

The prosopography of Cumae in the Greek and Roman Republican periods is well understood thanks to the work especially of M. Frederiksen recording and analyzing the pattern of Capuan citizens who moved to Cumae in the 2nd century BCE. The Imperial period at Cumae is less well understood despite the efforts of archaeologists, most recently Paolo Caputo, to free it from the image of a deserted city placed on it by Juvenal. A study of previously unpublished inscriptions along with a re-evaluation of the few conclusively assigned ones from the imperial period provides a fresh look at the population of this period. One component of the population shows a shift in that Cumae and its territory seem to have seen an influx of members of the imperial family and household during the 1st and 2nd centuries. This group ranges from freedmen of Augustus to Ulpia Marciana, sister of Trajan. They are attested both in stone inscriptions and lead water pipes. Further, we see evidence of some intermarriage between these new arrivals and the houses of the Republican leading families suggesting residence here at Cumae not just imperial beneficence. To paraphrase John D'Arms, these inscriptions provide evidence of more than imperial policy, they show personal preferences.

Epigraphy also provides a possible motivation for the expansion of the city by and under Domitian. J. R. Fears has argued, based on his dating of the public buildings in the Forum, that this expansion might have been to settle refugees from the Vesuvian eruption. At least one inscription from Cumae records a characteristic Pompeian name providing possible evidence for this relocation.

This new study of Cumae's imperial prosopography offers an image of a growing city in the 1st and 2nd centuries with close and long-term ties to the imperial household as well as perhaps Pompeian resettlement in the Domitianic period.