists, painters and sculptors; all these were Greeks too, so he expected and regretted their success. The Satire then does not give us a complete picture of the intellectual and aesthetic life of Rome.
Greeks found a very favourable environment in Rome, especially when the Roman aristocracy made it fashionable to affect the Greek language and customs so obnoxious to those attached to old Roman traditions. 21

From the inscriptions, most of them in columbaria, it appears that in the *collegia domestica*, Greeks and orientals were in a large majority. 22 In these family environments, while on the one hand slaves and *liberti* underwent a process of Romanisation, on the other they introduced into the household traditions, customs and religious beliefs of their own. The influence faithful servants and clever *liberti* had over their masters and the whole household was sometimes very great. At times, and in the imperial household often, it affected even the political, religious and general social life of Rome. 23

But religion, politics, social relations and duties were only superficially touched by Greek influence as compared with sexual morality which was deeply affected and suffered for it. Juvenal, therefore, is not venting merely a personal prejudice or the spite of a disappointed competitor; his words reflect a fact and voice a feeling which had great implications in the life of the Roman empire.

21 See for example, Satire 6, 185ff.

22 *La Piana*, *op. cit.* p.275.

23 The murder of Domitian, for example, was carried out by the Greek Parthenius, his chamberlain, and the Greek Stephanus, a steward of his sister Domitilla. *Carcopino*, *op. cit.* p.65.
Before we leave the Greeks and pass on to examine how the orientals fare at the hands of Juvenal and the Roman population in general, I think we should realise that Juvenal, when speaking so harshly and one-sidedly about the Greeks, is adopting one of the commonplaces perhaps first used by Cato the Elder, who attributed Rome's moral decline directly to the conquered Greeks and their luxurious ways. 24 There had always been Romans who distrusted Greek influence. Cato, while accepting part of it, fought against it all his life, 25 and as far as Juvenal is concerned, all moral perversions, luxury in dress, food, building, sexual degradation and public amusement come from the East and the Hellenistic world. As a Roman, he takes the role of hating Greeks almost indiscriminately; as a rhetorical satirist, he makes Greek vocabulary 26 speak for his hatred.

Within the empire then, there was a permanent division between the conquered Greeks and their Roman conquerors; Greeks despised Roman crudity and violence; Romans distrusted Greek versatility, elusiveness and lack of principles. The Greeks


25 Cato's partial acceptance of Greek culture is shown by his use of Greek rhetorical figures in his speeches and his study of Greek literature late in life. Juvenal is very like Cato. He detests the Greeks, but uses Greek words and perforce recognised the achievements of Greek artists and savants. On this subject, see M. Bodendorff, Persius Martialis Juvenalis quo modo de Graecis iudicent. Königsberg, 1892. W.S. Anderson, "Juvenal and Quintilian", NCLS 17 (1961) pp.54-7.

26 e.g. Satire 5, 72 and 121; 3, 57-8.
borrowed few ideas from the Romans, but the Romans learned much from the Greeks.

Hostility was only to be expected. The incoming of large foreign masses in any country never fails to arouse distrust, fear and resentment in the native or dominant race, even when imported labour is necessary for the economic and social welfare of the people. Such hostility and contempt may become acute when, as almost always happens, the older inhabitants rightly or wrongly consider the new races inferior in civilisation and progress, or decadent and exhausted, and whose contribution to a racial mixture they fear will adulterate the purity and strength of their own stock. This was exactly the attitude of the ancient Romans towards their immigrants from both the eastern and the western provinces, and it was naturally suggested by the fact that most of these foreigners had been brought to Rome as slaves. Yet even when the newcomers were free men, the proud Roman felt he was immensely superior to them as members of conquered nations, or at any rate barbarians.

The Roman writers of both the republican and imperial period - historians, philosophers and poets - abound in bitter denunciation of the evils brought to Rome with these foreigners and in disparaging characterisation of the various non-Roman races. Not only such men as the rigid and ever-grumbling Cato, not only such men as Cicero, Juvenal, Martial and Pliny who were fully Romanised Italians, but even Seneca and Lucan, both of Spanish origin, express in outspoken words their contempt and
disgust for the foreign crowds of Rome. In their eyes too, Rome had become the dumping-place of the whole world, and there was no vice, no corruption, no ill-practice that these foreign crowds had not imported with them, lowering all the standards of Roman life and invading all activities, offices and classes, so that Cicero feared that the state itself was falling into the hands of slaves. 28

His fear was not unfounded, for only a few generations later, freedmen and slaves at the court of the emperors often played a prominent part in the government as we shall see later. 29 Yet even in Cicero's time, the freedmen were a power to be reckoned with in Roman electoral campaigns. And, as the services of these masses of foreigners became increasingly more indispensable and their numbers greater, the stronger became the misgivings of the conservative classes and older groups.


28 "Nonne ad servos videtis rei venturas?" Pliny echoes this sentiment, N.H. 24, 1, 1: "vincendo victi sumus; paremus externis".

29 pp.34ff.
CHAPTER 3

THE OTHER EASTERN PEOPLES

In Satire 3, lines 31-2, Juvenal says that although the Greeks are many, their number in Rome is in fact small when compared with the throng of orientals, for "all the refuse of Asia" has flooded into Rome. Roman opinion of the Syrians and other oriental populations was not much better than that of the Greeks - such phrases as the scornful "imbellis Asia" were common. Syrian 'levitas' was matched only by the fickleness of the Greeks, and the people were said to be villainous, "not good for much - fit only to be slaves", and full of timidity and

1 cf. Satire 9, 131-3.

2 Athenaeus, p.20, supports this view. He said "whole nations have settled in Rome, as that of the Cappadocians and Scythians and they of Pontus and many others". cf. the whole of 36. cf. Seneca ad Helviam 6.

3 cf. Herodian 2, 7, 9;

4 See Tac. ann. 2, 55 and Heidel, "Why were the Jews banished from Italy in 19 A.D?" AJP 41 (1920) 36-47.

5 cf. also "vilissima genera hominum et servituti natas", Livy 36, 17, 5 and 75; Livy 35, 49, 8; "Nationes natas servituti", Cicero, de prov. cons. 5, 16; Cic. de orat. 2, 365 "Syri venales" and in Piso. 1; "Let Syria and Asia be in bondage" is the verdict of the Civilis of Tacitus, hist. 4, 17.
patient resignation, the character sometimes given the Syrians
being "patient as donkeys". 6

Yet the conquests of Alexander had originally carried Greek
manners and civilisation over Asia Minor, Syria and Egypt. As a
result, the citizens of these regions, the Hellenistic world, had
usually been intelligent and cultured. But long servitude had
rendered them patient and servile, grovelling in adversity and
bullying in success, and though the oriental quickly learned the
advantages of wealth, betaking himself to trade, and acquiring an
aptitude for business unsurpassed by any other race of the day,
nevertheless when chance offered him dominion and prosperity,
luxury and enjoyment became his sole desire. As the empire was
extended west, it had reached the Greek cities of Ionia, where
Greek wit combined with eastern wealth to build up a brilliant
civilisation, later spread by the Macedonian empire far over the
south of Asia Minor, Syria and Egypt. The result was an urban
life splendid without, but decadent within, for the Greeks were
captivated by the splendour of the barbarians they despised, and
by their own contribution had hastened the pace to degeneracy and
corruption. Cicero's father had observed that the better the
Syrians case to know Greek, the more abandoned they became; his
fear was lest his own countrymen should meet a like fate from a
like cause, 7 and indeed Rome, though at first she subjected her

6 e.g. "Suri genus quod patientissimum est hominum", Plautus, Trin. 342.

7 Cicero, de orat. 2, 66 (265), "nostros homines similes esse Syrorum venalium: ut quisque optime Graece sciret, ita esse nequissimum".
victims by her youth, vigour and freshness, did in her turn, fall into the clutches of oriental languor and vanity.

With regard to Rome, the provinces of Asia Minor and the nearby regions were an inexhaustible reservoir not only for supplying her slave-markets, 8 but also her specialists in various trades and professions. 9 Thus Syria made an important contribution to Rome's population and the oriental became ubiquitous in the city.

But it was not simply the mere presence in Rome of these people, their language and their customs to which Juvenal objected so strongly, but rather their bad moral influence (Sat. 3, 63-6). The metaphor he uses of the Orontes flowing into the Tiber conveys more than just the fact that there was a mixture of the races; for the chief river of Syria flows by Antioch, the city whose excessive luxury was satirised by Julian. 10 Alabanda, 1. 70, is another city noted for its luxury 11 from which Rome gains many immigrants. Such encouragements to luxury and vice are what Juvenal inveighs

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8 Cf. Juvenal, Satire 6, 381. Syrian slaves were very numerous. On the traffic of these slaves, see Hovers, Die Pheenischer, 1841-56, 3, 30, seq. 121.

9 Cf. Suetonius gr. 8 for grammarians. Syrians served in Italy also as bakers, cooks, hairdressers, singers and dancers. See Ser. sat. 1, 2, 1 for ambulias and Juvenal, Sat. 3, 63-6 for saambucae. Also Livy 39, 9; Cicero de orat. 2, 265; Juvenal 8, 159, tavernkeeper; Martial 10, 76, 2ff.

10 Julian, Nisopogen. Cf. Propertius, 1, 2, 5. 5a2, 23, 21-2.

11 Strabo 14, 660.
Other writers do not speak so harshly about the Syrians, who are credited with sharp wits by Herodion, a quality he said they shared with the rest of the East.\(^\text{12}\) According to him, they had pleasing gifts of drollery and satire,\(^\text{13}\) and Eunapius\(^\text{14}\) agreed that their speech was graceful.

But none of the Syrians whom Juvenal mentions have any of these redeeming features, but are all found in the context of luxury or decadence. For example, in Satire 7, 157ff., where he speaks of the noble Lateranus haunting some low cook-shop, it is a Syrophoenician who is his host. Then again, in Satire 10, 336ff., Juvenal contrasts strength of mind with the luxury of Sardana-pallius, to the definite disadvantage of the latter.

In Satire 1, 101ff. he paints us a wonderful picture of a Syrian success-story; a freedman pushes in front of the tribunes to receive his share of the dole. Why should he give way to the tribunes simply because of his oriental birth? He possesses the 'census' of a Roman knight, so what do empty titles matter? Nowadays money, not noble birth, confers social prestige.\(^\text{15}\) Indeed,

\(^{12}\) Herodian, 3, 11, 8.

\(^{13}\) Herodian, 2, 10, 7.

\(^{14}\) Vitae Soph. on Libanius.

\(^{15}\) Cf. Martial 5, 35; 5, 41.
nobility is in a sorry state. Corvinus, for example, belonged to the illustrious gens Valeria, which, like many other noble families, became so reduced that Nero had to grant it an annual pension of 500 sesterces "quibus Messala paupertatem innoxiar sustentaret". On the other hand, freedmen like Pallas and Licinus, also mentioned in this satire, had become very wealthy. Again from Juvenal, Satire 14, 86ff., we learn that Posides could afford to build himself a splendid house near the temple of Jupiter Capitolinus, and that Claudius lavished everything upon Narcissus, the most wealthy of his freedmen.

16 cf. Sat. 8, 7.
17 Cicero pro Flacco, 25.
18 Friedländer, op. cit. 1, 3 319, 320.
19 Tac. Ann. 13, 34.
20 Pallas amassed his wealth as imperial treasurer (Suet. Claudius 28 "a rationibus"); Pliny, 8, 6, 7 "Custos principalium opus". Friedländer, op. cit. 1, 3162. Pliny 33, 8134 wrote: "we have known many freedmen wealthier than Crassus and Sulla; three under Claudius-Callistus, Pallas and Narcissus". Cf. Friedländer 1 83, 92-5, 97.
Lcinus is called praedives, Juvenal, Sat. 14, 305.

21 Pliny 31, 5 shows there were baths built by him at Baiae. Cf. Seneca opp. 86 7 "baiana libertorium".

22 Sat. 14, 320ff. His wealth was acquired partly by taking bribes, partly by contracting for public works. ( Dio Cassius 60, 16 2; 60, 33, 6; Seneca Ep. 4, pr. 15).
But it is not the imperial freedman alone who rouses his wrath. Cinnamus, once a barber, is now an eques and "challenges all the patricians in wealth". And other equites do not escape the satirist's tongue. He accuses the Asian, Cappadocian and Bithynian equites of lying in court, and adds, almost as an explanation of this fault, that they have come from New Gaul as slaves and have risen in the social scale by sordid and disgraceful occupations. But Baebius Massa, satirised by Juvenal in Satire 1, 30ff., was even more successful - ingratiating himself with Domitian by acting as delator, he was actually promoted from equestrian to senatorial rank.

23 Satire 1, 24ff. Martial wrote of Cinnamus:

... tota notissimus urbe
et post hoc domino numeros factus eques.
(Martial, 6, 17, 1-2.)

Cf. also Martial 7, 64. In Juvenal, Sat. 10, 226, we hear of the great number of villas he possessed. Cf. Ibid, 5, 105.

Horace, epode 4, mentions a nameless former slave, who has promoted himself by patently unscrupulous methods to the rank of knight. Passers-by erupt in fury. Horace expresses the fury of Archilocus in terms of instinctive Roman indignation at the success of an unworthy man. The background of a Roman street, the Roman citizens, the figure of the alien risen over the heads of the native Romans - all remind one of Juvenal's dramatic presentation of his 'indignatio'.

24 The Cappadocians and Bithynians may be included in the Asiani who were notorious for lying; cf. Cicero pro Flacco, 60; Ibid, 26-27; Horace, 1, 6, 30; Persius, 7, 177.

25 Siden, 9, 5, 7, a locus classicus on informers, names Narcissus (Juv. sat. 11, 529m.), Maccus and Carus (ibid, 1, 30ff.), Licinius and Pallas (ibid, 1, 109m.). Cf. Martial 9, 26, and Juv. Sat. 1, 36.
Juvenal thus points out some of the many vices into which the freedman class seems to have frequently fallen. Drawn from peoples devoid of all political experience and brought up through slavery to value money and temporary appearances above all things, freedmen contributed to mould that attitude to life which eventually reproduced in the west some of the worst features of city-life in the East. But when we realise that on their arrival as slaves in Rome these men were deprived of their social and family life and their ancestral worship — in fact of all that had a restraining influence on their vicious instincts — and that they were often given vile and wicked jobs to do, which resulted in a complete loss of their sense of conscience, we cannot fairly expect anything more of them.

Ex-slaves in their thousands proceeded from the obscurity of the kitchen or retail shop to a high position, and though the grosser type of imperial favourite might be hated by those who abhorred the imperial regime for producing a Pallas or a Narcissus, still many a likeable freedman of moderate fortune

26. Frank points out that at least 80% of the population of imperial Rome had been emancipated from more or less ancient servitude. "Race Mixture In The Roman Empire", ANQ 21 (1918) 689-706.

27. Dal. 4, 24 speaks of the glory of the Roman franchise as sullied by many who purchased their freedom by poisonings, brigandage, burglary etc.

must have found entrance to self-respecting and even aristocratic families. The only barrier was that of poverty, not of blood; the slave became knight, praetor and provincial governor, and with such exalted position was given the opportunity for equality in marriage. As Juvenal writes, Satire 8, 1, "Stemmata quid faciunt?" if marriage to a wealthy man of servile or foreign origin assured wealth and position to the daughter of a once rich and proud family. Thus slave-blood rose high above its own level and mingled more and more with the noblest in the land.

Appian of Alexandria, who lived at Rome in the middle of the second century, was struck by this levelling that had taken place between slaves and free men, and he recorded how a slave, after he had been freed, lived on terms of absolute equality with the Roman citizen, whereas his descendants of the third generation were entitled to possess full political rights of citizenship, and nothing further distinguished them from inservi. Thus it was that sons of slaves and former slaves spread into the trades and crafts that required civil standing and were able to secure positions and fortunes; and in Cicero's day, it was these people who already constituted a large element of the plebeian classes.

The prominence of freedmen in the first century A.D. was largely due to their position in court where they filled important administrative posts. To the imperial freedmen, the emperors dedicated some of their far-reaching prerogatives. Thus the

29 Appian, B.C. 2, 120.
secretaries, treasurers, etc. had undisguised command over nobles and plebeians alike, attaining much power and wealth. By this avenue the provincial might surpass the native Roman.\(^3\) Senators of the empire, with rage in their hearts, silently bowed before the power of an ex-slave,\(^3\) because, elevated at a bound to the very steps of the throne, men like Pallas and Narcissus held authority in the emperor's name over the advancement, property, and even the life of his subjects. And even if the emperor went outside his household and chose confidants and friends from among the members of the two great orders of the state, these in their turn had slaves and freedmen to whom they were wont to delegate their business. Thus the slaves and freedmen of the emperor's court joined the slaves and freedmen of the emperor in the government of a city and an empire. How far their power and collusion went is seen when Domitian's favourites resolved to save their own lives by actually getting rid of him! Freedmen of the imperial household were often the most influential people in Rome under many emperors, especially Claudius\(^3\) and Nero, and though they imagined such men to be in their power, the emperors in actual fact, fell more and more into the power of their slave

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\(^3\) e.g. Juvenal, Satire 1, 102; see also Friedländer, Roman Life and Manners under the Early Empire, London 1908, 1, 64-114.

\(^3\) We see from Horace, Sat. 1, 6, 6, 38-41, 48-50, 89-131 the jealousy with which the 'new blood' was regarded. Cf. Tibullus, 2, 3, 59-60.

\(^3\) Claudius, on a wide survey of Roman history, (Tac. 2, 24), found precedents for the most liberal hospitality. See Claudius, Suet. 23 and 29 on Pallas and Narcissus.
subordinates. 33

The most prominent of the emperor's purely domestic servants were the cubiculii. These were able to sell even their reports of the emperor's mood, or, for their own ends, could circulate rumours of secrets their masters had confided to them. Senators and equites anxious for offices in the civil service, besought the chamberlain with bribes and compliments to put in a good word for them; poets and men of letters courted him with fulsome adulation, and would spend their last sesterce to obtain his mediation.

But after the death of Domitian, men began to see that the republic could not be reborn of a conspiracy hatched by peregrini and servi, and the emperors began to realise the threat to stable rule that lay in allowing men of such antecedents and of such a type near the summit of the state.

However, this power of the freedmen was not confined to

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33 Pliny, ep. 38, 1. Other imperial and ex-slaves whose names are important in history were the actors and the even more powerful concubines, e.g. Tac. ann. 11, 29. From time to time, actors won the emperors' graces by their talents and good looks and became influential at court, e.g. Measter, who became the lover of Messalina, and Paris, who at one time was greatly influential with Nero, but was later executed for an intrigue with the empress Domitia (Dio Cassius 67, 3). Cf. Suet. Domitian 3, 10; Tac. ann. 13, 13-22, 27; Suet. Nero 54; Dio 43, 18. An Egyptian, in Juvenal Sat. 7, 57ff., he is stated as possessing power to advance others socially. Martial mentions the "sale of empty smoke about the palace," 4, 5.

The imperial freedmen, holding the keys to princely favour, receive flattering addresses from Seneca, Statius and Martial, e.g. Martial 11, 13, 3ff. on Paris. He also addresses three flattering epigrams to Parthenius, 4, 45, 5, 6; 8, 26.
the imperial household. Juvenal, Satire 6, 146, shows us an ordinary domestic scene, where the freedman gives the mistress the order to leave her own house! But it would be unjust to deny that in that same freedman class there were men who felt a gratitude for their emancipation exceeding their obligations, who were conscientious servants, honest stewards and faithful, devoted agents; 34 and the fact that the empire ran as smoothly as it did during the second century, was due perhaps less to the vigilance of those in high positions than to the general working class, for freedmen laid the foundations on which the greater men built. But there were too many liberti for none to be bad, and agents were liable to be too harsh and too greedy, and administrators too insolent, cruel and untruthful. 35

In brief, there are cases for and against the freedmen. His existence was not exactly welcomed at Rome, and apart from certain legal disabilities, 36 he had to contend with the more

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34 In the reign of Nero, a freedman took the blame for a murder in order to shield his patron (Tac. ann. 13, 44), and Cicero's affection for Tiro is well known. Pliny (ep. 5, 19 and 8, 1), shows the most tender solicitude for Zosimus, his comic actor and Encolpius, his reader; he also rewards the long and faithful service of his nurse by presenting her with a small farm for her declining days, (ep. 6, 6) and is genuinely distressed by the illness and death of some of his slaves (ep. 8, 16 and 19).


36 The praetorian guard, legions and urban cohorts were closed to him; so was a Roman priesthood. He was barred from entering the local senate even in the towns of Italy and the provinces, except in Julius Caesar's colonies, and 'a fortiori' was excluded from the equestrian nobility at Rome, though some relaxation of this rule came from Claudius. (On freedmen admitted to the senate, see Friedländer op. cit. 1, 119).
numerous unwritten prejudices. Freedmen enjoying wealth and prosperity always presented a repulsive sight to the writers of the Silver Age, 37 and rich and ostentatious freedmen are reminded that servile birth is no birth at all. 38

But if nobles and intellectuals despised the ex-slave he found a more genial welcome among the lower classes. In the trade collegia, slaves, freedmen and free-born mingled freely with one another, and there never seems to have been any line of cleavage between the ingenui and their colleagues of lower rank. 39

Furthermore it must not be supposed that freedmen were incapable of returning any contempt that might be hurled at them. They had worked their way up from the ranks and were proud of their progress. They must often have conceived an intense scorn for the rich dandies who never worked with brain or hand.

Many freedmen went out into the world without any obligation. 40 They took their place in the city population, armed

37 Cf. even the broadminded and benevolent Pliny's indignation at the insolence of Pallas, epd. 6.

38 Martial, 10, 27, 4, tells a certain Didores with evident relish, that however sumptuously he may celebrate his birthday, nobody supposes that he was ever even born, free birth being the only kind of birth that really counts.

Similarly Martial jibes at another freedman who is evidently obtaining privileges for his possession of children. He may get all the rights of seven children, but since his own parentage is servile, with regard to society he has no parents of his own, Martial, 11, 12. See also Martial, 2, 29 and 11, 37.


40 These were citizens who had been slaves but had become independent immediately after manumission when their patron died and his heir took no interest in them, or when their public services had won them exemption from the opera.
with their ability and such capital as they had not spent in attaining their independence. But they found themselves amply provided for, for many secured comfortable positions in their patron's house, or obtained work which was not too exacting in the service of the state magistrates. It was this class that administered to the amusements of the public, supplied most articles of daily use and consumption, and, in the liberal professions, competed not unsuccessfully with free-born immigrants from the East. In trade and industry they competed in nearly every sphere of money-making, as farmers, food-merchants, builders, clothiers, slave-dealers, bankers and metal-workers. Work with the hands was left to slaves, freedmen and their descendants, as a true Roman would have none of it. In his mind, it was less disgraceful to depend on the state or a patron for subsistence, than to earn it by sordid labour. This prejudice gave the freedman his opportunity, for the Greeks and still more the semi-hellenised peoples of Syria and Egypt, had no

41 As actors, charioteers and gladiators, freedmen dominated the stage, circus and arena, often making their fortunes in this manner. Cf. Juvenal, Sat. 7, 112ff; Martial, 4, 67; 10, 74, 5-6; Suet. Galba, 15; Plutarch, Galba, 16, 2; Tac. hist. 1, 20.

42 War and agriculture were the only manual work recognised as honourable; toil in stuffy workshops was thought to enfeeble the body, and unskilled labour to dull the brain; therefore these were left to slaves. In Piana, op. cit. pp.249ff.

43 For Roman prejudice, see Cicero de officiis, 1, 150-1.
antipathy to trade and industry, and actually took pride in their work.

When there was a great influx of slaves, although the labour was mainly directed into industry and domestic work, nevertheless at the same time, art and science were also brought to Rome by the more brilliant of her captives and these too were left in servile hands. Thus architecture, law, medicine, teaching and art became increasingly connected with slavery, and the prejudice against them correspondingly intensified. 44

 Freedmen also made their fortunes in commerce and banking, but it is doubtful whether many could have become rich without external help. Patrons frequently advanced enough to float a business, or help would come in the form of a legacy from a friend. Once started, with average fortune, the freedman could rise rapidly. It is true that the largest fortunes were in the hands of the imperial servants, but high figures can be quoted of other freedmen too, whose wealth became proverbial. 45

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44 See R. Syme, Tacitus, Oxford 1958, Vol 2, p. 618. In Juvenal, Satire 3, we see how the Greek teachers of grammar worked their way into the sovereignty of the home. Still greater was the influence of the professors of oratory. Some of these were at times suspected of having taken part in political affairs and conspiracies (see Friedlander Roman Life and Manners Under The Early Empire, Vol. 1, London 1906, pp. 179ff.) Even though the Romans condescended to teach rhetoric, in sheer genius the Greeks easily outstripped them. Trained in the schools of Athens, Pergamus and Rhodes, the dwellers of the East swarmed into Italy and quickly vanquished the native teachers in the unequal struggle. The aristocracy of the empire treated painting as beneath their notice. La Piana, op. cit. p. 278.

45 Cf. libertinas ones, Martial 5, 13, 6; also Pliny N.H. 33, 134.
The self-indulgence of certain well-to-do freedmen was noticed by several authors. Seneca, speaking of the freedmen's baths in Epistle 86, 7, says: "We have come to such a pitch of luxury that the very pavements we tread have to be of jewels". But of course every freedman who rose to wealth was not so vulgar as Trimalchio. Many were men of culture and intellect, and indeed owed their exemption to these qualities. Nor is it fair to suppose that after obtaining wealth, the freedman's sole aim in life was to parade it. Many a freedman aided a struggling colleague with his patronage; one left his city a legacy, which, though it partly provided for an exhibition of gladiators, was also designed for the upkeep of baths; some built temples and other examples of public utility, which showed a wise and broad-minded benevolence. In this way, the oriental freedman took his place as a citizen of Rome and showed a patriotism that would have dignified an aristocrat of the purest blood.

Unfortunately, instead of witnessing a logical and gradual evolution which would have demonstrated the value of imperial institutions, the Romans had continually to endure the civic degradation entailed by a too arbitrary and drastic inversion of classes and roles. Both in town and country it demoralised the

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46 An example of an imperial freedman, ILS 1909; of ordinary freedmen, ILS 6986, 7323 and probably 6170, 6954, 6986.

47 ILS 6256.
citizens, and Juvenal in the Rome of Trajan, was infuriated to see the sons of free men constrained by self-interest to pay court to the slaves of the rich. 48 Both in Juvenal's day and afterwards, it seemed a happier fate to be a rich man's slave than a free-born, but poor citizen. 49

In Satire 3, 186ff., Juvenal complains that clients are forced to pay tribute and increase the savings of such pampered slaves, for he knew well enough that sufficient money was often thus accumulated to enable them to purchase their freedom. In Satire 5, 56 ff., he gives us a picture of the disgraceful manner in which a poor Roman client is treated at their hands. He is not waited upon by the expensive Flos Asiae, but by an African, and a cursor at that! For the slave purchased at so high a price cannot be allowed to mix wine for beggars; he thinks it beneath him to attend on a client even if he is an elderly man, and frets that he must stand while the client is seated. Every great mansion is filled with such insolent slaves, Juvenal complains; they grumble to have to hand you the bread, and should you happen to serve yourself from the wrong basket, there is always one of them who delights in admonishing you. 50


49 Juvenal, Sat. 3, 154ff; cf. 14, 323ff; 5, 132; Hor. app. 1, 1, 58ff; R. Bentley on Horace epode 4, 10; Cambridge 1711; Martial 2, 29; (Cambridge 1711).

50 On the licence allowed these slaves, cf. Juvenal Sat. 11, 10; Hor. Sat. 2, 6, 66; Seneca Const. sap. 2, 3 and ibid. de prov. 1, 6; Juvenal Sat. 9, 46ff.
Nothing more was needed to overturn the structure of the imperial rule, and this pernicious disequilibrium was aggravated now and henceforward by the fact that in a society where rank was decided by wealth, this money, instead of circulating amongst hard-working families and yielding the fruits of toil and husbandry, tended to centre more and more in the hands of a very few through the favours of the emperors and speculation. Thus the ranks of the middle class in the Urbs grew thinner and thinner, and there was nothing between the satellite plutocracy of the court and the mass of plebs too poor to exist without the doles of the emperor and the charity of the rich, and too unoccupied to forego the spectacles which, under Trajan, came to be provided every second day for its amusement. 51

But despite all Juvenal's criticisms of freedmen and slaves, and his hostility to their success, he does not believe that they should be ill-treated. He humanely lashes the miser who "pinches the bellies of his slaves", the gambler who flings away a fortune with the dice and has "no shirt for his shivering slaves", and the coquette who loses her temper and takes out her ill-humour on the unoffending backs of her maids. 52 In Satire 14, 16ff., he surprisingly teaches that a slave's soul and body are of the same material and elements as everyone else's.


52 Juvenal, Sat. 14, 126; 1, 92; 5, 475-485.
All this is actually an echo of public opinion, which
likewise abhorred the abominable cruelties of people like Sulpicius
in Juvenal, Sat. 14, 15-22. In our satirist's day, most masters,
if they did not totally abstain from inflicting corporal punish-
ment on their slaves, at the most used rode such as Martial laid
on his cock for a spoiled dinner. But such behaviour did not
prevent Martial caring for his slave and mourning his death.53
Furthermore, in the great houses, where many of the slaves were able
specialists and sometimes even more civilised and educated than
their masters, because, like the tutor, doctor and reader, they
had enjoyed a liberal education, they were treated exactly like
free men. In fact, when Pliny the Younger was in the country, he
would invite the better educated of them to learned discussions,54
for there was a great variety of intellectual capacity amongst
them and many were philosophers, teachers, doctors and
architects.55

53 Martial, 8, 23; 1, 101. Pliny the Younger reveals his
anxiety over his slave's health in *supp. 5, 19, 6-8. He acceded
to their legitimate desires (8, 16).

54 Pliny, *supp. 9, 36, 4.

55 e.g. Tiro (secretary), Cyrus (builder usually employed
by the Cicero's), Metrodorus (*Fam. 16, 20) ... and Alexio (*Att.
15, 2, 4) - doctors who served Cicero at various times.
Suetonius (de *gram. 5-10) mentions Daphnis, Gnipo, Praetextatus,
Epicasus, Eros and Lernaeus, who were teachers. In the field of
literature figured Nicias, Thyallus (poet) and Tyrannus
1, London, 1933.
CHAPTER 4

THE WESTERN MIGRANTS

Having dealt with freedmen and slaves in general, let us now return to our more detailed examination of the races from which that class was made up. So far we have discussed the part played by the Greeks and the Syrians from the Eastern provinces. Now let us examine the African and Gallic immigrants from the West.

Roman Africa took an important place among the provinces which contributed to the population of Rome. Especially during the second century and in the time of Septimius Severus, himself a native of Libya, the Africans seem to have felt the irresistible attraction of Rome. Juvenal, however, feels the same antipathy for them as he does for the other foreign races that invaded Rome. His remarks in Satire 5, 391 are made, I feel, in jocular fashion, as Roman opinion on Africans was much more damning than mere sneers at the oil they produced! Their race was considered perfidious and superstitious,2 but what was worse, the Africans

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1 Cf. Pliny, N.H. 7, 2.

2 The Africans were also called 'insidiosa natio' and 'genus hominum infidum' — Sallust, De Bello Num. 91, 7.
were despised by the Romans. Livy,\textsuperscript{3} calls them 'in Venerem præcipites', Silius,\textsuperscript{4} a race "decimēs fallere et nectere tectos numquam tarda dolos", and even Lactantius, himself an African admits that his people are "vani qui monstruosa et ridicula mirantur."\textsuperscript{5}

To Cicero, Africans and Spaniards are considered with the Gauls to be "wild, barbaric peoples."\textsuperscript{6} Juvenal supports this view when he speaks of the Gallic poisoner, Lucusta, in Satire 1, 71. But we find no other instances of satire directed against the Gauls in Juvenal's work. In fact, in Satire 7, 210ff., he actually praises Rufus as the "Allobrogian Cicero", and in Satire 7, 147ff., advises the man resolved to make money out of rhetoric actually to go to Gaul or Africa to study. How greatly rhetoric flourished in Africa under the empire, we know from the works of Tertullian, Cyprian, Arnobius, Lactantius, Augustine and Apuleius, and the study of Roman law and literature was also considerable in that country where Carthage was one of the most important centres for Roman culture.

Although the West was young and lusty, and Gaul and Spain were beginning to learn the advantages of political life and the opportunities offered by the municipal system, the fate of the

\textsuperscript{3}Book 30, 12, 18.

\textsuperscript{4}Ital. 2, 231.

\textsuperscript{5}Inst. 20, 36.

\textsuperscript{6}Cic. de leg. agrar. 2, 91, 95.
western captives was determined by a national character which militated against them from the outset. We see from Juvenal, Satire 5, 52ff., that the censor Gaetulus and theirector Maurus were not so high in favour as the flos Asiae.

This was because the western nations as a whole were all too high-spirited to bend to anything but brute force; nor had they in the main the particular qualities which might promote slaves in their masters' service and ultimately win for them their liberty. But even if members of these western peoples could submit to discipline, they were constantly beaten in the race by the superior genius of the Greek and Asiatic. In fact, the thousands of rude, strong war-captives of the western provinces were hardly suited to household duties and were far more useful for the roughest service in the fields, mines or galleys, or in gladiatorial shows.

Even so, Juvenal favourably contrasts the West with Egypt in Satire 15, 110ff. "Today", he writes, "the whole world has its Greek and Roman Athens; eloquent Gaul has trained the pleaders of Britain, and distant Thule talks of hiring a rhetorician ..." But the same cannot be said of Egypt. Juvenal despised and detested these people; in fact the first abdication of vice he names at the beginning of his first Satire is the Egyptian Crispinus. He says he cannot help writing satire, "when one of

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7 Juv. Sat. 1, 26-9.
the Nile's rabble", (as he calls the nation), Crispinus,
 negligently wears his rich, crimson military cloak and waves a
sweaty hand on which he displays his knight's gold ring. The
whole passage is filled with derogatory references and comments; 8
Crispinus' passport to Domitian's favour, we are reminded, was
his fish-selling, and his place of origin was no other than the
ill-famed Canopus. 9 As the passage proceeds, we see that
Juvenal's complaint is made mainly because Crispinus is yet a
further example of a rich upstart. He is another foreigner who
has come to Rome, made money and entrenched himself in the


9 Cf. Juv. Sat. 6, 84 and 15, 46. Seneca, epist 51, 3,
writes: "the wise man, or he who aims at being such, must avoid
certain abodes as unfavourable to virtuous practices. Therefore,
if he be looking about for a quiet retreat, he will not choose
Canopus." The city was inhabited by Greeks, Juv. sat. 15, 46, so
would be considered doubly infamous by the prejudiced Juvenal.
emperor's favour. But, worst of all, he is an Egyptian.\textsuperscript{10} Crispinus' faults seem endless.\textsuperscript{11} In Satire 4, 1-36, Juvenal rates him at length as "a monster with never a good point to redeem him of his vices." But his Egyptian origin is still the most unforgettable vice in Juvenal's jealous eyes. To think that a poor pedlar, who once wore a loin cloth of papyrus, could afford to spend 6,000 sestertii on a mere fish! Now princeps equitum,\textsuperscript{12} Crispinus used to salvage shads to make a living.

\textsuperscript{10}Crispinus' Egyptian origin is also dwelt on in Satires 1, 26 and 4, 23-4, 33. He became princeps equitum and court favourite of Domitian's privy council (4, 32, 108), where the extravagance of his attire (1, 27 and 4, 31), his change of jewels, his dandy airs (1, 23), and his lavish perfumery (4, 108-9), provoked general hatred. Martial flatters him as Domitian's favourite in 6, 17 and 7, 64. We may infer that Juvenal knew Egypt well and disliked it so violently (cf. Sat. 15, 44-9) because, as the scholiast says (Schol. 1, 1.), he had been banished to Egypt by Domitian - perhaps even by the Egyptian colonel of the guards, the scented and arrogant Crispinus. The suggestion that Crispinus was responsible for the banishment of Juvenal comes from R. Borghesi, \textit{Annotazioni alle satire di Giovenale, Oeuvres complètes}, 5 (Paris, 1869), 513-6. J. Earle, \textit{On Juvenal, Satire 1, 155-157}, Trans. Ox. Phil. Soc. 1897-8, 6-9, proposed that 1, 155-7, was a concealed autobiographical reference to Juvenal's own banishment. Highest believes Juvenal passed some time at court hoping to be noticed and tried to persuade the Roman nobles to recommend him for a post. But years passed and he was ignored. When he watched the unworthy methods by which such posts as he hoped for were distributed, and saw foreigners rising to the very heights of power in the empire, he grew bitter.

\textsuperscript{11}Cf. Pliny, \textit{N.H.} 22, 47 (23) and \textit{Lucilius} 10, 477 (Warmington).

\textsuperscript{12}His position as princeps equitum was the highest position any man of the equestrian order could occupy. The office is called (Suet. \textit{Galba}, 14) \textit{summus equestris gradus}. 
that foul feeder whose coarse flesh was eaten only by the very poor in Egypt. 13

Another Egyptian upstart is mentioned in Satire 1, lines 130ff., where Juvenal speaks of the "Egyptian Arabarches" who dared to range his inscription amongst the statues of the great Roman conquerors in the Forum Augusti. It is almost certain that the man meant there was Tiberius Julius Alexander, who was also a Jew by birth and therefore bound to be doubly unpopular in Juvenal's eyes.

But what was the general opinion of the Egyptians? The author of the Bellum Alexandrinum called the race 'ingeniosissimi atque acutissimi' 14 but "to play the Egyptian" came to be a synonym for underhand dealing. 15 Inland the Egyptian was ignorant, quarrelsome and fanatical, and Juvenal's fifteenth

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13 There is actually little external evidence for Crispinus' rank or even his existence. No inscription bears his name and there are only two epigrams by Martial in which he is mentioned, besides in Juvenal's Satires. Both epigrams treat him rather more familiarly than one would expect if he were commander of the household troops, and O. Hirschfeld, Untersuchungen auf dem Gebiete der römischen Verwaltungsgeschichte, 1 (Berlin, 1877), 223, felt sure Crispinus was only an imperial secretary. Night also wonders whether the name could be false, given him by Juvenal on the model of the praetorian prefect who served under Claudius (Tac. ann. 2, 1, 3; 2, 4, 5). But whatever the truth, such upstarts as Crispinus were very frequent in Rome since the proscriptions.

14 Bellum Alexandrinum, 3.

15 Suidas, "Ἀμφιμάχειον."
Satire contains the story of a feud between two towns which arose solely from such faults. The Satire begins with a scathing account of the animals the nation worshipped, and the cutting remark:

"What a holy race to have such divinities springing up in their gardens! ... It is forbidden there to slay the young of the goat, but it is lawful to feed on the flesh of man!"

Thus, as the Satire continues, the Egyptians' acts emerge as sheer savagery, worse than the action of animals who at least never kill their own kind.

The fight was the result of a long-standing feud because each town believed its own deities the only true gods. If he did not detest all Egyptians so bitterly, Juvenal might have given us further details, but he does not even state which people began the fight, most likely thus wishing to imply that it is immaterial anyway! They are all as bad as one another, and the resulting cannibalism is typical of the ferocity and inhumanity

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16. The town of Ombi worshipped Set, the crocodile-god, while the citizens of Tentyra adored Hathor and enjoyed hunting and killing crocodiles.

For details of the site of the battle, see F.H. Bouchac, "L'exil de Juvenal et l'Ombos de la XVe Satire" RevRev Phil 41 (1917) 169-184, and G. Higlott, "The Life of Juvenal" TAPA 53 (1926) 487. Aelian, De natura animalium 10, 21, gives further details on the crocodile-cult of the Ombites and records reasons for the loathing of crocodiles felt by their neighbours.

17. It is more likely that the crocodile-worshippers attacked to avenge the slaughter of their deity and that it was the luxurious Tentyrites who were holding holiday. Juvenal contemptuously describes their festival as an orgy.
of the Egyptian race in general. No other people resorted to
eating human flesh except as a very last resort to escape star-
vation and their own destruction. 16

Other writers have similar opinions of Juvenal's hated
country. Tacitus described it as:

"superstitions ac lascivia discordem, insciam legum,
ignaram magistratum"
in his *Histories*, 1, 2; and La Piana, 19 mentions the "criminal
hypocrisy and maleficient arts" of the Egyptians. Both opinions
seem to corroborate Juvenal's ideas on the nation, 20 and though
the satirist may have coloured his narrative, it does seem to be
based on fact.

We have now reached the end of our first section which
has dealt with the different races which Juvenal abhors, and I

16. Higet states that when similar outrages occur in the
twentieth century, Juvenal's story is probably quite true. See
G. Higet, "A fight in the Desert" CJ 45 (1949-50) 94-98 for a
parallel story told by Norman Douglas. There are records of
similar hatreds and barbarities in Egypt and N. Africa. But
Juvenal singles out this event because it happened in Egypt, that
loathsome country which he hated more than any other Roman who
has left a record, and which may have been the land of his exile.
He repeats that the NATION is guilty (*Sat.*, 15, 29, 31, 128, 129-
131, 169-70). Lines 129-30 appear to Higet to imply a death-
wish for all Egyptians. The Satire sets out to tell the truth,
though it is darkened by Juvenal's personal hatred and contempt
for the Egyptian race.


20. On the Alexandrians and Egyptians, see Seneca, *Dial*,
10, 3, 7 and G. Lumbroso, "Osservazioni antiche e moderne sul
carattere degli Alessandrini", in *Atti dei Linoci*, Ser. 2, Tom.
have tried to justify or refute his judgment of them by reference to other authors and historical facts. 21

In the course of our review, we have seen that there were many Gauls, Spaniards and other westerners contending in valiant but unequal struggle against the more astute Orientals, and many more Egyptians and Syrians with keen wits and a culture of a sort derived from Greece. But most prominent of all were the Greeks of Asia and Europe, endowed with musical and histrionic gifts, possessed of business ability, pre-eminent in art and science, and heirs to the tradition of a literature, a philosophy and a civilisation which rank among the most sublime the world has ever known.

21 We must remember throughout that the only places of which Juvenal seems to speak from personal knowledge are Italy, Egypt and North Africa. All his references to other parts of the world are vague, hearsay or hyperbolical. The note in Sat. 10, 193-5 is not found in any other author and looks like personal reminiscence. Hyperboles about Britain in Sat. 2, 195-61 and Spain, 3, 54-5.
CHAPTER 5

FOREIGN RELIGIONS

But discussion of the foreign races which invaded Rome does not complete our investigation of foreign infiltration into the city, for external ideas and traditions were introduced not only by individual foreign persons, but also by foreign religions. Beside the old native Italian deities were destined to be installed all the representatives of the Asiatic pantheons. Together with the traders and artisans from the East, these beliefs made their way into almost every commercial centre, especially the sea-port towns. New powers arrived from Asia Minor, Egypt and Syria, and all forms of paganism were simultaneously received and retained, while the exclusive monotheism of the Jews kept its adherents and Christianity grew in strength.

1 One of the main centres of religious feeling in Roman society under the empire was the army; local deities were worshipped, which belonged either to the country where the camp was situated, or to the countries from which the soldiers came. Special honour was paid to Mithras, to the Syrian and Anatolian sun-god and sky-god, warriors and rulers, and to Jupiter of the Syrian city of Doliche, a real legionary soldier, and armed like the legionaries, with his attributes of axe and thunderbolt; they were gods of strife and conquest, promising to the soldier might and victory. Rostovtzeff, A History of Anc. World, Oxford 1927, Vol. 2, pp.340-5.

The new foreign cults found a welcome at Rome - a sign of the inadequacy of the old beliefs to meet the religious cravings of a part at least of the population. The people needed new gods to worship in new ways, but these deities were aliens with whom the Roman had little in common, despite their concealment under Latin names. W. Fowler, Social Life at Rome in the Age of Cicero, New York 1909, p.333.
Just as the national institutions of the conquered were respected in so far as they could conform with the requirements of Roman rule, and provided they subordinated themselves to the Roman system, similarly their religions were left unmolested provided they remained in subordination to the official cults of Rome. Roman power did not concern itself with the multitude of gods worshipped by individuals, groups or nations, provided these remained within specified limits and did not attempt to give political content to their principles or a political aspect to their organisation and practices. With the gradual increase of foreign elements and the naturalisation of large numbers of them, foreign religions\(^2\) began to play an important part in the social, religious and even political life of the city, so as to become one of the important factors in the orientation of many a Roman institution; they even gained converts among the native population, began to claim recognition and public rights, invade the sacred precincts and appear as dangerous competitors to the traditional Roman religion. The conservative class and the government endeavoured in various ways to stem the tide, but neither laws nor force could prevent a cosmopolitan city from assuming a cosmopolitan character in religion. Rome was destined to absorb all religions in the same way as she absorbed all foreign races.\(^3\)

\(^2\)The foreign religions were spread especially by merchants, slaves and members of the imperial civil service, as well as by the troops. La Piana, op. cit. p.288 and pp.312-3.

\(^3\)La Piana, op. cit. pp.288, 296, 329, 331, 338.
There were two main periods in the history of the foreign
religions in Rome, the first an early period of either silent
tolerance or legal opposition during which there is no doubt
that these foreign religions kept their exotic character, and a
later period of protection and favour. It was with Claudius that
a really new period began for the oriental cults in Rome. Before
his reign, most of them were already practised by the large
foreign groups and had been carrying on active propaganda, but in
accordance with the policy enforced by Augustus, their religious
rites were performed in private, with the exception of part of
the cult of Magna Mater.

Dio Chrysostom of Halicarnassus, who was in Rome in the time
of Augustus, described the religious situation of the period
before Claudius in the following words:

"Nothing is to be seen among them (the Romans) of enthusi-
astic transports or corybantic frenzies; no begging under
the colour of religion, no bacchanals or secret mysteries,
no promiscuous vigils of men and women in the temples, nor
any extravagances of this kind. But all reverence is shown
to the gods both in words and actions beyond what is
practised among either Greeks or barbarians ... so great is
their aversion to all indecent fables." 4

Asia Minor was first to have its gods accepted in Italy;
since the end of the Punic wars, the black stone symbolising the
Great Mother of Pessinus had been established on the Palatine;
but kept closely under control, the Phrygian worship led an

4 Ant. Rom. 2, 19, as quoted by La Piana, op. cit. p.294-5.
obscure existence until the establishment of the Empire, by which
time the Phrygian and Asiatic devotees of the Magna Mater, mostly
of servile origin, formed large and important groups in Rome, and
the Phrygian cult wielded enormous influence. By Claudius the
official recognition of the cult which had previously covered only
the Graeco-Roman form was extended also to the Phrygian observ-
ance, with the result that the mysteries of Attis began to be
celebrated in public and were at last made accessible to Roman
citizens. Then only was the Phrygian cult allowed to develop
freely in all its splendour and excesses, introducing a sensual,
highly coloured and fanatical worship into the grave and sombre
religion of the Romans.

Yet Claudius' grant had sound motives behind it. In
spite of all the repressive measures and the Augustan revival of
ancient rites, the oriental cults had now gained a firm foothold
in Rome and were a real power in the life of the masses. To
ignore them was to let them develop and spread without public
control. Thus it seemed safer to bring them within the law,
rather than allow them to exist merely by toleration or privilege.

La Piana, op. cit. p.296-7. At least in part this grant
was probably due to the influence of Phrygian and Asiatic freed-
men and slaves in the imperial house. Some held important
offices in the bureaucracy, and others, especially during the
last years of Claudius' reign, exercised an enormous influence
in the government and were the power behind the throne, e.g.
Nietus, praefectus of the imperial table, and Pessides, whom
Claudius is supposed to have trusted above all others (Suet.
Claudius 28; Tacitus ann. 11, 18.)

La Piana, op. cit. p.297.
Nevertheless these changes in the Phrygian religion could not make it into a true Roman institution. In actual fact, the aristocracy which formerly had played an important part in the Roman form of the cult, now gave way to the lower classes and foreigners, and the festival of the Magna Mater and Attis became a festival of the plebs and slaves. The genuine Roman tradition had only scorn for the barbaric features of the cult, the language of Juvenal, Sat. 9, 25ff., and of such representatives of the hellenistic spirit as Lucian and Plutarch, showing that Attis and his mysteries had no attraction for people of culture and refinement. They believed that the Phrygian worship contrasted too violently with the calm dignity and respectable reserve of the official Roman religion and excited the minds of the people to a dangerous degree. The eunuchized galli were the objects of contempt and disgust, and what in their own eyes was a meritorious act, was made a crime punishable by law, at least under the empire.  

7 La Piana, op. cit. pp. 300-1.

8 What was thought of the galli even by the common people is clearly suggested by Plautus (Truculentus, 2, 7, 48), by the anecdote of the priest of Pessinus who came to Rome wearing a diadem and was mobbed by the populace in the forum (Bied. 386; Cumont, Oriental Religions, p. 52), and by what is related by Valerius Maximus 7, 7, 6. A fragment of Varro's Saturae Menippeae (Petronii saturae, etc. rec. F. Buecheler, ed. 5, cur. G. Heracius, Berlin 1932, n. 33-35, p. 108) tells, as a joke, of passing near the temple and surprising the galli in the performance of their rites.
It is obvious from this that the Phrygian cult, like the other oriental religions, dated back to a remote period of barbarism; and from that savage past they inherited a number of myths, the odium of which could be masked, but not eradicated by philosophical symbolism and practices, and whose fundamental coarseness had survived from a period of rude nature-worship and could never be disguised by the mystical interpretations of moralising theologians. A god worshipped as lord of the universe was the object of an obscene love-affair, and the taurobolium, performed to satisfy man's most exalted aspirations for spiritual purity and immortality, recalled cannibalistic orgies. Men of letters and senators attending these mysteries, saw them performed by painted eunuchs, ill-reputed for their morals, who went through dizzy dances; to them these were truly barbarous rites stricken with moral decadence.⁹

Beginning with the second century B.C., the mysteries of Isis and Serapis also spread over Italy with the Alexandrian culture whose religious expression they were; and despite persecution, they established themselves at Rome.¹⁰ They did not bring with them a very advanced theological system, because Egypt never produced anything but a chaotic aggregate of disparate doctrines, nor a very elevated ethics, because the level

⁹La Piana, op. cit. p.317.

¹⁰La Piana, op. cit. p.391.
of its morality - that of the Alexandrian Greeks - rose but slowly from a low stage; but they did familiarise Italy with an ancient ritual of incomparable charm that aroused widely different feelings with its splendid processions and liturgical dramas. They also gave their votaries positive assurance of a blissful immortality after death when they would be united with Serapis, and, participating body and soul in his divinity, would live in eternal contemplation of the gods.

At a somewhat later period, arrived the numerous and varied Baals of Syria. But the first Syrian deity to be worshipped in Rome seems to have been the goddess Atargatis. Her devotees were mostly Syrian slaves, many of whom were employed in rural work and thus scattered in the fields, but small bands of itinerant priests of the goddess, described by Lucian and Apuleius as charlatans and thieves, periodically visited their settlements and kept alive their faith.\[^{11}\]

Through their ability in divination, it would seem, these Syrian priests began, about the end of the republic, to enjoy a certain consideration in Rome, and the incoming of Syrian slaves in large numbers and the progressive invasion of the western markets by enterprising Syrian merchants ever since the beginning of the empire, gave to their gods a better standing in the city. The similarity in function between Atargatis, Magna

Nater and the Phoenician Astarte, made less objectionable the introduction of these new cults into the Roman world. Their savage rites had been softened in a hellenistic environment, and in this half-hellenised form, the mysteries of their gods were practised by the Syrian groups in Rome.

But with the exception of the myth of Adonis, the other Syrian gods seem for a long time to have roused no interest among the Romans. But when under Vespasian the region between the Taurus and the Euphrates became a Roman province, and when later Palmyra and the province of Arabia were secured by Trajan in 106 A.D., a new influx of Syrian divinities from these countries superficially hellenised, gave a new impetus to the Syrian religions in the West. Then the Semitic cults entered into successful competition with those of Asia Minor and Egypt. They may not have had so stirring a liturgy, nor have been so absorbed in preoccupation with a future life, but they did have an infinitely higher idea of divinity. The Chaldean astrology, of which the Syrian priests were enthusiastic disciples, had furnished them with the elements of a scientific theology, which had led them to a notion of a god residing far from the earth above the stars, a god almighty, universal and eternal.

When the Gauls of Damascus, Heliopolis, Doliche and Palmyra came to Rome, they assumed the title of Jupiter Optimus Maximus. But their assimilation to the god of the Capitol was only superficial, and their cults, as well as the cults of other Syrian deities connected with them, retained in Rome their
foreign character even more than did the cults of the other foreign deities. Under the half-Syrian Severan dynasty, they enjoyed the special favour and protection of the court; the presence of large and influential groups of Syrians in Rome, and much more the special imperial protection and religious fervour of the powerful and daring princesses Julia Domna, Julia Moesa and Julia Mamaea, made Rome the new centre of propaganda of the Syrian cults. Nevertheless, in themselves, as definite cults of specific deities, they remained extraneous to the Roman tradition, and it seems that the Syrian divinities in the city, far from undergoing a process of Romanisation, kept to the end their tribal characteristics and their savage rites, with the result that when the imperial favour ceased to protect them, the Syrian cults lost ground in Rome and gradually disappeared. 12

Every one of the Levantine countries gave Roman paganism new beliefs that were frequently destined to outlive it. But these beliefs of the fourth century or earlier were not consistent, for there was always a considerable difference between the faith of the masses and that of cultured minds. Astrology scarcely penetrated at all into the rural districts where the ancient devotions were maintained and the peasants practised their pious rites over anointed stones, sacred springs and blossoming trees, and continued to celebrate their rustic holidays during seed-time.

12 The inscriptions related to these cults found in Rome mention with few exceptions Syrians and orientals. La Piana, op. cit. pp. 310-7; Cameron, op. cit. 32; G.F. Moore, Hist. of Relig. 1, 449-54.
and harvest, as in the past. At the other extreme of society, the philosophers delighted in veiling religion with their own speculations; they improvised bold and incongruous interpretations of the myth of the Great Mother, which were received and relished by a restricted circle of scholars. But during the fourth century, there was much less intellectual anarchy, and a comparative harmony arose among the pagans after they joined the opposition, when one school, that of Neo-Platonism, ruled all minds. By compromises between old oriental ideas and Greco-Latin thought, an 'ensemble' of beliefs slowly took form.

With the adoption of the oriental mysteries, barbarous, cruel and obscene practices were no doubt spread, but an ethereal spiritualism ideally transfigured the coarseness of the primitive customs, and just as the doctrine had become completely impregnated with philosophy and learning, so the liturgy became saturated with ethical ideas; thus the taurobolium was now the means of obtaining a new and eternal life; the ritualistic ablutions were supposed to cleanse the soul of impurities and restore its original innocence; and the sacred repasts imparted virtue to the soul and provided sustenance for the spiritual life. While efforts had been made to maintain the continuity of tradition, its content had slowly been transformed, and the most

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13 e.g. the bloody dances of the Galli of the Magna Mater and the mutilations of the Syrian priests.
shocking and licentious fables were turned into edifying narratives by subtle interpretations. Paganism had become a school of morality, and the priest the doctor and director of the conscience, while the mysteries promised a blessed immortality to their initiates and claimed to reveal to them infallible means of effecting their salvation. Thus from coarse fetishism and savage superstitions, the learned priests of the Asiatic cults had gradually produced a complete system of metaphysics and eschatology. This religion was no longer like that of ancient Rome, a mere collection of propitiatory and expiatory rites performed by the citizen for the good of the state; it now claimed to offer the individual an idea of the universe which gave rise to a rule of conduct and placed the end of existence in a future life. It and Christianity moved in the same intellectual and moral sphere as the religious and mystical power of the Orient slowly overcame the whole social organism and prepared all nations to unite in a universal church.\(^\text{14}\)

But Juvenal did not foresee such auspicious times; he knew only that foreigners were introducing to Rome their own strange religions — religions which he considered most unhealthy for the state. How far the triumph of the Isiac religion for example, was due to the influence and activities of the

\(^\text{14}\)La Piana, op. cit. pp.353-5; Cuvant, op. cit. p.92; G.F. Moore, Hist.of Religions 1, pp.449-54.
Alexandrians and Egyptians who had settled in Rome, is difficult
to say, but there is considerable circumstantial evidence that
these played a part of capital importance not only in the intro-
duction of the cult, but also throughout its whole history in Rome.

 Instances of Alexandrians and Egyptians who rose to power
and authority in imperial circles, 16 as well as the activities of
famous men of letters, scientists, physicians and astrologers who,
from the banks of the Nile were attracted to Rome and settled there
at least for a time, show that the Isiac religion had representa-
tives and propagandists not only from the lower classes of
immigrants, - tradesmen and slaves, - but also from the learned
classes which represented the great traditions of Egyptian

15 In the Campus Martius there was apparently, from
historical and archaeological evidence, during the first century
A.D., a considerable group of Alexandrians and Egyptians (G.
Laënnec, Histoire du culte des Divinités d'Alexandrie hors de
l'Egypte, Paris, 1884, pp.156ff.) Close political and commercial
relations between Rome and Alexandria had been established long
before, culminating in the conquest of Egypt by the Romans at the
end of the republican period. The close commercial and industrial
contact between Alexandria and Rome through Puteoli, and the fact
that even in that period Rome appears so much influenced by
Alexandrian art, literature and even religion, leaves no doubt
that at the end of the republic, merchants, artists, men of
learning, quacks, free men, liberti, slaves and every kind of
immigrant from Egypt formed an important part of the foreign

16 One of Nero's teachers was Chaeresis of Naukratis, who
had been director of the library at Alexandria and was the
author of many books on Egypt and especially of a theological
treatise on Isis and Serapis. Dionysius of Alexandria, a pupil
of Chaeresis, was director of libraries in Rome and head of the
bureau for imperial correspondence, from Nero to Trajan. The
notorious Crescimus, as we have seen earlier, is also thought
to have held a post of considerable power. La Piana, op. cit.
p.304.
culture and civilisation, and were the teachers of the sacred wisdom so venerable for its remote antiquity and so celebrated by Greeks and Romans alike.

But Juvenal is unimpressed by the traditions and sacred wisdom of Egypt. The mention of Isis in his Satires is always in connection with wickedness. In Satire 7, 486ff., he writes of Isis the seductress, in 922ff. sneers at her temple as being a haven for prostitutes, and in 3, 93 recounts how she is the goddess invoked by the thief who believes in the gods, yet thinks it worth his while to risk their punishment.

The religion of Isis, despite the Hellenistic forms it assumed under the Ptolemies, had at first met in Rome with an opposition similar to that portrayed in Juvenal's works and it suffered persecutions even under Augustus and Tiberius. The successive attempts to eradicate this cult during the agitated period which followed the senatus consultum of 58 B.C. and the repeated destruction of the altars and shrines of Isis in Rome are well known, 17 but it is interesting to remark that these laws of repression coincide with the laws against all kinds of associations, enacted after bloody tumults had been provoked by the mobs Clodius had recruited from the Roman slums and organised into collegia to terrorise the government. Cicero expressly says that foreigners were in the great majority among

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17 In 59, 58 and 53, the senate ordered the altars and statues to be torn down, but to no avail. Archaeological and historical evidence concerning the Egyptian shrines has been collected and discussed by Lafaye, op. cit. pp.200-228; La Piana, op. cit. p.291.
these revolutionary forces, in his de domo sua, 33, 89. 18

But since the cult of Isis is the only one directly attacked by the laws of proscription at this period, it is likely that the Isiac associations had a large part in the troublesome events, and that a good many of the foreigners and slaves organised by Clodius, belonged to these fraternities. It seems that the members of the collegia Isiaca, even under the empire when the legislation against every kind of political activity on the part of the association was severely enforced, could not refrain from using their religious affiliation for political and especially electoral purposes. The cult, however, survived the proscriptive laws and actually flourished during the last years of the republic, 19 at which time no religion had ever brought to man such promise of blessed immortality as this.

The Egyptian cult was the first example at Rome of an essentially popular religious movement triumphant over the

18 On the political activities of the collegia, see Waltzing, Études sur les corporations prof. 1, p. 171. Rostovtzeff, op. cit. p. 286-7. The State did not object to collegia provided no clubs or societies of a seditious nature existed within.

19 Judging from the few inscriptions which concern the worship of Isis in republican times, there is no doubt that its adepts were mainly freedmen and poor people of oriental origin. Inscriptions found in various places connected with the Isiac cult and containing almost exclusively names of Alexandrians and Egyptians, merchants, soldiers, actors, athletes, freedmen and slaves, confirm this assumption (Lafaye, op. cit. pp. 229ff). Later, Isis and Serapis gained many devotees among all classes and races of the Roman population. La Piana, pp. 2, 17, 292, 303-5, 308.
continued resistance of the public authorities and the official
clergy. It was accused of being a corrupting influence
pervasive of piety; its morals were loose; it excited the worst
superstitions and appealed too violently to the emotions and
senses. All these factors offended the grave decency a Roman
was accustomed to maintain in the presence of the gods, and the
innovators had every defender of the *mens sana in corpore
sano* for an
adversary. 20

Again, the religion had been founded, supported and
propagated by the Ptolemies; it came from a country almost hostile
to Italy during the last period of the republic, issuing from
Alexandria whose superiority Rome both felt and feared; its
secret societies, made up chiefly of people of the lower classes,
might easily become clubs of agitators and haunts of spies. All
these motives for suspicion and hatred were more potent in
exciting persecution than the theological reasons.

When Augustus became master of the empire, he professed
a deep aversion to the gods of his former enemies, and in A.D.19,
Tiberius instituted the bloodiest persecution against the priests
of Isis that they ever suffered; in consequence of a scandalous
affair in which a matron, a noble and some priests of Isis were
implicated. 21 But the prestige of Alexandria seemed invincible;

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20 La Piana, p.293.

2, 85.
it was the model capital, which Rome strove to emulate. The Romans had copied her authors and institutions and invited her artists to their country; they had to accept her religion too.

The Egyptian religion finally obtained recognition either under Caligula, who is said to have caused the Isiac temple of the Campus Martius to be built, or more probably, under Nero. There is no doubt that the anti-Alexandrian policy of Augustus was disregarded by the later emperors and that the influence of the refined culture represented by Hellenic Alexandria regained its ascendancy at Rome, and from Caligula to the Flavii, gained more and more favour with the emperors.

The study of the Roman inscriptions relating to the cult, reveals that even in the period of its greatest expansion, the priesthood, the custody of the sacred objects in the temples and the associations grouped round the temples were mostly in the hands of Alexandrians and Egyptians; such a circumstance was not likely to win Juvenal's approval for the Egyptian religion when he loathed the Egyptian people so much. For though the cult used the Greek language, it nevertheless remained essentially Egyptian and retained its traditional rites and ceremonies. 22

22 It is obvious that the Isiac priesthood could be open only to persons familiar with the complicated ceremonial rules and the ancient traditions of the mysteries, kept with jealous secrecy away from the eyes of the public. This explains why native Egyptians were preferred for the important offices of the cult, but it is indeed remarkable that even the membership of the few collegia mentioned in inscriptions appears to consist mainly of immigrants from the region of the Nile. Even the names on the sepulchral slabs of the devotees who invoke Isis are with few exceptions those of persons of foreign or oriental origin. Aside from the presence of the official class, the religion of Isis in Rome appears from the inscriptions as a religion of immigrants, slaves, freedmen and women. La Piana, op. cit. p.305.
The fact that official recognition had been bestowed on the cult of Isis and Serapis, that its festivals were inserted in the Roman calendar and still more that it had secured a large following in the cosmopolitan population of Rome, made the city the great centre of the Isisic religion not inferior to Alexandria itself. 23

Domitian restored the Iseum of the Campus Martius and that of Beneventum, and transferred from the valley of the Nile sphinxes, cymocephali and obelisks of black or pink granite bearing borders of hieroglyphs of Amasis, Nectanebos or even Ramseses II; Hadrian caused the luxuries of the infamous Canopus to be reproduced in his villa at Tibur to enable him to celebrate his voluptuous feasts under the friendly eye of Serapis, extolled the merits of the deified Antinous in inscriptions couched in the ancient language of the Pharaohs, and set the fashion of statues hewn out of black basalt in Egyptian style. 24

But in Greco-Roman literature there were two opposing attitudes to the Egyptian religion. It was regarded as the lowest and highest of religions at the same time, and there was

23 La Piana, op. cit. p.308; Cumont, op. cit. p.84.

24 Those esthetic manifestations probably corresponded to religious prejudices - see Lafaye, op. cit. p.86ff; La Piana, op. cit. p.306, n.71. The fact that in the second century the comes pontifex of Alexandria and Egypt who held, even if only as a title of honour, the highest office of the Isisic hierarchy, had his residence in Rome at the court of Caesar, may have a special significance in the history of the Egyptian cults in Rome. La Piana, op. cit. pp.309-10; Cumont, op. cit. p.84-5.
always an abyss between the ardent popular belief and the enlightened faith of the official priests. The Roman could not help but admire the splendour of the temples and the ceremonial, the fabulous antiquity of the sacred traditions, and the learning of the clergy possessed of a wisdom revealed by divinity. In becoming the followers of the clergy, they imagined they were pursuing a religion which had engendered their own myths, for they were attracted by the marvellous country where all was mysterious, and by the Nile and the hieroglyphs engraved on the walls of gigantic edifices. Yet at the same time they were shocked by the coarseness of its fetishism and the absurdity of its superstitions, and were especially repulsed by the worship of animals and plants which had always been the most striking feature of the vulgar Egyptian religion. The maintenance of the most striking contrasts characterises Egyptian mentality which was never shocked by the cruelties and obscenities that sullied its mythology and ritual. Egyptian theology was indeed chaotic; there were prophets in the first rank of the clergy who learnedly discussed religion, but never taught a theological system which found universal acceptance. The hazy ideas of the oriental priests enabled everybody to see in them the phantoms they were pursuing, and men who trifled in letters rejoiced in moulding these doctrines at will. Due to its flexibility, the religion was

easily adapted and always found itself in harmony with the prevailing philosophy. The theology of the Egyptian mysteries then, followed rather than led the general flux of ideas; the same was true of their ethics; the religion did not force itself on the world by lofty moral precepts or a sublime ideal of holiness.

Isis herself was not a very austere goddess when she entered Italy. Identified with Venus, she was honoured especially by women with whom love was a profession. In Alexandria, city of pleasure, she had lost all severity, and at Rome, she remained very indulgent to human weakness. But when a more exacting morality demanded that the gods should make men virtuous, the Alexandrian mysteries satisfied the demand; for when a new ideal grew up in the second century, purity of the heart rather than mere cleanliness of the body was demanded. Now renunciation of the sensual pleasures was the condition for the knowledge of divinity which was the supreme good. Then no longer did Isis favour illicit love. But in this regard too, the Egyptian mysteries followed the general progress of ideas rather than directed it.

As for the priests of Isis, Juvenal rages indiscriminately against them and all other oriental priests, charging them with roguery and charlatanism, - Chaldean, Commagenian, Phrygian or priest of Isis

"who with his linen-clad and shaven crew runs through the streets and mocks at the weeping of the people." 26

26 Satire 6, 532-4; cf. 550, 553, 585; Cumont, op. cit. p.90.
He never weary of exposing the exploitation they practise, selling the indulgence of their god to frail female sinners, "bribed no doubt by a fat goose and a slice of sacrificial cake", or promising on the strength of their prophetic gifts and powers of divination "a youthful lover or a big bequest from some rich and childless man." 27 He declaims against oriental obscenity, attacking

"the chorus of the frantic Bellona and the Mother of the Gods attended by a giant eunuch to whom his obscene inferiors must do reverence," 28

and the mysteries of Bona Dea. 29 He holds his sides with laughter at sight of the penances and self-mortifications to which the male and female devotees submit with sombre fanaticism, 30 and puts the galli in the same class as the low ruffians of the cook-shop in Satire 8, 172ff. 31

Juvenal's savage and inexhaustible attacks need not

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27 Satire 6, 546-1, 548-50.
28 Satire 6, 512-6.
29 Satire 6, 313-7. The mysteries of the Bona Dea were originally a perfectly decorous rite and they seem so to have continued until the infamous sacrilege of Clodius. It was only under the empire that they became the scene of such orgies as in Juvenal 2 and 6, 314ff.
30 Satire 6, 522-9.
surprise us; it was the natural reaction of the 'ancient Roman', hater alike of novelty and the foreigner, to whom emotion and enthusiasm were a degradation, and who would gladly have disciplined the outpourings of faith by such ordinances as governed a civil or military parade. But his prejudices may seem rather unjust, because he traced back to the oriental religions alone superstitions whose origins go back to prehistoric times, long before Rome was invaded by the orient, and in whose development oriental religion had no part; and because he was so blinded by his feelings for them, that he completely ignores the moral progress, which, despite their excesses and aberrations, they achieved by the sheer force of their fervour and sincerity. The bloody ceremonies performed in the religious rites of the foreign religions must not allow us to slight the power of feeling that inspired them; for the sacred ecstasy, the voluntary mutilations, the eagerly sought suffering, showed an ardent longing for deliverance from subjection to carnal instincts and a fervent desire to free the soul from the bonds of matter. 32

For a large proportion of the population in Rome, the eastern freedmen and their children, the growth of the mystery religions was giving encouragement to the idea that all men were potentially divine. The Dionysiac mysteries became popular under

32 Carcopino, op. cit. pp. 130ff.
the empire. And for the emotional elements which had now become strong, these religions gave what the formalised cults of the Roman state could not give - a mystic identification of man with god in this life and hope of the continuance of that union in the next.

It is again the conservative Juvenal who states, Satire 6, 548-591, that those who profess to foretell the future are an evil brood, rascally oriental tricksters all of them. The Chaldei or mathematici began to appear in Italy as soon as Rome came into contact with Greece, which had long been overrun by eastern astrology. In Rome its success was connected with that of the oriental religions which lent it their support. 33

From distant Mesopotamia and Egypt, the lands of ancient wisdom, astrologers and experts in divination, soothsayers and physicians, all came to Rome. 34 Oriental astrologers, especially from Egypt and Chaldea, for whom Cato had a special hatred, were very fashionable in Rome, not only among the lower classes, but also in the aristocracy. Thus, despite the laws enacted against them at various times and their expulsions from the city and

33 In 139 B.C., a praetor expelled the Chaldei from Rome with the Jews, but the adherents of the Syrian goddess, of whom there were quite a number, were patrons and defenders of these oriental prophets, and police measures were no more successful in halting the spread of these doctrines than in the case of the Asiatic mysteries. Astrology represents the individual and his personal interests and not the advantage of the community; it was for this reason that the Chaldei were disliked by the Roman government. Cusmian, op. cit. pp.27, 39, 163-4, 166.

34 Friedlander, op. cit. 1, pp.210-12.
from Italy, astrologers, soothsayers and all sorts of quacks were always abundant and made a good living.  35

Juvenal is quite ruthless when he speaks of them. Of the soothsayers he writes 36 that an Armenian or Commagenian will go so far as to probe the entrails of a boy in his divinations! His prophecies will be made with the intention of informing against people himself, if necessary, in order to produce the required result.

Later on in the same Satire, lines 553ff., Juvenal rates the Chaldeans.  37 Their word is relied upon more than that of any

35 Tacitus wrote: "The astrologers in our city will always be expelled and will always be here." In spite of his discreet reserve and a few shafts of fugitive irony, Tacitus does not venture formally to deny the truth of the 'prodigies' which he records as scrupulously as did his predecessors, and he confesses he dare not omit or treat as fables 'facts established by tradition' (Fac. hist. 2, 50; and cf. Boissier, Tacite, 146.) Most of Tacitus' peers and contemporaries were harassed by the same preoccupations. Suetonius had a dream which upset him so much that he feared he was already losing a case in which he was engaged (Pliny, Epp. 1, 18); Regulus, the odious rival of Pliny the Younger at the bar, made use of horoscopes and the haruspex to increase his reputation and to obtain legacies by undue influence (Pliny, Epp. 2, 20). Pliny himself was inclined to reject the puerilities of dream-interpretations (Epp. 1, 8), but at the same time did not hesitate to write to Licinius Sura who had the reputation of being a storehouse of science, asking what he ought to think about ghosts and apparitions, and minutely detailing a series of experiences which had led him hitherto to incline to believe in them (Epp. 7, 27). Pliny's letters on this topic ought to put us on our guard against Juvenal's passionate attacks. Cumont, op. cit. p.164.

36 Satire 7, 36, 548ff. Cf. also Sat. 3, 42ff.

37 See also Satire 10, 94.
other group of astrologers. Yet see what topics they are consulted upon and how they supply spells and charms for the most wicked purposes!  

Nevertheless, under the empire, astrology manifested itself everywhere. Everyone bowed to it and the Caesars became its fervent devotees; the most earnest scholars expounded its principles and the very best minds received them. In actual fact, astrology merely brought renewed vitality to divination which had always been practised in Rome. Thus the best minds of the second century, indifferent or hostile to foreign religions, had recourse to divination without embarrassment or scepticism; and the public authorities attached so much importance to it that they prosecuted unauthorised diviners. When Juvenal therefore mocked the Chaldean adepts who trembled with fear to learn of the conjunctions of Saturn, and the sick woman in Satire 6, 580-1, he was deliberately turning a blind eye to the fact that in every stratum of Roman society, the impious and apathetic were as much a prey to superstition and taboo as the pious he despised.

Asiatic divination was first aristocratic because the obtaining of an exact horoscope was a complicated matter and

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38 Satire 6, 11, 565ff.

39 Satire 6, 610ff. Most of the orientals doubtless well deserved the scathing contempt of Tacitus, who called them a "genus hominum potentibus infidum, sperantibus fallax". Cf. (Tac. hist. 1, 22).
consultations were expensive, but it promptly became popular, especially in the urban centres where oriental slaves gathered in large numbers. Soon neither important nor trivial matters were dealt with unless an astrologer had been consulted first, as Juvenal tells us in Satire 6, lines 560ff.

Originally the adepts of this dubious art were despised, and as late as the period of Augustus they were equivocal beggar-women who plied their miserable trade in the lowest quarters of the slums. But with the invasion of the oriental religions, the magician began to receive more consideration and his condition improved. Then he was honoured and feared even more, until during the second century, scarcely anyone would have doubted his power to call up divine apparitions, converse with the superior spirits and even translate himself bodily to the heavens. During the entire life of the Roman empire, magic and sorcery continued, and the very mystery it was compelled to hide behind increased its prestige and almost gave it the authority of a revelation.

However, in spite of its aberrations, astrology and magic were not entirely fruitless. Their counterfeit learning helped the progress of human knowledge. Because they awakened false ambitions in the minds of their adepts, research was undertaken. The observations, collected with untiring patience by the oriental priests, caused the first physical and astronomical

\[40\text{ Cf. Juv. Sat. 6, 582 ff.}\]
\[41\text{ Cumont, op. cit. p. 187.}\]
discoveries, and the occult sciences thus led to the exact ones.

It is useless to attempt to deny that the oriental religions dealt with above were superior to the more dead than alive theology which they supplanted. Some of their rites, no doubt, like the bull-sacrifice of the Great Mother, or the procession of the torn-up pine which accompanied the mutilation of Attis, have something both barbarous and indecent in them. Nevertheless, the religions which practised them exercised a tonic and a beneficial influence on their followers and lifted them onto a higher plane. Under the combined influence of Greek thought and Roman discipline, oriental mysticism had been able to extract an ideal from the depravity of these materialistic cults and to rise towards those spiritual regions where perfect knowledge, flawless virtue and victory over sin, pain and death appeared as the glorious fulfilment of divine promises. False as was the science incorporated in the gnosis of each cult, it both stimulated and quenched the initiates' thirst for knowledge. Physical ablutions and lustrations went hand in hand with the inward spiritual peace of renunciation and self-denial, and divine favour was considered the reward for human virtue. Thus, thanks to the collaboration of oriental mysticism and Roman wisdom, new and fruitful faiths were born.

The moral effects of the foreign religions have been disputed. Some point to the licence and quackery practised by some devotees of eastern cults; others dwell on the lofty spiritual value of a religion that could call forth the beautiful
prayer to Isis in Apuleius or lead Plutarch to write so touchingly to his wife on the death of their daughter. In actual fact, the oriental religions purged themselves of much that was revolting as they passed west. On the whole, the influence of these religions was a strong force for good at a time when all other religion was dead. What they meant to such men as Apuleius and Plutarch, they probably also meant to hundreds of other worshippers, bringing new hope to educated and uneducated alike.
CHAPTER 6

THE JEWS

There remains only one foreign group in Rome which we have not yet examined, because their social conditions, juridical position and religious situation were different from those of all other foreign groups. The Jews will therefore be dealt with separately.¹

The first community of Jews began to form in Rome in the second century B.C. They carried with them into the diaspora that consciousness of the high destiny of their race which proceeded from their religion, and thus, living among the heathens, organised their own group-life apart in accordance with their own religious laws and traditions. While with other groups of immigrants, the practice of their native cults did not prevent them mingling in all kinds of social and economic activities or from taking part in the official cults of cities of states, for the Jews, on the contrary, their religion was more than a mere

¹ Seen from the outside and from a little distance, Judaism and Christianity were at first easily confused with one another, and it is possible that the invective Juvenal hurled at the Jews was really directed against the Christians, whom he had not at this date learned to distinguish from them (Sat. 14, 96-106). They were obedient to the commands of their God and might well pass in the eyes of a superficial observer for being simply attached to Jewish customs. Indeed, the Christians claimed to be the heirs of the Jews, see M. Simon, Verus Israel (Paris, 1948); Carcopino, Op. cit. p.136.
form of worship; it involved a series of definite prescriptions regulating their social and economic relations and even the common acts of everyday life such as food, drink and personal contact.

However, as long as the Jewish nationality was embodied in an independent state allied to the republic, Rome could not, and did not, refuse to grant to the Jews of the city the usual freedom of foreigners to practise their own religion and observe all the customs required by their religious laws.

But with the Jewish group, a peculiar problem arose; since on religious grounds the Jews could not participate in the official cults or observe the numerous legal prescriptions of oaths and ceremonies which gave religious character and sanction to so many of the official, social and economic activities of the people, the grant of religious tolerance to the Jewish immigrants made necessary a further series of privileges and exemptions which had no counterpart in the case of any other foreign group in Rome.

Rome was very considerate towards her Jews. There is no mention of severe measures of repression on the part of the government against the Roman Jews at the time when the imperial armies were burning the temple and slaughtering the people of Jerusalem, when the rebellion abroad was put down under Trajan.

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2 Roman authority even protected the Jews against those cities which tried to impose on them the local official cults, e.g. Josephus Ant. 14, 10, 8. Intruders who provoked disturbances in the synagogues during the meetings were guilty of atrox injuria and condemned to the mines, as happened to the slave Callistus, later bishop of Rome (Hippolytus, Philosophumena, 9, 12).
or when the Jews were banished from their holy city. In fact, Rome was wisely ready to go as far as possible in her respect for the national religious traditions of a race which opposed stubborn resistance to all the influences by which the gradual ethnical fusion or the levelling policy of the empire might have led to its absorption. But there were two points, both of vital importance to Rome as well as to the Jews, on which a compromise was more difficult to reach — emperor worship and Jewish proselytism.  

On these points, the imperial government hesitated long between a policy of tolerance and one of restriction and repression.

As regards the former, the Jews found no difficulty in adopting the less objectionable forms of emperor worship. To them, their sacrifices were an offering to God for the emperor and not to the emperor as God; and it does not seem that the Jews were ever molested solely on account of their method of conforming to the emperor cult. As far as the oath of fidelity to the emperor was concerned, which included recognition of the divine character of Caesar and was couched in openly idolatric terms, Rome permitted the Jews to use an expurgated formula free from all objectionable elements.  

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3 The Jews gained many proselytes from among the Romans; these belonged to all classes, from court circles downwards, as inscriptions on tombstones in the ancient Jewish cemeteries testify. Cautley, A History of Israel, 2, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1932, p.417. For Jewish inscriptions in ancient cemeteries and catacombs, see ibid, p.418, n.1.

4 La Piana, op. cit. p.377.

Roman legislation concerning the Jews was an attempt at a compromise between two conflicting principles in Roman policy. The privilege of exemption from the official cults, from certain practices in the worship of the emperors, from certain formulae in the oaths, and even in specific cases from the ordinary jurisdiction of the Roman courts, was a conspicuous example of Roman respect for the customs of a conquered people, and showed Rome's tolerance towards the religious traditions of the foreign groups in the capital. But on the other hand, Roman consciousness of the danger that might arise from the content of Judaism is revealed by the consistent efforts of the law to restrain the Jewish religion from gaining any ground outside the Jewish race. Jewish proselytism; teaching the final triumph of the Jewish nation over all others, if it had been successful, would have undermined the foundations of the whole Roman system; and it is not surprising that Rome at times opposed it, but rather that she did not take a more uncompromising stand against it. The special measures taken by various emperors directly or indirectly against Jewish proselytism and the severe penalties imposed, betray the same consistent aim of the Roman law to shut up Judaism within its racial boundaries and prevent its propagation. That

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6 Juvenal, Satire 14, 96ff., seems to show that Jewish proselytes were not uncommon in Rome; cf. Horace, Sat. 1, 9, 56, where Horace's friend Puscas pleads, no doubt in jest, for postponing his business, Hodie tricesima sabbata; cf. Ovid, Rem. Amor. 210; Persius, 3, 184; Juvenal, Sat. 3, 295 and 6, 159.
the Roman law preferred to continue with this mild procedure rather than to adopt the ruthless levelling policy of Caligula, is to the credit of Roman political wisdom. But Rome never gave up her programme of checking their political aspirations, and although she satisfied the religious needs of the Jews of the diaspora, at the same time she dispelled all hope of a political restoration for the Palestinian Jews.

The Jewish people had been a source of trouble to Rome throughout their history. From republican times, side by side with the Jews who of their own free will had come to Rome from the various cities of the diaspora led by financial reasons or other motives, Rome also contained numbers of liberti of Palestinian origin or descent possessing Roman citizenship, who seem to have played a part of some importance in the tumults and riots of the Clodian period, and of the civil wars that brought to an end the republican regime. And from the beginning of the

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7 La Piana, op. cit. pp. 365-6.

Palestinian Jews always formed a good part of the Roman Jewish community from the time of Pompey, but presently, as Philo remarks, many of the Romans who bought them preferred to set them free, finding them more troublesome than serviceable by reason of their obstinacy to live and work with and like gentile slaves (Philo. Leg. ad Caem. ed. Mangay, 2, 566). See also Oesterley, op. cit. p. 413. On the emancipation of Jewish slaves, see J. Juster, Les Juifs dans l'Empire Romain, Paris, 1914, 2, pp. 80 ff. and bibliography No. 1.

But after the war that culminated in the destruction of the temple in 70 A.D., and again after the rebellions under Trajan and Hadrian, still larger numbers of Jewish prisoners of war were brought to Rome from Palestine. La Piana, op. cit. p. 345.

9 Cicero, pro Flacco, 28, 1 ff.
empire, many members of the Jewish colony had proved so troublesome that in 19 A.D., Tiberius thought it necessary to take strong measures against them for the undesirable character of their religion and quasi-religious practices in Rome. 10

If such was the Roman opinion of the Jews, what was the Jewish opinion of Roman rule? To the Jew himself in general, the Roman power was the object of fear and hatred. The utterances of several Jewish teachers who visited Rome, 11 as well as certain Jewish legends about Rome and her emperors, describe the grandeur of the city in emphatic language - but do so only to make more portentous its future downfall and Israel's triumph more glorious. The utterances abound also in the denunciation of Rome's moral corruption and vices, and we may fairly assume that these expressed the feelings and secret hopes of many faithful Jews who gathered round the Roman synagogues.

But whatever their feelings or hopes, the Jews of Rome, with that mixture of idealism and practicality of mind, so

10 This was the first time there was any persecution of the Jews. See Oesterley, op. cit. p. 414 for further details. See also Tac. Ann. 2, 85; cf. Suet. Tiberius 36. Details are given by Josephus, Ant. Jud. 18, 3, 4-5.

11 Jewish proselytizers were especially successful with women, whom they sometimes persuaded to become temple prostitutes. It was such conduct on the part of some who professed Judaism, that led to the comprehensive punishment in Tiberius' reign, when about 50,000 Jews were expelled. Cf. W.A. Heidel, "Why were the Jews banished from Italy in 19 A.D.?" AJP 41 (1920) 38-47.
conspicuous in the whole history of the race, made use of all the advantages offered by the capital of the empire, adapted themselves to their environment as well as they could, borrowed such local customs and traditions as were not inconsistent with their law and religious convictions, and altogether played a part of no small importance in the social, religious and economic life of Rome.12

It was not the Jewish claim that their religion would some day become the religion of the whole world that worried the philosophers and thinkers of Rome, for they scorned such pretence; but Jewish intolerance and arrogance in supposing and preaching that they alone possessed truth and righteousness caused men of culture to lose patience, just as Jewish aloofness provoked the resentment and even the hatred of the masses. So although Jewish propaganda did not encounter among the masses in Rome that open hostility which in other cities of the diaspora, and especially in Alexandria, subjected the Jews to periods of hardship and suffering, nevertheless, even in Rome there was a considerable undercurrent of anti-semitism.13

The Latin satirists who make much of these anti-Jewish feelings, present humorous pictures of the strange customs of the Jews, their lack of refinement and their clannishness.


13 For further details, see Hausrath Geschichte der Juden in Rom, 1, 26 (1894) - Oesterley, op. cit. p.415-6.
Mutual assistance was so highly developed among them as to impress the Latin writers to mention it, though the satirical poets took pleasure in pointing out that Jewish charity was only liberal towards other Jews, and had a heart of stone for everyone else. Juvenal, Satire 14, line 103, would have us believe that Moses taught the Jews: "non monstrare vias eadem nisi sacra colenti".

This is untrue, but though it could be mere rhetorical flourish-ing, it may be based on some scrap of information Juvenal had collected. Obviously Juvenal was not without knowledge direct or second-hand of the Old Testament, and the Jews did in fact have the reputation of being misanthropists. Apion and other Jew-baiters asserted that Jews hated all Greeks and did everything different from the rest of the world.

The Romans as a whole regarded the Jews as specially superstitious, and Juvenal, in Satire 14, 96-106, speaks of this

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14 In several Jewish inscriptions of the Roman cemeteries, we find in praise of the deceased such words as πλοιον φίλημαν, πάτριβοι, φίλος. These sound like humble protests against this current accusation.

The Jewish butcher of H. Vogelstein and P. Rieger's, Geschichte der Juden in Rom, 1896, p.143, is called omnium (sic) amicus. La Piana, op. cit. p.392, n.36.

Other Roman authors, e.g. Tacitus and Pliny the Elder, speak of the Jews with dislike. Tacitus writes 'misericordiam inter se, adversus alios omnes hostile odio exercent'. See also St. John, 4, 9. Ancient accounts agree in attributing to the Jews a hatred for all nations except their own, cf. Tac. hist. 5, 5 and Quintilian 3, 7, 21. Thus the Jewish Law is misrepresented as consisting solely of prohibitions against showing the commonest offices of humanity to any but co-religionists.


16 Cf. Horace, Sat. 1, 5, 100; 1, 9, 69ff; Persius 5, 180ff.
trait at length. His intense hatred of the Jews seems to have led him to learn a little of their ways, and in actual fact Juvenal had greater knowledge of the Jews than any of his contemporaries or predecessors in Roman literature, except possibly Tacitus; for little was known in antiquity by the generality of pagan writers. Doubtless Juvenal had seen something of the Jewish community who were his neighbours in the Subura.

In his earlier Satires, Juvenal emphasises that the Jews lived by begging. In A.D. 70, after the destruction of the temple at Jerusalem, the number of Jews in Rome must have largely increased and most of them were in fact utterly destitute and did live by begging or fortune-telling. Neither in the second century does the Jewish community of Rome seem to have been noteworthy for wealth or prosperity, nor did the Jews pursue those commercial or money-lending activities with which we associate them in mediaeval and modern times. The Jewish community at Rome had its rapid growth chiefly from the thousands of prisoners of war, and could not compare in wealth with the older Jewish colonies of merchants and business-men at Alexandria or Cyrene. Even if the Jewish prisoners succeeded in gaining their freedom, they could not

17 Juv. Sat. 3, 14; 6, 542, where see his correct use of caeli numen and Mayor's note.


19 Satires 3, 12ff., 16, 296; 6, 543. Martial 12, 57.
easily climb high in the financial world. We find no mention of rich Jews who could make princely gifts to the temple while it stood, nor do we find rich Jews who could lend large sums of money to cities or private individuals. Josephus speaks of wealthy Jews of Puteoli, Crete, Cyrene and Melos, but no names of Roman Jews appear on the list. Roman sources state that a high percentage of their Jews, contrary to being wealthy, lived in rather impoverished circumstances as a depressed minority group.

However, the traditional teaching of the Jews that "men should make every effort not to become a public charge"²⁰ and that the most repugnant employment is honourable if it earns a living, made the Jews of Rome ready to enter the humblest occupations, which to the Romans would have seemed a disgrace. They engaged in every type of economic activity, though they were mostly to be found in relatively humble occupations; the passage of Martial which mentions the Jewish peddling of matches in exchange for broken glass is well known.²¹ But sham beggars were not lacking among the Jews,²² and the severe denunciation of such practices uttered by Jewish teachers²³ shows the existence


²¹Epigr. 12, 57; S. Reinach, protests against the usual interpretation, Textes, p.289.

²²"a mater doctus rogare Iudaeus", Martial, ibid.

²³See Moore, op. cit.
of the evil. However, neither the disparaging tone of the satirists, nor the poverty of the Jewish cemeteries justifies the assumption that the Roman jewry was solely a community of beggars and that no well-to-do class at all was present among them.

Juvenal also accused the Jews of practising quackery in Satire 4, lines 159-60 and 544-7. It is only later in his Satires that he looked on them as a highly organised religious group with a long tradition behind them. But even then, he could not resist pointing out the obvious peculiarities which would first strike the onlooker; their keeping of the sabbath, which Juvenal attributes to idleness; the absence of images in their temples; their abstention from pork, and the practice of circumcision.

But we must remember that Juvenal's scathing comments on the Jewish religion do not necessarily convey the hatred of all the Romans. In actual fact, a great many Romans, especially among

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24 Satire 4, 96-100.

25 Tacitus takes the same view of the Jewish sabbath and Jubilee, Hist. 5, 4.

26 Cf. Tac. Hist. 5, 5; Professor Mayor quotes Strabo, p.765; Lucan 2, 592-3.

27 Cf. Tac. Hist. 5, 4; but see Leviticus, chapter 11. Juvenal says the Jews think eating pork as bad as cannibalism, cf. Sat. 6, 150; Petronius scoffs at Jewish worship of what is ignorantly termed a porcinum numen.

the lower orders, looked with great respect on the Jewish observances. Tacitus, like Juvenal, has little good to say of the Jews, but even he is forced to admit the true nature of their worship.

From the descriptions found in the Latin writers as a whole, it appears that the Jews had succeeded in gaining the sympathies of many persons who admired the simplicity and purity of the Jewish doctrine of God, with its freedom from degrading mythological associations and its lofty moral teaching so similar to that of the noblest philosophical tradition. Nevertheless, it is doubtful whether many men of the aristocratic class ever became proselytes, though probably a certain number of them whose religious philosophy had led them to monotheism, sympathised with the Jewish teaching. 29

To sum up, we should recognise that the Jews had imbibed something of the Greek culture and education, and in the days of the empire were doubtless to a large extent possessed of that shrewdness for business which has always been theirs in medieval and modern times. 30 But these talents, which alone would have made them good slaves and enabled them to rise in their masters' grace and be rewarded by manumission, were somewhat discounted by

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29 Tac. Hist. 5, 5, indirectly praises the Jewish belief in one eternal and supreme God, whose image must not be counterfeited and who cannot pass away. Carcopino, op. cit. p.124.

30 See Oesterley, op. cit. p.416.
the pride and obstinacy begotten by their theocratic ambitions. Religious fanaticism was a quality which could never help slaves towards gaining their liberty.

For long years, Rome had shown more forbearance towards the troublesome Jews than to any other of her subject races, but from Horace's day to that of Rutilius Namatianus, the Jews remained objects of dislike, whose religious thought and history were sometimes misunderstood even by an observant Roman like Tacitus.
CHAPTER 7

CONCLUSION

We see from the section above on the foreign religions, that for the di peregrini and their worshippers, Juvenal's feeling is one of intense scorn. The Jews are attacked for their selfish, anti-social exclusiveness, for their cut-price venality as interpreters of dreams, and for their failure to respect the traditional sacred spots at Rome, and they move Juvenal to mirth with their prejudice against pigs. The Egyptian religion fares no better. In Satire 12, 28, Isis is mentioned as the goddess of the shipwrecked sailor turned beggar, and she is invoked in Satire 13, 92-4, not by the holy, but by the impious man who calls on her to strike him blind if only he may keep his ill-gotten gains. Her temple is nothing more than a regular rendezvous for immorality, and the priests of the Egyptian triad exert their baneful influence on the minds of credulous women. Other

1 Sat. 14, 96-106.
2 Sat. 6, 542-7.
3 Sat. 3, 12-14.
4 Sat. 6, 123ff.
5 Sat. 6, 489 and 9, 22.
6 Sat. 6, 526-541. 94
foreign priests are similarly attacked. Cybele\(^7\) and Bellona, who
drives her devotees to crazy prophecy,\(^8\) both supply Rome with
eunuch priests to terrify their female votaries with penance
unless a suitable bribe is forthcoming.\(^9\) And Juvenal has no time
at all for the Bona Dea, whose rites have simply degenerated into
sexual orgies for both women\(^10\) and for male perverts.\(^11\) Nowadays,
Juvenal says, there are few women chaste enough to touch the
vittae of Ceres,\(^12\) the wicked son sells his perjuries while
touching her altar,\(^13\) and the gay adventurer frequents her temple.\(^14\)

As a result, Juvenal cannot help but cling to the past,
when virtue and honesty were still to be found in Rome, and life
was simple. Living in accordance with his precepts, in Satire 9,
145ff., he says that when Persicus comes to dine, he will offer
him a plain meal which would have been considered a feast in the

\(^7\) Nevertheless Cybele, brought to Rome by special
invitation in 204 B.C. and a deity of the state, is to be
respected so long as her worship is conducted with decent Roman
restraint. J.D. Jefferis, "Juvenal on Religion", C.J. 34 (1939)
230.

\(^8\) Sat. 6, 123ff.

\(^9\) Sat. 7, 511-526.

\(^10\) Sat. 6, 314-341.


\(^12\) Sat. 6, 50.

\(^13\) Sat. 14, 218ff.

\(^14\) Sat. 9, 24. See also 6, 306-8.
good old days, and it will be served plainly by a country boy of simple modesty. For entertainment, there will be verses of Homer and Virgil, and no girls singing lewd Spanish songs and dancing sensual dances.

Juvenal feels there was a much better state of affairs in those days when Aius Locutius spoke as a deity who cared for his people, 'fictilis et nullo violatus Juppiter auro'. Then there was no heaven above the clouds crowded with divinities, no tripartite Greek division of divine supremacy, 'sed infernis hilaris sine regibus umbras', and no oriental immigrants to exert their baneful influence on Roman society.

Juvenal realised that when a number of foreigners flood into a city over a long period of time, the foreign element is not merely a passive recipient, but cannot fail to become an active contributor to the native race and environment, which is thus affected by extraneous traditions and mental habits. This is exactly what he feared would, and did, happen in Rome, and the formerly austere Roman way of life was altered so much that he was able to write that the Romans spoke of morals.

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15 Sat. 9, 111-6.

16 Sat. 13, 42-52.

yet had none, and even the foreigners themselves refused to imitate the behaviour of the Romans. In fact, things had reached such a pitch that it was the Romans who were corrupting the foreigners to whom they were supposed to be so superior!

Admittedly Juvenal says foreigners such as the unwarlike Rhodians and the scented Corinthians are rightly despised for their effeminacy, but there do exist foreigners of whom the Romans themselves should beware. Juvenal says that they should respect the Spaniards, the Gauls and those who dwell on the shores of Illyricum, and should show mercy to the reapers who give the Romans food so the latter can waste their time in entertainment. For though such people might be robbed of their all, they will always constitute a danger while Rome remains steeped in her degeneracy.

In the city, all the old values and virtues have disappeared, as symbolised in the virtual abandonment of the shrines dedicated to abstract qualities once so highly revered.

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18 Sat. 2, 99ff.
19 Sat. 2, 159ff.
20 Cf. Sat. 6, 296 and Martial, Epigr. 10, 68.
21 Cf. Sat. 6, 297; 11, 122; 3, 61; Cic. de re pub. 2, 7-8; Martial, Epigr. 10, 65, 1ff., and 10, 68, 10-11.
22 Juv. Sat. 8, 112ff.
23 Cf. Livy 10, 2.
Vitia Romana and cives indecori meet Juvenal's gaze wherever he looks in the streets, but the most complete indictment of Rome, the iniqua urbs of Satire 1, 30-1, and the saeva urbs of Satire 3, 8-9, comes in the third poem. However, when reading this satire, we must remember that Juvenal, though he insists that he produces a true picture of the world, always shows the dark side. He is liable to exaggeration and overstatement, and from a few examples makes deductions that are inclined to be too sweeping. 25

With a passionate concern for Rome, and a hatred for those who have defiled it, he presents the irrepressible reactions of an honest Roman to the degeneration of his native city. But his patriotism is of that narrow type which considers it a virtue to hate foreigners, and all orientals come under his ban. No doubt the coming of such a mixture of races, religions, morals and characters was the cause of considerable moral corruption, but it is not abhorrence of foreign vice, but rather jealousy of foreign success which angers the satirist. Also, on account of his rhetorical treatment of his topic, the desire for striking collocation or piquant anti-climax results in the non-moral point of view which sometimes asserts itself, for example, when the rich barber excites as much indignation as the cruel provincial governor, and the luxury of Crispinus as much wrath as his incest and adultery.

25 e.g. in Rome there are many Greeks, so Juvenal states that Rome is a Graeca urbs! (3, 61).
For Juvenal and many like him, the world was Rome, and the social conditions of their beloved city were wrong; it was full of vice and corruption, but more important, full of upstarts and foreigners who ousted the native Roman from his place in society. But in actual fact, Juvenal's age, as every age, possessed both admirable and degrading tendencies, and the foreigners in Rome worked for good as well as evil. On the one hand there was a class of philosophers with high ideals and a pure morality which was not without influence upon society though they were kept in the background through suspicion on the part of the emperors that they contributed a political opposition; some of these philosophers were Italians, but others came from provinces, like Euphrates, Artemidorus and Musonius. Then among the lower classes, Christianity was already at work below the surface, and not entirely without effect.

But on the other hand, there was also a class of "nouveaux riches", composed of merchants and adventurers, often Greek and oriental, who were not too moral in life, and spread a pernicious example of luxury. There were also a number of slaves of all nations who exercised a deeply corrupting influence on domestic life in many ways, and a number of freedmen who combined enormous wealth not too healthily with the tastes and habits of slaves. This is the picture Juvenal prefers to portray.

Gone were the days when wives were kept chaste by their
humble fortunes. Rome was now surrounded by luxury on all sides, against which Juvenal declaims in Satire 11. Access to and communication with all parts of the empire, and the peace which existed within the frontiers, gave an immense stimulus to commerce, and among the rich and successful, to luxury. The latter inevitably gave rise to crime and lust, because the copious supply of wealth at Rome attracted undesirable immigrants whose vices found a rich haven in the crowded city.

But it was not as if these immigrants remained at the bottom of the social scale; for it eventually became necessary for changes to be made in Rome's social strata. In the reign of Nerva, there were only half of the senatorial families counted in 65 A.D., thirty years before, so there was urgent need for perpetual new blood from the humbler strata of the population to revivify and nourish the urban aristocracy. But in drawing this new blood from the servile masses, Roman society was destined to expose itself to great dangers in the future, and in the present to inevitable adulteration.

Every social change calls forth hysterical protest, which is always likely to take a prominent place in the literature of the day. And in those days, those who wrote were also those whose privileges were being attacked and whose exclusiveness was

26 Juv. Sat. 5, 287.

27 For imported luxuries, see Juv. Sat. 14, 306.
being assailed, so it is small wonder that the slave, freedman and foreigner received less than was his due at the hands of Juvenal, Martial and their like.

There is no doubt that Rome gained culturally from her foreigners; but whether socially, economically, or morally, is a moot point. As far as slavery was concerned, though the actual institution was not condemned in that age, its effects were. When country folk moved to the town to find work, the artisan was faced with servile competition which seemed preferable to employers because slave labour was easier to obtain and cheaper to employ. As a result of this, there grew up a shifting urban proletariat which needed doles and amusements to keep them.

Slavery was also lethal to family life. Young Romans taught by slaves or freedmen of barbarian race and unsteady character were at best imbued with Greek notions and learned servile attitudes and vices. Slavery undermined the _mos maiorum_ and fidelity in marriage soon became the exception. Consequently, the native Roman element nearly ceased to perpetuate itself, especially in the upper classes.

Even if the slaves had been freed, they were still accused of many faults. Against the freedmen the main charges were vulgarity, ostentation, lack of manners, disrespect for Roman traditions, and blatancy. All this was true and all deplorable, but nevertheless inevitable in such a period of transition. In actual fact, the real reason for the Roman outcry
was jealousy of freedmen's success where free Romans had failed - jealousy of their wealth, ability, powers and influence with the important men of the state. That the imperial freedmen often deserved the abuse flung at them cannot be denied, for when Pliny adds his denunciation of Pallas to the witness of Tacitus, the gibes of Juvenal in Satire 3, 39 and those of Martial gain in credibility. Petronius caricatures ex-slaves' vulgarity and ostentation and no doubt exaggerates, but in many details he testifies to fact, for the power of the freedmen, their abuse of it, and the greed with which it was amassed are their crimes. 28

Yet it was those who made their protest who were partly the source of all the trouble. Because of the great number of slaves in Rome, there was no real incentive for the free Roman to work. The determined refusal of free Romans to work with the emperor had originally been a contributory reason for his employing freedmen. 29 So, deliberately standing aloof, the free born saw posts filled with ex-slaves, who were both capable and industrious, but later complained when they themselves were still poor and unimportant and the freedmen had risen in the social scale. Martial may dislike freedmen's vulgarity, but should give

28 See Doryphoros, Dio, 61, 5, 4; Asiaticus, Tac. hist. 2, 95; Narcissus, Dio, 60, 34; Phaon, Suetonius, Nero 48; Pallas, Tac. ann. 11, 29 etc. Cf. also Suet. Otho 5; Pliny, N.H. 33, 145.

them their due for their industry while he idled, and for thrift while he squandered, despising trade with a pride he and his like could ill-afford to maintain.

Thus slaves emerged from servitude and made their own contribution to the life of the empire, and, it has been suggested, a valuable one. Satirists fumed and protested; as we have seen they accused the Phrygians of stupidity, the Persians of empty verbosity, the Egyptians of criminal hypocrisy and maleficent arts, the Africans of perfidy and superstition, and the Jews of selfishness and rapacity, the Roman satires helping to keep alive Roman dislike and contempt for these racial attributes.

Yet a man like Cicero greatly admired the cultural and artistic achievements of the Greeks; but when he spoke as a politician, he blamed the foreigners for their lack of political education, which made the alien Roman rabble of former slaves an easy instrument of trouble in the hands of demagogues; when he spoke as a lawyer, he would scorn their untrustworthiness as witnesses in trials; and as a philosopher he pointed to their

30 See A.M. Duff, ibid p.185-6, 206-9.

31 On the common denunciation of the Phrygians, see a collection of texts in Labriolle, La Crise Montaniste (Paris 1913, pp.4-5).

32 On the vaniloqui Persae, see Ausonius, epigr. 42, 4.

33 Cicero, pro Flacco 27, 65.
lack of *gravitas*, a quality which in Cicero's day was the distinguishing mark of the genuine Roman gentleman; exactly what all those foreigners who crowded the streets of Rome did not possess was that *gravitas* and decorum of the lofty Roman race; their main fault was their *levitas*. After the time of Caligula and Nero, when the *gravitas Romana* had received hard blows from the highest representatives of the state, we hear much less of this ancient Roman virtue, except occasionally from such writers as Seneca and Tacitus. It is then not so much their *levitas* as their low standard of living that constituted the most grievous sin of the foreigners, their greed for gain and their superstitions. Martial and Juvenal took the place of Cato and Cicero.

But these judgments of Latin writers on the native qualities of Greeks and orientals must not be taken too seriously. As Tenney Frank remarks,

"it would be unfair to accept the self-complacent slurs of the Romans, who, ignoring certain imaginative and artistic qualities, chose only to see in them unprincipled and servile *egoista*."

So the satirists who fumed and protested were often misguided and exaggerated, mistaking accidentals for essentials. However, it may be that the influence of freedmen was not entirely salutary and that the rich crop of ex-slave dignitaries in the townships did indeed also contain the seeds of decay; it may be that the

34 T. Frank, "Race Mixture in the Roman Empire", *AHR* (1916), 705.
protests, spiteful and malignant though they were, yet ignorantly
contained elements of truth.

Most historians would agree that the penetration of the
West by the East was not lacking as a contributory cause to the
fall of the Roman Empire. But what exactly was this bad influence
of the East? Rostovtzeff, in his summary review of the causes of
the fall of the Empire, stressed "the biological or physiological point of view." 35

But the judgment of the contemporary Roman is not
altogether to be despised; he condemned Syrians, Egyptians, Cappa-
docians, Greeks and the rest, feeling instinctively that there was
a moral and political rottenness in these people. He may speak
sagely, to the contrary of German barbarism or British ferocity, but he did
see in these peoples the promise of progress, in the East, the
decay of stagnation. The Roman instinct may have been right.

Nevertheless it is fair to reflect that the representatives
of such foreign races in Rome, coming as they did from classes
depressed and worn out by several generations of slavery and
restriction, could hardly possess the native quality of their race
at its best. The specimens of immigrant foreigners to be observed
in the Roman foreign rabble were not of a kind to counteract the
prejudices bred by historical and social traditions which assigned
to the Romans the imperium mundi as a birthright. These

35 Rostovtzeff, The Social and Economic History of the
Roman Empire, Oxford, 1928, p.485.
foreigners and the racial mixture which had taken the place of the old Roman stock, did indeed lack the political and moral qualities by which the empire had been built and which were necessary if it were to be held together. Tenney Frank supplies a good example of a freedman's attitude to life in Rome. 36

"The Trimalchios of the empire were often shrewd and daring business men, but their first and obvious task apparently, was to climb the ladder of quick profits to a social position in which their children, with Romanised names, could comfortably proceed to forget their forebears. The possession of wealth did not as in the republic, suggest certain duties to the commonwealth. Narcissus and Pallas might be sagacious politicians, but they were not expected to be statesmen concerned with the continuity of the 'mos maiorum'."

Roman morality was most definitely affected by the influx of foreign customs. The Elder Cato saw the process gathering strength and tried to halt it; Sallust was an observer and perhaps himself a symptom of its increasing power; Horace made it the theme of several of his most powerful lyric poems; and a long series of legislators, from the censors of the republic to Augustus and Domitian, attempted to arrest the degeneration by restrictive laws. Juvenal's sixth Satire is a serious attempt to describe the results of a long and violent revolution, the collapse of family life and sexual morality in what had been one of the most puritanical societies of the ancient world. What Juvenal here denounces is what Horace foresaw, and what the Christian fathers were to attack and overthrow a few years later. Nowadays, Juvenal says the women pollute all the religious

36 T. Frank, _op. cit._ AHR, p. 706.
ceremonies that had once bound women together for good, but which now serve as an excuse for exciting and evil intrigue. In his sixth Satire, 11. 300-351, the leading theme is the degeneration of what were once the religious cults of chastity and wifehood into perverse orgies. But it is only fair to say that secret societies are usually made out to be worse than they are; all this passage seems as unreal as the account of the men's homo-sexual society in Satire 2, and all details are unconfirmed by other writers. Thus it might come from Juvenal's angry conviction that Roman women are hopelessly corrupt, and be rather inference and intention than true evidence - we have no way of checking. The only point we can make is that nothing Juvenal describes is impossible, as worse things are known from both ancient and modern times; and because of the long degeneration of Roman morals, it was probably close to the truth; wives did accept and practise imported religious cults.

Thus we see that Roman culture, in undertaking the task of levelling the world up to its own standard, was itself levelled down, or at least profoundly modified. Possibly other causes came when the venture of civilising the world was trembling in the balance, and turned what would have been a success into a glorious failure; or the dilution of Roman civilisation was carried much too far and taxed too much the savouring capacities of the original Roman element.

So, with the growing economic and political importance of the provinces, the levelling policy of the emperors, the rise of
new classes which superseded the old stock, and the religious
syncretism which undermined the nationalistic spirit of the old
religions. Rome, the denationalised capital of the great empire,
came to be ruled by the offspring of races which had originally
been brought to Rome only to serve. It must not be forgotten,
however, that in the process of amalgamation and fusion of races,
as well as the social changes in the city, the Roman element and
the Roman tradition contributed the vital forces which held the
organism together - that is to say the political and jurisdicjonal
institutions which were, and remained, essentially Roman.

In conclusion, from a biological point of view, it is
doubtful whether the Roman experiment in the fusion of peoples
was likely to be a success; the moral contribution of the East
could not exactly improve upon the old Roman virtues. But on the
other hand, the religious contributions contained elements of
value, and in so far as it influenced morality, was undoubtedly
a force for the good. In the sphere of politics, the East, while
providing new and versatile recruits to be trained often most
successfully as citizens, sent out its people already equipped
with an hereditary legacy of tendencies, which, in the long run,
helped to destroy the vigorous municipal life of the West.

Nevertheless, it is possible that, given more time, Rome
would have succeeded in her task of fusion, and that out of the
cosmopolitanism of the empire, a new and more brilliant civilisation
might have sprung, embodying the best and the most
reconcilable portions of the eastern and western types.
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