

the free men.

In the second book of his *Cretan Antiquities*, Sosikrates says that the (264) Cretans call their public slaves *Mnoia*, the ones they own privately *Aphamiotai*, and their subjects *Perioikoi*. Dosiades too gives a similar account in the fourth book of his *Cretan Antiquities*.

The Thessalians use the term *Penestai* for those who are not slaves by descent but were taken in war; the comic playwright Theopompos develops this meaning when he talks of:

the wrinkled counsellor of a labouring (*penestēs*) master.

In the second book of his *Thessalian Affairs* (if this history is in fact genuine), Philokrates says that the *Penestai* are also called *Thettaloiketai* (house-boys of Thessaly). In the third book of the *History of Euboea*, Arkhemakhos says that:

- (b) those of the Boeotians who came to live in the territory of Arne and did not later move on to Boeotia itself, but came to like the country, gave themselves up to the Thessalians to be their slaves. The conditions of the agreement were that they would neither carry them off out of the country nor kill them, while they were to work the land on their behalf and pay the rent contributions that were assessed. Consequently these people who stayed and handed themselves over in accordance with this agreement were originally called 'those who stayed behind' (*Menestai*), but now they are called *Penestai*. And many of them are wealthier than their masters.

- (c) Euripides too, in the *Phrixos*, calls them 'servers' (*latriai*) in these words:

Servant-toiler, belonging to my ancient household.

In the ninth book of his *Histories*, Timaios of Tauromenion says that in ancient times it was not the ancestral custom for the Greeks to be served by slaves they had bought for money. He writes as follows:

Everybody criticises Aristotle for having been wrong about the habits of the people of Locris. For it was not an accepted custom among either the Locrians or the Phocians for people to buy themselves maidservants or house-boys except in accordance with a contract made for a stated period of time. Indeed they say that the first person to be attended by two maidservants was the wife of Philomelos, who seized control of Delphi [355/4 BC]. Similarly

- (d) Mnason, the associate of Aristotle, became most unpopular with the people of Phocis after he had bought one thousand slaves, on the grounds that he had taken away necessary employment from the same number of citizens. For it had been customary for younger people to work as servants for older members of their own families.

Plato

In the sixth book of the *Laws* [776b–8a], Plato says:

- The question of slaves is a difficult one in every respect . . . Of all Greek institutions it is perhaps the Spartan system of Helots which gives rise to the greatest doubts and disagreements, with some people considering it a good thing and others not. The slave system of the Herakleots, who have enslaved the Mariandynians, is less controversial, as is the Thessalian class of *Penestai*. When we have studied these and all other types, what should we decide to do about the acquisition of house-boys? . . . For there is no element in the soul of a slave that is healthy. A sensible man should not entrust anything to their care. As the wisest poets [Homer, *Odyssey*, 17, 322] puts it:
- (f) 'When the day of slavery catches up with a man,  
Wide-seeing Zeus takes away half of his mind.'

. . . This form of property is not easy. This has in actual fact been demonstrated many times – by the frequent revolts of the Messenians, by all the difficulties that have occurred for those states whose citizens keep many slaves who speak the same language, and by all the acts of robbery and sufferings inflicted by the so-called roving bandits of Italy.

- 265) Anyone who considers all these points will be quite uncertain what ought to be done about things of this sort. There are two safeguards that one may take: first, those who are going to be slaves must not come from the same country of origin, and in so far as it can be arranged they must not speak the same language; and secondly, they must be properly looked after – and not just for their sakes; anyone who wishes to pay proper regard to his own interests should never behave arrogantly towards his slaves. . . . One ought to punish slaves according to strict justice instead of making them conceited by giving them the odd word of advice as one would a fellow-freeman; every word spoken to a house-slave ought to be a direct command; never at any time should an owner joke with his house-slaves, whether they are women or men. A lot of people foolishly like to act like this towards their slaves, and by making them conceited they make life much more difficult both for the slaves who have to
- (b)

obey, and for themselves in managing them.

*The Chians the First to buy Chattel Slaves*

The Chians were the first Greeks that I know of who used slaves they had bought for money, as Theopompos narrates in book seventeen of his *Histories*:

- (c) After the Thessalians and the Spartans, the Chians were the first Greeks to use slaves, but they didn't obtain them in the same way as these did. For as we shall see, the Spartans and Thessalians constituted their slave population out of the Greeks who had previously inhabited the territories which they now control – the Spartans taking over Achaean territory, the Thessalians that of the Perrhaiboi and the Magnesians; and they call the people they enslaved *Helots* and *Penestai* respectively. But the Chians have acquired people who are not Greek-speakers to be their house-slaves, and pay a price for them.

That is what Theopompos tells us. In my opinion God punished the people of Chios for this – for in later times they were engaged in a long war because of their slaves. At least Nymphodoros of Syracuse tells the following story about them in his *Voyage along the Coast of Asia Minor*:

- (d) The Chians' slaves ran away from them and made off into the mountains, where they gathered in large numbers and did a lot of damage to their country estates. The island is rough and covered with trees. There is a story which they tell that a little before our own time there was a certain slave who ran off to make his home in the mountains. Since he was a brave man who had a lot of luck when it came to fighting, he came to lead the runaways in the same way as a king leads an army. After the Chians had organised many expeditions against him which failed to achieve anything, Drimakos (for that was the runaway's name) saw that they were being killed for no good reason, and he made them the following proposal: 'Chian owners: what you have been suffering because of your house-slaves is never going to stop. How can it, since it is in accordance with an oracle that has been given by a god? Now if you make a truce with me and allow us to live in peace, I shall ensure that there will be many benefits for you.' So the people of Chios made a treaty with him and agreed on a truce for a certain period of time, and he prepared some measures and weights and a special seal. He showed these to the Chians and said that, 'I am going to
- (f)

- take anything that I take away from any of you in accordance with these weights and measures, and when I have taken whatever I need, I shall leave your warehouses sealed up with this seal. And I shall interrogate any of your house-slaves that run away about what their reasons are; and if anyone seems to me to have run away because he has been treated intolerably in any way I will keep him with me: but if their story does not convince me, I will send them back to their owners.' When the other house-slaves saw that the Chians were prepared to accept this arrangement, they ran away much less frequently, since they were afraid of being interrogated by Drimakos. At the same time the runaways who were with him were much more afraid of Drimakos than of their own masters, and treated him with great respect, obeying him as though he were their commanding officer; for he punished those who were guilty of breaches of discipline, and allowed no one to plunder the fields or to commit even a single act of injustice without having obtained his consent. At festival time, he would set out and take from the fields wine and any animals suitable for sacrificial purposes which their owners themselves would [† not] hand over. And if he found out that anyone was plotting to lay an ambush for him, he would take his revenge on them.
- 266)
- (b)

- The city of Chios had announced that it would give a lot of money to anyone who captured Drimakos or brought them his head; and so, in the end, when he had grown old, he called his boyfriend to a particular place and told him that, 'I have loved you more than anyone else and you are my favourite and like a son to me, and so on and so forth. Now I have lived for long enough, while you are a young man in the best years of your life. So what ought to be done? You ought to become an upright and respected citizen. And since the city of Chios is going to give a lot of money to the man who kills me, and has promised him his freedom, it is you who must cut off my head and bring it to the Chians, take the money from the city and live happily ever after.' Although the young man objected, he convinced him to do this; so he cut off his head and received from the Chians the money that had been promised, buried the body of the runaway and then went home to his own country. Later the Chians suffered a lot of vandalism and theft because of their house-slaves, just as they had before; and since they remembered how fair Drimakos had been to them when he was alive, they erected a shrine to him out in the countryside, and dedicated it to the Kindly Hero. And even today runaway slaves bring the first fruits of everything they steal to him. And it is also said that he appears to many Chians while they are asleep and warns them when their house-slaves are plotting against them; and those to whom he appears go to the
- (c)
- (d)

on behalf of his slave if he so wishes, and a jury's vote applies just as much to the man who kills a slave as to the man who kills a free man — then it would have been right for this slave to have been sent for trial and not to have been put to death by you uncondemned.

### 182. Isocrates, *Panathenaicus*

This attack on the way the Spartans treated their *Perioikoi*, allied communities subject to their political hegemony, implies that arbitrarily killing one's own slave was generally recognised to be an offence against the gods.

(181) Right from the start these men have suffered severely, and in the present situation they have served Sparta well; yet the Spartan *Ephors* [annual magistrates] are allowed to execute without trial as many of them as they wish. As far as the rest of the Greeks are concerned, it is not holy to pollute oneself by killing even the most useless of one's household slaves.

### 183. Demosthenes 21: *Against Meidias*

The existence of religious sanctions or even legal pronouncements against killing one's own slave does not imply mechanisms for making the owner answerable before a court of law. But democratic Athens was anxious that wealthy men should be restrained from behaving like tyrants: so any citizen had the right to initiate legal proceedings against those who did not treat their slaves humanely.

The Law proclaims: (47) If anyone humiliates (*hybrizēi*) anyone, whether they are free or slave, or commits any illegal act against any of these: let any Athenian who has the right to do so who wishes submit their names to the *Thesmothetai*.

### 184. Xenophon, *Memorabilia*, 2, 1

Xenophon's account of the conversations of Socrates shows that it was taken for granted that a master would punish a slave who failed in any way to do as his master wished. Socrates is conversing with the anarchist Aristippos, who claims that it is neither ruling others nor being a slave, but simply being independent, that brings one closest to happiness. Socrates points out that we unfortunately live in a real world in which

the strong do everything they can to enslave the weak: why is Aristippos so confident that no one will try to enslave him?

(15) Is it because you would be thought the kind of slave who brings no master any profit? No one wants to keep in his household a man who does not want to do any work but enjoys an expensive lifestyle. (16) Let us consider how masters behave towards slaves of this sort. Is it not the case that they control any inclinations towards lechery by starving them? And stop them from stealing by locking up the places from which they might take things? Prevent them from running away by putting them in chains? Force the laziness out of them with beatings? Or what do you do when you find you have someone like that among your slaves?

(17) I inflict every kind of punishment upon him — said Aristippos — until I can force him to serve properly.

### 185. *Digest* 18, 1.42: Marcianus, from *Institutes*, book 1

At Rome, the heads of households had originally had the absolute right to punish their slaves, like their sons, with death (the *ius vitae necisque*: see Nos. 201, 235, Ch. 20). Under the Empire, the general tendency for the state to restrict or at least monitor the rights of a *paterfamilias* extended to the execution of slaves. This does not mean that slaves could not continue to be executed in the most brutal fashion, but at least they were protected from any arbitrary whim of their masters by the need to obtain a condemnation before a court.

Owners may not sell their slaves, albeit they are criminally inclined, in order to fight with wild beasts. Thus the rescripts of the Divine Brothers.

### 186. *Digest* 48, 8.11: Modestinus, from *Rules*, book 6

(1) When a slave has been given up to wild beasts, punishment applies not just to the person who sold him, but also the person who bought him.

(2) Following the *Lex Petronia* and the Senate Recommendations applying to that law, the rights of owners when they wanted to hand over their slaves to fight wild beasts were taken away from them; but if the slave has been brought before a Judge, and the owner's complaint is found to be justified, then he may be handed over for punishment.

you happen to have sufficient status to be able to crush his anger, as the Divine Augustus once did when he was having dinner with Vedius Pollio. One of the host's slaves had broken a crystal cup; Vedius ordered the man to be seized and executed in a particularly bizarre way, by being thrown as food to lampreys – he kept some huge ones in his fish pond. Who would say that he did this for any reason other than ostentation? It was an act of savagery. The boy escaped and fled to Caesar's feet for refuge – all he was going to ask for was to be allowed to die in some other way than as food for fishes. Caesar was horrified at this unprecedented cruelty, and ordered the slave to be set free, all the crystal cups to be smashed in his presence, and the fish pond to be filled in. That was the way in which a Caesar could reprove his friend; he put his powers to good use. 'You order men to be dragged from a dinner party, and torn to pieces as a new kind of punishment? Are a man's bowels to be ripped apart just because one of your cups has been broken? Are you going to indulge your own moods to the extent of ordering someone to be led to execution in the very presence of Caesar?' If a man has so much power that he can put a stop to an outburst of anger from a position of authority, he should repress it unreservedly and making no allowances – at least, if it is one of the kind I've just described: beastly, horrible and bloodthirsty, and unable to be cured except by fear of some greater power.

#### 191. Apuleius, *Metamorphoses*, 9

This account of work in a flour mill is one of the most colourful descriptions of the degradation to which masters could subject their slaves – and through its influence on novels such as Flaubert's *Salammbô*, it has contributed to the popular modern picture of what life was like for a 'typical' victim of slavery. Nevertheless, it should not be forgotten that this was a work of fiction.

(12) I inspected the organisation of this highly undesirable mill with a certain degree of pleasure. The men there were indescribable – their entire skin was coloured black and blue with the weals left by whippings, and their scarred backs were shaded rather than covered by tunics which were patched and torn. Some of them wore no more than a tiny covering around their loins, but all were dressed in such a way that you could see through their rags. They had letters branded on their foreheads, their hair had been partially shaved off, and they had fetters on their feet. They were sallow and discoloured, and the smoky and steamy atmosphere had affected their eyelids and inflamed their eyes. Their bodies were a dirty white because of the dusty flour – like athletes who

get covered with fine sand when they fight.

#### 192. Diodorus Siculus, 5, 36 and 38

One area in which slaves were systematically and brutally exploited was mining. It is worth remembering that conditions were bad for all miners, not just slaves: this did not prevent free men from earning their living in this way (see Xenophon on the mines of Attica, No. 87 above; Ps.-Demosthenes, 42.20; an inscription from Spain, the *Lex Metallii Vipascensis* = ILS 6891 and L&R II, 43, illustrates the conditions of such free miners). Under the Empire, the labour shortage was made up by condemning criminals to the mines: see No. 125. Callistus (No. 138 above) and many other Christians worked in the mines because they were criminals, not because they were slaves. But in the late Republic, Roman contractors (*publicani*) used slaves for mining under the most atrocious conditions, for example in Spain. The revulsion felt by Diodorus' source, the Stoic philosopher Posidonius, comes through clearly.

(36.3) Originally any private person without mining experience could come and find a place to work in these mines, and since the silver-bearing seams in the earth were conveniently sited and plentiful, they would go away with great fortunes. But later the Romans gained control of Spain, and now a large number of Italians have taken over the mines and accumulated vast riches as a result of their desire to make profits; what they did was buy a great number of slaves and hand them over to the men in charge of the mining operations . . .

(38.1) The men engaged in these mining operations produce unbelievably large revenues for their masters, but as a result of their underground excavations day and night they become physical wrecks, and because of their extremely bad conditions, the mortality rate is high; they are not allowed to give up working or have a rest, but are forced by the beatings of their supervisors to stay at their places and throw away their wretched lives as a result of these horrible hardships. Some of them survive to endure their misery for a long time because of their physical stamina or sheer will-power; but because of the extent of their suffering, they prefer dying to surviving.

#### 193. Xenophon, *The Householder*, 9

Perhaps the most blatant result of the inhumanity of chattel slavery

was that the marriages of slaves could not be recognised. An owner had the right and the power to prevent his slaves from forming lasting relationships. Only in the fourth century AD, influenced by Christian ideals of family life, did Constantine decree that when slaves were sold, then husband and wife, parents and children, had to be sold together (*CTh.* 2, 25.1 = L&R II, 140). Inscriptions from Roman family tombs such as that of the Statilii show that at least 24–40 per cent of slaves were married (and their marriages would become legally recognised once they were freed). But most of the evidence is highly circumstantial (see Nos. 124; 148, Ch. 5; 149, Ch. 5; 150, Ch. 6; 201; 206, Ch. 6).

(5) I also showed my wife the women's quarters, divided off from the men's quarters by a bolted door, so that nothing could be brought out of this part of the house that shouldn't be, and so that the slaves shouldn't have children without our approval. For good slaves are generally better disposed towards their masters if they have had children, but if the bad ones live together, it is much easier for them to cause trouble.

194. *Digest* 37, 14.7: Modestinus, from the single-volume work *Manumissions*

Despite the criticisms of satirists and moral philosophers, neither Greek nor Roman legislation would do anything in principle to limit an owner's rights regarding the sexual exploitation of the slaves he owned (see Nos. 235, Ch. 5 and 240 below). However, in Roman law a vendor could impose certain conditions on subsequent owners (see No. 10); and by upholding the right of a previous owner to insist that a slave woman he sells shall not be prostituted, Vespasian did give slaves some protection. But it was not until 428 AD that a Christian emperor decreed that any slave forced into prostitution by her master should automatically become free (*CTh.* 15, 8.2).

The Divine Emperor Vespasian promulgated a decree to the effect that, if any woman had been sold on condition that she should not be employed as a prostitute, and she had been so prostituted, then she should become free; and that if the buyer were later to sell her to someone else without imposing this condition, she should become free in accordance with the conditions of the original sale, and become the freed-woman of the person who had originally sold her.

195. *Salvian, The Governance of God*, 7, 4

For Christians, with their much clearer and stricter attitudes towards sexual morality, the implications of an owner's absolute powers over his slaves were extremely serious.

(17) I would say that [in southern Gaul] the lady of the household certainly did not maintain her power unchallenged, because a woman whose rights as a wife have not been kept safe and unchallenged has not kept her rights over the household safe either. When the head of the household behaves like the husband of the slave girls, his wife is not far removed from the status of a slave. And was there any wealthy Aquitanian who did not behave like that? Was there any whose promiscuous slave girls didn't have a right to look on him as their lover — or their husband? In the words of the prophet: 'They went after women, each whinnying like a stallion after the wife of his neighbour' (Jeremiah 5, 8) . . .

(19) I must ask those who know about human nature what the morals of slaves will have been like under these circumstances, when the morals of the head of the household had sunk as low as that. How corrupted will the slaves have been, when their masters were so utterly corrupt . . . Now the master's position within his household is like that of the head to the body: his own lifestyle sets a standard of behaviour for everyone . . . (20) These masters didn't just provide a provocation to behave wickedly, but an unavoidable necessity, since slave women were forced to obey their immoral owners against their will; the lust of those in a position of authority left those subjected to them with no alternative. From this we can imagine how heinous this filthy uncleanness was, when women were not permitted by their shameless owners to be chaste, even if they had wanted to.

196. *Seneca, Dialogue 5: On Anger*, 3, 24

There is no reason to doubt that in antiquity, as now, many cases of ill-treatment of the weaker members of the household were the result of unintended emotional outbursts rather than systematic brutality. Seneca's diatribes on the importance of controlling anger illustrate the vulnerability of slaves to their master's moods.

(2) Why do I have to punish my slave with a whipping or imprisonment if he gives me a cheeky answer or disrespectful look or mutters something which I can't quite hear? Is my status so special that offending my ears should be a crime? There are many people who have forgiven defeated enemies — am I not to forgive someone for being lazy or careless or

talkative? If he's a child, his age should excuse him, if female, her sex, if he doesn't belong to me, his independence, and if he does belong to my household, the ties of family (*familiaritas*).

197. Seneca, *Dialogue 5: On Anger*, 3, 32

(1) In various situations, there are different reasons why we should control ourselves. We should be afraid of the consequences if we are angry with certain people; we should have too much respect to be angry with some people, too much disgust to be angry with others. No doubt we shall have performed a heroic action if we send some wretched little slave off to the prison house (*ergastulum*). Why on earth are we so anxious to have them flogged immediately, to have their legs broken on the spot? We do not abandon our rights by postponing the exercise of them.

198. Galen, *The Diseases of the Mind*, 4 (Kühn 5117)

Although a doctor found the frequency with which slaves were beaten under the influence of anger disturbing, he did not question a master's right to have a delinquent slave beaten or whipped.

If a man adheres to the practice of never striking any of his slaves with his hand, he will be less likely to succumb [to a fit of anger] later on, even in circumstances most likely to provoke anger. I used to recommend this behaviour even when I was a young man, and have maintained it throughout my life; my father trained me to behave in this way myself, and I have criticised many of my friends when I saw how they had bruised their hands by hitting their slaves on the mouth — I told them that they deserved to rupture themselves and die in a fit of anger, when it was open to them to preside over the administration of as many strokes of the rod or the whip as they wished a little later, and they could carry out such a punishment just as they wished.

There are other people who don't just hit their slaves, but kick them and gouge out their eyes and strike them with a pen if they happen to be holding one. I have seen someone strike his slave in the eye while under the influence of anger with one of the reeds we use to write with. The story is told that the Emperor Hadrian struck one of his attendants in the eye with a pen. When he realised that he had become blind in one eye as a result of this stroke, he called him to him and offered to let him ask him for any gift to make up for what he had suffered. When the victim remained silent, Hadrian again asked him to make a request

of whatever he wanted. He declined to accept anything else, but asked for his eye back — for what gift could provide compensation for the loss of an eye?

199. *Codex* 3, 36.5

Outbursts of rage could lead to legal complications. In the early third century AD, a lady called Statilia asked the emperor whether she had to fulfil a clause in her husband's Will which had clearly been written while he was beside himself with anger at two of his slaves.

The August Emperor Alexander, to Statilia.

It lay within your husband's own power to alter the clause he put in his Will when he was angry at his slaves, that one of them should be kept chained up for ever, and the other sold so as to be taken abroad. Now if a desire to forgive did in fact assuage this displeasure (and although this may not be proved in writing, there is no reason why it should not be proved by other arguments, particularly if some later meritorious actions on the part of these slaves can be proved, so great that their master's anger was likely to be assuaged), then the arbitrator appointed to divide up the inheritance (*arbiter familiae erciscundae*) should follow the deceased's most recent wishes.

200. Xenophon, *Memorabilia*, 2, 10

If a slave-owner looked after his slaves well, it might be not because he saw them as human beings like himself, but because he wanted to preserve his property: to keep his slaves from dying was just like keeping them from running away, as is shown by Socrates' attempt to encourage Diodoros to make friends with someone, by pointing out how keen he would be not to lose a slave through flight or sickness.

(1) Tell me, Diodoros — said Socrates — if one of your slaves runs away, do you take steps to recover him?

Heavens! — he said — I even get others to help me by announcing that there will be a reward for his safe return.

And if one of your slaves is ill — said Socrates — you look after him and call in physicians to stop him from dying?

Most certainly.

And if one of your friends, who is much more useful than your slaves, is in danger of dying through poverty, do you not think it right to try and save him?

(7) The head of the household [on his tour of inspection] should examine his herds and arrange a sale; he should sell the oil if the price makes it worthwhile, and any wine and grain that is surplus to needs; he should sell any old oxen, cattle or sheep that are not up to standard, wool and hides, an old cart or old tools, an old slave, a sick slave — anything else that is surplus to requirements. The head of a household ought to sell, and not to buy.

203. Suetonius, *Claudius*, 25

It has been suggested that under the Emperor Claudius, the direction of Roman legislation became much more favourable towards slaves, possibly because his advisors included men who had once been slaves (see No. 176 above). In fact, Claudius himself was no more humane than other Romans: he exposed his daughter Claudia, alleging that he was not her father (Suetonius, *Claudius*, 27), and his judicial treatment of freedmen was by no means liberal (see No. 37 above). But he did hold that a slave's obligations towards his owner ceased if his owner no longer fulfilled his obligations towards him: that he gave such slaves the status of Junian Latins is confirmed by the *Digest* (40, 8.2). This is not evidence for a more humane attitude towards slaves, but rather for the ever increasing role of the emperor, who saw it as his duty to codify and enforce existing practice and convention.

(2) Certain individuals were leaving sick slaves and those worn out with age on the Island of Aesculapius because they thought they would not get better. Claudius decreed that all who had been abandoned in this way were to be free, and would not return under their master's authority if their health improved; and if anyone preferred to kill a slave rather than abandon him, he was to be liable to a charge of murder.

## 204. Dio Cassius, 60 (61), 29

Dio dates this legislation to the year 47 AD:

(7) Since many people didn't bother to give their slaves any treatment when they were sick, and even threw them out of the house, he decreed that any who survived after being treated in this way should be free.

205. Xenophon, *The Householder*, 13

Moral philosophers addressed themselves to codifying rules for the treatment of slaves (Plato, *Laws*, No. 80, 264e above). Another of Socrates' pupils wrote a Socratic dialogue on household management, expressing his views on how a wealthy landowner should treat his wife and the other dependants within his household.

(9) It is possible to make human beings more ready to obey you simply by explaining to them the advantages of being obedient; but with slaves, the training considered to be appropriate to wild beasts is a particularly useful way of instilling obedience. You will achieve the greatest success with them by allowing them as much food as they want. Those who are ambitious by nature will also be motivated by praise (for there are some people who are as naturally keen for praise as others are for food and drink). (10) These are the things I teach those whom I wish to appoint as managers, since I believe that by doing so I can make them more honest persons, and I give them the following advantages: I don't make the cloaks and shoes which I have to provide for my workers all alike, but some worse and others of better quality, so that I can reward the better worker with better clothing and shoes, and give the worse to the man who is worse. (11) I think it is very demoralising for good slaves, Socrates, if they see that all the work is being done by them, while those who don't want to do any work or take any necessary risks get just as much as they do. (12) I myself think that better slaves should not be treated in the same way as worse ones, and I praise my managers when I see that they have given the best things to those who deserve them most, and if I see that someone has been treated too favourably as a result of flattery or some other unproductive favour, I don't let that pass, Socrates, but punish the man, and try to show him that this sort of thing isn't to his advantage [as a manager] either.

206. Aristotle, *The Householder*, 1, 5

A treatise ascribed to Aristotle but more probably the work of one of his pupils (perhaps his successor as head of the Athenian Academy, Theophrastus), contains ideas very similar to those of Plato and Xenophon, and later Varro (No. 148 above). The writer recommends that slaves should be told that they will be given their freedom after a stated number of years; and be allowed to raise a family — as 'hostages' to make it less likely that they will want to run away, and also so that the slaves who will replace them when they are freed will be *oikogeneis* ('house born'), real members of the family and not outsiders bought for

money.

(1) The principal and most essential form of property is that which is best and most central to managing a household: the human being. So the first thing to do is acquire good slaves. There are two categories of slaves: overseer and labourer. Since we can see that it is upbringing that gives young people their particular character, it is essential to educate any slaves we have bought if we intend to give them that kind of work which is appropriate to free persons [i.e. supervisory functions].

(2) In our dealings with slaves, we should not let them be insolent towards us nor allow them free rein. Those whose position is nearer to that of free men should be treated with respect, those who are labourers given more food. Since the consumption of wine makes free men behave insolently too (and in many cultures even free men abstain from it – like the Carthaginians when they go campaigning), it is clear that wine should never, or only very rarely, be given to slaves.

(3) There are three things [that concern slaves]: work, punishment and food. Having food but no work and no punishment makes a slave insolent; giving him work and punishment without food is an act of violence and debilitates him. The alternative is to give him work to do together with sufficient food. One cannot manage someone without rewarding them, and food is a slave's reward. Slaves, just like other human beings, become worse when better behaviour brings no benefits, and there are no prizes for virtue and vice. (4) Consequently we ought to keep a watch over how our slaves behave, and make our distributions and apportion privileges according to desert, whether it is a matter of food or clothes or free time or punishment. In word and deed we must adopt the authority of a doctor when he issues his prescriptions – noting the difference that, unlike medicine, food has to be taken continuously.

(5) The races best suited for work are those which are neither extremely cowardly nor extremely courageous, since both of these are likely to cause trouble. Those who are too easily cowed cannot persevere with their work, while those who have too much courage are difficult to control.

(6) It is essential that each slave should have a clearly defined goal (*telos*). It is both just and advantageous to offer freedom as a prize – when the prize, and the period of time in which it can be attained, are clearly defined, this will make them work willingly. We should also let them have children to serve as hostages; and, as is customary in cities, we should not buy slaves of the same ethnic origins. We should also organise sacrifices and holidays, for the sake of the slaves rather than the free men – for free men get more of the things for the sake of which these practices have been instituted.

207. *Pseudo-Phocylides*

In the collections of maxims and moral advice which were popular in antiquity, particularly for teaching children to read and write, no great attention is devoted to slaves.

One corpus of such literature is known as *Pseudo-Phocylides*; it is not certain who compiled these 230 lines of moral advice, but it was certainly not the archaic Greek poet Phocylides. The evidence suggests that the author may have been a Hellenistic Jew. Only five lines concern themselves with the relationship between a master and his slave, and this is in fact the very last section of the poem: here, as in other respects, mere status leaves slaves with the last place. (There is one other reference to slaves: line 181 tells you not to have sex with any of your father's concubines, but that is a matter of respecting your father, not the slaves.)

Provide your servant (*therapōn*) with the share of food that he is owed.  
Give a slave his rations (*takta*) so that he may respect you.  
Do not brand your servant (*therapōn*) with marks that insult him.  
Do not do a slave (*doulon*) harm by criticising him to his master.  
Accept the advice even of a slave (*oiketēs*) if he is wise.

208. Cicero, *On Duties*, 1, 13

Stoic philosophers insisted that masters had an obligation to treat their slaves properly, just as they would treat free workmen whom they had contracted to hire for life; this goes back to Chrysippus (c. 280–207 BC; see No. 239, 22.1 below and Athenaeus, 276b) and Cleanthes (331–232 BC), who was said by Seneca (*Letters*, 44.3) to have worked as a hired water-carrier.

One of the earliest written occurrences in Latin is in Cicero's handbook on proper behaviour, written for the benefit of his son.

(41) Let us also remember that we must behave justly even towards the lowest kinds of people. The most inferior status and fate is that of slaves. Those who tell us to use them in the same way as if they were hired workmen don't give us bad advice – we must insist that they do their work, but grant them what is just.