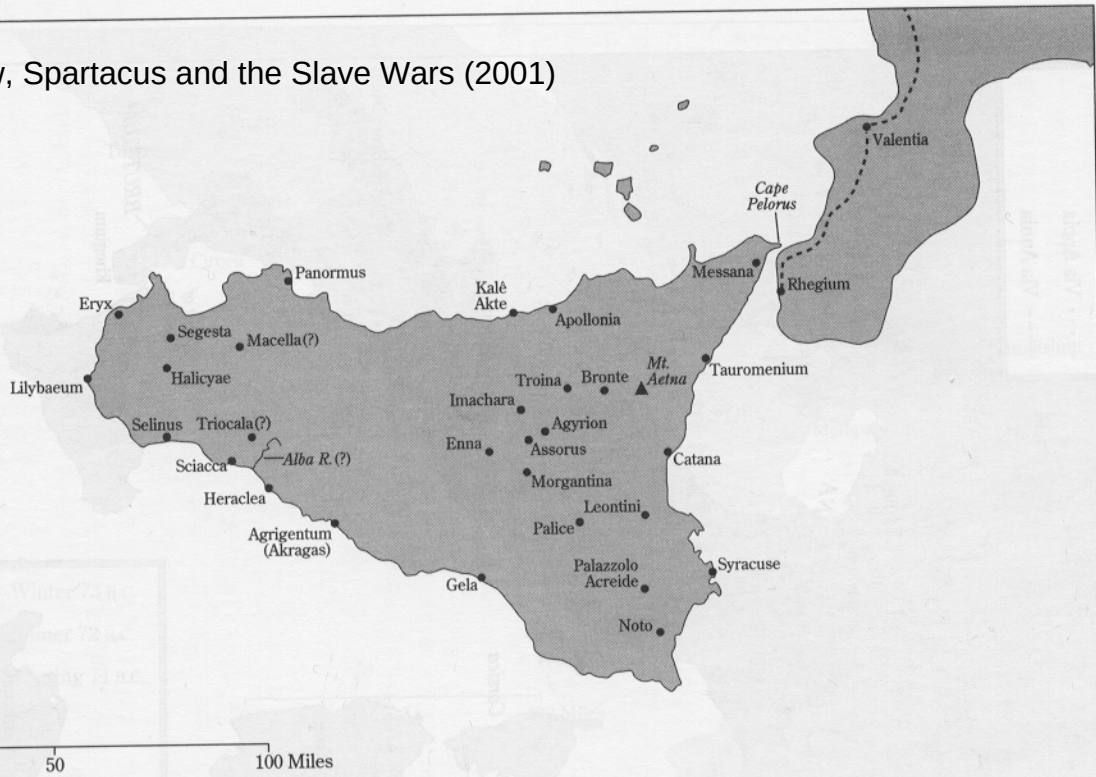


B. D. Shaw, Spartacus and the Slave Wars (2001)



Map 2. The Roman Province of Sicily at the Time of the Slave Wars, ca. 135–100 B.C.

1

Slave Life on the Large Farms: Work, Organization, and Surveillance

On the new agricultural plantations, or latifundia, that developed in Italy and Sicily between the third and second centuries B.C., the core permanent labor force was made up of large numbers of slaves who had been purchased from abroad. This new type of market-oriented agriculture generated handbooks to instruct farm owners how to run a large agricultural operation. According to the ideal farm model, slaves were deployed in small work units of ten to twelve men under the close supervision of overseers. To maintain a dependable level of security over larger numbers of slaves, owners often confined them in barracks at night and when they were not working in the fields.

1

COLUMELLA

Agricultural Slaves and the Slave Barracks

First Century A.D.

In the following passage, the Roman agricultural writer Columella discusses the types of slaves used for heavy work in the cultivation of cereal crops. He has just finished addressing the organization and management of slaves in urban households. In offering his advice on agricultural slaves, Columella emphasizes that considerable care must be given to discipline and surveillance of the workforce.

With respect to the other slaves, these are the rules that ought to be followed. I have never had cause to regret that I have maintained them myself. As long as they have not misbehaved, I have tended to converse

more often with my rural slaves in a more informal and familiar way than with my slaves in the city. When I realized that their endless regimen of work was somehow made lighter by this affability on the part of their master, I would jest with them and would even allow them to joke with me. Now I often arrange to talk with them about any new work, engaging in the pretense that they are more experienced in such matters. In this way, I become better acquainted with the abilities of each slave, and I find out just how much each slave knows. I have observed that the slaves undertake their work more willingly when they believe that they have been consulted about it and that their advice has been accepted.

It is now the usual practice for all careful masters to make certain that the slaves in the barracks are inspected, to check that they have been securely chained and that the places of housing them are secure and well guarded. The master also does this to find out whether the farm manager has chained or unchained any slave without his knowledge, since the master's orders in either case must be carefully maintained. If the head of the household has disciplined a slave by employing such a penalty, the manager of the farm must never remove the leg irons from the slave without the master's permission. Nor is the manager to release from chains any slave whom he has put in chains at his own discretion until the master has first been informed. The household head must also make an especially thorough investigation into problems involving these particular slaves. He must do so to make certain that the slaves do not suffer deprivation of clothing allotments or any other supplies that they need. Since these slaves are subject to so many persons who have authority over them, such as farm managers, work overseers, and the foremen of the slave barracks, they are more vulnerable to unjust treatment. And these slaves, once harmed by such savage cruelty or overbearing behavior, are all the more to be feared. A concerned master should therefore make inquiries both of those slaves who have been punished and of those slaves who have not been chained (whose claims are more to be trusted) to see whether they are receiving what is fair according to the master's own rules and regulations.

The master should test the bread and drink issued to the slaves by tasting it himself, and he should also inspect their clothing, gloves, and leggings. He should provide ample opportunity to the slaves to make complaints about those who have treated them cruelly or who have fraudulently cheated them. On occasion, I myself uphold the complaints of those slaves who have suffered genuine wrongs, just as

I punish those who incite my slaves to rebellious behavior or who make false accusations against their overseers. On the other hand, I reward those slaves who work strenuously and assiduously at their tasks. To the more fertile female slaves, who ought to be rewarded for producing a specific number of offspring, I have allowed some respite from work. To a few of them, I have even granted freedom when they have raised an especially large number of children. When a female slave has produced three children, she is granted leave from work. When she produces more, she even receives her freedom.

Such justice and concern on the part of the head of the household contributes greatly to the increase in value of his property. But as soon as he returns from the city, he should also remember to worship the household gods. Then, if time permits (if not then, certainly by the next day), he must immediately inspect and revisit every part of his property to assess whether his absence has been the cause of any lapse in discipline and watchfulness. He must determine whether even a single vine, tree, or item of produce is missing. At the same time, he should make a careful count of the animals, slaves, and all the farm equipment and furnishings. If the master follows these procedures every year of his life, when he reaches old age he will be able to depend on a long and deeply ingrained discipline in his slaves. And he will never reach an age so old that he will be despised by his slaves.

SOURCE: Columella, *On Agriculture*, 1.8.15-20.

2

VARRO

Slave Ranches: Master Herdsmen and Slave Shepherds

First Century B.C.

The slave rebellion led by Spartacus initially comprised gladiators who had been trained in the city of Capua, south of Rome. In earlier slave rebellions in southern Italy and in both of the great slave wars in Sicily, however, slave herdsmen, who tended large herds of cattle and sheep, provided much of the leadership and manpower for the slave armies. This type of slave was also an important source of recruits for Spartacus's forces as they moved through southern Italy. To understand why

these particular slaves were so important in the most dangerous slave war the Roman state ever fought, consider this account by Varro, which appeared in one of the standard Roman handbooks on agriculture.

Atticus: In this section, we still have to discuss how many and what types of herdsmen we should have.

Cossinius: For larger stock you need older men, but for smaller stock even boys will suffice. With regard to both types of slave, however, those who work the cattle trails must be stronger than those who return to the home farm of the estate every day—which is, of course, why you will see young men, almost always armed, out on the trails, while you will normally see not just boys but even girls tending the animals on the home farms. The slaves who pasture the herd animals should be required to spend the whole day with the animals, and all the herd animals should be grazed together during the day. During the night, however, each herdsman should camp separately with his own animals. All of the herdsmen should be under the charge of a master herdsman, who, preferably, should be older and more experienced than the other slaves, since the other slaves will be more willing to obey someone who is older and more experienced. He must not be so old, however, that he is less able to endure hard work because of the infirmity of his age.

Neither old men nor young boys can easily tolerate the hardships of life on the cattle trails—the steep terrain and the harshness of the mountain environment. Those who tend the herds have to suffer these hardships, especially if they are herding cattle or goats for which mountainous and forested pasturelands provide good fodder. You should choose quick, surefooted men of powerful physique who move with agility, men who are able not just to follow the herd but also to defend it from wild animals and bandits. They should be men who can lift heavy loads onto the backs of the pack animals, men who can run fast and are skilled at throwing spears.

Not every ethnic group is well adapted to tending herds. Neither the Bastuli nor the Turduli [both from Spain] are suitable for this task, whereas the Gauls are particularly good, especially with beasts of burden. . . .

. . . During the day, each herdsman should eat his meals separately, each one with his own herd, but all those who are under the authority of the same master herdsman should eat their supper together in the evening. The master herdsman must ensure that all

of the provisions needed by the herders and their animals follow after them, especially the food for the men and the veterinary supplies for the animals. For this purpose, the owners of the herds need to maintain pack animals—sometimes mares, sometimes other animals—that are able to bear heavy loads.

As for the procreation of children among the herdsmen, there is no problem with the slave herders who remain permanently on the home farm, where each man has a female fellow slave with him on the farm—a pastoral Venus, as it were—who in these matters [amorous interests] will look no farther afield. But many masters have thought it useful to send women along with the men who look after the animals in the open grazing lands and in the forested highlands, men who have to protect themselves from the rain by hastily constructed shelters rather than by seeking refuge in the home farm buildings. These women follow the herds, prepare the herdsmen's meals, and keep them hard at work. They should be physically strong and not morally loose women, but the kind of women who, in many rural regions, do not yield even a little to men when it comes to hard work.

SOURCE: Varro, *On Agriculture*, 2.10.1–7.

3

CATO THE ELDER

The Vilicus: The Slave Farm Manager and His Duties

Second Century B.C.

The slave manager or bailiff, called the vilicus (see glossary), was one of the most important figures in the management and control of the slaves on the latifundist estates. He lived on the home farm (villa) and managed the labor of all the slaves who worked on the plantation—a task in which his wife, the vilica, also played a very important role. These managers were sometimes critical catalysts in the great slave wars, and they provided important leadership in the rebellions. The farm owners relied heavily on them to maintain slave discipline, to keep the slaves hard at work and out of trouble, and to manage the basic economic operations of the domain. The vilicus was usually required to make a

thorough report to the estate owner (dominus) whenever the master or his agent (procurator) appeared to inspect the farm. The knowledge that the vilicus had of the local people, resources, and terrain was considerable and could be used, as slave owners feared, to his own advantage. The following two selections explain the duties of the vilicus and the qualifications he should have.

These are the duties of the farm manager.

Strict order must be enforced. Religious festival days must be observed. He must keep his hands off another man's property, while diligently preserving that entrusted to him. He must settle disputes in the slave family. If a slave has done something wrong, he must be punished, but in just proportion to the wrong done. He should see that the slaves under his control do not suffer from cold or hunger. He should see that the slaves are kept hard at work, which makes it easier to keep them from getting into trouble or meddling with property belonging to others. If the manager makes it clear that he does not want the slaves to make trouble, they won't. If he allows them to make trouble, the master must not permit such behavior to go unpunished. The manager must give praise for work well done, so that the other slaves will take pleasure in behaving well. The farm manager should not be doing the rounds to ingratiate himself. Rather, he ought always to be a sober man who is not off enjoying entertainments. He should keep the slaves hard at work and see that what the master has ordered is done. He should not think that he knows better than the master. He must consider his master's friends to be his own.

The farm manager must follow the directions of whomever he has been ordered to follow. He must not perform any religious rituals without his master's permission, with the exception of the Compitalia,¹ celebrated at the crossroads, and those of the household hearth. He must not lend to anyone, and he must insist on the repayment of whatever his master has lent. He must not make an exchange loan to anyone of seed grains, fodder, barley, wine, or oil. He should have only two or three neighboring families from whom he asks to borrow the things that he needs or to whom he lends in return, and no one else. He must review the accounts often with his master. He must not employ the same pieceworkers, wage laborers, or task workers for

¹ *Compitalia*: a rural religious celebration that took place in late December or early January and was centered on the Roman family, including their slaves.

more than one day at a time. He must not buy anything without his master's knowledge or keep anything in secret from his master. He must not tolerate any parasitic hangers-on. He must not have any desire to consult diviners, prophets, fortune-tellers, or astrologers. He must not cheat when sowing the seed grain, since this brings bad fortune. He must make sure that he knows how to perform every agricultural task on the farm and must actually do so frequently, but never to the point of exhausting himself. If he does this, he will be able to know what is in the minds of his slaves, and they will be more willing to work for him. If he follows these practices, he will be less tempted to leave the farm, he will be healthier, and he will sleep more soundly. He must be the first to rise and the last to go to bed. Before going to bed, he must make certain that the farm is shut down correctly, that everyone is asleep in the proper place, and that the animals are provided with fodder.

SOURCE: Cato, *On Agriculture*, 5.1-5.

4

COLUMELLA

How to Choose a Vilicus

First Century A.D.

My first warning is not to appoint a farm manager from the kind of slaves who please with their bodies and certainly not from the kind who have been engaged in effete and effeminate occupations in the city. This is a lazy and listless class of slaves who are inured to wasting time at sports fields, racetracks, theaters, gambling dens, clubs, and whorehouses, and who never stop dreaming about such frivolous things. When this type of slave brings this attitude to his agricultural work, the owner suffers loss not only in the slave himself but also to the value of his property in general. Rather, you must select a man who from childhood has been made hard by field work and who has been proven by experience. If this kind of man is not available, then choose a man from those who have shown themselves able to endure the rigors of slave labor. He should be a man who has passed beyond the first stage of youth, but who has not yet reached old age. If he's

too young, his age will detract from his authority to command, since older slaves consider it beneath their dignity to obey a man who is too young. On the other hand, if he's too old, he will be broken by very hard work. He should be of middle age and of strong body and be knowledgeable in agricultural work; either that, or a man who is concerned to do a good job and who will at least be quick to learn. . . . Even an illiterate man can administer a domain rather well, as long as he has a good memory. Cornelius Celsus² says that this sort of domain manager more often brings money to his master than problems with his account books. Being illiterate, such a man is less able to fiddle the accounts on his own or to do it through the agency of another because of the fear that his fraud will be discovered.

Whatever type of farm manager he is, he should have a slave woman assigned to him as his wife. She will act as a restraint on him and yet will be able to assist him in performing certain tasks. The manager should be warned not to become too friendly with any slave on the farm, much less with any slave from off it. Yet he can consider it appropriate to invite a slave to dine with him on a festival day as a sort of honor or to reward a slave who has shown himself to be conscientious in the performance of his tasks and vigorous in his work regimen. He will make no sacrifices, except those made by order of the master. He must not allow prophets and witches onto the domain, since these two kinds of people incite immature and simple minds through false superstitions to make frivolous expenditures and to commit shameful deeds. He must have no knowledge of cities or the local periodic markets, except to make purchases and sales that are pertinent to the running of the farm.

²Cornelius Celsus: a writer during the reign of the emperor Tiberius (A.D. 14–37).

SOURCE: Columella, *On Agriculture*, 1.8.1–6.

2

Gladiators, Slaves, and Resistance

Gladiators were men trained to fight with a sword (*gladius*) and other weapons in order to kill or wound each other for the entertainment of spectators. Other armed professional entertainers known as beast fighters (*bestiarii*) or hunters (*venatores*) were trained to hunt wild animals such as leopards and bears for the enjoyment of large crowds. Gladiatorial games were a defining element of Roman culture as it developed in the third and second centuries B.C. They were first developed to their most intensive level in the region of Campania, south of Rome (see Maps 3 and 4). Any analysis of the Spartacus slave war must take into account the fact that the gladiatorial schools and training facilities in this region were centered on the wealthy city of Capua. Many of our best sources of evidence about Roman gladiators, including notices for their performances, come from the city of Pompeii, located about forty-five miles south of Capua.

Gladiators often were pitted against each other to battle to the death. It is, therefore, no surprise that most of them were either condemned criminals or slaves who had little choice of their new occupation. Since gladiators were highly trained in the use of weapons and how to inflict injury on other humans, they were potentially very dangerous and had to be kept under close guard. At times, these men entered the gladiatorial arena intending to resist the fate to which they were condemned—even to the point of taking their own lives. At other times, high-ranking Romans felt that it would be advantageous to use gladiators outside the arena as professional enforcers and killers. In either case, gladiators posed a constant threat to the civil order of the Roman state in periods of political unrest and civil war.

LIVY

*The Repression of Slave Shepherds
and the Bacchanals in Southern Italy in 184 B.C.*

First Century B.C.

The praetor Lucius Postumius, to whom the province of Tarentum was assigned by lot, savagely repressed large-scale conspiracies of herdsmen and diligently completed the judicial inquiries into the last elements of the Bacchanalian conspiracies. Many persons who had been cited but who had not shown up for their hearings or who had abandoned their bail were hiding in those regions of Italy. Some of these men whom Postumius arrested he pronounced guilty on the spot, while others he sent to the Senate at Rome, where Publius Cornelius had all of them thrown into prison.

SOURCE: Livy, *History of Rome*, 39.41.6–7.

LIVY

*The Continued Repression of Slave Shepherds
and Bacchanals in Southern Italy in 182 B.C.*

First Century B.C.

A formal investigation concerning the Bacchanalian troubles was given as an additional task to the praetor Lucius Duronius, to whom Apulia had been assigned by lot as his province. These were some remnants that, like seeds planted by the earlier evils, had already begun to manifest themselves in the previous year. But the judicial inquiries into them, rather than being concluded, had in fact only been begun by the praetor Lucius Pupius in the previous year [183 B.C.]. The Senate ordered the new praetor to extinguish the threat completely so that it would not be able to spread more widely again for a second time.

SOURCE: Livy, *History of Rome*, 40.19.9–10.

The First Sicilian Slave War, 135–132 B.C.

The first major slave war faced by the Roman Republic erupted in the center of the island of Sicily, the state's first overseas province. According to most accounts, the war began with a sudden outburst of violence in 135 B.C. in the city of Enna, the agricultural center of one of the richest agricultural plains on the island and also an important cult center of the goddess Demeter. A slave named Eunus led the initial outbreak, but the war also involved other smaller revolts, led by local slave leaders, in different parts of the island.

At first, the Roman military response to the rebellion was feeble. Only after several resounding defeats did Rome take the war more seriously and assign regular military forces under praetorian commanders to the island. The war lasted for about four years. In its aftermath, there was much recrimination and blame, mostly of a moral nature, both of the slave masters, whose excessive harshness toward their slaves was seen as a significant cause of the war, and of the Roman governors and military commanders for their corruption, incompetence, and inaction.

The main account of the war comes from a Greek historian named Diodorus Siculus ("the Sicilian"), whose home city was Agyrion, on the island of Sicily, just north of Enna. He eventually left Sicily to settle in the city of Rome, where he completed a forty-book general history of the world from the beginning of human civilization to 60 B.C. The principal source that Diodorus used for events in Sicily was probably an earlier history written by Posidonius. Only fifteen of Diodorus's books have survived; unfortunately, the books relevant to the events of the great slave wars in Sicily have been lost. Therefore, we have to rely for information on much later writers who compiled synopses of the original work.

Two men summarized Diodorus's account of the slave wars in Sicily—Photios and Constantine Porphyrogenetos. Photios was head (patriarch) of the Orthodox Church at Constantinople between the

A.D. 850s and 880s. He compiled a vast compendium of synopses of classical works, including Diodorus's *History*. Constantine Porphyrogennetos ruled the Byzantine Empire from A.D. 945 to 949. While emperor, he directed that a reference reader, or encyclopedia, of classical literary works be compiled for his use. We call this reader the *Excerpts of Constantine*.

Following are these two versions of Diodorus's original account. It is important to read both accounts. Although the main elements of the story appear in both versions, there are significant differences between the two. The second account contains nuances and incidents not found in the first (for example, it contains a more detailed account of the kind daughter of the slave owner Damophilos) that offer insights into how the story was told and explained by historians of the time. Compare and contrast the content of the two versions, as well as the different perspectives, values, and emphases of the writers.

37

DIODORUS SICULUS

The First Slave War on the Island of Sicily: First Version

First Century B.C.

This is the version preserved in the writings of the Byzantine patriarch Photios.

The Sicilians had been prosperous and happy in every respect for a period of sixty years following the destruction of Carthage, when the slave war erupted among them for the following cause. Since the Sicilians were in a rush to acquire ever more goods for their extravagant lifestyles and were accumulating great wealth, they began to purchase very large numbers of slaves. They immediately placed brands and tattoos on the bodies of these slaves, whom they drove away in herds from the slave traders. They used the young men among them as herders and put the others to whatever use seemed most appropriate to each. The masters were arrogant and harsh in their treatment of the slaves. Since they were convinced that the slaves deserved only

minimum care, they gave them the least possible food and clothing. Most of the slaves were forced to provide for their own livelihood by becoming bandits. These bandit gangs were scattered around the countryside like detachments of soldiers. The result was that every place in Sicily was filled with murder.

The Roman governors of Sicily tried to prevent the growth of these gangs, but they did not dare to punish them because of the power and influence of the landowners who were the brigands' slave masters. The governors were forced to overlook the plundering of their own province. Most of the great landowners were Roman *equites* [see glossary]. Since these same landowners were also jurors in the cases against Roman governors who were arraigned on charges arising from the maladministration of their provinces, the men who served as governors greatly feared them.¹ The slaves, who were crushed by their hardships and suffering, and who were continually humiliated and beaten beyond all reason, were no longer able to endure their lot. So they began to congregate in groups here and there as the opportunity presented itself, and they began to discuss the possibility of revolt. Finally, they put their plans into action.

There was a Syrian slave, from the city of Apamea, whom a man named Antigenes, a citizen of the city of Enna, owned. This slave was a magician and a wonder-worker who claimed that he was able to predict future events from messages sent to him by the gods while he was asleep. Indeed, he was able to deceive many people because of this clever talent of his. From these small beginnings, he did not stop at reciting the prophetic messages that he had in his dreams, but he also claimed that he was able to see the gods themselves and to learn from them about events that were to take place in the future. Of the many things that he reputedly saw in his visions, some actually turned out to be true—quite by chance, of course. Since the predictions that did *not* occur were never challenged by anyone, while those things that did happen gained notoriety, this slave's fame and repute increased rapidly. His most striking performance was this: While in a state of ecstatic possession, he was able, by the use of some device, to produce fire and to breathe flames from his mouth. While in a trance, he would utter more prophecies about the things to come. He would do this by placing some embers into a hollow shell (or something like this) that was pierced at either end with a hole. Then, putting the shell

¹Some modern historians believe that this is a mistake or an anachronism, based on the belief that *equites* did not have an important role in the courts that tried miscreant governors until well after the end of the first slave war.

into his mouth and blowing on the embers, he would cause sparks and then flames to burst out.

Before the outbreak of the revolt, this same slave claimed that the Syrian goddess had appeared to him and had foretold that he was to become king. He announced this news not only to those around him in general but even to his own master. The whole thing was treated as a big joke. At his banquets, Antigenes, the master of this slave, would lead the others along in this bit of light entertainment. Antigenes would introduce Eunos (for this was the wonder-worker's name) to his guests, and he [Antigenes] would question him [Eunos] closely about his forthcoming kingship and about how he would treat each of the diners who was present when he became king. Without a moment's hesitation, Eunos would give a full account of everything, including how moderately he would treat the slave masters. Then there was the whole elaboration of his wonder-working itself. The diners would burst into laughter. Some of them would select a tasty tidbit from the dinner table and present it to Eunos as a gift, at the same time telling him that when he became king, he should remember them for this act of generosity. Not only did this wonder-working performed by Eunos result in a genuine kingship, but the repayment of the favors that he received as a joke at these banquets was done not without the goodwill of genuine gratitude.

The origin of the whole slave rebellion was as follows. There was a certain Damophilos, a citizen of Enna, who was an exceedingly wealthy man, but one who had a rather arrogant character. He had maltreated his slaves beyond all tolerable limits. His wife, Megallis, competed with her husband in the punishment and general inhumane treatment of their slaves. Because of this maltreatment, the slaves were reduced to the level of wild beasts and began to plot with one another for rebellion and the murder of their masters. They went to Eunos and asked him if the gods supported their plans. Following his normal procedure, through the use of his wonder-working skills, Eunos confirmed that the gods were favorable and advised the slaves to undertake their plan at once. They immediately collected four hundred of their fellow slaves. Arming themselves with such weapons as were available at the moment, they fell on the city of Enna. Eunos led them, working his usual wonders by breathing smoke and fire out of his mouth. Breaking into the houses in the city, the rebel slaves instituted a general slaughter, not even sparing the suckling infants among the inhabitants. Tearing them from their mothers' breasts, they dashed the infants to the ground. One cannot actually say in words

what they did to the women themselves—and with their husbands looking on—what terrible acts of outrage and utter lewdness were committed on them.

A large number of slaves from the city now joined the rebels. The slaves first inflicted extreme savageries on their own masters, and then they turned to the slaughter of the rest of the inhabitants. When the slaves who were around Eunos learned that Damophilos was staying with his wife in a suburban villa near the city, they dispatched some of their own men to bring back the man and his wife in chains. They did so, subjecting the pair to repeated physical assaults on the way. Only in the case of their daughter did the slaves show any consistent care and consideration. In her case, they acted differently, because she had a kind and benevolent character. As far as was possible, she had always been sympathetic to the slaves and had tried to offer them help when any of them was in need. From these actions of theirs, it is shown that the violence of the slaves did not stem from an innate disposition toward others, but rather that their actions were only fair repayment for the injustices that had formerly been inflicted on them.

The men who had been dispatched to arrest Damophilos and Megallis and to bring them back to the city (as I have said) arraigned them both in the theater, where a great assembly of the rebels had convened. Damophilos tried to use various rhetorical maneuvers in an attempt to save himself and was actually beginning to convince some of the crowd with his arguments. But Hermeias and Zeuxis, men embittered against him in their attitudes, shouted out that he was a deceiver. Not being able to await the final decision of the people, the one man drove his sword through Damophilos's chest, while the other cut his throat with an ax. Next, Eunos was chosen king, not because of his courage or for his abilities as a military commander, but solely because of his wonder-working powers, since he was the one who had started the revolt and because his very name seemed to be a good omen that portended his kindly disposition to his new subjects.

Once he was made master of all the rebels, Eunos summoned a popular assembly and decreed that all the inhabitants of Enna who had been taken prisoner were to be executed, except for those who had some skill in the manufacture of weapons. These latter persons he put in chains and set to work in workshops. He gave Megallis to the female slaves to do with as they wished. When they had finished torturing her, they threw Megallis off a nearby cliff. Eunos killed his own masters, Antigenes and Pytho. Crowning his head with a diadem and

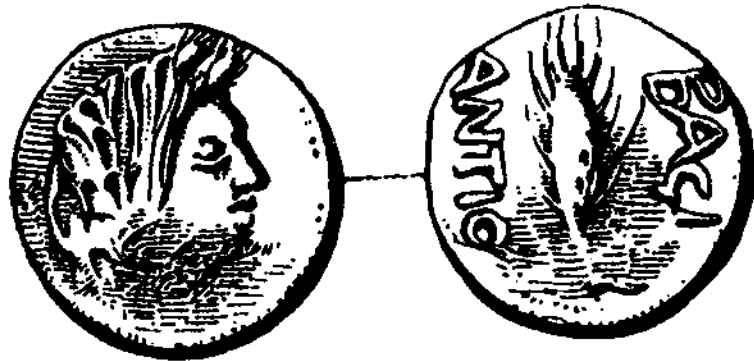


Figure 5. Coin Issued by the Rebel Slave Leader Eunus, a.k.a. Antiochus.

This coin features a veiled head of the goddess Demeter (or perhaps that of Matêr, who was venerated by the slaves), with a stalk of wheat, the most important agricultural product of the island. The legend Basi(leos) Antio(chou) translates as "[coin of] King Antiochus," the title under which Eunus proclaimed his new power. In striking this coin, the minters were imitating a standard motif found on coins issued by the Greek city-state of Enna. The rebel slaves were in effect advertising their autonomy as a state.

E. S. G. Robinson, "Antiochus, King of the Slaves," *Numismatic Chronicle*, vol. 20 (1920), pp. 175–76, fig. p. 175.

adorning himself with all of the other accoutrements and symbols of kingship, he declared his partner to be his queen. She was also a Syrian, a woman who came from the same city as Eunus. He appointed as royal counselors those who seemed outstanding in their intelligence. Among them was one Achaios—"Achaian" both by name and by ethnic origin—a man who excelled in both planning and action.

As well as he was able, within three days Eunus had provided arms for more than six thousand men, in addition to his other followers who were armed with axes, hatchets, slings, sickles, fire-hardened spears, and even cooking spits. In this fashion, Eunus moved about with his forces, ravaging the countryside [around Enna]. When he had collected a huge number of slaves, he became bold enough to engage in combat with Roman field commanders. When he joined battle with them, Eunus frequently came out the winner because of his larger numbers—he now had more than ten thousand soldiers under his command.

While these events were taking place, a man named Kleon, a Cilian, began a revolt of other slaves on the island. Everyone hoped that the two groups of rebellious slaves would clash with each other in battle and that the rebels would destroy each other, thereby freeing Sicily of the uprising. But contrary to all expectations, the two groups merged their forces. Kleon subordinated himself wholly to Eunus's command and assumed the role of a general in the service of a king. Kleon had five thousand soldiers of his own. It was now almost thirty days after the outbreak of the revolt.

A short time later, the Roman commander, the praetor Lucius Hypsaëus, arrived from Rome. He had 8,000 soldiers recruited in Sicily under his command. When the two sides confronted each other on the battlefield, however, the rebels emerged victorious, since they now numbered 20,000. Not long afterward, their total collective strength reached 200,000. Consequently, they emerged victorious from many battles with the Romans; only infrequently did they come off the worse. When news of these events spread outside Sicily, a slave rebellion involving 150 conspirators broke out in Rome. Another one that involved more than a thousand slaves broke out in Attica, another occurred on the island of Delos, and more revolts broke out in many other places. Because of the speed with which help arrived and the severity with which punishment was inflicted, the men who were in charge of each community quickly put down these rebellions. This brought any others who were contemplating rebellion to their senses. In Sicily, however, the evils only grew in scale. Whole cities were besieged and captured along with their inhabitants. Many armies were completely destroyed by the rebels.

The situation changed only when the consul [Publius] Rupilius saved Tauromenium for the Romans by placing it under a close siege and encircling it so that the rebels were compelled to live in unspeakable conditions and famine. The besieged were reduced to such extremes, in fact, that they began first to eat their own children and then their women. Finally, in despair, they did not even shrink from devouring each other. It was on this occasion that Rupilius captured Kleon's brother Komanos [or Kommas] when he was trying to escape from the besieged city. In the end, a Syrian named Sarapion betrayed the citadel, and the Roman commander was able to capture all the fugitive slaves in the city. When Rupilius had finished torturing the prisoners, he had them thrown off a high precipice.

From Tauromenium, Rupilius advanced to Enna, which he placed under a similar siege. By forcing the rebels into extremely dire straits,

he finally broke their hope. Kleon, their commander, sallied forth from the city with a few men, fought heroically, and in the end died, his body covered with wounds. His corpse was put on public display. Rupilius captured this city by the same type of betrayal that he used at Tauromenium, since, because of the great strength of its fortifications, it could not be taken by ordinary force of arms.

Eunus took his bodyguard of a thousand men with him and, in a cowardly fashion, sought refuge in steep and rugged terrain. Since the Roman commander Rupilius was already marching against them in full force, the men who accompanied Eunus realized how defenseless they were against the impending disaster. Anticipating their fate, they cut each other's throats with their swords. The wonder-worker and king, Eunus, who, like a coward, had sought refuge in some caves, was dragged out along with four men—his cook, his baker, his bath masseur, and the master of entertainments at his drinking parties. After he had been placed in detention, his body was destroyed by a mass of lice,² as befits a man of his connivance. He ended his life at Morgantina.

Rupilius then scoured the whole of Sicily with crack troops that he divided into small operational units. In this way, he freed the island from the scourge of banditry much more quickly than had been expected.

Eunus, the king of the rebels, called himself "Antiochus" and his mob of rebels "Syrians."

²This was a typical death of tyrannical rulers, including Antiochus IV, Herod the Great, and the Roman emperor Galerius, who persecuted Christians. Plutarch provides a vivid, if not repellent, description of the death of the Roman strongman Lucius Cornelius Sulla in 78 B.C. The ex-dictator's body turned into a mass of lice. Plutarch comments: "If we must make note of those men who were famous for other reasons, but who were not good men themselves, it is reported that the leader of the war of the runaway slaves in Sicily, called Eunus, was taken to Rome after his capture and died there of this lice-consuming disease" (*Life of Sulla*, 36).

SOURCE: Diodorus Siculus, *Library of History*, 34/35.2.1–24 [= Photios, *Library*, 284–86b].

DIODORUS SICULUS

The First Slave War on the Island of Sicily: Second Version

First Century B.C.

This is the account preserved in the Byzantine emperor Constantine Porphyrogennetos's Excerpts. Surviving only in fragments, this version of the slave rebellion covers the same sequence of events as the previous one, but it has different emphases and contains episodes not mentioned in the first account.

Never had there been such a great uprising of slaves as then arose in Sicily. Because of it, cities fell into terrible disasters, and countless men and women, along with their children, experienced the gravest misfortunes. The whole island seemed about to fall into the hands of fugitive slaves, who measured the extent of their power by the excesses of the misfortunes that were suffered by free persons. These events struck the majority of people on the island suddenly and contrary to all expectation, but to those who could judge these events realistically, they did not seem to happen without good reason. Because of the excessive success and wealth of those who were taking profits from this exceedingly prosperous island, at first all of those who had become wealthy so quickly desired only a luxurious life. Later, however, they became arrogant and were filled with violent excesses. Since the maltreatment of the slaves increased in equal proportion to their alienation from their masters, when the first opportunity presented itself, there was a sudden violent outburst of hatred on the part of the slaves. The result was that, without any communication between themselves, tens of thousands of slaves joined forces to kill their masters. Almost the identical thing happened in Asia at the same time, when Aristonicus claimed the kingship that was not rightly his.³

³Aristonicus, who professed to have a legitimate claim to the throne of the kingdom of Pergamum, led an abortive rebellion at the time of King Attalus III's death in 133 B.C. He issued his own coinage as a symbolic assertion of his royal authority and appealed to the lower orders, including the slaves, for support. The Roman consul Marcus Perperna brought his revolt to a violent end in 129. Aristonicus was taken to Rome as a prisoner and executed there.

Because their masters had treated them so terribly, the slaves in Asia joined Aristonicus and were the cause of great disasters to many unfortunate cities.

In almost the same fashion, each of the large landowners purchased entire lots of slaves to farm their lands. . . . [*The manuscript is defective.*] Some of them were shackled by their feet, others were ground down by the sheer weight of their work, but all of them had their bodies inscribed with the slave owners' arrogant marks of identification. Such large numbers of slaves flooded all of Sicily that those who heard the outlandish figures involved would not believe them. The Sicilians themselves had now become so massively wealthy that they began to rival the Italians in their arrogance, in their greed for more, and in their wicked machinations. The Italians, who also owned large numbers of slaves, had already made their slave herdsmen so accustomed to the loose controls over them that the slave owners did not need to provide the slaves with any of the necessary supplies for living, but rather simply allowed them to engage in acts of banditry. Great power had been permitted to men who, because of their physical strength, were capable of doing anything they wished and who were fortunate to have free time on their hands. Since these men lacked even the basic necessities of life, they were driven to commit dangerous and risky acts. This quickly produced a rapid escalation of lawlessness.

At first, they murdered men who happened to be traveling alone or in pairs along the roads in out-of-the-way places. Then they gathered in gangs to attack the houses of unprotected people during the night, taking by force all their possessions and killing all those who tried to resist them. Finally, their daring became greater and greater, with the result that at night, no road in Sicily was safe anymore. For those people who had been accustomed to living in the countryside, it was no longer safe to remain there. Every place was filled with violence, banditry, and every kind of murder. Since the slave herdsmen were raised in the rugged countryside and were armed like soldiers, naturally they were filled with arrogance and daring. They brandished clubs, spears, and imposing herdsmen's staffs, and their bodies were covered in the hides of wolves and wild boars, so that they had a frightening appearance that was not far from the savageries of war itself. Following close on the heels of each man was a pack of fierce dogs, while a regular diet of milk and raw meat made the bodies and minds of the men themselves thoroughly savage.

The whole island became filled with armed gangs scattered about the countryside, since, thanks to the permissiveness of their owners,

the aggressive impulses of the slaves were now provided with the necessary weapons. The Roman governors tried to prevent the madness of the slaves, but they did not dare to punish them, because the authority and power of the slave masters forced the governors to look the other way while the province was being plundered by the bandits. The fact is that most of the landowners were recognized Roman *equites*. Since these same men were judges in legal cases filed against the governors, arising from the maladministration of their provinces, they were greatly feared by the governors.⁴

The Italians who were beginning to engage in agricultural enterprises in Sicily purchased large numbers of slaves. They placed identifying marks on the slaves' bodies, but they did not provide them with sufficient food and ground them down with a brutal and oppressive work regime . . . and the enduring of these miseries. . . . [*The manuscript is defective.*]

Not only in the public realm of power should those in superior positions treat those who are humble and lowly with consideration. But similarly, in their private lives, if they understand their own situations accurately, they should treat their slaves considerately. Just as arrogance and brutal treatment in states leads to social upheaval and civil strife among the freeborn citizens, in the same way maltreatment produces plots against the masters by the slaves within the household. From this same source, fearsome rebellions are plotted against the state itself. To the degree that cruelty and lawlessness pervert the basic elements of power, to that same degree the characters of subject persons are made savage to the point of despair. For every person who has been made humble by chance or fate and who has willingly treated his superiors with goodness and respect, but who has been deprived of the expected humane consideration in return, will become an enemy to those who savagely lord it over him.

There was a certain Damophilos, born in Enna, who was an exceedingly wealthy man, but of arrogant character, who farmed a great circuit of lands filled with herds of cattle. He emulated the lifestyle of the Italians in Sicily—both in the great number of slaves that he possessed and in the inhumane and harsh way in which he treated them. Damophilos used to go the rounds of his lands in four-wheeled coaches drawn by richly caparisoned⁵ horses and accompanied by a retinue of armed slaves. In addition to these men, Damophilos also boasted a large number of handsome slave boys and a following of his

⁴See the note on page 81 concerning this claim about the status of the landowners and its supposed effect on the behavior of the Roman governors.

⁵*caparisoned*: adorned.

favorites. Both in the city and in his rural villas, he displayed finely chased⁶ silver vessels and purple-dyed coverings, and he had royal tables set with lavish feasts.

Damophilos exceeded even the luxuries of the Persians in his great outlays and expenditures. He also exceeded the Persians in arrogance. The command of a power that was answerable to no one and of a great wealth that was acquired by good luck affected Damophilos's uneducated and unschooled character. At first, his excessive wealth produced a desire only for what would suffice, but then it led to a violent impulse to acquire more, and finally to disaster and death for himself and to great misfortunes for his community.

Whenever he purchased a large number of slaves, Damophilos would treat them violently, inscribing letters and marks with instruments of iron on the bodies of men who had been freeborn citizens in their own lands, but who had suffered the fate of slavery through capture in warfare. Some of these he bound with leg irons and threw into slave barracks. Others he appointed to be his herdsman, but these he did not provide with sufficient clothing or food.

When Damophilos of Enna was approached by some naked slaves who wished to speak with him about the matter of adequate clothing, he would not listen to their petition but said, "What's this? Men wandering around the countryside, parading in the nude? Why don't they just importune a theatrical patron to provide them with the cloaks that they need so badly?" He ordered them to be bound to pillars and beaten, and then he haughtily had them dismissed.

Because of the stubbornness and cruelty of his character, there was not a day on which Damophilos did not punish some of his slaves, and never for any just cause. And his wife Metallis,⁷ who delighted no less in these excessive punishments, treated her women servants cruelly, as well as any of the other slaves who happened to cross her path. Because of the beatings and punishments administered by these two owners, their slaves became violently enraged toward them, and considering that nothing worse would happen to themselves than they were presently suffering. . . . [*The manuscript ends.*]

The slaves began to plot with one another about a rebellion and the murder of their masters. They approached Eunus, who lived not far from them, and asked him if their plans had the approval of the gods. Eunus fell into a trancelike state and began working his wonders.

⁶chased: ornamented.

⁷Megallis in the first account.

When he heard why they had come, Eunus made clear to them that the gods favored their revolt as long as they did not delay too long but put their plans quickly into action. It had been foretold, he said, that Enna, the chief city of the whole island, was to be their homeland. When they heard his words, they were confident that the divine was with them in their revolt. Their spirits were so on fire for rebellion that they would accept no delay in the accomplishment of their aims. They immediately set loose those slaves who were in bonds. Then, collecting as many of the other slaves as happened to live nearby, they gathered together about four hundred men in a field that was close to Enna. Making pacts and forging bonds of trust with each other by swearing oaths over sacrifices in the middle of the night, they armed themselves as well as they could on the spur of the moment. All of them donned the most powerful weapon of all: a rage that was directed at the destruction of their arrogant and overbearing masters. Eunus led them in their assault. Shouting encouragement to each other, the slaves burst into the city in the middle of the night and slaughtered many people.

The daughter of Damophilos, a girl approaching the age of marriage, simple in her character and remarkable for her human kindness, also lived in Sicily. She always showed concern for the slaves who were being beaten by her parents and felt sympathy for the ones that had been put in chains. Because of her kindness, she was greatly loved by everyone. So it happened in the present circumstances that her previous favors provoked in response the sympathy of those who had been treated well by her. Not only did no slave dare violently and shamefully to lay hands on the girl, but all of them made sure that the flower of her beauty was kept free from any outrage against her honor. Instead, the slaves selected the best men from their own numbers—the most outstanding among them was a man named Hermeias—and had them escort her safely to the home of some of her relatives in the city of Catana.

Although the rebellious slaves were wild with rage against all the households of their masters and resorted to uncontrolled violence and vengeance against them, it was clear that this response was not rooted in any innately savage nature. Rather, it was because of the outrages that had previously been committed against them that they now ran wild in the punishment of those who had previously done wrong to them. Even among slaves, human nature is perfectly capable of being its own teacher about what is just repayment, whether it be gratitude or vengeance.

After Eunus was hailed as king, he had all of them [the slave masters] killed, with the sole exception of those who in earlier times had deigned to invite him to their banquets when his master had allowed, men who had treated him kindly, who had shown respect for his prophetic powers, and who had given gifts of food to him from their own tables. Here was an amazing thing: a sudden shift in fortune and the fact that a favor granted for such a small thing should be repaid with such a great gift and at such a critical time.

Achaïos, the personal adviser of King Antiochus [the slave leader Eunus's new royal name], was not pleased with the actions of the runaway slaves and reprimanded them for the outrages they were committing. He announced, with some bravado, that they would suffer immediate punishment for these acts. Not only did Eunus not put Achaïos to death for his use of free speech, but he gave him the house of his former masters as a gift and made him one of his royal counselors.

There was another revolt of runaway slaves on the island worthy of record. Kleon, a Cilician from the region of the Taurus Mountains, had been accustomed to a life of banditry from the time he was a small child. In Sicily, he became a herder of horses and a man who habitually robbed travelers and committed murders all over the place. When he learned of Eunus's success and of the victories of the fugitive slaves under his command, he decided to lead his own revolt. He persuaded some of the slaves close by to join his mad enterprise. They overran the city of Acragas and almost all of the surrounding countryside.

Their pressing needs and lack of resources forced the rebel slaves to have a good opinion of everyone; they did not have the luxury of selecting only the stronger and better men.

There was no need of some heaven-sent sign to make them realize that the city was open to capture. Even to the dullest person, it was clear that the city's walls had fallen into disrepair because of the prolonged peaceful conditions and that now, when many of its soldiers had been killed, it was easily exposed to a successful siege.

Eunus had stationed his forces outside the range of the catapult bolts. He cursed the Romans, shouting out that it was not his men but the Romans who were the real fugitives—in their case, from the dangers of war. He even staged dramatic mime performances for the people inside the city on the theme of the slave rebellion—dramas in which the slaves themselves acted out the events of their rebellion against their masters. In these dramatic skits, the slaves poured con-

tempt on the arrogance and outrageous insolence that had led to the slave owners' self-destruction.

As for sudden and unexpected blows of misfortune, there are those who are persuaded that the divine has nothing at all to do with such occurrences. Yet, even so, it is surely to the advantage of the common good of society that fear of the gods should be inculcated in the minds of the great majority of ordinary people. For those who do the right thing because of their personal moral excellence are few in number. The vast majority of humankind refrain from doing wrong only because of the penalties exacted by the laws and the punishments coming from the gods.

When these great and countless evils were inflicted on the people of Sicily, the democratic mob had no sympathy when they witnessed the misfortunes of the masters. Quite the opposite: They were overjoyed. The common people were filled with envy because of their unequal share in the community and because of the lives they were compelled to lead, so very different from those of the rich. This envy of theirs, caused by the suffering that I have mentioned, turned to joy when they saw that the resplendent lot of the rich had been reduced to depths that would once have been beneath the contempt of even ordinary citizens. But what was the most terrible of all was the fact that the rebel slaves, who at least had some reasonable forethought, did not set fire to the rural villas of the rich and did not destroy the goods and harvests that were stored on the country estates of the wealthy. Indeed, in general they refrained from doing harm to anyone involved in farming. The free common people, however, used the runaway slaves as an excuse. Rushing out into the countryside, they not only pillaged and plundered the possessions of the rich, but they also set fire to their country villas—all out of envy.

The runaway Syrian slaves cut off the hands of their prisoners. Not satisfied with cutting off the hands alone, however, amid these terrible mutilations they made it their practice to cut off the whole of the person's arm.

Those persons who ate the sacred fish^a suffered many evils. The divine force, as if displaying what was fitting as an example for the others, left all of those who had acted with so little consideration with no relief from these ills. These same people, in accordance with the

^a*sacred fish*: Probably the fish sacred to the goddess Artemis that were kept in a pond at the fountain of Arethusa in Syracuse. Such fish also were central to the worship of the Syrian goddess Atargatis, and so they were probably well known to the rebel slaves.

vengeance inflicted by the gods, have also received blame in our historical accounts and so have reaped the kind of just punishment they deserve.

Since the Senate was struck with a reverent fear of the divine, it dispatched an embassy to Sicily in accordance with a Sibylline oracle [see glossary]. The ambassadors went to visit all the altars that had been established for Aetnean Zeus throughout the island of Sicily and made sacrifices at these altars. They also had barriers erected around the altars and ordered that no one was to have access to them except for those political communities that had by tradition made ancestral sacrifices at each particular place.

There was a man from Morgantina, one Gorgos, who was also known as Kambalos, a man who was preeminent in his wealth and personal reputation. One day he was out on the chase with his hunting dogs, when by chance he ran into a bandit gang of runaway slaves. To escape them, he began to run back to the city on foot. His father, Gorgos, who was out riding on horseback, happened to encounter his son. He dismounted and offered his son the horse so that the son might save himself by riding back to the city. The son, however, would not put his own safety before that of his father; nor was the father willing to accept the death of his son by making his own escape from the impending danger. As they were tearfully pleading with each other and contending with each other in respect and affection—the virtue of a parent's love for a child contesting with the son's love for a father—the bandits caught up with them and murdered them both.

SOURCE: Diodorus Siculus, *Library of History*, 34/35.2.25–3.11.

The documents that follow are minor sources for the first slave war on Sicily. They are often synopses, brief asides, and other snippets of information contained in histories, letters, and speeches from later times. Although often tangential to the main concerns of the writers, these pieces of information might confirm the general outline of the events described in the previous two accounts or add details that would otherwise be unknown.

*A Brief Summary of the Main Events
of 136–129 B.C.*

First Century B.C.

A slave war erupted in Sicily. Since the praetors were not able to suppress it, the consul Gaius Fulvius [Flaccus] [134 B.C.] was ordered to take the field. The man who caused this war was a slave named Eunus, a man of Syrian origin. Eunus collected a force of rural slaves, broke open the slave barracks, and in this way raised the numbers of his men to those of a regular army. Another slave, named Cleon [Kleon], likewise gathered together about seventy thousand slaves. After these two men joined forces, they fought several battles against the Roman army.

... [This book] includes, in addition, an account of campaigns in Sicily undertaken against the fugitive slaves, but with varying degrees of success.

Publius Rupilius, the consul [in 132 B.C.], brought the war against the fugitive slaves in Sicily to an end. Aristonicus, the son of the king Eumenes, took possession of Asia, although according to the last will and testament of King Attalus in which his kingdom was bequeathed to the Roman people, it was to be a free state. Publius Licinius Crassus, the consul [in 131 B.C.], although he was also pontifex maximus [see glossary] (a thing that had never happened before), actually left the land of Italy to attack Aristonicus. He was defeated in battle and died. Marcus Perperna, the consul, defeated Aristonicus and received his surrender.

SOURCE: Livy, *Summaries*, 56, 58–59.

Delos, slaves who were about to break out in a new revolt were repressed by the preemptive actions taken by the citizens of the island. All of these other incidents were caused by the first source of this evil in Sicily, which scattered the embers, so to speak, that sparked the other fires. The consul Piso, who succeeded Fulvius as commander in Sicily, captured the town of Mamertium, where he killed 8,000 fugitive slaves. Those whom he was able to capture alive, he nailed to crosses. In turn, he was succeeded by the consul Rutilius [Rupilius], who recaptured Tauromenium and Enna, which had been the most strongly fortified of the refuges held by the fugitive slaves. They say that more than 20,000 slaves were slaughtered in these operations. The causes of this great and protracted war were certainly lamentable. The slave masters were bound to lose everything unless they opposed their increasingly insolent slaves with the blade of a sword. And yet, as far as the tragic destruction caused by the fighting and the unhappy rewards of victory were concerned, the victors themselves lost just as much as the defeated.

SOURCE: Orosius, *History against the Pagans*, 5.6.1-6, 5.9.4-8.

42

POSIDONIUS

The Cause of the Slave War

First Century B.C.

In the eighth book of his *Histories*, Posidonius says concerning Damophilus the Sicilian, the man who was the cause of the slave war: He was a slave of luxury and evil-doing. He traveled through the countryside in four-wheeled carriages drawn by splendid horses and was accompanied by an escort of handsome young slaves, parasites, and a coterie of boys in livery. Later, however, he and his whole family met their end in a suitably humiliating manner, the object of his own slaves' contempt.

SOURCE: Posidonius, *Histories* [Kidd-Edelstein, F59; Jacoby, *FGH*, F7: from Athenaeus, *Deipnosophistae*, 12.542b].

43

APPIAN

*The Tribune of the Plebs on the Dangers
Posed by the Slave War in Sicily*

Second Century A.D.

In this brief passage, the historian Appian writes about the demands made by Tiberius Gracchus, the tribune of the plebs¹¹ in 133 B.C., for a redistribution of public land to Roman citizens. In making his arguments in support of a strong freeborn citizen body of farmers, Tiberius Gracchus was careful to point out the deleterious effects of slavery.

Tiberius was very critical of the large numbers of slaves in Italy as useless for warfare and of the slaves themselves as disloyal to their owners. He pointed to the recent disaster inflicted by the slaves on their masters in Sicily, precisely in a situation where the demands of agriculture had greatly increased their numbers. He also brought to mind the war waged against these slaves by the Romans, a war that was neither easy to win nor short in duration. Rather, it had been a protracted conflict that was dangerous and filled with unexpected shifts in fortune.

¹¹plebs: the ordinary citizens of the city of Rome.

SOURCE: Appian, *Roman History: The Civil Wars*, 1.9.36.

44

CICERO

The Behavior of the Rebel Slaves at Enna

First Century B.C.

In his prosecution of Gaius Verres, the former Roman governor of Sicily who was brought to trial on charges of extortion in 70 B.C., the Roman orator and senator Cicero purposefully maligned Verres' behavior by

making his actions in Sicily seem even worse than those of the rebel slaves. For Cicero's prosecution of Verres, see documents 79 and 80.

Was it from Enna that you [Gaius Verres] dared to take away the statue of Ceres [Demeter]? Was it at Enna that you tried to snatch the statue of the goddess Victory from the hand of Ceres, thus robbing one goddess from the other? You did this, when even those men [the rebel slaves], whose very being was that of wickedness rather than piety, desisted from desecrating or indeed even touching these holy objects? In the consulship of Publius Popillius and Publius Rupilius [132 B.C.], this place was occupied by slaves—runaways, savages, and public enemies. Yet these men were less the slaves of their masters than you are the slave of your lusts. They were less fugitives from their masters than you are from what is lawful and right. They were less savage by speech and origin than you are by birth and character. They were less the enemies of humanity than you are of the gods.

SOURCE: Cicero, *Against Verres*, 2.4.112.

45

STRABO

The Devastation of Sicily

First Century A.D.

In the geographer Strabo's description of Sicily, written about a century after the end of the second slave war on the island, he reports on the long-term effects of the slave wars on Sicily's economy and settlement.

Very few people live in the city of Enna in the hinterland [of the island of Sicily], where the temple of Demeter is located. Enna is situated on a high crest of land. Lying all around it are high mountain plains, all of them rich and arable. The city suffered severely when the fugitive slaves led by Eunus were besieged and, only with great difficulty, were forced out of the city by the Romans. The people of Catana and Tauromenium, and very many other cities, also suffered from these same problems.

[At this point, Strabo describes the town of Eryx, the temple of Venus Erycina, and the temple slaves who served this complex.]

All of the other settlements in the hinterland have, for the greatest part, been given over to herdsmen. I do not know of any persons living at Gela or Kallipolis or Selinus or Euboea or at many of the others.... The Romans, realizing that the land was deserted, took possession of the highlands and most of the plains regions and handed them over to men who herded horses, cattle, and sheep. Many times the island of Sicily fell into great dangers because of these men. At first, the herdsmen turned to banditry only sporadically, but later they began to operate in much larger numbers and pillaged the local settlements, as when Enna was seized by Eunus and his men.

More recently, in my own time, a man named Selouros was sent to Rome under arrest. He was nicknamed the "Son of Aetna" because he had led a gang of bandits that, for a long time, had overrun the lands around Mount Aetna, staging repeated hit-and-run raids on the surrounding settlements. I saw this man in gladiatorial games staged in the forum at Rome, where he was killed by being torn to pieces by wild beasts. Selouros was placed on a high contraption, as if he were on top of Mount Aetna. This tower was constructed in such a way that it would suddenly collapse into pieces. The result was that Selouros fell into the cages of the wild animals, which were built to fall open easily and had been constructed underneath the edifice for this purpose.

SOURCE: Strabo, *Geography*, 6.2.6-7.

46

FLORUS

The Extent of the Devastation of Sicily Caused by the Slaves

Second Century A.D.

The Latin author Florus seems to have depended mainly on the accounts of Livy and Sallust for his information on the slave wars. Since their historical works on these wars have been lost, Florus's words, even if they are only a shadowy summary of what once existed, are still useful.

Even if we fought against our own Italian allies—itsself an impious act—at least we fought with free and freeborn men. But who can even bear the thought, and not be greatly disturbed by it, of wars waged by slaves against the leading people of the civilized world? The first attempt at a slave war took place in the city of Rome itself, in the early years of its history, under the leadership of Herdonius the Sabine [460 B.C.]. On this occasion, when the city was occupied with the seditions caused by the tribunes of the plebs, the Capitolium¹² was seized, but it was later taken back by the consul. This incident, however, was more a civil insurrection than a genuine war.

Then [at a much later time], when our rule was established over very diverse and very distant lands, who could believe that Sicily would be far more cruelly devastated in a war fought against slaves than it had been by the war with the Carthaginians? This land, so rich in its production of cereal crops and, in a manner of speaking, almost a suburb of Rome, was divided into extensive agricultural domains that were owned by Roman citizens. The large numbers of slaves who worked lands owned by these men, and who were either housed in slave barracks or kept in chains, provided the basic manpower for the war.

A certain Syrian named Eunus—the very magnitude of the disasters he caused makes us remember him—by feigning a sort of crazed madness and tossing about his locks of hair in his worship of the Syrian goddess, incited the slaves to arms and to freedom, pretending that he had received such a command from the divine spirit. To prove that he was acting under divine inspiration, he hid in his mouth a hollow nutshell that he had filled with sulfur and embers, so that, by exhaling slowly, he breathed out flames while he spoke. This miracle initially attracted two thousand men from those whom he happened to meet, but later, when the slave barracks had been broken open by the right of war,¹³ he assembled an army of more than sixty thousand.

Leaving no evil undone, Eunus even adorned himself with royal insignia. He inflicted a devastation on fortified places, villages, and towns that was pitiful to behold. Finally, in the ultimate shame of the war, he even captured the army camps of Roman praetors. But I am not ashamed to name the commanders involved: They were Manlius, Lentulus, Piso, and Hypsaeus. The result was that praetorian commanders who ran from the battlefield were pursued by men who ought to have been arrested by professional hunters of runaway slaves. Finally,

¹²Capitolium: temple of Jupiter on the Capitoline hill in Rome.

¹³right of war: idea that one can do what one wishes in war.

under the command of Perperna, punishment was inflicted on the fugitive slaves. For Perperna defeated their forces and, in the final event of the war, placed them under siege at Enna, where he destroyed them with a famine that was as lethal as any plague. Those bandits who survived he punished with leg irons, chains, and crucifixion. Perperna contented himself with an *ovatio* [see glossary] for his victory over the slaves, so that he would not besmirch the honor of a triumph [see glossary] by displaying a sign¹⁴ that it was for vanquishing mere slaves.

¹⁴sign: In the general's triumphal parade, inscribed banners and signs announced to the spectators who the defeated enemy were.

SOURCE: Florus, *A Synopsis of Roman History*, 2.7.1–8.

47

VALERIUS MAXIMUS

Stories of Bravery and Cowardice of Romans and Slaves in the War

First Century A.D.

In the early first century A.D., Valerius Maximus produced a large collection of memorable sayings and accomplishments of famous persons. He intended these as examples to be imitated by his readers. Although they are not much more than moralizing vignettes, they preserve materials from other sources that have been lost.

1. There once existed those men who were dedicated to military discipline even if this meant breaking the bonds of kinship and friendship. They did not hesitate to exact punishment for a wrong that had been committed, even if it meant shame for their own households. Thus, Publius Rupilius, when he was consul in the war that he fought in Sicily against the runaway slaves, ordered his son-in-law Quintus Fabius to leave the province when, because of his negligence, he lost the fortified position at Tauromenium.

[The Latin text of the passage above is marked with textual difficulties.]

2. The consul Lucius Calpurnius Piso [consul in 133 B.C.], when he was waging the war against the fugitive slaves, punished Gaius Titius, the commander of a cavalry unit, for having surrendered his arms when he was surrounded by enemy forces. Piso inflicted the following kinds of humiliating punishments on Titius. He ordered him to be dressed in a toga cut into tatters and covered with an unbelted tunic, and, through the whole period of his tour of duty, to stand in his bare feet from early morning to late at night in front of his [Piso's] headquarters. He forbade Titius to have any contact with the other men or to use the bath facilities. The consul also confiscated the horses of the cavalry unit that Titius had commanded and transferred the cavalrymen themselves to units of slingers. Although the humiliation suffered by our fatherland was great, an equal shame was suffered by the guilty. They were our soldiers who, simply because of their wish to live, had allowed fugitive slaves, worthy only of crucifixion, to erect trophies for their victories over us—free men who had not even blushed at being forced to pass under a shameful yoke made by slaves. Piso made these men feel the mere light of day in which they lived as bitter, so that those who had feared death like a bunch of women would now actually hope for it like real men.

3. By exemplifying the virtue of self-control, Calpurnius Piso was able to rival the Fabii and the Ogulnii¹⁵ in glory. It is proven by the facts. When he was consul, Calpurnius Piso freed Sicily from the dangerous war with the fugitive slaves. According to army custom, Piso bestowed awards on those men whose extraordinary deeds had been of special use. Among the men who were singled out for honors was his own son, who, in holding certain specific positions, had fought very bravely. Piso awarded him a gold crown that was three pounds in weight, but only as an honorary title, declaring publicly that he considered it unfitting that a public official should expend funds of the state that would then enter the income of his own family. He therefore promised to leave the young man in his will an amount of gold equal to the gold in the crown. In this way, the honor would be bestowed publicly by the commander, while the son would receive the monetary part of the reward privately from his father.

4. As for Publius Rupilius, while he did not actually engage in taking tax-collection contracts for Sicily, he did do work for the private companies of tax collectors. In the same way, finding himself ex-

¹⁵*Fabii and Ogulnii*: two of the most illustrious political families of the early Roman Republic, whose heyday was in the third and second centuries B.C.

tremely hard-pressed financially, he actually hired out his services to the allied cities in Sicily. A little while later, when he became consul, all the Sicilians received their laws from him, and he freed them from the savage war against bandits and fugitive slaves. Indeed, if there could be any feeling in mute objects, I think that the gates of the city themselves would be astonished at such a great change of status in the same individual. For they witnessed a man just getting by on his day-to-day income, while they later saw the same man dispensing the law and commanding naval fleets and armies.

5. There are even deaths of barbarians that are deserving of memory. One such death was that of a man named Komās [Komanos] who, it is said, was the brother of Kleon, the supreme commander of the bandits. When Roman forces retook Enna, which had up until then been held by the brigands, Komās was brought before the consul Publius Rupilius. When Komās was being questioned about the number of his men and what the fugitive slaves were trying to do, he paused and steeled himself. Komās covered his head, bent down on his knees, and held his breath until he died in the arms of the guards, right in front of the consul himself. Miserable and contemptible men, who would in fact be better off dead, torture themselves during their interrogation with the fear and the dread of the death that might happen to them and worry about the form that it might take. In their minds, they sharpen the iron blade, mix the required doses of poison, take a rope in their hands, or cast their eyes to the tops of precipitous cliffs—as if one needed great preparations and extraordinary efforts to bring the partnership between body and soul to an end. Komās needed none of this. He ended his own life by extinguishing the life in his own chest.

SOURCE: Valerius Maximus, *Memorable Deeds and Words*, 2.7.3, 2.7.9, 4.3.10, 6.9.8, 9.12.1.

48

Slingshot Ammunition Used by Roman Soldiers

133 B.C.

Just like modern bomber crews who painted slogans on the bombs they dropped, Roman soldiers who used slingshots as weapons frequently inscribed words on the "bullets" they used as ammunition. Sometimes

these words were meant to encourage their own side—for example, the name of their commander. At other times, bullets were inscribed with crude obscenities, slurs, or curses aimed at the enemy.

The following example is an inscription from a slingshot bullet found in 1808 at Castrogiovanni in Sicily, near the site of ancient Enna. Many of these bullets have been discovered there, both on the heights of the site itself and on the surrounding slopes. Some bullets are inscribed; others are not. About thirty or so are inscribed with the Roman commander's name, as follows:

LUCIUS PISO, SON OF LUCIUS, THE CONSUL

See also document 61 for other examples of bullet inscriptions from the second slave war on Sicily.

SOURCE: *Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum*, vol. I², no. 847.

6

The Second Sicilian Slave War, 104–100 B.C.

The second major slave war that afflicted the Roman state was almost a carbon copy of the first. Taking place a generation after the first war, it also occurred on the island of Sicily. The sequence of events and the actions of the main protagonists are so reminiscent of the first slave war that some modern historians have hypothesized that the Greek and Roman historians who told the story of the second war simply copied the narrative patterns of the first. The real differences between the two wars, however, are significant, and the similarities may be explained by imitative behavior—the slaves and their repressors had learned from the first great war—and by the similar social, economic, and geographic conditions in which the events happened.

The main difference between the first and second slave wars is in their causes. A series of events in the year 104 B.C. created a recruiting crisis for the Roman army. The need for manpower led to a demand for increased contributions to Roman forces from Rome's allies. When the king of Bithynia protested that he could not provide men on the scale demanded because large numbers of the men in his kingdom had been kidnapped and taken into slavery by slave traders, the Roman senate responded by passing a measure intended to protect people of free status in the provinces of the Roman Empire from being wrongfully detained as slaves. This decree raised expectations of freedom among many of the people already held in slavery on the island of Sicily—slaves who had a model for resistance in their social memory. The war that broke out in the eastern part of the island in 104 B.C. lasted for four years and, once again, seems to have succeeded in part because of Roman inaction. The sudden explosion of slave resistance appears to have taken the local landowning elite in Sicily and the Roman authorities by surprise. Our main account of the war is, once again, that preserved in the surviving fragments of the history composed by Diodorus Siculus ("the Sicilian"), who perhaps had some ancestral memories of the second slave war.

DIODORUS SICULUS

*Events That Portended the Second Great Slave War:
The Rebellion of Titus Vettius**First Century B.C.*

Diodorus prefaced his account of the slave war with an account of an odd incident in southern Italy involving slaves who were incited to join a destitute young nobleman in an episode of local violence. Diodorus presents this strange episode as a sort of prefiguration of the more fearsome war that soon erupted on Sicily. The account survives in two slightly different versions.

It was the time when [Gaius] Marius defeated the African kings Bocchus and Jugurtha in a great upheaval in North Africa, a war in which he killed many thousands of Africans and took Jugurtha prisoner. Bocchus had first seized Jugurtha, so that Bocchus received a pardon from the Romans for the fact that he had opposed them in the war. It was also the time when the despondent Romans had suffered a shocking series of military defeats at the hands of the Cimbri in Gaul. This was the same time when men from Sicily came to the city of Rome to report that a rebellion involving tens of thousands of slaves was taking place in their own homeland. When this news was announced, the whole Roman state was in a great crisis. Since almost sixty thousand enlisted men had been lost in the war against the Cimbri in Gaul, there was now a shortage of troops to be sent out on campaign against any new enemy.

Before the outbreak of the revolt of the slaves in Sicily, however, there occurred a number of brief, small-scale slave uprisings in Italy itself, as if the divine spirit were signaling in advance the magnitude of the uprising that was about to take place in Sicily. The first of these minor rebellions occurred at Nuceria, where thirty slaves formed a conspiracy but were swiftly punished. The second uprising was at Capua, where two hundred slaves rebelled. They, too, were quickly repressed.

The third rebellion was a little odd. There was a man named Titus [Vettius] Minutius, who held the rank of *eques* [see glossary] and

whose father was a man of great wealth. He fell in love with a slave girl, a woman of exceptional beauty, who happened to be owned by another man. Having had sex with her and fallen desperately in love, Minutius tried to purchase the girl for the sum of seven Attic talents,¹ so violently was he compelled by his mad love for the woman. With some difficulty, he was finally able to persuade the girl's master to agree to this plan. A date was set by which Minutius was to pay off the debt, since he had been extended credit on the basis of his father's wealth. When the day arrived and he did not have the means to pay what he owed, a new deadline of thirty days was set. When this day also arrived and the creditors asked for payment, Minutius did not have any more resources to meet the payment than he had had on the first occasion. Since he was still ablaze with love for the woman, he did something that was against all reason: He concocted plots against his creditors and began to claim the powers of a king.

Minutius acquired five hundred individual sets of armor and weaponry. He was advanced the credit to pay for these weapons and arranged for a delay in the payment. In secret, he stockpiled the arms in one of his fields and incited four hundred of his own slaves to open rebellion. Then he donned a diadem and a purple cloak, surrounded himself with lictors [see glossary] and other symbols of office, and with the support of his slaves appointed himself king. He had the creditors who had been demanding payment for the girl from him beaten with rods and then beheaded.

Minutius provided his slaves with full armament and began to make attacks on nearby rural estates. Those who eagerly joined his cause, he also provided with arms; those who opposed him, he had killed. Very quickly, he acquired a following of more than seven hundred men. Next, he enrolled them into regular military units and divided them into centuries.² Minutius then established these men in a palisaded fort and received with open arms anyone who was willing to join the rebellion.

When the rebellion was reported to Rome, the Senate sensibly took counsel concerning the uprising and instigated measures to repress it. Of the praetors who were then in the city, they appointed one, Lucius Lucullus, to the task of apprehending the fugitive slaves. On the very day that he was appointed, Lucullus conscripted 600 soldiers from the city of Rome. When he arrived at Capua, he summoned 4,000 infantry

¹About seventy to eighty times the usual price for a slave.

²Equivalent to regular fighting units of eighty to one hundred men in the Roman army.

and 400 cavalry. When Vettius [Minutius] learned of Lucullus's impending attack, he occupied a strong rise in the land. By now, he had more than 3,500 men under his command.

At the first stage of the engagement, since they were fighting with the advantage of the higher ground, the fugitive slaves were able to beat back Lucullus's forces. By corrupting a man named Apollonius, who was acting as one of Vettius's commanders, and gaining his support with a formal promise of immunity from punishment, Lucullus was able to persuade the man to betray his fellow rebels. Now that he was cooperating with the Romans, Apollonius turned his forces against Vettius, who, fearing the punishment that he would suffer if he were taken prisoner, cut his own throat. The rest of the rebels followed his fate, except for the traitor Apollonius. These events transpired before the great slave rebellion that took place in Sicily, as if they were a foreshadowing of it.

SOURCE: Diodorus Siculus, *Library of History*, 36.1.1–10.2 [= Photios, *Library*, 386–87b]; 36.2a.1–3 [= *Excerpts of Constantine*, 3, 208].

50

DIODORUS SICULUS

*The Second Slave War on the Island of Sicily:
First Version
First Century B.C.*

Like Diodorus's account of the first slave war on Sicily, his record of the second slave war has been preserved in two versions. Despite their apparent similarity, it is worth reading both accounts, since each contains some perspectives and facts not found in the other. This is the version preserved in the Byzantine patriarch Photios's Library.

When the Senate assigned the command against the Cimbri to Marius, it gave him the right to request help from the overseas peoples of the empire according to their terms of alliance. It was in this context that Marius sent requests to Nicomedes, the king of Bithynia, to ask for his assistance. In his reply, Nicomedes stated that Roman govern-

ment contractors had kidnapped the majority of Bithynian men and that they were now slaves in the provinces of the empire. The Senate then decreed that no person who was a free citizen of an allied state was to remain enslaved in a Roman province and that the governors of the provinces ought to take measures to see that such persons were set free. In compliance with this decree, Licinius Nerva, who was governor of Sicily at the time, established judicial hearings and immediately set about freeing slaves. Within a few days, more than eight hundred people obtained their freedom. The main consequence of these events was that all people who were in slavery on the island now had their eyes set on freedom.

The rich and the powerful on the island hurried to see the governor and urged him to refrain from pursuing this course of action. Whether persuaded by their money or enslaved by their patronage, Nerva showed no more interest in his judicial hearings. As a sort of punishment, he ordered those slaves who came to him seeking freedom to go back to their masters. These slaves then gathered together. Fleeing from the city of Syracuse, they took refuge in the sanctuary of the Palikoi.³ There they began to debate with each other about rebellion. From this point on, the daring of the slaves became manifest in many places, but the first ones who made a strike for freedom were thirty slaves who belonged to two very wealthy brothers who lived in the countryside around Halicyae. A man named Varius led them. First, they cut their masters' throats at night while they were asleep. Then, rushing to the neighboring farms, they called the slaves on them to freedom. That same night their number rose to more than 120. Taking possession of a local place that was a natural strong point, the rebels made it even stronger, and they accepted into their number another 80 slaves who had armed themselves. Licinius Nerva made a quick march against them but had no success against the resistance of the besieged.

When force proved useless against the defensive position held by the slaves, the governor began to consider the instrument of betrayal. With promises of immunity, he persuaded one Gaius Titinius, who was also called Gadaios, to assist him in his plan. Two years before, this same man had been condemned to die, but he had managed to

³the Palikoi: Twin gods who were worshiped by the indigenous Sicilians. People went to their sanctuary, at a sulfurous lake near Leontini, in southeastern Sicily (see Map 2 on page 5), to swear sacred and binding oaths. Diodorus Siculus tells us that it also served as a refuge for fugitive slaves.

escape the imposition of the death penalty. He had been staging bandit raids, in the course of which he had murdered many free people who lived in the Sicilian countryside, but he never did any harm to slaves. This same Titinius now took with him a number of slaves who could be trusted and, on the pretense of taking sides with them in the war against the Romans, advanced on the fortified point held by the rebels. He was received as a friend. What is more, he was warmly welcomed, and because of his reputation for bravery, he was even chosen to be their commander. Titinius then betrayed the slaves' fortress to the Romans. Some of the rebels were cut down in the fighting, while others, who feared the punishment they would face if they were captured, hurled themselves off the cliff. This first revolt of fugitive slaves was, therefore, extinguished in the manner that I have just described.

After the soldiers who had taken part in this assault were released from service and had made their way to their homes, some men arrived who reported that eighty rebel slaves had cut the throat of Publius Clonius, a Roman *eques* [see glossary], and that they were now operating in large numbers. Because of the advice offered by some other men, however, the governor was dissuaded from undertaking any action against them. Since most of the soldiers had been discharged from active service, the governor's lack of decisive action provided the rebels with a much-needed opportunity to strengthen their own position. The governor did march with the soldiers he had at his disposal, but when he crossed the Alba River, he deliberately bypassed the rebels who had established themselves on the mountain named Kaprianos [Goat Mountain] and arrived at the city of Herakleia. Because the governor did not attack them, the rebels were able to spread the news of his lack of courage, and they soon incited a large number of slaves to revolt. Huge numbers of men who were well armed for battle hurried to join them. Within the next seven days, they had armed more than eight hundred men. Soon after that, they numbered no fewer than two thousand.

When the governor, Nerva, who was now at Herakleia, learned of the great increase in their numbers, he appointed Marcus Titinius as commander and assigned him six hundred soldiers from the garrison at Enna. Titinius launched an attack on the rebels, but since the slaves held the advantage both in number and because of the harsh terrain, Titinius and his men were defeated. Many of them were killed. Only by throwing away their weapons and running from the field of battle were the rest able to save themselves, and then only with difficulty. Victory in hand, the rebels were able to supply themselves with a

large quantity of captured weapons and to pursue their aims with greater confidence. Now all the slaves [on the island] were encouraged by the prospect of rebellion. As more and more men turned to rebellion with every passing day, there was a sudden and unexpected increase in their number, with the result that, within a few days, they were more than six thousand.

At this point, the rebels congregated to form a popular assembly. As the first order of business presented to them, they chose a man named Salvius to be their king. He had a reputation of being skilled at foretelling the future, and he had also been a mantic⁴ flute player at women's religious festivals. After he became king, Salvius ordered his subjects to avoid cities, since he considered them to be sources of laziness and excess. He divided the rebel slaves into three groups and set in command over them an equal number of officers. He ordered them to comb the countryside and to converge again at an assigned place and time. Since they were able to acquire for themselves a large number of horses and other animals by these raids, within a brief time they could equip and outfit a force of more than two thousand cavalry and no fewer than twenty thousand infantry, who were already well trained in war exercises.

Without warning, they suddenly fell on the strong city of Morgantina and subjected it to savage and unceasing assaults. With about ten thousand Italian allied troops as well as soldiers from Sicily under his command, Nerva, the governor, staged a forced march in the middle of the night to bring help to the city. Discovering that the rebels were occupied with the siege of the city, he made an attack on their fortified camp and found only a few men guarding it. He captured it quite easily. He discovered that the camp was full of women prisoners and every other sort of booty. After plundering it, he advanced on Morgantina itself. The rebels, however, suddenly turned around and attacked his forces. Since they held the higher ground, they immediately gained the upper hand in the battle. The men in the Roman governor's forces turned and ran from the field of battle. When the king of the rebels issued a proclamation that no man was to be killed who threw down his arms, most of the Roman soldiers cast away their weapons and ran for their lives. In this way, Salvius outmaneuvered his opponents and managed to take back his camp. By this complete victory over his enemies, he was able to get possession of many weapons. Because of the humane proclamation of the king, no more than six

⁴*mantic*: prophetic.

hundred Italians and Sicilians died in the battle, while more than four thousand were taken prisoner.

Since many more men flocked to his side because of his successes, Salvius now had double the former force under his command and became lord of the plains region of Sicily. For this reason, Salvius made another attempt to take Morgantina by siege. He issued a proclamation in which he promised freedom to all the slaves in the city. But when their masters countered with the same offer of freedom to any slave who joined them in the fight to defend the city, the slaves chose the masters' offer. Indeed, by their zealous efforts in the battle, these slaves helped repel the siege. When the Roman governor later rescinded these grants of freedom, most of the slaves ran away and joined the rebels.

Large numbers of slaves were being incited to rebellion in the rural areas around Segesta and Lilybaeum, and also in the lands around the neighboring cities. The leader of these slaves was a man named Athenion, a Cilician by origin, and a man who was renowned for his bravery. Athenion was a domain manager for two very wealthy brothers, but he was also experienced and highly skilled in predicting the future from the stars. He first persuaded the slaves who were under his authority, about two hundred of them, to join him. He then turned to the slaves who were on neighboring farms, so that within five days he had gathered more than a thousand under his command. When he was chosen by these people to be king and had placed a diadem on his head, Athenion conducted his rule in a manner that was opposite that of all of the other rebel groups. He did not accept all slaves who went into revolt, but turned only the best of them into soldiers. He forced the others to remain at their former tasks and had each of them take care of their own household managerial tasks and work assignments. From these people, Athenion was able to provide an abundance of supplies for his soldiers. He claimed that the gods had foretold to him, by means of the stars, that he would become king of all of Sicily. It was, therefore, necessary for him to conserve the land and all the plants and animals on it, since they now belonged to him.

When he had finally assembled more than ten thousand men, Athenion dared to lay siege to the impregnable city of Lilybaeum. Not meeting with any success there, Athenion departed from the city, saying that the gods had ordered him to take this course of action. If the slaves persisted in the siege, he said, the gods had declared that they would suffer misfortune. When he was preparing to make his retreat from the city, auxiliary troops from the Mauri of North Africa, who

had been dispatched to bring assistance to the people of Lilybaeum, arrived on ships. A man named Gomon commanded the Africans. He and his men made a surprise attack by night on the forces led by Athenion, who were now marching away from the city. After killing and wounding many of the rebels, Gomon returned to the city. The rebel slaves were filled with wonder at their leader's ability to prophesy the future by interpreting the stars.

A great chaos and a mountain of evils of truly epic dimensions disrupted all of Sicily, since not only slaves but also poor persons of free birth became implicated in every kind of brigandage and lawlessness. With no compunction whatsoever, they murdered anyone whom they happened to meet, whether slave or free, so that no one would survive to report their deranged behavior. The result was that the people who lived in the cities regarded their possessions within the city walls as barely still their own, while they regarded those possessions located outside the walls as lost and enslaved to the brute force of lawlessness. In addition, large numbers of people throughout all of Sicily suffered many other wrongs.

SOURCE: Diodorus Siculus, *Library of History*, 36.3.1–10.2 [= Photios, *Library*, 387–90].

51

DIODORUS SICULUS

The Second Slave War on the Island of Sicily: Second Version

First Century B.C.

This is the version preserved in the later "excerpts" from Diodorus's history made for the Byzantine emperor Constantine Porphyrogenetos, and in some fragments preserved by Photios.

Not only did the mass of slaves who moved to open rebellion overrun the country, but even free persons who lived in the countryside and had no possessions of their own turned to robbery and lawless behavior. Both because of their poverty and because of the general conditions of lawlessness, the poor citizens of the cities burst out into the

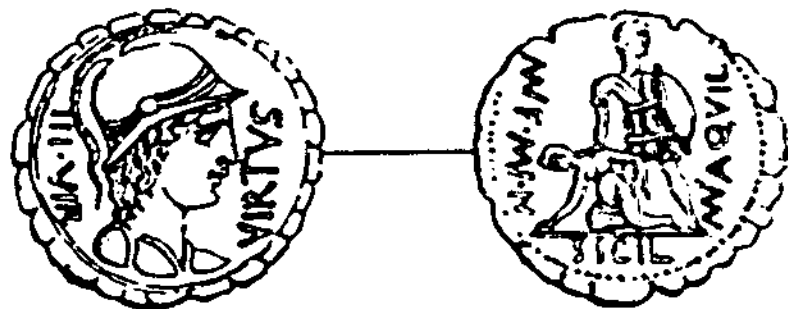


Figure 6. Coin Issued ca. 70 B.C. Commemorating Manius Aquillius's Victory in the Second Slave War.

Roman military men who won great victories over the slaves in Sicily were remembered by their descendants who wished to profit from their ancestors' achievements. This coin was issued by Manius Aquillius, one of the three "moneys" responsible for striking coinage for the Roman state around 70 B.C., immediately after the Spartacus slave war. Obviously, he wished to evoke the memory of the glorious achievements of his grandfather of the same name, who, as consul in 101 B.C. and proconsul in 100 B.C., ended the second slave war in Sicily and celebrated a minor triumph for it in 99 B.C. On one side of the coin is the caption "Virtus" (courage or manliness). On the other side is the name of the moneyer—"Manius Aquillius, son of Manius, grandson of Manius"—with a picture of his ancestor standing astride and holding up the half-nude, drooping figure of a woman who is the personification of the Roman province of Sicily.

Ernest Babelon, *Description historique et chronologique des monnaies de la République romaine*, vol. 1, Paris, 1885, p. 213, no 2.

countryside. Organized in criminal gangs, they drove off herds of cattle, carried off the crops that had been stored in granaries, and murdered anyone whom they happened to meet, whether free or slave, so that no one would survive to bring back a report of their madness and criminality. There was general anarchy both because there was no Roman rule to dispense justice to anyone and because many people simply usurped power, for which they were not answerable to anyone. The suffering that they caused was immense. For this reason, every place suffered from pillage. The poor had simply usurped the power to dispossess the rich of their property. Because of this wholly unexpected and unforeseen shift in fortune, the same men who previously had been among the leading men in their cities in honor and wealth were not only losing their property through acts of

violence at the hands of fugitive slaves but also were being forced to endure insolent and humiliating treatment at the hands of free persons. All such men who remained in the cities, therefore, considered their property within the city gates as barely still their own, while they now considered their property located outside the city walls as belonging to others and as enslaved to the brute force of criminality. There was chaos in the cities and a complete rejection of what was right according to the laws. The rebellious slaves had power over the open countryside and made the rural lands impassable, since they harbored deep and long-remembered hatreds for their masters and were never satisfied with whatever good fortune came their way. What is more, the minds of the slaves who were still in the cities were becoming infected with the disease of rebellion. As they moved ever closer to open revolt, they became objects of great fear to their masters.

Following the siege of Morgantina, Salvius conducted raids over the countryside as far as the plain of Leontini. He gathered together his whole army, having conscripted no less than thirty thousand men. He made sacrifices to the Palikian heroes and made them an offering of one sea-dyed purple cloak⁵ in gratitude for his victory. He then announced that he was King Tryphon⁶ and was hailed as a king by the rebel slaves. Intending to seize Triokala [Triocala] and to construct a palace for himself at that place, he sent a dispatch to Athenion, summoning the man just like a king would summon one of his generals. Everyone assumed that Athenion would contest primacy with Tryphon and that with the conflict between them, the slave war would easily be brought to an end. But Fortune, as if satisfied to increase the power of the fugitive slaves, caused the leaders to come to an agreement. Tryphon immediately went to Triokala with his military force. Athenion also came with three thousand men and subordinated himself as military commander to Tryphon, the king. He had sent the rest of his force to overrun the countryside and incite the slaves to rebellion. Later, Tryphon suspected that Athenion might attack him if given the opportunity, so he ordered Athenion to be placed in detention.

Tryphon furnished the strong and rugged fortress at Triokala with lavish adornments and made it even more impregnable than it had been. The place was called Triokala because it has three excellent advantages. First, it has flowing spring waters, which are exceptional

⁵sea-dyed purple cloak: purple was the color of royalty.

⁶King Tryphon: a violent, freebooting entrepreneur of violence from Cilicia named Tryphon, who claimed to be the legitimate king of Syria, had held sway over parts of the eastern Mediterranean in the late 140s and early 130s B.C.

for their sweetness. Second, the surrounding countryside is richly planted in vines and olive trees and is wonderfully suited to agriculture. Third, the place itself is situated on top of a huge and impregnable rock and is of forbidding appearance. Tryphon constructed a defensive wall, eight stades⁷ in circumference, around the city, excavated a deep ditch around it, and began to use the place as his royal quarters. Tryphon filled Triokala with an abundance of all the supplies that are needed to live the good life. He also constructed a royal palace and a marketplace capable of serving a very large number of people. From men who were exceptional in their intelligence, he selected a sufficient number whom he appointed to be his formal advisers and counselors. Whenever King Tryphon conducted official business, he donned a purple Roman toga and a wide-bordered Greek cloak. He also had lictors holding the symbolic axes⁸ to precede him, as well as all of the other accoutrements that are suitable to the embellishment of royal power.

To confront the rebels, the Roman Senate appointed Lucius Licinius Lucullus. He had 14,000 Italian and Roman soldiers; 800 Bithynians, Thessalians, and Akarnanians; 600 Lucanians, commanded by [Tiberius] Cleptius, a military man who was renowned for his bravery; and 600 other men, making a grand total of 17,000.⁹ He held Sicily with these forces.

At this point, Tryphon, who was beginning to plan the war against the Romans, removed the legal charges against Athenion and released him from confinement. Tryphon's preference was to prepare for the confrontation with the Romans at Triokala, but Athenion advised that the slaves should not trap themselves by accepting a siege but rather that they should fight in open terrain. The latter plan won the day, and the army, no fewer than forty thousand strong, was established in camps close to Skirthaia. The Roman camp was twelve stades¹⁰ away from theirs. At first, there were just a few sharp skirmishes between the two armies, but then both sides set out their lines, and the battle was joined there and then. Many men were killed on both sides. Athenion, who had two hundred cavalymen fighting with him, killed every-

⁷eight stades: a little under one mile.

⁸symbolic axes: A Roman magistrate was preceded by men holding bundles of wooden rods (*fascies*) with axes embedded in them that symbolized the power of the magistrate to discipline by the use of physical force.

⁹This is the total given in the manuscript, although the figures add up to only 16,000. Tiberius Cleptius (or Clepitius) would become an important war leader of the Lucanians in the armed struggle that the Italian allies waged against Rome in 90–88 B.C.

¹⁰twelve stades: about 1.4 miles.

one in his path, filling the area around him with enemy corpses. But when he was wounded in both knees, and then took a third wound, he was no longer able to fight. The fugitive slaves began to lose their morale. Finally, they turned and ran from the field of battle. Athenion was thought to be dead and so escaped notice. By pretending to be dead, he made his escape during the night and so saved his own life.

The Romans won a brilliant victory. Tryphon and his supporters ran from the field of battle. In their attempt to escape, many men were cut down. In total, no fewer than twenty thousand of the rebels were killed. Those who survived made their way under cover of darkness to Triokala. If the Roman general had followed them in hot pursuit, it would have been easy to kill them all. The general body of the slaves was so downcast and depressed that some of them even urged that they should return to their masters and submit themselves again voluntarily to their masters' authority. But the opposite opinion—that they should fight to the death and should not surrender to their enemies—won the day.

On the ninth day after the battle [at Skirthaia], the Roman general arrived at Triokala to place it under siege. After inflicting some casualties and suffering some himself, the general withdrew, defeated. The rebels regained their confidence. Whether because of simple laziness or because of some gifts [bribes] that had been given to him, the Roman commander did not accomplish what had to be done. For this reason, he was later summoned before a court and punished by the Romans.

Gaius Servilius, who was sent out as praetor in succession to Lucullus, accomplished nothing worthy of memory. For this inactivity, Servilius, like Lucullus, was later condemned to exile by a Roman court. When Tryphon died, Athenion became the successor to his rule. He placed cities under siege, overran the countryside with impunity, and became the lord of many men, while Servilius did nothing to prevent him.

It was at the end of the year when Gaius Marius was elected consul at Rome for the fifth time and Gaius¹¹ Aquillius for the first time. Aquillius was dispatched to repress the rebels, and because of his personal bravery, he crushed them in a brilliantly conducted battle. He fought a hand-to-hand duel with Athenion, the king of the rebels, and beat him in a heroic contest. Aquillius killed Athenion, but in the process he sustained a severe head wound. Later, when he recovered

¹¹Diodorus is incorrect. His first name was Manius.

from the wound following medical treatment, Aquillius continued to campaign against the remnant of the rebels, who now numbered about ten thousand. When they were not able to hold out against his attacks and they retreated to rugged defensive positions, Aquillius left no avenue untried until he finally defeated the besieged rebels.

Even after this defeat, there were a thousand rebels who survived with Satyros as their general. At first, Aquillius thought that he would attempt to defeat them with the brute force of arms. Later, however, by using negotiators, he obtained their surrender. He exempted the slave prisoners from summary punishment and instead took them to Rome, where he intended to have them fight as gladiators in combat with wild beasts. Some people say that they brought their lives to a most glorious end when they refused to do battle with the wild animals and instead cut each other down in front of the public altars. Satyros himself killed the last man. Then Satyros took his life with his own hand, dying like a hero. Thus, the war of the slaves in Sicily, a war that had lasted nearly four years, reached its tragic finale.

SOURCE: Diodorus Siculus, *Library of History*, 36.11.1–3, 36.7.1–10.3 [= *Excerpts of Constantine*, 314, 390; Photios, *Library*, 389–90].

52

ATHENAEUS

*The Second Slave War on the Island of Sicily
and the Contemporary Slave Rebellion at Athens*

Second Century A.D.

All of the documents that follow are minor sources for the history of the second slave war on Sicily.

Larensis said, "But every Roman, as you well know, my good Masurius, owns a very large number of slaves. In fact, there are many who own a myriad,¹² double that number or even more. They do not own them to produce profits, as in the case of Nicias, the very wealthy

¹²If the Greek word *myrias* (myriad) is to be taken literally, which it probably is not, it would mean "ten thousand."

Athenian. Rather, the majority of Romans employ the largest number of their slaves to accompany them as a way of displaying their prestige. Most of the slaves at Athens, on the other hand, who were numbered in myriads, worked in shackles in the mines. At any rate, Posidonius the philosopher, whose words you have repeatedly brought to our attention, states that they rebelled, murdered the men who guarded the mines, captured the acropolis of Sounion, and plundered Attica for a long time. This was at the same time that the second uprising of the slaves on Sicily took place. There were many of these slave rebellions, and more than a million slaves [literally, 'hundreds of myriads'] were killed. A history of the slave wars was written by Caecilius, the rhetor from Kalê Aktê in Sicily."

SOURCE: Athenaeus, *Deipnosophistae*, 6.272.d–f.

53

CASSIUS DIO

*The Actions of the Roman Governor of Sicily, Publius
Licinius Nerva, in 104 B.C.*

Third Century A.D.

When he was governor of the island of Sicily, Publius Licinius Nerva circulated a notice that any slaves who had charges to bring against their masters could come to him and he would help them. Nerva did this either because he had learned that some slaves were not being fairly treated in certain respects or because he was seeking personal gain, for he was the type of man who was not immune to bribery. Under the terms of his proclamation, many slaves began to congregate. Some of them declared that they were being treated unfairly, and others specified grievances against their masters, since they believed that they were being given an opportunity to right the wrongs that had been done to them, but without recourse to bloodshed. The free-born slave owners, however, after taking counsel among themselves, refused to concede any of the slaves' demands. Because of the pressures being brought on him by both sides, Nerva became nervous and feared that great harm would be done by the side that came off