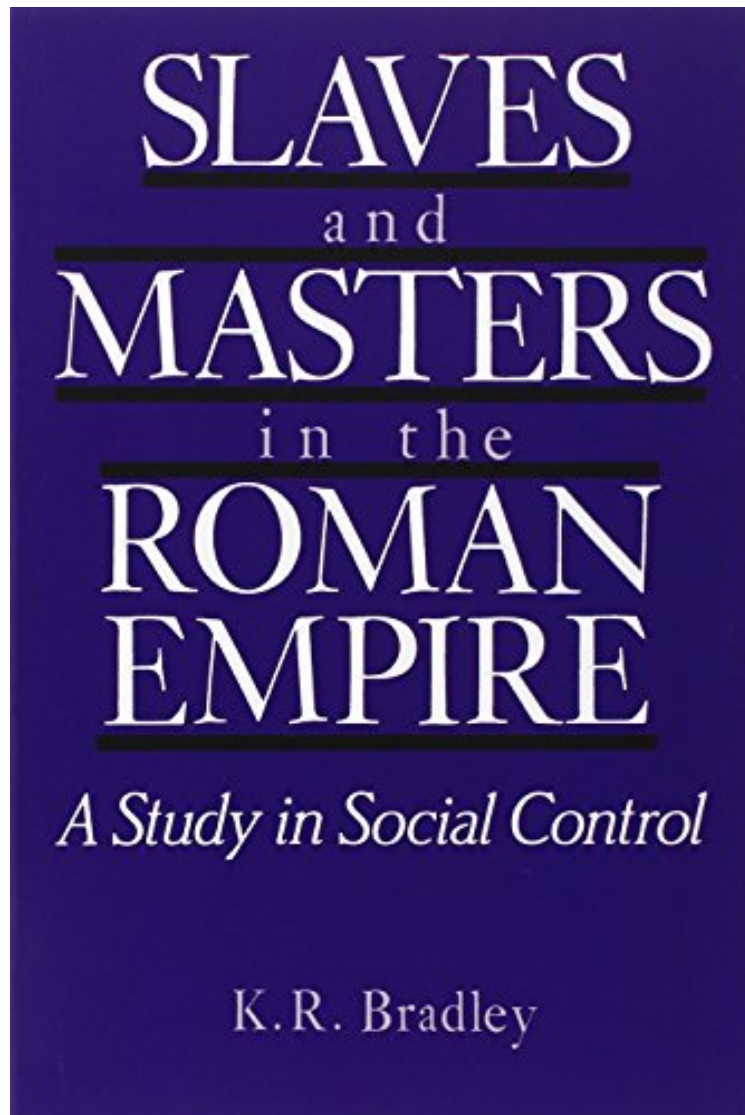


Slaves and Masters in the Roman Empire: A Study in Social Control

K. R. Bradley

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K. R. Bradley : Slaves and Masters in the Roman Empire: A Study in Social Control before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Slaves and Masters in the Roman Empire: A Study in Social Control:

3 of 4 people found the following review helpful. A Master's Carrot and StickBy Martha MarksI found Slaves and Masters in the Roman Empire: A Study in Social Control to be a tremendous resource for accurately building the relationships between the slave and free characters in my novel, Rubies of the Viper. Anybody who is interested in this subject will find this book useful.Could slaves interact easily and openly with their owners? Were they educated?

Smart? Moral? Loyal? The answer is: In many cases, yes. Certainly, there were many slaves who were uneducated, disloyal, conniving, and self-serving. Many never met their owners, much less built a personal relationship with them. Many adults and children were abused--sexually, physically, and psychologically--on a regular basis. Many spent their entire lives in conditions that we today simply cannot imagine or believe. But many Roman slaves managed their masters' estates competently and honestly. Many were true companions to their masters, often from childhood. Many served the same master loyally from birth to death. But they were still property... and that fact was never far from their minds. Every aspect of a Roman slave's life was 100% under the control of another person. The master determined what they ate and wore. What work they did, when, and how. What kinds of sexual relationships they could have. A master's understanding of what he wanted from his slaves--total obedience and loyalty, in most cases--and his methods of getting what he wanted were perfected long before the first century A.D. They consisted primarily of what we would call the carrot and the stick. The carrots: a tolerable life, decent food and living conditions, a semblance of family life, a chance to have their own savings and property (peculium), and a hope of manumission. The sticks: corporal punishment, threats of being sold or sent to labor on a plantation, and even the possibility of death at the master's sole discretion.

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Three Stars
By Charles Most
OKAY TO READ
14 of 14 people found the following review helpful. an excellent book
By TammyJo Eckhart
This book is an excellent introduction to the social condition of slavery in the Roman world. The only thing lacking is more of a historical sense of how things changed and why. Bradley does a good job of balancing the "master" view with the "slave" view, presenting several sides to each issue without much moralizing of his own -- a rare thing often in the history of slavery. A good book for both undergraduate and graduate and a good basic text to begin research from.

This ground-breaking book is the first to show how the institution of slavery, one of the most characteristic and enduring features of Roman imperial society, was maintained over time and how, at the practical level, the lives of slaves in the Roman world were directly controlled by their masters. The author demonstrates, first, how the tensions generated between slaves and masters can be perceived in the ancient sources, and, second, how those tensions were dealt with, as masters treated their slaves with varying forms of generosity and punishment in order to elicit obedience from them. Special attention is given to the slaves' family lives, to their acquisition of freedom through manumission, and to the climate of violence that surrounded them. Emphasizing the harsh realities of Roman slavery in a new way, this important book will stir intense debate among scholars and students.

"A first-rate book....Excellent in drawing out the basic facts, and giving a wholly convincing interpretation....Clear, compassionate and compelling."--JACT
"An informed interpretive essay on the means of social control inherent in the system of slavery in imperial Rome....The value of the book comes from the coherence and persuasiveness of [Bradley's] interpretation."--American Historical
"An ideal book to recommend to students as an introduction to the controversies and problems of methodology involved in the study of ancient slavery....An excellent introductory survey."--Classical
"In compact and accessible prose, Bradley has produced an innovative work of scholarship eminently suitable for courses on the Roman economy, society and the family as well as slavery per se."--Suzanne Dixon, University of Queensland
"will do nicely for an undergraduate one-semester course on Roman history....The book has lots in it and the better students will profit."--Thomas H. Watkins, Western Illinois University
About the Author
K. R. Bradley is at University of Victoria, British Columbia.