

THE SLAVE SYSTEMS OF CLASSICAL ANTIQUITY AND THEIR RELUCTANT RECOGNITION BY MODERN SCHOLARS

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ABSTRACT

As the background for their interpretation of Paul and other New Testament literature on slaves and slavery, New Testament scholars have been dependent on portrayals of ancient slavery by classical historians. Since M. I. Finley's trenchant criticism of how Western classics scholars' treatment of ancient Greek and Roman slavery has been determined by the distinctive ideology of classical humanism and anti-communism, and particularly since the appearance of Orlando Patterson's incisive comparative sociological analysis of slavery as "Social Death," more comprehensive and critical investigations into ancient slavery have emerged. Recent studies of slavery as a larger political-economic-domestic system deeply entrenched in ancient society and culture, more sensitive to the lives of the slaves themselves, present a far different picture of the social world addressed by Paul, suggesting serious reconsideration of standard interpretations of Paul and slavery.

In the modern academic division of labor, the history and culture of ancient Greece and Rome have been the jealously guarded turf of "classics" scholars. New Testament scholars of the last several generations have thus depended heavily on classical studies for their knowledge of the Greco-Roman "background" of early Christian and early Jewish literature and history. Nowhere is this more apparent than with regard to slavery.

For the field of classics, however, ancient Greek and Roman slavery was an embarrassment to be downplayed, hedged about with sophisticated apologies, or, if possible, explained away. In the late 1960s, when Scott Bartchy attempted a systematic investigation of ancient Greek and Roman slavery in connection with his dissertation on 1 Cor 7:21, there was no "serious, full-scale history of slavery in the Greco-Roman world" in English or German on which he could draw (1973:30)—and the great surveys by the French scholars Wallon (1847) and Allard (1876) had been largely ignored. The flurry of scholarly investigation into ancient slavery—accompanied by heated debate connected with the Cold War—during the late 1950s and 1960s, moreover, did little to alter the portrayal of slavery available from classics scholars. About

the only critical approach available at the time was offered by M. I. Finley in a few then very recent articles, which pointed out the different types of servile labor in antiquity and emphasized the utter powerlessness and social isolation of the vast majority of ancient slaves.

Otherwise Bartchy was dependent on the portrayal of ancient slavery in standard German, British, and American classics scholarship as a relatively benign situation ("much better than modern men are inclined to think"). That there was an "astonishing fluidity of status" between slavery and freedom, including "little difference between a slave and a son" in the Roman household with respect to the legal power of the father, Bartchy (1973:40–44) found in Westermann (1955) and Crook. That the lot of slaves underwent a "definite improvement in the first century (CE) due to a combination of ethical teachings of philosophers and the increasing numbers of slaves born in their owner's house (Bartchy, 1973:67–68) came from Joseph Vogt's Tübingen *Rektorsrede*, "Wege zur Menschlichkeit in der antiken Sklaverei," and the work of his collaborators such as Lauffer. The "advantages of being a slave" (Bartchy, 1973:71, n250) had been discussed a generation earlier by Barrow (1928, repr. 1968). Since "most slaves were treated well," therefore, it is not surprising that "the vast majority of slaves in the first century accepted their lot and were satisfied with it," partly because of the bright prospect of manumission (Bartchy, 1973:72, 84), as explained by Lauffer and others. The relatively recent West German classicists' ideological attack on the "ideological interests" of recent Marxist scholarship on ancient slavery was the direct source of the sense that the absence of revolutionary impulses among ancient slaves was due to their degree of contentment (Bartchy, 1973:87; Vittinghoff, 1962). It is all the more noteworthy that twenty years later, when Bartchy wrote the *ADB* article on "Slavery" in the New Testament period, the dominant views in classics scholarship on ancient Greek and Roman slavery had not changed all that much, judging from citations in the text (Alfoeldy; MacMullen; Wiedemann, 1981).

The situation is not much different for the few major treatments of Paul and slavery since Bartchy's investigation, which became the standard, widely read treatment of ancient slavery in New Testament studies. Petersen, whose focus is really "the sociology of Paul's narrative world," not concrete historical situations, relies only on Bartchy himself for "the institution of slavery in first-century Greece" (83, n56) and cites only Wiedemann (1981) and Lohse, along with Bartchy, on slave law (73, n11). Martin, emphasizing in passing the complexity of Greek and Roman slavery in general, moves quickly into the opportunities for social mobility that slavery offered. In that connection he depends upon classics scholars such as Barrow, Flory, and Rawson (1966, 1986) for the "unbroken family life" securely counted on by some slaves, and Barrow and Wiedemann for slavery (supposedly) as a method of integrating

outsiders into Roman society. Not until the very recent studies of Harrill (1995) and Callahan (1997) did New Testament scholars move beyond the standard portrayals of Western classical scholars and allow the more extensive critical studies of Finley (see esp. 1980; 1982; 1985) and the highly regarded historical sociological study by Patterson (1982) to figure prominently in analysis of ancient slavery as a background for reading Paul and other New Testament texts.

In the same decades that classics scholarship was reprinting old studies of Greek and Roman slavery and generating detailed new ones that reinforced the same picture, two parallel historical dramas were unfolding that one might have thought would have some effect on the study of slavery in the New Testament field, at least in the United States. Outside the academy—and often with some interaction with universities and theological schools—the Civil Rights Movement was growing in scope and intensity, challenging the “second-class citizenship” of African-Americans that remained as a legacy of slavery in the United States. Demonstrations of non-violent “civil disobedience” were rooted in New Testament teachings such as “love your enemies” and “bless those who persecute you.” Meanwhile extensive and intensive academic studies of slavery in the United States (and the Caribbean and Brazil) had brought public as well as academic debate over the realities and effects of slavery to a fever pitch. Classical historians, busy defending the “classics” in the curricula of elite colleges and universities in the 1960s, may have seen no immediate significance of ancient slavery, which supposedly was not linked with racial difference. The New Testament, however, particularly the “Pauline” letters, had been quoted for centuries as the divine sanction on slavery, and then cited by slaves themselves and abolitionists in opposition to slavery. It would seem, therefore, that professional students of the New Testament, however belatedly, would be interested in probing somewhat critically the portrayal of Greek and Roman slavery in the classics field, a leading spokesperson of which could still argue in a 1974 publication that “slavery and its attendant loss of humanity were part of the sacrifice which had to be paid” for the remarkable spiritual achievements of Western humanism (Vogt: 25). The following survey is not simply looking for the speck in a neighboring discipline’s eye. It is rather an attempt to recognize one of the apologetic logs obscuring our own vision. It may also be of some help in re-examining how New Testament literature legitimated slavery and helped make it work.

MODERN IDEOLOGY AND ANCIENT SLAVERY

Vogt, Finley (1980), and Garlan have offered surveys of modern treatments of ancient slavery that may help orient biblical scholars to the classical

studies on which we are so dependent. Oversimplifying Finley's more extensive and pointedly critical survey, we will trace the interaction of three strands of interpretation. First we will look at the defense of Christianity as having worked to mitigate the dehumanizing effects of slavery in the Roman world and finally to end it. Then we will consider the strange lack of interaction between (second) the classical humanist apology for ancient slavery and (third) the more fully historical explanation of slavery in ancient Greece and Rome as a product of and fundamental basis for the development of ancient Greek and Roman society. We will afterwards examine the important critical and comparative study by Patterson, and attend briefly to the more critical recent studies by classics scholars that have taken a far more circumspect and holistic approach, under the influence of Patterson and Finley.

In Defense of Christianity

The first great extensive treatment of ancient slavery was also an explanation of how Christianity had worked to end it. Working on the same assumption of the separation of religion and social structures, of personal faith and the established political-economic order, Henri Wallon's massive 1847 treatise, published at the end of a successful campaign for France finally to abolish slavery in the colonies, explained why the ancient Christian opposition to slavery had taken so long to effect any significant change. Accepting the political disposition of society as a condition to which it must submit, Christianity had acquiesced in slavery as a fact of life. Indeed, since the social edifice was already crumbling, it was important to maintain public tranquility and to effect improvement in the lot of the slave progressively through improvement of the master. Tending to its own proper mission, it directed its efforts only to personal morality. But it worked steadily against slavery, which is utterly incompatible with Christian beliefs and values (Finley, 1980:32–33). As further explained by Allard in an 1876 book that won not only the admiring approval of the Holy See but an award from the French Academy, the idea of human equality inherent in Christianity from the start began effectively to influence moral standards only after ancient Roman society became Christianized (Vogt: 175). Such an interpretation of the demise of ancient slavery was not difficult to demolish, as did John Millar in 1771, Franz Overbeck in 1875, and Westermann again in 1935 (Finley, 1980:14–15). Ernst Troeltsch summarized the stance of early Christianity toward ancient slavery: the church accepted it as part of property law and the political order and, indeed, by teaching inward freedom, actually strengthened concrete slave relations in late antiquity (1960:1.132). Vogt (145) nevertheless persists in the belief that Christianity opposed slavery with a fundamentally new view of property and power.

Classical Humanist Apology vs. Historical Explanation

To begin to comprehend the apologetic treatment of ancient slavery in Western classics scholarship, we must remind ourselves of the unique status and authority that classical culture has occupied in "Western civilization." With the Renaissance, of course, came the exciting discovery of ancient Greek and Roman culture. From the Renaissance through the Enlightenment to more recent ceremonial academic occasions, Greek and Roman writers have been cited as paradigms of excellence in style, logic, education, and morals. Athens and Rome were understood as the sources and paradigms of democratic and republican government. The French Revolution draped itself alternatively as the Roman Republic and the Roman Empire. In the United States, public architecture in national and state capitals imitated classical temples, memorializing and celebrating the glories of Athens and Rome.

More directly related to the development of the field of classical studies, the "Great Books" have formed the core curriculum in school and university education for the social elite in Britain and the United States. In Germany the tone for the *Gymnasium* curriculum was set by the New Humanism under the leadership of Wilhelm von Humboldt. The same Spirit (*Geist*) that had inspired the highest development of man's personality and versatility by the ancient Greeks was now to inspire the corresponding development among German youth through a thorough absorption in the classics (Vogt: 171). In the German development of the university with its strict division of labor by academic departments, "classical antiquity became the virtual monopoly of classical philology or *Altertumswissenschaft*, whose goal was to apprehend the high culture, the *Geist*, the very essence of those incomparable models of spiritual achievement, the Greeks and Romans" (Finley, 1980:38).

The departmentalization of intellectual inquiry, however, inhibited communication across disciplines. Classics scholars certainly proved unreceptive to political economists and historians exploring the role of slaves in the development of Greek and Roman civilization. Certainly classical philologists were put off by treatises on slavery in ancient Greece such as that by Johann Friedrich Reitemeier (1789), arguing that "universal human equality appears to be incompatible with civil society," and discerning in ancient slavery the oldest expression in a civil society of the domination-submission relation. Reitemeier anticipated by generations the concept of the household-economy of Greco-Roman society and Marx's and Weber's later view that slavery played a central role in the historical development of ancient society (Finley, 1980:38). Marx, of course, was instrumental in breaking with "the ethnocentricity of prevailing political economics, which applied modern categories to all the systems of the past, thereby masking the unique features of capitalism itself," and obscuring any differences between antiquity and

modernity (Garlan: 4). In his "Notebooks" (*Grundrisse*, 1857–58) written in preparation for writing *Capital*, Marx made an important further distinction between the "ancient" mode of production, dependent on chattel slavery, and the "Asiatic" mode of production (which appeared as slavery or serfdom only from the modern European point of view) in which all producers appeared as servants or slaves of the king or god who embodied the unity of the whole society (Garlan: 5–6). This distinction (made again, in effect, in Finley, 1960) might well have become helpful in historical investigation of biblical and classical societies. This was blocked, however, by a combination of intervening historical factors: the unavailability of the *Grundrisse* until recently, virulent anti-Marxism among key German and British classicists and biblical scholars who dominated those fields, and in the former "Eastern Block," a rigid Stalinist historiographical orthodoxy that boxed all societies into a four-stage scheme of development, omitting the Asiatic mode altogether and heightening the importance of the slavery stage.

Although Marx did exercise some indirect influence on the study of Western antiquity through the sociologists Karl Buecher and Max Weber, he had virtually no influence—or rather a negative influence—upon classical historians. Such influence was most effectively blocked at the end of the nineteenth century by the prestige of Eduard Meyer, who perpetuated precisely the "modernism" that Marx's insights would have undermined in laying the foundation "of our contemporary understanding of slavery in Greek and Roman history" (the opening statement in Westermann, 1935). In *The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, the first modern history of any period of Western antiquity, Gibbon had relegated slavery to a few paragraphs in chapter two. Other historians of antiquity virtually ignored it, except for a few sentences on the helots in Sparta (Finley 1980:22–23). Similarly, the most prestigious German ancient historian, Eduard Meyer, devoted only a three-page section (along with a few other references) to slavery in the fourth and fifth volumes of his monumental *Geschichte des Altertums* (1901–02), on fifth-fourth century Greece.

What became decisive for the understanding of slavery among classical historians, however, were two lectures, on "The Economic Development of Antiquity" (1924b) and "Slavery in Antiquity" (1924a), which "quickly acquired the rank of a binding synthesis" (Christ: 293; cf. 308–11). Meyer insisted that the state, not the economy or culture, is the decisive organism in history and found in antiquity a mirror image of the modern world. Nevertheless, says Meyer, fifth-fourth century BCE Athens stood "under the banner of capitalism" and ancient democracy, like its modern counterpart, derived from the capitalist "spirit." Slavery was a mere interlude and historical irrelevance, a by-product of the peculiar political development of the city-state. It was the corollary, the obverse of liberty, the product of a democracy that was it-self born from the development of commerce and artisan trades (Finley,

1980:44–46; Garlan: 8). Under favorable conditions, moreover, ancient slaves, like modern industrial workers, had opportunities to achieve wealth and upward mobility (Meyer, 1924a). In Finley's judgment, Meyer presents not an argument, but a succession of *ex cathedra* assertions, in highly rhetorical dress, without either evidence or a discussion of the views under attack. In forty pages he makes only eleven references to Greek and Roman sources (1980:47). "In sum, Meyer's lecture on ancient slavery is not only as close to nonsense as anything I can remember written by a historian of such eminence, but violates the basic canons of historical scholarship in general and of German historical scholarship in particular. . . . What Meyer provided was authoritative support and comfort for already generally accepted views, for the ideology of professional ancient historians" (Finley 1980:48). Meyer's hostility to socialism and intellectual inquiry that might be associated with it "were generally shared in the conservative German academic world." His admirers among classics scholars, moreover, simply "isolated themselves from their colleagues in economics, social science, economic history, and even modern history" (Finley, 1980:49).

Meanwhile, in the estimation of Finley and Garlan, at least, no significant inquiry into ancient slavery was being conducted in Italy, France, England or the United States, including Tenney Frank's *Economic History of Rome* (1919, 1927). Vogt, on the other hand, finds R. H. Barrow's 1928 portrayal of *Slavery in the Roman Empire* "particularly successful, because it avoids . . . value judgments" (Vogt: 180). Ironically, Barrow was clearly writing from the lofty perspective of British imperialism: "two centuries of experiment and experience in the ruling of subject peoples, of firmness not untempered by tact and sympathy" (xii). In his preface Barrow explains further that slavery played a role in "the spade-work in the task of civilising the world, which is Rome's legacy to later generations," quoting Lord Acton's comment that "it is scarcely an hyperbole to say that slavery itself is a stage on the road to freedom" (xv). Nor does Vogt catch the irony of his positive valuation of A. M. Duff's 1928 book on *Freedmen in the Early Roman Empire*, which in good "orientalist" fashion views "the population mixture brought about by the presence of slaves and freedmen" as "one of the causes of Roman decline" (180). In the *Pauly* encyclopedia article of 1935, expanded somewhat in his 1955 book, Westermann, a student and admirer of Meyer, produced simply another antiquarian exercise the mistakes and limitations of which have received ample attention in critical reviews (Vogt: 181–82; Finley, 1980:53–55; Garlan: 8). Vogt's own history of the Roman Republic (second edition, 1951), finally, "displays more than normal disinterest in slavery" (Finley 1980:58).

In 1951 came an announcement that the Mainz Academy was about to embark on a massive program of research into ancient slavery, under direction of Joseph Vogt. In retrospect, Wiedemann, Vogt's translator, detects an attempt at atonement after the Holocaust, "a kind of 'intellectual reparations' to

a dispossessed and exploited class to make up for his failure, as a committed Catholic, to stand up publicly against Nazism" (1987:8).

Finley notes that two broader political-cultural currents exercised the decisive influence on the research program spearheaded by Vogt in the 1950s. The first was the "third humanism," a revival of "classical humanism." For Werner Jaeger, one of its leaders, whose stature as one of the greatest philological scholars of the day strengthened his impact, classical humanism was the work of "the German-Protestant Geist" (Jaeger). The earlier humanism of Humboldt, of course, had accepted slavery as a necessary condition of "that liberal spirit which has not reappeared to a similar extent among any other people, that is to say, the spiritual role of noble and great attitudes truly worthy of a free man." The third humanism simply "turned its head." "Slave/slavery" "does not appear in the detailed indices" of Jaeger's highly regarded three-volume *Paideia* (Finley, 1980:56-57).

In his new research program on ancient slavery, Vogt on the one hand returns to older humanist apology, now for humanism as well as for slavery. At the conclusion of his 1953 essay "Slavery and Humanity" he wrote

We can appreciate Greek slavery as due both to that vitality which demanded that a man have a complete and active life even at the expense of others, and also to that way of thinking which looks on power not as the aimless discharge of brute force but rather as a rational instrument to bring about order. Slavery was essential to the existence both of this basic will to live and of the devotion to spiritual considerations. . . . Slavery and its attendant loss of humanity were part of the sacrifice which had to be paid for this achievement. (Reprinted in Vogt: 25)

On the other hand, Vogt claims and requires an ominous responsibility for classics scholars, not only to uphold the glorious humanistic standards, but to acknowledge the negative aspects of slavery as well. "Perhaps it has been left to the Classics to uphold the existence of intellectual standards in all areas of knowledge and skill, under conditions of general equality and universal freedom." If "the Humanism of classical studies is to survive in our world," however, we must abandon the old humanist "tolerance of the inhumanity that enabled the Greeks and Romans to secure their development as human beings"; we "must portray human society as it really was without concealing or extenuating its negative aspects." (1974:208-10).

Finley (1980:60) suggests that the sudden new interest in slavery by Vogt (and his students) constituted "a kind of 'saving the phenomena,' rescuing 'classical humanism' by certain concessions." In any case, "human society as it really was" turns out to have been not all that bad, as Vogt found that "humanity" was "constantly cropping up in the practice of slavery itself" (Finley 1980:60; cf. Stuhlmacher). As Garland (14) points out, Vogt and his collaborators emphasized that slaves were assimilated and integrated into ancient

society and that the elite whose progress benefitted from slavery responded by improving the lot of the slaves—somewhat in line with the paternalistic tradition particularly strong during the nineteenth century, in slaveholding America, and in Fustel de Coulanges's *The Ancient City*. Not surprisingly, Wiedemann (Vogt's translator) assembled his collection of texts (1981) in somewhat the same spirit.

The second political-cultural concern driving Vogt and his co-workers' programmatic research clearly arose from the Cold War that had divided Germany in particular. It is significant that Vogt and company began to deploy their research offensive even before research by Soviet and Eastern European scholars had begun to be published. As Finley (1980:60–64) and Garland (13–14) both explain, however, the West German *Altphilologen* provoked a major confrontation at the 1960 International Historical Congress and in the journal *Saeculum* in preparation for it. In publications connected with that Congress and in the decades following, Vittinghoff (1960, 1962) and others engaged in a blatantly ideological, even defamatory, caricature of Soviet and other Marxist scholarship on ancient slavery, which (then and since) is by no means monolithic. One wonders, however, if Finley's critique quite captures what may have been driving the West German humanistic *Altphilologen* such as Vogt. If slavery was as important in the beginnings of Western civilization as indicated in Marxist analysis, then portraying ancient slavery "as it really was without concealing its negative aspects" might not be sufficient to vindicate the enduring eternal value of the classics. In such an ideologically charged academic atmosphere, Western classics scholars were unlikely to include the broader social, economic, and political issues involved in ancient slavery that were being explored, however schematically, by Marxist scholars. As Wiedemann comments on the sociology of modern knowledge of antiquity, given "the career structure of German universities, in which young scholars are well advised not to write anything controversial," it is not surprising that the intensive new research agenda led by Vogt resulted largely in a series of detailed empirical studies of particular problems. "Disappointingly [they] fail to relate these to a wider picture of ancient slavery" (1987:8). After all, as Vittinghoff (1960:94, n 36) noted, "Everything essential was already said by Eduard Meyer in his foundational lecture of 1898."

By far the most significant development in classics scholarship on ancient slavery was the series of studies by M. I. Finley between 1959 and 1965 (most republished in Finley, 1982), followed by the set of essays on *Ancient Slavery and Modern Ideology* in 1980—partly because he brought historical explanation together with classical philology in the study of ancient Greek and Roman slavery. Trained as an historian, influenced by Marx, Weber, and the medieval historians Marc Bloch and Henri Pirenne and German critical theorists (of the "Frankfurt school") who had fled Nazi Germany in the 1930s, Finley recognized in all of his work that ancient Greek or Roman society must be viewed

as an interrelated whole, that the various facets of ancient life, economic, political, intellectual, religious, could not be studied in isolation. Even during the heyday of "objectivity" among historians, he recognized that the historian cannot be a disinterested observer. In his reviews of others' work "Finley sought to strip away the facade of objectivity by pointing out the connection between current 'politics' and the fundamental premises of the works under review" (Shaw and Saller, in Finley, 1982:xvi). He believed the intellectual should be engaged critically in the political issues of his own society.

In his early work on ancient Greek slavery, Finley recognized the diversity of vocabulary in various sources and, particularly importantly, the different types of servitude operative at different times and places in Greek antiquity. Rejecting the Marxist concept of class, he adapted the Weberian sociological categories of order and status, partly because the vagueness of the latter allowed recognition of the psychological dimension involved for the slaves themselves. In what may have become a subsequently misunderstood concept, he delineated a "spectrum" of different servile "statuses" among the particular political-economic patterns prevailing in different societies, times, and locations, including those that were "between slavery and freedom" (articles from 1959, 1960, 1964, and 1965 republished in Finley, 1982). Ironically, some of the historical variations of "servile status" he was painstakingly differentiating had been discerned by Marx in the *Grundrisse* which had been unavailable to him and to the Marxists whose concept of class he had rejected (until the mid 1960s). Finley's second major contribution to the construction and interpretation of slavery in the context of ancient Greek and Roman society has been to expose the conflictual power relations, including use of violence, and to induce ancient historians to think more critically about the interests and agenda of their sources. He does this in an often almost polemical way that makes unavoidable the difference between his own critical view and alternatives. Given the historical roots and continuing agenda of classical studies discussed above, his blunt challenges have been instrumental in clearing some intellectual-academic space for more critical and holistic approaches to ancient Greek society and the Roman imperial order and the important role of slavery in maintaining them.

The Historical Sociological Interpretation of Patterson

In 1982 Orlando Patterson published a monumental comparative historical sociological study, *Slavery and Social Death*, which won prominent awards from both the American Sociological Association and the American Political Science Association. Patterson's research is comprehensive, drawing on virtually everything available at the time in studies of ancient Greek and Roman history, literature, law, social structure, religion, etc. pertinent to ancient Western slavery, as well as parallel studies of slavery in virtually every known

historical case around the world. He also draws on significant social scientific theory pertinent to slavery considered in historical societal context, generating important new insights. His study is unusually strong with respect to ancient Roman slavery and makes important suggestions for the understanding of slavery in the context of Roman imperial culture in particular. Until very recently, however, important studies of slavery, particularly of Paul and slavery, by New Testament scholars made no reference to Patterson's knowledgeable, critical, and comprehensive work (Petersen; Martin; Bartchy, 1992). Only in the last few years, in the SBL presentations that led to this issue of *Semeia* (Callahan, 1991; Horsley, 1991) and in the work of Harrill and Callahan (1997) have New Testament specialists recognized that Patterson's study forms the basis for future work on ancient Greek and Roman slavery and on how slavery in New Testament literature and history can be understood in that context. Since Patterson should be read directly, the following paragraphs attempt only a brief summary of his original and stimulating analysis and interpretation.

Slavery was created and maintained by systematic, overt, institutionalized violence (Patterson: 3). In Greek and Roman antiquity this was practiced primarily by the state, often in acts of imperial conquest or re-conquest. Much of the domestic terminology of Roman slavery was derived from Roman military usage and organization (Weaver, 1964). Slaves' powerlessness originated (or was conceived as originating) as a substitute for death. For example, in 4 BCE the Romans simply crucified two thousand Judeans who, they thought, were active in rebellion. Usually, however, the Romans enslaved the young and able-bodied inhabitants in a (re-)conquered area of Judea or Galilee, after slaughtering the rebels, the aged, and the infirm, according to many of Josephus' reports (e.g., *B.J.* 1.180, 222; 2.68, 75; *Ant.* 17.289, 295). The enslaved thereafter lived under a conditional commutation: execution was suspended so long as they acquiesced in their slavery. "The slavemaster's power over his slave was total" (Patterson: 26).

Having been torn violently out of their previous life-situations and removed in chains to a strange new society, slaves thus lived in a state of natal alienation. They were socially dead persons, without birthright, isolated from the social heritage of their ancestors, "not allowed to inform their understanding of social reality with the inherited meanings of their forebears, or to anchor the living present in any conscious community of memory" (Patterson: 5). As aliens, slaves also lacked a place in the cosmos. Slaves were literally (including linguistically) and forcibly "resocialized." They had no connection with the larger society except through their master. They were of the lineage but not in it—given an often demeaning name ("Little Greek," "Lucky") and regularly addressed as "boy" (Patterson: 63). Older classics scholars, often writing from the perspective of the Greek and Roman slave-owners, had a telling way of describing slavery as "the integration of foreign-

ers" into society. But it was precisely the "alienation of the slave . . . from any attachment to groups or localities other than those chosen for him by the master that gave the relation of slavery its peculiar value to the master (Patterson: 7). This is what made the slave, as Aristotle articulated, an animate tool or an animate piece of property, imprintable and disposable at the will of the master. It would have been extremely difficult for an enslaved Galilean or Judean, bought by a wealthy and powerful head of household in Rome or Corinth, and forcibly integrated into a slave *familia* with a Syrian, a Thracian, a Galatian, and others from various subject peoples, to have maintained an identity and the traditions of his/her ancestors when all communication and interaction was taking place in the ethos of a large elite Roman or Corinthian household.

With M. I. Finley (1968:307–13), Patterson emphasized the "outsider" status of slaves as a key aspect of their condition. This has wide-reaching implications for social relations and "symbolic universes" and their interrelation in Greco-Roman society. In "slave society" the marginal position of slaves is essential to its social and cultural forms as well as to its economic survival. To focus on only a few aspects: (a) "The slave, in not belonging, emphasized the significance of belonging" (Patterson: 47). (b) Slaves, in being enslaved (not being free) or not having rights manifested the significance of being free or having rights. To undergird the binary division between those who possessed true humanity and those who were mere property procedures were required that undermined the slaves' humanity, such as corporal punishment, torture, and availability for the sexual satisfaction of the masters (Finley, 1980:95–96). (c) Those binary distinctions come to appear universal (*ius gentium* in Roman law) or perhaps even natural (Aristotle), and the (threat of) violent coercion by which slavery was maintained appeared natural, legitimated in the nature of things. Says Callicles in Plato's *Gorgias*, "For the suffering of injustice is not the part of a man, but of a slave, who indeed had better die than live; since when he is wronged and trampled upon, he is unable to help himself, or any other about whom he cares" (2.543, trans. Jowett).

Slavery, finally, affirms Patterson, was central and essential in the value of honor that dominated Greek and Roman culture and social relations. In classical Greece, the expanding system of slavery reinforced timocracy's grip on the society. "The preexisting timocratic value system, along with new economic forces, encouraged the development of large-scale slavery. At the same time, the enormous growth of slavery not only reinforced the timocratic character of the ruling class but stimulated its diffusion among all classes (Patterson: 87). To work for a living was utterly despised. To work for another was utterly shameful and degrading. The master's honor was thus manifested and augmented by the ownership of slaves, who had no being except as an expression or reflection of the master's being. Besides doing the work, slaves thus also served the master's psychological need to dominate—indeed

to dominate other human beings absolutely, to the point that they were not really humans in the same sense as the master. Even Vogt (8) admits that "slaves were irrevocably degraded in the eyes of the public." The Romans had an even more highly developed sense of honor than the Greeks. Perhaps the most striking manifestation was their need to demean the culturally superior Greeks whom they enslaved by public denigration of Greek character flaws or naming a Greek slave "Little Greek." Other subject peoples, of course, such as Judeans, Syrians, Lydians, Medes, indeed all Asiatics, were viewed as "born to slavery" (Finley, 1980:119). Even for the mass of ordinary Romans and inhabitants of cities around the empire, "the presence of a substantial number of slaves in Roman society defined free-citizens, even if they were poor, as superior" (Hopkins, 1978:112).

Recent Critical Studies of Slavery in Ancient Greece and Rome

Since the early articles of Finley and particularly since the highly suggestive historical sociological interpretation of Patterson, a whole range of studies by classical historians has dramatically widened and deepened the resources available to New Testament scholars on multiple aspects of ancient Greek and Roman slavery and slave systems. The book-length studies mentioned form much of the basis of the summary study of the ancient Greek and Roman slave systems in the next section.

Hopkins (1978) provides a systematic and well-documented analysis of the development of the slave system that provided the economic basis of the Roman imperial elite. He explains and details the integral historical relationship, during the last two centuries of the Republic, between the escalating wars of conquest, the introduction of millions of slaves into Italy, and the impoverishment of the Roman-Italian peasantry, who then joined the urban mobs or became colonists elsewhere in the empire. Not until Ste. Croix did Western classics scholarship finally produce a full-scale "historical materialist" presentation of ancient Greek and Roman societies (including a wealth of documentation). After working through his analysis of the ancient Greek and Roman slave systems, it is difficult again to ignore how important an economic foundation slavery provided for the cultures of the Greek *polis* and the Roman empire. As Garlan points out, however, one must look elsewhere for serious analysis of "the politico-legal dimension which the exercise of extra-economic constraints invariably confers on relations of production and which affects the corresponding theoretical positions adopted" (12). Garlan himself (1988) presented a critical systematic overview of slavery in ancient Greek society.

Critical approaches have been brought to a number of the key aspects of ancient slavery, some of which had not been examined previously. Bradley's books focused directly on Roman slavery (1984; 1989; 1994) present well-

balanced analyses of matters such as the intense conflict inherent in a coercive slave system, the manipulation and abuse of slaves, and slave resistance, and are informed by his other research into matters such as wet-nursing and the slave-trade (1986; 1987). The intense recent social-historical focus on the history of the family (Bradley, 1991; Dixon; Rawson, 1986; Saller, 1994) has necessarily included the roles of slaves in the Roman household, since most inscriptional as well as literary evidence concerns the large households of the elite. Saller in particular has demonstrated the relationship between the regular whipping of slaves and the importance in Roman society of sharply enhancing the honor of the wealthy and powerful by dishonoring and dehumanizing slaves. One still finds apologetic attitudes in classics scholarship, e.g., that despite slavery, which can be "rightly deplored," nevertheless "let us admire the Romans and the Greeks for themselves" (Starr: 68). Recent classics scholarship on slavery, however, has developed a far more critical and methodologically sophisticated understanding of the slave systems of ancient Greece and Rome and of what they meant for the lives of the millions of subject people who were enslaved. On the sound theoretical and methodological bases established by Finley and especially by Patterson, these more critical recent studies of ancient Greek and Roman slave systems can provide a more secure foundation for New Testament scholars' attempts to understand the ancient Greek and Roman slavery as the context of early Christian movements and literature.

SLAVERY AND EMPIRE

"In Rome and the Americas, and perhaps in Athens too, mass slavery was a direct consequence of imperial expansion." Since the Roman economy was far less differentiated and developed than that of modern northwestern Europe and north America, however, Roman slavery "was more directly a product of war: booty capitalism, as Weber called it, instead of industrial capitalism" (Hopkins, 1978:113). We do not need to enter the debate over whether ancient Greece and Rome were "slave societies." The key historical point is that both classical Athens and especially late Republican and early imperial Rome created an institutionalized system of large-scale dependence on slave labor for the major portion of basic production by a wealthy aristocracy that presided over an empire. Roman intellectuals themselves understood this, as illustrated by a jurist's etymology which, while surely false, nevertheless reveals the historical awareness that slavery was the direct result of warfare: "Slaves [*servi*] are so called because commanders generally sell the people they capture and thereby save [*servare*] them instead of killing them. The word for property in slaves [*mancipia*] is derived from the fact that they are captured from the enemy by force of arms [*manu capiantur*]" (Florentinus,

Digest 1.5.4.2–3). Other ancient intellectuals confirm the connection between slavery and warfare (e.g., Dio Chrysostom, 15, 25; Varro, *Res Rust.* 2.10.4).

In a complex and contingent development, enslaving millions of subject people was an essential condition and instrument for the emergence of the Roman imperial order during the late Republic. Indeed, the conquest and plunder of a massive empire and the enslavement of millions of conquered people transformed the earlier political-economy of the city of Rome in the course of the last several generations of the Republic. Keith Hopkins (1978) has laid out a systematic analysis and explanation of how this transformation took place—with the exception of his occasional projection of a market economy onto late Republican Rome. Through the plunder taken in their “triumphs” the noble Roman warlords gained massive wealth, the only socially acceptable investment for which was land. Meanwhile, the military campaigns in which the nobles could make their fame and fortune forced prolonged military service on tens of thousands of peasants. More than ten percent of the adult male population in Italy was commonly serving in the army during the last two centuries BCE. Such prolonged military service drove peasant families into debt and impoverishment. Hopkins calculates that in the seventy-two years between 80 and 8 BCE, “roughly half of the peasant families of Roman Italy, over one and a half million people, were forced mostly by state intervention to move from their ancestral farms” (1978:7).

The increasingly rich nobles were only too ready to take advantage of the impoverished peasant families. “The rich . . . acquired the plots of the poor, sometimes by purchase with persuasion, sometimes by force so that in the end they cultivated large estates not farms (Appian, *Civil Wars* 1.7). This systematic land-grabbing by the elite also required the legal transformation of traditionally inalienable land through new laws that guaranteed secure private ownership of land by the heads of the great households (as Weber saw, 67–76, 119–24). With hundreds of thousands of slaves generated by their conquests, they then reorganized the land into large estates run by gangs of slaves to raise the produce (including fine wine and olive oil) required for their luxurious palaces in Rome, Pompeii, and elsewhere, and their large staff of domestic slaves. The Roman elite knew exactly what they were doing: “After a time the rich men in each neighborhood, by using the names of fictitious tenants, contrived to transfer many of these holdings to themselves, and finally they openly took possession of the greater part of the land under their own names. . . . The result was a rapid decline of the class of free small-holders all over Italy, their place being taken by gangs of foreign slaves, whom the rich employed to cultivate the estates from which they had driven off the free citizens” (Plutarch, *Life of Tiberius Gracchus* 8). The Roman peasant-soldiers were thus used to fight the wars of conquest in which they captured the

provincials who replaced them farming what were once their own lands but now taken over by their commanders who took advantage of their impoverishment that resulted from their prolonged absence. "The sale of western prisoners took place on a vast scale: the wars in the valley of the Po, Liguria, Corsica, and Sardinia have been described as mere slave hunts" (Gordon: 109). From his glorious conquests of the Gauls the great general Julius Caesar may well have introduced as many as a million slaves into Italy, primarily to be deployed on the expanding estates of wealthy and powerful Roman nobles. Large numbers of slaves also came from Asia Minor and Syria (and Judea) through piracy as well as wars of conquest (Gordon: 94–95).

The result was a massive displacement of Roman and Italian peasants. As the popular tribune and reformer Tiberius Gracchus supposedly told his listeners: "The wild beasts that roam over Italy have their dens and holes to lurk in, but the men who fight and die for our country . . . [must] wander with their wives and children, houseless and homeless, over the face of the earth" (Plutarch, *Life of Tiberius Gracchus* 10). Tens of thousands of the displaced peasants migrated into the cities. Others the Roman state removed to colonies. Over a hundred such colonies were established between 45 and 8 BCE, one of the best known of which was that founded at Corinth by Julius Caesar in 44 BCE and settled largely by freed slaves and other "riff-raff" from the city of Rome. Still others joined the increasingly professionalized army, after service in which they too were settled in colonies at strategic points around the Mediterranean. "Between 80 and 8 BC . . . roughly half the free adult males in Italy left their farms and went to Italian towns or were settled by the state on new farms in Italy or the provinces" (Hopkins, 1978:66). In the complementary flow, albeit over a longer period of time, "many more than two million peasants from the conquered provinces became war captives and then slaves in Italy" (Hopkins: 1978:8–9).

Nor, contrary to earlier classical scholarship on slavery, did the wars of conquest and enslavement end with Augustus' establishment of the imperial "peace." Forty-four thousand Alpine Salassi were reportedly enslaved in 25 BCE, numbers of the Cantabri and Astures in Spain sold into slavery in 22 BCE, the men of military age in Pannonia enslaved in 12 BCE, and some of the Bessi in Thrace enslaved in 11 BCE (Strabo 4.6.7; Dio 53.25.4; 54.5.2; 31.3; 34.7). The intensity and scope of Rome's wars of conquest and expansion gradually lessened under the early Empire, yet wars and re-conquests continued as a principle source of slaves on into the second century (Harris, 1980:121–22; Bradley, 1987:48–49), as those familiar with the history of Roman rule in Palestine will readily recognize. It is likely that the first conquests of Judea and Jerusalem by Roman armies poured thousands of slaves into Roman slave-markets (*Psalms of Solomon* 2:6; 8:21; 17:12; Plutarch, *Vita Pomp.* 45.1–5). Cassius reportedly enslaved thirty thousand at Tarichaeae in Galilee in 52 BCE, then several years later enslaved four district towns in

Judea, including Emmaus (Josephus, *B.J.* 1.180; 2.222; *Ant.* 14.275; Josephus probably exaggerates the numbers). In suppression of the revolt in Galilee following the death of Herod the Romans supposedly enslaved the populace in or around Sepphoris (*B.J.* 2.68; *Ant.* 17.289). Josephus, who was himself involved in the Roman re-conquest of Galilee and Judea in 67–70 CE, mentions explicitly that Vespasian and Titus, after slaughtering the majority of people besieged in villages and towns such as Japha, Jotapata, and Tarichaeae, enslaved thousands of women and children (*B.J.* 3.7.31 #304–305; 3.7.36 #337–38). Of the fugitives who had fled into Tarichaeae and then Tiberias, he sent six thousand of the most robust youths to work on Nero's pet project of cutting a canal through the Isthmus of Corinth, then sold thirty-thousand more into slavery elsewhere (*B.J.* 3.10.10 #540–42). When Jerusalem finally fell to the prolonged Roman siege,

Caesar issued orders to kill only those who were found in arms and offered resistance, and to make prisoners of the rest. The troops slew the old and feeble; while those in the prime of life and serviceable they drove together into the temple. Caesar's friend Fronto reserved the tallest and most handsome of the youth for the triumph; of the rest, those over seventeen he sent in chains to the works in Egypt, while multitudes were presented by Titus to the various provinces, to be destroyed in the theatres by the sword or by wild beasts; those under seventeen were sold [into slavery]. . . . The total number of prisoners taken . . . amounted to ninety-seven thousand. (*B.J.* 6.9.2 #417–18)

Further tens of thousands of Judeans may well have been enslaved during the prolonged Roman suppression of the Bar Kokhba Revolt in 132–35 C.E. (Fuks: 29). The vast majority of those enslaved by Rome's wars of conquest probably ended up in the huge gangs of slaves working the estates of the Roman warlords, although some undoubtedly wound up as domestic slaves in Rome itself—and some of those later became freedmen/women (Fuks: 30–31; cf. Harris, 1980:122—"in excess of 100,000"). Thus, although the need for slaves was surely not the sole motive force, it is difficult to understand how Rome's relentless wars which brought glory to the generals and imperial control of the Mediterranean to the Senate were not also "slave hunts" (Weber; Hobson: 247–48; Harris, 1979:83–85).

Once the Roman slave-system was well-institutionalized there was a constant demand for slaves. And other sources of slaves were developed, primarily slave-breeding. The latter did not begin only with the establishment of empire and the supposed end of wars of conquest, but was well-developed already under the Republic, then became relatively more important under the empire (Harris, 1980:118–21; Bradley, 1987:42–55). The first references to large-scale breeding of slaves come in Cornelius Nepos, *Att.* 13.3; Horace, *Epod.* 2.65; Varro, *Res Rust.* 1.17.5; 2.10.6; Columella, *Res Rust.* 1.8.5, 19. An-

other principal source of slaves was the exposure of unwanted infants commonly practiced in ancient Greek and Roman society. It was generally expected that an abandoned baby would be picked up and enslaved. Gender, moreover, was clearly a factor: "Everyone raises a son even if he is poor, but exposes a daughter even if he is rich" (Posidippus, 11E = Stobaeus, *Flor.* 77.7). The frequency of self-sale into slavery and its importance for maintenance of the system has been blown way out of proportion by previous and even current studies. Here is a good illustration of the limitation of uncritical use of Roman law as a historical source, in this case its simple distinction between "those slaves reduced to our ownership by the civil law if a person more than twenty years old allows himself to be sold" and "those slaves who are ours by the law of nations who are captured from the enemy" (*Digest* 1.5.1). That formal distinction indicates nothing about numbers (*contra* Watson, 1985). It is generally agreed, however, that "the self-sale as a mode of enslavement was of negligible importance in the central period of Roman history" (Harris, 1980:124; Bradley, 1988:482).

Enslavement of exposed children and kidnapping and piracy continued as important sources of slaves throughout Western antiquity (Harris, 1980: 123), and kept a steady supply of newly enslaved subjects of empire flowing through the slave-markets in Cos, Corinth, and elsewhere. For students of the New Testament, it is noteworthy not only that Syrians and Judeans were thought to be inferior human beings appropriate for enslavement, but that "the great source" of slaves was Asia Minor. "Over and over again we hear of the typical slave as a Cappadocian or a Phrygian" (Harris, 1980:122). Also, "Galatia, like Phrygia of which it originally formed a part, was an important reservoir of slaves throughout antiquity" (Mitchell: 47). That kidnapping continued to be such an important source for slaves, finally, indicates how the slave system generally depended on the imperial order. For it was the need for slaves among the imperial elite in Rome and other metropolitan centers that drove the demand for slaves and it was the imperial administration that maintained the social-political order in which slave-hunters could conduct their kidnapping in the provinces to supply the burgeoning markets in Italy and key imperial metropolises.

SOCIAL CONTROL OF SLAVES BY MASTERS

The Inherent Conflict in the Slave System and in the Master-Slave Relationship

Both the Greek and the Roman slave-holding elite had a disquieting sense of insecurity with respect to their slaves, upon whose involuntary labor they depended for their positions of wealth and power. Xenophon wrote as if there was a perpetual state of aggressive antagonism between masters and slaves: citizens are "unpaid bodyguards of each other against their slaves,"

since "masters have often died violently at the hands of their slaves" (*Hiero* 4.3; 10.4). Lysias (7.35) and Demosthenes (21.49) speak of a natural enmity between masters and slaves. Plato (*Rep.* 578d–579a) conjures up the horrifying image of an owner of fifty slaves in mortal danger once he had been carried away with his family "to some desert place where there would be no other free man to help him." The wealthy and powerful Roman slave-owning class similarly viewed their slaves as essentially criminal (e.g., Columella, *Res Rust.* 1.1.20; 1.3.5; 1.6.8; 1.7.6; 1.8.1–2, 15, 17, 18; 1.9.1, 4; 7.4.2; 9.5.2; 11.1.12, 14, 16, 19, 21, 23, 25, 27; 12.3.7; Tacitus, *Ann.* 1.17.1; 2.12.4; 2.39.2; 6.10.3; 12.4.1; 13.46.4; 14.40.1; 15.45.5; *Hist.* 1.46.48; 2.59; 3.32; 5.9). In early Latin literature such as the *De Agricultura* of Cato and the comedies of Plautus, in portrayals for which there are no earlier prototypes, slaves appear as cruel, unruly, pilfering, intransigent, conniving, deceitful (Cato 2.2; 4; 5.1; 67.2; Duckworth: 249–52, 288–92; Bradley 1984:28–30). Columella's treatise on the management of an agricultural estate (*Res Rustica*) has an urgent tone about the dangers of slave ownership and the potential for slave revolt. Slaves must be ruled by fear (1.8.17–18; 1.2.1; cf. Cato, *De Agr.* 5.1–5; Varro, *Res Rust.* 1.13.1–2), balanced by kind considerations. He writes from a kind of a prison-camp mentality, viewing everything in terms of security and control of the slave laborers (Bradley, 1984:23–24). Slaves must be kept in chains and quartered in an *ergastulum* at night.

Similar anxieties haunted slave-owners about their own domestic slaves tending to their every need in their urban mansions. One of the reasons Augustus established a city prefecture was to discipline slaves in Rome itself. And the murder of the senator L. Pedanius Secundus by a slave revived concern among the patricians that urban slaves had to be ruled by fear, particularly considering the large foreign element (Tacitus, *Ann.* 6.11.3; 14.44.5). Slave-masters were anxious not only about the stability of the slave-system as a whole, on which their wealth and positions of power and privilege were dependent, but about their personal vulnerability in households surrounded by their "domestics." As the younger Pliny commented (*Ep.* 3.14), on the death in 108 of the senator Larcus Macedo, who had been assaulted by his slaves while bathing, "No master can feel safe because he is kind and considerate." The Roman proverb, "the number of one's slaves equals the number of one's enemies" (*quot servi, tot hostes*, Seneca, *Ep.* 47.5; Macrobius, *Sat.* 1.11.13), articulates succinctly the elite's fear for their own safety and the antagonism with which masters regarded their slaves.

Slaves, for their part, resisted in whatever ways they could discussed more fully in the article on "Slave Resistance" below. When they saw opportunities, slaves fled, as we know from the lengths their owners went to contain them or, failing that, to recapture them (Bellen). Toward the end of the Peloponnesian War 20,000 slaves took the opportunity to flee their servitude in Attica (Thucydides 7.27.5). *Drapetēs* came to mean specifically a runaway

slave, and *drapetagōgos* a “slave-catcher,” as in a fourth-century comedy by Antiphanes by that title. Among the finds from antiquity are some of the iron collars worn by slaves, containing instructions for their return to their owners if captured. Roman law addresses the problem, and slave-owners could hire professional slavecatchers (*fugitivarii*) to recapture fugitives (Daube; Bradley, 1984:32). Occasionally they murdered their masters and, albeit rarely, even managed collective revolt. That slave resistance was a regular feature of Roman life is indicated by repeated incidents mentioned by historians such as Tacitus or Appian. The latter, for example, having recounted Cinna’s massacre of slaves who had earlier plundered and murdered, commented: “Thus did the slaves receive fit punishment for their repeated treachery to their masters” (*Bellum civile* 1.74, Loeb trans.)

The relationship between an involuntary labor force initially forced into slavery by military violence and their masters dependent on their coerced labor was fraught with conflict from the outset. Obviously, maintenance of such an inherently conflictual system required complex means of social control. Ancient Greek and Roman slavery depended upon systematic management and manipulation of the slaves.

Dehumanization, Degradation and the Climate of Fear

Roman literature reveals a consensus among the slave-owning class that it was necessary to create a climate of fear among their slaves. “Severity must be employed by those who keep subjects under control by force—by masters, for example, towards their slaves” (Cicero, *Off.* 2.24). Following a slave’s murder of a senator it was argued in the Senate that “you will never coerce such a mixture of [strange] humanity except by terror” (Tacitus, *Ann.* 14.14; cf. 13.2). It was particularly important in the Romans’ mind to inculcate fear among slaves (Tacitus, *Ann.* 14.44); it produced greater loyalty (Propertius 3.6.6; Bradley 1984:113–14). Early Christian writers reflect this ethos of master-slave relations: “Slaves, obey your earthly masters with fear and trembling”—with a mild exhortation to slave-masters to “stop threatening” (Eph 6:9). To instill the fear requisite to maintaining the slave-system, therefore, the Romans employed various forms of dehumanization, degradation, and humiliation.

The slave-trade. The dehumanization entailed in ancient slavery began with the Greek and Roman disposition of subject people they captured in warfare. From accounts by Josephus and other historians, Judean and Galilean and other captives would have experienced the slaughter of many of their neighbors and family, very likely their parents, and their own sale to slave dealers who shipped them across the Mediterranean to cities such as Rome or Corinth. As if the traumas of capture and removal far from home were not enough, the slave trade itself entailed further humiliating practices

and slave-dealers were notorious for their abuse of the human "stock" in which they traded. A century and a half ago, Wallon (2.51–60) sketched an illuminating picture of the ancient slave-market, with its total humiliation of the human beings involved, which was simply taken for granted by the Greeks and Romans. If it is permissible to indulge in a little comparative history to illustrate the "natal alienation" involved in the slave-trade, we can listen to the eighteenth-century African Olaudah Equiano describe his own experience:

We were not many days in the merchants' custody before we were sold after the usual manner, which is this:—On a signal given, such as the beat of a drum, the buyers rush at once into the yard where the slaves are confined, and make choice of that parcel they like best. The noise and clamour with which this is attended, and the eagerness visible in the countenances of the buyers, serve not a little to increase the apprehensions of the terrified Africans, who may well be supposed to consider them the ministers of that destruction to which they think themselves devoted. In this manner, without scruple, are relations and friends separated, most of them never to see each other again. (Gates: 37–38)

Enslaved war-captives were likely sold more than once along the route to their final destination in Italy or elsewhere. Their humiliating journey began with sale to one of the *canabae* or parasitic "camp follower" slave-traders who followed the army ready to obtain war-captives "wholesale" and then sell them for handsome profits to "retailers" of "speaking tools." Now utterly isolated socially and culturally (linguistically!), enslaved war-captives were dragged in chains into the unknown, never to return home. On the stele of the Black Sea slave-trader (*sōmatemporos*) Aulus Kapreilius Timotheus a file of twelve slaves walks along in chains. Others were taken into slavery by kidnappers (cf. 1 Tim 1:10; NSRV = "slave-traders"). A papyrus mentions the ten-year-old girl Abaskantis from Galatia, sold in 142 CE in the Pamphilian coastal city of Side to the slave-dealer Pamphilos from Alexandria in Egypt. Another mentions a seven-year-old boy taken from Mesopotamia purchased in Egypt. Once placed on sale in Roman slave-markets, slaves were obliged to stand naked on a raised platform, with chalk marks on their feet indicating foreign origin. Legally required information about their particular qualities was suspended from their necks. In the case of slaves as well as cattle and beasts of burden, statement of defects was legally required (e.g., "a discrepancy between jaws, eyes, or arms is no ground for rescission if it does not affect the slave's ability to perform his duties"—Ulpian, *Digest of Justinian*, Book 21; cf. Plato, *Laws* 11 916a.). Potential purchasers could poke and prod. "When you buy a horse, you order its blanket removed; so too you pull the garments off slaves" (Seneca, *Ep.* 80.9).

Nor was the slave-market located in some out of the way place where the degrading display would be inconspicuous. It was rather in the center of

public "civilized" life, the Roman Forum itself, the *agora* of a Greek city, or the shrine of Isis (at Tithorea in Phocis, Pausanias 10.32.15; see further Harris, 1980:126). Major slave-trading centers during the late Republic and Empire, besides the older center Cos, were Byzantium, (Phrygian) Apamea, Tarsus, and especially Ephesus (Harris, 1980:127–28). Although slave-dealers were viewed as disreputable social pariahs in some Latin literature, there is substantial evidence that some were socially well-connected (even with the emperor), respectable authors of public inscriptions (to the Roman magistrate at Ephesus and in honor of the genius of the slave-market; Harris, 1980: 129–30).

For the enslaved, however, their social homicide and/or that of their children may have continued in the humiliations of the slave-trade. Slaves were sold and resold. "Throughout the Mediterranean . . . slaves were bought and sold from one owner to another as a matter of course . . . part of what the Roman jurist Papinian once offhandedly termed 'the regular, daily traffic in slaves'" (Bradley, 1992:126). The Roman *aediles* responsible for supervising markets propounded rulings for the marketing of slaves similar to those for the marketing of cattle. These functioned, in effect, as ancient equivalent of "lemon-laws," requiring slave-traders to inform potential buyers of defects in their merchandise, such as a slave having had his tongue cut out, a woman whose offspring are still-born every time, or slaves who were suicidal or prone to run away (Crook: 181–84).

We can easily deduce from the frequency of slave sale and from the limited surviving papyri that slaves were further dehumanized by the standard disregard of the intimate friendships and family relations they developed while in slavery. A study of the slave trade estimates an annual sale of 250,000 slaves in the early Empire (Harris, 1980:121). There are a handful of cases of mothers with young children, but no examples have yet been found of a sale of slave partners or of slave parents and child. The overwhelming majority of attested slave sales are of individual slaves. Tabulation of Egyptian papyrological evidence indicates sale of individual women slaves ranging in age from four to thirty-five, of individual male slaves from two to forty. That means not only that children were sold away from their parents, but that there was a brisk traffic in slaves, particularly women, during their prime child-bearing age, from thirteen to thirty-five (Bradley, 1984:53–57). In several known cases, slaves had already been sold three or four times, even before the age of fourteen, and had been sold far from their place of origin in Pontus, Phrygia, or Arabia. "It seems that slave-owners were little troubled about breaking servile family ties when economic considerations made sale of their slaves attractive or necessary" (Bradley, 1984:57–60). The treatment of slaves like other property in inheritance, moreover, resulted in similar break-ups of slaves' marital and familial relationships. The dehumanizing effect of "market forces" and treatment of humans as property in the slave-trade is illus-

trated, finally, by Furia Spes's dedication to her deceased husband: having loved each other since childhood as slaves, she and her beloved had "married," but after a short time had been involuntarily separated "by an evil hand" (ILS 8006, cited in Bradley, 1984:69).

Degradation by torture, beating, and branding. The rhetorical flourish of a Demosthenes that the greatest difference between the slave and the free man is that the slave "is answerable with his body for all offenses" (22.55), did not attract much attention in modern classics scholarship on slavery. As Finley (1980:94) notes, Westermann wrote three sentences on the subject and Vogt avoided it in his essays focused on slavery and humanity—while the older antiquarian Pignoria (1613) spent two chapters on it. Some classics scholars simply argued that "torture was seldom used" (Barrow: 31–35). That torture of slaves was a regular practice among Greeks and Romans could no longer be ignored, however, with the discovery in Puteoli of a Latin inscription dated to the late Republic or early Empire listing one of the duties of the city funeral director as the torture of slaves as requested by magistrates or private individuals, replete with details on the techniques and instruments of the trade. "If a slave is a property with a soul, a nonperson and yet indubitably a biological human being, institutional procedures are to be expected that will degrade and undermine his humanity and so distinguish him from human beings who are not property" (Finley, 1980:95). Torture and beating were the two most important "institutional procedures" of degradation among the Greeks and Romans.

Since they could not trust the testimony of free men in court, the Greeks developed a means of gathering testimony that they believed trustworthy, that extracted by *torturing* the bodies of slaves (Aristophanes, *Frogs* ll. 618–25; Pseudo-Aristotle, *Rhet. ad Alexandrum*; Garlan: 42–43; see now duBois, 1991). This practice was continued by the Romans. Torture of slaves, however, was not confined to court cases. Professional torturers (*tortorēs*) were available for hire. Administering a brutal beating was an exhausting undertaking (Cicero, *Cluentio*. 177; Seneca, *Ep.* 66.18, 21, 29). Petronius portrays Trimalchio as keeping two *tortorēs* on staff simply to punish his errant cook (*Satyricon* 49); Juvenal depicts a cruel mistress who kept a *tortor* on retainer (6:480). "Just like other artisans, the *tortor* had his place of business, where the variety of the tools of his trade could be counted on to chill his prospective victim to the bone" (Saller, 1994:148, citing Juvenal 6.0.29). It can no longer be pretended that instruments of torture such as spiked whips, racks, and hot irons were seldom used (Cicero, *Pro Cluentio* 177; Wiseman 1985:5–10; Saller, 1994:134, 147–48).

Roman literature indicates that slaves were regularly subject to *beatings*, the second principal means of degrading slaves. They were treated "not as if they were men, but beasts of burden," by masters who were cruel and insulting; a slave would be beaten even for disturbing the master's dinner by

coughing (Seneca, *Ep.* 47.3, 5, 11, 17–19). Cato, a man of traditional Roman values, flogged his domestic slaves for mistakes in the preparation and serving of dinner (Plutarch *Cato maior* 5.1; 21.3). The regularity with which Roman slaves were beaten is indicated in Tacitus' contrast of Roman brutality with the Germans' restraint in beating their slaves only rarely and not in matters of routine discipline (*Germ.* 25). In literature the life of the slave was linked unavoidably with the whip. A slighted wife transfers the target of her anger from her husband to her helpless slaves (Juvenal 6.481). In Plautus' comedies (before 200 BCE), a young man beats his slave, thus literally a "whipping boy," because he is frustrated in love (*Poenulus* 146, 410, 819), and apparently the stringing up and beating of elderly female slaves was meant to be funny (*Truculentus* 775–82 and *Aulularia* 48; Saller, 1994:148).

The regular subjection of slaves to the whip, however, was far more significant in Roman society than as a mere punishment. It was the principal means and symbol of slaves' degradation. In the widely read *A History of Private Life*, influential among those such as biblical scholars dependent on classics scholarship for their understanding of Greco-Roman slavery, Paul Veyne "deliberately minimizes the distinction between *filiusfamilias* and slave" (Saller, 1996b:144). He pictures the life of children as "a kind of slavery" (29), in comparison with which the life of slaves, in which "the master commanded with love," appears benign. In his recent study of *Roman Slave Law*, moreover, Alan Watson (1987:46–47) repeats the standard claim, based on the abstract constructs of Roman Law, that "in many regards the legal position of a slave was very similar to that of a son—of whatever age—in paternal power." He thus reinforces the belief that Roman slaves "did not fare much worse than the master's wife and children" in suffering merciless beatings (Genovese: 73). However such relations may have worked in the southern United States, slaves were not assimilated to the position of children in Roman households, certainly not with regard to beatings. Cicero, following Greek philosophers, wrote that "different kinds of domination and subjection must be distinguished." A father governs his children who follow out of readiness to obey, but a master must "coerce and break his slave" (*Rep.* 3.37). The primary instrument deployed to "break" slaves in (Roman) antiquity, as in the Southern United States, was the whip. Indeed, the use of the whip was precisely what distinguished slaves from the free children of Roman households—besides the fact that the sons inherited, while of course the natively-alienated slaves did not. .

In a critical and probing analysis of Roman social relations Richard Saller (1994; 1996a; 1996b) has recently explained that when Romans regularly *and legitimately* (in their own eyes) inflicted severe beatings on their slaves that maimed and even killed, more was at stake than raw physical pain. To the Romans whipping was primarily an insult to *dignitas*. As the grossest form of invasion, whipping was thus a deep humiliation. "The special potency for

Romans of the symbolic act of beating hinged on its association with slavery. One of the primary distinctions between the condition of a free man and a slave in the Roman mind was the vulnerability of the latter to corporal punishment, in particular the lashings at another man's private whim" (Saller, 1994:137). In Roman comedies, slaves are addressed with variations on the word *verber*, with *verbero* or "whipping post" being common, and the distinguishing marks of slaves are the scars on their backs from past whippings. Conversely the slave's metaphor for staying out of trouble was "to protect his back" from the whip (Saller, 1994:137–38, with many references). It is precisely the whip that distinguishes the master-slave relationship, in distinction from the father-child relationship. In his tract on child-rearing, Plutarch insisted that "children ought to be led to honorable practices by means of encouragement and reasoning, and most certainly not by blows nor by ill treatment; for it is surely agreed that these are fitting rather for slaves than for the freeborn (*De Lib. Educ.* 12). Similarly, Quintilian disapproved of whipping students, "because it is a disgraceful form of punishment and fit only for slaves, and in any case it is an insult" (1.3.13). Formally fathers did indeed hold the power of life and death over their children as well as over their slaves. Other than a famous legend or two, however, no evidence exists that such paternal power over children was ever used. By contrast, masters really did execute slaves, against which legal restraint was finally brought under Hadrian—although Constantine later ruled that a master who beat his slave so severely that the slave died was not to be charged with murder (Saller, 1996a:117–18). The whipping of slaves was a symbolic degradation as well as punishment. "The master's authority had to be coercive (to 'break' the slave), because the master-slave relationship was inherently exploitative. The servile spirit was one motivated by grudging fear, goaded by the lash; the servile back was marked with scars from past whippings" (Saller, 1994:151).

Closely related means of social control were the *branding* and especially *tattooing* of many slaves and the temporary or perpetual *shackling* of slaves (C. P. Jones). Small wonder that one finds in Roman law and literature "a strong suspicion that slavery was detrimental to the slave's character" (Watson, 1987:39). Law codes make frequent references to the likelihood that slaves had been "chained," "branded," even that a slave-master's will provided that a slave "be kept perpetually in chains" (*Digest* 47.10.15.44; Gaius, *Inst.* 1.13; Justinian, *Codex* 3.36.5). Slaves bore on their bodies the marks of the institutionalized practices of their humiliation. As Macrobius commented candidly, "At home we become tyrants and want to exercise power over slaves, constrained not by decency but capacity" (cited in Hopkins, 1978:119 n 43). "The hostility of masters to their slaves ran just below the surface of Roman civilization" (Hopkins, 1978:120). Not surprisingly, the Roman state backed up the "terror" that the master attempted to exercise in his *familia*. By ancient custom, all the slaves in a household of a master killed by one of his own

slaves were to be tortured and killed. Sure enough, when one of his household slaves killed the Urban Prefect Pedanius Secundus in 61 CE, all four hundred of the latter's household slaves were executed, over the protest of the urban poor at such inhumanity (Tacitus, *Ann.* 14.42–45).

Sexual exploitation. Slaves were habitually subjected to sexual abuse. That slaves' bodies were available to their masters without restriction is "a commonplace in Graeco-Roman literature from Homer on; only modern writers have managed to ignore it" (Finley, 1980:95–96). Both male and female slaves were sold as prostitutes, available for continuous sexual exploitation at the command of the masters (Henriques, 1962:89ff.; Pomeroy: 201). Martial sought a slave from a patron for sexual purposes, as if it was a common request (*Epig.* 8.73). Anecdotal evidence, rules on the registration and taxing of prostitutes, and the notoriety of the Subura area in Rome suggest that large numbers of slaves worked in brothels, which were a standard feature of Roman society (references in Bradley, 1984:116–17). Because of the special demand for young boys, owners attempted to delay the onset of puberty by various means, including castration (Pliny, *Nat Hist.* 30:41; 21.170; Martial, *Epig.* 9.6; Juvenal 6.373AB).

More common would have been slave-masters'—and probably their families' and friends'—regular gratification of their sexual desires among the slaves of their own *familiae*. The elder Seneca stated bluntly the perpetual sexual vulnerability of the slave: "Unchastity is a crime in the freeborn, a necessity for a slave, a duty for the freedman" (*Controversies* 4, Praef. 10; Veyne, 1978 [from Finley, 1980:170, n 15]). Martial's poems allude frequently to slave-owners' casual encounters with their slaves, both heterosexual and homosexual, including young boys and girls purchased specially for sex (*Epig.* 1.84; 2.33; 3.33; 4.66; 6.39, 71; 11.70; 12.58, 96). The freedman Trimalchio's comments reflect the vulnerable position of the slave: "For fourteen years I pleased him; it is no disgrace to do what a master commands. I also gave my mistress satisfaction" (Petronius, *Satyricon* 75.11). The first-century CE Stoic philosopher Musonius Rufus was unusual in his complaint about anyone "who has relations with his own slave girl, a thing which some people consider quite without blame, since every master is held to have it in his own power to use his slaves as he wishes" (Fragment 12, "On sexual indulgence"). Plutarch counselled a wife to acquiesce in her husband's sexual exploitation of slave girls because it was "respect for her that led him to practice his debauchery, licentiousness, and wantonness with another woman" (*Moralia* 140B). Such moralists disapproved of the master's lack of self-restraint, but voiced no concern about the dignity of slave women (Saller, 1996a:126–27). For Romans as well as Greeks, active and passive sexual roles corresponded symbolically with domination and subordination. The ancient elite would therefore have been bothered by a matron's liaison with a male slave. Otherwise the standard values appear to have been expressed by

Horace. As Finley (1980:96) says, he "was not being satirical when he recommended his own preference for household slaves, male or female: 'I like my sex easy and ready to hand' (*Satires* 1.2.116–19)." Although Romans refrained from sexual relations with freeborn boys (hence the *bullā* amulet worn by freeborn youth at the festival of Liberalia), there was nothing disreputable about sex with male slaves (Plutarch, *Moralia* 288A). And of course since Romans saw nothing wrong with sexual exploitation of slave women, they were perpetually subject to their masters' advances (Weaver, 1991/96: 178; Buckland 1908:76–77).

The degradation of the powerless slave could not help but have been internalized, although here we must speculate on the basis of non-slave witnesses. It is not difficult to imagine the effect on a person of constantly having the threat of violence overhead, or of always being available sexually to satisfy the master's or his relatives' desires. One of Plautus' characters speaks explicitly of the internalized violence, of "a force (she fears) which forces me to do violence to myself" (*The Rope and Other Plays*, 116–17). This internalization of violence was one of the principal factors that created the "faithful" slave. "Naturally alienated" and (as seen in Nazi concentration camps) "brutally deracinated human beings seeking new ties, new psychological attachments, not infrequently turn to those in whose power they find themselves" (Finley, 1980:104).

On the other side of the master-slave relation, however, Finley finds no general evidence for any doubts or guilt-feelings among ancient slave-owners (1980:99). That suggests that Greek and Roman society had developed a powerful legitimating cultural ideology in which they felt quite comfortable sexually invading or brutally humiliating the "bodies" that they owned. While Finley emphasizes that slaves were the property of their masters, Patterson includes this aspect in the broader context of power and domination of the slave by the master, which was absolute. Yet this shift of emphasis in the standard point about the slave (as the only human thing) being the property of the master serves only to make the point all the more central and telling. The modern capitalist concept of property has always been problematic when applied to modern political-economic relation and even more so when applied to traditional societies most of which lacked anything close to "private property." The Romans developed a radically new and unprecedented legal concept, that of absolute ownership of things. Scholars of Roman law suggest that the Roman *dominium* was not just a certain relation between a person and a thing, but absolute power, power not just to use (*usus*) or enjoy the fruits, but to use up (*ab usus*) or alienate or have inner power over a thing (see Patterson's summary, 1982:31). Patterson ventures the compelling hypothesis that behind the Roman drive to develop this legal fiction was slavery, as illustrated in the early original meaning (third century BCE) of the term *dominus* not as "owner" generally but as "slavemaster" in

particular. In effect, the slave, as the only human *thing* (*res*), was the paradigm of the concept of private property developed by the Romans. This development was correlated with the dramatic transformation in the Roman economy in which slaves, along with land, became the most important basis of wealth (Patterson: 29–32).

Inducements and Manipulations

Sexual relations and families. We may presume the desire for sexual relations among slaves. Epigraphic evidence indicates that slaves also valued long-range marital and familial relations when they had a chance (Bradley, 1984:48–49). Slaves' desires for sexual relations and families were exploited by slave-masters to induce acquiescence and obedience. Because technically, legally, slaves could not marry and produce recognized families, the existence of slave marriages and families presupposes the toleration if not encouragement of the masters. Roman slave-masters state explicitly their manipulation of their slaves in these respects. With regard to herdsmen in mountain valleys Varro commented that "it was advisable to send along women to follow the herds, prepare food for the herdsmen, and make them more diligent" (*Res Rust.* 2.10.6). Tertullian stated that discipline among slaves is better if they marry within the same household (*Ad. Ux.* 2.8.1). The manipulation of sexual and marital desires could be particularly important with regard to slave overseers. "The foremen are to be made more zealous by rewards, and care must be taken that they have . . . mates from among their fellow slaves to bear them children" (Varro, *Res Rust.* 1.17.5 Loeb). "The overseer . . . should be given a woman companion to keep him within bounds and yet in certain matters to be a help to him" (Columella, *Res Rust.* 1.8.5). The satisfaction of having "companions" and children, however, was not the only way in which such "perks" proved manipulative for slaves. Given the frequent sale of slaves away from their loved ones or from their children or parents, anxiety about forced severance from those family members must have plagued slaves, leading to their "good behavior" and "loyalty" to their masters.

Most of the slave marriages and children attested in inscriptions must have been from urban households. Recognition of the living arrangements in large urban households reveals another respect in which masters' allowing their slaves companions and children would have "domesticated" their household slaves. Living arrangements in such households were at virtually the opposite end of the spectrum from those of the modern Western nuclear family isolated in its separate apartment or three to five bedroom house. Slaves, freedmen/women, their children, and the children of the master all occupied the same physical, domestic space (Bradley, 1991:91–92). Privacy was minimal, confined to the few hours spent sleeping in small cells, if such

were available. A slave girl might sleep in the same room with her mistress, slave boy at the feet of his master, the master's children with their slave *nutrix*. All lived in close interaction, which left little or no sequestered site for any moments of independent life. Slaves may well have developed close attachments to others in the household, including children of the master. And they were under constant surveillance, either by the master and mistress or by other members of the *familia*.

The peculium as inducement. Clear evidence indicates that slaves of the Romans were allowed what was in effect property of their own. In the imperial period the term *peculium* came to refer specifically to resources at the disposal of the slave. Technically it belonged to the slave-owner, and on the death of the slave reverted to the master, who retained almost exclusive proprietary powers over the labor, possessions, progeny, as well as the person of his slaves. Also, in many cases it may not have been in effect a bonus, but the resources from which the slave derived her/his own subsistence living. In practice, however, the slave had use and control of the *peculium*, whether cash, food, livestock, other slaves, or grazing rights. Use of the *peculium* thus gave the slave a sense of responsibility and some taste of independence. The assumption that most slaves had such a *peculium* the easy expansion of which would aid them in buying their manumission, led apologetic interpretations of ancient slavery to argue that it was mild and unoppressive. Far from being primarily a factor mitigating slavery, however, the *peculium* and the other little perks of "humanity" were precisely what made the system work. Another of the "rewards" that slave foremen, according to Varro, should have, is "a bit of property of their own . . . for by this means they are made more steady and more attached to the place" (*Res Rust.* 1.17.5). Xenophon (*Oeconomicus* 5.16; 9.11–17; 12.6–10; 15.1) exhibits that the Greeks had preceded the Romans in understanding how to use "a bit of property" to control and manipulate their slaves. As Patterson observes, the *peculium* "was the best means of motivating the slave to perform efficiently on his master's behalf. It not only allowed the slave the vicarious enjoyment of the capacity he most lacked—that of owning property—but also held out the long-term hope of self-redemption for the most diligent slaves" (1982:185–86).

The use of this device to control slaves, of course, was not universal, perhaps not even extensive. "Very few slaves, relatively speaking, can ever have controlled truly substantial sums of money, and for many the *peculium* was vital to their material welfare and simple survival" (Bradley, 1988:485). Slaves' entrepreneurial and industrial use of their masters' property, however, became very important in the diversification of the Roman imperial economy. Much of the commercial life in Roman society was conducted by slaves exploiting their *peculia* on behalf of their owners. But such economic rewards for the minority of slaves also served to reinforce the slave system. The diversity of wealth among the minority of relatively well-off slaves, comparable to the

diversity of their occupations, helped prevent any sense of corporate identity from developing among them.

Manumission and manipulation. Westermann (1955) and others claimed a high frequency of manumission, even that most slaves were freed after age thirty. After all, Syme (446) had declared that "slaves not only could be emancipated with ease but were emancipated in hordes," and Jones (133) still wrote of "the massive influx of freed slaves into the citizen body" as a social problem confronting Augustus. Such classics scholars led New Testament scholars to understand that "all [domestic and urban] slaves in the first century could reasonably expect that they would be manumitted after serving their owners for ten to twenty years beyond physical maturity" (Bartchy 1973:118). That manumission was virtually automatic then became the basis for two further claims: it made for relative contentment among slaves, thus relieving any pressures that might have led to slave revolts (cf. Bartchy, 1973:85), and that slavery was a mechanism for the integration of outsiders into Roman society (Wiedemann, 1981)—one of the standard defenses of ancient Roman slavery. Slavery somehow constituted a "transitional state" which, with manumission, led the vast majority, who were freed, into a recognized if not fully equal status as Roman citizens (Alfoeldy). Arguments for widespread manumission were based on two types of evidence: inscriptions from large households in Rome and Augustus's decrees supposedly placing limits on the large numbers of slaves being freed at the end of the first century BCE.

The inscriptions about slaves and freed slaves, however, 98% of which are from large urban *familiae*, are highly atypical, representing slaves with easy access to and good relations with their masters (Wiedemann, 1985:163). The *familia Caesaris*, represented in many of the inscriptions, was utterly atypical. Hence epitaphs that indicate that slaves in the emperor's household regularly achieved manumission between the ages of 30 and 35 does not support the claim that "manumission was not difficult for an intelligent, energetic and thrifty slave in the early Empire" generally (*contra* Weaver, 1972:97–104). The Lex Aelia Sentia in 4 CE, moreover, does not provide evidence that most slaves were freed soon after the age of thirty. It was concerned rather to enhance the prospect that slaves freed and granted full Roman citizenship were of good, responsible character. "Not content with making it difficult for slaves to acquire freedom, and still more so for them to attain full rights, by making careful provision as to the number, condition, and status of those who were manumitted, he added the proviso that no one who had ever been put in irons or tortured should acquire citizenship by any grade of freedom" (Suetonius, *Augustus* 40.4). What the imperial legislation thus did was to give masters an excuse for not freeing slaves who deserved to be freed (Wiedemann 1985:168). An inscription from central Italy illustrates

how masters who fully believed in manumission for faithful slaves and who were even fond of their slaves could avoid manumission because of this law.

Debita libertas iuveni mihi lege negata
morte immatura reddita perpetua est. (CIL X, 1.4917)

The frequently cited passage in a Senate speech by Cicero, moreover, is merely a rhetorical analogy; he mentions six years as a sufficiently long time for a captured slave to serve because it had been six years since Caesar's crossing of the Rubicon, during which time the Roman state had been politically enslaved. Cicero himself certainly did not practice manumission after six years. He did not set his "most trusted and versatile" slave Tiro, who had been born into the *familia*, free until he was forty-nine or fifty (Treggiari, 1969:259)—i.e., virtually useless.

Much of the previous scholarly discussion regarding manumission, furthermore, takes on a tone of unreality once we ask about life-expectancy in the ancient Roman empire. Life-expectancy at birth for the population as a whole has been estimated at 20–30 years (Hopkins 1966–67:263–64; Durand, 1959–60:365–73; Frier, 1982:213–51; 1983:328–44). Thus, "it is hard to believe that in the Roman Empire slaves' life-expectation at birth exceeded twenty years" (Harris, 1980:118). Even assuming that one-third of children died in infancy, it would still appear that most slaves would hardly have reached 30 or 35, at which age the privileged slaves of the *familia Caesaris* were being manumitted.

In his reversal of his overly apologetic previous position, Wiedemann argues that regular manumission was an ideal, something the Romans wanted to believe, i.e., that if a slave served faithfully, s/he would be rewarded. As it affected practice, however, it had virtually the opposite effect. The slave-master had no obligation to free a slave whom he did not deem faithful. Law codes contain much evidence that masters displeased with their slaves would include in their wills clauses prohibiting them from ever being freed. The literary evidence adduced to show that Romans practiced regular manumission indicates only that they believed they should do so. The evidence of the jurists suggest that when a Roman slave-owner provided for ultimate manumission in his will or in a contract of sale, he paid scant attention to the ideal that a faithful slave should be manumitted" (Wiedemann, 1985:175). It is impossible to reach anything close to a statistical probability, but it is now believed "that emancipation was a comparatively rare reward," with perhaps only one out of five slaves having been freed. Such acts of generosity by Roman slave-masters were the exception, not the rule (Bradley, 1984:83–91; 1988:483; *contra* Watson, 1985:23). "Roman society was not marked by altruism" (Hopkins, 1978:117).

For the slave, manumission brought an improvement in moral, legal and, for slaves of Roman citizens, political position. S/he was no longer com-

pletely subject to the master's whim and could gain a degree of self-respect, being less subject to the most extreme forms of regular humiliation that slavery entailed. Many slaves of Roman masters became Roman citizens upon manumission, a practice unusual among slave-holding societies which drew comments from the Greeks, who did not grant citizenship with manumission. Economically and socially, however, not much changed for the freed slaves. The status of a freedman/woman has frequently been compared with that of a client of a Roman patron and the manumission phase of ancient slavery in particular assimilated to the vertical patron-client power relations into which a large proportion of the freeborn were forced during the late Republic and early Empire.

Freedmen/women, however, had far greater obligations to their patrons/former masters and were of distinctively lower status than freeborn clients. The relationship between ex-slave and ex-master was always stronger than that of the usual client and patron and had a distinctively involuntary quality. It cannot be viewed in isolation from the slave relationship it replaced (Patterson: 241). The ex-master could and usually did exercise three kinds of claims on his freedmen/women: *obsequium*, or the regular demonstration of proper reverence and gratitude to their patron and his kin (e.g., joining in the humiliating daily ritual of the morning *salutatio* in which clients would line up at the patron's house hoping for hand-outs); *operae*, obligatory work for the patron a specified number of days a week/year; and a claim to half or all of the freedpersons' estates on their death, which might also be inheritable by the patron's heirs (Treggiari, 1969:69–81; Wiedemann 1981:50–60). Many a freedperson must have faced economic hardship (e.g., the wry comments of the former slave Epictetus, *Diss.* 4.1.35–37). Special conditions were often stated in testamentary manumission. The will of Acusilaus, resident of Oxyrhynchus, specified that five female slaves set free were still subject to the condition that their services and earnings were to remain at the disposal of his wife as long as she survived, while his son was given claim to any children borne by the women in the future. (*P. Oxy.* 494). The slave woman Arescusa "by last will was ordered to be free if she gave birth to three children" (*Digest* 1.5.15).

For most freedpersons, their post-manumission destitution came after years of struggle and sacrifice to raise the "purchase price" of their freedom. Since the slave's *peculium* was really (legally) the property of the master anyhow, what was involved was more like a "gift-exchange," the slave's surrender of the *peculium* for the master's gift of freedom—except that in receiving the gift of freedom, the ex-slave then came under new obligation to the former master, for *operae*, etc. In any case, the "exchange" which cost the master nothing (providing the replacement cost for the freed slave) cost the slave dearly in terms of long-term sacrifice and struggle. "The money which slaves have saved up by robbing their own stomachs, they hand over as the

price of liberty" (Seneca, *Mor.* 80.4). Cost of manumission was probably close to or somewhat higher than the market price of slaves. Petronius gives HS4,000 as one figure, but a slave doctor paid HS50,000 (Duncan-Jones: 349–50; HS1,000 could provide basic rations for one person for four to eight years). Purchase prices varied according to the skills and ages of the slaves. It seems unlikely that the vast majority of slaves would ever have had opportunities to acquire such substantial sums (Bradley 1984:107). How long it might take for those who did is illustrated by two cases from Egypt. In the late first century a homeborn slave named Euphrosyne was set free by her owner Aline on payment of a ransom sum (plus tax) at the age of thirty-five; in the late second century a woman named Zosime was manumitted by her owner Tasucharion after payment of ransom at the age of forty-four (*P. Oxy.* 2843). Many scholars of ancient slavery suggest that prostitution was one of the principal means by which slaves worked at raising the price of their freedom.

Manumission of slaves in Greece during the last two centuries BCE is particularly well-documented by a thousand recorded cases involving 1200 slaves in Delphi (paralleled by others from the island of Calymna, near Cos). Especially interesting among these are the cases of so-called *paramonē* or suspended release, in which "bodies" (*sōmata*) formally bought freedom, but bound themselves contractually to remain, just as though they were still slaves, until their masters' and/or mistresses' deaths, and perhaps to meet some additional condition (see esp. Hopkins, 1978:chap. III). Of the 83% who were adults, 63% were female. The high average cost of 400 drachmae, enough to feed a poor peasant family for over three years, suggests that these slaves had unusual access to earnings, hence were not typical (Hopkins, 1978:168). That even relatively advantaged slaves would struggle to obtain such an amount of funds for only a conditional release suggests just how onerous and degrading slavery must have been, how intensely slaves desired their own even nominal freedom or that of their children. Such conditionally released slaves basically remained in all the basic conditions of slavery. The contracts emphasize the masters' right to punish: "If Eusias does not serve or do as she is ordered let Kleomantis have power to punish her in any way he wishes; he may beat her, chain her or sell her" (*FD* 3.3.329). The savings of conditionally freed slaves, just like those of a slave, were claimed by the master. Most interestingly, many of these conditionally released slaves (men and women) were required to produce one, two, or even three (already weaned) children for their masters or their heirs: "Let Epaphro give to my grandson Glaukias three babies, each two years old. And let Epiphanea give to my son Sostratos one three-year-old child after five years, and another three-year-old child to my grandson Glaukias after three years" (*FD* 3.6.38). In some cases parents were thus placed in situations where they "left children behind in slavery to win freedom for themselves as adults"—perhaps hoping to be able eventually to free their children as well (Hopkins, 1978:166).

In social status the freedman/woman had made the important transition from a non-person, subject to the power of a master, to a human being with (limited) rights, yet remained stigmatized by the shameful previous status as a slave. "The stigma of former slavery meant that the freedman was rarely perceived as an equal. Only time could blot out the memory of the debased condition [of slavery]. Hence, full freedom came only to his descendants" (Patterson, 1982:247). As a marginal person, moreover, the freedman continued to be viewed as something of an anomaly and, like all persons in transitional states, was regarded as potentially dangerous" (249). Custom, law, and prejudice conspired to keep even those who became Roman citizens in a position of second-class citizenship (Treggiari, 1969:36–68). The stigma of slavery, still suffered by the sons of freedmen, disappeared only after two or three generations. Nevertheless, to finally be free of having to constantly yield to the commands and whims of the master brought a sense of self-respect and pride. Slaves coveted freedom, were eager to move to the other side of the institutionalized Greek and Roman division between slave and free that meant having minimal human rights, being treated like a human being (even if of the low status) instead of like a beast, and having familial relationships recognized by the society.

Manumission served the interests of slave-master in several ways. It entailed little if any economic loss. The *peculium* was his anyhow, and his freedmen/women paid for their freedom. Freeing slaves before his own death added to his train of clients, increasing his prestige in comparison with his patrician peers. Testamentary manumission at his death brought admiration for his generosity and magnanimity. In both cases the actions thus added to his *dignitas* (Harrill: 171).

Whatever the benefit to a minority of domestic slaves who finally attained their freedom, the basic function of manumission was as an incentive to acquiescence, obedience and productivity among urban domestic slaves. (Agricultural slaves, of course, were apparently hardly affected by the promise, much less the reality, of manumission.) As Tacitus indicates, conferring freedom on a slave was a *beneficium*, an act of generosity by the master, which followed evidence of servile *obsequium*. Greek writers (e.g., Pseudo-Aristotle, *Oikonomikos* 1.5.6) stressed the efficacy of promising slaves their freedom, as an encouragement to co-operation and a disincentive to resistance" (Wiedemann, 1985:175). Columella indicates precisely how Roman slave-masters were thinking about manumission and how they manipulated their slaves with the prospect of freedom: "To women, too, who are unusually prolific, and who ought to be rewarded for the bearing of a certain number of offspring, I have granted exemption from work and sometimes even freedom after they had reared many children. For to a mother of three sons exemption from work was granted; to a mother of more her freedom as well (*Res Rust.* 1.8.19).

Testamentary manumission was the most popular mode among the Romans because it retained the services of slaves to the very last moment in

which their owner could use them; it kept the slaves in a suspense of good conduct to the end (Patterson: 223). The effect of the *lex Fufia Caninia* of 2 BCE and the *lex Aelia Sentia* of 4 CE was to give testamentary manumission "something of the character of a competition, the rules for which had to be compliant behavior, loyalty, and obedience . . . [they] made full manumission a reward to the slave who reached a deserving age, or . . . a slave who displayed conformity to the established values of free society" (Bradley, 1984:91–93). Correspondingly, refusal of manumission could be used as a punishment which, when known to other slaves, would have the same effect of an incentive toward good behavior: The will of Dasumius, of the Roman elite of second century, expressly bans the manumission of certain slaves at any future point in their lives, which was sanctioned by law. "I ask that Menecrates and Paedaros not be manumitted but kept in the same occupation as long as they live . . . because they have given me great offence by their lack of merit" (FIRA 2ed, III no. 148, ll 80ff). Slaves thus knew that submission to the interests and commands of the master—whatever their true sentiments—was required in order to earn his favor and cultivate the possibility of manumission. Masters could further manipulate their slaves by making known in advance the contents of their wills, thus eliciting continued compliance to their will through a prolonged period of time, since changes could be made. "It was the element of uncertainty which surrounded manumission which made freedom an effective form of social manipulation" (Bradley, 1984:99, 112).

Manumission thus served as an incentive for obedient servitude mainly for domestic slaves, most of whom never attained their freedom. Because slaves were systematically dehumanized on the one hand and thus intensely desired freedom on the other, Greek and Roman slave-masters could use the possibility of manumission to manage and manipulate their household staff. "For the masters, manumission was economically rational, partly because it tempted slaves to increase their productivity and lowered the cost to the master of supervising his slaves at work, and partly because the slave's purchase of freedom recapitalised his value Manumission, for all the benefit it gave to ex-slaves, thus served to strengthen slavery as a system" (Hopkins, 1978:131). "By holding out the promise of redemption, the master provides himself with a motivating force more powerful than any whip" (Patterson: 101).

SOME SPECIAL ASPECTS OF ROMAN SLAVERY

Wet-Nursing

Women, like slaves, have usually been "hidden from history," and perhaps women slaves most of all. A further important aspect of the experience of many enslaved women in ancient Roman society has been brought to light by recent research. Both classical literature and Roman inscriptions indicate

that elite families used wet-nurses and other care-givers to nurture their children (Bradley, 1986; 1991). To a degree they employed poor free-born women (Dio Chrysostom 7.114), but mostly they used slaves (or freedwomen) in their own households. Slave-owners thus exploited their slaves' own recent delivery to their own benefit. The *nutrix* inscriptions from Rome, however, also indicate that slave infants were also nursed by women other than their mothers (Bradley, 1986:210). We can imagine various contingencies behind this practice: the death of the mother, separation of child from mother through sale (or inheritance) of mother or infant, or a master's scheme for efficiency in a certain division of labor within the slave staff, with a mother going back to her assigned work while another slave nursed an additional child. Thus some of the wet-nursing practiced was apparently due to slave-breeding, which became more important in the early Empire (Bradley 1986:211–12)

Roman writers, however, viewed the common practice of having slaves nurse upper class children as threatening the proper socialization as well as physical nurture of the child. Favorinus feared the corrupting moral as well as physical influence on a child from a slave, particularly one of a foreign and barbarous nation, . . . dishonest, ugly, unchaste and a wine-bibber—partly because the nurse's milk transmitted her moral characteristics to the child (Aulus Gellius 12.1.8, 11–2; cf. Plutarch, *De Liberis Educandis* 5). Quintilian (1.1.4–5) and Tacitus (*Dialogus* 28.4—29.2) were concerned that children would be morally corrupted by the speech, stories, and beliefs of nurses and other disreputable slaves—concerns that may not have been unfounded, as we shall explore below. The slave nurse, who was the living embodiment of imperial power of conquest and control, thus became the symbol of decadence once she was placed in the intimate position of nurturing the heirs-designate of the imperial elite.

The threat of the “bad” nurse was mitigated somewhat by the stereotype of the “good” nurse, lovingly loyal to her master-nursling and utterly untainted by the resentment or resistance assumed for other slaves. Indeed, the good nurse became a symbolic comforter figure in literature. On the basis of such literature some historians have constructed a romantic view of the parent-child-nurse triangle and have imagined the Roman urban *familia* as a comfortable world free from the tensions and conflicts inherent in the master-slave relationship (Treggiari, 1975:56; 1976:76–104, esp. 89; Vogt: 105–109; Barrow: 37–38). The relationship between slave nurse and elite child was no doubt often close and affectionate, although in practice the senatorial and equestrian slave-holders knew that it was necessary to exercise the proper control of those charged with care of the children. However, this situation also set up the possibility of conflict, insofar as the nurse entered the child's familial world through compulsion rather than choice. A decree by Constantine in 326 suggests that there was always another possible scenario, that of subtle subversion by slave nurses: “Since the watchfulness of parents is often

frustrated by the stories and wicked persuasions of nurses, punishment shall threaten first such nurses whose care is proved to have been detestable and their discourses bribed, and the penalty shall be that the mouth and throat of those who offered incitement to evil shall be closed by pouring in molten lead" (*Theodosian Code* 9.24.1.1). Joshel draws on testimony of masters and slaves from the American south to indicate how the nursling's view of the relationship, which is what is usually represented on Roman *nutrix* inscriptions, may not correspond to the experience of the slave nurse. "The nurses affection and loyalty were there, but not in the way understood by masters who had difficulty seeing beyond their own feelings and their need for the nurse's love and trust" (Joshel: 12). For example, after she was liberated from a Georgia plantation, Louisa continued to tend the children left under her care. But when asked why she did not object to the Union soldiers setting fire to her master's house, she explained: "Cause there has been so much devilment here, whipping niggers most to death to make 'em work to pay for it" (Litwack: 163).

The Familia Caesaris and Other "Managerial Slaves"

That tiny faction of ancient Roman slaves who came into positions of considerable influence and responsibility has recently exercised a particular fascination on classics scholars and others. It has been claimed, for example, that with regard to the ordinary activities of managerial slaves, "it would have been difficult to distinguish them from free or freed people," except for the fact that they were "representatives of powerful people" and thus *appeared* "powerful, not weak" (Martin: 22). The first part of that statement is questionable because of the dominant values of Roman society. Not only was it beneath the dignity of honorable Greeks and Romans to work with their hands, but it was shameful to work for another person.¹ That presented a serious problem for a wealthy magnate who needed agents to manage their *latifundia* and other enterprises and a particularly serious problem for Augustus who, as *princeps*, suddenly faced the problem of a burgeoning imperial administration.

Because slaves were not only "the ultimate human tool" but also dishonored and "naturally alienated" they were available to do any work for another person, available for any assignment, susceptible of being trained for whatever task their master required, moved physically and occupationally at beck and command. Thus the availability of slaves provided a ready-made

¹ As suggested by Patterson's discussion (34), another reason why classics scholars, who have deep roots in aristocratic and bourgeois values, gloss over the realities of ancient slavery is that slavery exposes the demeaning nature of all labor for others, which took a distinctive new form in modern capitalism.

solution to the social and legal problem of having individuals act as agents for another person. For example, "the slave's lack of separate legal personality enabled him to handle funds directly on behalf of his master" (Weaver, 1972:205). Similarly, for the problem of administering both the empire and the extensive personal property of the emperor, the slaves of the emperor, the *familia Caesaris*, were the ideal solution. "As natively alienated persons with no other anchor in Roman society or as freedmen owing their status solely to the emperor, their interests were completely identified with his own and he could use and abuse them as he wished" (Patterson: 304). Such slaves' influence and standing, however, was always dependent. Even freedmen in such positions were considered people without honor (Garnsey: 122). Such slaves' position was thus also always insecure at best. Their masters retained the power to torture and kill even the most powerful managerial slave. "Of necessity, the power of freedmen and slaves was utterly precarious; it existed solely at the whim, feeble-mindedness, or design of the master. Often carnage ensued as the new emperor cleared the deck and settled scores Vespasian crucified Asiaticus, his predecessor's favorite; Otho executed Galba's favorite, Icelus, to public rejoicing; and so on" (Patterson: 307).

The wealth they acquired and influence they wielded did not give the "managerial" slave or freedperson any dignity or standing in the society. As literary sources, particularly satire, indicate quite clearly, the more wealthy and powerful the slave or freedperson, the more contemptuous he would be in the eyes of honorable people. "Indeed, to the degree that elite slaves used their master's power in relation to others, to that degree were they despised. It was precisely because they were without honor that they had risen to their positions in the first place" (Patterson: 331-32).

The Question of Social Mobility

Studies by classical scholars on manumission have been of singular importance recently in New Testament studies well beyond the particular issue of slavery in the sociological analysis of the "first urban Christians" by Wayne Meeks, focused on the "status inconsistency" of upwardly mobile individuals. He makes the sound observation that "the most fundamental change of status for a person of the lower classes was that from slavery to freedom—or vice versa" (20). Focusing on freedmen "because they provide an especially vivid instance of social transitions and the resulting dissonance of status indicators" (21), he draws evidence only from "recent intensive studies of the inscriptional evidence [documenting] the restless upward movement of the imperial slaves" (22), particularly by Weaver (1974; 1972).

Weaver (1974) indeed suggests that inscriptions from members of the *familia Caesaris* "can be of general significance in Roman society . . . [to] throw light on the process of social mobility in general" (123), yet offers no other evi-

dence for social mobility of freed slaves. Two thirds of the males of the *familia Caesaris* did indeed marry freeborn wives. By the end of the study of "social mobility," however, Weaver must actually conclude that, for all the high status of the imperial freedmen, the upward mobility of imperial freedmen into the equestrian order "was the merest trickle" (1974:136). In a more recent study (1991/1996) Weaver sharply questions the whole thesis of the upward mobility of freed slaves. He declares that the burial inscriptions from Rome are not typical of Italian towns and are even less relevant to provincial communities. Evidence from Rome itself over-represents the numbers of freedmen and freedwomen and their offspring (1991/96:189). Moreover, "the marriage pattern of the *familia Caesaris*, as of public slaves, is demonstrably abnormal for slaveborn society in general" (177). Weaver refers rather to "perceptive studies of the lower classes in Roman society [which indicate that] the effects of slavery on family life at those levels cannot be overemphasized—slave breeding, sale of children, forced separation of families, the general imputation of moral inferiority to slaves of all ages. These effects persisted to a considerable degree past the barrier of manumission and left their stigma on the next generation as well, even those fortunate enough to be freeborn." (1991/96:177; citing Rawson 1966:71ff., 1986a:170ff.) The most we can imagine is that freedmen's marriage "with freeborn women of citizen status would create the possibility of whole families of freeborn citizen children. This would enable the taint of servile blood to be minimized and enhance the social mobility of their descendants. But, in the absence of conspicuous wealth, this would not necessarily be achieved in the first generation, and not easily in sufficient numbers to produce a social invasion from below" (190). Not only was social mobility of freedmen nowhere near what was previously imagined, but the orientalist anxieties about Roman blood, and the civilization to which it gave rise, having run the risk of contamination from the East was historically unfounded.

Roman imperial society generally consisted of a static pyramid of legally mandated orders and a relatively rigid hierarchy of statuses. For what minimal social mobility there was, slavery, even most "managerial" roles, would not have provided a very promising launching pad, considering the social stigma that still attached to the minority of slaves who became freedmen/women—unless we are thinking of a social mobility that happened over three or four generations. The experience of the vast majority of slaves cannot be mitigated by focusing on the unusual influence or atypical mobility of a "select few." Nor would it be methodologically sound to juxtapose evidence for the perks available to that "select few" with the generally depressed circumstances of the vast majority of free people in the Roman empire. That some sold themselves into slavery says more about the condition of the masses of free people than it does about "the positive meaning of slavery." As noted above, for example, the dramatic social changes wrought precisely by

the expansion of the slave system in the late Republic brought impoverishment to the majority of Italian peasants in a wide radius around Rome. Not only did slavery not mean "upward mobility" for the vast mass of slaves, but the masses of freeborn people were experiencing a downward slide in both economic circumstances and social-legal status. Finley calls attention to "an important symbol of the changing social structure and accompanying social psychology which [had] set in by the second century CE that so-called *humiliores* [humble freeborn people] were transferred by law to the 'slave category'" in respect to corporal punishment and torture. The extension of humiliating indignities to "the lower classes among the citizen population . . . was a qualitative transformation in social values and behavior" (1980:95).

IMPLICATIONS FOR NEW TESTAMENT STUDIES

Slavery, as an integral aspect of Roman imperial society, impinges on the New Testament in numerous ways and with profound impact: in the historical condition out of which the Jesus movement and the early mission of Paul and others arose; in the focal symbols of the gospel message; and in the households and individual people who joined the movement(s).

According to Josephus and other sources, as noted above, Roman warlords enslaved tens of thousands of Judeans and Galileans who then ended up in slave markets in Rome and elsewhere in the generations before, during, and after the life of Jesus, Paul, and their associates. Cassius reportedly enslaved 30,000 people at Magdala two generations prior to Mary Magdalen. In retaliation against the popular messianic movement led by Judas son of Hezekiah in 4 BCE, right about the time Jesus was born, the Romans enslaved the people in Sepphoris or its environs near the village of Nazareth. After reconquering Galilee during the Jewish revolt in 67, Vespasian sent six thousand slaves to work on the canal at the Isthmus of Corinth. This meant not only collective trauma within Judean and Galilean society in the aftermath of mass enslavement. It also meant that tens of thousands of Judean and Galilean peasants ended up as slaves in Rome itself or other cities of the empire in which missionaries such as Paul catalyzed communities of a movement rooted in Israelite tradition. A substantial portion of the Jews living in Rome were apparently slaves or freedmen/women (Fuks; Lampe). Other subject peoples to whom Paul and others took their mission had also suffered the trauma of mass-enslavement—e.g., the Galatians, to whom Paul addressed an impassioned message about "freedom" and not falling back into "slavery" (Galatians 3–5).

In the areas of mission to the Gentiles the fundamental gospel message resonated with the experience of slavery. In the context of a recently subjected country such as Judea and Galilee, crucifixion would have been experienced and understood as the form of torturous execution practiced against insur-

rectionaries fighting to preserve their indigenous culture and way of life. In the context of Greek cities long since "pacified" and assimilated into the Roman imperial order, crucifixion would have been experienced and understood as the form of execution practiced against trouble-making slaves. It may not be surprising therefore to find in an early (pre-Pauline) hymn that "taking the form of a slave" is the key image for the "incarnation," the lowest of the low in a dehumanized and degraded condition (see further Briggs). As Patterson points out, even a message of freedom, such as Paul's exhortation to the Galatians (Galatians 3–6), depended on experience in a slave-holding society, for freedom had meaning only in contrast with slavery.

In the synoptic Gospel traditions, particularly the parables, derived from and rooted in Galilean Israelite culture not permeated by typical Greek and Roman slavery, perhaps most of the *douloi* would have originally been understood as "servants." Some *douloi*, however, such as those in the parable of the tenants (Mark 12:1–9 & par.), are clearly the "slaves" who comprised the staff of the large "households" of the ruling elite. Those who heard/read the Gospels with the assumptions shaped by their socialization into the dominant Roman imperial society, however, may well have taken any *douloi* as slaves.

Slavery, finally, figured prominently in the membership and structure of the "assemblies" that were the local forms of the overall "assembly" (*ekklesia*) of the movement. Whenever a "household" is mentioned, as in those of Stephanus, Gaius, and Crispus in Corinth (1 Cor 1:14–16; 16:15–16; cf. Rom 16:10–11, 23), it is possible that a whole household including its slaves (or freed-slaves?) was involved in a local "assembly." Paul even mentions the "saints in the emperor's household" (i.e., the *familia Caesaris*, through which the empire was administered), although we have no idea whether such "saints" were menial or "managerial" slaves. Actual or hypothetical slaves also crop up that we may miss, unless we are familiar with the patterns of slavery in antiquity. For example, it is at least likely that the "prostitute" mentioned hypothetically in 1 Cor 6:15–16 would have been a slave. By the third if not the second generation at least some assemblies of the young movement had assimilated to the dominant pattern of Roman imperial society, based in slave-holding households. Thus the deutero-Pauline letters and other early Christian documents include in their standard exhortations to the faithful that "slaves . . ." (e.g., Eph 6:5–8; Col 3:22–24; 1 Tim 6:1–2; Tit 2:9–10; 1 Pet 2:18–25 [here not *douloi* but *oiketai*]).

Finally, over against apologists for Christianity working from liberal individualistic perspectives and assumptions, it must be recognized that taking a stand in favor of abolishing slavery in Greek and Roman antiquity would not have occurred to anyone. Slavery was part and parcel of the whole political-economic-religious structure. The only way even of imagining a society without slavery would have been to imagine a different society.

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