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978-0-521-37887-1 - Slavery and Society at Rome
Keith Bradley
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This book is concerned with what it was like to be a slave in the classical Roman world, and with the impact of the institution of slavery on Roman society at large. It shows how and in what sense Rome was a slave society through much of its history, considers how the Romans procured their slaves, discusses the work roles slaves fulfilled and the material conditions under which they spent their lives, investigates how slaves responded to and resisted slavery and argues that, paradoxically, slavery as an institution became more and more oppressive over time under the influence of philosophical and religious teaching. The book stresses the harsh realities of life in slavery and the way in which slavery was an integral part of Roman civilisation.

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A captive German woman and her son surrounded by Roman troops, on the Column of Marcus Aurelius. Photo: DAI 95-1171.

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KEITH BRADLEY

Professor of Classics, University of Victoria



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For
Stephen J. D. Bradley

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Preface

This book is a study of slavery in the central period of Roman history that pays particular attention to what it was like – or to what I think it was like – to be a Roman slave. By ‘central period’ I mean the four centuries from roughly 200 BC to roughly AD 200, though I wander freely beyond these chronological limits as I think appropriate. Edward Gibbon described the slave population of Rome as that ‘unhappy condition of men who have endured the weight, without sharing the benefits, of society’. My interest lies in emphasising the structural importance of slavery in Roman society and culture and in trying to recreate the realities of the slave experience. The results are not always edifying, but they are in my view essential to a proper understanding of Roman antiquity. I hope that readers will find them arresting and absorbing as well, even if a trace of the ‘unhappy’ must always remain.

In keeping with the aims of the series to which it belongs, the book is primarily intended for students who are examining Roman slavery for the first time. Accordingly I attempt to combine a reasonable amount of basic material and explanation with analysis and interpretation. If more advanced readers find the book useful so much the better. I must stress, however, that I have written for those whose interests are genuinely historical and wide-ranging, free that is to say from the conservatism that conventionally dominates the practice of ancient history. It has been inevitable that I draw on and expand ideas about Roman slavery which I offered in *Slaves and Masters in the Roman Empire: A Study in Social Control* and *Slavery and Rebellion in the Roman World, 140 B.C.–70 B.C.* But I have consciously avoided excessive duplication of material (mostly for my own sake), and in particular I have given no detailed account of the major slave uprisings that belong to the first half of Rome’s central period. I do not assume that readers of this book will

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necessarily have read its predecessors, but I hope that they will be prepared to follow up specific topics in them when this seems fitting.

Finally, I must express my very deep gratitude to Paul Cartledge and Peter Garnsey, both for the confidence implicit in their original invitation to contribute to their series, and for their constant, but not obtrusive, support and interest while the book was in progress (especially on the part of Paul Cartledge). I trust that they will clearly recognise where their editorial advice has proved beneficial and that they will accept my thanks accordingly. I must also thank my colleague Patricia Clark for her willingness to comment on a draft of the book and, more importantly, for her general encouragement throughout, particularly on the bad days. I am grateful, too, to the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada and to the University of Victoria Research and Travel Fund for a series of awards that facilitated my research and, of even greater significance, made available the invaluable resource of time in which to write. My deepest, and unpayable, debt, however, remains all that I owe to Diane Bradley, whose continuing support of my work in all manner of circumstances I find, like her, to border on the miraculous.

Victoria, British Columbia

KRB

Abbreviations

<i>A Class</i>	<i>Acta Classica</i>
<i>AE</i>	<i>L'année épigraphique</i>
<i>AJAH</i>	<i>American Journal of Ancient History</i>
<i>ANRW</i>	<i>Aufstieg und Niedergang der Römischen Welt</i>
<i>AntJ</i>	<i>Antiquaries Journal</i>
<i>ArchClass</i>	<i>Archeologia Classica</i>
<i>BCH</i>	<i>Bulletin de Correspondance Hellénique</i>
<i>BGU</i>	<i>Aegyptische Urkunden aus den Staatlichen Museen zu Berlin, Griechische Urkunden</i>
<i>CAH²</i>	<i>Cambridge Ancient History</i> (2nd edn)
<i>C & M</i>	<i>Classica et Mediaevalia</i>
<i>CIL</i>	<i>Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum</i>
<i>CPh</i>	<i>Classical Philology</i>
<i>CPL</i>	<i>Corpus Papyrorum Latinorum</i>
<i>CQ</i>	<i>Classical Quarterly</i>
<i>CRAI</i>	<i>Comptes rendus de l'Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres</i>
<i>D Arch</i>	<i>Dialoghi di Archeologia</i>
<i>EMC</i>	<i>Echos du Monde Classique/Classical Views</i>
<i>HSPh</i>	<i>Harvard Studies in Classical Philology</i>
<i>ILS</i>	<i>Inscriptiones Latinae Selectae</i>
<i>JESHO</i>	<i>Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient</i>
<i>JRS</i>	<i>Journal of Roman Studies</i>
<i>JThS</i>	<i>Journal of Theological Studies</i>
<i>LEC</i>	<i>Les études classiques</i>
<i>MAAR</i>	<i>Memoirs of the American Academy at Rome</i>
<i>MBAH</i>	<i>Münstersche Beiträge zur Antiken Handelsgeschichte</i>
<i>MH</i>	<i>Museum Helveticum</i>
<i>PBSR</i>	<i>Papers of the British School at Rome</i>

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<i>P & P</i>	<i>Past and Present</i>
<i>P C Ph S</i>	<i>Proceedings of the Cambridge Philological Society</i>
<i>P. Cair. Masp.</i>	<i>Catalogue général des antiquités égyptiennes du Musée du Caire; Papyrus grecs d'époque byzantine</i>
<i>PIR²</i>	<i>Prosopographia Imperii Romani</i> (2nd edn)
<i>P. Oxy.</i>	<i>The Oxyrhynchus Papyri</i>
<i>P. Turner</i>	<i>Papyri, Greek and Roman; edited by various hands in honour of Eric Gardner Turner</i>
<i>P. Wisc.</i>	<i>Papyri at the University of Wisconsin</i>
<i>RD</i>	<i>Revue historique de droit français et étranger</i>
<i>ZPE</i>	<i>Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik</i>
<i>ZRG</i>	<i>Zeitschrift der Savigny-Stiftung für Rechtsgeschichte (Romanistische Abteilung)</i>