



**University  
of Victoria**

Graduate Studies

Notice of the Final Oral Examination  
for the Degree of Master of Arts

of

**GRAHAM BUTLER**

BA (University of Victoria, 2013)

**“Athenian and American Slaving Ideologies and Slave Stereotypes in  
Comparative Perspective”**

Department of Greek and Roman Studies

Wednesday, August 26, 2015  
10:00 A.M.  
Clearihue Building  
Room B415

Supervisory Committee:

Dr. Geoffrey Kron, Department of Greek and Roman Studies, University of Victoria (Supervisor)  
Dr. Ingrid Holmberg, Department of Greek and Roman Studies, UVic (Member)

External Examiner:

Dr. Jason Colby, Department of History, UVic

Chair of Oral Examination:

Dr. Reuben Rose-Redwood, Department of Geography, UVic

Dr. David Capson, Dean, Faculty of Graduate Studies

## **Abstract**

Many contemporary Classical scholars, such as Benjamin Isaac and Denise McCoskey, frame the ancient Athenian attitudes toward their slaves as akin to or the same as White American racism. In this thesis, I argue that Athenian literary representations of slaves, in comparative perspective, are actually only superficially similar to those constructed in White American literature. I survey ancient Greek Comedy and Tragedy's representations of slaves and demonstrate that the genres' slave stereotypes recognise that slaves share with citizens a common humanity. I survey White American literature from the antebellum and Jim Crow eras, and I establish that its stereotyping of Black slaves and freedmen dehumanises them through the construction of racial difference. I argue that this crucial difference between Athenian and White American representations of slaves indicates that the Athenian city-state's social system did not feature racism as it is articulated by critical race theorists Eduardo Bonilla-Silva and Joe Feagin.