HISTORIA 74, 2025/4, 388–427
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Mass Enslavements and their Political and Social Dimensions in the Peloponnesian War

ABSTRACT: This article analyzes the numerous instances of mass enslavement that occurred during the Peloponnesian War. Adopting a diachronic historiographical approach and considering the preceding *Pentekontaetia*, this study examines the processes and patterns of mass enslavements within the context of the belligerents' strategies during the Peloponnesian War. Consequently, this study engages with two distinct historiographical fields: the historiography of the Peloponnesian War and the study of ancient slavery.
Keywords: ancient slavery, Peloponnesian War, Athens, Sparta, *Pentekontaetia*, enslavements

I. Introduction

The significance of the Peloponnesian War as an event in the history of Ancient Greece can hardly be overstated.[1] The belligerent Greek poleis were among the most characteristic slave-holding societies in the ancient world.[2] The economies of the main combatants in the Peloponnesian War relied on the labor of thousands of slaves across virtually

* This paper was written as part of the SLaVEgents project: *Enslaved Persons in the Making of Societies and Cultures in Western Eurasia and North Africa, 1000 BCE–300 CE*, hosted at the Institute for Mediterranean Studies – Foundation for Research and Technology – Hellas, in Rethymnon, Greece (ERC Advanced Grant 2022, Grant Agreement 101095823), under the guidance of Professor Kostas Vlassopoulos.

Funded by the European Union

European Research Council
Established by the European Commission

I would like to express my gratitude to *Historia*'s two anonymous peer reviewers, whose extensive and constructive criticism significantly improved the quality of this paper, as well as to Jan Meister. This research owes its original concept and direction to my academic mentor, Professor Kostas Vlassopoulos, whose insightful guidance and immense energy were the driving forces behind this study. As a result, this paper is dedicated to him.

1 The bibliography on the Peloponnesian War and its various aspects is immense; see, among others, Kagan (1969, 1974, 1981, 1987), Lazenby (2004), and Hanson (2005). For a more recent overview of the Peloponnesian War and some of its most important aspects, see Kagan (2009), Tritle (2010), and Lendon (2010).

2 A groundbreaking work regarding ancient slavery in the Eastern Mediterranean before the advent of the Romans is the comparative study by Lewis (2018). Another important work is the collective volume by Lenski and Cameron (2018), while an up-to-date overview of Greek and Roman slavery is provided by

all sectors of economic and military activity.[3] Primary sources from this period frequently document the mass enslavement of inhabitants from various poleis and the reduction of numerous war captives to slavery. Despite the prevalence of these accounts, the phenomenon of mass enslavement during the Peloponnesian War has not been thoroughly explored, either within the historiography of the conflict or in the broader study of ancient slavery.[4] This is particularly notable given that *Pentekontaetia* witnessed relatively few instances of mass enslavement and other acts of brutality in intra-Greek conflicts.[5] According to the Inventory of Archaic and Classical Greek poleis, there are forty-six recorded instances of *andrapodismos* of conquered poleis up to 323.[6] However, only rarely is there evidence that the enslaved poleis disappeared permanently. It is also important to consider that some instances of mass enslavement may not have been recorded.[7]

Focusing on the Greek wars of the fifth century, the frequency of recorded intra-Greek enslavements during the *Pentekontaetia* is relatively low, though not entirely absent.[8] On the other hand, it should be noted that conquerors often chose to expel enemy populations collectively rather than enslave them. The onset of the Peloponnesian War marked a return to widespread brutality.[9] During the war, as a vigorous countermeasure to maintain their maritime empire, the Athenians increasingly resorted to mass enslavement of their rebellious subjects, employing a level of brutality previously reserved for non-Greek populations or enemies on the fringes of the Greek world.[10] Conversely, the Spartans and their allies frequently enslaved fellow Greeks. The study of mass enslavements during the Peloponnesian War is therefore crucial for several reasons. First, these events involved the large-scale enslavement of Greek populations following the capture of cities, a rare phenomenon in fifth-century Greece. Second, there were numerous instances of mass enslavements, including the abduction of both free and slave inhabitants in enemy territories. Third, different phases of the Peloponnesian War exhibited varying enslavement practices, adapted to evolving strategic situations. Finally, the frequency of reported mass enslavements provides a diachronic overview of an important aspect of ancient slavery during a relatively well-documented period spanning several decades.

Hunt (2018a). Regarding the conceptual problems of modern research on ancient slavery, see Vlassopoulos (2021).

3 Regarding slaves in warfare, the most important works are by Welwei (1974, 1977, 1988) and Hunt (1998). The role of ancient slaves in the respective economies of Sparta and Athens is most recently treated in Lewis (2018, 125–146, 167–196).

4 Vlassopoulos (2021), 191–192.

5 Kiechle (1958), 136; Shishova (1968b), 55–58; Kuch (1978), 29–31.

6 Hansen (2004a), 120.

7 Hansen (2004a), 122.

8 Shishova (1968b), 56.

9 Kuch (1978), 31–32.

10 Rosivach (1999), 135.

II. Historiography

Before analyzing the processes of mass enslavement, it is essential to provide a concise yet comprehensive review of the current state of research on the historiography of enslavement in Ancient Greece. William Westermann emphasized the significant impact of the Peloponnesian War on slave conditions, particularly noting the frequent enslavement of women who were subsequently sold in the slave market. However, he also observed that the traces of these effects on slave conditions have largely disappeared.[11] The first work specifically addressing mass enslavements was written by Gisela Micknat and published in 1954 under the title *Studien zur Kriegsgefangenschaft und zur Sklaverei in der griechischen Geschichte. Erster Teil: Homer*.[12] The title's indication that this study is the first part of a series suggests an unfulfilled intention to examine war captivity, enslavement, and slavery from a diachronic perspective across multiple volumes, although not exclusively focused on mass enslavements. In this work, the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* are interpreted as representing two distinct historical periods. The central literary motif of the *Iliad*, despite reflecting a historical reality distant from the narrator, encompasses not only the destruction of Troy but also the enslavement of its women. Thus, Achilles is portrayed as a conqueror of cities and an enslaver of women, embodying the ideal of the bygone era narrated by the *Iliad*, where the conqueror sought to seize territory, kill the men and children, and enslave the women.[13] Conversely, according to the author, the *Odyssey* represents a later period, when piracy and the slave trade began to gain prominence as conflicts among Greek poleis diminished with the peak of colonization.[14]

The second significant work was Hans Volkmann's *Die Massenversklavungen der Einwohner eroberter Städte in der hellenistisch-römischen Zeit*, published in 1961.[15] This work was groundbreaking in that it treated mass enslavements as a distinct topic, differentiating itself from Micknat's study by focusing exclusively on cases where mass enslavements occurred. Volkmann's analysis began, somewhat arbitrarily, with the sack of Orchomenos in 364 in Greek history and with Romulus in Roman history, covering the topic diachronically until the Fall of the Roman Empire. He concluded that the practice of mass enslavements of entire populations was primarily carried out by the Macedonians and Romans. In the Macedonian case, Philip II was noted for his large-scale enslavements of Greek poleis, while the Romans practiced this from the beginning of their expansion. Conversely, Hellenistic rulers generally avoided mass enslavements, likely for propagandistic reasons,[16] and a general decline in the practice became noticeable during the Roman Civil Wars.[17] Volkmann argued that there was a gradual reduction in mass enslavements among the Greeks, Macedonians, Romans, and Germanic peoples, which

11 Westermann (1955), 7.
12 Micknat (1954).
13 Micknat (1954), 46.
14 Micknat (1954), 53–54.
15 Volkmann (1961).
16 Volkmann (1961), 63, 81.
17 Volkmann (1961), 72.

he saw as a significant advance in the ancient laws of war.[18] This work was the first of its kind and was republished in 1990, still regarded as groundbreaking at that time. However, it also received criticism for its somewhat arbitrary choice of timeframes in both Greek and Roman contexts, as these starting points created historiographical challenges. This issue was compounded by the fact that between 1961 and 1990, no new works on mass enslavements, accessible to English-speaking scholarship, were published.[19]

Regarding the intellectual stance of the Greeks toward cruelty in war, particularly concerning whether war captives were enslaved or executed, Franz Kiechle's 1958 article is significant.[20] In this article, Kiechle examined how Greek intellectual discourse and moral attitudes toward war captives evolved over the centuries, gradually becoming more humane. However, Kiechle did not treat mass enslavements or their political context as separate processes, nor did he explore how political realities shaped the Greeks' ideological stance. Regarding the capture and treatment of prisoners, captives, and slaves, there are only two relevant studies: The work of Pierre Ducrey from the late 1960s and Andreas Panagopoulos a decade later on the captives and hostages of the Peloponnesian War.[21] Neither study provides overarching conclusions about the role of enslavement in the war itself, although Ducrey does highlight acts of benevolence as a propaganda tool in the later stages of the Peloponnesian War.[22] A similar pattern emerges in the fifth volume of William Kendrick Pritchett's magisterial study of ancient Greek warfare, where mass enslavements are analyzed in detail but not treated as separate processes of political and social significance.[23]

Regarding the diachronic treatment of Greeks enslaving other Greeks in the fifth and fourth centuries, as well as the intellectual and ideological views that emerged from this practice, the studies by Soviet scholar Irina Shishova stand out as particularly important.[24] Shishova examined the cases of intra-Greek enslavement during the Classical period, demonstrating that a complex interplay of factors led to a growing aversion to the practice. While Greeks never ceased enslaving one another, the increasing distaste for it was driven by fears of future retribution, the influx of cheap foreign slave labor, safety concerns regarding Greek slaves, and the rise of large political and military alliances that created a balance of power unfavorable to mass enslavements. Shishova emphasized that intra-Greek enslavement was influenced by a non-binding interstate framework that, while never fully developing into a regulated international law, remained largely unwritten and *ad hoc*.[25] As a result, the enslavement strategies of belligerents were shaped by contemporary power relations and the prevailing political and military context, with

18 Volkmann (1961), 90.
19 Walbank (1991), 508–509.
20 Kiechle (1958).
21 Ducrey, (1968); Panagopoulos, (1978).
22 Ducrey (1968), 285–286; see also note 7.
23 Pritchett (1991), 223–245.
24 Shishova (1968a, 1968b).
25 Shishova (1968b), 52–55.

economic motives playing a minor role.[26] Despite the significance of Shishova's conclusions, they have been largely overlooked in English-speaking scholarship due to the formidable language barrier, exacerbating the gap in the study of ancient slavery.

The lack of scholarly communication on the topic was partially addressed by the East German classicist Heinrich Kuch, who explored war captivity and enslavement in Euripides' *Andromache*, *Hecuba*, and *Trojan Women*.[27] Although Kuch was part of the Eastern Bloc academic environment, his grounding in the tradition of German classical scholarship allowed him to skillfully integrate research from both opposing scholarly traditions concerning mass enslavements in Ancient Greece.[28] Drawing on Kiechle, Kuch observed a relative amelioration of the long-established practice of executing men and enslaving women and children during the Classical period. This practice, he noted, was partially supplanted by the expulsion of defeated populations, reaching its peak during the *Pentekontaetia*.[29] However, this amelioration applied only to conflicts within the Greek world. Kuch concurred with Shishova's view that the influx of barbarian slaves into Aegean markets reduced the demand for Greek slaves, while the division of the Aegean world into two opposing blocs, led by Athens and Sparta, created a balance of power that was unfavorable to mass enslavements among Greeks.[30]

For Kuch, the Peloponnesian War signaled a return to the brutality of all involved sides in the war, and in particular, of the Athenians, as the latter sought to secure their empire against revolting subjects.[31] It is noteworthy that the aforementioned researcher noted how the collective behavior of the Athenians might have changed in the course of the massacres and the enslavements that the Athenians committed. Regarding the fate of the Mytilenians, there was an intense debate in the Athenian Assembly, but as the Athenian brutalities progressed from the conclusion of the Peace of Nikias until the fall of Melos, the stance of the Athenians became successively more cruel.[32] A few years later, Yvon Garlan posed the question of why Greek slaves are barely present in Greek poleis, despite the fact that intra-Greek warfare produced so many slaves.[33] According to Garlan, although the rules of Greek warfare were theoretically the same for everyone,[34] Greeks of the Classical period exhibited a certain type of repugnance toward the enslavement of fellow Greeks. As Panhellenic sentiments grew stronger in the fourth century, disdain for the continued enslavement of Greeks by Greeks increased, leading to several notable developments. These included the intensification of ransoming practices, which became part of legal obligations, citizen initiatives, or interstate policies. Additionally, in some cases, a third party or the victors themselves sought to undo the

26 Shishova (1968b), 69–70, 92.
27 Kuch (1978).
28 Kuch (1978), 27–41.
29 Kuch (1978), 28–29.
30 Kuch (1978), 31.
31 Kuch (1978), 39.
32 Kuch (1978), 35–36.
33 Garlan (1988), 49–50.
34 Garlan (1988), 47.

consequences of mass enslavements by bringing back the dispersed and enslaved former inhabitants, without significantly harming the interests of the enslavers. According to Garlan, such acts could explain the scarcity of Greek slaves among the Greeks themselves, despite the high numbers of enslaved Greeks.[35]

Anne Bielman also examined the issue of enslavement processes from a diachronic perspective, focusing on ransom mechanisms in Greek warfare.[36] In this way, Bielman demonstrated that the ransoming of captives in the wars of Classical Greece was primarily a private affair. This practice gained increasing significance during the Classical and Hellenistic periods, particularly as a component of interstate diplomatic negotiations. Nevertheless, as Bielman illustrated, enslavement and ransom remained primarily a matter of citizen initiative, contrasting with the practices of the Romans and Carthaginians.[37] The sole study that delves into the processes of mass enslavements in Classical Greece in greater detail is an important article by Vincent J. Rosivach.[38] In this article, Rosivach argues that the large-scale enslavement of Greek males by fellow Greeks began prominently only during the ascendancy of Macedon under Philip II in the mid-fourth century, with previous instances being exceptions rather than the rule.[39] Rosivach's approach to mass enslavements was groundbreaking in its diachronic perspective, though he did not extensively explore the political context behind the enslavement strategies of the warring parties in Classical Greece. Similarly, F. H. Thompson's study on Greek and Roman archaeology of slavery compiled all available information on enslavement processes, regardless of scale, across the Greek and Roman worlds. Thompson listed these processes based on the circumstances under which populations and individuals were enslaved; however, a broader analysis was beyond the scope of his work.[40]

Recent scholarship by Andreau and Descat reached similar conclusions,[41] emphasizing that while the killing of men and the enslavement of women were longstanding practices, significant changes emerged in the fourth century. The ransoming of war captives, rather than their execution, became a central issue in negotiations between warring parties and gained substantial political importance within the cities themselves. Additionally, the authors noted that the enslavement of Greeks by Greeks became increasingly intolerable, as evidenced by Demosthenes' strong condemnation of the Athenians who brought enslaved Olynthians into their homes.[42] Furthermore, Andreau and Descat echoed Garlan's inquiry into the scarcity of Greek slaves in the sources despite the prevalence of inter-Greek conflicts, suggesting that most enslaved Greeks were likely ransomed. This reflects a broader trend in fourth-century warfare, where ransoming on a significant scale began to supplant enslavement at a political level, while the capture

35 Garlan (1988), 50–52.
36 Bielman (1994, 1999).
37 Bielman (1994), 335–341.
38 Rosivach (1999).
39 Rosivach (1999), 136.
40 Thompson (2003), 9–46.
41 Andreau and Descat (2011).
42 Dem. 19.305–6.

of slaves was predominantly directed against non-Greeks during the late fifth and fourth centuries.[43]

An important development in understanding the semantics of mass enslavement in the Ancient World is Kathy Gaca's insightful assessment that *andrapodizing* and its derivatives referred specifically to the process of imposing the victor's dominance over defeated civilian prisoners – primarily young women, children, and young boys, who were the most desirable and manageable captives – rather than the general enslavement of all prisoners of war and civilians without exception, as is often mistakenly assumed.[44] Peter Hunt concluded that despite the liability of captured Greeks to enslavement, Greek warfare did not produce many enslaved Greeks. This was largely because captured Greek males were typically exchanged, while male slaves in Greek poleis were usually non-Greeks. Conversely, the mass enslavement of women and children resulting from internecine Greek warfare did not produce enough slaves to meet the demand of the Greek slave markets.[45] Sarah Forsdyke emphasized that warfare was a source of slaves and questioned whether the enslavement of captives was a primary goal of war or a secondary effect. She noted that the prospect of slaves as part of the booty held a prominent position in the sources and served as a contributory motive in launching ambitious military expeditions.[46] More recently, Kostas Vlassopoulos argued that ancient slavery is studied almost exclusively synchronically, dissociated from narrative history.[47] Perhaps, it would be more correct to state that historical diachrony in the historiography of ancient slavery is used only when it aspires to describe *longue durée* processes such as the emergence and the flowering of slave societies,[48] in contrast to a tighter timescale that runs over several decades, and in which a more synchronic approach in historiography is prevalent. Consequently, the mass enslavements during shorter historical periods, such as the Peloponnesian War or the *Pentekontaetia*, often escape historiographical attention as events of diachronic political and social significance.[49]

This general overview of the historiography of mass enslavements in the Greek world aims to represent both the advances and the discrepancies in the research process. These discrepancies are evident in the thematic discontinuity that characterizes the significant works of Micknat and Volkmann. Both authors approached enslavements from different historiographical perspectives, and their works are not in chronological succession, resulting in a sense of incompleteness in the research. Simultaneously, Kiechle's important article demonstrated an emerging humanistic attitude towards enslavements but did not delve deeply into the study of the enslavements themselves. Additionally, Shishova's work remained largely outside the scope of Western historiography due to the language barrier. More recent scholarly advances, such as those by Bielman, did not focus pri-

43 Andreau and Descat (2011), 55–57.
44 Gaca (2010), 155–158.
45 Hunt (2018), 37–40.
46 Forsdyke (2021), 63–65.
47 Vlassopoulos (2021), 190.
48 E. g., Meyer (1898); Finley (1980).
49 Vlassopoulos (2021), 191–194.

marily on slavery, while Rosivach's work did not inspire more detailed follow-up studies. While many scholars reached significant conclusions, such as the rise of aversion towards the enslavement of Greeks by Greeks and the emergence of mechanisms to avert or undo the results of mass enslavements, a detailed diachronic study of mass enslavements within a clearly determined chronological timeframe is still missing. This is particularly true for the eventful and tumultuous fifth century, encompassing both the *Pentekontaetia* and the Peloponnesian War, in the fashion of *histoire événementielle*. Therefore, this article endeavors to address this gap.

III. Mass Enslavement in the Eyes of Contemporary Authors

For contemporary Greeks, the accepted law of war held that captives were at the mercy of the victor.[50] Since it was widely accepted in Greek thought that all belongings of the conquered became the property of the conqueror, the victor was free to decide the fate of war captives. Consequently, the processes of enslavement revealed the political, strategic, and social priorities of each enslaver. As Xenophon describes in his famous passage, a great wailing spread from the port of Piraeus through the Long Walls to Athens:

> ἐν δὲ ταῖς Ἀθήναις τῆς Παράλου ἀφικομένης νυκτὸς ἐλέγετο ἡ συμφορά, καὶ οἰμωγὴ ἐκ τοῦ Πειραιῶς διὰ τῶν μακρῶν τειχῶν εἰς ἄστυ διῆκεν, ὁ ἕτερος τῷ ἑτέρῳ παραγγέλλων: ὥστ᾽ ἐκείνης τῆς νυκτὸς οὐδεὶς ἐκοιμήθη, οὐ μόνον τοὺς ἀπολωλότας πενθοῦντες, ἀλλὰ πολὺ μᾶλλον ἔτι αὐτοὶ ἑαυτούς, πείσεσθαι νομίζοντες οἷα ἐποίησαν Μηλίους τε Λακεδαιμονίων ἀποίκους ὄντας, κρατήσαντες πολιορκίᾳ, καὶ Ἱστιαιέας καὶ Σκιωναίους καὶ Τορωναίους καὶ Αἰγινήτας καὶ ἄλλους πολλοὺς τῶν Ἑλλήνων.
>
> "It was at night that the Paralus arrived at Athens with tidings of the disaster, and a sound of wailing ran from Piraeus through the long walls to the city, one man passing on the news to another; and during that night no one slept, all mourning, not for the lost alone, but far more for their own selves, thinking that they would suffer such treatment as they had inflicted upon the Melians, colonists of the Lacedaemonians, after reducing them by siege, and upon the Histiaians and Skionaians and Toronaians and Aiginetans and many other Greek peoples."[51]

According to Xenophon, nothing caused more terror to the Athenians than the prospect of death and slavery, which they anticipated for themselves as retribution for their own actions.[52] A fundamental distinction between the mass enslavements carried out by the

50 Xen. *Cyr*. 7.5.73; for similar statements, see Arist. *Pol*. 1255a 5–7; Kiechle (1958), 129–131; Kuch (1978), 27. See note 1 for the other Greek sources, which maintained the same view. As Shishova commented, the enslavement of Greeks by Greeks represented a hard and obvious reality throughout the Classical period, despite the growing tendency among fourth–century Greek authors to condemn it; Shishova (1968a), 7–23.

51 Xen. *Hell*. 2.2.3, trans. Brownson.

52 Schuller (1974), 20–21.

Athenians – frequently mentioned in contemporary sources – and other instances of mass enslavement during the fifth century is that the Athenian actions during the Peloponnesian War, increasingly repressive and punitive as Igelbrink notes, were deeply connected to the repressive nature of their maritime empire.[53] These actions brought significant material gains to the Athenian *demos* and served to punish insubordinate allies who challenged Athenian supremacy. A source from around 380, attributed to Ephorus, mentions that the Athenians were still stigmatized among other Greeks for establishing cleruchies on the lands of defeated enemies.[54] Thus, the enslavements perpetrated by the Athenians, and the retribution they deserved in the eyes of other Greeks, were viewed as more severe, as they were seen as a direct manifestation of Athenian imperial arrogance. Naturally, the concept of retribution among contemporary Greeks extended beyond acts of mass enslavement to include the correction of past injustices and the justification of expansionist policies, as illustrated in the political declarations and campaigns of Agesilaus and Alexander the Great.[55]

The killing of men and the enslavement of women and children were typical features of most slave-owning societies, as noted by Patterson and Rosivach, and these practices were prominent during the Peloponnesian War, predating the emergence of the Atlantic slave trade in the Early Modern Period.[56] As van Wees points out, across biblical and classical texts, the wholesale massacre of a captive population was rare. The common practice involved the massacre of men and the enslavement of women and children.[57] Consequently, fifth-century tragedy depicts only the enslavement of captive women, not men, clearly indicating the accepted practice of killing men while enslaving women and children during wartime.[58] Undoubtedly, men were killed because a large number of captive men posed a significant threat to their captors, as they could cause serious harm if they managed to escape, posing a constant danger.

IV. An Overview of Mass Enslavements During the *Pentekontaetia*

The mass enslavements committed by the Athenians during the *Pentekontaetia* were primarily directed against populations on the fringes of the Greek world. These actions aimed to secure strategic points and strengthen Athenian control in the Aegean and the Thraceward areas. Around 476/5, the Athenians under Kimon enslaved the Persian-held Eion and the Dolopes of Skyros, likely due to their piracy, and settled Athenian cleruchs in these regions.[59] During the expansion of the Delian League, Persian and other Asiatic

53 Igelbrink (2015), 472–474, 475–485.
54 Diod. Sic. 15.23.4; Brunt (1967), 85; Schuller (1974), 21; Stylianou (1998), 228; Hornblower (2011), 239.
55 Low (2007), 40–43.
56 Rosivach (1999), 140; Patterson (1985), 120–121.
57 van Wees (2010), 244.
58 Rosivach (1999), 133–134; some of the most characteristic tragedies where the enslavement of women and children is depicted are the works of Euripides, *Trojan Women*, *Andromache*, *Hecuba*.
59 Thuc. 1.98.1–2.; Rhodes (2007), 40; regarding the dates, see notes 11 and 12.

soldiers captured by Kimon's forces were sold into slavery. However, it remains unclear to what extent they were enslaved, as many were known to have been ransomed for a high price.[60] Notably, the Persian governor of Eion, Boges, knowing that the Athenian forces would kill him and enslave the women and children of his household, chose to kill his wife, children, and concubines to prevent their enslavement.[61] This act made him an object of admiration among his countrymen,[62] indicating that Persian slaves were uncommon at the time, likely due to the political dominance of the Persian Empire.[63] The political identities of the enslavers and the enslaved played a significant role in shaping enslavement practices and the policies of the belligerents. Enslavement and mass murder not only consolidated the victor's power but also upheld strategic status in interstate relations.[64] Boges' decision to avoid dishonorable slavery, thereby becoming a posthumous symbol of pride for Persians, suggests that for representatives of imperial powers, heroic death was preferable to dishonorable enslavement. This aligns with David Lewis' findings that gravestones belonging to Persians and Egyptians found in Athens likely belonged to metics, as these groups are not mentioned as slaves.[65]

A few decades later,[66] the Athenians treated their fellow Greeks similarly by capturing Chaironeia and enslaving its population in 446, although the enslavement of the Chaironeians was short-lived.[67] Notably, only one manuscript of Thucydides mentions that an actual *andrapodismos* took place. However, most scholars agree that enslavement did occur on this occasion.[68] Another instance of enslavement by the Athenians likely happened in the same year, though the exact date remains uncertain. Evidence for this enslavement comes from a funerary inscription honoring Pythion of Megara, dated conjecturally between 446 and 425.[69] The inscription notes that during an Athenian campaign against Megara, which led to the devastation of its countryside, the Athenians captured two thousand *andrapoda*. It is unclear whether these *andrapoda* were slaves who were seized or inhabitants of Megara captured by Athenian forces, and scholarly

60 Plut. *Cim*. 9.2–4; Pritchett (1991), 252.
61 Gaca (2010), 150.
62 Hdt. 7.107.1–2.
63 It is interesting to note the important remark of Balbine Bäbler that characters mocked in Attic comedy belonged to Anatolian ethnicities, subject to the Persian Empire, but they were never Persian themselves. See, Bäbler (1998), 105.
64 van Wees (2010), 253.
65 Lewis (2011), 104.
66 The account of the mass enslavement of almost 5,000 *nothoi* Athenians as a result of Pericles' controversial Citizenship Law, narrated solely by Plutarch (Per. 37.4), has long been disproven by generations of scholars as demonstrably false. Philochorus (frag. 119, Jacoby) and other earlier sources do not mention any enslavement of former citizens who were shown not to have both parents as Athenians. Karl Julius Beloch stated that the dreadful tale, according to which a quarter of the civil population of Attica at that time was deprived of its rights or even sold into slavery, must "disappear from Greek history." See Beloch (1886), 79; Gomme (1934), 135; Patterson (1981), 95–96, 122–123.
67 Thuc. 1.113.1–4.
68 Kagan (1968), 123; while modern scholars agree that this enslavement occurred, Gomme adds that neither Hellanicus nor Theopompus mention any kind of enslavement. See, Gomme (1945), 338; Rosivach (1999), 133.
69 IG I³ 1353.

opinion is divided on this issue.[70] Based on Thucydides' use of the term, it would be safer to assume that *andrapoda* refers to both enslaved formerly free persons and captured slaves in this context.[71] A similar, though not uncommon, example is the enslavement of Phaedo, a young high-born aristocrat, during the Spartan campaign against Elis circa 400, after the Peloponnesian War.[72] Xenophon explicitly uses the term *andrapoda* to describe the enslaved Eleans, without specifying their previous status.[73]

While inter-Greek mass enslavements were infrequent during this period, they did occur, especially when the victor had an overwhelming military advantage and the threat of brutal reprisals was real. One example is the enslavement of the Mycenaeans by the Argives sometime in the 460s, following an earthquake in Sparta that led to the great helot revolt. With Sparta unable to intervene on behalf of the Mycenaeans, the conflict heavily favored the Argives.[74] It is worth considering that around the same time as the purported enslavement of the Mycenaeans by the Argives, the Lacedaemonians imposed a particular clause on the departing Messenian rebels and former helots, following their conditional surrender at Ithome. According to Thucydides, the Messenian rebels agreed to evacuate Ithome with their families on the condition that any former helot who returned to the Peloponnese would automatically become the slave of whoever captured him.[75] Notably, the Spartans extended this slaving zone to the entire Peloponnese, well beyond their own state boundaries. It was assumed that any Peloponnesian who captured a former helot could rightfully own him, a condition that neither the Spartans nor their Peloponnesian allies seemed to find controversial or objectionable. In conjunction with this observation, it is important to note that during the auction following the Hermocopidae scandal in Athens in 414/413, among the confiscated property of those accused of profaning the Mysteries, there was a slave identified as *Μεσσένιος ἀνέρ*, part of a small group of Greek slaves.[76] Notably, despite Athens' official policy of supporting exiled Messenians, the presence of an individual Messenian slave – possibly from Spartan territory – was not viewed as problematic. This suggests that, in cases of individual enslavement, private property rights often took precedence over political considerations among contemporary Greeks. Therefore, it becomes understandable why the Spartans chose not to recognize the rebels as a unified political group but instead treated them as individuals subject to punishment.

Such was the dynamic of potential enslavement between warring factions in the fifth century that only a few years after the Messenians and former helots settled in Nafpaktos, they forced the population of Oiniadai to abandon their polis under the threat of

70 Pritchett (1991), 172; Osborne and Rhodes (2017), 170.

71 Thuc. 8.28.4; Thucydides groups together all the inhabitants of Iasos, by calling them *andrapoda*, denoting however their previous status; Pritchett (1991), 170; Hornblower (2008), 834.

72 Diog. Laert. 2.31, 2.105; Aul. Gell. 2.18; Suda Φ 154; Dušanić (1993), 83–97; Bielman (1994), 293; Nails (2002), 231.

73 Xen. *Hell.* 3.2.26.

74 Diod. Sic. 11.65.5; Paus. 2.16.5, 7.25.5–6; Piérart (2004), 603, 612. It should be noted that only Diodorus mentions an enslavement of the Mycenaeans, while Pausanias mentions a forced expulsion.

75 Thuc. 1.103.1–2.

76 IG I^3 430.

exterminating the male population and enslaving the women and children, as reported by Pausanias, a much later source.[77] Evidently, the former helots, now allies of the Athenians, were prepared to massacre and enslave a defeated enemy, despite having lived as slaves themselves. The next case of enslavement involves the Athenian intervention in western Greece around 437, a few years before the start of the Peloponnesian War. During this intervention, the Amphilochians, with the assistance of the Athenians and neighboring Akarnanians, enslaved the Ambrakian inhabitants of Argos Amphilochikon.[78] Notably, the Amphilochians enslaved their former fellow citizens by relying on external military support. This act of *andrapodismos* sparked strong enmity between the Ambrakians and the Amphilochians, as Thucydides clearly states, due to the enslavement of the Ambrakians by the Amphilochians. This incident demonstrates how the collective memory of enslavement could fuel future retribution, as the Ambrakians later attempted, though unsuccessfully, to retaliate against the Amphilochians by launching a military campaign.[79]

V. Mass Enslavements During the Archidamian War and the Case of Melos

There are eight confirmed cases of mass enslavement during the Archidamian War, with four involving the Athenians as the enslavers, often followed by the establishment of cleruchies on the lands of the conquered populations. Contentious cases, where it is uncertain whether enslavement occurred, such as at Mylai or during Demosthenes' campaign in Aetolia, will not be discussed here. Additionally, some instances of enslavement during this period were not recorded, such as the case which involved Philoxenus the Kytherian, who later became a prominent dithyrambic poet. Philoxenus was enslaved as a child in the first decade of the Peloponnesian War, although the evidence surrounding his enslavement is fragmentary and contradictory.[80] Starting with the sale of Ambrakian and Leukadian colonists, sent by the Corinthians to Epidamnos in 435, by the Korkyraians,[81] it is worth examining the Korkyraians' decision to sell the non-Corinthian colonists as slaves while sparing the Corinthians. As Thucydides mentions:

> (…) τῇ δὲ αὐτῇ ἡμέρᾳ αὐτοῖς ξυνέβη καὶ τοὺς τὴν Ἐπίδαμνον πολιορκοῦντας παραστήσασθαι ὁμολογίᾳ ὥστε τοὺς μὲν ἐπήλυδας ἀποδόσθαι, Κορινθίους δὲ δήσαντας ἔχειν ἕως ἂν ἄλλο τι δόξῃ.

77 Paus. 4.25.2; Kiechle (1958), 131; Gehrke and Wirbelauer (2004), 368.
78 Gehrke, (1985), 34. Regarding the uncertainty of the dates see note 2.
79 Thuc. 2.68.9.
80 Suda Φ 393; *Marm. Par.* 69; Thuc. 4.53–4.54; Campbell (1993), 138–139; Rotstein (2016), 33, 46. According to the Parian Marble, Philoxenus died aged 55 around 380/379. This means that he was born around 435/434 and was likely enslaved in 424, as a 10-year-old child, and was bought and raised in slavery. The problem is that Thucydides does not state that an enslavement took place on Kythera, while the Suda mentions that the child Philoxenus was enslaved by the Lacedaemonians, a fact that most scholars consider incorrect.
81 Thuc. 1.26.1.

> "(…) the same day had seen Epidamnos compelled by its besiegers to capitulate; the conditions being that the foreigners (Ambrakians and Leukadians) should be sold, and the Corinthians kept as prisoners of war, till their fate should be otherwise decided."[82]

From Thucydides' description, it is evident that the Korkyraians enslaved only the non-Corinthian colonists – specifically, the Ambrakians and Leukadians – while retaining the Corinthian colonists for negotiation purposes. This decision reflects the strategic rationale behind Greek enslavement practices. The Corinthian colonists represented the community directly at war with Korkyra, whereas Ambrakia and Leukas were subordinate allies; thus, negotiations did not involve them. Consequently, the Corinthian captives were valuable bargaining chips for future negotiations. Furthermore, the enslavement and sale of the Ambrakian and Leukadian colonists could be viewed as an exemplary punishment for those who might consider aiding the Corinthians. From a diplomatic standpoint, the Corinthian captives held considerable value for the Korkyraians in their conflict with their adversarial metropolis.

A similar situation occurred on the same day when, following their victory in the naval battle of Leukimme, the Korkyraians captured the Corinthians and executed the non-Corinthian captives.[83] The reasons for the Korkyraians' decision to execute captives in one instance and enslave them in another can only be speculated upon. One plausible explanation is that captives from a naval battle did not include non-combatants, unlike the settlers of Epidamnos. Another reason might be that enslaving and subsequently selling war captives could lead to their future release, particularly if they were bought as experienced naval crews. Such a scenario would pose a potential threat to the Korkyraians due to the captives' military expertise. As will become apparent, war captives were rarely enslaved precisely because of the future danger they could represent to their captors. In both essentially simultaneous instances, the Korkyraians sought to impose exemplary punishment on the allies of the Corinthians. However, they handled the war captives differently on these two occasions, possibly considering the potential future repercussions of their actions.

The treatment of Corinthian captives remained the same in both instances, similar to how the Corinthians treated Korkyraian captives following the naval battle at Sybota in 433. During that conflict, the Corinthians captured approximately 1,050 members of the Korkyraian crews, of whom 800 were slaves.[84] As Thucydides recounts:

> (…) οἱ δὲ Κορίνθιοι ἀποπλέοντες ἐπ᾽ οἴκου Ἀνακτόριον, ὅ ἐστιν ἐπὶ τῷ στόματι τοῦ Ἀμπρακικοῦ κόλπου, εἶλον ἀπάτῃ (ἦν δὲ κοινὸν Κερκυραίων καὶ ἐκείνων) καὶ καταστήσαντες ἐν αὐτῷ Κορινθίους οἰκήτορας ἀνεχώρησαν ἐπ᾽ οἴκου, καὶ τῶν Κερκυραίων ὀκτακοσίους μὲν οἳ ἦσαν δοῦλοι ἀπέδοντο, πεντήκοντα δὲ καὶ διακοσίους δήσαντες ἐφύλασσον καὶ ἐν θεραπείᾳ εἶχον πολλῇ, ὅπως αὐτοῖς

82 Thuc. 1.29.5, trans. Crawley.
83 Thuc. 1.30.1; Kagan (1969), 226–227.
84 Hunt (1998), 84.

τὴν Κέρκυραν ἀναχωρήσαντες προσποιήσειαν: ἐτύγχανον δὲ καὶ δυνάμει αὐτῶν οἱ πλείους πρῶτοι ὄντες τῆς πόλεως.

"(…) the Corinthians on the voyage home took Anaktorion, which stands at the entrance of the Ambrakian Gulf. The place was taken by treachery, being common ground to the Korkyraians and Corinthians. After establishing Corinthian settlers there, they returned home. Eight hundred of the Korkyraians were slaves; these they sold; two hundred and fifty they retained in captivity, and treated with great attention, in the hope that they might bring over their country to Corinth on their return; most of them being, as it happened, men of very high position in Korkyra."[85]

The Corinthians sold the 800 slaves who were part of the Korkyraian crews, while retaining the captured Korkyraians as hostages for future negotiations.[86] Notably, the 250 Korkyraian citizens – free members of the crews – were not enslaved; instead, they were kept for bargaining purposes, as in previous instances. Thucydides notes that these crew members were among the most prominent citizens of Korkyra, highlighting why the Corinthians refrained from enslaving the main adversaries of the opposing side. It is likely that the 800 enslaved individuals were rowers, while the 250 free citizens, who belonged to the upper echelons of Korkyraian society, likely comprised the corps of officers and marines aboard the Korkyraian ships.

It is evident that the belligerents chose to enslave and sell those prisoners whose enslavement was not politically detrimental to them, while also offering financial benefits. By avoiding the execution or enslavement of each other's citizens, both the Korkyraians and Corinthians aimed to secure political advantages from their adversaries. In the case of the Korkyraian captives, this strategy may have benefited the Corinthians and their Peloponnesian allies, as those prisoners, once freed, became central figures in the stasis of 427.[87] These uprisings sought to replace Korkyra's democratic government with an oligarchy sympathetic to the Peloponnesians and distanced from Athens.[88] The conflict between Corinth and Korkyra clearly illustrates that enslavement practices carried significant political implications. The two-year siege of Plataiai (429–427) further illuminates the complexities of enslavement, revealing the interplay of revenge, historical claims, and the need for an *ad hoc* system of diplomatic justice in interstate relations. The Spartans' decision to try the Plataians highlights their need to legitimize the subsequent execution of the captured Plataian and Athenian men and the enslavement of Plataian women. Anticipating their precarious situation following the reckless execution of Theban prisoners, the Plataians, before being besieged by the Spartans and Thebans, evacuated most of their population – including nearly all women, children, and the elderly – to Athens. They were acutely aware of the fate that awaited them should

85 Thuc. 1.55.1, trans. Crawley.
86 Panagopoulos (1978), 32–33.
87 Thuc. 3.70.1; Shishova (1968b), 70.
88 Kagan (1974), 175–176.

Plataiai fall to the enemy.[89] Furthermore, they understood that, after the execution of the prisoners, the Thebans – long-standing rivals – and their Peloponnesian allies would likely seek the harshest and most dishonorable punishment for their opponents. Before the Spartan siege began, only 400 Plataians, 80 Athenians, and 110 women, referred to as *sitopoioi* (who were responsible for providing food for the besieged), remained in Plataiai.[90]

Regarding these women, there is scholarly debate over whether they were slaves or free. Hunt argues that these women were slaves.[91] Gomme supports this view, citing Thucydides' reference that no one, whether free or slave, remained within the walls, which implies that the women were slaves.[92] In contrast, Panagopoulos contends that these women were probably free, noting that Thucydides specifies that the *sitopoioi* women were enslaved after the conquest of Plataiai.[93] Following the condemnation and execution of the Plataian and Athenian captives – a process framed by the Spartans as just and legitimate – the victors sold the women as slaves. This pattern again underscores that prisoners perceived as politically less threatening were enslaved, while those considered more dangerous were executed or held as hostages. This entire discussion is further clarified by Apollodorus' speech *Against Neaira*, dated between 343 and 340.[94] Although the manuscript has certain uncertainties – the speaker inaccurately claims that the siege lasted ten years instead of two and asserts that there was no organized evacuation, contrary to Thucydides' account[95] – it does provide insight into fourth-century Athenian perceptions. It indicates that the murder of free male Plataians and the enslavement of free women and children occurred without specific mention of slaves.[96] Therefore, it can be reasonably concluded that the *sitopoioi* women were indeed free or predominantly free.

In the case of Plataiai, it was of utmost importance for the Peloponnesians in general, and the Spartans in particular, to legitimize themselves as the rightful defenders of an interstate order based on justice, in contrast to the Athenians, who arbitrarily chose to massacre and enslave their defeated enemies. A key consequence of this approach was that the Plataians were judged and indicted as a collective group, subjected to exemplary punishment that included both execution and enslavement, to serve as a public demonstration of retribution for their alleged misdeeds.[97] As became evident during the conflict, especially during the Ionian War, the Spartans and their Peloponnesian allies were keen to portray themselves as champions of interstate order and justice among the Greeks. This political stance significantly affected how the Athenians were perceived

89 Thuc. 2.6.4.
90 Thuc. 2.78.3–4.
91 Hunt (2018b), 70.
92 Gomme (1956), 212.
93 Thuc. 3.68.2; Panagopoulos (1978), 41.
94 Kapparis (1999), 28.
95 Thuc. 2.6.4.
96 Dem. 59.102–103.
97 Thuc. 2.78.4; Kiechle (1958), 141–142; see note 2.

by other Greek states, a perception well understood by the Athenians themselves, as demonstrated by the episode involving the arrival of the *Paralus*.

The Athenians' approach to mass murder and enslavement grew increasingly severe during the Archidamian War and the period leading up to the Sicilian Expedition. This harshness was a significant aspect of their colonization policy, which not only demonstrated the power of the Athenian Empire but, as has been shown, also provided material benefits to the Athenian *demos*.[98] The Athenians not only massacred and enslaved numerous small communities but nearly exterminated the inhabitants of Lesbos during the Mytilenaian revolt. A major argument for the exemplary punishment of the Mytilenaians – which was ultimately not carried out – was their breach of trust, given their privileged relationship with Athens.[99] Had the initial proposal to punish the inhabitants of Lesbos collectively for their defection in 428/427 prevailed, the Athenians would have committed the largest massacre of a Greek population in the war, accompanied by enslavement.[100] As Thucydides reports, the original decision, supported by Kleon, was to punish the Mytilenaians collectively by executing the men and enslaving the women and children:

> (…) περὶ δὲ τῶν ἀνδρῶν γνώμας ἐποιοῦντο, καὶ ὑπὸ ὀργῆς ἔδοξεν αὐτοῖς οὐ τοὺς παρόντας μόνον ἀποκτεῖναι, ἀλλὰ καὶ τοὺς ἅπαντας Μυτιληναίους ὅσοι ἡβῶσι, παῖδας δὲ καὶ γυναῖκας ἀνδραποδίσαι, ἐπικαλοῦντες τήν τε ἄλλην ἀπόστασιν ὅτι οὐκ ἀρχόμενοι ὥσπερ οἱ ἄλλοι ἐποιήσαντο, καὶ προσξυνελάβοντο οὐκ ἐλάχιστον τῆς ὁρμῆς αἱ Πελοποννησίων νῆες ἐς Ἰωνίαν ἐκείνοις βοηθοὶ τολμήσασαι παρακινδυνεῦσαι: οὐ γὰρ ἀπὸ βραχείας διανοίας ἐδόκουν τὴν ἀπόστασιν ποιήσασθαι.
>
> "(…) and after deliberating as to what they should do with the former, in the fury of the moment determined to put to death not only the prisoners at Athens, but the whole adult male population of Mitylene, and to make slaves of the women and children. It was remarked that Mytilene had revolted without being, like the rest, subjected to the empire; and what above all swelled the wrath of the Athenians was the fact of the Peloponnesian fleet having ventured over to Ionia to her support, a fact which was held to argue a long-meditated rebellion."[101]

Although the massacre and enslavement ultimately did not occur, due to the intervention of Diodotus,[102] Lesbos still faced material exploitation through the establishment of Athenian cleruchies on the island, which transformed the local inhabitants into leaseholders. However, this arrangement appears to have been short-lived.[103]

Another notable instance of enslavement, marking the complete defeat of the oligarchic party in Korkyra, occurred in 425, when the Korkyraian *demos* was fighting the

98 Hornblower (2011), 239.
99 Figueira (1991), 193–194; van Wees (2010), 254.
100 Shishova (1968b), 65; Kagan (1974), 155.
101 Thuc. 3.36.2, trans. Crawley.
102 Thuc. 3.49.1; Kagan (1974), 163.
103 Zelnick–Abramovitz (2004), 331; Moreno (2007), 317–318.

oligarchs fortified on Mount Istone.[104] Following the defeat and extermination of the oligarchs by their democratic opponents at Istone, and with the consent of their Athenian allies, the women of the oligarchs were enslaved by the victorious Korkyraian *demos* and were most likely sold.[105] This example demonstrates that the enslavement of women was a continuation of a common practice prevalent, as evidenced, during the *Pentekontaetia*. Political considerations, if any, influenced the extent of the enslavements, as well as the need to demonstrate power and impose exemplary punishment on the defeated side.

The following year, in 424, Nikias, capitalizing on Athenian naval superiority, captured Thyreatis in Kynouria. According to Diodorus, the Athenians enslaved the Aiginetans of Thyreatis; the reason for this is fairly straightforward. The Aiginetans were fierce rivals of the Athenians and had been allowed by the Lacedaemonians to settle in Thyreatis following their expulsion from their island. This relocation was intended to create future problems for the Argives, as Thyreatis had been a point of contention between Argos and Sparta since the Archaic Period.[106] Decades earlier, the Athenians had implemented a similar strategy by settling the Messenian former helots in Nafpaktos, aware that establishing a politically influential Messenian diaspora near Peloponnese would cause significant issues for the Spartans. It is important to note that Thucydides' account differs from that of Diodorus, making the entire incident contentious, as seen in Thucydides' initial example:

> ἐν τούτῳ δὲ οἱ Ἀθηναῖοι κατασχόντες καὶ χωρήσαντες εὐθὺς πάσῃ τῇ στρατιᾷ αἱροῦσι τὴν Θυρέαν. καὶ τήν τε πόλιν κατέκαυσαν καὶ τὰ ἐνόντα ἐξεπόρθησαν, τούς τε Αἰγινήτας, ὅσοι μὴ ἐν χερσὶ διεφθάρησαν, ἄγοντες ἀφίκοντο ἐς τὰς Ἀθήνας (…) Αἰγινήτας δὲ ἀποκτεῖναι πάντας ὅσοι ἑάλωσαν διὰ τὴν προτέραν αἰεί ποτε ἔχθραν (…)
>
> "Meanwhile the Athenians landed, and instantly advanced with all their forces and took Thyrea. The town they burnt, pillaging what was in it; the Aiginetans who were not slain in action they took with them to Athens, (…) the Aiginetans captured to be all put to death, on account of the old inveterate feud (…)"[107]

On the contrary, Diodorus states:

> καὶ Θυρέας μὲν κειμένας ἐν τοῖς μεθορίοις τῆς Λακωνικῆς καὶ τῆς Ἀργείας ἐκπολιορκήσας ἐξηνδραποδίσατο καὶ κατέσκαψε, τοὺς δ᾽ ἐν αὐτῇ κατοικοῦντας Αἰγινήτας καὶ τὸν φρούραρχον Τάνταλον Σπαρτιάτην ζωγρήσας ἀπήγαγεν εἰς τὰς Ἀθήνας. οἱ δὲ Ἀθηναῖοι τὸν μὲν Τάνταλον δήσαντες ἐφύλαττον μετὰ τῶν ἄλλων αἰχμαλώτων καὶ τοὺς Αἰγινήτας.

104 Thuc. 4.48.5; Kagan (1974), 255–256.
105 Thuc. 4.48.4.
106 Cartledge (2002), 109, 120–122.
107 Thuc. 4.57.3–4, trans. Crawley.

> "And Thyrea, which lies on the border between Laconia and Argolis, he took by siege, making slaves of its inhabitants, and razed it to the ground; and the Aiginetans, who inhabited the city, together with the commander of the garrison, Tantalus the Spartan, he took captive and carried off to Athens. And the Athenians fettered Tantalus and kept him under guard together with the other prisoners, as well as the Aiginetans."[108]

In the Greek text, Thucydides does not use a derivative of the word *andrapodizein*; instead, he merely mentions the transport of the captured Aiginetans to Athens, without specifying whether they were enslaved. In contrast, Diodorus does use a derivative of that word, implying enslavement. Thucydides further asserts that the Athenians killed all the Aiginetans because they had long regarded them as hated enemies.[109]

It remains unclear whether only the men were executed as representatives of the community, and whether the women and children were sold as slaves, as this is not specified in the original text. Ancient authors might have assumed this was the case and therefore did not mention it explicitly. Rosivach supports Diodorus' account, suggesting that at least part of the population was enslaved.[110] It is reasonable to assume that the Athenians did not execute the women and children but rather enslaved and sold them. However, the fate of the Aeginetan women and children is uncertain. Diodorus, possibly drawing from Ephorus,[111] claimed that enslavement occurred, while Thucydides states that all the male Aiginetans were executed, without providing details on the women and children. In this context, one might conclude that Thucydides was not concerned with detailing the fate of the Aeginetan women and children, and that Diodorus' account is likely closer to the truth.

One of the most egregious acts of enslavement was committed by Kleon and the Athenians during the recapture of the Chalcidian city of Torone in 422. On this occasion, the Toronaian women and children were enslaved and subsequently sold,[112] while the Toronaian men were exchanged for prisoners held by Olynthos as part of the Peace of Nikias.[113] As it turned out, there were many Athenian prisoners, who were exchanged on a one-to-one basis. The ruthless treatment of the Toronaian women and children by Kleon, and the Athenian strategy of exchanging the captured Toronaian men and other Chalcidians for Athenians previously captured in the Peloponnesian War, highlights the cynicism and calculated logic underpinning these enslavement practices. The Athenians sold the Toronaian women and children as booty for immediate profit, while retaining the male prisoners to exchange for captured Athenians and possibly Chalcidian allies. This pattern illustrates once again that the more politically valuable members of a subjugated community – the men – were kept as bargaining chips, while the women and children were sold immediately. Gomme and Lazenby suggest that there is evidence in-

108 Diod. Sic. 12.65.9, trans. Oldfather.
109 Thuc. 4.57.4.
110 Rosivach (1999), 131.
111 Panagopoulos (1978), 88.
112 Panagopoulos (1978), 101.
113 Panagopoulos (1978), 100; Lazenby (2004), 101.

dicating that at least some of the women and children were later bought and released.[114] Regarding Torone, there is no record of whether the Athenians established a cleruchy in the area following the displacement of the Toronaians. Older German historians had speculated that this was likely, despite the absence of direct evidence, since the city is not mentioned in the tributary lists after its rebellion.[115] This view is shared by both Figueira and Igelbrink, who argue that Torone may have received a colony. Igelbrink emphasizes that, as part of the Peace of Nikias, Torone was considered part of Athenian possessions, which could have led to the establishment of Athenian settlers.[116]

Brasidas was acutely aware of the fate that awaited Skione and Mende if they were recaptured by Athens. Following the precedent set by the Athenians and the Plataians before the two-year siege of Plataiai, he transported the women and children of Skione and Mende to Olynthos.[117] This strategy not only protected non-combatants but also reduced the number of people under siege, thereby making the defense of the two cities more manageable. In the summer of 421, just a few months after the Peace of Nikias was enacted, Skione fell into Athenian hands after a determined resistance. The punishment inflicted by the Athenians on the Skionaians was particularly severe. As Thucydides recounts:

> περὶ δὲ τοὺς αὐτοὺς χρόνους τοῦ θέρους τούτου Σκιωναίους μὲν Ἀθηναῖοι ἐκπολιορκήσαντες ἀπέκτειναν τοὺς ἡβῶντας, παῖδας δὲ καὶ γυναῖκας ἠνδραπόδισαν, καὶ τὴν γῆν Πλαταιεῦσιν ἔδοσαν νέμεσθαι (…)
>
> "About the same time that summer, Athens succeeded in reducing Skione, executed the adult males, and enslaved the women and children. They then allocated the land to the Plataeans to inhabit (…)"[118]

There is, of course, a contradiction here that, as has been rightly observed, Thucydides does not explain. As noted earlier, Thucydides states that the women and children of Skione were transported by Brasidas to the safety of Olynthos as early as the year of Skione's defection. However, he later mentions that the women and children of Skione were enslaved. It is noteworthy that Thucydides falls into such a contradiction. Panagopoulos suggests that Skione was not entirely evacuated of women and children; rather, some remained in the city, although most had left.[119] This view aligns with that of Anthony Andrewes, who also believed that undoubtedly some women remained, similar to the situation at Plataiai.[120] One interesting point is that one of the provisions of the Peace

114 Gomme (1956), 632; Lazenby (2004), 101, 275.
115 Kirchoff (1874), 10–11; Kius (1888), 18.
116 Thuc. 5.18.5; Figueira (1991), 224; Igelbrink (2015), 362.
117 Thuc. 4.123.4.
118 Thuc. 5.32.1, trans. Crawley.
119 Thuc. 5.18.8. Panagopoulos (1978), 104.
120 Gomme, Andrewes, and Dover (1970), 30. As underlined by Antony Andrewes: "The women and the children had been removed to safety, though some women remained, as at Plataea. Thucydides clearly did not

of Nikias stipulated that the Athenians had the right to treat the Skionaians as they saw fit, indicating that their fate had been predetermined long before.[121] The Athenians' treatment of the Skionaians is comparable to their treatment of the Melians five years later. Isocrates mentions that the Athenians were accused of inhumane treatment of both the Skionaians and the Melians at the time of writing. These two cases of mass executions and enslavements are indeed placed in the same context. Isocrates attempted to defend the Athenians' actions by arguing that, in reality, the Athenians intended to do good rather than harm and had no desire to enrich themselves at the expense of the enslaved. He uses the example of the relocation of the exiled Plataians to Skione to equate the enslavement of the Skionaians with the expulsion of the Plataians, thereby portraying the Athenians' actions as acts of benevolence toward fellow Greeks, which served to counterbalance the more materialistic motives behind their atrocities.[122] Christian Igelbrink characterizes the subjugation of Skione as the first documented case in which a colony was created through military force.[123] Notably, Adolf Kirchhoff, drawing on Hellanicus and the Scholiast on Aristophanes, offered an insightful interpretation, arguing that the liberated slaves from the Arginusae campaign were enrolled as Plataians, given plots of land in Skione, and incorporated as fellow citizens.[124] It is remarkable that former slaves were rewarded with the land of the punished Skionaians for their service in the salvation of Athens.

Moving to the next case, it is notable that the Athenians chose to collectively punish Torone, Skione, and Melos, but not Mende. This distinction is significant, as Mende's revolt from the Athenian Empire was not supported by the general population of the Chalcidian city but was orchestrated by a small circle of oligarchs.[125] Consequently, after Nikias easily recaptured the city,[126] the Athenians did not impose collective punishment on the inhabitants of Mende, unlike in other instances. Panagopoulos suggests that the women and children of Mende, who had been relocated to Olynthos by Brasidas, likely returned to their city following the conclusion of the Peace of Nikias.[127] Another significant aspect of this episode is that the Peace of Nikias included a clause stipulating that if the helots revolted against Sparta, the Athenians would provide assistance.[128] Although there was no reciprocal obligation for the Spartans, the Spartans explicitly recognized, as part of the Peace of Nikias, that the Athenians had the right to deal with the revolted Skionaians and other minor revolted allies as they deemed appropriate once peace was concluded.[129] Therefore, it can be argued that, concerning the status of slavery and enslavement, both

have 4.123.4 in mind when he wrote this, and was probably not in Thrace when Skione fell; he is remembering only the terms of Kleon's resolution."

121 Thuc. 5.18.8.
122 Isoc. *Paneg.* 4.100, 109.
123 Igelbrink (2015), 366.
124 Schol. Ar. *Ran.* 692–694; Hellanicus *Atthis* 93.2; Kirchoff (1874), 9–10; Igelbrink (2015), 366–367.
125 Thuc. 4.130.7; Kagan (1974), 312–313.
126 Lazenby (2004), 99.
127 Panagopoulos (1978), 107.
128 Thuc. 5.23.3.
129 Thuc. 5.18.8.

the Athenians and Spartans explicitly acknowledged each other's right to manage their revolted subjects, whether they were slaves or not, at their own discretion.

The mass execution of the men of Melos and the enslavement of the Melian women and children represented the peak of Athenian imperial arrogance in the Aegean, occurring just one year before the ill-fated Sicilian Expedition. Although both sides in the Peloponnesian War committed atrocities, the case of Melos is particularly indicative of the brutal manner in which the Athenians exercised their imperial power, driven by the belief that Melos' independence would make Athens appear weak.[130] After a siege, and possibly due to treason, the Athenians captured Melos, executed the men, enslaved the women and children, and handed over the island to 500 Athenian settlers.[131] The conquest of Melos and its forced integration into Athenian territories brought substantial material benefits to the Athenian *demos*. Alfonso Moreno estimated that the population of Melos was significant enough to require a force of 38 triremes and 3,000 armed men to capture the island, suggesting a carrying capacity of around 5,000 people. The land was then distributed among 500 cleruchs to maximize the profit from the newly acquired territory.[132] As Moreno argues, the Athenians engaged in deliberate depopulation of regions and replaced the local population with comparatively fewer cleruchs to enhance economic returns. The expropriation of land from the expelled Histiaians in 446 is a notable example of this strategy,[133] aimed at maximizing profits from the land.[134]

The case of Melos is remembered not only for its brutality, as reflected in later writings, but also because it reveals the conventions of contemporary enslavement practices, which Alkibiades apparently violated. In a speech falsely attributed to Andokides – given that he would have been too young to deliver it[135] – the unknown author directly blames Alkibiades for the reckless act of fathering a child with an enslaved woman. Although the speech is pseudonymous, it highlights the reason why, during the Peloponnesian War, a city typically did not integrate the population it enslaved from another polis. Pseudo-Andokides emphasizes in his accusation that Alkibiades was the one who proposed enslaving the Melians and then purchased an enslaved Melian woman from the captives. This action violated the convention of reselling enslaved people, as enslavers avoided integrating enslaved individuals into their own city's population for obvious reasons. Alkibiades fathered a child who would grow to hate his own polis, knowing that his father was responsible for the death of his maternal grandparents. Thus, Athens potentially harbored an enemy within its walls.[136] This account is corroborated by Plutarch, who describes Alkibiades' action in a more positive light, noting that it was seen as an act of philanthropy by the Athenians.[137]

130 van Wees (2010), 253.
131 Thuc. 5.116.2–4; Igelbrink (2015), 375.
132 Moreno (2007), 317.
133 Thuc. 1.114.
134 Moreno (2009), 215.
135 Ps.-Andoc. *Alc.*; Gagarin and MacDowell (1998), 159–161.
136 Ps.-Andoc. *Alc.* 4.22–23.5.
137 Plut. *Alc.* 16.3–5.

Nevertheless, Shishova asserts that the assessment of Pseudo-Andokides is closer to the truth, as many Athenians felt immense indignation and shame for this crime for a very long time.[138] It is also important to note that the speeches of Pseudo-Andokides were composed after the Athenian defeat, while Alkibiades was undoubtedly called *philanthropos* only as long as he remained in favor with the Athenians. As a result, it is particularly interesting to observe the psychological discrepancy in how the Athenians viewed the enslavements they committed. On one hand, by referring to Alkibiades as *philanthropos*, they tended to belittle and dehumanize the enslaved Melians, implicitly acknowledging the enormity of their crime. On the other hand, the shame they felt was likely due to their exceptionally poor standing in the collective memory of the other Greeks, and the political implications that arose from it. This awareness aligns with the sentiments expressed by Euripides in *Trojan Women*, first performed in 415, where he has Poseidon explicitly condemn the destruction of Greek poleis, foreseeing the imminent threat of future retribution against the perpetrators.[139]

VI. The Mass Enslavements During the Sicilian Expedition and its Aftermath

As is well known, the Sicilian campaign began under the worst possible omens for the Athenians, as it became clear that the Segestans did not possess the money they had promised.[140] Consequently, the Athenians were compelled to finance the costly campaign through alternative means. The Athenian fleet, led by Nikias and accompanied by merchant ships, sailed along the northern coast of Sicily and captured the Sicanian town of Hykkara, which, although not at war with the Athenians, was an enemy of their Segestan allies. To understand how profitable the enslavement of the Hykkarans was, it is important to note that the Athenians were able to sell the inhabitants of this town for a total of 120 talents.[141] Moses Finley, based on this sum, estimated that at least 7,500 people must have been enslaved.[142] The significance of this amount becomes clear when we consider that Athens received a maximum of 400 talents annually from the allies of the Delian League. Thucydides noted at the beginning of his work that Athens received 600 talents per year as an alliance tax.[143] Russell Meiggs believed that between 445 and 431, the allied tax never exceeded 400 talents annually.[144] Even if we accept the higher amount mentioned by Thucydides, which likely relates to wartime payments, the Athenians acquired almost one-fifth of the annual tribute from the cities of the Delian League by enslaving just a single town.

138 Shishova (1968b), 84.
139 Eur. *Tro*. 95–97; Kiechle (1958), 143.
140 Kallet (2001), 27–31, 70.
141 Thuc. 6.62.2–5.
142 Finley (1962), 58.
143 Thuc. 2.13.3.
144 Meiggs (1972), 253.

But what was the political nature of the wholesale enslavement of such a town? Why did the Athenians target this settlement and not another? As seen in numerous examples from the *Pentekontaetia*, one of the key characteristics of the enslavement of a settlement was its political significance and strategic isolation. Hykkara was a Sicanian city and the Sicanians were neither Greeks nor Carthaginians and were ethnically distinct from the Segestans, who were Elymians. The Athenians chose to enslave this particular city because it was a rival to their allies and, due to its political isolation, would not pose a long-term threat. If the Athenians had enslaved a Greek city in Sicily, they risked alienating the other Sicilian Greeks, who were already coldly disposed towards Athenian intervention.[145] Moreover, the Athenians avoided attacking or enslaving Carthaginian cities in Sicily, as such actions could have led to war with Carthage, which would have been highly detrimental to their interests. Hykkara was thus an ideal target: it did not belong to any significant alliance networks that could be mobilized for its defense and was politically and diplomatically isolated from other cities. An important aspect of this case is that the Athenians enslaved the entire population of Hykkara without executing the men. According to Panagopoulos, Hykkara is clearly the first case during the Peloponnesian War where the primary motivation for enslavement was economic.[146] The enslaved Hykkarans were not all sold to third parties, but many of them became slaves of Athenian soldiers and accordingly participated in the siege of Syracuse.[147] Among those enslaved was the famous courtesan Lais, born in Hykkara according to various writers, enslaved by the Athenians and subsequently brought to mainland Greece.[148] It is particularly intriguing to consider how her life, and the lives of other enslaved individuals, evolved following their transition from freedom to slavery. Undeniably, her case, like that of Philoxenus, was exceptional.

Ancient historians seldom detailed the subsequent fate of enslaved individuals and captives unless their circumstances were notably harsh, as with the Athenians at Aigos Potamoi, or they held significant value in later negotiations, such as the captured Spartans from Sphacteria.[149] The capture of Athenians during the final, most dramatic phase of the Sicilian Expedition offers interesting insights into the process of enslavement and the victors' intentions regarding the fate of their defeated enemies. From the Athenian army under General Demosthenes, which numbered 20,000 men, the Syracusans captured 6,000 Athenians and brought them back to Syracuse.[150] To further undermine the Athenians, the Syracusans promised the Athenian island allies their freedom if they defected.[151] This strategy indicates that the Syracusans intended to enslave soldiers from the allied contingents of the Delian League, as these soldiers did not pose a future threat

145 Kagan (1981), 211–213.
146 Panagopoulos (1978), 126.
147 Thuc. 7.13.2.
148 Kapparis (2018), 416–417.
149 Kelly (1970), 128.
150 Thuc. 7.82.1–4; Kagan (1981), 347–348.
151 Kagan (1981), 347; as Kagan points out, even under these circumstances, the islanders remained largely loyal to the Athenians.

to Syracuse and their enslavement offered little value in negotiations, given that they were merely acting on behalf of Athens. Such an approach is understandable, as the measures taken to redeem war captives were typically driven by private initiatives and were therefore largely depoliticized.[152]

The soldiers of Nikias had begun to be captured by Gylippos' forces even before reaching the river Assinarus, as the Syracusan soldiers were capturing them for personal gain.[153] Consequently, the total number of officially enslaved Athenians who followed Nikias was relatively small, around a thousand men, since many had been captured individually by Syracusan soldiers and immediately sold as slaves. There was a strong inclination to humiliate the enslaved Athenians, evidenced by the Syracusans' act of tattooing a horse, the state symbol of Syracuse, on their foreheads.[154] While the exact meaning of the word *stizo* is somewhat contentious – whether it meant tattooing or branding – it most likely referred to tattooing at the time.[155] Deborah Kamen emphasized that marking war captives was considered an act of *hubris*, representing the worst kind of violent shaming.[156] This act echoed the Athenian treatment of Samian war captives more than two decades earlier, when the Athenians marked captured Samians with an owl on their foreheads, possibly inspiring Aristophanes' joking reference in *Babylonians* to the Samians as the "many-lettered people."[157] While the markings indicated ownership of the war captives, as Shishova noted,[158] it is important to emphasize that the Syracusans aimed to humiliate the Athenians, who had nearly enslaved them, and to retaliate against their own potential enslavement and extermination. As a result, Sicily was filled with enslaved Athenians, suggesting that most of the Athenians were captured and enslaved through the actions of private citizens seeking personal gain.

The treatment of Athenian and allied prisoners of war by the Syracusan authorities differed markedly following their collective imprisonment in the infamous quarries of Syracuse. The Syracusan authorities sold as slaves all minor allies and auxiliary slaves of the Athenian expeditionary force, except for the Athenians and their Italiote and Sicilian Greek allies.[159] What really happened to the survivors of the Syracusan quarries is highly contentious.[160] Donald Kagan argued that hardly any prisoners survived the harsh conditions, while other scholars believe that those who did survive were eventually sold as slaves.[161]

152 Bielman (1994), 335–341.
153 Kagan (1981), 350.
154 Plut. *Nic.* 29.2.
155 Jones (1987), 142–150; concerning the ambiguity of the semantics of *stizo*, see Kamen (2010), 99–100.
156 Kamen (2010), 100.
157 Plut. *Per.* 26.4; Edmonds (1957), 590–591; Tritle (2010), 14, 22. Tritle notes how Plutarch erred by reversing the tattoos.
158 Shishova (1968b), 59; see note 31. In this context, Shishova employs the Russian term *выжигали*, which can be translated as "branding" or "burning in a mark."
159 Thuc. 7.87.3.
160 Kuch (1978), 41; see note 1 for the analysis regarding the subsequent fate of the prisoners in the quarries.
161 Kagan (1981), 353; contra Kagan, Bielman (1999), 189; Tritle (2010), 157.

VII. Mass Enslavements and Their Political Background in the Ionian War

The Ionian War marked a turning point in the Peloponnesian War, as Sparta, supported by Persian financing, shifted the focus of the conflict to the core of the Athenian Empire, specifically the Hellespont and Ionia. With Persian assistance, Sparta constructed a substantial fleet, altering the balance of power in the war.[162] Additionally, the Spartan fortification at Dekeleia, not only led to the flight of slaves but also resulted in the large-scale abduction and enslavement of both free and slave inhabitants of Attika. The extent of the looting of the Attic hinterland and the immense economic damage caused by the abduction of its inhabitants surpassed the destruction wrought by the Peloponnesian forces during their repeated annual invasions at the start of the Peloponnesian War.[163] The account provided by the *Hellenica Oxyrhynchia* is particularly illuminating:

> οὐ μὴν ἀλλὰ πολύ γε βέλτιον ἔτι τὴν πόλιν πρᾶξαι συνέπεσεν, ὡς τὴν Δεκέλειαν ἐπετεί|χισαν τοῖς Ἀθηναίοις μετὰ τῶν Λακεδ[αι]μ[ονί]ων· τά τε γὰρ ἀνδράποδα καὶ τὰ λοιπὰ πάντ[α <τὰ> κατὰ τὸ]ν πόλεμον ἁλισκόμενα μικροῦ τιν[ος ἀργυρίο]υ παρελάμβανον, καὶ τὴν ἐκ τῆς Ἀττικῆ[ς κ]ατα[ς]κευὴν ἅτε πρόσχωροι κατοικοῦντες ἅπασαν μετεκόμι|σαν ὡς αὑτούς, ἀπὸ τῶν ξύλων καὶ τοῦ κεράμου τοῦ τῶν οἰκιῶν ἀρξάμενοι.
>
> "And indeed, it happened that the city (Thebes) fared even better when, with the Spartans, they fortified Dekeleia against the Athenians. For they (the Thebans) bought up the slaves and the rest of the stuff captured in the war for a small price, and, since they lived in the neighboring areas, they carried home all the equipment from Attika, starting with the timber and the tiles of the houses."[164]

The devastation of Attika and the enslavement of its inhabitants provide the backdrop for Demosthenes' speech *Against Eubulides*, delivered in 345, six decades after the Peloponnesian War.[165] In this speech, an Athenian named Euxitheos was seeking to restore his Athenian citizenship, as Athenian law required both parents to be Athenians. The main reason his father, Thoukritos,[166] was not considered an Athenian was due to his non-Attic accent. Euxitheos claimed that his father had been captured during the Dekeleian War and sold as a slave in Leukas, where he spent many years in slavery before being redeemed.[167] This case is reminiscent of the formerly enslaved Athenians whom Solon, through his reforms, redeemed from slavery and brought back to Athens. It appears that many of these Athenians had forgotten their Attic dialect after spending extended periods in slavery outside of Attika.[168]

162 Tritle (2010), 168–170.
163 *Hell. Oxy.* 17.5.1–4.
164 *Hell. Oxy.* 17.4.1–9, trans. McKechnie.
165 Pritchett (1991), 259–260.
166 Davies (1971), 95.
167 Dem. 57.18–19.
168 Solon fr. 36.1–15 West; Arist. *Ath. Pol.* 12.4.

In 412, the Spartans and their Peloponnesian allies subdued the Greek city of Iasos in Caria, an ally of Athens, and sold its inhabitants to the satrap Tissaphernes for a Daric stater per person.[169] The Iasians, expecting only the Athenian fleet, were caught off guard by the Peloponnesian attack.[170] The Spartans and their allies captured this Greek city, allied with Athens, with the specific aim of assisting the Persian central authorities against the rebellion led by Amorges, the son of Pissuthnes. Once again, the process of enslavement warrants particular attention. According to Thucydides, the Spartans sold both the free and slave inhabitants of Iasos as slaves, similar to their actions in Attika. However, they did not enslave the Greek mercenaries serving Amorges; instead, they incorporated them into their own army.[171] It is notable that, as with the Boeotians and the slaves of Dekeleia, Tissaphernes purchased the captives sold by the Spartans at a relatively low price. Pritchett calculated that one Daric stater was equivalent to twenty Attic drachmas, a sum amounting to just one-eighth to one-tenth of the price of a slave in Athens at the same time.[172]

While it is true that slave prices were lower in slave-exporting Asia Minor than in Attika,[173] some scholars have questioned why the Spartans sold the Iasians at such a low price. David Malcolm Lewis argued that the price had "hardly any commercial value."[174] David Pritchett suggested that the low price was due to Tissaphernes' assistance to the Spartans in capturing Iasos,[175] while Lisa Kallet stated that the Spartans were duped.[176] It seems unlikely, however, that the Spartans would sell the inhabitants of Iasos, who had been Athenian allies, to anyone other than Tissaphernes in the Aegean. Furthermore, the large number of captive Iasians and the probability that slave prices were significantly lower in Tissaphernes' satrapy – especially in the regions of Asia Minor known for exporting slaves – compared to contemporary Athens,[177] effectively ruled out the possibility of the Spartans obtaining a better price. Thus, the Iasians were sold cheaply and in large numbers to Tissaphernes, likely because he controlled regions with substantial slave-holding and slave-exporting activities, where slave prices were low and supply was high. Recent research indicates that large-scale slave holding was common in Achaemenid Asia Minor during this period.[178] In this case, the Iasian captives moved in the opposite direction of the typical slave trade flow – from the Aegean coast to the Persian Empire's hinterland – resulting in an even lower price as they were transported towards a slave-exporting region.[179]

169 Thuc. 8.28.3–4.
170 Panagopoulos (1978), 145.
171 Thuc. 8.28.4.
172 Pritchett (1971), 78.
173 Lewis (2016), 321–323.
174 Lewis (1977), 91.
175 Pritchett (1971), 77–78.
176 Kallet (2001), 252.
177 Lewis (2018), 250.
178 Lewis (2018), 247–251.
179 Lewis (2016), 317–321; see also van Wees (2020), 194, where van Wees comments on the act of Agesilaus to provide his friends, slave traders, and booty sellers with insider information that he was going to the (Aegean) coast, in order to prepare them to time their purchases.

Consequently, it appears that the Spartans had limited options. Faced with an immediate need to maximize their revenue, they reached an imbalanced agreement with their financial backer, Tissaphernes, to sell the Iasians at a symbolic price that was acceptable to him. As Hans van Wees has noted, conquering armies typically sold all their prisoners rather than being left with those who were less commercially viable, in order to maximize their revenue. Conversely, slave traders, such as Tissaphernes in this instance, purchased all captives, since they had already paid for them.[180] This context makes the extremely low price of the Iasian captives understandable. A comparison of the enslavements of Hykkara by the Athenians and Iasos by the Spartans reveals an interesting distinction: in the first case, where enslavement posed no political risks to the potential enslavers, a mass enslavement was carried out. In the second case, where enslavement offered political advantages that outweighed the risks, it was deemed a viable choice, even though it did not yield significant profits.

In the same year, Astyochos sacked the unwalled city of Meropis in Kos.[181] Interestingly, only slaves were abducted, while the free citizens were left unharmed. This suggests that the Peloponnesians needed resources to finance their military operations, but also did not want to turn an island like Kos against Sparta, given Sparta's image as the liberator of Greece.[182] Westlake suggests that the Koans vacillated between the two warring sides, without clearly supporting either.[183] Consequently, enslaving the Koans would have been politically damaging for the Peloponnesians, as it would have cost them potential allies. Moreover, as will be discussed below, avoiding the enslavement of Greek populations – especially in areas adjacent to the barbarian world – could serve as a powerful propaganda tool for the Peloponnesians, who needed to maintain both a pro-Persian stance and friendly relations with the Ionian cities.

This attitude of the Peloponnesians is reflected in the words of the Spartan admiral Kallikratidas, who declared that Greeks would not enslave other Greeks as long as he was admiral.[184] However, he himself sold the Athenians he captured on Lesbos into slavery, along with other captives who were already slaves. This was likely done both as a punitive measure and to set an example. This practice is reminiscent of the Corinthians' approach at the beginning of the war, where only captured slaves were sold. Clearly, Kallikratidas did not want to enslave the Methymnaians, as they were part of communities not hostile to Sparta and were potential allies.[185] Therefore, the strategic and propagandistic aspects of this specific enslavement process should not be overlooked. As Xenophon stated:

180 van Wees (2020), 193.
181 Thuc. 8.41.2
182 Panagopoulos (1978), 151–152.
183 Westlake (1979), 17.
184 Xen. *Hell.* 1.6.14–15.
185 Kagan (1987), 333–334.

τὰ μὲν οὖν χρήματα πάντα διήρπασαν οἱ στρατιῶται, τὰ δὲ ἀνδράποδα πάντα συνήθροισεν ὁ Καλλικρατίδας εἰς τὴν ἀγοράν, καὶ κελευόντων τῶν συμμάχων ἀποδόσθαι καὶ τοὺς Μηθυμναίους οὐκ ἔφη ἑαυτοῦ γε ἄρχοντος οὐδέν' ἂν Ἑλλήνων εἰς τὸ ἐκείνου δυνατὸν ἀνδραποδισθῆναι. τῇ δ' ὑστεραίᾳ τοὺς μὲν ἐλευθέρους ἀφῆκε, τοὺς δὲ τῶν Ἀθηναίων φρουροὺς καὶ τὰ ἀνδράποδα τὰ δοῦλα πάντα ἀπέδοτο.

"All the property which it contained the soldiers seized as booty, but all the captives Kallikratidas assembled in the market place; and when his allies urged him to sell into slavery the Methymnaians as well as the Athenians, he said that while he was commander no Greek should be enslaved if he could help it. Accordingly on the next day he let the Methymnaians go free, but sold the members of the Athenian garrison and such of the captives as were slaves."[186]

On the other hand, it is important to note that by 411, the Athenians were seemingly compelled to alter their approach to enslavements and adopt a more lenient stance due to their increasingly precarious strategic position. When Strombichides captured the walled city of Lampsakos, he retained only the slave captives, allowing the free captives to return to their homes. This marked a significant departure from previous enslavement practices.[187] This stance is particularly noteworthy, as it resembles Astyochos' approach in Kos. Panagopoulos notes that it is unclear whether this change was motivated by propaganda, but this was almost certainly the case. The Athenians had been weakened not only by their defeat in Sicily but also by the widespread enslavements they had conducted before the Sicilian Expedition. As Panagopoulos emphasizes, this act was the most humane response by potential enslavers since the beginning of the war.[188]

Henry D. Westlake demonstrated that, during the last phase of the Peloponnesian War, the attitude of most Ionian cities was opportunistic. The stance of each polis varied, yet there was no overarching effort to impose policies on one another.[189] he smaller Ionian cities adopted an ad hoc approach towards the Athenians and Spartans. Those who remained loyal to the Athenians, such as Iasos, faced severe punishment from the Spartans. In 405, Iasos suffered the misfortune of being captured, and its population was enslaved for a second time within a seven-year span.[190] This information is recorded by Diodorus Siculus, drawing on the earlier historian Ephorus, whereas the primary contemporary source, Xenophon, does not mention this episode.[191] This discrepancy suggests that Diodorus, who wrote later and is considered relatively less reliable, may have been mistaken. In contrast, Xenophon reports that, in the same year, Lysander captured and enslaved the entire population of Kedreies in Caria,[192] noting that its inhab-

186 Xen. *Hell*. 1.6.14–15, trans. Brownson.
187 Thuc. 8.62.2.
188 Panagopoulos (1978), 152.
189 Westlake (1979), 9–11.
190 Diod. Sic. 13.104.7.
191 Panagopoulos (1978), 169–170.
192 Panagopoulos (1978), 170.

itants were semi-barbarians.[193] Ducrey observed Xenophon's emphasis on the impure, semi-barbarian origin of the Kedreians.[194] He argued that Xenophon sought to highlight to his readers that the semi-barbarian status of the Kedreians, who came from a region known for supplying large numbers of slaves to the Greek world, was a significant factor in their enslavement. This stance suggests that Xenophon may have been attempting to justify an action that starkly contrasted with the approach taken the previous year in Lesbos by the admiral Kallikratidas.

Panagopoulos contends that Diodorus portrays Lysander as particularly bloodthirsty, in contrast to the image presented by Xenophon, and that Diodorus mistakenly substitutes Kedreies with Iasos, entirely omitting the enslavement of Kedreies. Additionally, the account of the execution of the male population of Iasos and the enslavement of the women does not align with what we know about this phase of the war, which is marked by a notably lenient attitude of the victors towards the vanquished.[195] In fact, the narrative in *Hellenica* follows a specific pattern. Lysander's next action in the same year was to capture Lampsakos, and as Xenophon characteristically describes:

> προσβαλόντες δὲ τῇ πόλει αἱροῦσι κατὰ κράτος, καὶ διήρπασαν οἱ στρατιῶται οὖσαν πλουσίαν καὶ οἴνου καὶ σίτου καὶ τῶν ἄλλων ἐπιτηδείων πλήρη: τὰ δὲ ἐλεύθερα σώματα πάντα ἀφῆκε Λύσανδρος.
>
> "Then they attacked the city and captured it by storm, whereupon the soldiers plundered it. It was a wealthy city, full of wine and grain and all other kinds of supplies. But Lysander let go all the free persons who were captured."[196]

In this passage, Lysander's humane treatment of the Lampsakian captives is emphasized, as he did not enslave them but instead set them free. A similar approach was taken by the Lacedaemonians during Agesilaus' Asian campaign, where he enslaved only barbarian captives. During the same campaign, a comparable treatment of Greek prisoners is evident in an episode in Lampsakos, recorded by Polyaenus. Although Polyaenus is a Roman-era source and, as Peter Hunt has pointed out, his reliability is limited,[197] this particular episode aligns with the enslavement strategies described by Xenophon in the Ionian theater. Polyaenus recounts this specific incident, which occurred in Lampsakos in the mid-390s:

> Ἀγησίλαος ἐστρατοπεδεύσατο Λαμψάκου πλησίον. ἥκόν τινες ἐκ τῶν μετάλλων ἐκπεπηδηκότες Ἕλληνες ἀγγέλλοντες, ὡς ἄρα Λαμψακηνοῖς πάντες μεταλλεύουσιν οὓς ἂν λάβωσι. τὸ στράτευμα ἠγανάκτησε, καὶ πρὸς τὸ τεῖχος ὥρμησε διαρπασόμενον τὴν πόλιν. Ἀγησίλαος κωλῦσαι μὴ δυνάμενος σῶσαι τὴν πόλιν βουλόμενος ὡς ὑπεραγανακτῶν δὴ ἐκέλευσεν αὐτοὺς δραμόντας ἐκκόψαι τὰς

193 Xen. *Hell.* 2.1.15.
194 Ducrey (1968), 275.
195 Panagopoulos (1978), 169–171.
196 Xen. *Hell.* 2.1.19, trans. Brownson.
197 Hunt (1968), 105.

> ἀμπέλους πρώτας· εἶναι γὰρ τῶν πρώτων Λαμψακηνῶν. οἱ δὲ πρὸς τὸ ἐκκόπτειν ἐτράποντο· ὁ δὲ καιρὸν ἔσχε πέμψας μηνῦσαι Λαμψακηνοῖς, ὡς χρὴ τὴν πόλιν ἀσφαλῶς φυλάττειν.
>
> "While Agesilaus was encamped near Lampsakos, there came to him some Greek deserters from the mines, who announced in the camp, that the inhabitants of Lampsakos had decided to send all the prisoners that they might capture to the mines. This so enraged the army, that they advanced right up to the walls of the city, determined to storm and plunder it. Agesilaus, who was unable to suppress their fury but wanted to save the city, pretended to join in the general resentment. He ordered his troops immediately to destroy the neighboring vineyards, because they belonged to the leading citizens. While the troops were engaged in doing this, Agesilaus managed to inform the citizens of Lampsakos of their danger, and they took steps to guard themselves against the intended attack."[198]

The author mentions that while the army was encamped near Lampsakos, some Greeks arrived and reported that the Lampsakians had put all their captives into the mines for slave labor. Polyaenus' emphasis on the nationality of the enslaved suggests that the anger of Agesilaus' soldiers had a distinctly ethnic dimension. Lampsakos, whose inhabitants had previously been spared by both Athenians and Spartans, was now enslaving Greek captives and sending them to the mines – inflicting the worst possible punishment a free Greek could endure. This fact justified the anger of Agesilaus' soldiers toward the Lampsakians. Furthermore, it is important to note the concerns of Agesilaus, about the potential consequences of storming Lampsakos, particularly for his campaign in Asia Minor. Notably, a significant number of Agesilaus' soldiers in the Asia Minor expedition were former helots.[199] This raises the possibility that the behavior of these soldiers was influenced by their own past experiences as slaves.

The closing stages of the Peloponnesian War in Ionia reflected Lysander's and the Spartans' overall strategy to present themselves as defenders of the Greeks, seeking to reverse the atrocities and injustices – particularly the massacres and enslavements – that the Athenians had inflicted upon other Greeks. It is not coincidental that Lysander, following his victory at Aegospotami, immediately began restoring surviving citizens of the poleis enslaved by Athens to their ancestral homelands by expelling the Athenian settlers.[200] While this portrayal could be questioned, given that it is based on Xenophon's accounts, which exhibit a strong pro-Spartan bias, it remains plausible. For instance, Xenophon does not mention the capture and execution of approximately 3,000 or 4,000 men by Lysander at Aegospotami[201] – an event reported by Plutarch and Pausanias, who, although later and considered less biased sources, provide crucial information missing in Xenophon's narrative.[202] However, the absence of enslavement of Greeks by

198 Polyaenus *Strat.* 2.1.26, trans. Shepherd.
199 Xen. *Hell.* 3.1.4; Welwei (1974), 151; Buckler (2003), 44, 59.
200 Xen. *Hell.* 2.2.9; Kagan (1987), 398.
201 Panagopoulos (1978), 173.
202 Plut. *Lys.* 11.6, 13.2; Paus. 9.32.9.

the Spartans during this phase of the war, coupled with Lysander's decision to execute all captured Athenians as retribution for their crimes against other Greeks, bolstered his and Sparta's political credibility. As a result of this stance, Lysander restored the Aiginetans, the Skionaians, and the Melians to their ancestral settlements – a development that many contemporary Greeks viewed favorably, especially in contrast to the Athenians' widespread massacres, enslavements, and expulsions of other Greeks.[203] Clearly, not all members of these communities were exterminated or remained in slavery.[204]

Conclusions

By following the enslavement processes of the Peloponnesian War diachronically, this article has attempted to shed light on the field of Ancient Greek slavery and the role that mass enslavements played in the war itself. Although Ancient Greeks frequently enslaved fellow Greeks up to the end of the fifth century, there were notably fewer mass enslavements during the period preceding the Peloponnesian War. During the *Pentekontaetia*, the mass enslavement of Greeks by other Greeks was a potential threat throughout the Aegean world. However, a combination of factors – such as the prevailing power balance, the relatively low intensity of warfare compared to the Peloponnesian War, and a general aversion to enslaving fellow Greeks – rendered mass enslavements relatively rare, even though the threat of enslavement remained very real. Several key characteristics defined mass enslavements. First, mass enslavements typically occurred when the enemy was weak and posed no future threat to the enslavers, with the process leading to the weakening and political dissolution of the vanquished community through the dispersal of captives. Second, enslavement, alongside mass executions, served as a conspicuous form of punishment for actions deemed unjust, despicable, or treacherous by the victors, and acted as a deterrent to third parties. The primary targets of enslavers were women and children, who were enslaved *en masse*, while soldiers and men of fighting age, if not executed, were typically held as captives for exchange – unless they were already slaves, in which case they lacked a political identity. Large-scale enslavements of men occurred when they were stripped of their political identity or were unable to resist as a unified group, such as the colonists of Epidamnos in 435, the Hykkarans in 415, the Iasians in 412, or the minor allies of the Athenians during the Sicilian Expedition.

Moreover, Greeks were inclined to enslave free Greek males – and even more so barbarians – if such captivity occurred when organized group resistance was impossible or unlikely, such as during the Dekeleian War or when surrendering Athenians were abducted by individual Syracusans. This enslavement was also common when captured Greeks could not be used for future negotiations. A significant example is the systematic enslavement of the Eleans, regardless of status, as implied by the case of Phaedo, immediately following the Peloponnesian War – an act carried out by the Spartans with the

203 Plut. *Lys.* 14.3; Kiechle (1958), 140.
204 Figueira (2004), 621; Flensted–Jensen (2004), 842; Reger (2004), 759.

enthusiastic support of their Peloponnesian allies.[205] This point is crucial, as free men were frequently enslaved in the ancient world if no cohesive resistance prevented their enslavement.[206] Consequently, women and children were most often enslaved simply because they were easier targets than collectively resistant Greek males, although the enslavement of the latter was neither rare nor intentionally avoided.[207] Despite the small and fragmentary sample, the lives of Philoxenus, Thoukritus, and Phaedo demonstrate that the enslavement of Greeks by Greeks remained a real and potentially permanent threat if redemption was not possible. Therefore, the presence of a few Greek slaves among the confiscated property of those accused of profaning the Eleusinian Mysteries should not be surprising.[208] Interestingly, the aversion of Greeks to enslaving other Greeks did not stem primarily from a sense of national consciousness but rather from the impracticality of enslaving fellow Greeks, as previously noted. However, even the influx of cheap barbarian slaves into Aegean Greece did not prevent Greeks from enslaving each other. This argument is further supported by the fact that when the balance of power was heavily skewed in favor of the enslaver, the enslavement of the weaker opponent was common, as it was perceived, as a response to a lower-status opponent who challenged the balance of power.[209] The Athenians' fear during the blockade of 404 that they might endure the same fate they had inflicted upon the *ἀνθρώπους μικροπολίτας* shows that contemporaries[210] – and especially the perpetrators – were aware that mass enslavements were more frequent in situations of extreme power imbalance, as demonstrated by the Athenians' mass enslavements of their lowly tributary allies.

There was a key difference between the enslavement of captives and the use of enslaved captives by their captors, as highlighted in the speech of Pseudo-Andokides. The Athenians enslaved thousands of women and children *en masse* and without restraint until the disastrous end of the Sicilian Expedition, yet they did not integrate these captives into their society. Pseudo-Andokides' speech illustrates how uncommon it was for enslaved people to be assimilated into the society of their captors, which partly explains the invisibility of Greek slaves owned by free Greeks. As a result, pragmatic considerations, such as the absence of close political enmity between Athens and distant barbarian polities, led the Athenians and other Greeks to import barbarian slaves. For the Athenians and other Greeks, enslavement carried political implications, whereas slaveholding itself should not. The integration of other Greeks as slaves into one's own society came to be viewed as highly negative, even though the intra-Greek enslavement was common, especially during the Peloponnesian War. Nevertheless, efforts were made to

205 Xen. *Hell*. 3.2.26.

206 van Wees (2010), 244–245.

207 Thuc. 3.46.6; Kagan (1974), 160. For example, in his famous speech where Diodotus countered Kleon's arguments for the worst possible punishment of the Lesbians, he emphatically stated that it is not beneficial to punish free men when they rise against Athens. It is important to underscore precisely this understanding of the Greeks: that free men were carriers of a political identity, and therefore their enslavement or murder, in that case, would have been detrimental to the perpetrator.

208 IG I³ 421–30.

209 van Wees (2010), 256.

210 Xen. *Hell*. 2.2.10; as Xenophon expressly states.

strip enslaved individuals of their political identity to mitigate the negative perception of enslaving fellow Greeks.

While all sides engaged in mass enslavements, what set Athens apart was that these actions brought significant material benefits to the Athenian *demos* through the effective expropriation of the defeated enemies' territory. As Peter Brunt noted, the confiscation of land from former allies for Athenian settlers was likely deeply resented by other Greeks, particularly since intra-Greek conflicts often erupted over just a few barren acres in bordering areas.[211] A central aspect of the mass enslavements carried out by the Athenians, which intensified throughout the first half of the Peloponnesian War, was the appropriation of land for settlers and cleruchs. This practice made the Athenians particularly notorious among other Greeks, as it was deliberately intended to provide material gains for Athens. This is further evidenced by Isocrates' later attempts to justify these Athenian actions, which were perceived by other Greeks as driven by materialistic motives. His efforts to deflect blame for mass enslavements from Athens included emphasizing acts of benevolence, such as granting Skione to the exiled Plataians.[212] Another important factor, possibly influenced by mass psychology, is that several mass enslavements carried out by the Athenians were political decisions made by the Athenian *demos*. Beyond the material benefits, these decisions likely reflected a desire within the Athenian political body to impose the harshest possible punishments on their rebellious subjects. It is no coincidence that the Athenian Assembly resented the lenient treatment of the surrendering Poteidaians by the victorious Athenian generals and initially supported Kleon's proposal to execute and enslave the Mytilenaians.[213]

A similar, though not identical, situation can be observed in the decisions made by the Syracusan democratic assembly to impose collective punishment on the defeated Athenians and their allies,[214] as well as in the decision of the Korkyraian democrats to exterminate their oligarchic opponents and enslave their women.[215] In contrast, the oligarchic Spartans generally adopted a more cautious and pragmatic approach, although they did not refrain from committing heinous acts when they had the power to do so.[216] It was only during the last phase of the war that the Spartans adopted a short-lived policy of not enslaving Greeks, a stance that was significant for them to maintain a quasi-legalistic approach to enslavements to gain approval from other Greeks.[217] Sparta's more cautious policy, combined with the rapid weakening of Athens following the Sicilian disaster and the need to seek allies in Ionia, led the Athenians to abandon their previously high-handed policies, which had become unsustainable. The Spartan diplomatic effort to present themselves as the protectors of the Greeks heightened the aversion to the enslavement of Greeks by other Greeks. Although this stance did not completely

211 Brunt (1967), 84–85.
212 Isoc. *Paneg.* 11.100, 109.
213 Thuc. 2.70.4; 3.36.2.
214 Diod. Sic. 13.19.4; Plut. *Nic.* 28.2; Kagan (1981), 350–351.
215 Thuc. 4.48.4–5; Gehrke (1985), 93.
216 Shishova (1968b), 64.
217 Powell (2006), 300.

end the practice – as shown by the Spartans' enslavement of fellow Greeks immediately after the Peloponnesian War – it reinforced ideological justifications for the enslavement of non-Greeks.

Throughout this period, it is evident that the processes of enslavement and the victors' decisions regarding the treatment of war captives were consistently driven by political calculations. Conversely, numerous examples show that when no political reasons impeded the enslavement or execution of war captives, these captives, stripped of their political identity, could easily become commodities for market transactions, meaning they could be enslaved. In Ancient Greece, if there were sufficient political reasons to enslave a population, then mass enslavement was enacted. If, on the contrary, no political reasons prevented enslavement, market rules applied, and everyone could be considered transactable, regardless of the prevailing ideological framework. Jon Lendon's assertion that in an ideal Greek war, the defeated lost as much honor as the victor gained, aptly reflects the pattern of enslavements and the repudiation of the political identity of the enslaved.[218] In Classical Greece, being deprived of political identity left individuals, regardless of ethnicity, vulnerable to enslavement and dishonor, marking their transition from freedom to slavery.

Table 1: The Mass Enslavements in the Period of *Pentekontaetia*

Year	Enslaved	Enslavers	Category of Enslaved	Source
476/5?	Thracians from Eion	Athenians	Entire population	Thuc. 1.98.1
476/5?	Dolopes of Skyros	Athenians	Entire population	Thuc. 1.98.2
470	Persians	Athenians	Persian soldiers (over 20,000 in number)	Diod. Sic. 11.62.1
468	Mycenaeans	Argives	Entire population (?)	Diod. Sic. 11.65.5
450	Persians	Athenians	Naval crews of 100 ships.	Diod. Sic. 12.3.3
446	Chaironeians	Athenians	Uncertainty whether only the oligarchs were enslaved or the entire population.	Thuc. 1.113.1
446	Megareans	Athenians	2,000 *andrapoda*	IG I^3 1353.
c. 437	Ambrakians of Argos Amphilochikon	Amphilochians, Akarnanians, and Athenians	Probably the entire population	Thuc. 2.68.7

218 Lendon (2010), 371–372.

Table 2: The Mass Enslavements in the Archidamian War and the Case of Melos

Year	Enslaved	Enslavers	Category of enslaved	Source
433	Ambrakian and Leukadian colonists in Epidamnos	Korkyraians	Ambrakian and Leukadian colonists. The Corinthians were kept as hostages.	Thuc. 1.29.5
427	Plataians	Spartans and allies	*sitopoioi* women	Thuc. 3.68.2
425	Korkyraian women	Korkyraian Democrats	Women of the oligarchs	Thuc. 4.48.4
424	Athenians	Sikyonians	Captured prisoners of war	Thuc. 4.101.4
424	Aigenitans of Thyreatis	Athenians	Entire population	Diod. Sic. 12.65.9
422	Toronaians	Athenians	Women and children	Thuc. 5.3.4; Diod. Sic. 12.73.3
421	Skionaians	Athenians	Women and children	Thuc. 5.32.1; Diod. Sic. 12.76.3
416	Melians	Athenians	Women and children	Thuc. 5.116.4

Table 3: The Mass Enslavements during the Sicilian Expedition and its Aftermath

Year	Enslaved	Enslavers	Category of enslaved	Source
415	Hykkarans	Athenians	Entire population	Thuc. 6.62.3–5
413	Syracusans	Athenians	3 trireme crews. Fate unknown.	Thuc. 7.23.4
413	Syracusans	Athenians	1 trireme crew. Fate unknown.	Thuc. 7.25.4
413	Syracusans	Athenians	1 trireme crew. Fate unknown.	Thuc. 7.41.3
413	Athenians	Syracusans	7 trireme crews.	Thuc. 7.41.4
413	Athenians	Syracusans	7,000 captured Athenians by the Syracusan polis. Unknown number of Athenians enslaved by Syracusan citizens.	Diod. Sic. 13.19.2

Table 4: The Mass Enslavements in the Ionian War

Year	Enslaved	Enslavers	Category of enslaved	Source
413–404	Free and slave inhabitants of Attika	Spartans	Free and slave inhabitants of Attika	Thuc. 7.27.2–5; *Hell. Oxy.* 17.4.1–9.
412	Iasos	Peloponnesians	Entire population	Thuc. 8.28.4
412	Meropian slaves on Kos	Spartans	Only the slaves	Thuc. 8.41.2
411	Lampsakian slaves	Athenian	Only the slaves	Thuc. 8.62.2
411	Athenians	Peloponnesians	22 naval crews (dead or captured)	Thuc. 8.95.7
411	Athenians	Peloponnesians	1 naval crew	Thuc. 8.102.3
410	Peloponnesians in Kyzikos	Athenians	"Many captured"	Diod. Sic. 13.51.8
409	Lydians	Athenians	"Many enslaved"	Xen. *Hell.* 1.2.4
409	Syracusans	Athenians	4 naval crews	Xen. *Hell.* 1.2.12
407	Thurians	Athenians	2 naval crews	Xen. *Hell.* 1.5.19
406	Athenians and slaves in Methymna	Spartans	Athenians and slaves	Xen. *Hell.* 1.6.14–15, Diod. Sic. 13.76
405	Carians of Kedreies (half-barbarians, half-Greeks)	Spartans	Entire population	Xen. *Hell.* 2.1.15
405	Women and children of Iasos	Spartans	Women and children	Diod. Sic. 13.104.7
405	Lampsakian slaves	Spartans	slaves	Xen. *Hell.* 2.1.19

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