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AN EXAMINATION OF THE INTEGRAL NATURE OF SLAVERY IN CLASSICAL GREEK STATES

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Abstract

This paper examines why slavery, despite what is now legally known to be its obnoxious status, was not only fundamental to the Classical Greek society but was also endorsed by its intellectual community that was renowned for advocating individual freedom and justice. By discussing the place of slaves among the Greeks, the paper posits that the people saw slavery as crucial to realising socio-economic as well as political goals. Hence, the Greeks came to terms with chattel slavery as one of the realities of human existence. While enslaving others could be an expression of a superior might, the paper reasons that the utilitarian motivations for it in the Classical period are obvious. Therefore, individuals, both rich and poor, saw slaves as part of household features, indispensable to meeting socio-economic needs or sensual gratification. The functional use of slaves also extended to the state, hence, Sparta and Athens got all the leisure needed for political and military activities from slaves being always at their service. The paper concludes with brief allusion to the Biblical Onesimus to describe the reality of slavery as integral part of the social order of the ancient society. In view of the modern situations of labour and sexual exploitation at the international level, it is added that, whether with legislation against slavery or what is sometimes insincerity in fighting it, slavery/slavery condition might remain a modern institution; patronised by both private and public figures as long as human values remain similar to the Greeks'.

Key Words: Slaves, Classical Greece, Utilitarian motivations, Human Values, Reality

Introduction

Whether in legal or economic system, slavery involves treating humans as a property that can be acquired or disposed at will. While slavery often evokes the thought of offering no remuneration when an individual is used under strict restraint or harsh condition to achieve productivity, chattel slavery would also include coercing people to work for private or public establishments without the “employee” having any say on terms of “employment” or without any agreeable condition of service; all subject to the whims of the “employer”. Although slave trade is known as outlawed in today’s world, ‘violence, control, coercion and the exploitation of labour’¹, reminiscent of ancient instances of slavery continue around the world.

Annually, ‘international trafficking in humans for sexual exploitation is an economic activity driven by profit motives, and up to four million people are estimated to be exploited by human traffickers’². Many individuals live in debt bondage, stories are told about so-called ‘house-helps’ in serfdom, whose lots are no better than those of ancient captives. Children who are supposedly adopted by their relations are victims of forced labour. While efforts have been made to differentiate slavery from human trafficking³, the detestable social condition or the thought of

¹ Kate Manzo, “Exploiting West Africa’s Children: Trafficking, Slavery and Uneven Development”, *Area*, Vol. 37, No. (December 2005) 397.

² Niklas Jakobsson Andreas Kotsadam, “The Law and Economics of International Sex Slavery: Prostitution Laws and Trafficking for Sexual Exploitation”. *Working Paper in Economics* No 458, School of Business, Economics and Law at University of Gothenburg, Sweeden (May 2013) 1.

³ Kate Manzo, “Exploiting West Africa’s Children: Trafficking, Slavery and Uneven Development”, *Area*, Vol. 37, No. (December 2005) 393-401.

crime the former evokes or results in is not different from the latter's. Slavery continues unabated with new vigour so that in reality there are more slaves today when the practice is labelled criminal than when 'compulsory, dependent labour was used in all places under Greek control and was so taken for granted that few, if any, questioned either its existence or its ethics'⁴

There is no gainsaying that human societies throughout the ages have relied on some form or forms of dependent labour to meet their needs in the fields of trade, manufacture, public works, and other aspects of production. Such dependent labour sometimes requires working under compulsion and harsh or inhuman treatment, otherwise known as slavery. Bringing out the sense of slavery is what is believed to be the status of the free man who in contrast with a slave does not live constantly under domineering restraints and in abject dependence on others, and this concept readily applies in this work. While 'five genuine slave societies in the history of mankind: Greece, Rome, Brazil, the Caribbean, and the United States'⁵ are often referred to in connection with this subject, the place of slaves in ancient Greek civilization particularly offers some insight into why slavery, no matter how loathed or vehemently legislated against, continues to enjoy patronage in the contemporary world where tens of millions are victims of human trafficking. Interestingly, 'in the past twenty years, there has been growing acceptance among ancient historians of the fundamental role of slavery in the classical economy'⁶, and this paper, in agreement with the trend, reviews the vital place of slavery in the ancient Greek society, particularly during the Classical period, and speaks to the seeming

⁴Kathleen Guler, "The Impact of the Ancient Greek Slave Trade on Art in the Balkans", *Saber and Scroll* Volume 2 (2013). 1.

⁵Moses I. Finley, "Was Greek Civilization Based on Slave Labour?", *Historia: Zeitschrift für Alte Geschichte*, Bd. 8, H. 2 (April 1959) 615.

⁶Michael H. Jameson, "Agriculture and Slavery in Classical Athens", *The Classical Journal*, Vol. 73, No. 2 (1977) 122.

permanence or indispensability of the institution in the human society.

Ancient Greece and the Space for Slavery

Owning a slave was considered basic to an average Greek's life as early as the 7th century as shown by Hesiod's words below:

First of all, get a house, and a woman and an ox for the plough—a slave woman and not a wife, to follow the oxen as well—and make everything ready at home, so that you may not have to ask of another, and he refuse you, and so, because you are in lack, the season pass by and your work come to nothing.⁷

Hesiod later shows he is here talking about slaves who would work for their masters without anticipating any benefits or reward.⁸ Likewise, Homer's *Iliad*⁹ and *Odyssey*¹⁰ present a Greek world where slavery thrived and a few examples are cited here to illustrate. *Odyssey* 7.103 indicates a constant feature of the households of the rich when describing the splendid royal house of Alcinous: 'fifty slave-women he had in the house, of whom some grind the yellow grain on the millstone, and others weave webs, or, as they sit, twirl the yarn, like unto the leaves of a tall poplar tree; and from the closely-woven linen the soft olive oil drips down'. Another reference is also made to slaves thus: 'fifty women servants hast thou in the halls, women that we have taught to do their work, to card the wool and bear the lot of slaves' in

⁷ Hesiod *Works and Days*, Translation by Hugh G. Evelyn-White. (London: Harvard University Press, 1914). 430.

⁸ Hesiod *Works and Days*, Translation by Hugh G. Evelyn-White. (London: Harvard University Press, 1914). 502, 597-603.

⁹ Homer. *The Iliad*. Translation by A.T. Murray. (London: Harvard University Press, 1924) This translation of *The Iliad* is used in this paper.

¹⁰ Homer, *The Odyssey*. Translation by A.T. Murray. (London: Harvard University Press, 1919) This translation of *The Odyssey* is used in this paper.

Odyssey 22.421-22. In *Odyssey* 24.275-279, there is reference to chattel slavery as women slaves 'skilled in goodly handiwork' are mentioned in a package of gifts which include 'seven talents', 'mixing-bowl all of silver, embossed with flowers', 'twelve cloaks of single fold', 'many coverlets', many fair mantles,' and 'many tunics'. Such use of women as slaves is also seen in *Iliad* 9.270-76 where Agamemnon promises Achilles eight slave women as gift.

Slavery, with time, became a commonplace in ancient Greek civilization, playing a major role in so many aspects of the Greeks' life. These ranged from domestic living to participation in military activity. Slaves were ubiquitous; they were found working as domestic servants, factory workers, shopkeepers, mineworkers, farm workers and ship's crew members. Slave-archers from Scythia who were used as police at Athens constituted the state's police force by the 5th century B.C.¹¹ Slaves served as clerks at the treasury office and the temples also had slaves for their goddesses as stated by Strabo:

And the temple of Aphrodite was so rich that it owned more than a thousand temple slaves, courtesans [prostitutes], whom both men and women had dedicated to the goddess. And therefore it was also on account of these women that the city was crowded with people and grew rich; for instance, the ship captains freely squandered their money, and hence the proverb, "Not for every man is the voyage to Corinth."¹²

¹¹ Elizabeth Baughman, *The Scythian Archers: Policing Athens*. Retrieved February 6, 2015 from www.stoa.org/projects/demos/article, 4.

¹² Strabo, *Geography*, Translation by H.C. Hamilton, Esq. and W. Falconer. Retrieved July 12, 2016 from

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The ‘More than a thousand temple slaves’ were not just offering sacrifices; they were actively involved in temple prostitution. At Athens, as there were many citizens, so there were many slaves, resulting in an equivalence of one slave to every free person and ‘the presence of slaves was a daily fact’.¹³ With a modest income, every household could acquire a slave or two to help with work or family business.

In the late 5th century BC, a cripple in defending his need before the Athenian boule saw himself deserving of the state pension because he was so poor he could not afford a slave.¹⁴ Indeed, it stands to reason that ‘how completely the Greeks always took slavery for granted as one of the facts of human existence is abundantly evident to anyone who has read their literature’.¹⁵ The dependence on slave labor in the Greek world has been attributed to, not only to the contempting view of manual work, but also to the thinking that slaves handling the work that would otherwise be handled by their owners provided the owner-citizens enough leisure for political activities and conducting of wars.¹⁶ It was clearly the ‘assumption that a well-functioning society had a necessity for slavery ... The city revolved around its use of slave

<http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/text?doc=Perseus%3Atext%3A1999,8.6.20>

¹³Victoria Cuffel, “The Classical Greek Concept of Slavery”, *Journal of the History of Ideas* Vol. 27, No. 3 pp. 323-342 (1966) 323.

¹⁴Lysias, *Lysias*, Translation. by W.R.M. Lamb (London: Harvard University Press, 1930). 24.6

¹⁵Moses I. Finley, “Was Greek Civilization Based on Slave Labour?”, *Historia: Zeitschrift für Alte Geschichte*, Bd. 8, H. 2 (April 1959). 145.

¹⁶Edward Harris, “Homer, Hesiod and the Origins of Greek Slavery”, Retrieved January 10, 2016 from <https://www.academia.edu/7417746/Harris>, 3.

labour and thus slavery as an institution was justifiable in the eyes of the city-state'.¹⁷

A slave did not need to be called by that name before he actually lived or functioned as one. 'If we e trouble in identifying "agricultural slaves" in Athens it may be in part because they are everywhere. In our sources the standard terms used for slaves do not refer to their legal, social or economic positions so much as to the aspect in which they happen to be'.¹⁸ Preoccupation with the etymology of the word might make it difficult to come to terms with what slavery basically suggests. Aristotle¹⁹ makes reference to a poor man who, in the absence of slaves, makes his family members and his ox do servile works. If slaves were to disappear, the picture of a typical Classical Greek housecraft becomes incomplete.²⁰

The Greeks cherished freedom and saw slavery as the opposite which must be resisted. Understandably, a moral issue arises over such desire for possession of slaves while there is burning hatred for becoming enslaved. This is aptly described below:

the attempt at a moral justification of slavery as beneficial institution assumed a difference in quality among men. Some are, literally, born to rule, others to obey. The difficulty lay in determining who was which, a

¹⁷ Wendy Gallagher, "Platonic and Attic Laws on Slavery", *The Compass*: Vol. 1: Iss.1, Article 7. (May 2014).

¹⁸ Michael H. Jameson, "Agriculture and Slavery in Classical Athens", *The Classical Journal*, Vol. 73, No. 2 (1977) 137.

¹⁹ Aristotle, *Politics*, Translation by H. Rackham, (London: Harvard University Press, 1944). 1323a.

²⁰ Aristotle, *Economics*, Translation by G.C. Armstrong, (London: Harvard University Press, 1935). 1344a35.

difficulty compounded practice of enslaving war captives and communities of losers.²¹

Since some believed they were ‘born to rule’ while others were born ‘to obey’ slavery in reality coexisted with freedom in the same world. The Greek knew this as much as they were cognizant of many different ways by which a person could fall victim of slavery. Two major sources are well known. Captives or victims of war or piracy first come to mind and ‘alongside the captives we must place the so-called barbarians who came into the Greek world in a steady stream - Thracians, Scythians, Cappadocians, etc. - through the activity of full-time trader’²² the practice that is similar to the modern record of European slave trade in Africa. Thracian parents’ complicity in making their children slavery exports²³ indicates that a family, for economic reasons, might sell one of its children into slavery. Infant children, exposed by parents who abandoned their newborn baby upon a hillside or at the gates of the city to die or be claimed by a passerby, would also fall in the category of captives or victims of war or piracy. It was the same with others who might have been kidnapped from their home countries, brought to Greece and sold at the slave market. Swelling the foregoing first source of slaves in Classical time is the second category of slaves: children born into slavery who automatically became slaves.

An understanding of slavery in the above setting as a situation of demand and supply is not farfetched since it was not just an outcome of military conquest or dominance. The slave market was replenished by parents and kidnappers who kept up the

²¹ Victoria Cuffel, “The Classical Greek Concept of Slavery”, *Journal of the History of Ideas* Vol. 27, No. 3 pp. 323-342 (1966) 334.

²² Moses I. Finley, “Was Greek Civilization Based on Slave Labour?”, *Historia: Zeitschrift für Alte Geschichte*, Bd. 8, H. 2 (April 1959) 152.

²³ Herodotus, *The Histories*, Translation By Robin Waterfield, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998). 5.6.

supply to meet both public and private needs for slaves. The perception of a slave as a necessary household tool in the ancient society is fittingly expressed below:

since, just as for the particular arts it would be necessary for the proper tools to be if their work is to be accomplished, so also the manager of a household must have his tools, and of tools some are lifeless and others living (for example, for a helmsman the rudder is a lifeless tool and the look-out man a live tool—for an assistant in the arts belongs to the class of tools) , so also an article of property is a tool for the purpose of life, and property generally is a collection of tools, and *a slave is a live article of property.*²⁴ Italics are mine.

Discomforting as the above statement of Aristotle may be, it was never contradicted by how popular slavery at Athens was, even in the era of democracy. Irrespective of the disability or limitations it meant for the slaves, no one would protest the perception of slaves as property of their masters rather than citizens of a state who lived in freedom. Hence, ‘*Doulos*, [slave] in describing the domination of one party over another, can be used to describe a power relationship between two parties. But it can also be used to describe the social condition of a person who lacks freedom’.²⁵ Consequently, when slaves were disallowed at the gymnasium and prevented from participating in public Assembly, the defence simply was: ‘property is a tool for the purpose of life’ or ‘property

²⁴ Aristotle, *Politics*, Translation by H. Rackham, (London: Harvard University Press, 1944). 1253b33.

²⁵ Kostas Vlassopoulos, “Greek Slavery: from Domination to Property and Back Again”, *The Journal of Hellenic Studies* (2011) 218.

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is a tool for the purpose of [gratifying] life', the purpose which would be determined by the owner. To the Greeks, since a slave was either a private or public utility, the possession of it was deemed natural and considered a life necessity, especially when the benefits were seen in the following light: 'increased productivity and reduced cost. The first gain results from the slave's being made to labour more intensively than a free worker. The second gain results from the slave's being subjected to inferior (cheaper) working conditions'.²⁶ It is safe, then, to conclude that slavery was indeed a profitable industry.

Different Masters but Unchanged Status of a Slave

The position of servitude was not necessarily defined by the kind of treatment meted out to a slave. Handling of slaves varied in ancient Greek states and some humane treatment was not unpopular with slavery. For example, in Athens, slaves were not expected to be beaten publicly because the Athenians would want to avoid unwittingly flogging citizens who bore little or no difference in physical appearance with the slaves.²⁷ Besides, loyal slaves as they engaged in manual jobs or in domestic services were often treated almost as part of the family and could take part in the family religious activities. Some slaves were even allowed to earn money and eventually buy their own freedom.

On the contrary, judging by the handling of her large population of servile helots, Sparta particularly represents a case of harsh treatment toward slaves. For example, At Sparta, in a practice called 'Krypteia', the state would unleash terror on the slave population of helots as next described:

the magistrates from time to time sent out into
the country at large the most discreet of the

²⁶ Morris Silver, "Slaves versus Free Hired Workers in Ancient Greece", *Historia: Zeitschrift für Alte Geschichte*, Bd. 55, H. 3 (2006) 259.

²⁷ Pseudo-Xenophon *Old Oligarch, Constitution of the Athenians*. Retrieved May 10, 2015 from <http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/text?doc>, 1.10

young warriors, equipped only with daggers and such supplies as were necessary. In the day time they scattered into obscure and out of the way places, where they hid themselves and lay quiet; but in the night they came down into the highways and killed every Helot whom they caught.²⁸

Another infamous case of cruel treatment of slaves occurred when the Spartan state authority under the pretext of rewarding meritorious service of the helots, declared that anyone from among the slaves who thought he had rendered the state so much service to deserve being set free should come forward. Identifying the two thousands helots who came forward at this announcement as the ones who were prone to rebellion, the Spartans then arranged what befell these men who were under the mindless domination: ‘with crowns on their heads [the helots] went in procession about the temples as to receive their liberty, they not long after made them away; and no man knew how they perished’.²⁹ Such was the Sparta’s callous record of treating slaves.

The varying treatment notwithstanding, ‘in truth we find that not only did slavery exist in ancient Greece, but it was also a thriving business’.³⁰ Abuse of slaves or killing them was made ordinarily a bad idea by the thought of the big returns their owners expected from the large investment in the trade, yet, since slaves had no rights, they were commonly exposed to harsh mistreatment. Even

²⁸ Plutarch, *The Life of Lycurgus*. Retrieved April 7, 2016 from http://penelope.uchicago.edu/Thayer/e/roman/texts/plutarch/lives/lycurgus*.html, 28.2

²⁹ Thucydides, *History of the Peloponnesian War*. Translation by Thomas Hobbes, Retrieved July 15, 2016 from <http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/text?doc> 4.80

³⁰ Wendy Gallagher, “Platonic and Attic Laws on Slavery”, *The Compass*: Vol. 1: Iss.1, Article 7. (May 2014) 3

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Athens had her record of mistreatment of slaves. In the silver mines at Laurium, in southeastern Attica, slaves were poorly treated. Mine shafts were small, unsafe, and poorly ventilated and the conditions could be no more brutal. Many of the thousands of slaves who worked in the mines were injured or killed in accidents. Although those forced into these conditions were often those condemned to death for committing crimes because it was understood that they would not live very long under these circumstances. Such harsh treatment of slaves is shown in Demosthenes' expression that follows:

If, gentlemen of the jury, you will turn over in your minds the question what is the difference between being a slave and being a free man, you will find that the biggest difference is that the body of a slave is made responsible for all his misdeeds, whereas corporal punishment is the last penalty to inflict on a free man.³¹

Even when the treatment might not appear brazen at Athens owing to some laws put in place to protect slaves; it was still a common perception of inferior social status of slaves. 'The Athenians and the citizens of other Greek *poleis* clearly recognized that owners exercised these powers over objects that belonged to them and that masters possessed all these rights over their slaves'.³² The control over slaves was absolute as they were used in various ways to gratify the desires of their masters who were at liberty to 'starve them to keep them from immorality, lock up the stores to stop their stealing, clap fetters on them so that

³¹ Demosthenes, *Demosthenes*, Translation by A. T. Murray, (London: Harvard University Press, 1939). 24. 167.

³² Edward Harris, "Homer, Hesiod and the Origins of Greek Slavery". Retrived January 10, 2016 from: <https://www.academia.edu/7417746/>, 10.

they can't run away, and beat the laziness out of them with whips'.³³ Such were the lots of slaves.

Slavery among the Greeks, in view of the foregoing, could be seen as both an instance of human domination of others who were viewed as inferior, which could be harsh, as well as using others to fulfil private/public goals or desires. The Greeks met their socio-economic and political needs with them. The fact about how well the institution served the society is expressed in the following words:

The leisure time allotted to Greek citizens was done so with the use of servants. Had it not been for the institutionalization of slavery in ancient Greece the empire may have festered instead of grown in its wisdom. Slaves were often the caretakers of the household and the marketplace. They would manage a place of business while the master or owner was free to pursue other interests, allowing for the creation of art and the advancement of knowledge. Slaves were also the major contributors to industry by working in silver mines which were a source of luxury and finance for the Grecians.³⁴

The above implies that in the ancient world, slavery was a *sine qua non* to any freedom the Greeks could boast of; paradoxically, it was the main prop or cornerstone of the society without which there would be an inadequate understanding of the social structure. 'That the most developed form of "true" or chattel slavery was found in those societies that exhibited the greatest

³³ Xenophon, *Memorabilia*, Translation by E. C. Marchant, (London: Harvard University Press, 1923). 2.1.16.

³⁴ Wendy Gallagher, "Platonic and Attic Laws on Slavery", *The Compass*: Vol. 1: Iss.1, Article 7. (May 2014) 2

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flourishing of individual freedom is a more unpalatable pill to swallow but the facts are beyond dispute: Athens, which we know best, offers the clearest examples ...'.³⁵ In other words, slavery grew with the freedom ushered in by the Athenian democracy so that 'the majority of Athenian households had one or more servile members and that, whatever the percentages between slave and free, to have slave help was considered the norm'.³⁶ Hence, the grinding socio-economic dependence on slavery is implicit in the case of the crippled mentioned above³⁷ whose condition is not only lack of a helping hand in his business but also a social symbol of abject poverty.

Philemon's Onesimus in the Social Reality of Slavery

With the popularity of slavery in the Classical Greek society, there was no campaign or legislation against the institution, rather, the influence of slavery persisted into the Hellenistic period and was also undeniably etched into the socio-economic fabrics of the Greco-Roman world. Although the Greco-Roman world is not the focus here, an example is taken from this period to demonstrate how tolerable the slavery under discussion was. The case of the "runaway slave", Onesimus, mentioned in Paul's letter to Philemon (Philemon 1-25) and the Colossians (Col 3:22-4:1), is typical of the constituent nature of slavery. In reconciling Onesimus with his master, Paul encourages Philemon to treat the alleged fugitive slave, whom he believes is now repentant as a Christian brother. Yet, Paul makes no attempt to thwart the social order of slavery since he feels obliged to send the slave back to his master, although with reluctance, in view of how good a companion Onesimus had become. While Paul is now pleading

³⁵ Michael H. Jameson, "Agriculture and Slavery in Classical Athens", *The Classical Journal*, Vol. 73, No. 2 (1977) 122

³⁶ Michael H. Jameson, "Agriculture and Slavery in Classical Athens", *The Classical Journal*, Vol. 73, No. 2 (1977) 123

³⁷ Lysias, *Lysias*, Translation by W.R.M. Lamb (London: Harvard University Press, 1930). 24.6

that Philemon sees his meeting Onesimus again as reunion of two Christians and enjoy ‘a filial relationship’³⁸ with him, nevertheless, he is cognizant of the unchanged status of Onesimus as a slave. That explains why, in Philemon verse 13, Paul expresses the desire to hold Onesimus back to minister to him, yet, he appeals to the free will and the authority of Philemon as the slave owner, refraining from doing so against the master’s consent. Paul shows he recognises slave-master relationship as the norm in his letter to Titus when he admonishes him: ‘exhort servants [δούλους] to be obedient unto their own masters and to please them well in all things...’ (Tit 2:9). Hence, Onesimus, ‘is a tool’³⁹ owned by and expected to be submissive to Philemon. Knowing the principles governing the relationship of slave and master so well, Paul expresses a realistic view of the social order and would only advocate humane treatment on the part of the slave owners (Eph. 6:5-9).

The brief allusion to the Biblical example is an illustration of what the social reality or tolerance of slavery at the democratic Athens and the oligarchic Sparta, as well as in other Greek states meant. It has been noted that different categories of slaves had their place in the communities: slaves with no special skills would be useful in the silver mines or could be hired out by their owners to work on large estates. On the other hand, slaves with skills or experience could work in their owners’ business establishments or get hired out if that meant more money for their masters. The fact remains that the practice of slavery among the Greeks was as commonplace as getting married and having children, activities which also existed under varying circumstances.

³⁸ Craig S De Vos, "Once a Slave, Always a Slave? Slavery, Manumission and Relational Patterns in Paul's Letter to Philemon", *Journal for the Study of the New Testament* 23, no. 82 (2001) 89-105.

³⁹ Chris Frilingos "For My Child, Onesimus: Paul and Domestic Power in Philemon", *Journal of Biblical Literature*, Vol. 119, No. 1, pp. 91-104 (2000)
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Conclusion

The brief look at the record of slavery in the ancient Greek society presents a picture of how humans tend to utilise their power and wealth, which made dependence on slavery in the social and economic spheres of the Classical period an undisputable reality. The abundance of slaves at Athens was a clear indication of the state's military prowess, and as suggested earlier, the institution of slaves at Athens gave the Athenian citizens the time they needed for the direct democracy, fighting on behalf the state in war. Besides, large numbers of slaves manned the Athenian silver mine at Laurium which was a mainstay of the city's economy. Both the wealthy and the poor at Athens wanted slaves and saw nothing amoral about possession of them. The government of Sparta in clear terms defined the place of slaves in the society. The helots who constituted their slave class, although outnumbered the citizen population by far, were the basis for the economy upon which the Spartans built their military strength. Particularly to Athens and Sparta, the state's economy could not have a foundation better than what was provided by the institution of slavery, which they consciously safeguarded.

The Classical Greek society reflects growth in standard of life, luxuries and leisure that corresponded with increase in slavery, tending to lend support to the utilitarian explanation for the existence of slavery throughout human history. Interestingly, 'during the 19th century, a majority of the United States' citizens declared slavery as a necessary evil'.⁴⁰ This is akin to the view of the ancient Greek philosopher, Aristotle, who, as discussed above, supported slavery because it meant a way of meeting some basic human needs to the Greeks. While the ancient Greeks generally believed they had indefeasible right to freedom, nonetheless, the place of slavery in their society was not considered unjust in a

⁴⁰ Steven T. Tran, "Slavery: The Main Ingredient to an Ancient Greek Polis' Military Dominance", Retrieved July 12, 2016 from <http://pdxscholar.library.pdx.edu/younghistorians/2016/oralpres/19, 9>.

world controlled by wealth and political power. Greek states would fight to defend the freedom of their cities and individuals enslaved could gain their freedom, yet theirs was a society that saw the institution of slavery as part of human existence.

The consideration of slavery in the Classical Greek society might lead to the conclusion that, even when the whole world speaks in unison against slavery, rooting out of the practice that persists under various guises, if the motivations by which it is mostly driven remain similar to those of the ancient Greek slavery, is a forlorn hope. As noted earlier, the need for slaves was motivated by the desire for cheap labour for production and pleasure. Slave women were used to satisfy the sexual needs of their masters and they functioned as prostitutes. Slaves were the helping hands for mistresses and their children in houses; they helped to prepare meals, engaging in weaving and sewing. The desire for similar services has existed throughout the ages and the human values that made slavery acceptable back then are still thriving.

Fought with the spirit and the 'zeal' with which dishonest leaders and followers contend with corruption, slavery in form of human trafficking endures because the society that "fights" it also profits from it. Despite its ugly record, there was no pretence of fighting slavery among the Greeks in the Classical time, yet, a lot can be learned from how those who were enslaved in ancient times got their freedom, a lesson that is crucial as long as slavery conditions remain modern realities and the unchanged human values make mockery of the fight against it. If humans continue to crave for slaves, individuals can resist or work against becoming slaves when they desire a different existence. This will be a subject for another discussion.

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