

= Slavery in ancient Greece =

Slavery was a very common practice in Ancient Greek history, as in other places of the time. It is estimated that the majority of Athenian citizens owned at least one slave; most ancient writers considered slavery natural and even necessary. This paradigm was notably questioned in Socratic dialogues; the Stoics produced the first recorded condemnation of slavery.

Modern historiographical practice distinguishes chattel (personal possession) slavery from land @-@ bonded groups such as the penestae of Thessaly or the Spartan helots, who were more like medieval serfs (an enhancement to real estate). The chattel helot is an individual deprived of liberty and forced to submit to an owner, who may buy, sell or lease them like any other chattel.

The academic study of slavery in ancient Greece is beset by significant methodological problems. Documentation is disjointed and very fragmented, focusing primarily on Athens. No treatises are specifically devoted to the subject, and jurisprudence was interested in slavery only inasmuch as it provided a source of revenue. Comedies and tragedies represented stereotypes while iconography made no substantial differentiation between slaves and craftsmen.

= Terminology =

The ancient Greeks had several words for slaves, which leads to textual ambiguity when they are studied out of their proper context. In Homer, Hesiod and Theognis of Megara, the slave was called δμῶν / dmōn. The term has a general meaning but refers particularly to war prisoners taken as booty (in other words, property). During the classical period, the Greeks frequently used ἀνδράποδον / andrapodon, (literally, "one with the feet of a man") as opposed to τετραπόδον / tetrapodon, "quadruped", or livestock. The most common word is δούλος / doulos, used in opposition to "free man" (ἐλεύθερος / eleútheros); an earlier form of the former appears in Mycenaean inscriptions as do @-@ e @-@ ro, "male slave" (or "servant", "bondman"; Linear B: 𐀀𐀁𐀅), or do @-@ e @-@ ra, "female slave" (or "maid @-@ servant", "bondwoman"; Linear B: 𐀀𐀁𐀅𐀆). The verb δουλεύω (which survives in Modern Greek, meaning "work") can be used metaphorically for other forms of dominion, as of one city over another or parents over their children. Finally, the term οἰκετῆς / oiketēs was used, meaning "one who lives in house", referring to household servants.

Other terms used were less precise and required context:

θήρακον / therapōn ? At the time of Homer, the word meant "squire" (Patroclus was referred to as the therapōn of Achilles and Meriones that of Idomeneus); during the classical age, it meant "servant".

ἀκολούθος / akolouthos ? literally, "the follower" or "the one who accompanies". Also, the diminutive ἀκολούθητος, used for page boys.

παῖς / pais ? literally "child", used in the same way as "houseboy", also used in a derogatory way to call adult slaves.

σῆμα / sēma ? literally "body", used in the context of emancipation.

= Origins of slavery =

Slaves were present through the Mycenaean civilization, as documented in numerous tablets unearthed in Pylos 140. Two legal categories can be distinguished: "slaves (δούλοις)" and "slaves of the god (θεῶν)", the god in this case probably being Poseidon. Slaves of the god are always mentioned by name and own their own land; their legal status is close to that of freemen. The nature and origin of their bond to the divinity is unclear. The names of common slaves show that some of them came from Kythera, Chios, Lemnos or Halicarnassus and were probably enslaved as a result of piracy. The tablets indicate that unions between slaves and freemen were common and that slaves could work and own land. It appears that the major division in Mycenaean civilization was not between a free individual and a slave but rather if the individual was in the palace.

There is no continuity between the Mycenaean era and the time of Homer, where social structures

reflected those of the Greek dark ages . The terminology differs : the slave is no longer *δουλος* (*doulos*) but *δμῶν* (*dmōn*) . In the *Iliad* , slaves are mainly women taken as booty of war , while men were either ransomed or killed on the battlefield . In the *Odyssey* , the slaves also seem to be mostly women . These slaves were servants and sometimes concubines . There were some male slaves , especially in the *Odyssey* , a prime example being the swineherd Eumaeus . The slave was distinctive in being a member of the core part of the *oikos* (" family unit " , " household ") : Laertes eats and drinks with his servants ; in the winter , he sleeps in their company . The term *δμῶν* is not considered pejorative , and Eumaeus , the " divine " swineherd , bears the same Homeric epithet as the Greek heroes . Slavery remained , however , a disgrace . Eumaeus himself declares , " Zeus , of the far borne voice , takes away the half of a man 's virtue , when the day of slavery comes upon him " .

It is difficult to determine when slave trading began in the archaic period . In *Works and Days* (8th century BC) , Hesiod owns numerous *δμῶν*es although their status is unclear . The presence of *δουλοὶ* is confirmed by lyric poets such as Archilochus or Theognis of Megara . According to epigraphic evidence , the homicide law of Draco (c . 620 BC) mentioned slaves . According to Plutarch , Solon (c . 594 - 593 BC) forbade slaves from practising gymnastics and pederasty . By the end of the period , references become more common . Slavery becomes prevalent at the very moment when Solon establishes the basis for Athenian democracy . Classical scholar Moses Finley likewise remarks that Chios , which , according to Theopompus , was the first city to organize a slave trade , also enjoyed an early democratic process (in the 6th century BC) . He concludes that " one aspect of Greek history , in short , is the advance hand in hand , of freedom and slavery . "

= = Economic role = =

All activities were open to slaves with the exception of politics . For the Greeks , politics was the only activity worthy of a citizen , the rest being relegated wherever possible to non - citizens . It was status that was of importance , not activity .

The principal use of slavery was in agriculture , the foundation of the Greek economy . Some small landowners might own one slave , or even two . An abundant literature of manuals for landowners (such as the *Economy* of Xenophon or that of Pseudo - Aristotle) confirms the presence of dozens of slaves on the larger estates ; they could be common labourers or foremen . The extent to which slaves were used as a labour force in farming is disputed . It is certain that rural slavery was very common in Athens , and that ancient Greece did not know of the immense slave populations found on the Roman *latifundia* .

Slave labour was prevalent in mines and quarries , which had large slave populations , often leased out by rich private citizens . The strategos Nicias leased a thousand slaves to the silver mines of Laurium in Attica ; Hipponicos , 600 ; and Philomidès , 300 . Xenophon indicates that they received one obolus per slave per day , amounting to 60 drachmas per year . This was one of the most prized investments for Athenians . The number of slaves working in the Laurium mines or in the mills processing ore has been estimated at 30 000 . Xenophon suggested that the city buy a large number of slaves , up to three state slaves per citizen , so that their leasing would assure the upkeep of all the citizens .

Slaves were also used as craftsmen and tradespersons . As in agriculture , they were used for labour that was beyond the capability of the family . The slave population was greatest in workshops : the shield factory of Lysias employed 120 slaves , and the father of Demosthenes owned 32 cutlers and 20 bedmakers .

Slaves were also employed in the home . The domestic 's main role was to stand in for his master at his trade and to accompany him on trips . In time of war he was batman to the hoplite . The female slave carried out domestic tasks , in particular bread baking and textile making . Only the poorest citizens did not possess a domestic slave .

= = Demographics = =

== Population ==

It is difficult to estimate the number of slaves in ancient Greece , given the lack of a precise census and variations in definitions during that era . It is certain that Athens had the largest slave population , with as many as 80 @, @ 000 in the 6th and 5th centuries BC , on average three or four slaves per household . In the 5th century BC , Thucydides remarked on the desertion of 20 @, @ 890 slaves during the war of Decelea , mostly tradesmen . The lowest estimate , of 20 @, @ 000 slaves , during the time of Demosthenes , corresponds to one slave per family . Between 317 BC and 307 BC , the tyrant Demetrius Phalereus ordered a general census of Attica , which arrived at the following figures : 21 @, @ 000 citizens , 10 @, @ 000 metics and 400 @, @ 000 slaves . The orator Hypereides , in his *Against Areistogiton* , recalls that the effort to enlist 15 @, @ 000 male slaves of military age led to the defeat of the Southern Greeks at the Battle of Chaeronea (338 BC) , which corresponds to the figures of Ctesicles .

According to the literature , it appears that the majority of free Athenians owned at least one slave . Aristophanes , in *Plutus* , portrays poor peasants who have several slaves ; Aristotle defines a house as containing freemen and slaves . Conversely , not owning even one slave was a clear sign of poverty . In the celebrated discourse of Lysias *For the Invalid* , a cripple pleading for a pension explains " my income is very small and now I 'm required to do these things myself and do not even have the means to purchase a slave who can do these things for me . " However , the huge slave populations of the Romans were unknown in ancient Greece . When Athenaeus cites the case of Mnason , friend of Aristotle and owner of a thousand slaves , this appears to be exceptional . Plato , owner of five slaves at the time of his death , describes the very rich as owning 50 slaves .

Thucydides estimates that the isle of Chios had proportionally the largest number of slaves .

==== War ====

By the rules of war of the period , the victor possessed absolute rights over the vanquished , whether they were soldiers or not . Enslavement , while not systematic , was common practice . Thucydides recalls that 7 @, @ 000 inhabitants of Hyccara in Sicily were taken prisoner by Nicias and sold for 120 talents in the neighbouring village of Catania . Likewise in 348 BC the population of Olynthus was reduced to slavery , as was that of Thebes in 335 BC by Alexander the Great and that of Mantinea by the Achaean League .

The existence of Greek slaves was a constant source of discomfort for free Greeks . The enslavement of cities was also a controversial practice . Some generals refused , such as the Spartans Agesilaus II and Callicratidas . Some cities passed accords to forbid the practice : in the middle of the 3rd century BC , Miletus agreed not to reduce any free Knossian to slavery , and vice versa . Conversely , the emancipation by ransom of a city that had been entirely reduced to slavery carried great prestige : Cassander , in 316 BC , restored Thebes . Before him , Philip II of Macedon enslaved and then emancipated Stageira .

==== Piracy and banditry ====

Piracy and banditry provided a significant and consistent supply of slaves , though the significance of this source varied according to era and region . Pirates and brigands would demand ransom whenever the status of their catch warranted it . Whenever ransom was not paid or not warranted , captives would be sold to a trafficker . In certain areas , piracy was practically a national specialty , described by Thucydides as " the old @-@ fashioned " way of life . Such was the case in Acarnania , Crete , and Aetolia . Outside of Greece , this was also the case with Illyrians , Phoenicians , and Etruscans . During the Hellenistic period , Cilicians and the mountain peoples from the coasts of Anatolia could also be added to the list . Strabo explains the popularity of the practice among the Cilicians by its profitability ; Delos , not far away , allowed for " moving a myriad of slaves daily " .

The growing influence of the Roman Republic , a large consumer of slaves , led to development of the market and an aggravation of piracy . In the 1st century BC , however , the Romans largely eradicated piracy to protect the Mediterranean trade routes .

= = = = Slave trade = = = =

There was slave trade between kingdoms and states of the wider region . The fragmentary list of slaves confiscated from the property of the mutilators of the Hermai mentions 32 slaves whose origin have been ascertained : 13 came from Thrace , 7 from Caria , and the others came from Cappadocia , Scythia , Phrygia , Lydia , Syria , Illyria , Macedon and Peloponnese . Local professionals sold their own people to Greek slave merchants . The principal centres of the slave trade appear to have been Ephesus , Byzantium , and even faraway Tanais at the mouth of the Don . Some " barbarian " slaves were victims of war or localised piracy , but others were sold by their parents . There is a lack of direct evidence of slave traffic , but corroborating evidence exists . Firstly , certain nationalities are consistently and significantly represented in the slave population , such as the corps of Scythian archers employed by Athens as a police force ? originally 300 , but eventually nearly a thousand . Secondly , the names given to slaves in the comedies often had a geographical link ; thus Thracian , used by Aristophanes in *The Wasps* , *The Acharnians* , and *Peace* , simply signified Thracian woman . Finally , the nationality of a slave was a significant criterion for major purchasers ; the ancient advice was not to concentrate too many slaves of the same origin in the same place , in order to limit the risk of revolt . It is also probable that , as with the Romans , certain nationalities were considered more productive as slaves than others .

The price of slaves varied in accordance with their ability . Xenophon valued a Laurion miner at 180 drachmas ; while a workman at major works was paid one drachma per day . Demosthenes ' father 's cutlers were valued at 500 to 600 drachmas each . Price was also a function of the quantity of slaves available ; in the 4th century BC they were abundant and it was thus a buyer 's market . A tax on sale revenues was levied by the market cities . For instance , a large helot market was organized during the festivities at the temple of Apollo at Actium . The Acarnanian League , which was in charge of the logistics , received half of the tax proceeds , the other half going to the city of Anactorion , of which Actium was a part . Buyers enjoyed a guarantee against latent defects ; the transaction could be invalidated if the bought slave turned out to be crippled and the buyer had not been warned about it .

= = = Natural growth = = =

Curiously , it appears that the Greeks did not " breed " their slaves , at least during the Classical Era , though the proportion of houseborn slaves appears to have been rather large in Ptolemaic Egypt and in manumission inscriptions at Delphi . Sometimes the cause of this was natural ; mines , for instance , were exclusively a male domain . On the other hand , there were many female domestic slaves . The example of African slaves in the American South on the other hand demonstrates that slave populations can multiply . This incongruity remains relatively unexplained .

Xenophon advised that male and female slaves should be lodged separately , that " ? nor children born and bred by our domestics without our knowledge and consent ? no unimportant matter , since , if the act of rearing children tends to make good servants still more loyally disposed , cohabiting but sharpens ingenuity for mischief in the bad . " The explanation is perhaps economic ; even a skilled slave was cheap , so it may have been cheaper to purchase a slave than to raise one . Additionally , childbirth placed the slave @-@ mother 's life at risk , and the baby was not guaranteed to survive to adulthood .

Houseborn slaves (oikogeneis) often constituted a privileged class . They were , for example , entrusted to take the children to school ; they were " pedagogues " in the first sense of the term . Some of them were the offspring of the master of the house , but in most cities , notably Athens , a child inherited the status of its mother .

= = Status of slaves = =

The Greeks had many degrees of enslavement . There was a multitude of categories , ranging from free citizen to chattel slave , and including Penestae or helots , disenfranchised citizens , freedmen , bastards , and metics . The common ground was the deprivation of civic rights .

Moses Finley proposed a set of criteria for different degrees of enslavement :

had no rights

Right to own property

Authority over the work of another

Power of punishment over another

Legal rights and duties (liability to arrest and / or arbitrary punishment , or to litigate)

Familial rights and privileges (marriage , inheritance , etc .)

Possibility of social mobility (manumission or emancipation , access to citizen rights)

Religious rights and obligations

Military rights and obligations (military service as servant , heavy or light soldier , or sailor)

= = = Athenian slaves = = =

Athenian slaves were the property of their master (or of the state) , who could dispose of them as he saw fit . He could give , sell , rent , or bequeath them . A slave could have a spouse and children , but the slave family was not recognized by the state , and the master could scatter the family members at any time . Slaves had fewer judicial rights than citizens and were represented by their master in all judicial proceedings . A misdemeanour that would result in a fine for the free man would result in a flogging for the slave ; the ratio seems to have been one lash for one drachma . With several minor exceptions , the testimony of a slave was not admissible except under torture . Slaves were tortured in trials because they often remained loyal to their master . A famous example of trusty slave was Themistocles 's Persian slave Sicinnus (the counterpart of Ephialtes of Trachis) , who , despite his Persian origin , betrayed Xerxes and helped Athenians in the Battle of Salamis . Despite torture in trials , the Athenian slave was protected in an indirect way : if he was mistreated , the master could initiate litigation for damages and interest (*dikē dikastikē* / *dikē blabēs*) . Conversely , a master who excessively mistreated a slave could be prosecuted by any citizen (*graphē hybris* / *graphē hybris*) ; this was not enacted for the sake of the slave , but to avoid violent excess (*hubris* / *hubris*) .

Isocrates claimed that " not even the most worthless slave can be put to death without trial " ; the master 's power over his slave was not absolute . Draco 's law apparently punished with death the murder of a slave ; the underlying principle was : " was the crime such that , if it became more widespread , it would do serious harm to society ? " The suit that could be brought against a slave 's killer was not a suit for damages , as would be the case for the killing of cattle , but a *dikē dikastikē* (*dikē phonikē*) , demanding punishment for the religious pollution brought by the shedding of blood . In the 4th century BC , the suspect was judged by the Palladion , a court which had jurisdiction over unintentional homicide ; the imposed penalty seems to have been more than a fine but less than death ? maybe exile , as was the case in the murder of a Metic .

However , slaves did belong to their master 's household . A newly @-@ bought slave was welcomed with nuts and fruits , just like a newly @-@ wed wife . Slaves took part in most of the civic and family cults ; they were expressly invited to join the banquet of the Choes , second day of the Anthesteria , and were allowed initiation into the Eleusinian Mysteries . A slave could claim asylum in a temple or at an altar , just like a free man . The slaves shared the gods of their masters and could keep their own religious customs if any .

Slaves could not own property , but their masters often let them save up to purchase their freedom , and records survive of slaves operating businesses by themselves , making only a fixed tax @-@ payment to their masters . Athens also had a law forbidding the striking of slaves : if a person struck what appeared to be a slave in Athens , that person might find himself hitting a fellow @-@ citizen , because many citizens dressed no better . It astonished other Greeks that Athenians tolerated back

@-@ chat from slaves . Athenian slaves fought together with Athenian freemen at the battle of Marathon , and the monuments memorialize them . It was formally decreed before the battle of Salamis that the citizens should " save themselves , their women , children , and slaves " .

Slaves had special sexual restrictions and obligations . For example , a slave could not engage free boys in pederastic relationships (" A slave shall not be the lover of a free boy nor follow after him , or else he shall receive fifty blows of the public lash . ") , and they were forbidden from the palaestrae (" A slave shall not take exercise or anoint himself in the wrestling @-@ schools . ") . Both laws are attributed to Solon . Fathers wanting to protect their sons from unwanted advances provided them with a slave guard , called a paidagogos , to escort the boy in his travels .

The sons of vanquished foes would be enslaved and often forced to work in male brothels , as in the case of Phaedo of Elis , who at the request of Socrates was bought and freed from such an enterprise by the philosopher 's rich friends . On the other hand , it is attested in sources that the rape of slaves was persecuted , at least occasionally .

= = = Slaves in Gortyn = = =

In Gortyn , in Crete , according to a code engraved in stone dating to the 6th century BC , slaves (*doulos* or *oikeus*) found themselves in a state of great dependence . Their children belonged to the master . The master was responsible for all their offences , and , inversely , he received amends for crimes committed against his slaves by others . In the Gortyn code , where all punishment was monetary , fines were doubled for slaves committing a misdemeanour or felony . Conversely , an offence committed against a slave was much less expensive than an offence committed against a free person . As an example , the rape of a free woman by a slave was punishable by a fine of 200 staters (400 drachms) , while the rape of a non @-@ virgin slave by another slave brought a fine of only one obolus (a sixth of a drachm) .

Slaves did have the right to possess a house and livestock , which could be transmitted to descendants , as could clothing and household furnishings . Their family was recognized by law : they could marry , divorce , write a testament and inherit just like free men .

= = = A specific case : debt slavery = = =

Prior to its interdiction by Solon , Athenians practiced debt enslavement : a citizen incapable of paying his debts became " enslaved " to the creditor . The exact nature of this dependency is a much controversial issue among modern historians : was it truly slavery or another form of bondage ? However , this issue primarily concerned those peasants known as " hektemoroi " working leased land belonging to rich landowners and unable to pay their rents . In theory , those so enslaved would be liberated when their original debts were repaid . The system was developed with variants throughout the Near East and is cited in the Bible .

Solon put an end to it with the ?????????? / *seisachtheia* , liberation of debts , which prevented all claim to the person by the debtor and forbade the sale of free Athenians , including by themselves . Aristotle in his *Constitution of the Athenians* quotes one of Solon 's poems :

And many a man whom fraud or law had sold
Far from his god @-@ built land , an outcast slave ,
I brought again to Athens ; yea , and some ,
Exiles from home through debt 's oppressive load ,
Speaking no more the dear Athenian tongue ,
But wandering far and wide , I brought again ;
And those that here in vilest slavery (*douleia*)
Crouched ?neath a master 's (*despotēs*) frown , I set them free .

Though much of Solon 's vocabulary is that of " traditional " slavery , servitude for debt was at least different in that the enslaved Athenian remained an Athenian , dependent on another Athenian , in his place of birth . It is this aspect which explains the great wave of discontent with slavery of the 6th century BC , which was not intended to free all slaves but only those enslaved by debt . The reforms

of Solon left two exceptions : the guardian of an unmarried woman who had lost her virginity had the right to sell her as a slave , and a citizen could " expose " (abandon) unwanted newborn children .

= = = Manumission = = =

The practice of manumission is confirmed to have existed in Chios from the 6th century BC . It probably dates back to an earlier period , as it was an oral procedure . Informal emancipations are also confirmed in the classical period . It was sufficient to have witnesses , who would escort the citizen to a public emancipation of his slave , either at the theatre or before a public tribunal . This practice was outlawed in Athens in the middle of the 6th century BC to avoid public disorder .

The practice became more common in the 4th century BC and gave rise to inscriptions in stone which have been recovered from shrines such as Delphi and Dodona . They primarily date to the 2nd and 1st centuries BC , and the 1st century AD . Collective manumission was possible ; an example is known from the 2nd century BC in the island of Thasos . It probably took place during a period of war as a reward for the slaves ' loyalty , but in most cases the documentation deals with a voluntary act on the part of the master (predominantly male , but in the Hellenistic period also female) .

The slave was often required to pay for himself an amount at least equivalent to his street value . To this end they could use their savings or take a so @-@ called " friendly " loan (?????? / eranos) from their master , a friend or a client like the hetaera Neaira did .

Emancipation was often of a religious nature , where the slave was considered to be " sold " to a deity , often Delphian Apollo , or was consecrated after his emancipation . The temple would receive a portion of the monetary transaction and would guarantee the contract . The manumission could also be entirely civil , in which case the magistrate played the role of the deity .

The slave 's freedom could be either total or partial , at the master 's whim . In the former , the emancipated slave was legally protected against all attempts at re @-@ enslavement ? for instance , on the part of the former master 's inheritors . In the latter case , the emancipated slave could be liable to a number of obligations to the former master . The most restrictive contract was the paramone , a type of enslavement of limited duration during which time the master retained practically absolute rights .

In regard to the city , the emancipated slave was far from equal to a citizen by birth . He was liable to all types of obligations , as one can see from the proposals of Plato in The Laws : presentation three times monthly at the home of the former master , forbidden to become richer than him , etc . In fact , the status of emancipated slaves was similar to that of metics , the residing foreigners , who were free but did not enjoy a citizen 's rights .

= = = Spartan slaves = = =

Spartan citizens used helots , a dependent group collectively owned by the state . It is uncertain whether they had chattel slaves as well . There are mentions of people manumitted by Spartans , which was supposedly forbidden for helots , or sold outside of Lakonia : the poet Alcman ; a Philoxenos from Cytharea , reputedly enslaved with all his fellow citizens when his city was conquered , later sold to an Athenian ; a Spartan cook bought by Dionysius the Elder or by a king of Pontus , both versions being mentioned by Plutarch ; and the famous Spartan nurses , much appreciated by Athenian parents .

Some texts mention both slaves and helots , which seems to indicate that they were not the same thing . Plato in Alcibiades I cites " the ownership of slaves , and notably helots " among the Spartan riches , and Plutarch writes about " slaves and helots " . Finally , according to Thucydides , the agreement that ended the 464 BC revolt of helots stated that any Messenian rebel who might hereafter be found within the Peloponnese was " to be the slave of his captor " , which means that the ownership of chattel slaves was not illegal at that time .

Most historians thus concur that chattel slaves were indeed used in the Greek city @-@ state of Sparta , at least after the Lacedemonian victory of 404 BC against Athens , but not in great numbers

and only among the upper classes . As was in the other Greek cities , chattel slaves could be purchased at the market or taken in war .

= = Slavery conditions = =

It is difficult to appreciate the condition of Greek slaves . According to Aristotle , the daily routine of slaves could be summed up in three words : " work , discipline , and feeding " . Xenophon 's advice is to treat slaves as domestic animals , that is to say punish disobedience and reward good behaviour . For his part , Aristotle prefers to see slaves treated as children and to use not only orders but also recommendations , as the slave is capable of understanding reasons when they are explained .

Greek literature abounds with scenes of slaves being flogged ; it was a means of forcing them to work , as were control of rations , clothing , and rest . This violence could be meted out by the master or the supervisor , who was possibly also a slave . Thus , at the beginning of Aristophanes ' The Knights (4 ? 5) , two slaves complain of being " bruised and thrashed without respite " by their new supervisor . However , Aristophanes himself cites what is a typical old saw in ancient Greek comedy :

" He also dismissed those slaves who kept on running off , or deceiving someone , or getting whipped . They were always led out crying , so one of their fellow slaves could mock the bruises and ask then : ' Oh you poor miserable fellow , what 's happened to your skin ? Surely a huge army of lashes from a whip has fallen down on you and laid waste your back ? ' "

The condition of slaves varied very much according to their status ; the mine slaves of Laureion and the pornai (brothel prostitutes) lived a particularly brutal existence , while public slaves , craftsmen , tradesmen and bankers enjoyed relative independence . In return for a fee (??????? / apophora) paid to their master , they could live and work alone . They could thus earn some money on the side , sometimes enough to purchase their freedom . Potential emancipation was indeed a powerful motivator , though the real scale of this is difficult to estimate .

Ancient writers considered that Attic slaves enjoyed a " peculiarly happy lot " : Pseudo @-@ Xenophon deplores the liberties taken by Athenian slaves : " as for the slaves and Metics of Athens , they take the greatest licence ; you cannot just strike them , and they do not step aside to give you free passage " . This alleged good treatment did not prevent 20 @,@ 000 Athenian slaves from running away at the end of the Peloponnesian War at the incitement of the Spartan garrison at Attica in Decelea . These were principally skilled artisans (kheirotekhnai) , probably among the better @-@ treated slaves . The title of a 4th @-@ century comedy by Antiphanes , The Runaway @-@ catcher (?????????????) , suggests that slave flight was not uncommon .

Conversely , there are no records of a large @-@ scale Greek slave revolt comparable to that of Spartacus in Rome . It can probably be explained by the relative dispersion of Greek slaves , which would have prevented any large @-@ scale planning . Slave revolts were rare , even in Rome . Individual acts of rebellion of slaves against their master , though scarce , are not unheard of ; a judicial speech mentions the attempted murder of his master by a boy slave , not 12 years old .

= = Views of Greek slavery = =

= = = Historical views = = =

Very few authors of antiquity call slavery into question . To Homer and the pre @-@ classical authors , slavery was an inevitable consequence of war . Heraclitus states that " War is the father of all , the king of all ... he turns some into slaves and sets others free " .

During the classical period , the main justification for slavery was economic . From a philosophical point of view , the idea of " natural " slavery emerged at the same time ; thus , as Aeschylus states in The Persians , the Greeks " [o] f no man are they called the slaves or vassals " , while the Persians , as Euripides states in Helen , " are all slaves , except one " ? the Great King .

Hippocrates theorizes about this latent idea at the end of the 5th century BC . According to him , the temperate climate of Anatolia produced a placid and submissive people . This explanation is reprised by Plato , then Aristotle in Politics , where he develops the concept of " natural slavery " : " for he that can foresee with his mind is naturally ruler and naturally master , and he that can do these things with his body is subject and naturally a slave . " As opposed to an animal , a slave can comprehend reason but " ? has not got the deliberative part at all . "

Alcidamas , at the same time as Aristotle , took the view : " nature has made nobody a slave " .

In parallel , the concept that all men , whether Greek or barbarian , belonged to the same race was being developed by the Sophists and thus that certain men were slaves although they had the soul of a freeman and vice versa . Aristotle himself recognized this possibility and argued that slavery could not be imposed unless the master was better than the slave , in keeping with his theory of " natural " slavery . The Sophists concluded that true servitude was not a matter of status but a matter of spirit ; thus , as Menander stated , " be free in the mind , although you are slave : and thus you will no longer be a slave " . This idea , repeated by the Stoics and the Epicurians , was not so much an opposition to slavery as a trivialisation of it .

The Greeks could not comprehend an absence of slaves . Slaves exist even in the " Cloudcuckooland " of Aristophanes ' The Birds as well as in the ideal cities of Plato 's Laws or Republic . The utopian cities of Phaleas of Chalcedon and Hippodamus of Miletus are based on the equal distribution of property , but public slaves are used respectively as craftsmen and land workers . The " reversed cities " placed women in power or even saw the end of private property , as in Lysistrata or Assemblywomen , but could not picture slaves in charge of masters . The only societies without slaves were those of the Golden Age , where all needs were met without anyone having to work . In this type of society , as explained by Plato , one reaped generously without sowing . In Telekleides ' Amphictyons barley loaves fight with wheat loaves for the honour of being eaten by men . Moreover , objects move themselves ? dough kneads itself , and the jug pours itself . Similarly , Aristotle said that slaves would not be necessary " if every instrument could accomplish its own work ... the shuttle would weave and the plectrum touch the lyre without a hand to guide them " , like the legendary constructs of Daedalus and Hephaestus . Society without slaves is thus relegated to a different time and space . In a " normal " society , one needs slaves .

= = = Modern views = = =

Slavery in Greek antiquity has long been an object of apologetic discourse among Christians , who are typically awarded the merit of its collapse . From the 16th century the discourse became moralizing in nature . The existence of colonial slavery had significant impact on the debate , with some authors lending it civilizing merits and others denouncing its misdeeds . Thus Henri @-@ Alexandre Wallon in 1847 published a History of Slavery in Antiquity among his works for the abolition of slavery in the French colonies .

In the 19th century , a politico @-@ economic discourse emerged . It concerned itself with distinguishing the phases in the organisation of human societies and correctly identifying the place of Greek slavery . The influence of Marx is decisive ; for him the ancient society was characterized by development of private ownership and the dominant (and not secondary as in other pre @-@ capitalist societies) character of slavery as a mode of production . The Positivists represented by the historian Eduard Meyer (Slavery in Antiquity , 1898) were soon to oppose the Marxist theory . According to him slavery was the foundation of Greek democracy . It was thus a legal and social phenomenon , and not economic .

Current historiography developed in the 20th century ; led by authors such as Joseph Vogt , it saw in slavery the conditions for the development of elites . Conversely , the theory also demonstrates an opportunity for slaves to join the elite . Finally , Vogt estimates that modern society , founded on humanist values , has surpassed this level of development .

In 2011 , Greek slavery remains the subject of historiographical debate , on two questions in particular : can it be said that ancient Greece was a " slave society " , and did Greek slaves comprise a social class ?

