

known to the ancient world, we have hints, more or less significant, scattered through the authors of antiquity.

It would be interesting to know whether there was any such common tongue to the hosts of mercenaries from all parts of the world that served under the Carthaginians in the Punic wars, such as we find so vividly depicted in "Salambo."

Some of the kings and generals who reigned over a variety of races were accomplished linguists. Mithridates, king of Pontus and Bithynia, spoke, according to Aulus Gellius (Noct. Att. xvii. 17), no less than twenty-five distinct languages, never seeking the aid of an interpreter when he had to communicate with any of the people under his sway. The Roman Senate, for centuries, prompted by pride and in order to maintain its dignity before outsiders, pursued just the opposite course. We learn from Valerius Maximus (ii 2. 2) that even to the Greeks they insisted on speaking Latin, "so that the latter, casting aside that volubility in which they excelled, were forced to speak through an interpreter, not in Rome only, but throughout the empire, and even in Asia and Greece, that reverence for the Latin language might be diffused through all nations." "Who, then," he continues, "opened the door to that usage which now deafens the ears of the Senate with Greek pleadings? Molon, the rhetor, I believe, who was such a spur to the literary ambition of Cicero. He it was who first of all foreigners was heard without an interpreter."

Nevertheless, for purposes of trade, there was no lack of interpreters in the outlying parts of the empire. At Dioscurias (now Iskuria), an old Milesian colony in Colchis, there were as Pliny (Hist. Nat. vi. 15) informs us, at one time no less than one hundred and thirty persons acting in that capacity, so great was the concourse of various tribes and tongues who came to trade in that locality. We know also that interpreters were constantly employed in connection with war and diplomacy.