

SLAVERY and ROMAN CULTURE

INSTRUCTOR:

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REQUIRED TEXTS (in alphabetical order):

- Bradley, K.R.: *Slavery and Society at Rome* (Cambridge 1994).
ISBN: 0521-37887-7
- Fast, Howard: *Spartacus* (North Castle books 1996, a new edition with a new introduction by the author)
ISBN: 1-56324-599-X
- Plautus: *The Pot of Gold and Other Plays* (transl. E.F. Watling; Viking Penguin, 1978)
ISBN: 0-14-044-149-2
- Wiedemann, T.: *Greek and Roman Slavery* (Routledge, 1994 repr.)
ISBN: 0-415-02972-4

SCOPE AND AIMS OF THE COURSE:

This course serves as an introduction both to the general history and to many particular issues and themes of slavery in antiquity, but with special emphasis on the Roman world and links to more recent **New World developments**. As we engage the ancient Romans, some other questions of a broader dimension will be addressed in order to establish a philosophical or ideological framework, as it were, and to indicate the many implications associated with the theory, practice, and historiography of slavery. Also, whenever appropriate and applicable, I shall offer comparisons with **New World slavery** (for which see the splendid work of Orlando Patterson, *Slavery and Social Death: A Comparative Study* [1982])

While the reading list is quite varied in scope and theme, I can not emphasize enough the crucial need to familiarize yourselves with the **primary sources** (i.e., Plautus and the collection of texts in Wiedemann). It is imperative that we distinguish, as much as possible, what the ancients themselves practiced and thought of slavery from the interpretations of more modern investigators such as Bradley (a **secondary source**), who will be our guide for our study of Roman slavery.

For the most part, each class will focus upon a specific issue(s) and/or era as noted in the course outline below. I will set the tone and parameters of the argument(s) and then I shall expect participation by the students. A topic of this sort will allow for some exciting and perhaps even hotly debated discussion; after all, freedom or the absence of it has always been not only at the core of human existence from time immemorial but also a perpetual object of observation and study by philosophers, dramatists, legislators, **moralists**, poets, historians, theologians and others !

MAIN OBJECTIVES:

1. To situate and understand a critical component of ancient Roman society.
2. To appreciate the pervasiveness of slavery in Roman society.
3. To approach the subject of slavery from many angles (e.g. social, political, legal, economic, literary, philosophical, **moral**) and through many different primary sources (e.g. **Biblical** and legal texts, farm manuals, the comedies of Plautus).
4. To consider arguments, even in their proto-forms, of the **moral opposition** to slavery.
5. To analyze primary sources thoroughly and consider their reliability, and to consider their value compared with **New World documentation**.
6. To study the impact of the revolt of Spartacus on New World sociological and political thought.
7. To be made aware of the continuing plague of slavery in many dimensions even today.

EVALUATION: to be based upon a term paper (12-15 pages) worth 20%, a final exam worth 40%, and informed class participation worth 40%. This latter portion will include the regular submission of TALKING POINTS based on the reading for the current class. These will then generate issues for discussion.

PRELIMINARY COURSE OUTLINE: PART I

Session I: A full introduction to the course, including the chronological and thematic parameters, the nature of the texts to be employed, the responsibilities of students.
Why study ancient slavery? Historiography / Ideology / Comparative evidence.
BRADLEY, chapter 1 (see below for primary texts)

Thereafter we shall proceed to a chronological and thematic investigation of Roman slavery, using, wherever possible, the categories which Wiedemann's source book lists. Thus:

- (1) The slave as property
- (2) Debt-bondage and serfdom
- (3) Manumission
- (4) Moral inferiors
- (5) Status symbol or economic investment?
- (6) Sources of slaves
- (7) Domestic slaves and rural slaves
- (8) Slaves owned by the state
- (9) The treatment of slaves: cruelty, exploitation and protection
- (10) Resistance
- (11) Rebellion
- (12) The true freedom of the spirit: Stoics and Christians.

The most obvious illustration (and a key component of the course) is the coupling of Wiedemann, chapter 11 (Rebellion) with the study of Spartacus' uprising as presented in the novel by Fast. If time permits, I should even like to schedule a viewing of the 1960 movie (restored, 1991), Spartacus. We would then have a grand and rare opportunity to compare and contrast the merits or defects of the historical record, a novelistic treatment, and a film --- three very different types of presentation about the same event.

We shall see, however, that these categories often overlap and that some texts can not simply be pigeon-holed into one of the rubrics. For example, as we shall learn, the comedies of Plautus reveal much not only about various features of slavery but also about the Roman response to and thinking about that institution.

I anticipate as well many opportunities for thoughtful and provocative discussion.

***MATERIALS WILL BE DELIVERED THROUGHOUT THE TERM VIA E-MAIL. For example: The Blame Game; Slavery in Ants; Old Testament passages; Pro-slavery Arguments in the New World, and so on.)**

BRADLEY / WIEDEMANN CORRESPONDENCE **Bradley chapters/Wiedemann selections**

Chapter 1: Confronting Slavery at Rome

No corresponding Wiedemann passages.

But note the following 4 texts from Bradley, chapter 1:

CICERO, Epist. ad Fam. 16.6:

My dear Marcus, as I hope to see you again and my boy and my Tulliola and your son, I am truly grateful for what you have done about Tiro, in judging his former condition to be below his deserts and preferring us to have him as a friend rather than a slave. Believe me, I jumped for joy when I read your letter and his. Thank you, and congratulations.

PAPYRUS TURNER 22:

In the consulship of L. Cuspius Rufinus and L. Staius Quadratus, at Side, before L. Claudius Auspicatus, demiurge and priest of the goddess Roma, on 26 Loos. Pamphilos, otherwise known as Kanopos, son of Aigyptos, from Alexandria, has purchased in the marketplace from Artemidoros, son of Aristokles, the slave girl Abaskantis, or by whatever other name she may be known, a ten-year old Galatian, for the sum of 280 silver denarii. M. Aelius Gavianus stands surety for and guarantees the sale. The girl is healthy, in accordance with the Edict of the Aediles,.....is free of liability in

all respects, is prone neither to wandering nor running away, and is free of epilepsy.

ILS 1514

To the deserving Musicus Scurranus, slave of Tiberius Caesar Augustus, accountant of the Gallic treasury in the province of Gallia Lugdunensis, from those of his underslaves (vicarii) who were with him when he dies at Rome

DIGEST 21.1.8:

The question arises whether one whose tongue has been cut out is healthy. This problem is dealt with by Ofilius in respect of a horse. His opinion is in the negative.

Chapter 2: The Slave Society at Rome

5; 17; 18; 19; 20; 81; 92; 93; 141

Chapter 3: The Roman Slave Supply

103; 104; 105; 106; 107; 110; 111; 112; 113; 114; 115; 116; 117; 118; 119; 121; 122; 123; 124; 149 (sect. 19)

Chapter 4: Slave Labour

20; 82; 88; 109; 126; 127; 129; 130; 131; 132; 133; 135; 137; 138; 141; 142; 143; 144; 145; 146; 147; 148; 149; 150; 151; 152; 153; 154; 155; 156; 157; 164; 165; 166; 167; 168; 169; 170; 171; 172; 173; 174; 175; 176.

Chapter 5: Quality of Life

191; 229 (sects. 27-29); 238 (sect. 14)

Chapter 6: Resisting slavery

83; 157; 180; 209; 212; 214; 215; 216; 218; 219; 220; 221; 224; 225; 226; 227; 228; 229; 230; 231; 232; 233; 234

Chapter 7: Change and continuity

1.

(a) **Stoicism:**

235; 236; 237; 238; 239; 240; 243.

(b) **Christianity:**

31; 52; 54; 138; 195; 213; 241; 242.

Chapter 8: Slavery and progress

(a) Manumission:

5; 6; 28; 29; 30; 31; 32; 33; 34; 35; 36; 37; 38; 39; 40; 41; 42; 43; 44; 45;
46; 47; 48; 49; 50; 69; 76; 77; 233.

(b) Torture:

187; 194; 219.

Chapter 9: To be a slave

No corresponding Wiedemann passages

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