

INTRODUCTION: THE SLAVERY OF NEW TESTAMENT STUDIES

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It was slavery that first made possible the division of labor between agriculture and industry on a considerable scale. . . . Without slavery, no Greek state, no Greek art and science; without slavery, no Roman Empire. Without Hellenism and the Roman Empire as the base, also no modern Europe. . . .

—Friedrich Engels

Them days was hell without fire.

—Former American slave

Slavery is a species of social murder. It reduces human life to a travesty of itself, sacrifices human beings on the altar of violent desire. And slavery teaches us what freedom really is. We have never known freedom without it. The paradigmatic *magnalium Dei* in the Bible is the liberation of slaves. The rupture of the Egyptian slave regime by a rag-tag Hebrew underclass, that ancient huddled mass yearning to be free, was the beginning of freedom. The freedom of that mixed multitude was the beginning of peoplehood. And the interdictions delivered to this delivered people, the revelation of the Law at Sinai, the beginning of an alternative political-economic-religious order, inclusive of human rights. Freedom, peoplehood, human rights: all defined by the previous experience of slavery.

In a critically acclaimed comparative historical study published in 1982, Orlando Patterson defined slavery as the permanent, violent domination of natally alienated and generally dishonored persons (Patterson: 13). Slavery is the exercise of a malevolent alien will against a person in a position of humiliation to the exclusion of all other claims and relations. The slave is a walking social atrocity living in the shadow of another's will without respect and without choice in any respect. Patterson was broadening the standard understanding of slavery. He insisted that the heinous human relation of slavery could not be reduced to "the simple reality" of property, as in M. I. Finley's

earlier attempt to place the study of ancient Greek and Roman slavery on a more adequate footing. Patterson argued that slavery must be understood as a relation of persons, not property. It is the unique relation between the master and the slave that distinguishes slavery from other forms of compulsory, degraded labor.

What . . . are the real differences between slaves and non-slaves who are nonetheless salable even against their will? The first difference is the relative power of the parties concerned and the origins of their relationship. The proprietor's power is limited by the fact that nonslaves always possess some claims and powers themselves vis-à-vis their proprietor. This power has its source not only in central authorities (where they exist) but in a person's claims on other individuals . . . the slavemaster's power over his slave was total. Furthermore with nonslaves, the proprietor's powers, however great, were usually confined to a specific range of activities; with slaves, the master had power over all aspects of the slave's life. (Patterson: 26)

In ancient Greece and Rome, as in the United States, the property relation of slavery was a relation between persons. One person, the master, possessed absolute power over the other, the slave. This power alienated the slave from his own will. This absolute power also alienated the slave from any semblance of dignity. Thus, we must recognize the perennial dishonor of the slave if we are to read rightly the stories of life in bondage under the Roman empire.

Before and after Patterson's study, New Testament studies depended on the very different picture of Greek and Roman slavery constructed by a classics scholarship enamored of classical humanism. Before Patterson's study appeared, New Testament scholars followed classics scholars in arguing that the slavery of antiquity was somehow better, more humane, than the institution in its modern forms. In contrast with how inhuman slavery is depicted in modern terms, slavery in the ancient world was characterized by "a somewhat loftier humaneness" (Stuhlmacher). Yet ancient Greek and Roman slavery, like modern slavery in the United States, applied the sanction of law and custom to kidnapping, rape, torture, and murder. The slaveholding ancient elite agreed with all master classes in all slave regimes that the use of the ruthless physical violence of torture, along with the psychological violence of terror, was more than a prerogative of dominical power. "There is no known slaveholding society where the whip was not considered an indispensable instrument" (Patterson: 4). Masters could and did crucify their slaves, and the excruciating death of crucifixion was recognized as capital punishment especially suited for their dishonored status (see Hengel: 51-63).

Even though Patterson's comparative historical study received awards in fields such as sociology and political science soon after its publication, New Testament studies of slavery either ignored it (Petersen; Bartchy, 1992;

Martin) or attempted to blunt its implications (Harrill; Combes). Scholarly assumptions and practices in the field continue to construct slavery so that its natal alienation and brutality are so obscured as to be invisible. (References and citations in the following discussion are intended as illustrations of the New Testament field, not as criticisms of particular scholars; the latter are working on the basis of standard assumptions in the field, mostly derived from older classics scholarship.)

In an apparent return to modern humanism's justification of the ancient Greeks and Romans we are counseled not to make moral judgments.

We must avoid a kind of ethnocentrism that does not recognize the diversity of forms, attitudes, and circumstances surrounding human chattel bondage in ancient and modern times. It is both methodologically anachronistic and intellectually inappropriate to hold ancient people to modern standards of morality, although the modern person can and should reject certain features of ancient morality, including slavery. (Harrill)

But terror, mutilation, sadism, unchecked perversity and homicidal rage, the "circumstances surrounding chattel bondage," are no less reprehensible because they took place in antiquity. Men were castrated and humiliated, women raped and prostituted, children molested and exploited. As Patterson has shown, these execrations are perpetrated under slavery in all ages. Ancient Greek and Roman social critics saw these as reprehensible and did not wait for modern liberal sensibilities to denounce the rampant sexual exploitation of slaves: Musonius Rufus (12), Seneca (*Epist.* 47.7), Dio Chrysostom (1.37), Justin Martyr (*First Apology* 27), Clement of Alexandria (*Paed.* 3.3.21.1).

New Testament scholarship that gives short shrift to Patterson's insights, however, does so to its own peril. Failure to recognize the perennial dishonor of the slave leads to misreading of evidence such as Greco-Roman romances. "Even with their upper-class prejudices, however, they [the Greco-Roman romances] provide bits of social history" (Martin: 35). The plot structure of romances supposedly "appropriates and abets the popular theme of the successful slave. In most cases, the hero or heroine is of noble stock and becomes a slave in a tragic twist of fate or divine anger" (Martin: 35). But the "popular theme" in these romances is precisely that the hero or heroine is not a slave at all, but someone noble. The "plot structure" thus underscores the assumption that nobility and slavery are antithetical, that enslavement is a misfortune and an affront to the freeborn, and that slaves, as such, are not successful unless and until they are no longer slaves. Supposedly "Lucian of Samosata offers many insights into how he and other ancients from the propertied classes understood slavery in their society . . . In his *Fugitivi*, Lucian brings a comical outlook to the plight of slave runaways" (Harrill: 29). But these unhappy protagonists are the characters of comedy. Their misfortunes are in no way tragic nor, dramatically, can they be. Tragedy, as Chaucer succinctly

defined it, is the story of the man who "falls from high degree to misery." Tragedy is the preserve of nobility. We may weep with kings, but we may only laugh at slaves because, as Patterson has shown, they are "quintessentially . . . without honor" (96).

The failure to acknowledge the quintessential dishonor of slaves and all those with a servile past also leads to a misreading of the humor of Petronius' *Satyricon* in its mercilessly ridiculous depiction of the *arriviste* freedman Trimalchio.

Later in the supper, after Trimalchio is quite drunk, he proudly tells his story himself. In his eyes, his low beginnings only emphasize his virtues, sound sense (*corcillum*), and business acumen . . . by which he rose to wealth. He came from Asia as a slave boy. For fourteen years he was his master's sexual pet and entertained his mistress as well. He gained power in the household—by the will of the gods, naturally. He pursued business, overcame hardships, inherited his own master's wealth, and became a powerful and immensely wealthy man in his own right: a first century rags-to-riches success story and all thanks to a well-connected and well-used slavery. Or, as Trimalchio says, "Who was a frog is now a king!" (Martin: 36–37)

The point of Petronius' satire, however, is that Trimalchio, for all his newfound wealth and opulence, is nevertheless still a "frog." Wine is required to loosen the freedman's tongue and allow his lips the history of his "success" that he seeks to repress by his ostentation. And though Trimalchio's wall paintings depict his humble origins at the auction block, it remains for Trimalchio himself to inform his guests of the salacious details of his early life as the toyboy of his former master and mistress. Petronius purchases our laughter at the expense of Trimalchio's honor. Indeed this is Petronius' point and the comfort of all nobility discomfited by the precipitous rise of the parvenu freedmen: they may achieve wealth and influence, but they can never acquire honor.

In New Testament scholarship, on the other hand, Trimalchio is the comic figure of the slave as the Roman imperial version of Horatio Alger. Slavery, properly negotiated, is a way of moving up the rungs of imperial society and escaping the poverty and degradation of those who fail to exploit an exploitative system to their own advantage.

In Roman society, slaves occupied positions not simply as slaves, but as slaves within particular households, which we might imagine as different ladders. Different households (ladders) themselves had different statuses . . . slaves did not seem to desire manumission simply because it brought individual liberty or because slavery was perceived unambiguously as an evil but because manumission was a step higher on the slave's particular social ladder. It is likely, however, that many slaves of Caesar would rather have remained slaves of Caesar than become freedpersons of some nobody. (Martin: 67).

We have no evidence—anecdotal, epigraphic, literary—that slaves desired to improve their situation by “trading up” to a master of higher status. There was no “social ladder” in Roman imperial society. Between the two classes of the Empire, the wealthy *honestiores* and the impoverished *humiliores* lay not a ladder but a chasm. Non-elites constituted roughly 99% of the imperial population. For this latter class, the overwhelming mass of all pre-industrial societies, scarcity was the rule. There was no mid-range economic group within the Empire of any importance, for the structure of the economy simply did not allow it (Meggitt: 49). The imperial Roman economy had no significant intermediate registers between the wealthy and the wretched. Due to the absence of market mechanisms, there was no autonomous or semi-autonomous mercantile class that could amass wealth by its own initiative. Profit-making was in the hands of the elites and effected by their exclusive use of “political capital.” “Upward mobility” is a myth of modern capitalism; wealthy merchants of the Empire cannot be read as ancient Horatio Algiers. Indeed the captains of commerce—managers of shops, overseers of absentee estates, business agents, ship captains and merchants marine—were often slaves because this occasionally lucrative but socially and economically marginal activity was appropriate to their socially marginal status.

When slaves of antiquity lamented their lot they did not do so with reference to the social status of their masters. The extant testimonies express aversion to enslavement as such without qualification. We have no indication that slaves had a preference for well-to-do masters. Nor is there any evidence that the lot of the slaves of the wealthy was any better than that of slaves owned by masters of modest means. Artisans, soldiers, peasants, even other slaves owned slaves (Meggitt: 130–31), but there is no suggestion anywhere that these slaves rued their servile lot due to the humble estate of their masters. Our sources suggest that the wealth of Roman elites might be exceeded only by their cruelty toward their slaves. No less than the emperor Augustus prevented the nobleman Vedius Pollio from throwing his slave into a pool of man-eating lampreys (Seneca, *De ira* 3.40.2; *De clementia* 1.18.2; Dio Chrysostom, 54.23.1–4). It is the slave of the wealthy, well-born Roman prefect Pedanius Secundus who in 61 CE rose up and murdered him (Tacitus, *Annales* 14.42.1), and it was Roman elites who were slaughtered by their slaves during the political instability of 70 CE (Tacitus, *Annales* 4.1).

More important and more obvious, however, is the brute fact that elective “upward mobility” was impossible for slaves precisely because slavery meant by definition that the slave had no control whatsoever over the ownership and disposition of his person. The claim that “many slaves of Caesar would rather have remained slaves of Caesar than become freedpersons of some nobody” is inconsequential because what slaves would “rather” do was inconsequential. Slaves have no preferences, no predilections, and to

speak of them as exercising prerogatives is to profoundly misunderstand the elementary realities of slavery.

Patterson has explained the function of servile subordinates in the imperial household through the analysis of what he has called "palatine slavery" (Patterson: 14; see 302–306), the servitude of powerful elite registers in imperial and royal administrations. These slaves, though wielding great power and exercising wide-ranging prerogatives on behalf of their masters, were serviceable precisely because they were slaves, mere tools of the sovereign with no will of their own. They could be compelled to go where the emperor needed them; cheap, flexible, indeed disposable. Patterson reminds us that their performance and compliance was also readily forthcoming because "They could literally be whipped into shape" (Patterson: 303). The true precariousness of the power of imperial slaves is clear from their fate attending a change of regime. Those most powerful slaves in the previous administration were always marked for destruction: Vespasian crucified Claudius' favorite Asiaticus, and Icelus, Galba's chief executive, was crucified in turn by Otho. (Patterson: 307). "If this was power," writes Patterson, "then we had better recognize it as a very peculiar and perverse form of power indeed and specify its limitations: that its source was wholly influential; that it was completely noninstitutional in origin, practice, and termination; that it had no authority whatsoever; and that it required natal alienation and dishonor" (307).

Under Roman hegemony, slavery was not salvation. Nor was manumission mercy. Roman law suggested that an adult male slave was to be manumitted at age 30 (Bartchy, 1973). The legal evidence, however, shows not that the slave must be manumitted at age thirty, but rather that he should not be manumitted before his thirtieth birthday—not a prerogative but a prohibition with a view to constraining manumission and not liberalizing it. In other words, this piece of legislation was negative in intent and effect: masters were not being ordered to free their slaves but rather not to free them until their life-expectancy had virtually run out. Augustus, the ultimate sponsor of the law, thought that Romans were already too freewheeling in the manumission of their slaves, and wanted to stem the glut of Roman freedmen. Nor did this prerogative of manumission bode well for the slave. Freedman status was accompanied by its own onerous exactions. As a matter of course masters exchanged grants of freedom for money and obligations to future services or *operae*. A patron could inherit one half of his freedman's estate (Gaius, *Institutes* 3.41, in Jones: 16), and substitute his freedman for himself as a debtor to his creditors (*Digest* 44.5.1.10, Ulpian, citing Cassius, in Jones: 22). All these and other prerogatives of the patron were in effect in perpetuity, an irksome reminder of the freedman's servile past.

But perhaps the greatest liability of manumission was inevitable destitution in advanced years. The life expectancy of a male from birth was about thirty years (Meggitt: 67, n. 157). Thus the manumitted slave, perhaps pur-

chased as a child or even born in servitude, was well past his prime at the age of manumission. He would be forced to struggle not to spend his declining years in penury. Surely the shrewder slave owner was more than happy to dispense with the slave, the ultimate dispensable "tool," after having obtained from him the best years of his life. Those masters who did not exercise this option were faced with the prospect of supporting slaves in their service past their optimal laboring years. An aging philosopher pathetically describes the situation.

... after garnering all that was most profitable in you, after consuming the most fruitful years of your life and the greatest vigour of your body, after reducing you to a thing of rags and tatters, he [the master] is looking about for a rubbish heap on which to cast you aside unceremoniously, and for another man to engage who can stand the work. (Lucian, *De Mercede Conductis*, 39)

The slave could become a slave and remain a slave against his will. The master could even force a slave to be free against his will. Even as slavery defines freedom antithetically, it degrades freedom systemically.

Neither ancient nor medieval authors show the interest that has served as impetus for the deluge of modern treatments that has flowed unabated since the latter half of the nineteenth century concerning the question of Paul's witness on the issue of slavery. For until the modern period, thinkers faced with slave regimes throughout the history of the Western intellectual tradition tacitly agree with Patterson that "there . . . [was] . . . nothing . . . peculiar about the institution of slavery" (vii). Aristotle's insight, if we may call it that, that the slave was property with a soul (*Politics* 1253b32), was analysis enough to last the West two millennia. Virtually no one in antiquity made substantive comment on the legitimacy of the institution itself. As Christian exceptions we may cite Augustine, from whose silence all thralldom would have benefited; he has the dubious distinction of being the first in Christendom to propose that slavery is divinely ordained of God and that perpetual bondage has apostolic sanction (*Quaest. in Heptat.* 11.77).

Yet there is ample evidence that at least some legatees of the heritage of ancient Israel were less than sanguine about slavery. Jubilees 11 attributes the origin of slavery to demons. According to Philo the Therapeutae disavowed slave-holding. Josephus tells us the same of the Essenes. Qumran legislation had no place for slavery. In Rev 18:4 John of Patmos condemns Babylon for the crime of slave-trading as the most egregious of the city's iniquities. References to the purchase of slaves in 1 Cor 7:23, 1 *Clem.* 55.2, and Ignatius' letter to Polycarp (4.3) suggests the practice of Christian corporate manumission (Callahan). Christians used their collective financial resources to buy freedom for their enslaved brethren. Some early Christians had serious reservations about slavery in all its quotidian ignominy, and were willing to put their money where their morals were. By their actions they called into question the

norm of violence, dishonor, and alienation that made slavery in their time and for all time what it really was.

The essays in this volume were generated in an attempt to return to Patterson's insights and to broaden the discussion on slavery and the New Testament. The project originated in a conversation between a graduate student and a visiting professor nearly ten years ago. Both were surprised to find that New Testament scholars treating the issue of Paul and slavery were still depending primarily on older classics scholarship that, in its touting of classical humanism, downplayed the severity of ancient Greek and Roman slavery. The work of M. I. Finley appeared in bibliographies, but did not affect the prevailing understanding of ancient slavery as basically benign. Most problematic was that New Testament scholars dealing with the issue of slavery had simply not paid attention to Patterson's ground-breaking comparative analysis of slavery. Our first step was to deliver papers questioning recent treatments of Paul and slavery at the "Pauline Epistles" section at the 1991 SBL Annual Meeting. Robert Jewett, who has done much to bring Paul's epistles to bear on issues of contemporary social concern, suggested that we think about a proposal for an issue of *Semeia* along the lines we were exploring. Thus we set about thinking how the scope and approach and perspective of the New Testament on slavery and particularly on Paul and slavery could be broadened appropriately.

One way to broaden the scope was to change the composition—and announce the changing composition—of those observing and analyzing the evidence. Biblical studies in general is witnessing the emergence of multiple voices and a "radical plurality" of methodological positions and directions (Segovia: 4) because of the growth of non-white, non-male and non-Western individuals in the biblical profession who have pushed biblical criticism to consider the "situated and interested nature of all reading and interpretation" (Segovia: 5). On the issue of Paul and slavery, however, many scholars have not widened their background and perspective to appreciate the contributions of the newer voices. For example, in 1984 Amos Jones, Jr., an African American, presented a discussion of 1 Cor 7:21 (a key text on the issue of Paul and slavery) that was sharply critical of the dominant European-American Protestant assumptions and interpretation, but his study does not even appear in the bibliographies of the recent books on slavery in New Testament studies (Martin, 1990; Harrill, 1995; Combes, 1998). One of our goals then was to promulgate the multiple voices at work on Paul and slavery, and, given the effective history of Paul's witness about slavery in the U.S., to have half or more of the contributors to this volume be African American scholars. In line with this quest for multiple voices, moreover, we have attempted throughout the project to implement a gendered investigation: to find, include, and interpret evidence pertaining to female slaves.

Another effort to broaden our scope and approach was to devise a more adequate critical and comprehensive approach to an issue such as Paul and slavery. We are grateful to the editorial board of this "experimental journal" for allowing us to use its offices and pages to experiment toward a more adequate and comprehensive approach. Our experimentation—our attempt to innovate—will be complex, broadly multidisciplinary and far from neatly defined and packaged. Indeed we find that narrow or uncritical experimentation and innovation on the issue of slavery has become part of the problem. A new approach or even a combination of new approaches can be brought to bear on this and other issues (Petersen, on which see Horsley's second essay below), but unless more basic assumptions are questioned and new approaches are adapted more critically and the basic conceptual apparatus of the field of New Testament studies are questioned, the result can be mere reinforcement of the same old interpretation, in this case, a modern scholarly projection on Paul. One can bring in previously unexamined written source material such as ancient novels and inscriptions (Martin, on which see Wills's essay below), but unless one is aware of the ancient sociology of knowledge and of writing-and-reading, the source material is easily misunderstood and inappropriately construed.

Broadening the scope of New Testament research entails special attention to the social location both of the extant literary evidence and of the various receptions of Paul. Because New Testament studies, and the classical studies on which it is often dependent, have ordinarily not taken class- or social power-relations into consideration, it has often been unclear or imprecise in assessing evidence, particularly literary evidence. By taking the social location of literary evidence into account, it is possible to determine more closely how it can be used—in this case, in the interpretation of ancient attitudes toward slaves and slavery. For example, since ancient "novels" were not "popular" literature in the sense that ordinary people read them, they cannot be taken as evidence for "popular" attitudes toward slavery in the sense of ordinary people's attitudes (see Wills below).

By taking into account the ways ancient slavery and Paul's stance on slavery are treated in a field of study (Paul) heavily determined by the German Lutheran scholars who pioneered the critical scholarship on Paul, one begins to see how important it is to *use yet move beyond* historical critical analysis of slavery in the ancient world and of Paul's stance toward slavery. Woven throughout this volume then is an acknowledgment of how the study and interpretation of Paul has been so dominated by Protestant, especially Lutheran, theology, by established academic New Testament studies and by European assumptions and viewpoints. Rather than to take these assumptions and viewpoints as the natural ways of examining Paul and slavery, we determined that it is often necessary to cut through or to by-pass or, better yet, to

challenge and confront those assumptions, viewpoints, and conceptual apparatuses.

By taking into account the various receptions of Paul, including the effective history of Paul and slavery, moreover, we seek to explore the power dynamics beyond the text's historical production. Our attention is not exclusively placed on texts, though serious consideration is given to the dynamics about power in the literary evidence about slavery from Israel's scriptures, from Paul and his Jewish contemporaries, and from the larger world of Roman and Greek literature of the first century. Our focus also is directed to receptions of Paul and slavery, for academia—sometimes in its failure to transgress disciplinary boundaries, sometimes in its compliance with received tradition, and often in its quest for authority through putative claims of objectivity—has tacitly supported if not outrightly colluded with forms of oppression. We also think much can be learned from the effective history of Paul and slavery in North America, for that history suggests that persons of African descent were vigorous and astute in their interpretations of Paul and in their discernment of the use of Paul by those who wished to control the identities and the power of blacks and women.

The essays in the volume are grouped into two parts. Those in Part I treat the evidence for slavery in antiquity and attitudes toward it. Those in Part II treat specific receptions of Paul and slavery by persons of African descent in North America. It should be noted that there is a significant discrepancy between the essays in Part I and those in Part II with regard to what "Paul" means. It is standard in the field of New Testament studies to speak of Paul in connection with the "genuine" letters which are by consensus usually attributed to him, with the other letters understood as deutero-Pauline. Ordinary Christian and other readers, however, understood Paul as the author of all the letters, including those in which slaves are instructed in no uncertain terms to be obedient to their masters. Each of the essays below plays a key role in reshaping discussions of ancient slavery and Paul's stance toward slavery in the direction that Patterson has pioneered.

In New Testament studies, inquiries into slavery in the Greco-Roman as the "background" of Paul's stance toward slavery have been dependent on the work of classical historians, especially in Germany. But classical philology and history have been closely linked with European humanism, again especially in Germany. Largely unnoticed by NT studies, classical historians influenced by the work of M. I. Finley and Patterson's more comprehensive theory of slavery have, in the last decade or so, sketched a far more complex and critical view of the Greek and Roman slave systems and of slave experience in these ancient societies. In the first essay of Part I, Horsley sketches a survey of these developments and the difference they make for our understanding of ancient Greek and Roman slavery.

In the Roman empire, however, slavery and the slave system were embedded in a multicultural world empire. Societies such as ancient Judea, that did not have an institutionalized system of slavery similar to that in ancient Greece and Rome, were brought under the political and cultural hegemony of the Roman empire and, in the East, of Hellenistic culture. New Testament literature was produced and shaped in this multi-cultural environment. In particular, Paul and especially the Gospels emanated from ancient Israelite culture recently taken over by the Roman empire. Moreover, we have realized in the last decade or so that even Greek terms for slavery were far from consistent, indeed were complex in having multiple terms and in those terms shifting in their meaning according to context. In his examination of statements pertaining to various forms of servitude in the Hebrew Bible, in ancient Near Eastern context, Callender finds that ancient Israel and other ancient Near Eastern societies had nothing comparable to the institutionalized chattel slavery of ancient Greece and Rome, but only debt-slavery and forced labor. Israel's origin in liberation from the harsh conditions of oppressive forced labor in Egypt, moreover, became the basis for strong objections to the imposition of forced labor by the Davidic monarchy under Solomon and later kings. Indeed because all Israelites are special "servants" of God, it is judged unacceptable that they be subjected to forced labor as "servants" of human rulers such as kings. The term *'bd*, "servant" is used in a variety of ways, including for chattel slavery, but also simply for the high ranking servants of the kings or special envoys of God. Benjamin Wright then examines what happens when the shift is made between the non-slave society of ancient Israel to the slave society of the Hellenistic world and the translation of *'bd* by *doulos* and other terms. The result is a bewildering range of meanings in which *doulos* often has clear connotations of chattel slave status, but can often indicate other relations, including that of an officer commissioned by a king or God.

In discovering the intriguing stories narrated in Hellenistic novels, New Testament scholars were under the impression that this literature that seems far less sophisticated than the standard "classics" of classical Greece and Rome was somehow a "popular literature," giving access to the non-elite of the Hellenistic-Roman world. Informed by recent studies of the very limited literacy of the ancient Mediterranean world, Wills argues that we need to examine the social location of this literature more critically. Pointing to the often unrecognized chasm of wealth and culture that separated the literate elite from the rest of the Hellenistic Roman world, he explains that the Hellenistic novels not only presuppose and address the literate elite, but articulate the social-cultural viewpoint of the elite, including their juxtaposition of their own honor with the degradation of the slaves who make their life of leisure possible.

The paucity of slave revolts in classical antiquity has been used as evidence that slaves were relatively content with their situation. In an ex-

amination of slave resistance, however, Callahan and Horsley point out not only that the forms of slave resistance were many and often subtle, but also that a shift to a more critical assessment of historical sources opens up recognition of just how persistent and prevalent those forms of resistance must have been in any slave society. Comparison with slave resistance and revolts in the New World enables historians to read more sensitively the evidence for widespread and sustained slave resistance in the ancient world.

New Testament scholars eager to broaden their horizons to the "social world" of Paul and his contemporaries borrowed what had been almost coextensive with sociology, especially in the United States, in the 1960s. Ironically, the fields of sociology and anthropology had moved past structural-functionalism as being too abstract and concerned with preserving the established order of the large-scale modern industrial societies it was developed to understand. In another essay, Horsley argues that the social science developed to understand the coherence and continuity of a whole modern social system such as the United States may be singularly inappropriate to an upstart movement that was challenging or providing an alternative to the established imperial Roman order. Presupposing the more critical and comprehensive understanding of slavery sketched in his initial essay, Horsley then presents a critical review of recent treatments of Paul's use of slave/slavery imagery and his attitude toward slavery. He attempts to understand the former in the context of Paul's overall arguments in Galatians 3–6 and Romans 6–8 in particular, and the latter in the context of Paul's overall agenda in his mission. He argues that read critically the Pauline textual bases of the standard view that Paul was a "conservative" on slavery and other social issues disappear and that a view of Paul that takes his overall anti-imperial agenda seriously could easily discern that he advocated the transcendence of slavery in the dawning new social order underway in the formation of his *ekklēsiai* as communities of an alternative society to the imperial order. While the better known Pauline disciples who produced the deutero-Pauline literature reverted to the dominant imperial social order based on the slave-holding household, some Pauline communities apparently engaged in the practice of "ecclesial manumission" of members who were slaves, by purchasing their freedom with common funds.

In Part II, Clarice Martin's essay, an examination of the effective history of Pauline texts about slavery, explains how the same texts could be used to create diametrically opposed discourses—a discourse of domination for the proslavers, and a discourse of dignity for enslaved Africans. On the one hand, proslavery apologists approached these texts under the influence of a long tradition of European ethnocentrism and white supremacist thinking and with the presumption that ancient and modern institutions of slavery were relatively benign. On the other hand, enslaved Africans approached these texts under the influence of traditional African moral virtues. These virtues

promoted the universal parenthood of God, the dignity of all persons, and the preservation of freedom and justice.

Callahan presents the sheer variety of approaches to Paul by African Americans from the days of United States slavery to now. In this sense, he allows the subaltern voices to speak for themselves rather than essentialize interpretations of Paul into one perspective. The evidence reveals that Paul was sometimes challenged because of his use of scripture or because he was perceived as a generator of a certain type of Christianity, but there is overwhelming evidence to suggest that Paul was viewed as someone whose words critiqued slavery and proffered wise counsel. At times, moreover, Paul's hard sayings were placed in a framework that would maintain Paul's liberative ethos, e.g., the framework of his other more liberative sayings; or in the framework of better, more liberative and less biased interpretations of Paul.

Studies of colonial cultural politics suggest that regimes of representation exert a powerful force in the formation of subjectivity. Certain metanarratives about blackness and whiteness in the 19th century United States discourse were intended to essentialize blackness and thus control the images of African descendants for the benefit of the West in general and the status quo in the United States in particular. Smith's essay examines William Wells Brown's novel *Clotel* for Brown's refusal to allow others to dictate the exclusive terms on which Pauline hermeneutics could be managed. Rather, Brown's novel gives voice to a tradition that was often shunted in the 19th century and that often goes unexamined even today in assessing 19th century black subjectivity in the United States. Smith explores that tradition, the black abolitionist tradition, for its multiple contributions to Brown's re-construction of Paul. Patterson reminds us of the need to evaluate Paul's social morality and political orientation in light of the moral judgments available to him in his own time. Patterson also notes the fundamental contribution of Paul to the concept of freedom carried by post-biblical Christianity into later Western civilization.

The editors are deeply indebted to all the contributors. We are also deeply grateful to the two respondents: Antoinette Clark Wire and Stanley Stowers. Wire reminds us of the importance of attending to evidence for female slaves and reveals in a personal way how importantly the legacy of slavery in North America is still with us. Stowers reminds us of the varying stances which interpreters may take in assessing Paul and of the larger question on the authority of the bible in general and Paul in particular at the dawn of the twenty-first century. Because of the contingencies of academic commitments, not all of the essays were available to both reviewers. We are grateful for the contributions of the respondents as they helped us toward our goal of broadening the scope, approach and perspective of New Testament research on the question of slavery.

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