



ANCESTRY, IDENTITY AND INTEGRATION IN IMPERIAL ROME

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The project would attempt a quantitative reconstruction of migratory flows within the population of Imperial Rome (1st-3rd centuries CE) in order to better define people coming to the Imperial capital from elsewhere. Migration to Rome in the Imperial Age has been under-analyzed yet, even though the question is relevant for historians and archaeologists. At first glance the horizontal mobility should mainly be restricted to Mediterranean area but some recent findings suggest that long hauls could not be ruled out. The identification of geographical restricted disorders, along with archaeological information, allow scholars to hypothesize the presence of some far Eastern immigrants living in Imperial Rome.

Biomolecular data on Roman lower-class people are scanty, and very few biologists have tried to analyze far-away mobility in Imperial Age. The frequently used strontium (Sr) and oxygen (O) isotopes will be analyzed to estimate individual origins because people share an isotope signature consistent to the water and soil of the region where they spent their lives. Conversely, foreign individuals should present anomalous ratios at odds with the locally-defined signature.

The project will evaluate the available field data pertaining to skeletal samples from several necropoleis in Rome. The availability of specialistic spreadsheets for each burial guarantees the scoring of all taphonomic features and this methodology will aid to directionally select samples to be molecularly typed according to information that might be related to cultural differences. Deposition pattern, cover typology, peculiar grave goods and of course selected diseases will be the driving factors for sampling. The isotopic evaluation will be compared to genetic features of people supposed to come from afar in order to support the hypothesis of demic movements Rome-ward from elsewhere. Eventually the genomic evaluation should be able to highlight specific genetic markers that could aid in the differential diagnosis of the topographically restricted disorders. The disease load of the immigrants could be also compared with locals to investigate whether life was more difficult for newcomers to Rome.

The outcome of this project could clarify some unsolved biases about Imperial Rome migration pattern, that should have represented one of the leading factor of *Urbs* success in facing huge healthcare issues.

This multidisciplinary approach could be useful at all for suggesting future directions in bioarchaeological migration research, tracing putative roadmaps to dissect the extreme melting pot feature of Rome in Imperial Age.