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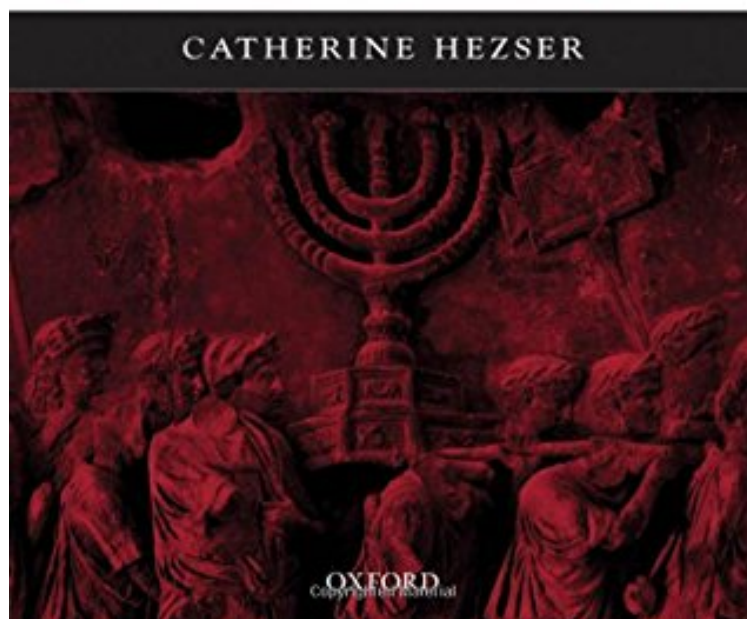
## Jewish Slavery in Antiquity

*Catherine Hezser*

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#3218716 in Books Catherine Hezser 2006-02-16Original language:EnglishPDF # 1 5.70 x 1.40 x 8.60l, 1.50 #File Name: 019928086X452 pagesJewish Slavery in Antiquity | File size: 26.Mb

**Catherine Hezser : Jewish Slavery in Antiquity** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Jewish Slavery in Antiquity:

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. An interesting, revealing look at slavery among the ancient JewsBy JeriHezser states "What needs to be emphasized...we are unable to reconstruct a historically accurate picture of slavery in ancient Jewish society" (p 381).The sources are scanty; the ancient writers weren't interested in the subject of

slavery and rarely referred to it. That said, Hezser has certainly brought forth every tiny bit of information on the subject. What is surprising is that Jewish authors seem much like the other societies nearby in relation to slavery. Slaves were considered outsiders, possibly dangerous, yet Jews appeared to accept slavery as a normal part of society. However, there were some indications that Jews viewed slaves quite differently from the Roman world around them. Jews rejected the idea that a master had the power of life or death over a slave, and they "advocated mild treatment and tried to protect slaves from the overt cruelty of their masters" (p 385). Another aspect in which Jewish society differed from the Romans was that they did not prostitute their slaves, either by sending young boys and girls to brothels to earn money for their masters (a common practice in ancient Rome) or by using slaves sexually. "Opposition to sexual union with slave women is clearly expressed in Josephus' writings" (p 195). In the case of a female slave who ended up married to her freeborn Jewish owner, the children were accepted as fully Jewish, despite the mother's status or even the fact that she could be of foreign non-Jewish extraction. Also, it is interesting to note that "Philo and Josephus were outspoken opponents of the natural slave theory, promulgated by Aristotle, which maintained that certain nations were born to be slaves" (p 118). Having to wear tattered clothing was considered the standard lot of a slave. 6 of 6 people found the following review helpful. Jewish Slavery in Antiquity By hshotka Surely, this book is not inexpensive (but unfortunately all these books are expensive), BUT I rarely enjoyed reading a book more than reading this book. Professor Hezser does not only give an excellent introduction into Jewish Slavery, but also compares it with slavery in the Hellenistic and Roman world. Thus she provides much more than the title of the book suggests. The entire text is based on ample evidence (it was for me surprising to learn how much there still is). Having read this book one sees "slavery" in antiquity more authentic (closer to the facts) than one may before reading this book. I strongly recommend this book to anyone interested in social life in Roman times.

This book is the first comprehensive analysis of Jewish attitudes towards slavery in Hellenistic and Roman times. Against the traditional opinion that after the Babylonian Exile Jews refrained from employing slaves, Catherine Hezser shows that slavery remained a significant phenomenon of ancient Jewish everyday life and generated a discourse which resembled Graeco-Roman and early Christian views while at the same time preserving specifically Jewish nuances. Hezser examines the impact of domestic slavery on the ancient Jewish household and on family relationships. She discusses the perceived advantages of slaves over other types of labor and evaluates their role within the ancient Jewish economy. The ancient Jewish experience of slavery seems to have been so pervasive that slave images also entered theological discourse. Like their Graeco-Roman and Christian counterparts, ancient Jewish intellectuals did not advocate the abolition of slavery, but they used the biblical tradition and their own judgements to ameliorate the status quo.

Catherine Hezser has produced an impressive work, erudite and marked by a keen social and literary sensitivity. It will be indispensable not only for the student of Jewish Studies, but also for everyone interested in the social history of Judaism under Roman imperial rule. \* European Journal of Jewish Studies \* a comprehensive book on Jewish slavery ... a mine of information \* David Rokeah, Journal of Theological Studies \* a carefully crafted study that is ambitious in scope, and her scholarship makes this book a significant contribution to Jewish and Roman history in late antiquity. \* THES \* ...a comprehensive and absorbing study \* Margaret H. Williams, Journal of Roman Studies \* About the Author Catherine Hezser is Reader in Middle Eastern Religion at the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London.