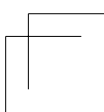
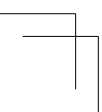
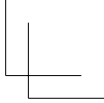
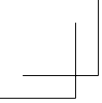


**Variations on the Dying Gladiator
and
Other Essays on Byron**



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Kasahara Yorimichi

**Osaka Kyoiku Tosho
2023**

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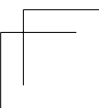
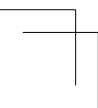
First published 2023

Printed in Japan at Osaka Kyoiku Toshō, Osaka

ISBN 978-4-271-21082-5 C3098

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PREFATORY NOTE AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This small booklet contains my past English writings on Byron's poems or those relating to *The Statue of the Dying Gladiator*, with the addition of newly written chapters and an adapted translation from the original Japanese version. Its publication is made possible with the research grant from Meisei University, which generously supported the author's research with its abundant research materials during the past twenty-four years.

Part I is primarily intended as an anthology of poems and prose writings relating to *The Statue of the Dying Gladiator*, rather than a collection of articles with an emphasis on the theses they are supposed to convey. Whatever theses these articles may appear to present will best be understood as an annotative footnote for a better appreciation of the quoted lines or passages in question. Readers, therefore, are recommended to pay less attention on the theses, if any, and more on enjoying poems and prose writings amply quoted in them. In fact, I took the liberty of quoting too copiously in Introduction to Part I and Chapters 1 and 2 (all newly written for the present booklet), but I believe this will serve the purpose of Part I just mentioned.

The original dates of composition of the articles in Part II predate those of Part I, but will serve as elucidating yet broader literary backgrounds to the poems in Part I. Those articles in Part II are more or less concerned with the theme of psychic expansion and/or contraction, which I hope will be made clear in the close reading of the poems or prose writings in question, and which I believe is what makes Byron's poems appealing.

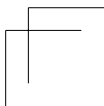
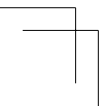
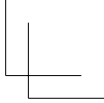
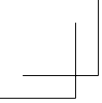
Some of the chapters in this booklet started as oral presentations. And I am pleased to extend my heartfelt thanks to all those who either accepted my paper proposals, offered me lectureships at various occasions, or invited me to contribute to journals or books. My earliest talk, "Byronic Ruins", given as a lecture at the 1998 Wordsworth Summer Conference, turned into Chapter 8 of this booklet with some revisions, and I am grateful to Jonathan Wordsworth, the Conference Director as of 1998, for his kind invitation. I am also indebted to local directors and organizers of various International Byron Conferences: first to M. B. Raizis for accepting my proposal "Meditations

on the Acropolis” (Section 9, Chapter 8 of this booklet) to be given at Messolonghi in 1999, thus allowing me a chance to pay homage to the *genius loci* of Greece to whom Byron devoted his last nine months of his life; next to Christiane Vigouroux of the French Byron Society for the Sorbonne Conference of 2006 where I presented a paper entitled “Mis-correspondence of Pronouns in Byron” (Chapter 7 of this booklet) under the conference theme of “Correspondence(s)”. My most recent attendance at an International Byron Conference, or to be more precise, the Joint Conference of the International Association of Byron Societies (IABS) and German Society for English Romanticism (GER), gave birth to “Croly’s Dying Warrior” (Chapter 5 of this booklet). I am pleased to offer my sincerest gratitude to Norbert Lennartz of Vechta, for giving me a chance to present a paper on a poem that celebrates an ancient Germanic hero on the German soil, and later for inviting me to contribute to *Boundaries, Limits, Taboos: Transgression in Romanticism* (Trier: WVT, 2021) under his editorship. Chapter 4 of the present booklet has its origin, although heavily revised, in “The Conflict between Nature and Art: An Annotation to Felicia Hemans’s ‘The Statue of the Dying Gladiator’”, written in Japanese and contributed to *A Firm Perswasion: Essays in British Romanticism* (Tokyo: Sairyu-sha, 2012), co-edited by Hatsuko NIIMI and Masashi SUZUKI, for whose excellent editorship I wish to convey my special thanks. No less gratitude is due to Nicholas Roe, the present Director of the Wordsworth Summer Conference, who invited me to give lectures at Grasmere, first in 2008, and then in 2017. The former lecture was invited by Marilyn Gaull for inclusion in *The Wordsworth Circle*, Vol. 40, No. 1 (Winter 2009), to which was contributed “Byron’s Dying Gladiator in Context” (Chapter 3 of this booklet) with revisions reflecting research results conducted at the University Library of St Andrews. The 2017 WSC lecture “Sotheby’s Coliseum and the Menades: What Drunken Madness!?” (Chapter 6 of this booklet) underwent some revisions towards the end in order to save Sotheby from unjust criticisms against his alleged “imitation”, and was transformed into Chapter 6 with the new subtitle “The Contemplation of the Grand”, thus exploring the true meaning of Byron’s often misinterpreted statement on Sotheby.



PART I

Variations on the Dying Gladiator



Introduction to Part I

[...] a party of English or Americans, paying the inevitable visit [to the Coliseum] by moonlight, and exalting themselves with raptures that were Byron's, not their own.

(From Hawthorne, *The Marble Faun*)

1 Byron

At the centre of the Hall of the Galatian in Musei Capitolini, Rome, stands the celebrated statue, so called *The Dying Gaul*, or *The Dying Gladiator*.

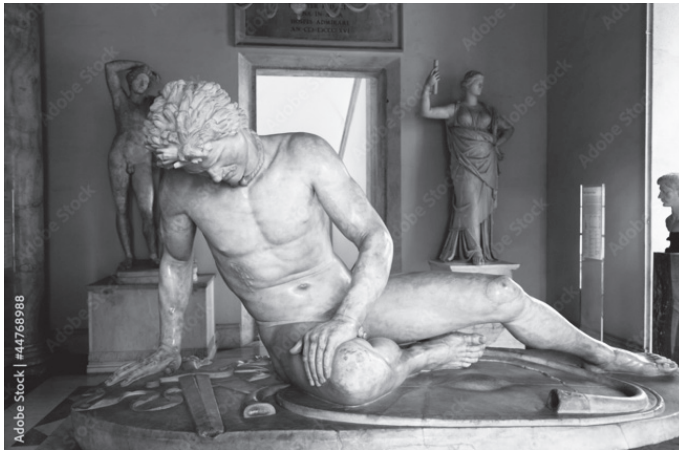


Fig. 1 *The Statue of the Dying Gaul, or Dying Gladiator*

Adobe Stock

This is the statue that inspired Lord Byron to pen some of the most famous stanzas in his *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage*, which in turn has made the statue even more famous as exemplified in the following quotes on either side of the Atlantic. First, Byron's *Dying Gladiator* stanzas from *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage*, Canto IV, published in 1818:

139

And here the buzz of eager nations ran,
 In murmur'd pity, or loud-roared applause,
 As man was slaughtered by his fellow-man.
 And wherefore slaughtered? wherefore, but because
 Such were the bloody Circus' genial laws,
 And the imperial pleasure.— Wherefore not?
 What matters where we fall to fill the maws
 Of worms — on battle-plains or listed spot?
 Both are but theatres where the chief actors rot.

140

I see before me the Gladiator lie:
 He leans upon his hand — his manly brow
 Consents to death, but conquers agony,
 And his drooped head sinks gradually low —
 And through his side the last drops, ebbing slow
 From the red gash, fall heavy, one by one,
 Like the first of a thunder-shower; and now
 The arena swims around him — he is gone,
 Ere ceased the inhuman shout which hail'd the wretch who won.

141

He heard it, but he heeded not — his eyes
 Were with his heart, and that was far away:
 He reck'd not of the life he lost nor prize,
 But where his rude hut by the Danube lay,
There were his young barbarians all at play,
There was their Dacian mother — he, their sire,
 Butcher'd to make a Roman holiday —
 All this rush'd with his blood — Shall he expire
 And unavenged? — Arise! ye Goths, and glut your ire!

(CHP, IV. sts. 139-41)

2 Hawthorne

Forty-two years after the publication of Byron's *Dying Gladiator* stanzas, Nathaniel Hawthorne, in the guise of the narrator of *The Marble Faun*, depicts the moonlit Coliseum and contemplates upon the barbarity of "the

Roman populace of yore” against the background of English or American tourists “exalting themselves with raptures that were Byron’s, not their own”.

Within [the Coliseum], the moonlight filled and flooded the great empty space; it glowed upon tier above tier of ruined, grass-grown arches, and made them even too distinctly visible. The splendour of the revelation took away that inestimable effect of dimness and mystery, by which the imagination might be assisted to build a grander structure than the Coliseum, and to shatter it with a more picturesque decay. Byron’s celebrated description is better than the reality. He beheld the scene in his mind’s eye, through the witchery of many intervening years, and faintly illuminated it, as if with starlight, instead of this broad glow of moonshine.

The party of our friends sat down, three or four of them on a prostrate column; another, on a shapeless lump of marble, once a Roman altar; others, on the steps of one of the Christian shrines. Goths and barbarians though they were, they chatted as gaily together as if they belonged to the gentle and pleasant race of people who now inherit Italy. There was much pastime and gaiety, just then, in the area of the Coliseum, where so many gladiators and wild beasts had fought and died, and where so much blood of Christian martyrs had been lapt up by that fiercest of wild beasts, the Roman populace of yore. Some youths and maidens were running merry races across the open space, and playing at hide-and-seek a little way within the duskiness of the ground-tier of arches; whence now and then, you could hear the half-shriek, half-laugh of a frolicsome girl, whom the shadow had betrayed into a young man’s arms. Elder groups were seated on the fragments of pillars and blocks of marble, that lie round the verge of the area, talking in the quick, short ripple of the Italian tongue. On the steps of the great black cross, in the centre of the Coliseum, sat a party, singing scraps of song, with much laughter and merriment between the stanzas.

[...] To make an end of our description, a red twinkle of light was visible amid the breadth of shadow, that fell across the upper part of the Coliseum. Now it glimmered through a line of arches, or threw a broader gleam, as it rose out of some profound abyss of ruin; now it was muffled by a heap of shrubbery, which had adventurously clambered to that dizzy height; and so the red light kept ascending to loftier and loftier ranges of the structure, until it stood like a star, where the blue

sky rested against the Coliseum's topmost wall. It indicated a party of English or Americans, paying the inevitable visit by moonlight, and exalting themselves with raptures that were Byron's, not their own.

(*The Marble Faun*, ch.17)

3 Dickens

Charles Dickens, writing almost at the same time with Hawthorne, has one of his characters, Pip, narrate the posture of his friend Herbert Pocket in *Great Expectations* as follows:

There was a sofa where Mr. Pocket stood, and he dropped upon it in the attitude of the Dying Gladiator. Still in that attitude he said, with a hollow voice, "Good night, Mr. Pip," when I deemed it advisable to go to bed and leave him.

(*Great Expectations*, ch.23)

It is doubtful whether the narrator of the novel, a young blacksmith who had newly come to London from Kent in the early nineteenth century, had ever seen a copy of *The Statue of the Dying Gladiator* or was able to recognise its posture as such. If, however, Dickens meant Pip the narrator to have seen a copy of the statue, it was surely at Miss Havisham's. Whichever the case, Herbert Pocket must surely have seen one during his gallant visits to various places in London, and Dickens certainly does write the novel on such assumptions.

Chapter 1

The Discovery of *The Statue of the Dying Gladiator*¹

But we are justified in asking whether the Capitoline statue and the Ludovisi group may not be copies of some of the figures in the cycle at Pergamum representing the triumphs of Attalos I.

(From Helbig, Guide to the Public Collections of Classical Antiquities in Rome.)

The Statue of the Dying Gladiator, according to Haskell & Penny, is first recorded in an inventory of the Ludovisi collection dated the 2nd of November 1623, and has therefore been inferred that it was discovered shortly before that time on the site where the Villa Ludovisi was being built (Haskell & Penny, 224). This site of the villa, as Hartswick demonstrates in detail, forms part of the gardens of Sallust, which later proved to be particularly rich in antiquities (Hartswick, 104). During the following two decades, the statue seems to have gained an immense popularity to such an extent that miniature copies were produced throughout Europe, as testified by John Evelyn in his diary entry of the 10th of November 1644: “In the Palace [of Prince Ludovisio’s Villa] I must never forget that famous statue of the Gladiator, spoken of by Pliny, and so much followed by all the rare Artists, as the many Copies and statues testife, now almost dispers’d through all Europe, both in stone & metal” (Evelyn, 2:235)². The statue then passed

1 This chapter is in part supported by JSPS KAKENHI Grant-in-Aid for Scientific Research (C) Grant Number 22K00397.

2 By Evelyn’s time, the reference to Pliny as the first source, in spite of the fact that de Beer comments as “not identifiable”, seems to have been a common knowledge. See for instance Winckelmann (Winckelmann/Fusseli, 12, 12n); William Hayley (Note XV to the “Third Epistle” (Hayley, 293)). Pliny the Elder, in his *Natural History*, speaks of its author as the Athenian sculptor Ctesilas (Pliny, 34:74).

into the hands of several owners, creditors, and inheritors, until in 1737 Pope Clement XII acquired it for the Capitoline Museums. It remained in the museum until 1797 when it was ceded to the French under the terms of the Treaty of Tolentino, and displayed in the Louvre as one of the trophies of Napoleon's conquest of Continental Europe. After the Congress of Vienna it was returned to Rome and restored in the reorganised Capitoline Museums (Haskell & Penny, 224).

The model of the statue, or the man who lies fatally wounded was referred to as a "gladiator" by Evelyn as quoted above. Winckelmann at first subscribed to this naming (Winckelmann, 12), but later, according to Haskell & Penny who succinctly summarized various theories, advocated "a herald theory" and triggered various speculations on all sides. He himself names three probable heralds in history and mythology who met their unfortunate deaths in their own ways. Carlo Féa who translated Winckelmann's works into Italian, argues for a Spartan trumpeter, while Ennio Quirino Visconti, an Italian antiquarian and art historian who emigrated to Paris along with numerous art works and became curator of the Musée Napoleon in the Louvre in 1799, argued that the physical characteristics of the figure point to a barbarian warrior, either a Gaul or a German. Antonio Nibby, an Italian archaeologist, is also a supporter of the Gaul theory, and further claims that the figure was modelled on one of the Gauls during their attack of Delphi under Brennus at the beginning of the third century BC (Haskell & Penny, 226-27).

Such were the basic facts shared, partly or sometimes inaccurately, by the poets of the early 19th century to be mentioned in this booklet. Less than a century later, a German classical archaeologist Wolfgang Helbig published a comprehensive account of the statue in his *Führer durch die öffentlichen Sammlungen klassischer Altertümer in Rom* [*Guide to the Public Collections of Classical Antiquities in Rome*] in 1891. Since then, it has commonly been considered that the figure represents a Gaul, and that the marble statue now housed in the Capitoline Museums is a copy of the bronze original, forming part of the triumphal monument of the Pergamenian king Attalos I who defeated the Gauls in the 3rd century, BC (Helbig, 1:396-99). Since the

English translation of 1895 “is based upon the original German version of 1891, but also incorporates the extensions and improvements contained in the French edition of 1893” (VIII), and that it may serve as the culmination of the foregoing views and studies on the statue, I should like to quote in full from the 1895 English translation of Helbig:

The Dying Gaul.

Formerly in the Villa Ludovisi and transferred to the Capitoline Museum under Clement XII. The restorations include the end of the nose, the left knee-cap, all the toes, the part of the plinth on which the right arm leans, the sword, and the adjacent part of the horn. This last object has been improperly restored, as it should certainly represent the mouthpiece of the horn, the opening or bell of which still exists in the ancient portion towards the other end of the plinth. The right arm, which has been broken off and re-united with the body, certainly belongs to it. It has been through a more drastic cleaning process than the rest of the body, but is of the same marble and executed in the same style. The marble of the figure comes in any case from the E. part of the Mediterranean [sic], either from Mt. Sipyron or from the island of Phurne (Furni), between Samos and Icaria, from Thasos or from Thrace (*Sigel*, in *Kinkel*, *Mosaik zur Kunstgeschichte*, p. 80; *Arch. Zeitung*, XXXIV, 1876, p. 153; *Athenische Mittheilungen*, II, 1877, p. 134).

The dying warrior is evidently a Gaul. Round his neck he wears the Gallic torque, or collar of twisted goldwire, well known through the story of Manlius Torquatus and through examples still extant. The arrangement of the hair and beard is also after the Gallic fashion. Diodoros (V, 28), evidently drawing on an older authority, informs us that the hair of the Gauls, through the constant use of ointment, became so thick and bristly that it could hardly be distinguished from the mane of a horse; and that the Gauls brushed it back from the forehead in such a way that they looked like Pans or Satyrs. According to the same writer, the Gaulish nobles shaved their cheeks and chin and allowed their moustache to grow. The statue reproduces most admirably the type of a

northern barbarian not only in the face but also in the forms of the body. The massive extremities, the large bones, the coarse and inelastic skin are all instances of this.

The formerly prevalent assumption that the Gaul had fallen on his own sword in order to avoid captivity is contradicted by the fact that the wound is on the right side of the breast. As the ancients, including the Gauls (comp. No. 884), knew very well that a thrust in the aorta was sure to be fatal, it is far more likely that he would have stabbed himself on the left side. On the other hand the attitude of the body and the position of the wound appear entirely natural, if we assume that the Gaul was wounded on his shieldless right side by an enemy, perhaps while in the act of raising his horn to his lips with his right hand. Mortally wounded, he has dragged himself out of the battle, has broken his horn, and now, lying on his shield, waits with sombre defiance for death. The bent position of his right arm, with the hand turned half inwards, is pathologically accurate; if the right arm were rigid and the hand turned outwards, the muscles of the right side of the breast would be stretched and the pain of the wound would be aggravated by the tension.

The statue was formerly in the Villa Ludovisi and closely resembles the group of Gauls (No. 884), also till quite recently in the same villa, not only in conception and general characteristics but even in such details as the pattern of the ornamentation on the shield. Apparently both belonged to one and the same cycle, of which the group formed the centre and our figure the right-hand corner. They cannot, however, have formed the sculptural decoration of a pediment, as the plinths are oval instead of rectangular. The lifelike details of the works would also have been lost at so great a height above the ground. It is therefore probable that the group of the Villa Ludovisi, the Capitoline figure, and the other statues of the series were placed side by side on one or more pedestals of moderate elevation.

Pliny (Nat. Hist., 34, 84) informs us that Epigonos (not, as formerly read, Isigonos), Pyromachos, Stratonikos, and Antigonos had represented the wars between the Gauls on the one side and the kings Attalos and Eumenes of Pergamum on the other. These kings were Attalos I (B.C. 241-197) and Eumenes II (B.C. 197-159). The excavations carried on on the Pergamenian Acropolis have, furthermore, brought to light a number of bases, with inscriptions showing that they bore statues or groups referring to the victories of these monarchs. Tradition also tells us that Attalos I presented the Athenians with a series of statues celebrating

his victories over the Gauls. As already indicated under No. 385, several extant statuettes, in marble, seem to be copies, made by Pergamenian sculptors, of the figures in this cycle. If this view be correct, we are constrained to connect also the Ludovisi group and the Capitoline statue with the Pergamenian sculpture of the time of Attalos I; for both works show, in spite of their more careful and realistic execution, an essential resemblance in their artistic methods to the above-mentioned statuettes. They cannot, indeed, have actually belonged to the monuments on the Pergamenian Acropolis, since the bases found there show distinct traces of having borne bronze statues, while Pliny expressly says that the four artists named above were workers in metal. But we are justified in asking whether the Capitoline statue and the Ludovisi group may not be copies of some of the figures in the cycle at Pergamum representing the triumphs of Attalos I. The Ludovisi group certainly reproduces a bronze original, as will appear more clearly when we come to discuss it (No. 884); and what is true of the group is true of the statue. In any case the material and the style of execution prove that both, like the statuettes mentioned under No. 385, are the work of Pergamenian sculptors. Observe, for example, the distinctness with which the fold of skin above the left shoulder of the dying Gaul is indicated. A Roman copyist would certainly have softened such a trait as this.

Müller-Wieseler, Denkmäler d. alten Kunst, I, T. 48, 217. *Baumeister*, Denkmäler d. kl. Alterthums, II, pp. 1234, 1235, Nos. 1408, 1409, pp. 1236 et seq. *Revue archéologique*, XII (1888), p. 284, Fig. 2. *Comp. Bie*, Kampfgruppe und Kämpfertypen, pp. 129, 130, 137, 140. Other references in *Friederichs-Wolters*, Bausteine, No. 1412, and in the *Revue arch.*, XII (1888), p. 280, note 3. — On the subject represented, see *Arch. Zeitung*, XL (1882), pp. 163-166, XLI (1883), p. 89. *Jahrbuch des Arch. Instituts*, III (1888), pp. 150-152. — On the reading 'Epigonos' instead of 'Isigonos' in Pliny, *Nat. Hist.*, 34, 84, see *Jahrbuch*, VIII (1893), pp. 131, 132. — The theory, advanced in the *Jahrbuch* (VIII, pp. 129-131), that the Capitoline statue reproduces the Tubicen of Epigonos (*Pliny*, *Nat. Hist.*, 34, 88) seems disposed of in *Röm. Mitth.*, VII (1894), p. 253. — On the wars of the Gauls and the Pergamenian kings: *Rheinisches Museum*, XL (1885), pp. 114-132. *Van Geldern*, Galatarum res in Græcia et Asia

gestæ (Amsterdam, 1888), pp. 203 et seq. — On the bases of the Pergamenian triumphal monument: *Alterthümer von Pergamon*, II, p. 84. *Loewy*, *Inschriften griech. Bildhauer*, No. 154, pp. 113-122.

(Helbig, *Guide*, 1:396-99)

Chapter 2

Intertextual Context: The Late Eighteenth Century

While they [the Romans] fancied themselves lords of the world, they forgot that they were men; while they indulged their amusement, they stifled their humanity. Indeed, what could be expected from a people capable of receiving a law, that, according to the usual interpretation of it, in a case of insolvency, ordained a fellow-citizen to be cut piece-meal, and be divided among his creditors?

*(From Rev. James Ramsay, *An Essay on the Treatment and Conversion of African Slaves in the British Colonies*)*

John Evelyn's statement of 1644 quoted in Chapter 1 is a good indication of the popularity the statue had gained among travellers in Italy who saw the statue and voiced their impressions and opinions in their travelogues or diaries. The present chapter is an attempt to draw an overall, if not comprehensive, map of those views expressed in the eighteenth century, with an emphasis on the citation themselves rather than on my own summaries or biographical notes. The arrangement of textual quotations, though being roughly chronological, is more or less thematic, with the themes or ideas themselves arranged according to the rough course of thematic change. Biographical notes are based upon relevant articles in *The Dictionary of National Biography*.

The first section begins with a quote showing the fidelity to a certain model, presumably a classical ideal, which then is followed by an opposing view, namely fidelity to nature expounded by Samuel Sharp. The second section includes expressions of various sentiments, such as in the words of Adam Smith: "pity or compassion, the emotion which we feel for the misery of others" (*The Theory of Moral Sentiments*, 1.1.1), or indignation

against the ancient Romans who, in the words of James Ramsay, “stifled their humanity”, “while they indulged their amusement”. Various observations on the countenance of the statue are grouped together in the third section, such as agony, nobility within, or fortitude of a mind “depressed by slavery, and without elevation of thought”. William Hayley’s quote at the end of the chapter summarizes almost all views expressed in this chapter, proving itself as an epitome of the eighteenth-century views.

1.a The statue seen within the debate between the ancients and the moderns : John Wesley (1703-91)

John Wesley, the founder of the Methodist Movement, takes sides with the ancients against the moderns, naming *The Statue of the Dying Gladiator* among several other statuary works as “loudly proclaim[ing] the just pretensions of the ancients to a superiority in [the arts of sculpture]”, and by so doing praises them as being “models of beauty and true sublime in sculpture”. Quoted from *A Survey of the Wisdom of God in the Creation: or a Compendium of Natural Philosophy* (1784):

’Tis worth notice, that the merit of the ancients is generally most controverted by those, who are least acquainted with them. There are very few of those, who rail at antiquity, qualified to relish the original beauties of the Iliad, Æneid, and other immortal performances of the authors just enumerated. There are fewer still, who are capable at one view to take in all that variety of science, which hath been laid before the reader, and which comprehends in it almost the whole circle of our knowledge. Of the remaining admirable monuments, which shew to what perfection the ancients carried the arts of sculpture and design, how few have taken any due notice; and of those, how very few have been able to judge of their real value? True it is, that time and the hands of Barbarians have destroyed the better part of them; yet still enough is left to prove the excellence of what hath perished, and to justify encomiums bestowed on them by historians. The group of figures in the Niobé of *Praxiteles*, and the famous statue of *Laocoon*, still to be seen at *Rome*, are and ever will be models of beauty and true sublime in sculpture; where much more

is to be admired, than comes within the comprehension of the eye. The Venus de medicis, the Hercules stifling Antaeus, that other Hercules, who rests upon his club, the dying Gladiator, and that other in the vineyard of Borghese, the Apollo of the Belvidere, the maimed Hercules of the same place, and the Equerry in the action of breaking a horse on mount Quirinal, are all of them monuments, which loudly proclaim the just pretensions of the ancients to a superiority in those arts.

(*A Survey of the Wisdom of God*, 5:147-48)

1.b Realism of the statue : Samuel Sharp (1709-78)

Of special interest in connection with the classical statuary is Samuel Sharp's statement in his *Letters from Italy, Describing the Customs and Manners of that Country, in the Years 1765, and 1766* (London, 1766), especially in an age when, according to Jean H. Hagstrum, general nature is visualized as sculptured reality (Hagstrum, 144-45).

Samuel Sharp (1709-78), a noted surgeon of the eighteenth century, served as surgeon to Guy's Hospital during 1733-57. His published works on surgery included *A Treatise on the Operations of Surgery* (1739), which achieved eleven editions and translations into five European languages, and *A Critical Enquiry into the Present State of Surgery* (1750), which achieved four editions and translations into five European languages. He set out on a tour through Italy, which resulted in the publication of his *Letters from Italy, Describing the Customs and Manners of that Country, in the Years 1765, and 1766* (London, 1766). John Kirkup, the author of the *DNB* article, describes this work as "forthright". The realism of *The Statue of the Dying Gladiator*, says Sharp, is far superior to the alleged realism of the *Farnese Hercules*, being true to nature. Quoted from the Dublin edition of *Letters from Italy* (1767):

It would be idle, and contrary to my declared plan of writing, should I attempt any description of the celebrated pictures or statues at Rome; I shall therefore only beg leave to observe, from my own feeling, that in the midst of all this excellence, the dying Gladiator affects me most. The *Farnese Hercules* is in the highest reputation, as an exquisite performance,

and would, indeed, have been a fine piece of sculpture, had there been such an original in nature; but, as I happen to know from my particular studies, that the muscles of a man's body, however much inflated, would not assume the shape they do here, I cannot be pleased, as some men are, with the *Farnese Hercules*; on the contrary, all is nature in the dying Gladiator, and indeed, the expression is so strong, a man may walk round and round the statue till he almost forget it is stone.

(*Letters from Italy*, 54)

2.a.1 Pity aroused in the viewer :

Jonathan Richardson,

the Elder (1667-1745) and the Younger (1694-1771)

Jonathan Richardson the Elder, a portrait painter and writer, was, according to *DNB*, the most important and prolific English writer on art of the first half of the eighteenth century, and influenced Sir Joshua Reynolds in many of his central ideas in his *Discourses*. Richardson is eloquent in detailed facial descriptions of the gladiator, yet no less important is his reference to “pity” which the statue arouses in the viewer. Quoted from *An Account of Some of the Statues, Bas-reliefs, Drawings, and Pictures in Italy, etc., with Remarks* (1722), co-authored by Jonathan Richardson the Elder and the Younger:

Myrmillo Dying, has the Strongest Expression of any Statue I have seen: He leans upon one Arm which gives way a little to the Weight of his Body, which evidently has no Force, because in that Action nothing can support it but holding his Thighs firm, and pressing his Legs to the Ground, but these Flag, and are flipping from under him, as appears by their being in a Position they can't hold, his other Hand is just sliding off his Thigh: His Mouth is a little open, and his Under Lip hangs: His Eyes are half clos'd, but incline faintly on one side towards the part where his Body goes to fall: His Hair is short, and clotted, and he has a Rope about his Neck, which adds extremely to the Pity we conceive for him: Under his Breast is a large Gash. See the Print in *Perrier*.

(*An Account of Some of the Statues*, 301)

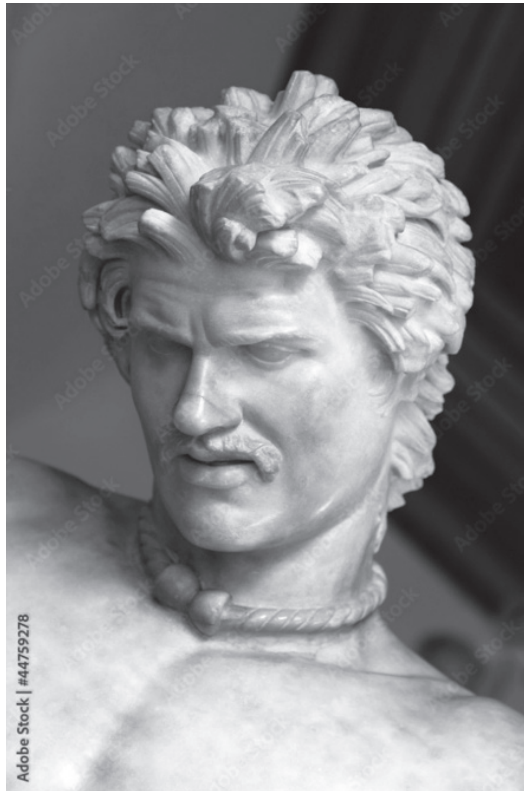


Fig. 2 *The Statue of the Dying Gaul, or Dying Gladiator* (Detail)
Adobe Stock

2.a.2 Sigh stimulated in the viewer : Edward Clarke (1730-86)

Laconic, yet of no less importance are lines from “A Letter to a Friend at Florence” in *A Letter to a Friend in Italy* (1755) by Edward Clarke, a traveller and antiquary clergyman. Clarke’s attention on the sigh stimulated in the viewer is all the more conspicuous, especially as it comes after a succession of beauty manifested in three male youths, Apollo, Meleager, and Antinous. Quoted from “A Letter to a Friend at Florence”:

Apollo's beardless Beauty, perfect Form,
 With Grace and Gesture inexpressible,
 And Attitude divine attracts the Eye.
 How dyes *Meleager*? What godlike Hand
 Inform'd Antinous! Here the Sculptor's Art
 Plays with our Passions, and commands at Will.
 The dying Gladiator asks a Sigh.

(“A Letter to a Friend at Florence”, ll. 138-44)

2.a.3 Sympathy aroused in the viewer :

Johann Joachim Winckelmann (1717-68)

Winckelmann, the pioneering German art historian of the eighteenth century, noted for his statement of “noble simplicity and sedate grandeur” when he spoke of Laocoon (Winckelmann, 30), observes, elsewhere in the same book, that the initial sympathy of the Romans was weakened by the institutionalized gladiatorial shows. Quoted from Henry Fusseli’s [sic.] translation, *Reflection on the Paintings and Sculpture of the Greeks* (1767):

In the most happy times of their freedom, the humanity of the Greeks abhorred bloody games, which even in the Ionick Asia had ceased long before, if, as some guess, hey had once been usual there. *Antiochus Epiphanes*, by ordering shews of Roman gladiators, first presented them with such unhappy victims; and custom and time, weakening the pangs of sympathizing humanity, changed even these games into school of art. There Ctesias studies his dying gladiator, in whom you might descry “how much life was still left in him*”.

* Some are of opinion, that the celebrated Ludovisian gladiator, now in the great salon of the capitol, is this same whom Pliny mentions.
 (*Reflection on the Paintings and Sculpture of the Greeks*, 11-12)

2.b.1 Indignation aroused in the viewer (1) :

Giuseppe (or Joseph) Barretti (1719-89)

Giuseppe Baretto, or commonly known in England as Joseph Baretto,

confesses he could not “help being less affected by the visible perfection of a Grecian chizzel, than by the inhumanity of the Romans”, who, Barretti says, were “always delighted by bloody shows”.

Barretti, a writer born in Turin, Italy, came over to England in 1751 and soon was introduced to Mrs Charlotte Lennox and her circle of artists and literary friends, who included Henry Fielding, Sir Joshua Reynolds, David Garrick, and Samuel Johnson (*DNB*). Barretti claims Dr Johnson is the best friend he ever had and the person to whom he is indebted for the best part of his knowledge. And Johnson, in turn, according to Boswell, admired Barretti for his linguistic and conversational skills, his scholarship, and his knowledge of Italian culture, praising his English for “its purity and vigour” (Boswell, 256). Barretti’s first publication in London was *An Account of the Manners and Customs of Italy* (1768) written as a reply to the inaccurate and superficial description of Italian customs and manners given in *Letters from Italy* by Samuel Sharp (see above for Samuel Sharp). In 1769 Barretti was appointed Secretary for Foreign Correspondence to the Royal Academy of Painting, and Sculpture and Architecture. It was in this capacity that he wrote *A Guide through the Royal Academy* (1781), in which the author, instead of extolling the artistic merit of the statue as was fit for the Secretary to the Academy, criticised the inhumanity of the gladiatorial combat shows of the Romans.

MIRMILLO *Deficiens*, or *The Dying Gladiator*; a Statue in the Campidoglio’s Collection. You have here a very beautiful representation of one of those Wretches, generally of Thracian extraction, who fought in public at Rome for the diversion of that brutal People always delighted by bloody shows. This is exhibited in a fallen posture, and dying of a wound received in the breast. It was a part of a Gladiator’s education to learn falling in a fine attitude in case of his being mortally struck by an Antagonist, and dying in a graceful manner, in order to deserve the applause of the Spectators. Whenever I look upon this Statue, I cannot help being less affected by the visible perfection of a Grecian chizzel, than by the inhumanity of the Romans. This *Gladiator*, attributed to *Ctesilas*, a famous Greek, who lived in the Augustan age, has been noticed by *Pliny*. The right arm of it was restored by *Michalangelo*.

(*A Guide through the Royal Academy*, 23)

2.b.2 Indignation aroused in the viewer (2) : James Ramsay (1733-89)

Rev. James Ramsay, an Anglican minister and slavery abolitionist, is not so much interested in the statue itself, as in uncovering and criticising the morally degraded state of the ancient Romans that allowed gladiatorial combat shows and the slavery system at large to establish in the course of history. The quotation is taken from *An Essay on the Treatment and Conversion of African Slaves in the British Sugar Colonies* (1784):

In the infant state of Rome, slaves worked, and lived with their masters, without much distinction of rank or usage. But in proportion as luxury increased among the Romans the condition of their slaves sunk gradually down to the lowest degree of wretchedness and misery. And indeed such representations as the statue of the dying gladiator, which exhibits the life of a brave useful man sacrificed, not to the safety of his country, but to the barbarous whim of, perhaps, the most worthless set of men that ever were assembled together in one place; the scandalous traffic that the elder Cato carried on in the natural feelings of his slaves, his setting them adrift to starve in their old age, when could no longer be serviceable to him, the condemning of them to fish-ponds for trivial faults; all these things must fill very reflecting man with such abhorrence of, and indignation at, the conduct of the Romans, in the character of masters, in their advanced state of empire, as must prove them unworthy of being drawn into example, except to be execrated for their conduct. While they fancied themselves lords of the world, they forgot that they were men; while they indulged their amusement, they stifled their humanity. Indeed, what could be expected from a people capable of receiving a law, that, according to the usual interpretation of it, in a case of insolvency, ordained a fellow-citizen to be cut piece-meal, and be divided among his creditors?

(An Essay on [...] African Slaves [...], 21-23)

3 The countenance of the statue :

Joseph Spence (1699-1768) and Lady Miller (1741-81)

The countenance of the statue strikes the viewer in various ways, as

witnessed, for example, by Joseph Spence (1699-1768), Professor of Poetry at Oxford (1728-38) but more commonly known as the author of *Polymetis* (1755) which proved an invaluable guide to mythological images for Keats: “The face of the dying gladiator is the most expressive of a human passion” (*Polymetis*, 1:83); or by Lady Miller (1741-81), the hostess of a literary salon near Bath, in her *Letters from Italy* (1776): “The dying gladiator; this famous statue exceeds the idea I had formed of it from the copies and descriptions. The countenance made such an impression upon me, that I believe I shall not easily forget it” (*Letters from Italy*, 2:291).

3.a The countenance of the statue showing agony within :

The Philanthrope (1797)

Those who pay attention to expressions on the countenance are naturally led to the consideration of what passions within that cause the expression as such. This is how the anonymous author of *The Philanthrope* discovered “agony” in preference to the grace of the Belvidere Apollo, or the beauty of the Medicaean Venus [The Venus de’ Medici? See a webpage “The Head of Medicaean Venus”.]

Though it be allowed that an original and immutable distinction subsists between virtue and vice; yet, according to the constitution or habits of different persons, they applaud different virtues and condemn different vices. Men of a robust structure and vigorous turn of mind, are chiefly delighted with great and heroic virtue; they consider the dangers and difficulties that arise from external circumstances as the test of merit; and extol fortitude, courage, and perseverance, as the highest of human exertions. Others again, of a softer complexion, and more inclined to the indulgence of amiable and kind affection, are captivated above every thing else with displays of gentleness, compassion, and mercy. The same thing happens in our judgments, and sentiments concerning elegant composition, and the works of elegant artists. One person is much captivated with the beauty of stile [sic.] and language: another with sentiment and moral remark: the imagery that flows from

a powerful imagination, is chiefly agreeable to those who are themselves endowed with inventive energies: and the tender display and expression of passion are solicited by readers of sensibility and sympathetic tenderness. The agony of the dying gladiator fixes the attention of many spectators, possessed both of taste and judgment; in preference to the grace of the Belvidere Apollo, or the beauty of the Medicæan Venus. — The correspondence between our principles of taste, and those of moral approbation, illustrated in these particulars, seems to imply a very intimate and peculiar connection.

(*The Philanthrope*, 46-48)

3.b The countenance of the statue showing nobility within :

Francis Garden (1721-93)

Francis Garden (1721-93), an Edinburgh-born judge and philanthropist, is unique in discovering nobility mixed with the agonies of mortal pain. Quoted from *Travelling Memorandums Made in a Tour upon the Continent of Europe in the Years 1786, 1787, and 1788* (1795):

[...] a dying Gladiator, of inimitable execution in form and expression. Mixed with the agonies of mortal pain, we perceive a noble high spirited indignation and impatience of life.

(*Travelling Memorandums*, 3:131)

3.c The countenance of the statue seen by impartial observers

In contrast with Francis Garden's rather impassioned observation, there are some who view the statue with calmer impartiality. Thomas Watkins, for example, sees shame, anger, and courage contending with agony, and struggling with death, quoted from his *Travels through [...] Italy*, 2 ed. (1794):

This statue [the dying gladiator called Il Mirmillone] has infinite merit. The wretched object whom it represents appears lying on the

arena mortally wounded, and feebly supporting his weight upon his arm. His limbs are as finely formed as those of Belviderean Apollo, but it is the countenance that is so wonderfully striking, for in it, shame, anger, and courage seem to contend with agony, and struggle against death.

(*Travels through [...] Italy*, 375-76)

William Mitford (1744-1827), a historian of ancient Greece best known for his *The History of Greece* (1784-1818), admits sternness and fortitude in the expression, but, after a careful study on the Grecian element in the statue, refrains from calling the man a “hero”, since, he claims, his mind is “depressed by slavery, and without elevation of thought”. Quoted from Vol. 6 (1797) of *The History of Greece*:

The character of the countenance of the figure in the villa Borghese is Grecian and heroic: the difference of the features of the dying gladiator, rightly so called, in the Capitol, is striking; the expression is very fine, the work is altogether admirable, and the more so because it marks precisely the character it has been intended to represent; not a Greek, for the face is not Grecian; not a hero, for the expression, tho showing sternness and fortitude, shows a fortitude of a mind depressed by slavery, and without elevation of thought. Such at least is the impression which it readily conveys to those to whom the forms of Grecian sculpture are familiar.

(*The History of Greece*, 6: 363n-64n)

4 William Hayley (1745-1820) at the turn of the century

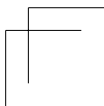
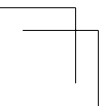
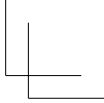
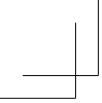
William Hayley, a patron and friend of artists including William Blake, George Romney, John Flaxman and Joseph Wright of Derby, and the author of *The Life of Cowper* (1803), published in 1800 *An Essay on Sculpture, in a Series of Epistles to John Flaxman*. This is a verse epistle in which the author traces the art of sculpture, in the form of the epistle to his friend John Flaxman, from its origin, and its progress through Asia, Egypt, Greece, and Rome, touching upon various statuary works of the places.

Hayley's lines on *The Statue of the Statue of the Dying Gladiator*, in *An Essay on Sculpture: In a Series of Epistles to John Flaxman* (1800), are very short, but in a sense an epitome of eighteenth-century observations in praise of its realism and its power to evoke sympathy in the viewer, being a descendant of (1) Samuel Sharp's insistence on "nature", and (2) Jonathan Richardson's and Edward Clarke's statements on "pity" or "sigh" stimulated in the viewer.

Yes, Attic Art! Each change of vital breath,
Of life the fervour, and the chill of death,
All, all were subject to thy glorious power; 520
Nature was thine, in ever-varying hour:
Witness that offspring of thy skill profound,
Thy Gladiator, bending to the ground,
In whom the eye of sympathy descries
His brief existence ebbing as he lies!

(An Essay on Sculpture, III. ll. 518-25)

Of Hayley's eight lines in praise of the statue's fidelity to "nature", what stands out most perhaps is the minute-by-minute description of the man at the very moment of dying: the change of his "vital breath" from "the fervour" "[o]f life" to "the chill of death"; and the gradual "ebbing" of his life "as he lies". The stone gains life as though it were a living being now dying. This is Hayley's verbal recreation of the Attic art.



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