

Slavery

The Slave Systems of Greek and Roman Antiquity, The American Philosophical Society (1955) by William L. Westermann.

These last twenty years the late Professor W.L. Westermann's article in the Pauly-Wissowa-Kroll Real-Encyclopedie der classischen Altertumswissenschaft stood as the standard source on the subject of slavery in classical antiquity. Hardly more than a year after the death of that eminent scholar of the graceful pen, a posthumous version of that synthesis has been put in our hands, bringing up to date the original article. Westermann's last years were devoted to a deepening and extension of his knowledge marked by several publications on the subject upon which he rose to the rank of world authority. More than to any other quality perhaps he owed this distinction to the rare combination of a passion for accuracy in research and an eagerness to venture into the areas of his discipline where the topical problems thrive. A survey of his statements and "decisions", therefore provides a summary of the valid opinion on a number of specific questions; a weighty view on all pertinent matters; including a few seriously contentious ones in regard to points of general interest to the student of economic and social history concerning the still unresolved problem of slavery. For as our knowledge of antiquity extends into the Sumerian, Semitic and Hittite Near East the complex nature of slavery, its various origins and functions in the community become apparent. As a rule Westermann was the first to describe his own views on a definite matter as tentative and open to revision. He justly took pride in this mark of objectivity in which he excelled. No one, of course, can be critical of the very postulates on which his thinking rests. "Throughout the entire book it has been a constant effort on my part," he wrote, "to look out of the windows of the slave structures as I have entered into them, upon the changing scenery of the Greek and Roman

Mediterranean cultures in which they stood." This 'looking out of the windows' provides the fascination of the work. Two vast perspectives opened up to him, the one pointing to the past, the millennial "pre-Greek" antiquity of the East; the other to the future, an equal stretch of Christian influence in the West. In this latter regard the work finally disposed of the modern legend which credited Christianity with a hostility to slavery and with removing that institution from its realm in the Occident. In regard to the early Orient, on the other hand, his perspective may have been viciated by his identification with Greek antiquity. On the matter of slavery he deemed the Greeks alone to have achieved conceptual maturity. It may be that in doing so he expressed a preference which on the problem of general slavery tends to reinforce some Western notions of an alleged cultural dichotomy of East and West ^{and its variants} which would wrench that institution from their anthropological and sociological backgrounds which cut across those historical culture areas.

Greek and Roman antiquity are dealt with separately, in altogether five sections: the Greeks in their classical and Hellenistic, mainly Egyptian, periods; the Romans, in their Republican and Imperial -- Western and Eastern -- periods. Over this stretch of a thousand years a set of questions are followed through with an unpedantic consistency: such as the sources of their slaves, absolute and proportionate numbers, employment, the slave trade and ^{slave} prices, legal status, particularly the social status, treatment, rise and deterioration on the social and human scale. Of the five periods, only classical Greece and Republican Rome have been here left roughly unchanged when compared with the 1935 version. To the first the Aramaic texts which deal with enslavement practices in the Hebrew settlement of Elephantine on the Upper Nile have been added, as of 'unusual importance'; to the latter, Republican Rome, "numerous details" have

accrued, and some of the conclusions have been altered. The other parts have been either "fully recast and rewritten" such as the eastern Mediterranean area ~~it~~ after the conquest of Egypt and Southwestern Asia by Alexander the Great; or "greatly extended and deepened" as the Roman imperial world in the three centuries after Christ. The Eastern provinces of the Roman Empire from Diocletian to Justinian, are "entirely new as contrasted with the brief statement made in the Pauly-Wissowa-Kroll treatment." In this description I followed the admirably balanced preface of the work and will continue to keep to the text in summing up the presentation of classical Greece. It is introduced by Homer and Hesiod. Slaves in the Homeric period were obtained by capture in war and by casual and sporadic, rather than organized, stealing of men, women, and children. Houseborn slaves do not appear at all in the epics. There is no example of enslavement of self-sale because of debt in the two epics. The work performed by slaves did not differ from that done by free servants. The Homeric situation...establishes the general picture of a mild form of agricultural and household use of slaves which persisted into the second century B.C., though with varying intensity, in those parts of the Greek world which did not become handicraft production areas. In those Greek states in which helotry or other forms of serfdom persisted, such as Sparta and Thessaly, any important development of slavery is not to be expected. During the eighth and seventh centuries events occurred which had a profound influence upon all social and economic phases of Hellenic life. These were the colonization of the Mediterranean littoral, the introduction of coined money in exchange, and the early stages of the Hellenic industrializing of handicraft production. That these changes gradually increased the use of slaves and eventually altered the whole type of Greek slavery cannot be questioned. The existence of a considerable number of debtor slaves in Attica as early as Solon's time, although Athens

was still relatively in the background of the commercial trends, and the fact that an export market for these slaves existed in other Greek city-states may be cited in support of the statement above.

For the period 750-600 B.C. we have slight indications of the type of slavery in Boeotia presented in Hesiod. Notable here is the complete omission of slaves as a fundamental necessity. Increased use of slaves, presumably in agriculture, in Attica is suggested by the practice of enslavement of debtors known to us from the abolition of self-sale or sale of members of one's family by Solon in 594 B.C. The abolition by Solon of the right of the individual in Attica to mortgage himself, his wife or his children for debt was far-reaching in its consequences. There were two ways by which a debtor could be reduced to slavery, by voluntary self-submission to servitude or by judicial decision when the total property of the debtor did not suffice to meet the debt obligation. Slavery incurred by debt was thus certainly eliminated as a source of slave recruitment of any consequence to the Greek world until the Hellenistic period.

From the Persian Wars to Alexander...The period as a whole is marked by an increase in the number of slaves relative to that of the free population; by increased employment of slave labor in handicraft industries in these cities which became centers of industrial production through small shop labor and through household labor for sale of the product to distributing agencies; and by the practice of capital investment in slaves for this type of household labor or in slaves which were leased to shop owners as instruments of production and sources of income to their owners. The references to slavery for the late sixth and early fifth centuries are exceedingly scant; but they seem to show that the western satrapies of the Persian Empire, rather than the Greek city-states, offered the best market for slaves. A considerable increase in the relative numbers and in the importance of the

slave population must be assumed for the period of the so-called pentēkontaetia at Athens (479-431 B.C.) This is strongly supported by the "important statement" of Thucydides that after Decalcea had passed permanently into Spartan hands, i.e., from 412 to 404 B.C., more than 20,000 slaves of the Athenians deserted. Nevertheless the notorious reference in Athenaeus to a service giving 400,000 slaves for Athens is refused all credence. Similarly the 1000 Nicias at Athens are judged to be greatly exaggerated. The disastrous illusion of an Athens teeming with slaves should now be finally set at rest. Westermann suggests that in Attica the slaves did not comprise more than a third of the total population, possibly not more than a fourth. A guess that the slaves in Attica in the earlier period of the Peloponnesian war numbered from sixty thousand to eighty thousand, including both sexes and all ages, would be within the bounds of reason. In the fourth century .. There is small reason to assume a marked increase in slaveholding in the Greek world. Eduard Meyer is quoted with approval for his view that agricultural production in most parts of Greece remained in the hands of free labor, except where a serf population provided for it. Great slave masses would have produced slave revolts. No slave revolts, as opposed to Helot uprisings, occurred in the eastern Mediterranean area until the late second century B.C.

In Attica, Corinth, and Megara the employment of slaves in industrial work far outweighed their use in agricultural production. In these city-states a rapid development of the custom of capital investment in slaves as instruments of production, earning money for their owners under the lease system, and the wide diversification of such labor, are clearly apparent. There is also no satisfactory proof available for the theory of a lower productivity of slave labor as compared with free labor. In the building accounts of the Erechtheum at Athens of 409-408 B.C. sixteen slaves appear

as skilled workmen as against thirty-five metics and twenty citizens, receiving equal pay for similar types of work with the free. There is no sign of any effort to obtain increased production by the process of speeding up the workmen, whether free or slave. The right of manumission which lay with the owners of slaves throughout antiquity was thoroughly established as a custom in the fifth century B.C., developing in the fifth and fourth centuries into a fashion so widespread that the entire aspect of slavery was changed. Serious revolts of slaves did not occur during the period 500-320 B.C. ...in the fourth century and thereafter the pressure of social custom operated in most cases to compel acceptance of manumission price upon the part of the master when it was tendered by the slave. ...Aramaic papyri from Syene in Upper Egypt has been made in the Charles Edwin Wilbour collection of the Brooklyn Museum. ...Elephantine in the second half of the fifth century B.C. ...Semitic-Hebrew type of enslavement... ...same find of Aramaic material which was published in 1906 by A. H. Sayce and A. E. Cowley. ...the male slave, Petosiris, was marked upon the right wrist with the letter yod, written in Aramaic. ...fortress of Yab. These slaves by all appearances are Egyptians. ...tattooing or branding, was a feature of the Semitic-Oriental slave practice. It was not characteristic of the Greeks. Both the divergencies and the likenesses between the two systems apply, when viewed in the large, to the general Semitic-Oriental slave practice as contrasted with that of the Greeks. The slavery documents range from 449 to 420 B.C. A slave lad named Yedoniah, to Uriah. This Uriah was doubtless a Hebrew. He agreed to adopt the slave as son, and not to enslave him or to permit his enslavement by others. No one was allowed to 'mark' the lad."

agreements for slave sustenance

gerotrophēσαι Hebrew: paras : gratuity

Elias Bickerman: ration, food allowance of the slave

demensum cibum of Plautus (dates ca. Antigonus of Socho)

Bickerman: paras is the equivalent of the Greek trophimum, meaning ration ...an agreement for slave sustenance (homologia trophimou deulikou) of record office of Tebtunis; appr. A.D. 16. "legal marriage of a slave woman to a member of the Hebrew community." "... her retention of slave status while married to a free man." "close relation to enslavement of the adoption of children, which is characteristically ancient Oriental, but not Hellenic." (cf. Uniah) A marked leniency in the treatment and attitude toward slaves certainly prevailed in Attica. ...

..semi-independent condition of the misthophorounta somata (pay earning slave). Gortyn: again even more closely. ...comes the evidence of one inner structural feature common to all slave institutions of which the ancient slave societies seem to have been aware than those more modern. ...that they feed and house their slaves up to a minimal standard, at least, of living requirements. Granting that slave status in general was an unenviable condition, there are many indications that deeper racial and class antipathies, such as those based upon differences of skin coloring, were totally lacking in the Greek world. It has not been sufficiently emphasized that both of these thinkers have thrown free workmen into close proximity with slave labor by their attitude upon the "banauisic" trades. The approach to the slave system of the Hellenic polities should be conditioned upon the understanding of the fluidity of its status. The ascent into freedom by the several methods of manmission then available was an easy and as prevalent as the descent from freedom into servitude. For a century after Alexander the sale of captives in war could not have been the

primary source of slavery in the Hellenistic world. Kidnapping and sale of children remained endemic and constant in the eastern Mediterranean. In the late third century a return to the policy of enslavement through war can be observed, notably in connection with the wars of the Macedonian kings. With the mass enslavement by order of the Roman Senate in 167 B.C. of 150,000 Epirotes, chiefly Molossians, from seventy towns the full effects became manifest in the Aegean area of the application of the policy of sale of captives on a large scale which had characterised Sicilian warfare since the time of Dionysius I of Syracuse and had become an accepted feature of Roman military policy during the Punic wars. The concurrence of these four elements created a situation, during the century of the Roman conquest of the East, 171 to 64 B.C., under which slaves were drained westward in large numbers.

- 3 century : mass enslavement by order of the Roman Senate
- " development in the West of large grain plantations
- 2nd " insensitiveness on the part of the Senate to ultimate economic disadvantages of unrestricted piracy

earlier decades
of 1st century inability on the part of the Roman senate to cope with that problem.

Arrest and eventual enslavement by state action for non-payment of taxes was everywhere possible, as in the previous Greek period. In Ptolemaic Egypt, contrary to the Solonian decree still prevailing in the Greek homeland cities, executory arrest and eventual enslavement of the debtor himself is now proven. By negative implication this is clear from a series of excerpts from the laws and regulations of Alexandria of the late third century B.C. Among them occurs the provision that Alexandrian citizens, male or female, might not become the slaves of their fellow

citizens. The evident assumption is that inhabitants of Egypt who were not Alexandrian citizens might be enslaved by other inhabitants of the country. The attitude toward slavery which inspired this decision was surely not Greek. It is in fact the application, in a restricted field, of the old oriental concept that fellow nationals could not be enslaved to persons of their own tribal group. It is probable that the proportion of slaves ~~in~~ ~~the~~ ~~population~~ ~~was~~ ~~not~~ ~~greatly~~ ~~increased~~ ~~after~~ ...in spite of the enlargement of the area of slave recruitment for the Greek world and the obvious extension into the newly founded Hellenistic industrial centers of Egypt and Western Asia of the Greek practice of capital investment in slaves for labor in handicraft shops. In the Greek papyri which come predominantly from the towns and villages of Ptolemaic and Roman Egypt the terms used at Athens to designate these handicraft slaves ("those who live apart" and "pay-earning slaves") do not appear. In the field of agriculture in which the greater part of Egyptian labor had always been employed, the teeming indigenous free population, which had always been accustomed to compulsory services, left little room for slave labor. The characteristic type of Egyptian slavery in the Hellenistic period was that of household service, especially with the dominant class of Greeks.

f (37) "Debtor slaves, *hypochreia sonata*, Abh. Sachs. Akad 42 (1): 59

Three different meanings for threptos which appear in the Asia Minor inscriptions of the Roman period. These are: foster-child, adopted child and slave child. These differences no doubt were followed in the third and second centuries B.C. Professor Bostovtzeff...He did not deal with the reverse of this picture, the introduction of the Greek type of production into the West, based upon trained craftsmen who might be either free or slave classification. This change, which is noticeable in Italy particularly, from dominant praedial slavery to a fairly balanced free and slave

labor system in the handicrafts, is of great importance. The conclusion that about three slaves would cover the average number owned by any one slaveholding family in central Greece seems to be warranted. In the Zenon papyri from Egypt of the third century B.C. Tyre appears as the most important outlet for Syrian slaves exported to Egypt. The idea, which is too widely accepted, of the concentration of the slave trade of the Aegean upon the island of Delos in the century after 166 B.C. is based solely upon an interpretation of a statement of Strabo alleging that 10,000 slaves could be handled there in one day.... Greek trading cities would rationally assign special places in them for the slave sales; but so far as known there were no separate slave markets in the sense in which the term was used in the days of North American slavery.

Pellux, 7:11 : Kukloi... ta anrapoda isēs kaita loipa θία.

The Ptolemaic royal ordinance just cited, which is of the third century B.C., also forbade the export of slaves out of Egypt. Comparison of these disturbances (of alleged Chian slave uprising) with the long-enduring slave outbreaks in the West and the brutality there displayed by both sides give sufficient proof that the large scale plantation and ranch slavery which developed in the area of the western Mediterranean introduced changes which for two hundred years affected the entire attitude of the Mediterranean world toward slaves and gave to its slave system a new economic and social significance. One important fact seems to lie at the root of all the differences which are discernible between the pre-Greek and the Greek social responses to the institution of slavery. This is that the level of maturity attained in legal thought by the Greeks of the city-state period, as represented in their attitude toward slavery, was much higher than that reached by their predecessors in ancient Egypt and in the Semitic-speaking lands of western Asia. This greater maturity expressed itself in a more

logical recognition among the Greeks of the distinctions of status between the free and the unfree and a far greater semantic precision in the terms which expressed the gradations of social classification. In sharp contrast to this clarity of differentiation between those completely free and those who were enslaved, with a special term for "freedman" () and regulations which provided the freedman group with legal directives, stands the blurring and overlapping of these social classifications in the Egyptian and in the Semitic languages. There is no precise word, in fact, for "manumission" or for "freedman" in the ancient Semitic languages. In the "heroic age" of their infiltration into the Tigris-Euphrates lowlands and their production of their epic poetry, corresponding to the Homeric age of the Greek world, the Sumerian language had no specific word for "slaves" which differentiated them as a population group from war captives. The cuneiform sign for "slave" meant, literally, a "man from the mountains," that is, a captive from an alien land. The same indefiniteness prevailed in the early development of the Egyptian language in the use of the term b'k, to the point that the Egyptologists still disagree as to the exact status of the persons thus designated. The Hebrew word 'ebed suffers from the same vagueness, its application ranging through "slave" or "servant of the Lord" in the phrase 'ebed Jahweh, to the titular epithet describing a high military or civil official as 'ebed al malek, "servant of the king." Among the pre-Greeks the distinction between the slave and the free man was determined by the concept of "religious tribalism" which governed the activities of the Oriental peoples. In direct contrast to the religious-patriotic motivations of the pre-Greek peoples of the eastern Mediterranean area the Greeks in their practice of enslavement paid little, if any, attention to polity patriotism; and they displayed no deference for religious sentiment. With no consideration even of fellow citizenship in the same polity,

but with ruthless logic, they "denationalized" the idea of slavery. The transmission records of the temenea at Delphi.....the enslavement of men of Hellenic origin and blood to ~~the~~ other Hellenes. In some instances the Greek slaves who were freed by sale to Delphian Apollo were fellow subjects and fellow residents of the same polities as the masters who accepted from them, through the god, the money for their self-redemption. It is true that such slaves as were natives of the same polity as their owners seem always to have been members of the non-citizen group. Whether this was a rule of legal formulation or is a mere accident of the chance which prevails in the transmission of ancient documentary evidence cannot be determined. Greeks completely disregarded tribal and coreligious considerations in their enslavement system. Said in other words, the Greeks secularized their institutions of slavery. It has been stressed above that the inexactness of the bondage terminology in the languages of the ancient Orient, which fails to fix clear lines of demarcation between the words for captive, servant, and slave, is conspicuously present in the Hebrew word 'ebed' which does not establish a distinction between free servants, persons in bondage, and slaves. It is not until the period of the Egyptian Empire, according to the abundant sources which we have, that slaves, in any strict definition of a slave system, begin to appear. The earliest contract for the sale of a slave thus far known to us from Pharaonic Egypt comes from the thirteenth century B.C. For throughout these ten centuries the Egyptian tongue still failed to produce the sharp linguistic categories separating "captives" from "slaves" such as the Greeks evolved in their precise linguistic distinctions between doulos, apoluteroi, and aleutheroi (slaves, freedmen, and men legally free). Nevertheless, it still remains a moot question whether the system of employing slaves in handicraft production could have established itself upon any large scale in Ptolemaic Egypt, or did so.

....improbably that anything but a relatively unimportant amount of employment of slave labor could have developed in the handicrafts even in Alexandria, the most completely Hellenized of all the cities of the Ptolemies. Only one Ptolemaic contract for the purchase of a slave has appeared among the Zenon papyri. (260 - 239 B.C.) From the year 215-219 we have a document. It has always seemed to the writer that the implications of this complaint are clear enough.....that legal measures existed for the detention of free members of the families of debtors if their persons had been pledged.

The record "is incomplete" on the problem of self-pledge and the pledging of one's family members

Bocchoris passed a law forbidding loans upon the person of the debtor. During the Persian rule over Egypt, from 525 to 332 B.C., this decree had fallen into abeyance.. Only in the city-state of Alexandria the Egyptian practice did not prevail. For an Alexandrian citizen could not become a slave of another Alexandrian.. A decree of Ptolemy II of the year 261-260 B.C. deals with the registration, for taxation purposes, of cattle and slaves in the Egyptian possessions in Syria and Phoenicia. It contains the following requirement: "If any persons living in Syria and Phoenicia have bought a free native of the lower class (sōma laikon aleutheron) or have carried him off or in any other manner have gained possession of" such a free person, they were to bring him in and register him. Lower class native who is free.... The prohibition of slave export does not appear in any legislation in the Greek homeland which I have encountered. This conclusion embodies the assumption that the custom of enslavement of captives in war and of persons snatched from neighboring tribes was practiced from early times by all the indigenous peoples of the western Mediterranean lands. The sale into slavery, on condition of export out of Sicily.... This

This incident serves, however, to mark the beginning of enslavement upon a large scale through war which became a characteristic feature of the western Mediterranean situation at the time of the rise to power of Diocysius I.

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PICKERING

Slavery

The Slave Systems of Greek and Roman Antiquity. By William L. Westermann, Professor Emeritus of History, Columbia University. Philadelphia: The American Philosophical Society, 1955.

"Throughout the entire book it has been a constant effort on my part," wrote that eminent scholar of the graceful pen, "to look out of the windows of the slave structures as I have entered into them, upon the changing scenery of the Greek and Roman Mediterranean cultures in which they stood." That traveler's glance fascinates the reader. But Westermann's scope is even broader. The work is not restricted to the Greek and Roman world; backward and forward in time millennial perspectives open up, the one pointing to the past, the pre-Greek antiquity of the East; the other, to the future, the stretch of Christian influence in the West with slavery present in North America, almost to the last. Westermann finally disposes of the legend that credited Christianity with initiating the removal of slavery from the Roman Empire of the Occident. A whole section is now devoted to the clinching of that argument. But as regards the pre-Greek world of Mesopotamia, he not only views it out of the Greek window but, over and above, all too often with Greek eyes. His appraisal of the Orient and its widely spread forms of debtbondage is occasionally marred by a narrow adherence to the Hellenic point of view.

These last twenty years Westermann's study in the Pauly-Wissowa encyclopedia has ranked as the standard source on the subject of slavery in classical antiquity. The present book is a worthy successor. More than to any other quality, perhaps, Westermann owed his renown to exemplary accuracy in research combined with an eagerness to venture into those fields of moral hazard where controversial problems

thrive. The new version has retained that freshness of touch, along with the precision. We find, for instance, the number of definite types of "known" manumissions slightly increased and brought up to date. Philosophical, cultural, and sociological problems abound: we encounter the local variants of Roman and Greek slavery; the intercultural differences between Greek and Hebrew slavery; the even broader distinction between Greek and ^{Mesopotamian + Pharaonic} pre-Greek, primarily Semitic, slavery; the Serapis cults, which in their Eastern form implied the ownership of slaves by the god, whereas dedication of a slave to Serapis in its widely spread Greek cult meant freedom for the slave because Greek gods could own no slaves; the split in the Christian mentality on the subject of slavery; the fateful impact of the racial factor on North American slavery -- each of these questions handled so as to give them their need in the cultural history of mankind. On a number of points he speaks as the recognized authority, as on the Delphic manumission documents; on all points as a scholar whose views carry weight.

Several chapters have been added by Westermann to the Pauly-Wissowa article; for the rest the present edition is a translation of that 1935 study with occasional elaborations that put recent research on record and incidentally raise questions of a general order. Other-

wise the structure is unchanged. Greek and Roman antiquity are dealt with separately, in five main parts altogether: the Greek in its classical and Hellenistic (mainly Egyptian) periods; the Roman in its republican and imperial -- both Western and Eastern -- periods. Over these thousand years a set of questions relating to slaves are followed through with unpedantic consistency: sources of supply; absolute and proportionate numbers; use and employment; trade, piracy and prices; legal and social status, particularly as to treatment and its deterioration or improvement in human terms. Of the five parts, only classical Greece and republican Rome are broadly unaltered. To the classical Greek period, the Aramaic texts of the Hebrew settlement of Elephantine on the Upper Nile (fifth century A.D.) have been added "as of unusual importance"; on republican Rome there are "numerous" new details and some of the conclusions have been revised, but no major changes are noticeable. The other parts, such as that on the eastern Mediterranean area after the conquest of Egypt and southwestern Asia by Alexander the Great, have been "fully recast, and rewritten," or at least, like that on the Roman imperial world in the three centuries after Christ, "greatly extended and deepened." The section on the eastern provinces of the Roman Empire from Diocletian to Justinian is "entirely new as contrasted with the brief statements in the Pauly-Wissowa-Kroll treatment." (I quote from the Preface, with its accurate indications.) Beside ^{the} new material on the role of Christianity, two amplifications stand out. The one is the recent harvest of Ptolemaic papyri. With cautious elaboration the evidence for the overwhelming part played by free labor as against slavery in Hellenistic Egypt is convincingly developed. The other addition is the study of the

leveling process three centuries later when the gap between rural free tenants and slaves diminished over wide areas of the Roman Empire, and the two groups tended to merge in a more or less uniform condition of serfdom.

The two decades that separated the two texts were a comparatively quiet span in the field of scholarship following upon an intellectual upheaval. The immense progress wrought by the early works of Eduard Meyer, Max Weber and Michael Rostovtzeff was already reflected in the 1935 text; 1955 in the main registers merely confirmatory accretions. As a result, those basic insights that in 1935 announced the historiographical climate of the twentieth century as against that of the nineteenth now stand out as massive, abiding recognitions.

In the first place, the alleged slave societies of the Old World have proved a misconception. Apart from the two centuries and a half when the Roman latifundia were fed from a torrent of war captives, neither Greece nor Rome ever possessed a labor system in which slavery was prevalent. In Greece, slavery was a late institution, chiefly domestic, nonagricultural; the employment of purchased slaves in some industrial crafts as well as in mining and their earnings in other walks of life benefited fifth -- and fourth -- century leisure-class incomes, not the preponderantly peasant citizenry. Eventually, slavery declined in the wake of receding prosperity in metropolitan Greece. -- Early Egypt knew slavery as little as early Greece. It remained a quite subordinate feature until Greek conquest gave it a wider scope among the Greek "sahibs" themselves. The crucial fact appears to be that (always with the important exception of the Roman plantations) free and unfree labor were never far apart in their earning capacities

for the investor, whether he acted himself as the employer of his slaves, leased them out, or merely scooped their earnings. North American slavery, Westermann notes, was a recrudescence of the Italian-Sicilian agricultural methods, with purchase instead of war as the source of labor supply, aggravated by racial discrimination that hit even the freedman, a trait unknown to any slave system of Mediterranean antiquity.

In regard to Greece, Hellenism and Rome the picture is clear, the facts are well established. Yet slavery as a sociological and economic problem of man's past history, has not been brought nearer to final clarification. Indeed, ^{a possible} ~~maybe an avoidable~~ complication has been introduced by Westermann's insistence on a systematic contrasting of Greek slavery to its western Asian variants including dependent labor not linked to land, such as the bonded debtor of the Code of Hammurabi or the Old Testament. To declare Graeco-Roman-North American slavery the only true form of slavery as Westermann does is to reduce that word to a problematic term, without any indication how it should be delimited not only from serfdom but also from bondage. The article of 1935 was silent on the issue; the 1955 version makes a sustained attempt at justifying the selection of the Hellenic model.

Westermann emphatically maintains the view that pre-Greek societies never rose to the level of distinguishing between captives and slaves, nor did they develop a concept of slavery that was indifferent to the slave's origin, whether native or foreign. He credits the Greeks with a gift for juristic accuracy and stresses their complete readiness to acquire their compatriot for a slave, two statements almost equally open to doubt. Admittedly, he differentiates sharply

between slavery and serfdom that attaches a person to a piece of land but that other boundary, where slavery shades off into debtbondage or other forms of bondage, is ignored. Greek-Roman and North American slavery is by implication taken as the "mature" form of the institution of dependent labor to a great part of which -- the bonded free -- it was hardly more than peripheral. That in some cases enslavement actually originated from default on debt hardly touches on the essentials of the question.

It might thus come to pass that some of the general advances in method gained by Meyer and Rostovtzeff in the treatment of ancient societies have been weakened by the preference accorded by Westermann to the legal concepts of classical Greece on the specific matter of slavery. Eduard Meyer insisted that Israelitic social history was analogous to that of other tribal societies, such as we should assume the Greeks and Romans to have originally established. Not East versus West, but kinship society versus state society were the poles between which the historians' appraisal of the data should move. Westermann (largely unconsciously) revives the pre-Meyerian polarity, thereby restoring the precedence of geography over sociology in the discussion of the problems of slavery. This may have reacted upon his judgment on Greek economic history itself. Hence, for instance, his interpretation of the Solonic crisis as resulting from the spread of "slavery" to Attica (always in the ^{unqualified} "full," "mature" sense of that term), while the evidence rather supports the view that the calamity from which Solon wished to rid -- and succeeded in ridding -- Attica was debt-bondage.

~~Westermann's revised classic on Greek and Roman slave systems offers in its own field a solid basis from which to proceed to that more~~

But for the authority deservedly enjoyed by Westermann on the subject of slavery, an expression of such minor doubts would appear misplaced. His ^{total} accomplishment in the field stands alone as to range, candor and reliability. In its revised form this nobly phrased classic on Greek and Roman slave systems offers a solid basis from which to proceed to that general survey of slavery and bondage in the Old World which we do not yet possess.

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The Slave Systems of Greek and Roman Antiquity. By William L. Westermann, Professor Emeritus of History, Columbia University. Philadelphia: The American Philosophical Society, 1955.

"Throughout the entire book it has been a constant effort on my part," wrote that eminent scholar of the graceful pen, "to look out of the windows of the slave structures as I have entered into them, upon the changing scenery of the Greek and Roman Mediterranean cultures in which they stood." That traveler's glance fascinates the reader. But Westermann's scope is even broader. The work is not restricted to the Greek and Roman world; backward and forward in time millennial perspectives open up, the one pointing to the past, the pre-Greek antiquity of the East; the other, to the future, the stretch of Christian influence in the West with slavery present in North America, almost to the last. Westermann finally disposes of the legend that credited Christianity with initiating the removal of slavery from the Roman Empire of the Occident. A whole section is now devoted to the clinching of that argument. But as regards the pre-Greek world of Mesopotamia, he not only views it out of the Greek window but, over and above, all too often with Greek eyes. His appraisal of the Orient and its widely spread forms of debtbondage is occasionally marred by a narrow adherence to the Hellenic point of view.

These last twenty years Westermann's study in the Pauly-Wissowa encyclopedia has ranked as the standard source on the subject of slavery in classical antiquity. The present book is a worthy successor. More than to any other quality, perhaps, Westermann owed his renown to exemplary accuracy in research combined with an eagerness to venture into those fields of moral hazard where controversial problems

thrive. The new version has retained that freshness of touch, along with the precision. We find, for instance, the number of definite types of "known" papyri slightly increased and brought up to date. Philosophical, cultural, and sociological problems abound: we encounter the local variants of Roman and Greek slavery; the intercultural differences between Greek and Hebrew slavery; the even broader distinction between Greek and pre-Greek, primarily Semitic, slavery; the Serapis cults, which in their Eastern form implied the ownership of slaves by the god, whereas dedication of a slave to Serapis in its widely spread Greek cult meant freedom for the slave because Greek gods could own no slaves; the split in the Christian mentality on the subject of slavery; the fateful impact of the racial factor on North American slavery -- each of these questions handled so as to give them their need in the cultural history of mankind. On a number of points he speaks as the recognized authority, as on the Delphic papyrus documents; on all points as a scholar whose views carry weight.

Several chapters have been added by Westermann to the Pauly-Wissowa article; for the rest the present edition is a translation of that 1935 study with occasional elaborations that put recent research on record and incidentally raise questions of a general order. Other-

wise the structure is unchanged. Greek and Roman antiquity are dealt with separately, in five main parts altogether: the Greek in its classical and Hellenistic (mainly Egyptian) periods; the Roman in its republican and imperial -- both Western and Eastern -- periods. Over these thousand years a set of questions relating to slaves are followed through with unpedantic consistency: sources of supply; absolute and proportionate numbers; use and employment; trade, piracy and prices; legal and social status, particularly as to treatment and its deterioration or improvement in human terms. Of the five parts, only classical Greece and republican Rome are broadly unaltered. To the classical Greek period, the Aramaic texts of the Hebrew settlement of Elephantine on the Upper Nile (fifth century A.D.) have been added "as of unusual importance"; on republican Rome there are "numerous" new details and some of the conclusions have been revised, but no major changes are noticeable. The other parts, such as that on the eastern Mediterranean area after the conquest of Egypt and southwestern Asia by Alexander the Great, have been "fully recast, and rewritten," or at least, like that on the Roman imperial world in the three centuries after Christ, "greatly extended and deepened." The section on the eastern provinces of the Roman Empire from Diocletian to Justinian is "entirely new as contrasted with the brief statements in the Pauly-Wissowa-Kroll treatment." (I quote from the Preface, with its accurate indications.) Beside new material on the role of Christianity, two amplifications stand out. The one is the recent harvest of Ptolemaic papyri. With cautious elaboration the evidence for the overwhelming part played by free labor as against slavery in Hellenistic Egypt is convincingly developed. The other addition is the study of the

leveling process three centuries later when the gap between rural free tenants and slaves diminished over wide areas of the Roman Empire, and the two groups tended to merge in a more or less uniform condition of serfdom.

The two decades that separated the two texts were a comparatively quiet span in the field of scholarship following upon an intellectual upheaval. The immense progress wrought by the early works of Eduard Meyer, Max Weber and Michael Rostovtzeff was already reflected in the 1935 text; 1955 in the main registers merely confirmatory accretions. As a result, those basic insights that in 1935 announced the historiographical climate of the twentieth century as against that of the nineteenth now stand out as massive, abiding recognitions.

In the first place, the alleged slave societies of the Old World have proved a misconception. Apart from the two centuries and a half when the Roman latifundia were fed from a torrent of war captives, neither Greece nor Rome ever possessed a labor system in which slavery was prevalent. In Greece, slavery was a late institution, chiefly domestic, nonagricultural; the employment of purchased slaves in some industrial crafts as well as in mining and their earnings in other walks of life benefited fifth -- and fourth -- century leisure-class incomes, not the preponderantly peasant citizenry. Eventually, slavery declined in the wake of receding prosperity in metropolitan Greece. -- Early Egypt knew slavery as little as early Greece. It remained a quite subordinate feature until Greek conquest gave it a wider scope among the Greek "sehibs" themselves. The crucial fact appears to be that (always with the important exception of the Roman plantations) free and unfree labor were never far apart in their earning capacities

for the investor, whether he acted himself as the employer of his slaves, leased them out, or merely scooped their earnings. North American slavery, Westermann notes, was a recrudescence of the Italian-Sicilian agricultural methods, with purchase instead of war as the source of labor supply, aggravated by racial discrimination that hit even the freedman, a trait unknown to any slave system of Mediterranean antiquity.

In regard to Greece, Hellenism and Rome the picture is clear, the facts are well established. Yet slavery as a sociological and economic problem of man's past history, has not been brought nearer to final clarification. Indeed, maybe an avoidable complication has been introduced by Westermann's insistence on a systematic contrasting of Greek slavery to its western Asian variants including dependent labor not linked to land, such as the bonded debtor of the Code of Hammurabi or the Old Testament. To declare Greece-Roman-North American slavery the only true form of slavery as Westermann does is to reduce that word to a problematic term, without any indication how it should be delimited not only from serfdom but also from bondage. The article of 1935 was silent on the issue; the 1955 version makes a sustained attempt at justifying the selection of the Hellenic model.

Westermann emphatically maintains the view that pre-Greek societies never rose to the level of distinguishing between captives and slaves, nor did they develop a concept of slavery that was indifferent to the slave's origin, whether native or foreign. He credits the Greeks with a gift for juristic accuracy and stresses their complete readiness to acquire their compatriot for a slave, two statements almost equally open to doubt. Admittedly, he differentiates sharply

between slavery and serfdom that attaches a person to a piece of land but that other boundary, where slavery shades off into debtbondage or other forms of bondage, is ignored. Greek-Roman and North American slavery is by implication taken as the "mature" form of the institution of dependent labor to a great part of which -- the bonded free -- it was hardly more than peripheral. That in some cases enslavement actually originated from default on debt hardly touches on the essentials of the question.

It might thus come to pass that some of the general advances in method gained by Meyer and Rostovtzeff in the treatment of ancient societies have been weakened by the preference accorded by Westermann to the legal concepts of classical Greece on the specific matter of slavery. Eduard Meyer insisted that Israelitic social history was analogous to that of other tribal societies, such as we should assume the Greeks and Romans to have originally established. Not East versus West, but kinship society versus state society were the poles between which the historians' appraisal of the data should move. Westermann (largely unconsciously) revives the pre-Meyerian polarity, thereby restoring the precedence of geography over sociology in the discussion of the problems of slavery. This may have reacted upon his judgment on Greek economic history itself. Hence, for instance, his interpretation of the Solonic crisis as resulting from the spread of "slavery" to Attica (always in the "full," "mature" sense of that term), while the evidence rather supports the view that the calamity from which Solon wished to rid -- and succeeded in ridding -- Attica was debt-bondage.

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But for the authority deservedly enjoyed by Westermann on the subject of slavery, an expression of such minor doubts would appear misplaced. His ^{work} accomplishment in the field stands alone as to range, candor and reliability. In its revised form this nobly phrased classic on Greek and Roman slave systems offers a solid basis from which to proceed to that general survey of slavery and bondage in the Old World which we do not yet possess.

The Slave Systems of Greek and Roman Antiquity, The American Philosophical Society (1955) by William L. Westermann.

These last twenty years the late Professor W. L. Westermann's

any of these
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Friday has

article in the Pauly-Wissowa-Real-Encyclopädie der classischen Alter-
kundwissenschaften ^{published} as the standard source on the subject of slavery in

classical antiquity. Hardly more than a year after the death of that emin-
ent scholar of the graceful pen, ^{an English translation} a ~~posthumous~~ ^{the original} version of that synthesis ^{has}
been put in our hands, bringing up to date ^{the original article}. Westermann's

last years were devoted to a deepening and extension of his knowledge marked
by several publications on ^{the some aspects of slavery} the subject upon which he rose to ~~the rank of~~
world authority. More than to any other quality perhaps he owed this distin-

ction to the ^{combining} rare combination of a passion for accuracy in research and ~~his~~
eagerness to venture into the areas ^{of his disciplines} where the ^{topical} prob-
lems thrive. A survey of his statements and "decisions", ^{therefore} provides
a summary of ^{the valid opinion on a number of specific questions}; a weighty
view on all pertinent ^{ones} matters; including a few seriously contentious ^{ones}

with an
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^{Some} ~~in regard to~~ ^{points of great} general interest to the student of economic and social
history concerning the still unresolved problem of slavery. ~~Perhaps one~~

growing into an area
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than answers to our

knowledge of antiquity extends into the Sumerian, Semitic and Hittite Near
East the complex nature of slavery, its ^{various independent} origins and functions in the
community ^{became} apparent. ^{As a rule} Westermann was the first to describe

his ~~own~~ ^{views} as tentative ^{and} open to revision. ^{OR}

pinpointing

~~justly took pride in the~~ ^{objectively} ~~work of objectivity in which he excelled~~

of course, ~~may~~ ^{be} critical of the ~~postulates~~ ^{on which his} thinking
rests.

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"Throughout the entire book it has been a constant effort on my part," wrote that eminent scholar of the graceful pen, "to look out of the windows of the slave structures as I have entered into them, upon the changing scenery of the Greek and Roman Mediterranean cultures in which they stood." That traveler's glance is what fascinates the reader. Forward and backward a millennial perspective opens up, the one pointing to the past, the "pre-Greek" antiquity of the East; the other, to the future, the millennial stretch of Christian influence in the West with slavery present almost to the very last. In this latter direction Westermann finally disposes of the legend that credited Christianity with initiating the removal of slavery from the Roman Empire of the Occident. A whole new section in this revision of a famous article is devoted to the quest that clinches the argument. In the direction of the past his perspective may have been vitiated by a distorting angle, the Greek. With classical Greece and Greek Egypt as his locus, slavery would appear split into Greek and pre-Greek forms, with the European-American version as the prototype, the pre-Greek, mainly Asian and African variant as no more than an unstable complex merging the condition of war captives with that of citizens sold or selling themselves or their family into slavery. Actually, that dichotomy of Greek and pre-Greek that lent itself to the inquiring mind as a model for the study of mutual acculturation of Greek and Egyptian under the Ptolemies, would wrench that institution ^e from its sociological and anthropological moorings ^{of slavery} that are the distinctive marks of Western and Eastern culture areas. ^{which are not differentially according} On this there will be more to say.

These last twenty years Westermann's German language study in the