

Slavery in World History ~ Contextualization

Slavery was common and ubiquitous (def. present, appearing, or found everywhere) in human societies, but the nature and intensity of slavery has varied significantly with place and time. Slavery, and other forms of labor, will be an important theme that we will return several times in this course.

Directions: Discuss and identify the defining features of slavery in the United States and compare these features to slavery in Rome.

	Slavery in the UNITED STATES	Slavery in Classical ROME
Who were slaves?		
Where did slaves come from?		
What were the main roles fulfilled by slaves in the economy?		
Could slaves become free?		
What caused the slave system to end?		

Discussion Questions

1. American and Roman examples of slave systems were unusual because of the extent to which slave labor was essential to the functioning of the whole economic system. **What are some other examples of slave holding societies?**
2. Does slavery still exist in the modern world? Where is slavery still practiced and how does it compare to earlier slave holding societies in Rome or the United States? Why has slavery been in relative decline since 1800?

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Who were slaves?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Africana 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Peoples from throughout the Roman Empire Ex. Egyptians, Syrians, Jews, Greeks, Gauls, North Africans
Where did slaves come from?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Atlantic Slave Trade Sold into slavery by own people and distributed/traded/sold throughout New World by Europeans 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Captured prisons of war Networks of long-distance trade
<p>The singular source of American slaves, contrasted with the widely varied peoples that made up Roman Slaves.</p>		
What were the main roles fulfilled by slaves in the economy?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Plantation labor, physical and demanding coerced labor Domestic Service: cooks, maids, childcare 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> (similar to US) coerced labor and domestic service More varied roles included skilled labor, entertainment, performance Yet not permitted to join military
<p>Roman slaves accounted for more varied roles within the Roman economy, and therefore had a bit more social mobility or at least prestige.</p>		
Could slaves become free?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rare occasions of manumission, either through purchasing freedom or benevolent slave owner freeing a slave Slaves could run away and find freedom as fugitives 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Yes, as some were contracted slaves they could eventually become freed Similar cases of manumission More easily able to escape and blend in to empire because of slave diversity
What caused the slave system to end?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Efforts of reformers and abolitionist who attacked the system of slavery on moral, economic, political, and even violent grounds The Civil War, Emancipation Proclamation, and the 13th Amendment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The system continued to operate Despite examples of slave rebellions, ex. Spartacus, they had little impact on slavery as a whole

Discussion Questions

1. American and Roman examples of slave systems were unusual because of the extent to which slave labor was essential to the functioning of the whole economic system. **What are some other examples of slave holding societies?**
 - ✓ Islam = varied from location and time; in some cases conversion to Islam as a way out of slavery
 - ✓ Many other regions used similar systems of domestic and enforced labor
 - ✓ Near East regions develop plantations style system for sugar cultivation
 - ✓ Europeans will mimic plantation labor in colonial efforts
 - ✓ Slave as soldiers, ex. Janissaries used by Ottoman empire

2. Does slavery still exist in the modern world? Where is slavery still practiced and how does it compare to earlier slave holding societies in Rome or the United States? Why has slavery been in relative decline since 1800?
 - ✓ Relative decline since 1800, formal systems of slavery outlawed
 - ✓ Informal systems still existed: child labor, sexual labor and trafficking, sweat shop, low paid labor