

CLASS AND POWER IN ROMAN PALESTINE

Anthony Keddie investigates the changing dynamics of class and power at a critical place and time in the history of Judaism and Christianity – Palestine during its earliest phases of incorporation into the Roman Empire (63 BCE–70 CE). He identifies institutions pertaining to civic administration, taxation, agricultural tenancy, and the Jerusalem Temple as sources of an unequal distribution of economic, political, and ideological power. Through careful analysis of a wide range of literary, documentary, epigraphic, and archaeological evidence, including the most recent discoveries, Keddie complicates conventional understandings of class relations as either antagonistic or harmonious. He demonstrates how elites facilitated institutional changes that repositioned non-elites within new, and sometimes more precarious, relations with privileged classes, but did not typically worsen their economic conditions. These socioeconomic shifts did, however, instigate changing class dispositions. Judaeans elites and non-elites increasingly distinguished themselves from the other, through material culture such as tableware, clothing, and tombs.

Anthony Keddie holds an MA from Yale Divinity School and a Ph.D. from the University of Texas at Austin. A former SBL Regional Scholar, Keddie is the author of *Revelations of Ideology: Apocalyptic Class Politics in Early Roman Palestine* (2018) and co-author of *Jewish Fictional Letters from Hellenistic Egypt* (2018).

Class and Power in Roman Palestine

The Socioeconomic Setting of Judaism
and Christian Origins

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For Rebekah and Dominick

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Note on the Text

In the preparation of this study, I have had to make some difficult terminological and conceptual decisions in service of clarity and consistency. Although this is not the place to justify these decisions at length, I wish to at least flag them for readers.

First, I never refer to “Jews” or “Christians” in Early Roman Palestine except when discussing scholarship that has employed these labels in particularly consequential ways. Instead, I refer exclusively to Judaeans and distinguish Judaeans “Christ-followers” either using that term or as members of the “Jesus movement.” For historical and ideological analysis, I consider this imperfect nomenclature more historically fitting and less theologically motivated (though certainly not free of ideological value). I have no intent of alienating modern Jews and Christians from their scriptures, traditions, and history. However, I find the category “Judaeans,” which makes manifest the salient ethnic association of this people with their geographical and symbolic homeland, and destabilizes our modern segregation of religious and ethnic identities, more consistent with group nomenclature in this period of study (see, among others, Esler 2003, 63–74; Mason 2007; Satlow 2014a).

Second, I refer to the full extent of Herod’s kingdom in the Early Roman period as Palestine. This label is inherently imprecise, for geopolitical boundaries and their official and conventional titles were constantly shifting. I attempt to use the ancient titles for this region and its component territories whenever it is helpful to understand the ancient sources, but when referring broadly to the full extent of the territory I use the term Palestine. Because I do retain the term Judaea when the ancient sources do, however, I distinguish the territory around Jerusalem as “lesser Judaea.” Whereas “Judaea” was the designation most Judaeans associated with the region, ancient authors variously used it to refer to the Roman province of

Judaea, the territory occupied by Jews/Judaeans (not just in lesser Judaea), and as a circumlocution for the biblical “Land of Israel.” I use the term Palestine to avoid some of this confusion. Although the label “Palestine” appears most often in outsider sources, its occasional usage as a geographical label by Philo and Josephus indicates that it was not only an external name for the region.

Third, I consider the “Early Roman period” in Palestine to last from 63 BCE to 70 CE. This whole period is sometimes referred to as the “Herodian period” or “Early Roman period I” as distinct from “Early Roman period II” (70–135 CE). In this book, “Early Roman period” is “Early Roman period I” (63 BCE–70 CE), “Early Roman period II” (70–135 CE) is referred to by that title, and the Middle Roman period is 135 CE to ca. 235 CE. The following list shows how I distinguish Palestine’s archaeological periods for the purposes of this book.

Periodization	
Iron Age I	1200–900 BCE
Iron Age II	900–586 BCE
Neo-Babylonian	586–539 BCE
Persian/Achaemenid	539–331 BCE
Hellenistic	331–63 BCE
Early Roman	63 BCE–70 CE
Early Roman II	70–135 CE
Middle Roman	135–235 CE
Late Roman	235–324 CE
Byzantine	324–638 CE

Fourth, the primary focus of this study is Judaeen society. Because I am particularly interested in changes in the economic, cultural, religious, and political institutions of Judaeans as Palestine was incorporated into the Roman Empire, I have not devoted much space to exploring non-Judaeen inhabitants of Palestine and their interactions with Judaeans. While this analysis often has implications for non-Judaeans as well, I leave the examination of the particularities of social change among non-Judaeans in Palestine for subsequent studies.

Transliteration, site names, and abbreviations follow the *SBL Handbook of Style: Second Edition* (Atlanta, GA: SBL Press, 2014) and J.F. Oates et al., *Checklist of Editions of Greek, Latin, Demotic and Coptic Papyri, Ostraca, and Tablets* (5th edition; Bulletin of the American Society of Papyrologists,

Note on the Text

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Supplement 9; Oakville, CT: American Society of Papyrologists, 2001). I have transliterated Greek, Hebrew, and Aramaic using SBL's "General-Purpose Style" rather than "Academic Style" (with the exceptions that I have transliterated π as *h* instead of *h* or *kh*, υ as *t* instead of *t*, and Ϙ as *ś* instead of *s*). In general, I have restricted untransliterated texts to the notes. For place names not listed in the *SBL Handbook*, I have used what I have found to be the most widespread English spelling. Unless otherwise noted, all scriptural translations are my adaptations of the NRSV and all translations of Classical authors are my adaptations based on the Loeb Classical Library editions. For the sake of convenience, I have supplied a list of abbreviations for the editions of inscriptions and documents that I cite most frequently as well as some other important research resources.

This sociohistorical investigation of class and power in Early Roman Palestine is qualitative rather than quantitative, selective rather than exhaustive. It focuses on a single research question which leads to re-evaluations of well-known data at some points and the introduction of new data and questions at others. I have endeavored to provide extensive and up-to-date citations in order to facilitate the researcher seeking to use this book as a resource for further exploration. My hope is that, whether the reader agrees with its main line of argument or not, this book will help to bridge the disciplinary divides between the "biblical" and "classical" fields and philological and archaeological methods while serving as a launchpad for new insights and inquiries into the relationship between religion and socioeconomics in antiquity.

Abbreviations

AE	<i>L'Année épigraphique: revue des publications épigraphiques relatives à l'antiquité romaine.</i> Paris, 1888–.
BGU	<i>Aegyptische Urkunden aus den Königlichen Staatlichen Museen zu Berlin, Griechische Urkunden.</i> Berlin, 1895–1937.
CIIP	<i>Corpus Inscriptionum Iudaeae/Palaestinae.</i> Berlin, 2011–.
CIJ	<i>Corpus Inscriptionum Judaicarum.</i> Edited by Jean-Baptiste Frey. Rome, 1936–52.
CIL	<i>Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum.</i> Berlin, 1862–.
CIS	<i>Corpus Inscriptionum Semiticarum.</i> Paris, 1881–.
CPIJ	<i>Corpus Papyrorum Judaicarum.</i> Edited by V. Tcherikover. Cambridge, MA, 1957–64.
C.Ord.Ptol.	<i>Corpus des Ordonnances des Ptolémées.</i> Edited by M.-Th. Lenger. Brussels, 1964.
C.Zen.Palestine	<i>Des Grecs en Palestine au IIIe siècle avant Jésus-Christ: Le dossier syrien des archives de Zénon de Caunos (261–252).</i> Edited by X. Durand. Paris, 1997.
I.Erythrai	<i>Die Inschriften von Erythrai und Klazomenai.</i> IGSK. 1–2. Bonn: Habelt, 1972–1973.
IG	<i>Inscriptiones Graecae.</i> Edited by W. Dittenberger et al. Berlin, 1903–.
IGR (IGRR)	<i>Inscriptiones graecae ad res romanas pertinentes.</i> Edited by R. Cagnat et al. Paris, 1906–1927.
IGSK	<i>Inschriften griechischer Städte aus Kleinasien.</i> Bonn: Habelt, 1972–.

ILS	<i>Inscriptiones latinae selectae</i> . Edited by H. Dessau. Berlin: Weidmann, 1892–1916.
IvE	<i>Die Inschriften von Ephesos</i> . IGSK 11–17. Edited by H. Engelmann et al. Bonn, 1979–84.
MAMA	<i>Monumenta Asiae Minoris Antiqua</i> . Edited by W.M. Calder et al. London, 1928–93.
NEAEHL	<i>The New Encyclopedia of Archaeological Excavations in the Holy Land</i> . Edited by E. Stern. Jerusalem, 1993–2008.
OGIS	<i>Orientis Graeci Inscriptiones Selectae</i> . Edited by W. Dittenberger. Leipzig, 1903–5.
OEANE	<i>The Oxford Encyclopedia of Archaeology in the Near East</i> . Edited by E.M. Meyers. Oxford, 1997.
O.Masada	<i>Masada I, The Yigael Yadin Excavations 1963–1965, Final Reports: The Aramaic and Hebrew Ostraca and Jar Inscriptions</i> . Edited by Y. Yadin and J. Naveh. Jerusalem, 1989.
PAT	<i>Palmyrene Aramaic Texts</i> . Edited by D.R. Hillers and E. Cussini. Baltimore, MD, 1996.
P.Cair.Zen.	<i>Zenon Papyri, Catalogue général des antiquités égyptiennes du Musée du Caire</i> . Edited by C.C. Edgar. Cairo, 1925–40.
P.Col.Zen.	<i>Columbia Papyri III–IV: Zenon Papyri: Business Papers of the Third Century B.C. Dealing with Palestine and Egypt, I–II</i> . Edited by W.L. Westermann et al. New York, 1934–40.
P.Flor.	<i>Papiri Greco-egizii, Papiri Florentini I: Documenti pubblici e privati dell'eta romana e bizantina</i> . Edited by G. Vitelli. Milan: Hoepli, 1906.
P.Ĥev./Se.	<i>Aramaic, Hebrew and Greek Documentary Texts from Nahal Hever and Other Sites, with an Appendix containing Alleged Qumran Texts (The Seiyāl Collection II)</i> . Edited by H.M. Cotton and A. Yardeni. Discoveries in the Judaean Desert 27. Oxford, 1997.
P.Jud.Des.Misc.	<i>Miscellaneous Texts from the Judaean Desert</i> . Edited by J.H. Charlesworth et al. Oxford, 2000.
P.Lond.	<i>Greek Papyri in the British Museum, VII: The Zenon Archive</i> . Edited by T.C. Skeat. London, 1974.
P.Masada	<i>Masada II, The Yigael Yadin Excavations 1963–1965, Final Reports: The Latin and Greek</i>

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	<i>Documents</i> . Edited by H.M. Cotton and J. Geiger. Jerusalem, 1989.
P.Mur.	<i>Les grottes de Murabba'ât</i> . Edited by P. Benoit et al. Oxford, 1961.
P.Oxy.	<i>The Oxyrhynchus Papyri</i> . London, 1898–.
P.Ryl.	<i>Catalogue of the Greek and Latin Papyri in the John Rylands Library, Manchester</i> . Manchester, 1911–52.
PSI	<i>Papiri greci e latini</i> . Florence, 1912–.
P.Soterichos	<i>Das Archiv von Soterichos (P. Soterichos)</i> . Edited by Sayed Omar. Opladen: Westdeutscher, 1978.
P.Tebt.	<i>The Tebtunis Papyri</i> . London, 1902–.
P.Yad.	<i>The Documents from the Bar Kochba Period in the Cave of Letters, I: Greek Papyri</i> . Edited by N. Lewis. Jerusalem, 1989. II: <i>Hebrew, Aramaic and Nabataean – Aramaic Papyri</i> . Edited by Y. Yadin et al. Jerusalem, 2002.
RDGE	<i>Roman Documents from the Greek East</i> . Edited by R.K. Sherk. Baltimore, MD, 1969.
RIC	<i>Roman Imperial Coinage</i> . Edited by H. Mattingly et al. London, 1923–.
RPC	<i>Roman Provincial Coinage</i> . Edited by A.M. Burnett et al. London, 1992–.
SB	<i>Sammelbuch griechischer Urkunden aus Aegypten</i> . Edited by F. Preisigke et al. Wiesbaden, 1915–2002.
SEG	<i>Supplementum Epigraphicum Graecum</i> . Leiden, 1923–.
TSSI	<i>Textbook of Syrian Semitic Inscriptions IV: Aramaic Inscriptions and Documents of the Roman Period</i> . Edited by J.F. Healey. Oxford, 2009.
WDSP	I = <i>The Samaria Papyri from Wâdi ed-Dâliyah: The Slave Sales</i> . Harvard Ph.D. diss. by D.M. Gropp, 1986. II = <i>Wadi Daliyeh II: The Samaria Papyri from Wadi Daliyeh</i> . Edited by D.M. Gropp et al. Oxford, 2001.