

Complex Roman Names

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Curriculum vitae

- ▶ Minored in Latin
- ▶ Current Palimpsest Herald
- ▶ Serpent Herald
- ▶ Maintain the Medieval Names Archive
- ▶ Companion of the Order of the Laurel



Where can you find these slides?

- ▶ At my website, www.yarntheory.net/ursulageorges/
- ▶ In the 2020 KWHSS *Proceedings* (eventually)

Aims and scope

Complexity might mean...

- ▶ Complexity in time
- ▶ Complexity in social role
- ▶ Complexity in name structure

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This class will feature **some** examples of **all** of these phenomena.

Roman timeline

509 BCE Roman republic created

264-146 BCE Punic wars

44 BCE Julius Caesar assassinated

27 BCE Gaius Julius Caesar **Octavianus** is granted the titles of *Augustus* and *princeps*

43 CE Claudius begins the conquest of Britain

212 CE Edict of Caracalla extends Roman citizenship

324 CE Byzantium (Constantinople) becomes new imperial capital

395 CE Eastern and Western empires split

Roman hierarchy

Between about 338 BCE and 212 CE, within territory controlled by Rome, and focusing on men . . .

- ▶ Roman citizens
 - ▶ Patricians
 - ▶ Plebeians
 - ▶ Liberti (freed people)
- ▶ Peregrini (foreign subjects)
- ▶ Enslaved people

Slavery in ancient Rome

Slavery in the Roman Republic and Empire was:

- ▶ Pervasive
- ▶ Cruel
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- ▶ Pervasive
- ▶ Cruel
- ▶ Inextricably tied to class and status
- ▶ Viewed as a model by later societies.

A resource on Roman slavery

Sandra R. Joshel and Lauren Hackworth Petersen (2014):

The Material Life of Roman Slaves seeks a way to make slaves appear or, more accurately, it searches for ways to see them—to make slaves visible where other evidence tells us they were in fact present.

Name structures by class and social role



Figure: Photo by D. Herdemerten, CC BY-SA 3.0

Some general sources for Roman name structure

- ▶ Christer Bruun and Jonathan Edmondson (ed.s), *The Oxford Handbook of Roman Epigraphy* (2014).
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- ▶ Ursula Georges, "A simple guide to Imperial Roman names."
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- ▶ Benet Salway, “What’s in a Name? A Survey of Roman Onomastic Practice from c. 700 B.C. to A.D. 700”. *The Journal of Roman Studies* 84 (1994), 124–145.

Tria Nomina

Names for citizens

Example

Titus Cornelius Felix

- ▶ Praenomen
 - ▶ From a short list
 - ▶ Often abbreviated or dropped completely

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- ▶ Cognomen
 - ▶ Most personal (but still maybe inherited)

Duo Nomina

Names for women from citizen families

Example

Valeria Tusca

- ▶ Nomen gentilicium
 - ▶ Family name
 - ▶ Same as father's nomen, but ending in *-a* (and usually *-ia*)

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 - ▶ Family name
 - ▶ Same as father's nomen, but ending in *-a* (and usually *-ia*)
- ▶ Cognomen
 - ▶ Most personal
 - ▶ Might be inherited (with *-us* changed to *-a*)

Women's praenomina

Question

Did women ever use praenomina?

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Did women ever use praenomina?

Answer

Yes! (At least in a few handfuls of examples.)

Sources for women's praenomina

- ▶ Mika Kajava, *Roman Female Praenomina*, Rome: Institutum Romanum Finlandiae
- ▶ Urpo Kantola and Tuomo Nuorluoto, “Female *tria nomina* and social standing in the late Republican and early Imperial periods”. *Arctos* 50 (2016) 79–105.

Some praenomina used by women

As analyzed by Mika Kajava

- ▶ Appia
- ▶ Fausta
- ▶ Gaia
- ▶ Gnaea
- ▶ Lucia
- ▶ Marcia
- ▶ Paulla/Polla
- ▶ Postuma
- ▶ Publia
- ▶ Quarta
- ▶ Quinta
- ▶ Salvia
- ▶ Tertia
- ▶ Tiberia
- ▶ Titia
- ▶ Vibia

Caveat

Women's praenomina were VERY, VERY RARE.

If Dad was a citizen. . .

Filiation

Examples

- ▶ Marcus Sulpicius Marci filius Felix
- ▶ Valeria Quinti filia Tusca

If Dad was a citizen. . .

Filiation

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After the gentilicium, children of citizens could insert. . .

- ▶ The father's praenomen
 - ▶ In the genitive (change *-us* to *-i*)
 - ▶ But usually abbreviated
- ▶ The word *filius* 'son' or *filia* 'daughter'
- ▶ Usually abbreviated and sometimes omitted entirely.

Men who could vote

In formal contexts, a citizen who could vote included the name of his voting “tribe” (tribus).

Examples

- ▶ Marcus Valerius Marci Quirina Firmus
- ▶ Lucius Calpurnius Collina tribu Longus

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- ▶ Legendarily only 3, eventually 35 tribes
- ▶ Usually abbreviated in names
- ▶ After the father's praenomen, before the cognomen.

Roman tribes

The Oxford Handbook of Roman Epigraphy

AEM	Aemilia	HOR	Horatia	ROM	Romilia
ANI	Aniensis	LEM	Lemonia	SAB	Sabatina
ARN	Arnensis	MAE	Maecia	SCA	Scaptia
CAM	Camilia	MEN	Menenia	SER	Sergia
CLA	Claudia	OVF		STE	
CLV			Oufentina		Stellatina
	Clustumina	PAL	Palatina	SVC	
COL	Collina	PAP	Papiria		Suburana
COR	Cornelia	POB	Poblilia	TER	Teretina
ESQ		POL	Pollia	TRO	
	Esquilina	POM			Tromentina
FAB	Fabia		Pomptina	VEL	Velina
FAL	Falerna	PVP	Pupinia	VOL	Voltinia
GAL	Galeria	QVI	Quirina	VOT	Voturia

Daughter of one citizen, wife of another

Example

Sulpicia Praetextata Crassi uxor

(daughter of Quintus Sulpicius Camerinus Peticus and wife of Marcus Licinius Crassus)

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- ▶ Uses the husband's cognomen
 - ▶ In the genitive (change *-us* to *-i*)
- ▶ Adds the word *uxor* 'wife'
- ▶ Fairly rare construction

Adopted men

In the Republic and early Empire

Example

- ▶ The eldest son of **Lucius Aemilius Paullus Macedonicus** was adopted by a man named **Quintus Fabius Maximus**. He became **Quintus Fabius Maximus Aemilianus**.

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- ▶ Start with the adoptive father's name (possibly including the cognomen)
- ▶ Take the birth nomen and change *-ius* to *-ianus*. Use this as a new (possibly extra) cognomen.

Other reasons to use an *-ianus* cognomen

- ▶ Related to an adopted person
- ▶ Referencing another important family nomen (for instance, your mother's)

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Example

Titus Flavius Vespasianus

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Testamentary adoption

A citizen could leave another citizen property **and his name** in his will. The pre-“adoption” name usually goes second, but other permutations are possible.

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- ▶ Whose cognomen was **Lucanus**
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- ▶ And became **Cnaeus Domitius Sexti filius Voltinia tribu Afer Titius Marcellus Curvius Lucanus**.

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- ▶ And became **Cnaeus Domitius Sexti filius Voltinia tribu Afer Titius Marcellus Curvius Lucanus**.
- ▶ The Titius Marcellus may reference his mother's family.

So far, we've seen constructions including. . .

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Very! This is known as **polyonymy** (“many names”).

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**Quintus Roscius Coelius Murena Silius Decianus Vibullius Pius
Iulius Eurycles Herculanus Pompeius Falco**

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How incredibly long could names get?

Answer

Very! This is known as **polyonymy** (“many names”).

Example

Quintus Roscius Coelius Murena Silius Decianus Vibullius Pius Iulius Eurycles Herculanus Pompeius Falco

- ▶ Consul in 108 CE
- ▶ Often went by Q. Pompeius Falco.

A rule of thumb

In polyonymous Roman names, the name that a person went by in informal situations usually falls **at the end**.

Frequency of complex names

Question

Were polyonymous names actually common?

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Answer

Yes, and their frequency increased over the first few centuries of the Roman empire.

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Gallivan's statistics

Senatorial men

In the first through third centuries CE. . .

Name type	Percentage
Praenomen + Nomen	3.9
Cognomen	9
Praenomen + Nomen + Cognomen	59.1
Praenomen + Nomen + 2 Cognomina	11.6
Polyonymous Name	16.2

Gallivan's statistics

Senatorial women

In the first through third centuries CE. . .

Name type	Percentage
Nomen	10.3
Cognomen	7.3
Nomen + Cognomen	62.1
Nomen + 2 Cognomina	5.9
Polyonymous Name	14.8

Freed people

Examples

- ▶ Marcus Laelius Marci libertus Donatus
- ▶ Maecia Marci liberta Haline

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- ▶ The former owner's nomen
 - ▶ Change *-us* to *-a* for a woman

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 - ▶ Change *-us* to *-a* for a woman
- ▶ The former owner's praenomen in the genitive case (change *-us* to *-i*), followed by ...
- ▶ The word *libertus* 'freed man' or *liberta* 'freed woman'
 - ▶ Both are often abbreviated

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 - ▶ Both are often abbreviated
- ▶ The former given name as a cognomen

But what if the former owner was a woman?

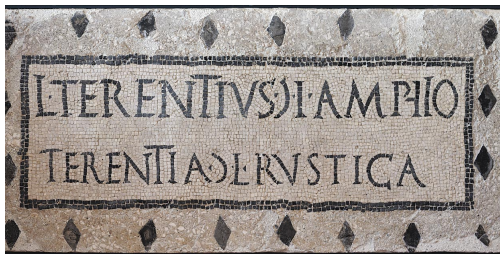


Figure: L. Terentius Amphio and Terentia Rustica

This inscription shows the symbol Ⓛ followed by an L.

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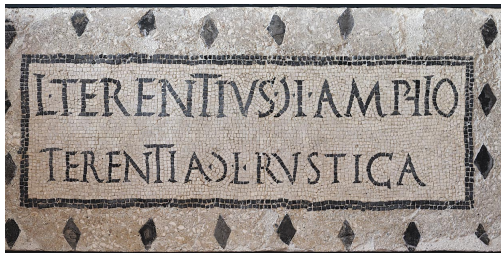


Figure: L. Terentius Amphio and Terentia Rustica

This inscription shows the symbol D followed by an L.

- ▶ The D or backwards C stands for **Gaiae** or **Caiae** 'of Gaia'.
- ▶ Sometimes expanded as **mulieris** 'of a woman'.

Names of non-citizens

Examples

- ▶ Lucco Treni filius
- ▶ Ammilla Lotiusi filia

Names of non-citizens

Examples

- ▶ **Lucco Treni filius**
- ▶ **Ammilla Lotiusi filia**

- ▶ Given name
- ▶ Father's name in the genitive (change *-us* to *-i* if possible, *-ii* can shorten to *-i*)
- ▶ *filius* 'son' or *filia* 'daughter' (often abbreviated and potentially omitted entirely)

Names of slaves

As recorded in Roman inscriptions

Examples

- ▶ Eutyclus Marci Tulli servus
- ▶ Silvana Publi Mummi Sisennae serva

- ▶ Given name
- ▶ Owner's name in the genitive (change *-us* to *-i* if possible, *-ii* can shorten to *-i*)
- ▶ *servus* or *serva* 'slave' (often abbreviated and potentially omitted entirely)

Some changes over time



Figure: Mosaic of the empress Theodora

Praenomina disappear

- ▶ Praenomina start becoming rare in the middle of the second century.
- ▶ By c. 300 CE, even senators and their families are skipping them.

Edict of Caracalla

Constitutio Antoniniana

In 212 CE, the emperor Caracalla issued an edict:

- ▶ All free men in the Empire were now Roman citizens.
- ▶ All free women had the same rights as Roman women.



Figure: M. Aurelius Severus Antoninus (Caracalla)

A nomen for everyone

Question

It's the third century, and now you're a Roman citizen! What's your *nomen gentilicium*?

Answer

Aurelius (or **Aurelia**, for women), just like Caracalla's.

This could get confusing. . .

In 219 CE records of the *cohors XX Palmyrenorum*, the scribe made a column with **Aurelius** for everyone's name.

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Compare and Contrast

- ▶ **Aurelius** Bassus Tiberini
- ▶ **Aurelius** Julius Marinus
- ▶ **Aurelius** Flavius Euclides

A more impressive nomen

Beginning with the reign of Constantine the Great (ruled 306–337 CE), elite people used **Flavius** or **Flavia** (often abbreviated **Fl**) as their primary nomen.



Figure: Flavius Valerius Constantinus (Constantine the Great)

Flavii

Examples

- ▶ Flavius Paulus Andreas
- ▶ Flavius Rufius Petronius Nicomachus Cethegus
- ▶ Flavia Cyria
- ▶ Flavia Romana