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0521861837 - Hostages and Hostage-Taking in the Roman Empire

Joel Allen

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HOSTAGES AND HOSTAGE-TAKING IN THE ROMAN EMPIRE

Hundreds of foreign hostages were detained among the Romans as the empire grew in the Republic and early Principate. As prominent figures at the center of diplomacy and as “exotic” representatives, or symbols, of the outside world, they drew considerable attention in Roman literature and other artistic media. Our sources discuss hostages in terms of the geopolitics that motivated their detention, as well as in accordance with other structures of power. Hostages, thus, could be located in a social hierarchy, a family network, in a cultural continuum, or in a sexual role. In these schemes, an individual Roman, or Rome in general, becomes not just a conqueror, but also a patron, father, teacher, or generically masculine. By focusing on the characterizations of hostages in Roman culture, we witness Roman attitudes toward ethnicity and imperial power.

Joel Allen earned his Ph.D. at Yale University and currently is Assistant Professor of History at Queens College, City University of New York.

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*For my parents and stepparents,
Linda and Jim Williams,
Doug and Lynn Allen*

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NOTE ON ABBREVIATIONS AND TRANSLATIONS

Ancient sources are abbreviated in keeping with the third edition of the *Oxford Classical Dictionary*. Translations are my own, although most were checked against and improved by the Loeb Classical Library.

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