

SOCIOLOGICAL STUDIES IN ROMAN HISTORY

Keith Hopkins was a sociologist and Professor of Ancient History at Cambridge from 1985 to 2001. He is widely recognised as one of the most radical, innovative and influential Roman historians of his generation. This volume presents fourteen of Hopkins' essays on an impressive range of subjects: contraception, demography, economic history, slavery, literacy, imperial power, Roman religion, early Christianity, and the social and political structures of the ancient world. The papers have been re-edited and revised with accompanying essays by Hopkins' colleagues, friends and former students. This volume brings Hopkins' work up to date. It sets his distinctive and pioneering use of sociological approaches in a wider intellectual context and explores his lasting impact on the ways ancient history is now written. This volume will interest all those fascinated by Rome and its empire, and particularly those eager to experience challenging and controversial ways of understanding the past.

Christopher Kelly is Professor of Classics and Ancient History at the University of Cambridge and President of Corpus Christi College. His books include *Ruling the Later Roman Empire* (2004), *The End of Empire: Attila the Hun and the Fall of Rome* (2009) and *Theodosius II: Rethinking the Roman Empire in Late Antiquity* (Cambridge, 2013). He is editor of the *Journal of Roman Studies*. He owes a great deal of his fascination with power and the workings of institutions to Keith Hopkins who supervised his doctoral thesis on 'Bureaucracy and corruption in the later Roman empire'.

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SOCIOLOGICAL STUDIES IN ROMAN HISTORY

KEITH HOPKINS

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William Harris is Shepherd Professor of History at Columbia University and Director of the University's Center for the Ancient Mediterranean. His *Roman Power: A Thousand Years of Empire* was published last year by Cambridge, and

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a volume he edited, *Popular Medicine in Graeco-Roman Antiquity: Explorations* also came out in 2016 (in the series Columbia Studies in the Classical Tradition). He memorialised H. in the *Proceedings of the British Academy* 2005.

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Willem Jongman is Reader in Economic and Social History at the University of Groningen. His *The Economy and Society of Pompeii* (1988, now an ACLS Humanities E-Book), begun while a research fellow at King’s College Cambridge, owed much to H.’s inspiration, criticism and friendship. His work is often characterised by a combination of economic (and sociological) theory and method and archaeological data. In autumn 2016, he gave a series of public lectures at the Collège de France on the archaeology of Roman economic performance.

Christopher Kelly is Professor of Classics and Ancient History at the University of Cambridge and President of Corpus Christi College. His books include *Ruling the Later Roman Empire* (2004), *The End of Empire: Attila the Hun and the Fall of Rome* (2009) and *Theodosius II: Rethinking the Roman Empire in Late Antiquity* (2013). He owes a great deal of his fascination with power – its use and abuse – and the workings of institutions to H. who supervised his doctoral thesis on ‘Bureaucracy and corruption in the later Roman empire’ and taught him college politics, wine and gardening (in equal measure). He is H.’s literary executor.

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ancient economic history, historical theory and the modern reception of the ancient world. His recent books include *Antiquity and Modernity* (2009) and *Thucydides and the Idea of History* (2014). He was supervised briefly by H. at Cambridge, and has continued to engage with different aspects of his work, especially in relation to historical methodology and the influence of social science on ancient history.

Walter Scheidel is Dickason Professor in the Humanities, Professor of Classics and History, and Kennedy-Grossman Fellow in Human Biology at Stanford University. He has published on ancient social and economic history, historical demography and the comparative history of labour, sex and state formation. He cherishes the memory of co-teaching ‘Ancient History: Problems and Methods’ with H. back in the late 1990s, and stubbornly believes that *Crocodile Mummy* would have been the best title for the present volume.

Caroline Vout is Reader in Classics at the University of Cambridge. She is a historian and art historian with a particular interest in the literary and visual cultures of the Roman imperial period and their reception. Her last book is titled *Sex on Show: Seeing the Erotic in Greece and Rome* (2013). Her next one, *Classical Art: A Life History from Antiquity to the Present*, will be published in 2018. Her doctoral dissertation was supervised, in part, by H. – usually over a lengthy lunch.

Greg Woolf is Director of the Institute of Classical Studies at the School of Advanced Study in London. His recent books include *Tales of the Barbarians* (2011) and *Rome, An Empire’s Story* (2012). He was taught by H. in the 1980s at Cambridge and has since written on cultural change, literacy, the economy, urbanism and religion, often in the shadow of H. Rereading some of H.’s essays for this volume reminded Greg not only how sharp his argumentation was but also how much fun his conversation (and footnotes) could be.

PREFACE

As Keith Hopkins' students we learned early the importance of being able to justify our labours and always to have ready an answer, ideally both elegant and plausible, to the implied question So what?

C. Edwards and G. Woolf, 'Cosmopolis: Rome as world city', in their (eds), *Rome the Cosmopolis*, 2003.¹

This volume collects a selection of fourteen essays by the Roman historian and sociologist Keith Hopkins (1934–2004), Professor of Ancient History in the University of Cambridge (1985–2001) and Fellow of King's College (1963–7 and 1985–2004). It is not – and this should be stressed at once – a biographical memoir. That task has been handsomely and sympathetically discharged by William Harris on behalf of the British Academy (and in more modest compass by Robin Osborne for *Past & Present*).² It is also fair to say that H. himself would have been wary of any attempt to monumentalise his work between hard covers, reluctant to see his essays pressed and preserved like some anthology of dried flowers.

In reply to H.'s (still echoing) 'So what?', it should be said – and with confidence – that the essays included in this volume are worth reprinting, not because they represent the final or conclusive word on an impressive range of subjects, but rather because they still provoke the careful and critical reader to further thought, and because, taken together, these fourteen pieces represent a highly original and innovative approach to

¹ Edwards and Woolf 2003b: 18.

² Osborne 2004a; Harris 2005; see too the obituaries in *The Guardian*, 29 March 2004 (Graham Burton); *The Telegraph*, 17 March 2004; *The Times*, 25 March 2004; *The Independent*, 23 March 2004 (Christopher Kelly); *The New York Times*, 15 March 2004 (Campbell Robertson); and *King's College Cambridge Annual Report* (2004) 42–7.

Preface

ancient history-writing which still commands – and demands – attention. It is with the continued importance and relevance of H.'s work in mind that each essay in this volume is followed by an "Afterword" written by one of H.'s friends and/or colleagues and/or former graduate students. These brief interventions set each essay in its wider context, offer an assessment of its impact on the field and (most importantly) reflect on why it is still an enjoyable, stimulating and rewarding read.

Of course (and unashamedly) there is an element of celebration in this volume. For H.'s former graduate students, solidly represented here, thinking about this project provided an opportunity to recall H.'s professorial seminars on Tuesday afternoons in his magnificent rooms in King's. Two agonistic hours were followed by an escape across King's Parade to a newly opened vegan café for carrot cake and curious teas. Of course, looking back, it is clear that this was no escape at all: continued spirited discussion, and lasting camaraderie, was precisely what H. had hoped would result. For H.'s friends and colleagues (here happily overlapping categories), this project allowed them to remember H.'s wit, his passion for gardening, his convivial dinner parties and his impressive private cellar. H. was capable of being extraordinarily good fun. To quote William Harris' assessment:

Keith Hopkins' public persona was the unembarrassed hedonist, who sought pleasure with fine wines, at table (he was an outstanding cook), in gardens, in far-off places, and in the company of women. These pleasures were, obviously, quite genuine, and it was an added pleasure that they sometimes scandalised his staid colleagues. He unstintingly gave great pleasure to others too, and was a profoundly sociable being.³

But in this volume, pleasant personal reminiscence is deliberately shouldered into the background. The focus is firmly on H.'s work. It is hoped that this tactic might have appealed to H. who treated biography as (at best) a pallid form of history. He always doubted (here commenting on St Paul) 'that knowing the man and his context will explain his thoughts – as

³ Harris 2005: 104; obit. in the *King's College Cambridge Annual Report* (2004) 46–7.

Preface

though knowing that Beethoven was short, deaf and lived in Vienna from the age of 22 helps us to understand his music. I suppose it does, but only at the 5 per cent level.⁴

This volume is (self-evidently) the work of many hands. I am particularly grateful to the thirteen friends and colleagues who (readily) agreed to write the Afterwords; for their enthusiasm for this project from its inception and their patience during its completion; and to the journals and publishing houses who responded so kindly and enthusiastically when informed of this project and its intention to reprint some of H.'s essays in a completely revised format. Especial thanks are due to a gang of four graduate editorial assistants – Richard Flower, Robin Whelan, Luke Gardiner and Graham Andrews – who all tirelessly chased down references and bibliography in Cambridge, Oxford, Chicago and Manchester; to Richard Flower who discharged with peerless proficiency the task of re-formatting the texts after they had been scanned; to Graham Andrews for expertly compiling an intelligent and helpful index; to Alessandro Launaro who first suggested the fine jacket illustration from the *agrimensores*; to Robin Osborne and Michael Sharp, for much useful advice and help; and to Martha T. Roth (former Dean of Humanities, University of Chicago) and Brenda L. Johnson (Library Director and University Librarian, University of Chicago), and her staff at the Regenstein Library, whose unfailing courtesy and assistance made it possible for this project to be completed in America.

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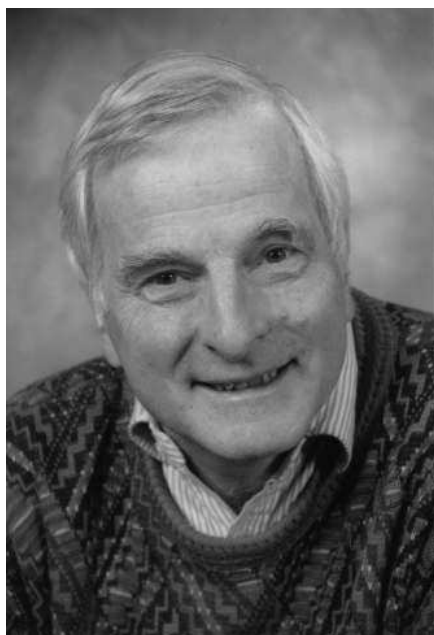
⁴ Hopkins 1997a: 15.

EDITORIAL NOTE

The fourteen essays reprinted in this volume have all been re-edited: that is, rather than being presented in the widely diverse formats of the originals, they now conform to a single set of editorial and bibliographical conventions. It should also be noted – and with all due delicacy – that the various, and not infrequent, slips and errors in the footnotes have, as far as possible, been identified and (silently) amended. No new secondary bibliography has been added, but (where it seemed helpful or appropriate) additional information on texts and translations has been offered. This material has been placed in the footnotes (between angled brackets). From that point of view, the essays in this volume are best regarded as ‘corrected reprints’. That said, for ease of reference, in citations the page number of the original publication is always given first, followed by the page number of this volume [between square brackets]. The bibliography serves two simultaneous purposes: it gathers together all the items cited by H. in thirteen of the fourteen essays presented here (allowing the reader to form some impression of H.’s library);¹ but it also includes the items cited in the Introduction, Afterwords and the occasional (bracketed) additions to the footnotes. Save for H.’s own works, these latter are, in each case, marked by an asterisk (*).

¹ The exception is the posthumously published, ‘The political economy of the Roman empire’ (Hopkins 2009 = essay 13) for which almost all of the footnotes and bibliographical references were supplied by Walter Scheidel in April 2006. Only the references in the main text and elements of footnotes 21, 47–9, 57, 66–7, 71, 76–8, 83, 87 and 89 are derived from H.’s own manuscript of a paper first given in Stanford in 2000, and lightly revised by H. in 2002; see explanatory note at [488 n. **] and Woolf [527 n. 1].

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE



(Morris) Keith Hopkins was born in Sutton, Surrey on 20 June 1934 and died in Cambridge on 9 March 2004. He is buried in the churchyard of St John the Baptist, Finchingfield, Essex. He was educated at Brentwood School. After two years of National Service (learning Russian in the Royal Navy's language programme and qualifying as a Service Interpreter in February 1955), H. went up to Cambridge to read Classics as a scholar at King's College, Cambridge. He graduated with first-class honours in 1958. The following year he began doctoral

Biographical Note

work under the supervision of A. H. M. Jones. From 1961 to 1963, he was assistant lecturer in Sociology at the University of Leicester; assistant lecturer and then lecturer in Sociology at the LSE from 1963 to 1972 (held concurrently with a research fellowship at King's College from 1963 to 1967); on secondment to the University of Hong Kong as Professor of Sociology from 1967 to 1969; and Professor of Sociology and Social Anthropology at Brunel University from 1972 to 1985 (Dean of the Faculty of Social Sciences from 1981). He spent 1969–70 and 1974–5 at the Institute for Advanced Study at Princeton. He was elected a Fellow of the British Academy in 1984. From 1985 to 2001, he was Professor of Ancient History in the University of Cambridge and a Fellow of King's College, and Vice-Provost from 2000 until his death. In addition to scholarly articles (fourteen of the most important are reprinted in this volume), H. published one edited volume, *Hong Kong: The Industrial Colony* (Hong Kong/London, 1971); two collections of essays, *Conquerors and Slaves* (Sociological Studies in Roman History 1) (Cambridge, 1978) and *Death and Renewal* (Sociological Studies in Roman History 2) (Cambridge, 1983); and one monograph, *A World Full of Gods: Pagans, Jews and Christians in the Roman Empire* (London, 1999).