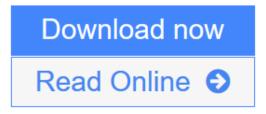


The Roman Guide to Slave Management: A Treatise by Nobleman Marcus Sidonius Falx

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The Roman Guide to Slave Management: A Treatise by Nobleman Marcus Sidonius Falx Jerry Toner Marcus Sidonius Falx is an average Roman citizen. Born of a relatively well-off noble family, he lives on a palatial estate in Campania, dines with senators and generals, and, like all of his ancestors before him, owns countless slaves. Having spent most of his life managing his servants—many of them prisoners from Rome's military conquests—he decided to write a kind of owner's manual for his friends and countrymen.

The result, *The Roman Guide to Slave Management*, is a sly, subversive guide to the realities of servitude in ancient Rome. Cambridge scholar Jerry Toner uses Falx, his fictional but true-to-life creation, to describe where and how to Romans bought slaves, how they could tell an obedient worker from a troublemaker, and even how the ruling class reacted to the inevitable slave revolts. Toner also adds commentary throughout, analyzing the callous words and casual brutality of Falx and his compatriots and putting it all in context for the modern reader.

Written with a deep knowledge of ancient culture—and the depths of its cruelty—this is the Roman Empire as you've never seen it before.

The Roman Guide to Slave Management: A Treatise by Nobleman Marcus Sidonius Falx Details

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Janet says

Fair warning. This book is probably going to offend you. Falx (or Toner, whichever you prefer) graphically covers *all* aspects of slave management, including torture and the mistreatment of female slaves by their male owners. It's very matter-of-fact about the underlying assumption that certain human beings are to be considered pieces of property by other human beings. The trick is to keep in mind that Falx's viewpoints are-to ancient Romans--almost completely mainstream and perfectly normal. Doesn't make it any easier to digest, though.

Kilian Metcalf says

When I saw the title of this book, I wasn't sure whether it was serious or satirical. I have a writer friend whose book is set in a world where slavery is accepted, so I took a look. It is a serious look at Roman slaver, written by a classics scholar. The style of the book is accessible, reads just like a modern management handbook, only about managing slaves. The Romans looked on slavery as an unquestioned part of life, and addressed the problems and benefits of well-managed slaves. At the end of each chapter there is a commentary giving the original sources for the advice of the fictional slaveholder, Marcus Sidonius Falx. A quick, enjoyable read, and an excellent resource for anyone writing fiction that includes slave characters.

Miriam says

Not just good advice for managing children and husbands, it's a wonderful read for those who are curious about what it was really like to live in Roman times. There are even fantastic references for those who would like to learn more about the institution of slavery in classical Rome.

jon says

Avery fine introduction to slavery in the Roman Empire, well sourced with commentary following the faux Falx advice of how to manage slaves as an owner and master. The distinct advantage of the foil of a mid first century manual is its tone and the exposure of the reader to Roman mores and sense of title and class culture. Index and bibliography serves to grant further use of the book as a reference for further research. Having read most of the primary sources that document the chapters in the commentary, I found this book's narrative format an engaging way to fashion an experience of Roman life that will fix the material in one's imagination and memory with benefit.

Simon Binning says

This is a great little book. Written by Marcus Sidonius Falx (with the help of Jerry Toner!), it takes us one step at a a time through the process of buying, training, managing, punishing and freeing slaves. Although we all think we know about slavery in the Roman Empire, the amount of authentic, first-hand evidence is surprisingly small, and much of what we do have was originally written because it was in some way unusual, so seeking the truth about slavery is more difficult than you would think. The majority of slave-owners were small businessmen, who perhaps owned one or two slaves to carry out the hardest work associated with their trade. But these people have left little or no evidence. Their story can only be guessed at. Those higher up the scale, who owned large numbers of slaves are better accounted for, but, by their nature, less typical. This book tries to weigh the evidence we have, and present a measured account of how slavery operated.

It needs to be borne in mind that slavery was an integral part of most societies at the time. No one, as far as we know, questioned the right of one man to enslave another. Even then, slavery was an ancient way of life. Certainly individuals rebelled against their lot, but it tended to be against their particular situation, rather than an intellectual rebellion against the institution.

The book leads you, as the prospective slave owner through choosing, training, managing, and freeing slaves. Along the way, sex, fun, rewards, punishment and many other things are also touched on. By the end, you should know what you are doing!

Anyone who has read much about Rome, either factual or fiction, will probably be familiar with much of the information in the book, but it is very readable, along with lots of references and suggestions for further reading.

Before we get carried away with our great moral progression, the most chilling sentence in the book for me was not those about punishment or torture, but the very last in the book - 'there are more slaves in the world today than there were at any point in the life of the Roman Empire.'

Timons Esaias says

Initial response: I've only just begun reading this book, but I have to say it's a bit of a fraud. The cover purports that it's non-fiction, based on an actual Roman text. But there is no Marcus Sidonius Falx text; it's an "instructive satire" I guess. Which isn't what I intended to buy.

Upon finishing: I deserve to be fooled by this book, I guess, having written quite a number of "faux news" satires in my day. The only hint that this isn't actually an ancient Roman text on slavery is that no translator is listed on the title page, just Jerry Toner. I've had quite a number of writing students who set their fiction in slave cultures -- but have no actual knowledge of what slavery does to a culture -- that I picked this up after slight examination, thinking I'd be able to recommend it to such students in the future.

Well, I might still suggest looking at it for the Commentaries and footnotes, but only with a heavy warning, if I do so. Instead I'll probably collect some relevant passages of legitimate translations from Project Gutenberg and give them that.

So, Toner has written a fake Roman treatise on slave management, riddled with anachronisms, in order to present the mind-set of someone who owned slaves in such a culture. I'm used to Classical texts that feel surprisingly modern, but it was only a couple of pages into the text that I realized that this one was too good to be true. (Which is when I looked for references to Marcus Sidonius Falx and found none; except on the internet, pointing to Toner.)

The point of the book is that a slave society is fundamentally different from the society we live in, and that

owning slaves is a mental burden on the owner, for very practical reasons. That's a worthwhile lesson, and the POV exercise is worth seeing. I'm not sure I see the reason for the false front to the project, except that it "stays inside the conceit" I guess. The problem is that Toner often slips in the chapter commentaries, and gives away that a story in Falx is actually from Seneca, or forgets for a moment his pretended scholarship. Also, from time to time he repeats something from the chapter as though it wasn't in the chapter, which I'm fairly certain was an editing error.

My rating is a classic example of what happens when the reader's expectation for what the book would be is not matched by what the book is. It's not always the actual book that warrants the low rating. Still...

Fred Kohn says

While the idea of telling the history of Roman slavery through a fictional Roman slave owner was clever, the author didn't pull it off very well. Setting that aside, I learned a lot about slavery and many sources were listed for further study.

Vladimir Rybalko says

First of all, the book is not about slavery or history of ancient Roma. If you think so, you read it and understood nothing. It's a very good book about human management. Surely if you are able to read between the lines.

Cosey says

In het soms erg oubollige wereldje van historici is het een ware verademing als er één rebel eens het lef heeft om geschiedenis op een andere manier naar het grotere publiek te brengen. Alleen al daarom: respect, Jerry Toner, respect.

'Handboek slavenmanagement'. Het is zo fout en stiekem zo grappig tegelijk. Een belangrijke nuance is wel dat het een historisch handboek slavenmanagement is en dus enkel 'toepasbaar' ten tijde van het Romeinse Rijk. Dit zorgt ervoor dat er geen zweem van 'too soon' rond hangt. We spreken namelijk over een samenleving van 2000 jaar terug. Maar, zoals Jerry Toner ook terecht aangeeft op het einde van zijn boek: "In onze tijd betoogt niemand nog dat slavernij aanvaardbaar of te rechtvaardigen is. Maar voor we onszelf op de borst kloppen over onze vooruitgang, is het goed te bedenken dat slavernij, ondanks de illegaliteit ervan in alle landen ter wereld, toch op brede schaal blijft bestaan. Dat is tragisch." Laten we dat dus vooral ook niet uit het oog verliezen.

Waar de vorm en insteek van het boek creativiteit uitstraalt, mist de inhoud en de schrijfstijl dit tot op het teleurstellende af. Als historicus ben ik ongetwijfeld een gekleurde lezer: ik heb me namelijk vier jaar lang liggen verdiepen in thema's als bv. slavernij tijdens de oudheid. Veel nieuws bracht dit boek dus voor mij niet onder de zon. Ook qua schrijfstijl bleef ik op mijn honger zitten. Het boek is zogenaamd geschreven door een Romeinse slavenhouder, Marcus Sidonius Falx. Jammer genoeg krijg je door moderne uitdrukkingen en woordenschat nooit echt het gevoel dat dit zo is.

Wat ik eveneens jammer vond, is dat het boek gedurig onderbroken wordt door kanttekeningen van Jerry Toner zelf. Daarin lijkt hij dan alle info te proppen die hij niet door zijn personage Falx gezegd krijgt. Achter ieder hoofdstuk schrijft Toner ook kort neer vanwaar hij de mosterd haalt (dus: welke historische bronnen hij gebruikt heeft). Gezien zijn stiel een correcte reflex, maar persoonlijk had ik die info er achteraan het boek bijgevoegd. Dat vergemakkelijkt het lezen. Ik geef toe dat ik zijn commentaren vaak overgeslagen heb.

Al bij al is dit een waardevolle poging om geschiedenis tot bij de mensen en actueel te krijgen. Mary Beard (bekende Britse historicus) schrijft dan ook in het voorwoord:

"Hoe verschillend zijn wij eigenlijk van de Romeinen?"

Tja...hoe verschillend inderdaad?

Darío says

An introduction to the history of Roman slavery written by a faux Roman, Marcus Sidonius Falx, a Roman man maybe from the 3rd century A.D, and commentary by a real author, Jerry Toner. The book is a handbook to those who want to know how a citizen of Rome managed their slaves, explaining how to torture them, how to make them do what you want, how to feed them, etc. The tone in which is written is funny because it is just so pompous, as any rich Roman man would write.

Douglas Wilson says

Well researched, and cleverly written. A wealth of information here about the customs surrounding ancient Roman slavery.

Robert Monk says

This little book is written as a faux instruction manual, composed in some unnamed period of Roman history (3rd century, maybe) by a composite Roman nobleman. (In other words, it's not a translation of an actual Roman text.) Toner, a Cambridge scholar, tried to present the feel of how someone from that class might have viewed their slaves. "Falx" is certainly not depicted as an admirable fellow, though he does voice the opinion that slaves might be human. He certainly says they should be treated like valuable property and cared for appropriately.

Each chapter consists of "Falx" describing a topic, followed by Toner himself, writing as an editor, giving some perspective and naming the sources he used in inventing "Falx"'s ideas.

It's interesting, but not really a source for hard facts about Roman slavery. The bibliography gives some texts which might be better for a more hardcore exploration of the topic. But it was a quick and entertaining read, so an extra star for that.

Ibrahim Niftiyev says

https://niftiyevibrahim.blogspot.com/

"Qullar? nec? idar? etm?li" antik dövrün "insan resurslar? meneceri"nin dilind?n yaz?lm?? möht???m kitabd?r. Roma aristokrat? Mark Sinodiy Falks ad? alt?nda Kembridc Universitetinin q?dim Roma üzr? alimi, elml?r doktoru Cerri Toner gizl?nib. Bu s?b?bd?n kitab olduqca ?sasl? m?nb?l?r? söyk?nir v? q?dim Romada mövcud olmu? quldarl?q haqq?nda ?trafl? m?lumat t?qdim edir: qullar?n ?ld? edilm?si, onlar?n t?hsili v? t?drisi, fiziki c?zalar v? onlar?n qidalanma rejiml?ri, ail? mühitind? onlar?n rolu v? s. Kitab o k?sl?r? xüsusil? ?h?miyy?tlidir ki, onlar ?sas?n insanlarla i?l?yirl?r. Ba?qa sözl?, müasir dövrümüzd? "?nsan resurslar?" adland?rd???m?z sah?nin pe??karlar?, müt?x?ssisl?ri v? ya sad?c? bu sah? il? maraqlananlard?r, q?dim dövrün insan resurslar? haqq?nda ?trafl? m?lumat toplamaq, h?m d? müasir dövrün insanlar? il? i?l?m?kd? ?v?zsiz m?lumat m?nb?yi olacaq.

Ümumiyy?tl? ideyan?n özü, y?ni q?dim dövrün aristokrat?n?n dilind?n quldarl?q haqq?nda m?lumatlar?n verilm?si olduqca maraql? ideyad?r. Bel? format icaz? verir ki, oxucu konkret v? ?ablon tarixi monoqrafiya ?v?zin? maraql? v? h?y?canl? bir ?s?r oxumaq t?crüb?si ya?ats?n. Bu s?b?bd?n Cerri Toner? böyük t???kkür dü?ür ki, o, üz?rind?n min ill?r keç?n bir dövrü bizim müasir dilimizl? sad? v? anla??ql? dil il? biz? t?rcüm? edib. El?c? d? dü?ünm?yin ki, q?dim Romada mövcud olmu? quldarl?q ?n?n?l?ri sad? v? m?nas?z bir ?ey olub. O dövr? aid yaz?l? m?nb?l?rin az olmas? bizi h?min dövr il? ?laq?dar dol?un t?s?vvür ?ld? etm?kd? ?limizi-qolumuzu ba?lay?r, lakin mü?llif maksimal d?r?c?d? bu problemi aradan qald?r?b.

Q?dim dövrd? d? qudlarlar?n müxt?lif növl?ri olub. Onlardan b?zil?ri sad?c? 1-2 qula sahib olub öz t?s?rrüfat v? ya m?i??t i?l?rini görürdül?rs?, b?zil?ri yüzl?rl? qula sahib olub ?m?lli-ba?l? böyük insan qrupuna r?hb?rlik etm?li olurdular. Bu da öz növb?sind? onlara qullar?n idar? edilm?si bax?m?ndan özün?m?xsus v? ?vzsiz t?crüb? qazand?r?rd?. Mark Sinodiy Flaks da bel? birisin? nümun?dir. Kitab?n da m?hz bel? böyük qrupa r?hb?rlik etmi? aristokrat?n dilind?n yaz?lmas? diqq?ti c?lb edir. Bu üslub biz? daha maraql? v? praktiki m?lumatlar ötürür. M?s?l?n, qullar? seç?rk?n hans? xüsusiyy?tl?r? fikir verm?k laz?md?r? Onlar?n fiziki v? m?n?vi dünyas?n? nec? düzgün olaraq d?y?rl?ndirib öz mülkünün bir hiss?sin? çevirm?k olar? Onlarla münasib?td? n?l?r? yol verm?k olar, n?l?r? yol verm?k olmaz? Çünki qul olsalar bel? q?dim söz biz? ehtiyatl? olma?? tap??r?r: N? q?d?r qulun varsa, bir o q?d?r d? dü?m?nin var. Onlara hans? halda azadl?q verm?k olar, hans? halda h?mi??lik özünd? saxlamaq laz?md?r? Onlar? hans? halda v? nec? mükafatland?rmaq v? ya ?ksin? c?zaland?rmaq laz?md?r? Onlar?n i?l?rini nec? izl?m?k laz?md?r ki, malikan?nin mal-mülkün? x?t?r yetirm?sinl?r v? gizlin i?l?rl? m???ul olmas?nlar v? s.

H?m d? b?dii çalarlar? özünd? da??yan kitab? oxuduqca bir az t??ccübl?nirdim. T??ccübl?nirdim ki, "dünyada art?q quldarl?q dövrü bitib! Urrraa!" fikri tamamil? bo? v? m?nas?z bir ?ey? çevrilir. Yuxar?da sadalanan prinsipl?r v? suallara veril?n cavablar m?n? bizim bu günkü, qap?n?n o tay?ndak? dünyan?n i? prinsipl?rin? 99%-lik ox?arl?q il? m?ni heyr?tl?ndirdi. Mahiyy?t etibar? il? d?yi??n bir ?ey yoxdur. Bu gün ?irk?tl?r, böyük firmalar v? dig?r qurumlar da eyni metodlarla v? prinsipl?rl? i?çil?ri seçirl?r, onlar? h?r gün art?qlamas? il? i? yerl?rind? saxlay?rlar v? sonunda sad?c? 1 v? ?n yax?? halda 2 günlük istirah?tl? ba?lar?n? aldad?rlar. M?n çox heyr?tl?nirdim ki, minl?rl? il bundan önc? olan dü?ünc? t?rzi, yana?malar v? paradiqmalar h?l? d? öz aktuall??n? itirmir. Bu çox ?eyd?n x?b?b verir. Birincisi, bu ondan x?b?r verir ki, b???riyy?t n? özün?, n? d? ba?qa m?s?l?l?r? yana?mas?n? t?kamül etdirmir. Bunun s?b?bi primitiv dü?ünc?l?rin, axmaq ideyalar? v? m?nas?z rejiml?rin h?l? d? sözünün k?s?rli olmas? v? h?l? d? onlar?n min ill?rl? hakimiyy?t adlanan illüziyadan istifad? etm?l?ridir. Bu fikir m?ni ona gör? m?yus edir ki, insan olaraq

?üurlu varl?q kimi varl???m?z?n n? özümüz?, n? d? ba?qa canl?lara favdas?n? görmürük. ?kincisi, bu ondan x?b?r verir ki, bütün bu aliml?rin, yaz?c?lar?n v? m?d?niyy?t adamlar?n?n azadl?q ca??r??lar? sad?c? bo?bo?una hava bo?lu?unda ora-bura uçu?ub, sonra da itib-ç?x?b gedib. Onu d?y?rl?ndir?n, qiym?t ver?n v? öz dü?ünc? t?rzin? cevir?nl?r t?k-tük insanlar olub ki, onlar?n da axr?na c?miyy?tl?r el? c?x?blar ki, hec yadplanetlil?r dünyam?z?a hücum ets?l?r bel? birlikl? v? ehtirasla bunu etm?zl?r. Üçüncüsü, biz hal-haz?rda böyük yalan?n içind? ya?ama?a davam edirik. Biz özümüzü d?, ba?qalar?n? da inand?rm???q ki, sivil, m?d?ni v? möht???m c?miyy?tl?rd? ya?ay?r?q, amma idar?etm? prinsipl?ri, metodlar? v? mahiyy?ti quldarl?q dövründ?n al?nan miras?n üz?rind? qurulub. Çox uza?a getm?y?k, c?misi 100 il bundan önc? AB?-da qarad?rili insanlara ?saslanaraq hakim olan quldarl?q dövrü b???rivy?tin üz qaras? devil b?s n?dir? Bu gün Çind? coxlu qul u?aqlar var. Ucuz Çin m?hsullar?n? onlar istehsal edirl?r. El? AB?-?n v? Rusiyan?n özünd? d? az da olsa immigrantlardan formala?d?r?lan qul i?çil?r komandas?na h?r ?tatda v? oblastda rast g?lm?k olar. ?ndi g?lin oturub fikirl???k gör?k bu n? dem?kdir ax?? Dördüncüsü, hec n?yin d?yi?m?m?yi insan irad?si v? ?qlinin mahiyy?tini d? if?a edir v? ?slind? onun da bir illüziya oldu?unu sübut edir. T?miz ?üurun, elmin v? ?xlaq?n bu mübariz?d? z?if olmas? v? el? hey m??lub olmas? m?n? deyir ki, insan?n m?n?vi xüsusiyy?tl?ri ona yol yolda?l??? etm?kd? hec d? sadiq möyqed?n c?x?? etmir. Be?incisi v? h?l?lik sonuncusu, bizim g?l?c?yimiz daha da böyük quldarl?q dövrünün ?sar?tind? olacaq. Müxt?lif dahil?rin antiutopiyalar? v? fantastik ?s?rl?ri biz? bunu ba?a dü?m?kd? yax?ndan yard?mc? olar bil?r. ?g?r Roma imperiyas?n?n h?yat t?rzi bu gün d? öz varl???n? qoruyub-saxlay?bsa, dem?li, g?l?c?k d? istisna deyil. Kemi? g?l?c?yin yanas?d?r. Odur ki, yolda?lar, xeyirli olsun, bizl?rin statusu min ill?r önc? n? idis?, indi d? odur, nec? idar? olunurduqsa, indi d? el?vik v? g?l?c?k haqq?nda dü?ünm?vin d? bir m?nas? görünmür.

M?nd?n f?rqli olaraq cari kitab bu gün i? h?yat?nda öz sözünü dem?ky? çal??an, m?qs?dyönlü, "m?qs?dl?r bütün vasit?l?ri do?ruldur" v? "a??ll?sansa niy? kas?bsan" kimi q?ddar mikroideologiya sahibl?ri üçün çox yax?? motivasiya v? bilik m?nb?yi d? ola bil?r. Bel? ?s?rl?r onlar?n mental enerjil?rini art?rar. bu gün ba?qalar?n?n m?lumats?zl???ndan istifad? edib öz m?qs?dl?rin? nail olma?a çal??an çoxsay?l? insan resurslar? müt?x?ssisi v? biznes i?çil?r var. Odur ki, kitab h?r iki c?bh?y? xitab edir v? h?r ikisin? d? n? is? h?diyy? edir. M?ni n?l?r haqq?nda dü?ünm?y? vadar etdi, onu siz? izah etdim.

Kitab ma?azalar?nda gördüyümüz "Müasir insan resurslar? menecmenti" tipli bütün kitablar?n mahiyy?ti v? m??zi bir t?k bu kitaba s?????b. Quldarl?q sözün? qar?? bizim beynimiz alternativl?r düzüb-qo?sa da, sistem el? h?mindir. Ehtiyac yoxdur hans?sa n?z?riyy?y? dayal? axmaq söz y???n? insan resurslar? kitablar?n? oxuma?a. "Qullar? nec? idar? etm?li" kitab?nda oxudu?umuz cüml?l?rd? yer alan "qul" sözünü müasir terminl?rd?n olan "müt?x?ssis", "i?çi", "?m?kda?", ya da ba?qa bir analoji sözl? ?v?z ets?k, mütali? zaman? gözl?rimizin önüncü ya özümüzün i? t?crüb?si, ya da ba?qa bir dostun, yolda??n i? h?yat? g?l?c?k.

Kitab?n yaz? üslubu çox özün?m?xsus v? ax?c?d?r. Sözl?r, cüml?l?r v? fikirl?r ideal harmoniyadad?r. Düzü, uzunçuluq var, onu gizl?tm?yim. B?zi ideyalar, fikirl?r v? t?svirl?r d?f?l?rl? v? d?f?l?rl? yenid?n qeyd olunub, hans? ki buna ehtiyac yox idi, amma yen? d? ümumi d?y?rl?ndirm?m yüks?kdir. ?lav? olaraq, h?r bir f?slin sonunda mü?llifin s?rf elmi, tarixi mövqed?n bildirdiyi q?sa ??rhl?r var. Bu ??rhl?r biz? b?dii v? sad? üslubdan, elmi müst?viy?, akademik ç?rçiv?y? rahat keçidimizi t?min edir. Çoxlu nümun?l?r v? maraql? izahlar t?crüb?ni n?z?riyy?d?n ön plana ç?kir ki, bu da kitabdan ?ld? olunan faydal? i? ?msal?n? art?r?r.

Juan Rivera says

Truly, the ways of thinking of other times are sometimes incomprehensible to us. Other current cultures may even be incomprehensible.

In ancient Rome the institution of slavery was one of the firmest, no one questioned its legitimacy. What did the Romans think of their slaves?

An illuminating book:

How to be a real master? How to buy a slave? Sex with slaves, of course, was allowed since they are objects for your pleasure. How to make a good slave? Advantages and disadvantages of torture. How to provide fun for them to entertain themselves and not reveal themselves. What to do in case of rebellion? When and how to free your slaves? Christians and their relationship with slaves.

I think many of the topics are topical, even the book tries to treat slaves well, motivate them, make them live well so that they are faithful to their masters ... in many cases you could put the phrase employees instead of slaves and it would work.

On the other hand the book makes me think two things:

Jesus never spoke of slavery as a wrong institution, even the early Christians were proud to be slaves to the lord Latin words used by Christians say that man is a slave of God. Why was Jesus never against the first apostles?

Another interesting thing to reflect: today slavery is prohibited in all countries, however there are 25 million people working against their will, as slaves, more than those who were in the worst time in Rome.