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The Greek Slave on Tour in America

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Abstract:

In 1847, the American sculptor Hiram Powers sent the second marble version of *The Greek Slave* (1846, The Corcoran Collection, National Gallery of Art, Washington, DC) on an American tour, entrusting the statue and exhibition logistics to an old friend and colleague, Miner K. Kellogg. This article considers the intersecting role of artist and agent in the American presentation of *The Greek Slave*, examining exhibition precedents, the logistics of the tour, techniques used to attract audiences, and the dynamics of the operation as relations between artist and agent shifted from cooperative to eventually divisive.

The Greek Slave on Tour in America by Tanya Pohrt

In 1847, the American sculptor Hiram Powers (1805–73) sent the second marble version of *The Greek Slave* (1846, Corcoran Collection, National Gallery of Art, Washington, DC) on an American exhibition tour, hoping to build on the success of the first statue (1844, Raby Castle, Staindrop), which had recently been shown in London's Pall Mall (fig. 1). This second statue had been commissioned by William Ward, later 1st Earl of Dudley, but Lord Ward wanted a different treatment of the drapery and “generously offered to relinquish his claims” upon learning that the artist wished to exhibit the statue in his native country.^[1] The exhibition venture was a speculative one whose positive outcome was by no means assured, but succeed it did, attracting many thousands of spectators in New York; Washington, DC; Baltimore; Philadelphia; Boston; and other cities in the United States. Powers did not oversee the tour himself, but entrusted it to the artist Miner K. Kellogg (1814–89), an old friend and colleague (fig. 2), while he remained working in Italy.



Fig. 1, Hiram Powers, *The Greek Slave*, 1846. Marble. Corcoran Collection, National Gallery of Art, Washington, DC. [\[larger image\]](#)

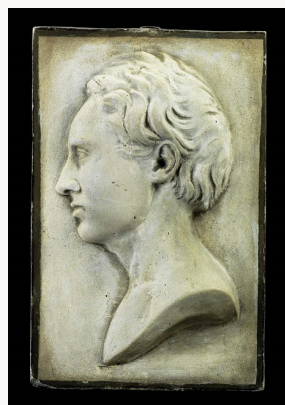


Fig. 2, Shobal Vail Clevenger, *Relief sculpture of Miner Kilbourne Kellogg*, 1839. Plaster. Smithsonian American Art Museum, Washington, DC. [\[larger image\]](#)

Scholars have investigated a number of reasons why *The Greek Slave* found favor (and controversy) with American audiences, but the issue of artistic authority in this venture has not been fully explored. This essay considers the intersecting role of artist and agent in the American presentation of *The Greek Slave*, examining exhibition precedents, the logistics of the tour, the techniques used to attract audiences, and the dynamics of the operation as relations between artist and agent eventually shifted from cooperative to divisive. As Hiram Powers's creation, *The Greek Slave* was the product of the sculptor's aesthetic vision and hard work. Yet the statue's reception was certainly shaped by Miner Kellogg's shrewd promotion and coordination efforts. The exhibition tour in America was a complex and highly influential operation that depended on Kellogg's judgment in multiple areas—choosing venues, meeting with locals, producing and distributing promotional materials and ephemera, and subtly crafting a narrative to help guide audiences in how to view and frame the statue.

Viewers today see *The Greek Slave* in a much different light than those first gazing on it in 1847. The *Slave*'s meaning is contingent and variable, impacted by time, display, advertising, promotion, and regional differences and beliefs among visitors and critics. My emphasis on the material variables of the object follows Jennifer Roberts's 2014 book *Transporting Visions: The Movement of Images in Early America*, which examines the ways that art and artists anticipated and responded to the conditions of geographical movement. As Roberts writes, "pictures in early America . . . were marked by their passage through space—not only by crushed corners, craquelure, and other indexical injuries that they may have sustained along the way, but also by their formal preprocessing of the distances they were designed to span."[\[2\]](#)

Roberts's study focuses on paintings and prints, but sculpture is ripe for such analysis, particularly an object like *The Greek Slave*, which was created with the idea of a traveling exhibition in mind. Powers's goals complicate the issue of *The Greek Slave*'s tour, for while it was Kellogg who arranged and finessed the actual travel and display, it was Powers who anticipated the statue's mobility, imagining potential audiences and factoring logistics and travel requirements into the statue's physical conception. Indeed, Hiram Powers had the idea of exhibiting a statue in America before he settled on *The Greek Slave* for that purpose. He initially considered exhibiting *Eve Tempted* (1877), but decided against it because of the vulnerability of the figure's outstretched arm (fig. 3). Writing to his friend Sidney Brooks in May 1845, Powers described his dilemma. "I have long desired to send one or two of my statues to be exhibited in the U. States," he noted, but regretted that *Eve* was "not sufficiently well supported to be carried about without danger."[\[3\]](#) Although he had orders for *The Greek Slave* in hand at this point, Powers lacked the money and resources to execute multiple marbles simultaneously, particularly for a speculative exhibition. "Unless I can procure more money in advance, I must make one pay for another."[\[4\]](#) Earlier, he had shifted back and forth between modeling *Eve*, *The Greek Slave*, and the *Fisher Boy* (1844, plaster, Smithsonian American Art Museum, Washington, DC), balancing his more speculative projects with portrait busts that would pay his immediate bills. As studio visitors and patrons responded favorably to the model of *The Greek Slave*, it became clearer to the artist that this would be the first sculpture to have a major showing in America.



Fig. 3, Hiram Powers, *Eve Tempted*, 1877. Marble. Smithsonian American Art Museum, Washington, DC.

[\[larger image\]](#)

Although Powers's decision to tour *The Greek Slave* was determined in part by timing and circumstances, his desire to create sculpture for public tour inevitably shaped the way the work was conceived and executed. As the artist sought patrons to fund the project, he also had a much larger audience in mind. He chose a subject that would appeal to a broad demographic, with a narrative that was comprehensible at a glance and yet also complex and open to multiple avenues of interpretation. An early description of the sculpture by Powers seems to anticipate groups of American viewers. Writing to John Smith Preston in early 1841, Powers offered the idea of a nude girl "with her hands bound in such a position as to conceal a portion of the figure thereby rendering the exposure of nakedness less exceptionable to our American fastidiousness."^[5] In Florence, Powers's potential patrons for such a piece were cosmopolitan and international. Only sending the sculpture to the United States for display would compel him to temper the figure's nudity. Continuing his description, the sculptor articulated other visual cues that would buttress the statue's honor against the gaze of potentially critical audiences, mentioning her "expression of modesty & Christian resignation. That she is a Christian will be inferred by a cross, suspended by a chain around her neck."^[6]

By imagining viewers who would "infer" the figure's Christian identity, Powers anticipated the dangers in crafting a nude for public exhibition—and potential remedies for those dangers. This concern with future spectators was no doubt shaped by Powers's early work at Joseph Dorfeuille's Western Museum in Cincinnati. As a young man, Powers was employed by Dorfeuille to craft waxwork figures and design sensational exhibits to attract crowds to the museum. The Western Museum's most distinctive display was *The Infernal Regions*, a wildly successful, mechanized, multi-sensory tableau of hell and purgatory, with heaven suggested in the distance, largely created by Powers. His work at the Western Museum was influential, instilling in Powers an understanding of the challenges and the techniques of attracting and entertaining audiences. Such experiences left the artist attuned to the ways that a work of sculpture could channel a range of powerful thoughts and emotions in viewers.^[7]

In addition to his showman's background, Powers was familiar with the format of the single-painting tour, which in America had first emerged in the 1820s, when artists such as John

Trumbull, Thomas Sully, Rembrandt Peale, and Samuel F. B. Morse created paintings for popular public display. Entrepreneurial yet also ideologically motivated, this practice of sending single works of art on tour allowed artists to create large, ambitious history paintings and exhibit them in multiple cities, often utilizing courthouses, churches, rented rooms, and small artist-run galleries as venues. Such exhibitions redefined a work of art not just as an object to be bought and sold, but also as a public resource for which the cost of labor and materials could be shared among many spectators.[\[8\]](#)

Paintings were the most common works shown at fine art exhibitions in America in the 1820s and '30s, but there were efforts to cultivate a public appreciation of sculpture as well. In 1829, James Fenimore Cooper commissioned a small sculpture group from the young Horatio Greenough, with the idea of exhibiting it in America for the sculptor's benefit.[\[9\]](#) "In a country like ours," Cooper wrote, "the acquisition of a good sculptor is no trifle. Of all the arts, that of statuary is perhaps the one we most want, since it is more openly and visibly connected with the tastes of the people through monuments and architecture."[\[10\]](#) Cooper selected a sentimental subject that he thought might appeal to the public, two putti from the foreground of Raphael's *Madonna of the Baldacchino* (fig. 4). The group, now lost, measured about three feet high and featured two cherubs singing from a scroll.[\[11\]](#)



Fig. 4, Raphael, *Madonna of the Baldacchino*, 1507. Oil on canvas. Pitti Palace, Florence. [\[larger image\]](#)

Several issues stand out in the exhibition of the *Chanting Cherubs* that resonate with the later tours of *The Greek Slave*. One is the notion that public exhibitions could increase an artist's reputation and lead to a government commission. This was certainly a motivation for painters who were vying to fill open spots in the US Capitol's rotunda in the 1820s and '30s, and it was also a consideration for sculptors. Greenough and Cooper discussed first exhibiting the statue in Washington, DC, in the hopes that it might spur government interest, but Greenough opted to send the work to Boston, where he had several supportive patrons. The potential for a federal commission was often on Powers's mind as well, and receiving one remained a lifelong goal.[\[12\]](#)

Public display of the *Chanting Cherubs* revealed American discomfort with nudity in sculpture. In Boston, objections to the naked figures led to the temporary addition of tiny aprons, a move that many viewers found objectionable. Greenough was disappointed to hear of the debacle. "I had thought the country beyond that," he wrote to Washington Allston in April 1831; "There is a

nudity which is not impure.”^[13] When Hiram Powers moved to Florence in 1837, Horatio Greenough had been established in the Italian city for close to a decade, and the two expatriate sculptors became close friends and allies. Powers was attentive to the issues raised by the *Chanting Cherubs* and likely discussed his exhibition possibilities with Greenough, focusing on ways to modify *The Greek Slave* to make it more acceptable to a public wary of the moral and religious issues raised by nudity in art.^[14] Still, *The Greek Slave* was a far more provocative subject than naked infants, and one of Powers’s precautions was to open his exhibition tour anywhere but Boston, lest the puritan inclination and lingering memory of the *Cherubs* damage the statue’s first impression on the American public.^[15]

The *Chanting Cherubs* also offered helpful precedents for issues of installation and display, which Powers and other artists followed. In April 1831, Greenough’s brother Alfred installed the *Cherubs* in a rented room on Boston’s Summer Street. Single tickets were twenty-five cents and season tickets, fifty cents, a price structure that was standard for painting exhibitions and was later used for *The Greek Slave*. Greenough had advised that his sculpture be installed on a pedestal at eye level, with a dark crimson curtain behind it. An assistant was hired to turn the group so that it could be seen from all angles.^[16] While the exhibit was well advertised and proved influential within cosmopolitan and intellectual circles, it was not tremendously popular with the public. Facing competition from a range of spectacular entertainments, the *Cherubs* lacked narrative and excitement; a few visitors were even confused and disappointed that they did not literally sing. By contrast, Powers was far more daring in his creation of a life-size female nude, ensuring that audiences would not be bored by his single-sculpture exhibition.

In late 1842 and early 1843, Powers finished modeling *The Greek Slave* and *Eve*, and rumors began to circulate that the sculptor himself was planning to return to America to tour both statues. Such expectations were not unusual but were, in this case, unfounded. Powers had intended, from a relatively early date, to entrust the American tour to Miner Kellogg. Earlier painters such as Thomas Sully and William Dunlap had done some traveling with their single-painting exhibitions, arranging venues and overseeing installations themselves. The artists then hired temporary agents for the day-to-day management of the exhibition, while they sought out portraiture commissions elsewhere. These arrangements were best suited to painters, however, whose supplies were portable; sculptors, in contrast, required an elaborate studio and a ready supply of clay, plaster, and marble. Because Powers had moved to Italy in 1837, he depended on friends for news and advice about the current state of US exhibitions as his own plans for touring a sculpture solidified. For example, in 1844, his friend Albert Gallatin Hoyt remarked on several recent displays of art in Boston: Washington Allston’s *Belshazzar’s Feast* (1817–43, oil on canvas, Detroit Institute of Arts) and Thomas Crawford’s sculpture of Orpheus (1843, marble, Museum of Fine Arts, Boston), which did not attract crowds because, Hoyt believed, “no classical subject can ever be popular with this public—its day is past.” In contrast, Hoyt assured Powers that *The Greek Slave* and *Eve* would be more popular and more frequently visited than any works of art ever exhibited in America, in part because of their “assimilation to the spirit of the age.”^[17] With such encouragement, Powers proceeded to plan his own exhibition tour, with the help of Miner Kellogg.

Kellogg became a stand-in for Powers in one of the most important and influential episodes of the artist’s career. Intelligent, well-traveled, affable, and gregarious, Kellogg was an artist with a

broad set of skills and firm ties to Powers, as revealed by the painter's portrait of Powers's daughter (fig. 5). Kellogg had first studied painting as a young man, working under Charles Alexandre Lesueur (1778–1853) in 1826–27 in New Harmony, Indiana.^[18] He resumed his art training when his parents moved to Cincinnati, Ohio, and later recounted that he first met Powers there in 1826, when “our mutual love of Art engendered an intimacy between us.”^[19] Kellogg then went east, working in New Jersey and Washington, DC, for several years, painting portraits of Andrew Jackson and Martin Van Buren, among others. In 1840, he worked as a courier for the US Department of State in Europe and the Near East. He traveled with the archeologist Austin Henry Layard in 1842, participating in a dig at Nineveh (now northern Iraq) before returning to Florence, where he had briefly settled and set up a painting studio in the summer of 1841. Kellogg found a warm welcome from Powers, who assisted him in procuring a studio adjacent to his own.^[20]

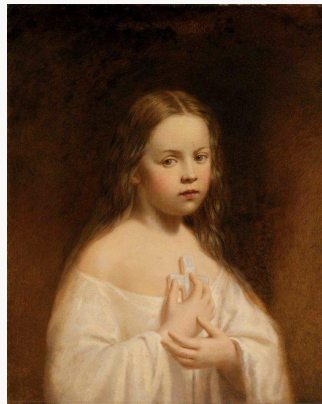


Fig. 5, Miner K. Kellogg, *Portrait of Hiram Powers's Daughter*, n.d. Oil on canvas. Smithsonian American Art Museum, Washington, DC. [\[larger image\]](#)

In Powers's mind, Kellogg's travels in and knowledge of the Middle East, his outgoing personality, and the friendship between them dating back to their days in Cincinnati made the younger artist an ideal figure to oversee the American tour of *The Greek Slave*. After they established plans for the tour, Kellogg went to Turkey and Greece to study the history and culture of the region, painting and sketching Near Eastern subjects. Back in Cincinnati, a newspaper article, perhaps a puff piece, discussed Kellogg's travels, emphasizing the documentary quality of the project. While “our education makes portions of [the East] familiar enough; yet there is not in our minds any picture of things as they are. These he can give.”^[21] Kellogg planned to display and sell his sketches of the Middle East on the side while managing Powers's exhibition. Powers supported this enterprise, recommending that the New Orleans collector James Robb acquire Kellogg's painting of a Circassian woman to complement the version of *The Greek Slave* that Robb was ordering from Powers.^[22] At least a few of Kellogg's paintings and studies from Constantinople seem linked to Powers's statue, enabling viewers to imagine the slave or a similar figure in painted form, as well as other characters who might have participated in the scene. For example, the subject of a sketch by Kellogg at Constantinople in 1845, *Chief Zefir Bey*, can be imagined at the auction of *The Greek Slave*, gazing up at her and contemplating her purchase (fig. 6).



Fig. 6, Miner K. Kellogg, *Circassian at Constantinople, Chief Zefir Bey*, 1845. Pencil and watercolor on paper. Smithsonian American Art Museum, Washington, DC. [\[larger image\]](#)

From the start, the tour of *The Greek Slave* was a thoughtful and well-organized operation. Acting on Powers's behalf, Kellogg oversaw all the details in preparation for the exhibition, receiving the statue; securing a venue; purchasing fabric and having a platform built; organizing handbills, tickets and advertising; meeting with editors and influential people in the arts; and hiring a full-time assistant to take tickets and staff the entry to the exhibition.^[23] Kellogg's pay was tied to the performance of the exhibition—he received 20 percent of the net profit with certain adjustments, depending on how much the venture brought in. If receipts rose above \$10,000, for example, Kellogg was responsible for his own travel expenses.^[24] The statue's exhibition opened in New York at the National Academy of Design's gallery, utilizing Powers's honorary associate membership to secure the room. The space was not perfect, since the gallery was at the top of several steep flights of stairs, up which the statue and revolving platform had to be carried. Visitors also found the stairs daunting, as a humorous caricature penned by "Yankee Doodle" suggests (fig. 7). However, Kellogg asserted that it was "the best & really only good exhibition room in N.Y."^[25] *The Greek Slave* opened to the public on August 26, 1847, after a two-day press preview. Several days later, Kellogg recounted the myriad details of his preparations in a long letter to Powers. "Your Slave is safe upon its pedestal! As pure and spotless as when it left your studio . . . I will not recount the vexations and anxiety attending all this . . . Now came arrangements of platforms, gas, hangings, etc. effecting insurance, seeing editors, tickets, handbills, advertisements and other small things." Writing that he was "determined to neglect nothing," in the first few days of the exhibition Kellogg "was present continually," often turning the statue and talking himself hoarse in answering inquiries, for the descriptive catalogue had not yet been printed. In the exhibition's first two days, "not a word of criticism was ventured, nothing but the deep admiration which silence alone can adequately express."^[26]

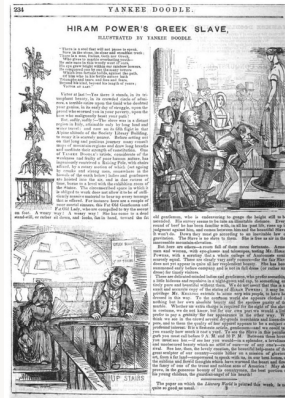


Fig. 7, “Hiram Power’s [sic] Greek Slave, Illustrated by Yankee Doodle,” *Literary World* (New York), August 28, 1847: 234. [\[larger image\]](#)

Both Kellogg and Powers knew that it was essential to maintain Powers’s artistic authority in absentia. Kellogg’s early press materials carefully promoted the sculptor as patriotic and involved in the tour, while justifying his absence. An early article crafted by Kellogg for the *National Intelligencer* describes how Powers had been “toiling in Italy” for the last ten years, “perfecting himself in his art, struggling with poverty and a young family around him to support. . . . His countrymen can now have the double satisfaction of enjoying the fruits of his genius” while “helping to give his country a reputation in the world.” Concerned to have the details of the venture accurately (and positively) known, Kellogg explained the tour’s genesis in depth, saying that Powers’s patron Lord Ward, “having learnt something of the circumstances of the artist—that his means were inadequate . . . that he had five children . . . and that he had for some time been desirous of sending a work to his own country,” released him from an agreement to sell the statue, saying that Powers should send it to America and later make another to fulfill his agreement. “The grateful artist flew to the studio of his friend and fellow-artist Kellogg. . . . ‘But, said he, what can I do? . . . If I leave my work here my family must starve.’ ‘Mr. Powers, (said Kellogg) I told you, five years ago, that when you should get a work ready to send to America . . . I would go and take charge of it for you.’” The article concluded by stating, “The statue of the Greek Slave is here: let our countrymen now tell the rest of the story.”^[27]

This ending invited New Yorkers to support Powers, empowering them to step forward and see *The Greek Slave* for themselves. Acknowledging the importance of spectators, Kellogg knew that their attendance and analysis of the statue were highly influential and would determine whether the venture could continue elsewhere. An article in the *New York Evening Mirror* also acknowledged the power of viewers, explaining that in the absence of government commissions, “artists throw themselves for support and remuneration directly upon the people.”^[28]

While Powers had crafted *The Greek Slave* in such a way as to emphasize her purity and deflect her sexuality while still rendering her nude, Kellogg’s actions on tour shaped visitors’ responses to this potentially volatile subject. At various venues the agent faced the question whether there might be separate visiting hours set aside for women and men to maintain propriety. Kellogg

took a firm stance on this issue, maintaining that “there was nothing in the statue that the most delicate & modest lady should not see and study and be delighted with.” Kellogg knew full well that if he set aside a special time for women, then “it would in effect be saying that there was something they should not witness in open day and before folks.”^[29] Kellogg also made strategic use of reviews of the sculpture. He reprinted an essay by the Reverend Orville Dewey on the statue in a number of newspapers, reiterating Dewey’s comments that emphasized the purity and chasteness of *The Greek Slave*, which was, he declared, “clothed all over with sentiment, sheltered, protected by it from every profane eye.”^[30]

Dewey’s essay offered a significant contribution to the exhibition’s descriptive brochure, which Kellogg composed with the assistance of Powers’s friends George Calvert and Henry Tuckerman.^[31] The brochure included information about the statue’s history, a short biography of Powers, and complimentary reviews and comments about the statue from different perspectives, their authors ranging from fine art connoisseurs, to ministers such as Dewey, to women writers discussing emotional reactions to *The Greek Slave*. On sale for twelve and a half cents, the brochure helped frame the visitor experience. The introduction assured readers that “each spectator is affected according to his particular point of view,” but emphasized that “all, however, agree in the elevating effect of the work; all feel, in gazing upon it that ‘a thing of beauty is a joy forever.’”^[32]

The text establishes that the figure is a “Grecian maiden made captive by the Turks and exposed at Constantinople for sale,” but, representing a being “raised above degradation,” the statue is “an emblem of all trial to which humanity is subject.” As Kellogg wrote, viewers “are not satisfied with designating its material perfection, but eloquently claim for it high moral and intellectual beauty.” Such musings offered fodder for exhibition viewers, whose responses were also cued by press reviews reproduced in the booklet, reassuring nervous viewers of the propriety of the crowds. “So pure an atmosphere breathes round it that the eye of man beams only with reverent delight and the cheek of woman glows but with the fullness of emotion.”^[33] The exhibition brochure functioned as a stand-in for artist and agent, offering information, reassurance, and talking points to engage individuals and groups. While the experience of viewing a work of art on tour could be fleeting, an artful brochure such as Kellogg’s enabled viewers to remember and relive the experience of encountering *The Greek Slave* long after it was gone.

In addition to assembling the brochure, Kellogg wrote newspaper articles throughout the tour that promoted *The Greek Slave* and sometimes his own work as well. One long editorial written for the Washington, DC, public (in advance of the sculpture’s arrival) championed Powers’s unsold bust of Andrew Jackson; criticized New York’s National Academy of Design for charging a rental fee to exhibit *The Greek Slave*; sang the statue’s praises; and concluded by noting, “Mr. Kellogg, the proprietor, has opened some charming pictures of his own painting, which I think you will be delighted with, when you see them. The ‘Circassian Woman,’ so beautiful, is the most celebrated.”^[34]

The New York exhibition of *The Greek Slave* was tremendously successful, with receipts totaling \$8,664.64 in a little over four months. Thomas Seir Cummings, cofounder and longtime board member of the National Academy of Design, later assessed the sculpture’s exhibition there, writing, “for a single statue or work of art,” it was “probably the greatest success on record.”^[35]

The New York show closed in early January 1848. Kellogg and his assistant packed up the statue and shipped it via railroad to Washington, then installed it in the Odeon, a hall located in the business district, where it opened to the public on January 24. The positive press that the statue had garnered in New York helped pave the way for the sculpture's subsequent reception. A short review in the *Alexandria Post* reiterated *The Greek Slave's* talking points; the writer was "struck with its touching chasteness and beauty. There is nothing in it which can offend the most delicate mind, and no one can behold it without intense admiration." Given the amount that had already been written about it, the author ventured that the statue "was deemed faultless by those who are qualified to speak of it," so "we do not feel it necessary to argue its claims."^[36] Such reviews testify to the exhibition's success and the momentum of positive publicity.

While in Washington, Kellogg met with a friend in Congress and saw an opportunity to advance Powers's cause, negotiating a resolution for the statue to be exhibited there for Powers's profit and incorporated into the newly formed Smithsonian Institution. This plan did not ultimately come to pass, but it illustrates Kellogg's initiative and business savvy, as well as his devotion to *The Greek Slave* and to Powers.^[37] The first few opening days in Washington saw very strong attendance numbers, but these later dropped off. The reasons could have been many, including bad weather, but Kellogg attributed the lag in visitors to the proximity of *tableaux vivants*, risqué performers posing as Venuses and other mythological and historical subjects, sometimes in the nude. With locations close to one another, *The Greek Slave* and the *tableaux vivants* were being "classed somewhat together in the public mind," according to Kellogg, a situation that must have counteracted the agent's efforts to maintain the propriety and respectability of the statue.^[38] After more lackluster attendance numbers, Kellogg decided to close the exhibition on March 25. Ticket sales were only \$1,368.34, and of that, \$921.44 was deducted for expenses. Part of the reason for such high expenses was that the lull in attendance had left Kellogg with time to pursue portraiture commissions he had received in New York, and he traveled there several times, deducting his travel costs from the exhibition's income.^[39]

The statue traveled to Baltimore next, and then to Philadelphia, where a long-brewing feud with Powers's patron James Robb finally erupted. Robb had ordered a version of *The Greek Slave* back in December 1845, asking to have it delivered within two years. As the American tour progressed and the sculpture increased in fame and value, however, Powers and Kellogg both worked to stall Robb, fearing that he would lay claim to the touring *Greek Slave* and potentially exhibit it himself, depriving the artist of a valuable livelihood. James Robb's behavior grew increasingly rancorous and divisive over the delays, and his agent seized the sculpture shortly after it was put on view at the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts. Miner Kellogg dealt with this challenge, and it initially proved to be less damaging than artist and agent had feared. After complex negotiations, Kellogg reported that Robb had agreed to continue to exhibit the statue in Philadelphia for Powers's benefit for a month and, after that, promised "that the statue is never to be exhibited to the detriment of your interests."^[40]

Meanwhile, Powers had finished a third version of *The Greek Slave* and sent it to the United States as a replacement for Robb's statue. This *Greek Slave* arrived in New York, and in June 1848, Kellogg took charge of it and brought it to Boston, where it was exhibited at the Horticultural Hall. The Boston showing was quite profitable, grossing \$3,948.75 in a little over three months.^[41] Next, the sculpture traveled west to Cincinnati, which was also a success, then to Louisville and New Orleans, followed by a return to Boston and New York, mostly for shorter

engagements. (The extended journey of the third version of *The Greek Slave* through North America is marked on a map in [Martina Droth's "Mapping The Greek Slave"](#) in this special issue.) Along the way there were challenges that Kellogg often handled with his savvy use of print media. When the issue of a tax on the exhibition was broached in Louisville, Kellogg published a notice in the local newspapers, shaming the city into making an exception to a local law for *The Greek Slave*. Kellogg wrote, "We should be sorry indeed if Louisville were to be the first city to impose a tax on the exhibition of such a triumph of American art and genius."[\[42\]](#) Likewise, in New Orleans, where Robb's statue had already been exhibited for charity, Kellogg worked to generate regional goodwill by holding a charity day and donating the exhibition's proceeds to support residents suffering from a recent outbreak of yellow fever (cholera).[\[43\]](#)

By the end of 1849, exhausted by frequent travel and battles over ownership of the sculpture, Miner Kellogg was ready to end the American tour of *The Greek Slave* and return to Italy to focus on his own art practice. Kellogg's oversight of the American tour had initially offered Hiram Powers an ideal way to circulate the statue without risking his own time on an uncertain venture. But as the months passed and the exhibition grew more successful and influential, yet also more complex, Powers may have been happy to see the working relationship come to an end. Kellogg acted ably on Powers's behalf, with both artists benefitting from mutual trust and support, but the agent could be difficult and was rumored to be living lavishly on the exhibition's dime. A friend reported to Powers that Kellogg always "stopped at the very first rate hotels, and no city of note was visited without the most fashionable tailor being employed to furnish some fine clothes, not for the Greek Slave of course, but the bills were always paid out of her pockets."[\[44\]](#) Additionally, Kellogg became overly emotional and attached to *The Greek Slave*, at times overstepping boundaries and fanning the flames of discord with associates and patrons such as James Robb.[\[45\]](#) After touring the West and revisiting New York and Boston, Kellogg finally closed the tour down on December 12, 1849.

Powers revived the traveling exhibition the following year to display *The Greek Slave* in smaller US cities, hiring his brother-in-law, Henry Adams, to manage the operation. Adams, described as "frugal in his habits" and "conciliating in his manners,"[\[46\]](#) was a prudent figure to avoid controversy; yet it seems unlikely that he would have generated the fanfare and success that Kellogg did, had he been in charge from the beginning. When Powers's brother Sampson had asked to manage the tour in 1845, Hiram said no, explaining that the undertaking "must be managed by a person conversant with the arts and possessing qualification peculiarly necessary to the management of such an exhibition."[\[47\]](#) After having spent nearly six years focused on Powers and *The Greek Slave*, Kellogg had difficulty shifting gears and returning to his own life. The parting was amicable at first, but simmering resentment soon emerged. Powers told a friend that Kellogg complained of feeling "used up," suffering from a lingering sense of fatigue from the "perplexities of that exhibition."[\[48\]](#) Kellogg had his assistant remit accounts of the tour to Powers shortly after it closed, maintaining that he was owed close to a thousand dollars. Powers gave Kellogg \$800, although he and others felt that the agent had already taken more from the exhibition than he was due. Not content, Kellogg demanded the balance of \$127, sending all of his documents and letters related to the tour for Powers to study. Powers stalled and ignored the issue for three years, refusing to return the documents and ultimately burning them despite the entreaties of mutual friends.[\[49\]](#) Powers thought that Kellogg wanted the letters "for mischief, nothing else," saying that Kellogg "wants to control me. . . . Once I had confidence in him—my letters show it. Now I believe him to be a rascal."[\[50\]](#)

These petty arguments were rooted, it seems, in the complex relationship between artist, agent, and statue; a vaguely disquieting, quasi-familial triangle, with both men vying for money and control over *The Greek Slave*. Kellogg had been fully dedicated as the statue's protector and exhibitor, at times writing about it as if it were almost human, as in a press piece in which he described the figure as "unconscious but beautiful."^[51] Kellogg's agency in the *The Greek Slave*'s early success in the United States enabled him to become a powerful representative for the artist, but he had no lasting claim over the statue. Hiram Powers, for his part, had relinquished control over his creation, ceding oversight of *The Greek Slave* to Kellogg, who negotiated the logistics and public relations of the exhibition, among other myriad details. At stake in this enterprise was not only substantial fame and fortune, but also authority and control. After the exhibition closed, there remained unresolved issues such as a lawsuit with the Pennsylvania Academy over exhibition proceeds, and the legacy of Robb's statue—both leaving some negative press.^[52] Could some problems have been avoided with more skillful negotiations on Kellogg's part? Kellogg published his side of the story in an 1858 pamphlet, but both men saw themselves as victims of the other's ill will as the rift deepened.^[53] Ultimately, it seems that although the struggle between Powers and Kellogg encompassed financial differences, the uneasy legacy of their shared custody of *The Greek Slave* lay at the heart of their disagreement.

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Notes

[1] Powers' *Statue of the Greek Slave* (New York: R. Craighead, 1847), 5.

[2] Jennifer L. Roberts, *Transporting Visions: The Movement of Images in Early America* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2014), 1–2.

[3] Hiram Powers to Sidney Brooks, May 13, 1845, Hiram Powers Papers, box 10, folder 24, frame 11, Archives of American Art (henceforth AAA), <http://www.aaa.si.edu/collections/container/viewer/bound-copies-letters-written-hiram-powers-transcripts-339968>.

[4] Ibid. Powers worked to correct the design flaw in *Eve*, but by the time he switched to a new block of marble, the first *Greek Slave* was finished and en route to be publicly exhibited in London. Richard P. Wunder, *Hiram Powers: Vermont Sculptor, 1805–1873*, 2 vols. (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 1991), 1:141, 142, 186, 207–10.

[5] Hiram Powers to John Smith Preston, January 7, 1841, Hiram Powers Papers, box 10, folder 23, frame 69, AAA, <http://www.aaa.si.edu/collections/container/viewer/Bound-Copies-of-Letters-Written-by-Hiram-Powers-Transcripts-339967>.

[6] Ibid.

- [7] For a recent study of Cincinnati's Western Museum, including Powers's involvement, see Ulana Lydia Baluk, "Proprietary Museums in Antebellum Cincinnati: 'Something to please you and something to learn,'" (PhD Diss., University of Toronto, 2000). See also Wendy Jean Katz, *Regionalism and Reform: Art and Class Formation in Antebellum Cincinnati* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 2002).
- [8] See Tanya Pohrt "Touring Pictures: The Exhibition of American History Paintings in the Early Republic," (PhD Diss., The University of Delaware, 2013).
- [9] See Nathalia Wright, "The Chanting Cherubs: Horatio Greenough's Marble Group for James Fenimore Cooper," *New York History* 38, no. 2 (April 1957): 177–97.
- [10] James Fenimore Cooper to J. E. De Kay, May 25, 1829, in *The Correspondence of James Fenimore Cooper*, ed. James Fenimore Cooper, 2 vols. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1922), 1:169.
- [11] Wright, "Cherubs," 181–82.
- [12] Hiram Powers had friends and contacts who worked on his behalf to promote his interests in Washington. See, for example, his correspondence with Charles James Madison Eaton, a collector and prominent figure who advocated for Powers there and in Baltimore. Hiram Powers Papers, box 3, folders 38–45, passim, AAA, <http://www.aaa.si.edu/collections/container/viewer/Eaton-Charles-J-M--284332>.
- [13] Horatio Greenough to Washington Allston, October 1831, Massachusetts Historical Society, quoted in Wright, "Cherubs," 190.
- [14] On the nude in American art, See E. McSherry Fowble, "Without a Blush: The Movement Toward Acceptance of the Nude as an Art Form in America, 1800–25," *Winterthur Portfolio* 9 (1974): 103–21, accessed February 15, 2016, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/1180570>.
- [15] For Powers's response to the *Chanting Cherubs*, see Wunder, *Hiram Powers*, 1:208.
- [16] Wright, "Cherubs," 186.
- [17] A. G. Hoyt to Hiram Powers, September 30, 1844, Hiram Powers Papers, box 5, folder 36, frame 21, AAA, <http://www.aaa.si.edu/collections/container/viewer/H-Miscellaneous-Hod-Hoo-284430>.
- [18] On Kellogg's early biography, see Llerena Friend, ed., *M. K. Kellogg's Texas Journal, 1872* (Austin and London: University of Texas Press, 1967), 21–41; and Lorna Lutes Sylvester and C. W. Hackensmith, "Miner K. Kellogg: Recollections of New Harmony," *Indiana Magazine of History* 64, no. 1 (March 1968): 39–64. For discussion of Kellogg's Middle East travels, see John Davis, *The Landscape of Belief: Encountering the Holy Land in Nineteenth Century American Art and Culture* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1996) 101–26.
- [19] Miner Kellogg, *Mr. Miner K. Kellogg to his Friends* (Paris, 1858), 5, Hiram Powers Papers, box 10, folder 55, frame 2, AAA, <http://www.aaa.si.edu/collections/container/viewer/Booklet-Mr-Miner-K-Kellogg-to-His-Friends-Reproduction--284754>.
- [20] See "On Bedawins [*sic*] and Camels," n.d.; correspondence related to Kellogg's State Department travels; and letters to friends, colleagues, and patrons. Research Material on Miner K. Kellogg and Kellogg Papers, 1840–79 and 1944–83, reels D30 and D33, AAA. See also Wunder, *Hiram Powers*, 1:128.
- [21] "Miner Kellogg—Dr. Wolff & c.," *Cincinnati Daily Gazette*, May 9, 1845, 2.
- [22] For Powers's suggestion that Robb patronize Kellogg, see Robb's response, James Robb to Hiram Powers, April 24, 1846, Hiram Powers Papers, box 8, folder 46, frame 8, AAA, <http://www.aaa.si.edu/collections/container/viewer/Robb-James-284621>.
- [23] The assistant hired was Charles C. Willits, also from Cincinnati, who had worked for P. T. Barnum and met Powers and Kellogg while traveling in Italy. Willits to Hiram Powers, July 13, 1847, Hiram Powers Papers, box 10, folder 12, frame 61, AAA, <http://www.aaa.si.edu/collections/container/viewer/W-Miscellaneous-Wig-Wil-339956>.
- [24] Miner Kellogg to Hiram Powers, August 13, 1847, Cincinnati Historical Society (henceforth CHS).
- [25] Kellogg to Hiram Powers, August 29, 1847, CHS.
- [26] Ibid.
- [27] *National Intelligencer* (New York, NY), August 25, 1847. This review/puff piece was subsequently reprinted in a number of other newspapers, including the *American and Commercial Daily Advertiser* (Baltimore, MD), August 31, 1847, 2; the *Newark (NJ) Daily Advertiser*, August 31, 1847, 2; and the *Boston Bee*, September 8, 1847, 2.
- [28] *New York Evening Mirror*, August 26, 1847.
- [29] Kellogg to Hiram Powers, September 5, 1847, CHS, quoted in Wunder, *Hiram Powers*, 1:221.

[30] Dewey, "Mr. Powers' Statue," *Union Magazine of Literature and Art*, October 1847. The Unitarian minister Dr. Orville Dewey first saw *The Greek Slave* in Powers's studio in Florence and published his essay long before the statue's arrival in the United States.

[31] *Powers' Statue of the Greek Slave*.

[32] *Ibid.*, 4.

[33] *Ibid.*

[34] "Jackson—the Fine Arts—Powers' Greek Slave," *Washington (DC) Daily Union*, October 12, 1847, 3.

[35] For a summary of the exhibition's finances, see Wunder, appendix D to *Hiram Powers*, 1:375; Thomas Seir Cummings, *Historic Annals of the National Academy of Design, New York Drawing Association, etc. . . . from 1825 to the Present Time* (Philadelphia: G. W. Childs, 1865), 201.

[36] "Exhibition," *Alexandria (VA) Gazette*, January 25, 1848, 3. The sculpture was advertised daily in the *Washington (DC) Daily Union*, beginning January 24, 1848, 2.

[37] See Wunder, *Hiram Powers*, 1:224–27.

[38] Kellogg to Hiram Powers, February 26, 1848, CHS.

[39] Wunder, *Hiram Powers*, 1:227.

[40] Kellogg to Hiram Powers, June 11, 1848, CHS.

[41] Wunder, appendix D to *Hiram Powers*, 1:375.

[42] *Louisville (KY) Journal*, January 20, 1849.

[43] "New York Correspondence," *Daily National Intelligencer* (Washington, DC), September 23, 1847, 3.

[44] Samuel Y. Atlee to Hiram Powers, October 20, 1854, Hiram Powers Papers, box 1, folder 21, frame 61, AAA, <http://www.aaa.si.edu/collections/container/viewer/atlee-samuel-york-284166>.

[45] Commenting on the Robb affair, Nicholas Longworth wrote to Powers that Kellogg "has intended to act as your friend, & has been more sensitive than he would have been in his own business. But his zeal will not benefit you." Longworth to Hiram Powers, November 18, 1848, CHS.

[46] Frances Austin to Hiram Powers, October 12, 1850, Hiram Powers Papers, box 1, folder 28, frame 15, AAA, <http://www.aaa.si.edu/collections/container/viewer/austin-frances-1-284173>.

[47] Hiram Powers to Sampson Powers, August 7, 1845, Hiram Powers Papers, box 8, folder 8, frame 46, AAA, <http://www.aaa.si.edu/collections/container/viewer/powers-sampson-339929>.

[48] Hiram Powers to Sidney Brooks, December 12, 1858, Hiram Powers Papers, box 2, folder 2, frame 72, AAA, <http://www.aaa.si.edu/collections/container/viewer/brooks-sidney-339825>.

[49] See, for example, Sidney Brooks, who reassured Powers that he was in the right, but asked about the papers. "Mr. Calvert asks me why you did not return Mr. Kellogg's papers to him when asked to do so, and particularly by Mr. Franklin Dexter?" Brooks to Hiram Powers, June 15, 1858, Hiram Powers Papers, box 2, folder 2, frame 28, AAA, <http://www.aaa.si.edu/collections/container/viewer/brooks-sidney-339825>. For details of the disagreement, see Wunder, *Hiram Powers*, 1:241–44, 257–61.

[50] Hiram Powers to Sidney Brooks, January 19, 1859, Hiram Powers Papers, box 2, folder 3, frame 6, AAA, <http://www.aaa.si.edu/collections/container/viewer/brooks-sidney-339826>.

[51] *Louisville Democrat*, January 20, 1849.

[52] For an overview of the conflict, see Wunder, *Hiram Powers*, 1:250. Powers did not receive the contested money from the Pennsylvania Academy until 1858, after several additional court rulings.

[53] Kellogg, *Miner K. Kellogg to His Friends*, 1–23.

Illustrations



Fig. 1, Hiram Powers, *The Greek Slave*, 1846. Marble. Corcoran Collection, National Gallery of Art, Washington, DC. [\[return to text\]](#)



Fig. 2, Shobal Vail Clevenger, *Relief sculpture of Miner Kilbourne Kellogg*, 1839. Plaster. Smithsonian American Art Museum, Washington, DC. [\[return to text\]](#)



Fig. 3, Hiram Powers, *Eve Tempted*, 1877. Marble. Smithsonian American Art Museum, Washington, DC.
[\[return to text\]](#)



Fig. 4, Raphael, *Madonna of the Baldacchino*, 1507. Oil on canvas. Pitti Palace, Florence. [\[return to text\]](#)



Fig. 5, Miner K. Kellogg, *Portrait of Hiram Powers's Daughter*, n.d. Oil on canvas. Smithsonian American Art Museum, Washington, DC. [\[return to text\]](#)



Fig. 6, Miner K. Kellogg, *Circassian at Constantinople, Chief Zefir Bey*, 1845. Pencil and watercolor on paper. Smithsonian American Art Museum, Washington, DC. [\[return to text\]](#)

234 YANKEE DOODLE.

HIRAM POWER'S GREEK SLAVE,


ILLUSTRATED BY YANKEE DOODLE.



"There is a soul that will not pause to speak,
 Save in the stone, its clear and steadfast truth;
 There is a man, Italian, Goth nor Greek,
 Who gives to marble everlasting youth—
 He sits once in this woody west of ours,
 His eye grew bright within our rainbow bowers,
 He conquered one by one the many towers,
 Which less fortunate builded against the path,
 Of him who in his fertile sphere hath
 Triumphed and toiled, and done and fears;
 Beyond his kind, beyond his length of years;
 VICTOR AT LAST."

Victor at last!—Yes there it stands, in its triumphant beauty, in its crowded circle of admirers, a terrible satire upon the timid who doubted your genius, in its early day of struggle, upon the proud who scorned you in your poverty, upon the base who malignantly beset your path!

But, softly, softly!—The slave was in a distant region in Italy, attainable only by long land and water travel; and now on its fifth flight in that Alpine solitude of the Society Library Building, to many it is scarcely nearer. Before setting out on that long and perilous journey many consult maps of mountain-regions and draw long breaths and meditate their strength of constitution. One of YANKEE DOODLE's artists, considerate of the weakness and frailty of poor human nature, has ingeniously contrived a Raising Pole, with chairs affixed, by a rotary motion of which (set agoing by cranks and strong men, somewhere in the bowels of the earth below) ladies and gentlemen are hoisted into the air, and in due course of time, borne to a level with the exhibition room of the statue. The circumscribed space in which it is obliged to work does not allow it to be of sufficiently massive material to bear up every tonnage that is offered. For instance here are a couple of poor mortal sinners, this Fat Old Gentleman and Fat Old Lady, who are compelled to try the ascent on foot. A weary way! A weary way! She has come to a dead stand-still, or rather sit down, and looks, fat in hand, toward the fat



old gentleman, who is endeavoring to gauge the height still to be ascended. His survey seems to be into an limitless distance. Every round of beef he has been familiar with, in all his past life, rises up in judgment against him, and comes between him and the beautiful Slave. It won't do. Down they must go according to an inevitable law of gravitation. The Slave is no slave to them. She is free as air in that inaccessible mountain-elevation.

But here are others—a room full of them more fortunate. Armed men and women, with eye-glasses and telescopes, testing Mr. HIRAM POWERS, with a scrutiny that a whole college of Anatomists could scarcely equal. These are clearly very early comers—for the fair Slave does not yet appear in quite all her resplendent beauty. She has been summoned early before company and is not in full dress (or rather undress) for timely visitors.

These are delicate-minded ladies and gentlemen, who prefer something a little hideous and repulsive in a night-gown and cap, to something entirely pure and beautiful without them. We do not assert that this is an exact and accurate copy of the statue of HIRAM POWERS; it may be a privilege Mr. KELLOGG extends to some very nice people, to have her dressed in this way. To the common world she appears clothed in nothing but her own absolute beauty and the spotless purity of the marble. Whether an extra charge is required for the sight of the slave in costume, we do not know, but for our own part we would a little prefer to pay a gratuity for her appearance in the other way. We think we see in the crowd several dry-goods merchants and linen-druggists, and to them the quality of her apparel appears to be a subject of profound interest. It is a first-rate article, gentlemen—and we could tell you exactly how much it cost a yard. To see the Slave in this peculiar garb you must call before 9 A. M. and 10 P. M. Between these hours you must see her—if see her you would—in a splendor, a loveliness and unobscured beauty which no artist of ours—or of any one's—can rival. See her, then, the lovely creation, the beautiful help-mate of the great sculptor of our country—come hither on a mission of glorious art, from a far land—empowered to speak with us, in our best hours, of the sublime and fervid thoughts which have warmed the heart and fired the fancy of one of the truest and noblest sons of America! May she prove, in the generous bounty of his countrymen, the best portion of his young children, the guardian-angel of his hearth!

The paper on which the *Literary World* is printed this week, is not quite so good as usual.

Fig. 7, "Hiram Power's [sic] Greek Slave, Illustrated by Yankee Doodle," *Literary World* (New York), August 28, 1847: 234. [\[return to text\]](#)