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Honour in Classical Greece

ERC project 2018-2023 Conference

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Speakers and abstract lists

Vincent Azoulay (Paris) ‘Athenian Democracy, Honours, and Punishments: Towards a Connected History’

This paper will start from a definition of the democratic regime proposed by Demosthenes in *Against Leptines* (§107–8). According to the orator, the *dēmos* exercise his domination (*kratos*) through a double monopoly: on the one hand, that of legislative deliberation and the making of norms; on the other, that of punishment *and* distinction. The people must both involve the elites in political life – by honouring them with rewards – and control their possible excesses – by punishing them harshly. This dialectic between honours and punishments is important to understand the functioning of Athens in the fourth century. Not only is punishment often conceived as *timōria*, recuperation of honour, and sometimes expressed through the deprivation of honour (*atimia*), but the two phenomena sometimes share the same lexicon, that of *timē* – i.e. *timēsis*, the *assessment* of the punishment after the court verdict, and *timēma*, one of the names given to judicial fines. The last phase of Socrates’ trial deserves to be re-examined in this light, as it exposes these intrinsic links. Beyond this specific case, this connected approach of honour and punishment can lead to a reinterpretation of the democratic dynamic in the fourth century and put the supposed ‘democratic golden age’ of the Hellenistic period under scrutiny.

Luigi Battezzato (Pisa) ‘Honouring the Gods, Honour among the Gods: from Homer to Tragedy’

‘Honouring the gods’ is a very common Greek phrase, and gods often speak about their ‘honour’. As many Greek texts recognised, this poses a difficult religious problem, which in turn creates opportunities for narrative complexities. The conferral of honour normally places the honouree in an inferior position. This makes the gods paradoxically dependent on human acts of worship, and on the continuous renewal of ritual. On the other hand, the gods speak about different degrees of ‘honour’ within the divine community, and on the fact that they can ‘lose face’ or lose ‘honours’ (i.e. areas of control over human and/or divine life). The paper will

explore these features, discussing the presentation of divine honour in Greek poetry, focusing especially on Zeus' role in the *Iliad*, and on the Erinyes in Aeschylus' *Eumenides*.

Giulia Bonasio (Durham) 'Is Honour Good for Us? Honour and *Megalopsychia* in Aristotle's *Eudemian Ethics*'

At the beginning of the *Eudemian Ethics*, Aristotle notices that many people consider honour the aim of a good human life. Aristotle disagrees with this view: as he explains in the *Eudemian Ethics*, honour is a natural good, but it cannot be the aim of a good human life. Honour is paradigmatic insofar as the goodness of honour is not the goodness of virtue, which is pursued for its own sake and in any amount, and it is not the goodness of a mere external good. In this paper, I explain what it means that honour is a natural good and I argue that honour is not good for everyone. *Qua* human beings we have distinctive psychological, desiderative, and cognitive attitudes towards honour. Honour shapes our relations in the community. However, agents must be in certain conditions in order to benefit from honour. As Aristotle defines it, *megalopsychia* is the 'best disposition regarding the choice and use of honour' (*EE* III 1233a5-6). This is compatible with a broader range of cases in which human beings benefit from honour: as the notion of natural goods suggests, honour is good for human beings as we are by nature, and it should help fulfil the function of the human soul at the best, which is living a happy life.

Pia Campeggiani (Bologna) 'Suum cuique: *Axia* and its Basis'

My paper deals with the concept of *axia* in Aristotle's political theory. Though often interpreted in terms of 'merit', *axia* is better understood *formally* as the criterion by which honour (e.g. one's claim to share in the constitution) and honours (e.g. offices or marks of distinction) are or should be attributed in different constitutions. *Axia* therefore depends on the theory of justice that each constitution embodies and its substantive content varies accordingly. I shall focus on Aristotle's ideal constitution and his normative proposal of a substantive account of *axia* in terms of civic excellence. Finally, I shall show that because Aristotle's ideal theory of justice promotes both individual flourishing and the common good, in the best constitution the good citizen and the good man are the same.

Christopher Degelmann (Berlin) 'Timē, Phēmē, and Historiography in Democratic Athens'

In a society of honour (*timē*) such as classical Athens, the spoken word weighed extremely heavily. Gossip (*phēmē* or *phatis*) and hearsay (*akoē*) therefore contributed significantly to the location of the individual in the societal hierarchy. How rumour and gossip constituted individual honour is the subject of the paper, as are the methodological challenges that accompany an examination of gossip from a historical perspective. While *timē* is sometimes literally inscribed into the official record, *phēmē* and its relatives are rather ephemeral phenomena – hard to detect in our sources, but especially in genres designed for performance (tragedy, comedy, and speeches) we find glimpses of rumour that is a reservoir of contemporary discourses, norms, values, and beliefs about honour.

Alessandra Fussi (Pisa) 'Honour, Recognition, Respect: Contemporary Debates and Ancient Responses'

In recent years the relationship between honour and respect has been the object of important philosophical debates. The first part of the paper examines (1) Stephen Darwall's (evolving) positions concerning respect as honour, appraisal respect and second person respect; (2) Axel Honneth's thesis that principles we usually consider universal have acquired normative weight thanks to specific struggles for recognition. Contrary to what we might initially think, the view

proposed by Darwall is not really compatible with some fundamental insights on honour and respect we can find in Aristotle and Xenophon, while Honneth's attention to historical struggles can be enlightening. The second part of the paper discusses Aristotle's analysis of competing claims to honour and recognition in the *Nicomachean Ethics* (specifically, in the section devoted to *megalopsychia*) and in the *Rhetoric* (in the sections devoted to indignation, anger and the character of the wealthy). Attention will be given also to the passages, in Xenophon's *Hiero*, in which the poet Simonides and the tyrant Hiero compare their views concerning giving and receiving honour.

Margaret Graver (Dartmouth) 'The Eyes of the Other: Honour and Epistemology in Plato and the Early Stoics'

Like shame, honour is a powerful motivator, and a complex one. The honour motive is complex (1) because it depends on a *prospective* assessment of how other people are likely to react to some action we have in mind; and (2) because it is inherently concerned with the source of its fulfilment, caring much more about the assessment of the *qualified* observer. My paper takes up the sensitivity of the honour motive to epistemic considerations as framed at two points in Greek thought: first in Plato's *Republic*, and then in certain fragmentary texts of the Hellenistic Stoics. While there are important differences between Plato's psychology and that of the early Stoics, there are also some striking similarities that illustrate how motives relative to honour can be both a moral issue and an interesting puzzle in concept formation.

Johannes Haubold (Princeton) 'Honour and the Workings of the Cosmos'

I propose to look at Greek cosmogonic epic in a comparative perspective, to illuminate the role of honour in different societies of the ancient Mediterranean world. My main focus will be on Hesiod's *Theogony* and the Babylonian creation epic *Enūma eliš* – though I will also be drawing on related texts. The aim is to set these poems in conversation and in so doing to gain a better understanding not just of how they work as texts but also how they frame social action and social values for their audiences.

Moritz Hinsch (Berlin) 'Honour in Ancient Greek Moneymaking'

Students of the ancient Greek economy have long treated ethics and commercial profit-seeking as antipodes. In a rough parallel, students of Greek social history have mostly framed claims about personal honour as driving a zero-sum competition that often clashed with norms of cooperative, law-abiding behaviour. The *HCG* project promotes an alternative perspective: since claims to respect presuppose shared notions of right and wrong, honour and shame often served as vehicles to communicate expectations about prosocial behaviour. This paper adopts the *HCG*'s perspective to highlight the neglected role of honour in ancient Greek moneymaking. Expressed in terms of honour and shame, ideas of justice and noble behaviour did not hinder commerce. Instead, they furthered it by providing a basis for mutual trust. In a world where commerce was embedded in personal networks, a man's reputation was one of his most valuable assets. By redefining the relation between prosocial behaviour and profit-seeking, an investigation of honour in moneymaking may contribute to a better understanding of the social embeddedness of economic behaviour in ancient Greece.

Ben Keim (Pomona) 'The Use and Abuse of Athenian Honour in Demosthenes' Macedonian Speeches'

I examine the honour-related claims and arguments developed within Demosthenes' early speeches concerning the rise of Macedon. While the supreme importance of individual and civic honour within *Against Meidias* and *On the Crown* has been regularly acknowledged, and significant attention has been given more recently to the Athenian 'economy of honour'

conjured up by *Against Leptines*, I explore Demosthenes' understanding of honour as an individual motivation (for Philip, for himself, and for others) and as an institutional concern (for post-Social-War Athens) within these deliberative speeches. I focus on the speeches in which Demosthenes either juxtaposes Philip's advances and Athens' responses – notably the *Olynthiacs* and the *Philippics* – or chronicles and laments the failures of Athens' handling of civic honours. Against the mid-fourth-century backdrop of Athenian self-definition as a democratic 'city of honour' populated by citizens who are particularly sensitive to the negotiations and pursuit of honour, I emphasize Demosthenes' understanding and use of honour(s) in these speeches through his (a) portrayals of Philip as a *philotimos*, (b) efforts to leverage (ancestral) honour and encourage Athenian action, and (c) frequent concern with the Athenian *demos*' control of civic honours.

David Konstan (NYU) 'Honour in Archaic Greek Elegy'

In archaic Greek poetry, questions of honour are raised in relation to three broad areas: politics, war, and sex. The tendency of poets of this age to compose both political or historical poems and erotic verses may seem odd to the modern reader. Indeed, the different sides of their production have tended to be kept apart in the critical literature, as though the erotic poems, being light and playful, were unrelated to the more serious and, in general, politically motivated historical compositions. In my paper, I examine the ways in which notions of honour expressed in erotic, martial, and status-centred poems of this period intersect to form a complex ideological matrix. Poems by Mimnermus, Theognis, Solon, and Tyrtaeus are examined.

J. E. (Ted) Lendon (UVA) 'The Honour of Cities'

When Pindar asserts (as he so often does) that an athletic victor brings honour (*timē*, *kudos*, *kleos*) to his family or city, Pindar is to be believed: families and cities are honour-bearing entities, and something fundamental changes about them when they are given more honour. The Pindar attribution of new honour to the city is not just a form of words to defuse *phthonos* or avert suspicions of tyrannical *hybris*, as Leslie Kurke argued (*The Traffic in Praise* [Ithaca, 1991] 209–18). That cities especially are honour-bearing entities is clear from the fact that they can and do frequently honour—witness the many fourth-century BC inscriptional grants of honour on stone from Athens. In fact, not only can cities honour as a whole, but their component bodies (*demos* and *boulē*) can honour separately and together: they too—quite apart from the city—are honour-bearing entities. I have argued elsewhere (*Song of Wrath: The Peloponnesian War Begins* [New York, 2010]) that understanding the honour of *poleis*, and *poleis*' resulting prickliness, is essential to understanding their foreign relations. In this paper I examine the components of civic honour, and how that collective honour can rise or decline over time.

Christel Müller (Nanterre) 'The Two Sides of *Timē*: Honour(s) and Price(s) in Hellenistic Inscriptions'

A twofold analysis is proposed here. The first part consists in a lexical study of *timē* word terms as found in inscriptions (mostly Hellenistic). These abound in the inscriptions from the 4th to the 1st century BC, and the phenomenon continues in the Imperial period. Two main senses emerge: one that refers to the value of an object (*timē* as price, *timēsis*, *apotimēma*) and one in which the word, in the singular or plural (*timē*, *timai*), refers to the honours bestowed as a reward on individuals or communities. Based on this terminological analysis, we can reflect on the link between the two main meanings of *timē*, that of value and that of honour. Euergetism is an excellent example of such a link. It is generally conceived, according to the classical system of 'gift-counter-gift' as an (actually or fictitiously) horizontal relationship where a benefactor, in exchange for his or her gift, receives an honour as symbolic recognition. This

conception has led to the erasure of a fundamental aspect of this practice, the notion of remuneration. We will therefore attempt here to formulate this relationship differently by considering *timē* as the basis of a very concrete evaluation. The *timē*-price paid by the *euergetēs* is rewarded, according to a very precisely acted (vertical) scale of values, by a *timē*-honour: the two sides of the *timē* are therefore leaning against each other and not disjointed as historians would have it, who seek to evacuate from the euergetic exchange the question of money as a standard of measurement also for practices and conducts.

Øyvind Rabbås (Oslo) ‘Aristotle on Emotion, Honour, and Ethical Life’

Honour (*timē*, *axia*) is about status: the standing or position from which we relate to each other in our interactions with one another, and the weight we give each other as sources of claims and concerns. Honour is very much part of Aristotle’s practical philosophy, both his ethics and his political philosophy. In this paper I focus on his extensive discussion of emotions in *Rhetoric* 2.1–11. My main claim is that we cannot appreciate the nature and function of the emotions unless we see how honour forms an integral part of them. Aristotle starts from the assumption that human life is social or communal. Communities are made up of individuals who interact with each other. In interacting they form various relationships. In such relationships the persons interacting inevitably recognize one another as sources of claims – they occupy a certain position or status vis-à-vis one another, and they interact qua occupying this status. This status gives the person occupying it a certain worth that others, and the agent himself, must recognize and give due weight in their deliberations and actions. The emotions are his way of registering this activity. I explore this by looking at select passages from *Rhetoric* 2.1–11.

Ruth Scodel (Michigan) ‘Honour and Reputation in Classical Athens’

This paper explores the relationship between honour (*timē*) and (good) reputation (*doxa*) in classical Athens. They are distinct: honour is essentially dyadic, given by one party to another, while reputation is triadic, social knowledge about others that is transmitted among people. Still, they often overlap. Typically, Athenians assume that a good reputation is a prerequisite for honour (especially election to office); that honour in turn increases the recipient’s reputation. Sometimes, however, the economy of honour does not function as it should. Timarchus had a successful political career although Aeschines claims that there was widespread gossip about his bad character. In Alcibiades, as Thucydides presents him, the usual synergy of honour and reputation breaks; he demands honour in a way that itself could only lead to negative evaluations of his character. Finally, the address to women in Pericles’ Funeral Oration (Thuc. 2.45) avoids a promise of honour and instead offers *doxa*. Women were certainly participants in the culture of honour, but unless they were priestesses they did not have dyadic relationships with men or groups of men outside their families. Pericles offers something real but limited: a reputation based only on private communication.

Elke Stein-Hölkeskamp (Duisburg-Essen) ‘Money makes the Man: Wealth as a Distinctive Feature of Ancient Elites’

My paper will focus on the relative value of wealth as a status marker for archaic elites. The analysis will be based on an interpretation of the relevant evidence of archaic poetry from Archilochos, Tyrtaios, Solon, and Xenophanes to the poets of the *Corpus Theognideum*. To this end, I will systematically explore the relevant texts for references to wealth, its acquisition, its consumption, and its moral evaluation. In all the authors of the period, the reference to wealth is extremely ambivalent. On the one hand, it is seen as a desirable good. On the other hand, the practices of acquiring it are critically examined. The poets characterize the pursuit of wealth as a central part of a pervasive competition that determined all areas of life of the archaic

aristocrats. Competition, however, produces winners and losers, and so the texts repeatedly address the fate of the impoverished and marginalized. Their integration into the typical aristocratic social networks came to an abrupt end. They were no longer able to participate actively in the political institutions of the emerging *poleis*. The connection between wealth and politics is another central aspect. I am concerned with the question of whether a success that had been achieved in one field of competition could be transferred to other fields of action. Could prestige and reputation based on great wealth be translated into political influence? Did success in the Panhellenic Games, based on the ability to share in the demonstrative consumption, automatically bring important advantages in other fields of action?

Claire Taylor (UW-Madison) ‘The Dynamics of Honour and the Enslavement of Women’

My aim in this paper is to investigate some gendered dynamics of *timē* through the lens of the captivity of women and their subsequent enslavement. On the one hand, the *timē* of men is predicated on the bodies of captive women; on the other hand, women are fully implicated in this value system in various ways. By looking at how honour is configured in and around the captive woman—by those involved in her enslavement and as focalized through the experiences of the captive woman herself—I hope to show that *timē* was not simply a value associated with a masculine elite but could be operationalized in gendered ways. Notably, this perspective allows us to explore how the intimate labour enslaved women performed within households was also governed by aspects of *timē*.

Hélder Telo (Lisbon) ‘Plato on the Philosophical Love of Honour’

The purpose of this paper is to demonstrate that, while Plato’s dialogues frequently criticise the pursuit of honour, they are also concerned with determining the right way of understanding and relating to honour. According to the *Republic*, love of honour (*philotimia*) is one of the three constitutive drives or urges (*philiai*) of the soul and, in contrast with love of knowledge, it is characterized as blind or irrational and as a form of self-interest. However, it is also argued that the soul’s drives can use and transform each other. Thus, love of honour can be sublimated if it is subordinated to love of knowledge. Using passages from different Platonic texts, I will show that we can conceive of two main philosophical uses of the soul’s love of honour. In texts such as *Alcibiades I* and the *Apology*, Socrates appeals to other people’s love of honour to stimulate their interest in philosophy. Likewise, in *Republic VI* and *Theaetetus* 172d-177b, Socrates himself appears to be concerned with honour, as he seeks to portray philosophers as respectable and admirable figures, but this is not done for self-promotion. Rather, it is motivated by concern or love for other people, insofar as philosophers’ good reputation allows them to benefit others, either as rulers or as excellent role models.

Natalia Tsoumpra (Glasgow) ‘Disease and the Body: Manifestations of Shame and Pride in the Ancient Medical Encounter’

In this paper I discuss the role of shame and pride in the ancient medical encounter. Even though the Hippocratic authors tend to suppress discussions of their own and the patients’ emotions, there are explicit references to shame felt by the sick individuals – sometimes extended to the physicians. Some instances of shame are associated with aesthetics and damage to form, as the uses of *aischros*, *aischunē*, and their cognates are limited to cases of external deformities and bodily deformations but are not applied to the diseased bodies in general. Sometimes the physicians’ concern for the effectiveness of the treatment clashes with their regard for the sick person’s dignity, and they may experience shame due to failure or professional incompetence. A distinct category of shame is reserved for female patients who feel *aidōs* and are therefore reluctant to disclose information to the male doctor. This shame is connected with (and exacerbated by) illness but not originating from it. Feminist scholarship

on emotions has long noted the connection between shame, gender, and power within patriarchal structures: shame about one's body, the feeling that one's personhood is being reduced to a mere corporeal existence and the sensation of alienation from one's own body, is a particularly gendered emotion. I conclude with a discussion of some fourth-century votive offerings in the form of female body parts displayed in the Asclepieia in Athens and Corinth, that may reveal a different attitude to illness: one that stresses not the shame attached to the diseased body, but the pride of the patients who recovered from illness and wish to commemorate their victory in public.

Frank Ursin (Hanover) 'Honourable Physicians in the Corpus Hippocraticum? The Pursuit of *Doxa* and *Euschēmosynē*'

Nowadays medical doctors still recite a 'Doctor's Pledge' (the so-called 'Declaration of Geneva') in some countries by swearing upon their honour. Could this suggest that honour was also of central importance in the archetype of pledges, i.e. the Hippocratic Oath? A glance at the Oath and at the *Corpus Hippocraticum* (*CH*) leaves one disappointed. Indeed, there is hardly any evidence of the Greek word for honour, *timē*, in the *CH*. To make matters worse, *timē* appears mostly in the later Hellenistic or Roman Imperial works of the *CH*. This paper argues that studying these lesser-known deontological texts in the *CH* (*Oath*, *Law*, *Art*, *Precepts*, *Physician*, and *Decorum*) is of great interest. In addition to *timē*, the concepts of *doxa* and *euschēmosynē* also play a central role in medical deontology. Therefore, in this paper I shall address three questions: First, to what notion of 'reputation' found in the *Corpus Hippocraticum* may the authors of the 'Declaration of Geneva' have been referring? Second, what were the rules of professional conduct in the *Corpus Hippocraticum* that fostered honour or a similar concept? Third, in which ways did the Hippocratic physician build his reputation: e.g. practising his art, gaining public acknowledgment of his moral principles, taking care of his external appearance? My hypothesis is that the deontological texts within the *CH* feature a form of medical professionalism that can be described using elements of professionalism theory.

Hans van Wees (UCL) 'Honour and Profit in Greek International Relations'

What was the role of honour – understood as 'the right to respect' – in Greek international relations? J.E. Lendon's *Song of Wrath* (2010) has argued that the Peloponnesian War (or rather the Archidamian War) was a competition for honour between Sparta and Athens, in which the primary goal of each campaign was to undermine the opponent's honour and to defend one's own. It is certainly important to acknowledge this dimension of Greek warfare, and I myself have argued that some of the most violent episodes in Greek (and more generally ancient) warfare – amounting to campaigns of 'genocide' – can be attributed to extreme anger generated by a perception that the opponent posed an insulting challenge to one's honour. However, honour has its limits in explaining the outbreak and course of ancient wars, partly because other factors were always also in play, and partly because the ideology of honour served legitimating purposes and was never a merely analytical concept that adequately explained behaviour. This paper revisits the behaviour of classical Greek belligerents and asks to what extent it can be understood in terms of aggressive competition for honour and to what extent it was shaped by 'profit' or other objectives.