# 9

# The Multiple Honours of Enslaved People in Ancient Greek Societies

*Kostas Vlassopoulos**

In his famous book *Slavery and Social Death*, Orlando Patterson presented a link between slavery and honour that has proved highly influential with scholars working in many disciplines, periods and areas.[1] Patterson argued that dishonour was an essential element of slavery in its various global permutations, alongside natal alienation; the lack of honour was a defining element of what it meant to be a slave. Over the last decade, a series of studies have started to critically re-examine the value of Patterson's conceptual scheme;[2] this chapter, alongside the other contributions to this volume, aims to extend this rethinking and challenge the validity of Patterson's essentialist linkage of slavery with dishonour. My main argument is that this identification is highly misleading and one-sided. It is beyond dispute, of course, that dishonour was a condition that was often inflicted on slaves. Patterson's approach primarily focuses on the perspective of the masters and the slaveholding societies they lived in; from that perspective, his approach is undoubtedly useful. At the same time, however, slaves constructed and exhibited various forms of honour, on the basis of their various coexisting identities; finally, the various relationships in which slavery was inscribed did not result solely in the dishonouring of slaves, but could also employ forms and conceptions of honour in ways that are radically different from what Patterson's approach makes us assume.

In order to approach the honour of enslaved persons, we need to make some clarifications with regard both to slavery and to honour. Slaves were undoubtedly the property of their masters; in addition, ancient political communities generally accorded hardly any rights to slaves and excluded them from most activities that were intimately connected to male free status.[3] It is the cumulative consequence of these two factors that makes slavery and dishonour so deeply intertwined. If honour is, among other things, a right to respect, as Frank Henderson Stewart has argued,[4] it follows that slave status

* Translations are principally drawn from Bathrellou and Vlassopoulos 2022; other translations are the author's unless otherwise indicated.

[1] Patterson 1982.

[2] For early criticisms of Patterson's approach, see Franklin 1983; for more recent and more systematic engagements, see Brown 2009; Bodel and Scheidel 2016.

[3] For slavery as property, see the exhaustive treatment in Lewis 2016; 2018. For slavery and exclusion from activities associated with the free, see Mactoux 1988.

[4] Stewart 1994: 21.

as such had no right to respect, and accordingly no honour. But enslaved persons were not defined exclusively on the basis of their slave status; they were also defined through the various relationships they constructed or participated in.[5] Relationships with their masters were obviously important; these relationships could give rise to honour and its attendant claims – see Canevaro in this volume. But equally important were relationships with other free people apart from their masters, with other slaves, as well as within the various communities on the basis of kinship, occupation, ethnicity and cult that slaves participated in. Within these relationships, slaves played a variety of roles. Some of these roles were linked with their status as slaves: they worked as cultivators, servants, artisans or in positions of trust and authority.[6] Other roles were independent from or relatively detached from their status as slaves: enslaved persons were often members of families and kinship groups and performed roles as parents, spouses, lovers, siblings, relatives or children; they were members of ethnic communities or occupational and religious associations. If slaves had no right to respect on the basis of their slave status, things might have been quite different with regard to the other roles that slaves played.

In order to conceptualise this issue, it is worth employing the distinction between recognition respect and appraisal respect proposed by Stephen Darwall.[7] Recognition respect consists in 'a disposition to weigh appropriately in one's deliberations some feature of the person in question and to act accordingly'.[8] Recognition respect could be paid to legal status, and from this point of view slaves could have no claim to respect. But recognition respect could also be accorded to the other roles played by slaves; it could, for example, be accorded to their roles as spouses or parents, as we shall see below. Recognition respect could also be paid to the occupational roles that slaves performed; in fact, in the case of slaves who lived and worked on their own as artisans or traders, the transactions they entered could not have worked efficiently unless other persons prioritised according recognition to the occupational roles of the enslaved persons rather than paying attention solely to their status as slaves.[9] Appraisal respect has as its objects 'persons or features which are held to manifest their excellence as persons or as engaged in some specific pursuit'.[10] This kind of respect could be paid to valuable features exhibited by slaves (loyalty, love, trustworthiness) or to feats that enslaved persons performed in the course of playing their roles as e.g. artisans, holders of positions of authority, or members of cult groups. In other words, once we take into account not just slave status, but also the relationships that involved enslaved persons, we are in a position to discover the multiple honours of enslaved people in antiquity. In this chapter I shall examine three major examples of such relationships: between masters and slaves; relationships between free and slave; and relationships within the communities that slaves created or participated in.[11]

[5] Vlassopoulos 2022.

[6] For a detailed examination of these slave roles and how they figured in the identity of Roman slaves, see Joshel 1992.

[7] Darwall 1977; see also Darwall 2013b.

[8] Darwall 1977: 38.

[9] See the excellent discussion in Canevaro 2018.

[10] Darwall 1977: 38.

[11] For a detailed analysis of these relationships, see Vlassopoulos 2021: 113–46.

The arguments of this chapter require two important caveats. The first is that they focus primarily, but not exclusively, on male slaves. Slavery, like everything else, was a highly gendered experience; what applies to the honour of male slaves might apply in significantly different ways to the honour of female slaves. Given the nature of the sources examined below, the focus on male slaves is largely unavoidable; I hope to examine in a future contribution the extent to which the arguments presented here in regards to male slaves can be also applied to female slaves. The second caveat concerns the focus of this volume on the relationship between honour and slavery in the Greek world. As I have argued elsewhere, the traditional identification of Greek slavery with slavery in classical Athens can no longer stand.[12] The history of Greek slavery must finally embrace the history of slave systems in the Hellenistic and early imperial Greek-speaking Eastern Mediterranean. In this respect, I employ in this chapter Greek sources from the Hellenistic and early imperial periods. At the same time, Greek slave systems, in particular in the early imperial period, were seriously affected by the impact of Roman slaveholding practices, legal systems and ideologies. There is no space in this chapter to examine the complex implications of this entanglement; I hope again to be able to examine the issue in a future contribution.

## Masters, Slaves and Honour

Let us start with the relationship between masters and slaves. There is no doubt that this was commonly conceived as an instrumental relationship in which slaves existed in order to fulfil the needs and wishes of their masters. The fact that slaves were property and had almost no claims towards their masters that Greek legal systems felt obliged to protect made the master–slave relationship extremely asymmetrical in principle.[13] Violence and the threat of violence were often sufficient tools for regulating this relationship, as numerous ancient sources attest.[14] But it is important to point out the existence of sources which point in a different direction, since they have important implications. I start with a passage from pseudo-Aristotle's *Economics* (1344a22–7, trans. Armstrong):

> δούλων δὲ εἴδη δύο, ἐπίτροπος καὶ ἐργάτης. ἐπεὶ δὲ ὁρῶμεν ὅτι αἱ παιδεῖαι ποιούς τινας ποιοῦσι τοὺς νέους, ἀναγκαῖον καὶ παρασκευασάμενον τρέφειν οἷς τὰ ἐλευθέρια τῶν ἔργων προστακτέον. ὁμιλία δὲ πρὸς δούλους ὡς μήτε ὑβρίζειν ἐᾶν μήτε ἀνιᾶν, καὶ τοῖς μὲν ἐλευθεριωτέροις τιμῆς μεταδιδόναι, τοῖς δ᾽ ἐργάταις τροφῆς πλῆθος.
>
> Of slaves there are two kinds; those in positions of trust, and the labourers. And since it is a matter of experience that the character of the young can be moulded by training, when we require charging slaves with tasks befitting the free, we have not only to procure the slaves, but to bring them up for this. In our intercourse with slaves we must neither suffer them to be insolent nor treat them with cruelty. A

[12] Vlassopoulos 2021: 166–99.

[13] For slaves and Greek states and legal systems, see Ismard 2019b.

[14] See e.g. [Plut.] *On the Education of Children* 8f–9a. For violence and ancient slavery, see Klees 1998: 176–217; Hunt 2016b; Lenski 2016.

> share of honour should be given to those who are doing more of a freeman's work, and abundance of food to those who are labouring with their hands.

Pseudo-Aristotle points out a major distinction among slaves: between the majority of slaves who worked as labourers under the direct control and supervision of their masters or their representatives, and a minority of slaves who operated in positions of trust and authority. He proposes that a form of recognition respect should be paid to slaves in positions of trust and authority who perform tasks associated with free status. How this conception worked in practice can be examined in a third-century CE petition from Oxyrhynchus in Egypt (*P. Turner* 41 = Bathrellou–Vlassopoulos 1.18):

> Αὐρηλίῳ Π[ρω]τάρχ[ῳ] τῷ καὶ Ἥρωνι στρα(τηγῷ) Ὀξυ(ρυγχίτου) παρὰ Αὐ[ρ]ηλ[ίας] Σαραπιάδος τῆς καὶ Διονυσαρίου θυ[γα]τρὸς Ἀπολλοφάνους τοῦ καὶ Σαραπάμμωνος ἐξηγητεύσαντος τῆς Ἀντινοέ(ν) πόλεως [χω]ρὶς κυρίου χρηματιζούσης δικαίῳ τέκνων. ἔχουσα πρότερον τοῦ πατρός μου δοῦλον ὀνόματι Σαραπίωνα καὶ τοῦτον νομίσασα μηδὲν φαῦλόν τι διαπρά[ξ]ασθαι τῷ εἶναί μου πατρικὸν καὶ πεπιστεῦσθαι ὑπ᾽ ἐμοῦ τὰ ἡμαέτερα, οὗτος οὐκ οἶθ᾽ ὅπως ἐξ ἐπιτριβῆς τινων ἀλλότρια φρονήσας τῆς παρεχομένης αὐτῷ ὑπ᾽ ἐμοῦ τιμῆς καὶ χορηγίας τῶν ἀναγκαίων πρὸς δίαιταν ὑφελόμενός τινα ἀπὸ τῶν ἡμετέρων μεθ᾽ ὧν αὐτῷ κατεσκεύασα ἱματίων καὶ ἄλλων καὶ ὧν καὶ αὐτὸς ἑαυτῷ περιεποιήσατο ἐκ τῶν ἡμετέρων λάθρᾳ ἀπέδρα. Περιηχηθεῖσα δὲ εἶναι τοῦτον ἐν τῷ Νόμου ἐποι̣κ[ίῳ] . . .
>
> To Aurelius Protarchus, also called Heron, strategus of the Oxyrhynchite nome, from Aurelia Sarapias, also called Dionysarion, daughter of Apollophanes . . . I have a slave, formerly of my father's, Sarapion by name, who I thought would commit nothing wrong, since he was my paternal slave and had been entrusted by me with our affairs. This man (I don't know how – on the provocation of others) adopted an enemy's attitude towards the honour and provision of the necessaries for life I gave him. He stealthily took some of our things, together with some clothes I had prepared for him and some others and some other stuff, which he helped himself to from our belongings, and secretly ran away. I got wind of the fact that he was at Chairemon's house, in the hamlet of Nomou . . .[15]

Aurelia Sarapias petitions the strategus with regard to the flight of her slave Sarapion. She appears perplexed by the fact that the slave chose to flee and steal some of her belongings, despite the fact that she had provided him with life's necessities and had treated him with honour. Given that she describes Sarapion as 'entrusted with her affairs', it is reasonable to assume that he had a position of trust and authority; this seems to accord with pseudo-Aristotle's distinction we examined above. But what did honour consist of in this instance, and what was the point of a mistress treating her slave with honour? A helpful hint in this respect comes from Artemidorus' *Interpretation of Dreams* (2.9 = Bathrellou–Vlassopoulos 1.27), in a discussion of lightning as a symbol indicating drastic changes in the lives of the dreamers:

[15] See Llewelyn 1992: 55–60, 1997: 9–46.

> τὸ κεραυνοῦσθαι . . . δούλων μὲν τοὺς μὴ ἐν πίστει ὄντας ἐλευθεροῖ, τοὺς δὲ ἐν πίστει ὄντας ἢ τιμῇ παρὰ τοῖς δεσπόταις ἢ πολλὰ κτήματα ἔχοντας ἀφαιρεῖ τῆς πίστεως καὶ τῆς τιμῆς καὶ τῶν κτημάτων.
>
> Being struck by lightning will result in the manumission of those slaves who are not in a position of trust; but slaves who are trusted and honoured by their masters or own many possessions will be deprived of those.[16]

Artemidorus distinguishes between two groups of slaves: the first group without privileges, presumably the majority, and a second privileged group, consisting of those who have honour, trust and possessions from their masters. We can interpret these honours bestowed by masters on their slaves in two ways, which are mutually compatible. Honour consists of the positions of trust and the possessions that masters gave to their slaves; these privileges are the visible manifestation of how masters honour their slaves. But we can also argue that honour, and the other privileges, are construed as rewards; they constitute what masters offer to their slaves as recognition of their meritorious acts or faithful service. This is clearly expressed in an important passage from Xenophon's *Oeconomicus* (14.8–9, trans. Marchant), in which Ischomachus discusses how he treats his slaves:

> οὓς δ' ἂν αἰσθάνωμαι, ἔφη, ὅμως καὶ εὖ πάσχοντας ἔτι ἀδικεῖν πειρωμένους, τούτους ὡς ἀνηκέστους πλεονέκτας ὄντας ἤδη καὶ τῆς χρήσεως ἀποπαύω. οὓς δ' ἂν αὖ καταμάθω μὴ τῷ πλέον ἔχειν μόνον διὰ τὴν δικαιοσύνην ἐπαιρομένους δικαίους εἶναι, ἀλλὰ καὶ τοῦ ἐπαινεῖσθαι ἐπιθυμοῦντας ὑπ' ἐμοῦ, τούτοις ὥσπερ ἐλευθέροις ἤδη χρῶμαι, οὐ μόνον πλουτίζων ἀλλὰ καὶ τιμῶν ὡς καλούς τε κἀγαθούς.
>
> And if I find any attempting to persist in dishonesty, although they are well treated, I regard them as incorrigibly greedy, and have nothing more to do with them. On the other hand, if I discover that a man is inclined to be honest not only because he gains by his honesty, but also from a desire to win my approbation, I treat him like a free man by making him rich; and not only so, but I honour him as a gentleman.[17]

Ischomachus distinguishes clearly between material rewards and honour; while he is dealing with slaves, who have no claim to recognition respect on the basis of their slave status, he is still willing to accord appraisal respect to certain slaves for their feats and appropriate moral disposition.

This observation highlights an important wider point. Slavery could certainly be construed as a relationship of property, as a permanent and dishonourable status, or as an instrumental relationship; but in all ancient societies there also existed alternative modalities, that conceptualised slavery in very different and often quite

[16] For Artemidorus and slavery, see Annequin 1987; Klees 1990; Chandezon 2018.

[17] For detailed discussion of the use of rewards and other slaving strategies in Greek slavery, see now Porter 2025.

contradictory ways.[18] Slavery could be perceived as a highly asymmetrical but reciprocal relationship of benefit and reward, assimilated to other asymmetrical reciprocal relationships like patronage: masters benefited from the services of their slaves and were grateful for them; slaves benefited from the benevolent protection of their masters and expressed their gratitude and respect. This is the phenomenon of master–slave paternalism, so effectively described by Eugene Genovese in respect to the antebellum US South.[19] This modality of reciprocity of benefactions and rewards is presented by a Milesian inscription from the imperial period (*SEG* xlvi 1475 = Bathrellou–Vlassopoulos 12.34):

> Τιβέριον Ἰούλιον· Τίτου Δαμιανοῦ Ἀσία[ς] ἀρχιερέως, υἱόν Κορνηλία Φροῦ<γι> Δαμιανόν ἡ φαμιλία τὸν ἴδιον κύριον.
>
> Tiberius Julius Frugi Damianus, son of Titus Damianus, high priest of Asia, of the tribe Cornelia; the *familia* [honours] its own master.

It is worth noting the Roman context of this inscription, both in the use of Latin words (*familia*) and in the Roman citizenship of the master. It is of course already remarkable to see a community of fellow slaves performing an honouring act in relationship to its master; but it is equally worth stressing the elite status of the master, who occupied the prestigious position of high priest of the imperial cult in the province of Asia. Slaves could gain honour by their association with a prestigious master in comparison with slaves owned by ordinary masters; this is in important respects the *raison d'être* of this particular inscription. I will give two further examples which illustrate the significance of masters for the honour acquired by their slaves. My first example is an imperial-period inscription from Bithynia (*I.Iznik* 1201 = Bathrellou–Vlassopoulos 5.30):

> ἀγαθῇ τύχῃ· ἔτους βι΄ [ἡ] Ὀκαηνῶ[ν] κώμη ἐτείμησεν Δορύφορον τῆς κρατίστης Κ[λ](αυδίας) Εἰάδος {δ} οἰκονόμον ταλαμῶνι καὶ εἰκόσιν καὶ προεδρίᾳ καὶ κατευχῇ{ν} διὰ βίου, καὶ τὴν γυναῖκαν αὐτοῦ Ποταμιάδα ἀρετῆς χάριν καὶ φιλανδρίας, διὰ τὸ ἡμᾶς πατρωνεῦ<σ>θαι ὑπὸ αὐτοῦ ἀσυνκρίτως.
>
> With good fortune. In the year 12, the village of the Okaenoi honoured Doryphoros, the estate manager of the excellent Claudia Eias, with a stele, portraits, seating in the first row and prayers, for the duration of his entire life. Also his wife Potamias, for her virtue and her love for her husband. [The reason for this honour] is that he has been an outstanding patron for us.

Doryphoros is described as the estate manager (*oikonomos*); the fact that the estate owner Claudia Eias is recorded with her Roman *nomen*, while there is no *nomen* mentioned for Doryphoros, suggests that he was still a slave and not a Roman freedman, though the argument cannot be conclusive. It is fairly obvious that the village of the

[18] For modalities of slavery, see Vlassopoulos 2018a; 2021: 148–54.
[19] Genovese 1974.

Okaenoi honours Doryphoros because of the important role he plays in the estate of a woman who was probably a major landowner in the area; it is the honour and prestige of the mistress which shaped the honour received by the slave. The Roman citizenship of this female landowner in a Greek-speaking area is a characteristic example of the entanglement between Greek and Roman ideologies and practices of honour.

Another interesting example is offered by an imperial-period inscription from Lydia (*TAM* V.1 442 = Bathrellou–Vlassopoulos 7.9):

> Εὔτυχος Ἰουλίας Ταβίλλης δοῦλος πραγματευτὴς σὺν καὶ τῇ γυναικὶ Ἐπιγόνῃ εὐχὴν ὑπὲρ υἱοῦ Νεική[τ]ου Μηνὶ Ἀξιεττηνῷ διὰ τὸ σ<ω>θῆναι αὐτὸν ὑπὸ τοῦ θεοῦ ἀσθενοῦντα.
>
> Eutychos, slave business agent of Ioulia Tabille, together with his wife Epigone, (offer this) to Men Axiettenos as fulfilment of a vow on behalf of their son Niketas, because, when ill, he was saved by the god.

In this particular case, the manager mentioned by single name explicitly states that he is the slave of a Roman mistress, thus supporting the interpretation for the earlier inscription. The reference to the mistress has no link to the rest of the inscription, which records the fulfilment of a vow made by the slave and his wife for the health of their son; it is therefore likely that it is the prestige of the mistress which explains why she is mentioned in this otherwise unrelated document. Eutychos could acquire honour by being associated with his important Roman mistress.

## Free People, Slaves and Honour

We can now move to the second relationship, that between free and slave. Prima facie, it is again fairly evident that there is a major disjuncture between the honourable free and the dishonourable slaves. This disjuncture can be illustrated with multiple examples: free people were punished with monetary fines for punishable offences, while slaves faced physical punishment for the very same offences;[20] slaves were excluded from eminently honourable activities, such as participation in the gymnasium and in pederastic relationships;[21] in societies in which kinship was one of the major structuring elements for the free population, slave kinship was legally invisible.[22] Freedom allowed women access to an honourable way of life, to the extent that *eleuthera* (free woman) ultimately became a synonym for wife; slavery had the opposite consequences for dishonoured female slaves.[23]

One could multiply examples ad infinitum; but at the same time, it is important to introduce a number of significant qualifications. The major one is that the

[20] See e.g. the regulations in *IG* II² 1362 from fourth-century BCE Athens.

[21] See e.g. the gymnasiarchal law of Beroia: *EKM* 1, Beroia 1, 21–32; see Mactoux 1988; Gauthier and Hatzopoulos 1993; Roubineau 2018.

[22] For kinship in Athens, see Humphreys 2018. For slave kinship, see Martin 2003; Mouritsen 2011a; Schmitz 2012; Simonis 2017.

[23] Harper 2016b.

identification of the free/slave distinction with the honoured/dishonoured distinction did not apply to all Greek communities in the same way and did not hold under all circumstances. Being a slave was not associated in all Greek communities with exclusion from honour and honourable activities. I will take as an example the case of marriage, as it is particularly relevant for the concept of dishonour and social death, as conceived by Orlando Patterson. In patriarchal slave-owning societies marriage is not always an activity associated with honour; it could be inflicted on slaves irrespective of their actual will, as the biography of Malchus so eloquently illustrates (Jerome, *Life of Malchus* 6). This is undoubtedly an important side of the coin; at the same time, not only is the offer of marriage an honour in itself, but marriage restrictions between groups with different social status and prestige emphasise the significance of honour for marriage practices. It would follow that marriages between free and slave should be unthinkable, and that was of course the case in many ancient, medieval and early modern societies; classical Athens would again be a characteristic example of this phenomenon. But in other societies, this was clearly not the case, as one finds in the ancient Near East or in medieval Muslim societies, where mixed marriages were permitted.[24] As regards the Greek world, the clearest evidence for mixed marriages concerns the regulations in the fifth-century BCE law code of Gortyn. Gortynian laws could show a fairly clear distinction between the relative honour of free and slave individuals: while the rape of a free person by another free person was punished by a fine of 200 drachmas, the rape of a slave by a free person was valued at only 5 drachmas (*IC* IV 72 II 2–9); the ratio of 1:40 expresses eloquently the relative honour of each group.[25] But at the same time, other regulations in the code (*IC* IV 72 VI 56–VII 10 = Bathrellou–Vlassopoulos 12.26) point in a different direction:

> [αἴ κ᾽ ὁ δ̃ολος] ἐπὶ τὰν ἐλευθέραν ἐλθὸν ὀπυίει, ἐλεύθερ᾽ ἔμεν τὰ τέκνα. αἰ δέ κ᾽ ἀ ἐλευθέρα ἐπὶ τὸν δ̃ολον, δ̃ολ᾽ ἔμεν τὰ τέκνα. αἰ δέ κ᾽ ἐς τ̃ας αὐτ̃ας ματρὸς ἐλεύθερα καὶ δ̃ολα τέκνα γένεται, ἔ̃κ᾽ ἀποθάνει ἀ μάτερ, αἴ κ᾽ ἔ̃ι κρέματα, τὸνς ἐλευθέρονς ἔκεν. αἰ δ᾽ ἐλευθέροι μὲ ἐκσεῖεν, τὸνς ἐπιβάλλοντανς ἀναιλέ̃θαι.
>
> If the slave goes to a free woman and marries her, their children are to be free; but if the free woman [goes to] the slave, their children are to be slaves. And if free and slave children are born from the same mother, when the mother dies, if there is property, the free children are to have it; but if there should be no free children, her relatives are to inherit it.

The law aims to regulate the legal status and inheritance rights of children from mixed marriages; mixed marriages as such are not the issue here, and consequently we do not know anything else concerning the circumstances in which such marriages would take place.[26] I want to emphasise two aspects; the first is that mixed marriages are simply

[24] Westbrook 1998; Ali 2010; Vlassopoulos 2018b; (forthcoming).

[25] See Lewis 2018: 150–3.

[26] For property rights as the main issue of these regulations, see Lewis 2013.

taken for granted, without the need to offer any context or qualification; the second is that the mixed marriages mentioned here concern relationships between male slaves and free women. Given the patriarchal structure of ancient societies, relations between free males and female subordinates were accepted in many of them; what was rather unusual was relationships between free females and male subordinates, which were usually seriously frowned upon, if not actively prohibited.[27] Whatever the social background behind the Gortynian regulation, it is fairly evident that either legal status did not carry sufficient dishonour to obstruct slaves from entering into marriages with free women, or the dishonour of slave status applied only within certain limits, and did not affect social practices outside these limits. This chimes in well with Aristotle's observation (*Pol.* 2.2, 1264a17–22) that Cretans allowed to their slaves everything they allowed to themselves, with the exception of participating in the gymnasium and the possession of weapons.

The existing evidence does not enable us to tell whether other Greek cities allowed slaves access to honourable practices such as marriage, as was the case in Gortyn. But we can be fairly certain that Greek cities could opt to put aside the dishonour associated with slavery in certain contexts and for certain purposes. I do not want to enter here the debate as to whether the Athenian law of *hybris* recognises slave honour, an issue discussed extensively by Canevaro, and by Fisher in his chapter in this volume. I turn instead to the case of public slaves, recently analysed superbly by Paulin Ismard.[28] Some decrees record honours for Greek public slaves; an interesting case concerns an Athenian fragmentary honorary decree from 302/1 BCE (*SEG* lix 117, trans. Lambert). The first fragment of the decree records the following:

> [ἐπὶ Νικοκλέο]υς ἄρχοντος ἐπὶ τῆς Λεωντ[ίδος δεκάτης] πρυτανείας ἧι Νίκων Θεοδ[ώρου Πλωθεὺ]ς ἐγραμμ<ά>τευεν· Μουνιχιῶν[ος τρίτηι μετ᾽] εἰκάδας, δευτέραι καὶ εἰκ[οστῆι τῆς πρ]υτανείας· ἐκκλησία· τῶν προέ[δρων ἐπεψή]φιζεν Σωσίστρατος Ἀντιφάν[ου Κήττιος?] καὶ συνπρόεδροι· Λυσίστρατ[ος ..... Φ]ιλόφρων Ἀτην, Ἡγήμων Ἀναγ, Νικ[ο..... Ἁ]λαι, Φρουρίδης Ὄαθ, Βόηθος Θορ, [.....]ος Ἄθμο, Ἀντικλῆς Ἐλευσί, Θεόδω[ρος Οἰνα]ῖ, Φιλῖνος Αἰγιλ· ἔδοξεν τῶι δήμ[ωι....]ίδης Χαρίτωνος Μυρρι εἶπεν· π[ερὶ ὧν Ἀν]τιφάτης ὁ δημό[σ]ιος ἔδοξεν ἐν τ[ῶι δήμωι ἔνν]ομα ἱκετεύειν, ἐπειδὴ Ἐπικ[ράτης πρό]τερόν τε συμπεμφθεὶς ἐπὶ στρ[ατοπέδου] ὑπηρετήσων τῶι στρατηγῶι Λ[εωσθένει κ]αὶ τῶν πολιτῶν τοῖς στρατ[ευομένοις καὶ] παρέμεινε πάντα τὸν χρ[όνον]
>
> In the archonship of Nikokles, in the tenth prytany, of Leontis, for which Nikon, son of Theodoros of Plotheia, was secretary; on the twenty-eighth of Mounichion, the twenty-second of the prytany. Assembly. Of the presiding committee, Sosistratos, son of Antiphanes of [Kettos?], was putting to the vote, and his fellow presiding committee members: Lysistratos of [-]; Philophron of Atene; Hegemon of Anagyrous; Niko[-] of Halai; Phrourides of Oa; Boethos of Thorikos; [-]os of Athmonon; Antikles of Eleusis; Theodoros of Oinoe; Philinos of Aigilia. The People decided. [-]ides, son of Chariton of Myrrhinous,

[27] See e.g. Evans-Grubbs 1993.
[28] Ismard 2017.

> proposed: about what Antiphates the public slave is deemed to have made a lawful supplication, since Epikrates both previously was sent to join camp to serve the general L[eosthenes?] and those of the citizens on campaign and remained the whole time . . .[29]

The second fragment of the decree in its original state would have recorded the honours voted for Epikrates, but its preserved part makes it impossible to tell what exactly was voted; but it specifies that Epikrates was a public slave (*dēmosios*), something left unspecified in the first fragment.[30] But the main issue of these two fragments is quite clear: the Athenian assembly accepts the supplication of one public slave in order to honour another public slave.

How should we explain this apparent discrepancy between the honours voted to public slaves and the dishonour associated with slave status? Some scholars have argued that public slaves possessed a special status that distinguished them from ordinary slaves, which explains peculiar practices like public honours.[31] The telling piece of evidence against such arguments is the fact that public slaves are punished in precisely the same ways as ordinary private slaves. The legal status of public slaves was the same as that of other slaves; but for certain purposes, Greek cities opted to put aside the free/slave distinction and treat them as if they were free. In other words, Greek cities punished public slaves as slaves, and honoured them as if they were free.[32]

The setting aside of the distinction between free and slave for certain purposes can be observed in various aspects of social and economic life. In cities like Athens many slaves lived and worked on their own and only surrendered to their masters a fixed or variable proportion of their earnings. These slaves effectively operated as independent producers and resembled free persons in many respects.[33] This form of slavery could only operate if people involved in social and economic exchanges with these slaves treated them primarily on the basis of their personal characteristics and occupational identities, rather than on the basis of their slave status.[34] Furthermore, free people would have treated such slaves as agents in their own right and would have had expectations of them in terms of the slaves' ability to sustain such interactions, and vice versa. Accordingly, free and slave participants in such interactions would adopt what Stephen Darwall has described as the second-person standpoint, even if this only applied to these particular interactions. As Mirko Canevaro has argued, societies like Athens operated with multiple spheres of honour, some of which were distinct from each other, while others were overlapping. Slaves could acquire honour in particular spheres as a result of their personal characteristics or occupational activities; but while free people could relatively easily have their claims to honour transferred from one sphere into another, and from the social, economic and cultural exchanges of the interaction order into the

[29] See Oliver 2009; Ismard 2017: 70–3.

[30] For another honorary decree for a secretary of the treasurers who was also probably a public slave, see *I.Eleusis* 182.

[31] E.g. Hunter 2006.

[32] Ismard 2017: 57–79.

[33] Kamen 2016; Porter 2021a.

[34] Darwall 2006.

institutional order of the state, such a recognition of honour claims across different spheres and orders was impossible or particularly difficult for slaves.[35]

## Slave Communities and Honour

This brings us to relationships within the communities that slaves created or participated in. The identities of enslaved persons did not depend solely on their status as slaves; they also constructed alternative identities and communities on the basis of family, kinship, profession, ethnicity and cult.[36] The honour of enslaved persons often revolved around these communities, rather than their slave status in itself. Let us start by examining slave communities in which slave status formed an important common element. We can start with communities which were based on the fact that all slaves belonged to the same master, as illustrated from an inscription from second-century CE Lydia (*TAM* V.1 71 = Bathrellou–Vlassopoulos 12.33):

> κολλήγιον φαμιλίας Γ. Ἰ(ουλίου) Κουαδράτου τ[ὸ] ὂν ἐν Θερμαῖς Θησέως κώμῃ τῆς Μοκαδδηνῆς ἐτείμησαν Ἐπιτυνχάνοντα ἥρωα ἐτῶν ἡ, προνοησαμένων Ἐπιτυν[χά]νοντος πατρὸς καὶ μητρὸς Σωτηρίδος.
>
> The *collegium* of the *familia* of Gaius Julius Quadratus, based in Theseus' Thermai, a village in Mokaddene, honoured Epitynchanon, hero, eight years old; his father Epitynchanon and his mother Soteris made provisions [about this].

In this case, the community of fellow slaves gathered together to honour one of their members who died particularly young; the slave mother and father of the deceased played their own prominent role in this act of honouring. The transliterated Latin terms employed in this Greek inscription (*familia*, *collegium*) and the fact that the owner of the slaves was a Roman citizen underlines a significant fact: communities of fellow slaves belonging to a single master are much more prominent in Latin epigraphy than they are in Greek epigraphy; this is an issue to which we shall return in the comparative section of this chapter.

Another inscription from imperial-period Lycia allows us to observe the features for which a community of fellow slaves honoured one of its members (*TAM* II 466 = Bathrellou–Vlassopoulos 7.11):

> Κ̣αλοκαίρῳ ἀνδρὶ ἀγαθῷ ἥρωι· οἱ σύνδουλοι Ἐλπιδηφόρος, Ἡρακλίδης, Ζώσιμος, Ναυκληρικός, Μαρίων, Κέρδων, Εὔγαμος, Μεταβολικ(ὸς) μνείας ἕνεκεν τὸν ἀγαθὸν καὶ φιλοκύριον καὶ προφ̣ανῆ ἄ<ν>δ̣[ρα].
>
> To Kalokairos, a fine man and hero. His fellow-slaves: Elpidephoros, Heraklides, Zosimos, Nauklerikos, Marion, Kerdon, Eugamos, Metabolikos, in memory, (honouring) a fine and distinguished man, who loved his master.[37]

[35] Canevaro 2018.
[36] Vlassopoulos 2022.
[37] Trans. Bathrellou and Vlassopoulos 2022: 171.

Kalokairos receives appraisal respect for his moral virtues (*agathos*) and his achievements (*prophanes*), as well as for his loving stance towards his master (*philokyrios*): the inscription illustrates how aspects that brought honour in the master–slave relationship could be linked with aspects that brought honour within the communities based on the master–slave relationship.

We can now move to slave communities of family and kinship; a particularly illuminating example is a funerary inscription from first-century CE Lydia (*SEG* xl 1044 = Bathrellou–Vlassopoulos 1.16):

> Ἑλικωνὶς ἐτείμησεν Ἀμέριμνον τὸν ἑαυτῆς ἄνδρα· Ἀμέριμνος τὸν πατέρα· Τέρπουσα τὸν ἴδιον υἱόν· Νεικόπολις ἡ μάμη· Ἀλέξανδρος καὶ Δημητρία καὶ Τέρπουσα τὸν ἀδελφόν· Αἰγιαλὸς ὁ θρέψας· Γάμος τὸν πενθεριδῆ· οἱ συνγενεῖς καὶ σύνδουλοι ἐτείμησαν Ἀμέριμνον. χαῖρε.
>
> Helikonis honoured Amerimnos, her husband; Amerimnos [honoured] his father; Terpousa [honoured] her own son; Neikopolis the grandmother [honoured Amerimnos]; Alexandros and Demetria and Terpousa [honoured] their brother; Aigialos the foster-father [honoured Amerimnos]; Gamos [honoured] his brother in law; the relatives and the fellow-slaves honoured Amerimnos. Farewell!

The inscription illustrates a family joined by the wider kinship group and other related individuals in order to honour Amerimnos; it includes the mother, grandmother, foster-father, siblings, wife, children, brother-in-law and other relatives; in fact, it is only the reference to fellow slaves that makes it possible to identify the deceased as a slave. Despite the fact that many ancient societies considered slaves as natally alienated and socially dead, inscriptions like this make it obvious that families and kinship groups created honour communities for ancient slaves; they created kinship roles, whose performance brought honour and recognition.

Alongside kinship communities based on ascription, slaves also participated in elective communities based on occupation, ethnicity and cult. While some of these communities consisted exclusively of slaves and former slaves, others had a mixed composition that included citizens, metics and slaves. Given the nature of our sources, it is often easier to see the dedications made by members of these communities rather than processes involving honour within them. I start therefore with three inscriptions that give us a sense of the membership of these various communities. My first example is a fourth-century BCE dedication from the mining area of Laurion (*IG* II$^2$ 2940 = Bathrellou–Vlassopoulos 2.1):

> [Tu]ράν[νοι Μηνὶ ἀν]έθ[εσα]ν ἐπ᾽ εὐτυχίαις ἐρανισταὶ οἵδε Κάδους Μάνης Καλλίας Ἄττας Ἀρτεμίδωρος Μάης Σωσίας Σαγγάριος Ἑρμαῖος Τίβειος Ἕρμος.
>
> The following *eranistai* offered this dedication to [Men Ty]ra[nnos] for good fortune: Kadous, Manes, Kallias, Attas, Artemidoros, Maes, Sosias, Sangarios, Hermaios, Tibeios, Hermos.[38]

[38] See Lauffer 1979: 185–8; Vlassopoulos 2011b: 470–1.

The foreign names of most members of this *eranos* imply strongly that they were slaves or former slaves; the fact that the inscription comes from the mining area of Laurion strengthens this assumption, and makes it likely that these individuals worked in mining; the fragmentary nature of the inscription makes uncertain what was the name of the deity mentioned, but the combination of legal status, foreign ethnicity, profession and cult illustrates well the mixture of elements from which such communities were composed. My second example is another fourth-century BCE dedication from Athens (*IG* II² 2934 = Bathrellou–Vlassopoulos 7.19):

> οἱ πλυνῆς Νύμφαις εὐξάμενοι ἀνέθεσαν καὶ θεοῖς πᾶσιν Ζωαγόρας <Ζ>ωκύπρου Ζώκυπρος Ζωαγόρου Θάλλος Λεύκη Σωκράτης Πολυκράτους Ἀπολλοφάνης Εὐπορίωνος Σωσίστρατος Μάνης Μυρρίνη Σωσίας Σωσιγένης Μίδας.
>
> To the nymphs and all the gods, fulfilling a vow, the washers set up this tablet: Zoagoras, the son of Zokypros; Zokypros the son of Zoagoras; Thallos; Leuke; Sokrates, the son of Polykrates; Apollophanes, the son of Euporion; Sosistratos; Manes; Myrrhine; Sosias; Sosigenes; Midas.

Four of the individuals mentioned in this inscription are recorded with name and father's name; they were presumably free people, probably a combination of metics and citizens. The remaining individuals are mentioned by name only, and some of them have typical foreign names often associated with slaves (Manes, Midas); it is likely, therefore, that they were slaves or former slaves.[39] On the one hand, the inscription makes clear the distinction between the honourable free people, who mention their kinship links, and the natally alienated slaves; on the other hand, all these people are brought together by their common occupation (as washers) and the dedication to the deities involved with their professional activities (nymphs). My final example is a fourth-century BCE epitaph from Laurion (*IG* II² 10051 = Bathrellou–Vlassopoulos 7.2):

> Ἀτώτας μεταλλεύς. Πόντου ἀπ᾽ Εὐξείνου Παφλαγὼν μεγάθυμος Ἀτώτας ἧς γαίας τηλοῦ σῶμ᾽ ἀνέπαυσε πόνων. τέχνηι δ᾽ οὔτις ἔριζε· Πυλαιμένεος δ᾽ ἀπὸ ῥίζης εἶμ᾽, ὃς Ἀχιλλῆος χειρὶ δαμεὶς ἔθανεν.
>
> Atotas the miner. Great-hearted Atotas, a Paphlagonian from the Black Sea, put his body to rest from toils, far away from his land. No-one could rival him in his craft. I am from the stem of Pylaimenes, who died subdued by the hand of Achilles.[40]

Atotas describes himself as a miner, and the inscription comes from the mining area of Laurion; it is therefore highly likely that he was a slave, or a former slave. Atotas expresses his pride in his Paphlagonian ethnic identity, his professional skills and his moral features. This is an excellent illustration of how the members of slave communities thought of themselves; it was personality, ethnicity and occupation that provided

[39] On slave names, see Vlassopoulos 2010; 2015; Lewis 2017.
[40] Trans. Bathrellou and Vlassopoulos 2022: 164–5.

the grounds on which slaves constructed their honour claims. A reflection of such claims can be found in contemporary Athenian comedy, as in the following passage from Menander (*Asp.* 238–45 = Bathrellou–Vlassopoulos 8.23), relating a dialogue between two slaves:

ΤΡΑΠΕΖΟΠΟΙΟΣ: κακὸς κακῶ]ς ἀπόλοιο τοίνυν νὴ Δία
τοιό]γ̣δ̣[ε π]εποηκώς, ἀπόπληκτε· χρυσίον
ἔχων τοσοῦτο, παῖδας, ἥκεις δεσπότηι
ταῦτ' ἀποκομίζων; κοὐκ ἀπέδρας; ποταπός π̣[οτ' εἶ;
ΔΑΟΣ: Φρύξ.
ΤΡΑΠ.: οὐδὲν ἱερόν· ἀνδρόγυνος. ἡμεῖς μόνοι
οἱ Θρᾷικές ἐσμεν ἄνδρες· οἱ μὲν δὴ Γέται,
Ἄπολλον, ἀνδρεῖον τὸ χρῆμα· τοιγαροῦν
γέμουσιν οἱ μυλῶνες ἡμῶν.

WAITER: Be damned to perdition then, by Zeus, since you've done such a thing, you idiot. You had so much gold, and slaves, and you've returned bringing them back to your master? And you didn't run away? Where on earth are you from?
DAOS: From Phrygia.
WAITER: A good for nothing! A ladyboy! Only we, Thracians, are men! Oh Apollo, the Getai are the manly sort! That's why the mills are full of us.[41]

The Thracian waiter criticises the Phrygian Daos as a coward, for choosing to return the property of his dead master to his relatives, instead of running away with it; he instead expresses pride in his Thracian ethnicity and its associated masculinity and bravery. While his further comment about the mills being full of Getai as evidence of Thracian bravery is obviously comic, this passage is likely to parody the pride of slaves in their ethnic identities.[42]

Towards the end of the fourth century BCE mixed communities based on occupation, ethnicity and cult started to adopt the *polis* model in order to form their assemblies, elect their magistrates, organise festivals and processions and reward members and benefactors; this formalisation created new kinds of documents, in particular honorary inscriptions created by these mixed associations.[43] We can start with two documents from Attica in the middle of the third century BCE (*SEG* II 9).

ἐπὶ Πολυεύκτου ἄρχοντος ἐπιμεληταί· Εὐτυχίδης, Θάλλος. γραμματεύς· Βάτραχος. ταμίας· Κτήσιππος.

[41] Translation from Bathrellou and Vlassopoulos 2022: 48–9. For these last two passages, see also Mazzinghi Gori's chapter in this volume.
[42] On mill slavery in Athens, see Porter 2019b; on the ethnic identities of Athenian slaves, see Hunt 2015; Canevaro and Lewis (forthcoming).
[43] Arnaoutoglou 2003; Gabrielsen 2007.

ἐπὶ Ἱέρωνος ἐπιμεληταί· Διότιμος, Δημήτριος, Πύρρος. γραμματεύς· Ἀρχέπολις. ταμίας· Βάτραχος.
ἐπὶ Διομέδοντος ἐ[πιμεληταί]· Ξένων, Ἀμφίπ[ολις?], Θάλλος, Α— — —
ἐπὶ Κυδήνορος ἐπιμεληταί· Τίβειος, Ἀρτέμων, Θάλλος. γραμματεύς· Ἀρχέπολις. ταμίας· Κράτης.
ἐπ᾽ Εὐρυκλείδου· γραμματεύς· Β[άτραχος]. ταμίας· Κρ[άτης].

In the archonship of Polyeuktos: superintendents: Eutychides, Thallos; secretary: Batrachos; steward: Ktesippos.
In [the archonship] of Hieron: superintendents: Diotimos, Demetrios; secretary: Archepolis; steward: Batrachos.
In [the archonship] of Diomedon: superintendents: Xenon, Amphip[olis?], Thallos
In [the archonship] of Kydenor: superintendents Tibeios, Artemon, Thallos; secretary: Archepolis; steward: Krates.
In [the archonship] of Eurykleides: secretary: Batrachos; steward: Kr[ates].

This inscription records the annual magistrates of this association. The document does not record the legal status of the magistrates or even their fathers' names, and consequently it is impossible to be certain about their status.[44] But the appearance of foreign names, like Tibeios, and of names rarely attested for citizens, like Artemon, makes it likely that some of these individuals were slaves or former slaves; given that ancient Greek uses the same word for magistracies and honours (*timai*), it is remarkable that such individuals could receive such honours within an association.[45] The second inscription comes from the island of Salamis (*SEG* II 10):

δεδόχθαι τοῖς θιασώταις ἐπαινέσαι αὐτοὺς καὶ στεφανῶσαι ἕκαστον αὐτῶν θαλλοῦ στεφάνωι ἀρετῆς ἕνεκα καὶ δικαιοσύνης: Ῥύθμον ἐπιμελητήν, Ὀνήσιμον ἐπιμελητήν, Ὠφελίωνα ἐπιμελητήν, ταμίαν Δόκιμον, γραμματέα Στρατοκλῆν Ἐλευσίνιον.

It was decided by the members of the *thiasos* to praise the following people and offer to each of them a palm wreath for their virtue and justice: Rhythmos, the superintendent; Onesimos, the superintendent; Ophelion, the superintendent; Dokimos, the steward; Stratokles from Eleusis, secretary.

With the exception of Stratokles, who is identified as an Athenian citizen from the deme of Eleusis, the status of the remaining honorands remains uncertain; but the presence of names like Ophelion and Onesimos, which are common for slaves, and Rhythmos, which is never attested for a citizen, makes it likely that many of these individuals honoured were slaves or former slaves.[46] But a conclusive case of a slave honoured by an association can be seen in a first-century BCE inscription from Rhodes (*I.Lindos* II 630 = Bathrellou–Vlassopoulos 7.22):

[44] For these issues, see the comments of Arnaoutoglou 2011.
[45] See Vlassopoulos 2010; 2015; Lewis 2017.
[46] For slave names in classical Athens, see Vlassopoulos 2010; 2015.

> Ἀθανόδωρος ἐγγενὴς τιμαθεὶς ὑπὸ Σωτηριαστᾶν Λυσιστρατεί<ω>ν χρυσέωι στεφάνωι καὶ θαλλίνωι, χρηστὲ χαῖρε.
>
> Athanodoros, a slave born in Rhodes (*engenēs*), has been honoured by the Soteriastai around Lysistratos with a golden and an olive wreath. Good man, farewell!

In this case, an association of Soteriastai that was brought together by a certain Lysistratos has honoured a second-generation slave who was born on the island of Rhodes; the inscription is silent with regard to the reasons for the honour, but the golden wreath implies that it must have been significant.[47]

To sum up: we have examined a series of examples that illustrate how the various communities that slaves participated in could bestow honours on their enslaved members on the basis of a variety of roles and features that these slaves exhibited. Recognition and appraisal respect for enslaved persons focused on their alternative identities and roles, rather than on their slave status as such.

## Comparative Perspectives

These observations need to be examined within a comparative framework; in this respect, I wish to make two important comparative points. The first comparison concerns the role of honour in Greek and Roman societies, respectively. There were of course major similarities in how honour operated in both Greek and Roman societies. But there were also important differences that so far have not been sufficiently explored from a comparative point of view.[48] One important issue concerns deference: the vertical recognition respect that social inferiors owe to social superiors.[49] It is worth pointing out the limited role of deference in Greek societies, as it appears through a number of examples: the limited form of rituals of social deference already in the more hierarchical Homeric world;[50] the limited scope that Greek forms of address allowed for social deference;[51] the fact that Greek texts, like the *Characters* of Theophrastus, are highly critical of individuals who are willing to show too much deference.[52] On the contrary, deference was a key aspect in Roman social structures: among multiple examples, one can mention the daily *salutatio* of clients to their patrons; the escorts that accompanied important persons on their public outings; the social inferiors' uncovering of the head, dismounting and kissing of the hands or knees of social superiors, when they encountered them in public spaces.[53]

These differences have important implications. They obviously affected the extent to which and the ways in which slavery and slaves figured in rituals and practices

[47] Boyxen 2018: 138 n. 73.

[48] The work of Ted Lendon has been fundamental in this respect: on honour in the Greek world, see Lendon 1997; 2010; on honour in the Roman world, see Lendon 2001; 2011; Jacotot 2013.

[49] For *aidōs*, a Greek word whose semantic framework includes deference, see Cairns 1993a.

[50] Van Wees 1992: 69–71.

[51] Dickey 1996; compare with Dickey 2007.

[52] Lane Fox 1997.

[53] MacMullen 1990: 190–8; Lendon 2001: 59; O'Sullivan 2011: 51–76.

of deference. In fourth-century BCE Athens Demosthenes found it outrageous that Meidias moved around with an escort of three or four slaves;[54] in fourth-century CE Rome Ammianus Marcellinus (14.6.16–17) railed against the huge slave entourages of the senatorial elite. But despite the commonality of the critique, it is fairly obvious that there were major differences in terms of how slaves were used to create prestige and deference for their masters in the Greek and Roman worlds.[55] This is of course relevant for the cases in which slaves acquired honour through their association with eminent masters; the difference in how deference operated in Greek and Roman societies meant that Roman slaves had a much wider scope for benefiting from the honour due to their masters.

This observation brings us to issues of temporal and spatial variation. Readers might have observed that a substantial number of the examples I have employed in this chapter come from Greek inscriptions from Asia Minor dating to the Roman imperial period. This is not accidental, as it is almost impossible to find relevant epigraphic evidence on honour and slavery deriving from earlier periods and the Greek mainland. It is of course possible that a major explanation for this skew is the epigraphic habit; the Roman imperial period is the point at which the epigraphic habit was employed by the widest spectrum of social groups, in comparison with all earlier periods of antiquity. It is therefore not surprising that there will be more epigraphic evidence for slaves in that period.[56] It is equally possible, though, that the phenomenon has a geographical skew: the concentration of evidence in Asia Minor might reflect local permutations of the three dialectical relationships we have examined.

However, it is also possible to examine a third possibility: that there was a development over time in the processes that related to the multiple honours of enslaved people. We can be certain that 'the associative phenomenon' was one such major development in the course of antiquity: the growth of voluntary associations based on religion, occupation and ethnicity and their formalisation from the fourth century BCE till late antiquity created new ways of seeking and awarding honour that affected wider sections of the population; this is certainly the case, e.g., with the association inscriptions from Hellenistic Athens and Rhodes we examined above.[57] It is possible, therefore, that the growth of the associative phenomenon created new opportunities not only for creating and acquiring various forms of honour by enslaved people, but also enhanced the possibility of displaying it publicly through feeding the growth of the epigraphic habit. At this stage in our understanding, I consider the epigraphic, temporal and spatial explanations as equally plausible and mutually compatible explanations. It is only the full collection of the evidence and its study within the spatial and evidentiary parameters that will enable us to come to

[54] Dem. 23.206–7.

[55] López Barja de Quiroga 2020.

[56] MacMullen 1982.

[57] For associations and honour, see Arnaoutoglou 2003; Tran 2006b; Gabrielsen 2007; Verboven 2007; Dondin-Payre and Tran 2012; Fröhlich and Hamon 2013; for associations and slavery, see Hasenohr 2003; Hasegawa 2005; Zoumbaki 2005; Tran 2006a; Borbonus 2014; Shaner 2018.

firmer conclusions about long-term changes in the history of the multiple honours of enslaved people in antiquity.[58]

This brings me to my second comparative point. Scholars exploring slavery in the early modern New World have gradually uncovered the rich history of ethnic slave communities and the impressive rituals they devised for selecting their leaders. Once a year in various places (e.g. Brazil, New England, New Orleans), when the free community elected its leaders, the slave community would organise elaborate pageants in which they elected their own leaders. These leaders were either slaves of important masters, or were distinguished for their personal characteristics, like bravery and bodily strength. They would often play the role of mediators between slaves and masters, or between the slave community and the free community; for example, slaves who had absconded and feared punishment from their masters would request the intercession of their slave leaders. The slave kings of Congo and of other slave nations in Brazil and Cuba are justly famous;[59] but particularly important is that even in societies where slaves were relatively few, like New England, we also come across the election of slave governors and kings.[60] It should be obvious that such positions constituted the supreme honours that enslaved people could receive in New World societies.

From a comparative point of view, it is quite remarkable that there is hardly anything comparable in our current knowledge concerning enslaved people in antiquity. Whether this disparity is real or apparent, and how to explain it, if it is indeed real, is a difficult question. It is of course possible that future research will uncover more relevant evidence; it is equally plausible that the nature of our evidence for ancient slavery might make phenomena like that of the slave kings of Congo less visible in our existing sources; it is also conceivable that we need to search elsewhere for equivalent phenomena in antiquity; but we cannot exclude the possibility that there was really nothing comparable in ancient societies, whatever explanation we devise to account for such a difference. But the study of the honour of enslaved people in antiquity needs to consider seriously the implications of such serious comparative study.

## Conclusions

The above discussion has hopefully highlighted the limits and inadequacies of Patterson's essentialist linkage between honour and slavery. Once we take into account the variety of relationships that slaves participated in, we can move beyond the dishonour associated with slave status. While slave status was accorded no recognition respect in most ancient societies, there were multiple contexts in which enslaved persons were accorded recognition respect for their various roles and appraisal respect for their positive features

[58] The full collection of the evidence is currently taking place for the creation of a digital prosopography of enslaved persons, as part of an ERC-funded project (2023–8), titled *SLaVEgents: Enslaved Persons in the Making of Societies and Cultures across Western Eurasia and North Africa, 1000 BCE–300 CE*. For further information about the project, see https://www.ims.forth.gr/en/project/view?id=272 (last accessed 26 September 2024).

[59] De Mello 2002; Walker 2004; Kiddy 2005.

[60] Piersen 1988: 117–40.

and achievements. Masters could use recognition and appraisal respect for a variety of purposes in their relations with their slaves, while slaves of important masters gained recognition respect from this association. While ancient political communities usually accepted no claims to respect on the basis of slave status, in a variety of contexts they were willing to put aside considerations of status in order to accord appraisal respect to slaves for their features or achievements. Finally, enslaved persons could acquire recognition and appraisal respect from the various communities they participated in. These conclusions open up questions concerning temporal and spatial differences and disjunctures among ancient communities, as well as long-term changes in the multiple honours of ancient slaves. The current state of our understanding and knowledge of ancient slaveries does not allow us to answer such questions; but a comparative perspective can be particularly illuminating for future work.