

Projekttitel: eManual Alte Geschichte  
Modul [optional]:  
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**Text Übersetzung:**

(Evelyn S. Shuckburgh / H. C. Hamilton, W. Falconer)

**Pol. 4.38**

As far as the sea is concerned, Byzantium occupies a position the most secure and in every way the most advantageous of any town in our quarter of the world: while in regard to the land, its situation is in both respects the most unfavourable. By sea it so completely commands the entrance to the Pontus, that no merchant can sail in or out against its will. The Pontus therefore being rich in what the rest of the world requires for the support of life, the Byzantines are absolute masters of all such things. For those commodities which are the first necessities of existence, cattle and slaves, are confessedly supplied by the districts round the Pontus in greater profusion, and of better quality, than by any others: and for luxuries, they supply us with honey, wax, and salt-fish in great abundance; while they take our superfluous stock of olive oil and every kind of wine. In the matter of corn there is a mutual interchange, they supplying or taking it as it happens to be convenient. Now the Greeks would necessarily have been excluded entirely from traffic in these articles, or at least would have had to carry it on at a loss, if the Byzantines had adopted a hostile attitude, and made common cause formerly with the Gauls, or still more at this time with the Thracians, or had abandoned the place altogether: for owing to the narrowness of the strait, and the number of the barbarians along its shores, it would have become entirely impassable to our ships. The Byzantines themselves probably feel the advantages of the situation, in the supplies of the necessities of life, more than any one else; for their superfluity finds a ready means of export, and what they lack is readily imported, with profit to themselves, and without difficulty or danger: but other people too, as I have said, get a great many commodities by their means. As common benefactors therefore of all Greece they might justly expect, not only gratitude, but the united assistance of Greeks, when threatened by the barbarians.

**Strab. 14.5.2**

The exportation of slaves was the chief cause of inducing them to commit criminal acts, for this traffic was attended with very great profit, and the slaves were easily taken. Delos was at no great distance, a large and rich mart, capable of receiving and transporting, when sold, the same day, ten thousand slaves; so that hence arose a proverbial saying, ““Merchant, come into port, discharge your freight—everything is sold.”” The Romans, having acquired wealth after the destruction of Carthage and Corinth, employed great numbers of domestic slaves, and were the cause of this traffic. The pirates, observing the facility with which slaves could be procured, issued forth in numbers from all quarters, committing robbery and dealing in slaves.