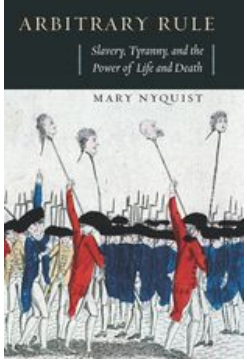

Arbitrary Rule: Slavery, Tyranny, and the Power of Life and Death

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CHAPTER

CHAPTER ONE Ancient Greek and Roman Slaveries

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Abstract

This chapter is concerned mainly with interrelations in Greek and Roman political thought between two modes of slavery: on the one hand, chattel slavery, a social institution that affected every aspect of life in ancient Greece and Rome; and on the other, political slavery, which appeared only as a rhetorical figure for an oppressive condition suffered by a political community or *polis*. Legal, chattel slavery tended to be conceptualized with reference to the individual household or its master, while political slavery invariably had reference to a political community and appeared in two distinct modes. Within the *polis*, political slavery represented a negative condition for the free, male citizens who expected to participate as equals in the political process, while externally, vis-a-vis other city-states, it represented a condition with which the entire community was threatened.

Keywords: modes of slavery, chattel slavery, social institution, political slavery, rhetorical figure, polis

Subject: Slavery and Abolition of Slavery, Intellectual History

The abolitionist and postabolitionist view that chattel slavery is fundamentally unjust was not shared by either Greco-Roman or early modern European authorities. To the overwhelming majority of such writers, slavery as lived experience was not of particular interest, much less one that called for major social reform or empathic understanding.[1] Why, then, was it so important to vilify slavery? Why should citizens have expended so much energy disparaging not only slaves but the very condition of slavery? Another question to be taken up here is why slavery was so frequently associated with violence in Greco-Roman political discourse. Initially, these may seem ridiculous questions. Anyone who has given chattel slavery a moment's thought knows that slaveholders maintained their position of power by means of systematic debasement and brute, physical force. Yet while this was true of actual, institutional slavery, in the discussion that follows I offer alternative explanatory frameworks for the specifically polemical contexts in which ancient Greco-Roman literature associates political slavery with degradation and violence. Tempted as some may be to understand political slavery as expressive of identification on the part of those who happened to be "free" with those who were not, the genealogical analysis undertaken here will critique this assumption as an anachronistic projection from later liberalism(s).

In this chapter, we will be concerned primarily with interrelations in Greek and in Roman political thought between two modes of slavery: on the one hand, chattel slavery, a social institution that affected every aspect of life in ancient Greece and Rome, and on the other, political slavery, which appeared only as a rhetorical figure for an oppressive condition suffered by a political community or *polis*. Legal, chattel slavery
p. 21 tended to be ↳ conceptualized with reference to the individual household or its master, while political slavery invariably had reference to a political community. Political slavery itself appeared in two distinct modes. Within the *polis*, it represented a negative condition for the free, male citizens who expected to

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participate as equals in the political process, while externally, vis-à-vis other city-states, it represented a condition with which the entire community was threatened. Rarely, however, was internal political slavery explicitly distinguished from external, and the failure to articulate or acknowledge their interdependence is highly significant, as we shall see. In a further, consequential complication, Athenian democratic ideology represented political slavery as a condition for which certain populations were naturally suited while for others, capable of ruling themselves, it would be inappropriate or unjust. For Aristotle, this was true of both chattel and political slavery. Before we can explore this influential nexus of slaveries, though, we need to reflect on the distinctive character of slavery as a figure for political oppression.

The trope of political slavery, which appeared in the history, philosophy, rhetoric, and tragedy of fifth-century BCE Athens, was a key element in the conceptual opposition between freedom and slavery central to democratic ideology. Not surprisingly, the opposition free/unfree did not capture the complexity of social realities. Freedom's antithetical relations with slavery obscured the variety of both free and unfree statuses available, together with the fact that since citizenship was determined by parentage, free status alone did not make one a citizen; metics (legally free resident aliens), for example, were not citizens. Only an adult male born to an Athenian citizen—and after Pericles's legislation of 451 BCE, both parents had to be citizens—could actively participate in politics and therefore fully benefit from political privileges.[2] Yet within these limits, emphasis on the free status shared by all members of the *polis* minimized differentiation by ancestry or social prestige, and was thus empowering for nonelite male citizens, who, historically, were largely responsible for generating and sustaining democracy's ideal valuation of freedom.[3] Despite its far more inclusive and complex policies on citizenship, the Roman Republic, too, embraced a foundational opposition between freedom and slavery.[4]

The distinctive features of political slavery's figural modality can more easily be appreciated if it is compared with ethico-spiritual slavery, also figurative. Moral philosophy occasionally represented *douleia* (δουλεία) in the positive sense of respectful submission to lawful order, as Plato did in the *Laws*.[5] More
p. 22 commonly, however, *douleia* gets stigmatized as a failure ↳ of mastery on the part of the individual agent. Ethical slavishness or ongoing enslavement is the outcome of weakness or self-indulgence on the part of the paradigmatically "free" agent. When a higher faculty of the free self falls subject to a lower faculty, or when the free self as a whole becomes hopelessly enamored of inferior, mundane pursuits, ethico-spiritual "slavery" is the inevitable result. In Euripides's *Suppliant Women*, for example, Eteocles, who is not well off, is praised for having rejected financial offers from friends "in case he should become slavishly attached to riches" (lines 874–76).[6] He has exercised the praiseworthy rational control, associated with self-mastery, lacking in someone who becomes a "slave" to appetite. By means of this psychoethical logic, familiar to anyone acquainted with ancient Greek and Latin texts or their medieval and early modern descendants, an individual's figurative, ethical slavery is understood as semiconsciously sought or, alternatively, tolerated because it has become habitual, in either case being somehow deserved.

While sharing figurative status, however, ethical and political slavery not only differ with regard to number—individual versus collective—but also operate on asymmetrical evaluative axes. The idea of political slavery as it appeared in Greco-Roman antityranny discourse does not valorize the position of master over slave the way ethical judgments do in recommending the rule of superior over inferior and self-mastery. This is true even when members of a political community are being shamed for an apparent willingness to submit to political slavery, in which case they acquiesce in a condition of subjection to a master when there is no need to do so. Instead of the paradigmatic rule of master over slave, antityranny discourse gives pride of place to the spirited exercise of freedom by political agents who meet as equals in the *polis*. Conceived as collective, political self-mastership by adult free males, none of whom rules over others—or, as Aristotle puts it, who rule and are ruled in turn[7]—Athenian democratic self-rule was, in essence, rule by *isonomia* within the *polis*: mastership *without* a master.[8]

Despite its aristocratic ethos and its often inegalitarian political practices, the Roman Republic appropriated this feature of Greek democratic ideology, according to which collective self-rule is a condition of autonomous governance by equals. Political slavery is thus the antithesis of the rational exercise of freedom that characterizes self-rule within the city-state. If psycho-ethical slavery results from a failure of individual self-mastery, political slavery comes about when a leader fails to protect the citizenry's freedom, instead attempting to become its master. By contrast with psycho-ethical slavery, slavery as a figure for the
p. 23 perceived subjection, dispossession, or disenfranchisement of a polity's naturally free members does not ↳ reflect badly on those who are, or are about to become, "enslaved." Such enslavement is attempted or perpetrated by a tyrant or group of tyrannous leaders represented as a would-be master, and it is tyranny

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that stands condemned. Although political slavery internal to the state is by no means a monolithic, transhistorical construct, both ancient and early modern orators and writers confidently assume that distinctly political enslavement is self-evidently offensive. To represent its very possibility is to avow a conviction that those who depict themselves (or are depicted) as threatened with enslavement deserve the continued enjoyment of their privileged, free status. Inherently polemical, allusions to political slavery consolidate the identity of those perceived to be threatened over against their tyrannous leader(s).[9] The injustice of political enslavement accordingly lies not in slavery per se but rather in the attempt to enslave those who patently ought not be enslaved.

What does the belief that such people should not be treated as slaves, even figuratively, have to do with attitudes toward those who are actually enslaved? Aristotle's *Politics* is central to any investigation of this question, since its association of barbarism with both the personal, natural slave and Asiatic political slavery has been inordinately influential. The natural affinity for political slavery that Aristotle attributes to Asiatic barbarians *tout court* is essential to his discussion of household slaves-by-nature (φύσει δολοι). Like political slavery, Aristotle's natural slave is associated with barbarism, just as natural freedom from both personal and political slavery is a characteristic of Greeks. When, for example, Aristotle concedes that critics who emphasize the random, conventional character of war slavery are onto something, it is on the commonsensical ground that there is a known category of people—implicitly, Greeks—whose legal enslavement cannot possibly be warranted: "[N]o one would ever say that he is a slave who is unworthy to be a slave," while in almost the same breath, he explicitly associates the natural slave with barbarians (βάρβάροι) ($1255^{a}25–32$).[10] A bit earlier, Aristotle argues that the personal slave's legal status ought to suit her or his nature (for Aristotle and other ancient writers, the paradigmatic slave is male), making it clear that only the mentally deficient, implicitly barbarous, natural slave ought to be enslaved: "For he who can be, and therefore is, another's, and he who participates in reason enough to apprehend, but not to have, is a slave by nature" (φύσει δοῦλος) (1254b21–23). Ancient Greek, Latin, and early modern writers tended to avoid overtly differentiating personal, legal slavery from political slavery. How, then, were they distinguished? By what means did auditors or readers determine which discursive context is appropriate? It
p. 24 would seem that addressees were ↳ to shift between (or among) discursive registers, performing rapid mental adjustments that would have become habitual given the prevalence of the polarity free/unfree. If for the moment we limit discussion to Aristotle's *Politics*, it is clear that certain of Aristotle's assertions refer unambiguously to legal, chattel slavery. The pronouncements just cited, for example, appear in contexts where Aristotle has already established that legal slavery is being discussed. Where such clarity reigns, it is because the immediate textual environment provides cues as to the relevant social context(s). When, as in book 1 of *Politics*, chattel slavery is being considered systematically, an author often signals this by using singular agent nouns such as *a slave, a master, a husband*, or *a father* (the latter two where wives and children are being distinguished from slaves). Generally speaking, singular forms indicate that either the individual citizen as psychoethical agent or the *oikos* (household) with its individual master are the implied social contexts, the latter being the relevant site for chattel slavery.

The individual citizen-master's alleged superior rationality, ability to rule, and free status are highlighted whenever household slavery is evoked. Yet the household itself is not thereby associated with freedom. As a positive, political ideal, "freedom" was a priceless trait only of citizens in their capacity as active members of the *polis* or of the *polis* as a community of such citizens. Participants understood, however, that though they met in the political arena as political equals, they were masters within their own households (*despotēs* designates both the household and slave master, though the head of household is not a *despotēs* over his children or wife).[11] The position of slave master—in ethico-spiritual discourse associated with individual agency—was therefore implicitly an attribute of the public personae of democracy's citizens. Put another way, active participation in the *polis* informally presupposed that citizens were slave masters endowed with the capacities needed to rule over the enslaved. Indeed, this commonality may have eased tensions among different economic strata of the free population.[12] When such slave masters assembled collectively in the *polis*, they were categorically disqualified for subjection to leaders who might try to treat them as slaves incapable of ruling themselves.

Problematically, however, in discussions of slavery as an institution, the private household is often the primary point of reference. Why should this be? Besides facilitating focus on the individual, the practice of foregrounding the household as slavery's site obscures from view not only differences between household and agricultural servitude but also the exceptionally life-threatening, life-shortening violence of state-
p. 25 sponsored slavery utilized for mining and other large-scale projects. As a convention of more ↳ systematic political reflection, this practice additionally suggests that enslaver and enslaved exist primarily within a

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relationship, and that they invariably encounter each other within the minicommunity of the household. Deflecting attention away from the long, twisted chain of coercive practices, commercial transactions, and social sanctions that resulted in and perpetuated enslavement, the practice of situating slavery within the household has the effect of naturalizing it, since the relationship between master and slave thereby shares space with both marital and parental relations. At the same time, though, location within the household underlines the enslaved's legal status as chattel, thereby differentiating the relationship between enslaver and enslaved from these normative familial relationships. Marital and parental relations are unquestionably sociable, while the relationship between enslaver and enslaved is only ambiguously so for Aristotle and later writers, since, as chattel, the enslaved ostensibly belongs to the same category as nonhuman animals and other possessions.

Aristotle brings even the acquisition of slaves by means of warfare within the purview of the household master in *Politics*, where household management requires the "art" of ensuring that the necessities of life are to hand. When first introducing this notion, Aristotle says that the art of acquiring slaves is "a species of hunting or war" ($1255^{b}38–40$). Whether they are to be domesticated or eaten, the beasts and fowl with which nature provisions humankind are legitimately pursued. Similarly, Aristotle argues, the enslavement of those defeated in battle is a form of hunting for human beings who are slaves-by-nature: "The art of war is a natural art of acquisition, for the art of acquisition includes hunting, an art which we ought to practice against wild beasts, and against men who, though intended by nature to be governed, will not submit; for war of such a kind is naturally just" ($1256^{b}22–25$).[13] Aristotle's analogy between hunting and just warfare, which, metaphorically, involves enslaving human beings who are naturally incapable of collective self-rule, has an exceptionally important afterlife in early modern debates on political and institutional slavery. These debates often perpetuate Aristotle's uneasy slippage between an art practiced on behalf of the individual household and warfare that engages opposing nations.

Peter Garnsey points out that compared with *Nicomachean Ethics*, Aristotle's *Politics* both marginalizes and dehumanizes the slave. He singles out the above passage for its radical erasure of any boundary between enslaved humans and nonhuman animals.[14] I would add that it also subtly links the just war with a compressed version of war slavery doctrine, whereby the victor has the options of either killing the vanquished (in the case of nonhuman animals done for sacrifice or food) or enslaving them ↳ (the equivalent for animals of domestication). Aristotle brings both options into loose association with the household when he makes warfare a figure for hunting as a natural art of acquisition, thereby finessing the problem that later troubles early modern theorists—that is, the connection between battlefield and household, between the victor's power over the enemies who are vanquished in a so-called just war and the individual slaveholder's over the enslaved. Here, because warfare engages collectivities, the human animals that provision the household are referred to in plural forms.

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Strengthened, perhaps, by a desire to distinguish Athenian household slavery from Sparta's state-sanctioned slavery, classical philosophy conventionally discusses ethical and legal slavery with reference to the individual household master as against political slavery and freedom, attributes of the community that constitutes the *polis*. Important similarities or differences between household and political slavery thus often appear in conjunction with a change in discursive number. Singular and plural forms are not all that distinguish them, though. In Aristotle's discussion of the individual natural slave in *Politics*, the natural slave's intellectual deficiency is stressed because it showcases the need for rule by a master. Incapable of self-mastery, a natural slave requires the guidance of a superior who possesses logos; for a natural master, the natural slave is, in turn, a bodily instrument or tool. Regarding political slavery, however, not rationality but comparative spiritlessness is key: collectively, or as a single political entity, barbarians are naturally given to a servile preference for absolute, monarchical rule. As "slaves" of their autocratic ruler, barbarians are believed to share a predisposition to subject themselves *politically* to a master—that is, to an absolute monarch.

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Political Slavery and Barbarism

Political slavery's polemical power derives in no small part from an opposition between those for whom it would represent a demeaning, traumatic loss and those for whom it was supposed to be natural. Non-Greek-speaking barbarians represented the latter in two different contexts, the first being the predominantly non-Greek-speaking (that is, "barbarian") ethnicity of Athens's slave population. In a persuasively developed study, Vincent V. Rosivach maintains that Athenians' negative views about non-Greek-speaking slaves originate in the second half of the sixth century BCE with the development of chattel slavery as an institution involving the enslavement of non-Greek adult males. Stereotypes and biases that took shape ↳ regarding non-Greek-speaking slaves thereafter worked their way into representations of
p. 27 political servility, the second context to feature *barbaroi*. In this context, which arose with the Persian Wars, the acquiescence of barbarians in absolute, monarchical rule was deemed tantamount to "slavery." Institutional structures and ideology sustaining chattel slavery, Rosivach argues, thus predate yet are used synergistically to elaborate Athenian democratic ideology.[15]

Classicists are generally agreed that the barbarization of political tyranny and slavery began in earnest with the Persian Wars and continued throughout the period of Athenian hegemony in the Aegean. Edith Hall has shown how central features of Athenian democratic and imperial ideology were articulated by means of an opposition between Greeks (or Hellenes) and Asiatics or barbarians, with values considered antithetical to democracy assigned barbarians. The polarity Greek/barbarian was mapped onto that between freedom and slavery, between equality and hierarchy, the rule of law and lawlessness, rationality and infantilism, simplicity and ostentation, and so on. Ethnically diverse and geographically disparate populations were brought under the rubric of *barbaroi* considered radically, even essentially, inferior to Greeks, whose distinct societies were likewise made to appear unified.[16] Associated both with enslavement as chattel and with political servility, "barbarism" became a complex, cross-institutional, cross-discursive phenomenon.

Aristotle's contribution to this process in *Politics* is exceptionally important but also difficult to unpack. Though Aristotle associates both chattel and political slavery with Asiatic barbarians in *Politics*' first book, he begins with political slavery. In the second section of book 1, Aristotle opposes Greek and barbarous conceptions of rule by suggesting that barbarians are less rational, possibly less evolved culturally, than Greeks because they lack the ordered distinctions of a genuine political society, a point he elaborates in a notoriously difficult passage: "But among barbarians no distinction is made between women and slaves, because there is no natural ruler among them: they are a community of slaves, male and female" ($1252^{b}5$–7). Though ostensibly referring to political slavery, Aristotle here blends political slavery into personal, chattel slavery, which is associated with the "natural ruler." The "natural ruler" has just been defined as master of a slave, a relationship likened to that between male and female and therefore implicitly located in the household, as it continues to be throughout book 1. But in this passage the natural ruler is also implicitly
p. 28 a free citizen conceived along contemporaneous Athenian lines. Overdetermining ↳ slavery's ties with barbarism, the erasure in this passage of differences between political and chattel slavery is ideologically motivated, and thus a clear example of the conflation of distinct orders I discussed earlier.

Exposed for critique is barbarism's presumed lack of differentiation between domestic and political rule, which Aristotle conflates with the absence in Asiatic societies of a principle of hierarchical differentiation within the household, absence that results in the emasculation of Asiatic men. Taking the *polis* as normative, Aristotle imagines that Athenians who are masters in their own households and free citizens in the *polis* would in a barbarian society become one with the paradigmatically male political "slaves" who are subject to an all-powerful übermaster. As a result, they would be—as barbarian men purportedly are—on the same level as women, since democratic ideology conceptualizes both women and slaves with reference to their place within the household. In this condition of bound-arylessness, Aristotle implies, the political ruler becomes a megadespot of unmarked political "slaves," a characterization that neatly prepares the way for his later evaluation of Greeks, Asians, and Europeans on the basis of spiritedness and rationality. The latter are qualities needed not only for internal, political self-rule but also for the external rule of other city-states or communities.

In the influential passage in book 7 where this ranking occurs, Aristotle correlates an ability or inability to institute internal, egalitarian political rule with a capacity or incapacity for governing other geopolitical units. Using a tripartite division of the world, Aristotle interrelates internal and external freedom by comparing Europeans, Asians, and Greeks. Europeans, he says, are

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> full of spirit, but wanting in intelligence and skill; and therefore they retain comparative freedom, but have no political organization, and are incapable of ruling over others. Whereas the natives of Asia are intelligent and inventive, but they are wanting in spirit, and therefore they are always in a state of subjection and slavery. But the Hellenic race, which is situated between them, is likewise intermediate in character, being high-spirited and also intelligent. Hence it continues free, and is the best-governed of any nation, and, if it could be formed into one state, would be able to rule the world. (1327^{b}24–33)

Political slavery's plasticity here does stellar service. On the basis of the polarity between ruler and ruled
p. 29 endemic to his culture, Aristotle assigns ↳ Hellenic "freedom" three domains, at least potentially. Hellenes are "free" in their superior, egalitarian internal self-governance, in their freedom from external rule, and in their capacity to rule over those not so blessed. Asiatic "slavery," conversely, potentially signifies both internal and external subjection. In addition to compounding figurative freedom and slavery in this way, Aristotle gives both of them a psychological, dispositional dimension. The barbarians who collectively so lack spiritedness that they meekly accept absolute monarchical rule (and perhaps rule by victors) can thereby be described as naturally suited to subjection.

Although Aristotle's systematization of various kinds of freedom and slavery was unique, his assumptions as well as the discursive density of his formulations were shared by other writers. Complexity of the kind found in this passage often arises when "slavery" is barbarized—that is, projected onto non-Greek Asiatics—in the context of antagonistic relations between Greeks and Persians. Used polemically of Persian dominance, the "slavery" with which Athens or other city-states are threatened is strongly linked to the "slavery" presumed to characterize barbarians subject to the Great King.[17] Similarly, the excellence of internal, democratic rule is conjoined with Athenian military superiority. In an often-cited passage, Herodotus posits a causal relation between Athens's earlier rule by tyrants—associated with the weakened condition of being kept down, likened to working fearfully under a *despotēs*—and its formerly unremarkable military status. Now that Athens enjoys democratic equality, Herodotus asserts, it surpasses all its neighbors (5.78).[18] In depicting the weakened condition that subjection to despotism induces as a form of slavery, Herodotus gets Athens's predemo-cratic condition to fit the patterned opposition between Persian despotism and democratic *isonomia* found elsewhere in the *Histories*.[19] During and after the Persian Wars, Athenian democratic ideology increasingly registered a concern with interstate "freedom" and "slavery," though this concern was not confined to Athens. Indeed, as a positive value, freedom within the *polis* came to be seen as interdependent with freedom of the *polis* from external rule and, eventually, with its rule over other *poleis*.[20]

As this indicates, internal and external political slavery can be invoked in the same passage or subtly interconnected in a number of other ways. Aeschylus's *Persians* addresses natural (un)fitness for servitude when Queen Atossa recounts a foreboding dream in which her son seeks to restrain (metaphorically to tame) two women who are at enmity with each other, one Greek, in Doric clothing, the other, in luxuriant Persian robes, who is from the "land of the barbarians":

p. 30

> [H]e harnessed them both beneath his chariot and put a yokestrap beneath their necks. One of them towered proudly in this gear, taking the reins submissively in her mouth, but the other struggled, tore the harness from the chariot with her hands, dragged it violently along with the bridle, and smashed the yoke in the middle. My son fell out. His father Dareios stood close by, pitying him.[21]

This passage alludes to Xerxes's attempt forcibly to unite two opposing geopolitical units, the allegorical representatives of which are treated like horses being broken in. Xerxes's act of yoking their necks together inescapably suggests enslavement, as does the reduction of status represented by their animalization. Unlike the barbarian, who willingly takes both the bit and her master's direction, the Greek balks with such spirit that she violently dismantles the entire apparatus of subjugation. Her resistance proleptically brings about Xerxes's fall—his fall, here, being a metonymy for Persia's defeat by the Greeks, whom Xerxes had vainly hoped to reduce to collective, interstate "slavery" in an attempt to expand his empire. With reference to Greece, the military, interstate register of figurative slavery-by-conquest is foregrounded in this passage. Yet at the same time, the natural slavishness of barbarians is allegorically manifested on the level of internal, political rule; on this level they *voluntarily* enact their servitude. Throughout Aeschylus's drama, Xerxes's military failure is bound up with the collective servility (and, on the part of Xerxes, rash godlikeness) encouraged by its mode of political rule or, conversely, with the spiritedness and love of

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freedom enjoyed by its Greek antagonists. When conquered, Xerxes is brought down from the heights of hubristic fantasies of mastering—metaphorically enslaving—both natural and human worlds, a shameful "fall" that mirrors the servile, ritual prostration (*proskynesis*) that Persian rulers exact from their subjects.[22]

In classical Greek literature, obeisance involving prostration before a ruler was a rite practiced by barbarians, who failed to observe proper boundaries between divine and human rule. In book 7, Herodotus has Hydarnes, a Persian general, try to persuade the Spartans Sperchias and Bulis to ingratiate themselves with Xerxes, Persia's Great King, by prostrating themselves, pointing to his own office as the type of reward they could receive for cooperative behavior. They respond, Herodotus writes: "Hydarnes, your advice with relation to us comes from something less than an equality of position. You counsel us as one who has tried one condition but knows nothing of the other. You know what it is to be a slave, but you have no experience
p. 31 of freedom, to know whether it is sweet or not. If you had had such experience, ↳ you would bid us fight for it, not with spears only, but with axes as well" (7.135.1–3). With this lead-in, the Spartans' refusal to prostrate themselves signifies their lived experience of rational, egalitarian political relations, cornerstone of pan-Hellenic self-proclaimed superiority over barbarians (7.136.1). In their principled rejection of Persian servility, the metaphoricity of subjects' enslavement to their monarchical ruler is elided. Like the spirited Greek of Atossa's dream who throws off both bit and harness, the two Spartans assertively resist induction into monarchical "slavery." The implication, of course, is that only those lacking such spiritedness would ever voluntarily comply with the fundamentally servile practice of ritual prostration before a monarch.

Tyranny, Slavery, and the *Despot's*

Tyranny is a political concept the extraordinarily rich history of which has received significant scholarly attention. Aristotle is the first of many to offer taxonomies of tyranny, whose varied historical and textual appearances still intrigue political commentators, theorists, and artists.[23] Yet tyranny's connections with "despotism," often used as a synonym for tyranny, tend not to be closely questioned, while its interrelations with slavery are frequently either underexamined or ignored. In this section, I initiate discussion of these terms, crucial to this study, by briefly outlining Raaflaub's thesis regarding the emergence of political freedom as a positive construct in archaic and classical Greece. My aim continues to be the clarification of discrete registers of meaning among tyranny, political slavery—both internal and external—and chattel slavery. In this section and the next, I develop a tentative theoretical framework for interpreting the long-standing connection between the collective character of political slavery and violence.

Raaflaub argues that when negatively politicized, the terms *turannos* and *despotēs* were central to the conflictual, triadic relations among tyranny, freedom, and slavery by means of which a positive conception of "freedom" emerged in archaic Greece. The *despotēs* and *turannos* have a complicated future before them, not least because they both initially had neutral or even positive connotations when used of a single political ruler, and could be used interchangeably with *basileus* (king).[24] Unlike *turannos* or *basileus*, however, which applied to individual political rulers, the *despotēs* was a political ruler or king only metaphorically, as the term *despotēs* designated the male head of household and master of slaves. The negative politicization of both *turannos* and *despotēs* occurred in a lengthy historical process in which slavery became ideologically
p. 32 inflected and antithetically bonded ↳ with tyranny. Painstakingly reconstructing this multiply contingent, complex process, Raaflaub argues that antithetical relations between slavery and tyranny historically preceded the emergence of an opposition between slavery and freedom. Likewise, he argues, the *despotēs* would originally have been associated not so much with the opposition free/unfree, but rather with the opposition master/servant or slave.[25] But by the time Aristotle writes, both *turannos* and *despotēs* are frequently used pejoratively of oppressive, autocratic rule, though *tyranny* can also apply more restrictively to rule illegitimately acquired by force.[26] (This meaning survives when early modern treatments of tyranny distinguish tyranny by acquisition from tyranny by practice.) Yet even when negative connotations had come to prevail in democratic Athens of the latter fifth century BCE, the tyrant and the *despotēs* could still, confusingly, be referred to neutrally or even positively. This tended to happen either in antidemocratic literature or in ethico-spiritual contexts, as when, for example, in *Politics* Aristotle refers to the soul as the *despotēs* of body ($1254^{b}5$).

As a synonym for the *turannos*, the term *despotēs* draws attention to the "slavery" (*doulosunē*) of the tyrant's subjects. Raaflaub explains the process of figuration whereby the term *despotēs* became negatively,

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polemically, charged when he elucidates what the figuration brings out: "the unrestricted, authoritarian, and unaccountable power the master exercised in both spheres."[27] Because this is the basis of what becomes conceptualized as arbitrary rule, it is important to grasp the condensed, embedded logic of the "enslavement" threatened by the *despotēs* as political ruler, which seems to go like this: although his rule within the household is unobjectionable, the *despotēs* wrongly wields unregulated power when governing within the *polis*. In the latter case, he threatens the freedom of *politai* (male citizens) and the rule of law they have instituted for their own self-government. Household slaves are, of course, to be treated as slaves, but it is fundamentally perverse to transfer the individual, arbitrary rule of the household master to rule of freeborn citizens.

This is the feature of tyranny that Aristotle singles out in *Politics* whento the self-interest he has made a characteristic of despotic rule in book 3, he adds arbitrariness in book 4. Aristotle associates tyranny's arbitrariness with an exercise of individual power that is unaccountable, undifferentiated with regard to its subjects, and self-interested (1295[a]19–22). We will return to this passage and its discursive positioning in a later section. At present, I want to flag the centrality of this identification of tyranny with individual,
p. 33 arbitrary rule not only to ancient Greek and Roman but also to ↳ early modern, neoclassical views of freedom. Modeled on that of the household *despotēs*, the tyrant's power is arbitrary because it is discretionary, unregulated, and directed to its own individual good rather than to that of the freeborn citizens in the *polis* whose collective welfare a leader is supposed to advance. In later traditions influenced by antityrannicism, such arbitrariness is linked with a flouting of received laws and institutions, or, more simply, lawlessness.

Yet the *despotēs*' sinister doppelgänger is not the only part the tyrant plays when reducing citizens to political slavery. He may also play the part of would-be conqueror even when it is his own people over whom he tyrannizes. Tyranny's interrelations with political slavery are semantically layered, but tend, I believe, to draw on tensions that are captured by means of imagery or scenarios associated with these two figures: the despot and the conqueror. Even when the two are fused, or when internal political slavery is not clearly distinguished from external slavery, it can be helpful to separate analytically the model of the tyrannous would-be household *despotēs* from the tyrannous would-be foreign conqueror. In the next section, we will take up tyranny's kinship with the threat posed by external, military enemies, the context in which the would-be conqueror appears. In the remainder of this section, we will examine the despot, who takes center stage when threatening the internal integrity of the *polis*.

By failing to distinguish the *polis* from his own, private household, the *despotēs* insultingly subverts the *polis* as a community of *politai*. The politicization of the term *despotēs* produces an unusual analogy, one that is polemical yet whose disjunctive logic opens onto the hypothetical, the fictive. As (dis)analogy, it suggests that if the ruler can be likened to the household *despotēs*, this likeness reveals that something has gone seriously awry, since *politai* are self-evidently not household slaves. Negatively politicized in this way, the term *despotēs* underscores democratic ideology's valuation of the *polis* as the special preserve of freedom at the same time that it disjoins household mastership from rule over citizens. By a process of negative definition, the bad ruler's identification as *despotēs* signifies that he has fundamentally misconstrued both his position and the nature of the *polis*, a public arena in which free, adult men govern themselves by means of laws and equal, open discussion. If a ruler exercises despotic power in the *polis*, he is, then, wrongly treating citizens *as if* they were slaves, treating the *polis as if* it were a household. Were he to be innocent of all other charges, the *despotēs* would still be guilty of committing the appalling error of conflating the private household with the public community of *politai*.

p. 34 Pursuing this further, it could be said that the *despotēs* threatens the *polis* by failing to preserve its separation from the household. Within his own household, the Athenian citizen ruled in and received status from every one of the relations Aristotle specifies: as husband, father, slaveholder, and head of the *oikos*, he occupied a position of hierarchical privilege. When the leader of the *polis*, possessing considerable stature and power, or having become entranced by his own self-importance, mistakenly treats the public realm as his own, private household, he tacitly reduces male citizens to the position of those over whom they ordinarily rule. In attempting or figuratively effecting such degradation of the male citizenry, the tyrant threatens the very domestic hierarchies that constitute the basis of citizenship. At the same time, or rather by the same logic, the tyrant undermines the equality of relations within the *polis*, equality that is often represented by the rule of law as a public, collectively produced practice of justice or, in *Politics*, by the capacity citizens have for occupying alternately the offices of ruler and ruled. According to the sedimented,

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figurative logic implicit in the language of political slavery, the tyrant's assaults on the integrity of political association and rule threaten to reduce its citizens to slaves.

The notion that a boundary between household and *polis*—a boundary erased by despotism—is a necessary condition of the citizenry's freedom is not uniquely Aristotle's. Herodotus's influential depictions of Persian despotism also presuppose Greek ideals of rationality and restraint together with a normative distinction between household and state from which tyranny deviates. In Herodotus's famous Constitutional Debate, Otanes critiques monarchy as an institution that invariably degenerates into tyranny because it fosters the individual leader's *hybris* and envy: "Take the best man on earth and put him into a monarchy and you put him outside of the thoughts that have been wont to guide him" (3.78–80). As has often been observed, with this groundbreaking insight, momentous in its implications, tyranny is understood systemically, as the inescapable by-product of political power that has been concentrated in the hands of a single ruler.[28] While placing characterological defects in dynamic interaction with monarchy's institutional supports, Otanes's critique suggests that the very singleness of the monarch's position of rule over many leads to grandiosity of self-conception and abuse of power. In practice, its singleness is too reminiscent of the sole rule enjoyed by the household *despotēs*.[29]

The figure of the tyrannous *despotēs* may be peculiarly well adapted to negative representations of single-person political rule informed by democratic ideology. What the tyrant does not appear to *get* is the
p. 35 specificity of political rule. The embedded logic sketched above appears most ↳ dramatically in Herodotus's representations of Persian despots, whose outrageous, outsize desires suggest that a temptation to treat the *polis* as if it were a grand, potentially limitless, household—where the master's behavior is not regulated by law—may be intrinsic to single-person political rule. Yet perverse substitution of private, arbitrary rule for the rule of law also appears as a general characteristic of single-person rule in the more somber context of *Suppliant Women*. Theseus generalizes when he declaims, "There is nothing more pernicious for a city than a sole ruler, above all because in such a situation there are no public laws, and one man has usurped the law and taken rulership for himself" (429–32).

As Herodotus portrays the Persian despot, his eros knows no bounds, obliterating any and all differences between private and public. His first transgressive act, followed by neither remorse nor reform, generally inaugurates a destructive trajectory in the course of which he continues to extend the reach of his unaccountable power. Herodotus stages a mesmerizing yet repellent travesty of political rule in vignettes that show the tyrant substituting his own indomitable will for law. If the despot's personal will supplants public law, his impulsive actions also flagrantly usurp the place of human language. Cambyses, for example, having murdered his brother—the first of his evil deeds, it is said—falls in love with one of his own sisters and decides he would like to marry her, though this is not permitted by Persian custom. The royal judges who take this case on at Cambyses's insistence find no law to sanction his desire, but are able to point out (thereby saving their own lives) that, as absolute ruler, the Great King is legally permitted to do as he pleases. It is reported that Cambyses thereupon marries his sister, and, soon afterward, another, younger sister whom he murders when he takes her with him into Egypt (3.29–33). This narrative sequence illustrates tyrannical power's drive to subordinate custom and law to its own, arbitrary ends as well as its ability to treat kinspeople as if they were not kin. Incest, often associated with barbarism, is, though, merely one expression of the Persian tyrant's refusal to acknowledge boundaries or grasp distinctions, a refusal more often illustrated when he treats his subjects as members of a vast, extended family over whom he has sole authority.

While Cambyses actually goes mad, Herodotus's other despots also behave in a way that suggests regression to an infantilized omnipotence that precludes the possibility of rational dialogue or collective process. Cyrus the Great King, for example, practices a burlesque form of physical mutilation, often associated with barbarism, when he orders the cutting of the river Gyndes.[30] Affronted when the river carries away one of
p. 36 his sacred horses, Cyrus decides to punish it by having his army cut 180 channels into ↳ each of its sides, forcing the artificial outlets to fragment the river's flow (1.189–90). Even more delusional is Cyrus's descendant Xerxes's assault on the Hellespont, over which he has his engineers laboriously construct a bridge that will "yoke" Europe and Asia (linked with the "yoke of slavery" to which Persia wants to subject Greece in Aeschylus's *Persians*). When a storm smashes the bridge to bits, Xerxes orders his men to punish the Hellespont with three hundred lashes and with branding, and to lower fetters into the sea. While carrying out the flogging, his men are to denounce the Hellespont for injuring its "master," who, it should know, will cross with or without its permission, words that are explicitly said to be barbarous (βάρβάρα) (7.33–35). Often cited to illustrate *hybris*, Xerxes's words arrogantly place him above the level of

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humankind, denying, in effect, that his power has any limits. Yet while challenging the gods, Xerxes's *hybris* also vividly dramatizes the despotic ruler's perverse relation to the household despot. Whips, fetters, and irons are, of course, instruments legitimately employed by the slave master in disciplining his slaves. Used by a political ruler, they signify an abuse of power, which for Herodotus's Xerxes extends to making the Hellespont his "slave."

As these episodes indicate, at its most extreme, the despot's grandiose desire for power leads him to alter or reduce the status of human and nonhuman obstacles to the imposition of his will. The violence this entails is one important feature of the enmity between the tyrant and his subjects to be discussed in the next section. Sometimes taking special pleasure in destroying the bond between parent and child, Cambyses and Xerxes, the most uninhibited Persian despots in Herodotus's *Histories*, both engage in violence directed against sons. Cambyses, for example, responds to the Persian Prexaspes's criticism of his excessive drinking by setting up a test of his own wits and skill: if he shoots Prexaspes's son through the middle of the heart, he will have cleared his name; if he fails to do so, then Prexaspes's words will have been vindicated. Having pronounced these terms, Cambyses immediately shoots the boy, cuts his heart open to make sure the arrow has actually pierced it, and then laughingly boasts of victory to Prexaspes (3.34, 3.35).

Several conventional motifs relating to despotism appear in this episode: the despot's rejection of good counsel, his immoderate desires, the pleasure he takes in devising and playing humiliating games, and the indulgence of sadistic energies. Prexaspes's inability to protect his son from gratuitous, fatal violence illustrates how ever-present danger becomes when the ruler's will is a law unto itself, as happens in
p. 37 *Histories*' narratives of ↳ unchecked, autocratic rule, especially when fused with imperial ambitions.[31] In a not dissimilar incident, when advancing on Greece, Xerxes meets with a request from his generous and devoted donor, the Lydian Pythius, whom Xerxes has formally pronounced his friend. Worried about putting all five of his sons at risk in this campaign, Pythius courteously asks that his eldest son be released from service to take care of him in his old age. Flying into a temper, Xerxes harangues Pythius as his "slave," claims ownership of all the members of Pythius's household, including his wife, and passes a sentence of death upon Pythius's eldest son, whom he proceeds to have killed and cut in half, one half of his body being put on either side of the road through which the army marches (7.38, 7.39).

The Tyrant as Conqueror and Antityranny

These grisly episodes of helpless parental degradation in the face of arbitrary violence directed against children emphasize a community's vulnerability in the absence of democratically shared participation in the rule of law. Typically, the tyrant's irrational, violent behavior is the result of increasingly frenetic attempts to enlarge or defend his power. It is sparked by dynamics internal to his stereotypical psychopathy, which spirals into paranoia when he perceives those he rules as personal enemies. But absent such psychologization, the tyrant's hostility takes on the more impersonally hostile aspect of the foreign invader or would-be conqueror. The fact that, historically, some tyrants used force in coming to power from outside the city-state they then govern is important to the pairing of tyranny and slavery. Tyranny frequently arose from within, though, in which case force or its threat contributed to victory over competing aristocratic factions. Both paths to the acquisition of political power are relevant to depictions of the tyrant as would-be conqueror.

The tyrant's hostility toward his people cannot be explained solely with reference to the historical record, however, as it is integral to what Raaflaub calls "antityranny ideology," which was central to the consolidation of Athens's democratic ethos but also relevant to other forms of communally shared governance where freedom was conceived as "nonslavery."[32] In formation before the Persian Wars, which intensified interrelations between internal and external freedom, antityranny ideology crystallizes the second of the two forms of conflict that feature the *polis* under threat. If in the first form the *despotēs* treats the *polis* as if it were his household, its citizens as if they were his slaves, in the second the tyrant poses the
p. 38 kind of threat ↳ to his people's security that an external conqueror would: he behaves as if he, their ruler, were their enemy. The geopolitical boundaries transgressed by military invasion are very different from those violated when the tyrant conflates household and *polis*, ignoring the essential difference between political rule and the master's rule of household slaves. Yet interstate violence, too, may threaten citizens with degradation to the status of political slaves, as we saw with Aeschylus's *Persians*. To convey the

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enormity of tyranny's threat to the *polis*, the tyrant's resemblance to an external enemy is thus often stressed, even if he arises from within.

Later antityranny traditions, too, represent the tyrannous ruler as a would-be invader who threatens to undermine the *polis* or even to destroy his people. To appreciate the underlying logic, we need to keep in mind two interstate practices to which the violence of political "slavery" may rhetorically refer. The first is the acquisition of slaves from among those defeated militarily, who were customarily considered subject to the victor. In ancient Greece, while non-Greek male soldiers defeated in battle might become captives sold into slavery, more often the conquered population's women and children—valuable because more readily assimilated—were abducted for enslavement. The special vulnerability of women and the young became a feature of Athenian antityranny ideology that was often retained by Roman and early modern adaptations. Alternatives to death or enslavement received little attention in ancient Greek and Roman literature, as did alternate means of acquiring slaves, such as slave trading and slave reproduction. Yet mentioning this should not minimize warfare's efficacy as a mechanism for enlarging slave populations as well as for intimidation. Thucydides reports grimly that in the Peloponnesian War, Athens contravened the customary prohibition against enslaving ethnic Greeks by ruthlessly subjugating Melos, a city-state that had been independent for seven hundred years, massacring its grown men, enslaving its women and children, and sending colonists in to settle it.[33]

The second practice to which political "slavery" may refer is the subjugation of one state by another. When tyranny is associated with foreign conquest, the acquisition of captive humans treated as chattel is often conflated with interstate "slavery." Interstate subjection resulting from military aggression could entail damaging consequences such as the coercive extraction of tribute or forced assimilation of subject populations, along with numerous other forms of loss or subservience.[34] Yet the "slavery" suffered by a conquered state—which we are in any case here considering as a figure for internal, political "slavery"—differs enormously from the lasting, traumatic dislocation from homeland, kinship networks, and linguistic
p. 39 and ↳ cultural communities that was experienced by those who were forced into bondage as chattel. Representations of tyranny-as-conquest may vividly evoke such trauma, but it is crucial that rhetorical effects not be mistaken for the realities of war slavery.

Distinguishing among rhetorical charges of threatened interstate "slavery" is equally important. By their subjects and critics, Athenian, Spartan, and Roman imperialism could credibly be represented as tyrannous. As Ryan Balot points out, "[I]mperial states acted like tyrants in that they exploited their subjects for their own good, without their consent."[35] Athens itself was often polemically cast as tyrannous and its subjects as slaves when debates arose over the interstate domination it practiced within Greece during its imperial expansion after the Persian Wars.[36] By its own propagandists, Athens justified its imperialism by pointing to the freedom from Persian slavery it had enabled its allies to enjoy and the egalitarian intrastate relations it had imposed.[37] Yet within imperial Athens and, later, Rome, the threat of interstate military defeat in aggressive warfare could still be construed rhetorically as "slavery," while the dangers posed internally by a potential tyrant-as-would-be-conqueror could be called upon to reinvigorate a militarized defensiveness that was part and parcel of imperial aggression and ideology.

When the energies of the would-be conqueror are mobilized, his energies are acted out in ways that evoke military invasion. (Vestiges of tyranny's association with invasion appear when in early modern and Enlightenment literature, "rights" are said to be "invaded.") We can see this in Herodotus's Constitutional Debate, where, critiquing one-person rule, Otanes says that when the absolute sovereign becomes tyrannous, "he turns upside down all ancestral observances, forces women, and kills men without trial" (3.80). All three charges showcase the tyrant's contempt for social institutions and bonds established within the polity, "ancestral observances" covering a wide range of religious and social customs to which an outsider may be indifferent or hostile (possibly recalling the Persians' desecration of Athenian temples). They are also reminiscent of the wanton destructiveness to which a society was vulnerable if assaulted militarily. The tyrant's sexual assault of the women subject to his power most clearly calls up this situation, but the killing of citizens without trial suggests that the tyrant's arrogant disregard of law might transform the *polis* into something of a battlefield.

The examples Euripides's Theseus gives of the sole ruler's arbitrary behavior are similarly evocative. When the people rule, Theseus says, they treasure the younger members of society.

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> A king, however, regards the existence of vigorous young men as a threat; he puts to death the bravest of them and those he regards as intelligent, since he is in constant fear for his tyranny. How could a city ever be strong, when its youth is mown down and harvested like the new growth of a meadow in spring? What point is there for a man to gain wealth and a comfortable life for his sons when all his efforts serve only to improve a tyrant's life? Why should he raise his daughters at home in the proper maidenly virtues, when the ruler wants the kinds of pleasure tyrants delight in and the parents are only paving the way for their daughters' tears? (445–56)

Editors of *Suppliant Women* note of the opening statement that the murder of young men who pose a threat may allude to Herodotus's narrative where the tyrant Thrasybulus cuts down taller ears of corn as nonverbal advice (transmitted through a messenger to Periander) about the need to eliminate potential rivals (5.92).[38] This works with the initial stress on power-mongering insecurity. Yet in the lines following, where the young men are mown down and harvested, the loss of their lives suggests needless sacrifice in battle, a central issue in the drama. In *Persians*, Darius, represented as protector of his male subjects' lives, is contrasted with his reckless son, the despotic Xerxes, unaccountable to his people yet responsible for the countless lives lost in battle (652–53). In Euripides's less personalized representation, the tyrant is as indifferent to the safety and well-being of his subjects as are military opponents, who heedlessly take the lives of sons, plunder the inhabitants' acquisitions, destroy their comfort, and ravish their daughters.

The tyrant as external enemy may be especially important to the antityranny ideology that develops alongside the values and institutions unique to mid-fifth-century BCE Athenian democracy. Antityranny ideology posits an antagonistic relationship between the tyrant and the entire citizenry or community. "To put it simply," Raaflaub says, "tyranny was good to think with. By the latter part of the fifth century," he continues, "the Athenians came to define their civic identities and virtues, their democracy, equality, and liberty in opposition to tyranny, past and potential, real and fictitious."[39] Tyranny concentrated everything that was considered hostile to democracy in a single, abhorrent figure against whom the community's energies could be organized. The ideology of antityrannicism thus acted as a cohesive force for the Athenian community, which, in Raaflaub's words, "virtually from the fall of tyranny in the late sixth century,
p. 41 embarked on a new and uncharted course, a course that led it to unprecedented heights ↳ of power exerted in unprecedented ways by the entire citizen body both within their *polis* and over many other *poleis* but that also caused deep anxieties, insecurities, and strong tensions."[40] Formerly a matter of interest primarily to members of the ruling elite from whom the tyrant would attempt to wrest power, antityranny ideology made tyranny of urgent concern to the entire democratic *polis*. Significantly, it also associated militarized enmity with monarchy as an abstract construct schematically opposed to democracy (or, less often, with oligarchy as democracy's perennial rival).

The ultimate expression of antityrannicism is, of course, tyrannicide. Conceptualized as justifiable killing rather than murder, tyrannicide itself further militarizes the enmity between tyrant and polity in its sanctioning of the destruction of human life, warfare's official métier. So important to the democratic *polis* were its antagonistic relations with tyranny that far from being a criminal act, the slaying of tyrants was publicly acclaimed and celebrated. Although the historical basis of their assassination of Hipparchus was questioned early on, Harmodius and Aristogeiton are the first tyrannicides to be eulogized in popular songs and to receive cult honors; they are also the first citizens to be memorialized in statues erected in the agora. The act of tyrannicide was associated with deliverance from tyranny's oppressive threat to democratic values, which the tyrannicides heroically preserved. Legislation offering tyrannicides immunity from prosecution and extending honors to their descendants testifies to the high public esteem in which they were held.[41] Antityrannicism's centrality to Athenian democracy was sustained by numerous social and religious practices, such as public testimonies and proclamations, written curses against tyranny, and songs heroizing tyrannicides.[42]

Insofar as tyranny posed a threat not only to the values but to the very security of the democratic *polis*, tyrannicide was an ideological form of imaginary, reciprocal violence, or, in Josiah Ober's words, of "therapeutic civil conflict" (*stasis*) by means of which distressing social divisions and conflicts were reenvisioned as having been resolved by a single, heroic act of militarized confrontation.[43] Literary and philosophical representations that suggested a likeness between tyranny and an external enemy therefore made an important contribution to antityranny ideology. There is, however, one aspect of the tyrant's enmity that contributed to antityrannicism without invoking figurative slavery: the tyrant's monstrousness, which reveals itself when he greedily takes his people's lives. In this manifestation of tyrannous hostility, which needs more attention than it is given here, the tyrant's brutality exceeds what

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p. 42 even the most psychopathic human could come up ↳ with and suggests instead bestiality or subhumanity. Polarized opposition of well-ordered government devoted to the good of the community and the single-person ruler who monstrously "devours his people" goes back to Alcaeus—even to Homer's *Iliad*, where Achilles accuses Agamemnon of precisely this—and is extraordinarily long-lived.[44]

The figure of the tyrant as monster appears within the *polis* when Plato develops his antidemocratic etiology of tyranny in the *Republic*. It is argued that the demos (used here to refer to the poor of the *polis*), who habitually nurture a sense of grievance against the wealthy, are easily led to champion someone who poses as their protector. This champion, Plato says, will be transformed into a tyrant when he falsely accuses an elite citizen of a crime, assassinates him, and further seduces the demos by promising to abolish debts and redistribute land. Plato compares these acts to an archaic ritual involving human sacrifice. Figuratively, his argument goes, they involve a transgressive tasting of human flesh or blood that has been mixed in with animal, the ingestion of which transforms the political protector into a tyrant in the way that the human consumer of human flesh and blood morphs into a wolf.[45] In this comparison, the tyrant's monstrousness results from his transgressive demagoguery, responsible for his victimization of the elite.

For democratic Athens, on the other hand, the monstrous tyrant was assimilated to the external enemy when the legendary Theseus was fashioned after Harmodius and Aristogeiton. Visible in vase paintings and sculpture, the modeling of Theseus's stance and gestures on that of the tyrannicides is significant in that it associates the single, violent act of tyrannicide with a mythos of deliverance. Theseus had already become something of an Attic Heracles in performing numerous heroic exploits, including, like Heracles, vanquishing the Amazons, whose defeat was joined to the establishment of Athenian democracy, now presided over by Theseus.[46] Of his numerous monster-destroying feats, most memorable was Theseus's killing of the Cretan Minotaur, devourer of Athens's annual tribute to Crete of seven youths and seven maidens. In dispatching the Minotaur, Theseus delivered from death not only the fourteen youths about to be sacrificed but also any future victims and therefore Athens itself. By means of Theseus's association with Harmodius and Aristogeiton, Athens's deliverance from Crete was made suggestively to resemble liberation from tyranny. Tyranny, monstrosity, and human sacrifice—brought together under very different auspices in Plato's *Republic*—were associated in this liberatory narrative in ways that greatly influenced later antityranny discourses.

p. 43 Tyranny, Despotical Rule, and Natural Slavery in Aristotle's *Politics*

Aristotle's discussion of slavery in *Politics* was of overwhelming importance to early modern debates on internal, political rule and on the legitimacy of colonial conquest. Even today it provokes controversy, which is another reason for giving it close attention. Though *Politics* systematizes many of the issues just discussed, in it chattel and political slavery are interrelated in ways that are extremely complex. Both are not only naturalized but also associated with barbarism. It might actually be helpful to refer not to a single doctrine of natural slavery but rather to Aristotle's dual doctrines of natural slavery, since both chattel and political slavery are represented as endemic to non-Greek, Asiatic populations. Distinguishing the two forms of slavery clarifies the development of Aristotle's argument. It also enables us to grasp the interplay between discursive registers, together with the invidious slippage between the household and *polis* as discursive contexts. In addition, it facilitates greater precision in specifying what kind of slavery later authors take Aristotle to be naturalizing.

As mentioned earlier, Garnsey notes that in *Politics* Aristotle goes out of his way to dehumanize the household slave. Garnsey persuasively relates this dehumanization to Aristotle's rejection of slave mastership as a familial correlate of properly political rule, a correlation Aristotle had accepted in *Nicomachean Ethics*.[47] I would like to develop Garnsey's argument by suggesting that both aspects of *Politics*—dehumanization of the enslaved and rejection of slave mastership as a fit analogue of political rule—are connected with its theorization of inappropriately arbitrary political power as despotical. This theorization appears in *Politics*, where Aristotle counterposes the naturalness of chattel slavery and the naturalness of barbarians' collective, political enslavement under monarchy to the unnaturalness of despotical rule as a mode of political rule for free citizens. To put this differently, in *Politics* Aristotle delineates the features of free Greek citizens who, natural masters in their own households, are collectively capable of governing themselves as equals and naturally antipathetic to political slavery—that is, to despotical rule.

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Aristotle opens *Politics* by confuting Plato's view that hierarchical relations within the household naturally correspond to those within the state, differences lying only in the size of the population being ruled.[48] Not all kinds of rule are comparable, Aristotle declares. As his argument unfolds, though, it becomes clear that
p. 44 Aristotle does not reject the principle of ↳ correspondence between household and state but only the inclusion of the enslaver/enslaved relation in the set of appropriate correspondences of which he approves. Of the three forms of relational rule within the household mentioned by Aristotle—master over slave, father over children, and husband over wife—the latter two do have analogues in the state: the father's rule is like royal rule, while the husband's is like that within the more or less egalitarian *politeia* (often translated "constitutional" rule, which combines aristocratic with some features of democratic rule). For a single, crucial reason, slave mastership categorically cannot be a model for rule in the *polis*: it presupposes a subject who is naturally a slave, whereas genuine political association is undertaken by free men who are equals.

Aristotle repeats the importance of differentiating kinds of rule when concluding book 1's discussion of chattel slavery, at which point he famously claims, "For there is one rule exercised over subjects who are by nature free, another over subjects who are by nature slaves" ($1255^{b}18–20$; see also book 7, $1325^{a}27–30$). Here, it is the juridical status of those who are ruled that determines the categorical unlikeness of despotic and political rule. Like other references to slavery, this may, though, be doing double duty. On the one hand, and in keeping with the discussion of household slavery Aristotle is completing, it distinguishes slave mastership in the household from rule in the *polis*, where those qualified to participate in public life are naturally free. Political rule cannot be analogous to slave mastership because Aristotle has already demonstrated that chattel slavery requires a master whose rationality naturally fits him for mastership (someone who is "free") and a natural slave who is intellectually deficient (identified with the barbarian). At the same time, by means of its parallel collectivities ("subjects," "slaves"), Aristotle's assertion is general enough to incorporate the figurative slaves of Asiatic monarchy into his doctrine of the barbarized natural slave.

Indirectly, Aristotle may be correcting a statement made in *Nicomachean Ethics* to the effect that Persian rule wrongly treats subjects as slaves. As it turns out, it is not wrong at all; such slavery suits its subjects perfectly.[49] Persian political slavery is naturalized again in book 3 of *Politics* when Aristotle explains the distinctive qualities of Asiatic monarchy, which, like chattel slavery, is both legal and hereditary: "For foreigners, being more servile in character than Hellenes, and Asiatics than Europeans, do not rebel against a despotic government. Such kingships have the nature of tyrannies because the people are by nature slaves; but there is no danger of their being overthrown, for they are hereditary and legal" ($1285^{a}20–24$). The
p. 45 implicit crossover here between chattel and political slavery occurs ↳ because both are considered natural to barbarians. Statements such as this, which transfer the category of the natural slave, originally situated in the household, to an entire ethnicity or nation—to "natural slaves," plural— lend authority to later usage in which the enslavement of "barbarians" is compounded. Both national and individual, personal slavery can be made to appear natural for barbarians.

Aristotle's defense of household, chattel slavery in book 1 includes a reasoned consideration of the opposing view that slavery is merely conventional and therefore unjust. Commentators who want to clear Aristotle of the charge of having written an apology for slavery bring forward the important concessions he makes, such as that nature does not always succeed in appropriately distinguishing the bodies and souls of freemen from those of slaves, or that the warfare through which slaves are acquired might be unjust.[50] Such apologies have to underplay connections between barbarians and slavery that confirm the existence of the slave-by-nature, such as, "[F]or it must be admitted that some are slaves everywhere, others nowhere" ($1255^{a}31–32$). Further, they must suppress the fact that Aristotle considers objections only to household, chattel slavery. Nowhere in *Politics* does Aristotle question the view that barbarians might not naturally be, as in the passage discussed earlier, "a community of slaves, male and female."

On the contrary, Aristotle confidently makes this assertion immediately after inaugurating his disagreement with Plato in the opening section, backing it up by a citation from Euripides. Given the imbrication of chattel with political slavery in *Politics*, this discursive ordering is critical to the development of Aristotle's argument. By mentioning the naturalness of barbarians' political slavery first, and by placing it beyond question, Aristotle lays the groundwork for several central claims: his thesis regarding the barbarous slave-by-nature in book 1; the association of hereditary absolute monarchy with natural, Asiatic servility in the passage just cited from Book 3; and the tripartite division of geopolitical dispositionalities in book 7. Rhetorically, the naturalness to barbarians of the overdetermined "slavery" introduced near the beginning of book 1 informs each and every one of these discussions.

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We can turn now to Aristotle's difficult but influential theory that deviant forms of political rule are despotic, which he elaborates in book 3. It will be helpful to compare this discussion with Aristotle's defense of household, chattel slavery in book 1, where, having foregrounded the naturalness for barbarians of an overdetermined "slavery," Aristotle repeatedly stresses the mutually beneficial character of the master-
p. 46 slave relationship. By contrast, in book 3, Aristotle suggests that household mastership itself has negative
↳ characteristics, the first of which is that it is self-interested: "The rule of a master [*despotēs*], although the slave by nature and the master by nature have in reality the same interests, is nevertheless exercised primarily with a view to the interest of the master, but accidentally considers the slave" ($1278^{b}32–36$). This feature of slave mastership is not previously mentioned in *Politics*. The enslaver's self-interested, exploitative relation with the enslaved introduces a distinct, crucially important reason for differentiating it from paternal, marital rule and household rule. Key to Aristotle's disagreement with Plato, it enables him to stigmatize as despotic political rule that is modeled on slave mastership.

In book 3, Aristotle argues that in relations between husband and wife, father and children, and (an occasional fourth) master and household, rule occurs "for the good of the governed or for the common good of both parties, but essentially for the good of the governed" ($1278^{b}39–41$). As in book 1, the master-slave relation is excluded from other relations within the household as a prototype for any form of natural, political rule. But this time it is disqualified *not* by the asymmetrical legal status of ruler and ruled but rather by the self-interested nature of slave mastership. Self-interestedness is not the only basis for exclusion, however, for in book 4 Aristotle goes on to mention a second, negative attribute of slave mastership: arbitrariness, an attribute he associates with individual will and unaccountability in a passage we looked at earlier: "This tyranny is just that arbitrary power of an individual which is responsible to no one, and governs all alike, whether equals or betters, with a view to its own advantage; not to that of its subjects, and therefore against their will. No freeman willingly endures such a government" ($1295^{a}19–23$).

For later, Roman republicanism and early modern resistance theory, this passage has momentous significance, summed up in the phrase "arbitrary rule." It puts in succinct, propositional language four distinguishing features of tyrannous, single-person rule that appear in numerous literary and philosophical contexts: the capriciousness of the single-person ruler's exercise of individual will (in Latin, *arbitrium*); its unaccountability; its interest in potentially exploitative self-interest rather than in the collective good of subjects; and its violation of the freedom essential to egalitarian self-rule. The phrase "against their will" is important since the use of force, appropriate to those who are chattel slaves, is diacritically degrading to freeborn citizens, whose collective identity is signaled here by the use of plural forms. As inappropriate model for the political ruler responsible to all alike, the figure of the household *despotēs* haunts the
p. 47 formulation just cited, which significantly concludes with reference to the individual citizen, as if ↳ on the model of the household master/slave relation: "No freeman willingly endures such a government." Despite his uneasiness with Athens's more radical democratic strains, Aristotle here appeals to democratic ideology in order to underline the naturally resistant spirit of freeborn citizens.[51]

Again, it must be stressed that Aristotle's portrait of the inappropriately self-interested *despotēs* in book 3 does not critique chattel slavery. Written at a relatively late stage in the process of politicizing despotism, Aristotle's *Politics* systematizes the embedded, ideologically encoded logic that emerged earlier, most notably, we have seen, in Herodotus's *History* and in the tragedies of Aeschylus, Sophocles, and Euripides. According to this logic, so long as the despot's unregulated power over the household slave is directed toward the fulfillment of private needs, there is no problem, or at least none worthy of note. It is accepted that the household master is not accountable for how he uses his power. This is not the case within the *polis*, however. The politicization of *despotēs* in democratic discourse directs attention away from the household toward the *polis*, where, ideally, the ruler is accountable not only to his collective fellow citizens but also to the law. Single-person rule is not the only form of rule to be characterized as despotic, however, for Aristotle makes it the prototype of all forms of imperfect, unnatural rule. In a passage that is crucial for centuries of political philosophy and debates on tyranny, Aristotle labels all deviant forms "despotic": "[G]overnments which have a regard to the common interest are constituted in accordance with strict principles of justice, and are therefore true forms; but those which regard only the interest of the rulers are all defective and perverted forms, for they are despotic, whereas a state is a community of freemen" ($1279^{a}17–22$).

Aristotle's choice of *despotic* as a term for defective rule has sometimes seemed puzzling. In the context of antityrannicism, Aristotle's language is not idiosyncratic.[52] Yet puzzlement about relations between the *despotēs* and tyrant may usefully register an experience of conceptual dissonance induced by reading *Politics*:

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having denied at the outset that household and political rule are necessarily similar, Aristotle proceeds to join them in book 3. They are joined, however, only negatively: for Aristotle the *despotēs* as household ruler is *not* a model for natural, political rule, though the *despotēs* alone fully illuminates its perversion. When the *despotēs* rules over freeborn men who naturally constitute their own, egalitarian mode of self-governance, both he and they are engaging in activities that are unnatural or inappropriate for the *polis*. If Aristotle does not entirely identify despotism and tyranny, he certainly follows contemporaneous practice by associating
p. 48 them very closely. Tyranny, Aristotle holds, is the worst of the ↳ "despotic" forms because monarchy, ideally, is best. According to Aristotle's taxonomy of forms of political rule, oligarchy and democracy are also despotic in deviating from a commitment to the public good. Yet not only in classical Athens but in Rome and early modern Europe, these forms cannot be represented as despotic with nearly the same flair and efficacy as can the individual, autocratic ruler, whose resemblance to the individual, household *despotēs* is so easy to recognize.

Two differences between book 1 and book 3 help to guide readers through this potentially baffling maze of distinctions, and both enhance the value of the specifically political freedom enjoyed by Greeks. The first, taken up already, involves the mutuality of the relation between enslaver and enslaved as it appears in book 1 as against the arbitrary self-interestedness of the enslaver's rule in book 3—arbitrary self-interestedness that is perverse with reference to a collectively ordered *polis*. The second involves the meanings assigned the *polis* in book 1 as against book 3. In book 1, Mogens Herman Hansen demonstrates, the basic unit of Aristotle's *polis* is the household, *oikia*, which includes relations between husband and wife, father and children, master and slave. Productive and reproductive ends are met by the *oikos*, which naturally begets other households, which in turn form a village that naturally develops into a *polis*. In this developmental view, women and men as well as children, slaves, and even animals are members of the *polis* construed as a geographic, agricultural, social, religious, productive, and reproductive community, though not as a political community.[53]

Such inclusivity is not possible for book 3's *polis*, whose basic unit is comprised by the male citizens, *politai*, participating in the life of the *politeia*. Here the *polis* is a political rather than economic or social community; it is a uniquely human institution whose end, the good life, *eudaimonia*, by definition excludes slaves and animals. Male children, of course, are not yet capable of participating in political life, while free women, though possessing a higher degree of rationality than slaves (normatively male), are not the human beings free men are, and are therefore not differentiated by free/unfree status. In books 3 and 7, Aristotle's discussion pertains to the *polis* as an exclusive, political community, considered, as Hansen puts it, "peculiar to Hellenic civilization and out of reach of barbarian peoples."[54] This, of course, is the community for which, to return to the passage just cited, "governments which have a regard to the common interest are constituted in accordance with strict principles of justice." If the two discrepancies between books 1 and 3 are brought into relation, we can see that in book 1, where the *polis* is an inclusive community, emphasis
p. 49 falls on how ↳ mutually beneficial chattel slavery is to master and slave alike and on their differential juridical status. In book 3, on the other hand, where the *polis* is a community of privileged, politically engaged citizens, slavery is construed as an institution of primary benefit to the master. Its individual, private character is suddenly thrown into relief. As a result of this abrupt, though relative, privatization, Aristotle can stress the inappropriateness of despotic rule in the public realm, where an aggregate of *politai*, themselves masters of slaves, meet as equals to participate in ruling the *polis*.

Scholarship on Aristotle stresses his unique ability to analyze and systematize basic assumptions of his culture.[55] Writing of the two senses of *polis*, Hansen argues that the Greeks "saw the *polis* both as a society composed of all inhabitants and as a political community restricted to adult male citizens. But the sources show that they were perfectly capable of distinguishing the two different meanings of *polis* and the two different spheres."[56] Similarly, I would argue, they would easily distinguish the despot's role in the household, where self-interestedness was to be expected, from despotic rule in a public community of free, male citizens. By postponing until books 3 and 4 his characterization of the *despotēs*'s rule as self-interested and arbitrary, Aristotle is able to systematize two discrete but interrelated institutions, chattel slavery and the *polis*. Aristotle has no intention of disparaging the actual slave master's satisfaction of his household's needs by means of the enslaved. What must be censured is rule that *forgets* the significant difference between mastership within the household, directed toward the individual household's good, and that within the *polis*, whose end is the good of those ruled. Aristotle advances the systematic character of his theorization by labeling as "despotic" perversions of natural, political rule. Dissociating and then selectively rejoining household and political rule in the very precise ways he does, Aristotle argues at one

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and the same time the categorical *naturalness* of household slavery and the *unnaturalness* for Greeks of despotism in the political sphere, associating enslaved *barbaroi* with both.

Roman Antityranny

Although antityrannicism emerged in the unique conditions of Athenian democracy as it developed in the fifth century BCE, the honoring of tyrannicides was practiced in Greek *poleis* outside Athens.[57] Central features of antityranny ideology, together with its ability to forge strong internal, political bonds—if only within the ruling class or in military battle—also appeared in Roman republicanism, and again in early
p. 50 modern political ↳ traditions that drew on Greek and Roman literature. Tyranny's complementary negative, slavery, was also integral to antityrannicism in each of its historically distinct forms, as was the one form of tyranny that does not reduce its subjects to "slaves"—the tyrant as nonhuman, acivil monster. (In getting antityrannicism to comprise both political slavery and tyranny, I extend Raaflaub's usage.) Interestingly, the tyrant's monstrosity provides the strongest foundation for tyrannicide. This can be inferred from Cicero's appeal to the tyrant's conventional nonhumanity in *De Officiis*, where he lauds the Roman people's unwillingness to tolerate tyrants, implicitly carrying on the defense of Brutus and Cassius as illustrious tyrannicides that appears in the *Philippics*. In a passage that was important to early modern antityrannicism, Cicero claims:

> [W]e do not share fellowship with tyrants. On the contrary, there is the widest cleavage between them and us, and should it lie within your power, nature does not forbid you to rob the person whom it is honorable to kill. Indeed, the whole of that noxious, sacrilegious breed should be banished from human society. Just as certain parts of the body are amputated once they begin to be drained of blood, and in their virtually lifeless condition affect other parts, so once the savagery and brutality of the beast takes human shape, it must be excised, so to say, from the body of humanity which we all share.[58]

The metamorphosis Cicero imagines has the beast usurping human form (rather than, as Plato has it, the human becoming wolf) without ceasing to be a beast. Getting rid of a tyrant who has become monstrous is not only no more ethically problematical than killing a nonhuman animal, Cicero implies, but altogether necessary, since it threatens the health of Cicero's idealized res publica. In doing away with the tyrant as lawless monstrosity, the tyrant killer removes a mortal threat to the body of politically associated citizens. The tyrannicide performs an act that is honorable, not criminal, an act of killing that is not homicide.

Shortly before this passage, in reflecting tendentiously on the difference between robbing a fellow citizen and a tyrant, Cicero introduces the infamous tyrant of Syracuse, Phalaris. With Phalaris in the picture, the tyrant's monstrosity is highlighted, since, like the Minotaur, Phalaris is bespattered with the blood of children he ritually sacrifices. (Both may have connections with the worship of Baal in ancient Carthage, where the practice of child sacrifice appears to have continued longer than elsewhere in the Mediterranean
p. 51 area.)[59] Phalaris is a human being who becomes akin to the artificial ↳ monster he is said to create, a brazen bull under which a fire burns so as to roast the children slipped into its maw and within whose hollow metal echoing screams sound as if emitted by the bull. If not always Phalaris himself, the monstrous, specifically cannibalistic, tyrant is a recurrent figure in medieval and early modern literature (the cannibalistic tyrant makes a significant appearance in Locke's *Second Treatise*). The notion that tyrannicide is not a criminal act has a similarly long life, as is evidenced by a tract published during England's Commonwealth explicitly entitled *Killing noe murder*.[60]

A related passage on the origins of tyranny shows more clearly how Athenian antityranny ideology was assimilated to Rome's republicanism: the tyrant's animality becomes manifest when the king degenerates into a *dominus* (master), as kings inevitably do. Cicero explains that the Greeks had different terms for "king" and "tyrant," and editors often add that in republican Rome, the Latin *rex* (king) signifies tyrant.[61] Yet it is not so often noted that when employed polemically as a synonym for *rex*, *dominus* functions as does *despotēs*. A term for the tyrant (from the Greek lexicon) just as *despotēs* is in Greek, *dominus* designates the male householder who is master—in Latin, more precisely, owner—of, among other things, his slaves. In this way, like the *despotēs*, the *dominus* becomes integral to Roman antityranny invective, which positions the tyrant's subjects as freeborn citizens abusively treated as "slaves." Given the sense of collective, voluntary association Cicero bestows on res publica, and the importance of private property in ancient Rome, the ruler who arrogates this kind of dominion to himself violates the integrity—the very public

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identity—of the common-wealth. Following a reference to Phalaris in *De Re Publica*, Cicero brings up Dionysius, tyrant of Syracuse, whose reduction of his people to slaves is encapsulated thus: "[N]othing belonged to the people, and the people itself belonged to a single man." Where there is a tyrant, Cicero's spokesperson Scipio concludes, there can be no commonwealth at all.[62]

The most significant point of continuity between Greek antityranny ideology and Roman lies in the negative connotations of *dominus* when used of a leader. The leader's degeneration into a "master" authorizes the kind of inflammatory rhetoric that Cicero uses in the *Philippics*, where Brutus and Cassius are liberators who have struck off the "yoke of slavery" that hung on the Roman people's neck and where, if Antony's rise to power is not vigorously resisted, Romans will ignominiously have to bear an arrogant, cruel, and licentious "master."[63] Compared with Greek, however, Roman antityranny discourse distinguishes itself by a stinging stress on the shamefulness of voluntarily submitting to political servitude.[64] A strongly militarized
p. 52 masculinity informs Cicero's antityranny rhetoric. Cicero, for ↳ example, portrays Antony's act of offering Caesar the crown as an abject request to be enslaved to the colleague he voluntarily turns into his "master": Antony behaves both as a vanquished soldier petitioning for his life, that is, cravenly willing to accept enslavement, and as a beloved submitting to the dominant position of his homosexual lover—something, Cicero says, Antony has willingly done since a boy.[65] For Roman citizens, at any rate, political slavery is so deeply disgraceful that death is to be preferred: "Nothing is more detestable than disgrace, nothing fouler than servitude [*nihil foedius servitudine*]."[66] Cicero reiterates this patriotic claim on several occasions. "Death," he asserts, "to Roman citizens has always been preferable to slavery."[67] Were Romans to choose enslavement to Antony rather than death, their behavior would be unspeakably shameful but would also place them in a condition they could not tolerate. "All other nations can bear slavery," Cicero explains, because they "shun toil and pain, and, to be free from these, can endure all things; but we have been so trained and our minds so imbued by our ancestors as to refer all our thoughts and acts to the standard of honor and virtue. So glorious is the recovery of liberty that in regaining liberty we must not shrink even from death."[68]

The slavery to which Cicero refers in these passages is political slavery in the form of subjection to single-person rule internal to Rome. So thoroughly militarized is the context in which liberty is either won or lost, however, that slavery's specifically political identity can be difficult to register, as are differences between internal and external political slavery. To heighten its polemical impact, Cicero's language often deliberately elides political slavery's differences from actual servitude, nearly always imagined as having originated in military defeat. In much Latin, as formerly Greek, literature, military defeat is the privileged origin of chattel slavery, the legitimacy of which is enshrined in Justinian's *Institutes* on the basis of its universal practice. This makes it all the more important to grasp that war slavery doctrine, highlighted by Roman jurisprudence, is not a window onto Roman sociomilitary practices, as is often assumed (Arendt, for example, says that the majority of ancient slaves were "defeated enemies").[69]

Writing generally and cross-culturally of this problematical assumption, Orlando Patterson points out how many alternatives, often preferable, are open to victors who have taken the vanquished captive: "immediate massacre; torture and sacrifice, sometimes culminating in cannibalism; ransom; prisoner exchange; temporary imprisonment; serfdom; impressments in the victor's army; colonization; and simple release."[70] Writing of ancient Roman practices, Keith Hopkins argues that though the enslavement of war captives was
p. 53 "an old tradition in the Mediterranean world," this does not ↳ explain its growth in Italy under Roman imperial expansion: "But then so was killing captives, putting them to ransom, sparing them, exacting a single indemnity from them, forcibly evicting them and taxing them. Of all these solutions to the problems of victory, slavery was one of the least common, and usually reserved for particularly obstinate or treacherous enemies. After all, the Romans conquered lands occupied by about fifty million people and had only about two million slaves."[71] Observations such as these, distressing as they are as reminders of warfare's brutality, clarify the ideological nature of Roman universalizing pronouncements on war slavery, to say nothing of the relentless emphasis on the high honor bestowed on those who willingly sacrifice their lives in armed defense of Rome's liberty, or of the additional stigma attaching to involuntary servitude when it is construed as a cowardly choice of mere life over valiant death.[72]

On the battlefield, Roman warriors are expected to choose death rather than the defeat that becomes a metonymy for slavery, liberty's spiritless, cowardly contrary. Life itself is valueless without "liberty," or, as Cicero formulates this proposition negatively in a passage that exemplifies the elision just mentioned, "For life does not consist in breath: it does not exist at all in the slave" (*Non enim in spiritu vita est, sed ea nulla est omnino servienti*).[73] Rhetorically elevating the value of liberty higher than mere animation, Cicero denies

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living, breathing slaves the dignity of genuine human "life." Momentarily—yet, in this, conventionally—eclipsed is the figurative character of the slavery Cicero passionately exhorts fellow Romans to avoid: voluntary submission to single-person rule would degrade free citizens to a less than human condition, that is, to the (figurative) condition of slaves whose social and political death renders them nonhuman animals.

Though much more could be said about Rome's distinctive militarization of slavery, my interest here is in broad continuities between Greek and Roman antityrannicism. Two of Livy's narratives memorializing republican Rome's dedication to liberty—those featuring Lucretia and Virginia—are profoundly informed by Athenian antityranny ideology in likening the tyrant-as-antagonist to an external enemy of Rome and its citizens, whose vulnerability to enslavement is exemplified by an unprotected, virtuous woman. In Livy's account of the republic's origins, a decision to overthrow the tyrant Tarquinius Superbus is taken by Junius Brutus when Lucretia tells him, her husband, and her father that Tarquinius's son gained entrance to the marital home in order to assault her sexually. Though Brutus does not kill Tarquinius Superbus, instead forcing him out of the city, Romans commemorate his liberation of Rome from tyranny just as Athenians do
p. 54 the famous Harmodius and Aristogeiton—that is, by a statue erected in the ↳ capitol.[74] In modeling Rome's Brutus on Athenian tyrannicides, this etiological narrative makes him into a liberator whose inauguration of the republic is imbued with antityrannicism. Brutus gets citizens to swear that Rome will never again be ruled by a king (on the assumption that kings inevitably degenerate into tyrants), institutes governance by rotation of consuls, and presides over the trial and execution of his traitorous sons, thereby demonstrating a disinterested commitment to the impersonal rule of law.

Appropriation and Disavowal of Slavery

Greco-Roman political slavery has multiple, intersecting determinations. Discursively, it has various conceptual dimensions and rhetorical effects, none of which emerged from citizens' direct identification with slaves. On the contrary, the polemical power of appeals to political slavery derived from its creators' urgent, passionate need to disavow kinship with those who were enslaved. With regard to democratic ideology, antityrannicism's pairing of slavery and tyranny demarcated the *polis* as an ordered, public arena for collectively exercised reason in its production and implementation of law's rule. To threaten the participation of free men in the *politeia* was to threaten the very essence of political order and civility, together with Greek and, later, Roman military superiority and imperial rule.

With the consolidation of antityrannicism, new forms of exclusion were instituted to reinforce the boundary between free and unfree that polemical appeals to figurative slavery could appear to have transgressed. Athenian regulations protecting the publicly heroized tyrannicides from slander, for example, also prohibited slaves from being given their names.[75] Even indirectly, in the passive form of bearing a tyrannicide's name, those whose status must remain unchanged were kept apart from figurative freedom. In a not dissimilar gesture, the Greek victory over the Persians at Plataea celebrated every four years at the Eleutheria was a festival in honor of freedom in which slaves were explicitly forbidden to participate. In his account of this celebration in his life of Aristides, available to early modern readers, Plutarch explains that "the men who are being honored gave their lives for freedom."[76]

Protest against the tyrant's attempts to degrade freeborn citizens to the condition of slaves not only endorsed existing discrepancies in status and privileges but arguably entrenched them by further stigmatizing those who were not similarly able to protest the injustice of their own degradation. Displacing
p. 55 the moralistic discourse of individual, psychoethical slavery ↳ onto the collective political arena, antityrannicism joined naturally valued freedom to an ability voluntarily to defend it. Because those able to exercise the privileges of citizenship were not and did not deserve to be slaves, it was at best a mistake, at worst a form of mad injustice, to treat them as if they were or could become. (This ideology reigned in the Roman Republic despite the large population of "freed" women and men—i.e., slaves who had been manumitted.) Such analogical, "as if" constructions, so important to the per impossibile reasoning that informs antityranny ideology, both naturalized the enslavement of and further disempowered those unable to represent the contingent nature of their condition. As an ideological formation, antityranny discourse denounced political slavery on the foundation of disavowal.

But what exactly was being disavowed? In *Slaves and Other Objects*,Page duBois uses a psychoanalytic conception of disavowal to critique the defensive relation that classical studies traditionally have had to the realities and ideological implications of Greek and Roman slavery. Even when the object of meticulously

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conducted historical research, duBois argues, ancient slavery as lived experience is frequently ignored in academic study of high cultural texts, knowledge of which within Europe and, later, North America has for centuries been the mark of class and gender distinction.[77] In her treatment of slavery as metaphor in classical political rhetoric, duBois examines the opposition between slavery and freedom as it appears in the texts of dramatists, orators, historians, and philosophers. DuBois suggests that the frequently polemical language of political slavery is effective in "manipulating the fears and anxieties of the free Greeks by threatening them with the status of their chattels, who were insistently, troublingly present—tattooed, bearing the scars of beatings and whippings, sexually vulnerable—among the furnishings of everyday life."[78]

From this perspective, duBois views Greek tragedies featuring defeated Trojans as managing free, adult males' dread of being enslaved by projecting it onto the Trojan women whose passionate responses to their pending or recent enslavement are frequently staged. Insofar as the grief and vulnerability of Trojan women such as Hecuba, Polyxena, and Andromacha were allegorically evocative of defeated Troy, they could safely awaken anxieties about potential interstate enslavement while at the same time, duBois says, "distancing it from male citizens by displacing it onto characters remote from them in time, in their class situation, and in gender." The royal women of archaic Greece who are subjected to enslavement may also, she suggests,
p. 56 awaken reflection on the waning power of aristocrats, whose hold ↳ on politics weakened as Athens's democracy was radicalized. In either case, duBois argues, privileged, male citizens are protected from direct identification with those who are, or are about to become, slaves.[79]

Though duBois does not do so, it is possible to consider such mediated, displaced identification as a means of perpetuating the disavowal intrinsic to political slavery. Where an emphasis on identification tends to highlight anxieties, however, emphasis on strategies of defense *against* identification may bring out the citizenry's corresponding desire to maintain its privileges and distinction. Both dimensions of disavowal were likely at work in the development and early modern renewal of antityranny ideology. In polemically representing the tyrant as a ruler incapable of respecting boundaries and traditions or behaving like a would-be conqueror, in either case willing if not eager to treat citizens as slaves, antityrannicism provided an emotionally engaging, conceptually fertile means of reproducing the polarity between free and slave as a feature of more egalitarian, political relations. Public speakers or writers who deployed antityranny discourse were able to appropriate the traumatic experiences of those who had been enslaved while simultaneously and forcefully repudiating likeness, much less identity. Ultimately, what antityranny discourse disavows and enables is the utterly contingent, materially and culturally instituted opposition between free and unfree.

Notes

1. For the absence of serious objections to slavery in classical and Christian antiquity, see Peter Garnsey, *Ideas of Slavery from Aristotle to Augustine* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996).
2. On the variability and range of statuses brought under the category of slavery, see M. I. Finley, "The Servile Statuses of Ancient Greece," *Revue Internationale des Droits de l'Antiquité*, 3rd ser., no. 7 (1960): 165–89. I am grateful to Ryan Balot and Margaret Williamson for assistance in clarifying these issues.
3. So Kurt Raaflaub argues when claiming that "political freedom was not a prime value for the elite." Raaflaub, *Discovery*, 255. On the sociopsychological needs met by democracy's provision of political identity, see 269–77. In "Democracy, Oligarchy, and the Concept of the 'Free Citizen' in Late Fifth-Century Athens," Raaflaub contrasts the oligarchic emphasis on the social qualities and status of the individual with the democratic stress on "the collective concept of the freedom of the whole community … rooted primarily in the political sphere." *Political Theory* 11, no. 4 (1983): 529.
4. For a discussion of central differences, see Craige B. Champion, "Imperial Ideologies, Citizenship Myths, and Legal Disputes in Classical Athens and Republican Rome," in *A Companion to Greek and Roman Political Thought*, ed. Ryan Balot, Blackwell Companions to the Ancient World, 85–99 (Chichester, UK: Wiley-Blackwell, 2009 10.1002/9781444310344).
5. Glenn Morrow discusses the variety of meanings Plato gives δουλεία in "Plato and Greek Slavery," *Mind* 48, no. 190 (April 1939): 186–201 10.1093/mind/XLVIII.190.186 .
6. Euripides, *Suppliant Women*, in *Orestes and Other Plays*, ed. Edith Hall and James Morwood, trans. Robin Waterfield (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001). Parenthetical citations are to line numbers of this edition.
7. Aristotle, *The Politics*, ed. Stephen Everson, Cambridge Texts in the History of Political Thought (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), $1.1259^{b}5$–6, $6.1317^{b}2$ (hereafter cited parenthetically in text).
8. Regarding equality, Gregory Vlastos brings out relations between equality before the law, which requires the rule of law, as well as the dialectically related meaning "that only the attainment of equality can secure the rule of law." "*Isonomia*," *American Journal of Philology* 74, no. 4 (1953): 365.
9. Raaflaub stresses the polemical character of antityranny discourse in *Discovery*, 134. For sharpening of distinctions

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between a "value-neutral and a negative-polemical terminology," see 259.

10. Citation of Greek is to Aristotle, *Politics*, ed. H. Rackham, Loeb Classical Library 21 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1932).
11. Taking issue with Orlando Patterson's conception of "sovereignal freedom" in *Freedom in the Making of Western Culture*, Raaflaub argues that only after the Persian Wars was rule over others thought of as a form of freedom: "That a *despotēs* was naturally free was so obvious that it did not need to be said. All that mattered was his status and the power he had over others." *Discovery*, 260–61. Politicization of freedom within and of the *polis* precedes valorization of rule over others.
12. Peter Hunt observes, "On the ideological level, slaves were a group against which all Athenians could define themselves as a unity." *Slaves, Warfare, and Ideology in the Greek Historians* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 3.
13. Permissible hunting of animals (as against humans) later illustrates the difference between slaves-by-nature and masters-by-nature ($1324^{b}36$–41).
14. Peter Garnsey, *Ideas of Slavery from Aristotle to Augustine* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 110–15.
15. Vincent J. Rosivach, "Enslaving *Barbaroi* and the Athenian Ideology of Slavery," *Historia* 48, no. 2 (1999): 129–57.
16. For a thorough discussion, to which I am much indebted, see Edith Hall's *Inventing the Barbarian: Greek SelfDefinition through Tragedy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989).
17. Anna Missiou discusses the metaphorical slavery of Darius's nobles in "δουλοσΤΟΥ βασιλεΩσ: The Politics of Translation," *Classical Quarterly* 43, no. 2 (1993): 377–91 10.1017/S0009838800039902.
18. Herodotus, *The History*, trans. David Grene (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987). Parenthetical citations are to book and section number of this edition.
19. On this passage, and on the verb κατέχειν as it relates to tyranny and Persian despotism, see Sara Forsdyke, "Athenian Democratic Ideology and Herodotus' Histories," *American Journal of Philology* 122, no. 3 (2001): 332–58.
20. See, e.g., Raaflaub, *Discovery*, 275.
21. Aeschylus, *Persians*, trans. and ed. Edith Hall (Warminster, UK: Aris & Phillips, 1996), lines 188–99.
22. See Hall's commentary in *Persians* on "yoke of slavery," 112n, and on prostration, 119–20n.
23. See, for example, Mario Turchetti, *Tyrannie et tyrannicide de l'Antiquité à nos jours* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 2001); Roger Boesche, *Theories of Tyranny from Plato to Arendt* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1996); Ephraim Emerton, *Humanism and Tyranny: Studies in the Italian Trecento* (Gloucester, MA: Peter Smith, 1964); and Oscar Jászi and John D. Lewis, *Against the Tyrant: The Tradition and Theory of Tyrannicide* (Glencoe, IL: Free Press, 1957).
24. Raaflaub, *Discovery*, 41.
25. Ibid., 252.
26. Ibid., 54–55. Greg Anderson traces tyranny's semantic shifts in "Before Turannoi Were Tyrants: Rethinking a Chapter of Early Greek History," *Classical Antiquity* 24, no. 2 (October 2005): 211–12.
27. Raaflaub, *Discovery*, 54. François Hartog brings out the tragic likeness of tyrannous power to the power of the household *despotés* in *The Mirror of Herodotus: The Representation of the Other in the Writing of History*, trans. Janet Lloyd (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988), 322–39.
28. Vlastos captures the profundity of this analysis in his discussion of the Constitutional Debate, "*Isonomia*," 357–62. In *Ancient Greek Political Thought in Practice* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009 10.1017/CBO9780511801747), Paul Cartledge argues that this debate marks "the *terminus ante quem* for the emergence of Greek political theory" as a subbranch of *historia* (71).
29. Compare David Brion Davis's comment in *Slavery and Human Progress* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1984) on the grandiosity encouraged by the enslaver's experience of the enslaved as an extension of his own will: "Such a relationship, unmediated by family restrictions or by the normal stages of generational succession, gave masters the illusion of omnipotence, of escaping the bonds of kin" (17).
30. Hall frequently discusses incest and mutilation as signifiers of barbarism in *Inventing the Barbarian*.
31. Carolyn Dewald argues that Herodotus shows Greek tyranny becoming increasingly caught up in the dynamics of Eastern despotism in "Form and Content: The Question of Tyranny in Herodotus," in *Popular Tyranny*, ed. Kathryn A. Morgan, 36–40 (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2003). See also Arnaldo Momiglianno, "Persian Empire and Greek Freedom," in *The Idea of Freedom*, ed. Alan Ryan, 139–51 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1979).
32. Raaflaub, personal communication.
33. Thucydides, *The Peloponnesian War*, ed. and trans. Steven Lattimore (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1998), 301.
34. For further consideration, see Raaflaub's discussion of archaic "expansion through integration" as against the "expansion through subjection" practiced by imperial Athens and Rome. "Born to Be Wolves? Origins of Roman Imperialism," in *Transitions to Empire: Essays in Greco-Roman History, 360–146 B.C.* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1996), 275, 288–89.
35. Ryan Balot, *Greek Political Thought* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2006), 142 10.1002/9780470774618.
36. See Raaflaub, *Discovery*, 128–46, 173–93, 259–61.
37. Balot, *Political Thought*, 162–76.
38. Hall and Morwood, *Suppliant Women*, 212n.
39. Raaflaub, "Stick and Glue," 83.
40. Ibid., 83.
41. Ibid., 66.
42. Ibid., 70–71. Detailing the variety of occasions on which antityrannicism was inculcated, Raaflaub comments, "All this reminded them regularly of their civic duty to fight would-be tyrants when and in whatever shape they might appear."
43. Josiah Ober, "Tyrant Killing as Therapeutic Stasis: A Political Debate in Images and Texts," in *Popular Tyranny: Sovereignty and Its Discontents in Ancient Greece*, ed. Kathryn Morgan (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2003), 225.

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44. Cited by Sara Forsdyke, "Uses and Abuses of Tyranny," in *A Companion to Greek and Roman Political Thought*, ed. Ryan Balot, Blackwell Companions to the Ancient World (Chichester, UK: Wiley-Blackwell, 2009), 236 10.1002/9781444310344 . Plato uses this figure again in *Republic* 619[c]. Ryan Balot provided the instance from the *Iliad* in a personal communication.
45. Plato, *Republic*, in *The Collected Dialogues of Plato*, ed. Edith Hamilton and Huntington Cairns, trans. Paul Shorey (New York: Bollingen Foundation, 1963), 8.565–66[b].
46. Raaflaub, "Stick and Glue," 66.
47. Garnsey conjectures that these and other differences are related to Aristotle's development of natural slavery theory in *Politics*, the later of the two texts. *Ideas of Slavery*, 116–27.
48. Malcolm Schofield discusses Aristotle's disagreement with Plato and his interest in differentiating political rule from mastership in "Ideology and Philosophy in Aristotle's Theory of Slavery," in *Aristoteles' "Politik"* (Göttingen, Germany: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1990), 16–20.
49. *Nicomachean Ethics* 1160[b]24–32, quoted in Garnsey, *Ideas of Slavery*, 118.
50. By stressing Aristotle's dynamic conception of nature, Jill Frank challenges the view that Aristotle propounds a theory of natural slavery. "Citizens, Slaves, and Foreigners: Aristotle on Human Nature," *American Political Science Review* 98, no. 1 (February 2004): 91–104.
51. For a helpful account of the complexity of Aristotle's views, see Andrew Lintott, "Aristotle and Democracy," *Classical Quarterly* 42, no. 1 (1992): 114–28 10.1017/S0009838800042622 .
52. Garnsey queries Aristotle's use of *despotēs*, confusingly arguing that in *Politics* Aristotle rejects an analogy between slavery and tyranny that he earlier accepted. *Ideas of Slavery*, 116.
53. Mogens Herman Hansen, "Aristotle's Two Complementary Views of the Greek 'Polis,'" in *Transitions to Empire: Essays in Greco-Roman History, 360–146 B.C.*, ed. Robert W. Wallace and Edward M. Harris, 196–203 (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1996).
54. Hansen adds, "And this Aristotelian doctrine still prevails among ancient histori-ans." Ibid., 203–4.
55. Schofield, for example, begins his inquiry into relations between ideology and philosophical critique with a discussion of Aristotle's endoxic method, which "has an elective affinity for ideology." "Ideology and Philosophy," 6.
56. Hansen, "Complementary Views," 202.
57. Ober, "Tyrant Killing," 226–28.
58. Cicero, *On Obligations (De Officiis)*, ed. P. G. Walsh (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 95; see also 91.
59. Adrienne Mayor, "Pacesetter," *London Review of Books* 32, no. 12 (2010): 30–31.
60. William Allen (i.e., Edward Sexby), *Killing noe murder* (London, 1657).
61. Cicero, *On the Commonwealth and On the Laws*, ed. James E. G. Zetzel (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 2.47 10.1017/CBO9780511803635 . For interrelations between Greek and Roman invective, see J. Roger Dunkle, "The Greek Tyrant and Roman Political Invective of the Late Republic," *Transactions and Proceedings of the American Philological Association* 98 (1967): 151–71 10.2307/2935871 .
62. *Cicero, On the Commonwealth 3.42.43*.
63. Cicero, *Philippics*, trans. Walter C. A. Ker, Loeb Classical Library 15 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1926), 1.2.6, 3.14.35.
64. For a fascinating discussion, see Robert Kaster, "The Shame of the Romans," *Transactions of the American Philological Association* 127 (1997): 1–19.
65. Cicero, *Philippics* 2.34.85–86.
66. Ibid., 3.14.36.
67. Ibid., 10.9.19.
68. Ibid., 10.10.20.
69. Hannah Arendt, *Human Condition*, 2nd ed., ed. Margaret Canovan (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998), 36n30.
70. Orlando Patterson, *Slavery and Social Death: A Comparative Study* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1982), 106.
71. Keith Hopkins, *Conquerors and Slaves* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1978), 108. In "On the Roman Slave Supply and Slavebreeding," K. R. Bradley argues that in republican and imperial Rome, both slave trading and slave breeding were important means of acquiring slaves. *Classical Slavery*, ed. M. I. Finley (London: Fran Cass & Co., 1987), 42–64. Richard Saller discusses the widespread practice of infant exposure, assumed to result in enslavement, in "Slavery and the Roman Family," ibid., 69–71.
72. Carlin A. Barton explains that surrender, *deditio*, left the defeated without any human rights and the victor with absolute power. "The Price of Peace in Ancient Rome," in *War and Peace in the Ancient World*, ed. Kurt A. Raaflaub (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2007), 249 10.1002/9780470774083 .
73. *Cicero, Phillipics 10.10.20*.
74. On the indebtedness of Roman antimonarchic ideology to Greek antityrannicism, including representations of Tarquinius Superbus, see Andrew Erskine, "Hellenistic Monarchy and Roman Political Invective," *Classical Quarterly* 41 (1991): 106–20 10.1017/S000983880000358X .
75. Raaflaub, "Stick and Glue," 66.
76. *Cited by*duBois, *Slaves and Other Objects*, 126.
77. Ibid., 6–31.
78. Ibid., 128.
79. Ibid., 133.

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