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CONTENTS

	PAGE
CORPUS INSCRIPTIONUM IUDAEAEE / PALAESTINAE	
BENJAMIN ISAAC, Introductory Remark.....	v
WALTER AMELING, Epigraphy and the Greek Language in Hellenistic Palestine.....	1
WERNER ECK, Honorary Statues as a Means of Public Communication in Iudaea / Syria Palaestina	19
JONATHAN J. PRICE, Transplanted Communities in Judaea / Palaestina.....	27
BENJAMIN ISAAC, Roman Roads, Physical Remains, Organization and Development....	41
P. J. RHODES, Directions in the Study of Athenian Democracy.....	49
ANNA NOVOKHATKO, Epicharmus' Comedy and Early Sicilian Scholarship.....	69
DANIEL GÓMEZ-CASTRO, Alliance Policies in the Elean War (c. 402-400): the Aetolian Case.....	85
EVA ANAGNOSTOU-LAOUTIDES, An Incident of Magic in <i>Heroides</i> 20 and 21.....	93
EGIDIA OCCHIPINTI, Athenaeus' Sixth Book on Greek and Roman Slavery.....	115
YOUVAL ROTMAN, The Paradox of Roman Eunuchism: A Juridical Historical Approach.....	129
AMIT BARATZ, Sources of the Gods' Immortality in Archaic Greek Literature.....	151
MOSHE BLIDSTEIN, Entering a Sanctuary the Wrong Way.....	165
KIMBERLEY CZAJKOWSKI, Jewish Attitudes to the Imperial Cult	181
ORLY LEWIS, Marcellinus' <i>De pulsibus</i> : a Neglected Treatise on the Ancient "Art of the Pulse".....	195
NURIT SHOVAL-DUDAI, Greek and Latin Loanwords in the Historical Dictionary of the Hebrew Language.....	215
REVIEW ARTICLE	
DONNA SHALEV, Collected Papers on Greek into Latin in the Context of Translation in Antiquity.....	227
BOOK REVIEWS	
P. Funke and M. Haake (eds.), <i>Greek Federal States and their Sanctuaries: Identities and Integration</i> (by Kostas Vlassopoulos).....	247
Corinne Bonnet, <i>Les enfants de Cadmos: Le paysage religieux de la Phénicie hellénistique</i> (by Guy G. Stroumsa).....	249
A.G.G. Gibson (ed.), <i>The Julio-Claudian Succession: Reality and Perception of the "Augustan Model"</i> (by Christina T. Kuhn).....	251
Suzanne Stern-Gillet and Gary M. Gurtler (eds.), <i>Ancient and Medieval Concepts of Friendship</i> (by Menahem Luz).....	253
Monika Frass (ed.), <i>Kauf, Konsum und Märkte. Wirtschaftswelten im Fokus – Von der römischen Antike bis zur Gegenwart</i> (by Merav Haklai).....	256
T. Bekker-Nielsen, <i>Space, Place and Identity in Northern Anatolia</i> (by Stephen Mitchell).....	258
Nicola Cusumano, Valentino Gasparini, Attilio Mastrocinque, Jörg Rüpke (eds.), <i>Memory and Religious Experience in the Greco-Roman World</i> (by Andrej Petrovic).....	260

Werner Eck, <i>Judäa - Syria Palästina: die Auseinandersetzung einer Provinz mit römischer Politik und Kultur</i> (by René S. Bloch).....	263
Joseph Geiger, <i>Hellenism in the East. Studies on Greek Intellectuals in Palestine</i> (by Erich S. Gruen).....	266
L. Koenen, J. Kaimio, M. Kaimio, R.W. Daniel (eds.), <i>The Petra Papyri II</i> (by Joseph Patrich).....	268
Deborah Levine Gera, <i>Judith</i> (by Cana Werman).....	270
Seth Schwartz, <i>The Ancient Jews from Alexander to Muhammad</i> (by Daniel R. Schwarz).....	273
OBITUARIES: LUCIEN POZNANSKI (by Yulia Ustinova).....	
SAMUEL SCOLNICOV (by Joseph Geiger).....	279
RACHEL FEIG VISHNIA (by Avshalom Laniado and Rachel Zelnick-Abramovitz).....	280
MORDECAI OSTWALD (by David Schaps).....	281
DISSERTATIONS IN PROGRESS.....	
PROCEEDINGS: THE ISRAEL SOCIETY FOR THE PROMOTION OF CLASSICAL STUDIES.....	287
	293

Athenaeus' Sixth Book on Greek and Roman Slavery

Egidia Occhipinti

This paper presents a literary approach to the study of the sixth book of Athenaeus' *Deipnosophists*, which is devoted to the subject of ancient slavery. The last twenty-five chapters in particular will be analyzed in detail, for they allow us to catch important aspects of Athenaeus' vision of Greek and Roman slavery.

Scholars have often focused on isolated chapters of this book to discuss specific historiographical issues. So, for example, Chapter 88 has been widely studied and considered a proof of the fact that in antiquity there were two kinds of slavery, one 'chattel' and the other 'helotic'.¹ Here we find a passage from the *Philippica* of the historian Theopompus which affirms that chattel slavery originated in the island of Chios. According to Theopompus, the Chians purchased non-Greek peoples and made them slaves. Instead, helotic slavery resulted from the subjection of native Greeks. In early times, some Greek peoples, such as the Spartans and the Thessalians, enslaved other Greek peoples who lived in close proximity to them:

πρώτους δ' ἐγὼ τῶν Ἑλλήνων οἶδα ἀργυρωνήτοις δούλοις χρησαμένους Χίους, ὡς ἱστορεῖ Θεόπομπος ἐν τῇ ἐβδόμῃ καὶ δεκάτῃ τῶν ἱστοριῶν: 'Χῖοι πρῶτοι τῶν Ἑλλήνων μετὰ Θετταλοῦς καὶ Λακεδαιμονίου ἐχρήσαντο δούλοις, τὴν μέντοι κτῆσιν αὐτῶν οὐ τὸν αὐτὸν τρόπον ἐκείνοις. Λακεδαιμόνιοι μὲν γὰρ καὶ Θετταλοὶ φανήσονται κατασκευασάμενοι τὴν δουλείαν ἐκ τῶν Ἑλλήνων τῶν οἰκούντων πρότερον τὴν χώραν ἦν ἐκεῖνοι νῦν ἔχουσιν, οἱ μὲν Ἀχαιῶν, Θετταλοὶ δὲ Περραιβῶν καὶ Μαγνητῶν, καὶ προσηγόρευσαν τοὺς καταδουλωθέντας οἱ μὲν εἴλωτας, οἱ δὲ πενέστας. Χῖοι δὲ βαρβάρους κέκτηνται τοὺς οἰκέτας καὶ τιμὴν αὐτῶν καταβάλλοντες'. ὁ μὲν οὖν Θεόπομπος ταῦθ' ἱστόρησεν· ἐγὼ δὲ τοῖς Χίοις ἡγοῦμαι διὰ τοῦτο νεμεσῆσαι τὸ δαιμόνιον χρόνοις γὰρ ὕστερον ἐξεπολεμήθησαν διὰ δούλους.

Now of all the Greeks, I believe that the Chians were the first people who used slaves purchased with money, as Theopompus relates in the seventeenth book of his *Histories*, where he says, "The Chians were the first of the Greeks, after the Thessalians and Spartans, who used slaves. But they did not acquire them in the same manner as those others did; for the Spartans and the Thessalians will be found to have obtained their slaves from Greek tribes, who formerly inhabited the country which they now possess: the one having Achaean slaves, but the Thessalians having Perrhaebian and Magnesian slaves; and the one nation called their slaves helots, and the others called them penestae. But the Chians have barbarian slaves, and they have bought them at a price." Theopompus for his part reported these things. But I think that, for their behavior, the deity was angry with the Chians; for in a subsequent period they were attacked by their slaves.

(Athen.² VI.88, 265 b-c = Theop. *FGrH* 115, F 122)

¹ Garlan (1988); Finley (1981). Cf. Westermann (1955) and (1973): 451-70, Finley (1959): 145-64, and (1998), Fisher (1993).

² Greek text Kaibel; transl. Yonge, slightly readapted.

Two further readings of this chapter (88) were given long ago, both focusing on Theopompus' supposed view of slavery. According to Mazzarino, Theopompus offers a historical explanation of Greek slavery by showing that the first example of slavery is represented by the case of penestae and helots, while Chian slavery is a later development. Furthermore, Theopompus' patriotic claim appears to shed some positive light on the ancient Chians, who could be appreciated for their conduct if compared with Spartans and Thessalians: the former acquired slaves of barbarian origin while Spartans and Thessalians forced other Greek peoples into slavery.³ According to Vidal-Naquet, Theopompus believes in the revertible character of helotic slavery.⁴ The condition of helots was judged as non-permanent: a helot had once been free, and might become so again. Conversely, chattel slavery was considered an irreversible condition, and due to its context — that is, it involved barbarian peoples — it was fully justified.⁵ Yet, Theopompus' fragment is difficult and unclear. In my opinion it cannot be read in its own right, for we do not know its proper context.

It has been also maintained that, in chapters 84-92, Athenaeus follows Posidonius' idea of slavery.⁶ He has Posidonius in the background and follows his thinking; he therefore praises helotic slavery and condemns chattel slavery. Now, this view is not convincing for several reasons. First of all, it depends on modern and outdated schemes regarding ancient slavery.⁷ Secondly, we can notice a sort of circularity in this approach: it seems as if Posidonius' thinking, which is illustrated through Athenaeus' words, is ascribed to Athenaeus himself. Finally, this idea takes a very low view of Athenaeus' capacity to understand the original point of view or to adapt it for his own purposes.

It is true that chapter 84 contains a passage from the eleventh book of Posidonius' *Histories*, which deals with the first slave war in Sicily. Here Posidonius points out that the Mariandinians of Heraclea are a slave community that is to be taken as an example of a safe and spontaneous form of subjection. This is because they, like other people incapable of defending themselves, spontaneously submitted to others who proved to be more capable and intelligent (Athen. VI.84, 263 c-f = Posid. F 60 K). Nevertheless, this evidence coupled with the following arguments against chattel slavery (Athen. chh. 88-92, that we shall discuss shortly) is not enough to provide proof that Athenaeus' criticism of chattel slavery mirrors a similar view held by Posidonius.

I believe that it is profitable here to resort to a literary approach in order to clarify Athenaeus' general arrangement of chapters 84-109 and the literary devices that he used, and to understand why he did so.

Of course, in chapters 84-109 it is difficult to discern what comes originally from Posidonius and what does not. This is because artificial and contrived transitions characterize Athenaeus' way of working. Transitions can be topics or the names of the authors quoted (i.e. 'Theopompus says A, *he* says also B, *he* says C'). Moreover, our

³ Mazzarino (1990): 504, note 362, and (1983): 48-9.

⁴ According to the scholar, Greek historians expressed interest in the phenomenon of slavery when the system was in crisis, that is, towards the end of the 5th century BC.

⁵ Vidal-Naquet (1979): 159-81.

⁶ Canfora (1989): 117-39.

⁷ Greeks were presumably unaware of the distinction between chattel slavery and helotic slavery. Cf. Vlassopoulos (2011): 115-30 and (2009): 347-63.

understanding is made even more difficult once we realize that Athenaeus often uses one or two dominant sources as a framework, which he names, but then he also hangs (apparently) independent material on that frame: as we shall see, he can quote Posidonius or Theopompus, drift away from the source and then drift back again. At times, therefore, we get the impression that Athenaeus is dozing and loses sight of his point, which is then delayed for a page or two. But is Athenaeus really so dull?

Hanging transitions are connected to another literary category, that of fragmentary clusters. Athenaeus tends to group passages from a single author: lots of Theopompus within a few pages, or Posidonius, and so on. This is thematically determined in part, of course: when slavery is the theme, Posidonius and Theopompus will be the leading authorities.⁸ One or more authors can be used, in this way, to provide the skeletal framework for one or more sections. Besides, other transitional techniques are at play as well, so that keywords in one item often suggest the next point or else the following one; the resulting pattern can be quite complex.

In the chapters in question Athenaeus deploys a series of subjects on slavery and related historical examples which apparently stand independent of each other: voluntary subjection, the subjection of *penestae*, purchased slaves, helotic slavery, Chian slavery, law in defense of slaves, terminology of slavery, examples from Old Comedy, the origin of helotic slavery, slaves in Greece and in Rome and their treatment. However he builds a tangled network of connections between these topics through transitions and clusters of transitions, so that the final result is a complex system of clever intratextual allusions. In the following framework (that I arrange in sections, from 1 to 17) the italics refer to transitions from one subject to another. Besides, there are transitions from one author to another: they usually mention the authors who give certain information. Clusters of transitions are from Theopompus (section 10) and Posidonius (sections 12-17), who represent Athenaeus' main authority.⁹

As we shall see, the first five sections are closely related each other through several thematic transitions: *the Mariandinians*, *the Thessalians*, *the Thessalian penestae*, *the Spartans*, *the Chians* and *purchased slaves*. The notion found in section 5, that the deity was angry with the Chians because they were the first people who purchased slaves, is further developed throughout the following sections (6-17), where it becomes a good basis for comparing Greek and Roman slavery. In fact, it is said that the Chians were enslaved by the tyrant of Cappadocia, Mithridates, because they mistreated their slaves; and the Romans, for their part, during the Mithridatic wars were corrupted by wealth and luxury and abandoned their predecessors' moderation in dealing with slaves. These two major themes — the Chians punished for the mistreatment of their slaves and Roman moral degeneration at the time of the Mithridatic wars — are key themes which allow us to clearly understand and explain Athenaeus' reasons for organizing the material as he did:

⁸ On Theopompus see Shrimpton (1991), and Flower (1994); on Posidonius see Edelstein-Kidd's edition with translation and commentary.

⁹ Especially Posidonius is told by Laurentius, one of the diners, to be quoted very often (VI.104, 272 d-f). See below, note 10.

1.

VI.84, 263 c-f (voluntary subjection: Mariandinians and Heracleotos)

In this section we find several quotations from different authors. Posidonius (F 60 K) says... (Ποσειδώνιος δέ φησιν...) Euphronion the epic poet calls *the Mariandinians δωροφόροι*. And Callistratus says (λέγει δὲ καί) that the expression *δωροφόροι* takes away the bitter taste of the term *οικέται* (house slaves), just as *the Spartans* with the helots, *the Thessalians* with *the penestae*, and *the Cretans* with the Clarotae. There follow quotations on *Cretan slaves* from Ephorus (ὁ Ἐφορος δέ... φησί, *FGrH* 70, F 29), Sosicrates (Σωσικράτης δέ... φησί, *FGrH* 461, F 4) and Dosiades (...ἵστορεῖ καὶ Δωσιάδας, *FGrH* 458, F 3).

2.

VI.85, 264 a-b (subjection of penestae)

There are quotations about *the Thessalian penestae* from the comic poet Theopompus (Θεόπομπος... φησί, I 752 K), Philocrates (Φιλοκράτης δέ... φησί, *FGrH* 601, F 2), Archemachus (Ἀρχέμαχος δέ... φησίν, *FGrH* 424, F 1), and Euripides (fr. 827 N).

3.

VI.86, 264 c-d (Timaeus on purchased slaves)

There is a discussion on Greek customs regarding slavery in early times. Timaeus, speaking of Locrian and Phocian customs, says (Τίμαιος δέ... φησί, *FGrH* 566, F 11a) that it was not usual for the former Greeks to be served by *purchased slaves*.

4.

VI.87, 264 d-265 b (Plato on helotic slavery)

There follows a quotation from Plato's *Laws*. According to Plato (Πλάτων δέ... φησί, *Nom.* 776 c) the system of slavery among *the people of Heraclea* would cause less dispute than the subjected condition of *the Mariandinians* and so too would the condition of *the Thessalian penestae*. Plato's main argument is to discuss the slaveholders' interest in preserving the system of slavery; according to his view there must not be genuine worries about the slaves for their own sake.

5.

VI.88, 265 b-91, 266 e (Theopompus and Nymphodorus on Chian slavery)

One of the diners¹⁰ suggests (πρώτους δ' ἐγὼ τῶν Ἑλλήνων οἶδα ἀργυρωνήτοις δούλοις χρησαμένους Χίους) that the Chians were the first Greeks who bought slaves with money. A quotation from Theopompus follows. The historian reports that (ὡς ἵστορεῖ

¹⁰ The setting of Athenaeus' sixth book is a dialogue between Athenaeus and his companion Timocrates; after some opening banter Athenaeus relates the content of a conversation that took place at a dinner party which he attended along with some learned men (VI.1-3).

Θεόπομπος, *FGrH* 115, F 122) *the Chians* after *the Spartans* and *the Thessalians* were the first Greeks to enslave peoples.

According to the diner, *the deity was angry with the Chians* on account of the fact that they purchased slaves with money; for in the subsequent period they were attacked by their slaves (ὁ μὲν οὖν Θεόπομπος ταῦθ' ἰστόρησεν ἐγὼ δὲ τοῖς Χίοις ἠγοῦμαι διὰ τοῦτο νεμεσῆσαι τὸ δαιμόνιον· χρόνοις γὰρ ὕστερον ἐξεπολεμήθησαν διὰ δούλους – ‘Theopompus for his part reported these things. *But I think that, for their behavior, the Deity was angry with the Chians; for in the subsequent period they were attacked by their slaves*’). A long quotation from Nymphodorus (*FGrH* 572, F 4) follows (Νυμφόδορος γοῦν... ἰστορεῖ, 265 c-266 e). The author, an itinerant ethnographer who lived in the Hellenistic age (third century BC), probably collected many stories from Chian oral informants; he records that at an unspecified time in the past *Chian slaves*, led by a bandit-slave, Drimacus, rose to rebellion. A narrative pattern can be clearly identified in reference to this slave rebellion: slaves revolt; they flee to the mountains; at a certain date and time the masters, heeding an oracle, make a truce with the slaves. The same narrative structure occurs again later, in section 7.

6.

VI.91, 266 e-92, 266 f (the punishment of the Chians)

A brief hint at Herodotus (VIII 105) and Nicolaus (*FGrH* 90, F 95) is found. Nicolaus and Posidonius (Νικόλαος δέ... καὶ Ποσειδώνιος... φασίν, F 38 K) state that *the Chians were enslaved by Mithridates*, the tyrant of Cappadocia, and were given up by him, bound, to their own slaves, for the purpose of being transported into the land of the Colchians. Therefore, *the deity was really angry with them, as being the first people who used purchased slaves*, while most other nations provided for themselves by their own industry (οὕτως αὐτοῖς ἀληθῶς τὸ δαιμόνιον ἐμήνισε πρώτοις χρησαμένοις ὀνητοῖς ἀνδραπόδοις τῶν πολλῶν αὐτουργῶν ὄντων κατὰ τὰς διακονίας). The proverb from Eupolis follows: ‘A Chian bought a master’.¹¹

7.

VI.92, 267 a-b (law in defense of slaves)

The quotations are from Hyperides (fr. 123 Bl.), Lycurgus (fr. 72 Tur.), Demosthenes (Against Midias 46), and Malacus. Malacus reports (Μάλακος δέ... ἰστορεῖ, *FGrH* 552, F 1) that the slaves of the Samians colonized Ephesus. The same narrative pattern as that found in section 5 can be easily recognized here: slaves revolt; they flee to the mountains; at a specific time the masters, heeding an oracle, make a truce with the slaves; the slaves are allowed to depart. The pattern is further developed by the addition of a narrative element at the end of the story: the slaves found a colony.

¹¹ According to Forsdyke (2012): 85 the story of Drimacus goes back as far as Eupolis’ time, that is the 5th century BC: it is possible that tales on Chios circulated widely in Athens, stimulating popular imagination.

8.

VI.93, 267 c-d (terminology of slavery)

Chrysippus – Clitarchus – Amerias – Hermon – Seleucus – Proxenus (*FGrH* 703, F 5) – Ion of Chios (fr. 14 N) – *Achaeus* (fr. 30).

9.

VI.94, 267 e-100, 271 a (the poets of Old Comedy speak of the old-fashioned way of life and assert that in olden times there was no great use of slaves)

94: Cratinus (I 64 K) – Crates (I 133 K) – Paeonium (I 209 K)

95: Teleclides (I 209 K)

96-7: Pherecrates (I 174 K, I 182 K)

98: Aristophanes (I 523 K) – *Metagenes* (I 706 K) – Nicophon

99: Paeonian orator (3.33) – *Achaeus* (fr. 6 N) – Euripides (fr. 887 N) – Menander (IV 265 M) – *Achaeus* (fr. 23 N)

100: Ameipsias (I 675 K) – Heniochus (II 432 K) – *Metagenes* (I 709 K)

10.

VI.101, 271 b-102, 272 a (on the origin of helotic slavery)

The theme of helotic slavery recurs here; it has been already dealt with in the previous sections (1, 2, 4, and 5). Philippus of Theangela, in his treatise on the Carians and Leleges, having made mention of the helots of *the Spartans* and of *the Thessalian penestae*, (Φίλιππος... φησί, *FGrH* 741, F 2) speaks of the Carians who enslaved the Leleges. Phylarchus (Φύλαρχος δέ... φησίν, *FGrH* 81, F 8) says that the Byzantians used the Bithynians in the same manner, just as *the Spartans* do the helots.

A cluster of quotations from Theopompus then follows. Theopompus on the origin of the Spartan Epeunacti, the Sycionian Catonacophori, the Arcadian Prospletai (Θεόπομπος... λέγων οὕτως *FGrH* 115, F 171; ...ὁ δ' αὐτὸς ἱστορεῖ *FGrH* 115, F 176; τὰ παραπλήσια ἱστορεῖ καὶ Μέναιχιμος ἐν τοῖς Σικυωνιακοῖς, fr. 2 M; ἔτι Θεόπομπος... φησί, *FGrH* 115, F 40). Phylarchus on the Spartan Mothaces (λέγει δέ... Φύλαρχος, *FGrH* 81, F 43). Myron on the emancipation of Spartan slaves (Μύρων δὲ ὁ Πριηνεύς... φησίν, *FGrH* 106, F 1). Theopompus again on the Spartan Eleatae (Θεόπομπος δέ... λέγων, *FGrH* 115, F 13).

11.

VI.103, 272 a-d (the possession of slaves in Greece)

There are quotations from several authors. (Epi)Timaeus says (εἰπὼν, *FGrH* 566, F 11b and T 16) that the Phocian Mnason *had more than a thousand slaves*; in the third book of his *Histories* he also says (κάν τῆ τρίτῃ δὲ τῶν ἱστοριῶν ὁ Ἐπιτίμαιος ἔφη, *FGrH* 566, F 5) that the city of the Corinthians was flourishing so intensely that *it possessed four hundred and sixty thousand slaves*. According to Ctesicles (Κτησικλῆς δέ... φησίν, *FGrH* 245, F 1), the Athenians numbered twenty-one thousand, the Metics ten thousand, and *the slaves four hundred thousand*. Xenophon says (ὥς... ἔφη Ξενοφῶν, 4, 14) that

Nicias *had a thousand servants*. Aristotle, in the Constitution of the Aeginetae, says (φησί... Αριστοτέλης δέ, fr. 427 R) that the Aeginetans *had four hundred and seventy thousand slaves*. Agatharchides says (φησί... Ἀγαθαρχίδης δέ, *FGrH* 86, F 17) that the Dardanians *had many slaves*.

12.

VI.104, 272 d-f (slaves in Rome)

From this section to the seventeenth Posidonius is quoted in a cluster of transitions.

The Romans... had a great many slaves. But they did not work hard, unlike the slaves in Athens who worked in the mines. Posidonius on the harsh treatment of the Athenian slaves working in the mines (Ποσειδώνιος γοῦν... φησίν, F 35 K). Caecilius of Cale Acte on Spartacus and slave revolts during the *Mithridatic war* (δὲ ἐκδέδωκε... Καικίλιος).

13.

VI.105, 273 a-c (the ancient Romans treated slaves with moderation: *the ancient Romans were prudent citizens, and eminent for all kinds of good qualities*)

The quotations are from: Polybius, Posidonius (ὡς ἱστορεῖ Πολύβιος καὶ Ποσειδώνιος, Polyb. F 76 Büttner–Wobst; Posid. 265 K), Cotta (ὡς Κόττας ἱστορεῖ, p. 247 ed. min. Pet), Chamaelon of Pontus (ὡς ἱστορεῖ Χαμαιλέων ὁ Ποντικός, fr. 33), Histiaeus of Pontus (ὁ δὲ Ποντικός Ἔστιαῖος καλῶς ἐκαυχᾶτο), and Nicias of Nicaea (ὡς ὁ Νικαεὺς Νικίας ἱστορεῖ, *FHG* IV 464).

14.

VI.106, 273 e-f (ancient Romans' moderation in dealing with slaves is appreciated: *they had [slaves], but they abided by the laws of their country, and lived with moderation, preserving the habits sanctioned by the constitution*)

15.

VI.107, 274 a-b (Posidonius, ὡς φησι Ποσειδώνιος, 266 K, is called into question to support the view expressed in the previous section (14): *they displayed wonderful piety towards the deity, and great justice, and great care to behave equitably towards all men, and great diligence in cultivating the earth*)

16.

VI.108, 274 c-e (three examples of moderate Romans are given: Mucius Scaevola, Quintus Aelius Tubero and Rutilius Rufus)

17.

VI.109, 274 e-275 b (the decadence of Roman customs *at the present time* is due to the action of Lucullus during *the Mithridatic wars*)

General Lucullus' conquest of Mithridates' kingdom and the importation of eastern luxury back to Rome are mentioned as the beginning of the end of the good old Roman

culture. The quotations are from: Nicolaus the Peripatetic on Lucullus' luxury (ὡς Νικόλαος ὁ περιπατητικὸς ἱστορεῖ, *FGrH* 90, F 77b), Polybius (ὡς Πολύβιος ἱστορεῖ, 31.24), Posidonius (φησὶν ὁ Ποσειδώνιος, 267 K), and Theopompus (ὡς ὁ Θεόπομπος ἱστορεῖ, *FGrH* 115, F 36).

There is clear and conscious artistry in this arrangement of hanging transitions. The origin of helotic slavery in section 10, for instance, would come more naturally right after section 1, but Athenaeus holds it back to fit a new beginning in section 10, after several quotations from ancient comedy (9). Section 9 is in fact a sort of narrative and poetic break, after which Athenaeus comes back to the initial point given in section 1, that is, helotic slavery.

Chapters 94-100 deal with utopia, an ideal world of the beginnings, where slavery is unknown. Greek utopia without *douleia* is an image from the Golden Age: a society where labor and service are unnecessary, either because the earth gives a bountiful production without work, or because inanimate objects move and produce, and fish get cooked on their own and come straight to one's mouth (Crates).

Also section 4 would better fit section 1; yet the transition on the Thessalians connects section 4 to section 5, where Theopompus refers to the Thessalians.

Again, section 11 on the possession of slaves in Greece would better fit section 3, where Timaeus speaks of purchased slaves. Nevertheless the transition *the Romans... had a great many slaves* of the following section 12 is closely linked to the transitions of section 11: the Phocian Mnason *had more than a thousand slaves, it possessed four hundred and sixty thousand slaves, the slaves numbered four hundred thousand*, Nicias *had a thousand servants*, the Aeginetans *had four hundred and seventy thousand slaves*, the Dardanians *had many slaves*.

Now let us turn to Nymphodorus' account in section 5, which is surprisingly long in comparison to Theopompus' evidence on the Chian slaves. Usually an extended historical quotation is introduced by Athenaeus because it is relevant to a theme A but happens to contain material also relevant to a theme B. This is the reason why in some places he quotes a particular author at length, while in neighboring pages he lists authorities much more succinctly to illustrate a point.¹² Here, Nymphodorus' tale is such a case. In fact, on the one hand it is relevant to the theme of purchased slaves; on the other it is particularly important as it forms a narrative pattern that is useful to describe a similar rebellion appearing some chapters later (section 7): slaves revolt; they flee to the mountains; at a certain date and time the masters, heeding an oracle, make a truce with the slaves.

The fictive character of the story of Drimacus is, moreover, suggested by Forsdyke too, who does not exclude, however, the possibility that the account also mirrors a kind of historical truth; this story would offer an example of the enormous growth in numbers of slaves in Roman society at the time of Athenaeus as well as of the deterioration of the master-slave relationship.¹³ It is possible that this tale is indeed an 'ideologically

¹² Pelling (2000): 173.

¹³ Forsdyke (2012): 37-89. On the story of Drimacus, see also Vogt (1973): 213-9 and Bonelli (1994): 135-42.

motivated fiction',¹⁴ aiming at reaffirming the Roman elite's view of slavery as a necessary and natural condition. Possibly it is not coincidental that Nymphodorus' account is preceded and to some extent introduced by a quotation from Plato's *Laws*, which emphasizes the masters' interest of preserving the system of slavery¹⁵ (section 4).

After this overarching look at the last chapters of book six, we come back to the initial issue: what in the text comes from Athenaeus and what from Posidonius.

Athenaeus' main concern in the last part of the book is to show a sharp contrast between chattel slavery, for which the Chians were punished by the deity, and the moderate treatment of slaves by the ancient Romans (sections 5-6, and 12-16); as a consequence, it seems that Athenaeus is also suggesting that the Greeks were harsher than the Romans in the treatment of their slaves. Furthermore — as we have already pointed out — the reference to the Mithridatic wars is the *fil rouge* that connects and explains the punishment of the Chians for having purchased slaves and the decadence of Roman customs from that time onwards. Athenaeus, eventually, refers to Posidonius, as well as to other authors, in order to reinforce this view.

An example of Athenaeus' way of reworking his sources is found, for instance, in section 6:

Νικόλαος δ' ὁ περιπατητικὸς καὶ Ποσειδώνιος ὁ στωικὸς ἐν ταῖς ἱστορίαις ἐκάτερος τοῦς Χίους φασὶν ἐξανδραποδισθέντας ὑπὸ Μιθριδάτου τοῦ Καππάδοκος παραδοθῆναι τοῖς ἰδίοις δούλοις δεδεμένους, ἴν' εἰς τὴν Κόλχων γῆν κατοικισθῶσιν· οὕτως αὐτοῖς ἀληθῶς τὸ δαιμόνιον ἐμήνισε πρώτοις χρησαμένοις ὀνητοῖς ἀνδραπόδοις τῶν πολλῶν αὐτουργῶν ὄντων κατὰ τὰς διακονίας. μήποτ' οὖν διὰ ταῦτα καὶ ἡ παροιμία 'Χίος δεσπότην ὀνήσατο', ἧ κέχρηται Εὐπόλις ἐν Φίλοις.

But Nicolaus the Peripatetic, and Posidonius the Stoic, in their Histories, both state that the Chians were enslaved by Mithridates, the tyrant of Cappadocia, and were given up by him, bound, to their own slaves, for the purpose of being transported into the land of the Colchians,— *so really angry with them was the deity, as being the first people who used purchased slaves*, while most other nations provided for themselves by their own industry. And, perhaps, this is where the proverb 'A Chian bought a master' originated, which is used by Eupolis in his *Friends*.

(Athen. VI.91, 266 e-f)¹⁶

Here it is pretty clear that Athenaeus gives the information coming from Nicolaus and Posidonius with the aim to stress the idea that the Chians were later punished by Mithridates because of their use of chattel slaves. The expression 'ἀληθῶς' connects this transition to the punishment of the Chians with a similar one, already found in section 5 (VI.88, 265 b-c): *But I think that, for their behavior, the deity was angry with the Chians; for at a subsequent period they were attacked by their slaves*.

Other quotations, though, cannot be easily distinguished from the main narrative. In section 14, for example, it is said that the ancient Romans were mild in dealing with

¹⁴ Forsdyke (2012): 85.

¹⁵ Forsdyke (2012): 77.

¹⁶ Nicol. *FGrH* 90, F 95. Posid. F 38 K.

slaves; later, at the beginning of section 15, this idea is supported by a passage from Posidonius, which shows the mild character of the ancient Romans in reference to their possessions, gods, and other peoples:

πάτριος μὲν γὰρ ἦν αὐτοῖς, ὡς φησι Ποσειδώνιος, καρτερία καὶ λιτὴ διαίτα καὶ τῶν ἄλλων τῶν πρὸς τὴν κτῆσιν ἀφελῆς καὶ ἀπερίεργος χρῆσις, ἔτι δὲ εὐσέβεια μὲν θαυμαστὴ περὶ τὸ δαιμόνιον, δικαιοσύνη δὲ καὶ πολλὴ τοῦ πλημμελεῖν εὐλάβεια πρὸς πάντας ἀνθρώπους μετὰ τῆς κατὰ γεωργίαν ἀσκήσεως, τοῦτο δ' ἔστιν ἐκ τῶν πατρίων θυσιῶν ὧν ἐπιτελοῦμεν ἰδεῖν· ὁδοὺς τε γὰρ πορευόμεθα τεταγμένας καὶ ὠρισμένας καὶ τεταγμένα φέρομεν καὶ λέγομεν ἐν ταῖς εὐχαῖς καὶ δρῶμεν ἐν ταῖς ἱερουργίαις, ἀφελῆ τε ταῦτα καὶ λιτά, καὶ οὐδὲν πλέον τῶν κατὰ φύσιν οὔτε ἠμφισεμένοι καὶ περὶ τὰ σώματα ἔχοντες οὔτε ἀπαρχόμενοι, ἐσθῆτάς τε ἔχομεν καὶ ὑποδέσεις εὐτελεῖς πύλους τε ταῖς κεφαλαῖς περικεῖμεθα προβατείων δερμάτων δασεῖς, κεράμεια δὲ καὶ χαλκᾶ τὰ διακονήματα κομίζομεν κὰν τοῦτοις βρωτὰ καὶ ποτὰ πάντων ἀπεριεργότατα, ἄτοπον ἡγούμενοι τοῖς μὲν θεοῖς πέμπειν κατὰ τὰ πάτρια.

For, as Posidonius tells us, their national mode of life was originally temperate and simple, and they used everything which they possessed in an unpretending and unostentatious manner. Moreover they displayed wonderful piety towards the deity, and great justice, and great care to behave equitably towards all men, and great diligence in cultivating the earth. And we may see this from the national sacrifices which we celebrate. For we proceed by ways regularly settled and defined. So that we bear regularly appointed offerings, and we utter regular petitions in our prayers, and we perform stated acts in all our sacred ceremonies. They are also simple and plain. And we do all this without being either clothed or attired as to our persons in any extraordinary manner, and without indulging in any extraordinary pomp when offering the first-fruits. But we wear simple garments and shoes, and on our heads we have rough hats made of the skins of sheep, and we carry vessels to minister in of earthenware and brass. And in these vessels we carry those meats and liquors which are procured with the least trouble, thinking it absurd to send offerings to the gods in accordance with our national customs, but to provide for ourselves according to foreign customs. And, therefore, all the things which are expended upon ourselves are measured by their use; but what we offer to the gods are a sort of first-fruits of them.

(Athen. VI.107, 274 a-b)¹⁷

Here Athenaeus clearly summarizes Posidonius. It seems that the reference to Posidonius gives way to a broader discussion on actual Roman customs as well. Presumably the first four lines mirror Posidonius' own thought closely. Nevertheless, it is not clear where exactly the Posidonian material ends. In fact on several occasions, Athenaeus does not mark the point where a quotation ends and extraneous material begins. One may argue that the rest of the material, or some of it, might still be from Posidonius; but regardless of where it originates we can notice Athenaeus' effort to merge the content of his source with his point. The same can be said of other quotations from Posidonius in sections 12 and 13. At VI.104 (section 12) Athenaeus, through a speech delivered by Laurentius, points out that the Romans had numerous slaves who were not used for purposes of income, unlike the Attic ones, who worked in the mines and were harshly treated by their owners. Here a quotation from Posidonius comes up in the text to enforce this statement.

¹⁷ Posid. 266 K.

But, after this, a smooth transition (Caecilius of Cale Acte) allows the narrative to shift to the theme of slave revolts in Sicily and in southern Italy at the time of the Mithridatic wars. While it is not possible to pick up clear marks indicating the end of a quotation and/or the starting point of Athenaeus' own intromission through the voice of his personages, it is evident that the narrative's main concern here is to give a contrastive comparison between Greek and Roman use of slaves. This can be told also of the following chapter, VI.105 (section 13), where quotations from Posidonius, Polybius, Cotta, Chamaelon of Pontus, Histiaeus of Pontus and Nicias of Nicaea provide the narrative with a moralistic color that, thanks to apposite historical examples, puts emphasis on the moderation of the ancient Romans.

Let us turn now to the last transition, which closes the sixth book (section 17). It bears a further reference to the Mithridatic wars and mentions, among others, Posidonius and Theopompus. It is worth noting that in no fragments does Posidonius refer to Roman degeneration at the time of the Mithridatic Wars; he just speaks of the virtues of former Romans. To some extent these last two mentions of Posidonius and Theopompus apparently weaken the main point, that is, the idea that the Romans became corrupted at the time of the Mithridatic wars. In fact, here we find a shift in subject matter: Posidonius describes the frugality of the ancient inhabitants of Italy; after that, Athenaeus uses Theopompus' statement to show that in modern times the peoples of Italy are degenerate:

πρότερον δὲ οὕτως ὀλιγοδεεῖς ἦσαν οἱ τὴν Ἰταλίαν κατοικοῦντες ὥστε καὶ καθ' ἡμᾶς ἔτι, φησὶν ὁ Ποσειδώνιος, οἱ σφόδρα εὐκαιροῦμενοι τοῖς βίοις ἤγον τοὺς υἱοὺς ὕδωρ μὲν ὡς τὸ πολὺ πίνοντας, ἐσθιοντας δ' ὅ τι ἂν τύχη. καὶ πολλάκις, φησὶν, πατὴρ ἢ μήτηρ υἱὸν ἠρώτα πότερον ἀπίους ἢ κάρνα βούλεται δειπνήσαι, καὶ τούτων τι φαγῶν ἠρκεῖτο καὶ ἐκοιμᾶτο. νῦν δέ, ὡς ὁ Θεόπομπος ἱστορεῖ ἐν τῇ πρώτῃ τῶν Φιλιππικῶν, οὐδεὶς ἐστὶ καὶ τῶν μετρίως εὐπορουμένων, ὅστις οὐ πολυτελεῖ μὲν τράπεζαν παρατίθεται, μαγείρους δὲ καὶ θεραπείαν ἄλλην πολλὴν κέκτηται καὶ πλείω δαπανᾷ τὰ καθ' ἡμέραν ἢ πρότερον ἐν ταῖς ἐορταῖς καὶ ταῖς θυσίαις ἀνήλισκον.

But in former times the inhabitants of Italy were so easily contented, that even now, says Posidonius, those who are in very easy circumstances are used to accustoming their sons to drink as much water as possible, and to eat whatever they can get. And very often, says he, the father or mother asks their son whether he chooses to have pears or nuts for his supper; and then he, eating some of these things, is contented and goes to bed. But now, as Theopompus tells us in the first book of his history of the Actions of Philip, there is no one of those who are even tolerably well off who does not provide a most sumptuous table, and who has not cooks and a great many more attendants, and who does not spend more on his daily living than formerly men used to spend on their festivals and sacrifices.

(Athen. VI.109, 275 a-b)¹⁸

Especially Theopompus' evidence is particularly difficult. In fact, it is not immediately clear if 'but now', νῦν δέ, refers to Theopompus' times or to those of Athenaeus. However, if the quotation referred to Theopompus' lifetime, the final part of Athenaeus' sixth book would therefore be very strange, as in previous chapters there is no hint at

¹⁸ Posid. 267 K. Theop. *FGrH* 115, F 36.

Greek degeneration during Theopompus' lifetime. I would suggest, instead, that Athenaeus is here referring to his own times and to contemporary inhabitants of Italy, now under Roman rule; and he forces the evidence he quotes to suit his main purpose, that is, to further stress the corrupting effects of wealth and luxury on Roman values.¹⁹

To conclude, this paper has presented a literary study of the last part of Athenaeus' sixth book of the *Deipnosophists*. It has been shown that Athenaeus uses his sources mainly to deploy his view of ancient slavery, which, possibly, mirrors the Roman elite's ideology as well. With reference to the issue of obtaining and managing slaves, the Greeks are depicted as harsher than the Romans. The reference to the Mithridatic wars is the *fil rouge* which connects and explains the punishment of the Chians for having purchased slaves and Roman moral degeneration; the decadence of the Roman customs is dated to the Mithridatic wars and is attested, moreover, in the following period.

Athenaeus' main evidence for this last part of book six is provided by both Theopompus and Posidonius; nevertheless, it is not possible to discern and determine exactly which parts belong to these authors in Athenaeus' narrative.

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¹⁹ Cf. Forsdyke (2012): 74-6.

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