

## RISK IN THE ROMAN WORLD

Modern risk studies have viewed the inhabitants of the ancient world as being both dominated by fate and exposed to fewer risks, but this very readable and groundbreaking new book challenges these views. It shows that the Romans inhabited a world full of danger and also that they not only understood uncertainty but employed a variety of ways to help affect future outcomes. The first section focuses on the range of cultural attitudes and traditional practices that served to help control risk, particularly among the non-elite population. The book also examines the increasingly sophisticated areas of expertise, such as the law, logistics and maritime loans, which served to limit uncertainty in a systematic manner. Religious expertise in the form of dream interpretation and oracles also developed new ways of dealing with the future, and the implicit biases of these sources can reveal much about ancient attitudes to risk.

JERRY TONER is a fellow, a tutor and the Director of Studies in Classics at Churchill College, Cambridge. He is a cultural historian whose work has a focus on history 'from below'. His book, *Popular Culture in Ancient Rome* (2009), analyses the life of the non-elite in Roman society. He has also written on Roman leisure and the Games, including *The Day Commodus Killed a Rhino: Understanding the Roman Games* (2014). He is interested in the use of classics to create imagery and stereotypes relating to subordinate groups, a theme explored in *Homer's Turk: How Classics Shaped Ideas of the East* (2013). Other areas of research interest include the sensory history of Rome and mental health in Antiquity. He came to the idea of risk from looking at how ordinary people developed coping strategies but also from his study of ancient disasters (*Roman Disasters*, 2013). There have been over thirty translations of his books into sixteen languages.

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JERRY TONER  
*Churchill College, Cambridge*



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## *Contents*

<i>Acknowledgements</i>	<i>page</i> viii
1 Risk and Uncertainty	i
2 A World Full of Risks	15
3 A Risk Culture	32
4 Risk Management	60
5 Moral Hazards: Constructing Risk	111
6 Conclusion	125
<i>Further Reading</i>	130
<i>Bibliography</i>	134
<i>Index</i>	144

## *Acknowledgements*

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