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Steven Mao April 10, 2022

American Receptions of Thucydides in the Antebellum Slavery Debate

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Abstract

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The study of Roman and Greek antiquity, including the languages of Latin and ancient Greek, were heavily emphasized in American classrooms. Naturally, this pervasive study in the classics permeated other areas of discourse in society. The early nineteenth century brought about an increased admiration for Hellenic culture, coinciding with the height of the American abolitionist debate. Therefore, abolitionists and pro-slavery advocates in the antebellum period (roughly 1816-1861) often invoked ancient Greek authors to support their own beliefs and arguments. Appropriations of Aristotle are known for being used by advocates of slavery; however, receptions of the ancient Greek historian Thucydides (c. 460- c. 400 BCE) and his work are less studied in this context. This thesis specifically focuses on how antebellum authors referenced Thucydides, to both justify and attack the modern institution of slavery.

Through the analysis of antebellum speeches, newspaper articles, and books regarding slavery, this thesis aims to examine not only the ways in which authors referred to Thucydides in the context of the slavery debate, but also how they referred to specific passages from his *Peloponnesian War* and then adapted and manipulated his writing for their own agendas. My first chapter juxtaposes how abolitionists and anti-abolitionists referenced Thucydides because of the rising appreciation for Greek culture. Both sides viewed Thucydides as a representative of Greek cultural achievement, yet abolitionists deployed a passage regarding piracy from the *Peloponnesian War* to demonstrate that not all ancient customs should be deemed moral. My second chapter focuses on antebellum references to Thucydides' account of Spartan helotage, a particular form of ancient slavery. These references all came from abolitionists, who lamented at the barbaric nature of helotage and attributed to it the downfall of Greece. My final chapter analyzes how Thucydides was used in the philological component of theological arguments regarding whether the Greek terms δοῦλος and δουλεία were truly meant to denote 'slave' and 'slavery' in the Bible. By means of in-depth analysis of primary sources, this study demonstrates the role of Thucydidean receptions in arguments of American abolitionists and proslavery advocates in the decades before the Civil War.

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Introduction

In his posthumously published autobiography, William Sanders Scarborough (1852-1926), the prominent Black classicist born into slavery, recounts an episode of his life that occurred in 1901 during a Harvard meeting of classicists:

> There was [also] the philological paper for the July meeting at Harvard College about notes on Thucydides relating to use and meaning of certain words. This meeting was an "interesting one," as a number of young Ph.D.s from the South were present and listened attentively… My remarks led one of these young doctors to look me over rather superciliously, as if to say, "You are very daring to say so much on that subject." He remarked caustically, "Thucydides seems to be your *magnum opus*." I had written one paper previously on the author and had entered heartily into discussions of him. It was the first time a member had in thus manner spoken to me of my work.[1]

According to Scarborough's account, Thucydides was discussed in a very formal academic setting, yet it is apparent from the Southerner's snarky comment that racial prejudice was still commonplace, even in academia. This anecdote suggests that decades after emancipation in 1863, the historian could still play an important role in the context of racial advocacy and confrontation. This thesis will explore the prehistory of Scarborough's anecdote, going back a half-century or so to look at receptions of Thucydides in the context of the antebellum debate over slavery in the United States. Growing tensions before the Civil War (1861-1865) between the North and South paralleled those between the Spartans and Athenians in Thucydides' *Peloponnesian War*, making it likely that this parallel added to the interest in the author and the historic events he described, not just after the Civil War but also in the decades of intensifying tensions over the issue of slavery. This thesis will explore how authors on both sides of the debate exploited contemporary interest in Thucydides and the prestige associated with his influential work to lend authority to their opposing claims.

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[1] William S. Scarborough and Michele V. Ronnick, *The Autobiography of William Sanders Scarborough: An American Journey from Slavery to Scholarship* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2005), 161.

Though excellent work has already been done in this area, the role of Thucydides in the debates about slavery in antebellum America has not been discussed. Amongst relevant literature, the volumes *The Mind of the Master Class* by Eugene and Elizabeth Genovese and *The Golden Age of the Classics in America* by Carl Richard stand out. In the chapter "In the Shadow of Antiquity" Elizabeth and Eugene Genovese give an overview of both Roman and Greek receptions in the slaveholding South with respect to politics, education, art, literature, and, most importantly, slavery. The Genoveses focus only on the South and, though they include several Greek authors, including Plato, Xenophon, and Herodotus, their brief references to Thucydides do not offer any detailed analyses. Richard, in his chapter on slavery, discusses both abolitionist and pro-slavery arguments. He agrees with the Genoveses that Southern slaveholders emphasized the works of Aristotle and Plato and shows that they even attributed Roman and Greek cultural achievement to slavery. Richard expands upon the work done by the Genoveses by considering the contributions of abolitionists and Black activists to the debate, but he too has little to say about Thucydides. These volumes give valuable insights into the ideology of American receptions of antiquity related to the issue of slavery, yet neither discusses Thucydides in detail or depth. Christine Lee's *Handbook to the Reception of Thucydides* does not contain any discussion of the American antebellum slavery debate. Caroline Winterer's study *The Culture of Classicism* provides an overview of some important reception trends in nineteenth-century America but does not include receptions of Thucydides.[2]

Another volume, *Ancient Slavery and Abolition: From Hobbes to Hollywood,* also provides articles pertinent to this thesis. In particular, "Appropriations of Spartan Helotage in

[2] Elizabeth Fox-Genovese and Eugene D. Genovese, T*he Mind of the Master Class: History and Faith in the Southern Slaveholders' Worldview* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 249-304; Carl J. Richard, *The Golden Age of the Classics in America: Greece, Rome, and the Antebellum United States* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2009), 181-203.; Christine Lee, *A Handbook to the Reception of Thucydides*. Hoboken: John Wiley & Sons, Incorporated, 2015.; Caroline Winterer, *The Culture of Classicism: Ancient Greece and Rome in American Intellectual Life, 1780-1910*. Baltimore (The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2004) 44-98.

British Anti-Slavery Debates of the 1790s" by Stephen Hodkinson and Edith Hall provides a synopsis for receptions of Spartan helots in relation to the British abolition debates in the late eighteenth century.[3] However, they discuss the reception of helots strictly in Britain, while also focusing much more on Plutarch's portrayal of the helots. This thesis, as will be seen in Chapter III, will show that Thucydides' remarks on Spartan helotage also made their way into American discussions of slavery, something not considered by Hopkinson and Hall. Sara Monoson, in her essay, "Recollecting Aristotle," demonstrated how Southerners drew on Aristotle and his *Politics* to resist abolitionists' beliefs of the natural right theory, misapplying it to their racist objectives, and to address a sociological element and where northerners themselves worked as 'wage slaves'. Ultimately, Monoson is able to prove how Aristotle served a critical role in shaping Southerners' way of thinking when it came to the issue of slavery.[4] On the other hand, Malamud's "The Auctoritas of Antiquity" focuses only on the abolitionist side, in particular ways in which African Americans received antiquity. For instance, she highlights African Americans' admiration for Carthage and their heroic portrayal of runaway slaves who chose death over slavery, much like the abolitionist argument presented by Richard, paralleling runaway slaves to Xenophon's retreat in his *Anabasis*.[5] This thesis examines Thucydidean receptions on both sides of the debate on slavery. Though scholarship that examines other receptions of classical authors exists regarding the slavery debate, studies focusing on the

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[3] Stephen Hodkinson and Edith Hall, "Appropriations of Spartan Helotage in British Anti-Slavery Debates of the 1790s." In *Ancient Slavery and Abolition: From Hobbes to Hollywood*, by Alston, Richard, Edith Hall, and Justine McConnell, eds., edited by Richard Alston, Edith Hall, and Justine McConnell (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011)

[4] Sara Monoson, "Recollecting Aristotle: Pro-Slavery Thought in Antebellum America and the Argument of Politics Book I." In *Ancient Slavery and Abolition: From Hobbes to Hollywood*, by Alston, Richard, Edith Hall, and Justine McConnell, eds., edited by Richard Alston, Edith Hall, and Justine McConnell. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011).

[5] Margaret Malamud, "The Auctoritas of Antiquity: Debating Slavery through Classical Exempla in the Antebellum USA." In *Ancient Slavery and Abolition: From Hobbes to Hollywood*, by Alston, Richard, Edith Hall, and Justine McConnell, eds., edited by Richard Alston, Edith Hall, and Justine McConnell (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011); Richard, *Golden Age,* 195.

reception of Thucydides and their significance from both the abolitionist and pro-slavery standpoints have yet to be published.

This thesis will follow the approach of intellectual historians and receptions scholars like Caroline Winterer, Carl Richard, and Sara Monoson, adapting it to the reception of Thucydides within the slavery debate. My analysis will apply some or all of the following questions to individual receptions: 1. How did antebellum authors use references to Thucydides in the context of the slavery debate?, 2. How did they refer to specific passages in Thucydides to support their own argument in the slavery debate?, and 3. How did they adapt and manipulate Thucydides' text to promote their own agenda? In addition to examining antebellum American Thucydides receptions, preceding and other relevant receptions will be provided, such as those from eighteenth-century Britain. This will be followed by an explanation of the American author's context and whenever it is warranted, by an analysis of the original Thucydidean text and its context. The goal of this study is to show how antebellum authors used and manipulated references to Thucydides to promote their own agenda within the slavery debate.

After looking thoroughly through multiple databases, the sources examined in this thesis reveal that Thucydides was used in arguments across different segments and disciplines of the slavery debate. While some receptors I have examined have been studied before, their references to Thucydides have not. Accordingly, my study examines receptions tied to the flowering of Hellenism in antebellum America, analyzes depictions of a particular form of ancient slavery known as helotage in Sparta, and will explore references to Thucydides in connection with biblical analysis.

Chapter I

Hellenism and Receptions of Thucydides in the Antebellum Slavery Debate

Classical education has had a significant role in American society since the founding of the nation. In the antebellum period of America (1816-1861), this emphasis on antiquity and classical education coincided with the peak of the slavery debate. Educated Northerners and Southerners held Greek and Roman antiquity in high regard, and prominent figures on both sides of the slavery debate entwined their studies in the languages and history of these civilizations with this central issue of their own time.

The decades before the Civil War saw a noticeable increase in receptions of Thucydides. Their use in the slavery debate was tied to Hellenism in America, a shift in interest from Rome to Greece, and from Latin to Greek. The rise of Hellenism, outlined by Caroline Winterer, encouraged greater reverence for Athenian democracy and a more profound appreciation for Greek literature.[6] This chapter presents an analysis of antebellum receptors' use of Thucydides linked with Hellenism specifically within the slavery debate. As both the North and South revered Athens to a certain degree, Thucydides was used as an indication of Athenian cultural achievement and a reliable record for Athenians' political success, as understood by receptors. Since British influence was significant in the development of American philhellenism, American abolitionists also adopted British critiques of slavery, most notably the argument involving the widespread nature of piracy in Homeric times as recounted by Thucydides. Prior studies have linked American abolitionism to British roots, yet none have done so as it pertains to Thucydides.

1. Pro-slavery arguments

[6] Winterer, *The Culture of Classicism,* 44-98.

This section will focus on the receptions of James DeBow and Lawrence Keitt, both of whom used references to Thucydides to advocate for Southern slavery. James D. B. DeBow, who has been mentioned before, was a pro-slavery journalist and publisher born in South Carolina. DeBow was editor of *Southern Quarterly Review*, but his most notable undertaking was his founding in 1846 of the *Commercial Review of the South and West,* which later became *De Bow's Review.* DeBow was an anti-abolitionist and secessionist, yet *De Bow's Review* was more than a mere "exhibit of the agrarian system of the Old South."[7] Rather, it reflected DeBow's own vision of the South, anticipating "the significance of the New West, of extensive railway transportation, and of the Southern industrial revolution; and this vision was uniquely stimulated as well as distorted by the vital presence of slavery."[8] Unlike many traditional Southerners who rejected the idea of an industrial society, DeBow championed an industrial revolution in which the South would no longer be dependent on the North.

Herman Nixon pointed out in his article describing DeBow's journal, "the commercialization and industrialization of the minds of agrarians was no easy task."[9] At the center of Southern skepticism toward industrialization was the fear that "industrialization might jeopardize the institution of slavery." Still, *De Bow's Review* addressed a wide range of topics coming from a wide range of sources. It was a discussion, and called itself "a monthly journal of trade, commerce, commercial policy, agriculture, manufactures, internal improvements, and general literature." Among these topics was also that of slavery. Like most of his fellow citizens in the South, DeBow was an ardent supporter of slavery and further justified his idea of expansion and a railway as a solution to a surplus slave population.[10] In his 115-page December

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[7] Herman Clarence Nixon, "DeBow's Review," *The Sewanee Review* 39, no. 1 (1931): 54–61, http://www.jstor.org/stable/27534607, 54.
[8] Ibid, 55.
[9] Ibid, 57.
[10] Ibid.

1855 issue of *De Bow's Review*, DeBow placed the article titled "Ancient Slavery" first. Prior to examining the article, it is also worth understanding DeBow's ideological shift in the 1850s. Instead of his earlier emphasis of "utilitarian knowledge," DeBow began to urge Southern families to send young men to Southern colleges teaching classics and the scriptures as opposed to their Northern counterparts which he argued "were preaching abolitionism instead."[11]

In "Ancient Slavery," DeBow's primary objective was to refute the abolitionists' accusation that slavery "degraded the citizens, and impoverished the ancients states," as it made labor disreputable.[12] He rebutted on the charge on the basis of ancient history and authors (mostly Roman), trying to prove that slavery was not the cause of depopulation, the decline of agriculture, and the displacement of free laborers in Rome and that it was the war and aggressive campaigns that depopulated Greece.[13] DeBow further argued that the very factors that caused the demise of these ancient civilizations were causing the vices of "pauperism," the fever of trade competition, greed, and the disregard of the marriage relation, vices he saw in contemporary France, Great Britain, and the North of America, where slavery was not practiced.[14] DeBow also argued that slavery existed when Greece and Rome were at their height in terms of culture and economic prowess. Therefore, the South must also require slavery to achieve the same success. DeBow appropriates Thucydides in the following passage to represent the pinnacle of Greek culture:

> …much of the agriculture, trade, commerce, finance, and manufactures, were in the hands of slaves during all generations of Athenian triumph and glory; that when Aeschylus composed his tragedies, and Pindar sung his odes, and Thucydides wrote his history, and Plato delivered his divine philosophy, and Demosthenes spoke, and Aristotle mastered, collected, expanded, reformed, and multiplied all knowledge, slavery was

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[11] Carl J. Richard, *The Golden Age of the Classics in America: Greece, Rome, and the Antebellum United States* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2009), 187.
[12] "Ancient Slavery". in *De Bow's Review 19* (1855), 617
[13] Ibid, 620.
[14] Ibid, 618, 620.

universal.[15]

In an article dominated by Roman arguments, the inclusion of this passage is a testament to the rise of Hellenism at the time compared to the eighteenth century and is evidence that Greek society was deemed relevant to the slavery debate in the minds of Southerners. Aeschylus, Pindar, Thucydides, Plato, Demosthenes, and Aristotle epitomize the cultural achievement that Athens had reached at its agricultural, economic, and political height. In referencing such cultural icons, DeBow implies that Athens' cultural achievements were dependent on slavery. Like Thomas Dew who "attributed the decline of Greece to Athens' imposition of hegemony, with high taxation and levying of tribute," DeBow blames the Athenians' "rapacity" in war, for Athens' fall.[16]

Prior to this praise of Athens, DeBow attributes Sparta's period of success to slavery as well, writing, "slavery formed the basis of the Spartan institutions during the whole period of Spartan ascendancy and heroism." Allusions to Sparta and particularly helotry will be addressed in the next chapter; however, it is worth noting that views on Spartan helotage were rarely positive and transcended sectionalist disparities. Both Northerners and Southerners agreed "that Spartan helotry combined the worst features of slavery and serfdom."[17]

However, a brief reference to Spartan helots is necessary to address DeBow's omission of slaves in warfare. In DeBow's efforts to prove that the institution of slavery did not degrade citizens, he illustrates that Greeks still displayed virtue in battle. Regarding the battles in the second Persian invasion of Greece described by Herodotus he remarks, "the battles of Thermopylae and Salamis, of Plataea and Mycale were fought by slaveholders, and it is not easy

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[15] Ibid, 617.
[16] Elizabeth Fox-Genovese and Eugene D. Genovese, T*he Mind of the Master Class: History and Faith in the Southern Slaveholders' Worldview* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005)*,* 288.; Ibid, 620
[17] Fox-Genovese and Genovese, *Master Class,* 289.

to see how slavery degraded the Greeks."[18] By DeBow's argument, the battles that exemplified the height of Greek military power, both naval and on land, were won solely by slaveholders and their virtue. Though rarely mentioned in Thucydides' accounts of Spartan warfare, it is acknowledged by Peter Hunt that helots were often enlisted, most clearly by Brasidas on his campaigns, and were impactful in Sparta's conquering of Athens in the Peloponnesian War.[19] Herodotus himself even describes an episode where there was a grave set for helots who died in battle, yet DeBow fails to acknowledge this in fear that contributions by slaves might undermine the glory of the slaveholders he mentions and thus his contemporary pro-slavery perspective.[20]

Thucydides was used above all due to a newfound respect for Hellenic culture. This is apparent in a speech in the House of Representatives by the Hon. Lawrence M. Keitt (1824-1864) of South Carolina. Keitt included a reference to Thucydides, as he sought to condemn modern abolitionism by highlighting the presence of slavery in Christianity and antiquity. Like DeBow, Keitt states that "slavery was an essential element of Grecian polity, and was rigorously defined and regulated," and slaves themselves even "possessed so many more physical comforts than the poor free Athenian citizen" as shown by the impoverished conditions depicted by Aristophanes in his *Wasps* (300-309).[21] Much of the menial labor "in the democratic States of Greece" was left for slaves, whereas citizens were bound to "military duty and public concerns."[22]

Keitt himself was one of the most notorious proslavery advocates in the south.[23] He was also known for his involvement in the caning of Senator Charles Sumner in 1856, causing a

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[18] "Ancient Slavery" in *De Bow's Review 19* (1855), 617.
[19] Peter Hunt, *Slaves, Warfare, and Ideology in the Greek Historians* (Cambridge University Press, 1998), 56-57.
[20] Herodotus, *Histories,* 9.85.2.
[21] Lawrence M. Keitt, *Speech of Hon. Lawrence M. Keitt, of South Carolina, on Slavery, and the Resources of the South; Delivered in the House of Representatives, January 15, 1857*. Washington, Printed at the Office of the Congressional Globe, 7.
[22] Ibid, 8.
[23] "Laurence M. Keitt (1824-1864)." http://www.thelatinlibrary.com/chron/civilwarnotes/keitt.html.

massive brawl on the House floor in 1858, and serving as a member of the Provisional Congress of the Confederacy in 1861.[24] Furthermore, Keitt was a member of the Planter class, who put an emphasis on agriculture and benefitted greatly from slave labor. As a result, he particularly looked to Athens' preservation of an agrarian society, declaring, "Athens, on the contrary, long held to her agricultural character; and nothing but the subsequent necessities of commerce and communion made her a maritime state."[25] Keitt then proceeds to highlight his idealization of the Athenians' agrarian state at its height:

> Up to the administration of Pericles, when the city had culminated into power by the splendor and success of her politics, had grown rich by the influx, of trade, and was adorned by the creations of art, some of the best families of Athens still clung to the rural soil, with their slaves around them, sharing in their labors and toils.[26]

Keitt's reference to Pericles suggests Athens at its height, at a time when the Athenians held significant economic and political power within the Delian league and were unsurpassed artistically. As mentioned before, the Athenians' model of democracy was admired by many in the philhellenism-shaped antebellum era. It is apparent that Keitt's vision of the South incorporates and maintains the prominence of agrarianism and therefore slave labor.

Many Southerner's ideas of an ideal society were exhibited by ancient Athens, where a lifestyle comprised of farming with the help of slaves was sought after. Thucydides describes the barren agricultural environment that Attica had faced compared to the northern region of Hellas in Book 1 Chapter 2 of his *History of the Peloponnesian War*:

> τὴν γοῦν Ἀττικὴν ἐκ τοῦ ἐπὶ πλεῖστον διὰ τὸ λεπτόγεων ἀστασίαστον οὖσαν ἄνθρωποι ᾤκουν οἱ αὐτοὶ αἰεί.[27]

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[24] Ibid.
[25] Keitt, *Speech of Hon. Lawrence M. Keitt,* 8.
[26] Ibid.
[27] Thucydides, *History of the Peloponnesian War,* 1.2.2; All Greek in this study was taken from Perseus Digital Library unless otherwise specified.

> Attica, in any case, was without faction from remotest times because of its poor soil, and the same people always occupied it.[28]

As such, Attica's land was not very fertile. Still, Michael H. Jameson in his article argues that the function of slavery was "tied to the typical economic and social roles of the Athenian" and noted that "the model Athenian citizen was a man owning farm land, supporting his family from the produce of that land," and with the help of slaves, would have "sufficient freedom from work to engage in his social function – ritual, political, and military."[29] This was precisely the model of society that Keitt, along with many other Southerners, advocated for in opposition to the industrial North and in contrast to DeBow's Southern industrialist views.

With the debate over slavery reaching its fever pitch, Keitt adds that "the dark pencil of Thucydides has depicted with gloomy energy the grief of families flying from their country homes at the approach of the Peloponnesian conflict."[30] The exact passage that Keitt refers to is an episode that takes place after Pericles gives up his own land for the public and encourages the Athenians to prepare for war and "bring in their property from the fields."[31] In Book 2 Chapter 14, Thucydides writes the following:

> οἱ δὲ Ἀθηναῖοι ἀκούσαντες ἀνεπείθοντό τε καὶ ἐσεκομίζοντο ἐκ τῶν ἀγρῶν παῖδας καὶ γυναῖκας καὶ τὴν ἄλλην κατασκευὴν ᾗ κατ᾽ οἶκον ἐχρῶντο, καὶ αὐτῶν τῶν οἰκιῶν καθαιροῦντες τὴν ξύλωσιν: πρόβατα δὲ καὶ ὑποζύγια ἐς τὴν Εὔβοιαν διεπέμψαντο καὶ ἐς τὰς νήσους τὰς ἐπικειμένας. χαλεπῶς δὲ αὐτοῖς διὰ τὸ αἰεὶ εἰωθέναι τοὺς πολλοὺς ἐν τοῖς ἀγροῖς διαιτᾶσθαι ἡ ἀνάστασις ἐγίγνετο.[32]
>
> After listening to him, the Athenians were convinced, and they brought in from the country their children, their women, and the equipment they used in the home as well, and even the woodwork that they took out of their houses. They conveyed their livestock and draft animals over to Euboea and the outlying islands. The uprooting was a difficult

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[28] Thucydides, and Steven Lattimore. 1998. *The Peloponnesian War*. Indianapolis: Hackett Pub. Co, 1998, 4; All translations of the Greek were taken from Steven Lattimore's translation unless otherwise specified.
[29] Michael H. Jameson. "Agriculture and Slavery in Classical Athens." in *The Classical Journal* 73, no. 2 (1977): 122–45. http://www.jstor.org/stable/3296867, 124.
[30] Keitt, *Speech of Hon. Lawrence M. Keitt,* 8.
[31] Thucydides, and Steven Lattimore. 1998. *The Peloponnesian War*, 81.
[32] Thucydides, *History of the Peloponnesian War,* 2.14.

process for them because the majority were always accustomed to living in the country.

Thucydides sets the somber scene of families and homes being uprooted out of desperation and necessity. Families' accustomed agrarian lifestyles are upended in times of war, as Keitt's Speech foresees the possibility of this happening to the South. Not only would Southern families lose their sense of country-living but also the institution of slavery that is essential to it. By emphasizing the "gloomy energy" of the Athenians seeking refuge, Keitt calls upon his fellow Southerners devoted to agrarianism to preserve slavery in the South, avoiding the "disruption" in agriculture as the Athenians experience in the Peloponnesian War.[33]

Keitt, though alluding to Thucydides, does not directly cite Thucydides' compelling passage. He had pursued classical studies at South Carolina College; however, considering the level of difficulty that came with Thucydides' writing, it is conceivable that Keitt may have read a translation or a historian's account of Thucydides. The renowned *History of Greece* by the aforementioned George Grote had a section on this very passage. Grote provides the following description:

> From all parts of Attica the residents flocked within the spacious walls of Athens, which now served as shelter for the houseless, like Salamis, forty-nine years before: entire families with all their movable property, and even with the woodwork of their houses; the sheep and cattle were conveyed to Euboea and the other adjoining islands.[34]

All this happened as "the farming, the comforts, and the ornaments, thus distributed over Attica, had been restored from the ruin of the Persian invasion."[35] If Keitt had indeed used Grote to understand Thucydides, this may reinforce the notion that Thucydides' work was deemed of

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[33] Jameson, "Agriculture and Slavery in Classical Athens," 124.
[34] George Grote, *History of Greece*, Reprinted from the Second London Edition. Vol. VI. (Boston: John P. Jewett and Company, 1851), 129.
[35] Ibid, 128.

especially high intellectual prestige and difficulty since he did not consult Thucydides' original Greek text. Thus, in reading more receptions of Thucydides, it is useful to evaluate where receptors' source their information and any potential misrepresentations that may arise.

Another notable aspect of Keitt's use of Thucydides is that it happens to be in the context of advocating for agrarianism. This was a role typically attributed to Thucydides' successor, Xenophon, particularly in his *Oeconomicus*. Clifford Anderson, states that "the antecedents of the American creed of agrarianism can be found as far back as Graeco-Roman times, in the writing of Hesiod, Aristotle, Xenophon, Cicero, Cato, and others."[36] Lois Olson cites Socrates, who in Xenophon's *Oeconomicus* said that "Agriculture seems to possess an incontestable right to the title of parent and nurse of all the other professions. Observe a country where agriculture flourishes, and you will behold arts and sciences flourish in equal perfection!"[37] Keitt's use of Thucydides to bolster his agrarian ideals indicates that, within the slavery debate in antebellum America, the historian held great significance, appearing even in arguments that traditionally involved other authors.

In the analysis of arguments from two figures on the pro-slavery side, Thucydides is utilized as a representative of a model Athenian society. DeBow expresses veneration towards Athens' cultural, political, and economic achievements when Thucydides wrote his masterpiece, while Keitt reminisces as Athens' agricultural base at its height had to be abandoned due to the Peloponnesian war. Though DeBow and Keitt had wildly different economic ideologies, they both use Thucydides in their attempt to demonstrate the practical benefits of slavery in society and the superiority of societies where slavery is practiced.

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[36] Clifford B. Anderson, "The Metamorphosis of American Agrarian Idealism in the 1920's and 1930's." *Agricultural History* 35, no. 4 (1961): 182–88. http://www.jstor.org/stable/3739823.
[37] Lois Olson, "Erosion: A Heritage from the Past." *Agricultural History* 13, no. 4 (1939): 161–70, http://www.jstor.org/stable/3739683.

2. Abolitionist Arguments: Athenian "Equality" and the 'Piracy' Argument

a. Cassius Marcellus Clay and Athenian "Equality"

On the other side of the debate, many abolitionists also had adopted the same admiration for ancient Greece, making it a central point in their arguments. Much has been said about Northern abolitionists, but Cassius Marcellus Clay exemplifies supporters of abolition among Southerners. An important figure in antebellum America, Clay was born in Kentucky to General Green Clay, a wealthy planter who held numerous slaves, in a Grecian-styled mansion known as "White Hall." Upon his graduation from Yale in 1832, Clay returned to Kentucky and was elected to the Kentucky House as a representative in 1835. At that time, he expressed relatively mild views on slavery.[38]

However, in his 1840 campaign for legislature, he expressed his most forceful views against slavery calling it "an evil morally, economically, socially, religiously, politically – evil in its inception and in its duration."[39] Thereafter, in 1843 Clay freed his own slaves, and in the same year, having made many enemies, survived an assassination attempt by Sam Brown.[40] Clay, in 1845, published the *True American*, a paper devoted to emancipation.[41] As the influence of his paper grew, so did the backlash that came with it, particularly catching the eye of John C. Calhoun.[42] He proceeded to conduct speaking tours which were met with more controversy both in the North and South until in 1846 he volunteered for the Mexican War "despite his opposition to the annexation of Texas."[43] In 1849, he survived another attack from his opponents. This,

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[38] Lowell H. Harrison, "THE ANTI-SLAVERY CAREER OF CASSIUS M. CLAY." in *The Register of the Kentucky Historical Society* 59, no. 4 (1961): 295–317. http://www.jstor.org/stable/23374695, 297.
[39] Asa Earl Martin, The Anti-Slavery Movement in Kentucky Prior to 1850 (Louisville, 1918), 6.
[40] Harrison, "THE ANTI-SLAVERY CAREER OF CASSIUS M. CLAY," 300.
[41] Ibid, 302
[42] Ibid, 304
[43] Ibid, 308

however, did not stop him from founding the Republican Party of Kentucky in the 1850s and befriending Abraham Lincoln (who later appointed him Ambassador to Russia) during a visit to Springfield, Illinois.[44]

In 1856, "Clay threw his tireless energy into the forwarding of the Republican Party," even earning himself three votes for vice-president.[45] Within the 1856 Republican campaign, Hinton Helper "asserted that the best speech of the entire campaign was delivered by Clay in the New York Tabernacle on October 24," where Clay described himself as "the voice of one crying in the wilderness," and declared that "liberty and slavery cannot coexist, but one or the other must die."[46] In his fervent speech, Clay approaches the slavery debate from many angles. He addresses inequality in America beyond slavery from a humanitarian standpoint, saying "it is not democracy!" that a mere 347,000 people control the wealth of the South, while there are 3,500,000 slaves, consisting of both African American slaves and white Americans in poverty; he addresses the inefficiencies in agriculture and manufacturing that come with slavery, describing inferior conditions in the South; he also addresses the hypocrisy of Southerners not only holding slaves but trying to expand the scope of slavery, rhetorically asking, "how then can this be a government where liberty is sectional and slavery national?"[47]

Following his ridicule of the Southern notion that slavery "builds up men," Clay presents Thucydides as expressing the opposite.

> Thucydides in his oration in memory of those who fell in the Peloponnesian war, thought far differently. It was the spirit of equality and self respect which made the Athenians invincible, and though they carried the arts of civilized luxury to greater height than the other Greeks, they always conquered them in equal fight.[48]

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[44] Ibid, 313.
[45] Ibid.
[46] Ibid, 313; Cassius Marcellus Clay, *Speech of C.M. Clay before the Young Men's Republican Central Union of New York, in the Tabernacle, October 24th, 1856*. S.I, s.n., 19.
[47] Ibid, 4, 9, 13.
[48] Ibid, 11-12.

Having referred to Pericles' Funeral Oration, Clay further cites Thucydides.

> "Not one of these" says he "was at all induced to shrink from danger, through the fondness of those delights which the peaceful affluent life bestows: not one was less lavish of his life, through that flattering hope attendant upon want, that poverty at length might be exchanged for affluence: thinking it more glorious to defend themselves and die in attempt, than to yield and live, they presented their bodies to the shock of battle and thus discharged the duty that brave men owe to their Country."[49]

Here, Clay uses the translation of Rev. William Smith, who will come up again in later chapters, to depict the selflessness of Athenians in battle. In his employment of the Funeral Oration, Clay intends to inspire in his audience feelings of nationalism with an emphasis on egalitarian values. Whether rich or poor, Clay notes, Athenian citizens were willing to sacrifice their prosperity in support of the public good while collectively bearing "the arts of civilized luxury to greater height than the other Greeks."[50] However, in his speech, Pericles is likely solely paying tribute to Athenian citizens, excluding Athenian slaves who were considered "the outsiders within, in opposition to whom all the citizens could feel united."[51] Therefore, as much as Clay underlines Athenian equality and how their "purest civilization is ever powerful over the idle and dissolute" South, equality and freedom were certainly not available to all. [52] Enslaved people were obviously bereft of certain rights held by typical Athenian citizens. Instead of making a case against slavery, it appears that Clay makes a case against the inequalities among citizens themselves in the South.

Pericles, in the rest of his Funeral Oration, presents his ideals of equality and freedom that make up Athenian democracy, the system of government that fostered Athenian

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[49] Ibid, 12.
[50] Ibid.
[51] Hunt, Peter. *Slaves, Warfare, and Ideology in the Greek Historians*, 40.
[52] Clay, *Speech of C.M. Clay*, 12.

"greatness."[53] A.B. Bosworth says that "the message is that the polis through its political structure and material wealth gives its citizens, rich and poor, unique opportunities for self-fulfillment and it deserves the passionate devotion of each individual, a passion which makes death in military service desirable contribution to the collective," precisely the message Clay intends to convey.[54] However, the model of Athenian democracy, which Pericles portrays and Clay alludes to, is the very model which Madison had discouraged in *Federalist* No. 63. While presenting arguments for the Senate by pointing to the governments of Sparta, Athens, and Rome, Madison criticized Athenian democracy because he considered it excessively democratic and lamented that it lacked the moderating influence of a senate.[55] The original disapproval of Athenian democracy waned as Hellenism gained steam in antebellum America. As mentioned before, many Americans began to look up to Athens as a political blueprint. Along with Clay's emphasis on democracy and abidance to the Constitution earlier in his speech, he inserts Pericles through Thucydides into the slavery debate to convey the need for social and political equality.

Modern interpretations do not fully support Clay's portrayal of Thucydides. As seen above, Clay states, "Thucydides in his oration in memory of those who fell in the Peloponnesian war, thought far differently." Here, Clay gives a controversial account of Thucydides, taking Pericles' views as Thucydides'. Many scholars agree that "Thucydides framed the speech in his own words and integrated it with his historical narrative," but, as Bosworth explains, the speech "is a potent distillation of the speech Pericles actually delivered."[56] As a result, there is still uncertainty in the field regarding Thucydides' true attitudes towards Pericles and democracy.

Clay's allusion to Thucydides' episode of the Funeral Oration ultimately does not support

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[53] Thucydides, and Steven Lattimore. 1998. *The Peloponnesian War*, 92.
[54] A. B. Bosworth, "The Historical Context of Thucydides' Funeral Oration" in *The Journal of Hellenic Studies* 120 (2000): 1–16. https://doi.org/10.2307/632478, 6.
[55] A. Hamilton, J. Madison, and J. Jay Federalist No. 63. In: The Federalist Papers. Palgrave Macmillan, New York (2009). https://doi.org/10.1057/9780230102019_32.
[56] Bosworth. "The Historical Context of Thucydides' Funeral Oration," 1, 16.

his argument by claiming the equality of enslaved Athenians. Rather, he articulates how "justice and virtue" in an equal society inspire true courage in comparison to the South lacking these qualities. Clay may omit the unequal role of slaves in the Peloponnesian War, but his speech still demonstrates the significant role that both Athenian democracy and Thucydides could play in the abolitionist argument of antebellum America.

b. The 'Piracy' Argument from the British

In 1825, an essay composed by Samuel Melancthon Worcester, with the pseudonym Vigornius, appeared in a collection titled *Essays on Slavery; Re-Published from the Boston Recorder & Telegraph.* Vigornius inserts a passage referencing Thucydides after conceding that examples of slavery indeed could be found in the Hebrew Bible, as argued by supporters of slavery. Vigornius paraphrases a passage on Greek piracy in Book 1 Chapter 5 of *the Peloponnesian War* and uses it to demonstrate the skewed moral compass that was held by the ancients. Although it is not explicitly stated that the obvious wrongs of Ancient Greek piracy should prove the unethical essence of slavery, one can clearly infer Vigornius' message that just because customs such as slavery existed in ancient civilizations, this does not mean they were necessarily virtuous.

This 1826 publication is the first sign of Thucydides' depiction of ancient piracy being woven into the slavery debate in America. However, a similar argument can be traced back to the British in the eighteenth century. Thomas Clarkson, an English abolitionist who played a big role in passing the Slave Trade Act of 1807 in Britain, wrote the following in his "Essay on the Slavery and Commerce of the Human Species," published in London in 1786:

> The honourable light, in which piracy was considered in the uncivilized ages of the world, contributed not a little to the slavery of the human species. Piracy had a very early

> beginning. "The Grecians," says Thucydides, "in the primitive state, as well as the contemporary barbarians, who inhabited the seacoasts and islands, gave themselves wholly to it; it was, in short, their only profession and support."[57]

Much like Vigornius, Clarkson stresses how the prevalence of piracy came with honor and status in ancient Greece, as supposedly was told by Thucydides. The Thucydidean text which is referred to is as follows:

> οἱ γὰρ Ἕλληνες τὸ πάλαι καὶ τῶν βαρβάρων οἵ τε ἐν τῇ ἠπείρῳ παραθαλάσσιοι καὶ ὅσοι νήσους εἶχον, ἐπειδὴ ἤρξαντο μᾶλλον περαιοῦσθαι ναυσὶν ἐπ᾽ ἀλλήλους, ἐτράποντο πρὸς λῃστείαν, ἡγουμένων ἀνδρῶν οὐ τῶν ἀδυνατωτάτων κέρδους τοῦ σφετέρου αὐτῶν ἕνεκα καὶ τοῖς ἀσθενέσι τροφῆς, καὶ προσπίπτοντες πόλεσιν ἀτειχίστοις καὶ κατὰ κώμας οἰκουμέναις ἥρπαζον καὶ τὸν πλεῖστον τοῦ βίου ἐντεῦθεν ἐποιοῦντο, οὐκ ἔχοντός πω αἰσχύνην τούτου τοῦ ἔργου, φέροντος δέ τι καὶ δόξης μᾶλλον: δηλοῦσι δὲ τῶν τε ἠπειρωτῶν τινὲς ἔτι καὶ νῦν, οἷς κόσμος καλῶς τοῦτο δρᾶν, καὶ οἱ παλαιοὶ τῶν ποιητῶν τὰς πύστεις τῶν καταπλεόντων πανταχοῦ ὁμοίως ἐρωτῶντες εἰ λῃσταί εἰσιν, ὡς οὔτε ὧν πυνθάνονται ἀπαξιούντων τὸ ἔργον, οἷς τε ἐπιμελὲς εἴη εἰδέναι οὐκ ὀνειδιζόντων. ἐλήζοντο δὲ καὶ κατ᾽ ἤπειρον ἀλλήλους.καὶ μέχρι τοῦδε πολλὰ τῆς Ἑλλάδος τῷ παλαιῷ τρόπῳ νέμεται περί τε Λοκροὺς τοὺς Ὀζόλας καὶ Αἰτωλοὺς καὶ Ἀκαρνᾶνας καὶ τὴν ταύτῃ ἤπειρον. τό τε σιδηροφορεῖσθαι τούτοις τοῖς ἠπειρώταις ἀπὸ τῆς παλαιᾶς λῃστείας ἐμμεμένηκεν.[58]

> For the Hellenes in early times, as well as the barbarians along the coast and all who were islanders, turned to piracy as soon as they increased their contacts by sea, some of the most powerful men leading the way for their own profit and to support the needy. Falling on unwalled cities consisting of villages, they plundered them and made their main living from this, the practice not yet bringing disgrace but even conferring a certain prestige; witness those mainlanders even of the present who glory in successful raiding, also the request everywhere in early poetry that men arriving by sea say whether they were pirates, as though those questioned would not deny the practice nor would those who wanted to know blame them. They also raided each other on land. Much of Hellas still lives in the old way up to the present, Ozolian Lokris, Aitolia, Akarnania, that part of the mainland generally, and for these mainlanders the habit of carrying weapons has survived as a result of the old-style plundering.[59]

It should be made clear that Thucydides is not expressing his own views of piracy as

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[57] Thomas Clarkson, *Essay on the Slavery and Commerce of the Human Species, Particularly the African, Translated from a Latin Dissertation, Which Was Honoured with the First Prize in the University of Cambridge, for the Year 1785, with Additions*, London, Printed by J. Phillips, 9.
[58] Thucydides, *History of the Peloponnesian War,* 1.5
[59] Thucydides, and Steven Lattimore. 1998. *The Peloponnesian War*. Indianapolis: Hackett Pub. Co, 1998, 5

commendable and prestigious. Thucydides even later praises the Athenians' initiative to "put weapons aside and make their lives more sumptuous as well as more relaxed" by relieving themselves of piracy.[60] Instead, he is reporting the state of piracy in the works of Homer who often described aristocratic raiding. In fact, Clarkson was aware of this, as promptly after his reference to Thucydides he remarks that Homer establishes accounts of piracy in the Trojan War.[61] This is confirmed by Richmond Lattimore, who says "Thucydides tells us that in Homeric times piracy brought honor rather than disgrace, and that this is shown by the kind of question the poets made their heroes ask each other."[62] He further theorizes that Thucydides acquired this viewpoint from a scene, discussed below, in the *Odyssey* when Telemachus and Mentor arrive at Nestor's shore in Mycenae and are asked if they are pirates. Clarkson uses this Thucydidean reference to piracy to make the very point that Vigornius made forty years later, namely that the set of moral standards held by ancients, regardless of how great their achievements were, should not necessarily be accepted in modernity. Homeric piracy was even too barbaric for Greeks in the Thucydidean age, needless to say for antebellum Americans. Thus, the same shift in moral standards should be adopted regarding slavery.

In 1816 a new edition of Clarkson's "An Essay on The Slavery and Commerce of the Human Species" was published with a few additions. Within the same chapter as before, after his discussions of the *Odyssey* and examples of piracy in Xenophon, Clarkson adds that piracy "contributed not a little to the slavery of the human species."[63] Clarkson then cites Thucydides in his footnotes while addressing the respectability of piratical expeditions and how "their frequency afterwards, together with the danger and fortitude that were inseparably connected

[60] Lattimore, *The Peloponnesian War*. Indianapolis, 6.
[61] Clarkson, *Human Species,* 10.
[62] Richmond Lattimore, "Penrose Memorial Lecture. Man and God in Homer." in *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society* 114, no. 6 (1970): 411–22. http://www.jstor.org/stable/986143, 416.
[63] Thomas Clarkson, *Essay on the Slavery and Commerce of the Human Species, Particularly the African, in Three Parts*. Georgetown, Published by the Rev. David Barrow, J.N. Lyle, Printer., 1816, 28.

with them, brought them into such credit among the barbarous nations of antiquity, that of all human professions, piracy was the most honorable."[64] This account of the honor that came with piracy contributes to the previous argument insisting on a repositioned moral compass from antiquity to contemporary times. As the piracy argument consumes a whole chapter of Part I of Clarkson's volume, it prompts the question as to why the piracy argument was so prevalent in Britain.

A glimpse into British history provides the answer. A dissertation by Catherine M. Styer covers the enslavement of Britons in the Barbary States, a group of states in North Africa including Morocco, Algiers, Tunis, and Tripoli, from 1570 to 1800. She tells the stories of Thomas Saunders in the 1580s and Thomas Phelps a hundred years later, both of whom were victims of attacks by Barbary Pirates.[65] The subject is often overlooked, but "for more than two hundred years, Britons, British colonists, and Americans suffered enslavement in North Africa."[66] Barbary Pirates not only abducted and plundered commercial sailors, but they often "hunted far from home," inciting fear in many maritime communities.[67] The seventeenth century became "the golden age of the corsairs," with thousands of English, Irish, and Scottish citizens being captured and enslaved.[68] The cause behind such attacks was a combination of British imperialism, commercial expansion, and Christianity, with Christian abductees being subject to grueling work, religious conversion, and not being able to return home.[69] It reached the point that "the enslavement of Christians was central to the seventeenth and early eighteenth-century

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[64] Ibid.
[65] Catherine Styer, "Barbary Pirates, British Slaves, and the Early Modern Atlantic World, 1570-1800" (University of Pennsylvania. ProQuest Dissertations Publishing, 2011), 1-2.
[66] Ibid, 2.
[67] G. N. Clark, "The Barbary Corsairs in the Seventeenth Century" in *Cambridge Historical Journal* 8, no. 1 (1944): 22–35. http://www.jstor.org/stable/3020800, 23.
[68] Ibid.
[69] Styer, "Barbary Pirates, British Slaves, and the Early Modern Atlantic World, 1570-1800," 15.

economics and militaries of Morocco and Algiers."[70] Both sides of the Atlantic read attentively and avidly regarding the issue at the time, and in 1797, James Wilson Stevens still recalled the horrors suffered by his enslaved countrymen.[71] With such acts still occasionally occurring and being only one century removed from its height, it is understandable how both anti-piracy and anti-slavery sentiments would still be at the forefront of British thought. In conjunction with the rise of philhellenism in both Britain and America, Thomas Clarkson draws upon anti-piracy sentiments in Thucydides which eventually galvanizes the same abolitionist arguments in America. Clarkson's writing proved to be influential, for the same passage of Thucydides that occurs in his 1786 volume is directly incorporated into William Blake's compilation of slavery-related texts in 1860.[72]

Shifting back to Vigornius and his 1826 volume, David Brion Davis explains that Vigornius was a proponent of immediatism, the stance to abolish "Negro slavery without delay or preparation," a position that the publishers of the volume strongly rejected.[73] His views were opposed by "a Carolinian" and "Philo," then were defended by "Hieronymus," all three of whom were additional contributors to the volume.[74] Born to Samuel Worcester, a United States clergyman and pastor, S. M. Worcester graduated from Harvard in 1822 and became a professor of rhetoric and oratory at Amherst College.

Throughout his six essays, it is evident that Vigornius considers slavery to be a morally evil institution and points out in essay No. II the irony that "in this boasted land of liberty and

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[70] Ibid, 9; John B. Wolf, *The Barbary Coast: Algiers under the Turks 1500-1830* (London: W. W. Norton and Company, 1979), 152.
[71] Styer, "Barbary Pirates, British Slaves, and the Early Modern Atlantic World, 1570-1800", 2.
[72] W. O. Blake, Compiler. *History of Slavery and the Slave Trade, Ancient and Modern*, Columbus, OH, H. Miller., 20
[73] David Brion Davis, "The Emergence of Immediatism in British and American Antislavery Thought." *The Mississippi Valley Historical Review* 49, no. 2 (1962)., 209.
[74] Ibid.

equal rights, there is a nation of slaves."[75] He further asserts that "the slave-holding system must be abolished" with "immediate, determined measures."[76] In Essays I & II he dispels pro-slavery arguments focused on impressions of slavery from the Hebrew commonwealth and other Ancient civilizations to sixteenth and seventeenth-century Europe. Referring first to instances in the Old Testament, he then presents slavery as it existed in Ancient Egypt, Greece, and Rome, as well as Europe and the American colonies in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Vigornius notes anti-slavery sentiments expressed by Pope Leo Xth, Queen Elizabeth, and Louis XIIIth and ascribes the abolition of slavery in part to Christianity.[77]

After a reference to the Hebrew Bible, Vigornius inserts the following Thucydidean paraphrase based on British precedents:

> Homer repeatedly alludes to the custom of kidnapping in small piratical expeditions, and of reducing prisoners of war to the condition of slaves. Thucydides mentions, that the ancient Greeks, and the inhabitants of the neighbouring islands and upon the Asiatic shore, were addicted to mutual piracies; and their predatory enterprises, like the subsequent practice of thieving in Sparta, so far from involving any idea of wrong, or of moral turpitude, appear to have been universally regarded as achievements of heroism and glory. An exchange of prisoners of war was unknown to the ancients. In Egypt, Greece, and Rome the collar and the chain awaited the captive.[78]

Like his earlier British models, Vigornius suggests that in antiquity acceptable standards included piracy, but just like piracy, the practice of slavery should no longer be acceptable. Prior to his paraphrase of Thucydides, Vigornius introduces the argument made by many proponents of slavery, that slavery began at the time of biblical figure Nimrod. He proceeds to describe Israelites as a "nation of slaves in Egypt," who "also become slave-holders, after their settlement in Palestine."[79] The positioning of these two passages signifies his intentions to point to

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[75] Vigornius, and Others. *Essays on Slavery; Re-Published from the Boston Recorder & Telegraph, for 1825.* Amherst, MA: Mark H. Newman, 1826, 8.
[76] Ibid, 8, 24.
[77] Ibid, 6-7.
[78] Vigornius, *Essays on Slavery,* 5.
[79] Ibid, 5.

examples of immorality in all ancient civilizations without "any idea of wrong," highlighting the argument that slavery cannot be condoned anymore due to the vices that come with it.[80]

As was to be expected, Vigornius received much backlash for his perspective considering that this even preceded the abolition of the slave trade in Britain. Another contributor to the volume, "A Carolinian", was a slaveholder who chastised him and accused Vigornius of believing in "an entire and immediate abolition of slavery."[81]Another man, who went by "Philo", acknowledged the right of slaves to freedom but opposed immediate emancipation[82]. Still, for some, Vigornius' writing proved to be very convincing. A Southerner, known by the name "Hieronymus," was another contributor to the volume and defended Vigornius in his writing. In his letter to the publisher in the "Publisher's Advertisement", Vigornius reveals that an anonymous slaveholder from North Carolina was accepting of his teachings because Vigornius "had seen it with the eye of a Christian and a patriot."[83]

Following Vignornius' volume in 1826, it is not until 1860 that we see Thucydides' portrayal of piracy used in the slavery debate, in this case by Charles Sumner. Sumner was a Senator from Massachusetts and acted as one of the leaders of the antislavery movement from the Antebellum era up to the Reconstruction period. Initially a part of the Free-Soil party, which was made up of many who abandoned the Whigs, Sumner became a prominent figurehead for the Radical Republicans who even criticized Lincoln for being too lenient on the South in the Civil War. He was most known, however, for being the victim of caning by Preston Brooks and Lawrence Keitt after his speech "The Crime Against Kansas." In the 1856 speech, which occurred during the Bleeding Kansas crisis, a series of violent clashes between supporters and

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[80] Ibid.
[81] Davis, "The Emergence of Immediatism in British and American Antislavery Thought," 224.
[82] Ibid.
[83] Vigornius, *Essays on Slavery,* iv.

opponents of slavery, he emphasized his wish for Kansas to become a free state.[84] However, the speech did not stop there. It became provoking and controversial as Sumner launched personal attacks against his foes, used obscene sexual language to describe the innate immorality of slavery, and used allusions to classical figures, including Cicero and Catiline as well as the story of Daphne and Apollo to attack the morals of his rivals.[85]

Even though the attack solidified his relationship with many white and black abolitionists, Sumner had to take a few years to recover. Once he returned to the senate, in 1860, he delivered another explicitly abolitionist speech, "The Barbarism of Slavery."[86] This speech came as a response to proslavery arguments that had become more sophisticated over time. Sumner "rigorously critiqued the 'pretension' of 'the alleged inferiority of the African race,'" and "argued that slavery was a relic of 'ancient barbarism' that must recede with the advance of civilization."[87] To this last point is where Sumner calls upon Thucydides:

> According to Thucydides, piracy in the early ages of Greece was alike widespread and honorable; so much so, that Telemachus and Mentor, on landing at Mycenae, were asked by Nestor if they were 'pirates'- precisely as a stranger in South Carolina might be asked if he were a slave-master.[88]

Again, like Clarkson and Vigornius, Sumner uses Thucydides' description of the widespread nature of piracy in Homeric times to deduce the immorality of slavery. Since piracy is no longer socially acceptable in antebellum America, why should slavery be? In other words, the same

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[84] Michael D. Pierson, "'All Southern Society Is Assailed by the Foulest Charges': Charles Sumner's 'The Crime against Kansas' and the Escalation of Republican Anti-Slavery Rhetoric" in *The New England Quarterly* 68, no. 4 (1995): 531–57, https://doi.org/10.2307/365874, 544.
[85] Ibid.
[86] Manisha Sinha, "The Caning of Charles Sumner: Slavery, Race, and Ideology in the Age of the Civil War." *Journal of the Early Republic* 23, no. 2 (2003): 233–62. https://doi.org/10.2307/3125037., 256.
[87] Ibid.
[88] Charles Sumner, *Barbarism of Slavery: Speech of Hon. Charles Sumner, on the Bill for the Admission of Kansas as a Free State* (Washington, D.C, Thaddeus Hyatt), 25.

attitude toward and disapproval of piracy in a modern and progressive society should be adopted to the institution of slavery.

In his comparison of an ancient pirate to a modern enslaver, Sumner incorporates Homer's *Odyssey* into his argument, prefiguring Richmond Lattimore's analysis of Thucydides' passage. Since piracy was prevalent in Homeric times, Nestor asks Telemachus and Mentor if they are pirates after they have dined. As Richmond Lattimore notes, some implications need to be inferred, "The newcomers have come in peace. They may be raiders, but they are not raiding Nestor. Had they done so, they would have expected a fight, and, if the raiders were really strangers, they would not have been altogether wrong in raiding, and the land-holders would of course not have been wrong in repelling and killing the raiders."[89] This episode in the *Odyssey* is meant to highlight the ordinariness of pirates in Homeric times, corresponding to the pervasive nature of slaveholders in the antebellum South.

This intersection between Thucydides and Homer was the very same that Richmond Lattimore alluded to. As previously mentioned, the overlap between the two authors in Thucydides' description of slavery is well documented. While Thucydides was primarily read in America after the rise of Hellenism, Americans' infatuation with Homer started much earlier. Only the most privileged and talented read Thucydides, but the consumption of Homer was more widespread. Winterer recounts that an author in 1796 called him "the father of genuine poetry." However, until the second third of the nineteenth-century collegiate study of Thucydides was restricted to short extracts in the *Graeca Majora.* After the 1820s American Homeric education took on a new approach to Homer inspired by inquiries of Homer's texts in eighteenth-century Germany that came to be known as the 'Homeric Question.' Controversy arose surrounding the authorship of the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey,* and students became immersed in Homer's world as the

[89] Lattimore, "Penrose Memorial Lecture. Man and God in Homer," 416.

Homeric Question "represented the avant-garde of textual scholarship." As such, Homer remained one of the most-read classical figures in America, explaining his role in Sumner's argument.[90]

After both of his speeches, Sumner's popularity rose among abolitionists, particularly black abolitionists. More than any other of his contemporaries, his arguments addressed racism in antebellum America.[91] *Frederick Douglass' Paper* pronounced, "At last the right word has been spoken in the Chamber of the American Senate. Long and sadly have we waited for an utterance like this and were beginning to despair of getting anything of the sort from the present generation of Republican statesmen; but Senator Sumner has exceeded our hopes, and filled up the measure of all that we have long desired in the Senatorial discussions of slavery."[92]

The impact of Sumner's arguments and speeches proved to be powerful. Though Sumner was controversial, Louis Ruchames praises him as an "indefatigable scholar, the humanitarian willing to lay down his life for his fellow man regardless of color, the warm human being never too busy to help his friends or forgive his enemies, the orator and statesman who ranks with the founding fathers of American democracy."[93] In fact, due to Frederick Douglass' recognition of Sumner, his whole speech, along with his reception of Thucydides, appears in the July 1860 issue of *Douglass' Monthly*, demonstrating the agreement that Douglass felt with Sumner's message..

In sum, the piracy argument on the abolitionist side rested on Thucydides' reference to Homeric piracy. The argument was rooted in the memory of Barbary Piracy and the impression it had left in the minds of the British. Initially, Vigornius uses it to put slavery into context in the

[90] Winterer, *The Culture of Classicism,* 85.
[91] Sinha, "The Caning of Charles Sumner: Slavery, Race, and Ideology in the Age of the Civil War," 257.
[92] Ibid.
[93] Ruchames, Louis. "The Pulitzer Prize Treatment of Charles Sumner." in *The Massachusetts Review* 2, no. 4 (1961): 749–69. http://www.jstor.org/stable/25086743, 769.

Hebrew Bible, but we eventually see the piracy argument at its most impactful in Sumner's speech. Not only does Sumner's reference to Thucydides show the prevalence of the abolitionists' piracy argument, but it also further reinforces Homer's impact on the piracy passage in Thucydides. This is evident in Richmond Lattimore's commentary on Thucydides' perception of Homeric piracy more than a century after Sumner's speech. He refers to the exact same scene with Nestor, Telemachus, and Mentor, relating it to Thucydides.

Conclusion

Philhellenism in the antebellum era ignited American admiration for Greek history, literature, and government. As the slavery debate climbed to its zenith as well in the nineteenth century, Greek authors such as Plato and Homer were all roped into the dispute between the North and the South. This included the Greek historians Herodotus, Xenophon, and, of course, Thucydides. As we examined the receptions of Thucydides by DeBow, Keitt, Clay, Vigornius, and Sumner, there is a stark contrast between how Northerners and Southerners reference Thucydides within the slavery debate. DeBow, who advocated for Southern industrialization, praised the Athenians for their success with the help of slavery; Keitt similarly praised the Athenians for their success, but he emphasized the existence of an agrarian society. In Keitt's speech Thucydides takes the typical role of Xenophon in the context of agrarianism. The Southern abolitionist CM Clay of Kentucky expressed praise for Athenians as well, applauding their egalitarian spirit in warfare which induced courage among the citizens. However, the most significant finding in this chapter is certainly the abolitionists' use of Thucydides in his perception of Homeric piracy, for the argument itself traveled across continents in multiple instances. Receptors highlighted Thucydides' description of the prevalence of piracy in Homer.

Sumner goes further and ties Thucydides' passage on pirates directly to the scene where Telemachus arrives at Nestor's shore. Since all Americans deemed piracy immoral, clearly moral standards had changed, and, like piracy, slavery must be considered immoral.

Chapter II

Critique of Slavery through References to Helotage

Just as the 'piracy argument' in the American slavery debate originated from British abolitionists, arguments tied to helotage can also be traced to British sources. As we turn our attention to the Spartans and helots, it is valuable to note that the Spartans themselves left no meaningful archives of their civilization. Yet, we know that for "about half a millennium, between roughly the seventh and second centuries BCE, the citizens of ancient Sparta exploited a native unfree population, the helots."[94] The classification of the helots as 'state serfs' had largely gone unchallenged until David Lewis makes important new arguments by combining his analysis of the economic and cultural context in Spartan society with a thorough analysis of classical Greek texts in his 2018 volume.[95] Ultimately, he makes a convincing case, against the second-century writing of Pollux, that helotage held qualities that made it a slave system.

The following chapter will first give an overview of British appropriations of helotage in relation to modern slavery through the aforementioned article by Hodkinson and Hall. Their article shows that helotage has only been discussed in the context of the British slavery debate, without specific Thucydidean receptions. This will lead into the analysis of attitudes towards

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[94] Stephen Hodkinson and Edith Hall, "Appropriations of Spartan Helotage in British Anti‐Slavery Debates of the 1790s." In *Ancient Slavery and Abolition: From Hobbes to Hollywood*, by Alston, Richard, Edith Hall, and Justine McConnell, eds., edited by Richard Alston, Edith Hall, and Justine McConnell (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 65.

[95] David Lewis, *Greek Slave Systems in Their Eastern Mediterranean Context, c.800-146 BC*. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018), 125-146.

Sparta that were adopted in America. Both abolitionists and anti-abolitionists wove helotage into their writing, particularly around the time of Britain's abolition of slavery and the eve of the Civil War. It will be noticed that some receptions of helotage are closely tied to Plutarch or other modern historians of Greece. However, receptions with the inclusion of Thucydides are less studied, which this chapter is intended to tackle.

1. Helotage in the British Abolition Debate

With the Slave Trade Act in 1807, the Parliament of the United Kingdom prohibited the British Empire's involvement in the slave trade across the Atlantic within the same month as the Act Prohibiting Importation of Slaves that was enacted on March 2nd in the United States. The years before it was occupied by avid debates surrounding the economic, moral, intellectual, and political considerations regarding the cessation of the British slave trade, as the first parliamentary motion for the act took place in the House of Commons in 1791 but was ultimately defeated by vote.[96]

A turning point in British abolitionism came in 1787 when a committee of twelve known as "The London Committee" was established "following many years of Quaker agitation against slavery and the growth of popular anti-slavery feeling in the 1770s and 1780s."[97] The motion of 1791 would not have even been hearkened to if it had not been for the group composed of, amongst others, Thomas Clarkson, who was alluded to in Chapter One, and William Wilberforce, an abolitionist member of the Parliament.[98] While previous motions in the Commons proved unsuccessful, the discussions of slavery and the endeavors of the committee allowed for ancient

[96] Hodkinson, Stephen, and Edith Hall. "Appropriations of Spartan Helotage in British Anti‐Slavery Debates of the 1790s.", 65.
[97] Austen, Ralph A., and Woodruff D. Smith. "Images of Africa and British Slave-Trade Abolition: The Transition to an Imperialist Ideology, 1787-1807." African Historical Studies 2, no. 1 (1969): 69–83. https://doi.org/10.2307/216327., 70.
[98] Ibid.

slavery, Spartan helotage in particular, to be used to "inform and justify competing ideas and images about contemporary slavery circulating both in and beyond Parliament."[99] As Hodkinson further notes, references to Spartan helotage were "important in framing the early British parliamentary motions, between 1791 and 1796 for abolition of the slave trade."[100]

As demonstrated by Plato, Aristotle, and Critias, helotage as an institution was contentious even in classical times, when slavery itself wasn't considered so. Controversial receptions of Spartan helots continued in Britain. However, discussions remained marginal until the 1730s and 1740s when "the evolution of this bourgeois ideology of sympathy, sensibility, and humanity… radically affected perceptions of the helots," causing morally charged arguments regarding the cruelty of the Spartans to emerge. Since not many first-hand accounts of helots existed, many in Britain heavily relied upon Plutarch's *Life of Lycurgus* to draw evidence. Hodkinson and Hall's "Appropriations of Spartan Helotage in British Anti-Slavery Debates of the 1790s" summarizes interpretations of helotage in Britain and the nature in which both abolitionists and supporters of slavery wove Spartan receptions into their arguments.[101]

In the pro-slavery faction, two notable proponents were an anonymous author, the 'Detector,' and Richard Valpy, the Headmaster of Reading Grammar School. Both condemned helotage for its inhumane nature to demonstrate the leniency of modern slavery in comparison. The 'Detector' states that helots were "treated in the most barbarous manner, abused beyond the patience of men," and Valpy describes the helots of Sparta as being "reduced to so inhuman a servitude." Some abolitionists argued that the condoning of modern slavery was hypocritical considering the general British condemnation of Spartan helotage. In their arguments for slavery, Valpy and the 'Detector' contrive helotage as a heinous institution that was so far beyond the

[99] Hodkinson and Hall, "Appropriations of Spartan Helotage in British Anti‐Slavery Debates of the 1790s," 74.
[100] Ibid, 65.
[101] Hodkinson and Hall, "Appropriations of Spartan Helotage in British Anti‐Slavery Debates of the 1790s," 70, 74.

immoralities of modern slavery that it could not be compared to British enslavement of Africans and trade to the West Indies. While the 'Detector' referred to John Potter's *Archaelogica Graeca*, Valpy misrepresents the nature of the Spartan *krypteia* and multitude of helots in the battle of Plataea as a subterfuge for his pro-slavery agenda.[102]

Though abolitionists also held a negative view of Sparta's treatment of its helots, they "highlighted some aspects of helot conditions that they argued were actually superior to those under modern slavery." William Preston, the first Secretary of the Irish Academy, claims that the population of Spartan helots multiplied under their enslavement, an assertion not supported in any classical sources. A more moderate abolitionist, Sir Philip Francis, a Whig MP, attempted to win the support of both pro-slavery and abolitionist MPs for his proposal to improve the conditions of West Indian slaves by giving them plots of land. He stressed the barbarity of Spartan enslavement, but still noted that the Spartans gave property to helots, prompting them "to work harder for their masters and seek personal improvement but not liberty." Francis assured the supporters of slavery that helots remained under Spartan authority, while to the abolitionists he argued that property rights "were both real and effective in raising their status." Francis' claims that Spartans surrendered land to the helots is not backed by ancient texts but is likely based on the eighteenth-century notions that Spartans renounced private property.[103]

Overall, the discussion of helots "became a relevant point of reference in anti-slavery debates at (and only during) the time when popular passion and political controversy about abolition was at its height" from 1791-1796.[104] As evidenced by British parliamentary debates prior to the 1807 legislation, both abolitionists and anti-abolitionists appropriated Spartan helotage in support of their respective agendas. Although some accounts of helotage are not

[102] Ibid, 75-76, 78-79.
[103] Ibid, 79, 81-83.
[104] Ibid, 87.

validated by ancient texts, it is significant that helotage becomes an important part of abolitionist arguments when one would primarily expect anti-abolitionists to use helots to indicate the widespread nature of slavery in ancient Greece. The frequent references to helotage in the modern slavery debate was also reflected in antebellum America, to which our focus now turns.

2. Attitudes Towards Sparta and Helotage in Antebellum America

At the end of their article on helotage within the British anti-slavery debate, Hodkinson and Hall discuss a reception of Spartan helotage by David Walker, a black American who was the son of an enslaved father and free mother. Forcefully arguing that American slavery suffered by African Americans was the worst throughout history, he wrote, "the sufferings of the Helots among the Spartans, were somewhat severe, it is true, but to say that theirs were as severe as ours among the Americans, I do most strenuously deny."[105] Walker goes on to describe evocative images of the experiences of black slaves in America and explains that helots "stirred up an intestine commotion" making them prisoners of war almost deserving of enslavement.

Allusions to Sparta were prevalent in antebellum America even outside the slavery debate. As briefly mentioned in Chapters 1 and 2, Sparta's oligarchic form of government served as an alternative form of ancient Greek government for Americans to turn to, at one point even used to represent a more stable form of government than Athenian democracy. The North was generally unreceptive to, as they deemed it, Spartan "aristocracy," as they deemed it. While Southerners also preferred Athens to Sparta, there was much more internal deliberation in the South. Concerns surrounding the social chaos of mobocracy that comes with democracy dissuaded many from admiring Athens in full.

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[105] Ibid, 95.

As in Britain, in antebellum America overall sentiments toward Spartan helotage were very negative, as many saw the Lacedaemonians' treatment and alleged assassination of their helots as barbaric and cruel. After Nat Turner's rebellion in 1831 and Britain's abolition of slavery in 1833, discussions of helotage became more frequent and intense, much like Hodkinson describes how the rise of British Sparta references came at a time when passionate discourse and political controversy regarding slavery reached its culminating point.

As an example of Spartan helotage's place within Northern anti-slavery ideology, we examine an 1854 sermon by Joseph Parrish Thompson, pastor of the Broadway Tabernacle Church. The basis of his sermon was to convey God's disapproval of slavery, and in his first argument, he argues that human governments inevitably perpetuate wicked practices. Thompson contends that governments are driven by the temptation to commit injustice and act as a conscienceless machine.[106] After mentioning the Egyptians and Israelites, Thompson invokes the helots of Sparta, saying,

> In the Greek and Roman republics, with their boasted freedom, we find the helots of Sparta, the bondmen of Athens, and the human chattels of Rome, subjected to all manner of degradation, indignity, and outrage, deprived of every legal right…[107]

Here, the helots are grouped together with Roman and Athenian slaves and are falsely portrayed as having no rights. However, this does not take away from Thompson's intentions to use the helots of Sparta to demonstrate the brutality of the Spartan leaders who continued the institution of helotage.

Pro-slavery references to helots in the antebellum period were hardly seen until the 1850s. In the May 1853 issue of *De Bow's Review* an article "Negro Slavery an Element of

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[106] Joseph P. Thompson, *No Slavery in Nebraska: The Voice of God against National Crime* (New York, Ivison & Phinney, 1854), 13-14.
[107] Ibid.

Southern Strength" presents the very idea its title suggests. DeBow concedes that the Greeks did not enslave people based on race but maintains that slaves helped Greece reach its height.[108] Similarly, Sparta became one of the most powerful states due to the large slave population, as Peter Hunt validates the abundance of enslaved people.[109] DeBow writes:

> Notwithstanding the large number of Spartan slaves, and the long and cruel wars by which they were subjected, it does not appear that they ever became formidable to their oppressors except on one or two occasions. On the contrary, they greatly aided in the splendid triumphs of the Spartans – and so little were they dreaded, that they often accompanied their master in war.

DeBow clearly underplays the fear that the helots struck into the Spartans, for, according to Thucydides, the "prevention and suppression of helot risings obsessed the Spartans."[110] In 4.80.3 of *The Peloponnesian War*, Lattimore translates, "in their fear of the intransigence and numerical strength of the helots…"[111] Still, DeBow attempts to highlight the heights that helotage helped the Spartans reach as well as the domination the Spartans had over their enslaved population. He even mentions their contributions to the battle of Plataea which he had failed to do seven years prior as seen in Chapter 2. Therefore, DeBow expresses that slavery is in fact beneficial and is an advantage for the South.

As seen from the quotations from Thompson and DeBow above, Spartan helotage held a significant role in the American slavery debate, especially in the decade before the war broke out. However, it is also notable that these references to helotage, both American and British, derive from Plutarch, modern Greek historians, or unknown sources. Mention of helots in the American slavery debate is widespread, yet many misrepresentations exist. In addition, not much

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[108] De Bow's Review 14 (1853): 417-524.
[109] Hunt, *Greek Historians*, 14.
[110] Elizabeth Fox-Genovese and Eugene D. Genovese, T*he Mind of the Master Class: History and Faith in the Southern Slaveholders' Worldview* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005)*,* 285.
[111] Thucydides, and Steven Lattimore. 1998. *The Peloponnesian War*. Indianapolis: Hackett Pub. Co, 1998, 225; Original Greek Text: ἐπεὶ καὶ τόδε ἔπραξαν φοβούμενοι αὐτῶν τὴν σκαιότητα καὶ τὸ πλῆθος (αἰεὶ γὰρ τὰ πολλὰ Λακεδαιμονίοις πρὸς τοὺς Εἵλωτας τῆς φυλακῆς πέρι μάλιστα καθειστήκει)

has been written about American receptions of another Greek author who documented Spartan helotage, namely Thucydides, to whom we now turn our attention.

3. Clay's Attack on Slavery Based on Helotic Insurrection

It is notable that DeBow overlooks the threat that helots posed to the Spartans; Genovese notes that, generally in the South, "commentators said little about something they knew well: Most of Greece, including Athens, did not suffer from slave revolts, but Sparta faced constant danger from its helots."[112] Seeing that this was a point rarely brought up on the pro-slavery side, or was glossed over as DeBow did, abolitionists, particularly the aforementioned Cassius Marcellus Clay, were not afraid to capitalize on it.

Clay, who later would be a forceful supporter of Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation, delivered a speech in the Kentucky House of Representatives in January 1841 regarding the 1833 law that prohibited the importation of slaves to Kentucky for the purpose of selling them. In his speech, he fundamentally opposes slavery as it "saps the foundation of all liberty."[113] Clay continues his speech by disproving pro-slavery arguments for the "divine right of slavery" as well as its "constitutionality."[114] After conceding the presence of slavery of Egypt and attributing it to "the destruction of Babylon, and the utter ruin of the empire" to slavery, Clay then poses the following question regarding ancient slavery: "How came it that a cause so general produced effects so limited?" and further asserts that "the Roman and Grecian states were great in spite of slavery."[115] Clay refutes the argument that ancient Greece and Rome were great because of

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[112] Fox-Genovese and Genovese, *Master Class,* 285.
[113] Cassius Marcellus Clay, Greeley, Horace, Editor, "Speech Against Slave Importation," in *Writings of Cassius Marcellus Clay: Including Speeches and Addresses* (New York, Harper & Brothers, 1848), 59.
[114] Ibid, 62.
[115] Clay, "Speech Against Slave Importation," 61.

slavery as DeBow previously argued. Rather, they were able to overcome the vices of slavery to reach their heights.

Clay observes that whenever we hear of ancient slavery "it is mentioned only in connexion with the evils of its sufferance – the desolation that forever marks its progress."[116] To demonstrate these 'evils' and 'desolation' he draws upon accounts of the Spartans' treatments of helots, writing:

> Plutarch and Thucydides tell us that during the reign of Archidamus, an earthquake threw Mount Taygetus upon Sparta and destroyed it; their slaves, the Helots – those natural enemies of their masters – immediately rose up and set upon the Lacedaemonians, and this proud and war-like people were forced to call in their rivals, the Athenians, to protect them from "domestic violence." We may judge the prolonged and aggravated desolation of the war, when we learn that Ithome was besieged for ten years before it was taken.[117]

This event known as the third Messenian War in the late 460s BCE is recounted in sections 1.101 and 1.102 of Thucydides' *the Peloponnesian War*, section 17.2 in Plutarch's "*Cimon*", and section 28.6 of Plutarch's "*Lycurgus*". As accurately recalled by Clay, and as told by both Thucydides and Plutarch, the insurrection of Spartan helots came after an earthquake, ultimately leading them to flee to Ithome and join forces with the Messenians.[118] The war eventually resulted in the Lacedaemonians' appeal to Athens for help. Cimon led an expedition with his troops to provide assistance to the Spartans, though Plutarch also tells of a previous expedition in his "Life of Cimon," which scholars such as Robert Luginbill have cautiously accepted.[119] Still, we know from Thucydides that the Spartans' plea for help indicated their weakness against the helots and combined with the Spartans' dismissal of the Athenians, this instigated the first

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[116] Ibid.
[117] Ibid.
[118] Plutarch, "Life of Lycurgus," 2015 (*Penelope.Uchicago.Edu*.), http://penelope.uchicago.edu/Thayer/E/Roman/Texts/Plutarch/Lives/Lycurgus*.html, 28.6; Thucydides, *History of the Peloponnesian War,* 1.101-1.102
[119] Plutarch. "Life of Cimon," 2015 (*Penelope.Uchicago.Edu*), https://penelope.uchicago.edu/Thayer/e/roman/texts/plutarch/lives/cimon*.html., 16.6-17.2; Robert D. Luginbill, "CIMON AND ATHENIAN AID TO SPARTA: ONE EXPEDITION OR TWO?" in *Rheinisches Museum Für Philologie* 159, no. 2 (2016): 135–55. http://www.jstor.org/stable/26315588, 152.

quarrel among the two.[120] The last sentence of Clay's paragraph above is most certainly taken from Thucydides, as Thucydides writes, "The men in Ithome, unable to hold out any longer, in the tenth year reached an agreement with the Lacedaemonians by which they were to leave the Peloponnesos under truce and never set foot in it again; anyone caught there would be the slave of his captor."[121] Clay warns his audience of the social upheaval that may arise as a result of slavery, cautioning them against the chaos and evils associated with Spartan helotage.

In the very next paragraph of his speech, Clay highlights the moral consequences that derived from the perpetuation of helotage. He writes:

> The effects of slavery upon the moral sensibilities of that people may be learned from the bloody "Kryptia," under which law two thousand slaves were massacred in a single night. Of course, the perpetrators of the deed escaped all inquiry or punishment, the whole community winking at the crime.[122]

The passage above describes the Spartans' alleged brutal assassination of two thousand of the best fighters among the helots after they had expected to be granted their freedom. Through the passage, Clay illustrates the effect that slavery has on human morality to the point that the Spartan 'Kryptia' would deem it fitting to assassinate two thousand helots at once, an act that was even too barbaric for the most outrageous slaveholders in the South. This was the event that, as mentioned before, sullied Spartan slavery in the eyes of Americans. Even more outrageous was that "the perpetrators of the deed escaped all inquiry and punishment," as no one in Sparta held them accountable for their barbarous deed.

Although both Thucydides and Plutarch write about this event, it is likely that Clay's reception is more closely tied with Plutarch's account in his "Lycurgus," since Plutarch assigns blame of this event on the *krypteia.* Even so, Thucydides' work is referenced through Plutarch,

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[120] Thucydides, *History of the Peloponnesian War,* 1.102.
[121] Thucydides, and Steven Lattimore. 1998. *The Peloponnesian War*, 50.
[122] Clay, "Speech Against Slave Importation," 61.

as Plutarch cites Thucydides in his text. Thucydides himself never associates the *krypteia* with the slaughter of the two thousand helots, as confirmed by Jean Ducat through Borimir Jordan.[123] The exact categorization of the *krypteia* is often debated, but viewpoints by scholars span from "elite guerrilla soldiers used to keep the helots in line" to Plutarch and Aristotle's description of them as a secret service of young warriors "equipped only with daggers and such supplies as were necessary."[124] Regardless, one of their purposes was to "demean" the helots and kill them if necessary.[125] While Plutarch's account of the massacre ascribes the act to the *krypteia*, Thucydides' account appeared as follows:

> καὶ προκρίναντες ἐς δισχιλίους, οἱ μὲν ἐστεφανώσαντό τε καὶ τὰ ἱερὰ περιῆλθον ὡς ἠλευθερωμένοι, οἱ δὲ οὐ πολλῷ ὕστερον ἠφάνισάν τε αὐτοὺς καὶ οὐδεὶς ᾔσθετο ὅτῳ τρόπῳ ἕκαστος διεφθάρη.[126]
>
> And with the selection of about two thousand, these put on garlands and went around the temples thinking that they had been freed; but the Lacedaemonians soon after did away with them, and no one knew how each was murdered.

In the passage above, not only is there ambiguity in how the slaughter was performed, but who it was performed by. This needs further scholarly discussion, which goes beyond the scope of this paper.

Clay's receptions of the helots and the Spartan *krypteia* are closely tied to both Thucydides and Plutarch. He employs the insurrection of the helots as an example of the potential dangers of slavery to social stability, which was particularly pertinent as Clay's speech came 10 years after the Nat Turner rebellion. Furthermore, Clay's allusion to the *krypteia's* involvement in the slaughter of two thousand helots manifests the skewed moral standards of the

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[123] Jordan Borimir, "The Ceremony of the Helots in Thucydides IV 80," In: *L'antiquité classique*, Tome 59, 1990. pp. 37-69., 64.
[124] Brandon D. Ross, "Krypteia: A Form of Ancient Guerrilla Warfare," Grand Valley Journal of History: Vol. 1: Is. 2, Article 4 (2012), 1; Plutarch. "Life of Lycurgus," 28.2
[125] Falkner, Caroline, Review of *Sparta*, by S. Hodkinson, A. Powell, J. Ducat, Emma Stafford, P.-J. Shaw, and Anton Powell in *The Classical Review* 59, no. 1 (2009): 190–93, http://www.jstor.org/stable/20482721, 192
[126] Thucydides, *History of the Peloponnesian War,* 4.80.4.

Spartans as induced by helotage. Since the Spartan's treatment of the helots was unanimously condemned by Americans, other abolitionists appropriated helotage in a similar fashion, albeit not as precisely as Clay.

4. Gurowski Attributes the Fall of Greece to Slavery

In contrast to Clay, Adam Gurowski appeared to be more radical in his abolitionism, perhaps because of his widely known temperamental demeanor and "eccentric appearance."[127] Originally from Poland, Gurowski emigrated to the United States in 1849. Upon his arrival to America, Gurowski eventually came to instill fear in Lincoln, who said, "so far as my personal safety is concerned, Gurowski is the only man who has given me a serious thought of a personal nature."[128] To Lincoln, Gurowski was "the prototype of the Radicals, the extremist anti-administration wing of the Republican Party," and, according to Lincoln, held antidemocratic values.[129] When it came to the issue of slavery, Lincoln and his moderate Conservatives held the restoration of the nation as their main objective, believing that emancipation was only a small part of a larger problem. On the other hand, Gurowski and his Radicals called for the immediate destruction of the institution.

Gurowski shows his passion for the subject in his 250 page volume *Slavery in History* published in 1860, where he refutes the argument made by supporters of slavery that "domestic slavery has always been a constructive social element."[130] Instead, he contends that history shows "that it has always been destructive" and has been "the most corroding social disease."[131] Gurowski's volume gave one of the most comprehensive and thorough historical overviews of

[127] Fischer, LeRoy H. "Lincoln's Gadfly--Adam Gurowski." *The Mississippi Valley Historical Review* 36, no. 3 (1949): 415–34. https://doi.org/10.2307/1893015., 415.
[128] Ibid.
[129] Ibid, 419, 434
[130] Gurowski Adam. *Slavery in History*. New York, 1860. A.B. Burdick., viii.
[131] Ibid.

slavery to date at the time. He weaves chapters regarding slavery in Egypt, Libya, Carthage, China, Greece, Italy, France, and Germany among others into a book, all of which highlight the destructive nature of slavery.

In his chapter on the Greeks, Gurowski laments over the rise of slavery after the Persian War given the accumulated wealth and military power of Athens. In a sense, Gurowski uses the same argument as Clay in Chapter 2, saying "on the eve of the Peloponnesian war, democracy still prevailed," as the democracy of Athens "composed of artists, yeoman, operatives, artisans" overshadowed oligarchic slave holders and characterized the Periclean epoch.[132] Reiterating the growth of slavery in Athens, Gurowski writes:

> At the beginning of the Peloponnesian war… The whole free population of Greece is estimated to have been at that time about eight hundred thousand souls; and the slaves– the Spartan serfs or Helots included– perhaps outnumbered the freemen. Thucydides says that the island of Chios had about two hundred and ten thousand slaves, the largest number next to Sparta; then came Athens, with nearly two hundred thousand human chattels; while other great commercial cities of Greece, as Sycyon [sic] and Corinth, likewise contained very large numbers.[133]

When checked against the Greek of Thucydides, it is true that "οἱ γὰρ οἰκέται τοῖς Χίοις πολλοὶ ὄντες καὶ μιᾷ γε πόλει πλὴν Λακεδαιμονίων πλεῖστοι γενόμενοι" or "For the slaves of the Chians, who were numerous and in fact the most numerous for any single city except that of the Lacedaemonians…"[134] However, the sources of Gurowski's numbers are unknown, for they are not validated by Thucydides or other ancient authors.

Gurowski continues that the Peloponnesian War caused destruction across Greece, ramping up the number of captives into slavery to the point where it doubled between the Periclean era and the Macedonian War.[135] As a whole, Greek slavery was perpetuated until the

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[132] Ibid, 117.
[133] Ibid, 118.
[134] Thucydides, *History of the Peloponnesian War,* 8.40.2.
[135] Gurowski, *Slavery in History*, 118.

end of the "independent political existence of Greece and Athens."[136] Domestic slavery, in particular, began in Athens, but "it was only during the period of the moral, social and political decomposition of Greece that slavery flourished."[137] Gurowski maintains that "domestic slavery enervated the nation and made it an easy prey to foreign conquest," and after drawing parallels between Greek and American slavery such as slave marts, he cautions Americans against falling into the same shortcomings.

Though Gurowski only briefly refers to the Spartan helots and focuses less on the treatment of slaves as opposed to their multitude, he still appropriates Thucydides and helots to highlight the pervasiveness of slavery. Gurowski is able to align this prevalence of slavery with the downfall of Greece to show the ramifications of such an evil institution. As he attributes the fall of Greece to slavery, it is reminiscent of Clay holding slavery responsible for the fall of Babylon and serves as a broad rebuttal to DeBow blaming the fall of Athens to 'rapacity' rather than slavery in Chapter 2.

5. Blake's Discloses the Evils of Helotage

William O. Blake, much like Gurowski, brings up Thucydides in the context of estimating the number of helots in Sparta. In his chapter "The Helots," he writes "their number is uncertain, but Thucydides says that it was greater than that of the slaves in any other Grecian state. It has been variously estimated, at from 320,000 to 800,000. They several times rose against their masters, but were finally reduced." The above reception comes slightly unconventionally, as it appears in Blake's massive 860-page volume titled *The History of Slavery and the Slave Trade, Ancient and Modern*, which was compiled from authentic and reliable

[136] Ibid, 120.
[137] Ibid.

materials. Furthermore, he described his volume as an objective "book of reference." Blake is not historically well known, but his volume is still significant to understanding the debate over abolition in the antebellum period.[138]

Although the publishers proclaimed his volume "a book of reference," hints of Blake's abolitionist ideology inevitably shone through. The publishers in the preface even explicitly state about slavery, "it is strange that a system which pervaded and weakened, if it did not ruin, the republics of Greece and the empire of the Caesars, should not be more frequently noticed by historical writers."[139] As slavery was not frequently unmasked for its detrimental effects in a historical sense, Blake intended to bring these crimes to light through a historical analysis of Greek and Roman slavery, and religion, in conjunction with the modern African slave trade.

In his reference to Thucydides above, Blake likely draws from the same passage that Gurowski did in Book 8 Chapter 40 of *the Peloponnesian War* that indicates Sparta being the only city that surpassed Chios in the number of slaves. Blake proceeds to give a detailed description of the peculiar traits of the Spartans to give a better sense of the very people that enslaved the helots. For example, Blake portrays the Spartans as possessing "severity, resolution and perseverance," and a people who bathed their infants in wine, and whose boys took pride in having bruises and wounds. Thereafter, it is worth noting that Blake only portrays the Spartans' treatment of helots in a negative light. The topic of private property granted to the helots, which British abolitionists even previously praised, Blake reports, "as the Spartans possessed estates, which personally they never cultivated, the helots were stationed throughout the country upon these estates, which it was their business to till for the owners." Compared to his British predecessors, Blake much more clearly depicts the demeaning conditions of the helots. Even

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[138] W.O. Blake, Compiler. *History of Slavery and the Slave Trade, Ancient and Modern*. Columbus, OH, H. Miller, 1860, xv, 39.
[139] Ibid.

when discussing instances of helots gaining wealth, Blake counters, "of what value is property to a man who is himself the property of another?" Even with wealth and property, the helots were helplessly subject to the Spartans.[140]

Their conditions worsen as "every year, on taking office, the magistrates formally declared war against their unarmed and unhappy slaves." Blake even mentions the "constant source of terror" the helots were to their "masters," that "whenever occasion offered they revolted, – whenever an enemy to the state appeared, they joined him, – that they fled whenever flight was possible." The helots' conditions were so inhuman and unbearable that they pounced on every opportunity to undermine their enslavers.[141]

Thucydides clearly does not play a big role in Blake's exposing of Spartan helotage. The chapter that we focused on draws from descriptions from Thucydides as well as Plutarch's *Moralia*, surely tied to ancient texts. Still, much like Clay and Gurowski, Blake's description of the helots shed light on the most heinous aspects of the institution that eventually lead to societal upheaval and destruction, exactly the objective of his volume. The same approach and tactic are taken by the abolition in the next section.

6. Cheever on Grote in *The Guilt of Slavery and the Crime of Slaveholding*

As opposed to our previous three abolitionists who directly refer to Thucydides, Rev. George B. Cheever refers to Thucydides' account of the helots through George Grote's *History of Greece.* Cheever, a leader among Christian abolitionists, was known for his works *God against Slavery: and the Freedom and the Duty of the Pulpit to rebuke it, as a Sin against God* and *The Guilt of Slavery and the Crime of Slaveholding, demonstrated from the Hebrew and*

[140] Ibid, 40, 42.
[141] Ibid.

Greek Scriptures. Prior to these publications, in 1846 his work was famously criticized by renowned poet and slavery proponent Edgar Allen Poe, who said, "He is much better known, however, as the editor of 'The Commonplace Book of American Poetry,' a work which has at least the merit of not belying its title, and is exceedingly commonplace."[142] Though the quote was not in reference to his abolitionist works, such degradation confirms the tension that formed between Cheever and advocates of slavery.

In the preface of his 1860 forty-chapter volume *The Guilt of Slavery and the Crime of Slaveholding, demonstrated from the Hebrew and Greek Scriptures*, Cheever accentuates how the tyranny of slavery has suppressed not only the enslaved, but also white abolitionists. He was inspired to complete this book and marshal biblical arguments against slavery "out of the intolerable pressure of the accusation that the Old Testament sanctioned slavery."[143] A more elaborate overview of Cheever's religious arguments will be given in the next chapter, but now we turn our attention to Chapter XVIII, "Judgement of God against Slavery in Egypt," where Cheever cites God's criticism of Egyptian slavery that would have eventually turned into helotage if it had continued.

Cheever inserts a section where he summarizes Volume II of Grote's *History of Greece* describing the conditions helots had to endure. However, when looking at Grote's relatively objective original text, it is apparent that Cheever exaggerates and seemingly misrepresents some of the English historian's information, weaving in his own biases. Thus, it is peculiar that Cheever disconnects such a section from his own original writing, even using a different font size on the page, perhaps hoping readers more closely associate the section with Grote's own

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[142] "Edgar Allan Poe and Literary Criticism (U.S. National Park Service)." Accessed January 25, 2022. https://www.nps.gov/articles/poe-literarycritic.htm.

[143] George B. Cheever, *Guilt of Slavery and the Crime of Slaveholding, Demonstrated from the Hebrew and Greek Scriptures* (New York, s.n, 1860), iv.

writing. Cheever writes that helots were "beaten, down-trodden, put to death without punishment of their murderers, yet belonging not so much to the master as to the state," no of which except for the last part Grote mentions.[144]

However, consistency among the authors becomes evident when describing the Spartans' fear of a helotic revolt and insurrection. Cheever directly quotes Grote, describing how the Spartans escalated their cruelty toward the helots and began "to practice combinations of cunning and atrocity which even yet stand without parallel in the long list of precautions for fortifying unjust dominion," which Cheever draws parallels with the Egyptians' policies to the Hebrews.[145] Like Grote, Cheever highlights the cruelty involved in helotage. Cheever states, "on the authority of Thucydides we learn that on one occasion two thousand of the bravest among the helots were entrapped by promises of liberty, and assassinated at once."[146] Likewise, Grote recounts the event and says, "for this dark and bloody deed, Thucydides is our witness."[147] Unlike Clay who, drawing from Plutarch, ascribes the disappearance of the helots to the *krypteia*, Grote cites Thucydides directly as his source without mentioning the Spartan institution.

Both Cheever and Grote add that the helots were beaten annually to keep their minds in servitude and that the helots that were particularly superior were put to death.[148] It is in this dark context that both Cheever and Grote refer to Thucydides. Much like Clay as discussed in the previous chapter, Cheever questions how long it will be until Americans resort to "similar assassinations" in fear of servile insurrection.[149] Cheever uses this section, especially the chilling assassination told by Thucydides, to demonstrate the gruesomeness of Ancient Greek helotage in

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[144] Ibid, 192.
[145] Ibid.; Grote, George. *History of Greece*. Reprinted from the Second London Edition. Vol. II. (Boston: John P. Jewett and Company, 1852), 376.
[146] Cheever, *Guilt of Slavery*, 192.
[147] Grote, *History of Greece*, 377; καὶ προκρίναντες ἐς δισχιλίους, οἱ μὲν ἐστεφανώσαντό τε καὶ τὰ ἱερὰ περιῆλθον ὡς ἠλευθερωμένοι, οἱ δὲ οὐ πολλῷ ὕστερον ἠφάνισάν τε αὐτοὺς καὶ οὐδεὶς ἤσθετο ὅτῳ τρόπῳ ἕκαστος διεφθάρη.
[148] Cheever, *Guilt of Slavery*, 193.; Grote, *History of Greece*, 379.
[149] Cheever, *Guilt of Slavery*, 193.

relation to the slavery of Egypt. He comments that the Egyptians were moving in the direction of helotism, yet "still at a great remove from the dehumanizing cruelty of American slavery."[150] If American slavery continues along the same track, it will, as Cheever believes, bring about the same horrors as Thucydides describes.

While Cheever does not accurately represent Grote's section on the helots, in his own writing he is able to illustrate the cruelty of helotism. In turn, as he admits that Egyptian enslavement over the Hebrews is already condemned by God, he portrays helotism as the most extreme and sinful example of enslavement which therefore must have been even more immoral. Combined with his speech, if Americans do not quickly abandon the institution the country will find itself in a society similar to the helots defenseless to God's punishments. Like most of the abolitionists we have examined, Cheever appropriates Thucydides and the helots to highlight the bloody and gruesome essence of Ancient Greek and Egyptian slavery, cautioning Americans against the same.

Conclusion

As we have analyzed the appropriations of Spartan helotage from late eighteenth-century Britain to antebellum America, it is clear that the enslaved peoples of Lacedaemon are quite meaningful to the slavery debate. Receptors in both countries are observed to draw upon Plutarch's "Lycurgus" and "Cimon" as references. Receptions vary in severity, from references to Spartans humiliating helots by forcing them to drink to the assassination of over two thousand of the bravest helots, but general sentiments surrounding helotage on both sides of the debate were overwhelmingly negative. As Hodkinson's article shows, the British took a comparative approach in their appropriations, with advocates of slavery justifying modern slavery as being

[150] Ibid, 192.

more lenient and abolitionists observing certain privileges helots may have had that are not granted in the modern institution.

This comparative approach is less seen in America. The 1830s and 1850s marked the turning points of American abolition, and, as seen in receptions by Thompson and DeBow, helotage became an important part of that debate. Abolitionists stressed the cruelty of helotage and its potential instigation of social destruction, while proponents of slavery emphasized its integral place in Spartan society. However, arguments that involve Thucydides are dominated by abolitionists. In proslavery appropriations of helotage there is hardly one that mentions Thucydides, who in *the Peloponnesian War* portrays the grim nature not just of helotage and slavery, but of war and mankind as a whole. As a result, the societal upheaval caused and barbarous treatment suffered by the helots were elements the pro-slavery advocates avoided while abolitionists focused on precisely these aspects of helotage. In Clay's reception of Thucydides, we see Thucydides mentioned in conjunction with Plutarch as they both discussed the insurrection and slaughter of the helots. Meanwhile, both Gurowski and Blake invoke Thucydides in demonstrating the multitude of helots in Sparta and slaves in Greece as a whole. Overall, abolitionists emphasized the barbaric treatment the helots suffered at the hands of the Spartans and highlighted the corrosive effect helotage had on Laconian and Messenian society.

Chapter III

Thucydides Receptions in Support of Biblical Arguments

Religion, particularly the many denominations of Christianity, was an inescapable part of nineteenth-century American society. In the wake of the Second Great Awakening, one would be hard-pressed to find a debate that did not go through the Church, as God and the Bible were the

primary sources of moral standards. While "Christians had always possessed a love-hate relationship with the classics" due to questions about classical morality, Richard notes that some in the antebellum era believed that the nation must "combine Christian piety with classical republicanism."[151] Some ministers like George Cheever, contrasted the materialism they observed in society "with the spiritual elevation of classicism."[152] As the issue of slavery came to the forefront of the public's mind, it was inevitable that both abolitionists and defendants of slavery turned to scripture to buttress their arguments. Scholars such as Eugene and Elizabeth Genovese as well as Albert Harrill have studied the role that religion played in the slavery debate.[153] Some such as Emily Greenwood and Sara Monoson, have examined the significance of classical receptions in this context, but the intersections of these two strands within the slavery debate is seldom discussed.[154] A rare example that does so is Brycchan Carey's "Classical Influences on Eighteenth-Century Abolitionist Poetry," yet it does so in the context of the British debate on slavery.[155]

A review of the sources discussed in this chapter shows that some receptions of Thucydides related to themes discussed in previous chapters: the prevalence of slavery, piracy, and Spartan helots in ancient Greece. Still, one area stands out in this context: the focus on

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[151] Carl J. Richard, *The Golden Age of the Classics in America: Greece, Rome, and the Antebellum United States* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2009), 152-180.
[152] Caroline Winterer, *The Culture of Classicism: Ancient Greece and Rome in American Intellectual Life, 1780-1910*. Baltimore (The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2004), 69.
[153] Eugene D. Genovese and Elizabeth Fox-Genovese. "The Religious Ideals of Southern Slave Society." in *The Georgia Historical Quarterly* 70, no. 1 (1986): 1–16.; Albert J. Harrill, "The Use of the New Testament in the American Slave Controversy: A Case History in the Hermeneutical Tension between Biblical Criticism and Christian Moral Debate." in *Religion and American Culture: A Journal of Interpretation* 10, no. 2 (2000).
[154] Sara Monoson, "Recollecting Aristotle: Pro-Slavery Thought in Antebellum America and the Argument of Politics Book I." In *Ancient Slavery and Abolition: From Hobbes to Hollywood*, by Alston, Richard, Edith Hall, and Justine McConnell, eds., edited by Richard Alston, Edith Hall, and Justine McConnell. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011).
[155] Brycchan Carey, "A Stronger Muse: Classical Influences on Eighteenth-Century Abolitionist Poetry." In Ancient Slavery and Abolition: From Hobbes to Hollywood, by Alston, Richard, Edith Hall, and Justine McConnell, eds., edited by Richard Alston, Edith Hall, and Justine McConnell. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011. Oxford Scholarship Online, 2011. doi: 10.1093/acprof:oso/9780199574674.003.0005.

specific meanings of Greek terms relating to slavery. Such philological debates prefigure recent scholarly debates and insights as discussed by David Lewis and Peter Hunt among others. Lewis asserts that terms such as δοῦλος and δουλεία, typically taken to mean 'slave' and 'slavery,' and their iterations were often used metaphorically, taking the "element of domination inherent in the relationship of legal slavery" and applying it to the "political sphere."[156] Hunt bolsters Lewis' argument by acknowledging this "metaphorical slavery" describes "unequal relations" beyond those between "slave and master.."[157] Though some instances of these political inequities would result in slavery, it is important to draw clear distinctions regarding polysemic words concerning slavery. In this chapter, we will again conduct an analysis of literature from both abolitionists Albert Barnes and George Cheever and slavery advocates John Fletcher and George Sawyer; we will discuss both their misrepresentations of Thucydides in philological components of theological arguments and show how our four antebellum writers use Thucydides' ancient text to promote their modern agendas.

1. Albert Barnes' Historical and Philological Critique of Slavery

Like Vigornius (mentioned in Chapter 1), Albert Barnes, an abolitionist, and the Pastor of the First Presbyterian Church in Philadelphia, evaded the question "whether slavery is a *malum in se*," or "that which is in itself sin," as he says. Barnes holds that "it is not necessary to engage in the inquiry whether slavery is *malum in se*;" rather, he argues his views on the basis of scripture, which he considers "to be the most important department of the general arguments respecting slavery."[158] He observes that many people, both Southerners and Northerners alike,

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[156] David Lewis, *Greek Slave Systems in Their Eastern Mediterranean Context, c.800-146 BC*. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018), 62.
[157] Peter Hunt, *Slaves, Warfare, and Ideology In the Greek Historians* (Cambridge University Press, 1998), 128-129.
[158] Albert Barnes, *Inquiry into the Scriptural Views of Slavery* (Philadelphia, Perkins & Purves, 1846), 6, 56.

have used the Bible as a justification for American slavery. Barnes concurs that the Bible should play a significant role on the subject of slavery since it was the standard of morals in the United States.

Barnes addresses biblical arguments made by advocates of slavery in his 1846 book titled *Inquiry into the Scriptural Views of Slavery*. The volume comprises 384 pages in seven chapters. The first two chapters respectively clarify questions about "Why the Appeal on This Subject Should Be made to the Bible" and "What Constitutes Slavery". In the following chapters, he uses scripture to examine slavery in Egypt, the Hebrew Commonwealth, and in relation to Mosaic Institutions. Barnes appeared to have had more moderate views compared to Vigornius, as he acknowledged that "slavery, though a great evil, is not the only [evil] in the land," more precisely, the United States. Consequently, he expressed his reluctance to preach about matters of slavery since it was not prominent in Philadelphia. Still, he clarifies that "the spirit of the Bible is against slavery" pointing to the twenty years he had spent studying exclusively the Bible up to this point. Simply put, he perceives slavery as a national evil that does not align with virtues defined in the Bible.[159]

As Barnes notes in Chapter V, the biblical argument that advocates of slavery used the most explains that slavery was present of Mosaic institutions. As these anti-abolitionists saw it, the existence of such a practice in scripture demonstrates the lawfulness of slavery.[160] At the outset of his discussion, he challenges the views of his opponents with the following questions:

> But how can there be any force in it, unless it be shown that Moses was at heart the friend of slavery as a permanent institution, and that his laws on the subject, if applied now, would sustain and perpetuate the institution as it exists among us?[161]

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[159] Ibid, 7, 8.
[160] Ibid, 105
[161] Ibid, 106

Barnes divided the chapter into three sections. It begins with an elaboration of the argument as it relates to Mosaic institutions and its regulations regarding servitude; this is followed by a comparison of slavery in the United States with that which was found in Mosaic institutions.

Barnes does not deny slavery existed, but maintains that it predated Moses, asserting "that slavery had an existence when Moses undertook the task of legislating for the Hebrews."[162] As he alludes to slavery and slave trafficking in Egypt, Barnes further admits, "it was undoubtedly practised by all the surrounding nations, for history does not point us to a time when slavery did not exist."[163] In order to demonstrate the prevalence of slavery in the ancient world, Barnes invokes Book 5 of Thucydides' *the Peloponnesian War*. Here, in chapter 105 of the "Melian Dialogue," Thucydides actually refers to a quote from the Athenians conveying political slavery induced by war, "We consider it to be of divine appointment, and conformable to reason, that one who has subdued another should have dominion – οὗ ἂν κρατῇ, ἄρχειν."[164] It is unknown where Barnes' draws his translation, but a more fitting translation is given by Finley, "our opinion of the gods and our knowledge of men lead us to conclude that it is a general and necessary law of nature to rule whatever one can."[165] While no forms of δοῦλος or δουλεία appear, Barnes, in this passage, equates the legal enslavement of chattel slaves with Lewis' idea of slavery in a political context as used by Thucydides, glossing over the necessary distinction for the purpose of his argument.[166] Barnes uses this quote to show that everyone in the past had slavery, including those not directly in the Judeo-Christian world. Nonetheless, Barnes claims that, the form of slavery Moses saw was a continuation of past generations. Barnes argues "that

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[162] Ibid, 112
[163] Ibid.
[164] Ibid.
[165] Thucydides. *History of the Peloponnesian War*. Translated by Rex Warner. Penguin Classics (London, England: Penguin Classics, 1963), 226.
[166] Lewis, *Greek Slave Systems*, 62.

the institution was already in existence, and that Moses did not originate it."[167] In addition, he gives us a sense of the unlawfulness involved in the institution by saying, "Moses found servitude in existence, just as he did polygamy and the custom of divorce."[168] Thus, it cannot be inferred that Moses himself would have created and perpetuated slavery among the Hebrew population. As such, Barnes uses Thucydides to support his argument that there is no evidence that Moses supported slavery, so the mere existence of slavery is not sufficient to justify the practice.

Another element that Barnes contributes to the slavery debate is the philological dispute regarding the meaning of the Greek term δοῦλος, which most took to mean 'slave'. While Barnes does not mention Thucydides in this context, his argument that δοῦλος instead meant a servant by contact or captive of war drew a rebuttal with extensive references to Thucydides by John Fletcher, as discussed in the next section. Barnes informs us that "the word doulos" is "frequently used in the New Testament, being found one hundred and twenty-two times."[169] In addition, the word οἰκέτης "occurs four times, in three places rendered *servant* – and in one *household servant*."[170] However, Barnes points out that the word ἀνδράποδον — andrapodon, "which peculiarly denotes slavery, does not occur at all."[171] In fact, David Lewis would agree with Barnes' assessment of ἀνδράποδον. Lewis mentions one passage in Thucydides when the Athenians captured Eion and Scyrus and a form of the term conjugated in the aorist third person plural (ἠνδραπόδισαν) is used. The Athenians sell "their inhabitants into slavery (ἠνδραπόδισαν), but politically subjected (ἐδουλώθη) Naxos."[172] "ἠνδραπόδισαν" is similarly translated as

[167] Barnes, *Scriptural Views of Slavery*, 113.
[168] Ibid.
[169] Ibid, 66
[170] Ibid.
[171] Ibid, 67
[172] Lewis, *Greek Slave Systems*, 62.

"enslaved the inhabitants" in Steven Lattimore's translation of Thucydides.[173] The word, which literally means human-legged, derives from the Greek term τετράποδον, meaning four-footed and typically used to describe beasts of burden. To distinguish all the Greek terms linked to slavery and servitude, Barnes draws the following distinctions:

> To serve in general, without reference to the manner in which the obligation to service originated, whether by purchase, by contract, by being made a captive in war, as a subject, a dependent, they expressed by the word δουλεύω-douleuō*;* to serve as a soldier for reward, or to serve the gods, they expressed by the word λατρεύω-*latreuō*; to serve as a domestic or household servant, under whatever manner the obligation arose; they expressed by the word οἰκετεύω-*oiketeuō;* 'to serve in the capacity of a hired man, or for *pay* in any capacity, they expressed by the word μισζόω-misthoō*;* to serve in the capacity of an attendant or waiter, especially at a door, they expressed by the word ὑπακούω-hypakouō. The proper word to denote a slave, with reference to the master's right of property in him, and without regard to the relations and offices in which he was employed, was *not δοῦλος-doulos,* but *ἀνδράποδον-andrapodon*, 'a slave, servant, especially one who as a prisoner of war is reduced to bondage.'[174]

As provided by Barnes, these distinctions support his side of the debate as they show the usage of the word δοῦλος in the New Testament. Thus, the word cannot be assumed to denote "slave". He recognizes, "that the word is most commonly applied to slaves in the classic writers, and frequently in the New Testament," but the mere use of the word does not indicate that they were held as property.[175] The same holds true for terms such as οἰκέτης. Later, in Chapter VII, Barnes compares δοῦλος to the English word "servant," asserting that it can be applied to "anyone who was engaged in the service of another."[176] Accordingly, again, we cannot suppose that it was applied to slaves, for any lapse in understanding may cause practices that stray away from biblical values.

Barnes begins the philological debate about the meaning of Greek words relating to slavery in the Bible and Thucydides. He distinguishes between the uses of several terms,

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[173] Thucydides, and Steven Lattimore. 1998. *The Peloponnesian War* (Indianapolis: Hackett Pub. Co, 1998), 48.
[174] Barnes, *Scriptural Views of Slavery*, 64-65.
[175] Ibid, 65
[176] Ibid, 322

ultimately reaching the conclusion that δοῦλος cannot be inferred to mean 'slave' in the modern sense of the word. In his understanding of Thucydides, Barnes neglects to recognize Thucydides' allusion to slavery in the metaphorical sense for the purpose of showing the widespread nature of slavery in the ancient world and in turn the existence of legal slavery before Moses.

2. John Fletcher's Critique of Barnes and Philological Defense of Slavery

In his 1852 volume *Studies on Slavery: In Easy Lessons,* John Fletcher of Louisiana defends the institution of slavery in the South at the height of the slavery debate in the mid-nineteenth century. Part of his argument directly responds to the philological arguments raised by Barnes in his discussion of the terms δοῦλος and οἰκέτης. In his quest to support the cause of Southern slavery, he draws upon sources from various civilizations in ancient history as well as his own exegesis of biblical passages in eight extensive chapters. Though not much is known about the author, the publisher states in his preface that he has "the double advantage of a full comprehension of the subject both in its Northern and Southern aspect."[177] As Fletcher was born and educated in the North and then lived in the South, the publisher implies that he must have a double advantage concerning the topic, having been able to see the "teachings", "arguments", "justifications", and "the religious and political sanctions" on both sides.[178] In conjunction with his broader perspective on slavery, as we are told, he employs his proficiency in ancient languages to read the original text, brandishing his superior scholarship. Hence, not only should the readers hold Fletcher in high regard for his academic studies but also for his ability to interpret both ancient texts and the "specific meaning of God's holy… standard and rule of life

[177] John Fletcher, *Studies on Slavery, in Easy Lessons: Compiled into Eight Studies, and Subdivided into Short Lessons for the Convenience of Readers* (Natchez, Jackson Warner, 1852), iii.
[178] Ibid, iii-iv.

and action."[179] This is exactly the stance that George Sawyer, a proponent of slavery in the South and member of the bar of Louisiana, takes in his 1859 volume *Southern Institutes; or, an Inquiry into the Origin and Early Prevalence of Slavery and the Slave-Trade,* which will be discussed in the next section, in reference to Fletcher's massive 637-page volume consisting of eight main studies and correspondingly subdivided up into lessons.

Before turning to his study of Thucydides and the analysis of lexical components of his texts, Fletcher responds to arguments for the abolition of slavery on the basis of scripture and moral philosophy. In his lessons throughout Study I, Fletcher reviews Biblical passages referring to slavery in order to oppose the abolitionist teachings of Francis Wayland, at the time President of Brown University and a Professor of Moral Philosophy. Both parties concur that "moral laws of God can never be varied by the institutions of man, any more than physical laws," as stated in Wayland's *The Elements of Moral Science*. However, while Wayland consistently argues that the principles of slavery are at variance with the ordinances of God, Fletcher attempts to refute his arguments by claiming that "slavery brings hundreds of thousands of negroes into a condition whereby" they will then be enlightened by the teachings of scripture. Fletcher pointedly notes that "it is conceded by Dr. Wayland, that Scriptures do not directly forbid or condemn slavery", but only preach moral principles that are incompatible with slavery. In one instance, Fletcher notes Abraham following his covenant with God in Genesis 15, received "'male and female slaves' some of whom were 'in his house,' and some 'bought with his money.'" Fletcher then proceeds to infer implications for slavery based on Genesis 18, "For I know him, that he will command his children and *his household* after him." As he sees it, scholars will concede the facts that 'his household' is a term by which slaves are particularly included. This example is

[179] Ibid, iv.

reflective of Fletcher's manner of reasoning throughout the volume. He presents an idea that is likely beyond his readers' knowledge base to fully grasp to make his points.[180]

Bruce Dickinson notes that Fletcher possessed a predisposition towards black people that was reflective of "ideas white Southerners possessed about blacks," quoting Fletcher who wrote, "the African savage feels a clear conscience when he kills and eats his captive."[181] Fletcher further argues that "sin is the antecedent of slavery," indeed that slavery is a punishment for the unholy, and ascribes to African American slaves a "savage state."[182] Fletcher thus justifies the enslavement of African Americans quoting Isaiah, "Therefore my people are gone into captivity, because they have no knowledge."[183]

It is not until Study VII that Fletcher invokes the help of Thucydides and the Greek language. His primary objective is to determine the meaning of the Greek noun δοῦλος within biblical texts by examining the term's use in Classical Greek works such as those of Thucydides, Xenophon, and Herodotus. Throughout this section, Fletcher intends to demonstrate the pervasive nature of slavery in Greece making his case that δοῦλος, in fact, should be understood to mean slave in Biblical contexts, while also establishing the numerous forms that slavery was manifested. At the beginning of Study VII, Fletcher presents a quote from *Inquiry into the Scriptural Views of Slavery* by theologian Barnes and highlighted in the previous section, "No man has a right to assume when the word δοῦλος, *doulos*, occurs in the New Testament, it means a slave, or that he to whom it was applied was a slave."[184] Naturally, Fletcher disagreed with this statement, even going so far as to say that Barnes' views involve "a misconception of the

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[180] Ibid, 7, 37, 43.
[181] Ibid, 18; Dickson D. Bruce. "Racial Fear and the Proslavery Argument: A Rhetorical Approach," in *The Mississippi Quarterly* 33, no. 4 (1980): 461–78. http://www.jstor.org/stable/2647469, 470.
[182] Fletcher, *Studies on Slavery*, 9, 11.
[183] Ibid, 12.
[184] Ibid, 506.; Barnes, *Scriptural Views of Slavery*, 322.

character and laws of God" by implying "that his [God's] laws forbid it."[185] Switching to direct address toward Barnes and the readers, Fletcher warns that this misconception means either "you are an idolater, or we are one."[186] This inflammatory statement in response to select statements that do not encapsulate the full argument of Barnes is obviously meant to put abolitionists on the defensive while inciting religious pathos and emotion among Fletcher's camp.

Fletcher then paraphrases arguments from unnamed scholars who supposedly claimed that "Greeks at an early day had no slaves, it is evident, it is good proof that the more ancient tribes, from whom they and their language descended, had none."[187] Since the Ancient Greek language "is a compilation from the more ancient ones", then the term δοῦλος could not have meant slave, according to this argument.[188] It is doubtful, as the terminology of slavery rooting from Homeric epic "is solely concerned with this individual legal status," but it is notable that Fletcher does not attribute this claim to a particular author.[189] The earlier meanings of δοῦλος and δουλεία are then shifted by Thucydides to possess a new metaphorical meaning in the context of "unjust systems of government" in the political sphere as argued by Lewis and Peter Hunt.[190] Regardless, Fletcher engages with this argument, stating, "language, and all its parts, has ever been found to conform itself to the habits and wants of those who use it. Wherefore we often find a term, which some centuries ago expressed a certain distinct idea, now to express quite a different one."[191] Simply put, even if δοῦλος did not originally connote an enslaved individual, the adaptation of the word could reflect a shift in attitudes toward slavery later on as well as the prevalence of it in Greek society.

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[185] Fletcher, *Studies on Slavery*, 507.
[186] Ibid.
[187] Ibid, 515.
[188] Ibid.
[189] Lewis, *Greek Slave Systems,* 61.
[190] Ibid*,* 62*;* Hunt, *Greek Historians*, 128.
[191] Fletcher, *Studies on Slavery*, 515.

In order to provide a broader context and a more accurate representation of the term, Fletcher shifts his focus onto the works of Thucydides, Herodotus, and Xenophon, "against whose use [of the word] no cavil can be made."[192] His inclusion of Thucydides in particular, he states, is backed by the biographer Plutarch. Paraphrasing Plutarch's account of Thucydides, Fletcher states that Plutarch, in his *De Gloria Atheniensium,* "expresses the idea that he [Thucydides] wrote in such a manner that the reader saw the picture of what he represented," revealing that "Plutarch was then clearly of opinion that the language of Thucydides was most appropriately accurate."[193] Similarly, Plutarch states that Thucydides "is always striving for this vividness in his writing, since it is his desire to make the reader a spectator, as it were, and to produce vividly in the minds of those who pursue his narrative the emotions of amazement and consternation which were experienced by those who beheld them."[194]

Since Thucydides and his works were held in such regard in the South, it comes as no surprise that Fletcher employs his reputation and fame to support his argument. Thucydides' presence in the Lesson not only appeals to Fletcher's Southern audience but is designed to also show Northern critics that he himself is an authority whose profound knowledge of biblical and ancient slavery trumps any argument that may gather steam from the abolitionist side. Furthermore, Fletcher accounts for 63 instances of the term δοῦλος used by Thucydides to prove both the true definition of the word and the widespread presence of slavery in Greece, a civilization admired by many Americans.

Fletcher acknowledges his use of the translation by Rev. Dr. William Smith of Chester, England as his primary Thucydides translation. Smith's translation of Longinus in the eighteenth

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[192] Ibid, 536.
[193] Ibid.
[194] Plutarch, *De Gloria Atheniensium,* (Loeb Classical Library, 1936), Section 3.

century received high praise as having "great accuracy and beauty."[195] However, Fletcher's most important motive to use Smith's translation lies in the fact that he was born in 1711 and wrote his rendition "at an age beyond the reach of prejudice or argument on the subject of slavery."[196] Thus, Dr. Smith's edition of Thucydides must be quite objective and any deviation from his argument cannot be attributed to Smith's own biases.

The first quote of Thucydides which Fletcher brings up occurs in Book I Chapter 8 of Thucydides:

> Οἵ τε ἥσσους ὑπέμενον τὴν τῶν κρεισσόνων δουλείαν.
> "And the great, who had all needful supplies at hand, reduced less powerful cities into their own subjection."[197]

The scene that Thucydides sets here describes how Minos, having organized a navy, drove out pirates, causing colonies on the sea-costs to gain both wealth and power. Fletcher argues that it would have been more literal to translate the term δουλείαν as slavery "because now there has grown up a wide distinction between the mere subjugating and enslaving", implying this distinction was not clear before at the time in which Dr. Smith had translated the passage.[198] Fletcher, therefore, asserts that the difference between subjugation and enslavement was not drastic enough in Smith's time for him to deduce an accurate translation. It is here where Fletcher contradicts himself. After advocating for the accuracy of Smith and his translation due to a period unaffected by prejudices, he turns around to criticize the very translation when it differs from his argument. He also suggests that in Ancient Greece, "all were reduced to slavery."[199] By his logic, the translations would be interchangeable, and the way Smith translates the term δουλείαν would in fact be correct, which, in fact, Lewis and Hunt would both agree

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[195] Fletcher, *Studies on Slavery*, 537.
[196] Ibid, 124.
[197] Ibid, 537; translations in Fletcher taken from William Smith.
[198] Ibid.
[199] Ibid.

upon as an example of political subjection. Since Fletcher contends that his own period (in antebellum America) makes a clearer distinction between the two, his argument becomes even more convoluted. The imperialistic subjugating component of the term must exist as Thucydides is evidently referring to either weaker colonies or cities. Finley, in his Penguin translation, supports this sense of authoritarian rule as opposed to individual enslavement, reading, "the weaker, because of the general desire to make profits, were content to put up with being governed by the stronger."[200]

To the same end of differentiating the two translations of the term, Fletcher continues to investigate the differentiation between subjection and enslavement. However, in the instance below, Smith does in fact translate δουλωσόμενος as to enslave. Fletcher cites Book 1 Chapter 18 of the *Peloponnesian War*:

> Δεκάτω δὲ ἔτει μετ' αὐτην αὖθις ὁ βάρβαρος τῷ μεγάλω στόλῳ ἐπὶ τὴν Ἑλλάδα δουλωσόμενος ἦλθε.
> "And in the tenth year after that, the barbarian, with a vast armament, invaded Greece in order to enslave it."[201]

Here, the participle δουλωσόμενος which describes the subject, ὁ βάρβαρος, is utilized and takes Greece, or Ἑλλάδα, as its direct object. Fletcher appears to be content with the translation of this passage, which occurs while describing the return of Persia against Hellas ten years after the battle of Marathon. However, it is worth noting that Fletcher finds it fitting to translate δουλωσόμενος here and δουλείαν before as enslavement. Both instances consist of one nation or city conquering or governing over the other. Though slavery most certainly could have been involved in Persians conquering of Greece, in the modern sense of the word, both 'subjugation' and 'subjection' are more commonly used when describing the colonial domination of a country.

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[200] Thucydides. *History of the Peloponnesian War*. Translated by Rex Warner. Penguin Classics (London, England: Penguin Classics, 1963), 26.
[201] Fletcher, *Studies on Slavery*, 537.

That being said, Thucydides' intentions for the word would again apply in Lewis' metaphorical reading of the term.

Another quote Fletcher provides describes the origin of the helots in Book I Chapter 101 of the *Peloponnesian War*:

> Πλεῖστοι δὲ τῶν Εἱλώτων ἐγένοντο οἱ τῶν παλαιῶν Μεσσηνίων τότε δουλωθέντων ἀπόγονοι· ᾗ καὶ Μεσσήνιοι ἐκλήθησαν οἱ πάντες.
> "Most of the Helots were descendants of the ancient Messenians, then reduced to slavery, and on this account all of them in general were called Messenians."[202]

As one of the central purposes of Fletcher's exercise appears to be to display his broad knowledge of ancient slavery, he also highlights the numerous manifestations of slavery that existed. The translation of δουλωθέντων as "being reduced to slavery" was fitting in this context. There is much debate among scholars on the categorization of helots, but Peter Hunt notes that Thucydides himself, in Book 8 Chapter 40 Section 2, "equates the Helots with the *oiketai* in Chios, who were most definitely chattel slaves."[203] Kostas Vlassopoulos continues that "there seems to be a widespread consensus that slavery is primarily a relationship of property."[204] Therefore, helots most certainly qualified as chattel slaves, at least in Thucydides, and Fletcher appropriately uses δουλωθέντων in its legal sense. However, this example raises further questions as to how Fletcher himself defines subjugation and enslavement. He has already implied that political subjugation was synonymous with enslavement in Ancient Greece and that in eighteenth-century England both were used interchangeably as well, yet Fletcher never provides examples as to which contexts "subjugation" could or should be used in translation.

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[202] Ibid, 538
[203] Hunt, *Greek Historians*, 16; οἱ γὰρ οἰκέται τοῖς Χίοις πολλοὶ ὄντες καὶ μιᾷ γε πόλει πλὴν Λακεδαιμονίων πλεῖστοι γενόμενοι καὶ ἅμα διὰ τὸ πλῆθος χαλεπωτέρως ἐν ταῖς ἀδικίαις κολαζόμενοι, ὡς ἡ στρατιὰ τῶν Ἀθηναίων βεβαίως ἔδοξε μετὰ τείχους ἱδρῦσθαι, εὐθὺς αὐτομολίᾳ τε ἐχώρησαν οἱ πολλοὶ πρὸς αὐτοὺς καὶ τὰ πλεῖστα κακὰ ἐπιστάμενοι τὴν χώραν οὗτοι ἔδρασαν.
[204] VLASSOPOULOS, KOSTAS. "GREEK SLAVERY: FROM DOMINATION TO PROPERTY AND BACK AGAIN." *The Journal of Hellenic Studies* 131 (2011): 115–30. http://www.jstor.org/stable/41722136, 115.

Currently, the Oxford American Dictionary defines the term 'enslave' as "make someone a slave", while it defines the term subjugate as "bring under domination or control, especially by conquest."[205] It then appears that the word enslave is primarily used to describe individual enslavement whereas subjugation can encapsulate individual enslavement as well as imperialistic conquest. While it is possible that definitions evolved, this distinction is likely still to have held true in antebellum America. Without stating his own distinct definitions of the two terms and providing us with concrete examples of such differences in Thucydides' original text, it would render some of Fletcher's insistence on translating the word as "enslavement" questionable. While Fletcher may convey a sense of the pervasiveness of slavery in ancient Greece, his failure to supply clear distinctions in his examples and his contradictory criticism of Smith's translation weakens his argument.

Even so, Fletcher still is able to provide the reader with the different manifestations of slavery within the text of Thucydides, even including distinction in Greek terminology. Fletcher highlights the use of οἰκετῶν in conjunction with δούλους in Book III Chapter 73 the day after a group of Corcyrean aristocrats defeated the democrats, who wished to remain allies of Athens, during the civil war in Corcyra:

Τῇ δ' ὑστεραίᾳ ἠκροβολίσαντό τε ὀλίγα, καὶ ἐς τοὺς ἀγροὺς περιέπεμπον ἀμφότεροι, τοὺς δούλους παρακαλοῦντες τε, καὶ ἐλευθερίαν ὑπισχνούμενοι. καὶ τῷ μὲν δήμῳ τῶν οἰκετῶν τὸ πλῆθος παρεγένετο ξύμμαχον, τοῖς δ' ἑτέροις ἐκ τῆς ἠπείρου ἐπίκουροι ὀκτακόσιοι.

"The day following they skirmished a little with their missive weapons, and both parties sent out detachments into the field to invite concurrence of the slaves, upon a promise of their freedom. A majority of the slaves came in to the assistance of the people, and the other party got eight hundred auxiliaries from the continent."[206]

[205] McKean, Erin. 2005. *The new Oxford American dictionary*. New York, N.Y.: Oxford University Press.
[206] Fletcher, *Studies on Slavery*, 541.

Fletcher adds, "it will be noticed that οἰκετῶν in this passage is also translated *slave*; but the οἰκέτης was a slave whose condition was above the mere δοῦλος. In English, the word will imply a *house-slave*. The οἰκέτης enjoyed a greater portion of his master's confidence, and consequently was under a less rigorous government."[207] By incorporating a term that not only exhibits the reality of slavery but appends another component of social class, Fletcher intends to effectively show the common occurrence of enslavement in ancient Greece. However, the common idea that *oiketai* refers to 'household slave' is not backed in-depth study of original usages and instead the term holds the meaning of agricultural slaves here.

Even earlier on in the volume, in Study II Lesson X, when Fletcher praises his own use of Dr. Smith's translation, he states that "in the most of languages, an idea, and facts in relation to it, may be and are often expressed without the use of the name of the idea, and sometimes of the facts." He proceeds to quote Book VII Chapter 87 of Thucydides which reads: ἔπειτα πλην Αθηναιῶν, καὶ εἴτινες Σικελιωτῶν ἢ Ἰταλιωτῶν ξυνεστρατευσαν, τοὺς ἄλλους ἀπέδοντο. While no word in this sentence refers to enslavement, Dr. Smith translates it as "But, after this term, all but the Athenians, and such of the Sicilians and Italians as had joined with them in the invasion, were sold out for slaves." Fletcher attempts to show the Greek customs concerning captives made in war. In this context, his inference of the translation is sound. It shows that many slaves were indeed a product of war, which we know to be true.[208]

Fletcher supplies abundant quotes from Thucydides to state the simple fact that slavery was prevalent, and thus should be maintained in antebellum America. He further draws upon the work of Thucydides to provide context regarding Greek terminology in his support of slavery through biblical interpretations. By highlighting various manifestations of slavery in Thucydides,

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[207] Ibid.
[208] Ibid, 124.

Fletcher intends to win over his readers by convincing them of his learned and in turn reliable quality. However, Fletcher ultimately undermines his own argument regarding the translation of δοῦλος and fails to provide concrete examples in accord with his translation of 'subjection' and to acknowledge the polysemic nature of the term δοῦλος in Thucydides, making parts of his argument convoluted and contradictory.

3. Sawyer Continues Fletcher's Argument

As noted in the previous section, George Sawyer was an advocate of slavery whose 1859 volume *Southern Institutes; or, an Inquiry into the Origin and Early Prevalence of Slavery and the Slave-Trade* draws upon Fletcher and his arguments defending the institution of slavery while challenging arguments made by abolitionists such as Barnes. Much like Fletcher's, the publishers of this volume inform the reader that Sawyer was born and "reared to the verge of manhood" in New England, even attending "one of her oldest colleges." He then moved to Louisiana which gives him the advantage of understanding perspectives from both sides of the slavery debate. Sawyer's volume contains ten sections, or essays, the first six of which stress the prevalence of slavery and its existence in the Hebrew Bible, Greece, Rome, the New Testament, and the Middle Ages. The final four chapters focus on the characteristics of slavery as it existed in the United States, such as the moral attitude toward the institution, the treatment of Black slaves, efforts of abolitionists, and the political and judicial attitudes towards slavery. Like Fletcher, Sawyer expresses stark pro-slavery ideals, defending the virtues of the institution as well as claiming the inferiority of African Americans while instilling a sense of pride in his Southern readers.[209]

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[209] George S. Sawyer, *Southern Institutes; or, an Inquiry into the Origin & Early Prevalence of Slavery & the Slave-Trade* (Philadelphia: J.B. Lippincott & Co., 1859), iii, iv

In his collection of essays, Sawyer discusses slavery in much the same way that Fletcher does. On page 132 of the volume, Sawyer states that Fletcher's *Studies on Slavery: In Easy Lessons* is a work "for which the literary world must be forever indebted to the indefatigable labors of John Fletcher, of Louisiana."[210] Sawyer's allusion to Fletcher and reverence for his work is evidence that though Fletcher's volume was not the most prominent, it still held significance in the pro-slavery side of the slavery debate. Sawyer displays admiration for Fletcher's arguments and intellect, even structuring his volume into ten essays to some extent after Fletcher's massive 637-page volume.

In his chapter regarding ancient Greek slavery, Sawyer details the customs of slavery in Greece and the terms used to denote slavery to vindicate its practice in the South. Sawyer invokes quotes from Homer, Plato, and Aristotle. He highlights the transition from slavery generated by piracy and war to a supposedly more civilized system where slaves could only be obtained "by purchase."[211] Sawyer further maintains, "we nowhere find a dissenting opinion to the legality of the traffic in barbarian slaves," and invokes Plato in his sixth book of *the Laws* when the Athenian considers the conflicting moral justifications of slaveholding after mentioning Spartan helotage.[212] Sawyer repeatedly parenthesizes the term δοῦλος when citing translation from classical authors, intentionally emphasizing that it applies to slaves. In addition, Sawyer calls attention to the cruel practices in ancient slavery, such as beating and branding slaves who were running away or disobedient, thus both demonstrating the mild nature of modern slavery and legitimizing harsh practices of slaveholders in the United States.

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[210] Ibid, 132.
[211] Ibid, 52.
[212] Ibid; "There is nothing sound in the feelings of a slave (δοῦλος); nor ought a prudent man to trust them in anything of importance."

Interestingly enough, Thucydides' name does not come up in the discussion of Greek slavery. Rather in Essay V, "Slavery in the New Testament," Sawyer calls upon Thucydides to support his stance regarding the meaning of δοῦλος. Thucydides' involvement in the discussion about the New Testament parallels the approach seen in Fletcher whereas Barnes the abolitionist mentioned Thucydides in his argument with respect to the Old Testament. Sawyer was undoubtedly familiar with Barnes, as in this very chapter he disputes Barnes' argument regarding the servant Onesimus, in his *Notes on the Gospels.*[213] However, he does agree with Barnes that "the Greek words δοῦλος and οἰκέτης are the words most frequently used in the New Testament and in Greek authors, as the general terms for servants and slaves."[214] Prior to discussing the history and meaning of the English word 'slave,' Sawyer poses the following questions:

> If then the Greek word δοῦλος, in its primitive and lateral signification means what we understand by the word slave… Why did the learned translators of King James' version of the Bible universally render that word by the English word *servant*, and yet use the term slave in the passage in Revelation? Why does not the word *slave* occur more frequently in the present English version of the Bible?[215]

He explains that "the legitimate use of this word in English must be of comparatively modern date," implying that it was not used widely enough to have been in the King James version of the Bible published in 1611.[216] Therefore, it can be inferred that "servant" was used in instances in which "slave" may have been appropriate. To prove that δοῦλος does, in the modern sense, mean "slave," he cites a plethora of Greek writers, from Euripides, to Xenophon, and Thucydides.

Amidst quotes of others, Sawyer quotes Book 1 Chapter 34 of Thucydides' *Peloponnesian War,* reading, "οὐ γὰρ ἐπὶ τῷ δοῦλοι, ἀλλ᾽ ἐπὶ τῷ ὁμοῖοι τοῖς λειπομένοις εἶναι ἐκπέμπονται," which translates to "They are not sent out to be slaves, but to be equals of those

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[213] Ibid, 116.
[214] Ibid, 127.
[215] Ibid, 125.
[216] Ibid.

who remain behind."[217]This quote, which Fletcher also references in his volume, occurs during the dispute over Corcyra. Sawyer employs this quote to provide background on the implications of δοῦλος. The current Penguin edition gives a similar translation, "Colonists are not sent abroad to be the slaves so far as we are concerned."[218] Seeing that the Corcyreans were a so-called 'colony' of Corinth, in this context δοῦλοι is again originally used by Thucydides in the metaphorical imperialistic sense which Lewis describes. Confident that he has convincingly demonstrated the denotation of the term to be 'slave,' he denounces those on the opposite end of the philological debate, such as Barnes, saying that "whoever will deliberately say that the Greek words δοῦλος and οἰκετης do not literally mean what we understand by the English word slave, must be either a literary novice or a knave."[219]

In the context of the philological debate regarding the interpretation of the Greek terms δοῦλος and οἰκέτης in the New Testament, Sawyer is disregarding the distinction between the literal and political meanings of δοῦλος. While clearly backing the term's correlation to slavery, Sawyer provides a logical reason as to why the English translation of the Bible fails to translate it as such. By calling upon and referencing classical texts and other Greek authors, he attempts to display such a connotation through classical texts despite misrepresentations pertaining to Thucydides' use of the term.

4. George B. Cheever: An Abolitionist's Philological Argument

As the work of Rev. Albert Barnes showed, philological references to Thucydides were not limited to the defenders of slavery. The Rev. George B. Cheever does not directly cite

[217] Ibid, 128.
[218] Thucydides. *History of the Peloponnesian War*. Translated by Rex Warner, 36.
[219] Sawyer, *Southern Institutes,* 132.

Thucydides in his engagement in the philological discussion. Rather, he responds to points made by Fletcher and Sawyer that were supported by Thucydides.

As noted in the previous chapter, Cheever was emboldened to write his *The Guilt of Slavery and the Crime of Slaveholding, demonstrated from the Hebrew and Greek Scriptures* to disprove pro-slavery arguments that denoted the Old Testament's sanction of slavery. Cheever further introduces the ideals of Abbé Raynal, a Roman Catholic priest during the Enlightenment period in eighteenth-century France, who believed "that a church defending this right[slavery] is no more a church of Christ, but a synagogue of Satan." By means of his 472-page volume, Cheever attacked the arguments based on both the Hebrew Bible and the Greek Septuagint translation made by defendants of slavery. He examined evidence in various books in the Bible, while also imploring his fellow Christians to speak out against the institution.[220]

Chapter XXXI in particular, "Examination of Greek Usage in the New Testament," carries on the lexicographical debate addressed by Barnes, Fletcher, and Sawyer. Instead of simply examining the Greek and the English King James versions of the Bible, Cheever considers the context of the Septuagint translation of the Old Testament, from Hebrew to Greek, to ascertain the meaning of δοῦλος. He informs us that the translators occasionally use δοῦλος for עבד (eved) in the Septuagint, while in other instances they use παῖς or οἰκέτης. As Cheever states, since the Hebrew word "עבד" signified a free Hebrew servant, δοῦλος must have come to represent a free Hebrew servant in the Septuagint due to the corresponding nature in their usages. Cheever admits that "in classic Greek" δοῦλος signified slaves; however, in the Old Testament, it must have meant "a laborer for wages on a voluntary agreement," as it is derived from the Hebrew vocabulary. The argument Cheever makes here directly relies on the meaning of the

[220] George B. Cheever, *Guilt of Slavery and the Crime of Slaveholding, Demonstrated from the Hebrew and Greek Scriptures* (New York, s.n, 1860), iv, v.

Hebrew term עבד, which J. A. Smith concurs to mean an "apprentice slave" rather than a "chattel-slave."[221] However, this point is contended by Lewis in his section regarding Iron Age Israel. He argues that there is no reason to translate עבד (eved) as "anything other than 'slaves' in the true property sense," as Hebrew texts depict slaves being given as gifts, sold to foreigners, and enslaved in wars and raids.[222] Hence, it can be inferred that Lewis would likely reject the notion that δοῦλος adopted a new meaning in the Greek translation of the Old Testament.

In the same chapter, Cheever looks at examples in the New Testament books of Mark and Matthew in Greek and English and cross-examines his analysis with Hebrew terms. He highlights his scholarship in Hebrew and Greek which backs his status as a respected scholar in the Christian community. All his arguments circle back to Christ, rather than his own morals. He notes that, in both Mark and Matthew, δοῦλος, as employed by the divine Spirit, denotes the "voluntary servant in the household of faith" and the "willing, loving servant of the Saviour." Therefore, δοῦλος is also applied in the Old Testament to denote a "servant of God." The Greek term adopts a new divine meaning of a loving child of God in the New Testament. As δοῦλος is a "Hebrew proselyte," Cheever argues that it has a new elevated meaning from the Hebrew term עבד. In response to Fletcher and Sawyer's use of classical Greek, in particular Thucydides' *the Peloponnesian War*, to prove that δοῦλος holds the same meaning of slave in scripture, Cheever uses the Septuagint's Hebrew precursor to argue for a new meaning for δοῦλος in the New Testament.[223]

Beyond Thucydides' absence in Cheever's discussion of the New Testament, Cheever calls upon him through George Grote's *History of Greece* in Chapter XVIII titled "Judgement of

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[221] Ibid, 356; Smith, J. A. "THE MEANING OF KYPIOΣ." *The Journal of Theological Studies* 31, no. 122 (1930): 155–60. http://www.jstor.org/stable/23952416, 158.
[222] Lewis, *Greek Slave Systems*, 202.
[223] Cheever, *Guilt of Slavery*, 366.

God against Slavery in Egypt." Cheever begins by adducing God's moral judgment of Egyptian slavery to Abraham, saying about the Israelites, "Know of surety that thy seed shall be a stranger in a land that is not theirs, and they shall serve them, and they shall afflict them, and also that nation whom they shall serve will I judge." Through accounts of the ruthless bondage as mentioned in Exodus, Cheever concludes that "this dreadful bondage was a type of the slavery of sin," which would have soon become helotism, "a system of perpetual oppression and cruelty" in the Spartan state.[224] As discussed above in Chapter Three, Thucydides is then mentioned in Cheever's section paraphrasing Volume II of Grote's *History of Greece.* Thucydides' account of the event in which two thousand helots were promised liberty but were assassinated instead is used by Cheever to highlight the inhumane nature of such an institution.

Five years later, Cheever again mentioned Thucydides in a discourse published in the *National Anti-Slavery Standard,* titled "Continued Oppression, and not God's Judgements, the Reason for Fasting". In his extensive speech, he challenged his listeners to consider a series of questions, which include "What is our place in history?", "What are our opportunities and duties in relation to the colored race?", and "Are we on the verge of a new national crime against that race?" He also equates white America to the Pharaohs of Egypt who, "at the outset, refused to let the children of Israel go."[225] Cheever maintains that God has been much more merciful towards Americans than he had been with the Egyptians. In regard to Thucydides, Cheever quotes Book 1 Chapter 69 Section 1 of *the Peloponnesian War*,

> Thucydides gives the sentiment to the Corinthians complaining against the Athenians, "that not to the men who rivet on the chains of slavery, but to such as, though able,

[224] Ibid, 191-192
[225] *National Anti-Slavery Standard* (New York, New York), June 17, 1865: 4. *Readex: African American Newspapers, Series 2*, 4.

> neglect to prevent it, ought the sad result with the truth to be imputed; especially when, assuming superior virtues, they boast themselves the deliverers of Greece."[226]

With this quote, Cheever wants the audience to ponder the aforementioned questions: "What is our place in history?", "What are our opportunities and duties in relation to the colored race?". The passage that Cheever utilizes is from the translation William Smith, whom Fletcher referenced as well. The passionate language in phrases such as "rivet on the chains of slavery" is not literal, rather it is added upon Smith's discretion. In contrast, Lattimore translates it as "For it is not the enslaver but the one who has the power to stop him but looks on who more truly does the deed, even if he bears a reputation for virtue as the liberator of Hellas."[227] Utilizing Thucydides, William Smith's translation, in particular, Cheever invites people to consider the grave sin that the country is committing in the form of slavery. If they don't choose to stop it, it is not "the men who rivet on the chains of slavery," but those who "neglect to prevent it" that will ultimately receive divine punishment. Cheever's discourse and usage of Thucydides incite those in his audience to consider their own moral standards.

Cheever's biblical and historical knowledge are on full display in his *The Guilt of Slavery and the Crime of Slaveholding, demonstrated from the Hebrew and Greek Scriptures,* as he provides etymological insights to the debate on δοῦλος started by Barnes, Fletcher, and Sawyer, who employ Thucydides in their arguments. He draws correlations between different languages to deduce his own argument for the word. However, many scholars such as David Lewis may disagree about δοῦλος adopting an elevated meaning in Scripture on the basis of the Hebrew Old Testament. On the other hand, Cheever's use of Thucydides in discourse is quite unique as it uses

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[226] Ibid.; οὐ γὰρ ὁ δουλωσάμενος, ἀλλ᾽ ὁ δυνάμενος μὲν παῦσαι περιορῶν δὲ ἀληθέστερον αὐτὸ δρᾷ, εἴπερ καὶ τὴν ἀξίωσιν τῆς ἀρετῆς ὡς ἐλευθερῶν τὴν Ἑλλάδα φέρεται.
[227] Thucydides, and Steven Lattimore. 1998. *The Peloponnesian War*. Indianapolis: Hackett Pub. Co, 1998, 33.

Smith's very loose translation to urge his audience members to consider their historic role and duty to fight slavery.

Conclusion

Though references to and quotes from Thucydides are not the focal point of the biblical arguments regarding the slavery debate, they supplement and bolster arguments made by significant figures such as Barnes, Fletcher, Sawyer, and Cheever. Arguments supported by our receptors' impressions of Thucydides are varied and are not limited to a single type as we see Barnes refer to him in the context of Mosaic institutions and Cheever as a rhetorical strategy. However, the debate revolving around the polysemic Greek terms δοῦλος and δουλεία emerges as the primary case in which Thucydides receptions are used. Proponents on both sides of the slavery debate are observed failing to recognize Thucydides' use of the terms with a metaphorical purpose. As a result of this, Barnes, Fletcher, and Sawyer, blur the lines of such a distinction between political and legal slavery in support of their own arguments. This philological discourse takes precedence for our two pro-slavery authors, as Fletcher and Sawyer both directly quote Thucydides, yet never delve into the content of his text in comparison to the two abolitionists, especially Cheever. He uses Thucydides' description of the death of two thousand helots to demonstrate the brutality of helotage. Regardless, the misrepresentations of Thucydides within the philological debate are striking; they are among the main points on which the arguments made by Barnes, Fletcher, and Sawyer, depend.

Conclusion

In the American antebellum period, appreciation for ancient Greece became a focal point of cultural life and soon permeated many aspects of American society, including the debate on slavery. The flowering of Hellenism also led to increased references to Thucydides. Some on the pro-slavery side, such as DeBow and Keitt, accepted Thucydides as a representative of the flourishing Athenian culture, and since slavery was practiced during the height of Athenian cultural achievement, slavery should be practiced and promoted. Abolitionists such as Clay similarly valued the egalitarian aspects of Athenian democracy but rejected any role of slavery in Athenian success. While there was broad approval of Hellenic culture, some abolitionists referenced a passage in Thucydides to extend the caveat that ancients had different moral standards than antebellum Americans. Thucydides was used to demonstrate this in his description of Homeric piracy. Just as piracy was accepted then and denounced now, the existence of ancient slavery cannot justify modern slavery.

Moreover, some American abolitionists used Thucydides when they based their critique of slavery on depictions of Spartan helotage. These arguments likely derived from similar discussions in Britain, though there were seldom references to Thucydides, and few American arguments used the same comparative approach as the British. From an overview of the works of our examined receptors, we see that in some instances Thucydides was used in conjunction with other authors, namely Plutarch, sometimes even causing ambiguity regarding to whom the reference was made. Abolitionist receptions of Thucydides in the helotage discussion primarily involved the abhorrence caused by the assassination of two thousand helots, and the caution against potential slave insurrection as Thucydides recounted the fear that the helots incited in their Spartan superiors.

References to Thucydides were interdisciplinary, as he was commonly called upon in theological debates about slavery. Pro-slavery advocates and abolitionists engaged in philological discussions on whether biblical references to slavery had been interpreted correctly. Advocates on both sides invoked Thucydides to provide context of terms denoting slavery in the Bible. However, they failed to acknowledge the metaphorical manner in which Thucydides commonly uses these terms to describe political domination, leading to a misrepresentation of Thucydidean texts.

Throughout this study, we have seen how participants on both sides of the slavery debate referred to Thucydides in their arguments, with the number of abolitionist receptions outnumbering pro-slavery receptions. On the abolitionist side of the debate, British influence as a result of the increased global interest in Hellenic culture is evident, particularly in the arguments pertaining to piracy and helotage. Yet, with the analyses of the works of our antebellum writers in Chapter III, we also see ways in which Thucydides and his terminology are misrepresented to support their arguments in the contemporary debate on slavery. Admittedly, Thucydides was not the most prominent classical figure when it came to the topic of slavery. When he is referenced, it is often alongside other figures such as Plutarch, Xenophon, Homer, or through historians of Greece such as Grote. However, through and through, Thucydides' status and prestige are displayed throughout the analyses of our receptors and are even leveraged to argue for and attack slavery. In Chapter I he was a representative of Hellenic culture and a reliable account of Homeric piracy, in Chapter II abolitionists called upon Thucydides as a trustworthy source for Spartan helotage, and in Chapter III he became a supposedly reliable reference for the Greek language in philological discussions.

In these aforementioned philological debates, some receptors also refer to the Greek historians Herodotus and Xenophon, two figures that are historically most frequently mentioned with Thucydides. While this thesis has led to unexpected discoveries regarding the receptions of Thucydides within the slavery debate, further scholarship is needed to further determine the role that all three Greek historians played in the antebellum slavery debate in America. This thesis brought to light how the flowering of Hellenism in America led not only to increased references to Greek authors such as Thucydides but also to Hellenic culture being mentioned in other areas of American society. Much like this study of Thucydides receptions, which demonstrated that receptions were reflective of ideologies in many different disciplines, further studies pertaining to Xenophon and Herodotus very likely would do the same. Thus, not only would we understand more about the place of Greek historians in American public discourse, but we would also discover a more comprehensive view of antebellum America as a whole.

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