Hand of the Master

Of Slaveholders and the Slave-Relation

Roland Boer and Christina Petterson

Since the work of G. E. M. de Ste. Croix,[1] the question as to whether one can speak of class in the ancient Greco-Roman world should not be an issue. Nevertheless, at a recent annual meeting of the Society of Biblical Literature, there were several panels devoted to the topic of class, with many scholars dismissing it as a useless and reductive term in the name of a liberalist focus on the individual. Interestingly, several presentations began with a reference to an unnamed scholarly trend which had for a while disassociated class from its understanding as relations of production, and a given class's relationship to the means of production, from which point the presenter then could go on to dismiss class for being unsophisticated in terms of its "lumping everyone together in one class." Here, of course, we have the nub of the problem, because class as a socioeconomic concept receives its fundamental meaning from the relation of a given group to the means of production and their position in the relations of production. Once this framework disappears, class loses its point of reference. What we explore in this chapter addresses the question of how class is manifested in collections of ancient texts like the New Testament. That such literature does not simply provide a reflection or a window onto class should be obvious, for literature is an oblique lens, mediating its context in unexpected ways. We thus do not subscribe to the vulgarization of class to signify identity or status, but rather to a concept revealing socioeconomic relations, such as property, exploitation, and struggle.

With these points in mind, we begin by examining slaves in the Gospel parables, with a specific interest in the way slavery is abstracted so as to "interpellate"—or constitute as subjects—all believers as slaves. Our next step is to Paul, not so much his well-known slave metaphors but the material reality of slave-owning and slave deployment in the missionary activity of Paul and others. But how are we to understand Paul as slave-owner? This requires an

examination of Roman law and practice, in which the slave—as thing (*res*)—lacks *potestas* and thereby agency, becoming the hand of the master.[2]

ABSTRACTED SLAVES

We begin not with Paul's abstracted metaphor of slavery,[3] but with the Gospel parables. Of particular interest are the parables in which God is a slaveholder who must deal with slaves. We would like to address three features of such parables: their allegorical "keys," the interpellation of Christians as slaves, and the connection with property—all of them abstractions from the material and economic reality of slavery. Before we do so, let us address an objection to the very idea that God is presented as a slaveholder in the parables. Luise Schottroff in particular has argued that such parables must be seen as antithetical, putting significant distance between the slaveholder of the parable and God (assuming thereby a link between the "God" of the text and the God of belief). For example, the owner of the vineyard in Mark 12:1–12 (also in modified form in Matt 21:3–6; Luke 20:9–19) has quite a number of slaves at his disposal. Schottroff argues that the "matter-of-fact interpretation of the vineyard owner as God" must be "fundamentally called into question if we take the social-historical analysis of the text seriously." Instead, the owner of the vineyard actually behaves "like an opponent of God; he does the opposite of what the God of the Torah and the Lord's Prayer desires and does."[4] If we add to this the violence against the tenants and the dismissal of the Jewish people, then the parable is clearly unacceptable—as commonly understood. In order to provide an alternative approach, Schottroff develops her nondualist theory of parables. Instead of treating the lives of common people in the Roman Empire as theological signifiers, she focuses on the actual lives of these people.[5] Thus, this parable—in light of the proposed nondualist theory—reflects the "economic hopelessness" of the "poor agrarian population and their hatred for their new master." It should be no surprise that "indebtedness turns those burdened with it into violent people filled with hatred."[6]

This particular parable is only one of a number of problematic parables, to which may be added the parable of the unforgiving slave (Matt 18:23–36), the laborers in the vineyard (Matt 20:1–16), the wedding banquet (Matt 22:1–13), and the slave parables in Luke (12:35–38; 17:3–10; 19:11–27). In each case, Schottroff refuses to see God as complicit in or providing ideological justification for socioeconomic and political structures of exploitation. Instead, she proposes that they should be seen not as analogies but as antithetical parables. They present the listeners with a sharp difference between the Kingdom of God and the contemporary situation. Her main hermeneutical strategy—in

contrast to William Herzog,[7] who detaches the parables from their later interpretations—is to translate ὅμοιουν and ὅμοιος as "compare" rather than "equate." Problematic as this may be from a semantic perspective, the reason is that "compare" incorporates the possibility of identifying *difference* in the comparison rather than being tied to similitude.[8] It should be no surprise that Schottroff also insists heavily on nonallegorical interpretations of the various parables, because she wants to use the exploitative and violent content of the parables to signify the actual socioeconomic context and separate a given parable from the Kingdom of God.

At least two problems arise from these proposals. First, it is difficult to avoid the fact that these parables present the class consciousness of slave owners, landlords, and thereby of the ruling class. In this light, slaves and tenants are depicted as wicked and rebellious types, seeking to deprive property holders of their perfectly justified income. Second, the problem remains that many of the parables do contain the "keys" to their own interpretation, either through an extensive one-by-one exposition of the various elements, such as in the parable of the sower (Mark 4:2–20; Matt 13:1–23; and Luke 8:4–15), or weeds in the field (Matt 13:36–43) or in the formula ὅμοιουν/ὅμοιος ἐστιν (Luke 6:46–49 cf. Matt 7:24–27). One may, of course, seek to separate these allegorical readings from the parables themselves, whether through historical efforts to separate the "original Jesus" from the early church[9] or through a desire to wrest a liberative reading from even the most recalcitrant material. While we appreciate the reasons for attempting to do so—negating the ruling class perspective or the elements of anti-Judaism implicit in the insider-outsider framework—what is lost in such efforts is the process of abstraction entailed in the allegorical interpretations.

But what do we mean by abstraction? Let us begin to tackle this question as follows. Christian metaphors of slavery include both negative and positive connotations: "The Christian can be termed both a slave of Christ and a freed person of Christ."[10] What is crucial in this designation is not the positive or the negative valence, but the characterization of the Christian as a slave, one way or another.[11] Thus, Luke 16:13 concerns a slave not being able to serve two masters. Here God and wealth are personified as masters, which means that the listener is interpellated as a slave. Further, in the various parables where God is characterized as slaveholder, the slaves are either obedient or disobedient, and are rewarded or punished accordingly, all of which provides the listener with a choice between being an obedient or a disobedient *slave*. Perhaps Luke 17:7–10 expresses this interpellation best:

Who among you would say to your slave who has just come in from ploughing or tending sheep in the field, "Come here at once and take your place at the

table?" Would you not rather say to him, "Prepare supper for me, put on your apron and serve me while I eat and drink; later you may eat and drink?" Do you thank the slave for doing what was commanded? So you also, when you have done all that you were ordered to do, say, "We are worthless slaves; we have done only what we ought to have done!"

In doing so, one follows Jesus's own example. As he points out in Mark, whoever wants to be first should become everyone's slave.[12]

Thus far we have argued that allegory and interpellation are two dimensions of the abstraction of slavery in the Gospels. Our third point concerns property, where a contradiction arises. The initial form of this contradiction appears with Ste. Croix's formulation. On the one hand, he claims that Jesus was against property; on the other hand, he acknowledges that "Jesus accepted slavery as a fact of his environment."[13] However, the question of property per se is not so clear-cut given that slaves are, of course, property. Parables and sayings against property do appear, such as the various sayings about camels and eyes of needles (Matt 19:23–24; Mark 10:23–25; Luke 18:24–25) and the parable of the rich fool (Luke 12:13–21). Yet, we also have the parables about God in which God is cast as a king or slaveholder, to the point of being in charge of substantial property, as we find in the parable of the faithful or the unfaithful slave (Matt 24:45–51; Luke 12:41–48) and the parable of the talents (Matt 25:14–30). A particularly interesting example is the chapter in Luke containing three parables which illustrate repentance. Two of them concern property as metaphors for sinners, namely, the parable of the lost sheep (Luke 15:1–7) and the parable of the lost coin (Luke 15:8–10). Both parables equate the repentance of a sinner with finding a lost sheep and a lost coin. The third is the parable of the prodigal son (Luke 15:11–32), whose father owns a large slave-run property. In all three cases, God is the property owner who rejoices in the return of something or someone lost.

All of this is only the initial part of the problem. Let us return to Ste. Croix: while he observes that slavery is accepted as part of the socioeconomic landscape of the Gospels, he also recognizes that slavery is "one aspect of the larger question of property in general."[14] Obviously, this observation is in tension with his earlier effort to distinguish property from slavery. Indeed, the two are inextricably connected in the Roman world. To summarize an argument detailed elsewhere,[15] the pervasiveness of slavery in Greco-Roman society and the slave market economy (not to be confused with a capitalist market economy) eventually led the Roman jurors of the late second century BCE to invent the category of absolute private property. Crucially, they defined such property not in terms of the relations between human beings—this is my property because it belongs to no one else—but as the relation between a human being and a thing (*res*). The catch here is that the *res* in question was

precisely a slave. For some centuries, slaves had been inexorably redefined as things and not as human beings. In this way it became possible to define absolute private property as the relation between a master (*dominus*) and slave-as-thing (*res*). Tellingly, the Latin word—a relatively new one—for such property was *dominium*. By the time we come to the Gospels, this definition of an economic reality had been in place for some two centuries. But the crucial point for our argument is that the very ability to designate a human being as private property entails a significant step in abstraction. It was not merely the abstraction entailed in coinage (invented in 600–500 BCE), in which an abstract value attaches to the shaped form of metal, but a further step in which the curious abstraction of value can also attach to a human being. Or rather, it could happen only when the human being in question had become an object, *res*.

It turns out that the separation between slavery and property in the Gospels is somewhat artificial, for they are part of the same socioeconomic reality. The tensions (noted above) between Jesus's challenge to private property and simultaneous acceptance (now including slavery) may now be read as a manifestation of the continuing struggle to come to terms with what was still a relatively new development. But we also suggest that the possibility of the abstraction of slavery in the Gospels, which we have identified in terms of allegory, interpellation, and the representations of property itself, lifts off from the socioeconomic shifts that were underway. More specifically, it was precisely the further level of abstraction produced and recognized in defining private property itself, in which a human being became an object with abstract value, that enabled the Gospel abstractions we have identified.

MATERIAL SLAVES

By now our argument has already moved from Gospel texts, metaphor, and abstraction to the material reality of economic relations. In this section, we explore further this materiality, now in terms of Paul's role as a slave owner.[16] Above all, there is the letter which concerns a slave directly—the letter to Philemon. In order to understand this letter, we draw on the work of Ulrike Roth,[17] which shows clearly how this letter functions as a productive beginning for early Christian attitudes toward slavery. Her argument is that Onesimus was a contribution as human chattel to the κοινωνία, and that Paul was a co-owner of Onesimus. This point is carefully argued through attention to the communication strategies of the letter, analysis of the term κοινωνία, and its practices of pooled ownership of various resources, Paul's display of mastery, and an analysis of the parallel universe of Pauline Christianity which brings

the contradiction between Christian brotherhood and the economic system of slavery to the fore. Roth concludes:

> Whilst slavery, like citizenship, was irrelevant in the new world order, it was the order of the "old" world, which acknowledged slavery, that allowed Paul a double coup: in his dealings with Philemon and Onesimus, Paul embraces the order of both this world and the next, creating parallel universes that, with regard to slavery, could only have been understood by non-Christians (and probably by some fellow Christians) as an expression of a complete and unreserved acceptance of the slave system.[18]

Arising from Roth's argument, let us emphasize the following. Least controversial is her point that Paul was a slave-holder. Based on a dual reading of κοινωνία as both a practical association of pooling resources for a specific goal, as well as Paul's spin on this as a community of believers (κοινωνία της πίστεως), Roth argues that Paul is consciously mingling the two layers in order to assert his authority and undergird his demand for Onesimus. Based on the contractual arrangements inherent in κοινωνία, to which Paul refers several times in the letter, he is challenging Philemon to honor the agreements in this arrangement. The precise issue is Onesimus, who if he was a contribution by Philemon to the κοινωνία, would make Paul the *de iure* part-owner of Onesimus. This situation accords with the agreement entailed in the nature of the κοινωνία, where material contributions become common property. Slaves, as chattel, would have been part of this contractual arrangement.[19] Two specific points in the letter reinforce the master-slave relation between Paul and Onesimus. First, Paul is ready to take on possible debts, which acknowledges his legal responsibilities to Philemon and is typical of the thinking of a slave master.[20] Second is the presentation of Onesimus as Paul's agent—the physical extension of Paul—who is to be received by Philemon both in the flesh and in the Lord, thereby reinforcing Onesimus's status as a "thing," a sentient tool or the hands of Paul's mind, but also "of the old world."[21]

This brings us to the second item of interest from Roth's article, namely the idea of slave as a thing (*res*), used as a slave, *within the church*. Scholarship on slavery and Christianity has moved far beyond William Westermann's naïve assertion that early Christianity regarded slaves as human personalities instead of *things*—the latter being the reality of Roman law.[22] In particular, the work of Jennifer Glancy[23] and J. Albert Harrill[24] has broken much new ground, and Joseph Marchal has proposed that Onesimus was also a sexual vessel.[25] Yet, there is still another possible step, which many scholars appear reluctant to take: the use of slave labor within the churches and congregations. These scholars attempt to insert a buffer against such a possibility in various ways: seeing Paul's perspective as *aligning* comfortably with that

of the slave owners; regarding Paul's possible interaction with slaves when accepting hospitality of slaveholders;[26] using qualifiers when mentioning ownership ("as though");[27] perhaps speculating that Onesimus was a runaway slave—since this avoids the interpretation that Onesimus was sent by Philemon as assistant to Paul, which would make Paul someone who directly benefited from slave labor. It seems that most follow, whether explicitly or implicitly, John Byron's remarkable point of view in his assessment of the status quo: "As appalling as the notion of slavery is in any society, the fact remains that, in the context of the New Testament, slavery did take on some positive aspects. This is not to suggest, of course, that Paul was a supporter of slavery. But he and other New Testament authors were able to find something that was of 'redeeming' value for their theology."[28]

Following Roth, we prefer to read the text in a more straightforward manner: slaves were used in the service of Christianity. We mean not only that Paul would have benefited from someone's slave in someone's house, but that the various congregations made use of slave labor, as we find with Onesimus and Epaphroditus. For example, the reference to Chloe's house in 1 Cor 1:11 suggests for John Barclay "probably . . . the presence of slaves in the homes of some of his converts,"[29] and for Carolyn Osiek and David L. Balch, following Gerd Theissen, "perhaps 'her slaves or dependent workers.'"[30] Both Glancy and Laura Nasrallah go a little further and suggest that the message to Paul was conveyed by Chloe's slaves,[31] but without arriving at the obvious conclusion that early Christianity exploited slaves as a matter of course—as did the rest of society.

Finally, Roth expands Barclay's point that the hospitality offered in the first house churches is unimaginable without the help of slaves.[32] She also argues that early missionary work had to rely on the work of slaves. One of us (Petterson) has suggested as much in a reading of Acts 18:1–5, where Paul works with Aquila and Priscilla, until Silas and Timothy turn up in Corinth.[33] While most commentators assume that Timothy and Silas bring funds, enabling Paul to focus on preaching,[34] the text actually says nothing about bringing anything. This opens up the possibility that Timothy and Silas work to support Paul, enabling him to preach full time. This is further supported by the "order" or "command" (ἐντολὴν),[35] issued by Paul to Silas and Timothy in Acts 17:15, to join him as soon as possible.

Another place where Paul's use of slaves is revealed is when he signs off his letters in his own hand:

> I, Paul, write this greeting with my own hand. (1 Cor 16:21)
> I, Paul, write this greeting with my own hand. This is the mark in every letter of mine; it is the way I write. (2 Thess 3:17)
> See what large letters I make when I am writing in my own hand! (Gal 6:11)

> So if you consider me your partner, welcome him as you would welcome me. If he has wronged you in any way, or owes you anything, charge that to my account. I, Paul, am writing this with my own hand: I will repay it. I say nothing about your owing me even your own self. (Phil 1:17–19)
>
> I, Paul, write this greeting with my own hand. Remember my chains. Grace be with you. (Col 4:18)

Obviously, if Paul writes only the occasional sentence, he must be dictating the remainder to someone else. It makes perfect sense to think this someone else was a slave under Paul's command. We only have to look at the example in Rom 16:22, where Tertius (a typical slave name, suggesting the possibility of a Primus and Secundus also under Paul's *potestas*), inscribes himself: "I Tertius, the writer of this letter, greet you in the Lord."[36]

In drawing this section to a close, let us return to Roth's insightful work, now in terms of what she calls "Christian Slavery," situating "Paul's use of slave labor in the wider context of the economic exploitation of slaves in the Roman Empire."[37] Dealing with slavery and the economics of missionary success, she argues that "slave exploitation was a systematic [and, we would add, systemic] feature behind Christianity's early success."[38] Since full-time labor and ministry were incompatible within Paul's modus operandi,[39] and taking into account the necessities of staying connected with various communities, Roth concludes that the "demand for slaves to undertake some of the leg-work—in a literal sense—emerges as very real," of which Onesimus and Epaphroditus are suitable examples.[40] The travels and epistles (from ἐπιστέλλω, of course) which made the Pauline mission a success were unthinkable without slave labor. Here we find offers of accommodation, financial assistance, in-kind travel subventions and courier services, as examples of slave-based services which slave-owners may offer Paul. Not to be forgotten is the possibility that Paul's own co-owned slaves assisted him on travels, as the earlier example from Acts likely shows.

HAND OF THE MASTER

A final question remains: how did Paul and other slave-owners see their slaves? Let us return to Westermann's suggestion that slaves were viewed as human beings. This position is an old trope in the wider scholarship on slaves, and emphasizes that since slaves were human beings with feelings and agency, the laws supposedly hint at some uneasiness, if not signs of humanitarianism.[41] This human side appears, it is suggested, in signs of affection between slaves and masters, recognition of family relations (despite the laws making it clear

that for slaves such relations did not exist), and slave roles in responsible positions, such as doctors, teachers, and overseers of estates. Here too the fact that slaves undertook most of the exchange activities in markets is supposed to indicate that they were not mere objects. There may have been certain restrictions: a slave could engage in a simple act of transfer (*traditio*), but not the elaborate and choreographed ritual of *in iure cessio*. Debate continues as whether a slave could undertake a solemn verbal contract (*mancipatio*) for the *res mancipi,* which concerned the transfer of the central production items of land, horses, cattle, and slaves themselves.[42] It may have been banned in strictly legal terms, but the reality was that such exchange took place all the time at the hands of slaves. They also made and received loans, acknowledged receipts of money, and managed operations (*institores*) for their masters.

If the Romans could show at least some compassion for their human things, surely Paul and the early Christians did so as well. Unfortunately, this was not the case. To begin with, the Romans lacked the understanding and category of direct legal agency.[43] Legal contracts could be made only by the actual persons, or principals, involved in the contract: "If Julius made a contract with Seius, who was acting under instructions from Marcus, and they were all free men, the contract firmly remained between Julius and Seius."[44] A third party was out of the question, or, if employed, the process was extremely circuitous and cumbersome. The crucial issue concerns what counts as a third party: this was another free person, that person's slaves, or a master's freed person. It did not count slaves in their own right, or indeed a master's children. The reason is that slaves and children did not have *potestas* but were subject to the *potestas* of the master. By contrast, another free person or even a freed person of a master's household did have *potestas* independent of the master. To go back to the contract: it could be made between two principals with *potestas*, but not through a third (or fourth party) that also held *potestas*.

Thus, the slave who engaged in myriad tasks for a master was an extension of the master. It was as though the master himself had acted in this or that transaction, for the slave was subject to his *potestas*. In other words, the slave was the absolute private property of the master and therefore had no ability to act outside that frame. The slave in question was the hand of the master, or perhaps a puppet, or—most appropriately—the self-motivated tool or automaton that Aristotle imagined: "If every tool could perform its own work when ordered, or by seeing what to do in advance. . . ."[45] This image is usually presented as an alternative to slavery or as the only other possibility to slavery, at least in the Greek imagination. Instead, it embodies how the Greeks actually saw slavery. The Romans took it a step further—as they had done with private property—and made it a legal and economic reality. In many respects, the slave was a thinking automaton, acting as an extension of the master.

From this reality a whole series of practices flowed, such as giving the slave a *peculium* (a specific amount of property or money) so that the slave could engage in market transactions directly; the ability to sue a master directly even if the transaction had been undertaken by his slave;[46] the limit to the amount sued up to the level of the slave's *peculium* (only when the action was undertaken without the knowledge of the master).[47] More widely, a slave could be appointed as manager (*institor*) of all manner of activities, such as cattle or slave merchant, innkeeper, miller, funeral undertaker, brothel manager, correspondence coordinator, tour manager, missionary worker, and so on. It would seem that slaves were the hands of early Christian masters as well, Paul included.

CONCLUSION

We are left with a final problem: the contradiction between the acceptance of slave-ownership in the early congregations and the ideology of equality espoused by Paul in his epistles.[48] However, if it is clear that the early Christian communities exploited slave labor in their missionary activity, then the issue becomes slightly more acute, needing an effort at least toward a solution. Here we draw on the theory of an imaginary resolution of a real contradiction, first proposed by Claude Lévi-Strauss and then elaborated by Fredric Jameson in an Althusserian framework.[49] In short, an irresolvable social and indeed economic contradiction so often generates an attempt at resolution at an ideological level. Obviously, such a resolution cannot deal with the real social contradiction, so it reveals, through its very tensions and problems, the irresolvable nature of the problem. In this light, we propose that Paul's effort to use slavery as a metaphor of equality, if not the Gospels' attempt to interpellate all believers as slaves, is an attempt to resolve the actual contradiction at an ideological level. It consists, quite simply, in making everyone slaves, figuratively speaking, while maintaining, supporting, and benefiting from the fundamental inequality of this economic structure in daily life: as Roth observes, Paul has his cake and eats it too.[50] The contradiction is not expressed in these terms, but relies rather on a difference between this world and the next, flesh and spirit, death and resurrection, and so on, which revolve around the fundamental problem of the early Christians caught between this world and the next. This means that the metaphor does not simply arise from everyday life,[51] but emerges as an ideological effort to deal with an actual and pressing problem. It also indicates the inability to resolve this problem in practice—a fact less surprising to those who insist that class is a prevalent feature of history.

NOTES

1. G. E. M. de Ste. Croix, *The Class Struggle in the Ancient Greek World: From the Archaic Age to the Arab Conquests* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1981).

2. The bulk of the material discussed in this chapter builds on and further develops our systematic study of economic realities in the first-century world: Roland Boer and Christina Petterson, *Time of Troubles: A New Economic Framework for Early Christianity* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2017).

3. Paul's slave metaphor has been well-researched, so we do not see a need to go over this material yet again. For example, see Dale B. Martin, *Slavery as Salvation: The Metaphor of Slavery in Pauline Christianity* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1990).

4. Luise Schottroff, *The Parables of Jesus*, trans. Linda M. Maloney (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2006), 17.

5. Schottroff, *Parables of Jesus*, 81–113.

6. Schottroff, *Parables of Jesus*, 17.

7. William Herzog, *Parables as Subversive Speech: Jesus as Pedagogue of the Oppressed* (Louisville: WJK, 1994).

8. We are not contesting the possibility of highlighting difference in a comparison, which we find an important feature of the comparative enterprise, following Jonathan Z. Smith, *To Take Place: Toward Theory in Ritual*, Chicago Studies in the History of Judaism (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987); *Drudgery Divine: On the Comparison of Early Christianities and the Religions of Late Antiquity*, Jordan Lectures in Comparative Religion (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990). We question the ability of the term ὅμοιουν and ὅμοιος to justify this move semantically.

9. Already some time ago, C. H. Dodd argued that allegorical readings were part of apostolic teaching and that the parables in particular should be understood in light of Mark 4:11–12: "And he said to them, 'To you has been given the secret of the kingdom of God, but for those outside, everything comes in parables; in order that they may indeed look, but not perceive, and may indeed listen, but not understand; so that they may not turn again and be forgiven'" (*The Parables of the Kingdom*, revised ed. [London: Collins, 1961], 14–15).

10. Jennifer Glancy, "Slavery and the Rise of Christianity," in *The Cambridge World History of Slavery*, ed. Keith Bradley and Paul Cartledge (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 457–58.

11. See also Wayne A. Meeks, *The Moral World of the First Christians*, Library of Early Christianity (Philadelphia: WJK, 1986), 157, 69.

12. Glancy, "Slavery and the Rise of Christianity," 459.

13. G. E. M. de Ste. Croix, *Christian Persecution, Martyrdom, and Orthodoxy*, ed. Michael Whitby and Joseph Streeter (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 349.

14. Ste. Croix, *Christian Persecution*, 345.

15. Boer and Petterson, *Time of Troubles*, 114–19.

16. As mentioned earlier, Paul is also responsible for a spate of slave metaphors, which may now be understood in light of the discussion concerning abstraction in the previous section.

17. Ulrike Roth, "Paul, Philemon, and Onesimus," *Zeitschrift für die Neutestamentliche Wissenschaft und die Kunde der älteren Kirche* 105, no. 1 (2014); "Paul and Slavery: Economic Perspectives," in *Paul and Economics: A Handbook*, ed. Thomas Blanton and Raymond Pickett (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2017), 155–82.

18. Roth, "Paul, Philemon, and Onesimus," 128.

19. Roth notes that a similar arrangement could be argued for the relation between Paul and Epaphroditus in Philippi. Roth, "Paul, Philemon, and Onesimus," 120–21 n. 70.

20. Roth, "Paul, Philemon, and Onesimus," 123–24.

21. Roth, "Paul, Philemon, and Onesimus," 122.

22. William Westermann, *The Slave Systems of Greek and Roman Antiquity* (Philadelphia: American Philosophical Society, 1955). See also John Byron, "Paul and the Background of Slavery: The Status Quaestionis in New Testament Scholarship," *CurBR* 3, no. 1 (2004). Carolyn Osiek and David L. Balch also reiterate Westermann's hypothesis: "The human dignity of slaves was recognized by their acceptance into the community, without calling into question the mention of slavery itself" (*Families in the New Testament World: Households and House Churches* [Louisville: WJK, 1997], 188).

23. Jennifer Glancy, *Slavery in Early Christianity* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 2003); *Slavery as Moral Problem: In the Early Church and Today* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2011).

24. J. Albert Harrill, *The Manumission of Slaves in Early Christianity*, Hermeneutische Untersuchungen Zur Theologie (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr, 1995); *Slaves in the New Testament: Literary, Social, and Moral Dimensions* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2006).

25. Joseph Marchal, "The Usefulness of an Onesimus: The Sexual Use of Slaves in Paul's Letter to Philemon," *JBL* 130, no. 4 (2011).

26. For example, see Glancy, *Slavery in Early Christianity*, 45. John Barclay suggests that the slave context that would have been most familiar to Paul was "that of slaves living in the urban homes of their masters" ("Paul, Philemon and the Dilemma of Christian Slave-Ownership," *NTS* 37, no. 2 [2009]): 165.

27. For "as though he himself was the owner of Onesimus," see Peter Arzt-Grabner, *Philemon*, Papyrologische Kommentare Zum Neuen Testament (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2003), 246. For scare quote ("elsewhere, the epistle maintains the claim that Onesimus 'belongs' to the apostle"), see Chris Frilingos, "'For My Child, Onesimus': Paul and Domestic Power in Philemon," *JBL* 119, no. 1 (2000): 101.

28. Byron, "Paul and the Background of Slavery," 136.

29. Barclay, "Paul, Philemon and the Dilemma of Christian Slave-Ownership," 165.

30. Osiek and Balch, *Families in the New Testament World*, 99; Gerd Theissen, *The Social Setting of Pauline Christianity: Essays on Corinth*, ed. John Howard Schütz, Studies in the New Testament and Its World (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1982), 93.

31. Glancy, *Slavery in Early Christianity*, 49; Laura Salah Nasrallah, "'You Were Bought with a Price:' Freedpersons and Things in 1 Corinthians," in *Corinth in Con-*

trast: Studies in Inequality, ed. Stephen J. Friesen, Sarah A. James, and Daniel N. Schowalter (Leiden: Brill, 2014), 64, n. 45.

32. Barclay, "Paul, Philemon and the Dilemma of Christian Slave-Ownership."

33. Christina Petterson, *Acts of Empire: The Acts of the Apostles and Imperial Ideology*, Sino-Christian Studies: Supplement Series (Taiwan: Chung Yuan Christian University Press, 2012), 89–91.

34. F. F. Bruce speaks of Timothy and Silas bringing "supplies" (*The Acts of the Apostles: The Greek Text with Introduction and Commentary* [London: Tyndale, 1952], 344). See also I. Howard Marshall, *Acts of the Apostles* (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1982), 293–94; Richard I. Pervo, *Acts: A Commentary*, Hermeneia (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2009), 452; Ben Witherington III, *The Acts of the Apostles: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998), 448–49.

35. Translations (e.g., NRSV) and commentaries usually translate ἐντολὴν as "instructions," which arguably softens the force of the word and takes for granted that they are coworkers, rather than subservient to Paul.

36. For indications of Tertius as a slave name see Heikki Solin, *Die Stadtrömischen Sklavennamen: Ein Namenbuch. Barbarische Namen, Indices* (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 1996), 152–53.

37. Roth, "Paul and Slavery," 156.

38. Roth, "Paul and Slavery," 170.

39. See Justin Meggitt, *Paul, Poverty and Survival* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1998), 76. However, it must be said that Meggitt's overall thesis, on the poverty of Paul and his communities, falls under what Roth astutely calls the "pauperising approach" to early Christians' social standing, which functions to minimize the possibility of implication in slavery and exploitation (which she also notes is not a given).

40. Roth, "Paul and Slavery," 171.

41. David Johnston, *Roman Law in Context* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 42–44; Dale B. Martin, "Slave Families and Slaves in Families," in *Early Christian Families in Context: An Interdisciplinary Dialogue*, ed. David Balch and Carolyn Osiek (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2003, 207–30); Alan Watson, *Roman Slave Law* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1987), 67–89; Jane Gardner, "Slavery and Roman Law," in *The Cambridge World History of Slavery*, ed. Keith Bradley and Paul Cartledge (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 424–26.

42. Hans Anhum, "Mancipatio by Slaves in Ancient Roman Law?" in *Acta Juridica (Essays in Honour of Ben Beinart)*, ed. Wouter De Vos (Cape Town: Juta, 1976, 1–18).

43. Gardner, "Slavery and Roman Law," 419–20.

44. Watson, *Roman Slave Law*, 90.

45. Aristotle, *Politics*, trans. Harris Rackham, Loeb Classical Library (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2005 [1934]), 1253b34–35.

46. The *peculium* also meant that the slave could not alienate the master's property, but only the *peculium*. Clearly, the *peculium* served to protect the master's property.

47. For detail, see Watson, *Roman Slave Law*, 90–101.

48. Concerning Onesimus, Barclay mentions "the central tension in the present status of Onesimus as both slave and brother to Philemon" ("Paul, Philemon and the Dilemma of Christian Slave-Ownership," 183).

49. Louis Althusser, *Lenin and Philosophy and Other Essays*, trans. Ben Brewster (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1971); Claude Lévi-Strauss, *Tristes Tropiques*, trans. John Weightman and Doreen Weightman (London: Penguin, 1989); Fredric Jameson, *The Political Unconscious: Narrative as a Socially Symbolic Act* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1981).

50. Roth, "Paul, Philemon, and Onesimus," 124.

51. As Glancy seems to suggest in her characterization of slavery as "fertile ground for generating metaphorical language" ("Slavery and the Rise of Christianity," 457).