



## The Roman Family (Ancient Society and History)

*Suzanne Dixon*

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Unfaithful spouses, divorce and remarriage, rebellious children, aging parents--today's headlines are filled with issues said to be responsible for a "breakdown" of the traditional family. But are any of these problems truly new? What can we learn from the ways in which societies dealt with them in the past? Suzanne Dixon sets the current debate about the family against a broader context in *The Roman Family*, the first book to bring together what historians, anthropologists, and philologists have learned about the family in ancient Rome. Dixon begins by reviewing the controversies regarding the family in general and the Roman family in particular. After considering the problems of evidence, she explores what the Roman concept of "family" really meant and how Roman families functioned. Turning to the legal status of the Roman family, she shows how previous studies, which relied exclusively on legal evidence, fell short of describing the reality of Roman life. (Many relations not recognized by law--the slave family, for instance, or the marriage of imperial soldiers--were tolerated socially and eventually gained some legal recognition.) Other topics include love and other aspects of the institution of marriage, the role of the children in the family, how families adjusted to new members, and how they dealt with aging and death.



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