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THE ARCHAIC ROOTS OF PATERNALISM: CONTINUITY IN ATTITUDES TOWARDS SLAVES AND SLAVERY IN THE *ODYSSEY*, XENOPHON'S *OECONOMICUS*, AND BEYOND*

This article discusses differences and continuity in responses to issues of slave management in two texts from different periods of Greek history (Xenophon's *Oeconomicus* and the *Odyssey*) and compares these responses to those of slave owners in the Antebellum South, ancient Rome, and the ancient Near East. In particular, it examines different expressions of paternalistic attitudes towards slaves (a well-studied feature of slave-owning classes throughout history) that it finds are present in both of these examples. The article explores the possibility that intertextual links were responsible for these similarities but suggests instead that they are reflective of real Greek slaveholding ideology across hundreds of years, which primarily served to justify an exploitative system and disguise the cruelty and violence inherent in maintaining it.

Eugene Genovese's *Roll, Jordan, Roll: The World the Slaves Made* (New York, 1974), which remains one of the most influential works on slavery in the American South, demonstrated the existence among slave owners of a 'paternalistic' ideology that helped justify the institution to those who benefited from it. This ideology cast slavery as a relationship of fictive kinship, in which the well-being of childlike slaves was maintained by paternal slaveholders. Building on the work of Genovese, Enrico Dal Lago and Constantina Katsari have argued that there was continuity of paternalistic attitudes in slave management literature from the Roman period to the slave systems of the Antebellum South.¹

* This article is indebted to David Lewis, Stephen Hodkinson, and Edmund Stewart, as well as my anonymous reviewers, for their insightful feedback on earlier drafts. All remaining mistakes are my own.

¹ E. Dal Lago and C. Katsari, 'Ideal Models of Slave Management in the Roman World, and in the Ante-Bellum American South', in E. Dal Lago and C. Katsari (eds.) *Slave Systems. Ancient and*

This present study contends that we can observe similar continuity in attitudes towards slaves in earlier Greek literature of the same type – particularly Xenophon’s *Oeconomicus*. It further argues that, despite significant differences arising from the perspective of authors and genre considerations, many of the attitudes towards slave management observable in the *Oeconomicus* can be found in the earlier archaic epic the *Odyssey*. Some of these correspond to what Thalmann has termed the ‘suspicious model’ of attitudes towards slaves, which views a slave class as naturally opposed to the interests of masters. Other attitudes in our Greek literature, however, are encompassed within Thalmann’s contrasting ‘benevolent model’, which falsely views the relationship of forcible domination of masters over slaves as in the interest of both parties.² This includes, as we will see, a form of proto-paternalism that, like the paternalism we find in American sources, portrayed slave owners as the benefactors of their slaves.

As I will argue in my first section, the similarities between these texts are at least partially a reflection of the fact that the *Odyssey* and the *Oeconomicus* depict a similar system of slave exploitation on agricultural estates. I will then note similarities between practical considerations of slave rewards and the importance of a master’s supervision of them in both texts. Though Dal Lago and Katsari considered the role which intertextuality played in the transmission of these ideas across the periods of history they examined, they did not explore this issue in any detail.³ In this article, contrastingly, I intend to deal more directly with the issue of intertextuality, though my analysis will be largely limited to our ancient Greek sources. Worthy of particular note is Leanne Hunnings’ argument that the *Odyssey* strongly influenced later discourse on slave management.⁴ Though the Homeric poems had an undeniably profound effect on Greek culture and literature generally, I will argue that, while both texts contain a strain of paternalistic thinking, they represent this ideology in markedly different ways.

Modern (Cambridge, 2008), 187–213. P. Hunt, *Ancient Greek and Roman Slavery* (Malden, MA, 2018), 186–9, provides another examination of paternalism in Roman sources.

² For definitions of these models, see W. G. Thalmann, ‘Versions of Slavery in the *Captivi* of Plautus’, *Ramus* 25 (1996), 116–17.

³ Dal Lago and Katsari (n. 1), 189.

⁴ L. Hunnings, ‘The Paradigms of Execution: Managing Slave Death from Homer to Virginia’, in R. Alston, E. Hall, and R. Proffitt (eds.) *Reading Ancient Slavery* (London and New York, 2011), 51–71.

In my final section, I will compare attitudes towards slaves expressed in ancient Greek literature with proverbs from the Near East, in order to further contextualize Greek literary responses to slave ownership within a wider history of slaving. In a highly influential work on comparative slavery, the sociologist Orlando Patterson argued that paternalistic-like attitudes have existed alongside slave ownership throughout world history.⁵ I believe that the findings of this article add further weight to Patterson's conclusion and to the broader idea that slavery evoked similar responses from slave owners throughout its history.

The slave estates of Odysseus and Ischomachus

At various points throughout its narrative and above all in its final books, which describe Odysseus' homecoming, Homer's *Odyssey* provides some informative details about the household of its main character.⁶ Particularly germane to the present topic are details about the slave labour force that worked and managed Odysseus' large estate. Another informative account of an ancient Greek household is described in the second and main part of the fourth-century BC *Oeconomicus* (*The Estate Manager*) by Xenophon, which recounts a conversation on household management between Socrates and an elite Athenian citizen by the name of Ischomachus.⁷ Socrates asks questions on the subject and Ischomachus' responses describe the running of his agriculturally based household and its domestic sphere managed by his wife. At its heart the text is a moral discourse, but it is framed in terms of practical advice offered to Socrates on the management of an estate.⁸ The training of slaves, furthermore, constitutes a significant part of this dialogue.

Before we examine some of the similarities in the presentation of slave management in both texts, some broader similarities between

⁵ O. Patterson, *Slavery and Social Death. A Comparative Study*, (Cambridge, MA, 1982), 338–9.

⁶ Many scholars follow e.g. R. Janko, *Homer, Hesiod and the Hymns. Diachronic Development in Epic Diction* (Cambridge, 1985), 196–200, in dating the writing down of the *Odyssey* to the mid-eighth century BC. J. P. Crielaard, 'Homer, History and Archaeology: Some Remarks on the Date of the Homeric World', in J. P. Crielaard (ed.), *Homeric Questions* (Amsterdam, 2005), 201–88, dates the poems to the seventh or sixth century based on features of their narratives which correspond to archaeological patterns of the time.

⁷ Xen. *Oec.* 7.1–21.

⁸ On the importance of ethical considerations to ancient Greek *oikonomia*, which distinguishes it from modern economics, see D. Leshem, 'What did the Ancient Greeks Mean by *Oikonomia*?', *Journal of Economic Perspectives* 30 (2016), 225–38.

the households of Odysseus and Ischomachus should be highlighted, in order to help explain how the system of forced labour described in the *Odyssey* and the *Oeconomicus* resulted in similar practical and cultural responses. However, it should be noted at this early point that there is disagreement about the extent to which the statements of Ischomachus reflect those of Xenophon. There is a minority, but prominent, trend in Xenophonic scholarship to read his works as ironic presentations which subtly undercut the overt messages they convey.⁹ My own thoughts on these readings are that, while Xenophon clearly shows himself capable of representing a complex opinion on the issues he discusses, his works should be read on the whole as largely straightforward in their intentions.¹⁰ In light of this scholarship, however, it seems advisable to distinguish between Xenophon the author and the remarks of his character Ischomachus accordingly.

Despite notable differences between the society described in the Homeric poems and that of classical Athens, both depended on the labour of chattel slaves.¹¹ As the life story of Eumaius demonstrates, the *dmōes* of Homer are often stated to be purchased by their masters, who exercised over all their *dmōiai* the rights which these transactions imply: that of property.¹² More specifically, this meant that the community in which the *dmōes* lived sanctioned complete domination

⁹ In the case of Xenophon's *Oeconomicus*, these scholars believe that Ischomachus' profit-orientated, rather than morally grounded, attitude towards his household is a subtle indication that the character is a negative example who does not speak for Xenophon himself. The idea originated with L. Strauss, *Xenophon's Socratic Discourse. An Interpretation of the 'Oeconomicus'* (Ithaca, NY, and London, 1970), esp. 182–5, though its most recent and well-substantiated articulation can be found in L. Kronenberg, *Allegories of Farming from Greece and Rome. Philosophical Satire in Xenophon, Varro, and Virgil* (Cambridge, 2009), part 1 and *passim*.

¹⁰ Similarly, P. Christensen, 'Xenophon's Views on Sparta', in M. A. Flower (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Xenophon* (Cambridge and New York, 2017), 379–80. In my opinion, there is too much in the *Oeconomicus* generally which cannot be read as a moral criticism – such as a lengthy section on the practicalities of agriculture – which would only be unnecessary padding (though see Kronenberg [n. 9], 62–6). Furthermore, as G. Danzig, 'Why Socrates Was Not a Farmer: Xenophon's *Oeconomicus* as a Philosophical Dialogue', *G&R* 50 (2003), 73–6, concedes in an ironic interpretation of this text, there is the fact that Xenophon was himself an elite landowner and, it should be mentioned, a lover of horse-riding like Ischomachus (11.17), as exemplified in his authorship of two works on the subject: *Peri Hippikēs* and the *Hipparchios*.

¹¹ N. Fisher, 'Hybris, Status and Slavery', in A. Powell (ed.), *The Greek World* (London, 1995), 49–55. Further and more detailed argumentation can now be found in D. Lewis, *Greek Slave Systems in Their Eastern Mediterranean Context, c. 800–146 BC* (Oxford, 2018), 112–14; E. M. Harris, 'Homer, Hesiod, and the "Origins" of Greek Slavery', *REA* 114 (2012), 352–8; M. Ndoye, *Groupes sociaux et idéologie du travail dans les mondes Homérique et Hésiodique* (Besançon, 2010), 226–300; M. Schmidt, 'Die Welt des Eumaius', in A. Luther (ed.), *Geschichte und Fiktion in der Homerischen Odyssee* (Munich, 2006), 117–38.

¹² E.g. Hom. *Od.* 1.430; 12.438–5.

over their lives by those who had paid for them – such as (to choose examples we will return to later) control over their reproductive rights and the ability to punish them in whatever way they deemed appropriate.¹³ The same is true of Athenian slaves, as we can observe not only in the *Oeconomicus* but in several hundred literary sources which have been the subject of intensive study over the past century.¹⁴

Furthermore, Lewis has recently shown that there is good evidence for some broad structural continuity in practices of elite agriculture from the archaic Greek to the classical Athenian world.¹⁵ As well as a similar system of farming, large archaic and classical estates were equally dependent on slave labour – the slaves in the *Odyssey* are put to work in an agriculturally based household, which is comparable to that described in the *Oeconomicus*.¹⁶ In the domestic settings painted by both texts, enslaved women are found spinning wool and preparing food.¹⁷ It is also apparent from the *Odyssey* that the use of male slave labour for agriculture, which is the entire point of Xenophon's discussion of slave management, was very much a feature of Odysseus' household too.¹⁸

In addition, we can infer from both texts a reliance on certain slaves for the management of this labour. The male slaves Eumaius, Melanthius, and Philoitiis are not only the primary slave characters in the *Odyssey* but are also important slaves tasked with overseeing Odysseus' herdsman.¹⁹ All three are also closely attached to his

¹³ On slavery as a relationship of domination, see K. Vlassopoulos, 'Greek Slavery: From Domination to Property and Back Again', *JHS* 131 (2011), 115–30. On the meaning of the term *dmōes* and its feminine counterpart, *dmōiai*, see also F. Gschnitzer, *Studien zur Griechischen Terminologie der Sklaverei* (Wiesbaden, 1976), 60–8.

¹⁴ There is far too little space to provide anything approaching a full bibliography on Athenian slavery. Some excellent recent syntheses are P. Hunt, 'Ancient Greece as a "Slave Society"', in N. Lenski and C. M. Cameron (eds.), *What Is a Slave Society? The Practice of Slavery in Global Perspective* (Cambridge, 2018), 64–75; R. Tordoff, 'Introduction: Slaves and Slavery in Ancient Greek Comic Drama', in B. Akrigg and R. Tordoff (eds.), *Slaves and Slavery in Ancient Greek Comic Drama* (Cambridge, 2013), 1–62; D. Kamen, *Status in Classical Athens*, (Princeton, NJ, 2013), chaps. 1 and 2.

¹⁵ Lewis (n. 11), 118–9.

¹⁶ Cf. W. G. Thalmann, *The Swineherd and the Bow. Representations of Class in the Odyssey* (Ithaca, NY, 1998), 55–7; Schmidt (n. 11), 117–30.

¹⁷ Enslaved women spinning wool: *Od.* 22.422–3; *Oec.* 7.6 and 41–2. Cooking: *Od.* 7.103; 20.105–8; *Oec.* 10.10.

¹⁸ E.g. Xen. *Oec.* 12.2; Hom. *Od.* 17.297–9. The pastoralism practised by Odysseus' slaves is absent from the *Oeconomicus*, though we know that it was an important source of wealth to many Athenian elites: see, e.g., S. Hodkinson, 'Imperialist Democracy and Market-Oriented Pastoral Production in Classical Athens', *Anthropozoologica* 16 (1992), 53–60.

¹⁹ Y. Garlan, *Slavery in Ancient Greece*, trans. J. Lloyd (Ithaca, NY, 1988), 33, 35–6. Eumaius oversees workers herding pigs (*Od.* 14.24–8) and Melanthius those herding goats (see 17.214,

household. We are told that Eumaius and Philoitus were raised from boyhood in Odysseus' household; and from a description of his sister, Melantho, as being raised by Penelope, we can infer that Melanthus had a similar upbringing.²⁰ This fact serves to underscore the treachery of the siblings' betrayal of Odysseus, as does Melanthus' economic mismanagement.²¹ Eumaius and Philoitus, for their part, are the only slaves to whom Odysseus turns for support in his final showdown with the suitors.²² In this way, the interrelated economic importance of these slaves and their relationship to the household are significant facets of their role in the poem. The same is true of the slave woman Eurykleia, who has been in the household since she was a young girl.²³ She also occupies an authoritative position in the household, as a *tamiē* (housekeeper).²⁴ Odysseus' household, in short, utilizes trusted slaves, closely attached to their owners, in important positions of authority over other workers.

The same holds true for the household of Ischomachus. In fact, the entirety of the section on the management of slaves is framed as a discussion on how to train good supervisors (*epitropoi*) who can manage Ischomachus' property in his absence. These supervisors, as we learn early in the discussion, are slaves – and it is notable that Xenophon, through Ischomachus, recommends that such slaves be trained for this position in the household rather than bought already experienced.²⁵ What follows is effectively a description of how to implement an incentive scheme for encouraging the good behaviour of slaves. Although much of this scheme should be taken as applying to all the slaves of the household, crucially, the emphasis of the discussion repeatedly returns to the necessary qualities to be instilled in an

223–4, 246). The same is presumably true of the cowherd Philoitus (20.185, 20.254), who, like Eumaius (14.121), is given the epithet 'leader of men' (*orchamos andrōn*). These workers may have been other slaves, although free workers are also mentioned on the estate of *Odysseus* (14.102; Ndoye [n. 11], 170–6).

²⁰ Hom. *Od.* 15.361–5; 20.209–10; 18.22–4.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 17.245–6.

²² *Ibid.*, 21.1 ff.

²³ *Ibid.*, 1.431.

²⁴ This term referred to a position with significant organizational and supervisory responsibilities in the *Odyssey* (Thalman [n. 16], 64). It is used to describe the leader of Hector's slave women in the *Iliad* (6.381, 390).

²⁵ Xen. *Oec.* 12.3. On the status of Ischomachus' *epitropoi*, see also 14.9: 'I treat them *as if* they were freemen (*hōsper eleutherois*)' (emphasis added). Pseudo-Aristotle, who wrote that 'Slaves are of two kinds: they are either a worker (*ergastes*) or a supervisor (*epitropoi*)' (*Oec.* 1.1344a25–6), recommended that *epitropoi* be trained from when they were youths (*neoi*: 1.1344a26–7).

epitropos.²⁶ It is from his ‘good’ slaves who respond well to his incentive scheme, that Ischomachus picks his supervisors.²⁷ Ischomachus also employs a *tamia* (the classical Athenian equivalent to the Homeric *tamiē*), who occupies an important place in the organization of his household and who receives rewards comparable to those received by his ‘good’ male slaves.²⁸ The use of trusted slaves in important positions is therefore another similarity between the households described in the *Odyssey* and the *Oeconomicus*.

The functioning of these two estates was heavily reliant on a very similar status of enslaved persons for the manual, supervisory, and organizational labour on which they depended. Both used violently coerced labourers who were isolated, by their origin, from the wider community in which they lived. Both masters also elevated certain slaves to positions of trust in order to provide the management which their estates needed.²⁹ In these respects, the world of the *Odyssey* would not have been all that foreign to Xenophon, who was raised in an elite Athenian household. As far as the management of a household’s slaves was concerned, Xenophon and his elite archaic counterparts, who comprised Homer’s audience, would therefore have faced similar challenges. Some deliberate and unintentional responses to these challenges, reflected in literary discourse, will now be the subject of our discussion.

The *Oeconomicus* and the *Odyssey* on the rewarding of slaves

As Thalmann notes, slaves in the *Odyssey* fit into one of two polarized archetypes; they are characterized as either ‘good’ or ‘bad’ and these qualities are ‘measured respectively by loyalty to and betrayal of the master’.³⁰ After reclaiming his household, Odysseus metes out rewards and punishment to both groups of slaves accordingly. The same theme

²⁶ These (summarized at 15.1) are goodwill to their master (*eunoia*: 12.5), concern for productive work (12.8–9), knowledge of the work over which they preside (13.2), the ability to command men (13.4), and honesty (*dikaiosunē*: 14.2–3).

²⁷ On good and bad slaves in the text, see below, p. 000.

²⁸ Xen. *Oec.* 8.10; 9.10; 10.10; 9.11–13.

²⁹ Further on the significance of slave supervisors in Greek household management texts and their Roman successors, which made similar provisions for the *vilicus* and *vilica*, see J. Carlsen, ‘Estate Managers in Ancient Greek Agriculture’, in K. Ascani, V. Gabrielsen, K. Kvist, and A. H. Rasmussen (eds.), *Ancient History Matters. Studies Presented to Jens Erik Skydsgaard on His Seventieth Birthday*, (Rome, 2002), 376–99.

³⁰ Thalmann (n. 16), 98; see also Thalmann (n. 2), 137–9.

is a recurring feature of Xenophon's discussion of slaves in the *Oeconomicus*, which consistently and directly refers to a binary division between slaves in a household based on their willingness to serve the interests of their master.³¹ In its first appearance in the dialogue he has Ischomachus contrast 'the good' (*hoi chrēstoi*) with 'the bad' (*hoi ponēroi*) slaves.³² A similar categorization reappears throughout the section on slave management.³³ The following sentence is indicative of this juxtaposition:

I make sure that the clothing and the shoes which I must supply for the workers are not identical, but some are of inferior quality and others superior, so that I can reward the better (*kreittō*) workers with superior garments and give the inferior ones to the less deserving (*hētō*).³⁴

As in the *Odyssey*, the treatment of slaves in the *Oeconomicus* (usually the apportioning of certain privileges) is governed by this divide between slaves.³⁵ In the *Oeconomicus* the divide constitutes the framework on which a strategy for a long-term coercive system is based.³⁶

The system of rewards offered to 'good' slaves also shares many of its specifics with the treatment of loyal slaves in the *Odyssey*. For their help in defeating the suitors, Odysseus makes the following promise to his two loyal slaves Eumaeus and Philoitus:

If the god subdues the proud suitors beneath my hands, I will find wives for you both and give you possessions and well-built houses near my own; and from henceforward in my eyes you two shall be comrades (*hetairoi*) and brothers of Telemachus.

(*Od.* 212.213–16)³⁷

³¹ That is, a divide between good and bad slaves who have received similar treatment by the same master. This divide is separate from other discussions in the work which argue that different masters train better or worse slaves (*Od.* 3.4; 12.19).

³² *Oec.* 9.5.

³³ *Ibid.*, 12.10–16; 13.9–12; 14.8–10.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 13.10–11. All translations of the *Oeconomicus* are from S. B. Pomeroy, *Xenophon, Oeconomicus. A Social and Historical Commentary* (Oxford, 1994).

³⁵ Such an explicit comparison between slaves is absent from the *Odyssey*, although both Eumaius (14.54; 16.1) and Eurykleia (20.147) are given the epithet 'divine' or 'excellent' (*dios/dia*). While Melanthius' words (17.216) are terrible (*ekpaylos*) and shameful (*aeikēs*), those of Philoitus (20.198) are 'winged' (*pteroenta*). For the most part, however, the archetypes of good and bad have been inferred from the actions of Odysseus' slaves and the responses of other characters to these actions.

³⁶ It is important to bear in mind the wider context of this discussion, which, as we have seen above (000), was on the training of *epitropoi*. 'Good' slaves who could be trusted by Ischomachus were vital to the productive management of his household.

³⁷ Translation from Hunnings (n. 4), 57.

As Hunnings notes, this short summary of slave rewards bears several similarities to those outlined in the *Oeconomicus*, including sexual privileges and material comforts.³⁸ It is worth pointing out that, as well as identifying wealth as a privilege given to slaves who prove themselves valuable to their owner, several passages recommend that such slaves receive honour too:

We instilled a sense of justice into [our *tamia*], by giving more honour to the just [slaves] than to the unjust [slaves] and showing her that the just live lives that are richer and better suited to a free citizen than the unjust. (Xen. *Oec.* 9.13)

If I learn of [slaves] who are induced to be honest not only because of the advantages they gain through being honest, but because of a desire to be praised by me, I treat them as if they were free men, not only do I make them wealthy, but I even honour them as if they were gentlemen. (Xen. *Oec.* 14.9)

Several of these statements are reminiscent of Odysseus' claim, cited above, that his slaves will be treated as if they were free members of his household. Particularly striking in this regard is Xenophon's statement that he will treat his slaves 'as if they were free men...and honour them as if they were gentlemen (*kalous te kagathous*)'.³⁹ The Pseudo-Aristotelian author of another classical Athenian handbook on household management (*Oeconomica*), which identified slave management as one of the most pressing concerns of its science, also recommends that slaves in important positions be given a measure of honour.⁴⁰ Nor was this shared sentiment unusual for its period. In a study examining Greek literary evidence for honour accorded to slaves, Fisher shows that the *Odyssey*'s portrayal of certain slaves as worthy of honour was a theme in discourse on the correct management of slaves, not only in Xenophon and Pseudo-Aristotle, but also in the writing of Plato.⁴¹

³⁸ *Ibid.*

³⁹ It has been argued, most recently by S. L. Zanovello, 'From Slave to Free: A Legal Perspective on Greek Manumission', PhD thesis, Università degli Studi di Padova and University of Edinburgh (2016), 30–6, and by M. Ndoye, 'L'affranchissement dans les poèmes Homériques: de la parente illusoire à l'adoption', in A. Gonzales (ed.), *La fin du statut servile? Affranchissement, libération, abolition*, (Besançon, 2005), i.24–6, that Odysseus' promise refers to manumission, which would set it apart from the recommendation in Xenophon. However, this reading is by no means accepted by everyone (see Thalmann [n. 16], 90, with additional references). Indeed, the language used by Homer seems to refer more to a master's treatment of his slaves than to the awarding of a set of legally defined rights; particularly noteworthy is the proviso that they will be so to Odysseus specifically (see the use of the dative first-person personal pronoun *moi*), rather than the community at large.

⁴⁰ [Arist.] *Oec.* 1.1344a30–1.

⁴¹ Fisher (n. 11), 56–62; see also Pl. *Prt.* 318e.

Similarities between Xenophon's *Oeconomicus* and the *Odyssey* can also be seen in the former's recommendations for the management of sexual relationships between slaves in the household. As Schmitz has pointed out, slave families in the *Odyssey* are the exception, not the rule, and only happen by the direct authorization of a master: a privilege awarded only to the most loyal of slaves.⁴² We are told directly of only one slave family in the *Odyssey* (three, counting Odysseus' promise quoted above), and Eumaios at one point complains that, since his master is gone, he cannot take a wife (14.449).⁴³ Similarly, the restriction of slave relationships (though not explicitly families) as a privilege awarded only to loyal slaves is a strategy that Ischomachus employs.⁴⁴ On the topic of slave reproduction, however, we find some disagreement between Xenophon and Pseudo-Aristotle, who did not recommend restricting the sexual rights of his slaves.⁴⁵ This appears to contradict Xenophon directly, as was noted in the first century BC by the philosopher Philodemus, who expressed his preference for Xenophon's advice.⁴⁶ Another notable difference between the texts is the absence of any mention of manumission in the *Oeconomicus*, whereas this measure *is* recommended as an incentive by Pseudo-Aristotle.⁴⁷ These differences are all the more noteworthy because of the clear intertextuality between the two works; it seems more or less beyond doubt that the *Oeconomica* was influenced either directly by the *Oeconomicus* or by a common ancestor of both – possibly a lost work of Antisthenes, another student of Socrates – or (most likely) by some combination of these two possibilities.⁴⁸

⁴² W. Schmitz, "Sklavenfamilien" im Archaischen und Klassischen Griechenland', in H. Heinen (ed.), *Kindersklaven – Sklavenkinder. Schicksale zwischen Zuneigung und Ausbeutung in der Antike und im Interkulturellen Vergleich* (Stuttgart, 2012), 71–3.

⁴³ We can infer that Eurykleia had children, as she acted as Odysseus' wet-nurse (19.482–3; Schmitz [n. 42], 72, n. 34). We can probably infer that she had a male partner too, since we are told explicitly that her owner, Laertes, never had sexual intercourse with her (1.432–3; Harris [n. 11], 349, n. 9). Neither her children nor a husband are mentioned in the poem, however.

⁴⁴ Xen. *Oec.* 9.5.

⁴⁵ [Arist.] *Oec.* 1.344b.17–8.

⁴⁶ Phld. 10.15–20.

⁴⁷ [Arist.] *Oec.* 1.1344b15–8.

⁴⁸ On the similarities between the *Oeconomicus* and the first book of the *Oeconomica*, and on the likelihood that both derived from Antisthenes' lost work, see U. Victor, *[Aristoteles] Oeconomicus. Das erste Buch der Ökonomik – Handschriften, Text, Übersetzung und Kommentar – und seine Beziehungen zur Ökonomikliteratur* (Königstein, 1983), 187–92. Supposedly, Protagoras also taught household management in the fifth century (Pl. *Pr.* 318e).

It is worth highlighting that which the intertextuality of the *Oeconomicus* and the *Oeconomica* suggests: that these texts were part of a broader conversation on household management in classical Athens, in which arguments between authors were presumably written down, distributed, and read by many elite Athenians, including those who wrote their own works on the subject. We might also think of these texts as part of a longer-term tradition, to which Philodemus added his thoughts over two centuries later, at around the same time as the Roman agrarian writers Cato, Varro, and Columella, who had read the earlier Greek texts and provided their own recommendations for the productive treatment of slaves.

By the time of Columella in the first century AD, and certainly in the manuals of the plantation owners in the US South some 1,800 years later, slave reproduction appears to have been facilitated as much as possible, and restriction of sexual privileges is never recommended. In my opinion, this change can be explained by the impact of changing economic conditions on the practices of slave management, reflected in turn by literature on the subject.⁴⁹ A full outline of this argument lies beyond the scope of the present article, although the disagreement between Xenophon and Pseudo-Aristotle suggests that, even within a similar economic context (barring significant changes in the fifty or so years between these texts which we cannot trace in the evidence), the restriction of sex among household slaves would vary from master to master. This discourse on slave management was not just a restatement of the same ideas in different contexts, but a dynamic discussion which altered over time.

We have already seen how the households of both Odysseus and Ischomachus relied on trusted slaves to manage their estates. Both texts also suggest, however, that this on its own was not enough to ensure adequate management. As Thalmann points out, an emphasis on the necessity of direct supervision over slaves by their masters is a theme present in the *Odyssey* as well as in later household management manuals.⁵⁰

⁴⁹ K. Hopkins, *Conquerors and Slaves. Sociological Studies in Roman History Volume 1* (Cambridge, 1978), 110–11; G. E. M. de Ste Croix, *The Class Struggle in the Ancient World* (London, 1981), 213, 234–6; and now D. Lewis (n. 11), 280–2, have argued, *contra* K. R. Bradley, ‘On the Roman Slave Supply and Slavebreeding’, in M. I. Finley (ed.), *Classical Slavery* (London, 1987), 48–9, and U. Roth, *Thinking Tools. Agricultural Slavery, between Evidence and Models* (London, 2007), 10–18 and *passim*, for a fluctuating viability of slave reproduction as a strategy throughout classical history, based on the fluctuating prices of slaves.

⁵⁰ Thalmann (n. 16), 61–2.

With its implicit distrust of unsupervised slaves, moreover, this shared sentiment is an excellent example of Thalmann's 'suspicious model' of attitudes towards slaves, discussed in the introduction above. Compare his translation of a comment by Eumaius – 'Slaves (*dmōes*), whenever their masters no longer control them, no longer wish to do the work that befits them' – with the following remark by Ischomachus:

When the master shows that he lacks concern, it is difficult for a slave to be concerned...the master who wants to make his men be concerned must be in the habit of supervising their work [that is] well performed, and not hesitant to impose the due punishment on any slave who lacks concern.⁵¹

One key difference between Odysseus and Ischomachus is the former's absence from the management of his estate during most of the action of the poem, in contrast to the latter's diligence in overseeing his. The author of the *Odyssey* therefore emphasized the need for due diligence by a master by highlighting the dilapidated estate of Odysseus – exemplified in the undisciplined Melanthius' damage to his owner's property.⁵² Xenophon, on the other hand, appealed to the same reasoning by using Ischomachus and his prosperous estate as a positive example.⁵³

So far, we have seen how Xenophon represented slaves of a household as belonging to one of two archetypes which deserved contrasting treatment (a characterization which is very much a feature of the Homeric poems) and used this as the basis of a system to incentivize them. I have left analysis of the punishment of 'bad' slaves to the following section, but we have noted how Xenophon laid out a system of rewards very similar to those offered by Odysseus to his loyal slaves. Another way in which the practical considerations of Xenophon resemble the content of the Homeric poems is the fact that both texts explicitly stress the importance of direct supervision by a master in enforcing the rewards and punishments meted out to slaves.

The issue of leadership and management is a leitmotif that runs through much of Xenophon's writing and is best exemplified in his ahistorical construction of the character of Cyrus the Great, the founder of the Persian Empire; indeed, the figure of the Persian king is drawn

⁵¹ *Od.* 17.320; *Xen. Oec.* 12.18–19. Similarly [Arist.] *Oec.* 1.1345a.

⁵² We are told in one passage that Melanthius allows the goatherders under his care to become careless in their work (*Od.* 17.245–6).

⁵³ Ischomachus valued his personal knowledge of farming and is described venturing onto his estate in the countryside and supervising the tasks of his slaves himself (*Oec.* 11.16).

on in the *Oeconomicus* in relation to the management of slaves and subordinates.⁵⁴ Slaves are said to be directly equivalent to free subjects, and the role of householder is stated to be directly equivalent to that of a king more generally.⁵⁵ Cyrus is held up as the consummate example of such a king in an extended passage before the introduction of Ischomachus to the dialogue, a discussion which serves as a parallel to Ischomachus' management style.⁵⁶ Cyrus' direct role in overseeing the competency of his governors is highlighted, a theme which reappears in Xenophon's largely fictional biography of the Persian king, the *Cyropaedia*.⁵⁷

As Xenophon's authorship of the *Cyropaedia* implies, Cyrus should be considered a prominent figure in the philosopher's thoughts on leadership. My introduction of Cyrus here may seem something of a digression, but it has a twofold purpose: first, to introduce the importance of the figure of Cyrus to Xenophon's thinking, a subject which will be returned to shortly; and secondly, to show that Xenophon's writing was the product of multiple influences on his thought. In many ways, his fictionalized portrayal of Cyrus is itself a reflection of his own conceptualization of ideal leadership, developed not only from literary influences (including Homer) but also from his own experiences as a commander and estate owner. Rather than just reflecting his own preconceived views, Xenophon's depiction of Cyrus was likely to have also been informed by his experience of Persia and its government, recorded in his *Anabasis*. Moreover, the use of the Persian Empire as an instructive paradigm appears to have been debated in Socratic circles.⁵⁸ Ancient authors, naturally, did not write in a vacuum. Xenophon's creation of Ischomachus was subject not only to his personal experiences but also to his involvement in

⁵⁴ S. B. Pomeroy, 'The Persian King and the Queen Bee', *AJAH* 9 (1984), 241.

⁵⁵ *Oec.* 5.14–16; 13.5.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 4.4–25.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 4.8; see also e.g. *Xen. Cyr.* 8.1.13.

⁵⁸ J. Morgan, *Greek Perspectives on the Achaemenid Empire. Persia through the Looking Glass* (Edinburgh, 2016), 215–21; see also R. Strootman and M. J. Versluys, 'From Culture to Concept: The Reception and Appropriation of Persia in Antiquity', in R. Strootman and M. J. Versluys (eds.), *Persianism in Antiquity* (Stuttgart, 2017), 9–21. The most obvious examples come from the corpus of Xenophon, but the trope almost certainly predated his writing. Plato saw Cyrus as a figure worthy of emulation (*Leg.* 694a–b; see also *Alc.* 1.105c), particularly because of his leadership through rewards (see below, 000), though he contradicted Xenophon's suggestion that the Persian king was a paradigm of household management (*Leg.* 694c–d; further references in S. W. Hirsch, *The Friendship of the Barbarians. Xenophon and the Persian Empire* [Hanover, NH, and London, 1985], 149, n. 3).

philosophical discourses of the time, and this can be seen in his use of Cyrus as a paradigm for the ideal estate owner.

There is a very real possibility that the *Odyssey* itself was among the influences on Xenophon's attitudes towards the treatment of slaves, a fact which, if true, could account for the similarities between these texts which we have noted so far. Indeed, if we accept Hunnings' view, the *Odyssey* was read in part as a practical guide to slave management in its presentation of an ideal structure of dependency, in which certain obligations are owed by masters to slaves and vice versa. The *Odyssey*, she writes, 'offered paradigms useful to the household manager in his handling of slaves, paradigms which constituted ideological justifications for attempts to keep a slave in the ideal condition of social death'.⁵⁹ As such, 'the *Odyssey* can be read as perhaps our earliest version of an archaic work imaginatively anticipating – and therefore informing – the "slave handbook" genre'.⁶⁰ Familiarity with the poets (of whom Homer was the most prominent example) was certainly a vital part of an elite Athenian's education.⁶¹ All wealthy Athenians, including the writers and readers of literature that dealt, inter alia, with the management of slaves, would have been extremely familiar with them, and several studies have argued for their influence on wider Athenian thought and literary discourse.⁶²

Hunnings also makes clear that, if the *Odyssey* did not have an instructive purpose in its conception, it was certainly perceived to have one in mid-fourth-century BC Athens. She notes a remark by Plato acknowledging this phenomenon in his *Republic*, but does not comment on a very similar one in Xenophon's *Symposium*, placed in the mouth of the Athenian Nikeratos.⁶³ However, Nikeratos' claim in this passage – that all subjects (including household management and, by extension, slave management) can be learned from Homer – receives

⁵⁹ Hunnings (n. 4), 68.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 51.

⁶¹ T. J. Morgan, 'Literate Education in Classical Athens', *CQ* 49 (1999), 53–7; N. J. Richardson, 'Homeric Professors in the Age of the Sophists', *PCPhS* 21 (1975), 65–81.

⁶² On the role of Homer in socializing Athenian men for their participation in citizen activities, such as interstate warfare and oratory, see respectively N. Fisher, 'Socialisation, Identity and Violence in Classical Greek Cities', in I. K. Xydopoulos, K. Vlassopoulos, and E. Tounta (eds.), *Violence and Community. Law, Space and Identity in the Eastern Mediterranean World* (London and New York, 2017), 113, and A. Ford, 'Reading Homer from the Rostrum: Poems and Laws in Aeschines' *Timarchus*', in S. Goldhill and R. Osborne (eds.), *Performance, Culture and Athenian Democracy* (Cambridge, 1999), 231–56.

⁶³ Hunnings (n. 4), 51. *Pl. Resp.* 10.606e; *Xen. Symp.* 4.6.

mocking rebukes from the other symposiasts.⁶⁴ What is more, in Plato's *Ion*, Socrates similarly challenges the idea that significant practical knowledge could be learned from Homer, as opposed to an expert in a particular field.⁶⁵

If the *Odyssey* had a direct effect on the household management recommended by Xenophon, it was an unacknowledged one; Xenophon was perfectly capable of citing Odysseus as an exemplar of household management, but chose not to, preferring instead to name Cyrus as the model par excellence of commanding subordinates. It seems clear from the discussion of this section that the treatment of slaves in the *Oeconomicus* was developed at least partially by factors separate to the *Odyssey*. These probably included Xenophon's independent thought and experiences, as well as discourse contemporary to fourth-century Athens.

I would not go so far as to argue that intertextuality played no role in the similarities between the *Odyssey* and the *Oeconomicus* that we have discussed. However, I find myself in agreement with Thalmann, who, commenting on the construction of 'good' and 'bad' slaves in both Plautus' *Captivi* and the *Odyssey*, believes the significance of these similarities to lie primarily in the fact that 'the problems and anxieties surrounding slavery and strategies for managing them are remarkably consistent from one slave-owning society to the other'.⁶⁶ As we shall see, there are also considerable differences in the ways that these texts deal with the punishment of 'bad' slaves.

Paternalism and the punishment of slaves

The King of Persia makes another appearance in the *Oeconomicus* during a discussion of the punishment of slaves for theft, which Xenophon begins by having Ischomachus state that he applies the civic laws of Athens – ascribed to the lawgivers Draco and Solon – to the subordinates in his own house.⁶⁷ Directly afterwards, he describes this strategy in the following terms:

By applying some of these laws...and by adding other enactments from the laws of the kings of Persia, I attempt to make my slaves honest in their handling of property. For

⁶⁴ Xen. *Symp.* 4.6–8; see also 3.5–6.

⁶⁵ Pl. *Ion*, 536e–546b.

⁶⁶ Thalmann (n. 2), 138.

⁶⁷ Xen. *Oec.* 14.4.

the former laws only contain penalties for wrongdoers, but the laws of the kings not only penalize the dishonest, but also reward the honest.⁶⁸

In other words, Ischomachus not only establishes punitive measures for misdemeanours by his slaves, but – modelling his household on Persian customs – he also establishes rewards for good behaviour. What rewards Xenophon had in mind here is clear from the discussion elsewhere in the text. Importantly, however, the same cannot be said about the punishment he refers to in this passage. Though references to punishment are very much a feature of the *Oeconomicus* as a whole, they are consistently mentioned ‘in studiously vague and unspecific terms’.⁶⁹ True, Ischomachus mentions imprisonment and even death as punishments in the Athenian laws he applies to his slaves, but it seems more likely that Xenophon’s meaning here is more general than specific – that, rather than applying actual laws to his slaves, it is more aspects of those laws’ overall character which he claims to have been applying to his system of control.⁷⁰ Imprisonment is certainly an option for Athenian masters wishing to discipline slaves – one that is mentioned by Socrates earlier in the *Oeconomicus* – but it is difficult to believe that capital punishment of slaves for stealing is really being recommended here.

This marks a sizeable difference between how ‘bad’ slaves are treated in this text and in the *Odyssey*, in which the executions of the disloyal slave women and of Melanthius are described in the most graphic detail in back-to-back scenes.⁷¹ Nothing approaching the level of violence painted there appears in the *Oeconomicus*. Indeed, in its graphic description of slave execution, the *Odyssey* is nothing like later Western slave manuals. It is telling that in her lengthy discussion of violence in the *Odyssey*, the comparative example which Hunnings

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 14.5–6.

⁶⁹ Fisher (n. 11), 57, with references. Similarly, H. Klees, *Herren und Sklaven. Die Sklaverei im Oikonomischen un Politischen Schrifttum der Griechen in Kassischer Zeit* (Wiesbaden, 1975), 88: ‘Ischomachus spricht an mehreren Stellen von Strafen, ohne zu präzisieren, was er darunter versteht’ (‘Ischomachus speaks in several places about punishment, without specifying what he means by that’).

⁷⁰ *Oec.* 14.5. David Lewis has drawn my attention to Herodotus’ claim that the Persians were forbidden by law from doing crippling (*anēkestos*) damage to one of their slaves for a single, rather than a repeat, offence (1.137). Xenophon had read Herodotus, or at the very least some of his sources for Persian history (D. L. Gera, *Xenophon’s Cyropaedia. Style, Genre and Literary Technique* (Oxford, 1993), 215–19), and it may be the case that he had this law, which stresses the importance of (admittedly measured) leniency, in mind when he referenced Persian law.

⁷¹ *Od.* 22.465–79.

employs is derived from the narrative of an American slave, not from the slave-owner literature that makes up the majority of her comparative material.⁷²

Naturally, this difference between the *Odyssey* and the *Oeconomicus* can be partially accounted for by differences in narrative and genre between the two texts. Ischomachos was not anticipating slave treachery of the kind that Odysseus dealt with, nor did Xenophon need to create a climax in which past wrongs are righted in the most dramatic of ways.⁷³ Nevertheless, his work is scant on details of what must have been one of the most important aspects of being a slave owner in the ancient world. Consider the fact that the *Oeconomicus* contains no mention of corporal punishment whatsoever, even though we know how important this was to Athenian slavery.⁷⁴ Punishment, as noted above, is only ever referred to ambiguously; there are references to confinement (3.4; 14.5), though Ischomachus never explicitly states that he restrains slaves.⁷⁵ Furthermore, slave discipline is never to be excessive and is always to be commensurate with the gravity of the slave's misdemeanour.⁷⁶ Dal Lago and Katsari note a very similar trend in their comparative study of slave management advice in ancient Rome and the US South, writing that these texts consistently put 'emphasis...on the certainty and fairness of punishment rather than its severity as instrument of prevention of, and response to, slave resistance to the master's discipline'.⁷⁷ The authors argue that this particular observation can be accounted for by reference to paternalistic ideology.⁷⁸

Such an ideology obviously conflicts both with slave resistance to their condition and with the slave owner's violent reaction to this resistance, which has been one of the hallmarks of slavery throughout its history. Rather than marginalize the importance of this issue, the *Odyssey* confronts it head on – revelling in the violence meted out to

⁷² Hunnings (n. 4), 65.

⁷³ P. W. Rose, *Class in Archaic Greece* (Cambridge and New York, 2012), 157–65, provides an excellent analysis of how the actions of the suitors and slaves who die at the hands of Odysseus are portrayed so as to invite the audience to revel in their gruesome comeuppance.

⁷⁴ On the punishment of classical Athenian slaves, see V. Hunter, *Policing Athens. Social Control in the Attic Lawsuits* (Princeton, NJ, 1994), chap. 6; for Greek slaves more generally, see H. Klees, *Sklavenleben in Klassischen Griechenland* (Stuttgart, 1998), chap. 2.

⁷⁵ Xen. *Oec.* 3.4; 14.5.

⁷⁶ Cf. Xen. *Hell.* 5.3.7.

⁷⁷ Dal Lago and Katsari (n. 1), 197. Although, like Xenophon, confinement is often mentioned (*ibid.*, 197–8), Varro is the only one of the Roman agrarian writers to mention whipping (*Rust.* 1.17.5).

⁷⁸ Dal Lago and Katsari (n. 1), 199–209.

slaves whom the poem works hard to characterize as deserving of the treatment which they receive. However, there are aspects of the *Odyssey* that appear decidedly paternalistic, particularly in its presentation of its 'good' slaves, who love their masters and are grateful to them for the little which they have. Eumaius, for example, notes the benefits which his kind master has bestowed on him, and Philoitius similarly bemoans the loss of his master.⁷⁹ The use of family metaphors in describing the relationship of slaves to their masters, a prominent aspect of later paternalistic attitudes, is evident throughout the *Odyssey* too. Thalmann, in fact, sees the *Odyssey* as using its caricatures of two categories of slaves to deal with the reality of slave resistance, while simultaneously maintaining an essentially paternalistic attitude towards slavery as a whole.⁸⁰

Dal Lago and Katsari also discuss an alternative motivation for masters to advocate the good treatment of slaves, based on the work of Fogel and Engerman, which views a slave owner's interest in the well-being of his or her slaves as grounded in self-interested concerns in a purely economic sense, rather than an ideological justification of slavery.⁸¹ According to this argument, not only did masters take care of their slaves out of a desire to preserve valuable property, but they also provided a set of incentives beyond the threat of violence as a necessary measure to increase slave productivity.

Even a cursory glance at the advice in the *Oeconomicus* on slave management makes it clear that this is how the work represents a master's interest in his slaves. As we have seen, the entire section on rewards is based around explaining how a master could acquire *epitropoi*. I can find no passage suggesting that Xenophon was interested in portraying the well-being of slaves as an end in itself or that 'good' slaves deserved good treatment for moral reasons. At one point, Ischomachus tells his wife that she will have to care for sick slaves, one of many statements in which Pomeroy sees a somewhat 'progressive' attitude to slave management.⁸² And yet, this too is best understood in terms of its utility as a means of control. It is phrased as a tiresome

⁷⁹ *Od.* 14.63–5, 137–44; 20.205–212. See also Schmidt's comments on the presentation of Eumaius in the poem: Schmidt (n. 11), 124–5, 130–5.

⁸⁰ Thalmann (n. 16), 78: 'The *Odyssey*'s narrative, through Eurykleia and more prominently through Eumaius, disguises a relation of exploitation by presenting it instead as something close to kinship'; see also discussion on Eurykleia (76–8) and Eumaius (87–8). Ndoye (n. 11), 140–2, argues the same from a more terminologically based standpoint.

⁸¹ Dal Lago and Katsari (n. 1), 202; R. W. Fogel and S. L. Engerman, *Time on the Cross. The Economics of American Negro Slavery* (London and New York, 1974).

⁸² Xen. *Oec.* 7.37. Pomeroy (n. 34), 65–7.

task by Ischomachus, one which his wife nevertheless expresses her eagerness to perform, only because it will earn her gratitude from household slaves. The *Oeconomicus* is also completely void of familial metaphors in describing the relation of slaves to their households. The closest comes in a passage describing the incorporation of a *tamia* into the household:

We trained her to be loyal to us by giving her a share in our joy when we were happy and, if we had any trouble, we called on her to share it too. We trained her to be eager to improve the estate by taking her into our confidence and by giving her a share in our success.
(Xen. *Oec.* 9.12)

Again, the focus is on the practical expediency for the slave owner.

All the same, the reasons for Xenophon's emphasis on positive over negative rewards deserve some further explanation. This focus, in fact, is indicative of a preference that leaders should inspire their subordinates to follow them through willing rather than forced obedience, which is a prominent theme throughout Xenophon's work, notably in his presentation of Cyrus the Great.⁸³ As well as in its reference to the king's law codes, the *Oeconomicus* mentions this as a positive aspect of Cyrus' reign.⁸⁴ An emphasis on positive rather than negative incentives is also a feature of Cyrus' imperial organization as described in the *Cyropaedia*, and a trait which Xenophon admired in the Persian prince Cyrus the Younger, under whom he served with the 10,000.⁸⁵ It is particularly worth emphasizing that in the *Cyropaedia* the Persian king never resorts to retributive or disciplinary violence in the administration of his empire, but always seeks to resolve issues peacefully.⁸⁶ For the most part, such responses are not necessary, as 'Xenophon much prefers to invent characters who are happy to be ruled by Cyrus, rather than oppose him.'⁸⁷ The same can be said of Ischomachus' slaves in the *Oeconomicus*.

It might be argued from this evidence that the attitude towards household slaves in the *Oeconomicus* has little to do with Xenophon's attitudes towards slavery per se. But it is still noteworthy that he saw

⁸³ R. F. Buxton, 'Xenophon on Leadership: Commanders as Friends', in Flower (n. 10), 323–37; Klees (n. 69), 86–8. On the same preference observable in Greek leaders in Xenophon's *Hellenica*, see H. D. Westlake, 'Individuals in Xenophon's *Hellenica*', *BRL* 49 (1967), 250.

⁸⁴ Xen. *Oec.* 4.7.

⁸⁵ E.g. Xen. *Cyr.* 8.1.26–9, 39; 8.4.6–7. K. Vlassopoulos, 'Xenophon on Persia', in Flower (n. 10), 368–9.

⁸⁶ E.g. Xen. *Cyr.* 8.3.21–3.

⁸⁷ J. Tatum, *Xenophon's Imperial Fiction. On the Education of Cyrus* (Princeton, NJ, 1989), 201.

no difficulty in comparing the management of slaves and freemen. Furthermore, just as Xenophon's account of Cyrus' reign drastically underestimates the violence surely required to maintain control of a despotic empire, Ischomachus' presentation of his household marks a distinct 'downplaying [of] slave resistance', as McKeown aptly puts it, and, as such, 'Xenophon's methods are relatively paternalistic.'⁸⁸ His preference for this approach, repeated to different degrees in slave management literature throughout history, seem indicative of a paternalistic bent, as Katsari and Dal Lago have argued it is in Roman and American examples of slave management literature.

Though it represents the violence inherent in slavery in the most extreme way, the *Odyssey* also, through the mouths of its slave characters, professes a belief in the benefits of slavery to slaves who accept their position happily. Xenophon, in contrast, does not feel the need to justify explicitly the exploitation of slaves, but only to explain how a slave owner might do this with the utmost efficiency. With its gruesome depiction of the execution of disloyal slaves, the *Odyssey* seems at first glance to be very different from the *Oeconomicus* in its treatment of slave dissent. Even accounting for differences in genre, the examples of practical action which Xenophon uses to reinforce his moral discourse on leadership – namely, an overemphasis on rewards and ambiguous reference to punishment – separate it from the *Odyssey*. Nevertheless, both texts show evidence of a paternalistic ideology which justified the exploitation of other humans as property, albeit in different ways. Following an ironic interpretation of the *Oeconomicus*, one could argue that Ischomachus' profit-driven motive to his treatment of slaves is another characteristic which exposes his moral failings to the astute reader.⁸⁹ It seems more likely to me, however, that Ischomachus does speak for Xenophon (at least for the most part), and that an ideological outlook can be seen, not in a hidden agenda intentionally placed within the text, but in its unintentional emphases.

⁸⁸ N. McKeown, 'Resistance among Chattel Slaves in the Classical Greek World', in K. Bradley (ed.), *The Cambridge History of World Slavery. Vol. 1. The Ancient Mediterranean World* (Cambridge, 2011), 174, 168.

⁸⁹ See above, p. 000. Compare the similar interpretation of Xenophon's Cyrus in C. Nadon, *Xenophon's Prince. Republic and Empire in the Cyropaedia* (Berkeley, CA, 2001), chap. 5 and *passim*, and Sparta in N. Humble, 'Xenophon's View of Sparta: A Study of the *Anabasis*, *Hellenica* and *Respublica Lacedaemoniorum*', PhD thesis, McMaster University (1997).

Cross-cultural similarities beyond Greece

The *Odyssey*, the *Oeconomicus*, and indeed the writings of the Roman agronomists and the classically trained American planters stand in an intertextually connected literary tradition, in which the earlier works no doubt had some influence on those that followed. However, I have argued that, in the case of Xenophon's *Oeconomicus*, we can see that the attitudes towards slavery were as much formulated from their contemporary context as they were drawn from archaic literature. To support this, we might point to a tradition of slave management advice outside this Western literary tradition. Daniel Snell has collected 55 proverbs from Sumer concerned with slaves. These proverbs cover a range of topics, but two are of particular relevance: 'After (the lady) had left the house and (the slave girl) had entered from the street, (away from) her lady the slave girl sat down at a banquet';⁹⁰ and 'The male [slave] because the lord is gone, the female [slave], because the lord is gone...'.⁹¹ These proverbs stress the importance of the master's direct oversight of slaves to the ruling class who conceived these proverbs and passed them down. This is a theme we have already seen in both the *Odyssey* and the *Oeconomicus*, and which Dal Lago and Katsari note in the material they studied.⁹²

Furthermore, in a section on food, Snell notes three proverbs which portray slaves as ungrateful for their rations. The following is indicative: 'Although the pea-flour of the home-born slaves is mixed with honey and fine oil, there is no end to their lamentations.'⁹³ Not only does this proverb characterize a slave's resistance to their status as ingratitude, it simultaneously portrays their master as their benefactor. We can here see a Near Eastern brand of paternalistic thinking. Together with the material examined in the previous section, these passages provide further evidence for Patterson's contention, referenced in my introduction, that paternalistic ideology frequently arises as a consequence of slavery.

It is true that the Greeks borrowed from Near Eastern literature, though the extent of this borrowing and its exact nature are still

⁹⁰ D. C. Snell, 'The Ordinarity of the Peculiar Institution', in R. E. Averback, M. W. Chavalas, and D. B. Weisberg (eds.), *Life and Culture in the Ancient Near East* (Bethesda, MD, 2003), 12, citing B. Alster, *Proverbs of Ancient Sumer. Volume 1* (Bethesda, MD, 1997), 88, 3.41.

⁹¹ Snell (n. 90), 14, citing Alster (n. 90), 303, Tablets in the Collections of the University Museum of the University of Pennsylvania, 3805.

⁹² Dal Lago and Katsari (n. 1), 210.

⁹³ Snell (n. 90), 10, citing Alster (n. 90), 14, 1.47.

debated.⁹⁴ A full examination of potential links between Sumerian proverbs on slave management and Greek texts is beyond the scope of this article. However, even if these specific proverbs were transmitted to later Greek literature (which seems unlikely to me), their survival in various forms is still worthy of remark. The similarities of this written advice across different societies point to continuities in cultural responses to slave management concerns that extend not only from archaic Greece to classical times, but also across large stretches of human history, regardless of intertextual links.

Conclusion

Managing slaves was a constant concern for well-off Greeks from the time of Homer to the classical period and beyond. In this article, I have examined literary sources which are indicative of particular attitudes towards slaves that developed in response to issues of slave management. These attitudes helped slaveholders deal with slave resistance and the necessity of employing slaves in positions of trust, through a dichotomy between ‘good’ and ‘bad’ slaves who needed rewarding or punishing accordingly. This advocated the just treatment of ‘good’ slaves and the award of honour and various material benefits beyond sustenance, but only on terms favourable to their masters.

We have also considered the possibility of intertextual links in accounting for these similarities. Of course, the conclusions reached here are limited by the state of our evidence; with so little of the entire corpus of classical Athenian literature still available today, any detailed study of the influences on the *Oeconomicus* is impossible to describe in detail. The loss of Antisthenes’ *Oeconomicus* is especially unfortunate for the present topic. Had it survived, we would be far better placed to understand the influences on Xenophon’s attempt at a science of slave management. Nevertheless, I have argued – with the aid of similar discourse in Sumerian proverbs – that the similarities between the

⁹⁴ Several intertextual links have been posited between Near Eastern literature and the Homeric poems specifically: e.g. A. Kelly, ‘The Babylonian Captivity of Homer: The Case of the *Dios Apate*’, *RhM* 151 (2008), 260–300. However, J. Haubold, *Greece and Mesopotamia. Dialogues in Literature* (New York, 2013), has recently argued against substantive borrowing of Near Eastern literature by that of Greece, *contra* W. Burkert, *Babylon, Memphis, Persepolis. Eastern Contexts of Greek Culture*, (Cambridge, 2004), and M. L. West, *The East Face of Helicon. West Asiatic Elements in Greek Poetry and Myth* (Oxford, 1997).

Odyssey and the *Oeconomicus* were as much a product of individual responses as the latter was derivative of the former.

I have also argued that both texts demonstrate paternalistic thinking. Subject as they were to genre and contemporary circumstances and discourses, however, the expressions of this ideology were radically different between the two. Though Xenophon always frames the privileges to be offered to slaves in the *Oeconomicus* in terms of their benefits to Ischomachus and his wife, his emphasis on rewarding slaves over punishing them makes his work very similar to much later writing on slave management and probably reflects a brand of proto-paternalistic thinking. If the comparison with modern American paternalism is indeed a sound one, we might postulate that such an attitude, if widespread, may indeed have mitigated some of the harshest treatments of slaves allowed by Athenian law – whether or not this arose from true paternalistic feeling or from self-interested property conservation.⁹⁵

Of course, we cannot know the extent of such attitudes among slave owners in Athens, let alone, as Hunnings rightly states, the effects which they had on the lives of slaves. She nevertheless fairly and articulately suggests that literary emphasis on the good treatment of slaves could have had a positive effect on real-life Athenian slaves.⁹⁶ As in America, however, the literature which this ideology created would often have masked the true level of violence against slaves in Athenian society and the importance of this violence in maintaining the system of slavery itself.⁹⁷

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⁹⁵ It may well have resulted from both, as Dal Lago and Katsari (n. 1), 202–5, argue of the Roman evidence.

⁹⁶ Hunnings (n. 4), 66–7.

⁹⁷ On the positive effects of paternalism and their limited extent, see E. Genovese, *Roll, Jordan, Roll. The World the Slaves Made* (New York, 1974), e.g. 67–8, 71–2.