

**Perry, M. (2015) “Sexual Damage to Slaves in Roman Law”, *Journal of Ancient History* 3.1, 55-75.**

There was an expectation in the Roman world that enslaved individuals would be sexually active, and sources generally represent such conduct as a positive and beneficial social practice. Only if the owner disapproved, or was unaware of the encounter, was the sexual interaction deemed illicit—and potentially damaging to enslaved individuals in ways that diminished their value. This paper explores the legal evidence addressing the issue of “damage to slaves” in order to investigate evolving notions of the perceived harm wrought by illicit sexual intercourse. It is possible to see Roman jurists articulating the notion of moral or character damage, as something distinct from physical harm. Such was the perceived destructive capacity of sexuality among elite Romans, that it might diminish even society’s lowest-ranking members.