

The mentions of slavery in the context of the kallipolis in Plato's *Republic* are, on the face of it, inconsistent. Not surprisingly, two opposing camps have formed. Vlastos suggests that they are a fourth class doing all the unseemly work behind the scenes. Yet, even though the text mentions slaves in passing, a fourth class doesn't fit into the psychodynamic taxonomy of the kallipolis, which has led to the suggestion that, to be consistent, Plato's kallipolis shouldn't have slaves. Neither of these positions is satisfactory. Rather, Plato is envisaging a new rationally based social relation, which, philosophically speaking, ties each worker to every other one so as to benefit the kallipolis as a whole, leaving no room for a distinction between trader-producers and their putative slaves. The household disappears both as a political and an economic unit, removing the conditions under which there could be intra-household literal slavery or inter-household metaphoric slavery, although Plato's aristocratic economic dirigisme means that he in no way should be thought of as an abolitionist.